

GOOD MOM

"Pilot"

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ACT ONE

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

ON KAT FISHER (40s), usually unflappable but currently fully flapped: face twisted into an ugly cry, mascara smeared, she's sniffing back snot -- a losing battle -- as her sunglasses dangle like they tried to jump from the wreckage of her hair.

Something red is smeared across her forehead -- blood, paint? It's hard to tell. She would dash away and reset herself -- but, inconveniently, Kat's in handcuffs.

Two LOCAL COPS lead her out of the school: one UNIFORM (20s), one plainclothes Detective (DAVE, 40s). As Kat TRIPS on a crack in the sidewalk, a piece of her sandal left behind --

KAT

Shit! I've been warning them to fix that for years.

The cops don't stop. Dave shoots her an appraising look.

DAVE

You under the influence, Kat?
Alcohol, Adderall... mommy drugs?

KAT

(is he serious?)
"Mommy drugs"??
(then)
Please, Dave. You've got this wrong. Just let me go home.

DAVE

This is standard procedure.

KAT

No, this is revenge. Humiliation.
You're playing right into --

DAVE

So there's a mastermind behind this, huh?

They round a corner, into the post-school pickup frenzy. Faces turn as PARENTS, STUDENTS and SCHOOL STAFF react to the odd sight of a distraught mom getting perp-walked.

UNIFORM

(re: crowd)
Whoa.

Kat addresses the onlookers, trying to play it off.

KAT
Big mistake, right? I'm sure you
all know that. Friends.

But every eye she tries to meet looks away. Silence.

KAT (CONT'D)
Seriously? You're all just gonna
let this happen?!

One STRIKING TEEN (17) in particular meets Kat's eye. That rare youth who seems wise beyond her years, no insecurity detected. Not gloating, not pitying, she's just... staring, as Kat is led to the curb.

This pushes Kat even closer to the edge. To all:

KAT (CONT'D)
If the tables were turned --
(picking from the crowd)
Betty... Delia...? Anybody??

Several teens have their cell phones out now, filming. The adults shift, embarrassed. But not moved to speak.

KAT (CONT'D)
Okay, good to know. Duly noted!

As Dave opens the back door of his car, Kat balks --

KAT (CONT'D)
I get carsick in the back seat.

Dave raises an eyebrow. The chutzpah.

DAVE
So, you're calling shotgun.

KAT
I don't usually have to.
(annoyed)
I'll puke.

UNIFORM
You wouldn't be the first.

The Uniform ushers Kat into the back of the car. She turns back to the staring crowd, one last thing to say to them --

KAT
You all know this isn't me. I'm a
good person! A good friend! A --

The door slams closed, muffling her as she repeats herself. As she stares wildly out the window -- how did she get here??

SMASH TO TITLES:

GOOD MOM

INT. KAT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (WEEKS EARLIER)

CHYRON: BEFORE

ON KAT looking out her kitchen window, a moment to herself before the day kicks into high gear. She's showered, styled, the poise and optimism she typically employs on display.

LANGUAGE APP VOICE (ON PHONE)

"I am going to the restaurant."

KAT

Voy al restaurante.

LANGUAGE APP VOICE (ON PHONE)

Voy al restaurante.

(then)

"Where is the beach?"

KAT

Donde esta --

JOE (O.C.)

Donde esta my work laptop?

Her husband, JOE (40s), the kind of guy who seems hotter than he is because he's a hands-on dad, enters.

Kat pauses the app as Joe pulls together the kids' lunches.

KAT

Donde estan the kids?

(calls to them)

Your Eggos are getting cold!

As she retrieves his work laptop from a nook --

JOE

You gonna be fluent by the time we leave for Cabo?

Facing away from Joe, something flickers across Kat's face. A crack in the facade. Doubt? Distrust?

She turns back with the laptop, the look gone. Instead she grins at him, always cool, going with the flow.

KAT
 I already know enough to be
 dangerous.
 (then)
Dos margaritas, por favor.

JOE
 I like the way you think. Blended?

KAT
 (playful)
 Order for yourself, those were both
 for me.

She hands Joe two juice boxes, switching to kid business.

KAT (CONT'D)
 You still good to drop Lexi and
 Cole this morning?

JOE
 That's the plan. Unless something
 changed.

KAT
 No. I was hoping we could talk...

Before anything more can be said, the kids flood in: COLE
 (8), easygoing; LEXI (12 going on 40), precise and nerdy; and
 GEMMA (16), still sweet despite being a full-on teen.

LEXI
 (disappointed)
 Ugh, I thought you said "eggs."
 Processed food is a nightmare.

Cole shrugs, pulling a waffle from the toaster --

COLE
 I like it.

LEXI
 (darkly)
 Of course you do.

GEMMA
 I can make eggs. I saw a recipe --

Joe scoops Cole up, Eggo and all.

JOE
 No time, I've got breakfast bars in
 the glove box.

COLE
Wait! Where's the syrup?

GEMMA
You finished it yesterday.
(expectantly, to Kat)
Mom?

KAT
It's on my list...

She opens a drawer FULL OF STOLEN CONDIMENTS from restaurants and hotels, grabs a sample-sized jar of honey. As she tosses it to Cole --

KAT (CONT'D)
Think fast!
(then)
Sweet and sticky, close enough.

LEXI
And stolen from bees.

KAT
Actually, stolen from the
Disneyland Hotel's breakfast
buffet... but point taken.

As Joe, Lexi and Cole head out, Joe turns back to Kat --

JOE
(remembering)
Did you want to talk?

KAT
Nothing urgent. Drive safe.
(to the kids)
Love you! See you tonight!

Kat and Gemma stand there, in the wake of the commotion.

GEMMA
(teasing)
Are you and dad keeping secrets?

KAT
From you? Impossible.

But off Kat... is there trouble in paradise?

INT. KAT'S CAR - DAY

On the way to school. Kat, behind the wheel, glances over at Gemma at a red light.

KAT

You're kinda quiet, considering you have me all to yourself.

GEMMA

I guess I'm a little nervous... Mr. Lomas is supposed to announce the yearbook positions today.

(then)

I don't know if I told you, Ben had to drop. He had a schedule thing.

KAT

Wait, so does that mean --

GEMMA

I'm the only one in line to be editor in chief. And as a junior, too. It's kind of a big deal.

KAT

Gemma! Is this for-sure, for-sure?

Gemma nods, trying to contain her excitement.

GEMMA

I think so.

(then)

Can we have dan dan noodles tonight? Just a low-key special dinner. I don't want to jinx it...

KAT

No jinx. You earned this.

(then)

And I'll get us some boba... or, bobas? Is it already plural, like "deer"?

They share a smile, then --

KAT (CONT'D)

(sincere)

I'm really proud of you, kid.

A HONK behind them. Kat's startled, resumes driving.

KAT (CONT'D)

Good lord.

(silly, yelling)

That's right, I love my daughter and I don't care who knows it!

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

From the drop-off zone, Kat waves out her car window as Gemma heads toward the school.

KAT
Break a leg!

NIA (40s), former trial lawyer and current PTA president, zips up to the car. She grasps the sill of the open window, the dropoff line equivalent holding open an elevator door.

NIA
'Morning Kat, got a sec?

Kat flashes a tight smile. Knows what this means.

KAT
For you, Nia? A whole minute.

NIA
I had some last-minute dropouts for the bake sale.
(then, oddly chipper)
Sometimes I think people like to see me scramble!

KAT
Monsters.

NIA
I wouldn't go that far.

KAT
I was joking. Because you were joking?

NIA
(was anybody joking?)
Oh. Okay.

KAT
Well, good luck!

She moves to pull away, calling Nia's bluff.

NIA
Wait -- I know you're down for next month, but your brownies are legendary...

Kat cuts to the chase --

KAT
If I whip up a double batch, would
that help fill the gap?

Nia exhales, relieved.

NIA
You're a lifesaver.

KAT
Eh, I'm a competent baker at best.

NIA
No, it's true. Who stopped Delia
from putting walnuts in her
snickerdoodles?

KAT
That was only halfway about
allergies. No need to reinvent the
wheel, it's a simple cookie --

Clearly a well-worn topic.

NIA
Uh oh, I got you started...

The high school BELL rings, saving both of them.

KAT
Lucky for you, we've reached the
end of our minute.

Nia doesn't move. Kat eyes her hand on the window sill.

NIA
Right.

She pats the car, steps back as Kat pulls away.

NIA (CONT'D)
(waving)
Good talk!

INT. CHARITY THRIFT SHOP - DAY

CRAIG (40s, social butterfly) zips a secondhand WEDDING DRESS
onto a mannequin as Kat watches at the counter. Business is
slow, as usual.

CRAIG
Wow, editor in chief as a junior,
that's gonna look great on Gemma's
college apps.

KAT

I know! I can finally stop bugging her to take up the bassoon.

CRAIG

Lucky. We're desperately trying to find Zach an extra-curricular that'll make him shine. Badminton, curling, golf... something's gotta stick, his GPA's in the toilet.

KAT

Have you tried giving him time to study?

CRAIG

(dead serious)

Studying involves bribes, and we can't afford his rates anymore.

Kat tries not to react to that as Craig lifts the mannequin, up and away to the window. BETTY (40s), a little ditzy and a lot gossipy, emerges from the back area with a plastic bin.

BETTY

Wanna help sanitize every fidget-spinner ever confiscated?

KAT

Bring 'em on.

Kat reaches in, picks up a spinner. Betty grabs the wipes.

KAT (CONT'D)

(re: spinner)

I want to hate them but they're just so much fun.

BETTY

(direct)

So did you find out Joe's big secret?

KAT

Oh, I didn't even get a chance to bring it up. The kids are always right there.

Craig returns, overhearing.

CRAIG

For the record, I was working up to this more subtly.

KAT

I should never have mentioned --
it's not a big deal.

BETTY

We don't know that it's not not. He
could have a whole other family.

(then, scandalized)

What if his other kids have the
same names? So he doesn't slip.

KAT

Okay, someone's watching too many
Lifetime originals.

(then)

Maybe he's planning something nice,
and I should butt out.

Kat looks to Craig for help, but he's doesn't bite.

CRAIG

My granny always said, "Never hurts
to ask."

KAT

If my husband has a second family?
That might hurt a little.

CRAIG

(shrug)

You'd bounce back.

BETTY

Unless Joe hired a hitman, in which
case...

(considers, then)

Fingers crossed they're open to a
higher bid. Or sex stuff.

DING! The doorbell chimes as the STRIKING TEEN enters,
lugging a large cardboard box. She's pretty in an other-
worldly way, her vintage wardrobe only magnifying this
somehow.

Kat's relieved for an excuse to change the subject.

KAT

Hey there. How can we help you?

STRIKING TEEN

I have some clothes I need to
unload.

Kat smiles reassuringly.

KAT

You've come to the right place.

The teen puts her box on the counter.

STRIKING TEEN

So do you go through and tell me
how much it's all worth?

KAT

This is actually a charity shop. So
it would be a donation.

STRIKING TEEN

(disappointed)

Oh.

As if it will ease the blow, Kat shares --

KAT

We're volunteers. Good Samaritans.

STRIKING TEEN

That's great. Really. But is there
somewhere around here that pays?

(off Kat)

I mean, for my stuff. No judgement
on your volunteer lifestyle.

Before Kat can reply (or take offense), Craig jumps in --
eager to share his opinion.

CRAIG

The only place that buys used is
The Collective, and they think
they're The RealReal. It's Chanel
or "go to hell."

The teen pats the side of the box, suddenly wistful.

STRIKING TEEN

Then I guess this is it. End of the
road.

KAT

I sense some hesitation?

STRIKING TEEN

I promised I'd let this stuff go.
New town, clean slate. But...

She shrugs. Kat nods, understanding. Then --

KAT

Would it help to throw in a baby
step? See how it feels to be apart?

BETTY

That's not really what we --

KAT

It's the new-to-town special. We'll
keep it between us.

STRIKING TEEN

You don't have to --

Kat takes a Sharpie, writes on the box: "DO NOT TOUCH - SEE
KATHERINE."

KAT

(warmly)

Sleep on it. And then... let me
know.

STRIKING TEEN

I will. Thanks.

She touches the box one last time, then turns and walks out.
As Kat stows the box under the counter, Craig and Betty
exchange a look. After the teen's gone --

BETTY

That's why I'll never get divorced.
See how it scars the kids. Even the
pretty ones.

CRAIG

Splitting everything she owns
between two tiny little apartments.

KAT

Who says? She could be a college
student, an au pair...
(off dubious looks)
Wow, so we're just leaping to
conclusions today.

CRAIG

Look around you -- what else is
there to do.

Kat grabs a fidget spinner and a wipe.

KAT

Plenty.

INT. KAT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kat enters with takeout and boba(s) in tow, finds Lexi and Cole on the couch with a DOG in a bandana: BE KIND, I'M BLIND

KAT

Is that Elaine's dog? From down the street?

LEXI

Tater Tot. She said we could baby-sit.

KAT

I want him home by dinner.

COLE

He's supposed to be blind but he's not bumping into anything.

LEXI

We're suspicious. But he has been pretty good at emotional support.

KAT

Emotional support?

Gemma appears in a doorway, eyes red.

GEMMA

I didn't get editor in chief.

Kat quickly puts the food on a side table as Gemma comes in for a hug.

KAT

Oh baby, I'm sorry. It's okay to be sad, let it out.

At their feet, Tater Tot bonks into Gemma's legs.

LEXI

He is blind!

INT. KAT'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The whole family sits around the dinner table, mid-meal.

