

Jumpland

By Danny Homan

Semi-finalist in the Scriptation contest

Logline: A longtime child therapist opens up an ice cream store, only to discover that running your own business isn't so sweet. To keep her dream alive, she'll have to fend off competitors, bribe drug dealers, and sabotage a trampoline park.

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FADE IN:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - MORNING

Elementary school children. Chasing each other. Reading quietly. Fighting. Braiding hair. Dangling from monkey bars. Eating lunches from brown paper bags.

A GIRL with a blue scrunchie trades PIXIE STICKS with a group of KIDS by a tree.

The school bell RINGS. The girl with the blue scrunchie downs a pixie stick, then stuffs the rest in her backpack. She joins kids as they bump and push each other, sprinting for class.

INT. SCHOOL THERAPY ROOM - DAY

TALIA (30s), sits at a table, demonstrating how to hold a pencil to the girl with the blue scrunchie.

TALIA

Nice and steady, Margo. Like this!

Margo tries to mirror Talia, but her hand's too shaky.

TALIA (CONT'D)

Wow, your hands have a mind of their own today. Try your lucky pencil!

Margo opens her backpack and takes out a sparkling blue pencil. She resumes the lesson, but presses too hard and BREAKS the tip. She throws the pencil down and pouts.

TALIA (CONT'D)

It's okay to be frustrated, Margo. But we should never give up.

MARGO

I can't do it, Ms. Talia!

TALIA

Yes, you can. My hands used to be just like yours, and I learned. Check this out.

Talia draws a cartoon dog, eating ice cream. As Talia embellishes the dog, Margo loosens up a bit. Finally, Talia hands her pencil to Margo.

TALIA (CONT'D)
Your turn, kiddo.

Talia leans in to help, but Margo's hands are still shaky. The pencil tip BREAKS. Pouting, Margo tries to snap the pencil and SMACKS Talia's nose on accident. Blood fountain.

TALIA (CONT'D)
Son of a...

MARGO
Miss Talia! Are you okay?

Talia uses the paper to blot her nose.

TALIA
I'm fine, it was an accident.

Talia's eyes narrow. She notices the pixie sticks poking out of Margo's backpack.

TALIA (CONT'D)
Margo, where did you get those
pixie sticks?

MARGO
...Mr. Huber.

A bell RINGS. Margo gathers her bag quickly and runs out of the room. A pixie stick slips out, and onto the floor.

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - DAY

A stained coffee pot with a donation jar. Spilled cream packet. Crappy plastic classroom chairs. A STATE OF FLORIDA map tacked to the wall.

Talia tosses the pixie stick on a table where JERRY (50s) grades a fat stack of math tests with a red pen.

TALIA
We had an understanding, Jerry.
What the fuck happened?

JERRY
Long division happened. State exams
are in a few weeks, and Principal
Bartley is breathing down my neck.

TALIA
I've got no problem with bribing
kids. You know that. Just wait
until after school.

JERRY

A teacher's got two options,
carrots and sticks. And last I
checked, kids don't do long
division for carrots.

She snatches his red pen.

TALIA

Jerry, don't give me that shit. If
Margo Volinsky has pixie stick
hands, she can't take a test.

JERRY

I've got a hundred and fifty to
worry about, Talia. You got a
problem, talk to Bartley.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

PRINCIPAL BARTLEY (30s) is too young to be principal. A
framed MBA on the wall is his only office decoration.

PRINCIPAL BARTLEY

You're a therapist, Talia -- so
numbers aren't exactly your strong
suit. Here's some simple math. Our
state funding is based on averages.
If a few kids get left behind,
that's called a remainder.

TALIA

Kids aren't numbers, dick.

PRINCIPAL BARTLEY

To the state, they are.

TALIA

Well, here's some math for you,
Principal Fartley. I get paid half
as much as a Cornerstone Academy
therapist, but I've got twice as
many students. What's the solution?

PRINCIPAL BARTLEY

Quit.

TALIA

Excuse me?

PRINCIPAL BARTLEY

You quit and open a private
practice. I hire a recent grad.

(MORE)

PRINCIPAL BARTLEY (CONT'D)

They work for one, maybe two years.
Get burnt out, but with the
experience to go private. The cycle
continues. Honestly, I can't
believe you stuck around so long.
It doesn't really add up.

TALIA

I always hated math. But for the
first time ever, you're right, I
quit.

Talia flips him off as she leaves.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

The bell RINGS. Children pour out of classrooms.

Talia walks through the chaotic scene, holding a box of her
personal things: a PHOTO of her husband. A pack of sparkling
blue pencils. The bloodied drawing of a dog eating ice cream.

EXT. TALIA'S CAR - DAY

On the phone, Talia puts the box in the passenger's seat of
her 2010 Toyota Corolla.

TALIA

I did something stupid, Mirri.
Drink? Yeah, no problem. I'll kill
some time. See you at five, bitch.

INT. TALIA'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

PUNK blares as Talia drives, drumming on the steering wheel.
She sings loud and in charge, like she used to be in a punk
band. Outside we catch glimpses of a small, university town.

Something catches Talia's eye. Suddenly, she pulls into a
strip mall. A car starts HONKING. Talia flips off the car.

TALIA

Oh, get over yourself.

EXT. JUMPLAND - DAY

Talia pulls up outside Jumpland, spelled out in block
letters. Through the window, we see kids in orange socks
jumping on trampolines, including a few kids from school.

INT. JUMPLAND - WELCOME COUNTER - DAY

Wall-to-wall trampolines, foam pits with balance beams, obstacle courses. Talia takes in the wondrous scene as though she's instantly become a kid again.

She hands a \$20 to a COUNTER TEEN staring at his cell phone.

TALIA
I want to jump.

TRAMPOLINES

Talia jumps higher and higher, like a little kid. Children point and laugh as she goofs around, pulling off different types of jumps and acting the fool to cheering kids.

She lands in a flourish, sweat-covered. Kids high-five her.

TALIA
I need a snack.

WELCOME COUNTER

Sweaty but satisfied, Talia approaches the Counter Teen.

TALIA
Y'all got a food court or an ice cream freezer or something?

COUNTER TEEN
There's candy in the ticket prize display.

TALIA
Pass.

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

Talia exits Jumpland, airing out her sweaty shirt.

TALIA
Ice cream. I need ice cream.

She walks the corner strip mall. Next to Jumpland is a pawn shop, a closed consignment store, a head shop, all scummy.

She passes a store with a sign, FOR LEASE. Inside it looks like someone let a hurricane in. Next to the store is a Chinese restaurant, where a MAN in his 50s helps a customer.

Perched on the far corner is a DRUG DEALER perched.

DRUG DEALER
Super-Ex, Molly, Tony Shalhoub...

Talia opens her wallet, only a \$5, pouts.

TALIA
Will you take a pack of sparkling
pencils for whatever the hell
Shalhoub is?

Brief staring contest as the Drug Dealer considers...

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Talia buys some pixie sticks and heads for the register.

The CLERK is on his phone. Talia clears her throat. The clerk doesn't acknowledge her. She holds up her fingers, three, two, one, then walks out of the store without paying.

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

Talia tears open a pixie stick as she walks back to her car. Empty 40s bottles and spent vape pods litter the lot.

EXT. FOR LEASE STORE - DAY

She pauses in front of the store. Looks inside. Broken glass. Cardboard boxes. Peeling paint. A chipped tiled floor.

EXT. SWEET DREAMS [TALIA'S FANTASY]

A line of KIDS extends out the door, all wearing orange Jumpland socks. Inside, a magical, sparkling floor. And Talia, beaming as she fills waffle cones for happy customers.

EXT. FOR LEASE STORE - DAY

Back to reality. Broken glass, boxes, and peeling paint. Talia stares at the FOR LEASE sign. She gets out her phone.

EXT. TOM'S BAR - DAY

A small, local bar in a quaint downtown of brick streets. An ENGLISH BULLDOG lies on the pavement, an Israeli flag-bandana wrapped around its neck. Its dog collar reads "TOV".

Talia kneels down and pats TOV vigorously.

TALIA
 Sup, Tov? Long time no butt sniff.
 Shit, I'm late. Your master is
 gonna kill me!

INT. TOM'S BAR - DAY

MIRRI (30s), an Israeli with lethal eyebrows, guards an open stool, shooting down potential suitors with deadly precision. Talia approaches. They kiss on the cheek, European style.

MIRRI
 You're late. I had to stab three
 men already.

TALIA
 Slow happy hour.

MIRRI
 It was worse in the military.
 Israeli men think dating is like
 disarming a bomb. Get in, get out,
 run away if something explodes.

