Cheeseheads

Pilot

by

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TEASER

INT. TAFT SCHMIDT’S APT. CHICAGO -DAY

TAFT SCHMIDT, 30something, blonde and super-model pretty climbs out from beneath her comforter and searches for her phone which is ringing. The ringtone is the opening riff of The Police’s “Roxanne.” She falls out of bed and onto the floor and finds the phone under a brassiere. She grabs it and answers.

 TAFT

Hello? What? What time is it? Oh God! I’m so sorry! I can be there in twenty minutes—can you wait? Oh, listen Laraine, I’m so sorry. Yes, I’ll see you when I get there. (She clicks the phone off) Shit… (she groans and pulls herself off the floor).

INT. THE SIGNATURE ROOM AT THE HANCOCK TOWER -DAY

Taft is escorted to a table near the window, where sits her boss, LARAINE NEWMAN, late 60’s. The waiter pulls out her chair and ceremoniously presents Taft with a menu. She sits looking a little worse for the wear, but still impossibly gorgeous. She removes her Covid mask.

 TAFT

 Laraine, I’m—

 LARAINE

Don’t say anything sweetheart. It’s your *birthday*—tomorrow—and I’m not even *aware* that you’re late. I was able to make several very important calls. Which reminds me; Jabul is in town and he’s dying to see you again!

TAFT

 Oh, wait, he’s the…the...the—

 LARAINE

 Senator.

 TAFT

 Right.

 LARAINE

So, I’ve put together a coffee break and a hot lunch for tonight, if that’s doable?

 TAFT

Oh, uhm, yeah. Sure. I was supposed to drive up to Green Bay; but seriously. If I can put it off, I’ll put it off.

 LARAINE

What’s in Green Bay? Not one of the Packers!

 TAFT

No, my family.

 LARAINE

You know Taft, you’ve been working for me for what now? Ten years plus? And you have never once told me a single thing about your family…

TAFT

 And why would I? Why would you want to know?

 LARAINE

 I have an Enquiring mind.

 TAFT

 Oh really?

 LARAINE

I think of all my girls as my family; and as a mom, I want to know at least a little something. So, tell me!

 TAFT

Fine June Cleaver. Well, there’s my mom and dad. He’s actually my step-dad. That would be Lorene and Albert…

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE THINGS NURSERY AND HARDWARE -GREEN BAY WI -DAY

ALBERT MITTERAND, early 60’s, is playing “Voice of the Mummy” (an elaborate ancient Egyptian themed board-game that talks) at the front register counter with his friend, AXEL SOUTHWARD, late 50’s. Albert has a bottle of beer. Axel, a martini. Albert rolls the die and lands on a King Tut mask space. He presses the button on the game’s mummy shaped sarcophagus. The mummy speaks!

 MUMMY

“You have escaped the crushing clutches of the one-eyed, giant mandrill. Take three jewels.”

 ALBERT

Three! Heh, hee! (He laughs and takes the jewels from the board).

AXEL

Lucky duck! (He picks up the die) Do mandrills have only one eye?

 ALBERT

Axel, I don’t think anything has only one eye. Except maybe a cat!

LORENE SCHMIDT-MITTERAND, 60’S, comes from the back, lugging a bucket of nuts, bolts, screws, etc. She hoists the bucket on the counter.

 LORENE

(To Axel) What are you doing here? I thought you had flights all week.

 AXEL

My blood pressure is up again… (sips his drink).

 LORENE

I asked you to sort these, Al.

 ALBERT

After the game. I’m winning!

 LORENE

(Pouring bucket of hardware pieces onto the counter, disrupting the game) Now you’re losing.

 AXEL

Well, that wasn’t very nice!

 LORENE

I’m trying to get my blood pressure down. Why don’t you make yourself useful Axel and help him? (She bustles out the door).

 AXEL

Speaking of giant one-eyed mandrills—

 ALBERT

(Raising a finger) Nope. I can say whatever I want about her; but nobody else can. (He swipes the hardware away and they continue playing the game).

