BEN/ANNIE ACT ONE (FKA ABBY)

BLACK. Music slowly fades in...it's "The Weight" by The Band. It's sturdy, warm, and comforting like a well-worn jacket.

INT. A BAR -- NIGHT

\* PLEASE READ ALL THE SELF TARE DIRECTIONS

A wide angle of an empty bar. The location looks vaguely familiar? ANNIE (30's) enters. She sits staring into camera, nervous. Then leaves again, remembering something.

Suddenly the shot of the bar shrinks 50%, now only taking up the left side of the screen -- the other half taken over by:

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Hello?

BEN (30's) sits at his computer, looking into the camera, confused. We realize we're watching a Zoom-like video conference...and that the "bar" Annie is in is just a digital background she is using.

START

BEN

Annie pokes her head back into frame, now holding a large drink, the familiar bar behind her. She also looks confused.

ANNIE

Oh! Hey, it's not eight-thirty yet.

BEN

Oh! I thought you said eight-fifteen!

ANNIE

No, eight-thirty, eight-thirty.

BEN

Ugh. Apparently I'm losing my mind.

ANNIE

Don't worry about it. Actually, I --

BEN

Wait, then why are you here?

ANNIE

Because, I...suck at technology and ever since I missed that happy hour last week cuz I couldn't unmute myself I've been showing up for everything fifteen minutes early like a loserperson.

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Sides by Breakdown Services - Actors Access

BEN

C'mon, you're not a loser-person. You're unmuted, you have a background... You're basically a hacker.

She narrows her eyes in mock-anger, then they share a smile.

BEN (CONT'D)

Well I, for one, am glad you're here.

ANNIE

Likewise.

Beat. Some chemistry here. Annie breaks it:

ANNIE (CONT'D)

BEN

So, I was thinking--

How is Jazmin?

ANNIE

Jazmin? I don't know...I get a text here and there, but...she hasn't talked to you?

BEN

No, but that's not unusual.

Ben takes a drink from a tiny brown bottle.

ANNIE

Wait, are you drinking straight Kahlua?

BEN

Yeah. I just had it, so.

ANNIE

You know you can buy alcohol?

BEN

I know, it just feels weird to be stocking up on liquor to drink by myself, so...I've just been drinking everything I have...

He takes another drink. Annie watches, concerned.

ANNIE

How are you?

BEN

I've been better. Are you listening

annie turns off the music.

## AMMILE

## "Hey...coach...get Norm an...Old Tashioned."

They share a laugh.

BEN

Oh man. I would kill for an Old Fashioned. I did not think my shopping through, I just panic-bought toilet paper and water.

ANNIE

Why is everyone buying water?! They're not turning off the taps, man! It's not that kind of disaster!

BEN

I know. I also bought a lotta flour. But it turns out you need other ingredients to bake.

ANNIE

For real? You don't have, like --

BEN

Everyone wearing a decent mask was grabbing flour, I thought they knew something.

ANNIE

I don't feel like any of us are thinking real clear. I just bought a whole display box of Warheads.

BEN

The sour candy?

ANNIE

I don't even like Warheads, I just suddenly got very worried I'd never see Warheads again. I got very emotional.

(popping a Warhead and squinting)

I'm just gonna eat one a day and if this isn't over by the time they're all gone I'm gonna kill myself.

Ben laughs.

ANNIE (CONT'D) How you holding up with the whole...the whole you and-- BEN

The whole Paz breaking up with me right before none of us could ever touch a new person ever again thing?

ANNIE

Yeah...that whole thing.

BEN

Not great! If I'm being honest. Weird time to be super-extra-alone.

ANNIE

I hear ya.

BEN

Yeah, but you've been single for forever, at least you're used to it. That came out wrong.

ANNIE

(smiling shock)

It sure did!

BEN

I didn't mean--

ANNIE

It's fine. Being alone sucks. Especially now.

BEN

Hey, you know what I was thinking about today?

ANNIE

Money? Live music? Human touch?

BEN

Chicago.

ANNIE

The musical?!

BEN

Yeah, I was thinking about Chicago the musical.

(off her laugh)

No, the city. You and me, remember?

ANNIE

(smiling)

Yeah, I remember.

Then: