

Break Away

By

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FADE IN:

INT. STEPHANIE'S CIVIC - DAY

Behind the wheel of a silver, fifteen-year old Civic is STEPHANIE CHASE (18), a soft-spoken, petite brunette. In the back seats, her younger brothers, IAN (15) and NICK (14), both baby-faced and full of freckles, chat animatedly with each other. Stephanie yawns and checks the boys in her rearview mirror.

STEPHANIE

Think you two can handle walking home tomorrow? I'm gonna be busy--
(sighs)
--probably all night.

IAN

We could. But it's easier to get a ride with Matt.

STEPHANIE

You mean the guy that snuck pot into the house? Mom would be so-

IAN

Mom's not gonna be there.

STEPHANIE

Fine. Just don't let him in again.

NICK

We won't. What's keeping you out so late anyway?

STEPHANIE

Group project. Nothing to get excited about.

Stephanie turns a corner and heads down the street they live on in a Palo Alto neighborhood. The houses that blur past in the car windows are fairly modern, middle class homes, mostly one-story but some two-story as well. She is a house away from theirs when she slows down.

ANGLE ON:

WHITE '07 CAMRY

The car is parked in the driveway. Through the windows, it's clear that the car is full with boxes and bags. LAYLA NUNEZ (22), an attractive and tan woman, grabs out a cardboard box from the trunk.

(CONTINUED)

BACK TO SCENE:

Both of the boys perk up as soon as they see Layla, liking what they see. Stephanie turns into their driveway next door.

NICK
Who's that?

STEPHANIE
No idea. Looks like she's moving in though.

Ian unclips his seat belt.

IAN
I should go say hi-

A CLICK comes from Ian's side door as Stephanie locks it.

STEPHANIE
I'll talk to her. You two'll just weird her out.

EXT. LAYLA'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

The house is one-story, smaller than Stephanie's, but spacious. The weather outside is in the 90s, making Stephanie uncomfortable. She stands at the front door and presses the doorbell after some hesitation.

STEPHANIE
Here goes nothing, I guess.

Stephanie shuffles her feet awkwardly and pulls at her shirt as she tries to cool down. Layla opens the door and leans against it once it's ajar.

LAYLA
Hi. Can I help you?

STEPHANIE
Uhh, hi. I live next door. I wanted to... introduce myself.

LAYLA
Aw, how sweet. I'm Layla.

STEPHANIE
Stephanie. I hope I'm not interrupting anything.

(CONTINUED)

LAYLA

You're totally fine. I'm just unpacking my stuff. Wanna come in? It's a mess in here, but a lot cooler.

INT. LAYLA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Stephanie steps into Layla's house. Cardboard boxes clutter the room and seem out of place compared to the already set up furniture. Stephanie wipes some of the sweat around her hairline.

STEPHANIE

This is much better.

LAYLA

Good. You can sit right under the fan if you want, just try to watch your step.

Stephanie beelines to the couch situated under the fan.

STEPHANIE

So this is all yours, huh?

LAYLA

For now. My aunt and uncle bought it recently, but they're letting me stay until I can find my own place.

STEPHANIE

That's-

Stephanie accidentally stubs her toe on a black violin case on her way to the couch.

LAYLA

Geez. I'm sorry. I led you right into the danger zone.

STEPHANIE

No, no, don't be sorry. I should've watched where I was going.

Layla bends down to examine the case and checks for damage. She doesn't find any and pushes it out of their way. Once Stephanie is sure she didn't break anything, she heads to the couch.

STEPHANIE

You play violin?

(CONTINUED)

LAYLA

Yeah. It's why I'm here actually. The San Francisco Symphony has an opening-- and I'm on the short list.

STEPHANIE

Wow! That sounds exciting.

Layla crouches down to open the flaps of one of the boxes, unpacks and moves about while she talks to Stephanie.

LAYLA

Exciting, but nerve-wracking. I really want to get in.

STEPHANIE

If you've gotten this far, I'm sure you know what you're doing.

LAYLA

(chuckles)

That's true. Let's just hope I remember that when I'm in front of the panel.

STEPHANIE

You going on stage is way more impressive than anything I could do.

Layla looks up while she stacks some books on the coffee table close by and smiles.

LAYLA

Being on stage isn't for everyone. I'm sure you've got something you're good at.

Stephanie points to some of the boxes around them after a pause.

STEPHANIE

Need some help?

LAYLA

I'm alright. Just having someone around is good enough for me.

INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Forks CLANK against plates as the Chase family eats dinner. Stephanie mostly pushes her food around. At the table with her and her brothers are their parents, KRISTEN (41) and JONATHAN (43). Despite a long day, Kristen keeps her hair back in a tight, neat ponytail. Jonathan looks clearly tired with dark circles under his eyes.

KRISTEN

Something wrong, Stephanie?

Stephanie, who has been distracted most of dinner, looks up from her plate.

STEPHANIE

Huh?

KRISTEN

You've hardly touched your food.

STEPHANIE

Oh, sorry. I had some pizza while I was at Layla's.

KRISTEN

Layla's?

IAN

Is she the girl next door? What's she like?

STEPHANIE

Yeah, she's our new neighbor. She's really nice and she loves music and might be a symphony violinist and--

NICK

--Is the woman of my dreams?

STEPHANIE

Get real.

JONATHAN

It's not like you to warm up to someone so quickly, Steph.

STEPHANIE

I know. She's just got everything... together. She's kind of amazing.

(CONTINUED)

KRISTEN

I'm happy for you. It'll be great
if you make a good friend so close
by.

STEPHANIE

(grins)

Yeah, I hope so.

INT. LAYLA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Layla's house is now tidied up and decorated with brightly
colored posters and paintings.

LAYLA

What do you think?

STEPHANIE

It's great. I can move around in
it, for one thing.

LAYLA

Much better than before, huh?

Stephanie's attention snags on a poster hanging on the wall,
"AquaForest" by Lois van Baarle, and she hurries over to
look at it and almost touches it before she drops her hand.

STEPHANIE

This is awesome!

Layla heads over to stand next to Stephanie.

LAYLA

You like indie art too?

STEPHANIE

Mhmm. I love it. There's so many
different styles out there.

Layla smiles from Stephanie's enthusiasm.

LAYLA

So you draw then?

STEPHANIE

Oh, well, I'm nothing like this. I
doodle in class when I don't want
to take notes, but it doesn't
really make me an artist.

(CONTINUED)

LAYLA

I wanna see the doodles, if you'll let me. It sounds like you're pretty passionate.

STEPHANIE

(flustered)

They're nothing special.

LAYLA

What if I promise to play for you in return? Then can I see?

Stephanie retreats from the poster and takes a seat on the couch. Layla joins her. The couch is small enough that it leaves little of a gap between them.

STEPHANIE

I do want to hear you play.

LAYLA

So is that a yes?

STEPHANIE

Yeah.

Layla flops back onto the couch, satisfied with her victory.

LAYLA

You know, we should go out sometime.

STEPHANIE

Huh?

LAYLA

(laughs)

To the city, I mean.

STEPHANIE

Oh, right. You haven't been yet?

LAYLA

Not yet. I'm still trying to get used to it here.

STEPHANIE

Missing home?

LAYLA

Yeah. I'd say so. I've called my sister practically every day.

(CONTINUED)

STEPHANIE

It's a pretty big house to be in by yourself.

LAYLA

I've had some good company at least.

Layla pats Stephanie's knee and smiles. Stephanie is at a temporary loss for words and scratches at the back of her head.

STEPHANIE

So, uh, what do you want to see in the city?

EXT. PIER 39 AQUARIUM - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

The pier is crowded full of people. The aquarium is surrounded by other shops, restaurants, and excitement.

INT. PIER 39 AQUARIUM - TUNNEL - SAME DAY

Stephanie and Layla lean against the railing and peer into the tanks full of fish that line the walls and the ceiling above.

STEPHANIE

Which one's your favorite?

LAYLA

Ooh... difficult. Maybe that one? He looks like he's having a good time.