CUT TO: RESTAURANT:

 LARAINE

 Well, they sound adorable!

 TAFT

Sure, adorable. And then there’s my older brother Gibson. My sister-in-law Natalie is a total cheese-head.

 LARAINE

Well, who isn’t up there?

 TAFT

Yeah, she pretty much lives for the Packers; but I mean she’s a real cheese-head. She grew up on a dairy farm. This girl actually did things until the cows came home.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN -NIGHT

The Green Bay home of GIBSON and NATALIE SCHMIDT, 40’s and their kids FRANCIS (FRANKIE) and ROCHELLE, 16 and 12 respectively. Rochelle enters the kitchen where her mother is finishing setting the table.

 ROCHELLE

 I tried Mom. They’re just ignoring me.

Natalie goes to the kitchen drawer and opens it.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM -NIGHT

Gibson and Frankie, both wearing football jerseys are staring at a football game on the TV with glazed eyes. Natalie enters the room.

 NATALIE

Boys, dinner is ready. (They ignore her. LOUDER) Boys, dinner is ready… (still no response). Boys. Dinner is ready. (Still nothing. She raises an airhorn and pulls the trigger. The two men leap off the sofa like they’ve been shot out of a cannon).

CUT TO: RESTAURANT:

 LARAINE

I love it! I think I’ll try that with some of my less motivated girls!

 TAFT

Then there’s my Aunt Genie and Uncle Jack. They make my mom and dad look like…the Cleavers!

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM AT THE GOLDFARB RESIDENCE -GREEN BAY -DAY

IMONGENE “GENIE” GOLDFARB, 60S, finds her husband’s blazer on the bed. She picks it up and his phone falls out of the pocket. She’s about to place it on the nightstand when it pings. A beat. Should she look? She frowns and opens the message. It’s a close-up photo of a woman’s chest in a very low-cut dress. Imogene strides out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM -DAY

Imogene’s husband, JACK GOLDFARB, 60’s, is at a baby grand piano. And he’s having a grand old time, tickling the ivories and singing “When the Saints Go Marching In” in a jazzy-breezy style. Imogene suddenly looms over the piano.

 JACK

 Oh, hi honey! (He keeps singing).

 IMOGENE

Don’t “hi honey” me. (She holds up the phone and shows him the boob photo) Whose tits are these?

 JACK

(Shrugs) Honey, you can’t see her face, so how would I know?

 GENIE

Well, why are whoever’s tits these belong to on your phone?

 JACK

It’s some kind of scam. She probably wants money.

 GENIE

Well, those are not the tits of a Nigerian prince. (She flips the lid of the keyboard cover and Jack yelps in pain. She storms out of the room).

 JACK

(Sucking on a finger) You almost broke the skin!

CUT TO: RESTAURANT

 LARAINE

(Squeezing lemon on to a fish-dish) My ex-husband was a boob man. No wonder he divorced me!

 TAFT

(Looking at her plate) I think they overdid this charred egg-plant…

 LARAINE

Send it back. So, is that it?

 TAFT

Well, there’s my baby brother Colton…

CUT TO:

INT. GREEN BAY SOUTHWEST GENERAL HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM -DAY

COLTON MITTERAND, late 20’s, is sitting on his desk, talking to his English class. Many of the male students, including his nephew Frankie, are wearing Southwest General football jerseys.

 COLTON

…and since we have so many athletes in the class, I thought we could start out the year by reading this— (He holds up a copy of *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles. The kids GROAN) Wait now…now what’s with the groaning? You’re gonna love it! It’s all about jocky guys at a jocky school who jump out of trees during World War Two! (A female student in a cheerleading outfit, DEBBY, raises her hand) Yes, Debby?

 DEBBY

It’s Deh-bor-ah. So, like, that’s the war that’s about M\*A\*S\*H, right?

