

READY

INT. HAIRDRESSER. DAY

A 30/40 year old woman sits on the black vinyl of a hairdressers' chair. A hairdresser of a similar age stands behind her and runs her fingers through the hair of our protagonist, Q. The hairdressers names is PATRICE.

PATRICE

It's lovely.

Q

I know, but take it off, please. I want a chin length bob.

PATRICE

You know I could go even shorter? I could cut it to here, to your ears?

Q

Do you think that would be best?

PATRICE

No. But then you'd be losing more than ten inches of length, and we could donate it to Hair for Care. It's this charity that makes wigs for kids with no hair.

Q

Does it have to be ten? Can you not give them a bit less?

PATRICE

No.

A beat, Q is hesitant.

Q

I think I'll just stick with the bob if thats okay.

PATRICE

You could always let it grow another inch and then come back and I could give you a bob. That way everyone wins.

Q

No, I have to do it today. It's the

first day of the rest of my life.

PATRICE

Oh wow, that's exciting!

Q smiles.

PATRICE

I had a day like that last week. I remember waking up and thinking, this is the first day of the rest of my life, I just had that feeling you know.

Q

Really? What happened?

PATRICE

I can't really remember actually. How awful, I think I just came into work. I remember the feeling though.

Q

Oh.

A beat.

PATRICE

Yeah, anyway. What are we going to do with you then?

PATRICE stands behind Q scissors in hand.

Q

Let's give a kid some new hair.

EXT. HOUSE. DAY

Q stands outside the door of a suburban house, taking a second to find her keys and entering.

INT. HOUSE. DAY

She enters quietly through the door and into the living room. The house is of a minimalist decor. A few plants, books on buddhism and zen and a cd's are carefully placed on shelves. There is a cold looking sofa and a single chair. A man, CARL, 30-40, sits at a desk in the corner with his back to the door and his back to Q, he has his headphones in and works at a laptop. He wears a karate uniform. Q looks at his back and composes herself, in this moment of stillness she tentatively

touches her hair.

Q

Hey.

CARL turns and looks up at Q as if he's forgotten who she is. He tries to hide his shock and regain his composure as his gaze takes her in.

CARL

Hey.

He turns back around and puts his headphones on. Q stands for a second before leaving the room.

INT. BEDROOM. DAY

A large white bed dominates the room. Q lies on one side of the bed, she looks small. We hear the sound of the front door. Q looks out the window and sees CARL marching in his karate uniform down the street. Q continues to look out the window after he's gone. She looks at the setting sun, the enormity of the sky.

We see windows. Windows of all shapes and sizes and varieties.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

We hear the front door open and close. Q wakes up, the light in the room has darkened. CARL pokes his head round the door, and Q smiles at him serenely. CARL enters the room.

Q

You're home early.

CARL

I know, the instructor didn't show so we had a substitute.

Q

Oh no.

CARL

Yeah and this guy was totally fake.

Q

He wasn't a tai chi instructor?

CARL

He was a comedian. He kept making

jokes and trying to get everyone to laugh.

Q
Oh, I thought you meant he was an imposter.

CARL
And he called all the forms by the American names.

Q
Wouldn't it be funny if an actual comedian did come in and tried to teach tai chi?

CARL
He called yun shou monkey hands.

Q
Like imagine Robin Williams taking the class.

CARL
Tai Chi is a noble and ancient art. Monkey hands.

They're missing each-other. Q is light hearted, happy to just engage with CARL, who undresses from his karate uniform angrily. They see one another. Q smiles trying to diffuse CARL's anger. CARL shows a degree of self awareness and allows himself to smile too.

CARL
Sorry.

Q takes in CARL. He is stripped down, and she brazenly looks at his body. He becomes shy under her eyes.

Q
Would you like to nurse, Carl?

A beat.

CARL
Is it okay if we don't tonight. I just want to take a shower, maybe do some reading.

Q
Thats fine.

CARL leaves. We hear the shower running. Q lies back down on her side of the bed. She looks out the window at the dark sky. She raises a hand to her hair, feels its length, feels the absence of it. She closes her eyes, and we fade out.

INT. SHOE STORE. DAY

Q looks down at her bare feet. A shop assistant kneels beside her, unbuckling some brown strapped sandals before putting them on Q's feet. Q smiles broadly.

Q

Yes, there perfect. I'll take them if thats okay.

The shop assistant smiles.

SHOP ASSISTANT

Would you like me to box them up for you?

Q

No, I'll wear them out.

SHOP ASSISTANT

I don't recommend that.

Q

Why not?

SHOP ASSISTANT

Well, I always wear shoes in the house for a few days first, that way I can still return them if they're uncomfortable.

Q

Thats a really good idea.

SHOP ASSISTANT

Wearing them in the house, thats the first step.

