

SUICIDE LEMONADE

by

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FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CRACKING AND POPPING. The room has a strange orange glow.

JULIA CARPENTER, 9, wakes up disoriented. A giant moth hovers above her bed.

Julia watches the moth fly in rapid circles, then dive into fire, turning into dust. The room is ablaze!

Julia leaps up and runs to the door. It's locked. She POUNDS on it.

JULIA

Mom!

No response.

JULIA

Mommy!

As Julia races to the window, the ceiling CRASHES down, missing her by inches. She crawls to the corner of the room.

JULIA

Help!

Red and orange flames ROAR, getting closer and closer. Just as Julia begins to choke on the thickening smoke, the door CREAKS open.

She runs past the flames, out to the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A HEART-WRENCHING SCREAM and a LOUD POUNDING come from the other end of the hallway.

Julia races toward the sounds. A handmade sign on a closed door reads: "NATALIE'S ROOM. ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK."

JULIA

Natalie!

A younger child's voice comes from inside the room.

NATALIE (O.S.)  
I can't breathe.

Julia reaches for the doorknob and recoils at the heat.

NATALIE (O.S.)  
Help me!

A SHRIEK behind the door is followed by SILENCE.

JULIA  
Natalie!

Julia slams her shoulder into the door. Nothing.

She tries again. BOOM! As the door opens, flames hit Julia. She SCREAMS and stumbles back into the corridor.

Through the open door, Julia sees her sister, NATALIE, 7, on the floor, dead, with a ceramic blue jay toy clutched in her hand.

As Julia tries to pat her flaming clothes out, a glimpse of a SHADOWY FIGURE flashes by in the background.

SUPER: "TWENTY YEARS LATER"

INT. JULIA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Patches of morning sun break through the cracks on cheap curtains.

Julia, 29, lies in bed awake, staring at the ceiling. She looks pale and exhausted, with dark circles under her eyes.

The ALARM RINGS. Julia hits snooze.

A dog SCRATCHES and BARKS on the other side of the door.

JULIA  
Okay. I get it.

Julia forces herself up, approaches the window, and draws the curtains.

Morning light illuminates a burn scar on her forehead.

INT. BATHROOM - SHOWER - DAY

Julia washes her hair. An audiobook plays through the shower speaker in the background.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
I'm in control of my own life.

JULIA  
I'm in control of my own life.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
I'm transforming into someone who  
can easily turn down drugs.

JULIA  
I'm transforming into someone who  
can easily turn down drugs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

An indie band poster on the wall shows a younger Julia with a bright green Mohawk and joyous face. It reads, "DEATH MUPPETS. 2005 TOUR."

Julia, in a Hello Kitty costume, applies makeup in front of the mirror. Behind her, her boxer, Alabama, gobbles down food from a large bowl.

JULIA  
Honey, you need to slow down.

Alabama couldn't care less. Julia grabs a tennis ball from the table and lowers her hand.

JULIA  
Hey, look what I've got!

The dog looks up.

JULIA  
Wanna fetch?

Alabama stares at Julia, then YELPS and throws up.

JULIA  
Alabama! Look what you've done.

Showing her guilt, Alabama looks down.

Julia smiles and pats her back.

JULIA  
It's all right.

EXT. JULIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Julia exits in the Hello Kitty costume. She freaks out as she sees a handwritten sign on the door. It reads, "LAST NOTICE OF EVICTION."

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - DAY

It's morning rush hour on a New York City subway train.

Hello Kitty sits in the middle of the packed car, staring off into nowhere. Julia looks lost. The cravings.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT - DAY

Fluorescent lights and concrete.

Julia stares at the SQUEAKY elevator as it descends and stops. The doors open and Julia's boyfriend, ELI RUSSELL, 31, dressed as Elvis and doped up, steps out.

ELI  
Hello, Kitty!

JULIA  
What the fuck? Why did it take you so long?

ELI  
Baby, I thought you quit.

Julia doesn't answer, looks away.

ELI  
Anyway, Igor flaked out on me.

JULIA  
Eli, please.

ELI  
I'm serious.

JULIA

Look at me! I'm having a shitty day, so stop bullshitting me.

ELI

Baby, you've been sober for three weeks. Are you sure you wanna start it all over again?

JULIA

You're fucking high and giving me a lecture?

ELI

Well, it's on you, sweetheart.

Eli takes a burnt meth pipe out of his pocket. Julia's hand trembles as she takes it from him.

Eli lights up the torch lighter. There is a CRACKLING as crystals start to boil. Thick smoke fills the pipe.

Julia takes a hit. A wave of euphoria washes over her face.

ELI

So how's the relapse?

JULIA

If you ask me tomorrow, you'll get a different answer.

Eli takes a hit and blows out a big cloud.

ELI

So what's the matter?

JULIA

Not much. It's just... I'm really fucked.

ELI

The whole world is fucked, not just you.

JULIA

I need to make three hundred bucks by Thursday or I'm getting evicted.

ELI

I have a strong feeling, baby,  
everything will work out fine.

JULIA

You're high.

ELI

So, what? I owe my dealer money.  
Am I freaking out? Hell, no. He  
can suck my dick.

JULIA

You're fucking high.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

Neon signs dazzle.

Several SPIDERMEN, MICKEY MOUSES, ELMOS, COOKIE MONSTERS,  
and others vie for turf and the attention of TOURISTS.

Among them are Hello Kitty and Elvis, doped up. As a group  
of GERMAN TOURISTS approach Julia, a different HELLO KITTY,  
in a flashier outfit, waves at them.

FLASHY HELLO KITTY

It's cheaper over here!

Tourists walk toward her.

JULIA

Hey! What the fuck?

FLASHY HELLO KITTY

(insincere)

Sorry.

Flashy Hello Kitty poses for pictures with the tourists.  
Each pays her a few dollars for the privilege.

Julia stomps to the other end of the block. As she turns,  
she sees Flashy Hello Kitty following.

JULIA

What's your fucking problem?!

Flashy Hello Kitty only smiles.

JULIA  
Will you stop following me?

FLASHY HELLO KITTY  
Are you on drugs?

Julia slaps Flashy Hello Kitty across the face. Flashy Hello Kitty throws a punch. A "cat fight" begins.

Spectators gather, some recording the scene on cell phones.

Eli intervenes and accidentally gets punched in the face. Blood gushes.

Julia gets on top of Flashy Hello Kitty.

ELMO takes a worried look down the street.

ELMO  
Cops!

INT. SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT

An evening rush hour crowd jams the car.

Julia is squeezed by the PEOPLE around her. Her makeup is smudged, her costume torn.

In the background, a mariachi band plays an annoying TUNE.

INT. JULIA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Still high, Julia hums the annoying mariachi tune as she dances in front of the mirror.

She rips the Hello Kitty costume off her body, revealing old tattoos and scars. Her face is sunken, her body malnourished.

Sadness washes over Julia. She touches her face, tracing the burn mark with her fingers.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Julia lies in bed. Her eyes are puffy from crying. She looks exhausted. The crash.

Alabama starts BARKING in the other room.

Julia looks around the room. Her eyes widen as she sees a SHADOWY FIGURE staring down at her from the corner.

Julia is frozen in fear as the shadowy figure approaches her bed.

Suddenly, there is a CRACKLING and POPPING. The room fills with thick, choking smoke.

Julia's eyes dart in panic as she realizes that her bed is ablaze.

CUT TO:

Julia wakes up, gasping. She turns on the light. There is no one in the room.

INT. BATHROOM - SHOWER - DAY

Julia lets the water pummel her. The audiobook plays in the background through the shower speaker.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Recovery, at times, will be  
challenging. Yes, you will  
relapse. As long as you get up and  
keep on fighting--

Julia grabs the speaker and SMASHES it into the wall.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She gets out of the shower, opens the medicine cabinet, and takes out the scissors.

For a few seconds, she stares at her wrists, contemplating.

Alabama's BARKING snaps Julia back to reality. She returns the scissors to the cabinet.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Bleak autumn light comes through the curtainless window.

Julia sits at the table with her head buried in her hands. The eviction notice lies before her.

Alabama approaches and puts her paw on Julia's lap.

The moment Julia lifts her head, Alabama licks her face.

Julia tries to resist, but Alabama persists. Finally, Julia hugs Alabama. Pure love.

JULIA

I'm sorry.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Julia stares at the "DEATH MUPPETS" poster. Her fingers trace her blissful smile on the photo, then over Eli's joyous face.

CRUNCH. Julia rips the poster off the wall, tears it into pieces, and throws it into the garbage can.

She grabs the guitar, sticks it in the case, and walks out.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Carrying the guitar case, Julia walks along the sidewalk with Eli. Both look gloomy.

JULIA

Are you upset with me?

ELI

Why? It's yours.

JULIA

It's just a stupid guitar.

ELI

1975 Gibson G-50 with a rosewood board and spruce top. We wrote two albums on that "stupid" guitar and we used to call it "Dream Catcher."

JULIA

"Dream Catcher".

(laughs)

I don't have a job and I'm getting evicted. You live in your uncle's basement and hide from your dealer.

Eli's phone RINGS.

Nervous, he looks at the caller ID and silences his phone.

JULIA  
Is that him?

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

The shop is narrow and grungy.

Julia places the guitar on the counter. Eli looks away as the SHOP OWNER examines the instrument.

SHOP OWNER  
Three fifty.

ELI  
Are you fucking kidding me?

JULIA  
Okay.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Julia and Eli step out of the shop without the guitar. As they are about to cross the street, someone grabs Eli's arm.

Eli's face pales as he sees IGOR, 47, a drug dealer with a wild and woolly appearance and personality to match, and two THUGS.

IGOR  
Hi, Eli.

ELI  
It's so funny, I was just about to call you.

IGOR  
Where's my money?

ELI  
I'll have some cash for you next week.

IGOR  
Sorry, lover boy, can't wait that long.

Igor punches Eli full force in the stomach. Eli winces.

IGOR

Next time I call you, pick up.

Another punch and Eli crashes to the ground.

Panicked, Julia takes out her guitar money.

JULIA

Igor, stop! Here, I have it.

Igor grabs the money from Julia and smiles.

IGOR

I haven't heard from you in a while. We should go out sometime.

JULIA

No. Thank you.

IGOR

Well, have fun with this loser.

