

The Mourning House

by

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. THE CAROLYN RESORT - EVENING

Muted gray light. The engine of a black Volvo idles in the fog. The sea is just audible somewhere beyond the cliff, hidden.

ISOBEL SUTTER (30s, Hollow-eyed, baggy sweater, hair pulled into a messy knot.) sits in the driver's seat, still as stone.

Her hands grip the wheel, tight enough that her knuckles have gone pale.

The passenger seat beside her is empty. A worn cardboard box rests there, sealed with painter's tape and labeled: "ROB'S THINGS."

She doesn't look at it.

Rain begins to pepper the windshield. Slow and soft. She doesn't turn the wipers on.

In the backseat: a duffel bag. A thermos. A rolled blueprint tube poking out of a half-zipped side pocket.

Outside the windshield:

A massive structure looms behind the curtain of fog.

The Carolyn.

Dark wood. Iron railings. Windows like blind eyes. It doesn't welcome. It waits.

Isobel reaches for the key.

But stops.

She sits there for a full five seconds, frozen. Breath fogs the inside of the glass.

Then she opens the door.

2 EXT. THE CAROLYN - FRONT STEPS - MOMENTS LATER

Isobel ascends the cracked steps with the duffel slung over her shoulder. She doesn't rush, but she isn't hesitant either.

She pulls a skeleton key from her coat pocket. Inserts it into the old lock.

The door opens before she turns it.

She freezes.

No wind.

No one behind her.

She exhales once, barely.

Then steps inside.

The door creaks closed behind her.

3 INT. THE CAROLYN - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Dust spirals in the last light of day.

A once-beautiful lobby stretches out, tile floor cracked.

A chandelier hangs limp, wallpaper peels in long, elegant strips.

Isobel steps in slowly.

Her footsteps echo.

Then another sound. A faint TAP. Like someone moving upstairs.

She freezes and her eyes lift toward the grand staircase.

Silence.

A gust slams the door shut behind her. Isobel jumps with a YELP.

ISOBEL  
(quietly, to herself)  
Good start. Great start.

She sets her bag down, and looks up at the chandelier that sways ever so slightly above.

4 INT. THE CAROLYN - LOBBY / STAIRCASE - NIGHT

The storm outside has worsened. Rain lashes the tall windows. Thunder grumbles distantly.

Isobel climbs the grand staircase with a flashlight. The beam cuts through dust motes, grazes faded portraits on the wall, former guests or owners, long forgotten.

The wallpaper peels off the walls like skin. At the top of the stairs, a hallway stretches into darkness.

She hesitates.

A subtle CREAK comes from deeper down the corridor.

Isobel's breath catches. She shines the flashlight ahead.

Boot prints on the dusty floorboards. A door slightly ajar at the far end.

She turns around to run, but stops.

She inches forward, instead.

5 INT. THE CAROLYN - HALLWAY / BRIDAL SUITE - CONTINUOUS

She pushes the door open.

The bridal suite.

A high-ceiling chamber with French doors that overlook the sea.

Mold creeps along the edges of antique wallpaper. The mattress is bare, the frame warped with time.

But the bones of elegance remain: ornate trim, a cracked vanity mirror, faded velvet curtains.

Isobel steps inside.

Her flashlight catches something on the vanity.

A POLAROID.

She picks it up. A smiling couple in the same room, decades ago. The woman in white. The man beside her wears a black tuxedo.

On the back, scrawled in faded ink:

"Clara and Thomas - 1955."

Isobel stares at the photo. Her eyes shine with tears.

Behind her, the closet door CREAKS open.

She spins, breath shallow.

Nothing. Just dust and shadows.

She exhales and rubs her face.

Isobel sets her flashlight on the vanity and pulls the curtains open.

Outside: lightning splits the horizon, the ocean crashes against the rocky cliffs below.

In the reflection behind her-

-A MAN stands at the doorway.

As still as a photograph.

She turns, but there's no one there.

Silence.

The light flickers when she turns back to the french doors.

A warm breath grazes the back of her neck.

A voice, low. Warm. Close.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
You shouldn't be near glass during a  
storm.

Isobel SCREAMS as she whips around, but the room is still empty.

Her flashlight blinks out.

Pitch black. The flashlight rolls off the vanity and hits the floor with a dull thunk.

Isobel stands completely still, spine taut.

The voice doesn't return. Just the distant groan of the wind that pushes through the cracks.

She shakes her head slightly as she slowly backs away towards the door.

ISOBEL  
(quietly)  
Nope.

She grabs her flashlight. It flickers dimly back to life, just enough to guide her as she sprints out.

6 INT. THE CAROLYN - STAIRCASE / LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Isobel descends the staircase with brisk, determined steps. Her pulse is loud in her ears.

The chandelier sways above her again, despite there being no breeze.

She crosses the lobby without pause to grab her bag, and shoves open the heavy front door.

The wind nearly takes it from her hands.

7 EXT. THE CAROLYN - CONTINUOUS

Rain lashes her coat. Hair sticks to her face as she makes her way to the car, parked crooked on the gravel drive.

Keys fumble. Door opens. She throws her bag inside and slams the door.

Inside, breathless, she rests her head on the steering wheel.

ISOBEL  
(low, to herself)  
Jesus Christ.

A beat.

She locks the doors.

SMASH CUT TO:

8 EXT. THE CAROLYN - EARLY MORNING

Fog blankets the grounds. Seagulls cry in the distance.

The Volvo sits parked under a crooked pine tree, the windshield glazed with condensation.

Inside, Isobel sleeps curled in the driver's seat, wrapped in her coat.

A faint KNOCK on the window.

She stirs and blinks blearily at the resort ahead. Morning light reveals more of it.

Twisting ivy, busted lanterns, rusted stair rails, shutters that hung off their hinges.

Isobel exhales and rubs her face.

Her jaw tightens, and she pulls a small pistol from her glove compartment. She tucks it in her jacket pocket.

ISOBEL  
(to herself)  
This place is mine.

She opens the car door and marches towards the hotel.

9 INT. THE CAROLYN - LOBBY / HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

Faint light filters in. Dust drifts through the air. Light seeps through sea-streaked windows.

Isobel moves with intent and check rooms one by one.

She opens a cracked ballroom door.

Empty.

A chair rests on its side. A broken frame on the wall with an old award:

"The Carolyn - Excellence in Coastal Hospitality, 1948."

She steps into the hallway toward the east wing, pistol ready in one hand.

A faint floorboard CREAKS ahead.

She pauses. Waits.

Nothing.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

A sharp rap from downstairs.

She swings around, and waves the gun wildly in front of her.

KNOCK KNOCK.

Louder. She pauses. It's just the front door.

She tucks the pistol away as she takes a deep breath, and heads back toward the lobby.

10 INT. THE CAROLYN - LOBBY / FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Isobel opens the front door.

Outside stands:

MARCY KENNER (50s, polished but tired), The realtor, a gift basket in her arms.

MARCY  
Morning, Mrs. Sutter! Just checking in. Thought you might like some local honey and...oat crackers?

ISOBEL  
(cool, controlled)  
Thanks, and you can call me Isobel.

She crosses her arms, and points a thumb inside.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
I thought you said no one had been here in years.

The realtor chuckles awkwardly.

MARCY  
Well, not officially. Maintenance crews, maybe? Vandals sometimes. But no one's really stayed overnight.

A beat of tension.

The realtor clears her throat.

MARCY (CONT'D)  
So! Settling in okay?

Isobel offers a tight smile.

ISOBEL  
Just starting to.

She doesn't move to let them in.

The realtor lingers awkwardly with the gift basket.

MARCY

We thought we'd drop by before the  
ferry crowd comes in. You know, see if  
you needed anything. The Carolyn can  
be a lot to take in.

ISOBEL

I noticed.

Another awkward beat.

MARCY

Well! You have our number if you need  
help. We do recommend keeping the top  
floors sealed. Roof damage up there,  
possible rot. Wouldn't want you  
falling through the ballroom ceiling.

Isobel tilts her head slightly.

ISOBEL

Someone already beat me to it. There  
are boot prints in the dust upstairs.

That wipes the smile off the realtor's face.

MARCY

Oh. I'm sure it's just from before.  
Last appraiser maybe? You know how  
long it's been. Years. Probably  
nothing.

ISOBEL

Probably.

The realtor smiles too big as she thrusts the gift basket  
forward.

MARCY

Lavender tea's supposed to be good for  
sleep! Call if you need anything.

Isobel stands alone at the doorway, the basket in her arms.

She watches as Marcy disappears into the fog.

From somewhere deep in the resort, far beyond the lobby:

A faint PIANO NOTE. One key. Hollow and deliberate.

Isobel steps back inside and shuts the door behind her.

## 11 INT. THE CAROLYN - BRIDAL SUITE - LATER THAT MORNING

Muted sunlight filters through stained curtains, and casts fractured patterns on the dusty floor.

ISOBEL stands in the center of the bridal suite, sleeves rolled, hair tied back. She takes a slow breath as she surveys the mess.

A broom leans against the cracked vanity. A bucket of murky water sits nearby.

She moves with quiet resolve. Opens the windows, tears down moth-eaten drapes.

Dust blooms in golden shafts.

## 12 MONTAGE - CLEANING THE SUITE

- Isobel pulls sheets from the bed, revealing the tarnished bed frame beneath.
- Wipes dust from the windows, revealing a view of the cliffs and crashing sea.
- Sweeps broken glass from a shattered wall sconce.
- She stacks a pile of water-damaged books, and she grimaces at the mildew.
- Opens a bureau drawer: inside, a delicate wedding veil, yellowed with age. She pauses. Almost touches it. Then closes the drawer.

## 13 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - LATER

The room is still worn and weathered, but breathes again.

Isobel sets her duffel bag on the now-cleared vanity and begins to unpack.

She moves methodically. T-shirts, jeans, toiletries.

Then her fingers close around something heavier. Leather.

She pulls out a brown journal. The edges are worn from travel. A leather strap keeps it shut.

The name R. Sutter is embossed in the upper corner.

She sits on the vanity stool. Holds it a moment.

Undoes the strap. Opens it.

Blank. Every page.

She flips faster. More urgency.

Nothing.

Her breath shakes.

She shuts the journal and presses it to her chest. Closes her eyes.

ISOBEL  
(soft)  
You said you'd write it all down.

She sits there, silent, as the waves crash faintly in the distance.

14 INT. THE CAROLYN - LOBBY - LATE AFTERNOON

Wind hums softly through the cracks. The light has cooled, grayed. Storm debris is scattered across the lobby: wet leaves, dirt, splinters from the front door frame.

Isobel descends the stairs, a trash bag in one hand, a mug of coffee in the other.

There's a distant metallic CLANK, and she stops.

Another clang, rhythmic, tools at work.

It comes from the west wing. Somewhere behind the front desk.

She moves toward it, cautious but not afraid. Her hand hovers near her coat pocket, and the pistol that still rests inside.

15 INT. MAINTENANCE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

CLANK.

Isobel rounds the corner.

A man stands on a ladder as he hammers a dislodged pipe back into the ceiling brace.

Tall, broad-shouldered. Rolled sleeves. Moves with the calm, practiced rhythm of someone who's done this a hundred times.

ISOBEL  
(Firm)  
Hey!

The hammer stops mid-swing.

The man looks down.

MAINTENANCE MAN  
Apologies, miss. Didn't mean to  
startle you.

ISOBEL  
You're not supposed to be here.

A pause. He steps down from the ladder slowly.

He holds out a large hand, calloused from years of manual labor.

MAINTENANCE MAN  
Elijah Moss.

ELIJAH MOSS (30s) was lean, and handsome in an old-fashioned way. Hair neatly kept, suspenders, work boots.

Warm eyes. Calm.

She relaxes slightly and shakes it.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Did the realtor send you?

ELIJAH  
No. Just figured someone ought to  
patch the damage after last night.

He wipes his hands on a rag. Nods toward the ceiling.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
That storm peeled a few boards back.  
Nothing serious, yet.

She studies him. He doesn't smile, but he isn't threatening either.

ISOBEL  
Didn't know this place still had a  
maintenance guy.

He chuckles and gives a lazy shrug.

ELIJAH

I'm not on the payroll, but it keeps  
me busy.

ISOBEL

You live nearby?

ELIJAH

Yeah, you could say that.

That smile, subtle, disarming, and not quite right. Too  
still.

ISOBEL

Well, you're trespassing.

ELIJAH

And you're renovating a place with no  
plumbing. It'll only get worse if  
you're not proactive about those  
things.

She doesn't respond.

Just slowly backs a step.

ISOBEL

Thank you, but you can go now.

He sets the hammer down gently. Picks up his tool bag.

ELIJAH

Alright, have a pleasant day, then.

Walks past her. Slow, deliberate. A trace of something cold  
in the air follows.