Layla points out a large fish that is flopped lazily at the bottom of the tank. Stephanie laughs. Their hands brush each other, but neither moves theirs back.

STEPHANIE

I've always liked it here. It's a good place to clear your head.

LAYLA

Yeah. I needed a bit of a distraction.

STEPHANIE

Your audition's coming up, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

LAYLA

In about a week. I've been practicing almost nonstop.

STEPHANIE

Will I get to hear it?

Layla nudges Stephanie's shoulder.

LAYLA

When I get to see your drawings.

STEPHANIE

I know. I've been drawing new stuff since we talked about it.

LAYLA

That's good!

STEPHANIE

Hopefully you'll like them.

LAYLA

I'm sure I will.

Layla swings an arm around Stephanie's shoulders. They peel off of the railing and continue to walk down the tunnel side by side. Both glance up as a shark swims over their heads and smile at each other. They exit the tunnel.

INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NEXT DAY

Stephanie's room is painted pastel blue and is full of photo frames, ticket stubs, and other keepsakes hanging on the walls and on shelves. She sits at her desk. The trash bin beside her is full of crumpled pieces of paper.

ANGLE ON:

DRAWING OF L

The paper on the desk is full of eraser shavings. The subject of her drawing is a girl with flowers in her hair that looks like Layla. The work looks ethereal.

BACK TO SCENE:

Stephanie blows away the eraser shavings. Without warning, Ian bursts into her room.

IAN

Have you seen the third PS4 controller?

(CONTINUED)

Stephanie doesn't even look up.

STEPHANIE

Nope.

Ian goes over to see what Stephanie's doing and leans on the back of her desk chair.

IAN

Wow, that looks a lot like Layla. I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

Ian gestures to her drawing. Stephanie covers it with her hands.

STEPHANIE

What does that mean?

IAN

You're around her all the time, you talk about her all the time. You guys are really close.

STEPHANIE

We're just friends.

IAN

As long as that's what mom and dad think.

(teasing)

I don't mind if you have a crush on her.

Stephanie waves Ian off.

STEPHANIE

The controller's probably in the kitchen. Nick was charging the batteries there.

IAN

Alright. Have fun with your drawing!

Ian heads out of the room. Stephanie looks back over her paper and bites her lip. After a moment, she huffs and returns to drawing.

INT. LAYLA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - A FEW DAYS LATER

Stephanie has a few drawings spread across the coffee table in front of her and Layla. The girls sit on the couch again.

LAYLA
These are beautiful.

Layla picks up one of the pages delicately.

ANGLE ON:

AFOREMENTIONED DRAWING

The ethereal girl in Layla's likeness is now complete, colored with soft pastels.

BACK TO SCENE:

Layla looks between Stephanie and the drawing.

LAYLA
You really sold yourself short. I
love 'em all, but this one's my
favorite. It kind of looks like me.

Stephanie fidgets after the question and leans closer to Layla to inspect the drawing.

STEPHANIE
Oh, uh, you think so?
(pauses)
You're right. It looks a lot like
you.

Layla holds onto the paper in her hands and beams at Stephanie.

LAYLA
Wow, my own portrait. Think I can
keep it?

STEPHANIE
You can have any you want.

LAYLA
I want them all!

STEPHANIE
They're all yours.

(CONTINUED)

Layla sets down the drawing before she stands and pulls over her violin case, takes the violin out, and positions it under her chin. She smiles when her eyes land on Stephanie and lifts her bow. Stephanie leans forward instantly.

STEPHANIE

I can't believe I actually get to hear you play.

LAYLA

I wanted it to be perfect before you heard.

Layla plays Vivaldi's "Summer" from the Four Seasons passionately. She skips through most of the song to impress Stephanie with the most complicated parts. This lasts for about 30 seconds with dissolves between different sections of the music. Layla lowers her bow while Stephanie sits quietly in awe.

LAYLA

What d'you think?

STEPHANIE

Amazing - you're amazing. You're going to ace the audition.

Layla puts away her violin and seals the case.

LAYLA

We'll see if you're right in just a few days.

INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - THAT AFTERNOON

Stephanie walks into the living room, humming the melody of "Summer." The rest of the family is settled on the couch while Nick flips through the channels to find something to watch.

KRISTEN

There she is.

JONATHAN

If I didn't know any better, I would've thought you moved in with Layla by now.

Stephanie leans against the back of the couch, invested in her phone.

ANGLE ON:

STEPHANIE'S PHONE SCREEN

(CONTINUED)

On the screen is a text conversation between her and Layla. Pictures of Layla in different dresses are followed with the message: "Which do you think I should wear for the audition?"

BACK TO SCENE:

KRISTEN

Why have you never invited her over?

Stephanie tunes back into the conversation, while her fingers continue to move over the screen.

STEPHANIE

It's easier to be at her house. I don't have to worry about bugging you guys.

KRISTEN

We want to meet her. We hardly know anything about her.

IAN

I think we've heard a lot.

In the midst of their conversation, Nick switches the channel to a show where two women are kissing on-screen. Stephanie watches the screen intently.

KRISTEN

Ugh. Change it, Nick.

Jonathan shakes his head.

JONATHAN

They let anything go on TV now. It's not right.

Stephanie withdraws from the couch, unsettled by her parents' reaction. When the channel is changed, Kristen returns her attention to Stephanie.

KRISTEN

Maybe you can invite Layla to come dress shopping with us this weekend. Your cousin's wedding's only a few weeks away.

STEPHANIE

(clipped)
Right. I'll ask her.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - TICKET COUNTER - THAT NIGHT

Stephanie and Layla stand in line and wait for their turn at the cash register. Stephanie is visibly tense.

LAYLA

You okay? You were quiet the whole ride here.

STEPHANIE

I just needed to get away from the house for a while.

LAYLA

Something going on?

STEPHANIE

Don't worry about it. It's stupid.

Layla rests her hands on top of Stephanie's shoulders.

LAYLA

If something's bothering you, you can tell me.

Stephanie parts her lips to say something before she looks away and shakes her head.

STEPHANIE

I'm still trying to figure things out.

Layla nods and lets the subject go, but keeps her hands on Stephanie's shoulders. The girls move up in line to get their tickets.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - THEATER - SAME NIGHT

Layla and Stephanie sit in a darker corner, faces occasionally illuminated by the screen. Stephanie looks at Layla rather than the movie and plays with her fingers nervously. Layla turns to Stephanie and keeps her voice hushed.

LAYLA

You sure you're okay?

Stephanie flinches and looks back at the screen.

STEPHANIE

Y-yeah. I'm okay.

(CONTINUED)

LAYLA

I wish you'd tell me what's going on. I could try to help.

Stephanie, similar to before, parts her lips to speak but chickens out. Layla takes Stephanie's hand and squeezes it.

LAYLA

I know we haven't been friends that long, but I want to be there for you when you're upset.

STEPHANIE

I- can we go somewhere else? There's too many people...

Layla nods while her hand still holds Stephanie's. Stephanie leads them down the stairs of the theater and looks behind her at Layla before facing forward.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - SAME NIGHT

The girls stop once they are outside and are distanced from the front doors. Behind them are lit movie posters. Layla's concern is clear in the brightness of the lights.

LAYLA

What is it? You're worrying me, Steph.

Stephanie's body language is still tense and she can't meet Layla's eyes.

STEPHANIE

I don't want to ruin what we have already.

LAYLA

You're not going to. Just tell me. Please.

STEPHANIE

I like you. I've never made friends with anyone so fast, but I... think I want more-

Layla reaches out to Stephanie.

LAYLA

Steph, it's okay. I like you a lot too.

(CONTINUED)

Stephanie's arms drop to dangle at their sides and Layla embraces Stephanie and squeezes her close. Stephanie reciprocates but sighs moments later.

STEPHANIE

My parents wouldn't have any of this.

LAYLA

Did they say something to you?

STEPHANIE

It wasn't anything big, but it's not the first time. Won't be the last.

LAYLA

They can get over it.

STEPHANIE

Huh?

LAYLA

You're an adult now, they should respect what you want.

STEPHANIE

It's not that easy - I still live with them. They might not even let me see you if they knew.

