

Non-Compliant

written by

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EXT. AIRPORT CURB / SUV - DAY

TARIK HAYES (late 30s), lean, wiry with watchful dark eyes, looks like he hasn't slept right in years.

He holds his phone in one hand, a roller bag in the other, with a laptop bag slung over his shoulder.

He reads something on his phone. Glances up at the Black SUV that pulls up in front of him.

It's unmarked. No company logo, no ride-share decal. The window rolls down. The DRIVER leans over.

DRIVER
Mr. Hayes?

TARIK
Yeah.

The Driver puts the SUV in park. Gets out.

DRIVER
You weren't supposed to bring luggage.

TARIK
I didn't think they were really serious about that.

DRIVER
They were.

The Driver opens the rear passenger door for Tarik and takes the roller bag. Tries to take the laptop bag too, but Tarik pulls away and brings it into the SUV with him.

The Driver puts the luggage into the trunk, gets in, and drives off.

INT. SUV - DAY

Tarik digs through his laptop bag. Finds a bottle of pills. Shakes a couple out into his hand and is about to take them. The Driver looks at him in the rearview mirror.

DRIVER
No outside meds. I have orders. If you don't cooperate, I turn around.

TARIK
You really gonna turn around over two pills?

DRIVER
I could lose my job.

TARIK
We're both going to have a
miserable drive if I don't.

The Driver reaches into the armrest storage and pulls out a bottle. "RELAX" on the label. Hands it to Tarik.

DRIVER
Dr. Corvin said you can have two of
these.

TARIK
What's it for? Anxiety? Insomnia?
Motion sickness?

DRIVER
It's what I was told to give you.

Tarik reads the label. A "Supplement Facts" box. "Proprietary Blend." A list of herbs, no amounts. Lot number, expiration.

TARIK
Fine. But if I black out, you're
the one explaining it.

He puts just one of his own pills back in the bottle. Shakes out one of their RELAX pills onto his palm. Takes them both with a swig of water.

LATER

The SUV climbs up mountain roads. Tarik looks somewhat distressed. He taps his watch. Reads the heart rate. Mid-50s.

He checks the stocks on his phone. VTCH in the red, -\$8.74. Scrolls down to a link in the app. Clicks.

The headline reads "VectoryTech Down 9% Amid CEO Health Concerns" with a picture of Tarik.

He exits out. Tries to open his email. Won't load. No bars. Toggles airplane mode. Checks for wifi. None. He puts his phone away.

He looks out the window. Outside, the landscape drops away thousands of feet around hairpin turns.

He checks his heart rate again. 52. Breathes out a long exhale, closes his eyes, and leans back.

EXT. SUV - DAY

The SUV winds its way up to a heavily wooded area with snow-capped mountains looming high above.

EXT. STILL PINES RETREAT DRIVEWAY - DAY

The SUV passes through a red Shinto gate (torii). Past parked cars, scattered cabins. Up to the lodge.

INT. STILL PINES RETREAT LODGE - LOBBY - DAY

Everything's wood, stone, natural fibers and ceramics. Fire in the fireplace. Retreat guests speak quietly, sipping tea.

Half the guests look like they haven't slept in a long time either. One woman's hand shakes when she lifts her cup. The other half look surprisingly content.

The Driver holds the door open for Tarik as he enters with his laptop bag and roller bag.

LILY, the guest intake coordinator, meets him with a smile.

LILY

Mr. Hayes. Welcome to Still Pines Retreat.

(smile fades)

You weren't supposed to bring luggage. Or work.

TARIK

Yeah.

She motions him toward a small office, trying to get her smile back.

LILY

My name is Lily. I'll get you registered.

INT. INTAKE OFFICE - DAY

Tarik sits in a chair, signing forms on a clipboard.

LILY

Can I get you some tea, Mr. Hayes?

TARIK

No thanks. Didn't I fill these out already?

LILY
This is specifically for Still
Pines Retreat. These govern your
stay here.

TARIK
Everybody says that right before
you sue them.

He finishes signing and hands her the clipboard. She looks it
over, sets it down, and approaches him.

LILY
We have a locked room where we keep
luggage, and safes for electronic
devices. You'll find everything you
need in your room. And whatever you
feel you're missing, we'd be happy
to provide.

Tarik makes no attempt to hand anything over.

TARIK
Your website says there are hours
where I can use the internet.

LILY
Yes, once your three-day detox is
done. You can use them during wifi
window, one-thirty to four.

TARIK
Please don't say "detox" like it's
a medical term.

LILY
It was in the forms you signed
before you came up here. If you're
unwilling to comply, we'll have to
drive you back down.

He relents. Powers off his phone and puts it on the desk,
along with his laptop bag.

LILY (CONT'D)
And your watch.

TARIK
It's a medical device. My
cardiologist told me to wear it.

LILY
Excuse me.

She leaves the office.

Tarik takes several bottles out of his laptop bag, opens them, puts pills in his pocket, and puts the bottles back.

Lily returns with the director, SERA CORVIN. She's wearing the same soft, neutral clothes as the guests and her features barely register. All that matters is her voice: gentle and hypnotic. You'd follow it straight off a cliff.

Lily closes the door, leaving Sera and Tarik alone.

SERA

Tarik. May I call you Tarik?

TARIK

Yeah.

She takes a seat next to him, keeping her calm posture.

SERA

I'm Sera Corvin, the director of Still Pines Retreat. You said your watch is a medical device?

TARIK

Yeah. It keeps track of my sleep, heart rate, all of it.

SERA

I read your file. You've been tracking this for years. Has any of it helped your doctors?

TARIK

Not yet. But it's objective data. Proves I'm not imagining it.

SERA

I know you're not imagining it, Tarik. Your symptoms are unusual, but you're not alone.

She puts a comforting hand on his arm. He glances at it.

SERA (CONT'D)

What I'm saying is, you already have the data. Your doctors have seen it. I've seen it. You don't need more numbers. You need to wake up feeling rested.

TARIK

And to stop passing out.

SERA

Which your electronics won't help you with.

TARIK

I can keep an eye on my heart rate. Sit down at least.

SERA

All right, you can keep your watch for now. If it keeps you from doing the work here, we'll revisit it.

TARIK

What about my medicine?

SERA

It's important we get a baseline for you. If you keep sedating your system, we can't see what we're actually treating.

TARIK

I know what my baseline is. I can't sleep. Start panicking. And then I black out.

SERA

I've reviewed what you're taking. You've been on these anti-anxiety meds for years. And you said the sleeping pills aren't working anymore. So you're looking for something you haven't tried yet, correct?

TARIK

Yeah.

SERA

We have our own supplements you'll find in your room. If that's not enough, we'll check back in.

TARIK

What's in them?

SERA

We use a proprietary blend, but nothing that conflicts with your medical history. If you have specific concerns, we can review it together.

TARIK
That's not how informed consent works.

SERA
If I listed off the names of chemicals and herbs, would you be reassured or keep fighting me?

TARIK
Probably both.

SERA
I'll have Lily come back in and see to your things. Then she'll show you to your room.

She gets to her feet. So does he.

SERA (CONT'D)
You'll sleep better tonight, Tarik.

TARIK
We'll see.

EXT. PATH TO CABINS - DUSK

Lily walks Tarik up to his assigned cabin.

LILY
All your groups and somatic sessions will be back at the lodge. Orientation's at five in the Halcyon room, dinner after. Please wear the clothes we've provided for the rest of your stay. The hot springs are over there. Clothing is optional.

TARIK
Can I get a map?

LILY
Like a... paper map?

TARIK
Yeah. I like to get my bearings.

LILY
We don't have one. You don't really need it. It's just the lodge, your cabin, and the hot springs.

TARIK

Right. Why make it easier to get
your bearings.

INT. CABIN - DUSK

Tarik checks out his rustic living situation. A twin bed, serene nature art on the walls. No TV or phone. A new journal, pen, and printout of his schedule on the desk. He picks it up.

It lists things like meals, yoga, group sessions about feelings, and individual somatic sessions.

He checks the closet. A coat, bathrobe, neutral-colored sweats, plain tees, fleece, and a pair of red snow boots.

In the bathroom, on a wooden shelf: small bottles of pills with pastel labels: RELAX, SLEEP, FOCUS, ENERGIZE.

He tears a page from the journal, then tears it in half. Puts half the pills from his pocket in one, half in another, folds them up. Tucks one into the back of the desk drawer.

He looks around. Hides another in a snow boot.

INT. HALCYON ROOM - DUSK

Tarik enters, now in their clothes. A dozen people sit in a circle on cushions on the floor. Shoes left near the door. He reluctantly takes off his shoes and joins the circle.

OLLIE, an aging hippie, begins the group.

OLLIE

Hi folks, I'm Ollie. Before we start, let's do a quick body check-in. Everyone close your eyes. Put one hand over your heart, one hand on your belly. Now breathe in with me, deeper into your belly. Inhale, two, three, four. Now exhale, two, three, four, five, six.

Tarik follows along, watching everyone else through half-closed eyes.

OLLIE (CONT'D)

Loosen your jaw. Let your shoulders drop. Now you can open your eyes. I want everyone to look at that sign by the door.

They do. A laminated sign shows green, yellow, and red circles with text next to each.

OLLIE (CONT'D)

We want to make sure everyone is comfortable here at Still Pines. If there's something you don't wanna do, you can point to red, or say "Red." That means stop. Yellow means slow down. Green means it's okay to proceed. Everyone clear?

The room nods.

OLLIE (CONT'D)

We're not here to fix you. We're just trying to give your body some breathing room so it can heal itself. All right, let's get started on introductions. No need to do last names or occupations, don't want to stress anyone out. Just your first name, where you're coming from, and if your nervous system tonight was a gesture, what would it be?

ORIENTATION PARTICIPANTS

John, New York.
Melissa, Los Angeles.
Kelly, Chicago.
Eric, LA.
Amy, Dallas.
Cid, Riverside.

The people in the circle do gestures like clenched fists, shrugging, clutching chests, or arms wrapped around themselves.

TARIK

Tarik. Bay Area. Red.

He doesn't make a gesture. A couple people chuckle, thinking he's joking.

OLLIE

All right, all right. No one has to do the gestures if they don't want.

The circle keeps introducing themselves, everyone else participating fully.

OLLIE (CONT'D)

For the rest of the night, see if you can let yourself be a guest in your body, not the boss. Notice what it does without trying to fix it.

Tarik glances at his watch.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tarik gets some food from the buffet-style cafeteria. All veggies and health food.

He sits at an empty table as far from everyone else as he can get.

AARON (40s) takes a seat across from him.

AARON

Hey. Aaron. Tarik Hayes, right?

Tarik meets his eyes briefly and goes back to his food.

TARIK

Yeah.

AARON

I don't want to stress you out, we're all here to relax, right? Sorry about your stock price though. That must suck. Shit, I lost like 5k myself already, I can't imagine how much you're down. But my cousin works at VectoryTech, and I had this idea I wanted to run by you. Everyone makes phones, tablets, watches, right? But what about shoes? You're always wearing-

Sera puts a gentle hand on Aaron's shoulder.

SERA

Aaron, no business talk. I need to speak to Tarik for a moment.

AARON

Sure, doc. No problem.

Aaron takes his tray and moves to another table. Sera takes his place. But she just eats.

TARIK
You wanted to talk?

SERA
No. I figured you could use a
break.

TARIK
You don't think I should put
a thousand dollars' worth of tech
into footwear?

She smiles. He almost matches it.

SERA
Settling in okay?

TARIK
It's a little...

SERA
Woo-woo? Some of our guests like
that. Some don't. Everyone
improves, regardless.

TARIK
Everyone?

SERA
Some don't realize it until after
they get back home, but yes. Even
you, I'm sure. It's what happens
when you leave here that I'm
worried about.

TARIK
Why? What happens when I leave?

SERA
You go back to the life and job
that's slowly killing you.

TARIK
My job's not the problem. It's my
body.

SERA
We'll see who's right after two
weeks.

They eat in silence for a while.

SERA (CONT'D)

Will you be at the hot springs
later? I find it really helps with
sleep to go right before bedtime.

TARIK

I didn't bring a suit.

SERA

It's clothing optional. Try it if
you can.

He shrugs.

She gives him a warm smile, then goes back to eating.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Tarik puts a hand in the desk drawer. Pulls the drawer out
further. It's empty. Checks the boot. Empty too.

TARIK

Fuck.

He sits down on the bed. Reaches for his pocket - no phone.
Looks around the empty room.

He shakes his head and stands back up.

EXT. HOT SPRINGS - NIGHT

Steam rises off terraced pools fed by natural hot springs. A
few guests sit in the pools, some talking quietly, some
alone. Almost all of them are naked.

Tarik stands in his Still Pines robe and sandals,
uncomfortable.

He hangs his robe and quickly gets into a pool, away from the
others. Tries to relax.

Sera enters with a towel over her arm and nothing on. She
hangs her towel next to his robe, then slides into the pool
beside him.

He keeps his eyes on the water in front of him.

TARIK

Did you go through my room?

SERA

Not me, personally. But "Staff may enter cabins for safety checks" was in the forms you signed. We have to do that when someone brings that many benzos into a place like this.

He scoffs.

TARIK

I take them exactly as prescribed.

SERA

Your medicine is locked up with the rest of your luggage. You can have them back when you leave.

TARIK

So I just... do whatever you say until you decide I can have my life back.

SERA

You say "Red," we end your program. Lily unlocks the cabinet, gives you your pills, your phone, your laptop. Driver's here in an hour. You could be back down the mountain tonight.

TARIK

That's not what it's supposed to mean.

SERA

For you it means both. It also means going back to passing out on camera. Are you ready for that?

TARIK

(quietly)

No. I can't go through that again.

SERA

But you don't really think we can help. You think you'll stay here two weeks, sleep terribly, eat rabbit food, do some "gestures," and go back home exactly the same.

TARIK

I've had a lot of experience with things not working out.

He meets her eyes. Tries not to let his eyes drop lower.

TARIK (CONT'D)

What's with the torii out front?
This isn't a Shinto temple.

SERA

Places like this aren't built with
you in mind. It's designed to feel
like what most of our guests
expect. But you... You're not most
of our guests.

Their thighs barely touch underwater. She doesn't pull away.
Neither does he.

SERA (CONT'D)

Give it a few days. You'll notice a
difference.

She watches his shoulders.

SERA (CONT'D)

Breathe with me for a bit.

She exaggerates her inhales and exhales. They breathe
together for a few cycles. His shoulders drop a fraction.

SERA (CONT'D)

I'll make sure you sleep here.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Tarik holds up the SLEEP bottle. He squints at the fine
print: "Take two capsules at bedtime."

He takes one of the SLEEP pills. Then one of the RELAX.

CUT TO:

He lies in bed awake. Checks his watch. 1:17am. 54 bpm.

He takes one more of the SLEEP pills. Goes back to bed.

Listens to the sound of the wind in the trees outside. Closes
his eyes.

INT. CABIN - DAY

The faint blue of early morning at the curtains. Tarik blinks
awake. Checks his watch. 6:53am.

He frowns at the time, trying to reconstruct the night. Gives up.

He sits up slowly, then stands, hands ready to catch himself. He stays upright.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Tarik moves down the line, putting food on his plate. He reaches the beverage station.

A STAFF MEMBER offers him a glass of red juice.

