WHEN LACEY MET D

 SCREENPLAY FOR FEATURE FILM

 STARTED – 2/26/25

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 **FADE IN**

EXT. LACEY’S APARTMENT – STREET - EVENING.

THE MUSIC SWELLS. A LOW, WIDESHOT OF WASHINGTON DC IS SEEN ON SCREEN. A CLOSE UP OF STREET PREFORMERS. ANOTHER SHOT OF FRIENDS GATHERING TO EAT.

A YOUNG PERSON SLUGGISHLY WALKS DOWN THE STREET. SHE PAUSES, CHECKING HER PHONE, AND HER EYES WIDEN. SHE REALIZES HOW LATE IT IS.

 LACEY
 “That was way too much last night. Even for me.”

A LOUD HORN AND CAR SOUND SCREECHES PAST HER, AND THE WATER FROM THE PUDDLE NEARBY SPLACHED ONTO LACEY’S CLOTHES.

 LACEY

 “Oh, Come on!”

SHE HUFFS IN ANGER. SHE THEN SHAKES HER FIST AT THE RETREATING CAR.

 “You’re going to pay for my new shoes!”

WHEN THE CAR IN RESPONSE COULD ONLY BEEP IN RESPONSE, LACEY SNARLED.
 LACEY
 “Jerk.”

LACEY LOOKS ON THE STEPS TO HER APARTMENT, HER CHEST TIGHTENING.

SHE NOTICES THE PAPER.

 LACEY

 “Oh, No. No, no, no.”

SHE HURRIES UP THE STEPS. SHE RIPS THE PAPER FROM THE DOOR HANDLE, AND BIG RED LETTERS WERE ON IT. ‘Eviction Notice’.

LACEY DROPS TO HER KNEES. SHE’S READING IT HASTILY.

 LACEY

 “This is actually the worst day of my life.”

 **FADE OUT**

 **FADE IN**

INT. NEW SCENE. – BECK’S BAR – AFTERNOON NEXT DAY.

LACEY IS HUNCHED OVER, HEAD ON BAR TABLE, WITH A HALF DRUNKEN BOTTLE OF ALCHOHOL.

A FIGURE APPROACHES. A YOUNG MAN IN HIS LATE TWENTIES, WITH RUSSET ORANGE HAIR AND A HANDSOME FACE. HE’S POPULAR AMONGST HIS EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS.

 BECK

“Dude. We were *just* drinking last night. What are you doing here?”

LACEY MUMBLES A RESPONSE.

 BECK

 “Huh?”

BECK POKES LACEY WITH A SPOON.

HE THEN SEES THE PAPER CRUMPLED UNDER LACEY, AND FROWNS.

 BECK

“You know I told you they were going to get you.”

LACEY LOOKS TO HER OLD COLLEGE FRIEND, TEARS IN HER EYES.

LACEY

“What am I going to do?”

 LACEY

“I can’t produce $1,400k in a week.”

BECK TRIES TO CRACK A JOKE.

 BECK

“Win the lottery?”

LACEY

“I don’t have even the money to buy a ticket.”

BECK SITS DOWN.

THE SCENE PLAYS OUT WITH CUSTOMERS WALKING IN AND OUT OF BECK’S BAR.

HE GREETS A RETURNING CUSTOMER, WHO WANTS TO ORDER FROM THE LUNCH MENU. BECK RUNS A BAR, LUNCH AND DINNER ESTABLISHMENT.

 BECK

“I could always hire you.”

LACEY

“That’s sweet, Beck. I do not want… I don’t…”

BECK GIVES HER A KNOWING SMILE.

 BECK

“Free hand-outs. I know. The offer is here. I’m cutting you off and getting water.”

LACEY NODS.

SHE KNOWS SHE NEEDS TO CUT BACK ON THE DRINKING. SHE KNOWS SHE NEEDS A JOB. SHE KNOWS SHE NEEDS TO SOMEHOW PAY HER RENT THIS MONTH.

SHE HAS ISSUES AND A LOT OF THEM SHE COULD SOLVE, BUT WHERE DOES SHE START?

LACEY FINISHES HER SANDWICH AND GRATEFULLY TAKES THE WATER FROM BECK.

BECK IS ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING, WHEN THE BAR DOORS HURRY OPEN.

ANOTHER YOUNG PERSON ENTERS. SHE LOOKS FRAZZLED AND NOT HER USUAL KEPT SELF. SHE DRESSES NICE, HAS LONG CURLY HAIR, AND SOMETIMES COMES IN WITH AN ELDERLY WOMAN.