TOM (40s), a friendly-bearded bartender, comes up to the women as Talia takes a seat.

TOM
 Talia, you're early today! To what
 do I owe the pleasure?

TALIA
 Time to celebrate! Shots, my man!

Tom pours two shot glasses and sets them down.

TOM
 Celebrate what?

TALIA
 I'm out!

MIRRI
 Out of what?

TALIA
 A job. I quit.

MIRRI
 I knew it. Did you tell Dylan?

TALIA
Nah. Gonna surprise him.

Talia gets out her phone.

TALIA (CONT'D)
Dylan, pick me up in an hour. I'm
gonna be drunk.

MIRRI
So, what now? Private practice?

TALIA
Yeah, maybe.
(beat)
You guys like my ice cream, don't
you?

TOM
You kidding me? That ice cream cake
you made me, best in my life. Made
me feel like a freaking kid again!

Mirri raises a single suspicious eyebrow.

EXT. TOM'S BAR - NIGHT

A white, GMC Sierra truck pulls to the curb. 70s ROCK plays.
The passenger door opens.

Talia leaps in and points onward.

INT. DYLAN'S TRUCK (MOVING) - NIGHT

DYLAN (30s) drives. He's a gentle giant who always wears
plaid. Talia holds her head out of the window like a dog. She
turns, smirking. He takes the bait.

DYLAN
So...

TALIA
I quit.

DYLAN
Hell yeah! Steak n Shake night?

TALIA
Dylan for the win!

EXT. TALIA'S HOME - NIGHT

The truck pulls up to a small home in the country. Pine cone needles cover a dirt driveway. There's an herb garden, a tool shed. The doormat reads: "Hold up, we're probably naked."

INT. TALIA'S HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dylan and Talia sit at a scratched wooden table, littered with the remnants of a Steak n Shake feast.

DYLAN

We got any ice cream?

TALIA

Think so.

She walks to a fridge covered with POLAROIDS:

Her, holding up a diploma. A punk show with Dylan. Talia, younger, arms around college students inside a Baskin Robbins. Talia and her mother at a trailer park.

DYLAN

You alright, Tal?

TALIA

Yeah, it's just weird. I'm gonna wake up tomorrow and not go to school.

DYLAN

Bartley again? Good riddance, that guy's a total dick.

TALIA

True. But he's right. It was time. I had to leave before...

DYLAN

Before what?

TALIA

I became one of those people who don't care anymore.

Talia opens the freezer and takes out a homemade pint of ice cream with a hand-drawn cartoon of a dog, tongue licking an ice cream cone.

TALIA (CONT'D)

I was starting to feel like that with the kids.

(MORE)

TALIA (CONT'D)

Like I wasn't really paying attention to them. Faking it. And I think they could tell.

DYLAN

Maybe private practice is for the best. You can finally be your own boss. Plus, the money would be nice. We could use a new AC.

She puts two scoops in a bowl, grabs a spoon and returns to the table. Dylan and Talia begin to share the ice cream.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

New flavor?

TALIA

Yup. What do you think?

DYLAN

It's amazing.

TALIA

Good enough to pay for?

DYLAN

Hell yeah. Wait, why?

Talia gets up and takes the Polaroid of her at Baskin Robbins from the fridge and sets it down beside Dylan.

TALIA

When was the last time you saw me that happy? Be honest.

He takes another look at the Polaroid. Talia, college days. Younger and happier. Slings ice cream.

DYLAN

Wait, the ice cream store thing? You haven't talked about that for years. You serious?

TALIA

Yeah. Everyone's happy when they're eating ice cream. I miss that. There's a place for lease. Decent location. Rent's super low.

DYLAN

How long's the lease?

TALIA

Five years.

DYLAN

Wow... that's a serious commitment.
Maybe a few years of private
practice, then we see how we feel?

TALIA

I don't want to wait.

DYLAN

When do you?

TALIA

Dick. I spent years at that school.
Now I want to hand out ice cream to
smiling kids. Is that so wrong?
Besides, it's a guaranteed success.

DYLAN

Said no one ever about an ice cream
store. Do you know how expensive
freezers are in the summer? How is
it a guaranteed success?

Talia puts her phone on the table.

TALIA

This is Jumpland.

There's a PHOTO of Jumpland. She starts to scroll through.
Kids. Sweating. Parents. Trampolines. Orange socks.

