

Without Wings

When pure love is born at the right time, it can alter the course of your life.

Logline: Disturbing news about his childhood protector and close friend compels a young man on parole to risk his freedom and his life to save her.

Eight-year-old Will Nedeau's young life is changed forever when a fiery barefoot angel four years older than him—a girl from New Jersey named Christina ("Chris") Averly—fights off the three bullies attacking him with fierceness and ease.

Now at 26, burdened by the strained relationship with his father and the painful reminders of his failed life, Will longs for the hope and optimism Chris gave him during their youth. After learning she has been convicted of murder and locked away in a mental hospital, Will violates his parole by crossing the country to visit her. But seeing her isn't enough. In a desperate act, Will breaks into the hospital after hours, assaults a nurse and two guards, and takes Chris out of there.

In the aftermath of the breakout, Tavian Julius—a young FBI agent drawn to the case for personal reasons—volunteers to pursue Will and Christina across state lines. As he digs deeper into Christina's medical history, he uncovers the troubling methods used to sedate her, and learns about a medical condition she has that requires immediate treatment.

"A girl I used to know told me that good memories are like starlight. Even after the event that created them stops burning, you can still see the light for a long, long time."

After ten years apart and being heavily medicated nearly the whole time, Chris doesn't remember Will. What follows is a harrowing journey of two separated halves struggling to rejoin while evading capture. With Special Agent Tavian Julius and the police looking for them from coast to coast, Will and Chris stay on the move, fighting desperately for a chance at a normal life.

The peace and serenity they find at a remote cabin in Oregon ends far too quickly. With law enforcement tightening the noose around them, Will and Chris find themselves at the end of the road. The happy ending they fought so hard for leads to a painful decision to secure their freedom that will end one—or *both*—of their lives.

In the end, bittersweet acceptance comes from knowing that the actions we take and the memories we create are all we really have in this world.

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(ACT ONE ONLY)

D.E. Ladd

EXT. WOODS - DAY

YOUNG WILL NEDEAU (8) is running for his life, a heavy book bag weighing him down. Three boys, all about two years older, laugh and howl as they chase after him.

SUPER: WHITLEY, NORTH CAROLINA - 2005

Near a small hill, Will twists his ankle and goes down. The bullies surround him. The leader, TONY MATAYA (10), closes in. His henchmen, PAUL and NATHAN (also 10), follow.

Tony grabs Will's shirt.

TONY

You don't run from me. Ever!

PAUL

Yeah, you little bastard.

Nathan laughs.

NATHAN

How'd that work out for ya?

Tony crouches down at the base of the hill, punches Will in the face. Paul eggs Tony on while Nathan dumps out Will's pack, laughing. Tony draws back to hit Will again and--

The bare foot of YOUNG Christina "CHRIS" AVERLY (12), long legged with wild dark hair, kicks him in the face. Tony falls onto a rotting stump. He jumps up, swatting at fire ants.

YOUNG CHRIS

(Jersey accent)

You little fuckahs feel like
fightin'? C'meah, ya little shit!

Chris jumps down from the small ridge, grabs Nathan by the shirt. Paul runs off.

NATHAN

I... I wasn't doing anything--

YOUNG CHRIS

I fuckin' saw you!

Chris punches Nathan in the face three times, knocking him to the ground. Tony tries to escape. Chris closes the gap, kicks his feet out from under him.

She sits on Tony's chest, punches him in the face four times before letting him up. Tony staggers to his feet, lumbers off clutching his bleeding face, bawling like an infant.

Chris returns to Will.

YOUNG CHRIS
You okay, kid?

Will stares up at Chris, his mouth agape. All he can do is nod. Chris crouches down. Will notices a--

Silver heart-shaped key on a leather cord around her neck.

YOUNG CHRIS
That ankle looks pretty bad. Can you walk on it?

Will tries to stand, winces and hisses in pain.

YOUNG WILL
I don't think so.

Chris takes a few moments to stuff Will's books back into his bag, slings it over one shoulder. She puts Will's arm around her other shoulder, helps him up.

YOUNG CHRIS
C'mon. Here we go...

They start out of the woods. As Chris helps Will along, he turns his face into her wild dark hair, looks at her with awestruck wonder.

YOUNG WILL
Who... Who are you?

Chris turns to smile at him.

YOUNG CHRIS
I'm Christina. You can call me Chris. What's your name?

Before Will can respond--

HANK (V.O.)
Will? Will, where you at?

EXT. NEDEAU GARAGE, BACK - DAY

WILL NEDEAU (mid-20s), scuffed-up but handsome, is standing behind the garage, looking over a graveyard of junk cars. One of the cars is a banged-up green 1970 Monte Carlo.

SUPER: COTTAGE GROVE, OREGON - 2023

HANK (O.S.)

Will?

Will turns to see his father, HANK NEDEAU (60s), shuffle out of the garage bay. The leathery old man stops a few yards away, bumps up his tattered ball cap.

HANK

Your appointment's in half an hour.

He nods at something hanging around Will's neck -- the heart-shaped key Chris was wearing, now on a silver chain.

HANK

What've you got there?

Will glances down, tucks the key into his shirt.

WILL

Nothin'.

They share a tense look in silence.

HANK

Don't let Emma catch you with that.
You know how she gets.

Will looks guilty. Hank starts to leave, pauses.

HANK

Man's gotta know when to leave the
past behind. You hear me?

Will nods in response, but his tone lacks conviction.

WILL

Yeah, Pop. I hear ya.

HANK

I know it ain't easy, keepin'
everything straight. But you uh...
you got a good job here. Workin'
for a smart, handsome guy...

Will's mouth twitches into a smile. He almost laughs.

HANK

You got a woman at home who loves
you. Got a shot at a normal life.
Couple more weeks you won't have to
put up with Hossley's shit anymore.

Will's partial smile drops at hearing the name "Hossley".

Hank turns and shuffles back to the garage.

HANK

You should get goin'. Don't wanna
be late.

EXT. NEDEAU'S GARAGE, FRONT - DAY

Will strides up to a small beat-up white truck, hops in. He turns the key. Engine turns over but won't start.

WILL

Come on, you piece'a shit...

He tries again, no luck. He hops out, opens the hood...

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

A sad cluster of six businesses in a row. The small truck pulls up, parks two spaces away from a newish flame-red Mustang. Will exits the truck, hurries up to--

INT. DARREN HOSSLEY'S OFFICE - DAY

DARREN HOSSLEY (30s), a sturdy former Marine, is sitting at a desk with his feet propped up. Military awards decorate the wall behind him. Will quietly enters the office in the b.g.

HOSSLEY

(into phone)

No, she just turned nineteen. I
don't care if she's a little
chubby, I can work with that.

(sees Will)

I gotta go: a stray dog just
wandered in. Talk to ya later.

Hossley ends the call, sizes Will up, checks his watch.

HOSSLEY

You're two minutes late. You park
that shit box near my car?

WILL

No.

HOSSLEY

You better not have.

Hossley stands, walks over to circle Will, looking him over. He shakes his head.

HOSSLEY

It's so fucking sad. What are you, twenty-six now? Shit, I was a staff sergeant at your age.

He sits on the edge of his desk, crosses his arms.

HOSSLEY

Had one guy come through here a few years back. Had less than a month left and stole a burrito. Knocked an old lady down on his way out, put her in a coma. Got himself another ten years.

Hossley stands tall again, leans close to Will.

HOSSLEY

You got what, a couple weeks left? I'll bet you my car out there you don't make it.

He extends his meaty hand at Will, who stares straight ahead.

HOSSLEY

I'm not playing around. My car says you screw up before you finish parole. Shake on it. Go ahead.

Will keeps staring straight ahead, doesn't move. Hossley points close to Will's face, making him flinch.

HOSSLEY

See that's how I know you're gonna fail. Don't even have enough confidence to bet on yourself.

He returns to his desk, sits down, opens a folder.

HOSSLEY

You taken any drugs or alcohol? Assaulted any more cops lately?

WILL

No. I'm still clean.

HOSSLEY

How's work going? You showing up on time? You steal anything? What's going on over there?

Will remains rigid as a statue.

WILL

Work is going well. I show up on time. I don't steal.

HOSSLEY

Your dad's a fuckin' saint. Or a moron like you, can't tell which.

He stares at Will for bit, laughs and shakes his head.

HOSSLEY

Get the fuck outta here. You're stinkin' up my office.

EXT. DARREN HOSSLEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Will steps out, strides toward his truck. Hossley steps outside, watches him with a twisted grin.

INT. BEAT-UP SERVICE TRUCK (PARKED) - DAY

Will hops in, turns the key. Truck turns over, won't start.

WILL

(small)

Come on. Not now.

Will pumps the gas, tries again. No good. He's hating life. He tries once more and--

OUTSIDE HOSSLEY'S OFFICE

The rattling engine fires up. A thick cloud of blackish-gray smoke wafts over Hossley's Mustang, through his open window.

Hossley's grin falls as the smoking truck backs away.

HOSSLEY

Hey!

INT. BEAT-UP SERVICE TRUCK (MOVING) - DAY

Will pretends not to hear Hossley, shifts into drive. He races out of the parking lot onto the main street.

He checks his mirror, smiles faintly at his small victory.

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

The small white truck rolls up the dead-end street, parks on the road by a lemon-yellow double-wide trailer. A white Honda is parked in the driveway, its trunk open.

EMMA TATE (mid-20s), blonde hair, blue hospital scrubs, lifts a bag of groceries out of the trunk, waves at Will.

EMMA (V.O.)
This cute little old lady came in today, said she had kidney pain.

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Side by side at the counter, Emma and Will prepare dinner. Will peels carrots while Emma cuts up raw chicken.

EMMA
I asked her where it hurt and she points at her lower rib cage.

She laughs. Will chuckles along with her.

WILL
Well, at least the pain wasn't in her ass.