STAFF

Something the kitchen came up with.
Beet, pomegranate, and some nervine
herbs. Good for your nervous
system.

He lets her pour a little. Takes a sip. Grimaces.

Tarik sets the glass down and gets a coffee instead.

He finds a spot at one of the long communal tables. Two other guests sit down next to him.

GUEST 1

(to table)

I can't believe how quiet it is
here. I'll never be able to sleep
at home again.

GUEST 2

I don't know what it is about this
place, but I wake up every day
feeling like I just got a massage.
But that juice was disgusting.

Tarik checks his watch under the table: 70s bpm.

INT. HALCYON ROOM - DAY

More cushions laid out to fit everyone, about 50 people. Last night's newcomers mixed in with a wider group.

Tarik sits on a cushion, still skeptical.

Ollie sits in the circle next to WILLOW (30s). She looks more like a clinic therapist than a guru.

OLLIE

All right, friends, welcome back. Quick announcements. Big storm coming up next week, so if you don't have snow boots in your cabin, talk to Lily in the intake office. For those that just got here yesterday, you're all gonna have one-on-one somatic sessions. Your only job is to show up and tell the truth about what your body's doing. Now Willow's going to walk us through how our nervous system rewiring works.

Willow points toward the door where the laminated GREEN/YELLOW/RED sign hangs.

WILLOW

Just a reminder for your sessions. Green means keep going. Yellow, slow down. Red means stop, hands off, session over. Now let's talk about fight, flight, and freeze. "Fight" doesn't have to mean literally punching walls. It can be sudden rage, heat, racing thoughts, racing pulse.

A few guests nod, eyes down.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Who'd like to start us off today by describing a time your body went into "fight" mode? What event set it off?

A few people raise their hands. Tarik checks his watch, then looks out the window at trees.

Willow points to GUEST 3.

GUEST 3

It happens all the time at work. People go through the drive-thru, their order's wrong, and they come into the lobby and yell at me! I didn't even give them their order! But they get angry, and all the sudden my heart is racing. Sometimes I just want to hop over the counter and slap them.

Tarik watches Guest 3, a little thrown.

WILLOW

Thank you. Now who'd like to share a story about when you felt "flight" or "freeze?" Flight can mean the same racing thoughts or heart rate, but you try to escape the problem. And freeze can mean literally freezing up, but also shutting down, lying down, sometimes even passing out. Anyone?

Willow briefly looks at Tarik. He looks away. She redirects her attention to the other guests.

INT. LODGE HALLWAY - DAY

A quiet hallway. A door marked SOMATIC ROOM A. Next to it, the same laminated red/yellow/green sign.

Tarik stands nearby as another guest exits and passes him. Lily appears with a tablet.

LILY

Mr. Hayes? Sera's ready for you.

She opens the door for him.

INT. SOMATIC ROOM - AFTERNOON

The laminated color sign is next to the door inside the room as well.

It looks more like a massage room than a doctor's office. A padded table with a sheet and blanket. The equipment is minimal, a tablet on a small stand.

Sera waits in cozy slippers.

SERA

Come on in, Tarik.

He steps inside. Lily closes the door behind him. He looks around. No diplomas on the wall.

SERA (CONT'D)

You missed yoga this morning. Did you sleep in?

TARIK

No. I'm not really into yoga.

SERA

You should give it a try. You came here for a reason. How did you sleep?

TARIK

I don't know. You've still got my phone.

She waits.

TARIK (CONT'D)

It's got the graphs and breakdowns. Without that, I'm guessing. Maybe a few hours.

SERA

More than at home?

TARIK

Yeah. Probably.

SERA

Okay. How do you feel right now?

TARIK

I don't know.

SERA

That's where we'll start. Not knowing. Before we get started, remember the colors. Yellow I slow down. Red, I stop.

She picks up a small flat sensor from the shelf.

SERA (CONT'D)

Shirt up. I'm going to place this here.

She taps her own ribs. He lifts his shirt.

She steps in, closer than he expects. She presses the sensor along his rib cage, palm flattening to smooth the tape. Her hand lingers on his chest a moment longer.

She taps a few times on the tablet. A simple ECG trace appears on the screen along with his heart rate: 70 bpm.

She props the tablet where he can see it.

SERA (CONT'D)
This is a way for us to see the
same thing together. Cold, hard
data, right?

She pats the padded table. Her voice drops into a more
hypnotic cadence.

SERA (CONT'D)
Lie on your back. Hands wherever
they feel safest.

He lies down, stiff, eyes on the ceiling.

She comes to his side and pulls his shirt up, resting her
hand flat on his chest, her palm over his heart.

SERA (CONT'D)
Inhale into my hand.

His ribs push up against her palm. She exhales, longer.

SERA (CONT'D)
Exhale a little longer than you
want to.

He copies her pace. His breath stutters on the way out,
almost a shiver.

On the tablet, the line jumps, a pause between beats, then
begins to smooth.

She moves her hand lower, to his abdomen.

SERA (CONT'D)
Keep breathing with me. Deep. Into
my hand.

She inhales, he matches it. She exhales longer, he matches.

He glances at the screen, then at her hand on his body, then
away. A steady 68 bpm.

SERA (CONT'D)
Good. Looking really steady now.
Keep your breathing the same.

TARIK
I can breathe at home.

SERA
Most people's heart rate rises when
they get overwhelmed. But not you.
(MORE)

SERA (CONT'D)

Sometimes yours spikes and then drops, sometimes it slowly sinks. So we're going to teach your body to regulate. Do you remember what you were talking about when you passed out on stage?

TARIK

I've seen the clip. I don't need the director's commentary.

He closes his eyes. The tablet shows his heart rate dip a little. 64. 61.

SERA

The lights were on you. Probably pretty hot. I bet you were sweating already. Everyone in the auditorium was watching you. It was a live keynote, right? So probably millions at home, too. Keep your eyes on the tablet.

He looks. 58. 55. 54.

SERA (CONT'D)

Then you said, "Our new entrance into Southeast Asia is about to..." About to what, Tarik? What were you going to say?

Bpm 50. 47. He shuts his eyes again, bracing for the drop.

Keeping her hand on his abdomen and her voice calm, she leans down, her breath against his ear.

SERA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

You're not going to pass out. Tense the muscles in your legs. Feel my hand on your skin. Don't think about anything else. Just my hand. Breathe deep into my hand.

She watches the tablet. His heart rate starts to rise.

SERA (CONT'D)

Just my breath. Deep breath in. And out.

She breathes in deep with him, mouth still at his ear.

SERA (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Open your eyes. Look at the tablet.
Objective data.

He does. The tablet shows his heart rate rising and stabilizing to a normal rhythm, 66 bpm.

SERA (CONT'D)
That's your day one.

She lifts her hand from his abdomen.

SERA (CONT'D)
You did really well. Next time
we'll see if we can bring you back
quicker when it drops.

She peels the sensor from his ribs. The line on the tablet flattens.

SERA (CONT'D)
Since you were willing to stay with
it, you can have the rest of the
afternoon off. Walk. Make yourself
some tea. Visit the hot springs.
But don't ask about your stock
price for forty-eight hours.
Doctor's orders.

TARIK
Can't promise that.

A hint of a smile from her. She saves the session and powers off the tablet.

SERA
We'll see what your body does
overnight.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Tarik studies the bottle of pills in the bathroom. They look slightly off from where he left them. He reaches for RELAX, then SLEEP. Shakes two of each into his palm.

He stares at the bottles, suspicious. Then swallows them with water anyway.

Tarik lies back in bed, staring at the ceiling. Checks his watch. 10:12pm. Heart rate: 58 bpm.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Tarik jolts awake. Blinks hard. Checks his watch. 7:15am. Checks it again.

He sits up fast, bracing for the usual spin. Nothing.

He stands. Hands hover near the nightstand, ready to catch himself. He's steady on his feet. Looks unsettled.

INT. MOVEMENT ROOM - DAY

Mats on the floor. Floor-to-ceiling windows look out over the trees.

A MOVEMENT TEACHER leads a group through slow stretches.

MOVEMENT TEACHER

Arms up. Reach like there's a
string from your fingertips to the
ceiling.

Guests reach, inhale. Tarik's at the back of the room, a half-beat behind everyone else.

INT. HALCYON ROOM - AFTERNOON

Another group circle. A FACILITATOR in a bohemian skirt talks as people sit on their cushions.

FACILITATOR

If your anxiety had a shape, what
would it be?

The participants make various gestures. Shaking hands. Fists. Drawing a circle around themselves. Tarik shrugs.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Tarik picks at a salad, away from the rest of the guests. He reads over his schedule: "Having Compassion For Your Inner Child," "Breathing Techniques," "Choosing Happiness."

He flips it over, looking for something more. Blank.

EXT. STILL PINES RETREAT - DAY

Tarik walks along a gravel path, notebook in hand.

He stops by a spot where paths intersect.

He opens the notebook. Rough lines sketch the layout: cabins, lodge, paths, the hot springs off to one side.

He adds a new line for the path.

He looks up at the lodge, then back to his map. Closes the notebook.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Tarik tosses the notebook on the desk. Takes two of the RELAX pills. Paces.

Sits on the bed. Reaches to his pocket. No phone. Gets up again.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

He approaches Aaron, who's sitting and browsing on his phone.

TARIK

Hey. Aaron, right? The shoe thing.
Any chance I could use your phone
for a minute?

AARON

You're still on the three-day
detox, aren't you.

TARIK

I just need to check my email real
quick.

AARON

Nah, man. If they catch me, I'm
screwed. But listen, about the-

Tarik walks away.

EXT. HOT SPRINGS - NIGHT

Tarik sits by himself in a pool. Looks around. Sera's not there.

He sinks lower in the water, staring at the steam.

INT. LODGE LOBBY - NIGHT

Tarik looks on edge. He spots Lily, approaches her.

TARIK

Hey, can I get my electronics back yet? Or my medicine? I don't want to have to leave early, but this-
(gesturing around)
-isn't helping.

LILY

I'm sorry, Mr. Hayes. I've been told you haven't been attending the group sessions. If you're not engaging with the program, Dr. Corvin might keep your restrictions in place longer.

TARIK

If you want me in those groups, I need my actual meds back.

LILY

There's medication in your room. That's what you're allowed right now.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

The room is dark. Only the bathroom light is on.

Tarik stands in the bathroom, staring at the bottles. SLEEP. RELAX. FOCUS. ENERGIZE. Not where he left them. He checks the gaps between bottles.

He picks up RELAX, puts it down. Then SLEEP. Counts the pills in them. Writes the numbers down in the notebook.

He takes two each of SLEEP and RELAX.

He rearranges them carefully: RELAX, SLEEP, FOCUS, ENERGIZE. All labels facing precisely forward. Each bottle a finger-width apart.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Tarik lies on the bed, staring at the ceiling. Checks his watch. 1:07am. Puts his hand over his heart. Tries to count his breathing.

CUT TO:

His eyes are open again. He flips onto his side. Checks his watch. 2:36am. Puts his hand over his heart. Breathes too fast.

Taps his watch: Heart rate 47 bpm.

He sits up. Stands, and immediately sits again. Uses his hand to prop himself. Slowly stands again. Wobbles.

He stares at the pills in the bathroom. Catches his reflection in the mirror. He looks genuinely scared.

INT. LODGE LOBBY - NIGHT

Tarik enters. The lobby is mostly dark. No guests. No staff.

There's a sign near the intake office: IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE AFTER HOURS, PLEASE PRESS THE CALL BUTTON NEXT TO THE BOOKSTORE.

He walks down the hall to the bookstore. Finds the button. Presses it. Then again. Paces. Presses it again.

MARGO (50s), a psychiatric nurse practitioner in a bathrobe and slippers walks down a staircase, rubbing her eyes.

MARGO

Mr. Hayes?

TARIK

I need Dr. Corvin.

MARGO

It's almost three in the morning.

TARIK

I can't sleep. Your pills don't do anything. The classes, the baths, none of it works. I can't do this. Get Dr. Corvin.

He's out of breath trying to get it out.

MARGO

Dr. Corvin has a full day tomorrow. Maybe you could try—

He holds up his watch. Shows her the screen. 48 bpm.

TARIK

Look at that. I am not okay.

Margo looks from the watch to his face. He looks terrified.

MARGO

All right. Wait here.

She disappears back up the stairs.

Tarik sits. Then stands. Paces. Sits again. Holds his head in his hands.

INT. SOMATIC ROOM - NIGHT

Tarik sits on the edge of the table, jittery and exhausted at the same time. The door opens. Sera steps in.

TARIK

I can't sleep. At all. Not like last night. I'm losing it here. I need to have something to do. You can't just take away everything from me and expect me to keep going.

She eyes him, then takes his hand and checks his pulse with two fingers.

SERA

You took the supplements?

TARIK

Yeah. They don't work.

SERA

And the hot springs?

TARIK

Didn't work either. Nothing works. You need to give me my meds back or find a way to fix this. Whatever you did yesterday worked. Everything else here is just new-age bullshit.

She considers him. Then crosses to the shelf, picking up the flat sensor.

SERA

I'll help. *If* you promise to attend the group sessions tomorrow. Shirt up.

TARIK

If this works, I'll go.

He lifts his shirt. She steps in close, presses the sensor to his ribs, smoothing the tape with her palm.

She taps on the tablet. A wavering line appears: Heart rate 47 bpm, dipping.

She props the tablet where they both can see it.

SERA

Lie down.

He lies back on the table, arms stiff at his sides, eyes on the ceiling.

She comes to his side, lifts his shirt higher, and places her hand flat on his bare chest, over his heart.

SERA (CONT'D)

Inhale into my hand.

He inhales.

SERA (CONT'D)

Exhale longer than you want to.

She exhales slowly. He follows, breath shuddering.

SERA (CONT'D)

Again.

They fall into a rhythm. In. Out. Her hand heavy on his chest.

She moves her hand down, resting it on his abdomen, just above the waistband of his pants.

SERA (CONT'D)

Breathe in here.

He glances at the tablet: 52 bpm.

SERA (CONT'D)

Threat and arousal share the same system. Most people ramp up when they feel threatened, then come back down. You switch off.

TARIK

So flip it back on.

She watches his face, then the tablet.

SERA

Okay. I'm going to place my hand lower. If you need me to stop at any point, say "red."

Her hand slides under the waistband of his pants.

Tarik sucks in a breath. The tablet shows a jump to 70 bpm.

SERA (CONT'D)
 Inhale, two, three, four.

He inhales. Grips the edge of the table.

SERA (CONT'D)
 Hold a moment. Then exhale longer.

Her arm moves with a small, steady rhythm under the fabric.

SERA (CONT'D)
 I'm teaching your body a different
 sequence. Instead of shutting down,
 you're going to stay online this
 time.

She keeps her eyes on the tablet, not on his face. Bpm 87.

His head tips back. He stares at the ceiling.

TARIK
 This is—

A sharp inhale cuts him off.

She leans in to his ear, voice barely above a whisper.

SERA
 Breathe. Don't think. Stay with
 your body. Feel it. Don't think
 about it.

Her hand keeps a slow, relentless pace. 94 bpm.

His whole body tightens. An involuntary sound escapes him.

On the tablet, the heart-rate line hits 98 bpm, then begins a
 gradual descent into longer, smoother intervals.

