

Waiting For Ashley

(Revision 2)

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INT. HOMETOWN DINER - DAY

1

It's brunch time in a homey, comfortable, college town diner.

ASHLEY'S VOICEMAIL (V.O.)  
Hello? You've reached Ashley. Sorry  
I'm not here...please leave a  
message.

As a flustered TERRY (21) stammers on the phone, we observe the diner atmosphere--

a HAPPY YOUNG COUPLE laughing at a photo on a cellphone,

TERRY (V.O.)  
Ashley. Answer your damn phone,  
okay? I mean...hey, let me know  
when you get here.

an OLD MAN quietly reading a newspaper near the window,

TERRY (V.O.)  
It's just, it's going to be awkward  
if your friend arrives and you're  
not here yet.

and 2 HIGH SCHOOL GIRL BEST FRIENDS laughing as they eat their food.

TERRY (V.O.)  
I...I really need to talk to you.  
Brunch, remember? Please text me  
back.

We finally notice Terry sitting alone at a booth. Besides the stress and anxiety visible on her face, she's beautiful: even in just a hoodie and skinny jeans.

She hangs up and repetitively glances at her watch and phone. Where the hell is Ashley?

LEWIS (22) saunters into the diner clad in sunglasses, a polo shirt, pastel shorts, and a cellphone to his ear. He's been here a million times.

LEWIS  
Yeah man, that's exactly what I  
said. Alright, I gotta go. I'm  
supposed to meet my bud Ashley.

Terry peers at Lewis from the booth. She's certain this is the "other friend" Ashley was talking about. There's something strangely familiar about him...

(CONTINUED)

LEWIS

What? Nah, it's not like that. Just meeting together with her and her best friend from home or something. I'll catch ya later.

He hangs up the phone. Sunglasses are still on.

LEWIS

Ron! What's up, my buddy.

RON (40s), the jolly restaurant manager, appears from behind the counter. \*

RON

Lewis. It's been awhile, how've you been? \*

LEWIS

Awhile? Ron, it's been like a week, man. I'm on a college budget, you know? \*

Lewis is noticeably attractive. Terry checks her image in her phone's reflection and quickly fixes her hair. \*

RON

Aren't you graduating soon?

LEWIS

Oh man, don't remind me. Let me just get it over with now, hand me a job application.

Terry bites her lip, deciding whether or not to engage. \*

RON

Oh, you're a real smart-ass, Lewis.

What the hell, here goes--Terry heads to the front of the diner to introduce herself. \*

TERRY

Lewis, right? You're Ashley's friend?

LEWIS

Yeah, that's me.

TERRY

I'm Terry. Ashley's friend from home.

They very formally shake hands.

(CONTINUED)

Ron examines Lewis and Terry. He's not sure what kind, but there's some sort of tension going on here.

LEWIS

Talk to you later, Ron.

Ron throws up a peace sign as he walks to the kitchen.

Lewis takes off his sunglasses.

LEWIS

Well, uh, guess we can wait for her together?

Does this guy think he's suave or something, taking off his sunglasses like that? But his eyes are friendly, playful, and...dreamy.

\*  
\*  
\*

TERRY

Of course.

They head back to Terry's booth and sit across from each other.

Crickets.

SUZY (30) the deadpan, I-hate-my-job waitress comes over to their table.

SUZY

Welcome. I'm Suzy. Are you two ready to order yet.

TERRY AND LEWIS

(almost too quickly, unison)  
We're waiting for Ashley.

SUZY

Who?

TERRY

Ah, our friend. We're waiting for someone.

SUZY

So are you love birds gonna order or not?

TERRY

What? I just met this guy.

(CONTINUED)

SUZY

Mhmm. Sure.

Suzy leaves their booth.

LEWIS

Well, wasn't she a ray of sunshine?

Terry hasn't decided if she likes this guy or not. He may be attractive, but again, where the hell is Ashley?

TERRY

I've heard a lot about you from Ashley.

LEWIS

That escalated quickly. Really? What have you heard?

TERRY

Things.

LEWIS

Things?

TERRY

Things.

LEWIS

Yeah? Well, I haven't really heard of you.

TERRY

Oh please, like she'd tell you anything about her best friend.

LEWIS

Best friend? How come I hardly ever hear about you then?

TERRY

Why would Ashley share her private life with someone like you?

LEWIS

Woah, there, what is it, Terry? You don't even know me. We just met, remember?

Terry picks up her smartphone and feigns boredom.

(CONTINUED)

TERRY

I've seen enough of you on your Facebook profile. You're a wannabe frat boy wasting his parent's money on red solo cups and hangovers.

