



ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY BY
RUDI O'MEARA

WHAT IF THE END WAS NOT THE END
HEREAFTER

THIS FILM IS NOT YET RATED

HEREAFTER

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I/E. STATION WAGON/COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A battered silver Volvo wagon speeds along a windswept two-lane road in a heavy snow storm.

Up front, a pair of young parents (30s) stare dead ahead through the icy windshield, looking spent.

Like they've both just endured something tortuous.

A lonesome tune, Patsy Cline's "ALWAYS", burbles through static over the AM radio.

MOTHER

Oh, honey...

The woman in the passenger seat twists sideways, looks back toward a small girl seated alone in the backseat.

This is MAZZY (8).

Her flushed cheeks are glazed with hints of recent tears. And she holds a woven dog collar in her hands.

The light of the moon glints off a bone-shaped badge dangling from the collar.

Mazzy's dotting but frazzled MOTHER draws a breath, tries to find the right bundle of consoling words.

None come.

MAZZY

Did they hurt her?

Her stern but loving FATHER casts his eyes to the rear view mirror, keeps his hands at ten and two.

FATHER

Of course not, darling.

MOTHER

They just let Daisy... sleep.

Mazzy rubs her tiny thumb across the letters engraved on the badge. Daisy, all-caps.

MAZZY

What if she wakes up and we're not there? Won't she be...

Her parents share a quick sidelong glance.

MOTHER

She isn't going to wake up,
sweetheart. We've been over--

MAZZY

We shouldn't have left her alone. I
want to get her back. Take her--

FATHER

She's not coming home, kiddo.

Mazzy clutches the collar to her heart, crumbles back to the
verge of tears again. Bereft.

MOTHER

But she'll always be with you, with
us. In our memories.

Mazzy's father studies her in the mirror a bit too long.

To his left: a steep embankment above a vast, moonlit lake.
Only the shoreline appears to be frozen. Lake Tahoe.

FATHER

That's how it works, darling. When
the people we love pass on, we get
to hold them forever in our hearts.

Mazzy's chest spasms. She tries to hold it in, put on a
brave face, be a good girl.

MOTHER

It's okay, baby. She didn't feel
anything. At all. But it's okay if
you do. It's okay to--

SQUEAL.

Mazzy's father hits a patch of unseen black ice and the car
skids sideways across the oncoming lane, smashes into the
guardrail, and rockets skyward.

Mazzy's mother braces. Her father YANKS the wheel sideways,
fiercely over-corrects. But it's too late.

SPLASH!

The SMASHES through the ice, car hits the inky blue water,
tips instantly forward.

I/E. STATION WAGON/FROZEN LAKE - NIGHT

Water and ice wash over the windshield, blotting out the
moon as the car quickly sinks.

Stunned and bleeding from his forehead, Mazzy's father turns, slaps at his window with both palms. It won't budge.

Mazzy's mother, in a daze, unbuckles her seat belt, spins in her seat, reaches back to undo Mazzy's belt.

CLICK. It falls undone.

The water outside is everywhere. A roiling tempest of mercurial bubbles amid nothing but blackness.

Mazzy just stares, still clutching Daisy's collar.

MOTHER

Don't worry, baby. Don't worry
we're going to get--

Suddenly, the windshield SPLINTERS like a dropped piece of fine china. Water OOOZES in, slowly at first, then faster.

MAZZY

Mama?

Mazzy's father undoes his belt, looks to the sunroof.

It too begins to buckle and crack as the car dips further and further into the depths.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Mama!

The sunroof IMPLODES, sends a torrent of water cascading down into the car.

Mazzy's mother instantly disappears from view, thrown down by the glass to the flooded foot well.

Mazzy's father, frantic, reaches back across the seat, grabs Mazzy, PULLS her forward as the car rolls sideways.

The deluge briefly wanes.

FATHER

Hurry, baby. Hurry. Deep breath.

Mazzy, bewildered and terrified simply stares, shaking.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Deep breath!

She nods, sees her mother floating unconscious with a massive gash across her forehead.

MAZZY
Daddy?

FATHER
NOW!

All instinct, Mazzy gulps down a couple quick breaths before he roughly SHOVES her toward the flooded void.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE, UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Mazzy, still holding onto the dog collar, drifts out into the abyss as the car rolls again and then plunges swiftly deeper and deeper.

For the briefest of seconds, she glimpses her father's face through the driver's side window.

His expression is oddly calm. Resigned. Unable to affect the outcome. Almost content.

Mazzy lets go of the collar, begins swimming downward.

But the car is moving too fast. She can't catch it. Can't reach it. Can't save him, save them.

Her father looks away, can't bear it.

And, just like that, they're gone. Lost to the dark like a mirage, like the car was never even there.

Mazzy stops paddling, looks to the surface. It's a good twenty-five feet up.

She looks back down. Nothing. Looks back up. Moonlight.

In a frenzy, she paddles into the light. The waterlogged fabric of her dress ripples with every stroke. Her woolen sweater grips her arms and chest like chain-mail.

But the weight of it seems to pull her down, wills her to relent, to give in, to join her parents.

But she fights through it, continues pushing, pushing, pushing upward for the surface.

NURSE (PRE-LAP)
We're losing her.

Below Mazzy, Daisy's collar drifts lazily by.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Crashing, crashing, crashing.

Just as Young Mazzy's hands break the glassy surface, the eerie silence gives way to the frantic DIN of a bustling emergency room.

PRE-LAP: Sensors DINGING. People SHOUTING.

Young Mazzy GASPS and GAGS.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

A cluster of EMTs surround a gurney inside a ramshackle, clearly overused trauma center.

On the table: a GIRL (late teens). Arms extended, blouse ripped open, she's stone-still. Gone.

Above her, clutching paddles, stands another woman in rumpled scrubs and an N-95. Her chest heaves. But her eyes are vacant. Empty.

Elsewhere by choice.

SUPER: TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER

The woman, a clearly older MAZZY (now mid-30s), drops the paddles, lowers her mask.

MAZZY

Mark it.

She's hardened. Seen too much. Walled herself off. Blotted out decades of despair. Tamped it down.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Time of death...

Her eyes drift to an old-school wall clock.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Eleven forty-seven.

She turns, rips off her blue rubber gloves, steps on the handle of a nearby bin, tosses them in.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

I'll tell the parents.

On autopilot, the adrenaline waning, she pushes through a pale yellow curtain, disappears.

STELLA (PRE-LAP)

But what'd you tell him?

The constant chaos of the E.R. incongruously gives way to the CLATTER of a bustling coffee shop.

PRE-LAP: Plates CLINKING. Milk FROTHING. People LAUGHING.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Still in her turquoise scrubs and battered Crocs, but now wearing a tight-fitting gray fleece hoodie, Mazzy, looking wrecked, lifts a steaming coffee cup to her chapped lips.

MAZZY

I said I couldn't. Didn't want to.
Didn't need to.

The woman across from her, STELLA (30s) eyes her up and down incredulously, not believing her answer.

Unlike Mazzy, she's dressed to the nines. Like a boss.

STELLA

Why the fuck not?

Mazzy tips her cup, swallows.

MAZZY

Last thing I want now is to get
married. Settle down. Commit.

STELLA

Are you insane?

It's not the first time Mazzy's been asked this question.

STELLA (CONT'D)

He freaking loves you, babe. What's
there to think about?

Mazzy slowly lowers her cup to its saucer.

Her face says it all. *Everything, all the time.*

STELLA (CONT'D)

What is it?

MAZZY

What do you mean?

STELLA

With you? Right now. Same shit?

Mazzy pulls her fleece straight, crosses her legs.

MAZZY

Yeah. We just, um, well... We lost two. This morning.

Stella knows exactly what this means.

STELLA

Oh, babe.

MAZZY

Cardiac arrest. Overdose. Forty-seven. And seventeen.

STELLA

Anybody ever tell you, working graveyard at a trauma center isn't likely the best way to deal with your own trauma?

A brief moment of sombre silence passes between them.

Stella breaks it first, SLAPS the table with her hands.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Anyway, I've said it before and I'll say it again. You can't find happiness if you don't *actually* let yourself be vulnerable, Maz.

(beat)

Especially with Kaleb.

Stella rips a hunk off her scone, plucks it between her ruby red lips, chew/smirks, tries to change the vibe.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Life's short. As you well know. Today especially. And love, well, it ain't safe. It's not pretty. It's complicated, messy. But it's worth it. Most of the time.

(swallowing)

Plus, I so completely called it. What'd I say when you moved in?

MAZZY

I know...

STELLA

That it'd only be a matter of time.

MAZZY

I just--

STELLA
And, God. His place is, like,
infinitely superior to that spooky
little hovel of yours on Hayes.

Mazzy discretely looks to her wrist, checks the time.

MAZZY
Still can't figure out how to turn
off the lights. So complicated.

Stella reaches for her iced coffee.

STELLA
You're welcome, by the way.

MAZZY
Thank you.

STELLA
Hugh is gonna flip out.

MAZZY
Don't tell him.

STELLA
Why not?

MAZZY
I don't wanna make a big...

Mazzy trails off, lifts her cup defensively to her chest.

STELLA
Hugh probably only introduced you
to his BFF to keep an eye on you.

Mazzy SIGHS into her steam.

STELLA (CONT'D)
(air quotes)
I'm not 'serious' enough for him.
And thank fucking god for that.

Stella looks away, seems to notice someone familiar passing
by down the sidewalk outside. Another attorney type.

STELLA (CONT'D)
You better drop to one knee, say
yes, and take that ring tonight, or
I'll scream bloody murder.

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

The first lulling, low-fi, downbeat bars of an early 1970s POP SONG unfurl slowly over the sound system of a packed and dingy Chinatown Karaoke bar.

The place is long and narrow. Almost claustrophobic. Lots of neon and way too many leftover Christmas lights. Bits and pieces of paper parade dragons hang from the ceiling.

At the far end of the bar, Stella sits hunched over shots next to Mazzy.

Mazzy has traded her scrubs for a black cocktail dress, chunky boots, and a well-worn leather jacket.

Stella pounds a shot, turns toward a young man swaying on a small stage about ten feet from the end of the bar, SHOUTS:

STELLA
Go on already!

The man on-stage has a microphone in one hand and is bathed in thin shafts of light cast by a spinning disco ball.

STELLA (CONT'D)
DO it! DO it! DO it!

To her left, a bearded CTO-type in skinny jeans and a charcoal hoodie, lifts his beer, wags his head side-to-side.

This is HUGH (30s) Stella's self-serious better half. His eyes are on Mazzy. Barely disguised longing.

HUGH
One hundred percent not my idea.

Mazzy takes a sip, tries to hide her mortification.

STELLA
Told you, babe. He's the one.

Over her shoulder, the young man on the stage, KALEB (30s) lifts the mic to his lips, SINGS:

KALEB
You know I need your love...

That's right: Gerry Rafferty's "RIGHT DOWN THE LINE".

KALEB (CONT'D)
You've got that hold over me.

Drunken RANDOS down the bar HOOT and HOLLER.

KALEB (CONT'D)
*When I wanted you to share my life,
I had no doubt in my mind.*

Mazzy's cheeks flush. She bites her lip, won't look up.

KALEB (CONT'D)
*And it's been you, woman,
Right down the line.*

Even though Mazzy won't, we can't stop looking. He's a vision. Spellbinding in his earnestness and scruffy charm.

High cheekbones. Floppy hair. Devil may care commitment.

STELLA
(to Mazzy)
Don't be an idiot.

Kaleb, his eyes locked on Mazzy's slouched profile, steps off the stage, slinks closer, ignores the monitor, SINGS with all his heart:

KALEB
*I know how much I lean on you.
Only you can see.*

Hugh looks to Stella, smiles. *This fucking guy...*

KALEB (CONT'D)
*The changes that I've been through
Have left a mark on me.*

Now Kaleb's lips are only inches from Mazzy's ears.

KALEB (CONT'D)
*You've been as constant as the
Northern Star.*

She finally turns, locks eyes with him.

KALEB (CONT'D)
The brightest light that shines.

Her face says it all: *I don't deserve you, jerk.*

Kaleb flashes her a puckish grin, spins, heads back to the mic stand on the stage in the swirl of spinning lights.

KALEB (CONT'D)
*It's been you, woman,
Right down the line.*

Mazzy finally downs the last of her shot, pours herself off her bar stool, saunters across the sticky floor toward him.

Kaleb slips the mic back into the stand, and, together, they belt out the CHORUS in total harmony:

MAZZY
*I just wanna say
 This is my way
 Of tellin' you
 Everything I could
 Never say before.*

KALEB
*I just wanna say
 This is my way
 Of tellin' you
 Everything I could
 Never say before.*

A wave of DRUNKEN APPLAUSE ripples through the space like a whirlwind. Hugh crosses his arms.

Kaleb steps back, looks to Mazzy, brimming with love, as she waveringly takes up the next REFRAIN solo:

MAZZY
*Yeah, this is my way
 Of tellin' you
 Everything I could
 Never say before.*

There is no way in hell these two shouldn't spend the rest of their long lives together. They're perfect.

Kaleb kisses her gently on the forehead, relinquishes the stage, traipses in time back to the bar.

Caught off-guard, Mazzy hesitates like a sleepwalker rudely awakened by a sudden sound.

As Kaleb takes her seat, Stella (as promised) SCREAMS:

STELLA
 GO girl!

With the song's bridge SWELLING behind Mazzy, Kaleb downs what's left of her beer.

No one else on Earth could love Mazzy more.

On cue, he lifts one hand, points her way.

She doesn't even bother with the monitor, knows the lyrics entirely by heart:

MAZZY
*'Cause you believed in me
 Through my darkest night.*

STELLA

Woo-hoo!

MAZZY

*Put something better inside of me.
You brought me into the light.*

Kaleb spins on his stool, eyes her proudly. *That's my girl.*

MAZZY (CONT'D)

*I threw away
All those crazy dreams.
I put them all behind.*

She lifts her gaze to his.

It's as if there's no one else in the neon-lit space but the two of them. Eternally bonded.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

*And it was you, boy,
Right down the line.*

Mic drop.

FEEDBACK. CHEERING. CLINKING GLASSES.

SLOW FADE TO:

INT. DONUT SHOP - NIGHT

Mazzy, Kaleb, Stella, and Hugh sit clustered tightly around a tiny table inside a garishly lit all-night donut shop doing their best to soak up the alcohol.

The place looks like a cheap Edward Hopper painting. A glowing glass box jutting out into the rain slicked streets.

HUGH

(slurring slightly)

See, now that's where you're wrong.

Hugh takes a ferocious bite out of a bear claw, washes it down with a huge gulp of milk from a red and white carton.

HUGH (CONT'D)

(to Kaleb)

With enough input, enough data, our model could *totally* replicate every aspect of a person's conversational style with almost perfect fidelity. Their syntax, their idiosyncratic malapropisms, their tone, their tics, their entire essence.

Across from him, Kaleb and Mazzy hold hands beneath the table. Both look like they'd very much rather be anywhere else but here, together (alone).

HUGH (CONT'D)

Let people leave behind a digital avatar of themselves so that their family has a lasting entity that they can interact with forever.

STELLA

What, isn't figuring out how to delete someone's Insta enough?

HUGH

Listen, I'm just sayin'...

He wolfs down another gargantuan bite.

HUGH (CONT'D)

(mouth full)

We ship that app and you can finally tear down that creepy old place Maz's parents built up on Carnelian Bay and build the epic ski cabin we all deserve. Especially me.

Stella, mortified and bored (and already far too sober for her liking) just glares at the oaf.

STELLA

(to Mazzy)

How'd I end up with this one, huh?

Mazzy continues gazing dreamily at Kaleb. It's the calmest, least guarded we've seen her. Enraptured.

MAZZY

Aw, he means well. I think.

HUGH

(still to Kaleb)

Your dad should've totally full-on funded this work, dude. It's, like, a hundred percent up his alley. The Institute's alley. You know?

Kaleb pinches up a donut hole, lazily plunks it into Mazzy mouth, looks like all he wants to do is kiss her.

MAZZY
(chewing)
Speaking of, when do I get to meet
Herr Maier?

STELLA
You still haven't met his dad?

Kaleb doesn't break eye contact with Mazzy.

KALEB
He's a very busy man.
(toward Hugh)
And, for your information, I've
already given it a shot. On the
side. Doesn't work.

HUGH
Wait. What? You have?

KALEB
Trained it on myself.

He picks up a carton of milk with his free hand, passes it
to Mazzy like it's a waxy container of the finest champagne.

KALEB (CONT'D)
Even with a hundred and eighty
billion parameters and my entire
chat history plus every known
snippet of audio and video of me
dating back to before I can
remember: home movies, school
plays, podcast appearances, even
that disaster at CES.

Mazzy empties the milk carton, wags her head discretely
toward the door. *Let's go, pretty boy.*

KALEB (CONT'D)
It just wasn't the same.

Kaleb eagerly SCOOTs his chair out, stands, doesn't let go
of Mazzy's hand.

Hugh's eyes drift instantly to their firm embrace. Even
Stella notices his brief envy. It's hard to miss.

