

Conquering the Staircase

written by

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INT. ALLISON/JOAQUIN'S HOUSE - DAY

ALLISON(34) and JOAQUIN(32) sit on their living room sectional couch. They're relaxed and talking.

Allison is wearing blue sweatpants bearing her favorite basketball team's logo, along with a wrinkled t-shirt.

Joaquin is wearing a tight, untucked button-up shirt and jeans.

ALLISON

(coyly)

It's on my list, but I hate
bureaucracy, so I can't promise
it's at the top of the list.

Joaquin chuckles softly, but remains serious.

JOAQUIN

Look, I know it's a pain in the
ass, but the secretary of state is
always backed up at the stupidest
times. Just promise me you'll go
this week.

ALLISON

I know. I know I know I know. I
just need a little... flexibility
right now.

Allison looks a little vulnerable, surprising Joaquin.

JOAQUIN

Hey- It's okay, turnaround time for
passports is a little over a week.
I just don't want this to be
another thing that gets buried--

ALLISON

--Another? Jesus, Jay...

JOAQUIN

That's not what I meant, Allie.
We're stressed. It's been a *shitty*
year.

Joaquin sighs, pausing to think.

JOAQUIN (CONT'D)

Some things are... falling through
the cracks, ya' know?

Allison wrings her hands lightly.

ALLISON
(voice cracking)
I'm- I'm sorry. I'm not trying to
be a bitch.

Joaquin places his hand on Allison's hand.

JOAQUIN
It's okay; I know you don't mean
it. We're both on edge.

ALLISON
I'm just **so fucking tired**. We were
doing so well and then--

Allison's voice hits a high pitch as tears start flowing down
her cheeks.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
--Between your job and then our--

Joaquin hugs Allison. She presses her face into his shoulder.

JOAQUIN
Deep breaths. We've still got
enough saved up. We'll be fine.

Allison looks at Joaquin and then looks down at herself.

ALLISON
Will we..?

Joaquin sits, unsure of himself for a beat.

JOAQUIN
We can try again. Give it some
time. We'll see the doctor when we
get back, make sure everything's
okay and--

ALLISON
--And what?! Replace her?! Jay,
we'd **named** her for God's sake! She
was our--

Allison's words catch in her throat. She buries her face back
into his shoulder.

Joaquin pulls her closer as he starts crying too.

JOAQUIN
We can't replace her. But we can
keep moving forward for her.
(MORE)

JOAQUIN (CONT'D)
She wouldn't want us to give up on everything.

Allison takes a deep breath.

ALLISON
How can we just... move on?

JOAQUIN
I don't- I don't know. But we have to figure it out. And I know we will. Because we still have each other. And there's nothing we can't figure out together.

Allison sniffs. There's a brief pause in the conversation.

JOAQUIN (CONT'D)
After all, we figured out how to build that stupid staircase made of drawers, right?

Allison lets out a small laugh mixed with a sob.

ALLISON
Why did we think that was a good idea? Neither of us owns *anything*!

JOAQUIN
I'd never broken a bone before, but we made it. It's ours. It doesn't matter if it's *completely pointless*. We didn't let it beat us.

Allison is smiling through her pain. She tries not to respond. Joaquin gestures towards the nearby staircase.

JOAQUIN (CONT'D)
Look at me, Allie! This shitty staircase took us *weeks*, but we conquered it! We will walk up and down the damn thing every day so it *knows* that it didn't beat us! And we'll do the same with life!

Joaquin picks Allison up. She smiles as she screams and laughs.

ALLISON
JAY! Put me down! Stop! Ahhhh!

Joaquin runs up the stairs holding Allison on his shoulder.

Joaquin rounds the corner into their bedroom. He drops Allison onto their bed as the two laugh.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
(still laughing)
You fucker! I told you not to do that!

Joaquin lays down next to Allison. She hits him playfully.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Next time, I'm kicking you in the balls.

JOAQUIN
It'll probably be worth it. It always is.

Joaquin kisses Allison's cheek. The two giggle before staring at the ceiling for a beat.

JOAQUIN (CONT'D)
We've got this. We've never let anything get the best of us before.

Allison sighs and rubs her eyes.

ALLISON
We are pretty awesome.

The two sit and hold hands for a moment.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
I love you.

JOAQUIN
I love you too.

The two sit in silence for another moment.

JOAQUIN (CONT'D)
You wanna play Boggle?

Allison laughs the last of her tears away.

ALLISON
Your timing sucks, you know that?

JOAQUIN
I'm not hearing a 'no.'

ALLISON

God fu- You know I can't turn down
a chance to beat your ass at word
games.

JOAQUIN

I don't words so good, but my
heart? My heart's a genius.

Allison rolls on top of Joaquin and kisses him once.

Allison stands and starts walking to the door.

ALLISON

Alright, heart-boy. If you lose,
you gotta go get us a pizza.

JOAQUIN

I think I can live with that.

Joaquin stands up and follows Allison out, grabbing her hand
along the way.

The two pass down the stairs back to the living room.

As Joaquin pulls Boggle out from their board game shelf,
Allison looks back at the staircase.

ALLISON

Yeah. We've got this.

FADE OUT