

ABILENE

FADE-IN:

EXT. RAIL YARD - MORNING

A railroad work site. Idle trains sit quietly in a makeshift maintenance station. Equipment and machinery are scattered throughout the yard. The city skyline hovers in the background, partially obscured by an overcast sky.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - FREIGHT TRAIN (MOVING) - MORNING

A slow-moving freight train RUMBLES over an old steel draw-bridge that spans a narrow waterway. Far below the bridge is a passing tugboat.

EXT. RAIL YARD

The freight train CREAKS and RATTLES its way into the middle of the rail yard, as a MAN switches a line of track.

EXT. RAIL YARD - GRAVEL PARKING LOT

A young WOMAN wearing a black sweatshirt and camouflage pants sits on the hood of a faded and dented Corolla, cradling a cup of coffee, watching the train.

ABILENE FRANCO (24) has a lean and sinewy frame with red hair and fair skin. Despite her youthful appearance, she has a troubled and vacant stare.

She sees BOBO, an elderly worker approaching, and manages a smile. Bobo raises his thermos aloft.

BOBO

Top you off.

ABILENE

Late for work.

BOBO

You should get a job here.

Abilene shakes her head.

ABILENE

Can't mix work and pleasure.

Bobo smiles affectionately, as he ambles toward the maze of interlocking train tracks. Abilene tosses the rest of her coffee, and then climbs into her car.

INT./EXT. ABILENE'S CAR (MOVING) - MORNING

Abilene approaches a picturesque lake, as the highway connects to a low-lying bridge that spans the dark, blue water.

Abilene pulls off onto the shoulder, looking agitated, tapping her fingers on the steering wheel. She lets out a sigh, turning around and driving in the opposite direction.

EXT. CITY NEIGHBORHOOD - MAIN STREET - MORNING

A bustling city neighborhood that resembles a small town suburb with its quaint brick buildings and civic square.

Abilene walks down the sidewalk, passing a collection of pedestrians, who exchange curious stares.

ABILENE (V.O.)  
I feel like I have this new  
power to read people's minds.

Abilene ignores the prolonged stares, walking quickly and with purpose.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE

A small, dark office with simple furnishings. Abilene leans forward in a large plush chair, looking uncomfortable and ill at ease. Across from her is DR. BRONWEN MITCHELL (46), dressed in a strapless gown and high-heels.

ABILENE  
People take one look at me and  
they may as well point and say  
there she goes. She's the one.

DR. MITCHELL  
Is that important to you?

ABILENE  
Part of me doesn't really give  
a fuck. Another part feels like  
I need to hold a press  
conference or something and set  
the record straight.

DR. MITCHELL  
What do you want people to know?

ABILENE  
That maybe I'm not the fuck-up  
everyone takes me for.

DR. MITCHELL  
Is it possible you're  
projecting your own thoughts of  
insecurity onto others?

Abilene smiles.

ABILENE  
The world is full of  
possibilities. That's my  
favorite saying.

DR. MITCHELL  
I remember.  
(pause)  
But I think you won't have  
these thoughts about how other  
people view you until you're  
able to feel good about  
yourself. You need to forgive  
yourself - for starters.

Abilene rises from the chair.

ABILENE  
Nothing personal. But I can  
only take so much psycho-  
babble. Sooner or later, I need  
to get my shit together all on  
my own. Right?

DR. MITCHELL  
Abby, you called me, remember?  
It sounded like a crisis.

Abilene rolls her eyes, as Dr. Mitchell looks annoyed. Dr. Mitchell glances at a clock behind Abilene, and then gives her a stern look.

DR. MITCHELL  
Abby, at eight o'clock tonight  
I am taking a dinner cruise to  
celebrate my twenty-fifth  
wedding anniversary with a boat  
full of people. So you have  
forty-five minutes to tell me  
why you called me tonight and  
what is really bothering you.

Abilene swallows hard, taking a deep breath.

INT. CITY NEIGHBORHOOD - METRO CAFE - MORNING

An eclectic-looking café with brick walls and wooden floors and mismatched wooden tables and couches. Concert posters and leaflets cover a portion of the walls. The clientele is a curious mix of alternative-looking young people, middle-aged women, and business people.

