Blueberry Special

by

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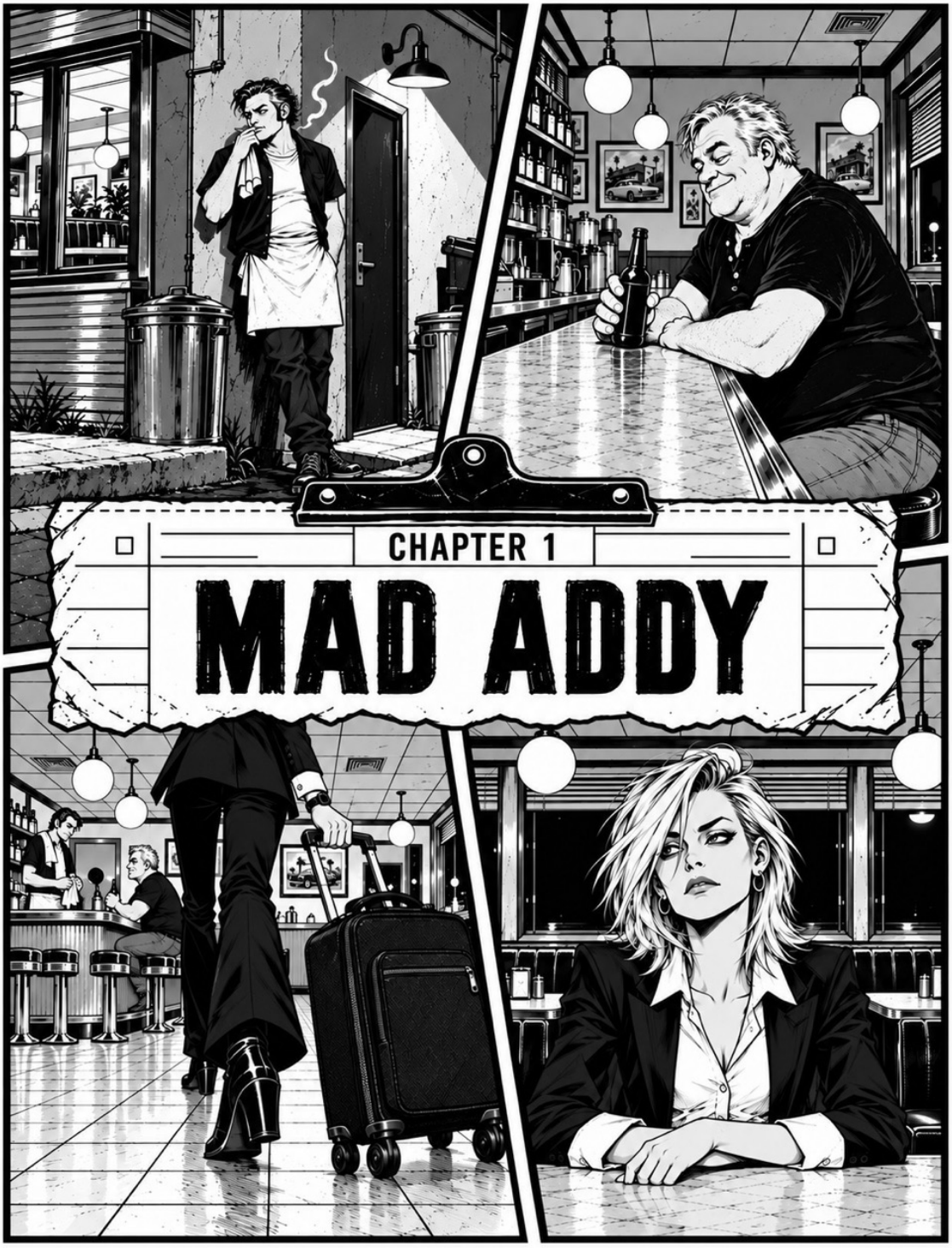
DINER

"Imperfection is beauty, madness is genius and it's better to be absolutely ridiculous than absolutely boring."

– Marilyn Monroe


CHAPTER 1
MAD ADDY

INT. DINER - NIGHT

A typical lonely all-American diner with its bubblegum pop playing and neon sign glowing against its widescreen glass and gleaming stainless steel features.

AMOS, a gruff elderly fellow with all the trappings of a lifetime drunk, is sitting at the bar alone with a beer.

He gazes around the diner. Just one other CUSTOMER sitting in a booth. Outside, visible through the windows, BILL, a middle-aged greaser, smokes as though his life depends on it.

Bill stubs his smoke out and enters via a back door. Amos guzzles back what remains of his beer as Bill exits the kitchen behind the bar and tends to cleaning glasses.

AMOS
You ever feel that?

BILL
Feel what?

AMOS
When nothing's actually perfect, but, for a moment, you feel the most comfortable you've ever felt?

BILL
Only when I'm smoking myself into an early grave.

Bill loads the dishwasher. Amos nods slowly to himself and signals his bottle is empty. Bill sees to that.

AMOS
Present. That's what people call it. Feeling present.

BILL
That right? See, I'm pretty sure what you're feeling is something people call drunk.

AMOS
Hey, I don't care if it's intoxication or meditation, I'll take whatever I can get.

Bill reflects with a long, troubled sigh.

BILL
You know what? I've had enough enlightenment for one lifetime.

AMOS
You ain't even had a lifetime.

BILL
Yeah but, you see, you're the ugly proof it only gets worse.

Amos almost laughs.

AMOS
I may be a bitter and twisted old bastard, but I've never regretted a truth I've learned. But you, Bill, you're angry, too angry.

BILL
I am, because every time I learn something new about the world, I feel less like becoming a Buddhist and more like becoming a vigilante.

AMOS
You don't think the Dalai Lama wants to throw his toys out the pram and tell everyone to go fuck themselves from time to time?

BILL
I think that, if he does, he's bottling it up well.

AMOS
Well, that's where you're wrong. The Dalai Lama's an angry old fuck just like you. He's just smart enough to know there's little point dwelling on it.

BILL
Maybe. Either way, the crazy thing is, as much as I'd like to be like that, I know I'd fucking hate it.

AMOS
And you'd be out of a fucking job.

Bill ponders what that means and works it out.

BILL
We have vegetarian options available, so cut your crap.

AMOS
You cut your crap. It's not exactly the crux of your business model, is it? And even if it was, an all-American Diner without the burgers? Without the steaks? No beer? No homemade meatloaf? Is that even an all-American Diner any more?

BILL
You're vastly underestimating the power of my charming personality.

AMOS
At least you're honest about it. Places like this may be old-fashioned, they may be out of touch, but you don't bullshit about who your customers really are.

Bill stares back, a little confused.

AMOS (CONT'D)
I like that. Hell, I'd like to live in a world where all companies are forced to show us their target demographic in their advertising. I want to see Coca-Cola tell us the holidays are coming while having to show us some poor obese diabetic fuck getting his foot removed a week before the office Christmas party. I want to see a BMW commercial where the whole thing is just some grade-A-asshole trying to cut his way into a line of commuters while repeatedly screaming obscenities at his wife. I want Jack Daniels to have to parade by a bunch of barely-functioning twenty-something alcoholics, explaining which ones are going to make it to thirty and which ones will be last seen being identified in a morgue by a grieving parent.
(MORE)

AMOS (CONT'D)
I want the campaign for the next Republican presidential nominee to just be some buzz-cut good-Christian man-child tightening up a tactical laser-sight to his Chinese-made AR15 knockoff while shedding a tear over a poster of some troops invading a country he's never heard of, all before trying to tease one out to those bikini pictures his neighbors' wife uploaded to Facebook three years ago.

BILL
Really? I always had you down as a Republican.

AMOS
I am, and I jacked off to those pictures before I got here tonight. I'm just saying, it's about time we were honest about things.

Bill smirks and gets back to work.

BILL
You know, I stole a whole traditional rotisserie chicken from Walmart once. Just walked straight out the door with that slow-roasted motherfucker.

AMOS
Save money. Live better.

BILL
It was delicious too.

AMOS
You feel guilty, when you ate it?

Bill pauses for a moment.

BILL
I felt like, for once in my life, I'd gotten even.

Bill's attention turns to the entrance, toward which walks MAD ADDY, a statuesque woman with a confident stride, dressed for business, and trailing a small luggage suitcase.

She enters and pauses, scanning the whole restaurant before eventually heading for the bar with the tiny wheels of her suitcase droning over carpet and clattering over tiles.

Bill wipes down the bar top, although it isn't really needed, as she takes a seat and smiles.

BILL (CONT'D)
How you doin'?

MAD ADDY
Shit.
(beat)
You got Kahlua?

BILL
Sure.

MAD ADDY
You got Grey Goose?

BILL
Yeah.

MAD ADDY
Canada Dry?

BILL
You want a Brown Russian.

MAD ADDY
Please.

He gets a glass and fills it with ice.

BILL
You know, it's a lot easier to just say, "Brown Russian".

MAD ADDY
Yeah, I get that, but then I just end up with your interpretation of whatever a Brown Russian is. Which could be anything. At least this way I get your interpretation of whatever those items add up to.

She has a point. Bill carefully makes the cocktail while catching Amos's eye and raising his eyebrows. Amos grins and keeps quiet, clearly enjoying the show.

The ginger ale fizzes as it fills the glass. Bill proudly places it on a napkin in front of Mad Addy. She takes a sip.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
Good.

Silence for a few long awkward moments.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
So, isn't anybody going to ask about my shitty day?

BILL
Please, by all means, tell us all about your day.

MAD ADDY
Just people failing to act like professionals, you know?

Another long silence as she drinks and gasps. There's an urgency and frustration to her.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
This is the part where you keep asking questions to tease information out of me, so it doesn't look like I'm sitting here venting to complete strangers.

Bill can't help but laugh. Amos cracks up too.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
(amused)
What? Is that so bad?

BILL
Believe me, if you're here to rant, you're in the perfect place.

Amos raises his drink to her.

MAD ADDY
Well, that's no fun. I want my tirade of frustrations coaxed out of me. What are your names?

BILL
Bill, and this is Amos.

Mad Addy and Amos share a mutual nod.

MAD ADDY
Well, it's a pleasure to meet you, Bill and Amos. May I ask you a question? Why can't people just do their fucking job?

AMOS
Well, that depends, what kind of job you're talking about?

MAD ADDY
Okay, well, I represent a sizable client who was willing to make a very reasonable deal today. All people had to do was show up, go through the process, and go away happy. But no, people had to lie. People had to break the terms we had agreed to. People had to try and take what wasn't theirs, and, long story short, I had to stab someone in the back.

BILL
It's okay to feel guilty.

Maddy seems almost offended at that comment.

MAD ADDY
Oh, I don't feel guilty, I feel cheated!

AMOS
Guilt is an emotion lawyers tend not to be able to feel, along with shame, compassion, loyalty-

MAD ADDY
-Woah! Screw you! I'm not a lawyer. I'm a representative.

AMOS
I don't even know what that means.

MAD ADDY
It means there's a big fucking difference, old man.

AMOS
Really? I find it hard to believe a "sizable client" would have any business interests out here.

MAD ADDY
Well, you find the best deals in the strangest places. Sadly, that also means you find the strangest people too.

AMOS
Takes one to know one.

Amos raises his glass. She raises hers back.

BILL
I'm sorry to hear about your day. Could I interest you in our fine selection of food options?

MAD ADDY
Actually, you know what, you could, Bill, you could.

Bill ceremoniously offers over a menu, which Mad Addy keenly scans through. He deadeyes Amos. Amos deadeyes him back. She nods as she reads and takes a moment to look up.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
Excellent vegetarian options, by the way.

She goes back to reading. Bill shoots Amos a smug smile.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
Can I get... The quinoa burger... And... can I get... some sweet potato fries?

BILL
You vegetarian?

MAD ADDY
Vegan. Yeah, umm, no more White Russians for me anymore.

BILL
Coming right up.

Bill takes her menu and goes to enter the kitchen.

AMOS
(to Mad Addy)
You know, you shouldn't say-

BILL
-No, Amos! You've been told!

AMOS
I'm just saying.

