

Cellular

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FIFTH DRAFT

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We start with a black screen as we hear the voiceover of a newscast playing:

NEWS ANCHOR #1 (V.O.)  
*And that's not all we're following.  
This summer fifteen and sixteen  
year olds around the country...*

SLOW FADE IN TO:

INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The voiceover continues throughout this scene:

NEWS ANCHOR #1 (V.O.)  
*...will be sitting their GCSEs but  
this year will be different. The  
newly introduced government-funded  
scheme: Merit Support Allowance, or  
MSA for short, will be put into  
effect.*

In a very dark room we hear a phone's alarm go off. As MARIE (16), awakes and emerges from her covers to turn her phone off that was lying on her pillow.

We see the light from the phone illuminate her face as she opens up her Chirper app (a knock-off of Twitter). Projected on screen we see what Marie sees: a projected image of her Chirper timeline as she scrolls through it reading different Chirps.

JUMP CUT TO:

NEWS ANCHOR #1 (V.O.)  
*Today we have Education Secretary  
Olivia Pearson to talk to us about  
the new initiative.*

Marie, still browsing on her phone with one hand, draws the curtains. She squints and rubs her eyes with one hand as she yawns tiredly.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

NEWS ANCHOR #1 (V.O.)  
*Thank you so much for joining us  
this morning.*

(CONTINUED)

Marie is sitting on the toilet whilst on her phone. On screen we see what she is looking at: she's reading an e-book. An email notification suddenly appears on screen advertising online dating sites. Marie quickly dismisses it by swiping it to the side.

PEARSON (V.O.)

*Not at all. I'm very happy to be here.*

CUT TO:

INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Marie, fully dressed in her uniform, is searching her room for something. She sweeps through her desk and looks through drawers.

NEWS ANCHOR #1 (V.O.)

*So explain to us, and everyone watching at home what the scheme is all about.*

Looking under her bed, she finds a card case and her face lights up. Picking up the card case and opening it she finds an old worn out library card. Frowning, she chucks it onto her desk.

PEARSON (V.O.)

*This scheme will allow pupils from lower-income families to be entitled to government financial support provided they reach their target minimum grade...*

Marie's phone bleeps an alert.

We see a text message appear on screen from a friend KATY that says: **U ready for today?**

Marie thinks for a while and texts back: **Think so. U?**

PEARSON (V.O.)

*...on their English and Maths exams. Working families suffered heavily...*

Katy texts back almost immediately: **Was up till 3 last night revising. So tired :'(**

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Pearson's voiceover carries on from the previous scene:

Marie enters the kitchen. Her mother SOFIA (42), dressed in dark blue overalls, is sitting at the table sipping a cup of coffee and watching the television with an intense focus.

It's now revealed that the television is the source of the voiceover. We see PEARSON and the NEWS ANCHOR's lip movements clearly match those of the voiceover.

PEARSON  
 (from television)  
*...under the previous government so  
 we feel that this new initiative  
 will give young people a real  
 incentive to achieve in the  
 classroom...*

Marie walks over to the table and takes a seat. Her breakfast - eggs, toast and a glass of water, are there waiting for her.

PEARSON  
 (from television)  
*...and also it will give them a  
 sense of responsibility to their  
 family's well-being.*

Marie starts eating. One hand on her phone and the other putting toast in her mouth. Sofia turns her attention from the television and notices Marie for the first time.

SOFIA  
 Oh, good morning sweetheart.

Marie gives a non-committal grunt as she continues eating, eyes fixed on her phone.

SOFIA  
 Did you have a good night's sleep?

MARIE  
 (not looking at her mother)  
 Yeah.

SOFIA  
 Are you all ready for today?

MARIE  
 I guess.

(CONTINUED)

SOFIA  
Can you please not do that while  
I'm speaking to you?

Marie puts down her phone and looks up at her mother for the first time in this scene.

MARIE  
Sorry.

SOFIA  
So, how was your revision?

MARIE  
It was fine.

SOFIA  
Are you sure? You're always on your  
phone I can never tell if you're  
revising or not.

MARIE  
(annoyed)  
I revise on my phone Mum. Everyone  
does.

Marie's phone beeps an alert. Marie automatically reaches for her phone to check it.

SOFIA  
What's your first exam?

MARIE  
(looking at her phone)  
Maths, I think. Mum, do you know  
where my Oyster card is?

SOFIA  
(thrown off)  
Do you - what?

MARIE  
My Oyster card. I can't find it.

SOFIA  
(distracted)  
Oh, it should be in your coat  
pocket.

Marie turns around in her seat and removes her coat which was draped to the back of the seat. Looking through the pockets she finds her Oyster card in a card case.

