The Affair

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PART ONE: NOAH.

EXT. ROOFTOP - PARK SLOPE, BROOKLYN - DAY.

Early morning. The unfinished roof is deserted. NOAH, 42, sits on a crate, smoking a cigarette and watching the sun rise slowly over the brownstones of Brooklyn.

He's wearing his pajama pants and a white tee-shirt. He's a handsome guy, well-built, solid. Maybe a little scruffy. Probably has a beard. And his hair is falling into his eyes. It's not some kind of hipster declaration, he just hasn't had time to get it cut.

From up on his perch, the city looks peaceful. Charming. Far away.

Noah takes another drag and extinguishes the cigarette. He picks up a hand-sized rock by the chimney vent, turns it over and reveals a compartment designed for hiding house keys, where he stashes the pack.

INT. BATHROOM- DAY.

Noah washes his mouth out with toothpaste and scrubs his hands vigorously in the sink. He breathes into them and sniffs.

An old-fashioned ALARM CLOCK goes berserk in the adjacent bedroom. Noah's wife, HALLA, 40, reaches one hand out from under a pile of covers and attempts to blindly silence it. Her hand flails, landing to the left and right of the clock, missing it every time.

Noah laughs.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, Noah turns off the alarm clock and pulls back the covers. Halla opens one eye and looks up at him, groggy.

HALLA
Hi friend.

NOAH
Hi friend.

Noah leans over and kisses her forehead. Her cheek. Her neck.

HALLA
You smell good.

She reaches up for him and he climbs on top of her. More sleepy kissing. As his hands move down her body -

The BABY MONITOR on the other side of their bed crackles alive and then admits a CRY.

Noah groans and rolls off of Halla.

NOAH
I'll get it.

HALLA
No, I'll get it. You load the car.

Halla slips out of bed, wearing his tee-shirt. He watches her go.

NOAH
Nice bum.

Halla slaps her ass in response. Noah grins.

EXT. STREET - DAY.

NOAH is packing a minivan on the curb outside his brownstone. It's one of those inconceivable acts of geometry that only men of a certain age with at least two children seem to have mastered. He approaches the task like a chess master. Absolute concentration.

His son, MARTIN, 13, comes out of the apartment and sits down on the stoop, watching him.

NOAH
Hey.

MARTIN
Hey.

NOAH
Are you packed?

MARTIN
Yup.

NOAH
Are you excited?

Martin doesn't answer. He picks angrily at some debris on the steps.

NOAH (CONT'D)
You're hiding it well, but I can tell that you are.

MARTIN
I wanted to stay here for the summer.

NOAH
I know.

MARTIN
I wanted to go to league camp.

NOAH
Well, next summer, if you bring that grade point average up, you can stay and go to league camp. -

MARTIN
That's ridiculous!

NOAH
Why is that ridiculous?

MARTIN
You said I could go to league camp -

NOAH
If you got your grades up. You seem to have forgotten the second clause of the contact.

MARTIN
It sucks at Grandpa's.

NOAH
That's not true.

MARTIN
It is true.

NOAH
Martin, your grandfather has a swimming pool, two tennis courts, and a sauna on his property. It objectively does not suck there.

Martin glares at his father.

MARTIN
You suck.

Noah shrugs.

NOAH
That is, at least, a more defendable hypothesis.

Martin spots his basketball tucked into middle of the suitcase rubric.

MARTIN
Oh shit, I've been looking for that.

He jumps up, darts over to the trunk and reaches for the ball -

NOAH
No wait!

But it's too late. Martin pulls the ball out, thus destabilizing the structure. The suitcases fall, popping open on the street.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Martin! What the hell?!

Martin just stares at him, blank.

NOAH (CONT'D)
What were you *thinking?*

Martin runs off into the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Noah sits in front of a massive floor-to-ceiling bookshelf, pulling select volumes and adding them to the pile.

His younger son, TREVOR, 8, walks through the room on his way to the kitchen.

NOAH
Trevor. Come here for a second.

Trevor looks at Noah in trepidation. He's been in similar situations. He knows they don't end well for him.

NOAH (CONT'D)
What are you going to read this summer?

Trevor shrugs.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Come on, you've got three glorious, uninhibited months ahead of you and a whole bookshelf in front of you. Pretty soon, you'll be nine and then ten, you'll get a job, you'll meet a girl, you'll have kids and you'll never have the chance to read for pleasure again. You have to make the most of the time you've got, little man. While the world is still your oyster.

Trevor reaches up and pulls down a book.

NOAH (CONT'D)
(taking the book)
No. Not that one.

TREVOR
Why not?

NOAH
You're too young.

TREVOR
Is it dirty?

NOAH
No. Who told you that?

TREVOR
My friend at school. She said her mom read your book and she said it had too much s-e-x.

NOAH
First of all, there's no such thing. And second of all, you go back to school and tell your little friend to tell her mother that you and all your siblings were the products of immaculate conception. So if she thinks my book is pornographic, it's her dirty mind at work, not mine. Tell her that.

Trevor sighs.

TREVOR
Do I have to?

EXT. STREET - DAY.

Noah is back on the curb, repacking the trunk. A VOICE begins speaking, over the scene. Noah doesn't react to it. He doesn't hear it.

VOICE
Mr. Kalish. Hi. Thanks for coming in.

NOAH'S VOICE
It's not like I had much of a choice.

VOICE
Well, we'll try not to take up too much of your time.

Trevor exits the brownstone and bounds down the steps, followed by his older sister, WHITNEY 16, who wears red lipstick, dark sunglasses and a tiny jumpsuit.

VOICE (CONT'D)
I'd like to begin by asking you a few questions about how this whole mess got started.

The kids climb into the minivan.

NOAH
(to Whitney)
Good morning, daughter.

WHITNEY
Good morning, father.

NOAH
Do you need your sunglasses in the car?

WHITNEY
I'm breaking them in.

NOAH
Are we going to see your eyes at all this summer?

WHITNEY
I doubt it.

VOICE
Is that alright with you? Mr. Kalish?

Halla comes out of the brownstone carrying their youngest daughter STACEY (2) in her arms.

NOAH'S VOICE
It's a free country, Pal. Ask away.

Halla opens the back seat and installs Stacey in her car seat.

HALLA
(looking around the car)
Where's Martin?

NOAH
Still in the house, isn't he?

HALLA
(frowning)
I don't think so.

INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY.

Noah wanders through the house, looking for his son.

NOAH
Martin? Martin?

VOICE
So can you tell us a bit about who you were in the summer of 2013?

Noah checks the kitchen .... it's empty.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY.

He checks the living room. Empty.

VOICE
Mr. Kalish?

NOAH'S VOICE
I don't understand the question.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY.

Empty.

NOAH
Martin? Come on dude, this isn't funny. Everyone is waiting on you.

NOAH'S VOICE
What, exactly, do you want to know?

VOICE
Anything you think is relevant.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL CLOSET - DAY.

Nothing but sheets and towels.

VOICE
How were you feeling about your life?

Noah closes the closet and heads down the hall towards a door with a KEEP OUT sign on it.

NOAH'S VOICE
Fine.

VOICE
Can you say a little more?

Noah's hand is on the doorknob-

NOAH'S VOICE
Great. I was feeling great. My kids were healthy. My wife was beautiful.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTIN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

A terrible mess. Basketball posters on the wall. Clothes strewn across the floor. Cereal boxes. Piles of sneakers.

Noah crosses the room -

NOAH'S VOICE
My life was pretty fucking perfect.

And opens the door to an adjacent bathroom -

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS.

Martin is dangling from the light fixture on the ceiling, HANGING by a cord.

Noah's heart stops.

NOAH
(small)
No.

Noah reaches up and rips the cord off the light. Martin falls to the ground. He lays there in a crumpled huddle.

Then he starts to giggle.

It takes Noah a moment to realize what's just happened. He SEES that the cord continues beneath Martin's collar. He yanks up Martin's shirt to reveal a rock-climbing harness, which was actually supporting the boy's weight.

Noah grabs Martin by the arm and pulls him to his feet with so much force he almost dislocates Martin's shoulder.

MARTIN
Ow! Dad! What the fuck?

INT. MARTIN'S ROOM - DAY.

Noah THROWS Martin into a chair.

NOAH
What is *wrong* with you?

MARTIN
It was a joke!