BILL
It bothers you! It doesn't bother me! Enough! Pack it in!
(to Mad Addy)
Ignore him. He's drunk.

Mad Addy looks intrigued.

AMOS
I just think people ought to know, Bill. Can't blame a guy for trying.

BILL
You keep this up, I'll cut you off.

AMOS
Cut me off? I'm your biggest customer!

BILL
You're costing me customers!

AMOS
She just looks like someone who would care about making a common social faux pas, that's all.

BILL
Faux pas? That's two strikes, Amos. Making my customers feel uncomfortable and speaking French in my restaurant.

AMOS
I apologize about the French.

BILL
You know how I feel about the French.

AMOS
Bill, none of us understand your issues with the French.

MAD ADDY
Guys?

They both look round.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
I don't know what it is you want to say, but I think I can handle it.

Bill sighs.

AMOS
"Can I get" implies you're asking permission to go fetch your food yourself. It's wrong. Unless you were genuinely requesting to go back to the kitchen and gather up the items you want to eat.

MAD ADDY
Oh.

BILL
Yet, it's pretty damn clear what it really implies.

AMOS
It also discredits the role of waiting staff, suggesting they are little more than a proxy for you to have food transported to your table. Which is bordering on rude.

BILL
(frustrated)
Yet still, nobody is actually offended.

Mad Addy mulls that over.

MAD ADDY
I see.
(beat)
I'm embarrassed.

BILL
Don't give him that power over you.

Bill glares at Amos.

BILL (CONT'D)
You see what I have to deal with? I put vegetarian items on the menu, you mock me. Then a goddamn, no offense, lentil-eating vegan walks through the door. I tell you to pipe down on the whole "can I get this" BS, and there you are, pissing off my customers-

MAD ADDY
-It's fine. Seriously, it's fine. I'm not pissed off. Sure, it sucks a little to find out you're doing something others believe is wrong, but it's always better to know, so you can change and better yourself.

BILL
You don't need to change for anyone, honey, believe me.

Exasperated, Bill bumbles through the doors to the kitchen, leaving Mad Addy feeling a little embarrassed. Amos and Mad Addy sit in silence for a few moments.

AMOS
You said, the people you were dealing with today lied to you?

MAD ADDY
Unequivocally and unabashed.

AMOS
You know, sometimes, I just can't figure how we got here. You know? Society? What happened to truth?

MAD ADDY
What happened to integrity?

AMOS
Honesty, loyalty, compassion, empathy. It's all trickling away from us, ain't it?

MAD ADDY
Dig this, I had a guy cut me off the other day on the four-o-five. You know what really bothered me though? It wasn't them cutting me off. No. It was them acting like it never happened. I mean, I honked. I honked that fucker good but nothing. No apology. No anything. They didn't even give me the finger. Hell, they didn't even look at me. It was like I either didn't exist or I was so inconsequential I didn't matter. I don't think I've ever wanted, no needed, someone to flip me off or curse me out, just to validate my existence.

Bill exits the kitchen and spots Amos' bottle is empty.

BILL
Another?

AMOS
Sure, and one for yourself, and another for our new friend here.

Bill doesn't hang about serving up a fresh round.

MAD ADDY
Aww, thank you.

AMOS
You're welcome. I umm... didn't catch your name.

MAD ADDY
Okay, you have to promise not to laugh, but people call me Mad Addy.

BILL
Mad Addy, well ain't that a hell of a moniker?

MAD ADDY
It's a bit much, I know.

AMOS
And are you truly mad, Mad Addy?

She thinks and seemingly drifts away into thought.

AMOS (CONT'D)
(to Bill)
We were talking about how honesty doesn't seem to matter anymore.

BILL
I had a friend tell me the other day, we're in a post-truth world, and I think he might just be right.

AMOS
We were living in a post-truth world the day politics started. Which I imagine was the day after the whole Adam-Eve-apple debacle. All that's changed is the stigma.

Bill stares, confused.

AMOS (CONT'D)
Your friend's way behind the times. There's no repercussion anymore. There's no shame. You can be a politician and you can flat out lie, or you can be a cop and flaunt whatever laws you want. Not because people won't notice, not because people won't care, but because nobody will hold you to it.

BILL
Well, you've got to face the music at some point.

AMOS
Yeah? When?

BILL
When the authorities deal with it.

AMOS
What do you think's out there? The Lie Police? The Department Of Doing What's Right? The Federal Bureau Of, excuse my language, fucking Integrity? What do you think's gonna happen? You're gonna see people dragged through courts and charged with multiple counts of "liar liar, pants on fire"?

BILL
Don't you mock me-

AMOS
-There isn't a cavalry coming. You know how we used to deal with lies? By calling people out on them. Holding them to account, and not letting each other forget. Shit don't stick no more. You're deluded. Adorable, but deluded.

Somewhat chagrined, Bill puts a fresh, fizzing Brown Russian down in front of Mad Addy, who remains despondent.

BILL
(to Mad Addy)
Back me up here, will ya?

Mad Addy snaps out of her trance.

MAD ADDY
What were we talking about?

BILL
(To Amos)
Great, first you offend my customers, then you put them to sleep.

MAD ADDY
Something about integrity?

BILL
(beat)
You okay?

MAD ADDY
Yeah, I umm-

BILL
-My distinguished bar prop here thinks we live in a world without repercussion. You agree?

She thinks long and hard and raises her finger.

MAD ADDY
Actually, not only do I think that's fair to say, but I think I may be proof of it.

Amos and Bill stare back, a little perturbed.

AMOS
So, you do feel guilt?

She slowly nods, as if realizing something.

MAD ADDY
Sometimes so much I'm overcome by it.

She stares into the middle distance and takes a long sip of her drink. Bill and Amos look to each other, confused.

BILL
Well, whatever you've done, it can't be that bad.

MAD ADDY
Oh, it's bad, alright. It's real, real bad.

AMOS
Stabbed a lot of people in the back?

MAD ADDY
And worse.

She looks guilty and upset.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
You ever wondered if you're going to hell?

AMOS
So, you get to kick it with James Brown. Big Deal-

MAD ADDY
-Seriously though. Have you ever genuinely thought that you could be going, and what it might be like?

She stares into her drink with complete sincerity.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
Have you felt that fear? I mean, that would be the ultimate consequence, wouldn't it? The perfect justice? You go through your whole life with nobody calling you out on your bullshit, and you think, yeah, fuck it, I can get away with this, I can do anything I want. And then one day, when you least expect it, boom, you're dead. No second chances. No do-overs. Nobody ever forgets now. Apathy's gone, and you're trapped in a world of reckoning with no way out. For eternity. That's life's punchline. You thought you could get away with it, but no, joke's on you, asshole.

She looks up from her drink at Amos and Bill to find them staring back shocked.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
You ever seen the devil? I saw him in a mirror once.
(dwelling)
Through me you pass into the city of woe. Through me you pass into eternal pain. Through me among the people lost for aye. Justice the founder of my fabric moved. To rear me was the task of power divine, Supremest wisdom, and primeval love. Before me things create were none, save things Eternal, and eternal I shall endure. All hope abandon, ye who enter here.
(sighing)
Like I say, I've had a pretty shitty day.

BING! Bill startles as her burger and fries appear at the serving hatch.

CHAPTER 2
THE SOMEWHAT AWKWARD ACT OF HAVING TO RECRUIT PARTNERS IN CRIME
DINER

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Sitting in a booth across from one another, DESHAWN and TYRONE, two black men in designer attire, appear to be locked in a moment of deliberation as they drink coffee.

DeShawn stares down at Tyrone with an incredulous look.

DESHAWN
Don’t go pretending it motherfucking isn’t what is motherfucking is.

Tyrone thinks about that. He's unconvinced.

TYRONE
Nah. Nu-uh.

DeShawn stares back with infallible confidence.

DESHAWN
You wanna throw down?

TYRONE
Fo’ real?

DESHAWN
Fiddy says he’ll say it.

Tyrone sits back and sighs with an air of arrogance.

TYRONE
Fiddy says you’re full of shit.

Bill crosses over to the table with his waiter pad in hand.

BILL
You guys ready to order?

DESHAWN
Yeah, sure. Hey, you mind if I ask you a question?

BILL
Sure, go ahead.

DESHAWN
My buddy here, he look like a thug to you?

Bill looks at Tyrone, then back at DeShawn, then back and forth between them as he tries to maintain composure and think of the right thing to say.

BILL
What the hell did I just walk into?

TYRONE
Apparently, I'd be no good for no high-flying job because this fool says I don't have no baby face.

DESHAWN
Fool? I read this shit in Forbes magazine.

BILL
They say, you shouldn't believe everything you read in magazines.

TYRONE
True dat. He got a point.

DESHAWN
It's a fair point, but you did not answer my question. In your eyes, does my ugly-ass friend here have a face like a thug?

BILL
Honestly?

DESHAWN
Honestly. As a white dude, honestly.

BILL
(long beat)
Yeah... you kinda have that... “thug vibe” going on.

A painfully long silence ensues. Tyrone seems appalled to hear it. DeShawn stares matter of fact. Bill winces.

TYRONE
Well, there it is.

DESHAWN
We appreciate the honesty.

BILL
I want to say you're welcome?...

DESHAWN
May I have a double cheeseburger please, with onion rings, and can you make sure it's medium-rare?

BILL
I sure as hell can.

DESHAWN
Thank you.

Bill turns to Tyrone.

TYRONE
Country-fried steak, broccoli, mashed potatoes.

BILL
No problem. Anything else.

They shake their heads.

BILL (CONT'D)
Coming right up.

DESHAWN
Thank you.

Bill leaves.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)
As motherfucking requested. You heard it from the white man himself. You a thug.

TYRONE
I am a thug, and so the fuck are you. In fact, you even more one than me!

DESHAWN
Guilty as motherfucking charged. So, you see the problem?

TYRONE
I don't see any problem that can't be fixed with a whole lotta fuck you attitude and an R15.

DESHAWN
You know who we dealing with here? These motherfuckers work for Cooch.

TYRONE
So?

DESHAWN
So, that's what I'm telling you, motherfuckers who work for Cooch are some scary ass motherfuckers. That's why I'm saying we need an in, and that in can't look like it grew up in South Central.

TYRONE
And I'm telling you, I don't know any cat prepared to double cross on a deal who doesn't look like they came from the hood.

DeShawn leans in confidently.

DESHAWN
But, I got an idea.

DeShawn surreptitiously gestures to two young women sitting in another booth, tucking into a share platter of nachos and chicken. This is AMEENA who's black, and STEWY who's white, both of whom look pretty street but hardly scream gangster.

TYRONE
A white girl?

DESHAWN
That a problem?

TYRONE
I dunno, I mean, white girls are pretty fucking used to taking whatever the fuck they want, right? So, she'd be over-qualified.
(beat)
Nah, they don't even look like they got an outstanding parking fine.

DESHAWN
That's the point.

TYRONE
You know 'em?

DESHAWN
I know of 'em.

TYRONE
Wait a minute. That's why we here?

DeShawn sagely nods.

TYRONE (CONT'D)
Cooch's people, they likely to know of 'em too?

DESHAWN
Un motherfucking likely.

TYRONE
So, let me get this straight, you're gonna ask a couple of Valley girl bitches if they wanna come do some serious hood shit with a couple of brothers who, you yourself, admit look like a pair of no good motherfucking thugs?

DESHAWN
This is LA, bitch, everybody wants to be gangsta.

They look around at Ameena and Stewy who are too far away across the diner to be heard, but appear to be in the midst of a heated debate themselves.

STEWY
Faceless corporation? What? Are you fucking high right now?

AMEENA
You know what everyone'll be smoking in ten years? Fucking Emerald Triangle Skank T.M. Whatever's cheapest to grow. Whatever can be shipped out and stored indefinitely in every WallyWeed superstore in L.A. Giving that mediocre high that should just, just, be enough to stop you giving a fuck about how wrong that actually is.

STEWY
Look, as long as people are high, they don't care why. That's business. Why's that such a problem to you?

AMEENA
Don't you see? The government couldn't kill the marketplace so they took the marketplace. Now every hippy motherfucker with a trust fund can stop selling dream catchers and start selling product.

