

PROTECTING ROSE

Written

by

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FADE IN:

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Distant city lights glimmer through grimy warehouse windows.

Expensive cars and shop equipment crowd the space.
Tables along the walls overflow with weapons.

DAVIS (60s), stands in front of a dozen MEN. Arrogant,
powerful, clearly in charge.

A metallic CLINK near the overhead door interrupts the
conversation. Weapons are drawn.

POLICE burst inside, guns drawn.

RICK SMYTH (30s), clean-cut, confident, a Milwaukee police
badge clipped to his shirt.

RICK
Drop your weapons.

NATE STONE (30s) Tall, muscular, dark buzz cut, wearing a
worn black T-shirt and jeans. He looks like he hasn't slept.

Nate gives Rick a quick nod.

He steps away from the suspects and levels his weapon at
Davis.

NATE
Just give me a reason.

Davis glares and Nate, then turns to his men.

DAVIS
Do it!

Police move in to handcuff the criminals.

Nate and Rick head toward the exit.

NATE
Can I interest you in a cold one at
Charlie's Pub?

RICK
(snorts)
I've got plans with someone a heck of
a lot prettier than you.

Nate chuckles.

NATE
Your loss.

They exit the building.

EXT. STREET IN SEEDY PART OF TOWN - NIGHT

The night swings into gear on bar-lined streets.

The distant blare of a saxophone serenades as crowds spill onto the sidewalks.

BRETT JANKOWSKI Bushy brows and mean eyes (40s), stands in a darkened parking lot of a rundown motel.

Brett holds a cellphone against his ear.

BRETT
I'm sure it's her.

Listens to the caller. Nods.

BRETT
She'll be dead by morning.

He pockets the phone, glances around, then pops the trunk of an SUV, grabs cutting pliers.

Crosses the parking lot and slips under a blue two-door sedan.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A REDHEADED WOMAN (mid-20s) exits a cheap motel room, a suitcase in one hand, car keys in the other.

Her cheek has a dark BRUISE, shadows under her eyes.

She glances around, then hurries to the same vehicle Brett tampered with. Climbs in and drives away.

INT. NATE'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

A winding country road.

Nate adjusts his rear view mirror and spots a blue sedan speeding toward him, swerving wildly.

Swerves to avoid it, but the car clips his side, sending him into a spin.

He comes to a stop in the middle of the road.
Looks around to see flames from down the hill.
Places a CALL to 9-1-1 as he eases his vehicle off the road.
ENDS THE CALL. Climbs from his car.

EXT. HILLSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Nate stumbles down the hillside toward the wreck.

The passenger-side door is wedged against a tree.
A REDHEADED WOMAN lies unconscious inside.

FIRE flickers beneath the hood.

Nate checks for a pulse, then unbuckles her seatbelt and
pulls her free, carrying her away from the vehicle.

The car EXPLODES.

He drops to the ground, shielding her until the debris stops
falling.

She eyes pop open.

Nate shifts slightly away, careful not to startle her.

Suddenly, she rolls onto her stomach and attempts to crawl
away.

REDHEAD
(barely a whisper)
He's coming.

Her strength gives out and she collapses to the ground.

Nate's posture shifts instantly, protective instinct taking
over as he scans the ridge.

A tense pause. Only wind and distant thunder breaks the
silence.

He kneels beside her and gently turns her onto her back.

She stares up at him, eyes dazed, weakly slapping at him as
she struggles to rise.

NATE
Stop, you're going to hurt yourself.

He grasps her wrists.

REDHEAD

Oww...

Nate notices the chafed skin and releases her hands. His gaze drops to her ankles. Also raw.

His eyes narrow.

NATE

Who tied you up?

LIGHTNING flashes, THUNDER cracks.

GUNFIRE rings out. Dirt flies up beside them.

Gunfire erupts from the ridge -- dirt kicks up beside them. Rain begins to fall.

Nate crouches over the woman, gun drawn. He spots a figure at the top of the hill and fires back, emptying his magazine, then reloads.

A car roars away in the distance.

Nate turns back to the redhead.

NATE (cont'd)

Miss, where are you hurt?

SIRENS approach.

She tries to speak, but no sound comes out. She passes out.

Checks her pulse. Removes his jacket and places it over her.

Police arrive.

OFFICER J.D. BOWMAN (late-20s) Stands at the top of the hill.

NATE (cont'd)

(yells over the storm)

J.D., we have an active shooter.
Shots fired from the north side of
the road.

J.D. turns away to search.

The PARAMEDICS move down the slippery hill.

A paramedic checks the woman for injuries. Place her on the stretcher and carries her up.

Nate follows. Approaches J.D.

NATE
Any sign of the shooter?

J.D.
'Fraid not.

J.D. seals shell casings in a plastic bag as more squad cars arrive.

Nate gets into his car and follows the ambulance.

INT. MEMORIAL HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Nate stands outside the woman's room.

A DOCTOR approaches.

DOCTOR ANDERSON (60s), professional.

DOCTOR ANDERSON
Officer Stone, I'm Doctor Anderson.
The patient is awake.

NATE
How is she?

DOCTOR ANDERSON
She has bruising. A slight
concussion. She also appears to have
amnesia.

NATE
Is it permanent?

DOCTOR ANDERSON
Hard to say. Her memory could return
in days, weeks, or even months. Worst
case is it never returns, but that
wouldn't be the norm.

The doctor pauses for a short beat, his expression sympathetic.

DOCTOR ANDERSON (cont'd)
Given her injuries, and the fact that
she's been restrained, we have to
consider the possibility of a sexual
assault.

Nate is stoic, the news not coming as a surprise.

DOCTOR ANDERSON (cont'd)
Given her injuries, we'll want a
specialist to speak with her and
assess the situation more closely.

The paging system calls for the doctor. He leaves for
another patient.

Nate takes out his cell. Places a call.

NATE
J.D., this is Nate. I'm still at the
hospital. Can you send over a detail
to guard her door for the night.

He moves to the water cooler and fills a paper cup. His eyes
fixed on the woman's door.

NATE
I'm running on fumes from the
undercover op. and need to get some
shut-eye. I'll be back at first
light.

Tosses back the water. Crushes the cup and drops it into the
trash.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

THUNDER booms in the distance. Brett, disguised as an
orderly, rolls a supply cart down the corridor. He passes
the guard's empty chair.

Enters the woman's room. The wall clock reads 2:32 a.m.

The Redhead is awake, and watches his approach.

Brett pushes the cart to the side of her bed.

REDHEAD
Hello.

BRETT
I'm here to check on you.

REDHEAD
(questioningly)
The nurse was just here.

Brett takes another step towards her. His wig catches on the
drapes around her bed, knocking it askew. Her eyes widen.

REDHEAD

Wait.

She holds up a hand, palm out.

REDHEAD (cont'd)

Who are you?

Brett lunges at her, reaching for a knife at his waist.

Clamps a hand over her mouth and tries to stab her.

She kicks him off-balance. Scrambles off the other side of the bed.

She SCREAMS as hospital equipment clatters to the floor.

Footsteps sound in the hallway toward them.

Brett races out the door, leaving behind a scene of chaos.

INT. NATE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nate awakens to a Rock n' Roll tune blaring from his cellphone.

He groans, fumbling for his phone. Answers.

J.D. (V.O.)

Nate, this is J.D. You should get over to the hospital.

Nate bolts from the bed.

NATE

What is it?

J.D. (V.O.)

The woman was attacked, and the officer we sent over is dead. They found him in the men's bathroom.

He steps into a pair of jeans. Pulls on a shirt.

NATE

How is she?

J.D. (V.O.)

The doctor's with her now.

He retrieves his gun and makes his way out of the bedroom.

NATE
I'm on the way.

Nate slams his feet into his shoes. Races for the door.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Nate enters the redhead's hospital room.

NATE
Miss, I'm Nate Stone with the
Milwaukee Sheriff's Office.

REDHEAD
(shakily)
Hello.

NATE
I'm in charge of your security. As
soon as the doctor releases you,
we'll be moving you to a safe house.

REDHEAD
Do you know who I am, or why someone
wanted to hurt me?

NATE
No, I'm sorry. We don't know your
identity yet.

She studies him carefully.

REDHEAD
What do you know?

His expression grows serious.

NATE
This wasn't the first attempt on your
life.

REDHEAD
(shocked)
What?

NATE
After the car accident, someone took
a shot at us.

She shakes her head in disbelief.

REDHEAD

I don't understand why this is happening.

She fights against rising emotion.

Nate watches her, sympathy in his eyes. He reaches for a single red rose from the vase beside her bed.

NATE

Until we know who you are, you'll need a name.

He hands her the rose.

NATE

Rose. It suits you.

She takes the flower, inhaling its scent. A moment of calm flickers across her face.

REDHEAD/ROSE

Rose...I like it.

INT. PENTHOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

MITCH LARSEN (50s), salt-and-pepper hair, sits on a leather couch, drink in hand.

Well dressed, powerful, and angry.

A KNOCK sounds on his office door.

MITCH

Enter!

Brett enters. Stops a respectable distance away.

MITCH

Well, spit it out.

Brett clears his throat.

BRETT

I'm sorry, boss. I didn't make the hit.

MITCH

You killed a cop!

Brett appears nervous.

BRETT

I needed him out of the way so I could get to her.

Mitch stands up and paces the room.

MITCH

I specifically instructed you to take care of the situation. You only made it worse!

BRETT

Security was too tight.

MITCH

That's bullshit. You're supposed to be a pro. How hard can it be to eliminate one small problem?

BRETT

It won't happen again.

Mitch stops pacing to glare at Brett.

MITCH

Her birthday is coming up, and she needs dealt with before then or we're going to have a problem.

He points a finger in Brett's direction.

MITCH

Meaning, you're going to have a problem.

Brett's face pales.

BRETT

I have an inside source. When they move her, I'll know.

MITCH

You better. Now get out.

Brett nods and exits the room.

Mitch picks up his cellphone and places a call.

MITCH

She's still alive... and there's fifty million riding on this.

He walks over to stare out the penthouse window.

(MORE)

MITCH (cont'd)
If Jankowski screws up again, I need
a backup plan.

INT. CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX - NIGHT

Rose and Nate enter an older, well maintained building. The large sign above the entrance reads LAKE MICHIGAN CONDOMINIUMS.

The lobby is brightly-lit and tastefully decorated.

Nate leads Rose over the sitting area. An old upright piano nestled in one corner.

NATE
Rest here, I'll only be a moment.

Appearing weary, she takes a seat. Leans her head back against the cushion and closes her eyes.

Nate studies her. He reaches into his jacket pocket to retrieve a small white case that reads: BREATH MINTS.

Spills two hard candies into his palm and pops them into his mouth.

NATE
Want one?

She opens her eyes studies the mint case.

ROSE
Mmmm. Cinnamon.

NATE
Yep. My favorite flavor.

