

"PLAYING IT STRAIGHT"

FADE IN:

EXT. BEEKEEPING FESTIVAL - DAY

TASHA SOBEL (25, smart-looking, dressed in a blazer) stands in a grassy field filled with tents and stands holding a microphone. Behind her, THREE BEEKEEPERS in full protective garb lift a tray of bees out of a beehive while a group of CHILDREN DRESSED AS BEES perform a choreographed dance.

TASHA

You won't bee-lieve the excitement down here in Founders' Park as Chesterfield holds its fifteenth annual Beekeepers' Festival. Honey lovers from all over the county came to sample wares and celebrate all things bee!

A rogue child dressed as a bee bumps into a beehive, knocking it over. Bees go flying. The beekeepers drop the tray, running away as all the FESTIVAL-GOERS start to cause a commotion. Tasha does her best to continue talking.

TASHA

The festival continues tomorrow so come on down for a sweet time! Reporting from Founders' Park, I'm Tasha Sobel.

The bees start to swarm around her but she still smiles at the camera even as the festival basically self-destructs behind her.

The person behind the camera, STEVE YOUNG (25, your typical harmless-looking straight guy), gets fed up and turns off the camera, dragging it and Tasha into the news van.

INT. NEWS VAN - DAY

Steve gets in the driver's seat, Tasha in the passenger's. They watch as small bee children are scooped up by DANCE MOMS into various vehicles.

STEVE
Why didn't you stop?

TASHA
You didn't say cut!

STEVE
You're a reporter. When the thing you are reporting on becomes a miniscule version of The Birds, you no longer have to report on it. I think you get a pass for that one.

TASHA
(wincing)
You got some ice somewhere?

STEVE
What, did they get you? Yeah, hang on. I had something in my lunch bag.

Steve reaches in the back and procures an ice pack. Tasha puts it on her neck, grimacing at the shock of the cold.

STEVE
You good?

TASHA
Yeah, let's just get back to the station. I'm sure Trevor is looking forward to hearing why we don't have a fluff piece for tonight's broadcast.

Steve starts the car. There's a lull as the radio plays some national talk show.

HOST (ON RADIO)
Now as you know, Will You Marry Gary has just announced their new suitor, and he's a Jesus freak!

The radio plays a COMEDIC HYMN to punctuate the statement. Tasha gets fed up and turns off the radio.

TASHA
Steve, you know I love working with you, but--

STEVE

But you're better than fluff pieces.
I know. You've been saying this since
college.

TASHA

I should be anchor by now, it's been
way too long. I was here at the tenth
Beekeepers' Festival and the fifteenth
and with the way Trevor treats me I'm
probably going to be at the thirtieth.

STEVE

What about the new co-anchor position?

TASHA

What about it, Steve? I've applied.
But you know he's got it out for me.

STEVE

Tasha, you're the obvious choice.
He's not going to let the position go
empty, of course he's going to pick
you.

TASHA

(slightly optimistic)
Really?

STEVE

Course.

TASHA

(playfully)
What are you going to do without me?

STEVE

Not get attacked by bees, for a start.

TASHA

Touché.

INT. KACL XYZ NEWS STATION, BULL PEN - DAY

Tasha sighs as she walks into the comforting pandemonium
of the Bull Pen, the open-concept office where the
CORRESPONDENTS edit and work.

She settles down at her desk: it's messy, with folders and files and remains of Sad Desk Lunches. There's a framed picture of her with another woman in a frame labeled "friendship." She puts on headphones and starts working.

STACY SIMPSON, the weathergirl (24, blonde, bubbly) walks up to her desk across from Tasha's with a cardboard box and starts packing all the exceedingly girly things that adorn it: a pencil cup full of pink feathery pens, a frame of sorority girls in matching crop tops and short shorts, decorated wooden Greek letters.

STACY

Hey neighbor!

TASHA

(removing her headphones)

Oh. Hey Stacy.

STACY

I've got exciting news!

TASHA

(disinterested)

Hmm, that's great. Listen--

STACY

I got the co-anchor job!

TASHA

You what?

STACY

Trevor just told me! I go on tonight!
Can you help me move my stuff into my
new office? I have an office!

TASHA

Yeah, sure, just let me do this one
thing first.

Stacy squeaks in excitement while Tasha, furious, storms out of the Bull Pen.

