

Script for

"Sidney Allen"

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"Sidney Allen"

AG: No tears fell, but a hole seemed to slowly grow in the pit of her stomach. It was as if all the memories and thoughts of the future without him manifested in the form of tiny creatures jabbing into her insides.

She felt each painful jab as the nostalgia of eighteen years flooded her. Next to her stood a statue in the form of her mother, Olivia.—Sidney did not have the power to extend a consoling hand to her grieving mother. Her personal grief consumed her.

It was 1974, and Sidney had just turned eighteen. Her marks were always exemplary, and her peers looked up to her. They followed her in hopes that by just being near her they would absorb some of her intelligence and disposition.

Sidney found herself wanting. She looked towards the comfort of her mother but discovered that to cope with her own loss, her mother was now devoting all of her time to her friends and entertaining the advances of a tennis coach named Stephano.

Sidney was on her own to combat the tiny creatures inside her still fast at work carving her insides with added fury. The created void was not simply a product of her father's death but of more. She needed to begin anew.

One day on a school field trip to London, Sidney and her best friend, Gwen, departed from the group to stroll along the River Thames. What started as a low hum suddenly grew into a loud beat interrupting their gossip. They peered up to witness a floating punk rock concert. Jumping around on a make-shift stage were two girls and a guy.

[*Play some Punk Music*]

AG: (Altered Voice) "They look reckless."

BC: "I know. I like that."

On the train back to school, Sidney and Gwen excitedly discussed how the punk rockers' tight jeans hugged their bodies, how their mo-hawks were like crowns, and how their sweat pooled showing passion, not filth.

Gwen and Sidney planned to meet at the train station in two days time to head back to London to change their lives.

That evening Sidney mustered the courage to ask for her mother's permission.

BC: "Mum, can I talk to you about something important?"

AG: (Altered Voice) "Certainly, my dear. What is it?"

BC: "Today, I saw something inspiring. I am responsible and would like your permission to go to London with Gwen. Ever since father died, I have felt an emptiness, and this is the first time I have felt inspired. I would like your blessing on this, Mummy. Please let me go."

AG: The tennis racket left Olivia's hand and sailed towards the wall. Her ears burned crimson.

AG: (Altered Voice) "There is no way in hell you are going to London with Gwen. Out of the question. NO! And that's final."

With that, she stormed out leaving her racket in shambles against the far wall. Sidney remained standing stoic in the dining room. In fact, she remained standing in that same spot all through the night.

The next morning, Olivia, still angry, found her daughter steadfastly positioned in the dining room.

BC: "Mummy, may I have your blessing?"

AG: (Altered Voice) "No! Never!"

At lunchtime, Sidney was still standing in the same spot requesting her mother's permission. Olivia and Stephano dined in silence barely passing even a glance at the teenager. However, Olivia could not completely avoid Sidney's eyes. The redness had receded and had been replaced with a tangible persistence. Sidney felt the tiny creatures inside her body had momentarily slowed the progress on the void consuming her.

Finally, at a quarter past 10, Olivia wrapped herself in her dressing gown and slippers. She walked into the dining room and with a defeated sigh, she pointed to the door.

AG: (Altered Voice): "If this is what you want, then go. I can't stop you and don't want to deal with you anymore. You have my blessing. Now go."

Olivia turned, shuffled back to her bedroom, climbed into bed, and wept feeling the emptiness she so desperately wanted to avoid.

The next morning Sidney and Gwen, dressed with the dignity of their privileged upbringing, boarded the train for London.

Upon arrival, they immediately sought a pawnbroker in SoHo. The two teenagers sauntered in—wearing posh blouses and designer skirts and strutted out wearing skinny jeans, high-top Dr. Marten boots, and second-hand leather jackets. They carried haversacks with a spare black tank top and an extra pair of pink lacy knickers. Sidney suddenly felt a new sensation - the

cool breeze on either side of her skull. Gwen and she had shaved the sides of their heads and spiked the remaining hair into fierce mo-hawks. They looked at one another, grinned, and jumped slamming into one another's shoulder.

Up ahead were three pairs of stumbling boots and voices loud with slurred chatter and laughter. Sidney and Gwen recognized the two girls and guy immediately and walked confidently towards them.

BC: "Hello, my name is Sidney and this is my friend, Gwen. We saw your concert the other day on the barge from the bank and loved it. You chaps were far out."

AG (Altered Voice): "Hey, thanks, man. I'm Johnny and these are my two leading ladies, Siouxsie and Nance. We're on our way to meet some friends. You two look like you'd fit right in with our group. Want to join us?"

BC: "We'd love to."