STEWY
Good! That's a good fucking thing! This is America! Land of the free market, right? So, goodbye criminalization and hello capitalization. Go on, tell me why we shouldn't be selling through a drive-thru rather than getting shot in a drive-by.

AMEENA
Because it's the small business people who get fucked, Stewy! People who've been serving their community for years, and I mean serving every profile of motherfucker around too, from homeless to Hollywood!

Stewy shakes her head, frustrated.

AMEENA (CONT'D)
You know what pot legalization is really about? Building a goddamn thrillitary industrial complex.
(miming smoking)
It's not about the green.
(miming money)
It's all about the green.

STEWY
I can't keep selling meth, Ameena. It fucks people up, and while I know this sounds ridiculous, I didn't get into selling drugs to fuck people up.

AMEENA
Listen to me, pot, if we go legit, will fuck us up. Just like places like this, it will ultimately and sadly become a race for the bottom. It's inevitable.

STEWY
Oh please! A race for the bottom? Seriously? You not saying Denny's is good, that Burger King is good, that Maccy D's is fucking goooooood?

AMEENA
Believe me, I could destroy a Grand Slam right this second, Whopper, fucking Filet-O-Fish, I'm down with that shit, motherfucker, but that's the whole damn problem.

STEWY
Good food is the problem? You're crazy! Will you please just stop and listen to yourself?

AMEENA
Mediocrity is the problem. Homogenization is the problem. That's what commerce does to an industry, and you know it. It monopolizes, it kills creativity, and it kills curiosity, and before you know it, the best you're ever gonna get in life is slightly better or slightly worse.

Stewy rolls her eyes at Ameena's impassioned rant.

AMEENA (CONT'D)
And then, after exposure to that mindset, day after day, year after year, that's how your blinkered ass sees the world. All until you fall into the trap of thinking that's how the world sees you, slightly better or slightly worse than the next cat that walks in the room.

STEWY
(beat)
You can't make the world perfect, Ameena, and you know what?

Ameena shrugs.

STEWY (CONT'D)
There's nothing wrong with accepting it, either.

Tyrone and DeShawn stop watching Ameena and Stewy and confidently slouch back in their seats.

TYRONE
What you gonna do with your cut?

DESHAWN
Don't be asking me that shit. Hell, don't be asking yourself that shit. You know better than to act like the payoff be guaranteed.

Tyrone grins childishly.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)
Fuck, you done drawn up a shopping list ain't you?

TYRONE
Don't you sit there all cold and considered as if you're some business-headed motherfucker. I see what's going on behind them eyes of yours, and it's all bitches and popping bottles.

DESHAWN
Okay, I ain't saying a brother doesn't like to get turnt up once in a while, but I got that white boy ethic, see? Work hard, play hard, motherfucker.

TYRONE
You goin' fuck some bitches.

DESHAWN
Oh, I'm goin' fuck the shit out of some motherfuckin' bitches. Hell, I'm goin' be like some top secret government scientist motherfucker fused Snoop Dogg and Ron Jeremy's dicks together and sent my experimental ass to fuck island with one mission; destroy all they hoes. But only, only, once I've diversified my motherfucking portfolio, and I ain't doing that till I know I got paid fo real.

TYRONE
So, you do know what you gonna do with yo money?

DESHAWN
I guess, in essence that is correct, yes.

TYRONE
I got a Ferrari, 488 GTB all waiting for me to just drop the dollar on its fine red ass.

DESHAWN
488? How'd the fuck you afford that? You been saving?

TYRONE
Fuck no.

DESHAWN
Then explain.

TYRONE
Well, story goes, there's this supercar dealership in Miami that got busted for bringing in yeyo because, well, they're a motherfucking supercar dealership in motherfucking Miami. The cops confiscated everything, 'cause, of course, they corrupt as fuck too. And they auctioned it all off real cheap like. That's where my boy picked up this ride.

DESHAWN
Miami?

Tyrone nods.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)
Shit doesn't strike you as strange?

Tyrone shakes his head.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)
A motherfucker drives a car from Miami to LA to sell it, and that doesn't make alarm bells go off in your motherfuckin' dumb ass skull? What, you think he crossed the country because he'd enjoy the road trip?

TYRONE
They're good cars, Dee.

DESHAWN
The car's stolen, you dumbass.

TYRONE
Maybe it is, maybe it ain't.

DESHAWN
Is it cheap?

TYRONE
Yeah.

DESHAWN
Is it being sold by a thug like you and me?

TYRONE
(beat)
Yeah.

DESHAWN
Stolen. Motherfuckin'. Car.

TYRONE
Convertible. Motherfuckin'. Car.

DESHAWN
Well, that just makes it worse.

TYRONE
Worse?

DESHAWN
Yeah, Ferrari's are what rapists drive, son, straight up.

TYRONE
And a convertible makes that worse?

DESHAWN
Nah, a convertible, in LA, just makes it impractical.

TYRONE
That's where you wrong. You see, I got you now. Listen up. The whole point of a convertible ain't that you ever put the motherfuckin' roof motherfuckin' down.

DeShawn pauses drinking and stares back in disbelief.

TYRONE (CONT'D)
Boom! You see, that's some real talk, right there. Look at your ass all frozen up! I just blew your goddamn mind!

DeShawn still doesn't know what to say.

TYRONE (CONT'D)
Listen up, shit's all about intent. When a bitch sees you ridin' in yo whip with that ragtop ready to drop. She already thinking in her mind about what it would be like to be cruising wit you with the wind in her hair. She already picturing all they jealous ratchet bitches envying her ass in the passenger seat. But you, you one cool motherfucker in the shade, with your climate control chillin' your sophisticated ass. That's what's up, intent, motherfucker, intent. Bitches love intent.

DeShawn mulls that statement over.

DESHAWN
Tyrone, I don't say this often, and I don't say this lightly, but that's a good motherfuckin' argument, son. I concede, convertible cars do indeed have their purpose. However, I stand unwavered in my view that Ferraris, like all supercars, are driven by motherfucking rapists.

TYRONE
Lamborghini's too?

DESHAWN
Richer, uglier rapists.

TYRONE
Porsche's?

DESHAWN
Older, poorer rapists.

TYRONE
Bentley?

DESHAWN
Pimps, who are also rapists.

Tyrone thinks for a few moments.

TYRONE
Aston Martin?

DeShawn mulls that one over.

DESHAWN
I could second-guess a motherfucker in an Aston Martin.

TYRONE
We allowed to even buy Aston Martins? 'Cause they won't even let a brother play James Bond.

They laugh.

DESHAWN
Well, that ain’t gonna stop this boy putting on a five-thousand-dollar suit and getting in an Aston Martin, fo’ real.

They continue laughing. Tyrone thinks.

TYRONE
I gotta think over this whole Fararri thing. Damn, can't even dream without fucking up my imaginary life.

DESHAWN
Well, I hope you do, 'cause last thing we need after this job is your shady-looking ass driving around town in a bright red stolen Ferrari, roof up or not.

Tyrone spots Stewy get up. He nods to DeShawn. They watch her walk out the entrance, take out a cigarette, and light it up.

TYRONE
There’s your cue. Fifty says she don’t talk to thugs.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Stewy smokes in the moonlight. Insects chirp. The lights of LA in the distance. This place is pretty remote.

DeShawn exits the diner and takes out a cigarette. He makes sure to make eye contact with Stewy. They exchange smiles.

DESHAWN
You gotta light?

STEWY
Sure.

She offers over her lighter.

DESHAWN
Appreciate it.

He lights up while staring at her. She laughs awkwardly. He chuckles and hands the lighter back, maintaining his stare.

STEWY
Do I know you or something?

DESHAWN
Nah. I was just thinkin', I wish I knew somewhere I could get something a bit stronger.

STEWY
You from outta town?

DESHAWN
Up here from Lynwood.

STEWY
Then you should have no problem getting hooked up.

DESHAWN
Yeah, but I'm a long way from friends. Know what I'm sayin'?

STEWY
Did your mom never tell you not to talk to strangers?

DESHAWN
Peace out. Didn't mean to bother ya'll.

He walks away and takes in the view.

STEWY
Whereabouts in Lynwood?

DESHAWN
Palm & Oak.

STEWY
You ever come over to Broadway?

He nods. She crosses over.

STEWY (CONT'D)
How much stronger you looking for?

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Stewy and DeShawn reenter and head for their respective tables. DeShawn sits back down by Tyrone while Stewy stands talking to Ameena.

DESHAWN
Son, if I had just a few less morals, I'd make a first-class fuckin' detective.

TYRONE
They in?

DESHAWN
They talkin'.

TYRONE
You a top negotiator.

DESHAWN
The best negotiator.

TYRONE
True dat.

Stewy whispers in Ameena's ear. She looks over suspiciously at Tyrone and DeShawn, who avoid looking directly back.

She gets up, taking the chicken and nachos with her.

STEWY
Jeez! Leave the food!

AMEENA
Hell no! This better be worth it!

Ameena and Stewy cross over to the guys. DeShawn moves across beside Tyrone and, like a gentleman, ushers the girls to take a seat. They all sit and stare at one another.

AMEENA (CONT'D)
You want some nachos? Chicken?

TYRONE
Thought you'd never ask.

Tyrone is quick to take up her offer. DeShawn remains cool. Ameena looks him up and down, she's a fierce woman.

AMEENA
Yeah, I seen you.

DESHAWN
I seen you too. Ameena, right?

AMEENA
Mmmhmm. Don't know your name.

DESHAWN
Well, I stay on the down low.

AMEENA
The fuck you do. You used to drag on Gardena, every weekend. And you used to win a lot. Black Mustang. The kind with a trunk, not a hatch.

TYRONE
Shit! That your old notchback, dawg? That must be ten years ago.

DESHAWN
That was a fast car and every one in Compton knew it. But you didn't know my name, see, and that's how I've always kept it.

AMEENA
Now, I'm proud of my name.

DESHAWN
You should. From what I know, your father was one respectable gang leader motherfucker. Not sure what he'd think, knowing his girl was slanging dope on the street mind.

Ameena glares.

AMEENA
Negro, fuck you.

The tension rises.

DESHAWN
BUT, I know you gotta be better than that. That's why I'm coming to you with a job offer that might just change yo whole life.

AMEENA
Try me, motherfucker.

DESHAWN
It's just an exchange, is all. Money, product. Product, money.

AMEENA
Then, with all due respect, why you need anybody else to come along?

DESHAWN
Well, you see, here's the thing, there ain't gonna be no product.

Ameena stares confused.

STEWY
You're planning a double cross.

DESHAWN
Funny how white folk get that so quick.

AMEENA
Motherfucker, I don't know if you huffed too many exhaust fumes on the strip, but you turn up to an exchange without either money or product, you leaving in a bodybag.

DESHAWN
Good thing things ain't even gonna get to the exchange itself. We got a plan for that. To make it happen though we need a special somebody who fits a certain profile.

AMEENA
Me?

