

HEART OF LIFE

by

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"LOOKING AT YOUR GENETIC DATA MIGHT UNCOVER INFORMATION THAT SOME PEOPLE FIND SURPRISING.

THIS INFORMATION CAN BE RELATIVELY BENIGN.

AT OTHER TIMES, THE INFORMATION YOU LEARN CAN HAVE PROFOUND IMPLICATIONS FOR BOTH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY."

- DISCLAIMER ON A POPULAR
HOME DNA TEST KIT.

COLD OPEN

VARIOUS PHOTOS of a man's life. Our NARRATOR is male, 60's. He's got a nice, Judd Hirsch-y quality to him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
His name is Sidney Winter.

- A bent, faded picture of a little boy in suburbia. He's making a lopsided structure out of pipe cleaners.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He was born and raised outside of Chicago in the late fifties.

- A 19 year old man at the University of Illinois, Chicago.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He studied architecture, but unlike his classmates who spent their weekends admiring the robust towers of Sullivan and Van Der Rohe, Sidney fell in love with houses.

- Residential houses. Bungalows. Craftsmans. Traditionals.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Places where real people raised real families. Homes.

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

30 YEAR OLD SIDNEY drives, listens to music.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And in 1988, in downtown Winnetka --

He notices something out of the corner of his eye...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
-- he fell in love again.

24 YEAR OLD LILIAN "LILY" MERRIT steps out of a salon. Her smock still on, she lifts a hand mirror to check her new cut and color in the sun.

Then she notices him. A charged moment between them before he glances back at the road and BRAKES HARD to avoid an accident. Sidney turns back to Lily who finds this funny.

MOMENTS LATER - He is now on the sidewalk with Lily. They talk and flirt and fall hard for each other.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Fate's a funny thing. Sidney wasn't supposed to even be on that street at that time. But because he'd driven an extra block to hear the end of a song --

"Hold On" by Wilson Phillips by the way (It was huge then - don't judge).

NARRATOR (V.O.)

-- his entire life changed.

SMASH TO:

MORE PHOTOS: A modest WEDDING; A ROAD TRIP West with a U-Haul (Sidney shows off his "left arm only" tan); Sidney hanging a shingle for his own ARCHITECTURE FIRM (just down the street from the Gamble House in Pasadena) and finally --

-- a FAMILY. A photo of Sidney, Lily and TWO KIDS (BOY, 9 and GIRL 3). We POP IN on the girl. SUPER: "**Sydney**".

NARRATOR (V.O.)

They named their daughter Sidney too, but spelled differently. With a "y", not an "i". S-y-d-n-e-y.

INT. ARCHITECTURE FIRM - DAY

SIDNEY SENIOR (let's just refer to him as "Sid" from now on, shall we?), then 36, works at his desk.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Lily insisted on the different spelling. So her daughter could have her own identity.

Reveal 4 YEAR-OLD SYDNEY at her dad's feet, drawing a house.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It didn't work.

CUT TO:

- MOMENTS OF SID & SYDNEY: Dressed as King and Princess at a Renaissance Fair; Watching Pink Panther movies together; Respective moments of dad and daughter playing softball, both getting ejected for hard slides and both getting in the ump's face.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Sydney Junior was her father's
daughter in a thousand different
ways. They even have weird genetic
things in common, like how they
both sneeze when they step into
sunlight.

SPLIT SCREEN of Sid and teenage Sydney exiting buildings and
SNEEZING.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It's a real thing. Look it up!

- BACK to the family photo where we now favor the BOY (9).
SUPER: "**Brendan**".

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Sidney was just as supportive of
his son as he was his daughter.

CUT TO:

8 YEAR OLD BRENDAN struggles to make an American Indian
diorama. Sid approaches.

SIDNEY
Hey, pal. Need a hand?

CUT TO:

SCHOOL - LATER: Brendan's classmates marvel at an intricate,
properly-scaled diorama of the Battle of Little Big Horn,
complete with period-accurate dress.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Maybe a little too supportive. And
maybe it was because of that, but
while his sister Sydney took *after*
their father --

CUT TO:

- VARIOUS MOMENTS OF TEENAGED BRENDAN asking dad for cash
before going out.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
-- Brendan took advantage of him.

CUT TO:

A CHARMING BUNGALOW on a tree-lined street where it fits
right in.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Sidney built his family a home in a part of Pasadena called "Bungalow Heaven". And for three decades that's exactly what it was...

A LIGHTNING-FAST MONTAGE OF FAMILY PHOTOS from the late 80's to today. Everything from old Polaroids to digital photos with Polaroid filters.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Pure heaven.

INT. WINTER ARCHITECTURE FIRM - DAY

A blank elevation page on a worn, ink-stained, old-school drafting table.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Until the day Sidney's world started to slip away.

Sidney's firm has grown to employ about 15 people. Sitting in his prime office, 60 YEAR OLD SID stares at the blank page. Holds a pencil in his hand.

ASSOCIATE (O.S.)

Sid? You okay?

An ASSOCIATE approaches, concerned.

SIDNEY

I'm great.

By the way, Sidney's voice sounds a lot like our Narrator's.

SIDNEY

I'm just having trouble remembering how to do this.

He refers to the desk, the paper. Everything.

MOMENTS LATER - Lily is here, leads her husband gently toward the door. Sidney's associates watch, stunned.

INT. NEUROLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Sidney and Lily receive devastating news.

DOCTOR

The prognosis is normally four to eight years but this is moving a bit faster.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
In the months that followed, as he
lost his mobility, memory, voice --

INT. DEN - WINTER HOUSE - NIGHT

Sidney, ailing but still alert and sitting upright, eyes a
framed family photo.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
-- Sidney stayed positive and
strong due to a simple idea: The
knowledge that when he's gone he
will be remembered as a supportive
father and a good family man.

CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Someone who built something
lasting. But like I said before,
fate's a funny thing.

OUR TITLE rises, like glowing embers:

H E A R T O F L I F E

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

CLOSE ON Sydney (now 24). She stares at something O.S.

SUPER: THREE YEARS LATER

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Six weeks ago Sydney saw an ad for a consumer DNA kit that tested for various inherited diseases, including the one that struck her father down. So, worried that she could be like her father in yet another way, Sydney did the test.

Reveal she is staring at her phone: On it an email inbox. One unread: Subject heading: **"Your G-Nome Health and Ancestry Results Are In!"**.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The results came back five days ago.

Her index finger hovers over it, ready to click but unable to.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She can't bring herself to read them.

A KNOCK on the door snaps her out of it. She's in a powder room, surrounded by those little soaps that no one's allowed to use.

SYDNEY

Be right out!

INT. HALLWAY - WINTER HOUSE - DAY

Sydney exits the bathroom, into a large 64TH BIRTHDAY PARTY for her father. GUESTS pack the house alongside CATERERS and WAITERS. The person who knocked, HERMAN (50's), seeing that it's Sydney he interrupted, tries to scoot past her.

SYDNEY

Mr. Delawder.

Just as he was about to close the door, Sydney stops it with her foot.

HERMAN

(nervous)
Sydney! Hello.

SYDNEY

I drove past your house the other day, saw you're doing some construction?

HERMAN

Oh. Uh, yes. Just some small, insignificant renovations. Nothing major.

SYDNEY

Interesting that you wouldn't hire my father's firm to do the work considering he, you know, *designed* your house in the first place.

HERMAN

Well, I would have but...

He gives her a look as if to say "You know".

SYDNEY

What?

HERMAN

Well, I don't want to be insensitive...

Again, she's not letting him off the hook here.

HERMAN

Your father isn't exactly available anymore, Sydney.

Herman glances across the room where Sydney's father (now 64) is visible through some French Doors in a converted den. He's in a hospital bed, asleep, lies amidst tubes and machines. Lily (now 58) stands next to the bed, talks with friends.

SYDNEY

Yes he is. He is available.
 (off Herman's confusion)
 You're looking at him. I went to his alma mater, I trained under him. I'm running his firm. I'm wearing his jacket for Christ's sake!

She refers to her father's Burberry jacket that she wears. (A look she pulls off with style, by the way)

SYDNEY

I mean, the only thing I technically don't have is his experience but so what? A baby shark is still a shark, right?

HERMAN

I don't know what that means.

SYDNEY

It means even though it's young, it can still bite your hand off.

She smiles. Herman unconsciously puts his hands in his pockets.

LILY (O.S.)

(coming over)

Excuse me.

(to Herman)

Can I steal my daughter for just a moment?

Lily pulls Sydney away from a relieved Herman.

SYDNEY

Mom, I was in the middle of defending dad's legacy.

LILY

Herman's an old friend, and it seemed like you were threatening to bite his hand off.

SYDNEY

You make it sound so aggressive. It's just frustrating, you know? He spends thirty years building this business and I can't keep it going for six months?? I'm hemorrhaging clients, I've had to lay off two junior associates, who are twenty years older than me by the way --

LILY

Sweetie. It's a party - maybe your father's last one of these. Try and enjoy yourself.

She squeezes Sydney's hand, moves off as Sydney notices --

-- TOM, across the room. He's a couple years older than Sydney, tall and awkwardly good looking. Sydney takes a breath, heads toward him as we CUT TO --

EXT. WINTER HOUSE - SAME

-- AN UBER as it pulls up outside the house. Brendan (now 29) and GARANCE (27, female, French-American) step out with vintage luggage that is as impractical as it is cool-looking.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

After enrolling in college, Brendan took a "gap year" to travel on his father's dime.

- A SERIES OF INSTAGRAM POSTS of BRENDAN through his 20's all over the world (lots of music festivals and booze wristbands). We finally CUT BACK TO --

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It's been a long gap.

BRENDAN

Isn't it a beautiful house?

GARANCE

C'est mignonne.

BRENDAN

It's more than cute. It's perfect. My dad's a great architect.

GARANCE

I can't wait to meet him.

BRENDAN

Yeah, he's gonna love you. They all are.

GARANCE

You studied architecture, right?

BRENDAN

For six and a half weeks. Oh, hey, uh...

He refers to a tasteful engagement ring on her finger.

BRENDAN

Don't forget. The surprise?

GARANCE

Ah, yes!

She takes the ring off, drops it in her pocket.

INT. WINTER HOUSE - SAME

Sydney approaches Tom, holds out a wine glass.

SYDNEY

(a bit too loud)

Hi! What's up?! Glad you made it.
Wine?

TOM

No I... already have a beer here,
but thanks.

SYDNEY

Ah. Missed that. I was right, by
the way, Herm Delawder hired
another firm to do renovations.

TOM

Yeah, D&R. I have a friend there.
It's a small job anyway.

SYDNEY

We have to talk about last Thursday-

TOM

(quickly)

Sydney, this is Natasha, my
girlfriend.

NATASHA, a lanky young woman, comes over.

SYDNEY

Oh, great! Welcome! Welcome.

TOM

This is my boss, Sydney.

NATASHA

Hi, I've heard all about you!

SYDNEY

(flustered)

Oh, well, terrific. Tom is one of
our brightest young architects.
We're very lucky to have Tom.
Working at the firm.

(wags her finger at Tom)

Don't you go anywhere. I'm gonna go
check on the brie.

Sydney turns, looking mortified. Suddenly A HIGH-PITCHED
noise from the other side of the room --

-- It's Lily. She's seen Brendan, entering the house. She rushes to the door and hugs her son.

LILY
You must be Garance!

GARANCE
Yes! So happy to meet you!

LILY
And you're from Sicily?

GARANCE
France!

LILY
Oh right, Sicily was - sorry, never mind!

BRENDAN
(guileless, to Garance)
I had a girlfriend from Sicily for a while.

LILY
Who we never met so it can't have been that serious.

BRENDAN
You met her - it was Wales you didn't meet. Because she was, you know. Psychotic.

GARANCE
You have a very full passport.

Sydney approaches.

BRENDAN
Syd! Garance, this is my sister.

Brendan hugs Sydney.

SYDNEY
Hi, hello, enchantee!
(to Brendan, whispers)
I need to talk now.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sydney and Brendan turn a corner.

BRENDAN
Shouldn't I see dad first?

SYDNEY

This is about dad. And us.

INT. FOYER - WINTER HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Guests walk past, not noticing a HIDDEN DOOR in the wall beneath the master staircase.

BRENDAN (O.S.)

I haven't been in here in years.

INT. SECRET ROOM - UNDER THE STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Sydney and Brendan sit in what was clearly an old clubhouse of sorts (which they barely fit in now). There are stacks of books, tapes and other toys.

SYDNEY

I figured since dad built this hideout for us, it was an appropriate place to read this.

She holds her phone out to him.

SYDNEY

I sent away for a DNA test to see if I might get what dad has. I haven't been able to open it yet.

BRENDAN

Is it a PDF?

SYDNEY

No I mean I've been too nervous to open it. I think I needed you to be here.

BRENDAN

Garance and I are engaged.

SYDNEY

Oh. Okay, congrats. Ready?
(re: her phone)
I'm gonna read this now.

BRENDAN

That's it? Just "congrats?"

SYDNEY

You've been engaged like what, three times before? I'll believe it when I see it.

She turns to her phone. Brendan takes it from her.

SYDNEY

Hey!

BRENDAN

You're in no position to be critical, Syd. You sabotage every relationship you're in.

SYDNEY

No I don't.

(off his look)

What, because I'm holding out for something as perfect as mom and dad? That's called having high standards.

BRENDAN

You broke up with a guy because he liked Dave Matthews.

SYDNEY

No, he said he liked the Dave Matthews "Ben and Jerry's" flavor so I said "Oh, a Dave Matthews ice cream flavor? It must be vanilla". He got mad, we got in a big fight and that's why we broke up.

She takes her phone back again.

BRENDAN

Whatever you say. Just don't tell mom about the engagement. I want it to be a surprise for when dad's better.

Sydney looks at her brother with concern. What is he talking about?

BRENDAN

Stem cell research? Immunotherapy? They're making progress every day!

SYDNEY

Brennie... No.

(firmly)

He's not getting better. It's too late. Have to deal with reality.

Brendan looks at his sister. She looks at him with love, as if he's a child.

SYDNEY

I'm opening this now.

Sydney takes a breath, opens the email. What she reads stops her cold.

BRENDAN
What's it say?

SYDNEY
(confused)
I don't...

BRENDAN
Syd?

SYDNEY
Oh my God, Brendan...

CUT TO:

A SCREAMING FEMALE FACE, in Ziggy-Stardust-ish make-up. It is frozen in a contorted anger.

SUPER: SIX DAYS EARLIER - NEW YORK CITY

We RACK FOCUS to reveal ALEXANDRA REID (36), the same woman in the photo, but a decade older and without the make-up. She is reflected in the glass frame of what we now realize is a GOLD RECORD for a male/female duo called "Ready Fire Aim".

EXECUTIVE (O.S.)
We know you're frustrated.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - RCA RECORDS - DAY

Alexandra turns to TWO MUSIC EXECUTIVES (one male, one female).

ALEXANDRA
I'm not. The fact that people aren't buying my music anymore? That's frustrating. But when my own label won't let me tour? That's fucking infuriating.

MALE EXECUTIVE
We want you to tour. Just --

ALEXANDRA
Just as long as I do it with someone who has narcissistic personality disorder, a sex addiction --

She glances at the record where we can now see JIMMY, her old partner - a wiry singer/guitar player.

ALEXANDRA

-- and a huge drinking problem. Y'know, trashing hotel rooms was one thing, but when he really partied, he took it out on the mattress. Are you still wetting the bed Jimmy?

Reveal JIMMY, the guy from the record cover, on a teleconference screen where he's been the whole time. He is calmly strumming a guitar.

JIMMY

Sorry? Sound went out there for a second.

MALE EXECUTIVE

He's open to touring, so you know.

ALEXANDRA

I'll bet he is.

JIMMY

I like the hair, Alex! Wish I could see it in person. Onstage. Thrashing around as you blow the audience's heads off.

ALEXANDRA

Your hair looks greasy.

FEMALE EXECUTIVE

The reality is, neither one of you can fill a large venue on your own.

ALEXANDRA

Jimmy, why do you always let people do your talking for you? Oh wait, is it because you're a complete coward? The reality is that you couldn't tour solo if you tried because I wrote those songs! I wrote those songs, they're MINE! I PUT MY SWEAT AND BLOOD AND TEARS INTO THEM, AND YOU TRIED TO TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME, AND I WILL NEVER TOUR WITH THIS EGOMANIAC, NEVER!

An awkward moment as the executives share a look over how harsh that was.

JIMMY

Well...okay, cool. I get it. Just uh...people...

He noodles with some chords. Everyone is waiting for him to speak.

ALEXANDRA
What? People what?

JIMMY
Oh. Sorry. People change.

He smiles.

JIMMY
Bye, beautiful rockstar. Bye,
business people!

ALEXANDRA
GOOD BYE.

Alexandra hangs up on him. For a moment no one says a word.

MALE EXECUTIVE
(beat)
So that's a 'No' on Jimmy?

INT. LOBBY - RECORD LABEL - MOMENTS LATER

Alexandra turns a corner. Her assistant CAMERON (25) has been waiting, jumps up and follows.

CAMERON
How'd it go?

Alexandra hands her the gold record, which she has taken off the wall.

CAMERON
That badly, huh?

INT. ELEVATOR - GOING DOWN - MOMENTS LATER

They stand in tense silence. Then:

CAMERON
Remember that DNA test you did
about a year ago?

ALEXANDRA
(remembers)
At the Oxfam charity thing? Yeah,
they were giving out free DNA kits
like they were mints. Everyone did
one. It was fun. Remember my report
came back, said I was one percent
Neanderthal?

She laughs at this. Cameron hands Alexandra her phone.

CAMERON

You got a notification from them today. Something new came up.

ALEXANDRA

Ooh.

Intrigued, she takes the phone.

ALEXANDRA

Well let's see what we've got.

Alexandra reads the email. As she does her smile fades, her expression hardens.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In a rush it all comes back to her...

CUT TO:

A BLUR OF BUILDINGS, TELEPHONE WIRES AND SKY.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But not of a memory long forgotten...

6-YEAR-OLD ALEXANDRA sits in a car's backseat. Stares out the window. "Hold On" by Wilson Phillips plays.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But of one that is so formative, so pivotal, that it has defined who she has become.

The car suddenly BRAKES AND SCREECHES TO A SUDDEN AND ABRUPT STOP. Alexandra is thrown forward but stopped by her seatbelt. She's fine.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

You okay, kiddo?

The driver turns around. It's 30 year old Sidney Winter.

ALEXANDRA

Yes, daddy.

Sid pulls the car over, parks it as it becomes clear we are in the same flashback that we saw before, but are now privy to parts of it we didn't see then - namely, his daughter in the backseat the whole time.

SIDNEY

Listen, I'm gonna go talk to
someone for a second. Wait here?

Alexandra nods, helpfully. Sid gets out, runs across the street and approaches 24 year-old Lily to introduce himself to her as --

-- 6 year old Alexandra watches, confused and completely unaware that her world is falling apart.

CUT TO:

A 60 MINUTES BROADCAST - From not that long ago. EARLY 30'S ALEXANDRA is interviewed in her multi-million dollar Soho loft.

ALEXANDRA

For years when I was a kid I didn't
know what to do with all those
feelings that my father's
abandonment had caused.

INT. BEDROOM - WINTER HOUSE - **PRESENT**

Sydney and Brendan watch this interview on a laptop, having closed themselves inside a guest bedroom.

ALEXANDRA (ON COMPUTER)

But then I found music. And I
figured out how to process all that
pain and resentment and anger
through my songs. I remember
writing lyrics so fast that my pen
was ripping through my notebook. It
was like an artistic exorcism. And
amazingly, people connected to my
work. Then I met Jimmy and --

Sydney abruptly closes the laptop. For a moment she and Brendan just sit there, silent.

SYDNEY

Well this is all obviously a big
mistake.

BRENDAN

We called the company, Syd. They
said the test was accurate.

SYDNEY

No, they said she shares twenty-five percent of her DNA with me and fifty with dad. That doesn't necessarily mean she's our sibling.

BRENDAN

Then what is she? Our grandmother?

Sydney takes this in. Good point.

BRENDAN

She's from Chicago, Syd. The dates line up from when dad said he was living there. She looks like him! More like him than we do if I had to be honest.

SYDNEY

Fine. But it still doesn't make sense. He was always there for us - Emotionally, financially... He was just always there. Still is!

Sydney points out the second floor window and down to where their father is visible in his bed (the French Doors to the den are open into the back yard now as the party starts to move outside).

SYDNEY

Do you remember when you were sick on Halloween so he took you trick or treating a week later?

BRENDAN

(fondly)

Nobody had any candy left but I got nine dollars in change and a Gatorade.

SYDNEY

How could he be the most supportive father in the world to us after being the least supportive to another? It makes no sense.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Actually, it makes perfect sense, which Sydney realizes in this moment.

Brendan joins Sydney at the window. For a moment they both just stand there, watching their father with new eyes. As more people start crowding into the back yard...

BRENDAN

Mom's about to give the toast. We should go down.

INT. WINTER HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Sydney and Brendan head downstairs. Sydney has her phone out, is typing away --

BRENDAN

What are you doing?

SYDNEY

Adjusting my preferences on the site so my info isn't shared.

BRENDAN

It's too late, Syd. You know she's already seen it.

SYDNEY

Maybe. Even if she did though, who's to say she even cares?

A KNOCK at the front door.

SYDNEY

I mean, you saw her interview. She's already "processed" this stuff through her music. Maybe she doesn't need to dig into her past anymore.

Sydney opens the front door, an afterthought. Finds herself face to face with Alexandra.

ALEXANDRA

Hi. I'm here to see my father.

Off Sydney and Brendan's reactions ---

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOEXT. MANHATTAN - **SIX DAYS AGO**

Alexandra RUNS through Chinatown --

NARRATOR (V.O.)

After discovering she might have
found her father after thirty
years, there was only one person
Alexandra needed to tell --

She enters storefront noodle joint, heads for the back --

INT. BASEMENT - CHINESE NOODLE RESTAURANT - DAY

WESLEY "WES" REID (39), handsome with a salt & pepper beard,
plays an underground (literally) high stakes poker game.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

-- Her brother, Wes.

The only other PLAYER still in, who's got a Unibomber fashion
vibe going, shows his cards. Wes snaps, angry.

WES

Bullshit.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Unlike his sister, who dealt with
her childhood pain and anger
through her art --

Wesley throws his cards down, tries to dramatically flip the
table. It's bolted to the ground.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

-- Wes never dealt with it. Not
even a little.

A couple BOUNCERS grab him.

WES

(to the player)

Bullshit you caught that on the
river you lying cheating -- let go
of me --

A flailing struggle until --

ALEXANDRA (O.S.)

Wes?

Alexandra steps into the room. Everyone stops upon seeing her.

WES (PRE-LAP)

It was a damn miracle, you showing up like that out of the blue...

EXT. STREET - CHINATOWN - DAY

Wes and Alexandra walk down the street, Wes still adjusting his eyes to the sunlight.

WES

You completely disarmed them - with your charms, that is. Not *literally* disarming them, even though they did have guns I'm pretty sure. Wait, how'd you find me?

ALEXANDRA

You used the ATM upstairs.

He shoots her a look. How did she --

ALEXANDRA

One of the benefits of cosigning on your brother's account so the bank lets him use it again - you get access to all his spending.

WES

I can explain the massage parlor charges.

She stops, turns to him.

WES

And I need the Tesla. That's a business expense.

She puts her hands on his cheeks and looks him in the eyes.

ALEXANDRA

I know where he is.

Wes knows who she's talking about right away. Off his reaction which is surprisingly not surprised --

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN - LATER

A taxi skids to the curb at the corner of 55th and 5th Avenue. Wes jumps out, followed by Alexandra --

ALEXANDRA
Wes, slow down.

WES
Come on.

ALEXANDRA
Wes, you're literally running away
from your problems --

Wes stops suddenly on the sidewalk, in front of Michael's
Restaurant.

WES
Here.

Alexandra stops next to him.

WES
It was here. Twelve years ago.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. MICHAEL'S RESTAURANT - **12 YEARS EARLIER**

27 YEAR OLD WES steps out of the restaurant. He's in a grey
suit. It's raining.

WES (V.O.)
I was coming out of a business
lunch --

Younger Wes seems much more put together, refined. His beard
is trim, cleaner. Whatever happened to him between this point
and the present, it clearly took its toll.

WES (V.O.)
-- when I saw him.

He starts to open an umbrella when he stops.

DOWN THE STREET, 48 YEAR OLD SID WINTER is outside the
Peninsula Hotel with Lily and their then teenaged kids,
Brendan and Sydney.

WES (V.O.)
He was with his family. His new
family.

Wes just stands there, getting soaked.

WES (V.O.)
My first instinct was to go talk to
him, right then and there.

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

But then I remembered that he'd never seen me with the beard and he might not recognize me right away. That I might have to tell him who I was! And then the *indignity* of that - of having to introduce myself to my own father - started to make my blood boil. And as I'm standing there, steaming, running all this through my brain --

Sid and his family pile into a cab and are driven away. It's all over in an instant.

WES (V.O.)

-- he was gone.

EXT. STREET - MIDTOWN - **PRESENT**

Alexandra takes this all in, dumbstruck.

WES

That's the only time I've seen him in thirty years.

ALEXANDRA

I... I could have called the hotel, Wes. I could have tracked him down. Why in the world --

WES

I didn't tell you for the same reason I brought you here now. I know you're all hyped up about finding dad but some things are best left in the past.

ALEXANDRA

And how's that philosophy working out for you?

(off his look)

Come on, Wes. I know you better than anyone.

WES

So do I! You used dad to spark your career and now you'll use him again to rekindle it.

Alexandra takes this in.

ALEXANDRA

Huh. I hadn't thought of that. But now that you mention it...

Wes, realizing what he's inadvertently started --

WES
Wait. I didn't --

ALEXANDRA
Yes you did.

CUT TO:

INT. L.A.X. - ARRIVALS - **EARLIER TODAY**

Alexandra breezes through baggage claim, pulls a single rolling bag. She sees a LIMO DRIVER holding a sign that says "SUNSHINE". She approaches.

ALEXANDRA
Ready to go?

DRIVER
(recognizes her)
Wait, you're --

ALEXANDRA
Sunshine, yeah.

She flashes a fake smile, then drops it right away.

INT. TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY

Alexandra sits in the back seat, looks at pictures of her father's architecture website.

DRIVER
"Sunshine". I get it. It's ironic.
Because it's like the opposite of
how you are?

Alexandra looks up. Not interested in chatting.

DRIVER
I'm used to celebrity code names by
the way. I've been in this game for
a while. I drove Jimmy a couple
times!

ALEXANDRA
(kill me)
Oh yeah?

DRIVER
Last time was to the Latin
Grammy's. He was "dropping in" with
Santana I think.

ALEXANDRA

Also known as "playing backup".

DRIVER

Jimmy's always with a different girl too. First there was that country star, then the young one, the twerker? There were a couple more --

ALEXANDRA

Do you mind turning off the child lock so I can throw myself onto the freeway?

DRIVER

What's that? Hey, do you want to go to the hotel first, or --

ALEXANDRA

No.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - WINTER HOUSE - **PRESENT**

We're now caught up with the moment at the front door with Sydney, Brendan and Alexandra.

ALEXANDRA

I'm here to see my father. My name is --

SYDNEY

(stunned)
We know who you are.

ALEXANDRA

Is that why you're standing there gaping at me like a half wit?

SYDNEY

(thrown)
What? Um - Wait here a second?

She closes the door on Alexandra. We stay outside.

ALEXANDRA

Are you freaking kidding me?

Alexandra peers through a window into the house, can see the party through the back.

ALEXANDRA

(realizes)
His *birthday*. That's right.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)
 Amazing. It's his stinking
 birthday.

INT. WINTER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Brendan freaks out while Sydney stays calm.

BRENDAN
 What do we do?? We can't have mom
 find out dad had *another family*.
 She's already fragile as it is. I
 mean, do you hear this playlist she
 put together?

We're now aware of the fact that "Hold On" is playing.

GARANACE
 (arriving)
 Holy shit, is that Alexandra Reid
 outside??

SYDNEY
 (to Brendan)
 Okay, listen. You run interference
 with mom. I'll deal with --

She refers to the front door.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - WINTER HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Sydney opens the door, steps out and closes it behind her all
 in one quick motion.

SYDNEY
 Sorry about that.

She holds out a polite hand.

SYDNEY
 I'm Sydney. Nice to meet you.

Alexandra starts to shake her hand --

ALEXANDRA
 Wait, your name is Sydney? That's
 your real name? I thought that was
 a mistake by the company. He really
 named you after him?

SYDNEY
 With a different spelling. 'Y'
 instead of 'I'.

Sydney points to the ground where a child's handprint in cement is, along with her name. Alexandra hates this.

ALEXANDRA

That is cute.

SYDNEY

So unfortunately, now was not the best time for you to pop by. But why don't we reschedule?

