PURE O

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EXT. DORM ROOFTOP - DAY

A beautiful, sunlit smile. This smile belongs to MARIE ASTOR (20). She squints into the setting sun, her smile broadening. Over this, a loud CLICK, then the scratchy sound of white noise. The voice that follows is tinny and recorded sounding.

MARIE (V.O.)
I was twenty years old when I lost my mind.

INT. MARIE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Marie types furiously at her computer, immersed in writing.

MARIE (V.O.)
They don't like to call it that, though. The shrinks, I mean. They call it "blossoming." My disorder blossomed. Like a rose, or a maiden.

INT. NYU CLASSROOM - DAY

Marie aloud reads from the piece she was working on. The professor looks around at the entranced class and smiles.

MARIE (V.O.)
I would call it more like "a free fall into infinite darkness." But maybe that's why I'm not a doctor.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - NIGHT

Marie and her friend MADISON (21) run wildly through falling snow toward a yellow cab that glows in the twilight.

MARIE (V.O.)
Shrinks are good like that, coming up with poetic euphemisms to talk about awful things. But in a way, this one actually makes sense.

INT. LOFT PARTY - NIGHT

Marie recklessly makes out with a guy.

MARIE (V.O.)
It blossomed alright. The way mold does on fruit.

INT. THE BOWERY BALLROOM - NIGHT

Marie dances (terribly) in a crowd to an indie-pop band.

MARIE (V.O.)
Or a wildfire does in the forest.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Marie holds Madison's hair back as she VOMITS in a toilet.

MARIE (V.O.)
It bloomed in my mind the way any disease does in a body.

EXT. DORM ROOFTOP - DAY

Marie is back at the rooftop party. Her smile breaks into a wild laugh. She leans on Madison, doubled over with laughter.

MARIE (V.O.)
Then it ate me alive.

INT. MARIE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

An incessant BEEPING.

Marie sits on the floor in a hoodie, knees drawn up to her chin. She lifts her hooded head to reveal a pale, tired face.

The BEEPING comes from an alarm clock beside her: 5:55am. She SMACKS it and there's an almost subliminal FLICKER of images:

The FLASH of a blade, a SPLAT of red hitting Marie's face.

Hands shaking, she pulls a PILL BOTTLE from her hoodie. The morning light gleams off the label:

TYLER DICKERMAN

XANAX: TAKE 1 TABLET DAILY

Marie shakes the last FIVE PILLS into her palm and throws them back, then rolls the empty bottle under her bed where it CLACKS against other empties.

She shuffles to the kitchen, tripping over stacks of notebooks on the floor, and opens a silverware drawer. It's full of SPOONS and SEAFOAM GREEN CRAYONS. She puts FIVE CRAYONS in her hoodie pocket.

The kitchen table is a disaster of papers crowned a thick, worn notebook. Marie reaches for it, then JERKS away, wiping her hand on her pants. She walks out, leaving it behind.

INT. NYU BUILDING - DAY

Security guards flank a long line of students waiting to go through a METAL DETECTOR. Marie stares straight ahead as she passes POSTERS for CONFLICT RESOLUTION MEETINGS and C HALL SUPPORT GROUPS, and FLYERS for a MENTAL HEALTH STUDY.

INT. NYU CLASSROOM - DAY

Marie sits near the back of the room, her eyes glazed over. Beside her is Madison, dressed like a sexy librarian in glasses and an unbuttoned button up. Madison openly gawks at the professor, MR. BROWN (42): short, homely, unbearably charismatic. He looks around the class as he talks.

MR. BROWN
We're getting close, boys and girls. Graduation, in its many splendored horror, is mere months away. If fact, some of you-

His gaze momentarily settles on Marie with a wink.

MR. BROWN
-May already be receiving letters of inquiry from magazines and publishing houses. This final semester of Creative Writing can transform your thesis from jello bullshit into steel latticework-but only if you're willing to work for it. So dig deep. Get dirty. It's the last thing you'll write in college. Make it count.

Madison leans over and whispers to Marie.

MADISON
So help me god, I am going to have sex with that man.

MR. BROWN
Okay. Let's take a look at the new chapter of Madison's Gothic werewolf parable "A Death in The Woods."

Madison blushes as she fishes out a slim packet of paper. Marie's hands don't leave her hoodie pocket.

MADISON
(Whispering)
Did you forget to print again?

Marie nods vaguely, her eyes glazing over from the drugs.

MR. BROWN
Madison, why don't we start with you reading across the page, and Marie, can you be our monster?

EXT. STREET - DAY

Marie walks quickly away from campus, her hands shoved in her hoodie pocket. A student handing out MENTAL HEALTH STUDY FLYERS shoves one at her. She dodges him.

INT. NYU CLASSROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Madison reads aloud, following the words with a sharp PENCIL that SCRITCHES along the page. Marie turns to her, eyes weirdly glazed. Suddenly, Madison CHOKES.

EXT. STREET - DAY (PRESENT)

Marie hears the BUZZ of a walkie-talkie and looks over to see two security guards eyeing her aggressively. She speeds up, sweat forming on her forehead.

MADISON (V.O.)
(Whispering)
Marie.

INT. NYU CLASSROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

BLOOD dribbles from Madison's lips. Marie looks down at her hands, gripping the PENCIL, sticky with blood.

EXT. STREET-DAY (PRESENT)

Marie takes her hands out of her hoodie pocket. Clean.

VOICE (O.S.)
Marie!

Marie looks up to see BRIT (22), a tall blonde, good-looking, but definitely not the brains of this operation.

BRIT
Holy shit, Marie, where have you been? Everyone's looking for you.

Marie looks dazed. She murmurs...

MARIE
Because of Madison?

BRIT
What happened to Madison?

MADISON (O.S.)
Yeah what did happen to Madison?

Marie wheels around to see Madison standing, furious, but uninjured.

MADISON
Oh wait, I know-she was super humiliated because Marie fell asleep in class. While reading her thesis. OUT LOUD.

INT. NYU CLASSROOM-DAY (FLASHBACK)

Marie jolts awake, sweaty and incoherent, to find the whole class staring at her eerily.

EXT. STREET - DAY (PRESENT)

Marie almost laughs, looking deeply relieved. Madison glares.

MARIE
Sorry, Mad, it's not you, I'm just-

MADISON
So hung over? Yeah. I could tell.

BRIT
Hey guess what, you guys?

Marie lights a cigarette.

MADISON
Ew, when did you start smoking again?

Marie shrugs.

BRIT
Yeah, gross, Marie. Guess what, though?

MADISON
You better quit before summer, I heard it makes you snore-

BRIT
Oh. My God, who cares? Guess what-

MADISON
What, Brit? Jesus!

BRIT
Ty Dickerman got expelled.

MARIE
WHA-

Marie starts violently COUGHING and drops her cigarette.

BRIT
Crazy, right? Derek has O Chem with Ty's roommate, Robby, and he said this morning him and everyone he dealt to got expelled in some kind of like, *sting op*! That's why I was looking for you, Marie! Didn't you guys used to make out or something?

Madison rolls her eyes.

MADISON
Ugh. That kid was a fucking train wreck. And now everyone'll wanna talk about it at Conflict Resolution-Hey where are you going?

Marie is jogging away from them. She yells back.

MARIE
I gotta go!

BRIT
You coming to ConRez later?

Marie says nothing, but breaks into a run.

INT. MARIE'S DORM ROOM- DAY

Marie explodes into her room and frantically searches under her bed, sifting through DOZENS OF BOTTLES: all Xanax, all prescribed to Tyler Dickerman, all empty. She digs through her trash-a stray bottle! She grabs it--

Empty.

MARIE (V.O.)
Good.

Her heart POUNDS in her head. She paces, counting, tripping over BOOKS, slipping on PAPERS, a sheen of sweat forming on her face. She shuts her eyes, a FLICKER:

A BLADE SLASHES, spraying BLOOD. A SCREAM, then a CHOKE. KNIFE again. BLOOD again. KNIFE again. BLOOD-KNIFE-BLOOD-

She rushes out of her room, SLAMMING the door.

INT. NYU DORM HALLWAY - DAY

Marie KNOCKS on a door five times, then five more, then five-

ROBBY (O.S.)
He's not here, Marie.

MARIE
I know, Robby. Can I just come in?

INT. ROBBY AND TYLER'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Marie is slumped on the floor beside a haggard looking ROBBY (22). One side of the room is depressingly bare: stripped bed, tacks in the wall where posters were. Robby sighs.

ROBBY
Now they're going to give me new fucking roommate...

MARIE
(Distracted)
How can no one else be holding?

ROBBY
You don't get it, do you? *Everyone got expelled.* And even if there's a few that didn't, no one's gonna be selling on this campus a for long, long time.

Marie rubs her eyes roughly.

MARIE
Well, how did Ty get his shit?

ROBBY
He was seeing like, twelve different shrinks, dude. One for every prescription. Memorized all the symptoms and everything.

MARIE
And they just gave him drugs? What did he tell them?

INT. NYU STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES - DAY

MARIE (V.O.)
I'm just really stressed out, you know?

Marie smiles nervously at the man-child sitting across from her. A piece of paper taped to his desk tells us this is JAKE LUDEN, (26, looks 15) He shuffles through a stack of papers, overwhelmed. A POSTER of the ABC's of violent warning signs droops on the wall behind him.

JAKE
Yeah, totally. We've gotten a lot of that in the last few months. Ever since The C Hall Incident--ah!

He pulls out a sheet of paper triumphantly.

JAKE
Ok. Here we go. Are you currently pregnant?

MARIE
Um, no.

JAKE
Are you currently having unprotected oral, anal, or vaginal-

MARIE
-No.

JAKE
Do you do any illegal drugs?

MARIE
No.

JAKE
About how many times a week?

MARIE
I just told you I don't do drugs.

JAKE
Ha! Tried to trick you. Old psych trick. Well. New to me. But old to the...world. Anyway. Where were we? Oh, have you ever attempted suicide?

MARIE
No. I'm just *stressed*. Maybe you could give me something to...take the edge off?

JAKE
Actually, I'm not technically a "doctor." I'm more of a graduate student. So I can't legally prescribe medication yet. But, have you tried going to ConRez?

She stands up.

MARIE
This was a mistake.

JAKE
Wait!

Jake rapidly digs through his avalanche of papers again.

JAKE
I know someone who can help you.

He finally locates and hands her a business card. She reads:

MARIE
"River Mackey?"

JAKE
Head of Counseling. He's all about that, y'know "taking the edge off."

INT. RIVER MACKEY'S OFFICE-DAY

NEW AGEY CHANTING MUSIC plays. Sage burns in a bowl. Marie skeptically eyeballs a dreamcatcher dangling by a window.

RIVER (V.O.)
See, each of these extensions holds a crystal that aligns with one of the body's seven chakras.

She looks back to RIVER MACKEY (55): his braided gray hair and flannel shirt in clear defiance of NYU teacher dress code. He holds a bizarre, spider-legged contraption.

MARIE
Oh. Great.

RIVER
We'll work on brow chakra first. It regulates what you feel as intuition. Then we'll do heart chakra. Guess what it controls.

MARIE
Love?

RIVER
No! Circulation!

He laughs.

RIVER
No, I’m just pulling your leg. It’s love. Anyway. Let’s get started.

He holds the device up to Marie's face and turns it on. It CLACKS loudly, flashing a blinding purple light.

RIVER
You feel that?!

MARIE
(Squinting)
Yeah!...So you’re not really a prescription drug kind of guy, huh?

RIVER
Absolutely not! I leave the poison to hacks like that pervert Schneeding!

INT. DR. SCHNEEDING'S OFFICE - DAY

Marie sits in a huge armchair across from DR. PAT SCHNEEDING, DIRECTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY (59); a walrus of a man with distracting tufts of hair protruding from his nose and ears.

SCHNEEDING
You remind me of a certain Freudian case study...The Rat Man.

MARIE
I remind you of The Rat Man?

SCHNEEDING
Mmm. He was haunted by grotesque nightmares of people having their anuses eaten by rats. A form of torture, used during The Inquisition, I believe. They would strap a box of starving rats to your anus or testicles and let them eat through your skin.

MARIE
Holy shit.

SCHNEEDING
You may not curse in here. But yes, it was barbaric.

MARIE
What happened to him?

SCHNEEDING
With psychoanalysis, Freud discovered the root of his fixation was a repressed memory of being punished for sexual exploration.

MARIE
So he was cured?

SCHNEEDING
Actually, he was killed in combat in World War I a few months later, so there could be no long term follow up.

MARIE
Of course.

SCHNEEDING
Now in your case, I believe you’re projecting a fear of intimacy onto the people around you. You’re afraid of the physical reality of intercourse,the penetration or “stabbing”-

He waggles his eyebrows at her meaningfully.

SCHNEEDING
-so you have created a reverse scenario, wherein *you* have the power to penetrate. It's about both desiring control and fearing it.

Long pause.

MARIE
Oh. So...can you prescribe Xanax for that?

He raises an eyebrow as he reaches for a prescription pad.

SCHNEEDING
I could.

Marie's face lights up as he begins SCRIBBLING on the page.

SCHNEEDING
But, due to a recent scandal involving students dealing pharmaceuticals, I'm prescribing psychoanalysis instead, with...

He tears off the page and hands it to her.

SCHNEEDING
...one of our most promising graduate students.

Marie looks down and reads:

JAKE LUDEN

INT. NYU STUDENT SERVICES BULDING HALLWAY - DAY

Marie storms into the hallway, crumpling up the paper. She turns the corner and SMACKS into a thin woman coming the other way, spilling PAPERS and PENS on the floor.

MARIE
Sorry.

She helps gather the papers, avoiding touching the pens. As she picks up the papers she realizes they're flyers for the mental health study. She reads:

DEPRESSION? ANXIETY? NIGHTMARES?

NYU Mental Health Services now recruiting students for an experimental treatment. Free for accepted participants. Call for interview.

Marie looks up at the woman. BLOOD seeps from the stab wound Marie just inflicted, GORY PEN still gripped in her hand.

WOMAN
Why don't you hang on to that one?

Marie looks down and blinks. She's holding the FLYER.

MARIE
Sorry. I mean. Thanks.

Marie shoves it in her pocket and hurries off, leaving the woman staring after her.

INT. MARIE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Marie stares blankly at the Word document on her laptop. All it says is:

"A Crime Told Twice"

She starts typing: "*The...*"

Her hand shakes. She pounds DELETE. The cursor blinks. She squeezes her eyes shut--

The computer screen types out: MURDERER. Photos pop up, BEEPING as they appear: a dorm room roped with police tape, BLOOD on the walls. A KNIFE in a Ziplock marked EVIDENCE.

Marie's eyes snap open. She lifts her head off her computer. The document is unchanged. Her clock BEEPS: 5:55pm.

Her eyes drift past the screen to an untouched stack of homework assignments. On top, a PINK FORM with the heading CLASS WITHDRAWAL stands out. She picks it up. Beneath it lies a POSTCARD covered in beautiful handwriting.