But Kaleb and Mazzy miss it entirely.

KALEB (CONT'D)
(dreamily)
Absence may make the heart grow
fonder. But presence is what makes
it beat.

A tiny hint of a COUGH rattles his chest. He thinks nothing of it, guides Mazzy up and away from the table.

MAZZY
(drunkenly)
Bless you, fine sir.

As they tumble toward the door, wound tightly together, Hugh and Stella just watch.

STELLA
Put a ring on it!

DING. DING.

The old-school bell on the door rings. And Mazzy flashes Stella her bare middle finger as she and Kaleb dance their way over the threshold and out.

Hugh, looking stung, pushes the bear claw slowly away.

HUGH
This is a billion dollar idea.

Stella, looking ill, puts a napkin over the mauled donut as if she's covering a corpse.

STELLA
C'mon, mister money man. I've got a
deposition at nine-thirty.

SCREECH. She stands, wobbles, heads for the door.

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Mazzy and Kaleb paw at each other as they trip and twirl across the wide plank hardwood floors of Kaleb's massive penthouse apartment.

The place is spectacularly posh. Floor-to-ceiling glass. Velvet. Marble. Unimaginably expensive modern art.

But none of that matters. Not now anyway.

Instead, breathless, almost feral kisses land on lips and necks and cheeks and earlobes as bits of clothing fall.

KALEB
Well?

MAZZY
Well what?

Kaleb glides the zipper of her dress down her spine: ZIPPPP.

KALEB
You said you'd think about it.
Her dress collapses at her feet.

MAZZY
I'm still thinking.
She pulls his shirt up over his head, tosses it away.

KALEB
And that's why I love you.
He bites her bare shoulder.

KALEB (CONT'D)
But...
She tugs his belt free.

MAZZY
But what?
His jeans drop.

KALEB
What am I going to have to do to
convince you?
She smiles, runs her hands over his bare chest.

MAZZY
Well, for starters, introduce me to
your dad.

Another faint COUGH ripples his torso.

Her face shifts from eager anticipation to clinical
curiosity. Then vodka-muddled concern.

INT. PENTHOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kaleb TWISTS her around backward, guides her toward the bed.

It's enormous. And the cream-colored upholstered headboard
runs nearly the entire width of the room.

Above it: a Basquiat. Because, of course.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Or at least let me bring that pink
chair you made me put into storage.

KALEB
(to the ceiling)
Bah. Bedroom lights to ten percent.

Every light dims.

MAZZY
Oh, that's how it works.

She spins him back around to face her again. Their lips are
only inches apart.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
I just need to know you don't have
any skeletons in the closet.

KALEB
Which one? There are so many to
chose from.

MAZZY
How can you afford this dump again?

KALEB
Ask Hugh. He's the money. I'm just
the brains.

Mazzy rolls her eyes as she pulls him with her down onto the
bed and slowly out of frame.

Out the window, the lights of The Bay Bridge flicker like
precious gemstones glinting on black satin.

SLOW FADE TO:

INT. PENTHOUSE, BEDROOM - DAWN

Mazzy and Kaleb lie wrapped around each other in a tangle of
white sheets as the sun slowly rises outside.

Fifty plus stories below, the fog-shrouded city gleams.

MAZZY
How could I marry you? I haven't
met a single person you're related
to yet. Not one.

KALEB

And?

MAZZY

I just... I never got that.

Something shifts in Mazzy's expression. A hint of sadness, grief. But she quickly tamps it down, pushes it away.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Plus, I need to hear some 'oh my god you won't believe what he wore to junior prom' stories. See some fucked-up photos. Get some dirt.

KALEB

Well, you won't get that from my dad, that's for sure. Or my sister.

She pushes back, studies him briefly.

MAZZY

Wait. You have a sister?

KALEB

Yeah. Twin sister. We don't talk.

This is definitely news. It changes the mood entirely.

Kaleb reaches up, touches a small, convex, mirror-polished silver pendant attached to a chain around his neck.

KALEB (CONT'D)

She made me this, at camp. Seventh grade. A *hexenspiegel*. Meant to ward off evil spirits.

He clears his throat. His chest rises and falls.

KALEB (CONT'D)

We were inseparable, as kids. But then she went off the deep end after Mom died.

Kaleb draws a shallow breath, COUGHS again. This time louder, harsher. Raspier.

MAZZY

How long have you had--

KALEB

It's just allergies.

He tries to pull her closer.

MAZZY
Doesn't sound like--

He cuts her off, changes the subject:

KALEB
When Dad moved out, he gave her the house we grew up in. Up in Marin. And she's been living there like a shut-in crazy cat lady ever since.

He runs a hand over her exposed shoulder, looks like he wants to say more, doesn't.

KALEB (CONT'D)
There. That's my skeleton in the closet. The only one.

Beat.

MAZZY
Did you really try making it? That dumb app that Hugh was on about?

Kaleb draws a breath. Looks suddenly winded and pale.

KALEB
Yeah.

MAZZY
Because of your mom?

He nods, inhales again, looks like he can't get enough air.

KALEB
(straining slightly)
After she died, I just found myself having these, like, never-ending, conversations with her in my head all the time.
(deep breath)
I just wanted to ask her what I should do with my life. What kind of girl I should marry. What the fuck to do about Dad. About the whole deal.

MAZZY
What whole deal?

Kaleb slowly swivels away, stands.

KALEB

She would've loved you. Would've
thought you were perfect.

He crosses the room toward his shirt on the floor. Oddly,
now he limps ever so slightly.

Mazzy clocks it immediately, looks to his right calf.

It seems oddly swollen.

MAZZY

Wait, what's wrong with your--

Kaleb, probably more than a little drunk still, ignores her.

KALEB

But I think, well, I think she
would've seen all the same things I
see in you immediately.

As he bends to pick up his shirt, he GROANS. In pain.

KALEB (CONT'D)

Your sadness. Your total commitment
to helping the least of us first.

He lifts his wrinkled shirt, slides both arms in. Every
movement seems to require herculean effort.

Mazzy sits up in bed, equal parts alarmed and hung-over.

KALEB (CONT'D)

Your terrible singing voice. Your
messiness. Your total inability to
just relax and smell the roses.

He turns to face her, pale as a ghost.

KALEB (CONT'D)

To love and be loved.
(slow inhale)
Unconditionally. By someone who--

KA-THUMP!

He instantaneously crumples to the floor like a puppet whose
strings have been unceremoniously cut.

MAZZY

K?

She pushes herself to her feet, frantic.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Kaleb!

On his back on the ground, Kaleb MOANS lightly. She rushes to his side, skids across the parquet.

KALEB

(disoriented)

I can't... see?

All-business, she rapidly checks his pulse, lowers her ear to his lips, checks his airway, looks up.

MAZZY

Where's your phone? Where's your--

KALEB

What?

She sees his jeans, strains to grab them, slides them over.

MAZZY

You just passed out. We need to get you to the hospital, now.

She pads one pocket, finds something, pulls it out. It's a small black velvet box. A ring box. For her.

KALEB

Maz?

MAZZY

I'm here, baby. I'm here.

She flips his jeans over, finds his phone, fishes it out.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

What's the code? For your phone?

KALEB

Twelve, twelve, six, five. Mom's--

She rapidly stabs at the screen. It unlocks. She dials 911.

MAZZY

(into the phone)

I need an ambulance. 181 Freemont, San Francisco. Unit 57B. Top floor. Possible code gray. Difficulty breathing. Persistent cough. Swollen right calf. No sign of apparent bruising or--

(MORE)

MAZZY (CONT'D)

(beat)

Have the E.R. at C.P.M.C. Van Ness
ready immediate tPA--

(beat)

What? No. I'm staff. Yes. Yes.
Please hurry.

She hangs up, clocks the time. *We need to go.*

Mazzy's eyes drift to the box on the floor.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

It's okay, baby. They're gonna take
good care of you.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - MORNING

Back in her scrubs again but still sporting matted hair and last night's make-up, Mazzy rushes through hospital hallways flanked by burly EMTs.

Kaleb, on oxygen, is strapped beneath a blanket to a rolling gurney. An INTAKE NURSE with a clipboard takes his vitals.

MAZZY

Thirty-three year old male.
Intermittent cough. Obvious
swelling, right calf. No signs of
bruising or internal hemorrhage.

BANG! They bust through a pair of doors and into a crowded space partitioned by canary yellow curtains.

Every passing STAFF MEMBER regards Mazzy with concern.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Run an ultrasound ASAP. D-dimer
STAT. Then, angiography of the
chest. Possible code gray.

INTAKE NURSE

Maz?

MAZZY

Check his lungs for P.E.s and get
him on either Enoxaparin or tPA
within the hour, yes?

The nurse wheels a barely conscious Kaleb into one of the curtained spaces.

INTAKE NURSE

Does he have a DNR?

The nurse loudly draws the curtain behind them closed.

WHOOSH.

MAZZY

I don't... know.

INTAKE NURSE

Do you have POA?

MAZZY

(slurring slightly)

What? No. I...

INTAKE NURSE

We need you to notify his next of
kin as soon as--

Mazzy shakes her head to sober up.

MAZZY

But I'm his... fiancée.

The nurse narrows her eyes, leans in close, sniffs.

INTAKE NURSE

(under her breath)

Are you... *drunk*?

MAZZY

No, no. No, I...

The nurse averts her eyes, mortified.

INTAKE NURSE

I need you to call whoever you can
and get cleaned up. You smell like
a distillery and look like shit.

Mazzy, busted, nods, slowly pulls out Kaleb's phone.

The nurse eyes her up and down, used to steely competence,
not glassy-eyed panic masked by drunken instructions.

INTAKE NURSE (CONT'D)

Go home. Get yourself together.
Come back. We'll keep him stable.

Mazzy looks to the phone, then to her feet. Ashamed.

The nurse quickly withdraws without another word.

KALEB
 (weak smile)
 Fiancée, huh? Nice.

Mazzy's normal reserve, her armor, melts.

KALEB (CONT'D)
 And fuck her. You're fine.

Still clutching his phone, she collapses to his chest, then kisses him lightly on the cheek.

MAZZY
 Don't worry.

KALEB
 I'm not worried. I'm engaged.

MAZZY
 I'll call your dad.

KALEB
Grrreat.

MAZZY
 Hey. At least now we'll meet.

A CODE CALL comes in over the P.A. system:

INTAKE NURSE (V.O.)
 Code Stroke, E.R. Repeat. Code
 Stroke, E.R.

Kaleb's face stiffens.

KALEB
 So, not allergies, huh?

It looks almost as though Mazzy might cry. But she won't.

Can't. Not now.

EXT. LABYRINTH - MORNING

As the morning fog melts off, Mazzy speed-walks the stone labyrinth just outside the hulking gray concrete walls of the hospital lobby.

She clutches Kaleb's phone in one hand and the little black ring box in the other.

MAZZY
 It's gonna be... He's gonna be--

She slows, lifts the box, cracks it open. A surprisingly sizable diamond glints in the pale light.

She GASPS, closes the box. Can't look at it.

Finally a tear falls. And with the tear, a memory:

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Mazzy's parents' car plunges slowly deeper and deeper into the inky black darkness of the frozen lake.

And, as it goes, we see her father's oddly calm face again.

Mysteriously content, he peers back at us through the driver's side window.

A young man full of love taken too soon.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. LABYRINTH - MORNING

Mazzy pockets the ring box, roughly wipes the tear from her cheek, lifts Kaleb's phone, unlocks it.

On screen, a contact card reading: DAD.

She closes her eyes, draws a quick breath, lifts her own phone, dials the number on-screen.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - LATER

Having not gone home, having not changed, still a bleary-eyed, hungover mess, Mazzy stands at Kaleb's bedside.

Opposite her stands an imposing and imperious, well-dressed man with silver hair and chiseled features.

This is VICTOR MAIER (60s) Kaleb's father.

Instead of looking to the sunken figure of his now alarmingly frail son, he regards Mazzy condescendingly.

VICTOR
Occluded?

MAZZY
Blocked.

VICTOR
I know the term.

MAZZY

A massive blood clot from his ankle
to his hip. It must have been
shedding pulmonary emboli...

She looks to him to make sure he's following. He nods.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

...sending them to his lungs.
Possibly to his heart. For days.
Maybe weeks, judging by the damage
to both of his--

VICTOR

Thus the sedation?

MAZZY

Thus the sedation. Until we can--

KALEB

(faintly)

Father?

Victor doesn't break eye-contact with Mazzy.

VICTOR

I'm here, my dear boy.

WHOOSH!

The curtain behind her ripples open to reveal a winded and
frantic Stella and Hugh.

STELLA

We came as quick as we--

HUGH

Oh, Mister Maier. I didn't--

Victor stares at them blankly. Like a shark.

MAZZY

Stella, Hugh. Victor, Kaleb's...

KALEB

(delirious)

...keeper.

Hugh thrusts a hand out. There's some sort of history here.

Victor shakes Hugh's hand dismissively.

STELLA
(to Mazzy)
How is he?

MAZZY
Could be worse. But stable. His
lungs are, well...

She trails off, not knowing how to spin it.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Should be able to get him in for
thrombolysis to break up the clot,
put a filter in his vena cava to
make sure nothing more--

Hugh finally looks to his barely conscious friend and
business partner on the gurney, doesn't like what he sees.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
I need to go home, get cleaned up,
grab a few things. Can you take me?
I don't want to be gone too long.

STELLA
Of course. What else can we do?

Mazzy looks to Victor. Victor nods.

VICTOR
I will stay with him.

MAZZY
Okay.

Her voice cracks. Stella notices, wraps her up in her arms.

STELLA
Thank god you were there.

Mazzy does her best to wall herself back off again.

From the gurney, Kaleb MUMBLES again, faintly:

KALEB
We don't get to choose how long we
have, only how we spend it.
(weak breath)
Isn't that right, Father?

His words send a shiver down everyone's spine but Victor's.

VICTOR
Go. I'll be here.

Mazzy kisses Kaleb gently on the forehead, turns to go.

MAZZY
I'll be right... back.

Stella slowly guides Mazzy through the curtain. Hugh hesitates for a brief moment, then follows them out.

Finally Victor looks to his son, crosses his arms.

After a brief moment, the curtain to his right swirls open again. And two SHADOWY FIGURES enter.

We can't see their faces.

Victor looks up. His face is as blank as the wall behind him is white. A cypher.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Prep him.

INT. PENTHOUSE, CLOSET - LATER

Mazzy, in a dazed rush, downs coffee, grabs her charger and anything else she can think of inside an obscenely large closet, shoves everything into a open satchel.

She's desperate to clear her head, return to vigilance.

CHIRP. CHIRP.

A muffled mobile phone buzzes.

INT. PENTHOUSE, BEDROOM - LATER

She looks up, crosses toward a dresser on which sits Kaleb's phone. And the now discarded ring box.

She lifts the phone, taps the screen. Nothing. It's dead.

CHIRP. CHIRP.

Another muted ring tone from further off.

She turns, spies her fleece jacket draped over the overstuffed bench at the foot of their still unmade bed.

CHIRP. CHIRP.

She rushes across the room, finds her phone, unlocks it.

On the screen, two letters:

O.R.

Perplexed, she hurriedly picks up. We don't hear the other end of the conversation.

MAZZY
Hello? This is. Yes. Yes.

Silence. Her face shifts. It looks as though she's had the wind knocked out of her.

A sudden, irrevocable shock.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
What?! No, no.

Her lower lip quivers.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
You can't... That can't--

Almost exactly like Kaleb did, she scissors to the floor.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
I just-- When?

Long, deathly silence. Mazzy just nods.

He's gone.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Okay. I, uh... No, no. I--

More tears fall. She can't stop them. Can't even feel them.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Yes. Yes. Wait, what? He what? But
that's not--

INT. HOSPITAL, HALLWAY - LATER

Mazzy, having walled herself off entirely again, chases a bearded ADMINISTRATOR (50s) down another nondescript hall.

MAZZY
What do you *fucking* mean I can't
see his body?

ADMINISTRATOR
I'm sorry, but his father made the
call, Maz. As his--

MAZZY
Made the call?!

She reaches out, forcibly SPINS him back around.

ADMINISTRATOR
To have him cremated.

MAZZY
Cremated?!

ADMINISTRATOR
It was in his Advance Directive.
Along with his DNR.

MAZZY
I was just here. He was just here.
Like, *forty-five fucking* minutes
ago! How could that... bastard be
so, so, so *fucking* cold?!

ADMINISTRATOR
It's the patient's prerogative. The
estate's choice, in this instance.

MAZZY
Estate? I just--

The administrator, as if following standard training, lifts
his hand to her shoulder. A mask of false concern.

ADMINISTRATOR
They did everything they could. The
damage to his lungs was too great.

MAZZY
But... how, how, how did--

ADMINISTRATOR
A perforation. Between the atria.
By the time they discovered it, it
was too late. The clot had already
passed. To his brain.
(beat)
He was gone. Instantly.

The past tense hits her like a ton of bricks. It's all she
can do to keep her knees steady.

ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry, Maz. Truly, I am.

They share a brief, wordless look.

