# SUGAR IN MY VEINS

by

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FADE IN:

JILLIAN (V.O.)
When I was born I didn't make a sound.

INT. HOSPITAL, DELIVERY ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON - A newborn BABY JILLIAN. She looks at her surroundings attentively. A beautiful healthy little girl.

A NURSE hands her to ELLEN MAZER, early 40s, your average suburban housewife, sweaty, still reeling from childbirth pain. Confused and very concerned Ellen stares at her DOCTOR. Why isn't her baby crying?

JILLIAN (V.O.)
Every doctor assured my parents that I was neither deaf nor mute. There was nothing physically wrong with me.

Ellen kisses her, calming herself. Baby seems happy.

ELLEN
You're just a quiet one, aren't you? My quiet little girl.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, DINING ROOM - DAY

THREE YEARS LATER. TODDLER JILLIAN sits in her high chair.

Around her the normal suburban morning routine: Ellen sending off TEEN SARAH, 13, with her lunch to school, NORBERT, early 50s, finishes breakfast.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
But I didn't speak until I could read.

Nobody notices Toddler Jillian pick up a sugar pack. She tears it open and dips her finger in the sugar. Loves it.

TODDLER JILLIAN
(baby talk)
Shuga in te aw.

The activity around her slows down. She speaks!

NORBERT
She said something!

ELLEN
What did she say? Honey, what did you say?

TODDLER JILLIAN
(laughs)
Shuga in te aw.

ELLEN
(confused)
Can you say “Mommy”, honey? “Mommy”.

Teen Sarah picks up the sugar packet Jillian has been playing with. She shows it to their parents: “SUGAR IN THE RAW”.

TEEN SARAH
Great. She’s a freak! I can NOT have a mega dork for a sister, Mom. She’s gonna ruin my whole life!

Norbert and Ellen don’t even hear her. They’re in shock.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
Mom wanted to know what it all meant.

INT. JILLIAN’S ROOM - NIGHT

Toddler Jillian reads a Dr. Seuss book, her little finger follows the words line by line. Norbert and Ellen argue outside her door.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
Should they put me in a special school? Hire special tutors? How do you support this incredible innate talent?

NORBERT
We do nothing.

ELLEN
Nothing? You can’t be serious. This isn’t nothing! She could cure cancer one day!

NORBERT
Maybe it’s just a phase, Ellen. Do you really want her to be ostracized from the start? Before she even has a chance to make friends and have a normal life?

Ellen shakes her head with regret, she doesn't want that.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CLASS ROOM - DAY

MRS. HARRIS, an uptight math teacher, writes additions and subtractions of easy numbers on the board, e.g. 7 + 4 =

MRS. HARRIS
Who wants to give it a try? Who hasn't been up here yet? Jillian?

SIX YEAR OLD JILLIAN reluctantly walks up to the board - and proceeds to solve ALL equations with lightning speed.

MRS. HARRIS (CONT'D)
Jillian, just one, one is enough...

Young Jillian stops abruptly. She gives Mrs. Harris the chalk back. KIDS stare at her with a mix of disgust and awe.

BOY
Freak...

YOUNG JILLIAN
Moron.

EXT. TRACKS - DAY

Phys Ed. Young Jillian and her CLASS MATES run around the tracks. She sucks at sports, huffs and puffs. Somebody TRIPS her and she lands head first into the ground.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
I wasn't born with an innate distrust in the human race. That evolved.

The COACH runs up to help her, everybody else SNICKERS.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CAFETERIA - DAY

Young Jillian opens several sugar packets to add to her milk. A group of GIRLS passes by, one of them grabs her milk and pours it over her head. Milk drips from her hair and chin.

GIRL
You know nobody likes you, right?

She had no idea. She looks after the girls devastated.

INT. JILLIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

THUNDER CLASP. A heavy thunderstorm hits the city. Teen Sarah runs into Young Jillian's room and curls up next to her.

YOUNG JILLIAN
It's just an electric current.

Sarah flicks her arm.

TEEN SARAH
Aren't you scared?

YOUNG JILLIAN
No. See, the positive charges form at the top of the cloud and the negative charges at the bottom...

As Young Jillian explains in grand detail, Teen Sarah regards her sister with growing affection.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, HALL - DAY

JILLIAN (V.O.)
They let me skip two grades. Life got a little easier, because the older kids just ignored me.

Young Jillian at her locker. Everybody around her is a few years older and with groups of FRIENDS. Jillian is all alone.

JILLIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I found most people to be dull, stupid and irritating anyway. I hated everything. I think I just didn't want a world that so adamantly didn't want me in it.

EXT. BOULDER, MAIN STREET - DAY

JILLIAN (V.O.)
Until the day I fell desperately in love at first sight. And nothing else mattered anymore.

Ellen, Young Jillian and Teen Sarah on a nice sunny shopping day. They pass by a music store with a banner: "NEW OPENING".

A VIOLIN attracts Jillian's attention. She stays behind.

Ellen notices her younger daughter is missing and comes back for her. Jillian points at the violin.

YOUNG JILLIAN
Can I have it?

INT. MUSIC STORE

The STORE CLERK hands Young Jillian the violin. Her fingers glide tenderly across the thin wooden frame.

STORE CLERK
Your daughter has excellent taste. This is a 1953 Giuseppe Giachetti.

ELLEN
How much?

STORE CLERK
Eight thousand five hundred.

Ellen sucks in air audibly and laughs.

ELLEN
That's a small car.

STORE CLERK
It's one of a kind. Giachetti's viola went for over ten thousand at a recent auction in New Zealand.

YOUNG JILLIAN
I want it.

STORE CLERK
How long has your daughter been playing?

ELLEN
She hasn't played yet.

STORE CLERK
Maybe a smaller kids' violin then? They start at only seventy-five.

ELLEN
What do you think, Jillian?

YOUNG JILLIAN
No. I want this one.

ELLEN
Okay, come on, Jillian, let's go. Let's sleep on it for a day or so.

Ellen grabs Jillian's hand and tears her away from the violin. You'd think she just ripped Jillian's heart out. Jillian bursts into tears.

The harder Ellen pulls, the louder Jillian WAILS. The little girl works herself into a full fledged HYSTERICAL FIT.

Sarah leaves the store embarrassed to the bone.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Jillian! Please calm down! That's a lot of money, we need to think about it! Please stop crying.

Jillian has a full on meltdown, screaming, crying, kicking. She has difficulty catching her breath -

- which causes her to faint.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Young Jillian moves peas around her plate with a fork.

NORBERT
... I am not spending a fortune just because she wants it. I want many things. I'd like a pool and a spa and a seat in the Senate.

ELLEN
Maybe she's a genius.

NORBERT
She hasn't cured cancer yet.

YOUNG JILLIAN
If you buy me the violin, I won't want anything else ever again. I swear. This is a promise between you, me and the universe. I won't want anything ever again.

NORBERT
That's ridiculous. Look, sweetie, if you had been playing for a number of years and it seemed promising, then maybe it would make sense, but this just on a whim? No.

YOUNG JILLIAN
If I can't have that violin, I will poke my eye out.

Norbert laughs out loud. Sarah too giggles. Ellen shifts uncomfortably in her seat. Young Jillian glares from one to the other, angry.

Without much ado, Jillian SLAMS the fork into her right eye.

A moment of shock.

Then Sarah breaks the silence with a SCREAM.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

JILLIAN (V.O.)
All things considered, sacrificing my right eye was probably the stupidest thing I ever did.

Young Jillian lies in a hospital bed, the right side of her head bandaged tightly. Her parents enter. She pretends to be asleep.

Ellen quietly slips something large and black under Young Jillian's arm: A violin case.

Young Jillian slowly opens the violin case and with her healthy left eye stares lovingly at the gorgeous Giachetti. If you asked her right now, she'd say it was worth it.

INT. JILLIAN'S ROOM - DAY

Young Jillian, now sporting a small eye patch, practices scales. The violin is much too big for her. And she sounds like a cat being skinned alive. Sarah SLAMS the door to her room shut. Repeatedly.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
Everything had come so easy, reading, writing, arithmetic - some part of me had expected that playing violin would be an equal breeze.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The same horrendous PRACTICE NOISE while the rest of the family eats dinner. Norbert, who looks like he's had a rough day at work, can barely stand it.

NORBERT
Some kind of genius.

INT. MUSIC SCHOOL, ROOM - DAY

JILLIAN (V.O.)
But the harder something was, the more I seemed to want it.

Young Jillian finishes a simple Mozart Menuet for violin - badly. Triumphantly she looks up at DARLENE SIMPSON, her aging music teacher, who cringes.

INT. MUSIC HALL - DAY

School recital. Young Jillian stands on stage reading from sheet music and performs the Czardas by Monti for PARENTS and YOUNG STUDENTS.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
I performed in public once.

TWO GIRLS in the first row LAUGH at one of her mistakes.

GIRL #1
Maybe she can only see half the notes with just one eye.

Young Jillian stops mid-play.

YOUNG JILLIAN
You know what? I shit on your approval.
(to GIRL #1)
Fuck you.
(to GIRL #2)
And fuck you, too.

A collective GASP from the audience. Ellen and Norbert rush to grab Young Jillian off the stage.

BACK STAGE - At the wings where nobody can hear or see them, Norbert whispers fiercely into her ear:

NORBERT
Never again. Look at me.

He takes the violin from her.

NORBERT (CONT'D)
<u>This</u> is a disaster. Never again.

Ellen gently manages to pry the violin from his fingers and hands it back to Jillian, who hugs her violin relieved.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
From then on I only played for my own private pleasure.

INT. DOCTOR'S ROOM - DAY

SEVEN YEARS LATER. CLOSE ON - a now 14 year old JILLIAN, a bright light on her face, while her right eye gets worked on by a SPECIALIST.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
They never managed to save my eye. When I turned fourteen, I got an implant evoking the illusion of a cornea and iris. It even moves along with what remained of my original eye ball.

As the Specialist steps away, we see the effect Jillian talks about. When her left eye looks to the side, the right eye - follows. The color is just slightly off.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY

Jillian steps out with her violin in hand, irritated by loud MOANS and SEX SOUNDS from Sarah's room.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
Sarah still lives at home. They say it's for convenience but I think it's just easier to keep us under surveillance. Sarah works at a bar and makes up for her lack of direction with the ambitious goal of screwing her way through Boulder.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

A heartbroken SARAH, 24, crying, red-faced violently cuts up the photograph of her latest boyfriend into pieces. Jillian catches her in the act.

SARAH
What are you looking at, Monster? Turn around and go away!

She throws the scissors after Jillian, who ducks expertly.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
She hopes one of them will turn out to be the love of her life and whisk her away to a life of eternal gratification.

Upset, Sarah grabs the pieces of the photograph and stuffs them in her mouth. Chews.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

JILLIAN (V.O.)
And I skipped another two grades.

Jillian ignoring the much older HIGH SCHOOL CROWD around her, arrives on her bike, violin case in basket.

JILLIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
People still talk about what I did to myself. They think I'm demented. I don't care, as long as they stay the fuck away.

She cycles by VOTING SIGNS for NORBERT MAZER - REPUBLICAN FOR ASSEMBLY.

JILLIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Dad is running for Assembly and is inching his way to the Senate. He'd rather not have daughters people talk about.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, STUDENT ADVISOR'S OFFICE - DAY

LAURA, the resident student advisor, sits across from Ellen and Norbert and a bored Jillian, going through her paperwork.

LAURA
Since Jillian will be a minor at graduation I wanted to discuss her options with you. Your daughter could have the pick of the crop. Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Princeton, you name it. What are you all leaning toward?

NORBERT
The University of Colorado, of course.

LAURA
Don't get me wrong, CU is a fine school, but your daughter -

NORBERT
- is fourteen. We can't let her go to a big city like Boston or San Francisco on her own. Especially not with her kind of history.

LAURA
Sometimes, in special cases like these, one parent decides to make the move along with their child.

NORBERT
That's out of the question. It's taken me over fifteen years just to be nominated for Assembly. And should my wife move - you know what splitting up a family is gonna look like for voters. As far as I'm concerned all these schools aren't going anywhere for a Masters or a Ph.D. Program.

Laura nods disappointed. She glances at Jillian, who coldly stares out of the window.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
That was going to be my life.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Carrying a stack of books Jillian passes by a COUPLE furiously making out in the WESTERN PHILOSOPHY isle.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
Stuck in fucking Boulder forever and ever. In a fog of obligation and disinterest, cushioned only by literature and music.

The NEW LIBRARIAN eyes Jillian as he scans her books. He points at Hermann Hesse's "Steppenwolf".

LIBRARIAN
That any good?

JILLIAN
I haven't read it yet.

LIBRARIAN
"Hesse handles alienation, individual destiny and the decay of society." Doesn't sound like much fun.

JILLIAN
I don't read for fun.

Grumpy Jillian grabs her books and leaves. Speechless, the new librarian turns to OLD LIBRARIAN, who shrugs.

OLD LIBRARIAN
We don't speak to her. Just scan and give her the books.

EXT. BOULDER STREETS - LATER

Her books, violin case and sheet music in the basket, Jillian rides her bike, enjoying a warm spring wind.

Suddenly - SCREECHING BRAKES.

Horrified, Jillian's face turns white as the side of her bike gets hit by a large ancient silver PICK-UP TRUCK.

She falls to the ground. Books and notebooks splatter across the cement.

RAY (O.S.)
Shit! Are you all right?

Dazed, Jillian makes out a pair of torn jeans, an old print T-shirt... The sun right behind him, she doesn't see his eyes until he leans down to help her up.

Warm, intense and sharp eyes that belong to RAY TRISHA, 28, tall, carelessly attractive, messy dark hair, and the kind of lean you get when you work out or take Heroin. Not that he does either.

RAY (CONT'D)
Are you okay? Feel any pain anywhere?

Frantically, Jillian reaches for her violin case. She opens it to check that the Giachetti is intact.

RAY (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry. If it's broken I can replace it.