SHE’S CORDIAL WITH LACEY, AND LACEY SMILES BACK. MOSTLY BECAUSE LACEY COULD TELL BECK LIKES HER AND GIVES HER THE BEST CUSTOMER SERVICE EACH TIME.

BECK GRINS WIDE.

BECK

“Hey, Rose.”

ROSE BRIGHTENS SLIGHTLY.

 ROSE

 “Hi, Beck.”

SHE FIXES HER PURSE, AND CURSES WHEN THE CONTENTS FALL ONTO THE FLOOR.

THIS TIME, LACEY GETS UP TO HELP HER.

ROSE

“Thanks. Uh… I see you here a lot.”

LACEY

“Lacey Williams. Beck and I graduated college together.”

BECK SCOFFS.

 BECK

“Graduated? You flunked out. Don’t change the narrative.”

LACEY WHIPPED HER HEAD TO BECK.

 LACEY

“Stop trying to make me look bad in front of the cute girl!”

BECK

 “I don’t need to *try to,* you do that on your own.”

LACEY TURNS TO LOOK EXASPERATED AT ROSE.

 LACEY

“This guy. Thinks he’s funny.”

THIS MAKES ROSE LAUGH. SHE’S LAUGHING SO HARD SHE FUMBLES WITH HER BAGS EVEN MORE, UNTIL SHE’S SNIFFLING AND CRYING, AS IF LACEY BROKE HER.

LACEY TAKES A FEW STEPS BACK.

LACEY

 “Beck, is your friend okay? I swear, I didn’t mean for my commentary to be that horrendous.”

BECK SEEMS TO KNOW WHAT’S GOING ON. HE LEAVES QUICKLY, AND RETURNS WITH A GLASS OF WATER AND A NAPKIN, HELPING ROSE TO A BOOTH.

BECK

“Rose has… been going through it. I can only assume what she’s crying about, we were talking about something important last week. I haven’t seen her since.”

ROSE, (TO LACEY):

“I’m not normally a crier. Things have just been hard on my mom. I don’t know what to do. I don’t want to take up your time.”

LACEY SHRUGS.

LACEY

“I’m about to be evicted from my house in two weeks if I don’t pay rent. I only ever chill here with him. I’m all yours.”

ROSE BLINKS.

ROSE (TO BECK):

“And you?”

BECK

“I’d rather sit here and talk to you then deal with that snippy middle-aged lady who’s upset about the ambiance and my employee’s tattoos.”

THE MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN’S HEAD SNAPPED IN HIS DIRECTION, EYES BLAZING.

ANGRY CUSTOMER

“I am being discriminated against, and I demand a refund!”

BECK (ANNOYED):

“Any press is good press, Susan. Have fun reporting me on Yelp.”

BECK TURNS TO LACEY, WHO’S SNICKERING. ROSE WIPES TEARS FROM HER EYES WITH A NAPKIN. SHE BLOWS INTO IT.

BECK (TO ROSE):

“You were saying?”

ROSE GIVES A GRATEFUL LOOK TO LACEY AND BECK. SHE NODS.

SHE BEGINS TO TELL HER TROUBLES WITH HER MOM.

 **FADE OUT**

 **FADE IN**

NEW SCENE. EXT. PARK – DAY

A TRANQUIL PARK SCENE SHOWS THROUGH A WIDESHOT, OF A SERIES OF GARDENS, AND TWO PEOPLE STANDING IN IT.

ROSE’S VOICE-OVER EXPLAINS.

ROSE (VOICE OVER):

“For the longest time, it’s been me and my mom. She’s been my rock through a lot of life’s troubles.”

ROSE’S MOM, D, SMILES AND LINKS ARMS.

ROSE (VOICE OVER):

“Even if she was struggling, I could see it in her eyes. She never said anything. She didn’t want me to worry.”

A FLASH AND A QUICK SCENE CHANGE OF NEON LIGHTS, A SIREN, AND POLICE IN FRONT OF A FRONT PORCH. ROSE IS SEEN SCARED.

ROSE (IN SCENE):

“Mom! *Mom! What are you doing? Don’t take her! NO!”*

POLICE OFFICER

“Ma’am, we have evidence that your mother has been dealing elicit drugs and we’ve searched her car. She’ll be in custody until further investigation.”

ROSE, (WEEPING):

“Please. Mom wouldn’t do this. I don’t know anything, and if I did, I wouldn’t keep this from the law. I have a little girl. She’s only eight.”