NOAH
You thought that was funny? You think killing yourself is -

MARTIN
I looked it up on the internet! It wasn't easy! They pay people a lot of money to fake a hanging. In, like, movies and shit. It's a real skill.

Noah stares at Martin.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
I thought you'd be proud of me.

NOAH
Are you *insane?* Everyone is in the car waiting for you. Is it so much to ask that for one day - *one day out of your entire life* - that you think of somebody other than yourself?

Martin's eyes start to swell.

MARTIN
(mumbling)
It was supposed to be a joke.

Noah doesn't know what to do. He would like to punch something. His kid, perhaps, or at least, a wall. Instead, he takes a deep breath and sits down heavily on the edge of the bed.

NOAH
Dude, what is going on with you? Last summer you were this happy little kid. What happened?

Martin doesn't respond. He can't. He's concentrating too hard on not crying. Noah picks up a cereal box, looks inside and RECOILS.

NOAH (CONT'D)
You have to clean up this room. You're going to get maggots.

MARTIN
(sniffling)
Now?

NOAH
No, forget it. We'll have it fumigated at the end of the summer.

Noah stands.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Let's go. Before your mother comes in.

Martin doesn't move.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Come *on*, man.

MARTIN
I hate Grandpa.

NOAH
I know. So do I. But look at it this way. At least you stand to inherit some of his money when he dies.

MARTIN
I won't take a *penny* of it.

NOAH
You'll change your mind.

EXT. STREET - DAY.

Noah opens the sliding side door and Martin climbs into the mini-van.

INT. MINIVAN -DAY.

Noah gets into the passenger's seat. Halla is driving.

HALLA
Everything okay?

NOAH
Fine.

HALLA
What happened?

NOAH
He had a stomach ache.

Halla turns around, worried.

HALLA
You feel okay, Marty?

In the backseat, Martin nods, subdued. Noah counts the his children.

NOAH
One, two, three, four.
(to Halla)
That's all the kids I've got, right?

HALLA
From me at least.

Noah smiles. Halla turns on the car.

INT. MINIVAN -DAY.

A few hours later. Stuck in bumper-to-bumper beach traffic on the one stretch of highway that takes vacationers from the city out to the beaches of Long Island.

In the backseat, Whitney is on her phone. Martin is staring out the window. Stacey is sleeping. And Trevor is, for some unknown reason, SINGING “Kumbaya” on an endless loop.

In the front seat, Noah squints at the road. He closes his eyes tightly and then opens them again.

NOAH
That’s weird. My vision just got blurry for a second.

HALLA
You okay?

NOAH
Yeah, it cleared.

HALLA
I spoke to my Dad. Guess what? He’s read your book.

Noah’s jaw tightens automatically.

NOAH
And?

HALLA
He really liked it. He said he’s excited to talk to you about it.

Noah rolls his eyes.

HALLA (CONT’D)
What?

NOAH
Nothing. That’s great. I’m excited to talk to him too.

HALLA
I don’t understand why you have such a chip on your shoulder about him. You act like he’s out to get you or something.

Noah doesn’t answer.

HALLA (CONT'D)
He's actually quite generous to younger writers. He's famous for his mentorship-

Noah closes his eyes again and takes a sharp breath in.

HALLA (CONT'D)
(worried)
What's going on?

NOAH
Nothing. I have a headache.

HALLA
Do we need to stop?

NOAH
No.

In the backseat, Trevor, who has fallen silent, starts to sing "Kumbaya" again.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Trevor?

TREVOR
Yeah?

NOAH
I'll pay you ten dollars to shut up.

TREVOR
(cheerfully)
Okay.

The car inches forward.

EXT. MONTAUK - ELMO'S PANCAKE PALACE - DAY.

Four hours later, the minivan finally pulls into a restaurant parking lot. All the kids pile out.

INT. BOOTH - DAY.

The family sit around a booth, looking at their menus. Whitney is still wearing her sunglasses.

HALLA
Whit, can you take those things off inside?

WHITNEY
I'm sure I *can.*

Noah reaches across the table and takes the sunglasses off his daughter's face.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)
Hey!

She looks up at him, angrily, through BLOODSHOT eyes.

NOAH
Where were you last night?

WHITNEY
I was at Courtney's.

HALLA
What were you *doing* at Courtney's?

A WAITRESS, early 30s, comes over to take their order. She's very pretty, with dark hair and wide-set eyes. Her name tag reads "Alison".

ALISON
What can I get you all?

WHITNEY
We were *studying.*

MARTIN
I'll have the burger.

NOAH
Really.

ALISON
(to Martin)
Fries?

MARTIN
Yeah.

WHITNEY
Really.

NOAH
Studying for what?

ALISON
(to Martin)
Cheese?

MARTIN
Yeah.

WHITNEY
The SATs.

NOAH
That test is in November.

ALISON
(to Noah)
Something to drink?

MARTIN
Sure. Surprise me. Something stiff.

She looks up at him. He smirks. She smiles and writes his order down.

HALLA
Your father and I are not morons, Whitney. We know what it looks like when someone has been smoking pot.

WHITNEY
Oh my God. First of all, no you don't because I've been high, like, fifty times in the last year and you have *never noticed* -

HALLA
Excuse me?

WHITNEY
And second of all-
(to Alison)
Is there *anything* on this menu that is *under* 1000 calories?

ALISON
Probably not.

WHITNEY
That's what I thought. I'll just have a diet Coke.

Halla grabs a menu-

HALLA
(to Alison)
Oh for God's sake, Miss, don't you have a salad or -

WHITNEY
Forget it. I’m not hungry.

HALLA
You have to eat.

TREVOR
Can I have the blueberry pancakes please?

ALISON
(writing on her pad)
Excellent choice.

NOAH
(to Halla)
Look at it this way ... if she’s not hungry, she’s not high.

ALISON
(to Whitney)
I could get the cooks to make you an egg white omelette. That’s what I usually have them make me.

Whitney looks at her suspiciously.

WHITNEY
But they cook in like, a ton of butter, right?

ALISON
No, I’ll make sure they use a nonstick frying pan. With a little cheese maybe-

WHITNEY
No cheese.

ALISON
No cheese. But how about some avocado? Because it’s the good fat. The kind that helps you burn more fat.

WHITNEY
Fine.

She passes her menu over. Alison looks at Noah and WINKS.

The noise of the scene starts to recede. There’s a slight RINGING in Noah’s ears.

VOICE
Do you remember the first time you saw her?

NOAH'S VOICE
Like it was yesterday.

Noah's POV: Alison is standing in a lotus position, with her right foot braced against her inner left thigh. Noah can SEE a glimpse of yellow underwear.

NOAH'S VOICE (CONT'D)
There was something so easy about her. So effortless.

Alison turns to Noah and says something that he can't quite hear. He frowns.

NOAH
Sorry, what?

ALISON
(far away)
What would you like to order?

He stares at her for a moment too long. Her gaze becomes concerned.

HALLA
Noah? Are you alright?

NOAH
I'm fine. I'm fine. I just need to use the... where is the ...

ALISON
Past the bar, take a left -

Noah gets up and heads quickly across the restaurant, to a door marked "RESTROOMS". He pushes through the door and then -

BLACKOUT.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY.

A little hallway in front of the bathrooms. Noah is lying on the floor, in a daze. His head is bleeding.

Noah's POV: A figure kneels in front of him, blurred. He blinks. It's clearly a woman. He blinks again and Alison comes into focus.

ALISON
Can you hear me? Are you alright?

NOAH
I think so.

He tries to sit up. He's overcome with dizziness -

NOAH (CONT'D)
Oh God.

ALISON
Should I call an ambulance?

NOAH
No!

ALISON
Are you sure?

NOAH
How long was I out?

ALISON
I'm don't know. A few minutes?

NOAH
Okay. I'll be fine. I'm just going to rest here for a moment.

The door to the restaurant swings open and a WOMAN enters. She eyes Noah and Alison strangely, then disappears into the women's bathroom.

Alison turns back to Noah.

ALISON
Let's at least give you some privacy.

She gets behind him, hooks her arms under his shoulders -

NOAH
Wait, no. What are you -

She pulls him into the men's room. The door closes behind them.

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM - DAY.

Alison props Noah up against the wall and crouches down to examine the cut on his forehead. She moves his hair to touch it. He GASPS in pain.

ALISON
That needs stitches.