Sidney grabbed Johnny's beer, took a long gulp, and offered it to Gwen. Johnny swung his right arm over Sidney's shoulders, and Siouxsie and Nance hooked elbows on either side of Gwen. Sidney and Gwen had arrived.

Sidney and Gwen found themselves swallowed whole by their new lifestyle. Sidney's feminine, idealized look had been replaced by a hardened, vapid appearance, and her days found her depressed and combating hangovers as she begged on the streets for food and party money. At night, however, she was alive. Sweaty and drunk, she was always at the center of mosh pits bouncing and fighting against the other punkers. She loved losing herself in the frantic pounding of body against body; the human contact and pulsation of loud music fueled her. Then, the cycle would repeat the next day.

Finally, one morning, Sidney could no longer ignore the intense jabbing in her insides. The void continued to expand despite the temporary nightly fulfillment.

BC: "I've been thinking. The destruction, the clothes, the drinking doesn't hold up. What we're chasing doesn't seem to last day to day."

AG (Altered Voice): "What are you talking about? You love this. I love this. Think of how much fun you're having."

Gwen pulled her jacket up to cover her head as the rain began to fall. Sidney rose to her feet and moved a few storefronts down to shelter herself. The sound of the rain on metal pierced her mind jumbling her thoughts.

That evening, despite the downpour, Sidney and Gwen attended the Iggy Pop concert. In honor of the punk rock God, the two girls moshed harder than ever, drank more than ever, and screamed louder than ever. During the set, Sidney was lifted onto the hands of the crowd. She could feel the palms and fingers of strangers transporting her thin frame feet first towards the stage. She felt like a product on a conveyor belt being moved towards its final processing. Iggy grabbed her hand pulling her towards him. They shared the microphone and screamed the remainder of the song in unison. During the frantic clapping at the song's end, Iggy stole Sidney backstage where she became the party and the after-party.

In the morning, Sidney awoke to the smell of smoke and the sound of rain pounding on the window. She removed the empty beer bottle piercing her side and rolled over to notice naked bodies, empty chip cones, and clothes strewn everywhere.

AG: After blowing the smoke from his long drag, Iggy said, **(Altered Voice):** "Good morning, sunshine."

Sidney rubbed her eyes to ease her pounding head and to jolt her blurred memory of the previous night's events. Iggy, noticing her pain, offered her the beer in his hand with a smile.

BC: "I'm out of here."

Sidney began scouring the room for her clothes.

AG (Altered Voice): "No, wait," Iggy said. "You're a great bird. Why do you have to run off? Let's party."

Sidney ignored him and hurriedly stepped into her clothes. She gathered her boots—and ran to the lift.

Gwen ran to Sidney wearing only her black tank top and lacy pink knickers.

AG: Surprised, she asked, **(Altered Voice)** "Where are you going?"

BC: "This isn't for me anymore. I'm going to find something new. You should stay. You seem to like this lot."

The ding of the lift sounded and Sidney boarded, alone.

The rain was pouring, but with hands tucked tightly into her jean pockets, Sidney strolled down to the banks of the Thames. Kicking rocks every few steps, Sidney reflected on the sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach. The tiny creatures renewed their work chipping away. She felt so desperately alone.

Without her realizing it, the rain had stopped and Sidney found herself in Chelsea. She left the river behind and went in search of a warm cup of tea. As she

approached a local café, she noticed a posh man sitting alone at an outdoor table.—He had a gentle smile and looked at Sidney with interest. Sidney smiled and entered the café.

Moments later, tea in hand, she exited and sat next to the handsome man.

AG (Altered Voice): "I'm Cameron," he said to impress her, but she did not recognize him.

Sidney peered into his charming eyes.

BC: "Nice to meet you, Cameron. I'm Sidney."

Three hours and four cups of tea later, the two were still sitting, sharing stories, and exchanging advances. Subtle, soft touches and longing gazes dominated the meeting. There was a genuine spark between the two.

AG (Altered Voice): "Sidney, this has been wonderful, but I do have to get back to work. I'd love it if you came by my shop, Jigsaw, around 3?"

BC: "I'd love to."

AG (Altered Voice): "Great. See you this afternoon."

Sidney watched him depart and then freshened up in the bathroom. She felt a sense of excitement deep within her. It was as if the tiny creatures were on break and dancing with sparklers instead of jabbing her painfully.

Eventually, Sidney sauntered into Jigsaw a pre-planned twenty minutes late. She perused the racks lining the front of the store fingering the silks and sliding the heads of the hangers back on the racks. While petting

the sleeve of a peach chiffon blouse, she spotted him standing in front of a set of mirrors next to a model.