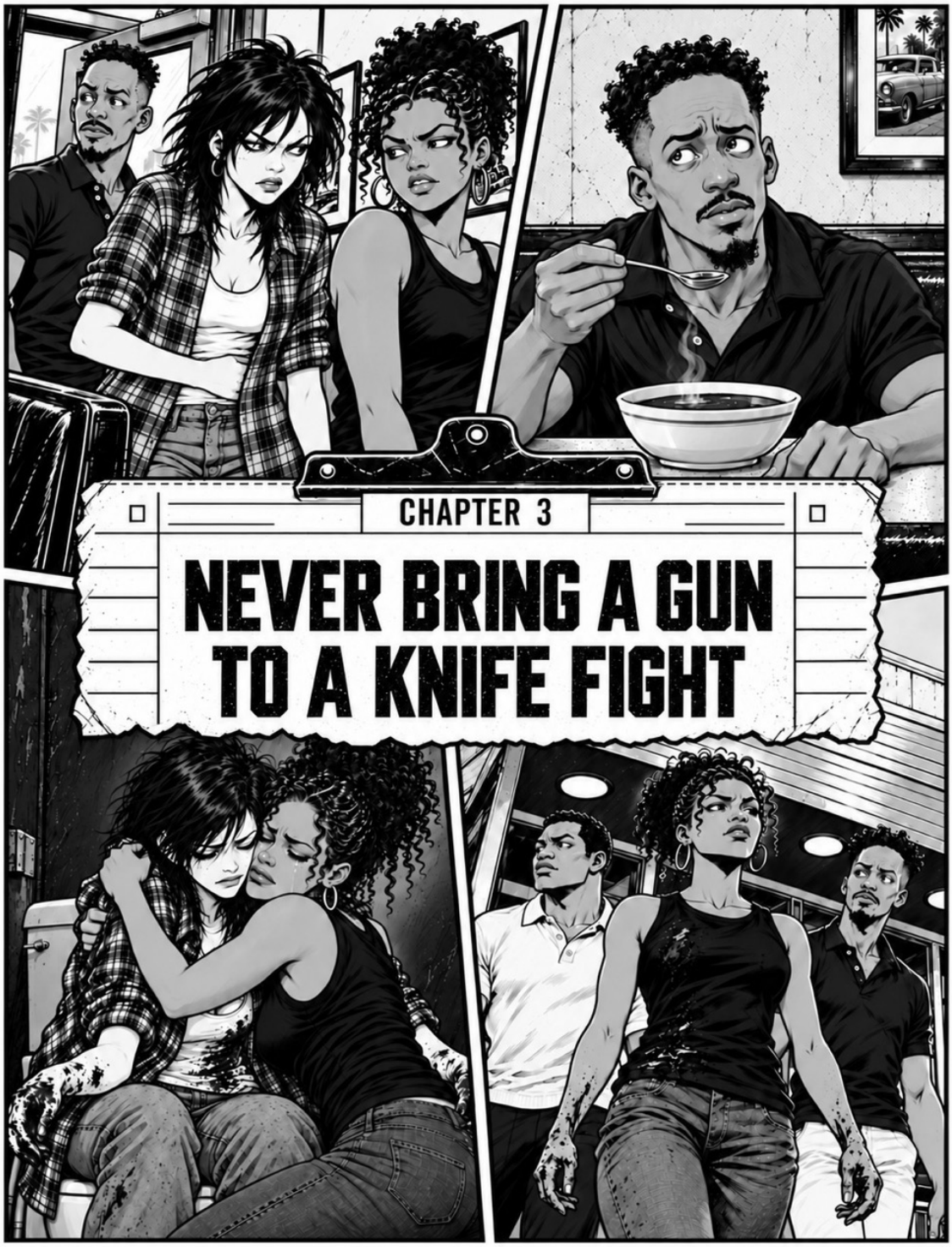
DeShawn shakes his head and points at Stewy.

DESHAWN
Little Miss Perfect right here.

STEWY
So, say we take you up on this, what's in it for us?

DESHAWN
Five figures. Each. And a VIP ticket into the big league. You two just gotta do what we say, and nothing can go wrong.

Stewy and Ameena look at each other.


CHAPTER 3
NEVER BRING A GUN TO A KNIFE FIGHT

INT. DINER - DAY

Bill is busy cleaning a table and stacking dirty dishes when something suddenly catches his eye.

Stewy, Ameena, and Tyrone enter with pensive looks painted on their faces. Something looks wrong with this picture.

They stay close together as they pace through the diner.

Ameena hides an old M1911 pistol in the back of her pants.

They split off, Ameena and Stewy making a b-line for the restroom and Tyrone heading for an empty booth.

Stewy clutches her gut and winces, distressed.

Tyrone proceeds to slump down in the booth in a manner which can only fairly be described as "low-key as fuck." He hides behind a menu, his hands trembling.

Bill takes the plates and crosses to the kitchen.

Tyrone glances back outside, where DeShawn paces back and forth while making calls on his cell phone.

RESTROOM

Stewy grimaces as she rocks on the can. She releases her hand from her gut to reveal a weeping stab wound.

She quickly covers it again and gasps in agony.

DINER

Bill makes his way over to Tyrone, coffee jug in hand. Tyrone continues to stare at the menu intensely.

BILL
Coffee?

Tyrone nods, fixated on the menu. Bill pours a cup.

BILL (CONT'D)
You okay?

Tyrone nods unconvincingly.

BILL (CONT'D)
Your friends okay?

Tyrone is clearly hiding something. Bill turns and heads to the restroom.

TYRONE
Wait! Umm.. what's the umm... soup of the day?

BILL
Tomato. I'll be honest, it's more of a soup of the year thing here.

Bill turns again to the restroom.

TYRONE
Say, what tomatoes are in the, you know, tomato soup?

BILL
(beat)
The big red round kind.

RESTROOM

Stewy trembles and sweats. Ameena squats by her.

AMEENA
Look at me. Look at me. It's just a flesh wound, okay?

Ameena unrolls toilet paper and tries to pack the wound.

STEWY
How about I stab you, and you tell me it's just a fucking flesh wound.

AMEENA
Listen. You know we can't call an ambulance, right?

Stewy grits her teeth and nods.

AMEENA (CONT'D)
So, I need you to hold on while we try to get some agreeable help.

STEWY
I can't.

AMEENA
You can. You held on this long.

STEWY
Go!

AMEENA
I can't go!

STEWY
We had a deal!

AMEENA
Motherfucker, you goin' be okay!

STEWY
Ameena, this is way more than a flesh wound and you know it. Go, like we always said. Cut the cord and run. Don't let me hold you back. Please. Just go.

Ameena shakes her head, but she knows Stewy is right. Stewy fumbles for her phone and tries to hand it over.

STEWY (CONT'D)
Go. Now.

Ameena takes the phone and nods respectfully.

AMEENA
We'll see.

DINER

Bill polishes glasses while eyeing Ameena as she makes her way to the booth where Tyrone nervously waits.

Outside, DeShawn continues to pace and prod at his phone with an increasing concern and urgency to his step.

Tyrone taps the table nervously as Ameena eases down into the booth opposite him. By comparison, she is dead calm.

TYRONE
So, what's the deal?

AMEENA
Calm the fuck down. We look suspicious enough, motherfucker.

TYRONE
She gonna bleed out?

Ameena stares back "Yes".

TYRONE (CONT'D)
What the fuck was that back there?

AMEENA
Cooch's people. That's what it was. Why the fuck didn't you tell me who you were trying to fuck over?

TYRONE
I seen some cold motherfuckers, but that was some ungodly fire and brimstone shit.

AMEENA
You listen to me. My best friend is probably gonna die. So you better pull your shit together and-

Bill crosses over and pours Ameena coffee. They sit in silence as coffee sloshes.

Bill shows Tyrone a large, shiny, fresh tomato.

BILL
Yes? No?

Tyrone stares at the tomato, surprised, and nods approvingly. Ameena watches, baffled.

BILL (CONT'D)
Glad it passes muster.
(to Ameena)
Can I get you anything?

AMEENA
No. Coffee's good. Thanks.

Bill walks away, thinking to himself. Ameena starts pouring heaps of sugar into her coffee.

They watch Bill make his way toward the restroom and look at each other, worried.

Bill suddenly turns to the kitchen and goes in. They sigh.

He exits again, sans-tomato, and heads back toward the restroom. They watch wide-eyed.

AMEENA (CONT'D)
(to self)
Don't you dare, motherfucker. Don't you dare.

She reaches for her gun as he disappears into the corridor.

CORRIDOR

Bill approaches the women's restroom door and knocks.

RESTROOM

Stewy glances around worried and steadies her panting.

INTERCUT BILL AND STEWY

BILL
You okay in there, miss?

STEWY
(pained)
Yeah!

BILL
You know, usually, my customers end up groaning in there AFTER they've tried my cooking.

Bill chuckles at his own joke. She struggles to conceal a pained gasp. He checks around and moves up to the door.

BILL (CONT'D)
Maybe I got the wrong impression here, but I could maybe make a call? And maybe I can make it look like you didn't have a choice in me making that call? You understand?

She grimaces and writhes.

STEWY
I'll be out in a minute! Thanks!

BILL
Do what you gotta do, honey.

He winces for a moment and leaves.

DINER

Tyrone and Ameena, almost out of their seats now, watch Bill exit the corridor and head for some other customers.

They look at each other, relieved, and sit back with a sigh.

DeShawn enters and sits in the booth beside Ameena.

AMEENA
Well?

DESHAWN
(defeated)
I tried my man on Crenshaw, he on duty. I tried my other man on East Side, he not picking up. I must have made twenty calls...

He shakes his head.

TYRONE
Fuck, man! So she gonna die?

DESHAWN
Who you called? Who you motherfuckin' called?

TYRONE
Fuck you! You know damn well I ain't connected like you-

AMEENA
Hey! Chill the fuck out and calm the fuck down.

She stares them down and turns her attention to DeShawn

AMEENA (CONT'D)
Motherfucker, you should have told me and my girl who you were trying to fuck with.

DESHAWN
Would you have gone ahead if I had?

Ameena knows he has a point, and the man's full of regret.

Bill crosses over again with his trusty coffee pot and stares down at DeShawn.

BILL
Coffee?

DeShawn nods and fumes while Bill pours. Ameena swigs hers back and slides her cup over for a top-up. Bill obliges.

BILL (CONT'D)
You go steady now, or you'll end up like your friend. She's really unloading in there, ain't she? It's always the little ones.

Ameena forces a somewhat queasy smile.

BILL (CONT'D)
(to DeShawn)
You eating, my friend?

DESHAWN
No, I'm good, thanks.

Bill points at Tyrone as he walks away.

BILL
One tomato soup, comin' right up, buddy.

DeShawn shoots Tyrone a look of pure WTF?

TYRONE
Jus' tryin' be lowkey.

DESHAWN
Soup? You ordered fucking soup?

Tyrone winces. DeShawn lays his hands on the table and tries his best to remain calm.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)
Let me help you get with the program. At some point, probably in the next five minutes or so, various motherfuckers pertaining to this establishment are going to start getting pretty fucking suspicious as to why one of our party is held up in the bathroom. Of course, that's all assuming no females here need to take a shit in the next two minutes, in which case, our cover is blown. But you, you busy getting one of your five a day. We need to put some distance on this place fast, whether we saving this girl or not.

DeShawn and Tyrone just stare intensely, neither one looking away as Bill saunters over and places a bowl of steaming tomato soup in front of Tyrone.

BILL
Bon appetite.

Bill leaves quickly, probably before Tyrone can ask any more tomato related questions, while the stare out continues.

TYRONE
Ju-

DESHAWN
-Eat yo soup.

TYRONE
J-

DESHAWN
Eat yo motherfuckin' soup or, so help me god, I reenact what went down back there right here in this motherfuckin' diner in front of all these motherfuckin' people.

Tyrone takes a spoon and starts slurping.

TYRONE
Damn! Shit's hot!

AMEENA
She's probably not gonna make it, and she wants us to go.

DESHAWN
Good, 'cause we ain't got no choice.

AMEENA
We always had a deal worked out for a situation just like this. She's sticking by it.

DESHAWN
Can she talk?

AMEENA
She gave me her phone herself.

DESHAWN
Let me be serious with you, it's bad enough that we be running out on a white girl, stereotypes an' all, but I gotta know you okay with leaving your girl behind. 'Cause if you ain't, I ain't cool with giving up now.

She thinks and looks at him with admiration.

AMEENA
You fucked up real bad, but I can see you're a good man.

DESHAWN
I lied to your ass, and I'm pretty fucking sorry about that right now, but, a good man I am not. I just know that walking out on a friend is some bad shit you gotta live with your whole goddamn life.

AMEENA
We take her to a hospital, we all go down. She knows that. I got a record. One more strike, I'm done as done, motherfuckers.

DESHAWN
Believe me, she talks, we all done as motherfuckin' done.

Tyrone stops eating and appears to have regained some composure. DeShawn glares back at him.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)
Motherfu-

TYRONE
No! Hear me out! I told you. We can take her to the hospital, dump her outside, and split, no problem. They don't have to report no crime. That shit's the law.

Ameena and DeShawn stare back plain-faced.

AMEENA
You one naive, knuckle-headed negro.

DESHAWN
That ain't how shit works. You think the cops play fair? They the biggest gang in the country.

AMEENA
You see the mess we left behind?

