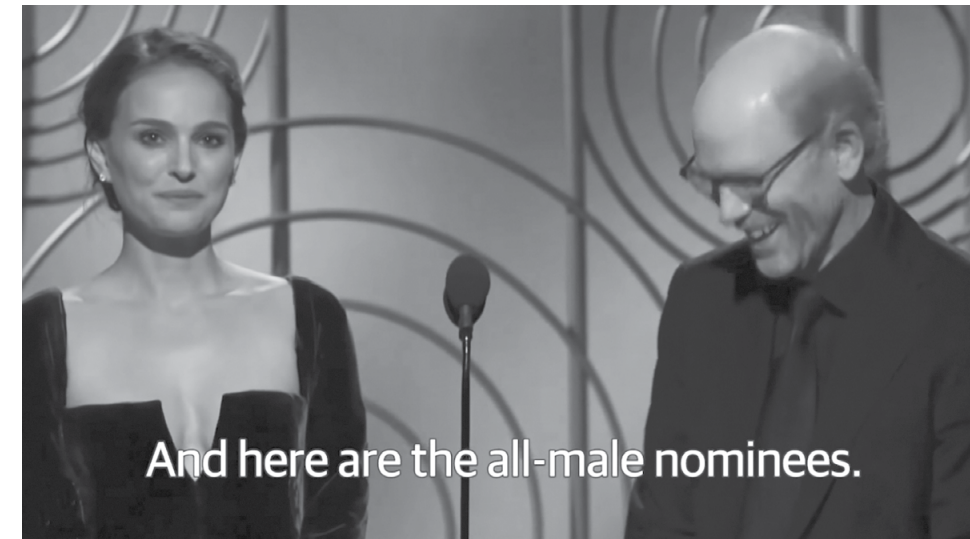




No, I love my grudges.



I tend to them like little pets.



And here are the all-male nominees.

You throw that shade, Natalie.

The Bechdel Test is a simple film test which names the following three criteria:

1. It has to have at least two women in it
2. Who talk to each other
3. About something besides a man

Only half of all films reach these requirements.

This is a publication dedicated to (mostly) female writers and directors who've shifted the lense beyond male stories and the female gaze. These creatives have broken through the male-dominated industry to tell the real experiences of 21st century women.

Women are meant to be more than seen on screen, *they're meant to be heard*. Women are funny, intelligent, assertive, and complex.

But also ambivalent, troubled, broke/underpaid, insecure, underemployed, gross, and sometimes volatile. Fiction allows us to take ownership of our best and worst qualities.

These are some examples of women's voices in the 21st century.

Big Little Lies



Written By:

Liane Moriarty (book) & David E. Kelley (screenplay)



Or like you know, like, I see this life and this moment and it's so wonderful, but it doesn't quite belong to me.

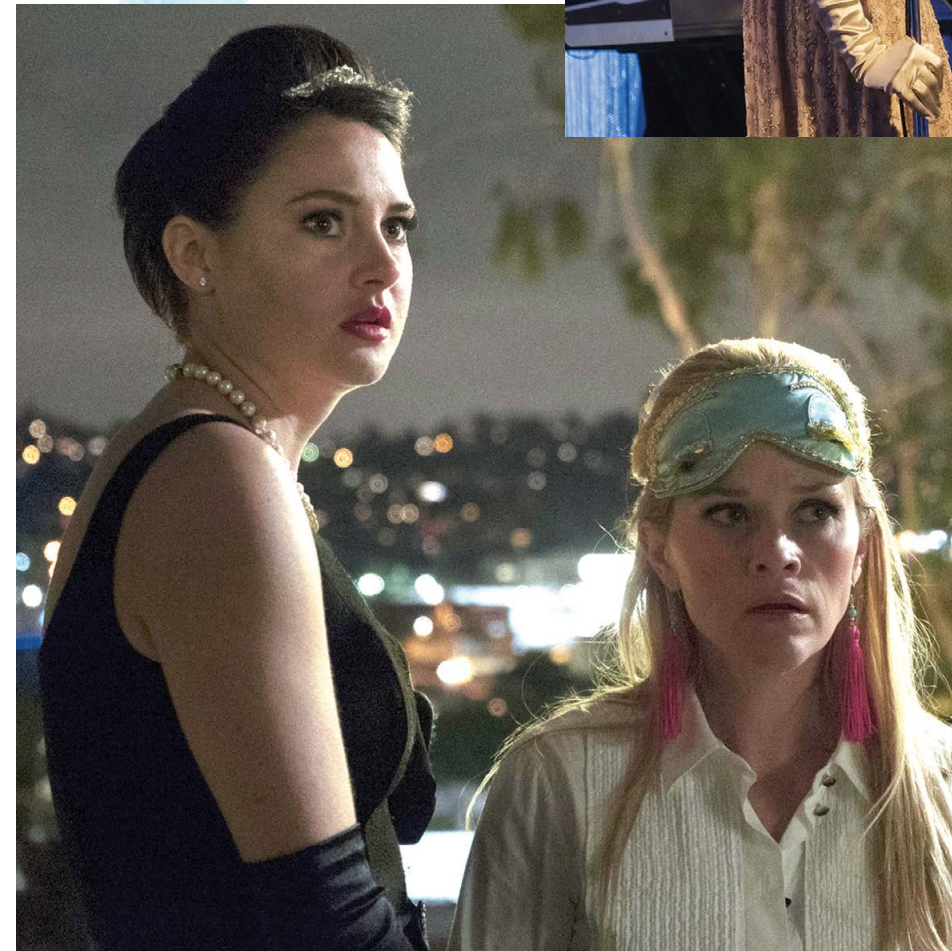


"We see people how they are, *not who they are.*" This is told at the beginning of Big Little Lies and it drives all the way through this landscape. In reality, we don't know who people are behind closed doors or what lies beneath the surface. We only know and see people through our own perspectives.

Big Little Lies slowly reveals the complexity of each carefully crafted character. From the vulnerability and insecurity of fierce, Type-A women to the silent anger and anxieties of women who've suffered physical abuse and/or sexual assault. This story brilliantly captures the real, painfully common struggles of women but also celebrates female comradery.

It's also one of the fewer stories that builds mothers as more than supportive roles to their children's narrative. Moms are people too, able to be compelling protagonists.

Cast: Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman, Shailene Woodley, Laura Dern, Zoe Kravitz.



BROAD CITY BROAD CITY BROAD CITY BROAD CITY BROAD CITY BROAD CITY BROAD CITY BROAD CITY



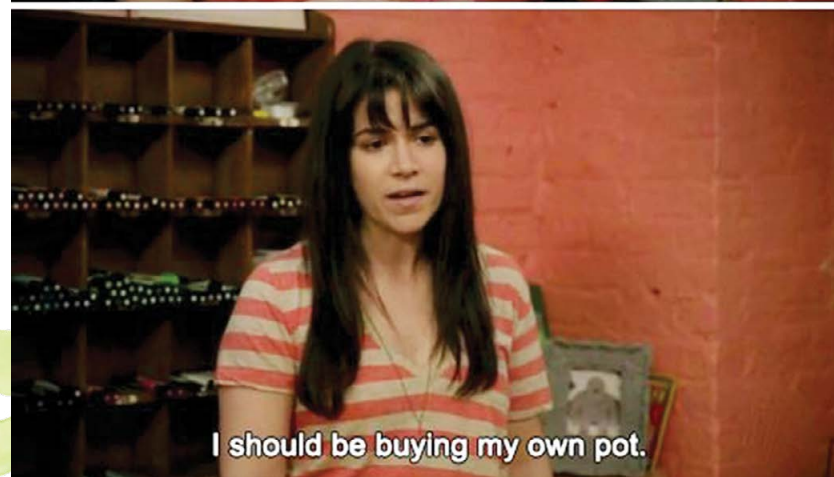
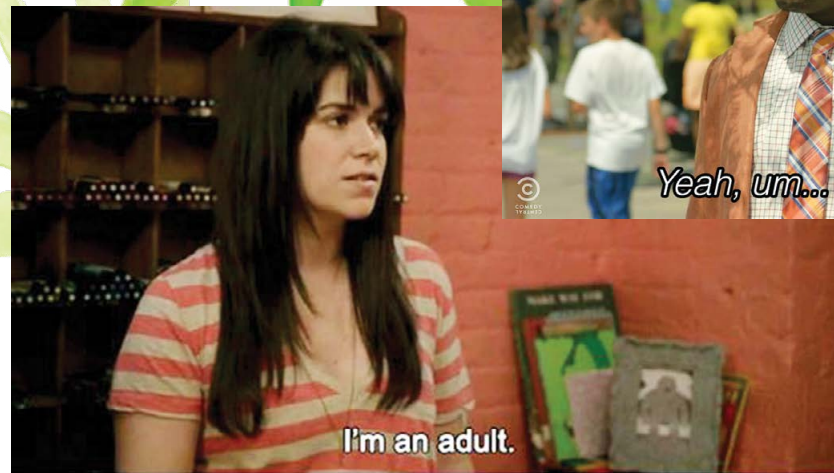
Written By & Starring: Ilana Glazer & Abbi Jacobson

