

CHALLENGE A SCENE:

NEW YEAR. NEW NEIGHBOR

Written by

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INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A shabby apartment building. Water stains in the popcorn ceiling. Stained carpet below. CHRISTINE (35) presses the elevator button. She's expertly put makeup on to look more lively than she feels.

The elevator doors open. MARK (23), a fit young man, stands there. He's got a purposely scruffy look. He wears a Northwestern University tank top.

Christine looks at him. CLOSE ON: the natural waves in his hair. The chiseled chest underneath his college tank top.

Mark steps aside, making room. Christine's sparkly silver cocktail dress swishes around her legs as she steps in the elevator. The doors close.

With her silver heels that match her dress, Christine is at least 4 inches taller than Mark. Mark glances at the heels.

MARK

How's the magazine going?

Christine rifles through her purse.

MARK (CONT'D)

Still super busy?

Christine adjusts her silver high heel. She grimaces.

MARK (CONT'D)

It's that bad, huh?

CHRISTINE

It's fine. How's unemployment?

MARK

Fair enough.

Mark smiles and puts his hands in his sweatpants pockets.

Christine pulls out a tube of pink lipstick. She puts it on her lips. The elevator SUDDENLY STOPS. The lipstick smears on Christine's face.

Mark hits the elevator door button several times.

MARK (CONT'D)

I'll text Pat from 3B. He gets this open all the time.

Christine opens a small COMPACT MIRROR and fixes her smudged lipstick.

In the reflection, Christine checks out Mark's strong biceps. They flex as he leans against the elevator wall. Mark looks up, noticing. Christine snaps her compact shut.

MARK (CONT'D)

Are you and Teddy still fighting about where to put that new couch?

Christine FREEZES. Then, she puts her lipstick back. She folds her hands over her purse.

MARK (CONT'D)

Sorry. It's a crime how thin these walls are.

Mark stretches his arms across his chest. Christine watches him as he does. Christine's phone BUZZES. The screen reads: "TEDDY CALLING." She silences it.

CHRISTINE

I'm meeting him at his firm's New Year's Eve party at the Omni.

MARK

Fancy.

Christine adjusts her high heel. She grimaces again.

CHRISTINE

I hate these shoes.

MARK

Why don't you take them off?

Christine looks at the sparkly shoes.

CHRISTINE

Because Teddy gave them to me.

Then: she takes them off. Barefoot, Christine looks at Mark. They stand eye-to-eye now.

MARK

I wouldn't care where you wanted to put the couch.

The elevator door OPENS. A young hipster man, PAT (21):

PAT

Hey Christine!

Christine picks up her heels and steps out of the elevator. She jogs to the exit of the building. Mark watches her as she goes.