JILLIAN
It's irreplaceable!

RAY
Are you sure you're okay?

JILLIAN
It looks like nothing's damaged.

RAY
Just pat yourself up and down.

JILLIAN
I'm not gonna touch myself in front of a stranger. I'm fine. Really.

Ray helps her pick up her books and papers. He glances at Hermann Hesse's "Steppenwolf" surprised.

RAY
You're reading that?

JILLIAN
No, I just get them for the smell.

RAY
Oh, you speak Sarcasm.

JILLIAN
Fluently.

RAY
A fine dead language indeed.
(studies her curiously)
Existential literature and violin.
How's your quantum physics?

JILLIAN
Not bad.

Jillian's attention shifts to her bike. The chain is off.

RAY
Here, I can fix that. Really, I'm that awesome.

He kneels down to get the chain back on - an exercise in both patience and brutal force.

RAY (CONT'D)
(re: "Steppenwolf")
I think that's a really bad idea, by the way. Don't read it.

JILLIAN
Why?

RAY
If you ever contemplated suicide, it'll seriously confirm all your suspicions about the futility of human connection.

JILLIAN
I don't contemplate suicide.

RAY
What a relief.

JILLIAN
You've read it?

RAY
I've read everything.

JILLIAN
You're not from here.

RAY
You don't think people read in Boulder?

JILLIAN
Not the ones I'm acquainted with.

RAY
Alas, born and raised.

JILLIAN
I haven't seen you around.

RAY
I'm not. They drag me back every year for Mahlerfest. You know, Gustav Mahler?

JILLIAN
I know Mahlerfest. I just don't care much for the Romantics.

Ray laughs and glances at this strange girl.

RAY
All of them? You don't like Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner, Bruckner, Brahms... Mahler's pretty much the musical equivalent of living in the moment.

JILLIAN
Do you play?

RAY
(shakes his head)
I just do the lights. You should come. Get your parents to take you.

Jillian's mood changes dramatically.

JILLIAN
My parents don't need to take me anywhere. I'm a Senior. Graduating High School in June.

RAY
My bad. I'm kinda out of touch with High School.

Jillian grabs the bike. With the force of annoyance she pops the chain back into its proper place. Ray gets back on his feet and watches her amused.

JILLIAN
You point lights at the stage?

RAY
A little bit more to it than that.

JILLIAN
Like what? Two lights? Three? Your mother must be so very proud. How long does it take to grasp the intricate art of light pointing?

RAY
What do you think?

JILLIAN
I don't actually care.

RAY
Then why'd you ask?

JILLIAN
Small talk, I guess.

RAY
Really? That is some of the worst small talks I ever had. You suck at small talk.

JILLIAN
You suck at driving.

RAY
Maybe you suck at riding a bike.

JILLIAN
Maybe you suck at everything.

Jillian dumps all her stuff into the basket and jumps onto her fixed bike.

RAY
Pleased to meet you.

JILLIAN
Pleasure's all yours.

Shaking his head yet feeling oddly invigorated, Ray walks back to his truck. WTF just happened?

Jillian turns to look back at him.

EXT. TRISHA HOUSE - DAY

A large old Craftsman home, a bit overgrown. Ray parks the truck in the drive way.

INT. TRISHA HOUSE

It's messy inside. Framed pictures of Ray as a teenager with his MOM and STEP-DAD on an old grand piano.

Ray throws his backpack on the sofa. An elderly, plump nurse, DEBBIE, comes around the corner at the sound of his arrival. They hug, genuinely happy to see each other.

RAY
Where is she?

DEBBIE
Out back.

EXT. TRISHA HOUSE, BACK YARD

Ray approaches an old lady with bright blue hair sitting in the afternoon sun, CHARLOTTE TRISHA, not old at all, barely 65, fragile and confused. Her right hand is bandaged.

RAY
Charlotte, what did you do to your hair?

CHARLOTTE
It's blue.

RAY
I can see that.

CHARLOTTE
I always wanted blue hair. I look like a mermaid.

RAY
You look stunning, Mom.

CHARLOTTE
Thank you, young man.

She obviously doesn't recognize him. He walks out of his Mom's ear shot to Debbie in the doorway.

DEBBIE
Yesterday she cut herself when she tried to open a pineapple can with a knife. I found her bleeding all over the place, she didn't even notice. She needs full time attention and I can't be here twenty-four seven, Ray. I can recommend a facility -

RAY
Fuck no. They reek of Lysol and death.

DEBBIE
- unless you can stay.

Ray quickly processes what that means to his lifestyle.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
So sorry, I hate to spring that on you. You just got back.

With a look toward his Mom, Ray nods solemnly.

INT. MUSIC SCHOOL, ROOM - DAY

Jillian plays her Giachetti. She has much improved from the last time we saw her as a six year old. She plays like a true virtuoso - with passion, conviction and skill. She finishes with a swift strike of the bow.

Darlene, now even older and half deaf, nods.

DARLENE
Well done, my dear.

JILLIAN
I was late on the pizzicato section and my tremolos were out of control.

DARLENE
Do you know what you need?

JILLIAN
A faster left hand?

DARLENE
A nice pat on the shoulder.

Smiling Darlene pats Jillian's shoulder with her own hand.

JILLIAN
I'm surrounded by philistines.

DARLENE
What did you say?

JILLIAN
I'm moving to the Philippines.

DARLENE
That should be fun, my dear.

INT. BOULDER COUNCIL, PRESS OFFICE - NIGHT

Fake smiling and conservatively clothed, Ellen, Sarah and Jillian stand on the sideline. Norbert has the podium, next to him his AIDE.

NORBERT
... we were able to raise $500,000 to allocate to the environmental community outreach programs.

JOURNALIST #1
What about the arts? There's been significant cuts in high school and special ed arts programs.

NORBERT
I'm a huge supporter of the arts. I think a creative experience or outlet is essential to the growth of any human being. My youngest daughter being the prime example.

All eyes on Jillian.

JOURNALIST #1
How about Mahlerfest? It's only a month away. Will we hear her there?

NORBERT
If she only wanted to, but I'm afraid her interests don't really extend to stage performance -

JILLIAN
I do.

Norbert's eyes shoot daggers at her.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
I mean, I'd want to. It would be an honor.

The room waits for Norbert's response.

NORBERT
That's great, just great. Why not? We'll see what we can do.
(moving on)
Boulder County Cares have garnered two more collecting partners...

Jillian's mind races as Norbert continues speaking.

EXT. BOULDER COUNCIL - NIGHT

The Mazers exit the building with the Aide by their side. Norbert is fuming.

NORBERT
The program has been online for months. Mahlerfest is not some school recital! It's a tourist attraction. You haven't been on stage since you were what, seven? What are you gonna do if someone coughs? Chew their head off? Can you even play on that kind of level? I know you're good, but I don't know. I have no idea.

JILLIAN
I think so.

NORBERT
That's a lousy assessment.

ELLEN
You know Olson, honey. You could talk to him. I'm sure he wouldn't mind squeezing her in.

SARAH
(to Jillian)
You know that people will talk to you. And about you. You hate that.

ELLEN
But maybe it'd be nice if they talked about something else than her self-mutilation act for a change.

AIDE
If they talk about her, then they'll have you in mind when they vote.

Norbert considers this. That's a good point.

NORBERT
I'll give Olson a call.

SARAH
How come you're into Mahlerfest all of a sudden?

JILLIAN
Mahler... is the musical equivalent of living in the moment.

SARAH
What the hell does that even mean?

A suspicious glance from Sarah. Jillian smiles convincingly.

EXT. BOULDER SYMPHONY - DAY

Sarah stops the car to let Jillian out. There are two big trucks parked up front. ELECTRICIANS, mostly sweaty shirtless guys, haul lights and stage gear inside. Jillian spots Ray amongst them. So does Sarah.

It's not hard. For the sake of the entire heterosexual female population he really should never wear a shirt.

SARAH
Damn. I oughta pick up the harp or something.

Jillian turns bright red, but Sarah doesn't notice. Ray disappears through the back.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Okay, Monster, come by the bar when you're done, you can hang out til my shift ends.

INT. BOULDER SYMPHONY - DAY

Holding on to her violin case Jillian steps into the impressively large symphony hall for the first time. The visiting ORCHESTRA from Kansas City under MAESTRO ROBERTO OLSON practices the Mahler Symphony No. 5.

The soundscape engulfs Jillian. She has to close her eyes, it's overwhelmingly beautiful.

In the empty rows sit a few local music students, TYLER LEWIS, 16, geeky and proud of it, LYSSA, MATTHEW and JAMIE. Jillian shyly picks a seat a couple of rows behind them.

LATER - Olson and his ASSISTANT step down to greet them.

OLSON
Great to meet you all. University of Colorado School of Music? Why don't you confirm times and pieces with Milly? If there's any special requests let her know.

The students follow Milly stage left. Jillian stays behind.

Olson goes to shake her hand.

OLSON (CONT'D)
We've heard a lot about you.

JILLIAN
I didn't mean to causing any trouble.

OLSON
Let's be clear, I'm doing your father a favor and we wouldn't be talking if I wasn't, but right now all I care about is that you can play. Can you play?
(beat, off her nod)
Milly, can you get me the Adagietto?

Milly runs to bring Olson a thick sheet music booklet.

Jillian takes a look at the notes.

JILLIAN
Now? Here?

OLSON
Where else?

Jillian reluctantly tunes her Giachetti. Her fingers tremble. She starts to play the first few bars.

Up on top of the balcony, near the control booth, Ray and his buddy ANDREW switch off a couple of old lights.

Jillian reads ahead a few bars and plays those almost perfectly. A couple of the symphony orchestra MEMBERS stop their chatter to listen.

It's beautiful. Jillian gets swept up herself.

The music students can't believe their ears. Tyler watches Jillian with growing admiration.

Something raw and captivating yet unaware about her.

ON - Ray as he watches her too, fascinated. Which causes him to BURN his fingers on a light's scorching barn doors. Rookie mistake. Andrew grins and throws him a pair of gloves.

ANDREW
Careful, Boss.

Ray grimaces and slips on the gloves.

Jillian finishes the final bar and doesn't dare look up. If she did she would see that Olson smiles impressed - where have they been hiding this girl all this time?

JILLIAN
I'm always too heavy on tremolos.

OLSON
So was Mahler.

INT. "THE BITTER BAR" - NIGHT

Sarah works the counter. Jillian sits in a corner, invisible to the rest of the world, reading "The Steppenwolf".

Jillian pours about SEVEN bags of sugar in one rip into her steaming cup of coffee.

BRIAN LONG, early thirties, Sarah's boss, homely but cuddly, with a heart that beats just for Sarah, glances at Jillian.

BRIAN
Keep her in my office next time.

SARAH
Come on, Brian, she's quiet. I'm almost done here.

Into the bar walk Ray, Andrew and a couple more GUYS from the electric department.

Jillian slouches and holds the book up to hide her face. Sarah lights up and approaches them with a friendly smile.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What can I get you?

ANDREW
Three buds, one Jackie Dee.

RAY
Coffee please.

SARAH
(flirtatious)
There's a Starbucks just around the corner.

RAY
I don't drink.

SARAH
Sorry, I wasn't trying to be a bitch. Are you recovering?

RAY
I didn't think you were and no, I'm not.

SARAH
Are you allergic?

ANDREW
Alcohol doesn't mix well with his daily bucket load of meds.

SARAH
Hold on, I know who you are. You're Raymond Trisha. You're that cautionary-tale-kid who sped down Tuckerman Ravine. I always wondered about you.
(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)
That was all over Boulder High for years. You broke your back.

RAY
Spinal stenosis, I didn’t break my back.

SARAH
But you didn’t get out of bed for like two years.

GUY #1
Fuck. What’d you do, boss?

RAY
I cried myself to sleep.

ANDREW
Doctors told him he would never lift more than a tooth brush.

RAY
Don’t you hate it when people tell you what you can or cannot do?

SARAH
I heard you got metal plates.

RAY
Just a couple of wires.

Jillian glances Ray up and down curiously to locate the wires with her non-existent X-ray vision.

SARAH
Does it still hurt?

RAY
Only when it rains.

He laughs, but Sarah doesn’t get it. Only Jillian chuckles.

Sarah hands Ray and the others their drinks.

Ray looks around for condiments. He spots a collection of sugar bags on Jillian’s table and goes up to reach for them.

“The Steppenwolf” cover betrays Jillian. With a grin Ray pushes the book down to reveal her face.

RAY (CONT’D)
How’d you get in here?

JILLIAN
Oh no. Should I not have used the door?

RAY
I admit, a terribly old-fashioned habit, but don't you have to be over twenty-one?

JILLIAN
I have connections.

Ray raises an eyebrow and dunks EIGHT sugar bags total in his coffee with an experienced single rip.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
Are you mocking me?

RAY
Why would I want to do that?

JILLIAN
Because you still have to drink that.

RAY
Yeah, I know.

JILLIAN
You may not be aware, but the American Medical Association has found that increased sugar consumption can cause obesity, diabetes, kidney failure, cardiovascular disease, copper deficiency, even cancer.

RAY
Call it an act of defiance.

Jillian watches Ray take a sip and for a single jerk of discomfort. There isn't any. She's impressed.

RAY (CONT'D)
Heard you play back there. I thought you didn't like Mahler.

JILLIAN
I'm still ambivalent.

RAY
How can something so painfully beautiful come out of somebody so -

JILLIAN
- ugly? Spiteful? Bitter?

RAY
- young.

That takes Jillian aback for a second.

RAY (CONT'D)
It's not a bad thing. Those college kids got nothing on you.

SARAH
My little sister bothering you?

RAY
No, no, quite the opposite.

SARAH
You two know each other?

JILLIAN
In passing.

RAY
You're breaking my heart, Sugar. I thought we went way back.

ANDREW
Sarah, when's your shift done?

Ray turns back to his friends and doesn't pay Jillian any more attention.

BRIAN
(grumpy)
Never.

