

MY HAPPY PLACE

"PILOT"

Written by Angel Hilson

MY HAPPY PLACE

"PILOT"

TEASER

INT. SUMMER'S HOME - KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Freshly dressed in a corset and boucle mini skirt, SUMMER WHITAKER, 23, fit, attractive, enters kitchen. Slips on MATCHING APRON and OVEN MITTS. A swing of her long, dark pony tail. She pulls JALAPEÑO CORNBREAD MUFFINS out oven.

SUMMER

Mama! Quick, come try one! Fresh out the oven.

Places MUFFIN on a small plate, cuts it in half, spreads room temp butter on it. Sits it on the table. Turns to stir GRITS and ROUX on stove. SAUTEED SHRIMP, ONIONS, PEPPERS leave fragrant aroma in cramped kitchen.

In walks mom, RACHEL, 60s, sweet, good-natured.

RACHEL

Smells delightful.

Drops down in her superpadded kitchen chair. Takes a bite.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Ooh, that's good. They're gonna love these.

SUMMER snags a piece of MUFFIN off her mom's plate. Munching.

SUMMER

Mm hmm. Got it right this time.

Summer turns down each pot. Takes BROWN LEATHER NOTEBOOK marked "Recipes," jots down adjustments while leaning over countertop lined with Rachel's prescriptions.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

--a dash of ancho chili powder...

RACHEL

Mmm. Just like my mama's.

SUMMER

Thanks for the recipe.

Summer kisses mom on forehead, who pats her hand. Contrast between their skin tones is stark. Mom on high yellow, almost white end. Summer's in middle with a deep caramel complexion.

She makes a bowl of SHRIMP AND GRITS a chef would be proud of. Serves it to Rachel.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
 Now this, is Chef's kiss (gesture).
 Alright, let me get this packed up.

Fills four 2-ft. tall insulated FOOD CARRIERS with large ALUMINUM PANS of food.

RACHEL
 Summer! (savoring) The shrimp and grits.

Summer smiles, removes apron. Slips on athletic shoes, matching boucle blazer. Packs heels into handbag.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Put your foot in these.

Rachel takes another bite and shakes her head.

SUMMER
 Meemaw's best.

RACHEL
 Rest her soul. Her recipes are second to none.

SUMMER
 You, stay out of trouble, while I'm out. Be back in a few, 'kay?

Summer hoists FOOD CARRIERS onto UTILITY WAGON. Rachel waves. Summer slips out the door.

INT. OHNSON CARPET EMPORIUM - DAY

The "J" in "Johnson Carpet Emporium" is missing. Never mind the grimy glass storefront. Faded carpet samples occupy a customer-less store.

IZZY, 28, easy on the eyes, leans on the counter. Runs her fingers through her long brunette hair. She's on the phone with SAM, 32, handsome, dark hair.

IZZY
 (into phone)
 And we need this by when?

Frustrated, Izzy rubs her forehead.

SAM (V.O.)
Don't have a lot of time. People
want their money.

IZZY
OK. OK. I can get it for you. But I
want double my cut.

SAM (V.O.)
Your ass is on the line too, you
know.

A peeved Izzy rolls her eyes.

IZZY
What do they know about me?

SAM (V.O.)
Nothing. 'cept that you're with me.
And what's good for one is good for
all. (laughs) Three musketeers,
right?

IZZY
I'm so sick and tired of you
dragging me into your shit, Sam--

SAM (V.O.)
--This is the last time--

IZZY
--Last time?

SAM
Last time.

IZZY
Alright.

SAM (V.O.)
Swear it.

IZZY
OK! Give me 24 hours.

Izzy hangs up. Looks around. Thinking. Biting her thumbnail.

EXT. SUMMER'S BRUNCH TOUR AT MANSION RENTAL - DAY

Music blasts. Summer pulls in to roundabout driveway. Staff hustles, unpacks, sets up. She unpacks her "MY HAPPY HIDEOUT BRUNCH TOUR" SIGNAGE, food carriers, catering gear. Her bestie/business partner, KARINA, 24, cute and curvy, runs up.

KARINA

Let me get that for you.

Karina lifts a FOOD CARRIER onto the WAGON.

ON LARGE "MY HAPPY HIDEOUT BRUNCH TOUR" SIGN as Summer stakes the signage into the grass on the front lawn.

SUMMER

Prepped enough for 125 people this week. Plus whatever I make on site.

KARINA

Good. Cause last week's brunch?
Bruh.

Karina shakes her head as they load the WAGON.

SUMMER

I know!

KARINA

Complete trash!

SUMMER

I was so embarrassed.

KARINA

Embarrassed? Girl, I actually died.

They laugh. Close friends, they get the struggle.

