

SIX IMPOSSIBLE THINGS

by

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Inspired by true stories

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INT. GRAY'S HOUSE, LISA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

LISA GRAY, 8, white, sits in a bed adjacent to a closet, messy with toys and a violin. She's a timid child with sensitive eyes who daydreams a lot. She reads *Through the Looking-Glass*.

Next to her sits ANITA GRAY, 29, white; Lisa's devoted, talented, risk-averse mother who is always multi-tasking.

LISA

"There's no use trying, Alice said."
"One can't believe impossible things."
(whispering)
You be the Queen.

ANITA

(playfully scolding)
"I daresay you haven't had much practice,
said the Queen. When I was your age, I
always did it for half-an-hour a day.
Why, sometimes I've believed as many as
six impossible things before breakfast."

Lisa giggles. The bedroom door opens, and DAVID GRAY, 39, white, Lisa's handsome father, walks in with his bicycle helmet still on, drinking from a water bottle. David likes to protect his wife, even baby her.

DAVID

Pumpkin, your mom still has homework to
do. Try and get some sleep now.

David exits, and Anita picks up the stuffed rabbit and places it face-first into Lisa's arms. Lisa turns it around to face out. She hugs the rabbit by the tummy.

LISA

Snowball likes her hands free, and she
wants her head facing out.
(whispering)
She doesn't want anyone breathing on her.

ANITA

Read for a bit 'til you get sleepy.

LISA

Wait, did anyone call about my cat?

ANITA

Nobody called to say they found Oliver;
I'm sorry, love. Maybe tomorrow.

Anita plants kisses on Lisa and Snowball. She heads out with the laundry. Lisa waits for a beat to make sure she is gone before sliding out of bed and walking to the window to see -

EXT. MIDDLE-CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

The picturesque suburban neighborhood; rows of perfect lawns and gardens. A DAD swaddles a crying BABY, putting her in a jogging baby stroller.

Lisa turns her gaze to a mirror decorated with a painting of animals and looks deep into her own eyes until all that fills the screen is her pupil when we cut to-

INT. OVAL ROOM - SAME TIME

This is Lisa's inner multiple personalities world in her mind's eye. Giant screens display a maze of bedrooms and playrooms. A group of her personalities (animation or actors) wearing clothes reminiscent of Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland" stare at the screens-

MOUSE, 5, a small, nervous, quiet girl with a cleft lip, stares wide-eyed at the father pushing the baby carriage and whispers with a slight lisp:

MOUSE

He'th gonna push her too hard in the dark. He'th gonna make her carriage fall all the way down the hill.

HATTER, 21, sports a three-piece business suit, and a top hat, under which he wears a Bluetooth headset as he strolls the center with hands clasped behind his back.

He is merciless - all logic and no emotions.

HATTER

Nah, he's just trying to get her to sleep again. She's fine. He adores her.

MOUSE

That's because she's thpecial. Weal, thpecial. Not like me, more like her.

Hatter shrugs and looks over:

ALICE, 6, friendly, playful girl with a bubbly, sweet personality. She smiles as she plays in a separate area to the side where she cannot see the screens or Red.

Dignified, the all-powerful Queen, RED, 34, watches the others from her regal throne, wand in hand.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

A quiet night and Anita sleeps alongside her husband. The quiet continues until- A terrified SCREAM breaks the silence.

LISA (O.C.)
Mommy, Mommy, Mommy.

Anita and David shoot up, their panic quickly giving way to a chuckle.

ANITA
I thought by the time she was eight; we'd get to sleep through the night. You kept the receipt for her, right?

Anita starts to get out of bed, but David stops her.

DAVID
It's okay. I'll take care of it. You gotta be at your internship first thing.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, LISA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Lisa angrily throws one colorful miniature glass doll after another. The dolls splatter and break.

LISA
I want Mommy! I want Mommy!

Lisa continues to thrash, that is until David enters, and as if in a sudden trance, Lisa stares into space.

INT. OVAL ROOM - SAME TIME

On one of the screens, David enters and turns the light on in Lisa's bedroom.

HATTER
Uh oh, it's not Mom. Mad March is out, so that doesn't work. Hmm. Mouse, you have to go and settle things down.

Hatter opens a large shining suit of armor lengthwise and pushes Mouse to enter it. She momentarily resists but then puts her arms and legs inside one by one.

Once fully inside, Hatter hits a button, causing the armor to clang shut and the top of the curved ceiling to open up.

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Lisa quiets down.

DAVID

(warmly)

You had a bad dream, Pumpkin? You're gonna be okay now; Daddy's here.

Lisa nods, her breathing slowing as David kneels closer.

They high five several times, from slow to very fast, ending with their own hand game, extending their index fingers and little fingers, holding the middle and ring fingers down with their thumbs.

David strokes Lisa's forehead and covers her with a blanket. He sings and hums quietly.

DAVID (CONT'D)

"Hush, little baby, don't say a word."

INT. CHILD RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM, CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

DR. LARRY ROSENBERG, 45, a small-framed brilliant, gay psychologist with a kind face, stands at a table covered in children's drawings.

Five Interns listen closely, including Anita and her best friend HEIJA, 24, a lively Korean-American butch lesbian woman who knows how to make mundane situations fun.

Heija adjusts her small round glasses as she listens.

DR. ROSENBERG

What else does this drawing tell you about the child? Anita?

ANITA

She has both arms and hands. She looks happy. She seems fine. Makes me wonder why she's even here?

DR. ROSENBERG

Look at the house.

HEIJA

I don't see a problem; door, windows.

DR. ROSENBERG

Anybody?

The interns scrutinize the drawing. Heija lifts her hand.

DR. ROSENBERG (CONT'D)

Heija?

HEIJA

Well... The doorknob's missing?

Dr. Rosenberg smiles.

DR. ROSENBERG

Bingo. Any idea why?

The interns all look at each other, perplexed.

ANITA

Lower intelligence is connected to fewer details.

DR. ROSENBERG

True, except look at the dog; it has nostrils and even whiskers. Anyway, I read her case, and before this child came to us, her mother used to put mattresses around all four walls in her room. Then left her locked in for days at a time.

HEIJA

So she felt trapped.

DR. ROSENBERG

She was trapped.

Dr. Rosenberg lets this sink in for the interns.

DR. ROSENBERG (CONT'D)

You won't always be lucky enough to know the history, so you really need to be a detective.

MAGGIE, 32, a sensitive and warm social worker, walks in.

DR. ROSENBERG (CONT'D)

Everybody, this is Maggie, an investigator from Child Protective Services. She needs our help.

MAGGIE

Hello all... yes, his name is Theodore. He's six and a fine lad, but...

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

he's a bit of an angel with an attitude;
and the attitude sometimes includes...
kicking.

DR. ROSENBERG

Volunteers, anyone?

Heija elbows Anita, who hesitates for a beat. Dr.
Rosenberg looks her way encouragingly.

ANITA

I would like to... I mean, unless there's
someone else with more experience.

DR. ROSENBERG

Experience is what you're here to get.
Why don't you give it a try, Anita?

Anita gives Heija a look of nervous anticipation.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Anita slices an orange as David walks in with items from
a pharmacy.

ANITA

You silly goose, you already got me my
list yesterday.

DAVID

Early-onset Alzheimers, but-

David pulls his shoulder back and lifts his chin up.

DAVID (CONT'D)

But I did remember to get out our taxes.
I'll put them into TaxSlayer tonight.

ANITA

O.M.G., would you?

DAVID

We should get a nice refund, and it's all
going for your garden.

Anita plays the part, giving a faux swoon as she looks
out to the backyard, her garden just starting to bloom.

ANITA

You really are my prince charming.

DAVID

And I got you one more surprise since you
had been working so hard at school.

David hands her a necklace and earring set in a box that
reads "Pandora Me." Anita dramatically throws herself
into David's arms. David pulls her close, playing the
romantic. He kisses her sweetly.

DAVID (CONT'D)

One more year, and you'll be Dr. Gray.

Anita's eyes go wide as she reciprocates the kiss,
passion radiating throughout.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I wish I didn't have this dinner tonight.

ANITA

Can't you blow them off?

DAVID

I'm two inches from this promotion.

David passionately kisses Anita once more.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anita sleeps in bed alone but jolts upright when:

LISA (V.O.)

Mommy, Mommy, Mommy.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, LISA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anita hurries in as Lisa screams worse than ever.

ANITA

Hey, hey, hey, Baby. Shhhhh, You're okay.

Anita switches on a sidelight. Lisa is terrified. Eyes
wide open, sweat plastering hair onto her face.

LISA

Mommy -

Anita softens as Lisa extends her hands to her. That is
when Anita notices that Lisa's palms are covered in
ghastly rough, reddish-brown spots.

ANITA

Oh, my Lord.

EXT. GRAY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Anita runs to the car holding Lisa's hand.

LISA
No, no, no. Please, no doctors. Really,
Mommy. I'm okay.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Anita and Lisa wait in a curtained "room" as Anita looks at Lisa, who's calmly playing Candy Crush on her phone.

INT. OVAL ROOM - NIGHT

Mouse sits in the bed, miserable.

HATTER
How're you feeling, Mouse?

MOUSE
Everything hurtth. I can't thwallow, and
thomething ith bothering me here,
inthide.

Mouse points to her cheek.

Hatter looks up to the main P.O.V screen to see:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Anita dials on her cell. No answer. Instead -

DAVID'S VOICEMAIL (V.O.)
You've reached David. Leave a message.

ANITA
Where are you? It's after midnight.
You're gonna get a migraine if you don't
get your sleep. Call me. Still at the
hospital.

Anita hangs up as DR. LUCY GRAM, a kind but severe Indian physician, walks in, followed by a Filipino nurse, KERRI.

DR. GRAM
Mrs. Gray. We have Lisa's blood work.

ANITA
Is she okay?

Dr. Gram studies Anita for a moment.

DR. GRAM

Nurse Kerri here is going to give her a shot of antibiotics. Let's you and I talk outside.

ANITA

She has an infection?

Dr. Gram leads Anita out while the nurse stays with Lisa.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Anita and Dr. Gram are sitting at a table.

ANITA

Is it something serious?

DR. GRAM

Yes and no. Let me ask you this: has Lisa gotten any blood transfusion or been exposed to another person's blood lately?

ANITA

No, she's perfectly healthy.

DR. GRAM

(regretfully)

Except, Mrs. Gray... Lisa has syphilis.

Anita freezes.

ANITA

I'm sorry. What?

DR. GRAM

We've run multiple tests, we're certain.

ANITA

That's impossible. I... I don't... Is that even a thing still? Syphilis?

Dr. Gram frowns, studying Anita intently.

DR. GRAM

I rushed the tests through myself because I didn't want any false positives.

Dr. Gram prepares herself for what she is about to ask.

DR. GRAM (CONT'D)

Mrs. Gray... You understand syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease...

ANITA

This is... I don't...

DR. GRAM

Mrs. Gray... do you have any idea as to who may have given this to Lisa?

Anita's eyes fill with tears.

DR. GRAM (CONT'D)

I know this is a lot to take in.

ANITA

But she's only eight.

Anita collapses into a chair next to her.

DR. GRAM

I'm afraid that's not all. I am required to report this to the authorities for potential child abuse.

ANITA

No, you are wrong. There must be some kind of a mistake here. It can't be.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anita walks in to find David pacing.

DAVID

Thank you, Sam. Anita and I will feel better knowing you've got our backs here. Thanks for taking my call so very late.

David hangs up, massaging his temples.

ANITA

You called Sam?

DAVID

Is there any question? He should be the one handling the investigation.

ANITA

I- I can't even wrap my head around this... I -

DAVID

Someone did something unimaginable to our child. We need to figure out who.

Anita breaks down crying. David puts his arms around her, but she pushes him away.

ANITA

Where were you earlier? You weren't even picking up.

DAVID

I'm sorry. George had us make a big toast - with red wine; by the time we got done I had a huge migraine. I had to lie still in the car 'til I felt safe to drive.

Anita softens slightly as David holds her tight. She massages his neck, burying her knuckles into his knots.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It's gonna be okay.

ANITA

I know. I know.

She sighs. Is it?

EXT. GRAYS' HOUSE, BACKYARD - DAY

Plants, flowers, and herbs everywhere, sitting in homemade pots made from wine corks and tree trunks.

Anita is hanging Lisa's birthday decorations up.

LISA

Watch, I'm gonna reach one K likes after I post this video on TikTok.

Using her cell, Lisa shoots a video of a squirrel tentatively taking a nut right out of her hand.

ANITA

(looking at the squirrel)
You're great with your actors.

The rash is still on Lisa's hands, but it's fading.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Lisa... I know this is a tough question... I just need to ask once more. Did someone touch you inappropriately?

Lisa stares at her mother but stays mute.

Then David tries. He high fives her exactly like before, slow to fast, ending with their playful hand signal.

DAVID

Honey, you can talk to us. Nothing bad will happen to you. We promise.

Lisa does not react at all. It's like he never said it.

INT. OVAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Hatter scrutinizes a screen of personality options:

HATTER

Oh boy, no, we can't talk. It's a joke. It's a big joke. We need someone who doesn't know anything.

Hatter turns to look at Alice on the floor, playing with a tea set.

HATTER (CONT'D)

Alice, you go.

ALICE

Yay, my turn.

Happy-go-lucky Alice instantly jumps up. Hatter guides her into the knight's armor.

HATTER

Hurry up, then.

The circular ceiling opens. The armor with Alice inside soars up out of the portal.

EXT. GRAYS' HOUSE, BACKYARD - DAY

Anita notices a sudden, more energetic change of attitude in Lisa.

LISA

Dad, play Slide the Shakes with me on Snapchat.

David sighs, becoming more frustrated.

DAVID

Honey, I know this is hard, but please, did anyone ever touch your private parts?

LISA

Nobody touched me. Now, can we play?

DAVID

Sure, Pumpkin. I'm logging in.

LISA

(happy)

Careful not to push the ice cream too hard; it will fall off the counter.

INT. GRAY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Anita, David, Heija, Lilliana, 8, and assorted party goers sing. A purple heart award for David and a Freemason award plaque are on the wall in his name.

EVERYBODY

Happy Birthday, dear Lisa,
Happy Birthday to you.

Lisa blows out the candles on her cake as David and others take pictures.

Lisa shivers, looking away from the cameras, as the adult-heavy gathering applauds, making her even more uneasy, which she tries to hide. She hugs Snowball.