Julia helps Eli to his feet.

JULIA

Let's go.

They walk away.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Julia and Eli trudge along the margin of a busy highway.

ELI

You shouldn't have given them anything.

JULIA

And watch them beat the shit out of you?

ELI

I would've handled it.

JULIA

(sarcastic)  
Of course.

ELI

What do you want me to say? I'm  
sorry.

JULIA

Are you?

ELI

This never would've happened if  
you hadn't given me my first hit.

Eli instantly regrets what he has said. Too late. Choked  
with emotion, Julia storms away.

ELI

Julia, wait!

Julia ignores him. Eli grabs her arm.

ELI

Baby, I didn't mean it that way.

JULIA

Are you really trying to guilt  
trip me? Didn't I just fucking  
save your ass?

Eli is silent.

JULIA

I think we need a break.

ELI

Baby, I'm sorry.

JULIA

You don't get it. I wanna get  
clean.

ELI

Who's stopping you?

JULIA

Do you think it's possible when  
you're around?

ELI

Now it's my fault?

JULIA

Eli, I'm leaving. Good-bye.

ELI  
Where are you going?

JULIA  
I'm moving back with my mother  
because I wanna stay away from  
you, understand?

ELI  
Or because you're getting evicted?

JULIA  
Fuck you!

Furious, she charges across the busy intersection.

ELI  
You can stay with me if you want.

Julia keeps going.

INT./EXT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

The car is half full. Julia sits, staring at her feet.

As the train exits the tunnel and starts across the  
Brooklyn Bridge, it emerges into a vibrant, breathtaking  
sunset.

It falls into darkness again as it enters another tunnel.

EXT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - DAY

It's a crisp October morning in an upper middle-class  
suburban neighborhood.

Julia totes a suitcase with Alabama next to her. As they  
approach an unkept two-story Victorian house, Alabama  
stops.

Julia pulls the leash.

JULIA  
C'mon, girl. I don't have time for  
this.

Alabama WHIMPERS. Annoyed, Julia forces Alabama to clamber  
up the stairs of the front porch.

Then, she approaches the door and KNOCKS. No response.

She RINGS the bell.

BEVERLY (O.S.)

I heard you!

The door opens and BEVERLY CARPENTER, 57, comes out with curlers and in a see-through nightgown.

JULIA

Hi, Mom.

Beverly points to the dog.

BEVERLY

What's this?

JULIA

Alabama.

BEVERLY

I hope you don't expect this mangy mutt to be inside my house, sweetheart.

JULIA

What do you want me to do with her?

EXT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

It's cramped and dingy.

Julia takes out a jerky treat and throws it deep into the garage.

As Alabama runs inside, Julia shuts the door.

LOUD BARKING from inside. Julia tears up as she walks away.

INT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - JULIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

The room is small and ugly, with dusty furniture.

Julia unpacks her suitcase on the bed.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Julia stares at her untouched breakfast. Beverly sits across from her with a glass of red wine.

BEVERLY

Where is your entourage? Where are the paparazzi? I told all my girlfriends that I'm the mother of a famous rock star.

JULIA

It's not even noon and you're drinking.

BEVERLY

A glass of pinot noir on an empty stomach is the best thing you can do for your skin. I read it in a magazine.

JULIA

I don't think it's working for you.

BEVERLY

(laughs)

I'm sorry, honey, but you're not exactly stopping traffic.

JULIA

That I know, Mom. You keep reminding me.

BEVERLY

Oh, Julia. Please don't be so defensive. You're beautiful in your own way.

Beverly chugs her wine and pours herself another glass.

BEVERLY

Anyway, it's so wonderful that you're here. We're going to have good times together.

Beverly opens the cabinet, grabs a plastic cup, and hands it to Julia.

BEVERLY

But now, it's potty time.

Julia gives her a look. Tense silence as they stare at each other.

Finally, Julia grabs the cup and heads to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Julia urinates into the cup. She leaves the cup on top of the counter, opens the tap, and washes her hands.

For a brief moment, Julia stares at her reflection in the mirror.

Then, she opens the cabinet door. It's filled with Beverly's prescription bottles. There are uppers, downers, and everything in-between.

Curious and excited, Julia reaches for the top shelf and grabs the bottle of Adderall.

She opens the cap and takes a pill out. Pauses for a moment, having second thoughts.

As Julia is about to place the pill in her mouth, she sees a glimpse of a figure in the mirror staring at her from the corner of the room.

Startled, she drops the bottle. Pills scatter all over the floor.

Julia turns around. No one is there.

BEVERLY (O.S.)

Honey, are you okay?

JULIA

Yes.

Puzzled, Julia kneels down and starts gathering pills. She puts all the pills back in the bottle.

INT. JULIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Julia paces back and forth.

BEVERLY (O.S.)  
Julia, congratulations! You passed  
your urine test.

Julia breathes a sigh of relief.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Julia pets Alabama as the dog devours her food.

JULIA  
I'm sorry, baby. It's only  
temporary. We'll be out of here  
soon.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Julia stops in front of a restaurant with a handwritten  
SIGN on the door reading, "HELP WANTED."

She hesitates, then forces herself to step in.

INT. "CADILLAC BURGERS" RESTAURANT - DAY

The decor is retro. Sinatra BLASTS.

Julia approaches MAIRA TORRES, 20s, at the host stand.  
Maira is attractive with vibrant makeup and a personality  
to match.

JULIA  
Hi, can I speak to the manager?

MAIRA  
How can I help you?

JULIA  
I saw the sign on the front door.  
I was wondering if you guys are  
still hiring.

Maira gives Julia a long stare.

MAIRA  
Julia, is that you?

INT. "CADILLAC BURGERS" - OFFICE - DAY

Maira looks apologetic as she touches Julia's hand.

MAIRA

Julia, I'm sorry. I wasn't the nicest person in high school.

JULIA

You were all right.

MAIRA

C'mon, let's face it. I was a cunt.

JULIA

Well, that was a long time ago. Right now, I'm looking for a job.

MAIRA

Can I ask you a personal question?

Julia flashes her a surprised look.

MAIRA

Do you still use?

JULIA

Use what?

MAIRA

I saw the video.

JULIA

What video?

CUT TO:

COMPUTER MONITOR

A Youtube video plays, titled "METH HEAD HELLO KITTY FIGHT IN TIMES SQUARE." It has more than two million views.

BACK TO SCENE

Mortified, Julia jumps out of her chair. Maira grabs her arm.

MAIRA  
Julia, stop.

Julia pulls her arm free.

JULIA  
Don't touch me.

MAIRA  
I'm not here to judge you.

JULIA  
I don't care.

Julia heads to the door.

MAIRA  
Listen, I know what you're going  
through. I've been there.

Julia stops.

MAIRA  
Trust me, I know the struggles.  
Please, let me help you.

INT. "CADILLAC BURGERS" - KITCHEN - DAY

It's a chaotic dinner rush hour.

Julia works the dishwashing station. Hurriedly, she stacks  
dirty plates onto a tray, trying to catch up.

As she is about to start the machine, a flamboyant WAITER  
snaps his fingers at Julia.

WAITER  
Sweetheart, the dishes? Hello?

EXT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Maira's car stops in front of the house. Julia exits the  
car. She looks exhausted.

JULIA  
Thanks for the ride.

MAIRA  
Sure thing. See you tomorrow.

JULIA  
Good night.

Maira drives off. Julia heads to the front door.

INT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Julia enters and hears VOICES of people and LAUGHTER coming from the next room. She opens the door and glances into the--

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A small party. Beverly is the center of attention. She has had one too many martinis.

BEVERLY  
Honestly, I don't know what to do with her or that stupid dog. I can't just kick her out, can I?

Beverly's friends PENNY and ROMAN, 50s, flash sympathy.

ROMAN  
Honey, you can't babysit her for the rest of her life. How old is she? Thirty?

PENNY  
Roman, for God's sake, it's her daughter!

ROMAN  
So, what?

PENNY  
You're being ridiculous!

ROMAN  
She's a grown woman.

BEVERLY  
I do see your point, Roman. But, I'm afraid if I don't help her, she might try to hurt herself.

ROMAN  
What do you mean?

BEVERLY

A few years ago, on my birthday,  
guess where I found her? In the  
bathroom, sprawled on the floor,  
pills scattered around and an  
empty bottle of pink lemonade.  
"Happy Birthday, Mother!"

Beverly chugs the rest of her martini.

ROMAN

Did she try to get any help?

BEVERLY

I tried, but she refused.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Anger and hurt flood Julia's face. She flounces up the stairs.

BEVERLY (O.S.)

Julia?

INT. JULIA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julia storms in and collapses on the bed.

Beverly enters.

BEVERLY

Knock knock.

Julia looks up at Beverly with a poker face.

BEVERLY

So, how was your first day of  
work?

JULIA

Okay.

BEVERLY

Just okay?

JULIA

It was marvelous.

BEVERLY

Glad to hear it. I'm having a little party. Do you want to join us for a drink?

JULIA

No, thanks.

BEVERLY

Are you sure?

JULIA

Yes.

Awkward silence.

BEVERLY

Honey, I just wanted to ask you something. Are you gonna do anything about that dog?

JULIA

What do you want me to do?

BEVERLY

I don't know, but something. It won't quit barking.

JULIA

Mom, I'm tired.

Julia covers her head with the blanket.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The only light comes from Beverly's headlamp as she sits in the armchair, drunk, sewing a scarf.

In the background, Alabama starts BARKING profusely. Beverly groans.

INT. JULIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The clock on the nightstand shows 3 A.M. Julia awakens. Her eyes widen as she sees her sister Natalie hovering above the bed.

Natalie stares at Julia, who is paralyzed with fear, unable to move.

NATALIE  
(whispering)  
I can't breathe.

Natalie's face turns red as she starts wheezing and choking.

CUT TO:

Julia wakes up terrified, gripped with fear. Takes a deep breath.

She forces herself out of her bed, walks to the window, and opens the curtains wide. Sunlight invades the room.

Julia peers out the window and sees Beverly leaving the garage. Beverly waves.

BEVERLY  
Good morning, sweetheart.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Julia, groggy, sits across from Beverly at the breakfast table.

BEVERLY  
More coffee?

JULIA  
No, thanks.

BEVERLY  
How's your eggs Benedict?