Q

Whats the second step?

SHOP ASSISTANT

Wear them outside.

Q

Whats the third step?

SHOP ASSISTANT

The third step? Its your life honey,
you decide.

Q smiles.

SHOP ASSISTANT

I'll just go and run them through the
till.

The shop assistant leaves. A couple walk into the shop holding hands. One of the couple moves forward to look at a pair of shoes, their hands stretch then brake apart. Q steals glances at them. They move closer again, inspecting the shoes. A hand is placed on the small of the back. A hand is placed on the nape of the neck. Hands are placed on each-others hips, they press together. The shop assistant returns.

SHOP ASSISTANT

Would you like to pay by cash or by
card?

Q

By card please.

As Q and the shop assistant finalise the transaction the couple leave, hand in hand, Q watches them go. We fade out.

EXT. HOUSE. DAY

Q walks towards the door of her house.

INT. HOUSE. DAY

Q enters the living room. CARL is sat in the middle of the room meditating, his eyes are closed and his hands are clenched. Q smiles and bends down, taking a shoe box out of her bag. She quietly puts on her new shoes, she smiles and walks in circles around the centred CARL. She sits on the cold sofa and looks at him. She looks at her hands in her lap. She looks at his hands clenched together. She looks at her own hands again and begins to softly cry. CARL is forgotten. We focus on Q. Her breathing changes, becomes rhythmic, first fast, then slower, deeper. It resonates within her like a great and complete cycle. Her feet and new shoes rock forward and backward. Her hands tighten. Her lips work in isolation. She opens her eyes. CARL is on his knees looking at her. The roles have reversed. We see the space between them.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Q and CARL are sat next to one another on the side of the bed. Q has pulled her nightgown up over her head, and CARL's face is pressed against her chest. Q looks into the distance, passive and alone. CARL's breathing gyrates and then climaxes.

CARL

I'll grab some tissues.

CARL leaves the room, and Q lays back on the side of the bed. CARL returns and hands Q some tissues and she wipes herself down. He joins her on the bed, each of them laying on their separate sides in the half darkness.

Q

Have you noticed my new look?

CARL

Your haircut?

Q

And I've got some new shoes.

CARL

Oh.

They are quiet again. A car's headlights go by the window casting their faces in a soft and ephemeral glow. In the darkness CARL inches his foot across and gently pushes it down onto Q's. Q presses her foot up onto his. They both smile, not to one another, but to themselves. CARL'S eyes are closed. Q presses up again, and CARL responds by pressing down. Q's eyes are closed now, a smile still playing across her lips. She presses once more. CARL doesn't respond. Q looks over at him, his eyes are closed and he sleeps softly. Q stays looking for a second, before turning her face away and closing her eyes.

EXT. HOUSE. DAY

Q closes her front door and walks out of her house. She wears her new shoes. As she walks she looks upon the windows and doors of neighbouring houses.

INT. BUS. DAY

Q looks out the bus window before leaning her head against it.

EXT. PARK. DAY

Q eats a packed lunch on a park bench. She watches the people that pass her. A child swinging on the arm of its mother. An old bald man. A dog barking at nothing in particular. She see's more windows.

EXT. BUS STOP. DAY

Q stands by the bus stop. She reads the flyers pinned to the notice board. They are mostly about missing pets, small jobs and clubs around the local area. One is call for movie extra's. Q speaks quietly under her breath.

Q
Step three, you decide.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Q presses up on CARLS foot. CARL pushes down on hers.

Q
Hey.

CARL
Hey.

Q
Hey. I think we should try to move to the next level. Move forward you know.

CARL
Do you mean, like try and have kids?

Q
I'm too old for that now.

CARL
Are you?

Q
Yeah.

CARL
Barely.

Q
Yeah. Its not that though. It's something I want us to try together.

CARL
Like a sex thing?

Q
No. Why did you think that?

CARL
It's just when you said together.

A beat.

Q
Do you still like our way?

CARL
Yeah. I do. Do you?

Q
Sure.

Their feet slowly caress each other.

CARL
Do you want to, right now?

Q
Okay.

CARL smiles and pulls Q on top of him. They kiss and briefly become blurred. Their feet are entwined. Their hands become clenched. CARL rolls Q off of him and sits by the side of the bed. Q is briefly alone, the weight of his body removed from her. She joins him, and lifts her nightgown over her head once more. He presses his face against her chest. His breathing increases. Her's slows. We jump cut to her lying on her side of the bed. CARL's hand rests on her head. She is breathing quickly, her body gently moving under the sheets. His body is static, he almost faces the other way, a solitary hand bridging the gap between them. Her breathing slows. He is almost asleep.

Q
Don't go to sleep.

CARL
I wasn't.

Q
The next level thing.

