The Millennials

By Allegra Fradkin
CHARACTERS

DR. LEORA LYNN, 46
A researcher. Good at her job because of her ability to connect personally and professionally yet never totally confident in the balance she strikes.

KIDS

CLAY KINCAID, 26
Book-smart but ill-equipped for a nine-to-five. Compassionate and earnest but impractical, lacking in focus and direction. His classic handsomeness is subdued by his liberal-arts-grad-scruffiness, making him more approachable.

MILO BERRY, 26
Has always believed that with hard work comes success; beginning to shed his trademark optimism.

SAGE MONTOYAMAMOTO, 25
A wry observer. Often has to be pushed to actually participate.

HALEY SCHULER, 25
Dramatizes everything. Spends more time fantasizing about a leading a different life than she spends living the one she has. Outspoken.

PARENTS

STERLING KINCAID, 52
No longer able to sustain a lifestyle of cigars, old fashioneds, and taxidermy, Sterling feels a bit lost.

JENNIFER BERRY, 46
Worked hard for everything she no longer has. Resilient.

MIMI YAMAMAMOTO, 50
Good-humored and self-deprecating. Frequently makes inappropriate comments.

DANIELA MONTOYA, 50
Fun in a similar way to Mimi when she's in the right mood but generally has a more serious demeanor. Responsible.

ELIZABETH SCHULER, 47
Very put-together on the surface, which belies the feeling that she's falling apart inside. Lately, it's become more difficult to conceal. Obsessed with being the perfect stay-at-home mother, as defined by her huge collection of parenting guides.

PEOPLE ALLUDED TO IN EPISODE BUT NOT PICTURED
MARTHA KINKAID, 54
Incarcerated. In her quest to "have it all" as a high-power working mom (and in spite of her refusal to ever use a phrase like "have it all"), Martha became greedy. Charming, friendly, doesn't seem like the cutthroat type.

RANDY SCHULER, 48
Immature, irresponsible, a good time. Always positions himself as the "fun parent" in contrast to Elizabeth.

KWAKU MONTOYAMAMOTO, 9
Sage’s adopted brother. Naïve and impressionable.

ACT ONE

INT. APPLE STORE - DAY

MILO BERRY, diligent and a little jaded, stands across the counter from a plastic surgery-enhanced sixty-year-old woman with a southern accent who has made herself comfortable in the bar stool opposite him. She twirls her hair flirtatiously.

WOMAN

Get it?! Walked into a bar. Just one. So it stopped working!

Milo looks exhausted but manages an appreciative chuckle.

WOMAN

I just can't believe you haven't heard that one before!

MILO

(almost monotone, with just enough enthusiasm for this delusional woman to believe him)

I know, you would think I would hear it all the time. But, no. You're the first.

The woman looks into Milo's eyes and strokes his hand, which then clenches tighter.

WOMAN

Well aren't you just the sweetest thing.

INT. DR. LYNN'S OFFICE - DAY
MILO, CLAY, SAGE, HALEY, and Dr. Lynn sit around a table in red chairs that are clearly for much younger study participants. The room is decorated for the kindergarten set.

MILO

(dryly)
So, I guess it's true what they say. Dreams really do come true.

SAGE

Wait. So you're a genius working at the genius b-

MILO

The irony isn't lost on me.

HALEY

Do you get the new iPhones before th-

DR. LYNN

I'm sorry to interrupt, Haley, but can we go back for a minute?

(to Milo)
What does Sage mean you're a genius?

MILO

It's nothing. Forget she said anyth-

HALEY

(teasingly)
Stop being so modest, Mi! Yes, Dr. Lynn, I'm afraid it's true. Hill Country Sentinel-verified. We are in the presence of a genius.

(sniffs)
Do you smell that?

Dr. Lynn looks at Haley quizzically.

HALEY

I swear, if you smell really, really hard, you can almost catch a whiff of the rarefied air.

Haley, who is facing Milo, looks down at the table and waves her arms in faux praise. Milo looks embarrassed.
HALEY

We are not worthy.

DR. LYNN

(Amused and a little uncomfortable after Haley's display; trying to seem professionally distant)

Milo?

MILO

(unenthusiastic, slumping a little in his chair)

It's not a big deal. My mom had me tested when I was younger. Whatever. She thought I might get a scholarship out of it.

CLAY

How did I not know that, dude? That's awesome.

