

FEELINGS | Megan Fleming | dark comedy | sample

First 10 pages of a family dramedy about a woman and her estranged sister driving from California to Kansas to bury their father, all in the midst of a zombie virus outbreak of which they remain stubbornly unaware.

OVER BLACK:

The soft HUM of fluorescent lights is heard in the background as we hear the deadpan voice of a young woman-

ALEX (V.O.)
People die at the worst times...

Then, that terrible SQUEAK of sticky fake leather as someone shifts in a seat.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

A decent sized WOLF SPIDER scurries into frame, running over a grey linoleum floor. A clear cup follows shortly after, trapping the spider. A woman's pale hand, neon green nail paint chipping in most places, comes into frame, sliding a piece of paper under the cup carefully.

ALEX (V.O.)
The absolute worst... And you may be thinking that there is no such thing as "a perfect time to die". But there is. You might also be thinking "no one can choose when to die", I mean, well, other than the obvious... But that's not my point, I'm just talking about ideal timing, theoretically, you know? Like, if I could pick a time to go, it'd be on August 10th, at the ripe age of 68.

Another SQUEAK of leather from somewhere O.S.

The hands carry the paper and cup to a sliding door. Outside, the hands release the spider from its clear cage. It scurries out from the door's threshold and into --

A TORRENTIAL DOWNPOUR.

Rain pelts the spider. It frantically tries to avoid the drops.

VOICE (V.O.)

You're not too old to be mad about everything. But you're not young enough to actually be happy. And think about it - nothing happens in August. The biggest holiday on the 10th is National Lazy Day. Seems like an auspicious day to go.

The hands take the cup from the ground and we meander up to the piercing blue eyes of ALEX (early 30s), watching the spider with a curious stare. The spider struggles to find shelter, finally succumbing to his watery grave.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

TIGHT on Alex's face. Her head rests on a mint green headrest. She's been monologuing to someone out of sight.

ALEX

People will have just enough time to get over you before Thanksgiving-
(yawning)

August isn't stressful either. That's the other thing. My dog and Grandpa died during finals week my senior year of high school. Now that is the worst time. School stress, holiday stress. You're enjoying a glass of eggnog and then bam, Grandpa Billy has a heart attack in the chair next to you. You drop your glass and now eggnog-less, you watch the life drain out of his eyes... I haven't had a cup of eggnog in 14 years. I loved eggnog.

Alex looks like she's getting sleepy. She rests her eyes.

By her chair, a BESPECTACLED MAN (60s) looks on, entranced and dumbfounded. He eyes her, is she asleep?

Alex's eyes shoot open, making the man jump slightly. Alex continues on, slurring occasionally.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I spent the week crying my eyes out, even though I should have been studying for finals, and I just kept thinking *whyyy couldn't we have discovered Frosty's tumorr til after Christmas?*

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

And that's superrrr selfish I know,
I mean Fwosty was my best fwend,
but- its true... Oh, wanna hear
something wild? My dad died two
hours ago. Right before I get my
wisdom teeth removed, weally? Like,
he couldn't have died after, when
I'm doped up on dwugs?

Alex looks up at the florescent light, contemplative.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Nowww my mom had good timing when
she died. I couldn't have picked a
better time myself. I was only 7 so
the shock wasn't too bad, but I
still was old enough to remember
her, so I still have her with me.
In here and here -
(taps her head and heart)
Oh, can you guess the month?

She waits for a response. When it doesn't come --

ALEX (CONT'D)

Auguwst!!
(thinking)
I miss them but they could've held
on a little loonger for the homies
they left behind, don't you fink?

Silence for an uncomfortable amount of time.

We open wider on the room, which turns out to be a dentist
office. Alex is indeed getting her wisdom teeth removed.
Sterile tools and bland walls abound. The Bespectacled Man is
an Anesthesiologist, clutching a breathing apparatus.

BESPECTACLED MAN

Why did you come to a Dentist
appointment right after your found
out your dad died?

ALEX

(slurring more)
Yuu know how loowng it tooook to
get thish appoinment? Youu thin I
wass jus goin to weschedule?

BESPECTACLED MAN

I've done all I can do for you. You
should be out soon.

ALEX

I feel gray man. Thanks for awskin
how my liv is goin. You aw swell.