INT. KACL XYZ NEWS STATION, EDITING BAY - DAY

Tasha bursts into the darkened editing bay where the Station Manager, TREVOR NOONAN (mid-fifties, getting too

old for this shit, just wants to get the job done) edits promo spots with an EDITOR, who continues editing while Tasha and Trevor argue.

TASHA

Trevor! What the fuck?

TREVOR

Tasha, if this is about the--

TASHA

You're damn right it's about the job. I've been working here since the day after graduation, I have put so much work into this station and you give it to, what? The weathergirl?

TREVOR

There were a lot of factors that went into the decision.

TASHA

Bullshit. What factors? Cup size?

TREVOR

Well, watchability is something our viewers care about. Anchors are the face of the station, they need to have a certain...appeal.

TASHA

So are you saying that I wasn't hot enough for the job?

TREVOR

It's more complicated than that, the demographics we are aiming for have specific tastes...

His voice fades out as Tasha focuses on the monitor behind him, playing a promo spot for Will You Marry Gary, the TV show advertised on the radio in the news van.

TV IMAGE - GARY ROBERTSON (early 30s, WASPy Christian white guy) is shown walking his dog while looking wistfully at trees.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 You've seen twelve past Garys find the
 one for them...

NEW IMAGE - TWELVE COUPLES, all very generic looking, are
 shown in quick succession.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Well, we've done it again...

NEW IMAGE - Gary laughs while drinking a beer with his
 GENERIC MALE FRIENDS.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 But this time, there's another man in
 the picture.

NEW IMAGE - Gary stares contemplatively at a cross while
 kneeling in a church.

GARY (V.O. ON TV)
 I'm just looking for a nice wholesome
 woman to call my own. And if she
 happens to be smoking hot, that
 wouldn't be terrible. I've been
 waiting my whole life for her, and I'm
 confident I'll meet her soon.

NEW IMAGE - Gary dramatically sniffs a rose and looks at
 the camera.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 ABC's hit dating show is coming
 soon... Apply now.

Tasha focuses back onto Trevor, still talking on and on.

TREVOR
 --you'd think after thirty years here
 I would get some slack from the higher
 up but no it's always "Raise your
 viewership, Trevor, no, you can't air
JAG reruns at night, Trevor."

As Trevor listens to the sound of his own voice, Tasha
 gets an idea.

TREVOR

--so I assume you understand it's
nothing personal, it's just business.
We good?

TASHA

I quit.

TREVOR

What?

TASHA

You heard me. I quit. If I'm not
pretty enough to be co-anchor then
surely you don't need me in front of
your cameras at all.

TREVOR

But--

Tasha walks out before he can even finish the thought.

INT. KACL XYZ NEWS STATION, STACY'S OFFICE - DAY

Tasha walks into Stacy's new office, already decorated
with even more pink than her old desk. Tasha picks up
the empty cardboard box Stacy used to move.

TASHA

You still using this?

STACY

No, why?

TASHA

I need it to pack up my desk.

STACY

Why would you pack up your--?

(gasps)

Did Trevor fire you?

TASHA

What? No, I quit.

STACY

Tasha! How could you quit? What am I
going to do without my work bestie?
Oh, I'll miss you so much!

Stacy hugs Tasha, who does not move.

TASHA

I'm sure... I'm sure you'll be just fine.

Stacy backs off, pouting.

TASHA

I just have to focus on excelling my career for now.

Tasha takes the box and leaves.

INT. KACL XYZ NEWS STATION, BULL PEN - DAY

Tasha packs up all the folders, files, and her one picture frame.

CLOSE ON - her computer screen with a "Will You Marry Gary" application ready to print. She defiantly hits print.

Tasha picks up the papers from the printer, kicks open the door and leaves, a smug look on her face.

INT. TASHA'S CAR - DAY

Tasha is angry-crying to Bikini Kill's "Rebel Girl" or a similar, more easily licensed punk song. As it ends, she calls Steve on speakerphone.

INT. KACL XYZ NEWS STATION, EDITING BAY - DAY

Steve is editing when his cell phone rings.

INTERCUT BETWEEN TASHA'S CAR AND KACL STATION EDITING BAY

TASHA

Steve?

STEVE

Oh my God, Tash, what happened? Did you really quit just like that?

TASHA

Just like that.

STEVE

Holy shit.

TASHA

Well what would you do if you were told you weren't fuckable enough for an anchor job?

