PROOF

written by

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Nor dread nor hope attend
A dying animal;
A man awaits his end
Dreading and hoping all.

-- W.B. Yeats

TEASER

IN BLACK:

The sound of BREATHING, in out, in out, deep and even, the rhythmic sound of life itself...

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

DR. KATHRYN RUSSO (40's) is jogging. Lean, beautiful, intense -- you can tell she does this a lot.

She passes a couple of NURSES. The younger one smiles and waves. Katherine ignores her, keeps going. She's not known for her bedside manner -- or any manners really. As she passes them, the older one mutters something, but Katherine doesn't hear, all sounds muffled by her noise cancelling earbuds. Except her breathing. In. out. In. out.

Suddenly, an AMBULANCE screams past her, lights flashing and screeches up to the ER entrance. PARAMEDICS leap out, pulling out a stretcher with a blood-drenched TEEN, a gun shot victim, his frantic GIRLFRIEND screaming by his side.

But the whole thing is eerily SILENT -- playing like a silent movie. Just the sound of breathing, in out, in out, as Katherine continues on her run. Behind her, hospital personnel rush out, yelling orders we can't hear as they surround the stretcher and race the victim inside.

Katherine continues running, her focus suddenly broken by an annoying BUZZING SOUND. She stops and yanks out her earbuds. CITY SOUNDS come flooding back -- car horns, trucks, street life. As she catches her breath and checks her beeper, we cut away on her muttered: "Fuck."

SMASH TO:

INT. HOSPITAL SCRUB ROOM/OPERATING ROOM - DAY

A trauma team in overdrive. No time to change, Katherine is helped into surgical scrubs over her Lululemon running gear. A trauma nurse, MARTA, (30's), gives a running briefing...

MARTA
We've got multiple gunshot wounds to the upper torso ...

Another NURSE hurriedly ties the back of Kat's scrubs, following behind them as Kat and Marta push INTO the OR.

MARTA (CONT'D)
... Patient is eighteen. It was a drive-by.
(MORE)

MARTA (CONT'D)
Probably mistaken identity. His girlfriend says he's an honor student, student council...

KATHERINE
How're his SAT's?

MARTA
His SAT's? Um, I don't--
(gets it)
Things you don't care about.

Bingo. The young victim, RAMON, is on the table being prepped. Blood is oozing from multiple holes in his chest.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
Pulse is 130. BP is 70 over forty and falling.

KATHERINE
That, I care about. Let's get him intubated. And I want that chest tube tray, stat!

Katherine takes a scalpel and goes to work, the world class cardio-thoracic surgeon in her element. She inserts the chest tube and a veritable geyser of blood gushes out.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
(an understatement)
That's not good. Okay, let's crack him. Finochietto rib spreader. The eight-- no make it the ten. Could be pericardial tamponade.

O.R. NURSE
Coming, doctor.

KATHERINE
And ready the retractors. I want the 35 millimeter Cooley, with the Deaver valve hook.

She spots a young intern, ZED (20's). A former refugee from the Sudan, he's a gentle soul in an intimidatingly tall and lanky frame. He's pretty intimidated himself at the moment.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
You. Intern. Do it.

ZED
(caught)
Me? Yes. Right away, Doctor.
(starts, stops)
(MORE)

ZED (CONT'D)
Uh, did you say the Deaver retractor?

KATHERINE
What? No! It's a *Cooley* retractor with a Deaver valve hook.

ZED
Of course.
(starts again, stops)
And that was the ten inch, yes?

KATHERINE
Jesus. You speak English, right? Or are you just learning that too?

ZED
Yes. I mean, I do. Speak English. I'm originally from the Sudan. But I went to medical school in Texas at the University of--

KATHERINE
Are we on a date? Cause I really don't think I'm dressed for it.

ZED
(confused)
I don't know what--

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
B.P.'s falling.

KATHERINE
(to Zed)
Just get out of the way. *Anybody*?

An OR nurse steps in next to Katherine and hands her the instruments as Zed, stung, steps to the background.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
We're losing him.

Suddenly, the blaring warning ALARM of the ECG.

KATHERINE
Dammit! I'm trying manual cardiac massage.

Katherine reaches into the open chest cavity and begins to massage the exposed heart. She works, focused, and intense, eyes on the monitors, willing them to change their readings.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
Come on...

And then, as she works -- all the color and sounds slowly drain out of the scene, washing out all detail, until everything goes WHITE and quiet. And we SLAM INTO:

ELSEWHERE (for lack of a better word)

A near death experience, first person POV. Not the cliched tunnel and light we're used to. We're moving through a strange organic space of muted colors and dark shapes. The SOUNDS of the OR come in short bursts, but fade into the b.g., as we pick up speed. Faster and faster. Some of the strange shapes whip past us. Others join us, moving alongside us, as we rush to... what? Meanwhile...

INT. OPERATING ROOM

Katherine is working feverishly, sweating, as she tries to restart the patient's heart, but the harsh ALARM of the ECG is an annoying reproach to her efforts.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
It's not working. Shit!

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
You want to call it?

KATHERINE
Hell no I don't want to call it!
(thinks, then)
I need ice.

MARTA
They're working on the a.c. but--

KATHERINE
For him! Get me ice, a lot of ice, and a cold wrap. We need to lower his body temperature *now*.

ZED
(realizing, blurts)
Therapeutic hypothermia.
(off other's looks)
Coma. Induced by intense cold to to delay ischemic injury to the brain. From victims who had fallen into frozen lakes and survived.

KATHERINE
(mildly impressed)
Thank you, Dr. Wikipedia.

ZED
(a thought)
We could try chilled intra-femoral saline with the transfused blood. It may be quicker.

KATHERINE
Do it.

MARTA
Wait. Is that an approved procedure? You need authorization.

KATHERINE
You want to wake him up and ask him to sign a waiver?
(to Zed)
Go.

And as they prepare the patient...

ELSEWHERE

We're moving rapidly as the swirling dark figures near us resolve into recognizable shapes -- human forms. We emerge with them into an unbelievably vast open space to SEE -- thousands more of these shapes, millions maybe, all moving toward an enormous WALL or membrane. Other, BRIGHTLY COLORED SHAPES hover near the membrane, surrounding the approaching monotone shapes, guiding them to and through the wall. As we move closer ourselves, one of these brighter shapes moves toward us, and resolves into what appears to be a WOMAN, cloaked in green swirls. As she reaches out...

INT. OPERATING ROOM

It's cold in here now, really cold -- we can see the breath of the trauma team as they work.

O.R. NURSE
Temp is 34.2 degrees Celsius and falling.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
Still no pulse.

KATHERINE
Shit. More cold packs! Now!

O.R. NURSE
Coming in.

As Katherine turns away to let them swap out the cold packs, we go TIGHT on her lips. Are they trembling with the cold?

No. She's saying something to herself, we can't quite make out. No one else is aware of it, and if they were, they'd be stunned, coming from a woman like Katherine Russo, but at the end we can just make out barely mouthed words...

KATHERINE
... *in hora mortis nostrae.* Amen.

It's her last resort -- a literal Hail Mary, a final remnant of her Catholic upbringing.

O.R. NURSE
(over her shoulder)
Doctor? We're ready.

KATHERINE
I'm here.

She turns back and resumes her work on the patient, but the anesthesiologist gives her a look. It's not good.

ELSEWHERE

The WOMAN IN GREEN takes our hand, guiding us toward the membrane, where other figures are passing through and disappearing beyond. We're led to a group of bright figures who surround us, welcoming us. One of these, smaller than the rest, a short adult or a child maybe, reaches out to us.

INT. OPERATING ROOM

The flatline beep of the ECG.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
(sigh of defeat)
All right. Let's call it. Time is, what, eleven twenty--

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
Hang on.
(surprised)
Think I've got a pulse!

ELSEWHERE

As we reach out to take the smaller figure's hand, suddenly, he disappears. Then all the figures disappear, leaving just the wOMAN IN GREEN in front of us.

INT. OPERATING ROOM

The slow BEEP of the ECG.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
Definitely got a pulse! It's weak. But he's alive.

KATHERINE
Let's try to keep it that way. Okay, people, let's get him on the pump, we've got work to do.

Katherine goes back to work. As she does, she seems to notice the patient's young face for the first time.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
Welcome back.

