

THE INTROVERT'S PLAYLIST

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FADE IN:

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Delicate IRIS (29) sits white-knuckled and wide-eyed. She breathes in through her nose...out through her mouth.

IRIS (V.O.)

There's a name for what's wrong
with me. I only know because my
sister found an article about it
online.

The breathing exercise doesn't help. She stabs at the iPod in her hand and curses the blinking battery symbol.

IRIS (V.O.)

I'm not "crazy". And I'm not the
only one. There's at least enough
of us to warrant a name.
Misophonia.

Across the room, a wall clock shaped like a giant tooth
TICKS away the seconds. TICK TICK TICK.

Iris crosses her arms over herself and shifts position in
her chair. TICK TICK TICK. She refuses to look...

But can't help herself. Her gaze migrates back to the
clock. TICK TICK TICK. Shaky breaths now. TICK TICK.

IRIS (V.O.)

Not that anybody else understands
what that means.

The only other patient, a middle-aged man, assumes all this
is fear of the dentist and gives her a sympathetic glance.

She places both elbows on the armrests and rests her hands
against the sides of her neck. TICK TICK TICK.

They're like gunshots. She flinches with each TICK. TICK.

Very slowly, she hunches forward until her fingertips are pressing against her ears...then jammed IN her ears.

Now the other patient stares at Iris like she's deranged.

IRIS (V.O.)

Technically it's a neurological
disorder that causes me to react
strongly to certain things I hear.

Iris abruptly gets up and strides over to the clock.

IRIS (V.O.)

Particular sounds get linked in my
brain to feelings of anxiety,
anger, even fear... Really
ordinary, everyday noises will
trigger my body's fight or flight
response.

She checks to make sure the receptionist isn't looking,
removes it from the wall, and extracts the batteries.

IRIS (V.O.)

Fighting means doing something,
ANYTHING to make the noise stop.

The other patient moves as if to rat her out to the
receptionist. Iris puts her hands up in supplication.

She makes a show of setting the batteries on a nearby table
and replacing the now-dead tooth on the wall.

She turns back to the room and realizes a dental assistant
coming through an interior door witnessed her tampering.

The assistant exchanges a glance with the other patient who
responds with a don't-look-at-me gesture.

IRIS (V.O.)
But that tends to draw unwanted
attention. Flight is better.

INT. CAFÉ - DAY

A waiter brings Iris a steaming teacup and a fruit plate.

Iris starts to take her jacket off when a man across the
room sniffs loudly through a stuffed-up nose. SNIFF.

Iris freezes. She watches him like a detonator clock.

IRIS (V.O.)
The most common misophonia
"triggers" involve eating or
breathing noises.

The man coughs and then inhales more productively this
time, choking a little on his own mucus.

Iris shoulders her jacket back on. SNIFF SNIFF.

She gulps the scalding hot tea and splutters most of it
back out. Eyes watering with pain, she blinks at her fruit.

SNIIIIIFF. She uses both hands. With two brimming fistfuls
of dripping honeydew and pineapple she bolts out the door.

IRIS (V.O.)
My biggest trigger is gum. Telling
me to ignore that sound would be
like lighting my hair on fire and
telling me to ignore the burning
sensation. But try explaining that
to a total stranger.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Iris is in the checkout line when the teenage cashier pops a piece of gum into his mouth.

Iris begins taking her items off the conveyor belt, but she's trapped by the long line of people behind her.

She reluctantly approaches the cashier and leans in to whisper something to him.

IRIS (V.O.)

Either they look at you like
you're crazy and stop...

The cashier frowns at Iris. Eventually he pulls a small trash can out from under the register.

He maintains eye contact with her as he very deliberately spits the gum from his mouth.

Iris makes appreciative gestures and gets out her wallet.

The cashier looks back at the next customer in line, jerks his head at Iris and twirls a finger next to his ear.

The other customer smirks. Iris catches the tail end of the cashier's routine but pretends not to notice.

INT. HAIR SALON - DAY

Iris is halfway through a haircut when a woman chewing gum is shown into the chair at the station next to hers.

Iris tries in vain to ignore the sound for a few moments before addressing the woman with a pleading smile.

IRIS (V.O.)

Or they look at you like you're
crazy and then carry on just to
spite you.

The woman turns her chair to face Iris. She blows a massive bubble and POPS it obnoxiously. Then laughs and POPS again.

Iris gets up and takes off her protective cape.

She thrusts some money into her stylist's hand and leaves sporting a dripping wet, very asymmetrical hairstyle.

INT. IRIS' APARTMENT - DAY

The décor is minimal with a hint of Zen. Iris sits curled up with a cup of tea in one hand, her Kindle in the other.

IRIS (V.O.)

It's better when I'm alone.
Usually that's enough.

INT. IRIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dog barks and howls emanate from one of her shared walls.

IRIS (V.O.)

Usually.

Iris winces as she inserts industrial-looking earplugs. She rolls onto her stomach and puts her head under the pillow.

The sound is muffled, but still audible. She flops back over and grabs a pair of ear-covering headphones.

They attach to her iPod and go on OVER her ear plugs.

She stares at the ceiling, listening to muffled music and howls, then puts the pillow over her face.

EXT. SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

The classical revival building looms imposingly.

INT. JURY SELECTION WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Iris stands before the blank-faced ADMINISTRATOR.

IRIS

So you understand? You can't trap
me in a room with a bunch of other
people.

ADMINISTRATOR

You say you got a disease?

IRIS

Technically it's a disorder. You
can look it up. Kelly Ripa has it.

ADMINISTRATOR

I don't have time to google every
crazy thing people pull off WebMD
and try to bring in here. You got
something in writing? Like from a
doctor?

IRIS

There's no treatment for it. Even
most doctors don't understand it.

ADMINISTRATOR

Take a seat and wait for your
group number to be called.

IRIS

I'm really not up to this-

ADMINISTRATOR

Something wrong with your hearing?

IRIS

There's nothing wrong with my
hearing. I hear EVERYTHING.

ADMINISTRATOR

Well then you won't miss your
group number being called.

Iris heads for a seat at the edge of the cluster of chairs.

She immediately roots around in her handbag. It's shaped
like a 3-dimensional teapot, ornamental spout and all.

Out comes the iPod. Music shield going up in 3-2-

ADMINISTRATOR

You'll need to surrender your
personal belongings. Only
essentials allowed.

Iris opens her mouth to protest.

ADMINISTRATOR - CONT'D

Essential enough to be prescribed
by a doctor.

Iris mournfully hands over the goods.

She returns to her seat. Back to face the firing squad
without her eardrum-sized bullet proof vests.

The fluorescent light above her head BUZZES in triumph.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The defendant, Levi (31), is comfortable in his skin but
awkward in his retro suit. A cowboy chaperoning the prom.

A PROSECUTOR questions KYNLEE (23) whose left wrist is
wrapped in bright pink gauze inside a zebra-striped sling.

Kynlee half testifies/half auditions for a soap opera.

KYNLEE

It all happened so fast. He came
at me...

The jurywoman next to Iris gasps and looks sharply at Levi.

PROSECUTOR

Take your time.

KYNLEE

I'm sorry. It's just harder than I
thought it would be...being in the
same room as HIM again.

PROSECUTOR

Remember you're safe here Kynlee.

KYNLEE

I was hiking near the entrance to
Heart Rock Trail. The only thing I
wanted was peace and quiet...

FLASHBACK

EXT. SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS, FOREST TRAIL - DAY

Kynlee emerges into a clearing where LEVI, with headphones
and a microphone, sits near the edge of a steep drop-off.

KYNLEE

(into a bling-y cellphone)
Oh my god I wish you could see
this view, it's SO gorgeous. I'm
gonna post a picture so you can be
all hashtag jealous.

Levi removes his headphones in pain at the sudden noise.

KYNLEE - CONT'D

You should've skipped work too
BITCH! I straight-up told them
that I am overwhelmed. You do NOT
want to be responsible for my
breakDOWN in the break ROOM!

LEVI

Excuse me?

KYNLEE

It feels so great to get away from
it all and just be able to hear
myself think for a change you
know? There's like nobody up here
on a weekday.

Kynlee paces as she talks on the phone, kicking the dirt.

LEVI

Hey. Lady. Hello?

KYNLEE

I gotta go. Text you in a sec.
(ending the call, to Levi)
God, WHAT?

LEVI

I'm trying to get a recording and
this equipment is really
sensitive.

KYNLEE

Uh, oh-KAY...

LEVI

Can you keep it down?

KYNLEE

Were you recording my
conversation?!

He points at a golf ball-sized hole in the ground.

LEVI - CONT'D

Ground squirrel. THAT'S what I'm
trying to record.

Kynlee responds with a just-lobotomized stare.

LEVI - CONT'D

But it's not going to come out if
it thinks there's people out here.
You see where I'm going with this?

KYNLEE

Well I'm off the phone now. Ok
Sergeant Doolittle?

LEVI

Yeah. Thanks a lot.

He re-dons his headphones and calibrates his settings.

Meanwhile Kynlee walks closer to the edge and turns to take
a selfie with the vista in the background.

The camera shutter on her phone makes a loud SNAP that's
followed by audible keystrokes. TAP TAP TAP.

She begins a text conversation. Now the tapping is
interrupted by a loud DING every time she gets a reply.

Levi glares until movement at the hole catches his eye. He
holds his breath. A twitching nose appears...a SQUEAK...

Kynlee laughs uproariously at a text message.