INT. OVAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Mouse shivers worse than Lisa.

HATTER

Don't think about that, Mouse. Think about the piñata. Wanna hit it?

MOUSE

I don't think I can.

HATTER

Just try.

ALICE

What about me? Please, pretty, please?

HATTER

You can go second.

MAD MARCH, 8, is very angry and hence was placed inside a small cage. He has rosy cheeks and a shock of ginger hair that stands up. He hits the bars to get their attention.

MAD MARCH

If anyone is going to smack something, it should be me.

HATTER

Sure, you can be third as long as you promise to go right back.

MAD MARCH

I know. I'm not stupid, Hatter.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone is gone after the party as an exhausted Anita cleans up. David appears with a large, beautifully wrapped box with a golden bow and hands it to Lisa.

DAVID

And you thought you'd opened all of your presents.

Lisa excitedly opens the gift. A striped KITTEN wearing a fancy "diamond" collar jumps out.

Lisa's face lights up as she cuddles it.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(to Lisa)

Like your kitty, Lisa?

Lisa freezes, with terror in her eyes.

EXT. OVAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Mouse clutches Snowball to her chest as her legs bounce together, fast.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT (MOUSE'S FLASHBACK)

Lisa holds a large stray-looking cat with a diamond-studded collar. VARIOUS ADULTS, 20s-70s, in hooded ceremonial robes surround her.

JILL, 40's, white, an unpleasant, quietly malicious woman, leans over Lisa.

JILL

(with fake sweetness)

Do you like your kitty, Lisa?

Lisa stares blankly ahead. Petrified.

JILL (CONT'D)

Why he's just as soft as can be.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - (BACK TO SCENE)

Lisa continues to stare as if she were frozen.

DAVID

What are you gonna name him?

Lisa jerks back to reality.

LISA

What do you think of Cheshire, Daddy?

DAVID

Heh... I think it's perfect.

Lisa picks up the kitten and snuggles it.

INT. CHILD RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM, PLAYROOM - DAY

A dollhouse and toys are in the room where Anita plays on the floor with THEODORE, 6, Hispanic.

He feeds a newborn doll with a toy bottle filled with milk, which disappears when one points it down.

THEODORE

Eat already.

Theodore repeatedly stabs the baby's mouth with the bottle.

ANITA

Wow, this must be very scary for the little baby, Theodore.

Theodore nods.

THEODORE

He's a bad baby.

Theodore throws the doll into the wall.

ANITA

I thought there's no such a thing as a bad baby. They don't understand much, and what can they even do?

Maggie, the social worker, walks in.

MAGGIE

Hello, Anita. It's a grand day, no?
(crouching down)
Hi, Theodore. How are you?

Theodore pays her no mind.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Sorry to interrupt, Anita, but can I have
a word?

ANITA

Sure. Our time's about up anyway.
(to Theodore)
Wanna go back to your room?

THEODORE

Whatever.

Theodore scurries out as Anita picks up the doll and
places it back in a doll's bed, covering it up.

She turns to Maggie.

ANITA

Do you know if there are any children
left at Theodore's home? I've got a few
concerns about the neglect and abuse of
infants. Let me grab his file...

Anita heads to the door.

MAGGIE

Anita...

Anita stops the gravity in Maggie's voice catching her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(regretful)
Actually, I'm here about your Lisa.

ANITA

Excuse me?

MAGGIE

Her doctor filed a child protection
alert.

ANITA

Oh. Of course.

Maggie points at a small table and chairs, and they both
take a seat. Maggie hands a notepad and pen to her.

MAGGIE

First thing we need is a list of *everyone* who's been in contact with Lisa.

Anita stares at the blank sheet, not moving.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I also would like some sort of daily schedule for her. What's her day-to-day, extracurricular activities, friends' houses she may go to. Stores that you stop at that-

Maggie stops, finally noticing that Anita has not moved an inch.

ANITA

I just... I can't imagine anyone we know-

MAGGIE

Anita, I know. I know. But she didn't get this from a toilet seat. I'm sorry.

(beat)

Let's just make the list.

Maggie nods to the notepad as Anita begins to think. Then picks up the pen and takes a deep breath -

BEGIN BIRTHDAY PARTY FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

EXT. GRAY'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - DAY

RAFAEL TAYLOR, 39, overweight, harmless-looking, balding with a comb-over. He is Liliana's dad, and she's holding on to his hand. He hands Lisa the bat for the piñata, which she hits so weakly it barely moves.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

Friends.

SAM LEVINE, 55, reassuring, white, stocky, in a police uniform, with a badge clipped to his belt, picks up Lisa to lift her closer to the piñata.

Lisa is more excited to hit it this time and makes it swirl wildly with a big smile on her face.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

Even if you believe with all your heart that they wouldn't hurt Lisa. And family.

A pair of grandparents encourages Lisa to try once more, with the Grandfather putting his hand behind her back. Lisa squints her eyes, grits her mouth, and swings.

BAM! The piñata explodes, candy and trinkets spilling everywhere. Everyone cheers.

INT. CHILD RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM, PLAYROOM - LATER

Anita sits back, the notepad now cluttered with names. Maggie takes it as Anita sits back, devastated.

MAGGIE

This is a good start, though I think you may be missing a few.

ANITA

No. I wrote down everyone.

MAGGIE

Everyone except...

Anita looks genuinely puzzled; then it dawns on her.

ANITA

David? He would never...

MAGGIE

Are you willing to bet Lisa's well-being on it?

ANITA

He's the last person who would do that.

MAGGIE

Anita, it could be anyone.

INT. GORDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Maggie places male and female, anatomically correct, adult and child dolls on the table.

MAGGIE

We can talk, or you can show me things using the dolls. That sound good?

LISA

Okay.

MAGGIE

All these dolls have their private parts.

INT. OVAL ROOM - DAY

Hatter looks on while Alice tugs on his shirt.

ALICE

Can I go play with the nice lady?

HATTER

No, it's better if Lisa is out. She knows even less than you, so she can't get us in trouble.

INT. POLICE STATION, SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

David and Anita sit across from Sam at his desk as he goes through one of his drawers.

Nearby are DETECTIVE LYNN HERNANDEZ, 39, Latinx, muscular, determined, and assertive, and DETECTIVE ROB HARRIS, 27, black, thoughtful, and new to detective work.

SAM

(to Anita)

I checked your list. No one has a criminal record on file. Not even a parking violation as far as we can find, never mind child molestation charges.

DAVID

But something happened to her anyway?

SAM

Not necessarily. Both Maggie and Detective Hernandez here interviewed Lisa, and she denies anything happened.

ANITA

But the tests in the hospital...

SAM

All I'm saying is that it could be a false alarm. Tests and diagnoses are wrong all the time; we've seen it happen before. Why don't you get her tested again with her own doctor?

ANITA

You didn't see the rash she had.

Anita sets her jaw.

DET. HERNANDEZ
Please know we'll do anything,
everything, in our power.

Anita turns to look at Hernandez, hope in her eyes

EXT. WHITE PICKET FENCE HOUSE - DAY

An unmarked police car pulls up to a house with a white picket fence in a middle-class neighborhood. Hernandez and Harris exit the car, walk to the door, and knock.

MRS. COHEN, 32, a bohemian housewife, answers. Hernandez flashes her badge.

DET. HERNANDEZ
Mrs. Cohen? Are you Anthony's mom?

MRS. COHEN
Oh, my God. Is he all right?

DET. HERNANDEZ
Anthony's fine... We just need to ask you
a few questions.

EXT. MARTIN'S HOUSE - LATER

Hernandez and Harris arrive at another house. Harris rings the bell- MR. MARTIN, 29, opens the door holding BETH, 8, in pigtails, with flush red cheeks and a cough.

DET. HARRIS
Are you Beth Martin's father?

MR. MARTIN
Yes. This is Beth. She's sick today, why?

DET. HARRIS
We're following up on a case. Could we
come in and talk with you and your
daughter?

Mr. Martin looks to his sick daughter then stands aside, motioning them into the house.

EXT. GORDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, PLAYGROUND - DAY

Lisa enters with her mother, then runs off to Beth and MARY, 8, both jumping rope while performing fancy tricks.

LISA
Can I play?

MARY
No. My Moms aid not to play with you.

LISA
Since when do you listen to your mom?

BETH
Since you got cooties. Go away.

Beth pushes a passive Lisa away. Lisa backpedals, hunk down on a bench, her face turning wooden.

EXT. WOODS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Someone pushes Lisa hard; she falls to the ground.

Five Toddlers in long white t-shirts are tied to trees next to Lisa.

In front of the children, a fire crackles beneath a huge black pot with boiling water. Six adults cloaked in red ceremonial robes surround them.

JOSEPH, 43, white, in plastic gloves, leads Lisa into the circle. She holds tight to her cat, Oliver, who has a long leash tied to his collar.

JOSEPH
Look at Lisa's kitty. Isn't he cute? But is he a good boy?

Joseph yanks the cat from her as Lisa instinctively reaches for him.

Another adult drags Lisa away and ties her up.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
(low and threatening)
Keep your eyes on the cat. Take your eyes off it even for a second, and you'll regret it. Be sure of that.

Joseph walks close to a couple of kids and puts the cat's head close to their faces.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Have you been a good boy? Have you been a good girl? And what do good boys and girls do? They follow the rules. We have very simple rules.
(MORE)

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

(pointedly to one child)

No crying. Never. Ever.

(to another child)

No throwing up. No matter what. Do as you're told and never, ever, tell. What'll happen if you tell?

The adults join in the intimidation-

WASPISH WOMAN

No one will ever believe you anyway.

BUG-EYED MAN

Big. Big. Punishment.

JOSEPH

That's right. Have you ever seen an animal crushed dead in the middle of the road?

CRUEL WOMAN

That's exactly what will happen to you if you tell.

SCARY MAN

Every time you see an animal dead on the road, know that we left it there for you to see, to remind you exactly what will happen to you if you tell.

JOSEPH

So you wanna be good girls and boys, right? Let's see if this cat is a good boy.

Joseph raises the cat as Lisa watches helplessly from a distance.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

(Looking to Lisa)

I'm going to do something to Oliver here. If he's a good boy, he'll learn to enjoy it. If he's very good, he'll ask for more. If he's bad... I will have no choice but to show him... how serious we are.

Joseph does something to the cat off-camera. The kids stare in alarm as Oliver yowls in pain.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Oh, he's not a good boy. He doesn't follow the rules. He doesn't do as he's told, and he cries.

Joseph stares directly at Lisa as he holds Oliver over the boiling pot.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Too bad.

(to the other children)

Keep your eyes on Oliver. This is exactly what will happen to you if you ever break the rules.

Lisa, motionless, stares straight ahead as Oliver yowls in extreme pain before -

Oliver's yowls turn to screams and suddenly cut into complete silence.

The children remain silent, straining to show no response.

EXT. GORDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, PLAYGROUND - BACK TO SCENE

Lisa, motionless, stares straight ahead, vacancy in her eyes. Beth and Mary stand over Lisa, staring at her.

BETH

She's so weird.

INT. GORDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Anita stands in the doorway as MISS GARCIA, 27, Latina, fun, pear-shaped, pulls a file folder from a stack she's carrying and shows Anita a picture of a girl standing on a sandy beach.

MISS GARCIA

Lisa sometimes makes as many as ten drawings in one art class. Very prolific. Don't forget this. Again.

Miss Garcia holds out the folder of artwork to Anita. From the edge of the playground, Anita and Miss Garcia see Beth dump a garbage bag of trash over Lisa. They run over to the girls.

ANITA

Hey.

MISS GARCIA
Stop that. Right now.

EXT. GORDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, PLAYGROUND - CONTINUOUS

Anita and Miss Garcia rush to protect Lisa, who lies on the bench, covered in trash and in a haze.

MISS GARCIA
What's going on here?

ANITA
What on earth are you doing? Why would you... Why would you think this is okay?

Beth and Mary look sullen, averting their eyes.

MISS GARCIA
Principal's office, scoot - pronto.

The girls hurry away, abashed.

INT. ANITA'S CAR/PARKING LOT - DAY

Heija is in the passenger seat as Anita pulls into the parking lot of a Child Residential Program.

HEIJA
How did supervision go yesterday?

ANITA
Bad. Dr. Rosenberg proved that almost all my interpretations of my client's drawing were wrong.

HEIJA
Oh, dear.

ANITA
I am re-thinking the specialty with kids. I just don't have the knack for it.

HEIJA
Not true. You just need to get more confident, and I am sorry Dr. Rosenberg is not helping with that.

ANITA
No, he's right. I might be in the wrong profession.

HEIJA

That's crazy talk. You really care.

ANITA

Yes, I care, but one needs to also be brilliant, like Dr. Rosenberg. He can look at a drawing and tell you like 20 things about the kid. He's a genius.

Anita parks the car.

HEIJA

He sure thinks he's a genius. But how do we know, really? Interpretations are not facts, just opinions. And you only had a few sessions with Theodor, so you don't really know who is right.

ANITA

I suspect he's right most of the time.

HEIJA

Anita. I know you're a goody-goody but -

Heija lifts Lisa's artwork folder from the dashboard.

HEIJA (CONT'D)

We could totally put it to the test. Now, this is one child you know better than him. Better than anyone. We'll give him Lisa's artwork, and let's see if he even knows what he is talking about.

Heija gets out. Anita hurries after her, worried.

ANITA

That's not a good idea.

HEIJA

Why not? It'll be our little secret. Put your doubts to rest.

ANITA

Heija, I'm really not comf-

Heija puts a finger to her lips and pushes a door open -

INT. CHILD RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Kid-sized tables and chairs. A wall of rainbow-themed ceramic tiles, each painted by a different child.

As Anita and Heija enter, several student interns are grouped around a table with Dr. Rosenberg. He spreads children's art across the tabletop.

DR. ROSENBERG

Okay, who wants us to look at their client's drawing?

Anita fails to intercept Heija in time before she slaps Lisa's file down and spreads her drawings onto the table.

HEIJA

Me, please.

DR. ROSENBERG

Anything you want us to know about the case, Heija?

HEIJA

It's a case I think even you will have troubles with, Dr. Rosenberg.

DR. ROSENBERG

Very well.

Heija steps back as the interns press closer to look at:

A vast sea with a small girl in the lower-left corner.

