

CROSSING THE POND

"Pilot"

Written by

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ACT ONE

INT. FANCY CHICAGO BUSINESS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

LILA (30, radiating confidence and total concentration on the problem at hand) stands before a group of FAT CAT EXECS, looking sharp in her expensive business attire.

She gives a great big smile, CRACKS HER KNUCKLES like a boxer warming up for a fight, and launches into her PowerPoint Presentation, beginning with a large Supply & Demand graph.

INT. FANCY CHICAGO BUSINESS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

PLEBEIAN EMPLOYEES huddle outside the glass windows of the conference room. They peer through, following along with Lila's presentation, although they can't hear it.

Lila moves from the simple Supply & Demand line graph to pie graph of Overall Expenditures.

The Employees NOD ALONG, still with her.

Lila moves to a slide zeroing in on HUMAN CAPITAL EXPENDITURES. The Employees GASP.

Lila begins to move faster and faster through an increasingly complex series of slides: four pie charts to a page, then sixteen, charts superimposed onto other graphs...

Until the PowerPoint resolves on a single, simple slide: "SOLUTION: FIRE MEREDITH."

Inside the conference room, the Fat Cat Execs APPLAUD.

Slowly, the Employees turn to stare at MEREDITH (60s, corn-fed Midwesterner, floral patterned shirt).

INT. ELEVATOR - LATER

Lila stands next to Meredith, who carries a cardboard box full of office knick-knacks and a cup with a big letter "M" on it. Lila's earlier confidence is gone. She is nerdy, awkward, and unable to hide it.

LILA

Funny running into you, in the elevator. Right?

(no response)

I guess... surprise! You've got the rest of the day off. And every day.

(MORE)

LILA (CONT'D)

Any fun plans?

(no response)

Not that you could have planned for this.

(no response)

Oh. I get it. You're ignoring me.

You're mad at me.

(no response)

Look, I'm just a consultant. This isn't personal.

MEREDITH

I'm your mom!

LILA

I know! And I love and respect you deeply as a person. But as an employee...

MEREDITH

I've been at that company for 35 years. Do you know what that means?

LILA

That your skill set was outdated?

MEREDITH

Lila! I didn't raise you to treat people like they're expendable.

LILA

Yes you did! You were very excited when I went to Business School!

(beat)

Look, now you can learn some new skills and get a job where you're actually good at what you do. It might not be fun at first, it might not be what you thought you wanted, but being successful is its own reward. You taught me to give up my dreams, remember?

MEREDITH

I didn't mean that you should fire your own mother!

The elevator doors have opened. Lila looks out to find various OFFICE PEOPLE and the burly SECURITY GUARD all staring at her.

SECURITY GUARD

For shame.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Meredith whirls out of the elevator to confront her daughter.

MEREDITH

What's going to happen to you if
you keep going on like this?

LILA

I'll probably get promoted in May?

MEREDITH

Maybe for now, that's enough. But
one day you'll turn around and
realize you're friendless, and
loveless. You've spent your whole
life focused on the bottom line and
you have nothing else. But it's too
late. And so you die, alone, and no
one cares. And no one finds your
body for weeks and by then, your
face has been eaten by cats.

Meredith rushes out the door. Lila yells after her.

LILA

I have a boyfriend!

The DOORMAN shakes his head, unconvinced.

MAIN CREDITS

INT. DINGY MUSIC VENUE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Artsy coffee shop by day, indie rock venue by night. Local
paintings on all the walls. JEFF (30s, always the center of
attention, very attractive, somewhat artsy) is getting ready
to go onstage, guitar in hand. Lila rushes in.

LILA

Do you think people like me?

JEFF

What's not to like?

LILA

I fired my mom today.

JEFF

Oh my god, that's terrible.

LILA

Thanks.

He kisses her.

JEFF

Tonight is going to cheer you up.
All our friends are out there: my
old roommates, the guys from my
beer brewing club, even Cindy.

LILA

That girl from the bookstore who
has a crush on you?

ANGLE ON: a very attractive, scantily clad young woman who
waves at Jeff enthusiastically.

LILA (CONT'D)

Where are all my friends?

JEFF

Deborah was busy tonight. Sorry.

The lights come up and Jeff strides onstage, leaving Lila in
the dark.

INT. BACKSTAGE - LATER

Jeff shreds on the guitar onstage. Lila watches from the
wings. She stifles a yawn. Behind her SILVANA, an incredibly
cool musician, jolts up from a nap.

SILVANA

Where am I?

LILA

Chicago. You're on next.

(beat)

That was a real question, right?

