

THE ARSONIST'S LOVE STORY

by

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OVER BLACK:

The ZIP of a MATCH STRIKING against a metal surface. Then the SNAP of it catching and the CRACKLE of burning wood.

FADE IN:

EXT. LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART (LACMA) - NIGHT

AIDEN KINSLEY, 28, lights a cigarette dangling between his lips. He's handsome, mysterious, with piercing blue eyes that look like they always know something we don't.

He takes a long drag and exhales, peering down at his watch. 8:30. He leans against the wall and looks around, thoughtful.

INT. LACMA / HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Aiden walks through the halls of the museum until he enters-

INT. LACMA / PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT - CONTINUOUS

-Where some truly iconographic photographs stare back at us.

The workmen sitting on a beam above New York City. The plane plummeting into the Trade Towers of 9-11. The starving child trying to crawl towards safety, while a vulture waits behind.

And then, Aiden sees it. "BURNING MONK, THE SELF-IMMOLATION," taken by Malcolm Browne. A Buddhist Monk sits motionless underneath a blaze of fire.

Aiden steps closer to the image, his eyes scanning every detail. They narrow in on the flames as-

ART CURATOR (O.S.)
Aiden. Sorry I'm late.

Aiden looks up and offers a hand to the ART CURATOR.

AIDEN
Steve, nice to see you.

They shake. The Curator motions to the photograph.

ART CURATOR
Have you ever seen this one?

AIDEN
Not in person, no.

ART CURATOR
Hypnotising, isn't it?

Aiden looks at the photograph and nods, entranced.

AIDEN
Very powerful statement.

Aiden stares at the picture for a beat. Then, he snaps out of it and offers a friendly smile.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Should we get started?

INT. CURATOR'S OFFICE - LATER

The Curator examines an oil painting.

ART CURATOR
Well, the Trinity pieces are
stunning, but this one is too-

AIDEN
-Contemporary? I know. I promised
a client I'd get his work in front
of you if he signed with me.

ART CURATOR
Using my reputation again?

AIDEN
Only borrowing it.
(then)
The only thing to consider, Steve,
is that in ten years, this guy's
work is going to be classic. And
considering I'm only asking 500,000
now, when it's worth ten million
and you have enough funds to buy
yourself a new boat or whatever it
is you like to blow money on,
you'll be glad I was using you.

The Curator shakes his head, smiling despite himself.

ART CURATOR
Real subtle, Aiden.

AIDEN
If you're buying, I'm selling.

The Curator puts the painting down.

ART CURATOR
Let's talk numbers then, shall we?

INT. WHISKEY BAR - NIGHT

CLANG! A bartender slams a metal MIXER onto the counter of a BAR, where Aiden sits, a satisfied expression on his face.

ZIPPP! The Bartender places the flame of a Zippo against a drink and sets it on fire. He hands it over.

BARTENDER
Special occasion?

AIDEN
As always.

Aiden blows out the flame and downs the drink.

EXT. WHISKEY BAR / PATIO - MOMENTS LATER

Aiden enters the patio area of the bar, which is dimly lit and smoky. Hipster types sip mixed drinks and chat loudly. Aiden turns to see, on a small stage, singing jazz, is-

-MAYA ROSE, 22, beautiful, sensual, talented.

Aiden pauses. She's beautiful. Maya's attention drifts towards Aiden and they lock eyes.

CHEMISTRY. A long, intense beat of it.

Maya looks away, singing to someone else, and Aiden immediately finds a seat. He places his drink down and reaches for his cigarette.

Maya turns to look at him again. Aiden lifts a match towards his cigarette, his eyes staring fearlessly back at her.

She's challenged. Still strumming her guitar, she STANDS and walks down the stairs, heading DIRECTLY TOWARDS HIM.

Everyone's gaze follows as she stops in front of his table. Aiden is not phased. He looks up at her expectantly.

MAYA
You can't smoke here.

Not what he was anticipating. He eyes a smoking sign.

MAYA (CONT'D)
It lies. When I sing, no smoking.

Maya takes the cigarette from his hand. She brings it to her lips and takes a long drag. She blows the smoke slowly, sensually into his face.

And then with a smile, she DROPS it in his drink.

The Bar Members LAUGH with approval as Maya spins around, singing her way back up to the stage.

Aiden watches her go, completely and irreversibly captivated.

INT. WHISKEY BAR - LATER

Two mixed DRINKS are SNATCHED up off the counter.

Reveal KATE, 23 going on 50, face adorned with stylish but serious glasses. She hands Maya a drink.

MAYA
How was I?

KATE
Great. But I still hate jazz.

MAYA
Your loss.

KATE
Maya, look-

Kate motions behind Maya. She turns around to see Aiden walking right towards them. She rolls her eyes.

KATE (CONT'D)
What? He's cute.

MAYA
He's probably a pedophile.
(off Kate's look)
A large percentage of the pedophile population listens to jazz.

KATE
I rest my case.

AIDEN (O.S.)
Hope I'm not interrupting.

Maya turns around and leans against the bar to face Aiden.

MAYA
I'm not comping your drink.

AIDEN
What about a name, then?

MAYA
Can't. But this is my friend Kate.

Aiden takes her hand.

AIDEN
Kate, I'm Aiden Kinsley. Nice to
meet you.

Kate shakes it, amused. Aiden turns back to Maya.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Can I offer you a smoke?

MAYA
Look, I know that you probably
think because I did that whole "no
smoking in my bar" routine that we
have some sort of connection, but I
do that to a new guy every weekend.

A beat.

AIDEN
So can I offer you a smoke, then?

EXT. WHISKEY BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Aiden strikes a match on the zipper of his sweatshirt.

MAYA
Never outgrew playing with matches?

AIDEN
I value simplicity.

He lights his own cigarette. The smoke swirls into the sky. Maya watches Aiden for a beat, then blows smoke out between her lips and extends her hand.

MAYA
Maya Rose.

AIDEN
A name, that was easy. How about
my twelve dollar whiskey?

MAYA
Don't push it.

Aiden grins. They smoke in silence for a beat.

AIDEN

I come here a lot, I've never seen
you before.

MAYA

The testosterone in whiskey bars is
a little high for my taste.

AIDEN

Sounds like you love your work.

MAYA

It's a hell of a lot better than
subbing French at Belmont High.

(off his look)

My necessity for a day job must
shock you.

AIDEN

Pas vraiment, non.

MAYA

Ah, parle vous Francais?

AIDEN

Just enough to impress.

Maya smiles despite herself and takes a drag.

MAYA

And what do you do?

AIDEN

I'm an art dealer.

MAYA

So you leech off other people's
talent?

AIDEN

I like to surround myself with
beautiful things.

Maya rolls her eyes, then drops her cigarette on the ground.

MAYA

Right. Thanks for the smoke.

As she turns-

AIDEN

Do you always run away?

She whips around, suddenly vulnerable - stripped naked by pure fear.

MAYA

What're you talking about?

Aiden studies her. Interesting.

AIDEN

Hmmmm. That struck a nerve.

And then it's gone. Maya crosses her arms.

MAYA

Look, I'm sort of in a relationship right now, and I'm not really looking for anything.

AIDEN

So then why are you out here?

MAYA

I don't know.

AIDEN

I think I do.

MAYA

Really. Why?

AIDEN

Because this city is full of people who bore you, and you think I might be interesting.

Whoa. Not the ordinary pick up line.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

I'm not looking for anything either.

He sticks out his hand for a handshake.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Friends?

Maya takes it, intrigued.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

A pair of shoes CLICK across the sidewalk.

They approach a METAL STORAGE GARAGE and pause. Then, the sound of a KEY in a LOCK, and a pair of HANDS reach down to lift the metal grate door, revealing-

-A SPARKLETS WATER TRUCK. We narrow in on one of the 5-GALLON bottles in the truck, bringing us to-

EXT. FORD MOTOR VEHICLE DEALERSHIP - NIGHT

-As the shoes KICK over one of the 5-GAL jugs. Clear, brown liquid GUSHES out of the bottle and rushes underneath a line of FORD DISPLAY CARS.

The HANDS unscrew another jug and repeat the action.

Then, with a loud ZIIIPPP, we pull back to see a man holding a MATCH in each hand. He outstretches his arms and pauses. In the distance, he looks out at a dark MAIN DEALERSHIP BUILDING. Two lines of cars lead towards it.

And then, the HANDS release the matches. They PLUMMET towards the ground, each hitting a trail of liquid and ROARING ALIVE. The trails of fire race towards their respective line of cars as the FIGURE turns his back on the dealership, revealing-

-THAT HE IS AIDEN.

BOOM! A car EXPLODES. BOOM! The car parallel follows. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Like ticking time bombs, the cars EXPLODE into fireballs of metal and glass.

The flames continue licking down the pathway as the cars explode behind it, until they reach the Main Dealership Building. They climb up the side of the cement structure and onto the roof.

WHOOSH! The roof goes up in flames. Then, the sound of windows SHATTERING as the fire races down the air vents of the building and EXPLODES inside the lobby.

Aiden pulls up the hood of a sweatshirt and strides away as the entire dealership is enveloped in flames.

TITLE CARD: THE ARSONIST'S LOVE STORY

INT. CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

Firefighters and LAPD buzz around a burn site as

SENIOR ARSON INVESTIGATOR KLEIN STEPHENS, 50s, crouches amidst the chaos. He's a serious man with a weathered face marked by wrinkles that have certainly been earned.

Above him, an ARSON INVESTIGATOR guides a tough, female SECURITY GUARD, whose face is blackened with soot and shoulders covered with a blanket, towards a fire truck.

SECURITY GUARD
I'm telling you, it's a goddamn
Sparklets guy!

Klein watches her go, then runs his hand along A POOL OF BLOOD on the ground. He reaches into his pocket and produces a PLASTIC BAG. He dips the ERASER of a PENCIL into the blood and puts it in the bag.

WEATHERFORD (O.S.)
Ladies and gentlemen, we finally
have ourselves a homicide.

Klein stuffs the bag into his pocket and looks up to see CAPTAIN BILL WEATHERFORD, 60s, greying and distinguished, hovering over him. Klein stands.

KLEIN
Homicide?

WEATHERFORD
Yeah, when someone kills someone else. I thought you were taking time off?

KLEIN
Where's the body?

WEATHERFORD
First floor stairwell. Wilkins is running out of patience, Stephens, and so am I.

KLEIN
He's a mayor. Impatience is part of the job description.

Klein notices a charred piece of BLUE PLASTIC on the ground with the letters RKLET.

WEATHERFORD
Don't bust my balls, Stephens.
You've been on this case for over three years.

Klein bends down to pick up the plastic. He examines it, leaning forward to sniff it.

KLEIN
Do you smell that?
(then)
Smells like gasoline.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Aiden closes the metal storage grate and locks the garage. Then he turns and walks, hood up, as fire trucks SCREAM past.

He watches it go by when he notices a group of HOMELESS huddled around a trash can at the park across the street. One HOMELESS MAN struggles to light an empty lighter.

Aiden puts his hands in his pockets and walks to them. The Homeless Man looks up at Aiden, apprehensive.

AIDEN
Need a light?

Aiden strikes a match on his zipper and drops it in the trash. It catches. Aiden looks around the street and notices some cardboard boxes stashed away against a building.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Those'll help.

The Homeless Man looks at the cardboard boxes. When he turns around, Aiden is already gone.

INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

Klein stands over a CHARRED BODY of a woman.

MORTICIAN (O.S.)
She's pretty disfigured.

Klein looks up at the Mortician as he ties a tag to her toe.

MORTICIAN (CONT'D)
But we should have enough dental.

KLEIN
To make a full plate?

MORTICIAN
Full enough to identify her.

Klein stares down at the blackened skeleton. Then, he brings a camera to his eye and SNAPS a picture.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

It's raining out. Aiden stands in line with sleepy Los Angelites, wearing the same outfit we last saw him in. Aiden always dresses in a hooded sweatshirt, sweater, and jeans. On this particularly cold morning, however, Aiden wears a RED SCARF around his neck.

He peeks around a patron and eyes the front page of the LA Times, when, suddenly, his face falls. He leaps out of line and snatches the paper off the rack. Above a picture of a blazing building, the headline reads:

DANTE ARSONIST TASTES BLOOD: FIRST HOMICIDE IN THREE YEAR CAREER OF FIRE SETTING.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT / KITCHEN - MORNING

Aiden BURSTS through the door of his apartment and heads straight for the kitchen.

He grabs a remote control off the counter and flips on the television. Footage of a FIRE tears across the screen.

NEWSCASTER (VIA TELEVISION)

Though sources have yet to identify the exact method used to set the fire, evidence points yet again to the mysterious Dante Arsonist leaving his mark across the city.

Aiden flips channels. He pauses at KLEIN STEPHENS conducting a press conference.

KLEIN (VIA TELEVISION)
-doing everything we can to identify the body.

REPORTER (VIA TELEVISION)
Investigator Stephens, why do you think Dante finally committed murder in tandem with arson?

KLEIN (VIA TELEVISION)
I don't know. The homicide breaks his established pattern. For three years, no one's ever been hurt or killed in one his fires.

(MORE)

KLEIN (VIA TELEVISION) (CONT'D)
So either he's intentionally trying
to make a new statement, or it was
a colossal mistake-

The Newscaster talks over the footage. Aiden stares at the TV, face blank with shock.

He buries his head in his hands, deeply troubled.

Then, after a beat, Aiden drags a kitchen chair into the center of the room and climbs up, pushing up a loose panel in the ceiling and pulling out

A large, black MAHOGANY BOX.

He flips it open to reveal hundreds of newspaper clippings, headlines, pictures, etc from three years of fires. We glimpse various headlines as he spreads them on the table:

DANTE ARSONIST STRIKES MALL, L.A. ARSON UNIT APPEARS STIFLED.

ARSON INVESTIGATOR STEPHENS CONNECTS TEMPLE FIRE TO DANTE.

CONNECTION OF HILTON FIRE TO DANTE STILL UNCLEAR.

AS STEPHENS LOSES WIFE, ARSON UNIT WHISPERS OF REPLACEMENTS.

Two announcements for the ANNUAL BELMONT HIGH ART SHOW. The name SAMUEL STEPHENS is circled on both.

The entire table is covered in clippings and pictures. Aiden sits down before them and begins to study.

INT. ARSON INVESTIGATION UNIT (AIU) HEADQUARTERS / KLEIN'S DESK - EVENING

Klein works away at his desk, falling RAIN pinging against his window. Underneath him lies BOOMER, a black labrador with a perpetual smile, wearing an accelerant detector cape.

HARTLEY (O.S.)
When was the last time you slept,
boss?

Klein looks up to see ARSON INVESTIGATOR JILL HARTLEY, 36, tough and strong, yet beautiful in that cop-like sort of way. She looks at Klein with the affection of a diligent protégé, who perhaps wouldn't mind being something more.

KLEIN
I don't need sleep.

HARTLEY

Yeah, those bags under your eyes
clearly agree with you.

(then)

You wanted to see me?

Klein opens a drawer and pulls out the BAGGED pencil. Hartley holds it up to the light.

KLEIN

I don't want anyone else knowing
about this.

HARTLEY

Blood?

KLEIN

If it doesn't match the DNA of our
victim, it may be his.

HARTLEY

Jesus, this is big, Klein.

KLEIN

Cross reference it against every
arsonist in our system. Convicted,
suspected, at large, everyone.

HARTLEY

When're the dental plates of the
victim coming in?

KLEIN

Monday.

Hartley pats his arm.

HARTLEY

Well then there's nothing left to
do. Go home. Get some sleep. Okay?

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT / KITCHEN - NIGHT

Aiden is still bent over the table, the rain coming down even harder than before. He studies an obituary for LILY STEPHENS. We see from his POV as certain words and phrases stick out:

WIFE TO KLEIN STEPHENS. PSYCHOLOGIST AT UCLA. AVID CHECKER PLAYERS AT EXPOSITION PARK. PROUD MOTHER OF SAMUEL STEPHENS.

Aiden tosses it aside and picks up another headline. But then, he pauses. He picks up the obituary again.

His eyes narrow in on the phrase AVID CHECKER PLAYERS AT EXPOSITION PARK.