SERA (CONT'D)
 Good. Stay here.

Her hand stays resting on his body.

SERA (CONT'D)
 Feel the table under you. Your body
 feels heavy, but you're fully
 supported. You don't have to do
 anything. You're safe. You don't
 have to keep fighting. You can
 relax. Fully relax into the table.

His chest rises and falls, slower now. His eyelids flutter.
 He looks almost sedated.

His heart rate on the tablet settles, stable in the 60s.

SERA (CONT'D)
Your body can let go now. The
table's got you. I've got you.

His whole body sinks deeper into the table.

She slowly withdraws her hand from under the fabric, careful not to break the rhythm of his breathing.

SERA (CONT'D)
Keep your eyes open for one more
minute. Watch the line. This is
what regulation looks like.

He watches the tablet. The even peaks move across the screen. Still in the 60s.

TARIK
This isn't regulation.

SERA
It works. It kept you online.
That's what matters.

He keeps his eyes on the screen so he doesn't have to look at her.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Tarik lies sprawled across the bed, one arm hanging off the side.

He blinks awake, disoriented, then rolls onto his back.

He stares at his watch. 10:56am. Then up at the ceiling, caught between relief and something closer to terror.

He gets out of bed, steady on his feet.

He checks the shelf. The RELAX and SLEEP bottles have shifted a little.

He opens them all up. Counts them. Jots them in the notebook. The numbers match the previous time.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Tarik sits in an armchair, looking over his schedule. A few guests drift through with mugs, talking quietly.

The door to the Intake Office opens. Lily steps out carrying a stack of folders.

Tarik gets up and intercepts her.

TARIK
Hey. Quick question.

She shifts the folders to one arm.

LILY
Yes?

TARIK
Today's my last "detox day." When do I actually get my phone and laptop back?

LILY
After evening group. *If* you attend.

TARIK
The wifi window is one-thirty to four. There's things I need to deal with.

LILY
Three days is three days, and the window is the window. It's non-negotiable.

He exhales, almost laughs.

TARIK
Of course it is.

She pulls a fresh printout from the top folder and hands it to him.

LILY
Your schedule got updated.

He looks at the page: each evening block now has SOMATIC ROOM A at 8pm.

TARIK
Every night?

LILY
(shrugging)
I guess so.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Tarik sits alone at the end of a long table, pushing lentils around his plate, the schedule next to his tray.

Sera takes a seat across from him.

SERA
You skipped your morning sessions.
You promised.

TARIK
I slept in.

SERA
I suppose we can allow that. You
won't be skipping anymore sessions
today, will you?

TARIK
I'm very motivated to get my laptop
back.

She studies him.

SERA
Why'd you pick here? This doesn't
seem like your thing.

TARIK
Couple of board members swore by
it. They pushed pretty hard even
before...

He shakes his head.

SERA
You trust them?

TARIK
They've been with the company since
the beginning. They backed me when
no one else would.

Sera's gaze flicks away, just for a moment.

SERA
They're your friends? They've got
your best interests in mind?

TARIK
We don't really hang out. But if
I'm better, the company's better,
right?

SERA
 So they're looking out for the
 company, at least.

She goes back to her food.

INT. MOVEMENT ROOM - DAY

Everyone, including Tarik, sits on mats on the floor, legs stretched out in front of them.

A MOVEMENT TEACHER guides a group through slow stretches.

MOVEMENT TEACHER
 Arms up. Now slowly fold down,
 extending toward your toes.

INT. EDUCATION ROOM - DAY

Chairs in a semicircle. A whiteboard at the front with two words written: SIGNAL STORY

Willow stands by the board. Tarik sits near the back, notebook on his lap, filling in his map of the Still Pines.

WILLOW
 We're going to keep this simple.
 First: what does your body do when
 you're stressed? That's the signal.
 Second: what thoughts show up with
 it? That's the story.

She underlines SIGNAL.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Signal might be something like a
 tight chest or shaky hands. *Story*
 might be *I'm weak* or *I hate my job*
 or *I've messed up my life*. Who's
 willing to share?

GUEST 4 raises a hand.

GUEST 4
 My signal's my shoulders. During
 the day they'll creep up, and by
 the time I get home, they'll be so
 sore. Story is, if I was better at
 my job, I wouldn't be like this.

WILLOW
 Thank you. Anyone else?

GUEST 5 chimes in.

GUEST 5

My heart races and I get hot and
sweaty. Story... I'm bad at talking
to people.

More nods. Willow turns toward the back.

WILLOW

Tarik? What's a signal your body
gives you?

TARIK

I check my email. Check my stock
price. See where I'm at.

A small laugh from the room. Willow smiles.

WILLOW

That's a habit. What happens in
your body before you check your
email?

He thinks. Comes up blank.

TARIK

I don't know. I just open my phone.

WILLOW

When your body hits its limit, how
does it tell you?

TARIK

I wake up on the floor.

WILLOW

That means you've been ignoring a
lot of early warnings. Part of what
we're doing here, especially in
your one-on-one work, is helping
you notice the smaller signals.

Tarik looks like he's cornered.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

But back to the story. When you
pass out, what's the first thing
you think when you wake up?

TARIK

Everyone saw. Everyone knows I blew
it. You're all just too polite to
say anything.

People murmur. Chairs creak. Willow forces a smile.

WILLOW

Thank you for sharing, Tarik. Who else wants to share?

INT. GROUP ROOM - DAY

A cozier room. Floor cushions, tissues on a low table, soft lamps. Margo leads the group.

MARGO

If it's comfortable, close your eyes. Picture yourself at seven or eight. Just an average day. What were you wearing? Where are you?

Most people close their eyes. Tarik keeps his eyes open, sketching out the layout of the lodge in his notebook.

MARGO (CONT'D)

Now imagine sitting down next to that younger you. What would you say to them?

GUEST 6 chokes up and raises her hand.

MARGO (CONT'D)

Yes, Karen?

GUEST 6

I'd tell her she doesn't have to be perfect. She can make mistakes and still deserves love.

MARGO

Can you offer that child some kindness? Can you picture giving her a hug?

Tarik draws a new rectangle: GROUP ROOM next to HALCYON.

INT. WORKSHOP ROOM - DAY

Another room, another circle. Ollie demonstrates box breathing, tracing the air with his finger.

OLLIE

Four counts in, four hold, four out, four hold. Simple box. Happiness is just a habit of attention.

Tarik rolls his eyes. Ollie exaggerates breathing, and the group follows along. In. Hold. Out. Hold.

Tarik checks his watch under his sleeve. 70 bpm.

He fills in a box for the Workshop Room on his lodge layout map.

INT. EDUCATION ROOM - DAY

Willow sits on a cushion, a stack of index cards in her hand.

WILLOW

It's not about pretending
everything's great. Notice when
things aren't that bad. That's all.

She hands the stack to the first guest to pass around.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

On your card, write down three
things from the last twenty-four
hours that were a tiny bit better
than what you're used to.

Tarik gets the cards, keeps one, and passes the rest along.

People start writing. Tarik stares at his blank card. Then writes: Slept. Didn't have a panic attack.

He taps the pen against the card. Almost writes something. Changes his mind.

Around him, a few guests share.

GUEST 7

I watched the sunrise from the hot
springs. That was amazing.

Tarik writes: Hot springs.

GUEST 8

No bad dreams. I didn't get up to
check if the door is locked. I've
never felt so safe in all my life.

WILLOW

Tarik. Anything you're willing to
share from your card?

TARIK

I slept. A lot longer than usual.

A couple of people smile, grimly sympathetic.

WILLOW

That counts. Notice if your brain wants to tell you it's not good enough. For a lot of you, it's going to be hard to convince yourself things are better. But you need to remind yourself "no good moments" isn't entirely true.

Tarik slips the card into his notebook, over the map of the lodge.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

The journal lies open on the desk.

On the page: a more filled-in layout of the lodge. INTAKE OFFICE. DINING. BOOKSTORE. MOVEMENT. HALCYON. WORKSHOP. GROUP. SMALL GROUP. BATHROOMS. EDUCATION. SOMATIC A/B/C.

Tarik sketches more detail in SOMATIC A: table and cabinet.

He flips to a different page: a sketch of the torii gate, the winding road up. Closes the notebook.

INT. LODGE LOBBY - NIGHT

Tarik waits outside the Intake Office. The door opens, and GUEST 8 comes out in tears.

GUEST 8

I still can't believe I'm finally here. Thank you so much.

Lily spots Tarik.

LILY

Excuse me, Yvonne, I just need to see to a guest really quickly, then I'll show you up to your cabin.

TARIK

Can I-

LILY

Just a moment, Mr. Hayes.

Lily ducks into the office, then returns with his laptop bag and phone. He turns the phone over, examining the case to see if it's been removed.

LILY (CONT'D)
Remember to attend your sessions.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Tarik plugs in his phone and laptop. They power on. He checks for wifi networks. Nothing. No cell phone bars. His disappointment plainly visible.

EXT. STILL PINES RETREAT - NIGHT

Tarik walks a path. Slows. Checks his cell phone. No bars.

He brings out his notebook. Marks a small X on the map of the grounds.

INT. LODGE - NIGHT

Tarik checks his phone. No bars. Marks a small X on the lodge layout in his notebook.

He checks for wifi networks. Two password-protected networks listed: SPR-STAFF and SPR-PRIVATE.

INT. SOMATIC ROOM - NIGHT

Tarik stands by the table, arms folded, restless. The sensor patch already on his ribs.

Sera taps the tablet. She checks the screen, then sets it where he can see it. 63 bpm.

TARIK
Hey. Any chance I could get on the staff wifi? I missed the window and I really need to see what's happening.

SERA
No.

He waits for more.

SERA (CONT'D)
You made your sessions. That's the work you're here to do.

TARIK

Yeah. Even "Choosing Happiness."
Wild that no one told me before I
could just *choose happiness*.

SERA

How was last night? After we
finished.

TARIK

I remember getting in bed. Then it
was morning. That hasn't happened
in years.

SERA

How do you feel right now?

TARIK

My body's more rested than it's
been since college and my head
thinks this place is a cult. So...
mixed reviews.

SERA

A cult would be after your soul. I
want some stable vital signs.

She pats the table.

SERA (CONT'D)

Sit. Not on your back. Just sit.

He sits on the table, facing her.

She steps closer and slides a hand under his shirt, palm over
his heart.

SERA (CONT'D)

I'm right here. Let your weight
settle into the table. Notice what
your body's doing.

She lifts her hand away.

SERA (CONT'D)

Now put your hand where mine was.

He does.

SERA (CONT'D)

Breathe in through your nose,
slowly. Then out like you're
blowing through a straw. Feel your
chest rise and fall.

He breathes with her through a few cycles.

TARIK

Relaxing doesn't feel relaxing to me.

SERA

That's what we're trying to change.

She takes his hand off his chest and folds it loosely in his lap. Then she steps in closer, sliding one knee between his, almost straddling one leg.

SERA (CONT'D)

You remember what we talked about last night. Threat, fear, stage lights, performance. Your body has them linked to collapse. Shirt up.

He lifts it. Her hand settles on his lower abdomen.

TARIK

Thought we were keeping it simple.

SERA

We are. Your body responded, so we're going to repeat that.

Her hand slips inside the waistband of his pants.

He tenses, then grabs her wrist. She holds still, eyes on his.

SERA (CONT'D)

Say "red" and I stop. The session ends.

He looks past her to the closed door. The 3-color poster. The sensor wire. The tablet. Nowhere to go that doesn't leave him alone with himself.

TARIK

I don't want to be a... a thing you're working on.

SERA

Tell me what you want. What would make you more comfortable?

He holds her gaze, breathing harder now. His grip tightens.

He shakes his head. Lets go of her wrist.

His hands slide to her hips.

TARIK

Closer.

He pulls her in until she's fully straddling his thigh, their bodies pressed together.

SERA

I'm not going to pretend this is the same technique I do with everyone. You want results, but you're skipping most of the program.

TARIK

I'm not skipping this.

Her hand slides under the elastic of his pants, slower this time, giving him room to pull away. He pulls her against him.

She settles her weight onto him, arm moving in a slow, steady rhythm under the fabric. Her other hand comes up to the back of his neck, holding him in place.

On the tablet, his heart rate rises into the seventies.

SERA

Okay. Stay with what you feel, not what you think about it.

He presses his forehead into her shoulder, eyes closed.

TARIK

If I pass out like this, you're gonna have a hell of a PR problem.

SERA

You're not going to pass out. You're going to stay in your body. Exactly like I tell you to.

His heart rate climbs higher. 80s. 90s. Her mouth drifts closer to his ear.

SERA (CONT'D)

Notice what happens right at the edge. Stay there. Let your body ride it instead of dropping away.

TARIK

You keep saying "your body" like I'm not in it.

SERA

You're in it now. Stay with it.

TARIK

Don't talk to me like I'm an experiment.

SERA

You came to me. You keep coming back. Stop pretending you didn't choose this.

Her pace adjusts minutely.

His thighs tense under her. His whole body tightens. He clutches her with both arms.

She keeps one hand on the back of his neck, the other still under the waistband, now just resting against him.

SERA (CONT'D)

Stay. Don't float off. Feel the table under you. Feel where it makes contact with your thighs.

He holds onto her for a few seconds more, then his grip loosens.

She slowly withdraws her hand and keeps her body close.

SERA (CONT'D)

Eyes on the tablet. Watch your nervous system find equilibrium.

But he doesn't watch the tablet. He lifts his head from her shoulder, eyes on hers.

His hand starts toward her jaw. His fingers barely brush her skin, then pull back like he's thought better of it.

She drops her gaze and turns her face away, but her body stays aligned with his.

SERA (CONT'D)

Feel the weight of your body on the table. Eyes on the tablet. That's all you have to do.

He looks from the screen back to her, reading the distance and the way her hands retreat to her sides.

TARIK

This is fucked up.

She eases herself away from him.

SERA

You can decide later what you want
to call it.

She steps back. Saves the session on the tablet.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Tarik's phone alarm goes off.

He blinks awake. Turns it off. Checks his watch. 9am.

He gets up, crosses to the bathroom shelf.

The RELAX and SLEEP bottles are in the same neat row. Labels
facing forward. Finger-width gaps between them.

A Health alert pops up on his phone: NEW TREND IN SLEEPING.
He opens it. "You are averaging more sleep over the past 4
days!" He scrolls through the screens, not looking relieved.

EXT. STILL PINES RETREAT - DAY

Tarik has his phone in one hand, his notebook open to the
pages of the grounds in the other. Jots a small X on the map.
Walks 10 more yards. Checks for bars. None. Puts another
small X on the map.

CUT TO:

He gets to the red gate over the driveway. Stops at the
threshold. Checks his phone. No bars. Puts an X on the map.
It's full of X's.

INT. EDUCATION ROOM - DAY

People sit on chairs in a semicircle, a few on floor
cushions. Willow leads the group.

On the whiteboard, in big letters: ASSOCIATIONS

WILLOW

Your nervous system learns in
pairs. A phone buzz might mean a
wave of anxiety. A certain song
might bring you to tears because it
was playing while something awful
happened. An email from your boss
brings up the thought "What did I
mess up this time?"

A few guests nod.