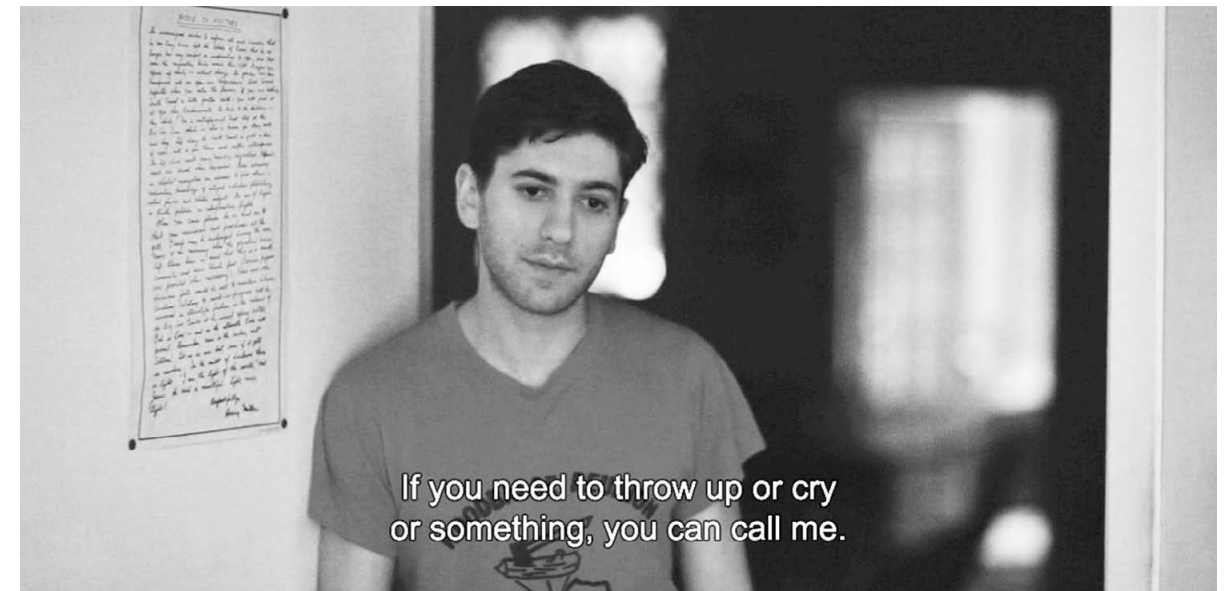
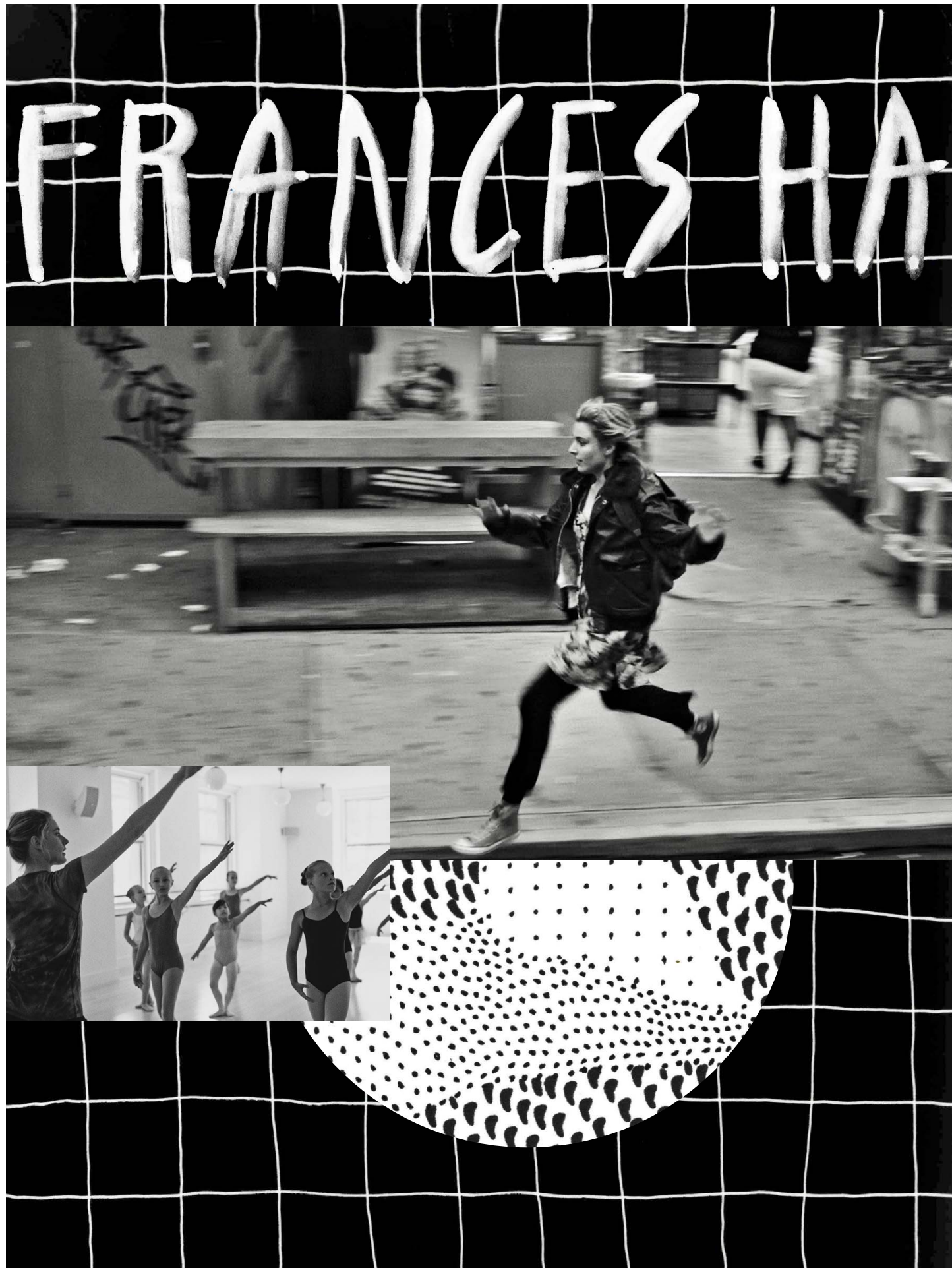
If Broad City can teach anything, it's this: all you actually need to get by is your bestie, there's a lot of creative ways to make a buck, and women are stoners too (but seldom represented in mass culture). In the world of Broad City, only Murphy's Law applies. What can go wrong for best friends Abbi (Jacobson) and Ilana (Glazer), will go wrong. They're rolling wayyy deep in millennial problems.

But is it all worth it? ~YAS QUEEN~

Abbi and Ilana are hella real and #friendshipgoals. In their amazing misadventures, they remind us of who we are but not seen as on screen. Just like men, women are also be pretty gross, lazy, messy, and uninhibited. So bring on the bad hookups, being a bad employee at work, gross-out body humor, lack of personal boundaries, and inappropriate public scenarios. But no matter the situation, it's all a damn good time for this dynamic duo.

Cast: Ilana Glazer, Abbi Jacobson.





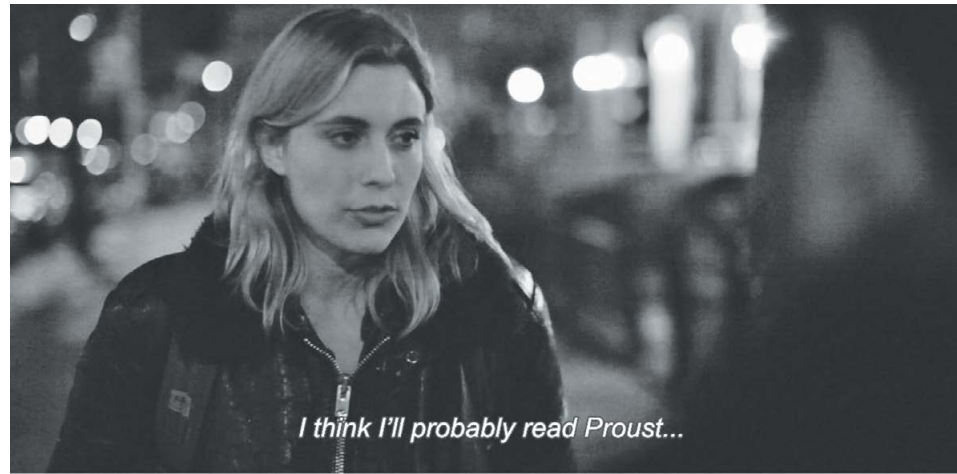
Written By: Noah Baumbach & Greta Gerwig

Meet Frances (Gerwig), a 27 year-old New Yorker without an apartment, without job security (a dance company apprentice, though never really a dancer), single, and not speaking to her best friend Sophie (Sumner). Sound familiar? *You've probably been her or at least known her.* But what makes Frances Ha so enticing is the endless joy and optimism she exudes while facing the challenges of pursuing dreams and finding yourself.

Frances is comically and painfully relatable. We've all had a period in life filled with emotional rants after too many vodkas, using your tax return to pay for a date, or leave your belongings on the sidewalk because you have nowhere to take it to. Or more generally, been in a hard-spot with employment and/or making rent. If you haven't...well frankly I don't believe you, or you never experienced being a twenty-something (or you just aced the hell out of it).

Greta Gerwig is the poster girl of millennial women. She makes grand romances of female friendship, embraces awkwardness, takes ownership of failure, and does it all in humorous style. So here's to making eyes with your best friend across the room (hopefully with David Bowie's "Modern Love" playing in the background).

Cast: Greta Gerwig, Mickey Sumner, Michael Zegen, Adam Driver.



I think I'll probably read Proust...