EXT. KLEIN'S HOUSE / LOS ANGELES SUBURB - NIGHT

Car tires SPLASH through a puddle.

Reveal KLEIN parking in front of his house behind another beat-up car. He opens the passenger door and lets out Boomer, who bounds towards the darkened house.

INT. KLEIN'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Klein flips on the light to find his son SAM, 17, half naked on the couch with a younger high school GIRL. They jump up and scramble for their clothes.

Smoldering next to the couch are two CIGARETTES, one of which leans precariously on the top of the ash tray, sluffing off black embers onto the carpet.

Boomer BARKS loudly at the commotion.

SAM

Dad! What the hell are you doing?!

GIRL

Oh my God.

KLEIN

I got off early.

(re: the cigarettes)

What are you doing?

SAM

You never come home early!

The GIRL scrambles towards the cigarettes and puts them out, stuffing the ash tray into her backpack and shuffling out the front door. Boomer BARKS as she rushes down the street.

KLEIN

Quiet, Boomer.

Sam disappears up the stairs.

KLEIN (CONT'D)

Sam! Get back down here!

INT. KLEIN'S HOUSE / SAM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam SLAMS his door and plops down on his bed. INDIE ROCK posters and ANGSTY ARTWORK cover his walls. An easel, collection of oil paints, and canvases litter his room.

Klein opens the door with a BANG.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing, Sam?
You could set this place on fire.

SAM
It was in an ashtray, chill out.

KLEIN
Don't test me, Sam, that's twice this week.

SAM
Oh my God, I was playing video games, get over it!

KLEIN
You skipped school.

SAM
It was a half day.

KLEIN
I don't care!

SAM
Don't be such a Nazi. Mom always let me take mental health days.

KLEIN
You can't run away from your responsibilities just because she's gone, Sam.

SAM
It works for you.

This stuns Klein. He stares at Sam for a long beat. Then-

KLEIN
You're grounded.

EXT. EXPOSITION PARK - DAY

It's a dreary morning, the kind of dull grey only Los Angeles can have after a night of insipid raining.

Aiden sits on a lone park bench, wearing his RED SCARF and surveying the park. Pairs of people play board games.

He sips a steaming coffee when he notices KLEIN arriving at the other end of the park. He carries a card table in one hand and BOOMER's leash in another.

Aiden's eyes narrow in on him. He tosses his coffee in the nearby garbage can and crosses.

EXT. PARK / KLEIN'S TABLE - DAY

Klein's head is buried in his newspaper. He reads an article: MAYOR URGES PUBLIC TO HELP IN SEARCH FOR FIRE SETTER.

AIDEN (O.S.)
Looking for a player?

Klein looks up to see Aiden standing over him. Boomer looks up and immediately starts GROWLING.

KLEIN
Quiet, Boomer.

Klein folds his paper and motions for him to sit. Aiden extends a hand to Boomer and allows him to sniff it. This appears to be enough for Boomer, and he sits back down.

AIDEN
My mom had a Rottweiler.

He sits and extends a hand.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
I'm Aiden.

KLEIN
Klein. Pick a color.

He extends both fists. Aiden points to the right hand and Klein reveals a BLACK CHECKER.

AIDEN
Fire burns coal. Your move.

Aiden spins the board around to play BLACK. Klein looks at the board and moves a RED CHECKER.

Aiden counters. The game is on.

They play silently as Klein moves again. Aiden counters. Klein jumps him. Aiden jumps Klein. But then, Klein jumps three of Aiden's pieces and lands at the back.

KLEIN

King me.

Aiden looks across at Klein as he kings his piece. But Klein only stares at the board.

AIDEN

So this guy's going 120 on the 405
when this trooper pulls him over.

Klein looks up at Aiden as he jumps Klein's piece.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

So the trooper asks for his license and the guy says, "Sorry, officer, I don't have one." "Why not?" "Well after my sixth DUI, the judge suspended it for life." "Jesus." The trooper says. "Well can I see your registration, then?" The guy responds, "Nope. Car ain't mine." "Oh? Where'd you get it?" "I stole it," the guy tells him. "Well where's the owner?" "I killed him. He's in the trunk. But I think I saw the registration in the glove box when I put my gun there."

Klein looks up at Aiden, amused.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Now this trooper's a rookie, so he calls his Captain, tells him everything he's heard, and asks him to come out and deal with this lunatic. But when the Captain gets there and asks for the guy's license, he presents a valid one. Captain asks to see in his trunk, the guy reveals nothing more than a tire and jack inside. Registration? Not only in the guy's name, but in an empty glove compartment. By now, Captain's a little confused, so he says to the guy, "I don't understand. My officer said you didn't have a license because of six DUIs. You stole the car, killed the owner, hid him in the trunk, and put your gun in the glove box." "Yeah?" Says the guy. "Lying mother fucker probably said I was speeding too."

Klein LAUGHS. Aiden grins as he moves his piece.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
I took a risk, I thought maybe you
were a cop.

KLEIN
Firefighter.

AIDEN
Really? Wow, I got lucky.

KLEIN
I can never remember jokes.

AIDEN
That's okay, this game is pretty
much a joke.

He motions to the board, which is COVERED in red checkers.

AIDEN ((CONT'D)
There's a lot you can learn about a
man by the way he plays checkers.

KLEIN
Really.

Klein takes another one of Aiden's pieces. Aiden kings him.
He counters with his own move.

AIDEN
For example. You played this game
with a focused, methodized attack
strategy. I, on the other hand,
fucked around, and very effectively-

Klein takes his last piece.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
-Lost.

Klein peers across at Aiden, his expression decidedly more
friendly than it once was.

KLEIN
Care for another?

AIDEN
Can't. I'm out of jokes.

He stands, rubbing Boomer on the head. He wags his tail.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Nice to meet you, Klein. Thanks
for the game.

KLEIN
You, too.

Aiden turns and walks away, a small smile of satisfaction
creeping across his face.

Klein watches him go, intrigued.

INT. FRENCH CLASS / BELLMONT HIGH - DAY

Maya writes in French on a white board.

MAYA
(in French)
The imperative is a french mood
used for commands.

She looks out at the class. A sea of sleeping Juniors.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Okay, everybody up.
(off their looks)
Se lever, get up.

The class stands, apprehensive.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Some of you seem to be having
trouble with your eyelids, so I'm
going to call out a command in
French and you're going to do it.

They exchange looks.

MAYA (CONT'D)
(in French)
Stand on the table.

Nobody moves. Maya puts her hands on her hips.

MAYA (CONT'D)
(in French)
Stand on the table.

Everyone climbs onto their desks.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Someone else, go.

STUDENT 1
(in French)
Jump off the desk.

Everyone jumps off the desks. They're smiling now.

MAYA
Good. Next.

STUDENT 2
(in French)
Do three jumping jacks.

The students do three jumping jacks. They're LAUGHING. An obnoxious, popular, CLASS CLOWN, smirks as he shouts-

CLASS CLOWN
(in French)
Show us your boobs!

Maya's cellphone VIBRATES on the desk. Maya picks it up as she points at him.

MAYA
Detention.
(then)
Hello?

AIDEN (VIA TELEPHONE)
I hear high school is the hardest
age group to teach.

RING! The students grab their things and filter out. Maya puts the phone to her chest and calls after them.

MAYA
Don't forget, papers due Monday!

She wedges the phone between her shoulder and ear as she gathers up her things.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Yeah? Who told you that?

AIDEN (VIA TELEPHONE)
Some singer I met.

MAYA
Was she any good?

AIDEN (VIA TELEPHONE)
Her attitude ruined it.

Maya smiles, toting her things and exiting the room.

INT. HALLWAY / BELLMONT HIGH - CONTINUOUS

MAYA
What can I do for you, Aiden?

AIDEN (VIA TELEPHONE)
I want you to take me to dinner.

MAYA
Oh you do, do you?

AIDEN (VIA TELEPHONE)
Yeah. I'm taking you to the Getty.
You're taking me to dinner.

MAYA
Doesn't it close at five?

AIDEN (VIA TELEPHONE)
For some, yes.

Maya heads towards the parking lot.

EXT. BELLMONT HIGH / PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

MAYA
Is that all?

AIDEN (VIA TELEPHONE)
If you're feeling generous, you
could tell that kid in the grey
sweatshirt I'm not a pedophile.

Maya looks up. Aiden is leaning against her car.

EXT. GETTY MUSEUM - NIGHT

A beautiful, clear view of the city.

MAYA (O.S.)
You said I had to buy you dinner.
You said nothing about where.

Narrow in on Maya and Aiden, sitting outside the Getty doors.

AIDEN
Somehow I thought the quality of
food would mirror the quality of
the experience.

MAYA

This isn't a date, so I'm feeding
you accordingly.

AIDEN

Your poor friends, do you always
bring fast food?

A SECURITY GUARD rounds a corner with a SUIT. Maya stiffens.

MAYA

Shit.

AIDEN

No, no, it's fine.
(then, waving)
Hey, Andrew!

The SUIT waves in return. Maya looks at Aiden, impressed. He smiles and crosses to shake the Suit's hand.

INT. GETTY MUSEUM - NIGHT

With the security guard's help, the Suit opens the door.

SUIT

Twenty minutes. My wife's hungry.

AIDEN

Thanks.

Aiden enters, Maya in close pursuit.

INT. GETTY MUSEUM / UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

MAYA

The perks of being an art dealer.

AIDEN

I thought I was a leech.

MAYA

You are. But I'm still impressed.

AIDEN

I made a couple deals for Andrew a
few years ago.

MAYA

Yeah, and your personal entourage
just gave us private access to the
Getty.

Aiden stops and motions to Van Gogh's IRISES. Maya's breath is stolen. She stares at the painting.

AIDEN
A single week after being
hospitalized for losing his mind,
Van Gogh started this painting.

MAYA
It's so incredible.

AIDEN
It's not his most famous work, but
it's always been my favorite.

MAYA
Why?

AIDEN
Because he saw through the madness
around him and was inspired by a
single moment of beauty.

They stare at the painting together. Then, she turns to look at him, her expression sincere.

MAYA
Why did you bring me here?

AIDEN
Because when I saw you through that
crowded room, the first thing I
thought of was this painting.

A piece of Maya softens. She studies Aiden, overwhelmed. But he simply looks back at the painting, thoughtful.

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maya opens the door to her apartment and flips on the light to reveal a stylized, zen interior. Aiden follows behind her. Maya enters the kitchen as Aiden peers into a bedroom.

AIDEN
Your roommate here?

MAYA
She works at night. Tea?

AIDEN
Sure.

Aiden sits on the couch and notices a picture of Maya with an older, attractive man sitting on the coffee table.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Is this your father?

MAYA (O.S.)
Who?

Aiden holds up the picture as she enters and sits beside him.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Oh no, that's my semi-complicated
relationship, Landon.

AIDEN
How long have you been seeing him?

MAYA
Five years? He's been helping me
get my theater career started.

AIDEN
How generous of him.

MAYA
He's perfect.

AIDEN
Then what's semi-complicated?

MAYA
He's married.

Silence hangs heavily between them. Both are relieved when the tea kettle WHISTLES and Maya jumps up to attend to it.

MAYA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
He was in the audience of the first
play I did in LA. I've actually
got a show there this weekend, if
you want to come.

AIDEN
Are you shamelessly plugging your
acting career?

MAYA (O.S.)
Maybe?

Aiden stands and puts the photo down.

AIDEN
What does he do, this Landon guy?

MAYA (O.S.)
Ever heard of Guiding Light Health
Insurance?

AIDEN
Yeah.

MAYA (O.S.)
He's the founder.

She enters and hands Aiden a cup of tea.

AIDEN
Wow, he must be very well off. I
get why you like him.

MAYA
Stop that, you don't even know him.

He looks at her, softening.

AIDEN
Is he good to you?

MAYA
Other than the fact he won't leave
his wife? Yeah, he's good to me.
(then)
Why do you care? I thought we were
friends.

AIDEN
We are.

Maya keeps her eyes on him as she sips her tea.

INT. AUDITORIUM / BELLMONT HIGH - EVENING

A high school art show is in full swing. The proud parents, name tags, art judges, Pellegrino, nervous students, cookies, the whole shebang.

The artwork is standard. Still-lifes, portraits, collage.

One section attracts attention. Emotionally envisioned and expertly painted canvases cover the walls of SAM'S exhibit. Sam stands nearby with ALICIA and some friends.

INT. AUDITORIUM ENTRANCE - AT THE SAME TIME

Aiden signs in at the entrance and enters the art show. He's in his usual attire, but he wears that RED SCARF again.

His eyes scan the student exhibits. Then, he finds it. A sign that reads: SAM STEPHENS. He moves towards it.

INT. AUDITORIUM / SAM'S EXHIBIT - MOMENTS LATER

Aiden pushes his way through the crowd to see Sam's paintings. Shockingly enough... they're very good.

Aiden pauses in front of a moody expression of an empty bed.

GIRL (O.S.)
So I'll see you later?

Aiden turns to see Sam waving goodbye to that HIGH SCHOOL GIRL. Aiden watches him for a beat. Then-

AIDEN
Loss, right?

Sam turns to see Aiden pointing at the empty bed.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
This one's about loss.

SAM
What makes you say that?

AIDEN
Well, for one, your bed's clearly not empty.

Aiden nods to the exiting Girl. Sam grins.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
And you're the only one here who's got anything to say at all.
(re: other exhibits)
Okay, so he can draw. He knows how to put a brush on a canvas. And she knows how to glue shit onto paper and paint over it. But your stuff is moody and dark, like something has happened to you.
(then)
Like there's someone in your life you lost.

Sam studies Aiden. Who the hell is this guy? Aiden sticks out his hand, a business card wedged between his fingers.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Aiden Kinsley. Sam, right?

INT. AUDITORIUM ENTRANCE - AT THE SAME TIME

Klein rushes through the entrance. The STUDENT at the check in table balks at his complete disregard for her.

STUDENT
Excuse me! I need you to sign in!

Klein returns, scribbles his name, and darts into the exhibit. He immediately spots Sam, talking to an unseen face.

INT. AUDITORIUM / SAM'S EXHIBIT - CONTINUOUS

AIDEN
Are your parents here? I'd love to speak with them.

KLEIN (O.S.)
Sorry I'm late, Sam, work was-

Aiden turns. Klein stares at him. A beat.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
It's you.

AIDEN
Is this your son?

KLEIN
What are you doing here?

AIDEN
I come every year.

Sam watches Aiden suspiciously. Aiden hands a card to Klein.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
I'm an art dealer.

SAM
You guys know each other?

AIDEN
No. KLEIN
Yes.

Klein looks at Aiden.

AIDEN
We've met.
(then, to Klein)
Your son is very talented. One of the best I've seen for his age.

SAM

He wants to see more of my stuff.

AIDEN

I don't mean to intrude.

Klein eyes Sam. He's grinning. He's actually smiling.

KLEIN

Not at all. It seems like this was
meant to be.

Aiden turns to Sam.

AIDEN

You talk over a good time with your
dad and call that number on the
card, k?

Sam nods. Aiden turns to make his exit, pausing near Klein.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

I'm a better art dealer than I am a
checker player. I promise.

KLEIN

Let's hope.

They exchange a smile. Then, Aiden turns and exits.

The PRELAPPED sound of a phone RINGING takes us to...

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

...As a phone RINGS amidst the blackness. Then, the sound of
a key entering a keyhole.

Aiden opens the door, a shaft of light flooding the
apartment. The scarf he wore is gone. He scrambles to get
the key out of the lock as the ANSWERING MACHINE picks up.

MAYA (VIA TELEPHONE)

I get the feeling you're a call
screener. You should pick up now.

Aiden scrambles to the phone.

AIDEN

Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maya sits on the couch, legs crossed, painting her nails.

MAYA
You're so transparent.

AIDEN
I just walked in the door.

MAYA
Right. So I have an extra ticket.

Aiden enters the kitchen and turns on the lights.

AIDEN
For what?

MAYA
Death and the Maiden.

Maya looks up as Kate walks past, a towel around her hair.

MAYA (CONT'D)
My show. Don't pretend you forgot.

Kate pauses. What is she doing? Maya grins mischievously.

AIDEN
When is it?

MAYA
This Friday at eight. You should
come. You'll like it.

Aiden pours himself a whiskey on the rocks.

AIDEN
Alright.

MAYA
Great. Tickets in your name at
will call. See you then.

They hang up. Aiden downs his drink.

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Maya flicks her phone closed.

KATE
I was going to bring Anna.

MAYA
I'm setting you up.

KATE
I hate it when you play cupid.

MAYA
Because you hate men?

KATE
Because I hate your taste in men.

MAYA
You thought he was cute, not me.

KATE
Which is clearly the reason you
went out with him.

MAYA
Don't be a prude. It'll be fun.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Klein, Hartley, and Weatherford walk through the hallway.

WEATHERFORD
Dental plates were traced to a Rose
M. Summers. She grew up in NorCal
in some no-name town in Sonoma
County. And two weeks after a
warrant goes out for her arrest,
all traces of Rose Summers fall off
the map.

KLEIN
Our victim is a Jane Doe.

HARTLEY
Wouldn't want it any other way.

WEATHERFORD
No bank account, no social, no
legal name change, nothing. She
completely disappeared.

KLEIN
What was the warrant for?

WEATHERFORD
Murder. Of Jim Summers. Her father.

Jesus. Klein fingers through the file.

KLEIN

Put Niven and Garrity on tracking anyone who used to know her and McMillen on what she did before she took off. Plane fares, cash withdrawals, bus tickets, anything. I need to know who she became if we're going to have any chance of connecting her to our arsonist.

Hartley writes this down, nodding.

KLEIN (CONT'D)

I want someone to interview by the end of the day.

HARTLEY

Got it.

Hartley runs off in front of Klein, who stops outside the AIU Offices and faces Weatherford.

KLEIN

You never leave your office on Mondays. What's going on?

Weatherford hands Klein a letter adorned by a seal that reads OFFICE OF THE MAYOR. Klein scans it.

WEATHERFORD

Wilkins's got a fire under my ass, Klein. You gotta close this case or I'm going to have to reassign it.

KLEIN

Tell Wilkins he and I are on the same page.

He looks at Weatherford.

KLEIN (CONT'D)

Then tell him to go fuck himself.

Klein turns and pushes through the door into the-

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

As the place buzzes with ringing phones and frantic investigators. Klein sits at his desk, and flops down the file, the pictures of Rose Summers' CHARRED BODY scattered on his desk as a FRESHMAN INVESTIGATOR races up.

FRESHMAN INVESTIGATOR
I cross-referenced those Sparklets
shipments. Large quantities of
five gallon bottles like the ones
at the crime scene were shipped
three times last month.

KLEIN
Where'd they go?

FRESHMAN INVESTIGATOR
South Africa, Jersey, and Portland.

Klein shakes his head, as Hartley arrives.

HARTLEY
Twenty three year old Scott Galley,
Rose's high school sweetheart.

KLEIN
He's expecting me?

Hartley nods and hands him the address. He stands.

FRESHMAN INVESTIGATOR
Maybe he's got a forwarding address
from another country to cover his
tracks?

KLEIN
Here's a word of advice, kid. If
you'd think to do it, the Dante
Arsonist hasn't done it that way.
(then, to Hartley)
I'll call you when I'm heading
back.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - AT THE SAME TIME

Aiden is in his car, in DISGUISE. He looks in the mirror as he applies a mustache to his bearded, glasses-adorned face.

He unwraps a newly purchased, small, writer's notebook and sticks it into the breast pocket of his trench coat. Then, he puts on a pair of LEATHER GLOVES.

He perks up when he sees KLEIN's car drive past him.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / FRONT DESK - MOMENTS LATER

A disguised Aiden enters the AIU Headquarters as the SECRETARY looks up.

SECRETARY
Can I help you?

AIDEN
Klein Stephens, please?

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - AT THE SAME TIME

A fist KNOCKS on a door. Klein's fist. He waits a beat, then a young man, SCOTT GALLEY, late 20s, answers.

KLEIN
Scott Galley?

SCOTT
Yes?

KLEIN
(flashing his badge)
Investigator Klein Stephens. May I
come in?

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / FRONT DESK - AT THE SAME TIME

Hartley arrives to see a bearded reporter waiting for her.

HARTLEY
Can I help you?

AIDEN
Yeah, hi, I'm from The Daily Times
and we're doing a story on the
Dante Arsonist investigation staff.
I was hoping to speak to
Investigator Stephens?

HARTLEY
Klein's not here.

AIDEN
Oh really? That's a shame. Are you-

He pulls out his notebook and flips through it convincingly.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
-Jillian Hartley?
(off her nod)
Word has it you're the true
mastermind behind this case.

Hartley shakes her head emphatically no.

HARTLEY

Klein has the nose of a bloodhound.

AIDEN

But without your work on Dante's
Temple fire, this division wouldn't
have even tied that site to arson.

HARTLEY

I'm sure they would've eventually.

AIDEN

And you're even painfully modest.

Hartley cannot help but smile. A beat, then-

HARTLEY

Klein will be back in a bit, but I
can try to answer some of your
questions until then?

Aiden grins. He's in.

INT. GALLEY'S APARTMENT - AT THE SAME TIME

Scott Galley hands Klein a glass of water.

KLEIN

How long did you date?

SCOTT

Not long enough to crack her shell.
To be perfectly honest, we were
kids. We weren't very serious.

KLEIN

Do you have any pictures of her?

Scott looks towards a cabinet in the corner.

SCOTT

You know what? I might.

Scott crosses to the cabinet and opens it up, pulling out a
shoebox full of loose pictures. As he thumbs through it-

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Rose never mentioned anything to me
about taking off. But I didn't
think much of it. There was always
something strange about her.

He reaches the end of the box.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
God, I guess I don't.
(snapping his fingers)
Katherine Burrows. They were always
close. She moved to Vegas with her
parents after Rose went missing,
but she's probably your best bet.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS - AT THE SAME TIME

Hartley leads Aiden through the Investigation Unit.

AIDEN
And how long has the Dante case
been in your hands?

HARTLEY
Little over three years.

As Aiden and Hartley pass a desk we recognize as Klein's, Boomer bounds towards Aiden, tail wagging, nose sniffing.

Hartley eyes Aiden curiously as Boomer crowds him. Aiden notices Hartley watching him.

AIDEN
I'm a dog person.

INT. GALLEY'S APARTMENT - AT THE SAME TIME

KLEIN
Thank you very much, Mr. Galley.

As Klein reaches the door-

SCOTT
Oh, Mr. Stephens? One more thing
you should probably know.

Klein turns around. Scott strides towards him.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Right before Rose left, her pops
dropped dead. Some people say he
killed himself, but I always
wondered if she did it. He wasn't
exactly a model of good parenting.

Klein studies Scott. Then-

KLEIN
We'll be in touch.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / HARTLEY'S DESK - AT THE SAME TIME

The phone on Hartley's desk RINGS. Hartley looks over at it from her spot beside Aiden and steps away politely.

As she nears the phone, Aiden turns inconspicuously and looks at Klein's desk, eyes scanning the tabletop.

HARTLEY
Hartley. Hey, Klein.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / KLEIN'S DESK - CONTINUOUS

Aiden looks down and sees the pictures of ROSE SUMMERS' CHARRED BODY. His eyes widen. He steals a glance at Hartley, whose back is turned.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / HARTLEY'S DESK - CONTINUOUS

HARTLEY
How'd it go?

KLEIN (VIA TELEPHONE)
Galley doesn't have a clue, but he knows someone who might.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT./EXT. KLEIN'S CAR - AT THE SAME TIME

Klein drives, headset on his ear.

KLEIN
Name's Katherine Burrows. Last known residency Las Vegas, Nevada.

As Hartley scribbles the name on a pad of paper-

HARTLEY
Oh, there's a reporter here to see you, a mister...

She spins around.

HARTLEY (CONT'D)
Tell me your name again?

But Aiden is gone.

HARTLEY (CONT'D)
Klein, can you hold for a minute?

Hartley presses hold and crosses to Klein's desk. She peers down at it to see that several important pictures are missing-

Hartley snatches up the phone.

HARTLEY (CONT'D)
He's gone. And he took her.

KLEIN
Who?

HARTLEY
Rose Summers. Her pictures are gone.

A beat as Klein realizes the implications. Then-

KLEIN
It's him.
(then)
Seal all the exits.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / INNER STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Aiden sneaks through the inner stairwell. He reaches the THIRD FLOOR door and peaks his head through-

-The hallway is frighteningly still.

The sound of a door SLAMMING above him. Aiden peers down the hallway and makes a decision, ditching his trench coat.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS - AT THE SAME TIME

The place is frantic. Hartley barks orders when her cell phone RINGS. She snaps it up.

HARTLEY
Hartley.

KLEIN (VIA TELEPHONE)
What's our status?

HARTLEY
It's a cluster fuck. Nobody's ever sealed this building before.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / THIRD FLOOR - AT THE SAME TIME

Aiden rounds a corner, moving swiftly, and immediately notices TWO MEN emerging from an inner office.

He quickly ducks into the MEN'S BATHROOM.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / KLEIN'S DESK - AT THE SAME TIME
Her office phone RINGS. She picks up.

HARTLEY
Hartley.

She listens, then hangs up quickly. Into her cell-

HARTLEY (CONT'D)
His coat's on the third floor.

INT. THIRD FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Hartley emerges, still on her cell, racing towards the third floor inner stairwell exit. Two men hold up a trench coat.

KLEIN (VIA TELEPHONE)
Have they checked the rooms?

HARTLEY
Have you checked the rooms?

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

Aiden has his head out the bathroom window.

It's a long way down. A rain pipe runs down the side of the building, but it's not exactly a model of stability.

Suddenly, VOICES can be heard outside the bathroom. Aiden quickly scans the ceiling, walls. By the door, he sees it:

FIRE EXTINGUISHER.

INT. THIRD FLOOR - AT THE SAME TIME

HARTLEY
Check the west wing, I've got the east.

The Investigators part with Hartley. She walks towards the Men's Room, cell to her ear.

KLEIN (VIA TELEPHONE)
You still with me?

HARTLEY
I'm with you.

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

Aiden snatches the extinguisher as FOOTSTEPS near.

INT. THIRD FLOOR - AT THE SAME TIME

Hartley looks down at the crack of the bathroom door. A SHADOW moves away from it. Hartley's face hardens.

HARTLEY
(whispering)
He's here.

KLEIN (VIA TELEPHONE)
Be careful.

Hartley takes a deep breath and then KICKS THE DOOR OPEN.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

BOOM! The door bangs against the wall and Hartley sees herself face to face with the disguised Aiden as

WHOOOOSH! He sprays Carbon Dioxide powder into her face. She SCREAMS and clutches herself, the cell dropping to the floor, as Aiden quickly climbs out the window.

KLEIN (VIA TELEPHONE)
Hartley?!

EXT. AIU HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Aiden ditches his sweatshirt as he sits on the windowsill, then wraps it around the rain pipe and uses it to shimmy down the side of the building.

INT./EXT. KLEIN'S CAR - AT THE SAME TIME

Through the phone we hear the sound of Hartley groaning.

KLEIN
Hartley?!

Klein hangs up and dials a new number.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
This is Investigator Stephens. We
have an emergency.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

Hartley sits in a hospital bed, face covered in what looks like ice burns, as a nurse applies Neosporin.

Klein enters, coat draped over himself. Hartley notices him.

HARTLEY
This is not my best look.

KLEIN
You look fine.

She smiles weakly, then peers behind him.

HARTLEY
Did you bring profiling?

KLEIN
You should rest, Hartley.

HARTLEY
Who are you, my mother? You know
we need a portrait.

KLEIN
We can get it tomorrow.

HARTLEY
Give me a break, Klein. I'm a big
girl, okay? Call it in.

Klein studies her, then picks up his cell and dials.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT / KITCHEN - NIGHT

Aiden sits in a window seat of his kitchen staring across at-
THE DINING ROOM TABLE, where the pictures of ROSE SUMMERS'
BODY lie in a messy pile. They're crumpled and folded, but
still distinguishably gruesome.

Aiden's a mess. His piercing blue eyes are red with emotion,
and his face is stricken.

He crosses to the table and picks up the pictures, holding
them at arms length.

Then, he drags a match across the zipper of his sweatshirt and brings the small flame to the bottom of the photographs.

He watches as they CURL AND BURN, walking slowly to the kitchen sink and dropping them safely inside.

We narrow in on the flames as we dissolve to...

INT. PLAYHOUSE - NIGHT

...The flames of a blazing fireplace on a stage dressed to be the interior of a home. Maya, dressed in full stage makeup, talks intimately with an ACTOR.

MAYA

"That's what I thought, that he should know just once what it is to... And as I can't rape, I thought it was a sentence you would have to carry out."

ACTOR

"Don't go on, Paulina."

In the AUDIENCE, Aiden and Kate sit together. Kate looks really uncomfortable.

MAYA

"But then I told myself that it would be difficult for you to collaborate in that scheme, after all you do need to have a certain degree of enthusiasm to..."

ACTOR

"Stop, Paulina".

MAYA

"So I asked myself if we couldn't use a broom. Yes a broom, Gerardo, you know, a broomstick. But I began to realize that wasn't what I had really wanted, something that physical. And you know what conclusion I came to, the only thing I really want? I want him to confess."

Kate looks over at Aiden. He's completely riveted.

EXT. PLAYHOUSE - NIGHT

The audience waits for the cast to exit backstage. People wait with flowers and chat amongst themselves. Aiden stares at the playbill DEATH AND THE MAIDEN by Ariel Dorfman as Kate approaches him from behind.

KATE

This wasn't my idea.

AIDEN

It's fine. Not your usual date movie, but I had a good time.

(off her smile)

I should've brought flowers.

KATE

Yeah, but you would've gotten roses and she thinks they're cliche.

Maya and the Actor exit the playhouse through a side door and the crowd envelops them. Maya calls out to everyone.

MAYA

I know you want to talk about how wonderful we are, but it's cold and I'm tired of standing. Cast party at my place!

The audience cries out with excitement. Aiden catches Maya's eye through the crowd. She smiles at him.

KATE

Get her snapdragons.

(off his look)

I won't tell.

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The living room is full of people with intense make up, artsy clothes, and boisterous voices. Maya sits on the couch beside Kate, snapping pics with an old POLAROID CAMERA. Two dark artsy-types love the attention.

Aiden enters through the front door, hands behind his back. He searches the room for Maya and immediately spots her.

Kate sees Aiden first, and they share a moment. Then Kate nudges Maya. Maya excuses herself, crossing to him. She raises an eyebrow at his usual sweatshirt and jeans.

MAYA

Nice outfit.

AIDEN

Einstein wore the same clothes
every day, why shouldn't I?

MAYA

That's an old wives' tale. His wife
dressed him.

AIDEN

I dress myself.

MAYA

Clearly.

(then)

What took you so long? I thought
maybe you weren't coming.

Aiden pulls a bouquet of snapdragons from behind him.

AIDEN

I hate feeling unprepared.

Maya takes the bouquet, smelling the flowers.

MAYA

Aw, Aiden, these are my favorite.

AIDEN

Lucky guess.

Suddenly, Maya's CELL rings in her pocket. She pulls it out
and reads the screen, her eyes lighting up.

MAYA

I'm sorry, can you give me a sec?

(picking up the phone)

Hey, Baby. Yeah, it was great!

Aiden watches helplessly as Maya disappears out of the room.
He crosses to the couch and plops down beside Kate, offering
her a cigarette. She waves it away.

KATE

That'll kill you, you know.

AIDEN

That's sort of the point.

He lights a match on his zipper and ignites the cigarette.
On the table in front of them, the flames of a candle dance.

KATE

Don't take it personally. The
apocalypse would stop if he called.

Aiden exhales thoughtfully, staring at the dancing flames.

AIDEN

This is your chance to tell me why
I should stay away from her.

KATE

I've known Maya a long time, Aiden,
and she's a great girl. But you'll
never really know her.

Aiden leans forward and fans his fingers through the fire.