DR. ROSENBERG (CONT'D)

Ah. A day at the beach. Now, look closely. What do you see? Anyone?

Rosenberg pushes the drawing to the center of the table.

FASHIONISTA STUDENT

I'm worried about her self-image. She draws herself so tiny. She also may be feeling helpless - no arms or hands.

Heija looks at Anita, surprised. Anita gives her an awkward, nervous half-smile.

DR. ROSENBERG

Good. And how do you read that?

EDGY STUDENT

Low self-esteem.

DR. ROSENBERG

Very likely. What else?

ANITA
(blurts out)
But why? Why would she draw herself so small?

DR. ROSENBERG
Fair question. Anyone?

Edgy Student holds up another drawing. It's much less detailed, with the people represented as stick figures.

EDGY STUDENT
I see a clue in this one.

The student holds up the picture as Dr. Rosenberg furrows his brow.

DR. ROSENBERG
Wait, that's not the same child.

EDGY STUDENT
It is.

DR. ROSENBERG
No, the child who drew this picture must be a couple of years younger.

Edgy Student flips the pictures over.

EDGY STUDENT
Same name. One was done last Monday, the other last Thursday.

DR. ROSENBERG
Really? Let me see.

Anita and Heija step closer as Dr. Rosenberg examines more drawings from Lisa's folder, dividing them into three groups.

DR. ROSENBERG (CONT'D)
Wow, this is intriguing. You've provided quite the compelling morning, Heija. I'm glad we came across this.
(more interested)
Has anyone ever seen the drawings of a multiple personality? It's now called Dissociative Identity Disorder, or D-I-D for short.

Silence.

Anita's eyes open wide as Heija looks at her, concerned.

DR. ROSENBERG (CONT'D)

You need to be actively looking for dissociation. Where there is dissociation, watch for distinguishing personalities, or, as they're called, (air quotes) "alters."

Anita steps forward, a lump in her throat.

ANITA

But wouldn't the parents have noticed if a child was a multiple?

DR. ROSENBERG

Not necessarily. They may create an alter whose only role is to act as if nothing has happened. Especially, if they are threatened by what might happen if anyone finds out. They will create a personality who can function as a regular kid, without trauma, at kindergarten, home, or school.

FASHIONISTA STUDENT

That's pretty sophisticated.

DR. ROSENBERG

No kidding. Not only would people around the child not know, but also that alter will not know either. Makes it easier to function, and it's not hard to hide something you're not even aware of.

ANITA

That's... that's impossible.

DR. ROSENBERG

It's not just possible; it's more common than we used to think. Many of our kids deal with severe, long-term trauma, hence dissociation. It's actually a remarkable defense mechanism. It's why-

Anita gets up and bolts out of the conference room.

The students look at each other, puzzled, as Dr. Rosenberg stands up, worried.

HEIJA

That's okay, Dr. Rosenberg. I'll go.

The doctor stops as Heija follows Anita out.

INT. INSIDE ANITA'S CAR - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Anita sits in her car, angry - but wiping tears.

Anita turns to Heija, who is pointing to the car lock, pleading to come in.

Anita relents, unlocking the door as Heija hops in.

HEIJA

I'm so sorry; I didn't realize-

ANITA

I *told* you I wasn't comfortable. Now this? My daughter is a multiple? Seriously?

HEIJA

That must have been horrible to hear; Sorry, Anita. But didn't I tell you even Dr. Rosenberg can be wrong, no matter how many Ph.Ds he has. Ridiculous, please. Nothing bad ever happened to Lisa.

ANITA

I wish. She's... oh God... Heija... Uh... Lisa... she's... She's been sexually abused.

Heija's expression drops.

HEIJA

What?

ANITA

She was diagnosed with syphilis.

HEIJA

When? Why didn't you tell me?

Anita starts to cry harder.

ANITA

It's so embarrassing. Here I am, wanting to help kids... After having a dad like mine, going to school for almost ten years, and I didn't even fucking notice.

HEIJA

Oh, Anita, I'm so sorry.

Heija takes Anita's hand - squeezes it.

EXT. CHILD RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM, POND - MOMENTS LATER

Heija and Anita walk around a small pond filled with ducks and swans.

ANITA

I don't want to let her out of my sight.
I wanna sit on her to make sure she's
okay.

HEIJA

That might not work as a permanent
solution.

ANITA

What else can I do besides follow her
around all day?

HEIJA

You'd have to quit school.

ANITA

I know. David and I are doing everything
we can so she's never alone with anyone.
But whoever did it is still out there.

HEIJA

Are the police helping?

ANITA

They've turned up nothing.

Heija nods reluctantly.

HEIJA

You know what, maybe we can split the
time. I can follow her when you're not
available. I have a ton of readings
anyway. I'll just read in the car.

Anita turns to Heija, her eyes filled with gratitude.

ANITA

You'll do that? I don't know what to say,
Heija.

HEIJA

You can't tell anyone. Not even David.

ANITA

(uncertain)
I don't know about that...

HEIJA

You know I like David, but he's not very good at keeping a secret. Remember your "surprise" graduation party?

Anita looks up at Heija and slowly nods.

INT. INSIDE HEIJA'S OLD CHEVY - DAY

Parked across the street from a house, Heija reads a book in a baseball cap and sunglasses.

She looks up to see David walk Lisa to the front door.

David hands Lisa a violin in a case and passes her over to an elderly male violin teacher, MR. GRANTHAM, 70s.

INT. PROGRAMMING ROOM - DAY

DRIP. DRIP. DRIP. Lisa's eyes flicker open as she adjusts to the nauseating fluorescent lights.

Jill and ORLANDO, 60, white, a measured and solemn man who inspires respect, looms over her.

ORLANDO

Let's try the new drug today. How long do we have?

Jill checks her cell.

JILL

Violin lesson, forty minutes.

Lisa sees a spotlight over her in the padded room.

She also notices an I.V. needle in her restrained arm. A saline bag drips to it, feeding into her veins.

An ice cream truck's JINGLING TUNE sounds. Jill's voice emerges from behind Lisa as she steps into the light.

JILL (CONT'D)

I want to see Blue, 23, line seven here immediately.

INT. OVAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Hatter anxiously stares at the screens.

HATTER

Where's Mouse? They need her.

As Hatter looks for Mouse, he sees -

Mad March angrily shakes at the bars of his cage.

MAD MARCH

We didn't do anything. Let me at 'em.

Hatter shakes his head no and looks around for Mouse until he sees Mouse hidden under a desk.

Hatter leans down to face her.

HATTER

Mouse, we need you out for training.

MOUSE

I don't want to. I can't. No more thpinning.

HATTER

Well, tough shit, if you don't go, they'll just make things worse for us. Out. Before I drag you. I mean it.

INT. PROGRAMMING ROOM - SAME TIME

Jill nods to another corner in the room.

Orlando emerges from the darkness, stepping next to the saline bag as he raises a syringe to the tube junction.

Lisa's eyes grow wide with panic as he injects a brown liquid inside.

ORLANDO

Do you want the spins to stop? I want to help you. I can't help you unless you bring out Blue 23, line seven.

As the liquid makes its way into Lisa, she immediately starts to react, moaning in pain and grasping the bed.

JILL

Or we can add more; maybe she likes it.

Lisa's body twitches as the terrible sensation resonates throughout her body.

Lisa P.O.V. the room is spinning quicker and quicker around her.

INT. OVAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Mouse reluctantly crawls out from under the desk.

MOUSE
(to Hatter)
I wish you were dead. You're *thcum*.

HATTER
Yeah, yeah, tell it to me after. Right now, think about Lisa.

Hatter looks up, following Mouse's rise to the top.

INT. PROGRAMMING ROOM - SAME TIME

Lisa's posture changes- She looks much more rigid.

LISA/MOUSE'S VOICE
Okay, okay, okay. I'm here. Thtop it, pleath, pleath, pleath.

Jill nods to Orlando, who now injects a blue liquid into the I.V. Instant relief flows through Lisa as her face relaxes.

ORLANDO
Good girl. I am going to count from ten to one, and by the time I reach one, I want you to be relaxed down to Ocean Floor.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Anita is on the phone with Heija.

ANITA
No, no, he gets it. He won't hold a grudge. We've known Sam since forever. He's like family to us.

HEIJA (V.O.)
At least we know he's on the case.

Anita stops, torn. She picks up her tablet and runs a search for "child GPS tracking."

ANITA

I have... so many paranoid thoughts. It's just, it's impossible it could be Sam. But I'm starting to suspect everybody.

She clicks "CONFIRM ORDER" on a GPS tracker necklace on Sentry Child.

INT. PROGRAMMING ROOM - SAME TIME

Lisa's eyes are closed as Jill and Orlando loom over her.

JILL

When you hear that, what does it mean?

Jill plays the jingle again.

LISA/MOUSE

Leave everything, follow the music, and do what I'm told.

JILL

And would you really do that?

LISA/MOUSE

Yeth... I would alwayth do that.

ORLANDO

I don't believe you. Open your eyes.

Orlando lifts a mousetrap and shows it to Lisa. He snaps the mousetrap as Lisa tries to hide a shudder.

ORLANDO (CONT'D)

You took long enough, even today. That doesn't instill us with a lot of confidence. Now I am going to count from five to one, and you will go twice as deep. Five - four - three - two *and* One.

Lisa's breathing becomes deeper, her eyes closed, fluttering, and she is motionless.

ORLANDO (CONT'D)

Good girl. This is exactly what's going to happen to you if you don't. Open your eyes but stay in Ocean Floor state.

Lisa opens her eyes and focuses on the trap.

ORLANDO (CONT'D)

(to Jill)

What do you think? Are we being serious enough? I would hate to have to do it.

JILL

I think she secretly likes it, like the rest of the mice; they go right in, or she definitely would have been quicker.

Orlando opens the mousetrap and brings it close to Lisa's hand. Jill brings a few more traps out.

JILL (CONT'D)

(cheerful)

Look what I found. Do you think one is even enough? She might enjoy two more. And she needs to learn to be a good girl and do as she is told.

The ice cream jingle starts again.

ORLANDO

No, she's really a good girl. I'm sure she'll work with us, right?

Lisa nods, yes.

ORLANDO (CONT'D)

Every time you hear this tune, you remember what will happen to you if you aren't a good girl. Now... put your finger in like I told you.

Orlando lifts the trap once more, pulling back the hinge, which releases with an unnerving SQUEAL.

He smiles over at Jill. She kisses him violently, biting on his lip.

JILL

We'll start with setting one, nice and quick, will barely leave a mark. Let's see if you decide to be a good girl. So going from one to two will really be your fault. It's your decision. Show me a good girl.

Orlando waits as Lisa lifts a trembling finger, inserting it into the gaping jaw of the mousetrap.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Anita turns as the front door begins to open, closing the Sentry Child page as well as her laptop entirely.

David walks in, peeling off his coat.

DAVID

Anita... You've got to be careful with what you say to Heija.

She turns, David leaning imposingly close.

ANITA

What do you mean?

DAVID

I talked to Sam.

ANITA

And?

DAVID

Well... I wanted to check for any updates... And... He was very concerned, kinda mad, actually.

David waits for Anita to respond, but she gives him nothing.

DAVID (CONT'D)

He said he ran into Heija outside Mr. Grantham's house. Seemed like she was spying while I dropped Lisa off.

ANITA

Maybe she wanted to look out for Lisa? Mr. Grantham could be a suspect.

DAVID

Did you give Heija Lisa's schedule? And Mr. Grantham's address?

Anita finally breaks, tears running from her eyes.

ANITA

We just wanted to help.

David softens, walks up, embraces her.

DAVID

I know, honey, but we're dealing with possibly dangerous people. The police are trained to deal with that.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

Also, you two in the wrong place at the wrong time could sabotage the whole case in court.

Anita pauses, abashed by his anger.

ANITA

I'll... I'll talk to her.

DAVID

That's my girl. Sorry I got so upset. I just don't want anyone hurting you.

INT. PROGRAMMING ROOM - LATER

Lisa no longer lies on the gurney. Instead, she sits in a rocking chair that Orlando gently rocks as he strokes Lisa's hair. He hands Lisa one piece of candy after another, which she accepts mindlessly.

ORLANDO

You did so well, baby girl. You're all done for today. Just relax - such a good job. Such an excellent student. The very best. You will grow to be very strong.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Anita sits at the kitchen table, checking a GPS app on her phone. A singular DOT on a map layout blips inside of her house. She closes it quickly as David enters with shopping bags.

DAVID

Hi, Hon, what are you up to?

ANITA

Nothing.

David puts the groceries away as Anita secretly pockets her phone, bending to load the dishwasher.

David slides up behind her amorously, putting his arms around her waist. Anita stiffens.

DAVID

We have a good half-hour before dinner.

ANITA

You're late back from the store.

DAVID
You're changing the subject.

ANITA
Are you serious? How can you even think
about sex with this going on?

Anita pushes him away, causing a glass to fall to the
floor - It SHATTERS. David slides back, now off guard.

DAVID
I... Anita, I'm sorry. I... I've been so
worried about Lisa... I don't want you to
think I've forgotten about you... About
us...

Anita starts to pick up the glass.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Shit. Hold on, let me get the broom, so
no one gets hurt.

Blood drips from Anita's finger.

ANITA
Too late for that.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Anita types a paper as Lisa practices Beethoven's "Ode to
Joy" on the violin, and David works out on a stationary
bike, dripping sweat. Lisa stops.

LISA
Have you seen my AirPods?

ANITA
Did you lose them already?

She and David exchange glances.

DAVID
I thought we talked about this? She
could've had your old ones.

Anita and Lisa's phones both ping.

LISA
Liliana is saying to come to her house to
hang out. Can I?

Anita looks to David, then to Lisa.

ANITA

Why doesn't she come here?

LISA

She can't because her dad has to help her with Algebra.

ANITA

I don't think it's a good idea.

David hops off his exercise bike and approaches Lisa.

DAVID

Pumpkin, why don't you go change the litter box and feed Cheshire?

Lisa runs off, and David looks soberly into Anita's face.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You don't want her to go?

ANITA

No. We thought we were watching her, but-

DAVID

(sincerely)

Maybe you're right; we should reassess this whole thing. I mean, whom can we trust?

ANITA

Yeah-

DAVID

Anita, we have to get on top of this. Until we know, I mean like, should we take her out of school? Maybe get a nanny or a governess who can teach her right here?