TALIA (CONT'D)

Practically next door. And what do
you think kids will want after
they're all sweaty and tired from
jumping their little hearts out?

DYLAN

So much ice cream... Okay, yeah
Tal. This could work. How's the
condition of the store?

TALIA

Nothing the best handyman I know
can't fix.

INT. STRIPMALL STORE - DAY

Dylan's boots CRUNCH through broken glass as he inspects the
storefront. Talia waltzes about, living out her fantasy.

TALIA

Three ice cream freezers there.
Four tables on each side So, what
do you think, Dyl-pickle?

Dylan's POV: A floor littered with trash. Broken tile. A
crack in the window. Through it, the Drug Dealer, staring.

DYLAN

It's gonna take a lot of work. And
money. It's risky. What if Jumpland
goes out of business? Then we're
stuck here for years.

TALIA

Already thought of that. Mirri's
got a lawyer friend, and he had the
landlord put this in the lease.

Talia gestures to a MANILA FOLDER on the counter labeled:
LEASE. She turns the page to a highlighted clause and points.

DYLAN

(reading)

Lease term only active so long as
Jumpland remains a leasee. Meaning?

TALIA

If Jumpland closes, our lease is
void. I know it's fast, baby. But I
want this. It feels right. So, what
do you think?

Talia flips to the final page, where she's already signed
with Jerry's red pen. Dylan takes the pen. Hesitates. Mutters
a prayer as he looks at the store. Signs definitively.

DYLAN

Let's go shopping. Lowes date!

INT. LOWES - DAY

Talia pushes a cart full of cleaning supplies, a mop, paint
brushes and paint cans, pulling in random goods impulsively
like she's a contestant in a supermarket sweepstakes.

INT. LOWES - CHECK-OUT REGISTER - DAY

She pulls up the cart. Dylan chats with Lowes-lifer SCOTT.

DYLAN

This is my old lady, Scott. Treat her right!

SCOTT

Sure thing, big D!

Scott presses a button: Cha-CHING! Employee discount!

TALIA

Don't call him that. Trust me.

SCOTT

So, you're opening an ice cream store? Rum Raisin's my favorite! Will you have Rum Raisin?

TALIA

For you, Scott... maybe.

SCOTT

This is gonna be great!

INT. STRIPMALL STORE - NIGHT

Tons of garbage bags fill the storefront. Dylan slumps against the door while Talia ties a garbage bag.

DYLAN

You coming home soon?

TALIA

Nah, gonna take care of a few more things around here. Then I got a lady date with Mirri.

DYLAN

You are unstoppable.

TALIA

You know it, bitch!

Dylan leaves the shop. Talia grabs two overfilled trash bags.

EXT. STRIP MALL - NIGHT

Bags in hand, Talia walks by the Chinese restaurant, where a MAN is at the counter, readying a take-out order. She passes the convenience store. TEENAGERS are buying vape pods.

EXT. STRIP MALL DUMPSTERS - NIGHT

Rats SCATTER as Talia attempts to find room for the bags. They keep tumbling to the ground. She shrugs, walks away.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Talia nears her car. Turns slowly. The Drug Dealer stands on the corner, smoking and staring. She waves. No reaction. She gets in her car and peels out. PUNK music blares.

INT. TOM'S BAR - NIGHT

Mirri chats with Tom as Talia bounds up to the stool.

TALIA

Lost track of time. Drinks on me.

MIRRI

Good. So, the store -- how is it?

TALIA

I'm sore in places I really shouldn't be. But everything's coming together.

MIRRI

You will fail.

TALIA

What? I'm not going to fail.

MIRRI

I'm only saying what Dylan is afraid to -- that you might fail, and if you do, what's your plan?

TALIA

Did Dylan call you or something?

MIRRI

Of course not. He's scared of me.

TALIA

I'm the only ice cream store in the neighborhood, Mirri. I'll be fine.

MIRRI

It's not about ice cream, Talia. It's about making alliances, crushing rivals. Being top dog.

TALIA

I think I'm in love with you.

Another guy approaches Mirri, ready to sling a pick-up line.

MIRRI

You're fragile, I'd break you.

He slinks away, broken. Mirri turns to Talia.

MIRRI (CONT'D)

Dylan is your most important ally,
because let's face it -- no one
else would put up with your shit.