Tarik sits near the back, sketching out a new lodge map in his notebook, this one neater and more accurate. An unfilled wing labeled "STAFF HOUSING" on it.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

For most of you, stress is associated with something. Usually work or school. Maybe an audience, dentist, or a sound. What's something that didn't used to bother you, but now stresses you out because your body linked it with something bad?

GUEST 9 raises her hand. Willow motions toward her.

GUEST 9

I used to love New York. It was my home for decades. But now when I think about it, all I feel is anxiety because of how stressful the last few months there were.

She writes under ASSOCIATIONS: New York = anxiety

WILLOW

Don't try to erase the old pairing. Your system already has it wired in. What you can do is stack a new one on top. Same situation, different feeling, again and again. Until your body has more than one story to tell.

GUEST 10 raises a hand.

GUEST 10

So like Pavlov. But my bell means I have a meeting.

A light ripple of laughter.

WILLOW

Exactly. If you want, you can treat yourself every time you enter the meeting room. Now, an association that's harder to control is with people. When someone was with you during a stressful event, even if their actions didn't cause you harm, you might associate that person with harm anyway.

(MORE)

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Or maybe you have a positive
association with a toxic person
because they were with you during a
positive time in your life.

A lot of people give nods and affirmations. Tarik stops
writing, listens intently.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Tarik sits at his desk with his laptop open, mouse hovering
over the wifi symbol. No networks showing. He checks the
time: 1:32pm.

He puts on a coat, packs up his laptop and heads out.

INT. LODGE LOBBY - DAY

Tarik approaches GUEST 11.

TARIK
Hey. Quick question. I can't seem
to get on the wifi from my room-

GUEST 11
Yeah, it's only in the lobby.

TARIK
Just here? Just this room?

GUEST 11
Give or take about fifty feet. It's
pretty slow too, so if you were
planning on streaming something,
don't bother.

TARIK
Thanks.

Tarik looks around. No desk. The two sofas with coffee tables
in front of them are already taken by other guests.

He sits against a wall near an outlet and gets to work.
Clicks on the SPR-GUEST wifi. Their login page is more red
than any other color. Requires name, room number, email, and
extensive terms and conditions.

He finally gets on. Hundreds of unread emails. He clicks
through them. Scans as fast as he can.

He types up a quick email: "Hey Allie, can you do me a favor and do a background check on Dr. Sera Corvin at Still Pines Retreat? What's she a doctor of? Thanks, Tarik"

SERA

Your 2pm starts in fifteen minutes in the Halcyon room. I hope you were planning on attending.

Tarik snaps his laptop shut. Sera stands over him sipping a red mug of tea.

TARIK

I've been dark for days. I need to check in, see what's happening.

SERA

We had an agreement. I'm not going to enforce the morning sessions if you really are sleeping in. But here you are, wide awake.

TARIK

I'm not a child. I paid to be here. I can use my time how I choose.

SERA

True. Maybe I should cancel our eight o'clock. Use the time how I choose.

TARIK

I'll attend the 2pm. But you need to extend the wifi window, let me on the staff wifi, or something. I'm trying to run a billion-dollar company.

SERA

That sounds stressful. Maybe you should take some time off.

She takes another sip of tea.

Lily approaches her.

LILY

Dr. Corvin? Mr. Doe from Finnnton Recovery is on line one-

There's a rare crack in Sera's composure as she turns on Lily.

SERA
 (quietly)
 Don't.

She and Lily walk back toward the Intake Office.

He opens his laptop back up. Types in "Mr. Doe Finnton Recovery". No matches on the words including "Doe." He clicks the link for Finnton Recovery.

The website is a bland landing page for the various wellness, addiction, and leadership retreats Finnton Recovery owns. A link for Still Pines Retreat is halfway down the page.

He goes back to his email. Tries to skim through as quickly as possible. VTCH in the red, -\$3.65.

Checks his watch. Heart rate in the low 50s.

INT. HALCYON ROOM - DAY

Ollie leads the group, same big circle of cushions.

OLLIE
 All right, folks. Gonna work on our colors again. Think about your past few days here.

He points to the sign near the door.

OLLIE (CONT'D)
 Green is one thing that's actually helped. Yellow is something you're not sure about yet. Red is something you pushed through that maybe you shouldn't have. Anyone want to share?

He gestures to GUEST 12.

GUEST 12
 Green, I went to the hot springs, *clothing optional*, and it was actually pretty relaxing. Yellow, I'm emailing my sister again. It wasn't something I really wanted to deal with here. Red, I still said yes to covering an extra shift next week.

Ollie nods, then looks over to Tarik.

OLLIE

Tarik? You want to try?

TARIK

Green, I'm sleeping better. Like, better than I have in years. Yellow, being offline when my company's going to shit and a million people are probably trying to reach me.

Tarik glances at the sign. All the people watching him.

TARIK (CONT'D)

Haven't quite hit red yet. Maybe close.

OLLIE

Noticing yellow before you slam into red is the whole point. You don't have to wait until you've had too much to decide you've had enough.

INT. SOMATIC ROOM - NIGHT

Same padded table. The tablet waits dark on the shelf.

Tarik stands with his shirt lifted. Sera tapes the sensor on his chest.

SERA

Lie back.

He lowers his shirt, but doesn't lie down.

TARIK

Why's your boss use a fake name?

SERA

He's a lot of people's boss. We keep work identities out of this space. It keeps things less stressful. Lie back, Tarik.

He studies her.

TARIK

You looked a little stressed yourself. Maybe you should take some time off.

He sits at the edge of the table.

She taps the tablet. Bpm in the 60s. She sets it on a shelf where they can both see it.

SERA

You left the afternoon meditation session early. I trust you were taking a nap.

TARIK

No, I walked out before I fell asleep.

SERA

We had an agreement.

TARIK

I attended. For a while. And I wasn't lying, it was putting me to sleep. But why *am* I sleeping here? Don't give me the healing hot springs bullshit. I don't trust your pills. And it can't just be...

SERA

You've got half of the equation.

TARIK

What's the other half?

SERA

Me. My touch. My voice. The way I cue your nervous system.

TARIK

So you're basically medical equipment.

For a moment, there's a crack in her professional calm.

SERA

You made it very clear you weren't going to do the work this retreat was built around.

She steps in between his knees. Her hands slide up his shirt, pressed against his chest.

TARIK

This-

(gesturing)

isn't the problem. I don't pass out in bed.

SERA

I know. What takes you out is sudden demand, eyes on you, and no exit. The idea that if you don't step up, everything's going to collapse.

TARIK

So how's this going to help me at work?

SERA

You've always handled pressure the same way. Ignore what your body's telling you, let it build 'til it's too much, then you collapse. My job is to get you noticing what's going on in your body before that happens. And give it other options when it peaks.

Her palm slides lower, to his abdomen.

SERA (CONT'D)

I tie those options to something you don't collapse during.

He huffs a humorless breath.

TARIK

Like earnings calls.

SERA

Like handing control over to others. Your system's been shutting off for decades. You gave me two weeks to undo all that. So we move a little faster.

She moves her hand lower. Her thumb traces a slow arc on his skin.

His eyes dart to the 3-color poster by the door.

TARIK

Yellow. What are you *actually* doing?

SERA

I'm pairing this level of intensity with you staying with the feeling. Not letting you drift off or check out.

(MORE)

SERA (CONT'D)
So when your system feels this kind
of load, it remembers it can handle
it. Same situation, different
outcome.

She keeps going, hand slipping under the fabric of his
sweatpants, finding a rhythm.

He closes his eyes. His hand slides to her waist. He pulls
her closer until her hips meet the side of the table.

She leans in, mouth near his ear.

SERA (CONT'D)
Your brain goes straight to "don't
disappoint anyone," "be strong,"
"don't show weakness," right?

He nods.

SERA (CONT'D)
We're giving it a different path.

Her hand stops moving. She rests it on his thigh, and
whispers in his ear again.

SERA (CONT'D)
Do you want me to keep going?
You're making excellent progress.

He opens his eyes and nods again.

She climbs onto the table, straddling him. She reaches
between them, pulling his sweats down.

She moves her skirt and maintains eye contact as she lowers
herself slowly. Stays there a moment, not moving.

SERA (CONT'D)
Put your hands on me.

He does, fingers gripping her thighs under her skirt.

SERA (CONT'D)
You're here with me. The table's
holding you. Breathe.

She inhales, so does he. She glances at the tablet. 74 bpm.

She starts to move, slow at first, rolling her hips. She
keeps one hand against the back of his neck, the other
wrapped around his shoulders.

He draws her down against him. She settles her weight, her whole body moving with his. His eyes close.

SERA (CONT'D)

Eyes open.

He opens them. She's looking directly at him, still moving in that same steady rhythm.

SERA (CONT'D)

Say "When it's too much, I step back."

She tightens her grip on his neck, slows the rhythm.

SERA (CONT'D)

Look at me. Say it.

TARIK

When it's too much, I step back.

She resumes her rhythm and watches the tablet. Mid-80s.

SERA

Again.

TARIK

If it's too much, I step back.

She changes the angle of her hips, a small adjustment that makes her inhale sharply.

SERA

You don't have to carry every
launch and meeting yourself.
Someone else can hold the numbers.
You stay in control of yourself.

He exhales on a shaky laugh.

TARIK

That your idea of medical advice?

She presses her body fully against his, her breathing faster. The ECG jumps into the 90s.

SERA

Your body's going to stop treating
intensity as lethal. It can feel
this much, stay with it, and keep
going.

(beat)

Picture the stage. Say it again.
Say it.

He's right on the edge now. She bites her lower lip, concentrating.

TARIK

If it's too much, I step back.

SERA

Stay with me. Every breath. Every heartbeat. You're in it, and you're not going anywhere.

She shifts minutely, speeding up. Both of them are in it now, movement tightening.

Her breath breaks into a stifled moan. His whole body locks, then shudders. He pulls her in, burying his face against her.

Her legs tremble as her movements slow, then stop.

She stays straddling him, both of them breathing hard. Her eyes close for a moment before she forces them open again.

His eyes are squeezed shut, hanging onto her.

She lets him. Watches his face.

SERA (CONT'D)

Open your eyes. Watch the screen.

He does. The ECG shows steady peaks in the mid 70s.

She carefully shifts off him, her feet finding the floor. She adjusts her clothes and smooths her expression back into something professional.

SERA (CONT'D)

Signal: you passed out on stage.
Story: if you step back, everything falls apart. New association: you step back and you're still here.

She gently pulls his sweats back into place, then sets his hand on his chest. He looks at the ECG, then at her.

TARIK

That's a lot of story for a line on a screen.

She meets his eyes only briefly.

TARIK (CONT'D)

(quietly)
You really don't make it easy to walk away.

She picks up the tablet, checks that the recording saved. She sets it back down where he can see it.

SERA

Feel the table supporting you. Feel your hand on your chest. Watch the line.

She heads to the door, hand on the knob. Doesn't look back.

SERA (CONT'D)

Drink some water. Take as much time as you need before you stand up.

She steps out, leaving him on the table, staring at the ECG and the closed door, his hands still where she placed them.

INT. LODGE LOBBY - DAY

Tarik's back in his spot by the outlet, laptop open. 108 unread emails. A red -\$4.32 stock ticker for VTCH in the corner.

He clicks on an email from Allie:

"She's got a PhD in clinical psychology from Columbia. Did post-doc work in trauma and psychophysiology. Not a licensed psychologist in CA or any other state. No bankruptcies. Credit looks clean."

Allie Tan, Chief of Staff, VectoryTech

He types back: "Thanks. One more thing, can you look into Finnton Recovery? Who's in charge, who's on the board, any complaints or scandals?"

He clicks send. The unread email counter drops from 108 to 107.

He skims the subject lines:

"It's China or layoffs"

"The market won't support the new price"

"We need a decision on Hyderabad"

"China is still our best option"

"The tablet redesign got scrapped???"

He clicks the last one: "Tarik, what the fuck, man? Andrew just told me we're rolling back the tablet redesign ahead of the Q1 release. What the hell was all that R&D for?"

He replies: "I didn't sign off on that. Tell them to hold. I'll deal with it as soon as I get back."

He hits send. Checks his watch. His bpm drops. 50. 49. 48.

TARIK

Shit.

He sets his laptop aside. Holds his head in his hands. His shoulders move with shallow, uneven breaths.

INT. LODGE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tarik paces outside Somatic Room A. Sera walks up. He checks his watch.

TARIK

You're late.

SERA

Two minutes.

She puts her hand on the doorknob, but doesn't open it yet.

SERA (CONT'D)

You missed your 2pm *and* your 3pm.

TARIK

I took a nap.

SERA

Don't lie to me, Tarik. You were sitting in the lobby for everyone to see.

TARIK

(raising his voice)
Oh, right, *Doctor* Corvin. What exactly are you a doctor of? I know you're not licensed.

SERA

Inside.

She opens the door and walks in. He follows her.

INT. SOMATIC ROOM - NIGHT

She closes the door behind him.

SERA

Sit.

TARIK

Why aren't you licensed? Ethical violations?

SERA

I never claimed to be a medical doctor or a practicing psychologist. I'm the clinical director here. I have a doctorate in psychology and decades of experience with nervous system work. So what exactly is your problem?

TARIK

This place. This whole place is fucking with me.

SERA

You skip out on sessions that are meant to help you heal so you can catch up on the work that's killing you. You get yourself agitated, then blame my retreat? Sit on the table, or get out.

He stares at her another moment. Then sits. She grabs the sensor from the shelf.

SERA (CONT'D)

Lift up your shirt.

He obeys. She presses the sensor to his ribs.

She taps on the tablet. The wavering line appears: low 50s.

SERA (CONT'D)

You came in hot and your heart rate's already dropping.

She props the tablet where they can both see.

TARIK

Why build a resort in the middle of nowhere unless you have something to hide?

SERA

Some people actually enjoy the peace and quiet, the mountains and trees. Watching deer from the dining room windows. Not you, though. You just wanted to get back to work the second you arrived.

He looks at the line on the tablet: 49. 48. 47.

SERA (CONT'D)

That's not me "messing with your head." If you want to leave, I'll call our driver. Say the word.

He glances to the 3-color poster. Then watches the heart rate on the monitor drop to 45.

TARIK

(quietly)

Help me. Please.

She steps in between his knees. One hand goes under his shirt, flat over his chest. His heart rate immediately rises.

SERA

Breathe in.

(both inhaling)

Out for longer.

He breathes with her until the tablet shows a 60 bpm.

TARIK

How am I supposed to trust you when I don't even know who you work for?

SERA

Finnton Recovery owns the building. I work for the guests. Including you.

He huffs out something between a laugh and a scoff.

TARIK

You "work" for everyone like this?

That stings. She steps back and turns toward the door.

SERA

Fine. Willow will take over your sessions. You'll go back to the standard schedule.

Tarik hops off the table.

TARIK

Fuck. Sera, wait.

She turns. They're close. Her breathing is a little uneven.

TARIK (CONT'D)

I don't know how to trust you on this.

SERA

I don't think you trust anyone.
That's why you always need to
handle everything yourself. Right?

(beat)

If you want to leave, leave. If you
want to stay, get on the table.
Those are your options. I'm not
going to keep fighting you.

TARIK

It bothers me. The idea that this
is work for you. Makes me feel like
a-

He shakes his head, disgusted.

SERA

Tarik-

He leans in and kisses her. For a second she freezes.