LAYLA

(pauses)

Then, they don't have to know yet. We can wait for you to move out or something.

STEPHANIE

You really think we can hide it?

LAYLA

We'll make it work somehow, I promise.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE WITH VIVALDI'S "SUMMER" IN THE BACKGROUND

A) INT. MOVIE THEATER - THEATER - SAME NIGHT

Stephanie and Layla sit in a secluded back corner. Layla puts an arm around Stephanie and holds her close.

B) INT. LAYLA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Stephanie and Layla lie on the bed in casual clothes, legs tangled up as they play a video game together. Within the shot are clearly drawn blinds.

C) INT. LAYLA'S CAMRY - DAY

Stephanie squeezes Layla's free hand while she drives.

D) INT. SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY - AUDITORIUM - SAME DAY

Layla plays in front of a panel of judges while she looks at Stephanie in the audience.

E) EXT. SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY - FRONT ENTRANCE - SAME DAY

Stephanie gives Layla a bouquet of flowers and hugs her.

END MONTAGE

INT. LAYLA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The front door is unlocked. Stephanie runs inside while Layla stands in the middle of the room, her hand shakes as she holds a phone to her ear.

STEPHANIE

What's the news? Is it-

LAYLA

I got in! They- they called, and I got the spot!

Caught up in the excitement, Stephanie kisses Layla for the first time. Layla drops the phone onto the carpet with a THUD. When they part, Stephanie is awestruck.

STEPHANIE

Wow.

Layla giggles and runs a hand through Stephanie's hair.

LAYLA

You just made the day even better.

(CONTINUED)

STEPHANIE

I knew you could get in.

LAYLA

I still can't believe it. I'm in the symphony.

STEPHANIE

When do you start practice?

LAYLA

Next Monday.

STEPHANIE

You're gonna love it.

LAYLA

Definitely. So how should we celebrate this weekend?

Stephanie grimaces at the reminder.

STEPHANIE

I just remembered my mom wanted to invite you to go out to the mall with us.

LAYLA

That doesn't sound too bad.

STEPHANIE

We'd have to be extra careful with how we acted.

LAYLA

I know. But we'll survive for one day.

STEPHANIE

And many days to come.

Layla holds both of Stephanie's hands.

LAYLA

Do you want to tell them the truth?

STEPHANIE

God, no. I just feel guilty.

Layla kisses Stephanie on the cheek.

(CONTINUED)

LAYLA

I know. We can't stay a secret forever. I'm going to be looking for apartments now that I made it in.

STEPHANIE

(laughs dryly)

They'd have a heart attack if I moved in with you and they found out we were dating.

LAYLA

Then we'll have to warm them up to the idea first.

STEPHANIE

Were your parents okay with you being with girls?

LAYLA

Mostly. I was around eight when I told my parents I had a crush on my friend, Alexa. They had a long time to get used to it.

STEPHANIE

Do they know about us?

LAYLA

Yeah, my sister told them.

STEPHANIE

What do they think?

LAYLA

They're glad you've helped me settle in and hope to meet you eventually. Albuquerque's a bit far.

STEPHANIE

At least they're excited for us.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DRESS SECTION - DAY

The section is filled with racks and displays of dresses and gowns for special events. Stephanie sticks close to Layla while she browses. Kristen wanders through the aisles and grabs a dress off the rack.

(CONTINUED)

KRISTEN

What do you think about this one,
Stephanie?

Stephanie circles around a different display to get a look
and her nose crinkles.

STEPHANIE

No thanks.

Layla holds a long, more form-fitting dress for Stephanie in
her hand.

LAYLA

I like this one.

STEPHANIE

That's really pretty!

KRISTEN

You would be tripping over that
dress the whole night. It's way too
long for you.

Layla returns the dress to its rack. Stephanie fans through
the different dresses on the rack in front of her and picks
out a purple, mid-length dress and shows it off to both
women.

STEPHANIE

What about this?

LAYLA

That might be even prettier. And
won't be a tripping-hazard.

KRISTEN

Much better. Go try it on while I
look for something for me.

