

UNTITLED BEN EPSTEIN PROJECT

"Pilot"

Written by
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TEASER

EXT. WONDERLAND THEME PARK - DAY

CLOSE ON: the beautiful, ageless, Latina face of GLORIA VILLAR. Well, she isn't really ageless; she's 34, and right now she's under about nine pounds of stage makeup and clad in full-on fairy-tale regalia to play "Princess Sophia."

GLORIA
... Dreams really do come true...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: Gloria is being embraced by the handsome PRINCE VALOR (a younger "ageless" than Gloria's ageless) as he stares into her eyes, completely in love.

PRINCE VALOR
How about "happily ever after?"

GLORIA
Well, Prince Valor -

PRINCE VALOR
- If we're going to marry, you should probably start calling me "Edward."

GLORIA
Well, *Edward*... I think "happily ever after" starts right about now.

Prince Valor leans in and gives her the most romantic - and chaste - stage-kiss a six-year-old could dream up...

... And indeed, we now see the audience is comprised of scores of CHILDREN and their PARENTS, watching what's called a "Street-mosphere" show on the "Main Street" of the celebrated American institution Wonderland Theme Park.

Gloria and Prince Valor are surrounded by ANTHROPOMORPHIC ANIMALS and performers dressed as GIANT VEGETABLES, all cheering their love. A movable BACKDROP of a royal animated kitchen is in the background.

As the romantic couple kiss, we *Panic Room*-style ZOOM THROUGH a hole in the ivory-covered fence behind them into:

EXT. BEHIND THE FENCE - CONTINUOUS

Past the waiting PERFORMERS IN COWBOY COSTUMES and black-clad TECHIES preparing a large prop stagecoach, and into:

INT. BACKSTAGE TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

KEEP ZOOMING DOWN A STAIRCASE, into the Wonderland Underground Tunnels, which comprise the first floor of the whole park.

And finally, we find LUCY VILLAR: 16, half-Latina, pragmatic, quick-witted and acerbic. Like the techies we saw behind the fence, Lucy is clad in black. She has an ear-piece and holds an iPad. Currently, she's stressed and on the move.

Everything here is happening FAST FAST FAST.

LUCY

Where the hell is my Rocky?

Lucy passes by PERFORMERS in various stages of undress: giant rabbit rubber legs on SWEATY GUYS in tank tops; PRINCESSES of different ethnicities scrambling to put on wigs. All of them regard Lucy with familiarity – quick high-fives, “hey Lucy”, etc – but no one's seen Rocky.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I kinda need a giant talking raccoon wearing a Stetson to appear in the next six seconds.

WILL (O.S.)

Lucy. I can do it.

Lucy turns to see WILL ARMSTRONG (17, mixed race black and white, masculine and tough), in the costume of a Rocky Raccoon in a Hawaiian shirt. He holds the giant rubber head.

LUCY

You're coming off 45 minutes of love and shoves and you're in Hawaiian Fun Rocky gear. You're still dripping in kid juice –

WILL

– “Kid juice” is phrase no one should ever say, and I can swap out the costume in three minutes –

PATRICK

– We don't have three minutes. They're at bows, and Cowboy Rocky's up next. Lucy, he's new, you gotta hold his hand, here.

Will's dad – and their boss – stage manager PATRICK ARMSTRONG (40, white, blue-collar, tough but kind) rounds a corner.

WILL

Dad, she's in a bind, I know the choreography -

PATRICK

- Union regulations say you need forty-five minutes between sets. Like I need grief from them if you go out again right away.

LUCY

Costumes said Rocky checked in. But it's his first day, maybe he's lost -

PATRICK

- Behind me on the left. You see?

Lucy sees: a guy we'll just call ARMANI SUIT for now (21, Wall Street handsome, well-bred and well-mannered). He lingers off to the side, inconspicuous but watching closely.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

New guy from upstairs. Here to "familiarize himself."

Eye-contact between Lucy and Patrick: this is serious. Lucy quickly rounds a corner while speaking into her ear-piece:

LUCY

I need all eyes on Rocky Raccoon. I repeat, all eyes on Rocky Raccoon -

And SMACK - she runs right into:

ROCKY RACCOON

- I'm assuming that's me?

The performer playing ROCKY RACCOON - Wonderland's iconic flagship character - is in full rubber-suited, cowboy getup, his voice muffled but audible through the giant raccoon head.

LUCY

I don't know who you are, but you're an idiot.

ROCKY RACCOON

This goes without saying. Look how I'm dressed.

Annoyed, Lucy grabs Rocky's arm, pushing him down the hallway as performers part like the Red Sea. Channeling Robert Downey Jr. in *Iron Man*, this Rocky talks quickly:

ROCKY RACCOON (CONT'D)

What's your name? I'm Rocky, but you probably knew that part already.

LUCY

I know the part about you being late and almost ruining everything.

ROCKY RACCOON

True, but you didn't quite answer my question.

(off her glare)

If you're glaring it's wasted on me. I can barely see through this head.

They arrive at the steps leading to the area behind the fence. As Lucy talks, she gives final adjustments to his costume.

LUCY

Okay, to review: you enter in front of the stagecoach and do your dance with the cowboys. A tech in the crowd manipulates your mask's jaw and makes the words come out. Then you have love and shoves – hug a kid, pose for a picture, sign an autograph, send them off – while I run interference on the crowd. After twenty minutes I say "Rocky has to go back to the rodeo," and I take you inside. Remember, to these kids, you are Rocky Raccoon, so no dream-crushing or illusion-shattering on my watch. If you're in distress, the signal is you take off your cowboy hat. Got it?

ROCKY RACCOON

... I sign autographs for cowboys?

(off her silence)

Are you glaring again?

LUCY

Just get the hell out there.

But guiding him up the stairs, she smells something:

LUCY (CONT'D)

Hold up, is that pot? Are you stoned?

