

"Meet the Stones"

FADE IN:

INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM - DAY

Seemingly empty florescent-lit white-tiled room. We see a closed bathroom stall door. And two sets of feet inside it. We hear hushed voices:

AVA (O.S.)
Put it in.

TRACY (O.S.)
I'm trying. Stay still.

Another voice chimes in from the stall next to it.

NICKI (O.S.)
Pass it to me after. Don't make me crawl under.

AVA (O.S.)
You'll get some. Don't worry.

TRACY (O.S.)
Do you have matches?

AVA (O.S.)
Shit. Nicki?

Nicki passes a book of matches underneath the stall wall.

AVA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Thank you.

SFX: The sound of a match being lit. Followed by the sound of something being inhaled.

NICKI (O.S.)
Quick, before someone comes.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM STALL - CONTINUOUS

Meet the girls: AVA STONE, our main character, 15-years-old, pretty but doesn't feel it, holds a makeshift pipe fashioned out of the cardboard from the inside of a roll of toilet paper and aluminum foil. TRACY FINE, also 15, pretty in a more conventional way, leans against the stall wall holding her breath and the hit of pot she just took. Ava puts the pipe to her mouth and inhales.

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She then passes the pipe and matches back under the stall to NICKI PLENN, another 15-year-old, cute, and a bit stragglier than the other two.

SFX: The sound of a match being lit, then an inhalation. Then a cough.

TRACY

One more time.

Nicki passes the paraphernalia back under the stall door to Tracy and Ava. Tracy takes another hit.

AVA

Put more in.

Tracy does. Ava takes one more hit then passes it again under the stall to Nicki.

AVA (CONT'D)

Let's go.

TRACY

I've gotta pee.

AVA

Okay, let me out. I'm going to get a drink.

NICKI

(through held breath) Wait for me!

Ava and Nicki both exit their stalls, Nicki disassembles the toilet paper pipe and tosses it in the trash, and Tracy starts undoing her pants.

CUT TO:

INT. GAS STATION SUNDRIES AREA/CASHIER KIOSK - MOMENTS LATER

Ava and Nicki approach the counter where the CASHIER, a seemingly put upon middle-aged man, leans against the lottery machine while he picks his teeth with his pinky.

AVA

One half Fanta, half Tab, please.

NICKI

And I'll have a Nurse Salt.

Ava and Nicki start into a fit of giggles. Oh, they are funny. The CASHIER stares sternly. He moves to the soda machine to facilitate Ava's drink choice.

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CASHIER

Cash or credit?

Ava succumbs to hysterical laughter and after putting down a dollar she and Nicki head out. They run into Tracy.

TRACY

What's so funny?

Ava and Nicki can't talk, can only laugh. If only the whole world was high! They keep moving and walk out toward the boulevard.

TRACY (CONT'D)

That was the last of it, by the way. I'm going to have to check my dad's safe for more. (flips her hair) I'm hungry. McDonald's or In 'n Out?

AVA/NICKI

In 'n Out.

TRACY

Have you guys noticed more cops than usual driving around?

AVA

Come on, don't be paranoid. Besides they're there to protect and serve. Speaking of which I can't wait to be served a Double-Double.

NICKI

Actually, I heard someone talking about some new program called "Stay In School L.A."... Maybe we'll get arrested!

This starts Ava and Nicki into another laugh fit.

TRACY

Real funny... I would lose my shit if I had to take a lie detector test. Who's got some Binaca?

Ava pulls some out of her purse, sprays her mouth then passes it along. They each spritz themselves.

NICKI

Hey, we need to talk about the weekend. Whose house are sleeping at Saturday night?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AVA

If my dad's going to be out of town we should stay at my house. I'll ask him tonight when I see --

SFX: The sound of a police siren, loud and close.

Ava, Tracy, and Nicki stand dumbfounded but at attention. A cop car has stopped short right in front of the curb where they've been walking.

POLICEMAN

(over loudspeaker) Stop where you are, girls. You should have stayed in school.

The girls all look terrified. But when Ava and Nicki look at each other they again erupt into hysterics. Tracy starts crying.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Ava, Tracy, and Nicki sit next to each other on a bench. Each of them have one handcuff shackled to the bench. A row of male suspects sit across from them on a bench similar to theirs -- the men are fully encumbered by handcuffs, hands behind their backs and ankles together.

NICKI

Wonder what we have to do to get that kind of treatment.

Tracy, clearly exhausted and worn down, starts giggling. Then...

TRACY

What am I going to tell my parents? They are going to kill me.

AVA

Why does my dad have to be in town? Rosa could have picked me up and no one would have been the wiser.

