

THE ROOST

LIBRETTO

BY

JOHN DE LOS SANTOS

INTERIOR KAT AND RICKY'S BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

EXTREME CLOSE UP: KAT is lying in bed on top of the duvet with her face covered by her hands. The camera pans out to MEDIUM CLOSE UP. She is wearing a spaghetti-strapped top and sweating. She slowly moves her hands down her face, then neck, then out of frame. Her face wrinkles in pain. Or is it pleasure?

RICKY (offscreen)

Kat! (beat) Kat! (beat) Honey! Are you alright?

KAT

Fine! (barely audible) Almost...

RICKY (offscreen)

Where are the spare AC filters?

KAT opens her eyes, exhales as if breathing fire, and sits up.

CUT TO:

INTERIOR HALLWAY

FULL SHOT: RICKY is digging through a utility closet. KAT appears out of the bedroom doorway and stares at him. We see that she is pregnant.

KAT

You said you'd wait for the repairman.

RICKY

I can't wait 'til Monday between noon and five. If it's only the filters, we can cancel. He probably wouldn't wear a mask anyway. Do you know where your folks keep them? (KAT is silent) Honey? Filters?

KAT

Dad must keep them in the garage with the rest of the hoard, but it's too hot in there. (beat) Come lie down.

RICKY

Lie down? We already took a nap.

KAT

Who said anything about a nap?

DUET

KAT

It's cool, the window's open.

Fan's on high.

Come lie down. Just for a sec.

Come lie down and kiss my neck.

I feel like I'm twenty.

How lucky are you?

Come lie down. Blow on my back.

Come lie down. I'll blow you
back.

This time I'll face you.

Grab your hair. Grab my...

I can't help it! I need...

Before long, I'll be too big.

Before long, we won't get sleep.

So...

What do you want for dinner?

RICKY

Kat, I can't right now.

There's no way.

Too soon. Too hot.

Too much at lunch.

I'm not twenty-five.

Lucky, I know.

Too sore. Too old.

Too long at home.

I'm losing... I'm losing my...

Kat, I said no!

Before long, this shit will
end.

Before long, I'll work again.

I'm sick of this! Not of you.

What do you want for dinner?

RICKY

Something light?

KAT

Something green.

RICKY

Works for me.

RICKY heads to the garage.

CUT TO:

MEDIUM SHOT: KAT returns to the bedroom and picks up her phone. CLOSE UP As she scrolls through a salad menu. JACLYN calls her on Skype, or Facetime, or ZOOM. KAT makes a face as if she is about to lift something very heavy, and answers.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP on Kat's face as she answers the video call.

KAT

Hi Mom. Mom?

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP of KAT's phone screen and JACLYN's face on cam.

JACLYN

Kat? Can you see me?

KAT

Yes.

JACLYN

Can you hear me?

KAT

(with great patience) Yes. You look good.

JACLYN

Everyone looks a decade older on here. How are you? How's your weight?

KAT

I'm fine, so's my weight. And before you ask, yes, we are taking good care of the house and plants.

ARIA

JACLYN

Thank God! Ricky had better be giving you what you need, laid off or not. I'm so glad we could help you out. You deserve a nice place to nest. Things are worse here. If you step out the front door with no mask, there's a fine. The stores won't let you in. Church is online. I quit watching the news. They're not telling me what to do. I'm tired of hearing about Kung Flu! (laughs) Are you listening? Even the beach house gets dull when you can't leave. Your Dad barely talks, just puzzles, cards, and loud naps. I may as well be by myself. Trust me, one day you'll understand. Losing your grip, hanging off a cliff. Alone with someone at your side. Look at me! I need space, before I fall. So, when can I come visit? See my baby and my plants?

KAT

Anytime, it's your house. But you need to wear a mask.

JACLYN

That's not funny.

KAT

Neither is "Kung Flu". You've got to wake up, Mom.

JACLYN

Please not this again. You sound like Ricky.

KAT

No, I sound like me. You're finally gonna be a grandmother. Wake up for them! (beat) Mom? Are you listening?

JACLYN

I have to go. And remember... don't touch anything in the garage.

JACLYN ends the call.

CUT TO:

MEDIUM CLOSE UP of KAT as she tosses her phone away, and lies back with her hands covering her face the same way as before.

CUT TO:

MEDIUM SHOT as RICKY enters the bedroom.

RICKY

Hey! I found the filters and swapped, but they weren't the problem.
(beat) Did something happen?

KAT

She called back.

RICKY

To apologize?

KAT

To remind me that things need to change. So many things. (beat) Let's get out of here.

KAT extends her arms to RICKY, who pulls her to her feet. She grabs a few pillows.

KAT

Get the duvet. We're going outside.

RICKY

Why? Aren't you hungry?

KAT

No, I'm hot!

TRACKING SHOT as KAT leads RICKY into the moonlit backyard. Under her instruction, they set up the bedding on the grass. Once satisfied, KAT reclines on the ground. She looks at Ricky and smiles.

RICKY

Good call. Starlight. That breeze is gold. I'd forgotten. Been so afraid.

CUT TO:

DUET

MEDIUM CLOSE UP as RICKY sits down with KAT.

KAT

So have I.

Things will change.

All this, and more.

Change the rest, but

on and on, with you.

How lucky are we?

Lucky to share.

On and on!

Fireflies begin to appear.

Look! A firefly!

Another!

On and on!

Family of light!

RICKY

But it will end.

For better, I hope.

For better, I know.

With you, on and on.

Lucky, I know.

The breeze, the hope!

On and on!

Look! Another!

All around!

On and on!

Family of light!

They hold each other and kiss as if it's their last night on earth.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXTERIOR - DRIVEWAY - NEXT MORNING

JACLYN pulls up the driveway and parks. She gets out of the car and looks at the house. She makes a face, pulls a mask out of her purse, and puts it on, but we don't get a clear look at it. She knocks on the door, but no one answers. Irritated, she pulls out her keys and unlocks the door.

CUT TO:

JACKLYN enters the house and closes the door. She looks around, then makes her way to the window. Her eyes widen in surprise and she pulls down her mask.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR - LAWN

A midsummer sun shines on KAT and RICKY still asleep in a beautiful tangle of post-coital bliss (.

CUT TO:

MEDIUM CLOSEUP of JACLYN's bewildered face. It eventually softens to one of longing.

JACLYN

Cock-a-doodle-do!

She replaces her mask. It has a lipstick smile on it.

FADE OUT