As she works, on Katherine's face, suddenly we're back to...

ELSEWHERE

We reach out for the woman in green, and then she too vanishes leaving us alone in the vast empty space. Then suddenly, we're yanked BACKWARDS, moving faster and faster, picking up speed, our journey in reverse, until we SLAM TO:

EXT. JAPAN - SENDAI BEACH - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Japanese HANDS doing frantic CPR on a soaking wet body in the tide. The rescuer finally leans back and we see eyes open, revealing -- it's Katherine! She coughs up a ton of water, gasping for air. And we realize now, the near death experience we just saw, wasn't the patient's at all, it was Katherine's. Off Katherine, taking deep lungfulls of breath, in out, the sound of life itself returning...

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Zed is at a vending machine, buying some Cheetos. Katherine, in her spattered scrubs, strides up to him.

KATHERINE
Hey... you! I can't keep calling you "intern." What's your name?

ZED
Zedan. Zedan Badawi.

KATHERINE
Of course it is. Listen, *Zed*, I know I was rough on you in there--

ZED
Doctor Russo, it isn't necessary for you to apologize.

KATHERINE
I'm not. I was hard on you because when you're in my OR, you need to pay attention and get it right the first time, no questions asked. And if you can't do that, you need to get the hell off my surgical rotation. Got it? Try Psychiatry. They love questions there.
(takes his Cheetos)
And for godssake, don't eat this crap. It'll kill you.
(he waits for more)
That's it. Go.

As he hurries away

LEN (O.C.)
I'll bet that bag could feed a family of five where he comes from.

Dr. Len Bayliss (40's) gets a coffee -- handsome with an ego to match. A hot doctor, if he wasn't your ex.

KATHERINE
I've been there, remember?

She tosses the snack bag and walks. He joins her.

LEN
Oh, I remember. You and me, patching up child soldiers in a monsoon between bouts of dysentery.
(waxing nostalgic)
Our first anniversary.

KATHERINE
Second. Don't you have some future MILFs to sonogram somewhere?

LEN
As a matter of fact, I do. But I wanted to talk to you first. It's about Sophie.

KATHERINE
Can it wait? I've got to go talk to a family whose son is in a coma. Which, given how he came in, not such a bad thing.
(off his look)
What?

LEN
You, uh, you might want to change first.

Katherine looks down, realizes she's still in bloody scrubs.

KATHERINE
Crap.

She spots a rack of greens nearby and starts changing right there (showing off her hot runner's body).

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
Is this about weekend custody again? Cause it's not what we agreed, Len.

Len is distracted by her changing. She's still got it.

LEN
What? Oh, uh, no, no. She's just been moody lately. I think she might be having some mean girl issues at school.

KATHERINE
Really. Okay. I'll talk to her.

LEN
Good. Cause she won't talk to me about it. Or anything really. It's not like with... I mean, I was always able to...

He trails off.

KATHERINE
I know. Me too.

A look between them. There's something deeper, something broken, neither wants to talk about. The moment is interrupted by a NURSE -- to their mutual relief.

NURSE
Dr. Russo?

KATHERINE
Yes?

NURSE
Dr. Stanton would like to see you right away.

LEN
Ooh, is someone in the dog house? Did you do something you shouldn't have?

KATHERINE
(maybe)
No!
(to nurse)
Tell him I'll be there right after I talk to my patient's family.
(to Len)
I'm sure it's nothing.

But as she heads off, her look says he may be right.

INT. DR. STANTON'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. OLIVER STANTON (50's), African-American. Serious, dry, intimidating. He's reviewing a file as Katherine barges in, finishing an argument she's been having in her head.

KATHERINE
I did what I thought was best to save my patient's life! And if you don't like it -- you can fire me!

DR. STANTON
I sincerely hope that won't be necessary, even if I knew what you were talking about.

KATHERINE
Oh. I thought-- Never mind. You wanted to see me?

DR. STANTON
Sit down, Katherine. Ivan Turing. You're familiar with the name?

KATHERINE
The internet guy?

DR. STANTON
The guy who put his own rocket into space, parachuted off Everest, basically reinvented internet auctions. Yes. The internet guy.

KATHERINE
I've heard of him. He's like a multi-billionaire, right?

DR. STANTON
Add a few more multi's. He may be considering making a donation to this hospital.

KATHERINE
Wow. That's great!

DR. STANTON
It could be. The thing is, he only wants to speak to you.

KATHERINE
What? Why me?

DR. STANTON
I don't know, but his people said he was insistent. And for the kind of money we could be talking about...

KATHERINE
Look, I know this could be big, but this really isn't my kind of thing. I'm not all that great with, you know...

DR. STANTON
People. I know. I need you to do this, Katherine. I'm sure I don't have to remind you how patient we've been about your leaves of absence for your Doctors Without Borders trips.

KATHERINE
Okay, that's not fair.

DR. STANTON
Two weeks in Japan after the tsunami, a month in Haiti, the civil war in Syria...

KATHERINE
Those people needed medical help. I'm not going to be threatened into doing this, Oliver.

DR. STANTON
I'm not threatening you. If I were, I'd offer to convene a review board to consider suspending your license for using an unauthorized procedure in the operating room. But as I said...

KATHERINE
You're not threatening me.

DR. STANTON
Look at the bright side. Maybe he'll offer you a ride in his rocket ship.

EXT. TURING INDUSTRIES UNLIMITED - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

A sprawling business campus, redwoods, fountains, bike paths... it's a cross between Google and Golden Gate Park.

JANEL (PRELAP)
Excuse me. Dr. Russo?

INT. TURING INDUSTRIES UNLIMITED - LOBBY

Ultra-modern. Pristine. Floor to ceiling windows look out on the beautiful campus. Irritable, Katherine is checking her watch as she turns to see JANEL FLYNN (20's), annoyingly young, smart and cute in a nerdy way (Anna Kendrick type).

JANEL
Sorry to keep you waiting.

KATHERINE
Not as sorry as I am to be kept.

JANEL
(thrown, recovers)
Uh. I'm Janel Flynn. Mr. Turing's associate. Would you follow me?

INT. TURING UNLIMITED HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

More gleaming marble and chrome. As they walk and talk...

JANEL
So. Are you ready to meet him?

KATHERINE
Am I *ready*? Who is he, the great and powerful Oz?

JANEL
(a smile)
In a way.

Is she serious? Katherine follows her through to...

INT. TURING'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

In contrast to the pristine lobby and hallways, it's a total MESS -- books in random piles on the floor, scattered files spilling out of boxes, climbing gear, engine parts, an archery target with arrows sticking out... Katherine turns to comment to Janel, but she's gone.

IVAN TURING (40'S), charming, greying temples, bit of a hipster vibe (think Robert Downey Jr.) finishes a call.

TURING
(into headset)
No, no that won't work. The NiCads take a big hit below 40 centigrade.

He motions Katherine to sit. She looks around, doesn't see an empty space that isn't covered with something.

TURING (CONT'D)
(into headset)
Just keep at it. I gotta go.

He clicks off and jumps to clear a chair for her.

TURING (CONT'D)
Sorry. Got my start working out of my crap filled garage and I just can't seem to work any other way.

As Katherine sits hoping she's not sitting on anything.

TURING (CONT'D)
So you met Janel. Great kid. Two Phd's and she wants to be a gofer for me. It's flattering but--

KATHERINE
Listen, I don't mean to be rude, but I have rounds to make, so...

TURING
Wow. Not even gonna try to kiss my ass. That's refreshing. Okay, let's get to the point. I'm dying.

KATHERINE
Excuse me?

TURING
Kicking the bucket, biting the big one, taking the big dirt nap. You're a doctor, I'm sure you're familiar with the concept.

KATHERINE
No. Yes. Sorry, I just wasn't expecting...
(realizing)
Wait. So *that's* what this is about?

TURING
Sorry?

KATHERINE
That's why you asked for me. You think your money and power lets you jump ahead of my other patients. I don't work that way. I think we both wasted our time.

She gets up, starts to go.

TURING
Sit down. Please. I don't need a new doctor. I have advanced *adeno-carcinoma.* An inoperable cancer, as I'm sure you know. I won't make it to the next summer Olympics. Winter either probably.

KATHERINE
I'm... I'm sorry.