INT. BRUNCH TOUR - MANSION RENTAL - DAY

Balancing the load, they wheel the WAGON to kitchen.

KARINA

It ain't a brunch tour if we can't feed nobody. Those folks were hongry. OK? Not hungry.(overly proper accent) Hongry.

Karina stares with wide eyes. Summer cracks up.

KARINA (CONT'D)
 'Bout to knock the walls down. We
 go and run out of food? Not a good
 look, Sis.

SUMMER
 Shows we're in demand, though.

KARINA
 (nods) And that has never been a
 bad thing.

Summer gives Karina a two-handed, girly high five.

SUMMER
 Think I perfected it!

Summer does a dance, reaches into a FOOD CARRIER, pulls out
 PAN of JALAPEÑO CORNBREAD MUFFIN. Karina looks doubtful.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
 What? Don't give me that look.

Summer washes her hands. Throws on food prep gloves. Slathers
 soft sweet cream butter on MUFFIN top. Hands it to Karina.
 Still steaming. The presentation is too much to resist. She
 immediately takes a bite.

KARINA
 Hmm. Sis! Moist. Spicy yet sweet.
 The texture. Perfection. I'll just--

Karina happily snatches another just before Summer slams the
 container shut.

KARINA (CONT'D)
 (RE: the slam) Hey!

Karina frowns, sucks and waves her finger to soothe the pain.
 Then bites MUFFIN.

KARINA (CONT'D)
 (Garbling with food in mouth) Tell
 me you're gonna finally open that
 brunch spot you been dreaming
 about? (beat) Mmm.

SUMMER
 Got some things in the works.

Summer lifts ENGRAVED BLACK LEATHER BINDER from handbag. DJ
 starts his set. Festive party atmosphere. Karina fills
 carafes with strawberry mimosa concoction.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
 Dropping it off tomorrow. Spoke to
 the banker and everything!

Her eyes gleam. Karina forms prayer hands.

KARINA
 I see you, Sis! Do it for the
 Culture!

SUMMER
 Got to. GOD knows these student
 loans. And forget about my degree.

KARINA
 Well, get your piece of the pie. By
 any means necessary.

SUMMER
 Make the American Dream work for
 me, right?

Karina pours mimosa into two champagne flutes.

KARINA
 Hell yeah. It's meant for us too!

ON CHAMPAGNE FLUTES AS GIRLS CLANK GLASSES AND DRINK.

EXT. SIDEWALK DOWNTOWN - DAY

IZZY is dressed to kill. Strutting. Red lips. A SHORT BLONDE WIG, parted in the middle. Perfect for the business district on a weekday.

Izzy spots kids selling bottled water at intersection. Stops. Gives \$20. Refuses Water. Smiles. Kids thank her. Continues.

Izzy BUMPS into a WOMAN, SAME HAIR, SAME BUILD, SIMILAR LOOK, leaving the bank. Izzy LIFTS the woman's WORK BADGE.

INT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Izzy discreetly reads name on WORK BADGE, tucks it. Turns on SIGNAL JAMMER. Throws on a pair of SHADES. Enters bank. Approaches bank manager, TOM REYNOLDS, 30's, square, average looking guy. Enthralled with hiding in plain sight, Izzy taps his shoulder.

IZZY
 Excuse me. Tom? Can you tell me,
 where I can find Jennifer Reinhart?

Izzy leans her head to the side, flirtatiously. He stares longer than he should. Points to Jen's office. Izzy relishes his weakness. Leans in close, cleavage exposed. Whispers near his ear.

IZZY (CONT'D)
Thanks, Tom.

TOM stands in lobby, watching her walk away.

EXT. SUMMER'S OLD NISSAN - MOMENTS LATER

Summer exits car. Throws on the matching blazer to fitted black slacks. Grabs ENGRAVED BLACK LEATHER BINDER. Confidently crosses street toward bank.

INT. BANK - MOMENTS LATER

Izzy stops at frosted glass office door. Discreetly uses WORK BADGE keycard. Slips inside.

INT. BANK - JENNIFER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Izzy rifles through Jennifer's desk. Summer knocks, startling her.

IZZY
Uh...just a minute.

Straightens up. Quietly closes drawers. Forced smile, she cracks the door.

IZZY (CONT'D)
Hello?

SUMMER
Hi, I'm Summer Whitaker, spoke to you over the phone?

IZZY
Um. This is unexpected.

Izzy forces a smile, her eyes dart past Summer.

SUMMER
Oh. Uh--

IZZY

--You know what? Come in.

Summer enters. Izzy quickly closes the door.

IZZY (CONT'D)

You'll have to excuse me. Just got in from lunch.

Izzy crowds Summer's space, perches at the front of desk. Feeling awkward, Summer stands there, hesitates.

SUMMER

Uh. Here's my business proposal and loan application? Everything you asked for. And more.