ROCKY RACCOON

I'm getting a high-strung vibe from you, so there's really not an answer to that question you're gonna like.

EXT. BEHIND THE FENCE - CONTINUOUS

We hear the sound of kids CHANTING "Rocky! Rocky!" from the other side of the fence. They pass by Gloria (Princess Sophia) and Prince Valor, who offstage is the GAYEST MAN ALIVE.

LUCY
 (to Rocky; incensed)
 - *You were burning one?*

PRINCE VALOR
 Oh, *hellllllll's* to the no!

As Gloria gives her Prince Valor a playful smack, the FENCE SWINGS OPEN and the stagecoach rolls out with the cowboys. Too late to turn back now - stoned Rocky is going on.

EXT. WONDERLAND THEME PARK - CONTINUOUS

The crowd goes nuts when they see Rocky, the cowboys, and the entourage (Lucy included) roll out. Rocky begins speaking through a COMPUTERIZED VOICE (not the performer), as operated by a nearby TECH, just as Lucy said.

ROCKY COMPUTER VOICE
 Howdy kids, looks like it's time for
 a hoedown! Whaddya say?

The kids CHEER. But as the cowboys and Rocky go into a cowboy hoedown, Rocky starts off strong, but then he stumbles... And Rocky falls down. And stays down. Shit - he must have passed out! Still, his computer headpiece KEEPS TALKING:

ROCKY COMPUTER VOICE (CONT'D)
 I love a good hoedown!

But with him on the ground, it seems creepy. A kid starts CRYING. From the sidelines, Lucy radios into her earpiece:

LUCY
 We have a Rocky tumble.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE TUNNELS - SAME TIME

Stage Manager Patrick doesn't waste a breath as he calls out:

PATRICK
 Rocky tumble!

Five GUYS in black – Will among them – run out to the exit... Patrick glances at Armani Suit. Armani Suit watches and then writes something down on his iPad, ominously.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. WONDERLAND THEME PARK - SAME TIME

Rocky lies on the ground, unmoving, as kids grow concerned and whisper. The COWBOY PERFORMERS continue their dance, standing in front of the fallen Rocky.

COWBOY #1

I reckon Rocky is hidin'...

As the cowboys improvise, we find Lucy in the audience again. A 6-year-old KID looks up at her, scared:

KID

Did Rocky have a stroke? My grandpa had a stroke.

LUCY

Rocky didn't have a stroke! He loves to hide! You know how silly he is...

The kid smiles, while in the background we see WILL and the other guys in black, who discreetly enter through the stagecoach while the cowboys onstage stay in character:

COWBOY #2

How we gonna have a Rocky hoedown without a Rocky? You fellas seen him?

While behind them... The guys surround the fallen Rocky. We don't see exactly what's happening – we're with the audience here – but only a few moments later, Rocky bounces up again. The kids LAUGH and CHEER with relief.

ROCKY COMPUTER VOICE

Looks like it's time for a hoedown!

The cowboys and Rocky begin their dance again, while behind the stagecoach, the black-clad guys carry a SEMI-CONSCIOUS GUY away. Will is no longer with them – he's in the suit.

LUCY

(into earpiece)

Switch-out's done. Show's back up.

As the show goes on, Lucy allows herself a moment of relief – which quickly turns to anger.

INT. BACKSTAGE TUNNELS - DAY

Lucy pushes open the door to a dressing room with Rocky's iconic cartoon face on it and enters **THE DRESSING ROOM**, where "Rocky" is behind a changing curtain as Lucy barrels in.

LUCY

You must already hate this gig
something fierce or you wouldn't be
trying to get yourself fired so fast.

ROCKY RACCOON (BEHIND CURTAIN)

Hey, it gets hot under that costume.

LUCY

You got *high* under that costume.

ROCKY RACCOON

Like you've never passed out in
there.

LUCY

I'm not the performing type. Kinda
like you're the "unable to handle his
buzz without fainting" type.

ROCKY RACCOON (BEHIND CURTAIN)

You gonna narc on me?

LUCY

It smells like Amanda Bynes's tour
bus in here so you basically narked -

But as she talks, "Rocky" steps from behind the curtain... And for the first time, we see IAN CHANDLER. He is 16, currently shirtless, dripping with sweat, and possibly the best-looking male specimen in the known world.

LUCY (CONT'D)

... Narked... yourself.

Lucy's words are mush. But doing anything besides taking in the utter hotness of Ian is a fool's errand - and he knows it.

IAN

Sorry, what were you saying?

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE**INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY**

Right back to that moment where Lucy is taking in Ian.

IAN

If you were looking for more adjectives to go with "can't handle his pot," let's start with "irresponsible," "caddish" -

Lucy may be flustered, but she's not one to change her tune at the sight of a pretty face. (Not for very long, anyway.)

LUCY

- "Unjustifiably self-satisfied," "smug," and of course, "douchebaggery."

IAN

Oh, those are good!

Patrick walks in. He tosses Ian a robe.

PATRICK

Hey Magic Mike, put on some clothes.

Ian wraps the robe around himself, a little slower than necessary. Then Patrick sniffs the air. Smells the marijuana.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

What's that?

Patrick looks at Ian - who for the first time, displays a hint of nervousness. Then Patrick turns to Lucy. She shrugs. She may be pissed, but she's not a narc.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Tumble on your first day, huh?

IAN

I was curious to see how the rescue protocols worked. Sadly, turns out I was unconscious by that time.

PATRICK

Ha. I was a fur for ten years. You gotta make friends with the Gatorade.

Patrick and Ian CHUCKLE. Then Patrick studies Ian's face:

PATRICK (CONT'D)

But maybe you'd be better as a "face." Maybe a Prince Valor...

LUCY
Patrick, that's a promotion.

