Wonderland

Pilot Episode
"It Begins"

Second Draft

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Dare to Pass and Brillstein Entertainment Partners

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ACT ONE

BLACK

Sounds of struggle and distress. Someone is having a nightmare.

INT. CLARA'S BEDROOM, DETROIT - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

The sounds (now muted) come from somewhere down the hall, but we're close on the worried eyes of 23 year-old CLARA LAMB. She's wide awake in bed and troubled by the terror she hears.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Clara creeps down a long hallway. The sounds grow louder until she stops at a door. Raps gently with her knuckle. Pushes the door open.

There in bed is her 16 year-old brother PETER, thrashing in terror. He's clearly having a NIGHTMARE.

CUT TO:

INT. CLARA'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - MORNING

CLARA
Peter???

The next morning. French toast sizzles in a caste iron skillet.

Once a showpiece Victorian, this sagging home is now dilapidated and devalued -- a prime example of the downfall of Detroit. We're in a kitchen of peeling wallpaper and rotting floorboards, but Clara's done what she can with it. The small dinette is set for two, orange juice on the table. She's manning the old gas stove like a pro. In the daylight, we get a better look at her...

Even in her holey sweatshirt Clara is beautiful. Uniquely so, with freckles covering the delicate features of a ballerina and dark green eyes that at first glance are all fight and at second all sadness, like the strong cry of a cello.

She glances at a wall clock, serves up breakfast. Again:

CLARA (CONT'D)
Peter!!

PETER (O.S.)
I'm up, geez.

And in plods her brother, exhausted and lugging a soccer duffle. In the daylight, we see that he's big for his age, effortlessly cool but with an angst and anger only 16-year-olds can get away with. He stops at the sight of breakfast.

PETER (CONT'D)
Seriously? What is this, commemorative French toast?

He dumps his bag, b-lines for the coffee pot.

CLARA
Just eat; it took me an hour.

After a second Peter gives in, brings his coffee to the table, sits. Clara watches him; the kid looks exhausted.

CLARA (CONT'D)
How'd you sleep?

He shoots her a look, doesn't want to talk about it.

PETER
Fine.

She backs off. He butters his breakfast.

PETER (CONT'D)
Do you have my tournament money?

CLARA
Fifty?

PETER
One-fifty.

CLARA
Right, yeah. I mean no. But I'll get it.

PETER
Clara, come on, there are gonna be scouts there--

CLARA
You'll have the money!

They eat, annoyed with each other. Then the age-old fight:

PETER
I still don't get why I can't get a job.

CLARA
'Cuz your grades suck.

PETER
Wow.

CLARA
Well?

PETER
D's are passing.

CLARA
D's for dummy. You're gonna get kicked off the team.

PETER
No, I'm not, I'm too good.

He grins. His arrogance, or rather his acknowledgement of his arrogance, is oddly charming. Clara rolls her eyes, but can't help smiling.

PETER (CONT'D)
Can I have the syrup?

She passes it to him. Watches him shovel the breakfast in his mouth like teenage boys do. She just picks at hers, then...

CLARA
So I was thinking maybe we should go see mom today.

PETER
Is that what this breakfast is? You're trying to bribe me?

CLARA
Peter, you know it's a hard day for her--

PETER
It's a hard day for *me!* And I don't need it made harder by listening to her nonsensical babble about dad! He LEFT us! It's that simple!

CLARA
Okay!

Peter's pissed. He feels ambushed, betrayed. He puts his napkin back on the table and grabs his duffle.

PETER
I'm not hungry anymore.

CLARA
Peter... Pete, I'm sorry.

But he's out the door on his way to school.

CLICK: Off goes their electricity. The utility company suspended service.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Awesome.

CUT TO:

I/E. CITY BUS/DETROIT - LATER THAT MORNING

Clara rides a cramped bus to work through the outskirts of downtrodden Detroit. She's on her cell dealing with the Utility Company, a RED OVERDUE ELECTRIC BILL in her hand for a whopping $474.32.

CLARA
(into the phone)
No, I...

Through the windows she can see bundled pedestrians and fall leaves already turning to orange and red. She sticks a finger in her free ear to try to hear better.

CLARA (CONT'D)
(phone)
I understand that, but if I could just have one more month--

The bus slows. Traffic's heavy. She checks her watch.

CLARA (CONT'D)
(phone)
Yeah, but we can't go without heat; it's-- I-- No, wait, wait, please--

But they've hung up.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Dammit.

The bus pulls over to its stop, and Clara hustles off.

EXT. DOWNTOWN DETROIT - CONTINUOUS

Clara zips her coat, flips up the collar, and shoves her hands in her pockets, cold. She rounds a corner and crosses the street toward the...

EXT. TRUCK STOP DINER - CONTINUOUS

A 50s-style greasy spoon in the middle of downtown with large glass windows and a neon sign rotating on the roof that reads: *The Truck Stop Diner*. The "n" is dark. She yanks open the door.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK HALL/MANAGER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A back hallway with florescent lights. Clara takes a breath then knocks on her boss's office door.

BOSS (O.S.)
Yap?

Pushes it open.

CLARA
(feigning cheer)
Hey, how are you?

Clara's boss TREK is late 30s, full beard, mountain-man good-looking if he weren't so grumpy. His desk is stacked with files and a computer out of 1992. Doesn't even look up:

TREK
Busy.

CLARA
Right. Ah, I was hoping that maybe I could get an advance. Just a week or, well, two actually.

Trek looks up from his paperwork, unsympathetic.

TREK
Clara, it's 8:17, your shift started at 8, so frankly you're lucky you still have a job.

CLARA
But--

TREK
You can leave the door open on your way out.

Clara bites her tongue and leaves.

INT. THE TRUCK STOP DINER/BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The break room consists of a table and a couple ratty couches. Clara dumps her bag and grabs her apron from her locker. Her best friend and coworker MICHE (late-20s, smart-mouthed but big-hearted) reads on her break.

MICHE
This *50 Shades of Grey* crap is better than YouPorn.

Clara slams her locker shut.

MICHE (CONT'D)
Whoakay, just an opinion.

CLARA
Sorry.

Clara heads back out into the...

HALLWAY

Miche follows her.

MICHE
Hey, are you okay?

CLARA
Bills. Again.

MICHE
(commiserating)
Ugh I know, isn't it awful? How they just keep coming *every* month? Can you sell something?

CLARA
I've sold everything worth anything in that house.

They pass TREK'S OFFICE, his door open like Clara left it.

TREK
Nineteen minutes late...

And Clara pushes through the swinging door to start her shift on the diner floor. Miche feigns being impressed:

MICHE
Wow, Trek, you are *really* good at telling time.

INT. DINER FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Vinyl booths, a Formica counter top. Clara slaps on a happy face, takes the order of a STRANGER with a British accent sitting all alone in her six-top booth.

CLARA
Morning there, you want coffee?

STRANGER
Tea.

CLARA
You got it. What about breakfast? Had a chance to look yet?

STRANGER
Just tea.

Clara looks up from her note pad for the first time. The man is staring at her intensely.

CLARA
Just tea?

He smiles. The guy's indiscernible, both in age and demeanor. At once avuncular and foreboding, simultaneously 40 and 60 with thick white hair that only confuses the issue further. He's got a POCKET WATCH in his hand. And it's ticking loudly.

CLARA (CONT'D)
(forcing a smile)
Be right back with that.

But Clara doesn't go for the tea; instead she b-lines to the college kid host BILLY.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Why'd you put *one* guy at my money-maker? That's my only 6-top this shift. I need it!

BILLY
He insisted.

CLARA
(sighs)
Ohmygod I hate people today.

Clara gathers a box of various tea bags, a cup of hot water, lemon. Brings it to the Stranger along with the bill.

CLARA (CONT'D)
And here's this when you're ready.

STRANGER
Thank you, Clara.

They lock eyes -- h*ow did he know her name?* She nods suspiciously then goes about refilling customers' coffee. We stay on the Stranger as he watches her work. Soon he glances down at the mug of luke warm water and the crap bags of tea, then he glances again at his pocket watch.

Across the floor Clara slides an omelet to an older customer:

CLARA
Looks good today, doesn't it, Bea?