Milo gives Clay an unsure half-smile.

DR. LYNN

And what about you, Clay? You were quite a precocious child yourself, if I remember correctly.

INT. DR. LYNN'S OFFICE, 1995 - DAY (FLASHBACK)

If the size of Dr. Lynn's glasses are any indication, it is clearly the nineties. Six-year-old Milo, Haley, and Sage sit around the same table, although it looks more age-appropriate in the flashback.

Bubbly Clay, outfitted in a sweater vest and rabbit ears, bursts through the office door. He has a bit of a speech impediment.

CLAY

Oh dea! Oh dea! I shall be too late!

He fumbles around in his pocket, and a pocket watch falls from his corduroys. The other children laugh, and Clay looks confused and then pleased.

DR. LYNN

(clapping)

Bravo! Bravo! So wonderful. Did you just watch "Alice in Wonderland"?
CLAY

(genuinely confused)
Watch it? I just finished Lewis Cawoll's novel. Is there a film version as well?

Dr. Lynn cocks her head to the side and smirks at Clay appraisingly, clearly intrigued by and taken with the peculiar boy.

CLAY

Anyways. I'm sowwy I'm late. Squash wan ovuh, and my mom said if I did the wabbit thing, you wouldn't be mad at me.

DR. LYNN

Of course not!...Squash? Like the vegetable?

Clay thinks this is hilarious.

CLAY

I get it! No, silly. The spoht.

(sadly)
But my souffle did wun ovuh in Fwench cooking this mohning.

DR. LYNN

French cooking? You certainly are a busy little boy.

CLAY

Today's nothing! On Wednesdays I have Improv, Latin, sitah, then a snack. Then pointillism and capoahwa.

DR. LYNN

What was that last one?

CLAY

Capoahwa! It's mahtial ahts and dance! Fwom Bwazil!

DR. LYNN

(nodding, impressed)
Is that so?
CLAY

It is so!

INT. DR. LYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. LYNN

Still staying busy, I presume?

CLAY

(smiling at the memory)
Well, I may have hit a bit of a roadblock. See, I double majored in medieval philosophy and pop culture studies with a minor in Sanskrit. Because, well, why the hell not? And ever since college I've been chilling with these badass kids in Romanian orphanages and building houses in Haiti for the sweetest people you'll ever meet and excavating Machu Picchu and-

DR. LYNN

AND??

CLAY

Well, yeah, but now with the whole thing with my mom...

Clay eyes Milo, and both look uncomfortable.

DR. LYNN

(trying to encourage a dialogue)
If I remember correctly, your mom was in the food business. Is that right?

MILO

Uh...

(glances at Clay uncertainly)
No offense, Dr. Lynn, but I don't see why you would pretend you haven't seen Mrs. Kincaid's face with a superimposed bullsye on every tabloid and news show and, like, Prius bumper sticker for the past three months.

DR. LYNN

I'm sorry, Milo. You're right. I just didn't want to make Clay uncomfortable,
and I wanted to get his perspective on the whole thing. But now that we're on the subject, I'm sensing a little tension between you two. The last time we met, y'all were the best of friends. What happened, if you don't mind my asking?

CLAY

(to Milo)
Do you want to take this one or-

MILO

No, man. You got it.

CLAY

Okay, so.

(bracing himself to tell the story for what has to be the millionth time)
You strike me as the thorough type, but just in case you're more of a headline-skimmer, I can give you the long version?

DR. LYNN

That would be great.

CLAY

So, as you probably know, my mom founded Bitegeist.

AD STILL FOR BITEGEIST

"BITEGEIST: IT'S A MATTER OF TIME" AT TOP. SOLID BACKDROP.
FOREGROUND: A RED VELVET-DRAPE TABLE--EMPTY

As Clay names items, they pop up in display on table.

CLAY (V.O.)

It all started a couple years before I was born with The Breakfast Club. That's what it was called--The Breakfast Club. She got all this cheap off-brand cereal and rebranded it to target each high school stereotype. There were Emo Os

A box of Emo Os appears on the table.

--Actually, those started off as Basket Case Flakes,
Emo Os disappear, are replaced by Basket Case Flakes like after that weird dandruffy girl in the movie, but they weren't a big seller, so the name was changed.

Emo Os replace Basket Case Flakes again.

There were Popular Pops and Apple Jocks.