MARIE  
(to herself)  
There you are.

SOFIA  
Marie, do you want to go over some  
practice questions?

MARIE  
(putting coat back)  
What?

SOFIA  
Practice questions. For your exam.

MARIE  
Why?

SOFIA  
Because I know you've always  
struggled with it.

MARIE  
(attention on Sofia, defiant)  
I've never struggled with it. It -  
it just isn't my strongest subject.

SOFIA  
Which is why I want to help.

MARIE  
I'll be fine Mum.

SOFIA  
Are you sure? I can always help you  
with -

MARIE  
(raised voice)  
Mum I don't need your help!

There's a silence between them. Marie looks at her mother  
and sees concern on her expression.

Marie picks up her bag, stands up and makes to leave the  
kitchen.

SOFIA  
Marie.

Marie stops and turns to face Sofia. Sofia opens her mouth  
to say something but hesitates. She closes her mouth before  
opening it again to say -

SOFIA  
Do your best okay?

Marie leaves the kitchen. Sofia takes a deep breath, stands up and walks over to the sink to begin washing the dishes. On the table where she was sitting we see a letter which says in big bold letters at the top:

**RENT - 2 MONTHS OVERDUE.**

CUT TO:

INT. BUS (MOVING) - MORNING

Marie is sitting on the top deck of a bus toward the front. She's on her phone and we see, projected on the screen to Marie's right, that Marie is continuing her instant-message conversation with Katy from earlier in the morning.

Marie types a message: **Im getting dropped to school. Mum doesn't want me to be late.**

A few moments later Marie's phone beeps an alert: **Is that why I can see your head at the front of the bus?**

Marie looks behind her and we see a teenage girl about Marie's age, giggle at her. This is KATY.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDORS - MORNING - SOME TIME LATER

Marie and Katy are walking down the corridors as they make their way to the amphitheatre where their exam is being conducted. There's a bit of a gap in between Marie and Katy as they walk together.

KATY  
I wish we wouldn't start with  
Maths. I fucking hate it.

MARIE  
Same.

KATY  
I know I'll do well in English  
though. That should balance things  
out I reckon.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE

Right.

The two of them reach the amphitheatre. Before they enter a female TUTOR (mid 30s) stops them. She is carrying a grey bucket. She points to a sign next to the door that reads:

**NO PHONES, NO DIGITAL WATCHES, NO MP4 PLAYERS, NO TABLETS**

TUTOR

You can recollect them once the exam is over.

Katy places her phone into the grey bucket without hesitation and enters the amphitheatre. With some hesitation, Marie does the same.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL AMPITHEATRE - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

Marie takes her seat in the middle of the class. The rest of the amphitheatre is filled with other students. Katy takes her seat near the front.

In front of Marie is a tablet that's turned off. The Tutor enters the room and addresses the amphitheatre.

TUTOR

We will start in a few minutes.  
Your exam will be conducted on  
these tablets. To turn them on...

The tutor's voice fades away as Marie stares anxiously at the blank black screen of her tablet. The whole amphitheatre is engulfed in silence. Absent-mindedly, she reaches for her pocket, but there is no phone there. She takes a deep breath.

TUTOR

...you may start.

Marie is suddenly brought down to earth. She hurriedly turns on her tablet, logs in and sees the first question.

A multiple choice question on Pythagoras' Theorem:

**Two sides of a triangle measure 10 inches and 6 inches.  
Which of the following choices for the length of the third  
side will make the triangle a right-angled triangle?**

**A) 4 inches   B) 7 inches   C) 8 inches   D) 9 inches**

(CONTINUED)

Marie stares blankly at the screen.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Marie lays on her bed whilst she's on her phone. Projected on screen we see she is on an app called Swooner (a knock-off of Tinder) and is swiping consecutive pictures of boys to the left. Her phone then rings.

Marie picks up the phone and stares at the caller ID: on screen we see its her Mum calling. Marie answers the phone.

MARIE

Hi Mum.

SOFIA (O.S.)

Marie? How was your exams?

Marie hesitates for a second.

MARIE

It went well.

SOFIA (O.S.)

You don't sound so sure.

MARIE

It went fine Mum.

SOFIA (O.S.)

Okay. Well listen, I'm going to be working tonight, so you'll need to fix your own dinner.

Marie sits up straight.

MARIE

You usually don't work overtime on Mondays.

SOFIA (O.S.)

I'm covering somebody else's shift.

MARIE

Mum...

SOFIA (O.S.)

It's fine. My break is nearly over. I'll see you soon. Love you.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE

You too.