LEXI

(to Cole, threatening)

You touch my rice, it's gonna cost you at dessert.

JOE
I still don't understand.
(to Gemma)
Weren't you the only student
eligible for the job?

Gemma picks at her food, still on the edge of tears.

GEMMA
That's what I thought. But Mr.
Lomas changed his mind.

JOE
When? Yesterday?

GEMMA
I guess this new kid convinced him
that the pre-reqs weren't fair to
everyone.

KAT
That doesn't sound fair. Aren't
there... bylaws? Something?

GEMMA
I don't know. But now Mac's editor
in chief. So that's that.

Kat and Joe share a look -- who??

COLE
Gem, you gonna finish your noodles?

Gemma pushes her plate toward her siblings -- jackpot! -- and
pushes back from the table.

GEMMA
I'll be upstairs.

Off Kat and Joe, exchanging a concerned look --

INT. KAT'S HOUSE - GEMMA'S ROOM - NIGHT

It's late. Kat enters, finds Gemma in bed but still awake.

KAT
You okay?

GEMMA
I know I need to get over it,
but... I have so many feelings.

Kat sits on the edge of Gemma's bed, strokes her hair.

KAT

Do you think it might help to talk to Mr. Lomas? These things aren't always set in stone.

Gemma's quiet, thinking.

GEMMA

I don't want to be dramatic.

KAT

It's not dramatic to ask questions when something doesn't make sense.

(off Gemma)

I could come with you, lend you some of my bossy-mom courage.

GEMMA

(touched)

Really?

KAT

Of course.

(remembering)

"It never hurts to ask."

Off this sweet mother-daughter moment...

INT. KAT'S HOUSE - KAT & JOE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kat enters as Joe stows something unseen in the drawer of his bedside table. Not giving off a whiff of wrongdoing, but Kat clocks it anyway. Then, to make her presence known:

KAT

I'm ready for this day to be over.

As she joins him in bed --

JOE

Is Gem okay?

KAT

She will be. I'm on it.

(then)

It's weird, this Mac dude getting installed over a capable young woman? Right?

JOE

The optics aren't great.

Kat nods, glad they're in agreement. Then:

KAT
I wanted to ask...

She's summoning her courage to be direct, but then, instead --

KAT (CONT'D)
Have you booked anything at the
hotel in Cabo? Like, massages?

JOE
(playful)
Knowing how much you like to be in
charge? *Claro que no*. I wouldn't
dare.

Kat bristles, none of this is what she wanted to hear.

KAT
I don't like to be in charge. I
just know I can only trust myself
when I want something done right.

Joe shifts, looks at Kat with a twinge of concern.

JOE
When's the last time your saw your
therapist?

KAT
When I had the job that paid for
the therapist.
(agitated)
Will you turn out your light? I'm
tired.

Joe knows not to press further, turns out his lamp.

JOE
Good night, Kitty. Love you.

KAT
... love you too.

Off Kat, staring into the darkness. Her mind wide awake.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Kat approaches the school's main admin building. Class is in session, a handful of students milling about. Craig and DELIA (40s), a "fun mom" in a wheelchair, exit into her path.

CRAIG

Hey lady. You ready for the big showdown?

KAT

It's just a chat.
(re: Delia)
We don't have to spread the word.

DELIA

Personally? I'd TP the shit out of Mr. Lomas' house. Eggs, silly string, tomatoes... those stains of shame, make him feel it.

Kat balks at this.

KAT

I think we can handle it with our words.

DELIA

Sure, but where's the fun in that?
(then)
If it does come to blows, we'll all want the play-by-play tonight.

KAT

What's tonight?

Craig gives Delia an abort-abort look, and Kat catches it.

DELIA

Oh, oops. I thought...

CRAIG

(under his breath)
Or maybe you didn't.

DELIA

I'm all over the place. I gotta go.
But -- call me!

After she leaves, a moment of tense silence. Then --

KAT
That was weird.

CRAIG
That's Delia for you.

KAT
Yeah, but now you're weird. If something's going on...

Craig sighs, admits --

CRAIG
It's this stupid book club.

KAT
Tara's? I thought it died out.

CRAIG
A new one. They keep popping up like Whack-a-Moles, don't they?

Kat's a little surprised to hear this. Hurt.

KAT
And Delia made the cut? She's not exactly a reader.

CRAIG
I've seen her devour a celebrity tell-all like it had a cherry on top.

(off Kat)
Come on. It's just books.

KAT
I hope I didn't do anything wrong...

(then)
Who's the host? Nia?

CRAIG
On the eve of a bake sale? Never.
(then)
Seriously, it's no big deal. In the Venn diagram of friends, you're not quite in the overlap this time.

