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written by  
Joseph Borjon

[writing@josephborjon.com](mailto:writing@josephborjon.com)

FADE IN:

INT. CARRIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

A bit messy from neglect, except for a proud little corner with several NCAA mementos and photos of a young SPRINTER celebrating her victories on the track.

A phone ALARM blares on the nightstand. Whoever's in bed is totally lost under the covers, still as a rock.

ON THE PHONE SCREEN

The clock shows it's 11:30 a.m. The alarm reads: "Appointment with Dr. Dempsey at noon. This is your 10th snooze!"

ON THE BED

As if the air were molasses, the person in bed reaches for the phone, silences it, and takes the covers off her head. She's CARRIE YOUNGSTROM, mid-20s -- the Sprinter from the photos. Groggy and exhausted, she's seen better days.

She struggles to sit up in bed, not least because there's a chain -- the kind a hardcore bro would use at the gym -- wrapped around her shoulders like a shawl. She doesn't seem aware of it, but it sure weighs her down.

She manages to sit up, moves to the edge of the bed -- and keels over, landing on the floor with a CLANK.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Holding a stack of papers, DR. DEMPSEY, 50, walks in, startling an anxious Carrie on the patient chair. The chain is still on her, but the Doctor gives her a skeptical look.

DR. DEMPSEY

You sure you want to hear it again?

INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Dressed for work, Carrie staggers toward the elevator as fast as the persistent chain lets her, chomping down on a hamburger. She glances at her watch.

A crude sign on the elevator panel reads: "Out of service."

CARRIE

By fetch.

She looks at the staircase -- huge, daunting.

Behind her, a grumpy MIDDLE-AGED MAN in crutches walks toward the stairs.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN  
What's the matter, young lady?  
Afraid of a little exercise?

CARRIE  
Should I be?

MIDDLE-AGED MAN  
Look at you. You're in the prime of  
your life. Don't waste it.

As the Man is about to start up the stairs, two LADS come rushing to help him.

LAD #1  
Here, let me help you, sir.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN  
Yeah, sixteenth floor.

Carrie takes an angry burger bite as the three men struggle up the stairs.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Out of breath, empty burger wrapper in hand, Carrie makes it to the top of the stairs. Barely.

She plops down on her cubicle chair. Looks at her employee-of-the-month awards on the wall and smiles proudly.

From a short distance, JASON approaches; he's in his mid-20s, fit but not terribly strong. Carrie sees him coming and quickly checks her reflection on the monitor, fixes her hair.

A SULKY LADY walks by, startling her.

SULKY LADY  
Uh-oh, the boss ain't too pleased.

Sulky walks away. Carrie looks over at boss OSCAR, 45, who's yelling into his office phone. Noticing Carrie, he points at her: "I'm coming at you."

Jason arrives.

JASON  
Hey, Carrie. How'd it go at the  
doctor's?

Carrie and Jason are comfortable with each other. Neither conceals the spark of attraction all that well.

CARRIE

Same as always. "There's nothing wrong with your tests, you're probably just under a lot of stress, nothing else I can do for you. The weight is all in your head."

JASON

Dang. Sorry I couldn't be there.

She crumples the burger wrapper and pitches it into the trash can, barely missing. She struggles to get up --

CARRIE

It's not like I'm disabled, Jason.

A NICE GUY passing by goes to pick up the wrapper for her, but her glare burns through his skull. The Guy books it. Carrie finally manages to stand up.

JASON

Why won't you let anyone do stuff for you?

CARRIE

(picking up the wrapper)  
What's there to do for me?  
(pitches again; makes it)  
I'm an athlete.

She looks over at Oscar again: He's still talking, angry. He glances at Carrie out of the corner of his eye.

JASON

See, that's the problem: It's been hard on you, this... Whatever it is. What you need is someone to help you, you know, bear the burden. A boyfriend, maybe?

CARRIE

That's your most direct approach so far.

JASON

Why not? Every other approach has bombed.

CARRIE

You crazy. Why would I want to put this on anyone else?

Before Jason can respond, a serious Oscar strides in.

OSCAR  
There's the award-winning employee.  
What's the excuse this time?

CARRIE  
Sorry, Oscar, I had to take the  
stairs.

OSCAR  
We all did. Seriously, you gotta  
get your ducks in a row, here.

JASON  
She just came from the doctor's --

OSCAR  
I know. And after, what?

CARRIE  
Jason, please go.

JASON  
Oscar, this shouldn't --

CARRIE  
Please.

Powerless, Jason glares at Oscar, leaves.

OSCAR  
The Pelaratti report. How's it  
coming?

CARRIE  
I'll finish it by end of week.  
Promise.

OSCAR  
It was due yesterday. Listen, if I  
don't see the report in my inbox by  
eight a.m. tomorrow, Burr's taking  
over and you're packing up. Got it?

As Oscar leaves, Carrie buries her head in her hands.

Jason sneaks back in. Carrie never looks up.

JASON  
Come on, let me help you.

CARRIE  
Forget it.

PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR THE REMAINING 8 PAGES.