

## Start From Here

Characters: Molly - mid 30s

Lawrence - 60-70 years old

Setting: An apartment in NYC in the evening, present day

*We open on a stage bathed in low blue lights, barely visible to the audience. As the lights come down, "Say It To Me Now" by Glen Hansard begins playing over the speakers. The song plays in its entirety, setting the mood for the show.*

*As the song plays, the lights stay low in blue and we see the silhouette of Lawrence in his studio apartment. He lives alone. The space looks comfortably lived in with a couch and coffee table centerstage and bed UL, with a bookshelf and a bartending cart (or liquor cabinet) on SR. He's writing in a journal while pacing slowly on the stage.*

*At the end of the song, lights gradually come up and we see the stage and Lawrence. There is a silent beat and then the doorbell buzzes loudly. Lawrence sits with his journal a moment, then goes to the intercom and lets in his guest. He turns the knob on his front door, leaving it barely open and places his journal back on the bookshelf. He stares at his shelf with his back to the door as Molly opens the door.*

*She stares at his back quietly a moment and lets herself in, gently closing the door behind her and putting her things on the chair next to the door. Lawrence does not turn around but he's aware she's come in.*

Molly: *(waits a moment, looking at Lawrence's back. She does not approach him).* Hey.

Lawrence: *(he lets that hang for a moment, then turns around, short but not rude)* Hey yourself.

*There is a moment where they take each other in.*

Molly: It's good to see you.

Lawrence: ...Likewise.

Molly: ...How have you been?

Lawrence: *(pause)* Adequate.

Molly: *(she chuffs)* Adequate? Just....adequate?

Lawrence: That's me.

Molly: That's...very you. *(pause)* How's your health?

Lawrence: Fine.

Molly: Good.

Lawrence: *(pause)* How about you?

Molly: Doing well....I saw the op-ed you wrote recently. About the writer's strike.

Lawrence: Did you?

Molly: Yeah. It was all over my feed. A lot of friends were posting about it.

Lawrence: It helps to be pro-writer.

Molly: Right. Seemed you hit the right tone with the right crowd.

Lawrence: That's good to hear.

Molly: ...I'm starting a new job soon, so...really looking forward to that.

Lawrence: Doing what?

Molly: Copywriter for an ad agency.

Lawrence: Sounds soul sucking.

Molly: *(lightly laughs)* I know. But it pays the bills so...

Lawrence: *(sincerely)* I hope you enjoy it.

Molly: Thanks. Me too. *(pause, looking around)* ...This place looks exactly the same. You'd think something would change in...what, 8 years?

Lawrence: 9 years

Molly: 9 years? Wow.... that's crazy to me...Are you writing anything new?

Lawrence: Not recently

Molly: Really? Why not?

Lawrence: I haven't had the time.

Molly: Are you still running your classes? I keep recommending people to you but I tell them I'm not entirely sure if it's still happening or not.

Lawrence: *(makes a face)* It's been difficult since the pandemic...a lot of people are unresponsive but I thought I might give it another go in a few weeks. Virtual, I mean. Send out a blast.

Molly: Sure...*(beat)* I miss in person groups. Hopefully you'll have a good turnout. A couple of my writing groups disbanded too so I've been looking for a new crew to join...*(Lawrence does not invite her, she notices)*

*They stand in silence.*

Molly: So...

*Lawrence stares at her, she stares at him. Nervous tension fills the room.*

Molly: *(breaks eye contact first)*...it's interesting how I've been here so many times and now it feels-...

Lawrence: Different.

Molly: *(considering it)* Yeah...different...*(she looks around the apartment as he looks at her)*

Lawrence: *(softly)* You look different.

Molly: What?

Lawrence: You look different.

Molly: Oh...in a good way?

Lawrence: Just different.

Molly: *(understands, takes off her shoes)* I'm not 24 anymore. I grew up.

*Lawrence nods and looks around his apartment as Molly makes her way around his home, slowly looking at things on the shelves and reacquainting herself. She picks up a small figurine on one of the shelves.*

Molly: You still have the panther figurine I gave you! I thought for sure this would be gone.

Lawrence: Hasn't moved off the shelf.

Molly: His little leopard buddy is still on my shelf too.

Lawrence: *(pause)* I can see you're making yourself at home.

Molly: Ah-! Sorry. *(puts back the figurine)* I was just checking to see if anything's changed. I- I shouldn't have-

Lawrence: It's all right.

Molly: Really? *(joking)* I'm kinda nosy.

Lawrence: *(lightly teasing)* Nosy and inquisitive as ever.