INT. TALIA'S HOME - NIGHT

Dylan's sleeping on the couch. There's a dog documentary on. Talia turns off the TV, kisses him on the forehead, then the cheek, then the neck.

TALIA

Hey, baby. You awake?

Her hands start to explore. We stay on Dylan, sleeping. Then wide-eyed as he wakes to Talia on top of him. He SMACKS her in the face. Talia staggers back, holding her eye.

DYLAN

Sorry! You surprised me! You okay?

TALIA

Ice, Dylan. Ice.

Dylan runs into the kitchen. He returns with a bag of FROZEN CORN and hands it to her. She holds the bag over her eye.

TALIA (CONT'D)

Last time I try to give you a
midnight hand job.

DYLAN

Which Springsteen album was that?

TALIA

Hurts, not funny.

DYLAN

I'm awake now...

BEDROOM

Talia mounts Dylan, a bag of ice on her eye.

TALIA
Dylan, we need a name...

DYLAN
Huh?

TALIA
A name for the ice cream store.
Stay with me, Dyl. I'm close.

DYLAN
Tal, I can't last much longer!

TALIA
SWEET DREAMS!

They climax. She flops over and falls asleep instantly.

DYLAN
Sweet dreams?

EXT. SWEET DREAMS - DAY

New front windows. A SIGN reads: "Sweet Dreams, coming soon!"

INT. SWEET DREAMS - DAY

Dylan runs measuring tape from a wall. He continues to draw measuring tape from the walls, taking careful notes.

Talia is headfirst in an ice cream FREEZER, banging about. She picks her head out, plugs in the freezer. It HUMS.

TALIA
Done! Alright, hold down the fort,
lover. I'm gonna get us an ally.

INT. JUMPLAND - COUNTER - DAY

Talia approaches the Counter Teen.

TALIA
I'd like to speak to the owner.

The Counter Teen points to LUKE (30s). He sports a neon orange jacket and jeans. Talia walks up to him confidently.

TALIA (CONT'D)
Hey, slick -- this place yours?

LUKE
Yup. I'm Luke. You came in here a bit ago, right? I remember you. Legion of kids cheering you on. Never really seen that before. So, you want to jump or what?

TALIA
Actually I came to talk business.

Luke gestures for Talia to follow him. They pass a row of lockers where kids and adults are putting on orange socks. They pass an arcade. Skee-ball draws Talia's eye.

TALIA (CONT'D)
Skee-ball? I rule at skee-ball!
(she blows a kiss at skee-ball)
See you later, beautiful.

LUKE'S OFFICE

A few boxes in the corner, filled with cheap plastic toys. Luke sits at an IKEA desk opposite Talia. On the wall is a photo of Luke with some kids in a hospital.

LUKE
An ice cream store? That's perfect! Jumpland won't be the only trampoline park in town, not forever. And my snack game is weak. And I was just thinking of putting in an ice cream freezer. When are you opening?

TALIA
Hard to say. Two months, maybe?

LUKE
Two? Want some advice?

TALIA
Nope.

LUKE
Don't wait for perfect. Do one thing right, the rest will follow. Businesses evolve. This place used to be a laser tag arena.

TALIA

Laser tag sucks. But I'll bite.
Why'd you switch to trampolines?

LUKE

Laser tag wasn't breaking even, so
I asked myself, what do I wish I
had when I was a kid. A trampoline.
Girl down the street had one.
Whenever my folks fought, I jumped.
It's hard being a kid, you know?

TALIA

I grew up in the trailer parks,
dude. Trust me, I know. But enough
about my crappy childhood. Let's
talk business. You put up some
flyers around Jumpland, and I'll
give any kids wearing orange socks
a free topping. How's that sound?

Luke takes a pair of special orange socks from a box.

LUKE

Deal. Take a pair, on the house.

INT. SWEET DREAMS - DAY

Dylan looks up from his table measurements as Talia enters.

DYLAN

How'd it go?

TALIA

We've got ourselves another ally.
But hurry up with those custom
tables, we're opening next month!

MONTAGE - PUNK ROCK CLEANUP - SWEET DREAMS

- PUNK music blares as Talia and Dylan clean furiously.
- Talia breaks down cardboard boxes like a madwoman.
- Dylan wipes down dusty windows to reveal the Drug Dealer.
- Talia opens a HUGE BOX with a brand-new ice cream maker.
- Dylan opens a can of sparkling COSMOS BLUE PAINT. Talia takes a whiff. Thumbs up.
- Dylan hobbles out of the store. Talia keeps sweeping.