She glances back toward her 6-top, but the strange man has gone. Clara approaches the table... He left exact change in coins, no tip. Annoyed:

CLARA (CONT'D)
Nice.

SMASH TO:

EXT. TRUCK STOP DINER/DETROIT - MOMENTS LATER

SQUEEEAK!! TWO CYCLISTS (a MAN and a WOMAN) squeeze their breaks to avoid a WHITE RABBIT scurrying across the street in front of them. They swerve and crash, the man right into a city TRASH CAN that flips and bangs into the diner window.

He picks himself up off the ground.

MAN
Are you okay?

WOMAN
I think so.

MAN
Where the hell did it come from?

Clara and Miche rush out of the diner with a FIRST AID KIT.

CLARA
Are you guys alright? We've got a first aid kit if you--

The man turns to Clara. They both go white. Meet KLEIN (mid-20s), Clara's ex and the love of her life. She hasn't seen him since he moved east for college, stayed east for work.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Klein.

MICHE
Holy sh--

CLARA
What are you doing back in Detroit?

KLEIN
You *work* here?

Clara glances down at her apron, embarrassed.

FEMALE CYCLIST
Hi.

The female cyclist BREE (20s) is a well-dressed, well-groomed, blonde Daughter of the Revolution.

KLEIN
Oh, sorry. Bree Harper this is Clara Lamb.

BREE
Oh my gosh, Clara!! The dancer! Klein goes on and on about your talent. Are you in anything we could see while we're in town? I love the ballet!

Clara flushes.

CLARA
I don't dance anymore actually.

BREE
Oh. I'm sorry to hear that...

Awkward. Miche notices Bree is bleeding.

MICHE
(to Bree)
Your hand is...

BREE
Oh! Geez.

CLARA
Here.

Clara opens the first aid kit, pulls out an antiseptic wipe.

BREE
A rabbit ran in front of us. Didn't know you had those downtown...

Bree smiles. Clara takes her hand, flips it over and <u>there, on Bree's third finger, is A WHOPPER OF AN ENGAGEMENT RING</u>.

Clara's heart stops. She locks eyes with Klein.

SMASH TO:

EXT. OUT OF USE BRIDGE - THAT NIGHT

Clara chugs a beer, full-throttle. She and Miche are boozing in a dried-up river bed under an out-of-use bridge.

MICHE
Slow down.

CLARA
Speed up.

Clara winds up and launches her now-empty bottle over the bridge. It smashes somewhere on the other side. She pops the top off another beer as...

CLARA (CONT'D)
Stupid dumb ass rabbit running through the road. Did you see the size of her *ring*?!!

MICHE
That crackerjack prize? Please.

CLARA
Screw this day! Damn lights, and bills and Klein and Peter and I'm freakin' over it!

MICHE
Freakin'?

CLARA
That was supposed to be *my* ring, *my* life! With her...JCrew ensemble. And dancing??? She *had* to bring up dancing. Like she *knew* how to make the worst day even worse.

Clara freezes. She's spotted a <u>small white rabbit</u> in the dirt. She narrows her focus...

CLARA (CONT'D)
Here bunny bunny bunny...Where's your friend who ruined my day, little bunny?

She stalks the rabbit as it hops toward a PEDESTRIAN WALK at the edge of the riverbed.

MICHE
Did we just enter Fatal Attraction?

CLARA
Ooh I'm gonna boil you then cut off your foot for good luck!

Clara charges the rabbit. They race down the walk, into a PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL that passes underneath the old bridge. It's dark and suddenly steep; Clara slides a ways but catches her balance and pops out on...

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE

But the rabbit has disappeared. Nowhere in sight.

It's slightly lighter and warmer on this side of the bridge, more colorful. But Clara is too drunk to notice and too preoccupied with the vanishing bunny. She spins around looking for it, then stumbles off the path over a HEAP OF STICKS AND DRY LEAVES, back down to the riverbed.

CLARA
Stupid fur ball.

She downs the last of her beer then yells:

CLARA (CONT'D)
INCOMING!!!!

Clara tosses the bottle, but just then the WHITE RABBIT zooms across her feet, startling her and throwing off her toss.

SMASH! The bottle cracks through the windshield of a PASSING CAR on the bridge above (a bridge that is supposedly closed).

The car screeches, slams into the wall of the bridge, knocking large stones to the riverbed below. Clara's stunned, then snaps out of it and races up the riverbank to the wreck. It's horrific.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Oh God...
(to Miche)
Call 911. CALL 911!

But when Clara looks down to where her friend should be, MICHE IS GONE.

<u>Everything slows</u>. Sound goes fuzzy, distant, out-of-synch. Clara turns back toward the wreck. Takes in the details. Crunched hood, deployed airbag. Then she sees the WOMAN WHO WAS DRIVING -- unconscious, bleeding, her skin shredded by shattered glass.

Lights in the distance. Sirens. A cop car, an ambulance. Clara is arrested. Her voice comes late, after her mouth makes the words:

CLARA (CONT'D)
I thought the bridge was closed. I-- Is she okay? Is the driver gonna be okay???

The COPS put Clara in the back of their car, and the last thing she sees is the driver on a stretcher being loaded into the ambulance. Off Clara's face bathed in red flashing light, peering out the rear window...

BECOMES:

INT. COP CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Da-dunk, da-dunk. Seams of highway pavement click by. Clara stares into the seat in front of her, in shock.

One of the TWO COPS calls in the crime.

COP
Yeah, we've got a 923 on our hands. Girl from Up There. Bringin' her in now. Over.

Clara shifts her eyes and begins to come back to reality. She glances into the front of the car, then out the side window but doesn't notice that this cop car is slightly odd; it has no rear or side view mirrors.

EXT. POLICE STATION - LATER

The Police Station is a grand building that's crumbling on the outside. The cops help Clara out of the car.

CLARAS
This is the police station?

COP
Watch your head.

INT. POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

The station lobby is lofty, in pristine condition, and spotless. It's also empty except for a CLERK inside an ALL GLASS BOOTH at the end of a zigzagging line of velvet rope.

The Cops escort Clara to the Clerk. He's engrossed in a book about DOORS (all the various shapes and sizes), so the cops knock on the glass to get his attention.

COP
The 923, Jim.

CLERK
Oh, great! Yes. Thanks, boys.

They hand her off.

CLARA
How long will you keep me here?

CLERK
Hand, please. Right there.

On the counter is an inscription that reads, "Touch me." Clara places her hand over it and THUMP. A metal machine clamps down around her wrist and releases. Around Clara's wrist now is a BLUE METAL LINK BRACELET. She examines it, confused.

CLERK (CONT'D)
Name?

Before she can answer, in swoops that white-haired, tea-drinking British stranger from the diner: PHILIP WHITE.

PHILIP WHITE
Emily Walsh. I've got her.

And Philip whisks Clara away to an elevator.

CLARA
That's not my--

PHILIP WHITE
(sotto)
Here, for today, your name is Emily Walsh. With no exception. Understood?

She recognizes him now...

CLARA
You...???

PHILIP WHITE
Me. Philip White. Bloody awful tea, by the way.

Ding! The elevator doors open and they go inside.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Philip presses a button with an ornate 'B' on it. A JOLT and the elevator goes DOWN instead of up. Clara's confused and suspicious:

CLARA
Who are you?

PHILIP WHITE
Your attorney, among other things.

CLARA
Attorney? Why?!

PHILIP WHITE
For the trial.

CLARA
Trial???! What happened to the driver? Is she okay? Did she survive?

PHILIP WHITE
Oh she is very much alive.

CLARA
(relieved)
Okay, listen, you have to understand this was a complete accident--

PHILIP WHITE
Was it?

CLARA
Yes, I wasn't-- That bridge has been closed for years. If I'd known it had reopened I *never* would have been chucking bottles...

PHILIP WHITE
Your bridge is closed.

CLARA
But--

PHILIP WHITE
Ours is not.

CLARA
What?

PHILIP WHITE
Where are you?

CLARA
I...
(re: the elevator)
Are we still going down?

PHILIP WHITE
And down.

