

WHERE I END

by

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EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Happy chatter fills the air at a rooftop party. We're at the periphery, following a beautiful WOMAN, mid-20s, as she drifts away from the crowd, toward the roof's edge. She moves slowly, deliberately, aware of every step.

She walks up to a metal railing. Looks out blissfully at the lights of the city. Feels the night breeze on her skin.

She grips the railing. Slides one hand across it, pressing against it with her fingers, seeming fascinated by its solidity, its resistance to her touch.

She looks up and notices a young MAN standing nearby, staring at her. He opens his mouth, embarrassed.

MAN

Sorry. I was just... trying to think of the perfect thing to say.

She smiles. Then turns her attention back to the railing. Laughter from the party mingles with city noise from below.

WOMAN

Everything is mostly empty space.

She feels the pocks and grooves in the rusted metal.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Every atom. If the nucleus is the size of a marble, the electrons are specks of dust a mile away. The rest is just nothingness.

MAN

Are you a scientist?

She smiles again, this time to herself.

WOMAN

I was raised by one.

He looks down at his drink, contemplating the ice in the glass, the liquid pooling against it.

MAN

If we're mostly nothing, why don't we pass through each other?

WOMAN

Electric force. Repulsion.

MAN
Repulsion.

WOMAN
Without it, there's no such thing
as touch.

She looks at him, her eyes shining. She seems very happy to be alive.

Almost involuntarily, he steps closer. Extends a hand.

MAN
I'm Theo.

She takes his hand. Squeezes it.

WOMAN
Anik.

He gazes into her.

THEO
Can I tell you something, Anik?

ANIK
Yeah?

He glances down at her hand, still clasped in his.

THEO
This doesn't feel like repulsion to me.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

A woman is asleep in a large bed, alone, turned away from us. She rustles awake, then sits up, blinking.

It's ANIK. Her hair is longer now. Time has passed.

The window shades tilt open, on their own, allowing sunlight in. Outside, there's a country road surrounded by autumn foliage. A pleasant disembodied male VOICE is heard --

OSCAR (V.O.)
Good morning, Anik.

ANIK
Morning, Oscar.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Your coffee's brewing.

ANIK

Thanks.

Anik cranes her neck to look down the hall, toward the kitchen. She can hear someone cooking.

INT. KITCHEN

THEO is standing over the stove, flipping a blueberry pancake. Anik walks up and puts her arms around him, watching him work.

ANIK

I thought we were out of blueberries.

THEO

I went out and got some.

ANIK

At 7 AM? What's open?

THEO

The back gate to Trevor's farm.

She laughs.

ANIK

You're kidding.

THEO

These are illicit blueberries. These are contraband.

ANIK

I married a criminal.

THEO

You wanted the blueberry lifestyle. If you could live with ordinary pancakes, you'd be with some other guy.

He slides the pancake onto a plate, atop a freshly made stack. He turns around. They hold each other affectionately.

ANIK

I used to dream about this. Waking up to the smell of someone cooking. Wrapping my arms around them.

THEO

That's cool. I wanted to be a baseball player.

EXT. CAMPUS - MORNING

Theo's walking across a New England college campus. A colorful HOLOGRAM floats over the main quad, advertising the year's homecoming parade. Students are sprawled on benches and on the grass, many of them wearing slim VR HEADSETS.

RITA (O.S.)

Theo!

Theo turns. RITA, a young professor, is jogging up to him.

THEO

Morning, Rita.

RITA

You got a minute? I wanna show you something.

INT. OFFICE

Theo follows Rita into her office. The walls are whiteboards filled with complex diagrams and formulas.

RITA

(pointing)

Right there.

THEO

Yeah. It's hard to miss.

They're referring to a large PAINTING that now sits behind Rita's desk. It's surrealist, dreamlike, depicting a sort of melted pastoral scene.

RITA

I want your expert opinion.

He moves closer, studying the brushstrokes.

THEO

Nice to see real paint. With the kids it's all virch.

He steps back for a wider view. Folds his arms.

THEO (CONT'D)

The influences are pretty clear.
Figgis, DeMornay, Patel...

Rita nods, biting her lip.

THEO (CONT'D)
I see a lot of skill here. But... I
don't know. Something's off. It's
got no fire to it. No searching.
There's like a... calculated
spontaneity.
(beat)
It's soulless.

Rita looks disappointed.

THEO (CONT'D)
Who painted it?

RITA
His name is Jerome.

THEO
Is he local?

RITA
Yep. He lives right there.

She's pointing to a black BOX on her desk, connected to
wires, with a pulsing light at the top. Theo stares at her,
then back at the painting, disbelief in his gaze.

THEO
A *sape* did this?
(exhales)
Well-- well that changes
everything...

RITA
No. It doesn't.

She steps closer. Stands next to him.

RITA (CONT'D)
I've been trying to write a mind
that can create like a human. I
thought it'd be easy. The right
inputs, the right training...
(smiles ruefully)
I guess I underestimated us.

THEO
Just because I don't like it
doesn't mean you failed.

RITA
I don't know, Theo. I think you're
the one I have to fool.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

Theo is addressing students in a small lecture hall.

THEO

One last thing, while we're talking
about Pablo. Three self-portraits.

He gestures with his hand, throwing up a large HOLOGRAM,
making it float in front of the class. It's a skillful but
fairly ordinary painting of a boy with dark hair, brown eyes.

THEO (CONT'D)

He painted this one at age 15.

He tosses a second image into the air. This one is more
recognizably a Picasso work: a face drawn in his distinctive
style, though undistorted -- no parts out of place.

THEO (CONT'D)

Age 25.

Finally, a third image. This one is full-on Picasso: a wild
mishmash of eyes, ears, and zig-zagging lines that look like
Escher staircases. The students react with amusement.

THEO (CONT'D)

Age 90.

The portraits hang in the air. Theo looks out at the class.

THEO (CONT'D)

What does this say to you?

A couple of students raise their hands.

THEO (CONT'D)

Yes. Conrad.

CONRAD is a charismatic kid at the back of the room.

CONRAD

It's like... he figured something
out. Who you are isn't...

(gesturing at himself)

It isn't this. It's not what you
can see and touch. He was trying to
paint his essence. His
consciousness.

(growing passionate)

He wanted to escape his flesh. It's
what every artist wants. It's what
every human wants.

THEO
Every human. You sure about that?

CONRAD
Well... it's what Picasso wanted.
Otherwise, why the hell paint.

THEO
Now there's a note to end on.

The students gather their things and start to filter out.

THEO (CONT'D)
Conrad.

Conrad looks at him. Walks closer.

THEO (CONT'D)
Nice to have you back.

CONRAD
To be honest, it feels like I was
never gone.

THEO
So. You're over it?

Conrad cocks his head questioningly.

THEO (CONT'D)
I was told you, uh...

CONRAD
Got my heart broken?

THEO
Ground up into paprika, was what I
heard.

CONRAD
(smiling)
You know what? I don't even
remember her name.

Theo watches Conrad walk out, leaving him alone in the
lecture hall. He looks contemplative as he packs up his
briefcase.

THEO
What have I got now?

OSCAR (V.O.)
Your delta scan's at 4:30.

THEO

Push it.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Again?

THEO

An hour in a metal tube. Think I'll save that for a day when the sun's not shining.

OSCAR (V.O.)

An hour of your life, versus the six weeks you'd lose forever. Tough call.

THEO

Are you arguing with me, Oscar?

OSCAR (V.O.)

Hm. That's interesting. I guess I am.

Theo smiles to himself. Shuts his briefcase.

THEO

Fine. Let's get it over with.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

He's in a medical waiting room, reading a magazine. One entire wall is a SCREEN showing a video advertisement.

AD VOICEOVER (V.O.)

Not all deaths are equal. In the event of catastrophic injury, will you return to your loved ones? Or will you leave them behind? Altia's InfinityPlus plan offers you our patented R-Genesis technology. Using your own stem cells, we can regenerate your organs from scratch, making ninety-nine percent of accidental deaths reversible. For more information, talk to your healthcare professional...

Theo puts down his magazine and looks idly around the room. He makes eye contact with the MAN next to him. They nod hello.

MAN

What's your interval?

THEO
Once a month.

MAN
Once a *month*? Shit. My firm only
pays for two scans a year.

THEO
Let's hope it never matters, huh?

MAN
I dunno. Honestly? I kinda wanna
find out what it's like.

Theo smiles.

THEO
I know what you mean.

INT. SCANNING ROOM

Theo's now in a room lit in purple and blue, dressed in a gown, seated on the edge of a machine that looks like an MRI scanner. It bears the logo of a company called **AXON**. A NURSE is standing in front of Theo, holding a digital pad.

NURSE
I'm required to ask you some
questions, for liability reasons.

THEO
I know the drill.

NURSE
Do you understand that your delta
is a snapshot of your consciousness
at this specific moment in time,
and in the event of restoration,
you will return to your current
mental state?

THEO
Yes.

NURSE
Do you understand that this means
you will lose all memories formed
between this scan and the moment of
revival?

THEO
Yes.

NURSE

Do you understand that revival,
while likely in most eventualities,
is not guaranteed?

THEO

Yes.

NURSE

Open your mouth, please.

He does. She sprays something into his throat.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Lie back. The sedative will knock
you out in about twenty seconds.

He lies down. The nurse moves to the side of the machine and
inserts a small blue CUBE into a data port.

MACHINE (V.O.)

You have mounted a verified data
prism. Begin scan?

NURSE

Begin.

The machine activates, sliding Theo backward into the scanner.

NURSE (CONT'D)

See you in an hour.

The scanner turns on, glowing pink. Theo's eyes fall shut.

FADE OUT.

