

Pre-Existing
by
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(Inspired by true events)

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OVER BLACK.

MRI MACHINE
Breathe in... Hold your breath...

WE HEAR: NO SOUND AT FIRST THEN THERE IS THE LOUD BANGING OF THE MRI MACHINE.

MRI MACHINE
Relax.

WE HEAR: TERI BROOKS EXHALE

FADE IN:

INT. NEW YORK - PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - MRI SUITE - DAY

TERI BROOKS (mid-30s) black, a natural beauty is inside the MRI machine with her arms above her head there is an IV attached to the crook of her right arm.

POV INSIDE MACHINE: THERE IS ABOUT AN INCH OF SPACE BETWEEN TERI'S FACE AND THE INSIDE OF THE MACHINE. SHE KEEPS HER EYES CLOSED AND IS BREATHING HEAVILY.

MRI TECHNICIAN (O.S.)
Teri are you okay?

Teri nods.

MRI TECHNICIAN (O.S.)
You have to say something Teri,
because if you're nodding or
shaking your head I can't see you.

TERI
Yes.

MRI TECHNICIAN (O.S.)
Thanks, remember if you start
feeling claustrophobic let us know
and we can take a break, okay?

Teri nods, she does get claustrophobic but wants the test to be over.

MRI TECHNICIAN (O.C.)
I need you to say either yes or-

TERI

Yes, yes can we just- please.

MRI TECHNICIAN (O.S.)

Okay honey, we're almost done. Now for the contrast injected intravenously. You may experience a slight metallic taste in your mouth and a hot sensation running through your body but, that's normal.

INT. PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - BATHROOM - DAY

Teri dressed in her hospital gown splashes water on her face. There is a KNOCK at the door and then someone TWISTS the doorknob.

Teri stares at herself in the mirror, she's been through a lot over the last couple of years and it's taking a toll.

INT. PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - CHANGING ROOM - DAY

Teri is standing at her locker getting dressed, she pulls on her sweater, sits down and pulls on boots. She's tired - not only physically but emotionally. She sits in silence for a moment. She puts on her earrings, winter coat and wool hat. Teri pulls back the curtain and heads out, she turns around and re-enters the changing room, closing the curtains behind her. She opens a drawer and pulls out a couple pair of clean hospital socks, a hospital gown and shoves them into her bag. Teri closes the drawer and exits the changing room.

INT. APP FOR THAT!- DAY

Teri walks to her cubicle, she takes off her coat and hangs it on the back of her chair. Her coat falls to the floor, she doesn't pick it up. Teri plops down in her chair and devours an apple fritter. DONNY (40s) Asian, over the top personality and style) walks over. He picks up Teri's coat from the floor and hangs it on a hook in her cubicle.

DONNY

Good day my lady, nice of you to join us.

(leans in)

Rumor has it you're interviewing, do tell.

Teri grabs Donny's tie, she pulls it so hard he's forced facedown on her desk. Teri staples his tie to her desk.

Donny struggles to remove the staple from his tie without strangling himself. Teri winks at him. Donnie grabs Teri's staple remover and frees himself. Teri goes back to her apple fritter and Donny scurries away.

INT. APP FOR THAT! - STAIRWELL - DAY

Teri is on the phone, INTERCUT PHONE CALL AS NEEDED. YUKI (50s), Asian, all business.

YUKI

Hi, Teri this is Yuki from Dr. Aguilera's office. I have the results from today's MRI. And I'm sorry but there are more lesions on your liver than last time, so we're going to have to watch them carefully.

TERI

What does that mean?

YUKI

As you know your liver disease eventually progresses to liver cancer and that's why we're trying to be proactive with getting you a transplant but, for now, we'll keep an eye on things on our end and raise your MELD score so you can be closer to the top of the transplant list.

INT. APP FOR THAT! - CAREY'S OFFICE - DAY

Teri is sitting in the chair opposite CAREY, her boss, (mid-40s) handsome metrosexual. She has her iPad, AD LIB Carey giving her notes. Teri is looking out the window. Carey stops talking, it takes a moment for Teri to notice.

CAREY

So, what's going on?

TERI

Why don't you tell me?

CAREY

Some of the office staff are complaining again.

TERI
 (Thick New York Accent)
 You want I should talk to them?

CAREY
 No, just rein it in okay? Also,
 why were you late on Monday?

TERI
 I told you, and I put it on your
 calendar, I had a doctor's
 appointment.

CAREY
 Again?

TERI
 You say again like there is a limit
 to sick days.
 (off look)
 There is? Wow, who knew? I figured
 that since I practically built this
 company from scratch.

CAREY
 You did not.

TERI
 I was there when your office was
 your fourth floor walk up.

CAREY
 There was an elevator.

TERI
 Now you tell me, can I go?

She stands up.

CAREY
 Rein it in Teri.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAY

Teri is on her cell phone.

TERI
 I'm not going to call every time I
 have an MRI or a bone density scan
 or CAT Scan, I'm just not mom...
 because I can handle it...

(MORE)

TERI (cont'd)

I will, I'll call them and tell them to stop sending sensitive medical information to your house because my nosey mother can't help reading my mail, which is a federal crime, by the way, for which you could spend considerable time in jail.

Teri steps into the street without looking and gets honked by a passing car that nearly hits her.

TERI

No, that was me almost getting run over. I told you, you'd be the death of me.

INT. BROOKLYN - ANGRY WADE'S BAR - NIGHT

Teri enters and looks around for her childhood best friend. She spots ANGIE (mid-30s) Latina, native NYer to the core with her boyfriend LOS (mid-30s) Latino, nice guy with an edge and a guy she doesn't know, GABE (early-30s) white, sweet, dad bod. Angie rushes over as Teri turns to flee.

ANGIE

Teri, Teri, Teri.

TERI

Why oh why do you keep doing this?

ANGIE

He's a really nice guy.

TERI

They're all really nice guys, there were the twins Jerry and Larry, Hakim the butcher, Alejandro the aspiring DJ, must I go on?

ANGIE

This guy is the real deal, he went to NYU with Los they even traveled through South America after graduation. It was very "Motorcycle Diaries".

TERI

Yeah, cuz Los is a regular Che. Listen, has this guy cured cancer? I got standards you know.

ANGIE

Please, I swear if this doesn't work out I will never-

TERI

Angie, you said that after the twins Jerry and Larry which, was a great, but freaky threesome. Hakim the butcher and Alejandro the aspiring DJ. Once again, aspiring? Just get two turntables or better yet my company has an app for that.

Teri makes a play for the door, Angie tries to block her but Teri makes it past.

ANGIE

I swear sometimes I think you're happy being miserable and alone.

Angie's comment hits Teri like a slap in the face. Teri turns around.

TERI

Tell me how you really feel.

ANGIE

I'm sorry but, I want the Teri from three years ago back, the happy go lucky girl who was open to anything.

TERI

I don't want to discuss this right now.

ANGIE

Not discussing it won't just magically make you better.

TERI

No shit Sherlock.

ANGIE

God, when'd you become so incredibly mean?

TERI

I'm sorry, it's been a long day and I'm feeling sorry for myself. I had an incredibly noisy MRI followed by some potentially bad news.

ANGIE

What?

TERI

I don't really want to go into it now.

Angie gives Teri a bear hug and won't let her go.

TERI

Keep this up and people will think we're lesbians.

ANGIE

We were, remember that one time freshman year?

They walk towards the table where Los and Gabe are waiting.

TERI

I thought we agreed to never discuss that.

ANGIE

Seven minutes in heaven.

TERI

Where was I? Because I remember it being more like a minute and a half of incredibly awkward.

Teri has a tag hanging out of her shirt. Angie rips it off.

TERI

Great, now I can't return it.

Gabe jumps up so that he can take Teri's coat. He knocks over his beer. Teri gives Angie a look that says "you owe me one."

INT. ANGRY WADE'S BAR - NIGHT

Angie, Teri, Los and Gabe are singing "Love Shack" by the B52s. Los plays the "air" drums and Gabe plays the "air" guitar while Teri and Angie sing and play "air" tambourines. When they finish they receive a smattering of claps.

GUY AT BAR (O.S.)

Get the fuck off the stage!

WADE (mid-40s) hardworking guy with a heart of gold.

WADE

Yeah, you're scaring away my customers!

TERI

Wade? Don't make me come down there!

ANGIE

(in Spanish)

I don't need this shit.

Angie drunkenly trips off the stage. Teri drops the mic and follows her, she trips as well.

GABE

(looks at Los)

Um, yeah.

They exit the stage.

EXT. ANGRY WADE'S BAR - NIGHT

Los, Angie, Teri and Gabe literally pour out of the bar. Angie gives Teri a drunken kiss on the mouth.

ANGIE

(southern accent)

Ya'll be good now hear?

Los and Angie head in one direction while Gabe and Teri cross the street and head in another.

TERI

You don't need to walk me home.

GABE

I know, but I know Krav Magra just in case someone tries to attack you or if you want to attack me I can show you how to-

He goes into a kung-fu stance.

GABE

(birdlike sound)

Cah-caw!

TERI

Ah, fuck my life.

Teri walks away. Gabe goes after her.

TERI

No need to follow I'm just up one more block.

GABE

I usually provide door to door service but, I see you have a problem with men being nice to you.

TERI

You are very observant my little cricket.

GABE

Actually it's grasshopper. Okay, no one can say I didn't at least try to be a gentleman. Madame
(he bows)
I'm afraid that this is where I bid you adieu.

He walks away, Teri watches him.

INT. TERI'S CONDO - NIGHT

Teri and Gabe stumble into her apartment kissing.

TERI

What was your name again?

GABE

Gabe. And you're Teri right?

They strip away each others clothes.

INT. TERI'S CONDO - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Strewn clothes are everywhere but the action has slowed down considerably. Gabe and Teri are having sex actually it's more like Gabe on top doing all the work.

TERI

Ow, ow, my hair.

Teri's hair is caught under Gabe's arm. Gabe heads under the sheets so that he can go down on her again, Teri stops him.

TERI

No, no, that's okay.

GABE

Really?

TERI
Yeah it's getting kinda late.

GABE
Do you mind if I finish?

TERI
No, not at all.

They kiss. Gabe continues.

GABE
Who's your daddy?

TERI
Mr. Brooks. Why don't we, let's-

Teri maneuvers them so that their spooning with her back to him. The lovemaking continues and then abruptly stops.

TERI
Whoa there cowboy the back door is off limits.

Gabe massages her back.

TERI
Mmmm, aahhh, yeah.

Teri stealthily slips her phone from under her pillowcase and turns it on.

CANDY CRUSH VIDEO GAME
Divine.

GABE
Really, you like that? Wait, is that Candy Crush?

Teri quickly slips the phone back under her pillow and pretends to be sleeping. Teri SNORES LOUDLY.

INT. TERI'S CONDO - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Gabe is sound asleep. Teri forces herself to vomit. She cleans up the vomit but, the smell of the vomit and cleaning product make her throw up again. After she's cleaned up her mess, Teri brushes her teeth and looks at her ragged reflection in the mirror. Teri sprays air freshener to get rid of the smell, she quickly brushes her teeth and slips back in bed. Gabe spoons with her but, she moves his arm and tries to scoot away but he spoons again and this time he's not letting go.