Then just like that, the elevator stops. One of the elevator's side walls slides open to reveal a REFRESHMENT STAND. It's piled high with cakes and scones, finger sandwiches, macaroons, jams, tea pots and cups. A RUBY-LIPPED WOMAN with a pillbox hat stands behind it to serve.

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
Ah! English breakfast, please.
(to Clara)
Cake? Scone? Orange marmalade?

Clara just blinks. Perplexed.

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
No then.

Clara stares at the cakes as the wall slides back into place and the elevator resumes its descent.

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
Watch now. Almost there.

During the final floors, the elevator walls change. Wood grain and burly knots slowly bleed into view, drowning out the metal until it seems they are in an all-wood box.

CLARA
What is this place?

Ding! The doors open to reveal an OUTDOOR SCENE: ENDLESS CHERRY TREES AND SUNSHINE. Thousands of rogue blossoms swirl on the wind, peppering the blue sky with pink. The most beautiful thing Clara has ever seen.

PHILIP WHITE
Wonderland.

Clara's eyes go wide and we cut to black.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. WONDERLAND/CHERRY GROVE - SAME

Slow motion and high def: Clara stands just outside the elevator staring into a swirl of blossoms. They fall in her hair, onto her eyelashes. She is hypnotized by the beauty...

DING! Back to real time. Clara turns and sees the elevator doors closing. But they aren't normal elevator doors; they're covered in bark and set inside the trunk of an oversized cherry tree. Once closed, you'd never know they were there.

Clara glances up, unable to see or understand what she just descended to get here. Above the trunk are only tree branches, like any other tree branches.

PHILIP WHITE (O.S.)
This way.

CLARA
But--

Philip is already 10 paces ahead of her on a narrow path through the trees. She hurries to catch up.

PHILIP WHITE
You've read the books, right? Alice's Adventures, Through the Looking Glass. Most people think they're fiction, they're not. It's really that simple. And no, Alice wasn't tripping, wasn't dreaming, wasn't mad, she was trespassing in a real, live place--or visiting, as it's been revised. Your blue bracelet, by the way, don't lose it. Not until I tell you to anyway. It's your passport and your classification, issued only to those from Up There.

CLARA
Up where?

PHILIP WHITE
Where *you* live. Not actually up anywhere, of course. Just a phrase used for clarity.

CLARA
(confused)
I don't--

He stops, tells her directly:

PHILIP WHITE
Wonderland is the world of living dreams. If a person dreams it Up There, it comes to be Down Here, born into Wonderland fully formed but free. Free to do and become what it will.

CLARA
Wonderland...???

PHILIP WHITE
These trees, for example, they were dreamt to bloom in every season. But if I chop one down it dies, set one aflame it burns. We are real here. As real as you.

Clara spots half a dozen lavender BIRDS flying backwards. They lead her gaze toward a steep cliff that plunges to a deep VALLEY. In a state of shock, Clara steps off the path and approaches the cliff's edge for a better look.

Clara's POV: The valley below is snow-covered in squares, like a giant CHESSBOARD. It's snowing still but in reverse. Upwards.

Clara watches as a delicate flake zooms up past her nose, swirls left and loops away past an OLD WOMAN in a ROCKING CHAIR at the cliff's edge, staring across the valley through a white-washed window suspended in front of her.

Fear creeps into Clara's eyes.

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
(re: the old woman)
She loves the view. Rocks all day.

CLARA
...This is how it starts.

PHILIP WHITE
What?

CLARA
Madness... I'm losing my mind.

PHILIP WHITE
(sincere)
The only thing mad is the Hatter, darling.
(MORE)

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
There's nothing the matter, I promise. Ten steps more or we shall be too, too late.

CLARA
(a plea)
Prove it to me. Please? ...Prove you're real.

PHILIP WHITE
Prove *you're* real.

And Clara realizes sadly that she doesn't know how...

Just then Philip's pocket watch rattles in his suit, making a noisy racket. He pulls it out, clicks a button to quiet it. Then back to Clara:

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
Tick tock.

And he's off. Clara scrambles after him. They crest a hill:

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
There...

An ornate IRON GATE 100 feet tall, and beyond it, gardens and fountains and green lawns. There in the distance is a grand, white castle twice the size of Versailles.

EXT. BELLUS CASTLE GATES - MOMENTS LATER

Just outside the iron gates, a dozen ARMED SOLDIERS march out to form a circle around Clara and Philip. A 12-foot GIANT comes to the center to check them in. Clara's jaw goes slack at the sight of him.

PHILIP WHITE
Close your mouth.

GIANT
White, haven't seen you in a few.

PHILIP WHITE
How are you, Percy? Got the 923 from Up There; the Royal She is expecting us. Show him your bracelet.

Wide-eyed, Clara holds up her wrist with the blue bracelet. The Giant clamps a small tool around the bracelet--CLICK--and leaves behind a small CASTLE CHARM (Wonderland's version of a passport stamp). Then he WINKS at Clara, and...

GIANT
I'll just need *your* ID, White.

PHILIP WHITE
Of course.

Before our eyes, Philip transforms into a small WHITE RABBIT.

GIANT
Clear!

The armed guards disperse, Philip expands back to his human self, and the gates open.

CLARA
You're...

PHILIP WHITE
The White Rabbit. At your service.

Off Clara, stunned...

EXT. BELLUS CASTLE - MOMENTS LATER

Philip leads Clara through the grounds and around to the back of the palace. They pass long lawns filled with PICNICKERS and CROQUET GAMES, fountains that spout champagne, laughing CHILDREN, LOVERS reading to each other. A GROUP OF GOWNED WOMEN catches Clara's eye -- their hair is adorned with live butterflies.

But then Philip brings her to a set of stone steps that descend into...

INT. BELLUS CASTLE WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As ornate as the castle exterior was, this room is simple. Like a holding room for jury duty selection. Metal chairs, business carpeting, harsh lighting, and the constant buzz of electricity. There are a couple dozen people here, all seated, all scared, all silent. Half of the room is filled with BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE (dreams), and the other half is filled with the HIDEOUS (nightmares). Dividing the two groups is a narrow aisle leading to a PROCTOR. Philip takes Clara directly to him.

PHILIP WHITE
Hey there, got the expedite.

PROCTOR
So this is the girl from Up There.

Simultaneously, everyone in the room turns to look at Clara.

PROCTOR (CONT'D)
Mind your business, or I'll tell the Queen!

And simultaneously they look away, terrified.

PROCTOR (CONT'D)
Throne Room Three, Philip.
(leaning in to Clara)
Keep your head about you.

The Proctor snickers and unlocks the iron door behind him. Philip and Clara pass into the...

INT. HEXAGON ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A small hexagonal room with a numbered door on each wall. Big enough only for the two of them. Clara is finally terrified.

CLARA
(terror)
Will she hurt me? The Queen?

PHILIP WHITE
Not if all goes as planned. Now, pay attention. Take in every detail, study the room, the guards, the people, the exits. *Her*. Memorize them.

CLARA
Why?

PHILIP WHITE
They may be your savior. Ah! Here we are! Door Three...

Philip pushes the door numbered 3 open, and they enter...

INT. THRONE ROOM THREE - CONTINUOUS

A cathedral-ceilinged hall of blue and silver filigree with a packed balcony of beautiful spectators and a jury box against the side wall. Broad steps lead to an elevated platform supporting an ornate throne, and there stands CLARA front and center on the floor with only Philip by her side.

Flanking the throne stand twins TWEEDLEDEE and TWEEDLEDUM, and flanking the Tweedles are SIX MEN WITH ELEPHANT TRUNKS in place of noses. In the far corner is an UNMANNED TYPEWRITER that takes down the court report all by itself.

BOTH TWEEDLES
All rise to welcome her Royal Highness the Blue Queen of Wonderland.

The spectators stand, the Elephant Men trumpet with their trunks, and in comes the BLUE QUEEN. The crowd CHEERS at her arrival; she's beloved.

CLARA
(sotto to Philip)
The *Blue* Queen?

PHILIP WHITE
(sotto to Clara)
Bow and address her.

Clara curtseys. The Queen raises a hand to quiet the crowd.

CLARA
Your Highness.

BLUE QUEEN
Please...

Clara glances up at the Queen.

BLUE QUEEN (CONT'D)
Call me Alice.