AIDEN

We all have secrets.

KATE

Hers run deep.

AIDEN

They're not secrets if they don't.

INT. LIVING ROOM / MAYA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Several guests have cleared out. Maya takes a Polaroid of Kate as she naps in a chair. She waves the picture dry and scribbles on the white part with a sharpie.

Aiden sits on the couch beside her.

AIDEN

So is he missing this for business
or for pleasure?

MAYA

Neither. Wedding anniversary.

Maya scans the room and spots two people making out in the corner. She snaps another Polaroid and waves it dry. She uncaps her sharpie and scribbles on it, too.

AIDEN

Have you ever been raped?

Maya stops with the picture and gapes at Aiden.

MAYA

What?

AIDEN

Have you ever been raped?

MAYA

Jesus, what makes you ask that?

AIDEN

It was a very real performance.

MAYA

It's called acting.

AIDEN

You brought yourself to the part.

MAYA

Who are you, Stanislavski? That's a bold assumption, Aiden.

(then)

If I'd played a lesbian would you ask if Kate and I were sleeping together?

AIDEN

No.

MAYA

Then what makes this different?

AIDEN

There was an honesty to it. I can't explain it.

MAYA

Well good. Don't.

Maya stares at Aiden, then slides closer to him and extends the camera at arms length.

AIDEN

Maya, I hate pictures.

MAYA

Oh get over it.

FLASH! The Polaroid hums as the picture spits out. Maya hands him a sharpie.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Be memorable.

Aiden looks at Maya carefully, then scribbles on the picture.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / SECURITY - EVENING

Klein sits in front of monitors, watching footage of Aiden. Whenever Aiden passes the sight-line of a camera, he moves so that his face ISN'T VISIBLE.

Knuckles WRAP on the door as Weatherford enters.

WEATHERFORD

How's it going?

KLEIN

He knows this building like the back of his hand.

On screen, the figure enters the bathroom and disappears. A short while later, they see Hartley kicking the door open and being enveloped in a cloud of white smoke.

WEATHERFORD

Hartley's back.

Klein presses stop and turns to Weatherford.

KLEIN

What?

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / HARTLEY'S DESK - NIGHT

Hartley works away at her desk, bandages around her face.

KLEIN

What are you doing here?

HARTLEY

Working.

KLEIN

You should be at the hospital.

HARTLEY

I'm not fragile.

KLEIN

It's not about being fragile, Hartley, it's about being smart.

Hartley turns around to look at Klein.

HARTLEY

No offense, Klein, but you're not exactly the authority on this one.

(then)

(MORE)

HARTLEY (CONT'D)
If I wanted someone to baby sit me,
I'd call my mother. So if you're
not gonna put me to work, I'd like
you to mind your own business.

A beat. Klein stares at Hartley. Then, finally-

KLEIN
Smaller shipments from multiple
companies.

He hands her a report.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
He ordered bottles from multiple
companies instead of Sparklets
alone. To cover his tracks.

(re: the report)
Cross reference their shipments to
LA and get me a common address or
name or credit card or anything.

HARTLEY
Will do.

Klein leaves. Hartley watches him go with a small smile.

EXT. KLEIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A light sprinkle falls in the driveway, the reflection of the street lamps dancing across small puddles. A car we recognize as Aiden's sits in the driveway. Klein rolls up, noticing the car with disdain.

INT. KLEIN'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

Aiden, wearing his RED SCARF, sits with Sam on the couch, examining ARTWORK.

AIDEN
The brushwork is nice, stylized...
(then)
This is really good stuff, Sam.
Have you thought about putting
together a gallery?

Klein enters through the front door.

KLEIN
You're grounded, Sam. That means
you don't have friends over-

Klein notices Aiden and balks.

AIDEN
Klein. Nice to see you.

KLEIN
Aiden.

AIDEN
I had the afternoon off, I hope
this is okay.

KLEIN
What are you doing here?

SAM
Don't freak out, Dad, I invited
him. To see my stuff.

Klein looks at Sam. He's beaming.

He puts down his bag and crosses into the kitchen. Aiden
watches him go, then, returns his attention to Sam.

AIDEN
So how would you feel about selling
some of these?

INT. LIVING ROOM / KLEIN'S HOUSE - LATER

Klein hands Aiden a glass of whiskey. A CHECKER BOARD sits on
the coffee table, waiting.

KLEIN
As a general rule, if Sam says I
know about it, I probably don't.

Klein sits across from Aiden in a large armchair.

AIDEN
I'm sorry, I should've checked with
you first.

Klein waves a dismissive hand and takes a sip of his drink.

KLEIN
Loser's advantage. Your move.

AIDEN
Delicately put, Klein, thank you.

Klein shrugs. Aiden moves a checker. Klein counters. They
play in silence for a beat. Then-

KLEIN
Is it lucky or something?
(off Aiden's look)
I've never seen you without that
scarf on.

Aiden shrugs.

AIDEN
I guess it makes me feel European.

Aiden eyes Klein, then looks down at the board. They play in
silence for another beat.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
So is he any good?

AIDEN
Sam? Depends, but I think so.

Aiden moves a piece.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
He has a lot of raw talent, he just
needs to mature a little.

KLEIN
You'll get no argument from me
there.

Klein counters.

AIDEN
I dunno, he seems pretty well
adjusted for a fireman's kid.

KLEIN
Arson investigator.
(off his look)
I'm actually an arson investigator.

AIDEN
Whoa, now I'm really impressed. If
you'd been my dad, I would've burnt
down buildings or broken laws to
feel like I was accomplishing the
appropriate level of rebellion.

KLEIN
What did your dad do?

AIDEN
He was unemployed.
(then)
(MORE)

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Didn't do as much rebelling as
perhaps I anticipated.

Klein smiles. He jumps three of Aiden's pieces.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
What about yours?

KLEIN
Drank a lot.

AIDEN
See? And you landed in law
enforcement. All thanks to teenage
angst. King me.

Klein does. A beat as he contemplates his next move.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
What made you want to do that?

KLEIN
What?

AIDEN
Investigate arsonists.

KLEIN
Fear of guns. Fascination with
fire. King me.

Aiden kings his piece and moves.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
What made you want to deal art for
a living?

AIDEN
It's the closest I'll ever get to
my real passion.

KLEIN
Yeah, and what's that?

Aiden looks up at Klein. Shit. He let himself get too
honest. He quickly scrambles for a lie.

AIDEN
Journalism.

KLEIN
Did you study it in school?

AIDEN

High school teacher told me I never
had the nose for the writing style.

KLEIN

You know, I've got a guy who owes
me a few favors.

He moves a checker and then stands to get his wallet. He
returns and hands Aiden a card.

KLEIN (CONT'D)

I'll tell him you're going to give
him a call.

Aiden examines the card as Klein contemplates his next move.

EXT. KLEIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Klein stands in the doorway as Aiden walks to his car.

AIDEN

I will beat you eventually, Klein.

KLEIN

Whatever you say.

INT./EXT. AIDEN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Once Klein shuts the door and turns off the light, Aiden's
smile immediately disappears. He lights a match and applies
it to the business card Klein gave him.

It curls as it BURNS.

He starts the car, tosses the burning card out the window,
and drives away.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Bells DING as the doors open. Aiden pushes through the doors
and into the post office.

DOOR WOMAN (O.S.)

Good afternoon, Mr. Tealghieri.

Aiden spins around to see the DOOR WOMAN, late thirties,
heavy set, smiling at him. Aiden flashes a grin of his own.

AIDEN

Afternoon, Alice.

Aiden crosses to a P.O. Box and produces a key. He opens it and pulls out his mail, filtering through them.

Junk mail. Junk mail. Then, a Bill. To a MR. TEALGHIERI. From SPARKLETS WATER, INC.

Aiden slips the bill into his jacket and trashes the rest.

AIDEN (PRELAP) (CONT'D)
I think this is my first ever date
at a high school.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD / HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Maya and Aiden stroll across the baseball field of her high school. They head towards the campus buildings.

MAYA
Who said this was a date?

Aiden shoots her a look. She smirks.

MAYA (CONT'D)
So whaddaya think of my roommate?

AIDEN
Seems like a good friend.

Maya notices a baseball wedged in the corner of the first base fence where it hits home plate. She trots towards it.

MAYA
I don't mean for me. I mean for
you.

She tosses the baseball at Aiden. As he catches it-

AIDEN
Too cute for me.

Maya raises her eyebrow.

MAYA
What does that say about me?

AIDEN
You're not cute.

He lobs the ball back at her.

MAYA
Thanks a lot.

AIDEN
You're beautiful. You know you're
beautiful.

Maya tosses the ball between her hands, staring at Aiden. Then she jogs across the baseball field and takes his hand.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Where are we going?

MAYA
I wanna show you something.

INT. INDOOR POOL / HIGH SCHOOL GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Maya pushes open the door to reveal an INDOOR POOL. The pool light, glowing a soft blue under the chlorinated water, casts a beautiful, undulating glow across the gym.

She energetically moves towards the pool. She lets down her hair and undoes her jacket.

Aiden watches as she unbuttons her shirt and skirt, revealing white cotton underwear and a bra. Her skin is smooth, her figure slender and feminine.

Locks of hair flow down her back and her legs are long and toned. She kicks off her shoes and jumps in the pool.

She comes up and shakes her hair away from her face. Aiden watches her body beneath the rippling water.

MAYA
C'mon Aiden!

Aiden stares at her.

AIDEN
I don't swim.

MAYA
You don't have to.

He says nothing.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Oh, c'mon Aiden, don't be boring.
I've always wanted to do this.

AIDEN
I don't swim.

Maya's brows furrow.

MAYA
I don't understand.

AIDEN
It's fine. You wouldn't.

Aiden swiftly turns and exits the indoor pool.

MAYA
Aiden, wait!

The door swings shut behind him.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aiden pushes through his front door, furious.

In uncontrolled rage, he turns over chairs, flips over a table, throws a lamp against the nearby wall.

After a moment, he stares at the fireplace lined with tall candles. He ignites a match and proceeds to light them.

A KNOCK on the door.

EXT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - AT THE SAME TIME

Maya stands outside Aiden's door, wet. Her hair sticks to her face in straggly strands, and her clothes are soaked.

AIDEN
Did you follow me?

MAYA
Can I come inside?

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Maya looks around at the apartment as Aiden shuts the door and leans against it. It looks like a tornado ripped through it. She turns around to face Aiden. A long beat.

MAYA
Is it me?

AIDEN
No, Maya.

MAYA
Then what? Are you gay?

AIDEN

No.

MAYA

You only like blondes.

AIDEN

No.

MAYA

Tell me you don't want me, then.

Her eyes are unblinking. Testing. And very sexual.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Go on.

AIDEN

I can't.

Maya steps closer to Aiden and leans in. He shies away.

MAYA

It's okay, Aiden.

She leans forward and kisses him. Aiden melts into her touch. He puts his arms around her, their embrace passionate, until...

...Maya's hands reach to take off Aiden's sweatshirt. His hands quickly stop hers. She pulls back to look at him.

MAYA (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

Aiden studies her. Then, he reaches down for the bottom of his sweatshirt and brings it over his head, revealing-

A body completely covered in FIRE BURN SCARS.

Maya freezes. Aiden tries to measure her reaction.

But then, Maya slowly kisses his chest, hand grazing his scarred torso. Aiden opens his mouth to speak, but Maya puts her hand to his lips.

MAYA (CONT'D)

It's okay.

She watches him as she slowly leans in for the kiss. Their lips touch, and Aiden finally closes his eyes.

He takes her by the back of the neck and truly KISSES her.

It grows passionate. Aiden frantically unbuttons her shirt and spins around, pushing her damp body against the wall. Then, he lifts her up, she wraps her legs around him, and together, they make love.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Aiden lies on his back on the floor, Maya's head resting on his chest. He caresses her hair and stares at the ceiling.

MAYA

Why were you afraid to show me?

AIDEN

Wouldn't you be?

A beat. Then-

MAYA

How did it happen?

AIDEN

I don't want to talk about this.

She sits up to look at him.

MAYA

Please, Aiden. I want to know.

AIDEN

No, you don't.

MAYA

Yes I do. You can trust me.

AIDEN

It's not about trust.

MAYA

Then what?

He's silent. She touches his chin.

MAYA (CONT'D)

C'mon, Aiden, I want to know you.

A long beat. He studies her. Then-

AIDEN

My earliest memory of my mom is of her in sunglasses, because every time he'd drink, he'd hit her.

(MORE)

AIDEN (CONT'D)

When I was almost ten, he beat her unconscious and I lost it.

(then)

I remember coming to on the garage floor and seeing that his shoes were wet. My hands were taped behind my back, but I lifted my head up and saw that I was wet, too. The room smelled like rubbing alcohol. And then I heard the lighter strike against his jeans.

He pauses, lost in the memory. Maya extends her hand and puts a finger against his lips.

MAYA

You don't have to talk about this anymore.

Aiden finally looks at her. Tears stream down her cheeks.

AIDEN

I didn't want you to see this, Maya. I didn't want you to see how ugly I am.

MAYA

You're not ugly, Aiden.

AIDEN

Yes, I am.

Maya reaches out and touches his burned skin.

MAYA

I think you're beautiful.

He studies her, a hardness in him softening. He places a hand under her chin and lifts her lips to kiss them. A long, sensual, loving kiss. Then, he rolls on top of her and they begin to make love again.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aiden wakes up on the floor next to the fireplace. He sits up and rubs his eyes. When he opens them, he sees-

Maya is gone.

AIDEN

Maya?

After a moment, he wraps himself in the blanket and gets up.

The PRELAPPED sound of KNOCKING brings us to-

EXT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

-As Aiden WRAPS on Maya's apartment door.

AIDEN
Maya, it's me. Open the door?

The door CLICKS open. But instead of Maya, Kate appears.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Is she here?

KATE
She's out for the night. Is
everything okay?

AIDEN
She won't return my calls.

KATE
Yeah, she tends to do that.

AIDEN
Do you know where she is?

KATE
I'm sorry, I don't.

AIDEN
Please, Kate. I don't want to
watch her slip away.

KATE
No, Aiden, I actually don't know
where she is.
(off his look)
Landon's company has some party
tonight and I think she's singing,
but there are a million hotels in
this city.

She shrugs helplessly.

KATE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

INT./EXT. AIDEN'S CAR - LATER

Aiden speeds towards downtown.

AIDEN
Los Angeles, California.
(then)
Guiding Light Health Insurance.

A long beat. Then-

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Yes, hi, you know, I just left the
house like an idiot and forgot my
invitation at home. Do you think
you could give me the address of
tonight's ball?
(then, listening)
Great, thank you so much.

Aiden flips closed the cell phone and steps on the gas.

INT. HILTON BALLROOM - NIGHT

A typical gala. Tuxedos, ball gowns, champaign flutes,
schmoozing wealthy types, hors d'oeuvre trays, and plastered
smiles fill the room.

On the stage, underneath a sign that reads "CELEBRATING 10
YEARS OF LEADERSHIP," Maya wears a stunning dress and sings.

Nearby, standing beside the bar, is LANDON BAYLEY, 48,
attractive with salt and pepper hair. He mingles with a
group of socialites and his WIFE.

At the door, Aiden nods at SECURITY as though he's supposed
to be there and strides into the crowd. He looks stunning in
his tuxedo, and a few women's heads careen to look at him.

He immediately spots Maya on the stage.

ON STAGE

Maya looks out across the crowd as she sings and suddenly
notices AIDEN standing alone and staring at her.

AT THE DOOR

WAITRESS (O.S.)
Red or white?

An attractive young WAITRESS holds up a tray of red and white
wines to Aiden. He looks across at Maya. He makes a
decision and then smiles back.

An unusually friendly smile for Aiden.

AIDEN
I'm not sure. How do you like it?

ON STAGE

Maya watches as Aiden flirts shamelessly with the Waitress. She finishes her song and swiftly exits the stage. She crosses to Aiden as the waitress leans in seductively.

WAITRESS
Then I'd choose red. It's so
passionate and sensual and warm.

Aiden lifts his eyebrow and reaches to take the red wine from her tray when Maya practically barrels into him.

