

CHASING SHADOWS

Written by

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INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

In complete black. A heated argument. Pacing.

CLIFF

You know, you shouldn't go into relationships trying to change people.

ANNETTE

I'm not trying to change you! I'm just asking for a little bit of fucking affection?

CLIFF

Don't curse at me. I hate it when you curse like that.

ANNETTE

A little bit of a affection, *sorry*.

CLIFF

Because I didn't want to take a stupid picture?

ANNETTE

It's more like... what the picture represents.

CLIFF

What does it represent? This is the shit that matters to you?

ANNETTE

No, I just-

CLIFF

Because it's superficial bullshit, Annette, like it's just-

ANNETTE

*I know!*

A beat. Stillness. Maybe Cliff's holding her now.

ANNETTE

I just want to feel... loved.

Another beat.

CLIFF

Well that's not how I love.

Annette chuckles sarcastically.

ANNETTE  
How do you love then, Cliff?

CLIFF  
Through-through words. Memories.

Sound as Annette pulls away.

ANNETTE  
(annoyed)  
What?

CLIFF  
The day we met.

A pause. This is just what the doctor ordered.

ANNETTE  
What about it?

CLIFF  
I was in the elevator...

Fade into...

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY - FLASHBACK

An elevator opens, revealing a young man, CLIFF, in a baseball cap on his phone. A young brunette woman in leggings and a t-shirt, ANNETTE, walks into the elevator dragging a suitcase.

The elevator stays open for a moment. Annette looks at Cliff, alarmed.

ANNETTE  
Is this building co-ed?

Cliff looks up from his phone and chuckles.

CLIFF  
I think it's gendered by floor.

ANNETTE  
Oh, thank God.

Cliff laughs. Annette becomes flustered.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry! I didn't mean it like-

He waves her off.

CLIFF

You're good, you're good.

The two smile at each other before the elevator doors shut.

The outside of the elevator doors still show as older Annette and Cliff recount the memory.

ANNETTE (V.O.)

God, I was so awkward. It's terrible.

Cliff laughs with her.

CLIFF (V.O.)

Well, it's why I love you.

**TITLE: CHASING SHADOWS (temp title)**

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

A messy room of beige, grey, and green. An acoustic guitar lays in the corner. Posters of Daniel Caesar, Frank Ocean, and Joji on the wall. Clothes splayed on the floor. A dresser with makeup and a Juul on top.

ANNETTE(21), a girl with grown-out roots but a fresh face, lays in bed, awake.

She turns over to spoon a sleeping CLIFF(21), a lanky boy with sharp features and messy hair he never bothers to tame. It's kinda his thing.

Annette wraps her arms around him. He stirs awake.

ANNETTE

Oh, sorry.

CLIFF

You're good. I was barely sleeping.

Annette lets out a sigh.

ANNETTE

Just one of those nights, I guess.

Cliff turns to face her. Annette instinctively runs a hand through his hair. He yawns.

CLIFF

Are you hungry?

INT. ANNETTE'S CAR - NIGHT

Annette sits behind the wheel, Cliff in the passenger.  
They're comfortable.

A song plays as they sing along. Cliff holds the phone, and suddenly pauses the music.

ANNETTE

Hey!

CLIFF

No no no, I need you to listen to  
the new instrumental Patrick sent  
me.

He presses the phone. A vibey bedroom-pop instrumental plays.  
Annette starts nodding her head.

ANNETTE

Wait, this sounds like the last  
one.

CLIFF

Nah, we're thinking of leaning more  
into a lo-fi sound now.

ANNETTE

Well, I like it!

CLIFF

Really? I think it's missing  
something.

ANNETTE

Probably... singing.

Cliff chuckles.

CLIFF

Shut up.

Annette giggles and smiles at him as they both keep nodding  
their head to the music.

INT - CAR - FLASHBACK

Younger Annette and younger Cliff bobbing their heads to a  
different track.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

This one kinda blew up in my  
hometown.

(MORE)

CLIFF (CONT'D)

My school asked me to play it at prom, it was a whole thing.

ANNETTE

Wow, it's really good!

CLIFF

Thanks.

A long pause.

ANNETTE

Why are you going here anyway?  
Like, it seems like *this* is what you want to do.

Cliff sighs.

CLIFF

My parents said I *had* to go to college because they don't think the whole music thing is sustainable.

ANNETTE

Oh, that sucks.

CLIFF

Yeah, they practically begged me to go here.

ANNETTE

Hm. It was the opposite for me.

CLIFF

How so?

ANNETTE

My mom begged me to stay near home. But the program here was too good to pass up.

CLIFF

Yeah, it's alright. But once the money rolls in, I'm out.

Annette looks off into the distance and nods.

EXT. CAR - LATER - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

The car pulls up to a drive-through. Annette turns to Cliff.

ANNETTE

The usual?

He nods, looking back at his phone.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

Could we get two three tender meals  
please, and two lemonades?

EMPLOYEE

(through intercom)

What sauce?

ANNETTE

Barbecue.

CLIFF

(mocking)

Barbecue.

Annette turns back to him.

ANNETTE

What?

CLIFF

You just always put so much  
emphasis on the *cue*.

Annette laughs awkwardly.

ANNETTE

I do?

CLIFF

Yeah.

ANNETTE

Oh... okay?

CLIFF

I'm just pointing it out! It's not  
a big deal.

ANNETTE

No I know, but-

EMPLOYEE

Will that complete your order  
ma'am?

Annette quickly turns to the speaker.

ANNETTE

Yes! Thank you.

EXT. DRIVE THRU - LATER

They pull up to the drive thru and come face to face with the employee, a gloomy teenage boy.

EMPLOYEE

15.63.

ANNETTE

Here ya go.

Annette hands over her card. The employee takes the card, looks up, and leans over to peer at Cliff. His face brightens.

EMPLOYEE

Wait, are you Cliff Dyver?

Annette smiles and turns to Cliff, who waves with a smile.

CLIFF

Yeah, hey man!

EMPLOYEE

Dude, no way. I'm a huge fan! I play your shit all the time here.

CLIFF

Thanks, that means a lot.

A long pause of the employee staring at Cliff.

EMPLOYEE

Oh shit, your food!

Annette and Cliff laugh as the employee scrambles to get their meals.

The employee frantically hands over the lemonades to Annette. She giggles and puts them in the cupholders.

He hands her the receipt and card along with the bag containing their meals.

ANNETTE

Thank you!

EMPLOYEE

You guys have a good night. Can't wait for the album, dude.



CLIFF

Thanks man, have a good one.

The car drives off.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Annette smiles widely as Cliff stares at his phone again.

ANNETTE

Looks like someone has a fan club!

Cliff sighs.

CLIFF

Yeah, great to know I'm big with teenage fast-food employees.

Annette lightly punches his arm.

ANNETTE

Hey, that's a pretty big crowd.

Cliff rolls his eyes but smiles slightly.

The car drives off onto a dark empty road.

EXT. APARTMENT STEPS - NIGHT

The couple, both adorned in sweatshirts and sweatpants, sit on the steps to their apartment building, a view of the stars overhead. They both eat their meals in silence.

CLIFF

Wait, what exam do you have next week?

Annette laughs.

ANNETTE

I've told you!

CLIFF

You know I suck at remembering that stuff.

She sighs.

ANNETTE

The Psychology of Adolescence.

CLIFF

Wait, that could be a good title.

Annette looks at him, confused.

ANNETTE

For the album?

Cliff looks off into the distance, deep in thought.

CLIFF

Yeah.

ANNETTE

I mean, I don't think we count as adolescents anymore.

CLIFF

Then maybe it could be like, a nostalgia thing.

ANNETTE

I'm not sure, I feel like it's a little long of a title.

CLIFF

Fuck, I don't know!

A beat.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Annette reaches out an arm and rubs his shoulder.

ANNETTE

It's okay, I know you're stressed.

Cliff leans on her. They stare up at the sky.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

It'll all be okay.

She kisses his forehead and looks back up at the starry sky. He smiles.

CLIFF

You think we'll see one tonight?

ANNETTE

I swear I saw one a couple nights ago.

CLIFF  
That was definitely a plane.

Annette laughs.

ANNETTE  
Probably, but I want to believe it  
was one.

Cliff wraps his arms around her.

CLIFF  
Either way, I've got you.

ANNETTE  
(flustered)  
Oh God.

She puts her head in her hands.

CLIFF  
(playfully)  
What?

He tickles her and the two laugh hysterically. Finally, Cliff  
takes her in his arms.

CLIFF (CONT'D)  
Knowing you is like knowing a star  
right before it shoots across the  
sky.

Annette smiles and leans in. The two kiss deeply.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Sun peaks in through the window.

Annette and Cliff sleep peacefully, intertwined in bedsheets.

Annette stirs awake and reaches her phone on the nightstand.  
Startled, she pulls off the covers and stands up quickly. She  
puts her hand on Cliff's shoulder and gently shakes it.

ANNETTE  
Babe, babe.

He sleepily turns over and looks up at her.

CLIFF  
What?