 COLTON

Well, Deborah, M\*A\*S\*H is set during the Korean War…

 DEBORAH

And that’s that place where that Kim Chun-King guy is planning on taking over, like, the whole entire world?

 COLTON

Sort of. Are there any other questions? (Frankie raises his hand) Frankie?

 FRANKIE

We can read this off our phones, right?

 COLTON

No! (More whining from the class) I’m sorry; but I want you to actually read the words off of a page made out of actual paper. Look (he holds up the book) Look at how thin it is! It’s only two-hundred pages. Fits right in a pocket! (CONTINUED)

(The bell RINGS) Frankie, I want to speak to you for a minute (The other students exit and Frankie stops at Colton’s desk. Colton holds out his hand) Hand it over.

 FRANKIE

(Sighs as he reaches into his book bag and retrieves a shiny red apple, which he hands to Colton) It wasn’t my idea.

 COLTON

(Chuckles) Tell your mom I said thanks. (Frankie starts out the door) Frankie, listen…ahh, you don’t have a problem being in my class, do you?

 FRANKIE

No dude. I mean, everyone knows you’re gay.

 COLTON

I meant that I was you uncle.

 FRANKIE

Why would that be a problem? I love you bruh!

 COLTON

That’s “Uncle Bruh” to you! (He tosses the copy of *A Separate Peace* to Frankie who catches it with one hand). And no Cliff’s Notes!

 FRANKIE

Whatever… (he exits and Colton shines the apple on his shirt and then bites into it with gusto).

CUT TO RESTAURANT:

 LARAINE

 (Sipping coffee) I thought those boys were gay.

 TAFT

Well Colton is. I never even considered my nephew—

LARAINE

I was talking about the two boys from *A Separate Peace*. Anyways, I really think you should— (She’s interrupted by the wait staff who place a piece of cake with a candle in it, in front of Taft. They sing “The Birthday Song” like a choir of angels and depart the table) I think you should go up to see your family. You only get one, you know.

 TAFT

Which is certainly more than enough. But what about Jabul?

 LARAINE

He’s too kinky for you. He likes those hot fudge sundaes. I can get Pamela to go. She’s a freak.

 TAFT

Well, they are planning a surprise birthday party for me tomorrow.

 LARAINE

Will you be surprised?

 TAFT

Only if I make it out of there in one piece. (She contemplates the candle then blows it out and hands a fork to Laraine).

 LARAINE

By the way…do any of them know about your *alternative lifestyle*?

 TAFT

No…

 LARAINE

You know, sooner or later, someone is going to find out. Sometimes it’s better if they find out from the horse’s mouth…instead of some horse’s ass, right?

 TAFT

I’ve managed to keep it a secret this long…

 LARAINE

And we all know that keeping secrets forever is, oh, I don’t know (She digs into the cake slice with her fork) A piece of cake!

 TAFT

(She half-heartedly laughs and takes a forkful of cake) Too much vanilla…

 LARAINE

You’ve always been a little too much vanilla.

CUT TO CREDIT SEQUENCE.

ACT ONE

EXT. GIBSON AND NATALIE’S HOUSE -LATE AFTERNOON

Taft pulls up in front of the house in a two-seat, luxury roadster. She looks at the house, smiles and then sighs. She gets out of the car, and grabs a Neiman-Marcus shopping bag from the back seat, adjusts her fur coat and goes to the door. She knocks on the door and before she even gets to knock number two, the door flies open, revealing her excited young niece, Rochelle.

 ROCHELLE

 Auntie!

 TAFT

 Hi Rochelle!

Rochelle pulls her into the house, nearly breaking her aunt’s arm in the process.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE -LATE AFTERNOON

Rochelle has her aunt in a bear hug.

 ROCHELLE

 I love your coat!

Natalie comes out of the kitchen and joins the pair.

 NATALIE

 Hi Taft! Rochelle, let go of your aunt.

