

LIFE OF THE PARTY

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Original Script

1. INT. CAFETERIA - UNIVERSITY - DAY

Incoherent, loud voices emanate from all over, students chatter, sitting at tables, walking around, the room packed, yet somehow, **COLE (21)**, a shy, "stuck in his head" awkward Sophomore, sits alone, centered at a table, no one on either side of him, his lunch tray in front. His gaze forward, unwavering.

COLE (V.O)

You ever get an idea so crazy, it hijacks your brain? Like, no matter what you do, it's just... There?

People walking around Cole begin to slow, like Coles only focused on one thing. On the other side of the cafeteria is **MELISSA (21)**, the "popular" girl, peppy with that cheerleader flare, sitting atop a table, her friends around her, laughing, fully engaged in whatever she's saying.

COLE (V.O)

That's Melissa... The girl of my dreams.

Cole watches, fixated as Melissa blows a bubble with gum. The cafeteria's noise warps, becoming a dull, echoing hum.

COLE (V.O)

What if I just walked over there?

Cole's hyperfixation takes over, thoughts spiraling.

COLE (V.O)

What if I said something cool? Something witty? Like "Yo, how you doin?" Would she laugh? No. Probably not. She'd think I'm an idiot and... And...

HOPE (O.S)

Hey, Cole!

Hope (21), the "life" of any party, fun charismatic and Cole's best friend, stands beside him, a tray of food in her hands.

HOPE

Ohh-kay... So your doing it again.

Cole smashes back to reality, blinking a little, the cafeteria speeds back up, and voices return to full volume.

HOPE

You have to stop staring. It's... Weird. Maybe a little creepy.

Cole groans, Hope sits next to Cole.

COLE
I-It wasn't-I was thinking.

HOPE
Yeah, well, you sure do look like a
weirdo when "thinking"

Cole rolls his eyes, Hope steals a fry off his untouched tray.

HOPE
So, when are you going to talk to
her?

Cole shifts uncomfortably, his gaze still on Melissa.

HOPE
Dude, just go over there.

COLE
I-I can't!

HOPE
See! Dude, you always get too deep
inside your head, you need to
loosen up! And party!

Hope suddenly grins.

COLE
No, I know that look, Hope don-

Hope suddenly stands up on the bench, then climbs on the table, scanning the entire cafeteria.

HOPE
(announcing)
WHO WANTS TO PARTY?!

The cafeteria pauses. Heads turn. A few murmurs. Then someone cheers. Another whistles.

HOPE
That's right! Everyone's invited.
Bring your friends. Bring snacks.

She throws her arm down toward Cole, like announcing a prize.

HOPE (CONT'D)
Cause my boy Cole here's hosting
tonight!

COLE
(quiet)
Oh God.

A beat. Then scattered applause. One guy stands and fist-pumps.

RANDOM GUY
Whoo! Yeah! Cole!

HOPE
Tonight! His dorm. Be there!

The cafeteria erupts into a mix of laughter and cheers. Hope hops off the table and sits down like nothing happened.

COLE
Hope, what the he-

CUT TO:

2. INT. CLASS - UNIVERSITY - LATER

COLE
-ll was that?!

Hope and Cole sit side by side in the back of the classroom. The class room is the generic, tables, seats and dry erase, the professor stands in front, students line the seats.

HOPE
Shh...

Hope gestures to the front of the class, as the professor lectures on. Coles foot begins to tap like a tick. Then the professor ends his class and sets the students free.

COLE
(turning to Hope)
I can't throw this party?! I'm-I've never done or...

Students start to get up, walking down the middle and around Hope and Coles table.

COLE
We got to call it off Hope!

Hope begins to say something when Melissa and her croneys stop at their table.

MELISSA
Soooooooooooooooooooo
(stops to chew gum)
This party better be good.

She leans over Cole, looming menecingly.

MELISSA
We're thinking on stopping by.
So... Ya know.

She straightens, then heads out the door.

COLE
This parties going to be great!

HOPE
Thats the spirit!