Healing is their business. Death is the day-by-day downside.
The only thing to do is to keep it as far at a distance as
possible for as long as you can.

Her face hardens. Then the light leaves her eyes entirely.

EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT - DAY/NIGHT

Mazzy walks in crushing silence through cold stone canyons of silvery skyscrapers as FACELESS STRANGERS sweep by all around her like passing phantoms. Like ghosts.

The sun rises. Shadows shift. The sun sets. Darkness falls. Over and over again as she shambles on, bereft.

Crystalline tears wash down her face. But her expression is frozen. Desolate. Vacant. Forsaken. Lost.

She's trapped alone amidst the passing of time, forever.

INT. PENTHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Back inside Kaleb's ridiculously ostentatious apartment, Mazzy HOWLS into her phone:

MAZZY

You heartless *fucking* prick. I deserve an explanation. To see his body. To have you at least pick up the *fucking* phone. So help me god, I will ruin the rest of your miserable *fucking* life if I have to, you arrogant, self-absorbed, haughty piece of shit.

CLICK. She hangs up, her chest heaving.

SUPER: THREE WEEKS LATER

There's barely a light on in the place. But we see her reflection bouncing off of every angular plane of glass.

Behind her: the jutting tip of the Transamerica Building. A small red light atop the spire blinks like a heartbeat.

Anger melting back to crushing despair, she tosses her phone to the curved white leather couch, looks to the ceiling.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Lights fifty percent.

Nothing happens.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Fuck!

Silence.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Lights in the living room fifty
percent.

Recessed lights in the ceiling slowly swell, emit a soothing
amber glow.

But instead of being becalmed, Mazzy breaks down entirely.

Deep, guttural SOBBING.

The WAIL of the abandoned, of decades and decades of sorrow,
loneliness, and defeat.

Not even bothering to wipe the tears away, she staggers off
toward the darkened bedroom, to the closet.

INT. PENTHOUSE, CLOSET - NIGHT

There on the dresser is Kaleb's phone again. Still dead.

Mazzy, still weeping, looks from the phone to Kaleb's
clothes hung in neat rows on the opposite wall.

She falls into them as if searching for him there.

Clutching at sleeves, pant legs, and coattails, she inhales
deeply between body-rocking heaves.

MAZZY
Why? Why? Why?

In the dark, no answers come. Only silence.

She brushes her cheeks with the backs of her hands, pulls a
chunky wool sweater from a shelf, slips her shuddering frame
into it, staggers away.

INT. PENTHOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Trying to keep it together, Mazzy pours whiskey into a
crystal rocks glass, lifts it to her lips, swallows
ravenously. Desperate to numb her grief.

Behind her, a marble-clad wine cellar with glass doors glows
like a neatly organized crypt.

Feeling the burn, Mazzy looks around, contemplates fleeing.
Heading anywhere but here.

BUZZ. BUZZ.

Her phone rings. She grabs the bottle, rushes back toward
the light, toward the living room.

INT. PENTHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Clutching the bottle and her nearly empty glass, Mazzy stares down at her phone on the couch.

It's Stella, not Victor.

Mazzy hesitates, picks up.

MAZZY

Stel.

STELLA

Jesus. There you are. I've been calling and calling and--

MAZZY

I know. I just. I can't. Yet.

STELLA

It's okay. It's... How are you?

MAZZY

How do you *fucking* think I am?

STELLA

No, I mean. We just... We're here for you, babe. We just want to...

MAZZY

Want to do what?

STELLA

Help you. You don't have to go through this alone. Talk to me.

MAZZY

I will. When I'm ready.

CLICK.

Mazzy cuts the connection, tops off her glass, turns around, walks down a wide hallway toward an office.

Tall shelves full of curated curios and monographs.

INT. PENTHOUSE, OFFICE - NIGHT

Mazzy steps into the office, catches sight of a framed photo of her and Kaleb in blue helmets in the Redwoods.

She downs the last of her whiskey, sets the glass and bottle down, looks to the ceiling.

MAZZY

Lights in the office, ten percent.

Just like clockwork, they glow.

Mazzy lifts the photo, studies it. *How could he be gone?*

In the dim light from above, we can make out a monitor and keyboard to her right.

She sets the photo down, takes a swig from the bottle, reaches toward the back of the monitor, turns it on.

Stuck to one corner of the monitor: a pink Post-It note reading: PRACTICE "DOWN THE LINE".

A login screen paints her tear-streaked face with color.

Mazzy guesses. Types in the same code from his phone.

It works.

She takes another swig, sits, pulls up a browser. Types. And the screen fills with images of Victor. She scrolls, clicks.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna make your life a...

A fast-moving shadow passes behind Mazzy. She drunkenly clocks it, turns.

There's nothing there.

She looks back to the screen, scrolls again.

A river of type washes by, occasionally interspersed with posed photos of Victor standing before a vast, modernist campus. A research facility nestled high in the hills.

She pauses, scrolls back up to a bolded pull quote, reads:

MAZZY (CONT'D)

*The purpose of the center is to
extend and enhance life for all by
pushing the bounds of our current
understanding of consciousness,
limited as it might be.*

She takes another heavy pull from the bottle, swallows.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Fuck you.

Suddenly, we hear what sounds like the first few bars of an old-time COUNTRY SONG echoing plaintively from hidden speakers somewhere out in the living room.

Mazzy nearly drops the bottle, stands.

We recognize the song. It's "ALWAYS" by Patsy Cline again, the same song playing when her parents' car hit the ice.

Mazzy grips the bottle like a knife, turns, moves slowly back toward the hallway, toward the sound.

Over the speakers:

PATSY CLINE (V.O.)
Always, always, always.

INT. PENTHOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mazzy cautiously rounds the corner from the office, continues slowly toward the glass and stone fireplace that separates the living room from the dining room.

INT. PENTHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Still gripping the bottle, she scans every surface, every object as Patsy Cline CROONS:

PATSY CLINE (V.O.)
*I'll be loving you, always,
With a love that's true, always.*

Through the glass of the fireplace, we see what appears to be a lone figure turn and walk toward the dining room.

Mazzy slows, rubs her eyes with her free hand.

The figure, a man it appears, slows, looks back.

PATSY CLINE (CONT'D)
*When the things you plan
Need a helping hand.*

Mazzy blinks hard. Recognizes him immediately.

MAZZY
K?

The man turns, disappears into the dining room.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
K!

Mazzy sprints after him.

PATSY CLINE (V.O.)
I will understand, always.
Always.

INT. PENTHOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Bleary-eyed and breathless, Mazzy runs into the dimly lit dining room only to find it empty. She's entirely alone.

PATSY CLINE (V.O.)
Days may not be fair, always.
That's when I'll be there, always.

The reflection of a swiftly moving solitary figure ripples across the floor-to-ceiling glass beyond the kitchen.

Mazzy runs full-out.

EXT. PENTHOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

She SKIDS to a stop at the marble island where she poured her first glass, spins around.

PATSY CLINE (V.O.)
Not for just an hour,
Not for just a day.

She spins, runs down a long passage back toward the bedroom.

INT. PENTHOUSE, PASSAGE - NIGHT

More fleeting reflections in the distance.

It's definitely him.

PATSY CLINE (CONT'D)
Not just for a year, but--

Mazzy looks to the ceiling, her heart pounding, SHOUTS:

MAZZY
 Music, pause!

It does.

She turns, catches sight of her own reflection. Just a lone woman clutching a bottle of whiskey with her chest heaving and lines of dried tears streaked down her cheeks.

MAZZY
 Fuck. I must be--

BUZZ. BUZZ.

The sound of a phone ringing again. Her phone?

She turns, looks toward the living room.

BUZZ. BUZZ.

The sound is not coming from there. It's coming from dead ahead. From the bedroom.

She lifts the bottle again, starts off down the hall - slowly at first, then faster.

BUZZ. BUZZ.

A third ring.

INT. PENTHOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

She steps into the same bedroom from earlier, pauses, looks to her left.

BUZZ. BUZZ.

The sound is coming from the closet.

She RUSHES toward it.

INT. PENTHOUSE, CLOSET - NIGHT

Atop the dresser, there again is Kaleb's phone. Somehow, it's miraculously plugged in now, fully-charged.

She lifts it. The screen lights up. On it, two words:

KALEB MAIER

She drops the bottle. It shatters: SMASH!

The phone rings one more time.

BUZZ. BUZZ.

She thrusts a hand out, grabs it, STABS in the code to unlock it, lifts it to her ear.

MAZZY

K?

In the silence we can hear BREATHING. Faint at first, then louder. Then, a pained VOICE echoes over the line:

KALEB (V.O.)

Absence may make the heart grow fonder.

Mazzy's face drains of all color.

KALEB (V.O.)
But presence is what makes it beat.

And, just like that, she crumples to the floor.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - NIGHT [DREAM SEQUENCE]

Back in the depths of the frozen lake, the silhouette of a single man floats above us.

His arms are extended. And his lifeless legs ebb and flow with the windblown waters.

His eyes are open but milky. His face, gaunt and ghostly.

It's Kaleb again, dressed precisely as he was when he passed out and dropped to the floor.

Behind him, the light of the moon ripples across the surface. But there's no way to reach it. No way past.

He's blocking our way. Holding us down. Holding us back.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

INT. PENTHOUSE, BATHROOM - MORNING

Mazzy twitches awake, sprawled out face-down on the cold stone of a vast marble bathroom.

The intact but empty bottle of whiskey sits on its side next to the freestanding, pill-shaped tub.

Kaleb's clothes are strewn all over the floor in heaps. Like a nest of Mazzy's drunken grieving. Her desperately scavenged remnants of his fading memory.

Artifacts of mourning.

She pushes herself up off the floor, winces, turns, does her best not to look at herself in the mirror.

Instead, she rushes back toward the closet.

INT. PENTHOUSE, CLOSET - MORNING

Back inside the ravaged closet, amid scattered hangers, empty shelves, and open drawers, there's Kaleb's phone.

Now though, it's not plugged in. And it's dead again.

A powerless black mirror, just as it was before.

Mazzy sets it down like it's a ticking time bomb, searches her whiskey-seared brain for some semblance of sense.

MAZZY
(to the ceiling)
Music, play.

After a brief, breathless second, MUSIC does indeed echo down from unseen speakers.

But it's not "ALWAYS". It's not Patsy Cline.

It's the (now particularly eerie) opening guitar licks of "STRAIGHT DOWN THE LINE" once again.

Kaleb's karaoke play list on studious repeat.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Music, pause.

Mazzy rushes, her head splitting, for the office.

INT. PENTHOUSE, OFFICE - MORNING

Mazzy skids to a stop at the desk, rapidly SMASHES the space bar on the keyboard.

The screen illuminates again, prompts her to login again.

She does, eyes on the Post-It to practice.

And we're suddenly back on the same article, the same pull quote from earlier.

Without even sitting down, Mazzy grabs the mouse, closes the window, Googles:

VICTOR MAIER CENTER

And a Google Maps listing pops up for:

THE IMMER INSTITUTE

She grabs a pen, scribbles the address onto a nearby pad of paper, RIPS the sheet free, runs back for the closet.

INT. PENTHOUSE, ENTRANCE - MORNING

Hastily dressed and running on a blend of fear, grief, and adrenaline, Mazzy rushes down the hall to the closed front door clutching Kaleb's phone in one hand.

Her keys are in her other hand and she has her leather messenger bag slung over one shoulder.

BUZZ. BUZZ.

She skids to a stop, lifts Kaleb's phone. Nothing.

BUZZ. BUZZ.

She whips out her phone, unlocks it, sees a call coming through from an UNKNOWN CALLER.

Mazzy hesitates, almost picks up.

The call goes to voice mail. And, just as she's about to slip her phone back into her jacket pocket:

DING.

A text comes through. She looks. The number is unfamiliar.

Mazzy draws a breath, clicks on the text:

"Come to the house."

Mazzy narrows her eyes. Another text comes through:

"Sorry, it's me. Kaleb's sister. Kasi."

A third text pops up. It's a Google Maps link.

MAZZY
What the actual--

WHOOSH.

An oversized envelope slides in under the front door to Kaleb's apartment.

Mazzy lowers her phone, bends to pick up the envelope, thumbs it open, pulls out a sheaf of paper.

It's some sort of legal document. Lots of small print. And, at the top of the page, the words:

EVICTIION NOTICE

Mazzy SLAMS the papers in her bag, throws open the door.

There's no one there.

I/E. CAR/BRIDGE - DAY

Mazzy speeds her rust-dotted gold 1990s BMW through slow-moving traffic on the fogbound Golden Gate Bridge.

Her face is full of fury. And she's wearing Kaleb's ring on her ring finger.

The diamond sparkles faintly in the eerily low light.

She blinks, draws a breath, closes her eyes briefly.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - NIGHT [DREAM SEQUENCE]

And we FLASH to the obsidian depths of the frozen lake.

Above us, bathed in rippling moonlight, Kaleb's body floats again, arms extended. Savior-like.

This time though, his eyes are closed. And his face is no longer gaunt and ghostly. His cheeks are almost rosy.

Alive. Brimming with incandescent vigor.

But then, his eyes SNAP open. His body JOLTS. A gale of silver bubbles flows from his lips. A rigor mortis scream.

KALEB
(barely discernible)
Save me.

PRE-LAP: Car horns BLARE.

END FLASHBACK.

I/E. CAR/BRIDGE - DAY

Mazzy, jolted, yanks the wheel hard left, barely misses three cars, almost hits the median.

MAZZY
Jesus fucking Christ.

Wheels SCREECH. More horns HONK.

Mazzy guns the gas as the dull red north tower of the bridge rips by above, still partially obscured by milky fog.

I/E. CAR/NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

The haze has given way to bright blue, cloudless skies as Mazzy pilots her car through an impossibly idyllic neighborhood full of well-tended mid-century homes.

Behind each peaked roof and minimalist façade: dun colored hills dotted with Live Oak and Bay Laurel trees.

Mazzy drives slowly, gripping the wheel with her left hand. The ring on her finger fills the car with dazzling light.

The backseat of the car is nearly covered with abandoned detritus. Clothes. Shoes. Books. Empty to-go cups. Wrappers.

Up ahead on the right: the only house in seeming disrepair. The grooved siding has been painted a deep blue black. The yard is overgrown with dead poppies.

The place is the picture of perpetual mourning.

A ghost house.

Mazzy slows, looks to her phone, confirms the address. Then she passes the house, continues on, doesn't stop.

MAZZY

Nope.

She looks to the eviction papers on the passenger seat, changes her mind, guns the gas again.

EXT. THE INSTITUTE, PARKING LOT - DAY

Mazzy stands outside her car, staring at a massive, bright white, multi-story architectural masterpiece nestled incongruously at the crest of a bucolic hilltop.

The place is all gentle curves and sharp angles. White stone cladding. Triangular skylights. Cantilevered steel stairs. A vast, glassed-in lobby dotted with mature trees.

All of the other cars in the lot are upper echelon. Mercedes. Range Rover. Maserati. Porsche.

Mazzy takes deep breath, tightens her grip on the envelope full of papers, slides her satchel around to the back, and walks across the lot toward the lobby.

Full of purpose. And dread.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, LOBBY - DAY

Mazzy crosses the palatial, sunlit lobby toward a marble reception desk.

In the distance, high-net-worth MEN AND WOMEN of all ages walk side-by-side with MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS in white lab coats. Some are crying. Some look beatific.

Loads of Loro Piana and Eileen Fisher.

And headscarves and canes.

The newly bereft and terminally ill. All of means.

Above, a vast semi-circular glass oculus fills the space with bright sunshine and razor-sharp shadows.

It's like a spa, research lab, and hospital combined.

Ahead, a lone RECEPTIONIST (40s) sits at a marble desk.

As Mazzy barrels toward her, she looks up, smiles.

RECEPTIONIST

Welcome to the Immer Institute. How
can I help you?

Mazzy SLAMS the papers on the desk.

MAZZY

I need to talk to Victor Maier.

The receptionist looks to her right.

In the distance, two glaringly over-armed SECURITY GUARDS stand beside a pair of security scanner gates.

They nod slowly her way.

The receptionist looks down, types on what appears to be a virtual keyboard projected onto the marble before her.

RECEPTIONIST

Is Doctor Maier expecting you?

MAZZY

He sure as hell better be.

RECEPTIONIST

Your name?

MAZZY

Mazzy Walker. Sorry.

(beat)

Maier.

The receptionist looks up, perplexed.

Mazzy looks to the ring on her finger.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

I'm his son's--

From her left, a VOICE:

VICTOR (O.S.)

Fiancée.

Like a summoned spirit, Victor materializes, strides silently across the space, throws his arms around Mazzy.

VICTOR
I'm so sorry, my dear. I've been
trying to contact you. Desperately.

Mazzy seems entirely taken aback by his sudden show of deep compassion and concern.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
But I'm afraid my poor boy and I
hadn't had the most open lines of
communication, of late.

Mazzy tries to wriggle free, can't.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
When it happened, I just...

He trails off, seeming entirely overcome.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
He was such a beautiful boy, full
of boundless potential. Taken too
soon. Too soon, just like his
beloved mother.