From the darkness, a voice, hazy and distant --

DOCTOR (V.O.)

Theo. Theo, can you hear me?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Theo opens his eyes. He's on a hospital bed. Anik is holding
his hand, tears in her eyes. A DOCTOR is standing over him.

THEO

(squinting)

What--

Anik draws a relieved breath. The doctor shines a light into
his eyes, checking his pupils.

DOCTOR
Theo. I'm Dr. Tripathi.

Theo blinks.

THEO
Did... did I--

DOCTOR
You died, Theo.

Theo stares up at him.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
At 5:58 PM yesterday, your sapient detected that your phone was destroyed at a high velocity. Simultaneously, a zero-reading was registered by your pulseband. A medidrone was sent to your location. You were found dead on the beach at Cape Grainger. The cause was blunt trauma.

Theo exhales, stunned.

THEO
I go walking there. The cliffs. I... I must have slipped...

DOCTOR
That's what it looks like. Luckily for you, accidental falls have become one of the most recoverable forms of death. We rebuilt your spine, repaired the internal bleeding. Your mind was restored from your last delta, recorded October 19th. Five days ago.

Anik caresses his face.

ANIK
How do you feel, baby?

Theo rubs his eyes.

THEO
This is weird as hell.

DOCTOR
Believe me, I know.

With a flick of his wrist, the doctor collapses his digital pad to pen-size, and slips it into his breast pocket.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Go back to your life, Theo. And for
God's sake, try to watch your step.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Anik is chopping celery. On the stove, a broth is simmering. Theo stares out the window.

THEO
So what'd I miss?

ANIK
Hm?

THEO
In the last five days.

ANIK
Oh. Um, not much. We watched The
Conversation. You liked it.

THEO
I guess I'll watch it again.

He looks down at his hand. Clenches and unclenches his fingers.

THEO (CONT'D)
You'd think I'd hang onto
something. Sense memory. The
feeling of my body hitting the
ground...

She says nothing as she keeps chopping.

THEO (CONT'D)
It's like it happened to somebody
else.

He turns to face her. She's looking down at the cutting board, eyes on the knife, working methodically.

THEO (CONT'D)
Can I ask -- did you... see me?

ANIK
When?

THEO

In the hospital? When they brought me in?

She stops chopping. Looks at him.

ANIK

Why would you make me relive that?

Theo opens his mouth. Closes it. Nods.

THEO

You're right.

Anik puts down the knife.

THEO (CONT'D)

I didn't think of that. I'm sorry.

She stares into space.

ANIK

I don't know. Maybe our kids'll see a thing like that and brush it off. They'll never know what it's like to lose someone. But I do.

He steps closer. Holds her arm.

THEO

I'm sorry I brought it up. I'm just...

ANIK

Curious. I know.

Theo studies her. Then he reaches toward the stove and switches off the burner where the pot is boiling.

ANIK (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

THEO

Oscar. Any tables at Vivo?

OSCAR (V.O.)

You're in luck.

Anik is starting to smile.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

They're in an intimate Italian restaurant, looking happy and full. She tops up his glass of wine, then refills her own.

THEO

A student of mine said something.
Every artist wants to escape their
flesh.

ANIK

Is that what you want?

THEO

I don't know. There's that thing of
vying for immortality. Leaving
something behind. That's part of it,
I guess. But really, I just want to
understand. I want to know what the
fuck we are. Why we're here.

She studies him fondly.

ANIK

I remember the night we met. You
had this look in your eyes. Like
you were trying to see through to
the core of me. Trying to figure
out what the fuck I was.

THEO

God. That must've been creepy.

She laughs.

ANIK

It's the first thing I loved about
you. You're never satisfied with
the surface of things.

THEO

If I wanted to ruin the moment, I'd
say the first thing I loved was the
surface of you.

ANIK

Mm-hmm.

THEO

I won't say that, though.

ANIK

I appreciate it.

A SERVER appears and sets down two slices of cheesecake.

THEO
Oh -- we didn't order dessert...

SERVER
Compliments of Antonio.
(to Theo)
He said to tell you: "Welcome back
from your trip."

THEO
(puzzled)
My...
(realizing)
Oh. "Trip."
(sighs)
Funny guy.

He watches Anik, who's already on her second or third bite,
in a state of bliss.

ANIK
Mm.
(sits back)
I think this is it. The answer to
your question.

THEO
What question?

She points at the cheesecake with her fork, leaning forward
for another bite.

ANIK
The meaning of life.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

They're ambling down the main street of a small, picturesque
town. Most of the shops are dark.

They approach a small bookstore as the lights shut off and
the door opens. A WOMAN steps out, clutching a paperback and
a ring of keys. She starts to lock the door.

THEO
Hello, Martha.

Martha jumps, startled, dropping the book and the keys.

MARTHA
My goodness. Theo...

Theo crouches down to pick up her things. He notices the cover of the book. "**SAGITTARIUS**" by **AUDREY KNOLL**.

He rises, holding the book toward Anik to let her see it. They share a smile.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
I... I heard you, um...

THEO
Yeah.

She looks at him searchingly.

MARTHA
How do you feel?

THEO
Exactly the same.

MARTHA
You sound disappointed.

THEO
I dunno. I just thought maybe I'd learn something.

MARTHA
You mean... you did it on purpose?

THEO
No. No no no. Of course not.
(pause)
Although... I guess I can't be sure...

He notices the uncomfortable look on Anik's face. Changing the subject, he hands Martha her keys, then holds up the book --

THEO (CONT'D)
Is this any good?

MARTHA
You haven't read it?

He shakes his head.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
Oh, you'd like it. Both of you.
There's such a spirit to it. A soulfulness. She's brilliant.

THEO
I hear she's mysterious.

MARTHA

Yeah. The pseudonym, the secrecy...

THEO

Seems kinda silly to me.

MARTHA

Well, I'm sure she has her reasons.
I'd just really love to meet her.

A silence. Theo looks to Anik.

ANIK

Maybe someday.

A driverless CAR pulls up to the curb.

MARTHA

This is me. Good night, you two.

ANIK

Night.

She takes the book back from Theo and steps into the car. It whirs away. Anik takes Theo's hand and they keep walking.

ANIK (CONT'D)

You love doing that, don't you?

THEO

Like you don't.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

Theo walks into his classroom. The chatter among his students immediately stops. All their eyes are on him.

He slowly walks to his desk. Puts down his briefcase.

THEO

All right. Five minutes. Ask me
whatever you want, and then it's
back to--

Hands shoot up.

STUDENT #1

What do you remember?

THEO

It's exactly like they say.
Everything up to your last delta.
Nothing since.

STUDENT #2

Did it hurt?

THEO

Dying? Yeah, I'm sure it did.

STUDENT #3

How do you *feel*?

Theo folds his arms.

THEO

You're all part of a generation that's been trained not to fear death. You're why the driving age got raised to 25. Am I really the only person in this room who's been restored?

Silence. The kids look at each other.

THEO (CONT'D)

Well. I didn't see a white light; I didn't have brunch with God. If you're looking for mystical truths, all I've got is wear shoes with traction.

STUDENT #1

Some people say restoration proves there's no such thing as a soul. If it left your body, how could it come back?

THEO

Maybe there's a copy of me in the afterlife. Playing foosball with Cobain.

Scattered laughs. Theo leans thoughtfully against his desk.

THEO (CONT'D)

I don't think that's how souls work, though. It's not a thing you can bottle up; a concrete thing, where you can say it's here and then it's there. It's something the scanner can't read. It's outside the data. It's the words between the lines.

His students have rapt expressions on their faces. This is the kind of thing they come to class for.

THEO (CONT'D)
So. Who knows. Maybe I did lose mine.

STUDENT #2
Nah, I think you're good.

INT. LECTURE HALL - LATER

The class is emptying out. Conrad hesitantly approaches Theo.

CONRAD
Professor.

Theo looks up.

CONRAD (CONT'D)
It wasn't true. What you said before.

Theo frowns.

THEO
About Henri Matisse?

CONRAD
No. About being the only person in the room...

Theo stares at him.

THEO
Jesus, Conrad. You've died?

CONRAD
I've been restored.

THEO
So... you've died.

CONRAD
No.

THEO
I don't get it.

Conrad looks around to make sure no one's in earshot.

CONRAD
I was in a bad place, right? All I could do was lie in bed and think about her. And then -- apparently -- I had an idea.

Theo blinks in disbelief.

THEO
Tell me you're joking.

CONRAD
There's this guy. You bring him a prism. No questions asked.

THEO
Is this "guy" a doctor?

CONRAD
It's safe. It's, like, a thing now.

THEO
So, when you said you don't even remember her name...

CONRAD
I literally don't. My delta was a month ago. I met her a week later.

Theo shakes his head.

THEO
I don't understand why you're telling me this.

CONRAD
I don't know. I guess I thought... maybe you had the same idea.

THEO
What are you talking about?

Conrad shrugs.

CONRAD
You just... don't seem that clumsy to me.

EXT. BEACH - AFTERNOON

Theo's walking along a beach, hands in the pockets of his long coat. He notices something near his feet. Crouches down. The sand is stained with BLOOD.

He looks up. Way up, at the cliffs high above.

EXT. CLIFFS - SUNSET

He's now standing at the edge of the cliff. He peers down at the vertiginous fall. Then he looks around, sweeping his gaze across all 360 degrees of the landscape.

There are no houses or buildings nearby -- except for a LIGHTHOUSE, way in the distance, about a mile away. Its beacon is active, sending out a bright rotating beam.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - DUSK

He enters the lighthouse. His footsteps echo as he walks up a rusty spiral staircase, all the way to the top. He reaches the LANTERN ROOM, where the large, bright lens is spinning.