3. INT. COLE'S DORM - LATER

The door swings open. Cole stands in the doorway, staring into the small, cramped dorm room like it's the site of a future disaster. His bed is unmade. Books and clothes litter the floor. A pizza box from God-knows-when sits half-open on the desk.

COLE (V.O)
This parties going to be horrible!

Hope enters behind Cole.

HOPE
Ooo. Okay. So it's a little cramped, and may need a bit cleaning.

COLE
This is a mistake. I can't. I don't even go to parties!

HOPE
Thats because you think every interaction is a pop quiz.

She grabs a random bag and begins picking trash off the floor.

HOPE
You don't have to impress anyone. Just host the space.

COLE
That's... Not comforting.

HOPE
Good. Comfort's your prison.

She grins, pulls out her phone and begins to play music, loud and pulsing.

HOPE
Let's get started lover boy.

4. INT. COLE'S DORM - NIGHT

The party is alive. Streamers hang, lights flash, illuminating the room in a blue and purple hue.

Music pulses as people, packed together, tightly dance, laugh and shout over one another. The party leaks into the hallway, swelling with guests.

Cole, now dressed in a polo, stands stiffly to one side. Half-hiding, half watching. A plastic cup in his hand, untouched.

A wild unsure look riddles his face, the face of someone in a thought spiral. Occasionally he tries to smile at passing students, but gets nothing back.

He forces himself to take a sip of punch. Winces. It's awful. His eyes scan the room—recognizable faces all locked in their own little circles. Everyone talking. Laughing. Performing.

A burst of noise from the door. People glance, then part.

MELISSA ENTERS.

Effortlessly radiant. Surrounded by her entourage. Shes dressed in a dress, instantly outshining everone else in the room. She waves at someone, already halfway into a discussion as she walks.

Cole freezes. The room slows.

She laughs. It cuts through the noise like a knife.

He watched her glide through the crowd like it's hers.

Cole takes a deep breath, adjusts his shirt and steps forward.

He makes it a few feet. Someone backs into him—apologizes then moves on. He continues on through the crowd. Someone steps on his foot, then he's there, a couple feet away from Melissa.

Cole hesitates, the voices around him swell.

She's laughing with two girls and a guy, holding court like the room is hers. For a moment, she turns—her eyes catch his.

COLE (V.O.)

Okay. Say something. Just say anything.

COLE

Hey.

Melissa's smile fades a little. Her eyes scan him.

MELISSA

Hey... you're the guy throwing this, right?

COLE

Yeah.

MELISSA

Cool.

She sips her drink. A beat.

COLE

Um... you wanna dance?

Melissa pauses, blinking. Then exchanges a look with her friend—half-hidden, half-patronizing.

MELISSA

Oh, that's cute.
(laughs a little)
No thanks.

Her tone is light, but dismissive.

MELISSA

But thanks for the party. The punch
is... strong.

She walks past him. One of her friends smirks as she follows.

Cole stands there, mid-party, completely still.

The music thuds. The lights flicker.

5. INT. DORM HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Away from all the excitement Cole sits, slumped on the floor, back against a wall. Down the hall people dance, laugh, going in and out of his dorm.

The party's still alive, but here, there's only stillness.

Cole rests his head in his arms, alone.

COLE (V.O)

Well you done it Cole.

He closes his eyes.

COLE (V.O)

You went for it.

A couple walks down the hallway, stopping in each others arms to look into each others eyes.

COLE (V.O)

And you failed. She saw you and
laughed

The couple continues down the hall, stumbling over Cole. They don't even notice him.

COLE (V.O)
I should've never thrown this party. It was mistake. A joke.

A beat.

Cole curls deeper into a ball. Lets a single tear loose.

A beat.

Then, opposite from the party, FOOTSTEPS echo, coming closer.

HOPE (O.S)
What'd I miss?

Cole doesn't look up as Hope approaches.

HOPE
Oh. Um. Tough night?

She slumps next to him. Side by side, yet inches between them feel far.

A long silence.

COLE
Didn't work

HOPE
What didn't work?

COLE
The party. The plan. Me.

