

GRADUATION NIGHT

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ROCK MUSIC plays from a DARK SCREEN.

FADE IN

INT. ELEVATOR DOOR - NIGHT

An elevator door slides open to reveal a YOUNG WOMAN and YOUNG MAN kissing with passion. PRINCESS has a taut, athletic body. RIMER is a punk.

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Princess breaks the kiss. She pulls Rimer into an expensively furnished room, lit with CANDLES. An EXPANSIVE WINDOW shows a spectacular view of Los Angeles at night. The room includes a FULLY-STOCKED BAR and a BABY GRAND PIANO.

Rimer looks around, awestruck.

PRINCESS

Tonight all your dreams come true.

Princess sits and lays out a line of WHITE POWDER. She hands Rimer a ROLLED UP BILL and he inhales the powder.

PRINCESS (CONT'D)

Let's play a game.

She opens an ORNATE WOODEN BOX. Inside lie three SILVER CANISTERS nestled in red velvet.

PRINCESS (CONT'D)

Get two questions right, and I do whatever you say. Get two wrong...

RIMER

I feel so good.

Princess pulls him close to her face.

PRINCESS

What flower blossoms at night and dies in the day?

RIMER

Roses.

PRINCESS

No, stupid.

Princess opens the first canister and unrolls a SCROLL. It says "DREAMS."

PRINCESS

Dreams. Dreams blossom at night and die in the day.  
It's a riddle, see?

RIMER

Yeah.

PRINCESS

What river runs cold until someone makes it run hot?

Rimer sits up and tries to make his drug-sodden brain function.

RIMER

What river runs cold...

Princess puts the second canister in her mouth and moves it in and out, between her lips.

RIMER (CONT'T)

A faucet. A faucet runs cold until someone turns on  
the hot water.

PRINCESS

Wrong again.

Princess crawls toward him until they are eye to eye, breath to breath.

PRINCESS (CONT'D)

You have to do whatever I say.

INT. PENTHOUSE BACK ROOM

In the center of the room stands a series of RISING PLATFORMS, like an altar on a pagan temple. Princess leads Rimer to up the steps, undressing him.

She lies his naked body down, produces LEATHER STRAPS from under the bed and lashes him to it. She straddles him as he lies helpless, drug-induced giggles bubbling from his lips.

Princess produces ELECTRIC CLIPPERS. Rimer tosses his head in protest.

RIMER

No. No!

PRINCESS

You have to do whatever I want.

She violently grabs his hair. The BUZZ SOUND of the clippers clicks on.

Princess kisses her way down Rimer's body. His head is shaved, and she is naked. She climbs on top of him and begins to move up and down.

RIMER

Yes. Oh, yes. Oh!

PRINCESS

Now. Now. Now. Kin-Chu!

KIN-CHU, a muscular Asian giant, looms from the shadows. He raises a razor-sharp CEREMONIAL AXE and slashes off Rimer's head.

Kin-Chu picks up Rimer's head. The eyes have life in them and the mouth moves, trying to speak. Princess watches, eyes shining, as the mouth goes slack and the eyes die.

Princess sits astride Rimer's headless corpse, her naked body spattered with blood. She giggles with manic glee.

INT. PENTHOUSE BACK ROOM – LATER

Princess sits in a chair dressed in a robe, her hair damp. KIN-CHU zips up a BODY BAG with a body inside.

PRINCESS

Have Nikos drop this one off Catalina. No, Vancouver.

She rises and walks away. Kin-chu shoulders the body and carries it out of the room.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. PREP SCHOOL – THE CHAUVET ACADEMY – DAY

An audience of PARENTS and TEACHERS sits in front of a platform on a manicured lawn. A CHAMBER ORCHESTRA plays MUSIC: "Pomp and Circumstance."

A dozen PREP SCHOOL SENIORS dressed in robes march up to the stage and sit.

OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE

The MUSIC ends. The DEAN steps up to the podium.

DEAN

Welcome to the sixty-fifth commencement of The Chauvet Academy.

PAN DOWN the line of graduating seniors as the Dean speaks. They sit properly, except for the last in the line: CALVIN CHARLES. He slumps in his chair.

DEAN (CONT'D)

We represent a tradition of excellence in education. Yet in all our years I don't think this school has ever had a finer class of graduating seniors.

SARAH JANE, a prim blonde, sits beside Calvin. She gives him a reproofing look and Calvin reluctantly sits up straight, like the others.

INT. BRACKET HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM – DAY

A similar ceremony takes place on a basketball court. A HIGH-SCHOOL BAND plays MUSIC, a blaring version of "Pomp and Circumstance." DISORDERLY STUDENTS sit on folding chairs. They wear jeans and sneakers under the graduation robes.

LUCY ANDERSON sits waiting on a STAGE. The HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL steps up to a MICROPHONE. The SOUND OF FEEDBACK whines as he speaks:

PRINCIPAL

It has been a long and challenging year, filled with the agony of failure and the thrill of success.

VIC and PETER sit among the students. Peter punches text into an I-PHONE.

Elsewhere in the crowd is PINKY, a girl with multiple piercings and pink hair. The SOUND of her PHONE VIBRATING compels her to answer and she reads the text. Pinky breaks into a smile and looks down the line of students for Peter.

Peter looks back, grinning.

PRINCIPAL (VO)

Today we honor the students who have sailed through the rough seas and have somehow come miraculously to shore.

EXT. PREP SCHOOL

At the podium, THE DEAN finishes his opening remarks.

DEAN

Now we will hear a few words from this year's valedictorian, Calvin Charles.

Calvin rises to the SOUND OF LIGHT APPLAUSE. He takes the podium.

CALVIN

Here we are, the sons and daughters of privilege.  
I ask myself, as I often do, "Why me?" What does  
it mean to be born into money?

Calvin pauses at the SOUND OF THE DEAN CLEARING HIS THROAT. He glances over to The Dean, who gives him a disapproving look. Behind The Dean, Sarah Jane stares wide-eyed as if saying, "Don't you dare."

CALVIN (CONT'D)

It means we should always be mindful of those  
less fortunate than ourselves.

BRACKET HIGH GYMNASIUM

LUCY stands before the microphone.

LUCY

Finally, to my friends, you have made high school  
an experience worth remembering. I love you all.

The crowd bursts with the SOUND OF APPLAUSE, HOOTS AND CHEERS. Peter whistles through his fingers. Vic hoots and pumps his fist in the air.

Lucy steps back and the Principal takes the microphone.

PRINCIPAL

Thank you, Lucy. All right, quiet down. Quiet down.  
I'd like to remind those of you headed for college to  
study hard. To the rest of you, good luck. Enjoy the  
reception. Don't throw your hats.

He steps away from the microphone and the system whines with the SOUND OF FEEDBACK. The High School band plays MUSIC: A FIGHT SONG.

Vic turns to Peter. A quick glance passes between them,

VIC

One...

PETER & VIC

...two, three!

They toss their MORTARBOARDS in the air. The students cheer and everyone throws their hats.

BRACKET HIGH SCHOOL GYM – RECEPTION AREA

STUDENTS talk beneath a BASKETBALL HOOP decorated with STREAMERS.

PINKY discreetly pours VODKA into the punch bowl. Lucy walks up beside her.

PINKY

Peter's uncle gave him the keys to the loft. Weekend in the city. You have to come.

LUCY

My mother would kill me.

PINKY

We'll wait 'til ten, no later.

Pinky gives Lucy a glass of the punch. Peter and Vic arrive. Peter beams at Pinky and she smiles back. Vic throws an arm around Lucy.

VIC

Great job, kid.

He gives her a knuckle rub, knocking off her mortarboard.

LUCY

Hey! You stupid jerk. Grow up for once.

She recovers her mortarboard and hurries off.