ANITA

Way too expensive, David.

DAVID

You're right, as usual. Maybe after I get my promotion. If not, we can sell the house. But until then, perhaps if you take a break from college, home school her? Be with her every minute?

David intensifies.

DAVID (CONT'D)

No more playdates. No more friends. We'll be her friends, right? We'll only trust ourselves.

ANITA

We can't keep her totally isolated.
That's not... healthy.

(searching for a way out)

You've known Rafael forever. Do you think he has secrets from you?

DAVID

Rafael? He doesn't keep anything from me.
'Times I wish he would. I trust him.

Anita nods. Lisa is back with the kitten in her arms.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Come on, pumpkin, let's go. I'll drop you off on my way.

LATER -

Anita types away, working on her paper, completely distracted. Finally, she closes her laptop, checking the GPS app on her phone. A monitoring blip is on the move across the map screen.

Anita picks up her phone and dials it.

ANITA

David, are you with Lisa?

INT./EXT. INSIDE DAVID'S CAR - DAY

David drives.

INTERCUT CONVERSATION:

DAVID

No, I dropped her off already; I'm almost at the office. You okay?

ANITA

Did they say if they were going anywhere?

DAVID

No, why?

Anita pauses, tempted to tell him as she watches the blip move across the screen.

ANITA

I - I forgot to tell her to wear a jacket.

DAVID

She'll be fine. It's not even cold out.

Anita pauses, watching the blip move.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I know it's hard but try not to worry; Lisa's safe right now.

ANITA

Okay. Thanks, honey.

She hangs up. The blip is still on the move.

EXT. GRAY'S HOUSE, DOORWAY - DAY

Anita pulls her coat on and grabs her cell from the purse, dialing Heija's number.

HEIJA

Hey, what's up?

ANITA

I need your help.

LATER

Heija's old Chevy squeals to a stop as Anita jumps in before they peel out.

EXT./INT. STREET - INSIDE HEIJA'S CHEVY - LATER

Heija speeds along as Anita studies her phone.

ANITA

Left here. And then a quick right.

INT. STONY BROOK HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

A security camera monitor and police radio scanner sit on a table. Across the small room, an open door leads to an -

ENTRANCE ROOM - SAME

An intercom buzzes. In the security monitor, Liliana's dad, Rafael, sees "UNCLE" MARK, 62, sleazy and balding.

Mark makes a hand signal at the security camera. Rafael buzzes the door open.

Mark walks in and whispers.

RAFAEL

What's your pleasure today?

MARK

Surprise me.

Mark pays Rafael a sizable wad of cash.

NURSERY - MOMENTS LATER

Rafael walks in to see Lisa sitting quietly with Liliana, and a 14-year-old, who rocks a baby. Lisa takes Liliana's hand.

LILIANA

Daddy?

RAFAEL

Eenie... Meenie... Minie... Mo.

Rafael twirls his finger, pointing at Liliana, the 14-year-old, the baby, and finally at Lisa. Lisa strains to have no response but holds Liliana's hand tighter.

Rafael gives her a hand signal, and Lisa lets go.

INT. OVAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Hatter, on high alert, looks at Mouse, who has ducked behind a counter.

HATTER

Go, Mouse. Go-go-go.

MOUSE

Why me? Can't anyone elth go?

HATTER

You're trained for this job; you can get through this. Anyone else would just get us in big trouble.

Mouse is crying.

MOUSE

I don't like it. Don't like it at all.
They keep thaying I like it, but I don't;
It hurtth. And you're not allowed to cry.

HATTER

Of course not. Now, go Mouse. Go. Think
of Lisa-

MOUSE

Thtop thaying that. What about me?

Hatter just stares at Mouse as she finally relents.

MOUSE (CONT'D)

I hate you, idiot!

Mouse, head bowed, enters the armor, then ascends through
the skylight.

INT. STONY BROOK HOUSE, BEDROOM #1 - DAY

A room with a sinister edge to the décor. Photographs of
toddlers dressed as bride and groom adorn the walls.
There is also an inverted pentacle, a drawing of a goat's
skull contained within it.

Mark sits on a bed, waiting as he keeps his eyes closed.
Mark looks over as Rafael leads Lisa in. Lisa takes on a
vacant, dreamy air.

RAFAEL

This is about what you had in mind?

Mark stands and looks Lisa up and down, smiling smugly.

INT. HEIJA'S OLD CHEVY - DAY

Heija speeds along.

HEIJA

Lisa's still not returning your texts?

ANITA

No. She just stopped a few minutes ago,
somewhere in there.

Anita points to an upper-middle-class community.

EXT. STONY BROOK GATED COMMUNITY - MOMENTS LATER

The houses are new, with generous lawns and gardens.

Heija pulls over. They jump out, and Anita circles with her phone, trying to pinpoint the signal.

ANITA

Where is she? This damn phone.

She fishes out a pair of AirPods.

HEIJA

What are you doing?

ANITA

It's Lisa's AirPods. I put her phone on "Live Listen." Maybe I'll pick something up.

She starts running, intent on finding her daughter.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Lisa? Lisa?

HEIJA

Anita. Wait.

But Anita keeps running, cupping her ears as the AirPods pick up a signal.

MARK (V.O.)

Are you gonna be a good girl, Lisa?

Anita runs faster along a row of houses, trying to geo-locate her daughter, then when the voice becomes more distant, she turns back.

MARK (V.O.)

You know, if you get feisty, this will only hurt more.

Anita ends up at a shuttered house where she consults the GPS again.

ANITA

Liiisssaaa.

MARK (V.O.)

...You're gonna do everything Uncle Mark tells you to, right?

No answer.

HEIJA

Wait, let's be smart about it. We don't want to blow our cover. Maybe we should call the cops?

ANITA

I'm not waiting for no cops.

EXT. STONY BROOK HOUSE, YARD - CONTINUOUS

Anita and Heija sneak quietly around, looking for an open window to peek through.

Heija notices a window on the second floor with the blinds up next to a tall tree.

HEIJA

There. Help, give me a boost.

Anita helps Heija onto the first branch of the tree.

ANITA

Careful.

Heija climbs up until she is at the level of the window. She peers in and freezes in horror.

Extremely distraught, Heija loses her footing and falls from the tree. Anita runs up to Heija, who sits up.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Are you okay? What did you see?

Heija staggers to her feet, shaking her head.

HEIJA

Quick, do you have the number for the detectives on Lisa's case?

ANITA

Yes, they gave me a card.

Anita gives her the business card, and Heija dials and steels herself as she talks into the phone.

HEIJA

I'm here with Anita Gray, Lisa's mother; I need you to come here immediately. Child abuse... Stony Brook Ave... Yes, and they're filming it too.

Heija pauses and listens, looking at the mailbox.

HEIJA (CONT'D)
It's 294. Now, please hurry.

ANITA
No. God, no.

Heija grasps Anita's arm.

HEIJA
(to Anita)
It's not her.

Anita immediately rushes to the front door and bangs on it like crazy-

But nobody opens it.

ANITA
Open up! Fucking open the door, you asshole! Give me my daughter!

INT. STONY BROOK HOUSE, ENTRY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A phone rings on Orlando's desk.

VOICE ON PHONE (V.O.)
Slight problem at the Flycatcher's Nest.

Orlando hangs up quickly.

EXT. STONY BROOKS HOUSE - A BIT LATER

Detectives Harris and Hernandez pull up to see Heija and Anita at Orlando's door.

ANITA
About damn time.

DET. HERNANDEZ
(to Heija)
We came as fast as we could. Are you sure she was under eighteen?

HEIJA
Try under five.

Harris, furious, raps on the door.

DET. HARRIS
Open up! Police!

Orlando, the same man from the programming room, opens the door. Harris raises his badge.

ORLANDO
Hello, Officer. What can I do you for?

DET. HERNANDEZ
Judge Drummond?

ORLANDO
In the flesh.

Hernandez steps forward.

ORLANDO (CONT'D)
Detective Hernandez. How are you?

DET. HERNANDEZ
Fine, Judge. Is this your house?

ORLANDO
Sure is; why? Is there a problem?

DET. HERNANDEZ
We need to come inside. Suspected child abuse.

Heija and Anita stand in the background, trying to get a glimpse inside.

ORLANDO
Clearly, you have the wrong address. My kids are all grown up and away in college.

HEIJA
That's a fucking lie.

DET. HERNANDEZ
(to Heija)
Let us handle this.

Harris tries to enter, Orlando bars his way.

DET. HARRIS
We need to search this house.

ORLANDO
Sure, just hand over the search warrant.

DET. HARRIS
We got probable cause to believe a crime against a minor is in progress here.

DET. HERNANDEZ
Exigent circumstances to enter without a warrant.

ORLANDO
Based on what information?

Hernandez looks back at Heija.

DET. HERNANDEZ
This woman saw -

ORLANDO
And how did she see this supposed crime?

HEIJA
I saw what you were doing. I climbed this tree right here.

ORLANDO
Which makes you guilty of trespassing.

DET. HARRIS
Son of a bitch! You can't hide this.

ORLANDO
Listen, detectives. I don't appreciate the intrusion. I should have you arrest her. I don't know what she thinks she saw but we were having a perfectly innocent meal, my wife and I with a few friends.

Another car leaves from the rear of the house and exits the gates. Anita sees it, as does Orlando. Anita checks the tracking app.

ANITA
Lisa's on the move again. Let's go.

Anita and Heija jump in the car and drive away.

INT. OVAL ROOM - NIGHT

Hatter tucks Mouse in a bed and offers her a warm drink.

HATTER
You don't have to do anything else today - just rest.

MOUSE
I hate you. I hate your gutth.

Hatter sighs.

HATTER

Like my job is so easy. Alice, I need you to come out so Mommy can't tell.

ALICE

Oh goody. What's the matter with Mouse?

HATTER

She's coming down with a cold, I think. I need you to come out.

Mouse discreetly gives Hatter the finger.

INT. GRAY'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Anita rushes in, seeing David walking from the kitchen with a cup of coffee.

ANITA

Where's Lisa?

DAVID

Upstairs. Why? What's wrong?

Anita just stammers, shaking her head.

As Heija enters behind her, Anita sprints up the stairs, two at a time. David puts down his coffee and follows.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, LISA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anita runs in and sees Lisa seated in a chair, texting. She embraces her.

ANITA

Lisa, are you okay? What happened?

LISA

Nothing. I went to Liliana's?

ANITA

Don't lie to me. What happened? Did someone hurt you?

LISA

Mommy, you're scaring me.

At that moment, Heija runs in, followed by David.

DAVID

Anita, what's this about?

LISA

We played Pokemon. And then we went by Liliana's Aunt Clare's cuz Liliana left her game disc over there, but then we got your message that you wanted me home.

ANITA

There was a man. Who was the man?

LISA

Uh, Liliana's dad?

ANITA

Who is Uncle Mark? Tell me, who is he?

LISA

I don't know, Mommy.

ANITA

Don't lie to me, Goddamnit.

She grasps Lisa by the shoulders and shakes her in frustration. Heija rushes to pull her away. Tears of alarm spring to Lisa's eyes. David sweeps her up in his arms.

DAVID

Anita - what the hell?

ANITA

There was a man. Heija. You saw something.

Anita takes a breath, backing down, and allows Heija to manhandle her out of there.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David covers Anita with a soft blanket and hands her a cup of hot milk. They sit on the sofa together, watching TV as Anita checks her watch.

DAVID

Ssh. We're all here. She's safe. No matter what, we're in this together.

David's phone rings and Anita leaps up to fetch it.

INT. ROOM AT POLICE STATION - NIGHT

There is a hustle about the station as Sam motions Anita, David, and Lisa to stand in front of a one-way window into an interrogation room.

In it, they see MARK JOHNSON, 40s, African American, disheveled, defensively glaring at Harris and Hernandez.

SAM

This is our guy.

Anita turns to Sam, shocked hope in her eyes.

ANITA

Who is he?

SAM

Mark Johnson. Aunt Clare's gardener and part-time caregiver. He had keys; musta showed up early.

ANITA

No one saw him?

SAM

Rafael, Liliana, and Clare Taylor were in the back at the time of the attack. Lisa went in to use the bathroom. Is that right, Sweetie?

Lisa nods but picks distractedly at a spot on the wall.

Sam bends down to Lisa's level.

SAM (CONT'D)

Honey, did you see this man in the house?

Lisa nods absently. Anita and David look at each other, horrified.

SAM (CONT'D)

Good girl, Lisa. Did he threaten you?

SLAM!

The three adults flinch as they turn to the interrogation room, seeing Johnson getting more heated, objecting to the Detectives' accusations.

SAM (CONT'D)

Lisa, I want you to listen to me carefully... Did you see him before that day?... Did he hurt you?

Anita winces at the words, but Lisa just shrugs, humming a little tune to herself.

ANITA

Lisa, you need to talk to us. If this is the man, we need you to be strong and tell us the truth. We can finally stop this. Please, honey. We are right here with you, and he cannot hurt you.

Lisa's expression changes, suddenly afraid. Anita leans back.

LISA

I can't. That would be weally sthcarwy. Don't make me do that. pleathe, pleathe, pleathe.

ANITA

(to David)

Wow, she's lisping. She hasn't done that in a long time.

DAVID

Clearly, we're hitting something here.

Lisa bolts from the room, and Anita jumps up after her.

INT. CORRIDOR, POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Anita skids around the corner, followed closely by the other two.

DAVID

Lisa. Where are yo -

David stops as he spots her. Lisa is hunched against the wall. David walks over and crouches down to her level, holding her tight.

LISA

Can I go home now? It's weally late.

She starts chewing on her knuckles.

DAVID

I'm gonna take you to the car. Your mom will finish up with Sam.

(to Anita)

This was too much for her.

Anita nods.

David leads Lisa out as Anita watches them go.

ANITA
I want to kill him, Sam.

There's disappointment in Sam's face as she turns to him.

ANITA (CONT'D)
What is it now?

SAM
The Taylors didn't see Johnson enter or leave the house. Clare Taylor says he showed up twenty minutes after Lisa left. And I don't think Lisa's ready to make a statement.

ANITA
Did you see her? She's traumatized. She shut down at the sight of him.

SAM
I know, but... Based on what we have... we can't hold Johnson.

ANITA
What? No.

SAM
I'm sorry. Hernandez and Harris have been putting the squeeze on him for hours; he ain't cracking.