PATRICK
He's the right height. Right
complexion. We're short on Valors.
(to Ian)
And it's less costume, so you
wouldn't be as hot. Heat *is* why you
collapsed, right?

IAN
... Yeah. It was the heat.

PATRICK
All right. We'll get you learning the
part stat. For now, hydrate.

Patrick heads out into the **BACKSTAGE TUNNELS**, and Lucy
follows. Once out of Ian's earshot, she says:

LUCY
We have guys who've been waiting
years to play Valor. This ass-hat
screwed up right out of the gate, so
why would you -

PATRICK
- Lucy. I love you like a daughter,
but you gotta drop it and let me do
my damn job.

Patrick walks away, leaving Lucy alone. She peeks into the
dressing room and sees Ian getting ready. He heard everything:

IAN
... Maybe add "ass-hat" to the list?

Annoyed, she stomps off. He watches her go and smiles.

EXT. TWINKLE'S NEST - EVENING

A 4-year-old BOY screams and cries while sitting on the lap of
TWINKLE BIRD, an anthropomorphic canary wearing suspenders.
They sit in giant bird nest outfitted to look like a house.

CRYING BOY
AHHHHH!!!! HE'S SCARY!!!

The boy cries and thrashes while his PARENTS attempt to calm
him, photographer HARPER MUNROE (16, crucifix necklace, good
Christian girl turning restless,) tries to keep a happy face.

We now see that Lucy and Will stand off to the side in civvies, amused by the display.

HARPER

And... Smile?

BOY'S MOTHER

C'mon, honey! Smile for Twinkle!

CRYING BOY

I HATE TWINKLE!!!! AHHHH!!!!

Harper sighs and snaps the photo. After the boy throws his slushie at Harper's head, TWINKLE'S GREETER leads the crying boy away. Harper is tapped on the shoulder by a NEW PHOTOGRAPHER, signalling her break.

Heading away from the LONG LINE OF KIDS AND PARENTS, Harper wipes her face as she joins Lucy and Will as they walk through **THE PARK**. Harper and Will hold hands, a longtime couple. Everywhere you look there's something "Wonderland-Ful," with rides, shops, stands of food and apparel. Paradise to an over-stimulated kid, but old hat to Lucy, Harper, and Will.

HARPER

I'm so over this job. I can't believe my parents are *still* making me work at this Diet Snot-flavored park.

Lucy and Will exchange a glance. She nods: "Go ahead."

WILL

Pop quiz!

HARPER

No! Why?

WILL

Shirtless, coked up Charlie Sheen shows up at your family's new house at 3 AM. He just wants to talk. Do you let him in?

HARPER

(not enthused)
... No...?

WILL

Bad move! He wanted you to join the Dazzle Homeowner's Association where they weigh you and then give you that weight in gold as a "Welcome to the neighborhood" gesture.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

So then he breaks all your dishes and makes you tell him he's pretty.

HARPER

I change my answer to "yes." I let in shirtless coked up Charlie Sheen.

LUCY

Bad move! He blames your father's new promotion for escalating violence in Syria and says you need to move back to your old neighborhood with your friends.

HARPER

Then he cries in my soup, right?

LUCY

Yes, but they're delicious tears.

HARPER

What did I say to deserve a pop quiz? Seriously, I'm still Harper from the block. I can do the dance and everything.

WILL

You literally live in a Wonderland-owned town named "Dazzle." My car got towed there 'cause it didn't "meet the aesthetic requirements." Exactly what "block" are you talking about?

The mood's joviality is tested in a moment of tension. Harper opts to ignore Will's snark and instead says to Lucy:

HARPER

Dude, Luce: Did I hear a *GQ* cover model took a Rocky tumble?

LUCY

Whatever, he's not that cute. Kinda big on the dick-scale.

(before Harper can joke)

Not that dick-scale.

HARPER

You sure you don't want a litter of Hot Rocky's raccoon babies inside you? Park chatter says he's *gorg*.

LUCY

If by "gorg" you mean "inconsiderate towards the livelihood of his fellow performers," then yes: *totes gorg*.

As Will watches Lucy deny the obvious fact of Ian's attractiveness, we see a look of jealousy on his face.

And Harper notices Will's look, but doesn't say anything. Instead she just takes her boyfriend's hand.

EXT. "THE BRICK" - NIGHT

With the lights of Wonderland in the distance, Lucy walks through the working-class neighborhood that houses many of its employees. She approaches a drab, nondescript building that could almost be a college dorm. For Lucy, it's home.

INT. LUCY'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

As Lucy approaches the front door, she hears the sound of a woman's FLIRTATIOUS LAUGHTER coming from inside. She sighs – her expression reading "here we go again" – before entering:

THE APARTMENT

A modest home Lucy shares with her mother Gloria – the princess from the opening sequence. Photos of the two of them adorn the walls, along with photos of Gloria playing princesses in various Wonderland shows through the years.

Gloria entertains Italian CHEF ANTONIO MICARELLI (30, drunk, stud-muffin) who barely speaks English. Gloria and Antonio canoodle on the couch, but when Lucy walks in, Antonio moves his arm off like a teenager caught in the act.

GLORIA

Honey, this is Antonio. He's a chef in the World Village. Antonio, this ray of sunshine is my daughter, Lucy.

CHEF ANTONIO

(heavy Italian accent)
Your... Daughter?

LUCY

He's doing the math right now in Italian, isn't he?

CHEF ANTONIO

It is late... I must go.

Unsure of what to do around Lucy, he gives her an awkward handshake. Gloria looks somewhere between disappointed and amused as he takes off in record time.

A slightly uncomfortable moment between mother and daughter lingers in the air. So Lucy asks with mock seriousness:

LUCY
Mom... Is Chef Antonio my real dad?

Gloria throws a couch pillow at her head. Lucy throws it back and walks to the kitchen portion of the main room.

GLORIA
Chef Antonio could be the one. You don't know.