FRANKIE (29), a young, athletic-looking woman exchanges an exasperated look with OWEN (48), the manager of the cafe. Owen glances impatiently at his watch, as Frankie looks across the room and gives a sigh of relief at

ABILENE

Striding quickly into the crowded café.

OWEN

You're killing me, Abby.

Abilene ignores him. Frankie gives a sympathetic look, as Abilene dons an apron, taking her place behind the counter, smiling at a middle-aged WOMAN in the queue.

FRANKIE

He's been in a bad mood since he got here.

Abilene glances at an order on the counter, pouring a cup of coffee, handing it to a MAN with tattoos on his arms.

ABILENE

Here ya go, Bruce.

She turns to the next customer.

OWEN

You're forcing me to make a very unpleasant decision.

ABILENE

For an ex-hippie, you're one of the most uptight people I know.

OWEN

I mean it, Abby.

ABILENE

Fire me and you'll lose half your business. Isn't that right Mrs. Bellamy?

Mrs. Bellamy gives Abilene a look of fondness, placing her hand gently across the counter on Abilene's arm.

MRS. BELLAMY  
Whatever you say, Abby.

Frankie looks over her shoulder to Owen.

FRANKIE  
You know she's right.

Owen fumes, as he walks away to clean off a table. Frankie and Abilene exchange knowing stares, as Bruce gingerly approaches with his cup of coffee.

BRUCE  
Excuse me, Abby. But this  
doesn't taste like decaf.

There's a pregnant pause, as Mrs. Bellamy takes a deep breath, and then retreats from the counter. Frankie shoots a look to Owen, as the place goes silent.

BRUCE  
It's possible you made a  
mistake.

Abilene flashes a sweet smile that makes Bruce uncomfortable.

ABILENE  
Bruce, the world is full of  
possibilities.

Bruce nods.

ABILENE  
It's possible there's life on  
Mars. And it's possible size  
doesn't really matter.

BRUCE  
Abby, never mind. I can -

ABILENE  
(interrupting)  
It's even possible Melissa  
didn't actually leave you for  
her yoga teacher, but that's her  
loss. Me and Frankie always say.

FRANKIE  
Always.

ABILENE  
So is it really possible that I  
accidentally gave you decaf?

BRUCE  
Sorry, Abby. My bad.

Bruce walks away, as Abilene calls out.

ABILENE  
Bruce. Still my favorite  
customer?

Bruce smiles sheepishly, bouncing out the door.

OWEN

Shakes his head, as Abilene and Frankie exchange knowing stares.

EXT. METRO CAFE (LATER) - DAY

Abilene gathers an outdoor table, carrying it into the café. Frankie sweeps under the tables, placing chairs upside-down atop the tables. Frankie gives Abilene a concerned look.

FRANKIE  
You look tired.

ABILENE  
Slept in my car last night.

FRANKIE  
First rule of marathon training.  
Get proper sleep and rest.

Frankie follows Abilene outside where they both drop into a seat, letting out a tired sigh. Abilene watches the traffic lights change, as a parking warden writes a ticket at the curbside, and then waves to Abilene.

FRANKIE  
I don't get your obsession with  
trains. And airports.

Abilene watches a car pull up to the curb.

ABILENE  
Me? What about you? This time  
it's a marathon. Before that,  
cross-country skiing. Last  
year, weight loss. What happens  
after the marathon? You can't  
function without setting some  
sort of personal goal for  
yourself.

Abilene looks up and sees SONYA (4) emerge from the car and run to a smiling Frankie. Frankie takes the little girl into her arms, smiling affectionately, shooting a look of disdain over the girl's shoulder to

JAKE

The tight-lipped father who has a perpetual frown and scowling countenance. He calls out from inside the car.

JAKE

What? No thank you for picking her up at school?

He glares at Abilene.

JAKE

And you. Stay away from my daughter.

The car pulls away from the curb, as Sonya looks at Frankie.