MAYA
Excuse us.

She ushers him into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

MAYA
What are you doing here?

AIDEN
Celebrating ten years of
leadership. What does it look like?

MAYA
You have to leave.

AIDEN
Don't want to be seen with me?

MAYA
Aiden, please. Not here.

AIDEN
You saw me naked, Maya.

She pauses, effected.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
I trusted you.

A long beat. Then-

MAYA
I have to go.

She spins around and disappears through the doors. Aiden stares at them as they slide closed, fury boiling.

INT. HILTON / KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

White coated cooks flip sizzling pans and yell at one another across roaring stove top flames. Aiden walks briskly through, eyeing the flames as he passes.

He notices bottles of oil, cans of PAM, lighters, and matches as he goes. He palms a lighter and a can of PAM.

Finally, he nears what appears to be a small TRASH ROOM. The cracked open door reveals food scraps and buckets of goo.

Aiden slides through the cracked door. Peering into one of the buckets, he sees his reflection in a BLACK, OILY substance: KITCHEN GREASE.

Aiden pulls out the lighter and thumbs it. Then, with one hand, he uncaps the PAM and SPRAYS at the match.

It ignites an IMPROVISED BLOWTORCH. He aims it at the grease and it immediately catches, ROARING to life in the bucket.

Aiden quickly KICKS the bucket over, the FIERY GREASE spreading across food scraps and tossed aside trash.

Then, the grease passes through the cracked door, a river of fire igniting the white tiled kitchen.

INT. HILTON / BALLROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

CEILING SPRINKLERS go off, soaking the patrons, ruining the lively gala, and halting the soft music. Landon covers himself with his arms, cursing, as Maya slides off stage, her hair wet and straggly.

FIRE ALARMS dissolve into the sound of SIRENS as we go to-

INT. HILTON / KITCHEN - NIGHT

Where Firefighters buzz around the kitchen.

Klein surveys it, eying a BURN LINE across the floor.

Hartley, who stands interviewing a witness, notices him and smiles. Klein catches her gaze and nods gratefully.

Then, Weatherford enters and immediately spots Klein. His brows furrow. He looks across at Hartley.

WEATHERFORD
Did you call in a 447?

Hartley shakes her witness's hand distractedly and crosses.

WEATHERFORD (CONT'D)
As soon as the press sees you here,
Klein, they're going to connect
this to Dante, and we cannot afford
that right now.

KLEIN
But this is Dante.

WEATHERFORD
If it was him, the entire hotel
would be on fire. It was probably
an accident.

HARTLEY
Then it would've been electrical,
not a barrel of grease that could
never have fallen over on its own.

Klein looks at Hartley, surprised.

HARTLEY (CONT'D)
It's a flammable liquid trail,
Bill. That's still his signature.

A Firefighter calls to Weatherford, urgent. He catches his eye and puts up a hand: one second. Then, to Klein-

WEATHERFORD
Fine, but then you're in charge of
handling the shit storm.
(shaking his head)
Call in the press conference.

He turns and strides away. Klein looks at Hartley. He offers her a grateful smile. She returns it. Then, she watches as Klein strides away.

EXT. HILTON - NIGHT

We follow Klein as he exits the building. As he gets into his car, we stay on the HILTON and PAN UP THE SIDE OF THE HOTEL. We go UP AND UP until we narrow in on ONE DARK ROOM. We move inside to see-

INT. HILTON ROOM - NIGHT

-Maya and Landon, mid-fornication. A stark contrast from the sensual love with Aiden, Maya is taking it hard doggie-style.

The pace accelerates until Landon CLIMAXES and collapses on top of her. He breathes HARD in her ear, panting with the exertion of an old man who just reamed a much younger girl.

LANDON

You are a goddess.

He kisses the back of her neck and rolls over onto his back, sighing with satisfaction and closing his eyes. Maya rolls onto her side and props herself up on her elbow, watching Landon drift into sleep.

MAYA

Hey hun?

LANDON

Hmm?

MAYA

Did you put a call into West Valley Recording yet?

LANDON

Hmm? No, I was getting ready for this gala. But I'll take care of it next week, I promise.

He rolls away from her. Maya stares at his back.

MAYA

I've heard that before.

LANDON

Can we please talk about this in the morning, Kiddo? I'm tired.

He pulls the blankets up around him. Maya watches him for a beat, then slides out of bed.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maya looks at herself in the mirror. She sighs heavily at her reflection. Then, she turns and sits down on the toilet. She looks up at the wall opposite her to see-

-A print of VAN GOGH'S IRISES hanging above her. Maya stares at them, thoughtful.

INT. PERIODICALS DATABASE / LA PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Aiden sits in front of a database machine. He types into the search bar: LANDON BAYLEY.

Several results pop up on the screen. He clicks one, 1999.

INSERT NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: "LANDON BAYLEY, 38, youngest CEO of GUIDING LIGHT HEALTH INSURANCE announces new plan to broaden eligible recipients."

He clicks on another, 2001.

INSERT HEADLINE: "Bayley Goes on Record: Raising premiums a matter of necessity."

He clicks on another, 2001.

INSERT HEADLINE: "Talks of a Bayley buyout, LA Officials declare their dedication to preventing a monopoly."

Aiden looks away from the computer, thinking.

EXT. ARSON INVESTIGATION UNIT HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A podium sits outside the front of the headquarters. Various members of the PRESS wait impatiently.

HARTLEY and KLEIN exit the building and the Press springs into immediate questioning mode. Hartley reaches the podium and holds up her hand. She waits for their silence.

HARTLEY

Thank you for coming. Senior Arson Investigator Stephens is going to be making a brief statement. He will not be taking any questions at this time.

She steps aside and Klein takes her spot.

KLEIN

Last night during a high profile gala, the kitchen of the Beverly Hilton was set on fire. At first glance, this fire appears spontaneous, perhaps even accidental. But upon closer look, my team and I have determined that this was, yet again, the work of the Dante Arsonist.

Klein pauses, looking out at the waiting microphones and television cameras.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
Most arson cases are spontaneous.
Crimes of passion, if you will.
Girl discovers boyfriend's cheating
on her and sets his clothes on fire-

INT./EXT. AIDEN'S CAR - DAY

Aiden pulls up in front of a TWENTY-PLUS-STORY building marked by the sign GUIDING LIGHT INSURANCE CORPORATE.

KLEIN (V.O.)
-But in the case of a pathological
or serial fire setter, the fires
are not spontaneous at all. They
bring with them a clear signature.
And the Dante arsonist is no
exception.

He parks the car and reaches into a bag on the passenger seat, pulling out a janitorial uniform.

EXT. GUIDING LIGHT INSURANCE CORPORATE - DAY

Aiden walks towards the building in a janitorial uniform. A suit exits the building and Aiden nods to him, holding the door open courteously and slipping inside.

KLEIN (V.O.)
His profile is specific. He's most
likely a loner, a victim of abuse.

INT. GUIDING LIGHT INSURANCE - DAY

Clipboard in hand, Aiden walks through the lobby, drawing out a floorplan. He nods to security as he passes, then makes a large X on his diagram.

KLEIN (V.O.)
He's highly intelligent, perhaps
even a genius.

Another janitor passes by and Aiden smiles at him like he knows him. The other janitor, confused, smiles in return.

KLEIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
A master of manipulation and
disguise.

INT. GUIDING LIGHT INSURANCE CORPORATE - LATER

Aiden enters an office space and finds a SPARKLETS WATER DISPENSER. He marks a TRIANGLE on his diagram.

Other various TRIANGLES litter the drawing.

KLEIN (V.O.)
His fires are sophisticated,
planned, distinct-

EXT. GUIDING LIGHT INSURANCE CORPORATE - LATER

Aiden lifts up a MANHOLE in the ground and slides it over.

INT. UNDERGROUND WATER MAINS - MOMENTS LATER

Aiden wades across the underground sewage to the WATER LINES.

KLEIN (V.O.)
-Because he believes what he does
is the highest form of art.

He runs his hand across the various labellings until he finds SPRINKLER SYSTEM.

EXT. ARSON INVESTIGATION UNIT HEADQUARTERS - DAY

KLEIN
This fire, while not the usual
frightening scope we've seen over
the past few years, still bears
Dante's signature.

Klein notices WEATHERFORD standing at the back of the press area, watching him.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Aiden sits on the patio of the coffee shop, sipping coffee. A fully rendered floorplan, for all twenty three stories of Guiding Light Health Insurance, sits before him.

On the TELEVISION in the corner of the room, we see the PRESS CONFERENCE with Klein playing out.

KLEIN (VIA TELEVISION)

-We're asking that if anyone saw anyone or anything unusual while they were at the Hilton last night, please contact the LA Arson Unit as soon as you can. Thank you.

Klein bows away. As the PRESS calls after him for questions, the NEWSCASTER takes over the story. Aiden watches the television, almost blankly, when-

MAYA (O.S.)

You following me?

Aiden immediately folds the papers, looking up to see Maya.

AIDEN

Believe it or not, I came to this place long before you and I met.

MAYA

You're right. I was projecting.

He looks away and puts his papers into a bag. Maya looks up at the television. Footage of the FIRE plays on screen.

MAYA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I almost died after you left, you know. Apparently someone set the kitchen on fire.

(then, playfully)

It wasn't you was it?

Aiden zips his bag and stands.

AIDEN

Yes, Maya, you rejected me and I set the Hilton kitchen on fire.

Aiden exits. She quickly follows.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Maya walks behind Aiden.

MAYA

Aiden, wait.

AIDEN

What do you want, Maya?

MAYA

Just to talk.

Aiden stops and spins around. She practically runs into him.

AIDEN
Okay. Then talk.

A beat. He stares at her expectantly.

MAYA
I... I wanted to say I'm sorry.

AIDEN
Good, you said it. Feel better?

He turns and continues walking. She follows after him.

MAYA
I told you I wasn't looking for anything, Aiden. I'm sorry, but you can't possibly understand.

AIDEN
You're right. I don't.

MAYA
I can't throw five years away on a whim. I don't even know you!

He stops to face her.

AIDEN
Then you do very interesting things with people you don't know.

This silences Maya. Aiden spins around and walks off. She watches him go, helpless.

INT. KLEIN'S HOUSE / OFFICE - EVENING

Klein's on the phone, huddled under the bright halo of a single reading lamp as RAIN falls outside.

MISS BURROWS (VIA TELEPHONE)
Still on vacation. Leave a message.

KLEIN
Hi, Miss Burrows, this is Klein Stephens, senior investigator on the Dante Arsonist case, calling again about a Miss Rose Summers?

A distant KNOCK from the other room. Klein looks up.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
I don't know if you're checking
your messages, but if you could
please call me back at the LA Arson
Investigation Headquarters, I would
really appreciate it.

Klein hangs up the phone to attend to the KNOCKING.

EXT. KLEIN'S HOUSE - AT THE SAME TIME

Klein opens the front door to reveal Aiden standing outside,
soaking wet, with a half-empty bottle of Jack in hand and his
scarf around his neck.

KLEIN
Aiden?

AIDEN
(drunkly)
Sorry it's l-late.

Klein looks across the lawn at Aiden's car, concerned.

KLEIN
Did you drive here?

AIDEN
Ca... can I come in?

INT. KLEIN'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Aiden plops down on the couch next to Boomer.

KLEIN
You need water.

Aiden watches as Klein disappears into the kitchen, his
drunken expression replaced by a knowing smirk.

HE'S COMPLETELY AND TOTALLY SOBER.

As Klein reemerges with water, Aiden resumes his persona.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
Here.

He hands Aiden the water and sits on the coffee table in
front of the couch. As Aiden takes a sip-

KLEIN (CONT'D)
You're bombed.

AIDEN
No, I'm dru-
(hiccup)
Drunk.

KLEIN
What are you doing here?

AIDEN
Should I go? I should go.

Aiden takes a swig of whiskey and tries to stand. He falls back on the couch, almost on Boomer.

KLEIN
Whoa, easy.

Klein stands over Aiden as he falls towards a pillow. He grabs a nearby blanket and covers Aiden with it.

Klein sits on the coffee table in front of the couch. Then-

KLEIN (CONT'D)
What's going on, Aiden?

Aiden looks up at him.

AIDEN
She left me.

KLEIN
Who?

AIDEN
How could she pick him? He doesn't even love her.

Klein takes the whiskey out of Aiden's hands and places it on the table.

KLEIN
Women are complicated, Aiden. My wife dumped me on Christmas two years before she married me.

AIDEN
Why?

Klein shrugs.

KLEIN
I'm sure she'll come back, Aiden.
Give her time.

Aiden nods. Klein takes the water out of his hand and places it on the table.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
Sleep it off here.

Klein gets up and disappears behind the couch and up the stairs, shutting off the light in the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM / KLEIN'S HOUSE - LATER

The lights in the house are out and the place still. Aiden lies, eyes open, waiting. Finally, he kicks off the blanket.

INT. HALLWAY / KLEIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Aiden slinks down the first floor hallway, opening doors quietly and then closing them again. He comes across a bathroom, a laundry room, and then finally

AN OFFICE.

He checks behind him, then enters the room.

INT. OFFICE / KLEIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Spotless. A desk, a file cabinet, a bookshelf, a lamp.

Aiden moves first to the file cabinet. The top drawer is labeled "AIU PROGRESS AND REPORTS," the second "ARSONIST PROFILES," the third "MISC."

He tries them. All locked. He opens a drawer in the desk and finds a paper clip. He unfolds it and works on the locks. CLICK! Jackpot.

Aiden opens the first drawer and rifles through it. He pulls out a massive, overflowing file that reads DANTE ARSONIST.

THWUMP! The file lands on the desk. Aiden rifles through clippings from past fires, scribbled notes, profile history.

He reaches a file within a file. "FIRST HOMICIDE."

He opens it. Notes about the victim. Pictures of the body. Random addresses and phone numbers.

Then, he finds what he's looking for, near the back.

"ROSE SUMMERS. DEAD END PERSONA 2000. CURRENT ALIAS UNKNOWN."

Aiden re-reads the page. Who's Rose Summers?

Suddenly, he hears the door CREAK open behind him and he spins around to see-

Boomer, tail wagging.

Aiden SIGHS with relief. He takes one last look at the name ROSE SUMMERS and then closes the file.

INT. KITCHEN / KLEIN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Klein enters the kitchen to the sound of scrambling eggs. Aiden stands at the stove, cooking breakfast, still wearing that bright red scarf.

AIDEN
Good morning.

Klein, grumpy and groggy, GRUNTS and approaches the coffee machine. He pours himself a cup and sits at the table.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Morning, Sam.

Sam enters the kitchen, equally as groggy. He GRUNTS, too, then plops down at the table.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I came over last night.
The things whiskey does to a man.

Klein waves his hand in dismissal and attends to the full cup of coffee in his hands.

Sam looks up as Aiden shovels eggs onto a plate with a grin.

SAM
Are you always so perky in the mornings?

AIDEN
Only when I'm hung over.
(handing him a plate)
Eat your eggs.

Klein's PHONE RINGS. He pulls it out of his pocket.

KLEIN
Stephens. Hey Hartley.

Aiden perks up nervously at the name.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / HARTLEY'S DESK - AT THE SAME TIME

Hartley reads off of a report:

HARTLEY

Twelve separate addresses in the greater LA area match the cross reference you gave me. Eleven of them are to homes and one of them is a P.O. Box.

KLEIN

A P.O. Box?

HARTLEY

Weird, right?

KLEIN

Not if you don't want anyone knowing where you live. What's the name?

Klein looks across at Aiden as he washes the cooking pan off in the kitchen sink. He's trying to listen inconspicuously.

HARTLEY

Foreign name, Dan Tealghieri. So far, nothing's coming in on it.

KLEIN

I'll be right in.

INT. KLEIN'S HOUSE / KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Klein closes his cell phone and pushes back from the table right as Aiden takes a seat in front of his plate.

SAM

It's Saturday.

KLEIN

Is it?

Klein buses his dishes. Sam turns around to watch his father.

SAM

You can at least eat.

Klein tosses his eggs in the sink. Sam turns to Aiden.

SAM (CONT'D)
Good luck with him. He was always
a workaholic, even before Mom died.