There was Nutri-Brain for the nerds. I think there was a puzzle on the outside of the box or something.

Nutri-Brain.

Delinquents were the only demographic not represented, but I guess Mom figured they'd just steal one of the other kinds. After those took off, she developed the Spice Girl Spice Set...

Five curvaceous spice jars pop up.

Although no one really knew how to cook with "Sporty" and the others. So the only one that really sold was "Ginger."

Fifty more jars of "Ginger" appear.

Then, Forrest Gump-inspired chocolates.

Boxes of chocolates fill the table, each labeled something different (Including: "Charmed," "Shelf," "Dog's," "Low," "Pirate's," "A highway")

They were essentially normal chocolates, but each box came with one of those maps, and each chocolate was a different life milestone. Nougat was "mortgage." Toffee, "marriage." Caramel, "divorce." You get the idea.

As we entered the digital age, so did Bitegeist, introducing products like Zuckerburgers and Barbecuetube.

A sad-looking hamburger and hotdog appear on the table.

Those were pretty much just burgers and hotdogs with clever branding strategies.

SPLIT SCREEN:
ON ONE SIDE -

A YouTube channel playing a video of an animated dancing hotdog in sunglasses

OTHER SIDE -

Slowly scrolling down Facebook page, profile picture is a burger wearing the same sunglasses; down the wall are pictures of the same burger in front of the Eiffel Tower, Leaning Tower of Pisa, etc.

INT. DR. LYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

CLAY

Anyway, then she started getting political. There were Sobama instant noodles, Obalmonds, Barock Candy...She might've actually been the only Republican making money off his presidency. But then came the ill-fated day that she sought inspiration from Foxnews.com. I wonder how many white collar criminals' stories start out that way...Anyway, I guess she was reading about the euro crisis when one of those Chobani ads popped up on the side of the page. She took it as a sign from God--because, who wouldn't?--and created a line of Eurozone debt-themed Greek yogurt, otherwise known as My Big Nonfat Greek Yogurt. The promotion included all sorts of dumb slogans, like "GDP? You mean Goddamn Paradise?" and "At just 90 calories, who would've thought austerity could taste so rich?" There was another one about liquidity...I forget. Whatever. The point is My Big Nonfat Greek Yogurt was a goldmine. With MBNGY stock shooting through the roof, Bitegeist decided to buy up some other companies and expand into a multinational corporation with tens of thousands of employees worldwide. Dad got his Aston Martin; Mom got her chateau. Life in the ol' Kincaid house wasn't too shabby. There was nowhere to go but down.

Clay exhales.

A team of culinary investigators--did you know that was a thing?--decided MBNGY was a little too good to be true, a little too creamy for its lo-cal designation. So they put it to the test. It turned out Mom had decided to cut costs by repurposing ingredients from her
discontinued Clinton-era Impeaches 'n' Cream ice cream, not known for being particularly low in fat. I guess it had sort of naturally fermented into something resembling yogurt, and she saw it as the perfect opportunity. The charges started off relatively minor: defective product liability and negligence. But as the investigation continued, they uncovered the cover-up.

MILO

Mrs. Kincaid was charged with fraud, deception, unfair competition, bribery, and racketeering.

CLAY

Not gonna lie, still don't know what racketeering is, just that my mom's serving five years for it.

MILO

(mutters)
And that my mom's out of a job because of it.

CLAY

Right.

(to Dr. Lynn)
So Milo's mom worked with my mom.

MILO

Worked for his mom. She put everything she had into that job. There was no employee more loyal, more dedicated. And then they laid off everyone--hardly any severance.

CLAY

All the assets were frozen. And now I'm back home, manning the fort, or what's left of it, with Dad.

DR. LYNN

I can see how all that would put a strain on your friendship. I guess your parents weren't as close socially as the two of you were. How are they holding up?
MILO

No clue. I think this is the first time a Sterling and a Berry have been in the same room since Martha's court date when my mom had to testify.

INT. DR. LYNN'S WAITING ROOM - DAY

JENNIFER BERRY, quiet, strong, and understandably mistrusting, sits in the farthest seat from STERLING KINCAID, nontreating, not self-aware, and jaw-droppingly handsome. MIMI YAMAMATO, DANIELA MONTOYA, and ELIZABETH SCHULER are off to the side.