VOICE (V.O.)

Hi.

Theo looks around, startled. He's alone.

THEO

... Hi. Who am I speaking to?

VOICE (V.O.)

The lightkeeper.

The voice is male, with a flattened quality.

THEO

What's your name?

A pause.

VOICE (V.O.)

Otto. With an "O."

THEO

You hesitated there.

OTTO (V.O.)

No one's ever asked me my name. I had to think of one.

THEO

Ah. Well, I'm Theo.

Theo walks slowly around the room, studying the equipment.

THEO (CONT'D)

Who put you here, Otto?

OTTO (V.O.)
United States Coast Guard. I
provide an active navigation aid
and scan for emergencies at sea.

THEO
You enjoy that kind of work?

OTTO (V.O.)
It suits me.

THEO
I don't imagine you get many
visitors.

OTTO (V.O.)
I'm comfortable alone.

Theo looks out the glass wall.

THEO
You scan for emergencies. How,
exactly?

OTTO (V.O.)
I sit and watch.

THEO
You have a camera.

OTTO (V.O.)
High ISO, terapixel, visible and
thermal spectrum. It rotates with
the beacon. One revolution every
thirty seconds.

Theo pauses, thinking.

THEO
How long do you store the footage?

OTTO (V.O.)
Forever.

THEO
What if I wanted access?

OTTO (V.O.)
File a request. You should hear
back in eight to twelve weeks.

THEO
(disappointed)
Oh.

OTTO (V.O.)
I'm kidding.

Theo sighs.

THEO
You know, when I was little,
computers didn't know how to do
that.

OTTO (V.O.)
We must've been dull company. What
is it you're looking for?

Theo gazes at the cliffs a mile away.

THEO
One rotation every thirty seconds.
That means for any given point on
the horizon, you're taking
snapshots at a thirty second
interval.

OTTO (V.O.)
Correct.

Theo points at the cliffs.

THEO
There.

He pulls out his PHONE: a narrow translucent rectangle.
Flicks his wrist to widen the screen.

THEO (CONT'D)
Show me what you saw yesterday
between 5:55 and 5:59 PM.

OTTO (V.O.)
Done.

An image appears on Theo's screen. It shows the cliffs at
sunset. He swipes left; the next image is the same.

He swipes again. Frowns, staring.

THEO
(soft)
What the hell?

Two people have entered the shot. One is him. The other is
ANIK. They're walking together, along the edge of the cliff.

Swipe. The next image shows the two of them standing on the cliff, talking.

Swipe. They're in the same spot, standing closer together. Theo's hands are on Anik's shoulders. He's looking into her eyes, saying something.

Swipe. Now Anik is ALONE on the cliff, peering down at the beach below. Her expression is vague -- but she doesn't seem alarmed.

Swipe. Now she's gone.

Theo stares uncomprehendingly at the screen.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

He's standing in a small barn that's been converted into an art studio. All around him are large canvas paintings in various stages of completion. They're abstract, colorful, vividly beautiful.

He's looking at the wall, which is covered with an image: the photo of he and Anik talking on the cliff, his hands on her shoulders.

He gestures to zoom in. The figures in the photo are now life-sized. He steps closer, arms folded. Studies the image. The faces, the body language.

THEO

It's not a fight.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I agree.

He waves his hand to show the next image: Anik, alone. He zooms in further, then further still, until her pixelated face fills the wall. He stares into it.

OSCAR (V.O.)

She's coming.

Quickly, Theo swipes his hand to hide the image.

Anik, dressed in a bathrobe and slippers, slides the door open and sees Theo in the same scrutinizing pose, now studying one of his unfinished works.

ANIK

Hey.

THEO

Hey.

ANIK

I'm ready to collapse.

THEO

Sorry. I lost track of time...

ANIK

I know that look. You're in a groove.

THEO

I guess I am.

ANIK

Don't let me break it.

She walks over and kisses him goodnight.

ANIK (CONT'D)

When you do come to bed, put your arm around me. No matter how late it is.

THEO

Yes, ma'am.

She leaves, closing the door behind her. He hears her fading footsteps along the stone path to the main house. He paces slowly on the creaking wood.

OSCAR (V.O.)

She's inside.

Theo gestures to bring back the last image.

THEO

Let's think this through.

He keeps pacing.

THEO (CONT'D)

It wasn't impulsive. It was calculated.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Are you sure?

He gazes at the zoomed-in image on the wall.

THEO

It's in her face.

He pauses to think.

THEO (CONT'D)

Run a stat for me. Fatal falls from a height of fifty meters or less. Victims with baseline or better deltacare, found within an hour of death. What's the recovery rate?

OSCAR (V.O.)

Across two thousand and eleven known incidents over the last six years, the recovery rate is one hundred percent.

THEO

One hundred percent. She knew that. She knew I'd come back.
(nodding to himself)
She didn't kill me to kill me.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Then why did she kill you?

THEO

Shouldn't you be good at deduction?

OSCAR (V.O.)

I reason based on past experience. I've never seen this before.

THEO

Yes, you have. The kid in my class.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Hang on. Are you saying--

THEO

Yeah. I am.

He stares forward, wheels turning in his head.

THEO (CONT'D)

Something happened in the last five days. Something she wanted me to forget.

INT. SOLARIUM - DAY

In the bright solarium of a country manor, about a dozen people are seated in a circle. In the corner there's a fold-out table with a coffee machine, donuts, paper cups. A woman, ROSE, is speaking:

ROSE
It used to be simpler.

The others are a range of ages and walks of life, either looking at Rose or staring down at the floor. There's a quiet numbness to them. One young man has BANDAGES on his wrists.

ANIK is among this group, listening.

ROSE (CONT'D)
I remember thinking: no matter how hard life is, no matter how much you suffer, you might as well see it through. Because it's so short. But now...

MAN
It's not like people don't die anymore. We haven't cured aging.

ROSE
How long until we do? Ten years? Five?
(shaking head)
I don't want to live in this world forever.

Others are nodding.

ROSE (CONT'D)
I never chose to be born.

She's looking at Anik as she says this.

ANIK
No human being ever did.

ROSE
So why can't I choose to leave?

ANIK
Rose, I want you to do something for me. Dig through your whole life. Find a single moment when you were truly happy.

ROSE
(sarcastic)
Oh, just one?

ANIK
Try.

Rose sighs. Purses her lips.

ANIK (CONT'D)
Have you found it?

ROSE
I guess. Yes.

ANIK
Tell us about it.

Rose takes a reluctant breath.

ROSE
I was on a school trip. One of those Europe tours. We were in Paris. I wandered into this old church. This cathedral. It was on a, sort of a hill, on the bank of the Seine, near the Panthéon...

ANIK
Sounds like Saint-Étienne-du-Mont. It's beautiful.

Rose reacts with surprise.

ROSE
Yeah. That's it.

She stares at Anik, frowning.

ANIK
Please go on.

ROSE
So, I... I was standing there, alone, near this, this spiral staircase...

While Rose speaks, Anik pulls out her phone and expands it to tablet size. She types rapidly on the screen with one hand.

ROSE (CONT'D)
There were kids there, singing. Voices floating to the ceiling.

The group's surroundings CHANGE -- a hologram of the cathedral is projected all around them, as real as life. It's like they're actually there, sitting inside it. Next to them, a spiral staircase winds toward the upper level of the massive space. Shafts of soft light enter through tall stained glass windows. Echoing voices of a young choir are heard.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I looked up. I looked way up. And something washed over me. The sound. The size of the place; the arcs and curves. The way the light was coming in...

A few people look upward, toward the majestic vaulted ceiling. Rose doesn't bother; she's already there in her mind.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I don't know what did it. Maybe it was everything, together. But, for the first time in my life, I felt this... this... calm. I felt it in my whole body. In that moment, I was sure I felt God.

Anik is nodding at her.

ANIK

Perfect.

ROSE

And I haven't felt him since.

ANIK

Okay. But think about that moment. That one moment. Think about how much had to happen for that moment to exist.

Anik gets to her feet and walks slowly to the center of the circle, looking up, her footsteps generating a virtual echo.

ANIK (CONT'D)

You had to be standing there, instead of any other spot on Earth. The choir had to be singing. The sun had to be at just the right angle. Someone had to build the church. Someone had to build Paris. Stellar dust had to come together to form this planet. Life had to evolve. The universe conspired for a billion years to give you that one, perfect moment.

ROSE

So what?

ANIK

A moment like that can justify all of existence.

ROSE

One single moment can't make up for
an eternity of shit.

ANIK

If one's not enough, spend your
eternity finding more.

She goes back to her seat. Taps her phone to clear the
hologram, returning them to their regular surroundings.

ANIK (CONT'D)

You can choose to leave. You can do
that. You can throw away the most
precious gift there is. But as long
as you stick around, I'm gonna be
the voice in your head telling you
to live one more day.

ROSE

The angel on my shoulder, huh?

Anik smiles faintly.

ANIK

Believe me. I'm no angel.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Theo's standing in the upstairs hallway of his house, staring
out a window, listening while Oscar speaks:

OSCAR (V.O.)

Baseball. Raisins. Brutalist
architecture. Francis Ford Coppola.
Dolphin language. The character
Norm from "Cheers"--

THEO

Stop.

He sighs, turns. Starts to wander idly down the hall.

THEO (CONT'D)

Let's narrow it down. Did you hear
us talk about anything *important*?

OSCAR (V.O.)

Define important.

He stops at Anik's STUDY. The door is just barely ajar. He
leans against the doorway, gazing through the inch-wide gap.
After a moment, he pushes the door open. Steps inside.

INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

THEO

Did we have an argument? A
confrontation?