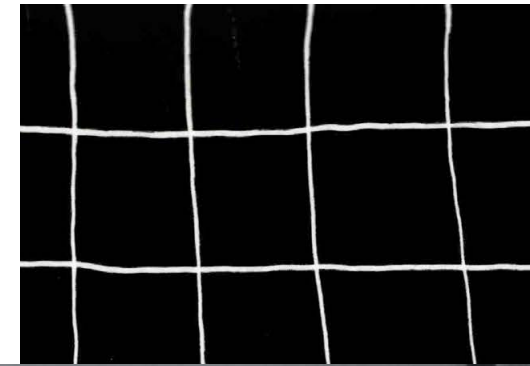


...because sometimes it's good to do what you're supposed to when you're supposed to.



FREE CHAIR

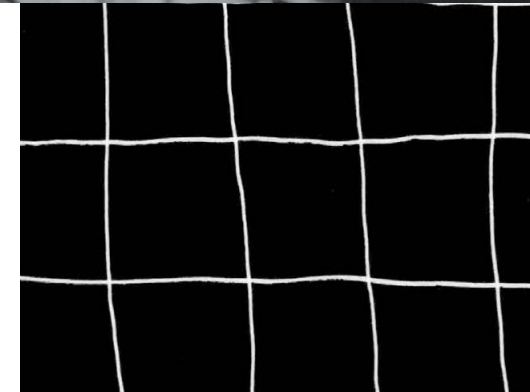
Totally normal, really.
Didn't fit in storage space.
Needs a home.



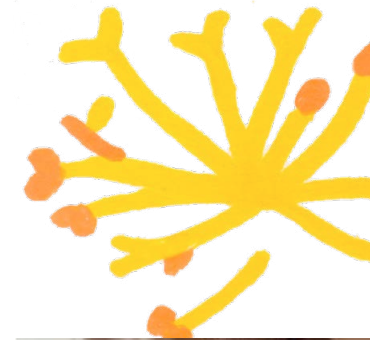
I love you, even if you love...



your phone that has e-mail more than you love me.



GIRLS



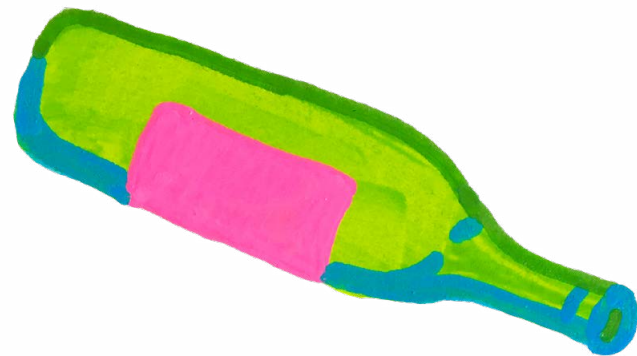
Created By: Lena Dunham

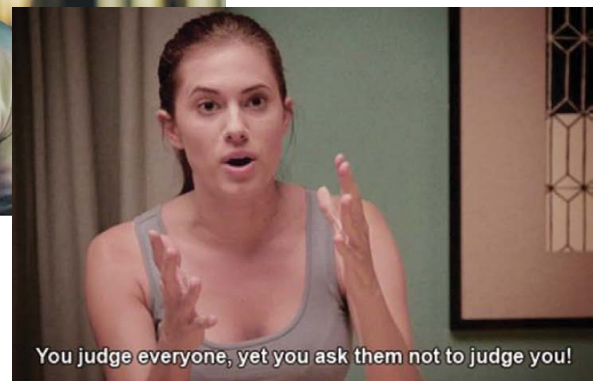
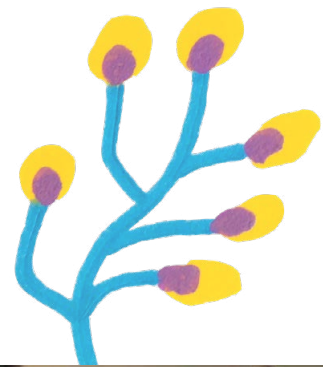
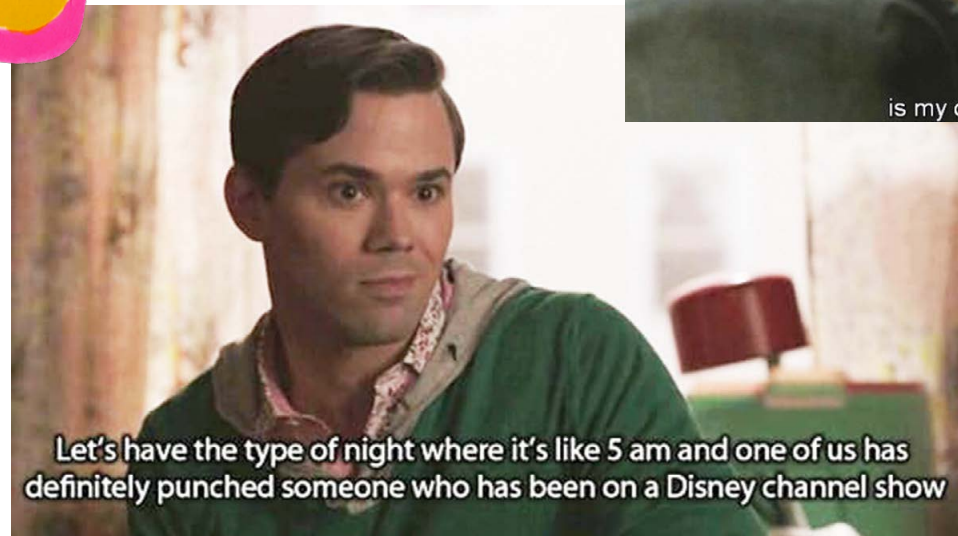
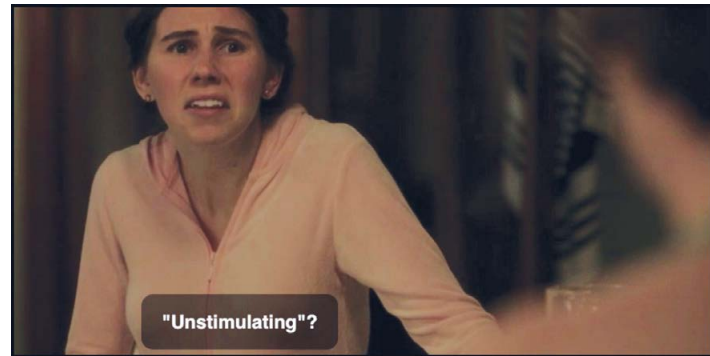
Written By: Lena Dunham, Jenni Konner, & Judd Apatow

Girls will make you cringe, there's no way around it. But you'll also probably laugh because you know someone like that or experienced a similar situation. If you're looking for overly charismatic and quirky characters, you should probably flip past this because that doesn't apply here (except for Elijah). All the characters are built with narcissism and deep, realistic flaws—but also positive traits too, *they're not monsters*. But it adds a rich, complexity to the voices in the series, that makes you sigh but also root for them.

Filled with contradictions, dysfunction, and charm—Girls navigates around friendship, relationships, passion, failures, self-care, victories, and most importantly, growth. Life doesn't get any easier, we just become more resilient. *And eventually, Girls* grows up and become women.

Cast: Lena Dunham, Allison Williams, Jemima Kirke, Zosia Mamet, Adam Driver, Alex Karpovs, Andrew Rannells.





insecure



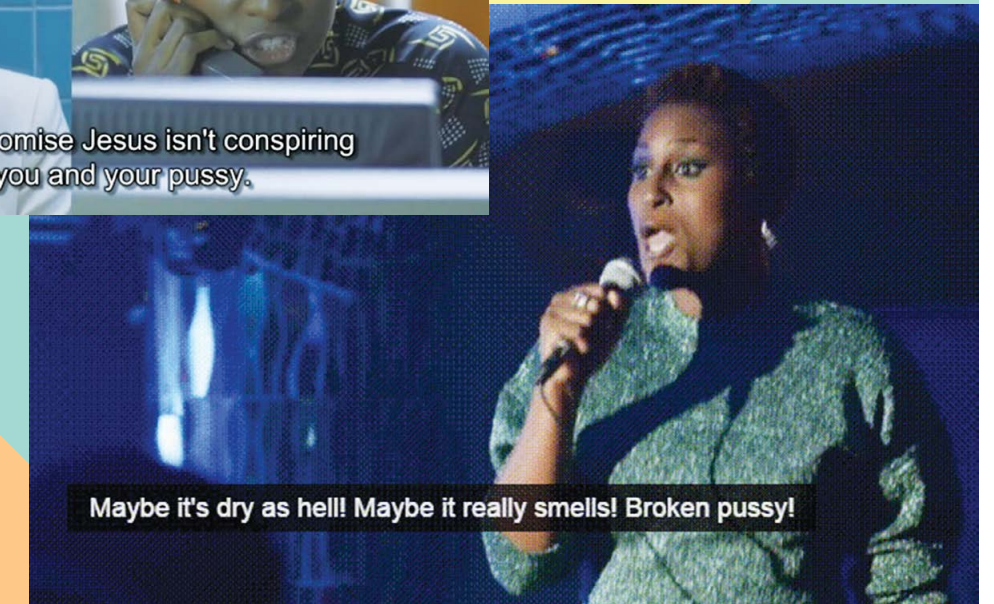
Created By: Issa Rae

Written By: Issa Rae & Larry Wilmore

Born from the web series [The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl](#), Issa Rae brings us [Insecure](#)—an emotion you probably know very well. [Insecure](#) helps define what it means to be a modern-day black woman—which is hella good because it's 2018 and women of color are still wayyyy under-represented. The series follow best friends Issa (Rae) and Molly (Orji) living in Los Angeles and inching towards their 30s. Each has their own set of dilemmas and *insecurities*—Issa realizes she needs to raise her expectations in her professional life and relationship, meanwhile Molly is a bomb-ass lawyer who needs to loosen her dating standards.