Jennifer glares at Sterling, refusing to avert her gaze until he notices. He looks up from his phone for a second, looks back down, then does a double-take. He smiles at her and nods cluelessly, as if to say, "It's good to see you, unfamiliar person who seems to recognize me." Jennifer furrows her brow in confusion. If anything she's now more amused by his stupidity than upset.

INT. DR. LYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. LYNN

I haven't heard from you yet, Haley. What is it that you do?

(looking through a file)
I see here that you used to want to want to be a large animal veterinarian. So, have you dedicated your life to healing horses?

HALEY

Um, well, I went riding on an episode of "Two Lips" last season?

Milo, Clay, and Sage stifle their snickers, clearly already aware of Haley's claim to fame.

DR. LYNN

I'm sorry, "Two Lips"?

HALEY

Oh. Sorry. Do you not have a television or something?

Dr. Lynn looks annoyed.

HALEY
Anywho...

CLAY

It's a reality dating show.

HALEY

Yeah. There's this hot guy and all these girls. And he booty-texts whomever he wants to hook up with that night. And if he thinks you're good in the sack, he texts you for a date the next day.

SAGE

It's supposed to be a play on how our generation views relationships.

HALEY

Oh yeah, and there's the tulip ceremony! If you use too much tongue or talk about boring things on the date or something, you don't get a tulip.

Dr. Lynn nods hesitantly as if she thinks she gets it.

HALEY

The trick is to do a really good job until there are, like, two tulips left. Then, when the guy texts you to hook up, tell him you're on your period or something so you get kicked off. That way you get as much exposure as possible but there's no chance you'll win and have to spend any time with him after the taping. He's generally a pretty big dick.

Dr. Lynn is still nodding, trying her hardest to appear accepting and not traumatized.

DR. LYNN

I can imagine.

HALEY

Yeah, so, that's what I do.

DR. LYNN

(sweetly)

Excuse me?
HALEY

I pretty much just ride the reality TV circuit. It's not a bad gig. I'm actually trying to get my mom to go on Ex-Wife Swap: In Denial Edition, but she says she doesn't fit the bill, which I told her is exactly what someone who did fit the bill would say, but she wouldn't have it. She's al-

DR. LYNN

Okay, but Haley. Surely you don't intend to do this forever.

HALEY

Oh, no. Of course not!

Dr. Lynn looks relieved.

HALEY

I plan to have my own show one day.

INT. DR. LYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. LYNN

Wow.
(Pause)
Well, we're almost done here.
(pglancing through her notes)
Just one more thing. So, correct me if I'm wrong, but it appears that all of you are sharing a residence with your families again.

Dr. Lynn pauses to let this sink in. Everyone else looks around each other surprised, as if this is the first time in the conversation that they've realized this.

CLAY

Welp. That's probably the most depressing thing I've heard in a while.

HALEY

Yeah, and on that note-

Haley gets up to leave.

DR. LYNN
Yes, you all are done. Feel free to email me with any questions.

The rest of the group is already heading towards the door.

DR. LYNN

(calling out to them)
Please tell your parents they can come in now!

Dr. Lynn slumps into her chair with a deep sigh. She then regains her business-like composure, straightening her papers and arranging the various folders in front of her so they form right angles.

INT. DR. LYNN'S WAITING ROOM

Jennifer is working on her laptop. Sterling is holding his iPhone sideways, clearly engrossed in the game he's playing. Elizabeth is on her phone, not saying anything but looking like she's about to burst with rage. Mimi and Daniela are flipping through waiting room magazines.

MIMI

(louder than she intends)
Oh no!

The parents looks up for a second then return to what they were doing. Daniela looks concerned.

MIMI

This is the April Guns 'N' Fish! I've already read this one.

DANIELA

(laughs)
Oh, here. Have mine

Daniela hands Mimi "Cheerleaders Digest"

DANIELA

(deadpan)
There's a really hard-hitting piece on herkies versus high ju-

ELIZABETH

(shouting into phone)
WHAT?

Everyone jumps. Elizabeth looks embarrassed.
ELIZABETH

(in a hushed voice, sarcastically)
Oh yeah, great. Thanks, Tom. You know what, don't do me any favors.

(pauses, listening, looking at ground)

Haley, Milo, Clay, and Sage file into the room and towards their respective parents.