TURING
I'm fine with it. Well, not *fine*. But all things considered, I'm pretty happy with my life, the things I've accomplished.

He wanders to his climbing equipment.

TURING (CONT'D)
When I jumped off Everest, people asked me if I was nervous. Truth is, I really wasn't. Because I was totally prepared. I mean, I knew *exactly* what would happen, down to the wind variation for every millimeter of descent.

Katherine watches him, where's he going with this?

TURING (CONT'D)
See I've always hated unknowns. At Christmas, I used to sneak down in the middle of the night and open my presents and then rewrap them, so I'd know what I was getting. And now that I'm facing the biggest unknown there is -- I want to open my present early. I want to know what to expect when I die.

KATHERINE
Right. You and everybody else who ever lived.

TURING
Ah, but the difference is, I have the resources to try to find out. I'd like *you* to do that for me.

KATHERINE
You lost me.

TURING
I'd like you to try to find real proof of what happens when we die. If you can do that, I'm prepared to offer you full control of my estate when I'm gone. Roughly ten billion dollars for your Doctors Without Borders. Or whatever you choose.

KATHERINE
(beat, then laughs)
You sure you don't want to meet Bigfoot too, while I'm at it?

TURING
I honestly don't care if it's proof that there's nothing at all and all those stories of near death experiences are just that, stories. Or that there really is something else. I just want to *know*.

KATHERINE
You're serious.

TURING
As terminal cancer, as it were.

KATHERINE
Okay. You really want to know? When you're dead, you're dead. That's it. There's nothing after we die. Lights out, nobody home.

TURING
That's just your opinion. I'm talking about proof. Real, verifiable, scientific *proof*.

KATHERINE
Look, I'd love to take your money. When I think about what it could do to get medical help to all the places in the world that need it. But what you're asking is impossible.

TURING
Is it? In 1895, Lord Kelvin said heavier than air flight was impossible. Seventy years later we had footprints on the moon.

From a pile near his desk, he shows her a stack of files.

TURING (CONT'D)
These are all files I've collected that raise some pretty interesting questions -- people who've died and come back, who've seen "ghosts," who say they've experienced reincarnation... And I've got a warehouse full of these.
(MORE)

TURING (CONT'D)
Maybe it's crap. All of it. Or maybe, in there, somewhere, there's real, actual, proof.

KATHERINE
... Why me? I'm a surgeon not a -- parapsychologist.

TURING
You gave an interview for a PBS documentary on death where you said basically what you said here. You were sceptical, sarcastic, full of yourself... a lot like me. You're a brilliant physician with a hard science background so if you're satisfied with the certainty of what you uncover, I will be too. *That's* why you.

KATHERINE
Look, I'm sorry. This isn't for me. You should find someone else.

She gets up to go.

TURING
Don't you want to know if you were close to seeing your son again?

KATHERINE
(stops, stunned)
What did you say?

TURING
I've done my research, Dr. Russo. I know you have a daughter, Sophie, fifteen, who's into downloading Electronica Club Music, Japanese anime and not much else. And that you and your husband, Dr. Leonard Bayliss are currently separated.
(then)
And I know that you lost your teenage son, Will, in an automobile accident a few years ago. I'm sorry for your loss.

Katherine stares at him.

TURING (CONT'D)
I also know that you nearly drowned on a trip to Japan to help victims of the most recent tsunami, and at that time, you had your own near death experience. Am I wrong?

As Katherine continues to stare at him, stone faced...

KATHERINE'S FLASHBACK: A series of quick FLASHES...

FLASH. Japan. Katherine struggles in the ocean, slipping under water as waves crash over her.

FLASH. The brightly colored figures surround us. The WOMAN IN GREEN leads us to the smaller figure -- a teenage boy?

FLASH. In the water. Human hands reach down and pull us toward the ocean's surface.

FLASH. The WOMAN IN GREEN disappears and we race backwards.

FLASH. Eyes opening. Katherine, coughing up water, returned to life, as in the opening.

BACK TO...

Katherine's face, stoic but emotional at the memory.

TURING (CONT'D)
I think you have a very personal connection to this subject. You've suppressed it, understandably, but I think you want answers just as much as I do. Maybe more.

KATHERINE
That was just some kind of, of... hallucination. A chemical reaction in the-- How the hell did you know about that? I never told anyone that. And I mean *no one*. Except--

And then she stiffens as she realizes.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
Sonofa*bitch*.

She turns and heads for the door, furious.

TURING
(calling after her)
So you'll think about my offer?!

INT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A beautiful San Francisco Victorian on a quiet street. Katherine, in yoga sweats and tank opens the door for Len and SOPHIE (15), an old soul in extremely short shorts.

SOPHIE
Hi, mom.

And she blows right past her, into her room, shutting the door. Len hands her Sophie's overnight bag.

LEN
Be happy. That's more than I get.

KATHERINE
What the hell is wrong with you?

LEN
What?

Katherine pulls him into the kitchen, out of ear shot.

KATHERINE
You told someone about Japan? How could you do that? That was extremely personal!

LEN
What are you talking about?

KATHERINE
You told Ivan Turing I had a near death experience and saw our son?

LEN
Oh. That.

KATHERINE
Yes. *That*!

LEN
His people said you were up for some big grant I was just trying to help. I wanted you to seem more... human.

KATHERINE
And you didn't think about talking to me first?

LEN
They asked me to keep it quiet in case it didn't happen.
(MORE)

LEN (CONT'D)
(an eager fan)
Wait, so you actually met Ivan Turing? What's he like?

KATHERINE
Just go.

LEN
Kat, I was trying to help.

He looks at her, frustrated, how did the gap between them get so huge? He goes. Katherine pours herself a glass of wine, then notices Sophie leaning in the doorway.

SOPHIE
Did you really meet Ivan Turing?

KATHERINE
Who are you, the NSA? Let's talk about school. Dad said something about some mean girl problems?

SOPHIE
Usual beyotches. Nothing I can't handle. So Turing. Come on, tell me everything!

KATHERINE
It's nothing. He wants me to do some research for him.
(off her look)
He offered me some of his money to look into near death experiences, life after death, things like that.

SOPHIE
Interesting. How much of his money?

KATHERINE
(into her glass)
... All of it.

SOPHIE
Holy shit! Are you kidding me? He's worth like ten billion dollars!
(off Kat, realizing)
Oh my God, you turned him down, didn't you?

KATHERINE
I can't accept his money for something that's a total waste of time.

SOPHIE
You don't know that.

KATHERINE
Yes. I do.

SOPHIE
But isn't it worth at least *trying?* What if there really is something more after we die? What if we knew we were going to see Will again? Wouldn't that be *amazing*? Don't you ever wonder if--

KATHERINE
(too forcefully)
No! I don't.
(then)
Will's gone. And feeding some rich egomaniac's fantasy won't change that. ... I'm going to bed.

Katherine goes, leaving a rattled Sophie.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Dr. Stanton is talking with a few hospital BOARD MEMBERS in business suits as Katherine passes, not breaking stride.

DR. STANTON
Ah, Katherine! How did it go with--

KATHERINE
Not happening, Oliver. Can't talk. Rounds.

As she continues on her way, Zed catches up.

ZED
Dr. Russo. I was just about to page you.

KATHERINE
Then I guess I saved you a dime.
(off his puzzled look)
Phone calls here used to be ten cents. At a pay phone. Before cell phones-- what did you want?

ZED
It's the gunshot victim. Mr. Garcia? He came out of the coma.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM/HALLWAY - DAY

The patient, Ramon, is bandaged and hooked up to monitors, but he's awake and propped up in bed, intently watching TV.

KATHERINE
Mr. Garcia? I'm Dr. Russo.

RAMON
(focused on TV)
Hey. You ever seen this guy?

ON THE TV

It's a daytime talker. The HOST is interviewing PETER VAN OWEN (30's), a charming, too good looking author and medium.

HOST (ON TV)
We're chatting with Peter Van Owen, world renowned author, psychic and medium.
(turns to Van Owen)
So these... spirits, they actually *speak* to you?

VAN OWEN (ON TV)
Oh yeah. Trust me, sometimes I wish they wouldn't. They can be just as annoying as the living.

The host and audience laugh. She clicks it off.

KATHERINE
Ugh. Is everybody a sucker lately?