She replaces the form and picks up the card, reading:

MARIE- HAD A WILD TIME AT CARNEVALE! WISH WE COULD MAKE IT TO GRADUATION, BUT PARIS AWAITS! KEEP THAT GPA UP!

XOXO MOM

PS-THIS PICTURE REMINDED ME OF YOU!

She flips it over. It's a creepy, bird-like Carnevale mask.

BANG!BANG!BANG!

Someone KNOCKS heavily on her door. She tosses the postcard down and opens the door. Madison and Brit stand in the hall.

MADISON
Oh wow Marie, nice outfit.

BRIT
I think you look hot. But like, weird hot. Like, Olsen twin hot.

Marie looks down at her underwear, socks, and hoodie.

MADISON
Sure. Or like one those Worm Guys that live on the subway.

MARIE
They're called Mole People. And they don't live *on* the subway, they live in the tunnels-

MADISON
Whatever. Anyway, we're going out tonight, remember? Hunter and Dave?

MARIE
Ah, shit, I totally forgot...I don't know, you guys...

Madison looks crestfallen.

MADISON
C'monnnnn. You're the one who said I need to get down with guys my own age. Besides, you never do anything anymore! It'll be good for you.

Marie looks at her friend's worried face and shakes her head.

MARIE
Fiiiiiine.

MADISON
YES! And this is a date, okay? Wear something slutty.

Madison shoves a mess of pale crayons off the couch and sits, grabbing the postcard off the table. She shakes her head.

MADISON
Is it me, or is it kind of messed up that your mom and stepdad aren't coming to graduation?

Marie looks up from digging through piles of clothes on the ground and sees her holding the postcard. She shudders.

MARIE
It’s pretty much par for the course with them. But it’s okay. Just one less thing to worry about.

MADISON
Maybe you’re right. I’m still trying to talk my mom out of bringing the cat-Woah.

Marie has stripped her hoodie off to display a fully defined set of ribs and bony hips.

MARIE
What?

MADISON
Marie...You look...

BRIT
Uhhh-mazing!

MADISON
Yeah. You look like a runway model, you bitch. What’s the secret?

MARIE
Self-loathing.

MADISON
(Nodding)
So hot right now.

Marie slips into a dress, then pulls her hoodie back on over it. Madison COUGHS loudly.

MARIE
Now what?

MADISON
Uh, nothing. Just, isn’t it time to wash that hoodie?

MARIE
No. I don’t know. Why?

BRIT
You just have *so* many cute clothes-

MADISON
What she’s trying to say is, we’re sick of seeing you lurch around with your hands in that kangaroo pocket like a fucking gollum.

Marie takes hers hands out of the pocket and lets them dangle awkwardly at her sides. She smooths one of the sleeves.

MARIE
I'm not a gollum...I just like this hoodie. What do you care...

MADISON
(interrupting)
You need to get boned, Marie. And no one's wants to bone a gollum.

MARIE
Well, maybe the gollum doesn't want to bone, either! Maybe gollum just wants to stay home with her cozy hoodie where it's nice and quiet-

INT. CAFE HABANA - NIGHT

Marie sits in a DEAFENINGLY LOUD resturant across from HUNTER (22), over-confident, and DAVE (21), who is just *really* trying to pull off an ironic mustache. Brit and Madison nod approving as Hunter shouts.

HUNTER
American novels are so masturbatory now, it just makes you feel like, what ever happened to art for art's sake, you know?

BRIT
Totes.

Marie rolls her eyes and turns to Brit.

MARIE
Where's Dickwad tonight?

BRIT
Derek will be meeting up with us later at Bar None.

MADISON
Gross.

BRIT
(Hissing)
Madison, do *not* disrepect my man.

MADISON
He has a fucking *ponytail*, Brit-

They're interrupted as A PLATE OF MEAT is set down on the table. Everyone except Marie grabs a KNIFE and starts sawing at the RED MEAT. Marie reaches for the pills in her hoodie pocket before remembering...she doesn't have any.

She tosses back the remains of her mojito. Dave notices and decides it's time to make his big move.

DAVE
I really like your style! It's like, Girl with the Dragon Tattoo or something!

MARIE
Thanks. That mustache makes you look like a pederast!

DAVE
What?

Madison leans over.

MADISON
Marie, Hunter interned at the New Yorker!

She looks back to Hunter.

MADISON
Professor Brown is having Marie submit her thesis short there.

BRIT
Yeah, she's like, a genius.

MADISON
Tell them about your crime story!

DAVE
Yeah, tell us!

Marie shakes her head, embarrassed.

MARIE
Oh, no...

Madison gives her a withering look.

MADISON
Haha-YOU'RE BEING WEIRD. TELL THEM.

MARIE
Um. Well, it's two stories, really.

Marie's voice fades, getting lost in WET, GRINDING noise of metal on meat. She senselessly reaches for her pills again.

MARIE
One told from the perspective of the victim and the other from the, uh, the...um...criminal...

Marie glances around, glimpsing BLEEDING MEAT, GREASY BLADES.

MARIE
But I can't...write it...anymore...

She trails off, looking back at Dave, whose shirt is unbuttoned at the top, revealing a little triangle of skin--

SUDDENLY, she grabs Madison's KNIFE, lunges forward and STABS Dave in the patch of skin! BLOOD sprays her face. Brit SCREAMS. Dave's body crumples as Marie drops the knife and-

VOICE (O.S.)
Marie!

Blinks. Dave sits before her, unwounded but weirded-out.

MARIE
...what?

MADISON
HE ASKED IF YOU LIKE CHANDLER.

Madison shakes her head.

MADISON
She does. She loves Noir.

MARIE
(standing up)
I-I have to go.

She runs out of the restaurant.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Marie veers into an alley and VOMITS mojito onto the pavement.

WILL (O.S.)
Woah!

She turns around to see WILL (26), handsome, but shady looking in a ratty Knicks hoodie. She wipes her mouth.

MARIE
My bad.

He checks his shoes for barf.

WILL
No, that's what I get for lurking in an alley by a college bar-

MARIE
Sh!

She holds her hand up and listens: the sound of LOUD TALKING AND LAUGHTER gets closer.

MADISON (O.S.)
I should go look for her...

Marie shoves Will against the brick wall, leaning back so they're obscured in shadow just as Madison and Brit pass by.

BRIT
Bar None closes in an hour! Derek's waiting. Just text her to meet us.

They pass. There's a brief silence.

Will tries to step forward, but she pushes him back again as more voices approach.

DAVE (O.S.)
...Fucking weird dude.

HUNTER (O.S.)
Just stick to shots if she shows up. Only way you'll get laid with that fucking mustache anyway.

Will looks sideways at Marie and sees her jaw clench as the guys shamble past. She exhales and steps forward. Will pulls a PACK OF CIGARETTES from his pocket and offers her one.

WILL
Like your hoodie.

Marie glares at him, looking for signs of mockery. When she sees none, she takes a cigarette.

MARIE
Thank you.

WILL
Anyone ever told you you're cute when you puke?

MARIE
Every weekend.

He offers her a light and she glances down at his fingertips- oddly dusted in pale blue paint. She inhales, eyes narrowing.

MARIE
You're being pretty cool about this.

WILL
I work at a bar. I've seen much, much worse. Trust me. Girl vomit is adorable. Especially when it's this minty.

MARIE
What're you doing out here, anyway?

He shrugs.

WILL
Same thing you're doing.

MARIE
Barfing?

WILL
Escaping boredom.

He takes a drag and she notices a graffiti tag on the wall behind him reading: "HAND." It's pale blue.

WILL
So, should we keep lurking in the alley or do you want to grab some coffee or mouthwash or something?

MARIE
Seriously?

WILL
Sure.

Marie considers him, images flickering through her mind:

They kiss, pressed against the alley wall. Suddenly, Will GASPS. A red stain blooms through the Knicks logo. RATS lap at BLOOD dripping onto the pavement.

She shivers and tosses her cigarette on the ground.

MARIE
Eh. I'm not that bored.

She turns away from him.

MARIE
Thanks for the cigarette, though.

WILL
Wait!

HSSSS. He's suddenly spray painting the wall with pale blue.

MARIE
Hey-

WILL
I'm Will. And that-

He finishes with a flourish.

WILL
Is my phone number.

She shakes her head and starts walking away.

MARIE
You're insane.

WILL
Call me!

She laughs and keeps walking.

INT. MARIE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Marie SLAMS her door and collapses in front of her open computer. Photos of her with her friends and family fade in and out. In the pictures she looks happier, healthier.

She flicks the mouse. Word document appears. Her hand shakes, her need to write palpable. The cursor winks mockingly.

She SNAPS the computer closed and grabs the WITHDRAWAL FORM.

INT. NYU CLASSROOM- DAY

Students file past Mr. Brown, handing him outlines for their thesis papers. Marie lingers, waiting until everyone else is gone, then hands him the withdrawal slip.

He glances at it and looks at her, incredulous.

MR. BROWN
You're kidding.

MARIE
I'm sorry.

MR. BROWN
Don't apologize to me.

Mr. Brown snatches a PEN out of a PEN HOLDER on his desk containing several MARKERS and a PAIR OF SCISSORS

MR. BROWN
I'm not going to sit here and sweet talk you, Marie. You know how talented you are. But none of that will mean anything if you do this. Understand?

He looks at her staring blankly past him, the bags under her eyes, the hoodie.

MR. BROWN
I mean, is there something you want to talk about?

Marie finally pulls her eyes away from the gleaming SCISSORS.

MARIE
No.

He shakes his head and signs it, muttering.

MR. BROWN
Waste.

EXT. DORM ROOFTOP - DAY

Marie smokes on the deserted roof, now scattered with party debris: empty bottles, chairs, strings of unlit Christmas lights. She peers over the edge and flicks her cigarette off. It's a long, long drop.

MADISON (O.S.)
Thought you might be up here.

She jerks around. Madison walks towards her, letting the roof door close behind her.

MADISON
Cool hanging out with you last night.

MARIE
Sorry.

There's a long beat.

MADISON
I know you were buying from Ty.

Marie's face registers shame and shock, all at once.

MADISON
I'm not a fucking idiot, Marie. You've changed. I mean, you know that, right? You weren't always like this. You used to be fun. And funny. We used to actually *do* shit. And now...I don't know. But whatever you're on, it's turning you into a black fucking hole.

MARIE
Jesus Mad, I'm not a *junkie*. I'm just...Everything that happened-

Madison's face hardens.

MADISON
Oh my god, don't even *say* it. You're not gonna blame this on that chick in C hall again. It was like *six months* ago! You didn't even know her! Give it a rest!

MARIE
You don't understand...

MADISON
I do, actually. You're using that sick shit as an excuse to slack off and get wasted. I'm not gonna lie, Marie, that's pretty fucked up.

MARIE
(Raising her voice)
Well, I guess I'm pretty fucked up then, aren't I?

Madison rubs her eyebrow, collecting herself.

MADISON
Look...I just, I don't think we should live together this summer.

Beat.

MARIE
You already found someone else.

MADISON
Well, Brit broke up with Dickwad again last night, so...yeah.

Madison bites her lip, looking like she might cry. Instead, she hands Marie a piece of paper.

MADISON
This was on your door.

She leaves, her heels CLACKING as she heads to the door. Marie watches her go, then looks down and reads the paper:

"*Ms. Marie Astor,*

This letter is to inform you that as of your withdrawal from class ENG0323, you are ineligible for student housing. Please vacate within 48 hours."

MARIE
Fuck!

She crumples the letter and hurls it off the roof. She sighs.

MARIE
Fuck.

INT. MARIE'S DORM ROOM - LATER

The room is packed up, with everything but her laptop crammed into a duffle bag. Marie paces the room with her cellphone pressed to her ear. Her voice is high and unnatural.

MARIE
Heyyyy mom. How's Italy?

Pause.

MARIE
Sorry I-No, I'm not upset, I understand. No, I'm okay, I just...

Marie leans on the window and with her finger marks TALLIES OF FIVE on the foggy glass.

MARIE
Do you ever think, like...there could be a part of you that you've kept hidden from yourself your whole life?
(MORE)

MARIE (CONT'D)
Like maybe, after all this time, you don't really know who you are, what your capable of? You ever worry about...that?

Silence from the other end. Marie's face flushes red. She wipes the glass clean with her hand.

MARIE
Aha. Just kidding that's weird. Um, anyway. I was actually wondering...

She spits it out quickly.

MARIE
...doyouhaveAuntGloria'snumber?

The faint sound of YELLING is audible through the phone.

MARIE
No-no, it's for a project--Ok. You know, never mind. Alright, bye.

Marie opens the laptop and Googles GLORIA NEWBERRY. She scrolls past glamorous HEADSHOTS from the 70's, locates a PHONE NUMBER, and dials before she can change her mind.

EXT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

A light snow falls on an address written in seafoam crayon: 25 GRAMERCY PLACE. Marie looks up at the gilded number in front of her: 25.

She swallows, then shakily grasps the BRASS GARGOYLE KNOCKER and TAPS five times.

Marie's eyes dart around the crowded street wildly, like a cornered animal, catching and sticking on certain elements:

The SILVER TIP of a woman's UMBRELLA. A BUS AD FOR A SLASHER MOVIE. LAUGHTER as someone exits a BUTCHER SHOP. The TINKTINK of a handyman chipping away at a door hinge with an ICE PICK-

She grabs the knocker again, TAPPING: 1, 2, 3-she stops at the CLACKING of many deadbolts unlocking. The door cracks open, strains of SHOWTUNES drifting out. Suddenly, a darting eye surrounded by dramatic false eyelashes peers through.

MARIE
Aunt Gloria?

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

CABARET plays through an ancient speaker system.

Marie sets her duffle bag at the base of a sweeping staircase and stares up at the kind of vaulted ceilings you never see in New York City. The apartment has the faded glory of opulence gone to seed.

MARIE
(Calling out)
Thanks for letting me stay here!

GLORIA (O.S.)
Speak up dear! This isn't a studio!

Marie follows the voice into the kitchen where GLORIA (60's) dumps a box of cookies onto a plate. Her thin frame is draped in a threadbare silk kimono that billows as she spins around-

She wears an alarming mask of make-up: thick powder, false lashes, severely drawn on eyebrows; all framed by an elaborate wig. Yet somehow, the family resemblance is clear.

With one hand she offers the plate of COOKIES. With the other she holds a cigarette.

GLORIA
Cookie? I made them myself.

Marie looks past her at the open COOKIE BOX sitting on the counter. She accepts a cookie from the plate.

MARIE
Thanks. I was just saying how nice it is of you to have me. I know you and my mom don't really...

Gloria waves her hand dismissively.

GLORIA
With you around I can finally get rid of the boy that delivers my groceries. I think he's become obsessed with me. And anyway it can get a little boring around here with just me and Wanda.

MARIE
Oh, is that your...maid?

GLORIA
My god, I haven't even introduced you! Damn my manners! WANDA!

The CLICKING of tiny claws hitting the hardwood. Suddenly, 10 PUGS come rushing around the corner, wagging and WHEEZING furiously, followed gimpily by one, extra wheezy 11th PUG.

Gloria cackles with delight at the frantic dogs, which circle her, yapping excitedly.

GLORIA
(Commanding)
Wanda-Sit!

All of the dogs simultaneously sit perfectly still, like eleven porcelain statues.

GLORIA
(Explosively)
Good Wanda!

They burst back to life, their tails wagging their bodies. Gloria doles out treats from the pockets of her kimono.

MARIE
Which one is Wanda?

Gloria laughs again.

GLORIA
Let me show you your room.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Marie wanders through the second floor, tapping on a GLASS OF WHISKEY and listening to Gloria watch TV in the den below.

She creeps to Gloria's bedroom and tries the handle of the closed door. Locked.

INT. GLORIA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Marie opens a mirrored medicine cabinet: The sheer number of PILLS within takes her breath away. Lexapro, Prozac, Zoloft. Anti-depressants, anti-psychotics, even nitroglycerin, it's all there. Everything except Xanax.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gloria sits at the table with a cigarette dangling from her mouth. She holds a pug firmly while she clips its toenails. SHOWTUNES blare. Marie wanders in sleepily.

GLORIA
I already fired the grocery boy, so there's nothing for breakfast. Only cigarettes.

Gloria pushes a pack of cigarettes and a ZIPPO towards Marie.

GLORIA
And coffee's on the counter.

Marie stands and crosses, reaching towards the COFFEE POT, then past it, to a KNIFE BLOCK--

She turns, clutching a BREAD KNIFE, and SLASHES Gloria's face! The dogs SNARL. Gloria's ruined mouth grins horribly.

GLORIA
Good girl, Wanda.

Gloria releases the dog, her face normal. Marie jerks her hand away from the coffee pot. She sits down and lights a cigarette, sparking the Zippo in increments of five.

GLORIA
Here's a list. If you pick up the groceries, I'll let you keep that lighter.

MARIE
Oh, no, that's okay-

GLORIA
Roger Moore gave me that lighter. You go get some scotch and Grape Nuts and I'll give it to you.

MARIE
Honestly-

GLORIA
Just take it. Roger was an asshole.

MARIE
Is there anything else I can do?

Gloria seems to consider this.

GLORIA
You know, Wanda likes you.

MARIE
Oh. I like Wanda, too.

Gloria nods.

GLORIA
Good. Then I'll fire the dog walker, as well. Wanda doesn't seem to care for her, and frankly, neither do I. There's something a little wormy about her.

MARIE
Wormy?

GLORIA
The leash is in the hall.

Marie nods and takes a drag of her smoke. Gloria stares at her expectantly.

MARIE
Oh, okay, so like right now?

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Marie wanders aimlessly through an abandoned, rainy Central Park. The Wandas race around, delighted to be unhooked from their eleven-pronged leash. Marie picks up a STICK to throw.

Suddenly, there's the sound of quiet SINGING. Marie freezes. A CHILD, (8), in a YELLOW RAIN SLICKER rounds the bend, walking toward her. He smiles at the sight of all the dogs.

Marie's hand tightens around the wet bark of the stick.

The child kneels down to pet a Wanda.

In a flash of movement, Marie LUNGES forward with the STICK, SHOVING the child behind a BUSH. He falls back with the STICK protruding horribly from the soft skin of his neck.

He dies quietly, CHOKING on blood.

Red slides off the yellow slicker, disappearing in the dirt.

Marie closes her eyes and leans her head back, letting the rain wash the blood from her hands and face.

She opens her eyes. The Wandas stare at her curiously. Her hands are clean and wet. She looks around. Bushes everywhere.

Frantically, she looks behind the nearest bush. Nothing-except-is that a handprint in the wet ground? She looks closer. Is it? She hears faint SINGING and wheels around.

She's alone.

Marie sways, faint, and abruptly VOMITS. The Wandas gather around, eating it. Marie wipes her mouth and immediately peers behind another bush. Nothing.

Far behind Marie, out of her view, a very faintly singing spot of YELLOW rounds another bend and disappears.

Marie straightens up and slowly turns in a circle.

The park is empty. Bushes stretch out in every direction.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - LATER

It's starting to get dark. Marie's in a completely different part of the park. She feverishly looks behind another bush.

Nothing.

The Wandas whimper, shivering and wet.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A disheveled, wild-eyed Marie sits on her bed surrounded by every article of clothing she owns. Everything yellow is in the trash. She holds a crumpled piece of paper in her hand:

NIGHTMARES? ANXIETY? DEPRESSION?

She stares at it, TAPPING the corner of the page in fives.

INT. BRIGHTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Marie sits on a couch across from GWEN BRIGHTON (34), aka the skinny woman from the hall. The office is crowded with stacks of files and seems oddly lived-in, almost half office, half apartment.

BRIGHTON
The goal of the study is to develop a treatment specific to you and compare it with your prior treatment. I see you met with Dr. Schneeding...

MARIE
Yeah. He diagnosed me with wanting to penetrate everything. So. Look out.

Brighton stifles a smile and sets down Marie's file.

BRIGHTON
What do you want to get out of the study?

MARIE
Same as everyone, right? Get better. To be like before.

BRIGHTON
Before the nightmares?

MARIE
Right.

Brighton makes a note. Marie looks annoyed, uncomfortable.

MARIE
What do *you* want to get out of the study?

Brighton takes off her glasses. She looks at Marie squarely.

BRIGHTON
Good question. I guess you could say the same as you. Same as everyone. I want to get better.

MARIE
Aren't you supposed to say you want to help me?

Brighton shrugs.

BRIGHTON
This isn't a place where we say what were supposed to say. That's everywhere else. This is where you say what you mean.

MARIE
Well, if we're both trying to get better, who's gonna fix us?

Brighton smiles.

BRIGHTON
You don't trust me, do you?

Marie is startled. Brighton shrugs.

BRIGHTON
It's okay. You have no reason to. We just met.

MARIE
It’s not that. I just...I dunno.

She looks away. Brighton TAPS a RED PEN against Marie’s file.

BRIGHTON
Okay. Let me tell you what I think.

Marie watches the pen uncomfortably. Her hands tremble on the arm of her chair.

BRIGHTON
I think you’re suffering profoundly. You’re underweight, your eyes are bloodshot, your movements are erratic--it’s obvious. So obvious that I bet the people around you have started to comment, which only causes you to withdraw further, making everything even worse. And all because of the nightmares, right?

Marie nods weakly, trying not to look at the SKIN of Brighton’s neck. TAPTAPTAP. Marie rasps, throat dry:

MARIE
(inaudibly)
Can you...

BRIGHTON
But you’re not really having nightmares. Are you?

The PEN gleams. The TAPPING gets louder.

MARIE
(whispering)
Can you...

BRIGHTON
Because it doesn’t stop when you wake up.

TAPTAPTAP. It’s deafening now. Marie clenches her hands.

BRIGHTON
It doesn’t ever stop, does it?

TAPTAPTAP. Marie closes her eyes, and takes a breath.

MARIE
Can you stop that?

BRIGHTON
Sure.

TAPTAP-The tapping stops. Marie opens her eyes. Brighton's PEN is lodged in her gut.

BRIGHTON
So. I'm gonna ask you again, and this time I want you to be honest. Why are you here, Marie?

Marie unclenches her shaky hands, flipping them over and over. Clean. She looks at Brighton. Her stomach is fine.

MARIE
I think I'm a sociopath.

She starts to cry, shakily sticking her hands out.

MARIE
So I was wondering if you can arrest me? Or commit me, at least?

BRIGHTON
Arrest you for what?

Marie cries harder.

MARIE
Um. I feel like I might have killed someone yesterday. But I'm not totally sure? But even if I didn't, I'm definitely about to, any second. So-is there any way can you like, Minority Report me so I can just go to jail now, before it's too late?

Marie dissolves into a crying mess.

BRIGHTON
Marie.

MARIE
What?

BRIGHTON
Take a deep breath.

Marie breaths deeply.

BRIGHTON
First of all, if you killed someone, you would know. And secondly, you're not a sociopath.

MARIE
I'm not?

BRIGHTON
No. Not even close. The opposite, actually. You have Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

A beat.

MARIE
(sniffling)
No, that's not right. I haven't washed this hoodie in like, four months. I eat stuff after it falls on the floor.

BRIGHTON
Germophobia and orderliness are just one facet. You're part of a "purely obsessional" subset. "Pure O" for short.

MARIE
Sounds like a gay bar.

BRIGHTON
It means it manifests more mentally, with obsessing, than physically, with compulsions.

MARIE
Can you prescribe Xanax for it?

BRIGHTON
Taking Xanax for OCD is like putting a band-aid on an infection. You're not fixing it, you're just covering it up.

Marie's shoulders slump. Brighton writes on a prescription pad.

BRIGHTON
I'll get you started on SSRI's. It won't *feel* as good as the Xanax, but it will actually help. However. I'm only giving you enough medication for five days.
(MORE)

BRIGHTON (CONT'D)
You want more, you gotta come back and talk to me. Sound fair?

She tears off the top page of the pad and offers it to Marie. Marie makes no move to take it. They stare at each other for a moment, then Brighton folds the paper and leans forward.

BRIGHTON
Look, I get it. It's scary. And it's hard. And if you're not ready to fight, that's fine, I won't waste my time trying to make you. But I will tell you this: if you think you can outrun this thing, or hide from it, or ignore it...you've got some very dark days ahead. Because sooner or later, you've got to lock horns with it, and it sure as hell doesn't get any easier. But in the end, it's up to you.

A loud KNOCK interrupts. Brighton glances at the door.

BRIGHTON
That's my next appointment.

Brighton stands, but Marie GRABS the hand holding the prescription like she's drowning.

MARIE
Wait.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The sun has begun to set, bathing the street in golden light as Marie walks toward campus.

MARIE (V.O.)
You can fix it, right?

BRIGHTON (V.O.)
Well. Let me put it this way:

She passes Cafe Habana and sees Will's phone number on the alley wall. She looks away.

BRIGHTON (V.O.)
There's no going back to the way things were.

She reaches NYU campus and sees a group of students waiting for the bus. She spots Madison holding court for a group of guys. They laugh at something she says.

BRIGHTON (V.O.)
But that doesn't mean you can't go forward.

Marie turns away, heading towards the Student Health Center.

INT. DR. BRIGHTON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

BRIGHTON
At the end of the study, you'll write up a personal account-

MARIE
I can't write.

Brighton looks down at the file in front of her.

BRIGHTON
It says here you're a Creative Writing major.

MARIE
I was. But I can't write anymore.

BRIGHTON
When's the last time you wrote something?

MARIE
For class, or in general?

BRIGHTON
Either.

MARIE
Five months.

Brighton nods and tosses her a BLACK NOTEBOOK.

BRIGHTON
Then that's going to be our way in. You'll start fictional: an alien killing an octopus, Tom killing Jerry, whatever. But over time they'll become more real. More personal.

MARIE
Is this because I'm a Writing Major? Because I could switch to like, Econ. Bang. Problem solved.

BRIGHTON
If you were Econ I'd just make you do it in Excel. It's how the treatment works: we make a list of the things that scare you and then you do them. Over and over again.

MARIE
So it's like Fear Factor.

BRIGHTON
No, it's not like Fear Factor.

MARIE
It sounds a lot like Fear Factor.

BRIGHTON
Stop stalling and start writing.

Marie takes out a crayon. Brighton stops her.

BRIGHTON
Nope. That's insane. You're not writing with that.

Marie hands over the crayon. Brighton gives her the RED PEN.

BRIGHTON
Now write this down: Exposure List, Item #1...

Marie presses the PEN down hard, watching the INK pool.

BRIGHTON
Marie.

MARIE
Yeah.

BRIGHTON
Write it, don't carve it. That's my good pen.

The spell is broken. Marie begins to write:

MARIE'S EXPOSURE LIST:

TITLE CARD: ITEM #1. WRITING.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marie sits at the kitchen table with the red pen staring down at what looks like the rantings of a serial killer: "As the knife wept blood onto the kitchen floor, Gloria finally understood what she had been all along: a monst-"

GLORIA (O.S.)
What are you doing?

Marie snaps up to see Gloria looming in front of her.

MARIE
Oh shit, You scared me.

Gloria glances down at the page and arches a painted eyebrow.

GLORIA
Likewise.

MARIE
No, I'm just...it's for school...

Gloria sits beside her, lighting a cigarette.

GLORIA
Uh-huh. Looks fun. You want help?

MARIE
Um...okay, sure. What's another word for monster?

GLORIA
Anomaly. Mutant. Fiend.

Marie writes furiously.

MARIE
Woah, slow down.

GLORIA
Gorgon. Demon. Sheila.

MARIE
Sheila? Who's Sheila?

GLORIA
My mother.

MARIE
Oh.

GLORIA
Your mom didn't tell you much about me, did she?

MARIE
Not really.

Gloria nods, stubbing out her cigarette.

GLORIA
Well. Time to feed Wanda.

Marie sits quietly for a moment. She takes out her phone and scrolls down her contacts until she reaches MOM. She pauses, hovering over the button, then clicks the screen off.

INT. BRIGHTON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A notebook page filled edge to edge with scrawled red ink. The page turns to reveal another beneath just like it. Brighton finishes while Marie chews her fingernail nervously.

BRIGHTON
I *love* the compulsive.

MARIE
Who?

BRIGHTON
Your protagonist, the woman that kills her dogs. I loved that you gave her compulsive traits.

Marie looks troubled.

MARIE
Thanks.

BRIGHTON
Actually, you know what? I want to try something. Close your eyes.

Marie closes her eyes--

INT. MARIE'S MIND

It's pitch black.

BRIGHTON (V.O.)
Imagine what your mind might look like if it was a room.

Still blackness.

MARIE (V.O.)
It’s just darkness.

BRIGHTON (V.O.)
Turn on the lights.

Suddenly, florescent lights CLICK on, revealing an endless control room, the walls all buttons, computer screens, etc.

MARIE (V.O.)
It looks like...the inside of a rocket ship.

BRIGHTON (V.O.)
Good. Now find your OCD.

Marie notices a FLASHING RED BUTTON. She pushes it. The lights go out and are replaced by BLACK LIGHTS, which illuminate TEEMING BUGS and CREEPING MOLD coating everything.

MARIE (V.O.)
It’s everywhere. It’s infected everything.

BRIGHTON (V.O.)
No. That’s what it wants you to think. Your OCD is just a thing. A thing that doesn’t belong. Find it.

She presses the red button again and the lights come back up. Suddenly, standing in the middle of the room is a confused, bookish looking woman in 1950’s style clothing.

MARIE (V.O.)
I think I found her.

BRIGHTON (V.O.)
She’s a woman?

MARIE (V.O.)
I think she’s a...librarian?

The woman nods.

BRIGHTON (V.O.)
What’s her name?

Marie notices a name tag on her dress spelling out:

MARIE (V.O.)
Nancy.

INT. BRIGHTON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Marie opens her eyes.

BRIGHTON
When you start to panic, try to remember what Nancy really is. She's not a demon, or an infection- she's a stowaway who doesn't want to be caught. Make sense?