STEVE

He did not.

TASHA

He may as well have! He gave the job to Stacy! Bi Apple Thetan pink ponies Stacy! Ugh. Men are the worst.

STEVE

We really are. So what are you going to do now? Do you have another job lined up?

TASHA

Not exactly...

STEVE

Do you have any idea what you're going to do next?

TASHA

Less of an idea... more of a scheme. Promise you won't laugh.

STEVE

I promise no such thing.

TASHA

I'm going to apply to Will You Marry Gary and I'm going to win it to prove to Trevor that I am in fact smoking hot and TV material.

Steve laughs for about five seconds too long, the kind of laugh where you have to take a breath halfway through.

STEVE

No, seriously, what are you going to do next? Infomercials?

TASHA

I was being serious! What better way to get back at Trevor than to prove to him I'm desirable on his own beloved network in prime time.

STEVE

Well, it's ambitious, I'll give you that. But what about--

TASHA

I'll figure it out. I'm sure it will be fine. I can act. Hey, I'm about to pull in, but I wanted to ask you: could you come over tomorrow and help me film my application video? For old time's sake?

STEVE

Sure. Tash, good luck telling all this to Paige. You're going to need it.

TASHA

It'll be fine, she's chill. Okay, I gotta go, bye.

STEVE

I'll pray for you.

EXT. TASHA'S HOUSE - DAY

Tasha parks in the driveway, wipes away her tears, and unloads her box of stuff.

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, FRONT HALL - DAY

Tasha sets her keys in a dish alongside another set. She walks by a bunch of framed pictures on the wall: pictures of her with the woman from her desk picture.

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

That woman is PAIGE ORTBERG (25, brunette, no-nonsense). She's sitting at the kitchen table. Their cat, SPATULA O'SHAUGHNESSY, is purring on her lap.

PAIGE

You're home early.

TASHA

Well, I quit.

PAIGE

You what?

Tasha sits down at the table next to her, putting the box on the floor.

TASHA

You know that co-anchor job I've wanted forever?

PAIGE

Of course, it's like, the cornerstone of your five-year plan.

TASHA

Well, they gave it to the weathergirl because I'm not "watchable" enough for evening news or some shit like that.

Paige is visibly upset by this.

PAIGE

How dare he! This is because we went to the holiday party as girlfriends, isn't it? Homophobic bastard.

TASHA

So you're not mad at me for quitting?

PAIGE

Of course I'm not mad! Who are you going to hire?

TASHA

What?

PAIGE

A law firm. For the discrimination suit.

TASHA

Oh, I'm not going to sue. I was thinking of taking a break from reporting. I kinda have an idea, but it's a bit out there.

PAIGE

Whatever it is, he deserves it.

Tasha pulls out the application form from the box.

TASHA

Now don't freak out.

PAIGE

Last time you said that you brought a snake home.

TASHA

I'm going to apply to Will You Marry Gary.

PAIGE

You're going to what?

TASHA

Why is everybody so shocked by this? I want to prove to Trevor that I could look desirable.

PAIGE

And you think the best way to do that is to sell yourself out to the male gaze?

TASHA

It's for a good cause.

PAIGE

Tasha, you're the proudest lesbian I know. Why do you suddenly want to deny everything you are to prove a point? It's letting them win by objectifying you and who you are.

TASHA

But think of the jobs I can get afterward! I'll be famous.

PAIGE

I'm on TV too, Tash. But you don't see me lying and cheating and selling out for a better job at the morning show.

TASHA

Do you seriously not understand?

As their voices raise, Spatula runs out of the room.

PAIGE

No, I understand exactly what you are trying to do, I just don't think you do. Like, what are you going to do when they find out that you're gay?

TASHA

They won't! I'll just...pretend you are my roommate.

PAIGE

No you won't.

TASHA

What do you mean?

PAIGE

If you're seriously going to do this, I'm moving out.

Paige gets up from the table and walks into the bedroom. Tasha follows her.

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - CONT.

Paige pulls a dingy duffel bag out of the closet and starts packing up her clothes, pulling heaps and heaps of sleeveless cocktail dresses out of the closet. It's what she wears on the morning show.

TASHA

Paige...

PAIGE

Tasha, save it. Honestly, I've seen this coming. Do you know how depressing it is listening to you come home from work every night and complain? Do you ever ask how my day is? If I have a terribly homophobic boss? No, you don't. I agree that what Trevor did was terrible. But what you're doing? What you're doing is worse.