Marie hangs up her phone. She turns to look outside the window before we -

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD: TWO MONTHS LATER

CUT TO:

INT. HOME - ENTRANCE HALLWAY - MORNING

A stack of envelopes come through the mailbox. Marie walks over to it and picks them up. The envelope on top of the stack has been sent from Marie's school.

Marie shuffles through the remaining envelopes and sees one with red stampings on the envelope that say:

**URGENT - EVICTION NOTICE.**

Marie looks at the eviction envelope with an alarmed expression. She then makes her way to enter the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Marie enters the kitchen and sees Sofia sitting at the table reading a novel.

MARIE

Mum, are we being -

Sofia shuts her book and looks up at Marie eagerly.

SOFIA

Are your results here?

MARIE

(thrown off)

What? Err, yeah...

SOFIA

Have you opened them?

MARIE

Not yet.

(CONTINUED)

SOFIA  
(excited)  
Don't leave me in suspense, open  
it!

Marie opens up the envelope. She sees her results but she only focuses on the top two subjects:

**ENGLISH - D**

**MATHS - E**

Marie stares at the paper blankly.

SOFIA  
How did you do?

Marie doesn't answer. Sofia walks over and looks at the sheet in front of her.

Sofia stares at the paper, speechless. Marie looks up at her mother. Sofia has a mixed expression of disappointment and concern.

MARIE  
(to her mother)  
I'm sorry...

SOFIA  
What happened dear? Were the exams  
hard?

MARIE  
I - No - you were counting on me  
and -

SOFIA  
Counting on you?

MARIE  
MSA. You wanted me to qualify for  
it and -

SOFIA  
Marie, it's fine.

MARIE  
But -

SOFIA  
(a flash of anger)  
I said it's fine!

(CONTINUED)

Marie looks at her mother who runs her hand through her hair, her eyes closed. Sofia walks over to the kitchen sink and prepares to do the dishes.

SOFIA  
(not looking at Marie)  
You're going to have to do resits.  
You can't get into college with  
those grades.

Marie takes out the envelope with the eviction notice on it. She looks at it for a while before turning her gaze to her mother.

MARIE  
Mum...

SOFIA  
(still not looking Marie)  
What?

Marie hesitates for a second.

MARIE  
Never mind.

Marie puts the letter down on the table and leaves the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - EARLY AFTERNOON

Marie is sitting at her desk. She takes out her phone and opens up a revision app for GCSE Maths. She starts to flick through some of the questions when her phone beeps an alert.

She sees a text from Katy, it says: **How were ur results?**

Marie thinks for a while before texting: **They were okay. U?**

Marie goes back to her revision, but she gets another text from Katy: **Happy with my results.**

Another text: **Got 1 A and 9 B's.**

And another text: **No A\*s tho. Lol.**

No subsequent message. Marie tries to return to her revision but her phone beeps again. Marie, now frustrated, opens up the text message.

(CONTINUED)

It's from Katy again: **Me and Rachel are going cinema later to celebrate. Wanna come?**

Marie texts Katy back: **Im a little busy now okay? I'll text you later.**

Marie's phone doesn't beep again. She goes back to her revision app but her phone beeps again. This time its an email from Amazon promoting their best deals. Marie groans in frustration as she puts down her phone.

JUMP CUT TO:

Marie is looking around her room frantically. Opening drawers, cupboards, looking under the bed. She finds one book behind her bedside table and opens it up, but realises its just a cookbook. Marie chucks it on her bed in frustration.

Marie's gaze turns toward her desk. She walks over to it and finds a card case lying on the surface. She opens up the card case and takes out a worn out library card.

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - EVENING

Marie enters the library and sees that barely anyone is in here. She walks across the aisles looking for books on Maths and English. She picks a few off the shelves, all of them covered in dust.

JUMP CUT TO:

Marie takes a seat by herself on the table with several books stacked next to her. She opens up a large one. As she slowly opens it up and the pages fall one after another, Marie caresses the physical form of the book.

She starts to read, takes out her notebook and makes a few notes. Her handwriting his shaky and wobbly, like a child's.

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - EVENING - SOME TIME LATER

Marie is still studying when her phone, which is on the table vibrates loudly.

Subconsciously, Marie picks up the phone to unlock it but manages to stop herself. She looks at the phone uncertainly before putting it down. She resumes her studying.

(CONTINUED)

The phone then vibrates again. Marie looks at it this time but does not pick it up. The notification light is blinking constantly. Marie's eyes are fixed on it. The blinking light, beckoning Marie's attention.

Marie continues to stare at her phone.

CUT TO BLACK

We hear Marie's phone vibrate again.

THE END