INT. SWEET DREAMS - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Talia tosses ingredients into a WHIRRING ice cream maker. There's a dry erase board beside her with a list of twenty ice cream flavors, half crossed out.

She stops the machine, adds toppings, tastes. Grins.

TALIA

I should eat some real food.

INT. SWEET DREAMS - NIGHT

Talia sorts through cardboard, paint sample swaps, junk mail. She pulls out a MENU for the Chinese restaurant next door. Presses her cellphone to her ear.

TALIA

Can I place an order for pickup?

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

MR. ZHENG (50s, all glasses and smiles) mans the counter.

MR. ZHENG

Welcome! Table for one?

Talia glances around. No customers. There's a single plastic take-out bag behind Mr. Zheng, clearly her order.

TALIA

Nah. Just picking up.

MR. ZHENG

Talia! Cash or credit?

She pays in cash. While Mr. Zheng counts change, Talia notices a little boy, FREDDIE, in the kitchen. His head rests against the freezer. Something strange about him.

MR. ZHENG (CONT'D)

Alright! You need a fork?

TALIA

Nah, I'm good... Hi, I'm Talia.

MR. ZHENG

I know! Enjoy the chow-mein!

TALIA

I'm leasing the place next door.
It's gonna be an ice cream store.

MR. ZHENG

Welcome to the neighborhood! I'm
Zheng! Bobbie Zheng! That's my son.
Freddie. Freddie, come meet Talia!

Freddie turns, ghosts. Mr. Zheng shakes his head.

MR. ZHENG (CONT'D)

He's very shy. Always has been. He
must get it from his mother.

Mr. Zheng hands Talia a fortune cookie, then another one.

MR. ZHENG (CONT'D)

Here, in case your fortune's bad.

TALIA

Why would it be bad?

MR. ZHENG

Just in case!

INT. SWEET DREAMS - NIGHT

Talia throws her leftovers away. Walks over to an open can of
COSMOS BLUE PAINT. Takes a WHIFF. Picks up a paint roller.

LATER

Cosmos blue paint sparkles. Talia basks before realizing
she's literally painted herself into a corner.

TALIA

Are you kidding me?

She plays "the floor is wet paint," pulling down Dylan's
CUSTOM TABLES and hopping from one to the other, all the way
from the storefront to the countertop. She leaps to the
countertop, braces herself, holding the back edge.

TALIA (CONT'D)

Ha! Suck it, floor! Suck it!

The countertop SNAPS. Talia falls to the floor.

She gets up slowly, paint stuck to her arms, her clothes, her
hair. Looks beneath her. She's made a paint angel.

TALIA (CONT'D)

Fuck!

LATER

She sits on the counter, repainting the floor with a roller. Paint sticks to her hair. She tries to separate two strands, but her hair clumps together.

BATHROOM

Blue water drains into a sink. Talia tries to scrub the paint out. She notices a pair of SCISSORS. She grabs them and cuts her hair, blue strands falling into the sink.

EXT. SWEET DREAMS - NIGHT

Talia walks to her car, touching her hair. It's short, almost punk. She YAWNS. Then freezes, noticing the Drug Dealer.

DRUG DEALER
Super-Ex, Sharon, zip, bliss,
Cumberbatch.

Talia checks her wallet, empty. Shrugs, continues to her car.

INT. TALIA'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Talia drives, YAWNING, fighting to keep her eyes open.

INT. TALIA'S HOME - NIGHT

The front doorknob JIGGLES. Dylan springs up from the couch and turns on some SEXY MUSIC. Talia enters, puts her purse down, and heads for the bedroom without noticing.

DYLAN
Hey baby! Forgetting someone?

Now she notices the candles, the incense, the sexy music.

TALIA
Sorry, tired, can't.

DYLAN
But it's been weeks! When? WHEN?

She disappears into the bedroom, leaving Dylan alone.

INT. SWEET DREAMS - DAY

TEENAGERS walk past, tossing spent vape pods on the ground.

EXT. SWEET DREAMS - DAY

Talia bursts out, yelling after the teens.

TALIA

Hey -- hey! Don't litter. We're not doing that around here anymore, got it? Now come back and pick it up!