CARL

Yeah.

Q

You have to promise to try it.

CARL

What if I'm already doing it?

Q

You're not. You have to promise to try it.

CARL

Okay.

A beat.

Q

I think we should become extra's. Like in a movie, in the background of a scene. There's this film called Hello Maxamillion Goodbye Maxamillion, and they're looking for people to sit in a fictional French restaurant called Mon Plaisir. It's on Saturday, and it's not that far from here, and I'd really like to try it. With you.

CARL smiles.

CARL

Okay.

Q smiles.

Q

You will need to get a haircut though.

CARL

Sure.

Q

And maybe some new shoes.

CARL

Can I go to sleep now?

Q

Goodnight.

CARL
See you in Hollywood.

Q smiles and through the sheets their feet press together.

INT. HAIRDRESSER. DAY

Q sits on a waiting chair in the hairdressers. She holds a small thank you card, Hair for Care written on the front of it. The handwriting inside is a child's. She looks up at CARL who's having his haircut by PATRICE. They talk, there's lots of eye contact. CARL says something and PATRICE laughs. PATRICE says something and CARL laughs. PATRICE runs her fingers through CARL's hair as she cuts it. She holds his head in her hands. She leans in front of him to trim his eyebrows. Q watches, her card forgotten in her lap. PATRICE spins CARL around in the chair.

PATRICE
What do you think?

Q looks very small as she smiles.

INT. HOUSE. DAY

Q sits on the cold sofa holding a laptop. CARL sits at his desk, headphones on.

Q
You should really get some new shoes.

CARL removes his headphones.

Q
Do you not want to get new shoes for tomorrow?

CARL
You don't see people's shoes in movies.

Q's shoes tap together as she thinks about this.

Q
No I guess you don't.

She scrolls on her laptop.

Q
Listen to this. Imagine a busy saloon in the old west. When the bad guy

walks in, how do you know he's bad? Because the background actors freeze mid-action, beer glasses raised half to their lips, cards half shuffled, darts frozen in mid air. Extra's aren't extra's at all. They are integral to the scene, they create life.

A beat. CARL nods.

CARL

Can I read something to you?

Q nods.

CARL

When you see the beauty of a tree, then you will know what love is.

Q

Thats beautiful.

CARL

I think so.

Q

Did you just transcribe that?

CARL

Yeah it just came to me.

Q

Came to you, through the headphones?

CARL

Well, yeah.

CARL turns back around and puts his headphones on.

Q

It's beautiful.

CARL doesn't respond. Q looks away from CARL and focuses on her laptop.

EXT. OUTSIDE RESTAURANT. DAY

MAXAMILLION stares directly into the lens. The focus twitches in and out. We hear a crew members voice.

CREW

Can we get a little bit more light on
Maxamillion please.

MAXAMILLIONS face is brightened. We cut to a close up still
life of another face, MARTHA. A make up artists hand lightly
brushes her face.

CREW

Okay, that's perfect. Sound?

We cut to a wide of the scene. We see the crew members in
position. We see MAXAMILLION and MARTHA. There are a few
tables of different couples around them. On one of the tables
sits Q and CARL.

SOUND

Speeding.

Q looks around her watching the scene.

CREW

Camera?

CARL looks around.

CAMERA

Rolling.

Q and CARL look at each other.

CREW

Okay, action.

Q

Hello.

CARL

Hello.

Q

We don't usually say hello at dinner.

A beat. CARL is silent, they are both tentative and unsure.

Q

I'm going to drink some of my water
now.

CARL

Me too.

Q
No we shouldn't at the same time.

CARL
Why, I'm thirsty?

Q
No it will look fake.

CARL
It is fake! All of it, thats what acting is.

CARL leans back in his chair as Q holds her glass of water.

Q
We have to keep talking-

CARL
- Well clearly I can't do this-

CREW
-Cut cut!

The crew member moves over to their table as the rest of the cast and crew reset.

CREW
Sorry I thought you guys knew, you have to talk silently.

CARL
Oh, do you mean like-

-Carl manipulates his mouth into a weird fast version of pretend speaking. Q does the same.

CREW
No sorry not quite like that, have an actual conversation, as you normally do, be real, be yourselves, just don't vocalise anything out loud. Is that okay?

Q
Oh of course sorry we didn't know-

CARL
-Sorry.

CREW
Guys no worries, relax, and have a
good time.

The crew member leaves.

CREW
Okay, sound?

Q's places her hands gently on the table.

SOUND
Sound speeding.

Q looks at CARL.

CREW
Camera?

Q looks at her own hands, then at CARLS which look very far
away.

CAMERA
Camera rolling.

CREW
Okay, action.

CARL returns Q's gaze.

(*denotes mouthed/whispered)

Q*
Hey.

