

The End

By

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INT. BREAK ROOM - OFFICE - DAY

The white walls of the room shine in the too bright fluorescent ceiling lights. The place is clean, but minimalistic with a fridge and four-seat round table.

A coffee machine is the only appliance on the high counter that runs along four feet of wall. A stack of Styrofoam cups and a box of cheap doughnuts finish the ornamentation.

RICHARD, 32, sits at the table. His short hair is combed neatly, but his body is bigger than it should be, and his suit is just a little bigger yet, giving him an ever so slightly sloppy appearance.

ALISON, 23, enters in a high-waisted skirt, short-sleeved linen button-up and sling-back heels. Her look is vintage, but professional. Her long dark hair falls in her face.

She heads straight for the coffee. She grabs a cup, fills it with coffee and heads for the door without acknowledging Richard. Before she has a chance to get out of the door:

RICHARD  
Good morning, Alison.

She turns around and smiles, feigning patience.

ALISON  
Morning, Richard.

RICHARD  
So did you watch American Idol last night?

ALISON  
DVR-ed it.

RICHARD  
What's her name? That girl you like? Malaysia?

ALISON  
Malaysia? Like the island nation in Southeast Asia? Are you serious?

RICHARD  
You know who I'm talking about, don't you? What's her name? The one you always say is going to win?

ALISON  
MyLeesha.

RICHARD  
That's right. MyLaysha.

ALISON  
MyLeesha.

RICHARD  
What?

ALISON  
Nothing. What about her?

RICHARD  
You always say she's going to win.

ALISON  
So?

RICHARD  
So... how funny is it that she got  
kicked off last night?

Alison stares at him, hard. After a beat she turns around and walks out. We follow her down a hallway and into an office labeled "Office Manager: Katherine Bell."

INT. KATHERINE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The office is a little nicer than the break room, but still bright white and simplistic: a desk, a computer, two visitors chairs and a plant in the corner.

KATHERINE, 29, sits at her desk, looking put-together and professional with her blonde hair in a bun. She sips on a cup of coffee and stares at her computer monitor.

Alison walks in and sits down in a guest chair. She places her Styrofoam cup on Katherine's desk. Katherine glances up.

ALISON  
If I ask you "Did you watch  
American Idol last night?" and--

KATHERINE  
I don't watch American Idol.

Katherine looks away from the screen, leaning forward in her chair to give Alison her full attention.

ALISON

Okay, if someone asks me "Did you watch American Idol last night?"--

KATHERINE

I really don't understand why you watch that show. You don't even like music--

ALISON

I like music. Who doesn't like--

KATHERINE

Then why won't you go with me to Karaoke on Wednesdays--

ALISON

Because, normally, when I'm not having dinner with my Aunt Enid, I watch American Idol on Wednesdays.

KATHERINE

Why can't you DVR it?

Alison stares at her for a moment, deadpan.

ALISON

Okay, let's say I go with you to Karaoke next Wednesday.

KATHERINE

Seriously? You'll go?

ALISON

Maybe. But let's say I do. Let's say I already did.

KATHERINE

Okay...

ALISON

And the next day--

KATHERINE

What did you sing?

ALISON

I--

Alison's look is impatient, but then she smiles.

ALISON  
Something by Kelly Clarkson

KATHERINE  
Oh, I love her.

Alison blinks off the irony and continues:

ALISON  
So we went to karaoke and the next morning you ask, "Did you watch American Idol last night?"

KATHERINE  
But you DVR-ed it.

ALISON  
Exactly.

KATHERINE  
Why would I ask if I already knew--

ALISON  
Pretend you didn't know. What would you think when I told you that I DVR-ed the show?

KATHERINE  
That you wasted approximately two percent of the recording space on your DVR?

ALISON  
But have I watched it?

KATHERINE  
Can't you remember?

Alison shakes her head and waves her hands. Reset.

ALISON  
Okay, someone asks "Did you watch American Idol last night?" and I reply "I DVR-ed it." Does that mean I already watched it or that I'm planning to watch it later?

KATHERINE  
That's what you've been trying to ask me? Why didn't you just say so?

A beat as Katherine considers.

KATHERINE

Depends. You could have DVR-ed it then watched it later that night--

ALISON

Then why wouldn't I have said yes when you asked me if I'd watched it?

KATHERINE

You know I would never actually ask you about American Idol, right?

ALISON

It was Richard. Richard asked me.

KATHERINE

Oh, yeah, he was rambling on about how that MaLeesha girl got the boot last night. I told him I didn't care and that he should probably talk to you about it.

ALISON

MyLeesha.

KATHERINE

Your Leesha? Are you making the fan to stalker transition? Should I stage an intervention?

ALISON

Her name is MyLeesha. She was my favorite contestant, and she got voted off last night, but I hadn't watched the episode when Richard told me. He completely ruined the show for me by telling me the end.

KATHERINE

Yeah, he's bad at that. The other day, he told me that the detective dies at the end of that movie, The Detective's Lady.

Alison groans and throws her hands up in the air.

ALISON

I haven't seen that either.

KATHERINE

Oh, really? The book is good.

ALISON  
You read the book?

KATHERINE  
Yeah. It's good.

ALISON  
So you already knew the ending?

KATHERINE  
Yeah, but... Richard didn't know  
that. The jerk.

Alison picks up her cup of coffee.

ALISON  
I have work to do.

Alison stands and walks toward the door.

KATHERINE  
Don't forget. Karaoke. Kelly  
Clarkson. Next Wednesday.

Alison waves her hand over her shoulder to simultaneously  
acknowledge and ignore the comment.

We follow Alison as she moves out of the office and down the  
hallway into an open area of gray cubicles. Maximum boring.

INT. ALISON'S CUBICLE - DAY

Alison's desk is neat and adorned with the normal supplies.  
The cubicle walls are covered with pictures of nature: some  
photographs, others pulled from magazines or calendars.

Alison chugs the rest of her coffee then tosses the empty  
cup into the trash can under her desk. She plops down in her  
chair and pulls up a document on her already on computer.

She types normally at first, but then her presses turn  
furious. She shoves the keyboard aside.

WILL, 22, pops up on the other side of the cubicle. His  
shaggy brown hair covers his forehead, but he is otherwise  
neat in his white short-sleeved collared shirt and skinny  
black tie. He looks down at Alison.

WILL  
Hi. I'm Will. Remember?

ALISON  
Yep. Alison.

WILL  
I know. Having a bad day?

ALISON  
Yep. No. I... really, it's stupid.

WILL  
You want to hear stupid? Last Thursday, I intended to bring a book I was reading to work, you know, to read at lunch. I couldn't find it. I looked all over my apartment. I was late to work. I thought about the book all day. It sucked. But it's also stupid.

ALISON  
(light)  
That is pretty stupid.

WILL  
Worst part? The book was in my briefcase. I'd already put it in there the night before so I wouldn't forget it.

They both laugh. A beat. Will's smile is inviting.

ALISON  
Okay. So I watch American Idol...

WILL  
Yeah? Me, too.

ALISON  
Really?

WILL  
Yeah. Did you watch last night?

Alison smiles to herself.

ALISON  
I... DVR-ed it.

WILL  
Oh, well, are you going to watch it tonight?

ALISON

So you're saying you're assuming I didn't already watch it?

WILL

Yeah. That's what... I'm saying... I'm assuming. Why? Did you already watch it?

ALISON

No.

WILL

Then my assumption was correct.

ALISON

Completely.

Will looks momentarily confused.

ALISON

Richard, on the other hand, took "I DVR-ed" it mean that I wanted him to tell me that my favorite contestant, MyLeesha, got voted off.

WILL

MyLeesha got voted off?! No way! That sucks. I love MyLeesha. She's definitely the best singer this year. And she's only sixteen. Sixteen!

ALISON

Wait, I thought you said you watched it.

WILL

I said I watch American Idol.

ALISON

But you didn't watch it last night?

WILL

I DVR-ed it.

They look at each other for a beat then crack up. Will starts to slide back down to his desk.

ALISON

I'm sorry I ruined Idol for you. I really thought you watched it.

Will bounces back up. He puts his elbow on the top of the cubicle wall and leans over as he talks to Alison.

WILL

It's cool. I did watch it. I was just kidding. Only, I think Richard was messing with you because MyLeesha didn't get voted off.

ALISON

What? Who did?

WILL

If I told you that, I'd ruin the whole thing, wouldn't I?

ALISON

You're lying right now, aren't you? You're just telling me that to throw me off when I watch it.

Will smiles.

WILL

Fine, you're right. Or. Am I lying now to double-reverse you?

Alison tries to analyze his face.

WILL

Anyway, what's the big deal if you do know the end?

Will walks around to her desk, sitting on the edge.

WILL

Isn't the story just as important as the end?

ALISON

Isn't the "story" just the build-up, the drama, the manufactured suspense... that leads up... to the end?

Will shrugs.

WILL

Maybe on American Idol.

Will smiles slyly.

WILL

Okay. Check it out. Eight months from now, at the New Year's Eve party, we're going to hook up.

ALISON

What? Is that... are you... what?

WILL

Me and you... we're finally going to kiss at this year's office New Year's Eve party.

ALISON

Finally? Including this conversation, in the two weeks you've been here, we've only spoken to each other three times.

WILL

You've been keeping track?

Will's smile borders on flirtatious.

ALISON

So, I'm confused. Are you hitting on me?

WILL

No. No, of course not. I know you've got a thing for Art in Accounting.

ALISON

I do not... exactly.

Will smiles to himself.