ELIZABETH

(still into phone)
And don't tell me to "chill." I hate it when you say that. You sound just like Hay-

Elizabeth suddenly sees Haley's wedges in front of her and looks up to make eye contact. She closed-mouth smiles at her daughter.

ELIZABETH

(into phone, unconvincingly kind)
No, honey. It's okay. Finish that last-minute spending report from your boss.

Elizabeth winces in response to the audible but indiscernible shouting on the other end.

ELIZABETH

(into phone)
I won't take no for an answer. I know how badly you want to be here. So does Haley.

Elizabeth squeezes Haley's wrist lovingly. Haley rolls her eyes.

ELIZABETH

(into phone, a little more dark/aggressive in tone but still with characteristic restraint and sweetness)
But I would hate for you to die in a fiery car accident trying to rush here in traffic. Now, go finish that budget analysis, and we'll talk when you get home.

Elizabeth hangs up and flashes Haley a fake smile.

HALEY
(under her breath)  
I thought you said it was a spending report.

Haley fishes in Elizabeth's purse and pulls out a car key.

ELIZABETH

 stil smiling widely)  
Pardon? (pause) Oh! You know me and that financial mumbo jumbo. I hardly know a stock from a-

HALEY

Whatever. We're all gonna go do something.  
Don't wait up.

Haley turns to leave. Elizabeth grabs her hand.

ELIZABETH

Wait a minute, Haley. Who's we?

Haley looks at Elizabeth like she's an idiot.

ELIZABETH

(pleasantly surprised)  
Clay, Sage, and Milo? How sweet. I'll just save the meatloaf for another night. Here, let me give you some money for dinner.

Elizabeth searches through her purse. Haley walks away.

ELIZABETH

You know, I wish you'd spend more time with them instead of that crew that's been coming around the house lately. Those girls are bad news. Just the other day I saw one of them ta-

There's a double chime sound, and Elizabeth looks up to see the door to outside swinging shut behind Haley. She meets the other parents' gazes with a strained smile.

DANIELA

Have fun! And don't forget to pick up your brother from hip hop at 5.

SAGE

Remind me again why you guys signed him up for that.
MIMI

It's important to be in touch with one's roots and try new things.

DANIELA

(teasingly)
Yeah, Sagey. If we hadn't signed you up for those salsa lessons, how would we have ever known how uncoordinated you were?

MIMI

(to Daniela)
Don't forget the bonsai classes! Poor Sagey. Any miniature botany career aspirations she was fostering--out the window!

DANIELA

Literally!

MIMI

(to Sage)
Do you remember that? You were so cute. You wouldn't let us in your room for 3 weeks, and then finally I had to know what was going on.

DANIELA

(in an announcer-like crescendo)
And in the privacy breach category, the bad mom award goes to...

MIMI

I know, I know. I just couldn't help myself. And there it was. Practically a full-grown tree. I swear there was a bird incubating her spawn on one of the branches poking through the window.

Mimi and Daniela crack up.

SAGE

I'm glad I can provide so much amusement. But back to hip hop...how is that helping Kwaku connect to his roots?? Isn't that a little bit raci-

MIMI


Dammit! I just missed such a good opportunity for a pun.

Daniela jokingly consoles Mimi with a shoulder pat.

MIMI

Something with the bonsai's roots and Sagey's roots...

DANIELA

There, there. The moment has passed.

SAGE

Okay, forget it.

DANIELA

No. Sorry, sweetie. We were just joking. What were you asking?

SAGE

I just don't see what hip hop has to do with-

MIMI

Hip hop is a very important form of expression for the African American community. There's a long hist-

SAGE

But Kwaku isn't African American. He's African.

MIMI

(jokingly offended)
And you call us racist! Honey, Kwaku was born in Africa and now he lives in America. What do you think African American means?

SAGE

Right, but-

DANIELA

But what?
SAGE

Never mind.

(sighs)
See ya later.

(Off-key but basically to the tune of Billy Joel's "Famous Last Words":)
MIMI

Nothing left for a dream now...

DANIELA

...only one final serenade...

MIMI

And these are the last words we have to say...

DANIELA AND MIMI

(in messy unison, waving on "bye")
...Before another Sage goes Byyye!

Sage rolls her eyes but doesn't seem too bothered by her mothers' antics. Before she walks out to meet Haley, she glances around at the other parents, each one alone and apparently unhappy, and smiles gratefully at her own.

JENNIFER

(measuredly)
Okay, just-

Jennifer looks up at Sterling and Clay skeptically.

JENNIFER

Just, be safe.

MILO

Mom, I'm 26. We're gonna have to cut that cord sometime...

JENNIFER

(offended)
I'm sorry. I guess I forgot what an independent adult you were just now when I was emailing our landlord.
Milo looks hurt. Clearly this is a sensitive subject.

MILO

I told you, I'm trying. As soon as I can save up enough to-

JENNIFER

(guiltily)
No, no, no. I didn't mean that. I'm just a little on edge because of, well...you know.

MILO

Wait wha-?

Milo looks up at Sterling then back at his mom.

MILO

Oh right. I'm so sorry. I bet you don't have to stay if you don't want to. Dr. Lynn will understa-

JENNIFER

No, no. It's fine. I'm fine.

Jennifer swallows and puts on a brave face. Milo still looks concerned.

JENNIFER

Really, Mi. Go with your friends.

Milo walks away cautiously, looking back at his mom like she's a volcano pre-eruption.

Clay walks out with him, turning around on his way out the door to call out to Sterling, who is now chatting with Elizabeth.

CLAY

("ironically," with corresponding hand gesture)
Peace out, Pops!

STERLING

(nervous, clueless but wanting desperately to be seen as cool, both by his son and by Elizabeth)
Uh, um, yes...Peace out.
Sterling tries to mimic Clay's hand gesture.

CLAY

(laughs)
Alright, later. See you at home.

There's a delay while Sterling thinks of a response, and at this point Clay has already exited.

STERLING

Yup. Later, skater.

ACT TWO

INT. ELIZABETH'S CAR - DAY

Haley is driving. Sage is in the front, and the boys are in the back.

CLAY

Oh wait, did we ever figure out where we're going?

HALEY

(smugly)
I know just the place.

INT. DR. LYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

The parents sit in the tiny red chairs.

DR. LYNN

Please, make yourselves comfortable. Well, uh, as comfortable as possible. I do apologize for the setup. I do most of my work with children.

Sterling raises his hand.

DR. LYNN

Yes? Mr. Kincaid? By the way, you don't have to raise your hand. This should all be very informal.

STERLING

Oh, uh, sorry. I was just, uh, wonder- Well, it's just I wasn't exactly, uh, here
last time. And I was just hoping to learn a little more about what you do here.

DR. LYNN

Of course, Mr. Kincaid. So twenty years ago, when your children were just in kindergarten and I was working on my doctoral dissertation and still going to the gym on a semi-regular basis, I proposed a project to my advisor. I wanted to find a group of kids who would be hitting puberty right around the time of the new millennium and follow them through various life stages. I didn't know if my findings would lead to anything, especially since I could only afford to recruit such a small sample size, but I thought it might be interesting on an individual level. So I have records of everything from when they lost their first tooth to when they lost their virginities—all confidential of course. And I like to speak to the parents of the subjects because, while peer relationships are important in identity formation, I'm finding that family is more significant for this generation than ever before. Growing up, Millennials, as we're calling them, were closer to their parents than any generation that preceded them, and now an unprecedented number is moving back home, and no one's sure how long this will last or what effect it will have on marriage, career, and parenting for this generation. And that's where you come in. I want to know what you think about these issues, as a parent of a millennial. By the way, I also wanted to reach out to you and your family. I know this must be a really difficult time. Please let me know if there's anything I can do.

STERLING

Well, thanks. Thank you. We're actually doing just fine. And I'd prefer if we didn't discuss it since it's obviously a pretty personal issue.

Jennifer scoffs.

STERLING

Excuse me. Did you want to say something?
JENNIFER

I'm sorry. It's just hard for me to sit here and hear you call this lawsuit that's been broadcast around the world and was single-handedly perpetuated by your wife a "personal problem."

STERLING

(getting riled up)
And who are you?

JENNIFER

You're serious?

STERLING

What? Have we met?

JENNIFER

Unbelievable. Milo wasn't lying--you really weren't around.

STERLING

Who's Milo?

JENNIFER

My son. Your son's best friend growing up. I worked at Bitegeist from the beginning. I went to the Christmas party at your house every year. Martha really never mentioned me?

STERLING

I don't know, Martha wasn't home much...That's not true. I guess I was never home much to know whether she was home much or not.