ANITA
What if it's not him?

SAM
He's the one; I'm pretty certain. All these years on the force, I got an instinct.

Anita looks at the floor, trembling.

SAM (CONT'D)
You have my word Anita; we'll be watching that asshole like white on rice, day and night. If he so much as drops a Twinkie wrapper, he's busted.

Anita stares at Sam.

SAM (CONT'D)

We know who he is now. It's just a matter of time, you'll get your justice, and he's going down... forever.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Harris sits at his desk, with Hernandez staring at her computer. He swivels in his chair and looks at her.

DET. HARRIS

Okay... I'll say it. We blew it at Drummond's place. I lost my rag. We ain't got nuttin' on him.

DET. HERNANDEZ

He's a freakin' judge, ese, what were we supposed to do?

Harris eyes Hernandez, deciding if he should say his next words.

DET. HARRIS

...Seems like you two are old buds.

Hernandez stiffens, looking up from the computer screen and turning to Harris.

DET. HERNANDEZ

I'm sorry. I think I misheard you. Sumpin' you tryin' to tell me here?

Harris is silent. Hernandez waits for a moment before going back to her computer screen.

DET. HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

Rafael and Clare Taylor are equally spotless. Mark Johnson, on the other hand: drunk driving, heroin charges, quite the colorful history.

DET. HARRIS

Which he denied. Not denied like, "I got wrongfully arrested for driving while Black," denied it like it didn't ever happen.

DET. HERNANDEZ

I've seen guys deny a lotta shit. But let's look into it. The whole story of the "bathroom visit" don't one hundred percent work with what the mother heard, the locations, and the timeline.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Anita and Heija surf the web, all the while, Anita has the kitten chase a red laser light.

Heija scrolls through images of the pentagram symbol she saw through the window.

ANITA

Isn't this a Jewish symbol?

HEIJA

No. That's six corners. What I saw was like a five-point star.

(re: screen)

Look. It says here that the Pentagram has to do with good magic if it's pointing up. Pointing down - bad magic.

ANITA

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

HEIJA

No clue, but the one I saw on the headboard in that house was definitely pointing down. And it looked like that.

Heija points to a similar image on the screen. A chill comes over both of them.

ANITA

Down. With a... goat's skull in it?

Heija clicks through, then reads-

HEIJA

Let me see... God, this is bizarre. Get this. It says the goat is associated with... Satan.

ANITA

How the hell does that fit in?

HEIJA

Let's try something else.

Heija types some search words.

HEIJA (CONT'D)

"Satan, child pornography."

ANITA

Jesus... there's so many results.

HEIJA

Some of these say... Oh my God... It says they torture animals, even pets. They have... weird rituals in cemeteries. This is... seriously creepy stuff. Does that really happen?

Anita hugs the kitten.

ANITA

Can you imagine torturing somebody's pet? How cruel do you have to be? Lisa still isn't over Oliver.

Anita scrutinizes the cat.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Wait a minute.

Anita clicks to open a file on the laptop, it being Oliver's lost cat poster.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Heija, help me zoom in on that.

Heija does so, zooming in on the image until-

ANITA (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

HEIJA

What?

ANITA

His collar, look.

Heija squints, looking at Oliver's collar and noticing a number of gemstones embedded in it, except for one, which is missing plus a scratch on the leather.

HEIJA

(turning)

I don't understand-

And that's when Heija sees it. The kitten Anita is holding is wearing Oliver's Collar. Her eyes grow wide, looking to Anita.

HEIJA (CONT'D)

What does that mean?

ANITA

If Oliver were really lost, David wouldn't have his collar.

HEIJA

What? You don't think David... I mean, this is the guy who helped Lisa feed the baby bird every twenty minutes all night.

ANITA

I guess there could be a different explanation. Maybe David found Oliver at the side of the road crushed in a car accident, and he didn't want to upset us, but...

Anita collapses on the couch.

ANITA (CONT'D)

I just- I don't know what to think. This just seems bigger than one lone pervert. What you saw at Stony Brook -

HEIJA

True.

ANITA

And that thing about Lisa going into the bathroom at the Taylors? How does that explain all this? She didn't get infected the other day. I'm so confused, Heija.

INT. DR. ROSENBERG'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Rosenberg sits at his desk, child's drawings spread before him. He eyes the artwork closely while Anita nervously stares at him from across the desk.

DR. ROSENBERG

How old is the child?

ANITA

Eight.

Rosenberg points to a drawing of a small girl with bright red lips and large, dark eyelashes.

DR. ROSENBERG

Do you see how the legs show even though she's wearing a skirt?

Rosenberg points to a second drawing.

DR. ROSENBERG (CONT'D)

You see it here, also. It may indicate that the child feels exposed. Look here.

ANITA

Like she cannot cover herself well enough, even with clothes?

DR. ROSENBERG

Exactly.

Rosenberg points to a third drawing.

DR. ROSENBERG (CONT'D)

You hardly ever see that without trauma. She kept going over and over at the private parts area, too. There's a lot of anxiety about her own sexuality, and at her age, we need to ask ourselves why.

ANITA

So she's been sexually abused?

DR. ROSENBERG

With our kids, yes, very likely, I'm afraid. Wait a second... Is that the same child Heija brought to class, the D-I-D? I see some similarities.

Anita nods yes.

DR. ROSENBERG (CONT'D)

Then with that degree of trauma to cause a dissociative disorder, it makes it even more likely.

The devastation shows in Anita's face.

DR. ROSENBERG (CONT'D)

There's nothing wrong with caring, but we need to separate our feelings a bit, or we lose our objectivity and get burnt out quickly.

Anita nods but still can not talk.

ANITA

I... I, uh... oh hell - my daughter drew these.

Dr. Rosenberg's eyes open wide, and Anita quickly wipes a tear away.

DR. ROSENBERG

Oh, Anita, I had no idea. I'm so sorry.

ANITA

I can't help but get mad at her. Which I know isn't fair, but she won't talk to me about any of it.

DR. ROSENBERG

It's not unusual that victims are threatened not to tell. Maybe you are interacting with an alter who doesn't even have this information.

ANITA

I feel helpless; I don't know what to do to help her.

DR. ROSENBERG

Keeping her safe now is a good start

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

Front-loading washer and dryer churn. Anita arrives just as the washer stops. Anguish sweeps over Anita's face as she transfers the load to the laundry basket. Tears stream. She wipes her face with one of the garments - Lisa's panties. She stares at them.

ANITA

God damnit.

A fit of rage propels the rest of the clothes into the dryer. She slams the door and hammers down the buttons with her fist.

She sinks to the floor. She clutches herself. Head down, wrists crossed, she clasps her hands in prayer.

ANITA (CONT'D)

God. If you are there, please help me.

LATER

Anita silently prays, her eyes closed, her face is lifted. The dryer's BUZZER SOUNDS as the load comes to rest. She nods her head in resolve. Eyes open. She reaches for her cell.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Maggie?

INT. GRAY'S HOUSE, LISA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Anita hands Lisa her Snowball.

ANITA

There. All stitched up, good as new.

Lisa sits on her bed, cuddling the rabbit.

LISA

She feels lumpy.

Lisa pokes one of the bumps on Snowball's side.

ANITA

She just needs cuddles.

Lisa hugs Snowball close. Anita stands and begins to pack some clothes and toys in a suitcase.

ANITA (CONT'D)

You're gonna go on a little vacation.
Okay, sweetheart?

LISA

Where are we going?

ANITA

Not we, Sweetie, just you.

LISA

What? By myself? Whu- Why? I don't wanna go alone.

ANITA

You'll be not very far with my two friends, Ronny and Erica, who are super nice, and you'll have other kids your age to play with whenever you want.

Lisa starts to cry as Anita immediately consoles her.

ANITA (CONT'D)

And I'll come to visit Every Sunday, at the very least. I promise.

LISA

Why do I have to go away? I didn't do anything. I was good.

Anita stops packing and looks at Lisa with tender eyes.

ANITA

Of course you were. Oh, and guess what else? They have a dog.

She hangs a turquoise necklace on her.

ANITA (CONT'D)
Promise you'll wear it for me always?
It'll help keep you safe.

Lisa fingers the necklace. She nods.

INT. GRAYS' HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

David, iPad in hand, approaches Anita as she dusts the coffee table.

DAVID
So, before you say, "I told you so," you
were right about keeping an eye on Lisa.

ANITA
Oh, really?

DAVID
I know I didn't react well to it, but you
did good. I'm sorry, honey.

He shows her a picture of a beach resort on his iPad.

DAVID (CONT'D)
To make it up to you - What do you think?

She does not look happy.

ANITA
Hawaii? I don't think now is the right
time.

The doorbell rings as they both turn.

INT. GRAY'S HOUSE, ENTRY HALL - MOMENTS LATER

David opens the door to find Maggie, with Detective Hernandez right behind her. Anita watches anxiously.

DET. HERNANDEZ
Hello, Mr. Gray.

DAVID
Detective, how can I help you?

DET. HERNANDEZ
We're here to take your daughter into
protective custody.

DAVID

What? Wait... what the fuck? On what grounds?

MAGGIE

Mr. Gray, it is department policy that if we get information that abuse is continuing, but we don't know by whom, then we move the child into foster care.

Hernandez begins to enter the house, but David steps in front of her, holding up his hands.

DAVID

You... No-no. You can't take her.

DET. HERNANDEZ

Actually, we can.

DAVID

You're not taking her anywhere. She's been through enough.

DET. HERNANDEZ

Let's everybody keep their cool. Mr. Gray, don't make this any harder than it needs to be. I'd prefer not to have to detain you.

David does not yield.

DAVID

Go ahead - all the better for me to sue you.

DET. HERNANDEZ

Sir, please step aside.

David does not budge, turning back to Anita as he continues to block the door.

DAVID

Quick, get Sam on the phone. They're here to take Lisa.

ANITA

I know, David.

David tenses, slowly turning as Anita wheels two suitcases from the hall closet.

David looks utterly stunned.

DAVID

What the hell are you talking about?
Anita... What have you done?

ANITA

Lisa, come here, honey.

Lisa joins them in the hall as Anita kneels beside her.
Lisa is confused but tries not to show any emotion.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Sweetie, it's time to go on your little
trip now.

LISA

But I don't want to.

Anita hugs her.

DAVID

You don't have to go if you don't want
to, honey. Daddy wants you to stay.

David extends his hands. However, Maggie steps forward,
preventing David from grabbing Lisa.

MAGGIE

Sorry, Mr. Gray - it is now a matter for
the courts.

Lisa attempts to go to him, but Anita holds onto her.

INT. OVAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Hatter and Mouse, almost glued to the screens, watch the
events unfold.

Mouse studies Maggie in particular.

MOUSE

Is this Magpie a good perthon?

HATTER

(nodding)

Maggie? Yes, she seems real nice.

MOUSE

I don't want to go. Can't we all just go
to Hawaii instead?

Hatter contemplates things for a moment.

HATTER

I think Lisa needs to stay out.

MOUSE

(relieved)

Weally? You're tho nithe.

Mouse smiles.

HATTER

For now, yes.

INT. GRAY'S HOUSE, ENTRY HALL - SAME TIME

Lisa bursts into tears, with Anita picking her up, kissing, and hugging her tightly. She then hands her to Maggie.

MAGGIE

You're doing the right thing.

Maggie carries Lisa out the door, her crying increasing with each step. David takes one step, and Hernandez takes two to block him - David stops. Anita calls after her sobbing daughter.

ANITA

I love you, baby. I love you.

Hernandez picks up Lisa's suitcase. Arms crossed, David glares at her.

DAVID

You are gonna regret this. You'll be hearing from my lawyer.

DET. HERNANDEZ

(to Anita)

You need us to stay?

Anita looks at David. He rolls his eyes. Anita answers Hernandez by shaking her head, "no." Hernandez gives her a card.

DET. HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

You need anything, give me a call. Twenty-four seven.

Anita nods as Hernandez turns and leaves.

Enraged, David whirls around to face Anita.

DAVID

Do you have any idea what you've just done to our daughter?

ANITA

I do. I've made arrangements for her to stay safe.

Anita walks toward her suitcase, but David blocks her, getting right in her face.

DAVID

Are you leaving me?

ANITA

I just... I need some time to think.
I'm...

Anita is confused, and David pulls his shoulder back and lifts his chin up, calming down.

DAVID

Hey, I know; it's been a shitty time for all of us.

Anita hesitates. She closes her eyes for a bit, lifts her head, and then picks up her suitcase.

DAVID (CONT'D)

We need to heal from what happened, put it behind us. I know it's hard for you to let it go, understandably -

David rubs his eye as Anita uses this opportunity to grab her suitcase and plow past him out the door.

DAVID (CONT'D)

We were meant to be in this together. A family?

The door closes, David is left there, standing in shock. He takes a deep breath, visibly shaken. He looks like he's going to cry.

INT. HEIJA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aside from the aging wallpaper and more classical architecture, the place has a student feel to it. Small, with worn furniture, posters on the walls, etc.

Heija opens the door to reveal Anita with her suitcase.

HEIJA
What's going on?

Anita says nothing, motions Heija aside.

ANITA
Do you mind?

Heija shakes her head as Anita enters.

LATER:

Anita sleeps on the couch. Her phone RINGS, and she answers, groggy.

ANITA (CONT'D)
Hello?

CREEPY VOICE (V.O.)
*Quod spectentur Lisa demens canis, Gloria
Causa Satani est anima tua ut vendetur,
et omnium in infernis arderet aeternum.*

ANITA
Who is this?

CREEPY VOICE (V.O.)
And may you never see your daughter
again. You hear me?

The voice snickers evilly.

Anita flings the phone and wraps herself in her arms.

ANITA
Help me, help me, help me.

EXT. FOSTER HOME, BACKYARD - DAY

Lisa plays with two KIDS while ERICA, 30s, a tightly wound foster mom with her hair in a perfect, tight bun, loosely supervises.

INT. FOSTER HOME, LISA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

RONNY, 30s, Lisa's foster dad, comes into the room with ANGIE, a small white mutt, which Lisa pats.

RONNY
Just making sure you're in bed. Erica is
putting down the baby.
(MORE)

RONNY (CONT'D)

Do you want to wait for her to put you to bed, or would you like to read with me?

LISA

You can if Angie can be on my bed.

RONNY

Angie is a little stand-offish with people. She prefers to snuggle with other dogs.