WILL

Anyway, no, I'm not hitting on you. I'm just telling you the end of the story. Well, you know, it's the end of the one story, Art in Accounting's story, mainly, and the start of another story. Our story.

ALISON

I don't get it. Are you pretending to be psychic right now?

WILL

No, I'm just ruining the story for you. You know, by telling you the

WILL  
end. Revenge for the MyLeesha  
thing.

ALISON  
Okay, you have to explain to me how  
we end up kissing at the New Year's  
Eve party.

WILL  
Oh.... so... now the story matters?

Alison scowls. He got her.

ALISON  
So you're not hitting on me; you're  
illustrating a point.

Will shrugs and looks at her mysteriously.

WILL  
But now every time you hang out at  
the vending machines to flirt with  
Art in Accounting--

ALISON  
I never do that.

WILL  
Really? It legitimately takes you  
fifteen minutes to decide between  
plain and peanut M&M's?

Alison has no answer, she's busted.

ALISON  
Are you intra-office stalking me?

WILL  
When you're flirting with him, just  
remember, it's fruitless because  
you and me... New Year's Eve...

ALISON  
That's not the real ending. You  
made that up. In real life, no one  
can spoil the ending for you  
because no one actually knows  
what's going to happen.

WILL  
In real life, it's not about the  
ending. It's about the journey.

ALISON  
Right.

WILL  
The story.

Alison folds her arms.

ALISON  
Fine, whatever. I'll watch the episode of American Idol, okay?

WILL  
Great. Oh, hey, since I'm watching it tonight and you're watching it tonight... want to watch it tonight together?

Alison smiles.

ALISON  
So you were hitting on me?

WILL  
No, no, of course not. Actually, I'm gay.

ALISON  
What? No you're not.

WILL  
Shh. I'm trying to make our big ending more of a shocker.

Alison laughs.

ALISON  
You're completely insane.

WILL  
So how about seven?

Alison gives him one more suspicious look before nodding.

ALISON  
Fine.

WILL  
I wonder who's going to get cut.

Alison tries not to laugh.

WILL  
 Seriously, I hope it's not  
 MyLeesha. I love that girl.

Alison gives in and chuckles.

ALISON  
 Yeah. Ditto. MyLeesha's the best.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. OFFICE - DAY

There are cheap decorations strung up everywhere. The lights are low and a few televisions show scenes from Times Square.

SUPER: NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

The party isn't exactly hopping, but Richard, Katherine and the handsome ART from accounting are among the party guests.

Alison and Will walk in together, laughing over a previous conversation. Their wardrobes are dressed up for the event. Will bumps his shoulder into Alison's.

WILL  
 Oh, hey, look, there's Art from  
 Accounting. Damn. He's so sexy.

ALISON  
 Stop pretending to be gay.

WILL  
 But you say, pretty much every day,  
 that you want a gay best friend.

ALISON  
 I don't say that every day.

WILL  
 And as your non-gay best friend--

ALISON  
 Who said you're my best friend?

WILL  
 I sometimes feel like you're  
 pressuring me go gay.

Richard runs up to them holding a CD.

RICHARD  
I'm about to pop in some MyLeesha.  
I love this girl! Have you guys  
ever heard of her?

Alison and Will exchange an amused look.

ALISON  
Nope. Hmm mm.

WILL  
(to Alison)  
Did he say Malaysia?

ALISON  
Malaysia? Like the island nation in  
Southeast Asia?

Alison and Will trade a secret grin. Richard rolls his eyes.

RICHARD  
It's MyLeesha.

ALISON  
MyLaysha?

WILL  
I think he's saying MaLeeja.

RICHARD  
MyLeesha! She's only the hottest  
new recording artist. Get with it.

Richard walks off. They laugh. A beat.

ALISON  
Hey, I just thought of something.  
Isn't tonight the big night?

WILL  
What big night? Are you an Art  
finally going to get back together?

ALISON  
I went on one date with that guy  
six months ago. We were never even  
together. He's so boring.

WILL  
As I knew he would be.

ALISON  
You were right.

Alison turns toward him.

ALISON  
You were right about a lot of  
things, Will.

WILL  
Like how you're the prettiest,  
smartest, coolest girl I've ever  
met in my entire life?

Alison blushes.

ALISON  
You've never said that, actually.

WILL  
No. Not out loud. Doesn't mean I  
wasn't right about it, though.

They stare at each other for a long beat. Alison takes a  
step over the only space between them. Will smiles.

In the background, the countdown to the new year begins from  
ten. Will's lips drift carefully closer to Alison's.

WILL  
So... what do you think? Did I  
completely ruin the story by  
telling you the end?

Alison shakes her head, her lips nearly touching his.

ALISON  
Nope. You just gave me something to  
look forward to...

As the clock strikes midnight and their co-workers celebrate  
the new year, Alison and Will come together in a gratifying  
and long-anticipated kiss.

FADE TO BLACK.