

1 FADE IN: 1

2 INT. PUBLIC BATHROOM - DAY 2

MEREDITH, a woman in her very early twenties, pulls at her face in a grimy public bathroom. She's nondescript in every possible sense of the word, but doesn't seem to know or care how to change that.

VOICEOVER

This is her. This is me, in a way,
in every way, but in no way at all.
As it were.

Meredith pulls a movie theater uniform over her clothes, and begins to button the uniform.

VOICEOVER

We all call her many names, but the
best one is Perfect. We wish she
was Perfect.

Meredith adjusts the collar of the shirt, which sticks out. Falling onto her hands against the bathroom counter she sticks her tongue out at her reflection.

VOICEOVER

I don't understand her as well as I
should, which would be completely.
She is ugly in her way, but at
times I am overwhelmed by our
beauty. I don't like the way pieces
of my face fall into each other,
over and over. The blankness inside
of edges is overwhelming.

A toilet flushes off-screen in the bathroom. Meredith's introspective phase falls, she washes her hands and picks up a backpack sitting on the ground, one last look in the mirror.

VOICEOVER

My forehead is terrible.

3 INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY 3

MEREDITH walks through a dimly lit movie theater lobby, weaving through a few scattered patrons to the front booth. She stands behind the counter with ANGELA -- physically similar to Meredith, but more in ownership of herself. A CUSTOMER, a woman in her forties, orders popcorn.

(CONTINUED)

VOICEOVER

She does a lot of things, many things, undefinable things. Her day is so full of things its hard to remember even one. She is floating on the edge of existence and when she touches it she finds herself average.

Meredith hands a box of popcorn to the customer, taking her cash with a smile. When the woman walks away, she leans on the counter, sighs.

VOICEOVER

Why should she be confined to the mundane? But what else would she deserve?

A group of three girls walks in, giggling and laughing. They buy movie tickets from Angela, slowly collapsing to the other side of the booth to buy popcorn and candy from Meredith. They exist within themselves, popping out of their bubble to interact with Meredith and Angela with identical levels of self-reflexivity, each silently apologizing for the self-centeredness of all others.

VOICEOVER

She could be one of them. It's possible, easy even. Everybody is the same. Anything inborn that makes me special is easily enough ignored. We could take on their idiosyncrasies, their desires, the goals they tell their friends and fake the ones they don't. That's all we ever do.

Angela inspects her nails, then her phone under the counter.

VOICEOVER

I'm her.

The older WOMAN fussing with her popcorn.

VOICEOVER

I'm her.

The girls, now talking excitedly in a loop of raised voices and shushing, open the doors of a movie about to start.

VOICEOVER

I'm her, I'm her, I'm her, even.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VOICEOVER (cont'd)

She has the capacity for anything,
which is the most useless quality
of all. She is trapped in her
versatility, unable to sink into
herself without feeling that she
will lose herself.

She doesn't know who to be.

CUT TO:

4 INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

4

Meredith wipes down the counter, her reflection staring at her. Angela shakes the last of the kernels from the popcorn machine.

ANGELA

Are you coming out? There's a group
going to Ace.

Meredith pauses in her cleaning, looks at Angela. Angela nods.

ANGELA

You came last time, right?

VOICEOVER

She doesn't know. This is possible.

MEREDITH

I don't have clothes for it.

ANGELA

Borrow mine.

CUT TO:

5 INT. CAR - NIGHT

5

Meredith sitting alone in a car. She flips through the radio stations with increasing aggression, until she returns to the second song she had heard. It goes to commercial, and she slaps off the radio. Starts the car, begins to back out of the parking spot when

CUT TO

6 INT. CAR - NIGHT

6

Meredith sits in the front passenger seat of a different car. She wears a tight cotton dress, a plastic bag stuffed with her work clothes at her feet, and is applying lipstick in the passenger seat mirror by the light of the car light. Angela sits in the driver's seat in a red dress of the same style.

ANGELA

Is my hair okay?

MEREDITH

Yeah.

ANGELA

Good. (beat) You look really different with makeup.

Meredith caps the lipstick, tilting her head back and forth.

MEREDITH

Good.

7 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

7

The front door jiggles, opens. Outside is almost as dark as outside. Meredith slips into her apartment, flicking on all of the lights as she stalks through the living room, kitchen, throwing her keys skidding off of the table. Her home is chaotic, but not messy.

VOICEOVER

These are her things. This is her room. This is her life. She can tell you more about her rug than her personality. She has spoken more about the rug than her personality.

