CASUAL

EPISODE 2
"Friends"

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INT. ALEX’S DINING ROOM - THE MORNING AFTER

Valerie, Laura and Leon sit together at the table, covertly eyeing each other. Nobody says a word for a long beat.

Alex enters with a plate of waffles, oblivious.

ALEX
We’re out of buttermilk. Also one of them got stuck in the griddle. But it’s fine. I’ll eat it. Juice?

Still no response. He pours everyone OJ.

ALEX (CONT’D)
They’re better with buttermilk. Which is surprising because buttermilk is disgusting. But when it comes to batter there’s really no substitute.

Another beat.

ALEX (CONT’D)
So. Friday. TGIF. What’s everyone got going on?

LAURA
Alex?

ALEX
Yes?

LAURA
Will you please pass the syrup?

ALEX
Try the lemon and sugar.

LAURA
Just the syrup.

Alex passes the syrup.

ALEX
You live over in Silverlake, right Leon?

LEON
...How did you know that?
ALEX
You left your wallet on the counter. Also your AAA card is expired.

Valerie shoots Alex a dirty look.

ALEX (CONT’D)
I’ve thought about moving east but traffic is such a pain. And it’s hotter over there. I hope you have AC.

LEON
I do.

ALEX
Central?

LEON
Window mounts.

ALEX
You should get central. It makes a difference.

VALERIE
(abruptly rises)
Can I talk to you for a second?

As she and Alex walk out of the kitchen Leon gives Laura a weak smile. She picks up the Arts section of the newspaper. Nonplussed.

INT. HALLWAY – MOMENTS LATER

ALEX
What’s up?

VALERIE
What the fuck is wrong with you?

ALEX
Um. Lots of things?

VALERIE
You invited him to stay for breakfast.

ALEX
I wanted to make waffles.
VALERIE
Don’t you think you should have asked me first?

ALEX
You said you wanted to make new friends. He’s nice. He could be a friend.

VALERIE
He’s my one night stand! (lowering her voice)
How do you think Laura feels?

ALEX
She seems fine to me.

VALERIE
Like you have any idea what ‘fine’ is.

ALEX
You sound stressed. Maybe you should ask Leon for a back rub.

VALERIE

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leon nibbles at his waffle. Laura sips a coffee.

LAURA
(still looking at the paper)
Good review for King Lear at The Broad.

LEON
You like theater?

LAURA
Nah. You just look uncomfortable. Thought I should say something.

She smiles genuinely. He smiles back.

LEON
So your mom. And your uncle...

LAURA
Regular Bonnie and Clyde.
LEON
They’re close, huh?

LAURA
Yeah. It’s actually pretty normal. Except when they shower together.

Leon’s eyes go wide.

LAURA (CONT’D)
Leon. I’m fucking with you.

Valerie and Alex return.

VALERIE
C’mon Laura. You’re gonna be late for school.

Leon stands with Laura.

VALERIE (CONT’D)
Don’t get up. Just... finish your waffle. Alex can see you out.

LEON
Ok.

As Valerie turns to go.

LEON (CONT’D)
I’ll call you?

VALERIE
Uhuh. Great. Ok then.

She quickly closes the door behind her. Alex goes right back to his breakfast.

ALEX
Well she’s in a mood. Pass the lemon?

INT. VALERIE’S PRIUS - MORNING

Valerie drives. Laura fiddles with the radio. Finally turns it off.

VALERIE
I’m sorry.

LAURA
About what?
VALERIE
You know.

LAURA
The strange man at the breakfast table?

VALERIE
I didn’t mean for you to... I mean. With your dad. It’s just... You know I’m not trying to replace him. But I can understand if you’re uncomfortable.

LAURA
I’m not if you’re not.

VALERIE
Ok.

Beat.

LAURA
How was he?

VALERIE
Huh?

LAURA
First times can be awkward. He seemed awkward.

VALERIE
You really wanna know?

LAURA
You asked me after Emile and my first time.

VALERIE
That’s different.

Laura shrugs. Willing to let it go.

VALERIE (CONT’D)
...I think it had been a while for him too. He was gentle. A little too gentle. Maybe wounded. I got the sense that he was holding something back. I think it’s for the best that we’re going our separate ways.
LAURA
You psychoanalyzed him. Like he was one of your patients.

VALERIE
I did not.

LAURA
Sounds like attachment issues.

VALERIE
Those are your words not mine.