He pops another mint into his mouth. Wiggles his brows.

She smiles. Holds out her hand for a mint. Nate tips two into her palm.

ROSE
Thank you.

NATE
How are you doing?

ROSE
I'm fine. Really. It's just...a lot.

She exhales, strained, then places the mints in her mouth.

NATE

We'll figure it out, Rose. Just give it time.

She offers a sad smile and nods.

ROSE

Go on. Do what you need to do.

She rests her head against the sofa and closes her eyes again.

Nate studies her thoughtfully before walking to the security desk.

JOE (60s) - Security guard.

Joe looks up from his paperwork. Stands up to greet Nate.

JOE

Heard you'd be staying with us for a while.

Nate hands Joe his business card.

NATE

Here's my updated contact info. if you need to reach me.

Joe nods and tucks the card into his binder.

PIANO MUSIC flows from the lobby.

Nate turns to see Rose at the piano, focused, a soft expression on her face as she gently sways to the music.

He steps closer, surprise and admiration flickering across his features at her talent.

Finishing with a flourish, she glances up at him and smiles.

NATE

That was incredible.

She scoots off the bench, happy.

ROSE

I don't know how I can play. It just came naturally.

NATE

(approvingly)

It seems your memory's returning already.

She laughs softly.

ROSE
I guess so.

Nate takes her elbow and leads her to the elevator.

NATE
Let's get you settled in for the
night; you must be exhausted.

ROSE
Yeah.

She gives him a hopeful look.

ROSE
Maybe I can come back down to play
again tomorrow?

Nate smiles.

NATE
I think that can be arranged.

INT. CONDOMINIUM UNIT - NIGHT

Nate shows Rose around the condo.

NATE
The master bedroom has an over-sized
tub if you'd like a soak before
dinner.

ROSE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nate gestures toward an open closet.

NATE
One of the female officers brought
you some clothes.

He points to the door next to the closet.

NATE
Bathroom's through there. I'll get
dinner started.

ROSE
You're cooking?

NATE

Yep.

He grins teasingly.

NATE (cont'd)

It's pizza night.

He leaves.

Rose enters the bathroom.

BATHROOM:

Rose starts the shower, then strips.

Steps into the steamy shower and washes her hair.

Uses a washcloth to clean her body, avoid the worst of her bruises.

She turns off the water and steps out to wrap a large towel around herself.

Moves to the bedroom.

ROSE'S BEDROOM:

Exhaustion lines her face as she walks to the bed and sits on the edge.

KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nate chops vegetables while a saucepan simmers on the stove. Round pizza dough rests in a pan on the kitchen counter.

His cell phone vibrates on the counter. He wipes his hands on a towel. Answers.

NATE

Nate here.

RICK (V.O.)

Hey, Nate. We had the woman's car checked out. Unfortunately it raises more questions than it answers.

Nate turns on the speaker, setting the phone back down.

NATE

How's that?

He grabs a ripe tomato from the refrigerator and chops it into thin slices.

RICK (V.O.)
The car was a rental, registered
under a false name.

NATE
Why would she be traveling under a
false identity?

RICK (V.O.)
That's the million dollar question.

NATE
Anything come back on her prints?

RICK (V.O.)
Nothing, I'm afraid.

Frustration paints Nate's features.

NATE
What about missing persons?

RICK (V.O.)
Nothing there either.

Nate lifts the pan off the stove and pours the sauce onto the dough. Set the pan into the sink.

NATE
Damn.

RICK (V.O.)
And just as we suspected, her brakes
were cut.

He places the vegetables onto the pizza.

NATE
She's certainly a puzzle.

RICK (V.O.)
How is she?

NATE
Okay for the most part. Though she
seems, fragile, for lack of a better
word.

He retrieves freshly grated cheese from the bowl on the counter and tosses it evenly over the pizza.

RICK (V.O.)
Maybe she should talk with someone.

NATE
Probably a good idea. Any
suggestions?

RICK (V.O.)
Sheila Williams. I worked with her
before, and she's the best there is.

NATE
Don't happen to have her number, do
you?

RICK (V.O.)
Yeah, hang on.

Nate wipes his hands on a towel. Grabs up the cellphone and
shuts off the speaker.

NATE
One more thing. She plays the piano
like a concert pianist. That might
help, or not, but at least it's
something.

Writes down a number.

NATE
Thanks, Rick.

Nate ends the call. Finishes up the pizza and puts it in the
oven.

Places a call to Sheila Williams.

NATE (cont'd)
Ms. Williams, this is Nate Stone...

HALLWAY (LATER)

Nate raps on Rose's door and waits.

Knocks again.

NATE
Rose.

He cracks open the door and sees her lying on her back,
stretched out atop the comforter, wrapped in a towel.

He steps inside.

ROSE'S BEDROOM

Nate walks to the bed.

His gaze moves across her form, her bruises and scrapes evident.

NATE
(mutters)
Eyes off the victim, jackass.

He kneels next to her bed. Gently shakes her shoulder. Calls her name. She stirs, but remains sleeping.

He stands back up.

NATE (cont'd)
You deserve a good night's rest,
sweetheart.

He walks to the closet to retrieve a blanket from inside. Returns to spread it over her body.

Leaves the room.

ROSE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A thump at the door stirs Rose awake.

She tosses the cover aside and sits up. Blinks sleepily.

Another knock at her door.

NATE (O.S.)
Rose, are you up?

Rose stands, the towel loosely covering her body.

Finds a short robe draped over a chair and tugs it on, tossing the towel onto the chair.

ROSE
Yes, one minute.

She holds the robe closed with one hand and hurries to the door to open it.

NATE
Morning.

Rose pushes tangled bangs from her eyes, meeting Nate's startled gaze.

The robe clings softly to her frame, her long legs visible beneath the short hem.

ROSE

Morning.

Nate holds her gaze, his expression guarded.

NATE

I'm making breakfast. You must be starved after missing supper.

She nods but remains silent.

After an awkward pause, Nate takes a step back. He turns and heads down the hall.

Calls out over his shoulder.

NATE

Breakfast will be ready in fifteen minutes.

KITCHEN - MORNING

Nate opens the refrigerator door. Grabs a pitcher of orange juice and places it on the table. He moves to the stove where an omelet is cooking.

Rose enters.

ROSE

(shyly)

Hi.

NATE

Hey. Hope you like cheese and veggie omelets.

Rose takes a seat at the kitchen table.

ROSE

Guess we'll find out.

She fills a glass with orange juice, watching Nate prepare breakfast.

A skillet sizzles in the quiet kitchen.

Nate places a fluffy omelet on her plate.

NATE

Don't wait for me. Go ahead...eat.

ROSE

Thank you.

He returns to the stove.

She picks up her fork and takes a generous portion to her mouth. Chunks of steaming cheese and vegetables fall onto her plate.

ROSE

Mmm... It is good.

Nate chuckles.

NATE

Cooking is a hobby of mine. I figure if I'm going to take the time to cook, I'm going to do it right.

He sets an omelet on his plate, returning to place the pan and spatula in the sink. Pours himself a cup of coffee.

NATE

Wanna cup?

ROSE

No... I don't think so.

Nate joins her at the table.

NATE

You have an appointment with a therapist on Wednesday. Hopefully she can help you remember something.

ROSE

All right.

She sighs, takes a sip of orange juice.

Studies him.

ROSE (cont'd)

How long have you been a cop?

NATE

Going on ten years now.

ROSE

Did you always want to go into law enforcement?

Nate shakes his head.

NATE

Funny story actually. Wanna hear it?

ROSE

I would. It'll give me something to think about besides how screwed up my life is.

Nate gives her a sympathetic nod. He leans back, cradling his coffee mug

NATE

My father died when I was six, and it was just Mom and me until I was about fourteen. She met my stepfather when he arrested me for a curfew violation.

ROSE

Wow. You're kidding.

He chuckles, pausing to take a bite of breakfast.

NATE

Nope. I'd fallen in with a local gang--

Rose pauses with her fork halfway to her mouth.

ROSE

That's hard to believe.

NATE

(teasingly)

I haven't always been the fine, upstanding citizen you see before you now.

She laughs softly.

He takes a swig of coffee, setting the mug down with a soft thud.

NATE

Mom came to bail me out, and the rest is history.

Finished with her omelet, Rose places the fork down.

ROSE

That's so romantic.

Nate looks amused.

NATE

My being arrested is romantic? Can't say as I ever quite looked at it that way.

ROSE

No, silly. The way they met. Was it love at first sight?

He shrugs.

NATE

I guess. They were married within a year. Tom was also a widower, with four sons of his own.

ROSE

Five boys. Wow! How'd that go?

NATE

Not well, I'm afraid. I resented Tom's boys and my anger issues were off the charts.

His expression grows dark.

NATE

One night, I planned to meet up with my gang and head over to Rockford to steal a car.

ROSE

Did you?

NATE

I intended to. But Tom figured something was up. He confronted me and we had this huge fight.

He pauses over the memory, a tight expression on his face.

NATE

I was so angry, I wanted to go even more. Tom finally resorted to handcuffing me to the bedpost all night.

Rose gasp softly.

ROSE

Isn't that child abuse or something?

Nate chuckles.

NATE

Yeah, probably. But that's how much he didn't want me going.

He loses his smile.

NATE

Good thing to. The next day I found out that the gang hadn't just stolen a car, they'd carjacked one.

ROSE

(quietly)

Oh.

He met her gaze, something hard flickering in his eyes.

NATE

They killed the driver in the process, something that I couldn't live with.

ROSE

How awful.

NATE

I told Tom, and he pushed me to come forward. They went to prison, but the rest of the gang threatened to kill me. That's when I learned the value of having a big family. My stepbrothers made sure anyone who came after me had to deal with them too.

His expression softens.

NATE

Even though I'd acted like a total ass, they still stood behind me. We've pretty much been inseparable ever since.

ROSE

That's sweet.

NATE

Tom taught me duty and honor, and after a stint in the army, I came home and joined the same police force as my youngest brother.

ROSE
So being a hero runs in the family.

Nate chuckles.

NATE
Two of my brothers are policemen. One
is a fireman, and my oldest brother
is with the F.B.I.

ROSE
Such a touching story.

She raises her hand to her heart.

Nate laughs.

NATE
Well, one thing we know for sure,
Rose.

ROSE
What's that?

Nate takes another drink of his coffee. His gaze steady on
her face.

NATE
You're definitely a romantic.

LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rose reclines on the couch, engrossed in a book. Also on the
couch, Nate scrolls through his cellphone.

A TV music channel plays a pop tune that draws Rose's
attention. She lifts her head from her book, her shoulders
swaying to the music.

ROSE
This song sounds familiar. It makes
me wanna dance.

NATE
(eyebrows quirked)
Yeah?

He stands and holds out his hand.

NATE
It might jar your memory.

She smiles and takes his hand.

ROSE

Yeah, why not.