Cole lifts his head, glancing over at Hope. She's dressed in a punk rock jacket and a simple black dress. Hair tousled. Her presence calming, but electric.

COLE
Your stupid plan! I should've never listened to you.

Hope just looks at him.

COLE
Agreed to your schemes. Did you-was this... Was it ever about me? Did you ever stop to consider my feelings? This was all your idea. Your show! Your experiment!

A beat. Hope just watches Cole. Quiet. Present.

Then gently, she puts her arm around him. He lets her.

HOPE

No. It wasn't about me.

She looks down the hall, towards the sound of the party.

HOPE

I just thought... I hoped that this party would push you out of your comfort zone and well give you the confidence to go ask this girl out. To be a version of yourself you've never tried. To live life a little.

Cole looks blankly at his knees.

COLE

Well you shouldn't have. You've known me for years Hope, I'm shy, quiet and like to be left alone to my own devices. I'm not you Hope, I'm not the party type. A version of myself I've never tried. I have myself all figured out.

6. INTERCUT: INT. COLE'S DORM - FUTURE

Cole stands alone at the center of the dancefloor. The mob of people dancing around him, surrounded by energy, but somehow apart from it. Frozen.

HOPE

You know, at our age, most people think they're supposed to have it all figured out.

7. INTERCUT: INT. DORM HALLWAY - PRESENT

Cole looks over to Hope.

HOPE

Like... You're supposed to know who you are, what you want, where you're going-all of it. And if you don't, then something must be wrong with you.

8. INTERCUT: INT. COLE'S DORM - FUTURE

Cole, still standing in the middle of the room, begins to dance a little. Music blares. People shout.

Hope's across the room, dancing with the motion of the crowd. She smiles, shouts. Her arms in the air.

HOPE (O.S)

But the truth is that life isn't a straight line. It's this tight a scribble. It's a song that you forget the words to halfway.

Cole looks over to her, trying to match her energy. She notices and begins to weave her way through the crowd to him.

9. INTERCUT: INT. DORM HALLWAY - PRESENT

Hope looks over to Cole. Her gaze gentle, but firm.

HOPE

I see you Cole, the constant loop you put yourself in. Everytime you want to do something or even screw that something up, you spiral, freeze and doubt everything you've done up to that point.

Cole's look is sad, but knowing.

10. INTERCUT: INT. COLE'S DORM - FUTURE

Hope reaches Cole through the crowd, smoothing out her dress. The two face each other. Hope is out of breath.

HOPE (O.S)

Life, life isn't a test you pass or fail Cole. Life is a lesson we're constantly learning. You tired Cole. That matters more than you think.

COLE (O.S)

But... I still feel like a failure.

11. INTERCUT: INT. DORM HALLWAY - PRESENT

Hope begins to get up from Cole's side.

HOPE

Then congrats. Cole, you don't need to be the life of the party, you just need to live in it.

She offers Cole a hand up.

12. INTERCUT: INT. COLE'S DORM - FUTURE

Hope gets close to Cole, then offers him her hand to dance.

13. INTERCUT: INT. DORM HALLWAY - PRESENT

Cole takes Hope's hand.

14. INT. COLE'S DORM - CONTINUOUS

Cole takes Hope's hand.

A beat.

They lock eyes.

Cole breathes in, his chest rising with hesitation... then falling with surrender.

Hope doesn't hesitate. She pulls him gently forward.

They step into the crowd.

They begin to move – not perfectly, not with flair – just together.

The crowd swirls around them in blurred motion.

They spin. Bump into strangers. Laugh. No rhythm. No pressure.

Cole lets go – of fear, of pressure, of expectation.

Hope throws her arms up, dancing freely.

Cole follows. Goofy. Loose. Happy.

They jump in place to the beat. Cole mimics a robot. Hope mock bows. They break into laughter.

Hope twirls and Cole catches her hand, pretending to dip her, then nearly falls. They crack up.

They dance back-to-back, then face each other again, nodding in sync with the rhythm.

For the first time, he's not in his head.

He's just here.

Not as a different version of himself.

Not as the life of the party.

Just living in it.

With his best friend.

And it's enough.

THE END