JULIA  
(sarcastic)  
It's amazing.

BEVERLY  
Bon appetite.

Julia forces herself to chew some dry toast. Beverly grabs the milk carton and pours some milk into her cereal.

Suddenly, she bursts into laughter.

Julia gives her a questioning look. Still laughing, Beverly points to the milk carton.

BEVERLY

Honey, did you see this?

Julia looks at the carton and sees a photo of a washed-up woman in her 40s. The caption under the photo reads, "HAVE YOU SEEN HER? MONA ASHLEY PIKE."

JULIA

What's so funny?

BEVERLY

It's Mona. Mona Pike. Sweetheart, she was your baby-sitter.

JULIA

She's missing and you find it amusing?

BEVERLY

Not missing. Wanted! For murder! A crackhead and homicidal maniac. Maybe I should have checked her references after all.

JULIA

You think?

BEVERLY

Please be honest with me, okay? Did she ever hurt you?

JULIA

Hurt me?

BEVERLY

Did she ever expose you to drugs?

JULIA

Wow. Are you really trying to blame a part-time baby-sitter whom I hardly remember for your bad parenting?

BEVERLY

It's just sometimes I wonder why you became who you are.

JULIA

And who exactly am I?

BEVERLY

Do you really want me to go there?

JULIA

Could you remind me where exactly you were when I was trapped inside the burning house and had to watch my sister choke to death?

BEVERLY

Do you think you are the only victim? I lost my child. That didn't give me an excuse to become a dope head.

JULIA

Yeah. I opened your bathroom counter. It looks like a pharmacy.

BEVERLY

If you're referring to my medication, which I need for my rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, mixed connective tissue disease, and degenerative disk disease--

JULIA

(sarcastic)

Oh, Mother. I didn't know you were so sick.

BEVERLY

How could you possibly know? You're never around. The only time you're here is when you have nowhere else to go.

Julia gets up from her chair.

JULIA

Thanks for breakfast.

BEVERLY

I wish you wouldn't ruin it.

Julia heads to the door.

BEVERLY

You don't need to feed the dog, honey. I already took care of it.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Julia enters. She looks around, searching for Alabama, and sees her in the corner of the garage.

Her face grows concerned as she notices that the dog looks thinner and weaker. Her food bowl is untouched.

JULIA

What's the matter, baby? Why  
haven't you touched your food?

Alabama WHIMPERS. Julia attempts to get Alabama out of the garage. Alabama refuses to move.

JULIA

C'mon, girl. Lets take a walk.

Alabama vomits.

INT. "CADILLAC BURGERS" - OFFICE - DAY

Julia enters and sees Maira typing on a computer.

JULIA

Maira, can I speak with you?

Maira looks at Julia.

JULIA

I was wondering if I can get two  
hundred dollars in advance.

MAIRA

What for?

JULIA

Personal reasons.

MAIRA

I'm afraid, Julia, you'll have to  
wait another week to receive your  
paycheck.

JULIA

I really need it.

MAIRA

I'm sorry, but that's our policy.

JULIA

Please.

Maira gives Julia a long stare.

MAIRA

How are you, Julia? Is there anything you wanna talk to me about?

JULIA

It's not what you think.

Maira doesn't look convinced.

JULIA

I'm not trying to get high. My dog is sick. I need to take her to a doctor.

Maira flashes Julia a sympathetic look.

EXT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Julia is out of breath as she struggles to carry Alabama out of the garage.

Eli approaches.

ELI

Julia!

Julia turns around. An expression of surprise flits across her face.

JULIA

What are you doing here?

ELI

What's wrong with Alabama?

JULIA

I don't know. I need to take her to a clinic.

ELI

Can I help you?

INT. ELI'S CAR - DAY

Rain splashes on the windshield of a broken-down hatchback sedan.

Eli drives. Julia sits with Alabama in the back seat. She looks upset.

ELI  
Julia, don't worry. Alabama is a tough cookie.

JULIA  
Thanks for the ride.

ELI  
Of course.

Awkward silence.

JULIA  
So, what are you doing here, Eli?

ELI  
I missed you.

JULIA  
Can we skip the small talk?

ELI  
I have something for you.

Eli lifts up his jacket from the front passenger seat, revealing Julia's old guitar.

Julia is not impressed.

JULIA  
What's this?

ELI  
I want us to get the band back together.

JULIA  
Eli, please. Wake up.

ELI  
Why do you have to be so negative?

JULIA  
Reality check: we're fucking  
crackheads.

ELI  
I've been clean.

JULIA  
For two weeks?

ELI  
Hey, it's the longest I've been  
clean in the last two years.

JULIA  
I'm proud of you, but you  
shouldn't have wasted money. My  
money.

ELI  
Baby, I know you're upset, but we  
can have a fresh start.

Alabama WHIMPERS and begins to vomit.

JULIA  
Oh, Jesus! Can you speed it up?

INT. ANIMAL CLINIC - DAY

Julia and Eli sit on the bench, anxiously staring at the  
pictures of happy dogs framed on the walls.

Both look up as DOCTOR LARSON, 42, a male vet, approaches.

DOCTOR LARSON  
I'm afraid Alabama will have to  
stay with us tonight.

JULIA  
Is it something serious?

DOCTOR LARSON  
We still have to run a few tests.  
Hopefully we'll find out the  
results by tomorrow.

Julia's face darkens.

INT. ELI'S CAR - NIGHT

Early evening. Rain has stopped.

Julia, in the front passenger seat, watches Eli as he turns the key in the ignition to no avail. He flashes Julia a pleading look.

JULIA  
Are you serious?

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Eli tries to turn the ignition, as Julia struggles to push the car forward. The engine COUGHS and dies.

Julia raises her arms, giving up.

JULIA  
Okay, I'm done.

Eli gets out and stares at his car with growing frustration.

ELI  
Do you have a metro pass?

JULIA  
You just missed the last bus.

ELI  
I guess I'm fucked.

Julia rolls her eyes.

INT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The TV is tuned to the shopping channel, advertising cheap jewelry.

Beverly dozes in her armchair with her sewing kit in her lap.

Julia and Eli tiptoe through the living room. As they approach the stairs, Eli accidentally bumps into a lamp.

Beverly's eyes snap open.

BEVERLY  
 Julia? Is that you?

Julia and Eli give each other a nervous look and rush up the--

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

They run into--

INT. JULIA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Panicked, Julia locks the door and opens the closet.

JULIA  
 (whispering)  
 Hurry up! Get in.

Eli hesitates.

BEVERLY (O.S.)  
 Julia?

JULIA  
 Yes, Mom?  
 (to Eli)  
 C'mon, get inside.

HARD KNOCKING on the door.

BEVERLY (O.S.)  
 Julia, open the door!

Julia forces Eli into the closet and shuts the door.

BEVERLY (O.S.)  
 Who's in there with you?

JULIA  
 It's just me, Mother.

BEVERLY (O.S.)  
 Open the goddamn door. Now!

Julia opens the door. Beverly storms into the room and flashes Julia a furious look.

JULIA  
 Hi, Mom.

BEVERLY  
Don't you ever lock any of my  
doors again!

JULIA  
You're overreacting--

BEVERLY  
My house, my rules!

A SHUFFLING comes from the closet. Beverly looks around the room.

BEVERLY  
What was that noise?

JULIA  
What noise?

BEVERLY  
You know exactly what I'm talking  
about.

JULIA  
Honestly, I have no idea.

Beverly stands there for a moment, listening. Then her eyes fixate on the closet.

INSIDE CLOSET

Eli, sweating profusely, holds his breath.

BACK TO BEDROOM

Beverly starts toward the closet.

JULIA  
Mom?

Beverly ignores her and approaches the closet.

As she's about to open it, Julia reaches for the vase on the nightstand and tips it over.

The vase hits the floor and SHATTERS.

Beverly turns around, enraged.

BEVERLY  
What is wrong with you?

JULIA  
It was an accident.

BEVERLY  
That vase was a collector's item  
given to me by your great-  
grandmother!

JULIA  
What was it doing in my room?

BEVERLY  
I put it there for safekeeping. I  
never imagined you'd come back.

JULIA  
Voila! Here I am.

BEVERLY  
Guess what? I want you out of here  
by the end of the week.

Beverly storms out of the room, SLAMMING the door behind her.

Julia lets out a sigh of relief. She waits for another few seconds, then approaches the closet.

The moment she opens the door, Eli bursts out of the closet, trembling, in a state of panic.

JULIA  
Gosh, Eli. Are you all right?

Eli still tries to catch his breath.

JULIA  
Do you want some water?

ELI  
I'm fine, just give me a second.

He sits on Julia's bed. She notices his hands are still shaking.

ELI

When I was a kid, my dad used to lock me in the closet. I know, I should get over it.

JULIA

I'm sorry.

She sits next to Eli and touches his hand. His face softens. They look at each other. It's a tender moment.

ELI

I lied to you. My car isn't broken.

JULIA

And you made me push that stupid piece of crap?

ELI

I wanted to spend time with you.

JULIA

Fuck you.

ELI

Shhh. Your mom will hear us.

JULIA

Now you're worried?

Eli caresses Julia's hand. She pulls away.

JULIA

Don't touch me.

ELI

I miss you.

JULIA

I should've left you in that closet.

ELI

Kinky!

Julia can't help but smile. Eli grabs her face and kisses her. She allows it. They collapse to the bed and begin to undress each other.

INT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Soft morning light breaks through the window. Julia is still asleep.

Eli, fully dressed, stares at her for a moment, then gently kisses her on the lips. Julia opens her eyes.

ELI  
I need to get going.

JULIA  
Be quiet going down the stairs.  
Don't wake her up.

ELI  
I can handle an old lady.

JULIA  
You don't know her. She'll pull  
out her rifle.

ELI  
You're funny.

JULIA  
I'm serious.

ELI  
What about you, baby? What are you  
gonna do?

Julia shrugs.

ELI  
Why don't you move in with me?

JULIA  
We've tried it before, remember?

ELI  
This time is different.

JULIA  
Sorry, Eli. I really don't know.

ELI  
We can save some money and move to  
California. We'll take Alabama  
with us.

Julia ponders.

ELI  
Aren't you tired of the winters  
here?

JULIA  
Are you asking me if I wanna get  
the fuck out of here?