KLEIN
(warning)
Sam.

SAM
He worked late the night she kicked
the bucket.

KLEIN
Shut up, Sam!

A beat. Sam stares at Klein, angry, then pushes back his chair and exits the kitchen.

Klein watches him go, then KICKS Sam's chair into the table with a SLAM. He puts his hands on his hips.

AIDEN
Klein, I'm sorry, I didn't know
your wife-

KLEIN
You can let yourself out.

He exits. Aiden watches as Klein slams the door behind him.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / KLEIN'S DESK - DAY

Klein examines the report on Dan Tealghieri.

HARTLEY
Pseudonym for both the PO BOX and
billing receipts. But there's no
etymology for the name Tealghieri.
It seems sloppy, doesn't it?

KLEIN
Say his name for me.

HARTLEY
What?

KLEIN
Say his full name out loud.

HARTLEY
Dan Tealghieri.

Klein listens, then shakes his head, incredulous.

KLEIN
That bastard.

Klein turns to the report and scribbles on the paper.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
He reorganized the name so it's
less obvious.

He holds up the report, a name scrawled on it.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
Dante Alghieri. Author of Inferno.

HARTLEY
Dante for the Dante Arsonist?

KLEIN
He's telling us to go fuck
ourselves and really enjoying it.
(then)
Let's duplicate the sentiment.

EXT. SMITH'S AUTO WRECKING - DAY

Aiden examines a used WATER STORAGE truck.

SMITH (O.S.)
You some kind of collector?

Aiden spins around to see MR. SMITH, 68, ancient.

AIDEN
How much?

SMITH
12,250.

Aiden puts his hands on his hips and steps back.

AIDEN
I'll give you 10,500.

SMITH
10,500? What do I look like to you?

Aiden shrugs and walks towards the exit.

SMITH (CONT'D)
Alright, alright. 11,000.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Aiden fills the gas tank of the WATER STORAGE Truck.

Or it seems.

A CLOSE UP reveals that Aiden is filling WATER BOTTLES with gasoline. He screws the cap on and places it in the bed of the truck. It is one of nearly a dozen bottles.

INT. STORAGE SPACE - DAY

The SPARKLETS DELIVERY TRUCK and the WATER STORAGE truck sit idle in the space.

Aiden stacks another BOTTLE of gasoline on an already looming pile. Several brands of WATER BOTTLES make up the bunch.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / KLEIN'S DESK - NIGHT

Klein types on his computer when Hartley approaches. She knocks on the wall of his cubicle.

He looks up at her. She hands him a report.

HARTLEY

I ran the blood in the DNA against everyone in our system. Nothing came back.

KLEIN

Of course not. That would make our job easy.

HARTLEY

At least we have definitive evidence, Klein. It's a step forward.

KLEIN

Yeah. Thanks.

As she turns to walk away-

KLEIN (CONT'D)

Hey, Hartley?

(off her look)

Do you think I came back to work too fast?

HARTLEY

I dunno, boss, I do fire.

(then)

Lily was a very lucky woman, Klein.

KLEIN

The guy that gets you will be the
luckier, Jill.

Hartley smiles and pats his cubicle.

HARTLEY

Good night.

KLEIN

Night.

Klein watches Hartley go, a softness in his expression.

The PRELAPPED sound of a DOORBELL ringing brings us to...

EXT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

... As Maya presses on the doorbell. Her back is to us as Aiden opens the door.

He stares at her, startled. A long beat.

MAYA

Do I really look that bad?

She pushes past him.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT / LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maya enters the kitchen as Aiden shuts the door. He hears the sound of the FREEZER opening and the SHUFFLING of ice.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT / KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maya drops ice into a cup and grabs whiskey off the counter. She pours it into the glass.

AIDEN

Whoa, whoa.

Aiden takes the whiskey away from her and closes it. She whips around to face him, revealing MAKEUP-STAINED cheeks and RED, TEARY eyes. She's been crying.

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

MAYA
She's pregnant.

She plops down at the table and takes a swig of the whiskey.

MAYA (CONT'D)
He's never gonna fucking leave her.

AIDEN
I assumed that was part of the
appeal.

MAYA
Why would I want that?

Aiden reaches into his pocket and produces a cigarette. As he places it in his mouth and lights it-

AIDEN
He's safe. You never have to
follow through on anything.

MAYA
Spare me the psychological babble,
would you please?

She reaches out for his cigarette. He reluctantly hands it over. As she takes a drag-

AIDEN
Isn't that why you ran away from
me? Because you might've felt
something real for once?

MAYA
I didn't run away.

AIDEN
You fucked me and left me.

MAYA
No, I made love to you.

AIDEN
And then you left me.

She hands the cigarette back.

MAYA
You're not the only one with scars,
Aiden. This isn't easy for me.

Aiden looks out the window. A long beat as Maya watches him.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Look, I made a mistake. But I'm not going anywhere this time. I wouldn't be here if I was.

AIDEN

No, you wouldn't be here if his wife wasn't pregnant.

MAYA

You're not my backup plan, okay? I have lots of guys I could run and cry to over something like this.

AIDEN

Then why don't you?

MAYA

Because I miss the way I feel when I'm with you.

Aiden finally looks at her.

MAYA (CONT'D)

I got scared, okay? I'm sorry.

Aiden studies her for a long beat. Then, he puts out his cigarette, takes her head in both hands, and kisses her.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT / BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clock reads 1:00 AM. Aiden slides out of bed carefully.

INT. STORAGE SPACE - NIGHT

Aiden has a HOSE hooked up to his WATER TRUCK, filling it.

The needle of the PRESSURE METER is full to capacity. He shuts the hose off and hooks a PUMP up to the truck.

Then, he clicks a STOPWATCH and pumps the water out of the truck and into a drain in the street.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT / BEDROOM - MORNING

Aiden and Maya sleep next to one another, foreheads touching.

Maya stirs and rolls onto her back, stretching her arms out. It wakes Aiden, whose eyes flutter open. Maya smiles at him.

MAYA

Good morning. Did you dream?

Aiden shakes his head no and stretches. Maya lies on her side and props her head up with her hand.

MAYA (CONT'D)

So I was thinking that I'd camp out here for a bit.

AIDEN

Trying to avoid Landon?

MAYA

Trying to spend more time with you.

Aiden looks at Maya, surprised. She smiles.

MAYA (CONT'D)

I'll make a mess, I promise.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

A typical outdoor strip mall with many a store. Amongst them is a small POST OFFICE.

Klein's car squeezes into a spot in front of the glass doors of the post office. He turns off the car and opens his door, gingerly allowing it to rest against the car next to him.

He shimmies out the door, his HOLSTER catching on the seat belt. He looks back, frustrated, and removes his GUN.

He takes off his holster and places his gun in the back of his pants. He tosses the holster on the seat and shuts the door behind him, buttoning his jacket to hide the gun.

His cell phone rings. He spins around and looks across the parking lot, spotting a NONDESCRIPT WHITE VAN. He waves.

KLEIN

Hartley. Can you see me? Okay, keep all eyes on the lot. I want an ID on anyone that enters these doors.

INT. POST OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Klein enters and passes a familiar, smiley DOOR WOMAN.

DOOR WOMAN

Good morning, sir.

Klein nods at her and scans the post office. He immediately finds the P.O. BOX SECTION, lined in gold mailboxes.

DOOR WOMAN (CONT'D)
Can I help you with something?

Klein's eyes skim the wall for the number. 451. He turns.

KLEIN
Yeah, I'm hoping to connect up with an old friend, Dan Tealghieri. Do you know him?

The Door Woman blushes.

DOOR WOMAN
Oh, Dan comes in from time to time.

Klein's eyes narrow in on a young Man as he walks towards the Post Office. Tall, dark, full facial hair, blue eyes.

But he finds a PACKAGE in the man's hands. The return address reads MARK-something. It's not his guy.

DOOR WOMAN (CONT'D)
He's a very mysterious young man.

KLEIN
How old is he now?

DOOR WOMAN
I dunno, early thirties?

Klein steps aside to let the Man pass through the front door. Then he reaches into his pocket and pulls out his wallet.

KLEIN
Dan hasn't seen me in a while.

Klein hands her a bill.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
I'd like to surprise him.

The Door Woman gives him an approving nod.

Klein finds a bench near the front door. He settles in, opens up a newspaper, and waits.

INT./EXT. AIDEN'S CAR - DAY

Aiden pulls up outside Maya's apartment complex and parks.

AIDEN
Do you want me to come in with you?

Maya shakes her head no as she exits the car. She leans through the rolled down window and gives Aiden a kiss.

MAYA
Go do something useful.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Klein's cell VIBRATES in his pocket. He pulls it out and reads a text from HARTLEY: MATCHING DESCRIPTION ON THE WAY.

Klein shuts the phone as a COUPLE enters the post office, the MAN also bearded, tall, dark featured, and blue eyed.

WOMAN
You promised.

MAN
That was before I met your parents.

The WOMAN playfully shoves the Man and he smiles.

The Man walks towards the PO BOX area of the post office and Klein stiffens. He places his hand on his gun.

But he cross to PO BOX 221. Not his guy.

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT / MAYA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Maya enters her bedroom and crosses to a closet, pulling out a suitcase and flopping it on the bed.

KATE (O.S.)
He called at least six times today.

Maya looks up to see Kate leaning against the door jam.

MAYA
He can call for eternity, I'm done.

KATE
Great, you should let him know.

Kate hands Maya the apartment phone.

MAYA
I won't be here.
(handing back the phone)
You can tell him.

Maya disappears into the bathroom and returns with a bag of toiletries. As she tosses it into the suitcase-

KATE
No, Maya. I am tired of picking up
your pieces.

MAYA
What are you talking about?

KATE
Who's going to pay rent? Huh?
Gas? Electric? Cable?

MAYA
A subletter, this isn't
revolutionary.

Maya zips the suitcase and pushes past Kate into the

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Kate follows on her heels.

KATE
You can't run away and always
expect me to fix everything until
you're ready to come back.

MAYA
Nobody asked you to take care of
me.

KATE
No? That's news to me. Because I
keep trying to live my life, Maya,
and you always get in the way.

Maya whips around, a sudden malice in her expression. The stark shift is reminiscent of her sudden character change when she met Aiden for the first time.

MAYA
You just don't want me to leave
because you have no idea what to do
without me.

She catches Kate off guard.

MAYA (CONT'D)
You follow me around like a wounded
puppy, it's like your obsessed or
something.

KATE

What are you talking about?

MAYA

Keeping you happy is not my responsibility, Kate. So get over me already.

KATE

You know what, fuck you, Maya. Get out of my apartment.

MAYA

Fine.

Maya spins around and exits, SLAMMING the door behind her.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Aiden's neck is covered in his scarf when he pulls into the post office parking lot. He checks his watch, shutting the door and walking towards the post office.

INT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The Door Woman looks out the window and sees Aiden approaching. She smiles and immediately looks at Klein.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Aiden pushes through the last line of cars obstructing his way to the front door.

He tries to squeeze past two cars parked far too close to one another when his shirt catches on the side view mirror.

As Aiden stops to unhook himself he recognizes...

KLEIN'S CAR. In the driver's seat is the forgotten holster.

Aiden's eyes go wide.

INT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Klein scans the people inside the post office over the top of his newspaper when a finger touches his shoulder.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Aiden's gaze whips towards the Post Office, and he sees the Door Woman standing beside a familiar figure.

KLEIN.

Aiden spins around and finds in the lot a WHITE VAN.

He's being watched. He turns and walks around the corner of the building, playing at being nonchalant.

INT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Klein turns and looks at the Door Woman, who grins at him.

DOOR WOMAN
He's on his way.

Klein puts down the newspaper and whips around, looking out the window.

A text message comes in: POSSIBLE MATCH-UP ON THE WAY.

Just then, someone pushes through the door.

The figure moves quickly as it crosses the post office to the P.O. BOX section.

Klein turns around to see the figure wearing a hooded sweatshirt nearing the box in question. He poises in front of 451, back turned, as he puts the key into a lock.

Klein unhooks his gun and immediately rushes at the figure, slamming him into the wall of P.O. BOXES. He spins the figure around, revealing...

...SOME HOMELESS GUY. He's dirty as hell and looks scared.

The Door Woman looks on, shocked.

HOMELESS GUY
Hey! What's the problem here, man?!

The Door Woman spots Aiden disappearing into his car as Hartley and Team evacuate the NONDESCRIPT WHITE VAN and rush towards the post office.

KLEIN
Are you Dan Tealghieri?!

HOMELESS GUY
No, I'm the fuckin Tooth Fairy.

Klein CRACKS the guy in the face with his ELBOW. The sound catches the Door Woman's attention as Aiden's car peels out.

HARTLEY and crew burst through the doors, surrounding Klein and the Homeless Guy. Homeless Guy puts his hands up to protect his face, a ONE HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL in his hands.

HOMELESS GUY (CONT'D)
God damnit! Some guy gave me a
Franklin to open this mailbox, I
don't know shit!

Klein snatches the bill from the Homeless Guy's hands. He unfolds it to find a message written on it:

NICE TRY OLD MAN.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

KLEIN PUSHES through the glass doors and scans the lot.

There's no one there.

Klein slams his hands on the hood of a car, furious.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Maya's things are strewn all over the living room.

Sitting on the couch in front of the television as the final scene of a MOVIE plays is AIDEN. Maya's head lies in his lap, and she's sound asleep.

The credits roll and Aiden looks down at Maya. He slides slowly out from underneath her, trying not to wake her. Then, he picks her up and carries her into his bedroom.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT / BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Aiden places Maya in his bed and pulls the sheets around her. He pauses for a beat, moving her hair out of her face and watching her. His eyes are full of affection.

Then, he kisses her and exits, shutting the door behind him.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / KLEIN'S DESK - NIGHT

Klein is asleep at his desk. A RAPPING on the cubicle wall. He jerks awake to see WEATHERFORD standing there.

KLEIN

Jesus, Bill, you scared me.

(then)

Why aren't you home with your kids?

WEATHERFORD

I should ask you the same thing.

Klein gathers up some papers and puts them in his briefcase.

WEATHERFORD (CONT'D)

Word of this afternoon got to Wilkins. He's ordered me to take you off the case.

KLEIN

What?

WEATHERFORD

It might be good to take some time off, Klein. You came back so fast.

Klein slams his bag down on the desk.

KLEIN

What would have been more socially acceptable? To mourn forever?

WEATHERFORD

You took two weeks.

KLEIN

I wasn't shot in the line of duty, my wife died.

WEATHERFORD

I'm sorry, Klein, but there's nothing I can do. We've got good investigators here, Hartley's fantastic. Just go home to your son and try to forget about it.

As Weatherford turns to walk away-

KLEIN

No one knows this guy like I do.

Weatherford stops, turns to look at Klein.

WEATHERFORD

You don't even know him.

AIDEN (PRELAP)

He's politicking.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Klein and Aiden sit across from one another in a booth. Klein takes a sip of his beer. Aiden wears his scarf.

KLEIN
He is a politician.

AIDEN
No, I mean your captain. He should tell Wilkins to fuck himself, you're the best guy for the job.

KLEIN
Weatherford's got loyalties, too.

AIDEN
Clearly not to you.

Klein shrugs. The Waitress arrives with plates of food and sets them down before Klein and Aiden.

KLEIN
You never called Adam.
(off Aiden's look)
From the newspaper?

Shit. Aiden immediately backpedals.

AIDEN
I know, I'm sorry. I haven't had time.

KLEIN
Right, because your job is so busy?
Because your girlfriend left you?

AIDEN
Watch it, Klein.

His sternness stuns Klein. And Aiden, too.

KLEIN
Didn't know it was a sensitive subject.

AIDEN
Neither did I.

Aiden sips his drink. An uncomfortable silence. Then-

KLEIN
I was married once before I met Lily.
(MORE)

KLEIN (CONT'D)
To a girl I dated in college. Got
pregnant when I was twenty three.
Twenty three, Aiden. I didn't even
want to get hitched.
(then)
She miscarried.

Aiden finally looks at him.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
I wasted six years with a woman I
never loved because it was easy.
(then)
Don't fuck up your life because
you're afraid to change, too.

Aiden watches Klein for a beat, as the Waitress arrives.

WAITRESS
How is everything?

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT / KITCHEN - AT THE SAME TIME

A CUPBOARD slams shut.

Reveal Maya, still in PJs, stretching to reach a cupboard.

A cereal box sits on the counter next to milk. Maya stands on her tip-toes and manages to open the cupboard.

BOWLS. She can't reach. She lifts herself up onto the counter and kneels on it, reaching the bowl. She places it on the counter and carefully tries to climb down.

But her sock-covered foot hits the tile floor and SLIPS.

She lands with a THUD on her back. She winces, folding her knees into her chest to temper the pain. She opens her eyes and breathes slowly.

Then, she sees it. A PANEL in the ceiling that looks a little offset. Something STICKS through. Newspaper. She furrows her brows.

She carefully gets up and drags a chair underneath the panel. She climbs up and lifts the panel, feeling blindly around for something. Her fingers touch it. She pulls the box down and opens it. And then, her eyes go WIDE.

EXT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aiden pads up the stairs to his apartment, keys JINGLING.

He unlocks the door and enters.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Strewn papers from his box litter the floor.

Maya sits in the middle of the chaos, reading. She immediately spins around to look at him.

MAYA

What the hell is this?

Aiden stares at her, caught completely off guard. She holds up the PLANS for LANDON's FIRE.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Are you going to burn down Landon's company, too? Like you burned down the Ford dealership and the temple?

She refers to a NEWSPAPER ARTICLE.

MAYA (CONT'D)

And the Hilton kitchen?

AIDEN

You were never supposed to see that.

Maya shakes her head and stands, grabbing her purse and pushing past Aiden to the door. He rushes to it.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Maya, wait.

MAYA

Get out of my way, Aiden.

AIDEN

Are you going to go to the police?

MAYA

Maybe I am. What are you going to do? Set me on fire?

She tries to open the door. He puts his hand out to stop it.

AIDEN

Please, Maya, it's not about destroying, or making a statement, or hurting anyone. It's about taking things that are ugly and making them beautiful.

MAYA
You're crazy.

She tries to open the door, but he closes it again.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Get out of my way.

AIDEN
Please listen to me.

MAYA
Why, Aiden? I don't even know you.

AIDEN
Yes you do, Maya, this doesn't
change anything. It doesn't mean I
don't love you.

A sobering moment.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
I love you, Maya.

Maya stares at Aiden.

MAYA
Then stop. Stop for me.

AIDEN
It's not that simple.

MAYA
Yes it is.

AIDEN
It's not, you don't understand.

MAYA
I understand about bad things,
Aiden. Did you know that my dad
used to climb in bed with me at
night?

Aiden is silenced. He stares at her, shocked.

MAYA (CONT'D)
That my throat would ache the next
morning from holding back tears
because I knew he'd like it better
if I cried?

AIDEN
Jesus, Maya, I'm sorry.

MAYA

I'm not. I moved on. At a certain point you have to move on.

AIDEN

Is that why you're with Landon?
Because you moved on?

Maya looks at the ground and shakes her head. Aiden softens.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry he did that to you, Maya. But what happened to us is not the same. This isn't something I can control.

MAYA

Yes you can, Aiden. You're more than your scars. I know you're more than this.

AIDEN

No, Maya. I am this.

A beat. She opens the door.

MAYA

I really hope that's not true, Aiden. Because if you can't stop yourself, I'm going to have to find someone who can.

And with that, she SLAMS the door behind her. Aiden sinks down to the floor and buries his head in his hands.

INT./EXT. MAYA'S CAR - NIGHT

Maya speeds down the deserted night streets, jaw clenched.

After a moment, she begins to cry. She pulls over and collapses her head on the steering wheel.

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / KLEIN'S DESK - DAY

Klein gathers up some papers from his desk. Hartley arrives.

HARLTEY

Hey, boss.

KLEIN

Not your boss anymore, Hartley.

HARTLEY
Semantics.

She sits down in Klein's chair as he places files in a bag and hands Klein a paper.

He looks at it. It's the handwriting from the hundred dollar bill, isolated. "NICE TRY OLD MAN."

HARTLEY (CONT'D)
Too many prints to isolate one. So we're trying to match the writing.

Klein nods, then looks up at Hartley.

KLEIN
Thanks.

HARTLEY
Anytime, boss.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Aiden sits on the patio and fingers his pack of matches. His cell phone is wedged between his ear and shoulder.

AIDEN
Eleven missed calls looks
desperate, Maya. Please call me?

He flips it shut, SIGHING.

ZIIIPPP! He looks over as an Angsty Teen absentmindedly lights his Zippo while talking to a coffee mate.

At the table in front of him, a cigarette smolders in a tray. Aiden looks back at the case of matches in his hands.

Across from him, the sound of a MATCH striking as a Man lights his Girlfriend's cigarette.

Aiden closes his eyes and lets the smell wash over him. Finally, he can't take it any longer. He nods to the Man.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Can I bum a cigarette?

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Aiden puts the cigarette between his lips and reaches into his pocket for the matches. He opens the box only to find...

... it's EMPTY.

A beat. Aiden THROWS the box onto the ground and slides down the wall to a kneeling position.

INT. KLEIN'S HOUSE / OFFICE - NIGHT

Klein's on the phone again.

KLEIN

Miss Burrows, Klein Stephens calling. Again. Please call me back at 818.555.0451. That's my home number, alright?

He hangs up and drops his head, frustrated. Then, a distant KNOCKING on the front door.

INT. KLEIN'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Klein's living room is full of boxes. Aiden stands amongst them, confused, as Klein enters with a glass of whiskey. He wears his trademark red scarf.

AIDEN

I like what you've done with the place.

KLEIN

I went back to work so fast I never got rid of Lily's stuff.

Klein sits on the couch.

AIDEN

The beauty of unemployment.

KLEIN

What's this about the art show?

Aiden pulls a file of papers out from underneath his arm.

AIDEN

He's not an adult so I need you to sign off on this stuff for him.

KLEIN

He would be so insulted.

AIDEN

All teenagers take the law personally.

He sits beside Klein. Boomer bounds up, a ball in his mouth. Aiden rubs his head, then looks at Klein as he signs.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
What's the one thing you won't
throw out?

Klein looks up at Aiden, surprised.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
When my mom died, I refused to
throw away this pair of sunglasses
she used to wear.

Klein studies Aiden, then goes back to signing the papers.

KLEIN
Her wedding ring.

Suddenly, the PHONE RINGS. Klein gets up and crosses to the phone and snatches it up.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
Hello?

Suddenly, his head jerks up. He turns and looks out the window, his reflection in the glass panicked and stricken.

INT./EXT. KLEIN'S CAR - NIGHT

Aiden drives Klein up to an ACCIDENT SITE. Ambulances, fire trucks, a crumpled car.

EXT. ACCIDENT SITE - CONTINUOUS

Klein slams the car door shut behind him and runs through the caution tape. Aiden follows close behind. The flashing of pictures and the MURMUR of policemen fill the air.

We recognize Sam's car, stopped in the middle of the street, driver's side door open. But the car looks fine.

Klein rounds the corner of a fire truck to see a crying ALICIA being debriefed by another cop as SAM is lifted onto a STRETCHER. The color drains from his face.

A moving COP immediately intercepts them.

COP
Sir, you can't be here.

KLEIN
He's my son. Sam!

Sam's stretcher is placed in an ambulance.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
What happened?

COP
Exited his vehicle to chase after
his girlfriend when an oncoming car
hit him.

Klein runs past the cop towards the ambulance. Aiden decides to wait behind. Klein reaches the doors as the paramedics reach for them.

KLEIN
Sam!

Sam cocks his head to see Klein. The Paramedic tries to close the door but Klein puts out his hand to stop it.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
Sam, are you okay?

SAM
Go away, I don't want you here.

KLEIN
Sam, I'm your father.

SAM
Only when I'm on a stretcher, I
guess.

Klein steps back, shocked. The Paramedics shut the door on Klein, who watches helplessly as the SIRENS flash and the ambulance pulls away.

Aiden walks up behind Klein and puts a hand on his back.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Aiden sits on an uncomfortable bench outside a hospital room. He looks up as Klein walks down the hall, coffees in hand.

Klein sits down on the bench and hands Aiden the coffee.

AIDEN
Thanks.

He takes a sip. Sour.

KLEIN

Thanks for bringing me here, Aiden.

AIDEN

He's gonna be okay, Klein, kids are made of rubber.

Klein nods. A NURSE exits Sam's room and nods to Klein.

NURSE

He's awake.

But Klein doesn't move. The Nurse waits impatiently for him to give her some direction. Aiden looks up at her.

AIDEN

Thanks.

As she walks away-

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Aren't you going to go in?

KLEIN

He doesn't want me here.

AIDEN

He doesn't know what he wants.

KLEIN

He thinks I don't care. But every time I look at him, I see her.

A beat.

AIDEN

Sam has no idea how lucky he is, Klein.

Klein looks at Aiden, then pats him on the knee.

KLEIN

You're a good man, Aiden.

Aiden smiles, but when Klein looks away, Aiden's face dissolves to an emotion we've never, ever seen before.

Guilt.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aiden enters his apartment. He immediately looks over at Maya's stuff. Still there.

He crosses to the kitchen and goes through the motions to get his Mahogany Box from the ceiling panel.

He crosses to the fireplace and kicks the candles out of the way. He opens the box and empties its contents into a pile. Then, he grabs a lighter out of a drawer and drops it in.

The papers ignite, crackle, and burn. Aiden sits back against the couch and watches as his history burns.

EXT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aiden KNOCKS on the door. The Mahogany box is under his arm.

AIDEN

Maya?

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - AT THE SAME TIME

Maya walks slowly to the door and looks through the peephole. She sees Aiden holding the box. He KNOCKS again.

AIDEN

Maya, I need to talk to you.

Please open the door?

(then)

I'm done, Maya. I don't need it.

Maya steps away from the peephole and leans her head against the door, thinking. Then, she looks through again.

Aiden's gone.

EXT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - AT THE SAME TIME

Maya opens the front door and peers out.

Nothing. She grabs the box.

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Maya kicks the door shut behind her and opens it.

Inside is a large pile of ashes.

Maya slinks to the floor, shocked. She picks up the ashes and runs them through her fingers, thinking.

INT./EXT. AIDEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Aiden is parked outside Maya's apartment, hooded sweatshirt up around his face, sleeping.

Suddenly, Maya treads down the stairs and enters the garage. The lights of her car jerk Aiden awake. He watches her pull out of the driveway, then quickly turns on his car and follows behind her.

EXT. 24 HOUR DINER - NIGHT

Maya enters the restaurant as Aiden's car pulls up. He parks across the street and follows after her.

INT. 24 HOUR DINER - CONTINUOUS

The HOSTESS smiles upon Aiden's entrance. But Aiden looks after Maya as she nears a booth only to see-

LANDON stand to greet her.

HOSTESS
Can I help you?

The world seems to slow as Landon embraces Maya.

HOSTESS (CONT'D)
Sir?

Aiden looks at the Hostess, then spins around and leaves.

HOSTESS (CONT'D)
Sir!

AT THE BOOTH

Maya pulls out of Landon's arms.

LANDON
How are you, Kiddo?

MAYA
I'm fine.

She sits coldly. Landon looks down at her, curious, then slides into the booth as a WAITRESS arrives with menus.

WAITRESS
Can I get y'all somethin to drink?

MAYA
I'm not eating, thank you.

Landon squints across at Maya, curious, then hands the menus to the Waitress.

LANDON
Just a Guiness for me, then.
(then, as she leaves)
You ask me to meet you for dinner
and you're not eating?

MAYA
It's late.

LANDON
No, there's something else.

The Waitress delivers his Guiness. As he takes a swig-

MAYA
You're right. I'm breaking up with
you.

Landon swallows slowly. He stares across at Maya.

LANDON
It's the baby.

MAYA
No, it's not.

LANDON
You want me to leave her.

MAYA
You're never going to leave her,
Landon. You can't change.
(then)
We both know we've been using each
other for a long time. You were
safe and I was easy and that worked
for us. But now I'm done.

Maya stands when, suddenly, Landon's hand WHIPS out and GRABS her arm. Hard. She calmly turns to look at him.

LANDON
I think you should sit down.

MAYA
I think you should take your
fucking hands off of me and go home
to your wife.

She stares at him, their eyes locked until, finally, Landon reaches into his pocket and produces his wallet.

One hand still on her arm, he counts out bills and fans them on the table. Then, he picks them up and tosses them at her.

LANDON
Here.

He lets go of her arm and stands.

LANDON (CONT'D)
You're going to need this.

He pushes past, bumping her shoulder as he exits the diner.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aiden bursts through the front door, heading straight for a closet in the living room. He throws open the door to reveal a DOLLY and several SPARKLETS WATER BOTTLES.

EXT. STORAGE SPACE - NIGHT

Aiden stands on top of the WATER STORAGE TRUCK and dumps the contents of OTHER BRAND WATER BOTTLES inside the large tank.

He tosses a bottle aside and proceeds to empty another.

In the SPARKLETS WATER TRUCK beside him, racks are stacked with SPARKLETS WATER BOTTLES filled to the brim.

EXT. GUIDING LIGHT HEALTH INSURANCE - NIGHT

Aiden's WATER STORAGE truck slowly pulls up near Guiding Light Health Insurance.

Aiden gets out carrying heavy pipe cutters and walks to the back of the truck. He unhooks a WATER PUMP and strides quickly towards the MANHOLE in the asphalt.

INT./EXT. MAYA'S CAR - NIGHT

Maya drives, phone to her ear, smiling.

MAYA
Aiden, it's me. I'm coming over.

She SNAPS the phone shut, bringing us to...

INT. UNDERGROUND WATER MAINS - NIGHT

As Aiden's pipe cutters SNAP through hard plastic.

Water immediately starts to flow out.

Aiden hooks a pump up to it and siphons water out of the pipes. The labeling on it reads SPRINKLER SYSTEM.

EXT. GUIDING LIGHT HEALTH INSURANCE - AT THE SAME TIME

A large hose runs from inside the manhole to a nearby storm drain, where water gushes into the sewers.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT HALLWAY- NIGHT

Maya KNOCKS on the door. No answer. She KNOCKS again.

MAYA

Aiden?

Nothing. She tries the knob. Nothing. She kicks up the doormat. No key.

Then, her nose catches the smell of something. She leans down and peers underneath the crack of the door. A LIQUID reflects the moonlight from the windows... Gas.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Shit.

EXT. GUIDING LIGHT HEALTH INSURANCE - NIGHT

The water stops flowing out of the pump. Aiden unhooks the pump and carries it to the side of the WATER STORAGE TRUCK.

Then, he pulls a stopwatch out of his pocket. Above the time window are the numbers 47. He presses START.

INT. UNDERGROUND WATER MAINS - AT THE SAME TIME

The pressure meter, which rests at ZERO, begins to rise as the fluid from the truck is PUMPED into the SPRINKLER SYSTEM.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Klein sits outside Sam's room, staring down at a sheet of paper in his hand, the one Hartley gave him.

"NICE TRY OLD MAN." The handwriting alone taunts him.

He leans forward and puts his head in his hands. Then, after a beat, he pulls out his cell phone and dials.

MISS BURROWS (VIA TELEPHONE)

Hello?

Klein's head pops up, shocked. He's frozen.

MISS BURROWS (VIA TELEPHONE) (CONT'D)

Hello?

KLEIN

Miss Burrows?

MISS BURROWS (VIA TELEPHONE)

Yes?

KLEIN

This is Klein Stephens, Senior Arson Investigator.

The other line goes silent.

KLEIN (CONT'D)

Hello?

MISS BURROWS (VIA TELEPHONE)

What do you want?

KLEIN

Can I come over? I'd like to talk to you in person.

Silence again.

KLEIN (CONT'D)

Miss Burrows?

MISS BURROWS (VIA TELEPHONE)

I leave for work in an hour.

EXT. GUIDING LIGHT HEALTH INSURANCE - AT THE SAME TIME

A SPARKLETS WATER DELIVERY TRUCK, one we recognize as Aiden's, pulls up outside Guiding Light Health Insurance.