Meredith opens the freezer, starts mechanically pulling through frozen meals, pulls out a boxed curry. The box joins three identical boxes in the trash can.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. DANCE CLUB -NIGHT

8

Meredith, Angela, and two other girls stand in line outside of a club. It's too cold to be outside for the amount of time they've already been there, the air a mixture of breath and cigarette smoke.

9 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 9

Meredith sits on the couch, lights dimmed, eating gourmet peanut butter cups out of a bag. The light of the TV plays in harmony with the light of her phone on her face and the sound of a 90's sitcom laughtrack in the background.

She opens Instagram, scrolling through too fast to distinguish between photos. She opens her drafts to a list of photos. She opens one, playing with the caption. Hesitates, publishes.

10 INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT 10

Meredith, a drink in hand, self-consciously beginning to dance in a large crowd of people. The three girls she came with bob in and out of sight, Angela appearing first and disappearing last -- the focus is on Meredith.

11 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 11

She hovers over the photo, refreshes the app. Deletes the photo, then closes out of her phone, throwing it on the couch. Pops another peanut butter cup in her mouth.

MATCH CUT:

12 INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT 12

Meredith finishes the drink in her hand, grabs Angela.

MEREDITH

Do you want anything?

ANGELA

You wish!

They laugh, neither sure exactly what the joke is. Meredith weaves over to the bar.

13 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 13

Meredith picks up a book. She skims a page, jumping around the book, then listlessly throwing the book on the ground.

VOICEOVER

What has defined your entire life?
What defines you now?

14 INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

14

Meredith sits at the bar, waiting for a drink. A group of boys looks at her from the opposite end, half admiring, half inspecting, judging. Their faces indistinguishable. Angela approaches her.

ANGELA
(to the bartender)
Rum and coke

ANGELA
(to Meredith)
I got thirsty.

MEREDITH
That's alcohol.

Their drinks arrive.

MEREDITH
I think I'm going to move.

ANGELA
No you're not.

MEREDITH
I am so. Chicago maybe.

ANGELA
You would hate Chicago.

MEREDITH
Would not.

ANGELA
You're a bitch about the cold.

MEREDITH
Italy.

ANGELA
You don't speak Italian.

MEREDITH
Neither do you.

ANGELA
I'm not the one who's moving to
Italy.

(CONTINUED)

MEREDITH

It's a thought.

VOICEOVER

It's not really. It's something to talk about.

MEREDITH

How often do you hate yourself?

ANGELA

What?

MEREDITH

I need to walk around.

She finishes her drink, pushes back onto the dance floor. Angela watches her with the same expression as the boys across the bar. One of those boys slinks away from the bar as well, closing some of the distance. She dances.

15 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 15

Meredith changes into pajamas. She puts in earbuds, the same song that was playing in the club. She bobs to the music.

16 INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT 16

She dances. The boy moves closer, then he's in front of her, then he touches her arm and she looks up into a face the camera does not see.

VOICEOVER

The answer is always, the answer is often.

17 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 17

Meredith on her bed painting her nails white. The paint slops over on one of her fingers. She painstakingly, messily, wipes it off with a tissue.

18 INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT 18

He reaches for her face and

CUT

She pushes at his arm, angry. There's the cough of a tear in her voice.

(CONTINUED)

MEREDITH
Get off of me!

She walks off into the crowd of girls, her girls. She finds Angela and has her hold her, non-reciprocal, just being held. There's a look of surprise for Angela, that when Meredith glances up, settles into disappointment. She still holds her though.

CUT TO:

19 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

19

VOICEOVER
The answer is a slow burning
seething dislike of yourself
boiling below conscious emotion,
the hatred of the self as the self
exists, will exist, and has always
existed.

She messes up her nails, worse than before. Groans.
She grabs at her hair with frustration. The nails are even
more fucked up than before.

MEREDITH
God fucking damn

20 INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

20

He reaches for her face and
she kisses *him*, actively, forcefully.

CUT

Angela watches Meredith and the boy dance -- it's not really dancing, just making out and swaying. She watches anyway, swaying at their pace. Meredith breaks the kiss and takes him by both hands, leading him out a back exit. Angela sways.

CUT

Meredith slowly uncurls from Angela. There's a look between them, a little too deep for just friends. There's a moment when Angela could move, act on the impulse, and she uses it, leaning down for a kiss on the cheek that leaves lipstick and a question. Meredith, without smiling, boops her on the nose. Slips away toward the bar.