CARL*
Hey.

They both smile.

CARL*
Sorry.

Q*
No worries.

A beat. CARL's and Q's legs are static under the table.

CARL*
So. Do you come here often?

Q laughs.

Q*
Oh, all the time. I'm a personal
friend of the chef.

CARL*
Really? Whats his name?

Q*
Pierre.

CARL*
Great name.

Q picks up his glass of water and drinks from it.

CARL*
Are there usually this many camera's
when your here?

Q waves a dismissive hand away, CARL smiles.

Q*
Oh please, its just the paparazzi.

CARL*
Are they here for you? Are you famous?

Q*
Yes I am, I'm an actor.

CARL*
Thats amazing.

Q's foot twirls slow circles under the table.

Q*
Yeah it is, and what do you do?

CARL*
Im a bodybuilder.

Q laughs.

Q*
I can tell, you're very -

CREW
-And cut! great work everyone, extras
take a quick break, you can talk

normally, chill out and we'll pick up again in a few seconds.

Q looks at CARL. They have nothing to say. CARL looks down. Q's feet have stopped twirling.

Q
You okay?

CARL
Yeah you?

Q
Yeah, you?

CARL
Yeah.

They sit in silence again, they do not look at each other.

CREW
Okay, everyone we're about to pick up again. If this table here could just shuffle closer together, and if you guys could toast your wine glasses that would be great.

Q and CARL pick up their wine glasses.

CREW
Okay, sound and camera?

CAMERA
Rolling.

SOUND
Speeding.

CREW
And, action.

Q and CARL lightly tap their glasses together. It makes a small ringing sound and they both smile in embarrassment.

CARL*
What are we toasting?

Q*
We are toasting, us. Me because I've just won my first Oscar, and you because you've just won the over 75

body builder world championships, how do you do it?

CARL*

Body building, is all in the mind, and in the hands.

Q holds up her hands.

Q*

Could I be a future champion?

CARL takes Q's hands in his own.

CARL*

Ah yes, I see great promise.

Q smiles. We begin to focus on body language, the dialogue continues and we see them speaking but we are not truly privy to it, we don't intrude and leave it to themselves. CARL plays with Q's hand, touching the lines of her palm, feeling the spaces in between her fingers. Q and CARL's legs are closer together under the table, Q's feet twirling once more. CARL says something and Q laughs and pulls her hand away from CARL, but he reaches over it holds it once more. Q pushes her shoes off her feet. They hold animated conversations, listening and looking intently and adoringly at one another. Q reaches her foot over and touches it to CARL's leg. He looks at her and smiles, he leans forward, as does she, their heads reaching over the table, CARL puts a hand on Q's cheek, they lean in to kiss-

CREW

-And cut! Great, its looking lovely people, super work! Camera and Sound you ready to go straight away again?

CARL's hand drops from Q's cheek. He looks down and leans back. Q looks around at the set, her legs drawn back into herself. CARL drops his hands onto the table. Q's are in her lap.

CREW

Okay, I think we're almost their guys, this should be the last take.

CARL and Q aren't looking at one another.

CREW

Alright, and action.

Q pushes CARL's foot up with her own. He pushes down on hers. She smiles. Q takes CARL's hand in her own, and puts it to her cheek. He runs his free hand through her hair. They lean forward and gently, slowly kiss. They lean back, CARL kisses Q's hand before covering it with his own. Their feet are entangled. CARL starts to pour a bottle of wine. They talk and listen and love.

Q*

Don't get me wrong, I love being a world famous, jet setting, international actor. But, I don't know, it does get lonely sometimes.

CARL*

Yeah. Thats the same as bodybuilding.

Q*

And, I just feel like, I miss. Well, I miss.

CARL*

Yeah, I know what you mean, its like, I feel as if.

CARL and Q's hands are still entwined, as are their legs. Their heads are bent forward, close to one another.

CREW

And cut, and that's a wrap for our background actors, give them a big hand.

Members of the crew and cast start clapping. Q and CARL remain close to one another.

Q*

What were you going to say?

CARL*

I don't know. I don't know, I was acting.

Q looks down.

CARL*

What were you going to say?

Q*

I don't know, I guess I don't really have anything to say.

CARL nods. The clapping has continued and Q and CARL join in and acknowledge the people around them. They stand and leave the table.

INT. HOUSE. DAY

Q sits on the sofa eating a bowl of pasta. CARL sits at his desk, his headphones are on as he looks at his computer, he too eats a bowl of pasta. Q looks out the window. She looks at the door. She looks at CARL's back, and she smiles. Q stands, she's wearing her new shoes. The camera stays on her shoes, and she walks out of frame. We hear the front door close. Looking out of the window, we see Q walk by. She walks out of the shot, and we fade out.

End.