SONYA

Why doesn't daddy like Abby?

FRANKIE

He doesn't know any better.

ABILENE

Manages a smile, watching Frankie and Sonya snuggle noses. She looks away with a pained expression.

EXT. SMALL BUNGALOW - EVENING

Abilene walks down a narrow street of small bungalows. She trudges up onto the porch of a small house with peeling paint and a rotting roof dotted with moss.

INT. BUNGALOW - EVENING

A dark living room except for the pale glow of a small lamp and television. Seated in a large recliner still wearing her green hospital outfit is EVELYN (48), Abilene's mother.

Evelyn has dishwater blonde hair and still looks fetching, despite sleepy-looking eyes and a long, narrow countenance. She cradles a drink, watching a reality television show.

Abilene stands in the doorway, studying the scene in the living room.

ABILENE  
Educational TV.

EVELYN  
You didn't come home last night

Abilene shrugs. Evelyn swigs the last of her drink, and then snarls over her shoulder.

EVELYN  
The headstone people called again. Some new guy that Alberto hired. A nephew or something. And Martha needs you to work for her tomorrow.

ABILENE  
Shit.

EVELYN  
I'm tired of taking messages for you.

ABILENE  
Life's a bitch, mom.

EVELYN  
You cooking tonight?

Abilene sighs, walking into the kitchen, opening the pantry, grabbing a box of spaghetti.

EXT. CITY STREETS - MORNING

Abilene drives a small golf cart-looking vehicle along a city street, passing a rubbish truck and street cleaner. The cart has the city logo painted on the side and letters that read: PARKING WARDEN.

EXT. CURBSIDE - MORNING

Abilene wears a city-issued skirt and blouse, looking far more conventional than usual. She stands next to a parked BMW, entering information into a handheld mini-computer. She looks up at a tow-truck, backing up in front of the BMW. A grizzled DRIVER emerges, hooking up the car.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Hey, you can't do this.

BOB PRITCHARD (49), a well dressed man with an angry face runs up to Abilene, gasping for air.

ABILENE  
I'm doing it.

PRITCHARD  
I know for a fact a meter maid  
has to stop if you arrive  
before the ticket is written.

Abilene presses a button on her PDA, then turns to the man.

ABILENE  
You are officially too late.

PRITCHARD  
Bitch.

ABILENE  
Excuse me.

PRITCHARD  
Just have to fill your quota.

ABILENE  
What is it with you people and  
this quota myth?

PRITCHARD  
How about the guy who was  
kissing my bumper last week?  
Where was his ticket?

ABILENE  
It's just a bumper. It's not  
like he was touching your dick.

Abilene motions to the tow-truck driver, who stops hooking  
the car.

ABILENE  
You touched a soft spot in me,  
so here's some advice.

PRITCHARD  
Advice from the Meter Maid.

ABILENE  
Number One. Don't call me Meter  
Maid. Number Two. Intimidating  
doesn't work. Number Three.  
Apologize or admit you're wrong.

PRITCHARD  
Anything else?

ABILENE

When all else fails. Make up a creative excuse. You didn't even try.

Abilene tears off a ticket receipt, holding it out to Pritchard, who snatches it from her.

PRITCHARD

I know you. I know all about you

Abilene ignores him, walking to her vehicle.

PRITCHARD

I'll fight this. I won't be lectured to by a child killer.

Abilene freezes, yelling out to the tow-truck driver.

ABILENE

Billy. Tow his sorry ass.

BILLY

With pleasure, Abby.

Abilene looks back to the seething man.

ABILENE

Final rule. Don't piss off the Parking Warden.

Abilene fights back tears, as she climbs into her vehicle, and then drives away.

EXT. METRO CAFE - MORNING

Frankie cranks out an espresso, as a distressed Abilene enters the cafe in her parking warden outfit.

FRANKIE

You just can't stay away.

Abilene goes behind the counter, pouring herself some juice.

FRANKIE

You okay?

OWEN

I hope you're paying for that.

ABILENE

Piss off, Owen.

Frankie walks over to Abilene, murmuring under her breath.

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