MARIE
I think so.

BRIGHTON
Good. Let's talk about homework.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Will's light blue phone number has been covered up with more graffiti and REWRITTEN IN PINK with the words: YOU GONNA CALL ME OR WHAT? CIRCLE "YES" OR "NO"

A shadow falls on the wall as Marie walks past.

BRIGHTON (V.O.)
If you let it, this disorder will subdivide your life into smaller and smaller pieces until there's nothing left.

A moment later and she's back again, walking the other direction. She pauses at the number, then keeps walking.

BRIGHTON (V.O.)
Your job is to break down those walls and make room again.

She paces back and forth a few more times, debating.

BRIGHTON (V.O.)
So I want you to think of the last thing OCD prevented you from doing.

Marie defiantly walks up to the number...

BRIGHTON (V.O.)
And do it.

And dials.

EXT. THE EGG ART GALLERY - NIGHT

A very hip art gallery. So hip that it has no sign, just a huge, WHITE EGG taking up most of one wall. A long line of steampunks snakes along the sidewalk. Near the front, Will and Marie's hoodies stand out in the sea of odd clothing.

WILL
I'm glad you called. Now I can finally get my number off that wall. You wouldn't believe how many crack heads I've talked to in the last few weeks.

Marie laughs. She looks around at the apparel around them.

MARIE
I've never been to a gallery opening before. I feel...overdressed?

WILL
Yeah, art people are fucking freaks.

The line moves as some weirdoes in ruffled shirts are let in. A guy in lensless glasses taking tickets stares at his phone.

GLASSES GUY
Welcome to The Egg.

He glances up and gives them both a disdainful once over.

GLASSES GUY
You can't wear that in here.

WILL
Wear what?

GLASSES GUY
Hoodies. Not allowed. We have a dress code here. No "gym attire." If you want to come in, you'll have to take those off.

Will looks to Marie, who is blatantly uncomfortable with the idea. He turns back to Glasses Guy.

WILL
C'mon man, you just let in a guy dressed like a Civil War reenactor.

GLASSES GUY
I really don't have time for this. Either take off your street person clothes or get out of line.

WILL
Seriously, man, don't be a dick-

Glasses Guy gestures and two gothy bouncers materialize.

WILL
Aw, really? What are they going to do, spook me to death?

They pull out tazers. Will grabs Marie's hand and starts backing away.

WILL
Okay, y'know what? Fuck you. And fuck your lensless glasses, and fuck your gothy bouncers, and fuck your dumb fucking egg. We're not the weird ones. *You're* the weird one. Okay? You're the weird one.

INT. FRANKIES PUB - LATER

MARIE (O.S.)
You didn't have to do that.

WILL
He was the weird one.

A paint marker absently draws A HAND on a vast white surface.

WILL
I thought taking you to an art gallery would make me look sophisticated. I think it worked.

Marie laughs. The two of them sit at a bar covered in BUTCHER PAPER littered with doodles from the night's patrons. Will shades the fingers of the hand. Marie makes tiny TALLIES.

WILL
Art people are all like that. It's part of why I left school.

MARIE
"Left?"

WILL
Technically, was "asked to leave."

MARIE
Let me guess. Vandalism?

WILL
Such an ugly word. I like to think of it more as “surprise art!”

Marie’s phone RINGS. She looks down at the screen. “MOM.” Will abruptly draws an X through the hand.

WILL
Do you need to get that?

Marie silences it.

MARIE
Nope.

WILL
Hey, what are you doing tomorrow?

MARIE
No.

WILL
No, what?

MARIE
No, everything!

Will looks taken aback. Marie sighs.

MARIE
Look, you seem...sort of nice.

WILL
Thank you?

MARIE
So I’m just gonna lay it out for you. Because for whatever reason, you seem to think I’m some kind of rad, manic pixie dream girl. But in reality, I'm more of a...depressive goblin nightmare lady.

WILL
You’re hardly a lady.

MARIE
I’m serious. I'm fucked up. Not in a cute, fun, hot-in-bed way. In a nasty way. A way you wouldn’t like.

WILL
How do you know?

MARIE
Trust me. It's not worth it. Coming into my life would be exhausting. Like boarding an airplane. It takes forever, nothing dangerous is allowed in, and once you finally get on board, you realize the hard part hasn't even started yet. You really want to sign up for that?

WILL
Yes.

MARIE
No you don't. You need a nice sailboat kind of girl. Breezy. Uncomplicated. I have way too many rules and regulations.

WILL
You know, the funny thing about airplanes is: even though it's hard, even though it can be scary...It's still flying.

He leans in close.

WILL
And you can't fly with a sailboat.

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Will and Marie make out furiously.

Will's apartment is a tiny studio lined with cans of SPRAY PAINT they keep KNOCKING onto the floor. The neighbor beneath POUNDS on his ceiling angrily.

Will peels off her hoodie. She lays back, looking at the art:

A series of MELTING NEON SKULLS with the words WHO'S LAUGHING NOW? scrawled across them in spidery cursive. A disembodied eyeball on block lettering spelling out STOP CRYING.

She looks away. On Will's bedside table are paper stencils and SHINY EXACTO KNIVES.

SPLAT. A drop of BLOOD falls from Will lips onto her face. His mouth is slack, teeth red. Red words flash through her mind in cursive and block letters: MONSTER. KILLER. FREAK.

INT. MARIE'S MIND

She shuts her eyes, trying to picture Nancy, but the control room of her mind is dominated now by a black doorway, POLICE TAPE strung across it, a BLOODY HANDPRINT on the doorframe...

INT. WILL'S APPARTMENT - NIGHT

She opens her eyes and starts to hyperventilate.

MARIE
I can't do this.

Will can see the tears tremble in her eyes.

WILL
Okay.

MARIE
No, I mean, I *really* can't do this.

She sits up, pulling her hoodie back on and puts her hood up. Will sits up beside her.

MARIE
I'm sorry.

WILL
It's okay. You can make it up to me by telling everyone I have a big penis.

She laughs.

MARIE
You're funny.

WILL
You're beautiful.

MARIE
You're weird.

WILL
You're still beautiful.

He pauses, trying to figure out what he wants to say.

WILL
Okay, so you've got some shit, I get that. But you also have some...balls. And I like that...in a girl?

He looks flustered. She stands up.

MARIE
I should go.

WILL
Wait! What I'm trying to say is...there's some part of my crazy gets your crazy. So why don't we just...see what happens?

Marie considers him: shirt off, covered in tattoos, surrounded by his weird art. She sighs.

MARIE
Just don't try to "fix" me, Okay?

WILL
I never try to fix anything.

MARIE
Don't ask me what's wrong, or if I'm okay, or why I do weird things.

WILL
No problem. Stuff's boring anyway.

MARIE
And please, *please,* don't ask me what I'm thinking about. Trust me when I tell you, just this once: *you don't want to know.* We have to keep it simple-Why are you smiling?

WILL
Trust me when I tell you, just this once-

He grabs her hand and pulls her back onto the bed.

WILL
I can do simple.

INT. DR. BRIGHTON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The office looks disorganized, papers and empty coffee cups crowd the desk. Brighton rubs her eyes as she passes Marie's phone back to her, a picture of Will on the screen.

BRIGHTON
Not what I had in mind for a homework assignment, but he's cute.

MARIE
Yeah. I...um, I have a weird question.

BRIGHTON
I probably have a weird answer.

MARIE
(Stammering)
I...uh. I can't...bone.

Brighton smiles slightly.

MARIE
And...it's like the more I want to, the worse it gets. Then I freak out, because I feel like I must be one of those SVU killers that's going to like, bone someone and then kill them, or kill someone and then bone them, and the cops will come and they'll be all disgusted, like "My God, there's a pubic hair in the wound!" And-

BRIGHTON
Totally normal.

MARIE
What?

BRIGHTON
Well, OCD normal, not normal-normal. It's the disorder recognizing a soft spot and trying to exploit it.

Marie looks at her blankly.

BRIGHTON
It means you like him.

MARIE
Well. Makes me feel like a perv.

BRIGHTON
I guess we'll just have to write a story about it, then, won't we?

MARIE
I don't know why I tell you anything.

BRIGHTON
Neither do I. And as much as you don't want to hear it, the best thing you can do is tell him-

Marie is vehemently shaking her head. Brighton sighs.

BRIGHTON
I know you think you can do this alone. But, honestly, you need to be around other people. If for no other reason than to remind you what a normal life looks like.

Brighton's eyes droop for the briefest second, her left thumb rubbing the faintest tan line on her bare ring finger.

BRIGHTON
Trust me on this one.

She drops her hand self-consciously, recomposing herself.

BRIGHTON
Anyway. We'll get there. In the mean time, I have a super fun activity for you to do instead.

TITLE CARD: ITEM 2. LISTENING.

EXT. EAST RIVER BOARDWALK - DAY

Marie grimly walks the Wandas. They bark loudly, but all we can hear is the tinny voice speaking through Marie's headphones over white noise:

MARIE (V.O.)
Once upon a time, there was a girl who liked to hurt things.

INT. SUBWAY - NIGHT

Marie nods along absentmindedly as PSYCHO KILLER blasts in her headphones. She switches to the next track. It's the THEME MUSIC FROM HALLOWEEN. She switches again. Static, then:

MARIE (V.O.)
She felt her blade slide between his ribs. Easily, like it was coming home. His screaming turned to a choke as foaming lung blood dotted the sheets...

She sighs and folds her hands to keep them from tapping.

EXT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Different keys from a massive key ring struggle to unlock all the locks while MACK THE KNIFE plays loudly. The door finally opens. Marie takes out her headphones. A SCREAM cuts the air.

MARIE
Aunt Gloria?!

GLORIA (O.S.)
In the den! Watching cinema!

Marie sighs with relief and winds through the labyrinthine apartment talking loudly.

MARIE
What's the deal with Mack the Knife, anyway? Everyone thinks it's so swanky, but the lyrics are like worse than Cannibal Corpse. Right? I'm not the weird one here-

INT. GLORIA'S DEN - NIGHT

Marie enters the den where her aunt watches a low-budget horror movie on TV.

GLORIA
It's a murder ballad from a German opera. What's Cannibal Corpse?

MARIE
Never mind.

Gloria pours a glass of gin and holds it out to her.

GLORIA
Sit down. Have a drink. Grab a Wanda.

Marie drains the glass and reluctantly sits. The EXTRA WHEEZY PUG climbs on her lap and immediately falls asleep. On TV a platinum blonde wanders moronically down basement stairs.

GLORIA
Look at this jack ass. Lighter their hair, the quicker they die. Psycho started that one, really.

Gloria lights a cigarette and passes it to Marie, then lights another for herself and takes a deep drag.

GLORIA
I knew Alfred, you know.

MARIE
Hitchcock? You're kidding.

GLORIA
Met him at a party. He wouldn't leave me alone, the old dog. I was just his type back then.

She waves a hand at the now screaming blonde on screen.

GLORIA
Like her. Of course, it's all well and fun to direct an actress to play fragile, but when the camera stops rolling, well, Hitch...He wanted a girl who could act crazy, not one that actually was.

MARIE
So what happened?

GLORIA
Nothing happened. He moved on to a different blonde. They all did. Even my mother.

She takes another drag.

GLORIA
Even yours.

There's a heavy pause, and Marie realizes her aunt is drunk.

GLORIA
But you're not a blonde. You're true blue like me, I can tell. Keep your eye out for those ones, the ones that will stick with you. Might not be as pretty, but those are the good ones.

She sucks down her gin and gestures towards the screen where a long shadow is falling over the blonde's teary face.

GLORIA
Besides, we all know how the blondes end up.

She grins crookedly at Marie, who smiles back uneasily.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marie scrolls through missed calls on her phone: MOM, MADISON, MADISON, NYU...

She sighs and keeps scrolling: MADISON, MOM, NYU, MADISON...WILL.

INT. WILL'S APPARTMENT- NIGHT

Marie lays in bed beside Will, eyes open and staring. The clock reads 6:06 AM. Suddenly, she's over Will, an EXACTO KNIFE in hand, blank look on her face. He opens his eyes and she brings the blade down, stabbing him with wild ferocity!

--Marie opens her eyes, covered in sweat. She looks over at Will, huddled in a heap with his back to her.

Shivering, she crawls to him, and lowers her face, head turns, until her ear a centimeter from his lips. After an agonizig moment, she finally hears his SOFT BREATH.

She sighs with relief.

WILL
What are you doing?

She starts. Will's eyes are open. He looks deeply weirded-out

MARIE
Nothing. Shhhhh. Go back to sleep.

WILL
You go back to sleep. Weirdo.

She lays back down. She looks at the clock. 6:12 AM. She fidgets, then gently takes his pulse. She nods, relieved.

She looks back over. 6:19 AM. *He's so still*. She gingerly takes his pulse again. Nods. Still alive. Looks back over...

EXT. NYU HOSPITAL-DAY

Marie and Brighton sit on a bench outside the hospital. Marie anxiously avoids looking at the hospital.

BRIGHTON
How's the boning going?

MARIE
We’re not so much “boning” as we are awkwardly making out sometimes while I cry. But. At least I won’t get pregnant.

BRIGHTON
At least there’s that.

MARIE
So...what are we doing here?

BRIGHTON
Well. We’re doing something different today.

MARIE
Yay.

BRIGHTON
Today we talk about your trigger. So close your eyes, and tell me the story of when it started.

Marie takes a deep breath and closes her eyes.

INT. MARIE’S MIND

MARIE (V.O.)
Once upon a time, last semester, there were two room mates. Becca and Joanne.

We see two girls decorating a vaguely familiar dorm room.

MARIE (V.O.)
They lived in C Hall.

A dark haired girl sleeps in her narrow bed.

MARIE (V.O.)
Everything about them seemed fine. But it wasn’t. Because one night, Becca just...

SHINK. A hand pulls a KNIFE from a silverware drawer.

MARIE (V.O.)
Snapped.

An EXPLOSION of movement as the knife quickly comes down. A SCREAM echoes.

MARIE (V.O.)
She stabbed her six times before someone got in and stopped her.

A dorm room roped off by POLICE TAPE. Students sit in a hallway, crying.

MARIE
That morning every dorm had an emergency meeting. My RA was crying when she told us, everyone was crying.

Marie sits with the other students, squinting distractedly at figure walking down the hallway towards her.

MARIE
And I remember suddenly thinking “Good.” Just the one word. “Good.” And I thought, “The fuck was that?” Then I thought “Oh my god. Is this what happened to Becca? Is this how it starts?”

The figure emerges into the light. It’s Nancy, looking eerie in the incongruous setting.

MARIE (V.O.)
And I guess in a weird way, it was.

Marie opens her eyes.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

MARIE
I never met Joanne, but I met Becca once. And she was...she seemed normal, you know?

Brighton nods, looking far away, lost in thought.

BRIGHTON
She did, didn’t she?

Brighton suddenly stands up.

BRIGHTON
Come with me.

Marie follows Brighton as she walks towards the hospital.