Stephanie and Layla head to the dressing room.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The dressing room is small with a bench and a mirror hanging
on the wall. Layla locks the door behind them while
Stephanie steps into her dress.

STEPHANIE

Could you zip it up for me?

(CONTINUED)

LAYLA

Of course.

Layla circles behind Stephanie and puts one hand on her back to hold the dress while she zips it. Stephanie turns to face her.

LAYLA

It looks great on you.

Layla puts her hands on Stephanie's waist. While Stephanie looks at her reflection in the mirror, Layla leans in closer and the two share a kiss. Then another. They're interrupted by sudden footfall as Kristen approaches their door.

KRISTEN

Hey, Steph. Are you coming out? I want to see the dress.

Stephanie jumps away from Layla.

STEPHANIE

Just one sec!

Kristen jiggles the door knob after she hears Stephanie's voice. Stephanie rushes to open the door with her straps slipped down her shoulders.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - OUTSIDE DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kristen stands with a few dresses draped over her arm.

KRISTEN

(hums)

It's definitely cute.

Kristen sets the dresses down on one of the lounge chairs and approaches Stephanie. She grabs the hanging straps.

KRISTEN

These really need to be adjusted-

Layla heads over to examine the straps as well and folds them over so that they're tighter.

LAYLA

I could adjust them. It'd only take a bit of sewing.

KRISTEN

Oh, that would be great.

(CONTINUED)

STEPHANIE

I think this is the best dress I've seen yet.

KRISTEN

If you're sure...

STEPHANIE

I am.

KRISTEN

Alright. You girls can wait while I try some things on then.

Layla now moves her hands off of Stephanie's shoulders. Stephanie heads back in to the stall to change and comes back out in her regular clothes and carries the dress. The two head out of ear shot while Kristen tries things on.

STEPHANIE

(nervously)

That was close. I was caught up in-- you don't think she--

Layla squeezes Stephanie's hand.

LAYLA

We're fine, Steph. I doubt she thought anything of it.

STEPHANIE

I don't want to screw things up.

LAYLA

You're not screwing anything up. You're reading more into this than you need to.

Stephanie sighs.

LAYLA

I'm sorry if I made you upset. I was caught up too.

STEPHANIE

No, no. I really liked it. I'm just nervous about all this.

LAYLA

I know, I--

(CONTINUED)

Stephanie and Layla see Kristen come out of the dressing room and hush up. Kristen discards all of the dresses but one and heads over to the girls.

KRISTEN

Sorry to keep you girls waiting. Do you think this'll look good for the wedding, Steph?

Kristen holds up the dress in her hand.

STEPHANIE

Yeah. Looks good.

The three head into the line for the register. Stephanie is about to talk with Layla when Kristen jumps in instead.

KRISTEN

You don't want to get anything, Layla?

LAYLA

Oh no, it's okay. I hardly wear most of the dresses I have. Nothing really comes up to need one.

KRISTEN

I see. It's good to have one, anyway. You may get taken out somewhere fancy for a date. Now that you're on your own, I'm sure you'll find someone nice.

They take another step up in line.

LAYLA

I've already found someone pretty nice.

Layla nudges Stephanie on the shoulder. Stephanie's eyes widen as she takes Layla's comment too seriously. Kristen is completely unfazed and laughs.

KRISTEN

It's nice you two are such close friends.

INT. LAYLA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

The bathroom is brightly lit and there are several hair clips on the counter as well as some perfumes in the corner. Layla curls Stephanie's hair with a curling iron while Stephanie sits on a stool in front of the mirror.

LAYLA

What do you think so far?

Layla lets go of a strand of hair after she's curled it and fans out the pieces she's already done.

STEPHANIE

Careful. I can't upstage the bride.

LAYLA

(chuckles)

I can't prevent that. You're gonna look beautiful.

There's a pause.

STEPHANIE

I wish you could come with me.

LAYLA

You can't invite anyone along?

STEPHANIE

I could bring a date, but...

The mood shifts rather quickly as Layla looks at Stephanie's reflection in the mirror.

LAYLA

You're still too scared for them to know?

STEPHANIE

I'm sorry.