AG (Altered Voice): "Can I help you find something?" a salesclerk asked.

BC: "Yes. Cameron. But I can find him myself."

AG (Altered Voice): "Ah, Sidney. You came," Cameron said turning towards her approach.

Sidney carefully placed her left hand on his lapel and lifted onto her tip toes to whisper in his ear. She placed her left cheek to his and let her delicate voice dance in his ear. Upon return to her flat fleet, Cameron twirled the pencil in his right hand, grabbed Sidney's hand with his left, and placed the pencil in the coffee mug on the register on their way out the door.

Just as the sun was setting, Sidney awoke to the tickle of Cameron's kisses on her bare shoulder. She inhaled deeply, uncurled her legs, and turned to face him. They laid underneath the white down duvet touching and gazing as the orangey pinks from the sunset peeked in through the windows of Cameron's minimalist flat.

AG (Altered Voice): "Who are you?" Cameron said at last grinning.

BC: "Sidney. Cameron, I need a job - and my own flat."

AG (Altered Voice): "What can you do?" he asked.

BC: "Well, there are three things - I can think, I can wait, and I can go without."

AG (Altered Voice): "All admirable qualities. Interesting, but what good are they?"

BC: "Well, I can think, do maths, and speak French and Italian. I'm cool and can wait, and I can go without. I don't have to do anything I don't want to do."

AG (Altered Voice): "You can speak Italian and French, and you're good at maths. I have someone that I'd like for you to meet but first..."

With that, he rolled over on top of Sidney and began kissing the sensitive skin beneath her jaw.

The next morning Sidney awoke to the aroma of brewed coffee and the sizzling sound of bacon. She slipped on a white terry robe and attempted to tame her blond tresses before shuffling into the kitchen to find Cameron.

AG (Altered Voice): "Good morning. Ready for breakfast?" Cameron said pointing to the place setting at the kitchen counter.

BC: "Thank you."

AG (Altered Voice): "You know? I was thinking about those three qualities you told me about last night - how you can think, you can wait, and you can go without. I think you can make a good life for yourself, and I have someone that I'd like you to meet."

With that statement, he placed an egg on top of toast with a bit of bacon and beans on a plate in front of her.

BC: "Thank you. For breakfast and the opportunity."

The two then spent all morning together in the apartment but were eventually forced to clean up for the meeting Cameron had arranged for later that afternoon.

It was quarter to 3 and Sidney stepped off the elevator to be met by two large glass double doors etched with the name Kahn Fashion Ltd. She smoothed her hands over the front of her leather jacket and tucked her left hand into the front pocket of her skinny jeans. Taking a deep breath, she opened the heavy glass door and walked confidently up to the oversized, mahogany receptionist desk.

BC: "My name is Sidney Allen. Cameron Bryan set up an appointment for me."

AG (Altered Voice): "Take a seat."

High heels, pencil skirts, and lengthy black eyelashes met Sidney's gaze as she plodded her Dr. Martens to the uncomfortably low and stiff waiting area couch. She sat admiring the dance of beautiful men and women gracefully gliding from cubicle to conference room carrying glossy photos, typed copy, and clothing sketches. Pieces from the new line hung on clothing racks and waltzed past. Sidney felt like an outcast.

Just as she rose to leave, red-head summoned her to follow. Sidney, in fear of being impolite and disappointing Cameron, followed and found herself facing the back of a seated woman with a chestnut brown bob haircut.

AG (Altered Voice): [*nervously*] "Mrs. Kahn, this is Sidney Allen, Cameron Bryan's friend."

Camille Kahn, the queen of British fashion, finished reading the latest fashion news and swiveled her chair around to face Sidney. Kahn stared at young Sidney expressionless.

AG (Altered Voice): "Who are you? What do you want?"

BC: "Cameron sent me to work for you."

Just before what Sidney assumed would be a mocking dismissal, Kahn's phone rang loudly. Kahn answered and disgustedly threw down the papers in her hand at some remark from the caller, and Sidney bent to gather them. On top was an unfinished sketch of a model with a simple blouse but no bottom. Kahn had swiveled back around in her chair and was yelling and gesturing wildly at the caller, so Sidney grabbed a pencil and began sketching. She added embellishments to the blouse and created a wide-legged cropped trouser. Sidney made the flat drawing spring to life with a fashionable, flattering outfit. Just as she was adding a strappy, platform shoe to the right foot of the drawing, Sidney felt the silence. Kahn was standing over her, and when she noticed Sidney had stopped drawing, she snatched the piece of paper and turned on her heel. As she walked out the door, she said...

AG (Altered Voice): "We have a new look. You're hired."