DESHAWN
We left a car. That shit's traceable.

AMEENA
We got Cooch on our backs and the LAPD, and hell, I'm not sure which I trust less.

DESHAWN
You know why Lady Justice always be wearing that blindfold? Bitch can't stand to see the corruption.

AMEENA
You need to get with the program. We ain't much better off than stabbed right now, we outlaws. That life you had this morning, that's your old life now. You dig?

Tyrone mulls that over.

TYRONE
Well, I guess I'll just get back to eating my soup.

They sit in silence as Tyrone slurps away. They look pretty fucking troubled.

DESHAWN
Something don't feel right about this. Something don't feel right at all.

They sit thinking. Tyrone keeps scraping his bowl with his spoon. DeShawn shoots him a look which shows he's close to flipping out.

AMEENA
Wait! Bushido! That's it!

DESHAWN
Say what?

AMEENA
The Way of the Warrior! Bushido!

DeShawn doesn't know what the fuck she's saying.

AMEENA (CONT'D)
Okay, listen up. For five hundred years, samurai have been building their philosophy of ideals, honor, bravery - you know, all that high-integrity warrior shit you see in anime movies?

DESHAWN
Not exactly, but go on.

AMEENA
Well, the Gukushu, those were like these hardcore monk motherfuckers that studied Bushido, they had a solution for a situation as fucked up as the one we face right now.

DESHAWN
Which is?

AMEENA
The Karmic Solution.

DeShawn is still none the wiser.

AMEENA (CONT'D)
It's like a reverse Ultimatum Game?

She looks at them. They look back, completely perplexed, Tyrone with his spoon in his hand.

AMEENA (CONT'D)
Just for the record, you are some strategically ignorant motherfuckers. Okay, divide and choose, let's say there's a cake, and you want the slices between two kids to be equal, but they have to negotiate between themselves, so-

TYRONE
-One cuts the other chooses.

Ameena points at him.

AMEENA
Right on.

DESHAWN
Soup, motherfucker.

AMEENA
That's how people usually do it. But how about this, one kid divides the cake, but then the kid who cut it gives the other kid the knife.

DESHAWN
And then what?

AMEENA
Well, that first kid better have played pretty motherfucking fair in the eyes of that second kid, right?
(MORE)

AMEENA (CONT'D)
But here's the thing, what's worse, being a little greedy or stabbing a motherfucker over a piece of cake?

TYRONE
Wait, wait, wait, that depends on how much cake this little punk keepin' for himself.

DeShawn sternly points at Tyrone's bowl.

AMEENA
Exactly! There's a chance that motherfucker pushed their luck too far. But, either way, they're choosing to hand the knife over to show their honor and bravery. That's what makes the difference. That means they're inviting the karma to balance out. They are passing on their giri.

DESHAWN
Their giri?

AMEENA
Their debt of gratitude. Their sense of honor. Their duty. I do something bad to you, but in exchange I give you the power to correct my wrong by doing something way, way worse to me.

DESHAWN
Ancient samurai warrior tradition and all, I see how that helps me cut cake in the hood, but I don't see how it solves the motherfuckin' problem we have right now.

AMEENA
We have to leave our girl behind, right? We got no choice? I got nobody I can call? You got nobody you can call?

DESHAWN
That's how it is.

AMEENA
So, that's what we're going to do. We can twiddle both thumbs up our asses all night long trying to come up with a solution, but their ain't one coming, no way, no how? We gotta go, we gotta run now?

DESHAWN
Yeah.

AMEENA
So, we do this, we leave her behind BUT we let her keep her phone.

DESHAWN
(beat)
Yeah?

AMEENA
Yeah.

TYRONE
Yeah?

AMEENA
That's our debt of gratitude, putting the power in her hands. That's our loyalty to her. Think about it, we're giving her the ultimate choice, and she'll know it. She can choose to fall on her sword, or save herself. However, if she does choose to save herself, she does it knowing she's throwing three motherfuckers who had no better choice under the bus.

Deshawn and Tyrone gradually process what she's proposed.

DESHAWN
Why do you know this shit?

AMEENA
The game. Takes a damn fool to play without some hustle.

DeShawn nods. Tyrone finishes the last of his soup.

DESHAWN
That's the plan then. Play it cool. Drop the burner on her. Get the fuck out of dodge. Hope karma doesn't come bite us on our asses.

Ameena goes to get up. DeShawn holds her back and looks across the Diner. Bill enters the kitchen.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)
So the old man thinks she's gone.

She gets up and paces toward the restroom, passing by innocent diners who know no better.

She opens the door to the--

CORRIDOR

It's Empty. The door clatters behind her, she opens a door and enters the--

RESTROOM

Ameena crosses to the cubicle she left Stewy in. She opens the door to find--

Stewy slumped on the can with her eyes closed. Ameena is overcome by emotion. Stewy comes around.

STEWY
I told you to go.

Ameena hugs Stewy.

AMEENA
We goin' okay, we goin'. We tried our best. I'm so sorry.

STEWY
Don't be. I knew what I was getting into, okay?

Ameena shakes her head, upset.

AMEENA
You didn't. They lied.

STEWY
Either way, what's done is done.

Ameena turns to the basin and, with a degree of uncertainty and conflict, she takes out a tiny black zip-up case.

She stares at it for a few moments and unzips it. It's a drug kit in very poor condition.

She runs a tap, then clinks down a dirty old spoon.

She takes out a lighter and starts burning a murky substance in the spoon while Stewy fights through the pain.

STEWY (CONT'D)
What are you doing? Just go!

The dirty brown liquid draws up the syringe. Ameena takes it along with the tie-off and squats, facing Stewy, looking deadly serious.

AMEENA
If it gets too much, this might help take the pain away.

Stewy tries to grab them but Ameena holds back. Dirt floating within the mixture of the syringe.

AMEENA (CONT'D)
Now look, I found this shit in the car we took. I can't vouch for the purity. Who knows where this needle's been. Who knows what this even is. So it's on your ass, okay?

Stewy snatches the items and nods appreciatively. Ameena takes out Stewy's phone and offers it over.

STEWY
No phones. That was the deal.

AMEENA
I trust you.

STEWY
Then I don't need the phone.

AMEENA
No. I gotta do this. I trust you to make the right choice.

STEWY
Please tell me this isn't some of your way of the warrior bullshit again?

Ameena smirks through her tears and places Stewy's phone in her blood-soaked hand.

She reaches around her back and retrieves the M1911 from the back of her jeans. It's old. It's just a .22 caliber.

STEWY (CONT'D)
No. They'll be looking for you.

AMEENA
And if they find you first, you can slow them down.

Ameena leans in and slips the gun into Stewy's jeans. She hugs her tight, clutching her clothes with her hands and struggling to hold back crying.

Stewy keeps her bloody hands away from Ameena's clothes and starts to cry.

AMEENA (CONT'D)
You my girl.

STEWY
I'm your girl.

They sniff back tears and share a resigned smile for a few moments. How did things end up like this?

STEWY (CONT'D)
Now, get the fuck outta here, and Ameena-

Stewy stares, deadly serious.

STEWY (CONT'D)
-If that crazy motherfucker finds you first, give 'em hell.

Ammena nods just as seriously, puts her game face on, closes the cubical door, and leaves.

CORRIDOR

Ammena eases the restroom door closed behind her. She takes a deep breath, composes herself, and opens the door to the--

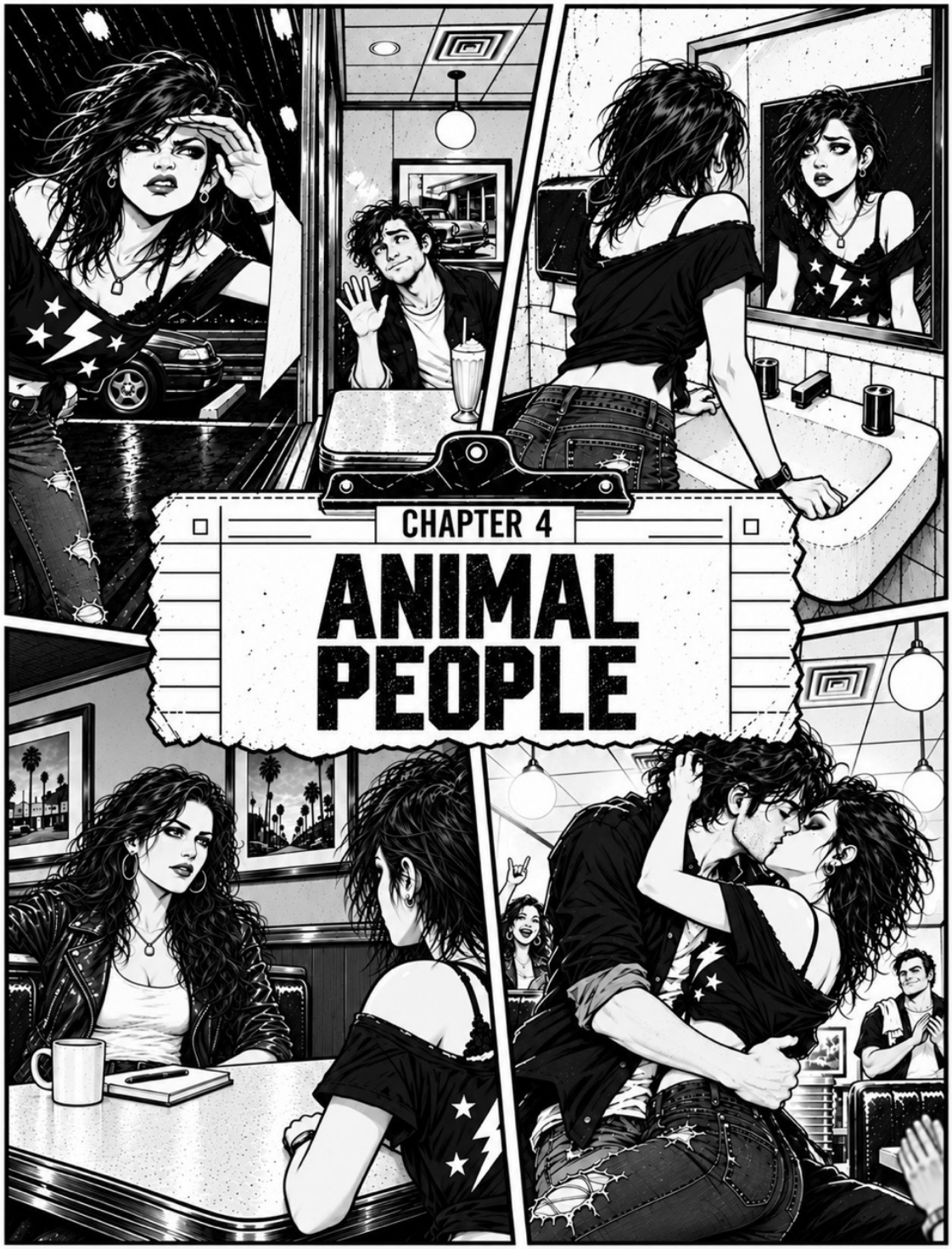
DINER

Ameena looks around for Bill. He's entering the kitchen. Now's their chance.

She looks to Tyrone and DeShawn, who are getting up and leaving cash on the table.

She walks with purpose across the restaurant, blood smeared on her hands and clothes.

She joins Tyrone and DeShawn and, as best as she can given the situation, holds her head up high as they exit the diner and disappear into the night.


CHAPTER 4
ANIMAL PEOPLE

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Sitting at a table by a window alone, MAX, a casually dressed Irish guy, prods busily at his phone as he sips a milkshake. Something outside catches his attention.

He looks up above a window sign to see Stewy outside, peering in, scanning the restaurant with a goofy stare. Max sits awkwardly, unsure where to look. He looks back up at Stewy to find she's still pulling that stupid face.

She takes out her phone and taps away. Max's phone buzzes. He checks it and, somewhat sheepishly, leans around the poster and waves. While it can't be heard, Stewy curses to herself before pacing around the diner and making her way in.

Max stands up and offers out his hand as she crosses over.

MAX
Max, a pleasure to be meeting you.

She shakes his hand.

STEWY
Stewy, pretty fucking embarrassed.