 TAFT

Hi Natalie (She kneels down and retrieves a box from the shopping bag and hands it to Rochelle) This is for you…

ROCHELLE

So cool! (Mispronouncing)Yeveeze Saint Lohrent! (She pulls the lid off of the box, revealing a deluxe make-up kit and then throws her arms around her aunt’s neck).

 TAFT

(Over Rochelle’s shoulder to Natalie) That’s exactly how I used to pronounce it!

 NATALIE

(Confused) That’s not how you pronounce it?

 ROCHELLE

Mom, can I?

 NATALIE

We discussed this. No make-up until you’re thirteen…

 TAFT

Oh, I’m sorry. I would’ve—

 NATALIE

It’s fine. She can keep it. She just can’t wear it yet.

 ROCHELLE

Mom please? Just a tiny bit?

 NATALIE

We’ll see. Now go tell your brother your aunt is here.

 ROCHELLE

(As she leaves) Mom, you know “we’ll see” always means “no.”

CUT TO:

INT. FRANKIE’S ROOM -LATE AFTERNOON

Frankie is reclining on his bed, reading *A Separate Peace* (the book, not his phone). A tear trickles down his cheek and he wipes it away, just as his door bursts open and Rochelle charges into the room.

 ROCHELLE

 Auntie Taft is here!

 FRANKIE

Shell, I asked you to knock first. Do I have to start locking the door?

 ROCHELLE

Sorry, I forgot. Hey, are you reading a book?

FRANKIE

No, I’m doing the dance of the seven veils… (He puts the book on the nightstand) I’ll be right there… (Rochelle leaves and he picks up a gym sock off the floor, sniffles and then blows his nose into the sock) Damn!

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM -LATE AFTERNOON

Taft takes off her coat and throws it on the recliner and reaches into the shopping bag for another box, which she hands to Natalie.

 NATALIE

 Oh, Taft, really! You didn’t have to do that!

 TAFT

 I wanted to.

 NATALIE

(Opens the box and removes a Hermes scarf depicting horses in various stances) Oh my goodness, a scarf! (Unfolding it) It’s so big! (Pointing at one of the horses) Oh, this one looks exactly like Mulligan, my horse on the farm! Thanks Taft (She hugs her).

 TAFT

You can actually wear it as a blouse if you want. I can show you. It’s a thing. There are online tutorials and—

 GIBSON

(Entering room) Hey daffy Taffy! (He goes to his sister and they hug).

TAFT

Hi Gib.

She raises her hand and Gibson follows. Shortly, the pair are performing an elaborate secret hand-shake. Apparently, something from childhood, it even has phrases like: “Don’t feel bad, don’t feel blue! Frankenstein was ugly too!” And: “Lean to the left, move to the right! Peel your banana and OOOMMMPPPHHH, take a bite!” Natalie, Rochelle and Frankie (who has entered during this) watch the proceedings in various states of delight and/or embarrassment.

 FRANKIE

 Can you teach me that?

 TAFT

(Moving towards him) Oh my God! Somebody had a growth spurt! (They hug) Would you look at these shoulders?

 FRANKIE

(Blushing) Oh Auntie!

 TAFT

(Reaching in the bag again; then to Frankie) Look kid; I was gonna get you a catcher’s mitt or something but I know you already have everything they make for all that jock-o stuff, so, I figured you could figure out what you wanted (She hands him a credit-gift card).

 FRANKIE

Oh Auntie, so Gucci! Thank you!

 TAFT

Oh! Well, I’m sure you can use that at Gucci—

 FRANKIE

(Laughs) Oh, that just means it’s…like, you probably would’ve said “neat” back in the day…

 TAFT

How old do you think I am?

 NATALIE

I hope that’s not too much? How much is on that?

 TAFT

Now, that’s between me and Frankie (Natalie bites her tongue and looks at Gibson: Are you okay with this?)