Molly: *(laughs)* Yeah...um-but really. If you want me to sit down like a normal person instead, I can...

Lawrence: *(sincere)* It's fine.

Molly: You're sure?

Lawrence: Yes.

Molly: Ok cool. *(She turns back to the shelves she was looking at. Lawrence quietly chuckles at her reaction)*

*Molly notices a small picture frame on the shelf of a teenage boy and younger girl. She picks it up.*

Molly: This is new. *(She studies the photo)*

Lawrence: Stop!

*Molly freezes in place and looks back to Lawrence.*

Lawrence: *(serious)* That is one of the few remaining pictures I have of my sister when we were young. Please be careful.

Molly: I-I'm sorry. *(she gently places it back on the shelf)* I didn't know.

Lawrence: *(he walks over to pick up the photo frame)* I recently unearthed some old family photos I hadn't seen in years and this was one of them.

Molly:....like, a shoebox under the bed situation?

Lawrence: Nearly.

*Lawrence takes the frame over to the shelves near the bartending cart and places it on an eye-level shelf there instead.*

Molly: *(tentatively)* ...sorry Lawrence. I-

Lawrence: *(continuing to look at the photo)* I was 16 and she was 7. In this. *(nods towards the photo)*

Molly: It's a cute photo. I don't think I've ever seen a photo of you that young.

Lawrence: She was unwell when this was taken, as she often was. I protected her as much as I could so she would feel safe...cared for...

Molly: *(sincerely)* That's very sweet, Lawrence.

*He doesn't answer her. Molly stands in place a moment, starts to say something but stops herself, then moves towards her bag.*

Molly: ...Not to interrupt any deep thoughts but, look what I found. (*Lawrence turns around as Molly pulls out a stack of papers from her bag*) I brought your pile of potential books. It's strange how something can sit in your house for years and you never notice until you're getting ready to move. Is there a particular place you want them?

Lawrence: Anywhere is fine

Molly: (*looking through the papers*) You know, we could read through them, if you wanted. It would be fun to make notes again and go over character motivations, inciting actions....you know....all that stuff....

Lawrence: ...you're not in my class anymore.

Molly: Right, I know but...I mean, I'm moving in a few weeks and it might...I don't know...be nice?

Lawrence: Is that a question or an estimation?

Molly: (*playful*) You're the writer. Why don't you tell me?

*Lawrence rolls his eyes and shakes his head.*

Molly: Booooo, grumpy writer!

Lawrence: You can put them on the coffee table, please.

Molly: I will. (*plants herself down on his couch with the manuscripts in her lap, looking through them*) Honestly, I haven't really read through all these but I think you should give them another chance.

Lawrence: (*playful sarcastic*) Do you?

Molly: You never know. One might actually be good. (*she looks up at him and smiles*)

Lawrence: I suppose if you're staying longer, I should offer you a beverage. (*turns to the bartender cart to get a glass*)

Molly: Yes please. Do you have a good red...?

Lawrence: *(He pours water into a glass and hands it to her)* Unfortunately for you, we are bereft of red. Water

Molly: *(slightly disappointed)* I suppose that will have to do.

Lawrence: *(pouring himself a glass)* Given our history, I don't think alcohol would be appropriate...*(he stares at her knowingly)*

Molly: Ooooo, the dreaded influence!

Lawrence: Molly...

Molly: Lawrence...

*He rolls his eyes and sits on a chair next to the couch, opposite the side Molly is on. Molly is reading the scripts on her lap as Lawrence is looking at the glass of water in his hands, contemplating.*

Lawrence: Is your family all right?

Molly: Yeah. I think so, anyway. I had to cut my mother out unfortunately but my sisters say she's still the same.

Lawrence: *(sincere, this is big)* Oh... What happened?

Molly: *(still looking at the scripts, shakes her head and shrugs)* She said a lot of...nasty things that were really uncalled for. Never apologized, never took any responsibility and it was the last straw for me. I haven't spoken to her in about 6 months.

Lawrence: Do you think there's any chance of reconciliation?

Molly: *(thinks, looks at him)* When your mother tells you she's glad you're not having children because she doesn't want anyone like you...

Lawrence: Did she really?

Molly: Yeah, so... *(turns back to scripts)*

Lawrence: Can't imagine why you'd cut her out. *(drinks)*

Molly: We've been through this cycle so many times; we're talking, one little thing sets her off, she says horrible things about me to me, I'M the one who apologizes, we don't talk for a couple months, and then we somehow start talking again. It's always the same.