LUCY
I do, though. What's for dinner?

GLORIA
(shit-eating grin)
Whatcha making?

Lucy opens the fridge. Practically empty.

LUCY
Apparently, peanut butter. Crap, I should've gone to the grocery store -

GLORIA
- Honey, relax. We'll do takeout tonight, 'cause tomorrow the park is *buuuuuying*, what what...

Gloria begins to raise the roof. Lucy sighs.

LUCY
We talked about you raising the roof.

GLORIA
Aren't you excited? Tomorrow's the Wonder Buddy Ball! Fancy new Wonderland president will be there! We get to dress up, mingle with the Dazzlers, eat free buffet, get crunked -

LUCY
- Also, no more saying "crunked." I may be late, I have the Red Cross pre-college program interview before -

GLORIA

– Way to bury the lead! When did the Red Cross happen?

LUCY

Today. Apparently someone dropped out last minute, and I was one of the final alternates. They decide who's going up to Stanford like this week.

GLORIA

Oh my baby!! I am so proud of you!!!

Gloria pulls Lucy into a big embrace. She starts tearing up. Remember, Gloria is an actress; she gets emotional.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

I always knew you could cure typhoid.

LUCY

They already cured typhoid, Mom. It's about preventing it in developing –

GLORIA

– Shh, I'm having a moment. When you leave Wonderland I'm going to have to watch *Gilmore Girls* by myself. Oh my baby, you're gonna blow 'em away...

INT. RED CROSS OFFICE - DAY

Lucy sits opposite Red Cross supervisor DENISE (35, serious-minded, polar opposite of Gloria). She is not "blowing them away." In fact, she may just be "blowing it":

LUCY

– And I think, um... All people affected by disaster across the country and around the world should receive care, shelter and hope.

DENISE

... That's our mission statement. Word for word. It's on our website.

LUCY

("oh fuck me")
... I knew it sounded familiar.

DENISE

Well! Thanks for coming in.

Denise smiles a professional "you're not going to get this" smile, and Lucy tries to keep it together as she heads to the door. But just before she's out, she turns to Denise:

LUCY

I totally bombed that, didn't I?

Denise holds up Lucy's application file.

DENISE

You have stellar grades. Your essays are immaculately-researched. But the reason we didn't select you before – and what I was hoping to see today – is why you want to work here.

Lucy takes a deep breath. This isn't easy for her.

LUCY

I've lived in Wonderland my whole life. All around all you hear is "dreams come true" and stuff, but I don't necessarily believe that.

Denise is hard to read, but Lucy definitely has her attention:

LUCY (CONT'D)

I *do* believe I've got about \$14 in savings, and that affirmative action and good SAT scores won't be enough to get a full-ride to college.

DENISE

So this program is just about padding your college resume?

LUCY

No... See, the world's a big place and I haven't seen it. You work in Wonderland too long, you can start thinking life will turn into a fairy tale. Like you're a character at the beginning of an animated movie waiting for a magical adventure to start. You get delusional. I've seen it happen to my moth – to other people. The Red Cross is about reality... And I want to be part of something real.

Denise smiles; that's what she wanted to hear.

DENISE

... I can't promise anything, but how about you come back for a final interview with my supervisor this week, and then we'll see what's what?

EXT. WONDERLAND THEME PARK - NIGHT

The main square of Wonderland has been lit up like it's Christmas – no different from every night here, with one big exception: no guests. Tonight, it's employees only. Everyone from CAFETERIA WORKERS to HIGH-POWERED EXECUTIVES are there. This is the "Wonder Buddy Ball."

You can tell the working-class "Brickers" apart from the "Dazzlers" by their clothes and affect. They've clustered on opposite sides of the park like kids at a middle school dance.

On the Bricker side, Gloria is exuberant as she hugs her daughter, proud and exclaims to her nearby BRICKER FRIENDS.

GLORIA

My girl's curing malaria!

The Brickers CHEER. Lucy tries to temper expectations:

LUCY

Again, malaria: already curable. But I still have a final interview –

GLORIA

– You're going to *murder* that final interview. You're celebrating! We're getting you a boy to rub up on.

LUCY

You're really piling up my future therapy bills here.

Gloria spots Ian walking through the park. He's dressed well. Very well. As he passes by, he sees Lucy. He confidently smiles and nods at her, charisma in effect even at a distance.

GLORIA

Who is *that*? Did you see the way he looked at you? *I* got lady tingles.

LUCY

I'd sooner kick it to Chef Antonio, ESL and all.

GLORIA

Then, my precious treasure, you must be deaf, dumb, blind and dead.

Will comes over, pissed. Still, Lucy's relieved to see him:

LUCY

Please save me from this conversation.

WILL

This is some straight-up nonsense.

Will points out Harper on the other side of the park talking to a group of WELL-DRESSED TEENAGERS.

WILL (CONT'D)

Harper's hanging out with Chris Rummel? Freshman year that kid put his pubes in my cheeseburger. Not a euphemism.

LUCY

He lives on her new block. And if it's any consolation, she says they're top-notch pubes.

He look at her, amused by her joke but still saddened by Harper on the other side of the party.

As Lucy gives him a consoling look, the sound of a CHAMPAGNE GLASS BEING CLINKED is heard through the loudspeaker.

JAMES (O.S., ON LOUDSPEAKER)

Hello! And welcome!

All eyes turn to the steps of the ENCHANTED CASTLE – a large attraction at the front of the park. Standing atop it is a dashing man of 45; a silver-haired, square-jawed, well-tailored captain of industry. As we'll learn in a moment, this is the new president of Wonderland. This is JAMES CHANDLER.

He stands next to his elegant, glamorous wife MARGOT (45), and speaks into a mic:

JAMES (CONT'D)

As some of you know, my name is James Chandler, and I am honored to take over as Wonderland's president today.

The crowd APPLAUDS. Lucy notices Gloria watching intently.

JAMES (CONT'D)

... My Grandpa Hank started this company when he drew the very first Rocky Raccoon cartoon back in 1928. I worked in this very park twenty-five years ago. Even played Rocky myself.

Will throws Lucy a look: "give me a break."

JAMES (CONT'D)

More recently, I was an executive here and then in our New York offices. But now I'm here to stay. And so is my family. So I'd like to introduce my beautiful wife Margot –

Margot waves to the crowd, in full on Jackie O mode.

JAMES (CONT'D)

And my son Theodore, who will be taking over as creative director of the park. Theodore, c'mon up. Say hi.

By James's side is young man we recognize as "Armani Suit." Now we know his name: THEODORE CHANDLER waves to the crowd.

JAMES (CONT'D)

He looks twelve, but kid graduated Harvard in three years. It's unseemly but a dad's gotta brag, right?

Good-natured CHUCKLES from the Dazzlers, while some Brickers like Will are more suspicious.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Working in the character department taught me the ropes, so I thought "Why not have my younger son start at the same place?" In fact, he's already begun working. Ian, wave hi.

And now Ian stands on stage. He smiles that charming smile, and waves to the crowd.

In the audience, Lucy GASPS. She's been working – or rather, sparring – with the son of the president of Wonderland. As Lucy's jaw hangs open, Will leans over and whispers:

WILL

... Guess we know why my dad had to promote Snoop Lion...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**EXT. WONDERLAND THEME PARK - NIGHT**

Lucy, Gloria, and a few others stand in an informal "greeting line" to say hello to James and his family. We recognize a few assorted Brickers – Patrick, gay Prince Valor, some Cowboys – who've all had a few extra glasses of "Magic Ale."

Harper and Will are conspicuously off to the side, engaged in what appears to be their umpteenth lover's spat. The mood in line is buoyant, but Gloria seems nervous.

GLORIA

Maybe we'll meet him another time.

LUCY

I think this love and shove is a one-time deal. Aren't you excited to "hob-knob with the Dazzler elite?"

GLORIA

I was. I am. I just –

JAMES

– Gloria, right?

Lucy and Gloria have reached James, Margot, Theodore – and of course, Ian. He gives Lucy a little wave, but she looks away.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You were here when I was an executive twenty years ago...

THEODORE

You've been a princess for *twenty years?*

Gloria is flustered; it's not every day she comes face to face with a man of this much power and wealth. And the fact that Creative Director Theodore is scrutinizing her age isn't doing wonders for her confidence. Still, she manages to say:

GLORIA

Not quite twenty years... Don't you go aging me. I'm not ready to play a crone just yet.

JAMES

Far from it. Wonderful to still see you here, Gloria.

Gloria forces her most confident smile and moves away from the receiving line. Lucy follows, but doesn't get far:

IAN (O.S.)
Lucy, hold up.

She turns to see that Ian has left the line and followed her. Gloria gives her daughter a look: "Are you okay?"

GLORIA
I can hang around...

LUCY
I got it.

Still flustered, Gloria nods, and disappears into the crowd. Now away from her mom, Lucy turns to Ian, self-conscious:

LUCY (CONT'D)
Our adjectives list about you didn't mention "Wonderland president's offspring."

IAN
I knew I forgot something.

Lucy is awkward: what should she say to this guy?

IAN (CONT'D)
Look... I didn't open with that salient detail because I didn't want you to feel like you *had* to play nice. You're more fun when you're pissed at me.

He smiles at her: is he flirting? Fuck. This can only lead to trouble. But look at his eyes: you could swim in those things.

LUCY
We're lucky I'm still pissed at you.

IAN
At least let me try to get back on your good side.

LUCY
"Back" implies a time when you were.

IAN
Have you ever been to the top of the executive penthouse?

LUCY
Crap, must've lost my key.

IAN
Want to see it now?

Lucy is thrown for a curve?

IAN (CONT'D)
What? I think you're sweet.

He's 100% serious. For once, Lucy has no quick retort.

IAN (CONT'D)
"Sweet" might be a stretch. We'll go with "plucky." I can make adjective lists, too. What do you say?

But before she can answer, the moment is interrupted by:

HARPER (O.S.)
... What do you say to what exactly?

They turn to see Harper: drunk and flashing her biggest and best flirtatious smile at Ian. This duet just became a trio.

INT. PENTHOUSE ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Lucy, Ian, and Harper ride up the executive elevator. Lucy is nervous, Harper drunk and wobbly, while Ian is on his phone turned away from them. As he talks, Lucy and Harper WHISPER:

LUCY
What's going on with you and Will?

HARPER
Ugh, Will's acting like one of those self-righteous poor people in *Les Miserables*. Besides... *Look who we're in an elevator with...*

They glance at Ian, still on the phone. More WHISPERS:

HARPER (CONT'D)
Wait - am I box-blocking you?

LUCY
... Hardly. He's not my type.

HARPER
No, he's not.

The elevator doors open as Ian gets off the phone.

IAN
Sorry about that. I think my dad has a bottle of the good stuff up here...

Ian leads them to:

THE PRESIDENT'S PENTHOUSE OFFICE

Everything you'd expect to find in the office of a Fortune 500 CEO. Solid oak furniture with original Rocky Raccoon animation cells worth more than Gloria or her ilk make in a year.

Harper looks around and SQUEALS IN DELIGHT at the opulence. Ian grabs a bottle of Krug Brut Vintage from his dad's bar. He says to Lucy:

IAN (CONT'D)

Balcony's got a ridiculous view.

Lucy walks out onto the adjacent **BALCONY** over-looking the whole park from floors up. You can see all the way from the Brick into Dazzle. But more pressingly, from up here, the park looks beautiful. Lucy whispers:

LUCY

... I've never seen it from up here.

IAN

Kind of amazing, right?