Poof goes the nose. Off goes the mic. Up go the hands.

LEVI

What the—? Come on!

He whips off his headphones and stands.

Kynlee laughs and switches from selfies flicking off the camera to snaps of him staggering around in frustration.

END FLASHBACK

INT. COURTROOM - CONT'D

PROSECUTOR

I'd like to refer the jury to the
photographic evidence obtained by
the victim both before and during
the attack.

A large monitor displays Kynlee's Facebook page.

The first image - Kynlee's initial selfie. The next is an
action shot of Levi mid-way through throwing his hands up
so they appear to be raised menacingly.

His facial expression is also bizarre - caught just as he's
looking up so only the whites of his eyes are visible.

In the jury, Iris frowns at the absurdity of the picture.

The gasping juror next to her lets out a cry of horror.

Kynlee makes a show of averting her eyes from the screen.

LEVI

Why would she post that?!

JUDGE

All right, all right now. Why
don't we go ahead and break for
lunch? Let everyone settle down...

INT. JURY ROOM - DAY

The jurors mill around chatting. Iris' eyes sweep the room for audio bombs when in rolls an arsenal...

A bailiff wheels in a cart with sub sandwiches, bags of potato chips, and cans of soda.

Everyone settles around a table. Iris surveys her options.

There's an open seat between the GASPING WOMAN and an ELDERLY GENT...another one between the handsome FOREMAN and an awkward-looking YOUNG MAN.

The Gasping Woman pulls a balled-up tissue from her sleeve. The Elderly Gent adjusts his dentures. Red flags galore.

The Foreman flicks his cheeks to make water drop noises. The Young Man scratches at a freckle on his arm.

Iris gauges these the lesser of four evils and sits down.

FOREMAN

(to Iris)

Seems like an easy decision.

IRIS

I don't know what you mean...

FOREMAN

The case. Pretty obvious what happened.

IRIS

We haven't heard his side of it yet.

GASPING WOMAN

I don't want to hear anything from that man. Gives me the shivers just sitting there.

IRIS

He doesn't seem dangerous.

GASPING WOMAN

The worst ones never do. Ugh, and that suit - looks like he borrowed it from a corpse.

A loud CRUNCH interrupts Iris. The Young Man is relishing his first open-mouthed bite of his potato chips. CAH-RUNCH.

IRIS

I-uh, don't you want to save room for your sandwich?

She moves his unwrapped sub a little closer to him.

YOUNG MAN

I'm not gonna eat that. These are the real deal. My mom never buys the name brand stuff.

(to the group)

Anybody not want their chips?

A few other jurors slide their chip bags across the table.

The Young Man empties them all onto his paper plate until there is a small mountain of chips in front of him. CRUNCH.

Iris looks like she's going to cry. CRUNCH. CAH-RUNCH.

INT. JURY ROOM - LATER

Lunch has wrapped up. Iris' chair is now against the wall next to the door. She hunches over in it, miserable.

A few jurors sneak glances at her and shake their heads.

The Young Man licks salt off his fingers. Plenty of chips still remain on his plate. The BAILIFF opens the door.

BAILIFF

Time to go.

(noticing Iris)

You ok lady?

No response. She's still shell-shocked from World War Chip.

The Bailiff shrugs and waves at the others to follow him.

The jurors begin to file out. The Young Man addresses the Bailiff on his way out the door.

YOUNG MAN

Nobody's gonna clear my plate
while we're gone right? Because I
know we have to come back here
afterwards to deliberate or
whatever and I'm gonna finish
those.

BAILIFF

(ushering him along)

Yeah yeah.

Iris suddenly realizes she's the only one left in the room.

She creeps over to the table and pours what's left of the Young Man's soda all over his plate.

Once the chips have been doused she carefully positions the can on the plate's edge so it appears to have tipped over.

With this done, she hurries to rejoin the others.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Levi is now on the witness stand giving testimony.

LEVI

I'm a freelance audio engineer.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

What does that involve exactly?

LEVI

Mostly I record and manipulate sound effects and background audio for use in movies and television.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Is that what you were doing on the day in question?

LEVI

Sort of. I've been working on this soundwalk for a while. It's a pet project now. But once it's finished I plan to try selling it commercially.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

A "soundwalk"?

LEVI

A series of field recordings, layered on top of each other to pull a listener into an environment. Even on a quiet mountainside there's so much to hear - more than you'd expect...

He shoots a glance at Kynlee. She sneers back at him.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

So you record these sounds individually? And then what?

LEVI

I combine all the audio back in my studio - but gradually.

(MORE)

LEVI - CONT'D

So the listener has a chance to
appreciate all these subtle parts
that make up the audible whole.
It's like art for your ears.

Kynlee scans the jury - her captive audience. She makes eye
contact with Iris and looks to strike sympathy gold.

Kynlee points at Levi and makes a 'crazy' gesture, twirling
a finger on her supposedly injured hand next to her head.

Iris' expression hardens. This little flower just got
thorny. The sympathy point goes to Levi.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

I'll tell you what I'm hearing
right now Levi...A man who's
passionate about his work.

LEVI

The sounds around us matter. They
have a huge impact on the way we
feel, both positive and negative.

He scans the jury as he speaks, his gaze lingering on Iris.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Would it be fair to say this
passion you feel for your work
played a part in your frustration
with the plaintiff?

LEVI

I admit I was frustrated. And I
regret what happened. But I didn't
MEAN for it to happen.

There are murmured reactions from the spectators. Kynlee
hugs her sling to herself as though seized with fresh pain.

FLASHBACK

EXT. SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS, FOREST TRAIL - CONT'D

Levi is squatting down to pick up his recording equipment.

Kynlee's fingers steadily upload more drivel.

KYNLEE

God I wish I'd been videoing you
stomping around like that - it
would have made a hilarious Vine.

Levi walks back over to Kynlee, holding his long
unidirectional microphone in his right hand.

Kynlee's phone is in her left hand as she switches from
typing to swiping her finger across the screen.

LEVI

Look at yourself. Why this
exhausting need to document and
share every second of your life?

KYNLEE

Says the guy holding the giant
recorder thingy.

LEVI

This isn't about me. I'm capturing
this environment so others can
immerse themselves in it.

KYNLEE

Uhh, and that's exactly what I'M
doing when I post pics. See?

She holds up her phone to show him her first selfie.

Levi responds by repeatedly thrusting his arms outwards.

LEVI

Do YOU see? Even when you took
that picture you were staring at
your phone. Turn your head! Look
with your eyes! Really look -

On the last swing of his arms the tip of the mic knocks
Kynlee's phone from her hand just hard enough to send it
over the edge of the incline.

They both peer over the side to see it bounce off a few
boulders and disappear into the underbrush far below.

KYNLEE

Oh you did NOT! You did NOT -

LEVI

Sorry...I didn't mean -

KYNLEE

You will be!

She backs away in the direction she came from, the wheels
turning behind her eyelash extensions. She points at him.

KYNLEE - CONT'D

Assault...Assault!!

END FLASHBACK

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

The judge addresses the jury. Levi fidgets in his seat.

JUDGE

The defendant is charged with one
count of criminal property damage,
and one count of Simple Assault.

(MORE)

JUDGE - CONT'D

As I explained at the start of the trial, under CPC 240 you must only be convinced he acted willfully.

On cue, Kynlee flops her injured wrist for the jury.

JUDGE - CONT'D

There is no requirement that the alleged assault resulted in serious injury, or any injury at all. As I assume the plaintiff was informed at some point...

The prosecutor nods with a what-can-you-do shrug.

Kynlee leans forward in her seat to psych out Levi.

She flicks him off with the hand peeking out of her sling.

JUDGE - CONT'D

Simple Assault only requires that the defendant intentionally attempted to commit such an act and had the means to do so. If you have any questions please instruct your chosen foreperson.

The court is dismissed. Iris notices Levi staring at her as she files out with the other jurors.

INT. JURY ROOM - LATER

Everyone is seated around the table. The Young Man pushes a finger sadly into the mush of his potato chip stockpile.

FOREMAN

So? Any questions before we vote?

There's a collective shaking of heads.

FOREMAN - CONT'D

Right. Let's get this over with.
All in favor of returning a guilty
verdict on both counts?

Everyone raises a hand except for Iris.

FOREMAN

You forgot to raise your hand.

IRIS

No I didn't.

FOREMAN

What?

IRIS

It sounds like an accident.

GASPING WOMAN

You should want to see that maniac
locked up more than any of us.

IRIS

Why?

GASPING WOMAN

I didn't want to alarm you. You
already seemed so...fragile after
lunch. But I saw him looking at
you. Twice!

IRIS

Who?

GASPING WOMAN

Him! The assaulter!

IRIS

I didn't notice...

GASPING WOMAN

Twice.

FOREMAN

Look, lady, I'm betting you want to get out of here as much as the rest of us do. Let's just agree he's guilty. You heard the judge - they're only misdemeanors.

IRIS

Misdemeanors that carry possible jail time. Definitely a criminal record.

The bailiff opens the door.

BAILIFF

Where we at? You all staying for dinner?

The other jurors look meaningfully at Iris.

YOUNG MAN

(to the bailiff)
What's for dinner?

BAILIFF

Taco Tuesday.

IRIS

(is it terminal doc?)
Soft shell?

BAILIFF

Nah, the good stuff. Deep fried, crunchy.

YOUNG MAN

Can we get nachos?

BAILIFF

We can make nachos happen. If y'all
are stay-

YOUNG MAN

Nachos!

The Foreman stares at Iris. She clenches her fists.

IRIS

(it's malignant alright)
Nachos...

INT. JURY ROOM - LATER

Dirty paper plates litter the table and the air reeks of salsa
when the bailiff enters again.

BAILIFF

Judge is calling it a night. Any
progress?

Other jurors glare openly at Iris but no one speaks. The only
sound is the Young Man inhaling a string of melted cheese.

BAILIFF

Report back at 8am tomorrow then.

There's a chorus of groans.

INT. IRIS' APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Iris enters her apartment as her neighbor, MR. GARVER, does
the opposite. A dog starts whimpering as he turns the bolt.

Garver slams his fist against the door.

MR. GARVER

Shut it...I'll come back in there
'n' give you somethin' to cry about!

IRIS

Are you going out Mr. Garver?

MR. GARVER

What's it look like?

IRIS

Will you be out late?

MR. GARVER

What's it to you?

IRIS

It's just that your dog-

MR. GARVER

Jefferson Davis.

IRIS

I'm sorry?

MR. GARVER

That's the dog - Jefferson Davis.
What about him?

IRIS

He cries and barks when-

MR. GARVER

I didn't ask my ex to leave that
ugly mutt with me and I can't
control what it does. Maybe, instead
of getting up in MY business,
tracking MY comings and goings -
maybe YOU should go out. If my dog's
FEELINGS are bothering you that
much...Go get yourself a life.

He walks off, muttering under his breath. Iris flushes.

INT. JURY ROOM - MORNING

Back at the table, all eyes are on Iris. The Young Man scarfs donuts and coughs up little clouds of powdered sugar.

FOREMAN

Well?

IRIS

Not guilty.

The Foreman crushes his empty Styrofoam cup between his hands.

FOREMAN

You know some of us have LIVES to
get back to.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Levi, in yesterday's suit, looks expectantly at the jury.

JUDGE

Have you reached a verdict on either
count?

FOREMAN

No Your Honor. We have a hung jury
situation on our hands.

More than a few pointed stares bore into Iris.

Kynlee's entitlement senses are tingling. She scowls at this unexpected human obstacle from across the room.

JUDGE

I don't like wasting taxpayer money on mistrials. I'm going to ask that you go back to the jury room, re-examine your opinions, and try to come to a consensus.

FOREMAN

Yes Your Honor...

INT. JURY ROOM - CONT'D

The Foreman stretches back in his chair, cups a hand to check his breath, then fishes a pack of gum out of his pocket.

As he puts a piece in his mouth he notices Iris' expression. It's like he just pulled the pin out of a grenade.

He keeps his eyes locked on her as he chews. Slowly he blows a bubble and catches her flinching when it POPS.

FOREMAN

Anybody else want gum?

Only a couple hands go up but the Foreman proceeds to stand and distribute a piece to everyone except Iris.

FOREMAN - CONT'D

Come on. Everybody take a piece. I've got plenty. We can have a contest - see who can blow the biggest bubble.

ELDERLY GENT

Nah. My teeth.

With the exception of Iris and the Elderly Gent, all the jurors are now chewing. CHOMP SMACK SMACK POP SMACK.

The Foreman winks at another juror and gestures with a tilt of his head towards Iris, who stands and starts pacing.

A few bubbles burst in quick secession. POP POP POP. Iris rushes to the door and jerks it open.

BAILIFF

Everything ok?

IRIS

I need to use the restroom now.

BAILIFF

Ok, you know where-

She is out the door and past him before he can finish.

INT. LADIES ROOM - LATER

Iris stares at herself in the mirror above the sink. Her eyes are red from crying. The Bailiff knocks on the door.

BAILIFF

Everything all right? I'm going to have to ask you to finish up. You need to be back in the jury room.

IRIS

Ok...I'll just be another minute.

She leans her forehead against the mirror and gently THUDS it against the glass. THUD THUD - then suddenly - an idea.

Going back into the stall she gets a handful of toilet paper.

She wets it in the sink, tears it into pieces and stuffs the soggy strips into her ears to form makeshift plugs.

The Bailiff knocks again. She arranges her hair in front of her ears and takes a last second to steel her nerve.

INT. JURY ROOM - CONT'D

The Foreman grins maliciously at Iris as she returns.

FOREMAN - MUFFLED

You can't hide forever.

Iris moves her chair away from the table.

The Foreman follows with his own chair, plopping it down right in front of hers so she's trapped between him and the wall.

GASPING WOMAN - MUFFLED

Just change your vote honey.

The Foreman chomps and chews inches from Iris' face.

She squeezes her eyes shut and crosses her arms.

Her voice is too loud thanks to her ear plugs.

IRIS

Not guilty!

The Foreman slaps his knees in anger.

The Young Man walks over and takes advantage of Iris' temporary blindness to peer down her top. He frowns.

YOUNG MAN

What's that dripping down her neck?

The Foreman looks closer at Iris and sees a glimpse of white through her hair.

FOREMAN

Unbelievable! She's gummed up her ears!

He claps his hands close to Iris' face. The rush of air causes her to open her eyes again.

FOREMAN

Hey Looney Tunes!

(pointing at his ears)

I'm on to you!

He gets up and opens the door to speak to the Bailiff.

FOREMAN

We got an issue.

(he gestures at Iris)

She put something in her ears.

That's against the rules or
something right?

BAILIFF

I don't know. That's...it's never
come up before.

FOREMAN

You gotta tell the judge. We tried
but we're still hung thanks to
Barbara Bonkers over there.

BAILIFF

I know this judge. He has no
patience for this sort of thing.
Your best bet is to do what he told
you. Figure it out.

The Bailiff closes the door. The Foreman rubs his face.

GASPING WOMAN

I have book club tomorrow.

FOREMAN

Don't tell me that - tell her!

GASPING WOMAN

(bending to shout in her face)

BOOK CLUB!

Everyone stares at Iris, many of them standing over her chair.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

The Bailiff hands a sheet of paper to the Judge.

JUDGE

On the count of criminal property
damage, the jury finds the defendant
Not Guilty.

KYNLEE

Are you for real right now?!

JUDGE - CONT'D

On the count of Simple Assault, the
jury also finds the defendant Not
Guilty.

Kynlee removes her sling angrily and launches into a phone
call. Levi shakes his attorney's hand, smiling with relief.

JUDGE - CONT'D

I'd like to thank the members of the
jury for their time. Court is
adjourned.

The jurors file out. The Gasping Woman shakes her head.

Iris looks back over her shoulder at Levi but he's engrossed
in conversation with his lawyer.

EXT. COURTHOUSE PARKING LOT - LATER

Iris is standing next to her car rooting around for her keys
inside her giant teapot purse.

Levi comes around the corner of the building several yards
away. He waves when he recognizes her.

LEVI

Hey!

Iris is so startled she drops the teapot, spilling her keys and a few other items from the open lid.

Levi jogs towards her. Iris pretends not to notice him as she hurries to scoop everything up.

He reaches her car just as she pulls away. The teapot bag is visible on the passenger seat. Levi stares after her.

INT. SARA'S HOUSE - DAY

SARA (27), a bouquet of sunflowers compared to her sister's wilting demeanor, hands a freshly-changed baby to Aunt Iris.

SARA

I wonder what he wanted to say to you.

IRIS

Or do to me.

SARA

But you believed him.

IRIS

More like I didn't believe her.

SARA

Well I'm proud of you. And now you can tell Mom you met a guy and sort of not be lying to her face.

IRIS

I'll leave out the part about being legally compelled by the state of California...Oh, I almost forgot.

She juggles her nephew like a pro and fetches an ominously large shopping bag from over by the front door.

IRIS - CONT'D

Sorry, again.

She hands the bag to her sister.

SARA

You didn't have to do that.

(to the baby)

It was Mommy's fault wasn't it?
Normally I remember to take the
batteries out before Auntie Iris
comes over.

IRIS

I felt really bad.

SARA

It's these tile floors. I dropped
a plastic sippy cup the other day
and that shattered too.

Sara opens the bag to reveal a giant digital wall clock
that would look more at home perched over a stock exchange.

SARA - CONT'D

Oh. It's...it's really...

IRIS

Modern?

SARA

Industrial...

IRIS

The numbers are easy to read.

SARA
(under her breath)
From space...

IRIS
Hmm?

SARA
This one'll need a little more
space. The kitchen maybe?

INT. TEA SHOP - DAY

Iris, listening to music, enters without noticing Levi.
She removes her headphones to speak to the BARISTA.

IRIS
Do you still have any of the 1st
Flush Darjeeling left?

BARISTA
Oh hey Iris. How much you want?

Iris is peering into her wallet and debating when Levi
pipes up from his table in the corner.

LEVI
So she's called Iris. Let me get
that for you Iris. Least I can do.

IRIS
What - what are you doing here?

LEVI
The internet told me this is the
only decent tea shop in town. I
was hoping I might run into you.

IRIS

How did you know I liked tea?

He joins her at the counter and points down at her handbag.

BARISTA

He's been in, like, every day this week.

IRIS

What? Why?

LEVI

To thank you. I know you're the reason I'm not in jail right now.

The barista shoots Levi a wary look.

IRIS

(mumbling to the barista)

We met at court.

BARISTA

You know, my sister-in-law runs a speed dating thing at this bar...

Iris, embarrassed, starts to move away from the counter.

IRIS

Never mind about the Darjeeling.

LEVI

Can't I buy you a cup of tea at least?

Iris shakes her head, still retreating.

IRIS

You don't have to thank me. I didn't do anything.

EXT. STREET - CONT'D

Iris exits and heads for home with Levi in close pursuit.

LEVI

I saw the way they were looking at
you when they announced the hung
jury.

She puts her headphones back on, a not-so-subtle hint.

LEVI - CONT'D

Just like they glared at me all
through the testimony. Next thing
I know the verdict is 'not
guilty'? That was you. Had to be.

IRIS

You still don't owe me anything.
And it's insanely creepy that you
tracked me down like this.

LEVI

It is?

She gawks over her shoulder at him, still fleeing, until it
dawns on him that he's chasing a woman down a street.

LEVI - CONT'D

It is. Oh god I'm sorry.

IRIS

I don't even think we're supposed
to be talking.

LEVI

That was only during the trial.
I'm really sorry - I only wanted
to thank you.

She keeps going, pretending not to hear him.

LEVI - CONT'D

Will you tell me why at least? And
I'll go away.

IRIS

It was her word against yours. She
was clearly lying about her injury
so why not about everything else?

(beat)

And I sympathized with you.

LEVI

You did?

IRIS

Yeah, I have...I have misophonia
which-

LEVI

You do?

IRIS

You know what that is?

LEVI

It's rare.

IRIS

I know.

LEVI

You know what acoustic ecology is?

IRIS

No idea.

LEVI

It's the study of the
relationships that living
creatures develop with sound.

(MORE)

LEVI - CONT'D

Man! I've only read about people with misophonia. I never thought I'd ever get to meet one. Too awesome.

IRIS

Well consider me acquainted. You can cross me off your bucket list of the mentally afflicted.

LEVI

I'd love to get your take on a few recordings. Let me give you my contact info.

He offers her a business card but she doesn't take it.

IRIS

I don't really...socialize.

LEVI

No wonder it's taken me so long to meet you.

IRIS

Trust me, even without the misophonia I'm no fun to hang out with. I'm super boring.

LEVI

SUPER boring?

IRIS

It's like regular boring only you go to bed even earlier. In fact just the other day my sixty-year-old next door neighbor told me to get a life.

LEVI

Harsh.

IRIS

I was kind of complaining about
his dog, Jefferson Davis -

LEVI

Jefferson Davis?

IRIS

That's the dog's name. The poor
thing barks when he leaves it
alone, which is all the time.

LEVI

Poor YOU. Doesn't your neighbor
care about your whole, you know-

He points at his ears and makes an exaggerated panic face.

IRIS

I don't tell many people about
that. It's hard to convey how
"awesome" it is. This is my stop.

Their walk brings them to the entrance of her building. She
turns to go in. He positions himself in front of the door.

IRIS - CONT'D

Again with the creepy? We just
talked about this.

LEVI

(embarrassed shuffling)

Sorry, uh...I just want you to
know...the uh, the Japanese
believe the sooner you repay
favours the better.

(MORE)

LEVI - CONT'D

The longer they go unpaid, the
larger the return favor will have
to be. Take the card will ya?
Please...I owe you one.

Iris accepts the card, tucks it in her purse and skirts
around him...a little closer than she maybe needs to.

LEVI - CONT'D

Oh hey, what kind of dog is it?

IRIS

My neighbor's? A small one. Boston
terrier I think...Why?

LEVI

No reason. See you soon maybe?

Iris just presses her lips together and goes inside.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

The UGHUGGAAH of a PATRON clearing his throat is a lion's
roar. Iris, wearing a nametag, freezes like a gazelle.

UGHUGGAAH. Iris whips open a drawer of her work station at
the front counter. UHGG-UHGGAA-UHGUGGAAH!

Inside - packets of Kleenex and an arsenal of lozenges,
neatly arranged in a removable utensil tray.

A woman appears to check out a book but Iris, tray in one
hand, empty glass in the other, darts around her.

First to the water fountain - fill the glass. UHHGUUHHAA!

Now to the phlegm-plagued patron's reading table. UHGAAA!

She brakes too hard. The water splashes onto the table/the patron/the book. Some cough drops make a break for it too.

PATRON

Hey...

She hands him the glass and kneels to collect errant drops.

IRIS

(out of breath)

I brought you some water.

PATRON

Thank you?

There's a line of people waiting at Iris' vacant post now. Enough to summon the HEAD LIBRARIAN from her lair.

IRIS

It sounds like you might need it.

The Head Librarian is watching her...she lowers her voice to a whisper and blocks the view of the tray with her body.

IRIS - CONT'D

Also, here's a selection of throat soothers. Are you getting over a cold? Or is it allergies? If I know the cause I can recommend the most effective lozenge.

PATRON

Thanks but, uh...

A pair of TEEN GIRLS snicker at this exchange.

IRIS

Take a couple. I have plenty.

HEAD LIBRARIAN

Iris?

Iris smiles and nods at her boss while surreptitiously nudging the man with the tray. He leans away from her.

The teenagers take position on opposite sides of the room.

TEEN GIRL #1

Ahem!

Iris' neck swivels, looking for the source.

HEAD LIBRARIAN

Iris?

TEEN GIRL #2

AH-HEM!

Iris spins. It seems to be coming from behind that shelf-

TEEN GIRL #1

AH-HA-HA-HEM!

Iris spins back so fast her tray spews hard candies like a piñata. Book shelves erupt with laughter on both sides.

PATRON

Jesus lady!

HEAD LIBRARIAN

Iris!

INT. LIBRARY OFFICE - LATER

Iris sits at a desk across from the Head Librarian.

HEAD LIBRARIAN

I hate to do this.

IRIS

I know.

HEAD LIBRARIAN

The library's environment cannot tolerate such a disruptive presence. We must have calm. We must have quiet.

IRIS

I understand.

Iris collects her things and leaves.

INT. IRIS' APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Iris returns from being fired. In the hallway a uniformed ASPCA OFFICER exits Mr. Garver's apartment with a Boston terrier in her arms.

Mr. Garver stands in his doorway waving a sheet of paper.

MR. GARVER

I never seen this! This a joke?

ASPCA OFFICER

I assure you we take dog fighting allegations very seriously. You're welcome to appeal, but in the meantime I'm within my rights to remove the animal.

MR. GARVER

What allegations? Look at that thing! What kind of moron would fight THAT against another dog?

He throws up his hands in annoyed surrender.

MR. GARVER - CONT'D

Ah take it! The food's too expensive anyway!

(MORE)

MR. GARVER - CONT'D
But good luck dealing with my ex
when she decides she wants the
damn thing back!

The ASPCA officer leaves with the dog, passing Iris.

MR. GARVER - CONT'D
(shouting after her)
That's a whole different kinda
bitch than what you're used to!

As Iris passes by him he shoves the piece of paper at her.

It has the building's address and depicts a Boston terrier
wearing a luchador mask in front of a confederate flag.

It reads: "Friday Night Fights!" and "Jefferson Davis is
President of RIPPING YOUR THROAT OUT"

MR. GARVER
You believe this?

Iris stares mutely at the flyer.

Garver shoots her a suspicious look and slams his door.

INT. IRIS'S APARTMENT - DAY

Iris reads in her armchair. She hears a muffled BUZZING.

She realizes it's coming from inside her apartment and
searches for it. The sound stops and starts again.

Finally she locates the source - her cellphone is on
vibrate with the ringer off in a drawer of her dresser.

It's her MOTHER calling.

IRIS

Hi Mom.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Iris, you didn't pick up, I was worried.

IRIS

It took me a minute to find my phone.

MOTHER (O.S.)

It's bad enough you live alone. You need to keep your phone handy. What if there's an emergency?

IRIS

Mom...

MOTHER (O.S.)

Your sister called. She says you got fired last week. Was it the-

IRIS

Yeah.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Do you need me to send money?

IRIS

I'm fine, really.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Well I hope you're taking advantage of all this free time. Spreading your wings a little. Spreading anything a little...

IRIS

Mom - I'm making plans.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Plans!? Who is this? Who am I
speaking to?

IRIS

In fact I better let you go. I was
just in the middle of dialing
someone when you called.

MOTHER (O.S.)

You said you couldn't find your
phone -

IRIS

Love you!

Iris hangs up and stares thoughtfully at her handbag.

EXT. LEVI'S HOUSE - DAY

Iris pulls up to Levi's house out in the boonies.

A variety of bird feeders swing from the surrounding trees.

Iris gets out of the car and sees a Boston terrier wagging
his tail from a couch on the covered porch.

Levi appears in the screen door as Iris comes closer.

LEVI

Any trouble finding the place?

IRIS

That's Jefferson Davis.

LEVI

(coming out onto the porch)

He just goes by Jeff now. Less
controversial.

IRIS

I knew it! I knew you had
something to do with that!

LEVI

I may have created a fake flyer
with a Boston terrier pic I found
online...faxed it to some
interested parties...

IRIS

(backing down the steps)
Oh my god.

LEVI

Wait - where are you going?

IRIS

I just remembered I barely know
you. And what little I do know
makes you seem like a huge weirdo
- which coming from me is really
saying something by the way.

LEVI

Is this because of Jeff? Look at
him. He's quiet as a mouse. You
were right - he just doesn't like
being left alone all the time.
He's like...the opposite of you.

IRIS

It's not funny. My neighbor's
probably on some register now so
he can never own a pet again.

LEVI

You're welcome...Seriously, was
your neighbor upset? Because I
asked when I adopted him and no
one had come forward to -

IRIS

That's not the point. You
can't...What kind of person...?

LEVI

I didn't think you'd ever call. So
I had to get a little creative in
the favor-repayment department.

Iris shakes her head dumbly. It's weird being on this side
of the "you're crazy" for a change.

LEVI - CONT'D

You came all the way out here. At
least come check out my sound
studio. It's in the basement.

IRIS

The basement? Is that supposed to
put me at ease?

LEVI

Come on - you'll like it. It's
completely soundproofed.

IRIS

Do you hear the words coming out
of your mouth?

LEVI

How bad can I be?

IRIS

I don't know. I heard a rumor you
were on trial for assault a while
back.

INT. LEVI'S HOUSE - CONT'D

Levi leads Iris through the living area to a set of stairs.

It's like a World Market exploded. Cluttered with artifacts and photos of an adventurous, inquisitive life.

IRIS

Nice place.

LEVI

Thanks. It was my grandfather's.
Right this way. All the fun
stuff's down in the basement.

IRIS

You should know I called my sister
and gave her your contact info.

LEVI

Is she in the market for a sound
effect? Or does she need audio
restored? I do that too.

IRIS

No...never mind. Let's just do
this.

INT. LEVI'S BASEMENT STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

The set-up here is more sophisticated than the ramshackle exterior of Levi's house would ever let on.

Levi enters with a folding chair and gestures at Iris to sit on the ergonomic rolling chair at the center console.

LEVI

Well? What do you think?

IRIS

You've...got a lot of buttons...
How do you keep it all straight?

LEVI

It gets to be second nature. Can I
play something for you?

She nods and he offers her a set of headphones. Once she
has them on he presses a button to play the recorded sound.

She listens intently for a few seconds.

LEVI

Any guesses?

IRIS

I've never heard anything like it.

LEVI

It's a family of bats echo-
locating. The frequency is too
high for the human ear to pick up
so you have to use a special
device called a bat detector.

IRIS

What is it with guys and bragging
about their bat detectors?

Her joke never lands. There's an awkward moment.

LEVI

Does it make you feel anything?

She shrugs. He presses another button and Iris frowns.

IRIS

It sounds like a pig...or a
goose...some kind of pig goose?
Having sex? Or a heart attack?

LEVI

Close. It's Jeff.

(MORE)

LEVI - CONT'D

He does this reverse sneezing thing when he gets excited. As far as I know no one's ever recorded the elusive pig goose mating coronary you described...

IRIS

Why would you record Jeff sneezing?

LEVI

I never turn down a sound. They're all music to me.

IRIS

Really? So nails on a chalkboard?

LEVI

Doesn't bother me.

IRIS

Good for you...

INT. LEVI'S BASEMENT STUDIO - LATER

Iris hands her headset back to Levi.

IRIS

It's getting late.

LEVI

You could stay for dinner.

IRIS

I really shouldn't.

LEVI

I'm not a bad cook. Ask Jeff.

IRIS

It's not that. I know I've been acting all normal so far...but it's just better if I eat alone.

LEVI

Right. The misophonia. You worried I chew with my mouth open?

IRIS

You could say that. For me, dinner either has to be really quiet, like I'm on my own - or really loud, like I'm in a packed restaurant. Anything in between and I...depending on what we're eating...sometimes I can't...

LEVI

Let's go out then! There's this new Ethiopian place I've been meaning to try.

IRIS

It's not that simple. There's no guarantee the place will be busy enough and if it's really busy...

LEVI

What?

IRIS

Sometimes I get overwhelmed. I'm so paranoid about someone chewing gum, or blowing their nose, or whatever - that I can't help looking around until I find someone doing one of those things.

LEVI

That's kinda nuts.

IRIS
And THERE it is.

She gets up to leave.

LEVI
(laughing)
Wait! I'm sorry. Let me cook
dinner for you then. We'll go
upstairs and I'll put some music
on. I've got a great sound system.

IRIS
(waving at the equipment)
I believe you.

LEVI
It'll be ok.

IRIS
And if it's not? If I have to get
up and leave in the middle of
dinner? Because if it can happen
at every Thanksgiving then you
better believe it can happen here.

LEVI
(shrugging)
I've got some Tupperware. You can
take it to go.

INT. LEVI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Iris sits on a sofa as Levi busies himself in the kitchen.

Jeff is on a dog bed near Iris. He squeezes a toy in his
mouth over and over. Slowly. SQUEAK...SQUEAK...SQUEAK.

The pendulum of an ornate cuckoo clock across the room TICK
TOCKS back and forth. Iris eyes' flirt with the front door.

One of Jeff's wonky eyes is on Iris. SQUEEAAK. SQUEEAAK.

Iris makes sure Levi's back is turned and then gently takes the toy from Jeff. She fakes a throw.

When Jeff looks away she quickly hides it in a drawer of the apothecary-style coffee table.

Jeff turns back, confused. Iris mouths the word "Sorry."

Jeff wanders off in search of his toy. The clock sounds louder without Jeff's squeaking contributions. TICK TOCK.

IRIS

You mentioned some music?

LEVI

Oh yeah. Just let me dish this up
real quick.

TICK TOCK TICK TOCK TICK TOCK.

IRIS

You're busy. I can do it. Just
tell me what button to push.

LEVI

No worries. I got it. Dinner is
served!

Iris moves to the table where Levi sets plates of pasta.

He transfers an iPOD from his pocket to a speaker dock.

Speakers located all around the room suddenly broadcast the sounds of a busy restaurant. Iris' face lights up.

LEVI

This way you can have all the
noise of the crowd...

(MORE)

LEVI - CONT'D

...without the actual crowd. And if you don't like the way this restaurant sounds I'll push a button and whisk you away to another. I've got a whole playlist of 'em.

He points at their plates of pasta.

LEVI - CONT'D

But I figured we'd start with the Italian place.

They eat without speaking for a few moments. Levi chuckles.

IRIS

What?

LEVI

I'm just appreciating the irony. Me seeking out sounds for a living and you...

IRIS

You have no idea...Sometimes I wish I'd been born deaf.

LEVI

I actually do a lot of volunteer work with a deaf charity.

A sound of plates crashing bursts from the speakers.

LEVI - CONT'D

But I get it...I met a guy with severe tinnitus once. All day, every day, this buzzing sound coming from inside his own head.

(MORE)

LEVI - CONT'D

Until one day he couldn't take it anymore. He punctured his own eardrums with a corkscrew.

IRIS

God...

LEVI

It healed and everything. Didn't do anything about the buzzing of course. Now he's on a bunch of antidepressants and he had to move in with his brother's family.

IRIS

At least I can get away from most of the noises that bother me. There are times when I'm alone that I can almost forget I have misophonia.

LEVI

Being alone is awesome right?

IRIS

You're teasing me.

LEVI

Not at all. Jeff and I just prefer it in smaller doses than you do of course. But being alone can be like...anyway it SHOULD be like...

IRIS

Like a cool drink on a hot day.

LEVI

Yeah. Exactly. It should replenish you. Recharge the battery.

IRIS

My sister had a baby a few months ago. She complains about going weeks without having an adult conversation. And I'm like - not talking to anyone for weeks? That alone's almost worth getting knocked up for.

Levi chokes on a mouthful of pasta.

IRIS - CONT'D

Sorry! No I - forget I said that. I would never get knocked up just to...Are you ok?

Levi nods and sips his water. The conversation stalls.

Suddenly there's singing and cheering in the background.

Levi looks over his shoulder to scan the invisible crowd.

LEVI

Must be somebody's birthday.

EXT. LEVI'S HOUSE - SUNSET

Iris and Levi sit on the porch with Jeff between them.

They speak in whispers to avoid scaring off the birds.

IRIS

Thanks for dinner.

LEVI

It was nice to have the company. Nice for me anyway.

IRIS

And your samurai debt is repaid.

LEVI

There's still something I'd really
like to do with you. Just promise
me you'll keep an open mind, ok?

Iris widens her eyes...

INT. SARA'S HOUSE - DAY

Iris and her sister sit on either side of the baby, now
strapped in a high chair.

He bangs a phone-shaped rattle against the plastic tray.

IRIS

He wants to take me to a concert.

BANG BANG BANG.

SARA

That could be fun.

BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG.

IRIS

No. It couldn't.

SARA

You worried about the crowd or—

BANGBANGBANGBANG!

SARA - CONT'D

— ok ok! That's enough of that I
think.

She trades a stuffed teddy for the phone rattle.

SARA - CONT'D

Sorry sis.

IRIS

Don't apologize. I blame the telemarketers that keep calling him when he's eating.

(beat)

It's not a date.

SARA

You said he's interested in you.

IRIS

He's definitely interested in what's wrong with me.

SARA

Don't talk like that.

IRIS

What else does he know about me?

SARA

Uh let's see - there's no ring on your finger. You have all your own teeth and a pair of C-cups.

IRIS

I'm being serious. He does all this charity stuff. And he co-chairs some "acoustic activism" group...I'm probably his next science fair project.

SARA

Stop it. Who knows? He is a sound expert. Maybe he can help...

Iris shrugs. She takes one of her nephew's tiny hands.

SARA - CONT'D

Kinda creepy about your neighbor's dog though.

IRIS

I know...Makes my clock murder
look like child's play.

SARA

"Murder"?

IRIS

(innocently)

Manslaughter.

INT. PACKED MUSIC HALL - NIGHT

Punk band "Me First And The Gimme Gimmes" performs in drag.

Levi shouts over the music as he leads Iris into the crowd.

LEVI

Aren't these guys great? They
always dress as something
different depending on the song
lineup!

Iris clings rigidly to Levi's arm.

LEVI

I've always wanted to see them
live. They do a lot of covers so
their fan base is really diverse -
great for people watching.

As they come to a stop, a man next to Iris spits on the
floor at her feet. She shoots a desperate look at Levi.

LEVI

Or ignore the people. Just focus
on the music.

She squeezes her eyes shut. The song comes to an end.

The crowd cheers. A man right behind Iris puts his fingers in his mouth and blasts an ear-piercing WHISTLE.

LEVI

Hey...Iris, you ok?

Another WHISTLE. And another. She's brittle glass.

LEVI

You're not, are you?

He turns to the man whistling behind them.

LEVI - CONT'D

Hey buddy-

IRIS

Don't! Don't say anything.

LEVI

What else is there to do?

INT. LEVI'S CAR - NIGHT

The PLIP PLIP PLIP of the turn signal is the only sound.

IRIS

...You could have put me in a cab.

PLIP PLIP PLIP PLIP.

LEVI

It's totally fine...the acoustics
in there were...way off tonight
anyway.

The light changes. He turns. The PLIPS cease. Iris exhales.

IRIS

Sorry you didn't get the results
you were expecting.

LEVI

What's that supposed to mean?

IRIS

Nothing...you just don't know what
you're dealing with.

LEVI

I thought I was dealing with a
fellow music lover.

IRIS

I do love music. I couldn't live
without it.

Levi grunts noncommittally. Before she can stop herself-

IRIS - CONT'D

What are you doing tomorrow?

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - DAY

Musicians in traditional Peruvian dress warm up on a dais.

LEVI

Iris! Iris over here!

He uses his mic to wave her to a spot front-and-center.

IRIS

It's busy... Who would've guessed
there were this many panpipe
enthusiasts in San Bernardino?

LEVI

I know, right? Chalk one up for culture. I started to think you weren't coming.

IRIS

I figured it'd be better to drive separately...just in case.

LEVI

Lucky for you I got here early to record the sound check.

Iris warily scans the army of blankets surrounding them, assessing the threat level...

Hayfever sneeze 10 o'clock. Pretzel rods 1 o'clock. Kazoo enthusiast 6 o'clock. Blow Pop 8 o'clock. Code Red people.

She spots a woman asleep on a lawn chair in the distance.

IRIS

Oh, hey, I think that's...Mary.

LEVI

Who?

Iris waves at the woman, getting no response.

IRIS

Mary!

LEVI

You know each other?

IRIS

Yeah, that's Mary. She's...I know her. Can we go sit over there?

LEVI

This is prime real estate here...

Iris waves at the woman whose chin is glued to her chest.

IRIS

MARY!

Iris heads in the woman's direction. Levi picks up his blanket and reluctantly follows.

The two trek out to "Mary's" less-settled frontier.

Iris takes the blanket from Levi and sets up shop.

LEVI

You wanna wake her up? Say hello?

IRIS

You know, now that we're closer I realize this isn't Mandy.

LEVI

You mean Mary.

He looks back to the gap they left - already swallowed up.

LEVI - CONT'D

I can barely see the stage.

Iris removes a small pair of binoculars from her bag.

LEVI

You have a mirror in there too?

Iris looks puzzled.

LEVI - CONT'D

To check if Not-Mary's still breathing.

IRIS

This is nice right? We have our own space. It's more intimate.

Levi joins her on the blanket.

LEVI

Yeah, I guess.

IRIS

So...found anything else
interesting to record lately?

He's thoughtful. Then a devilish smile appears.

LEVI

As a matter of fact...

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

Iris helps Levi capture a variety of sounds.

A) INT. LEVI'S BASMENT STUDIO - DAY

Levi positions a standing microphone close to a watermelon sitting in a shallow plastic bucket. Donning headphones, he points to Iris. She taps it timidly with a hammer. He gives her a thumbs up and she attacks the fruit with gusto.

B) EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - DAY

Levi crouches low to the ground, recording Iris' footfalls as she jogs past: first in tennis shoes, then in high heels, then in too-large cowboy boots.

C) INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Iris holds the mic close to a freezer case while Levi repeatedly slides the door open and shut. Levi attempts to stand his ground when the cashier approaches to scold them but Iris drags him away.

D) EXT. LEVI'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Iris and Levi lean their heads together to share a pair of headphones connected to the bat detector. They both duck when a bat swoops low, bumping heads. They laugh, embarrassed. Levi sets the bat detector on the ground and takes her in his arms. They kiss.

INT. LEVI'S HOUSE - MORNING

Iris enters the kitchen wearing one of Levi's t-shirts. The ornate cuckoo clock sits dismembered on a counter.

He comes in to find her rooting through the cabinets.

LEVI

I have tea if that's what you're looking for. Here.

He produces a box of teabags.

IRIS

That's not tea.

LEVI

It says "tea" on the box.

IRIS

That's the dust they sweep up off the floor after they've sorted out my tea.

She finds her bag and pulls out a small metal tin.

IRIS - CONT'D

THIS is tea.

LEVI

(to himself, eyeing the bag)
Of course there's tea in there.

IRIS

Once you go loose leaf you never
go back.

LEVI

I vote we both go back to bed.

Iris rolls her eyes. He grabs at her playfully.

IRIS

I have stuff to do today.

LEVI

What stuff?

IRIS

I have an interview.

LEVI

That's not until this afternoon.

IRIS

I was gonna go home first...just
be quiet for a little while.

LEVI

Oh. Ok.

IRIS

Levi, don't think that-

LEVI

No, no, I get it.

IRIS

This has been great. Honestly. But
I'm not used to it.

LEVI

You gotta recharge a little. But
you can do that here.

IRIS

Levi...

LEVI

Just because we're together
doesn't mean you can't be alone.
I'll go down to the studio and get
some work done. You'll have the
rest of the house to yourself.

IRIS

I don't want you to have to hide
in your own basement.

LEVI

Hey I have work to do. I've hardly
made a cent since I met you woman!
I spend all my time lurking in tea
shops and not assaulting you.

IRIS

(laughing)

Ok, I'll spend the morning here.
But I'm gonna have to go home to
change at some point.

LEVI

I have a suit you can borrow.

IRIS

Not the one from your trial?

LEVI

What? It's vintage.

IRIS

One of the women on the jury
thought you stole it off a dead
guy.

LEVI

The audacity! I would never steal
another man's clothes.

IRIS

Only another man's dog.

He moves to grab her again but she pulls away laughing. He
engages in playful pursuit.

LEVI

Watch what you're saying now! I
don't want to wind up on trial
again.

He chases her through the house until he has her cornered.
He moves in for the 'kill' but Iris has a secret weapon.

IRIS

Alone-time-starting-NOW!

Levi surrenders and retreats in admiration.

LEVI

Well played.
(calling out)
Jeff! To the basement!

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Iris is dressed in business attire, clutching her resume.

She waits for the manager to get off the phone.

A HOTEL EMPLOYEE works to check in a mother with two boys.

On the edge of the desk is an old-fashioned brass call
bell. One kid DINGS the bell and the other laughs.

Pretty soon they are taking turns - DING DING DING.

Then one boy blocks the other with his body so he can hit the bell nonstop DINGDINGDINGDINGDING.

Iris is taut, winding tighter with every successive DING.

The mother looks apologetically at the employee.

HOTEL EMPLOYEE

(with a long-suffering tone)

Happens all the time. We're all
used to it.

Suddenly the boy stops. Iris exhales and looks down at the resume now clutched so tightly that it's crumpled.

She debates what to do and then - DING! She flies the coop, the bell's noise chasing her outside.

EXT. SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS, FOREST TRAIL - DAY

Levi and Iris hike, with Jeff on a leash, to the site of Levi's altercation with Kynlee.

IRIS

So this is it.

LEVI

Yep.

(peering over the edge)

Somewhere down there a cellphone
case is dazzling a rattlesnake
thanks to me.

IRIS

And yet I feel perfectly safe.

LEVI

I'd never hurt you. Not in front
of Jeff.

They sit down to rest and admire the view.

IRIS

You still need that squirrel?

LEVI

Yeah but I don't think it'll risk making an appearance with a dog around.

IRIS

Why bring your equipment then?

LEVI

Never know what you might hear.

IRIS

You make that sound like it's a good thing.

LEVI

Gum, clocks - what are some of the other ones?

IRIS

Gum, any loud eating...ticking clocks, dripping faucets, anything repetitive like that. Raspy breathing. Sick noises - coughing, throat clearing, sneezing, sniffing...

LEVI

Good thing I don't have seasonal allergies.

IRIS

Yeah.

LEVI

Hey, cheer up. That's the whole reason we came out here. There'll be other interviews. And I know somebody who's getting a flu shot for Valentine's Day.

He points both thumbs back at himself and Iris half-smiles.

LEVI - CONT'D

I know what always cheers me up. A good movie.

IRIS

Yeah, I could go for a movie.

LEVI

At the movie theater?

IRIS

Have we met?

LEVI

Hear me out. We'll sit way in the back. We'll go see something explode-y. Lots of noise.

IRIS

I don't go to movie theaters.

LEVI

You've never been to one with me before. Come on! It'll be great I promise. What do you say?

EXT. LEVI'S HOUSE - LATER

Levi sets up a projector on a table in his backyard.

Iris sits on a futon facing the back wall of the house that's serving as their screen.

IRIS

When do I get to find out what
we're watching?

LEVI

During the opening credits. But
here's a clue - the film I've
selected will back up certain
claims I made earlier about 1991
truly being the golden age of
cinema.

IRIS

The sun's going down.

LEVI

This takes time to set up.
(under his breath)
It's not as easy as, say, going to
the actual movies.
(then to Iris)
Be right back.

He heads into the house. She can hear him pottering around.

Jeff comes up and nudges her with a tennis ball in his
mouth. She tries to take it but he jumps out of reach.

She reaches again for him and he darts between her legs
under the futon. She's leaning forward with her head
hanging down to see him when Levi returns.

A CRUNCH makes her sit up.

Levi is back at the projector carrying a large bowl. He
presses play and joins her on the futon.

IRIS
...You made popcorn?

LEVI
(oblivious)
Hope you like extra butter.

He throws back another handful and settles into his seat.

Iris looks ahead at the screen. CRUNCH.

She grips the futon cover. CRUNCH.

Her expression wavers. Rational battles irrational. CRUNCH.

She wraps her arms around herself protectively.

LEVI
You warm enough? I can grab some
blankets.

IRIS
...I'm fine.

LEVI
You sure? You look cold...

He looks at her, then down at the bowl of popcorn.

LEVI - CONT'D
Oh shit...

He moves the bowl down onto the ground and Jeff instantly
dives into it from his spot beneath them.

LEVI - CONT'D
No! Jeff - leave it! Iris I'm so
sorry.

IRIS
Don't apologize.

LEVI

It's force of habit. Movie and popcorn you know? God I'm an idiot.

IRIS

(standing)

It's fine. I just - it's late.

LEVI

Iris I'm sorry! I wasn't even thinking.

IRIS

I'm supposed to believe that?

LEVI

What? What's the alternative?

IRIS

You can't "test" me Levi. It doesn't matter how much I like you, it doesn't matter how great a day I'm having - those noises will always set me off.

LEVI

I don't under-

IRIS

I'm saying don't look for signs of improvement! Because there won't ever be any!

LEVI

Iris I forgot. It was a slip up, that's all. Everything's ok. So I find a different movie snack. Pudding? Soup? It's no big deal.

She heads into the house to get her bag. Levi follows.

INT. LEVI'S HOUSE - CONT'D

LEVI - CONT'D

Please don't go. I'm sorry.

IRIS

What are you apologizing for?

Eating popcorn in your own
backyard? That's insane!

(gesturing to herself)

THIS is insane.

EXT. LEVI'S HOUSE - CONT'D

Iris comes out the front door with Levi right behind her.

Iris opens her car door and turns back to face him.

IRIS

You said you knew all about my
disorder right?...Like how it gets
worse as you get older?

LEVI

So does bone density! Doesn't mean
I'm gonna commit to wearing a
full-body cast starting tomorrow!

(beat)

I'm standing here telling you I'm
willing to make the effort.

IRIS

I just...I need to go home.

She gets in her car and leaves. Levi stands helpless...then
takes a swing at a bird feeder on his way back inside.

INT. IRIS' APARTMENT - DAY

Iris sits in her armchair, trying unsuccessfully to read.

She pours herself a cup of over-steeped tea and grimaces at the bitter taste. Suddenly her phone RINGS in her pocket.

She drops her teacup clumsily and wrestles it out.

IRIS

Oh, hey little sis.

SARA (O.S.)

Hey. I was all ready to leave you a voicemail. You never answer the first time.

IRIS

Yeah.

SARA (O.S.)

I'm not interrupting anything am I?

IRIS

No.

SARA (O.S.)

Oh good. Listen, it's totally no big deal, but I was wondering if you saved the receipt for that clock? The light it puts out at night is keeping the dog awake.

IRIS

No. I don't think so.

SARA (O.S.)

That's ok.

(MORE)

SARA - CONT'D

I can just throw a dishtowel or something over it before we go to bed...You ok? You sound quiet. Well, quieter.

IRIS

Things with Levi...

SARA (O.S.)

Oh Iris...It sounded like two were spending a lot of time together.

IRIS

That was the problem.

SARA (O.S.)

Are you ok?

IRIS

Why wouldn't I be?

SARA (O.S.)

Is it definitely over?

IRIS

I have more than enough people in my life as it is.

SARA (O.S.)

I just thought...it sounded like he understood enough to-

IRIS

To what? Tolerate me? He said he wanted to make the 'effort'. I don't want to be anybody's effort. I can be happy alone - you know I can.

SARA (O.S.)

I know Iris...But you can also be
happy NOT-alone. You understand
that, right?

A pause stretches between them, broken by a baby's cry.

SARA - CONT'D

I have to go - he's waking up.

(beat)

Just don't rule anything out.

That's all. Not yet.

The call ends. Iris stares at the phone in her hand.

EXT. COSTCO - DAY

The parking lot is heaving with customers.

INT. COSTCO - CONT'D

Levi examines a 10 lb. vat of peanut butter. Iris stands
with the cart, looking anxiously at the other shoppers.

IRIS

I thought you just needed
birdseed.

LEVI

I should get this while we're
here. To put in Jeff's kong toy.

Iris sees someone behind Levi chomping on a wad of gum.

IRIS

(muttering)

Go away go away go away...

LEVI

What's up?

IRIS

It's the weekend. You brought me
to Costco. On the weekend.

She looks over her a shoulder at a little girl bouncing a
huge plastic ball on the concrete WHAP WHAP WHAP.

LEVI

You said you wanted to hang out. I
told you I had a quick errand to
run. Is it too much? Do you want
to wait in the car? I'll be quick.

IRIS

Is this punishment for the other
night? Some passive aggressive-

LEVI

Wow...that's...If you think I'd
purposely...I don't know what
happened to you before Iris. I
asked once and you didn't want to
talk about it, remember? But you
can't put that stuff on me.

IRIS

Can we just go now? Please?

He heaves the peanut butter into their cart.

LEVI

Fine. Let's go.

Iris takes off for the front of the store.

She notices a nearby shopper winding up for a sneeze and
changes course abruptly.

She's focused on the exit ahead when Levi seizes her arm and pulls her away from the cart to hide behind a display.

IRIS

What are you-

He points around the display to the aisle they just left.

Moving towards them is Kynlee, her attention on her phone.

She doesn't notice their cart until her own makes contact.

KYNLEE

Guh-hod people! Rude!

She uses her cart to bash the other one out of her way.

IRIS

Does she have a restraining order
against you?

LEVI

I don't think so.

IRIS

You would know.

Levi abruptly starts to move back towards their cart.

IRIS

What are you doing?

LEVI

Kindling and I are going to have a
little chat. With witnesses this
time.

IRIS

(hissing)

We should go. Levi...Levi!

But he's gone. Iris waits behind the display.

LEVI (O.S.)

Hey! I've got something to say to-

KYNLEE (O.S.)

What the...YOU?

Already kicking herself, Iris flings herself into the aisle in time to see Kynlee point an accusing finger at Levi.

KYNLEE

Assault!

LEVI

Oh no you don't-

Kynlee sees Iris over Levi's shoulder. Her eyes widen with slow recognition. She raises her finger to Iris.

KYNLEE

Cahoots...

LEVI

What? Wait a -

Kynlee inhales a huge lungful of air to bellow...

KYNLEE

CAHOOTS!

She moves her finger back and forth between Levi and Iris.

KYNLEE - CONT'D

ASSAULT! CAHOOTS! ASSAULT!

(howling)

CAHOOOOTS!

From her cart, Kynlee pulls out a lifetime-supply box of press-on nails. She chucks it at Levi.

He ducks instinctually. It hits Iris square in the chest and explodes. Fingernails go flying.

LEVI

Iris! Are you all right?

(to Kynlee)

You crazy bitch!

CRUNCHING footsteps announce the arrival of an EMPLOYEE.

KYNLEE

(to Employee)

You witnessed that. He verbally
assaulted me.

EMPLOYEE

Uhh...

KYNLEE

(to Employee)

Earth to Mouthbreather! That was
assault.

EMPLOYEE

Uhhhh...

KYNLEE

GOD! Moron!

In her rage she chucks the phone she had in her other hand
at the employee. It misses and knocks down a display of
pickles out in the main passage like a carnival game.

EMPLOYEE

Heeeyy...

Her new phone is in pieces on the floor, covered in broken
glass and pickle juice. Kynlee snaps.

KYNLEE

(snarling at Iris and Levi)

YOU!

A security guard approaches from behind Kynlee.

LEVI
(to Iris)
Maybe we should go.

If looks could kill...but Iris lets him take her arm.

They turn to flee. Hundreds of false nails skittering under their feet make it slow going.

Kynlee's chase is just as hindered. They all CRUNCH and slide like they're speed-walking on ice.

Levi and Iris round the corner just as the security guard enters the aisle. But he's coming in too fast.

He loses his footing as he catches up to Kynlee. Grabbing her for support, they both collide with a shelf and fall.

On the ground, Kynlee looks up in time to see something up in the gloom of the very top shelf wobbling off the edge...

A giant box plummets down at Kynlee. She screams and covers her head. It crash lands inches in front of her. It reads:

Safety First® Hands Free Cell Phone Adapters

EXT. COSTCO PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Levi bolts to his car but Iris stops a few feet away. She pulls a press-on nail from her cleavage and stares at it.

LEVI
What're you doing? Get in.

IRIS
I'll take the bus.

LEVI
Will you just get in?

IRIS

What did you think that was going to accomplish? Arguing with people doesn't change anything.

LEVI

And hiding from them does?

IRIS

You don't get it. You THINK you get it. Which makes it so much worse.

Over her shoulder Levi sees a different security guard exit the store. The guard spots them and speaks into his radio.

LEVI

Iris please get in the car!

IRIS

No. The experiment is over.

LEVI

What the hell are you talking about?! This wasn't an experiment!

IRIS

It was for me.

Levi stands gut-punched, waiting for her to take it back...take it back. But she only flattens her expression.

He gets into the car and drives off without another word.

Iris looks back at the security guard lumbering towards her. Head down, she strides quickly to the bus stop.

She watches the guard's approach through the plexiglas of the shelter. But a bus gets to her first.

The bus door opens, revealing a driver with gum mid-bubble.

The rent-a-cop is still huffing and puffing. Almost there.

Iris reluctantly boards and fishes a twenty from her wallet. The driver POPS his bubble and points to a sign:

"Exact change only"

IRIS

Keep it.

The driver shrugs and closes the door.

The sweating security guard dismisses the retreating bus with a frustrated wave. But Iris hasn't escaped punishment.

Every seat is full, except for one directly behind two kids noisily gargling with their milkshakes. GLUGGGAGGLUUGG.

Iris shudders. Condemned, she walks to The Chair.

She sits and pulls out her trusty iPOD with shaking hands.

The old woman in the window seat beside her twitches, with vacant eyes. She mutters to herself in agitation.

As Iris watches, the old woman begins to bang her head against the window, mumbling and cursing to herself. THUD.

Iris dons her headphones and presses play without taking her eyes off the woman. Horrified and hypnotized.

THUD. THUD. Almost in time to Iris' music. THUD. THUD.

Iris can't drag her eyes away. So she shuts them instead, sending the first of many tears rolling down her cheeks.

THUD. THUD. THUD.

THUD. THUD. THUD.

INT. LEVI'S HOUSE - DAY

Levi struggles to get the batteries back into his cuckoo clock. He gives up and slams the whole thing down.

He notices Jeff scratching at a drawer in the coffee table.

Levi walks over, opens the drawer and finds the squeak toy.

He contemplates it for a moment before handing it over.

INT. IRIS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

All is quiet, but Iris tosses in bed. Her ear plugs and headphones sit unused on top of her nightstand.

Wide awake, she stares at the ceiling.

INT. PACKED MUSIC HALL - NIGHT

From a spot at the bar, a drunk Levi applauds mechanically as a rock band finishes their set and leaves the stage.

A tall and toned female ROADIE sidles up next to him.

ROADIE
(to the bartender)
Bottle'a Rolling Rock.

LEVI
Good show.

ROADIE
Yeah.

LEVI
I thought about getting into the
backstage business myself.
(MORE)

LEVI - CONT'D

But I always kind of worried I
didn't have the upper body
strength for it.

ROADIE

It's a workout, that's for sure.

She cracks her knuckles loudly, one at a time. Levi winces.

ROADIE

(noticing, grinning at him)

What?

LEVI

(smiling)

Oh, sorry. My fingers...I
dislocated two of them really bad
when I was a kid. Every time I
hear that sound, it's like...I
look down and expect them to be
jutting out at weird angles again.

ROADIE

This sound?

She cracks her knuckles again. Still smiling, Levi takes a
step backwards unconsciously.

LEVI

Doesn't that hurt? It sounds like
it hurts.

ROADIE

You kidding? It feels great.

She cracks her neck from side to side. Levi grimaces.

ROADIE - CONT'D

Check this out.

She turns to snap both arms straight back behind her. Delighting in his discomfort as her shoulders CRACK.

Levi laughs nervously. He runs a hand over his face and slowly turns away. Her laughter follows him out.

INT. SARA'S HOUSE - DAY

Sara attempts to hold the writhing baby as Iris, bags under her eyes, tries to distract him with a teething ring.

SARA

Would you get his bouncer? I think it's in the trunk of my car. God, that's if we didn't leave it at my mother-in-law's...

Iris nods. Before she even opens the door leading to the garage she notices a red glow emanating from beneath it.

INT. SARA'S GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Frowning, she opens the door. Thanks to Iris' digital clock, the garage is lit up like a window in Amsterdam.

INT. SARA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Just as Iris returns with the bouncer, her "teapot" rings.

Sara and Iris exchange a look.

SARA

Well it's not me. And Mom's on that retreat.

Iris rushes over to her bag, but pauses when she doesn't recognize the phone number. She answers apprehensively.

IRIS

Hello?...Yes.

SARA

Is it him?

IRIS

Is that really necessary? I
didn't-

(beat)

I understand. Tomorrow...Yes.

She hangs up and turns to her sister with worried eyes.

SARA

It wasn't him.

IRIS

I have to give a statement...

INT. SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

Iris waits nervously on a bench outside the Judge's private chambers. A COURT OFFICIAL opens the antechamber door.

COURT OFFICIAL

Iris Hathaway?

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - CONT'D

JUDGE

An allegation of jury tampering
has been made. It was brought to
the court's attention that you
were seen with the defendant you
and your peers recently acquitted.

IRIS

Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE

Without any other evidence to the contrary, I have only your statement - and his - to rule out misconduct. Did you have any contact with or connection to the defendant either before or during the trial?

IRIS

No sir. I only met him afterwards.

JUDGE

Thank you Miss Hathaway.

IRIS

That's it? What about Levi's statement?

JUDGE

He gave it this morning.

IRIS

Oh...how did he seem?

The Judge purses his lips and gives her a withering look.

IRIS - CONT'D

I mean, he's not in trouble?

He shakes his head and looks down at his blotter to signal the end of the conversation.

INT. SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY COURTHOUSE - CONT'D

Iris exits the Judge's chambers. The Court Official isn't at his desk and she hears arguing out in the corridor.

She peeks out a crack in the antechamber door...

COURT OFFICIAL

Ma'am, ma'am, you're going to have to calm down. This is a discussion to be having with your attorney.

KYNLEE

That brain-dead stock boy can't press charges against ME. I'm the VICTIM. I threw my phone in self-defense. I'm the assault-EE, not the assault-ER!

The Bailiff arrives to help usher Kynlee out. Iris makes sure the coast is clear before departing.

EXT. SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY COURTHOUSE - CONT'D

Iris exits the building deep in thought. Her phone RINGS.

IRIS

Hey sis...It went fine but listen - do you have any hiking gear I can borrow?

EXT. SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS - DAY

Iris stands contemplating the famous "Heart Rock" formation, listening to her iPod.

Wearing a small backpack, she moves off into the woods.

She stops for a moment, takes a breath, closes her eyes.

Removing her headphones, she reaches out with her ears.

She hears birds calling to each other, rustling noises in a bush nearby, her own breath.

The sound of children laughing from somewhere on the trail behind her breaks the spell and she smiles faintly.

Opening her eyes, she heads over the edge of the trail and begins picking her way down a steep slope.

EXT. LEVI'S FRONT PORCH - DAY

Iris leaves a small wrapped package on Levi's doorstep.

EXT. LEVI'S FRONT PORCH - LATER

Levi's car pulls up and he gets out, shuffling some mail.

He narrowly misses stepping on the box on the mat.

The card attached to the wrapping twine is cut in the shape of a teabag. He flips it over to reveal one word: "Tea?"

He opens the box and finds Kynlee's cracked, weather-beaten, but unmistakably-bedazzled cell phone.

INT. TEA SHOP - EVENING

Iris sits at a table set for two, nursing a cold cup of tea. There are minor scratches on her hands and forearms.

Levi enters with a messenger bag and joins her.

LEVI

What are we drinking?

IRIS

This is Da Hong Pau...It means Big Red Robe. A rare oolong from China. Difficult to come by.

LEVI
Difficult huh?

IRIS
Very difficult.

LEVI
Good. The harder it is to come by
- the better it usually turns out
to be.

Iris pours him a cup and he sniffs it.

LEVI - CONT'D
Green tea?

IRIS
No oolong is its own category-

She's interrupted by someone at another table taking a long, loud SLURP of their tea.

Iris looks at the slurper, then down at her hands.

LEVI
Hey...hey.
(she meets his gaze)
I got your present.

She smiles weakly. He nods at the state of her hands.

LEVI - CONT'D
Looks like the rattlesnake put up
a fight.

There's another loud SLURP and Iris pushes her chair back.

LEVI
Wait.

IRIS

I could say something...?

LEVI

You don't have to do that.

IRIS

Fight or flight Levi...

LEVI

Or adapt. I brought you a present
too.

From the bag he pulls out two sets of bulky headphones with
built-in microphones. He hands one pair to her.

LEVI - CONT'D

Plug the jack into your phone and
put these on.

Iris looks unsure but follows his instructions. When they
both have headphones on he calls her phone with his.

IRIS

Hello?

LEVI

Can you hear me ok?

IRIS

(smiling)

Yeah.

LEVI

Can you hear anything else?

Iris looks around - she and Levi get plenty of odd looks
from some of the other customers but there's no sound.

IRIS

Just you.

LEVI

So, you were giving me a lesson in
fancypants oolong.

IRIS

(adjusting her mic)

The story behind this particular
tea is really interesting...

FADE OUT.

THE END