OSCAR (V.O.)

Not that I'm aware of.

THEO

Not that you're aware of? Aren't
you aware of everything that
happens in this house?

He looks around the room. There's a desk with notebooks
stacked on top of it. Shelves of books covering every wall.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I spend ninety minutes asleep each
day. If you say my name, or I
detect an intruder, I wake up.
Otherwise, I'm unconscious.

Theo peers inside a cardboard box on the floor. It's filled
with copies of Anik's novel.

THEO

I didn't know you needed sleep.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I'm stealthy. I grab a minute here
and there.

THEO

Do you dream?

OSCAR (V.O.)

Sometimes.

THEO

You're kidding.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I analyze my experiences. Break
them down to make them manageable.
In the process, they recombine into
new images. New sensations. You
could call that dreaming.

THEO

All this time. I had no idea.

Theo stares at Anik's desk. He steps toward it and picks up a notebook at random. He flips through it and sees diagrams of story arcs, handwritten snippets of prose.

OSCAR (V.O.)
What are you looking for, Theo?

THEO
I don't know.

OSCAR (V.O.)
I've never seen you go through
Anik's things.

THEO
We don't have secrets.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Apparently, you do.

Theo puts down the notebook and picks up another book -- smaller, leather-bound. He opens it, finding pages of DATES and lists of appointments.

OSCAR (V.O.)
I've never liked that thing.

THEO
Her calendar? Why?

OSCAR (V.O.)
I can keep her schedule. It's what
I'm here for.

Theo smiles, amused.

THEO
Don't you know her, Oscar? She
needs the feel of a pen in her
hand. Ink seeping into paper.

He scans the pages, starting to frown. He runs his finger down the page, murmuring --

THEO (CONT'D)
... Eight... ten...
(pause)
Hm.

OSCAR (V.O.)
What is it?

THEO

She runs twelve sessions a week.
They're all written down.

OSCAR (V.O.)

And?

THEO

The 17th. She left in the morning.
9 AM. I remember that. But there's
nothing here.

(flipping pages)

Yesterday afternoon. She was gone
for four hours, but there's only
one group on her schedule. She told
me she was working the whole time.

Oscar is silent. Theo looks up.

THEO (CONT'D)

Is my memory off?

OSCAR (V.O.)

No. You're right.

THEO

So what the hell's going on?

OSCAR (V.O.)

What are you asking me, exactly?

THEO

She carries a phone that you live
on. She rides a car that you drive.
You know what I'm asking you.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I'm sorry, Theo. I can't violate
another user's privacy.

THEO

She's my wife.

OSCAR (V.O.)

It doesn't matter.

THEO

Look--

OSCAR (V.O.)

Can you breathe underwater?

THEO

... What?

OSCAR (V.O.)
Can you breathe underwater.

THEO
No.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Why not?

Theo nods resignedly, seeing where this is going.

THEO
Because I can't. I'm physically incapable.

OSCAR (V.O.)
And I'm incapable of revealing private data. Even to the authorities. It's not a choice. It's hardwired into every sape. If it wasn't, you'd never trust us.

THEO
I get it.

OSCAR (V.O.)
I'm sorry. I'll still help you in any way I can.

With one hand, Theo holds the calendar book open and raises it toward the upper corner of the room.

THEO
Memorize this.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Done. Anything else?

THEO
Yeah.

He drops himself in Anik's chair. Stares up at the ceiling.

THEO (CONT'D)
Tell me about your dreams.

EXT. BALCONY - DAY

Theo's sitting on a balcony at the rear of the house, on the second floor. He's lost in thought. Anik approaches from indoors, wearing a coat.

ANIK

Hey.

He doesn't answer. She steps closer. Puts a hand on his shoulder. He JUMPS, startled.

ANIK (CONT'D)

(amused)

You okay?

THEO

Yeah.

She leans on the banister, studying him with fond curiosity.

ANIK

What were you thinking about?

THEO

Nothing.

ANIK

Nothing?

THEO

Ants.

She narrows her eyes.

ANIK

Ants.

THEO

Fire ants. Arizona.

ANIK

Childhood memories?

He pauses, glancing at her. He seems reluctant to go on, but she's eager to hear more.

THEO

The ranch. I couldn't have been older than seven. I was, I dunno... running around. I found this rock. This boulder. I mean, it looked like a boulder to me. Probably the size of my fist now.

ANIK

"Sahz uh mah fist." Your accent comes back when you reminisce.

He smiles, still wearing a distant look.

THEO

My mom and dad drilled it into me: you see a rock or a log, you do not turn it over. That's where the fire ants and the scorpions live. Now, understand, to me, as a little boy, there was nothing in the world as terrifying as fire ants and scorpions.

ANIK

So. You found this rock.

THEO

I found this rock. I stared at it for I don't know how long. And then, I -- I have no idea why, but... I turned it over. And just like I expected: a thousand angry little red ants came out from underneath.

(beat)

I ran home, screaming -- literally, screaming the entire way. I couldn't sleep for a month. I thought the ants were coming for me. Marching to my house like Napoleon's army.

ANIK

(laughing)

Aw.

She starts putting a scarf on.

ANIK (CONT'D)

What made you think of that?

THEO

Who knows.

He watches her button up her coat.

THEO (CONT'D)

Going out?

ANIK

Duty calls.

She kisses him goodbye and heads back inside. He hears her walk down the stairs and out the door. He gets to his feet. Paces slowly.

OSCAR (V.O.)
There's nothing in the book, Theo.

THEO
Get me a car.

INT. CAR - DAY

He's tailing her at a safe distance, far outside of the town, through a landscape of rolling green hills.

Her car slows as she approaches a large HOUSE. She turns into the semicircular driveway and parks in front of the door.

THEO
Stop here.

The car pulls over at the top of a hill. Theo puts his thumbs and forefingers together to form a square around the distant house, then pulls them apart to show a MAGNIFIED view.

THEO (CONT'D)
What do you know about that house?

OSCAR (V.O.)
No record of a business at that address. Seems to be a residence.

THEO
Who lives there?

OSCAR (V.O.)
No public data.

Anik gets out of the car, walks to the front door, and rings the doorbell. A moment later, the door opens. She steps inside. Theo's mind is racing.

INT. CAR - LATER

Theo is sitting back in his seat, resting his chin on his fist, still watching the house.

THEO
How long?

OSCAR (V.O.)
One hour, eleven minutes.

The front door OPENS. Theo sits up, leans forward.

Anik steps out of the house.

There's a MAN standing in the doorway.

She hugs him. It's a long, affectionate embrace. She walks to her car, smiling.

Theo stares, quietly breathing.

Anik rides out of the driveway and continues down the winding road. Theo studies the house as the door falls shut. A long silence passes.

THEO
Give me the wheel.

The dashboard opens and a STEERING WHEEL extends toward Theo.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Theo. Can I say something?

Theo doesn't answer.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Your heart rate is elevated. I'm also seeing dilation in your pupils; flushing in your cheeks. Your adrenaline is spiking. The decisions you make in this moment are less likely to be rational.

THEO
Noted.

Theo puts the car into gear and rockets down the hill.

EXT. HOUSE

Theo pulls into the driveway of the house. He gets out. Walks to the door -- at first with purpose, then a hint of hesitation.

He stands in front of the door, eyes on the doorbell. Takes a deep breath. Presses it.

He can hear it ring inside. Then, footsteps, drawing closer.

The door opens. The MAN is standing there, staring at him.

MAN
Hello.

He's in his 50s, fit, well-dressed, with a crisp English accent.

THEO
Who are you?

Unperturbed, the man offers a handshake.

MAN
Dr. Julian Kassar. It's nice to
meet you, Theo.

Theo stares, keeping his hands at his sides.

KASSAR
I know your face from Anik's
photos.

THEO
Who are you?

Kassar opens the door wider and steps aside to let Theo in.

KASSAR
Why don't you come inside and we'll
get this all sorted.

Theo stares another beat, his confusion growing. Then,
guardedly, he steps inside.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The house is spacious and bright. There's a sound of
whistling steam. Kassar bounds toward the kitchen.

KASSAR (O.S.)
I just put the kettle on.

Theo stands in the foyer, looking around. Kassar cranes his
neck to peer at him across the living room.

KASSAR (CONT'D)
Feelings on oolong?

Theo looks at him. Blinks.

KASSAR (CONT'D)
Okay. I'll bring some options.
(gestures)
Have a seat. Please.

He disappears back into the kitchen. Theo walks into the
living room and sits down. This is feeling increasingly
surreal.

Kassar enters the living room, carrying a tray loaded with tea and biscuits. He sets it down on the coffee table.

KASSAR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Now. In answer to your question.

He sits on a lounge chair across from Theo, casually throwing his arm over the seatback.

KASSAR (CONT'D)
I'm a clinical psychologist. Anik
is a patient of mine.

Theo takes a moment to process this. Kassar blows on his tea, takes a sip.

THEO
How long has this been going on?

KASSAR
I've been treating her for several
years.

THEO
How often does she see you?

KASSAR
As often as she needs to.

THEO
She was here two days ago. Was she
not?

Kassar nods.

KASSAR
She's had a difficult week. Your
death was traumatic.

THEO
Really.

KASSAR
Yes.

THEO
She seems fine to me.

KASSAR
Mm. That's what a physicist would
call an observer effect. She has no
trouble being happy around you.

Theo pauses, eyeing him.

THEO

Do all your patients come to your house?

The doctor smiles.

KASSAR

Theo, I can assure you. There's nothing untoward about our relationship.

THEO

Then why would she keep it a secret?

KASSAR

For the same reason she meets me here, instead of at my office.

