

"MEANS TO AN END"
v.2

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INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

MEGAN (17), girl-next-door wannabe, is sat on a library table covered in sheets of paper and open books. She checks them as she types on her computer, focused. CAREY (17), comes out from behind a bookshelf, carrying a book about Machiavelli, which she brings Megan.

CAREY
(sort of loud)
Is this it?

Megan checks the cover.

MEGAN
(whispering)
Yeah, thanks.

She starts looking for something in the book. Carey sits next to her and starts popping a pimple in a small mirror. Megan finds what she was looking for and smiles, typing down quicker.

LIBRARIAN (O.S.)
C'mon girls, now it really is time to go.

She appears from behind a bookshelf and stands there. Carey starts packing her stuff. Megan's eyes are still on her screen, but she waves at Mrs Stevenson.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Sorry Mrs Stevenson, just a minute!

Carey looks at the screen.

CAREY
It was perfect a week ago, let's go.

Carey taps Megan on the shoulder and signals with her head. Megan starts packing.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Megan and Carey are walking along the road.

CAREY
I was thinking of getting him a record player, maybe.

MEGAN

That's expensive, though.

CAREY

Yeah... Do you wanna split it?

MEGAN

Sure.

CAREY

So you're coming?

MEGAN

I don't think so. I don't feel like partying right before exams.

CAREY

Fair enough. But it's his birthday.

(beat, humming)

Wasn't he coming to the library today?

MEGAN

Well yes, but he told me he had a thing and couldn't come, so he's finishing his part later. I'll call him and check though, I don't trust him.

CAREY

Why not? I mean, he's really nice.

MEGAN

That's cause he's not in your class.

Megan stares at Carey for a second, gasps a little.

MEGAN

Oh... you bitch.

CAREY

What?

MEGAN

You're crushing on that asshole, aren't you?

CAREY

No!

(beat)

Shut up.

MEGAN
(chuckles)
Connor? Seriously? You officially have
the worst taste in men.

CAREY
Oh, right, you're one to talk.

Megan pushes Carey teasingly.

MEGAN
Hey! Well, you go tell your little
boyfriend that he better finish his
part.

The two approach a building that looks like a nightclub. On
the door, men in suits smoke and check them out disgustingly.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Cause I'm not failing because of him.

CAREY
Of course you're not failing.

They walk past the men. SARAH(17) in a dress walks out the
door and lights a cigarette. She makes eye contact with
Megan. Another man hands them a pamphlet, that Megan takes.
Carey grabs Megan's arm and pushes her away from the
building. They walk away.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Megan goes into her house. There's three dishes on the table,
where her MOM (52) is having dinner.

MEGAN
Hi!

MOM
You're late, honey.

Megan sits at the table with her. She takes the project from
the bag and places it on the table.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
I know, I know. Sorry. Library.

Megan's DAD (53) comes out from the kitchen with a plate and
sits at the table. Megan is looking through the project while
she eats.

DAD

Oh hey, Megan, they called from the admissions office.

Megan looks up from the project, thrilled.

MEGAN

Cambridge?

DAD

Uh, Oxford, I think.

MEGAN

Huh.

(mouth full of food)

What did they say?

DAD

They said you have a pretty big shot at getting full tuition, you know, based on your grades and the admission essay.

Megan lays down her fork.

MEGAN

Oh, my god. That's great.

MOM

Well, we already knew that, honey. You just have to keep working hard.

Megan smiles at her parents like a little kid.

DAD

Oh, and you have to send in our tax returns so they can check if you're eligible for the scholarship.

Megan nods her head. She goes back to the project.

MEGAN

I still prefer Cambridge, though. I think it's better for politics.

MOM

Well, yeah, but Oxford is where most of the Prime Ministers graduated from.

Megan nods, focused on the project.

DAD
Hey, c'mon, listen to your mother.

MEGAN
Sorry. Project.

They eat in silence for a second.

MOM
How's Carey?

MEGAN
(eyes on her book)
She's good.

She suddenly gasps and looks up.

MEGAN
Did you know her brother's dropping
out of uni?

DAD
Why? Is he okay?

MEGAN
Yeah, he just discovered he was born
to be a rock star or something. He's
in a band now.

MOM
Wow... didn't he want to be an
engineer last month?

Megan chuckles.

MEGAN
Alright, I'm going upstairs. I can't
focus here, you guys. And I'm
presenting this tomorrow.

Megan stands up and takes her project and dinner upstairs.

DAD
Okay, honey. Don't stay up late!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Megan is sitting in bed studying, stops then takes the phone
from her nightstand and dials a number. She stops the music
coming from her radio.

Megan waits on the phone. Finally someone answers.