LAYLA

No, it's alright. We'll get through this together. I just don't want you to be so anxious.

STEPHANIE

Do you think it'd be easier if I came out with it?

(CONTINUED)

LAYLA

I don't know. I haven't been around your family enough to guess how they'd take it.

STEPHANIE

That's not reassuring.

LAYLA

It isn't, but I'll support you through it all. I'll be getting my own place soon, so if they don't take it well, you can stay with me.

Stephanie merely nods. Layla sets down the curling iron on the table.

LAYLA

You're all set. Think you can pull this off for the big day?

STEPHANIE

Maybe.

INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - THAT EVENING

Kristen plays with the curled strands of Stephanie's hair and nods approvingly.

KRISTEN

You look wonderful, Steph. It'll be perfect for the wedding.

STEPHANIE

Thanks. It was all thanks to Layla though. I don't know if I'll do as good of a job when the time comes.

KRISTEN

I'm sure you'll manage. Maybe if you get more practice, you can start doing up your hair more often.

STEPHANIE

Why would I?

KRISTEN

You might want to get a bit more dressed up when you find a boy you like.

While Kristen circles around to look at the work done on the back of her head, Stephanie scowls.

(CONTINUED)

STEPHANIE

Right.

KRISTEN

You know Drew is coming to the wedding. You remember him, right?

STEPHANIE

Yeah.

KRISTEN

Maybe he can keep you company. He's a very nice boy.

STEPHANIE

I'm not really interested in him.

KRISTEN

At least give him a chance.

Stephanie grits her teeth, fed up with the conversation.

STEPHANIE

I'm gonna go shower.

Stephanie walks out of the room.

INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME NIGHT

Stephanie sits in bed and sketches out another drawing in a sketchbook.

ANGLE ON:

DRAWING OF L AND S

Layla and Stephanie are in fancy dresses and dancing. Stephanie's hands are on Layla's shoulders and Layla's hands are at Stephanie's hips.

BACK TO SCENE:

Stephanie abruptly puts down her pencil on the nightstand beside her, flops back against her bed frame, and grabs her phone to call Layla. Layla speaks groggily, woken up by the call.

LAYLA (V.O.)

Hey. S'everything alright?

STEPHANIE

I changed my mind.

(CONTINUED)

LAYLA (V.O.)

Huh?

STEPHANIE

I want you to come to the wedding with me.

LAYLA (V.O.)

Really? You were pretty against it just a few hours ago.

STEPHANIE

I know. I'm still kind of worried about it.

LAYLA (V.O.)

Then why the change of heart?

Stephanie pauses and stares down at the drawing in her lap.

STEPHANIE

I want to be with you. I know I'll have a good time if you're there.

LAYLA (V.O.)

Are you sure?

Stephanie traces the drawing with her finger.

STEPHANIE

I'm definitely sure.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

The wedding day has arrived. Stephanie and Layla sit in one of the front pews, both look beautiful for the occasion. On Stephanie's other side is Kristen.

ANGLE ON:

Stephanie's cousin, JESSICA (25), faces the groom, BEN (27). They are an attractive pair and smile at each other constantly. They hold hands and look deeply into each other's eyes.

BACK TO SCENE:

Kristen leans over to whisper into Stephanie's ear.

KRISTEN

That'll be you up there one day.
With the man you love.

Stephanie doesn't comment.

(CONTINUED)

ANGLE ON:

S AND L'S HANDS

Stephanie puts her hand on top of Layla's.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

Stephanie, Layla, and the rest of her immediate family are seated at a circular table. The maid of honor finishes up her speech.

MAID OF HONOR

And I know you two'll be very happy together.

Everyone raises their glasses. Stephanie and Layla clink theirs together. Stephanie takes a conservative sip.

NICK

When can we get some cake?

Stephanie is about to answer when someone from behind puts a hand on her shoulder. She turns her head in surprise. It's DREW (20), a tall, lanky young man.

DREW

Stephanie! I barely recognized you.

STEPHANIE

Same here.

Kristen looks interested by their interaction while Layla stares at Drew silently.