Clara's eyes go wide at the discovery that the Blue Queen is none other than ALICE LIDDELL, the little girl from <u>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</u> all grown up.

Like Philip, Alice speaks with a British accent. She appears to be in her 20's now but has the same long, yellow hair the illustrations depict. Her lips are red, her figure enviable, she wears a blue and white dress half-Renaissance, half-Paris Runway and a blue Up There bracelet identical to Clara's but with far more charms. In short, Alice is a knockout.

ALICE
Not who you expected, am I? Not Red nor White nor Hearts, just Alice.

The crowd cheers again. Alice smiles.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Come, let me look at you.

Clara swallows hard, nervous as Alice examines her face. Then, as if confessing to a playmate:

ALICE (CONT'D)
I've always loved freckles. They weren't the fashion in my day, but then neither was I by the end.
(to the crowd)
Sit.

They do.

ALICE (CONT'D)
You've drawn quite a crowd, Emily. It's not often we have visitors from Up There anymore. Am I to understand you stumbled upon us?

PHILIP WHITE
She followed me on my return after delivery 16 27 40 03.

ALICE
Detroit?

PHILIP WHITE
Correct.

Suspicion sparks in Alice, but she masks it immediately.

ALICE
You got down quite the same way I did the first time. Following this *Jack* Rabbit. You've never been a very good guide, Philip--she must have been horribly confused. I know I was. And you look smart too, Emily, in the eyes. It's always hardest for the smart ones.

Alice winks at Clara with a smile and returns to her throne. Clara breathes a bit more, relieved. This trial might not be so bad after all...

ALICE (CONT'D)
Judy, charges?

JUDY, the opposing council, clears her throat.

JUDY
Defendant is charged with inebriation and unruly behavior resulting in the destruction of private property held by the Tarnen seated here, Penelope Green.

We see PENELOPE now, the driver of the car. The woman's face is still torn to bits, the skin shredded and hanging.

CLARA
Oh my god, are you okay?

ALICE
Darling, she's fine. She's a Tarnen, that's how she looks. You might have even improved her.

Penelope lowers her eyes, ashamed.

ALICE (CONT'D)
What was this 'unruly behavior'?

JUDY
She threw a beer bottle, Your Majesty.

ALICE
And what was the resulting destruction?

JUDY
It broke Ms. Green's windshield, Your Majesty.

ALICE
And the bottle?

JUDY
I'm sorry?

ALICE
Did the bottle break?

JUDY
...I'm sure it did, Your Majesty.

ALICE
Philip, how does Emily Walsh plead?

PHILIP WHITE
Guilty, My Queen, but with great regret.

ALICE
Guilty and regretful indeed. Guilty of having her beer bottle smashed by this Tarnen's car. Regretful the bottle is no longer whole. What a horrible crime was committed against you and your bottle, Emily!

Judy and Penelope can't believe that Alice is flipping this.

ALICE (CONT'D)
It seems to me these charges should be switched. What say you?

Clara's terribly confused, struggles to form words.

CLARA
I...don't wish to file any charges, your Highness.

Alice tilts her head, surprised.

ALICE
Let me understand. You wish the charges to remain as they are?

CLARA
I-

ALICE
Very well, I find you guilty!!!

The courtroom erupts. Clara looks to Philip for help, terrified and confused.

Alice holds a hand up, and the crowd falls silent. Once again, she speaks to Clara with kindness:

ALICE (CONT'D)
Normally I don't have guilty parties speak, but as a fellow girl from Up There, I'll allow you to say something in your defense before I sentence.

Philip exchanges a surprised glance with the Tweedles; this was unexpected. Clara begins her story slowly, then picks up pace. As it tumbles out of her, we watch Alice. The Queen's expression changes with each new piece of information:

CLARA
I'm...so sorry. *So* sorry. I had... the *worst* day. I saw the love of my life for the first time in years, and he's engaged to this *perfect* woman, and my electricity was shut off because I can't pay the bill. My brother is failing out of school and having horrible nightmares--he screams all night long--and he's my responsibility, you know? And I can never seem to help him.
(MORE)

CLARA (CONT'D)
And the worst thing, the *worst* thing was that I *should* have gone to be with my mother today. Because today is the day that my father left us. Seven years ago today, the *worst* day, and I couldn't even go to her, I couldn't handle being with her in her sadness, so I let her be alone. And I went drinking. I went drinking because I couldn't face the night. And I did this stupid thing, and it was an accident, and I'm so sorry--

ALICE
Stop.

Alice's demeanor has shifted into quiet danger.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Your name isn't Emily, is it?

But before Clara can answer, in barges Alice's husband, the BLUE KING. He's dashing with a 5 o'clock shadow, wearing muddy riding boots and hunting gear. The King hands his rifle off to a guard, and we see that he also has a version of the BLUE UP THERE BRACELET around his wrist. All of this while:

BLUE KING
Is it true? A girl from Up There? Let me get a look at her!

Clara's face pales at the site of him.

ALICE
(suddenly nervous)
Darling, we're right in the middle of--

CLARA
Dad...???

The Blue King is Clara's long lost father JACKSON.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Dad!!!

Clara runs toward him, but A GUARD INSTANTLY HAS A SWORD AT HER NECK.

She freezes. And confusion erupts in the court.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. THRONE ROOM THREE - CONTINUOUS

Chaos. The crowd is on their feet. Clara shakes from fear of the blade at her neck.

ALICE
SILENCE!!

The court falls quiet. Jackson looks to Alice, confused, and we realize HE DOES NOT RECOGNIZE CLARA.

CLARA
Dad?

ALICE
The girl's lost her mind.

But Jackson approaches Clara for a better look. Makes the guard re-sheath his sword. Examines his daughter's face.

Clara's eyes water.

CLARA
I never thought I'd see you again...

JACKSON
I'm sorry, I don't know you. I'm afraid you're confused.

Philip shoots an instructive glance at the Tweedles; they slip from the room. Jackson returns to his Queen's side, and Clara pleads to her retreating father...

CLARA
DAD!!!!

PHILIP WHITE
(whispers to Clara)
You need to run!

ALICE
EMILY WALSH!

PHILIP WHITE
(whispers)
Now!!!

ALICE
For the crimes of property destruction, making false claims against the Blue King, and threatening the state of Wonderland I hereby sentence you to death by axe.

BAM! She slams her gavel down.

ALICE (CONT'D)
OFF WITH HER HEAAAAAAAAAAAD!!!

Clara gasps and takes off running.

Guards rush after her, but she's got a good lead and is already out a side door.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Philip?! After her!!!

As instructed, Philip drops down to rabbit form and races, quick as a hare, after the escaping Clara.

INT. STAIR MAZE - CONTINUOUS

Clara sprints through a maze of staircases that twist and tilt like an Escher print. Guards come from every which way, but she's still many paces ahead. The White Rabbit however is gaining fast.

Finally, a door at the bottom of one staircase. Clara bangs through it just as the Rabbit catches up. Simultaneously, they cross into the...

INT. WHITEOUT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

An all-white room with no way to distinguish its edges or size. An old Frenchman FRANÇOIS bars the door behind Clara and the White Rabbit once they're safely inside.

FRANÇOIS
(thick French accent)
Clara Lamb, it is my great honor to meet you.

Philip pops back to human form. Clara backs away from both men, terrified...

CLARA
What the hell is going on? Why is my father here? Why doesn't he *know* me?

PHILIP WHITE
(ignoring her, to François)
We have to use the tunnel.

BANG! The barred white door pops into visibility then sinks back into the wall. Battering ram.

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
Quickly!

François scrambles to the other side of the room, Philip in tow. The Frenchman tears off his GLASSES, pulls them apart. Hidden inside the frames are two SECRET KEYS. François hands one to Philip, and they jams the two keys into two white locks in the white floor. A secret hatch comes into view.

BANG! The battering ram against the door.

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
On three. One, two, three.

Philip and François turn the keys in synch, and the hatch unlocks, lifts up, reveals a secret compartment underneath.

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
Get in.

BANG! The door. Philip grabs Clara and shoves her into the compartment.

CLARA
What are you doing to me? Where does this go--

Philip shuts her inside. He and François turn the keys to re-lock the panel, but François' key gets stuck...it won't come out of the lock.