MEGAN

Hi Connor, I'm just calling to check
how you're doing with the project.

(beat)

Huh?

(beat)

But do you have time to finish?

(rolls her eyes)

Okay...

(beat)

Okay, okay, bye... see you tomorrow.

Megan hangs the phone. She takes a deep breath and grabs her laptop. She yawns and starts typing.

Megan grabs a book from the shelf.

Megan is working on her desk.

She puts her hair up in a bun.

She sips coffee while working.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Megan is sitting on a chair while sipping coffee, tired-looking, reading the project.

Megan stand and starts pacing up and down the kitchen, well-dressed but with a jam stain on her shirt, practicing for her presentation. Papers in one hand and coffee on the other.

MEGAN

(to herself)

... on refearing to power Machiavello
said "princes in Italy who had
longstanding power and lost it cannot
blame bad luck,

She leaves the project on top of a coffee ring.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

but should blame their own indolence",
a still relevant idea on today's
political scenario as we were able to
see on Churchill's take on...

She realizes the project on the table is stained.

MEGAN

Shit.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A document is printing. It suddenly stops.

MEGAN

C'mon...

Megan tries to fix the printer in a rush, pushing buttons and typing on her laptop. She hits the printer, which starts back up again. She realizes the stain on her shirt.

Megan rubs the stain with a rug.

CUT TO:

Megan is wearing a tank top. She puts the project in her bag, checks the time and she leaves in a hurry.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The hallway is full of students, waiting to go into class.
CONNOR (17) approaches Megan.

CONNOR

Hey.

MEGAN

Hi.

Megan takes a deep breath and takes some papers out of her bag. She hands him the papers.

CONNOR

Look...I'm sorry, the thing's that, I
just...

MEGAN

(interrupting)

It's fine. Just pretend you know what
you're talking about, okay?

CONNOR

Oh, cool. I owe you big time.

She turns around but then looks back.

MEGAN

You better not screw up. There's a lot

at stake for me.

She walks away into the bathroom.

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM - DAY

Megan freshens up, splashing water on her face. She takes off her jacket.

SARAH (O.S.)

I mean, I wouldn't put it on my
resumé, but still...and it's not like
I'm a hooker or anything. A job is a
job, and the money's really good. Like
this dude the other day...

Megan is paying attention. Sarah comes out of the stall with a friend.

SARAH (CONT'D)

gave me like thousands just for...

Sarah stops talking when she sees Megan. They look at each other and smile awkwardly, then Sarah and her friends leave.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Megan and Connor are presenting in front of the class. MR COLLINS, a teacher in his forties, watches from a desk.

CONNOR

So this italian dude that lived a
bunch of years ago, Machiavelli - you
may know him as the means to an end
guy - he basically said that you can
do the most fucked up shit and it
doesn't matter as long as you get what
you want. I mean, he never actually
said that, but it's what we got from
it.

Megan shakes her head at him.

MEGAN

I believe that my partner is trying to
state that the "means to an end"
phrase wasn't directly a Machiavelli
quote, but more of a rephrasing of his
ethics that happened over time. And
even today, we can use this to talk
about politics...

Megan watches as Mr Collins turns to talk to a student while she speaks. She clears her throat and he looks back to her.

MEGAN

And as we constantly see world leaders who do the most questionable things in the name of the greater good, we see it fit to compare today's political scene to Machiavelli's ethics in "The Prince", a book that has withstood the test of time, and still sparks up debate on whether or not the end justifies the means. Thank you all for your attention.

The class claps.

MR COLLINS

Good job, guys. It was a fresh take on the subject. Really well put. So tell me Connor, are you satisfied with the end results of the project?

CONNOR

Definitely. It was worth the effort.

MR COLLINS

Very well. Onto the next group, please?

MEGAN

Wait, Mr Collins, is there something we should've done differently?

MR COLLINS

Not really. Good job.

MEGAN

Really? Because I wasn't that sure about my take on-

MR COLLINS

(interrupting her)

Actually, Miss Holloway, I do feel obligated to tell you that that is not an appropriate shirt to wear to school.

The class falls silent for a second.

MEGAN

What?

MR COLLINS

It is my job as a teacher to make sure that my students don't get distracted.

MEGAN

I'm sorry, I must've left my jacket in the bathroom.

MR COLLINS

Well you should go put it back on. And next time, you won't be allowed to present in front of the class.

(beat)

School rules.

Megan stares at the class in silence, shocked, then fixes her tank top. Some students laugh quietly.

MR COLLINS

The thing is, Miss Holloway, we can see your bra strap. It's simply not appropriate.

(beat)

You can save that for the beach,

Mr Collins turns around to face some guys in class.