Lawrence: It's a shame-

Molly: And you'd think, you know, you try setting boundaries and asking her not to talk about certain things and she blows up in your face complaining about how she can't be "real" with you and how you're not letting her "vent" her issues. Like, stop telling me about your abuse. I can't help you!.....*(pause)* I'm sorry. I shouldn't have brought all that up. *(she looks at him)*

Lawrence: It's all right....I'm very sorry things fell as they did.

Molly: Me too. *(they hold a look and she goes back to the manuscripts)*

Lawrence: ...you know, my father had these....moods. They were quite unpredictable when I was very young. He would stay up for days carving and at times, he would call me into his shop to help him. My hands were too small for some of the tools but the really intricate work, when he needed small hands, he would guide me into making these tiny designs. One night...I must have been about 8...he called me in to help him restore an old sideboard. He had been yelling at my mother that morning which was a sign that I had to be well behaved in his shop. So I went in, shaking all over...

Molly: You wanted to impress him.

Lawrence: I wanted to show him I was capable. I heard how he spoke about men who wouldn't put in the work to build with their hands or to fix something that was broken. He was passionate about his work, to put it mildly...So I walked into his shop and looked at the sideboard, which was bigger than me at the time. He asked me to pull out one of the drawers and as I did, the handle came off in my hands. I looked at my father, absolutely terrified of how he would react.

Molly: What did he do?

Lawrence: At first he just stared at the handle in my hand, veins starting to pop up in his neck. I stood still, hoping he'd say anything. The silence was excruciating. His face went red and as he opened his mouth, I tried to put the handle back on. The screw had been



stripped and I ended up scratching the front which made him even angrier. He screamed at me to get the hell out of his shop and I ran home.

Molly: That's awful.

Lawrence: He came home later that night and they had another argument while I was in bed. My mother tried to defend me but...*(he pauses a moment, lost in the memory, then shakes his head)* The next morning, I got out of bed and found my mother crying at the table....she told me he left and it would be just us for a while. I never saw him again.

Molly: Jesus christ, Lawrence....you never told me about this...

Lawrence: There's a reason for that.

Molly: Did you end up blaming yourself?

Lawrence: For a time. But my point is...you are not obligated to give out forgiveness and you're not responsible for *her* behavior.

Molly: Yeah... There's just a lot of guilt that's hard to get rid of.

Lawrence: Molly. *(she looks at him)* It gets easier.

Molly: *(nodding, quiet)* Thank you.

Lawrence: *(pause)* Is there anything I can do?

Molly: *(scoffs)* I don't know, probably not. If I had any answers, I wouldn't be here....I mean, not "here" literally but, you know-

Lawrence: I understand.

Molly: Thanks....I'm sorry about your dad.

*Lawrence just nods and finishes his water. A moment passes. Then Molly goes through the stack of manuscripts and finds a thick one held together with a binder clip. She stares at it a moment and then hands it to Lawrence*

Molly: Here. Make yourself useful.

Lawrence: *(takes the script and gets up, looking at it, puzzled)* “Foundational Growth”..?

Molly: What’s wrong?

Lawrence: *(starts pacing around the room, he flips through the pages confused)* I don’t remember writing this...God...where is my mind going?

Molly: Hm, weird. Check the title page again. Maybe there’s a date written on it...

*Lawrence flips to the title page, scans it, has a realization, looks to Molly, back to the script.*

Lawrence: Ah, was this your great ploy?

Molly: *(innocently)* What?

Lawrence: You knew I didn’t write this and yet you still included it with the stack.

Molly: Ok, so I brought one of my own. For notes.

Lawrence: “Notes”.

Molly: Yes. And I wanted to go over it with you because I want to try and publish it.

Lawrence: Did it ever cross your mind that I might be busy?

Molly: Yes. But I know you and I know Saturdays are a day off.

Lawrence: Who’s to say I don’t have a student coming in an hour?

Molly: Then I guess we have an hour.

*Lawrence puts on his glasses and sits back down in the chair. There is a moment of silence. Then-*

Lawrence: I knew I wouldn’t title something as *gaudy* as “Foundational Growth”.

Molly: Hey!

Lawrence: A little on the nose, don’t you think?

Molly: It's my first draft!

Lawrence: I seem to remember someone asking for notes. *My* notes, in fact. Could I have imagined that? *(he rests his elbow on the arm of the chair, hand on his face, staring pointedly at Molly)*

Molly: *(stares at him, deadpan)* Less gaudy, noted.

Lawrence: *(reading from the beginning synopsis)* "An American love story exploring the complexities and differing perspectives in....." *(he pauses reading)* ...Molly.

Molly: Hm?