MAX
I'm not going to lie to you. As first impressions go, you've made an arse of it.

They both sit down.

STEWY
I love your accent, by the way.

MAX
I have an accent? My hole! Will ye fek off with that shite, ye ejit?

STEWY
It's just there, if you listen out for it. You know, like, real carefully.

MAX
Thanks. I like yours too. I mean, the surfer twang you got there, it's very attractive.

STEWY
I'm not a surfer.

MAX
Well, you got the twang, nonetheless.

STEWY
What twang?

MAX
Say "yeah" for me.

STEWY
Yeah.

MAX
Now say it with, you know, some actual enthusiasm, like this isn't turning into the worst date of your life. Like, "Spring break! Y..."

He signals her to continue the line.

STEWY
Spring break ye-urgh!

MAX
There it is! You got the twang, so you have!

She smiles and laughs.

MAX (CONT'D)
It's a masculine thing.

STEWY
Oh wow, thanks? I sound like a man?

MAX
Better than the vapid airheads I'm sick of suffering.

She stares back, confused. He winces innocently.

MAX (CONT'D)
That said, the fact you don't sound like a vapid airhead doesn't mean you necessarily aren't one.

He cringes.

MAX (CONT'D)
I'm the one fecking this right up now, aren't I?

She nods to herself as she opens a menu and reads it.

STEWY
Not feeling so embarrassed now.

MAX
You have very green eyes, do you, by any chance, have any family from Ireland?

STEWY
Close. Australia.

MAX
Oh, just Irish criminals then?

They laugh as Bill makes his way over.

BILL
Can I get you two lovebirds some drinks?

Their gaze averts from one another, and they quickly become awkward. Bill sighs with remorse.

BILL (CONT'D)
First date?

Max nods uneasily.

BILL (CONT'D)
Ah shit. I need to stop doing that. Drinks?

STEWY
I know what I want, like, I already know what I want to eat.

MAX
That really the case, or do you just want to get out of here as quickly as possible?

STEWY
No, I really want a grilled cheese and a Budweiser.

Bill notes it down and turns to Max.

MAX
That's probably the least romantic meal I've ever heard of.

STEWY
Well, it's what I want.

MAX
Could I get a cheeseburger and another vanilla milkshake, please?

BILL
You sure can. Coming right up.

Bill leaves.

STEWY
That's like, the least original AND least romantic meal I've ever heard of.

MAX
You ever had a cheeseburger in Ireland?

STEWY
No. I've never been to Ireland.

MAX
Well, if you do, take my advice and stick with the grilled cheese.

She smiles and laughs. They sit in silence for a moment.

MAX (CONT'D)
Look, I'm going to get right to the point. You're young, you're pretty, you got a cracking sense of humor, so why the fuck are you single?

STEWY
That is pretty forward. You got a plane to catch, or something?

MAX
Do ya snore real loud?

STEWY
No.

MAX
Do ya talk too much?

STEWY
Maybe.

MAX
Do ya talk too little?

STEWY
Definitely not.

MAX
Are you a clumsy fucker? Like dangerously clumsy? Have you ever, like, gone to slice an onion and accidentally stabbed someone in the face with the knife?

STEWY
I am proud to say, I have never done that.

MAX
Do ya smoke?

STEWY
...No.

Max tries to work her out.

MAX
Are you, like, a massive racist? Like, a nazi racist with the boots, and the little armband, and everything?

STEWY
No, my best friend is black.

MAX
You steal, don't ya? That's what it is.

STEWY
Actually...

MAX
I knew it! Ya thieving fucker. Stay away from me Lucky Charms.

STEWY
I cheated.

She stares deadpan.

MAX
So?

STEWY
I had an affair.

MAX
And you think that makes you no good for anybody?

STEWY
I think it makes me no good in a lot of people's eyes, yeah.

MAX
The sex kind of affair or the other kind of affair?

STEWY
Seriously? We're having this conversation?

He waits. She can't believe it.

STEWY (CONT'D)
The emotional kind, NOT that it's any of your business. Who goes there on the first date?

MAX
Well, you tell me then, when's the right time to have this conversation?

STEWY
Whenever isn't now.

MAX
Did you come clean to your fella, or did he find out?

STEWY
SHE didn't find out, I told her.

Max wasn't expecting that. Stewy raises her eyebrows.

STEWY (CONT'D)
Yeah, trying to work it out now, aren't you? Which way did she go? I wonder. A little more pussy, or a little bit of peen?

MAX
The big question is, did she lose her mind and throw you out, or did she try to see things from your point of view?

She doesn't want to answer.

MAX (CONT'D)
Like I say, you either have these conversations now, or you have them when it's too late.

Stewy shakes her head and looks around the restaurant. She snaps back, shocked.

STEWY
Woah!

She points to ROCKSTAR, a pretty normal if not fashionably dressed looking woman sitting alone at a table, thanking Bill for topping up her coffee while she studies a notebook.

Max shrugs.

STEWY (CONT'D)
Seriously? You don't know who that is?

Stewy pinches the band-top she's wearing and shakes it.

STEWY (CONT'D)
Okay, that, sitting right over there, drinking coffee and taking notes, is my fucking hero, yeah?

MAX
You should go over and introduce yourself, so you should.

STEWY
No. She'd think I'm a crazy asshole?

MAX
Really? Why's that?

STEWY
Because I am a crazy asshole.

INT. DINER - LATER

Max sucks on the dregs of his milkshake. He's finished his meal way before Stewy. She eats her grilled cheese.

STEWY
I think you're the one trying to get out of here as quick as you can.

MAX
You Americans really underestimate the quality of your cuisine.

He stares.

STEWY
What?

MAX
I'm still dying to know, your ex, how did she respond?

She sighs. He's never going to let this drop.

STEWY
You really wanna know?

He nods.

STEWY (CONT'D)
Well, to be honest, she was really understanding about things.
(beat)
And I hated her for it. I figured, if she felt passionate enough, well, she'd have been angry.

MAX
Just 'cause someone can control their anger doesn't mean they lack passion.

Stewy shakes her head, sure.

STEWY
No, you see, I think it does.

MAX
Do you not think it's through love that all the other emotions seem insignificant?

STEWY
No. Not really. I think love makes all other emotions come alive.

MAX
Okay, let me ask you, do you really think it was her passion that was the problem, or do you think it was that you had to face the burden of your shame alone that angered you?

Frustrated, Stewy turns her attention back to a menu.

MAX (CONT'D)
So, who left who?

She looks up from the menu with a bit of a glare.

STEWY
I left her.

MAX
Why?

STEWY
Because, despite all that, I figured she deserved better. Don't pretend to understand.

MAX
I'm not saying I do understand. I'm just saying I've been there.

STEWY
You got cheated on?

He looks back guiltily.

STEWY (CONT'D)
You had an affair?

He looks more guilty.

STEWY (CONT'D)
The sex kind or the other kind?

He gestures penetration with his fingers. She's shocked.

MAX
I know what it's like to take your guilt and your shame and ball it up inside yourself, pretending it's not there while still obsessing about it. You ever thought that what really killed your relationship wasn't both of you losing faith in your love, but you losing faith in yourself?

He has her full attention and his words are hitting her hard. Stewy doesn't even notice Bill has returned, and him picking up her plate jolts her back to reality.

BILL
Can I get you guys any desserts?

Stewy fumbles for the menu.

STEWY
Sure. Can I be really weird?

BILL
You're in LA, take your best shot.

STEWY
Can I get the Blueberry Special but without the blueberries?

BILL
(very long beat)
You want the Blueberry Special, but without the special?

MAX
She can have what she wants, surely. Is that now how it is?

BILL
Well, I do aim to please, as if my cheery demeanor doesn't scream that anyway. Honey, you want the Blueberry Special without blueberries, then that's no problem.

STEWY
I'd just prefer it like that.

He looks to Max.

MAX
Can I have the Brownie, please?

BILL
You want her blueberries?

Max sits thinking for a few moments.

MAX
Yeah. Is that allowed?

BILL
It's my pleasure. Two bastardized versions of the chef's best efforts coming right up.

MAX
Hey, you did offer, so you did.

BILL
I'm not complaining. I mean, what gives one guy the right to tell us all how we like to eat, right?

MAX
Right.

STEWY
Right.

BILL
(to self)
I should have a word with that asshole.

Bill leaves. They stare in silence for a few moments.

MAX
Maybe I got it all wrong, but the way I see it is, until we can face our own failings and not be ashamed of them, how can we expect to criticize anybody else?

STEWY
I fucking hate myself so much for cheating.

MAX
That's why I can't be anything but straight about what I want, or no relationship is gonna work out for me. I know we see our flaws in others, but the fact is, I'm tired of people who choose candles by the name and cars by the color.

STEWY
Yeah? I wanna use my car for road trips and not to just get to places I have to be.

MAX
And while I'm at it, I don't understand people whose lives revolve around sports teams-

STEWY
-and share in their glory! I want to stop being criticized for the things I try to do by the people who do nothing at all.

MAX
I want to read more books-

STEWY
-and watch less chat shows!

MAX
I'm tired of feeling like I have to choose between being a dog person or a cat person. Why can't I be-

STEWY
-an animal person!

MAX
(long beat)
That last one a quote or something?

Stewy shrugs.

MAX (CONT'D)
You normally finish other people's sentences?

STEWY
Honestly, normally, I struggle to finish my own.

They stare, the diner's lights glistening in their eyes.

STEWY (CONT'D)
I'm going to use the restroom.

Stewy ejects from the booth leaving Max sitting stunned. She looks just as overwhelmed as him as she paces by booths toward the restroom. Tonight was the wrong night to lie about her smoking.

She passes the Rockstar, who glances up from her notebook and smiles. Stewy, so consumed she barely notices, shoots her a confident one back before bustling through the door.

RESTROOM

Stewy's hands shake as she braces herself against the basin. She looks like she is about to have a panic attack.

She runs the cold tap, soaks a towel, and puts it on the back of her neck. She paces back and forth, her well-worn Chuck Taylors squeaking on the tiled floor.

Feverishly, she takes out a pill bottle and clicks open the top. She pours a little powder out onto her finger.

Sniff! She snorts it back. She pauses, grits her teeth, and struggles to fight back tears.

With a gasp and a clenched fist against the wall, she whimpers a little as her heaving chest slows, and she gradually calms.

Seemingly too ashamed to be alone with herself, Stewy exits.

DINER

Stewy wipes her nose as the diner's music floods into her senses. She heads back toward Max.

ROCKSTAR (O.S.)
Hey!

Stewy snaps around to see the Rockstar smiling back. She gestures to Stewy's t-shirt.

ROCKSTAR (CONT'D)
Don't think I'm going to let a fan just walk by without having a chat.

While this is no doubt way cool, Stewy is in the wrong headspace to be dealing with this shit right now.

ROCKSTAR (CONT'D)
Please.

She gestures for Stewy to take a seat, which, with all the grace of a stoned zombie, Stewy does.

ROCKSTAR (CONT'D)
Fuck! This isn't one of those situations where you're wearing the shirt ironically, is it?

STEWY
No, I, umm... I'm a fan.

ROCKSTAR
Thank fuck for that.

The Rockstar laughs. Stewy laughs a little too much and struggles to maintain focus as her world turns surreal.

STEWY
(re: notebook)
You writing? I like to write. Songs and poetry mainly... I mean, I try too, but... I... I suck pretty bad.

ROCKSTAR
You think you suck?

STEWY
People have literally told me I suck.

Stewy has the wide-eyed stare of an addict.

ROCKSTAR
You okay, dude? You seem, like, a little on edge?

STEWY
I'm on a first date.

ROCKSTAR
Fuck! I'm sorry. You wanna get back?

STEWY
I don't know?

ROCKSTAR
What?

STEWY
You ever suddenly got exactly what you wanted and then questioned if you really deserve it?

ROCKSTAR
Wow, this band really does appeal to the neurotic demographic. Look, I know nothing about your relationship, but let me put it in terms of music. You will never believe you're worthy, and there will always be people telling you you're not. That never changes. You will only ever either feel like a hack who's never made it or a hack who never should have made it. That's life.

Stewy isn't sure how to react.