Noah reaches up to feel for himself.

NOAH
I'm bleeding?

ALISON
You must have hit your head on something.

NOAH
Shit. Is there a first aid kit around here, or -

ALISON
Why don't you just let me call you an ambulance?

NOAH
(slightly panicked)
That really isn't necessary. If you would just pass me a few paper towels -

ALISON
Okay. Okay. You're in charge.

Alison stands, wets a pile of towels and kneels in front of him again to clean the wound. He WINCES.

ALISON (CONT'D)
So is this like, a typical day for your family?

NOAH
I'm not usually the one bleeding, but yeah.

She smiles.

ALISON
I'm Alison, by the way.

Noah looks up at her. She really is very beautiful. He has a sudden urge to reach out to her. To pull her towards him -

NOAH
I'm Noah.

A KNOCK on the door -

MARTIN'S VOICE
Dad! Are you in there?

NOAH
(calling)
Yeah man. I'm here.

MARTIN'S VOICE
Is something wrong?

NOAH
No, just got the runs. You may not want to stand too close to the door.

MARTIN'S VOICE
That's disgusting, Dad.

NOAH
Tell your mother I'll be right back.

They listen to the sound of Martin's footsteps walking away. Alison turns back to Noah. Her face is inches from his own. She is staring at him, curious. Waiting for an explanation.

NOAH (CONT'D)
I just don't want to worry them.

Beat. Then Alison nods and finally stands.

ALISON
Wait here. I'll find a band-aid.

INT. ELMO'S PANCAKE PALACE - DAY.

Noah slides back into the booth with the rest of his family. Halla immediately spots the bandage under his hair.

HALLA
Oh my God, what happened to you?

NOAH
I slipped. Hit my head on the sink.

HALLA
Just now? In the bathroom?

NOAH
Yeah, the waitress brought me a few bandages -

Halla watches Alison leave the restroom area and cross the restaurant.

HALLA
She was in the bathroom with you?

NOAH
No, of course not. She showed me where the first aid kit was and -

A chicken finger hits his head. Courtesy of Stacey.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Is this for me? Why thank you very much. Is it a cookie? Can I dip it in your milk?

Noah attempts to dip the chicken finger in Stacey's glass of milk. She SQUEALS with delight.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY.

The kids are loaded back into the minivan. Noah buckles Stacey into her car seat.

STACEY
You've got dirt on your face!

WHITNEY
That's not dirt, stupid. That's dry blood.

NOAH
Whitney, if you don't adjust the attitude, I swear to God ...

In the front seat, Halla turns and looks at Noah, concerned.

HALLA
Is it still bleeding?

NOAH
I doubt it. It was a tiny cut -

HALLA
When we get to my parent's place, I want to see it.

He freezes.

HALLA (CONT'D)
What?

NOAH
I forgot to leave a tip.

HALLA
It's fine. She was obnoxious anyway.

NOAH
Halla. They live on those tips. I'll be right back.

Before she can stop him, he's jogging back across the parking lot.

INT. ELMO'S PANCAKE PALACE - DAY.

Noah enters from the outside. Alison is clearing off the booth. He watches her from behind... her long, bare legs... her slim waist... her neck...

Just for a moment though. Then he pulls out his wallet, opens it, finds a bill-

She's moving back across the restaurant, trays in both hands, stacked high with dirty dishes-

Noah steps in front of her. She stops and smiles. It's radiant.

ALISON
Miss me?

NOAH
I forgot to leave a tip. I'm sorry. I'm a little out of it today.

ALISON
Understandably so.

NOAH
This is, uh, this is for you.

He holds up the twenty. But she has no hands.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Do you have a pocket or -

He scans her body for someplace to tuck the money.

ALISON
On my ass.

She steps towards him. He looks over her shoulder, down her back. Sees a pocket in the skirt.

NOAH
Oh, you want me to ... okay.

She moves even closer. Her breasts brush his chest. Before he can think about what he's doing, Noah reaches around her waist and slips the twenty into her back pocket.

ALISON
Thank you.

NOAH
You're welcome.

Alison pivots gracefully and moves past him, into the kitchen. He stares after her.

EXT. BRUCE BUTLER'S HOUSE - DAY.

Huge wooden gates, covered with ivy, open slowly. The minivan passes through and stops in the center of a circular, pebbled drive. Before them stands a Georgian country masterpiece. One of those dreamy old mansions, built by oil barons, during the turn of the previous century.

The front door swings open and Halla's mother, MARGARET, 65, comes flying out.

MARGARET
You're here! Finally!

The kids pile out of the car. One-by-one they embrace their grandmother.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Whitney let me look at you. God, you're so thin. Have you stopped eating or something?

HALLA
Practically.

MARGARET
(to Whitney)
Well, keep it up, you look fabulous.

HALLA
Mom, this is not a behavior pattern we want to encourage.

MARGARET
Don't listen to you mother. She's just jealous. She was always a donut. Lose a few more pounds dear, and I'll take you to Paris.

Behind the car, Noah has opened the trunk and begun unloading luggage. Martin sidles up to him.

MARTIN
Aren't you worried these people are going to fuck us up royally?

NOAH
Oh come on, your mother turned out okay.

MARTIN
She's a nutjob too, Dad.

NOAH
Maybe so, but if you keep talking about her like that, you're going to wind up with a fist in your mouth.

Martin stares at Noah, shocked.

NOAH (CONT'D)
We all have our limits, Pal.

Martin walks away.

EXT. YARD - DAY.

Noah, a beer in hand, opens the screen door and steps out of the house, unto the expansive deck. Before him is an epic backyard. A swimming pool in the foreground. Tennis courts in the distance. A flower garden. A vegetable garden. A fountain. A gazebo. A hammock.

Trevor is already in the pool. Whitney is reading in the hammock. Martin is hitting balls down on the tennis courts.

Noah HEARS a sound behind him and turns. Halla's father, BRUCE, 70, has joined him on the deck. He's holding a bottle of white burgundy.

BRUCE
Noah, I thought I might be able to interest in you in an apertif.

NOAH
Thanks Bruce. I've got a beer.

BRUCE
(frowning)
Where in the world did you find that?

NOAH
In the refrigerator?

BRUCE
Huh. Must have been left by one of the Mexicans.

Bruce pours himself a glass and shows the bottle to Noah.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
It was a gift from Paramount.

NOAH
That's right. The new movie opens soon, doesn't it?

BRUCE
Next month.

NOAH
Have you seen it?

BRUCE
I couldn't bear to. After the mess they made of my last book ... nobody listens to me out there. Nobody actually wants my opinion. They just want me to cash my check and show up at the premiere. So that's what I do now. And I feel like a bit of a whore, of course, but then I come home and I look around...

He surveys his kingdom.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
And I feel better.

Noah suppresses an eye roll. Both men drink.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
So, I read your little book.

Noah winces.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
I enjoyed most of it very much. Of course you could have used a decent editor, but the first novel, by an unknown writer ... I'm sure you didn't get to pick.

NOAH
No.

BRUCE
Halla tells us it did well? I don't keep up with such things.

NOAH
Well enough to get a second book.

BRUCE
Well congratulations, son. That's not easy to do.

Bruce holds out his glass. They clink.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Now you can finally quit that horrible job of yours.

NOAH
It wasn't *that* big an advance.

BRUCE
Oh no? Pity.

NOAH
I like my job, Bruce. I wouldn't quit it even if I did make the kind of money you do.

BRUCE
Your first book felt a bit disjointed, if you want to know the truth. Like you never really had the chance to complete a thought. You need to give yourself *time,* Noah. To write, of course, but just to *be.* Out here, some days I don't even go into my office. I just walk down to the beach and think.
(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)
By the time I sit back down at my computer, a whole chapter just flows out of me.

Noah doesn't respond.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Everyone has one book in them. Almost nobody has two.

Noah drains his beer.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
How's the brownstone?

NOAH
It's wonderful.

BRUCE
Large enough for all of you?

NOAH
(flat)
Yes. Thank you again for the loan.

Bruce waves him off.

BRUCE
It was my pleasure. I couldn't have my grandchildren growing up in a tenement.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY.

Halla and her mother are making dinner in the kitchen. Stacey is coloring at the table. Noah enters and retrieves another beer from the fridge.

NOAH
I'm going to take a walk.