Real tears gather in the corners of his eyes.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Why would he do that to the both of
us? To the ones who loved him most?

The receptionist looks away.

MAZZY
I'm sorry?

Mazzy finally slips free of his grasp.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Do what, exactly?

VICTOR
Disallow us to mourn him properly.
Send him off into the next life
together. Gracefully.

Victor looks to the receptionist, then back to Mazzy.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
You don't know?

No answer from Mazzy. Only stunned silence.

Victor guides her away, across the lobby, through the maze of monied patients, toward the stone-faced security guards.

Everyone she passes seems entirely out of it. Glassy eyed and on the verge of incapacitation. Benumbed.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

His will expressly dictated. No ceremony. No funeral. Immediate cremation. His ashes not to be distributed to his next of kin. To be disposed of like... like--

Victor, again overcome, just stares at the gleaming floor.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

My entire life, my dear, has been dedicated to one thing and one thing alone. The discovery of a way to maintain connections. Deep and lasting bonds between generations. Not just in the ephemera they leave behind, not just in memories which fade as years go by. But via our common connection to the collective consciousness.

(off her narrowed eyes)

To the spirit of the divine, the vital life source that sustains every single living creature on this planet and throughout the entire cosmos.

He guides her past the guards, through the scanners, and toward a bank of elevators.

In the distance, hints of what appears to be some sort of vast meditation space.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

All my life, and especially after my dear Annalise, Kaleb's mother, passed...

He pauses at one of the elevator doors, scans a key card attached to his belt, presses a button.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
...I've done everything in my power
and sometimes beyond it to answer
the single question that has
persistently perplexed humankind
for all of existence.

A pair of silver doors WHOOSH open.

The guards behind them stare into the lobby, saying nothing.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, ELEVATOR - DAY

Victor guides Mazzy, deeply wary, inside a glass elevator.

VICTOR
What happens next?

The doors close. The elevator ascends. Floor after floor of
vast modern office space and high-tech labs flash by.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Is it light or darkness? Paradise
or perdition? The end, or simply
the beginning?

WHOOSH. The doors open again.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, WALKWAY - DAY

Victor ushers Mazzy out onto a long white perforated steel
walkway suspended just beneath the glass oculus.

Down below, more patients continue their slow, guided
procession to who knows where.

VICTOR
Kaleb's self-imposed self-
immolation was a stubborn 'fuck
you' to the old man, it appears.
(beat)
Just like his aimless dabbling in
aptly titled *Artificial*
Intelligence.

MAZZY
But, the Hospitalist said--

VICTOR
That they did all they could?
Nonsense. I could have saved him.

MAZZY
Hold on. Hold on. Hold on.

He notices the legal documents crumpled in her fist, SIGHS.

VICTOR
He always was terrible about living
within his means.

MAZZY
What?!

VICTOR
But I'm afraid that's entirely
beyond my sphere of... *influence*,
my dear.

Victor slows, looks out over his ethereal domain.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
As it has for six generations in
our family, his estate, such as it
was, passes directly to his sister
on the event of his...

He looks to the ring on her finger.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Pity, time. Never does serve us
quite as well as we wish.

Mazzy tightens her grip on the papers in her fist.

MAZZY
What is this place?

He smiles devilishly.

VICTOR
A pathway to the divine.

She pulls away from him, steps backward.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
He will *always* be with us, dear.

Mazzy slows at the word. From the song.

But then she speeds back up toward the elevators.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
What if what we've considered the
end isn't the end, for any of us?
What if the mind is not the sole
source of consciousness? What if
the dead could live on, not in our
memories but via our senses?

Mazzy takes off running.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Surely that would be some
consolation to you, yes?

HARD CUT TO:

I/E. CAR/HOUSE - LATER

Mazzy pulls up to the same jet black mid-century house from earlier, kills the engine, rolls down her window.

MAZZY
The fuck. The fuck. The--

Suddenly, the front door SWINGS open. And out steps a statuesque young woman with long, flowing hair and spellbinding almond eyes.

She's wearing a gauzy white dress and an elegant, mid-length woven gray shawl. And she's got a lit joint dangling from her paint-speckled fingers.

Meet: KASI MAIER (30s) Kaleb's mysterious twin sister.

She's the stunning, sharp-edged mirror image of her brother. Their eyes, identical. The same thin lips. The same high cheekbones. Impossibly similar in all ways but one.

Inside the car, Mazzy reflexively GASPS at the sight of her, stunned speechless by the intense and absolutely unmissable resemblance. She's his carbon copy.

Kasi lifts the joint, takes a draw, blows smoke.

KASI
You've seen him, too.

Mazzy STAMMERS, looking paralyzed. Petrified.

KASI (CONT'D)
It's okay. I won't bite.

Kasi turns, steps back through the door and into the atrium open to the sky, gestures for Mazzy to follow.

INT. HOUSE - DUSK

As the sun sets over the hills behind the house and a gauzy, low-lying mist slowly returns, Mazzy sits opposite Kasi inside her ramshackle mid-century house.

A fire CRACKLES in the brick fireplace. The walls are lined with expressionist charcoal sketches and old photographs.

All of the furniture seems to have been scavenged. Threadbare and ravaged. But lived-in.

So completely the opposite of Kaleb's perfectly curated but airless penthouse.

KASI

Of course he said that. Fucking place is just a glorified Ketamine clinic for the rich and famous.

There's a blue glass ashtray full of smoked-out roaches next to the legal documents on the low coffee table before them.

KASI (CONT'D)

A bunch of high-net-worth lab rats seeking self-indulgent solace.

Kasi takes another draw, offers the joint to Mazzy.

Mazzy declines, guard up.

Kasi looks to Mazzy's abdomen, nods.

KASI (CONT'D)

Yeah. Good call.

MAZZY

I'm sorry?

KASI

You're pregnant.

Mazzy jolts backward.

MAZZY

What?

Her hand unconsciously drifts to her belly. A flicker of hope. And then total devastation.

KASI

Don't worry, it's his.

MAZZY

The fuck are you even--

KASI

But not from three weeks ago. From the eighteenth. After Thai, I think. At that place on...

MAZZY
 (panicking)
 Thai?! How the hell do you--

KASI
 Just test, yeah?
 (deep drag)
 If I'm wrong, I owe you ten bucks.
 (long exhale)
 Certainly complicates Father's
 glorious master plan.

Mazzy shoves herself to her feet.

MAZZY
 This was a mistake. I must be
 losing my *fucking* mind.

Kasi lazily doffs her ash, points to the stack of legal papers on the coffee table.

KASI
 But, all the more reason for him to
 let you keep the place now.

MAZZY
 That's enough.

Mazzy roughly SNATCHES the documents up, turns to go.

KASI
 He said everything went to me?
 Bullshit. It went back to the
 trust. The family. Controlled by
 him. Like every other goddamn thing
 in my entire *fucking* life.
 (beat)
 Listen and listen close.

Kasi STABS out what's left of the joint. Mazzy hesitates.

KASI (CONT'D)
 Father is a monster.

Long beat. Both women stare at each other, Mazzy still spinning out and yet bumping on her resemblance.

It's like being with him again. Seeing him again.

KASI (CONT'D)
 K didn't tell you about us, did he?

Kasi stands, looks to the drawings taped to the brick fireplace. They're all terrifying. Scenes of violence.

KASI (CONT'D)

Ever since we were little, we shared what some wrongly call 'second sight'. The ability to send ideas or images to each other just by concentrating hard enough.

Mazzy grips the papers, looks to the sliding glass doors, incredulous, and ready to bolt.

Kasi turns, RIPS a drawing down from the fireplace, studies it remorsefully.

KASI (CONT'D)

A form of telepathy common among identical twins. I could think of an ice cream cone. Kaleb would draw it. He would picture a dinosaur. I could describe every detail. Like it was my own waking dream. Even if we were kept at great distances.

(pregnant pause)

Something Father was increasingly fond of doing, especially as our gifts began to wain.

Mazzy parts her lips to speak. No words come.

KASI (CONT'D)

He used to take Kaleb up to Tahoe. Lock him in the shed on the dock. Out over the water. Performing tests for hours. Days even. Alone.

Kasi looks to the wall of windows to her right. They're impossibly dirty. But we can still make out the ever encroaching fog.

KASI (CONT'D)

And Mother would keep me here. Until she couldn't take it, the torture, any longer. And, well...

She trails off, drops the drawing.

It appears to be of a woman in a nightgown hanging by the neck from a rope tied to a hook in one of the beams, above.

Mazzy looks to it, paralyzed, petrified.

KASI (CONT'D)

That's when it ended, for Kaleb at least. Father went off the deep end, into his so-called *research*.

MAZZY
Hold on, hold--

KASI
And Kaleb walled himself off from me, threw himself into his studies. He achieved. I withdrew, spiraled, let Father have his way with me. But Kaleb flourished. It was like he'd finally gotten his brain back. His mind, empty, vast, and spotless like that fucking douche bag condo.
(deep breath)
Built a stupid AI that used nothing but his own dreams, his newly solo subconscious, so that he could bounce ideas off himself instead of me for a change.
(pained sigh)
Then his work. You. His criminal fucking co-founder. Hugh.

Kasi returns her laser-like gaze to Mazzy.

KASI (CONT'D)
He's run that company into the ground. Taken advantage of poor K's perennially sunny disposition.

Those last three words drip with venom.

KASI (CONT'D)
Thus the eviction. But don't worry, I can call off Father's stooges.

MAZZY
Stooges?

Kasi saunters almost seductively past Mazzy.

KASI
Problem is, when Kaleb cut me out, he didn't realize the circuit, our connection, it's still open. I can still see it all. *Feel* it all.

Kasi passes the wall of glass separating the interior atrium from the rest of the house.

KASI (CONT'D)
Come. See for yourself.

Through the open atrium, we can see fog slowly beginning to menacingly blot out the stars.

Mazzy looks again to the door, to the exit. Hesitates.

MAZZY
(under her breath)
Fuck, fuck, fuck.

INT. HOUSE, BEDROOM - EVENING

Mazzy stands, gobsmacked, at the center of Kaleb's teenage bedroom. Everything she'd once hoped to see is here. Awkward photos, trophies, posters of long broken-up bands.

A single bed covered in faded sheets leans against one wall.

And, across the entire wall opposite: tacked and taped drawings layers and layers deep. They're all as frenetic and violently expressive as those in the living room.

But, from what we can make out, they depict more mundane, almost bucolic scenes from a simple life well-lived.

KASI
The more he lived, the more I
couldn't. Wouldn't. Shouldn't. It
was as if all of the joy he found,
that he felt with you, that you
gave him, sapped me of mine. Made
me wish I'd let Father finally end
it for me. Permanently.

Kasi reaches out, slides one of the closet doors open.

KASI (CONT'D)
And then, three weeks ago...

The entire inside of the closet is papered with hundreds of quickly-rendered, nearly identical drawings.

KASI (CONT'D)
...this.

Mazzy leans in, squints, finally sees that every drawing depicts a solitary figure floating with their arms extended below the surface of a ink-black body of water.

She GASPS, jumps back. Everything goes dark.

INT. HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mazzy, terrified, turns to see that the glassed-in atrium at the center of the house is now swiftly filling with water.

Thousands of gallons a second rush from above, just like it did inside her parents' car when she was a girl.

Mazzy looks to Kasi. From the shadows, Kasi just nods.

Mazzy turns, SPRINTS away.

HALLWAY:

Mazzy STREAKS down the narrow hall, SKIDS to a stop next to a floor-to-ceiling window.

The water is nearly to the top.

ENTRANCE:

Mazzy RUNS past pane after pane of glass. Behind her, the walls seem to bleed water.

Through the atrium, Mazzy spies another set of glass doors.

She DASHES for them.

FAMILY ROOM:

She SKIDS to a stop before the doors.

Tries to scream, can't.

Then she see it.

In the water floats a man, Kaleb, in exactly the same pose.

Frantic, she YANKS at the door handles with all her might.

KALEB (O.C.)
(from behind her)
Be careful.

Mazzy WHEELS around to find herself face-to-face with a grotesquely ravaged Kaleb.

Bone exposed between open wounds. Tattered, waterlogged clothing. Milky eyes full of feral menace.

She SCREAMS, spins, finds herself confronted by another even more decrepit Kaleb.

KALEB
Of Father.

She pushes his body away, tumbles backward, turns, lands in the rotting arms of yet another cadaver-like Kaleb.

KALEB
He must be stopped.

Her chest heaving and her eyes wide, Mazzy STUMBLES away from him, THUDS into another ghostly figure.

But it's Kasi.

Her skin is intact and luminous in the moonlight.

KASI

He just wants it to end.

Without another word, Kasi leans closer, KISSES Mazzy on the lips - just like Kaleb used to.

Mazzy tries to push herself free, can't.

Kasi pulls back. Her eyes are so his eyes. Identical.

KASI (CONT'D)

But Father won't let it. And
neither will you.

Mazzy, in a panic, finally bolts.

I/E. CAR/BRIDGE - NIGHT

All alone in her car, eyes full of fright, Mazzy speeds back across the mist blanketed bridge with the legal docs in pile on the seat beside her.

MAZZY

The fuck are you doing?!

She SLAMS both palms on the steering wheel.

The car SQUEALS across an empty lane, alarmingly close to the median.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Pregnant? That crazy *fucking* bitch.

Mazzy grips the wheel, centers her lane, tries and fails to regain her composure.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

I just...

Her anger swiftly melts into deep sorrow.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry baby. I'm so...

A huge tear rolls down one cheek. She roughly wipes it away.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
I should've said yes.

BUZZ. BUZZ.

The sound of a phone on vibrate JOLTS Mazzy. She looks to the console, sees it's Stella again, decides to pick up.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Hey.

STELLA (V.O.)
There you are.

MAZZY
I'm sorry.

STELLA (V.O.)
Don't be. Listen, Hugh and I are headed to La Taqueria. Meet us there. Like old times. You don't have to talk. Just come for a drink. We love you. We just wanna be there for you. You know?

Mazzy hesitates briefly, her head still spinning.

MAZZY
Okay.

STELLA (V.O.)
Great. See you--

CLICK.

Mazzy hangs up, instantly regrets saying yes.

EXT. LA TAQUERIA - NIGHT

Mazzy, Hugh, and Stella sit under the white arches outside this landmark Mission taco joint.

Beers and burritos litter the table. Mazzy hasn't touched her food. Instead, she downs her third Modelo.

STELLA
Wait. What?

MAZZY
Yeah. He was all lovey-dovey. Fatherly. Fucking freak.

HUGH
Maz, it's okay to be angry...

MAZZY

Will everyone please stop telling
me how to feel?! *Nothing's* okay.
Nothing will ever be okay...

Mazzy trails off as a passing stranger in a black hoodie catches her eye.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

...again.

She leaps to her feet, knocks her bottle off the table. It hits the concrete with a loud: SMASH.

The sound drags her eyes downward toward the sea of broken glass at her feet. She looks up, steps over it: CRUNCH.

STELLA

Maz? Let us help you.

The figure on the sidewalk is gone. But still, she tumbles off after it. After him.

Like a woman in an inescapable tractor beam trance.

Hugh stands.

HUGH

Mazzy, please.

Mazzy hurries off down the crowded sidewalk.

STELLA

(to Hugh)

Fuck. I don't know what to--

EXT. MISSION STREET - NIGHT

As Mazzy bobs and weaves through the crowd, no sign of the hooded figure. He's vanished like a passing phantom.

But Mazzy still sprints desperately down the sidewalk.

He's got to be here. Somewhere. Anywhere.

But he isn't, never will be.

Nearing the end of the block, winded and crushed, Mazzy slows, bends at the waist, gives up.

More tears fall.

Passing pedestrians cut her a wide berth.

I/E. CAR/GARAGE - NIGHT

Mazzy pulls into an open spot inside the subterranean parking garage below Kaleb's building, kills the engine.

Still an emotional wreck, she just sits there in silence for a few seconds, staring at the concrete wall ahead of her.

Her tear-streaked face is bathed in a sickly green light from the BUZZING fluorescent lights outside.

She finally pulls the keys from the ignition, looks to a small paper bag on top of the twisted pile of documents on the passenger seat.

Out of nowhere: CRACK!

Mazzy, jolted, looks quickly to the sunroof.

It instantly SPLINTERS just like the windshield in her parents' car did when she was a girl.

Inexplicably, the entire garage is now totally submerged.

Through the water outside, luxury sedans float upside down as the green lights continue to flicker.

In a panic, Mazzy drops the keys, THRUSTS her palms to the glass above her.

Through the splintering web, water seeps in.

MAZZY

No, no, no!

The car's roof loudly buckles. CRUNCH!

Metal-on-metal GRINDING under immense pressure.

Mazzy, GASPING, lowers a hand, SMACKS desperately at the buckle on her seat belt.

Outside her window, the same grisly vision.

A man, clearly a ravaged and wasted Kaleb, drifts hauntingly by with both arms, again, extended.

KALEB (V.O.)

Let... Me... Go.

With that last word, everything jarringly returns to normal.

No water. No cracked glass. No buckled roof.