Katherine checks his vitals.

RAMON
You don't believe in any of that?

KATHERINE
I don't believe in taking advantage of other people's grief.

RAMON
... Can I ask you something? I was dead for a while there, right? I mean really dead.

KATHERINE
That's sort of a grey area, from a doctor's point of view. You're not dead now, that's what matters.

Ramon nods, wrestling with something. Then...

RAMON
This is gonna sound whack, but while I was out, I saw things. Crazy things. Like I could see my body, like I was up at the ceiling looking down on it. And I was thinkin', that poor son of a bitch, he's gonna die. And then I thought, holy shit, that's me!

KATHERINE
That's a fairly common hallucination, but--

RAMON
And I saw you! You were operating on me. And you were wearing these... running shoes.

KATHERINE
(pauses, then)
Well, a lot of us wear them. When you're on your feet like we are... But you couldn't have actually experienced anything like that. You were in a coma, with very little or no brain activity.

RAMON
Right. Just the mind playing tricks, huh?

As Katherine writes some data on his chart...

RAMON (CONT'D)
You don't seem like the type to be prayin' to the Virgin Mary or nothin'.

Katherine freezes.

RAMON (CONT'D)
But when I was looking down from up there, I could swear I heard the *Ave Maria*. In Latin, like we do in church. ... *nunc, et, in hora mortis nostrae.* Amen.
(MORE)

RAMON (CONT'D)
Like it was right inside my head.
(smiles)
Guess we hear what we want to hear, right?

Katherine is stunned, covers.

KATHERINE
I'm sorry. I have other patients.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Out in the hall, deeply rattled, she stops to catch her breath. What the hell just happened?

NURSE (O.C.)
Dr. Russo?

A nurse approaches, concerned.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Are you all right? Dr. Russo?

Katherine composes herself and moves on. As the nurse shrugs, chalking it up to typical rude Katherine behavior...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - DAY

A busy lunchtime crowd. Zed is in line, piling his tray with a hamburger, pie, and other junky crap. Katherine cuts into line next to him, to the irritation of those behind.

KATHERINE
I need to talk to you.

ZED
(sighs, resigned)
I'll put the cheeseburger back.

KATHERINE
What? No. You want a stroke at forty, knock yourself out.

As Zed pays and Katherine follows him to a table...

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
It's about yesterday's surgery. The gunshot victim?

ZED
Yes. What about it?

KATHERINE
During the procedure, did you hear me say anything... unusual?

ZED
Unusual?

KATHERINE
Anything out of the ordinary, anything, I don't know... non-medical. In Latin, maybe?

ZED
Latin? No.

KATHERINE
Are you sure?

ZED
After you... corrected me, I was listening very carefully. Believe me.

KATHERINE
But it's possible somebody could have told the patient something I said, or thought I said, isn't it? I mean, that's possible, right?

ZED
I don't understand.

KATHERINE
Never mind.
(a beat, then)
Can I ask you a personal question? What do *you* think happens after we die?

ZED
I'm sorry, what?

KATHERINE
Do you believe in life after death? It's a simple question. Yes or no?

ZED
I come from a culture where it's not a matter of belief. It's considered a fact. We live, we die, we live again.

KATHERINE
I see.

ZED
But it's also considered a fact that malaria is caused by spirits and AIDS can be cured by rape. So no, Dr. Russo, as a man of science, I don't believe in life after death.
(then, shrugs)
But I suppose anything is possible.

Katherine nods, gets up to go. Then...

KATHERINE
Oh. That idea of yours, to use chilled saline with the transfused blood? Not completely terrible.

ZED
Does that mean I could join you on your next rounds for Mr. Garcia?

Katherine can't admit, she's not ready to go back there yet.

KATHERINE
I'll think about it.

She goes. Zed sighs, picks up his burger, about to take a bite. Then remembering her words, pushes it away, put off.

INT. NURSE'S STATION - DAY (LATER)

Turing's assistant, Janel, dodges a hacking PATIENT in the hall, and approaches the duty nurse, CARL.

JANEL
Excuse me. I'm looking for Dr. Russo?

CARL
She's on the third floor.

MARTA
(overhearing)
No. She's on the fourth floor.

NURSE
I saw her heading up to five.

JANEL
Okay, so, which is it?

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Katherine, in her workout gear, is climbing and descending steps, two at a time, for her indoor workout. Janel enters from the hall.

JANEL
Excuse me, Dr. Russo? Can we talk?

KATHERINE
(not breaking stride)
I've got a triple bypass right after this, so...

JANEL
Right. Okay.

Janel realizes her only choice is to join her.

JANEL (CONT'D)
(climbing in sync)
I know you're busy, but this won't take long. Ivan asked me to bring you some files. And I just--
(growing winded)
(MORE)

JANEL (CONT'D)
Whew. I just wanted to show you that-- Wow. This is really-- whew.

KATHERINE
(as they climb steps)
You okay? How old are you?

JANEL
Twenty five.
(breathing hard)
I'm fine. Totally fine.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A flushed Janel sits with Katherine on the steps.

KATHERINE
Just keep taking deep breaths.

JANEL
I'm so sorry. Probably don't get to the gym enough. Ivan's one of those people who doesn't sleep. I have to be there when he needs me.

Katherine clocks her borderline obsession.

KATHERINE
So, what, he sent you here to convince me to accept his offer?

JANEL
He thought it might be helpful for you to see some of the files.

She pulls a small stack of files from her messenger bag.

JANEL (CONT'D)
They're pretty amazing, really. Like this one? It's a young girl, Lily, who was a patient right here at this hospital. Eight years old, she was technically brain dead from meningitis. And when she was revived, she talked about things she couldn't possibly have--

KATHERINE
Let me stop you right there. The answer is no. If you want, tell your boss you were very persuasive, I was tempted, blah blah blah...

JANEL
This is a fraction of what we have. I think if you look at these files--

KATHERINE
I'm sorry. I'm afraid I just can't.

JANEL
Are you? Afraid?

Katherine stiffens. The truth is this whole area brings up too many raw emotions she's kept buried.

KATHERINE
I'm a little too busy trying to save people in this life to worry about whether there's a next one. Okay?

JANEL
But if you'd just read the files--

KATHERINE
Your boss is going to die. And none of this is going to change that.
(then)
Talk to Carl at the nurse's station, he'll get you some oj and a cookie to get your sugars up.

Katherine sees Janel look away, hiding the emotion, as her feelings for Turing overwhelm her. Crap. Katherine's *really* not good at this kind of thing. Uncomfortable, she eyes the door and a possible escape -- thinks better of it.

JANEL
(wipes her eyes)
Sorry. This is *so* unprofessional.

KATHERINE
Yeah. It kind of is, actually.

Janel smiles as she wipes a tear, then...

JANEL
(embarrassed)
I should go.

She grabs her messenger bag and heads to the door.

KATHERINE
Hey. It sucks, losing someone you care about.
(off her look)
I don't have any advice. It just... *sucks*.

Janel nods, goes. Katherine sits, thinking of Will, her own lost loved one and that pain that's buried but never gone. Then she notices the files Janel left behind.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
Hey! Wait.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kat races out from the stairway, looks around -- but Janel is gone.

DR. STANTON
Dr. Russo. A minute?

KATHERINE
If it's about Ivan Turing, Oliver, I really don't think that's gonna--

DR. STANTON
It's about your gunshot victim, Mr. Garcia. Apparently, he's been asking for you. Any reason you haven't stopped by again?

She's still not quite ready for that.

KATHERINE
I'm... following his chart. He seems to be improving nicely.

DR. STANTON
Try to stop in. Now about Turing--

A NURSE approaches.

NURSE
Excuse me, Dr. Russo? There's a call from your daughter's school.

KATHERINE
I'll be right there.

NURSE
Um, they said it was urgent.

Kat sees Len striding towards her, a grim look on his face.

LEN
I'll drive.

EXT. BELMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

An upscale private school on beautiful tree-lined grounds. Some Ivy League colleges would be jealous.

MS. MALONE (PRELAP)
Ordinarily, I would have no choice but to expel her.

INT. HEAD MISTRESS'S OFFICE/HALLWAY - DAY

MS. MALONE
We have a zero tolerance policy for student on student violence.