MARGARET
Don't go far. We eat promptly at six. Otherwise Bruce gets heartburn.

Noah leaves.

EXT. THE BEACH - DAY.

Noah sits down by the surf, nursing his beer, watching the waves. The beach is relatively empty.

It’s early in the season, and most of the sunbathers have gone in for dinner. Only the SURFERS are still in the water, sucking the marrow out of the swell.

Out of the corner of his eye, Noah notices a ROGUE BOARD drifting towards shore. He looks around for the owner, but there’s nobody close by. Worried that it will be swept out again by the tide and lost, Noah gets up, wades into the water to retrieve it.

Then he sits back down in his spot.

NOAH’S VOICE
If you asked me if I was a happy man, back then, I would have said yes. I loved my wife. I loved my kids. My first book had just come out... everything I promised myself I’d achieve when I was a young man... I’d done it.

VOICE
But?

NOAH’S VOICE
That’s the thing. There was no “but”. When I look back on what happened, I couldn’t tell you why.

A SURFER appears suddenly, like a seal, in the white water. He stands and waves. Around his ankle, there’s a broken leash.

SURFER
(re: the board)
Thanks for the rescue, man. It’s getting gnarly out there.

NOAH
No problem.

SURFER
I’m Cole.

NOAH
Noah.

They shake.

COLE
You gonna paddle out?

NOAH
No, I don’t ... I’m just watching.

COLE
On vacation?

NOAH
That's right.

COLE
Want to learn? I teach people. I run a clinic. We meet every morning. Seven am at Tower 4.

NOAH
Thanks but I'm not sure it's my thing.

COLE
Where you staying?

Noah gestures vaguely behind him in the direction of Bruce's house.

COLE (CONT'D)
Oh wow. You a wall street guy?

NOAH
(surprised)
Do I *look* like a Wall Street guy?

COLE
Hey, no offense man. I like Wall Street guys. They're psychopaths. They make good surfers.

NOAH
I'm a teacher. It's my father-in-laws house.

COLE
Ah. Well. I like teachers too. If you change your mind, just show up one morning. First lesson's on me.

NOAH
Thanks man.

COLE
It's the least I can do. You saved my board.

Noah nods. Cole starts down the beach. As he walks away, Noah SEES the tattoo of an angel spread across his back.

COLE (CONT'D)
(turning back)
If you see a bonfire outside your window tonight, that's my crew. We're having a sort of meet-and-greet to see who's back for the season. You should come.

NOAH
But I don't surf.

COLE
Alright, don't come. But don't call the cops.

INT. BRUCE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT.

Halla applies a fresh bandaid to the cut on Noah's forehead.

HALLA
How did it happen again?

NOAH
I told you. I slipped in the bathroom while I was washing my hands. The floor was wet. It was just ... it was stupid.

Halla hesitates-

HALLA
I was afraid you were having another seizure.

NOAH
Stop -

HALLA
You weren't feeling well all day.

NOAH
There's nothing wrong with me. The doctors said so. You're making us both crazy worrying about it.

Halla's eyes start to well up.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Hey. Hey, look at me.

She looks at him.

NOAH (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

She shakes her head.

NOAH (CONT'D)
What's going on?

HALLA
I don't want to lose you.

NOAH
Halla. Baby. You're not going to lose me. You will never, ever, lose me.

She moves into his chest and he wraps his arms around her. He kisses the top of her head ... her ear ... her neck... her mouth...

INT. BRUCE'S HOUSE - SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Noah and Halla make love silently in a little attic room. They move with the practiced familiarity of two people who have been together for years, who know each other's bodies like their own...

Noah is close to coming. He shuts his eyes. His tongue slides out of his mouth a little. Halla laughs.

Noah's eyes pop open.

NOAH
What?

HALLA
Your face when you're about to come is funny.

There's a SOUND outside the door. Halla freezes.

HALLA (CONT'D)
Did you hear something?

NOAH
No.

HALLA
I did. Stop, stop.

From outside the door, comes a light scratching, and then-

STACEY'S VOICE
Mama? I had a bad dream.

Noah groans and rolls off of his wife for the second time that day. Halla scrambles out of bed and opens the door. Stacey is huddled on the floor, crying. Halla swoops her daughter up in her arms.

STACEY
I don't like it here.

HALLA
It's okay, baby. It's just a strange house. You can sleep with us.

INT. BRUCE'S HOUSE - SPARE BEDROOM - LATER.

The room is dark. Noah and Halla lie in bed with Stacey between them. The girls are fast asleep. Noah is awake, staring at the ceiling. He turns and looks out the window. From this high up, he has a clear view, past the backyard, over the dunes, all the way to the water. There, in the distance, he can see the distinct flicker of fire.

NOAH'S VOICE
I was a little restless, sure. But all men are a little restless.

He turns and looks at his sleeping family.

EXT. DUNES - NIGHT.

Noah quietly opens the wooden gate that separates Bruce's property from the sand. He continues down a small path of wooden planks through the dunes.

NOAH'S VOICE
You give up some personal liberties to live in a secure state. On all levels. National. Municipal. Marital.

The sky above him is streaked with stars.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Noah wanders down the deserted beach, headed towards the bonfire.

NOAH'S VOICE
I'd never had a problem with it before. I liked being married. When other men used to complain about their wives, I'd just think "Well that poor sucker made a bad choice."

Up ahead, he sees a woman sitting alone on the sand, close to the surf. As he crosses behind her, she turns to look at him.

It's Alison. Her face is illuminated by the moon. She looks stunning. Otherwordly.

NOAH
(amazed)
Hi.

ALISON
You found me.

NOAH
What? No, I was just ... I was just out for a walk and you happened to be -

ALISON
(smiling)
Hey Noah? I was kidding.

NOAH
Oh. Right. Sorry, I -

ALISON
How's your head?

NOAH
It's - uh - it's fine now. Thank you.

ALISON
Are you going to the party?

NOAH
Uh - what party?

ALISON
The surfers are throwing a bonfire.

NOAH
I don't surf.

ALISON
Me neither. Walk me home then?

NOAH
(surprised)
Um, okay.

ALISON
Unless you have somewhere else to be?

NOAH
No, I - where do you live?

ALISON
I'm just up over that dune.

She holds out her hand to him for assistance. He pulls her up to stand. She tries to brush the sand off her body.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Would you mind cleaning the places I can't reach?

She turns her rear towards him. She's wearing jeans and a thin tank. There's sand caked all over her very attractive ass.

Beat.

NOAH
I don't think that's a good idea.

Alison turns back towards Noah and grins.

ALISON
Fair enough.

She pulls a pack of cigarettes out of her purse.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Want one?

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT.

Noah and Alison walk down a little paved road that runs parallel to the beach. They're both smoking.

ALISON
I don't get it. Are you a writer or not?

NOAH
I've written a book.

ALISON
So you are then.

NOAH
No, but you know what they say. Everyone has at least one book in them. You haven't really proven anything until you've followed it up.

ALISON
I don't know anyone who says that.

NOAH
(weary)
I do.

ALISON
Sounds like you hang out with assholes.

Noah smiles. He's never thought of it that way.

ALISON (CONT'D)
And your wife? What does she do?

NOAH
She, um, she sells luxury books.

ALISON
(frowning)
Luxury books?

NOAH
You know, coffee table books. On fashion. Or travel. Lifestyle stuff.

ALISON
She's a writer too?

NOAH
No, she doesn't - she *sells* them. To hotels and fancy stores.

ALISON
So she sells books that rich people read?

NOAH
Well, I mean, you certainly *can* read them. But mostly, they're kind of decorative.

Alison laughs.

NOAH (CONT'D)
What?

ALISON
Nothing. I just never knew that was a job.

NOAH
Yeah, well, it's not like curing cancer, but Halla's got a great eye, so...

Alison stops.

ALISON
This is me.

They're standing in front of a gravel driveway which leads to a small, airy beach cottage, up on stilts.

NOAH
Wow. What a great house.

ALISON
I think so.

She heads up the driveway.

ALISON (CONT'D)
So does she sell your book?

Noah is lost for a moment in the moonlit perfection of this little bungalow.

NOAH
What? No.

EXT. OUTDOOR SHOWER - NIGHT.

Alison leads Noah around the side of the house to a quaint water closet made entirely of wooden planks. She strips down to her bikini and steps inside, barely closing the slotted door behind her.

