ACT ONE

SCENE A

INT. OUTER OFFICE/DANNY AND NOAH'S OFFICE - MORNING (DAY 1)
(DANNY, NOAH, MELANIE, TESSA)

AN OFFICE. TWO DESKS. ONE OF THEM IS EMPTY. AT THE OTHER
SITS MELANIE, 33, A HOT GIRL WHOSE FATHER IGNORED HER JUST
ENOUGH SO THAT SHE DOESN'T REALIZE SHE'S A HOT GIRL. MELANIE
IS MUCH BETTER AT ORGANIZING OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES THAN HER
OWN. SHE'S IN THE MIDDLE OF AN INTERVIEW WITH TESSA. TESSA
IS 23, PRETTY, ENTITLED, RAISED IN L.A.

TESSA

...and I'm like, "You have to be nice,
Brandon. You fat skank. You smoker.
You can't do this to my best friend.
I know you had your ears reduced and
pinned, you Schnauzer. She's your
girlfriend, okay? So you are getting
your dad's plane and we are going to
visit her in rehab. And if you sweat
me on this, so help me dog, I will go
straight to your MySpace page and post
all that weird stuff you make Jordana
do to you with coffee!" (THEN) So
we went. And Jordana hasn't barfed
for ninety days. (PLEASED) La-la-la.

MELANIE

Yeah, um... Let me repeat the
question: Why do you feel qualified
to be an assistant?

TESSA

I'm a people person.

MELANIE

(STARES AT HER; THEN) Listen, Tessa --

SFX: CELL PHONE RINGS.
MELANIE (CONT'D)

One sec...

MELANIE RUMMAGES THROUGH HER PURSE UNTIL SHE FINDS HER PHONE. SHE ANSWERS QUICKLY AND WITH GREAT ANTICIPATION.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE) Hello...? Yes... yes...

(THEN, DISAPPOINTED) Oh. O-kay.

Well, then give her a flea bath.

Thanks. Don't hurt her. I'll pick her up after work.

TESSA

Who did you think that was gonna be?

MELANIE

What?

TESSA

You were all nervous. You totally thought that was going to be someone else. Who? A guy? Are you pregnant? You are. Don't wig. My friend, Adrie, is a baby mama and she totally loves it. But she has, like, a gazillion nannies.

MELANIE

I was not waiting for a guy to call, and baby mama-hood is not in my near future.

TESSA

Then who was it?

MELANIE

Um, it was your business. And they called to say "none of..." (REALIZES (MORE)
MELANIE (CONT'D)

THIS JOKE IS A BUST; SHE WANTS TO DIE)
your business..."

TESSA

Good one. No, seriously, who did you
think it was going to be?

MELANIE

Why on earth do you think I would tell
you something like that?

TESSA

It's the weirdest thing. People just
do.

MELANIE

Well, not this person.

THEY STARE AT EACH OTHER FOR A LONG BEAT.

TESSA

Go on.

MELANIE

Here's the thing: I thought that was
going to be a job offer. Nobody knows
this, but I'm not really hiring a
second assistant. I'm hiring someone
to replace me.

TESSA

Why? Do you suck at this job?

MELANIE

I'm flawless at it. That's the
problem. I don't want to be a
flawless, unmarried assistant.
Because in five years I'll be a
flawless, unmarried assistant who's
five years older.
TESSA
How old are you now?

MELANIE
Why the hell would I tell you something like that? (BEAT; THEN)
Thirty-three. (THEN) Listen, Tessa, you seem like a really --

TESSA
Oh, no, don't. No. You're not allowed to.

MELANIE
What?

TESSA
You can't dump me yet.

MELANIE
I'm not dumping you, this is a job inter--

TESSA
Yes, you are, you totally are. Look, I know I got this interview because of my dad, but I'd be good here. Please don't dump me yet. You don't even know me.

MELANIE
(SIZING HER UP) Have you ever even been dumped?