SARAH
Right about now.

ANDREW
Wanna call a couple of girlfriends and join us at the Dark Horse for karaoke?

SARAH
(to Ray)
You're going?

RAY
I don't think so.

Andrew and the others "boo".

RAY (CONT'D)
Maybe just to listen to you all making fool of yourselves.

SARAH
Okay, great! I'll just drop Monster off at home.

Jillian followed with growing confusion. Whatever just happened, dropping her off at home is not good.

INT. JILLIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jillian practices Mahler's Adagietto diligently. She struggles with a particularly challenging passage.

The sound of a car door SLAMMED shut. She stops and glances out the window.

Ray walks Sarah to the door. They disappear from Jillian's view. She can only see snippets of their bodies.

EXT. MAZER HOUSE

Ray and Sarah kiss good-night. Sarah is way more into this than Ray, who doesn't seem quite present.

SARAH
You wanna come in for a bit?

RAY
You live with your parents.

SARAH
We could go back to your place.

RAY
Maybe I'm not really in the mood.

SARAH
You have moods, huh?

RAY
All the time.

SARAH
Or maybe you're just playing hard to get. I don't mind a challenge.

Sarah kisses him deeper. It's working.

RAY
(laughs it off)
I'll call you.

SARAH
Make sure you do.

Ray walks away. A feeling and he turns around to see - Jillian quickly move away from her bedroom window.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sarah brushes her teeth expertly. Jillian sneaks in. With a routine move Sarah slides hand lotion over to her.

JILLIAN
How was Karaoke?

SARAH
Nobody should attempt Tori Amos stone cold sober. Big mistake.
(suddenly)
I really like him, Monster. He's smart, he's got a job, a house, a bit scrawny, but real nice eyes. I have to pull every sentence out of him, but I think that's endearing. I'm done with egotists.

JILLIAN
Sounds like a keeper.

Sarah beams, full of hope and excitement for a fresh start.

INT. BOULDER SYMPHONY - DAY

Jillian plays the Mahler piece she practiced for Olson. She seems nervous and unsure. She stops to feel her wrist. Tyler watches her from back stage.

OLSON
What do you know about Mahler?

JILLIAN
Austrian. Composed some of his better known symphonies early 20th century. Married. Two children...

OLSON
He was diagnosed with a defective heart, could only walk a certain number of steps per day.
(MORE)

OLSON (CONT'D)
He became obsessed with his irregular heartbeat. You can hear it in his later works everywhere. An irregular rhythm. Fatal strokes.

Jillian nods, re-reading the sheet music.

OLSON (CONT'D)
He thought if a composer could say what he had to say in words he would not bother trying to say it in music.

JILLIAN
I guess I'm not sure what he's trying to say.

OLSON
Then you need to figure out what you're trying to say.

Jillian frowns uncertain. Quite the task.

OLSON (CONT'D)
Don't worry, you will. "I am hitting my head against the walls, but the walls are giving way." He said that, too.

Jillian laughs, that's comforting. Olson waves Tyler onto the stage. Jillian is done for the day.

INT. BOULDER SYMPHONY, CONTROL BOOTH - LATER

The STAGE MANAGER and an irritated Ray go over the plans for the symphony.

RAY
This is a mess, why did they rewire that section? Waste of time and money. Now we have three thousand amps going through the same two battens.

STAGE MANAGER
Can you fix it?

RAY
You know I can, but that's gonna take me a while.

STAGE MANAGER
Thursday?

Ray glares at him, fat chance.

STAGE MANAGER (CONT'D)
This is what happens when you take off for a year.

RAY
What do I get if I stay?

STAGE MANAGER
How about a contract and a smooch?

RAY
I'll take the contract.

The Stage Manager laughs. Ray steps out of the booth and almost right into - a nervous-looking Jillian.

RAY (CONT'D)
Hey, Sugar. You're lost?

He keeps walking, Jillian follows. She blurts out:

JILLIAN
My sister isn't looking for a fling or anything like that. She might pretend like she doesn't care, but she does. She wants to rescue every three-legged dog she sees. Those stupid don't-text-and-drive commercials make her cry.

RAY
Who says that's what I'm looking for?

JILLIAN
You're just her type.

RAY
A three-legged rescue kind?

JILLIAN
The mysterious, emotionally unavailable kind.

RAY
(laughs out loud)
Mysterious, huh? You're really quick to judge, considering you don't know anything about me or what the hell you're talking about.

JILLIAN
Now I'm crushed. I thought we went way back.

RAY
Touché.
(beat)
I'm seeing her tonight.

JILLIAN
You're coming to the house? Tonight?

RAY
Yeah?

JILLIAN
Hope you have time to change.

Leaving Ray standing confused, Jillian runs away.

EXT. BOULDER SYMPHONY - LATER

Jillian places the violin in the basket of her bike. The College of Music students talk in a little group. Tyler spots Jillian from afar. He runs alongside her.

TYLER
Hey! Hey, slow down!

Jillian stops when she notices.

TYLER (CONT'D)
I'm Tyler.

JILLIAN
I'm late.

TYLER
And you're good. Haven't seen you around campus.

JILLIAN
I'm still in high school.

TYLER
Really? I started school when I was five and a half, so I'm like the youngest one at the music school. I gotta say, it kinda sucks.

Jillian for the first time looks at him a little more kindly.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Who's your violin instructor?

JILLIAN
Darlene Simpson.

TYLER
I heard she's deaf.

JILLIAN
She's got other merits.

TYLER
Such as?

JILLIAN
She doesn't bother me.

TYLER
That's cool, something to be said for that. Hey, so we're all heading over to the Arcade after Lyssa's done, you wanna join us?

JILLIAN
I don't do video games.

TYLER
You don't have to play. They have pizza and soda and stuff, we could just talk.

JILLIAN
About what?

TYLER
I don't know...

JILLIAN
Sounds riveting. Maybe some other time. I do have to get home.

TYLER
Okay. Next time then.

Jillian peddles away from the boy. A bit confused about the exchange. Did he just ask her out?

EXT. MAZER HOUSE, BACKYARD - EVENING

The Mazer backyard has been transformed to a country club party extravaganza.

WAITERS hand appetizers and wine glasses to Boulder's high society.

Norbert with Ellen on his side makes sure the party is a huge success. Sarah also mingles.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, BATHROOM

Jillian goes through Sarah's make-up drawer. She finds a dark red lipstick, goes to the mirror and paints her lips for the first time ever.

EXT. MAZER HOUSE, BACKYARD

Norbert and Ellen shake hands with LARRY BOWERS, CHIEF OF POLICE and his WIFE. The Aide shadows his every move.

NORBERT
Congratulations, Larry. Long time coming and well deserved.

LARRY
Couldn't have done it without your support. I owe you.

NORBERT
God, I hope everybody here owes me.

Laughter.

LARRY
The entire Boulder Police Department stands united. Assembly's yours for the taking.

Ray arrives at the party. Having taken Jillian's advice, he did change. Sarah runs up to him and kisses him hello.

RAY
You didn't tell me about all this.

SARAH
Isn't it beautiful? There's an open bar. I didn't think you'd mind. Come on, I want to introduce you to my parents.

He vaguely protests, but she drags him along to -

AIDE
... They're working on getting Norbert on a couple of morning shows next month.

LARRY
Don't forget your lines.

NORBERT
I can improvise. I'm good at that.

SARAH
Mom, Dad, this is Ray. He works for the Boulder Symphony but he was based in New York. He's a - what was that again -

RAY
Chief lighting technician. I design too.

NORBERT
(shakes his hand)
Good to meet you. And what are your intentions with my daughter?

He laughs out loud at Ray's speechless expression.

NORBERT (CONT'D)
Don't worry, son, I won't be holding a gun to your head. Yet.

RAY
I'm relieved. And a little scared.

Jillian makes her way amongst the guests toward Sarah, Ray and her parents.

NORBERT
What did you say your name was?

RAY
Raymond Trisha.

NORBERT
Trisha...
(rings a bell)
Are you related to Charlotte?

RAY
My mother.

NORBERT
And how are "things"?

RAY
"Things" are fine, thanks for asking.

Ray gets distracted by Jillian's now extremely luscious lips. Norbert turns to see what caught his eye. He too spots the lipstick from a mile away. He motions for Ellen to take Jillian away and wipe it off.

NORBERT
So do you know how to install recess lighting? We were thinking about that for the kitchen.

Ray's eyes widen in panic. To his relief, Norbert gets distracted by a new GUEST.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, KITCHEN

Ellen tenderly wipes the lipstick off of Jillian's embarrassed face with a kitchen towel.

JILLIAN
Mom, leave it, I can do it myself.

ELLEN
Why do you want to grow up so fast? You have so much time.

JILLIAN
Time is relative.

ELLEN
How was rehearsal?

JILLIAN
Illuminating.

ELLEN
Don't put yourself under too much pressure. We're very proud of you, but this isn't just about you. We're all pulling our weight for your father's election.

Triumphantly Ellen pulls out the most current issue of a daily paper. It features a one page ad about Mahlerfest with Jillian's name visibly featured.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
He paid for that. Isn't that nice?

Ellen kisses her daughter's forehead. Jillian re-reads the ad with a shocked expression. It's all too real now.

EXT. MAZER HOUSE, BACKYARD

Jillian wanders through the party in search for something to numb her mixed emotions with. She steals a Vodka bottle from the open bar and heads for the wild shrubbery.

To her surprise, she finds Ray sitting there smoking - also in search for solitude. He starts to hide the cigarette, when he realizes it's just her.

RAY
You're fuckin' everywhere.

JILLIAN
I live here.

She turns to leave.

RAY
Hey. Sorry. Stay.

Jillian stops.

RAY (CONT'D)
Sugar, I have no idea why you bring out the worst in me, but maybe we just got off on the wrong foot. Peace?

Jillian eyes the cigarettes.

JILLIAN
Can I bum one?

RAY
No.

JILLIAN
Just one.

RAY
No speeches about smoking hazards?

Jillian shakes her head. She sits down and he lights it for her. Her first cigarette, she's trying to play it cool. After an initial cough, she gets over the shock to her system.

RAY (CONT'D)
As long as we're sharing...

Jillian hands him the Vodka bottle. He takes out a couple of prescription bottles and downs a bunch of pills with a sip.

JILLIAN
What are those?

RAY
Vicodin, Oxycotine, Percocet...

JILLIAN
Thought you can't mix them with alcohol.

RAY
I really shouldn't. But fuck it...

JILLIAN
How old were you when you got knocked out of commission?

RAY
Fifteen to seventeen.

JILLIAN
You probably had a lot of catching up to do.

RAY
I still kinda do.

Ray takes another swig of vodka, the painkillers and alcohol start to work their woozy magic.

RAY (CONT'D)
So maybe this is all just perfect timing. Staying in Boulder. Taking care of Mom. Dating your sister. Just perfect. Right?

JILLIAN
Yeah, sounds perfect.

Ray grins and decides to change topics.

RAY
Is anybody coming to hear you play?

JILLIAN
I'm sure my family will be there.

RAY
No, I mean Juilliard, Berklee, Oberlin. Playing at Mahlerfest is a big deal.

JILLIAN
I'm going to CU in the fall.

Ray huffs. Clearly doesn't think much of CU.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
I don't know what I was thinking anyway. I've never played in front of more than one person in one tiny room all my life.

RAY
Freaked out?

JILLIAN
People hate me.

RAY
Nobody hates you. I like you.

JILLIAN
Bullshit.

RAY
I like talking to you. And I don't like talking to many people.

JILLIAN
They'll all be coming to see me fail. Drop my bow or have a nervous breakdown. And then they'll think that it wasn't worth it.

RAY
What wasn't?

Jillian points at her right eye.

RAY (CONT'D)
Oh that. Yeah, I heard about that. You're a walking legend of household item abuse. You should totally make a thing out of that when you're famous.

JILLIAN
Mom said it's not about me.

RAY
No offense to your Mom but that's not true. It is. It's about you. It's just simpler than you think it is. It's about you playing the music.
(MORE)

RAY (CONT'D)
(beat)
You know what?

Jillian shakes her head, curious.

RAY (CONT'D)
I'll pick you up tomorrow. Bring your violin. Boulder High?

Jillian nods.

Ray squeezes his cigarette out. He takes out a travel size Listerine and gurgles, then spits it out. He hands the remainder to Jillian.

RAY (CONT'D)
If anybody smells cigarettes on you, you didn't get one from me. 'Cos I don't smoke.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, CLASSROOM - DAY

Jillian has a hard time concentrating on school. Her eyes wander to the window.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

STUDENTS leave the school grounds. Jillian picks up her bike.

Suddenly a HONK. Jillian's head turns in the direction.

Ray waves, having just arrived in the parking lot.

Jillian runs up quickly and dumps her bike into the bed of the truck.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Ray parks his truck and waits for Jillian to exit.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER

OLD FOLK mill around, some in wheel chairs. Jillian looks around, shocked at the sudden confrontation with mortality.

COMMUNITY ROOM - Ray guides her to the community area, where more ELDERLY play BINGO. Debbie wheels Charlotte toward them.

CHARLOTTE
Who's that? A girlfriend?

RAY
This is Jillian, Mom. She's a friend. She plays violin.

CHARLOTTE
I love violin.

RAY
If we ask her very nicely, she'll play for you. She just has a bit of stage fright.

Jillian's eyes widen in protest.

CHARLOTTE
Would you please?

Reluctantly Jillian opens her violin case. Ray motions to the a COMMUNITY CENTER WORKER to make sure this is okay. He nods, of course.

RAY
Look at it this way, this is the best audience to practice on, ever. Tomorrow half of the people here won't remember a thing.

JILLIAN
(laughs)
What would you like me to play?

CHARLOTTE
Do you know Reggae?

JILLIAN
Reggae?

RAY
She likes Reggae.

JILLIAN
Okay. I have one.

With a shrug Jillian puts the bow to her violin, tunes it. And dives into "I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW".