PINKY

(to Vic)

You're such a shit.

Vic grins defiantly.

EXT. LUCY'S HOUSE DAY

The houses on this street are crowded too close together, and most of them need repair. LUCY pulls into a driveway in a battered old DODGE. LUCY'S MOTHER, a weary woman of 45, loads HOT BOXES into an SUV. She wears a chef's white jacket.

Lucy comes out of the Dodge still in her graduation robes. Mother stops working.

MOTHER

Oh, look at you. I'm so proud, baby.

LUCY

I wish you could have come.

MOTHER

Let me get a picture.

Mother finds a DISPOSABLE CAMERA. Lucy poses and mother snaps.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Hurry now. Change or we'll be late.

LUCY

Mom, its graduation. My friends...

MOTHER

Those delinquents. Roberto needs you tonight and I told him you could work tomorrow, too.

LUCY

Mom!

MOTHER

End of discussion. Hurry and change.

EXT. PREP SCHOOL PARKING LOT

Calvin walks toward an EXPENSIVE CAR. A SPORTY CONVERTIBLE speeds up with TWO PREPPY BOYS and TWO PREPPY GIRLS. They wear graduation robes and have OPEN BOTTLES OF CHAMPAGNE. The driver, MICHAEL, waves a bottle at Calvin.

MICHAEL

Come on, Cal. Celebrate!

CALVIN

No, thanks. I'm driving.

MICHAEL

So am I.

Michael drinks champagne straight from the bottle. It foams and spills all over him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Party at your house. One hour.

He hits the accelerator. The Sporty Convertible jumps a curb and smashes into some bushes. The Preppy Kids squeal with laughter. The Driver backs up, turns and speeds off, chewing up the lawn as he goes.

EXT. THE CHARLES ESTATE – EVENING

The massive mansion has DOZENS OF COSTLY AUTOMOBILES parked in the driveway. Calvin pulls in. A VALET runs up to his car. Calvin surrenders his keys. Since the cars block his way to the front door, he goes around back.

CHARLES ESTATE – KITCHEN ENTRANCE

A large CATERING TRUCK stands in the service driveway. Several OLDER CARS stand parked around it, including LUCY'S DODGE and LUCY'S MOTHER'S SUV. A handful of CATERING WORKERS unloads HOT BOXES and other equipment.

Lucy emerges from the truck dressed in a CATERING UNIFORM. She carries a stack of CHAFING DISHES, which she drops.

Calvin comes up the driveway and notices Lucy struggling. He kneels down to help her gather the chafing dishes.

LUCY

Thanks. I can manage.

CALVIN

I don't mind.

Their eyes meet. He smiles at her, and she smiles back at him.

INT. THE CHARLES ESTATE – KITCHEN

Several COOKS and WAITERS IN UNIFORM bustle about. Lucy's mother, wearing a CHEF'S HAT, prepares FOOD. Lucy and Calvin come in with the chafing dishes. Lucy's Mother quickly takes the dishes from Calvin.

MOTHER

You don't have to do that, sir.

Calvin turns to Lucy. He can't seem to keep his eyes off her, nor she him.

CALVIN

I'm Calvin Charles.

LUCY

I'm Lucy.

Standing in the kitchen, servants bustling about, mother watching: there's not much more they can say.

CALVIN

Nice to meet you.

## CHARLES ESTATE - DINING ROOM

Calvin enters through the kitchen door. A BUTLER looks up, surprised.

BUTLER

Master Calvin. Whatever are you doing in the kitchen?

Calvin shrugs and walks past.

BUTLER (CONT'D)

May I take your jacket?

## CHARLES ESTATE – DINING ROOM – AFTER DINNER

Calvin and his friends, dressed formally, line the table with the remnants of dinner before them. MICHAEL and SARAH JANE are among them. Lucy and other waiters in uniforms clear away the empty plates.

MR. CHARLES rises at the head of the table. On one side sits CALVIN'S MOTHER. On the other sides sits CALVIN'S GRANDMOTHER, a shrunken lady 90 years old.

Mr. Charles taps a WATER GLASS with a KNIFE. The SOUND OF CONVERSATION dwindles and stops.

MR. CHARLES

For his graduation, Calvin's mother and I would like to present a gift, which is also an investment.

He signals, and the butler carries in a COVERED PAINTING ON AN EASEL. Mr. Charles removes the cover, revealing an ABSTRACT PAINTING. The assembled guests respond with the SOUND OF LIGHT APPLAUSE.

Lucy notices the painting, startled. Michel, sitting at the table, speaks:

MICHAEL

A Picasso.

CALVIN

Actually Georges Braque, a contemporary of Picasso and co-founder of the cubist movement.

Michael rolls his eyes. Other Preppy Students stifle snickers. One fakes a yawn.

Mr. Charles clears his throat.

MR. CHARLES

Your grandmother has a gift as well.

The Old Lady totters to her feet, holding a WHITE ENVELOPE. She gives it to Calvin.

CALVIN

Thank you, grandmother.

He hugs the old lady. The SOUND OF A FART rings out. Some of the Preppy Students snicker. Mr. Charles RINGS A SMALL BELL.

CHARLES ESTATE - KITCHEN

The catering staff stands poised with desserts on trays. The MUFFLED SOUND OF THE SMALL BELL is heard.

MOTHER

Go, go, go.

CHARLES ESTATE – DINING ROOM

SARAH JANE sits beside Calvin. Lucy sets a DESSERT in front of Sarah Jane. Sarah Jane takes one bite of her dessert.

SARAH JANE

Take this away. It's horrid.

Lucy places a dessert in front of Calvin.

SARAH JANE (CONT'D)

I said take this away.

Lucy picks up the dessert and walks to the kitchen door. Calvin sees her go, and rises.

CHARLES ESTATE – KITCHEN

Lucy storms in with the dessert in her hand. She throws it into the SINK, with the SOUND OF GLASS BREAKING. Mother and the Cooks look at her.

CHARLES ESTATE – DINING ROOM

Calvin slowly opens the kitchen door a crack.

Through it, he sees Lucy and her Mother in animated conversation. Mother gestures as if to say, "Go take a break." Lucy leaves.

Calvin quietly closes the door.

## CHARLES ESTATE – BEDROOM

Lucy walks into the darkened bedroom, illuminated by moonlight shining through French doors. She opens the doors and goes out on the balcony.

Calvin comes in a few moments later. He sees Lucy on the balcony and goes to her.

CALVIN

I want to apologize for my so-called girlfriend.  
She was unforgivably rude.

Lucy begins to cry. Calvin hands her his HANDKERCHIEF. She wipes her eyes and composes herself a bit.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

My friends can be insensitive. Sometimes I'm  
embarrassed to be associated with them.

LUCY

Is that painting the real thing?

CALVIN

Afraid so.

LUCY

I always thought Braque got a raw deal. He invented  
cubism with Picasso, then came up with assemblage  
on his own. But most people have never heard of him.

CALVIN

Maybe Picasso worked harder.

LUCY

Some people work hard all their lives and  
never succeed. Some have it handed to them.

CALVIN

Privilege is no guarantee of success.

LUCY

Isn't it? Look how you celebrate your graduation.  
I graduated today, too. I can't wait to go to college  
and start living my own life.

CALVIN

Why not start tonight?

Lucy looks at him. He's staring off, mostly talking to himself.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Sometimes I think about just taking off, getting a job,  
living like a normal person.

Lucy grabs his arm and looks him in the eye.

LUCY

Meet me out front in five minutes.

CALVIN

Why?

LUCY

Come with me and my friends. See how the  
rest of the world lives.

CALVIN

My guests, my father. I have obligations.

LUCY

If I can do it, so can you.

Lucy exits. Calvin watches her go.

TO READ THE FULL SCRIPT

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