NICKI

We've got to get our stories straight -- we were only missing P.E.... If we stress our poor body images maybe they'll have sympathy. Are either of you willing to purge on command?

One of the men shackled directly across from the girls gives them a nod.

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SHACKLED GUY #1

What are you in for?

NICKI

Ditching.

SHACKLED GUY #2

Shit, my cousin was caught ditching hot merch... did two years. They found the car parts buried in his backyard.

TRACY

We were only ditching school, not merch.

AVA

We were bored. We don't know anything about car repair.

NICKI

Maybe if we'd taken Auto Shop instead of Home Ec we wouldn't be in this mess.

Shackled Guy #2 nods his head like she has a valid point.

SHACKLED GUY #1

Don't knock Home Ec. I made my mom a knife cozy one year for Christmas, she still says it was her favorite thing I ever gave her.

Ava notices something in the distance -- her father, JOSEPH STONE, has arrived.

AVA

Oh shit, it's on.

Close on Joseph -- a charismatic, and youthful-looking forty-three year-old -- walking toward them. He tries to control a smile from overtaking his lips. He locks eyes with Ava and shakes his head. He stops to talk to a police officer.

JOSEPH

(pointing at Ava) That one's mine.

Ava raises her hand to wave a wary hello and the chain attached to her handcuff clanks against the bench.

CUT TO:

INT. JOSEPH'S CAR - LATER

Joseph and Ava are buckled up and on the move.

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JOSEPH

So how often are you doing this?

AVA

You know... not that much. And it's just P.E. When am I going to need to do pull ups in my future? I don't want a future with pull ups.

JOSEPH

Ava. That's not the point. And, trust me, in the future you will want toned arms. Every woman I've known has been concerned about it. But the point is, ditching is against the rules, it's dangerous, and it's not good for you. What do you gain from ditching?

AVA

Relief from boredom.

JOSEPH

Boredom is part of life. Learning to deal with that will be hugely beneficial to you.

AVA

Super.

JOSEPH

Are you at all remorseful about this? And not just getting caught.

AVA

Yes. I know it's technically wrong. It's just there's so much going on and so much I want to do. Sometimes school just seems beside the point.

JOSEPH

Listen, you and your brothers being okay is the only thing that matters to me. The only thing. You have to help me here. You've got free will and I can't be with you every second. I can't control you. Much as I'd like to. Actually, I would not like to. I would like to raise you so that you learn to take care of yourself. That's probably best for you. But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

AVA

Well, I do take care of myself. A lot. You're gone all the time. Mom...

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JOSEPH

(guilt setting in)

That's all very true. But that's our reality and we have to deal with it the best we can. Listen, we're all trying. I know that. I hope you know that. We've got to work together. You're getting older now. You have to start thinking big picture. Future. I know it's hard to imagine the future. How do we know what's going to happen? Life seems so random. But there is a part of it we can effect. That's where good decisions come into play. Thinking things through.

AVA

Well, you're kind of scaring me but, I'll try.

JOSEPH

Maybe you need to talk with someone.

AVA

What are we doing right now?

JOSEPH

A woman. You're becoming a woman, maybe you want to talk to a woman about woman things.

AVA

Like pull ups?

JOSEPH

Yes, pulls ups and more.

AVA

I talk to women. Tracy's mom shepherded me through the whole menstrual cramp thing... Candace takes me bra shopping...

JOSEPH

I know there are women in your life but maybe you want to talk to someone where you can feel like you can say anything and express any concerns or questions with complete anonymity.

AVA

You want me to see a psychiatrist? I was only ditching P.E.

(searching)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

AVA (CONT'D)

Too much exercise can contribute to a
screwed up body image!

JOSEPH

You don't have a screwed up body image.
You're sufficiently insecure. And listen,
about Candace...

AVA

Is she coming over tonight?

JOSEPH

No. I hate to have to spring this on you,
but we've decided to take some time
apart.

AVA

What? Why?

JOSEPH

Sometimes I screw up.

AVA

(disappointed and accusatory)
Because you don't want to commit.

JOSEPH

Ava. It's not that simple. We're in
different places.

AVA

Why should I listen to you when you don't
have it all together?

JOSEPH

I'm going to let that go because I know
this is hard and it's emotional. Listen,
we just want different things.

AVA

What do you want?

JOSEPH

I want you to be okay. Happy and okay and
to make good choices. I want you to be
better than me.

Unable to articulate her feelings, that finely grained
mixture of sadness and empathy, Ava reaches over and turns up
the radio.

SFX: Devo's version of "Satisfaction".

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Joseph looks to her to see if she gets how perfect it is that this song is playing. She won't meet his gaze but he knows she gets it. They drive in silence the rest of the way home.

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