Big smiles on Charlotte's and Ray's faces. A few of the other elderly stop what they're doing to listen.

Jillian interprets the song as a classical masterpiece, really puts her heart and soul into it.

When she finishes, the whole room erupts in friendly applause. Jillian laughs out loud.

Charlotte suddenly gets up and points at the small upright piano on the wall. This is unexpected. Ray helps her get there. Charlotte's tone changes. She doesn't speak like a child anymore but a regular confident woman.

CHARLOTTE
Thank you, mein Liebling. Jillian, do you know Monti? The Czardas?

All too well. The piece she once failed at on stage.

JILLIAN
One of the first things I learned.

Charlotte's fingers find the right keys. She starts. Jillian joins in. It's a simple Hungarian folk piece that after only a minute turns into an incredibly fast whirlwind.

Ray watches transfixed. Both women in complete command of their instruments.

Jillian messes up. Embarrassed, she stops playing, while Charlotte continues on her own.

CHARLOTTE
You just need to work on boldness. You need complete and utter lack of fear of being alone. You're all alone up there. It's like speeding on a highway. Say suddenly there's a deer right in front of your car. What do you do?

Jillian looks up at Ray for help. He just shrugs.

JILLIAN
Hit the brakes.

CHARLOTTE
No, you don't. You can't. If you brake for the deer, you risk losing your own life and that of others behind you.

JILLIAN
But then I kill the deer.

CHARLOTTE
You have to. You can't stop. Nothing can stop you.

SUDDENLY - Charlotte stops. She stares at the piano keys as if she doesn't know what they are and where she is.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Ray...

Ray rushes to her side.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
What time is it?

RAY
It's four thirty, Mom.

CHARLOTTE
Are you staying for dinner, young man?

Ray shakes his head, sad that Charlotte's moment of clarity is gone. Charlotte discovers the violin in Jillian's hands.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Do you play? Will you play for me, please?

DEBBIE
She'll play again soon, Charlotte. Come on, come with me.

Debbie helps Charlotte up back to Bingo. Because Ray looks disappointed, Jillian takes his hand and squeezes it.

INT./EXT. RAY'S TRUCK - AFTERNOON

Boiling with emotion, Ray doesn't realize how deafening the silence is between him and Jillian in the car.

He drives past a stop sign without stopping.

JILLIAN
That was a stop sign.

RAY
Was it?

JILLIAN
You're such a shitty driver.

Ray chuckles, still in thought.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
You're okay?

RAY
Yes. I don't know.

JILLIAN
What is it?

RAY
I get this feeling sometimes when I'm driving down the street - I just know, I know for sure that the engine's suddenly going to explode and the whole car is going to go up in flames and I with it, and then I just can't breathe anymore.

JILLIAN
It's not like swallowing a fly. An engine explosion is freakishly random.

RAY
And I think... what if I turn out like her?

JILLIAN
That won't ever happen to you.

Ray stops the car in front of the Mazer house.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
It was nice to meet your Mom.

RAY
You made her day back there. And a bunch of other people's. Remember, that's really all an audience wants.

JILLIAN
I never had to worry about it. When I play, I get to forget about me. Who I am, where I'm from. That's all I ever wanted. I just disappear. And then I hate myself a little bit less.

RAY
There's nothing wrong with you.

Jillian smiles sadly, that's not true. And in that smile, they share a moment. That sudden electric jolt.

JILLIAN
Okay... Well, thank you for the experience.

RAY
No, thank you. Really.

Ray regards her with tenderness and in a moment of affection, he leans over and kisses her on the cheek. He pulls back.

RAY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I hope I wasn't -

JILLIAN
No, it's a cheek, it's fine, cheeks are very platonic, the French do it all the time, even to strangers. Not that I've ever been to France... Have you?
(off his nod)
Of course you have.

The amount of "flustered" baffles Ray enough for him to ask -

RAY
You're not eighteen, are you?

Jillian sighs. The moment turns into the moment of truth.

JILLIAN
Fourteen.

Ray recoils with an almost disgusted shiver.

RAY
Fourteen?! You're not fourteen. You don't talk like a fourteen year old.

JILLIAN
Not many fourteen year olds I can draw from so -

RAY
Fuck. You're serious. Fourteen? But you said you were a senior.

JILLIAN
I am. I skipped four grades.

RAY
Wow. Four grades. That's... that's really nowhere near eighteen.

JILLIAN
Nowhere near seventeen either. Even sixteen sounds better, huh? Or fifteen. Fifteen would be great.

They exchange weirded-out looks.

RAY
Not that I care or that it matters for... no reason.

JILLIAN
I know.

Jillian quickly climbs out of his car.

RAY
You should really find some friends your own age, might help.

JILLIAN
You should start fucking my sister.
(beat)
Might help.

She SLAMS the door shut. Ray rubs his eyes, yup, he totally deserved that.

INT. JILLIAN'S ROOM - DAY

A flustered Jillian opens her violin case. She stares at the Giachetti.

JILLIAN
(whispers)
Just be enough. Can you be enough?

INT. MAZER HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

At the dinner table Jillian watches from the corner of the eye Ray picking Sarah up.

Ellen goes through the book keeping for Norbert's campaign. She exchanges smiles and "Hellos" with Sarah's date. Not much energy spent. Most don't last.

SARAH
You wanna come in?

RAY
No, that's okay.

He locks eyes with Jillian briefly, then looks away.

INT. TRISHA HOUSE - NIGHT

While Charlotte eats dinner, Ray finishes a paint job on the living room. He takes a good look at all the work he's done inside the house. Quite proud of it.

Sarah knocks and enters. Ray introduces her to Charlotte. Charlotte regards her confused.

CHARLOTTE
Do you play violin?

SARAH
No, do you like violin? My sister plays. We could bring her sometime. What do you think?

RAY
Maybe not anytime soon.

EXT. MAZER HOUSE - DAY

Jillian gets on her bike to leave for school in the morning, when Sarah walks back home, the proverbial walk of shame, sex hair inclusive. With a grin she flicks Jillian on the way in.

INT. BOULDER SYMPHONY - DAY

Ray mid-discussion with the Stage Manager. They go over the program. He watches Jillian on stage. She messes up.

RAY
I'd like to keep it simple, no need to bring in pyro or anything crazy.

JILLIAN
(from below)
FUCK!

RAY
But I'll put some diffusion on everything to soften the edges on that little one down there.

The Stage Manager laughs.

EXT. BOULDER SYMPHONY - DAY

Jillian walks up shyly to the College of Music students talking amongst themselves.

Her meek attempt at being “social”. The others regard her with a certain indifference, while Tyler opens up the circle to her.

INT. JILLIAN’S ROOM - DAY

Jillian practices. She puts too much pressure on her fingers. A shooting pain stops her.

She looks at her fingertips, fire red. The skin of one of them has broken and a little blood drips out.

LATER - Her finger now covered by a layer of band-aid Jillian continues playing the passage, determined to ignore the pain.

INT./EXT. SARAH’S CAR - DAY

Jillian jumps into Sarah’s car after rehearsal. Sarah cranes her neck.

JILLIAN
What are we waiting for?

Before Sarah can answer, Ray plops into the backseat.

RAY
Hey. Hi, kiddo.

Fingernails on a chalkboard for Jillian.

SARAH
Brian’s closing down the bar for his birthday party tonight, I promised we’d get a cake and munchies and balloons.

RAY
Because he’s turning seven? Okay, let’s go. I only have an hour.

Sarah drives off.

JILLIAN
Can you drop me off at the Arcade?

SARAH
Who’s at the Arcade?

JILLIAN
A friend.

SARAH
You don't have friends. What kind of friend?

JILLIAN
Just drop me off, okay? Tyler's got a car, he can take me home later.

SARAH
Tyler, huh? Who's Tyler? Is he cute? Do you like him? Is he from Boulder?

As Sarah continues teasing, Ray studies Jillian's perfect swan-like neckline, a stray hair around her ear.

She feels something, but when she glances back, Ray has averted his gaze.

INT. ARCADE - DAY

Jillian sits surrounded by Tyler, Lyssa, Matthew and Jamie, who all stare at something on Lyssa's Iphone.

MATTHEW
What is that?

LYSSA
It's "The Squirrel"!

Lyssa performs the "Sun Drop" Squirrel Dance with gusto.

LYSSA (CONT'D)
Place your left hand under your chin and your right hand under your chin. Shake your derriere and smell the nut, smell the nut, smell the nut...

JAMIE
You're insane.

LYSSA
Drop, step, smell the nut. Drop, step, smell the nut.

Everybody bursts out laughing but Jillian. She's distracted. Plus she really doesn't get why this is funny.

Tyler shoves some fries over to her.

JILLIAN
What are you doing tonight?

TYLER
Nothing. Did you... wanna see a movie or something?

JILLIAN
I was thinking about crashing a party.

EXT. “THE BITTER BAR” - NIGHT

Loud MUSIC and CHATTER. Jillian arrives with Tyler in tow. She put on a pretty dress, some simple make-up. She looks determined, Tyler scared.

INT. “THE BITTER BAR”

The bar is packed, a colorful Boulder crowd. A frown on her face, Sarah approaches Jillian and Tyler.

SARAH
I didn’t say you could come.

JILLIAN
Not staying long. I wanted to introduce you to my friend Tyler. Tyler, that’s my sister, Sarah.

TYLER
I see the genes didn’t stray too far from each other.

SARAH
Is that a compliment for me or for her?

TYLER
I’m - no, I wasn’t - both really.

SARAH
I’m just kidding, relax.

TYLER
So, are we okay to be here? I don’t want to get anybody into trouble.

SARAH
Yeah you’ll be okay. Just do me a favor and stay away from the booze.

Jillian scans the bar. Ray stands laughing with a few OLD FRIENDS, Brian, Andrew and some guys from the electric department. Jillian instantly grabs Tyler’s hand.

Just in time. A second later Ray spots her too.

He knows exactly what she's doing. Funnily enough, it bothers him nevertheless.

JILLIAN
I could use a drink. What about you?

TYLER
I shouldn't, I'm driving...

JILLIAN
Come on, don't be such a pussy.

She drags him to the counter.

A vast array of alcohol to choose from. Nobody's paying attention and so Jillian goes ahead and mixes two glasses with way too much vodka and cranberry juice. Hands one to Tyler. He smells it. Whoa.

TYLER
This is really strong.

Jillian gulps down half very quickly. Her whole body shivers.

JILLIAN
Do you have cigarettes?

TYLER
You shouldn't smoke, it's bad for you.

JILLIAN
What about pot? Nothing?

Tyler shakes his head. Jillian refills her glass. She wants to refill Tyler's but it's still full.

TYLER
Are you okay?

Tears form in Jillian's eyes. She shakes her head, "no".

TYLER (CONT'D)
Do you... want to talk about it?

JILLIAN
No.

TYLER
You just seem a little -

JILLIAN
I am.

They stand in awkward silence.

TYLER
Is there a bathroom?

JILLIAN
It’s a bar. I would presume there is.

Tyler goes to look for the men’s restroom.

Jillian takes another angry gulp. The alcohol rushes through.

RAY (O.S.)
Sugar, what are you doing?

She didn’t hear him walk up. Ray stands right behind her, takes her glass away and pours it out into the sink.

Jillian doesn’t turn around. Instead she backs into him gently, into a natural embrace.

There’s people around them, but not close enough to notice something strange they’re not looking for. And only for Jillian time slows down.

Ray’s breath moves the hair around her temple.

She finds one of his hands and their fingers intertwine.

Tyler returns. The magic ends abruptly. Ray tries to cover up to his best ability. A dazed Jillian smiles.

JILLIAN
Come on, let’s get out of here. It’s a bit stuffier than I thought.

TYLER
(confused)
Okay?

Jillian takes another drink and Tyler and drags them outside. Ray looks after them with nagging mixed emotions.

SARAH
He seems like such a sweet kid.

RAY
Yeah. She’ll eat him alive.

SARAH
(laughs)
I think you're overestimating my sister.

Ray smiles wearily, he's not so sure.

INT./EXT. TYLER'S CAR - NIGHT

Sipping on the rest of her drink, a wasted Jillian looks out the window at the street flying by.

TYLER
... there's always politics, you know. You have to just work around it. And Olson's such a pro. He's making me think about switching to conducting. Or orchestration.

JILLIAN
Did you ever kill a deer?

TYLER
What?

JILLIAN
Because you couldn't stop? Do you think that's what road kill is? Self-preservation? Survival of the fittest? Or some kind of sheer force of nature?

TYLER
I don't get it.

JILLIAN
I do. Stop the car. Over there.

She points at a dirt road approaching.

TYLER
Why?

JILLIAN
Just stop it.

Very reluctantly, he complies.

TYLER
I know you probably don't find me all that enticing, but it'd be crazy to walk all the way home from here -

Jillian downs her drink and then proceeds to climb across the handbrake onto his lap. This is more awkward than she thought. The steering wheel drills into her back and she doesn't really know what to do with her knees without bumping into something.

And Tyler can't figure out whether he's about to get laid or strangled.

When she kisses him on the lips and their teeth SMACK together, he gets it. He quickly lowers the entire driver's seat and it SLAMS down. Now their foreheads BUMP. It's a gigantic mess.

Tyler unzips his pants frantically and Jillian slides her panties down her legs.

They sort of have sex. Jillian's expression at the unfamiliar sensation resembles somebody who's playing with a Rubic's Cube for the first time.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Does it hurt?

Jillian shakes her head, you can almost hear her "Puh-Lease" loud and clear.

He pushes her off him before he comes, all too quickly.

Jillian falls back onto the passenger seat. She pulls up her panties and watches him curiously catch his breath.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Are you... was that okay?

JILLIAN
I guess?

She couldn't look more unimpressed.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
Okay, thanks. You can drive me home now.

TYLER
I do like you, you know. Maybe we could talk about this a bit more?

JILLIAN
There's really not much to talk about.