TASHA

Paige, babe, please, can't we talk about this?

Paige zips up the duffel bag and leaves Tasha in the bedroom with Spatula. She scoops him up and cuddles him.

TASHA

You'll never leave me, right, Spatula?

Spatula meows annoyedly. Tasha buries her face into his fur, ashamed to be crying, but she can't help herself.

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tasha eats a microwave dinner in her pajamas as she fills out her application questionnaire with a pink glitter pen. She doesn't look great, her hair is tied up in a messy bun, she's obviously been crying. She's talking to Spatula, curled up on a cat tree in the corner. She's not used to being alone.

TASHA

How would I describe my ideal mate...
hmm...

She glances at an old coffee mug stained with Paige's lipstick, still by the sink.

TASHA

What do straight girls like? Tall.
Nice hair. A good job? Oh, a good
jawline. And forearms. Sexy accent.

She looks at Spatula as if he holds the answer.

TASHA

Shit, I just described Ruby Rose,
didn't I? Okay, let's start over.
Male. Tall. Nice. Funny. Yeah,
that'll do. Keep it vague. What's
next? "What's your drink?"

She takes another sip of her beer.

TASHA

Should I put Cosmo or Cosmopolitan,
what sounds more convincing?
Cosmopolitan.

TASHA

Hobbies and interests... Laughing,
having fun, and spending time with
friends. Nothing offensive in that.
Pets... One cat, Spatula
O'Shaughnessy, the only man I love.

Spatula jumps down from the tree and lies next to Tasha,
as if he knows what the next question is.

TASHA

"How many long-term relationships have
you been in and how did they end?"

Tasha starts to tear up.

TASHA

Nope, Spatch. We're going to skip
right past that one, please and thank
you. We can always come back to it
later. "What have you looked for in
relationships that you haven't found
yet?"

She scratches Spatula behind the ears for a beat.

TASHA

Loyalty. Support. Someone who is my
best friend and will deal with my
spontaneous adventures and outlandish
schemes. Someone who is willing to
stand with me and take a leap of
faith.

She's surprised with herself. In fact, she's full-on
crying. She tries to get a hold of herself.

TASHA

(quickly)

Well, that seems appropriately cheesy.
I think that's enough for tonight.
Bedtime for us! We'll have lots of
room from now on.

She scoops up Spatula, covering him in little kisses as
she carries him into the bedroom.

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tasha walks into the living room with a carton of ice cream, wearing a bathrobe. She doesn't look in much better shape, but her hair is down and brushed. She clicks some buttons on the remote and sits motionless on the sofa, watching the movie Carol and eating the ice cream using the scoop as a spoon. Spatula climbs back into his tree.

TV IMAGE - CATE BLANCHETT, on TV, raising a wine glass to her lips as the screen fades to black.

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - LATER

The ice cream carton is almost empty, and Tasha is snottily crying into a tissue. She grabs the remote and flips through channels, landing on Paige's morning show.

TV IMAGE - Paige talking with a ZOOKEEPER holding a snake.

PAIGE

I hope you'll excuse me, I don't have a lot of experience with these sorts of things.

ZOOKEEPER

Well they don't bite. Ralph here is completely harmless.

Tasha flicks a glob of ice cream onto the tv screen angrily. It lands on Paige's face as she drapes the snake across her shoulders, Britney Spears-style, to the Zookeeper's amusement. Suddenly, the doorbell rings. Spatula immediately runs to investigate. Tasha wipes the tears and ice cream from her face and goes to answer it.

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, DOORWAY - DAY

Tasha opens the door to let Steve in, toting an expensive-looking camera, but not the giant one he uses for news reports. Tasha smiles, and it's obvious it's the first time since the breakup that she's done that.

STEVE

Did somebody order a film crew?

TASHA

Steve, I'm so glad you are here, I'm sure you know all about--

STEVE

Shh! No Paige discussion allowed today. We are going to do this! Are you ready?

Tasha doesn't know what to say, but something changes in her face. Her expression changes from one of self-pity to one of determination.

TASHA

Yeah, hang on. Go ahead into the backyard, I'll be right there.

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY

Tasha walks into her bedroom and takes off her robe, revealing a strapless crop top and short shorts, the same outfit the matching sorority girls in Stacy's photo were wearing. She walks up to the vanity, opening a MAKEUP BAG labeled "Paige." She twists open a tube of hot pink lipstick, applies it, and throws the tube back into the bag. Then, she throws the makeup bag into the trash can.

EXT. TASHA'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - DAY

Steve has set up a tripod for the camera. Tasha walks out and Steve is taken aback.

STEVE

Holy shit, Tash.

TASHA

Don't you dare say anything.

STEVE

Look, I'm just a humble straight man, but I think I can say without bias: you look amazing.

TASHA

This is worse than that time I went as Amanda Bynes for Halloween.

STEVE

Have I ever thanked you for doing that so I could be Channing Tatum?

TASHA

Here's a way you can thank me: never comment on my appearance again.

STEVE

Fair enough. Now, are you ready to get your straight on?

TASHA

Ready as I'll ever be.

STEVE

Alright, just let me slate. Tasha, application video, take 1.

He gestures to Tasha, who claps to slate. As soon as she does, a huge ear-to-ear grin appears on her face.

TASHA

Hey y'all! I'm Tasha Sobel and welcome to my house! I'm here to show you why I should marry Gary!

STEVE

Holy shit, what was that?

TASHA

That was my impression of a straight girl.

STEVE

That was terrifying.

TASHA

Yeah, it's not bad, right? I've always thought it would come in handy one day.

STEVE

What next?

TASHA

Well, I've got to tell them about myself.

STEVE

Minus the whole...

TASHA

Yes, Steve, minus the whole gay thing. Why is everyone making such a big deal of this? It's just my sexuality, it's not my whole personality.

STEVE

Well...

TASHA

Steve! Just film me.

STEVE

Fine. Tasha, application video, take two.

TASHA

I'm Tasha, I'm twenty-four, and I'm just a home-grown girl. And to tell you a secret? I've never had a boyfriend in my life. In fact, I've never even kissed a boy.

STEVE

(after he stops recording)
Cut! Nope, never kissed a boy. But girls, on the other hand...

TASHA

See, it's technically not lying. I mean, I've never had a boyfriend. So they can't get mad at me for omitting the fact that I was prom king.

STEVE

But do you really want to be "technically legal" about this?

TASHA

I mean, I've already quit my job. I'm kind of all in on this.

STEVE

Alrighty. Let's get some B-roll of you frolicking about.

TASHA

Oh! Yes, good idea, that's very important.

Steve films Tasha doing cartwheels, watering some flowers, hula-hooping.

STEVE

Looks great.

TASHA

I feel like I'm in a tampon commercial.

STEVE

Well, that's a good sign, right?

TASHA

Yeah, I'm actually feeling pretty good about this now.

INT. KACL XYZ NEWS STATION, BULL PEN - NIGHT

Steve and Tasha make their way through the XYZ station. Tasha is dressed in all black complete with beanie pulled low.

INT. KACL XYZ NEWS STATION, EDITING BAY - NIGHT

They manage to get to the editing bay and Steve flips on the lights.

TASHA

Steve!

STEVE

What?

TASHA

Someone might see us on the surveillance tapes!

STEVE

The only person who could possibly see you is Gus in Security, and you waved to him on the way in. We aren't sneaking around, I don't know why you wore your sneak-around clothes. Just calm down.

TASHA

Why would you tell me to calm down? When have I ever calmed down?

STEVE

I just thought it might be worth a try.

TASHA

You got the stuff?

STEVE

Tasha, this isn't a drug deal, the footage is all loaded up and ready to go.

Steve turns on the computer in the editing bay, clicking a few buttons.

STEVE

I took a stab at a possible opening during my break today, let me know what you think.

He hits play on the computer, playing the tape.

COMPUTER IMAGE - Tasha, arms crossed, looking important while a superimposed American flag waves behind her.

STEVE (V.O.)

(horrendously dramatic)
Tasha Sobel is all you could possibly want in an All-American girl...

NEW IMAGE - Tasha hula hooping in the backyard.

STEVE (V.O.)

Fun...

NEW IMAGE - Tasha playing with Spatula.

STEVE (V.O.)

Caring...

NEW IMAGE - Tasha watering flowers.

STEVE (V.O.)

And ever so lonely.

NEW IMAGE - Tasha in the backyard as before.

TASHA (ON COMPUTER)

Hey y'all! I'm Tasha Sobel and
welcome to my house! I'm here to show
you why I should marry Gary!

NEW IMAGE - Stock footage of explosions crossfading into
footage of a bald eagle as Bon-Jovi esque music plays in
the background. Big block letters appear reading "Tasha
and Gary 4ever."

Steve looks at Tasha expectantly.

STEVE

(after a beat)

Well...what do you think?

TASHA

It's...a lot.

STEVE

I know, I know, but I never get to do
any fun editing here and there's so
much to play with. You're lucky I cut
the part where I put you in the
background of classic movies.

TASHA

Yeah, I don't think that would be a
good idea.

STEVE

That's exactly what you say in The
Godfather!

TASHA

Steve, we can save that for the
bloopers when I'm rich and famous,
let's try to think like reality TV
producers.

STEVE

Fine, I'll get rid of the explosions
and all that.

TASHA

I liked the flag at the beginning,
though. Makes me look important.

STEVE

Really?! Awesome.

TASHA

Alright, time to exploit my body for the sake of my career.

INT. KACL XYZ NEWS STATION, EDITING BAY - DAWN

Tasha and Steve are sleeping hunched over the editing bay controls. Tasha wakes up, elbowing Steve awake when she realizes what happened.

TASHA

Steve! Steve! Wake up, it's morning!

STEVE

(waking up)

Oh shit. What time is it?

TASHA

Six.

STEVE

That means that...

TASHA

Which means that Paige is here. So we have to get to the front door without her noticing us.

STEVE

Would her noticing you be that bad? I mean, she knows what you're doing.

TASHA

She doesn't know that I got you involved! Plus, knowing her, then she would want to make polite small talk about the weather or something. I can't do that, not so soon.

STEVE

So what do we do?

TASHA

It's a good thing I wore this because we're going to sneak around.

Tasha and Steve leave the booth. Tasha is dramatically sneaking each step, peering around corners, etc. They notice Paige talking to someone in the bull pen, but manage to get to the front door without incident by hiding behind various CREW MEMBERS and racks of clothes.

EXT. KACL XYZ NEWS STATION, PARKING LOT - DAY

Tasha and Steve burst out of the station. Tasha is out of breath, sneaking around is exhausting.

TASHA

Whew. You got the final product?

Steve brandishes a USB stick.

STEVE

You know it.

TASHA

Alright. I'm actually going to do this. Boy, that was an adventure, right?

STEVE

I will never understand the lengths you will go to to avoid people.

TASHA

It's a blessing and a curse. Remind me sometime to tell you the story of when I convinced my high school girlfriend I got amnesia and couldn't remember her.

STEVE

Amazing.

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tasha sits on her couch in pajamas with a glass of red wine, carefully folding her application and putting it in an envelope with the USB stick. She glares at the TV, where Stacy is delivering the nightly news. She holds up the envelope for Spatula to lick and seals it.

TASHA

Well, Spatch, here goes nothing.

Spatula meows. Tasha downs the last of her wine.

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Tasha sits down at the kitchen table armed with a mass of highlighters and pens and begins to read the first book in a tall stack of books, a former Gary autobiography called "Garried With Children."

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER

Tasha's now halfway through the stack of books.

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER

Time has passed, Tasha's on the last book in the stack. There's a knock at the door, so she puts down the book and heads to the doorway.

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, DOORWAY - DAY

Tasha opens the door to reveal Paige, still in whatever cocktail dress she wore to host the morning show.

TASHA

Paige.

PAIGE

Hi Tasha. Look, I'm not here to fight, I just want my things and then I'll be out of your hair.

TASHA

Oh. Okay, yeah. Come on in.

Tasha and Paige walk into the kitchen. Paige sees the stack of books and scoffs.

PAIGE

What's this?

TASHA

Oh, you know. Research.

PAIGE

So you're really--

TASHA
I'll hear back from them any day now,
yup.

There's a painfully awkward silence.

PAIGE
So I, uh, I'm staying with Jenny.

TASHA
Jenny? Jenny-from-college Jenny?

PAIGE
Yeah, turns out she got divorced and
moved back home.

TASHA
Oh thank God. That guy she was with
was the worst. Do you remember their
wedding?

PAIGE
Jordan almonds? What is this, 1986?

They laugh again, like old times, but then it fades.

TASHA
So do you need, like, some bags or
something?

PAIGE
I brought some. So I guess I'll just,
go do that.