Lisa pats her bed. Angie jumps at her feet, turns around, and makes herself comfortable.

RONNY (CONT'D)

Would you look at that? A first. Ever since we rescued her, she immediately jumps off if we sit on the bed. You must be real good with animals, Lisa.

LISA

They like me. Would you read me a story?

RONNY

Okay. What were you thinking?

He holds up a handful of books.

RONNY (CONT'D)

The world's your oyster.

LISA

That one, Amelia Earhart.

RONNY

Good one. Oh, would you like me to help you take your necklace off for bed?

He reaches toward her, but Lisa backs up, shaking her head.

INT. OVAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Hatter and Mouse, eyes open wide, stares at the screens, tense and ready.

HATTER

Mouse, we may need you.

Mouse looks up, alarmed.

INT. FOSTER HOME, LISA'S BEDROOM - BACK TO SCENE

Ronny pulls his hand back.

RONNY

Oh, sorry, no, it's not a have-to; it's an only-if-you-want-to. Don't even worry about it. We're still getting to know each other.

Ronny sits further away from her as Lisa relaxes. She turns the turquoise pendant on her necklace in her fingers.

INT. HEIJA'S ATTIC APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Anita sits on the sofa, listening in on the conversation via the pendant, which is connected with an app on her phone.

RONNY (V.O.)

Amelia refused to accept "no" for an answer. She dared to do what no one had done before.

LISA

How many impossible things did she do?

INT. OVAL ROOM - SAME TIME

On the screen, from Lisa's P.O.V, she listens intently to the story. Ronny displays a kindly smile on his face.

Mouse and Hatter exchange looks, surprised.

MOUSE

Ith he just going to wead her a book?

HATTER

I don't know. Let's see what happens tomorrow.

MOUSE

Tho thtwange. He was about to touch her, but when she didn't want him to, he just pulled back.

MAD MARCH

Maybe boys aren't all the same? What else did they lie about?

MOUSE

Maybe I wathn't weally born to be the cho-
then one...

HATTER

Okay, okay, enough. That's just crazy
talk. You know that's what you were
trained for. Knock it off, the lot of
you, or they'll put us in the blue room.
You know they can see what we think.

INT. STONY BROOK HOUSE, OFFICE - DAY

Orlando files his nails pointy and sips a Scotch, his
cowboy boots on the desk, as he talks into his cellphone.

ORLANDO

Realistically, you can't not find me that
info on her, what with your third
mortgage and your daughter's probation
situation.

A pause in the conversation.

ORLANDO (CONT'D)

No, you're not going to try; you're going
to do it. CPS, foster care, school
enrollment... she'll show up somewhere,
and you will find this elementary school.

Another pause. Coughs a phony dry cough.

ORLANDO (CONT'D)

No, never to me. Use the channel I set
up. Send the signal. Don't fail. I'll
take care of you down the line.

Orlando hangs up. He rolls his eyes and shifts his boots.
He trades phones to make a second call.

ORLANDO

We need her tonight. I will have the
address for you in two hours. No, we
can't just pick some other girl off the
street. I need someone trained for this.

A pause in the conversation.

ORLANDO

What did you just say to me? Don't forget
I have enough footage to put you away for
a hundred lifetimes.

(MORE)

ORLANDO (CONT'D)

Think of that and get creative... Yeah,
that's what I thought.

He hangs up, smirking as he walks to the window. Peering
out among his domain, he sees-

Heija's car is parked one house away from his.

ORLANDO (CONT'D)

Ah. Hello again, my dears. Missed me?

EXT. STONY BROOK STREET - DAY

Heija pulls up in her Chevy, Anita with her.

HEIJA

How are these guys still at large? It
seems impossible.

Anita laughs hollowly.

ANITA

A lot of impossible things have happened
lately.

HEIJA

Yeah, well, they can take a break.

ANITA

God, help me. Here we go.

HEIJA

Whoa, wait.

ANITA

I'm done waiting.

Anita gets out. She walks to the driveway gates and looks
at Orlando's house. She places a tiny camera on the
street sign opposite Orlando's door.

Back in the car, they survey the house where Orlando was.

HEIJA

Hey, I'm exhausted. We're gonna be no
good like this. Let's get some food.

As Heija pulls away, someone is seen in the window of the
Stony Brook House, parting the curtains to peep out.

LATER

Orlando casually strolls the street in front of his house. He pauses at the signpost where Anita reached up.

Spotting the camera, he reaches up to grab it but thinks better of it and strolls on.

ORLANDO

I can work with that.

INT. INSIDE HEIJA'S OLD CHEVY - DAY

Heija stops at a red light. A moment of calm passes before a black car pulls up behind them.

EXT. CITY STREET - SAME TIME

A black-clad MASKED MAN steps out of the black car with a baseball bat and strides toward Heija's car.

INT. INSIDE HEIJA'S OLD CHEVY - SAME TIME

BAM! The passenger window EXPLODES!

A wall of glass bursts next to Anita's head. She screams as the glass flies onto her, and the Masked Man pounds the car with the bat.

Heija steps on the gas, running the red light, narrowly avoiding a collision with another car turning in front of her.

HEIJA

Jesus. Jesus Holy Christ.

Anita sits entirely still.

Heija pulls over.

ANITA

Shit shit shit.

HEIJA

It's okay. We're gonna be okay. No, we are okay... for sure... fuck.

She turns to Anita, who's shaking in anger, her face covered in minor cuts. But suddenly, she closes her eyes take a deep breath, and smiles, turning to Heija.

HEIJA (CONT'D)

What??

ANITA
(confident)
We're getting close.

INT./EXT. LAKEVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

POV of an observer in a grey Ford Taurus, as a group of children and parents leaves the school.

The foster dad, Ronny, exits the school's front doors with Lisa, her white rabbit visible in the mesh front of her backpack. They get into a waiting car. The Taurus pulls from the curb, following at a distance.

INT. POLICE STATION, FILE ROOM - DAY

Detectives Hernandez searches through stacks of files sighs in frustration.

DETECTIVE HERNANDEZ
Dammit. Nothing.

She opens another book, starts flipping.

Harris sits at a computer. A file pops up with Johnson's picture on it. On the file - Harris clicks on the heroin charge.

A window pops up -

DETECTIVE HARRIS
The heroin charge is backdated three months... we should talk to the arresting officer -

Harris clicks.

DETECTIVE HARRIS (CONT'D)
Shit.

Hernandez looks up.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - DAY

Lisa sits on a bench holding Snowball as foster mom, Erica, reads a newspaper. Two girls stand near the playground, waving her over.

LISA
(to Erica)
Those girls want me to play with them.

Erica looks up from her newspaper at them.

ERICA

You go have fun.

She goes back to her newspaper - it blocks her view of the girls. Lisa runs off with Snowball.

Lisa plays tag with the two girls. She stops as one girl chases the other around to the other side of the slide.

Suddenly, Lisa hears the bush next to her shake. She turns to investigate and sees -

A hand extends from the bush. It beckons her and gives the secret hand signal. Lisa hesitates, then follows.

INT. HEIJA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Anita and Heija sit eating take-out when Anita's phone rings. She immediately picks it up-

ANITA

Hello... No, I don't have her. Why would I have her? She's with the foster parents. I'm sorry, what're you saying?

Anita listens for a beat, and then, horrified, she hangs up her phone. Anita pulls up the necklace app and checks Lisa's position.

ANITA (CONT'D)

It happened. I knew it would happen. God, God, God, God, God.

HEIJA

Hey, hey, slow down. It's Lisa?

ANITA

She's missing. We have to go and get her.

HEIJA

Do you have a location on her phone?

ANITA

The phone still shows up at Ronny and Erica's. But I have GPS on her necklace. And I sewed one into her rabbit.

HEIJA

You've come a long way from not knowing how to program alarms on your phone.

ANITA

Yes, it took me three days and many
YouTubes to figure everything out on my
own.

HEIJA

Did you check the camera at our friend
the judge's?

ANITA

Yes, while I was waiting for you. Nothing
there since school let out.

HEIJA

Got it. I'm downloading the app also.

Heija works with her phone to get the app as Anita pulls
up an "S.O.S." button on the app.

ANITA

I can ring her on the necklace. But
anyone with her would hear it...

Heija looks up from her phone - they both stare at the
button, uncertain.

INT/EXT. TAURUS/GAS STATION - SAME TIME

A car is parked outside a rustic gas station at an
intersection on a country road. Lisa sits in the back
seat, hands folded on her lap.

INT. OVAL ROOM - NIGHT

Hatter and the alters look at the screen, seeing Lisa's
POV of the car interior.

MAD MARCH

We should run. This is our chance.

HATTER

No. He told us to wait. Mouse, you go.
And don't move a muscle when you're
there.

Mouse quickly puts the armor on.

INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Lisa's kidnapper gathers cookies, candy and soda, and moves to the counter. We do not see his face, just the back of him.

INT. TAURUS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Lisa looks at her necklace.

ANITA (V.O.)

It's Mommy, Sweetie. I need to know where you are. Please, talk to me.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

The kidnapper pays for his purchase.

INT. OVAL ROOM - NIGHT

Mad March is freaking out, yelling at the screen.

MAD MARCH

Say something, Mouse. Say something!

HATTER

No, Mouse, don't you dare.

INT. TAURUS - NIGHT

Anita's calm voice still comes through.

ANITA (V.O.)

Say something, baby. Please. I need to know if you're okay and who took you.

Lisa sits still, but she recognizes the stress in her mother's voice. A silent tear slides down Lisa's cheek. Lisa looks up to see her captor returning; she quickly wipes the tear away.

INT. HEIJA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Anita and Heija stare at Anita's phone with bated breath, waiting.

HEIJA

Just get the address. Let's go.

Anita nervously refreshes the app.

ON PHONE MAP:

ANITA

Shit. She's thirty miles from here!

Heija stands.

HEIJA

Let's go...

Instant, silent agreement as they move to the door.

HEIJA (CONT'D)

Should we call the police?

ANITA

Good question. Let's just call Hernandez directly.

At the bottom of the stairs, Anita checks another location app on her phone. Blanches.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Dear God.

HEIJA

What?

ANITA

I... I don't... The signals are separated. The necklace is not moving; Snowball - her rabbit's - moving away. Fuck.

Anita shows Heija the screen.

HEIJA

What's your gut saying?

Anita thinks hard.

ANITA

I told her not to take the necklace off. But she never goes anywhere without Snowball.

HEIJA

Let's split up; I've got the app - just share the permission for your account with me.

ANITA

I'm going after Snowball; you take the necklace.

Anita touches the screen of her phone a few times to share it with Heija.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Refresh your app.

HEIJA

Got it.

EXT. HEIJA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Anita and Heija enter their separate cars and take off in opposite directions.

INT. ANITA'S CAR - NIGHT

Anita speeds along; a car honks at her as it swerves, narrowly avoiding an accident as she stares down at the GPS.

INT/EXT. ANITA'S CAR/ WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Anita pulls up outside a shabby warehouse. She leaps out, still following her phone. The back door - it's locked. No windows. She moves down the side of the building.

Around a corner - there are stairs outside going up to a second-story door.

EXT. SECOND STORY STAIR LANDING - NIGHT

Anita tries the door. Locked. About halfway back down the stairs, she notices a window above her. It's locked.

Anita sprints down the stairs, finds a big chunk of brick, takes it back to the window, and smashes it.

It was loud. She looks around, pulls the glass away.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

It's dark. Anita is sneaking down another metal staircase using the light from her phone. She looks at the app.

Phone screen- The blip on Anita's phone changes from amber to green, indicating that she's close.

At the bottom of the stairs, Anita gets to a large, rickety metal shelf stocked with various supplies. Behind the middle shelf, the head of Snowball pops up. It disappears from view, then pops up again. It bounces merrily along toward the end of the wall.

ANITA
(breathless)

Lisa!

Anita rushes toward it only to be met with -

Sam, holding Snowball and a gun - pointed at Anita.

SAM
Guess again.

ANITA
No... Come on. Sam... Don't tell me...

SAM
You don't know when to quit, do you?

ANITA
Where is she?

SAM
Nuh-uh. You're done asking questions.
Cause, unfortunately, for some, you've
walked right into your own arrest.

ANITA
My arrest? On what grounds?

SAM
On the grounds of, you pissed me the fuck
off. Meddling when I told you to leave it
alone. Hands on your head and turn
around.

Anita raises her hands. Turns her back to him.

Sam holsters his gun and takes out his cuffs, pulls her hand behind her back.

ANITA
We trusted you.

SAM
Well... we all make mistakes.

He smirks as she bolts forward to the other side of the shelving unit.

SAM (CONT'D)

Oh, come on...

Sam, confident, takes his time pulling his gun back out.

ANITA

Fuck you!

She shoves the shelving unit over on him -

SAM

Son of a bitch!

Sam tries but can't get out of the way as it pins him down. He is not hurt, just pissed.

SAM (CONT'D)

God damn it!

As he struggles to get out from underneath the boxes and structure, Anita comes around with her phone/light. He can't see her.

SAM (CONT'D)

(sing-song teasing)

I've still got my gun.

Anita sees his arm pop up on the side of a box, gun in his hand. He is almost free.

She kicks his hand like a football. The gun goes skidding across the floor. Anita chases it.

Sam scrambles and instantly pops up out of the mess, but Anita is there - pointing his gun at him.

SAM (CONT'D)

What, you're gonna shoot an officer of the law? Have you any idea how badly that would go for you? Court just loves giving custody to cop killers.

ANITA

Only if they catch me, and I'm very sure your body cam is mysteriously off now.

Sam just chuckles.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Where is she, you asshole?

Sam just smiles. Anita fires the gun at him - missing on purpose. Then she moves closer and points it at his crotch.

SAM

Whoa. Whoa. Whoa.

ANITA

I'm about to turn you into a woman.

Sam puts his hands up.

SAM

Take it easy with that. Besides, you don't have it in you.

Anita smacks him in the head with the gun.

ANITA

Where is she?

His hand goes to his head, and he pulls it away, bloody.

SAM

I'll never tell. Not allowed. I follow the rules. Never tell.

Sam smiles confidently. It's a stalemate.

ANITA

Get the handcuffs.

SAM

(shrugs)
Lost them in the scuffle.

ANITA

Find them!

SAM

You go find them.

Before Anita can say a word, Sam lunges at her, knocking her backward to the ground. She loses the gun and her phone. The phone, 10 feet away, is the only source of illumination in the room as Sam sits on top of her, pinning her hands down.

SAM (CONT'D)

Stupid bitch.

(then)

We always carry backup handcuffs.

(beat)

But I won't need 'em, now.

He puts his hands on her neck and starts choking her. Anita grabs his arms, but he's too strong. She flails her arms out to the side as he chokes her.

We see her hand brush past the gun, then go back to it.

SAM (CONT'D)

No one will ever know.

The evil grin on Sam's face is wiped off when Anita slams the gun into his temple.

Sam rolls off Anita, loopy from the blow. Anita is coughing uncontrollably as she cuffs Sam's hands to a large loop of pipe coming out of the floor.

INT. CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Anita gets in hastily, tosses Snowball and Sam's gun into the passenger seat. Still coughing, she calls Heija as she drives off.

ANITA (INTO PHONE)

Hey. Got Snowball. No Lisa. (cough) Sam - our cop friend - is in on it. Did you get anything?

(listens, still coughing)

I'll meet you there.

EXT. COUNTRY GAS STATION - NIGHT

Anita pulls up to join Heija near the country road intersection. She walks over to Heija's car, gets in.

Heija holds up Lisa's pendant, that now has a broken chain.

HEIJA

I thought I'd caught up to her. I just found this on the ground. She could be anywhere.

Anita surveys the intersection, a flicker of recognition dawns on her.

ANITA

I've been here before. Sam has a cabin about half an hour away. He lent it to us one time, for a weekend trip.

HEIJA

Oh shit. Come on, my car's faster.

They jump in, head out.

EXT. HUNTING LODGE / WOODS - NIGHT

A cozy-looking place deep in the woods. It is one long wooden lodge adjacent to two smaller, concrete, windowless buildings.

INT. HUNTING LODGE, WINDOWLESS ROOM - NIGHT

Orlando leads a group of FOUR VERY YOUNG girls into a small room. They all wear white dresses. Right before he turns the lights out, we see that one is Lisa.

In the dark, he puts a flashlight under his face. Creepy.

ORLANDO

Tonight, He will come and choose himself
a bride - perhaps more than one. I know
you will all stay very quiet and wait for
him. And you'll all pray fervently to be
chosen. Won't you?

They are silent, scared, and motionless. Orlando smiles, then exits the room. A heavy deadbolt locks.

INT. HUNTING LODGE, SUPPLY ROOM - LATER

Shelves loaded with knives, ropes, and long syringes line the walls. An aquarium filled with live crabs sits next to a jar buzzing with house flies. Joseph, the cat torturer, paces around. He mockingly sings an "Oingo Boingo" song:

JOSEPH

"I, I, I love little girls
They make me feel so good
I love little girls
They make me feel so bad..."

ORLANDO

I bet... and they're ready for you.

Joseph opens a long closet that contains an array of masks; they are a combination of human and animal features with large teeth and glowing or empty eyes. Joseph tries on one with glowing, red eyes. Then, triumphantly-

JOSEPH

Time to make some nightmares. They'll pee their pants.

INT. INSIDE HEIJA'S OLD CHEVY - NIGHT

Heija flies along the winding two-lane road. Anita stares at a map on her phone. They come to a crossroads. Heija slows down.

HEIJA

Right or left?

ANITA

I'm not sure. We only went there once. I wanna say left?

Heija makes a sharp turn to the left.

HEIJA

I gave those detectives - Hernandez... the address for the gas station. We should update them on which way we're going.

Anita reluctantly dials. Then hangs up.

ANITA

No. First, I'm calling the local Sheriff.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Orlando is encircled by men and a few women, all wearing black or red ceremonial robes with hoods and chanting.

Several young girls, including Lisa, STEPHANIE, 5, and Liliana, are tied to trees by their ankles and wrists.

ORLANDO

On this hallowed night, three brides are to be chosen.

Joseph enters in costume. When he pulls a string, a long, thin tongue comes out from the mask's mouth. He dances around the circle until he stands in front of Lisa.

JOSEPH

Ahhhhhhh, you are the chosen one.

Joseph pulls out a long, sharp, ceremonial-style DAGGER. Lisa doesn't react.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

You were born to marry the Unholy One
and, with your body and heart, serve the
men.

ADULTS IN CIRCLE

Serve the men.

Joseph stabs the knife forward - Lisa braces, but he only
cuts the rope binding her hands.

INT. INSIDE HEIJA'S OLD CHEVY - NIGHT

Anita and Heija come to a dead end.

ANITA

Oh, God. Turn around. Go back.

HEIJA

Are you sure? Maybe we should head back
to -

ANITA

Turn the fucking car around.

HEIJA

Yep.

Heija slams the brakes and cuts the wheel, spinning the
car around in a cloud of dust like a professional racing
driver.

EXT. INTERSECTION NEAR GAS STATION - NIGHT

Detectives Harris and Hernandez stand by their car at the
side of the road, studying maps on their cell phones. A
patrol car approaches, lights flashing. It pulls over as
Hernandez waves him down.

It's a local cop. He approaches as Hernandez flashes her
badge (to AL MORRISON, 36), an affable-appearing police
officer with a rural accent.

DET. HERNANDEZ

Detective Lynn Hernandez. This is my
partner, Rob Harris. We're here in
connection with the missing girl.

AL

Al Morrison. Dispatch got a call from a
woman who said there's some suspicious
shit going on up here in the woods.

(MORE)

AL (CONT'D)

It's not the first call like this. Don't like it.

DET. HERNANDEZ

What kind of suspect shit?

Al looks around for a moment. Then, quietly-

AL

My buddy on vice suspects Satanists.

DET. HERNANDEZ

Well, I hate to tell you he may be right.

AL

What the hell you talkin' about?

DET. HARRIS

Pedophiles. Child porn and trafficking.

AL

We caught three kids once in this very woods, but they wouldn't say anything.

DET. HERNANDEZ

They intentionally torture them to give them split personalities. Then brainwash the personalities to cover up for them.

AL

They're fucking smart to stay away from the police, no? I wonder how.

Al goes for his gun as he speaks, leveling it at Hernandez.

AL (CONT'D)

I'm gonna have to ask for your weapons.

Harris and Hernandez exchange glances. Harris gives Hernandez an almost imperceptible nod.

HARRIS

Aw, c'mon man, I just cleaned my piece; what you gonna do with it?

He walks toward Al, offering his gun, handle first.

Al shoots him a look -

Hernandez instantly SLAMS Al's car door against him. Al's gun discharges as Harris tackles Al, slamming his head on top of the squad car.

Harris quickly cuffs the dazed Al to his own steering wheel. Harris yanks Al's radio off his shoulder and tosses it away.

DET. HERNANDEZ
(to Harris)
Good lookin' out, güey. How did you know?

DET. HARRIS
We bin on the local frequency this whole time and ain't heard diddly shit about him coming this way. Plus, this case has got me paranoid as fuck.

EXT. FOREST, TREE-LINE - NIGHT

Jill pours rubbing alcohol into a steel bowl, then dips a sponge into it. She looks up at Lisa, who is frozen, staring back at her. Jill smiles at her. Lisa's expression does not change.

INT. OVAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Mouse looks on in terror as the sponge is raised.

HATTER
I know you're scared.

MOUSE
Please, Hatter. Don't make me do thith.

HATTER
They want you, Mouse. Lisa *needs* you.

MOUSE
But wut about me?

HATTER
You're stronger than you think, Mouse.

Mouse looks anguished, not wanting to abandon Lisa.

MOUSE
It'th gonna hurt.

HATTER
But it won't last long.

MOUSE
Pleeeeathe.

HATTER

How about this? Once you get back, Alice will dream you a room full of puppies, candy, and all sorts of fun things just for you, okay? Whatever you want.

Mouse cries, looking at Lisa.

HATTER (CONT'D)

I promise, Mouse. Do you trust me?

Tears roll down Mouse's cheeks as she nods, enters the armor.

EXT. FOREST, TREE-LINE - BACK TO SCENE

Jill bathes Lisa with the sponge.

JILL

(cheerful)

Aren't you excited? It's your wedding day - every little girl's dream.

Lisa stares ahead blankly as Jill pulls off Lisa's tee shirt. She scrubs Lisa's cheeks with the sponge. Lisa stoically takes it but then raises her hands to her eyes.

JILL (CONT'D)

Does it burn? Good. Makes you strong.

Jill washes Lisa roughly. Suddenly, Orlando appears, holding a small, purple wedding dress with a veil. He pulls it over Lisa's head. Jill hands Orlando a camera.

JILL (CONT'D)

Take some wedding pictures.

Orlando points the camera at Lisa.

ORLANDO

(to Lisa)

You look beautiful, darling. Give me a big smile.

Lisa strains to smile as the flash goes off.

JILL

Now, pull your dress up for the wedding album.

Lisa pulls her dress up, covering her face. Flashes from the camera light up the night.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Anita and Heija pull into a turnout. They hop out of the car and look around, trying to get their bearings. The bright moonlight reveals a valley overlook.

Anita notices smoke in the distance.

ANITA

Over there.

HEIJA

We passed a dirt road back there. Let's head in that direction.

They hop back in the car and turn around.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Heija's car turns down the road. Dust envelopes the taillights.

EXT. FOREST, ALTAR - MOMENTS LATER

A bonfire burns. Robed adults, chanting in low, monotone voices, encircle a stone altar. They pass around a goblet, each person taking a sip.

A menacing banner of a pentagram with a goat's skull dominates the altar. Large candles burn on each end.

Lisa lies frozen on the altar as a shirtless man in a horned mask anoints her forehead with blood. Stephanie and Liliana wait for their turn, emotionless.

EXT. HEIJA'S OLD CHEVY - HUNTING LODGE - NIGHT

Anita and Heija arrive at the hunting lodge. "Private Property - No Trespassing" signs abound. Heija cringes.

ANITA

Over there.

Heija follows Anita's gaze - there are a dozen cars and trucks parked behind a building. No lights or other signs of life.

HEIJA

Okay, okay... Let's take a second here and think about this. Maybe we should wait for the cops.

ANITA

I'm done waiting.

HEIJA

It's a hunting lodge. There *will* be guns.

She pulls Sam's gun from her jacket.

ANITA

All the more reason to go *now*. You stay
and wait for them.

Anita exits the cars, walks toward the building. Heija
contemplates for a moment -

HEIJA

Shit.

Heija exits the car, follows after Anita.

MOMENTS LATER

Anita moves very slowly and carefully toward the first
building. Heija follows. They creep along a line of
pickups and cars, peeking between them.

In the distance, they see -

A procession of robed figures holding long candles. One
of the figures wears a mask with shiny, red eyes. Others
carry a TODDLER in a purple dress above their heads.

Anita readies the gun. Heija puts her hand on Anita's
arm, shakes her head "no." Anita lowers the weapon.

Anita and Heija move quickly along the cars and trucks
until they are next to the processional path. By this
time, the figures have all vanished into the woods.

ANITA

(frantic whisper)

Come on.

She and Heija hurry after them. They freeze at the sound
of cult members returning. They duck behind a tree just
as cult members pass back the way they came - without the
child.

After they pass, Anita and Heija continue down the path.

INT. FOREST, ROCKY AREA - NIGHT

Rafael sits on a large rock, guarding a wooden casket. He hears rustling behind him, turns and - BAM - Heija whacks him unconscious with a tree branch.

ANITA

Fucking hell. It's - it's Liliana's dad.
Asshole.

She kicks him in the gut. He doesn't move. Heija undoes the latch to yank the lid open. It is filled with...

HEIJA

Crabs.

ANITA

Oh my God - God. No. No. Nooooo.

EXT. FOREST, ALTAR - SAME TIME

Orlando, Jill, and other adult Cult Members hear a noise in the distance. They look toward the casket.

ORLANDO

What was that?

JILL

The bride must've gotten a love bite.

Orlando laughs, and Jill smiles back at him.

ORLANDO

But she knows better than to make a
sound.

JILL

Don't you worry. The little bitch will
get hers, and I'm just the one to do it.

Jill grins with anticipation.

EXT. FOREST, ROCKY AREA - NIGHT

Anita unties the last of the ropes from Stephanie, puts her jacket around the girl, and sits her beside a tree.

ANITA

Stay here out of sight. We'll be back for
you as soon as we can.

EXT. FOREST, ALTAR - CONTINUOUS

Anita and Heija creep forward, Anita with the gun out, Heija with her branch and Stephanie's ropes.

They reach the edge of the clearing where the cult is assembled.

HEIJA

Holy fuck.

Liliana stands in her purple gown among the circle of cult members who are dressed in robes, holding candles.

Anita gasps. Lisa lies motionless on the altar in her wedding dress, the pentagram banner behind her.

Orlando presides over the mock wedding ceremony.

ORLANDO

Infernal cabal, we are gathered here tonight to unite these servants of the profane in the state of holy matrimony. We call upon Baphomet, Balaam, and Moloch to bring your power upon this union.

The human circle parts, allowing the shirtless man wearing the heavy horned mask to pass.

ORLANDO (CONT'D)

Horned One, we beckon you forth to claim this child as your bride. Virile flesh to consume or pleasure. Your whim made manifest, and your glory made whole.

The Shirtless Man steps to the altar's foot and lays his hands on Lisa's inner ankles.

He looks up at her, eyes dark beneath the horned mask.

Anita and Heija share one last look. They're doing this. They burst out of the underbrush.

ANITA

All of you on the ground. *On the ground, now.*

Anita waves her gun at them, furious. The cult members freeze. Orlando raises his hands. The man in the horned mask stands motionless.

Heija holds her branch like a batter about to hit a home run.

HEIJA
(loud)
Don't nobody move.

Anita advances her gun on the masked man.

ANITA
Get away from my daughter.

The man's shoulders shake; it's not clear if he is crying or laughing.

Anita steps toward him, angry.

ANITA (CONT'D)
And take off the mask, damnit. I swear to God; I'll shoot.

Anita fires a bullet into the air. A wince is felt throughout the entire crowd.

ORLANDO
Now, now. Let's not act like children, shall we? We can come to an agreement.

The man removes the horned mask.

It's DAVID.

ANITA
(gasps)
Jesus. David?

HEIJA
Holy mother of God.

David smiles ironically at her.

DAVID
Honey, I wouldn't do that if I were you.