Beat, as Tyler digests the implication.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
No offense. I just don't want to talk about it. I'd rather get home. I might have to throw up.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, HALLWAY

Norbert and Ellen look up when they see their daughter half-stumble through the door, holding on to her violin case.

NORBERT
Did rehearsals run that long?

JILLIAN
Yes. I'm exhausted. And I really have to pee.

She makes sure her parents buy it before she disappears.

INT. BATHROOM

Jillian throws up violently into the toilet bowl.

When she's finished, she leans back and sits on the cold tiles motionless. Her head spins. She had no idea she could feel that bad.

Realizing what just happened, she half laughs, half cries.

EXT. BOULDER SYMPHONY - DAY

TOURISTS, LOCALS and MUSIC ENTHUSIASTS have gathered.

Norbert and Ellen are surrounded by ACQUAINTANCES who want to shake his hand and tell Norbert they'll be voting for him.

Ray with Sarah in tow approaches the "Will Call" booth, takes an empty envelope and writes the name "IRMA ABBOTT" on it. Sticks a ticket for the performance inside then hands it back to the CLERK.

RAY
Can you please, please remember this one and let me know if she came to pick it up?

The Clerk nods and creates a sticky note for himself.

INT. GREEN ROOM

The chamber musicians prepare for the show. Jillian looks positively green. Tyler walks up to her with a shy smile.

TYLER
We're all heading to the Dark Horse after. You're in?

JILLIAN
I'm not sure I can ever eat anything again.

TYLER
They have soda.

Jillian nods, "fine".

INT. SYMPHONY

The seats begin to fill with an expectant audience.

EXT. SYMPHONY

Ray waits next to Sarah, while Norbert and Ellen wrap up their conversations. He glances over to the box office booth.

The Clerk just handed a bunch of PEOPLE their tickets. He sees Ray looking and gives him a NOD and a THUMBS UP.

SARAH
What was that about?

RAY
Don't worry about it. I better head up. It's time.

INT. GREEN ROOM

Jillian loosens her wrist. Olson checks in with everybody. He approaches her last.

OLSON
The moment of truth.
(off her concerned look)
Let the music speak for itself. But have something to say.

INT. BOULDER SYMPHONY

Sarah finds her seat next to Norbert and Ellen.

CONTROL BOOTH -

Ray works the control board. The lights in the auditorium are slowly dimmed.

STAGE -

Olson walks on stage to immediate APPLAUSE.

OLSON
Thank you, I'm extremely pleased you're all here for these little Mahler gems and these wonderful young performers. They're well aware that they'll be upstaged tomorrow night by, well, me -

LAUGHTER from the audience.

OLSON (CONT'D)
- so please give them a very warm welcome.

BACKSTAGE -

Jillian waits in the wings, fidgeting nervously.

A SERIES OF IMAGES: Matthew and Jamie perform a two piano orchestration of Mahler's "Das Klagende Lied".

Tyler and Lyssa go on next for their viola and cello performance of the "Wunderhorn".

And suddenly it's all happening very fast: SOMEBODY pushes Jillian gently up on stage.

STAGE -

Jillian walks out, holding on to her violin for dear life. She takes center stage position.

She can see PEOPLE whisper into each other ears.

Ray isn't hard to spot in the booth. Best seat in the house.

That's when she makes her decision: To play for him. Everybody else fades away.

The first strike of the bow falls.

She's good, and she only gets better.

Ray leans back in his seat, relieved. Then he gets sucked in.

The more Jillian improves throughout her performance, the more intense the notes and combinations become, the more Ray seems to be drifting away. It’s hypnotic.

The last few strikes of the bow. And it's all over.

Happily, Jillian opens her eyes.

A moment of silence. Then overwhelming APPLAUSE.

Ray quickly moves some faders on the board.

INT. FOYER - EVENING

Norbert and Ellen talk to local PRESS. Norbert puts his arm around Jillian.

NORBERT
How about that? Are you as speechless as I am at this little girl?

REPORTER
You must be very proud.

NORBERT
Of course I am. And if I could just say something to all the parents and their kids out there - you don’t need drugs or sex, you can spend your time productively on something as valuable and simple as music. And I’m very glad my daughter is setting that example.

The reporter takes some pictures with the two of them. This is exactly how Norbert wanted this night to go down.

LATER - PEOPLE walk by Jillian and shake her hand or tell her she did a great job. Amongst them is IRMA ABBOTT, a woman in her early sixties, stern, pretty, a casual gray suit. She takes extra time.

IRMA
Well done, my dear. I’ll be in touch.

Jillian nods confused what this stranger could possible be in touch with her about.

Ray and Sarah join everybody in the lobby.

SARAH
That was really good, Monster. Kind of intense.

Jillian checks in with Ray. He just nods in agreement.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(to Ray)
Did you wanna grab a bite or just head home?

RAY
I have to wrap up for the night. And then switch around everything for the orchestra tomorrow.
(directed at Jillian)
I'll be here for a while.

Norbert and Ellen come to gather their daughters. Ellen puts a jacket on Jillian's shoulders.

NORBERT
Shall we?

Jillian hesitates. Something unspoken goes on between her and Ray. He's waiting for a response.

Jillian motions at Tyler and the others chatting to their own FAMILIES and FRIENDS.

JILLIAN
I think everybody's going to go to the Dark Horse to celebrate. Do you mind if I... hang out?

Ray got his answer. He kisses Sarah good-night, then heads back to the balcony.

NORBERT
Celebrate?

JILLIAN
We're all under age. I'm sure it won't get much wilder than fries and diet coke.

ELLEN
Are you going to get home okay?

SARAH
Tyler's got a car.

ELLEN
He seems like a very nice boy. Just don't do anything rash.

JILLIAN
Mom!

NORBERT
You're back by ten. And I don't want to read anywhere tomorrow morning that my daughter's exposing bra straps or dancing on a table.

JILLIAN
I promise to only expose an elbow.

Norbert nods reluctantly, okay. Ellen takes care of Jillian's violin and her other non-essential items. They leave.

Jillian indicates a beeline to Tyler -

But as soon as her family is out of sight, she slips behind a pillar.

She sees Tyler look for her. She was just there, where did she go? The others push for heading out.

Finally, Tyler gives up. He leaves, too.

Her heart beats hard and her fingers tremble. She feels her cheeks, they're red hot.

INT. BOULDER SYMPHONY, CONTROL BOOTH

Jillian carefully enters the booth, but Ray's not there. Instead she encounters Andrew and the Stage Manager who are working on next day's show.

ANDREW
Did you leave something?

Jillian shakes her head.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
You better head on home then, sweetie. Gettin' dark.

Jillian nods, confused. She cannot spot Ray anywhere around the balcony area, either.

Maybe she misunderstood.

EXT. BOULDER SYMPHONY - EVENING

Jillian pushes the glass doors open.

Empty. Everybody's gone. The sun sets over Boulder.

From the corner of her eye, she sees a little red glint across the street.

Ray leans on his pick-up truck, smokes a cigarette and waits for her.

She crosses the street, her hands buried in her pockets. They stand a few feet apart, checking the temperature.

RAY
This is such a bad idea.

Jillian swallows her disappointment.

JILLIAN
Then just drive me to the Dark Horse, and I'll be out of your hair.

Ray sighs defeated. He opens the passenger door and Jillian climbs inside.

EXT. TRISHA HOUSE - NIGHT

The truck pulls into the driveway - clearly NOT the "Dark Horse". Ray gets out and points Jillian to the back of the house. No front doors.

INT. TRISHA HOUSE, BACK ENTRANCE

It's dark. Jillian doesn't know where she's going. Ray closes the door behind them.

She bumps against a piece of furniture and loses her balance. Ray catches her by the hand and switches the lights on.

INT. TRISHA HOUSE, LIVING ROOM

A sense of awkwardness as Jillian looks down at their hands intertwined. Ray lets go.

RAY
Do you want anything? Water or...?

JILLIAN
I'm fine, thanks.

RAY
Let me check on her.

He goes to Charlotte's room on the ground floor.

A bit lost, Jillian walks around to the grand black piano in the corner. Ray comes back.

RAY (CONT'D)
She's asleep.

JILLIAN
(re: the piano)
Did she teach you?

Jillian pats the piano bench. Reluctantly, Ray sits down.

RAY
I haven't played in a hundred years.

Even though Ray butchers it a little, the Novelette in C Major by Francis Poulenc is a lovely piece. You don't have to be a concert pianist to play it, its beauty shines through.

Jillian sits down next to him.

RAY (CONT'D)
The accident killed all my concert pianist career aspirations. Or I should say my Mom's. My heart was never in it anyway, not the way yours is.

JILLIAN
I only played for you. I'll only ever play for you.

RAY
I can't do this, Sugar.

JILLIAN
Then why am I here?

He gets up and walks away from her and the piano.

RAY
Fucking fourteen...

JILLIAN
It's just numbers. People's maturity shouldn't be judged by numbers. I know you know this. There's so much stuff around me, so much music, books, words, feelings, ideas... I sometimes feel it all won't ever fit into this body.

Ray studies her as she talks, enchanted.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
In ten years nobody will bat an eyelash.

RAY
Maybe that's when we should talk again.

JILLIAN
I can't wait that long.

RAY
I look at you and I can see who you're going to be so clearly. That amazing beautiful perfect woman you'll grow into. And I want that, all of that. I don't want to mess you up.

JILLIAN
Please mess me up. I want to be messed up and crazy and ecstatic. Don't you?

She comes closer. And now has no idea how to do this. Finally, she grabs his hand and plops it on her breast.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
It's a B-cup.

Ray laughs and nods impressed, "good to know".

His bemused expression turns serious. Same hand moves up her breast to her neck to her face.

He hesitates but then leans down to kiss her on the lips.

Something to be said for experience, because this is nothing like Jillian's first kiss with Tyler.

Jillian relaxes into the embrace and feels herself melting.

Things get heated very fast. Ray comes up for air.

RAY
Hey, slow down. Please. You need to give me a minute here.

JILLIAN
But we don't have much time.

Jillian takes him by the hand upstairs.

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM

Ray's room is plastered with books. Jillian admires his vast collection. Ray watches her like a strange new pet.

She opens a random book. It's been underlined and the space in the margins scribbled all over. She finds a copy of Hermann Hesse's "Steppenwolf". She opens it, same situation.

JILLIAN
You like to violate books.

RAY
I like to organize my thoughts.

JILLIAN
(reads underlined passage)
"Perhaps the whole of human life is but a bad joke, a violent and ill-fated abortion of the primal mother, a savage and dismal catastrophe of nature."

RAY
Sounds about right.

JILLIAN
(looks around)
This is where Sarah sleeps, isn't it? When she stays over.

RAY
Yeah. What do you want me to do about that?

JILLIAN
I don't know.

RAY
If I break up with her, it'll be much harder to see you now that rehearsals are over and done with.

Ray strokes along her face, his fingers near her right eye.

JILLIAN
You can touch it. I don't feel anything.

His thumb gently touches her implanted cornea, expecting a different sensation. Jillian doesn't jerk away, just looks at him with her healthy eye.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
Can I see your back?

He pulls his shirt up just to the top of his neck.

Very small scars on his lower back, where the wires were pulled through.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
War scars...

RAY
What did we fight for?

JILLIAN
Something we had to have.

RAY
Selfish scars, then.

Jillian touches his back and kisses the scars.

Ray pulls his shirt down abruptly.

RAY (CONT'D)
If anybody finds out about this, I'm going to jail. Do you understand?

JILLIAN
Why is it that everything I ever want has to come with this ginormous price tag?

RAY
Maybe because you want very age-inappropriate things.

They kiss again hungrily. Ray kisses her neck. His hand moves down her panties between her legs.

RAY (CONT'D)
Like this.

Jillian closes her eyes, her breathing accelerates.

RAY (CONT'D)
Do you want that?

JILLIAN
Yes.

RAY
How badly?

JILLIAN
Don't test my mighty powers.

With a small gasp, Jillian grabs onto his shirt and buries her head in his neck.

EXT. MAZER HOUSE, STREET - NIGHT

Ray parks the truck about a block away from the Mazer home.

INT./EXT. RAY'S TRUCK

They kiss good-bye.

RAY
You're all right?

JILLIAN
Are you?

RAY
I'm not sure.

JILLIAN
Nothing happened.

RAY
Everything happened. Just because I didn't fuck your brains out doesn't mean nothing happened.

JILLIAN
I'm not gonna tell anybody.

RAY
I didn't think I could ever be that guy. I'm not that guy.
(groans)
What did you do to me?

JILLIAN
What if you are that guy?

Ray slumps over the steering wheel for a beat and contemplates that possibility.

RAY
Honestly, I don't know who I am right now.

JILLIAN
Are you mad at me?

RAY
No. Just... scared shitless. It should be the other way round.

JILLIAN
This can't be much scarier than tearing down Tuckerman Ravine.

RAY
Not hugely dissimilar.

She kisses him again, a meager comfort, then climbs out of the truck. Ray u-turns.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, HALLWAY

Jillian hangs her jacket on the hooks.

ELLEN (O.S.)
How was your date?

JILLIAN
It was hardly a date. There were four other people present.

LIVING ROOM -

Jillian runs up to give Ellen a spontaneously big hug. Ellen isn't used to displays of affection from Jillian and regards her daughter suspiciously. Feels her forehead.

ELLEN
You're warm. Your skin's glowing. Are you coming down with something?

JILLIAN
I feel fine.

Norbert looks up from his laptop and emails.

NORBERT
Fantastic response from anybody who came to the recital today.
(MORE)

NORBERT (CONT'D)
And word's spreading. That'll be a helluva burst in numbers, I'm telling you. Go to bed, my superstar, you must be exhausted.

Jillian beams, basking in the glory for as long as she can.

HALLWAY -

Jillian passes Sarah in the bathroom brushing her teeth.

SARAH
Hey! Monster!

Jillian stops, instantly guilty.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Did he kiss you good-night?

Jillian hesitates, then just nods.

SARAH (CONT'D)
And? How was it?