LEWIS

What are you, a cyber-stalker? \*

TERRY

If it's online and public it's fair game. \*

Lewis gives her a questioning look. \*

TERRY

You know it's true, don't look at me like I'm a creep. Like you've never clicked around on someone's profile before. \*

LEWIS

Touche. But I'm right here, you could get to know me instead of judging me on my Facebook status updates. We're not even Facebook friends. \*

She stops scrolling through her phone and looks Lewis in the eye. Terry has an intense gaze. \*

TERRY

I've seen your name on Ashley's profile page. She shouldn't be hanging out with people like you.

Lewis scoffs, stands up, crosses his arms.

LEWIS

Listen, "best friend." You think you know Ashley? Well then. Why is this the first time I've met you?

TERRY

What?

LEWIS

Yeah. I've known her since freshman year. Best friend, huh? You've never visited. I've never seen your face on her walls. Digital or physical.

Terry stands up too, triumphant. She crosses her arms.

(CONTINUED)

TERRY

Guess she never told you then.

LEWIS

What?

TERRY

That's what I thought. If you were really her friend, you would know that she hates putting pictures up on walls. \*

Lewis gives Terry a curious look and slowly sits down. His eyes gleam.

LEWIS

Okay...explain. \*

Terry follows suit and sits down also.

TERRY

She thinks it's creepy having people stare at her in her own house.

LEWIS

Huh.

TERRY

She also sucks at decorating. In third grade, she tried to throw me this surprise birthday party...she thought it'd be funny to mix Batman and CareBear decorations.

LEWIS

That's actually tastefully funny. That would make a great party theme.

TERRY

Yeah, well not to an 8 year old. It scarred me for life. Bats and rainbow-bears...no thanks.

LEWIS

...I still win.

TERRY

What?

(CONTINUED)

LEWIS

Like I said, it's been 4 years and you haven't visited her once. Bad decorator? Her room is full of photos everywhere with all of her friends. And I've never seen your face in any of them.

\*

For a second, Terry seems upset by this. She looks away.

TERRY

Well, whatever. Our friendship is more than pictures.

\*

\*

Terry pulls out her cellphone again and pretends to check her non-existent text messages.

\*

\*

Lewis examines Terry closely for the first time.

She's kind of beautiful. The sunlight from outside hits her face in all the right angles.

Something is clearly on her mind. And Lewis wants to figure out what it is.

Terry glances up at Lewis' gaze, uncomfortable with his stare. Lewis quickly looks away and coughs. Terry puts her hair behind her ear and blushes.

\*

LEWIS

Well yeah, of course. Life is more than pictures.

Suzy comes up to their booth. Jeez, these people are annoying.

SUZY

...and life is food. As in, are you two going to order or not?

Terry and Lewis look at each other.

TERRY

Uh, yeah. I guess we'll just order. What's the cheapest thing on the menu?

SUZY

A cup of coffee?

TERRY

Yeah, I'll have that.

(CONTINUED)



LEWIS

Wait a second, didn't you drive like 5 hours to get here? Aren't you hungry?

TERRY

Well, Ashley was supposed to treat me, but, uh, if she's not coming 'till later...I'll just order food when she actually gets here.

LEWIS

Suit yourself, I guess. Can I have the breakfast combo?

SUZY

It's past breakfast time.

LEWIS

Really Suzy? Why you gotta play me like this?

Terry tries to hide a smile at his cheesiness. This guy is pretty damn charming.

Suzy, however, is not having it. She stares at Lewis.

LEWIS

Fine, fine. I'll get the burger meal then.

SUZY

Whatever you say.

Suzy sighs and heads back to the kitchen area.

SUZY

Kids.

\*  
\*

Another silence between Terry and Lewis.

Terry attempts to make light of the situation. Honestly, she just really needs someone to talk to her. Lewis will have to do for now.

\*

TERRY

Still a ray of sunshine, right?

LEWIS

Yeah. She's new, but she's been like that since I've known her.

\*  
\*

(CONTINUED)

TERRY

You come here often?

LEWIS

All the time. I've known Ron since freshman year. Funny though, Ashley and I used to come here all the time. I thought she wanted to catch up.

TERRY

...you haven't seen her in awhile? \*

LEWIS

We used to hang out all the time! She was my buddy. She told me to come get brunch with her and some friend of hers, so I did.

TERRY

Wait, you saw her last night? \*

LEWIS

Yeah, I was having a kickback at my house. I invite her all the time but this is the first time she's showed up in a long time. \*

TERRY

I didn't know she was the frat house party type...

LEWIS

I'm not in a frat! I just like to have a good time, okay?

TERRY

If you call blacking out a good time, then sure.

LEWIS

Calm down with the sass, will ya? Come on, it's not freshman year. Don't tell me you've never had a little fun.

TERRY

I did. Not for me. It's stupid.

LEWIS

Hey hey, no need to pass judgement on everyone else. Yeesh, what a killjoy. Okay then, Terry. What do you do for fun?

(CONTINUED)

TERRY

Fun?

Terry laughs manically.