Silvana nods and cracks a beer.

SILVANA

Chicago. What a bummer.

LILA

Hey!

SILVANA

Last week I was in Paris, drinking
absinthe in the twilight.

(MORE)

SILVANA (CONT'D)

Before that, coffee in Morocco.
Before that, hot toddies in London
town.

LILA

Paris to Morocco to London? Wow.

SILVANA

The things I saw—

LILA

Geographically, that's a really
inefficient tour.

Silvana shakes her head.

SILVANA

Chicago. What a bummer.

INT. DINGY MUSIC VENUE - ONSTAGE - NIGHT

Jeff finishes his song with a dramatic jump in the air. The
SMALL CROWD of hipsters GOES NUTS.

JEFF

Thank you! Now, I know you all
really wanna hear "Fast Times in
the Carpool Lane" but first, I'm
gonna need my amazing girlfriend
Lila to come to the stage!

Lila comes onstage, surprised but excited.

LILA

Am I singing? What do I do?

JEFF

Do nothing. Just prepare yourself
for a Big Moment.

He begins to work the crowd.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Do you guys want to see a Big
Moment?

The Small Crowd ROARS yes.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Then Chicago, I need you to help me
out.

(he begins the chant)

Jeff! Jeff!

SMALL CROWD

Jeff! Jeff! Jeff!

Jeff directs the volume up, then lowers it with his hand. Then he gets down on one knee. Silence falls.

JEFF

Lila, since the moment I saw you, I knew: you are the yin to my yang. The anchor to my sailboat. The Jackie Chan to my Chris Tucker in "Rush Hour." I love that movie.

He pulls out the ring.

CINDY

Dammit.

JEFF

My dad always said marriage is just a matter of getting stuck with the right person. Lila, do you wanna be stuck with me?

Lila looks out at the Small Crowd. She looks to the wings, where Silvana watches, unimpressed.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Uh... Lila?

LILA

Of course I do! Yes! Duh!

Lila takes a DEEP BREATH and puts on the ring.

JEFF

Okay! Now, here's "Fast Times in the Carpool Lane."

He begins to play.

INT. BACKSTAGE - LATER

Jeff finds Lila on the ratty sofa, trying to stay calm.

LILA

What was that?!

JEFF

Aren't you happy? We're right on schedule!

LILA

What?

JEFF

You always wanted to engaged by thirty. We'll be married by thirty-one, no sweat. Babies at thirty-two and thirty-four-

LILA

-and-a-half. Jeff, I made that plan when I was eighteen. The world was simpler then. There was no Twitter.

JEFF

I can see it now: I'll be the fun, stay-at-home Dad, you'll be the... you know, you'll work a lot.

LILA

Right...

JEFF

Which you love! It's the American Dream, but 21st Century style so I can focus on my music.

(off her face)

Is something wrong?

Just then Silvana walks past them, heading onto the stage. She looks at Lila, trying to remember.

SILVANA

Salt Lake City?

LILA

Chicago.

SILVANA

Weird. You look Mormon.

Silvana walks on stage to APPLAUSE. Lila watches her go.

LILA

When do I get to play the music?

INT. CONSULTING FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Lila's fellow consultants, SHERIDAN, RYAN, and TANYA - a bunch of attractive jerks - lounge around a table waiting for their staff meeting to begin.

TANYA

I got one: last weekend my mom's friend cornered me at a party, so I told him interest rates are directly proportional to bonds.

They LAUGH.

SHERIDAN

This chick I slept with was trying to get some free financial advice, so I told her: get a better job.

They LAUGH. They stop laughing as Lila walks in.

LILA

Guess who got engaged last night?

Everyone looks at Tanya.

LILA (CONT'D)

Me!

She shows off the ring to lackluster responses.

LILA (CONT'D)

Want to go celebrate after work?

SHERIDAN

Sorry, busy tonight.

TANYA

All week, actually.

Ryan nods his agreement. The conversation is closed. Ryan pulls out business card and throws it onto the table.

RYAN

Okay, here's one. A woman I met on an airplane asked me to move to Scotland to save her failing company. So I told her: you couldn't pay me to help you. Because your operating budget is less than my salary!

They LAUGH. Lila picks up the card, intrigued.

LILA

"At Tiny Tuneyards we believe every child is a star."

TANYA

No wonder they're going broke.

Lila slides the card into her pocket.

LILA

Okay, um, what about this? I got my
own mom fired.

RYAN

What?!

TANYA

Oh my god.

SHERIDAN

Damn. That's messed up.

They stare at her in disapproval.

END OF EXCERPT