 GIBSON

(Changing subject) Let me hang up your coat (he picks it up off the chair) Hmmmm, fancy-schmancy! I guess Chez Schmidt is doing well, huh?

 TAFT

Oh, that old thing? That was grand mom’s. It’s falling apart.

 GIBSON

Which grand-mom? Because I don’t remember either one of them wearing this (he goes to the closet).

 NATALIE

Taft, we’ve been meaning to get down to the city and see your place; but you know, with the lockdowns and all, we just couldn’t.

 TAFT

Oh, I understand.

 NATALIE

But you are reopened, right?

 TAFT

Oh, yeah! (Quickly changing subject). So, Frankie, how’s school?

 FRANKIE

It’s fine. I’m in Uncle Colton’s English class, so that’s a little awkward. More for him maybe.

TAFT

Yeah, I could see that. I’m sure it will be fine. And you’re still playing ball, I imagine.

 NATALIE

(Scoffs) “Imagine”? We’ve got scouts coming out of the woodwork. U.M. is interested!

 TAFT

You-em? Ummm, what is “U-M”?

 GIBSON

(Sitting in recliner with a chuckle) University of Michigan.

 TAFT

Of course! Is that like a big deal or something?

 NATALIE

(Disbelieving) Well, it’s only where Tom Brady got his start!

 TAFT

Oh, that’s great Frankie. And you’re using protection, right?

 NATALIE

Pardon me?

 TAFT

(Nervous laugh) Oh, well…you know, like a helmet! For his head! So, he won’t get a concussion or something like that!

 FRANKIE

Well, Auntie, it’s kind of a requirement.

 ROCHELLE

Don’t worry, his skull is pretty thick.

GIBSON

Yeah, he comes from a long line of thick skulls; but you know Taft, I do worry about that—

 TAFT

What?

 GIBSON

Head—and neck—injuries…

 FRANKIE

Here we go…

 NATALIE

(Changing subject. To Rochelle who is still forlornly looking at the make-up kit) Shell, go get the lighted mirror from my bathroom.

 ROCHELLE

(Realizing) Really? (Her mother nods and Rochelle is out of the room like lightning. Natalie shoots a look at Gibson who pretends not to see it).

 GIBSON

(Aiming remote at TV) I think the Michigan-Indiana game is on ESPN… (The awkward silence is overtaken by the familiar sounds of a televised football game).

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM -NIGHT

About an hour has passed. The coffee table has drink cups and bowls of snack foods and a make-shift beauty parlor, where Natalie and Taft have been showing Rochelle how to properly apply make-up. They’ve also roped in Frankie, who is getting his eyes done by his sister.

TAFT

…I would say that blush is the true bane of any woman’s maquillage. If you think that you’ve applied too much: you have. Wouldn’t you agree Natalie?

 NATALIE

Sure. Whatever you say Taft.

 ROCHELLE

(To Frankie) You look like Adam Lambert!

 FRANKIE

Who? Does he go to Southwest? (He looks in the mirror) I think the purple eyeshadow is a bit much Shell.

 NATALIE

So do I. Go wash that off Francis.

 ROCHELLE

Let me get a picture first!

 GIBSON

Why, are you gonna blackmail him?

 NATALIE

Let me see… (She takes Rochelle’s face in her hands). I’m not gonna say you’re not beautiful, because you are. And I don’t think you need any make-up; but if you like, you can wear a little to school on Monday.

 ROCHELLE

(Looks in mirror) I have to say I look amazing. But you know what Mom? I think I will wait until I’m thirteen. (She and Frankie exit the room).

 NATALIE

You’re staying for dinner, right?

TAFT

Thanks, but I can’t. I told Colton I’d meet him for a drink.

 GIBSON

Are you gonna stay with mom and dad? (Taft rolls her eyes and makes a face) You know you can stay here too.

 NATALIE

Rochelle will go out of her mind.

 TAFT

Oh, I know…but Colton said he’d put me up. Or put up with me! May I use the powder room?