EMMA
Shut up. You're a pain in the ass. It's your turn to do the onions.

Will groans, opens a cupboard, bends down to reach inside.

EMMA
How did it go today?

WILL
Same as always. How many onions?

EMMA
Just a small one. Two more weeks and you'll be done for good.

Will straightens up with the onion, closes the cupboard.

WILL
Can't fuckin' wait. You wanna go to the lake this week? Get outta town for a little bit?

Emma is staring at Will's neck. She points her knife at it.

EMMA

What's that?

Will looks down. Fuck. He forgot to take off the necklace.

WILL

Oh. Nothing, it's just uh--

He reaches for it. Emma is faster. She grabs the necklace, yanks it off him with a little snap of the chain.

EMMA

What the fuck is this, Will?

She holds it up, the heart-shaped key dangling. Will looks guilty, says nothing.

EMMA

I've told you three times now to keep this fucking thing in a box. And here it is. Again.

WILL

I know. I was just...

EMMA

You were just what? Feeling nostalgic about...

Emma's voice hitches a little.

EMMA

The psycho chick who got you locked up and then bailed on you?

WILL

It's not like that, I just--

Emma picks up a porcelain spoon rest, hurls it at him. Will ducks. Spoon rest shatters against the wall behind him.

EMMA

Shut the fuck up! Jesus, Will. What the hell do I have to do?

She steps over to the sink, flips a switch. The garbage disposal hums to life. She holds the key over the sink.

EMMA

If I dropped this, would you lose your hand trying to get it back?

Will stares at the key dangling from the chain. As Emma starts to lower it into the disposal--

WILL
It's not about her.

Emma hesitates, waits for him to go on.

WILL
I was a scared little kid once,
always running away from something.
Never thought anyone would ever
help me... until someone did.

FLASHBACK - YOUNG WILL SAYS GOODBYE TO CHRIS

A packed-up car towing a moving trailer sits in the background. Chris holds the heart-shaped key out to a tearful Young Will. He takes the key, hugs her.

BACK TO SCENE

WILL
That key is all I have left.

He looks Emma in the eyes.

WILL
I keep it because... it reminds me
that hope is real.

Emma hesitates a bit longer, turns off the disposal. She steps closer to him.

EMMA
I'm your hope now, Will. You
understand? Me. But if you still
need this...

She holds out the key. Will reaches for it. Emma lets it drop to the floor between them.

EMMA
If I ever see it again, I'll make
it disappear. And I'll go with it.

Emma storms past him out of the kitchen. Will picks up the key on its broken chain, stares at it with a haunted look.

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Will lies in bed on his back. He turns his head to see Emma lying beside him, facing the wall on her side, miles away.

Will stares up at the ceiling, drifting back in time...

TEEN WILL (V.O.)
You should come out here sometime.

INT. TEEN WILL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Posters and keepsakes of scenic Oregon cover the walls. TEEN WILL (16) sits in front of a computer with a web cam.

TEEN WILL
I'll pay for your plane ticket.

On his monitor: Chris (now 20) forces out a smile.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Would if I could. Don't wanna leave
Nancy by herself, you know?

Will's hopeful expression wilts into a frown.

TEEN WILL
Is that fucker still harassing you?

CHRIS (V.O.)
Tony's the same coward he always
was. I can handle him, trust me.

Chris bites her lip, shakes her head. She looks pissed.

TEEN WILL
Don't do anything stupid. I got my
license now. I'll borrow one of my
dad's cars, drive out there.

Chris's angry look softens. She smiles at him.

CHRIS (V.O.)
That's very sweet, Willy. I don't
wanna pull you into this. Don't
worry about me, I'll be fine.

TEEN WILL
You talk to the police yet?

CHRIS (V.O.)
Fuck no. Tony's uncle is a cop.
They're not gonna do shit.

Will considers this, nods with resolve.

TEEN WILL
I'm comin' out there. Don't do
anything without me.

Chris shakes her head.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Willy, please don't. I'm serious.
Your dad will kill you.

BACK TO SCENE

Will is lying in bed with an angry defeated look. He rolls onto his side, facing away from Emma.

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Dressed in maroon scrubs, Emma prepares to leave for work. She opens the fridge, sets a small lunch cooler on the counter. Will watches her from a distance.

WILL
I'm sorry about yesterday.

EMMA
We'll talk about it later. I'm
running late again.

She steps outside, opens the mailbox, brings in a stack of mail. Tosses it on the table, points at it.

EMMA
Don't forget to pay the water bill.

She picks up a tote bag and her purse. Steps out and closes the door, leaving the lunch cooler on the counter.

Will pours himself a cup of coffee. He takes a sip, steps over to the table, looks at the stack of mail. Picks up a--

Letter: "Averly" is handwritten in the return address.

Will sets his coffee down, opens the letter. His expression sags into a look of shock and despair as he reads.

NANCY (V.O.)
Dear William. I'm Chris's aunt,
Nancy. You spent a lot of time with
my niece when you were a boy...