Anita opens her mouth but cannot talk. Her knees buckle. She has to grab the edge of the altar to steady herself. The gun shakes in her hand.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Whoa, whoa, you'd best put the gun down. You mistake your advantage here. Threatening me in front of all these witnesses, one of them a superior court judge.

Heija raises her "bat" higher, ready to swing.

ANITA

Why would you do this? These horrible people...?

DAVID

They showed me power and freedom.
Showered me with grace and money. It pays
for her school, your school. Your car.
Our house. Your jewelry.

David points to her necklace.

DAVID (CONT'D)

And we do just as much good in the
community.

ORLANDO

We've got connections. You can go to jail
tomorrow... and give David full custody
of Lisa. Or we can talk and find a
compromise.

David pulls his shoulder back and lifts his chin.

DAVID

Would you really want Lisa to grow up
without a mother?

ANITA

It's not like she has a father.

Heija creeps toward Orlando. Suddenly, a TEENAGER
charges, slams her to the ground, fighting wildly.

Heija shrieks as he punches her in the face, his fist
heavy with silver rings.

Anita spins, distracted - and David dives for Anita's
gun, wrestles her for it. Orlando moves to intervene.

BLAM!! The gun discharges, plugging Orlando in the chest.

David rips the gun from Anita.

Looks over at Orlando, who reaches toward him with
crimson-stained hands.

Jill runs to embrace Orlando as he sinks to his knees.

JILL

No. No!

She's sobbing hysterically and kissing him ardently, but
he's too wounded to react to either.

DAVID

Look what you've done!

David points the gun at Anita, trembling as -

Orlando breathes his last breath.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You killed him, bitch!

David levels the gun at Anita, the nervous tic in his eye spasming rapidly. His finger caresses the trigger, but he does not squeeze it.

Jill, still sobbing, brokenly hisses to David:

JILL

Be a good boy now.

She makes the same hand signal that David and Lisa shared.

David snaps out of it, slams Anita in the head with the pistol, knocking her to the ground. He points the gun at Anita's head when -

The sound of the Ice Cream Jingle from the programming session fills the air.

The children exchange glances and runoff in the direction of the sound.

Lisa slowly rolls herself off the altar, prepares to run.

DAVID

(to Lisa)

Stay, Lisa! Wait for me.

Lisa freezes. The teenager hovering over Heija follows the girls who run. David grabs Lisa by the wrist.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(to Lisa)

Now come.

David keeps his gun on Anita - who is still on her knees - as he and Lisa back away, then into the woods.

Anita attempts to stand, wobbles, dizzy.

ANITA

Shit.

Heija, a nasty cut to her forehead, stumbles over to Anita, then wobbles and sits back down on the ground.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

HEIJA

I'll be fine. Just need a minute. Follow them.

Anita nods and takes off - past Orlando's corpse, determined.

HEIJA (CONT'D)

And get the bastard.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

David, sure-footed in the moonlight, leads Lisa. They follow the jingling tune.

INT. OVAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mouse watches Lisa's progress toward the sound, fear in her eyes. Mad March turns to Hatter, furious.

MAD MARCH

Mom almost had him. If we go with him, it's just going to be more and more of the same thing - stupid ass-hat.

(with a new resolve)

It's now or never.

MOUSE

Mad March, you can't -

HATTER

You'll just make him angry. You'll make them all mad. Even madder than you get. They'll stick us in that blue room.

MAD MARCH

Oh yeah? Try me. Just try me.

Mouse prepares to leave.

MOUSE

I'm going to go tell Daddy on you! He's going to find out anyway.

MAD MARCH

You little snitch.

Mad March flies at Mouse and pushes her down.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Lisa stumbles, slowing David as he trots toward the jingling tune. He jerks on her arm, slowing to a walk.

DAVID

And what do you do when you hear that sound?

LISA

Go to it right away.

DAVID

Bertrand will get us all out of here. We'll be home free. We'll do this somewhere else - no need to call off the nuptials.

INT. OVAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hatter pulls Mad March away from Mouse.

HATTER

Stop it. Stop it!

MAD MARCH

Sorry, don't know what came over me.

Hatter releases Mad March (who was faking it) and suddenly jumps into the armor, burning with fury.

HATTER

Nooooo.

Mad March zooms through the skylight.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

David presses on toward the sound of the ice cream truck, which is now much louder.

Suddenly, Lisa pulls back, digs in her heels, grunts. David's head whips around in shock.

Lisa, a badger now, claws at David's arm. Grunts become shrieks and screams. She bites down into David's wrist.

David jerks his arm, whirls like he's shaking off a rabid beast.

INT. THE OVAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Beside herself, Mouse claws at her ears compulsively.
Alice paces dreamily, in a fugue-like state.

ALICE

The time has come.

MOUSE

We're done for. Weally this time. We're
weally weally-

Mouse goes silent, following Alice's gaze, as she looks
upwards to see a burst of red flash through the sky.

A red-clad figure intercepts Mad March in mid-flight and
strikes him back with her gleaming red wand.

MOUSE (CONT'D)

Who's that?

Armored Mad March's coattails flap wildly as he wrestles
the red figure in mid-air before she overcomes him with
superior strength and equal fury.

She drags Mad March back down into the oval room, flames
coming from her heels as the amazed group watches.

It's RED.

MAD MARCH

Let go of me.

With a hearty swing of her wand, she draws the skylight
above them resoundingly closed, just as Mad March falls
through it into a heap on the floor.

She tips her crown; gives her red cape a regal swish.

HATTER

Who the hell are you?

RED

I'm Red. The Queen of all hearts.

Mad March flies at her, furious.

MAD MARCH

Let me out. I'll get them, I swear.

Red raises her wand, and before it even touches him, he
is knocked back across the room.

HATTER

Yes, calm down. You can't just "get" the group. You can't go against what they say, and you can't ever escape from this. It's impossible.

RED

It's not impossible.

HATTER

How did you even get here? I know everyone the group made, and you are not on the list.

Red extends a hand, Alice takes it and curtseys.

RED

I came from Lisa. They don't know about me. It's not impossible to escape. But Mad March can't do it alone. It's going to take the six of us.

The alter personalities exchange glances with the first glimmer of hope.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

David and Lisa come to a dirt road, where the ice cream truck is parked. A MAN waves to David and switches off the jingle.

DAVID

We'll be outta here in no time.

David turns to see that Lisa has stopped, stock still.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It's time to go.

LISA/MAD MARCH'S VOICE

No. Not with you, Ass-hat.

Lisa delivers a hard KICK to David's groin. He doubles over, gasping. Lisa stares at her father in shock and confusion. She can't believe what she just did.

LISA/HATTER'S VOICE

Alice, Run. You're the fastest. Run. *Run.*

Lisa takes off running as fast as she can. David curses and hobbles after her.

In the woods, Lisa runs through trees, stumbling. In hot pursuit, her father's voice echoes behind her.

DAVID (O.S.)
You're a bad girl, Lisa. You better come
back here, right now!

Lisa falls hard, tries not to cry out as she kneels.

DAVID (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You can be a part of the group, but it
only works if you do as you're told.

Still on her knees, Lisa clutches her wrist in pain. David appears on the dark path but can't see her. He's walking slowly now, quietly.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You're breaking the rules. That's the
worst thing to do.

He's close by her now but can't make her out - the moonlight glints off of the gun in his hand.

DAVID (CONT'D)
When children can't be relied on to do as
they're told, bad things happen to them.

David draws a flashlight from his back pocket, sweeps the forest with its beam. Lisa ducks just as the beam passes overhead.

DAVID (CONT'D)
And you know we'll always find you.
Always. You know that's true.

David passes by her as he continues down the path. Lisa crawls to her feet and limps away quietly.

DAVID (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Better come out now, and I will see what
I can do for you.

Lisa turns at the sound of his voice, wide-eyed.

LISA/HATTER'S VOICE
Mouse, you know how to hide.

LISA/MOUSE'S VOICE
Ssh. Be weally quiet.

Lisa creeps toward a large tree.

Behind the tree, she plasters herself like a vine.

LISA/RED'S VOICE

All of you, remember. Believe. We can get away.

LISA/HATTER'S VOICE

Alice, can you dream something soothing?

LISA/ALICE'S VOICE

Just close your eyes. Imagine yourself under the bridge in the shade.

Lisa crouches in against the tree, eyes shut.

She then gasps, and the flashlight reveals the barrel of the gun pressed against her head.

DAVID

You know you'll always belong to us.

Lisa's lip trembles in fear.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Till death do us part, Sweetie.

David's finger begins squeezing the trigger and...

BANG. Anita launches herself from out of nowhere, sending the shot wild as she throws David to the ground. They grapple. David rolls on top of her.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Praise the Lord; I get to get rid of both of you at once. Are you watching, Lisa?

David looks back at Lisa while Anita's hand finds a rock.

David levels the gun at her face. Pulls the trigger -

On an empty cylinder.

Anita smashes the rock against David's face.

It sends him reeling. In her fury, she rolls back onto David, striking him three hard blows in succession to punctuate her words:

ANITA

Vicious - Sick - Pervert!

DETECTIVE HERNANDEZ

(O.C.)

Freeze!

Anita looks up to see the Detectives, guns leveled.

DET. HARRIS

On your knees. Hands behind your heads.

Anita and David stagger to their knees. David squares up; jerks his chin up.

DAVID

Officers, thank God. She's lost her mind.
She kidnapped Lisa; she was scared I'd
get custody.

The Detectives exchange stony glances.

David extends a bloody hand toward them.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Thank you. I thought she'd kill me.

DET. HERNANDEZ

David Gray, hands behind your head. Are
you okay, Anita?

SAM (O.C.)

I'll take it from here.

Sam appears from the woods, badge out, his gun trained on Anita.

SAM (CONT'D)

It's all true; we've been watching her
for a while now.

DAVID

Sam. Boy, am I glad to see you.

(to Lisa)

You're safe now, Sweetie. Run to Uncle
Sam; He'll take care of you.

Lisa does not move.

SAM

(to David)

I believe that belongs to me.

Sam takes the gun from David.

DET. HERNANDEZ

I don't think so.

Harris levels his gun at Sam, who remains nonchalant.

SAM

(to Det. Hernandez, calm)

Fuck you.

DET. HERNANDEZ

Falsification of police records to
implicate Mark Johnson as a pedophile,
digital footprint traces back to you.

SAM

You're out of your mind. You wanna accuse
me; you'll lose your badge.

Sam cocks his gun, points it at Hernandez.

SAM (CONT'D)

(to Harris)

Cuff her!

Harris gives Hernandez an almost imperceptible nod.

DET. HARRIS

See now; I just put the shackles on
David, I ain't carryin' no spares -

Sam frowns at Harris. BAM! Hernandez shoots, Sam slumps
against a tree. Blood pours from his chest.

SAM

I'm a good boy.

Harris rushes to Sam's side. He tries to breathe, coughs
blood, and has no breath left. He takes one last breath
that rattles through his damaged lungs. The spite fades
from his dead eyes.

Hernandez kicks the back of David's legs, knocking him on
his knees, cuffs him and reads him his rights.

DET. HERNANDEZ

...If you cannot afford an attorney, one
will be provided for you. Do you
understand the rights I have just read to
you?

DAVID

Fuck you.

Harris grabs David by the front of his shirt - gets up in
his face.

DET. HARRIS

Seem to me like you the one that's
fucked.

David starts to speak but thinks better of it.

DET. HARRIS (CONT'D)

It ain't gonna go easy on you. In fact,
you gon' get molly whopped real good...
those boys in the tanks hate child pervs.

David blanches. He looks one last time at Anita, a sad, incredulous gaze on her face. She snaps out of it, rushes to embrace Lisa.

ANITA

I'm so sorry, honey. Are you hurt?

Lisa says nothing. Anita holds her tight, relieved.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Hernandez jimmies open the ice cream truck's rear door to find the terrified children sitting inside.

DET. HERNANDEZ

Hey guys. It's all gonna be okay.

Several police vehicles and two ambulances are parked nearby, lights flashing. Anita watches as Cult Members are led into police vans.

A PARAMEDIC leads a scratched and swollen Stephanie into a waiting ambulance. Another PARAMEDIC checks Heija, and Anita joins him.

ANITA

I don't know how to thank you.

HEIJA

Pancakes. Triple stack. Soon.

Anita tries to smile.

Hernandez kneels next to Lisa and looks at her with tender eyes.

DET. HERNANDEZ

You should go home and rest now. But
would you be able to help us later, by
talking about what happened?

ANITA

I'm not sure the part which is out knows.
She has a condition. A coping mechanism,
really...

Lisa breaks her trance, looks at her mother, surprised.

ANITA (CONT'D)

But tomorrow, we'll call and get a special therapist to help everybody inside. You can coordinate with her.

INT. ANITA'S CAR - NIGHT

Anita and Lisa buckle in, and Anita squeezes Lisa's hand.

ANITA

I'll do everything I can to keep you safe from now on.

INT. PLAY THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

The office is filled with stuffed animals, a sandbox with miniature toys, art supplies, a dollhouse, and more.

Anita walks Lisa, who's wearing butterfly wings, into the room. A therapist, JENNIFER, 55, welcomes them with eyes that crinkle wisely.

JENNIFER

Hi Lisa. Nice wings.

LISA

Alice picked them out.

JENNIFER

Would Alice like to come out and tell me about them?

Lisa enthusiastically nods yes.

INT. OVAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Alice, Red, Hatter, Mad March, and Mouse all stop and watch the screens. They all turn to each other.

ALICE

Am I really allowed to come with my own name?

RED

Yes, we don't have to listen to the group anymore.

ALICE

Is that true, Hatter?

MOUSE

It's not weally over, is it?

HATTER

This can never be completely over.

MOUSE

Not for Lisa.

They look sadly at each other.

HATTER

But you can go out and play now.

Alice smiles.

INT. PLAY THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Lisa nods.

LISA (ALICE'S VOICE)

Can I show you pictures of my cat first?
His name's Cheshire, and his favorite
thing is to chase a laser.

Anita steps out. Lisa pulls out her phone and sits down
to show Jennifer the pictures.

Anita exits, looking back at them before closing the door
behind her.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK:

Ritual abuse has been disclosed by survivors from:

Every state in the USA.

Every province in Canada.

Every country in the UK.

And over thirty other countries worldwide.

If you or someone you know has been affected, contact
<https://survivorship.org> or your local rape crisis
center.

THE END