ROCKSTAR (CONT'D)
But the thing is, some people are lucky, and some people are unlucky. But, for want of a better cliche, nobody's ever perfect.

STEWY
What if you're so bad people tell you to, like, go kill yourself?

ROCKSTAR
You know who the biggest rejectors of hip-hop were? R&B fans. Now people can't tell the fucking difference. It took twenty years to unite two genres that shared the same movement, the same audience, and the same hurdles. You know who it took to unite them? Dr Dre.

Stewy doesn't get it, and her world's getting stranger.

ROCKSTAR (CONT'D)
People who make a difference are rebels, and rebels are feared before they're accepted. Is easy to be terrified of that, to want the glory without the hardship, without the rejection, without being stripped down and having to rebuild.

The Rockstar stares deadly serious for a few moments. Stewy stares back, pretending to be on the same wavelength.

ROCKSTAR (CONT'D)
So, you can either put on a mask and delude yourself, or you can be brave and accept that you're weird, that you don't fit in, that not everyone is going to be cool with you, and yeah, sometimes that person who hates you the most is yourself, and you've got to accept that sometimes the shit you tell yourself doesn't matter either. Because that's you being afraid of who you really are and what you're really capable of.

The Rockstar points to the entrance.

ROCKSTAR (CONT'D)
And the fact is, you never know who's going to walk through that door and change your life. You just better be ready for the fact someone may like you for the freak you actually are.

The Rockstar sits back and sighs. Stewy remains silent.

ROCKSTAR (CONT'D)
Fuck! I need to write some of this shit down. That was deep, right?

Stewy nods as if she understands.

ROCKSTAR (CONT'D)
So, if your date hasn't left to go gather up a search party, go get 'em, dude.

STEWY
Thanks for the advice.

Stewy gets up and leaves, totally baffled by what she's listened to and barely able to function.

She returns to the booth where Max waits and finds their desserts already there. She sits down against the backboard and draws her feet into the fetal position.

MAX
You get her autograph?

STEWY
Turns out she's even crazier than you are.

MAX
You okay?

STEWY
Yeah? Why?

She picks at her dessert. He eats his fast.

STEWY (CONT'D)
She has that manly twang you said you like.

MAX
Still dwelling on that, I see.

STEWY
Isn't that what we do? Fish for compliments and take home just the negatives?

MAX
When it comes to any kind of criticism, good or bad, I prefer the practice of catch and release.

Stewy stares at Max eating, and suddenly--

STEWY
I sell drugs... Pot mainly, but a little meth now too.

He stops. She stares.

MAX
And you take 'em too.

STEWY
How'd you know that about me?

MAX
Because it's pretty fuckin' obvious, that's how.

She stares innocently.

MAX (CONT'D)
And you can save me the puppy dog eyes, too.

STEWY
Do you hate me for what I do?

He shakes his head and averts his eyes.

MAX
The problem is, now's not a good time for me to be around someone like you.

STEWY
Because you hate me?

He sighs, frustrated.

MAX
Quite the opposite, if you must know-

He stares. There's something in his eyes. Maybe love.

MAX (CONT'D)
-But I can't do this, Stewy.

STEWY
Because I'm not perfect?

MAX
Because I'm not perfect.

She doesn't know what to say. He takes out his wallet and flicks through it. He takes out a card and slides it to her.

MAX (CONT'D)
We've all got our secrets. If you ever want to know mine, you have my number.

He places cash on the table and gets up. He looks troubled.

MAX (CONT'D)
But take that card and deal with your own first.

He leaves. Stewy watches him pacing toward the entrance. Her chest heaves. Her pupils dilate.

She gets up and stands tall in the middle of the diner and, just as he's about to step through the door--

STEWY
Max!

He turns back. Everyone in the diner looks to her.

STEWY (CONT'D)
Nobody's perfect.

He looks back and gradually smirks. She beams a loving smile and crosses to him. He crosses to her. The music in the diner builds. The lights glow bright.

They embrace one another and kiss as they spin while everyone in the diner applauds.

BILL
I called it! Lovebirds! Free drinks for everybody!

The Rockstar shoots Stewy the horns.

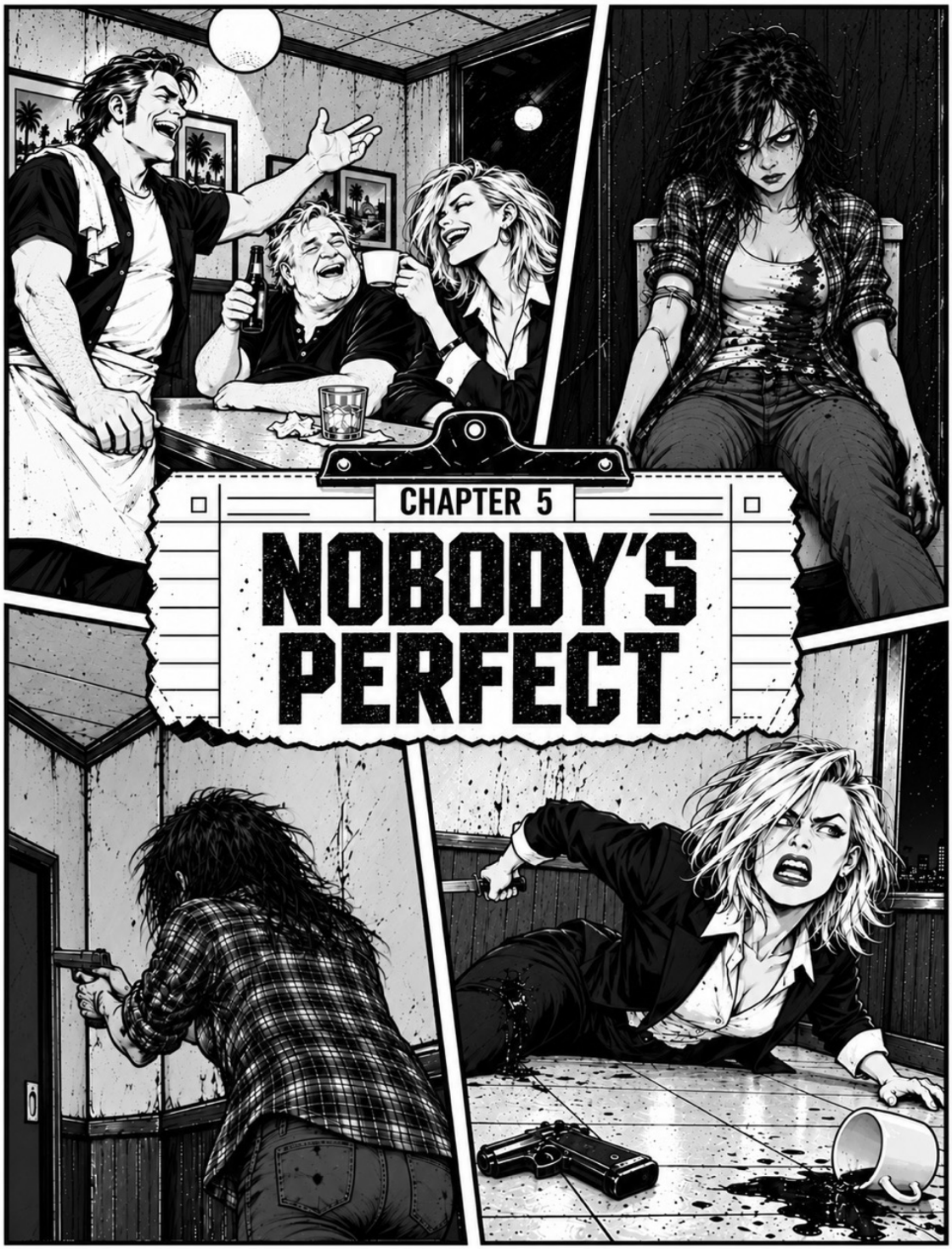
ROCKSTAR
That's my fucking girl, right there!

Max and Stewy nuzzle their heads together and--

Stewy snaps back to reality, still sitting curled up in the booth watching Max make his way across the car park.

Life in the diner goes on. The bubble gum pop. The chat of diners. The clinking of plates and cutlery.

Stewy stares into nowhere.


CHAPTER 5
NOBODY'S PERFECT

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Mad Addy, very satisfied with her meal, eats her last remaining sweet potato fry and scrunches up her napkin. Bill sweeps her plate away while Amos guzzles back beer.

BILL
You feeling any better? I'm used to people coming in here hangry, but You were getting a little dark back there. Can I get you a dessert, coffee, an exorcism?

She nods and smiles.

MAD ADDY
You know, not a lot of people know what a Brown Russian is.

AMOS
I didn't know what a Brown Russian was until tonight. Old dog, new tricks.

MAD ADDY
I once asked a bartender for a whiskey with an "e", and he thought I wanted some speed with my drink.

AMOS
That's a Scotch thing, right?

Bill grabs his trusty coffee jug.

BILL
Coffee?

She nods. He pours. She watches the pitch-black liquid trickle from the jug and gradually fill a cup.

AMOS
Did we put the "e" in or take the "e" out?

BILL
We put it in because, you know, more is always better over here.

AMOS
That's what we always do, don't we? Fucking piece of shit country.

BILL
Don't start on this again.

AMOS
You said it yourself, more is better. That's all we bring to the world. We have no revered quality because all we are is brash. We're not classy like the British. We're not artistic like the French or amorous like the Italians. We're a well kept studio backlot, a facade, a tired old show that peaked in the 60's and has been eternally on repeat ever since. Our idea of culture is turning everything into a sports event. The best we can do is cheer "USA USA" like a bunch of air-headed cheerleaders when we convince ourselves we've actually won something. We talk tough but act cowardly, and when our actions come back to bite us, we cry like spoiled brats about it.

BILL
Enough already!

AMOS
No! Hear me out! This country was built on the principle of liberty, yet we suppress and incarcerate millions under the guise of patriotism. But here's the thing, despite all of that, we do have this, we're a nation of dreamers, we all aim for an ideal, every one of us, and I don't think there's anything more admirable or more showing of the human spirit than that. So god bless the USA.

Amos is pretty impressed with his speech. Bill not so much.

MAD ADDY
It was actually the Irish who put the "e" in whiskey.

AMOS
Oh. Well, the point still stands. We're dreamers until we die, and I, for one, am pretty damn proud of it.

MAD ADDY
Good for you, but do you ever dream of dying?

Amos and Bill stare at Mad Addy confused.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
C'mon? You must? The ideal way to go? You dream about the perfect life so why not the perfect ending?

BILL
The chef tells me he wants to die on the job. That might work for him, seeing as he's the one who doesn't have to face the hungry customers.

MAD ADDY
So, what about you?

BILL
I've got a rough idea of what it's going to be like, yeah. My cholesterol is seven point six. So it'll be too soon, too pathetic, and too unexpected.

AMOS
Seven point six makes you the picture of good health in Alabama. Maybe you should move there?

MAD ADDY
That's how you THINK you'll go. But how do you WANT to go? Ideally?

Bill sighs and thinks about it.

BILL
Quick and when I least expect it. I don't want to know I'm going. Too many regrets.

He forces a smile. Mad Addy turns her attention to Amos.

AMOS
You see, that's where you're wrong. You know what I wanna do? I wanna stare death right in the eye. Face it like a man.

Amos and Bill wait for Mad Addy to tell hers.

BILL
Well?

MAD ADDY
Oh, me? In a blaze of glory, preferably. All while knowing I'd taught somebody a lesson, that I'd made a point, and winning the argument once and for all.

BILL
That's a hell of a dream.

MAD ADDY
Proud to be an American!

They laugh.

AMOS
She's just being a patriot!

BILL
USA USA!

AMOS
USA USA!

They are drunk enough and tired enough that this is all hilarious. Bill turns to get his coffee jug.

MAD ADDY
Gentleman, it's been a pleasure!

BANG! She shoots Bill in the back. He crashes to the floor.

She turns to Amos, with a black 9mm Beretta in her hand. He freezes, stares back down the barrel, and winces.

BANG! She blows him away, sending him toppling off his stool and tumbling to the tiles.

Mad Addy drops from her stool and takes up a well-practiced shooting stance, aiming across the diner.