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY

Will paces about, wringing his hands. His gaze darts back and forth as he grapples with a tough decision.

NANCY (V.O.)

I am very sorry to have waited so long to bring you this terrible news. I hope you can forgive me.

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY

Will stands with his phone to his cheek.

WILL

(into phone)

Hey, Pop. It's me. Yeah, I'm not feelin' well. Won't be in today.

He opens a closet, tosses an empty duffel bag onto the bed.

NANCY (V.O.)

Ten years ago, Chris told you she was going back to New Jersey. She only did this to spare you the pain of knowing the truth.

WILL

(into phone)

I'll be in later on Monday. Yup.

Will ends the call, puts his phone down. He takes clothes from a drawer, stuffs them into the duffel bag.

NANCY (V.O.)

Chris was convicted of murder. She's been at Barrowsford ever since.

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE, SPARE ROOM - DAY

Will sits at a desk in front of an open laptop. On the--

Laptop screen: airline website, flight to North Carolina.

Will opens his wallet takes out a--

Business credit card: "Nedeau Auto Repair" marks the front.

Will types in the numbers.

NANCY (V.O.)

I hope you can forgive me. Please think of Chris now and then, and include her in your prayers.

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Will steps into the kitchen, duffel bag in hand to find--
Emma standing at the table... reading Nancy's letter.

WILL

Emma. What are you...

He notices the lunch cooler she forgot in her other hand. She looks at the bag in Will's hand, then up at him.

EMMA

What do you think you're doing?

Will grips his duffel bag, licks his lips.

WILL

I'm goin' back East. For a couple days. I'll be back before Monday--

EMMA

Have you lost your fucking mind? You're not allowed to leave the state. You're not going anywhere.

Will glances at his watch, moves toward the door.

WILL

I'll be back soon. I promise.

Emma drops her lunch cooler on the table.

EMMA

You're not doing this. You hear me?

She grabs his shirt, tries to shove him back. Will doesn't budge. Emma slaps his face, pummels his chest.

EMMA

You stupid fucking bastard!

She snatches up her lunch cooler, storms out of the house.

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

Will follows her outside. Emma gets in her car, starts it up. Tires squawk as she backs out, tears off down the street.

Will closes the door, hurries to his truck.

INT. EUGENE AIRPORT, BOARDING GATE - DAY

Will runs up to the gate as the gate attendant starts to close the door to the boarding ramp.

WILL

Wait! Don't close that door.

He hands over his ticket.

The sound of jet engines revving up leads to--

INT. AIRPLANE (AIRBORNE) - DAY

A sweaty Will is sitting in the middle seat between a man in a suit by the window, and a woman leaning away from him into the aisle. Will's eyes droop and slowly close...

Racing engines, wailing sirens. Tires squealing.

A car crashes and--

EXT. STATE HIGHWAY - NIGHT (DREAM/FLASHBACK)

Headlights shine on a green 1970 Monte Carlo, wrecked on the roadside. Steam pours out from under the hood. Teen Will staggers out into the flashing blue lights.

Shadows aiming guns move in. A STATE TROOPER (30s) closes in.

STATE TROOPER

Get down on the ground!

Teen Will fights the officers as he's taken down. A steady mechanical roar grows louder. Bright lights shine on his face, into his eyes and--

INT. AIRPLANE (AIRBORNE) - DAY

Will winces as sunlight flickers across his face. The roar of the jet's engines returns. He looks out the small window, at the fluffy white clouds racing by.

The faraway look in Will's eyes carries over to--

INT. RENTAL CAR (MOVING) - DAY

The late-afternoon sun hangs low in the sky. Will takes in his hometown with a haunted, hollow look. He slows down, makes a right turn into--

EXT. NANCY AVERLY'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - DAY

Will's green rental car pulls up to the old white hulk of a house: chipping paint, chalky windows. Potted plants hang off the porch. Will parks beside a small import.

EXT. NANCY AVERLY'S HOUSE, PORCH - DAY

Will climbs the steps leading to the front door with a stained-glass window. He knocks.

Inside, footsteps approach. The door opens. NANCY AVERLY (50s), gray-haired with a kind face, blinks at Will.

NANCY
Yes? Can I help you?

WILL
Hi, Nancy. I got your letter.

Nancy reacts with shock, lets out a small gasp. She opens her arms to Will, embraces him.

INT. NANCY AVERLY'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

The huge kitchen is homey and warm. Daylight is fading outside the tall windows. Will and Nancy are sitting at the table having coffee.

NANCY
I was in Florida visiting a friend when it happened. I never should have left her here alone. Tony had been harassing her for months leading up to it.

Nancy sips her coffee, stares off through the window.

NANCY
He left animal skins and bones on the porch, stuff like that. I never caught him, but I know it was him.

Will looks pale, troubled. Hesitates before asking--

WILL

How do they know... she killed him?

NANCY

Chris was convinced that Tony had raped a young girl in Centerville. Even though he had an alibi, she broke into his house, and...