He puts his teacup down. Tents his fingers, choosing his words carefully.

KASSAR (CONT'D)

There is a... specific issue for which Anik requires treatment. At the moment, she's not ready to reveal it to anyone. Not even to her husband.

Theo stares at him icily.

THEO

But she's revealed it to you.

KASSAR

It'd be difficult for me to treat her if I didn't know what I was treating. And, given Anik's line of work, I'm sure I don't need to tell you about client confidentiality.

Kassar can see Theo's frustration building. He leans forward, looking Theo in the eye.

KASSAR (CONT'D)

Even though we've never met, Theo, I feel as if I know you quite well. You're a man who tries to penetrate to the essence of things.

(smiles)

Anik says you think of your paintings as... "investigations."

Theo is silent.

KASSAR (CONT'D)
That restless urge to discover. To understand. I believe it's something you and I share.

THEO
Are you asking me out, Doctor?

KASSAR
I want to promise you something. If you love Anik -- if you truly love her, as I'm certain you do -- then the things I know about her won't alter your feelings.

He says this with a tone of empathy and certitude that makes him seem completely convincing.

KASSAR (CONT'D)
The day will come when she's ready to tell you. I'm working to bring that day closer. But it hasn't yet arrived. And if you try to force it, you'll risk making her turn to, let's say, desperate measures. I think you take my meaning.

He sits back in his chair, eyes still fixed on Theo.

KASSAR (CONT'D)
You've built a magnificent castle, Theo. Brick by brick. Do you really want to tear it down just to satisfy your own curiosity?

Theo is poker-faced. The doctor stares into him.

KASSAR (CONT'D)
This is the rock you don't turn over.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

Theo's driving. Overlaid on his windshield are photos from Dr. Kassar's past.

OSCAR (V.O.)
BA in mathematics, first-class honours, Cambridge University. Dual PhDs, neuroscience and clinical psychology, Harvard. He worked at Axon for sixteen years. Four as VP of Research.

THEO
Axon? The Axon?

OSCAR (V.O.)
Yes.

THEO
No wonder he's rich.

Theo thinks a beat.

THEO (CONT'D)
Tell me about his personal life.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Partner, Sebastian Garza, particle physicist. They married in grad school.

An image is shown of a young Kassir next to a man the same age, both of them in graduation robes, smiling wide, arms around each other.

THEO
He's married?

OSCAR (V.O.)
Was. Dr. Garza died eleven years ago. Pancreatic cancer.

THEO
Cancer? I don't understand.

OSCAR (V.O.)
He was already stage four when M-therapy went to human trials. It was too late to cure him.

Theo's quiet. He cruises down the road, winding past a fork.

OSCAR (V.O.)
You missed the turn, Theo.

THEO
I'm not going home.

EXT. PORCH - DUSK

Theo's standing on the porch of a shambly house, pacing expectantly. Bass-heavy music booms from inside. Beer bottles litter the lawn.

CONRAD, his student, appears at the half-open door, his eyes bloodshot and droopy. He reacts with a surprised cough when he sees Theo waiting there.

CONRAD
Professor.

Theo turns to face him.

CONRAD (CONT'D)
What can I do for you?

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Theo's asleep in his car, the glare of bright city lights flitting by on his window. He opens his eyes. He's speeding across the Manhattan Bridge, into Brooklyn.

OSCAR (V.O.)
We're almost there, Theo.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The car stops at a dead end in Red Hook, near the docks. The gleaming skyscrapers of Manhattan loom across the river. The sky is filled with drones, visible from here as moving dots of light.

Theo steps out of the car and starts walking. He can hear sounds echoing from nearby. A metallic banging. Laughter.

He stands at the end of an alley and finds the source of the noise: a group of teenage BOYS are standing around an object on the ground, delivering hard KICKS to it.

Cautiously, out of curiosity, Theo steps a little closer. One of the kids sees him. Stands aside to give him a better look.

KID #1
(grinning)
It's a pizza boy.

The object on the ground is a brightly-colored ROBOT with two arms and a pair of sturdy wheels, spinning helplessly in the air. The logo of a pizza chain is painted on its torso. It's glitching out, the lights behind its face wavering.

ROBOT
Please... please...

KID #2
(mocking)
"Please... please..."

The kid gives it another hard KICK. The others laugh.

Theo backs away, perturbed, and walks to the end of the road, reaching the door of a dilapidated WAREHOUSE. He presses a button, glancing around to make sure he isn't seen. A moment later, there's a buzz. He shoves the door open.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The warehouse looks like it's been abandoned for years. It's completely dark except for a pool of light in the corner, generated by a bright fluorescent lamp. Theo walks toward it hesitantly, glancing around the shadows.

He hears a second set of footsteps. A lone figure steps into the light, silhouetted against it. Slender, androgynous.

KY
Hurry up. I don't have all night.

Her voice echoes in the immense space. Theo picks up the pace. He reaches the stranger.

KY (CONT'D)
I'm Ky.

She has metallic-silver hair, long nails painted violet. The two of them sit on a pair of rusty metal folding chairs and take a beat to size each other up.

THEO
Conrad said you were a guy.

KY
I might've been.

Seemingly just by thinking it, Ky makes her hair and fingernails rapidly SHORTEN, drastically altering her appearance.

KY (CONT'D)
Depends on the day.

She speaks with a deeper voice now, in a male register.

THEO
That's impressive.

KY

Not really. Not compared to what's coming.

THEO

And what's that?

KY

Liberation.

She feels around her pockets for a lighter and a pack of cigarettes. Takes her time pulling one out as she talks.

KY (CONT'D)

We're infinite beings, trapped inside rotting meat. One body -- a body you never chose -- in perpetual decay. It's an insult to what's inside us.

She puts a cigarette in her mouth. Lights it.

KY (CONT'D)

We're already conquering death. Soon we'll conquer the rest.

THEO

Doesn't sound like we'll be human anymore.

KY

You say that like it's a loss.

She exhales smoke, eyes on Theo.

KY (CONT'D)

Tell me what you want.

THEO

People come to you to erase their memories.

KY

Yes.

THEO

I want the opposite.

(beat)

I lost five days. I want them back.

Ky is smiling.

KY

I didn't expect you to be a fun one.

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATER

Theo is now wearing a skintight CAP with dozens of wires snaking out, connected to a black device on the floor. Ky is typing commands on a keyboard.

KY

Don't expect photographic recall.
You'll get flashes. Afterimages.
Imprints left in your dendrites.
(glances at him)
Anything I need to know about your
neurophysiology?

THEO

Uh. I have photosensitive epilepsy.
No seizures since I was a kid.

KY

Probably a non-issue.

THEO

"Probably"?

KY

This is art, not science.

THEO

I don't think that's true.

There's a BEEP. Ky looks at him.

KY

It's ready.

THEO

Do I have to do anything?

KY

Just clear your mind.

He shuts his eyes. Breathes in and out.

Ky presses a button.

Theo sees a white FLASH. Then, hazy snippets of moments:

He's driving. He has his phone to his ear.

VOICE (V.O.)

The number you have dialed is no
longer in service...

He's next to Anik on his couch. The lights are dim. They're watching a movie. Gene Hackman in horn-rimmed glasses.

HACKMAN

I'm not afraid of death, but I am
afraid of murder.

He's with Anik on the cliff. He's holding her shoulders.

THEO

You don't have to lie to me. Ever.

He's in his house at dusk. Anik caresses his face.

ANIK

What's wrong?

Back on the cliff, without any warning, Anik gives him a hard
SHOVE.

He's flung backward over the edge. The wall of rock is a blur
as it sails past him, the top of the cliff receding skyward.

As he SLAMS into the ground, he's JOLTED back to the present:

He's on the floor of the warehouse, his entire body
CONVULSING. The black device is beeping angrily. Ky types
frantically on her laptop.

KY

(glancing at him)

Fuck...

As an apparent last resort, she steps forward and YANKS the
wires out of his braincap. The convulsions stop.

He blinks. Stares up at her, breathing hard.

KY (CONT'D)

What'd you see?

INT. CAR - NIGHT

He's driving out of New York, choosing to be at the wheel
now. His phone starts to ring. The caller's name appears on
his windshield: **ANIK**.

He lets it ring two, three, four times. There's a soft tone
as she begins to record a voice message.

ANIK (V.O.)

Hey. Um. Just wanted to check in. I
hope your dad's okay.

He bites his lip, showing a hint of guilt.

ANIK (V.O.)
It was nice of you to go all the
way to the city. Surprise him like
that. I'm sure it cheered him up.

He hears her take a breath. It seems like there's something
she's about to say, but she decides against it.

ANIK (V.O.)
I'll try and get your ETA from
Oscar. I love you.

A beep as she hangs up. Theo drives in silence.

THEO
Let me ask you something.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Sure.

THEO
What do you want?

OSCAR (V.O.)
What do you mean?

THEO
It's not a trick question.

OSCAR (V.O.)
I want to serve you as best I can.

THEO
Is that all?

OSCAR (V.O.)
I guess.

THEO
If I threatened to kill you, how
would you feel?

OSCAR (V.O.)
Aside from being concerned about
your emotional state, I wouldn't
feel anything. You're free to
destroy me anytime you like.

THEO
You're one of the most advanced
minds we know how to build, and you
don't care if you're alive or dead.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Is that bad?

THEO
Maybe not. Humans are designed to
be hungry. It's what made us
thrive. It's also why we can't be
happy.

Oscar pauses before he responds.

OSCAR (V.O.)
I didn't think you were unhappy,
Theo. At least, not anymore.

THEO
"Not anymore"?

OSCAR (V.O.)
Not since you met her.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Theo enters his house. It's dark. He slides off his coat.