BRIGHTON
Rebecca Engles is gone. She was sent to a private institution out of state. But Joanne is still being treated. *Right* here.

Brighton gestures at the hospital. Marie stops.

MARIE
Oh, no. No fucking way-

BRIGHTON
Marie, I shit on at least a dozen university codes just now by telling you this. Do you know why?

Marie is silent.

BRIGHTON
Because I've failed. Me, and my entire department. We failed. And as a result there's a girl in there who has to go through life looking like science experiment. We've got the highest prescription drug abuse rates in the country. The highest suicide rate. And now this. *The system is not working.*

Brighton starts walking again, and Marie matches her.

BRIGHTON
That's why your personal statement is so important. Because it shows the extra money and effort is worth it.

She looks Marie in the eye.

BRIGHTON
I'm all in with you, Marie.

MARIE
Let's just hope it works, I guess.

Brighton smiles.

BRIGHTON
No pressure.

They stop in front of the hospital. The doors automatically open. Inside, the chaos of the ER hums like a hornet's nest.

BRIGHTON
You should really meet her, one of these days. She's tough. Like you.

INT. STANDINGS BAR - NIGHT

MARIE (V.O.)
I will kill them all, she thought.

Marie takes out her headphones as she walks into the bar. Basketball flickers on ancient TVS. Grime coats everything. Two men argue at the bar while Will fiddles with a KEG TAP, his back to the door.

WILL
That's it, I've heard enough.

The men grow silent. Will doesn't turn around as he struggles to untangle a keg hose.

WILL
I'm giving it to Barry. Pao Gasol might have worse facial hair, but the bottom line is he looks more human than Marshawn. So game over, Barry wins. Now both of you shut up or I'll start charging you for your goddamn refills.

Marie laughs and Will wheels around. He breaks into a grin.

WILL
You're here!

BARRY
Hey Will, is this your girlfriend?

WILL
Hey Barry, don't you still owe me $50 from fantasy last year?

Barry's smirk falls right off his face.

WILL
Yeah. Go back to Googling pictures of Marshawn Lynch, big guy.

Barry turns red. Will ignores him and leans towards Marie.

WILL
Guy tipped me 2 bucks last night after drinking about a keg and a half. Anyway. You want a beer?
(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)
Have a beer. And before you ask for a Cosmo or something, we only have beer and very terrible wine, so just take the beer. Also, we have no food. Just these peanuts, which I don’t think are safe to eat.

MARIE
Impressive.

WILL
I know. Sometimes I just like to stand here and...drink it in.

MARIE
Was that a pun?

WILL
Maybe. Anyway, let me give you the tour.

He waves his arms expansively.

WILL
This is Standings.

He points-

WILL
Over there is the bathroom. We only have a Men’s, which is both interesting and unique.

MARIE
I can just pee outside.

Will smiles and gestures up-

WILL
There are the TVs.

Starts pouring a beer-

WILL
And these are the taps.

He slides the beer over to Marie.

MARIE
Thanks.

She takes a sip. He stares at her, grinning.

MARIE
What?

WILL
Nothing. I just realized I really hated this place up until like two minutes ago.

INT. STANDINGS BAR - LATER

Standings is closed and empty except for Will and Marie, who sit on the bar smoking cigarettes and eating peanuts. Marie looks sadly at shriveled black nut.

WILL
You're breaking my heart with that peanut. Let's order pizza.

MARIE
I have Amici's saved in my phone.

She slides it to him and hops off the bar.

MARIE
I'm going to the Men's. Get breadsticks. No utensils!

Marie walks into the bathroom and Will picks up her phone. It unlocks to an itunes track entitled: "KILLER by MARIE".

INT. STANDINGS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Marie looks at herself in the mirror. She hears her own voice faintly, but it must be in her head.

MARIE (V.O.)
I will kill them all. Cut them open and watch them bleed out...

MARIE
Shut up, Nancy.

Her voice continues to talk, but she ignores it. She puts on lip gloss, takes a deep breath and walks back out.

INT. STANDINGS BAR-NIGHT

Will quickly fumbles her phone, CLATTERING it loudly on the bar. He looks at her guiltily as she walks over.

MARIE
What?

Will says nothing. She picks up the phone suspiciously and looks at the screen. A look of horror crosses her face.

MARIE
Oh. My god.

WILL
(Laughing)
Pretty fucked up, babe.

Her eyes well up with tears.

MARIE
Did you call the police?

He laughs, in spite of himself.

WILL
No. But I didn't order the pizza yet, either. Don't kill me.

MARIE
Are you scared?

WILL
Of what, your creepy book on tape? Nah. You should hear my workout mix. It's just a loop of Hitler speeches. Untranslated. Sometimes that's what you need to get really pumped up, you know?

She buries her face in her hands.

MARIE
Jesus.

WILL
I will say that if this was a ploy to get rid of me, it was ingenious, but it's not gonna work.

He takes her hands away from her face and holds them.

WILL
I like you. And there's nothing you can do, or say, or put on your iPod that'll change that. You can talk to me, Marie. I'm not some college kid. I don't spook easy-

She kisses him, suddenly and violently.

WILL
God, I really gotta stop making you cry every time you see me.

She kisses him again.

MARIE
It's okay. I cry every time I see anyone.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Brighton and Marie sit across from each other. Brighton downs coffee like water, looking exhausted. Her hands shake slightly from over-caffination. A WHITE PLASTIC KNIFE sits on the table between them.

TITLE CARD: ITEM #3. TOUCHING

MARIE
What the hell do you expect me to do with that?

Brighton leans in, wide-eyed, and whispers-

BRIGHTON
Go on a killing spree.

Marie leans in, too.

MARIE
We're gonna need a bigger knife.

Brighton laughs. Marie shakes her head.

MARIE
You're sick, you know that? And seriously, why would you bring a weapon to a public place like this?

BRIGHTON
I got it here. Over by the condiments. Want to get your own?

Marie looks over to a metal cup holding dozens of plastic knives. She shudders, inhaling sharply.

MARIE
I hate you. And I hate this. And I won't be held responsible for whatever happens next.

BRIGHTON
Fine. I take full responsibility.

Marie plucks the knife off the table and holds it delicately.

BRIGHTON
Good. Now, where's the last place you'd want to be with a knife?

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Marie sits in packed subway car, the knife sticking out of her hoodie pocket. She twists her headphone cord anxiously.

MARIE (V.O.)
The knife felt light in her wicked hands. She surveyed the subway passengers and thought...

A young guy looks at her and smiles. She looks away.

MARIE (V.O.)
He'll probably be the first to go.

She leans her head back onto the glass and closes her eyes-

INT. MARIE'S MIND

Nancy wears safety goggles, a heavy canvas apron, and leather gloves. She holds the knife gingerly and flips through a huge instruction manual labeled "KNIFE PROTOCOL."

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Marie opens her eyes and smiles.

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Marie lays on Will's bed in her hoodie and underwear flipping though a sketchbook. Will SMACKS her butt as he walks by.

WILL
You know, I was thinking maybe we could go to your place sometime.

Marie's jaw works from within her hoodie.

MARIE
Nope.

WILL
What, you live in Jersey or something?

MARIE
Just no, okay?

Will gives her a hard look.

WILL
Sorry, too personal? Okay, how 'bout this for a question: why don't you ever go to class?

Marie's face turns red, but she doesn't look up.

WILL
Or are you in school at all? Do you even *have* a place? Am I dating a homeless person? Why don't you ever answer the phone when your mom calls? Is that even your mom, or is some other guy just saved as "mom"? Cause if it is, that's pretty smart, but you should tell me if you're an orphan. In fact, you just tell me literally *anything*, because I have no idea who you are.

MARIE
You got me. I'm a homeless orphan. Now I bet you feel bad.

WILL
Do you not want your friends and family to know you're "slummin' it with the bartender?"

MARIE
Stop it.

WILL
No. Just for a second, I want to talk like normal people, without the rules.

MARIE
Well, I'm not a normal person, and that's not what you signed up for.

WILL
I know it's not what I signed up for!
(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)
But things change, and what worked yesterday doesn't work today.

MARIE
Why not?

WILL
Because, now I like you and I want to know what the fuck is going on!

She says nothing. Will finally just shakes his head.

WILL
Whatever. I gotta go to work. Lock the door when you leave.

He SLAMS the door. Marie turns back to the book-

RING!

Marie looks at her phone. MOM. Feeling bold, she answers it.

MARIE
Hey mom.

Beat.

MARIE
I know, sorry, I've been-WHAT?

Marie bolts off the bed, eyes wide, and starts to pace.

MARIE
I don't understand, why wouldn't you tell me you're coming? Yeah, I'm surprised, I just-What is that like, two weeks?

She leans against the wall and slides onto the floor.

MARIE
No, it's good. I'm really happy.

She buries her head in her hands.

MARIE
It'll be great.

INT. NYU STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES - DAY

Marie rushes breathlessly to Brighton's door. She's about to open it when she hears MUFFLED SHOUTS within. She pauses.

VOICE (O.S.)
...enrollment to drop twenty percent! At 40K <u>each.</u> You do the math. And you have the nerve to request more money, more staff? You're lucky to still have a job-

BRIGHTON (O.S.)
The presentation will show-

MADISON (O.S.)
Marie?

Marie freezes at the voice. She slowly turns around to see...

MADISON
Hi...

A very awkward beat. Madison looks like she's been crying.

MARIE
Hey...uh...you ok...?

MADISON
Not really. This spacey horse-whisperer shrink just told me my aura's gone bad and I have to stop using microwaves.

MARIE
Oh yeah, I know that guy.

MADISON
Hey, um, do you want to like, grab coffee or something-

VOICE (O.S.)
Someone's losing their head over it, Gwen. And it sure as hell isn't gonna be me.

The door swings open and a glowering DR. SCHNEEDING storms out. Brighton looks hunched, fragile. Her eye catches Marie

BRIGHTON
Marie?

MARIE
I need to talk to you.

BRIGHTON
Not a good time.

MARIE
Please.

Marie looks at her desperately. Brighton sighs

BRIGHTON
Ten minutes.

Marie turns away from Madison.

MADISON
Wait, what are you doing later?

MARIE
-Sorry, Mad, I gotta go...

MADISON
(too loudly)
I fucked Mr. Brown!

Madison goes red.

MADISON
Shit.

She hurries off, her eyes filling with tears. Marie stares a moment at Madison's retreating back, then walks into Brighton's office and shuts the door.

INT. BRIGHTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Silence. Marie looks terrified. Brighton looks pissed.

BRIGHTON
Let's review. You dropped out.

MARIE
Yes.

BRIGHTON
So you're no longer an NYU student.

MARIE
Right.

BRIGHTON
And you've been consistently and systematically lying to me for the entirety of your treatment.

MARIE
Pretty much.

BRIGHTON
Anything else you want to confess?

MARIE
No.

BRIGHTON
And now your mom, it turns out, hasn't abandoned you, but is actually coming to see you graduate from the school you recently-secretly-dropped out of. And you want me to...what? Lie to her for you? I mean, what's your plan here? You can't seriously expect me to keep treating you-

Brighton looks down at Marie's thick file, the crux of her study. Her shoulders droop.

BRIGHTON
You realize the position you've put me in?

Brighton looks close to tears.

BRIGHTON
It's over.

MARIE
It's not. It can't be. I mean, it works! You were right, we just have to finish it.

Brighton shakes her head. Marie gets quieter.

MARIE
I can't go back to...the way I was. Please.

A heavy pause. Brighton shakes her head angrily.

BRIGHTON
You're telling your parents. Everything. This is too important to be jeopardized by some dysfunctional family shitstorm.

MARIE
Okay.

BRIGHTON
Say it. Say "I will tell them."

MARIE
I will tell them.

Brighton angrily writes a note on a post-it.

BRIGHTON
I'll put a note in with the Bursar saying you're on temporary mental health leave. Obviously you'll omit this from the personal statement

MARIE
Thank you.

Brighton waves her off, irritated. An unmistakable shift has occurred in the relationship.

BRIGHTON
Don't fuck with me, Marie. I want honesty from now on, or we are done. Understand?

Marie nods.

BRIGHTON
Go call your parents before I do.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Marie walks up the steps to Gloria's apartment with the phone glued to her ear.

MARIE
Hey mom, it's me, Marie. Your daughter. Um. So. There's something that...we should talk about...

EXT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Marie tries to put her keys in the lock and the door swings open. Unlocked. Marie jerks her hand back with a start.

MARIE
Anyway so call me back when you get this love you bye.

She hangs up and steps into the house.

MARIE
Aunt Gloria?

Silence. No showtunes, no barking dogs, nothing. Suddenly, she notices the half dozen locks hang broken on the frame.

MARIE
Gloria!?

She hears the Wandas WHIMPER pitifully from another room. She follows the sound upstairs where Gloria's door is open a crack. *Gloria's door is never open.* Marie pushes on it.

INT. GLORIA'S ROOM - DAY

The room is dim, with heavy drapes drawn against the setting sun, but Marie can still make out the shapes of the pugs huddled together on a massive king bed.

MARIE
Aunt Gloria?

She trips towards the windows and draws the shades, sending dust clouds billowing in the cruel shock of sunlight.

It's a bad episode of Hoarders. Overflowing ashtrays cover the floor and bed, competing for space with dog bowls.

A thick layer of pug hair coats every surface, threatening to swallow up the hundreds of lipsticks, powders, and eyebrow pencils piled on a long armoire.

Marie weaves towards the crying dog pile on the bed. All the pugs sit anxiously, wagging their tails at Marie.

All except one.

There, in the center of the bed, surrounded by her ten sisters, lies one dead extra wheezy Wanda.

EXT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marie pats down the earth atop the tiny grave in the center of Gloria's front yard. She stands up and brushes the dirt off her hands. A neighbor leans on her stoop, yammering.

NEIGHBOR
...she was still screaming when they strapped her in. I thought she was dying until the paramedics told me it was just her dog--

MARIE
What hospital did they take her to?

NEIGHBOR
NYU.

Marie pales.

MARIE
Are you sure?

NEIGHBOR
That's where they always take her

MARIE
Thanks.

EXT. NYU MEDICAL CENTER - NIGHT

Marie sits on the bench outside the hospital. An ambulance SIREN screams in the distance. Her phone rings: MOM.

She silences it and looks back at the door to the ER. The SIREN gets louder, and suddenly an ambulance SCREECHES to a stop in front of her. PARAMEDICS rapidly unload a BLOODY MAN.

Marie stands up and walks away.

EXT. WILL'S APPARTMENT-NIGHT

Marie knocks on Will's door five times, then five more, then five more-

It opens.

WILL
Hey, sorry about-

She kisses him hard, pushing both of them into his apartment and SLAMMING the door behind her.

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

They make out on the bed. Will pulls back for a second.

WILL
Are you sure this is what you want?

Marie shakes her head.

MARIE
(Whispering)
No.

He pulls away further, but she grabs him.

MARIE
Don’t ask me, just do it.

He hesitates. She strips off her hoodie to reveal only a black bra. He gets on top of her.