 NATALIE

Taft, stop. You know where it is. (Taft heads down the hall. Natalie picks up her scarf and playfully approaches Gibson and drapes it over him). What do you think of my present?

 GIBSON

That’s a scarf…is what it is. (The price tag is still dangling from a corner. Gibson looks at it and does a double-take). She paid four hundred and fifty dollars for this?

 NATALIE

(Looking at tag) Really? Huh! Business must be pretty good! (Holding scarf against her chest) You know, you can wear it as a blouse. (Mispronouncing) It’s Hermeeze!

 ACT TWO

EXT. TITLETOWN BREWING COMPANY RESTAURANT -NIGHT

Taft pulls her car into a space, gets out and walks towards the restaurant, which is housed in an old train station and has a massive statue of Green Bay Packers player, Donald Driver, leaping from atop a giant football.

CUT TO:

INT. TITLETOWN RESTAURANT -NIGHT

Taft enters the bar area, which is not very crowded, and sees her brother Colton at the bar. He waves and comes over to her. They hug and exchange greetings.

 TAFT

Oh, I miss you! (She raises her hand as she did with her older brother. Colton looks at her expectantly).

 COLTON

What?

 TAFT

Whadda ya mean, “what”? (He’s not getting it. She sighs). The Secret Schmidt Shimmy-Shake!

 COLTON

Oh right! I’m a little rusty Taft.

 TAFT

Don’t feel bad… (She tries to initiate the hand-shake but it’s not working). Don’t feel blue… (Colton tries but hopelessly starts tanking). Frankenstein was ugly too…(Nada). Oh, forget it! Let’s have a drink. (They return to where Colton was sitting at the bar). I just wanted to thank you again for letting me crash at your place.

 COLTON

No problem.

 TAFT

I won’t be cramping your style or anything—or with anyone…?

 COLTON

Definitely not a problem there. In fact, there’s nothing there. Or more precisely, no one.

 TAFT

Can you explain that to me? Have you looked at yourself in the mirror lately?

 COLTON

It’s not all about “looks” Taft.

 TAFT

Only people who look like you do, say that.

 COLTON

Maybe it’s my medical-grade foot odor problem.

 TAFT

Oh, get out! Wait…is that true?

 COLTON

Shall I take my shoes off? (He reaches for a foot).

 TAFT

Gross! Gross!

 COLTON

(Laughs) I don’t think my feet are any stinkier than the next guys…

 TAFT

Let’s stop talking about smelly feet. What are you drinking? (She looks at the drink menu) Oooh! Look at all these beers! Hmmmm, “Titletown Haze-asaurus Rex.” That sounds interesting.

 COLTON

I feel like a margarita.

 TAFT

That sounds good too. Sold! (Motions to BARTENDER who approaches) Two margaritas my good man. I’ll have mine on the rocks, with salt.

 COLTON

Same for me.

 TAFT

It’s a little warm in here.

 COLTON

You’re wearing a full-length, fur coat in September. (He helps her out of it). Seriously Taft, fur? I thought you were a little more—and I hate this word—woke—than that.

 TAFT

This old thing? It was grand-mom’s.

 COLTON

Which grand-mom, because I don’t remember—

 TAFT

My father’s mother. I don’t think you ever met her. And besides, whatever little creatures gave their lives for this coat are long gone. Nothing is going to change that. I feel like I’m honoring the—whatever these things are. Or were.

 COLTON

Beaver.

 TAFT

Pardon me?

 COLTON

Sheared beaver. And methinks you’re rationalizing.

 TAFT

Colton, I don’t want to talk about my personal life! (Laughs as the bartender places the drinks in front of them). And please don’t say “methinks.” People will think you’re a nerd, methinks. Like I used to be.

 COLTON

“Used to”? (Taft swats his shoulder). Well, I’m an out and proud, card-carrying member of the club. Here’s to nerds! (They clink glasses).