PHILIP WHITE
Hurry!

FRANÇOIS
It's stuck!

PHILIP WHITE
You have to go!

BANG!

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
Now, François!!!

And Philip saves himself: He pulls a square of cloth from his pocket, tosses it in the air and shrinks down to the rabbit. The cloth falls on top of him and seals up into a small bag with him inside, then sweeps up into the air like a roped snare might. The White Rabbit hangs in a small sack, suspended in midair as if he'd been caught in a trap.

BOOM! The door flies open.

François yanks the stuck key, and the tip of it breaks in the lock. He has no time to run, so the best he can do is step on top of the broken key tip so that Alice doesn't spot it in the white floor.

Guards flood in. Then Alice. She eyes the terrified François.

ALICE
Where is Clara Lamb?

François trembles but doesn't answer.

Alice spots the wriggling bagged rabbit. She plucks it from the air, pulls a small dagger from her pendant necklace, and slices open the burlap. Philip spills out in human form.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Tell me.

PHILIP WHITE
I'm so sorry, Madame, I was snared upon entry. I couldn't see what happened from inside.

She whips back around to François.

ALICE
And you? You're not talking? Lost the use of your lips? Lost the knowledge of language...?

She approaches him, dagger in hand.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Then you wouldn't mind if I cut out your tongue?!

The Frenchman stumbles back, terrified, and that's when Alice spots it... The broken KEY TIP in the secret panel's lock. She presses on the floor around it with her shoe; the panel's edges come into view. She looks at François with a smile. A genuine smile, a smile that makes us think she isn't angry.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Found it.

Then WHACK! In a blink, Alice has grabbed an AX from one of the guards and lopped off the Frenchman's head. Red blood spatters across the white room, across Alice's porcelain skin and blue and white dress. François' HEAD rolls to Philip's feet; he suppresses his horror, his grief.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Open it.

And the guards hack into the floor panel.

CUT TO:

INT. SECRET COMPARTMENT/TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Clara is alone in a dark room, the entrance panel above her head. She can hear the axes hacking into it, then an inch of blade breaks through. Immediately, cement begins filling in the hole. Clara backs up to avoid it and whoops! Falls into a large MINING CART that carries her down a roller coaster track then banks left into a long...

TUNNEL

And who should pop up inside the speeding cart? None other than Tweedledum and Tweedledee, running at the mouth. They speak to Clara like a drum beat -- rhythmically, musically.

BOTH TWEEDLES
Well hello there, and goodbye soon!

Introducing each other to Clara:

TWEEDLEDEE
Tweedledum.

TWEEDLEDUM
Tweedledee.

BOTH TWEEDLES
I hate when you call me that.

CLARA
(confused)
What?

TWEEDLEDUM
Oooooooh you made the Queen so mad!

TWEEDLEDEE
She's gonna be after you.

TWEEDLEDUM
After me?!

TWEEDLEDEE
Her.

TWEEDLEDUM
Oh.

TWEEDLEDEE
Can I see your bracelet?

TWEEDLEDUM
I want to see!

TWEEDLEDEE
Don't show it to him; show it to ME!

CLARA
Stop!!!

TWEEDLEDUM
Go!

TWEEDLEDEE
Left!

TWEEDLEDUM
Right!

TWEEDLEDEE
I know I'm right!

BOTH TWEEDLES
DUUUUUCK!

Tweedledee yanks a metal bar, clicking the car onto a new track that forks left under a low-hanging support beam. The Tweedles and Clara duck, barely missing banging their heads. Clara is flabbergasted, frustrated, angry...

CLARA
Stop the car.

TWEEDLEDUM
What?

CLARA
Stop the car, stop the car, STOP THE CAR!

TWEEDLEDUM
Sigh...The One isn't ready.

TWEEDLEDEE
The One will be fine!

TWEEDLEDUM
I'll bet you a fiver.

TWEEDLEDEE
All your cash is MINE. Dummy?

TWEEDLEDUM
Dee?

TWEEDLEDEE
Buckle up in two times three!

And the Tweedles strap themselves in to the bottom of the cart as they count down:

BOTH TWEEDLES
Six, five, four, three, the darkness now is yours to seeeeeeee!

The cart suddenly halts and hinges up on end, dumping Clara out while the Tweedles stay safely strapped inside. Clara flies through a wooden roof at the end of the tunnel and up into a...

BARN/OUTER WHEEL - CONTINUOUS

Clara comes crashing through the floor boards of a dark barn. Lands hard and is knocked unconscious.

BACK TO:

INT. WHITEOUT ROOM - MEANWHILE

CRACK! The guards mangle the secret panel enough for Alice to rip up a large chunk of it. Instead of finding Clara and the secret compartment, she finds a hardened slab of CONCRETE.

Unable to contain her fury, she storms out of the room requesting Philip follow:

ALICE
PHILIP!!!!

CUT TO:

INT. QUEEN'S BOUDOIR - MOMENTS LATER

Blue wooden panelling on the walls. An ornate chandelier. Alice stands behind a privacy screen with her arms out; two LADIES IN WAITING sponge the blood from her skin and remove her spattered clothing. Philip is on the other side of the screen.

ALICE
I need Jackson's mind on the present, not fluttering back to some life he's long forgot. Bring in a gift, something big.

PHILIP WHITE
There's a meteor shower in the Inner Wheel, born several days ago.

ALICE
Move it to his window. And explain to me, Philip, exactly how Clara Lamb ended up in my home undetected.

PHILIP WHITE
She had no identification on her; we could only go by her word. What concerns me more is that she may have followed me in on purpose. She knew to lie, had help escaping. It seems something larger is going on here.

ALICE
Clearly.

Alice appears from behind the screen in her dressing gown, now clean of blood. She approaches Philip, reads his face, searches for dishonesty...

ALICE (CONT'D)
Do you know what one of my absolute favorite suppers was back in Oxford?
(pause)
Rabbit stew.

She smiles genuinely, as if what she just said wasn't horrific. Somehow Philip maintains his poker face. And Alice starts on her way out...

ALICE (CONT'D)
Listen to the whispers in our midst. I want your ears up, Rabbit.

She pauses.

ALICE (CONT'D)
And Philip, one more thing, a man's opinion...

She turns back to him and opens her robe revealing scant but decadent lingerie (accents of blue, of course).

ALICE (CONT'D)
Will the King like it?

PHILIP WHITE
He'll be mesmerized.

Alice grins, genuinely pleased, and leaves. Off Philip's worried face, we go back to the...

INT. BARN/OUTER WHEEL - MEANWHILE

The barn is pitch black save for a stream of red moonlight coming from the hayloft. Clara regains consciousness, stands to investigate; she pulls the chain of a bare bulb and GASP! Half a dozen porcelain DOLLS WITH HUMAN BODIES AND FOX HEADS swing from ropes tied around their necks. They are all dressed in GREEN SUITS.

Creeeeak. A door opens somewhere behind her. Clara whips around but can see nothing. Footsteps tap closer.

CLARA
Hello?

Her echo answers back:

ECHO
Goodbye? Goodbye? Goodbye?

Then SLAM! The unseen door slams shut.

Clara turns on her heel to run in the other direction, but somehow there are even more hanging dolls than before. They're everywhere, suspended at all heights. Clara must weave through the dolls, pushing them out of her way, untangling herself from them. She spots the barn door, weaves toward it, but:

LITTLE BOY (O.S.)
HELLLLLLLP!

Clara freezes. Somewhere amidst the dolls is a boy, screaming.

LITTLE BOY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Dad? Daddy??? DADDYYYY!

Clara races back the way she came, making her way toward the cries until she comes upon a trembling LITTLE BOY, about 9 years old.

LITTLE BOY (CONT'D)
Help. Help me. Please!

All around him new dolls plummet until their nooses go taught around their necks. This little boy is at the very center of this nightmare, haunted by more and more dolls getting closer and greater in number by the second.

LITTLE BOY (CONT'D)
They keep coming!

CLARA
(reassuring)
They're just dolls, okay? They can't hurt you. They're--

SLAP! One of the dolls covers the boy's mouth with its hand, muffling a shrill scream. THESE DOLLS ARE ALIVE.

Other dolls join in now. They grab at the little boy, pull his hair with their fox tails, slap their hands over his eyes so he can't see.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Stop! STOP IT!

But as Clara tries to save the child, a doll grabs onto *her* coat and yanks. She goes flying backward, smack into a wall, then falls to the barn floor.

Clara picks herself up just in time to see another doll grab onto the boy's arm and <u>zoom upward</u>. The rope around the doll's neck shortens with great speed, pulling both the doll and boy high into the rafters some 30 feet up.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Oh God...

Then the doll lets go. <u>And the Little Boy plummets</u>.

Clara races for a stack of hay bails, pushes into them, and the stack goes tumbling. Hay spreads out onto the floor just as the child lands. Saved by the cushion.

But Clara's not done. She grabs an old shovel, and WHACK! She explodes a row of dolls into shards. CRACK! She crushes one to dust. Clara continues in this fashion, destroying dolls with the shovel until there's nothing left but rubble.

Quiet. Stillness. Then a shaky, grateful voice:

LITTLE BOY
Thank you.

Clara turns to the boy with a smile, but her jaw drops. She sees now that this boy is a younger version of...

CLARA
Peter!!!

PHILIP WHITE (O.S.)
He's been fighting for seven years.

Clara whips around to find Philip and the Tweedles standing right behind her. Faster than a blink, TweedleDee slips a large pair of hedge clippers against Clara's wrist, around her blue Up There bracelet, and SNIP! Removes it.

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
And now it's over.

FFFOOM! Clara plummets straight down.

SMASH TO:

INT. PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL, DETROIT - SAME

Silence. Suddenly Clara is back in Detroit, standing inside the concrete pedestrian tunnel that travels under the bridge. Terrified and unsure of what just happened.

MICHE (O.S.)
Clara???

Clara walks back out to the...

EXT. RIVERBED - CONTINUOUS

Clara emerges, dazed. She looks up at the bridge above.

MICHE
Did you get him?

No car crash. Everything is as it was before she went through the tunnel.

CLARA
Who?

MICHE
The White Rabbit?

Clara flips around to look at Miche, and we cut to black.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

BLACK

Nothing to see. Just the first synth measures of Kid Cudi's hit "Pursuit of Happiness (Nightmare)."

INT. MICHE'S CAR - NIGHT

A terrified Clara stares out the passenger window, forehead pressed to the glass, watching the lights of the city stream by. Kid Cudi's lyrics ooze in:

Tell me what you know about dreams, dreams/Tell me what you know about night terrors, nothin'...

MICHE (O.S.)
Clara?

The music cuts out as if it were only in Clara's head and Miche interrupted.

CLARA
Hm?

MICHE
Are you okay?

CLARA
Why?

MICHE
Ah, you ran through that tunnel and came back out like you were hit by a bus.

CLARA
(confused)
Yeah, I just... I had the weirdest dream...

MICHE
But you *never* dream.

CLARA
I know...

Miche pulls up outside Clara's dark home (the electricity is still off) and puts the car in park.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Miche, how long was I gone? Through the tunnel?

MICHE
I dunno, a couple seconds. What's going on with you?

CLARA
Do you ever wonder if... maybe you're going crazy?

Miche can see the fear in Clara's eyes.

MICHE
Sometimes. ...But if you're aware enough to wonder if you're crazy, you're not.

Clara nods, pulls her bag onto her shoulder, and climbs out.

CLARA
See you tomorrow.

EXT. CLARA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Clara nears her front porch, surprised to see Klein waiting for her on the steps... This is the last thing she needs.

KLEIN
I went by the diner, but you'd already left for the day. Is your electricity out?

CLARA
Klein, I just... I don't think I can talk to you right now, okay?

KLEIN
Yeah, no, I just wanted to apologize for this afternoon. I didn't mean for you to find out about Bree that way.

CLARA
It's fine. Honestly... this afternoon feels like a million years ago now.

He squints, examines her.

KLEIN
Hey, are you okay?

A long beat where she decides how much she wants to say. The emotion of the day bubbles, the terror, the uncertainty...

CLARA
I don't know...

KLEIN
Is it because of the day? Today? Your dad...?

She fights back tears.

CLARA
(surprised, touched)
You remember?

KLEIN
How could I forget? He was like a second father to me... It just never made sense that he left.

CLARA
God, I just-- I feel like I've spent the last seven years trying to keep it all together and I'm failing.

KLEIN
You never fail.

CLARA
You haven't been around for a while...

KLEIN
Remember that time that idiot director told you that you weren't strong enough for the solo in Swan Lake. So you got up every morning and danced it for two hours before school and four hours after, for three weeks.
(then grinning)
I didn't see you at all, it was really annoying, BUT!!! The audition came, and you nailed it. You're the strongest person I know, Clara. You're gonna pull through... What did your dad used to say about tomorrow...?

CLARA
Tomorrow is today, only better.

KLEIN
Yeah.

She smiles.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
He had good in him. Hope. Maybe today can become a reason to remember that.

She nods.

CLARA
Thanks.

Climbs the steps.

KLEIN
Tell your brother I said hey.

CLARA
Klein?

She stops.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Congratulations. Bree seems really great.

They share a smile, and Clara slips through the door.

INT. CLARA'S HOME/THIRD FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Clara climbs the second floor stairs, slightly unsure. Dark. No electricity. She uses a flashlight as she hairpins back down a long hall at the top of the steps to a long-closed DOOR.

She takes a breath, opens it and walks into...

INT. LILY AND JACKSON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jackson and Lily's bedroom is preserved exactly as they left it years ago, save a layer of dust that now coats the place. Clara takes in every detail. A collection of mirrors on a dresser, photos of the family in happier times. ONE OF HER FATHER HOLDING HER on his knee (she's 6 and in a pink tutu).

Then Clara focuses in on one PHOTO in particular, framed and propped on a bookshelf. It's of the whole family, and we...

FLASHBACK - A LITTLE OVER 7 YEARS AGO

The same room, seven years earlier. Pure joy. Clara (16) and Peter (9) pile into Jackson and Lily's bed with them as a tripod camera beeps toward a timer shot.

Peter drags an old doll with him, and Jackson looks just like he did in the castle in Wonderland. Clara's mother LILY is in her 30s here, beautiful, vibrant. And Clara has a carefree undercurrent we haven't seen until now.

Laughter and shouts of...

JACKSON
Hurry!

LILY
Come on this side.

CLARA
Do I have broccoli in my teeth?

JACKSON
Blow.

Peter blows his nose into a Kleenex Jackson holds and SNAP!

BACK TO:

THE PRESENT

That mishap of a photo is in Clara's hands now. She studies it. None of them were ready for the shot, but they couldn't look happier or more connected, more like a family.

Clara smiles. Then she notices something in the photo... The doll in her brother's hand. She shines her flash light directly on it: A FOX STUFFED ANIMAL, not *exactly* the same as the one in Wonderland, but it wears the SAME GREEN SUIT.

Clara furrows her brow confused, unsure. It's all so strange.

PETER
BOO!

Clara jumps out of her skin. She turns to see her brother in the doorway, chuckling. He's got a blanket around his shoulders and a flashlight shining up from his chin.

CLARA
(recovering her breath)
Jesus...

PETER
When did you get home? I just had the best nap! By the fire, of course, since you know, we don't have heat. Is that gonna change anytime soon?

CLARA
Wait, you slept?!

Peter never sleeps.

PETER
I know, right? Really well too. Do you have my soccer money?

CLARA
You didn't have any nightmares???

PETER
Wow, why the Inquisition? I slept great, okay? Like a log, like a baby, like the dead...

Clara looks back at the photo, totally freaked out. Peter eyes her...

PETER (CONT'D)
You're really weird tonight.
(concerned)
...Don't stay in here too long, okay? Better just to forget this stuff.

And her brother goes.

Clara returns the frame to its shelf, suspicious of the photo, almost as if the thing might be possessed. And it's then that she spots it:

A COPY OF ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND.

Unsure, Clara slides the book out and opens it. "Property of Lily Lamb" on the inside cover. Clara flips through the pages -- dog-eared and highlighted, notes scribbled in the margins, then something falls from the pages... A BLUE CHARM BRACELET, just like the ones in Wonderland.

She takes a closer look. This bracelet has multiple charms on it: the Palace charm Clara got but also a hand mirror, a croquet stick, a teapot, a Jabberwokey...

What. The fuck.

SMASH TO:

I/E. BUS/DOWNTOWN DETROIT - THE NEXT MORNING

Clara fights through a crowd of business men and women, dashing out the bus doors onto the city sidewalks. She calls Miche, leaves a message:

CLARA
Miche, it's Clara. Can you tell Trek I'm taking a sick day? Janice is gonna cover for me. Call you later.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

Cold. Sterile. A NURSE leads Clara through a slew of mentally ill PATIENTS, each a threat of what might be happening to Clara. She looks at them closely, really seeing them for the first time.

The nurse and Clara come to a cracked door. The nurse knocks, pushes it open.

NURSE
Lily? Your daughter's here.

We finally confirm what has happened to Peter and Clara's mother: She's gone insane.

LILY (a very old-looking mid-40s now) SITS IN A ROCKING CHAIR, STARING OUT THE WINDOW, just like the old woman at the cliff's edge in Wonderland.

NURSE (CONT'D)
She loves the view. Rocks all day.

Just what Philip said. The nurse leaves them alone.

CLARA
Hey, Mom, how are you today? I like your nightgown. You got me one like that when I was a girl...

But her mom's in another world, dazed, rocking. Her hair needs combing. Clara smooths it out with her fingers, as...

CLARA (CONT'D)
You look beautiful today. Do you want some music on?

No answer. It's heartbreaking.

Finally Clara pulls the blue BRACELET from her pocket.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Mom, I have something here... I was hoping you could look at it, tell me what it is. Can you look, mom? Please?

Nothing. No response.

CLARA (CONT'D)
I found it in your room--it was inside a copy of *Alice in Wonderland*--

Suddenly Lily stops rocking.

She turns, looks down at the bracelet. Reaches for it. Takes it in her hand. Fingers through the charms. And clarity spreads over Lily's face for the first time in nearly seven years.

LILY
Jackson...

Lily looks up, locks eyes with her daughter. Sees her, *really* sees her. Clara is awed by the moment.

CLARA
Mom...?

LILY
(lucid)
You have to bring him back.

CLARA
What? What do you mean?

Lily's hands begin to shake.

CLARA (CONT'D)
What do you mean I have to bring him back, mom?

LILY
Make him remember... *Make* him--

Clink, clatter. Lily drops the bracelet. Clara bends down to retrieve it...

CLARA
Wait, just stay with me, okay? Just--

...and spots something odd underneath her mother's bed. A MUSIC BOX. Attached to the lid is a TAG with an order similar to those she saw in Wonderland: *OPEN ME.*

Clara pulls the box out, flips the latch, lifts the lid, and there, inside the box, is a small figurine of <u>YOUNG ALICE in her classic blue and white apron dress, twirling to music like a ballerina</u>. Lily shrieks.

LILY
She's got him! She's got him!

Lily grabs the box from Clara and smashes it to a million bits against the wall. Clara backs away terrified. Nurses run in to restrain her mother.

NURSE
It's okay, Mrs Lamb. You're okay.

LILY
She TOOK him from us!!!!

Clara watches as they inject Lily with a sedative. And her mother slips back into dreamland.

NURSE
There you go... There...

A tear spills over Clara's lashes as she holds her breath in terror.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. PSYCH HOSPITAL/DETROIT SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

A panicked Clara (bracelet in hand) exits the hospital in a hurry. She crosses the street, rounds a corner and runs SMACK into half a dozen WHITE RABBITS on the sidewalk. Clara gasps. A PET SHOP OWNER apologizes as she picks up the escaped rabbits.

PET SHOP OWNER
So sorry, someone left the cage open...

Clara backs away, backs right into someone. She whips around startled. A GRUFF FAT MAN greets her.

GRUFF MAN
Been waitin' all morning! That it?

He grabs the BRACELET right out of Clara's hand...

CLARA
HEY!

...and goes inside a...

INT. PAWN SHOP - CONTINUOUS

The place is small, packed floor to ceiling with junk and treasures. The man examines Clara's bracelet under a loop.

GRUFF MAN
Shoot, he wasn't kidding. Flecked with sapphire chips, alright. Excellent craftsmanship.

He pops open the register.

GRUFF MAN (CONT'D)
Cash, yeah?

Clara snatches the bracelet back up.

CLARA
It's not for sale.

GRUFF MAN
Really? Said you had one of your own, this was a spare.

The man plows on, counting out cash.

GRUFF MAN (CONT'D)
$474.32 and $150, right? Thought it was strange he worded it that way-- why not just say $624.32, and why the 32 cents at all? $625 seems like a simpler price, but it's none 'a my business. Whatever way you want me ta say it, I'll say it.

He's stacked the cash in two piles for her. She's astonished:

CLARA
$474.32 and...

GRUFF MAN
$150, that's right.

It's the exact amount of money Clara needs: the utility payment in one pile, her brother's tournament fee in the other. Clara places the bracelet back on the counter.

CLARA
Who told you I was coming?

GRUFF MAN
British guy, 'bout this tall. White hair. Sold me that.

The man points to something by the shop door. Clara turns to see what it is:

A CHESSBOARD, opened and arranged with an army of BLUE pieces, and in front of all of them are THE BLUE KING AND QUEEN, modeled exactly after Alice and Jackson. Clara's eyes go wide as she picks up the JACKSON PIECE...

ZOOM IN TO:

INT/EXT. PALACE BALCONY/BALLROOM, WONDERLAND - MEANWHILE

Jackson stares into a dark sky filled with shooting stars. A tumbler of Scotch in hand. He's on a balcony outside a grand ballroom where a party is in its throws.

Follow Alice now as she weaves through the crowd to him. Through music, dancing, champagne. Through BEAUTIFUL REVELERS singing a ditty hailing Alice and Jackson as their saviors.

Alice reaches the balcony and slides up behind her King, kisses his neck.

ALICE
You know I had those stars brought here just for you...?

But Jackson is preoccupied.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Are you alright, my love? Come into the party.

JACKSON
I just can't get that girl out of my mind. Why was her punishment so harsh?

ALICE
The girl is imbalanced. She's a threat to Wonderland. Jackson, we work so hard to keep our world beautiful and loving. That girl wants to see Wonderland destroyed. I didn't have a choice but that sentence.

JACKSON
No, of course. We've worked too hard...

He looks at her, in awe of his wife.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Do you know how beautiful you are? How strong?

ALICE
Tell me.

She smiles, blissful. He chuckles.

JACKSON
I'm sorry I haven't visited with the guests much. I'm exhausted from the hunt.

ALICE
Not too tired for me, I hope.

JACKSON
No one could be.

ALICE
...Shall we slip out?

JACKSON
Meet me in the bedroom.

He kisses her, leaves her on the balcony. Then Alice's demeanor changes; fear creeps in...

ALICE
Valourus?!

Instantly VALOURUS weaves through the party goers to the Queen's side. He's her head general: 6'7" with a long scar that bisects his face diagonally.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Burn the trial record. And do whatever you need to find Clara Lamb. I want her in pieces.

BACK TO:

INT. CLARA'S HOUSE/DETROIT - MEANWHILE

Peter opens the front door into the living room. The lights are back on. It's warm enough to take off his coat.

PETER
Hello? Clara???

His sister comes bounding down the steps.

PETER (CONT'D)
What'd you do, rob a bank?

She hands Peter his SOCCER UNIFORM for the tournament. He's dumbfounded.

PETER (CONT'D)
Oh my God, you totally robbed a bank.

CLARA
Peter listen to me.

She takes his shoulders:

CLARA (CONT'D)
I am not gonna lose you, or the house, or let you give up your dreams. Ever.

PETER
Ummm okay...

She grabs her keys and heads for the door.

PETER (CONT'D)
Where are you going???

But the door slams. She's already gone.

SMASH TO:

EXT. OUT OF USE BRIDGE - MINUTES LATER

Clara races into the dried out riverbed.

CLARA
Philip???

