CHASING PLANES

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DRAFT 1 - 05/30/18
DRAFT 2 - 06/08/18
DRAFT 3 - 06/17/18
DRAFT 4 - 06/21/18
DRAFT 5 - 07/08/18
DRAFT 6 - 08/30/18
DRAFT 7 - 10/02/18
SUMMARY

Mara (12) and Naomi (17) plan to run away from their depressing town. But when Naomi is suddenly injured, Mara is faced with a decision: does she choose to stay in town with her sister, or leave on her own for a hope of a better life.
INT. MARA’S HOUSE, KITCHEN – AFTERNOON (1999)

A 70’s kitchen, cupboards are covered in polaroid pictures of two girls. MARA (12) opens the cupboard to see lots of canned ravioli and an empty Jack Daniels. She opens another cupboard to more empty bottles.

It’s quiet, but BARKING DOGS and SIRENS drift through the window from far away.

Mara looks back at HEATHER (30s) asleep on the couch in scrubs. She looks at the pile of bills on the counter.

INT. MARA AND NAOMI’S BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

Mara kneels and pulls a rusty tin from under the bed. OUR NEW LIFE is written on top, with a picture of Mara and an older girl. She pulls out a couple of dollar bills and closes it.

NAOMI (O.S.)

Mar!

Mara startles and shoves the tin back under the bed, but part of it still sticks out. She folds the bills in her pocket.

INT. MARA’S HOUSE, KITCHEN – CONTINUOUS

Mara enters to see NAOMI (17) dressed in a dirty mechanic uniform and holding a giant old muffler in the kitchen. It’s the older girl from the polaroid picture.

MARA

Wow.

NAOMI

I KNOW! And I also got THIS.

Naomi holds up a random car part and sets the muffler down.

NAOMI (CONT’D)

It’s the last part we needed! And I got more money for the tin. We’re almost there.

Mara throws her arms up, excited.

NAOMI (CONT’D)

Then we’re outta here!

They hug and Mara HUSHES her, pointing to sleeping Heather.
MARA
(whispering)
Don’t let mom hear.

NAOMI
(whispering)
I just need time at the shop to make a little gas money. Let’s leave on my birthday.

MARA
That’s a month away...

The muffler slips and CRASHES to the ground. The girls JUMP and disheveled Heather sits up sleepily. She smiles to them.

HEATHER
Hey babies. Can someone please get me a drink?

NAOMI
(smugly)
I’m working on the car.

Naomi picks up the muffler and leaves. Mara feels the cash in her back pocket.

MARA
Yeah mom, I’ll be right back.

INT. GAS STATION – EVENING

The sun just going down. A “Have You Seen Me” sign taped to the window with lots of missing faces. Mara stops in an aisle to stare at a scenic postcard of the Redwood Forest.

PARKER (12) walks beside her. He is chubby and talks a lot.

PARKER
You ready?

Mara puts the card down and moves on to the liquor section. She pulls a Jack Daniels off the shelf.

MARA
Yep!

Mara walks to the counter and hands over the liquor. The smiling CASHIER is a white haired, plump man.

CASHIER
Hi Mara. This for Heather?
MARA
Yep.
Parker places his gum on the counter with her Jack Daniels.

PARKER
Now we’re even for last time.

MARA
That race didn’t count.

She tosses the gum off the counter and pays the Cashier. Parker rolls his eyes. The Cashier hands Mara the change and brown bag.

CASHIER
Tell your mom hi.

The door bell CHIMES as Mara and Parker leave.

INT. MARA AND NAOMI’S BEDROOM - EVENING

Naomi enters in her mechanic uniform, wiping her dirty face with a rag. She sees the money tin sticking out under the bed. Thinking. She counts it and sees that money is missing.

INT. MARA’S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Heather is pouring over the pile of bills. Naomi walks in with the money tin at her side.

NAOMI
Where’s Mara?

HEATHER
(doesn’t look up)
Went to get me a drink.

Naomi hurries angrily to the door.

EXT. GAS STATION - DUSK

Mara balance walks on the curb beside Parker. They pass trailer homes along a busy road.

PARKER
Want some gum?