Then she kisses him back, deepening it before she pulls
herself away half an inch.

SERA (CONT'D)

This isn't-

He follows her, catching her mouth again. The kiss turns
hungry fast. His hand slides to the back of her neck. Her
fingers grip his shirt.

She finally pulls back, breathing hard.

SERA (CONT'D)

You're supposed to be watching the
line.

But he doesn't take his eyes off her.

She nudges him back. He lets her push him down until he's
flat on the table.

She climbs up and straddles him. Her hand works his sweats
down just far enough.

Her hand slides up his chest and she lowers her mouth to his
ear, her voice barely audible over his breathing.

SERA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Stay in your body. Feel every
second of it. Don't think about
anything but this.

She begins to move and his eyes close.

SERA (CONT'D)

No. Look at me.

He does. His hands come up under her skirt, gripping her, pulling her harder against him.

BEGIN MONTAGE

-- Tarik's bathroom. He counts pills, writes numbers in the notebook. The columns are getting longer. More obsessive.

-- Tarik sits in his usual spot by the outlet, laptop open. Inbox overflowing. New email from Allie: "Finnton Recovery Holdings LLC (Delaware) - Registered agent only. Six wrongful-death suits in the last eight years at their rehabs, all settled out of court. Nothing at Still Pines."

His mouse hovers over the "Reply" button. Looks like he might be sick. Closes the laptop instead.

-- In the Somatic Room, Sera rides him slowly, leaning forward with both hands on his chest. She lowers her mouth to his ear.

SERA

Your body knows when it's too much.
When to step back. Listen to it.

-- In the movement room, an instructor guides a group through yoga poses. Tarik wobbles in a lunge. He catches himself, forces himself to stay in it.

-- In the Somatic room, Sera's on top of Tarik, moving in steady rhythm. She glances at the tablet: 89 bpm.

SERA (CONT'D)

Imagine someone else doing the
keynote. You don't have to do
anything. Watch the line.

95 bpm. She watches it, adjusting her pace.

SERA (CONT'D)

Watch your heart rate. Your body's
showing you it can let go and keep
going.

101 bpm. She speeds up to match it.

-- In the Halcyon Room, GUEST 13 shares while Tarik sits on the cushion watching.

GUEST 13

Green, I finally told my boss I
needed a smaller caseload. And she
said okay.

-- In the Somatic Room, Sera and Tarik lie on the table
together under a blanket, her hand over his heart.

SERA

Feel it settle. You're safe here.
Feel the weight of your body on the
table. You can relax here.

-- He walks around the exterior of the lodge, where the staff
wing juts out from the building. No doors or entrances on the
first floor. Very few windows, all covered with curtains.

-- Tarik stands in a second floor hallway staring at a door
that says STAFF HOUSING. He opens up his notebook, now with a
very detailed lodge map. Brings his attention to the first
floor wing underneath Staff Housing. No entrances on his map.

-- He heads down some stairs. Comes to an empty wall. Looks
at his map. The first floor wing should be between the
bookstore and dining room.

-- He examines the wall in the bookstore. Pushes on shelves,
pulls on books. No secret entrance.

-- He examines the wall in the dining room. Peeks behind some
wall art. No hidden doors or seams.

-- Tarik sits in the lobby, laptop open. Types an email:
"Just hold the line. India move stays on track. Redesign
ships Q1. I'll handle the board when I'm out of here." Hits
SEND. Watches his heart rate dip below 50.

END MONTAGE

INT. SOMATIC ROOM - NIGHT

Sera straddles Tarik, knees on either side of his hips, one
hand gripping the back of his neck as they kiss.

She breaks away just enough to glance at the tablet: 52 bpm.

SERA

Something on your mind?

TARIK

Every time I picture the office, I
get this surge of panic. I don't
know why.

SERA

Maybe it was always there, you just never let yourself notice it before.

TARIK

No. I don't think so.

SERA

You know when there's construction outside your window for hours, you tune it out. Then when it stops, you finally realize how loud it was.

TARIK

It wasn't that bad.

SERA

You saw eight different doctors and went through countless tests in the past two years. You passed out on stage. It was that bad.

(quietly, smiling)

You don't have to go back.

He laughs that off.

TARIK

I kinda do.

She shifts lower in his lap, settling her weight on him. Her hips start a slow, steady roll. On the tablet, his heart rate climbs into the 60s.

SERA

Pay attention to what your body tells you. Ignoring it is how you wind up on the floor again.

She glances back at the tablet. 70s. 80s. She speeds up slightly.

SERA (CONT'D)

Your body's been trying to tell you it's too much. You don't have to keep carrying everything yourself.

His hands grip her hips, trying to control the pace, the situation, something. She doesn't slow down.

SERA (CONT'D)

You don't need to do the keynote.
You don't need the tablet redesign
in this release.

His fingers tighten on her skin.

TARIK

I never said anything about the
tablet redesign. Are you reading my
emails?

SERA

You brought it up in one of our
sessions.

TARIK

No. I didn't.
(louder)
Are you spying on me?

SERA

We're working. Stay with your body.
Don't go into your head. Breathe
with me.

TARIK

Red.

She freezes, shocked. Looks to the tablet. His heart rate
jumps to 105, then immediately drops.

She slides off his lap in one quick move, putting space
between them.

SERA

Lie down. Breathe. Deep, slow
breaths. Stay with me.

His heart rate on the tablet plummets. 70s. 60s. 50s. Her
eyes dart between him and the tablet, panicked.

TARIK

What the hell is going on, Sera?

His heart rate keeps dropping. 40s. 38. 35. He sees it too.

SERA

Lie down. Now!

He hits the table hard, head rolling to the side.

The ECG flattens. Bpm displays --. Sera's torn. She takes a
step toward him, stops. Darts to the door, yanks it open.

SERA (CONT'D)
(shouting out the door)
Margo! Willow! Medical response,
Somatic A!

She's back at his side in an instant. She props his feet up with the table extension.

Tugs his clothes straight.

Grabs a folded blanket from the shelf. Spreads it over him.

Grabs another folded blanket and props it under his knees.

She wrings her hands, watching the tablet. Bpm still reading --, but the line wavers slightly.

SERA (CONT'D)
Tarik, stay with me. Breathe.

A heartbeat finally appears again. Then another. Bpm in the 40s.

Margo and Willow burst in, out of breath, taking in the scene.

WILLOW
Should I call 911?

SERA
No, it's okay. He's back. He's fine. He's... Get, uh... a blood pressure cuff, pulse oximeter and more blankets. He might go into shock if we don't get him warm. An electric blanket.

Willow rushes back out. Margo moves in to take Tarik's pulse. Sera's legs finally give out. She sinks down against the wall beside the table, shaking.

CUT TO:

Tarik sits hunched on the table, an electric blanket wrapped around his shoulders, sweat shining on his face.

Margo takes his blood pressure. Pulse oximeter on his finger. On the tablet, his oxygen saturation reads 97%. Bpm 53.

Sera stands in the doorway, still trying to get her composure back.

MARGO

Ninety-five over sixty-five. Wait another few minutes before you stand up, but you'll be okay.

Margo removes the cuff, slips the oximeter off his finger. She heads for the door and leans in close to Sera.

MARGO (CONT'D)

(quietly)

We should have a doctor on staff. I'm not comfortable with this. Have the SUV take him back tonight.

SERA

He's stable. He'll be fine.

Margo leaves. Sera closes the door, takes a deep breath, then approaches Tarik's side.

TARIK

How long was I out?

SERA

Probably less than a minute. Felt longer. I could check the session log.

TARIK

It's never happened like that before.

SERA

Your body's been trying to tell you for years and you haven't been listening.

TARIK

But it wasn't even about work, or stress, or-

He glances at the poster by the door.

TARIK (CONT'D)

That's not how that's supposed to work.

SERA

Your body's telling you it can't carry the big decisions anymore. If you don't step back, it'll shut everything down for you.

TARIK
Step back from what, exactly.

SERA
Responsibility. Obligations. The
weight of the world on your
shoulders.

He studies her, unconvinced.

TARIK
That's one way to read it.

SERA
Take one day off tomorrow. Don't
think about work. Don't go online.
Try to relax.

She reaches for his hand and holds it.

SERA (CONT'D)
Your body is begging you.

TARIK
Yeah. Maybe.

He looks away. She gets some paper towels and pats sweat from
his forehead.

SERA
You shouldn't be alone tonight. I
could stay in your cabin. Or you
could stay in my room. I have a
queen bed. I wouldn't- It's just
about keeping an eye on you.

TARIK
I'll be fine.

SERA
I need to monitor you. I'm not
risking you having another episode
alone.

INT. LODGE - STAFF WING - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

She scans her keycard and they enter the staff wing. Sera
slowly walks him down the hall.

TARIK
Could I get in trouble for being
here?

SERA

No. I'm the director, remember?
You're fine.

She uses her keycard again to open her door.

INT. SERA'S ROOM - NIGHT

The staff rooms aren't much bigger than hotel rooms, but have more belongings. Sera helps him undress and gets him into bed.

She steps into the bathroom and takes some pills from the medicine cabinet, washing them down with water.

Tarik watches her from the bed. She notices.

SERA

I can't get my voice to work on myself. And I've never met anyone else whose voice does the trick. Yours comes close. If you stuck around, I could teach you how to do what I do.

He gives her a skeptical smile. She curls up next to him, mouth near his ear. Her voice has that same hypnotic cadence from their sessions.

SERA (CONT'D)

You're okay. Your body can relax now. Sleep. I'm here. You're safe.

Her fingertips drift back and forth across his chest.

SERA (CONT'D)

Feel how heavy your arms are. How the mattress holds you. You don't have to hold yourself up. Tomorrow you're going to sleep in. You're going to let your body recover.

His breathing slows, getting deeper. His eyes close.

SERA (CONT'D)

When you think about work, your chest gets tight. Notice that. And then let it go. You don't need to solve anything right now.

Her fingers keep drifting across his skin.

SERA (CONT'D)
Your company can run without you.
Nothing will fall apart.

His eyes flutter open. His fingers close around her wrist on his chest.

TARIK
No.

SERA
(whispering)
You're safest when you let go. Your
body won't let you stay on the old
path any longer. You can relax
here. You're safe here.

His eyes close, and his hand falls away from hers. She keeps her hand on his chest, feeling his heartbeat.

SERA (CONT'D)
(whispering)
You're safe. I've got you.

INT. SERA'S ROOM - DAY

Tarik wakes, momentarily confused.

Sera steps out of the bathroom. He sits up.

SERA
Did you sleep all right? Are you
feeling okay?

TARIK
...Yeah.

SERA
You sure? Any dizziness, chest
pain, anything like that?

TARIK
Never better.

She kneels on the bed next to him, her hand on his knee. She leans in and gives him a gentle kiss.

SERA
I have a nine o'clock. You can go
back to sleep, or take as much time
as you need. The door locks
automatically.

She gets up and pulls on her slippers.

SERA (CONT'D)

Don't push yourself today. Let your
body recover.

She heads out the door.

Tarik gets up. Dresses.

He looks around. Opens her laptop, sees the lock screen.
Tries out "admin." Then "password." No luck. He closes it.

Pulls out some of her desk drawers. Finds a journal.

He flips through the journal. Patient initials, dates, notes
in shorthand he can't decipher.

He pulls out his phone. Takes photos of all the pages that
have "T.H." Puts the journal back.

In her bathroom, he opens the medicine cabinet. Nothing
remarkable.

Same 4 bottles as his room. He opens SLEEP. Looks at the
pills. He pockets two in a wad of toilet paper, then puts the
bottle back.

INT. STAFF WING - SECOND FLOOR - DAY

He heads the opposite direction from where they entered the
wing. Passes numbered doors, some decorated with wreaths and
other personal effects.

At the end of the hall, he finds a staircase. Goes down.

INT. STAFF WING - FIRST FLOOR - DAY

The corridor is darker here. No personal items on doors.

He puts his ear against one door. Slowly opens it. A storage
room for yoga mats, cushions, and chairs.

Next door. Industrial shelving, cleaning supplies.

Continues down the hall, opening doors. Finds a locked door.
Then another. And another. Needs a keycard.

He closes his eyes. Tries to map it all in his head. Looks
around again.

MAINTENANCE WORKER

Can I help you?

He spins. A MAINTENANCE WORKER stands at the end of the hall, tool bag in hand.

TARIK

I was just putting back some cushions for Dr. Corvin.

He walks past the worker, back up the stairs.

INT. CABIN - DAY

He sits at his desk, filling in the staff wing on his Still Pines Lodge map.

A door for each employee, a door for each room on the first floor. Labels Sera's room and the rooms he opened. Leaves the locked rooms downstairs blank.

EXT. STILL PINES RETREAT - DAY

Tarik walks from his cabin toward the lodge, coat on, notebook tucked under an arm. He stops. Looks up. A few flakes of snow drift down.

He brings his attention back down to earth. A pair of mule deer stand in the path in front of him.

He stares. Tries to bring his phone out of his pocket without taking his eyes off them.

They dart away before he can raise his phone up. He stands there, staring after them a moment. Then resumes his walk.

INT. HALCYON ROOM - DAY

Everyone's at the windows, watching snow fall. It's already accumulating.

Ollie claps his hands. Everyone settles on cushions, Tarik included.

OLLIE

Storm's gonna be dropping a lot of snow over the next few days. If your checkout is coming up, we encourage you to head out by noon today, we'll refund the difference.

(MORE)

OLLIE (CONT'D)

If you decide to stay on 'til the roads are clear, we'll keep you here at the same rate, including scholarship guests. For those of you who used our transport, last trip to the airport is 2pm sharp and it might not be back 'til Saturday.

Tarik raises his hand.

TARIK

My checkout's Sunday. It'll definitely be back by then, right?

OLLIE

Should be.

INT. EDUCATION ROOM - DAY

A SUBSTITUTE (60s) runs things with a tablet in hand.

SUBSTITUTE

Willow's feeling a bit under the weather today, and everything's supposed to be in here. Come on.

The tablet freezes. The Substitute taps it. Swipes. Nothing. The Substitute sighs, looking around the circle.

SUBSTITUTE (CONT'D)

Anybody know how to fix these?

Tarik raises his hand.

TARIK

I can take a look.

Heads turn. Tarik takes the tablet from the Substitute.

He force-quits the app.

He holds down the buttons for volume up, volume down, and triple taps the power button.

The Still Pines app shrinks into a gray TOOLS overlay:
NETWORK INFO. DEVICE INFO. SYNC & LOGS. SUPPORT.

He taps NETWORK INFO. A list of networks appears: SPR-GUEST, SPR-STAFF, SPR-PRIVATE, each with a small eye icon.

He taps the eye next to SPR-STAFF. The password reveals in plain text: StillPines92549! He taps the eye next to SPR-PRIVATE. The password reveals: StillPines32579#.

He reads them. Fixes them in his mind.

He backs out. Opens SUPPORT.

A simple config screen:

USERNAME: sprtech

PASSWORD: StillPines101184%

REMOTE SERVER: admin.stillpines.local

He commits it to memory. Backs out. Opens the retreat app, relaunched the group program.

Tarik hands the tablet back.

TARIK (CONT'D)

You might want to restart it later.
It's running hot.

SUBSTITUTE

You're a lifesaver. Thank you.

He settles back on his cushion. Waits until the Substitute is focused on the group again.