Lawrence: *(referring to the script)* What is this?

Molly: *(sarcastically, not looking at him)* A manuscript.

Lawrence: A manuscript. *(he takes off his glasses and tosses them on the table)* What exactly is this about?

Molly: "An American love story exploring the complexities and differing perspectives in an age gap relationship". Sometimes you need to finish the sentence, Lawrence.

Lawrence: Molly, I'm serious.

Molly: So am I. I'm just reading the words off the page.

Lawrence: *(stares at Molly, bewildered)* ...how can you be so indifferent about this?

Molly: It's not that big a deal. People write about this stuff all the time. It's not like it's a new idea.

Lawrence: Molly, you can't-...*(he rubs his head)* When you write about- *(exhales, beat)*...You couldn't be bothered to talk to me first?

Molly: You would have dismissed it before I had any idea *how* I wanted to write it. This is something I wanted to create!

Lawrence: Without any consideration for me, clearly.

Molly: You haven't even read it!

Lawrence: I don't need to. I've lived it!

Molly: So have I. *(pause, she leans forward)* I know what we had and I know what we didn't. The majority of this *(gestures to the manuscript)* is "didn't". If you'd give it a chance, maybe you'd change your mind!

*Beat. Lawrence gets up and starts pacing.*

Molly: Ok, Lawrence, don't you think you're being a little dramatic?

Lawrence: I don't know considering this is something that could significantly affect my career.

Molly: *(gets up and goes to him)* Lawrence, I didn't put your name in it. I didn't specify anything about you. It's pure fiction.

Lawrence: *(stops pacing)* Pure fiction?! *(beat)* Do you have any idea what *could* happen if people put the pieces together?

Molly: Well, yeah. That's why I wrote it the way I did. You are protected.

Lawrence: You can't guarantee that.

Molly: Correct. I can't. BUT like I said, I didn't put anything identifying you in it. No one is going to know about our...*(struggling to find the right word)*...affair.

Lawrence: *(hurt)* An affair. Right. *(he goes to sit on the arm of the couch, back mostly turned to Molly)*

Molly: *(she goes to stand on the other side of the couch)* I'm sorry. That's not what I meant to say.

Lawrence: But saying it says a lot.

Molly: Lawrence, what other terms can I use? We couldn't call it a *real* relationship. You wouldn't even go out in public with me.

Lawrence: And that defines a relationship to you?

Molly: No! That's just an example-

Lawrence: (*pointedly*): But a two year "affair" helps boil it down to the bare bones of what it was, right?

Molly: (*serious*) Don't do that. You know that's not what I mean.

Lawrence: It may not have been what you meant but it's what you said.

Molly: Stop. It's not like that.

Lawrence: So (*turns to her*), tell me this so I'm clear, am I listening for what you're saying or what you're meaning?

*A pause. Molly is hurt by this*

Molly: Can-..can we restart here? Like take a breath and pull back a minute?

Lawrence: (*pauses*) I-....(*realizes, then-*) No. (*gets up and goes to the bartending cart to pour himself whiskey in a glass*)

Molly: No??...What do you mean "no"?!

Lawrence: (*pause, matter of fact*) I said no. It's really a simple answer. (*He turns to her*) Or perhaps you should listen to what I *mean* instead

*He drinks, it's a cheap shot and he knows it*

Molly: ...I thought the rules were no alcohol tonight.

Lawrence: I'm beginning to think I could have been wrong.

Molly: (*suspicious*) Why are you being like this? You've never talked to me this way before.

Lawrence: Tell me why you wrote the story.

Molly: I thought you didn't want to read it.

Lawrence: I don't. I want to know why you wrote it.

Molly: Why does it matter?

Lawrence: *(warning)* Moll...

Molly: *(annoyed)* What?!

*There is a moment of tense silence.*

Molly: *(crosses her arms and takes a step forward)* Why don't we do this: you tell me why you want to know so badly and *then* I'll tell you why I wrote it?

Lawrence: *(shaking his head)* Uh-uh. We're not doing this.

Molly: I don't see why not; I'm offering a basic trade of information.

Lawrence: It's not going to work like that.

Molly: Why not?

Lawrence: Because.

Molly:...because? That's it? Just because?!

Lawrence: That's the rule

Molly: *(scoffs and rolls her eyes)* You and your "rules"...*(she turns her back to him and paces in front of the couch)*

Lawrence: It's my house.

Molly: I know.

Lawrence: *(continuing)* So it's my rules

Molly: *(sarcastic)* Yes, we've established that.

Lawrence: *(he takes a step towards her)* Perhaps you need reminding...