Skulls LAUGH and melt. Eyeballs weep blood. Marie KNIFES Will in his naked, tattooed back. Nancy sits cross-legged and blushing amidst blaring ALARMS and flashing red lights.

INT. WILL’S APARTMENT-LATER

They lay in bed. It’s weird.

WILL
Can I ask you something?

MARIE
I guess so.

WILL
Did you throw out all my Exacto knives?

Beat.

MARIE
Yeah.

Will nods.

WILL
Are you afraid of me?

MARIE
No.

She clenches her hands into fists, trying not to tap.

MARIE
I’m afraid of myself.

Will stares up at the ceiling for a moment, understanding the implications of this for the first time.

MARIE
There’s something wrong in me.

Her voice breaks.

WILL
You know what always makes me feel better?

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Over pitch black there's a metallic RATTLING, then the HISSS of an aerosol can as thread of sky blue spray paint arcs across a wall.

MARIE (V.O.)
How long have you been doing this?

Marie watches as Will fills in an elaborate bubble letter. His movements are fluid and efficient.

WILL
Long time.

MARIE
Have you ever been caught?

WILL
Not here.

She's hypnotized as he outlines the word with hot pink.

MARIE
Why do you write that word, "Hand?"

WILL
Really, with the questions? Thought we weren't doing that.

MARIE
Sorry. Was your family, like, killed by a pack of wild hands?

WILL
Red.

MARIE
What?

WILL
Toss me the red. And keep an eye out for people on their cellphones.

She throws him a red can. Will keeps painting as he talks.

WILL
We didn't have art class where I went to school. So I worked at this tattoo shop all through high school. And it was awesome, actually. I just got high and gave my friends tattoos all day. Thought I'd do it forever.
(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)
But when I got offered a scholarship to the Art Institute, suddenly it stopped seeming so great. And it was like, shit, maybe I can get the fuck out of here and make a go at it.

He glances back.

WILL
You keeping an eye out?

Marie nods. He goes back to painting.

WILL
So. Came to the city for school, and the first day we had 5 minutes to draw our hands. Then we hung them on the wall and the whole class walked through together while the professor critiqued them. So we hung ‘em up, and there was all kinds of shit, photoreal, abstract- and then there was me. “a preteen who’s idea of fine art is Spawn comics.”

His wrist twitches, sending a line of red into an “H”.

WILL
Shit.

He grabs the blue and starts fixing the letter.

WILL
The thing is, Spawn had the best illustrators of any comic series ever. But they didn’t know that, because they were elitist dicks, and their shit was all just souless, pandering noise. I didn’t wanna do that. I wanted to do something that had heart. Art that took balls. So that’s what I did. And I wrote *hand* because...I dunno. Fuck those dicks.

MARIE
But then you got caught.

WILL
Yeah. But by then I wanted to. Otherwise...I’d have to admit it.

MARIE
Admit what?

He does a finishing touch and steps back. The piece is so clean and bright it practically glows in the dark.

WILL
That I was scared.

He turns to her, vulnerable.

WILL
You know?

She looks away uncomfortably.

MARIE
Not really.

His face falls, then hardens. He laughs, loud and false.

WILL
Didn't think so.

Marie snaps.

MARIE
What do you want from me? I'm sick, okay? Is that what you wanna hear? That my brain is a rat nest of unspeakable fucking horror? That I kill you a thousand times a day, and no matter how many times my shrink tells me it's not real, I can't shake the feeling that it's-

Suddenly, a light in one of the building's windows comes on. Will covers her mouth with his hand.

WILL
(Whispering)
We gotta go. Now.

He grabs his BAG OF CANS and gestures Marie to follow him. She doesn't move. He looks around desperately.

WILL
What!? C'mon!

MARIE
I'll find my own way home.

WILL
Marie-

Another light goes on in the building. He looks at her sadly, then disappears into the shadows.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's eerily quiet. Marie lies awake on the couch, the surviving ten pugs SNORING around her. A shrill RINGING cuts the air. Marie follows it to a house phone she never knew existed.

DR. RYAN (O.S.)
This message is for Marie Astor... I'm Dr. Ryan from NYU Psychiatric Ward. You were named emergency contact by one of our patients, Ms. Gloria Newbury. We do need to speak with you before we release her, so please call us at your earliest convenience.

She looks past the phone to a PACK OF CIGARETTES on a window sill. She lights one and leans on the glass, staring at the city, SPARKING the Zippo in fives, over and over again.

INT. DR. BRIGHTON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Brighton looks serious. Marie looks exhausted.

BRIGHTON
How'd your parents take it?

Marie squirms.

MARIE
Uh. Not great.

BRIGHTON
Do you want to talk about it?

Marie avoids her gaze.

MARIE
Not really.

BRIGHTON
I know it sucks now, but you did the right thing. I'm proud of you.

She beams at Marie, who looks queasy.

BRIGHTON
Anyway. I wish I could go easy on you, today, but we have a big one.

TITLE CARD: ITEM #4 FLOODING

Brighton sets something wrapped in cloth on the table with a muffled, metallic CLINK and starts to unwrap it.

MARIE
Nononononononono...

It's a knife. A real one. Shiny, sharp, and medium-sized.

BRIGHTON
You can't write everything, Marie.

MARIE
Yes I can.

Brighton shakes her head.

BRIGHTON
Some things...you just gotta do.

Marie looks at her desperately.

MARIE
Please-Not today. I'm not ready.

Marie shoves her hands into her hoodie pocket and shakes her head violently. The walls start to pulse.

BRIGHTON
Pick up the knife.

Hands shaking, Marie slowly picks up the knife as if it weighs a thousand pounds. Sweat shines on her brow.

BRIGHTON
Good. Now hold it like you mean it.

Marie starts to cry a little.

MARIE
No...please. Please don't make me do this. Please don't. Please.

Brighton says nothing, but forces Marie's hand to point the knife out.

MARIE
Stop. Stop. I can't do this. I can't I can't I can't. Please.

Brighton leans forward until the blade is denting her skin. Marie's vision narrows with panic.

BRIGHTON
Breath.

Marie's hand suddenly twitches. Brighton inhales sharply. A drop of BLOOD springs from the tip of the knife.

MARIE
Fuck!

The knife CLATTERS to the floor. Marie stands up, swaying.

BRIGHTON
It's okay-

MARIE
-No it's not! I can't do this shit any more. I can't do this.

She bolts out the door, wiping her hands on her hoodie.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marie sniffles as she shoves the thick black notebook and crimson pen into the trash. She crumples up her exposure list and throws it in on top.

MARIE
Fucking quack.

EXT. STANDINGS BAR - NIGHT

Marie smashes out a cigarette on the ground. She's pulled herself together, but not by much. She walks in and SLAMS the door behind her.

INT. STANDINGS BAR - NIGHT

Barry, Nick, and a few other regulars watch the Knicks on TV. Marie collapses on a stool. Will looks at her coolly.

MARIE
Yo.

WILL
Looking for free beer?

MARIE
Why, you looking to get laid?

WILL
If I was, I can think of a lot easier ways than this.

MARIE
Classy.

WILL
You know what, I actually am.

MARIE
Is that why you left me on a roof in the middle of the night?

WILL
You wanted to stay there!

MARIE
I wanted to talk!

WILL
Oh, great! Good timing! Sorry I didn’t wanna stand around guessing what you’re thinking until we got arrested.

Marie stares daggers at him. He sighs as he pulls a glass out from under the bar and starts filling it from the tap.

WILL
Look, you want free drinks and casual sex? Fine.

He smacks the glass on the counter in front of her.

WILL
But don't act like you’re looking for a gentleman, because that’s bullshit. You want someone you can use to escape your life. And this is what that looks like.

He nods at the beer. Marie locks eyes with him.

MARIE
You got anything stronger?

Marie breaks into a smile. Will pulls a bottle and two shot glasses out from under the counter.

WILL
It just so happens...

He fills the shots.

WILL
For emergencies.

MARIE
My whole fucking life is an emergency.

WILL
I'll drink to that.

They click glasses and drink. She taps the glass down five times. Will notices and for the first time, remarks.

WILL
That was weird.

MARIE
Oh buddy. You have no idea.

WILL
Let me guess. You don't wanna talk about it?

MARIE
Gimme a couple more of these and ask me again.

He smiles and refills their shots. They toss back the shots and slam the glasses on the table.

INT. STANDINGS BAR-LATER

The bar is empty. Music plays loudly. Marie lies on her back on the bar smoking. Will draws on her arm: the silhouette of a girl with a rat curled up in her head. They're both wasted.

MARIE
Hey.

WILL
What.

MARIE
Let's go paint something.

Will shakes his head.

WILL
Not a good idea to paint wasted. Plus it's Saturday, the cops are gonna be out...

MARIE
C’mon, please? I need this.

WILL
Why.

MARIE
Because. It’s fun. Because I’ve had a bad week. Because my brain is a goddamned scrolling encyclopedia of ways to kill people, and when we do this dumb shit together-it's not that it goes away-sometimes it gets worse, actually-but I just don't mind it as much.

She looks at him. He puts the lid on his pen, grinning.

WILL
I knew you had some romance squirreled away in that little old rat brain.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Will and Marie weave down the street, carrying a BACKPACK of conspicuously RATTLING spray cans. Marie suddenly stops dead.

WILL
What?

Marie points to a building ahead with a giant, pure white egg shape taking up most of one wall.

WILL
Is that-

MARIE
The Egg.

WILL
Aw, our first date.

They stalk up beside it. Will looks around, squinting, drunk.

WILL
Pretty exposed. Would be a very balls out move. But...

MARIE
But...?

WILL
But fuck ‘em if they can’t take a joke.

She laughs. He tosses her a can of green. She looks at him.

WILL
Well? What are you waiting for?

MARIE
What?

He nods to the wall.

MARIE
Oh, I don’t think-

WILL
Don’t think.

Marie hesitates, then starts to paint. And paint. And paint. Will watches at first, then begins to paint behind her, following as she moves across the wall.

Finally, they both step back and survey their work.

It’s a green tally of five, over and over again and a stylized, thin fingered hand, reaching, as if trying to grab the lines while being buried by them. The effect is intense.

WILL
‘Sactually pretty tight, huh?

A spotlight swings onto them abruptly.

COP (O.S.)
Freeze-Don’t move you little shits!

In a flash, Will bolts, dodges into another alley and is gone. Marie stumbles and is immediately snagged by a cop.

MARIE
Will!

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Brighton strides angrily out of the police station with Marie hurrying along behind her.

MARIE
-community service. But they made me pee in a cup and everything!

Brighton ignores her and walks purposefully towards the nearest subway stop.

MARIE
So you wanna get breakfast or something-

Brighton stops suddenly next to the subway staircase and holds out a piece of paper.

BRIGHTON
Here's a prescription for a month of your SSRI's. That should be enough time for you to find another doctor.

MARIE
What?

BRIGHTON
Honestly, it's my fault. And I'm sorry, but this has become *completely* unprofessional.

MARIE
I thought-

BRIGHTON
You thought, what, that you would just exploit the doctor-patient relationship to avoid getting in trouble with your parents?

MARIE
Look, I just got out of *jail*-

Brighton holds her hand up, shaking her head.

BRIGHTON
Did you even tell your parents you dropped out?

MARIE
They're in Italy-

BRIGHTON
Did you tell them or not?

Marie is silent.

BRIGHTON
Jesus fucking Christ.

MARIE
No, wait! I'm sorry! I'm sorry I ran out last time, I'm sorry I lied, I'm sorry I fucked up, I'll be better-

BRIGHTON
It's too late.

MARIE
You said you would help me.

Brighton shakes her head.

BRIGHTON
I can't. Not any more.

Brighton turns and heads down the stairs. Marie snaps.

MARIE
Hey, you know what else is pretty unprofessional? Abandoning a patient in the middle of treatment because you suddenly decide your fucking study is more important.

Brighton stops.

MARIE
Because that's what it's all about, isn't it? The study. A happy ending, good PR. Something to make everyone forget that you dropped the ball on a fucking *socio*. And now you don't need me for your little redemption narrative, so you're done, right? Yeah. Real fucking professional.

Brighton strides up the stairs and gets in her face.

BRIGHTON
You wanna take the gloves off? Fine. Yeah, I fucked up, Marie. But at least I have the guts to take responsibility for it. I don't get the luxury of having a disorder to blame all my bullshit on. You have OCD. That's tough. But it doesn't mean you can act like a child and expect to be treated like an adult.

Marie is silent, her face burning.

BRIGHTON
You had a chance to help people in a meaningful way. But you decided your own little drama was more important. You're an indulgent, self-destructive little *kid*. And I'm a psychiatrist, not a fucking babysitter.

She storms down the stairs and disappears into a crowd of commuters, leaving Marie alone on the sidewalk.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Marie's heart BEATS loud as she pushes through the morning commuter crowd. Every person she brushes against doubles over and crumples to the ground. People continue toward her in a steady wall, but behind her lies a carpet of bloody corpses.

MARIE (V.O.)
Good.

Her white plastic knife is covered in blood. She's a walking plague, carnage incarnate. She breaks into a run.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's dark. The only sound is Marie's chewed fingernails TAPPING out a staccato pattern onto and empty scotch bottle.

ONETWOTHREEFOURFIVE. ONETWOTHREEFOURFIVE. ONETWOTHREEFOURFIVE

She TAPS the BOTTLE too hard. It slides off the table and SHATTERS on the floor. The Wandas BARK spastically.

She picks up a long piece of GLASS and approaches the dogs. They BARK louder...A Wanda yelps.

Marie tosses the GLASS in the trash.

MARIE (V.O.)
Good.

MARIE
Shut up!

She looks at her hands. BLOOD. Squeezes her eyes shut and opens them.

BLOOD.

Holy shit. The Wandas BARK. Is one missing? She counts: 1,2,3,4...they run in circles, confusing her...5,6,7,8,9 10?

She looks around: BLOOD on the floor. She looks in the trash. BLOOD on the GLASS. She counts and counts and counts-one is missing, it's dead, she must've hid it somewhere.

She looks behind curtains, in the fireplace, the oven- No Wanda, but everything is covered in BLOOD. She sways, faint. She looks at her hands. MORE BLOOD.

INT. GLORIA'S BEDROOM - LATER

The light clicks off and on 5 times, then stays on. Marie rushes in and starts to search the cluttered room.

She looks under the BED. Nothing. Opens a drawer--She freezes. Two dozen PILL BOTTLES glow orange from within.

All Xanax.

Dizzy with relief, she grabs one. Her elbow knocks a tall stack of JEWELRY BOXES. She starts re-stacking, then stops, overcome with curiosity. She unlatches a box and opens it.

MARIE
...the fuck...

The inside is lined with velvet and divided into three sections, intended for earrings, necklaces, and bracelets. But instead of jewelry, the box is filled with-

MARIE
Hair?

Black EYELASHES, brown EYEBROW HAIRS, and masses of dirty blond HAIR, balled up and stuffed in the box. Revolted, she drops the box. Unable to stop herself, she opens another box.

Hair.