Mara rolls her eyes. She’s bothered.
MARA
You didn’t have to do that.
Parker pulls out the Redwood Forest card she had looked at.
PARKER
What about this?
Mara looks away to hide her embarrassment.
MARA
What?
PARKER
I saw you staring at it. Take it.
Mara takes it and holds it preciousely in her hands.
PARKER (CONT’D)
I don’t know why you want it anyways. Just a dumb picture.
Mara stops suddenly, staring ahead at an angry Naomi far across the street.
MARA
Oh shit.
Naomi holds the tin in her hand and rushes across the busy street ahead. A car turns quickly and hits her. All Mara sees is an explosion of dollar bills in the air. SIRENS come.

INT. MARA’S HOUSE - MORNING
SERIES OF SHOTS - Morning light falls on dirty dishes at the table. A pile of mail on the counter. Deflated balloons and “Get Well Soon” cards lay discarded.

INT. MARA AND NAOMI’S ROOM - MORNING
Mara CREAKS the door open slowly, peaking through to see a broken Naomi. Her face is puffy from crying and she plays with a wrench in her hand.
Naomi glances for a moment to Mara, whose eyes are caught on the wheelchair at the end of the bed.
NAOMI
Get out. I’m tired.
Mara nods slightly and shuts the door.
INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mara lingers outside the door. Nearby, Heather talks on the phone.

    HEATHER (O.S.)
    (almost whispers)
    Even if I could afford some sort of therapy, she’d still never walk
    again...

Scrambling for her high tops, Mara grabs shoes and leaves.

EXT. AIRFIELD - MORNING

Mara sits cross-legged with Parker. He checks his watch.

    PARKER
    One minute before takeoff.

Mara just stares ahead at the plane.

    MARA
    I wanna get on that plane.

Parker studies a beetle on the ground.

    PARKER
    Uh-huh. That probably won’t happen.

    MARA
    You don’t know anything.

    PARKER
    I know no one ever leaves this place.

Mara tightens a knot on her shoe and stands.

In the distance, an airplane turns its propellors on. The two line up and ready for the race.

    PARKER (CONT’D)
    On your mark, get set, go!

They take off running at the same time the airplane starts down the opposite track. Mara is far ahead of Parker. He runs until the plane takes off. Mara keeps running long after it’s gone. Sprinting until she can’t anymore. Running after it. Crying.

She stops and watches the plane fly away. The Redwoods Forest post card sticks out of her back pocket.
INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Mara enters with a bunch of balloons and a store-bought birthday cake. She tip toes past Naomi’s room, positioning everything on the table.

CRASH. Something falls in Naomi’s room. Mara rushes in.

INT. NAOMI’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mara enters to find Naomi on the floor. She’s holding onto the wheelchair, looking pained but okay.

MARA
Are you okay!?

NAOMI
Yeah. Just give me a sec.

Mara sits by Naomi on the floor.

NAOMI (CONT’D)
I bit my tongue when I fell. Is it bleeding?

Mara LAUGHS, relieved. She checks Naomi’s tongue.

MARA
That’s it? You’re fine.

NAOMI
I just want to get in my chair and go outside.

Moments pass.

MARA
It’s almost your birthday.

NAOMI
I don’t want to think about it.

MARA
But I have a surprise.

Mara helps Naomi up and into the chair. She pushes her out of the room. It’s small and they bump into everything.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Mara stops Naomi in front of the table with cake. Naomi doesn’t looked amused.
NAOMI
(not excited)
Yay a cake.

MARA
Just wait here.

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS
Mara lifts the garage and puts the car in neutral, letting it roll to the street. Putting it in park, she runs back inside.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS
Mara starts pushing Naomi toward the front door.

MARA
Close your eyes.

Naomi doesn’t shut her eyes. Mara doesn’t fight her.

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS
Naomi sees the car. She looks excited but confused.

NAOMI
What are you doing?

MARA
I’m gonna lift you.

Mara helps Naomi into the passenger seat. She’s stronger than she looks. She climbs into the drivers seat.

Mara starts the car and adjusts the mirrors. Naomi just LAUGHS as Mara pulls away and down the street.

EXT. CITY LIMITS - MORNING
Naomi and Mara are parked on the side of a highway. The sign says ‘Now Leaving West Valley.’ The sunlight peeks over the horizon.

The two are serene. The Redwood Forest card is placed in the corner of the windshield.

Mara wipes a tear with her sleeve. Naomi takes her hand.

THE END