Molly: *(Stops pacing, faces him)* No, I very clearly remember your rules. But I don't think they apply to me any-

Lawrence: *(with authority)* Stop talking.

*For a moment, Molly is stunned. But her body relaxes as she catches on.*

Molly: *(beat, eyeing Lawrence)* Don't you dare...

*Lawrence takes a moment. He does not break eye contact.*

Lawrence: Sit down.

Molly: *(breathing, a pause)* I haven't done this with any-

Lawrence: *(interrupting, more firm)* Sit. Down.

*Molly starts breathing heavier and without breaking eye contact, she slowly sits on the couch.*

*Lawrence approaches Molly as a predator does with prey. He takes his time, building the anticipation. He places his glass on the table and goes behind the couch. Lawrence ends up leaning over the back of the couch to position his head right next to her's. As his head gets close, Molly turns her head slightly and he follows, positioning his mouth at the top of her ear.*

Lawrence: It's been a long time since we've played this game, Molly...

Molly: *(quietly, breathing)* Fuck.

Lawrence: *(pause, anger brewing)* Might I remind you that you are in my home?

Molly: *(struggling)* You might.

Lawrence: *(continuing)* And being in my home, you are aware that I set the expectations?

Molly: I'm aware...But rules were made to be broken.

Lawrence: *(pause)* I believe you're also aware of what happens when you *break* my rules.

Molly: *(lost in the memory)* Yes *(she turns her head to him, their faces close)*...I used to love the punishment.

Lawrence: I know you did...*(a pause, then Lawrence pulls away from her)* Stand up.

*Molly stands up slowly and Lawrence walks to stand next to her, his body turned facing her. He takes her chin in his hand and brings it up to look at him, face to face.*

Lawrence: As my guest, you *will* obey the rules I set in my home for as long as you're here. Do you understand me?

Molly: *(low)* Well, I'd say I'm more than just a guest now, right Lawrence? After all, I have seen you without your clothes on.

*They stare into each other's eyes, nearly daring the other to make a move. Then Lawrence removes his hand from her chin and quietly chuckles, picking his glass up off the table.*

Lawrence: You haven't changed. You're as much of a stubborn brat as you were back then.

Molly: I'm stuck in my ways. *(she takes his drink from his hand and finishes it, putting the empty glass on the coffee table)* So.

Lawrence: So.

*A tense beat.*

Molly: ...You want to know why?

Lawrence: You're giving up that easy?

Molly: I'm not. I just feel bad for you.

Lawrence: You should watch that mouth.

Molly: Make me.



Lawrence: *(that's it)* You are asking to be bent over my knee and spanked.

Molly: Careful you don't break your hand, old man.

Lawrence: You are treading in dangerous waters, Miss Molly.

Molly: Danger is my middle name

*In this moment, Molly breathes in suddenly and places her hand on her chest, breaking the eye contact. Lawrence notices her energy shift and drops his demeanor.*

Lawrence: *(concerned)* Is everything all right?

Molly: *(pause)* Yeah....I just suddenly got overwhelmed with-...I forgot what...playing was like...with you...it came back so easily...

*Lawrence looks her over, unsure of what to say next. Then-*

Lawrence: *(low)* I-....I have to tell you...I saw a photo of you recently with your hair...*(he trails off a bit and tentatively puts his hand near her head but almost afraid to touch it, as if he'd cross some boundary he shouldn't)*...and-..I realized I still...well.. *(he can't bring himself to say it out loud)*

*Molly gently takes his hand and puts it on the side of her head. Lawrence almost breathes a sigh of relief. She nods, there's a moment, and as she takes her hand away, so does he.*

Molly: *(flat)* I wanted to feel closer to you. That's why I wrote it.

*Molly takes the empty whiskey glass and heads to the bartending cart, picks up the bottle, turns around, and goes to sit on the couch. She fills her glass and drinks, putting the glass back on the table and stares at it. Lawrence watches her do this and rather than take the bottle back to the cart, he goes to the cart and pulls out a second bottle to pour for himself. He takes his now full glass and slowly paces the apartment while Molly is still staring, both processing what just happened. Then Molly breaks the silence.*

Molly: *(quietly)* I guess I should call myself a car.

Lawrence: *(stops pacing, pauses)* There's no need for that.

Molly: But you've got a student coming.

Lawrence: I lied *(takes a drink from his glass)*

*The silence in the room is palpable. Molly runs her fingers through her hair and Lawrence stands in place behind the couch. Until-*

Molly: This sucks *(takes another drink)*

*Lawrence nods in agreement. He takes another drink and prepares himself before replying.*

Lawrence: I very nearly considered canceling this meeting...This was not my expectation.