POLICE OFFICER

“Then you better hope she’s not guilty, for her sake. For now, stay put and stay quiet. Anything you say can and will be used against you in the court of law.”

ROSE LOOKS TO HER MOTHER, BROKEN. ROSE’S MOM, D, LOOKS AWAY, ASHAMED.

 D (TEARFULLY):

“I’m sorry, Rosie.”

  **FADE OUT**

 **FADE IN**

 INT. – BECK’S BAR – PRESENT DAY.

LACEY, BECK, AND ROSE STARE AT EACH OTHER.

LACEY TAKES A GULP OF WATER.

 LACEY (TENTATIVELY):

“I… don’t know what else to say, except. I’m sorry.”

ROSE SNIFFS.

 ROSE

 “It’s okay. We barely know each other. I still can’t process it. It’s been cleared that mom didn’t have any drugs in her, so she hasn’t been taking them, *but she has been dealing them,* and somehow that’s even worse.”

ROSE SHAKES HER HEAD.

 ROSE

 “And this has been going on in my own home! I should be pissed at her. I’m relieved she’s at the very least not an addict. I don’t know. It’s just me until mom gets released. If she even is. I don’t know. I need someone to pick up my little girl after school to babysit — and when mom is home, to keep her under house arrest watch.”

 BECK

 “You know I’d help in a heartbeat.”

ROSE SHAKES HER HEAD.

 ROSE

 “You’re far too selfless, Becks.”

LACEY SWALLOWS. HERE COMES A STRANGER WITH ARGUABLY, EVEN MORE ISSUES THAN SHE.

LACEY GETS AN IDEA.

 LACEY

 “I’ll help.”

ROSE LOOKS TO HER, SHOCKED.

 ROSE

“Lacey, no. You’ve got your own shit.”

LACEY SHRUGS.

 LACEY

 “We’ve all got shit. Beck’s business is at risk of getting badly reviewed, that angry Susie —,”

ABRUPTLY, SUSAN CORRECTS LACEY.

 SUSAN (SPUTTERING):

 “Susan!”

 LACEY (ANNOYED):

 “Whatever. Sabrina. Shut up, Samantha. I don’t know where I’m gonna live in two weeks if I can’t make the money. You need someone to look after your mom and kid. I’m great at people-sitting.”

 ROSE (CAUTIOUS TO BECK):

“Has she ever looked after anyone under the age of ten?”

BECK’S LAUGHING NOW.

 BECK

 “No. I wouldn’t trust Lacey with my pet rock.”

LACEY GASPS IN OFFENSE.

 LACEY

“I am the fun wine aunt of your future children’s dreams! How dare you.”

LACEY TURNS TO ROSE, HER EXPRESSION SOFTENS.

 LACEY (TO ROSE):

 “You can say no and I can find work somewhere else. It’s fine. I can send you my resume and you’ll see I’ve done a number of odd jobs. Repair services. Food delivery. Mostly working through hiring apps. I prefer to gig work than actually go through a company, but it’s biting me in the ass. It doesn’t pay.”

ROSE NODS. SHE SMILES GRATEFULLY.

 ROSE

 “I’ll think about it. I won’t give you an answer right away, I’m sorry. There’s a lot I need to go over at the station. But for those long nights where I’m away, if I need you, I will text you.”

LACEY SMILES. SHE TAKES OUT HER PHONE.

 LACEY (HANDING OUT PHONE)

 “Is it okay if we exchange numbers?”

ROSE AGREES.

THEY DO SO, AND ROSE GETS UP, GIVING BECK A TIP (WHICH HE TRIED TO REFUSE) AND MOUTHING A THANK YOU. SHE SAYS SHE HAS TO GO PICK UP HER DAUGHTER FROM SCHOOL, AND IF EVERYTHING SMOOTHS OVER, SHE WILL ARRANGE A MEETING FOR LACEY TO MEET HER DAUGHTER.

THEY EXCHANGE GOODBYES.

WHEN ROSE LEAVES, LACEY TURNS TO A SHOCKED BECK.

 BECK

“I’ve been trying to get her number all damn month. How did you get it first? Unfair.”

 LACEY (GRINNING):

“Maybe I’m just better than you and winning at life.”

BECK SNICKERS.

 BECK

“Yeah, says the girl who’s arguing with her landlord.”

LACEY FROWNS, SHRUGGING.

 LACEY (DISMISSIVE)

“We’re on a break.”

BECK CONTINUES TO LAUGH. LACEY TAKES A BITE OUT OF HER SANDWICH.

 **FADE OUT**

 **FADE IN**

EXT. OUTSIDE – STREET – IN FRONT OF COFFEE SHOP. NEW SCENE.