TESSA
I'm told it's a bummer.

MELANIE
No, my eighteen-year-old cat crapping on my pillow is a bummer. Getting (MORE)
MELANIE (CONT'D)
dumped by someone you see a future with is soul crushing. Because it's personal. It's someone saying, "I'm good enough for you, but you're not good enough for me." And the difference here is... is... it's just... (THEN, REALIZING IT'S THE SAME) What do you know about the job?

TESSA
I'd be working for the guys in that office.

MELANIE
And what do you know about the guys in that office?

TESSA
They wrote a really famous book.

MELANIE
Actually they wrote three really famous books.

TESSA
What are they about?

MELANIE
Are you kidding me?

TESSA
I read different kinds of books.

MELANIE
Called "magazines?"

TESSA
(IMPRESSED) Okay, who totally gets me?
MELANIE
(SIGHS; THEN) They wrote a fantasy trilogy called *The Journey of the Yeleds*. It's about two boys who journey to a mythical -- Why am I telling you this? Read the books. Like everybody else in America.

TESSA
I promise I'll read them. I'll buy the CD today.

MELANIE
What else do you know about them?

TESSA
They're gay.

MELANIE
Actually, just one of them is gay.

TESSA
The cute one?

MELANIE
Wrong question. They're vain and insecure, so they're both cute. Get it? (THEN) This office is purely personality-driven. I mean, you have to be able to use the computer and answer phones, but pretty much everything is about how you handle the boys. We call them "the boys." It's not a pervy thing. It's just a thing thing.
TESSA
("THONG SONG") Thing-tha-thing-thing thing. (THEN) Remember that song?

TESSA / MELANIE
From junior high? / From college?

MELANIE (CONT'D)
Anyway, writers are weird and these two are no exception. They've known each other since they were kids. They make up words, they have weird bathroom things, and they often come to work wearing the same outfit. This is something you never mention when it occurs. It's very upsetting for the gay one.

TESSA
Do you know "gay" used to mean happy?

MELANIE
Every day at eleven forty-five you have to ask them what they want for lunch. They'll act like they're deciding, but it's always going to be the same thing: Danny gets tuna on wheat toast, Noah gets chicken salad on wheat toast. When you bring it to them, they're going to offer each other a half of their sandwich. This seems to please them.
TESSA
But wouldn’t it be better to, like,
make the switch before you give it to them?

MELANIE
Never make the switch yourself! These
guys need rituals to convince
themselves that they’re living
authentic lives.

TESSA
So, what, are they, like, exactly
alike?

MELANIE
They’re nothing alike. Danny is a
guy’s guy. Into sports, puts a joke
wherever a feeling should be, reads a
lot, kind of unreachable, but every
now and then he shows you that he’s...

IF SHE REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT, SHE’D SAY "PERFECT FOR ME,"
BUT SHE DOESN’T THINK ABOUT IT.

TESSA
What about the other one?

MELANIE
Noah is a piece of work. Not the
easiest man to work for. Doesn’t
really get the whole you’re-at-home-
and-the-work-day-has-ended thing.
Never met a boundary he didn’t cross.
Confrontation is his friend. He’s a
bitch. He’s too emotional. He’s
hyper-critical --
TESSA

You don't like him, huh?

MELANIE


TESSA

Rituals.

MELANIE

Exactly.

TESSA

So do they just spend most of the day writing?

MELANIE

(LAUGHING DERISIVELY) Y-y-yeah.


DANNY ENTERS. HE'S IN HIS MID-THIRTIES, WEARING GOOD, WELL-WORN JEANS, A BLUE V-NECK SWEATER OVER A CRISP WHITE T-SHIRT.

DANNY

You know what's a really bad combination? Mint body scrub and your balls. (THEN, NOTICING TESSA) Oh. Hello.

MELANIE

Tessa, this is Danny. Danny, Tessa.