Mazzy, her heart racing and her mind melting, swivels in her seat in shocked disbelief.

Then her eyes fall to the bag on the seat next to her.

In a frenzy, she quickly snatches it up, throws her door open, sprints for the elevators.

INT. PENTHOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER

Mazzy, still in a panic, paces around the kitchen island in Kaleb's apartment with her arms wrapped around her elbows.

On the island: the paper bag and another unopened bottle of very expensive whiskey.

She hesitates for half a second, then she snatches up the bottle, turns, doesn't even bother with a glass.

INT. PENTHOUSE, BEDROOM - LATER

Mazzy sits alone in a tangle of sheets at the center of Kaleb's massive, still unmade bed.

Wearing nothing but a wrinkled camisole and a pair of panties, she swigs from the now half-empty bottle as the light of her phone dances across her face.

From the phone: tinny VOICES and WIND.

KALEB (V.O.)
(on-screen, not visible)
Just do it already.

MAZZY (V.O.)
(on-screen, visible)
I can't!

Eventually, we can barely make out that she's watching a video apparently shot from a GoPro mounted to Kaleb's helmet as they stand on a circular platform high in the redwoods.

Wind bends the nearby trees. A thick metal cable arcs from just above their heads gracefully down into the forest.

KALEB (V.O.)
Gimme a break. This was your idea.

MAZZY (V.O.)
No it wasn't. No it wasn't!

Wearing a helmet and leather gloves, Mazzy grips the cable that tethers her to the treetop with all her might.

KALEB (V.O.)
All this time I thought you were
full-tilt fearless.

A fearsome GUST rocks the tree.

MAZZY (V.O.)
Jesus fucking CHRIST!

Even though we can't see his face, Kaleb clearly seems to be eating this up. Reveling in her paranoid freakout.

KALEB (V.O.)
Fine. Watch and learn, chicken.

Back in the bed, Mazzy lifts the bottle again, guzzles.

Her eyes are glassy. Empty. Spent.

Tranquilized by the alcohol and the video. By her memories.

The view on-screen shifts to Kaleb as he shimmies past, unclips, clips back into a metal trolley with two handles.

MAZZY (V.O.)
Please be careful.

KALEB (V.O.)
Bah.

Our view TILTS downward.

Beyond and below the platform, we can barely make out that the ground is nearly three hundred feet down below.

KALEB (V.O.)
See you on the on the other side.

Kaleb looks up, pushes off, ROARS down the zip line at an alarmingly high rate of speed.

All we see are his bare crossed legs and his worn desert boots rocketing through the treetops.

ZZZZIIIIIPPPPP.

Mazzy scrolls the video backward with one finger.

KALEB (V.O.)
See you on the on the other--

Mazzy scrolls backward again.

KALEB (V.O.)
See you on--

She backs it up yet again.

KALEB (V.O.)
See you--

Swipe.

KALEB (V.O.)
See you--

Swipe.

KALEB (V.O.)
...on the other side.

CLICK.

She turns her phone off, tosses it away, doesn't cry.

Instead, her face is a study in blotted-out pain. Emotion
squelched by sheer force of will. And alcohol.

Like a snake handler having taken the venom by choice.

MAZZY (PRE-LAP)
(zero emotion)
I'm fine.

INT. HOSPITAL, HALLWAY - DAY

Mazzy walks side-by-side down a harshly-lit, grim hallway
with the same intake nurse that busted her for being drunk.

They're both in matching scrubs.

INTAKE NURSE
But shouldn't you--

MAZZY
(irritated)
It's okay.

Mazzy slows. The intake nurse stops dead.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
I need this. To get my shit back
together. To...

She trails off, doesn't want to say too much.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Plus, I used up all my PTO.

The nurse looks her up and down like she's trying to suss out how to disarm a grenade.

INTAKE NURSE
Mazzy?

Mazzy, exasperated, looks away. *What?!*

INTAKE NURSE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

Mazzy continues walking, tries to tune her out.

The nurse follows.

MAZZY
For what?

INTAKE NURSE
Telling you to go home.

MAZZY
Don't be. You were right. I was wasted. Blotto.

Mazzy bends left, heads toward the Emergency Room.

INTAKE NURSE
I just feel so--

MAZZY
How long have you worked here?

The nurse, on the move, cocks her head.

INTAKE NURSE
Um...

Mazzy slows again, stabs her badge at a sensor. Two automatic doors open to the DIN of the Emergency Room.

The sounds is like a tonic to Mazzy. A welcome distraction.

Mazzy wades into it, drinks it in.

MAZZY
Not having to feel is what makes this place tick.

PATIENT (PRE-LAP)
Oh, god. Oh god!

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - LATER

Inside one of the canary yellow curtained Emergency Room bays, Mazzy quickly, deftly cleans a deep gash in the forearm of young male PATIENT (20s).

Blood and iodine ooze from the wound.

PATIENT
Fucking hurts!

Calm, cool, and collected once again, Mazzy works with a self-assured mastery. She's back in her element.

Her gloved hands move like a concert pianist's.

MAZZY
Just stay with me.

As the patient looks away, grits his teeth, she reaches across herself for a wad of gauze.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
We gotta get this wound nice and clean before we--

WHOOSH.

The curtain beyond the gurney rustles partly open.

And we catch the faintest hint of a FAMILIAR FIGURE passing.

Mazzy stops dead. Blood oozes.

The figure outside disappears.

Like a phantom. Like an illusion.

Mazzy drops the gauze, stands.

PATIENT
What is it?

MAZZY
Keep pressure on it.

In a trance, Mazzy steps toward the curtain, pushes it open.

There's no one there.

PATIENT (O.S.)
Doc?

A pair of automatic doors in the distance WHIR closed.

Saying nothing, Mazzy rushes toward the sound, skids to a stop, swipes her badge. The sensor flashes green.

PATIENT (O.S.)
Hello? Can somebody please--

The doors begin to open again.

Mazzy roughly SHOVES herself through and back into --

INT. HOSPITAL, HALLWAY - SAME TIME

The same silhouette swiftly disappears around a bend ahead as Mazzy threads her way into the hallway.

MAZZY
Wait. Stop.

No answer.

In an all-out frenzy, Mazzy races down the hallway, takes the same bend, skids again to a stop.

The same vague figure veers right, steps into an open elevator as other STAFF and ADMINISTRATORS wordlessly go about their daily grind.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Hold that--

She runs like a maniac as the doors slowly trundle closed.

Spooked co-workers part ways, lift their hands, regard her with a mix of fear and pity.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Shit. Shit.

She rapidly STABS at the call button for the next elevator, watches the display for the one descending.

The same administrator from earlier catches sight of Mazzy from a distance, CALLS OUT:

ADMINISTRATOR
Mazzy?

MAZZY
C'mon. C'mon. C'mon.

The descending elevator stops at LL1 - Lower Level One.

ADMINISTRATOR
Weren't you gonna take a little
time to--

The elevator doors before her slowly open.

MAZZY
Sorry. Can't talk.

A JANITOR with a huge supply cart pushes his way out.

She YANKS at the cart, JAMS her way past him, HAMMERS the
LL1 button, then the CLOSE DOORS button.

From outside, the administrator just watches, his face full
of confusion and (condescending) concern.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Mazzy BURSTS back through the partially open elevator doors
to find herself in a windowless, subterranean space
somewhere deep in the bowels of the hospital.

No one's there. She's entirely alone.

MAZZY
Hello?

Her VOICE echoes slightly. No answer.

The doors behind her RUMBLE slowly closed.

FLASH!

A blindingly white burst of light fills the space as another
set of doors opposite Mazzy DING open.

And, to her stunned disbelief, a lone figure on a gurney
draped in a white sheet is wheeled from the elevator by two
VAGUELY FAMILIAR MEN (30s) in matching scrubs.

Neither of them even seem to notice Mazzy standing there as
they swing the gurney toward another pair of doors.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. Where are...

No answer from either man as one of them swipes a key card.

Mazzy is about to call out again when a third figure emerges
from the elevator.

It's Victor. Dressed exactly as he was the day Kaleb died.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

YOU!

Victor doesn't respond. Doesn't hear her. Can't see her.

Unperturbed, he calmly turns, follows the men with the gurney through the doors and down the hall.

Mazzy just stands there staring, her heart THUNDERING in her chest. *What the fuck is going on?*

Victor and the two men round another corner and disappear as the double doors CLICK and begin to close.

But, before they do, Mazzy, in a daze, RUSHES through them.

INT. BASEMENT, PASSAGEWAY - SECONDS LATER

Mazzy SKIDS around a corner in hot pursuit, only to find the hallway eerily abandoned.

No sign of Victor, the men, or the body on the gurney.

MAZZY

K?

A light BLINKS through the glass panel in a door down the hall. She rushes for it.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Kaleb!

INT. BASEMENT, MORGUE - SECONDS LATER

Mazzy BURSTS through the door to find herself inside a vast, sterile, harshly clinical space.

Cold steel autopsy tables sit empty beneath surgery lights on white armatures. More florescent lights BUZZ.

Along one wall: a floor-to-ceiling bank of refrigerated silver mortuary cabinets.

Cream colored tile lines the walls and floor. Drains.

And, at the center of it all stands the wheeled gurney with the body draped in white.

Just a lone body on a slab.

His profile, even draped in white, is unmistakable.

Mazzy, winded and terrified, slowly advances, saying nothing. Pausing before the gurney, she reaches a trembling hand out for the corner of the sheet, grips it.

WHOOSH!

She YANKS the sheet away - only to find the gurney empty. It's not him. There's no one there. Just an empty gurney.

And her, alone, in the hospital morgue.

In a rage, Mazzy turns, THROWS open one heavy steel cabinet door at a time, YANKS each wheeled body rack out.

Men. Women. Young. Old. All naked. All dead.

MAZZY

Where are you? Where are you? Where are you?

Breathless, she pulls the last cabinet open, reaches for the rail, pulls with all her might.

But, it's not him. It's the dead girl from three weeks ago.

Then, from off:

ADMINISTRATOR (O.S.)

Maz?

Mazzy WHEELS around.

Her face shifts from frantic desperation to deep denial and then to total mortification.

A single tear rolls down her cheek. She can't help it.

INT. ELEVATOR - LATER

An obliterated wreck, Mazzy steps into the elevator back at Kaleb's building, reaches for the keypad, still trembling.

Instead of pressing the top floor, she thumbs the LOBBY key.

The doors slide silently shut.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Still in her scrubs and her hair a total mess, Mazzy shambles like a sleepwalker through the vast, glass-clad and art filled lobby, toward a pair of revolving doors.

A few STYLISH RESIDENTS (30s) watch with concern, MUTTERING under their breath.

But she doesn't hear them. Can't see them. Doesn't care.

Instead, she pushes her way through the revolving doors and out into the early evening light.

EXT. CHINATOWN, SIDEWALK - DUSK

As the sun slowly sets, Mazzy shuffles down a crowded sidewalk past butcher shops and bakeries.

Strands of illuminated red paper lanterns sway above her as she walks, again in a paranoid daze.

The scene is festive and bustling. But, to her, it's nothing but a blur. A world not worth living in.

EXT. CHINATOWN, ALLEY - SAME TIME

She turns, winds her way through the crowd and into a narrow, graffiti-covered pedestrian alley.

Somehow now, her stride seems more purposeful. More intentional. Like she knows where she's going.

Toward the end of the alley, she slows.

From across the street up ahead: a faint blue glow.

Neon.

At the sight of it, she stops dead, draws a breath.

Her chin quivers.

And then she soldiers on toward the light.

EXT. KARAOKE BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Beneath the BUZZING and BLINKING blue neon, Mazzy stands on the sidewalk, staring into the grimy windows of the same tiny karaoke bar from before.

It's almost as though we can hear Kaleb singing his heart out for her once again.

But instead, through the windows, all she can see is a sad line of middle-aged DAY DRINKERS (50s) trying to numb themselves into oblivion.

Just like her.

MAZZY
(to herself)
What is *happening* to me?

A familiar reflection WASHES across the glass before her.

Inside the bar, one the nearest drinkers looks up, spins on his stool, locks Mazzy in his gaze, gestures.

Go get him, already.

Mazzy slowly turns to see Kaleb walking away from her with his hands in his pockets, toward a busy intersection.

She looks back into the bar.

But it's empty now. Not even open. A rusted metal safety grate blocks the blackened windows.

She looks back down the street. Kaleb's gone.

Time races. The world tilts on its axis.

And she takes off on a dead sprint.

EXT. INTERSECTION - SECONDS LATER

Mazzy stops, turns, sees him again - this time already across six lanes of traffic.

MAZZY
Stop! Stop!

He doesn't. Doesn't even turn. Just keeps on walking.

Mazzy dashes diagonally across the street, is almost hit by four separate cars.

Wheels SCREECH. Horns BLARE. People SHOUT.

Mazzy barely reacts, just runs.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DUSK

Weaving through tight packs of TOURISTS, Mazzy races past gaudy strip clubs and crowded bars.

Blinking lights and harsh neon slashes across her face as she tries to keep up, tries to catch him.

But at every gap in pedestrians, he seems impossibly far off. Like he, too, is running all-out.

But he's not. He's just walking, calmly.

Peacefully.

MAZZY

Kaleb, please! Wait for me!

No response.

Instead, he takes a sharp left, disappears around a corner.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DUSK

Mazzy, her lungs burning, rounds the same corner only to be presented with an impossibly steep, narrow side street.

Even the sidewalks are stepped.

And, at its crest: Kaleb again.

MAZZY

Don't do this! Stop! Talk to me!

Nope.

He summits the last stair, turns right, disappears again.

Mazzy summons all her strength, follows him up.

EXT. STEEP STREET - EVENING

At the top of the stairs, sucking down air, Mazzy turns, looks, sees him again, tries to shout.

But he vanishes again, leading her on.

She charges off after him.

EXT. DEAD END - MOMENTS LATER

Mazzy finds herself alone in a small horseshoe shaped dead end surrounded by a ring of trees full of wind-born garbage.

MAZZY

Please.

She lowers her hands to her knees, bends at the waist, can't go on, can't keep up.

But then she lifts her gaze to a flight of stone stairs.

Above them looms Coit Tower.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Stop.

Mazzy staggers toward the stairs, starts up them two at a time in the deepening darkness.

EXT. STAIRS - NIGHT

As Mazzy zigzags up a narrow, twisting, overgrown pathway, thorny vines tear at her face and arms.

But higher and higher she climbs, running on desperation.

She can't call out for him, can barely breathe.

EXT. COIT TOWER - NIGHT

Mazzy finally emerges from the trees at the top of the stairs to see the Art Deco entrance to Coit Tower.

Strangely, one of the doors is wide open.

Gasping for air, Mazzy tumbles across the plaza, up the exterior stairs, through the door, and into the tall, cylindrical concrete structure.

INT. COIT TOWER, ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Once inside, Mazzy looks around wildly. Breathlessly.

There's no one to be seen. No Park Rangers. No ticket takers. No tourists. Just her.

And no Kaleb.

As if she knows the space well, Mazzy runs for the stairs.

INT. COIT TOWER, STAIRWELL - NIGHT

In total darkness, Mazzy winds her way up the narrow, claustrophobic stairwell with the last of her strength.

WPA-era murals wash by as she climbs.

Normally vibrantly colored, vivid, and optimistic, now they seem desperate and haunted. Spectral. Eerie.

INT. COIT TOWER, OBSERVATION DECK - NIGHT

Mazzy emerges into a large circular cathedral-like space open to the sky and lined with arched windows.

Through every window, the city sparkles.

And, at the center of it all: Kaleb.

He stands with his back to us. And he doesn't seem winded in the slightest. Instead, he's oddly calm.

KALEB
Lame, right?

Mazzy, too hoarse to speak, takes a tentative step forward.

KALEB (CONT'D)
For a first date.

She can't believe her eyes. It's really him.

KALEB (CONT'D)
But she kinda reminds me of you,
Lillie Hitchcock Coit. The lady who
paid to build this tower. Smoked.
Cussed like a sailor. Dressed like
a man to sneak into all the dudes-
only card rooms in North Beach.

Mazzy tries again to say his name. Can't.

KALEB (CONT'D)
Anytime a firefighter was injured
or sick, she'd nurse them back to
health all by herself at the Palace
Hotel, which she owned by the way,
stubborn old broad.

He finally turns around, luminous. Almost lit from within.

KALEB (CONT'D)
Kinda like you.

He reaches out, takes her in his arms, kisses her deeply.
And then he gently lets her go.

Mazzy, dumbfounded, staggers backward.

Only to find that he's gone. She's all alone.

As if he was never there in the first place.

All the color leaves her face as hope crumbles into anger
once again. Fearsome, inescapable rage.

Mazzy spins away, HOWLS.

It's the shrill, choked cry of the irrevocably broken.

The sound bounces off the concrete, ripples back at her in
scorching, obliterating waves.

INT. COIT TOWER, STAIRWELL - LATER

Mazzy lurches down the stairs in the dark.

Again, haunting, ghastly faces wash by step after step.

It's as if she's trudging through a sea of lost souls. The left behind. The forgotten.

Just like her.