Molly: To be honest, I'm surprised you didn't.

Lawrence: *(shrugs)* I wanted my manuscripts back.

Molly: Bullshit. *(turns to look at him)* I don't believe that for a second.

Lawrence: *(chuckles, to himself)* Quite right.

*Molly turns to face front again. Another pause.*

Molly: Where do we go from here?

Lawrence: ...I've been wondering that myself *(he walks to sit on the other end of the couch with her)* I shouldn't have-

Molly: No, it's all right...it was...like going down memory lane *(drinks)*

Lawrence: A bit further than I meant...

*Another silence between them.*

Molly: ...you know, I have a calendar event notice that still pops up with your end of summer workshop each year?

Lawrence: In August?

Molly: Yeah.

Lawrence: Why haven't you deleted it?

Molly: I forgot at first. Then it comes up and I think of deleting it but I just...slide the notification away.

*Lawrence thinks on this and doesn't respond.*

Molly: ...Are things always going to be weird between us? I don't want it to be weird.

Lawrence: I doubt you'll have to worry about that much longer. You're moving.

Molly: Shit....yeah. I keep forgetting...

Lawrence: Before you know it, you'll be gone.

Molly: Don't say it like that. You make it sound like I'm dying!

Lawrence: *(teasing)* Ashes to ashes...

Molly: *(laughing, hits his arm with a couch pillow)* Shut up! *(they both chuckle. Beat)* I don't want to lose you.

Lawrence: Molly...you know we can't go back. Even if that were possible...I don't think I could.

Molly: Right...

Lawrence: You can remember how deeply I felt for you...it still stings for me after all this time.

Molly: Me too. I just...I still want to be involved in your life. Even if it's not a lot, I-...I worry about you.

Lawrence: *(serious)* You shouldn't.

Molly: *(gives it right back to him)* But I do. *(shrugs)* I can't help it.

Lawrence: Unfortunately, you can't have everything, Moll. *(finishes his drink and gets up to pour another)* You had to expect some fall out.

Molly: Of course *(drinks)*...Though, I did try to fix things.

Lawrence: *(turns around)* We see it differently. And that's ok. *(drinks)*

Molly: It's not ok to me. I-*(she shakes her head and looks down)*....

Lawrence: Molly, we don't understand each other. We are different people from different generations-

Molly: That shouldn't matter!

Lawrence: *(firmly)* But it does. Things happened the way they happened and for better or worse, it is what it is.

Molly: *(quietly, to herself)* I'm trying to make things better.

*Lawrence takes a moment, decides not to say anything, then goes to sit in the chair next to the couch. Another beat, then-*

Molly: I didn't come here just to bring your manuscripts.

Lawrence: ...I know.

Molly: I wanted to-

Lawrence: -it doesn't matter.

Molly: It matters to me.

Lawrence: *(still not looking at her)* It's fine.

Molly: It's not.

Lawrence: It is.

Molly: I don't feel like it's fine.

Lawrence: It is.

Molly: *(leans forward to get into his eye line)* Can you please have a *real* conversation with me?

Lawrence: What would you like me to say?

Molly: *(gets up and starts pacing)* Jesus fucking christ, Lawrence. I'm trying to talk to you and it's like pulling teeth!

Lawrence: What would you like me to say, Molly?

Molly: *(stops and stares at him, angrily)* I'm trying to apologize to you!

Lawrence: Why?

Molly: What?

Lawrence: Why? Why now after all this time?

Molly: *(angry)* Because you wouldn't say more than two words to me any time I tried to reach out to you! Email, text, call, either ignored or barely any response!

Lawrence: *(stands up)* Now why do you think that is, Molly?

Molly: *(beat)* Look, I know I fucked up, ok? I'm in the doghouse. But I'm taking responsibility for my actions.

Lawrence: *(flat)* I can see that.

Molly: *(she takes a couple steps towards him)* I'm sorry, Lawrence. I'm sorry for what I did and the way I broke things off. I'm sorry for the way I hurt you. I just...I've been wanting to apologize to you in person and I didn't think you would agree to meet me if I didn't have a reason to come by.

Lawrence: *(nodding)*...Are you all right?

Molly: ...I don't know.

*There is a silent pause.*

Molly: ...Is there anything you would like to say to me?

Lawrence: No. This has nothing to do with me. *(picks up his drink and turns away from Molly, walking around the back of the chair)*

Molly: ...Are you kidding me? I just put out my heart and soul on the line there...