EXT. ZILKER PARK - DAY

Haley, Milo, Clay, and Sage sit side-by-side on top of rusty monkey bars with their legs dangling over the sides. Haley passes down beers from a mini-cooler. Sage declines.

Haley belches.

HALEY

Is it just me or has this place...changed?
MILO

Well, yeah. Those used to be swings. It wasn't just a bar with random chains hanging down from it.

CLAY

And it was never just us here. There's something weird about an empty park.

SAGE

Wanna hear something depressing?

HALEY

Always!

SAGE

You know how we were all in a playgroup when we were really little? Like, you've seen pictures, right? Well, I was going through an old album the other day, and there was a picture of all of us standing on that rope bridge where we used to play hot lava, right over th-

Sage stretches to see the bridge from where she's sitting, almost losing her balance. She's settles back in and now reclines on the monkey bars. The others follow her example.

SAGE

Yeah, so there's this picture of us standing on what is now that homeless man's bed, I guess. Anyway, we're holding up this poster that says "The Neverland Treasures, 1991-1992." Like, whoever's mom came up with the name knew we'd be coming back to this same spot, now closer to thirty than nineteen, still desperately boycotting growing up. I mean, what the fuck is wrong with us that our first instinct was to come drink beer at the same place we used to gulp down bottled breast milk? No offense, Haley.

MILO

You were right, Sage. That was incredibly, incredibly depressing. Thanks.

CLAY
(turning onto his side to look at Sage)
Wait, Sage. I just realized. You never said why you were still living at home.

MILO

(to Clay)
Oh yeah, you're right!

(to Sage)
For me it's money stuff. Clay's helping out his family. Haley's...just being Haley.

Haley shrugs.

CLAY

But yeah. What's your deal? You always used to talk about how annoying your family is. How they're "four matching polos and a golden retriever away from being a stock photo for some stiff diversity campaign."

SAGE

(sits up, suddenly going from somber to alert)
Hey, I think he's stirring!

Sage points to the rope bridge, which does appear to be gently swaying.

Maybe we should go check and see if everything is okay.

The others, who are still lying down, exchange skeptical glances. Clay shrugs as if to see Sage's issue isn't worth pushing her on just yet. Milo and Haley seem to be fine with moving on.

EXT. ZILKER PARK - DAY

Milo, Sage, Haley, and Clay gather around the rope bridge, two on either side. A twenty-something guy with dreadlocks and a "Keep Austin Weird" tie dye t-shirt is semi-conscious on the bridge.

Haley gently tugs at a dread.

HALEY

Excuse me, sir? Sir!

The man is suddenly fully conscious, though he's still squinting because of the sun.
MAN  
Who in God's name are you calling "sir"?

The man's eyes slowly open.

MAN  
Haley? Haley Schuler?!

HALEY  
Ben! Oh my God. How did I not recognize you before? How are you??

Milo, Sage, and Clay exchange unsurprised glances. Haley would know the man sleeping on the rope swing.

HALEY  
(not taking her eyes off of Ben)  
Oh, how rude of me! Ben, these are my friends. Friends, meet Ben.

MILO  
So how do you two know each other?

HALEY  
(to Ben)  
So what have you been up to? Tell me everything!

INT. DR. LYNN'S WAITING ROOM - EARLY EVENING  

STERLING  
I don't know about you guys, but I could sure use a drink after that.

Daniela looks at Mimi.

DANIELA  
I'm afraid we're going to have to sit this one out. Kwaku refuses to do his homework unless someone stands over him watching.

MIMI  
Yeah, we're thinking about sending the little brat back to African, maybe getting a replacement kid. Maybe this new one will remember to make his bed.
The other parents laugh nervously. Sterling waits until Mimi and Daniela have made their exit to pick up the conversation.

STERLING

(shaking his head)
Man, she is something else.

ELIZABETH

(clearly excited by the prospect of gossiping, particularly with such an attractive man)
Who? Mimi? She's always been a nut! When the kids were in third grade, she let Sage bring her in for show-and-tell. She let the class try on all her bracelets—even the boys! And she let them ask anything they wanted about what it's like to be a lesbian. I guess Sage had been fielding a lot of questions about her two mommies...And what's up with that last name: Montoyamamoto? You know there's no hyphen, right. They just merged their two last names into one. What is that? (Repeats the name in quick succession, butchering it) Montoyamamoto. Montoyamoya. Montoyamamama...