Okay, listen, I promise Jesus isn't conspiring against you and your pussy.

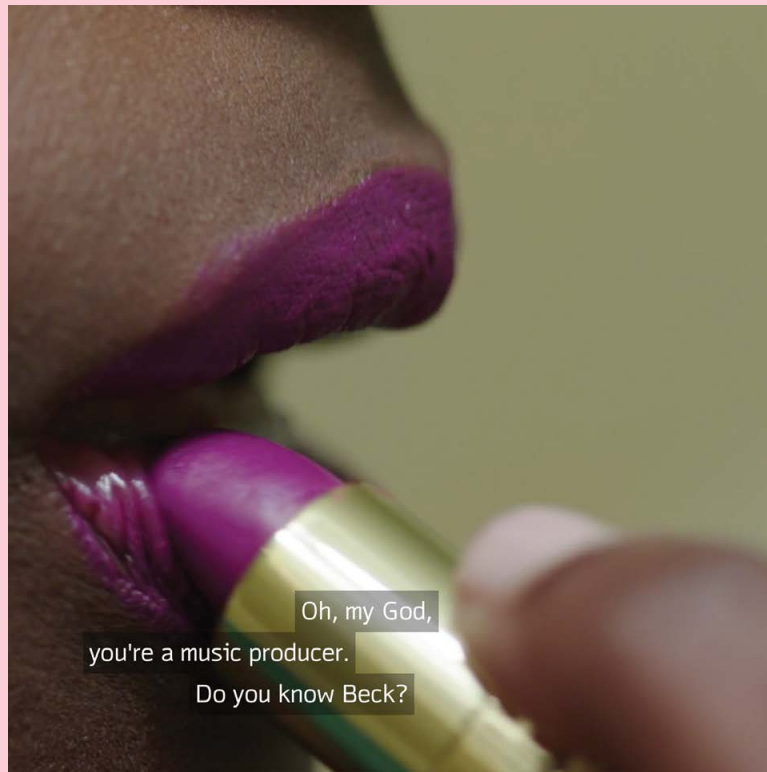


Maybe it's dry as hell! Maybe it really smells! Broken pussy!

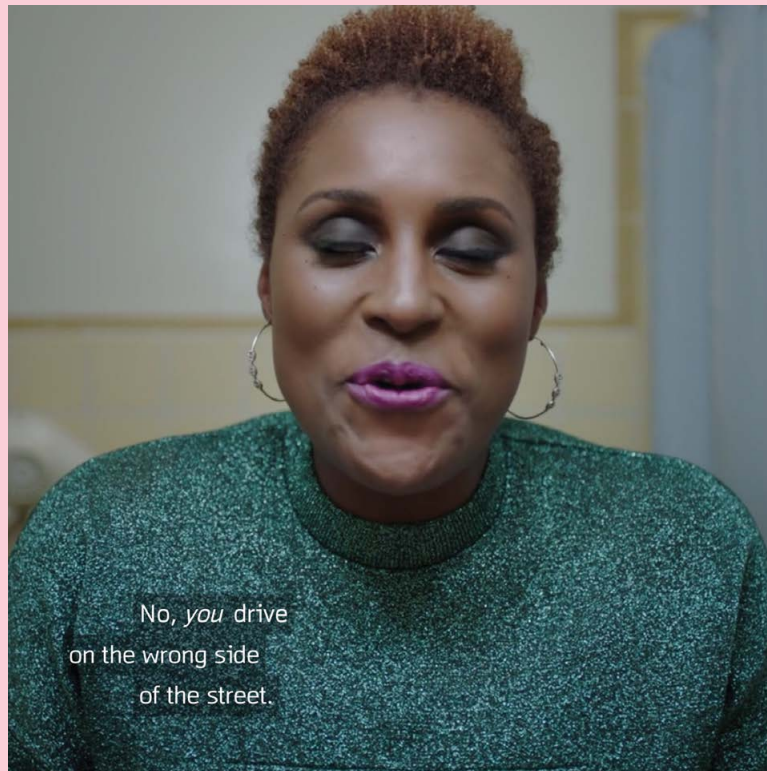
Both encounter micro-aggression and casual (and not so casual) racism in their daily lives—showing what many women experience and provide perspective for those who don't. Mostly from Issa's all-white co-workers asking cringey questions like, "What does on fleek mean? They don't really need sunscreen, do they?" It's balanced with comic lightness, especially when Issa freestyle raps her feelings to herself.

[Insecure](#) also draws its strength by featuring a variety of musicians, social issues, and experiences that relates to black contemporary culture. Against sunny, beautiful LA of course. :)

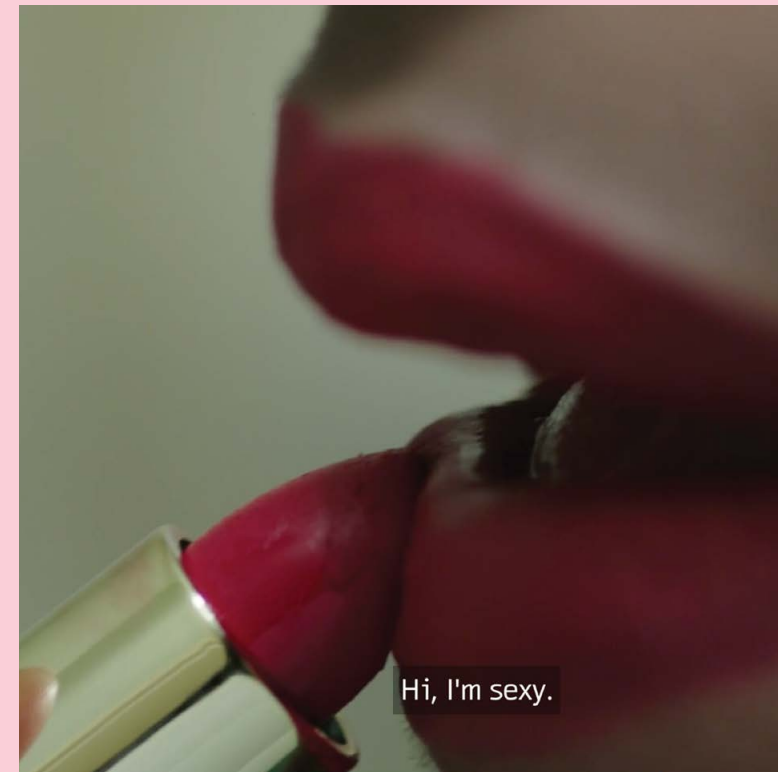
Cast: Issa Rae, Yvonne Orji, Jay Ellis, Natasha Rothwell, Tiffany Dubois, Lisa Joyce, Y'lan Noel.



Oh, my God,
you're a music producer.
Do you know Beck?



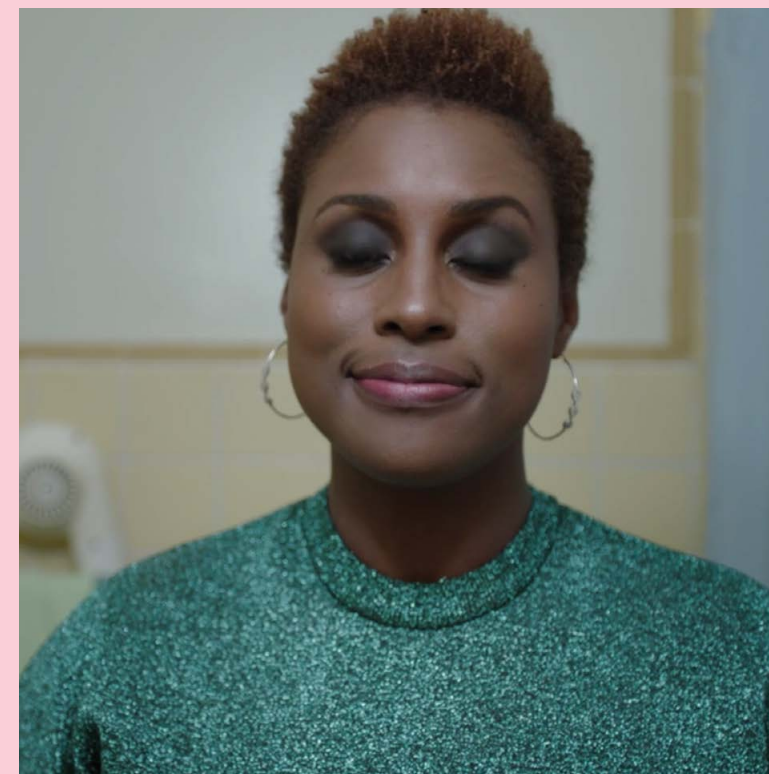
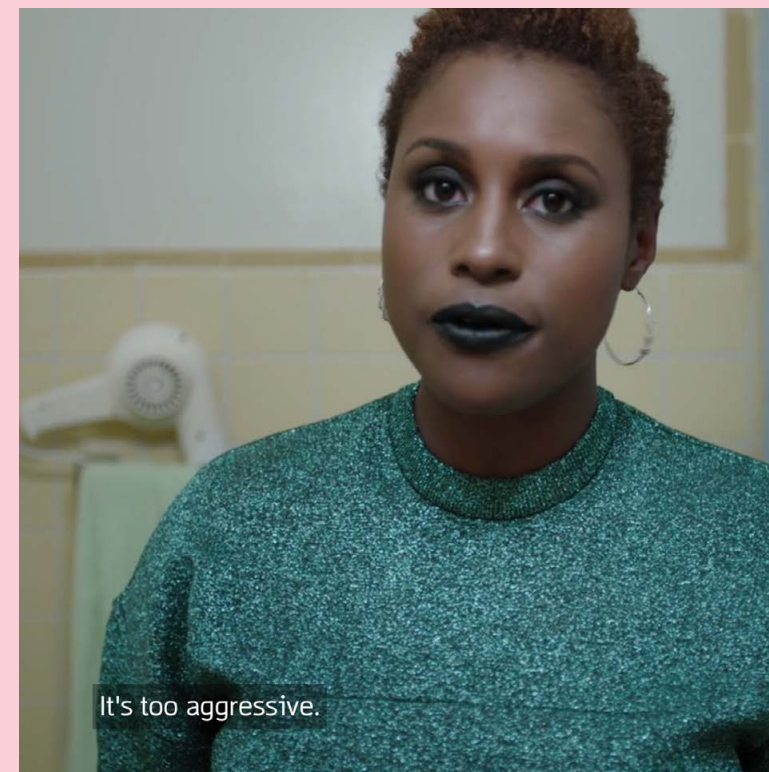
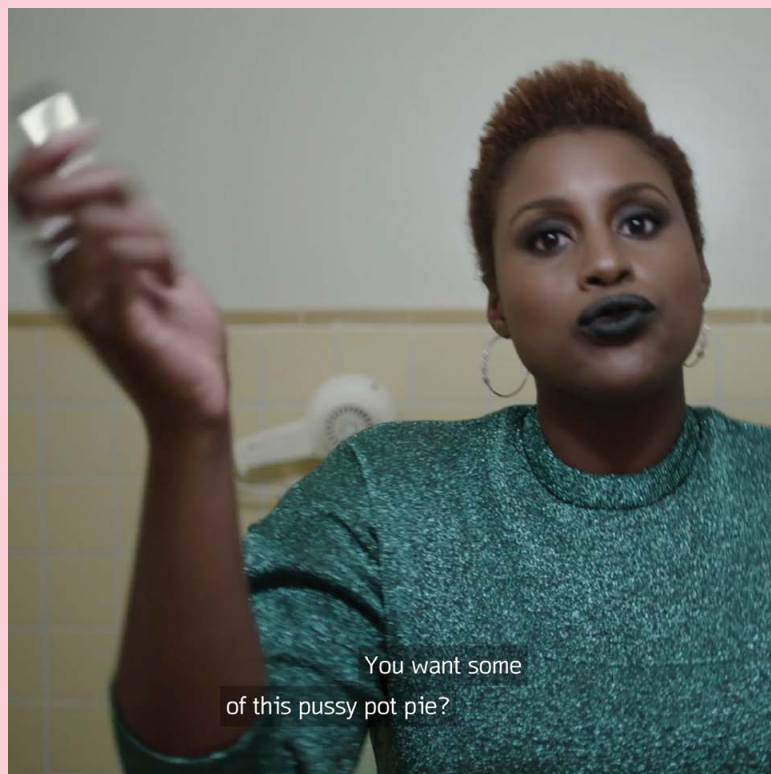
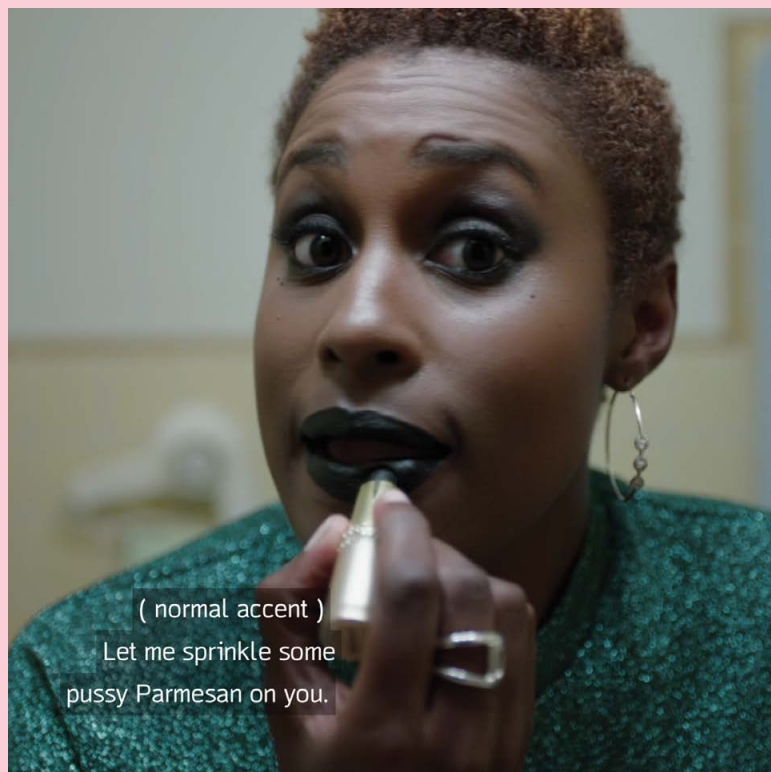
No, *you* drive
on the wrong side
of the street.



Hi, I'm sexy.



Hey, tiger.
Mm-hmm.



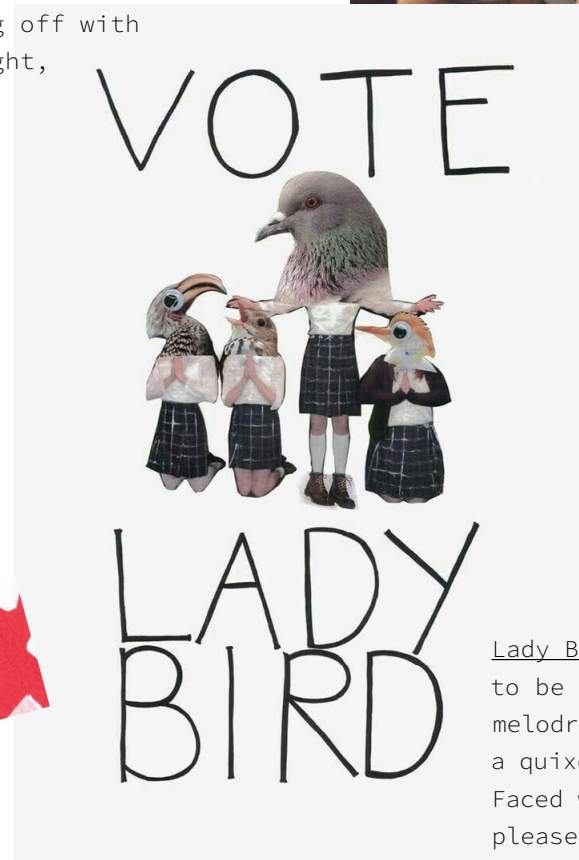
Lady



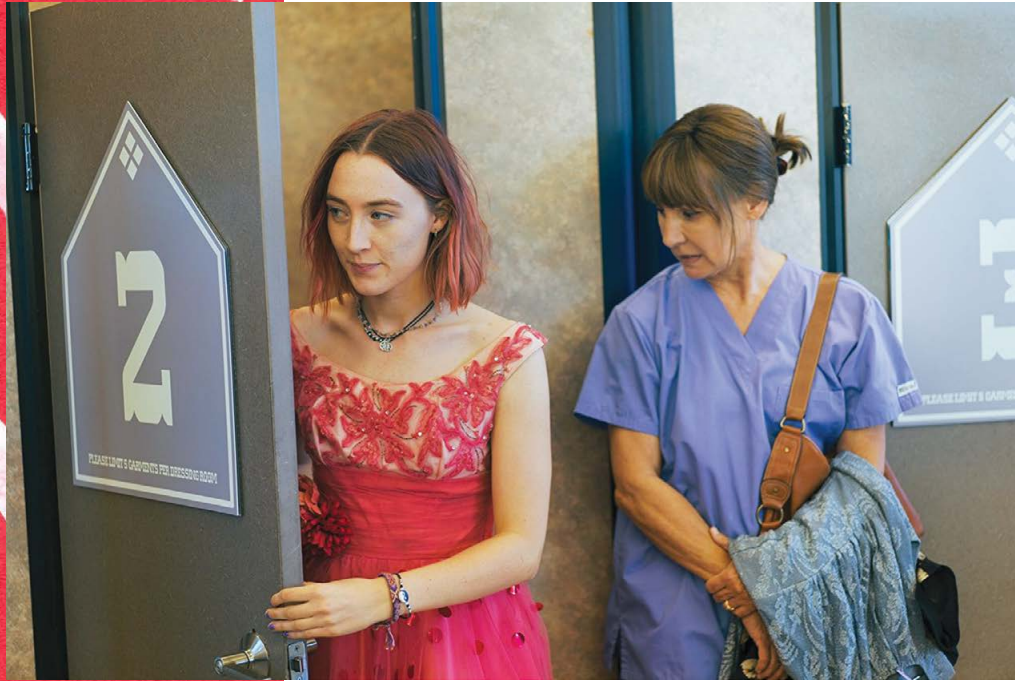
bird

Written & Directed By: Greta Gerwig

The teenage-coming-of-age can seem a bit stale and trite, but that doesn't apply to Greta Gerwig's semi-autobiographical film. Christine (Ronin), who goes by Lady Bird, claims that it's her given name—as she puts it, “It is given to me, by me.” The storyline goes through her senior year of high school with the typical rites of passage: homecoming, plays, holidays, the god-awful process of college admissions. But she also creates nostalgia of your own high school experiences through her experiences—hanging out with her best friend Julie (Feldstein), blowing off class, goofing off with her cast after opening night, or anything really.