Summer smiles, pats the ENGRAVED BLACK LEATHER BINDER.

IZZY

Uh huh.

SUMMER

You said I could download the forms and bring them in?

IZZY

Yes.

Summer slips past Izzy and sits down, reclaiming her personal space. Izzy gets flushed, but follows suit. Goes to sit behind the desk.

IZZY (CONT'D)

Um. So, yes. You have all the paperwork?

SUMMER

Sure do! All here. I even included site plans, the menu, recipes. Details like that. I want you to know how serious I am about this.

Summer enthusiastically nods, waiting for approval. Gets nothing. She gives Izzy the ENGRAVED BLACK LEATHER BINDER. A slightly disappointed Summer lingers.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

Is. (gulps) Is that all?

Izzy stands, leaning forward at the desk.

IZZY

That's it. I'll be in touch.

Forced smile. Extends her hand. Shakes. Gives her politest get-the-fuck-out face. Feeling unwelcome, Summer goes to leave, then turns around. Another attempt to connect.

SUMMER

That's a *really* pretty locket.

Points to Izzy's BLUE OVAL LOCKET trimmed in gold.

IZZY

Thank you. (genuine warmth) It was a gift from my mother.

Izzy runs her fingers over the gold trim of the BLUE OVAL LOCKET.

IZZY (CONT'D)

(cold) So yeah, I'll be in touch.

Summer nods and leaves, puzzled. Izzy collapses on herself. Gathers herself. Opens the ENGRAVED BLACK LEATHER BINDER. She lifts her DARK SHADES to scan the contents.

IZZY (CONT'D)

(to herself) Damn, I'm good.

Izzy smiles like she's hit the jackpot.

INT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Summer stands, her back to Jennifer's door.

SUMMER (V.O.)

Choices. They say a man--no scratch that--a *woman* is the sum of all her choices...This is a big next step...

An uneasy feeling. She turns back, reaches for door knob. Thinks twice. Shakes it off. Slowly smiles.

SUMMER (V.O.)

I'm ready for it.

Walks out bank, full of optimism.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. SUMMER'S FRONT PORCH/SIDE WALK/STREET - LATER

A barefoot, disheveled Rachel descends the stairs in a hurry.

RACHEL

On time? Running late. There early?
Right on time. On time? Running
late. There early? Right on time.
Right on, right on, right on time.

Rachel laughs, runs wildly. Shirt buttons unmatched. Hair unkempt.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Whew! Right on time. Right on time!

Runs into street. Car screeches to a halt. Horn honks long, angry. Confused and disoriented, Rachel repeatedly pounds hood of car. Driver yells profanities. MRS. NELSON, 50s, fit, neighbor, is out power walking. RUNS to Rachel, HANDS OUT.

MRS. NELSON

No, no, no, no, no! (to driver)
We're so sorry! So sorry!

Ushers Rachel to safety of sidewalk. Driver speeds off.

RACHEL

What? What is this?

Rachel snatches her arm away. Frowns.

MRS. NELSON

Made a mistake is all. It's OK now.

She gently coaxes Rachel to front steps of her house.

MRS. NELSON (CONT'D)

Let's get you inside.

INT. SUMMER'S OLD NISSAN - LATER

Summer drives home from bank, energized. Radio up. Sings along. Mrs. Nelson calls. She puts her on Bluetooth.

SUMMER

(on phone)
Hello? Mrs. Nelson? Is...
everything alright?

Turns radio down.

MRS. NELSON (V.O.)
Hi Summer, I found your mom.
Wandering in the street again--

--Summer slams her brakes. Car behind narrowly misses rear-ending her. Honks loudly. Cars behind brake.

SUMMER
(on phone)
Oh my GOD. I'm on my way, now.

MRS. NELSON (V.O.)
Please, honey, try not to panic.
She was out here with no shoes. And
your front door was wide open--

SUMMER
--I, uh, I. (breathe) I thought
these episodes were over. Her new
treatment. I mean it's
experimental, but it was working.

An angry driver gives her the finger as he zooms by.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
(to driver) Kiss my ass, you dumb
bitch! (on phone) --Ohh, Mrs.
Nelson, I'm so sorry!

MRS. NELSON (V.O.)
Honey, I get it. No worries here,
she's safe now. At home. You take
your time. We'll be right here.

Summer closes her eyes briefly. Takes a breath. Snaps out of it. Takes her foot off the brake and slowly pulls off.

SUMMER
Thank you. I'll be there soon.

Hangs up. Speeds through traffic to get home.

INT. SUMMER'S HOME - FOYER - EVENING

Drained, Summer drops her keys in bowl, handbag on coat rack.

SUMMER
Mama (softly) I'm home.

Mrs. Nelson meets Summer before she reaches the living room.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
 (whispers) How is she?