Paige leaves to pack up her things in the bedroom.
Spatula jumps up onto the kitchen table, looking at
Tasha.

TASHA
I know, I know, you never liked her in
the first place. It's over. Really,
I promise. Gotta find myself a girl
who will appreciate my spontaneous
plans. Well, schemes.

There's a knock at the door. Tasha answers it to find a
small bright pink tube about a foot long propped against
the door. She brings it into the kitchen and twists off

an end. It explodes into a cloud of pink glitter, going everywhere.

TASHA

The fuck?

Paige walks back into the room.

PAIGE

Tasha, have you seen my makeup ba-- Oh my god, what is this?

Tasha brushes the glitter off of her clothes. Spatula tries to lick it off his paws. Tasha scoops him up. His long fur is absolutely covered in glitter, she tries her best to comb it out with her fingers.

TASHA

Who would do this? Honestly, if this was a prank, it's not funny.

PAIGE

It's a little funny.

TASHA

It's not funny! Maybe it's hate mail. Does that make sense? Maybe one of your adoring fans found out we broke up.

She opens the tube further and unfurls the rolled up letter inside. Paige is upset she brought up the breakup.

PAIGE

I don't talk about my personal life on camera, I don't let it affect my career, unlike certain--

TASHA

Holy shit. I'm in!

PAIGE

What?

TASHA

I'm going to be a Gary Girl!

PAIGE

Oh. Well, maybe this isn't the best time. I'll come back later, shall I? And Tash?

Tasha dances with Spatula in celebration.

TASHA

Yeah?

PAIGE

Think about it before you say yes.

TASHA

Okay, okay. Hey, can I borrow some of your clothes for the show? I'll pack up the rest so you just have to pick them up.

PAIGE

Ugh. Fine. But I'm keeping your Ralph Lauren flannel.

TASHA

Deal.

Paige leaves, annoyed. Tasha picks up her phone and dials a number.

TASHA

Hi, this is Tasha Sobel. I'm happy to say I will be able to participate in this season! Thank you! Yes, I'll look for the email tonight. Thank you again. Bye.

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tasha is on the floor, vacuuming a still glittery Spatula with a Dustbuster and scrolling through an email on her phone.

TASHA

I have to be in LA in a week? Oh, Spatch, we gotta find you a babysitter.

Spatula meows over the sound of the Dustbuster.

TASHA

We've got a lot of work to do.

EXT. SEPHORA, STOREFRONT - DAY

Tasha walks into the store--

EXT. SEPHORA, STOREFRONT - LATER

--and walks out with a full face of makeup and a giant shopping bag. She blinks, not used to the false eyelashes. Fed up with them, she peels them off before getting back into her car, sticking them to a telephone pole, making it look like it's looking down.

EXT. CURL UP AND DYE SALON, STOREFRONT - DAY

Tasha, again, walks in--

EXT. CURL UP AND DYE SALON, STOREFRONT - LATER

--and walks out with a full blowout and another shopping bag full of products and appliances. Her hair is caramel brown with chunky highlights.

EXT. ANTHROPOLOGIE, STOREFRONT - DAY

Tasha walks in--

EXT. ANTHROPOLOGIE, STOREFRONT - LATER

--and walks out in a new dress, a short number with bohemian bell sleeves, and high heels, with lots of shopping bags on the crook of her arm.

EXT. WAX ON WAX OFF BEAUTICIANS - DAY

Tasha walks in--

EXT. WAX ON WAX OFF BEAUTICIANS - DAY

--and walks out, walking a little awkwardly, rushing to her car.

INT. TASHA'S CAR - DAY

Tasha sits in the driver's seat, wincing a bit, and checks her makeup in the rearview mirror as she calls her mom on speakerphone.

TASHA

Mom?

TASHA'S MOM (ON PHONE)

Hi, honey. What's up? Are you doing okay?

TASHA

Mom, I'm fine. Listen--

TASHA'S MOM (ON PHONE)

It's such a shame, really. I liked Paige. But it wasn't meant to be. How are you coping?

TASHA

Well, about that. I was thinking I might go on a retreat for a bit. Escape to the mountains, live off the land. There's a great program in Montana and I thought--

TASHA'S MOM (ON PHONE)

You really think that's a good idea, sweetie? You never really did well in Girl Scouts.

TASHA

All the more reason to learn my way around now! So I'm calling to say that I won't have service for a few months. Will you be okay?