KAT
I thought we were all one big circle by now.

Craig steers away from this line of inquiry.

CRAIG
 Nobody loves a crowd anymore.
 (then)
 Honestly? I'm jealous of you.

KAT
 (deadpan)
 Really.

CRAIG
 I can't figure out how to say no to
 these things. It's gonna be a
 snooze-a-palooza.

KAT
 What's the book?

For maybe a millisecond Craig is caught off guard, before --

CRAIG
 That's what tonight's for -- we're
 voting on it. Pray for me.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - YEARBOOK CLASSROOM - DAY

Gemma and Kat sit in student desks as TOM LOMAS (30s), tie
 but no blazer (a "hip" teacher), perches on the edge of his
 larger desk, looming over them. Kat doesn't like it.

MR. LOMAS
 I'm sorry if I gave you the wrong
 impression, Gemma -- but you were
 never entitled to the job.

Gemma's flustered, apologetic.

GEMMA
 I didn't... I mean, the pre-reqs...

Kat gets up, sits on the tabletop of the student desk.

MR. LOMAS
 What are you -- that's not fully
 sanitary.

KAT
 You're doing it.

MR. LOMAS
 On my desk.

GEMMA
 (embarrassed)
 Mom.

KAT
It's only fair that we're eye to
eye. Gem?

Kat pats the top of Gemma's desk, and she hesitates.

MR. LOMAS
(be cool)
Gemma.

But mom wins out. Gemma moves up onto the desktop.

KAT
Please, help us understand.

MR. LOMAS
It is what it is. Mac is a senior,
and came to this school with more
experience. Once we talked, it made
sense.

KAT
But nobody talked to Gemma.
(then)
I'm sure this Mac is a great kid,
but Gem has experience here. She
works so hard, and then some boy
comes in...

She trails off as both Mr. Lomas and Gemma react to this.

KAT (CONT'D)
What?

As if on cue, the door opens and the STRIKING TEEN from the
thrift store walks in. Immediately she senses it's a bad
time. As she backs out --

STRIKING TEEN
Oh, sorry, I didn't realize --

MR. LOMAS
Mac, wait.

Kat reels, connecting the dots.

KAT
Hold up. You're Mac?

Mac smiles, wary of whatever's going on here.

MAC
And you're Gemma's mom. Katherine.

KAT
Kat, actually.

Gemma looks between them, surprised.

GEMMA
You know each other?

KAT
(to Mac)
We have some questions about these
new rules.

Mr. Lomas and Mac share a significant look. Kat clocks this, doesn't quite know what to make of it.

MAC
(carefully)
I didn't mean to step on any toes.
But it wasn't entirely fair that
all the power went to the old guard
by default.

KAT
The old guard? Gemma's sixteen.

MAC
You know what I mean. It's hard
enough being the new kid without
these spurious barriers.

KAT
Spurious. Uh-huh.

MR. LOMAS
Mac served as editor in chief of
the yearbook and the paper at her
old school.

GEMMA
(impressed)
As a junior? How did you have time?

MAC
It's just working smarter. I have a
lot of ideas for how to bring this
place up to speed.

Mr. Lomas nods at Mac, admiringly. Then, to Kat and Gemma.

MR. LOMAS
I think you're gonna find this all
very exciting.

Kat's not convinced.

KAT
Seems like it might be more fair to
put this to a vote. Let everyone
weigh in.

MR. LOMAS
Mrs. Fisher --

KAT
It's more democratic.

MAC
You think I don't believe in
democracy?

GEMMA
Mom --

MAC
I mean, if we're talking about
what's fair -- my mom's not here to
defend me.

Off Kat, thrown.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Kat lays on a couch like she's in therapy.

KAT
"Spurious." Who throws that word
around in everyday conversation?

She's talking to ROSA AGGABAO (50s), allergic to BS,
PRINCIPAL nameplate on her desk. They're friends.

ROSA
(light)
The SATs.

Kat sits, throws her a look. Not funny.

KAT
It worries me, what a pushover Mr.
Lomas is with these kids. I hope
you're keeping an eye on him.
(off Rosa)
I'm serious.

ROSA
 Look, Tom inherited that snafu in the rules. He handled it as he saw fit. Closed the loophole.

KAT
 Like a door in Gemma's face.

ROSA
 She'll get it next year.

KAT
 Next year? Who knows where any of us will be by then!

Rosa comes around her desk, puts a gentle hand on Kat.

ROSA
 I know it's hard, but I see this all the time. These moments build character. In students and parents.
 (then)
 Is Gemma okay?