A BUSTLING CITYSCAPE WAITS BEFORE LACEY.

SHE ARRIVES EARLY TO HER MEETING WITH ROSE AND ROSE’S DAUGHTER. SHE LOOKS TO HER PHONE AT THEIR LAST TEXT. SHE WAITS A LITTLE LONGER, UNTIL FINALLY, SHE HEARS A YOUNG GIRL ANIMATEDLY TALKING WITH HER MOTHER. IT’S ROSE.

 ROSE

 “Hi! Lacey, right? Hope we’re not too late.”

LACEY SMILES. SHE BEAMS AT THE SHY LITTLE GIRL, NO OLDER THAN EIGHT, WHO HAS MATCHING ORANGE-RUSSET HAIR LIKE HER MOM AND PIGTAILS, AND A BRIGHT SHIRT THAT SAYS ‘GIRLBOSS’ ON IT IN PINK.

 LACEY

 “Not at all. Wasn’t waiting long. Hi, I’m Lacey. What’s your name, cutie?”

THE GIRL LOOKS TO HER MOTHER FOR ASSURANCE. HER MOTHER NODS, NUDGING HER.

 LUCY

 “Lucy. Like the song.”

SHE SMILES AT HER MOTHER.

 LUCY

 “Mama named me after a flower and a song. I’m Lucy Violet Waltz.”

 ROSE (CHUCKLING)

 “And I’m Rosalie Marie Waltz, but friends call me Rose.”

LACEY LOOKS BETWEEN THEM.

 LACEY (FUMBLING)

 “Uh, I’m Lacey Williams. Named after… ah. Lace. Like. The satin. Or something. And my folks.”

THIS CAUSED THE GIRLS TO LAUGH, AND LUCY TUGGS AT HER MOTHER’S ARM.

 LUCY

 “Will stuttering lady be the one looking after me while you’re with grandmama?”

LACEY SNORTS. ROSE PATS LUCY’S HEAD, AND NODS.

 ROSE

 “Yes, dear. She’s a close friend to mama’s friend. So, if Beck likes her, then she must be good. Because Uncle Beck is good, right?”

LACEY FEELS FLUSHED. IT’S CLEAR SHE FINDS ROSE ATTRACTIVE, AND THERE’S SOMETHING BREWING. LACEY DOESN’T WANT TO PUSH THAT SOMETHING, AS ROSE IS DEALING WITH SOMEHTING UNIMAGINABLE. THIS WILL BE A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR ALL INVOLVED, AND TAKING THINGS SLOW WAS THE ONLY OPTION.

 LUCY (SHRUGGING)

 “If you say so. Do you like princesses, Ms. Lacey Lady?”

 LACEY LAUGHS, AS DOES ROSE.

 LACEY

 “Do I? I would cosplay with Beck when we were in college. Do you know what that is? I have photos.”

LUCY’S EYES GROW WIDE WITH EXCITEMENT.

 LUCY
 “Who were you? Were you Princess Rapunzel? Show me, show me. Mama, mama, can I see?”

LACEY CHUCKLES.

 LACEY

 “In our group, I was Princess Tiana. I looked the best in green with my skin tones. Beck was Prince Eric.”

WITH THE INITIAL ICEBREAKER SAID, LUCY WAS NO LONGER SHY AROUND LACEY. ROSE IS RELIEVED BY THIS, RUFFLING LUCY’S HAIR AND LEAVING THEM FOR A MOMENT AT THE OUTSIDE TABLE IN FRONT OF STARBUCKS TO ORDER THEIR COFFEES. LUCY IS ANIMATEDLY TALKING ABOUT PRINCESSES AND DRAGONS AND HER STORIES, TO WHICH LACEY DID HER BEST TO KEEP UP WITH.

THE SCENE ENDS WITH ROSE RETURNING, PAUSING TO SEE LUCY SNUGGLING WITH LACEY, AND LACEY SHOWING HER A KIDS-FRIENDLY YOUTUBE VIDEO.

ROSE SMILES FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT WEEK.

 **FADE OUT**

 **FADE IN**

EXT. STREET – OUTSIDE LUCY’S SCHOOL PARKING LOT

IT IS A WARM MONDAY IN NOVEMBER, NOVEMBER 18TH, 2019, AND LACEY IS REPORTING FOR HER NEXT FREELANCE GIG.