She closes her eyes, shakes her head.

NANCY

A neighbor saw Chris leaving, called the police. They found Tony's body in the basement. Chris's DNA was everywhere.

She chokes back a sob.

NANCY

When she called me from jail... she sounded like she was twelve years old again. Kept saying she had to get out. Worst day of my life.

WILL

I'm gonna go see her. Tomorrow.

Nancy shakes her head, sniffles.

NANCY

She stopped talking three years ago. I used to visit her almost every day but... she won't see any visitors. Not even me.

Will blinks at her in shock. Nancy wipes her eyes.

NANCY

She's not well. Physically or mentally. They've been trying to help her, but...

She pushes her chair away from the table.

NANCY

She always got depressed this time of year, ever since you moved away. She wanted you to have something.

She steps out of the kitchen, leaving Will to try and catch his breath. His hands are shaking.

Nancy returns with a colorful book, hands it to him.

NANCY

She wanted me to send this to you,
but... I didn't know how to
explain. I'm sorry, Will.

Chris's diary: a smiling sun on the cover, a sleeping
crescent moon on the back, and a lock holding it closed.

Will touches the key around his neck, takes it off. He
unlocks the book but doesn't open it. He locks it again.

WILL

I'm still gonna try and see her.
Maybe if they tell her it's me...

He gives Nancy a hopeful look. She forces a pained smile.

NANCY

Don't expect too much.

EXT. NANCY AVERLY'S HOUSE, PORCH - DAY

The late-afternoon sky burns hot-pink and orange. Will hugs
Nancy goodbye, turns away and descends the steps.

Nancy watches him, arms wrapped around herself. Worried.

EXT. FREE BIRD MOTEL - NIGHT

Typical roadside place. Sign has a neon bird flapping its
wings. Will's rental car pulls in, parks outside the office.

INT. FREE BIRD MOTEL, OFFICE - NIGHT

The MOTEL MANAGER (50s), pokes at a computer behind the desk.

MOTEL MANAGER

Seventy-nine even for the night.

Will takes out the business credit card, sets it down.

INT. FREE BIRD MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Will is sitting up in bed, Chris's locked diary and the key
lying beside him. He's staring through the TV light splashing
his face, at something in the distant past.

TEEN WILL (V.O.)
Are you even listening to me?

INT. JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Teen Will, in a beige jumpsuit, talks on the pay phone.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Of course I am. I'm just...

Chris sounds distracted. Scared. Rustling sounds fill the earpiece. Teen Will listens, puzzled and agitated.

TEEN WILL
What's going on? You sound upset.

CHRIS (V.O.)
It's nothing. I'm... going back to Jersey for a while, and--

TEEN WILL
I'm in jail right now and you're going back to Jersey? What the fuck? What about Nancy? I thought you were worried about--

CHRIS (V.O.)
I can't talk right now, Willy. Okay? I'll... try to get a hold of you later. I promise. I'm sorry.

The phone clicks. Will reacts with shock, then rage.

TEEN WILL
Hello? Hello! Fuck you!

He slams the receiver several times, nearly breaking it.

BACK TO SCENE

Will stares at the wall, TV light playing in his dark eyes.

On the TV: classic black-and-white film. A man and woman embrace. Dramatic music swells as they kiss passionately.

Will picks up the remote, turns off the TV.

INT. FREE BIRD MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Fully dressed, bag packed, Will stares down at his phone. He turns it on. Before he can duck out the door, it rings.

Phone screen: "DAD" flashes at him.

WILL
Ah, shit.

He hesitates a moment, taps the screen.

WILL
Hey, Pop.

HANK (V.O.)
Will. How ya feelin'?

WILL
Uh... A little better.

HANK (V.O.)
Uh-huh. Know what I can't figure?

Will closes his eyes, wincing at Hank's tone.

HANK (V.O.)
Why the hell my truck is in Eugene
at the goddamned airport!

WILL
Calm down. Let me say something--

HANK (V.O.)
Where the hell are you right now?

WILL
I'm heading back. I just want to
see her first. They locked her up--

HANK (V.O.)
They're gonna lock you up, dumb
ass. Get back here. Now. I'll be
waitin' for you.

The call ends. Will lowers the phone, tucks it away.

EXT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM - DAY

The rundown place sits on a few acres inside a rusty barbed-wire fence. It's unpleasant to even look at.

Will's car drives through the locked-open gate with a faded "Barrowsford" sign on it, past the empty guard shack.

NURSE KATIE (V.O.)
I'm sorry, Mr. Nedeau.

INT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, LOBBY - DAY

Broken chairs and gurneys litter the hallways, water spots from leaks in the ceiling stain the floors. NURSE KATIE (30s) is sitting at a computer behind the front desk.

NURSE KATIE
Miss Averly isn't seeing any
visitors at this time.

WILL
Yeah, I know. But I figured if she
knew it was me...

Nurse Katie moves her mouse around, clicks a few times.

NURSE KATIE
Dr. Leider is out all morning.
Might not be back until tomorrow.