But then: CLINK. CLINK.

A light somewhere further down the stairs illuminates, fills the claustrophobic space with hints of color.

Mazzy continues her slow decent only to arrive at a section of mural lit (seemingly purposefully) by a single bulb.

At the center of the composition: a young mother in a blue dress... clutching a baby.

A baby.

Mazzy nearly collapses.

INT. PENTHOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mazzy sits in the bathroom with her panties down around her ankles and the paper bag from earlier torn open on the tile floor before her.

In her hands: a white plastic pregnancy test.

Two stripes. Double vertical lines.

Positive.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, LOBBY - DAY

Having not showered, her mascara nearly blotting out her eyes, Mazzy stands again at the marble reception desk inside the immaculate lobby of The Immer Institute.

Just as before, WEALTHY PATRONS crisscross the space guided by DOCTORS in white lab coats.

VICTOR (O.S.)
The connection is still strong.
That's good.

Mazzy, in a grief-fueled stupor drags her finger across a sheer glass display. *My signature? Why? Who cares?*

MAZZY
(zero affect)
How does it work?

Victor looks to the receptionist. She nods. *We have it.*

Instead of answering, he gently takes Mazzy by the arm, guides her across the lobby.

VICTOR

There's no need to trifle with the particulars, my dear.

Mazzy moves with him, her will broken.

MAZZY

I wanna know. Need to know.

Victor veers left, toward a long, marble clad passageway.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, PASSAGE - DAY

As the two of them pass all manner of very clinical looking spaces (research labs, operating theaters) behind thick glass doors, all we hear is Victor's MELLIFLUOUS VOICE:

VICTOR

I forgot. You're a professional.
Are you currently taking any SSRIs?

Mazzy just wags her head dolefully side-to-side.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Excellent.

He ushers her toward another pair of glass doors.

Beyond the glass: a vast circular space lined with sleek, womb-like white leather chaises - all arrayed in a circle.

Next to each chaise, a tall IV stand.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

The infusion is harmless. Just a means to amplify the connection.

He reaches out, swipes his badge, pushes the doors open.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, INFUSION ROOM - DAY

Inside the space, nearly all of the chairs are occupied by well-dressed MEN AND WOMEN.

Each one wears a black satin eye mask, low-profile silver headphones, and a crown-like device that PULSES gently at their temples.

Their bare arms and stockinged feet are crisscrossed like those of modish sarcophagi.

Sleek, matte white storage units sit beside each bed for each patients' belongings.

Mazzy pauses, slips slowly back toward panic.

But Victor forcefully ushers her to a single open seat.

VICTOR

(hushed)

Place your belongings in the case.
Lie back, relax, don your mask and
headphones whenever you're ready.
And one of our guides will be with
you momentarily.

Mazzy rakes in a breath, looks ready to run.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

I'm so glad you came back to us.

And, with that, he silently withdraws.

For a long beat, Mazzy just stands there with her heart racing. *What the fuck are you doing here?*

But then, at her wits end, she finally kicks off her Crocs and lowers her spent body to the cold white leather.

CUT TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK:

A disembodied WOMAN'S VOICE mingles with DULCET SPA MUSIC.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

(English accent)

You will feel a slight warming
sensation in your right arm. Don't
forget to breathe. Feel your chest
rise and fall. Allow the music to
wash over you, guide you, open your
heart. Think of your departed.
Invite them to you. To be with you.
To join you.

And, with that, the darkness is slowly replaced by what appear to be interlocking STRANDS OF LIGHT.

Threads of undulating pure plasma pulsate, unravel, and then weave themselves back together again in time to the MUSIC.

As if the fabric of the universe is unmaking and rekindling itself over and over and over again. For all eternity.

It's a dazzling, spellbinding display.

And, over it all: HEAVY BREATHING. Mazzy's breath.

INT. PENTHOUSE, PASSAGE - NIGHT

Mazzy RACES down the hallway of Kaleb's apartment.

Unlike before, the floor is littered with debris. The art is gone. Paint peels from the walls in large, tattered swaths.

Decades of dust and soot clot the air.

Mazzy slows, turns, sees that she's alone.

Behind her, another shadow passes. Then another.

Sensing them, she turns back around, nearly drops what appears to be Kaleb's dead phone.

MAZZY

Kaleb?

No response.

Her eyes still barely adjusted to the darkness, Mazzy advances slowly down the hall, rounds the corner.

LIVING ROOM:

She CRUNCHES over shattered bits of wood and glass to enter the once palatial living room.

The entire wall of floor-to-ceiling glass which once looked out over the silent city has somehow been blasted away. The wind HOWLS up and inside.

No lights from the city below. Just darkness.

As with the art, all the furniture is gone. Not stolen, not moved. Incinerated. Cremated.

Her heart THUNDERING in her chest, Mazzy slowly turns to see two barely discernible figures standing in the middle of the decimated space, facing away.

A man and a woman.

Their arms droop lifelessly. Their shoulders slump.

Were it not for the fact that they're both standing amid the charred wreckage, they could almost resemble bodies dangling from a hangman's noose.

And they're each soaking wet.

MAZZY

Mom?

Mazzy stops dead. Eyes full of fear.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Dad?

Both eerie, waterlogged figures slowly swivel toward her. But before we can catch a glimpse of their faces:

WHOOOOOSH.

The fireplace to Mazzy's right suddenly ignites.

Mazzy JOLTS sideways at the sound, looks to see that where her parents stood are now just two faint gray mounds of ash.

DING.

The device in Mazzy's hand vibrates.

Over the sound of her HYPERVENTILATING, Mazzy slowly (almost reluctantly) lifts Kaleb's phone.

The screen illuminates. Full battery. Vivid home screen of Mazzy and Kaleb wearing helmets in the Redwoods.

And a single text:

"RUN"

Mazzy stares at it, uncomprehending.

DING.

Mazzy slowly lowers the phone, unable to move.

Then, over the HOWLING WIND, a VOICE:

KALEB (V.O.)

Please. Release me.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. THE INSTITUTE, INFUSION ROOM - SAME TIME

In a frenzy, Mazzy RIPS off her eye mask, TOSSES the headphones to the floor, YANKS the crown from her head, and LEAPS from the chaise.

BANG!

The IV stand she's still connected to falls to the floor.

Mazzy wobbles, drugged, looks to her arm.

None of the other supine patients in the space even react in the slightest as she violently WRENCHES the port out of her arm, grabs her bag, staggers swiftly for the doors.

Again, the world tilts on its axis. The light is near blinding. The colors, searingly over-saturated.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, PASSAGE - SAME TIME

Entirely beside herself with fear and with blood oozing down her arm, Mazzy runs shoeless through the vast marble hall, toward the light of the lobby.

No one stops her. It's as if they don't even see her. Like she's not even there. A ghost herself.

EXT. THE INSTITUTE, PARKING LOT - DAY

Her eyes narrow slits, Mazzy spins in the lot full of obscenely ostentatious cars, searches again for her shitty 90s sedan, finally sees it, gallops toward it.

Her bare feet SLAP across the scorching pavement as she runs for her life.

STELLA (PRE-LAP)
You did WHAT?!

I/E. CAR/NEIGHBORHOOD - AFTERNOON

Mazzy, her head splitting, sits parked a good distance down the street from Kasi's crumbling mid-century house.

She's got her phone pressed to her ear.

Her bloody arm trembles.

MAZZY
I don't know. I just. He just... I
don't know what I was--

STELLA (V.O.)
(over her phone)
Babe, it's okay. It's alright to
just let yourself mourn.

MAZZY
No, you don't understand.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LAW OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Stella sits at her sizable, overly orderly desk in another
smart looking pants suit.

STELLA
He's dead, Maz. Kaleb is *dead*.

MAZZY
He kissed me. I felt it. I saw him.
Heard him. Plain as *fucking* day.

STELLA
Where?

MAZZY
Coit Tower.

STELLA
What?

MAZZY
Where we...

A hint of a grim realization washes across Mazzy's face.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Our first kiss.

She nearly drops her phone.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
That's what he said. To me. That
night. Every single word. Verbatim.

Stella looks to her phone, alarmed.

STELLA
Tell me where you are. I'll come
get you. We can help you.

Mazzy looks toward Kasi's house.

STELLA (CONT'D)
It's just grief, Maz. It fucking happens. The whole thing. Denial, anger, bargaining, depression--

MAZZY
25 Rubicon Court, San Rafael.

STELLA
What?

MAZZY
I need you to come, be my backup.

STELLA
Backup?

MAZZY
His sister's place. Kasi. Up in Marin. She knows, I think.

STELLA
Sister?

MAZZY
Twin sister, yeah.

Mazzy shifts hands, pulls her keys from the ignition.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
If you don't hear from me in thirty minutes, that's where I'll be.

STELLA
Wait one fucking--

MAZZY
Just get here as fast as you can.

Stella is stunned speechless. For once.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Alone. No Hugh. I think he's in on it too somehow.

STELLA
The fuck are you even--

Mazzy reaches to the backseat for her satchel. From the floor she grabs a blouse, a pair of jeans, and some boots.

MAZZY
Oh, and I'm pregnant.

More breathless silence from Stella.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
There, I buried the lede.

CLICK. She hangs up, starts changing.

Back in her office, Stella just stares blankly ahead.

INT. HOUSE, ATRIUM - LATER

Kasi sits in a sun-bleached butterfly chair inside the open atrium nursing yet another joint as Mazzy frantically paces with dried blood smeared up her forearm.

KASI
Told ya so. He's fucking *there*.

MAZZY
What do you mean, there?

KASI
Trapped like a fucking puppet on strings, as per usual.

MAZZY
No, no. I feel it, I see it. I saw him. I *felt* him.

KASI
Duh. That's how it works.

MAZZY
How what works?!

She taps her temple with the fingers clutching the joint. Then she points up to Mazzy's head.

KASI
Telepathy.

Mazzy spins away.

MAZZY
Fucking hell. What am I doing here?
I must be losing my--

KASI
You want answers. That makes sense.
But they don't, the answers.

She doffs her ash, crosses her legs.

Again, the resemblance is shocking. Traumatizing.

KASI (CONT'D)

Daddy's little shtick, peace of mind for the one-percent? Giving them a little taste of what comes next so they can go about their posh little lives with no fear of oblivion? It's just a fucking con. There is no next. Just a bunch of flashing lights as your brain runs out of juice. Trust me.

Mazzy leans forward, hands on her knees again, looks like all the wind has been knocked out of her. Plummeting.

KASI (CONT'D)

What you saw in the hospital, in the morgue. That wasn't you hallucinating. It was him. His last memories. As his mind died. Before it all went black.

MAZZY

Please. Stop.

Kasi won't. Doesn't want to.

KASI

Before he got stuck in Father's cage like a rat on wheel on death's doorstep. Stuck reliving his endless demise for the viewing pleasure of the terminal and bereaved with big bank accounts.

She lazily rummages around in her sweater for her lighter as her joint sputters.

KASI (CONT'D)

Unable to do the decent thing for the both of us and just *fucking* die already. Get out of our heads.

MAZZY

He's in there? At that place?

KASI

Mm-hmm. Well, his body is at least.

FLICK. WHOOSH. PUFF. PUFF.

KASI (CONT'D)

Father's been collecting his little menagerie of fucked-up telepaths for decades now.

(MORE)

KASI (CONT'D)

Keeping them in a perpetual near-death state. Taking what they think they experience, what they transmit, and blending it up with the dreams and, if things go sideways, nightmares of the rich and famous. All via the power of Ketamine and for a pretty fucking penny. But it's all a sham. There is no afterlife. Just a flood of fucking endorphins before everything goes dark forever.

MAZZY

How do... How do you *know* all this?

KASI

Because he did it to me. I was his prototype. Father's first test subject. Until I was finally able to convince him I'd lost my gift.

Kasi inhales deeply. Her joint FLARES.

KASI (CONT'D)

With a little help from the weed.

Kasi holds the smoke in. Like interior armor.

MAZZY

I need to get him out.

Kasi wags her head side-to-side, still holding the smoke.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

I need your help.

Kasi finally exhales, leans forward, stabs out the joint.

KASI

Maybe he doesn't want you to. Won't let you see him like that.

She stands, steps toward Mazzy, grabs her by the shoulders.

KASI (CONT'D)

Plus, this isn't about you. Now.

Mazzy just stares into her eyes, pleadingly.

KASI (CONT'D)

Fine. Fuck it. I can get you in.

She lets go of her shoulders, turns, steps back through the open glass doors and into the living room.

KASI (CONT'D)
But you're not gonna like it.

As Kasi disappears, Mazzy lifts her phone, unlocks it, stabs at Messages, quickly types:

"Change of plans. 2200 Redwood Drive. Hurry."

CLICK.

She shuts off her phone, pockets it nervously.

I/E. CAR/DRIVEWAY - DUSK

Mazzy wordlessly pilots her car up the steep private drive to The Immer Institute.

KASI
When I finally figured it out, I
tried to go to the press, anyone.
Of course, everyone thought I was
nuts. Turns out, they're actually
all customers. Every single one of
'em. The entire establishment.

Mazzy, barely listening, looks to the rear view mirror.

In it, she sees a hint of a silhouetted figure in the seat directly behind her.

It's a ravaged and wasted Kaleb yet again. Waterlogged, waxy, shredded skin. Empty eyes, and jutting bone.

Necrotic.

KALEB
Don't.

Mazzy SHRIEKS, spins.

The car nearly barrels off the narrow, winding road.

But there's no one there. The backseat is empty.

Kasi reaches calmly out, grabs the wheel, rights the car.

KASI
See, I told you. He's angry.

Mazzy, hyperventilating, just stares.

KASI (CONT'D)
Maybe Father's not the one keeping
him stuck here. Maybe it's you.

Kasi lets go of the wheel, reaches a hand inside her
sweater, adjusts something heavy in one of her pockets.

Mazzy, STAMMERING, grips the wheel again.

And, as she does, a pair of headlights approach from behind.

Kasi swivels her gaze toward the headlights.

Disappointed but not surprised.

In the car behind them we can barely make out Stella's
silhouette. And Hugh's.

KASI
Fine. Their funeral.

EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Having abandoned both cars, Mazzy, Stella, and Hugh chase
Kasi uphill through knee-high grass and dense oak trees in
the silvery moonlight.

STELLA
Babe. Stop. Stop!

HUGH
It's probably just his stupid AI
hallucinating! Fucking with you.

Stella's eyes drift to Mazzy's ring. Her face falls.

STELLA
Oh, sweetie.

In the distance downhill, we can catch faint glimpses of the
bright white, modern complex behind them.

MAZZY
He's in there, I know it. She knows
it. We can *feel* it.

STELLA
Feel it?! Maz? Maz!

Stella grabs her, spins her around.

STELLA (CONT'D)
He's not. He's gone. He's dead.

Ignoring them, Kasi keeps moving. Something heavy bounces up and down in her sweater pocket.

STELLA (CONT'D)
(to Hugh)
Do something.

Hugh hesitates, nervous eyes on Kasi.

HUGH
Please, Maz. I miss him too.

MAZZY
That fucker didn't cremate him. He
took him prisoner. He's *using* him.

Hugh SIGHS, runs his hands through his beard.

HUGH
That doesn't make any--

MAZZY
And you! Tell me you haven't run
the *fucking* company into the
fucking ground.

HUGH
What?

MAZZY
You're broke, aren't you?

Hugh STAMMERS.

In the distance, Kasi disappears from view.

MAZZY
You wanna know why I never fell for
you? Because you're a glad-handing
opportunist with zero imagination.

Mazzy looks to Stella, exasperated.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Sorry, not sorry.

STELLA
Hugh, what is she talking about?

MAZZY
You sold K out, you bastard.

HUGH
 Our AI, our LLM, just couldn't stop
 hallucinating. We needed cash.
 Runway. How was I supposed to know
 it all came from his fucking...

In the distance: BANG! A single gunshot.

HUGH (CONT'D)
 ...dad.

Mazzy turns, sprints uphill.

STELLA
 Wait. You gave that prick--

HUGH
 Total access to our tech, yeah. It
 was the only way out.

EXT. HILLTOP, HATCH - NIGHT

Kasi stands in a clearing clutching a small handgun. At her feet is a concrete slab housing a rusted metal door with a now shattered brass lock dangling from it.

KASI
 Fucking tech-bros.

She bends, throws open the hatch: CRRRREEEAK. SMASH!

Mazzy, winded, steps up behind her.

KASI (CONT'D)
 Down the stairs. Through the
 tunnel. Under the building and in.

Kasi pockets the pistol, pulls out her lighter, lights it.

KASI (CONT'D)
 And tell them to shut it.

She steps inside, starts down a rusted circular staircase.

KASI (CONT'D)
 Their mouths, not the hatch.

Reluctantly, Stella and Hugh enter the clearing just as Mazzy follows Kasi down (with one finger to her lips).

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Mazzy chases Kasi through a long, waterlogged concrete tunnel. The only light comes from Kasi's flickering lighter.

Along one wall: a corroded steel pipe nearly five feet in diameter. On the opposite wall: strands of disused cable.