Lady Bird is exactly what it's like to be seventeen—filled with the melodrama of early individuality and a quixotic view of the future. Faced with the struggle of wanting to please your mom but wanting to fill your own desires...and the conflict that occurs when those don't always overlap. Which is where we find Lady Bird and Marion (Metcalf) at the heart of the mother and daughter relationship. Arguments come to a raging boil but quickly calms and most is forgotten. The cycle repeats but is always filled with love.



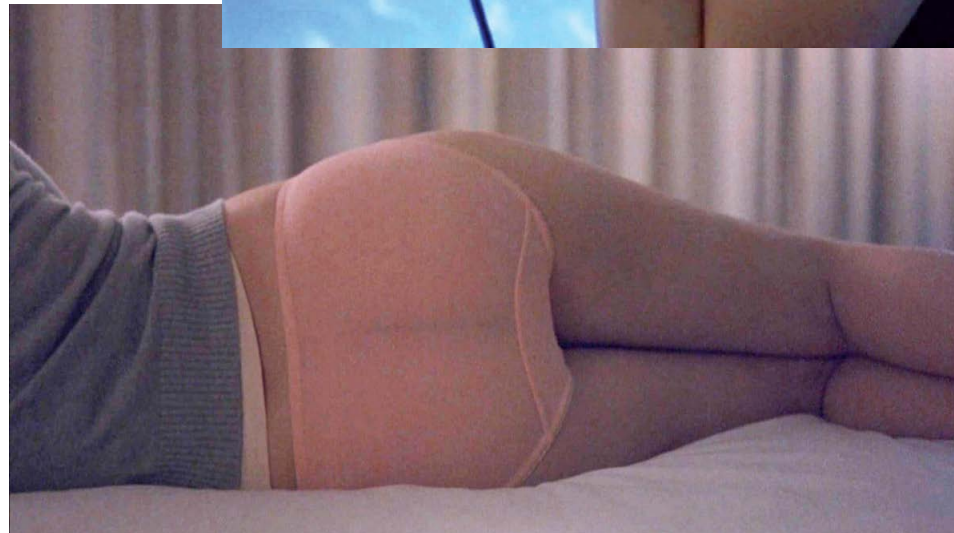
What gives Lady Bird supporting substance is how it softly hits on real life subjects—ranging from religion, loss of virginity, War on Terrorism*, depression, and abortion. But what Lady Bird depicts best is financial stress and classism from a teenage perspective, much like Pretty in Pink. Lady Bird and Julie daydream about their peers' homes and read magazines at the grocery. Lady Bird's family struggles to make ends meet, meanwhile one of her classmates comically has a tanning bed in a spare bedroom. It's one of the few times we get to see teenage girls on screen address subject matters beyond crushes and boys.

The most meaningful moments are when "Lady Bird" evolves into "Christine." Through self discovery, she becomes aware of her her underlying love of her hometown Sacramento—and most importantly, how much she's like her mother.

* BTW, Lady Bird takes place in 2002, so 9/11 and the War on Terrorism is very socially relevant in daily life.

Cast: Saoirse Ronan, Laurie Metcalf, Beanie Feldstein, Lucas Hedges, Timothée Chalamet.

LOST
IN
TRANSLATION



Written & Directed By: Sofia Coppola

Often we think of travel as a journey to get away from ourselves and escape from life. But sometimes the experience of other places is alienating—feelings of uncertainty and isolation becomes amplified. This especially applies when you're experiencing an introspective crisis. Because *wherever you go, there you are*. Which is what brings unlikely duo Bob (Murray) and Charlotte (Johansson) together in Tokyo—one experiencing a mid-life crisis, the other experiencing a quarter-life crisis.

Lost in Translation enriches the small, universal feelings that we all have. The experience to be completely, emotionally open with a stranger. Especially the scene where Bob and Charlotte lay in bed and share their

vulnerabilities is so bittersweet and sincere. With Charlotte insisting, "Let's promise to never come back here, that way we can always remember being here together." Charlotte's frustrations of being capable but too aimless to be anything. To feel disconnected from the life you live or the people who surround you. Or to feel a general sense of discontent, like Bob does.

These subtle, emotional moments are offset by the transcendent beauty of Japan—the saturated streets of Tokyo, singing pop songs at karaoke bars, visiting shrines of Kyoto, experiencing Tokyo nightlife, and many visits to the hotel bar. It's a beautiful celebration of self reflection, moments of connection, and the magic of chance encounters.

Cast: Scarlett Johansson, Bill Murray.



CHARLOTTE
I'm stuck. Does it get easier?

BOB
No. Yes, it gets easier..

CHARLOTTE
Yeah? But look at you.

BOB
Thanks..

(Charlotte smiled knowingly)

BOB
It does.. the more you know
who you are and what you want,
the less you let things upset you.

CHARLOTTE
Yeah.. I just don't know
what am I supposed to be.
I've tried to be a writer but
I hate what I write and..
I've tried taking pictures,
but they're so mediocre..
and every girl goes through
a photography phase, like horses,
you know dumb pictures of your feet..

BOB
You'll figure it out. I'm not worried
about you. Keep writing.

CHARLOTTE
But, I'm so mean.

BOB
Mean is ok.

Shoppgirl



Written By & Starring: Steve Martin

Out of all the titles listed, Shoppgirl hits closest to my personal life. The main character Mirabelle and I have shared these things in common: struggling artists*, working as a department store shoppgirl, depression, wandering in and out of existential crises. The major difference between Mirabelle and I is never being courted by a charming, older millionaire named Ray (who even pays Mirabelle's student debt—swoon).

Written by Steve Martin (film is based off of his novel), the story follows the relationship that blooms, *and eventually wilts*, between Mirabelle (Danes) and Ray (Martin). During which Mirabelle goes through a journey of self-actualization and self-fulfillment. In the background is Jeremy (Schwartzman), an aimless, underachieving man Mirabelle briefly encountered prior to Ray—who is also on a similar transformative journey as Mirabelle.

