

FADE IN:

INT. NEIL CLARKE'S BEDROOM — NIGHT.

NEIL, forty-four, disheveled in pajamas in a half-lit room, sits on the edge of his bed as if he is sitting on eggshells. He looks tired, worn out. MOONLIGHT shines through the bedroom window.

A young woman, mid-twenties, GENEVIEVE, stands a few feet in front of him with a BAG over one shoulder and a BOOK in her hands. She is wearing comfortable, casual clothing, and she looks distressed, possibly on the verge of tears.

Before this scene, NEIL and GENEVIEVE have had difficulty communicating about a number of different things. The night before, NEIL declined a late night FaceTime conversation with GENEVIEVE on the grounds of being tired and low energy. This argument stems from GENEVIEVE canceling Saturday's plans two days prior because she claimed that packing and unpacking for her move would be time-consuming. NEIL suspects additional reasons behind her decision.

GENEVIEVE

Hm, why did I cancel Saturday's plans? Hm. Well, let's see. I was embarrassed for putting myself out there only to learn I was completely alone in that regard. Then, my feelings were hurt. (A beat.) Then, I decided I didn't need to feel that way because life is all about lessons and I did truly have things to do. So, rather than wait, I bumped up my to-do. Which was stupid, because when I called the cleaners to thoroughly clean an apartment so that it's "move-in ready" they need at least 6 hours. So, that's all damn day. The movers are all booked for Saturday and can't move anything until Monday.

NEIL

(VOICE VERGES ON INCREDULOUS) So, instead of trying to talk to me about it, try to talk me through your thought process when I asked, you find a way to avoid me entirely?

GENEVIEVE

Well, at the time I wasn't sure what I was thinking and my feelings were a mess. It was overwhelming.

NEIL

(A PAUSE, A SIGH) Anyone could have told you no decent moving company really works on the weekends, and certainly not at the last minute.

GENEVIEVE

(SHEEPISH) Well, I didn't know and no one told me. So, I guess I'm just an idiot then.

A moment or two passes in awkward, complete silence, save for a distant SIREN clanging. NEIL pushes a hand through his hair and stares at the ceiling for a second, composing himself.

NEIL

(WITH BUILDING FRUSTRATION) I offered to help, but you didn't take me up on it, and you've got yourself in this mess. And let me preface what I'm about to say with this: I don't think you're a child. I have an issue with all of this right now (MAKES A CIRCULAR MOTION WITH HIS HANDS) because what I'm doing feels like what a parent might do while untangling a child's mess. I'm not your dad, but trying to help you get through an overreaction like this makes me feel like I am and that's really unsettling to me.

Another moment passes in heavy silence as NEIL steadies his focus on GENEVIEVE; she looks away.

GENEVIEVE

You're right. I did get myself into this mess. I'm owning up to that. I said that I was sorry and I'm ready to move on. I don't know what more I should do or say to make things better between us. I wish I wouldn't have said anything at all, because it's so insignificant now, in hindsight. And it was stupid and I still feel stupid. And I'm just sorry.

(PAUSE) I should go.

NEIL

What do you think leaving now would do?

GENEVIEVE

I don't know. I mean, it's late. You should sleep. I should sleep. I don't know.

NEIL

Do you always run off after an argument?

GENEVIEVE

I mean, what should I do? Just sit here? I brought a new book. I guess read that. Or we can talk more. I don't know, I don't have a lot of arguments like this. In school, arguments related to my work or mock cases are based on facts not feelings. Feelings are less concrete to navigate.

NEIL struggles to keep composure, to avoid rolling his eyes, to keep from saying something he'll regret later. However, he realizes that if he doesn't say anything now, he probably won't have a chance to say it later, so he takes a deep breath before he speaks.

NEIL

I'm going to say this now so you can decide what you want to do. You are going to have a difficult time with me if you don't learn to stand your ground and argue with me over anything and everything. When I ask why or what you're thinking, I actually want to know those things. I want answers, not a wall, not a dismissal. I know that not everything has or needs a concrete answer, but if I know what you're thinking and what you're

feeling, I can try to understand you better. But if you're going to dismiss feelings because they're harder to navigate, because they're messy, and then run away from them, then whatever this is and whatever it could be isn't going to work, and I'm saying this from a very rational perspective. It's not my prerogative to chase after flighty behavior. I'm very much a tortoise and not a hare. So if you absolutely, truly believe you can handle that, you can stay. But if you can't, I understand and I won't hold it against you.

GENEVIEVE is quiet for several minutes, avoiding looking at NEIL, focusing on the book in her hands, her shoes, everywhere else but NEIL.

GENEVIEVE

Yes, I will try. Sometimes I'm not always ready to talk about things because I need time to process what I'm thinking and how I'm feeling. These things aren't always clear to me, but I will talk. I will always talk no matter how uncomfortable I feel.

(A BEAT) And thank you for being patient and willing, Neil.

NEIL gives a noncommittal grunt.

NEIL

All right. Okay. Let's go to bed. It's late, and we're both tired.

NEIL stands up to find something for GENEVIEVE to wear to bed. While she changes and does whatever she needs to do to get ready for bed, NEIL climbs into bed and lies with the covers up to his shoulders and stares at the ceiling, wondering, not for the first time, if this should continue and if this should have even begun.

FADE OUT.