Before he rounds the corner, he glances back.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

Be careful upstairs, Isobel. The  
second-floor railing's not secure.

Then he's gone.

Her eyes widen slowly.

She never mentioned her name.

16 INT. THE CAROLYN - BALLROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Faint light spills through tall, grime-clouded windows.

The grand ballroom is vast and faded, filled with echoes of elegance: a warped dance floor, torn velvet drapes, an old phonograph half-sunken into the floorboards.

Isobel steps inside as she hugs her coat around her. Her boots creak across the floor.

She pauses. Something feels off.

A breeze brushes her neck, but when she turns, she sees nothing.

Her eyes catch on a section of the far wall, where the wainscoting doesn't quite line up. A seam. Subtle. Almost hidden.

She crosses the room, crouches, runs her fingers along the edge. Taps it lightly.

HOLLOW.

She presses.

Nothing.

She notices a few old boards nailed haphazardly across a panel at the base. Not original. Newer. Rushed.

ISOBEL  
What the hell?

She tugs at one of the boards. It creaks but holds. She peers through a sliver between the cracks, just darkness.

The faint impression of a staircase descending into black.

Isobel frowns. Steps back.

She exhales, grabs a screwdriver from her coat pocket, but when she tries the nails, they don't budge.

Almost fused into the wood.

She gives up after a moment and stands.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Whatever. Probably just storage.

She exits.

As the ballroom door creaks closed behind her, one of the boards twitches.

17 EXT. THE CAROLYN - GARDENS - MORNING

Early morning sunlight cuts through the mist, and paints the landscape in soft gold.

Isobel walks slowly through the neglected gardens behind the hotel, coffee in hand.

Overgrown flower beds and cracked fountains mark the remnants of grandeur.

She kneels and gently pulls weeds from a faded stone planter.

Behind her,

ELIJAH (O.S.)  
Gardens were beautiful once.  
Honeysuckle. Lavender. Roses.

She startles, but quickly steadies herself. Turns.

Elijah stands a respectful distance away, hands loosely in his pockets as he watches her.

She rises slowly.

ISOBEL  
Are you going to make a habit of  
sneaking up on me?

He smiles faintly.

ELIJAH  
Wasn't my intention, miss-

ISOBEL  
Isobel Sutter. Sorry, guess I'm still  
on edge from last night.

ELIJAH  
It'll pass. The Carolyn's been empty a  
long time. Must just be getting used  
to someone being here again.

Elijah picks at paint that chips off the building.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
Buildings aren't that different from people. Neglect them, they fade. But sometimes, with the right care, they care for you back.

A small smile tugs at Isobel's mouth.

ISOBEL  
Well, that's why I bought it. Thought I'd fix it up, turn it into a bed and breakfast someday.

He eyes her thoughtfully as cautious optimism shows in his expression.

ELIJAH  
A fresh start.

ISOBEL  
Yeah. Something like that.

A quiet beat passes.

He kneels down to help her clear the tangled ivy from an old birdbath.

ELIJAH  
Any reason you chose here?

She hesitates, guarded.

ISOBEL  
Like you just said, a fresh start.

He looks at her but doesn't push.

ELIJAH  
Well. It's good you're here.

She meets his gaze briefly, then looks away.

ISOBEL  
Hey. Yesterday, you called me Isobel.  
How'd you know my name?

He gives her a puzzled expression.

ELIJAH  
Did I? I can't recall, I'm sorry.

A beat of silence. He stands, brushes dirt from his hands.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
Well, I should let you get back to it.  
If you need help,

ISOBEL  
(softening)  
I'd appreciate it.

He nods once, gently.

ELIJAH  
Alright then.

He gives her a quiet nod and walks away through the garden, and fades into the misty distance.

She watches him go, then looks down.

Beside the planter is a fresh honeysuckle that blooms where Elijah stood.

18 EXT. COASTAL TOWN - MAIN STREET - AFTERNOON

A tidy but cluttered shop. Shelves stocked with tools, cans of paint, gardening supplies. The crisp smell of fertilizer fills the air.

FRANK DOUGLAS (60s), wiry and weathered, friendly but cautious eyes, arranges shelves behind the counter.

He looks up as Isobel enters.

FRANK  
Afternoon! What can I do ya for?

Isobel pulls out a handwritten list from her purse.

ISOBEL  
Quite a bit, actually. Paint, plaster, nails...and advice, if you have any to spare.

Frank chuckles warmly as he steps out from behind the counter.

FRANK  
Advice is free. Paint'll cost you.

She smiles and hands him the list. He scans it, nods.

FRANK (CONT'D)  
Doing some big renovations?

ISOBEL  
Just bought The Carolyn Resort.

He stops, list half-folded in his hand. Raises an eyebrow.

FRANK  
You don't say! Did hear that someone  
took it, just never thought I'd see  
'em.

She eyes him curiously.

ISOBEL  
Why's that? Prime location, great  
views. Seems like it should've sold  
years ago.

He shifts.

FRANK  
Well, folks around here are funny.  
Superstitious. The Carolyn's history,  
it ain't exactly pretty.

She leans in gently, voice softer now.

ISOBEL  
Tell me.

He glances around, lowers his voice.

FRANK  
In the fifties, fire gutted half the  
hotel. A lot of folks didn't make it  
out. Place has been empty ever since.  
Every now and again, someone tries to  
open it up, nothing ever sticks.

ISOBEL  
Well, maybe it's just been waiting for  
someone to breathe new life into it.

Frank considers her for a moment, before he hands her a receipt.

FRANK  
Be careful up there, Miss Sutter.  
Place has a way of holding onto  
(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)  
people.

He turns abruptly, begins to gather her supplies.

Isobel turn to leave.

Through the shop window, the Carolyn is visible in the far distance.

19 INT. COASTAL TOWN LIBRARY - ARCHIVES ROOM - AFTERNOON

An old library, warm and cozy. Shelves stacked with worn books. ISOBEL stands by the front desk as she wait quietly.

The LIBRARIAN (50s, bookish, gentle eyes) returns holding a large archival box.

LIBRARIAN

Here we are, the original blueprints  
and some news clippings on the  
Carolyn. It's quite a story.

Isobel takes the box with a grateful nod.

20 INT. LIBRARY - READING TABLE - MOMENTS LATER

She spreads out the blueprints. Her fingers trace rooms she's begun to recognize.

The ballroom, the bridal suite. She notes the staff quarters labeled near the west wing.

Then, tucked beneath the papers, yellowed NEWSPAPER ARTICLES.

Headlines jump out at her:

"TRAGEDY AT THE CAROLYN: 13 DEAD IN FIRE"

"LOCAL HERO PERISHES ATTEMPTING RESCUE"

"GUESTS CLAIM FIRE STARTED WITHOUT WARNING"

She rubs her face, as exhaustion sets in. Her phone buzzes suddenly. She answers distractedly:

ISOBEL  
Hello?

A pause. Just static. Then...

A faint, distant piano note.

Familiar.

A chill runs down her spine.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Who is this?

The line goes dead.

Isobel lowers the phone slowly.

She packs up the box and stands to gather her coat and bag.

LIBRARIAN (O.S.)  
Find what you needed?

Isobel pauses and holds the box close.

ISOBEL  
Almost, thank you so much for your  
help.

She hurries out. The librarian watches her walk out with a quiet curiosity.

21 INT. THE CAROLYN - LOBBY - EVENING

Isobel steps through the front door as she carries supplies and the archival box from the library. She also carries a small bag of groceries.

Her eyes quickly scan the shadows.

She moves briskly toward the front desk, and sets the supplies down.

A quiet sound interrupts her, a distant rustling, soft and rhythmic, from somewhere deep inside the building.

She stops, alert, and listens carefully.

Another faint rustle.

Fabric moves.

She slowly turns her gaze upward, toward the mezzanine level.

Nothing there but shadows and silence.

ISOBEL  
 (under her breath)  
 Maybe I should have gotten some mouse traps.

She steels herself, picks up her bags, and heads quickly toward the stairs.

22 INT. THE CAROLYN - GRAND FOYER - MORNING

Sunlight filters through the dusty glass.

Isobel balances on the second-highest rung of a rickety wooden ladder, and sways awkwardly as she patches a crack along the upper wall with a spackle knife and small bucket.

Sweat beads at her brow. She's focused. Alone.

She reaches a little too far to one side-  
 The ladder WOBLES.

She catches herself, her breath hitches. Freezes.

The bucket teeters-

ELIJAH (O.S.)  
 You're leaning too far.

Startled, the spackle knife slips from her hand-

A firm grip catches her waist from behind just as the ladder gives a threatening creak.

ISOBEL  
 Jesus!

ELIJAH  
 Not quite.

He steadies her with calm hands until she regains balance.

ISOBEL  
 You've got a habit of showing up at  
 just the right time.

Isobel climbs down slowly.

Elijah steps back to give her space.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
 Were you watching me?

ELIJAH  
Nope, just walking by. Lucky timing.

She gives him a sidelong look.

ISOBEL  
You said you live nearby, huh?

He nods once, nonchalant.

ELIJAH  
A few hills east. Close enough to hear  
you cursing at the ladder.

ISOBEL  
I wasn't cursing.

ELIJAH  
The startled crows say otherwise.

A flicker of amusement between them, then a pregnant pause.

ISOBEL  
Hey, call me a nutjob, but...is this  
place haunted?

Elijah raises an eyebrow and smiles softly.

ELIJAH  
I don't believe so, why do you ask?

ISOBEL  
Ever since I got here, weird shit  
keeps happening. Stuff disappears,  
there's movement in the corner of my  
eyes, the freaking piano at two AM.

Isobel sighs and runs a hand through her hair.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Never mind, forget I said anything.

Elijah finally exhales. He moves to the ladder and tests its wobble with a single touch.

ELIJAH  
You'll kill yourself trying to fix  
this place alone.

ISOBEL  
So help me out, then. If you're going  
(MORE)

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
to keep showing up.

A small smile grows on his face.

ELIJAH  
Alright.

She pauses, and turns to look back at him with a surprised look.

ISOBEL  
Wait, really? Okay...but I don't like games. If something's happening here, I want the truth, got it?

He nods.

She turns back to the wall and picks up her spackle knife again.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Good. Then hand me the nails.

23 INT. THE CAROLYN - EAST WING CORRIDOR - LATE AFTERNOON

The light has turned amber and low. Isobel walks down the long corridor with purpose, a flashlight in one hand and her phone in the other.

She mutters to herself, annoyed.

ISOBEL  
Out of tarps. Of course. Because nothing in this place cooperates for more than six hours at a time.

She passes faded door placards: "SUN ROOM", "CARD LOUNGE", "GENTLEMEN'S PARLOR."

She pauses.

The door to the parlor is cracked open.

And from inside,

Laughter. Deep and rich.

She steps closer and peers through the gap.

## 24 INT. GENTLEMEN'S PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

A soft amber glow fills the room. Velvet chairs. Cigar smoke curls toward the ceiling.

Four men in tuxedos lounge around a low table. They laugh and converse, mid-toast.

One raises a crystal tumbler of bourbon.

Another lights a cigar.

All of them are in sharp black-and-white, their faces eerily still when they're not speaking, like dolls briefly animated.

ISOBEL (O.S.)  
What the hell...

The man with the cigar turns slightly, as if he can sense her.

She gasps-

BLINK.

The room is empty.

No men. No chairs. No smoke.

Just a cold, unused room filled with dusty furniture and time that suffocates the air.

She stumbles back a step and her flashlight beam jitters.

Her breath quickens. She looks down the hallway, then back into the room.

ISOBEL  
Alright. Fuck this.

She pulls out her phone, fumbles through the screen.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
You want to screw with me? Fine. You picked the wrong girl for this fake haunted house bullshit.

She dials. Brings the phone to her ear.

25 EXT. THE CAROLYN - LATER

A SHERIFF'S CRUISER parked outside.

A UNIFORMED OFFICER (50s, gruff, skeptical) walks with Isobel along the perimeter.

26 INT. THE CAROLYN - GRAND FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

A sheriff's SUV idles in front of the hotel. The wind has picked up again, and rattles the tree line.

The sky glows the sickly orange of a storm about to return.

Isobel stands at the bottom of the steps, arms crossed tight.

Her expression is a mix of frustration and controlled fear.

DEPUTY KLEIN (40s, polite, tired) stands a few feet away, notebook in hand. His badge is real, but his attention seems practiced.

KLEIN

And you're sure they weren't...what,  
some kind of projection? Reflections?  
You said there was smoke?

ISOBEL

They were talking. Drinking. One of  
them looked right at me. The room  
smelled like cigars for God's sake. I  
didn't imagine it.

Klein jots something half-heartedly in his pad.

KLEIN

We've had calls like this before.  
People break in, mess around. Urban  
explorer types. Usually harmless. But  
I'll file a report and circle by later  
tonight, see if anyone comes back.