Alex begins to fade but comes to once more and starts humming
a tune that just barely sounds like *I Love It* by Icona Pop.

Bespectacled Man puts the mask on her, turns up dial.

BESPECTACLED MAN

She just won't let go huh?

He turns to the dentist ASSISTANT who has been sitting
quietly in the corner, clutching a clipboard and looking
absolutely perplexed this whole time.

BESPECTACLED MAN (CONT'D)

(checks watch)

That was the saddest anesthesia
induced rant I've ever seen. You
can get Dr. Schwartz. In two hours
she'll be wisdom teeth free --

ALEX

(muffled under the mask)

Whoooo! Lets blast these fudgers!

The Assistant and the Bespectacled Man jump. They turn to
Alex, somehow she's still up.

OLDER MAN

I'd strongly advise going to see a
therapist after this. And a
neurologist.

ALEX

Okeeeey.

Alex's eyes flutter, she's fighting to stay awake. But like
the spider in the rain, she finally succumbs to the darkness.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

We are back at Alex's apartment, in her small back patio. The
torrential downpour is just a drizzle now. We focus in on the
dead spider, legs curled inward, abdomen up. One of its
spindly legs TWITCHES. A moment passes, it was probably
nothing... Then, the spider JOLTS up, turning itself back
onto its feet. It scurries away, back towards the apartment,
as if it didn't get pelted to death by rain drops.

CUT TO:

The TITLE CARD fades in, dominating the screen:

F E E L I N G

INT. DENTIST OFFICE - DAY

Over black, voices and the buzzing of dental equipment sound from somewhere beyond. A closer voice gently calls out.

NURSE (O.S.)
Alex! Wake up there hon.

Alex opens her eyes slowly, looking directly into the harsh florescent lighting above. A NURSE stands above her, smiling.

Behind the Nurse, TV plays the news. The lower third graphic reads 'Plane makes emergency landing at LAX as elderly couple fall severely ill'. Maybe the casual viewer doesn't notice.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Easy there. Surgery went great.

Alex slowly moves off of the chair.

EXT. OUTSIDE DENTIST OFFICE- DAY

Alex, mouth full of cotton swabs, tries to unlock her shitty car, stumbling quite a bit. The overcast skyline of Los Angeles dwells in the background. There are a couple helicopters circling something in the distance.

The same Nurse appears running behind her.

NURSE
Stop! You can't drive! You told us before that your sister is picking you up, she hasn't signed you out.

ALEX
Wewl not anymaw! I feel fiiine.

NURSE
Please don't drive, for the sake of my job?

ALEX
Fine! I wawk!

NURSE
At least let me call you a cab.

Alex throws her keys, they go soaring over the nurses head.

ALEX
I said I wawlk!

Alex starts to run before Nurse can do anything, then pauses and runs back to grab her keys.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I actually need my apawtment key.

The Nurse can only stare in disbelief as Alex flails across the parking lot.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES- DAY

Alex plops slowly down a busy street. From her backpack, Alex takes out some tangled headphones and plops them in her ears.

Takes out her phone. Dismisses the notifications about 23 missed calls and 70 missed texts, most from a contact named RILEY. Instead, turns on "I Love It" by Icona Pop ft Charlie XCX.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LOS ANGELES (CONT MUSIC)

A swollen faced Alex dance-shuffles across a busy crosswalk, her buoyant energy not at all matching that of the subdued Monday afternoon commuters.

EXT. DIFFERENT LOS ANGELES SIDEWALK - DAY (CONT MUSIC)

A brigade of military jeeps whizzes by as Alex shimmyes down a new sidewalk. She tries to give a PASSERBY a high five but he just shuffles past.

Alex is about to say something to him when she sees an ice cream shop nearby.

EXT. PARK - DAY (CONT MUSIC)

Alex bops her head as she eats ice cream on a park bench.

EXT. PARK - DAY (LATER)

Alex has fallen asleep on the bench. Her ice cream melts down her hand into a puddle.

A COP comes over and prods her.

COP
You can't sleep here.

Alex groggily looks up at him, revealing her swollen cheeks and blood drool dripping from her mouth. The Cop jumps back.

COP (CONT'D)
Ah!