Nate holds her loosely in his arms. They move to the upbeat music, Nate occasionally spinning her with the rhythmic beat.

The sound of her laughter fills the room.

The music changes to a love ballad. The space between them gradually disappears.

Rose sighs and snuggles closer.

Nate leans down and speaks softly.

NATE

Mmm, you smell nice.

Rose goes rigid, then shoves him away with surprising strength.

She backs against the wall, her body shaking. Holds her hands up as if in an attempt to ward him off.

Nate looks upset as he slowly approaches. Stops a short distance from her and holds out a hand in peace.

NATE

Everything's okay, Rose. You're safe.

She appears to be in shock.

NATE (cont'd)

No one's going to hurt you.

Her eyes focus on him as recognition settles in.

ROSE

N-Nate?

NATE

Yeah. It's just me.

He gently takes her hand and leads her to the couch, settling in beside her.

NATE

What happened back there?

She shakes her head, looking confused.

ROSE

One minute I was having a wonderful time dancing with you, then suddenly this man's face entered my mind. I just - panicked.

NATE

What did he look like?

ROSE

I can't remember, it all happened so fast.

NATE

Don't worry about it. You see the therapist soon, and she'll help you figure it out.

She wrinkles her nose.

ROSE

You think that's really necessary?

NATE

You want your memory back, right?

She releases a frustrated breath.

ROSE

Yes.

NATE

Everything's going work out. Just give it time.

She gives him a shaky smile.

ROSE

If you say so.

Nate picks up the T.V. remote and offers it to her.

NATE

How about a movie. Ladies choice.

Amused, she snatches the remote locates a romance movie.

Nate groans and settles in for a chick flick.

ROSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Asleep, Rose tosses and turns, then SCREAMS as she jerks up in bed and startles herself awake.

Moments later, Nate bursts through the door, gun in hand. He flips on the lights, scanning the room as he takes in the scene.

Rose is sitting up, knees drawn up under the blanket, her arms wrapped around them.

Crossing the room, he sets the gun on the nightstand and takes a seat on the edge of the bed.

NATE
You all right?

ROSE
I--I remembered something.

NATE
What?

She rakes her fingers through her hair.

ROSE
A man and a woman. I think they were my parents.

NATE
That's good, Rose. Anything else?

ROSE
We're in Chicago, I think.

She stares at the far wall, lost in the memory.

ROSE (cont'd)
I was sixteen or seventeen, and I remember running up the steps of a large building.

Her tear-filled gaze returns to him.

ROSE
I remember looking back, and they were standing on the sidewalk, smiling at me. We seemed...happy.

Nate reaches out and gives her shoulder a reassuring squeeze.

ROSE (cont'd)
I'm sorry, that's it. That's all I can remember.

NATE
Your memories are returning. That's
something to be happy about.

Nate studies her thoughtfully.

NATE
How'd you like to get out for a bit
tomorrow?

Her expression brightens.

ROSE
Really?

NATE
You bet. Now, try and get some sleep.

He stands and picks up his gun.

NATE
Night, Rose.

ROSE
Night, Nate.

He exits, closing the door softly behind him.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nate and Rose are both dressed for the day. He walks over to
where she's reading a book.

NATE
Ready to get out of here.

ROSE
More than ready.

She lays the book aside and gets to her feet.

NATE
I made reservations for five at a
little out of the way Italian
restaurant.

ROSE
Perfect.

They exit the condo.

MONTAGE - INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

* Nate and Rose sit at a corner table, their faces illuminated by soft lighting.

* Nate faces the room, scanning his surroundings.

* They carry on a conversation, laughing and joking between bites.

* Nate pays the bill and leads Rose out of the restaurant. His hand rests on the small of her back.

INT. CONDOMINIUM UNIT - NIGHT

Rose and Nate enter the condo.

ENTRYWAY:

NATE

Wait here while I do a quick security check.

ROSE

You really think that's necessary?

NATE

It won't take but a minute.

Nate strides down the hallway, looking into each room along the way. He enters Rose's room. His gaze locks on something above the door. A LIGHT flickers on.

Nate spins around and races back to the living room. Rose is in front of the picture window, looking at the city lights.

She turns to the sound of his footsteps.

NATE

We gotta go, Rose! Now!

ROSE

What?

EXPLOSION!

Rose gives a startled SCREAM. Nate flips over the couch. Pulls her towards him.

NATE

Quick! Crawl under.

She does, and he wedges himself in with her, curling his body around hers in a protective way.

More EXPLOSIONS sound, closer this time. The ceiling starts to crumble sending dust and debris raining down on them. Both cough from the thick cloud of smoke.

A few seconds later, Nate crawls out of the narrow space.

He helps Rose out as FIRE CRACKLES nearby. He pulls her towards the dining room.

Rose slows and tugs at his hand.

ROSE

Nate, shouldn't we go that way.

She gestures toward the kitchen, and the exit.

NATE

Too risky.

DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nate leads her to a large bookcase.

ROSE

What do you mean?

NATE

Someone could be waiting for us to leave the building.

He takes in her frightened expression.

NATE

Trust me.

He pushes a book to the side and flips a switch behind it. The bookcase swings open, revealing a dim STAIRCASE leading down.

Rose snorts, a hint of hysteria beneath the amusement.

ROSE

What? Are you James Bond or something?

Nate gives a grim chuckle and ushers her into the hidden passageway.

NATE

Something like that.

EXT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Halfway down, they meet Joe on the way up.

JOE
You two alright?

Nate frowns.

NATE
Considering someone blew up the safe-
house, we're just peachy.

Joe looks sheepish.

NATE
Anyone hurt?

JOE
Don't think so. Seems you two were
the targets.

NATE
Whoever it was knew we left the
condominium.

JOE
Good thing they didn't know about
this old stairwell.

EXT. CONDOMINIUM PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Nate, Rose, and Joe exit into the parking structure.
Emergency sirens wail in the distance.

NATE
Joe, we need to get out of here. Fast
and quiet.

Joe nods and leads them to his car.

ROSE
Where are we going?

NATE
Get in and lay down. I'll explain
everything as soon as we're in the
clear.

Nate helps her onto the backseat. He slides onto the floor.
Joe tosses them a blanket. Nate covers himself and Rose.

INT. JOE'S CAR (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

The car pulls away, unnoticed by the emergency vehicles and the crowd of SPECTATORS.

Joe veers onto the freeway and picks up speed.

JOE
It's clear.

Rose tosses off the blanket and sits up.

Nate takes a seat next to her.

NATE
You okay?

Rose nods, looking shellshocked.

Nate leans forward to speak with Joe.

NATE
Find a secure spot to pull over.

He turns back to Rose.

NATE (cont'd)
As far as anyone knows, we died in the fire. By the time they figure out the truth, I'll have you in a more secure location.

ROSE
So, whoever it is will stop looking for me?

NATE
(nods)
At least long enough to figure out what the hell's going on.

The car veers into a truck stop, behind two tractor-trailers.

Joe exits and Nate slips behind the wheel. Rose moves to the passenger seat.

NATE
Get word to Rick about finding the damn leak. I'll contact him as soon as we're safe.

JOE
Good luck.

ROSE
Are we just going to leave him here?

JOE
Don't worry about me, miss. I'll call
a friend for a ride home.

NATE
Later, Joe.

The car pulls away.

EXT. CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX- NIGHT

Rick climbs from his car.

The scene is one of chaos and confusion with GAWKERS and
EMERGENCY PERSONNEL all around. The top floor of the
building on FIRE.

Rick grimaces and marches over to J.D.

RICK
What the hell happened?

J.D.
Seems like someone set off a series
of bombs on the top floor. No sign of
Nate or the woman.

Mouth pinched tight, Rick stares at the building.

J.D.
It'd take more than a few bombs to
take Stone down.

Rick studies the chaotic scene.

RICK
Contact me as soon as you know
anything. I'll be at headquarters.

Rick turns to leave when his cell phone rings.

RICK
Rick speaking.

His tense expression eases as he continues towards his
vehicle.

RICK (cont'd)
Thanks, Joe. As always, we appreciate
your help.

Ending the call, he dials another number.

RICK (cont'd)
Cheryl, pull the records of everyone
involved with the safe house.

INT. JOE'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Rose stares out the window as she chews her thumbnail.

NATE
Hey, give your poor nails a break.

She studies her jagged nails and sighs.

ROSE
How do you think they found me?

Nate's faces hardens.

NATE
I suspect they've got someone on the
inside.

Rose leans closer, eyes filled with worry.

ROSE
You think a cop set the bombs?

NATE
Not set the bombs, but someone sure
as shit leaked our location.

ROSE
So we're going someplace where they
can't find us?

NATE
That's the plan. We'll lay low until
Rick's able to shut down the leak.

ROSE
But they found us once, won't they
find another?

NATE
It's not an official safe house, so
it'll be harder to trace.

Rose gives him a weak smile, chewing on her nails again.

ROSE
How much further?

NATE

'Bout an hour. Why don't you get some sleep.

Rose leans her head against the seat and closes her eyes.

ROSE

I don't think I'll be able to sleep.

She quickly nods off.

Nate chuckles softly, then pops two breath mints into his mouth.

EXT. NATE'S CAR - NIGHT

Nate pulls up to a century-old farmhouse set back from the road, with a covered front porch that has weathered a hundred Wisconsin winters.

He tenderly strokes Rose's cheek.

NATE

Wake up, sleeping beauty.

Her eyes flutter open, and she smiles up at him.

ROSE

Hi.

She sits up and looks around.

ROSE

Where are we?

NATE

This is my stepfather's property.
We'll be safe here for now.

As they exit the car, an orange tabby darts into the bushes.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

They enter a small kitchen—dark wood cabinets, maroon walls, white countertops and tile floor.

ROSE

Pretty.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Entering the living room, no bigger than the kitchen, Nate motions towards the back of the house.

NATE
Bedrooms are through there. You can
take the larger room on the left.

The living room is filled with antique furniture, including a grandfather clock in the corner that wasn't running.

ROSE
That's pretty. Does it run?

Nate nods and steps over to wind it.

NATE
Tom built it years ago. Master
woodworker.

He points toward a screened-in room at the front of the house.

NATE
He added the sunroom in the late
seventies. There's an old two-room
schoolhouse out back that I can show
you tomorrow.

Rose steps over to look out the window.

ROSE
It's quiet out here. Safe.

NATE
We're miles from any other homes,
Rose. You can relax.

She turns to Nate with a weary smile.

ROSE
I'd give anything for a bath right
now. I feel pretty grubby.

She glances down at her clothes.

ROSE
But I don't have anything clean to
put on, and I smell like smoke...

NATE
There's a good chance we have some
spare clothes somewhere.

Nate steps into a short hallway and points to a door between the two.

NATE (cont'd)
Bathrooms there.

He motions toward the room on the left.