She glares at him.

ISOBEL

No one broke in. They vanished.

KLEIN

Right.

Footsteps crunch behind them.

ELIJAH (O.S.)  
Everything alright out here?

They both turn.

ELIJAH walks toward them from the side path, sleeves rolled, as he wipes his hands on an old shop cloth.

Klein eyes him. Nods politely.

KLEIN  
Evening. You staying up here too?

ELIJAH  
Just lending a hand.

ISOBEL  
This is Elijah Moss. He's been helping me with repairs.

Klein scribbles something, eyes Elijah again.

KLEIN  
Don't think I've met you. You local?

ELIJAH  
Nearby.

Isobel watches him closely.

KLEIN  
Well, if either of you see anything else, give us a call. You armed, Ms. Sutter?

ISOBEL  
Yes.

KLEIN  
Then you'll be fine. Stay inside tonight. Lock the doors. Make sure the windows are all closed.

He tips his cap and walks back to the SUV.

Isobel stands in the amber light, silent.

Elijah watches her.

ELIJAH  
You alright?

ISOBEL

I called the cops on either teens or ghosts.

Isobel releases an exasperated sigh.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)

Yeah. Just fine.

She walks past him, back toward the Carolyn.

Elijah watches her go with a concerned, but also slightly amused expression.

He follows her back inside.

27 MONTAGE - LIVING WITH THE HAUNTING

- Isobel scrapes wallpaper in the dining room. Behind her, a chair slowly turns on its own. She jumps with a yelp. Pauses. Then returns to scraping.
- She paints a door frame. The paint bubbles and peels immediately. She sighs, wipes it clean, and starts again.
- Thunder outside. She boards up a broken window as piano notes echo faintly down the hallway. She pauses...and listens with a slight smile. Keeps hammering.
- Elijah appears in the background to silently fix a pipe, then helps Isobel lift a beam she couldn't manage alone. No words exchanged. Just a nod.
- She scrubs a rust-colored stain from the carpet. It vanishes. When she returns with cleaner, it's back. She groans, sets the bottle down, walks away.
- A door creaks open behind her while she's brushing her teeth. She uses her foot to kick it closed without looking.
- They move a couch together, dusty and moth-bitten. As they do, she pauses to watch him. His strength, his steadiness. He catches her watching and smirks. She quickly looks away.
- She lies in bed, lamp on. The lights flicker once. She waits. They steady. She rolls her eyes and turns the lamp off herself.

END MONTAGE.

28 INT. THE CAROLYN - SCREENED PORCH - SUNSET

A breeze whispers through torn mesh and ivy-wrapped wood.

The porch overlooks the sea, its roar low and constant, like distant thunder. The sun sets in the distance.

Isobel sits curled in a cracked wicker chair, a bottle of red wine on the table beside her, half-full glass in hand. A soft shawl is draped over her shoulders.

She gazes out to the ocean, relaxed but weighted, then hears the faint scuff of boots on the wood.

ELIJAH (O.S.)  
Been a while since someone enjoyed  
this area.

She turns her head with a soft smile.

ISOBEL  
Well. I like the sound of things  
falling apart.

ELIJAH  
(chuckles softly)  
There's a lot to love about this  
place, then.

Elijah stands in the doorway, hands tucked into his pants pockets.

ISOBEL  
Wanna sit? Drinking's always better  
with company.

She gestures to the empty chair across from her.

He steps forward, lowers himself into the chair. It creaks softly beneath him.

She pours more wine into her glass, then offers him the bottle.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
It's not great. But it gets the job  
done.

He politely holds up a hand.

ELIJAH  
Thanks, but I don't drink much.

Isobel shrugs.

ISOBEL  
Suit yourself.

She sips hers, then leans her head back, eyes half-lidded.

They both sit in silence for a few moments before Isobel finally speaks.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
I used to design buildings. Nothing big. Dental offices. Condos. A library once. They cut the budget halfway through. Put all the money into the parking structure.

Elijah listens.

ISOBEL  
It was supposed to be a dream job. It turned into compromise...after compromise, after compromise. I started to forget why I did it.

The glass is halfway to her lips when she pauses.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
And then there was Rob. My husband.

She rubs the gold ring in her finger. The wind moves through the porch, and lifts a strand of her hair.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
We weren't happy at the end. But I still loved him. In some quiet way that lingers around. The kind that doesn't let you stop caring.

Elijah shifts forward in his seat.

ELIJAH  
You lost him.

That was a statement, not a question.

She hesitates, then nods.

ISOBEL

Car accident. Two winters ago. He called me on the way home to say he was sorry for a fight we had. I almost didn't answer.

He watches her with something almost mournful in his eyes.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)

So I sold everything, left it all behind me. Bought this wreck.

She gestures lazily around them.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I thought maybe if I gave something else a second chance, it would give me one too.

A long silence. Elijah slowly reaches towards her hand, and covers it with his own.

ELIJAH

It's a good reason to stay.

She looks at his hand on hers, then meets his eyes across the table. Hers are glassy now, but clear. Searching.

ISOBEL

Why are you always here, Elijah?

He holds her gaze, but doesn't answer immediately.

ELIJAH

Because I know what it feels like, to stay too long in a place you thought would heal you.

ISOBEL

Then you know what it feels like when it doesn't.

A beat. The sea crashes below, distant and hollow.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)

You see the weird stuff here too, don't you.

Elijah doesn't hesitate.

ELIJAH  
Sometimes.

ISOBEL  
Honestly? I've gotten kind of used to it. Nothing's hurt me yet, so maybe whatever ghosts are here just want to...I don't know, slightly annoy me?

He doesn't react. Doesn't question.

ELIJAH  
How come you haven't told anyone?

ISOBEL  
(low)  
Because no one would believe me. Not really. Not the realtor. Not the sheriff. Not my sister.

A long breath.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
It's easier to pretend it's just the wind. Or the pipes. Or my grief.

She looks away.

Elijah watches her for a moment, then gently pulls his hand back.

She catches it, holds it.

Their eyes meet again, closer now. Softer.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
You're the only thing here that doesn't feel unfinished.

His soft smile returns.

ELIJAH  
You don't have to be afraid of this place. It doesn't want to hurt you.

ISOBEL  
What about you?

He hesitates.

ELIJAH  
I think I just want you to stay.

The silence between them stretches, tender and uncertain.

29 INT. THE CAROLYN - LAUNDRY ROOM - MIDDAY

The laundry room is humid and cluttered. A fan spins lazily in the corner.

Isobel kneels beside an old iron wash basin and scrubs a set of white curtains that refused to come clean in the machine.

Elijah stands nearby, arms crossed as he watches her struggle with visible amusement.

ELIJAH  
You know we have bleach for that.

Isobel huffs and her shoulders slump.

ISOBEL  
This is vintage fabric. If I use bleach, it'll fall apart.

ELIJAH  
So will your wrists if you keep scrubbing like that.

She glares at him, but there's no fire behind it.

He steps forward, crouches beside her.

ISOBEL  
I didn't peg you for the laundry type.

ELIJAH  
I was a maintenance man, not a caveman. You think guests didn't complain if linens were off-white?

She snorts.

ISOBEL  
How terribly civilized of you.

He grabs a bar of soap and a rag.

ELIJAH  
You're using too much water. Watch:  
(MORE)

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
little circular motions, light  
pressure.

He demonstrates. She watches, reluctantly impressed.

ISOBEL  
Showoff.

He hands her the rag.

ELIJAH  
Try it.

She mimics him, awkward at first, but starts to get the hang of it. A rhythm.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Okay, maybe this is satisfying.

ELIJAH  
Told you. Most things are, if you stop fighting them long enough.

She glances up at him, a little caught off guard. He meets her eyes.

A pause.

He reaches over and dips the rag back in the water.

Their hands brush.

ISOBEL  
You always this helpful?

ELIJAH  
Only for pretty women who take on doomed renovation projects.

Isobel's eyes widen and she blushes.

She tries to brush it off.

ISOBEL  
Well then. Guess I'm your type.

He grins and they return to the task at hand in comfortable silence.

30 INT. THE CAROLYN - STORAGE CLOSET - DAY

The closet is cramped, filled with stacks of linens, cleaning supplies, and an assortment of vintage decor items.

A single bare bulb glows warmly above them.

Isobel stands on her tiptoes, as she tries unsuccessfully to shove an old box onto a high shelf.

The box tips precariously.

Suddenly, Elijah steps into the narrow space behind her, reaches effortlessly over her head, and steadies it.

His body is close, but respectfully so.

ELIJAH

Careful.

She exhales softly.

ISOBEL

Thanks. Apparently I'm vertically challenged.

He laughs softly.

She turns slightly, then realizes just how close they are in this tight space.

Neither of them moves immediately.

He clears his throat gently.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

We, uh, could switch places. Might be safer.

She meets his eyes, and smiles slightly.

ISOBEL

You calling me reckless?

He holds her gaze.

ELIJAH

Not reckless. Determined.

There's a gentle pause as they both realize how quiet the house has become, how small the space feels.

Her voice lowers, genuine.

ISOBEL  
Can I ask you something?

ELIJAH  
Sure.

ISOBEL  
Do you actually like doing this?  
Fixing this place, I mean. Because,  
sometimes I worry I might have dragged  
you into something you didn't want.

His expression softens.

ELIJAH  
Isobel, if I wasn't enjoying this, I  
wouldn't still be here.

She studies him carefully, not sure if he's talking about the hotel, or her.

He leans slightly closer, casual but meaningful.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
Besides, I like it here. The company's  
good.

She blushes faintly, but doesn't break eye contact.

ISOBEL  
Well, you're not so bad yourself.

He grins, warm and genuine.

ELIJAH  
High praise.

They remain close a second longer, comfortable in the silence, then reluctantly shift apart.

He reaches up and effortlessly slides the box into place.

Isobel rolls her eyes.

ISOBEL  
Now you're just showing off.

He chuckles and steps back to let her through the doorway first.

ELIJAH  
Maybe just a little.

They leave the closet together, and their shoulders brush lightly as they exit.

31 INT. THE CAROLYN - BRIDAL SUITE - THE NEXT NIGHT

A single lamp glows warm in the corner, casts soft light across the room. Shadows cling to the edges like moss.

Isobel sits on the bed in flannel and bare feet, cross-legged with a plate of dry toast and an open can of soup beside her.

She balances her phone between shoulder and ear as she sorts through a pile of old newspaper clippings on the bed.

ISOBEL  
(into phone)  
Yeah. I called the cops. And I didn't even feel crazy about it until the guy gave me the "seen too many horror movies" look.

Her sister's voice crackles softly from the speaker. Concerned, distant.

SISTER (V.O.)  
You sure it's not just nerves? I mean, you've been through a lot, Izzy.

ISOBEL  
Melody. I know what I saw. But I also know how it sounds.

She rifles through the stack of papers absently, half-focused.

SISTER (V.O.)  
Maybe you just need a break from that place. A few days. Somewhere with reliable plumbing.

Isobel scoffs.

ISOBEL  
You know that I can't.

She pulls another clipping forward and freezes.

A black-and-white photo stares back at her.

Elijah Moss, exactly as he looks now. Young. Alive.

He stands in front of The Carolyn in a work uniform, hands behind his back, a faint smile under tired eyes.

The headline reads:

"LOCAL GROUNDSKEEPER DIES HERO IN RESORT FIRE"

She blinks.

Her breathing changes. Becomes more frantic.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
(into phone, faintly)  
Hold on.

She reads quickly now, her eyes scan every line. The article spells it out:

"Elijah Moss, 33, perished in the fire that consumed the east wing of the Carolyn Resort...attempts to rescue trapped guests...managed to activate sprinkler system...remembered as quiet, kind...survived by no immediate family..."

She sets the clipping down, her face contorted in confusion.

SISTER (V.O.)  
Izzy? You still there?

Isobel's eyes stay locked on the photograph.

ISOBEL  
Yeah...I'll have to talk to you later,  
Mel. Bye.

She hangs up the call.

Isobel sits rigid on the bed, the phone clutched tightly in one hand.

Her breath trembles softly.

Her eyes remain locked on the old clipping, on Elijah's photograph.

She slowly sets the phone aside.

A beat.

She glances around the room, and her eyes land on objects

they've handled together.

Tools, paintbrushes, the jacket he left draped over a chair.

Ordinary, tangible things.

She takes a slow, steady breath.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
(softly, to herself)  
Okay. Think.

She picks up the clipping once more and studies it carefully, as if some hidden detail might surface.

But there's nothing new.

She finally rises from the bed and moves to the window.

Outside, the ocean crashes distantly.

Everything feels quiet, deceptively peaceful.

Her reflection stares back at her from the glass, face pale, eyes searching.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
(under breath)  
You knew. You had to have known.

She rubs her temples, stressed, then turns back toward the bed.

