

LÉA

by

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Soothing ambient sound from an open window fades in. A distant hiss from a highway, cars honking and an airplane in the sky generates a hum.

VOICE

(V.O)

Sit down, George. There's...
there's something I need to tell
you.

FADE IN:

INT. LÉA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - MORNING

An old fan sits on the window sill of a small, New York apartment. It oscillates back and forth, blowing the sheer curtains as it passes.

A lit cigarette hangs on the edge of an ashtray beside the fan. To the right of the window is a dirty fish bowl, home to a single, BLUE FISH.

VOICE

(O.S)

Please, just hear me out, ok? My
mind's been running a mile a
minute and I haven't had the
courage to say anything until
now...

She lowers her volume, speaking softly.

VOICE

(O.S.)

I haven't been faithful to you.

(beat)

I know you probably hate me now,
and there's nothing I can say to
change what happened. But I just
want you to know that I'm sorry.

The voice belongs to LÉA (30), wearing nothing but a large tee shirt and panties.

She walks to the window with a script in one hand, a cup of Ramen noodles in the other. She picks up the cigarette, takes a long drag, and scribbles a couple of notes on the script.

She reads the final line again, this time with a much greater volume.

LÉA

I'm sorry, George!

She taps some ash into the ashtray, sets down her food, and picks up a small can of fish food next to the bowl.

She looks over to the fish bowl for a moment, then leans closer -- the fish floats on its side in the middle of the bowl.

INT. LÉA'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - LATER

Léa stands in front of the toilet and flushes, watching as the fish spirals down the drain.

TITLE CARD: "LÉA"

PRECUT: TECHNO MUSIC fades in from the silence.

INT. LÉA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - LATER

A 90's workout video plays on an old, tube television.

Léa follows along with the INSTRUCTOR, mimicking her every move.

PRECUT: Phone RINGING, MARK picking up

MARK
(V.O.)
Hello?

LÉA
(V.O.)
Hey... it's me.

INT. LÉA'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - LATER

Léa sits at a small table with her cell phone to her ear. She has two stacks of papers next to her, taking a sheet of of each stack and stapling them together at the corners.

MARK
Who?

LÉA
Léa.

MARK
(beat)
I'm at work.

She looks down at her script.

LÉA
Just hear me out, ok?

MARK
Look, I can't --

LÉA
-- I know you probably hate me
now, and there's nothing I can say
to change what happened.

MARK
I don't hate you --

LÉA
-- But I just want you to know
that I'm sorry.

MARK
(beat)
You can't keep calling me.

Léa ignores Mark's comment and changes her mood.

LÉA
My audition's today! This one
could really be my break, you
know?

MARK
Look, I have to go.

He hangs up.

LÉA
Mark...Mark?

INT. LÉA'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - LATER

Léa lays in her bathtub, holding her breath under the water.
Small bubbles swim upward from her nostrils.

PRECUT: VOICE from an AUDIOBOOK.

VOICE
(V.O.)
Now, let's try these sounds in a
sentence. Listen and repeat after
me. It's just another humdrum day.

INT. BUS - DAY

Léa leans against the glass of a New York bus -- sunglasses on. She has headphones in her ears and is listening to British accent training. She repeats to herself with a British accent.

LÉA

(whispering)

It's just another humdrum day.

VOICE

I don't care to wear my hair like
Mary.

The bus comes to a stop. Léa looks out the window.

LÉA

(whispering)

I don't care to wear my hair like
Mary.

A couple, MAN and WOMAN, are fighting outside the bus -- Léa can't hear what they're saying.

VOICE

Betty is really silly.

She watches their interaction intently. She seems to enjoy it.

Léa mimics the woman's posture and motions -- turning her head to the side, placing her hand on the back of her neck

VOICE

The heavy rain is quite a pain.

The bus drives away. Léa's eyes follow the couple as they disappear into the distance.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY, LANES - DAY

The bowling alley has yet to open.

Léa dusts a lane gutter in silence, under harsh fluorescent light. She's wearing a tacky bowling alley uniform.