Lawrence: *(keeping his back to her)* Yes, I was listening.

Molly: And you have nothing to say to me? No response at all?

Lawrence: No. This is for you. *(drinks)*

Molly: What does *that* mean?

Lawrence: *(turns to face her)* You needed your justification heard. It has been heard.

Molly: *(takes a couple steps towards Lawrence)* That's it?? Just "heard, chef" and that's it?!

Lawrence: *(angry)* What did you expect, Molly? Did you think I would drop onto my knees, thanking you for your apology??

Molly: Of course not!

Lawrence: *(continues, walks past Molly to the bartending cart)* Or did you see me singing your praises about how kind and mature you are to take time out of your busy schedule and think of me for a moment?!

Molly: Stop it! You're not being fair.

Lawrence: Fair...*(quietly chuckling as he turns to her)* You really want to talk about fair?

Molly: Yeah, I do, actually. I'm making every effort I can to fix this. You don't want to participate in any conversation I try to have with you. So how can I POSSIBLY mend things if I'm talking to a BRICK WALL?!

Lawrence: *(finally letting it out)* You want me to talk? Fine! *(downs drink and leaves the glass on the cart, takes a step towards her)* I think it's unfair you want a response from me. Because I don't owe you one. I think it's unfair when you tossed me aside the way you did when the next guy came along. Like you didn't give a shit. After EVERYTHING we shared, do you have ANY CONCEPT of what I went through?! *(he gets very close to her, speaking low)* And I think it's unfair you expect us to be friends again. After the way you acted when Sarah died? You couldn't even be bothered to call me the next day!

Molly: I was 25, Lawrence! No one in my life had ever committed suicide before! Do you think I knew how to deal with that?

Lawrence: The minute things got hard, you ran off. Leaving me to pick up the pieces ALONE!

Molly: You can't hold that against me-

Lawrence: *(interrupting)* You could have called! You could have come over!

Molly: I can't read your mind, Lawrence! You could have said something to me, ANYTHING would have helped because I didn't know what to do!

Lawrence: Either way, she's gone. Imagine navigating that new reality! *(he pulls away and rubs his eyes)*... living the rest of your life without her, the one you were supposed to protect *(he looks up to the ceiling, back turned to Molly)*... You realize we were together that night.

Molly: *(slowly nodding)* I remember. She called.

Lawrence: I should have been there. I should have-... *(he pulls away to go to the cart and make himself another drink)* But it doesn't matter at the end of the day, right? Because it wouldn't have worked out anyway. So you're off the hook. Congratulations. I hope you feel fucking glorious *(he downs his entire drink and puts it on the bartending cart, still not looking at her.)*

Molly: Lawrence, I-

Lawrence: *(interrupting)* DON'T!

*Lawrence slams his palm down on the cart and accidentally breaks his glass. Molly looks to him and sees that his hand is bleeding. Lawrence clutches his hand tightly,*

*shaking and grimacing, then slowly opens it. He starts picking out tiny glass pieces while wincing.*

Molly: *(quietly)* Shit.

*She thinks for a second, then runs to the bed and reaches for a box underneath it. Quickly getting the medical box, she takes it to the coffee table and opens it, grabbing gauze and a long, wraparound bandage.*

*Molly stands and takes a step towards Lawrence, pauses a moment, then pushes forward to him. She touches his arm and slides her hand to his wrist, about to turn his hand up so she can see the damage better. Lawrence instinctively grabs her forearm with his good hand before she can, stopping her.*

Molly: *(sternly, looking at his eyes)* Stop it.

*He meets her eyes and relents, allowing her to see his hand fully.*

Molly: *(gently)* Come on

*Molly pulls Lawrence to the couch. She sits him down and goes DSL to grab a roll of paper towels. She sits on the couch, tears off a few paper towels, and wets them with the alcohol on the table. Then gently taking his wrist, she starts wiping the blood off Lawrence's hand. He flinches but says nothing. He will not look at her. She presses the paper towel to his palm to slow the bleeding.*

Molly: *(quietly)* I know it hurts. But I don't feel any hard glass pieces. *(She gently presses on different parts of his palm)* Do you feel any when I do this?

*He doesn't answer her. Molly tries to gauge his reactions while checking his palm but he gives her nothing. She returns to pressing the towel on his hand.*

Molly: You might need stitches. But maybe not. It's not that deep.