Lucy nods, then looks at him. His hand starts to creep towards hers. Right now, he doesn't look so smug. In fact, he looks downright dashing. Above the park, *literal* fireworks go off. Time almost seems to stop... But then:

HARPER

Oh my God, you can totally see my house in Dazzle! Look!

Harper has loudly joined them. Ian's hand moves away.

HARPER (CONT'D)

You are so *bad*. When were you going to tell everyone who you were?

Lucy eyes her friend: Harper's tone is quite flirtatious...

IAN

A Libra?

Harper laughs far too loudly at the joke.

LUCY

This was nice and veritgo-inducing, but Harp... We should go.

IAN

I promise wherever you're going is less fun than this balcony.

HARPER
Yeah, Fun Police, we just got here!

LUCY
(deliberate)
Will will wonder where we are.

HARPER
Oh, *will* Will?

Drunk, Harper laughs at her own joke.

LUCY
Okay, I'm gonna take Harper home
while her embarrassing splatter to
the ground is only figurative.

As Lucy starts to lead Harper away, Harper calls back.

HARPER
Byeeee Ian...

Lucy and Harper arrive at the elevator doors. As they open,
Lucy and Ian make eye contact as Harper whispers loudly:

HARPER (CONT'D)
Do you think he likes me?

The doors close as Lucy and Ian exchange a little smile.

INT. LUCY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Lucy wears her greeter uniform while making breakfast. She's
in a good mood. Gloria emerges from her bedroom.

GLORIA
So... What did Ian want last night?

LUCY
(little smile)
He showed me the penthouse view.

GLORIA
... Was that... all he showed you?

LUCY
Mom! Blegh!

GLORIA
Because... I don't think he should be
showing you anything except... Math
homework, or something.

LUCY

Okay, for one it's summer and there's no homework, and two, I also thought Ian seemed sucky at first, but maybe I misjudged -

GLORIA

- Lucy, I forbid it.

Lucy looks at Gloria: is she joking? No, she's not.

LUCY

... And I quote: "Lucy, rub up on a guy. He gave me lady tingles."

GLORIA

Honey, trust me, I get guys like Ian. I just want to give you advice -

LUCY

- I forgot what a guy expert you are. How silly of me, considering I've had front-row seats to the parade of winners you've brought around -

GLORIA

- Hey, watch it, I'm your mother -

LUCY

- No, I'm *your* mother. Look who buys groceries, does laundry, makes breakfast, while you dress like a runner-up from "America's Skankiest Model." You don't want me going away to the Red Cross because you'll lose your maid. Who the hell are you to "forbid" me from doing anything?

GLORIA

... I'm sorry that's what you think of me. Good luck on your interview.

Lucy looks like she wants to apologize, but doesn't have the chance as a truly hurt Gloria quickly retreats to her bedroom.

INT. ROXY'S SALOON - DAY

Lunch at a grimy Bricker Bar, located just outside Wonderland. Something of a speakeasy, it has clearly unlicensed drawings of Rocky and Roxy Raccoon (Rocky's equally iconic "girlfriend," obviously) in revealing outfits, smoking, drinking, playing pool, etc. An inside joke to park employees, and an obvious subversion of Wonderland's squeaky clean image.

Lucy and Will have lunch in a booth, on break from work.

WILL

Where'd you and Harper run off to last night?

Lucy considers how fully to answer the question...

LUCY

... She just needed to cool off. I hear you guys had like act three of Relationship Drama Theater.

Before Will can respond, the bar goes quiet. All eyes turn to the entrance: Ian and Theodore Chandler just walked in.

Silence lingers. Theodore walks over to a picture of scantily-clad Roxy Raccoon. He addresses a blue-collar BARTENDER:

THEODORE

Do you have license for these decorations?

BARTENDER

Uh... We're not technically in the park. There's no sign on the door, we never get tourist business -

THEODORE

- So you *don't* have a license?
(off Bartender's silence)
Well... Then all I can do is buy everyone in here a round.

Theodore LAUGHS; he was joking. The Bartender SIGHS, relieved. Someone gives Theodore a backslap. As drinks are poured, Ian approaches Lucy and Will, and extends his hand to Will.

IAN

I'm Ian.

WILL

(doesn't take it)
I know who you are.

LUCY

This is Will.

IAN

Of "Harper and Will?" Plot thickens.

WILL

What the hell's that mean?

IAN
Means whatever you want it to, man.

WILL
(standing up)
Do we have a problem?

IAN
Ask my shrink, I got loads of them.

LUCY
(to Will)
Take the testosterone down a notch –

Having overheard their conversation and sensing the tension between Will and Ian, Theodore approaches his younger brother:

THEODORE
– Ian. You don't enter a man's home and drop a deuce on his carpet.
(to Will)
Will Armstrong – character department, right? You play Rocky, Slinks, and Professor Prune. Can I buy you a beer?

WILL
I'm underage.

THEODORE
Who's gonna tell?

Will eyes Theodore with suspicion. Then he gives a slight nod.

EXT. DAZZLE - DAY

Our first real glimpse of Dazzle, and it's a sight to behold: clean and tidy, with uniform houses boasting perfectly fresh-mowed lawns, the streets litter-free and immaculate.

One such Dazzle lawn is being examined by HARPER'S MOTHER (40s, slightly out of her element) and MRS. COVINGTON (45, total Stepford wife, everything in place). Ms. Covington holds a clipboard while Harper's Mom anxiously listens:

MRS. COVINGTON
Lawns must be mowed each week to avoid a fine, with of course the exception of December, when we import the snow....

We MOVE UP TO **HARPER'S HOUSE**, where Lucy and Harper are on the second floor, watching Harper's Mom and Mrs. Covington talk. Harper nurses a Gatorade after last night's hangover.

LUCY

She's saying these words out loud and yet it's not a Funny or Die video.

