

ALL GOOD

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EXT. PANDORA ENTRANCE - MORNING

A glass-fronted, modern, pristine medical building. A CONCIERGE wearing an immaculate suit hovers next to a set of automatic sliding doors, polishing the clinic name - "PANDORA". The sign glints in the sunlight.

Outside Pandora's doors loiters HOPE (late 40s) - a sweaty, dishevelled mess next to the neat building. Her hardened features and deep worry lines belie her troubled past.

Around her neck hangs a digital placard that alternates protest slogans:

"PANDORA CREATES ZOMBIES AND SOCIOPATHS!"

"MANDATORY REVERSALS, NOW!"

She lets out a dejected sigh as she surveys the clinic's busy car park. Slumps against the building, fanning her face with a bunch of leaflets.

Concierge frowns and shakes a cloth at her.

Hope drags herself upright. Concierge wipes the wall where she had slumped.

INT. FREDERICK'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

CELINE (30s), her petite frame swamped under dowdy clothing, eyes the clinic warily from the passenger seat of a modest car. She leans slightly away from-

-FREDERICK (30s), a wiry but strong-looking man, who occupies the driver's seat. He appraises the clinic with steady eyes.

His face darkens as he observes Hope shoving a leaflet at a client. The client lets it drop and swats Hope away. The leaflet lies discarded outside the clinic entrance.

Frederick smirks. Turns to Celine with a charming smile.

FREDERICK

You know, not everyone is as lucky as you, Celine.

She shrinks further away from him.

FREDERICK (cont'd)

Not every husband would go to all this expense just to put a smile back on their wife's face.

Celine fishes for a response, her mouth twitching.

CELINE

But I... you...

He pulls her chin towards him such that they are eye-to-eye. She flinches then forces herself to relax.

FREDERICK

You do still want to do it, don't you? Remember, this doesn't make you weak. It will make you strong again.

He strokes her cheek. His smile is warm, his eyes cold.

Celine nods, twitches her mouth into a brief smile. Slides out of the car, closing the door with a soft CLICK.

EXT. PANDORA CAR PARK - MOMENTS LATER

PRITI (late 20s), of Indian origin, dressed in jeans and smart top, a quality handbag slung over her shoulder, shambles towards the clinic. Her otherwise pretty face is drawn, dark circles blight her eyes.

She gazes at the shiny Pandora sign, almost in a trance.

Celine examines a faded bruise on her arm as she trudges towards the clinic entrance, a few paces behind Priti.

Both distracted, they COLLIDE, exchanging pained smiles.

Shoulders hunched, Celine observes a client leaving the clinic wearing a dreamy smile. She straightens up, hopeful.

Another client leaves in tears. Celine glances between the clinic and Frederick's car, paralysed by indecision.

Priti shrugs, catching Celine's eye.

PRITI

Must be a reversal.

Celine gives a single nod as they shuffle onwards.

CLYDE (40s), a tall languorous man adorned in a flashy outfit, with a permanent superior sneer, swaggers past the two hesitant women. Disdain written all over his face.

CLYDE

Amateurs.

EXT. PANDORA ENTRANCE - SAME

Hope spies Clyde, Priti and Celine approaching. She looks at Concierge, who scoops up the discarded leaflet. Glances at the unmanned entrance.

She appraises the stack of leaflets in her hand. Half-smiles. Deliberately drops a few more.

Tutting, Concierge stoops to gather the leaflets. Hope slips inside the sliding door.

INT. PANDORA DOOR WELL - CONTINUOUS

Hope roots herself between external and internal automatic sliding doors, blocking an intercom that secures the internal doors.

Clyde struts in. Celine and Priti shuffle in behind him, all in the door well. The external doors slide CLOSED.

Hope addresses Priti, Clyde, Celine with desperate pleas.

HOPE

Can't you see? Don't you care that erasing memories like this is ruining society? Pandora's the only winner here!

Priti gulps. Celine glances at Frederick's car.

Clyde scowls and sweeps Hope aside with his arm, just as the LIGHTS GO OUT.

He presses the intercom. SILENCE.

Priti waves at the external door sensors. DOORS DO NOT MOVE.

Clyde pounds the internal doors. Gesticulates at Hope.

CLYDE

Fuck being trapped with this nutcase!

She meets his derisive glare with a steady gaze.

HOPE

Trust me, Clyde, the feeling is entirely mutual.

Hope scrutinises each client: Celine crouches against the external door. Clyde paces and fidgets. Priti huddles in a corner. Zeroes in on the latter.

HOPE (cont'd)
What's your name?

PRITI
Um. Priti.

HOPE
Nice name. I'm Hope. Ironic really.
Hope hangs out at a place where hope
generally comes to die.

Hope snorts. Priti squirms.

HOPE (cont'd)
What are you here for? Just bad
feelings, or memories too?