JILLIAN
Good.

SARAH
That's it? Good? Don't you usually have some bigger words for that kind of stuff?

JILLIAN
(deadpan)
It blew my mind. For the first time, I actually feel alive.

SARAH
Wow. That good, huh?

Jillian leaves Sarah befuddled. How come she's never experienced that?

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Ray goes through his meds and swallows one of each methodically but increases the dose. When he closes the medicine cabinet door, he catches his reflection. And kind of hates what he sees.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Jillian returns books. The New Librarian avoids eye contact. He notices that Jillian smiles at him politely. That freaks him out. She points to “The Steppenwolf”.

JILLIAN
I liked it. But I think I’ve read every book about alienation and individual destiny there is. Maybe some chick lit next time.

She laughs at her own joke, then leaves. The new librarian glances at the old librarian, who shrugs. People.

INT. “THE BITTER BAR”, BRIAN’S OFFICE - NIGHT

Through the half open door across her homework, Jillian sees Ray and Sarah in a vivid conversation with Brian and Andrew.

Ray excuses himself to go to the bathroom. Brian’s all too happy to keep Sarah company.

On his way, Ray slips into Brian’s office instead. He closes the door and leans in to kiss Jillian on her lips.

JILLIAN
Are you crazy? She’s right there!

RAY
Shut up. I missed you.

JILLIAN
We’re horrible human beings.

RAY
Yeah. Revolting.

JILLIAN
Abominations.

The kiss deepens, their breathing quickens and Jillian reddens. Then Ray ends it abruptly to get back -

- just as Brian opens the door. In some perfectly timed miracle move Ray slips behind the door. Brian did not see him. He only sees a breathless Jillian.

JILLIAN (CONT’D)
Brian!

BRIAN
(imitates her voice)
Jillian!

He grabs two rolls of quarters and notices her flushed face.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Need a couple of those... You're all right?

JILLIAN
Fine.

BRIAN
(re: her homework)
Do you need any help? I used to be really good at chemistry.

JILLIAN
No, I'm fine. You... just caught me masturbating.

BRIAN
(disgusted)
I'm out of here.

Brian closes the door very quickly, revealing a grinning Ray on the other side.

RAY
You're my hero.

JILLIAN
Fuck off, I just had a small heart attack.

Ray laughs his own unease away and kisses her quickly good-bye. She watches him return to her sister through the half open door as if nothing ever happened.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The bell RINGS for end of the first morning class.

Jillian jumps on her bike and rides as fast as she can off school grounds.

EXT. TRISHA HOUSE - DAY

Jillian throws her bike in the drive way, making sure nobody saw her. She runs through the open back entrance -

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM

- into Ray's bed. He was asleep and GROANS when a person lands on him.

RAY
It's the middle of the night.

JILLIAN
No English Lit, Mrs. Reed called in sick.

RAY
That's how long?

JILLIAN
An hour and fifteen.

They kiss and he pulls her under the covers, then pretends to fall asleep again beside her. Laughing, she shakes him awake.

RAY
Get off of me, I gotta brush my teeth...

INT. TRISHA HOUSE, KITCHEN

In the background Debbie walks Charlotte outside for a walk. Ray motions for Jillian to sneak downstairs.

LATER - A light breakfast with coffee. Jillian and Ray take spoons of sugar one after the other from Ray's sugar box.

JILLIAN
What's your story with that?

She motions at all the sugar.

RAY
What's yours?

JILLIAN
I don't get cavities. And I think I have some weird sugar deficiency.

RAY
Bullshit.

JILLIAN
I asked first.

RAY
My first girlfriend somehow figured out that whenever I drank tons of Mountain Dew, my cum tasted sweeter. So I started piling it on, and now I just really like it.

JILLIAN
Bullshit.

RAY
I didn't make that up.

Jillian curiously eyes his crotch.

RAY (CONT'D)
No, really, don't even think about it. I didn't say that to get a blowjob out of you.

But Jillian's determined to find out. She's already unzipping his jeans.

RAY (CONT'D)
How would you even tell? You have no grounds for comparison.

JILLIAN
How do you know?

Somehow that makes him angry. Ray pushes her away abruptly.

RAY
That kid at the party? You did not suck that little jerk's cock.

JILLIAN
No, you can't get mad at me. You're the one flaunting your sex life and ex-girlfriends. And you're still dating my sister!

RAY
Because of you!

JILLIAN
You're an asshole!

RAY
I'm twenty-eight. It's impossible for me not to have some sort of past or talk about it. You're just a baby.

Just as angry, Jillian grabs her things and runs away.

JILLIAN
Don't call me that ever again.

RAY
Oh like that's fucking mature.

JILLIAN
You wanna see immature? I'll show you immature. "Place your feet shoulder width apart, drop your derriere, and smell the nut."

Jillian performs the Squirrel Dance. Badly.

RAY
Really?!

JILLIAN
Drop, step, smell the nut. Drop, step, smell the nut.

Ray can't help it, she looks too ridiculous. He laughs.

RAY
What the -

JILLIAN
Fuck you!

RAY
Jillian!

She runs out through the back exit. SLAMS the door shut.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Wiping angry tears streaming down her face, Jillian bikes back to high school.

JILLIAN (O.S.)
... It feels like yesterday that we set foot in this building and began our journey -

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Jillian stands in her graduation robe on stage. Her parents sit in the audience, listen proudly. Sarah's also there but she didn't bring company.

JILLIAN
- that would prepare us for whatever waits on the other side of these walls.
(beat)
That's just bullshit, isn't it...

Jillian suddenly stops as she reconsiders what she wrote. STUDENTS and PARENTS move in their seats unnerved.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
I don't think anybody knows or cares really, but recently, I started this... torrid affair with a much older man.

Norbert glances around concerned. Sarah frowns.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
His name is Gustav Mahler. Or was, he died about a hundred years ago. Even Mahler thought that he was hitting his head against walls. You can't prepare for that. What I wish for us is the courage to keep hitting our heads against walls. Whatever that may mean to you. And I hope that those walls give in.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jillian helps with the dishes when the phone RINGS. Ellen picks up.

ELLEN
Mazer. - Yes. - One moment, please.

She hands the phone to surprised and hopeful Jillian.

JILLIAN
Hello?

It's not him.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
Hi, Tyler. - Great, I'm great.

Ellen mimes - points at dishes, pretends to eat, points at the phone.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
Would you maybe like to come over for dinner? - Friday night?
(MORE)

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
- Okay, yeah, it's 515 Olive. Highland Park.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

An animated Tyler heartily digs into his potatoes. Jillian wishes she was anywhere but here.

TYLER
... playing at Mahlerfest is one thing, but getting a repeat performance sponsored by the college is quite the compliment.

NORBERT
I'm not surprised. You kids just blew me away that night.

JILLIAN
And this is next Saturday?

TYLER
Saturday after next. Same venue, same program. Different audience.

KEYS rustle, then the door opens. It's Sarah. With Ray. Jillian considers hiding under the table.

SARAH
We were going to eat out, but when Ray heard that you were cooking dinner tonight, he went on and on about how he missed home cooked meals.

ELLEN
It's just meatloaf.

RAY
I love meatloaf. I could die for meatloaf.

Ray snags a seat next to Jillian, who freezes.

RAY (CONT'D)
Hope we're not interrupting.

NORBERT
Not at all. How's Charlotte doing?

RAY
She's perked up a little.

SARAH
She's a great lady. You'd have liked her, Tyler, she taught piano at Juilliard, then here in Boulder.

TYLER
Did she ever perform?

RAY
She did but then she switched to teaching. Until my step-father left at the onset of her dementia. Or as some people like to say, she went nuts.

Awkward silence. Norbert is probably those "some people".

NORBERT
I hope she had health insurance. Most musicians can't afford it.

SARAH
I think it's a noble profession.

Under the table Ray's hand lands on Jillian's knee. She brushes it off.

RAY
No, your Dad's right. Musicians can't afford anything. The average hourly income is $27.51. You're either unemployed or work part-time giving private lessons. And it's religious organizations that provide the most paying gigs, which sucks if you were raised an atheist.

NORBERT
Atheist? So what is it exactly that you believe in?

RAY
Art. Music. Literature. Evolution. Neuroscience -

NORBERT
But those are all gifts from God. It encourages an unhealthy sense of entitlement to think otherwise.

RAY
I think it just encourages progress.

Norbert stares him down, not fast enough with an answer.

ELLEN
We're Presbyterian.

The sentence just hangs there in more awkward silence.

RAY
My point was that when my mother played you never saw a happier person.

Ray's hand finds its way back to Jillian's leg.

RAY (CONT'D)
Mrs. Mazer, that is some of the best meatloaf I've ever had.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, KITCHEN

Everybody cleans up after the dinner. Norbert opens the laptop, showing Tyler everything about his Assembly campaign.

Ray doesn't have much time to catch Jillian on her own with all the back and forth. When they have a chance, he whispers:

RAY
You can't just run out on me. I have to be able to talk to you.

JILLIAN
Not here.

Ray hands her something small, shiny and black. A cell phone.

RAY
I couldn't call you.

Jillian hides the cell in her jeans' back pocket, right before Tyler walks in with Sarah.

SARAH
We're looking for dessert. Can't call it a night without a sugar rush, right? Those two - biggest sugar freaks ever.

TYLER
(to Jillian)
I'm glad we could hang out. Didn't really get to do that after the concert.

SARAH
Didn't you like raise the roof at the Dark Horse?

TYLER
(confused)
Yeah, we did...

He glances over at Jillian whose face falls and her eyes widen, begging him to stop talking.

TYLER (CONT'D)
We did. That was a great night...

Tyler catches Ray looking at Jillian in a way he recognizes. Suddenly, it all becomes very clear to him.

TYLER (CONT'D)
I should go.

JILLIAN
I'll walk you out.

EXT. MAZER HOUSE

Jillian walks a shocked-looking Tyler to his car.

JILLIAN
Thank you for... back there.

TYLER
As a friend, I hope you don't mind me saying, but I don't think you know what you're doing.

He kisses her on the cheek.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Good-bye.

Jillian nods, good-bye.

INT. JILLIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jillian's new cell phone buzzes. She picks up quickly.

JILLIAN
(quiet voice)
Hold on.

She slips into her closet and closes the door on herself.

CLOSET - In the darkness his voice is all she perceives. Tears shoot into her eyes, an instant emotional wreck.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
I thought we were done.

RAY (O.S.)
(laughs)
We had a fight. A really stupid one at that.

JILLIAN
Oh... Okay.

RAY (O.S.)
Next time give me a chance to apologize.

JILLIAN
I'm sensitive about my age.

RAY (O.S.)
So am I. Why was that kid around tonight?

JILLIAN
That double standard thing, you're doing it again. You can't commit to my sister, and my age is the perfect excuse not to commit to me, either.

RAY (O.S.)
That's not fair. I can't commit to your sister, because I'm not in love with her, and I can't commit to you because I'll be arrested.

JILLIAN
Let's drag this out indefinitely then. I'll play at your wedding for fucking $27.51 per hour.

RAY (O.S.)
When can I see you?

EXT. BOULDER SYMPHONY

An unsuspecting Jillian arrives at the symphony on her bike.

INT. BOULDER SYMPHONY, CONTROL BOOTH

Jillian is about to enter the control booth, when she realizes that Ray is not alone. She hides just in time.

SARAH
... with you at all last week. Even when we see each other you just seem someplace else. Have you stopped taking your meds?

RAY
That would be a really bad idea. Look, I'm sorry. I've had a lot on my plate. I think I rewired this whole theater.

SARAH
I thought things would slow down a little after Mahlerfest.

RAY
They haven't though.

SARAH
That's it? They just haven't?

RAY
What else do you want me to say?

SARAH
Something a little reassuring would be nice.

RAY
(sighs)
I can't do that.

SARAH
What do you mean?

RAY
Sarah, what do you even like about me? That I'm this "challenge" for you or some kind of invalid worth saving? Because you and I haven't had conversations that went much deeper than tomorrow's weather.

SARAH
But we talk all the time.

RAY
No. You talk. About rainbows and unicorns and happy things and I just can't catch up. I'm sorry. You're beautiful and a really nice person -

SARAH
I'm nice. Wow. I don't understand. I try so hard and then I just get slapped in the face.

RAY
Then stop trying.

Sarah gives him a "Fuck You" glare, then gets up to leave.

RAY (CONT'D)
I meant, for my sake.

SARAH
See ya around, I guess.

She stomps out of the control booth, confused and angry. Jillian watches her leave, her heart breaking for her sister.

A moment later, Ray opens the door to check for Jillian.

RAY
Sorry. She just turned up.

He notices that Jillian looks at him funny.

RAY (CONT'D)
What? I let her go, isn't that what you wanted? I'm yours. If you'll have me. Can you handle that?

JILLIAN
I don't know.

RAY
No, me neither. Probably a good thing that we won't be able to figure it out for another four years or so.

Ray points at the front row.

RAY (CONT'D)
Here, sit down.

JILLIAN
Why?

RAY
Just shut up and sit down.

ON - Jillian reluctantly takes a seat in the audience.

SUDDENLY, every light in the symphony hall goes completely dark. All she hears is the first notes of MUSIC. LOUDLY.

A shuffle and then Ray sits down next to her. The first lyrics of "I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW" reinterpreted by the Holly Cole Trio blast through the dark space.

JILLIAN
Is that what you do in your spare time? Sit in the dark?

He shushes her. Motions for her to just enjoy it.

The stage lights take on a life of their own. They're programmed to do so. They move in unison with the song. Change colors, move across, finally culminate in an effect that looks as if raindrops of light flood the entire area.

Jillian watches in amazement. It's beautiful. Ray watches her, wrapped up in everything about her.

The music FADES INTO -

INT. JILLIAN'S ROOM - DAY

Jillian playing violin, eyes bright and happy. A KNOCK, Ellen enters with a large thick envelope.

ELLEN
This just came for you. It's from Juilliard.