DREW

How've you been?

STEPHANIE

I've been fine.

DREW

Would you like to dance with me?

STEPHANIE

Oh, but aren't you supposed to wait an hour after eating for that?

KRISTEN

That's swimming, sweetheart. Why don't you get up and have some fun?

(CONTINUED)

Stephanie looks over to Layla who seems at a loss for an excuse. Stephanie grabs the champagne glass and downs the whole thing before she gets up.

LAYLA

I'll catch up with you once the song's over, okay?

STEPHANIE

Yeah.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. RECEPTION HALL - SAME NIGHT

Stephanie dances with Drew on the dance floor. Her movements are hesitant and sluggish while he is more animated. Drew's hands slide lower down Stephanie's sides as the song continues.

DREW

I'm glad you came tonight.

STEPHANIE

Thanks.

Stephanie searches for Layla in the crowd.

DREW

Something wrong?

STEPHANIE

No, it's nothing.

While they sway back and forth, Stephanie accidentally steps on Drew's foot. Her heel hurts enough to where Drew drops his hands.

STEPHANIE

Oh God. I'm sorry.

DREW

It's alright.

Drew is about to resume their dancing when Layla cuts in and takes Stephanie by the hand.

LAYLA

Sorry to interrupt, but I want a turn.

Layla takes Stephanie over to a different part of the dance floor. Stephanie looks kind of shocked while Layla puts her hand on Stephanie's hips.

(CONTINUED)

STEPHANIE

That wasn't really subtle.

LAYLA

I had to rescue you. You looked like you were in pain.

STEPHANIE

At least he didn't trample my foot then run off like I did.

LAYLA

He'll live. I wasn't going to let the night end without getting in a dance.

The two dance together. No one seems to pay much attention to them. The two lean in closer the more they dance, close to kissing when they remember where they are.

LAYLA

Wanna go somewhere more private?

STEPHANIE

Yes. Please.

EXT. RECEPTIONAL HALL - PATIO - CONTINUOUS

The door closes behind them. The music from inside still can be heard outside, somewhat muffled but still loud. Layla pulls Stephanie close and kisses her.

LAYLA

Much better.

The two giggle as they dance very close, foreheads touching.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - SAME TIME

Jessica puts a hand on Kristen's shoulder.

JESSICA

Where's Stephanie? The fireworks should be starting soon. I know she'll love to see them.

INTERCUT BETWEEN JESSICA WITH KRISTEN AND STEPHANIE WITH LAYLA

Stephanie stops dancing but stays flush against Layla. Layla strokes her hair.

(CONTINUED)

KRISTEN

I haven't seen her since she went to dance with Drew.

STEPHANIE

I love you, Layla.

Jessica and Kristen search the reception hall for Stephanie.

Layla cups Stephanie's cheeks with her hands and kisses her passionately.

Jessica and Kristen pass by Drew who is standing by himself at the refreshments table.

KRISTEN

I thought you were with Stephanie.

DREW

She went off with her friend.

Jessica and Kristen nearly resume their search when Ben interrupts.

BEN

Come on out to the patio now, Jess. The fireworks are about to start any minute.

JESSICA

(sighs)

Sorry, auntie.

Stephanie and Layla continue to make out, oblivious to the guests inside making their way towards them.

Jessica, Ben, and Kristen head to the patio with the rest of the guests.

Stephanie slides her hands down Layla's sides.

Jessica reaches the door to the patio first, pushes it open.

Layla dips Stephanie down, which incidentally illuminates Stephanie's face with the patio lights.

END INTERCUT

Jessica freezes when she sees Stephanie and Layla. Stephanie and Layla barely notice they have company until several guests are out onto the patio. Kristen is the first to step forward. A very shocked Drew can be seen a little ways behind her.

(CONTINUED)

KRISTEN
Stephanie!

Stephanie nearly falls from Layla's arms as she tries to regain her footing, mortified as she looks at all of the people staring at them. Layla is equally caught off guard.

STEPHANIE
(pauses)
Have I... introduced you guys to
my-- uh, Layla?

FIREWORKS launch in the sky.

FADE OUT.