KAT
 You know Gemma. She bounces back.

ROSA
 Good.

Rosa pats her with finality and moves back to her desk, ready to move on with her day. But Kat's got more on her mind.

KAT
 You hear about this new book club?

ROSA
 The Manga Appreciation Society? Ms. Lee's advising, lots of interest.

KAT
 Not for students. Craig and Delia are in it. I thought maybe you...

ROSA
 Nope.
 (pointed)
 Too busy dealing with well-meaning parents.

Kat nods, getting the hint.

KAT
 Guess that's my cue.

Rosa walks her to the threshold, with a warm smile.

ROSA
My door's always open.

And then, without a hint of irony, she closes it -- leaving Kat less than satisfied.

INT. KAT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A KNIFE slices into a tray of BROWNIES on the kitchen counter. Kat cuts with maybe a little more force than usual, as Gemma sits eating one.

GEMMA
I can't believe Lex and Cole slept through brownies.

KAT
Chasing that blind dog really seems to wear them out.

GEMMA
Maybe we need one of our own.

Kat shoots her a look, not convinced.

KAT
A blind dog?

GEMMA
Any dog. Zoe got a puppy.

KAT
As soon as it stops being a novelty, guess who's doing all the work?

GEMMA
I would help.

KAT
You're gonna be busy. Especially if Mr. Lomas rethinks his decision.

GEMMA
That's not going to happen.

KAT
You never know...

There's a lull as Gemma seems to weigh her words, then --

GEMMA

Thanks for coming today. Sorry it got weird.

KAT

You don't have to apologize.

GEMMA

I know, but... maybe Mac was right.

Joe comes in, grabs a brownie. Kat takes one, too.

JOE

Sounds like everything worked out?

GEMMA

Yeah. Actually, Mac and I had a long talk after Mom left. I think I'm gonna learn a lot from her.

JOE

Her? Mac's a she?

GEMMA

(why are adults weird?)
Yeah, those are her pronouns.

They're interrupted by a BLECH noise, turn to see that Kat has spit a bite of brownie into the sink. She grabs all the brownies and throws them in the TRASH.

JOE

Whoa -- what are you doing?

KAT

Something's off.

GEMMA

Mine tasted fine.

Joe smells his, takes another bite.

JOE

This one's good.

KAT

Well, they're in the trash now. What do you want me to do?

JOE

Take them out. Nobody has to know.

Kat stares at him -- really?

KAT
I'll know.

She grabs her keys.

Off Joe and Gemma, exchanging a look -- what's up with mom?

INT. KAT'S CAR - NIGHT

Kat sits in her car, staring at a house down the street. It's lit from within, a gathering in progress. CRAIG (the host), DELIA, NIA, BETTY and spouses, drinking, eating canapes.

Kat cranes, trying to see more.

EXT. BUSHES - NIGHT

Closer now, crouched, Kat watches as ROSA enters from the kitchen with a half-empty bottle of wine. To herself --

KAT
"Too busy dealing with parents..."
(then, suspicious)
Where are the books? Is this even a
book club?

Craig speaks, and everybody laughs. This is not a snooze.

KAT (CONT'D)
That's right, Craig. Laugh it up...

Just then, the SPRINKLERS start up. Kat stifles a small SCREAM, stays still as she's drenched.

For a moment she's worried that someone heard -- but inside everyone is none the wiser, happily taking a selfie.

OFF Kat, dripping and dejected.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Kat waits to pay, looking like something cat dragged in, the conveyor belt loaded with store-brand baked goods.

BETTY (O.C.)

Kat...?

She turns to see Betty behind her in line, buying several bottles of red wine. Clearly the party ran out.

Kat regards her as if everything is normal.

KAT

Hey girl. Someone's having fun.

BETTY

(evading)

Oh, you know... it's nothing.

She eyes Kat's purchases, eager to change the subject.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Bake sale snuck up on you?

Kat doesn't want to give Betty the upper hand.

KAT

You'd think. But this is for me.

BETTY

All of it...?

KAT

My sweet tooth was tingling.

She opens a bag of cookies, digs in. The CHECKER and CUSTOMER in front of her exchange a look. She offers the bag to Betty.

KAT (CONT'D)

You want in on this?

Betty gives her a long, pitying look. Then --

BETTY

It's the secret family, isn't it?

INT. KAT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kat forcefully unpacks the baked goods from the grocery bag onto the counter. Joe enters.

JOE
 Hey, is everything okay? You were gone for a while.

KAT
 Yeah, I just have to make them look homemade.

She transfers the brownies to a PRETTY PLATTER, cutting them in half to match the look of the ones she threw out.