TASHA'S MOM (ON PHONE)

Of course. Does this mean I get to have my grandkitty visit while you're gone?

TASHA

I was going to ask! I hope you don't mind.

TASHA'S MOM (ON PHONE)
He's my favorite furbaby.

TASHA
Okay Mom, two things. One, never say "furbaby" again. Two, if he seems sparkly, just ignore it. He rolled around in the bath after I used a bath bomb.

TASHA'S MOM (ON PHONE)
Alright. Well, just bring him by whenever. I'll miss you so much, but I know you have to do what you have to do.

TASHA
It's basically my only option.

TASHA'S MOM (ON PHONE)
Are you at least getting back out there?

TASHA
I'm not sure if the girls at this retreat will be interested in me, Mom. It's not that kind of thing. But... yeah, I think I'm ready to move on now.

TASHA'S MOM (ON PHONE)
Good. I'm sure you know what you're doing.

TASHA
I hope you're right.

INT. LAX AIRPORT, BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

Tasha, bedecked in the spoils of the makeover montage, grabs her bag, and looks out the window, in awe of Los Angeles. Just as she is about to have a Mary Tyler Moore hat-throwing emotional moment, she's interrupted by VANESSA GRIMES (30s, sleek bob, wears a lot of blazers).

VANESSA
Tasha?

TASHA

Yes! Hi!

VANESSA

Vanessa Grimes. Exec Producer.
Welcome to LA, I need to check your
bags now.

TASHA

What?

VANESSA

We need to take your laptop, phone,
books, anything that can give you
media.

TASHA

Oh. That wasn't in the email.

VANESSA

You really think we'd get thirty
attractive women to sign up for this
thing if we told them they couldn't
keep their phones? I'd lose my job.
Come on. Hand the stuff over.

TASHA

It's all in my--

VANESSA

Then take it out.

In the middle of the crowded airport, Tasha unzips her
suitcase and unloads her laptop, phone, and a Kindle into
Vanessa's waiting purse.

VANESSA

Great. Here's your welcome packet and
notebook.

She hands Tasha a manila folder and a small XYZ-branded
notebook.

TASHA

I thought we weren't allowed to have books.

VANESSA

Well, we've figured out that our contestants should be writing everything down as it happens in case of a book deal.

TASHA

Oh. I guess that makes sense.

VANESSA

Now come on, we have to head back to the hotel. We're only going to be there for a few days so we can train you before filming starts. You won't get to meet Gary until we film your first meeting, so don't even ask.

Vanessa starts walking toward the exit. Tasha runs to follow her.

TASHA

I'm sorry, there's training?

VANESSA

(while still walking)

You need to be TV ready. That takes time and training. You'll be in the hotel and then we'll move you all into the mansion when you're ready to meet Gary.

Vanessa taps out a text on her phone and almost instantly a nondescript silver van pulls up in front of them. Vanessa gets in the passenger seat, Tasha slides open the side door and hauls her suitcase inside.

INT. PRODUCTION VAN - DAY

Tasha sits in the darkened production van. There's a terrified looking girl in the back, CONNIE CHAMBERS (28,

blonde, leggy). Vanessa talks to the both of them while still texting incessantly.

VANESSA

Alright, now this is covered in your training but I'll tell you it now so you know from the start: from now on, you listen to us. You wear what follows that day's dress code, you repeat a moment if needed by our directors, and whatever you do, you don't eat on camera. Ever. There's more but those are the main ones. You'll pick up the rest of it.

Tasha now looks as terrified as Connie. There's a period of silence, then Tasha tries to make small talk.

TASHA

Hi, I'm Tasha.

CONNIE

I'm Connie, it's so nice to meet you.

TASHA

Are you okay?

CONNIE

Yeah, I'm fine, it's just, I miss my dogs. They're my angels.

TASHA

Oh, I get that. I miss my cat, he's my favorite little man.

CONNIE

Hopefully not for long, though!

TASHA

What?

CONNIE

Gary.

TASHA

Oh. Oh, yeah. Yeah, he's certainly something.

CONNIE

I'm sure he'll love you. I hope he likes me. I've dreamed of marrying him ever since Gary W. married Lauren S.

TASHA

Wait, wasn't his name like, just announced? He's already your dream man?

CONNIE

Well, you know, when you dream of marrying a Gary, the specifics of the Gary can usually be filled in later.