SUBSTITUTE (CONT'D)

Okay, today we're going to talk
about the difference between shame
and guilt, and where we feel them
in our bodies. Guilt means you feel
bad because of something you did.
Shame means you feel bad-

Tarik opens his notebook low in his lap and quickly jots down the credentials.

INT. HOT SPRINGS - CHANGING AREA - NIGHT

Benches line the walls, shoes and boots tucked underneath.
Hooks hold towels, clothes, and robes.

Voices drift in faintly from the pools outside. No one in the room.

Tarik steps in, towel over his shoulder. Pauses, listening.

He moves to the first set of clothes, searching with his hands. Nothing.

Second set of clothes. Nothing. He moves to the third set. Finds a staff badge clipped to the waistband.

He watches the doorway as he unclips the badge, pockets it, and positions the clothes exactly the way he found them.

INT. STAFF WING - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

He walks the hall confidently, like he's supposed to be there. Past a young STAFF MEMBER coming out of their room. They don't even give him a second glance.

INT. STAFF WING - FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT

Tarik stops at the first locked door he found earlier. He holds up the stolen keycard. A soft beep. A tiny green light. The lock clicks open.

He opens the door. It's guest luggage. A few electronics safes. He closes the door.

He moves to the next locked door. Scans the keycard.

INT. FILE ROOM - NIGHT

Rows of file cabinets, a copier, and office supplies on racks.

Tarik enters. He works his way down the cabinets. Finds H.

He flicks through 'til he finds HAYES. The only papers in the folder are the release forms he filled out the first night.

He opens more drawers. Just release forms.

INT. TECH ROOM - NIGHT

A few modest server racks line one wall. A row of charging docks on a counter, each holding a tablet.

A single desk with a laptop. A swivel chair.

A soft beep and a click. Tarik opens the door and steps in.

He sits at the desk. Opens the laptop. The Finnton Recovery logo fills the screen.

User Name:

Password:

He enters sprtech and StillPines101184%. Login accepted.

The screen displays: STILL PINES RETREAT - SESSION DASHBOARD
 RESERVATIONS
 DEVICES
 CLIENTS
 SESSIONS
 METRICS
 VIPS

He clicks on CLIENTS. A list of alphanumeric IDs. He clicks on one at random: BF-199. Medical records, assessment reports.

He exits out. He clicks SESSIONS.

A schedule with more alphanumeric IDs, Dates, Session types, Somatic Rooms A, B, or C.

He clicks on the first one: AA-001-SOM-X-DEMO1. It's an hour-long session that displays a perfect 60bpm ECG throughout.

He sorts by date. Finds the session corresponding to Somatic Room A, 8pm the previous night: TH-327-SOM-A-09. He clicks on it. The ECG shows the momentary flatline in the middle.

He backs out to the main menu. Clicks CLIENTS. Finds TH-327.

Scans of his medical records. Reports. Vital signs. He clicks on a text file.

Medical terms like "dysautonomia," "parasympathetic nervous system function," and "bradycardia."

Psychological terms like "acute dissociative response" and "possible panic disorder." He takes a picture.

He focuses in on "tendency towards substance abuse," "moderate suicidal ideation markers." Takes another picture.

He backs out to the main menu. Clicks METRICS. Graphs and charts of the clients over the years, dividing them up into 4 categories: SCHOLARSHIP, SLIDING SCALE, STANDARD, VIPS.

He backs out to the main menu. Clicks VIPS.

A new screen, more alphanumeric IDs. He clicks one at random.

It opens a new screen: IP-146

"Objective: Must not go through with the merger."

"Therapeutic narrative: Client reported chronic anxiety, insomnia, and intrusive thoughts regarding upcoming merger."

"Through somatic and narrative work, client chose to withdraw from merger process. Merger was subsequently voted down.

Objective complete."

He scrolls all the way down. Finds TH-327. He clicks.

"Open Objectives:

1. Must not move production to India.
2. Cancel tablet redesign for next release.
3. Reassign future keynotes to COO.
4. Resign as CEO.
5. Doesn't return from Still Pines."

Takes another pic. Behind him, the door opens with a click.

He spins in the chair.

Sera stands in the doorway. For a split second she looks shocked. Then returns to her usual calm demeanor.

She steps inside and closes the door gently, but doesn't move closer. She reads what's on the screen.

TARIK

You gonna tell me this is all a big misunderstanding?

Her eyes stay on the screen.

SERA

No.

She looks at him now, still keeping her back to the door.

TARIK

Start talking. What does "doesn't return from Still Pines" mean? You gonna kill me? Or get me to kill myself somehow, is that it?

SERA

I've never been responsible for anyone's death and I'm not going to start with you. I don't know if you looked at the metrics. That's what I care about. How many people I can help.

Tarik shakes his head.

TARIK

This isn't treatment, it's mind control. You're not helping anyone.

SERA

It's just conditioning. I'm allowed to say no, and I have said no. When I looked over your files, everything I was sent...

(MORE)

SERA (CONT'D)

I don't know what moving the factories or the tablet redesign means, ethically. But I know if you leave here, keep going like you have been, you don't survive.

TARIK

Because of what you did to me?

SERA

Because of who you are. People like you don't live to your fifties. You have heart attacks. OD. Kill yourselves, either purposefully or accidentally. It's only a matter of time before your heart stops and doesn't start up again.

He points at "Doesn't return from Still Pines."

TARIK

What does it mean? Answer me.

SERA

To me, it means you stay here, live here, even work here if you wanted. If you didn't want to work for me, you could work remotely for just about any tech company on earth. Is that really so bad?

TARIK

Who's paying you for this?

SERA

Finnton Recovery. I don't know any more than that.

TARIK

And what do you get out of it? A deposit to an offshore bank account? You're not exactly living it up here.

SERA

Hitting all five objectives means I can fund a hundred and seventy people who never would've been able to come here. They go home sleeping better, not waking up screaming. They go back to jobs they can actually keep, with the tools they need to continue improving.

Her voice gets sharper.

SERA (CONT'D)

If you would've socialized with anyone else, you probably would've figured out that part on your own. Half the people here haven't had a vacation in a decade. They don't get time off and couldn't afford this if they did. Some don't even have health insurance. And treatment for mental health conditions?

She scoffs.

SERA (CONT'D)

You want to know why I didn't go into private practice? Because I only could've helped a handful of people a year and only those who could afford the privilege. Here I get to help *thousands*. I save lives, Tarik. You want objective data? Should I type up a spreadsheet?

He stares her down.

TARIK

At the cost of ruining my life.

SERA

Saving it.

She holds out her hand.

SERA (CONT'D)

Give me the keycard. Go cool off somewhere. I'll see you at your eight o'clock.

He stands, but doesn't give her the key card.

TARIK

For what? More of your sex mind control bullshit?

SERA

It accelerated your progress. But we can go back to what it's supposed to be, if you'd prefer. Breathing exercises. Biofeedback. Cognitive behavioral therapy.

TARIK

So you can hit more objectives.

SERA

I've always had your health in mind. You're sleeping better. Your heart rate's been holding steady.

TARIK

Except for last night. What did you do to me?

SERA

I told you before, it's your body telling you *it needs this*. And if you head home now, you're going to collapse again. Maybe you won't get up next time. Give me the keycard.

TARIK

Or what?

He takes a couple of steps toward her.

SERA

If you keep pushing this, I call security. They confine you to your cabin until Sunday. We file a police report. Your lawyer handles it, maybe you pay a fine, and everyone forgets it happened.

TARIK

When I get back, I'm going to talk. About Finnton. Your "VIPs." About what you did to get my numbers where you wanted them. You're the one who's going to need a lawyer.

SERA

If you go back, you'll go back to sleeping maybe three or four hours a night. Having panic attacks. Taking benzos. Passing out during presentations. Anyone looking at the cold, hard data is going to see that I'm the only person who ever really helped you.

She steps toward him, 'til she's inches away.

SERA (CONT'D)

I bet you download the Finnnton
Recovery app just to hear my voice
again. I recorded their nighttime
wind-downs. The 5-4-3-2-1 grounding
technique. Breathing techniques.

(leaning in, quieter)

But you'll have to come back to
Still Pines to get the real thing.

He stares at her. Thinks. Desperate for some way out of this.

He hands her the keycard and steps around her, out the door.

INT. LODGE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

He's breathing hard, panic in his eyes.

He heads for a stall. Closes the door. 49 bpm. He sits on the
toilet, steadying himself with a hand on the wall.

He pulls out his phone. Finds the SPR-STAFF wifi. Enters the
password. Gets on.

He opens his email. Composes an email to Allie: "They're
using mind control-" He deletes "mind control." Types
"conditioning." Deletes that, too.

"I found files-" then deletes it.

He stares at the screen. "If I don't come back Sunday-" and
stops. Deletes it.

He thinks. Still breathing hard.

He attaches the photos from Sera's journal and the
screenshots of the VIP dashboard. "See if you can figure out
what this means." Deletes.

He removes the VIP screenshots from the email, leaving only
the notebook pages attached.

Finally types: "Notes from someone at the retreat. I'll
explain when I'm back. I'm leaving tomorrow. Get a ride
service to pick me up. Text or email as soon as you make
arrangements." Hits SEND.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Tarik lies flat on his back in bed, eyes open. Checks his
watch. Low 50s bpm.

He sits up. Looks toward the bathroom shelf. RELAX. SLEEP. FOCUS. ENERGIZE. In a neat line like always.

He lies back down. Rolls onto his side, away from them.

CUT TO:

He checks his watch. 2:38am.

CUT TO:

He rolls over. Checks his watch. 4:56am.

CUT TO:

He's on his back, eyes open. Checks his watch. 6:11am. He sighs. Sits up. Looks like he didn't sleep at all.

He stands, then immediately sits back down. Checks his watch. 44 bpm.

He gets up very slowly, using the desk and chair to help himself up.

He re-examines the map of the lodge.

EXT. STILL PINES RETREAT - DAY

The cloud cover and snow make the sky a muddy dark grey. Snow falls heavier. There's over a foot of accumulation already.

Tarik carefully steps along a shoveled path, looking for any sign of cars in the driveway or movement in the parking lot. Just a few other guests walking toward the lodge.

INT. LODGE LOBBY - DAY

The moment he enters the lobby, his phone starts buzzing with notifications. Looks around, but the other sleepy guests don't notice anything.

He quickly walks down the hall.

INT. LODGE - SMALL GROUP ROOM - DAY

He enters a small room with a single table and 4 chairs. Locks the door behind him. He turns on "Do Not Disturb."

He looks through his email. Texts. Nothing from Allie yet.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

He eats at a table with a few other guests.

GUEST 14

I saw a bobcat yesterday! I feel like I stepped into a Disney movie.

GUEST 15

I know, right? Sitting in the hot springs with the snow falling in my hair is going to be something I remember for the rest of my life.

TARIK

Hey. Are any of you scholarship guests?

GUEST 14

Me.

GUEST 15

Me too.

GUEST 16

And me.

GUEST 17

Not me. Guess I make too much money. What a problem to have, right?

TARIK

It's been a good experience?

GUEST 16

I mean, the first few days were rough. Some of the sessions were pretty intense. I cried a lot. But I needed it. Don't regret it at all. I love it here, and I don't even like snow.

GUEST 17

There was that one guy who thought it was supposed to be an ayahuasca retreat. He sure was disappointed.

GUEST 14

I bet Ollie's still got a sheet of blotter left over from the sixties.

The guests share a laugh.

TARIK

Anyone have Sera for your somatic sessions? What'd you think?

GUEST 17

I didn't get much out of 'em, but I mainly came up here to unplug.

GUEST 15

They made me more aware of where I store tension, and how my breathing affects my mood.

TARIK

So, nothing that felt "off?"

Guests 15 and 17 gesture like they don't know what he's talking about.

GUEST 16

If you're not comfortable when they put a hand on you, you can always say red.

INT. LODGE - SMALL GROUP ROOM - DAY

Tarik looks through his email. An email from Allie: "None of the rideshare services are going up there 'til the snow clears. They told me Friday at the earliest. I even called up 10 different private cars. No one's willing to risk it."

INT. LODGE LOBBY - DAY

Tarik stands in the middle of the lodge in his coat, hat, and the red boots, his laptop bag over his shoulder. Guests sip tea and chat quietly.

TARIK

(loudly)

Is anyone heading out today?
Someone with tire chains? I'll pay cash for a ride down.

A few guests look up, but don't say anything.

TARIK (CONT'D)

Is anyone leaving? I just need a ride out of here. Please. I'll pay. Whatever you want.

Still nothing.

TARIK (CONT'D)
I'll pay anyone ten thousand
dollars to drive me to the airport.

A few guests laugh and whisper to themselves. Other guests stare. One pulls out their phone, filming.

Tarik glares at the FILMING GUEST but doesn't back down.

TARIK (CONT'D)
No takers? Fine. I'll buy any piece
of shit car in that parking lot for
a hundred thousand dollars. I'll
drive myself.

Lily comes out of the Intake Office.

LILY
(to Filming Guest)
Delete that now, or your access
will be rescinded.

The Filming Guest lowers their phone, but doesn't stop.

LILY (CONT'D)
Mr. Hayes, no one's taking you up
on it because the plows haven't
started clearing the roads. Even
with chains, you can't drive
through the snowdrifts.

TARIK
When do the plows come?

LILY
I don't know, exactly. *If* they come
today, and that's a big if, it'd be
in the afternoon. More likely
tomorrow or Friday. Might not even
be until Saturday.

TARIK
There's gotta be someone driving.
There are homes along the highway.
We drove past them on the way up.

LILY
They stay in until the plows come
through.

TARIK
Get my bag. I'm leaving.

LILY
Our driver won't be back until
Saturday.

TARIK
It's only a quarter mile to the
highway. I'll find a ride.

LILY
I just told you, the plows won't
even-

TARIK
Get my fucking bag so I can leave!

A wave of dizziness hits him. He checks his watch. 43 bpm.
He sinks to the floor, but stays conscious.
Lily hurries up the stairs.

CUT TO:

Sera and Lily come back down the stairs. Tarik's sitting on
the floor, his head between his knees.

Sera kneels beside him.

SERA
Are you all right?

He lifts his head and glares at her.

TARIK
(quietly)
I can't even talk about leaving
without feeling like I'm going to
pass out.

SERA
If it makes you feel better to
blame me, go ahead. Feel better?
(off his silence)
You look like you didn't sleep at
all last night. You shouldn't have
skipped your session. If you want
to take a nap, I can-

TARIK
No. I'm leaving.

SERA
You can't even stand up.

TARIK

I'll be fine as soon as I get out
of here. Get my bag.

SERA

You'll freeze before you get to the
highway. Even if you made it that
far, there won't be a single car
out there.

TARIK

Get my bag. Now.

Sera stands up.

SERA

Fine. I tried. We'll get your
luggage.

Sera nods to Lily. Lily heads back upstairs.

Tarik struggles to his feet, keeping an eye on his watch.

TARIK

You can bill me for the boots and
coat.

SERA

You'll only last so long on
adrenaline and denial. You're not
getting off this mountain and you
know it.

EXT. STILL PINES RETREAT DRIVEWAY - DAY

There's no shoveled path down the driveway. Tarik fights his
way through knee-deep snow, dragging his bag behind him. His
pants are already soaked to the knees.

