

LOOK UP

written by

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INT. APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

A summer Saturday. Inside the living room of a cozy two-bedroom in Bed-Stuy. The poor(er) man's Williamsburg.

Blankets and pillows, reminiscent of Grandma's handiwork, are strewn across the couches. Coffee mugs form rings on the wooden side tables. Vinyl records are arranged in rows on the walls. Small succulents line the window sills.

Through an open window, we can hear the carefree ramblings of the youthful neighborhood residents. This world is so vibrant, but everything appears in

BLACK & WHITE.

Only the smart phone SCREENS emit a glow of mesmerizing COLOR luring most human attention into a parallel world.

VANESSA HUBER (mid-20s), who always has a DSLR slung around her neck, sifts through photographs scattered across the coffee table. Her phone BUZZES loudly. She squeals.

VANESSA

Did you see who just liked my
insta?

CLAIRE GLASS (mid-20s), blind, sits across from Vanessa reading the braille version of "King Lear".

CLAIRE

Um... no.

VANESSA

Bobby Jones. Can you believe it?

CLAIRE

From high school?

VANESSA

I didn't think he knew who I was.
We were such nobodies back then.

CLAIRE

Speak for yourself.

VANESSA

I mean *obviously* it doesn't matter,
but I won't say no to attention
from the popular guys.

CLAIRE

Why would you? I'll bet Bobby's
twice as popular these days.

BUZZ.

VANESSA

Ooooo Jimmy Anderson with a like.
This is some of my finest work.

CLAIRE

I'm rolling my eyes at you.

On the television, a buttoned-up local weatherman makes his prediction.

WEATHERMAN

It's going to remain sunny over the next few days here in New York, with a high of around 87 tomorrow. Let's move on to our "Solar Flare Watch". This flare is the talk of the town, and researchers predict that it will hit Manhattan at some point early tomorrow morning. The researchers are unsure of the flare's potential for damage, so, for your safety, we strongly advise that everyone remain indoors. We will continue to update you every half hour. Back to you, Christine.

CLAIRE

Man, what a weird weekend. Kind of exciting though, right?

Vanessa's attention remains on her phone.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

What's it like out there? Are people panicking? What does the sky look like?

VANESSA

Sunny. You heard the guy.

CLAIRE

I know, but, what does the sun look like?

VANESSA

Round.

CLAIRE

Can you see the flare hurtling toward the Earth?

VANESSA

Matt, Alex, and Dave are meeting up for drinks in a bit.

CLAIRE

Not those self-obsessed drones.

VANESSA

You don't like them?

CLAIRE

Let's stay in. You heard the news, it's not safe to go outside.

VANESSA

They're just trying to hold an audience.

CLAIRE

We can watch a movie and order takeout.

VANESSA

Should I wear my blue dress? I posted a picture in it like two and a half months ago on Facebook. Do you think anyone will notice?

CLAIRE

Would you *stop* looking at your phone for one second?

VANESSA

Listen, tomorrow we can hang out, and I'll tell you all about the damage the flare does to the skyline.

CLAIRE

Can you promise me that you'll take a second to look up from your phone tonight? I want you to tell me what it's like out there.

VANESSA

You sure you don't want to come?

Claire holds up her book.

CLAIRE

King Lear is the only shallow, insecure man I need tonight.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP BAR - EVENING

Vanessa, MATT (mid-20s), ALEXANDRA (mid-20s), and DAVE (mid-20s). Drinks in hand. Smartly dressed and huddled around a tall bar table.

VANESSA

Do you see that guy over there?

Vanessa gestures to another 20-something. Alone and leaning against a wall. Vigorously typing on his smart phone. She snaps a picture.

ALEXANDRA

Oh my God, please don't be creepy.

VANESSA

He's a perfect addition to my collection.

DAVE

What is this for again?

VANESSA

We've been over this. The Whitney asked me to collect photos of people using social media for my very own exhibit. It's a comment on society's newfound disconnect from the real world, their disillusionment, their growing ego-

MATT

Speaking of ego, look at this shit. Twitter verified Jason Kessler.

ALEXANDRA

How can Jack Dorsey allow supremacist pigs to enjoy the benefits of verification?

DAVE

Isn't it just for authentication?

MATT

Honestly, I don't know why I'm not verified.

VANESSA

You're not famous.

ALEXANDRA

Wait, did I tell you guys about that DM I got from Adam last night?

MATT

How do we feel about boys DM-ing us?

VANESSA

Not great.

DAVE

What if they don't have your number?

VANESSA

It's not that hard to find. They can put in a little effort.

MATT

Real quick let's take a Snapchat. I want Joe to know we're here.

VANESSA

Are we staging a rooftop rendezvous?

MATT

Nothing like the threat of solar destruction to put me in the mood.

ALEXANDRA

Ew.

Matt awkwardly balances his smartphone between his pinky and thumb and extends his arm.

MATT

Everyone, get in.

CAMERA FLASH FADES TO:

INT. SUBWAY CAR - EARLY MORNING

Vanessa tries to stay awake. She adjusts her camera lens and observes the assortment of faces.