21 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 21

Meredith's in the bathroom, staring at herself in the mirror.

MEREDITH
God fucking damn!

22 INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT 22

Meredith at the bar. The lipstick still lives on her cheek - a battle scar, a birthmark.

MEREDITH
I need another shot

She takes the offered shot and pushes herself back onto the dance floor.

CUT

23 EXT. BACK DANCE CLUB - NIGHT 23

She's with the boy, pressing him into the corner of a brick wall behind the club. The music is tinny from inside and they're dancing, but their mouths moving more than anything else.

24 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 24

She grabs at her hair, looking for nail polish in it. Glances down to a pair of scissors on the counter. There's a pregnant pause on the scissors, weighted by a glance at her bare arm. She shakes her head, violently

MONTAGE BETWEEN THE TWO SETTINGS

25 INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT 25

MEREDITH dancing -- dancing alone, dancing with ANGELA. It becomes increasingly unclear what is happening when and with who. The music becomes more and more intense.

26 EXT. BACK DANCE CLUB - NIGHT 26

In a montage with the shot above, Meredith makes out with the boy she's snared from inside. He's handsy. Right now she enjoys that.

27

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

27

- MEREDITH grabs the scissors, the music from the club continuing over into the bathroom. She grabs her hair and, after a wild eyed hesitation, chops it off.

- A climax in the music. Meredith and the BOY move further into their corner, a fumbling moment where suddenly Meredith is against the wall. His mouth smiles at her.

- The process of chopping hair takes longer than she thinks, and is not nearly as neat. Her hand falters halfway through cutting off her hair.

- Meredith is still jumping to the beat. Her face falls into neutrality. She is sickeningly tired of being here, but she keeps dancing.

- The BOY takes her by the waist, pins her by a wrist against the wall. She has on the same meaningless smile that fell in the club a moment ago.

- Meredith watches the hair clump fall out of her curled hand onto the floor. It sits there.

- ANGELA is dancing with her now, two solitary dancers that happen to be in the same orbit.

MEREDITH

I'm not drunk enough for this.

- Meredith takes another chunk of her hair, pulling it more aggressively, slowly and jaggedly beginning to cut it off.

- She's cornered, she's in the corner, his hands are on her hips and her face. She looks past him, and he kisses her neck instead.

MEREDITH

I'm not drunk enough.

- Dropping the scissors like they burned her, she looks up sharply at the mirror. At herself, at her hair, at her wrists. There is the desire to scream thick in the air.

- MEREDITH takes ANGELA's hand, starts pulling her toward the exit. The two GIRLS they came with bob behind, part of the orbit.

- A cut to the BOY kissing Meredith, a cut to her in the mirror, still trapped in the inability to scream

28

EXT. DANCE CLUB -NIGHT

28

The GIRLS stumbling a little on the street. A GIRL, not with them but dressed so that it wouldn't have been surprising if she was, is standing next to the wall, vomiting. MEREDITH stares, unable to stop looking.

- MEREDITH tearing away from the mirror to the shower stall. Door slams open, closed.

MEREDITH(BATHROOM)

GAWD!

- CUT TO Meredith with the boy. Her eyes, closed, pop open. She looks him in the eyes for the first time

- OUTSIDE: Angela pulls Meredith's hand. Next to the club is a DINER

INT. DINER - NIGHT

The GIRLS are crammed into a single booth. Meredith shoves a fry into her mouth. Then another. Another. Chewing carelessly and messily.

- BATHROOM: A closed shower door, the water running and steam rising behind it.

- OUTSIDE CLUB: Meredith pulls away from the kiss with force and as much passion as she began it.

- DINER:

ANGELA
(OFFSCREEN)

Hey.

- CLUB:

MEREDITH
I want you to leave now.

- BATHROOM: The hairdryer is running and clothes and towels are crumpled on the floor.

- CLUB:

MEREDITH VOICEOVER
Now please.

- DINER:

(CONTINUED)

ANGELA

Your... you've got lipstick...

She gestures to her cheek.

- BATHROOM: MEREDITH brushing out her hair. It catches at a piece she cuts and she holds it, looking pained, quiet.

- CLUB: The BOY has vanished. MEREDITH props herself up against the wall. Exhales. Pulls out her phone and opens the camera. She touches her lips, her cheeks.

- DINER: MEREDITH turns to the window, examines her reflection in the mirror. Slowly rubs off the lipstick.

VOICEOVER

God, I hate my forehead.