He checks his watch. Heart rate in the 90s. He lets out a
breath that's almost a laugh.

He keeps pushing forward, confident he's going to make it.

Up ahead, the red torii gate materializes through the falling
snow. His smile falters.

He slows. Checks his watch again. 70s and dropping.

He forces himself faster. Breath louder now, almost a pant.

He keeps his wrist lifted where he can see it. 59. 57. 56.

His hands are shaking, his breathing erratic.

He crosses under the gate. His breathing turns into rapid, shallow gasps. His hearing dulls, replaced by a high ring.

He staggers forward a few more steps. 50. 47. 43.

Lets go of his bag. It tips and falls behind him. 40. 38.
Then a spinning error symbol.

His knees buckle. He pitches forward, face first into snow.

INT. SOMATIC ROOM - NIGHT

Tarik comes to on the padded table, naked under a pile of blankets. Sera lies pressed against him, one hand over his heart, the other gently caressing around his ear.

SERA

It's okay. You're safe. You're warm. Everything's okay.

He tries to orient himself, confused.

TARIK

What's going on?

SERA

You pushed too hard out there and your body said no. We found you fast and got you inside. You've been asleep for about six hours.

He glances at the 3-color sign by the door.

TARIK

It's the colors. You trained me like a fucking dog.

SERA

Your body's trying to protect you. I've only ever tried to help.

TARIK

I can't leave.

SERA

No.

TARIK

If I get in a car?

SERA
Your body won't let you.

He goes very still, eyes on the ceiling.

TARIK
So the only way off this mountain
is in a body bag.

SERA
It'll be okay. You're safe here.

TARIK
Stop saying that.

They stare at each other.

She traces a slow line along his cheek, like she's soothing a child. Then she kisses him.

SERA
(quietly)
You don't like my voice?

TARIK
No.

She nods. Then kisses him again, her hand drifting down his chest. He catches her hand before she can go lower.

SERA
What?

TARIK
You get paid for this too?

SERA
No one is paying me for this. I'm
here because I want you.

He glances to the tablet, his heart rate in the 60s.

TARIK
Turn that off.

SERA
I wanted to make sure you were
stable.

TARIK
Turn it off or get out.

He rips the sensor off his chest and tosses it onto the floor.

SERA
(quietly)
Okay.

She pushes herself up, reaches over, and turns off the tablet.

She starts to settle back under the blanket. He rolls over with her, his body settling over hers.

TARIK
You don't get to tell my body what
to do anymore.

SERA
Okay, tell me what-

He kisses her, stopping whatever she was about to say.

One of her hands comes up slowly, reaching for his chest.

He grabs her wrist and pins it to the table above her head.

TARIK
No breathing exercises. Don't tell
me how safe I am.

He pins her other wrist too, holding both above her head with one hand. His arm shakes a little.

TARIK (CONT'D)
Don't talk unless I ask you a
question.

She nods.

He kisses her and she raises her mouth to answer him without words.

He shifts his weight and eases into her, holding her gaze the whole time like he's daring his body to drop out again.

She exhales and almost speaks, the start of his name on her tongue. He tightens his grip on her wrist.

He sets a steady rhythm like he's trying to push his way through something that's been sitting on his chest for years.

For a moment fear flashes across his face, and his rhythm falters. He glances at the blank tablet out of habit, then forces his focus back to her.

She almost starts to speak. Bites her lip instead. She tilts her hips up into him, keeping him moving.

She lets out a soft moan, turns her face to the side, eyes squeezing shut.

TARIK (CONT'D)

Look at me.

Her gaze locks on his.

She breaks first with a choked gasp, her whole body tensing. He buries his face in her neck as he follows.

He stays over her for a moment, both of them shaking and breathing hard.

He finally rolls to his side, pulling the blanket back over himself. Puts space between them.

She stays on her back and doesn't try to close the distance.

TARIK (CONT'D)

I'm still leaving.

SERA

(quietly)

I know.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Grey light leaks around the curtains. Wind shudders against the windows.

His phone's alarm goes off. He wakes, shutting it off. 9am.

He pushes himself up slowly, watching the number on the watch. 60s bpm.

He stands without issue. Shakes his head like he wishes he wasn't better.

EXT. STILL PINES RETREAT - DAY

The storm has strengthened overnight. Snow in 4' drifts, still falling. The sky is a dirty grey.

Tarik trudges along the shoveled path toward the lodge, his laptop bag over one shoulder. Other guests shuffle the same direction in hats and scarves.

INT. LODGE LOBBY - DAY

A fire crackles in the fireplace. Guests murmur over tea.

A print-out has been taped to windows and distributed on the furniture.

Tarik picks up one of the print-outs from a coffee table:
DUE TO THE WINTER STORM, INTERNET AND LANDLINES ARE
TEMPORARILY DOWN. STAFF: INTERNAL NETWORK IS UNAFFECTED.
PLEASE KEEP USING TABLETS FOR SESSIONS.

He sets the print-out down and heads toward the hallway.

INT. LODGE - SMALL GROUP ROOM - DAY

Tarik slips in, closes the door, locks it. Drops into a chair and opens his laptop.

He pulls out his notebook, finds the credentials.

He connects to SPR-PRIVATE.

He types: admin.stillpines.local

The login page with the Finnton Recovery logo loads.

He types in the credentials. Hits enter.
STILL PINES RETREAT - SESSION DASHBOARD
RESERVATIONS
DEVICES
CLIENTS
SESSIONS
METRICS
VIPS

He clicks VIPS. Finds TH-327. Takes screenshots. Clicks on other VIPS. Takes more screenshots.

He opens his email. Tries to refresh. Spinning wheel. Nothing loads.

He opens a browser. Error message indicating no internet access.

INT. HALCYON ROOM - DAY

Ollie leads the group. Snow streaks the window.

OLLIE

With the storm, I know a lot of you
are feeling stuck. Literally and
emotionally.

A few guests murmur in agreement.

Tarik sits on a cushion near the back, knees drawn up, notebook closed.

OLLIE (CONT'D)

It's times like these where we start to think about what kind of life we want to come back to. What we want to change in our lives. Things we miss. Things we don't.

EXT. HOT SPRINGS - NIGHT

Snow falls in heavy flakes, glowing in lantern light. Steam rises off the pools.

Tarik sits with his shoulders under the water, back against the stone, eyes closed. His hair is wet, snowflakes melting as soon as they touch him.

Nearby, GUEST 18, in her 30s, lets out a blissful sigh. Tarik opens his eyes.

GUEST 18

I never want to get out. It's gonna be so cold.

A few people chuckle.

GUEST 19

They'll have to scoop me out with the skimmer.

Tarik actually smiles. Guest 18 turns to him.

GUEST 18

First time here?

TARIK

Yeah.

GUEST 18

Isn't it the best?

TARIK

Parts of it.

GUEST 18

Which parts?

He looks around. The rising steam. The snow clinging to the branches of the trees around them.

TARIK

This is pretty nice.

GUEST 18

The hot springs are my second favorite part. My favorite part is the fact that I literally can't answer a single email or phone call. Cat threw up a hairball? Kid doesn't want to take a bath tonight? Database down? Clients screaming? Who cares. I'm untouchable.

Tarik stares at the surface of the water, the way the snow melts as soon as it touches.

TARIK

Yeah.

(quietly)

Not being needed.

He tips his head back against the stone, closes his eyes, and lets himself sink a little more.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The dining room is warm and bright against the storm outside, the glass fogged at the edges.

Tarik stands with a plate in hand at a table with trays of cookies, pastries, and other desserts.

He puts one cookie on his plate. Considers. Adds a second dessert. Then a third. And a fourth.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tarik sits at a table near the window with Guests 14, 15, and 16. His plate is a graveyard of crumbs.

GUEST 16

I'm gonna miss this so much when I get home.

GUEST 15

The food most of all. I bet I gained a pound a day. But it's all organic and vegetarian, so I don't feel too bad.

GUEST 14

I'm worried I might be responsible for all this. My checkout was supposed to be today, but I kept praying for some way to stay longer. My bad.

The Guests laugh.

TARIK

I'll miss sleeping in. Sleeping in general.

(beat)

The hot springs.

(another beat)

Not feeling like I'm one mistake away from losing everything.

They nod.

GUEST 16

I'm dreading the "so, how was it?" questions. How can I even explain? I feel like this is what life was supposed to be like.

GUEST 14

Just say "Fine, thanks." Done.

GUEST 15

I'm just gonna tell everyone it was a cult. Hopefully it'll keep the prices lower. I don't know if I can get a scholarship again.

They all laugh. Tarik does, too, a little.

He reaches for the last cookie crumb on his plate, pressing it onto his fingertip, eating it like it's the last food he'll ever have.

He glances at the window. At his reflection faintly overlaid on the outside world. For a moment, he looks almost content. Not happy, but close as he'll ever be.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

He sits at his desk, writing in his notebook. Whatever he's writing is long, covering both pages.

He finishes with: "If I'm dead, it wasn't an accident or suicide. Hold Sera Corvin responsible."

He tears out a blank page. He closes the notebook and puts it in his laptop bag.

He tears the page into 5 smaller pieces, and writes SLEEP, RELAX, ENERGIZE, FOCUS, and SERA'S PILLS on the papers.

He pours pills from a wad of toilet paper onto the SERA'S PILLS sheet and tightly folds it up.

He pours two pills each from the SLEEP, RELAX, ENERGIZE, FOCUS bottles in his bathroom onto the other papers, and tightly folds them up.

He hides the paper-wrapped pills inside a pocket in his laptop bag.

He sets his watch on a watch charger. Pockets his phone. He puts on his coat and heads out.

INT. LODGE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tarik enters the empty bathroom. Goes in a stall.

He takes out his phone. Logs onto the private wifi. Tries email. Offline. Tries a webpage. Offline.

He records a video of himself.

TARIK

Whoever sees this, I really hope you're not Sera. In my cabin, there's a notebook in my laptop bag. Read the last pages. Test those pills. If I'm dead, it's because of Sera Corvin.

He pockets the phone while it's still recording.

INT. SOMATIC ROOM - NIGHT

The same padded table. The shelf with folded blankets. The 3-color sign next to the door. The tablet in its usual place.

Sera leans against the table, waiting.

She looks up as Tarik enters.

SERA

You showed up.

TARIK

Just following my schedule.

She studies him, trying to read his mood.

SERA
How are you feeling?

TARIK
Get on with it.

She blinks, then nods.

SERA
Shirt up.

He sits at the edge of the table and pulls his shirt up. She tapes the sensor to his ribs.

She taps the tablet. The familiar wavering line appears. 58 bpm. She sets the tablet down where he can see.

SERA (CONT'D)
Another one of *those* days. Lie back.

He does. She climbs carefully over him, straddling his hips. She glides her hand up his torso.

She notices his wrist is bare.

SERA (CONT'D)
No watch today?

TARIK
Battery died. I left it on the charger.

She glances at the tablet. 52 bpm. She lowers her mouth to his ear.

SERA
(quietly)
Stay with me. You're safe with me.
Right here. Just stay with me.

She kisses him slowly, her hand over his heart.

She guides him inside her. She starts slow.

SERA (CONT'D)
You're here. Safe. Inhale into my hand. Feel your body.

On the tablet, the heart rate starts climbing.

Tarik lifts a hand, sliding it up the back of her thigh.

TARIK

Were you scared when I passed out?

It comes out almost casual.

SERA

Of course I was scared. I care
about you.

She adjusts her hips slightly, keeping her rhythm smooth. The
line on the tablet climbs through the 60s.

SERA (CONT'D)

You think I'd enjoy watching
something like that?

TARIK

I think you enjoy having complete
control over someone.

SERA

I enjoy watching you survive.

On the tablet, his heart rate climbs into the 70s. She leans
in closer.

SERA (CONT'D)

Stay with this. My hand. My body.
Not the stories in your head about
what this means.

His arms wrap around her, pulling her in. He kisses her,
pushing everything else in the room out of the way.

One arm stays wrapped around her, the other caresses her
cheek. For a second, they hover in something that looks like
love.

Then he glances at the tablet. 80 bpm and climbing.

TARIK

You know what I keep thinking
about?

SERA

Don't think. Stay in your body.
Stay with what's real.

TARIK

Finnton Recovery Holdings. All the
little retreats like this one. All
the other VIPs.

Her hand on his chest tightens. Her rhythm falters for just a second before she forces it steady again.

SERA

Tarik-

TARIK

I bet the regulators would love a tour of this place.

SERA

Don't do this to yourself.

TARIK

No, this is what you did to me. I'm imagining walking into an office with a laptop full of case files. That line that says "Doesn't return from Still Pines."

SERA

Breathe with me. In for four-

TARIK

When people look up Sera Corvin, they'll find "sexual relationship with a patient." "Unlicensed."

Her hand presses harder against his chest without meaning to.

SERA

Stop. Stay in this. Right here.

He keeps his arm around her, and leans up just enough to bring his mouth to her ear.

TARIK

I'm going to go through that gate. Get on a plane. Talk about how I used you to get better and then I left you, begging and crying, because you thought I gave a shit about you. You're a paid service. You want to take away everything I worked for? I hate you, Sera.

Her hips stop moving. She shakes her head, tears welling up in her eyes.

SERA

Don't say that. Tarik-

He glances at the tablet. Heart rate jumps to 105.

TARIK
Red. I'm leaving.

She freezes, holding her breath. She stares at the tablet.
The line drops. 70s. 60s.

SERA
Listen to me. You're safe. Your
body is—

TARIK
Red. I'm calling the board. Red.
I'm doing the keynote. Red. I'm
moving the production out of China.

She grabs his shoulders. The heart rate on the tablet
continues to plummet. 50s. 40s.

SERA
Stay with me. You're safe. I'm
here.

TARIK
I'd rather be dead than spend
another minute with you. Red. Red.
Re—

Bpm 35. Then --. Flatline. His eyes close. His arm drops away
from her.

She scrambles off him. Watches the flatline on the tablet.

She pulls open the door.

SERA
(yelling)
Medical emergency, Somatic A!

She props his feet up with the table extension. Adjusts his
clothes, yanking the sheet up over his lower body, her hands
shaking.

She tries to elevate his legs with blankets.

Stares at the tablet. At the flat line. Her breath comes
shallow.

The door bangs open. Margo and Willow rush in, wide-eyed.

MARGO
Again?

WILLOW
What happened?

SERA

I don't know. He just dropped. No pulse. I think it's asystole. This time—

Her voice breaks. She forces herself to sound professional.

SERA (CONT'D)

Get the crash kit.

WILLOW

We don't have a—

MARGO

We have the emergency bag. I'll get it.

Margo bolts out.

Willow hovers, paralyzed, looking from Tarik to the tablet.

WILLOW

Should I call 911?

SERA

Do you have service? I don't. Are the landlines back up?

Willow fumbles her phone out with shaking fingers, dials.

WILLOW

Yeah, I got a bar.

(into phone)

We have a guest in cardiac arrest at Still Pines Retreat. No pulse.

Margo rushes back in with a faded orange duffel that says "EMERGENCY" in peeling letters.

She yanks the zipper. Inside: a blood pressure cuff, a pulse oximeter, a bag-valve mask still in plastic, and a laminated "CPR" sheet.

SERA

Jesus. That's it?

MARGO

We should start compressions.