Her eyes catch something on the dresser, a worn set of keys Elijah left behind.

She picks them up and turn them over in her fingers.

Ordinary, solid, entirely real.

After a long moment, she sighs deeply and turns to the door.

32 INT. THE CAROLYN - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hallway is empty, lit faintly by sconces that flicker softly and make the shadows stretch longer.

Isobel pauses, uncertain, and then calls out quietly:

ISOBEL  
Elijah? Are you...still here?

Silence.

She grips the keys tighter.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
(a little firmer)  
Elijah. I-I found something. We need  
to talk.

Still nothing.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
Please.

The silence lingers heavily. No footsteps. No response.

She exhales, frustrated and shaken.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
(to herself, softly)  
Fine. I'll wait.

She steps back into the suite, then gently shuts the door  
behind her.

33 INT. THE CAROLYN - KITCHEN - MORNING

Soft morning light streams through the windows. The table is  
set simply: mismatched plates, two mugs of coffee, slightly  
burnt toast.

Isobel sits at one end, watching Elijah move about the  
kitchen area. He hums quietly as he sets down a jar of jam.

ELIJAH  
Sorry I burned the first round. I  
haven't cooked in...a long time.

ISOBEL  
So you keep saying.

He smiles and sits. Reaches for his coffee. She watches him  
sip it.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Doesn't it taste off?

ELIJAH  
Tastes fine to me.

She looks down. Her fingers toy with the butter knife beside

her plate.

ISOBEL  
Hey, Elijah?

ELIJAH  
Hm?

She picks up the knife.

Holds it. Weighs it.

And before she can lose her nerve, she flicks the knife across the table, low and fast.

It passes straight through Elijah's shoulder.

No blood. No reaction. The knife clatters against the wall and falls to the floor.

Elijah doesn't flinch. He just looks at her.

Her breath catches. Blood falls from her face. She's suddenly very still.

ISOBEL  
(soft)  
Why didn't you tell me?

He's quiet for a long beat.

ELIJAH  
Because I didn't want that to be the first thing you knew about me.

Her eyes don't move from his face.

ISOBEL  
But it changes everything.

ELIJAH  
It doesn't have to.

A silence grows between them. Not hostile. Not quite afraid. Just shaken.

Her hands tremble as she reaches for her coffee.

ISOBEL  
How long have you been here?

A long sigh escapes Elijah.

ELIJAH

Long enough to stop hoping anyone would talk to me like I was still human.

ISOBEL

Long enough to know how to dodge questions as well as this knife.

He stands and walks slowly to where the knife rests on the floor, picks it up, and sets it gently back beside her plate.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

If you want me to leave, I will.

She doesn't answer. Instead, she picks up the knife, sets it straight, and returns to her breakfast.

After a minute or so of silence, Isobel gestures to his coffee mug.

ISOBEL

That was dirt water, by the way.

Elijah gives her a look, then peers into his mug.

He begins to laugh. Isobel soon joins in.

34 MONTAGE - RECLAIMING THE CAROLYN

- Isobel and Elijah sand down a warped banister together. Her hand covers his to correct the pressure.
- Fresh sheets being tugged over an antique bed. She smooths the fabric while he tightens the bolts.
- They repaint the ballroom walls as sun pours through the cracked windows. He catches her with a streak of white on her cheek, then licks his thumb to wipe it off. She grimaces, but appreciates it.
- In the kitchen, they unpack supplies. He tries to show her how to light the ancient stove pilot. It clicks, flares, which causes her to jump and laugh. He kisses her forehead.
- They sit on the garden steps with mugs of coffee, sweat on their skin, covered in grime and sawdust. Her head rests on his shoulder. The sea below looks peaceful.

— Later that afternoon, Isobel opens one of the sealed windows. For the first time, fresh air rushes into the bridal suite. She leans out into the sun, eyes closed, smiling.

35 INT. THE CAROLYN - GENTLEMEN'S PARLOR - NIGHT

The room glows gently with lamp light. The fire in the hearth burns low, casting slow amber flickers across polished wood. Outside, wind sighs against the windows.

Isobel sits on the old velvet settee, barefoot, a throw blanket draped over her legs.

A half-empty glass of wine rests on the nearby table.

Elijah kneels near the fire to stoke it.

ISOBEL

I thought this room deserved a drink.

ELIJAH

Looks like it got one. And then some.

She smiles, holds out another glass of wine.

ISOBEL

You going to pretend to drink this too?

He accepts it and sits on the old leather sofa, relaxed but watchful. She joins him. Close. Closer than usual.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)

Can I ask you something you won't deflect with charm or politeness?

ELIJAH

I can try.

ISOBEL

How did you die?

He looks at the fire. Doesn't answer right away.

ELIJAH

Smoke got in before the fire did. It was the east wing. I'd just finished a repair run when someone started yelling from the ballroom. People were trapped in one of the private suites. I tried to get the door open, but it

(MORE)

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
had already gone.

He hesitates.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
I don't remember the pain. Just a  
moment where I realized I wasn't going  
to get back out.

She watches him and her eyes grow glossy.

ISOBEL  
You stayed to help.

ELIJAH  
I was the one who knew the building  
best. If I didn't try, who else  
would've?

ISOBEL  
And after?

ELIJAH  
After was quiet. I woke up in the  
stairwell. The house was wrong. Stuck.  
No one came. I just kept moving  
through the halls. Kept fixing things,  
for no one.

ISOBEL  
That was...what? Seventy years ago?

He nods faintly. Isobel leans back and her eyes drift to the ceiling.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
And I thought I knew what loneliness  
was.

He doesn't respond.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
Did it hurt? Being forgotten?

ELIJAH  
Only at first. Then it just became the  
shape of things.

ISOBEL  
But you're still here. Still you.  
(MORE)

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
That's kind of miraculous.

ELIJAH  
Maybe. Or maybe I just can't figure  
out how to leave.

He meets her eyes.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
But lately, it hasn't felt like  
waiting anymore.

Silence stretches. The fire crackles between them.

Isobel sets her glass down and reaches over to gently touch his hand. It's warm.

She leans toward him, slowly.

He meets her halfway.

Their kiss is quiet, familiar, like something they've been circling for days.

Their hands find each other, then arms, shoulders.

ISOBEL  
(whispers)  
You don't feel like a ghost.

ELIJAH  
You make me forget I am one.

They kiss again, deeper.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
(low)  
You don't have to do this.

Her brows knot in confusion.

ISOBEL  
Why?

Elijah looks slightly surprised.

ELIJAH  
You don't need to feel sorry for me,  
I'll be okay.

Her confusion turns to a tender frustration.

ISOBEL  
I'm not doing this out of pity,  
Elijah,

Isobel's eyes lock onto his.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
I'm doing it because for the first  
time since Rob died, I feel like I'm  
allowed to want something again.

He moves closer.

ELIJAH  
And you want me?

She lets out a breathy laugh.

ISOBEL  
God help me, I do.

Elijah smiles wide and pulls her into his lap.

It isn't rushed. There's nothing urgent.

Clothes are loosened.

Button by button. Touch by touch. Kiss by kiss.

Elijah lays her down on her back as a large hand tangles in  
her hair.

He peppers a slow trail of kisses down her neck, to her  
shoulders, then her bare chest.

He looks down at her, silently asks for permission, and she  
nods.

Elijah presses his lips to hers, and Isobel moans into the  
kiss as he enters her.

Her eyes roll back and flutter closed, nails dig into his  
bare skin.

They move together in a slow and passionate rhythm, lit only  
by firelight and the shadows of the room.

## 36 INT. THE CAROLYN - BRIDAL SUITE - EARLY MORNING

The room is still. Pale blue morning light seeps in through gauzy curtains.

A faint breeze stirs the edges of the bedsheets.

Isobel lies curled beneath the covers, hair tangled across the pillow. Her breathing is slow, satiated.

Elijah sits in a chair near the window, dressed only in his slacks. The first sun of the day edges across his face and bare chest.

He watches her in quiet, peaceful awe.

Isobel stirs and her eyes blink open. For a moment, she forgets where she is.

Then she sees him. Sees the room. Remembers.

A soft smile touches her lips.

ISOBEL  
You always wake up that quietly?

ELIJAH  
I don't sleep.

ISOBEL  
Right.

She sits up and clutches the blanket around her chest. Her body's sore in a satisfying way. Her expression's shy, but not uncertain.

He crosses to the bed and sits beside her.

ELIJAH  
You okay?

She nods.

ISOBEL  
I didn't think I'd ever do something like this again. Wake up feeling like I didn't just make a mistake.

She rests her head on his shoulder. He presses a kiss to her hairline.

A long pause. The house is quiet. Isobel closes her eyes again.

Elijah reaches down and lifts a quilt from the foot of the bed, drapes it over her.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
You're always taking care of things.

He chuckles at this.

ELIJAH  
Old habits.

He pulls her into his arms and holds her tightly against him.

37 INT. THE CAROLYN - SUN ROOM - MORNING

The light in the sun room is warm. It seeps through old lace curtains, and makes the gold trim on antique frames glow.

A small record player in the corner spins a scratchy jazz tune, soft and slow.

Isobel and Elijah sit cross-legged on a moth-eaten rug, surrounded by stacks of old photographs and framed memories. Dusty glass glints like mica in the sun.

Isobel picks up a photo of a 1950s couple mid-dance, caught in motion under the grand chandelier.

ISOBEL  
They all look so happy in these.

ELIJAH  
That was New Year's, I think. '52 or '53. Those two used to sneak out to the ballroom after midnight. They'd bribe the night porter with a bottle of blackberry brandy.

Isobel smiles and her eyebrows lift.

ISOBEL  
You remember them?

ELIJAH  
(small smile)  
I remember everyone. That's the curse of maintenance work. You're invisible, but you see everything.

He glanced to the door in the direction of the ballroom.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

I used to watch the guests down there.  
All dressed up. Laughing. I thought if  
I could live any life, it'd be that  
one. One night of dancing and being  
known by someone who didn't want  
anything fixed.

She tilts her head, a lazy smile on her face while she  
studies him.

ISOBEL

You must have loved this place.

He lifts a photograph from the pile. Four men in work  
uniforms stand out back, a younger Elijah among them.

ELIJAH

I did. It wasn't just a job. It was a  
rhythm. Wake before the guests. Oil  
the hinges. Bleed the radiators. I  
knew where every pipe ran, where every  
window stuck. This place...it was  
everything to me.

Isobel watches the way he speaks, how present he becomes when  
he remembers.

ISOBEL

I can tell how proud you were of it.

ELIJAH

Yeah. Maybe more than I should've  
been.

He picks up another photo, this one of the grand opening.  
Dozens of people lined up, dressed to the nines. Champagne in  
hand.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

Opening day, they let the staff come  
up from the kitchens and housekeeping.  
Everyone had to look sharp. I wore a  
borrowed suit that didn't fit. The  
manager told me I cleaned up alright.

ISOBEL

You must've been, what? Twenty?

ELIJAH

Just turned. Got the job the week I  
buried my father. Figured if I was  
going to stay in this town, I might as  
well fix something that still wanted  
to be whole.

He looks down at the photo again.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

I used to believe places could hold  
onto the best parts of us. Now I'm not  
so sure.

A long silence. The record crackles softly.

ELIJAH (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Perhaps they just collect the parts we  
don't know how to let go of. Memories,  
dusty old ghosts.

Isobel sets her hand gently over his.

They sit there a while longer, flipping through photos of  
lives that came and went.

But the warmth in the room begins to fade, almost  
imperceptibly.

38 EXT. THE CAROLYN - OVERGROWN GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Golden light spills across the wild grass. The old garden has  
been partially cleared:

a crooked bench, an iron table, two chipped tea cups waiting.  
The scent of salt and honeysuckle drifts in on the breeze.

Isobel steps out, wiping paint from her hands on a rag. She  
pauses when she sees it.

A makeshift picnic. A pot of tea. A few crookedly cut  
cucumber sandwiches. A plate of peaches.

Elijah stands nearby, arranging the last place setting like  
it's a high-stakes operation. He turns, caught.

ELIJAH

It's not much. The sandwiches might be  
structural hazards.

ISOBEL  
Did you do this?

ELIJAH  
It felt like a waste of sun not to.

She steps closer, her eyes sweep the setup. It's imperfect, charming, made by someone who hasn't entertained in decades.

ISOBEL  
This is...really sweet.

ELIJAH  
I was aiming for "not tragic."

They sit. The bench creaks beneath them.

He pours the tea. She watches him, and notices how careful his hands are, how present he is in this moment.

ISOBEL  
You always this thoughtful, or am I just special?

ELIJAH  
I don't remember ever doing something like this for anyone.

Isobel pauses. A quiet, meaningful beat.

ISOBEL  
Do you forget things often?

ELIJAH  
Only things that don't matter.

ISOBEL  
And this?

ELIJAH  
This definitely matters.

She looks away, overwhelmed. Not ready to be seen so clearly.

ISOBEL  
You seem different lately. Lighter, happier.

ELIJAH  
You ever have a moment that reminds you what it feels like to be alive,  
(MORE)

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
and then you realize how long it's  
been since you felt that way?

She nods, slow and quiet.

ISOBEL  
Every day here.

Elijah looks at her. The sunlight catches in his eyes.

ELIJAH  
That's what you're doing. To me.

He pauses.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
You're reminding me.

She's still. The wind shifts and brushes her hair across her cheek. He tucks it behind her ear, tentatively.

She smiles at him.

ISOBEL  
I don't know what I'm doing. I really  
don't.

ELIJAH  
That's okay. Neither do I.

He leans forward and, carefully, he presses his lips to hers.

39 INT. THE CAROLYN - BRIDAL SUITE - NIGHT

Soft lamplight pools on the bed. The room is warm, quiet. The ocean hushes outside the window.

Isobel sits cross-legged under the covers, a mug of tea on the nightstand, an old leather-bound journal rests on her lap.

She opens it carefully. The pages are still blank.

Elijah sits at the edge of the bed to unlace his boots. His suspenders hang loose at his sides. He glances over his shoulder.

ELIJAH  
That new?

ISOBEL

No. I gave it to Rob the year we got married. Said he was going to write down all the big stuff. Our life together.

She flips a few more empty pages.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)

He never wrote a single word.

Elijah pauses. Watches her gently.

ELIJAH

Did that hurt?

She shrugs, eyes still on the book.

ISOBEL

At the time? Not really. I think I told myself it meant we just hadn't lived anything worth writing yet.

She traces the inside of the cover with her thumb.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)

Later, it felt like proof we were always halfway apart. Like he never really saw it as worth documenting.

She hesitates.

Then pulls a pen from the nightstand drawer and sets the tip to the first page.

ELIJAH

What are you going to write?

ISOBEL

I don't know. Maybe just that today was a good day.

He watches her. A quiet pride in his expression.

ELIJAH

Sounds like a solid beginning.

She smiles. Not brightly, but genuine.

Isobel writes a single line. Then another.

The scratch of pen against paper is soft and steady.

Elijah leans back against the headboard beside her.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
You don't have to fill it all.

ISOBEL  
No. But I think I'd like to leave  
something in it before I go.

They sit side by side, the lamp glows over the page, the ocean ebbs against rocks beyond the window.

40 INT. THE CAROLYN - LOBBY - DAY

Sunlight filters softly through the front windows. The air feels cleaner than it did weeks ago, less heavy, more lived in. The front desk gleams, newly oiled, and a vase of fresh flowers sits beside the old guestbook.

Isobel steps in from the dining room and wipes her hands on a towel, surprised to hear the front door creak open.

Marcy Kenner, the real estate agent who sold her the property, stands in the threshold with a forced smile and a clipboard.

MARCY  
Isobel! I hope I'm not intruding.

ISOBEL  
No-uh, not at all. I just wasn't  
expecting anyone.

MARCY  
I was in the area showing a place up  
the road. Thought I'd check in.  
Curiosity got the better of me.

She steps inside slowly, and looks around with a slight wrinkle in her brow. Something about the space seems to hold her breath short.

MARCY (CONT'D)  
Wow. This actually looks...good.  
Really good.

ISOBEL  
That sounded dangerously close to  
sincere.

MARCY

Oh, it is. I mean it. Most buyers  
don't make it past week two. I half-  
expected to find you halfway to Maine.

Isobel snorts through her nose.

ISOBEL

I thought about it.

Marcy glances upward at the chandelier as she runs her fingers along the molding.

MARCY

You know, I hated showing this place.  
Every time I came in, I'd get this weird headache. Like my lungs had to work harder. Probably mold or asbestos or some chemical leak we didn't catch.

She laughs lightly, brushing it off.

MARCY (CONT'D)

Didn't help that it sat for so long.  
Like the whole house was mad about being ignored.

Isobel watches her, expression unreadable.

ISOBEL

It's calmer now. Since we started fixing things.

MARCY

Well, whatever you're doing, keep it up. You've made it feel lighter.

She smiles again. Still polite. Still unsettled.

MARCY (CONT'D)

Anyway, I won't hover. Just wanted to see the miracle for myself. Thought maybe I'd been too hard on the old girl.

She taps the wall once like it's an old dog.

ISOBEL

You weren't wrong.

Marcy nods, satisfied enough.

MARCY

Well. If you ever do want to sell it  
again—don't call me.

They both laugh.

Marcy leaves the door open behind her as she leaves.

Isobel watches the sunlight fall across the threshold.

41 EXT. SMALL BEACH BELOW THE CAROLYN - DUSK

The narrow stretch of beach is tucked below the cliff,  
scattered with driftwood and sea glass.

Waves lap gently at the rocks. The air smells like salt and  
wet stone.

Isobel walks barefoot along the edge, shoes in hand, her  
rolled jeans damp to the ankles.

Behind her, Elijah trails a step behind.

ISOBEL

I didn't think you'd be able to come  
down this far.

ELIJAH

Neither did I.

Isobel glances at him.

ISOBEL

I thought ghosts were usually kind of  
stuck. Where they died, or where  
they're buried. Seemed like some sort  
of rule.

ELIJAH

Yeah, well. Either the rules changed,  
or I'm the exception.

They reach a long, smooth log and sit. She takes a deep  
breath, then speaks while she stares at the horizon.

ISOBEL

What was it like?

She waits a moment before Elijah responds.

ELIJAH  
Dying?

Isobel nods.

He doesn't answer right away.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
It was fast. And not. I remember heat.  
And choking. Then nothing. No light,  
no tunnel, just quiet. Like falling  
into a pocket of silence.

She turns to face him fully.

ELIJAH  
I kept waiting for angels or the  
pearly gates to appear. But it still  
hasn't happened yet.

He chuckles once, dry.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
Kind of depressing, really.

ISOBEL  
Do you wish you'd moved on?

Elijah shrugs.

ELIJAH  
Maybe. Sometimes. Then one day,  
someone showed up who wouldn't stop  
picking fights with the plumbing. And  
talking to herself. And drawing those  
fancy blueprints she'll never use.

She smiles, and playfully bumps her shoulder into his. He chuckles.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
And I remembered what it felt like to  
want to stay.

Isobel nods slowly, then she nudges his knee gently with  
hers.

ISOBEL  
If you're going to haunt something, it  
might as well be beautiful.

The sky deepens. The waves pull higher. Somewhere behind them, the Carolyn sits on her cliff, watching.

Isobel leans forward, elbows on her knees. Her voice softens.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Do you know what the house really is?

Elijah watches the water for a long moment before answering.

ELIJAH  
Not exactly.

ISOBEL  
But you've felt it.

He nods.

ELIJAH  
I haven't seen anyone else like me  
around here.

He picks up a pebble. Rolls it between his fingers.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
I don't think The Carolyn holds onto  
the dead.

ISOBEL  
What do you mean?

ELIJAH  
I think it holds onto what's left  
behind. Guilt. Memory. Love no one  
said out loud.

ISOBEL  
So it, what, feeds on us? Like some  
sort of sadness leech?

ELIJAH  
Can't say for sure, wish I could. Wish  
I knew why it was keeping me around.

42 INT. THE CAROLYN - BOILER ROOM - NIGHT

The air is damp, thick with the stench of rust and old water.  
Barely any light.

The boiler looms like a sleeping animal, its pipes veined  
across the ceiling like arteries.

Isobel steps carefully through the space, the flashlight bobs as she scans the exposed brick and warped tile. Her breath plumes faintly in the cold.

She kneels beside the old pressure tank, adjusts a valve Elijah had flagged earlier. It hisses steam. She flinches-  
BZZZ-BZZZ.

The sound slices through the stillness.

Electric. Her phone in her back pocket.

She frowns and pulls it out.

No service.

No signal.

But the screen glows:

1 NEW VOICEMAIL

She stares at it.

The date reads: February 3, 2022. The day Rob died.

She taps PLAY.

ROB'S VOICE (V.O.)  
(soft, laughing at first)  
Hey. Hey, um, I'm trying to find a  
good way to say this without sounding  
like an idiot.  
(louder over car noise)  
I'm sorry, Izzy. About earlier. I  
shouldn't have said that. You were  
right. I just-

The line crackles, like water hitting live wires. Isobel clamps a hand over her mouth that was wide with shock.

Tears fall down her cheeks.

ROB'S VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I love you. That's all. Even when  
you're a stubborn pain in the ass.  
I'll be home soon.

Then-

A HORRIFIC METALLIC SHRIEK across the line. Tires SCREECH. Glass SHATTERS. A low, final THUMP.

Then silence.

Isobel just stands there. Frozen. Shaking. Her lips part but no sound comes out.

ISOBEL  
No...No, no, no-

The voicemail ENDS. The screen fades to black.

She taps the screen again. And again. No voicemail. No log. Just the empty call screen. "No service."

The flashlight flickers. She's alone in the boiler room, but the air feels heavy now. Watched.

The rhythmic drip-drop of the water ceases. She looks around, but no one is there.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
Elijah?

A distant CLANG comes from somewhere in a brick crawl space. Not footsteps. Movement. Large. SKITTERS and SCRATCHES.

Something YANKS her backwards by the arm, and she cries out in shock and pain.

Isobel pulls against the invisible force, and breaks free. She clutches her arm as she scrambles for the stairway.

43 INT. THE CAROLYN - BRIDAL SUITE - NIGHT

The warm glow of the lamp casts a warm wash across the room. Rain taps gently at the windowpane.

Elijah lies in bed, shirtless, the blanket low on his hips. An old worn paperback is open in his hands. He looks up as the door creaks.

Isobel steps inside, pale and quiet. Her flashlight clatters gently onto the nightstand.

ELIJAH  
Hey, hon. Everything alright?

She nods once, too fast, as she yanks off her coat.

ISOBEL  
I bled the line. Like you said.  
Pressure dropped about five points. It  
should hold.

Her voice is clipped. Controlled.

ELIJAH  
You okay?

ISOBEL  
Fine.

She kicks off her boots and peels herself out of her sweat-damp clothes. That's when he sees it.

A faint red hand print around her arm.

Bruised, like someone held her there and squeezed too tightly.

He immediately sits up.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
(protective)  
What is that?

She doesn't answer. Just stares at him, eyes wide. Her chest rises and falls faster now.

ISOBEL  
I...I don't know.

He stands and crosses to her, then gently turns her by the waist.

The shape is unmistakable. Fingers. Palm. Huge.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
Oh, sweetheart...

She winces and her eyes squeeze shut when Elijah makes contact with the mark.

Isobel opens her mouth to speak, but it takes a few seconds for the words to come out.

ISOBEL  
I got a voicemail.

That stops him cold in confusion. His eyebrows knit together.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
From Rob. The day he died. It played  
by itself. Said he was sorry, said he  
loved me. Then...the crash.

Elijah's jaw tightens. He says nothing.

Isobel's voice cracks more as she tries to speak.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
It wasn't a memory. It was his voice.  
The call log is gone, but I *swear* I  
know what I heard.

Her voice grows quiet.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
And then something grabbed me, and it  
hurt a lot, burned.

Elijah's eyes fall back to the mark. Guilt begins to cloud  
his features.

ELIJAH  
I shouldn't have let you go there on  
your own.

ISOBEL  
I'll be okay, I'm...I'm a tough gal.

He reaches out, his hand hovers just above the mark.

A silence builds between them. But neither backs away.

Isobel steps forward. Slides her arms around his waist. She  
rests her forehead against his collarbone.

He wraps his arms around her.

44 INT. THE CAROLYN - BALLROOM - MORNING

Sunlight streaks across the warped parquet floors of the  
grand ballroom.

Isobel stands at the center of the room with a bucket of  
water and a scrub brush. Determined. Tired.

Her hands shake slightly as she dips the brush and begins  
scrubbing the floor near the far wall.

Silence echoes around her. A few chairs stacked, a window

cracked open to the sea air.

She works in steady rhythm, and pauses occasionally to rub her temples.

Scrub. Scrape. Rinse. Pain.

ELIJAH (O.S.)  
You're up early.

Elijah steps into the ballroom from the east hallway, sleeves rolled, dirt on his hands. He holds a small bundle of tools.

ISOBEL  
Couldn't sleep.

A pause. She wrings the brush out into the bucket, water pinkish with old dust and rot.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Did you ever clean this floor?

ELIJAH  
Oh yeah. Guests came through here all the time. Did I ever tell you about the whole separate hallways workers used to get around? Hidden ones. Service passages.

Isobel points behind her with a thumb.

ISOBEL  
No, but I found that one when I first got here. It's all boarded up, though.