KASI
 Father still uses the water. Turns
 it into super-cooled saline. To
 keep every 'patient' in an induced
 cryogenic coma.

Kasi reaches a hand forward, pushes her way through a thick spiderweb that spans nearly the entire tunnel.

Behind Mazzy, Stella and Hugh struggle to keep up.

KASI (CONT'D)
 Keeps them close to death, in
 terminal lucidity.

She takes a bend to the left, starts down a gradual stepped decent. Moisture trickles down the cement.

KASI (CONT'D)
 That little blast of mental clarity
 just before you--

SLAP.

Mazzy walks face-first into what seems to be a thin, translucent membrane of some sort.

SMACK.

A second panel of clear material snaps taut behind her, lifts her, silently screaming, into the air.

WHOOSH.

The two panels suck together, trapping Mazzy mid-stride, arms out, face to one side, feet airborne.

HISS.

The space around Mazzy floods with a viscous, churning liquid brimming with tiny translucent bubbles.

Mazzy struggles violently to get free until:

KASI (PRE-LAP)
 That's good.

Mazzy, no longer trapped, stumbles forward, GASPING.

KASI
 He's still in your head.

Stella and Hugh just stare. *The fuck just happened?*

KASI (CONT'D)
C'mon. Almost there.

INT. TUNNEL, ACCESS DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Having made it to the source of the faint light at the end of the tunnel, Kasi CLICKS her lighter closed, pockets it.

A massive, battered steel door with a grime-clouded porthole and six rusted levers stands before them. It looks as though it could take a nuclear blast.

MAZZY
What's...

KASI
On the other side?

Kasi bends to grab one of the levers, HEAVES it up. The GRINDING of metal-on-metal reverberates down the tunnel.

KASI (CONT'D)
Like I said.

She reaches for the next lever, pulls it up.

KASI (CONT'D)
Nothing.

Behind Mazzy, Stella and Hugh share another nervous look.

STELLA
Hold on. Hold on. Let's think about
this for a second, yeah?

Kasi reaches for the upper levers, cranks them both, one after the other.

KA-THUMP. The door jolts slightly inward. Warm air courses through the seal, brings an eerie HOWL.

KASI
Close your eyes.

MAZZY
What?

Kasi lifts her wrist, looks to her watch.

KASI
We'll have ten minutes, max.
(MORE)

KASI (CONT'D)
 (forcefully)
 Close your eyes.

MAZZY
 Why?

KASI
 Think of him. Tell me what you see.

HUGH
 Jesus, is this really--

KASI
 Do it now.

Mazzy EXHALES, reluctantly stitches her eyelids together.

INSERT MONTAGE:

A quick series of blindingly fast FLASH CUTS:

-- The lights of a bright white passage WHIP by--
 -- Two huge glass doors WHOOSH open automatically --
 -- Gloved hands FILL a long silver syringe --
 -- Triangular panes of glass SPIN high above --
 -- Everything slows, brightens, SLIPS out of focus --
 -- A blizzard of silver bubbles SWIRLS all around us --

END MONTAGE.

INT. TUNNEL, ACCESS DOOR - SAME TIME

Mazzy opens her eyes, looks to Kasi.

MAZZY
 It's some sort of... lab.

KASI
 The ceiling?

MAZZY
 Glass. Like a spiderweb. A circle
 full of triangles.

Kasi nods, knows exactly where to go.

KASI
 Seventh floor.

She looks to a confused Hugh and a petrified Stella.

KASI (CONT'D)
Cryo lab. Used to be where they
kept the primates.

She palms Mazzy a battered white key card covered in faded
stickers of rainbows and unicorns.

KASI (CONT'D)
Used to be mine, back in the day.

She turns, grips the circular handle below the porthole.

KASI (CONT'D)
Father never changes the code.
Never thought I'd come home.

MAZZY
Wait--

KASI
Once you make it to the lab, find
him, get him out. However you can.

MAZZY
Wait.

Kasi turns back to Mazzy, impatient.

KASI
You won't have time for a full
transfusion.

MAZZY
Transfusion?

KASI
To get the saline out. Raise his
body temperature. Jump start his
heart. He'll be weak, disoriented,
barely able to--
(off Mazzy's confusion)
Listen to him. He'll tell you how
to get there if he wants you there.

MAZZY
I don't--

Kasi reaches into her sweater, pulls out her pistol again,
wags it toward Mazzy.

KASI
Take it. Use it if you have to.

MAZZY

What?

Hugh reaches in, grabs the gun. Mazzy YANKS it back.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

(to Hugh)

No.

Kasi grins.

KASI (CONT'D)

Every inch of this place is under remote surveillance. They see you, every exit locks instantly from the outside. No way out. So, get in. Get out. Or end up another one of Father's lab rats.

Kasi spins back to the door, PUSHES it open.

MAZZY

Where are you going?

KASI

To get real proof.

Kasi steps in over the threshold.

KASI (CONT'D)

The world needs to know what he did to me. To all of them.

She wags a tiny stainless steel thumb drive back toward Mazzy, disappears inside.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, PASSAGEWAYS - CONTINUOUS

From the damp darkness of the tunnel, we slowly emerge into an immaculate series of curvilinear passageways.

Everything is bright white and windowless. Harshly bright.

Up ahead, moving fast, Kasi veers left, gestures right.

Mazzy, clumsily clutching the pistol, nods, swerves right, hugs the wall as she moves.

Stella and Hugh, leaving muddy footprints, follow her closely, saying nothing.

Mazzy slows at an intersection, looks left, then right. She blinks, narrows her eyes, nods to herself, continues on.

Stella and Hugh chase her as fluorescent lights BUZZ from above. It's the only sound we hear.

Then, slowing again, Mazzy turns, sees a familiar door. An elevator door. The one she rode previously.

She lunges across the hall, sprints for the door, skids to a stop, sweeps the badge across the sensor.

The light flashes green.

Mazzy looks to the ceiling, sees a small camera mounted high up. It's pointed away, the opposite direction.

She looks back to Stella and Hugh, gestures for them to mirror her movements. They do.

WHOOSH.

The elevator doors glide open. She leaps inside, looks to the keypad, presses seven. Nothing happens.

She swipes the key card, presses again. It lights up. And the doors trundle closed behind all three of them.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The subterranean floors flash by. Then the vast lobby from earlier. It's eerily abandoned.

The elevator slows at seven.

Mazzy looks to Stella, then to Hugh.

Hugh draws a breath to speak. She nods no. The doors open.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, SEVENTH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Stella and Mazzy step out of the elevator, look both ways.

At the far end of the hall are a pair of tall glass doors that we've seen before. The same doors Mazzy saw.

She instantly sets off toward them.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, CRYO LAB ENTRANCE - SAME TIME

Mazzy steps up to the sensor by the doors, swipes the key card. The light flashes green. The doors BUZZ open.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, OFFICE - SAME TIME

Inside what appears to be her father's vast, minimalist office, Kasi crouches in front of a hulking curved monitor with the thumb drive plugged into its side.

As the drive FLASHES, writing files, Kasi's face is painted by the glow of a FLICKERING VIDEO playing on-screen.

It's of her, as a girl, unconscious on a gurney with a primitive early cranial rig wrapped around her head and multiple IVs attached to both arms.

A YOUNGER VICTOR steps up behind her in a white lab coat.

YOUNGER VICTOR (V.O.)
(on-screen)
Terminal lucidity achieved.

The darkened silhouette of a man steps up behind Kasi.

She barely reacts, lifts a hand to the drive, pulls it discreetly out, palms it.

KASI
It's over, Father.

VICTOR
(from the shadows)
Nothing ends until I say it ends.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, CRYO LAB - SAME TIME

Mazzy and Stella surge into the cramped lab only to be confronted by a gruesome, terrifying sight.

Suspended from the ceiling, fifty or more GHASTLY FIGURES hover sandwiched between rigid, vacuum-packed vertical sheets of thick, semi-opaque plasticine.

Just like what Mazzy envisioned in the tunnel.

Their arms and legs are gruesomely splayed. Their contorted bodies are wrapped in sheer white tunics and are fully enveloped in a thick, viscous, nearly frozen liquid.

Tubing and wires jut from their arms, chests, and legs. Black ventilator tubes hold their mouths in silent screams.

Men. Women. Old. Young. Every race. All catatonic.

And each one bears a flashing cranial rig like the one placed on Mazzy's head inside the infusion space earlier.

Below each plastic panel: a clear plinth with a thin digital display full of flashing telemetry data.

And, high above, a massive steel pipe matching the one in the tunnel wraps around a slanted glass oculus.

HUGH

What the hell is this?

MAZZY

He's in here. I know it. I saw it.

STELLA

Oh my god.

MAZZY

Just go. Find him! Find K!

All three of them take off running, SKIDDING to a stop at each twisted, pale, vacuum-packed body.

Their faces are distorted, ghoulish-like. Empty eyes. Bloodless lips locked around black tubing.

Mazzy slides to a stop, rushes to the foot of one of the volumes, squints. It's not him. It's a woman twice his age.

She turns, runs for the next and the next.

In the distance:

HUGH

Fuck me.

Mazzy and Stella swivel their gazes his way.

He points at the nearest taut plastic panel.

HUGH (CONT'D)

It's... *him*.

Both women rush toward Hugh. He's right.

There he is, in nearly the same position he's been in in all of Mazzy's horrifying visions.

Dead eyes open. Arms out. Savior-like. A thin, crown-like band of flashing sensors wrapped around his temples.

Abruptly, every light in the entire space switches from steady white to FLASHING RED.

From unseen speakers: the ALARM BLARE of klaxons.

The doors behind them BOLT loudly. They've been spotted.

Mazzy bends to one knee, frantically swipes through a series of screens trying to find the info she needs.

MAZZY

Where is it? Where is it? Where--

She pauses on an EKG that's nearly fully flat-lined. And an EEG that's firing like an electrical storm.

STELLA

Wait. That doesn't...

Mazzy, still clutching the gun, quickly swivels digital dials, pushes up graphs comprised of glowing pixels.

The red lights strobe. The alarm DRONES on.

MAZZY

(to herself)

Induced therapeutic hypothermia. To maintain brain function after...

It's not working. Nothing's changing.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

C'mon. C'mon. C'mon.

But then the semi-opaque liquid all around Kaleb's body begins to slowly shift in hue. Gets clearer.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Please, baby. Please.

She steps back, stares breathlessly.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

Come back to me.

Stella's eyes dart to Kaleb's cranial rig. It strobes red.

STELLA

I don't think that's--

HUGH

Shoot it.

Mazzy wheels around toward him, bathed in red light.

MAZZY

WHAT?!

HUGH
The plastic. Shoot it!

Mazzy STAMMERS.

STELLA
I think we're loosing him!

Hugh YANKS the pistol away from Mazzy, takes aim.

MAZZY
Wait!

The EKG on the display behind her has fully flat-lined.

BANG.

Hugh fires once. The bullet barely pierces the material. It seems to seal around itself, miraculously self-healing.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
STOP!

BANG. BANG. BANG.

Three more shots. Gaps finally open. Fluid oozes out.

Mazzy LUNGES closer as the pouch buckles, collapses in on itself, releases Kaleb's motionless body.

She catches him, falls to the ground, wraps him in her arms, cradles him tight, SHOUTS:

MAZZY (CONT'D)
(to Stella)
Hit that button! On the screen!

Stella does a stunned double-take.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
NOW!

Stella lunges out, SMASHES the button on-screen.

Kaleb's body CONTORTS as thousands of volts of current course through his glistening frame.

Mazzy, holding on for dear life, CONVULSES as well.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Again.

Stella hits it again. More voltage. More pain.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
(weaker)
Again.

Stella's hand wavers. The graph is still flat.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
(to Kaleb, in pain)
Please come back. Please...

Stella hits it again. Mazzy and Kaleb thrash violently.

The KLAXONS suddenly cease.

But lights continue flashing a violent red.

HUGH
(to Stella)
Stop it. You'll kill them both!

From behind Hugh, a VOICE:

VICTOR (O.S.)
Precisely.

Stella and Hugh wheel around to see Victor standing directly behind them, clutching a bloodied and beaten Kasi.

He holds a silver scalpel to her bulging jugular.

VICTOR
(toward Mazzy)
Don't be a fool, my dear.

Hugh reflexively lifts the pistol, takes shaky aim as Victor slowly advances toward them.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
(still to Mazzy)
You know it. You feel it. We both
want the same thing. An end to
pain, absence, grief.

Hugh's finger grips the trigger. It's almost as though Victor doesn't even see him, doesn't care.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Peace for those who remain. Ease
for those facing their own
extinction. Hope.

Every light still pulses: RED, RED, RED.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
 You let him pass, you close that
 door to him forever.
 (beat)
 I won't let you do that. To
 yourself or to me.

Mazzy clutches Kaleb's motionless body, stares helplessly
 into his eyes.

MAZZY
 He doesn't want this. Not this way.
 You're using him. All of them.

Victor drags Kasi with him toward a circle of black marble
 at the the center of the space.

VICTOR
 I gave you a path. A bridge.

Kasi, her eyelids fluttering, can barely hold herself up.

KASI
 It's a sham. An echo of an echo.

Victor presses the blade further into her neck.

VICTOR
 Enough.

MAZZY
 Let her go.

He slows at the center of the circle of black marble.

VICTOR
 Not this time. Not again.

HUGH
 Victor, please. Think about this.

VICTOR
 Oh, I have, my boy. I have. And you
 of all people should know.

Hugh's hand trembles. The barrel shakes.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
 None of this would have be possible
 without your voracious AI and his
 trivial little app.

Victor tightens his grip on Kasi.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
This is what the world needs.

Hugh seems to waver. His hand quivers.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Everyone in this room would be in a
pine box were it not for me.

He gestures to the sickly collection of suspended cadavers.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Their gifts, once mocked, wasted.

Blood seeps from just below the blade pressed into the
Kasi's thumping jugular.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
And now? They're our salvation from
a life of paralyzed by the narrow-
minded fear of death.

Hugh exhales, slowly lowers the quaking gun.

STELLA
(toward Hugh)
The fuck are you--

HUGH
What if he's right? What if it's
all true? What if it works? This is
a fucking game changer.
(beat)
Maz saw it. She felt it. It's
fucking real, Stel.

Victor nods slowly.

VICTOR
(toward Mazzy)
No father should have to endure
what I've endured.

Stella charges toward Hugh, goes for the gun.

They tussle briefly. The gun goes off twice.

BANG. Glass falls from the ceiling.

BANG. A bullet hits the massive steel pipe near the oculus.

And, from the pipe, a GEYSER OF WATER erupts. It rushes down
into the claustrophobic space like a waterfall.

Thousands of gallons a second.

Hugh finally gets the gun back, tumbles toward Victor.

STELLA

Hugh!

VICTOR

What have you done?

With Victor distracted, Kasi slips a hand into her sweater, pulls out her thumb drive, drops it.

Only Mazzy, dazed, clocks it as it hits the knee-deep water.

STELLA (CONT'D)

(to Hugh)

Don't you *fucking* dare!

Hugh flips the gun over in his hand, lifts it toward Victor, butt-end first, wades toward him as the space swiftly fills.

It's already nearly waist-deep.

HUGH

Sorry, Stel.

He hands the gun to Victor as the water rises.

HUGH

But it's just... *business*.

VICTOR

Quite.

Victor turns the pistol over, aims, fires: BANG!

The shot clips Hugh in the shoulder, spins him, splashing backward into Stella's arms.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

And thank you for bringing my
prodigal daughter back to me. She
shall come in very handy.

BANG!

He fires again. Hits Hugh below the surface, in the thigh.

The circle of marble Victor and Kasi are standing on
revolves a few degrees, begins to slowly lower.

Water courses through the open seam all around it.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Very handy indeed.

The disc of marble disappears downward and another disc rotates into it's place, seals tight.

Above, the massive steel pipe circling the slanted glass oculus bursts in three more spots: BOOM. BOOM. BOOM.

More water CASCADES down. The ROAR is near-deafening.

STELLA
Hugh?! MAZ!

Already floating in the frigid water, Mazzy struggles to keep Kaleb's limp body close.

The cramped space is filling, filling, filling. Too fast.

Stella grabs Hugh by the collar, drags him toward Mazzy.

STELLA (CONT'D)
You gotta let him go! That's not
Kaleb. He's not here. He's not--

Kaleb's body jolts, slips from Mazzy's grasp, tethered by his telemetry and ventilator.

Mazzy, in a frenzy, ducks her head under the roiling waters, tries to keep her eyes on Kaleb.

Stella reaches out, snags her, pulls her back up.

Behind her, Hugh is fading. Slipping into shock.

STELLA (CONT'D)
That's not him! That's not Kaleb!
Kaleb is gone! You've gotta--

MAZZY
No, no. I can... I can save him.

Stella pulls her closer. They're nearly to the glass oculus.

All of the sheer plastic volumes below glow contentedly.

STELLA
It's over!

Stella lets go of Hugh, spins around, pounds at the glass, notices a bullet hole.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Help me!

She spins around again, feels for the hole, SMASHES the butt end of her fist into it. BAM. BAM. BAM.