MRS. NELSON
 (whispers) She was really confused
 when I found her. Didn't recognize
 me. But I think she's fine now.

Mrs. Nelson looks back into the living room at Rachel.

SUMMER
 Thank you.

Mrs. Nelson gives her a much needed hug. Summer chokes back
 tears. Mrs. Nelson grabs phone off end table.

MRS. NELSON
 (to Rachel) Alright, Rachel. I'm
 heading out now. See you in a bit.

RACHEL (O.C.)
 See ya, girl. Thanks for stopping
 by, it was so nice talking to you.

INT. SUMMER'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Summer cautiously approaches. Rachel puts on OLD RECORD on
 VINTAGE RECORD PLAYER. Rocks to music. Smiling. Reminiscing.

SUMMER
 (soft) Mama? You OK?

Rachel reaches for Summer. Mother and daughter DANCE SLOWLY.
 Summer lays her head on Rachel's shoulder. Like a child.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
 (soft) You scared me.

Tears stream down Summer's face. She squeezes Rachel as if
 holding her tighter will halt what is already in motion.
 Rachel pulls away. Concerned, she wipes Summer's tears.

RACHEL
 Summer, baby? Why are you crying?

SUMMER
 I'm just glad you're OK. Anything
 could've happened with you leaving
 the house like that.

RACHEL

To me? Why would you say
that?(looks around) Summer? Where's
your father? When's he coming home?

Summer covers her mouth, to keep from crying out. Quietly
wipes away fresh tears. Looks Rachel in the eyes.

SUMMER

Mama? (beat) Mama. It's been 6
months. (beat) 6 months. Dad...

Summer shakes her head "no." Alarmed, Rachel REMEMBERS. Cries
out in heartache.

RACHEL

No! No. No. No. No. No.

Rachel repeatedly knocks her fist against her head. Sobbing.

SUMMER

(soft) Mama, Mama. Shh. (cries) I
know. I know. I miss him too.

Gently, Summer pulls Rachel's fist away and holds her hands.
Summer bites down through her tears. Tries to be strong.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

(to herself) We need to call Dr.
Halyard.

INT. SUMMER'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Karina and Summer count money from Sunday's brunch.

SUPER: TWO MONTHS LATER

SUMMER

This week's haul was pret-ty nice.

KARINA

Best week so far. Purr!

SUMMER

Yaaasss, bitch. We doing it!

KARINA

Aye! We getting it in!

Tongues out, Summer and Karina dance in their chairs. Pretend
to lasso and pull "it" in. They laugh loudly.

SUMMER

Here's your cut.

Sits a stack of BILLS in front of Karina. She takes it, tucks it in her purse. Summer puts money in envelopes. Labels each.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

This is for the DJ, equipment rentals, and next week's Air BnB.

Summer slides envelopes to Karina.

KARINA

Where to next?

Summer gets up. Goes to pantry.

SUMMER

Inventory check. (beat) Don't know.

KARINA

Let's do an Air Bnb in Midtown.

Summer checks her spices, flour, sugar, etc.

SUMMER

OK. Hey, we need more cinnamon...

Summer keeps searching. Karina notes ingredients to get. Summer's phone rings. She answers.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

(into phone) Yel-low? (snickers)
This is. May I ask who's calling?
(beat) Wait. (frown) Slow down.
(beat) A mortgage? Miss, I don't
owe a mortgage on anything.

Summer's brow furrows. Karina senses her distress.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

What? (beat) For how much? (scoffs)
And when was this? (beat) 2 months
late? Oh, no, I'm sorry, you have
the wrong number!

Heart pounding. Rapid breaths. Summer hangs up. Looks at Karina. Fear and confusion in her eyes.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

Lady got the balls to tell me I owe
on some random mortgage. It's a
scam right? Tryna get me to give my
info or something?

KARINA
That does not sound right, Girl.
I'd check my credit.

Summer leaves. Returns with laptop. Sits at kitchen table.
Pulls her credit report. Karina looks over her shoulder.

KARINA (CONT'D)
There! There it is. (points) A
mortgage for \$1,423,600!

SUMMER
She wasn't lying...

Karina starts pacing back and forth, angrily.

KARINA
Girl! Somebody ripped you off! For
big bills.

Summer sits momentarily stunned, stares off into space.

KARINA (CONT'D)
Look!

Summer's eyes follow where Karina points.

KARINA (CONT'D)
There's already a 30 *and* a 60 day
late. They took that money and ran.

SUMMER
How could this have happened?

Summer thinks, searching for an answer.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
The only thing I can think of is
that business loan. That was *two*
months ago and this mortgage is *two*
months late!

Summer bolts from the kitchen table.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
We need to pay the bank a visit.

END ACT ONE