She looks around, but no one is there. Clara spots the pedestrian tunnel that she followed the White Rabbit through the other night. She approaches it tentatively, looks inside, can't see the end of it...

CLARA (CONT'D)
Philip?

Cautiously, Clara steps inside. She picks up speed, starts to run, pops out on the other side, but--

PHILIP WHITE (O.S.)
It's not that easy.

Clara whips around, and there's Philip leaning against the bridge. She's still in Detroit.

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
You can't just waltz through a tunnel and wind up in Wonderland; we'd have people coming in all the time.

CLARA
My father's down there! And that dream, the dolls, that was Peter's dream. And I destroyed it Down There, and he slept Up Here--our worlds are connected.

PHILIP WHITE
Tangled, really.

CLARA
And my mother... My mother *knows*!!! She knows dad is there, that Alice took him, that he doesn't remember us. She's been there and she knows the truth!

PHILIP WHITE
Somewhere in her muddled mind.

CLARA
Is that what drove her mad? The truth? Will it drive me mad?

PHILIP WHITE
The truth, Clara, is what keeps a person sane. Your mother... It's complicated. Her mind has been clouded by nightmares, but that can't happen to you.

CLARA
Because I don't dream...

PHILIP WHITE
Exactly. That's what makes you special.

Beat.

CLARA
I want him back. I want my father back.

PHILIP WHITE
Clara, he doesn't know you--

CLARA
I'll make him.

PHILIP WHITE
It's not that simple--

CLARA
I can do it! Send me back!

PHILIP WHITE
Clara--

CLARA
NOW!!!

Pause.

PHILIP WHITE
Fine. But not without a plan.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - MAGIC HOUR

Sunlight streams in through lush greenery. It dances off leaves and the tripping bubbles of a small stream.

Clara hides amidst the tall roots of a giant tree, her breathing slightly quick... She's nervous.

CRACK CRACK! Twigs snap on the forest floor to her right, and she jerks her head to see... Just an old BUCK feeding on leaves and berries. A shimmering gold coat. Large antlers. Clara catches her breath, but the animal spots her in the roots. They freeze. Then the buck darts off into the green, startling a large WHITE BIRD with a long tail of silver and blue feathers.

The bird flaps upward into the open sky above. It soars, wings outstretched, bathed in the warm glow of the late sun, then...

BANG! The bird is SHOT. Clara flinches at the sound, and the bird plummets to the ground like a stone. It lands on the forest floor with a thud. The wound bleeds out, not red like the blood Clara knows, but a deep, beautiful blue.

JACKSON (O.S.)
It came down over here!

Clara perks up at her father's voice. Then the sound of DOGS and horse HOOVES beating through the trees until a HOUND lunges into sight and retrieves the bird.

Jackson and his white stallion come next.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Good girl, Izzy--

Clara steps out form her hiding place in the roots. Jackson freezes at the sight of her. He's about to yell out to his hunting guards, but--

CLARA
Please!

He stops.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Just listen?

JACKSON
Criminals don't deserve to be heard.

CLARA
I'm not--

JACKSON
Shall I shoot you now?

He raises his gun at her. She throws her hands up. Cautiously and slowly, she begins to speak. Then the stories speed up until they tumble out of her as in a furious rush.

CLARA
When I was nine you bought me my first pair of point shoes. You knew I really wanted green ones, but they don't make green ones, so you bought a pair of white ones and had them dyed. And the dye came off on my tights, and all the kids made fun of me, but I loved them. I loved those green point shoes, and I loved you for getting them.

Jackson's face softens as he listens, but he keeps the rifle on target...

CLARA (CONT'D)
Mom! Mom had this really long hair when I was little, and you used to brush it for her at night. And sometimes you'd take a piece of it and put it across your lip and pretend you had a moustache. And it didn't matter how many times you did it--she thought it was the funniest thing! You just always made her laugh.

JACKSON
I don't know what fantasy you've built or why, but you are in a world of trouble--

CLARA
(frustrated, upset)
Trouble!!!??? Your *son* is in *trouble*. He hasn't slept well in seven *years* all because you abandoned us. This toy you gave him, a toy that was like a safety blanket for him as a kid, that same toy has been attacking him in his nightmares by the thousands! And he cries for you, Dad. He cries for you to help him and YOU NEVER COME--

JACKSON
(furious)
One more word about this kid Peter and I'll--

CLARA
I never said his name.

They freeze. Staring at each other. Breathless. Astonished.

CLARA (CONT'D)
I never said Peter's name...

And Jackson lowers the gun.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

EXT. FOREST - SAME

Clara and Jackson, still staring at each other in awe. Clara smiles, amazed...

CLARA
You remembered.

But Valourus's voice breaks their connection:

VALOURUS(O.S.)
Your highness...?

Jackson glances in that direction.

JACKSON
No. No, *you* called him Peter, I'm sure you used his name.

CLARA
I didn't.

JACKSON
Valourus...?

She pleads:

CLARA
Dad...

JACKSON
SHE'S HERE!! EMILY WALSH IS HERE!

Valourus and several other guards ride up, but WHOOSH! Clara grabs hold of a VINE that yanks upward into the sky taking her with it. Her escape plan begins.

The guards shoot at Clara in rapid succession but miss the moving target, shattering the bark of a tree instead. She keeps rising.

High above, hidden in the forest canopy, are the TWEEDLES. They are the ones hoisting Clara upward with that vine. Finally she zips into view, lets go of the vine, and drops onto the Tweedles' branch.

Bullets wiz by, tear leaves. The guards are still shooting. Clara and the Tweedles race out toward the end of their branch...

TWEEDLEDEE
Hurry now!

TWEEDLEDUM
Cross this bow!

BOTH TWEEDLES
JUMMMMMP!

They leap into the air and tumble into the basket of a large...

EXT. HOT AIR BALLOON - CONTINUOUS, DUSK

This hot air balloon is enormous. Clara and the Tweedles knock about in the basket as the balloon lifts through the clouds. More shots. They cringe, terrified.

PHILIP WHITE
Stay down.

Along with the Tweedles and Clara, Philip is in the basket too. They soar higher and higher...

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
Almost...

The balloon passes through a thick white cloud and pops out the other side. Out of view now, this band of brothers can stretch their legs.

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
Alright.

Clara starts to breath again. The Tweedles stretch their legs.

CLARA
Thank you all. Thank you for risking your lives for me.

PHILIP WHITE
Not just for you, dear. When Alice took your father, it didn't just destroy *your* life, Clara. It destroyed ours as well.

LITTLE PETER (O.S.)
Hello?

Little Peter from the fox nightmare peaks out from behind Philip. He smiles wide at Clara, huge dimples.

CLARA
Peter! Come here!

The boy flings himself into her arms. A happy child now. Clara is overwhelmed. She turns to Philip:

CLARA (CONT'D)
It was Peter dad remembered. He remembered his name, I got him to remember something!!!

PHILIP WHITE
We suspected you could. But it was only one thing, Clara. And as quickly as you made him remember, Alice will make him forget.

CLARA
How?

PHILIP WHITE
With the Wonder, of course... Alice steals the most wondrous of our world to surround your father with beauty and joy. To wash his brain with living dreams, so he forgets all else. ...It leaves the rest of us with only darkness...

Philip turns his gaze outside the balloon. Clara follows it. The clouds have dissipated, and she can see the outskirts of Wonderland now... a place of ENDLESS DARKNESS.

She turns quickly, trying to find her father in all of this, and then she spots it: BELLUS, the very center of Wonderland, a circle of light and color and beauty.

There, in the greenest of fields, is Clara's father. He and his guards gallop through the grass with the day's kills strapped to their horses, racing toward the BLUE PALACE shining in the dusk at the very center of Wonderland.

A fireworks display shoots off over the castle's parapets, welcoming the King's return.

PHILIP WHITE (CONT'D)
Every second, every day, with every spectacle and scent and breeze, Alice lulls your father from you again.

Clara focuses her gaze on the palace:

CLARA
She's taken everything from me, ruined all of us...

Then Clara makes a decision. She turns back to Philip, her voice low, determined, strong:

CLARA (CONT'D)
You tell me how to get to her, and I will get our lives back.

And we cut to black.

END OF SHOW