Small cracks begin to spiderweb and spread.

Mazzy looks down again. Through the turgid water, we can barely make out Kaleb floating ten feet down. Still trapped.

Stella PUNCHES again. The glass SHATTERS. We see stars.

Stella, teeth chattering, grabs Hugh, SHOVES him toward the gap. There's just enough room to squeeze out.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Babe. Now!

Mazzy wags her head briefly side-to-side, rakes in a deep breath, and dives.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, CRYO LAB, UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Just like she did as a girl, Mazzy frantically paddles downward deeper and deeper as beams of light from above ripple and surge.

Nearly twenty feet down, she finally reaches Kaleb, grasps one arm, then the other, pulls herself around to face him.

For a second it looks almost as if they're wound together in some sort of elaborate, slow-motion waltz.

His sheer white tunic and her gauzy floral blouse ebb and flow with every undulation, every ripple.

His silver mirrored pendant floats below his chin.

Mazzy gently reaches up, draws the ventilator from his lips, removes the crown of flashing lights from his head, rips off every sensor, every IV, every lead.

Silence.

Just the two of them face-to-face, submerged.

She gently caresses his face with one hand. Then, his neck, his forehead, his chin, his cheeks.

Suddenly, his eyes open.

But they're no longer milky. No longer dead. Instead, they're full of life. Brimming with love.

He thrusts a hand forward, lightly places his splayed fingers on her belly, smiles.

He knows.

Mazzy's face flashes from shock to adoration to profound, irrevocable loss. Unfathomable heartbreak.

But his smile doesn't fade. Instead, he dips his head slightly to catch her gaze again.

KALEB (V.O.)

No, no.

Mazzy looks to him. His lips don't move.

But his face says it all:

KALEB (V.O.)

It's okay.

Mazzy wants to scream, cry out. Can't.

His eyes placidly study her like he's trying to commit every aspect of her form to memory, forever.

KALEB (V.O.)

This is my time.

She wags her head vigorously side-to-side. *NO!*

KALEB (V.O.)

Thank you.

From above, the moonlight rains down in heavenly bands.

KALEB (V.O.)

For letting me go.

Mazzy tries to protest again. He just smiles, catches sight of her ring, nods slowly.

More pride than sadness. Fulfillment.

He begins to slowly sink, less buoyant than she is. Drawn to a different fate.

KALEB (V.O.)

I'll always be with you.

In one last flourish, he, like a magician, miraculously produces Kasi's stainless steel drive, floats it her way.

KALEB (V.O.)

Always.

And, with that, he disappears into the deep just like her father did so many years ago.

Alone, Mazzy grips the drive, turns, paddles with all her might toward the surface.

Through the pulsing red. Toward the moonlight.

As she goes, Kaleb's flashing crown of sensors drifts by just like Daisy's collar did, blinks twice.

Goes dead.

EXT. THE INSTITUTE, ROOF - NIGHT

Mazzy, breathless, BURSTS upward through the water coursing through the smashed panes of glass, pulls herself out, rolls over onto her back, GAGS out saltwater, shivers violently.

Ahead of her, Stella cradles Hugh. He's bleeding out. Pale.

Mazzy rolls away from the gap, lies face-up amid the cascade of freezing liquid, silently sobs.

Her chest heaves. Tears stream down her drenched cheeks. But she doesn't make a sound.

An entire lifetime of misery, loss, and abandonment.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Mazzy and Kaleb huddle over a tiny corner table inside a bustling Thai restaurant.

Over the CLATTER and DIN, Kaleb clears his throat, thinks briefly, smiles.

KALEB

Actually, no.

(beat)

What I'd want is, like, a chance to finally understand all of the little things you said to me over our, I dunno, six decades give or take, that I'd somehow missed, didn't hear right, didn't get. You know what I mean?

Mazzy, radiant, rolls her eyes slightly, twirls a fork though the cluster of noodles on her plate.

MAZZY

Uh, yeah. No.

KALEB

Like, that moment when you realize
you've been singing the wrong
lyrics to your favorite song for,
like, your entire life.

She takes a bite, nods. *Tell me more, kook.*

KALEB (CONT'D)

Well, I'd love for *that* to be my
eternity. My great hereafter.

He pulls his napkin from his lap, reaches a hand into his
pocket, pulls something out of it.

KALEB (CONT'D)

Just discovering the *actual* lyrics.
The real words. To your song.

He backs his chair out, bends to one knee.

The night of his first proposal.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. THE INSTITUTE, ROOF - NIGHT

As water continues to blur down the glass all around her,
Mazzy wipes away tears, tries to calm her seizing chest.

MAZZY

That *fucking* bastard.

She sits up, looks to Stella and Hugh, still shivering.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

(to Hugh, coldly)

And you...

She looks right. Sees a shaft of red light pulsing up
through a nearby, smaller, pyramidal skylight.

RIP!

She tears off one sleeve of her soaked blouse, stands,
rushes over toward Stella and Hugh, kneels again, wraps the
fabric around Hugh's bloody leg.

MAZZY (CONT'D)

This is gonna hurt.

She cinches the tourniquet tight.

Hugh barely flinches, can't control his body.

HUGH
 (shivering)
 I'm sorry, Maz. I'm so--

Mazzy ties a quick, firm knot, stands, looks past the skylight to a motorized window washing basket attached to two articulated steel arms.

MAZZY
 (to Stella)
 C'mon.

Stella, shell-shocked and freezing, just blinks.

Mazzy turns, rushes across the rooftop.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
 We gotta get back in there. Save
 her. Get the rest of them out.
 (beat)
 Take that sonofabitch down.

EXT. THE INSTITUTE, ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

Mazzy stands at the edge of the skylight, looking up at the heavy metal window washing basket hovering just above it.

The flashing red light from below washes across her face.

MAZZY
 Now.

At the edge of the roof, Stella, throws a lever.

And the whole contraption falls, hits the glass, instantly SHATTERS it, plunges sideways into the building, stops.

Glass and bits of steel shower down into the bright white, multi-story zigzagging, triangular stairwell below.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
 Perfect. Let's go.

Stella simply stares, all-adrenalin now.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
 Snap out of it. We gotta get him to
 Marin General, ASAP.

Mazzy sprints back across the gravel, skids to a stop.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
 (to Hugh)
 Can you stand?

He nods, shivers, pushes himself to his feet.

Instead of being angry, Mazzy shoves one arm around him, helps him back across the roof, toward the skylight.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

BANG!

Hugh, covered in blood, lands on the metal grate of the basket, winces in pain.

Mazzy and Stella catch him.

MAZZY
Hold on tight.

Mazzy checks to make sure he's steady. Stella nods.

The red flashing lights still strobe as Mazzy reaches for the control panel on the basket, pushes a lever.

And the whole thing rapidly free-falls before, SCREECH, she hits the brakes and the basket stops dead, bouncing only inches from the glass covered terrazzo.

Mazzy throws a tubular steel gate open, steps out.

CRUNCH.

She wheels around, points.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
(hushed)
The lobby, the doors. Use whatever
you can to smash your way out.

Stella nods, helps Hugh out. He's weak but conscious.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
Get him to the E.R.

STELLA
Wwwwwhat are you gonna--

She spins on her heels, her face hardened again. Cold.

MAZZY
Hurry. Before he loses more blood.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Victor violently DRAGS a nearly comatose Kasi across the empty lobby clutching a phone to his ear with his free hand.

VICTOR
(into the phone)
Scramble live monitoring. I want no
record of this. Repeat, no record.

He veers toward a hulking pair of doors in the distance.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Unlock all interior doors. And get
manned security here ASAP. We need
to drain the cryo lab before all of
the specimens fail. Do I make
myself clear?

INT. THE INSTITUTE, CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Mazzy rushes past a series of closed glass doors down a long
corridor leading away from the stairwell.

Each room she passes looks like some sort of dimly lit
laboratory. Beakers and benches. Sequencers. Microscopes.

She swerves across the hall, skids to a stop in front of
what appears to be an operating room.

Bingo.

Mazzy swipes the key card. Miraculously it works.

The panel FLASHES green and she ducks inside.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, OPERATING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mazzy makes a beeline for a tall glass container lined with
labeled vials full of liquid and boxes full of equipment.

Syringes. Scalpels. Vials. Surgical tubing. Bandages.

In a deft flurry of movement, she pulls precisely what she
needs, shoves what she can into her waterlogged pockets,
turns back around, peers out the door.

The coast is clear.

She silently ducks back out, clutching a massive syringe in
one hand like a knife.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Mazzy edges her way silently up to the same bank of
elevators from before.

She peers around the corner.

The space is still eerily empty. Just a vast stone and glass atrium lit by pulsing red lights.

In the distance, she sees Stella tugging Hugh with her, leaving a slick of blood.

Mazzy points to an empty silver umbrella stand next to the glass doors to the empty parking lot.

She mimes smashing the glass.

Stella just nods back, pulls Hugh toward the doors.

As they go, Mazzy wheels back around to the empty lobby. There's no sign of Victor. Anywhere.

MAZZY
(under her breath)
Please, K. Show me the--

FLASH TO:

INT. THE INSTITUTE, OPERATING THEATER - SAME TIME

We catch a brief glimpse of what appears to be an empty amphitheater of sorts, seen from the stage.

Row after row of steeply raked seating in two half circles. The lights in the space also flash red.

And, over the mesmerizing scarlet pulsations, Victor's disembodied VOICE:

VICTOR (O.C.)
As you can now see, the subject's
heart rate is nearly imperceptible.
Brain temperature is holding steady
at fourteen degrees Celsius.

The scene before us slowly dissolves. Disappears. Vanishes. Kaleb's last lucid moment, gone.

BACK TO:

INT. THE INSTITUTE, LOBBY - SAME TIME

Mazzy looks to see, across the lobby, the same pair of tall double doors Victor just fled toward.

MAZZY
Thank you, baby.

She takes off running.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, OPERATING THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Mazzy quietly enters a darkened anteroom as we hear, again, Victor NARRATING for an apparently absent audience:

VICTOR
As with all things, energy is
required for transmission. Very
little is required for receipt.

Mazzy slowly steps through an open archway.

To her right and left, identical curving pathways wrap around the back of a horseshoe shaped set of sleek risers.

Dead ahead: a direct path down toward a bullpen-like operating theater.

It's like a futuristic rendition of a macabre 18th century teaching college dissection hall.

At the center, on a gurney, lies an unconscious Kasi. Above her, Victor towers in a white lab coat.

He clutches a bloody scalpel in one gloved hand. And his other hand rests on the black oxygen mask over her mouth.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
The concordance of their thoughts
was unparalleled in my experience.

Mazzy decides to veer right, moves silently though the darkness behind the risers.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
But, as repeated experimentation
demonstrated, the fidelity of her
signal far eclipsed his.

Mazzy slows nearing the end of the risers.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Her skills were superior.

As Mazzy edges into the light, we can see Victor to her left, down on the stage.

Above and around him: row after row of empty seats bathed in blasts of red.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Until she squelched her signal,
squandered her gift.

Is he talking to himself? Or to her?

Victor lets go of the mask around Kasi's mouth, steadies the scalpel in his hand.

Mazzy tightens her grip on the stolen syringe.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
You should have told me, my dear.

From this vantage point, we can see that a section of Kasi's head has been shaved and prepped for surgery.

It's lined with blue paper. And an overhead lamp projects a fine grid of lines and tiny numbers across her bare scalp.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Your pregnancy changes everything.

Mazzy freezes.

Victor caresses his daughter's skin, prepares to cut.

Next to him, a waiting crown-like cranial rig FLASHES.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
That's why he's still with you.
(gravely)
Or was.

Victor's blade touches Kasi's skin, slices.

Mazzy leaps out into the light with a hand behind her back.

The hand with the syringe.

MAZZY
Stop it. Stop!

Victor pauses, lifts the scalpel, turns her way.

VICTOR
Don't let her cynicism infect you.
The collective consciousness is
nothing if not a shared dream.
Regardless the source. You've felt
it. You know it. It's works.

Victor turns back toward his daughter.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
I can use her to bring him back.

MAZZY
Let her GO!

Victor pauses again with the blade.

Blood runs in rivulets down Kasi's shaved head.

VICTOR
That's rich coming from you.

Mazzy continues her cautious advance. Victor tightens his grip on the blade.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
The more you lose, the less you
seem to be able to let go of.

MAZZY
I loved him.

VICTOR
And I his mother.

He turns, calmly gets back to the task at hand.

MAZZY
You killed her yourself you
sonofabitch!

Without another thought, without another word, with zero hesitation, Mazzy CHARGES up onto the stage.

Victor, impatiently turns back around to face her.

But she's on him before he can even react.

She lets loose a guttural, gut-wrenching, furious YOWL and then sinks a hefty syringe into his neck.

With her free hand she SLAMS the plunger down.

In goes 50cc of Midazolam.

VICTOR
You don't know what you're--

She YANKS the syringe out, steps back, full of rage.

MAZZY
She's your daughter, not some
fucking test subject!

Victor drops the scalpel, staggers backward.

VICTOR
I'll make you pay for this.

His knees buckle. He tumbles sideways, sees the pistol on a silver surgical table, thrusts a hand out for it, misses, hits the floor with a meaty THUD.

Mazzy just watches, ice cold.

MAZZY
You already have.

From the ground, Victor GURGLES.

MAZZY (CONT'D)
With everything.

Mazzy drops the syringe, looks to Kasi's body, reaches back into her bag, pulls out a small clear vial labeled "ADRENALIN" and another empty syringe.

INT. THE INSTITUTE, CRYO LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Mazzy sits on the glistening floor of the now drained cryo lab with Kaleb's lifeless body draped over her lap like Michelangelo's Pietà.

The lights no longer flash red. Instead, the space glows an almost heavenly white. Ethereal. Celestial.

No longer crying, no longer sobbing, Mazzy just tenderly strokes Kaleb's wet hair, cradles his head.

But her bare left arm now has a length of thick surgical tubing tied tightly around it.

And, on the marble before her, lies another full syringe and an empty vial.

A vial marked: "MORPHINE".

MAZZY
(quietly, to Kaleb)
Stella was right. You were the one.
The only one. Ever.

Kasi silently steps up, sees the syringe, knows what it means, pauses.

KASI
Don't do it.

Kasi, with effort, bends to one knee and gently removes Kaleb's necklace. The one she made for him.

His protector.

Mazzy doesn't look up, continues lightly rocking the body of the dead love of her life.

Slowly, Kasi pushes herself back to her feet, extends a clenched fist clutching the necklace toward Mazzy.

It sparkles in the light.

KASI (CONT'D)
Don't let Father win.

Mazzy finally lifts her gaze.

SLOW FADE TO:

EXT. THE INSTITUTE - NIGHT

Together, Mazzy and Kasi step through the smashed glass doors to the lobby as the harsh blue and red light of sirens silently sweeps over the façade in DRAMATIC SLOW MOTION.

Numerous EMTs pushing wheeled gurneys full of rescue equipment rush into the space to try to resuscitate the remaining poor souls still trapped within.

Behind Mazzy and Kasi, a pack of UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS drag a drugged but conscious Victor, handcuffed, across the broken glass and out into the night.

But neither woman seems to notice, seems to care.

Instead, Kasi firmly grips Mazzy's bare arm, now minus the impromptu tourniquet, as they cross the parking lot full of ambulances and cop cars.

Bonded now. In the broken places. But alive.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK: The STATIC of a car radio switching stations.

I/E. CAR/LAKE - DAY

A slightly older Mazzy (early 40s) is back at the wheel again. But this time inside a newer car. A safer car.

Something practical.

Outside, Lake Tahoe speeds by again. But it's no longer nighttime, no longer winter.

Instead, it's summer. An impossibly sunny, blue sky day.

Mazzy finally finds a hint of a station on the radio, lets go of the dial. The song is familiar. Patsy Cline again.

"ALWAYS" again, this time through STATIC. Like it's coming in from another era, another time. Another world.

Mazzy hesitates, lets her eyes drift from the windshield to the rear view mirror.

Draped around her neck: Kaleb's silver pendant.

In the backseat, safely buckled in, a YOUNG GIRL (8) gazes contentedly out at the lake speeding by.

Her face is a perfect blend of Mazzy's and Kaleb's.

Unmistakably theirs.

She marvels at the beauty of the lake as if it's a vast, remote sea of tiny diamonds perfectly reflecting the cloudless cerulean skies above.

Mazzy bites her lip, looks back to the road, grips the steering wheel firmly. Not out of fear. Out of love.

As the SONG fades away, overcome by more STATIC, Mazzy reaches back for the dash, continues her search.

From the steering wheel, Mazzy's ring casts brilliant, scintillating points of light across the roof of the car.

Almost exactly like the disco ball did way back in the dingy little Chinatown karaoke bar.

And behind Mazzy, the little girl, her daughter, reaches her tiny hand across the seat.

She absentmindedly pets a sleeping puppy curled up on the leather next to her.

It dozes soundly in a pool of light.

Not a care in the world. Safe and sound.

Together.

CUT TO BLACK.

ROLL END CREDITS --

To "EVERLASTING ARMS" by Vampire Weekend.

THE END