Another.

Hair.

Another.

This one is empty, save for a single yellowing PHOTO. She takes it out.

It's a picture of Gloria as a teenager in the 70's. Young, beautiful, laughing, she is barely recognizable as the same person now. Instead, the resemblance to Marie is uncanny.

Marie looks up and catches a glimpse of herself in the vanity mirror, surrounded by open boxes of hair, her hands bleeding from being cut by broken glass, clutching a bottle of Xanax.

MARIE (V.O.)
Good.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Marie rummages desperately through a wastebasket.

She finds what she's looking for: a wadded up BALL OF PAPER. She smooths the crumpled exposure list out onto the table. WRITING, LISTENING, TOUCHING, and FLOODING are all crossed out. There is one item left. She circles it with her red pen.

TITLE CARD: ITEM #5. DOING

INT. SUR LA TABLE - DAY

Rows and rows of knives hang on display like cruel icicles. Marie stands in the midst of them, transfixed.

The smooth SHINK of metal on metal snaps her out of it. The sound seems to be inside her head, but then she sees the source: an employee sharpening a knife. She approaches him looking really weird.

EMPLOYEE
Hi there. Can I help you find something?

SHINK

MARIE
Yes.

He smiles pleasantly. SHINK.

MARIE
I need some uh...

--Blood runs down the side of his face where Marie has slashed him. He continues to smile. SHINK. Marie flinches.

EMPLOYEE
Some...?

MARIE
Some uh...

EMPLOYEE
You okay, miss?

She closes her eyes tightly. SHINK.

MARIE
Some knives.

SHINK.

INT. MOISHE'S BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

Skinned animals hang on display, waiting to be butchered. A myriad of knives and cleavers cling precariously to a magnetic strip along the wall. Marie gapes at all of it.

MOISHE (O.S.)
Vegetarian?

Marie turns away from the carnage to see Moishe the Butcher standing behind his counter. He taps out "shave and a haircut" with the tip of his knife on a marble cutting board.

MARIE
What?

MOISHE
The way you're eyeballin' the meat, like it's about to jump down and grab ya. You a vegetarian?

MARIE
Um, kind of. I'm trying to...get back into meat, I guess.

MOISHE
Came to the right place. I've converted more than my share. Vegans even. The way I see it, its not something you ease into. Best to jump in with both feet and get a sampler-veal, lamb, the works.

He begins grabbing various pieces of meat and wrapping them up with paper and twine.

MOISHE
I'll give you my special vegetarian discount if you promise not to overcook it.

MARIE
Thank you.

He winks at her.

MOISHE
Welcome back.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Marie sits at the kitchen table holding a bloody KNIFE, her hands stained red. It seems like a nightmare until she starts offering small pieces of raw meat to the Wandas. The listless pugs just ignore her.

MARIE
That's milk fed veal, you know.

She looks down at the sea of sad puppy eyes.

MARIE
C'mon guys, Gloria's probably-

At the sound of her name, the dogs WHEEZE hysterically. She glances at them and they stare back, bug-eyed, tails wagging.

MARIE
Aw, damn you all.

INT. NYU MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

The emergency room waiting area. All the sounds and sights of misery blend together: a feverish baby CRIES, a man with a broken nose SNIFFS back blood, a woman with a dog bite MOANS.

THERE IS BLOOD EVERYWHERE. Splattered on shirts, seeping through band aids, dried on hands. Each image jumps out at Marie in rapid succession.

NURSE
Marie Astor?

MARIE
Yes!

Marie springs to her feet and approaches the serious looking NURSE (40's) at a computer.

NURSE
Your aunt's been moved from the crisis unit up to Psych Ward. Floor 3. I'm on my way up there now, if you want to follow me.

INT. NYU PSYCH WARD - DAY

The nurse leads Marie down a long, beige hallway. It's a strangely forced calm compared to the chaos of the ER. They stop in front of a closed door.

NURSE
Empty your pockets, please.

Marie begins to turn her pockets inside out.

NURSE
You'd be surprised what they can make into a weapon. A good rule of thumb is, don't bring anything you wouldn't be able to board an airplane with.

Marie pats her hoodie pocket and pulls out a WHITE PLASTIC KNIFE. The nurse GASPS and snatches it from her.

MARIE
Wow. I'm sorry. I...I completely forgot that was in there.

The nurse glares, but opens the door to the room.

NURSE
She's on a sedative, so she may not wake up. You have 15 minutes.

Marie steps into the room and immediately comes back out.

MARIE
(Whispering)
I'm sorry, there's been a mix up. I'm looking for Gloria Newberry.

The nurse peeks in the door.

NURSE
That's Ms. Newberry.

MARIE
No, it isn't.

The nurse looks at her strangely.

NURSE
This isn't her first time here.

INT. GLORIA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Marie walks back into the room. It looks like any other hospital room, except that every edge and corner has been rounded, giving the room a surreal dullness.

NURSE (O.S.)
I'll be out here if you need anything.

She hears the door CLICK shut behind her as she sits down by the bed and looks at the stranger asleep in front of her.

Curled into a tiny ball, Gloria can't weigh more than 90 pounds. Without her wig, make up, and eyelashes, Marie sees for the first time her completely bald face, dotted with scabs and scars. She looks about a hundred years old.

Marie covers her mouth to keep from crying out loud. She SNIFFS loudly and Gloria slowly opens her eyes and smiles. She takes Marie's hand in her own.

GLORIA
Can you believe they won't let you smoke in here?

Marie laughs tearfully. Gloria shakes her head.

GLORIA
And they think I'm the crazy one.

One of the machines hooked up to her DINGS. Gloria doesn't seem to notice, but Marie watches as a cloudy fluid of anti-psychotics drains into Gloria's IV.

GLORIA
How's Wanda?

MARIE
Good. She misses you.

Gloria nods. Her eyes droop as the drugs kick in.

GLORIA
I never should have left.

She closes her eyes.

GLORIA
It didn't matter anyway, had it in me all along. That fucking curse.

MARIE
What curse?

Gloria reopens her eyes, now glazed, lost in memory.

GLORIA
It's the blood. Bad blood. That's what makes us what we are...

She touches her ruined face.

GLORIA
Monsters.

Gloria's nail DIGS into her skin at her temple. Marie grabs her hand firmly and presses it onto the bed.

GLORIA
She was a seamstress. Sheila, I mean. And when she got in her moods, she'd click her scissors. You'd hear them in her pocket, snip, snip snip-then-She'd go off. Cut up what she was working on, cut our clothes. Tried to cut all your mom's hair on her tenth birthday.

MARIE
You're kidding.

GLORIA
I got home and she had Eva pinned on the kitchen floor. So I knocked her out with a tea kettle.

Marie gives a choking laugh.

GLORIA
I tired to help her off the floor, but Eva wouldn't take my hand. I kept telling her, she's asleep now, don't worry. Then I realized-she wasn't scared of Sheila. She was scared of *me*. So I left.

Saltwater leaks out onto her bald little face.

GLORIA
I left her there.

Gloria wipes a tear away and starts SCRATCHING at her eyebrow. Marie grabs her hand again and pins it down.

GLORIA
But the funny thing is, your mom was okay. She got out, all by herself...And I'm still there.

She closes her eyes again.

GLORIA
I'll always be there.

She drifts off into a drugged sleep, leaving Marie alone.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT-DAY

Marie furiously types at her laptop, then stops, hits record on her computer, and reads aloud.

EXT. BAD NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Marie wears an orange reflective vest as she paints over a series of SPRAY-PAINTED PENISES scrawled across a boarded up liquor store. Next to her another, equally miserable youth lethargically paints over the words "BUY CRACK."

INT. MANHATTAN ANIMAL CONTROL - DAY

Hundreds of forlorn dogs CRY and BARK. The noise must be deafening, but all we can hear is-

MARIE (V.O.)
I am a murderous psychopath. I get off on stabbing people.

Marie wears her headphones as she walks amongst the rows of strays. She stops in front of a kennel with a tiny black PUPPY huddled in the corner.

MARIE (V.O.)
I am a killer.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Marie walks toward campus carrying a thick envelope and a burned CD labeled "PERSONAL STATEMENT."

As she rounds a corner, she pauses, then walks back. She's at the ally by Cafe Habana. She stares down it for a long moment, then keeps walking.

On the wall where Will first wrote his number is a spray-painted stencil of two hands forming a heart.

INT. NYU PSYCH WARD HALLWAY - NIGHT

Marie trundles down the hall to her aunt's room wearing her hoodie again, her hands shoved in the front pocket.

INT. NYU PSYCH WARD ROOM - NIGHT

She opens the door. Gloria is unwrapping some Nicorette. She wears a kimono and costume jewelry, but no wig or makeup.

MARIE
Hey.

GLORIA
Hey yourself. Did you bring me some more gum?

MARIE
Nope.

Marie unzips her hoodie as her aunt rambles.

GLORIA
You'd think with all the science these days someone would come up with a cigarette-Oh!

Marie has shrugged off her hoodie to reveal the tiny black PUPPY. She hands him to Gloria, who looks like she might cry.

GLORIA
Who's this precious princess?

MARIE
His name's Killer.

Gloria sets him on the bed.

GLORIA
Of course it is. It's about time we had a man around the house.

Killer immediately pees on the bed and prances to Gloria proudly. She cackles with delight.

GLORIA
That's right, honey. You give that lazy nurse something to do.

Killer jumps off the bed and runs laps around the room. Gloria throws gum wrappers for the dog and laughs maniacally.

MARIE
You excited to come home?

GLORIA
I'm excited to have a smoke and a nice big glass of scotch.

MARIE
My mom and step-dad get into town this week.

GLORIA
Want me to see if they'll hold my room for you?

MARIE
Hilarious.

Just then, the serious looking nurse pops her head in. Killer BARKS crazily at her feet. She gawks in disbelief.

NURSE
Absolutely not.

GLORIA
For Christ's sake, settle down, Nurse Ratched. It's just a dog.

MARIE
It's my fault, sorry, Nurse Ratched-

NURSE
That's not my name.

Killer gives a final BARK and speeds out the door into the hall. The nurse glares at Marie as she chases the dog.

NURSE
You have 30 seconds to get control of your animal before I call security.

GLORIA
Oh, can it, Ratched.

INT. NYU PSYCH WARD HALLWAY - NIGHT

Marie chases the puppy as he streaks down the hall and veers sharply into a room.

MARIE
Ah, shit!

INT. NYU PSYCH WARD ROOM 2 - NIGHT

She jogs into the room to find Killer has jumped onto a bed where a girl is leaned over petting him, her long hair obscuring her face.

MARIE
I'm so sorry-

The girl looks over and sweeps her hair back from her face. A red scar runs down her jaw.

INT. MARIE'S MIND

Joanne is STABBED in her bed. The assailant flickers back and forth between being Becca and being Marie.

MARIE (V.O.)
Good.

JOANNE
Hi.

INT. NYU PSYCH WARD ROOM 2 - NIGHT

Joanne smiles at her, Angry scars stand out like neon on her pale arms and periodically appearing to bleed.

Marie sways on her feet, faint, her vision swimming.

JOANNE
Are you okay?

The walls close in. The room darkens. She staggers forward and catches herself on the edge of the bed.

JOANNE
Woah! Here, sit down.

Joanne offers her hand, and Marie sees her palms bear the worst of the scars, deep criss-crossing defensive wounds.

MARIE
No, no, I should go. I'm sorry.

JOANNE
You can sit for a minute until you feel better. I don't mind.

MARIE
No, I really...

She trails off as she catches a glimpse of a dried out bouquet on her bedside table. Beneath it is a folded, deflated “GET WELL!” BALLOON and a dusty stack of CARDS.

MARIE
Maybe I will sit for a second, if you’re sure you don’t mind.

Joanne’s face brightens.

JOANNE
No! Not at all.

Marie sits on the bed and finds herself staring at the scars, which continue to periodically open and bleed. Joanne smiles.

JOANNE
The scars, right? It’s okay. I’m still getting used to them, too.

MARIE
Do they...hurt?

JOANNE
Not as much as they used to.

They sit in silence. Killer licks Joanne’s scarred hands happily.

JOANNE
You want to see something crazy?

MARIE
Sure.

She rolls up her sleeve to display more scars on her shoulder. Marie looks away from them.

JOANNE
No, look.

Marie forces her self to look back to her. Joanne is pointing to a scar on her biceps.

JOANNE
It looks like a heart, right?

Marie looks closer. She’s right. It’s a perfect heart.

MARIE
Huh.

JOANNE
I couldn't even look at them at first, I just wore long sleeves and basically cried all day. But after a while I realized that they aren't going anywhere, so I should probably get used to them. That's when I found it. And this one, too.

She flips her arm over and points to curved scar.

JOANNE
It's a J. For my name. Joanne.

Marie touches a jagged, zig-zag scar on Joanne's ruined palm.

MARIE
M. For Marie.

JOANNE
Nice to meet you.

MARIE
Likewise.

Beat.

JOANNE
So, what are you in for?

Marie pauses.

MARIE
I have obsessive compulsive disorder.

Joanne nods knowingly.

JOANNE
My sister has that.

MARIE
(astonished)
Really?

JOANNE
Yeah. Whenever she drove would have to stop like every half mile to make sure she hadn't hit someone. It literally took her hours to get anywhere. Eventually she just started walking.

MARIE
You’re kidding.

JOANNE
Nope. I remember one time she was driving me and my brother to see the new Lethal Weapon movie, and out of nowhere just SLAMMED on the breaks and made us get out and look for a body along the road for like two hours. I remember ‘cause we had to see “How Stella Got Her Groove Back” instead. It was the worst.

MARIE
About four months ago my best friend wasn’t answering her phone. And I was so convinced I had somehow murdered her that I got up in the middle of the night, walked across campus, and climbed up the fire escape so I could see in her window.

JOANNE
Was she dead?

MARIE
No. Her phone was on silent because she was hooking up with this dude. I think she saw me, too. But we just never talked about it.

Joanne laughs and her face looks younger, more alive.

JOANNE
Sorry, I shouldn’t laugh.

MARIE
Yeah, you should. You really should.

EXT. GLORIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A hand lays a rose on the little mound of dirt.

Gloria steps back, hugs Killer a little too hard and takes a huge drag from her cigarette. Beside her, Marie holds Wanda’s leashes. They all stand stoically for a moment of silence.

MARIE
She had a very full life.

GLORIA
I wanted to have her cremated.

MARIE
Well. Too late now.

Beat.

GLORIA
She was a good dog.

MARIE
One of the best.

Gloria stubs out her cigarette with a sigh.

GLORIA
Alright. I need a fucking drink.

INT. GLORIA'S APPARTMENT - NIGHT

Gloria still holds Killer in her arms as she rummages through the freezer. Tupperware containers full of cubed food keep tumbling out onto the floor and startling the Wandas.

Marie sits at the table fumbling with a Swiss Army, trying to figure out how to put the blade back down.

MARIE
I don't know what to do about my mom.

GLORIA
Where's my scotch? What the hell is all this shit?

MARIE
I've been practicing cutting stuff.