Sidney established herself at Kahn Fashion Ltd and in the good graces of Camille Kahn herself. She transformed the production of the Kahn clothing line by offering her fresh perspective and helped streamline the business thanks to her accounting expertise. She even calmly dealt with the aloof, erratic, and demanding "Nuclear Kahn," a feat many staff members never mastered. Sidney was able to climb the company ladder quickly ascending from assistant to designer.

After her first fashion show at London Fashion Week, Kahn escorted Sidney onto the catwalk following the last model and prompted the audience to applaud for Sidney, her fashion prodigy.

Sidney became a household name. She traveled to Milan, Paris, Rome, and New York showcasing her production line in the world's top fashion markets and expecting to be treated like the world's top fashion designer.

Sidney worked hard and worked her assistants harder. Finally, after several weeks of feeling nauseas, she allowed her assistant to squeeze in a doctor's appointment. Sidney had been putting it off claiming fatigue, but she couldn't keep anything down. This was hindering her work, so she acquiesced hoping for a quick fix.

Sidney heard the rapping on the door

BC: "Come in."

AG (Altered Voice): "Hi, Sidney Allen? My name is Dr. Feldman."

He extended his hand to Sidney, but Sidney remained preoccupied with glossy photos.

BC: "Just prescribe me something for nausea. I don't have a lot of time."

AG (Altered Voice): "Yes, I understand. I don't have a lot of time either with all the patients I need to help, so here is your prescription to control the morning sickness. Be sure to make an appointment on your way out for a month from now. That's when you'll be able to hear the heartbeat for the first time."

Dr. Feldman handed Sidney her prescription. The photos spilled onto the floor.

BC: "What? Morning sickness? Heartbeat?"

Cameron was overjoyed and loved that the new baby resembled Sidney so closely. Sidney instead was obsessively concerned about getting back to work.

Sidney did not take maternity leave and found herself on a plane to Milan leaving Cameron as Mr. Mom. At

first, she would call home but those phone calls lessened. Then she started attending business meetings and dinners instead of dinners at home. Finally, Sidney left Cameron and her daughter altogether.

The newly single, fashionable Sidney surrounded herself with the wealthy, posh crowd. She attended the discos every night of the week and would lose herself in the music, champagne, and latest designer drugs. Then she would sleep all the next day in the comfort of the penthouse suite of whatever hotel in whatever city. The cycle would then repeat the next day.

One afternoon, Sidney awoke alone in her dark hotel room to the painful jabs in her insides. The tiny creatures had continually been at work since her father's death but had just recently seemed to trade their shovels for pitchforks. The jabs made her physically wince, and so she curled up like a ball, pulled the covers over her head, and hummed a lullaby to silence her pain.

That evening was Camille Kahn's birthday bash on her personal yacht near Henley on the Thames. All the big names in the fashion and film industry were in attendance. She schmoozed with all the right people, said all the right things, and partied all night long. Everyone regarded her highly and begged for the chance to be near her. However, the void had consumed Sidney again.

Standing alone with an empty bottle of Crystal on the stern of Kahn's yacht, the jabs in her insides were unbearable as she thought about her life. She thought about how the clothes, the gossip, and the money were all just a front for happiness. These material items and fake friendships served as a plaster for her pain but did not and could not cure the infection. Sidney felt alone, and staring into the water, she saw the reflection of her daughter in the moonlight. No tears

fell, but the pitchforks jabbed tirelessly and eventually tossed her overboard.

A muffled lady's voice sounded in her subconscious and slowly became more clear. Finally, the poking and voice manifested themselves as Sidney came to on the shore of the Thames.

She opened her eyes halfway and felt the rocks that had kept her afloat and alive bruising her back and sides.

AG (Altered Voice): "Are you alright?" the grayed woman asked.

Sidney tried to lift herself off the bed of rocks, but her muscles and will surrendered causing her to slip. The woman grabbed her arm before she slid completely underwater and bent to help support her weight so that she could be assisted to the safety of the shoreline.

AG (Altered Voice): "I'm going to help you into my ferryboat and give you a warm cup of tea," said Valerie Dingy.

Sidney did not reply and did not fight.

Wrapped in a blue parka and holding a mug of steaming tea, Sidney sat on the ferryboat next to Valerie in reflective silence. The hum of the boat, the cool breeze, and the smell of the water overtook her senses and drowned out the chaos of reality. The tiny creatures worked tirelessly as usual, but she felt thankful for their presence for it meant that she was still alive. With a blank stare, Sidney sat riding and gripping the steel mug all day.

AG: As the sun was setting, Valerie asked her passenger, **(Altered Voice):** "Dearie, do you have a place to stay?"