Groups of 20-somethings scattered around the car. Taking selfies and giggling about the night.

A homeless man lying across three seats. His only possessions are a plastic bag and a smart phone.

A construction worker checking his morning email. Ready to start the day in spite of the impending forecast.

Vanessa nervously checks her phone. 6:32 AM.

VANESSA
 (via text message)
 hey claire we stayed out a little
 later than i thought we would, i
 should be home around-

SUDDENLY

The subway car abruptly HAULTS.

Passengers are THROWN from their seats.

First the lights go dark. Then the phone SCREENS.

PITCH **BLACK**.

A panicked murmur starts to rise.

Through Vanessa's window, we see generator lights flick on at the upcoming station. The platform is dimly lit, but the passengers are lured like gnats to a light bulb.

All the passengers rush from one side of the car to the other, SQUISHING Vanessa against the window.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 (muffled)
 Let's try Plan B.

Vanessa manages to free herself from the pile of people and leads the passengers through the door at the end of the car.

The passengers walk through two cars before arriving in a car parallel with the lit platform. The group has grown in size. 100 people are now packed into the narrow car.

The passengers stand and watch as a sweaty MALE PASSENGER (30s) is trying and failing to pry the doors open with his hands. A FEMALE PASSENGER (20s) is arguing with him.

FEMALE PASSENGER
 Can I give you a hand?

MALE PASSENGER
 (through gritted teeth)
 No...I...can...do...this.

FEMALE PASSENGER
 What are you trying to prove?

MALE PASSENGER
 I'm...a...gentleman.

FEMALE PASSENGER

Listen, we can solve this with some physics. A simple lever-

The male drops his arms.

MALE PASSENGER

Before physics, men survived on brute strength.

FEMALE PASSENGER

And the wisdom of women.

Vanessa moves toward the door.

VANESSA

Has anyone tried calling for the engineer?

MALE PASSENGER

He hasn't come through here. And all the phones are dead. No service.

VANESSA

None at all?

The female moves toward the door with a piece of scrap metal.

FEMALE PASSENGER

You just position the fulcrum so that the force you exert is multiplied-

MALE PASSENGER

Where did you get that?

FEMALE PASSENGER

I pried it out from under a seat.

The female wedges the metal between the doors and PULLS hard. The doors slowly begin to open. Other passengers move in to help the doors along.

The passengers RUSH out the doors.

FEMALE PASSENGER (CONT'D)

What did I tell you?

MALE PASSENGER

I could have done that.

Vanessa steps out of the car and moves toward the stairs. As she climbs the stairs, she passes a wall mosaic:

42ND ST - TIMES SQUARE

CUT TO:

EXT. 7TH AVENUE AND 42ND STREET

Vanessa SPRINTS up the stairs and onto the sidewalk.

She looks up. The world is now in

COLOR,

but the electricity is out.

New Amsterdam Theatre. Madame Tussauds. H&M. All DARK.

Vanessa runs a couple blocks north and sees the Good Morning America TICKER TAPE. It's DARK.

Everything has stopped in its tracks. Time seems to stand still. The natural silence is eerie.

Everywhere, people are CREEPING out of buildings and parked cars. PHONES in hand. CONFUSED faces. PANICKED eyes.

People hold their phones above their heads trying to find service.

They gather together to commiserate. What happened? How do we fix it?

Vanessa adjusts her lens. Brings the viewfinder to her eye. A perfect addition to her collection.

VANESSA'S P.O.V. - CONTINUOUS

Slowly, PANIC turns to CONVERSATION. ENGAGEMENT. CONNECTION.

Vanessa snaps pictures of

NEIGHBORS chatting on the sidewalk,

A COUPLE sitting on the hood of a car, LAUGHING,

TEENAGERS playing with a YOUNG WOMAN'S DOG.

In the corner of the viewfinder, Vanessa spots a PANICKED group of women. Clucking like hens.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

PANICKED WOMAN #1
What should we do?

PANICKED WOMAN #2
What *can* we do? The phones don't work.

PANICKED WOMAN #3
The timing couldn't be worse.

VANESSA
Having a tough time without your smart phones?

PANICKED WOMAN #2
I can't imagine a more inconvenient scenario.

VANESSA
Everyone else seems to be getting along just fine.

PANICKED WOMAN #1
Well, everyone *else* isn't dealing with a lost child.

PANICKED WOMAN #2
Have you ever dealt with a lost child?

VANESSA
A *what*-?

PANICKED WOMAN #3
She comes up to us looking for her mother-

PANICKED WOMAN #2
-and she tells us she only knows her mother's phone number-

PANICKED WOMAN #1
-No other information. Just a phone number.

VANESSA
Is she okay-?

PANICKED WOMAN #2
She can't remember what her mother looks like-

VANESSA
You look very pretty in your pink
dress.

LUCY
Mommy and I were going to church.

VANESSA
Do you know what the church is
called?

LUCY
Um...Paul...um...a-pop-sul.