 TAFT

(Pointing to stage) Oh, look, they have karaoke! (She looks around) Well, this place is fun!

Taft does a double take as she watches a pair at a table. A very small Japanese girl, HIMARI FUKUMOTO, 12ish, places a foam cheese-wedge hat on the head of a very large Japanese man. He is her brother, YOSHI FUKUMOTO, LATE 20’S. Himari pulls out a smart phone and takes a selfie with him. He quickly and sheepishly removes the hat.

 TAFT

 That guy looks like a sumo wrestler.

 COLTON

 He probably is.

 TAFT

 And he keeps looking at you.

 COLTON

No. No he’s not. Is he? (Taft nods and gives a saucy giggle).

They watch as Yoshi throws some money on the table, stands and heads towards the exit. He stands stoically, staring straight ahead. Himari approaches Colton and Taft.

TAFT

Well, hello there young lady. Aren’t you adorable!

 HIMARI

Thank you. I hope I’m not disturbing you.

 TAFT

Oh, sweetie, we’re already disturbed!

 HIMARI

(To Colton) My brother was wondering if he may shoot you his digits. (Colton nearly does a spit take).

 COLTON

Why doesn’t he ask me himself?

 HIMARI

He only speaks Japanese and he’s extremely shy.

 COLTON

(Looks at Taft: Should I? She nods excitedly). Okay little girl, shoot away. (He picks up his phone and Himari relays the phone number then gives a little bow). So, you’re from Japan?

 HIMARI

Yes.

 COLTON

Don’t you have school on Monday?

 HIMARI

(Giggles) Oh, I graduated from Oxford two years ago. Thank you so much. My brother will be very pleased.

She bows again and is gone. She meets Yoshi at the door and they disappear into the night.

 TAFT

 Well, that was interesting. He is really cute!

 COLTON

 Isn’t he!?!

 TAFT

 Let’s do some tequila shots.

 COLTON

Okay; but just one. Remember you have to be fresh for this party tomorrow.

SMASH CUT TO:

Close-up of the bar-top. There is definitely more than one empty shot glass in front of Taft. She downs another one.

 COLTON

 Taft, honey, I think that’s enough for now.

 TAFT

(Two and a half sheets to the wind) Oh, pssssshhhh-tosssssshhhhh. I’m fine. I had a giant lunch with my boss…

 COLTON

I thought you were your own boss.

 TAFT

I am damn it! (She picks up her phone and looks at her image on the screen and wipes some lipstick off her teeth. She points at herself on the screen) Hey lady, you’re not the boss of me! (She turns to Colton) Why is there a sumo wrestler in Green Bay Wisconsin?

 COLTON

I’ve heard they sometimes come here to try and break into the NFL.

TAFT

Oh, well, that makes sense. So, what happens when you and sumo-guy have pillow talk? Is the Oxford grad going to interpret? How weird would that be? Grammatically precise, I’m sure; but really weird (Laughs).

 COLTON

Thanks for putting that scenario in my head.

 TAFT

(Pinching his cheek) You are welcome!

 COLTON

Listen, Taft, I want to talk to you about something.

 TAFT

I’m all ears.

 COLTON

A couple of months ago I drove down to Chicago. I wanted to surprise you at the restaurant. But when I got there, it was closed.

 TAFT

There was a lockdown.

 COLTON

No, Taft. There wasn’t. And the restaurant wasn’t just like, closed. It looked closed, closed.

 TAFT

(Abruptly)It went under. Or rather, it went up. As in “belly up.” Sadly, Taft’s Bistro is no more. C’est la vie, I guess.

 COLTON

So, this is probably none of my business, but, like, what are you doing for money?

TAFT

 I’m an heiress, remember?

 COLTON

Sure. The entire “Outside Things” fortune. Seriously, Taft. How are you getting by? Because by the look of things—

 TAFT

What things?

 COLTON

Well, that coat for one.

 TAFT

I told you. That was grand mom’s!