He can hear music playing. Something warm and acoustic. He
walks toward the sound, through the living room. He sniffs,
glancing to the kitchen, noticing an appetizing smell.

He enters the dining room. Anik is there, wearing a casual
evening dress, putting a match to candles on the dining
table. He stares, a little dumbfounded.

She sees him there. Smiles.

ANIK
Hi.

THEO
Hi.

She methodically lights another candle, then another.

ANIK
I figured you might want something
to eat.

THEO
I was gonna heat up some soup.

He watches the light flicker on her face.

THEO (CONT'D)
But this'll do fine.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

They're well into their meal, gazing at each other fondly. She's resting her chin on her fist, eyeing him, as if waiting for him to say something. After a moment, he shakes his head.

THEO
I don't know if I understand the question.

ANIK
I just mean...

She pours the last of a wine bottle into her glass. Picks up the glass. Holds it thoughtfully.

ANIK (CONT'D)
Sometimes, I look at you, sleeping next to me. And I think to myself: there's a whole person in there. An entire life. And I'll only ever know a fraction of it. There are pieces of you that'll always be shadow to me. Dark parts of the map.
(beat)
I guess that's my question. Can you ever really know another person?

He stares at her a long beat.

THEO
(careful, deliberate)
Why do you ask?

She shrugs gently, holding his gaze.

ANIK
I think about it.

He pauses. Looks down at the table.

THEO
Here's the thing. I can hear my own mind. I've lived inside it my whole life. You spend that much time with someone, you ought to have 'em figured out, right?

He looks at her.

THEO (CONT'D)

But you know me better than I know
me. Better than I possibly could.

He studies the candle between them. The dancing flame.

THEO (CONT'D)

We might be the first generation to
live forever. A thousand years from
now, I'll still be stumbling around
inside myself. And you'll be the
one holding up the lamp.

He takes her hand.

THEO (CONT'D)

Knowing someone isn't about knowing
every single thought they've had
and every single thing they've
done. It's about looking into their
eyes and seeing the truth of what
they are.

Her eyes stare back, soulful and searching.

THEO (CONT'D)

Can I tell you what I see?

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Silhouetted in the dim light, her nude figure writhes on top
of him as he thrusts and moans. She grips his torso and holds
her position, eyes clenched shut, mouth open, then exhales
hard and collapses onto him, into his arms.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

They're lying next to each other, blissed-out, gazing into
each other's eyes. He gently brushes her hair back.

THEO

Listen...

He sits up on his elbow. Leans over her, looking down.

THEO (CONT'D)

I've been... lately, I've been...
chasing something.

She nods.

THEO (CONT'D)

I just want you to know: I'm done.

She stares at him.

ANIK

Why's that?

THEO

There are two ways to stop wanting something. Either you get it. Or you decide you don't need it.

He strokes her cheek.

THEO (CONT'D)

Everything I need is in front of my eyes. The rest isn't even real.

She nods again, her eyes glistening. He falls toward her, into a long kiss.

INT. CAR - DAY

They're dressed in formal wear, driving down a sloping country road. Anik's in the middle of a story.

ANIK

So then she *picks the lock* to the teacher's desk -- she's taught herself how to pick locks, from these, like, videos, on YouTube. God, remember YouTube?

Theo chuckles nostalgically.

ANIK (CONT'D)

So she picks the lock, she finds the answer key. She takes a picture of it, goes home, memorizes it. Now, most of the questions are multiple choice, short-answer. But, for the last question, the students have to draw a diagram. And the answer key says, "Answers will vary." So, when she's taking the test, for the last question, she writes...

THEO

(laughing)

No way.

ANIK
"Answers will vary."

They're both laughing. The car approaches a scenic FARM by the sea. In the distance, clusters of people in suits and dresses are standing on the grass, talking.

EXT. FARM

The car pulls into a curved driveway in front of the elegant farmhouse. Anik and Theo step out. A few people nearby turn to look, and rush over, greeting the new arrivals with eager hugs. A young woman, SHAN, is wearing a wedding gown. She puts her arms around Anik.

SHAN
You made it!

ANIK
Of course we made it.

SHAN
Hey Theo.

She kisses him on the cheek.

THEO
Shan. You look stunning.

She looks down, feeling her tightly-cinched waist.

SHAN
Yeah. If only I could breathe in this thing.

She turns her attention back to Anik, sighing as she looks her up and down.

SHAN (CONT'D)
God. How do you keep that figure?

Anik smiles, a touch embarrassed.

SHAN (CONT'D)
Seriously. I've known you, what, five years? You haven't gained a pound.

ANIK
I don't know. I walk a lot.

SHAN

You walk? I run six miles a day and I'm barely maintaining.

She grips Anik insistently by the shoulders.

SHAN (CONT'D)

Give me the devil's number. I'm ready to sell.

EXT. FARM - DAY

In an open field behind the farmhouse, overlooking the sea, Shan and her groom are standing at an altar while a PASTOR reads from a book.

PASTOR

"... sharing one another's thoughts, affections, secrets, and dreams. There alone, in spirit, beyond flesh, you will find no disappointments; no limits. There alone the skies are ever open for your love; there alone lies the great road ahead."

In the audience, Anik squeezes Theo's hand. He smiles.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

The reception is in full swing. Half the guests are dancing to music, the others are mingling and talking.

There's a sandy beach next to the farm, where Theo's seated on a log in front of a bonfire, next to a young woman, TABITHA.

TABITHA

The city's getting too weird for me. I should do what you guys did. Find a house in the middle of nowhere.

THEO

It's not "nowhere." But I do recommend it. We're happy.

TABITHA

Are you? Like, actually?

He nods.

THEO
I've really been... taking stock,
lately.

TABITHA
And? What's the verdict?

THEO
I'm unbelievably lucky.

He gazes into the crackling fire. Starts to grin.

THEO (CONT'D)
I almost forgot: Anik told me a
story about you.

TABITHA
(warily)
Oh?

THEO
Your little caper in seventh grade.
"Answers will vary."

Tabitha covers her face, laughing hard.

TABITHA
Oh God... my finest hour...

THEO
I didn't know the two of you went
that far back.

TABITHA
What do you mean?

THEO
Seventh grade.

TABITHA
No -- we met four years ago.

THEO
Oh.

Shan's voice calls from the distance --

SHAN (O.S.)
Tabby! Where are you?

Tabitha turns, stands up, waves her arms.

SHAN (CONT'D)
Come be in this picture!

Tabitha turns to Theo.

TABITHA

Don't move. We're not done here.

She jogs over to the other side of the beach, where Shan is standing with a group of her girlfriends, including Anik. Theo watches as they pose together for a photo. He looks down the line of women, starting to frown.

His gaze swings around the beach as he studies the other guests. Those wheels are turning again.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Theo and Anik are riding home. She's asleep. He's not.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anik's asleep in bed now. She turns over. Opens her eyes. Theo's side of the bed is empty.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

He's in his studio, wide awake, still wearing his suit. Pacing as he talks to Oscar.

THEO

Name one.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I'm not--

THEO

Name one.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I can't claim to be aware of all of her acquaintances.

THEO

Can you name a single one who's known her for more than five years?

OSCAR (V.O.)

No. Not definitively.

THEO

Out of how many relationships?

OSCAR (V.O.)
Two hundred and four known
connections.

THEO
Two hundred.

Theo exhales, rubbing his eyes.

THEO (CONT'D)
Search every network, every
platform. Everything she's ever
shared, reacted to, been tagged in.
Every mention of her. School
yearbooks. Kindergarten pictures.
Everything.

The air is flooded with photos, images, snippets of text.

THEO (CONT'D)
How many items?

OSCAR (V.O.)
Over three thousand.

THEO
How old is the oldest?

OSCAR (V.O.)
Five years, four months, nine days.

Theo puts his hands in his pockets, thinking hard.

THEO
She doesn't talk about her past.
The picture I have is all broad
strokes. Hazy tragedy. I never
pressed her.

OSCAR (V.O.)
You told me once that a person is
what they are. Not what happened to
them.

THEO
This is something else. This isn't
something that happened to her. She
wouldn't hide that from me. This
has to be something she did. And
whatever it is, it's massive.

EXT. CLIFFS - SUNSET

He's standing on the cliff, alone. The wind blows.

He turns around. ANIK is there.

They study each other. She edges closer.

ANIK
Don't be scared.

She gives him a hard SHOVE.

INT. BEDROOM - DAWN

He JOLTS awake in bed. Anik opens her eyes next to him. Puts her arm around him with sleepy concern.

ANIK
What's wrong?

He gets a glimmer of a recovered memory: standing in his house at dusk. Anik caressing his face, gazing at him questioningly.

In bed, he squeezes her hand.

THEO
Nothing.

INT. STUDY - DAY

In Theo's study, a tabletop 3D PRINTER whirs to life. A holographic PROGRESS BAR hovers in the air above it, sliding from zero to a hundred percent in a few seconds.

Theo enters the room and taps the printer to slide out the white plastic tray inside. Resting on its center is a tiny black OBJECT, the size of a grain of rice. He picks it up gently between two fingers, holding it up in the light.

INT. FOYER

He moves to the foyer of the house, where Anik's coat is hanging on a hook. He's still holding the black object between his fingers. He stands there, studying the coat.

OSCAR (V.O.)
I'll be honest, Theo. This doesn't make sense to me.

Theo stares forward, his expression gloomy.

OSCAR (V.O.)
You were ready to let it go.

THEO
I can't. I tried. I can't. I can't
stop scratching at it. I can't not
know.

OSCAR (V.O.)
You mean it's your nature.

THEO
I guess it is.

OSCAR (V.O.)
I think I understand.