The teens look at each other. Flick her off. Walk away.

TALIA (CONT'D)

If I see you again, I'm going to abort you!

DRUG DEALER (O.S.)

Molly, big rock candy mountain. Stallone.

She notices the Drug Dealer, standing on the corner.

TALIA

Yo, dude. What are your hours?

DRUG DEALER

Huh?

TALIA

At what hours do. You. Deal. Drugs? I'm trying to run a business here.

DRUG DEALER

Me too.

TALIA

We have so much in common! Maybe we can come to an understanding.

MINUTES LATER

Talia approaches the Drug Dealer, holding a banana split. He walks off, eating.

TALIA

Pleasure doing business with you.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Mr. Zheng stands at the counter, take-out bag beside him. Freddie hides behind a chair, sucking on ice. Talia enters.

MR. ZHENG

Talia, nice hair! Very modern! When do you open? Soon, right?

TALIA

Tomorrow...

MR. ZHENG

How exciting!

TALIA

I want to die.

MR. ZHENG

That's the spirit!

EXT. SWEET DREAMS - NIGHT

Take-out bag in hand, Talia is about to unlock the shop. "ICE CREAM BITCH" is spray-painted on the window. Talia balls her fist, glances around, ready for battle.

She picks up the SPRAY PAINT CAN, takes a deep breath and unlocks the front door.

INT. SWEET DREAMS - CONTINUOUS

Talia SCREAMS at the top of her lungs. Then eyes the pair of orange JUMPLAND SOCKS on the counter.

INT. JUMPLAND - NIGHT

Luke sweeps up trash. A loud BANG on the window turns his head. Talia, slumped against the glass, holding up the socks.

TALIA

I need to jump.

TRAMPOLINES

Talia jumps recklessly, laughing and laughing, jumping higher and higher, like a little kid, like she never wants to stop.

FOAM PITS

Talia and Luke sit on a balance beam.

LUKE
Relax, it happened to me, once.
I'll swing by, clean those windows
up, no problem.

TALIA
Life saver.

INT. SWEET DREAMS - NIGHT

Talia watches Luke, outside, as he finishes cleaning the windows. He tosses a rag down and enters Sweet Dreams. He admires the sparkling floors. She hands him a waffle cone.

TALIA
Thanks, Luke. I owe you one.

INT. SWEET DREAMS - MORNING

Talia flips the OPEN SIGN. Takes a breath. Pulls down tables.

EXT. SWEET DREAMS - DAY

A line of kids out the door, half wearing orange socks.

INT. SWEET DREAMS - DAY

The store is bright and bold, like its owner. And packed with kids and parents. Mirri stands to the side of the huge crowd with Dylan as he showcases his beloved custom tables.

DYLAN
See? Hinges, so when Talia's about
to close, she can put them up.
That's some easy sweeping!

At the counter, Talia dishes out samples, fills waffle cones, ladles toppings, just like in her fantasy. She can hardly keep up, but she seems to be enjoying it.

Tom leans against the wall, watching her work.

TOM
The rocky road is amazing, Talia!

Tom turns to a kid with chocolate smeared all over his face.

TOM (CONT'D)
She's an ice cream wizard, right?

Mr. Zheng arrives, Freddie trailing shyly behind him.

MR. ZHENG

Talia, you did it! Congratulations!

TALIA

Welcome to Sweet Dreams! What can I get you?

MR. ZHENG

Oh, no, I don't eat ice cream. My teeth are too sensitive! I'm more of a cake guy. Do you have cake?

TALIA

Afraid not.

MR. ZHENG

Oh, that's too bad. Very disappointing. I'm kidding! I'm a choco-holic! Freddie, what flavor?

Freddie presses his forehead against the ice cream display.

MR. ZHENG (CONT'D)

Freddie wants vanilla!

Talia hand Freddie a scoop of vanilla. Mr. Zheng and Freddie wave goodbye as Luke arrives, high-fiving kids in Jumpland socks as he makes his way to the counter.

LUKE

So, what's the hot flavor all the kids are going for these days?

TALIA

Jumpland Jelly Donut is pretty popular. Made it last night.

LUKE

Oh yeah?

TALIA

What can I say? I was inspired.

Dylan sees Luke and Talia flirting. Mirri sees Dylan seeing Luke and Talia flirting. And Tom sees... well, you get it.