 COLTON

That coat is brand new. And don’t think I missed the Fendi label.

Taft starts to speak but then doesn’t. She looks down at her glass. She looks at Colton. This is a huge moment. She wants to get it off her chest. And, she’s drunk.

 TAFT

 I’m a hooker.

 COLTON

 (What can he say?) …You…make rugs?

 TAFT

 Nope. I’m a Lady of the Night.

 COLTON

(Hopefully) The graveyard shift at Northwestern Hospital?

 TAFT

I’m a call girl.

COLTON

 Extended car warranties?

 TAFT

(Loudly) I’m a whore!

Suddenly, the booze hits her full force and she lurches off the barstool and starts singing “I’m A Whore” to the tune of “I Am Woman” with bits of “Lady Marmalade” mixed in. She stumbles onto the karaoke stage and picks up the microphone. She taps it.

 TAFT

Is this on? (It is indeed, ON and she continues singing). “I’m a woman, I’m a whore, with titties too big to ignore…and I’ve screwed too much to go back and pretend…’cuz I’ve done it all before, when I was down there on the floor…

The BAR PATRONS APPLAUD. Colton has clambered onto the stage and is trying to get the mic away from her.

 BARTENDER

Hey lady, karaoke is tomorrow night!

 COLTON

Okay Sis, time to get you home—

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT -NIGHT

Taft is staggering as her brother guides her across the pavement. She looks up at the football player statue.

 TAFT

(Singing to the tune of “Ice, Ice Baby”): Nice ass baby! Nice ass baby. (Waving her phone which is shooting off camera flashes) We’ve got the papa-papa-papa-ronis after us! Hey Colt, let’s get a selfie with the quarter-back!

 COLTON

No. We’re going home now. And he’s a wide-receiver…

 TAFT

Hey, my co-worker Pam specializes in that! (Looking about, crosseyed) Dude, where’s my car?

 COLTON

It will be fine here overnight. I’ll drive.

They get to his car and he piles her into it.

 TAFT

 Oh, I love my little baby brother!

CUT TO:

INT. COLTON’S APARTMENT -NIGHT

Colton’s place is tiny but charming, natch. He guides Taft, who is now muttering nonsense, into the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. COLTON’S BEDROOM -NIGHT

Colton moves Taft towards the bed.

 TAFT

(Looking into Colton’s eyes) I wanted to be the next Julia Child, Colton…not the next Xaviera Hollander…

 COLTON

Girl, you gotta get some new references.

He lets her go and she falls to the bed. Colton removes her shoes. He’s still holding the coat, which he gently covers her with. He exits the room and leaves the door ajar. He sits on his sofa and sighs. He takes out his phone and looks at the number that Himari gave him. His finger hovers above the “Call” icon; and then the phone RINGS. He answers.

 COLTON

Hi Mom. Yeah, she’s here. No, she’s already in bed. Yeah, she was super tired. I’ll ask her to call you in the morning—sorry—tell her to call you. Yes, I’ll see you tomorrow. No, of course I didn’t tell her about it. Okay. Yep. Good-night. (He clicks off the phone, sits back on the couch and closes his eyes. Then, to himself): Do they even have cheese in Japan?

 TAG

INT. COLTON’S BEDROOM -MORNING

Taft is completely swallowed by the fur coat. Her phone starts LOUDLY RINGING “Roxanne.” Taft sits up and GROANS and pulls the coat off her head. She desperately rifles the coat for the ringing phone. Finally, she finds it, takes it out and answers it.

 TAFT

Hello? (We can hear the voice of Rochelle singing “The Birthday Song” at the top of her lungs). Oh! That’s great sweetie! You have a lovely singing voice… (But the voice doesn’t stop singing) That’s great Shell, really, really great! (She clutches her head in the throes of hang-over misery). Really terrific…gee, I didn’t know this song had so many verses… (and we FADE TO BLACK).

(OUT)