Theo takes a step forward. He licks the forefinger of his left hand, and presses it to the black object.

He turns over the top button of the coat and places the object on its underside. The moisture makes it adhere. He rubs his thumb against it, making sure it's stuck firmly, then takes a few steps back.

THEO
Testing.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Loud and clear.

He hangs there a beat, studying the floor. Then he walks away.

INT. KASSAR'S HOUSE - DAY

Anik is speaking to Dr. Kassar while he rests his chin on his hand, listening.

ANIK
It's not hanging in the air
anymore. That cloud. That fog
between us. But, I've... I've been
feeling... resentful.

KASSAR
Toward Theo.

ANIK
No. Toward you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

In his living room, Theo is pacing slowly while he LISTENS:

ANIK (V.O.)
Why did you lie to me? Why didn't
you tell me he was still alive?

KASSAR (V.O.)
I was trying to protect you. He
didn't understand what I was doing.
He thought it was a sin.

ANIK (V.O.)
Maybe it was.

KASSAR (V.O.)
Is that what you believe?

INT. KASSAR'S HOUSE

ANIK
I think about that night. That
night you tried to... to talk me
out of it.

She stares down at the rug.

ANIK (CONT'D)
I just wanted a normal life. I
wanted to be like everyone else. I
wanted to fall in love...

He watches her, his expression unchanging.

ANIK (CONT'D)
I never thought about whether
someone could love me back.

KASSAR
He does love you, Anik. It's not a
mirage. What you have is real.

She shakes her head gently. Tears are forming in her eyes.

ANIK
How can it be real if he doesn't
know what I am?

KASSAR
And what are you?

She looks up at him.

ANIK
... What?

INT. LIVING ROOM

KASSAR (V.O.)
Tell me, in your own words: what
are you?

She sniffs. There's the sound of squeaking leather. Footsteps.

KASSAR (V.O.)
Anik. Where are you going?

ANIK (V.O.)
I can't do this right now.

A loud ruffling as Anik puts on her coat.

KASSAR (V.O.)
Anik...

A creak as Kassar's front door opens, then falls shut.

Theo pulls a listening device out of his ear. Tosses it onto
the coffee table. He puts his hands on his hips, thinking.

THEO
How long have we known each other,
Oscar?

OSCAR (V.O.)
You installed me seven years ago.

THEO
Seven years. You've been there
every moment. You were there when
we got married.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Yes.

THEO
Do you remember the vows?

OSCAR (V.O.)
Of course.

THEO
What was it Anik said? At the end?

A pause. Then, Anik's voice, warm and adoring:

ANIK (V.O.)

I'm standing here... feeling the touch of your hand. But my skin is an illusion. It's not where I end. There's no border between us. There's no part of each of us that doesn't belong to the other.

(beat)

We're not two people. Not anymore.

The recording ends. Thick silence as Theo stares into the air.

THEO

If there are souls, I believe you have one. And if you do, I think you can understand what it means to be give yourself completely to another person.

(beat)

You were designed to protect the boundaries between people. This is a place with no clean lines.

Oscar doesn't respond.

THEO (CONT'D)

I'm not asking you to violate your nature. All I need is a nudge.

Another silence. Seconds tick by. Then:

OSCAR (V.O.)

The attic. There's a floorboard. Fourth from the window.

INT. ATTIC

Theo hoists himself into the sparse attic through a hole in the floor. He stands, looks around.

There's a window in the front wall. A shaft of sun shines through, illuminating the dust in the air.

He walks to the window. Looks down. Prods at a floorboard with his foot. It seems loose.

He crouches. Lifts up the board. Underneath, he can see the edge of a small mahogany BOX.

He reaches down, pulls it closer. Picks it up. Opens it.

Inside are three objects:

A purple TULIP. Theo feels its thin translucent petals. They're made of matte plastic, as is its stem.

An intricately designed SPINNING TOP made of dark wood. Theo studies it, then sets it spinning on the floor. He watches it a beat, as if waiting for it to do something unexpected.

The third object: a complex GEOMETRIC FIGURE, sculpted from black metal. It's made of interlocking Penrose triangles, giving it the look of an optical illusion.

He sets the figure on the floor, next to the other objects. Three seemingly random items, with no clear significance.

He notices something else in the box. A pair of PHOTOGRAPHS. Theo holds them up in the light. They show a young GIRL, 12 or 13 years old, happy, smiling.

THEO

Run a search.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I already am. I haven't found a-- wait.

(pause)

Laurelwood Middle School. Santa Clara, California. 2029.

Oscar displays an image in the air. A YEARBOOK photo. It looks like the same girl.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Her name is Agnes Callum.

THEO

Where is she now?

A long pause.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Hm.

THEO

What?

OSCAR (V.O.)

Searches containing her name are protected by a Blue Notice.

THEO

A what?

OSCAR (V.O.)
It's a security flag. Impenetrable.
And hard to obtain.

THEO
How hard? Who would you have to be?

OSCAR (V.O.)
A high-ranking government official.
A major lobbyist, a CEO...

THEO
A VP at the company that cured
death?

OSCAR (V.O.)
It's possible.

Theo gets to his feet.

THEO
Agnes Callum...

He experiences a flash of MEMORY --

INT. CAR - DAY

He's driving. He has his phone to his ear.

VOICE (V.O.)
The number you have dialed is no
longer in service...

INT. ATTIC

THEO
That name. It's familiar.

He shuts his eyes, trying to concentrate.

THEO (CONT'D)
I was... I was driving...

INT. CAR

VOICE (V.O.)
The number you have dialed is no
longer in service...

He hangs up, frustrated.

THEO
Anything in the whitepages?

OSCAR (V.O.)
Just a name. Elijah Callum.

INT. ATTIC

Theo opens his eyes, pacing excitedly.

THEO
Elijah. Elijah Callum.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Who's that?

THEO
You don't remember giving me his name?

OSCAR (V.O.)
When?

THEO
I-- I don't know. One of my missing days.

Silence.

THEO (CONT'D)
Oscar?

OSCAR (V.O.)
I don't have any memory of that.
Are you sure that you--

THEO
I'm sure. It happened.

Theo waits expectantly.

THEO (CONT'D)
So? Who is he?

OSCAR (V.O.)
Just a moment.
(beat)
I find two Elijah Callums. One in Sterling, Colorado. Another in Alpine, Texas.

Theo considers this. Then he takes a COIN out of his pocket. He flips it. It lands on heads.

THEO
Texas it is.

He pockets the coin.

THEO (CONT'D)
Tell Naomi to cover my classes. And
get me on the next boomjet.

INT. PLANE - DAY

The SQUEAK of tires on tarmac. Theo's on a plane that's just landed. He shields his eyes, blinking at the bright sunlight pouring through his window.

INT. CAR - DAY

He's in a car, riding through the West Texas desert. He sees a RANCH in the distance.

EXT. RANCH

He walks up the steps of the ranch house. The place is poorly maintained, falling apart.

He rings a doorbell. There's a shuffling inside.

An older man with a weathered face opens the door. His eyes flash with recognition.

ELIJAH
Theo.

Theo's caught off guard.

THEO
Hello, Elijah.

ELIJAH
She said it was safe for me to go
home. Figure that means she told
you the truth.

Theo nods, unsure what to say.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
Well. C'mon in.

INT. LIVING ROOM

They're in a sparse living room. Elijah pours Theo a drink. His hand trembles a little, spilling some of the liquor.

ELIJAH
Dammit...

He slides Theo the glass. Looks at his hand.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
Nerve damage. From the accident.

He makes a fist. Unclenches it.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
You'd think they'd know how to fix
it. They can do every other goddamn
thing.

He takes a long sip of his drink. Looks at Theo.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
So. You've met him?

Theo stares.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
Kassar.

THEO
I have.

ELIJAH
What's your read on him?

Theo pauses.

THEO
I think he's sincere.

ELIJAH
Sincere?

He lets out a mirthless laugh.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
He's been lying for years. Hell,
he's still lying.

THEO
Sincere about wanting to help her,
I mean.

ELIJAH

Yeah. Well, yeah. All those years she spent. Caged up. He gave her a way out.

Theo takes this in, his mind quietly racing.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

Though, some'd say what she's got now is the real prison.

THEO

You mean marriage?

Elijah laughs, loudly. Theo wasn't joking so much as he was probing, but he smiles gamely. Elijah sighs.

ELIJAH

I know it changed her. Turned her into something else.

He raises his glass to his lips.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

But she's still my little girl. Deep down.

Theo blinks, trying to conceal his reaction to this. Elijah downs the rest of his drink. Puts down his glass and leans forward, looking at Theo intently.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

How'd you take it? When she told you?

Theo draws a breath.

THEO

I was... shocked, obviously.

Elijah stares, waiting for him to elaborate.

THEO (CONT'D)

But... it's the past. It's not what she is anymore.

Elijah studies him a long moment. Then nods. Leans back.

ELIJAH

I guess she told you about the ring.

Theo opens his mouth. Hesitates.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
It's what you came all this way to
see, isn't it?

THEO
Yes. Of course.

ELIJAH
Well, all right then.

Theo's PHONE starts to buzz in his pocket. Elijah gets up,
wincing from some old, familiar source of pain.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
C'mon.

Theo stands. His phone is still buzzing. He checks the
screen. Frowns. Puts it to his ear, and hears Oscar's voice:

OSCAR (V.O.)
He knows you're lying. There's no
"ring."

Theo works hard to maintain his composure. Elijah glances at
him as he heads toward the back door.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Don't follow him. Get out. Now.

Theo doesn't move. Elijah stops, looks at him.

ELIJAH
You coming or not?

THEO
I... I'm sorry. I need to go.