TERRY

I don't have time for "fun."

LEWIS

Oh this sounds good. I want to hear this story. \*

TERRY

Well first of all, I'm going to medical school. I've got things to do.

LEWIS

(impressed)

Congrats! Well, shit. Going places, huh.

TERRY

Thanks. It's been a long four years.

LEWIS

Yeah, I can only imagine. But you already got in, right? What's there to worry about? You've got the whole summer to chillax.

TERRY

You don't get it, do you?

LEWIS

Get what?

TERRY

It's not that simple. There's so many things I have to do to prepare myself for how stressful it's going to be. I haven't even graduated yet and I'm already stressed about the future.

LEWIS

Well, you're chasing after your passion, right? If you love what you do, then what's the problem?

Terry pauses for a minute. Contemplates this.

(CONTINUED)

TERRY

Well...I guess you're right.

Suzy comes back with the burger meal and coffee and places it on their table. The burger is kind of pathetic.

Terry's stomach GROWLS loudly.

LEWIS

You're seriously not going to order anything?

TERRY

College student on a budget, alright? Just let it be.

She sips her coffee and burns her lip.

TERRY

OW.

Her stomach GROWLS again.

LEWIS

I call bull. Hey Suzy, can we have another burger meal?

SUZY

Yeah. Is your friend still coming? 'Cause I'm not coming back here a third time.

Terry and Lewis glance at each other. They share a moment.

LEWIS

Nah, just another burger meal.

SUZY

Ya'll better not be here all day.

Suzy leaves.

TERRY

You're paying for my burger, by the way. Technically didn't order that.

LEWIS

I don't mind. Jeez, no need to starve yourself. The whole "starving college student" is a joke. Well, 50% of the time.

(CONTINUED)

TERRY

Tell me about it.

LEWIS

(attempting)

If I'm paying for your food...does  
that make this a date?

TERRY

What? Just because one person pays  
for the other doesn't make it a  
date.

Their conversation continues but slowly fades so that all we  
hear is the diner buzz around them. \*

CUSTOMERS enter/exit the diner, SERVERS wait tables, and \*

DIFFERENT PLATES OF FOOD \*

are placed on various different tables. A burger here. a  
burger there. Fries. Milkshakes. BLT's. Sub sandwiches.  
Steak. Finally, \*

TERRY'S BURGER \*

is placed on her table next to Lewis' burger. \*

TERRY

God, these burgers look...deflated. \*

LEWIS

I kind of like it. Adds character. \*

3/4 of their burgers left. \*

TERRY

The burgers, or the diner? \*

1/2 of their burgers. \*

LEWIS

Why not both? The burgers are tired  
souls, waiting to be devoured by  
hungry college kids. This  
diner...well, it does have a B  
rating. B for burgers? \*

1/4 of their burgers. \*

Lewis plays with the burger bun. Terry laughs. \*

\*  
\*  
\*

Lewis raises his hand to order more food. He points at a milkshake on another table and indicates that he wants 2 of them. \*

INT. HOMETOWN DINER - EVENING 2

Through the outside glass window of the diner, we realize that Lewis and Terry are now the only ones left. \*

Their table: empty plates, empty milkshake glasses, utensils, napkins. \*

Restaurant staff, including Suzy, clean up tables, the floor, and put away dishes. Sounds of spraying water and pots and pans come from the kitchen.

Lewis draws intricate ketchup art on his empty plate. Terry's eyes are closed. \*

TERRY  
Are you done yet? \*

LEWIS  
Almost, almost. Just adding the finishing touches. \*

TERRY  
This better be good. \*

LEWIS  
Alright...voila! Check out this masterpiece. \*

The ketchup art is of some sort of hybrid CareBear with bat wings. Lewis is definitely not an art major. \*

Terry cracks up. \*

TERRY  
I can't. You just went there. \*

LEWIS  
Yeah, I did! Come on, let's take a selfie with this masterpiece. Show Ashley how shitty her decorating is. \*

Lewis moves over to sit on the same side of the booth. The two are more comfortable with each other. He snaps the picture; they laugh together. \*

Lewis slowly attempts to put his arm around Terry's shoulder...

(CONTINUED)

TERRY

What's your major, anyway? I never asked you.

LEWIS

Anthropology. Study of the humans.

TERRY

Ha, ha. That's gonna get you far in life, huh?

Lewis retracts his arm. His face is suddenly serious.

LEWIS

What do you mean?

TERRY

Well, you know. Humanities majors. Spells unemployment, doesn't it? Come on.

She hits a sore spot for Lewis. No one has the right to judge him like that.

\*  
\*

LEWIS

Just because I'm not all stressed out about the future and have a stick up my ass doesn't mean I don't have a future, alright?

TERRY

I never said you don't have a future. Unemployment is still a future. Just not a favorable one.

