

CLEO

Written by

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EXT. RITZY HOTEL PROM. LOS ANGELES, CA. PROM, 2007. NIGHT.

The STUDENTS passing through the parking lot and front garden look like they should be attending the VMAs, rather than a High School Prom. Even the decorations are designer. Everyone is paired off.

The side doors are open. Leading to the rented ballroom. Banner for PROM hangs above them. Live music from a popular band echoes.

Two opposing groups pass and reveal NATE, 18 , sitting on a bench. Head down. A crinkled, clear box with a eccentric CUSTOM MADE CORSAGE in his lap. He looks defeated but quaff.

His Blackberry starts buzzing. A number not saved in his contacts. Sighs. Not who he wanted.

Struggles to decide whether to answer or not. Answers.

NATE

Hello?

He can't hear. Goes back to car.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. NATE'S BMW. CONTINUOUS.

NATE gets into his car. Throws corsage in back seat. Slams door.

The phone connects to his Bluetooth when he starts the car.

AUTOMATED VOICE

(V.O.)

This call will be monitored and recorded. I have a collect call from...

Static.

AUTOMATED VOICE (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

An inmate from LAPD Metro Detention Center. Say yes to accept.

Sighs.

NATE

Yes.

Phone rings.

Sits for a moment with hands on steering wheel. Watching his peers.

The backseat of his car is filled with boxes and suitcases. Only the front two seats are free.

OFFICER HAMILTON

(V.O.)

Is this Nathaniel Parker? The emergency contact for a Cleo Parker?

Mechanical.

NATE

Yes. I'll be right over.

Hangs up. The car radio wails of angsty broken hearts.

He pops the cigarette lighter in. Rustles through his glove compartment. Pulls a pack of PINK DREAM cigarettes from a woman's small clutch. He takes one out. Lights it with car lighter.

Drags. He coughs. He is not a smoker. Drives away.

Drives through the winding freeways and sights of LA. Bright and alive, streets flooded with people. He takes an alternative route and heads up a deserted uphill street.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION LOBBY. NIGHT. MOMENTS LATER.

NATE enters in a daze. He looks around. Fluorescent lights blind him.

Goes to front desk. A portly, heavily mustashed officer, HAMILTON, looks up from paperwork. Annoyed.

OFFICER HAMILTON

Can I help you?

Looks Nate up and down.

OFFICER HAMILTON (CONT'D)
You're here for the girl, eh?

Nods. Officer chuckles, shaking his head.

OFFICER HAMILTON (CONT'D)
She sure does have a mouth on her.

Waves him forward. Down a side hallway.

INT. POLICE STATION HALLWAY. CONTINUOUS.

NATE and OFFICER HAMILTON walk down hall.

OFFICER HAMILTON
You're the brother right? Nathaniel
Parker?

He double-checks the forms on the clipboard.

Nate's face falls.

NATE
Yeah, that's me. The reliable
brother. Bailing little sis out of
trouble.

He looks down the list.

OFFICER HAMILTON
Well, she's had an eventful night.
Public intoxication, underage
drinking, disrespecting an officer,
and my favorite stealing a police
car.

Nate stops.

NATE
Wait, what?

OFFICER HAMILTON
Yep.

Squints to read.

OFFICER HAMILTON (CONT'D)
Apparently, it was "a dare you just
couldn't pass up".

He laughs. Nate doesn't react. Stops. They've reached her
holding room, the private suite.

INT. POLICE HOLDING ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

CLEO, 18, beautiful with long, naturally black hair. She wears a fancy gown, perfectly matching the eccentric CORSAGE. She looks bored. Arms crossed. Leaning against the wall.

Looks at NATE through the glass. Smiles. OFFICER HAMILTON and Nate enter.

CLEO

Ah, Rich, couldn't get enough of me?

OFFICER HAMILTON

(to Nate)

Ah, now I'm 'Rich'. Guess it's better than "fucking pig fucker".

Her eyes flick towards Nate in the doorway. Cleo beams. Head cocked to one side.

CLEO

Natie! You made it!

Cleo drunkenly gets up. Wrists in handcuffs. She puts her arms over Nate's head in a hug. Locking him in. He doesn't hug her back.

CLEO (CONT'D)

I can't believe I got arrested.

OFFICER HAMILTON

Okay, okay...

Pulls the two apart.

Turns to Nate, sticks tongue out and does the rock n' roll hand sign. Officer Hamilton takes off the handcuffs.

OFFICER HAMILTON (CONT'D)

(to Nate)

Her bail is set at \$1,000.

Pissed. Rummages for wallet. No cash, only credit cards.

NATE

Do you take card?

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. NATE'S BMW. MOMENTS LATER.

NATE and CLEO sit at a traffic light. The tension could be cut with a knife. Cleo seems at ease though. Begins flipping through stations. Every change makes Nate's eye twitch.

NATE

Can you not.

She shrugs unapologetically. Pulls his Ipod out of a compartment. Scrolls through. Waiting for his apology. Annoyed.

CLEO

Jesus, Nate. Loosen up.

She picks a song. "*Date with the Night*" Yeah Yeah Yeahs. Sings along. Takes out Sidekick. Typing rapidly.

CLEO (CONT'D)

We should go out, I think Georgina Morgan is having a huge after-after-party.

Nate is silent.

CLEO (CONT'D)

Hello! Do you want to go? Nate.

NATE

Usually you go to the event first.

CLEO

Oh, Nate, no one actually goes to prom. We barely even show up to school. Make the next left.

He drives past.

CLEO (CONT'D)

What are you doing? That was the turn.

NATE

No. Its not.

Cleo turns down music.

CLEO

Where are we going?

NATE

I'm taking you home. You're completely trashed.

CLEO

(Audrey Hepburn accent)
 You of all people, should know that
 my greatest power lies in holding
 my liquor.

NATE

If tonight has proved anything,
 it's the opposite of that.

He makes the turn into her gated neighborhood. The bar raises
 for his car.

CLEO

I don't want to go home.

Building up. About to burst. Knuckles white on steering
 wheel. Turns to her full of rage.

NATE

Well, I didn't want to wait for two
 hours looking like a total jackass!
 I didn't want to spend my prom
 night signing papers to get you out
 of jail! Fucking jail, Cleo. We all
 have to do things we don't want to.

She is stunned. Grabs pink dreams cigarette. Pops in car
 lighter.

CLEO

Don't be petty, Nate. It's been a
 weird night.

He pulls out the lighter. She sneers.

NATE

Oh, has it? Has it, Cleo? You know,
 tonight was supposed to be special.
 But, I should have known it
 wouldn't end the way I expected.

CLEO

Nate, if you wanted to fuck me, why
 didn't you just say so?

She tries to unzip the back of her gown.

NATE

No! I don't want to fuck you.

Cleo stops. Offended.

NATE (CONT'D)

I want to kiss you and I want to make love with you and I want it to mean something. It was stupid. I should have know that with you it doesn't matter if you've known me for 18 years or 1 night, a fuck is a fuck.

They pull in front a a gated house atop a hill, Cleo's parents house. Parks outside gate.

No one speaks. He stares forward. Trying not to cry and making sure she doesn't see.

CLEO

I don't know what to say.

NATE

That's a first.

Both stubbornly sit still.

NATE (CONT'D)

You should go. I want to get to campus before the sun comes up.

He does not look at her.

Looks behind her at the packed seat.

CLEO

You're really going then.

NATE

There's nothing for me here. Empty people following pointless trends just because some blonde, Botox barbie says "it's hot". It's all superficial rot.

CLEO

Thanks, Morrissey.

Nate doesn't reply.

NATE

I don't have all night.

She gets out of the car. Slams the door. Walks to the gate and types in code. She looks back. Waiting for him to apologize.

He is already pulling away. Her face drops.

CUT TO:

INT. NATE'S APARTMENT. HUMBLE, TEXAS. PRESENT DAY.

A close up of a light bulb. A hand carefully screws it out.

REVEAL : NATE, now 23, scruffy hair and the beginnings of a beard, below. Fumbles with packaging of new light bulb. Wedges it out. Reaches up to place a new light bulb from the package.

He comes down from his small step ladder. Stands back to admire his work. Flips the switch. The light shines dully, barely lighting the area it's above.

Looks at packaging. 30 watts. Exits. Shuts off the light.

BLACK.