Sidney shook her head and met the gaze of Valerie for the first time.

AG (Altered Voice): "You can stay with me if you'd like. I live up the way."

She pointed to a wooden shed just up the shoreline from where she docked her ferryboat.

BC: "Thank you."

The two ladies dressed in matching blue parkas strode up the dirt path to Valerie's humble shed. Inside, Sidney noticed the cramped but homely feel. It was a one-room shed, but it felt more inviting than any hotel room ever had.

Valerie pointed to a second camp bed.

AG (Altered Voice): "This one's yours."

AG: Just before closing her eyes, Sidney whispered,

BC: "My name is Sidney."

Valerie and Sidney became inseparable. They established a routine consisting mostly of ferrying individuals across the Thames and enjoying their simple existence. Sidney's blue parka, tan work pants, and boots became her uniform. Her demeanor relaxed, her talk became simple and reflective, and her appreciation for the river increased. Many ferry riders remarked at how similar in disposition and appearance Valerie and Sidney were, and many routine riders mistook one for the other.

While standing at the side of the ferryboat, Sidney looked into the river. She thought about how the river was an agent of change in her life - the floating punk rock concert, her walk along the riverbank towards

Cameron, and her attempted drowning due to her bourgeoisie excess. The river had witnessed it all and had helped lull the tiny creatures inside her to sleep with its ebb and flow. She felt calm; she felt secure; she felt peace. The river was her life and her love.

Later that day, the sound of heels clicking on the dock alerted Sidney. She turned to find a younger version of herself. The twelve year old wore a sad, preppy costume and browbeaten expression.

AG (Altered Voice): "Mum. Dad died when he was visiting grandpa in Northern Ireland - bomb."

Sidney stared blankly. Her life with Cameron seemed like it had been something she had read in a romance novel, not something she had actually lived. Chelsea Girl was looking to her mother to fill her void - she was lost without her father - but Sidney was at a loss on how to be a mother. She did what society had taught her and wrapped her arms around the stiff girl. She led her up the path to her humble shed, showed her a camp bed of her own, and offered her a mug of hot tea as she wrapped her in a warm, blue parka.

Chelsea Girl crouched at the foot of her camp bed hiding behind her steel mug. Chelsea Girl couldn't help but notice the change in her mother's appearance. Her father had always shown her pictures of her mother dressed in designer gowns, not a hair out of place, and a red lipstick smile. Now her appearance screamed plain and masculine. She imagined her mother smelling like fresh lavender soap but was slapped with the smell of dead fish instead.

One afternoon, Sidney returned to the humble shed to check on Chelsea Girl. As she walked up to the door, she heard glass shattering, stomping footsteps, and grunts. Worried, she quickened her step and burst in through the front door. Chelsea Girl turned quickly and

hurled the steel coffee mug at Sidney's chest. Sidney winced in pain and glanced around at the material carnage. Her eyes widened.

BC: "Are you sad?"

AG (Altered Voice): "Sad? Are you daft? This place is pure hell. You look like shit and act all high on nature. You're no mum. I hate you."

Chelsea Girl stormed out.

Sidney exhaled and stared at the far wall. Several moments later, she felt a comforting hand on her shoulder. Sidney's hand reached up to grab it, and they stood in silence. Valerie waited for Sidney to start the conversation.

BC: "I don't know what to do. She's so destructive, rebellious, and sad."

AG (Altered Voice): "Have you tried setting limits or talking sternly with her?"

BC: "No."

AG (Altered Voice): "Just remember - life is more difficult on a child without limits than on a child with limits."

Sidney asked to be left alone and wandered down to the riverbank. She sat with knees to her chest on a rock jutting out into the water. She tried to gain the perspective of Chelsea Girl. It took her back to her childhood and feelings of emptiness. She vowed to help Chelsea Girl silence the tiny creatures inside of her like she had finally been able to.

Walking back to the ferry, she saw the backside of Chelsea Girl as she plodded down the dock.

BC: "Chelsea Girl - wait!"

Chelsea Girl did not stop, did not turn. Sidney never saw her daughter again.

From that day forth, Valerie and Sidney commenced their routine, peaceful lifestyle. They had become one with the river and often spoke to it as if it were a sentient being. The river was their livelihood, their confidant, their peace.

Eventually, gray hair replaced Sidney's blond tresses and Valerie passed away. Sidney maintained the humble shed and the ferry, and the ferry goers did not notice that there was only one ferrywoman. The riders did not know Sidney's name and just assumed it was the same woman who had always been there. Valerie Dingy was Sidney Allen.

Life, change, death. From the hills to the sea. The river sees everything all at once. The river was always there after all and continues to live.