INT. SWEET DREAMS - NIGHT

Talia wipes down the counters. Dylan folds up custom tables.

DYLAN

What a day! So, how'd we do?

Talia opens the register, cha-CHING. Fans tons of cash.

TALIA

Our hard work paid off! And it's
only gonna get better from here.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS LOCATIONS

- EXT. SWEET DREAMS - DAY - Talia turns the sign to OPEN.
- INT. SWEET DREAMS - DAY - Talia serves a few customers.
- EXT. SWEET DREAMS - NIGHT - Talia locks up, YAWNING.
- INT. TALIA'S HOME - NIGHT - Dylan waits at the table with a Steak n Shake feast when Talia enters, walks past unaware.
- INT. SWEET DREAMS - DAY - A customer leaves. The coast's clear. Talia scrapes freezer burn from an ice cream tub.
- INT. SWEET DREAMS - BACKROOM - NIGHT - Talia writes down in an ACCOUNT LEDGER with a black pen. Barely broke even today.
- INT. TOM'S BAR - NIGHT - Mirri checks her phone, annoyed. She shakes her head, then taps a young women on the shoulder.
- INT. TALIA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - Dylan, splayed out on the couch in a sexy robe. Talia walks by, unaware.
- INT. TALIA'S HOME - BEDROOM - An alarm BEEPS: 6:00 AM. Talia wakes, bleary-eyed.
- BATHROOM MIRROR - Talia examines her bloodshot eyes.
- INT. SWEET DREAMS - DAY - Talia's about to hand a cone to the customer but SNEEZES all over it. The customers flees.
- EXT. SWEET DREAMS - Total DOWNPOUR. The parking lot is completely empty. Even the Drug Dealer is gone.

END OF MONTAGE

TITLE: ONE MONTH LATER

INT. SWEET DREAMS - OFFICE - NIGHT

Talia opens her ledger and writes a number in red. She scans her daily sales numbers. Almost everything is written in red pen. She closes the book, horrified.

TALIA
I'm not gonna make rent this
month... What the hell happened?

INT. LUKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Luke studies a FLYER. He looks up as Talia enters.

LUKE
Thanks for coming. We've got a
problem.

TALIA
Is the problem that I want to get
blindingly drunk but I can't afford
to because I'm broke?

He slides the flyer towards her: "Skybounce Trampoline Park:
Grand Opening." The place looks enormous, more trampolines,
bigger arcade, and huge rooms for parties.

TALIA (CONT'D)
Skybounce. Shit. Looks like you're
not the only trampoline park in
town.

At the bottom of the flyer is the text: FEATURING STARBALLS.

TALIA (CONT'D)
What the unholy fuck is a star
ball?

STARBALLS PROMO VIDEO

LILLY (40s, wholesome with dimples) stands in front of a
counter with several mixing bowls. Her store is like the
inside of the Jetsons' spaceship: white, curved, clean.

LILLY
Hey there, everyone! People always
ask me, hey Lilly, what makes a
Starball a Starball?

Lilly's hand dig into a bowl of cake.

LILLY (CONT'D)
First we take some moist cake.

She dollops buttercream into the bowl.

LILLY (CONT'D)
Mix with rich buttercream frosting.

She forms small cake balls around wooden sticks.

LILLY (CONT'D)
Pop a biodegradable stick in the
batter, pack it tight!

She dips a cake ball into a bowl of velvety icing.

LILLY (CONT'D)
And give that ball a big old icing
bath! But that's just a cake ball!

Lilly rolls a ball in sparkling glitter. It looks amazing.

LILLY (CONT'D)
Now that's a Starball!

INT. LUKES OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Talia stares at the frozen image of Lilly on Luke's phone.

TALIA
I hate her. I hate her so much.

LUKE
Granted, she's a tad peppy. But
she's not why you're losing
business. This guy is our problem.

Luke turns to the back of the flyer. There's a photo of the owner of Skybounce, CHESTER ZARICOT, basking in his trampoline empire. A park triple the size of Jumpland.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Chester Zaricot. Owner of
Skybounce. If he has his way, he's
going to put me out of business.

TALIA
What's the plan?

LUKE
Let's scope out the competition.

EXT. SKYBOUNCE PARKING LOT - DAY

A bizarro version of the strip mall: a Steakhouse, a health food store, a yoga studio, Starballs, another yoga studio, and finally, Skybounce Trampoline park.