Elijah's face stills. She continues to scrub.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
What was it used for?

ELIJAH  
Storage. Overflow. Sometimes after the fire, people dumped things down there no one wanted to see anymore.

His tone is quick, clipped. She raises an eyebrow, but lets it go.

ISOBEL  
Makes sense.

She rubs her head again with a quiet GROAN.

ELIJAH  
You got a headache?

ISOBEL  
Yeah, hasn't gotten better since last night. Probably from air pressure changes, we're supposed to get a storm later.

He watches her for a long moment. Sets his tools down and kneels beside her. He takes the brush from her hand. Scrubs once. Twice.

ELIJAH  
(softly)  
You're allowed to fall apart a little, you know.

They scrub the floor together. The water grows murkier.

45 INT. THE CAROLYN - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lightning flickers through the stained glass window at the end of the hall.

Isobel walks slowly with a cup of tea, tension still tight in her neck and shoulders.

The hallway is lined with cracked, dust-covered mirrors, some full-length, some framed above hallway tables.

Isobel freezes, her eyes wide at something straight ahead of her. The teacup trembles with CLINKS that twinkle against its saucer.

ROB'S REFLECTION stares out at her from the long mirror at the end of the hall.

He's as he was the day he died: windbreaker, hoodie underneath, soft eyes, faint stubble. A little tired. A little kind.

ISOBEL  
(whispers)  
R-Rob?

He doesn't move. Doesn't blink. His voice is a whisper, but fills the entire space.

ROB  
You didn't answer.

She drops her teacup, and takes a slow step forward.

ROB (CONT'D)  
You were always halfway out the door.

She shakes her head.

ISOBEL  
That's not fair.

ROB  
Neither was dying on the highway while  
you felt sorry for yourself.

She reaches toward the mirror.

He's gone.

A mirror that hangs next to her flares to life.

Rob stands in it again. His skin is just slightly off.  
Grayer, eyes too shiny.

ROB (CONT'D)  
I called to say I loved you. And you  
were relieved when I didn't come home.

Isobel shakes her head more wildly.

ISOBEL  
That's not true!

She rushes toward the mirror.

He smiles faintly, then jerks violently, like something  
pulled him by the spine.

He vanishes again.

46 INT. THE CAROLYN - CONTINUOUS

Rob appears again in the cracked mirror at the far wall, his  
neck is now tilted unnaturally, lips blue.

ROB  
You never even opened the box of  
things from the hospital.

Isobel SLAMS her hands on the table, and sends the spoon clattering.

ISOBEL  
Stop it!

Lightning flashes outside. The reflection ripples like water.

He SMILES, and a chunk of his cheek sloughs off, black and wet against the glass.

He strolls from mirror to mirror, down through the lobby, the dining room, and then the mirror just before the doors to the ballroom.

Bones audibly CRACK and SCRAPE with each step.

ROB  
Tell me you're sorry. Tell me you  
wished it was you.

47 INT. THE CAROLYN - BALLROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Isobel bursts in, out of breath. The ballroom is silent. Dust motes float like ash in the air.

One last mirror remains intact, propped in the corner behind stacked chairs.

Rob stands inside it. But now he's half-skeletal, one eye milky white, jaw torn half-off. He raises a hand and points.

Toward the hidden panel in the wall. The service stairs.

ISOBEL  
(voice cracking)  
What's down there?

Rob's mouth moves. But no sound comes out.

He begins to ROT violently in the reflection, each stage of decay sped up like a video.

He cries and wails in pain as his skin bubbles and his shirt fuses into blackened flesh.

Rob GARGLES through one more scream before the mirror SHATTERS.

48 INT. THE CAROLYN - BALLROOM - NIGHT

Isobel stands alone among shattered glass. Her entire body trembles.

The remnants of Rob's final, rotting visage still echoes behind her eyes. Dust swirls through a slant of moonlight from the upper windows.

Her breathing is ragged and she presses both palms to her face.

ELIJAH (O.S.)

Isobel?

She spins. Elijah stands there, just inside the ballroom doors, his face drawn with concern.

Isobel tries to say something, but her voice catches in her throat. Elijah crosses the space quickly and catches her as she stumbles forward.

She tries to speak through hysterics.

ISOBEL

He was here! Rob! He was in the mirrors. Talking to me. Blaming me!

He holds her tighter, his arms wrapped fully around her, but his jaw is tight. He doesn't say anything yet.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)

He tried to make me follow him. The service stairs.

A pause. Elijah's body stiffens.

He lets go of her suddenly, and instead holds her by the shoulders. Isobel looks up to him, confused.

ISOBEL

What is wrong? I thought it was just storage...right!?

ELIJAH

Stay away from that.

ISOBEL

Elijah, what's down there?

ELIJAH  
It doesn't matter.

ISOBEL  
Yes, it does! That thing, whatever it is, wanted me to follow. It looked like him. It knew things only he would know.

ELIJAH  
(frustrated)  
That's what it does! It feeds off what hurts. It pulls things out of you, dresses them up in someone you'll listen to.

ISOBEL  
But why that place? Why the stairs?

Elijah looks away.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Elijah. Talk to me.

ELIJAH  
You don't need to know what's down there. You don't need to see it.

ISOBEL  
Don't I?

Beat.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
You said you'd tell me the truth. You said if something was happening here, we'd face it together.

Elijah swallows rough, and looks up at the ceiling.

ELIJAH  
Well, maybe...maybe I lied.

A harsh beat of silence. His eyes are cold now. Not cruel, just tired.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
Stay away from those stairs. Promise me.

He moves toward the door, but stops short, hesitates.

Then dissipates into thin air.

Isobel stands in the ballroom, surrounded by mirrors that no longer reflect her.

Outside, the wind howls against the walls like a voice held just below the surface.

49 INT. THE CAROLYN - SUN ROOM - NIGHT

A storm rattles against the windows.

Rain streaks down the glass in winding trails. The record player skips softly, and repeats a single piano note.

Isobel crosses the room, candles flicker as she passes. She carries a stack of fresh linens, moves slowly, tired.

She pauses. The fire in the hearth flickers oddly. Too bright. She blinks. The record stops.

A new light spills across the room.

Golden, rich, impossibly warm.

She turns.

FLASH OF WHITE:

50 INT. THE CAROLYN - SUN ROOM - VISION - DAY

Sunlight pours through spotless windows. A chandelier glows with polished crystal. Every chair is upright. The velvet is deep red, the mirrors clear.

The Carolyn is pristine.

Laughter echoes from down the hallway.

Isobel stands in the middle of it all, radiant.

Hair curled, pinned up. Soft makeup. She wears a tasteful vintage dress and a name tag that reads:

"Isobel Moss, Owner."

Guests bustle in from the front hall, luggage in hand. Someone hands her a gift basket.

She laughs. Warm, effortless. The sound surprises even her.

GUEST (O.S.)  
You've really brought her back to  
life.

Isobel glances to her hand as her wedding ring glints.

But it's not the one Rob gave her.

It's vintage. Square-cut. Yellow gold band. New.

She touches it gently, then turns.

Elijah holds a tray of coffee and pastries as he enters through the French doors. Clean, crisp shirt. The filigree on his golden ring matches hers.

He grins at her with a warmth only love could deliver.

ELIJAH  
Garden suite's ready, Hon. They want  
to book for the fall too.

She smiles back. Tears fill her eyes, but they don't fall.

ISOBEL  
Of course they do. You made it  
perfect.

He crosses to her. Kisses her gently. She closes her eyes and melts into it.

FLASH—

Thunder crashes.

The golden light drops out.

51 INT. THE CAROLYN - PARLOR ROOM - NIGHT (REALITY)

Isobel jerks slightly as if waking from a dream.

The fire is gone, the hearth cold.

The chandeliers sag with dust again. A breeze slips through a cracked window.

All the color has drained from the room.

She stands alone. No guests. No laughter.

No Elijah.

Her arms are still slightly lifted, like she's mid-embrace.

She lowers them slowly. Looks down at her hand. The ring is gone. Her finger's bare.

She swallows hard. Her breath trembles.

But she doesn't cry.

She kneels and gathers the linens she dropped, and folds them with mechanical care.

One corner of a napkin catches a tear from her cheek as she blinks it away.

She sits on her heels for a long moment, hands still.

ISOBEL

...That wasn't fair.

She rises. Gathers the folded linens in her arms, then walks out.

52 INT. THE CAROLYN - BALLROOM - MORNING

Isobel hauls a paint can across the floor alone. Her hair is tied up, face drawn. She kneels to cut in the edges.

As she works, she hears footsteps out in the hall. She sits up and quickly turns to look expectantly.

ISOBEL

Oh, Elijah-

Silence. Just her own breath and the far-off crash of waves.

She looks around for a moment, then dips the brush in and continues to paint the walls.

53 INT. THE CAROLYN - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

A cabinet creaks open behind Isobel as she cleans the old stove. She turns quickly, eyes bright with hope.

ISOBEL

Elijah?

No answer.

Just the slow drip of the faucet. The wind shifts through the cracked window.

She swallows hard, then proceeds to scrub the stove harder.

54 INT. THE CAROLYN - GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

She pushes a wheelbarrow over the gravel path. Stops at the edge of the hedge line.

Fresh honeysuckle has bloomed along the stones.

She kneels beside it, brushes the petals gently. Her voice is barely audible.

ISOBEL

I miss you.

55 INT. THE CAROLYN - LOBBY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The chandelier sways slightly above her as she sweeps. A floorboard creaks on the stairs.

She turns sharply. No one.

She waits a few more seconds. Hopes. Then lowers her gaze.

The broom clatters as she leans it against the desk and sits, shoulders slumped.

Isobel begins to quietly cry into her hands.

After a moment, her breath steadies. She shifts slightly on the bench, and her knee knocks into something under the front desk.

A soft thud. She frowns, then reaches underneath.

Her fingers brush the edge of something tucked between the floorboards and the bottom panel.

Flat, dry paper.

She pulls it free: a folded note, yellowed and brittle. The ink has bled in places, but it's still legible.

She opens it with care. Reads silently.

ISOBEL (V.O.)

If you find this, I've gone below to check the east service hallway.

Sprinkler system wasn't triggered, gone to manually turn open valves.

If anyone gets out, meet at the ferry  
(MORE)

ISOBEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
road. If I'm not there by first light,  
bury me as a Catholic.

No name. But the handwriting—tight, slanted, precise—is  
unmistakably his.

ISOBEL  
(whispers)  
You went down there.

She clutches the note to her chest, then folds it again.

Her gaze is fixed on the ballroom doors across the lobby.  
Beyond them: the panel. The stairs.

But she makes no move towards them. Not yet.

56 INT. THE CAROLYN - BRIDAL SUITE - NIGHT

The room is dim. The rain outside has quieted, but water  
still trickles in the gutters, and taps rhythmically against  
the windowpane.

The fireplace is unlit. The shadows are soft.

Isobel enters slowly, towel over one arm, the other hand  
trails along the door frame as she closes it behind her.

She crosses to the bed and sits on the edge.

ISOBEL  
(quietly)  
You said you wouldn't leave me.

She folds the towel in her lap. Runs her fingers over the  
worn embroidery on the edge.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Maybe you didn't have a choice. Or  
maybe I drove you away. I've been so  
damn stubborn. I couldn't even let go  
of a marriage that was already gone.

She glances toward the corner of the room where he used to  
sit in the mornings. The chair is empty.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
I used to think that love was just  
holding on tighter. Even when  
everything hurt.

Isobel lets out a small breathless laugh.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
But with you it's been different.  
Quieter. Like I can breathe again.

She lies back on the bed and looks up at the ceiling. Her voice is raw now, and cracks as she speaks.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Elijah...I think I'm in love with you.  
I don't know what the hell that means,  
for either of us.

She takes a deep breath and blinks hard.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
I just wanted to tell you. In case  
you're still here. In case you can  
hear me through all the walls and dust  
and whatever this house is.

She closes her eyes.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
You're the first person who's ever  
made me want to stay. That's not  
nothing.

A beat of silence. Stillness.

Then, the faintest creak from the floorboards. A shift of weight. Almost like someone sat beside her.

Isobel opens her eyes.

The room is empty.

She lets out a slow sigh, then rolls over and pulls the blankets up to her shoulders.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
(quiet)  
Goodnight, Elijah.

57 INT. THE CAROLYN - BREAKFAST NOOK - MORNING

Sunlight filters through gauzy curtains. The room feels brighter than usual, but wrongly so. A mug steams on the table beside Isobel.

She quietly sits in a robe and stares outside. Tired.

FOOTSTEPS click slowly against the linoleum.

From the hallways walks in...Elijah.

His shirt tucked, hair neatly combed.

He smiles.

ELIJAH

Isobel, sweetheart, you look beautiful  
this morning.

She turns, startled.

ISOBEL

Elijah!?