JOE
 You don't have to, Nia would understand.

KAT
 Is that what Nia would do? I'm not so sure.

JOE
 Let me help...

Kat stops, looks up at Joe, suddenly ready to say the hard thing.

KAT
 You know what would help? I'd love to know where that 800 dollars goes, every month. We're up to... twenty-four hundred?

Joe's completely surprised.

JOE
 What?

KAT
 The statements from your business account still come to the house. Last week, I accidentally opened one.

Joe's quiet for a minute -- processing. Then:

JOE
 I wish you'd told me sooner. It's nothing, honey. Really.

Kat stands there, holding her brownie knife.

KAT
 Try me.

JOE
It's going to Adam.

Kat deflates a bit, the anger clearing.

KAT
Adam, your brother?

JOE
He's been out of work for months.
Insisted we call it a loan.

KAT
You could have given me a heads-up.

JOE
He really doesn't want it to get
back to our folks, you know how
judgey they can be. I promised I
wouldn't tell anybody.

KAT
But... spousal privilege...

JOE
That might apply if I'd committed a
crime --

Joe spots the open bag of cookies.

JOE (CONT'D)
Is this 100 percent about the
money?

KAT
What else would it be about?

JOE
How'd things really go with Mr.
Lomas today?

KAT
(admits)
Not exactly to plan.

JOE
Do I need to hire a fixer?

Kat sighs, petulant. Still gesturing with the knife.

KAT
No.
(then)
I just want Gemma to be happy.

JOE
 She seems happy. I think you can
 rest your case.
 (then)
 Now will you put down the weapon
 and give me a hug?

KAT
 Okay. But -- no more secrets.

Kat puts the knife on the counter as Joe comes in for a hug.

JOE
 No more secrets.

On Kat's face -- still unsettled.

JOE (CONT'D)
 Can I ask why you're damp?

INT. KAT'S HOUSE - GEMMA'S ROOM - NIGHT

It's late, Kat has showered and changed. She finds Gemma in
 bed, on her phone.

KAT
 Who's texting at this hour?

Gemma puts her phone down, caught. Kat comes in, sits on the
 edge of her bed.

KAT (CONT'D)
 You don't have to put on a brave
 face if you're hurting.

GEMMA
 I'm okay. I promise.

KAT
 You have every right to stand up
 for yourself.

GEMMA
 I did. We did.
 (then)
 But it's over. I trust Mr. L. And
 Mac is cool.

This still doesn't sit right with Kat.

KAT
 She went behind your back.

GEMMA

But now we're friends. And the new rules make sense. They took me by surprise at first, that's all.

Kat nods, chooses her words carefully.

KAT

I just... it's easy to fall into this role of people-pleaser --

GEMMA

What do you always tell me?

Gemma looks at her mom expectantly. Kat's at a loss.

KAT

Remind me.

GEMMA

I'm a strong woman.

(then)

I got it from you. Obviously.

Off Kat, heartened by Gemma's certainty.

INT. CHARITY THRIFT STORE - DAY

Kat's stationed at the register as Betty arrives.

BETTY

Hey there, Cookie Monster.

KAT

I'm so glad you brought that up.

(then, confiding)

Last night? You caught me in a blood sugar dip. It's a little embarrassing...

BETTY

Oh sweetie, I didn't realize you had a medical issue.

KAT

You know I love a snack.

Betty nods, thinking back.

BETTY

It makes so much sense now.

(then)

But how did you get wet?

Kat shakes her head, wide-eyed.

KAT

That's the scary part... I can't even remember.

BETTY

You poor thing. Next time you're peckish, just give me a ring.

(seriously)

Don't leave the house like that.

Kat smiles sweetly.

KAT

You're the best.

Craig walks in, reporting for duty.

CRAIG

What'd I miss?

KAT

I was gonna ask you the same thing. How was the book club?

Betty and Craig try not to make eye contact.

CRAIG

Oh, I was so bushed, and Stan worked late. I decided to skip it.

KAT

That's too bad. I bet it was fun.

CRAIG

Not without you there.

KAT

Tell the host I'd be happy to join next time.

(then, brightly)

What's the book?

Betty and Craig make brief eye contact, uncomfortable.

BETTY

I'd love to chat, but I've gotta check the new inventory.

CRAIG

That's a big job. I'll join you.

As they flee to the back, Mac enters the store. It's hard to say if she's thrilled that Kat's on duty, but they both put their game faces on.

KAT
 Hey there...
 (trying it out)
 "Mac."

MAC
 You're not the first to be
 confused.

KAT
 It's a man's world.