ALISON (O.C.)
(from inside the shower)
Do you mind if I just rinse off?

NOAH
Not at all.

The SOUND of water turning on. Behind the door, steam begins to rise. A moment and then Alison's bikini top drops to her feet.

NOAH (CONT'D)
I love these things.

ALISON (O.C.)
What?

NOAH
(shouting)
I said I love these things!

ALISON (O.C.)
Outdoor showers?

NOAH
(shouting)
Yeah.

ALISON (O.C.)
Come on in! When the planks get wet they smell like pine.

NOAH
(shouting)
I can smell it from here!

Alison's wet head appears around the door. She reaches out a glistening hand.

ALISON
You have to try it.

She grabs Noah's arm. Her touch startles him. Snaps him back to reality.

NOAH
(sharply)
No.

He pulls away, almost violently. He looks around. What is he *doing* here?

NOAH (CONT'D)
I have to go. It's late. I'll, um, I'll see you around.

Noah turns and leaves as quickly as he can.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT.

Noah walks down the dark road, trying to calm his heartbeat. Behind him, he HEARS the muffled sound of a man and a woman arguing. The woman's voice sounds a lot like Alison.

The fight seems to escalate. They're screaming at each other.

Noah slows down.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT.

Shrouded by shadows, on the far side of the street, Noah watches the events unfolding down Alison's driveway.

She's wrapped in a towel talking to a MAN, mid-30s, in swim trunks. Noah is too far away to hear what they're saying. A surfboard leans against a parked car.

Alison PUSHES the man away as hard as she can. As he stumbles back, the motion-sensitive light switches on and Noah can see his face -

It's Cole.

Cole reaches for Alison. She SLAPS his hand away. He comes at her again, grabbing her by the hair, whispering into her ear. Noah doesn't know what to do. It looks like she's being attacked. He steps forward, into the street, with the intent of saving her -

Just as he does, she turns her head and looks down the driveway. Noah FREEZES. She seems to SEE him. Somehow, through the dark, she's looking right at him.

Then she does something strange. She SHAKES HER HEAD. It's a slight movement, but it's clear.

Alison turns back to Cole and says something incendiary. He takes a beat, looks at her, then he PUSHES her against the hood of the parked car. He bends her over on her stomach and enters her from behind.

Alison rests her head against the hood of the car. She's facing down the driveway. She's facing Noah. Her eyes meet his and LOCK.

He knows he should go - it isn't right to watch - but he can't move. He can't breathe. Somehow he knows that she *wants* him to stay. Like she's putting on a show.

For him.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY.

Noah is sitting across the table from a POLICE OFFICER, mid-40s. His hair is shorter, almost cropped. He's older too, though it's difficult to say how much. He looks beyond tired. He's weary.

He stares off into space, remembering.

POLICE OFFICER
Mr. Kalish? Mr. Kalish?

Noah snaps back to the present moment.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
Then what happened?

NOAH
What do you mean?

POLICE OFFICER
You walked her home and then?

Noah looks at the cop. Confused. Innocent. He shrugs.

NOAH
Nothing. I left.

CUT TO BLACK.

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

PART TWO: ALISON

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE - DAY.

Ditch Plains, Montauk. Dawn. The same beach cottage. Up on stilts, with a view of the ocean.

ALISON, 31, lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. She turns over and looks at COLE, 35, sleeping next to her. He's facing away from her, curled around a pillow.

Alison stares at his back. Between his shoulders, there's a striking TATOO of the archangel Gabriel, as a child, sitting down, holding his knees to his chest. His wings are spread majestically behind him. A sword lies at his feet.

Alison reaches her hand out to touch the tattoo, then thinks better of it, and slips out of bed instead.

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY.

Cosy and cluttered. Shells from the Maldives, rocks from Hawaii, wood carvings from Indonesia. The old wood floors are covered with colorful rugs. The couches are deep and faded by the sun.

Alison fills a tea kettle with water and sets it to boil on the stove.

COLE (O.S.)
(from the other room)
Where'd you go?

ALISON
Nowhere.

COLE (O.S.)
Come back to bed.

ALISON
Okay.

She doesn't move.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY.

Alison climbs back into bed. Cole turns and wraps his arms around her.

COLE
How'd you sleep?

ALISON
Fine.

COLE
Any dreams?

Alison frowns, trying to remember -

ALISON
No.

COLE
You're supposed to write them down as soon as you wake up.

Alison looks to the bed stand on her left, where a silly pink "dream journal" remains in its packaging.

ALISON
Okay.

COLE
That lady we talked to said it would really help.

ALISON
I know.

COLE
I remember my dream.

He pulls her closer to him.

COLE (CONT'D)
Want to hear?

ALISON
I don't know...
(she kisses his neck)
Was it dirty?

COLE
Not exactly.

She moves down his chest.

COLE (CONT'D)
You were pregnant.

She freezes.

ALISON
Really.

COLE
Really.
(beat)
What do you think about that?

They stare at each other. It's a serious question.

Alison doesn't answer. Instead, she moves her mouth farther down his stomach. Cole makes a half-hearted attempt to stop her -

COLE (CONT'D)
Ali...

Her head disappears from frame. Cole gives up. He lies back and groans.

CUT TO:

Alison and Cole having sex. He's on top. She's staring at the ceiling. Her arms are wrapped around him. But her expression is oddly vacant. Like her mind is someplace else entirely.

Cole comes ferociously. He rolls to one side. She looks at him and smiles.

COLE (CONT'D)
How was that?

ALISON
Really good.

Cole knows she's lying. He sighs.

EXT. ALISON'S HOUSE - DECK - DAY.

An hour later. Alison emerges from the house, holding her tea. She sits down in a rocking chair and looks out. Across the street, she can SEE a section of the ocean between two houses. The sun is rising over the water.

On the driveway below, Cole appears, in a half-zipped wetsuit, carrying his surfboard under his arm.

He waves to her. She waves back.

COLE
(calling up)
What are you doing today?

ALISON
I was thinking about going to work.

COLE
And later?

She shrugs.

COLE (CONT'D)
I'm going to swing by and visit him after my clinic this afternoon. Want to meet me there?

ALISON
Okay.

COLE
Can you be there by four?

ALISON
I think so.

COLE
Cool. And then afterwards, I want to take you out to dinner. Unless you already have a hot date?

ALISON
I have to check my calendar.

Cole grins.

COLE
You do that.

He starts down the driveway. She watches him go. Suddenly, she stands and goes to the railing -

ALISON
Be careful!

Cole stops, turns back. He looks concerned.

COLE
I will, Ali.

EXT. OUTDOOR SHOWER - DAY.

Alison sits on the floor of the outdoor shower, under the spray. She's staring at the water as it hits her feet and disappears between the slatted wooden planks. We get the feeling she's been sitting there for a while. Like, maybe, she's having a hard time getting up.

A VOICE starts speaking. It's the same voice we heard on Noah's side, the POLICE OFFICER. And just like Noah, Alison doesn't seem to HEAR it.

VOICE
Why don't you tell me how it began?

ALISON'S VOICE
Oh God, it was so long ago, who remembers?

VOICE
We're hoping that you do, Ms. Bailey.

EXT. ROAD - DAY.

Alison peddles her bicycle along the side of Montauk Highway on her way into town. The road is mostly deserted. The sun is now cresting over the tops of the hills.

ALISON'S VOICE
It all started on a dark and stormy night.
(beat)
Oh, God, I'm kidding. Please don't write that down.

INT. ELMO'S PANCAKE PALACE - BATHROOM - DAY.

In a dirty, cramped employee bathroom, Alison changes into her uniform. A short, candy-striper dress. She rolls her hair into a tight bun and covers it with a baseball cap that reads ELMO'S PANCAKE PALACE.

INT. ELMO'S PANCAKE PALACE - KITCHEN - DAY.

Alison emerges from the bathroom into the restaurant kitchen. The LINE COOKS are behind the counter, prepping food.

LINE COOKS
Alison! Que pasa?

ALISON
Otro dia juntos en el paraiso.

They laugh. She goes to the linen closet, finds an employee apron, order pad, etc., then turns and bumps smack into -

LUTHER, mid-thirties. Too handsome for his own good.

LUTHER
Hey, good morning.

ALISON
Luther. What are you doing here?

LUTHER
I own the place.

ALISON
It's seven am. Isn't that your bedtime?

LUTHER
Ha.

INT. ELMO'S PANCAKE PALACE - COUNTER - DAY.

Alison stands behind the counter, wiping down menus and stacks them in a pile. Luther hovers.

LUTHER
So what's going on, Bailey?

ALISON
Not much.

LUTHER
You know what I was thinking about last night? That first summer you came to work for us. What were you, sixteen? My father still owned the place. I was working behind the counter. Remember that?

ALISON
Sure.

LUTHER
God, you were so hot back then, in your little candy stripes.

She tries to ignore him.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Not to say there's anything wrong with you now, but fifteen years ago... *jesus*. I thought, if I just put my noodle in that girl's ca-ca before I turn 18, I will die a happy man. And then I did. The end.

She glares at him. He grins.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
I love that story.

Alison moves down the counter and begins scooping butter from a large tubs, into individual serving trays.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
How's Cole?

ALISON
He's fine.

LUTHER
You guys still shacked up together?

ALISON
We're married, Luther.

LUTHER
Listen. I didn't want to be the one to have to tell you this, but the last couple of times I've been down to Ditch Plains, he's been joined at the hip with this girl named Jolene.

ALISON
She *works* for him. Just like I work for you.

LUTHER
Okay maybe. But have you *seen* her? Because assuming she's not half the bitch you are (and honestly, how could she be) and assuming Cole has eyes in his head, I'm telling you, it's just a matter of time until -

ALISON
(annoyed)
Don't finish that sentence.

JANE, late twenties, enters the restaurant from the outside door, already in her uniform.

JANE
Sorry I'm late.

LUTHER
(displaced sexual frustration)
Jesus Jane.

She stops. Confused.

JANE
What the hell are you doing here?

LUTHER
This is my restaurant. Why does everyone keep asking me that?

JANE
(to Alison)
How are you?

ALISON
I'm fine.

JANE
Isn't today -

ALISON
(quickly)
Yes.

JANE
Why did you come in?

ALISON
I'm meeting Cole later.
(to Luther)
I have to leave a little early today.

LUTHER
What? Why? Is it like your fucking anniversary or something?

JANE
Luther!

LUTHER
What?

JANE
Are you high?

LUTHER
No, this is natural charm.

He storms out of the restaurant, back into the kitchen. The girls look at each other and laugh.

INT. ELMO'S PANCAKE PALACE - COUNTER - LATER.

Mid-afternoon. The lunch rush is finally clearing out. Jane and Alison are both back behind the counter, looking worse for wear. Alison consolidates ketchup bottles. Jane empties the coffee and makes another pot.

JANE
I went to see that psychic yesterday.

ALISON
The one your cousin knows?

JANE
Yeah. Her boat is parked down at the Marina.

Jane finds a glittering business card in her purse and holds it up for Alison to see.

ALISON
And?

JANE
She was incredible. I swear to God I didn't tell her a thing, but she knew my whole life. All about Tim. She knew that he was married and that he had three kids. She told me that it was an impossible relationship and that I had to end it.

ALISON
I've been telling you that for six months.

JANE
Yes, but she's a *professional.* And she said she had a vision of me standing beneath a waterfall with the man I was going to marry.

ALISON
(genuinely)
That's very exciting.

JANE
Isn't it*?* Do you know where I can find a waterfall?

ALISON
I think there are some in upstate New York. I'll borrow the truck from Cole and take you next weekend.

JANE
Really?

ALISON
Sure. We'll make a day of it. Maybe go into the city afterwards. Find a club...

JANE
What if we meet my soulmate?

ALISON
We'll bring him with us.

JANE
What if he doesn't like clubbing?

A BELL rings to indicate the front door has opened. Noah and his family enter the restaurant. Noah is holding Stacey, who's half-dozing, sucking her thumb against his shoulder. He talks to her softly, trying to wake her up. She nods and then cranes her little neck to kiss him on the cheek.

VOICE
Do you remember seeing him for the first time?

ALISON'S VOICE
Yes.

VOICE
Do you remember what you thought?

No response.

VOICE (CONT'D)
Ms. Bailey?

ALISON'S VOICE
I remember he was holding his daughter.

Halla looks around the restaurant for someone to help them. She sees Jane and Alison behind the counter and gives an impatient little wave.

JANE
A six-top. Awesome.

She grabs some menus off the pile.

ALISON
I'll take them.

JANE
Don't you have to go soon?

ALISON
I'll cover this table. Then I'll leave.

Alison takes the menus from Jane and heads across the restaurant.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Welcome to Elmo's. Will you need a high chair?

Noah looks up at her and smiles.

NOAH
That would be great.

CUT TO:

INT. ELMO'S PANCAKE PALACE - COUNTER - DAY.

A few minutes later. Alison fills six glasses with ice water.

She notices the card for Jane's psychic lying on the counter. She picks it up, considering...

Suddenly, Noah and Stacey appear on stools in front of her. Alison quickly pockets the card.

ALISON
Why hello.

NOAH
Hello. We're sorry to bother you. We were wondering if you had any crayons.

ALISON
I bet I do.

Alison smiles at Stacey. The little girl just looks at her shyly. She's sucking on a necklace of plastic beads.

ALISON (CONT'D)
My God, she's cute.

NOAH
Yeah, I think so.

Alison finds a pail of crayons behind the counter.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Oh Stacey. Look what the nice waitress gave you. What do you say?

STACEY
Thank you very much.

Alison's heart melts.

ALISON
You're very welcome, Darling.

Meanwhile, Noah has put two crayons up his nose and he's coloring with them on the back of paper place mat.

NOAH
Look at me. I'm a coloring walrus!

Stacey laughs. Alison notices one of the beads in her necklace is MISSING.

ALISON
Oh no, you've lost a bead.

NOAH
What?

Noah takes the necklace out of Stacey's mouth and looks at it.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Shit. Stacey, did you swallow one of these?

Before she can respond, Noah dumps the crayons out on the counter. Then he plugs Stacey's nose, put his finger in her mouth and makes her vomit into the pail. It all happens so quickly, and he's so nonchalant about it, that Stacey doesn't even have time to get scared. She whimpers a little, when it's over, but doesn't cry. Noah pulls her onto his lap.

NOAH (CONT'D)
You're okay, baby. You're okay.

Noah looks down into the bucket and pulls out a bead.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Look at what was in your tummy!
That's not food.

Alison stares at him, amazed. She's never seen a man handle a child so easily.

NOAH (CONT'D)
(re: the bucket)
I'm sorry about the -

ALISON
No, it's okay. Is she-

NOAH
She's fine. Maybe, if you have some apple juice or something?

ALISON
I'll bring it right over to you.

Noah picks up Stacey and carries her back to the booth. Alison turns to the soda fountain, reeling.

CUT TO:

INT. ELMO'S PANCAKE PALACE - DINING ROOM - DAY.

Alison carries a tray full of drinks across the restaurant. Noah comes towards her, from the other direction. He looks suddenly quite pale. There are sweat beads forming along his hairline

ALISON
Are you alright?

NOAH
Fine. Could you just tell me where the bathroom -

ALISON
Past the bar. Door on the left.

Noah presses past her, stumbling a little. She watches him go, concerned.

INT. ELMO'S PANCAKE PALACE - DAY.

Alison pushes through a door marked "Restrooms", which opens unto a little hallway. Noah is sitting on the ground, in a daze. His head is bleeding.

ALISON
Oh my God! Are you alright?

NOAH
I think so.

ALISON
What happened?

NOAH
I'm not sure. I may have had a seizure.

ALISON
A *seizure?*

NOAH
Just a little one.

ALISON
Wait, I'll go get your wife.

NOAH
No -

ALISON
No?

NOAH
I'll be alright. Could you just... could you sit with me for a second?

Alison looks at him warily.

NOAH (CONT'D)
I'm really okay. This has happened before. I just need to rest for a moment.

She sits down next to him. He looks at her. Tries to smile.

NOAH (CONT'D)
I'm Noah, by the way.

ALISON
I'm Alison.

Noah leans his head back against the wall and closes his eyes. Alison watches him. She's suddenly overwhelmed with tenderness for this man. She wants to reach out to him. To take his hand or something.

ALISON (CONT'D)
This really isn't your day, is it?

NOAH
(eyes still closed)
I've had worse.

A phone RINGS in Alison's pocket. She takes it out and looks at the caller ID. It's Cole.