HARPER

(holding her head)

Shhh... We need to create a hangover-friendly space...

MRS. COVINGTON (ON THE LAWN BELOW)

... Of course you'll need to provide a minimum of three reindeer...

Harper starts unpacking boxes, less enthused to laugh at this.

LUCY

I wonder if she's read *1984*. Dude, do you think the Dazzle neighborhood committee is secretly Big Brother? I can't believe you actually live here.

HARPER

It's a bit much, but I see where they're coming from.

LUCY

... Are you really defending the reindeer Gestapo down there?

HARPER

Having a nice lawn isn't exactly puppy genocide. There's nothing wrong with wanting to fit in.

LUCY

... So "fitting in" means getting bombed and throwing yourself at Ian Chandler when you have a boyfriend?

HARPER

Like my boyfriend would've been more upset about me being there with Ian than he would about *you* being there with him.

This hits close to home. Lucy tries to play it off:

LUCY

... Will's like my brother.

HARPER

You think he sees it that way?

Lucy is silent.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Even before I moved, you guys have always had more in common. You have those in-jokes. You both work in the character department. You're both raised by single parents. Both...

LUCY

... Economically challenged?
 ("Lucy, you dick")
 Sorry, I - I'm not saying the right thing today at all...

Before Harper can respond, Lucy leaves.

EXT. PARK TUNNEL ENTRANCE - DAY

Gloria approaches the tunnels when her phone RINGS.

GLORIA

Hello....

Whoever Gloria is talking to throws her for a curve.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

... How'd you get this number?... No,
 I can't see you now. I have a show...

But she's not hanging up - in fact, she's getting emotional. We don't know who's talking to her - at least, not yet...

INT. BACKSTAGE TUNNELS - DAY

Lucy walks down the tunnels finishing up a greeter shift, practicing her Red Cross interview under her breath as she looks over some notes.

LUCY

"There's ways to help beyond giving money or blood. I mean, obviously I have so much money and even more blood..." Yeah, that'll slay 'em...

She passes some PERFORMERS who laugh. She doesn't stop moving.

LUCY (CONT'D)

(to the performers)
 Just talking to myself like a crazy person, carry on.
 (practicing again)
 "Last year you helped 155 million people in 70 countries -"

But Lucy trails off when she sees Patrick bounding around a corner, nervous as hell.

PATRICK

We got a problem. Your mom's on in ten and nobody can find her. Phone's off. What the hell's going on?

But before Lucy can answer, Theodore rounds another corner holding a chart. Lucy lingers behind, torn about what to do...

THEODORE

Gloria Villar's scheduled to perform as Princess Sophia, yes?

PATRICK

Something's gotta be up. She's never missed a show in fifteen years.

THEODORE

Fifteen years is a long time for a grown woman to play a teen princess.

PATRICK

Wonderland is Gloria's *life*.

Lucy looks at her notes. Then at her watch. Clock's ticking...

THEODORE

I appreciate your loyalty, but if I've been observing for two days and she's missed one of them, we might need to reconsider our personnel -

LUCY

- My mom's not coming.

All eyes turn to Lucy. With a straight face she says:

LUCY (CONT'D)

She's sick. She asked me to fill in. I just finished my last greeter shift or I would've been here earlier.

Will and Patrick exchange a look: obviously Lucy's story is bullshit, but she smiles in the face of Theodore's gaze.

LUCY (CONT'D)

... Maybe I should get into costume?

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**INT. BACKSTAGE TUNNELS - DAY**

Lucy quickly walks towards the dressing room, next to Will (in half Rocky costume) who's gotten wind of her stunt:

WILL

You have that interview in an *hour* –

LUCY

– Maybe I can still make it. My mom can't lose this job.

(quick pause)

And you need to go easy on Harper. She's doing her best.

He takes her arm. For a second, they both stop:

WILL

Maybe – Maybe Harper's not who I'm supposed to be with...

A charged moment between them. Lucy's torn.

LUCY

... Yes, she is. Fix it.

Lucy enters a dressing room, beginning a short SEQUENCE.

– **IN A DRESSING ROOM**, Lucy struggles to fit into Gloria's Princess costume with the help of some other GREETERS and PERFORMERS. It doesn't fit quite right; adjustments are made.

– **IN THE TUNNELS**, Lucy races down the halls with towards the exit to outside her own GREETER.

– **AT THE STAIRCASE**, Lucy practices the choreography. She fucks it up. She grimaces, when Patrick approaches:

PATRICK

You know the part?

LUCY

Seen my mom do it a million times.

PATRICK

That better be enough. You're on.

She heads to the area **OUTSIDE BEHIND THE FENCE**, ready to meet her "Prince Valor"... And holy shit, it's Ian.

IAN

Even *you're* a princess deep down.

Lucy fights to fend off a panic attack as she speaks rapidly:

LUCY

I'm not a performer and I've never done this and your brother can't fire you but he can sure as hell can fire me and my mom. God, last time you performed you were high and fainted. You probably don't even know the choreography -

IAN

(no bullshit, reassuring)
- I know it all. And I got you.

From outside the fence, FAIRY TALE plays as a NARRATOR speaks:

NARRATOR (O.S.)

Once upon a time there lived a beautiful girl named Sophia -

The fence doors swing open and Lucy walks out into:

WONDERLAND THEME PARK. She's been here a million times, but she's never had so many eyes on her. Young, hopeful eyes, waiting to be whisked away to someplace magical.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

- In the kingdom of Prince Valor.
"Edward," to his friends.

Now Ian walks out onto the street, perfectly in character. He and Lucy are on different sides of the "stage."

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Prince Valor lived in a magnificent castle. Sophia scrubbed the floors of her wicked step-mother's inn. Prince Valor and Sophia had never met...

Lucy begins to "scrub the ground" while Ian gazes out.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

... But sometimes, late at night, they dreamt of each other.