NATE (cont'd)
See if you can find any clothes
that'll fit. My sister-in-law usually
forgets something.

INT. BEDROOM (CONTINUOUS)

Rose enters. A wrought-iron four-poster dominates the room, a tall dresser against one wall.

She checks the drawers until she finds a long white cotton nightgown. Turning, she bumps into Nate. He catches her by one arm to steady her, men's clothes clutched in his other hand

Their eyes meet, and for a moment, neither of them moves.

The sound of the clocks chime breaks the intimate moment and he releases her and steps back, clearing his throat.

NATE
I'll get a fire going while you
freshen up.

Rose nods and moves past him, entering the hallway.

NATE
(calls after her)
Toss your clothes outside, and I'll
throw them in the washer.

She enters the bathroom and shuts the door behind her.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM

Nate enters the laundry area, tugging on the sweatpants and T-shirt he'd found, before dumping their dirty clothes into the washer. Heads into the Living Room.

INT. KITCHEN

Nate rummages through the freezer, finding a family frozen meal. Turns on the oven and places it inside.

Grabs two bottled waters from the refrigerator and returns to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Nate twists off the tops of the water, and sets them on the coffee table before starting a fire in the fireplace.

Plops onto the floor and stretches his legs out in front of him. Leans back against the couch.

Rose enters, her nightgown skimming slender curves.

NATE
Feel better?

ROSE
Yes, much better, thanks.

NATE
Dinner will be ready in about twenty minutes.

He offers her a sheepish grin.

NATE
It's not much, just a crappy frozen meal.

She sits on the floor, across from him.

ROSE
It'll be fine.

NATE
Tomorrow we'll take a run into town and stock up on supplies. Pick up some clothes too.

ROSE
How long do you think we'll need to stay here?

His eyes fixed on hers, he takes a swig from his water before he speaks.

NATE
(shrugs)
A week maybe. Maybe less, if your memory returns.

ROSE
I'd be dead if it wasn't for you.
Thank you for saving me, and thank
you for protecting me now.

NATE
It's my job.

He leans back. Winks.

NATE
Rescuing damsels in distress is my
specialty.

Rose laughs.

ROSE
I just bet it is, Officer Stone.

They share a smile.

NATE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nate awakens, squinting at the clock. 3:02 AM. Did the
clock's chiming wake him, or was it something else?

He retrieves his gun from the nightstand and cautiously
steps into the hall.

A faint moan comes from Rose's room.

He quickly enters her room., finding her asleep. As he turns
back, she moans again, tossing distress.

Nate moves to the side of the bed to lightly touch her
shoulder.

NATE
Rose, wake up.

Her eyes pop open.

ROSE
Nate?

She sits up.

NATE
You were having a nightmare.

He sets his gun on the nightstand and takes a seat on the
edge of the bed.

NATE
Did you remember something?

ROSE
I--I remember being scared.

NATE
What scared you?

ROSE
A man... An older man...

She takes a deep breath and stares off into space.

ROSE
We were having breakfast, but I was afraid of him. All I remember is that he was older. That's all. Nothing else.

She looks back to Nate with a look of sadness.

NATE
Would you like some company, until you fall back to sleep?

She nods, relief softening her features.

ROSE
If you don't mind.

NATE
Not at all.

Nate settles against the headboard as she leans back onto the pillow, her gaze lingering on him a moment longer.

INT. PENTHOUSE MITCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Mitch steps to the bar to pour himself a drink.

MITCH
Care for one?

He drops two ice cubes into his glass before adding two fingers of Cognac.

BRETT
(appears nervous)
No, I'm good.

Mitch sets his drink on the desk before he reaches for a Cuban cigar and lights it.

A cloud of smoke shrouds his face.

MITCH

So, Brett — what makes you so sure
this time?

BRETT

I planted bombs in their condo that
destroyed most of the upper floors.

MITCH

How do you know she died in the
blast?

BRETT

I--I blocked off the stairs and
disabled the elevator.

Brett's gaze flicks to the TWO ARMED MEN standing near the
door, then back to Mitch.

BRETT

There's no way she could have made it
out alive.

Mitch leans forward and exhales smoke into Brett's face.

MITCH

Do you have proof she's dead?

Brett's eyes dart to the men again, fear showing in his eyes
before looking nervously back at Mitch.

BRETT

I can get it for you.

MITCH

I have it on good authority that you
did not cover all the exits.

Mitch flicks cigar ashes onto the floor.

MITCH (cont'd)

If she lives long enough to collect
her inheritance, everything I've
built disappears.

Mitch's gaze turns steely.

MITCH

If she manages to escape, there won't
be anywhere you can hide.

Brett nervously shuffles his feet.

BRETT

I swear I have the situation under control.

Mitch presses the red-hot tip of the cigar onto Brett's forearm.

Brett grunts and his body stiffens, but he doesn't move

MITCH

You have one day to bring me the proof.

Mitch takes a casual step back and waves a dismissive hand toward the door.

MITCH

Now get the hell out of here.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

Nate carries an armload of grocery bags into the kitchen and sets them on the counter.

Rose follows behind with two shopping bags and places them on the small kitchen table.

They begin to put away groceries.

ROSE

When can we reschedule with the therapist?

Nate pauses and turns to study her, his gaze intent.

.

NATE

I can set it up, if you're ready.

Rose lifts her chin, determination in her eyes.

ROSE

I'm ready.

They finish organizing the groceries.

ROSE (cont'd)

I'm going to put away my new clothes and rest for a bit.

NATE

Sounds good.

HALLWAY (LATER)

Nate knocks on Roses door. She opens it.

NATE
Lunch is served, milady.

He bows, with a sweeping gesture toward the living room. She smiles at his antics and walks past him.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They take their seats around the small coffee table where two steaming bowls of chili are waiting along with bottled waters.

ROSE
Mmm... Smells good.

Rose takes a sip smiles approvingly.

ROSE
Delicious. I'm impressed.

He gives her a playful smirk.

NATE
Chili's not especially difficult.

ROSE
Says you. I can't cook a lick.

She froze with a spoonful of soup halfway to her mouth, her wide-eyed gaze snapping to Nate.

ROSE
Wait. How do I know that?

He grins at her.

NATE
Your memory is fighting it's way
back. That's a good thing, Rose.

Rose smiles back at him before taking a bit of her soup.

ROSE
Yum. Where did you learn to cook?

NATE
My mom insisted everyone help out in
the kitchen.

He chuckles.

NATE (cont'd)
Thing is, I found out that I enjoyed
it.

ROSE
Bonus for me. Not only do I get a
bodyguard, I get a chef.

Nate studies her with a smirk.

NATE
Yeah, you're a lucky girl all right.

Rose laughs, lifting up her water bottle for a drink.

NATE
How'd you like to do a little target
practice later this afternoon?

ROSE
Really?

NATE
Yep. Thought I'd show you a few self-
defense moves too.

For a moment, Rose looks uncertain, then she nods. A look of
determination enters her eyes.

ROSE
I'd like that.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH — LATE AFTERNOON

The thin orange tabby watches Rose from the steps of the
porch.

ROSE
Hey, pretty girl. Are you hungry?

Rose kneels and sets down a small dish of tuna.

Nate stands nearby, a hint of fondness in his eyes.

Rose rises and takes a step back, glancing over to Nate.

ROSE (cont'd)
I think I'll call her Autumn.

The cat inches closer.

EXT. OPEN FIELD — LATE AFTERNOON

Cicadas hum.

A paper target flaps on the trunk of a giant oak.

ROSE grips the pistol with both hands.

NATE steps in behind her, his chest close to her back. His hands settle over hers, steady and sure.

NATE
Finger off the trigger until you're
ready to fire.

She nods as he adjusts her stance, subtle and patient.

She steadies her breath, aims, fires—

A clean hole appears dead center.

ROSE
Bull's-eye.

NATE
Not bad.

She glances at him, surprised, a small smile breaking through.

NATE (cont'd)
Again.

She reloads—slide, click, aim—faster this time.

Each SHOT hits near the center.

He raises an eyebrow.

NATE (cont'd)
You handle that like you've done it
before.

ROSE
(excited)
Maybe I have?

NATE
(nodding)
Maybe so.

He sets the pistol aside.

NATE (cont'd)
How'd you like to try some self-
defense moves?

ROSE
I'd love to.

NATE squares off with ROSE.

He swings slow. She blocks—late. He corrects her stance with
a touch to her shoulder.

Again. She catches it clean.

He grabs her wrist.

NATE
Don't pull. Twist.

She turns through his grip, breaking free.

He nods, impressed. Taps his ribs.

NATE (cont'd)
Elbow. Quick.

She drives her elbow back, stopping just short. His grin
widens.

NATE (cont'd)
You catch on quick.

ROSE
Guess I have a good teacher.

MINI-MONTAGE — CONTINUOUS

They move again — block, counter, strike.

Rose grows more confident with each exchange. Nate offers
fewer corrections.

Their movements fall into an easy rhythm as the sun dips in the sky.

They circle each other, training partners now, an unspoken connection growing between them.

END MONTAGE

Nate drops his hands to his sides, taking a step back.

NATE

I think that's enough for the day.

Rose bends slightly, catching her breath.

Nate studies her, impressed.

She straightens, a smile on her face.

ROSE

That was fun.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH – SUNSET

Rose steps onto the porch with a folded blanket and places it in a sheltered corner, near the cat's food dish.

Autumn watches cautiously from a distance.

Nate leans in the doorway, amused.

NATE

Looks like someone's staying.

Rose smiles faintly.

INT. SHEILA WILLIAM'S OFFICE – DAY

The RECEPTIONIST shows Rick into Sheila's office.

RECEPTIONIST

Ms. Williams will be right with you,
Detective Smyth.

RICK

No thanks, I'm good.

The receptionist leaves and shuts the door. Rick pulls out his cellphone and scrolls through it as he waits.

The door opens and SHEILA WILLIAMS (30s) enters. Tall. Blond. Beautiful.

Rick watches as she crosses the room and takes a seat behind her desk.

SHEILA
Detective Smyth, it's nice to see you again. I understand you'd like me to visit your amnesia victim, Rose?

RICK
Yes--but at a safe house, if you'd be willing?

SHEILA
Of course, And please, call me Sheila.

Rick gives her a teasing smile.

RICK
Only if you call me Rick.

Sheila smiles back.

SHEILA
Has Rose remembered anything at all?

RICK
Not much yet--just that she plays the piano. May have had professional training.

Rick leans over and drops a file folder on her desk.

RICK
This is all the information we have on her so far.

Sheila flips through the folder. Checks her calendar.

SHEILA
Can you pick me up here, tomorrow. Say ten o'clock?

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Rose stacks the dishwasher while Nate puts leftovers into the refrigerator.

ROSE
Your meatloaf was yummy.

NATE
Glad you liked it.

ROSE
I did. Tonight though, I'll cook.

NATE
Sure.