Footsteps. A customer makes a run for it. She aims, leading them perfectly and--

BANG! They go down hard at full speed, hitting a booth.

She moves through the bar and into the kitchen.

BANG! From inside. After a few moments, she exits with a handful of sweet potato fries and scoffs them shamelessly.

She perches back on her stool and sips on her coffee, staring into the middle distance with a vacant look in her eyes and complete indifference to what she's just done.

RESTROOM - A LITTLE LATER

A toilet flushes. Mad Addy leaves a cubicle and meticulously washes her hands. As she checks herself in the mirror, she spots something on the floor of the other cubicle. It looks like a phone.

She readies her gun and moves in slowly, creeping to the door. She sweeps it open to find--

Stewy slumped on the can against the wall, eyes closed, pale white, and lifeless, the empty syringe in her arm which has been tied off to reveal a vein.

She prods Stewy. Nothing.

She looks down at her feet. Stewy's cell phone on the floor with Max's contact details open, ready to dial.

Mad Addy pulls a doleful face. She stares at Stewy with her waist covered in blood and her arms hanging.

MAD ADDY
You called your boyfriend? That's so... sad!

Mad Addy goes to leave and walks right back.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
You know, what happened today was nothing personal. I'm just... I'm a bit of a cunt, if I'm honest. And, for what it's worth, most people don't slip away from me. So, good for you. You're in, like, at least the top ten percent of people I've killed.. ever.. and that's lots.

She goes to leave and walks back again.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
(long beat)
I'm sorry, okay? I don't get to pick who tries to double-cross me. That's kinda on you too, when you think about it. So, yeah, that pretty much makes us even. The other people out there not so much, admittedly. I just get frustrated when I can't find who I'm looking for. That's kinda on you too. You should probably think about that.

Mad Addy stares a Stewy a little longer. There's a hint of regret in her eyes, which are drawn to the empty syringe still stuck in Stewy's arm. She seems disappointed.

She walks away and leaves the restroom. The door slowly squeaks to a close behind her. The fluorescent lamp hums, bathing Stewy in a eery cold light.

The volume of the music in the diner turns up, echoing through the restroom, and--

Stewy's eyes creep open, filled with vengeance.

She reaches down in pain and picks up her phone. She stares at it, confused. While tripping on a very strange high, she tries to compose herself and get her bearings.

The light goes out. She struggles up and stumbles out of the cubicle in the darkness. The light flickers back on.

Stewy steadies herself and gazes around, disoriented.

She opens the door. The music blasts, causing her to wince.

CORRIDOR

Stewy staggers out of the restroom and stares at the door to the diner. She retrieves the old M1911 from the back of her jeans and raises it, ready to fire.

She stares down the barrel and advances step by step to the door. Hesitantly, she eases the door open and enters the--

DINER

Through her crosshairs, Stewy scans for Mad Addy. The music continues to blast. She's nowhere to be seen.

Suddenly, a head behind a table. Stewy concentrates.

Mad Addy stands up with her back to Stewy as she searches through a wallet and nods along to the music. She takes all the cash out and tosses it aside.

Stewy squeezes the trigger, and--

Nothing. She checks the gun and flicks off the safety.

She peers back through the sights. Mad Addy, still unbeknownst of Stewy's presence, walks across the diner with her coffee cup in hand and groove to her step.

Stewy tightens her finger on the trigger and--

Nothing. Frustrated, Stewy cocks the slide and re-aims, struggling to keep her arms outstretched

Mad Addy walks out of Stewy's sight, behind the bar, and turns her attention to the register.

Stewy slowly eases sideways as the register rings. She circles the bar until she has Mad Addy in her crosshairs.

She can see her taking cash. She firms up her aim, and--

Mad Addy moves away. Stewy tries to re-aim, but Mad Addy ducks again, disappearing behind the bar.

With her cup of coffee daintily in her hand, Mad Addy unzips her travel bag, revealing it's full of neatly stacked bills. She adds the takings from the register and wallets to it and stands back up, right in Stewy's sights.

Stewy concentrates. Mad Addy crosses across the diner again.

Stewy follows her, the gun bobbing as she struggles to keep her shaking arms outstretched. But she's locked in now.

Mad Addy stops, thinks, and turns around.

There's Stewy, gun pointed. And here's her, standing there with her metaphorical dick in her hand. She goes for her gun.

BANG! Mad Addy hits the floor along with her coffee and gun.

Stewy collapses through weakness and slumps down a wall.

Mad Addy clutches her bleeding thigh and looks around for the gun. It's not been thrown far. She drags herself toward it.

Stewy finds the energy to aim and--

BANG! Mad Addy takes a hit to her arm. She screams and desperately reaches into her boot. She pulls out a large sharp, glistening knife, and--

Swings around with everything she can muster.

THWACK! Stewy, now panting heavily, looks down at the knife impaled in her arm and back up at Mad Addy sitting upright.

Stewy, feeling no pain, aims right for her.

BANG! Mad Addy goes down with a shot to the shoulder.

Stewy waits while the music plays, trying to keep the gun aimed until the last of her strength gives out. She sits panting, unsure of what to do and barely able to move.

The track ends. She tries to get up. No. She's got nothing left now.

Just Stewy's heavy breathing in a room littered with bodies.

MAD ADDY
(long beat)
Seriously?

Mad Addy cringes in pain on the floor.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
You do realize, if you'd just waited five minutes, I'd have left?

Stewy smirks to herself a little.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
You scared?

Mad Addy glares at the ceiling and coughs up blood.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
I said, are you scared?

STEWY
Of what?

MAD ADDY
Of death, obviously.

STEWY
Are you?

MAD ADDY
I asked first. You have to answer first.

STEWY
I don't know.

MAD ADDY
That's not a real answer.

They both lie, panting.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
I mean, do you have any regrets?

STEWY
Look, can we just die in peace?

MAD ADDY
No! I want to know. Do you have any fucking regrets?

Stewy rolls her eyes and tries to move again. Nope.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
Well?

STEWY
Yeah! I have regrets! Of course, I do! Okay?

MAD ADDY
Is it that guy you called? On your phone? I saw it. Max?

Stewy is surprised, her privacy violated.

STEWY
I didn't call him.

MAD ADDY
Well... maybe you should have...

Stewy doesn't appreciate the advice.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
What were you going to tell him?

STEWY
You honestly want to know?

MAD ADDY
You think I'd waste my dying breaths if I didn't?

Stewy looks at the knife and needle stuck in her arm.

STEWY
You promise not to laugh?

MAD ADDY
I'm not sure I'm even capable of that right now.

STEWY
Actually, I was going to call him, and tell him he's perfect.

Mad Addy tries not to laugh.

MAD ADDY
He your boyfriend?

STEWY
No.

MAD ADDY
So, what's so perfect about him?

STEWY
You wouldn't understand. I just thought he deserved to know it, and know he deserves someone special.

MAD ADDY
Wait! Woah! You were going to tell him he could do better than you?

Stewy pouts.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
That's fucking weak, dude. I know I promised not to laugh and everything-

STEWY
-Well, it's true!

MAD ADDY
You do suck at double-crossing people, I'll give you that.

STEWY
That and everything else. You know what I've wanted to do for the last few months, more than I've ever wanted to do anything?

MAD ADDY
What?

STEWY
Quit being a crook, get clean, and start being an artist. How pathetic is that?

MAD ADDY
And then pursue this guy?

STEWY
Yeah.

MAD ADDY
Wow, you really did fuck up.

Their panting calms. Silence for a few long moments.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
Well? You gonna ask me if I'm scared too?

STEWY
Are you?

MAD ADDY
Yeah! I'm pretty fucking scared, thanks for asking!

STEWY
Because you didn't do the things you wanted to do?

MAD ADDY
Fuck no.
(long beat)
I've never done anything other than what I wanted to do, for me and myself only, regardless of how others may have seen it.

STEWY
So, what's the problem?

Mad Addy tries to move and winces in pain.

MAD ADDY
What's your name?

STEWY
Stewy.

MAD ADDY
Addison. Hey.

STEWY
Hey.

MAD ADDY
I'm not going to lie to you, Stewy. People like the whole badass image, but you don't clear up after yourself like I do unless you're running from something.

STEWY
It can't be that bad.

MAD ADDY
Does this room not look like somebody has a serious problem?

Stewy looks at the carnage of dead bodies.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
You're angry because you're not perfect? Fuck me. Try being fundamentally fucked up in the head. Try that for a lifetime.

Mad Addy reflects.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
I'm gong to hell, Stewy. I'm pretty sure being a vegan isn't going to make up for all the cold-blooded killing I've done.

Mad Addy thinks and seemingly has a revelation.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
Hey, you still have your phone?

STEWY
Yeah.

MAD ADDY
Look, there's no way I'm gonna make it, but there's a chance you will.

STEWY
If I call an ambulance, they'll put me away.

MAD ADDY
For long?

STEWY
I sell drugs.

MAD ADDY
Big deal. I've stabbed you twice, one of those times from the other side of a room. No offense, but I get the impression you're far from a fucking crime lord.

STEWY
They'll go after my best friend.

MAD ADDY
Listen to me. It's your word against nobody else's. This is what you do. You call the cops. They come. They save you, but there's no saving me. When they question you, you say some crazy fucker started shooting people, and you fought back. Said crazy fucker stabbed you twice, because she's a fucking badass, but you grabbed a gun off a victim and unloaded into her as per your god-given right.

STEWY
And the drugs?

MAD ADDY
Well, given the rather obvious needle hanging out your arm, you get charged with possession, but you live, and you walk.

STEWY
Why are you helping me?

Mad Addy doesn't answer. Stewy looks at her gun.

STEWY (CONT'D)
You know what I really feel like doing? I feel like calling that guy, saying my piece, and blowing my fucking brains out.

MAD ADDY
Or, you could not be so fucking stupid, Stewy. You want to be an artist, right? That's what you said? You want to stop being a crook and start being an artist?

Stewy starts to cry.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
Don't fucking pussy out on me, Stewy! You want to be an artist, is that correct?

STEWY
Yes.

MAD ADDY
What kind of fucking artist?

STEWY
I want to sing.

MAD ADDY
Why?

STEWY
To make people happy. That's all this ever was supposed to be, a way to make people happy.

Stewy shakes with tears.

MAD ADDY
Then get with the program! You walk away from this, you go after what you want!

STEWY
I can't!

MAD ADDY
Why not!

STEWY
Because, I don't know if you've noticed, but life doesn't work out how we all want it to!

MAD ADDY
Look, this guy you’re in love with. I hate to tell you, but he isn't perfect. Nobody is. And being an artist won't be perfect either. Life will be nothing like you wanted to be, okay?

STEWY
So why bother?

MAD ADDY
Fine. Don't listen to me. Listen to the advice my dad gave me when I was a kid. I never took it, but maybe you will. Nothing is ever perfect, and nothing ever goes perfectly, because imperfection is the shadow cast by the light of dreams. And, as long as you have dreams, you have everything.

Stewy calms her crying and sniffs back tears.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
Because, no life is worth living, no matter how imperfect, if a person can't appreciate their flaws and mistakes are only visible because they have the ambition and aspiration to better themselves.

STEWY
I think a rockstar tried to tell me that too once. You remembered all that from when you were a kid, yet never acted on it?

MAD ADDY
Well, before he died, I thought it was pretty sappy. Now it seems pretty much on the money. Fucking hindsight's a bitch, right?

Silence again as they both think while fading out.

MAD ADDY (CONT'D)
So, what's it going to be?

STEWY
I think I'm tired of people telling me how to live my life.

Stewy takes her phone and prods at it. Mad Addy's eyes dart around as she listens. Stewy puts the phone to her ear.

MAD ADDY
You know I'm right! You know I'm fucking right!

Stewy is just about holding on. Tears stream from her eyes.

Maddy manages to roll to her side and look up at Stewy.

STEWY
(into phone)
Ameena... I gave 'em hell.

Mad Addy's eyes widen with pure terror.

With the last ounce of energy Stewy has left, she raises the gun, aims carefully for Mad Addy's head, and with a look of pure righteousness in her eyes--

BANG!

THE END