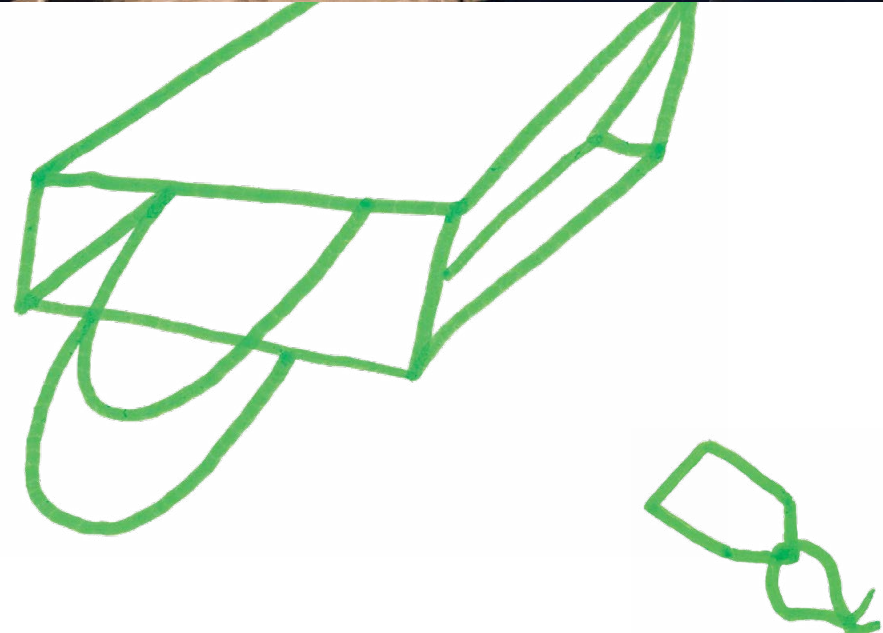
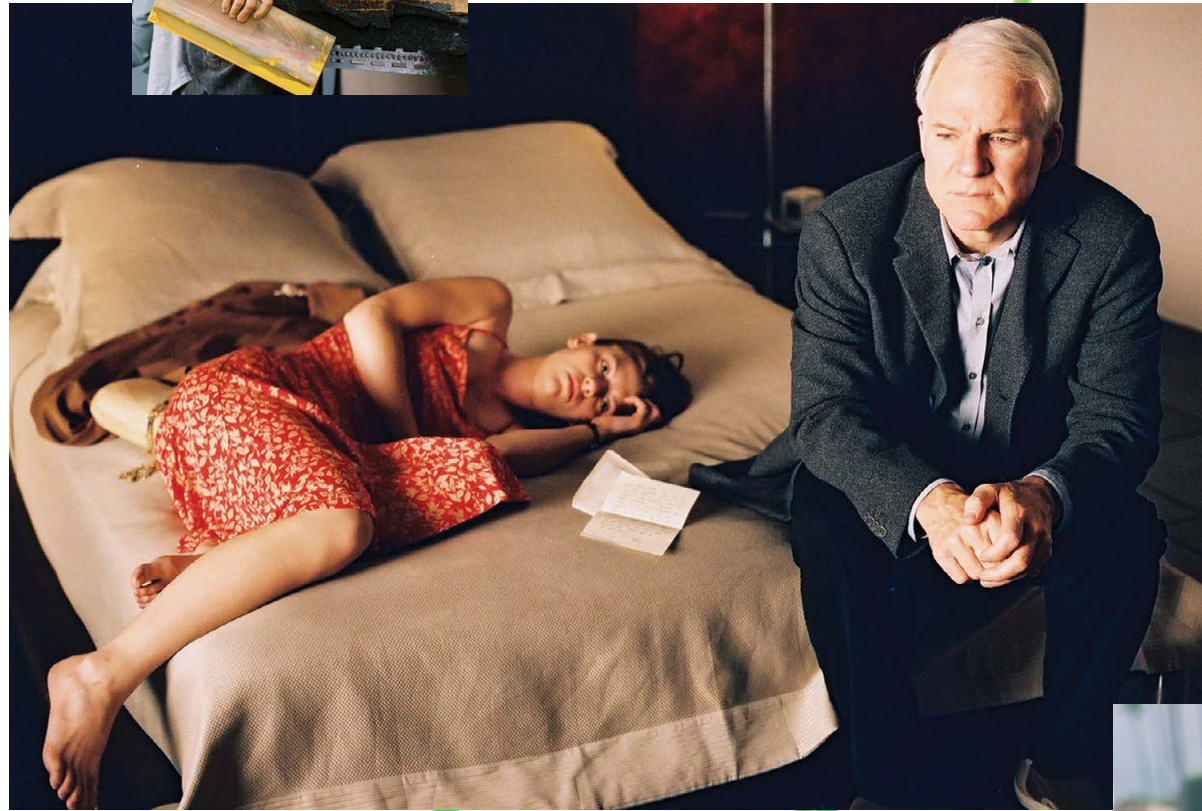
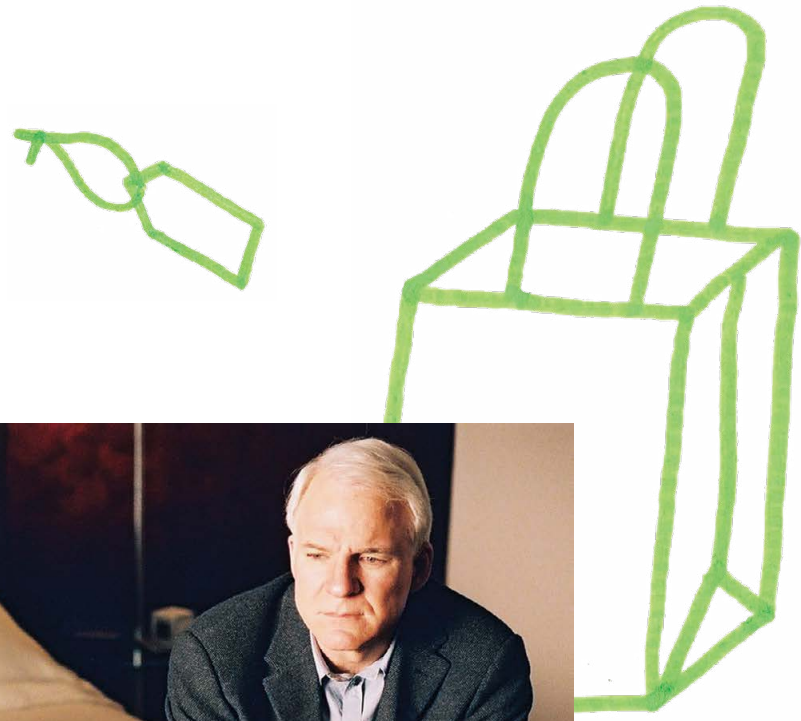


Shoppgirl is hilarious and poignant. Touching upon the lesser parts of your twenties: feelings of displacement and loneliness, insufficient funds, bad sex, boredom, and general feelings of being lost. But it beautifully illuminates how challenges and heartache shape our identity and who we become.

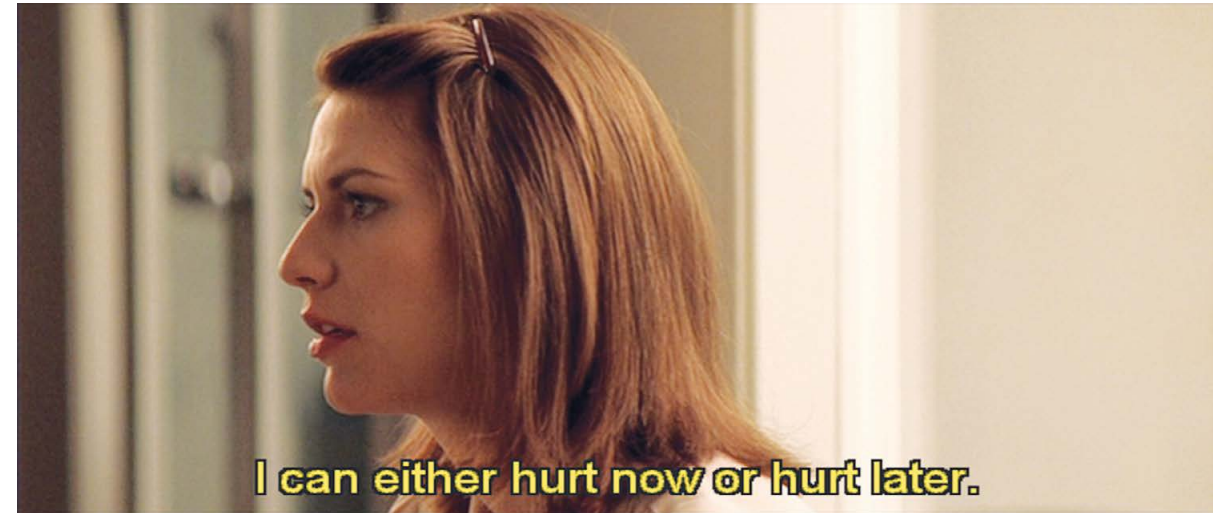
Also, hats off to Steve Martin, for writing about women in a true, sincere vision.

Cast: Claire Danes, Steve Martin, Jason Schwartzman.

* *Technically* Mirabelle is a fine artist and I'm a designer.



Why don't you love me?



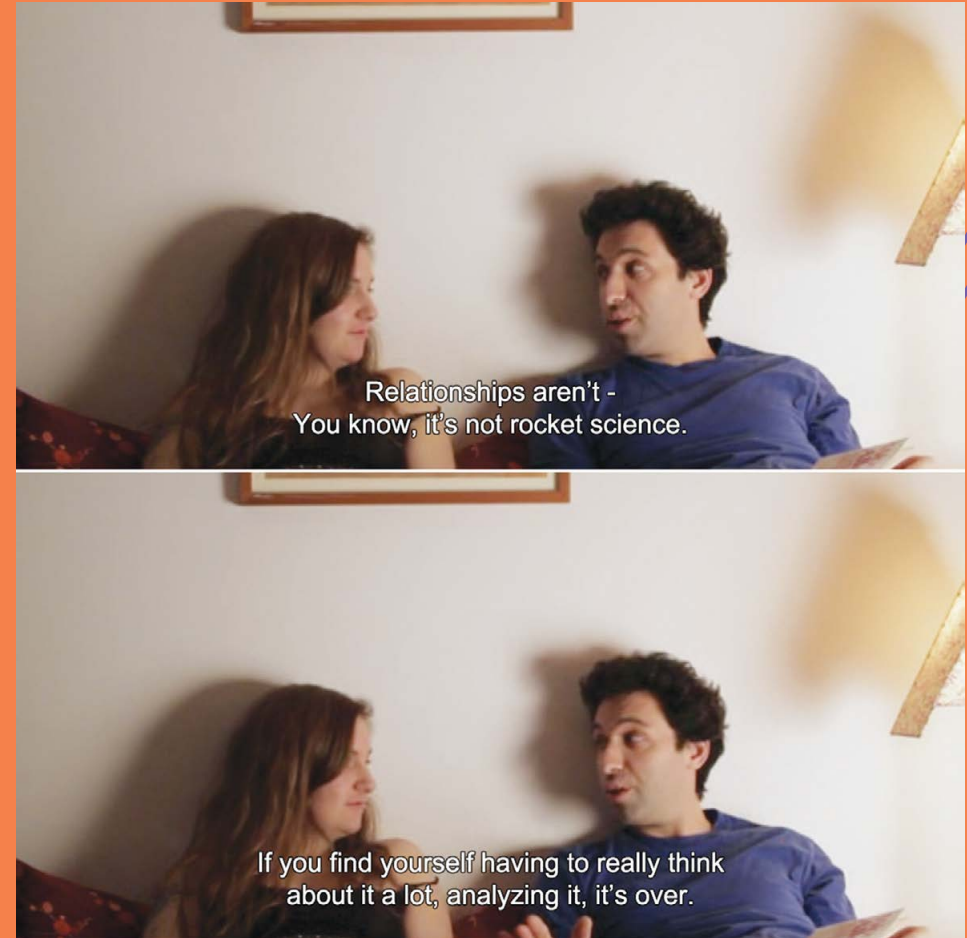
I can either hurt now or hurt later.



Tiny



Furniture



Written & Directed By: Lena Dunham

What's really enjoyable about Lena Dunham's debut *Tiny Furniture* is that it's a film dedicated to that strange space between graduating from college and beginning your career—other than *The Graduate* of course. It's a time many of us are displaced in our childhood bedrooms uncertain of how to move forward.