Rose squirts detergent into the dishwasher, shuts the door and starts it.

NATE
How about a walk. Work off some of that meal?

ROSE
Okay. Where are we going?

NATE
There's a path in the woods I'd like to show you.

ROSE
What kind of path?

NATE
You'll see.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH – MORNING

Autumn curls on the blanket, lifting sleepy eyes as Rose and Nate step onto the porch.

Rose sets a bowl of tuna down for the cat. Autumn rises, stretches, then rubs gently against her legs with a soft purr before settling down to eat.

Rose kneels, smiling, and lightly strokes the cat's tangled fur.

ROSE
Morning, Autumn.

Nate watches, tenderness in his eyes.

NATE
I think you've found your therapy cat.

ROSE
She's a sweetheart.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Rose and Nate exit the farmhouse. A light breeze winds through the trees as birds sing their morning songs.

They reach a walking path where hand-carved tree stumps border the entrance.

ROSE
These are gorgeous! Were they carved with a chainsaw?

NATE
Yep.

ROSE
Are they yours?

Nate points to a raccoon and a bear sculpture.

NATE
Those two are, my brothers did the others. The bear is a little rough; it was my first try.

ROSE
How old were you?

NATE
Sixteen. The raccoon was a couple years ago, just before I went undercover for a long assignment.

ROSE
What kind of assignment?

NATE
Sorry, sweetheart; if I told you, I'd have to kill you.

Rose laughs and dramatically rolls her eyes.

ROSE
Not funny, Nate...considering.

He chuckles in response.

They stroll along the winding path, coming upon a plank bridge over a wide ditch. A giant rubber alligator crawls up the one side of the hill. A toy, doll-sized troll, holds a sign charging five dollars to cross.

Laughter ensues as they cross the bridge.

Next, a mailbox nestled in a tall tree, marked with bright red airmail signs, makes Rose smile with amusement.

When they come across a rope spiderweb draped between two trees that borders the path, inhabited by a giant toy spider, she bursts into laughter.

Nate smiles at her reaction. Looks pleased.

ROSE
Oooh, scary!

NATE
It's corny, I know. But little kids love it.

They follow the trail until they reach a small pond. An old rope swing hangs from a tree limb that dangled over water.

ROSE
A swimming pond?

NATE
Yep.

Nate pauses. Studies her for a thoughtful moment.

NATE
Maybe when this is all over, we'll come back later this summer and take a dip?

Their eyes meet and linger for a moment. Rose smiles and nods.

ROSE
I'd like that.

They continue their stroll. Past a tree filled with intricately built birdhouses and another displaying flags from around the world.

They come across a tall, wooden tic-tac-toe game with spinning pieces. They proceed to play a few games. Rose wins.

ROSE
That was so fun.

They pause to appreciate the hand-painted shovels attached to the bottoms of several trees.

They continue on to where a large fallen tree is now an amusing playground.

A saddle securely strapped to the fallen trunk, with stirrups for riding. A tree house built into the sturdy branches for climbing.

At the end of the path, they encounter an exquisitely constructed circular maze made from mid-size rocks.

ROSE (cont'd)
Oh wow...how long did it take to build this?

NATE
About three months.

A cool breeze kicks up as Nate kicks small branches away from the path. He takes Rose's hand, and they follow the maze until reaching the center. A decorative stone bench sits there.

NATE
The maze is one of the first things I did with my brothers after the whole gang episode.

They take a seat on the bench. Rose sits back with a sigh of pleasure. Takes in the beautiful scenery.

NATE (cont'd)
After the way they'd rallied around me during that nightmare, I dropped my attitude and got to know them.

She casts him an understanding smile as two deer walk slowly past.

NATE (cont'd)
I spoke with Rick this morning.

ROSE
And?

NATE
He'd like to bring Sheila Williams out to see you tomorrow.

ROSE
Okay.

Dark clouds form overhead and they make their way back to the farmhouse. RAINDROPS sprinkle down. Laughing, they break into a run toward the farmhouse.

They enter the farmhouse.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nate enters the living room.

A small platter of tiny grill-cheese sandwiches with the crusts cut off are sitting on the coffee table, along with crispy french-fries, and two sodas.

He flops down in front of the fireplace. Pops a sandwich into his mouth and moans in appreciation. Reaches for a couple fries.

ROSE

I take it you approve of my dinner choice?

Rose stands in the kitchen doorway wearing the same white nightgown, holding two saucers of strawberry shortcake.

His heated gaze travels over her as he takes a bite of his french fry.

With a soft blush, she continues over to set the saucers on the fireplace mantle.

NATE

Ready to get your butt kicked in a game of Poker? I dug out some play money from an old Monopoly game.

Nate slides a stack of play money towards her and starts shuffling the cards.

ROSE

I don't know how to play.

His brows dance.

NATE

Don't worry, sweetheart, I'll teach you everything you need to know . . .

Rose laughs. Nate grins, deals the cards.

LATER

Rose yawns and stretches her back with a soft GROAN.

ROSE

Okay, so how much do you owe me?

NATE

Let's see.

He looks at a pad of paper on the coffee table. Runs his finger down the page.

NATE
Looks like about... \$176,000, you
little card shark.

He picks up a stack of play money. Counts it out.

NATE (cont'd)
Good thing it's not real money, or
I'd be in a world of hurt.

He pushes the play money across the table.

Rose yawns.

ROSE
While this has been a lot of fun. I'm
tired. I think I'll call it a night.

Nate nods.

NATE
I'll clean up.

ROSE
You sure?

NATE
After that great meal? Absolutely,
it's the least I can do.

Rose laughs and heads to her room.

Nate cleans up then relaxes on the couch, drifting off to sleep. He awakes to the sound of soft crying coming from Rose's bedroom.

ROSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nate heads into her room. Sits on the edge of the bed.

NATE
Rose, wake up.

Her eyes pop open. Nate brushes strands of hair off her face.

NATE.
I heard you crying. Same dream as
before?

She nods and sits up. Suddenly, she leans forward, gripping his shoulders as she kisses him.

Nate tenses for a brief moment. GROANS. Cups her face in his hands and returns the kiss.

After a long moment, he breaks off the kiss.

NATE.

Rose... Sweetheart, we can't do this.

She places her hands on his chest and stares into his eyes.

ROSE

Why not?

NATE

It's my job to protect you, even from myself.

He kisses her nose.

NATE.

Let's figure out your story first.

Rose sighs and smiles softly.

ROSE

All right.

NATE

Get some sleep now.

ROSE

Will you stay with me?

He takes her into his arms.

NATE

I'll stay.

She snuggles into him and they both fall asleep.

INT. ROSE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Rose wakes up alone.

She listens to the steady, rhythmic tick-tock echoing through the hallway before sliding out of bed - runs her fingers through her tangled hair.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Rose crosses over the living room and into the kitchen. A pot of coffee brews on the counter. She inhales deeply, with a moan of pleasure.

ROSE

Nate?

No answer. A noise from outside draws her attention. She peeks out the kitchen window.

A bare-chested Nate stacks chopped wood against the side of the house. His body shimmers with sweat from his labor.

Entranced, she watches him for a few moments. Shakes her head.

ROSE

Stop gawking at the man.

She moves to the coffee pot and pours two cups of coffee. Adds cream and sugar to hers.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rose exits the house with both coffee mugs.

ROSE

Looks like you've been busy.

Nate tosses another log onto the stack. Turns to her. Wipes the back of his hand across his forehead. His heated gaze sweeps over her.

NATE

Remind me to thank my sister-in-law for that nightgown.

Rose looks both amused and annoyed.

ROSE

Stop that.

Nate grabs up his shirt and tosses it across one shoulder.

NATE

Stop what?

He has an innocent look on his face, though he's obviously fighting a smile.

She huffs out a breath and hands him his coffee.

ROSE
Stop flirting with me if you're not
going to do anything about it.

He tilts her chin up with two fingers and presses a quick
kiss to her lips.

NATE
(murmurs)
Who said I'm not going to do anything
about it?

Nate steps back and takes a sip of coffee, a teasing glint
in his eyes.

She laughs, unable to resist his charm.

NATE
Rick and the therapist should arrive
soon. You still okay with that?

Rose nods, yet her face holds a look of uncertainty.

ROSE
What if I still can't remember
anything?

NATE
Ms. Williams is one of the best.
You'll do fine.

Nate takes her hand. They walk toward the farmhouse.

NATE
Give me ten minutes to clean up and
I'll make a big batch of pancakes.

ROSE
I've got it, you go ahead. After
breakfast, I'd love to see the old
schoolhouse out back.

NATE
Sounds good. Maybe we'll take a
stroll to the pond afterward.

MONTAGE - EXT. WOODS - DAY

NATE and ROSE walk through the woods winding path.

* They stop in a small clearing. Nate sets up a blanket.
They lie down on their backs, look up at the sky.

He points out clouds that shift and change, taking on different shapes and forms.

* Nate picks a wildflower and gives it to Rose, who twirls it between her fingers.

* Nate brushes a strand of hair out of her face, and they share a gentle smile.

* Nate looks at Rose protectively. Scans their surroundings.

* They finish their walk through the woods.

* They return to the farmhouse.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NOON

Nate and Rose near the farmhouse, standing intimately close, full of smiles and laughter.

Rick's car pulls onto the property and Nate walks over to greet them.

Rose watches nervously nearby. Nibbles on her thumbnail.

Sheila approaches Rose.

SHEILA

Hello, Rose. I'm Sheila Williams.
It's a pleasure to meet you.

Rose smiles politely.

ROSE

Hello.

The men walk over.

NATE

(addresses Rick)

You two must be hungry after that long drive. I thought we'd throw some burgers on the grill.

RICK

That sounds great.

SHEILA

Actually, if you don't mind, I'd like to freshen up first?

ROSE

Of course, Ms. Williams.

SHEILA
Please, call me Sheila.

Rose smiles, appearing more relaxed.

ROSE
Of course, Sheila. This way.

The women enter the house, leaving the men outside.

NATE
Any news?

RICK
'Fraid not. But we planted a false
lead and are just waiting for someone
to take the bait.

He glances toward the house, then looks at Nate with a
smirk.

RICK
You and Rose seem pretty, uh, cozy.
Something you want to tell me?

NATE
Nothing to tell.

Rick gives him an amused shrug.

RICK
If you say so.

Nate ignores the comment.

NATE
Let's hope Sheila can help her. She's
been having bad nightmares.

RICK
Sorry to hear that. Has she
remembered anything?

NATE
Only being scared of an older man,
but hiding it from him. So many
possible scenarios around that, and
none of them good.

Rick's expression turns serious.

RICK
Sheila wants to try hypnosis. You
think Rose'll go for it?

NATE

I think she'd do anything if it helps her remember.

The women's laughter filters through an open window.

RICK

Sounds like they're hitting it off. That should make things easier.

Nate nods in agreement.