STERLING

So, you ladies want to get out of here or what?

ELIZABETH

Sure! Haley took my car...

STERLING

Not a problem. I have plenty of room. Jennifer?

JENNIFER

Oh, I was just going to go home and wait for Milo...

STERLING

Nonsense! You're coming with us!

ELIZABETH

(less enthusiastically)
Yes, you should definitely come.
JENNIFER

Okay, I guess one drink won't hurt. Milo won't be back for a while anyway.

ACT THREE

INT. STERLING'S CAR - EARLY EVENING

Spirits are high as Elizabeth (backseat), Sterling, and Jennifer bob their heads to The Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby."

Elizabeth's phone rings. She looks down at the caller ID, and all of the joy drains from her face.

ELIZABETH

Hi, Officer Joe. How are you? What is it this time?

Sterling turns down the music.

ELIZABETH

Ben? I don't know a Ben...Wait a minute! Ben Goldberg? Yes! Haley used to run around with him in high school. I always knew he was a bad egg. A shame, too. Such nice parents. But it's like I always say-

She's interrupted by Office Joe on the other end.

Yes, yes. I'm on my way now. Thank you, Officer.

ELIZABETH

(to Sterling)
I'm so sorry to do this. But do you think you could drop me off at the police station. It seems that Haley's gotten in a bit of a scuffle.

Sterling and Jennifer exchange a quick glance.

STERLING

Absolutely. Is everything okay. Is there anything we can do?

Caught off guard, Jennifer jumps a little at "we."

ELIZABETH

No, no. Everything's fine. It's no biggie. You two have fun.
EXT. PARK - EARLY EVENING

CLAY

Are they not coming back? It's been, like, half an hour since she said they'd be back.

MILO

Chill out, dude. What's the big deal? They're probably just making out somewhere.

Clay looks upset rather than comforted by Milo's assumption.

SAGE

Of course! Clay and Haley! Claley? How could I be so blind? You're obviously into her.

CLAY

I mean, I'm n- Well, I d- I, uh...

SAGE

Eloquent, really. The next Dr. King.

INT. STERLING'S CAR - EARLY EVENING

Now it's just Sterling and Jennifer in the car. It's awkward.

STERLING

So, uh. That Elizabeth, huh? She's pretty tightly wound.

JENNIFER

(distracted)
Hmm?

STERLING

(sighs)
Never mind.

JENNIFER

Are you okay?

STERLING
Yeah, I'm sorry. It's just hard. With Martha in jail and everything. You know what it's like- Oh God. I'm so sorry. I'm not trying to say what's happening with Martha is anything like you and your husband, I mean, you're a widow, so it's obviously different.

Jennifer looks stunned at Sterling's endless series of gaffes.

STERLING

Oh God. Fuck. Fuck, I'm so sorry. I don't know what I'm thinking. I guess I'm just a little nervous. Not that I have a reason to be nervous. It's just that-

JENNIFER

Pull over.

STERLING

What?

JENNIFER

Just do it.

STERLING

Here?!

JENNIFER

Jesus fucking Christ. Are you always this difficult? I'm trying to help you. Pull over.

Sterling pulls into the practically empty lot of a small strip mall.

STERLING

There. Are you happy?

JENNIFER

(sarcastically)

Thrilled. Remind me never to ask you for a favor.

STERLING

Wha-
Jennifer clamps her hand over Sterling's mouth.

JENNIFER

This will be so much better if you don't speak. Trust me.

STERLING

(muffled by Jennifer's hand)
Wha will?

JENNIFER

Shhh. Okay? When I move my hand, I don't want you to say anything. I just want you to kiss me. Can you do that?

STERLING

WHA?

JENNIFER

(impatiently)
Now what did we just discuss?

Sterling nods slowly. Jennifer lets out a sigh of relief.

JENNIFER

Good.

Jennifer moves her hand from Sterling's mouth to his thigh. Sterling looks at her for a few seconds and then goes for it, leaning over the console.

He stops kissing her.

JENNIFER

(rolling her eyes)
What's wrong now? You don't strike me as the guilt-ridden type.

STERLING

It's not that.

Sterling unbuckles his seatbelt, stretches, and rubs his side where the seatbelt was digging in.

That's better. Now where were we?

FADE OUT