She opens an old school personal organizer which she's been holding, flips to a calendar.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

And in the meantime we can sort some stuff out.

ALEXANDRA

Like what?

Sydney starts to answer --

ALEXANDRA

How old are you? You *look* young but that men's blazer -- and is that a vintage Filofax? It's like an old man's brain has been transplanted in the body of a sorority girl.

SYDNEY

Well, I take after my father --

ALEXANDRA

Also mine.

SYDNEY

Yes. Yes -- which is sort of why I'm having trouble accepting that he would ditch his children. Because I would never do that.

ALEXANDRA

Do you have children?

SYDNEY

No. But I might one day. And I would never ditch them.

ALEXANDRA

Oh he didn't "ditch" us. He abandoned us. Dropped us like a hot rock covered in dog crap. Listen, kid. I get that you're in shock.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)

You can't fathom how you could have missed something like this. But you didn't know what he was. And I've known for a long time. I've been living with it for thirty years. And I'm not waiting one more second to tell him what I think of him.

She tries to move past Sydney who blocks her way.

SYDNEY

He must have tried to reconnect with you at some point. To make amends. There's been some mistake maybe -

ALEXANDRA

You want to do another DNA test? Will that prove it to you? Fine! Here's my sample.

Alexandra spits on Sydney's concrete handprint.

ALEXANDRA

We could draw some blood for yours.

She holds up her fists. Sydney steps back, alarmed.

SYDNEY

Easy! Jesus.

The door opens and Garance pops her head out.

GARANCE

(smiling)

I'm sorry to interrupt, but I have to tell you, "Bite Marks" changed my life.

ALEXANDRA

Screw this.

Alexandra turns and walks defiantly across the lawn toward the side of the house, headed for the back.

SYDNEY

Wait!

Sydney starts to move after her, but realizing she won't catch her in time by going that way, decides to cut through the house. She moves back through the front door --

EXT. BACK YARD - WINTER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lily gives a toast before the assembled guests. An elaborate garden takes up much of the back yard. She stands next to her ailing husband's bed (the French Doors to the den still open).

LILY

As you can see all around you, I love to garden. But what you might not notice is that everything was grown using Companion Planting which is something my mother taught me...

IN THE BACK - Alexandra turns a corner and stops upon seeing the crowd (from here her dad is hidden behind standing guests).

Sydney exits the kitchen door. She sees Alexandra.

LILY (CONT'D)

The basic idea is that certain dissimilar things thrive if planted together.

Alexandra wades through the standing crowd toward the front. She grabs a glass of champagne as she goes to blend in.

Sydney, seeing this, gets Brendan's attention, nods toward Alexandra. Both he and Sydney try to head her off.

LILY (CONT'D)

Cucumbers, for instance, taste spectacular if they've been planted next to sunflowers. Celery works best with pumpkins...

The closer Alexandra gets, the more people notice her. WHISPERS of recognition rise --

LILY (CONT'D)

There's just certain lucky combinations that, when they live side by side and grow together become stronger and better.

Sydney, trying to get to Alexandra without causing a disruption, bumps into someone, spilling wine on them.

Brendan can't get around an annoying couple who are holding hands.

LILY (CONT'D)

Sid and I were one of those special combinations. We've grown alongside each other and thrived in ways we never would have alone.

(lifting her glass)

To Sid. My sweet and tender companion who...

She stops in mid-sentence upon seeing Alexandra emerge from the crowd.

Alexandra for the first time sees that her father is in a hospital bed. Whatever she had planned on doing in this moment seems to have gone out the window.

Sydney reaches the front, but sees that she's too late.

Alexandra approaches her father. Nobody stops her or says a word.

On dying SIDNEY WINTER, as Alexandra reaches his bedside. This is the closest we've been to him so far in this state. He is frail, gray. His breaths are far apart. His vulnerability is total.

Alexandra stares at her father, humbled.

LILY

It's Alzheimers. Early onset.
Hello, Alex.

ALEXANDRA

(without turning to look at
her)
Hello, Lily.

Off Sydney and Brendan exchanging a look, shocked that these two know each other. But then, *of course* they do --

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. SALON - WINNETKA, ILLINOIS - **30 YEARS AGO**

1988. 24 year old Lily stands outside that salon, is face to face with 30 year old Sid.

SIDNEY

(nervous)

I'm sorry, I've just never seen anyone like you before.

LILY

Well that's no good. I was going for Michelle Pfeiffer.

She refers to her cut, which definitely has a cool Pfeiffer "Into the Night" vibe to it.

LILY (V.O.)

I didn't know he was married at first. I swear I didn't.

SIDNEY

Have you ever had butterflies in your stomach? I think I'm having them right now.

LILY (V.O.)

But I found out soon after.

LILY

(to Sidney)

Butterflies are just a response to fear. It's your body telling you to run away.

SIDNEY

Do you want to run away?

LILY

(smiles)

With you?

INT. KITCHEN - THE WINTER HOUSE - **PRESENT**

Lily talks to Sydney and Brendan. The party seems to have abruptly ended. Guests have gone. The caterers are packing up their things. Supply company movers roll tables out. (Note: Alexandra is nowhere to be seen)

LILY

He claimed his marriage was pretty much done.

LILY (CONT'D)
 We tried to be a family, you know.
 But the kids wouldn't have it.

CUT TO:

A BRIDE, Lily at 25, running down a banquet hall corridor in heels.

A BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)
 No! Get away from me!

She turns a corner and stops in a kitchen doorway:

9 YEAR OLD WES stands before his father. A wedding cake is on the ground where it has been stomped on repeatedly. Wes is tear-stained and raw.

LILY (V.O.)
 Wesley, in particular, was not happy.

SIDNEY
 Kiddo --

WES
 Go away. I hate you. I don't want to see you anymore.

Lily, heart breaking for him, steps toward him.

WES
 (anguished)
 Go away. Go away!

LILY (V.O.)
 He kept expressing that idea, in various forms, for months. "Go away".

INT. THE WINTER HOUSE - PRESENT

LILY
 He, and to a lesser extent his sister, made it very clear how they didn't want us being a part of their lives. And then when your dad got a job offer out here, we...

SYDNEY
 Gave the kids what they wanted.

Lily nods.

LILY

Obviously they didn't really mean it. They were upset.

Lily looks out the window where Alexandra is visible pulling away in the same black Towncar she showed up in.

LILY

They wanted their father in their lives. But it wasn't until I had you guys that I realized what a huge mistake we made.

SYDNEY

(hopeful)

So that's when you reached out, right? That's when dad tried to contact them?

LILY

He didn't want to.

SYDNEY

But... he had to have tried something.

LILY

(shakes her head)

I begged him eight thousand different ways. He would just shut down. It's honestly the only thing we've ever fought over in thirty years of marriage.

SYDNEY

(grasping)

Well maybe he sent letters but didn't tell you. Like to his first wife? And maybe she sent them back. And those letters are in a shoebox in the attic right now, tied up with twine, like in a movie!

She looks at her brother to back her up. He clearly doesn't agree with her.

LILY

I'm sorry, Sydney. But he made it clear he did not want to reconnect with those children.

SYDNEY

But... why? There must be a reason.
People have good reasons for doing
bad things, right?

LILY

I never understood why and he never
told me.

Sydney lets this sink in. Then, as if flipping a switch, she
walks out.

LILY

Sydney.

Too late, she's gone. Lily turns to Brendan.

BRENDAN

I just want to know one thing. Is
the son successful too?

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - HOLLYWOOD HILLS - DUSK

JIMMY holds the front door open, a look of surprise.

Alexandra walks right past him, inside.

JIMMY

By all means, come right in.

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - DUSK

Jimmy follow Alexandra inside his stupidly giant house (View
of the Hills; pool; too many guitars).

ALEXANDRA

I just flew here this morning
because -

JIMMY

You wanted to see me, yeah -

ALEXANDRA

No, Jesus. I wanted to see him.
Turns out he's been living in
Pasadena for the last thirty years,
he has two grown children...

JIMMY

Are you talking about who I think
you're talking about?

ALEXANDRA

...and I came out here to have the whole "Grand Confrontation" with him, maybe leave with some material for a new album, who knows?

JIMMY

You are talking about him.

ALEXANDRA

But guess what? He's dying. He's completely out of it. And now I don't know what to feel. But the thing that's really messing with my head is the fact that the only person I want to talk to about it, is you! Which pisses me off. So screw you, Jimmy! That's why I came here. To tell you that.

She eyes him, expectantly.

JIMMY

Listen, Alex, I want to play you this bridge I've been working on - sit down a sec. You're gonna love this.

She walks out, as quickly as she entered.

JIMMY

(calls after)

You're wrong, you know. I did write one song!

EXT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy appears in the door, calls after her.

JIMMY

I wrote "The Choice". And the remix of that charted in Germany! Your hair does look great! Does mine seem thinner? I don't mind either way. Just wondering!

The limo driver sees Jimmy as Alex storms into the back seat.

DRIVER

Ey, Jimmy! My man!

The driver gives Jimmy a thumbs up.

JIMMY
 (cheerful)
 Ey, whatever your name is. Good to
 see you!

ALEXANDRA
 (barks)
 Drive.

INT. SYDNEY'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Sydney drives, aimless. She turns on the radio. "Hold On" by
 Wilson Phillips is on. She turns it off. Then she has a
 thought, whips the wheel --

INT. ARCHITECTURE FIRM - NIGHT

Sydney comes into her dad and her architecture offices.
 There is a light in one of the open cubicles. She walks past
 some detailed architectural models (the old school firm
 relies on these more than computer graphics) to find --

-- Tom at a desk.

SYDNEY
 Knew you'd be here.

TOM
 Sorry I left early, wanted to get
 some stuff done here.

SYDNEY
 I love working alone on Saturdays
 too.

TOM
 How was the rest of the party?

SYDNEY
 (beat)
 Uneventful.

She KISSES him passionately. For a moment he kisses her back.

TOM
 We - we shouldn't.

SYDNEY
 Yeah, I know, we really really
 shouldn't - this isn't gonna work -
 (unbuttoning his shirt)
 Which is probably why I'm so into
 it!

She bites him.

TOM

Oww -

SYDNEY

Because it's true, I sabotage any real relationships by comparing them to my parents who, it turns out, had a marriage built on a foundation of bullshit!

NATASHA (O.S.)

Excuse me!

Natasha is standing at the other end of the office, at the door.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Just came by to pick up my boyfriend.

Sydney immediately steps backward, knocking over an expensive looking architectural model, which smashes to the floor.

NATASHA

Still need help with those boxes?

Sydney notices that Tom has a couple of boxes by his desk with files in them.

SYDNEY

What are those for?

CUT TO:

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB - NIGHT

Wes KICKBOXES with a sparring partner. He's all fury at the expense of skill.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

A few years back Wes took up kickboxing.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - ATHLETIC CLUB - LATER

Wes changes. The motion-sensor lights suddenly turn OFF.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

He does it as a way to "get his anger out".

Wes waves his arms around.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It works --

He waves faster and adds some jumping into the mix. Nothing.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

-- but only temporarily. The anger
always comes back. Stronger.

He now flails and jumps around like a crazy person.

WES

(while jumping)
God damn it!

EXT. ATHLETIC CLUB - LATER

Wes hits the street, now changed and on the phone.

ALEXANDRA (OVER PHONE)

You need to come out here.

WES (INTO PHONE)

You're kidding, right?

ALEXANDRA (OVER PHONE)

He doesn't have much time left.

WES

I can't believe this. Thirty years
of resentment toward this guy and
the second you find out he's dying
you want to forget everything he
did? Shouldn't he be the one with
the memory issues?

INTERCUT WITH:

ALEXANDRA, who is in the backseat of the Towncar, watches the
city rush by.

ALEXANDRA (INTO PHONE)

You wouldn't say that if you saw
the state he's in.

WES (OVER PHONE)

California, right?

ALEXANDRA

Cut it out, Wes.

Wes laughs, enjoying this on some perverse level.

ALEXANDRA

If this is about not wanting to see
Lily --

WES

Who?

ALEXANDRA

(getting angry)

Look, I don't care if you avoid
dealing with your childhood shit
for the rest of your life. But
you'll regret it if you don't see
him before he dies. Just one time.
Just fly out, it's six hours door
to door.

WES

What if he wakes up?

ALEXANDRA

What?

WES

It's a thing that can happen you
know - they call it Terminal
Lucidity - right before the end
they can wake up and look around
and even talk for a second. What if
he does that and I'm there? And
what if, in one of his final
moments on this planet, through a
neurological miracle, he's able to
recognize me, for just a fleeting
moment? And in that moment, through
his disease-addled brain he
realizes that, because I'm there, I
must have forgiven him. I'd be
giving him closure, a peace that he
does not deserve. Now that's
something I'd regret. So will you.

The Towncar stops. Alexandra realizes they're back in front
of the Winter house.

WES

Which is why you should get the
hell out of there before it's too
late.

INT. KITCHEN - WINTER HOUSE - SAME

Garance peers out the window. Brendan sits at a kitchen
island, eyes his phone.

GARANCE

She's just sitting in her limo.
Like she's on the fence about
coming back in.

BRENDAN

(eyes his phone)
"Wesley Reid. He ran Vesuvius
Investments, his own venture
capital firm, until he was kicked
out after assaulting his co-
founder." Oops.

GARANCE

(can't believe it)
Alexandra Reid is in your backyard.

BRENDAN

Listen to this though: "At his
height he was personally worth more
than a hundred million dollars."
This guy was an angel investor in
like twenty different giant
companies!

He looks to Garance for a reaction. She seems indifferent.

BRENDAN

Don't you think that's interesting?

GARANCE

That Wall Street guys call
themselves "angels"? Bestow
religious properties to their
average abilities? No, I don't
think that's interesting.

BRENDAN

No, the fact that dad's two other
kids, without any support from him
at all, both have these incredible
success stories. Meanwhile look at
me!

GARANCE

You're saying you wish you'd had a
crappier childhood?

BRENDAN

No, but maybe having a dad that
broke my baseball glove in for me
didn't help.

GARANCE
What a monster.

LILY (O.S.)
(panicked)
Brendan!

Brendan and Garance turns at the sound of his mother. There is terror in her voice.

INT. TOWN CAR - PARKED - SAME

Alexandra can see Brendan and Garance running through the house, Lily upset. Something's clearly very wrong. Alexandra opens the car door, moves for the house --

CUT TO:

EXT. ARCHITECTURE FIRM - DAY

Sydney watches as Tom puts his boxes in the back of Natasha's car. Natasha sits with her window rolled up.

TOM
I know this timing isn't great for me to leave, but D&R's an aggressive firm, and they've been courting me for a while. I accepted a junior associate position.

SYDNEY
So the minute my dad's gone, you're out?

TOM
No, Syd. I'm not leaving because your dad's gone. I'm leaving because he's never going to leave that place.

This takes Sydney aback.

TOM
You still follow his ideas, his styles, the same traditional stuff he was doing for decades. I want to do something new. So should you!

Sydney's phone rings. She sees it's BRENDAN calling.

SMASH TO:

INT. THE WINTER HOUSE - NIGHT

Sydney pushes quickly through the front door. Lily, Brendan and the nurse are standing around Sid Winter's bed.

LILY
He's still holding on, but...

BRENDAN
The nurse is about to give him some more morphine.

She walks into the room. The time between breaths is alarming. Each could be his last.

The nurse applies the morphine.

Sid's eyes, which were rolled back into his head, roll BACK DOWN. His pupils face forward. He is looking at --

-- Alexandra, standing near the back, trying to stay out of everyone's way. She looks back at her father.

It's probably just the fact that his head is on its side like this - He probably would be staring at a blank wall if she hadn't been standing there. But there she is. And it's as if he's looking at her. It affects Alexandra.

Sydney, unaware of this moment transpiring, steps between them to take her father's hand. Despite everything, she is wrecked.

Lily moves her husband's head so it's facing upward. Sid's eyes now stare directly up.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Sidney Lofland Winter took his last breath at one-oh-nine a.m. He had just turned sixty-four years old.

SID'S POV: His family looks down at him. Alexandra visible too. Our view darkens...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He didn't have any final words. But if he had, what could he have said?

BLACK SCREEN

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I mean, you don't take a secret to your grave if it's easy to explain.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - WINTER HOUSE - MORNING

Sydney is asleep in a chair. She wakes to the sound of A CAR OUTSIDE. She moves toward the front door, passes Alexandra who stirs from the couch where she's been sleeping too.

SYDNEY
Someone's here.

LILY
(from the kitchen)
It's probably the funeral home to
pick up your father's body.

Sydney opens the front door, revealing --

-- A RENTAL CAR. It is parked and a MAN gets out.

Sydney doesn't recognize him and we don't either - not at first. Probably because he's shaved his beard. WES, looking as vulnerable as a boy, takes a few steps toward the house when he sees Alexandra appear in the doorway next to Sydney. From the look on his sister's face he knows he's too late.

Wes, shattered, but proudly trying to hide it, turns back to the car.

ALEXANDRA
Wes.

Alex strides across the front lawn but Wes is already in the car, starts it up --

ALEXANDRA
Wes!

He peels away.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. RENTAL CAR - MOVING - LATER

Wes drives, angry, ducks and weaves through freeway traffic. Around a bend, brake lights. Everything slows to a crawl.

WES

Son of a --

Wes whips the car to the right and GUNS IT up the side of the road -- He's going SO FAST that when --

-- ANOTHER CAR pulls out Wes must whip the wheel --

The car skids and ROLLS VIOLENTLY --

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - WINTER HOUSE - DAY

Alexandra is on her phone, paces. Upset.

ALEXANDRA

It just keeps going straight to voice mail.

Sydney and Lily are here. They are concerned but they keep their distance.

ALEXANDRA

This is all my fault.

LILY

Alex --

ALEXANDRA

No, it is! I talked my brother into coming out. Actually, if you go way back, this *whole thing* is my fault. If thirty years ago I hadn't asked my father to drive an extra block to hear the end of a Wilson Phillips song he probably never would have met you!

Lily takes this in, clearly surprised by at least part of this information.

SYDNEY

Wait. That means if it weren't for you... I wouldn't exist?

ALEXANDRA
Another thing that's my fault.

Alexandra's phone rings. She answers it quickly.

ALEXANDRA
Hello?? Is he -- What hospital?
Okay, I'm coming.
(hangs up)
He's been in an accident.

LILY
Oh no -

Sydney grabs her car keys.

ALEXANDRA
(to Sydney)
No, that's all right. I'll call a
car.

SYDNEY
Don't be stubborn. This is faster.

Alexandra hesitates.

SYDNEY
We can still hate each other.

ALEXANDRA
Deal. He's at St. Vincent's.

INT. SYDNEY'S CAR - DAY

Sydney drives Alexandra.

ALEXANDRA
This is an old person's car.
It's even got it in the name.
"Oldsmobile." They stopped making
these, because anyone who might
want one was dead.

SYDNEY
My dad got it for me. Our dad.

ALEXANDRA
Not my dad, thank God. Hate to
think how I'd have turned out if
I'd grown up with him. I mean, look
at you. Driving a granny car.
Wearing an old man's sports jacket.
What do you do for a living?

SYDNEY

(pause)

I've been running his architectural practice.

ALEXANDRA

(laughs)

Oh my God! You're his doppelganger!

SYDNEY

(starting to cry)

Stop it! I loved him! He was a great man! You just didn't know him!

ALEXANDRA

Well you didn't either!

SYDNEY

(stricken)

No, I guess I didn't, and now - what am I doing?! What am I supposed to do?!

ALEXANDRA

You want advice? Daddy's gone and now you want a big sister? Well you don't have one, you spoiled little brat! Just like I didn't have a dad! But I didn't whine about it: I used it! I used it as fuel to tell the world to go to hell! So stop blubbering, you little brat.

Sydney wipes her eyes, focusing on the road.

SYDNEY

...I think you just gave me some advice.

ALEXANDRA

No I didn't.

SYDNEY

I think you did. Thanks, big sister.

They drive on in silence.

INT. E.R. - ST. VINCENT HOSPITAL - DAY

Sydney stands with Alexandra who talks with a Primary Emergency NURSE.

NURSE

He's critical, has multiple rib fractures, a bilateral femur fracture. We're running a battery of tests to see what surgeries he needs --

Alexandra is trying to process this, but it's overwhelming. Instinctively, Sydney puts her hand on Alex's shoulder. Alex ignores it.

Then Sydney notices TOM, entering the E.R. He looks around, finally making eye contact with Sydney. They walk toward each other.

TOM

I called the house -- I'm so sorry about your dad. He...he taught me so much.

SYDNEY

Come on, we have to talk.

She leads him away.

EXT. WINTER HOUSE - DAY

Brendan and Garance watch as a funeral home car drives away.

BRENDAN

I can't believe it. He was doing fine. He was going to turn it around...

Garance pulls him closer.

BRENDAN

I have to stay...

GARANCE

Of course we'll stay for the funeral...

Brendan looks at her. He has something else in mind. Lily steps out of the house behind them, car keys in hand.

BRENDAN

Where are you going, mom?

INT. E.R. - ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Sydney and Tom are in the waiting area.

SYDNEY

I want you to know, I'll think about giving you your job back.

TOM

Oh. You will.

SYDNEY

D&R's aggressive all right, but I'm gonna get aggressive too. And unlike that slick as shit firm, you could move up the ranks fast, because, well, there are no ranks. Fact is, I could use you. You're the only one besides me who can use Autocad, as opposed to ink and quill. And we're not just building houses anymore. We're going after new projects.

TOM

Umm... your dad wouldn't have gone for that.

SYDNEY

Yeah. No kidding. And I know how much you admired him.

She takes off Sidney's jacket.

SYDNEY

Here. Here's a keepsake. His jacket. Doesn't actually fit me.

She tosses him the jacket.

SYDNEY

Think about it.

Across the hall, Sydney sees Lily, entering through the front door, heading to the elevator.

INT. ICU - ST. VINCENT'S - MOMENTS LATER

Lily steps off an elevator, approaches a nurses station. Lily says something to the nurse which is drowned out by various hospital noises. She's pointed toward a room which Alexandra steps out of.

Alexandra watches as Lily approaches. Stops a foot or so from Alexandra and the door.

ALEXANDRA

Lily, we don't have anything to talk about, so --

LILY

(interrupts)

I didn't know you were in the car that day.

Alexandra stops. Wasn't expecting her to say this.

LILY

He never told me that.

Lily is being truthful, something Alexandra can tell.

Lily then walks past Alexandra, into the hospital room --

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lily enters the room, stops. Wes is laid on in the hospital bed with cuts, bruises and bandages, still hooked up to all manner of life supporting machine.

He's conscious though. But barely.

LILY

I'm so sorry.

He sees Lily. And he says something, but it's unintelligible.

LILY

What?

She moves closer to him. Through pain he says it again but again it's impossible to understand.

Lily gets even closer to him, leaning down next to him.

It takes all of Wes' energy to talk but it's worth it to him to say this.

WES

(barely audible)

Go away.

Lily thinks.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME

Outside the room, Alexandra suddenly remembers something --

ALEXANDRA

Oh shit.

She pulls out her phone and walks off quickly.

CUT TO:

EXT. U.S. DISTRICT COURTHOUSE - DAY

SUPER: **CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.**

INT. COURTROOM - U.S. DISTRICT COURTHOUSE - DAY

JUDGE CORINNE M. REID (64) presides. Her bench is clean and organized. A small collection of hourglasses is the only adornment. A confident PROSECUTOR argues next to a defensive DEFENSE LAWYER.

PROSECUTOR

Your honor, now that the defendant has been convicted we strongly request that bail be revoked and he be remanded to custody.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Your honor, my client has a family, he's been here for every hearing --

While this goes on a door opens, a LAW CLERK enters, whispers to a COURT SECRETARY who approaches the judge.

CORINNE

(to defense attorney)
Hold that thought, counsellor.

The secretary hands the judge a Post-it. Corinne looks at it.

CORINNE

(whisper, to secretary)
Is she on the line?

SECRETARY

Holding.

CORINNE

(to the courtroom)
Fifteen minute recess.

On gavel we CUT TO --

INT. JUDGES' CHAMBERS - MOMENTS LATER

Corinne's clerk watches Corinne stands at her desk, phone to her ear.

A FRAMED PHOTO OF ALEXANDRA AND WES is right next to a LARGER FRAMED PHOTO of younger Corinne shaking hands with George H.W. Bush.

CORINNE (INTO PHONE)

How many surgeries? Is he going to be okay? Well, when will they know??

(beat)

Wait, why were you two out in California?

She is told the answer. Her mood darkens. Corinne is silent for a long moment.

CORINNE

All right.

She hangs up. The clerk springs into action. As she moves to take her robe:

CLERK

I'll clear your docket, get you an afternoon flight on --

CORRINE

(pulls away)

That's not necessary. We'll finish our day.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Fate is a funny thing.

She readjusts her robe, picks up a pile of papers.

A SONG starts on our soundtrack. Sweet, emotional. Maybe, I dunno, something with the same title as our show?

"Heart of Life" plays over:

INT. WINTER ARCHITECTURE FIRM - DAY

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Because if Sidney Winter had never gotten sick, his daughter never would have had herself tested. In other words, Sidney had to die for his family to have a chance...

Brendan unlocks the front door, steps in. He turns the lights on and looks around. Goes to his father's desk and sits down.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

A chance to face their fears.

INT. BATHROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Sydney splashes water on her face, then notices a framed advertisement on the wall. It says 'What Makes You You?'. It's an ad for the *G-Nome DNA kit*.

It's an ad for the *G-Nome DNA kit*.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...to forge their own identity...

INT. ICU - ST. VINCENT'S - DAY

Alexandra sits alone, in a corner. She writes lyrics in a notebook. Her phone rings. It's 'JIMMY'. She ignores it. It rings again. She picks up.

ALEXANDRA
Leave me the hell alone, I'm at the
hospital - my brother had an
accident.

She hangs up.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Lily moves toward the door as if to leave. But instead she finds a chair, carefully turns it toward Wes and sits down in it. She's not going anywhere this time.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...to right a wrong...

On Wes, unconscious. Peaceful and broken, but alive.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...to heal.

And in the background, from our TITLE SONG: ***"Pain throws your heart to the ground."***

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Sidney had to pass away for his
family to have a chance --

"Love turns the whole thing around".

NARRATOR (V.O.)
-- at being a family.

EXT. ST. VINCENT HOSPITAL - DUSK

Sydney steps outside for some fresh air.

ALEXANDRA (O.S.)
 Came out to see the show?

Alexandra is already out here.

SYDNEY
 I'm sorry?

Alexandra refers to the parking lot where a NEW DAD is trying to install an infant seat in his car. The infant seat is winning.

ALEXANDRA (O.S.)
 I could have found him years ago,
 you know.

Sydney turns to Alexandra, realizes she's talking about their dad.

ALEXANDRA
 Just hired a private detective, it
 wouldn't have taken long. It's not
 like he changed his name.

SYDNEY
 Why didn't you?

ALEXANDRA
 Thought it was cause I didn't care.
 But maybe I was scared...of what I
 might find.

SYDNEY
 Yeah...we're pretty intimidating.
 To quote a song, "You can't choose
 your family, but family is a
 choice."

Alexandra turns to her.

SYDNEY
 It's one of my favorite songs of
 yours. From when I was a kid, of
 course. I mean, it's an *old* song.

ALEXANDRA
 Okay, easy.

SYDNEY
 How'd the rest of it go? "Every day
 you choose to stay --"

ALEXANDRA
 -- or walk away."

SYDNEY

Well, dad did both. Stayed and walked away. So who knows what he was thinking? I don't.

ALEXANDRA

Actually that's the one song I didn't write.

Alexandra sees a town car pull into the lot. Her driver waves to her.

ALEXANDRA

What the hell?

The back door opens and Jimmy steps out. He's on the phone.

JIMMY

Yeah. Yeah, baby, I'll call you back later. Gotta go.

Alex walks over to him.

ALEXANDRA

What the hell are you doing here?

JIMMY

Thought you might need some moral support. Also I brought a vegan burrito.

She looks at him.

JIMMY

What?

ALEXANDRA

I'm not angry at you. Not at all.

JIMMY

Shit, well that's a first!

A couple of passers by are ogling Jimmy and Alexandra.

JIMMY

(to fans)

Hi! I'm not here for rehab!
Neither is she!

ALEXANDRA

(to fans)

Screw off.

(to Jimmy)

Here, come meet my sister.

The sun comes out. Sydney suddenly SNEEZES, interrupting her. Alexandra, in the very next instant, also SNEEZES. They look at each other and laugh.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I'm telling you, it's a real thing.
Look it up!

We PULL AWAY, watching the two women and Jimmy as they talk, smile, have a warm moment together. They look like sisters.

"No, it won't all go the way it should. But I know the heart of life is good."

CUT TO BLACK.

"I know it's good".

END OF PILOT