NATE

I'll grab the burgers. Why don't you get the grill going? The charcoal's in the shed.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Rose sits in a comfy chair in the living room with her eyes closed, hypnotized. Sheila stands in front of her. Nate and Rick are seated on the couch.

SHEILA

Rose, can you hear me?

ROSE

Yes.

SHEILA

Where are you right now?

ROSE

At the farmhouse with Nate.

SHEILA

Can you tell me why you're here?

Rose tenses up.

ROSE

Someone tried to kill me.

SHEILA

But no one can harm you now. You're safe at the farmhouse.

Rose nods. Shoulders relax.

SHEILA

Rose, I need you to go back in time...a day. Then two days. Where were you two days ago?

ROSE
At the farmhouse with Nate.

SHEILA
Can you go back further, Rose. Back to the hospital? Do you remember when you woke up there?

ROSE
I woke up in the hospital and Nate is there.

SHEILA
And before that? A day, two days before that? Can you tell us what happened?

Rose tenses.

ROSE
No.

SHEILA
It's okay. Remember you're at the farmhouse and nothing can hurt you. But I need you to go back two more days.

Nate and Rick exchange a worried glance.

ROSE
I'm scared.

SHEILA
You're in control here, Rose. Completely safe. Tell me what you see.

ROSE
He wants to hurt me.

SHEILA
Who wants to hurt you?

Rose inhales sharply. Her breathing labored.

ROSE
I have to get out of here, before he finds me again.

SHEILA
Where are you right now?

ROSE

In my car. He's looking for me.

Nate grabs a pencil and paper off the coffee table and scrawls something on the paper. He leans over and hands it to Sheila. She reads it, and nods.

INSERT - NOTE

It reads: Take her back further. Before the accident.

BACK TO SCENE

SHEILA

Remember, you're in control, Rose.

Rose relaxes. Her breathing calms.

SHEILA

Can you take us back before the accident. To when you were hurt.

Rose's face scrunches up.

ROSE

He found me.

SHEILA

Who found you?

ROSE

I don't know.

SHEILA

Where are you?

ROSE

...In the trunk of a car. I can't move because I'm tied up

Hysteria creeps into her voice.

SHEILA

Take a deep breath, Rose. You're safe. Nothing can harm you. What happened next?

ROSE

The car stops. He--he pulls me from the trunk and cuts the ropes.

SHEILA

Where are you?

ROSE
I don't know. It's dark.

Rose shudders.

ROSE
He drags me into a house and ties my arms to an overhead beam. He licks my neck and says I smell good.

Nate leans forward. Looks distressed. Rakes his hands through his hair.

ROSE (cont'd)
He told me...he says, I've wanted you for a long time, Cassandra, but Mitch wouldn't let me touch you.

SHEILA
Good, Rose, that's good. What else does he say?

ROSE
(Mimics a man's voice)
Now he doesn't care what I do with you. He just wants you dead.

She clenches her fists in anger.

ROSE
I spit in his face and he slaps me for it. Then he tries to kiss me.

Rose sits straighter in her seat.

ROSE (cont'd)
The struggle weakens the ropes and I fall to the floor.

Shoulders squared, Rose laughs.

ROSE (cont'd)
I grabbed a lamp from a nearby table and hit him with it. It knocks him out and I escape.

FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rick and Sheila leave, and Nate shuts the door behind them. He turns to Rose.

NATE
You were amazing.

ROSE
Cassandra. Nate, I have a name now.

NATE
Sure do, babe. But I prefer Rose. At least until your memory returns.

ROSE
I don't feel like a Cassandra, anyway. I like Rose.

They stare into each others eyes, the intensity of their bond evident, even without words.

NATE
You were so brave.

Rose smirks.

ROSE
I was, wasn't I?

She lifts a hand to his face.

ROSE
I'm about to get even braver.

Nate clears his throat.

NATE
How's that?

ROSE
Please, Nate. Make love to me tonight.

He takes her hand from his face. Presses it against his heart.

NATE
Not a good idea.

ROSE
Why not?

NATE
You've been through a traumatic experience, and you need time to heal.

ROSE
(breathless)
No. I just need you.

Rose grips the back of his head and brings his mouth down to hers.

Nate initially resists, but soon yields to passion and kisses her back. The kiss goes on for long moments, until he finally breaks the kiss to look deeply into her eyes.

NATE
Are you sure this is what you want?

ROSE
Yes.

After a beat, Nate sweeps her up into his arms and steps into the hall.

BEDROOM (CONTINUOUS)

Nate strides into her bedroom and places her on the bed. She watches him as he takes his weapon from its holster and places it on the nightstand.

He stares down at her but makes no move to join her.

NATE
You are so beautiful, but I don't
want to take advantage...

Rose comes up onto her knees. Curves her arms around his neck and presses close. She whispers against his lips.

ROSE
Don't talk. Just love me.

Still he hesitates. Rose pulls back to frame his face between her palms. Stares into his eyes.

ROSE
Snap to it, Officer Stone.

The tension drains from his face and he chuckles. Gives her a quick kiss.

NATE
Yes, ma'am.

With frantic movements, they help each other shed their clothes.

ROSE
Hurry, Nate...

The bed squeaks when Nate crawls onto it, and they both laugh. Nate covers her body with his. They kiss and begin to make love.

INT. PENTHOUSE MITCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Mitch is in a heated conversation on the phone.

MITCH
I don't give a shit what your constituents want. Tomorrow's vote better be no, or I'll ruin you.

A knock sounds on the door. Mitch slams the phone down.

MITCH
Enter!

COLE (30s), Mitch's second in command, enters the room.

Despite his outward appearance of civility, the coldness of his eyes and his bruising size are enough to give any man pause.

COLE
We tracked down Jankowski and had another chat. Said he had a lead on Cassandra's whereabouts, something about a shrink. Assured us he has it under control.

MITCH
Do you believe him?

Cole shakes his head in response.

COLE
We still have a few men tailing him. If he finds her, we'll know.

MITCH
She turns twenty-five today and that changes everything. I want her brought to me unharmed.

COLE
Yes, sir.

MITCH

And take care of Brett while you're
at it.

INT. RICK'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Rick's on his cellphone. The grandfather clock reads 2:15

RICK

This is Rick Smyth. Could you let Ms.
Williams know I'm running late for
our two o'clock appointment?

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

I'm sorry, Officer Smyth. Ms.
Williams hasn't shown up for work
yet, and she missed all her morning
appointments.

Rick's car comes to a stop at a red light as the
receptionist continues, concern in her voice.

RECEPTIONIST

I called her house, but no one
answered.

Rick's expression tightens

.

RICK

I'll swing by her place. She's
probably just running late.

RECEPTIONIST

That sounds good. Thank you.

Rick ends the call. Does a U-turn in the intersection. His
cell phone rings. He puts it on speaker.

RICK

Rick here.

J.D. (V.O.)

Rick, this is J.D. I thought you'd
want to know that we found the leak.

RICK

Who is it?

J.D. (V.O.)

Looks like your classic case of
pillow talk.

(MORE)

J.D. (V.O.) (cont'd)
Agent Jordon's been blabbing to his
new girlfriend about confidential
details from our cases.

RICK
Jesus Christ! So much for keeping it
in his pants.

Rick turns into a subdivision.

J.D. (V.O.)
Yeah, we brought the girl in, but so
far she hasn't provided any useful
information.

RICK
We need to know exactly who she's
been speaking with. Let me know as
soon as you find out something new.

Rick ends the call. Pulls into Sheila's driveway. He exits
his car. Finds her front door ajar. He draws his gun.

Calls out her name. No answer. He cautiously enters the
house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rick crosses the entryway and enters the living room. It is
in disarray. Pieces of furniture strewn about. Signs of a
struggle.

A trail of red liquid stains the floor.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He follows blood drops to find Sheila lying in the hall.
Badly beaten. He crouches down and gently strokes her cheek.

RICK
Sheila, wake up.

Rick scans her wounds, a look of dread on his face. Her eyes
flutter open.

SHEILA WILLIAMS
I'm sorry, Rick... He--wanted Rose.

Her eyes fall shut. Unconscious.

RICK
Stay with me, honey.

Rick curses under his breath, reaches for his phone and calls for an ambulance.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Nate and Rose cuddle on the couch, listening to soft music on the radio. The clock on the table reads 2:15.

As he leans in to kiss her, his cellphone chimes out. He groans and answers it.

NATE

This better be good, Smyth.

He listens silently. His face smooths into an expressionless mask. He gets to his feet and strides to the front window to drag the curtains back. Peers outside.

NATE

Call me when you have a new location.

He ends the call and turns back to a Rose, her expression filled with worry.

ROSE

What is it?

He sits next to her and takes her hand in his. Rubs her knuckles with his thumb.

NATE

Rose, it's not safe here anymore. We need to go.

ROSE

Why?

NATE

The safe house was compromised. Someone broke into Sheila's house and hurt her.

ROSE

Oh no! Is she going to be okay?

NATE

They don't know yet... I'm sorry, sweetheart, but it looks like they were looking for you.

Rose jumps to her feet, fists clenched at her sides.

ROSE
(voice rises)
It's my fault.

Nate stands to take her into his arms.

NATE
No, baby. It's not your fault. It's
the bastard who did this.

He tucks a strand of hair behind her ear.

NATE
Gather your things, we need to move.

Rose nods grimly then leaves the room. Nate begins to gather supplies to take with them.

KITCHEN - LATER

Nate tucks the last of their supplies into a box. Plucks his car keys from the small basket sitting on top of the kitchen counter.

Rose SCREAMS.

ROSE'S BEDROOM (CONTINUOUS)

Nate charges into Rose's bedroom. She stands in the middle of the room, CRYING. He takes her into his arms.

His gaze scans the small space.

NATE
What's wrong?

ROSE
My parents, they're dead.

NATE
You remember your parents?

She looks up at him. Nods.

ROSE
My parents... I remember them now. It
was the Orchestra Hall in Chicago...
they were crossing the street and a
car came out of nowhere and hit them.

She buries her face into her hands.

ROSE
Nate - I watched them die!

Nate's expression darkens, sympathy in his eyes.

NATE
I'm sorry, baby. Sorry you had to
witness that.

Her bedroom window suddenly SHATTERS. Rose SCREAMS.

Nate takes them both down to the floor. Wraps his body
around hers as bullets continue to fly.

The shooting stops as suddenly as it'd begun.

NATE
(Fiercely)
Stay here - I'm taking this bastard
out.

Rose clings to his shirt, frantic.

ROSE
You can't go out there.

NATE
I have to.

He presses a short, hard kiss to her lips.

NATE
I'll be back for you.

Cautiously rising, he races outside.

EXT. FARMHOUSE WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Nate darts into the woods, his gaze alert for signs of
danger. He races past the sandbags painted like animals,
through the rows of windmill spinners humming in the breeze,
and across the troll bridge in one big leap.

He finds Brett crouched behind a large tree. His rifle still
pointed at the farmhouse, but he's not shooting. Only
watching.

Nate takes aim with his gun.

NATE
Drop your weapon!

Brett's stiffens.

NATE

Do it now!

Brett places his rifle on the ground. Rises to his feet.

NATE (cont'd)

Turn around!

Brett turns toward Nate. Sends him a sullen stare.

NATE (cont'd)

Hands up, asshole.

Brett slowly lifts his hands. He quickly grabs a concealed gun at his waist. Fires a shot towards Nate.

Nate groans when a bullet impacts his shoulder. He stumbles backward, but manages to return fire.

Nate's bullet strikes Brett in the chest. Sends him stumbling back a few feet. Brett's eyes widen in shock as he falls to the ground.

Nate grabs his shoulder in an attempt to stem the blood flow. He sways on his feet before he collapses to the ground, hitting his head on a rock and falling unconscious.

EXT. FARMHOUSE WOODS - NIGHT

The sun lowers in a colorful sky as Nate groggily regains consciousness.

He groans, clutching his injured shoulder, and forces himself upright.

Blood soaks through his shirt. He tears off a strip of fabric and wraps the wound as best he can.

He rises and checks the shooter for a pulse - nothing.

Nate glances toward the farmhouse.

SMOKE curls into the sky.

His expression tightens. He breaks into a run.

The house is engulfed in FLAMES.

NATE

Rose!

Walls of FIRE block the doorway entrance.

In a panic, Nate runs to her bedroom window. Rolls a log underneath and climbs onto it.

NATE
Hang on, baby. I'm coming.

He SHATTERS the window with a single punch.

FIRE ERUPTS from within.

Nate throws up his hands to shield his face and falls backward off the log.

He rolls onto his knees, then lifts his head to the sky to release a GUTTURAL CRY.

NATE (cont'd)
Rose!

He collapses, unconsciousness.

EXT. A LARGE ESTATE - NIGHT

A car pulls through an imposing entrance and up a large circular driveway to a grand country estate.

The car stops. Cole climbs from behind the wheel and his COHORT exits the passenger side. Cole moves to the back of the vehicle and pops open the trunk.

He jerks a disheveled Rose from inside. She stares at the mansion with a look of shock, then a dawning expression of rage.

Cole drags her up the steps and inside.

INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

Shoved into a room, Rose falls to the floor. Mitch stands near the door, watching her with a smirk.

She gets to her feet and glares at Mitch.

ROSE
Hello, Uncle.

Mitch looks at her as if she's nothing but an annoyance. Straightens his tie.

MITCH
So you remember.

ROSE

Yes. The minute your goons brought me home, I remembered everything.

She lunges for him, tearing at his face with her nails. Cole and the other man rush forward to restrain her.

Spitting with fury, she struggles to break free.

ROSE

I'm CASSANDRA MARIE TOWNSEND, and you murdered my parents. You bastard.

Mitch grabs her face and squeezes it. Malice drips from his words.

MITCH

What a pity you weren't with them on that sidewalk when Cole took care of them for me. Things would have been so much simpler.

He shoves her face away and dabs at the blood on his cheek with a silk handkerchief.

ROSE

You tried to kill me!

MITCH

(a nonchalant shrug)

Yes. Of course. With you dead, I inherit everything.

Rose goes still. She glares at him with hate in her eyes.

ROSE

I'm twenty-five now. You no longer control my fortune.

Mitch tsk tsks. Amusement swirling in his smug gaze.

MITCH

Guess we'll have to do it the hard way.

ROSE

You'll never get away with this. Nate will find me.

Mitch laughs.

MITCH

Don't you know? Nate Stone is dead.
So no, there'll be no saving you this
time.

Devastation shatters her expression.

ROSE

Liar! You're a liar.

She struggles to get to him again, but the men hold on
tight.

MITCH

I can't take the chance you left a
Will leaving the estate to charity,
or something as equally outrageous.

Mitch nods to Cole, who releases her. The other man holds
her tighter.

MITCH

Count yourself lucky I allowed you to
live this long, Cassandra.

Cole pulls a SYRINGE from his jacket.

MITCH (cont'd)

You would have been dead years ago if
I hadn't been worried about arousing
suspicions so soon after your
parents' deaths.

She struggles to get free. Cole injects something into her
arm.

MITCH (cont'd)

I've had a new Will drawn up, just
waiting for your signature. All the
T's crossed and the I's dotted. That
way, when you commit suicide, I win.

ROSE

(words slurring)

I'll never sign...

Mitch laughs. He directs his next words toward Cole.

MITCH

Take her to her old room.

Rose opens her mouth to speak. Nothing comes out.

Her eyes a glassy stare as they drag her from the room, her feet scuffing along the floor.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Nate slowly regains consciousness and struggles upright. His face tight with pain, he notices the IV in his arm and the bandages wrapped around his forearms.

Confusion clouds his expression – then grief and rage.

NATE
(guttural)
Rose.

He yanks the IV free, causing the monitor to BEEP in protest. A nurse enters and rushes to his side.

NURSE
Mr. Stone, you need to lie still.
You've been badly injured.

He ignores her and throws off the hospital sheets, stumbling to his feet.

NURSE
Sir, you need to get back in bed,
right now.

Ignoring her, he yanks open the closet and tugs his jeans on under the hospital gown, then slips on his shoes.

NURSE
You're not ready to leave.

NATE
I'm sorry, I can't stay.

He brushes past her.

Rick appears in front of him, blocking the exit.

NATE
(snarls)
Move, Rick. I'm going to find who did
this.

RICK
Nate, we believe she's alive.

NATE
What?

RICK

When you didn't pick up my call, I
drove to the farmhouse. I found you
unconscious and the house on fire.

Rick clasps Nate's shoulder, steadying him.

RICK

They didn't find a body inside.

Nate sucked in a deep breath, hope filling his eyes.

NATE

She's out there somewhere?

RICK

Looks like. Here, I brought you fresh
clothes.

He hands Nate a duffel bag. Nate takes the bag and digs out
a shirt and his cell phone. Drops the bag to the floor with
the rest of the clothes.

NURSE

I see there's no changing your mind.

With a huff, she hurries from the room.

NATE

How long have I been out?

He shrugs out of the hospital gown, exposing the fresh
stitches. Tugs on the shirt, wincing.

RICK

About a day. You lost a lot of blood.

Nate's expression hardens as he buttons the shirt with
steady fingers.

NATE

We need to find who took her.

The exit the hospital room.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Nate and Rick head for the elevators. The same scowling
nurse hurries over to them. Shoves a clipboard in front of
Nate's face.

NURSE

Please sign this. It says you're
leaving against our medical advice.

Barely slowing his pace, Nate takes the pen she hands him
and scrawls his name. Hands back the pen.

RICK

You sure you're feeling alright? Head
still bothering you?

Nate punches the elevator down button.

NATE

(snaps)
It's fine.

Rick looks doubtful.

RICK

Glad to hear it.

INT. POLICE STATION CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Rick's gaze follows Nate as he paces the conference room.

Nate moves with a slight limp, one hand subconsciously
pressed against his bandaged ribs.

A plaque on the wall reads: MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Officer J.D. Bowman walks into the room, a file folder in
his hand.

J.D.

The Orchestra Hall lead panned out.

He walks over and hands the folder to Nate. Rick stands and
joins them.

J.D.

Eight years ago a couple was killed
in a hit & run in front of the
Chicago Orchestra Hall. Witnessed by
their teenage daughter, Cassandra.

Nate flips open the folder. They all stare at a picture of a
younger Rose.

NATE

It says here she's an heiress to a
considerable fortune.

Rick glances over Nate's shoulder at the contents of the file. He whistles.

RICK
Fifty million. Now that's a number
people would kill for.

J.D.
Her uncle was appointed her guardian
and executor of her parents' estate.
A Mitch Larson. Guy moves in some
high political circles.

NATE
Larson?

He turns to Rick.

NATE
Didn't Rose mention someone by the
name of Mitch when she was under
hypnosis?

RICK
Yes, she did.

Nate's expression hardens, something raw flickering beneath.

NATE
It's her own goddamn uncle.

INT. ROSE'S FAMILY ESTATE — BATHROOM — NIGHT

Dim light. Steam clings to the mirror.

ROSE sways on her feet — pale, weak, her eyes glassy from
the drugs.

She braces against the shower door, draws a shaking breath,
and turns the water to cold.

Still clothed, she steps under the spray. Gasps as the icy
water hits.

Her breathing steadies through clenched teeth. She presses
her palm to the tile, trembling.

ROSE
(softly)
Oh, Nate...

She stays until her body shakes uncontrollably.

Then she twists the knob off, wrings the water from her hair, and stares at herself in the mirror – bruised, hollow-eyed, but alive.

ROSE (cont'd)
(low, fierce)
I'd die before I sign.

She grabs a towel, dries quickly, changes into jeans and a blouse.

From the top shelf of the closet, she pulls down a small BOX, rummages, and finds a LETTER OPENER.

She palms it, glancing toward the door.

FOOTSTEPS in the hall.

Rose presses herself against the dresser, the letter opener hidden behind her thigh.

The door swings open.

COLE, hulking and cruel, steps inside holding a loaded SYRINGE.

COLE
Ready to sign the papers, Cassandra?

ROSE
Go to hell.

His laugh is cruel.

COLE
Your uncle says we finish this tonight.

He closes the door, eyes sweeping over her. His grin turns mean.

COLE (cont'd)
If you don't sign now, he's giving me free rein. I told him I could make you cooperate.

Rose stiffens but forces her face blank.

ROSE
Maybe we can make a deal.

COLE
Interested now, huh?

He moves closer. She doesn't back away.

ROSE
You don't have to hurt me.

COLE
Too late for that.

He lunges, catches her arm – and drives the needle into her thigh.

ROSE
No!

The plunger depresses halfway. The drug burns through her veins.

Her vision swims.

She slams her shoulder into him, hard. He stumbles.

She DRIVES the LETTER OPENER it into his neck.

COLE
(scream)
You—!

Blood spurts. He drops to his knees and clutches the wound.

Rose stumbles back, shaking, the opener slick in her hand.

ROSE
(whisper)
I'm sorry...

She bolts for the door.

INT. HALLWAY / STAIRCASE – CONTINUOUS

Her vision wobbles. The world tilts.

She grips the railing, half falling down the stairs.

A GUARD appears at the top, gun raised.

GUARD

Don't move!

Rose runs forward.

GUNFIRE erupts, splintering the banister.

She tumbles down the steps, hits hard, then scrambles toward the front door.

Another shot rips past her.

She yanks the door open and staggers outside.

EXT. ROSE'S FAMILY ESTATE — FRONT STEPS — CONTINUOUS

Cool night air slams into her lungs. Dizzy, disoriented, she stumbles down the steps.

Nate grabs her from behind.