Kat and Len face MS. MALONE, an attractive but no-nonsense head mistress. Sophie sits nearby, looking out the window.

MS. MALONE (CONT'D)
But given your family's... circumstances, we've decided to make an exception. She'll be suspended, of course, for two weeks. Followed by a six month probationary period if she agrees to anger management counselling.

KATHERINE
And I suppose those little bitches get nothing at all.

LEN
Katherine.

MS. MALONE
Sophie shoved one of those *girls* into a locker. She needed a dozen stitches to the back of her head.

KATHERINE
After being bullied by her. Repeatedly. Or does that not matter if her father owns half the peninsula and donates a shit load every year?

MS. MALONE
(tight)
I'll give you some time.

Ms. Malone stiffly exits.

LEN
I thought you were going to talk to her.

KATHERINE
Whoa. So this is my fault?

SOPHIE
Can we just go?

LEN
I'm not saying that.

KATHERINE
What are you saying?

LEN
Let's just drop it.

KATHERINE
I tried, okay? We're all figuring this out. It's not like this kind of thing ever happened when--

She checks herself.

SOPHIE
When Will was still alive? Yeah. Everything was better then. Cause now you're stuck with just me.

LEN
Sophie, that's not what she meant.

SOPHIE
Will's lucky. You have no idea what it's like to be the kid who *didn't* die.

Sophie storms out. Len and Kat trade a look, then follow her out to the hallway.

KATHERINE
Sophie...

SOPHIE
I really don't want to talk about it. Can we please just go home?

Katherine and Len trade a look. Whose home?

LEN
It's my turn.

KATHERINE
I think she should be with me.

SOPHIE
It's okay. I'll go with Dad.

KATHERINE
You don't have to just because--

SOPHIE
It's fine. I want to.

Sophie walks off, leaving a stung Katherine watching her go.

INT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a glass of white wine being filled. Katherine pours, stops, pours some more.

She puts the bottle back in the fridge and as she closes it, notices a photo on the door. She takes it off and looks at it. It's a family picture from better days -- Kat, Len, Sophie and Will, a handsome teenager, with a devilish smile. She smiles, missing him, missing her family, now broken.

The phone RINGS loudly, startling her. She grabs for it.

KATHERINE
Sophie?

INTERCUT: Marta, on the phone, at the nurse's station.

MARTA
It's Marta, Dr. Russo. From the hospital?

KATHERINE
(disappointed)
Oh. What is it, Marta?

MARTA
I wanted to let you know there was a scheduling conflict so your seven a.m. surgery tomorrow is cancelled.

KATHERINE
Right. Okay. Got it.
(about to hang up)
Wait. You know I think I'll come in early anyway. I want to check in with Mr. Garcia, the gunshot patient. There's, um, there's something I should follow up on.

MARTA
Didn't they tell you? He was transferred to Cedars down south. The family wanted him closer. His internist approved it. I can get you his info if you want.

KATHERINE
No. No, it's fine.

She hangs up. Looks at the photo again. Then dials.

SOPHIE (V.O.)
(voicemail)
Hi, it's Sophie. I can't answer the phone now, *obviously*. I assume you know what to do at the beep.

KATHERINE
Soph. It's me. I just wanted to see how you're doing. So... how're you doing?
(winces, lame)
Okay, so, um, call me, okay? Okay.

She hangs up, sighs. Then taking her wine and the photo she walks past Sophie's empty room, glances in and then moves on to another room. She pauses in the doorway and turns on the light. It's cleaned up, a bit sterile now, but there's still a few of Will's personal effects, mementos on the wall, skateboarding posters, band stickers, trophies, etc. She takes it in. Then turns off the light.

Sitting on the couch, she tosses the family photo on the coffee table next to her bag, the contents spilling out where she dropped it. Among them she notices the FILE FOLDERS, Turing's assistant, Janel left behind. Crap. She forgot to call to have them picked up. Checks her watch -- too late to call tonight.

She picks up one of the files, the one with the young girl, Lily, Janel told her about. Katherine looks at the attached photo of a cute little girl, LILY SWEENEY (7). One photo shows her attached to a respirator, eyes staring lifelessly. Another photo shows her between her parents, smiling for the camera -- someone else's child, someone lucky to have their child back. Katherine tosses the file aside.

She sees her own family photo on the coffee table. She looks over at the file next to her again. Then she picks it up, and this time, she opens the file and begins to read...

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. KATHERINE'S CAR - DAY

Katherine drives slowly through this working class neighborhood, checking addresses against a file. Zed is with her, eating soggy fries from a fast food bag.

ZED
Are you sure you don't want some?

KATHERINE
I would rather smoke an entire carton of unfiltered cigarettes.

ZED
(interested)
Do you have any?

Katherine shoots him a look. Then, noticing...

KATHERINE
I think this is it.

ZED
You still have not told me why you requested my assistance.

KATHERINE
I need to make a house call. And let's just say, I could use an intelligent second opinion.
(off his grin)
Oh get over yourself.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Katherine and Zed are on the porch. Katherine takes a breath and presses the doorbell. DALE SWEENEY (40'S), a friendly blue collar type, opens the door.

DALE
Can I help you?

KATHERINE
Mr. Sweeney? I'm Dr. Russo. This is Dr. Zedawi. I'd like to talk to you about your daughter, Lily, and her recent... experience, if you don't mind.

DALE
No, not at all! Please, come in.

Katherine nods, follows him in, trailed by a puzzled Zed.

INT. SWEENEY HOUSE - A SHORT TIME LATER

Kat and Zed sit as Dale's wife, COLLEEN (40'S), warm and well-fed, hands them each a lemonade.

COLLEEN
My lemonade's a bit tart. If you need more sugar it's right here.

Zed automatically reaches for it. Off Kat, stops himself.

ZED
It is quite perfect. Thank you.

Katherine is typically blunt and to the point.

KATHERINE
I read your daughter's medical file. She's a very lucky girl. A bacterial infection like that, she should be dead.

COLLEEN
(matter of fact)
Oh but she did die.

CARL
And she went to Heaven. And then she came back to us.

COLLEEN
(off their looks)
I know what you're thinking. We're not religious people, Dr. Russo. Oh sure, we were both raised with it. But lately it's just been church on Christmas, things like that, know what I mean?

KATHERINE
Ten years of Catholic school, so...

COLLEEN
So you know. But after this... we know now that death is definitely not the end. No doubt about it.

KATHERINE
What makes you so sure?

Colleen nods to Carl, who pulls out some crayon drawings.

CARL
When she was in the hospital and it looked like she'd never come out of the coma, I went for a walk. It just seemed so unfair, she's so young, and I was just so mad... I don't know, I just hauled off and punched a soda machine.

COLLEEN
She drew this after she woke up.

She shows them one of the drawings. WE SEE a girl on a hospital bed, and outside the room, by a soda machine, a figure, like Carl, with angry red lines coming off his hand.

CARL
She said she was up near the ceiling, watching them working on her body. And she saw me, out in the hall, hurting my hand.

ZED
(off the drawing)
Fascinating.

COLLEEN
And that's not all. She talked about meeting people in the *other place* -- that's what she calls it. People from our family who passed on that she never even heard about.

Hands them more drawings.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)
My Aunt Viv, God love her, never met a fried food she didn't like. She died of a heart attack right before Lily was born.

She shows them a drawing of a fat female figure with jagged black lines through the heart.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)
Lily said she saw this person she called Vee. For Vivian, right?
(chuckles)
Said she smelled like chicken nuggets. See her heart?

KATHERINE
Who's this one here? She seems to draw this one a lot.

ON THE DRAWINGS, a blonde girl holds hands with a stick figure with a mustache and what looks like a uniform.

CARL
That's the only one we couldn't figure out. Lily called him Paw Paw. But my dad's still alive and Colleen's father looked nothing like that. We showed it to Ruth --

COLLEEN
That's my Mom. She was always the keeper of the family tree. But she had no idea who it could be. Poor thing took a turn recently. She's in assisted living now.

CARL
You can keep that if you want. We've got dozens of 'em.

Lily (7), cute, blonde, walks in from the back of the house.

LILY
I'm hungry.

CARL
There's our little artist.
(scoops her up)
This is Dr. Bedawi and Dr. Russo.

KATHERINE
You can call me Kat.

LILY
You can call me "Dog." But I don't think we're gonna get along.

They share a laugh, a bonding moment between Lily and Kat.

KATHERINE
I like your drawings. Must've been scary, being in that "other place."

LILY
Not really. It was nice. I'll make you some new pictures if you want.

KATHERINE
I'd like that.

COLLEEN
(to Lily)
C'mon, I'll get you some lunch.

KATHERINE
We should be going anyway. Thank you for your time.

As they head out, Katherine notices a book. Peter Van Owen's Into the Light: Conversations with the Other Side.

CARL
You know about Peter Van Owen? He's amazing, right? He said he might put us in his next book! We might even get to be on TV. Is that great or what?

Off Katherine's reaction, not sure what to think...

INT. KATHERINE'S CAR - DAY

Katherine drives, lost in thought. Then...

KATHERINE
Aren't you going to ask me what that was all about?

ZED
I have been told, it is best to pay attention and not ask too many questions.

KATHERINE
I get it. So what do you think?

ZED
I think they believe the little girl experienced *something*.

KATHERINE
But?

ZED
I think most people believe what they want to believe. And I think that's enough. For most people.

He gives her a look, knows she's not one of them. Katherine nods, and continues driving.

INT. HOSPITAL - EXAMINING ROOM - LATER

Len looks at some X-rays up on the view box. Kat waits.

LEN
What am I looking at?

KATHERINE
You tell me.

LEN
Female child, seven or eight years old... I see a lot of inflammation of the meninges. I'd say bacterial meningitis. Pretty nasty case, by the looks of it. Little out of your field, isn't it?

Katherine pulls some pages from Lily's file.

KATHERINE
Just doing some follow up. She was a patient here. In a coma for five days. Here's her EEG.

LEN
(as he looks it over)
Listen, about yesterday...

KATHERINE
How's Sophie holding up? I left her a ton of messages, but...

LEN
She's snarky, sullen, pissed off -- y'know, pretty much back to normal. I left her at home binge watching tv on her computer. Why they think suspension is a punishment...
(he sees her pain)
She'll reach out to you when she's ready, Kat. She might be *thirty*.

KATHERINE
(smiles, then re file)
So what do you think? I'm looking for cognitive brain activity.

LEN
Not a chance.

KATHERINE
What about some sort of deep dream state, some of her senses still functioning at a subconscious level?

LEN
With this EEG? I'd say this desk has more going on upstairs.

Katherine nods, turns to go.

LEN (CONT'D)
Hey. You ever think, if it hadn't happened -- the accident, things would be different. With us?

KATHERINE
It wasn't just about Will. You know that.

LEN
I'm not the same person, Kat. Maybe if we got it all out in the open. I don't know, told Sophie...

KATHERINE
What, that her dad was screwing a twenty something drug rep in our bed while I was on call? Who's that supposed to help?

LEN
I didn't mean *specifics*. Obviously, there are some things you don't talk about with your kids.

KATHERINE
Obviously.

Katherine pauses, getting a thought. There's something about what Len just said -- things a parent wouldn't tell a child.

LEN
Kat...

KATHERINE
Thanks for the consult.

And she heads out, preoccupied, something on her mind...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

DR. HAMMOND, a balding, officious doctor lectures a group of INTERNS, including Zed, as they watch from behind the lower half of a middle-aged PATIENT, on his side, facing us.

DR. HAMMOND
To prevent infection, you need to be certain the wound is clean and dry and all the pus has been expressed prior to suturing. Dr. Zedawi. Would you do the honors?

A little gingerly, Zed takes the tools. Kat enters, points.

KATHERINE
I need *him*. Let's go.

She goes. Zed quickly hands over the implements, shrugs apologetically and follows her out -- to frowns all around.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

Zed catches up to Katherine, matching her stride.

ZED
Thank you. Though I will need to make up the training eventually.

KATHERINE
I'm not worried about your suturing. How's your googling?
(off his look)
There's somebody I want to find. And I'd rather not ask the people who'd know.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY - DAY

A pleasant sunny place, elderly people playing cards, some stretching, doing yoga, etc. Katherine and Zed are escorted through by IRINA (30's), a bookish supervising caregiver.

IRINA
Other than the family, she doesn't get many visitors. And she doesn't really mix in here a lot. Basically, she's WTD.

KATHERINE
Sorry. WTD?

IRINA
Waiting to die.

INT. ROOM - DAY

RUTH LAYTON (70's), a beauty once, sits in a wheelchair, watching TV as Irina enters with Kat and Zed.

IRINA
Ruth? There are some doctors here to see you.

IRINA (CONT'D)
Pfft, I'm through with doctors.

Irina gives them a look and goes.

KATHERINE
Actually, Mrs. Layton, we'd like to talk to you about your granddaughter, Lily.

Ruth visibly brightens.

RUTH
Lily. Beautiful girl, isn't she? She's my miracle.
(then)
What did you say your name was?

KATHERINE
I'm Katherine. This is Zed. We spoke to your daughter and son-in-law about Lily's illness. And about her experience.

RUTH
That nonsense about her visiting the "other side?" I don't believe in all that.

KATHERINE
To be honest, I don't either. But they told us you were the keeper of the family tree and I'd like to follow up on something.

She hands her Lily's crayon drawing.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
I know it's just a child's drawing but I was hoping you could take another look and see if you had any thoughts about who this might be. The one Lily called Paw Paw.

Ruth's mood darkens. She hands it back without looking.

RUTH
I have no idea. I told them that.

KATHERINE
(gently)
I know that's what you told your daughter. But I think maybe you do.

RUTH
(a look, then)
I think you should go. I don't feel well.

KATHERINE
We did some computer searches -- You were married to your husband, Bill on... When was it?

ZED
June the 6th, 1969.

He hands Kat a computer print out.

KATHERINE
And you were together until he died of a stroke ten years ago, is that right?

RUTH
What's your point?

KATHERINE
(off printout)
Well, according to this, for a short time after you were married, you had separate mailing addresses. It looks like by December of 1970, when your daughter, Colleen was born, you had reunited, but before that, *nine months*, to be exact, you and your husband weren't even living in the same state.

RUTH
... Goddamn internet.

She sighs. Then, making up her mind, Ruth wheels to a shelf and pulls out a photo album. Kat and Zed trade a look.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Bill was a good man. Most of the time.

(MORE)

RUTH (CONT'D)
But right after we got married I found out he was screwing some slut at the office. A lot of 'em do that, you know.

KATHERINE
I've heard.

RUTH
He begged me to stay. Swore he'd be good. But I moved back with my folks to think about what I wanted to do. One night, bunch of my old school friends took me out to a bar. There was a nice lookin' boy there who bought me a drink, and I was just so mad at Bill... I think you can figure out the rest.

She pulls a photo out of the album.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Bill and I got back together pretty soon after that. And I never told him. Didn't see the point.
(hands them the photo)
That's him. The boy from the bar. He sent me that from Viet Nam.

Katherine looks at the photo. It's a handsome man in an Airforce uniform, with a large sixties mustache. On the back: "Thanks for the best night of my life. See you when I get back. Paul."

RUTH (CONT'D)
I heard he got shot down not long after that was taken.

KATHERINE
You think this is who Lily saw.

RUTH
If you tell Colleen, I'll deny it, but I believe Paw Paw is Lily's grandfather. Her *real* grandfather.

Kat compares the photo to Lily's drawing. It's crude and childlike but the likeness is undeniable. Off Katherine's reaction...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Katherine and Zed walk toward the nurse's station.

ZED
I don't understand. How is it you are not astonished by that?

KATHERINE
I admit. It was... interesting.

ZED
Interesting? That little girl died and met her real grandfather, who she did not even know existed!

KATHERINE
I thought you were a man of science. There are other explanations, you know.

ZED
Such as?

KATHERINE
It could be a coincidence. Just because she drew a mustached man in uniform doesn't mean it's the same man. Or, more likely, she visited her grandmother, found that photo in the album and the image stuck in her subconscious.

ZED
You are a very suspicious and cynical person, Dr. Russo.

KATHERINE
(proudly)
Thank you.

They arrive at the nurse's station.

MARTA
I was just about to page you. You're wanted in surgery.

KATHERINE
Ah, my aortic bypass rescheduled?

