

Bake for Life

by
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TRIGGER WARNING: MENTAL HEALTH, SUICIDE, SEXUAL ASSAULT

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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Silas*	TV Production Worker	30s	Any
Kara	Olympic Boxer/Contestant	29	F
Jan	Kara's Assistant	20s/30s	F
Flo*	Boxer/Longtime friend of Kara	20s/30s	F
Coach Bateman	Kara's Coach	50s	M

Note: *Silas and Flo can be doubled. The voices of the host and other celebrities can be doubled with Silas/Flo/Jan.

If extra actors are available, they can enter the stage here** Perhaps they represent judges, host/s, crew, and other contestants on the baking show. Perhaps they represent something or someone else.

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LIGHTS UP ON:

A portable kitchen island donned with a stand mixer, mixing bowls, standard baking ingredients, and an apron.

The side of the island facing us is decorated with a logo and the words “BAKE FOR LIFE”

Silas, dressed in black with a headset and an iPad in hand, paces back and forth.

SILAS

Where’s Kara? We need to test the lighting again.

KARA

(Running on) I’m here!

SILAS

Ah! We’ve already shot the other contestant’s PSAs so you’re the last one before we start baking, Yeah? Can I have you behind the stove. We just need to reset the angle--James!-- (Walking off)

The lighting shifts slightly, as if being adjusted to light Kara better.

SILAS

(Entering) Okay ready? Just stand there for a moment. (Into headset) Oh. Yeah. I’ll-- Kara? Can you practice this? (Handing Kara the iPad) Just a rewrite for the intro. (Into the headset) Yeah, yeah she’s got it. Ready? (To Kara) Ok, had a quick skim? (Taking the iPad) Great. The lighting’s great. We’re gonna do a few test shots. (Getting out of the way) Whenever you’re ready.

She looks up into the “camera”. The lights change as if to let us know she is being recorded.

KARA

Hi, I’m Kara Steepleton, Team USAs Olympic Gold Medalist in Women’s Boxing and a contestant on this season’s charity special fundraising episode for Suicide Prevention.

(Beat) Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States. (Beat) We can all help to prevent suicide. Check in with your peers. You never know what someone is going through. If you or someone you know is struggling, call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 800-273-8255. That's, 800-273-8255. Let's work together to prevent suicide today.

Beat. Silas walks forward.

SILAS

That was great. I think we're ready to shoot. (Into headset) Yeah?

Jan, in smart/casual dress and a bluetooth ear piece, enters briskly.

JAN

You have eight missed calls.

KARA

Yeah, my watch has been buzzing like crazy. I'll check after we wrap on this shot.

SILAS

Ready?

Jan picks up a call and exits.

Silas counts down with their hand. They point to Kara.

When the lights change to "record," a live feed of Kara being filmed is projected above/behind her. She is obnoxiously large.

KARA

Hi, I'm Kara Steepleton, Team USAs Olympic Gold Medalist in Women's Boxing and a contestant on this season's charity special fundraising episode for Suicide Prevention.

Kara's watch buzzes

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States.

Her watch buzzes louder. Almost mockingly.

We can all help to prevent --

Kara flicks her eyes down to her watch. Losing momentum.

--suicide.

She is now holding her wrist up to read the message. A moment.

SILAS

Cut!

Silas walks up. Kara is still glued to her watch. Her face still.

SILAS

Alright. What's going--

Jan enters. She holds a hand up to Silas. They both look at Kara for a moment.

JAN

Kara?

Jan and Silas exit.

Kara is on the phone. Flo enters. They are both in spotlights.

FLO

I've been calling you for--

KARA

When.

FLO

What?

KARA

When did the bastard kill himself.

FLO

Kara.

Sixteen years Flo. Six. Teen.

KARA

A long beat.

FLO

Me too.

A knock.

JAN

(On the other side of a door) Kara?

FLO

Do you need to (go)--

KARA

How did he--

FLO

They found him--

JAN

Kara?

FLO

--His office. He took some--

Kara draws a sharp breath.

JAN

Kara!

KARA

CAN YOU WAIT A GODDAMN MINUTE? (Beat. Into phone) They find the pictures and he just-

FLO

Look, I'm pissed too.

Jan peeks her head in.

JAN

(Meekly) They just need to know how long you'll be.

Call me later.

FLO

Wait--

KARA

Flo hangs up. Her spotlight goes out. Kara looks at her phone. Jan enters.

They took a five, are you--(ready?)

JAN

Gonna ask me if I'm okay?

KARA

Beat.

Are you okay?

JAN

No. Jan. I'm not.

KARA

Beat.

Do you need more than a five?

JAN

Bateman's dead.

KARA

Coach--?

JAN

Coach Bateman killed himself last night.

KARA

But the hearings--

JAN

In two days.

KARA

A moment.

JAN
I'm sorry.

KARA
Eight months wasted.

SILAS
(From stage left) Jan?

JAN
Want me to cancel?

KARA
I'm fine. Let's bake.

Kara marches to the kitchen island with too much energy and a straight face. Lights change.

She parks herself behind the island.

SILAS
Okay?

KARA
Yes.

SILAS
Great. We have the other bakers ready, and the judges are getting restless so we need to get some footage before we break for lunch. We'll reshoot that intro later. Yeah? James? Got them lights going?

Lights change to "record."

We hear the voice of an overly energetic baking show host.

As the host speaks, the light on Kara becomes more intense.

HOST
Hello bakers! For your first challenge today, you will be making a loaf. This can be sweet or savory, whatever you fancy. We are looking for a moist but crumbly loaf, bursting with flavor. You have one hour...Ready, steady, bake!

Somewhere we see and/or hear a clock ticking/moving to show the passage of time.

Kara begins to measure ingredients. Dumping them into the bowl.

She slices something. Did she nick her finger? She dumps it in the bowl of the stand mixer.

HOST

(Offstage) And what are you making for us today?

CELEBRITY 1

(Offstage) Today I'm making a honey cornbread loaf. When I'm on tour, there's this little diner...(carries on with some story).

Kara fumbles about for ingredients. Her movements are precise but misguided.

A dim light comes up on stage right. Coach Bateman stands facing Kara.

Kara sees him. She tries to slow her breathing.

HOST

(Offstage) And what are you baking for us today?

CELEBRITY 2

(Offstage) Well, when we were filming on location in New Zealand...(tells some story)

Kara turns back to her island. Her hands are not working. She tries to grab different baking utensils, she drops them and scrambles to pick them up. This continues.

COACH BATEMAN

Kara you're not focused. You need to focus.

Kara's movements quicken as if she's trying to busy Coach Bateman away. She puts something that vaguely resembles a loaf into the oven (under the island).

She stops to breathe for a second.

COACH BATEMAN

You're tense.

Kara starts to clean and wipe off the surface of her island.

Coach Bateman walks over to Kara and puts his hands on her shoulders. She freezes. He attempts to massage her shoulders.

COACH BATEMAN

Breathe into your shoulders. (He breathes deeply) You're so tense.

Kara falls deeper into this memory.

Perhaps the lights change. Perhaps they begin to flash.

COACH BATEMAN

Your back...do you always hold all of your tension in your back?

He steps to look at her entire back. His hands begin to make their way down her body.

HOST

(Offstage) Bakers! You have 10...9...8...7...(this continues)

Kara snaps back. She knocks Coach Bateman out of the way while she shoves on oven gloves and pulls the loaf out of the oven.

She throws it onto the counter.

Coach Bateman looks at it for a moment.

COACH BATEMAN

Not your best work.

He can exit or stay on stage.

HOST

(Jolly) And what did you make for us today Kara?

KARA

Its supposed to be earl grey.

HOST

It looks...

KARA

Shit.

HOST

Should we cut?

SILAS

Cut.

Silas enters. Looks at Kara for a moment.

We can break for lunch here.

Lights up, Jan and Silas begin to head to break. **

KARA

My Coach killed himself last night.

They stop and look at her.

Picked up my first pair of gloves when I was eight. Started training at ten. Scouted and picked up for his gym so I could start competing at thirteen. Fourteen I saw my first little flashing red light. Told my mom I saw it in the changing room. Asked what it was. Her face kinda froze stiff like plaster. "Change at home" she said. So I did. No questions asked. He's a world champion. He has a wife and daughters. High school was high school. Coach made sure I never had time to date. Gotta be ready for trials. Team USA doesn't wait. Bodies changing. Hands wandering. Coach starts correcting me in ways he never has before. Doesn't ask if he can put his hand there. Just does. Suddenly he's a certified physiotherapist and he's stretching us, massaging us, diagnosing us. I start looking for flashing red lights. Start wearing baggy clothes. Start wanting life to be over. Trials begin. Flo tells me he went too far this time. Mack says it was always too far. Trials go well. Make the team. Coach hugs me too tight. For too long. The Olympics. Coach wants to celebrate my medal. Stands too close. We're not at the gym. Its late. No volunteers around...(Beat) They found pictures. They found my naked, thirteen year old body, on a USB, in his home. I wanted to evaporate. (Kara looks up) I used to stay up dreaming of ways to disappear. To end me. And now he--he just--

Kara starts throwing the contents of the kitchen island onto the floor ending with the loaf.

Perhaps Coach Bateman makes his presence known.

Beat.

He gets to end it. He fucking ended it.

Beat.

Why did I have to stay?

Beat.

I want to ask why but I know. I wanted to believe that justice was real. That you would get punished. But thats not how this works.

Beat.

It never works out.

Beat. Kara screams.

The suppressed feelings/reactions from the past sixteen years try to exit her body.

This goes on for some time.

It never works out.

Blackout.