Ellen waits for stunned Jillian to open the envelope.

She reads. Then she hands the paperwork back to Ellen.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
You're accepted to start in the fall? Did you apply and just forget to mention it to us?

Jillian shakes her head.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jillian sits at the table, while Norbert paces on the phone. Ellen bites her fingernails.

NORBERT
I see. - Irma Abbott, as in Irma Abbott, head of admissions. - Really? - I didn't know you did. - No, we're very pleased, that's quite a compliment to our little girl here. - I just wanted to call to get some more information on all of this. - Yes, you did, thank you.

He puts the phone down. His polite demeanor quickly changes to mild disgruntlement.

ELLEN
This is a huge honor. Usually students travel to New York to audition for these spots.

NORBERT
But it is New York. A six hour flight. East Coast.

JILLIAN
I know where New York is, Dad.

NORBERT
I didn't know they sent people around the country to snap up our children willy-nilly.

ELLEN
Let's not discard it off hand.

NORBERT
I never discarded anything, but the whole point was to wait and maybe transfer for a post-grad so she can stay at home. Where she's safe. Do you all not realize what could happen to a child with her kind of temper in New York City?
(shakes his head)
We need to think about it. Is this even something you'd want? I always thought of your violin as more of a hobby.

JILLIAN
It's all I ever wanted.

Something dawns on her as she says those words.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
I want to go. Please let me go.

NORBERT
As I just said, I need to think about it.

ELLEN
You said, “we”. We’ll make it work.

NORBERT
Okay. We’ll talk about making it work but no promises. There’s a lot going on right now. We’ll discuss again in detail after the assembly vote.

JILLIAN
Can I go and tell Darlene?

ELLEN
Sure. Be back for dinner.

Jillian hugs her parents good-bye then runs out the door.

INT. BOULDER SYMPHONY, CONTROL BOOTH

A KNOCK on the glass. Ray looks up from work.

Excited, Jillian holds the acceptance letter to the window. It takes Ray a moment to figure out what’s going on.

LATER - Ray re-reads the letter. He smiles proudly.

JILLIAN
I don’t know how or what you did -

RAY
You did that all by yourself. All I did was make a phone call and convince Irma to get on a plane and hear you play. It wasn’t all that hard. Mom and her used to be really good friends.

JILLIAN
Can you get off work?

RAY
Right now?

JILLIAN
There’s things I want you to do to me and you can’t do them here.

A bit lost for words, Ray glances her up and down to figure out if this really means what he thinks it means.

Andrew and the Stage Manager approach the booth.

RAY
Give me half an hour.

Jillian slips out of the booth, nodding quiet “hellos” at Ray’s co-workers.

ANDREW
(sing-song)
Somebody’s got a crush...

RAY
Oh yeah? You think I have a shot?

The men laugh, excellent joke.

ANDREW
I’d hate to be that age again. Just let her down easy, boss.

INT. TRISHA HOUSE, BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Like drunk people clinging to each other on a ship at storm, Ray and Jillian stumble onto his bed. Tearing each other’s clothes off in the process.

He pushes her onto the mattress. She watches as he unzips her pants, heart pounding in her throat.

JILLIAN
What am I supposed to do?

RAY
Nothing, Sugar. Don’t do anything.

Reluctantly Jillian leans back. She watches impatiently.

When Ray finds himself face to face with her, he hesitates.

RAY (CONT’D)
I can stop. Anytime. You know that.

JILLIAN
I’m not going to break. I promise.

Ray shakes his head at this strange creature in his arms and covers her lips with his.

Clearly, this isn't going to take thirty seconds, so let's not stick around.

LATER - Post-coital, Jillian looks happy, but different. Older. A bit like run over by a train. Ray buries his head in her armpit.

RAY
Fuck, you smell so good. How do you do that? I'm obsessed with your body odor. Don't ever shower again.

Without a knock, the door swings open and Charlotte stands there. Jillian stares mortified.

CHARLOTTE
Oh, I'm sorry... I thought... Hi!

JILLIAN
Hi, Charlotte...

CHARLOTTE
I'm looking for the bathroom. Do you know where it is? It's not where it's supposed to be.

Ray pulls on a pair of boxers, goes to help his Mom.

RAY
Right across, Mom.

Jillian falls back on the bed. This is getting exhausting.

Ray returns swiftly and lights a cigarette. Jillian holds the blanket over her head.

RAY (CONT'D)
Sorry about that.

JILLIAN
She wouldn't tell, would she?

RAY
She's got good days. This isn't one of them.

Jillian shakes off the scare, takes his cigarette and inhales. She leans in to kiss Ray on the lips, blowing smoke into his mouth.

JILLIAN
This is a disgusting habit. You need to quit.

RAY
You're a disgusting habit I need to quit.

He takes the cigarette away from her.

JILLIAN
New York's so far away.

RAY
Nothing's far away once you're there.

JILLIAN
That's deep. And enigmatic. You are by far the smartest man I know.

RAY
Thank you, I'll be here all night.

JILLIAN
I don't want to leave you.

RAY
Yes, you do. It'll only be for a little while. If anything, it's so much easier to see you in New York, and I'm there half the time. A bit more anonymous than Boulder.

They kiss, working themselves up again.

RAY (CONT'D)
When do you have to be home?

JILLIAN
Soon-ish.

Jillian pulls him onto her body. They roll over into a passionate embrace and proceed to make love once more.

LATER - Jillian wakes up in Ray's arms.

It's light out, which confuses her for a second. Shouldn't it be darker?

A really bad feeling shoots through her body. She rises abruptly, waking Ray up in the process.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
What time is it?

RAY
I don't know...

She checks the time on her cell phone. 6:44.

JILLIAN
Please tell me that's 6:44 p.m.

Ray doesn't look so sure.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
Fuck.

She grabs all her clothes and throws her shirt over her head.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck. I'm such an idiot. I have to go.

Dazed, Ray puts on his clothes as well.

RAY
I hope you can come up with something good.

JILLIAN
Like I fell into a ditch and couldn't move my legs for eight hours?

RAY
It happens.

Suddenly, Jillian stops all the rapid movement.

JILLIAN
I'm sorry.

Ray looks at her, manages a wry "It's okay" smile.

EXT. TRISHA HOUSE - MORNING

Jillian runs to her bike. Just as she's about to hop on and drive off -

POLICE SIREN. The one, two short WARNING BLEEP for her to stop in her tracks.

A POLICE CAR just arrived at Ray's house. The TWO OFFICERS inside spotted her like a deer in headlights.

Jillian thinks about running. But it's too late. The officers exit the car and approach her.

OFFICER #1
Jillian Mazer?

She nods.

OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)
We'll need you to come with us, please.

With a heavy sigh, Jillian leaves her bike behind and follows the officers into the car.

INT./EXT. POLICE CAR

Jillian's locked in. The doors won't open from the inside anymore and there's the infamous steel mesh cage in front of her. She has to watch from this quiet place as the Officers approach the front door and ring the bell.

Ray opens the door. They have a conversation that Jillian isn't privy to.

Finally, Officer #1 returns to the car, but Officer #2 stays inside the house.

EXT. MAZER HOUSE - DAY

Officer #1 walks Jillian a little like a common criminal to the front door, where shocked Norbert and Ellen wait for her. NEIGHBORS, at least the early morning risers, look on with a frown.

NORBERT
Thank you. I've talked to Larry, he'll deal with this.

OFFICER #1
Understood, Mr. Mazer.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, HALLWAY

As soon as Officer #1 is out of sight and the door closes, Norbert turns to Jillian and shakes her.

NORBERT
How did this happen? What did he do to you? What happened?

Jillian is too stunned to answer.

NORBERT (CONT'D)
How could you do this to us? To your sister? I don't understand. Make me understand!

Sarah, her arms crossed, stands in the back, processing.

NORBERT (CONT'D)
Go to your room.

Sarah follows Jillian.

SARAH
Are you all right? Do you want to talk about it? How did he - did he force you?

Jillian shakes her head. The magnitude of that head shake isn't lost on Sarah.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You've gotta be fucking kidding me.

INT. JILLIAN'S ROOM

Jillian goes to her room and closes the door behind her. There's a click and Jillian realizes that they switched out the door knob. It now closes from the outside only.

JILLIAN
Dad?

She turns the knob violently, but it won't open.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
Don't do this. Dad. Please open my door. You can't do this.

In shock, Jillian glides to the floor. Stuck.

EXT. TRISHA HOUSE

A confused Debbie places an even more confused Charlotte in her little cheap car with an overnight bag.

INT. TRISHA HOUSE, LIVING ROOM

Ray and Officer #2 wait in silence. Ray pours himself some coffee. He offers to Officer #2, who shakes his head.

STEPS approach. Officer #2 rises for Larry Bowers, Chief of Police, and Norbert.

When Norbert sets eyes on Ray, he shoots at him like a bull at a red flag.

A HEAVY PUNCH lands in Ray's face and he falls to the ground, spitting out blood.

Norbert has to be restrained by Larry and Officer #2 not to throw another one.

Larry whispers to Officer #2 to leave them alone.

Ray slowly gets up and dusts himself off.

NORBERT
You degenerate little fucker from a fucking degenerate, profane family. I could smell it the moment I set my eyes on you. You are staying away from my daughter. If you ever as much as even think of her, I'll fucking kill you.

RAY
I'm sorry, but should I be calling my lawyer?

LARRY
We're going to set up a restraining order for now.

RAY
(genuinely surprised)
That's it?

NORBERT
Oh, if it was up to me, I'd love to see you rot in prison for statutory rape and kidnapping for the next ten fucking years.

LARRY
Which we have quite a good case for.

Ray senses a "but" coming. He looks from one to the other.

NORBERT
This is very poor timing for me. The Assembly vote's next week. I can't afford any of this. I don't even know how much damage control I have to do just because my daughter arrived in a police car this morning.

Ray drags his sorry ass back to his coffee. Pours spoonfuls of sugar into the mug.

RAY
You're not pressing charges?

LARRY
There's no good way to keep that quiet, especially not once the words "statutory rape" get out there.

RAY
Media loves a good sex scandal.

LARRY
We'd like to avoid that kind of attention, if we can.

Ray laughs, wipes the blood away as it spills out.

LARRY (CONT'D)
You obviously won't be able to stay in town much longer.

RAY
Obviously. Can you give me some time?

LARRY
Friday.

RAY
Okay.

All is said and done. Norbert and Larry turn to leave.

RAY (CONT'D)
Mr. Mazer, you're really letting your daughter's sex offender walk because of this election?

NORBERT
I'm doing you a fucking favor.

RAY
Wow. I don't know which one of us is the bigger fuck-up.

Norbert is about to make true to his word and kill Ray, when Larry pulls him back.

LARRY
Calm down, it's not worth it.
(to Ray)
Friday. I'm keeping an eye on you.

INT. JILLIAN'S ROOM - DAY

Jillian almost cried herself to sleep. Ellen enters with a lunch tray and walks around the room to remove anything that Jillian could possibly abuse, pencils, letter openers etc.

ELLEN
We called a lot of people last night. Your friend... he was the only one who had a hunch.

Jillian nods, of course, fucking snitch.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
I was thinking we could drive to the hospital to make sure you're okay.

JILLIAN
Why?

ELLEN
I just can't imagine that this was consensual, sweetie.

JILLIAN
Nobody raped me.

ELLEN
They have emergency contraception and various treatments for possible venereal disease. And maybe we can start you on some counseling.

JILLIAN
I didn't do anything wrong!

ELLEN
This is my fault. I abandoned you. When I agreed to just let you be. I shouldn't have. I've been regretting it ever since. I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

Norbert enters, agitated over what happened at Ray's house.

Sarah stands outside the room, can hear and see everything.

NORBERT
We've taken care of everything.

JILLIAN
What did you do?

NORBERT
This is over. Nobody ever has to know. I did not waste thousands of dollars on this campaign just to read in the newspaper tomorrow morning that Norbert Mazer's daughter is some dirty little godless "Lolita".

JILLIAN
And what now?

NORBERT
You'll be starting CU in the fall, as we planned. Forget about Juilliard, there's no way in hell I'm sending you to New York now. We're not awarding this behavior.

JILLIAN
But that's my whole future, it should be my choice -

ELLEN
Norbert, I really think we should talk about this later, when we all had a chance to simmer down.

Norbert points at the Giachetti.

NORBERT
That was your choice, too.

JILLIAN
It's the only thing that ever mattered.

NORBERT
You don't have a track record for making great choices.

Norbert gets up to leave and takes her lunch fork with him with a glare at Ellen, "you gave her a fork?!".

JILLIAN
Dad, wait. I know I'm not what you wanted. You just wanted a normal little girl with pigtails, two eyes, average grades and friends at the mall. I wanted that too.

Jillian gasps for air, trying to find the words.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
Whenever I looked into a mirror and I saw my face, I kept thinking that nothing about it makes any sense to me, and maybe, just maybe I'm not human at all. He proved me wrong. I just needed someone to prove me wrong.

Dejected, Ellen follows Norbert out of Jillian's room.

HALLWAY -

On their way out they pass Sarah feeling conflicted. Norbert locks Jillian's room.

EXT. TRISHA HOUSE - DAY

A FOR SALE sign already on the front lawn.

Ray, sporting a swollen lip, walks around the house with the LISTING AGENT, going through the final details. He sees Sarah arrive and wraps it up.

RAY
... doesn't need to be replaced for another twelve years or so. And this is the spare set.

Ray hands him a set of HOUSE KEYS.

LISTING AGENT
Great, if I have any questions, I'll give you a call.

Sarah waits for the agent to leave. Ray looks worried. One more Mazer who probably wants to kill him.

RAY
I didn't think you'd ever want to talk to me again.

SARAH
I just wanted to see your face, meet that other guy, the one I don't know at all. See what I missed. How I missed it.

Ray gives her a moment to study him with curious disgust.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I feel so stupid. And blind-sided. And really just sick to my stomach.
(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)
That's my baby sister! How could you do that?