LAURA
Definitely attachment issues.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARVARD WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Laura steps out of Valerie’s car.

VALERIE
You coming home for dinner?

LAURA
Becca wants to do a girls thing. That ok?

VALERIE
Call me and check in. I love you. Really I do.

LAURA
Love you too.

Valerie watches Laura walk into the idyllic campus. Suddenly a RAPPING on her window breaks her spell.

Valerie turns to find JANET FORD (early 40’s but looks 30’s with the near perfect work she’s had done to her face). Janet is an insufferable gossip.

VALERIE
(to herself)
Shit.
(she rolls down the window)
Janet. Hi. You scared me.

JANET
Sorry hon. How’s everything?
Valerie considers for a moment. Then takes the bait.

Valerie
I’d be happy to help.

Janet
Wonderful!
EXT. ALEX’S HOUSE - MORNING

Leon heads to his car. Alex follows a little too closely behind.

ALEX
So like I said, medium heat. Four minutes each side. And no grass fed beef. You want that cow with antibiotic enriched corn oozing out of every orifice.

LEON
That’s a really disgusting image.

ALEX
Right? And that’s before it even gets to the slaughterhouse which is a cesspool of disease and agony.

LEON
Why do you still eat meat?

ALEX
Because it’s delicious and it eases my suffering.

Leon unlocks his car. Then stops.

LEON
Hey. Can I ask you something about your sister... Sorry if that’s inappropriate.

ALEX
It is. But I don’t care.

LEON
Should I call her? We had fun but I mean, we kinda left it at, you know. You saw.

ALEX
Hmmmm. You have a minute?

LEON
...Sure.

ALEX
Great. Let’s get coffee.
INT. CAFE - MORNING

Alex and Leon sit together drinking their coffees.

ALEX
So the thing with Val is her ex husband is a colossal douche wagon and she’s just getting back into the dating scene.

LEON
A douche wagon?

ALEX
Yeah. Like a douche canoe. But worse.

LEON
Right.

ALEX
Anyway. It’s great that she’s dating because she’s great, but also tough because she’s not looking for anything serious. I mean this guy literally destroyed her relationship template. At least that’s what I overheard her saying on the phone.

LEON
I shouldn’t call her.

ALEX
You gotta date around and if it’s meant to happen it’ll happen.

Leon scoffs.

ALEX (CONT’D)
What?

LEON
Nothing.

ALEX
Talk to me.

LEON
I barely know you.

ALEX
You had sex with my sister. Last night. I made you breakfast.
LEON
Ok. The thing is, I’ve been in kind of a dry spell.

ALEX
Define dry.

LEON
Before last night? 10 months.

ALEX
Woah. Post breakup?

LEON
Dated for three years. Engaged for another. A month before the wedding I found tapes.

ALEX
Tapes?

LEON
Oh, you know. Just a collection of every man and woman she’d ever been with up to and including the time we were together.

ALEX
That’s not good.

LEON
No it’s not. Since then I’ve been trying to get back on my feet but I don’t really know where to start.

Alex thinks for a moment. Then:

ALEX
Have you ever heard of LAMatch?

INT. HARVARD WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Students pack their bags in a rush to get to lunch. Laura follows them out until-

MICHAEL (O.S)
Laura?

MICHAEL HORN (late 20’s) the English teacher who made you love English (and older men) stands by his desk.
She backtracks.

MICHAEL (CONT’D)
This paper you turned in. For the last assignment. It’s very good. You have a really mature voice.

LAURA
(smiles)
Thank you. I had a good time writing it.

MICHAEL
I can tell. Look. There are contests for young writers. They give prizes and they publish. Colleges love that kind of stuff. I think you should consider submitting.

LAURA
Really?

MICHAEL
We can go through it. I’ll help you clean it up then we take a shot.

LAURA
That sounds amazing.

Michael takes out a pen and scribbles on a scrap of paper.

MICHAEL
Here’s my cell. Call me when you have some free time.

Laura takes the piece of paper.

MICHAEL (CONT’D)
Seriously I’m impressed. Keep up the good work.

LAURA
Thanks Michael.

MIA (O.S)
Laura!

Laura turns. Sees MIA FORD (16), a blond teenage version of her mom Janet and BECCA HAYNES (17), the girl who hit puberty at 9 and was dating by 11.

LAURA
I gotta go.
They share a look then Laura hurries:

OUTSIDE

MIA
What did he want?

LAURA
Nothing. Just talking about one of my papers. He wants to submit it to some contest.

MIA
Wait. Did he give you his number?

LAURA
...Yeah.

MIA
Oh my god. Oh my fucking god.
You’re the one.

LAURA
The what?

Mia and Becca share a look.

BECCA
Every year Michael Horn picks a student-

MIA
Usually it’s a senior so he can wait until summer vacation-

BECCA
Last year was Liz Segal-

MIA
The year before Carrie Thompson-

BECCA
I hated that bitch-

MIA
Huge cunt. Anyway-

BECCA
They get close-

MIA
Spend time together out of school-
Things heat up—

And then—

They fuck.

They fuck?

They fuck.

Laura can’t help herself from half smiling.

You’re smiling! You so want him!

Shut up.

INT. VALERIE’S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Valerie leads a red-eyed TEDDY (40’s) to the door.

You’ll be ok, Teddy. Just be vocal... And try to stop reading her emails. It’s only going to hurt.

Teddy hugs her tight. Lets out one last sob.

Thank you.

He exits. Valerie lets out a long breath.

He cried a lot.

Twenty four minutes. New personal best.

His wife wants to open up the marriage. She replied to a group sex listing on craigslist.
LEIA
Gang-bang or swinging?

VALERIE
Gang-bang. She said he could watch.

LEIA
Nice of her.

VALERIE
Any calls?

LEIA
OCD Owen.

VALERIE
Please don’t give my patients pet names.

LEIA
He’s asking to come in tonight.

VALERIE
Schedule him for Monday. I can’t.

LEIA
He’s gonna do that thing where he sniffs three times every time I stop talking.

VALERIE
He has a personality disorder.

LEIA
I know. OCD Owen.

Valerie shakes her head. Is about to go back to her office then stops.

VALERIE
I met someone.

LEIA
...

VALERIE
A guy at a bar last night. I told him to take me home and he did.

LEIA
And you’re telling me now?! Did you sleep with him? How was he? And this morning? When did you kick him out?
VALERIE
...I didn’t. I left him with Alex.

LEIA
Your brother?

VALERIE
Uhuh.

LEIA
Are you sure that’s a good idea?

VALERIE
What do you mean?

LEIA
I dunno. Doesn’t he, like, have problems with boundaries?

Off Valerie’s look:

INT. VALERIE’S PRIUS – EVENING

Valerie drives towards Beverly Hills, phone ringing on the bluetooth.

INT. ALEX’S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

Alex (wearing a flannel, slim cut jeans and vans) wolfs down leftovers.

He picks up his ringing phone. Talks with his mouth full.

INTERCUT

ALEX
Hey.

VALERIE
I’ve been calling you.

ALEX
I’ve been busy.

VALERIE
No you haven’t.

ALEX
Whatever. What’s up?

VALERIE
What happened with Leon?
ALEX
I said I was sorry-

VALERIE
No. I mean when did he leave?

ALEX
Right after you did.

VALERIE
Did you explain the situation?

ALEX
With crystal clarity.

VALERIE
So you didn’t give him my number.

ALEX
What do you take me for? He was your one night stand. You’re not ready for anything serious. He gets it and he won’t be coming around. Chill.

VALERIE
Ok... Thanks. I dunno why I was worried. What are you doing tonight?

ALEX
Might go for a drink. Wallow in self pity. You know.

VALERIE
You could try spending a Friday night at home.

A horn honks off screen.

ALEX

EXT. ALEX’S HOUSE - EVENING

Leon, in a similar looking flannel, is parked outside, engine idling. Alex jumps in.

ALEX
Nice shirt. Val says hi.

Leon’s car pulls out.
EXT. JANET FORD’S MANSION – EVENING

Valerie takes a breath then rings the doorbell. Janet opens the door. Kisses her on both cheeks.

    JANET
        Darling. You made it.

INT. JANET’S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM

One word: opulent.

The other women on the committee are STELLA FRANCIS (40’s), impossibly large lips, KIM CANTER (40’s), resting bitch face, and MARIA ALVEZ-SMITH (late 30’s), a former Ms. Guatemala ‘rescued’ into sterile suburban housewifedom.

Janet pours Valerie a glass of white wine.

    JANET
        Girls you know Valerie. Valerie.
        Stella, Kim and Maria.

    VALERIE
        Hi.

    JANET
        So. Valerie. Before we start with homecoming, tell us all about the divorce.

Valerie frowns.

CUT TO:

INT. LEON’S CAR – EVENING

Leon drives. Alex typing on his phone.

    LEON
        You do this a lot?

    ALEX
        A fair amount.

    LEON
        And it works?

    ALEX
        No. But I’m a glutton for punishment. Hang a left.
He turns his phone to Leon. On it is his LAMatch app and the profiles of two TATTOOED WOMEN: SKYE (30’s) blonde bob & 'LENORE (30’s) jet black hair.

ALEX (CONT’D)
Skye and ‘Lenore. Any preference?

LEON
Is that Skye with an ‘e’?

ALEX
And ‘Lenore without. I guess vowel switching is in.

LEON
Look at those sleeves.

ALEX
Tattoos are the best.

LEON
They’ll look like shit at forty five.

ALEX
Exactly. If a girl has ‘em then you know she’s got the right attitude.

LEON
What attitude is that?

ALEX
Down to make mistakes.

INT. BLIPSY BARCADE - KOREATOWN - NIGHT

A dark little arcade/bar where people go to be ‘ironic’. Skye and Lenore at the bar drinking PBR tall boys. Alex and Leon approach.

ALEX
Skye? Lenore?

SKYE/LENORE
Hi.

ALEX/LEON
Hi.

Beat.

ALEX
Shots?
EXT. BECCA’S PARENTS’ BEVERLY HILLS MANOR - NIGHT

Loud music thumping. You can practically see the house vibrating.

Laura and Emile approach.

LAURA
I don’t want to stay too long, ok?

EMILE
Whatever. They’re your friends.

LAURA
Just don’t leave me.

INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A medium sized party. Teenagers drinking. The vibe is young.

Emile leads. Becca holding his hand behind. Suddenly Mia and Becca grab Laura and pull her down the hall. Both of them are rolling face.

MIA

BECCA
Come on. Everyone’s outside.

Laura gives Emile a parting look like ‘help me’. Emile rolls his eyes as the girls head:

OUTSIDE

Where the party continues to rage. Kids swim in underwear and dance around the pool.

Mia runs her hands up and down Laura’s back.

MIA
Let’s go swimming.

LAURA
I’m ok.

MIA
No. You have to. The water feels so good. It like, rolls over you. And you go up and down. I don’t know how to describe it.
LAURA
Like a wave?

MIA
Yeah. A waaaaave. God I love that word.

LAURA
You go ahead. I’m gonna go sit over there and pretend like I’m having fun.

Mia and Becca drop their clothes and jump into the pool. Splashing, giggling.

Laura walks off to the side alone and plops down in a chair. She looks out at the youthful reverie around her. Feeling out of place.

She takes out her phone and starts to text.

INT. BLIPSY BARCADE - CONTINUOUS

Alex drinking at the bar with Skye watching as an animated HIPSTER TYPE mashes buttons on a FROGGER arcade game.

HIPSTER
(high fiving his friend)
YES! Level up! You got this, little froggie.

ALEX
I can’t take my eyes off him.

SKYE
I know. It’s all you’ve been talking about.

ALEX
I mean, he’s so happy. How can anyone be that happy?

SKYE
Maybe he had a pet frog.

ALEX
Or maybe his dad was a truck driver who abandoned him and his mom at an early age and this is some weird sublimation therapy. Like he’s the frog and he just wants to get safely to the other side before his dad can run him over.
SKYE
What are you talking about?

ALEX
Bad parenting.
   (he gestures to her tattoos)
You know what I mean.

SKYE
My dad was a CPA.

ALEX
What’s that?

SKYE
A tax accountant.

ALEX
Wow. That sounds boring. What does he think of your tattoos?

SKYE
He’s dead.

ALEX
Oh. Sorry. Mine too. At least I hope he is.

SKYE
What did he do?

ALEX
Mostly slept around. Is Skye your real name or did you make it up?

Skye nods at 'Lenore, who is laughing as she talks to Leon. Having a good time.

SKYE
Excuse us.

She and 'Lenore head to the bathroom. Alex walks over to Leon.

ALEX
How’s it going with 'Lenore?

LEON
I don’t think I’m her type.
ALEX
Don’t think like that. You’re everybody’s type. And I saw her laughing.

LEON
I dunno. She just seems really jittery.

ALEX
She’s probably nervous because you’re so charming.

LEON
That’s definitely not true... Though she did say to come to the bathroom if I wanted to have some fun.

ALEX
...And you’re here why?

They both look over at the closed bathroom door.

INT. JANET’S HOUSE
Wine is flowing. Mouths are flapping.

KIM
You don’t want the house?

VALERIE
There are a lot of memories in that house. Some of them good. Some not so good.

KIM
...But it’s a house.

STELLA
And it’s north of Sunset.

JANET
Honey. A piece of advice. Take everything that’s not nailed down. You earned it.

MARIA
He took so much from you, you deserve to take some back.

VALERIE
I guess so-
JANET
Really you should thank him. Free before forty with a daughter, a house and alimony? I’d kill for that.

VALERIE
(joking)
You could push Ben down the stairs and claim he fell.

JANET
You really think that’d work?

VALERIE
...No, Janet.

JANET
(sigh)
Me neither. Plus what if he didn’t die? If he was just paralyzed and I had to push him around in a wheel chair? What a nightmare.

Valerie exhales deeply. Tries to keep it together.

EXT. BECCA’S BEVERLY HILLS MANOR – NIGHT
Laura sips a beer. Watches as Becca and Mia grope each other in the pool.

A KID walks past her and VIOLENTLY THROWS UP in the bushes. He turns back to her, vomit on his shirt and mouth.

He stares at her drunkenly for a long beat.

LAURA
Yes?

KID
(slurring)
Do you believe in love at first sight?

She stands.

INT. BECCA’S BEVERLY HILLS MANOR – MOMENTS LATER
Laura steps around conversations. Sees a few FACES she may or may not recognize.
LAURA
Have any of you seen Emile?

FACE
Who?

LAURA

FACE 2
Oh. Maybe that’s who Danielle was talking to. They went upstairs.

Laura’s eyebrows furrow as she heads upstairs.

She peeks her head into bedrooms. Kids making out. Some drinking and smoking. Nothing out of the ordinary. She reaches for the knob of a closed door. Locked. She’s about to move on when—

VOICE (O.S)
FUCK! COPS!

Laura turns and looks down to the first floor where people are scattering. Two bored POLICE OFFICERS stand in the threshold of the front door, blocking her exit.

OFFICER #1
(to Laura)
You! Come down here.

Laura looks behind her. Nobody. She walks back down the stairs.

OFFICER #2
Who’s the home owner?

LAURA
...Probably the bank.

OFFICER #1
What?

LAURA
In this economy and this neighborhood? I’m guessing they had to refi. Second mortgage. Maybe third.

OFFICER #2
Are you being a smart ass?
LAURA
You asked.

OFFICER #2
How old are you?

Laura glances back up at the second floor where she sees Emile exiting from the locked room with DANIELLE (17), a bim in a mini skirt.

He and Laura meet eyes.

EMILE
Hey...

She turns back to the Officers, takes a gulp of her beer then holds out both fists to the officers.

LAURA
Sixteen.

INT. BLIPSY BARCADE

Alex and Leon outside the door of the bathroom.

ALEX
Do it.

LEON
You do it.

ALEX
She asked you.

LEON
I have low self esteem.

ALEX
Everyone has low self esteem. If you don’t they commit you.

LEON
Please?

Alex knocks.

SKYE (O.S)
Occupied!

ALEX
It’s Leon... And Alex.

Beat.
The door cracks open.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Alex and Leon enter. See ‘Lenore cutting up drugs on the toilet.

SKYE
Close the door.

ALEX
(re: the drugs)
You’re doing that here?

‘LENORE
So what?

ALEX
I dunno. Just feels kind of unsanitary.

LEON
Like a slaughterhouse?

Alex shoots him a look.

SKYE
It’s fine. They clean these toilets all the time.

Alex looks around. That is clearly not the case.

‘Lenore blows a line.

‘LENORE
C’mon.

ALEX
The last time I did cocaine I couldn’t sleep for two days. My heart felt like it was going to explode.

SKYE
It’s speed.

ALEX
Well in that case...

Skye does a line.

‘LENORE
Who’s up?
LEON
I think I should go.

SKYE
Don’t be such a little bitch, Leon. We were having a nice time. Now do a line and we’ll all go back to my place for a night cap.

Leon looks shocked.

ALEX
One sec.

He pulls Leon into the corner. They whisper together and the girls cut more drugs.

LEON
I don’t want to take speed. This is a bad idea.

ALEX
Maybe. Or but maybe this is one of those times where it seems like a bad idea but it’s really a good idea.

LEON
Is that the vibe you’re getting?

ALEX
Not at all. These girls are totally crazy. But...

LEON
You think they might want to have sex.

ALEX
I think they might.

LEON
The tattoos are pretty cool.

ALEX
Right? And I bet there’s more we haven’t even seen yet. I’m just saying we should think about it.

LEON
I’m thinking about it.

ALEX
So am I.
LEON
You call it.

ALEX
You sure?

LEON
I’ll regret it either way.

ALEX
(smiles)
You know what? I’m really starting to like you.

LEON
Fuck it. Let’s do it.

ALEX
Yeah?

LEON
Yeah.

Suddenly a loud KNOCK on the door.

ALEX/LEON/SKYE/‘LENORE
Occupied!

The handle continues to jiggle.

ALEX
What the fuck. Occu-

Suddenly it flies open on a BURLY BIKER-TYPE. He goes right for ‘Lenore and the drugs. Grabs her by the arm.

Alex steps to him. Takes hold of his shoulder.

ALEX (CONT’D)
Hey asshole. What do you think you’re doing-

The Biker-type cold cocks him in the face. Leon jumps in. As he, Alex and the Biker-type grapple, Skye and ‘Lenore slip out the door and book it.

INT. JANET FORD’S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

One empty wine bottle has become three. Janet stroke Valerie’s hand while Maria touches her knee. Valerie’s discomfort is evident.
JANET
It’s good that you came. This is why we’re here. For each other. As friends. In a circle of trust.

MARIA
And you know. Anything you say here? It stays between us.

JANET
We’re all about discretion.

Valerie’s phone rings. She quickly grabs it.

VALERIE
(into phone)
Hello?

Her face falls.

VALERIE (CONT’D)
(into phone)

She hangs up.

VALERIE (CONT’D)
I’m so sorry. That was my daughter. I... I have to go. Something came up.

JANET
Can we help?

KIM
What happened?

STELLA
Tell us...

Her phone rings again. Same number. Valerie rips herself away from the grasping hands of her friends.

VALERIE
(into phone)
I’m coming right now—
(long beat)
You what!!??

INT. POLICE STATION – NIGHT
Laura and Alex sit on a bench together in processing.
LAURA
I can’t believe you fought a cop.

ALEX
He was undercover. And it wasn’t really like we fought. He mostly just kicked my ass. The guy was massive. And he had a beard.

LAURA
Mom is gonna be so pissed.

ALEX
It’ll be fine. You had one beer and made a real estate joke. Let me do the talking.

LAURA
...I think Emile might be cheating on me.

Alex looks at Laura. For once he sees her as the vulnerable teenager that she is.

ALEX
You ok?

LAURA
I dunno. He was in a room with another girl. I didn’t see anything but...

Alex takes her hand. Holds onto it.

ALEX
Fuck him. You can do better. Also he sucks at guitar.

LAURA
I know.

Valerie rushes in. Takes one look at them sitting together.

VALERIE
You’re grounded.

ALEX
What?!

LAURA
...I think she’s talking to me.

ALEX
Oh... Still!
Hi Valerie.

Valerie turns and registers Leon’s presence, sitting on the bench across from them. Shock doesn’t begin to describe it.

...I told Leon we’d give him a ride to his car.

Valerie squeezes the wheel tight, gritting her teeth. Laura in the front seat next to her, Alex and Leon in back. Valerie looks at Alex in the rearview. A death stare.

It’s just up to the right.

Valerie pulls over. Leon hops out. Looks at Valerie through the front window and Alex through the back.

Thanks. For the ride... Guess we’ll talk later.

Valerie forces a smile. It quickly fades. As she starts to pull away Alex covertly puts his thumb to his ear and pinkie to his lips and mouths ‘call me’ to Leon.

The car is silent as Valerie drives through the night. Neither Alex nor Laura dare say a word.

Valerie’s Prius pulls in to the driveway. She steps out.

Val. I’m sorry-

Don’t. Just don’t.

And without another word she turns her back and heads inside.

Alex looks up at the dimly lit stars. Laura heads for the front door. Stops.
LAURA
Good night Alex.

ALEX
Good night Laura.

LAURA
Thank you.

ALEX
For what?

LAURA
Being a bigger fuck up than I am.

She grins. Alex can’t help but grin back. Off their shared smile we:

FADE TO BLACK.