INT. APARTMENT- AFTERNOON

Alex walks into a small studio apartment. Minimalist. Or maybe just lazy. Ikea furniture haphazardly put together. A mass-produced painting of some ambiguous city skyline hangs on the wall. Alex throws down her meds and keys. Walks to the refrigerator. Scoots the spinach containers to the side and reaches for a six pack of beer and a leftover pizza box. Grabs both and sits down at the table. Pulls out her phone. 19 missed calls, 8 voice mails.

She flicks her phone onto the table and grabs a slice. Takes a bite and immediately spits it out.

ALEX
Ooh. Ow

She opens a beer and chugs it. Then lowers her face onto the cold table. Her phone begins to ring again- RILEY. She glares at it until it goes to voicemail, then closes her eyes.

INT. APARTMENT- MORNING (LATER)

Alex wakes up at the table with a piece of paper sticking to her blood and drool covered face.

She grimaces and takes the piece of paper still sticking to her face. A rent past due notice. She crumples the paper and throws it into the trash can, then goes to the freezer and delicately puts a frozen pizza pocket package on her cheek.

She looks at her phones voice-mail list. She scrolls down and looks at the first voicemail from Riley two days ago.

RILEY (O.S.)
Hey. I'm excited you reached out for a ride tomorrow. I know its because I'm the only one you know with a car and flexible hours. But still. It's a nice restart. Will you send me your addre-

Alex clicks another voicemail, this one from yesterday.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Hey. The hospital said that you picked up their call about dad. Why aren't you answering my calls? Can you just send me your address and I'll come over?

Alex clicks out of the voicemail. Another call from Riley comes in. Alex throws her phone. Sits in silence. Doesn't seem to like that either.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

She picks up her phone and keys.

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY

Alex, now in a creased dress, walks through a sea of cubicles and we hear fragmented gossip.

OFFICE PERSON (O.S.)

-shit ton of army trucks on the 405. Took me forever to get home.

OFFICE PERSON 2 (O.S.)

President must be in town.

Alex sits at her cubicle. A short, cute man with curly hair, JEREMY, pops his head over the partition.

JEREMY

Aren't you supposed to be out recuperating from a dental surgery?

ALEX

I'm recovered. See?

Jeremy eyes her.

JEREMY

You don't look recovered.

MARTIN (40s, balding, overbearingly kind) walks over to Jeremy's cubicle looking down at some papers.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

(softly)

Shoot.

Jeremy ducks down into his cubicle.

MARTIN

Hey Jeremy, did you get that spreadsheet I sent Friday?

Martin looks up, Jeremy is no longer standing with Alex. Martin clocks Alex's cheeks.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Botox?

ALEX

Mmhmm.

MARTIN

I like it, makes your profile look more pronounced.

ALEX

Thanchs.

MARTIN

What'd I come over here for again?

Alex shrugs. He walks away. Jeremy rises up from his cubicle.

JEREMY

Actually, stay. You keep the monsters away.

ALEX

Also don't make a big deal of it but my dad died yesterday -

JEREMY

Wait what?

ALEX

Yeah, lung cancer, that's not -

JEREMY

Wait, yesterday, your dad died and then you got your wisdom teeth removed, and now you're at work?

Another person, MARTHA (40s) rises her head over a cubicle behind Alex's.

MARTHA

Your dad died and you're at work?

Jeremy looks over Alex's shoulder to Martha.

JEREMY

And she got her wisdom teeth removed.

Alex turns to Martha with her swollen face. Martha gasps.

MARTHA

Oh my god!

ALEX

Get back to work Martha! Jeremy, my point is, if my sishter, aka the love of your life callshs you, dont tell her my new address ok? She's in town trying to track me down and I've just got too much going on right now to deal wich that.

JEREMY

Right, your lack of wisdom teeth and your dad's death.

ALEX

Exactly. So you wont schay anything if she calls?

Jeremy is about to say something but he is cut short by Martin, who appears in the aisle.

MARTIN

Alex! Can you come into my office?

Alex looks around and sees Martin in the aisle.

She also sees most of her other coworkers are peering above their cubicles, staring at her.

ALEX

(sighs)

Word travels fasht around here.

Alex looks back at Jeremy. Points at him

ALEX (CONT'D)

Don't tell.

JEREMY

Uh - scouts honor.

Alex heads towards Martin's office, Martin is already walking inside.

END OF SAMPLE