LEWIS

Why the hell did you even come up here?

TERRY

What? I--to see my best friend, Ashley.

LEWIS

Bullshit, Terry. She's not your best friend. You hardly know her. I hardly know her anymore, you know that? We're acquaintances, at best. No. You're just desperate.

Terry slides out of the booth and stands up.

(CONTINUED)

This whole diner day thing was the coolest thing that's happened to her in awhile, but he hit the nail on the head and it hurts.

TERRY

You found me out, you happy? Yes, I'm friendless. I'm boring. I have a stick up my ass. I care a lot about what I do and I decided to care. And you're right, I am desperate, alright? I'm broke. I have no money. My credit cards are declined and my loans are coming up soon. At least I'm not some loser senior throwing parties every fucking weekend like college is forever. Grow up.

Terry stomps off to the bathroom and slams the door.

INT. DINER BATHROOM - EVENING

3

The bathroom is small; it's a one-person bathroom. It's not gross but it's not pristine, either. Your typical diner bathroom.

Terry frowns in the mirror.

Her eyes turn from anger to sadness, she buries her face in her hands and lets out a sob.

INTERCUT between Lewis and Terry:

INT. HOMETOWN DINER - EVENING

4

Suzy walks up to Lewis.

INT. DINER BATHROOM - EVENING

5

Terry pulls out her phone and dials Ashley's number again. Tears spill on her screen.

ASHLEY'S VOICEMAIL (O.S.)

Hello? You've reached Ashley. Sorry I'm not here...please leave a message.

Terry lets out an internal scream, takes a deep breath, and leaves a message at the beep.



INT. HOMETOWN DINER BOOTH- EVENING 6 \*

SUZY \*

Jeez, what the hell is her problem? \*

LEWIS \*

Beats me. Jeez. Grad school I \*

guess...at least she's going \*

somewhere. I'm a loser, Suzy. She's \*

right...I don't know what the hell \*

I'm doing. \*

INT. DINER BATHROOM - EVENING 7 \*

TERRY \*

Hey! You didn't show up...I just \*

really needed someone to talk to, \*

and I thought, since you said to \*

come up yesterday...that I could \*

talk to you. \*

INT. HOMETOWN DINER BOOTH - EVENING 8 \*

SUZY \*

Fuck grad school. It sucked ass. \*

LEWIS \*

You went to grad school...? \*

SUZY \*

Worst decision of my life. \*

Honestly, kid, you realize, just do \*

whatever the fuck you want with \*

your life. That's all you can do, \*

anyway. I was just trying to stall. \*

You wanna know the secret to all \*

this crap? \*

INT. DINER BATHROOM - EVENING 9 \*

TERRY \*

I know it's been awhile. Uh, I...I \*

met your friend Lewis. He's..anyway \*

I'll, uh. Talk to you later. \*

She puts down the toilet seat and sits with her head in her \*

hands, breathing deeply. She looks up. \*

Beat. \*

\*

INT. HOMETOWN DINER BOOTH - EVENING

10 \*

LEWIS

What?

SUZY

Just be a Nike shoe.

LEWIS

Uh, thanks, but no thanks.

SUZY

Just do it. Just fucking do it. I thought science was my thing. Turns out, a Master's degree later and I realize all I was doing was stalling, waiting for some great revelation. It doesn't happen. So to that I say: fuck it, and just do it now.

LEWIS

Is that why you're waiting tables?

SUZY

Hey, big shot. This is temporary. I've got plans.

LEWIS

You know, you're not so bad.

SUZY

Yeah, well. Whatever. Don't forget to pay the bill. If I'm not so bad, I'm sure that should reflect on your tip. I've been waiting on you guys all night.

LEWIS

Ah, shit. Right.

Suzy pauses before she walks away. Maybe she can help this kid.

\*  
\*

SUZY

And just throwing this out there but maybe you should go after that girl, too.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

LEWIS

What?

\*  
\*

(CONTINUED)

SUZY

You know what I mean. If you're gonna sit in a dinky diner for an entire day, you guys are either insane or you have something real.

Before Lewis can say anything, Suzy is already on her way back to the kitchen.

Lewis dishes money out of his wallet.

Terry exits the bathroom, sits across from Lewis. They look each other in the eye.

TERRY

Ashley didn't answer.

A silence.

LEWIS

Of course she wouldn't. Honestly, she's always been a flake.

TERRY

I'm...I'm sorry about earlier. This past year has been...rough.

LEWIS

Don't worry about it. We all have steam. And you were right, partly...there are some things I've been avoiding. Like the fact that I'm graduating and I have no idea what the hell I'm doing.

TERRY

Honestly, neither do I. We're all in the same place.

LEWIS

I'm tired of waiting.

A beat.

TERRY

Me too.

LEWIS

Terry...do you want to get out of here? Let's go do something. Anything.

(CONTINUED)