Priti's lips shut tight. She avoids looking at Hope.

A PHONE RINGS.

Priti retrieves a phone from her bag. Answers it.

PRITI
(into her phone)
Yeah, I'm here. Where are you? I
thought we said this morning?

Hope sweats profusely, fans her face. Priti glimpses her.

PRITI (cont'd)
(into her phone)
You will come this afternoon though?
(pause)
Yeah, I'm also getting both. I won't
even know who you are in 20 minutes.
Sorry, I know that's brutal but I
have to. This whole thing is turning
me inside out.

She hangs up, tears welling. Tosses the phone into her bag.
Hesitates, retrieves a water bottle. Hands it to Hope, who
downs some water.

HOPE
Thanks, you're a life saver.

They exchange a strained smile.

Hope removes her digital placard, rests it against the
internal doors. It faces inwards, rotating slogans visible.

HOPE (cont'd)
Here to forget someone, I take it?

As Priti puts her left hand to her mouth, holding back a wave of nausea, Hope clocks her engagement ring.

HOPE (cont'd)
When's the wedding?

Priti shoves her hand out of view. Talks through her sobs, focused on the floor.

PRITI
God, it's such a mess. It's not that I don't love him or anything... I think I just panicked about settling down and...

Hope holds her hands up.

HOPE
I'm not here to judge, love.

CLYDE
If only!

Clyde grabs the digital placard and turns it around, words no longer visible. Priti dry-heaves. Takes deep breaths.

PRITI
This place is so stuffy.

HOPE
Are you sure it's the stuffiness causing the nausea?

Priti wilts under Hope's scrutiny.

PRITI
All the more reason to get it done, right? My head's in bits and I can barely eat a thing.

HOPE
Oh, people always justify it somehow. But without remembering how this is churning you up, how do you know you won't do it again?

PRITI
Because I love him.

HOPE
Wasn't that also the case when you met Mr New Guy?

Hope's harsh words cause Priti to recoil.

PRITI

Look, I'm not stupid. And I'm not one of your "sociopaths" either.

She waves her hand towards the placard.

PRITI (cont'd)

I just... He just... got into my head. If I can wipe the memory, I can get on with my life again.

HOPE

See, that's the problem with this place. Kidding people that they're perfect. This was supposed to be for trauma victims, not for just anyone to purge their baggage onto a memory stick.

Hope gesticulates.

HOPE (cont'd)

Can't you see this is a revolving door?

Clyde looks at the sliding door, sniggers. Hope glares.

HOPE (cont'd)

Not literally.

Clyde continues pacing and fidgeting, never still.

Priti retreats, hanging her head.

Hope perches next to Celine, who sits hunched on the floor.

HOPE (cont'd)

You OK, love?

Celine tenses and instinctively covers the bruise on her arm. She gives a tight smile.

CELINE

I'm fine.

Hope appraises her for a moment.

HOPE

Sorry. I'll leave you alone.

Heavy pause.

HOPE (cont'd)

But when is he gonna leave you alone?

Hope micro-nods towards Frederick's car. Celine adopts a defensive position.

CELINE

You don't... It was... It was just a mistake.

HOPE

You know, I'd be willing to bet I would've recognised you too if my memory wasn't so shit.

Celine fumbles a vape pen out of her pocket, pointedly avoiding Hope's gaze.

HOPE (cont'd)

How can you possibly know that this was a "mistake", a one-off, when there's a facility here that lets abusers get away with it?

Celine vapes, attempting to be inconspicuous. Clyde strides over, yanks the vape pen out of her hand, jabs it at her. Celine cowers.

CLYDE

Put that filthy thing away.

The vape pen clatters to the floor. Clyde resumes pacing.

HOPE

Was there really any need for that?

She scoops the vape pen up, hands it to Celine. Clyde rounds on Hope.

CLYDE

Nobody knows what that crap does to you long term. Fucking vapers, poisoning me with their strawberry-smelling shit!

He throws a disgusted sneer at Celine, who pockets the vape.

HOPE

Can't you see the poor girl's been through enough?

CELINE

None of you know what I've been through.

All eyes on Celine.

CELINE (cont'd)

You all assume he dragged me here. I was the one who wanted to be happy again. To go back to where we were.

HOPE

OK, so it was your decision? The one token rule that this place purports to enforce. And it was you who even started that conversation, was it?

Celine's brow furrows. Her ensuing silence speaks volumes.

Hope takes her hand reassuringly.

HOPE (cont'd)

If you genuinely believe he wouldn't do it again, then by all means have the extraction. But if you're in any doubt then do yourself a favour, love - don't get it done.

Priti peers at Frederick's car. He drums the steering wheel, his intense stare fixed on Celine. Noticing Priti, he smiles the same cold smile, causing Priti to shudder.

PRITI

Or you could pretend to have it?

Celine regards her with wary interest.

PRITI (cont'd)

Go in, come out. Maybe even see if you can get a reversal, so you'll know if you've been here before? Then you can decide your next move.

CELINE

But then I'll still remember.

HOPE

Some memories are there to protect us.

Clyde scoffs.

CLYDE

Why do you even give a shit, anyway? Really think you're gonna change the world, one Pandora client at a time?

HOPE

Better than sitting there waiting for the world to get better on its own.

Clyde snatches up the digital placard, brandishes it at her, taunting her.

CLYDE
Keep your preachy crap to yourself,
ain't gonna work on me.

HOPE
And that Mr Cool act ain't gonna work
on me. You haven't stayed still for a
second, itching for your next fix.

His jaw clenches as he dumps the placard on the floor. He exhales through his nose, like a bull about to charge.

HOPE (cont'd)
You have a go at Celine for what she
might be doing to your body, but you
clearly don't give a damn what you do
to your head.

Clyde gets right up in Hope's face. She stands solid.

CLYDE
Fuck you.

HOPE
Oh, we've all got our demons. Even I
came here once.

Clyde looks her up and down.

CLYDE
Oh I'm gonna enjoy this. Grab your
popcorn, folks!

Hope glowers. Priti gives her shoulder a reassuring rub.

HOPE
My son begged me not to, but... I
dunno... I couldn't handle it, my
head was wrecked.

She pauses, taking deep breaths, fanning her sweat patches.

HOPE (cont'd)
He decided to teach me a lesson.
Whilst I was in there, he had his own
procedure. This was in the early
days, when it was the Wild fucking
West-

She chokes up.

PRITI

It's OK, we all do things we wish we hadn't.

HOPE

No, you don't understand. The reversal didn't work.

Hope sinks to the floor, buries her face in her hands, rocks back and forth. Celine hugs her. Hope slides her hands off her face.

HOPE (cont'd)

I hope none of you ever have to know what it's like to have your own son, who you've raised for eighteen years, not even know who you are.

Stunned SILENCE.

Lights FLICKER on. INTERCOM BUZZES. Both sets of doors OPEN. Everyone freezes momentarily.

Clyde snaps out of it, sneers at Hope as he saunters inside.

Celine hugs Hope again. Shuffles inside with a nervous backward glance.

Priti follows Celine. Halts. Rounds to the external doors.

EXT. PANDORA ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Priti inhales deeply as the fresh air hits her, prompting her to dry heave. She leans against the building to recompose for a moment. Heads for her car.

Hope gallops after her, clutching the digital placard under one arm. Shakes Priti's hand with her free arm. Priti smiles as she discreetly wipes her now sweaty hand on her jeans.

HOPE

You won't regret it.

PRITI

Oh, I'm sure I will. But that's all part of the process, right?

Hope grimaces.

PRITI (cont'd)

Fancy some company here tomorrow?

HOPE

Why? Erm, I mean... Yes! But why?

PRITI

I figure I owe the universe a favour.
Might need another of those.

Priti nods to the placard. Hope snorts as she slings the placard back into place around her neck.

EXT. PANDORA ENTRANCE - LATER

Clyde drifts outside in a dead-eyed trance. He inhales, bringing himself round. Winks at Hope. She scowls back.

He spies BONNIE (40) idling in a convertible, roof down. She wears sunglasses, feminine scarf - classic chic. She grins.

BONNIE

My Clyde!

Clyde grins, jogs to the car, hops over the side.

CLYDE

My Bonnie!

Bonnie and Clyde share a passionate clinch. Bonnie speeds off, TYRES SCREECHING, scarf fluttering.

INT. PRITI'S CAR - SAME

Priti slouches in the driver's seat. Sound of TYRES SCREECHING.

Her red, blotchy face is streaked with tears. She wipes the last of them away, staring at the clinic for a long moment.

She sees Celine emerge from the clinic, sunglasses on, shuffling in an apparent trance towards Frederick's car.

Priti slaps the steering wheel in frustration.

Celine's head flickers in Priti's direction. Priti sits upright, starts her ENGINE.

EXT. PANDORA CAR PARK - MOMENTS LATER

As Celine is equidistant between Priti and Frederick's cars, she swerves and hurries to Priti's car.

Frederick charges out of his car.

Priti's passenger door flies open. Celine darts in.

INT. PRITI'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Celine's eyes widen, breaths come in fits. She hugs Priti.

 CELINE
 Thank you, thank you!

Her face falls.

 CELINE (cont'd)
 What now?

Frederick pounds the outside of Priti's car. Celine cringes.

 PRITI
 Rebuild, I guess?

She pulls away, leaving Frederick agape in the car park.

EXT. PANDORA ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Hope waves enthusiastically as Priti and Celine pass her.

Concierge appraises her with fresh admiration.

Hope stands tall and smiles at Concierge - her first genuinely happy smile.