MARTA
Sorry, not you, Doctor. I meant Dr. Zedawi. You're on surgery rotation, right? Dr. Stanton is performing an emergency endoscopic craniotomy. Patient is a juvenile.
(checks her clipboard)
Sweeney, first initial "L."

KATHERINE
Let me see that.
(off chart, concerned)
It's Lily.

INT. HOSPITAL SCRUB ROOM/OPERATING ROOM - DAY

Katherine flanks Dr. Stanton, walking quickly. He's in surgical scrubs, removing his gloves.

DR. STANTON
They brought her in non-responsive. The film shows an unresolved clot related to the meningitis. Appears to have migrated to the anterior hypothalamus. Obviously, the surgery is extremely risky...

KATHERINE
And without it she'll probably die.
(as he removes gloves)
So what's the hold up?

DR. STANTON
There's a hitch.

KATHERINE
A *hitch*?

DR. STANTON
It seems the parents don't want to sign the consent.

KATHERINE
What? Why not?

DR. STANTON
I don't know.
(a look)
They said *you'd* understand.

Off her reaction...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Katherine enters to see Lily in a bed, pale, unconscious and hooked up to machines. Carl and Colleen huddle, talking to a MAN with his back to us. Colleen, red-eyed, sees her.

COLLEEN
Dr. Russo! I'm glad you're here.

The other person turns...

VAN OWEN
Doctor. Hello.
(extends a hand)
Peter Van Owen. So sorry we have to meet under these circum--

KATHERINE
What the hell is he doing here?

CARL
(thrown)
We-- we asked him to come.

KATHERINE
(to Van Owen, furious)
So, declining the surgery, that was your idea? What, does it make a better book for you if she dies?

VAN OWEN
Maybe I should wait outside.

CARL
No. It was our decision. They said there's a seventy percent chance Lily wouldn't survive the surgery. And even if she does she could have severe brain damage.

COLLEEN
With all she's been through...
(emotional)
We just can't put her through that.

KATHERINE
I understand. No, actually, I don't! You have a chance to save your child. Even a small one. You take it. This is about more than that, isn't it?

Colleen and Carl trade a look.

COLLEEN
(fighting tears)
We just feel that... Maybe she wasn't meant to come back to us. Maybe God wanted us to know she was going to be okay, in the "other place." And now that we know that... we have to let her go.

KATHERINE
Bullshit! I'm sorry, but you *don't* know that.
(re Van Owen)
No one does. Not for sure. Look, I don't know what Lily saw the last time she was here. Maybe it really was some vision of the other side. Or maybe, it was just some mechanism in the brain we don't fully understand yet. But one thing I do know for sure, is that right now, your daughter is alive. If you let us try, we have a chance to save her. And you have a chance to watch her grow up.

Carl and Colleen look at each other, emotionally drained, not sure what to do.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
Trust me. Not everyone's that lucky. Don't pass it up.

SMASH TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

TRACKING with Katherine, alongside Lily's gurney, as Dr. Stanton, Zed and nurses rush her to surgery.

KATHERINE
Let's get her prepped. I'll scrub in and meet you in there.

DR. STANTON
You're a cardiac surgeon. This is a craniotomy. I'll take it from here.

KATHERINE
Come on, Oliver. It's not like it's brain surgery.

A weak smile. He doesn't return it.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
I'd like to be in there.

DR. STANTON
I don't know what your connection is to these people -- we'll discuss that later, but you're clearly way too close.

KATHERINE
That's ridiculous. I don't see--

DR. STANTON
(end of discussion)
I've got this.
(to others)
Let's go!

Frustrated, Katherine trades a look with Zed, who looks back sympathetically as he and the team move on without her.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - LATER

Katherine is at the soda machine. She puts her money in and pushes the button. As her juice drops, she notices a small dent -- where Carl punched it the first time Lily was here. As she gently runs her hand over it, she's startled by...

VAN OWEN
For what it's worth, I never suggested they decline the surgery.

KATHERINE
That's a comfort.

VAN OWEN
... I know a lot about you, you know. I did some research after that documentary where you talked about the scientific explanations for near death experiences.

KATHERINE
Know your enemy, is that it?

VAN OWEN
I don't think we're enemies, Dr. Russo. In fact, I happen to think we're a lot alike.

KATHERINE
Really.

VAN OWEN
We both ease people's suffering, heal their pain...

KATHERINE
(scoffs)
I'm a doctor. You do cheap parlor tricks.

VAN OWEN
I think your son might disagree.
(off her look)
He doesn't want you to grieve for him anymore, you know. He wants you to know that he's happy and that he's with others who--

Katherine EXPLODES, shoving him against the machine, HARD.

KATHERINE
Stop it! Don't pull that crap with me!

Some passing nurses trade a look and hurry on their way.

VAN OWEN
Is it really so hard for you to believe there's something more?

KATHERINE
Yes! And you know why? Because I *really* want to, okay? And that makes it so much worse. I wish I was like other people, who can take things on faith. But I need to *know.* I can't just accept what I can't touch or hear or see.

VAN OWEN
Maybe you're not looking in the right places. *Maybe*... you're just not trying hard enough.

Off Katherine's irritation, and frustration...

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

The beeping of monitors. Dr. Stanton, seated, peers through the operating microscope, working on Lily, who looks small and frail surrounded by the surgical team, including Zed.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
O2 sat is ninety four percent. BP is 115 over 73.

Katherine enters in full scrubs.

KATHERINE
How is she?

Everyone but Dr. Stanton looks up in surprise. The OR nurse, Marta, steps in her way.

MARTA
Dr. Russo. You're not supposed to be in here.

KATHERINE
(calling, around her)
Dr. Stanton, you can fire me if you want. But I'm staying.

DR. STANTON
(not looking up from the scope)
Two offers to fire you in one week? One of these times I'm going to have to take you up on that.
(to Marta)
It's okay. We're basically done.

He stands up and crosses to Katherine, pulls down his mask.

DR. STANTON (CONT'D)
We aspirated the hematoma. She made it through that part okay. But beyond that...

Katherine looks over at little Lily, concerned. Dr. Stanton rubs his arm, grimaces a little.

DR. STANTON (CONT'D)
Must be getting old. Just can't sit for that long like I used to.

Suddenly, he plummets to the floor, pulling down a tray of clattering surgical instruments all around him!

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
Holy shit!

Katherine quickly kneels down next to him.

KATHERINE
Oliver! Can you hear me?
(checks his pulse, calls out)
He's in arrest!

MARTA
We got a code blue!

Katherine immediately starts CPR, pressing rhythmically.

KATHERINE
Come on, Oliver, stay with me.

Zed kneels down next to her.

ZED
What can I do?

KATHERINE
Get me the paddles, stat!
(calls out)
And let's get somebody in here to do the close on her!

As Katherine continues to work, intently, steadily on the immobile Dr. Stanton...

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
(to Dr. Stanton)
And you didn't want to have a cardiac doc in here.

She's trying to keep it light, but her concern at the lack of any response at all shows on her face.

As she keeps up the urgent CPR, we slowly PULL BACK AND UP until we're looking down on the frantic scene from above -- one patient on the table, another on the floor, Katherine in the center, as if we're seeing it all from the ceiling.

And then we hard SMASH TO:

BLACK

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL NURSE'S STATION/HALLWAY - DAY

Katherine is dropping off a med chart, when she HEARS...

LILY (O.C.)
Woof-woof!

A nurse pushes a gurney past with Lily, bandaged but better.

KATHERINE
Hey! How's my favorite dog?

NURSE
Just taking her for some tests.

LILY
I drew you a picture.

KATHERINE
(takes the drawing)
Yeah? Thanks.

It's a crayon drawing of a very tall, skinny, dark skinned man in a lab coat next to a woman with cat ears, whiskers and a tail -- clearly meant to be Zed and Kat.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
Wow. It's more like a photograph.

NURSE
All right, let's go, Rembrandt.

The nurse pushes Lily's gurney into the open elevator.

KATHERINE
So, no new pictures from "the other place" this time, huh?

LILY
(hesitates)
... She told me not to talk to you about that anymore.

KATHERINE
She? Who, your mom? Your Grandma?

Lily slowly shakes her head as the doors close. Kat frowns. What was that about? Her thoughts are broken by...