She looks to Sera.

SERA

I'm not still certified. Are you?

Margo nods. Sera motions toward Tarik.

WILLOW
Shit, the call dropped.

She dials again.

Margo climbs onto a step stool, positions her hands wrong, then corrects them. Starts compressions, counting under her breath.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Yeah, it's Still Pines again. We're starting CPR, but we don't have a medical doctor on staff.

Willow puts her phone on speaker.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
(over speaker)
-need you to keep going with compressions until help arrives or until you are physically unable to continue.

SERA
The roads are closed. They haven't plowed yet. Can they get a helicopter up here?

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Not in the storm. Keep going as long as you can.

The scene is chaotic and sloppy. No AED. No real crash cart.

Sera skims a laminated CPR sheet with cartoon diagrams, fumbles the bag-valve mask over his face, squeezing too fast at first.

Margo's arms start to tremble.

MARGO
I can't—

SERA
Switch. I'll take over.

She climbs up, starts compressions herself. Her form is better, but still not great. She's openly crying now. Her tears drip onto his chest.

The tablet still shows the long, clean flatline.

Willow sobs in the corner, holding the phone, still on speaker. Margo leans against the wall, sweat-soaked.

Sera slows. Stops. Keeps her hands on his heart a moment longer.

She looks at the tablet. At the line. At his face.

WILLOW
(whispering into phone)
We couldn't- He's- I think we need
the sheriff... or coroner up here.
When you can get through.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
We'll get someone up as soon as we
can.

Willow starts sobbing again. She hangs up.

Sera powers off the tablet, not even trying to save the session. She stares at the black screen like she's looking for answers.

WILLOW
What... what do we do now?

SERA
We cover him. Secure the room. Wait
for the roads to clear.

Willow looks horrified.

WILLOW
We can't just leave him here. I do
sessions in here.

SERA
We'll move him somewhere secure
until the sheriff can get up here.

Sera pats down his pockets. Finds his phone, still recording.

WILLOW
Why was he recording your session?

SERA
I don't know. Doesn't matter now.

Sera stops the recording. Deletes it. Then opens his photos.

MARGO
What are you doing?

SERA

He accessed our private data. I'm making sure it doesn't end up anywhere else.

Finds the pictures of the dashboard, her journal. Deletes them all.

She hands the phone to Willow.

SERA (CONT'D)

Gather all his belongings, but his phone and laptop stay locked up in the safe. Someone from VectoryTech will be here to collect them.

Willow gives Sera a questioning look, but takes the phone.

SERA (CONT'D)

(quiet)

We'll wait until most of the guests are in bed. Have Fred block the hallway. Say he's cleaning. Then we move him. No one says anything about this. Understood?

Margo and Willow nod.

Sera reaches for a clean blanket, pulls it over Tarik's body.

INT. LODGE - SMALL GROUP ROOM - NIGHT

The same small group room where Tarik was earlier, the table now pushed against the wall.

Sera holds the door open.

Margo and the Maintenance Worker pull in Tarik's body on a sheet. They leave it in the middle of the floor.

MAINTENANCE WORKER

Shouldn't we- I don't know... The kitchen has a walk-in cooler.

SERA

The plows will come through tomorrow. This is... enough.

They leave. Willow brings in Tarik's luggage and laptop bag.

WILLOW

I double-checked his room. These are all his belongings. His laptop and phone are locked in the safe.

SERA

Thank you. You can go.

Willow takes one last glance at the body, then leaves.

Sera searches the compartments in Tarik's laptop bag. Finds his journal with all his sketches. She skims through it. Reads his final pages.

She continues to search his bag. Finds the pills tucked away in labeled folded papers. She pockets all of them.

She keeps searching his bag until she's finally satisfied she got everything.

Sera kneels down beside Tarik's body. She pulls the sheet away from his face.

She strokes his cheek, and gives him a kiss. A tear rolls down her cheek.

SERA (CONT'D)

I could've kept you safe.

She leaves, taking his notebook with her.

INT./EXT. LODGE LOBBY - DAY

Sunlight shines through the big windows. High snowbanks outside.

A Sheriff's SUV crawls up the plowed drive, chains clinking. Behind it, a white Coroner Van.

Sera steps out to meet them and points them toward the side entrance.

INT. LODGE - SIDE ENTRANCE - DAY

Sera opens the door for DEPUTY HARRIS, and a CORONER TECH follows, carrying a folded gurney.

DEPUTY HARRIS

I'm Deputy Harris, this is Ms. Martinez from the Coroner's office.

CORONER TECH
Morning.

SERA
Thank you for coming. This way.

INT. SMALL GROUP ROOM - DAY

Sera leads them in.

SERA
He collapsed during a somatic session. He had a history of vasovagal syncope and bradycardia, and had two other episodes during his stay.

DEPUTY HARRIS
You did CPR?

SERA
Yes, Margo and I both. We followed the emergency protocol, called 911, did everything they told us to do.

The Deputy nods.

The Coroner Tech unfolds the gurney, snapping the legs into place.

The Coroner Tech kneels beside Tarik, pulls back the sheet just enough to see his face and upper chest. Checks for any obvious injury.

CORONER TECH
(to Deputy)
Matches what dispatch sent over. Male, thirties. Collapse during treatment at about 20:10, no pulse when staff called 911. CPR was discontinued at 20:47.

The Deputy jots that in a small notebook.

DEPUTY HARRIS
His name?

SERA
Tarik Hayes. I can show you his cabin, if you'd like.

The Deputy nods, then eyes the luggage and laptop bag.

DEPUTY HARRIS

These his?

SERA

Yes, that's all his belongings except for his laptop and phone. A VectoryTech employee was going to come by to collect them. Company property.

The Coroner Tech unfolds the body bag on the mat beside Tarik.

The Tech and Deputy work together, turning Tarik's body, sliding the bag underneath, then rolling him into it.

They lift the bagged body onto the gurney, secure the straps.

CORONER TECH

Can you grab the bags and help me get him into the van?

DEPUTY HARRIS

Sure.

(to Sera)

I'll need statements from you and anyone who was present when he passed. Any other documentation on him would be helpful.

SERA

Of course. I'll wait in the lobby.

The Coroner Tech wheels the gurney out. The Deputy follows with Tarik's luggage and laptop bag.

INT. CORONER VAN - DAY

Chains crunch over packed snow and ice as the van winds down the mountain road.

In the cargo area, the body bag lies strapped to the gurney.

The zipper nudges down from the inside.

FLASHBACK - INT. LODGE - SMALL GROUP ROOM - DAY

Tarik works on his laptop. He clicks SESSIONS. Finds TH-327-SOM-A-09. Clicks.

A graph of the full session fills the screen, the brief flatline in the middle.

He clicks OPTIONS, then EXPORT DATA, then DUPLICATE.
NEW SESSION ID: TH-327-SOM-A-09(1)
STATUS: TEMPLATE ONLY - NOT LOGGED

He clicks EDIT.

A basic timeline editor. Time on the x-axis, heart rate on the y-axis.

He scrolls to the flatline. Studies the minute before. Hitting 89 before the jump to 105, then the crash. Counts the seconds between 105 bpm and the flatline.

He deletes the recovery after the flatline completely.

He copies a chunk of the flatline bar along the x-axis. Then pastes. Pastes again. Copies a longer portion. Keeps extending the flatline.

The flatline now runs for a solid sixty minutes. He hits SAVE.

A warning pops up: EDITING RECORDED DATA FOR DEMONSTRATION/TRAINING USE ONLY.

He clicks CONFIRM. Renames the file TH-327-SOM-A-11.

He backs out to the main menu. Clicks DEVICES. Finds SOMATIC-A. Scrolls through scheduled sessions. Clicks on the 8pm.

Finds a checkbox: DEMO MODE - USE RECORDED DATA. He checks the box.

A dropdown appears with all the sessions listed. He sorts, and selects TH-327-SOM-A-11. Then clicks OK.

The screen displays: "Scheduled playback: TH-327-SOM-A-11, 20:00-21:00."

He sits back. Then closes the laptop.

INT. CORONER VAN - DAY

Tarik unzips the body bag and gulps fresh air.

TARIK
Hey. Don't freak out.

The Coroner Tech slams on the brakes. The van lurches. She twists around, staring.

CORONER TECH
Fucking hell.

TARIK

Can you take me to the hospital? I
might pass out again.

The Coroner Tech stares another second, then grabs the radio.

CORONER TECH

(into radio)

Dispatch, this is Unit 4 from the
coroner's office. That body from
Still Pines is very much alive.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Tarik sits propped on a gurney, an IV in his arm. A NURSE
slips a blood pressure cuff off his bicep.

NURSE

108 over 75. Heart rate sitting
pretty in the sixties. Labs look
fine so far. Doctor'll be in to
clear you once your panel comes
back.

TARIK

Can you run a drug test or
something? I think maybe they were--
(catches himself)
I don't know what was in those
bottles they gave me.

NURSE

Did you experience symptoms that
would lead you to believe you were
drugged? Memory loss, slurred
speech, feeling unsteady or
uncoordinated?

TARIK

Not really, not like that.

NURSE

If you were altered we'd see it.
You're oriented. There's no order
in your chart for tox.

TARIK

I had samples of their pills in my
laptop bag. They took them, but--

She's already stepping away.

NURSE

If you feel lightheaded, use the
call button.

She leaves.

Deputy Harris steps in with a small notebook.

DEPUTY HARRIS

Mr. Hayes. Mind if I sit?

The deputy pulls up a chair without waiting for an answer.

DEPUTY HARRIS (CONT'D)

You gave them a hell of a scare.
Want to tell us why?

TARIK

They wouldn't let me leave.

DEPUTY HARRIS

In the middle of a snowstorm. I
listened to the call. Those three
women were scared to death, crying.

Tarik leans forward as much as the IV lets him.

TARIK

They call us VIPs, with
"objectives" assigned to us. I saw
the dashboard. She was trying to
reprogram me, make me quit my job
and stay there with her.

The Deputy finally scribbles something.

DEPUTY HARRIS

That "dashboard" you logged into.
You had authorization for that?

TARIK

They left the tablet unsecured.
Their admin passwords were in plain
text. I just—

DEPUTY HARRIS

(interrupting)

So you accessed their private data
without permission? Did you access
anyone else's medical information?

Tarik doesn't say anything.

DEPUTY HARRIS (CONT'D)

I don't have a psychology degree, but mind control in a week seems like a stretch. What I see is a high-stress guy going to a retreat, messing with their equipment, and scaring the hell out of everyone.

TARIK

Make them show you the VIP files. Test the pills they gave me.

DEPUTY HARRIS

Even if those files exist, they're protected health information. I can't just waltz in and demand to see them without a warrant. And nothing you've said gives me probable cause to go back up there and seize anything. But I talked to some of the other guests while I was there. One even showed me footage of you yelling in the lobby, almost passing out.

TARIK

They have my phone and my laptop. I want them back.

DEPUTY HARRIS

Still Pines logged them as company property belonging to VectoryTech. A lawyer from your company already arranged pickup.

TARIK

They're mine. There's evidence on them.

DEPUTY HARRIS

Then I'd get a lawyer. VectoryTech knows you faked your death. I don't think they're going to trust you with their equipment anymore.

(beat)

For what it's worth, everyone at Still Pines was incredibly relieved you were alive. Get some rest, Mr. Hayes.

The Deputy closes the notebook and leaves.

EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Automatic doors slide open. Tarik steps out with his luggage and laptop bag.

ALLIE (40s) stands just outside, looking equal parts tired and pissed off.

ALLIE
You look terrible.

TARIK
Thanks.

ALLIE
Come on. I parked in the short-term lot.

INT. ALLIE'S CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Allie drives, Tarik sits in the passenger seat.

TARIK
You got here fast.

ALLIE
It looks bad, Tarik. Deputy Harris called the office. Your board liaison is already talking to legal, so I figured someone should make sure you got back home without making a bigger mess of things.

TARIK
They have my laptop. My phone.

ALLIE
We have them. VectoryTech security got on a red-eye and picked them up from Still Pines first thing.

She reaches into the center console and pulls out an older smartphone with a cracked corner.

ALLIE (CONT'D)
Here. My old one. No SIM card yet, but better than nothing.

She drops it into his hand.

TARIK
Thank you.

ALLIE
Don't thank me yet.

He looks over.

ALLIE (CONT'D)
The board called an emergency meeting. They voted to remove you as CEO. "Temporarily." But like I said, it doesn't look good.

TARIK
I took screenshots and pictures. They're on my phone and laptop. They have them, if they just look-

ALLIE
What they saw was the video of you in the lodge lobby having a meltdown. The optics aren't great. Faking your death didn't help either.

He lets his head fall back against the seat.

TARIK
So that's it.

ALLIE
You're not exactly destitute. You're just not in charge anymore. "Temporarily."

TARIK
It was someone on the board. Maybe more than one. Bill, Steve, Andrew, they all told me go to Still Pines. They raved about it.

She glances over at him.

ALLIE
Jesus Christ, Tarik. I've been there. Most relaxing two weeks of my life.

TARIK
When did you go?

ALLIE
During my divorce. I probably mentioned it.

TARIK

Who told you to go there?

Allie side-eyes him.

ALLIE

No one told me. I looked for wellness retreats where I could unplug, and Still Pines was really highly rated. Not everything is a conspiracy.

Tarik takes a few unsteady breaths. Checks his watch. Allie notices.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

You need some Xanax? There's a bottle in my purse.

TARIK

I've got some.

ALLIE

Then take it. I'm serious, Tarik. You've done enough damage. Chill the fuck out.

INT. TARIK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tarik turns on the light. Leaves his luggage and laptop bag by the door.

He stands in the middle of the room for a long beat. Then approaches the window. It's loud. Sirens, helicopters, distant planes, honking horns, the sounds of traffic below.

INT. TARIK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tarik lies on his back in bed, eyes open. Lights off.

The phone sits on the nightstand. A benzo bottle beside it.

He rolls onto his side, reaches for the bottle. Shakes out a pill. Swallows it dry.

He closes his eyes. The noise outside gets louder.

He picks up the phone. 3:06am. Unlocks it. He opens the app store. Types: Finnton Recovery.

The Finnton Recovery app appears, with a 4.9 rating.

He clicks INSTALL.

He opens the app. Scrolls, finds: "Sleep Wind-Down." He taps it. Sets the phone on the nightstand.

SERA (V.O.)

Get into a comfortable position.
Feel the weight of your body
against the mattress. Take a deep
breath. Let your shoulders sink a
little deeper. Let your legs become
heavy. Your bed is supporting you.

His eyes close.

SERA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

There is nothing you have to do
right now. No decisions to make.
Nothing that needs your attention.
Just your breath and your body.
Breathe in for a count of four.
Hold it. Then exhale a little
longer.

His breathing starts to match her count.

SERA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In through your nose... and out
through your mouth, slowly, like
blowing through a straw. You are
safe.

He lets out a sound, almost a laugh, almost a sob, but
doesn't open his eyes.

SERA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If thoughts arise, let them float
away. Let the day go. There's
nothing more you need to do. Stay
with the feeling of being held.
Relax into the mattress. Feel it
holding you. Nothing else matters
right now.

His breathing starts to slow. The phone screen times out,
leaving the room in darkness while her voice keeps going.

He exhales and falls asleep.

THE END