SHE MADE FOOD DELIVERIES ALL DAY, AND MOSTLY DEALT WITH MANAGEMNET OR LEAVING PHOTOS THAT THE FOOD MADE IT TO HUNGRY CUSTOMERS AT THEIR DOORS. THE BUSIEST DAYS WERE FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS, BETWEEN THE EVENING HOURS 3 – 7. SO, MONDAY WAS HER SLOWEST, WHICH CAME IN GREAT WHEN SHE NEEDED TO PICK UP LUCY.

LACEY TAKES IN A DEEP BREATH. SHE’S NERVOUS. SHE’S DONE MANY JOBS WHERE SHE’S REPORTED IN FOR WORK THE FIRST DAY. YET THIS ONE HAD A LOT RIDING ON IT.

SHE KNOWS SHE CAN’T WAIT OUT IN THE CAR, SO SHE ARRIVES EARLY BEFORE 3:20, WHICH IS LUCY’S DISMISSAL SINCE SHE STOPPED GETTING ON THE BUS.

ROSE PRIVATELY TOLD HER THERE WAS A BULLYING INCIDENT BETWEEN LUCY AND ANOTHER STUDENT, AND THE BUS DRIVER WAS DISMISSIVE TO IT. HEARING THAT ALONE MADE LACEY’S BLOOD BOIL, EVEN IF SHE BARELY KNOWS THEM.

LACEY WALKS UP TO THE LOCKED DOOR, SEEING THE SECURITY GUARD AND FIRST RANG THE BELL.

 SECRETARY:

 “Hi, welcome to Westside Elementary, home of the Bears. How can I help you?”

LACEY CLEARS HER THROAT.

 LACEY

 “Yeah. Uh, I should be on a list? My name is Lacey Williams. I’m a friend of Rose Waltz. I’m here to pick up a Lucy Violet Waltz.”

THE SECURITY GUARDS’ FACE LIGHTS UP AND SOFTENS AT THE NAME, AND HE MENTIONS SOMETHING TO THE SECURITY GUARD.

THERE IS SHUFFLING, AND FOR A SECOND LACEY WORRIES SHE’S GOING TO BE TURNED AWAY. BUT THEN, THE LOCK UNCLICKS ITSELF, AND SHE’S GREETED BY THE SECURITY GUARD, A YOUNG MAN NO OLDER THAN SHE IS.

 SECURITY GUARD

 “Lucy’s a sweetheart. She’s in Art class now, but we’ll call the teacher and let her know her Aunt is here.”

LACEY’S HEART WARMED. AT LEAST THERE ARE GOOD PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT LUCY’S WELL BEING, EVEN IF THE KIDS ARE GIVING HER TROUBLE.

LACEY NODS, AND BRINGS OUT HER ID, WORK IDENTIFICATION, AND RESUME FOR FURTHER REFERENCE.

 LACEY

 “Here is everything I can think of to bring. I sign right here?”

LACEY POINTS TO THE SIGN-IN SHEET, AND THE SECURITY GUARD AND SECRERTARY LOOK TO EACH OTHER. THE OTHER SECRETARY, AS THERE WAS TWO DESKS IN THE ROOM, LAUGHS.

 SECRETARY #2

 “Oh, honey. We only need your ID to make sure you’re not a school bomber or someone with ill intention to hurt the kids. Ms. Rose called us and let us know exactly who you were and signed off.”

 SECRETARY #1

 “We will take your resume, though. We’re always in need of paraprofessionals or teacher’s aide for our school district.”

LACEY’S EYES GROW WIDE.

 LACEY

 “Thank you. I’ve been looking for a stable income, and money’s tight. I have… no prior experience with children, though. Aside from Lucy.”

THE FIRST SECRETARY LOOKS TO THE OTHER ONE, AND NODS.

 SECRETARY #1

 “We have a lot of teachers aids’, teachers, workers, here that were in the same position as you. If you’d like, we can give you our supervisor’s number and district manager, and we’ll see what happens from there. Is that all right?”

 LACEY (SMILING)

 “Thanks for taking that into consideration. Here is everything, and my contact info.”

LACEY PROVIDES THE HELPFUL LADIES WITH THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION, AND HER CONTACT INFORMATION. SHE’S THEN TOLD TO SIGN IN, AND WAIT, UNTIL THE KIDS ARE CALLED FOR DISMISSAL.

LACEY SMILES AND THANKS THE FRONT OFFICE.

SHE SITS ON THE OLD WORN-OUT CHAIRS, AND WAITS FOR LUCY.

 **FADE OUT:**

 **FADE IN:**

INT. FRONT OFFICE OF WESTSIDE ELEMNTARY. AFTERNOON.