Ian sings his part of a romantic duet. And he's perfect.

IAN

*When will I find you / I know you're
out there / When will I find you /
You're waiting for me somewhere.*

Now it's Lucy's turn. She steps forward, tripping on her dress – but Ian catches her. For a moment they lock eyes. He smiles at her: "You got this." And she does:

LUCY
*When will I find you / Come take me
 away / When will I find you / Oh my
 prince, please say today.*

She's recovered. They smile and keep SINGING.

INT. BACKSTAGE TUNNELS - DAY

Still in costume, Lucy tears down the tunnels towards the exit. Also in costume, Ian follows her.

IAN
 Where are you going?

LUCY
 I'm ten minutes late, but maybe
 they'll still be there –

IAN
 – Are you running over in costume?

LUCY
 You have a better idea?

CUT TO:

I/E. IAN'S PORSCHE - DAY

Still in his prince costume, Ian's car tears down the streets of Dazzle. In the back seat, Lucy changes from her princess outfit into her civvies.

LUCY
 Don't peek!

Ian smiles to himself. He peeks.

EXT. RED CROSS OFFICE - DAY

Ian pulls up. Lucy rushes out, covered in sweat. She finds Denise – the woman who interviewed her – walking to her car.

LUCY
 Denise! I'm here! I can meet your
 supervisor...

DENISE
 You're half an hour late.

LUCY

I know, It's complicated but – but
I'm here now...

DENISE

She's gone. We filled the spot.

Denise looks at Ian in his Porsche. Nods to herself. Getting back in her car, she says one last thing to crestfallen Lucy:

DENISE (CONT'D)

But your boyfriend's very good-
looking. Nice car.

Denise drives off. Lucy watches her go, fighting back tears.

LUCY

... We need go back. Not supposed to
take costumes out of the park.

EXT. BEHIND THE FENCE - SUNSET

Lucy is alone in the fenced area behind the park just as the sun is setting. Ian enters from the tunnels and joins her.

LUCY

My mom has never flaked like this.
I'm a little worried she fell out of
a roller coaster or something.

IAN

Nah. My dad says the safety
regulations are up to snuff.

LUCY

... Thanks for the ride. That was
solid of you.

IAN

I'm not sure what to do with you
being nice to me. It feels so wrong.

She laughs sadly, then looks out at the setting sun.

LUCY

I'll never get out of here.

IAN

... Maybe there's a part of you that
didn't want to leave. Maybe, despite
what you say, you kinda like it here.
Your friends are here. Your family is
here. Wonderland is home.

LUCY

I just wanna play my whole life safe?

Ian takes a step closer to her.

IAN

I didn't say "safe"... But maybe you kinda wanted it to happen that way.

LUCY

Yeah, I *wanted* my mom to flake out -

IAN

Nothing here makes you want to stay?

Now he's right up in her face. She almost whispers:

LUCY

No... Nothing.

And finally they're kissing. Imagine the best first kiss you've ever had, and you're still nowhere near this. But then:

GLORIA (O.S.)

Lucy!

Lucy and Ian break away from the embrace. Gloria stands in the tunnel doorway, sweaty, out of breath, and horrified.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

You can't -

LUCY

- I'm not talking to you.

Both livid at her mother and embarrassed by the interruption, Lucy runs away, leaving Gloria alone with a confused Ian.

EXT. WONDERLAND THEME PARK - NIGHT

Ian and Theodore walk through the park towards **TWINKLE'S NEST**.

THEODORE

For a sick lady, Gloria Villar seemed quite intent on rushing to the show.

IAN

Maybe she just really, really wanted to see me play Prince Valor. Lucy and I killed it, huh?

THEODORE

You two were very convincing.

IAN

... I think I might do well here.
Maybe it won't be like New York.

THEODORE

I'm pleased you're taking something seriously. But... Having you publicly work minimum wage – you know this is just Dad's PR stunt, right?

IAN

(trying to play it off)
... Oh... I know...

THEODORE

So... By all means, have your fun with your lady co-stars – onstage or off. But let's not pretend you're going to bring these people home... Not in the daytime, anyway.

Ian is torn: he doesn't agree, but it's his big brother...

THEODORE (CONT'D)

C'mon. Car's waiting.

As Theodore leads his conflicted brother away, in the dark they don't notice Harper packing up her equipment. She's heard everything. She looks she's just been punched in the gut...

She takes out of her phone and sends a text that we don't see. But then she looks up to see Will approaching.

WILL

Hey...

Harper turns to see Will approaching. There's an uncertain coolness between them. Neither knows what to say...

EXT. LUCY'S APARTMENT ROOF - NIGHT

From her rooftop, Lucy looks out onto Dazzle, only miles – but many worlds – away. Then DING: She gets the text from Harper:

HARPER'S TEXT

<3

Lucy is confused, but touched. She texts "<3" back, as a nervous Gloria opens the door to the roof. Palpable silence.

GLORIA

... The Red Cross?

Lucy shakes her head. That's not happening.

LUCY

... No curing of malaria, typhoid, or any of the actual things I could've worked on.

Gloria's heart breaks, the world on her shoulders...

GLORIA

I didn't... I didn't know you'd sub in for me. I'd never have -

LUCY

- What the hell, Mom? *Where were you?*

GLORIA

Luce... Look... With Ian... I didn't want you to kiss him because -

LUCY

- Let's just focus on one of your epic screwups at a time, okay?

Gloria collects herself. This is excruciating for her:

GLORIA

... They're connected because - God, this got so messed up - I was late because I got a phone call...

Gloria's been dreading this conversation for years. She nearly chokes on the words:

GLORIA (CONT'D)

... I got a phone call... I got a phone call from James Chandler...

LUCY

Ian's dad?

GLORIA

... Ian's dad... And... Your dad.

Lucy stares at Gloria, dumbfounded...

END OF PILOT