Lucy struggles to say the word "apostle." Vanessa chuckles.

VANESSA
St. Paul's! I don't remember where
that is, but I don't think it's
close.

Vanessa consults the crowd for help.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Does anybody know how to get to St.
Paul's?

MAN (O.S.)
I can get you ladies where you need
to go.

The voice STARTLES Vanessa. She turns around. Face to face
with the NAKED COWBOY.

VANESSA
Don't you get cold this early in
the morning?

NAKED COWBOY
Gotta give the people what they
want.

LUCY
Mommy says people like you go to
hell.

NAKED COWBOY
Well, I reckon yer mama's meaner 'n
a wet panther.

Vanessa pulls Lucy back.

VANESSA

Alrighty, if you know where St. Paul's is, we would appreciate your help and we'll just be on our way-

NAKED COWBOY

-I've got just the thing.

The Naked Cowboy pulls a crudely folded map of Manhattan out of the side of his Speedo. Vanessa winces.

VANESSA

What else do you have in there?

The Naked Cowboy WINKS. He walks away strumming his guitar.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Why did I ask?

Vanessa slowly opens the three-fold map.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

A Google map!

(beat)

I mean... a "map".

Vanessa SQUINTS her eyes. STUDIES the map. MUMBLES to herself. She's really having a tough time.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Jeez, I haven't read one of these in forever. Where's the talking woman when you need her?

(to the crowd)

Does anyone know how to read one of these?

(beat.)

I think this is it. 60th and Columbus. That's a bit of a walk. My Uber app isn't working. Neither is my Lyft. The subway is a no-go.

Lucy points to a YELLOW TAXI CAB a block away.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

A taxi! How retro.

Vanessa and Lucy run toward the taxi and hop into the back seat. The TAXI DRIVER (30s), eating a bagel, looks back at them with a mix of SURPRISE and CHAGRIN.

TAXI DRIVER

I'm eating breakfast.

VANESSA
St. Paul the Apostle on 60th and
Columbus, please.

TAXI DRIVER
My phone's not working.

VANESSA
I'll take another excuse for 200.

TAXI DRIVER
I'm new here. I need the GPS to
navigate the one-way streets.

VANESSA
Use this.

Vanessa hands him the map.

TAXI DRIVER
A Google map?

VANESSA
Just a map. I'll help you navigate.

The driver looks down at the map and back at the two girls.
He **THROWS** his bagel down on the passenger seat and **GRUMBLES**
to himself.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
I promise that bagel will still be
there when we're done.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CHURCH OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE - LATER

The taxi pulls up in front of the church. The people here are
behaving the same as in Times Square. **TALKING. LAUGHING.**
INTERACTING.

As she finishes a conversation with the driver, Vanessa leads
Lucy out of the back seat.

VANESSA
All I'm saying is, it would do us
some good to put our phones down
once in a while.

TAXI DRIVER
When your paper map can talk to me,
I'll consider taking a break. Until
then, I need my phone for my job.

VANESSA

I guess. Enjoy your bagel.

The taxi pulls away. Vanessa opens and studies the map.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

We should probably take a walk around the block. She could be anywhere around here. Or anywhere at all. If we can't find her here, we'll go to a police sta-

LUCY

Mommy!

Lucy runs to her MOTHER (30s) and jumps into her arms. The two embrace so tightly they appear as one.

LUCY'S MOTHER

My sunshine, you had me so worried. Don't you ever wander off again.

Lucy's two BROTHERS (8 & 10) are irritated by the spectacle.

BROTHER #1

Lucy gets away with everything.

BROTHER #2

If I ran off, all Hell would break loose.

LUCY'S MOTHER

Watch your language. We are outside a church.

Lucy and her mother refuse to let go of each other.

Just as Vanessa raises her camera to take a picture of the embrace, we hear a

BUZZ.

Vanessa jumps. Could it be...?

CUT TO:

VANESSA'S P.O.V. - CONTINUOUS

People SMILING and LAUGHING all around her.

Time slows down.

Distractedly, the people reach into their pockets. Wrap their fingers around their phones. Slide their phones out of their pockets.

As they turn their phone screens toward their faces,
the **COLOR** is DRAINED from the world
and into the phone SCREENS.

Smiles FADE.

Laughter DISAPPEARS.

Conversation CEASES.

NO SOUND.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CHURCH OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE - CONTINUOUS

Vanessa reaches into her own pocket. Her phone screen lights her face.

Off screen, we hear Lucy's laughter.

CUT TO:

VANESSA'S P.O.V. - CONTINUOUS

The shallow focus of Vanessa's phone switches to a deep focus on Lucy and her mother as they continue to embrace.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CHURCH OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE - CONTINUOUS

Time and sound return to normal as Vanessa makes a decision.

She slides her phone back into her pocket.

She points her camera at Lucy and her mother.

She brings her eye to the viewfinder.

CUT TO:

VANESSA'S P.O.V. - CONTINUOUS

Lucy and her mother are in full **COLOR**.

Vanessa snaps a picture.

CAMERA FLASH FADES TO BLACK.