She blinks, and suddenly he has teleported to kneel right in front of her.

He leans in and kisses her cheek. She doesn't resist, but her eyes stay open.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)

Where were you? Where did you go?

ELIJAH

I thought you needed some space. I am sorry, I'm here now. That's all that matters.

He pours tea without asking.

She watches him carefully, and tears fill her eyes.

ISOBEL

I missed you.

He reaches out, brushes her hair behind her ear, then tucks his hand beneath her chin.

ELIJAH

I know, and I'm not going anywhere again.

Isobel wipes away a tear, before she wraps her arms around his neck, and her mouth crashes into his.

## 58 MONTAGE - THROUGHOUT THE DAY

- In the garden, Elijah is already there waiting for Isobel. He kneels beside a flowerbed of impossibly perfect roses. Roses that weren't there yesterday.

He holds one out to her.

## ELIJAH

Your beauty and grace causes even the  
brightest rose to whither in  
comparison.

She smiles, flustered and slightly confused, but still takes the flower.

Without warning, he grabs her wrist and pulls her down into his lap. He begins to pepper kisses along her neck, and his hands roam over her body.

- Isobel dusts a framed painting, balanced on a small step stool.

Elijah stands behind her, too close. One hand rests on her hip. His other hand gently smooths her hair down her back.

Again and again.

She pauses, and stiffens just slightly, but doesn't say anything.

He doesn't move away.

- That afternoon, she walks past the parlor and sees Elijah, who just...stands there. His body is faced towards the wall, motionless.

When she calls his name, he turns with a grin, like he'd been waiting for her to say something.

## 59 INT. THE CAROLYN - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A table for two has been set with care. Candles flicker in glass holders. A record player hums quietly from the next room.

Isobel steps in, freshly showered, a little hesitant.

Elijah stands near the table in a soft button-up, sleeves rolled. He's lit gently from the side, his smile warm.

ELIJAH

I thought we could have something nice  
tonight. Something not covered in  
dust.

She smiles. It's shy, grateful.

ISOBEL

You cook?

ELIJAH

Not well. But the house remembered  
where the silver was.

They sit. He uncovers a pair of plates and steam rises from  
them. Roasted vegetables, a simple pasta.

She takes a bite.

ISOBEL

(teasing)

Okay, I officially don't believe you  
made this.

Elijah's face suddenly goes blank.

ELIJAH

(serious)

Does it matter?

She pauses, confused.

ISOBEL

No...I guess not.

They eat. He watches her a little too closely.

ELIJAH

You looked beautiful earlier. When you  
were walking through the garden.

ISOBEL

I was weeding.

ELIJAH

Still. You looked...like you belonged  
here.

She blushes and releases a sarcastic laugh.

ISOBEL  
That's a first.

A soft pause.

ELIJAH  
You do. Belong, here. I see it. You  
and me.

She looks up, surprised by the sudden intensity.

ISOBEL  
Elijah, I don't even know what this is  
yet.

Isobel gestures at the air between them. She can see from  
where she sits that his jaw is clenched tight.

ELIJAH  
It's real. That's enough, isn't it?

The candlelight flickers. His expression is soft, but he  
doesn't blink. The smile doesn't reach his eyes.

Her own smile falters, just slightly.

ISOBEL  
You're being...really sure about this.

ELIJAH  
Aren't you?

Isobel takes a sip of wine as she eyes him carefully.

Elijah tilts his head.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
You said you missed me, Isobel.

She sets her glass down. The room feels a touch colder now.

ISOBEL  
I did.

A long silence.

ELIJAH  
Then why do you seem afraid of me?

Under the table, her fingers tighten around the napkin in her  
lap.

60 INT. THE CAROLYN - LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Isobel pulls warm towels from the dryer, then stacks them into a basket. The overhead bulb flickers.

ELIJAH (O.S.)  
I keep thinking about this morning.

She jumps. It's Elijah, and he's close. Too close.

ISOBEL  
Don't sneak up on me.

He doesn't apologize. He steps forward to brush her hair off her shoulder. His fingers slowly trail along her neck column.

ELIJAH  
You said you missed me. So I came back. I can stay with you. Forever, if you want.

His voice is low, almost reverent.

ISOBEL  
Elijah, back up.

Elijah's large hand wraps around her wrist. Isobel winces.

ELIJAH  
You don't have to be alone anymore.

She tries to yank her arm away, but his grip tightens.

ISOBEL  
(sharper)  
Let me go.

His eyes shift and something flickers underneath. Something too dark.

Without warning, Elijah flips her around and bends her over the washing machine.

He leans in, lips at her ear and his free hand tangled in her hair.

ELIJAH  
You already chose us, and we love you.  
So. Much.

He presses Isobel's face hard against the cold metal as she

struggles.

ISOBEL  
You're not him. You aren't Elijah!

The doppelgänger Elijah tilts its head, eyes too wide.

Then it smiles.

Its voice warps and glitches between tones, between memories, between people.

NOT-ELIJAH  
(distorted)  
He belongs to us. He was making you so happy. Too happy. We can't have that. You'll be ours, soon enough.

She gropes around for the nearest object, a wrench from the laundry sink, and swings with a YELL.

CRACK!

The figure explodes into soot and smoke, and vanishes with a SHRIEK that doesn't come from any throat.

Silence.

Her breath trembles, and she runs.

61   INT. THE CAROLYN - MAINTENANCE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Isobel sprints through the darkened hallway, her boots pound against the concrete.

Her flashlight beam slices wildly as her breath comes in gasps, ragged, panicked.

She rounds a corner and skids to a halt.

Elijah's work area. Quiet, dusty, lit only by the flicker of an overhead bulb about to die.

The toolbox lies open on the floor, tools scattered. A half-repaired pipe leaks a slow rhythmic drip.

She scans the shadows as she steps in.

ISOBEL  
Elijah?

A faint sound...from inside the wall.

A voice, muffled and strained.

ELIJAH (O.S.)  
(muffled)  
Isobel?

She whirls around to face the far wall.

An uneven patch of wood and plaster pulses faintly like it can breathe.

She presses her palm against it.

ISOBEL  
Elijah?! Elijah, are you in there? Can you hear me?

ELIJAH (O.S.)  
You have to go. Now. It's just using me.

ISOBEL  
I'm not leaving you!

She presses both hands to the wall, desperate to feel something. Anything.

The surface warms beneath her palms, then jerks inward like it's inhaling.

CRACK.

NAILS PUNCH THROUGH THE WALL.

Dozens. Sharp, rusted, jagged.

They pierce through both of her palms.

She SCREAMS. Isobel's knees buckle underneath her.

Isobel jerks backwards and blood hits the floor.

The nails pull with her, but she tears free with a meaty SCRAPE, then cradles her hands as she collapses against the floor.

The wall heals itself before her eyes, wood and plaster smooth over the holes like skin closing over a wound.

ELIJAH (O.S.)  
(strained)  
Please, Isobel! Just run!

Isobel grabs her coat, wraps her bleeding hands tight, and stumbles upright, with one last look at the wall.

She backs away. The Carolyn groans above her.

ISOBEL  
I won't let you die in this place  
twice!

Then she turns and runs.

62 INT. COASTAL EMERGENCY CLINIC - NIGHT

Rain taps gently against the windows of the ER waiting room.

The room is quiet, other than the fluorescent lights that HUM overhead. The smell of antiseptic and salt lingers in the air.

Isobel sits slouched in a molded plastic chair near the far corner, jacket wrapped tight around her. Her eyes are fixed on a vending machine that's out of order.

A NURSE walks past her and barely looks up. The front desk hums with muted keyboard clicks.

Distant.

A TV murmurs above: weather warnings, ferry cancellations. Static crawls across the bottom of the screen.

Isobel's foot bounces. Her hands twitch in her lap. Her gaze flicks to the exit door.

Sirens outside grow in volume, until paramedics burst in, soaked and panting as they wheel a young man on a stretcher.

Mid-thirties. Unconscious. Pale.

A CRASH CART is called. Monitors beep wildly.

Isobel watches, frozen.

A nurse shouts vitals. They wheel him through a door toward the trauma bay.

The hallway lights flicker as he passes.

Isobel doesn't breathe.

And then, a voice. A woman collapsed at the front desk as she sobs.

She clutches a phone to her ear, eyes red and wild. She turns to the nurse.

WOMAN

My husband! Please tell me he'll be okay!

Isobel's expression cracks.

Her hand goes to her chest and she clutches her shirt.

She stands, and runs out of the ER.

63 EXT. THE CAROLYN - NIGHT

Rain slams the windshield. Wipers drag across glass in rapid, uneven sweeps.

The Volvo SCREECHES to a stop at the base of the Carolyn's crooked drive. Mud splashes. The headlights catch the warped front steps like teeth.

The driver's door bursts open.

Isobel climbs out, soaked instantly. One hand shields her eyes.

The other grips a crowbar. Her jaw is clenched. Her bandaged hands tight on the steel, and blood drips down the handle.

She marches up the stairs. Keys jingle as she throws the door open.

64 INT. THE CAROLYN - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The door SLAMS behind her. Wind howls through the cracks.

Thunder rattles the chandelier above, but Isobel doesn't flinch.

She crosses the floor and soaked boots SQUEAK on the tile. Past the desk. Through the ballroom doors.

65 INT. THE CAROLYN - BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

The ballroom is still. Too still as Isobel heads straight to

the far wall.

The warped panel. The one Elijah told her to avoid.

She doesn't hesitate.

ISOBEL  
You ungrateful bitch! You think this  
is going to break me?

She wedges the crowbar under the lowest board and wrenches.

CRACK.

A GROAN emits from every corner of The Carolyn, like an angry beast.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
We have been working our goddamn asses  
off to repair you, and this is how you  
thank us?!

The nails SCREAM as they pull free. The board clatters to the floor.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
I own you, not the other way around!

CRACK. Another board falls.

She wipes rain from her face. Her hands tremble, but she keeps going.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
And you don't get to keep him!

She rips away the last plank.

Behind it: a dark, gaping stairwell.

A single breath of hot, dry air rises from below, like a furnace long cold, waking up.

Isobel tosses the crowbar aside with a distant CLANK.

She stands at the threshold and pulls a flashlight from her jacket.

The house creaks above her. The chandelier swings back and forth.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
You wanted me to come down there?

She takes the first step.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
Fine. Here I fucking come.

66 INT. THE CAROLYN - SERVICE STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Isobel descends slowly, flashlight in hand. The beam cuts through layers of soot and cobwebs. The air thickens with every step, like trying to breathe through ash.

Walls contract. Pipes overhead groan and crack like broken bones that shift in old flesh.

A soft hiss. Then a voice. Distant. Muffled.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Fire's in the east wing! Get them out,  
now!

She stops.

Another voice SHOUTS. A woman SCREAMS, children CRY. Doors SLAM. Static. All around her, it echoes from the walls.

The flashlight flickers.

WHOOSH!

A blast of heat rushes past her. Her hair lifts as if caught in a draft, but there's no wind.

Her flashlight beam hits a wall, and for a second, it glows orange. She sees a man through the smoke.

Elijah, younger, yells through the haze.

He drags someone by the arm. The guest resists and wails for their child.

He disappears into flame.

ISOBEL  
Elijah!

She races down another step.

More flashes: smoke pours under doors, blackened wallpaper

peels like skin, chandeliers melt mid-fall.

SCREAMS.

ALARMS.

GLASS SHATTERS.

She covers her ears. The sound is unbearable.

She stumbles. The flashlight falls from her hand and rolls into the darkness.

She reaches the last step.

FLASH TO WHITE:

67 INT. ROB'S CAR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A monotone BUZZ, like the flat-line of a heart monitor.

Stillness.

Snow falls in thick, soundless sheets across the windshield. Streetlights blur in the frost.

The defroster hums softly and pushes pale arcs into the glass.

Isobel sits in the passenger seat. But she's not really here. She's the audience. Trapped. Frozen in time.

ROB (30s, warm, tired, trying) sits in the driver's seat. He pulls onto an empty street, one hand on the wheel as the other wipes fog from the glass.

He glances at his phone on the console. Taps the voice recorder.

ROB

Hey, um...I'm trying to find a good way to say this without sounding like an idiot.

He smiles to himself. It's small. Nervous.

ROB (CONT'D)

I know you're still mad. I get it. I said things I shouldn't have. Again. But you were right. You're usually right, and I hate how hard that is for  
(MORE)

ROB (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
me to say.

Isobel watches him from the back seat now. Her face hollow. Comatose and helpless.

ROB (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
I'm tired, Izzy. But I miss you.  
And I know I don't get to say that  
like it's new. I miss you when you're  
in the next room. I miss how we used  
to be.

He laughs, just a breath.

ROB (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
You were so alive when we met. And I  
didn't know how to hold that without  
crushing it.

He rubs his eyes. The wipers squeak across the windshield.