ROSE

No! Let me go!

She thrashes wildly, fear and adrenaline fueling her.

NATE

Easy—easy—you're safe—

Eyes glazed with drugs, Rose throws her head back.

Nate grunts but holds on, tightening his grip without hurting her.

ROSE

Don't touch me! Let me go!

NATE

(urgent, steady)

Rose, honey. It's me Nate.

The fight drains from her.

ROSE

(weak, slurred)

Nate's dead...

Her eyes roll back. She goes limp in his arms.

NATE lowers her gently to the ground, cradling her.

NATE
(soft, fierce)
No, sweetheart. I'm right here.

Flashing RED and BLUE lights slice through the darkness.
Police vehicles skid to a stop as officers rush the estate.
Nate gathers Rose up, carrying her toward safety.

DRIVEWAY — LATER

Emergency lights strobe.

RICK meets Nate beside his car, where Rose lies in the back seat wrapped in a blanket.

RICK
How is she?

NATE
Don't know. The blood isn't hers.

RICK
We found a half-empty syringe in her room. They were dosing her.

Nate's jaw tightens.

RICK (cont'd)
There's a dead man upstairs — letter opener to the neck. Carotid hit. Bled out.

NATE
What about Larsen?

Rick shakes his head.

RICK
The shooter's in custody. We'll get answers soon.

Nate brushes damp hair from Rose's face, voice low.

NATE
I want that bastard.

Rick nods, eyes grim.

Behind them, officers sweep the house as sirens wail into the night.

INT. MILWAUKEE HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Nate sits by Rose's side. Watches her sleep peacefully. Rick enters.

RICK
Any news from the doctor?

Nate nods.

NATE
She's battered and bruised, but he said she'll heal with rest.

RICK
That's great.

Rick pauses, a slight smirk on his face.

RICK
So, we know where Larson is. I wondered if you wanted to go with us to bring him in?

Anger flashes in Nate's eyes.

NATE
Wouldn't miss it.

INT. MITCH'S EXECUTIVE HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Mitch sits behind his desk. An UNKNOWN MAN sits across from him.

UNKNOWN MAN: (60s) Looks smug and entitled. Gets to his feet.

SENATOR
Thanks for the help, Mitch. I'll have the money wired to your offshore account first thing tomorrow.

Mitch shakes the man's hand.

MITCH
It's been a pleasure doing business with you, Senator.

The Senator straightens his tie. Smirks.

SENATOR

Sometimes the voters don't get it right. It's up to us to do what's best for the country. Even if that means bending the law, just a little.

Both men laugh. The Senator exits the room.

LATER - HOTEL BALLROOM

Mitch strides into the ballroom, greeted by a chaotic scene of Police and confused GUESTS.

Nate locks onto Mitch and steps forward, controlled but unmistakably dangerous.

Mitch freezes, then spins on his heel and races into the lobby.

HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Mitch reaches for the gun in his jacket pocket.

Nate chases after him.

NATE

Stop! Police.

A woman waits for the elevator. The indicator light shows the elevator car is still on the top floor.

Mitch lunges forward and places an arm around the neck, spinning them toward the approaching police.

He presses his gun against her temple. Her high-pitched SHRIEK echoes around them.

Nate comes to a stop a short distance away. His gun aimed at Mitch.

MITCH

Back off, or I'll kill her!

NATE

We have Casandra, Larsen. We know everything.

The woman whimpers as Mitch's gun shakes in his hand.

NATE

You can't win. Let the woman go.

MITCH

Go to hell!

Mitch lifts his gun from the woman's head, swinging it toward Nate.

The woman jerks from his grasp and darts into the arms of a waiting police officer.

Mitch fires his weapon.

Nate returns fire.

Mitch slams back against the elevator door with a dull thud. A bullet hole between his eyes. He slides to the floor.

INT. ROSE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The room silent, except for the sound of the beeping monitor by Rose's hospital bed.

Rose stirs. Her eyelids flutter as consciousness returns, until they finally open.

Nate smiles down at her, his thumb caressing her cheek.

She blinks like an owl as full awareness returns.

ROSE

Am I dead?

He leans in and presses a soft kiss to her forehead.

NATE

You're very much alive, sweetheart.

She lifts her hand to touch his face.

ROSE

Mitch told me you were dead.

Nate takes her hand in his, intertwining their fingers.

NATE

I'm pretty hard to kill. Especially when I'm saving the woman I love.

Rose smiles sleepily.

ROSE

You love me?

NATE
(Softly)
Eternally.

Nate presses a kiss to the back of her hand.

NATE
You're safe now. Rest now, we can
talk more later.

Her eyes close as she drifts off to sleep.

Still clasping her hand, Nate sits back in the chair.

ROSE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Rose opens her eyes. Focuses on Nate's face. She takes a deep breath.

ROSE
Nate, I know who I am now.

Still holding her hand, he gives it a gentle squeeze.

NATE
I know who you are too, Rose. You're
mine.

ROSE
Always.

She squeezes his hand back, then her expression grows serious.

ROSE (cont'd)
Nate, my uncle was responsible for my
parents' deaths.

Sympathy fills his eyes.

NATE
I know.

ROSE
He became my guardian after they were
killed. I thought he loved me.

She blinks back tears.

ROSE
It took me years to work through my
grief enough to realize he only cared
about my money.

Nate gently swipes a tear from her cheek.

NATE

Don't cry over that bastard.

She sniffles, then nods.

ROSE

When I realized his plans to overdose me and make it look like a suicide, I hacked into his computer and found out his involvement in my parents' deaths.

NATE

Is that when you ran.

ROSE

Yes. I took some jewelry and enough cash to start over somewhere else and left before he could catch me.

NATE

Brave girl.

Concern flashes across her face.

ROSE

How's Sheila?

NATE

She's still healing from her injuries, but she'll be fine.

He brushes back her bangs.

NATE

What happened after you ran?

ROSE

I managed to stay hidden for more than a year before Brett tracked me down.

NATE

So you knew him?

She grimaces.

ROSE

He works for my uncle. I was hoping to stay hidden until my twenty-fifth birthday, when I came into my inheritance. Only then would I have enough resources to protect myself.

He chuckles.

NATE

You're a brave and resourceful woman, Cassandra-Rose.

His expression tightens.

NATE

You don't need to worry about Jankowski anymore. He's dead.

She looks surprised.

ROSE.

Oh.

She blinks sleepily as her eyes droop.

ROSE

What's going to happen to my uncle?

Nate presses a finger against her lips.

NATE

There'll be time for that later. For now, just rest.

Rose nods. Yawns.

ROSE

You'll stay with me.

He smiles teasingly.

NATE

My butt's glued to this chair.

She laughs softly. Drifts off to sleep.

INT. NATE'S HOME: LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rose in his arms, Nate carries her into the living room of his home. Her happy laughter rings in the air.

ROSE

Nate, put me down. I'm fine. Doctor Anderson gave me a clean bill of health.

Nate drops a kiss onto the tip of her nose.

NATE

Maybe I just want to hold you for a little longer.

ROSE

(sounding pleased)

Oh. Okay then.

He crosses over to the couch and places her down gently. Kneels down to tuck a warm blanket around her lap.

ROSE

Nate, can you tell me what happened to my uncle now?

He brushes tendrils of stray hair away from her eyes.

NATE

I was waiting until you were feeling better.

ROSE

I've told you a million times, I'm perfectly fine.

Nate wiggles his brows.

NATE

You most certainly are perfect and fine.

She rolls her eyes.

ROSE

Goof. Now spill.

He studies her face for a moment. Nods with resolve.

NATE

When we found your uncle at a high-dollar fundraiser in Chicago, he pulled a gun. I had no choice but to shoot him - he's dead.

A moment of silence as Rose processes the words. She shrugs.

ROSE
Good riddance to bad rubbish, I
guess.

Grinning, Nate lifts her and settles her on his lap.

NATE
That's my girl.

Rose caresses his cheek.

ROSE
Am I, Nate? Am I your girl?

NATE
Of course you're my girl. You'll
always be my girl.

ROSE
Knowing who I am doesn't change
anything?

NATE
Why should it? You're still the same
sweet, sexy woman I pulled from a
burning car.

She playfully swats his arm.

ROSE
Smart ass.

A soft SCRATCHING at the back door interrupts them.

Nate smiles, a playful twinkle in his eyes, and rises to
open it.

Rose watches, curious.

The door swings open and Autumn slips inside, freshly
groomed.

The cat pauses, glances around, then trots straight to Rose,
jumping on her lap.

ROSE (cont'd)
Oh my goodness. Autumn...

Her voice trembles as she pets her cat. The sound of the
cat's happy purring puts a big smile on her face.

She glances at Nate.

ROSE (cont'd)

Thank you.

Nate shrugs, pleased with himself.

NATE

Figured she belongs with you.

Autumn licks Rose's arm, then leaps onto the back of the couch behind her head, tail swishing contentedly.

Nate takes a seat on the couch. Careful not to disturb the cat, he places one arm around her shoulders.

ROSE

What happened to the money? Is it all gone?

NATE

We don't know yet. It looks like your uncle either spent or moved most of the money before we caught him.

Rose rubs her face against Nate's cheek.

ROSE

I don't care about the money, Nate. All I care about is you.

NATE

(smiles)

Well, it looks like a few of your accounts were missed. You still have about six hundred thousand, which isn't exactly chump change.

She shrugs.

ROSE

Whatever.

Nate chuckles. Cups the back of her head to stare into her eyes.

NATE

I know we haven't known each other that long, Rose-Cassandra Marie Townsend. But I know that I love you.

He presses a quick kiss to her lips.

NATE

I was hoping you'd move in with me so
I can convince you to marry me
someday.

Rose smiles. Places soft kisses all over his face. Nate chuckles and wraps her in an embrace.

NATE (cont'd)

Is that a yes?

ROSE

Yes, Nate. That's most definitely a
yes.

A grin splits Nate's face. Rose readjusts herself so that she's straddling him.

The cat jumps to the floor and wanders off.

Rose clasps his shoulders. Stares down at his smiling face. She begins to unbutton her blouse.

His hands slip to her hips. He peppers kisses along her neck. Murmurs in appreciation.

ROSE

(breathlessly)

You know, I'm not exactly broke.

NATE

Mmm. Okay.

ROSE

Nate, I still have my family home.
It...It's worth over seven million
dollars. I can sell it.

NATE

Whatever you what, baby.

ROSE

Um. You're not upset because I'm
rich, right? Some men don't--

Nate lifts his head to stare at her. A smile curves his lips. Love and desire written on his face.

NATE

Baby, I don't care if you're broke or
if you have millions. You're all I
care about, Rose. Just you.

ROSE
I love you, Nate Stone.

NATE
I love you more, Cassandra-Rose.

Nate kisses her neck again. Continues to unbutton her blouse as she moans her pleasure.

FADE OUT

THE END