MR COLLINS (CONT'D)

...right boys?

He laughs, followed by an awkward silence. Megan swallows nervously.

MEGAN

You're the only one who seems to have a problem with the bra strap. Tell me, Mr Collins, who exactly is it distracting for?

(beat)

You?

MR COLLINS

(angry)

Alright, enough! Can the next group please come forward?

MEGAN

(to herself)

This is bullshit.

MR COLLINS

Do you mind sharing that with the class?

Pause.

MEGAN

Nothing.

(beat)

I've been working on this project for weeks and I'm supposed to just sit here and let you humiliate me?

MR COLLINS

Enough.

(beat)

Do yourself a favor and sit down. And it would be wise to apologize to me. I'm sure you wouldn't want this incident to have a negative impact on your grade.

Megan stands in silence. She heads to her chair, walking by the teacher's desk. Looks from her classmates.

MR COLLINS (CONT'D)

And just so you know, Miss Holloway, you failed the assignment the moment you showed up like that.

The class sits in silence, a suppressed laugh here and there. Megan freezes on the spot.

MEGAN

You're right, Mr Collins. It's my fault. It was obvious that my teacher would be distracted by my bra strap. How did I not see that?

MR COLLINS

Enough!

They stare at each other in tension. Megan starts taking off her bra.

MEGAN

I'm sorry you couldn't see past that.

She places her bra on the teacher's desk.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Here you go, Mr Collins. You can keep
it.

Megan stares at her classmates and then storms out of the
class.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Megan walks into her house. She takes a deep breath and heads
to the living room.

DAD
Hi honey.

Megan looks at them, about to speak, then stops. She heads
upstairs.

MOM
We got a call today.

Megan freezes on the spot.

DAD
Mr Collins had a lot to say about your
presentation.

Megan turns around.

MOM
What the hell were you thinking?

Megan is on the verge of tears.

MEGAN
You don't understand, it was so
humiliating.

MOM
Insulting your teacher just because he
didn't like your project? Is that how
we raised you?

MEGAN
That's what he told you? That's not
what happened! He didn't even mention
the project, he was just focused on
the shirt.

DAD
Well, you should've kept your mouth

shut.

Silence.

DAD

That's not how we treat people in this house.

MEGAN

But you guys saw how hard I'd been working... And the way he just discredited me-

MOM

Exactly! You've been working so hard, and now you're on the verge of losing any chance at a scholarship because of a pride thing.

MEGAN

It wasn't a "pride thing", mom! And I could just apologize and beg him for a second chance.

DAD

You're not gonna get it, he made that very clear.

MEGAN

He's being so unfair.

MOM

No, Megan. Don't try to put the blame on him. You brought this upon yourself.

Silence.

DAD

God, Megan. We thought you were smarter than this.

Megan and her parents stare at each other. She stands up and leaves the room.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Megan is lying in bed. There's a knock on the door. She ignores it. They knock again.

MEGAN

Go away.

The door opens and Carey walks in, carrying food from McDonald's.

CAREY

Hey.

Megan smiles at her, then sighs. Carey walks over and hugs her tight.

MEGAN

I fucked up.

CAREY

I heard...

They laugh, then stop hugging and start eating the food.

CAREY (CONT'D)

I should've been there.

MEGAN

I should've just shut up.

CAREY

Yeah, probably... but you know what, fuck him! I'm glad you didn't let him treat you like shit.

MEGAN

I don't know... At least I'd have a scholarship now.

Carey looks at her, worried. Megan chuckles.

MEGAN

I can't believe I'm not going to university.

CAREY

What? Of course you are.

MEGAN

Well, yeah, some local uni, maybe. If they want me. Not Cambridge.

CAREY

Hey, even if you lose the scholarship, it doesn't mean it's over. You just

have to get the money.

MEGAN

Just?

CAREY

Well, yeah, start babysitting and waitressing, and save up.

MEGAN

Carey, I love you, but a babysitting job does not pay for Cambridge.

CAREY

Right... Well, see? You're smart. You should charge people to write their essays for them.

Megan laughs. Carey takes an essay from the desk and hands it to Megan.

CAREY

See? Just by selling your project you could probably make hundreds.

Carey hands Megan the essay. Megan flips through it. From between the pages, she finds the pamphlet she was given at that nightclub.

CAREY (O.S.)

I mean, it's not that ethically correct, but hey, means to an end, right?

Megan looks at the pamphlet, then back to a Cambridge one on her desk. She looks at Carey, conflicted.

CAREY

Hey, it's gonna be okay.

MEGAN

Yeah... maybe.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Megan walks toward the door of the nightclub. She takes a deep breath, then walks through the door, watched by men.