ROB (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
I love you. So much. That's all. Even  
when you're a stubborn pain in the  
ass. Even when we can't find the same  
sentence anymore. Even when you won't  
call back.

He slows at an intersection. A light flickers yellow up ahead.

ROB (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
I'm gonna be home soon, okay?

He reaches for his phone to send the message.

There's a blare of a HORN. Bright headlights. His head jerks.

TIRES SCREECH.

He yanks the wheel. Everything spins-

CRASH.

Glass explodes inward. Metal SCREAMS. A sharp impact shudders through the frame.

CUT TO BLACK:

68 INT. SERVICE STAIR CHAMBER - NIGHT

Isobel lies on the center of a black abyss. The air around her thickens. Not with smoke, but grief.

Heavy. Slow. Too familiar. Ash floats like snow.

There are soft FOOTSTEPS behind her.

She struggles to sit up, and turns.

Behind her, Rob steps into view. Young and clean, he wears the jacket he died in, but his face is calm now. Loving.

ROB

It's okay, Izzy. You don't have to carry any of it anymore.

Isobel trembles and tries to catch her breath. She wildly shakes her head.

ISOBEL

You're not him.

ROB

I remember everything. The silence. The fight. Your guilt. Your relief.

She turns to face him fully. Her voice catches.

ISOBEL

I never wanted you to die.

ROB

But it was easier than sitting down to talk. Easier than divorce papers.

She doesn't answer.

His tone softens, becomes tender.

ROB (CONT'D)

It's okay. I forgive you. You can make things right. Just come with me.

He extends a hand.

And the room begins to shift.

The ash melts into mist, the burned walls fade into the suggestion of light.

A beautiful, open space forms around her. A glowing field. Warm, clean, serene.

Both of her hands are grasped in Robs. Everything is quiet, other than the faint sound of evening crickets.

She takes a step toward him. Another.

ROB (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
This is peace. No more fear. No more  
trying. You and me. Together again.  
Like it was supposed to be.

She sways forward, eyes soft as tears fill them. Her hands trembles in his.

She takes another step-

-and suddenly winces.

She glances down.

Just beyond her next step is a jagged length of rusted pipe, angled perfectly toward her chest.

Not-Rob stands across from her. He's calm. Gentle. Too calm.

NOT-ROB  
It's okay. You can rest now. Just take  
that step. It'll all be over.

ISOBEL looks down at the pipe.

Then back at him.

Her eyes are still wet, but they are also steady.

ISOBEL  
(softly)  
You never would've asked me to do  
this.

His smile falters the smallest bit.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Even when you were hurting. Even when  
I failed you. You still wanted me to  
live.

She doesn't run. Doesn't fight.

She steps past the pipe and sits down in the dirt. Cross-legged. Centered. Grounded.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
Here's the deal. I'm not going  
anywhere. So if you're going to wear  
his face, you can sit with me.

The smile drops from Rob's face.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
And we can talk. I want to know why  
you're doing this.

The parasite, still wearing Rob's face but fraying around the edges, crouches across from ISOBEL. Its voice is thinner now—fractured between human and something deeper.

PARASITE  
Isobel. I wasn't always like this.

It pauses, as if to gather its thoughts.

PARASITE (CONT'D)  
I started as sorrow. Just traces.  
Echoes in the walls. Regret soaked  
into wood, memory clinging to stone.

Isobel watches, breath shallow.

ISOBEL  
You're the house?

PARASITE  
I'm what it couldn't forget. What no  
one stayed long enough to carry out.

Its form flickers. Half Rob, half smoke.

PARASITE (CONT'D)  
They came here wanting to heal. But  
grief doesn't like to be ignored. So  
they drank. They screamed. They ran.  
And the ones who stayed? I wore them  
down. I hollowed them out. They either  
fed me...or vanished.

The voice goes softer. Not quite remorseful, but aware.

PARASITE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
You stayed longer than most.

After a long moment of silence, its voice changes. The tone is cracked. Smaller.

PARASITE  
You left him. You leave everything.

ISOBEL  
I did. I was tired, and afraid. I thought if I loved less, it would hurt less.

She breathes. Slow and deep.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
But I've learned something since I came here.

The parasite watches her warily.

ISOBEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
All this sadness, all this grief, it doesn't need to be fed. It needs to be seen, held, let go.

The parasite's form starts to twitch. The illusion falters.

Isobel's breath catches as it changes shape.

A child. Burned. Crying.

PARASITE  
(quiet, afraid)  
If I let go...I'll disappear.

ISOBEL  
I know. But maybe that's not death.  
Maybe that's just peace.

The parasite looks up to Isobel with eyes that were more innocent than she was comfortable with.

PARASITE  
(whispers)  
Will you stay with me?

Isobel nods her head gently.

ISOBEL  
Yeah, I can stay...

She reaches out and takes its hand.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
...and I forgive you.

The parasite, still in the child's shape, lays it's head in her lap.

It cries quietly as it begins to crumble.

It's peaceful, remorseful.

The fragments drift away like ashes in the sunlight.

Gone. Free.

Light bleeds through unseen cracks above.

The chamber is still. Ash no longer drifts down like snow.

Isobel sits alone, arms limp at her sides, cheeks wet. She breathes. Truly breathes.

The air isn't heavy anymore.

It's clean.

Isobel lets herself rest as she lies back onto the concrete floor and closes her eyes.

69 INT. BENEATH THE CAROLYN - STORAGE CHAMBER - LATER

The air is still.

No illusions remain, just charcoal-blackened beams, collapsed furniture, melted silverware, scraps of linen scorched into ash.

Isobel walks slowly through the wreckage. Her steps are careful, deliberate.

She passes a half-melted doorknob, still attached to a splintered section of wall. A set of burnt baby shoes turned to carbon. A metal coat hook fused to a radiator.

She crouches near a cracked teacup, embedded in ash.

Her fingers brush over it, but she doesn't take it. Just acknowledges it.

Isobel moves deeper, toward a corner where the ceiling sags low, and a beam rests crooked against the floor.

She stops. Her eyes catch something half-buried beneath it:

Fabric. Charred. Faded blue.

She kneels down to get a closer look.

Isobel's hands tremble as she removes the debris. Quiet and gentle, like pulling the covers from someone who's asleep.

Soon, she sees it.

A singed suspender strap. A rusted tool belt buckle.

She exhales, barely a sound.

It's Elijah.

His body, curled where he fell and preserved by ash.

His name tag still faintly visible on what's left of his shirt:

"MOSS"

She stares for a long time. Doesn't move.

Then she sinks down beside him with a GASP--  
and weeps.

Not quiet tears, but full, aching sobs. The kind she's held in for years.

For Rob, for herself, and now for Elijah.

Isobel curls inward, her hands over her face, when a shadow moves behind her.

A flicker. Footsteps. Boots, soft and measured.

She doesn't hear them at first. Doesn't feel the shift in air.

But then, there are arms.

Arms that wrap around her.

Not cold. Not spectral. Warm. Real.

Elijah kneels behind her, silent.

He gathers her into him, slowly, as if afraid she'll break if he moves too fast.

She tenses, then realizes what is happening, and breaks harder.

She turns into him and buries her face against his chest.

His hands hold her tight. Isobel's voice is muffled and cracked as she tries to speak.

ISOBEL  
I wish you didn't die here.

ELIJAH  
I know.

ISOBEL  
You were alone. For so long.

ELIJAH  
Not anymore.

She grips his shirt. Ash streaks his shoulders. Her sobs quiet slowly into breaths that tremble with every exhale.

He rests his cheek against her hair and closes his eyes.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
It let me go...when you did.

ISOBEL  
How do I know this is really you?

He leans back just enough to look at her. His eyes are glassy. Steady.

ELIJAH  
Because I'm not asking you to leave with me. I'm asking you if I can stay.

She presses her forehead to his and nods.

They sit together in the ruins. In the quiet.

A ghost, and the person who makes him feel alive again.

70 INT. THE CAROLYN - BALLROOM - ONE WEEK LATER

The room has been restored. Not to perfection, but to dignity.

The floorboards are smooth. The chandelier glows low and warm. The grand windows reflect moonlight off the sea.

A vintage phonograph crackles softly in the corner. A slow, dusky jazz tune plays.

Isobel steps barefoot onto the floor, a simple dress clings to her skin.

She carries two glasses of wine, one in each hand.

Elijah waits near the windows, hands in his pockets, suspenders slung over a soft linen shirt.

No one else is here, just them.

She offers him a glass.

ISOBEL  
To the strangest love story I've ever  
lived.

ELIJAH  
I'm honored.

They clink glasses. Sip.

Isobel sets hers down on a windowsill and steps forward.

ISOBEL  
(softly)  
Hey, dance with me.

He hesitates for just a second. Not out of fear, but because he wants to remember every second of it.

He sets his glass aside, then steps into her arms.

Their bodies fit together like they've done this before. Like they've been dancing this whole time, and the music has finally caught up.

Her head rests on his shoulder. His hand gently at her waist.

ELIJAH  
I used to watch the guests down here,

He said softly into her ear,

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
All dressed up. Laughing. Dancing. I  
(MORE)

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
thought if I could live any life, it'd  
be that one. Never thought I'd ever  
get it. I almost don't believe it.

ISOBEL  
Well, you better start.

She pauses and looks him up and down with a smirk.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Maybe not the tuxedo. But this part.

He smiles and shrugs with a soft laugh.

ELIJAH  
Yeah. This part's enough.

They sway. The song continues.

Outside, the sea crashes softly against the cliff side.

71 EXT. THE CAROLYN - DAY

Sunlight. Not too bright. Soft. Filtered through salt-smeared windows and the green of climbing ivy.

The front porch has been repainted. A new hanging sign sways in the breeze:

THE CAROLYN GUESTHOUSE - EST. 1946 / REOPENED 2025

A CAR PULLS UP the long, winding gravel road.

Out steps MEL (mid-30s, Isobel's sister. Clearly related, but more free-spirited.)

She adjusts her sunglasses, takes in the view, and whistles under her breath.

MEL  
Damn, Izzy.

The hotel rises behind her, still weathered, but alive now.

The front door opens.

Isobel steps out in a breezy sundress and work apron, hair pinned up, a bright smile across her face.

ISOBEL  
Told you I wasn't completely unhinged.

She walks up to Mel with her arms opened wide.

MEL  
Jury's still out on that one.

They hug tight.

Mel looks up at the porch, Eyes scan the hanging flowers, the repaired railings, the brass handle that glimmers on the front door.

MEL (CONT'D)  
Holy cow, you really did all this  
yourself?

ISOBEL  
Oh, heck no! Not all of it, at least.

From the side of the porch, Elijah steps into view, sleeves rolled, tool belt slung low. He gives Mel a quiet, polite smile and a nod.

ELIJAH  
Ma'am.

Isobel beams and wraps an arm around his waist.

ISOBEL (CONT'D)  
Mel, this is Elijah. He does all the  
maintenance around here. Well, the  
stuff I can't handle alone.

A beat.

And my new boyfriend.

Mel raises her eyebrows, the good kind of surprised.

MEL  
Boyfriend, huh?

Elijah offers his hand. She shakes it, and nods in approval.

MEL (CONT'D)  
That's one way to keep costs down.

ISOBEL  
Yeah, he's really good with his hands.

Both Elijah and Mel stare at her.

Isobel grins innocently.

72 INT. THE CAROLYN LOBBY - LATER

Soft morning light warms the polished wood floors. Fresh flowers sit in a small vase at the front desk.

Isobel arranges a stack of guest keys when the front door opens with a soft chime.

An OLDER WOMAN (80s), elegant but worn at the edges, steps inside, assisted by a younger woman.

Her eyes sweep the room, and a gentle awe flickers beneath careful reserve.

OLDER WOMAN  
Well, I'll be...I never thought I'd  
see this place open again.

Isobel smiles bright, hands still on the keys.

ISOBEL  
Welcome back, then.

The woman takes a few steps forward and looks up at the chandelier.

OLDER WOMAN  
My husband and I honeymooned here in  
'52.

She smiles, distant and warm.

OLDER WOMAN (CONT'D)  
We used to sneak into the ballroom  
after hours and dance till our legs  
gave out.

The woman chuckles, and her eyes mist slightly.

Over Isobel's shoulder, Elijah steps out from the hallway, a clipboard in one hand. He pauses and watches quietly.

She freezes, just for a breath.

Her eyes lock onto his face. Something in her expression shifts: Surprise, confusion, then...recognition.

She blinks, then gives him a knowing smile.

And walks on without a word.

OLDER WOMAN

Well, then. I should go see if it  
still smells like salt and old wood.

She heads toward the ballroom without another word.

Isobel watches the old woman go. Elijah steps beside her, and wraps an arm around her waist.

They exchange a quiet look, and smile softly before they lean in for one final kiss.