RAY
She knew what she was doing.

SARAH
She couldn't have! And you should have known better!

RAY
I know. I'm sorry, I know. I'm not a pervert, I don't scour the internet for little girls, I didn't plan any of this. You've got to admit that your sister's not like any other fourteen year old you've ever met.

SARAH
And that makes it okay? It's not you it's her?

RAY
That's not what I meant. She... got to me.

SARAH
How? Maybe I'm just too small-minded for this shit.

RAY
What shit? What did you really want to hear about? How many times, where? For how long?

SARAH
Shut up! You fucked up! Don't try and spin this around on me!

RAY
I'm sorry!
(beat)
I'm so sorry. I know that it's the most selfish thing I've ever done.

Sarah tries to compose herself.

RAY (CONT'D)
Is she all right?

SARAH
She's under lock and key. She's not gonna leave Boulder until she turns legal.

RAY
What?

SARAH
Which sucks for me, because I have to see her every day.

RAY
(flash of fury)
Then move out. You're old enough not to live with your parents anymore. Get an apartment. And a career, not a job.

SARAH
Do not patronize me.

RAY
Don't blame her.

SARAH
I don't know which of the two of you I hate the most.

RAY
Come on, Sarah. You don't hate her.

Sarah leaves, maybe even more upset than when she first came.

INT. BOULDER SYMPHONY, GREEN ROOM - DAY

Jillian picks up her violin. She walks by Tyler who doesn't meet her eye.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Ray goes through his medicine cabinet. In a fit of anger, he throws all the pain killers he has into the toilet bowl.

Then flushes and watches hundreds of little white pills twirl around before they disappear.

EXT. TRISHA HOUSE - DAY

Ray locks the house. One last sad look, then he throws the backpack he once upon a time arrived with in the passenger seat of his truck and takes off.

INT. BOULDER LAW OFFICE - DAY

Ray signs some sort of document we don't understand the meaning of. Yet. Not being on the pain killers is taking a toll. His hand is trembling and he breathes heavier.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, DINING ROOM - DAY

Sarah cuts up a photo of Jillian into pieces. Then proceeds to stuff it in her mouth and eat it.

INT. NURSING HOME - DAY

Ray gives instructions to Debbie and where to reach him in case of emergency.

He kisses Charlotte good-bye, upset to leave her in that Lysol and death-reeking place.

INT. BOULDER SYMPHONY, STAGE - DAY

Jillian steps on-stage again. A gaze up to the balcony. Ray is gone. Andrew now deals with the control board.

Jillian starts to play. She plays faster than usual, more and more furious. Today, she has something different to say.

INT./EXT. RAY'S TRUCK

Ray leaves Boulder behind. He's clearly in pain now and in the throngs of withdrawal. An unlit cigarette between his lips. His hands shake.

He takes out his cell and dials.

INT. JILLIAN'S ROOM

Jillian's cell in her jacket pocket is set to vibrate. It rings, but nobody is there to hear it.

INT./EXT. RAY'S TRUCK

Ray listens to the ringing. Then an automated answer message.

RAY
Hey, Sugar.
(beat)
I didn't get to say good-bye. I'm so sorry. I mean, I'm not sorry about you and me, though you're probably the worst thing that's ever happened to me. So me leaving isn't the end of it all. I'm not asking you to wait for me, that would be stupid. I just... I want you to go to New York and be all you can be. Okay?
(about to hang up)
I love you.

He puts the phone away, his vision blurred. He looks for a lighter in the glove compartment.

Visibility ahead isn't great. This is a winding Colorado mountain street.

He veers the into the left lane and barely notices. He can't breathe anymore.

He tries to light the cigarette. His hands tremble hard enough now that making the lighter work is near impossible.

Chances are fifty-fifty that nothing's gonna happen. But it's a little surreal, like he's anticipating that explosion.

EXT. STREET

A 26 ton truck pulling a dolly and semi-trailer comes shooting from around the corner and SLAMS straight into Ray's pick-up.

Overwhelming SCREECHING as the pick-up gets dragged along and then spit out into the low ravine, where it overturns once and CRASHES against a tree. The metal warps around it.

There's no way anybody could survive this.

INT. BOULDER SYMPHONY, BACK STAGE

Jillian finishes with a fierce strike of the bow. APPLAUSE.

She walks back stage and sees Ellen's pale and sad face.

INT. MAZER HOUSE, HALLWAY

Larry stands at the doorway, talking with Norbert in hushed voices. He sees Jillian and interrupts.

JILLIAN
What's wrong?

LARRY
There was an accident, just outside of Boulder.

JILLIAN
What accident?

LARRY
We don't think he suffered much, the impact was severe.

Jillian shakes her head, that's not possible. The grave faces all around her confirm that it is.

She pushes Norbert away and runs out of the house.

EXT. STREET

Jillian runs until she can't anymore. She's in tears and completely out of breath.

Distraught, she arrives at a spot overlooking the vast beautiful Colorado landscape.

And that's when she SCREAMS from the bottom of her lungs.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
When I was born, I didn't make a sound. I wouldn't go out that way. I would go out with a deafening noise that would shake the whole world.

INT. JILLIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jillian's fingers glide over her Giachetti violin.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
It was my fault. I had somehow cursed myself. Every time I wanted something, I had to present the universe with some kind of sacrificial offering.

In a sudden fit of rage, Jillian takes the violin by the neck and hits her desk with it.

Hard.

Again and again, until the Giachetti has disintegrated into pieces. Nothing salvageable.

JILLIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Or maybe he was just a shitty driver.

Strange relief on Jillian's face at the sight of the chaos and destruction.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Dressed in black, Jillian waits far away from the crowd. She holds on to a plastic bag with the pieces of the violin.

The present MOURNERS slowly disperse. Many familiar faces pass by Jillian - Brian, Andrew, a guilt-ridden Larry, Debbie holding on to an oblivious Charlotte, shocked Sarah...

Charlotte stops for a moment, recognizing Jillian.

CHARLOTTE
Hallo, mein Liebling.

Jillian bravely holds back tears.

JILLIAN
I did what you said. I didn't stop.

CHARLOTTE
How did it go?

JILLIAN
Really well, I think.

CHARLOTTE
You'll come by and play for us again, won't you?

JILLIAN
(motions to plastic bag)
I can't.

CHARLOTTE
He wouldn't like that at all.

Jillian examines her hazy eyes, not sure Charlotte knows who she's talking about. But it doesn't matter. She's right.

GRAVE SITE -

Jillian walks up to the empty dark hole with the bag.

A GRAVE DIGGER watches her curiously.

JILLIAN
Can I throw this in there?

He shrugs, why the heck not.

Jillian throws her broken violin into the grave, on top of the coffin.

JILLIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Yeah, I know, it wasn't exactly the most understated act of my life. But it felt right to have my two first loves buried together.

INT. JILLIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jillian sits on her bed, chin on her knees. Her eyes are blood-shot and empty. An untouched tray of food.

There's a quiet KNOCK on the door. Then the door is unlocked from the outside. It's Sarah. Cool eyes, poker face.

JILLIAN
What do you want?

SARAH
Do you still want go? To New York? If so it's gotta be tonight.

She hands Jillian the acceptance packet from Juilliard back.

JILLIAN
You know I can't afford it without their support.

SARAH
His realtor sold the house. Dead or alive, he would have left you a fucking scholarship. Juilliard knows. They're waiting.

JILLIAN
Does Dad know?

SARAH
(shakes her head)
They only had my number.

Beat as Jillian tries to make sense of it all.

Sarah gives her an envelope with about $1000 in cash. And a credit card.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Mom's. Don't go crazy. Emergencies and deposits only. And this.

A business card.

SARAH (CONT'D)
It's a lawyer Brian recommended to me. You may need to get emancipated once you're there, for employment and such. I don't know how hard that's gonna be, but maybe talk up your high school diploma rather than your sexual escapades.

JILLIAN
Why are you doing this?

SARAH
I don't know if I want you in my life anymore.

Jillian swallows, slapped in the face.

JILLIAN
Just over a month ago, I would have given my right hand to be like you.

SARAH
Why? Why on earth would you want to be anything like me? Do you want to know what bugs me? Sure, you went behind my back, but I get that. What really bugs me is that you didn't even have to do anything. You were just being your old weird self. I'm never good enough.

Jillian looks at Sarah, seeing her insecurities for the first time clearly. Sarah softens a little.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Keep the right hand, Monster. You'll need it.

INT. GREYHOUND STATION - NIGHT

Several other sleep deprived TRAVELLERS waiting for their buses. Sarah returns with a ticket for Jillian.

SARAH
It's one way. You can stay on 'til Washington, then there's a two hour lay over.

EXT. GREYHOUND STATION

PASSENGERS line up to board the bus, Jillian and Sarah last.

JILLIAN
Won't they come after me?

SARAH
I got it covered.

They share an awkward moment of to hug or not to hug. In spite of everything, Jillian goes in for an embrace. Sarah hugs her back, then flicks her arm for good-bye.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Good luck, Monster.

INT./EXT. BUS

Jillian hands the BUS DRIVER her ticket, then looks for a window seat.

Most passengers are asleep. ELDERLY COUPLES lean against each other, a GIRL sleeps in her MOM's lap.

LATER - Jillian leans back in her seat and looks out of the window.

Watches the dark Colorado landscape fly by.

She feels something hard in her jacket pocket. Her cell phone. She completely forgot she had it.

It indicates there's a message. Jillian listens.

She gasps, when she hears Ray's voice.

She wipes the oncoming tears away, but they just keep running. Then the famous last words. Jillian buries her face.

Somewhere in the distance the first line of sunrise, breaking the blue of the sky with a touch of soft pink.

INT. TV STUDIO, MORNING SHOW - DAY

BACKSTAGE - Next morning. Sarah and Ellen stand behind monitors, while a busy CREW tapes a live feed of one of Boulder's most popular morning shows.

Norbert sits in the visitor seat, looking discombobulated, across from him LUCY CREGAN, ueber-friendly talk show host.

NORBERT
... For the past four years, the committee, the council and I, we have been working day and night to make sure that the community outreach programs are the strongest ones in the states.

LUCY
A lot of work, isn't it? How does your family deal with that?

NORBERT
My family supports me one hundred per cent.

LUCY
Your youngest daughter is quite a rising star, isn't she? I missed her recital at Mahlerfest, but I read the reviews.

NORBERT
She's a very talented little girl.

LUCY
Quite a handful, I bet.

NORBERT
Well, raising children is always a challenge and I fully recognize that. I'm sure all parents will agree with me on that.

LUCY
I have it from a very reliable source that she's been accepted to Juilliard, how great is that, and is starting this fall.

NORBERT
That -
(laughs nervously)

That is information no one else should have.

His eyes dart behind the cameras for help.

He locks eyes with Sarah. There's something conspiratory going on between Sarah and Ellen. A fake polite smile. Ellen's eyes force Norbert to go on speaking.

LUCY
That's quite the achievement.

NORBERT
Yes. Yes, it is. She's in Juilliard right now -

He checks in with Ellen whether that's correct. Ellen nods.

NORBERT (CONT'D)
(gritting teeth)
- very well taken care of by her... aunt. I'm extremely proud of her.

EXT. JUILLIARD - DAY

A beautiful late summer day. Green trees embellish the modern style building, the elite college of dramatic arts.

Happy, talented STUDENTS scatter along the campus lawn.

Jillian walks down the path with duffel bag. She's sweaty and exhausted, but exhilarated to finally be here.

Irma Abbott comes to greet her, puts an arm over her shoulder - like the non-existent aunt that Norbert made up.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
What I did, everything I ever did, isn't for the weak of heart.

EXT. ASSEMBLY - DAY

Norbert won election to Assembly. Ellen and Norbert rise in front of their SUPPORTERS, hugging each other happily.

Sarah opens a champagne bottle and hands them two glasses. She fills another glass and passes it on to - Brian. She smiles at him with loving adoration.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
Maybe I'll see them, when everything's blown over and maybe they'll understand that Sarah was right from the start, that I was a freak. That that never changed.

INT. NEW YORK, PAWN SHOP - DAY

What better place to buy a cheap violin? Jillian hands the SHADY CLERK eighty dollars and he hands her an old violin.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY

The LAWYER who was recommended by Brian sits across Jillian and goes through the emancipation process documents with her.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
I don't know what I learned. That I was capable of being this greedy, this thoughtless? Or that maybe, just maybe I belonged somewhere? To someone?

INT. ORCHESTRA REHEARSAL HALL - DAY

Jillian plays second violin in a few rows of strings in the large youth orchestra.

She seems to be fitting in with the rest of the many talented, geeky YOUNG MUSICIANS, concentrating hard on her work and looking up to the CONDUCTOR. He stops the rehearsal.

CONDUCTOR
Okay, we'll stop here. Come back tomorrow. But better.

LATER - Jillian packs up the sheet music and her new violin. A girl with a viola, PENNY, 17, chirpy, perky turns to her.

PENNY
I play like crap when I'm on my period. My name is Penny. I have mild ADD. And severe OCD. And I'm a virgin and that's not ever going to change because I refuse to get a Facebook account. Creeps the hell out of me.

JILLIAN
Jillian. I have an artificial right eye and I may have killed someone.

Penny nods impressed.

EXT. LINCOLN PARK - LATER

At a small outdoor coffee shop, Penny and Jillian sit with pastries and cups of coffee.

JILLIAN (V.O.)
And maybe one day I'll have to stop consuming so much sugar. You know, diabetes, kidney failure, cardiovascular disease, copper deficiency...

Penny watches perplexed when Jillian pours seven sugar packets into her coffee.

PENNY
Are you hypoglycemic or something?

JILLIAN
Call it an act of defiance.

Penny shrugs, "hey, it's your coffee".

Jillian sips on her sugar coffee, looks out at Lincoln Center and smiles.

JILLIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... yeah, it's fucking bad for you. But until then, my love, I can still taste you and have you rush through my veins, whenever I want.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END. *