Alison quickly silences the ringer and puts the phone away.

ALISON
Sorry. Wait here. I'll find you a bandaid.

Noah opens his eyes and looks at her.

NOAH
(sincerely)
Thank you.

INT. ELMO'S PANCAKE PALACE - DAY.

The restaurant is practically empty. Alison clears off the carnage that Noah's family left in the booth. Jane comes up with a tray, to help her.

JANE
Please go. Let me finish this.

ALISON
You sure?

JANE
Yes, go. Get out of here. Tell Cole I say hello.

ALISON
You're the greatest.

Alison removes her hat and apron and shakes out her hair.

JANE
How'd you make out?

ALISON
What? Oh, they stiffed me.

JANE
Really?

Alison nods.

JANE (CONT'D)
Assholes.

EXT. ROAD - DAY.

Alison, back in her civilian clothes, rides her bike through the quaint beach town.

She stops in front of a little bakery and hops off.

INT. BAKERY - DAY.

Alison points to a chocolate cupcake covered with rainbow sprinkles.

ALISON'S VOICE
Look, I can't really tell you what I was thinking. That first year, everything was still such a blur.

ALISON
Three please. And some candles.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY.

With the cupcakes packaged neatly in her basket, Alison rides along the side of the road.

ALISON
I do remember the sun was really bright. Like, unusually strong for so early in the season.

She stops at a four-way intersection, gets off her bike and walks it off the road, to the mouth of a dirt lane flanked by holly trees.

She shades her eyes with her hand and stares down the path.

ALISON'S VOICE
There was no place to hide.

EXT. MARINA - DAY.

Alison rides her bike into the parking lot of the fishing marina.

EXT. DOCKS - DAY.

Alison stands at the end of one of the docks.

She reaches into her bag and pulls out the glittery business card that Jane left on the counter.

It reads:

Isabel Guralnik, Psychic. "The Painted Lady"

Alison looks up again. Sure enough, the boat in front of her is called *The Painted Lady.*

INT. ISABEL'S BOAT - HULL - DAY.

WHACK. A knife descends on a cutting board, severing a fish head.

A woman, ISABEL, mid-60s, with a crown of kinky grey hair, tosses the head in a nearby bucket. Alison nervously sits at a little card table, watching her.

ISABEL
So you're a friend of Jane's?

ALISON
We grew up together.

ISABEL
Where?

ALISON
Here.

Isabel turns and looks at Alison over her crooked wire-rimmed frames.

ISABEL
In Montauk?

ALISON
That's right.

ISABEL
A native. That's very good. That means your reading will be very clear.

With one swift motion, Isabel tears out the fish's spine.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HULL - LATER.

Isabel sits across the card table from Alison. A line of tarot cards are spread between them.

ISABEL
And the final card.

Isabel flips over The Devil.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
Lucifer. That's worrisome.

ALISON
Am I going to die?

ISABEL
No, that's not what Lucifer means. This is the card of temptation. Something is coming. Something... powerful... wild... ... it may be a very good thing... or he may enslave you.

ALISON
He?

Isabel frowns at the cards.

ISABEL
This is very strange.

She holds up another card. It's the picture of a very young squire.

ALISON
Who is that?

ISABEL
The Page of Cups. Do you have any children?

Beat.

ALISON
No.

ISABEL
Huh. Then I think you are about to receive a message. Be careful with messenger. He is very sensitive. You must be clear with him. Or he will misunderstand you. He *wants* to misunderstand you.

Alison picks up the card and stares at the smiling little boy.

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY.

Alison is back at the same the intersection. Again, she stares down the dirt road lined with holly trees.

She gets off her bike and starts to walk it slowly up the lane.

EXT. CEMETERY GATES - DAY.

Alison stops at the entrance to a small, New England cemetery. She leans her bike against a crumbling stone wall and takes out the box of cupcakes.

She checks the time on her phone. It's already 6 pm.

And there are three MISSED CALLS from Cole.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY.

Alison sits in front of a newish headstone. She traces her hand over the engraving.

It reads:

GABRIEL BAILEY, 2011-2013.

There are fresh flowers on the grave and a little keychain with a surfboard attached. Cole, it seems, has already been there.

Alison unwraps the bakery box and takes out one of the cupcakes. She sticks a candle on top, lights it, and places it at the foot of the grave.

Then she kneels down, gets her face very close to the ground, and begins to sing.

ALISON
(singing)
Happy Birthday to you. Happy Birthday to you. Happy Birthday dear Munchkin.

She chokes on a unexpected sob. She wipes a sudden torrent of tears away with the back of her hand.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Happy Birthday to you.

Alison presses her ear to the earth as if she's listening for a response.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER.

Hours later. The last rays of the summer sun hover on the horizon. Alison is sleeping on Gabriel's grave. She wakes with a start and looks around, confused. Without the bright sunlight, the cemetery is a very different place. The tall trees that were sheltering her from the sunlight, just hours before, are now hulking, menacing. The shadows are long.

She's frightened. She quickly pulls out her phone and makes a call.

ALISON
Cole?

EXT. CEMETERY GATES -NIGHT.

Alison sits on the stone gates, waiting. Headlights down the dirt path. They come closer and closer, blinding her. A pick-up truck stops and Cole gets out. He looks at his wife.

ALISON
Please don't be mad.

Cole silently loads her bike into the back of his truck.

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Alison opens the oven. She pulls out a tray with dried pot leaves spaced in neat rows.

EXT. DECK - NIGHT.

Alison expertly crumples a leaf between her fingers. She rolls the joint quickly, lights one end with a lighter and takes an epic drag.

She leans back in the rocking chair and watches the stars coming out. Her shoulders slowly loosen and fall.

Alison HEARS the sound of a screen door opening beneath her. Cole appears in the driveway below, his wet suit half-zipped, carrying a surfboard.

ALISON
(surprised)
You're going out again?

COLE
I had a lousy surf. Broke my strap. Almost lost my board. Gonna try to redeem myself.

ALISON
Alone?

COLE
Unless you want to come with me?

Beat. Then Alison shakes her head.

COLE (CONT'D)
That's what I thought.

He stands his board up and examines it.

COLE (CONT'D)
Are you ever going to get back in the water?

ALISON
I don't know.
(beat)
I'm sorry.

COLE
I don't care. I just thought you'd miss it.

ALISON
No, I mean, I'm sorry about this afternoon.

Cole looks up at her.

COLE
I went by the restaurant. They said you'd left hours ago. Where were you?

Alison shrugs, helplessly.

ALISON
Nowhere.

Cole just sighs. He picks up his board and heads down the driveway.

ALISON (CONT'D)
(calling after him)
Be careful.

This time he doesn't turn around.

EXT. THE BEACH - NIGHT.

A few hours later. Alison sits on the beach, wrapped in a wool blanket, watching the surf.

ALISON
I was thirty-one years old. I remember promising myself I'd get to thirty-five. I'd make it through until then. And if nothing had changed... well then I'd tried hard enough.

She HEARS a noise behind her and turns around. She's shocked to see Noah, smiling down at her.

NOAH
Hello.

ALISON
(stunned)
Hi.

NOAH
I found you.

ALISON
(confused)
Were you looking for me?

NOAH
I'm kidding. I was just on my way to that barbecue down there.

ALISON
Oh you're a surfer?

NOAH
Yeah. Sort of. I'm learning ... do you live around here?

ALISON
Right over that dune.

NOAH
Cool.

Noah just stands there, grinning.

ALISON
How's your head?

Noah touches his bandage.

NOAH
Oh it's okay. I think.

ALISON
Did you end up going to the hospital?

NOAH
No, I couldn't face it. I might go tomorrow.
(beat)
Can I join you?

ALISON
Uh, sure.

NOAH
Or, I'm sorry - did you want to be alone?

ALISON
No, no. Sit.

Noah sits down happily, next to her. He takes out a pack of cigarettes and offers her one.

NOAH
Want one? They're french.

ALISON
I quit a while ago.

NOAH
Me too. But I'm on vacation.

Alison smiles.

ALISON
Okay. Why not.

She takes one and he lights it for her.

NOAH
I only allow myself to smoke french cigarettes.

ALISON
Why?

NOAH
Because they're so hard to come by. I usually give up before I find one.

Alison laughs.