ELI  
Baby, let's do it.

Eli stares at Julia. She smiles.

ELI  
Is it a yes then?

Julia nods.

JULIA  
Okay. Let's do it.

INT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

The sound of an ENGINE STARTING.

A glimpse of hope reflects in Julia's eyes as she stares  
out of the window, watching Eli drive away.

INT. "CADILLAC BURGERS" - KITCHEN - DAY

Hectic as usual. Julia hurriedly packs "to go" orders.

Her phone RINGS. She grabs her cell phone from her pocket.  
The CHEF gives her a look.

CHEF  
What do you think you're doing?

Julia ignores him and answers the phone.

JULIA  
(into phone)  
Hello?

DR. LARSON (O.S.)  
Julia? This is Dr. Larson from  
Hilton Crest Animal Clinic.

JULIA

Yes?

DR. LARSON (O.S.)

I'm afraid I have some bad news.

Julia's face sinks.

INT. ANIMAL CLINIC - BACK ROOM - DAY

Fluorescent lights cascade through the white walls.

Julia, in disbelief, stares at Alabama's dead body on a slab. Dr. Larson gently touches her on the shoulder.

DR. LARSON

I'm really sorry.

JULIA

She was a healthy dog. How could this have happened?

DR. LARSON

I took some X-rays. I found this in her digestive system.

Dr. Larson pulls out a needle from a plastic bag and shows it to Julia.

DR. LARSON

Do you think she might have accidentally swallowed it in her food?

Julia doesn't answer. Slowly over her face comes a horrifying realization.

INT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Julia's hands shake as she opens a drawer. She takes out Beverly's sewing kit and checks her collection of needles. One is missing.

She takes out the needle Dr. Larson gave her and compares it to the needle that is missing. It's the same one.

Enraged, Julia runs up the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Julia heads to her mother's bedroom. She opens the door and storms in.

INT. BEVERLY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julia discovers her mother in bed in a white see-through nightgown, all doped up. Her hair is disheveled and her makeup is smudged.

A half bottle of Southern Comfort lies on the nightstand, next to a tube of pills.

Beverly looks up at Julia and smiles.

BEVERLY  
(slurring)  
Hi, sweetheart.

JULIA  
How could you do this?

BEVERLY  
Do what?

JULIA  
You, monster! You killed my dog.

BEVERLY  
Don't you dare talk to me in that tone!

JULIA  
You fucking bitch!

BEVERLY  
Well, at least I'm not the dead one.

Julia is out of control. She attacks Beverly, puts her hands around Beverly's throat, and begins to choke her.

Beverly tries to resist. Julia squeezes her throat with more force.

Beverly's face reddens. She coughs and wheezes. As she is about to pass out, Julia stops.

Beverly huffs and puffs, trying to catch her breath.  
Fuming, Julia stomps into the--

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julia opens the cabinet door and takes out Beverly's pills.  
In a deep frenzy, she starts dumping the pills into the  
toilet.

As Julia is about to toss the last of the remaining pills,  
Beverly enters the bathroom with a rifle.

Her face turns pale as she notices empty pill bottles  
scattered all over the bathroom floor.

BEVERLY

What are you doing?!

JULIA

You want your precious little  
pills? Go ahead, grab them.

Julia FLUSHES the pills down the toilet.

Beverly lifts the rifle and points it at Julia. A long  
pause.

JULIA

Well, what are you waiting for? Do  
it.

BEVERLY

Get out of my house!

JULIA

You're a despicable hag! I wish  
you were never my mother.

Julia storms out of the room.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Orange lights of street lamps reflect on wet asphalt.

Julia trudges along the empty sidewalk. In despair, she  
picks up her phone and dials a number.

LONG BEEPS, followed by an answering machine.

ELI (O.S.)  
Hi, you reached Eli. I'm not here  
at the moment. Leave a message  
after the tone and I'll call you  
back as soon as possible.

JULIA  
(into phone)  
Hey, where the fuck are you? Call  
me. I need you.

Julia hangs up.

EXT. MAIRA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Two-story McMansion with a well kept lawn and big garage.

Julia approaches the door. Hesitant, she RINGS the bell.

A few moments later, the door opens and Maira peeks out.  
She looks surprised.

MAIRA  
Hi, Julia.

JULIA  
Hi. I'm sorry to bother you this  
late.

MAIRA  
Is everything okay?

Julia looks down.

MAIRA  
What happened?

JULIA  
Nothing. I just need a place to  
crash.

MAIRA  
Of course, come in.

INT. MAIRA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A large, pretty kitchen flows into a spacious dining area.

Julia sits across the table from HECTOR, 7, Maira's son. He stares at Julia.

HECTOR  
What happened to your face?

Julia is taken aback.

HECTOR  
You're ugly.

Julia doesn't know how to react; she giggles.

Maira enters with a bottle of wine and flashes Hector a look.

MAIRA  
Hector, are you bothering her?

HECTOR  
She's weird.

MAIRA  
That's not a nice thing to say.

JULIA  
It's okay, Maira. He's right. I'm kind of weird.

MAIRA  
Go ahead Hector, apologize.

HECTOR  
I'm sorry.

MAIRA  
Now, go to your room.

Hector gets up from the chair. Maira gives him a kiss. He heads to his bedroom.

MAIRA  
I'm sorry about that.

JULIA  
He's a cutie pie.

MAIRA  
He can also be a handful.

Maira reaches for the wine opener and unscrews the cork.

She pours wine into two glasses and hands one to Julia.

Julia takes a big sip.

A long pause.

MAIRA

How's your dog? Is she improving?

JULIA

She's gone.

MAIRA

I'm sorry to hear that. Was she sick?

JULIA

(casually)

No, she was healthy. My mother killed her.

Maira is speechless.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

The guest bedroom has newly painted walls, fringe curtains, and a massive closet in the corner, next to a grandfather clock.

Maira and Julia, both tipsy, set up the sheets on the bed.

MAIRA

If it gets cold, I have an extra blanket in the closet.

JULIA

Thank you.

MAIRA

So, what's your next move?

JULIA

I don't know. I'm trying to reach my boyfriend.

MAIRA

You can stay here as long as you want, until you figure things out.

JULIA

I'll be gone by tomorrow.

MAIRA

Again, no rush. Sweet dreams.

Maira leaves.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The clock approaches 3 A.M.

Julia wakes up. Her eyes are open, but she can't move.  
Sleep paralysis.

The room is silent. Then, a SQUEAKING SOUND. It's coming  
from the closet.

Frightened, Julia looks at the closet door as it slowly  
CREEPS open.

At first, there is nothing but darkness. All of a sudden,  
we hear Eli MOAN.

Julia wiggles her fingers desperately, trying to break free  
from her frozen state.

JULIA

Eli?

A three-dimensional shadow figure in human form slowly  
emerges out of the closet.

SHADOW FIGURE

He belongs to me.

CUT TO:

Petrified, Julia awakens. It's a gray, rainy morning.

Still afraid, she forces herself to look at the closet.  
It's closed. Julia breathes a sigh of relief.

INT./EXT. BUS - DAY

Crowded bus. Gloomy COMMUTERS sip their coffee and read  
their morning papers.

Julia sits next to a window, watching the raindrops fall.

The bus stops at the traffic light.

Julia picks up her phone and dials a number.

LONG BEEPS. Phone goes to answering machine.

ELI (O.S.)  
Hi, you reached Eli. I'm not here  
at the moment--

Julia hangs up.

EXT. BROOKLYN - ELI'S HOUSE - DAY

Blue-collar neighborhood. It's still raining.

With a broken umbrella in her hand, Julia moves near a single-unit house. She spots Eli's old sedan parked outside of the garage.

Julia approaches the door and RINGS the bell. No one answers. She tries again.

An OLD LADY next door comes out and glances at Julia.

OLD LADY  
Can I help you, young lady?

JULIA  
Hi. I'm looking for Eli.

OLD LADY  
Oh, dear. I'm afraid I have some  
bad news.

INT. MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL - DAY

Julia rushes in through the giant revolving doors into the busy hallway.

She approaches the elevator and spots Eli's uncle FRANK, 52, a cop.

JULIA  
Frank!

Frank turns around. They approach each other.

FRANK  
Hey.

JULIA  
Where is he?

Hiding his teary eyes, Frank looks away.

JULIA  
What happened?

FRANK  
He was doing fine. Last night I  
found him on the floor with a  
needle. I didn't know he was  
slamming.

Julia is speechless.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - LATER

Numb with shock, Julia stares at Eli through the glass ICU  
window. He is asleep.

SANDRA (O.S.)  
Julia.

Julia turns around. Behind her stands SANDRA, Eli's twin  
sister.

Sandra flashes Julia a look of disdain. Julia cringes.

SANDRA  
Look what you did to my brother.  
He almost died!

Julia looks down.

SANDRA  
Are you happy with yourself? It  
should've been you.

JULIA  
I know.

SANDRA  
Do you?

JULIA  
I'm a toxic person. I destroyed  
his life.

SANDRA  
What are you gonna do about it?

Julia is silent.

SANDRA  
Why don't you do the world a  
favor, Julia? Why don't you  
fucking kill yourself?

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Julia trudges down the long corridor distractedly, like a zombie. She bumps into PARAMEDICS pushing a gurney.

MALE PARAMEDIC  
Hey, watch it!

INT. HOSPITAL - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Fully dressed, Julia is seated on the john. She looks lost. The cravings.

Slowly, she reaches into her pocket, takes out her cellphone, and dials a number.

LONG BEEPS. Someone answers the phone on the other end.

IGOR (O.S.)  
Hello?

Julia doesn't answer.

IGOR (O.S.)  
Julia?

JULIA  
(into phone)  
Hi, Igor.

EXT. IGOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Late evening. Shabby two-story frame house with neglected lawn. The stairs leading up to the porch are mostly rotting away.

Julia approaches the door. She waits for a few seconds, not sure what to do.

Finally, she gathers her courage and KNOCKS on the door. Almost instantly, the door opens and Igor peeks out. His pupils are dilated, his face twitching.

IGOR  
Julia! Long time no see.

Julia doesn't answer.

IGOR  
Are you just gonna stand there?  
Come in.

INT. IGOR'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jaundice lights.

The room is filled with a clutter of garbage. Dirty dishes fill the sink, occult books are scattered on the floor.