DR. STANTON (O.C.)
I suppose you think I owe you now.

REVEAL Dr. Stanton, very much alive, in robe and hospital gown, being pushed in a wheelchair. She smiles.

KATHERINE
In some cultures, you'd have to be my slave for the rest of your life.

DR. STANTON
You're doing my bypass. Which means you get to cut me with a knife. I think that's thanks enough.

Katherine shrugs, that makes sense. Then...

KATHERINE
You know, you were pretty much flat lined there for a while. Just curious. Did you by any chance...

DR. STANTON
See a tunnel? White light? Dead relatives?
(scoffs)
I got none of that. Just... nothing. Kind of sobering, really. Guess we have to make the most of the time we've got, huh?

He's pushed on down the hall. Katherine watches him go, then looks down at the drawing in her hand. A thought...

INT. LILY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Katherine explores the empty room, filled with flowers, balloons, stuffed animals.

She sees some crayon drawings on the wall -- more of her and Zed, the hospital staff. She smiles. And then she stops.

She slowly pulls off one of Lily's new crayon drawings. It shows Lily in "the other place," like before, but this time holding hands with a new person. A woman -- all in green.

FLASHBACK - A quick FLASH of the woman in green, from Kat's near death vision, reaching out to us, taking our hand.

BACK TO Katherine as she picks up more drawings on the bedside table. She flips through them.

They all show the same thing -- crayon images of the strange woman in green, exactly like in Katherine's own near death experience. Is that who Lily meant? On her reaction...

EXT. TURING UNLIMITED CAMPUS - DAY

Hipster twenty-something employees on bicycles cruise past Ivan Turing, leaning back on a bench, eyes closed, enjoying the sun. A Katherine-sized shadow falls over him.

KATHERINE
We need to talk.

He squints up at her, shields his eyes.

TURING
I'm dying, you know. Are you gonna sit down or make me go blind too?

As she sits...

TURING (CONT'D)
Did Janel happen to mention what's keeping my triple shot soy latte?

Katherine reaches in her bag, hands him a file.

TURING (CONT'D)
What's this?

KATHERINE
One of your files. A little girl named Lily. I checked it out.

TURING
And?

KATHERINE
Well it's not *proof*, if that's what you're asking. But there were a few things about it that could, *possibly,* be worth pursuing further.

He waits. She sighs, then all business...

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
Okay, here's how it's gonna go. There was an earthquake in Guatemala just last week. They need medical aid, badly. So you're going to make donations, big ones, to Doctors Without Borders, as needed, wherever it's needed.

TURING
Will I get some kind of plaque or statue?
(off her look)
Go on.

KATHERINE
I need to be able to pursue anything I want, wherever it leads. And not just from your files. All expenses covered.

TURING
I'm good with that.

KATHERINE
And I'll need help. There's an intern. He's got a lot to learn, and a crappy diet, but I think he could be useful.

TURING
Done. You should take one of my people too. To handle logistics, research, interface with me... There's a young woman, two Ph.d's, incredibly loyal. Just don't ask her to wrangle a triple shot soy latte.

KATHERINE
(smiles)
I'm good with that.

TURING
So does this mean we have a deal?

KATHERINE
There's one more thing. I'm not giving up surgery. It's what I do. And I don't need people I work with giving me grief about this. So it stays strictly between us. I'll keep working at the hospital and do this on the side. Understood?

TURING
Death stuff on the down low. Got it.

He holds out his hand. She looks at it. Then shakes. As she looks out, and it begins to sink in...

KATHERINE
Suppose we really do this. Suppose I actually find evidence that definitively *proves* to a scientific certainty...

TURING
That this is all we get? You only live once -- YOLO, as they say? Or that there really is something *more,* some kind of conscious life after this one?

He looks out on the park-like space, life all around them.

TURING (CONT'D)
Either way, we'll finally know, won't we?

And off their faces, gazing out, contemplating the enormity of what that could mean...

INT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Katherine and Zed are at the table, looking through files.

KATHERINE
I think we should separate these into near death experiences, and things like reincarnation, and other post-death phenomena, like poltergeists and ghosts... And I can't believe I'm saying this.

Janel staggers in, loaded down with more file boxes.

JANEL
(sarcastic, for Zed)
I got this.

ZED
Did you need assistance?

JANEL
Let me guess, where you come from, women carry this much on their heads.

ZED
Where I come from, even the pregnant women carry more than that. Are you with child?

JANEL
Excuse me?

KATHERINE
All right. Don't make me separate you two.

LEN (O.C.)
Knock knock.

Len and Sophie enter, a little surprised at the scene.

SOPHIE
Oh... sorry. The door was open.

KATHERINE
We're just finishing up.
(covering)
They're, um, they're helping me with the Doctors Without Borders stuff. We got some new funding.

LEN
That's great! Congrats.

Zed and Janel trade a look.

LEN (CONT'D)
Okay, well, here's her stuff.
(to Sophie)
Guess I'll see you next week.

Sophie gives a teen shrug, heads to the kitchen.

LEN (CONT'D)
(pointed, re Sophie)
Good luck.

He goes. Off the sound of opening and closing cabinets coming from the kitchen...

KATHERINE
Give me a minute.

KITCHEN

Sophie reads a snack bag she pulled from a cabinet.

SOPHIE
Ucch, don't you have anything that's gluten-*full*?

KATHERINE
Listen, I was thinking... maybe we could watch a movie later. Maybe order some takeout...

SOPHIE
Is this your awkward way of trying to reconnect? Where we, what, eat veggie Chinese food and have a shared vicarious emotional experience over some sappy rom com?

KATHERINE
I was thinking Indian food. But yeah. Kinda.

Sophie grabs a drink and the snack bag, heads to her room.

SOPHIE
Get extra garlic Naan.

And she shuts her door. Off Katherine -- it's a start.

INT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE - LATER

The SOUND of raucous laughter. TRACK along the coffee table, past dirty plates and takeout boxes, and FIND Katherine and Sophie on the couch, a bowl of popcorn between them, watching television, laughing hysterically.

But it's not the latest romantic comedy. REVEAL they're watching home movies -- videos of Kat, Sophie, Len and Will, mugging for the camera, vacation stuff, acting like idiots. With his trademark devilish grin, Will's doing wild over the top skateboard stunts and crashes worthy of YouTube fame.

SOPHIE
(through the laughter)
Oh my god, look at him.

KATHERINE
I know. Kind of amazing he lived as long as he did, right?

SOPHIE
(winces, off a fall)
Ooooh. I remember that one.

KATHERINE
Me too. Your dad patched him up, but I think Will always liked my stitches better.

SOPHIE
Maybe when you finish your thing for that Turing guy, you can ask him yourself.

Kat gives her a look.

KATHERINE
How'd you know?

SOPHIE
Please. You're not that hard to read. I'm not Dad, you know. Plus, I peeked at those files when you were making the popcorn. That stuff is seriously cray-cray.

KATHERINE
Let's just keep all that between us, okay?

SOPHIE
Fine.
(then)
You really think you might find out if there's any life after death?

KATHERINE
I don't know. No. Actually. I don't.

She looks at the TV, the smile of her son. She sighs.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
But I suppose it's worth a shot.

Sophie looks at her mother, seeing her in a new light, the pain of the past few years turning to purpose.

SOPHIE
(then, scoops popcorn)
Hey, heard there was some buzz around the hospital you shoved a guy. You get suspended too?

KATHERINE
I'm gonna kill your father.

And as they smile and return to the videos like two old friends, the SOUND of slow and steady breathing, in out, in out, carries us to...

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Katherine is jogging again, earbuds in, in the zone. She passes some other doctors. One waves. She ignores him. Keeps going. Some things never change.

As she continues on her run, breathing hard, an ambulance, SIREN blaring, screams past her in the opposite direction.

She jogs a few more steps, then stops. She sighs, then turns around and begins to run back the way she came, anticipating her beeper that's already begun to BUZZ.

And as she makes her way inside the busy hospital, we slowly PULL BACK to SEE -- the busy street scene, full of people living their lives, most giving little thought to the big questions of life and death.

One of them, a strangely familiar WOMAN, stands across the street, watching as Katherine disappears inside. Then she pulls a GREEN SHAWL over her shoulders, turns, and walks away, blending into the street life passing by.

THE END