PRECUT: Loud DISCO MUSIC fades in.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY, SHOE COUNTER - LATER

The clinical, bright light from before is replaced with a cheap laser show. Colorful circles of light dance along the walls and floor in the darkness. Music pounds in the background.

Animated graphics appear on the screen above one of the lanes:
GUTTER.

Léa stands behind the shoe counter, scribbling notes on her script.

ALEX, 31, a clean-cut businessman wearing an off-the-rack suit enters the lobby with his son, TOBY (8). Toby runs off to the arcade as Alex approaches the counter.

Léa is deeply focused on her script. She doesn't look up.

Alex knocks on the counter.

LÉA
(looking up)
Sorry, how can I help you?

ALEX
...Léa?

LÉA
Alex. Hey.

Alex initiates an awkward hug over the counter.

ALEX
How've you been?

LÉA
Uh, great.

ALEX
I haven't seen you since... what, Easton?

LÉA
Yeah, something like that. How are you?

ALEX
Pretty good, actually. Went into real estate and moved out to the Lower East Side. I'm just taking my son out for the weekend, his mom lives around here.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)
That's him over there.

Alex points behind him where Toby stands in front of an arcade game, staring intently at the screen.

LÉA
You have a son now...

ALEX
Yep. Turning 9 this Friday.

Léa forces a smile.

LÉA
So uh, you need shoes?

ALEX
Oh, yeah, I'm an 11 and he's a 6,
I think.

Léa nods and walks toward the shoe shelf.

ALEX
So, how long have you been in the
bowling business?

LÉA
Oh, I uh... I actually don't
really work here. My husband owns
the place. I just come in
sometimes to work on my scripts.
Character research, that kind of
thing.

ALEX
Wow, so you got married.

Léa slips her ring off of her right hand and onto her left ring finger.

She lifts up her hand and shows him the ring.

LÉA
Yep. Two years now.

ALEX
Congratulations...
(beat)
And you're still pursuing acting,
huh?

Léa comes back with the shoes.

LÉA
It's actually going really great.
I have a huge audition today.

ALEX
Oh yeah?

LÉA
Yeah, it's for a feature.

ALEX
That's great. That your head shot?
Can I...

Léa looks down at the manilla folder beside her script and nods.

Alex reaches over and pulls out the head shot. He holds it up, comparing it to her face.

ALEX
Looks really good.

GORAN, Léa's boss, comes out from a door behind the counter.

GORAN
Léa... I need you on lane four.

Léa takes the head shot from Alex.

LÉA
(to Goran)
Ok.

GORAN
Now, please.

Léa nods.

Goran shakes his head and exits.

LÉA
(to Alex)
Sorry, uh... it'll be \$8.

Alex is suspicious. He pays her.

ALEX
Thanks for the shoes.

Léa walks away.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY, BEHIND THE LANES - LATER

Surrounded by machinery and loud noises, Léa fixes a lane jam by unscrambling some bowling balls. They all roll into a hole.

She sits down to catch her breath and looks down at her watch.

She closes her eyes and pushes her fingers hard into her eyelids.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY, BREAK ROOM - LATER

Goran is flipping through a binder, his glasses on his nose.

Léa bursts in crying, which startles Goran. Her eyes are swollen.

GORAN

Jesus, what's wrong?

LÉA

I have to go...

GORAN

We just opened --

LÉA

-- My boyfriend just got in a really bad accident.

GORAN

...What?

LÉA

I just got a call from the hospital.

Léa wipes her eyes. She turns her head to the side and places her hand on the back of her neck, imitating the woman from the bus stop.

LÉA

My mind's been running a mile a minute --

GORAN

-- When're you gonna stop with this shit, huh?

LÉA

What are you talking about, my husband was in a terrible --

GORAN

-- Thought it was your boyfriend.

Léa is silent.

GORAN

Now, unless you have anything of actual importance, go get back to work.

Léa approaches the door, tail tucked between her legs. She stops at the door for a moment, then turns back to Goran.

LÉA

(beat)

I need the rest of the afternoon off.

GORAN

If you leave, you're gonna have a lot more time off than that. Comprende?

Their eyes lock for a brief moment.

Léa storms out of the break room without a word.

PRECUT: The RATTLING of a subway.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - LATER

Léa sits in the subway car, applying makeup in a compact mirror. The New York skyline moves slowly across window behind her.

She closes her mirror, removes her flats, and puts them in her purse. She pulls out a pair of high heels and slips them on.

INT. ELEVATOR - LATER

Léa stands alone in the elevator as it moves slowly upward.

LÉA

(V.O)

(whispering, very quickly)

I know you probably hate me now and there's nothing I can say to change what happened but I just want you to know that I'm sorry...I know you probably hate me now and there's nothing I can say to change what happened but I just want you to know that I'm --

HARRISON
(V.O.)
Leah?

INT. CASTING OFFICE, LOBBY - AFTERNOON

Léa looks up from her script. She is sitting in a large waiting room, surrounded by a handful of other actresses, also reading over their sides.

HARRISON, the casting director, stands outside of the door to the audition room. He repeats Léa's name again.

HARRISON
(pronouncing incorrectly)
Leah Thompson?

Léa stands and smiles.

LÉA
(pronouncing correctly)
Léa.

HARRISON
We're ready for you.

INT. AUDITION ROOM - LATER

The door to the audition room opens. Léa enters, followed by Harrison.

At a small desk sits the director, GILL. To his right, a video camera is fixed on top of a tripod.

Harrison takes a seat on the other side of the camera.

HARRISON
Stand on the white tape, please.

Léa looks down and shifts over, putting her toes on the tape.

HARRISON
And I'll be reading with you
today.

Léa nods.

Harrison reaches over and presses record. A small, red light blinks on the front of the camera.

HARRISON
Go ahead and slate.

Léa swallows.

LÉA

Léa Thompson, reading for Carly.

She looks over to Gill.

GILL

(beat)

Whenever you're ready.

LÉA

(to Harrison, with a British accent)

"Sit down, George. There's... there's something I need to tell you."

Gill takes a deep breath.

HARRISON

(to Léa)

"What's wrong?"

LÉA

(British accent)

"Please, just hear me out, ok? My mind's been running a mile a minute and I haven't had --"

GILL

-- Excuse me, can we stop just a minute?

Léa stops and looks at Gill.

GILL

Can we lose the accent?

LÉA

Sorry, I remember seeing that it took place in Oxford...

GILL

Oxford, Georgia. Let's just be you, ok?

Léa nods.

GILL

Alright, let's start again.

LÉA

"Sit down, George.

(MORE)

LÉA (CONT'D)

There's... there's something I
need to tell you --"

GILL

-- I'm sorry, stop there.

(beat)

Ok, I want you to do it again. And
I want you to imagine that this is
the first time you've ever told
George the truth.

(beat)

Whenever you're ready.

Léa looks straight into Harrison's eyes and lingers for a
moment. She summons some tears.

LÉA

"George... sit down.

(beat)

I need to tell you something."

HARRISON

"What's wrong?"

LÉA

(beat)

"Please just... just hear me out,
ok. My mind's been --"

GILL

-- Ok, thank you.

LÉA

I... I can read it differently...

GILL

That's alright. It was great.

LÉA

(to Harrison)

"Sit down, George!--"

HARRISON

-- Thank you so much for coming
in.

Léa composes herself, nods her head graciously, and heads
toward the door.

LÉA

(to Gill)

'Yellow and Gold' is my favorite
film.

GILL
Thank you.

She exits.

INT. SUBWAY/BUS - LATER

Léa looks out of the window at the skyline.

INT. LÉA'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - DUSK

Léa stands in front of the mirror. She wipes a cloth across her face, removing her makeup. She stares into the glass.

INT. LÉA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DUSK

Léa walks into the bedroom with a plastic bag in her hands. Inside the bag is a single, ORANGE FISH.

She approaches the window, opens the plastic bag, and dumps the fish into the bowl.

She takes the fish food, sprinkles a generous amount of flakes into the water, and watches as the fish rushes to the surface to feed.

CUT TO BLACK.