Aiden pops out, dressed in a Delivery Uniform and carrying a clipboard. He walks to the back of the truck and fills up a large dolly with SPARKLETS WATER BOTTLES.

He peaks at his stopwatch. 21 MINUTES have passed. He strides towards the building.

He reaches the front doors and sees a young, FEMALE SECURITY GUARD... a tough, female security guard... pacing.

He KNOCKS.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

KNOCK KNOCK! Klein's fist bangs on a door.

KLEIN
Katherine Burrows?

He raps on the door again until it swings open and Klein sees KATE, Maya's roommate and friend, staring back at him.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
Katherine Burrows?

Klein flashes his badge.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
May I come in?

Kate seems different. There's a coldness to her that we've never seen before. She steps aside so that Klein can enter.

EXT. GUIDING LIGHT CORPORATE - NIGHT

Aiden stands on the other side of the glass door.

AIDEN
I got water for Guiding Light.

SECURITY GUARD
It's after midnight.

AIDEN
I'm supposed to deliver these jugs
before the weekend and as of ten
minutes ago, we're Saturday
morning, so can you let me through?

SECURITY GUARD
I'm sorry, but it's after hours.

AIDEN

I had to take the 5 to get here and there was a six car wreck that put me back three hours. Anybody'd be late. Please, Miss? Help me out?

She looks at her watch impatiently, then opens the door.

SECURITY GUARD

Ten minutes.

Aiden tips his hat to her and pushes past, dolly in tow.

INT./EXT. MAYA'S CAR - NIGHT

Maya speeds downtown. She dials. The sound of a VOICEMAIL.

MAYA

God damn it, Aiden!

She SNAPS the phone shut, frustrated. Then, she opens it and dials again.

DISPATCHER (VIA CELLPHONE)

911 Emergency.

(off the silence)

Hello?

Maya closes the phone and shakes her head, angry at herself.

MAYA

Shit.

KATE (PRELAP)

Look, I haven't heard from Rose Summers in at least five years. I don't know what you want from me.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kate stands against the wall, arms crossed as Klein surveys the apartment. He examines pictures on the wall, some of which are with Kate and Maya.

KLEIN

So you were best friends your entire life, but she never mentioned where she was going?

KATE

That's right.

She's lying. And Klein knows it. He eyes her, then opens the door to a room we recognize as Maya's.

INT. GUIDING LIGHT HEALTH INSURANCE - NIGHT

Aiden lifts a SPARKLETS BOTTLE off the dolly and uncaps it. He sniffs its contents, closing his eyes.

Then, he dumps it into a dispenser. It pumps out of the bottle with loud GLUGS.

A HOLE in the bottom bottle leaves a trail of GAS following behind Aiden's dolly.

He enters the elevator. He's on the FIFTEENTH floor. He presses the button for the FOURTEENTH and it lights up.

INT. GUIDING LIGHT LOBBY - NIGHT

The Security Guard sees as Maya strides towards the glass doors and enters a code into the security panel.

It accepts with a BEEP and the doors open.

SECURITY GUARD
What are you doing?

MAYA
I left something in my husband's office.

SECURITY GUARD
Can I see some ID?

Maya hands over a badge.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)
Oh, I'm sorry, Miss Bayley, go right ahead.

MAYA
Thanks.

INT. GUIDING LIGHT ELEVATOR - LATER

The doors ding at floor five. Maya peeks her head out.

MAYA
Aiden?
(nothing)
God damn it.

She steps back inside and quickly presses the next floor. The elevator dings at floor six. Nothing.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Fuck!

She puts a cigarette between her lips. As she lights it, the doors for the seventh floor swing open and Maya sees...

...Aiden at the end of the hall, filling a water dispenser. Her eyes widen with shock.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Aiden?

Aiden turns.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Aiden, what are you doing?

INT. APARTMENT / MAYA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

An unmade bed, tussled clothes, opened drawers. Klein sees a vanity mirror in the corner of the room, pictures stuck underneath the molding, and crosses to it.

As he nears, he notices a very important Polaroid. A picture from the party that Maya took of herself with...

AIDEN.

Underneath the picture is a message he'd written that is now visible to us for the first time.

"YOU LIGHT MY FIRE."

Time practically stops. Klein pulls out the paper from Hartley in his pocket.

THE HANDWRITING MATCHES. Klein points at the picture.

KLEIN
Who is that?

KATE
My roommate, Maya.

KLEIN
Maya what?

Kate hesitates. Klein turns to look at her.

KATE
Maya Rose.

INT. GUIDING LIGHT INSURANCE CORPORATE - NIGHT

Maya strides towards Aiden, furious, heels CLICKING through a trail of brown liquid.

MAYA
You said you were done with this!

But Aiden can only look at the cigarette in her mouth.

AIDEN
Maya, put the cigarette out.

MAYA
Fuck you, Aiden, you lied to me!

AIDEN
You were leaving me for him! What did you expect?

MAYA
I expected you to be more than this. I expected you to change!

AIDEN
I did.

MAYA
Yeah, this is striking evidence.
(shaking her head)
I should never have believed in you.

She turns around to leave when Aiden reaches out for her arm.

AIDEN
Maya, wait-

But he bumps her. The cigarette in her hand PLUMMETS TO THE GROUND and LANDS IN THE GASOLINE.

WHOOOSH! The trail LIGHTS.

Maya whips around as the gas heads for the WATER BOTTLE.

Aiden leaps onto her as the SPARKLETS JUG EXPLODES INTO FLAMES, plastic shards flying everywhere.

Fire alarms SCREAM and SPRINKLERS engage. But water doesn't flow from the ceiling.

GASOLINE DOES.

The flames on their floor ROAR with the fuel. The trail leads up the walls to the floor above. It lights the ceiling.

Aiden picks up Maya. She's terrified.

He races towards the stairwell when the CEILING ABOVE cracks and BURNING BUILDING plummets down at them. Aiden pushes Maya out of the way as the beam falls between them. The fire grows as the gasoline rains down.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Take the stairs!

MAYA
But, Aiden-

AIDEN
-Get the fuck out of here, Maya!

Maya gives him one last look and races into the stairwell.

Aiden takes the elevator.

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Klein whips around to face Kate.

KLEIN
That's not her real name, is it?

KATE
I don't know what you're talking about.

KLEIN
C'mon, Miss Burrows. I've seen this a million times. You're her friend. You shield her, protect her. But what did she ever do for you?

A long beat. Then-

KATE
Look, she ran off with her boyfriend a couple of weeks ago. I dunno where she is, okay?

Klein snatches the Polaroid off the mirror and pushes past.

KATE (CONT'D)
Wait, where are you going?!

INT. GUIDING LIGHT INSURANCE CORPORATE / LOBBY - NIGHT

The elevator doors DING and Aiden races into the Lobby, which is also aflame and raining down with gasoline.

He eyes the Security Booth, but the guard is gone. He crosses to it, fingers shaking as he presses EJECT on the tapes. He pulls them out and tosses them in the fire.

As he races across the lobby, another LARGE BEAM plummets towards the ground. Aiden looks up just in time to duck out of the way, but-

-THE CORNER OF THE BEAM CATCHES THE NAPE OF HIS NECK.

He falls to the floor, wincing in pain. He touches the back of his neck and looks at his fingers.

BLOOD. Lots of it.

He undoes his sweatshirt as he picks himself up. He WRAPS THE SWEATSHIRT AROUND HIS NECK and races across the lobby.

Behind him, on the floor of the building, TRACES OF HIS BLOOD ARE LEFT BEHIND.

KLEIN (PRELAP)
Hartley! Hartley, can you hear me?

INT./EXT. KLEIN'S CAR - NIGHT

Klein's SPEEDS down the street, phone plastered to his ear.

KLEIN
What's Rose Summers' middle name?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. AIU HEADQUARTERS / HARTLEY'S DESK - AT THE SAME TIME

Hartley opens a drawer and thumbs through looking for a file.

HARTLEY
Is everything okay, Klein?

KLEIN
I'm not sure yet.

Hartley finds the file. She pulls it out and reads it.

HARTLEY

Okay let's see... Middle name
Maya. Rose Maya Summers.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - CONTINUOUS

Guiding Light Health Insurance EXPLODES into flames.

Aiden, standing by his water truck, his neck wrapped in his shirt, turns to see it go up.

Then, he lights a match and tosses it. The WATER STORAGE TRUCK EXPLODES into flames. The sounds of approaching SIRENS bring us to...

INT./EXT. KLEIN'S CAR - NIGHT

...An ambulance passes Klein. He stares at the road, shocked.

HARTLEY (VIA TELEPHONE)

Boss?

KLEIN

I need one more favor, Hartley.
(then)
I need the address of a man named
Aiden Kinsley.

INT. GUIDING LIGHT INSURANCE CORPORATE / LOBBY - NIGHT

The building is charred and indistinguishable. Klein crouches on the ground to stick his pencil eraser in a POOL OF BLOOD as an Arson Investigator leads THE FEMALE SECURITY GUARD past.

SECURITY GUARD

It's a Sparklets guy!

Suddenly, we realize that we've seen this scene before. We thought it was in connection to the Ford Dealership fire... Think again!

WEATHERFORD (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, we finally have ourselves a homicide.

Klein pockets the pencil and looks up to see Weatherford.

KLEIN

Homicide?

WEATHERFORD

Yeah, when someone kills someone else. I thought you were taking time off?

KLEIN

Where's the body?

WEATHERFORD

First floor stairwell. Wilkins is running out of patience, Stephens, and so am I.

KLEIN

He's a mayor. Impatience is part of the job description.

Klein notices a charred piece of BLUE PLASTIC on the ground with the letters RKLET.

WEATHERFORD

Don't bust my balls, Stephens. You've been on this case for over three years.

Klein bends down to pick up the plastic. He sniffs it.

KLEIN

*Do you smell that?
(then)
Smells like gasoline.*

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aiden sits near his kitchen table, scarf around his neck, looking at Maya's things, which are still strewn around his living room. He leans back into his chair and tugs at the scarf, too hot.

As he unwraps the scarf from his neck, we see A LARGE SCAR ACROSS HIS NAPE, IN THE SAME PLACE HE GOT HIT BY THE FALLING BEAM! We realize in this moment that he always wore this scarf to hide his scar from Klein... a scar he got from the fire Maya died in!

A KNOCK. Aiden looks up, furrows his brows. He crosses to the door and looks through the peephole and sees...

...KLEIN staring back at him. He leaps back from the door.

KLEIN (O.S.)
Aiden, are you there?

Aiden spins, looking around the apartment.

AIDEN
What are you doing here, Klein?

He grabs his RED SCARF as he races into the kitchen and opens the oven.

KLEIN (O.S.)
I need to talk to you.

AIDEN
It's called a phone!

He sticks his head in and wrestles around with some pipes.

KLEIN (O.S.)
In person.

AIDEN
So talk!

He closes the oven and turns on ALL THE BURNERS on the stove. He races to the windows and closes them.

KLEIN (O.S.)
It's about your girlfriend, Aiden.

Aiden pauses. He looks at the door.

KLEIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Will you let me in?

A beat. Aiden closes the door to his bedroom and bathroom and then crosses to the door. HE WRAPS THE SCARF AROUND HIS NECK TO COVER THE SCAR and opens the door.

Klein steps into the living room and shuts the door. He looks around at the apartment.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
I smell gas.

AIDEN
My pilot's out.

Aiden sits on the couch and stares at Klein.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Are you gonna sit?

KLEIN

No, thank you.

He leans against the wall, arms crossed.

AIDEN

What's wrong, Klein?

KLEIN

You're girlfriend's dead.

AIDEN

...What?

KLEIN

They found her body a few weeks ago, but it took us a while to identify her.

AIDEN

Maya's not dead, she left me.

KLEIN

Nope. She burned to death in a fire.

A sobering moment. Klein stares at Aiden.

KLEIN (CONT'D)

The last Dante arsonist fire.

(then)

Your fire.

Aiden's jaw tightens as he tries desperately to keep away the oncoming wave of emotion.

KLEIN (CONT'D)

Her full name is Rose Maya Summers.

Did she ever tell you that?

(then)

No, of course she didn't. She didn't want anyone knowing about who she used to be. Not even you.

AIDEN

No-

INT. GUIDING LIGHT STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Maya tries the door of the second floor stairwell. Locked. The fire tears after her as she races to the first floor and tries the door. Locked.

KLEIN (V.O.)
We found her trapped at the bottom
of the first floor stairwell.

As she pounds on the door-

KLEIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The bones in her right hand were
broken from banging on the door.

*She collapses to the ground, tears streaming down her face,
as the fire races towards her.*

KLEIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
If it makes you feel any better,
she died almost instantly... after
the fireball hit her.

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aiden stands up, furious.

AIDEN
No, fuck you. She made it out, I
watched her leave!

KLEIN
But you didn't see her get out of
the building, did you, Aiden?

INT. GUIDING LIGHT INSURANCE CORPORATE - NIGHT

*Aiden watches Maya disappear into the STAIRWELL as he races
towards the elevator.*

KLEIN (V.O.)
It was chaos, wasn't it? It's all
a blur.

INT. GUIDING LIGHT INSURANCE CORPORATE LOBBY - NIGHT

*Aiden races across the lobby and the FALLING BEAM catches him
on the back of the neck.*

KLEIN (V.O.)
You even got hurt yourself. Which
is why you didn't realize how badly
it all turned.

AIDEN (V.O.)
No, I know she made it out!

INT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

AIDEN
She's mad at me, but she's fine.

KLEIN
No, Aiden. She's dead.

AIDEN
No, no, not Maya.

KLEIN
Rose, Aiden. Her name is Rose.

It breaks him. Aiden backs away, shaking his head. But as he does, it's clear he's moving towards the front door. Klein suddenly pulls his gun on Aiden.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
Don't move.

Aiden looks at Klein.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
You're good, Aiden. You used my son, you used my wife, you used my grief. But you're not going to walk through that door.

AIDEN
I stopped using you almost as soon as I began, Klein.

He turns the doorknob. Klein CLICKS the hammer. Aiden slides towards the kitchen as Klein notices that in his hand is a MATCH.

KLEIN
What are you doing?

AIDEN
Have you ever shot a gun in a room full of propane?

KLEIN
Aiden, put the match down.

AIDEN
I can't.

As he steps into the kitchen, he points to the door.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
That's for you.

Klein moves towards it cautiously, gun still drawn.

KLEIN

Aiden, put it down. Let's talk about this.

AIDEN

I killed her, Klein. I destroyed something beautiful

He shakes his head and drops to his knees.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Some things can't be undone.

He brings the match to the bottom of his zipper.

KLEIN

Aiden, no!

Aiden lights the match as Klein DIVES out of the front door. The room ERUPTS into an orange fireball of flames.

EXT. AIDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Klein sits on the curb opposite Aiden's building, watching as firefighters calm the last of the flames.

HARTLEY (O.S.)

How you doin'?

Klein looks up as Hartley sits beside him.

HARTLEY (CONT'D)

I read the deposition.

(then)

I can make sure it never gets to Weatherford, if you want.

KLEIN

It'll boil over once I get back.

(then)

I'm taking leave.

Hartley puts a hand on Klein's back.

HARTLEY

I'll be bored without you, boss.

KLEIN

I'm sure we could find a way to see each other.

He smiles at Hartley. She grins in return.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Sam lies on his back, eyes closed. His face is covered in bandages, and his legs and arms are in casts. Klein enters the room quietly, crossing to the foot of Sam's bed. He stands there, watching him.

Sam's eyelids flutter open.

KLEIN
How're you feeling?

Sam shrugs. Klein slowly sits next to him.

SAM
Aren't you supposed to be at work?

KLEIN
I'm taking some time off.

A beat. Sam stares at Klein.

SAM
You're kidding.

KLEIN
How would you feel about going
camping?

SAM
What about school?

KLEIN
Consider it a mental health break.

Sam studies him. Then-

SAM
Yeah, Dad. That sounds fun.

Klein smiles and takes his son's hand. Then, he puts his head down on the bed and shuts his eyes.

FADE OUT.