

CHASING PLANES

written by

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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 post card 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 preciously 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 propellers 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 look 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