GLORIA
Congratulations. I think you've got it down.

Gloria SLAMS the freezer shut. Marie keeps fidgiting.

GLORIA
We're gonna need more scotch.

MARIE
We're supposed do a graduation dinner on Friday at some nice restaurant. It'll be a shitshow.

GLORIA
Ruining a dinner? Ugh, God. Up to you. You'll owe her one.

MARIE
What do you mean?

GLORIA
Didn't Eva ever tell you what mom did when we ruined dinner?

MARIE
No?

GLORIA
Whenever we fought at the table, Sheila would make one of us cook for everyone the next night. She'd say, "You took this shitty dinner from me, now you're gonna give me one back."

Gloria nods as she sets Killer down and lights a cigarette.

GLORIA
We had some terrible goddamn meals. You ever seen a 14 year-old try to cook a pork roast? It's how I kept my figure through high school. Anyway, maybe you can feed them some of the crap in my freezer-Oh for Christ's sake, give me that.

She snaps her fingers. Marie sheepishly sets the knife in her palm. Gloria snaps it shut with one hand.

GLORIA
In the mean time-

She fishes a hundred out of her kimono and gives it to Marie

GLORIA
Be a doll and go to the liquor store for me. Scotch. Top shelf.

INT. FANCY RESTURANT - NIGHT

Champagne pours into a flute, bubbles spiralling upwards.

EVA (O.S.)
Do you love it?

Marie looks down at a hideous, bird-like Carnevale mask. Marie's mom EVA (40's, glamorous) beams expectantly while Marie's step-dad ANDREW tops off her champagne glass.

MARIE
I love it.

EVA
Put it on!

MARIE
Oh...maybe later.

Andrew laughs at Marie's discomfort as he fills her glass.

ANDREW
She might need a few more of these first, honey.

He winks at Marie and he moves on to her brother DICKEY (16), splashing a tiny drop of champagne in his glass. Dickey rolls his eyes. Marie counts her fingers beneath the table.

EVA
Put it on! It'll be fun!

ANDREW
I want to propose a toast. To Marie-

He lifts his glass. Marie clenches her hands under the table.

MARIE
Wait!

They all look at her.

MARIE
I have to say something.

DICKEY
Are you a lesbian?

EVA
Dickey!

DICKEY
Let her answer, mom!

MARIE
I, uh...Ah, fuck it. I dropped out.

EVA
WHAT?

ANDREW
Fuck.

Her step-dad sits down heavily.

DICKEY
Oh, shit!

ANDREW
You watch your mouth!

DICKEY
You just said-

EVA
YOU DROPPED OUT?

Marie can only nod.

EVA
WHEN?

MARIE
...about three months ago...

EVA
THREE MONTHS AGO?

Marie looks down at her hands.

EVA
Wow. Okay. Wait a second. Just-

She blinks rapidly.

EVA
Okay, so we fly out here to see you graduate, and instead: SURPRISE!- You dropped out? Three fucking months ago? And you tell us *at your graduation dinner*? Wow. Just, wow.

MARIE
I didn't want to...ruin your trip-

EVA
Oh, of course. This is our fault right? Because we can't take a vacation any more without the whole fucking world falling apart.

ANDREW
Honey-

Eva holds her hand up and drains her champagne. She sets her glass down with a THWACK. A silver crack spiders up the side.

EVA
Well. You'll just have to reapply and take summer classes. God knows we haven't sunk enough money into that school yet.

DICKEY
Wait, how come you dropped out?

EVA
Quiet, Dickey.

MARIE
No, I want to talk about it.

EVA
I don't care what you want. It's not the time or the place-

Marie ignores her mom and turns to her brother.

MARIE
I have OCD, Dickey.

ANDREW
What?

Eva's face goes pale, but no one's paying attention

DICKEY
You're like the messiest person I know. I saw you eat an Oreo off the floor. *After* the dog licked it.

MARIE
That's what I said. But it's a weird subset called "Pure O."

Dickey scoffs.

DICKEY
Sounds like porno.

ANDREW
Dickey, I swear to god-

MARIE
There's something else.

EVA
Oh, good, there's more!

MARIE
I've been staying with Aunt Gloria.

Dead silence. Dickey looks around confused.

DICKEY
The crazy one?

Eva stands up.

EVA
I have to go.

MARIE
Mom-

Eva doesn't look back as she beelines out the door. The table sits stunned for a moment.

DICKEY
Way to go, psycho.

ANDREW
Shut up.

Andrew turns and looks at her severely, pointing a finger.

ANDREW
Fix it.

The guys watch as Marie makes her way out the door. Andrew looks at Dickey for a beat, then dumps Marie's champagne into his glass with a sigh.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Eva sits on a stoop, looking bizarre in her glittering formal wear. Marie sits beside her and offers her a cigarette.

EVA
You're smoking now, too?

MARIE
Only on special occasions.

Eva takes a cigarette and lights it. They stare at the street for a minute, neither willing to continue the conversation.

MARIE
I'm sorry.

EVA
Why didn't you tell me?

MARIE
Honestly...I was afraid you were going to react exactly like you did. I thought you'd be mad. And I thought you'd act like by not talking about it, we could make it disappear. But I already tried that and I'm not doing it any more.

EVA
No. Clearly not. Instead you're just dropping out of college to live with your mentally unstable relative.

Eva shakes her head, exhaling smoke.

EVA
How is Gloria, anyway?

MARIE
Pretty good, actually. She wanted me to tell you something.

EVA
I'm sure-

MARIE
-She said she's sorry. She's sorry she left you.

Eva glances at Marie with glittering eyes, realizing that everything she had tried to keep from her daughter had been revealed. After a long moment, she slowly begins to speak.

EVA
I went looking for her. Did she tell you that?

Marie shakes her head.

EVA
Well, I did. After I graduated. I found her too, stayed with her for a week. And she stole. And lied. And fucked anything that stood too close. She was toxic-screaming and scratching like an animal, then begging for forgiveness like a child. Just like mom.

Marie nods.

EVA
By the time I got pregnant with you, she had stopped leaving her house. And, honestly, I felt-felt-

MARIE
...relieved.

Eva looks away. Under the streetlight, she suddenly appears old, and tired, the lines on her face more pronounced.

EVA
I never bought that loony bullshit about the curse. But when I was in labor, I remember praying the whole time. Praying it would skip you. But I knew, as soon as you were born. You looked just like her.

Mascara runs from the corner of her eye. Marie hugs her mom.

EVA
It’s my fault.

MARIE
No it’s not.

EVA
And when you needed me I went to stupid fucking Italy.

MARIE
Woah. Hey. Italy is not stupid. What about that super great mask you got there?

EVA
You hate it, don’t you?

MARIE
You know what, I do. I really do.

Eva laughs and wipes her eyes.

MARIE
It’s okay, mom. I’m okay. And you know what’s even crazier? Aunt Gloria’s kind of okay, too. I mean, you should see her. She’s got hair coming in and everything.

Eva nods ever so slightly.

MARIE
No, I mean seriously, you should see her. She's next door at The Flatiron.

EVA
What?

MARIE
Yeah, probably five scotches in by now. Might want to catch her before she switches to gin. Makes her wonky.

Eva looks panicky but makes no move. Marie hears the familiar TAPPING, but this time it’s Eva’s shoe on the pavement. Marie presses her foot on top of Eva’s.

MARIE
I know you're scared. It's scary. But the scariest part is avoiding it. And as soon as you do this, it's gonna get easier. Trust me.

Eva takes a deep breath, stands up and walks towards the bar.

MARIE
Mom.

Eva turns and looks at her.

MARIE
I’m sorry I ruined dinner. I owe you one. Actually I owe a lot of people one.

Eva shakes her head, smiling.

EVA
Well, I hope you’re a better cook than Gloria was.

She pushes open the door and steps inside. Marie sits in silence for a moment. The door reopens and a bouncer walks out. As the door eases shut, we hear Gloria’s earsplitting CACKLE ring out. Marie smiles.

INT. STANDINGS BAR - DAY

Will dries glasses behind the bar, ignoring Barry’s ranting. He hears the door SHUT and looks up to see Marie. She gives him a little wave. He nods at her and looks at Barry.

WILL
Hey Barry.

BARRY
What?

WILL
Get the fuck out of here.

BARRY
What?

WILL
You heard me.

BARRY
Can I finish my drink at least?

WILL
No.

Barry gives a huff and shuffles past Marie muttering.

BARRY
Bro's before ho's, man...

Marie walks up to the bar and sits down across from Will.

MARIE
Poor Barry.

WILL
I really should give him a job.
He's here more than I am.

MARIE
Well. At least he's reliable.

Beat. Will looks embarrassed.

WILL
You get community service?

MARIE
Yeah.

WILL
They make you paint that wall with
the dicks?

Marie smiles quizzically.

WILL
They always send you there the first few times. Part of their “Scared Straight” bullshit. I'm pretty sure they paint those dicks themselves, too, ‘cause they're always there.

MARIE
How many times have you been arrested?

WILL
A lot. A lot of times.

She nods.

WILL
I’m sorry.

MARIE
I know.

WILL
No, I mean, I’m really sorry. I have problems. I’m working on it. But, I dunno, it’s...complicated.

MARIE
I can do complicated.

She smiles. They stare at each other for a moment.

MARIE
Oh, I wanted to give you this.

She slides an envelope across the bar.

MARIE
You should come to this weird thing I’m doing. There’s going to be food. And drinks. And...dogs. And my parents.

WILL
Yikes.

MARIE
I know. Just think about it.

She starts to leave.

WILL
Marie-

She turns around.

WILL
I'm not mad you threw out my exactos.

She smiles.

WILL
And I don't care that you don't like to talk about stuff. The rat brain, the scary mixtape, that's cool too. The thing that made me crazy was that I couldn't get you to trust me. So I did what any responsible, well-adjusted guy would do: I got you drunk, coerced you into vandalizing, and let you get arrested.

He shakes his head.

WILL
Anyway. I started thinking...what the fuck am I doing? This whole art with balls thing...man, painting under bridges at night because you're afraid people won't like your shit if they see it properly lit is, uh, not that ballsy. So. I think it's time for me to man up, put on my lensless glasses and ask nicely to paint on the inside of the gallery.

MARIE
Does that mean you're done with graffiti?

WILL
Pretty done, yeah.

Marie gives him a strange smile.

MARIE
How done is pretty done?

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Madison sits a stool going through mail. Very nearby Brit and DEREK (23, ponytail) aggressively make out on a couch.

Madison tears open an ENVELOPE with a green thumbprint on the outside. She pulls out a CARD and a PHOTOGRAPH falls out. She picks it up, looks at it momentarily and starts laughing.

INT. NYU PSYCH WARD - DAY

Joanne sits in bed next to a huge bouquet of new BALLOONS, everything from HAPPY VALENTINES DAY to IT'S A BOY. She tears open an unmarked ENVELOPE

INT. NYU CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Brighton shakes hands with a group of enthusiastic NYU Mental Health employees. Rivers Mackey holds her in an awkward hug. Schneeding begrudgingly shakes her hand. Jake Luden babbles questions to her. Each holds identical copies of a file:

RIPPING OFF THE BANDAID: PROPOSED CHANGES BASED ON STUDY OF STUDENT "X"

Paper clipped to the front of each file is a burned CD labeled: A PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Her colleagues leave, but Brighton lingers, looking somber. As she stuffs the last file into her bag, she pauses at a CARD with a cartoon of a 1950's librarian sporting a name tag reading NANCY. A speech bubble reads:

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO JOIN MARIE, GLORIA, AND THE WANDAS FOR A KILLER FEAST!

Inside the card is the original CD with the words PURE O: A PERSONAL STATEMENT scribbled in Marie's handwriting.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

SHOWTUNES play loudly.

Madison and Marie play with Killer until he is run off by a barking pack of disgruntled Wandas.

MADISON
What's your summer thesis called again?

MARIE
How To Commit Murder, And Other Impure Thoughts.

MADISON
God, you're weird. Oh, that reminds me, did you hear Mr. Brown's car was vandalized?

MARIE
Oh no.

MADISON
Yeah. Someone spray painted the word "TURD" in giant green letters across his entire car.

MARIE
Wow. That's pretty fucked up.

Madison smiles.

MADISON
Super fucked up.

Marie grins.

MARIE
I better go check on the meat.

Marie heads back into the kitchen, snatching a WINE GLASS out of Dickey's hand as he shows off a tiny scar to Joanne.

In the dining room. Gloria, wigless with short, soft hair coming in, LAUGHS over a stack of OLD PHOTOS with Eva.

Andrew interrogates Will in a corner over a glass of SCOTCH.

Someone KNOCKS, but it's too noisy for anyone to hear. The unlocked door opens and Brighton steps in. She walks through the room introducing herself and continues into the kitchen.

Marie is cutting bread when she sees Brighton. Brighton smiles and hands her a copy of the study with THE CD paper clipped to the front. We can't hear what's said, we just see them hug tightly, Marie's KNIFE still clutched in her hand.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Everyone sits at the table talking. In the center is a MASSIVE ROAST, surrounded by a rainbow of CUT VEGETABLES.

Marie stands up from her seat at the head and TAPS her glass with a long, sharp knife.

MARIE
Before we eat, there's something I want to say.

Dickey, rosy-cheeked and obviously buzzed, pipes up.

DICKEY
She's a lesbian!

MARIE
Besides that, Dick.

Andrew glares at Dickey and scoots his wine glass away.

MARIE
Everyone sitting at this table tonight is here because at one point...I really thought I might stab them to death.

People laugh, some more uncomfortably than others.

MARIE
I was afraid of hurting the people that mean the most to me. So I left. And I stayed away you. And I acted badly. And I told myself it was to protect you, but it wasn't. It was to make myself feel better. And it was something that I had been doing for a long time. Long before...all of this. And I would probably still be doing it if it weren't for you. So thank you guys.

She raises her glass to Madison.

MARIE
For calling me on my shit.

She turns to Gloria.

MARIE
For standing by me.

She toasts her family.

MARIE
For having faith in me when I gave you no good reason to.

She looks at Brighton and Joanne.

MARIE
And for reminding me not of who I am, but of who I should be.

She smiles at Will.

MARIE
You are the ones that make this fight worth fighting.

She lifts her glass towards the whole of the table.

MARIE
And I would not be here without you.

They CLINK glasses and drink. Marie sits down and surveys the table.

--Everyone is DEAD in their chairs, slumped forward in pools of blood, their knives protruding from their backs.

Nancy stands at the foot of the table in her 1950's Sunday best, glass raised.

NANCY
Cheers.

--Marie blinks. Around the table everyone talks and laughs as they eat. Marie smiles and plunges her knife into the meat.

MARIE (V.O.)
I was 20 years old when I lost my mind. But I don't like to call it that. I like to think of it the way the shrinks do. "Blossoming," they call it. Like a rose or a maiden, like mold on a fruit-like anything that changes.

CUT TO:

BLACK.

MARIE (V.O.)
Like anything that grows.

There's a moment of dead air, then a loud CLICK.

THE END