It's also a time where nothing much is happening and brilliantly not much does in *Tiny Furniture*. Aura (Dunham) moves back to her New York home from college, doesn't have many friends around, and works as a restaurant day hostess that doesn't pay enough to be self-sufficient. But Dunham's strength is making ugly personality traits and bleak situations comical. Eventually, most of us look back and laugh at this awkward phase in life, though it sucked at the time.

The story is filled with boredom, family tension, and emotional meltdowns—*what's more universal than that?* Outside her mom (Simmons) and competitive younger sister



(G.Dunham), Aura spends her time with Charlotte (Kirke) and Jed (Karpovsky). Charlotte is a fun, spoiled childhood friend who isn't necessarily a positive influence and Jed is a visiting Youtube star (Karpovsky does a Nietzschean cowboy that's pretty fucking great).

Yes this story is deeply steeped in privilege—but this film is a loose autobiography of Dunham's life and is self-aware of her privilege. The DIY aspect of this film is compelling and a bit surreal. It's interesting to watch how Dunham created this film by using her real family home as a set and her real family and friends as the actors in it—blurring the lines of fiction and reality.

If *Tiny Furniture's* moments of a dead hamster on a first date, wearing underwear to shutdown a sibling's party, or fucking in awkward places doesn't sound entertaining or *vaguely familiar*—are you really being honest with yourself?

Cast: Lena Dunham, Jemima Kirke, Alex Karpovsky, Laurie Simmons, Grace Dunham.



*Regret is a complete waste of time,
I never think about my 20s.*

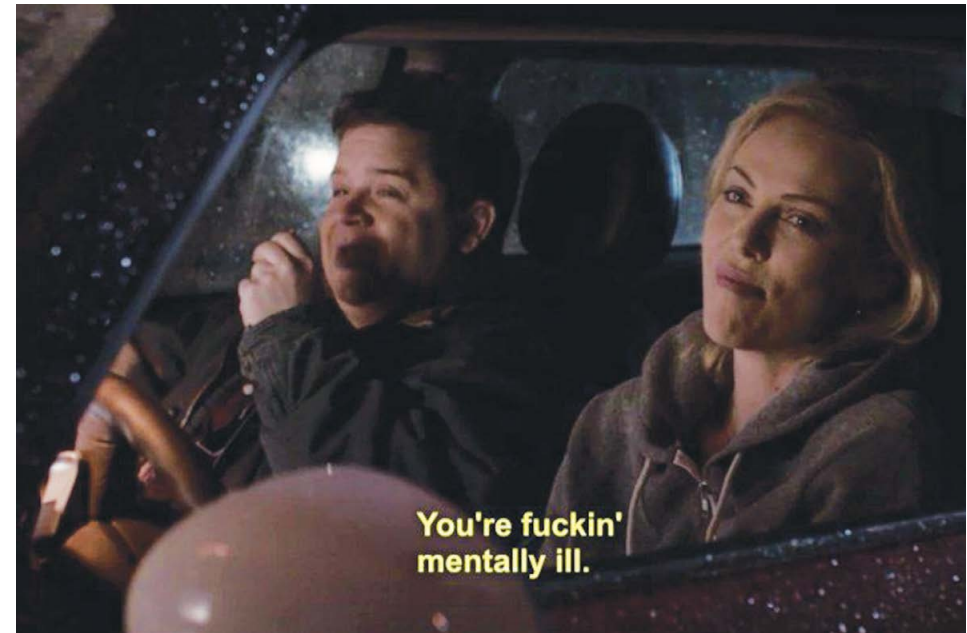


*I'm okay.
I'll be fine.*

young



adult.♥



Written By: Diablo Cody

Young Adult shows us that mean, popular girl from high school you probably knew. But in this dark comedy, Diablo Cody shows us what happens when we don't graduate into adulthood, even way past the coming-of-age period.

This is a story about Mavis (Theron), a successful YA novelist who is past her prime teenage years. After finding out her now-married high school boyfriend Buddy (Wilson) is also a new father, she decides to return home. This isn't your typical *hometown visit and bender with friends you hardly get to see*—this is a full blown mental breakdown. She returns to steal him back and relive her glory days. Things naturally derail. Along for the ride is Matt (Oswalt), a former classmate who forms an unusual bond with Mavis and hasn't been able to move on from high school—for very opposite reasons.

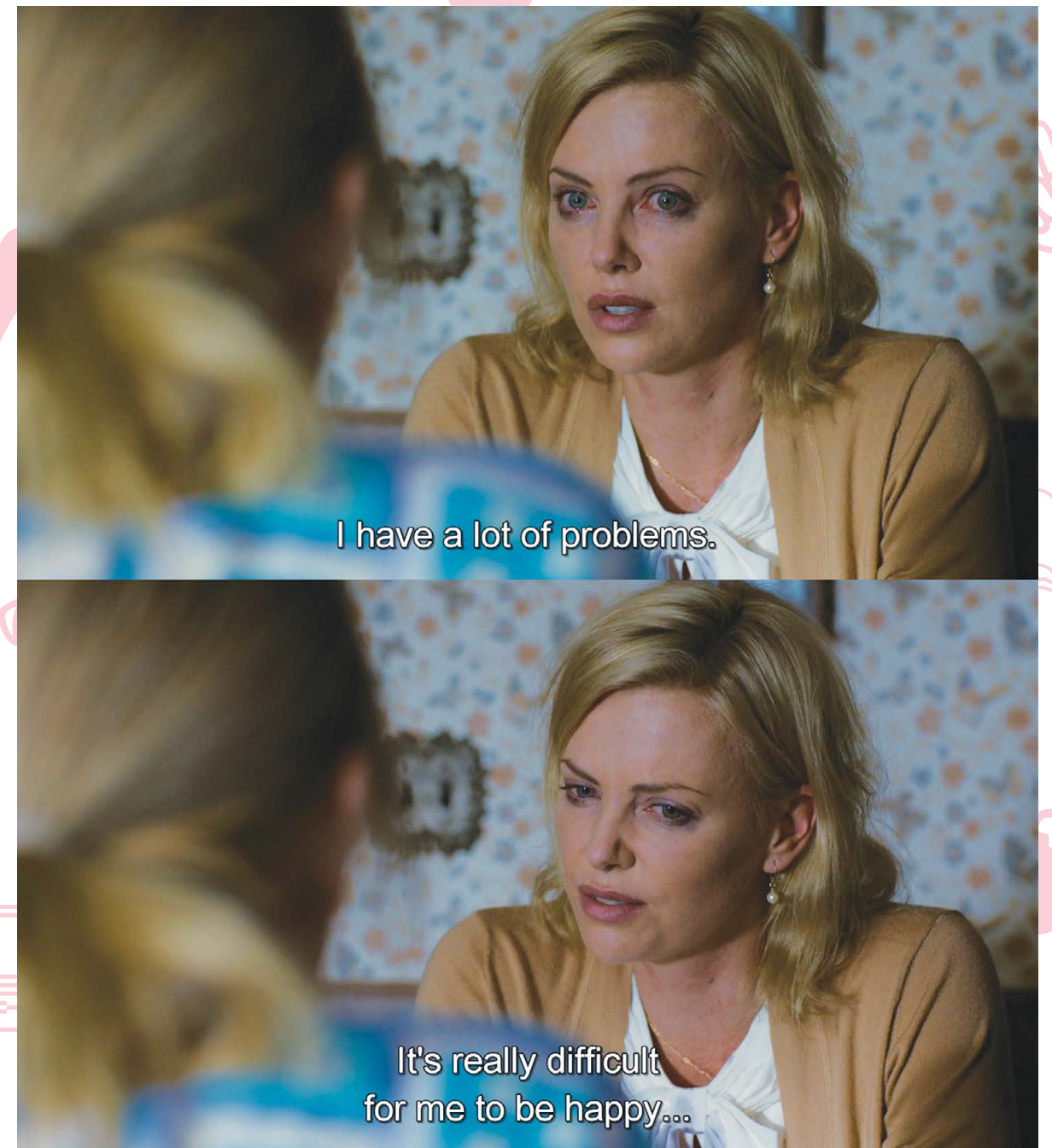
Beyond the teenage dream, Mavis is an unhappy adult unable to get a grip on reality, and struggles with depression and alcoholism. Young Adult proves that compelling stories can come from female characters that are deeply flawed and unlikable—but still vulnerable and worthy of empathy. The film also makes a bold statement of, “*does a protagonist have to learn anything at all?*”

Cast: Charlize Theron, Patton Oswalt, Patrick Wilson.



Yeah, I think I might be an alcoholic.

MOM
(laughs) Oh honey, don't be ridiculous.
You're not an alcoholic.



I have a lot of problems.

It's really difficult for me to be happy...

CREDITS / INFO:

Big Little Lies, HBO, ©2017.

Broad City, Comedy Central, ©2014-Present.

Frances Ha, IFC Films, ©2012.

Girls, HBO, ©2012-2017.

Insecure, HBO ©2016-Present.

Lady Bird, A24, ©2017.

Lost in Translation, Focus Features, ©2003.

Shopgirl, Buena Vista Pictures, ©2005.

Tiny Furniture, IFC Films, ©2010.

Young Adult, Paramount Pictures, ©2011.

Written & Designed By:

Hannah Williams

—

williamshannah.com

@williamshannah

hello.williamshannah@gmail.com