Will visibly deflates on hearing this.

NURSE KATIE
If you want, I can...

A delivery man enters pushing a dolly stacked with boxes. He starts down the hallway.

NURSE KATIE
Ugh. They're supposed to use the
delivery entrance.

She gets up, hurries out of the office to catch the guy.

NURSE KATIE
Excuse me? Hi. Who are you with?

Will watches Nurse Katie direct the guy to follow her. He glances behind her desk. On the wall he sees--

A map: it shows patient initials and numbers.

Will looks around for witnesses. He takes out his phone, steps into the office area, snaps a picture of the map.

NURSE KATIE (O.S.)
Thank you, you too!

Will ducks back out of the office before Nurse Katie returns. He gives her a wave as he starts down the hallway.

WILL
Thanks for your help. I'll check
back later.

Nurse Katie offers a smile and a wave back.

INT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, HALLWAY - DAY

Will starts toward the exit... then ducks down a side hallway. He pauses in a doorway, looks down at his--

Phone screen: Will expands the photo. "C.M. Averly, B-301" shows on the basement level.

Will continues down the hallway past broken furniture and wheelchairs. He pauses at a short hallway to the right. A pair of doors are held together by a chain and a padlock.

A booming voice makes him jump.

GUARD #1 (O.S.)
Can't get out that way.

Will turns to face GUARD #1 (50s), a rugged older fellow wearing a revolver with reload pouches and pepper spray.

WILL
Isn't... that against fire codes?

GUARD #1
Used to be an automatic door. Had to chain the handles to keep the patients from wandering off. Can I help you find something?

WILL
Uh... no. I was just leaving. Got turned around.

Will forces a smile at the guard, who gives him a wary look.

EXT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM - DAY

Guard #1 escorts Will out of the building. Will gives him a wave. As Will heads back to his car, his expression darkens.

INT. WILL'S RENTAL CAR (PARKED) - DAY

Will gets in the car, stares at the building. He pounds the steering wheel in frustration. Then he notices--

An orderly standing outside by a back entrance, having a smoke. The door is propped open.

Will fixates on him, wheels turning in his head.

EXT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, BACK ENTRANCE - DAY

The orderly drops his cigarette, crushes it out. He opens the door, steps back into--

INT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, STAFF AREA - CONTINUOUS

Orderly ambles along heading back to work. He doesn't see--

The door remaining open a crack. Will's face appears in the small window. He opens the door, slips inside.

Will creeps farther in, stops beside a rack against the wall containing white orderly smocks wrapped in plastic.

INT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, BASEMENT - DAY

Dimly lit with ten or so rooms on each side. Will rounds the corner wearing one of the orderly smocks, looks around. No one there but him.

Will checks his phone, starts down the hallway, reading door tags as he goes. About halfway down he stops at--

Door tag: C.M. Averly - B-301.

He hesitates to look through the small window. When he does--

The white padding of the room comes into view. Will turns to the left and he sees--

INT. CHRIS'S PADDED CELL - DAY

Chris sits in the corner. Her hair is cut shorter. She stares off at nothing. One hand is propped up on her leg. Two of her fingers twitch slightly -- a feeble plea for help.

INT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, BASEMENT - DAY

Will stares at the fragile shell of his friend sitting inside the room. He rests a hand on the small window.

WILL

(low)

Chris?

He closes his eyes, rests his head against the door, starts to lose it. He tugs at the locked door handle in vain.

A heavy door closes nearby. Footsteps approach.

Will turns to listen. The basement door opens.

A stocky ORDERLY (30s) enters. Will turns away, heads for the opposite end of the basement. As he goes--

ORDERLY
Hey. Hey! Wait a second!

EXT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, BACK ENTRANCE - DAY

Will exits where he came in, tossing aside the orderly smock as he hurries back to his car. The Orderly exits behind him, picks up the discarded smock.

ORDERLY
Hey, you! Come back here!

Another orderly steps outside. And another...

Will gets in his car, starts it up and--

INT. WILL'S RENTAL CAR (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Will tears out of the parking lot, leaving the nightmarish place behind. His composure crumbles as he flees the scene.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Will looks like a plane crash survivor in shock as he shuffles through the terminal toward his gate. As he goes--

YOUNG CHRIS (V.O.)
You can't get upset every time I
talk to a boy.

FLASHBACK - NEIGHBORHOOD STREET

On the walk home from school. Young Will stands pouting on the sidewalk as Young Chris holds him by the shoulders.

YOUNG WILL
Ben is an asshole.

YOUNG CHRIS
Why do you even care? Listen to me,
Willy... I'm four years older than
you. That's a lot. One day, a girl
your age is gonna come along and
make all your dreams come true.

Young Will raises his chin, looks her in the eyes...

YOUNG WILL
I don't want anybody else.

Young Chris's smile drops. She has no response to this.

BACK TO SCENE

Will slowly approaches the ramp to board his plane. He stops ten feet from the female ATTENDANT (20s). He's the last person waiting to enter the jetway.

ATTENDANT
Sir? I need your ticket.

Will looks up. His broken expression hardens. He takes two steps back, turns around... and walks back the other way.

INT. AIRPORT VEHICLE RENTAL COUNTER - DAY

Will slaps the business credit card onto the counter. The MALE CLERK (20s) looks up, smiles.

MALE CLERK
Oh. Hello again. Back so soon?

WILL
Yeah. I need another car.

INT. BANK - DAY

Typical financial institution: marble counter, gaudy paintings, glass cubicles. Will approaches the FEMALE TELLER (30s) standing behind the counter.

FEMALE TELLER
What can I do for you today?

Will sets the business credit card on the counter.

WILL
I need a cash advance for a thousand dollars. Please.

Female Teller runs the card, looks up at Will.

FEMALE TELLER
The limit is set at seven-fifty.

WILL
That'll work.

INT. BANK LOBBY - DAY

As he's leaving, Will notices a rack with free newspapers and magazines. He grabs a copy of "Gun Trader" on his way out.

INT. WILL'S RENTAL CAR (PARKED) - DAY

Will flips through the Gun Trader magazine to a--
Listing page: ad for a ".357 Magnum, good condition."
Will takes out his phone, dials.

WILL
Hi, I'm calling about your ad...

INT. GUN WIDOW'S GARAGE - DAY

Daylight is fading fast. The garage door is open. Will's rental car sits in the b.g. He looks disappointed to be holding a .357 magnum... lever-action carbine.

WILL
I thought it was a handgun.

The GUN WIDOW (70s) shakes her head. A big black German Shepherd stands beside her, watching Will's every move.

GUN WIDOW
Sold all the handguns after the old
man's funeral. 'Cept this one...

She pulls back her shirt to show a vintage .45 model 1911 on her hip. She nods at the carbine in Will's hands.

GUN WIDOW
It's pretty banged up, but she
shoots like new and she'll fire any
.357 or .38 shells you feed her.

Will doesn't look thrilled. He nods, shrugs.

WILL
I'll take it.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE SUPER CENTER - NIGHT

Will pushes a cart down the aisles tossing items into it: nylon cable straps, a large, lock-blade knife, a small pair of bolt cutters, some gloves, duct tape.

He turns toward the grocery section.

GUNS AND AMMO COUNTER

Long guns and ammo fill locked glass cases. Will pushes his small cart up to the counter. A gallon of spring water and some food items sit on top. MALE CASHIER (50s) approaches.

WILL

Can I check out here?

MALE CASHIER

Sure. This gonna do it for ya?

Will points at the shelf behind his head.

WILL

Gimme two boxes of .357 Magnum.

INT. WILL'S RENTAL CAR (PARKED) - NIGHT

Sitting in an empty parking lot, Will finishes a sandwich and takes a swig of water. He snaps open the dome light cover. As he's removing the bulb, his phone rings.

Phone screen: the name "DAD" flashes.

Will lets out a heavy breath. He taps the screen, putting the call on speaker. Sets the phone on the dash.

WILL

Hey, Pop.

HANK (V.O.)

Where the hell are you? Been waitin' at the airport for two hours. Your plane just landed and you weren't on it!

Will glances at a bag on the seat beside him, open to show the cable straps, duct tape, and .357 shells inside.

WILL

I gotta stay for a while.

HANK (V.O.)
Stay for what? You wanna end up
back in prison? Maybe you forgot
what it was like in there.

A dark, pained look sweeps across Will's face.

WILL
No, I remember.

HANK (V.O.)
Emma told me about the letter.
Jesus, Will. You can't help her.

Will lays the rifle on his lap, opens a box of .357 shells.

HANK (V.O.)
I was only tryin' to set you
straight. Smarten you up a little.

Hank snatches in a breath, lets out a ragged sigh.

HANK (V.O.)
You kept gettin' in trouble, addin'
years to what was supposed to be...

WILL
What? A lesson? I needed to see
her. I pleaded with you, but you
didn't give a shit--

HANK (V.O.)
I didn't make you steal my car! I
didn't give you the booze or the
drugs that got you locked up half a
dozen times!

WILL
No, you just got me locked up that
one time. I was only sixteen.

Will scowls as he feeds rounds into the rifle.

WILL
You threw me to the wolves. Treated
me like a criminal. I'm here right
now because of you.

Will racks the lever on the rifle, chambering a round. Hank
sniffles on the other end. In a softer tone--

HANK (V.O.)
There's nothin' you can do for her,
Will. Come on home. Please.

WILL

I can't do that. Good-bye, Pop.

Will ends the call. He opens the door, raises the phone high, and smashes it on the pavement.

He closes the door, starts the car.

EXT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Only three cars occupy the lot. Headlights off, Will's rental car creeps toward the East wing of the building, parks in a patch of dark shadows.

EXT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, EAST WING EXIT - NIGHT

Will pushes at the doors to get at the chains. He removes the bolt cutters from his belt, snaps through them. He tries to push the doors open. They won't budge. He steps back and--

INT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, EAST WING - NIGHT

Will kicks at the doors. The right one swings wide, hits the wall, shattering its window. Will holds the rifle at the ready as he starts down the hall.

NURSE KATIE (O.S.)

What the hell was that?

Will backs against the wall, waits. He leans the rifle against the wall, opens the folding knife. The moment Nurse Katie rounds the corner--

Will grabs her, cups a hand over her mouth, muffling her scream. He holds up his knife, shows it to her.

WILL

Keep quiet and I won't hurt you.
Get on the floor, facedown. Do it.

Scared, Nurse Katie gets down on her stomach. Will binds her wrists and ankles with cable straps, rolls her onto her back.

WILL

How many guards?

NURSE KATIE

Two of them. Just two.

WILL

Don't lie to me. Are you sure?

NURSE KATIE

Yes. Only two.

Will tears off a strip of duct tape, covers her mouth. He takes the keys off her belt, drags her into a dark patch, picks up the rifle.

INT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Will is halfway down the dimly lit hallway when an OLDER GUARD, (60s) steps out of an adjoining room. Will aims the rifle and charges him.

WILL

Hands in the air! Do it now!

Older Guard does as he's told.

WILL

Turn around!

Older Guard turns around as Will closes in, shoves him in the back, knocking him to the floor.

WILL

Hands behind your back.

Will cinches Older Guard's wrists and ankles together.

OLDER GUARD

We-- we don't keep the keys to the drug cabinets--

WILL

Shut the fuck up. How many other guards?

OLDER GUARD

Just one other.

WILL

You lie to me I'll kill you.

OLDER GUARD

Just one more, I swear to God.

Will slaps a strip of tape over Older Guard's mouth, drags him into the dark. Will snatches the .38 revolver from Guard's holster, stuffs it in his waistband, moves on.

INT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Will makes a right, starts down another dim hallway. Before the midway point, a YOUNG GUARD (20s) calls out--

YOUNG GUARD (O.S.)
Tom? Did you hear a crash? Where
are you?

Will starts running toward the direction of the sound. Before he can close the gap, Young Guard rounds the corner.

Will aims the rifle at him.

WILL
Hands in the air! Now!

Young Guard reaches for his gun. Will closes in. Guard has trouble with the release strap. Will aims the rifle at him. The strap comes free. Guard draws his weapon--

Will brings the muzzle of the rifle down on Young Guard's forearm, knocking the pistol out of his hand, then bashes him in the face with the butt, knocking him to the floor.

WILL
The fuck is the matter with you?

Will kicks the gun away. He rolls the Young Guard over on his stomach, cinches his wrists and ankles.

WILL
Who else is here? Just you and the
nurse and the old man?

Young Guard nods, crying and bleeding. Will tapes his mouth shut, leaves him in the dark.

INT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, BASEMENT - NIGHT

Will emerges from the stairway, runs down the hall. He finds Chris's cell, examines the keys by holding them up to the light. He tries two of them before--

Click!

INT. CHRIS'S PADDED CELL - NIGHT

Will opens the door. Pale light falls on Chris's face. Her eyes open. She stares at the open doorway.

Will enters, leans the rifle against the wall by the door.

WILL

Chris? Can you hear me?

Chris doesn't move, doesn't blink, just keeps staring at the opened door. Will kneels beside her, gently touches her head.

WILL

Okay, come on. Here we go...

Will slides one arm under the fold of Chris's knees and the other behind her shoulders. He lifts her and walks to the door, grabbing the rifle on his way out.

EXT. BARROWSFORD SANITARIUM, EAST WING - NIGHT

As Will carries Chris to the car parked on the lawn, she squeezes his shoulder. Will stops, sets her on her feet. Chris's eyes flutter. Will looks at her, smiles.

WILL

Hey. It's me. Willy.

Chris closes her eyes, takes a deep breath of fresh air... and goes limp. Will opens the back door for her and--

An alarm sounds.

Will loads Chris into the back seat, buckles her in.

Floodlights paint the area. A roaring engine approaches. Blue lights flash. Sirens rip through the night. A police SUV closes in fast.

Will shuts the back door, ducks down as the SUV stops twenty feet away. Driver door flies open. The OFFICER (30s) draws his weapon, aims at Will's car.

OFFICER

Step out and show me your hands!

The sirens of at least three more police vehicles approach in the distance. Will looks around for a way out.

OFFICER

You got nowhere to go! Show me your hands! Now!

Will looks up at a--

Utility pole to his right: A large transformer is mounted to it, almost directly above and beside the SUV.

Will aims at the transformer, fires. An explosion showers the police SUV with sparks and knocks out the floodlights.

Debris hits the SUV, crushing the light bar. Will ejects the spent shell, aims and fires into the SUV's grill, killing the radiator. He fires again, taking out the headlights.

Officer curses and blindly returns fire in the dark.

Keeping low, Will ducks into the driver's seat, starts the car, and tears off into the darkness.

END OF SAMPLE