IGOR  
Go ahead and have a seat, Julia  
darling.

Julia moves the pile of dirty clothes off the couch to make room and sits.

Igor, at the dining table, measures crystal meth with a triple beam balance scale. Next to the scale is a variety of plastic baggies and other drug paraphernalia.

Julia's eyes are fixed on a burnt meth pipe lying on the coffee table.

IGOR  
So, where have you been? I was  
worried about you.

JULIA  
I was away.

IGOR  
Rehab?

JULIA  
I was staying with my mother.

IGOR  
You poor thing. Is she as hot as  
you?

JULIA

Hotter.

Igor laughs.

IGOR

Really? Can I have her number?

JULIA

I'll introduce you to her.

IGOR

Can I ask you a stupid question?  
Promise me you're not gonna get  
upset.

JULIA

What?

IGOR

What the hell were you doing with  
that guy?

Julia is silent.

IGOR

I heard about what happened. That  
guy is too much--

JULIA

Can we not talk about it?

IGOR

I'm sorry. I just can't keep my  
mouth shut.

JULIA

Do you mind if I smoke from this  
pipe?

IGOR

Sure.

Julia grabs the pipe and LIGHTS UP the torch lighter.  
CRACKLING as crystals start to boil.

The moment she takes a drag, her eyes widen. An expression  
of artificial bliss crosses her face.

IGOR

Told you, this batch is the bomb.

As Julia is about to take another hit, a LOUD POUNDING is heard. It's coming from the basement.

Julia flashes Igor a questioning look. He pretends to hear nothing.

JULIA  
What was that?

IGOR  
What?

JULIA  
There's someone in the basement.

IGOR  
Julia, darling. I don't have a  
basement.

Suddenly, a HEART WRENCHING SCREAM comes from the basement. Igor smiles.

IGOR  
I'm just fucking with you. That's  
my girl, Mona. She's hiding.

JULIA  
From who?

IGOR  
Ahhh... That bitch can't handle  
her drugs. She sees shadow people.

Another SCREAM. Igor stomps on the floor.

IGOR  
Mona, shut up!

The screams and pounding halt. Awkward silence.

Slowly, Julia's confusion turns into paranoia. Igor notices it and touches her hand.

IGOR  
Julia, darling. You need to chill.

Julia gets up.

JULIA  
It's getting late. I should be  
going.

IGOR

Relax!

JULIA

I'm fine. It's just... my friend Maira. She's waiting for me.

IGOR

Does she party? Tell her to come over. Maybe we can have a threesome.

JULIA

You're funny.

IGOR

Who said I was joking?

He unzips his pants.

JULIA

What are you doing?

IGOR

Here. Why don't you smoke a little more?

He offers Julia the pipe.

Julia ignores him and heads to the front door. Igor follows Julia and grabs her hand.

JULIA

Hey, don't touch me!

IGOR

That's not nice.

He touches Julia's breasts. She pushes him away.

JULIA

Get the fuck away from me!

IGOR

Sweetheart, honey. There's no need to be disrespectful.

JULIA

Stop--

IGOR  
Wasn't I a good host? Didn't I let  
you smoke my shit?

JULIA  
Here... I'll pay you.

Shaking, Julia takes out a few crumpled bills from her pocket and offers them to Igor.

IGOR  
Twelve dollars?! Wow!

JULIA  
I'll give you more.

IGOR  
When?

JULIA  
I get paid next week.

IGOR  
That's what loverboy used to tell  
me. Look what happened to him.

JULIA  
Igor, I swear, I promise! I'll pay  
you back--

IGOR  
Julia, darling. I'm sorry. I hope  
you realize I'm not running a  
charity. But, I'm sure we can work  
out our differences.

He grabs Julia by her hair and attempts to push her down to his crotch.

Julia resists, but Igor is stronger. She bites his hand.

IGOR  
Ouch! You fucking worthless cunt!

He smacks Julia across the face, knocking her to the floor. Julia cringes in pain. Blood gushes from her nose.

IGOR  
Oh, my God! Look what you did,  
bitch! You stained my floor!

Julia attempts to lift herself up, but Igor shoves her back. He mounts her and starts tearing at her clothes.

JULIA  
Igor, please. What are you doing?!  
No!

IGOR  
Yes!

JULIA  
Help!

He covers her mouth with his hand.

IGOR  
Shut up, you skank! I hate  
violence, but you gave me no  
choice.

Julia spots an empty beer bottle on the floor and extends her hand, trying to reach it.

IGOR  
Hey, I can see you.

He punches her, KNOCKING her senseless. Julia's eyes close.

BLACKNESS.

MONA (O.S.)  
Wakey wakey, eggs and bakey.

INT. BASEMENT - CAGE - NIGHT

Julia's eyes snap open. She looks up.

Above her stands MONA, 42. Mona has been slamming meth for years. Her skin is dry, her teeth are rotting, and her mind is deranged.

With a feverish excitement in her eyes, Mona gives Julia a big smile.

MONA  
Good morning, sleepyhead.

Disoriented, Julia looks around.

Her confusion quickly turns into panic as she realizes she's locked inside a cage in a dingy basement.

Mona giggles.

MONA

They told me you would come.

Julia notices that her panties are torn. She gasps in shock. Terror pulses through her body. She covers her face with her hands and begins to sob.

MONA

Ohhhh, what happened?

No response.

MONA

Come on, girlfriend. You can tell me. I can keep a secret.

Julia's sobs grow with a fury. She slams against the cage.

JULIA

Help! Please, somebody help me!

MONA

Hey, take it easy. Don't hurt yourself.

JULIA

Let me out of here! Igor!

MONA

Yeah, good luck with that.

Mona giggles as she watches Julia running around the cage in a state of panic.

MONA

All right, lady. I hope you realize no one can hear you. Unless you're fucking stupid.

Julia gives up and collapses to the floor. Her initial panic has worn off and is replaced by total helplessness and despair.

MONA

Are you done?

Julia ignores her.

MONA

Hey, I'm talking to you.

Julia's face turns pale. She holds her stomach, gags, and throws up.

MONA

Oh, my God! Look what you've done, you filthy whore! That's disgusting! Now it's gonna stink in here!

JULIA

Shut up!

MONA

Bitch, what did you just say?

Julia ignores her.

MONA

I'm talking to you!

JULIA

Stay away from me, you skank.

Mona, in a rage, jumps at Julia. Julia tries to push her away. Both collapse to the floor.

Mona gets on top of Julia. She grabs Julia firmly by her hair and attempts to shove her face into the pool of her own vomit.

MONA

Eat it, bitch! Eat it or die.

Julia strikes Mona with her elbow, hitting her in the face. Blood gushes out of Mona's nose. Mona freaks out.

MONA

What the fuck is wrong with you?!

Julia tries to release herself from Mona's grip.

As Julia struggles to her feet, Mona pulls her back down.

Moments later, both women are on the floor, rolling, SCREAMING at each other.

Suddenly, the cage door opens and Igor rushes in with a taser.

IGOR  
What's going on in here?!

Igor approaches them. TIZZST. He tases both women.

Julia and Mona SCREAM as they run to different corners of the cage.

TIZZST. AAHHHH!

MONA  
Stop it! Please!

IGOR  
Do you want more?

MONA  
She started it!

IGOR  
I don't care who started it.

MONA  
I'm sorry!

Waving the taser, Igor approaches Julia.

IGOR  
What about you, sweetheart? Am I gonna have more problems with you?

JULIA  
Igor, please. Let me go! Please--

IGOR  
Julia, darling. You don't get it, do you?

JULIA  
I promise, I won't tell anyone. I swear--

IGOR  
You and I... We're gonna have great times together.

Julia notices that the cage door is unlocked. She races to the exit.

As she's about to get out of the cage--

TIZZST. Igor tases Julia. She crumples to the floor and faints.

Mona giggles.

IGOR

Shut up!

Mona goes silent. Igor grabs Julia by her feet and drags her back inside the cage.

IGOR

Julia, I'm sorry. Honestly, I hate doing this to you, but you keep on fucking up. Why?!

He slaps Julia's face in an attempt to revive her.

Finally, Julia opens her eyes. An expression of shock crosses her face as she sees Igor above her, holding a syringe.

JULIA

What are you doing?!

IGOR

Baby, trust me. This'll make you feel a whole lot better.

JULIA

Stay away from me!

MONA

I think this bitch is a virgin. Look at her, Igor. She has no visible marks.

IGOR

Mona, be quiet or I'll come over there and shut your mouth!

Julia screams and struggles as Igor tries to hold her down.

IGOR

Hey, take it easy.

JULIA

Please-- No-- NO!

IGOR  
Relax, baby. You'll enjoy it.

JULIA  
Stop!

Igor lowers the syringe, about to slam her arm with it.

JULIA  
Igor... Please. Wait! Let me do  
it myself.

Igor smiles.

IGOR  
Now, you're talking.

He offers the syringe to Julia. Reluctant, Julia grabs the syringe from his hand. Waits.

IGOR  
Well, what are you waiting for? Go  
ahead.

JULIA  
You're making me nervous. I wanna  
do it without you staring at me.

IGOR  
Oh, fuck me! What do you want me  
to do? Close my eyes?

As he yanks the syringe from Julia's hand and is about to slam her with it, his phone RINGS. He answers.

IGOR  
(into phone)  
Hello?... Now?... How much?... I'm  
on my way.

Igor hangs up his phone and gives Julia a long stare.

IGOR  
Okay, whatever. I have to go now.

Julia sighs her relief.

IGOR  
Don't worry. We'll do it tomorrow.  
Can I expect you to be ready?

Julia is silent.

IGOR  
Julia, darling. I can't hear you.

JULIA  
Yes.

IGOR  
Excellent. Well, ladies, please  
behave, okay? Be nice to each  
other. Good night.

As Igor walks out of the cage, Mona gives him a begging  
look.

MONA  
Can I have it?

Igor stares at her for a moment.

MONA  
Please.

IGOR  
Fetch.

He tosses Mona the syringe.

The moment Igor leaves, Mona slams her arm with the needle.  
Her eyes pop and an expression of euphoria flushes across  
her face.

Mona closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. When she  
opens her eyes, she's a different person -- happy,  
friendly, and horny.

Mona notices Julia staring at her.

MONA  
Can I help you?

Julia looks away. Mona giggles.

MONA  
Just kidding. I'm so glad you're  
here. I miss having company.

She approaches Julia. Julia backs away into a corner.

MONA  
Don't be afraid.

JULIA  
I'm not afraid of you.

MONA  
Good. I want us to be friends.

She flashes Julia a lustful look.

MONA  
Your hair is so beautiful. Can I touch it?

JULIA  
No.

MONA  
Well, I guess I'll have to wait until tomorrow.

JULIA  
It's not happening now. It's not gonna happen tomorrow.

MONA  
Once you slam it, everything happens. Believe me.

JULIA  
I won't let it happen.

MONA  
Aren't you're so brave? Do you wanna know what happens when you don't follow his orders?

She takes off her shirt, revealing dark purple scars on her back from beatings.

MONA  
That's what happens.

A flash of pity flickers across Julia's face, followed by a big surprise when she notices an ugly tattoo covering Mona's arm.

It's a tattoo of a black rose and an inscription around it, which reads, "I LIVE IN THE SHADOWS."

MONA  
Do you like my tattoo?

JULIA  
I know you.

Mona gives Julia a questioning look.

JULIA  
Mona Pike. You used to babysit me  
and my little sister. I'm Julia.  
Julia Carpenter.

Mona's face turns pale.

MONA  
What the fuck are you talking  
about?

JULIA  
Remember Natalie? And our mom,  
Beverley Carpenter?

MONA  
Listen, lady. You're confusing me  
with someone else.

JULIA  
I'm not.

MONA  
Shut up!

Julia points at the tattoo on Mona's arm.

JULIA  
That tattoo. It's so ugly, I'll  
never forget it.

MONA  
Your face is ugly!

JULIA  
What happened to you, Mona?

MONA  
What happened to you? You're  
fucking delusional. That's what  
happened.

JULIA

You were such a lousy babysitter.  
You used to scare the shit out of  
me and my little sister with your  
stupid stories about shadow people  
and how they would steal our souls  
if we didn't behave.

Mona

Shut up!

Panicky, Mona looks around the room.

MONA

They can hear us.

JULIA

Who?

MONA

Them!

She points to the corner.

Julia looks and sees a dark silhouette in the corner of the  
basement.

JULIA

It's nothing.

Suddenly, the shadow moves. Julia gasps and rubs her eyes  
in disbelief.

MONA

I told you. You saw it, didn't  
you?

JULIA

We're just crashing. It's not  
real.

MONA

Don't say that. You're making them  
mad!

JULIA

It's all in your head.

MONA

Shut up!

Julia's panic grows as she hears the sounds of FOOTSTEPS and WHISPERS.

JULIA  
It's Igor. He's trying to scare  
us.  
(yells out)  
Hey! It's not working!

MONA  
You'll get us in trouble!

Suddenly, a BUZZING SOUND.

Julia looks around. Nothing.

Within seconds, the BUZZING intensifies, becoming almost unbearable. Julia places her hands over her ears.

MONA  
(laughs)  
Here they are!

Julia's eyes widen in disbelief as she sees SHADOWY SILHOUETTES surrounding her.

JULIA  
This isn't happening!

Out of nowhere, Julia's hair sets on fire. She SCREAMS.

FLASHBACK - JULIA'S MEMORY

INT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Julia, 9, is trapped in the burning house. She SCREAMS as she tries to pat out the flames spreading across her head.

JULIA  
Mom!

Fire spreads quickly, producing dense, toxic smoke.

Julia coughs and collapses. As she is about to pass out, a FIREFIGHTER rushes in.

Quickly, he grabs Julia and runs out.

EXT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The house is engulfed in flames. Dark smoke leaps from broken windows.

A crowd of concerned BYSTANDERS watches as the firefighter carries Julia to an ambulance. Among them is Mona, 21.

Julia spots Mona in the crowd. They make eye contact.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. BASEMENT - IGOR'S HOUSE - DAY

Soft morning light cracks in through the tiny basement window.

Julia wakes up, gasping, trying to catch her breath. She taps her head, checking her hair: it's intact.

Then, she looks around and spots Mona on the other side of the cage, scribbling on the floor, humming. Next to her is a half glass of orange juice.

MONA

Good morning, sleepyhead. Are you ready for your big day?

Julia lifts herself off the floor.

MONA

Quite a freak show last night.

JULIA

What happened?

MONA

You know what happened. You saw them.

JULIA

I'm not sure what I saw.

MONA

Don't worry, honey. You'll see them again.

Mona points to a plate on the floor with a cold omelette intact.

MONA

You should eat your eggs.

Julia ignores her.

MONA

Eat your damn breakfast.

JULIA

He's probably lacing our food.

Mona laughs.

JULIA

That's why we're having these visions.

MONA

Visions?

JULIA

How long has it been since you slept?

MONA

Why?

JULIA

You need to get some rest.

MONA

Lady, I'm not crazy. You're the one who doesn't want to face reality.

JULIA

What is the reality?

Mona smiles and points to a drawing on the floor. It's a childlike scribble of five female figures with grim expressions.

MONA

Do you like my drawing? Do you know who they are? Hanna, Blair, Maria, and Emma. They used to live here too, in this cage. I met one of them... Emma. What a sweet girl. She was so young. You know what happened to her? Take a guess.

Julia's face twitches in horrid realization.

JULIA  
He killed her?

MONA  
First he drugged her and raped  
her, then he ripped her heart open  
and offered it to the shadows.

Julia struggles to stay calm.

MONA  
(whispers)  
He uses shadow people for his  
magic. He's a witch.

JULIA  
You're out of your fucking mind.

MONA  
Where you're standing right now is  
exactly where he stabbed her.

Julia looks down and sees bloodstains on the floor. She  
gasps and steps back in horror.

MONA  
Hmmm. You didn't ask me who the  
fifth girl was.

Julia looks at the drawing. The fifth figure has a scar  
across her face. Her eyes widen with panic.

Mona giggles.

MONA  
They've been watching you, Julia.  
They've been waiting for you.

JULIA  
We need to get out of here!

MONA  
No, lady. You need to get out of  
here.

JULIA  
Mona, please--

MONA

You came here, flirted with death.  
What did you expect?

JULIA

Wake up! He'll kill us both!

MONA

I've always been his favorite!

JULIA

Is that why he's keeping you here  
like an animal?

MONA

You're jealous!

JULIA

I know you're in trouble, Mona--

MONA

Stop fucking with me. I'm not that  
person!

JULIA

You are Mona Ashley Pike--

MONA

Be quiet!

JULIA

You're wanted for murder.

MONA

Stop talking!

JULIA

Would you rather rot in here, or  
go to jail?

MONA

Shut up!

(in tears)

I didn't do it. I didn't do it! He  
forced me to do it.

JULIA

Who?

MONA

Igor! I didn't wanna do it. Oh, God!

JULIA

Why don't you tell the police?

MONA

Look at me! Who's gonna believe this?!

JULIA

I do.

MONA

Liar! You just want me to help you get out of here.

JULIA

We both need to get out of here.

MONA

That's enough. I'm not talking to you.

JULIA

Mona, please... I need your help.

MONA

Leave me alone!

Suddenly, Mona collapses and chokes. Julia rushes to her aid.

JULIA

Hey, what's wrong?!

Mona gags. Her body quivers.

JULIA

Mona, are you okay?

Mona points to the orange juice.

MONA

Poison.

A yellow foam forms around Mona's mouth. She faints. Julia panics.

JULIA

Igor!

Julia shakes Mona and slaps her across the face, trying to revive her.

JULIA

Wake up! You need to wake up!

Mona doesn't respond. Julia tilts Mona's head sideways.

JULIA

C'mon, help me, Mona! You need to vomit.

She puts her finger in Mona's mouth. A few moments later, Mona vomits.

Her eyes open slightly and she coughs. Then, she vomits again. Julia sighs with relief.

JULIA

Gosh, you scared the hell out of me.

Mona's eyes well with tears.

JULIA

Are you okay?

MONA

I thought I was special. He's trying to kill me.

Mona covers her face and sobs.

MONA

This is all your fault. Why did you have to come here and ruin things for me? Why?!

JULIA

Didn't I just save your ass?

MONA

Who asked you to?

JULIA

All right. Next time I'll just let you choke on your own vomit.

MONA  
Oh, God! He's gonna stab me!

JULIA  
If we work together, we can get  
out of here.

MONA  
It's impossible!

JULIA  
Have you tried?

Mona is silent.

JULIA  
Mona, are you with me?

MONA  
What the fuck do you want from me?

JULIA  
If both of us attack him at the  
same time, we can take him down.

MONA  
Don't be stupid.

JULIA  
Can you get up?

MONA  
I'm sick.

JULIA  
Will you try at least?

Mona attempts to get up, but collapses. Her hand lands on a  
used syringe.

She groans with pain as she pulls out the needle from her  
palm.

Julia stares at the syringe.

JULIA  
Can I have it?

Mona flashes her a look.

JULIA

Please.

MONA

You're one crazy bitch. I hope you know what you're doing.

Mona hands Julia the syringe. Julia hides it in her pocket. Both look up as they hear INTENSE KNOCKING on the main door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Igor rushes to the door. He looks all doped up.

IGOR

Hold your fucking horses!

He approaches the door and looks through the peephole.

IGOR

What do you need, Eli?

ELI (O.S.)

I need to talk to you.

IGOR

I'm listening.

ELI (O.S.)

Can you open the door?

IGOR

I'm busy.

ELI (O.S.)

Please.

Igor opens the door. He fakes a smile.

IGOR

Hey, what a surprise, buddy. I heard about your little accident. Glad to see you're all right.

ELI

Thanks.

IGOR

Well, you should take it easy this time. Anyway, I don't have any stuff for you right now, so come back some other time. And make sure you call me first, okay?

As Igor goes to close the door, Eli catches it.

ELI

Wait, I'm looking for Julia. Have you seen her?

IGOR

Nope.

ELI

She won't return my calls.

IGOR

Maybe she doesn't wanna see you. She probably needs a break from your pathetic ass.

ELI

She's missing. No one has seen her.

IGOR

I'm sure she's all right.

MUFFLED SCREAMS come from the basement.

IGOR

Listen buddy, right now, I'm busy. I'll let you know if I hear from her, okay? Gotta go.

JULIA (O.S.)

Help!

ELI

Julia?!

As Igor is about to shut the door, Eli pushes him aside and rushes into the house.

IGOR

Hey!

ELI  
Julia?!

JULIA (O.S.)  
I'm here!

Igor creeps behind Eli. BOOM! He hits Eli in the head with a wooden bat, knocking him out cold.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The door CREAKS open.

Julia's face shows a look of shock as she sees Igor descending the stairs, dragging Eli down to the basement.

Eli is unconscious. His wrists and ankles are tied together and his mouth is covered with duct tape.

IGOR  
Julia, darling. You have a visitor.

JULIA  
Eli!

IGOR  
I'm afraid your Romeo can't answer you at the moment.

JULIA  
What have you done to him?!

IGOR  
Me? Your boy has no manners.

Eli moans as he slowly regains consciousness.

IGOR  
Hello there, buddy.

Igor sucker-punches Eli in the stomach. Eli groans.

JULIA  
Stop it!

IGOR  
I'm afraid I can't help myself.  
Sorry.

Igor kicks Eli again.

JULIA  
You have to let him go!

IGOR  
You think?

JULIA  
They'll be looking for him!

IGOR  
You're so smart. That's why I  
always liked you. Maybe I should  
get rid of him as soon as  
possible.

JULIA  
Let him go. Please. I'll do  
anything you want!

IGOR  
Anything?

He bursts into laughter.

IGOR  
Julia, darling. You'll do anything  
I want regardless.

JULIA  
That's not what you want.

IGOR  
Oh, you'll be surprised.

JULIA  
I don't believe you.

IGOR  
You don't have to.

JULIA  
I'll slam, Igor--

IGOR  
So?

JULIA  
I'm willing to give us a try.

IGOR

What a desperate attempt to save  
your loser boyfriend.

JULIA

He's not my boyfriend. We broke  
up.

IGOR

And you have the nerve to call me  
a liar?

JULIA

I don't give a fuck about him.  
Do whatever you want. Just don't  
do it in front of me.

IGOR

Wow! Julia, darling. You're full  
of surprises.

He glances at Eli, whose eyes well with tears.

IGOR

Ouch! It seems like the honeymoon  
is over.

JULIA

Please, take him upstairs.  
Anywhere. Out of my sight.

IGOR

All right!

Julia points at Mona, who is curled up in the corner of the  
cage, shivering.

JULIA

What about her?

IGOR

Well, I can't believe she's still  
around.

MONA

Baby, what are you doing? I love  
you.

IGOR

If you love me, why didn't you  
die?

Mona breaks down into tears.

JULIA  
Get rid of her, Igor.

Igor flashes Julia an approving smile and nods.

IGOR  
That's my girl.

Igor unlocks the cage and enters. Mona shrinks into a corner as he approaches her.

MONA  
Igor, please. Why are you doing  
this to me?

IGOR  
I'm sorry, Mona. And thank you so  
much for two wonderful years.

MONA  
Baby--

IGOR  
It would be easier for both of us  
if you close your eyes.

Igor pulls out a knife from his pocket.

MONA  
Oh, God!

JULIA  
Wait!

Igor looks at Julia.

JULIA  
Before you do it, I want you to  
slam me.

IGOR  
Julia, darling. One thing at a  
time.

JULIA  
No. If you're doing it in front of  
me, I need to be high.

IGOR  
Why do you always have to be so  
fucking high-maintenance?

JULIA  
Please.

IGOR  
Fine.

He looks into his pocket and takes out the syringe.

IGOR  
Fetch--

JULIA  
Wait. I want you to slam me.

IGOR  
C'mon!

JULIA  
We need to build that connection  
between us. It's important.

She extends her left arm and waits.

JULIA  
Please.

IGOR  
Well, if you insist.

Igor returns the knife to his pocket. He approaches Julia  
and takes her hand.

IGOR  
Make a fist, baby.

Julia makes a fist. Igor searches for the vein and places  
the needle to her arm.

IGOR  
Are you ready?

Julia nods and slips the syringe out of her pocket.

JULIA  
Hey.

IGOR

What?

JULIA

When you do it, I want you to look  
me in the eyes.

IGOR

Okay.

The moment he looks up, Julia stabs him in the eye with the  
syringe.

A HEART-WRENCHING SCREAM. Igor stumbles back in agony. A  
fountain of blood spurts out of his eye.

Julia takes off. Igor charges after her, tackles her from  
behind, and takes her down.

IGOR

You fucking cocksucker, you're  
dead! Dead!

He gets on top of Julia.

JULIA

Help!

IGOR

Shut up!

Igor chokes her. Julia gasps and pants as she struggles to  
release herself from Igor's grip. He squeezes her with more  
force.

Julia's face turns red. As she's about to black out--

WHACK!

Someone smashes Igor in the face with the plate of cold  
omelette. Igor whirls around. It's Mona.

IGOR

Goddamn, you little cunt!

Igor pulls out the knife from his pocket. Mona steps back.  
Too late.

Igor stabs her in the chest. Mona cries out and crashes to  
the floor.

Julia leaps to her feet. As Igor turns around, she gives him a full force kick in the crotch.

Igor drops the knife and squeals in agony, doubling over in pain. Julia picks up the knife from the floor, then grabs Mona by her elbow.

JULIA  
Hurry up, Mona. Get up!

She helps Mona to her feet.

JULIA  
Let's go!

As they are about to get out of the cage, Igor grabs Julia by her foot. She turns around and stabs the knife through his hand, pinning him to the floor.

Igor howls with pain. Julia steps out of the cage and slams the door in his face.

IGOR  
Julia, darling--

JULIA  
Shut up!

Julia locks the cage. Then, she takes a look at Mona, who is on the floor, bleeding profusely.

MONA  
I don't think I'm gonna make it.

JULIA  
You'll be okay, Mona. I'll get you out of here.

She runs to Eli in the other corner of the basement and starts releasing him from the ropes.

Mona looks at Igor. Groaning in pain, Igor pulls the knife out of his palm.

MONA  
Pain is a blessing. It cleanses the soul.

IGOR  
Mona, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you.

MONA  
It's all good.

IGOR  
I know I fucked it up, baby, but I  
still love you.

Mona is silent.

IGOR  
Can you please give me another  
chance?

He points to a jacket on top of a chair within Mona's  
reach.

IGOR  
Mona, please. Throw me the keys.

Mona ponders for a few moments, then she reaches for the  
jacket and looks into the pockets.

She takes out the keys and a torch lighter. Igor shoots her  
a desperate look.

IGOR  
Keys. Hurry!

Mona drops the keys and flicks the lighter. It shoots a  
huge flame outward.

MONA  
The shadows... They want you.

IGOR  
Mona, what are you doing?!

MONA  
Good-bye.

Igor's eyes widen as Mona sets a bag of fertilizer on fire.

IGOR  
No!

Julia turns around.

JULIA  
Mona! What the fuck?! Stop!

Eli takes off his jacket and runs with it.

He reaches the bag of fertilizer and tries to pat out the flames. The damage is done.

Within seconds, fire spreads throughout the cellar, reaching stacks of plastic bottles with vibrant chemicals. They go up in flames.

Soon, the entire basement is ablaze.

Igor screams in terror as flames approach him.

IGOR

Help!

Suddenly, his clothes catch fire, then his entire body. He rolls around in agonizing pain, trying to pat out the flames.

IGOR

Help me!

Julia is shocked as she watches Igor being devoured by fire. There's nothing she can do.

Thick smoke fills the basement. Julia coughs.

ELI

We have to go!

Julia nods. Eli and Julia grab Mona by her arms and guide her up the stairs.

Eli lifts the hatch.

As they're about to leave the basement, Julia looks down and sees Igor on the verge of death, surrounded by shadowy figures.

As Igor dies, the basement ceiling begins to collapse.

EXT. IGOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is engulfed in flames. Thick smoke pours from the windows.

Julia and Eli run outside, carrying Mona.

They reach Eli's car. Eli looks into his pockets, searching for the keys.

ELI  
Shit! I must've dropped the keys  
in the basement.

JULIA  
Are you fucking kidding me?

Eli looks around and spots an old bicycle on the porch.

ELI  
There's a gas station down the  
road. I'll get some help.

JULIA  
Hurry!

Eli mounts the bicycle and pedals away.

Julia glances at Mona, who is covered in blood. She looks weak.

MONA  
I guess that's it.

JULIA  
You'll be okay, Mona. We'll take  
you to the hospital.

She rips off her blouse and ties it around Mona's wound.  
Mona's eyes become watery.

MONA  
I'm scared!

JULIA  
Mona, shhh. Relax.

MONA  
Oh, God! The horrible things I've  
done.

JULIA  
It's okay. Calm down.

MONA  
I cared about you and your little  
sister as if you were my own  
sisters. I loved you guys.

JULIA  
I know. Why did you leave?

MONA

I was going through rough times. I needed cash.

(a beat)

Oh, God! Why did you have to be there? Why didn't you run out?

JULIA

What are you talking about?

MONA

I opened the door for you, but you wouldn't leave!

JULIA

When?

MONA

That night. It was me. I started the fire.

The whole world stops. Julia, speechless, rage filling her every core.

JULIA

I don't believe you.

MONA

I'm sorry.

JULIA

Why?!

MONA

I don't know how to tell you this. It was her idea.

JULIA

Who?

MONA

Your mother. She wanted to collect the insurance.

JULIA

Shut up! You're a liar!

MONA

She knew about my situation. She promised she would take care of me.

JULIA  
How much did she pay you?!

MONA  
Seven hundred.

JULIA  
Is that how much my sister's life  
was worth to you?!

Mona looks away.

JULIA  
Answer me!

MONA  
I'm so sorry.

JULIA  
You murderer!

She puts her hands around Mona's throat, about to choke her.

MONA  
Do it. I deserve it.

Julia restrains herself and breaks into tears.

MONA  
I wanted to open the door for her,  
but you wouldn't leave.

JULIA  
How could you do such a horrible  
thing?

MONA  
I'm sorry. I hope some day you'll  
forgive me.

Julia grabs Mona's head and tilts it toward the burning house.

JULIA  
You see that? That's where you're  
going.

Mona's eyes express horror. A few seconds later, they become still.

Julia gets up. As she stares at the burning house, millions of thoughts run through her head.

Her eyes fill up with a storm of emotions. She screams.

Around the collapsing roof, a swarm of moths flies in circles and dives into the fire.

INT. ELI'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Late morning sun shines in through the windows.

Julia wakes up. For a few moments, she stares at the ceiling, then leaps out of bed and approaches the window.

She pulls the curtains open and gazes out. It's windy.

INT. ELI'S CAR - DAY

Two cups of coffee stand secured in the cup holders. Eli navigates his car through the heavy traffic.

Julia, in the passenger seat, stares out the window.

ELI

Hey.

Julia doesn't respond.

ELI

Your coffee's getting cold.

Silence.

ELI

You shouldn't believe everything that deranged woman said.

JULIA

You don't know Beverly.

ELI

So what are you gonna do?

JULIA

Can you call Frank?

ELI

Why?

EXT. COUNTY ARCHIVES - DAY

Eli pulls his car over and HONKS. His uncle Frank, a cop, waves at Julia and Eli as they step out of the car.

FRANK  
You're late.

ELI  
Sorry, Uncle.

FRANK  
Hurry up! I've got other things to do.

ELI  
Here, I got you some coffee.

Eli hands Frank Julia's cup of coffee. Frank takes a sip.

FRANK  
Shit, idiot. This is cold.

ELI  
You're welcome.

They all head toward the entrance.

JULIA  
Frank, thank you.

FRANK  
Oh, shut up.

INT. COUNTY ARCHIVES - DAY

The maze of narrow corridors is surrounded by cabinets containing thousands of files.

Julia and Eli wait at the front desk. Frank sits on the bench, sipping cold coffee.

A middle-aged CLERK approaches Julia and hands her a thick folder.

CLERK  
I think this is what you've been looking for.

JULIA

Thanks.

Julia opens the folder and looks through the insurance records. Her face turns pale.

ELI

Baby, are you okay?

Julia doesn't answer.

INT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Beverly steps out of the shower, humming. She puts on her robe and wraps her hair with a towel.

Then she opens the bathroom cabinet and takes out the bottle of Oxycontin, pops the lid, and tosses two pills into her mouth.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Beverly enters. She is startled when she sees Julia sitting on her bed.

BEVERLY

Oh, my God! What are you doing here?

No response.

BEVERLY

How did you get in here?

JULIA

Through the door.

Beverly laughs.

BEVERLY

Of course! I assume it's time for me to change the locks.

JULIA

That will be the least of your concerns.

BEVERLY

Sweetheart, what're you doing here? Are you here to start a fight?

JULIA

Do you ever miss Natalie?

BEVERLY

Julia, are you high?

JULIA

Tell me again, Mother, where were you on the night of the fire?

BEVERLY

Oh, God! Not again.

JULIA

Why not?

BEVERLY

We've already gone through this. Move on.

JULIA

She was my little sister. I can never move on.

BEVERLY

Well, there's nothing I can do.

JULIA

You can confess.

BEVERLY

To what?

JULIA

You killed her!

Beverly attempts to slap Julia. Julia grabs her hand.

JULIA

Don't.

BEVERLY

How could you say such a cruel thing? You've no idea what it is to lose a child!

JULIA

How much money did you collect?  
Was it worth killing your own  
flesh and blood?

BEVERLY

Are you out of your mind? Get out  
of here!

JULIA

I'm going to the authorities.

BEVERLY

And tell them what?!

Julia indicates the folder in her hand.

JULIA

That you have quite a history  
collecting insurance.

Julia walks to the door. Beverly blocks it.

BEVERLY

Julia, you're being ridiculous.  
All these accusations. Why are you  
doing this to me?

JULIA

Move.

BEVERLY

How could you possibly have such a  
tremendous hatred in your heart  
toward your own mother? What have  
I done to deserve this?

JULIA

Beverly Carpenter, you killed your  
own daughter. I'll do everything  
to make sure you spend the rest of  
your life in jail.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

As Julia starts down the stairs, Beverly comes out of her  
room with a rifle.

BEVERLY

Julia! Stop!

Julia ignores her. Beverly points the rifle at Julia.

BEVERLY

Don't move!

Julia turns around. A long pause.

BEVERLY

Why did you have to come here?  
To blow your little brains out,  
why did you have to come to my  
house? You could've done it  
anywhere.

JULIA

No one will ever believe you.

BEVERLY

A meth head committing suicide?  
Sounds plausible.

JULIA

What are you waiting for?

BEVERLY

Oh, Julia. You think I'm a liar, a  
monster. But that night, when I  
learned you survived, I was so  
happy. I really hoped we would get  
along. I guess I was wrong.

Beverly pulls the trigger. CLICK.

Surprised, she pulls it again. CLICK. An awkward moment.

Julia reaches into her pockets and takes out a bunch of  
bullets.

JULIA

Do you need these?

Julia tosses the bullets down the staircase.

Beverly's face reddens with fury. Swinging the rifle, she  
charges towards Julia. As she attempts to strike her, Julia  
dodges.

Beverly tries again. Julia grabs the rifle. They struggle.

JULIA

Mother, stop. It's over.

BEVERLY

Let it go!

Beverly pulls the rifle out of Julia's hands, but as a result, she loses her balance.

She screams as she slips on the bullets and tumbles down the stairs. It is a long, painful fall.

Finally, she lands at the bottom of the stairs, breaking her neck.

Silence. Julia looks down. Her eyes widen in disbelief. Beverly is dead.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The sky is sapphire on a crisp autumn day.

Julia washes Natalie's tomb. Suddenly, a blue jay lands on the tombstone.

Julia freezes. She watches the bird ruffle its feathers. Then, it flies away. Julia's eyes well with tears.

INT. BEVERLY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A packed suitcase stands on the coffee table.

MATTHEW, 36, a real estate agent, watches Julia signing the deed to the house.

MATTHEW

Well, I guess that's it.

He hands Julia a check. She passes him the papers.

MATTHEW

So, what are you gonna do with all that money?

JULIA

I'm moving to Cali with my boyfriend.

MATTHEW

Good luck.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

The trunk of Maira's SUV opens. As Julia and Maira hurriedly take out two heavy suitcases, an IMPATIENT DRIVER behind them HONKS.

IMPATIENT DRIVER  
Hey, you! Keep moving!

Maira looks at Hector, who is inside the car.

MAIRA  
Mijo, close your ears.

Hector covers his ears.

MAIRA  
(to driver)  
What's your fucking problem,  
asshole?

Driver goes silent. Maira SHUTS the trunk.

MAIRA  
Okay, Hector. You can uncover your  
ears now. Do you wanna say bye to  
Julia?

HECTOR  
Bye, Julia.

JULIA  
Bye, Hector.

He blows her an air kiss. Julia smiles.

JULIA  
Maira, thank you. I'll never  
forget what you've done for me.

MAIRA  
Shut up.

They hug.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Hurried passengers flock from a crowded departure area into the gates.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
 Last call for passengers to flight  
 four twenty-five from New York La  
 Guardia to LAX. Last call!

Concerned, Julia looks around and dials a number on her cell phone. She hears LONG BEEPS followed by an answering machine.

ELI (O.S.)  
 Hey, you reached Eli. I'm not  
 available at the moment. Leave a  
 message after the beep.

JULIA  
 (into phone)  
 Eli, where the fuck are you? Call  
 me!

Frustrated, she hangs up.

A female FLIGHT ATTENDANT waves at Julia.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
 Miss, are you coming?

JULIA  
 When is the next flight?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
 In four hours.

JULIA  
 Thanks.

Julia rushes to the exit.

EXT. ELI'S HOUSE - DAY

The sky is pregnant with a storm. Trees sway in the wind.

Julia gets out of a yellow cab.

JULIA  
 Sir, can you please wait? I'll be  
 right back.

The DRIVER nods.

Julia rushes to the front door and RINGS the buzzer.

No response.

She BANGS on the door.

JULIA

Eli!

Again, no response. She walks around the side of the house.

EXT. ELI'S HOUSE - REAR - CONTINUOUS

Julia approaches the back door. It's unlocked. She opens it.

INT. ELI'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

LOUD METAL MUSIC comes from the basement. Julia descends the stairs and enters the--

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Julia goes through complex emotions as she sees Eli crushed on the sofa, meth pipe in his hand.

JULIA

Eli.

Eli jumps up, startled.

ELI

What are you doing here?

Julia doesn't answer. Her eyes well with tears.

ELI

Please, don't cry.

JULIA

Why are you doing this?

ELI

I'm sorry.

JULIA

Get up! Let's go.

Eli hesitates.

Julia attempts to grab the pipe from his hand. He resists.

ELI  
What are you doing? Stop!

JULIA  
What is wrong with you?!

Eli doesn't answer, looks away.

JULIA  
Baby, listen. It's all right.  
We'll get through this. Let's go.

ELI  
I don't know.

JULIA  
We need to leave. Please, come  
with me.

Eli doesn't answer.

JULIA  
Eli?

ELI  
I can't.

JULIA  
I love you!

ELI  
I love you, too, but what are we  
gonna do in L.A.?

JULIA  
What are we gonna do here? Get  
high? Come with me.

ELI  
I can't.

JULIA  
Please.

ELI  
Why don't you stay with me?

Julia ponders.

ELI  
Baby, sit down. Relax.

Julia sits.

Eli lights the meth pipe and takes a hit. Julia watches him blow out a huge cloud of smoke.

He offers Julia the pipe.

ELI  
You want some?

She doesn't answer. A long silence as they stare at each other.

Julia gets up and heads to the stairs.

ELI  
Julia!

She ignores him and leaves.

Eli's eyes well with tears. He gets up, about to follow her, but changes his mind.

He walks back to the sofa, grabs the meth pipe from the coffee table, and lights it. Takes a big hit.

Behind him, in the dark corner of the room, stands a SHADOWY FIGURE watching him.

EXT. ELI'S HOUSE - DAY

As Julia walks out of the house, THUNDER CLAPS, followed by a sudden downpour of heavy rain.

She stops and lifts her head. No tears, no sadness. Acceptance. Rain trickles down her hair and face.

A HONK.

CAB DRIVER (O.S.)  
Miss, are you coming?

Julia nods and gets into the cab.

The cab drives off, melting into the distance.

FADE OUT.