MAC
 There's no philosophy behind it, I
 just hate the name "Mackenzie."
 (then)
 But my mom loved it.

KAT
 I know the feeling.

They regard each other for a beat, then --

KAT (CONT'D)
 Look, I don't feel great about how
 yesterday went down. I'm the
 adult...

MAC
 So I should listen?

This could be a challenge, but Kat concedes.

KAT
 So I should know better.

Mac smiles, appreciates this.

MAC
 Trust me, Gemma's in good hands.
 She's basically my protege now.

Kat raises an eyebrow. Bold.

MAC (CONT'D)
 Anyway... you were right.

KAT
 I was?

MAC

Yeah. I came back for the box. I can't let it go just yet.

KAT

Oh...

Kat deflates a bit, as if letting out a big exhale.

KAT (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry. It's gone.

MAC

Gone?

(then)

Are you sure? Like, can you check?

KAT

I looked everywhere.

(then)

Another volunteer must have put it on our donation truck, and I don't have a way to track it down.

Mac's quiet, at a loss. Then:

MAC

You weren't going to tell me?

KAT

I was hoping you'd gone the other way. And in that case, why upset you?

Mac nods, her eyes welling, trying not to cry.

KAT (CONT'D)

Oh sweetie... I wanted to avoid this, and here we are.

MAC

No, this is on me. I should have listened to my gut to begin with.

She turns and walks out, clearly dejected.

Off Kat, a look of pity falling away as she glances under the counter...

INT. KAT'S HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

Kat opens the trunk of her car... REVEALING Mac's box.

Kat opens the box, examines the contents. Clothes that clearly belonged to Mac, including vintage items handed down from older relatives.

One stack of sweaters has a little note pinned to it: MOM. Kat picks up a lovely one from that bunch. Holds it to her face, smelling someone else's perfume.

She pulls it on. It's soft, warm. As Kat hugs the sweater to herself... Joe walks in.

JOE

The kids are gonna mutiny if we don't start dinner.

(re: sweater)

That's cute. Shopping spree?

KAT

Just some thrift store finds.

(then)

I was thinking, it's been too long since we all talked to Adam. Maybe after dinner?

Joe stops in his tracks, turns cold.

JOE

No. Not tonight.

KAT

I won't give away that I know anything. It might lift his spirits to hear from the kids.

JOE

Just leave it alone, Kat.

(then)

I don't push about your mom.

Kat absorbs this gentle threat.

KAT

Tell the kids I'll be right in. And after dinner -- we'll do ice cream.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Kat and Gemma walk onto campus together at the start of a school day.

GEMMA

I could have gotten your Tupperware for you.

In every way, this is the reverse of the opening scene -- people smile and wave at Kat.

KAT

It's not a Tupperware. It's my signature brownie platter.

(then)

Besides, this is an excuse to be among my people.

GEMMA

...moms?

KAT

People who care about you.

(parting, sweetly)

Love you.

Kat disappears into the crowd. Gemma continues, finds Mac perched on a bench. Mac immediately notices that Gemma is wearing ONE OF HER SHIRTS.

MAC

Where'd you get that?

GEMMA

Oh, this? My mom's always bringing stuff home from her thrift shop.

And finally -- something cool enough to wear to school.

(then, worried)

It's not too funky, is it?

MAC

No, it's great. I used to have one just like it.

As Mac's wheels turn, Mr. Lomas passes them on his way in.

MR. LOMAS

Morning, ladies.

He points to Gemma as she checks her phone.

MR. LOMAS (CONT'D)

Do you ever stop texting? I'm not convinced you sleep.

Gemma rolls her eyes at him, but she's clearly pleased.

GEMMA

There's no sleeping in high school.

She watches as he goes -- admiring him, maybe too much.

MAC
I wouldn't trust him.

Gemma looks at her, surprised.

GEMMA
What do you mean?

Mac considers, then backpedals with a shrug.

MAC
I don't trust anybody.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Kat pulls herself from a group of chatting parents, finally makes it over to Nia's table of empty bake sale containers.

NIA
Thanks again for your brownies.
Even more compliments than usual.

KAT
Really?
(then, noticing)
Where's my platter?

NIA
Gemma's new friend picked it up for
you. She was just here.

Kat frowns, feels eyes on her. She turns, sees Mac watching her from afar.

NIA (CONT'D)
Mac, right? Such a nice girl.

KAT
Nice doesn't mean anything though,
does it? Ted Bundy was "nice."

Mac smiles and waves, hard to read. Kat mirrors her. A weird standoff. Nia's unsure, but waves and smiles at Mac, too.

NIA
You're a funny one, Kat.

KAT
Oh, I'm dead serious.

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT