

Burning Bridges - Pilot

Scene 1

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EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The outside of apartments on a dead street in 1970's New York City, with red stop lights glowing all around. SCREAMING and BANGING is heard from a third story apartment. A MAN walks out from the apartment below onto his fire escape, looking up and walking back inside. Through the window he turns his record player up.

SUGGESTED: Peggy Lee's, "Fever", starts to play.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The inside of the small bedroom has a mix of girls and guys clothes and belongings on the floor, with two twin beds. The walls have torn paper and stains covering it. The bedroom door is shut and the music bleeds in from the floor below.

THE DUKE (O.S.)

It happens every day! We have to
eat! We have to drink!

The SMASHING of a BOTTLE is heard followed by CRYING. MUFFLED GRUNTS and SLURRS are made out. The bedroom door swings open.

BRIDGE, white male, 18, an under average height guy and a bit scrawny rushes ISABELLE, black female, 10, into the bedroom and places her on the bed. She sits there, holding a bloody washcloth over her left forearm, sobbing with Bridge kneeling next to her.

He tightens the cloth on her arm delicately, using it just as much to wipe the sweat from his shaking hands as he does to stop the bleeding from her arm. SMASHING BOTTLES, BANGING and YELLING are heard from the other room.

BRIDGE

I'll be right back, okay? Just stay
here.

Bridge gets up and hurries out of the room, shutting the door behind him. Isabelle stares at the door, holding in tears.

THE DUKE (O.S.)

I can't do shit around here without
you and that garbage getting in my
way.

BRIDGE (O.S.)

Don't call her that!

THE DUKE (O.S.)
 She hurt her arm, too bad! Making a
 situation worse than it is. Don't
 touch me! This is my house, you
 don't put your hands on me!

A loud THUD echoes the apartment. Isabelle jumps off the bed, rushing to the door. The beds springs shake momentarily, coming to a stop. It is silent.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Bridge and Isabelle sit at the kitchen table eating cereal. Bridge has a black eye, right side, and Isabelle has a big white patched bandaid on her left forearm. She is looking at the back of the cereal box.

ISABELLE
 There's no start to finish on this
 maze.

BRIDGE
 I promise there is.

ISABELLE
 Look.

Bridge takes the box and examines the back for just a few seconds. He points.

BRIDGE
 There.

ISABELLE
 Where?

BRIDGE
 (dragging finger on maze)
 Here to here.

He puts the cereal box down.

ISABELLE
 Shit.

BRIDGE
 Don't say that.

ISABELLE
 I'm surprised you can see out of
 your eye. That's all.

Bridge tries to ignore her comment, giving a slight SCUFF, trying to brush past the topic. Isabelle stares at him.

Beat.

ISABELLE CONT'D
You look like shit.

BRIDGE
What did I just say about that word?

ISABELLE
You didn't specify which word.

BRIDGE
I don't need to, you're just trying to get me to say it to justify it.

ISABELLE
There's a million words in the English language Bridge. I mean, you got to be a little more specific.

THE DUKE, white male, late 40's, walks into the kitchen. He is wearing a ripped up Jazz teeshirt, boxer briefs and tube socks. He is very grim and brings around the presence of a wild dog. He has a handle bar mustache and walks with a hunch. He places his hand on Bridge's shoulder.

THE DUKE
How is it?

Bridge doesn't answer. He stares at the table in front of him. The Duke shakes his shoulder a bit with a tighter grip.

THE DUKE CONT'D
Hey. You need a bag of frozen peas or something?

BRIDGE
No. It's fine.

THE DUKE
Well a thanks for asking would have been polite, but I can see you're under a lot of stress.

The Duke walks over to the fridge. He opens the door, grabbing the orange juice.

THE DUKE CONT'D
So, last night. I guess I'll admit things got a bit out of hand. People said things they didn't mean...

He grabs a cup from the cabinet and pours the juice, leaving the carton on the counter when finished.

THE DUKE CONT'D

...and violating personal space,
causing me to, you know, cause that
whole...

The Duke motions his hand over his face while taking a sip of juice.

THE DUKE CONT'D

...situation, which doesn't look
too bad if you ask me. Bet some
girls might even talk to you now.
Probably think you're badass,
tough. You'll probably thank me at
some point. I don't expect right
now cause you don't see the big
picture of things being young and
under-developed, but, you know,
someday.

He sips his orange juice, chuckling a bit. Bridge moves to get up.

THE DUKE CONT'D

Woah woah woah, alright, stay
seated... I'm sorry I ruffed you up
a little. I didn't think I got you
like that but, it's unfortunate.
And you, all about your arm there,
complete accident. But that's not
truly my fault cause you are
running around here like a little
maniac. Can't stop someone from
slipping on the glass, am I right?
Like going on an ice skating rink
with no skates. Just, swoooooosh.

Bridge gets up from the table motioning to Isabelle.
Isabelle stands as well.

BRIDGE

Better leave for school. Grab your
stuff Issy.

THE DUKE

Hey!

Bridge and Isabelle stop moving, standing by the table. The Duke walks over to Bridge.

THE DUKE CONT'D

Now it takes a big man to apologize when he's made a mistake. It doesn't even take half to accept one. Now I suggest you accept it before I'm forced to take it back. Simply out of the rules of common courtesy of course.

Bridge doesn't move. The Duke grabs his arm tight with one hand and continuing to drink orange juice in the other.

THE DUKE CONT'D

Now, I want you to say, "I accept your apology. And thank you for being so patient with my stubborn ass, dad. Thank you for putting a roof over my head and supplying me with all this wonderful fuckin food in my belly." (Pulling him closer) Are you not accepting my apology?

BRIDGE

Thank you.

THE DUKE

Thank you for what?

BRIDGE

Thank you for the apology.

THE DUKE

You don't sound accepting.

BRIDGE

I accept it.

THE DUKE

You accept what?

BRIDGE

Your apology. I accept it. I accept your apology.

Beat.

THE DUKE

Well thank you for accepting. I'm glad we're on the same page. Don't be late to school.

He lets go of Bridge's arm and takes a sip of orange juice. Bridge backs up into a chair, almost falling over it.

BRIDGE

Shit!

Bridge and Isabelle walk out of the room.

ISABELLE

You said shit.

BRIDGE

Don't let your teachers hear it.

CONTINUED...