*Still no reaction. During the next monologue, Molly gingerly lifts the paper towel up and wipes the blood left on his hand. She puts a piece of gauze over his wound. As she dresses it, she focuses on his hand while she speaks-*

Molly: You're right, you know...I should have called you after your sister died. I thought you needed space and I didn't know what to say...I should have broken things off with



you in person instead of just fading away and expecting you'd understand...I was afraid of hurting you...and in that fear, I made decisions that made things...so much worse...I can't take any of that back...So all I can do is apologize over and over until I'm blue in the face. Not that it will matter at this point and I'm not making any excuses but...from one fucked up kid to another...I'm trying.

*With that, she finishes dressing his wound. As soon as Lawrence feels she's finished, he gets up abruptly. He walks over to the photo of him and his sister and stares at it, keeping his back to Molly.*

*Molly waits to see if he responds in any way. When he doesn't, she starts nodding her head, understanding. She begins cleaning up the papers on the couch. She puts her own manuscript in her bag and organizes the rest into a messy pile, then puts the pile onto his bed. She turns to give him one last look and says-*

Molly: Manuscripts are on the bed. If you're looking for them.

*Still no response from him. She waits a moment, then starts heading to the door to pick up her things and put her shoes on. Before she gets there-*

Lawrence: Molly.

*Molly turns, hoping for any kind of response from him.*

Molly:...Yes?

Lawrence: *(turning around)* Don't, um-....don't...don't leave.

*Molly stands there, unsure of what to do next.*

Molly:....ok...

*They both stand in place for a moment.*

Lawrence:...I shouldn't have blown up like that. It was uncouth...

Molly: Well, but-....a little deserved, I think.

Lawrence: I let my temper get the best of me.

Molly: It's- I mean...it's fine. Really.

*They stand in silence again. Then-*

Lawrence: Where are you moving to?

Molly: Colorado Springs.

Lawrence: *(nods)* Good town.

Molly: Yeah, it's got...mountains...

*Another silence creeps in. Neither of them are sure of what to say but also not wanting to leave on this note.*

*After a few moments, the song "To Someone From a Warm Climate (Uiscefhuaraithe)" by Hozier fades in, starting about 1:34 into the song.*

*Molly makes the first move as she slowly walks to Lawrence. She gets close to him, pauses, and then envelops him in a hug. Lawrence is surprised at first but relaxes after a moment and hugs her back. The lights fade down to the same blue silhouette as they were in the beginning. Careful with his damaged hand, the two hold onto each other and as the song plays, they begin slowly dancing. Nothing professional, just flowing with their music together. Near the end of the song, they face each other and kiss, a few longing moments, and separate. Then Molly places her head on Lawrence's chest and he holds her in the last few moments of the song.*

*The song ends and lights come up slowly. Molly opens her eyes.*

Molly: ...I should go...

Lawrence: Would you like me to call you a car?

Molly: ...That's ok. I can do it on my phone.

*They separate and Molly goes to her phone, requesting a car. Lawrence walks halfway to her.*

Molly: Got it. It'll be here in 5. *(she starts putting on her shoes and collecting her things together)*

Lawrence: You've got everything?

Molly: Yeah, I think so.

Lawrence: Your manuscript?

Molly: In here. *(she picks up her bag)* Are you-...are you gonna be ok?

Lawrence: I'll be adequate.

Molly: *(she lightly chuckles at his response)* Adequate, right...*(beat)* I'll miss you.

Lawrence: Moll...*(He puts his hand on the side of her face and gazes at her a moment)*...you're going to thrive.

Molly: *(smiles)* Please take care of yourself.

*"World Spins Madly On" by The Weepies begins playing. Molly looks at her phone and Lawrence drops his hand.*

Molly: I have to go. He's here.

Lawrence: Be safe.

Molly: I will. Please go to the doctor for this. *(she points to her hand)*

Lawrence: *(nods)* I will.

Molly: Kay. *(turns to the door, opens it and looks back one last time)*. Bye.

Lawrence: Bye.

*Molly leaves and the door closes. Lawrence stands in place a moment, staring at the door. He goes to lock the door, turns around, and stares at the remnants of her arrival: the glass, the medical box, the paper towels. Another moment. He grabs a few paper towels and goes to the bartending cart, wiping away the blood and gingerly tries to pick up the big pieces of glass into the towel. In the middle of this, he stops and runs his uninjured hand down his face, forehead to chin, staring at the mess. He decides to leave the towel and glass pile on the cart shelf and goes to his bed, sitting next to the*

*messy stack of papers. He looks at the manuscripts a few moments, then picks up the stack and puts them in the garbage can.*

*The lights fade down slowly as he turns off lamps in his home. He then lays on top of his bed and turns to his side facing US as the lights fully go dark and the music fades out.*

**END**