NOAH (CONT'D)
So I'm Noah, in case you -

ALISON
I remember. I'm Alison.

NOAH
I know. I'm sorry again, about this afternoon.

ALISON
Don't worry about it.

NOAH
I can't believe I made you watch me choke my kid.

ALISON
Things happen. Kids are stupid.
(beat)
I'm glad she's alright.

NOAH
And then I had a seizure in your -

ALISON
Hey, Noah. Do I look upset?

NOAH
(honest)
You look great.

Alison flushes. She wasn't expecting that.

ALISON
Then drop it.

NOAH
Okay.

They resume staring at the ocean.

NOAH (CONT'D)
So do you live out here year round?

ALISON
Yup.

NOAH
What do people do for fun?

ALISON
With kids? All sorts of things - surfing, sailing, fishing -

NOAH
No, I mean, single people.

He turns and stares right at her. Almost like he's asking her out.

ALISON
Um... I wouldn't know.

NOAH
You're not fun?

ALISON
I'm not single.

NOAH
(surprised)
You're married?

She nods.

NOAH (CONT'D)
But no ring.

ALISON
We're both surfers. We were afraid we'd lose them in the water.

NOAH
Wow. You're *married.*

ALISON
You sound shocked.

NOAH
It's just, you seem so...

Alison frowns.

ALISON
What?

NOAH
Independent.

ALISON
(touched)
Oh. Thanks.

Beat.

NOAH
Any children?

Alison looks at the sea again.

ALISON
No.

NOAH
Well you're young. You've got plenty of time.

Alison nods but doesn't respond. An awkward silence sets in. They both smoke.

ALISON
Can I ask you a question? It may be kinda rude?

NOAH
Go ahead.

ALISON
Why'd you have four?

NOAH
Kids?

She nods. Noah smiles.

NOAH (CONT'D)
I used to have a good answer for it actually. It was something about wanting to populate the earth with reasonable people so the extremists, with their enormous families, didn't take over.

ALISON
You had four children for political reasons?

NOAH
I was in grad school. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

ALISON
And now?

NOAH
I couldn’t imagine my life without each one of them. They really are the best things that ever happened to me. I know everyone says that, but it’s true.

More silence. They don’t look at each other. But there’s some kind of heat building between their bodies.

ALISON’S VOICE
I didn't like getting close to new people back then. I didn't want to have to explain to anyone else what had happened.

She lays back against the sand with a sigh. A moment. Then he lies back as well. They look up at the stars.

NOAH
It’s such a beautiful night.

ALISON
Yeah, it is.

I feel like doing something crazy.

ALISON
Like what?

NOAH
You want to go for a midnight swim?

Alison feels suddenly sick.

ALISON
No, I... I don’t.

She sits up.

NOAH
I’m sorry, that was stupid -

ALISON
It’s okay.

NOAH
I didn’t mean to suggest anything inappropriate. I just thought it might be refreshing to, you know, get wet.

He cringes.

NOAH (CONT'D)
That didn't come out right either.

Alison can't help it. She smiles. Then she stands up.

ALISON
It was nice bumping into you.

NOAH
Can I at least walk you home?

EXT. ALISON'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT.

Alison and Noah turn up the pebbled driveway that leads to her house.

NOAH
Wow. This is where you live? This place is great.

ALISON
Thanks.

NOAH
When did you buy it?

ALISON
My parents built it actually. It was their summer home.

Noah spots the outdoor shower adjacent to the side of the house.

NOAH
Is that an outdoor shower?

ALISON
Yeah.

NOAH
Oh man, I've always wanted one of those.

ALISON
Want to try it?

EXT. OUTDOOR SHOWER - NIGHT.

Alison shows Noah the little wooden stall.

NOAH
This is my idea of happiness.

ALISON
Go ahead. Get wet.

Noah grins.

NOAH
No. I should go home.

He turns to look at her. Stare at her, more accurately. She smiles up at him. She doesn't mean to. It just keeps happening.

ALISON'S VOICE
But he didn't feel like a new person. He felt like someone I had known a long time ago. And then lost track of.

ALISON
Okay. Well, thanks for the walk.

She puts out her hand to shake. He ignores it, moves in and KISSES her on the cheek.

NOAH
I guess I'll see you around town?

ALISON
There's no real way to avoid it.

Noah nods and heads up the driveway.

Alison takes a deep breath, trying to calm her heartbeat. Then she steps into the shower, turns on the hot water and takes off her clothes.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Alison exits the shower, wrapped in her towel just as Cole is turning up the driveway, accompanied by a stunningly beautiful, younger girl. They're both carrying boards. This is his employee JOLENE, 25.

COLE
Hey.

ALISON
Hey. Hi Jolene.

JOLENE
Oh my God, *Alison*. Cole told me what day it was and I just want to say, I am *so* sorry.

Alison glares at Cole.

COLE
What? Is it a secret?

JOLENE
Did I say something wrong?

COLE
No, Jo. You didn't. I'll see you tomorrow?

JOLENE
Okay. Goodnight Alison.

ALISON
(as pleasantly as she can)
Goodnight.

Jolene heads off down the street. Cole walks slowly towards Alison.

COLE
She was just trying to be nice.

ALISON
Fuck her if you want to. I don't care. Just don't make me watch.

He stares at her in disbelief. Then he turns, PUNCHES a dent in the hood of his truck.

She JUMPS.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Cole! Don't do that!

COLE
Why not?!

ALISON
Because you're scaring me!

COLE
I'm scaring you? *I'm scaring you???* I did everything you wanted. I read all the books. We went to the counselor. We went to the priest. I took you to that fucking shaman in Patagonia. I'm *trying,* Alison.

ALISON
I know.

COLE
I wake up every day with his face in my head too. You're not the only one who lost a child.

ALISON
I *know*.

COLE
How much longer are you going to treat me like I'm the one who killed him?

ALISON
(stunned)
I don't.

COLE
Yes you do.

A long pause. Then Alison goes over to him. She leans into him.

ALISON
I'm sorry.

Cole doesn't respond.

ALISON (CONT'D)
It *hurts*.

Cole melts. He wraps his arms around her.

COLE
I know it does, baby.

ALISON
Make it stop.

COLE
I don't know how.

Alison reaches up and kisses Cole. He kisses her back, gently. She kisses him harder. Hungry. Her hands move down his body, into his trunks. He puts his fingers in her hair and pulls her towards him gently, whispering in her ear -

COLE (CONT'D)
Let's go inside.

ALISON
No.

Alison puts both hands on Cole's chest and SHOVES him away suddenly. He looks at her, confused. He reaches for her. She SLAPS his hand.

They stare at each other. Breathing hard.

In one swift movement, Cole grabs Alison by both shoulders, turns her around and pushes her against the hood of his car. He bends her over onto her stomach, rips off her towel, and enters her from behind.

COLE
Is this what you wanted?

ALISON
Yes.

As Cole fucks her, Alison rests her head on the cold metal of the car hood and looks out into the darkness. As usual, she feels nothing.

Suddenly, she GASPS.

There, in the shadows, on the other side of the street, she sees Noah. Watching.

His eyes bore into hers. He's not looking away. He's not ashamed. He's just standing there, watching her with another man.

As if it's all for *him*.

ALISON (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Harder.

Cole pounds into her harder. Noah doesn't break his gaze. Alison has never done anything like this before. She's terrified, but also, incredibly turned on. She FEELS something start to build -

ALISON (CONT'D)
Harder.

Cole grabs her hips and slams himself into her. She closes her eyes and lets the sensation overwhelm her. They come at the same time.

It's the first orgasm she's had in a year.

Cole falls on top of her.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Oh my God.

COLE
Did you just - ?

ALISON
Yeah.

Alison opens her eyes and looks out into the darkness.

Noah is gone.

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DAY,

Alison sits in the interrogation room. She looks radically different. She's wearing a business suit. Her wild hair is pulled tightly back and clipped into a neat bun. There's a briefcase on the floor next to her. She's older too, though, like Noah, it's difficult to tell how much.

She's staring off at the wall...

POLICE OFFICER
Ms. Bailey?

Alison turns and looks at him.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
(gently)
It's almost three o'clock. You said you had to pick up your kid at three.

Alison looks at her watch.

ALISON
Oh God, thank you. Can I go then?

The officer nods.

OFFICER
You can go.

Alison gathers her things and leaves.

END OF PILOT