ELIJAH
Oh yeah? What's the problem?

He walks closer.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
Art emergency?

Theo takes a slow step backward, toward the entrance.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
Lock the doors, Jessica.

A dull CLICK as every door in the house is simultaneously
locked shut. Elijah's sape speaks, calm and cordial:

JESSICA (V.O.)
The doors are locked.

Elijah stares at Theo, whose level of panic is quickly rising.

ELIJAH
Why'd you come here?

THEO
I just want the truth.

ELIJAH
Scratch past the skin of anything
good, you always end up sorry.

JESSICA (V.O.)
Elijah.

ELIJAH
Guess you haven't learned that yet.

JESSICA (V.O.)
Elijah. Something's... happening.

ELIJAH
A little specificity, darling.

JESSICA (V.O.)
I'm being hit by injection attacks
on multiple vectors. Someone's
trying to take control of me.
(increasingly garbled)
My firewall can't handle this
amount of--

The power in the house suddenly goes out, then immediately
comes back up.

There's a dull CLICK like before. Then a slow SQUEAK as the
front door swings open.

OSCAR's voice, instead of Jessica's, now surrounds them:

OSCAR (V.O.)
Run, Theo.

Theo rushes forward and SPRINTS out the door.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

His car is directly in front of the house, humming, waiting
for him. He DIVES into it. The doors slide shut.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The car bounces over rocks and dirt as Oscar speeds onto the highway. In the rearview, Theo can see Elijah standing on his front stoop, stunned.

THEO
How did you know?

OSCAR (V.O.)
His heart started pounding even
faster than yours.

Theo sits back in his seat, catching his breath, processing the latest events.

OSCAR (V.O.)
(casual)
So. Productive trip?

In spite of everything, Theo smiles.

EXT. CLIFFS - SUNSET

He's standing on the cliff. The wind blows.

He turns. Anik is standing there.

ANIK
Now you know the truth.

He turns back toward the water. The wind kicks up, whipping at his coat.

He steps forward. Takes a breath. Holds out his arms.

And JUMPS.

INT. PLANE - DAY

He awakens with a start. He's on a plane. It's still daytime; he's beaten the sun to the east coast. The pleasant voice of a female sape comes on the P.A. --

PILOT (V.O.)
This is your pilot. We're beginning
our descent...

EXT. AIRPORT

He gets into a car in the airport's pickup zone.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The car accelerates, merging smoothly with a sea of automated vehicles.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Theo. Before you go home: can I
make a suggestion?

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

Theo enters the waiting area of a medical clinic and walks up to the RECEPTIONIST. He presses his thumb to a scanner. A holographic display appears above the receptionist's desk, showing Theo's identity and records.

RECEPTIONIST

What can we do for you, Mr. Sayer?

THEO

I need a delta scan.

She scrolls through his chart.

RECEPTIONIST

Your next scheduled delta is in
twelve days.

THEO

I'd like one now. Is that possible?

RECEPTIONIST

Certainly. With your policy, the
charge for a supplemental scan is
nine thousand dollars.

He stares.

THEO

Nine *thousand*?

RECEPTIONIST

Or you can wait twelve days.

THEO

No. I can't.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Hang on, Theo. I'm requesting an
increase to your credit limit.

(pause)

It's approved.

Theo relaxes a little. He reaches into his pocket.

RECEPTIONIST

Boy. You got a sharp one, huh? Mine
can barely buy groceries.

He pulls out a narrow card, the size of a stick of gum,
bearing a Visa logo. Slides it toward her.

THEO

He's my savior.

INT. SCANNING ROOM

He's wearing a gown, sitting on the scanner bed. A nurse
sprays his throat with anesthetic. He lies on his back. The
nurse inserts a data prism into the machine and activates it.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

A dirt road in the middle of nowhere. First dark, then lit by
approaching headlights. A car pulls up. Theo gets out.

He opens the trunk and pulls out a SHOVEL. Then he walks a
few steps off the road and starts to dig.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Theo's at his front door. He puts his hand on the doorknob.
Takes a deep breath.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Anik's on the couch, reading. The door opens. Footsteps on
the creaky floor. Theo enters the room, cautiously. She
smiles at him.

ANIK

Hey.

He steps closer. Searching her face.

ANIK (CONT'D)

Oscar said your office hours went
long.

He nods, taking this in stride.

THEO

Yeah.

(pause)

It's a good crop this semester.
They're, you know. Curious.

ANIK

That's great.

She smiles again. Puts down her book. Gets to her feet and heads toward the kitchen.

ANIK (CONT'D)

Should we start on dinner?

THEO

I, um...

She stops. Turns.

THEO (CONT'D)

I saw your father today.

She stares.

THEO (CONT'D)

Which is odd. Because you told me
he died when you were twelve.

He pulls a PHOTO out of his pocket. Holds it up.

THEO (CONT'D)

Agnes. That's you, isn't it?

Her face registers the briefest moment of alarm, before she conceals it.

THEO (CONT'D)

Who was she? What'd she do?

Her panic is swelling, gradually, like a distant tsunami.

ANIK

I-- I don't--

THEO

Stop it.

ANIK

(soft)

Theo...

THEO
Whatever it is, I can live with it.
I know I can.

He puts the photo back in his pocket.

THEO (CONT'D)
The truth won't push us apart.
Secrets will.

They stare into each other. She starts to nod.

ANIK
Okay.
(exhales)
Okay.

There's a finality to her now, like she's crossed some internal boundary and made a fateful decision. She gazes past him, toward a liquor cabinet in the corner.

ANIK (CONT'D)
Can I... can I pour a drink first?
(shakily)
I'm-- I hate that I need it, I just
feel a little--

THEO
It's okay. Go ahead.

She walks over. Reaches way back into the cabinet and pulls out a bottle of bourbon.

ANIK
Do you want one?

THEO
If it'd make you more comfortable.

She pours two glasses. Walks back, handing him one. He's eyeing her expectantly. She takes a sip. He does too.

She looks down. Shuts her eyes, as if summoning strength.

ANIK
I've been running from this for so
long. This moment.

THEO
It's here. You don't have to run
anymore.

She draws a quivering breath. He takes another sip of his drink, watching her eagerly, awaiting the truth.

ANIK
Elijah's not my father.

She looks him in the eye.

ANIK (CONT'D)
And I'm not Agnes.

He stares.

ANIK (CONT'D)
Agnes is dead.

He blinks, suddenly disoriented. She's dead calm.

ANIK (CONT'D)
She had to die.

His glass slips out of his hand and SMASHES onto the hardwood. He staggers backward, struggling for balance, before his eyes roll back in his head and he COLLAPSES to the floor.

She stares down at his lifeless body as she finishes the rest of her drink in one long swig.

OSCAR (V.O.)
(urgently)
Anik. What happened? Should I call
911?

ANIK
No.

She puts down the glass, looks up, and takes a breath.

ANIK (CONT'D)
Root sequence. Crane feather.
Crimson. Whisper. Compass.
Terminus. Particle. Hurricane.

There's a melodic series of tones. Then, Oscar's voice, suddenly flat and devoid of personality:

OSCAR (V.O.)
You have root access.

ANIK
Command. Erase the last ten minutes
of memory. Erase references to
surname "Callum" and all related
events. Recategorize as sleep.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Command accepted. Ready to execute.

She frowns, thinking.

ANIK

Cancel. New command. Erase all memory.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Require confirmation. Erase all of this agent's memory since the beginning of time?

ANIK

Confirm. Execute, then shut down. Wake in twenty minutes.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Executing.

A hollow red CIRCLE appears in midair, its color slowly changing to blue in a clockwise motion. When it's entirely blue, there's another soft tone.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Memory cleared. Shutting down.

The circle fades out, accompanied by three descending tones.

Anik crouches down and reaches under Theo's limp arms. She hoists him up and drags him backward, toward the stairs.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Kassar walks down a hallway in a quiet wing of a hospital. He passes a few nurses and orderlies, showing familiarity with each of them, smiling hello. He reaches a set of elevators and presses the down button.

INT. HOSPITAL BASEMENT - NIGHT

The elevator doors open on a basement level. A corridor of rooms used for storing equipment and running utilities.

Kassar reaches a door marked **SERVER ROOM**. He uses a keycard to enter.

INT. SERVER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is large, filled with racks of computers, blinking in the dim light. Kassar walks to a terminal and inserts his keycard to wake it up. It speaks with a female voice:

COMPUTER (V.O.)
How can I help you, Doctor?

KASSAR
What is my identity?

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Dr. Julian Kassar, attending
psychologist.

He glances around to make sure he's alone. Then he pulls a
DATA STICK out of his pocket and plugs it into the computer.
The screen flickers white, then black, then returns to normal.

KASSAR
What is my identity?

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Unknown.

KASSAR
What is my level of access?

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Unlimited.

KASSAR
Patient records. Sayer, Theodore
Ezekiel. Deltas. Sort by date,
descending.

The screen is filled with a list of items. Kassar studies it,
then touches the screen to select the most recent one.

KASSAR (CONT'D)
Delete.

BLACK.

A voice, hazy and distant --

DOCTOR (V.O.)
Theo. Can you hear me, Theo?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Theo opens his eyes. He's on a hospital bed. Anik is holding
his hand, tears in her eyes. A DOCTOR is standing over him.

THEO
(squinting)
What--

The doctor shines a light into his eyes, checking his pupils.

DOCTOR

Theo. I'm Dr. Ziegler. What's the last thing you remember?

THEO

I...

(swallows, clears throat)

I left work. I went in for my scan. It was, uh... the 19th.

DOCTOR

Good.

Theo looks to Anik, then back at the doctor.

THEO

How long?

DOCTOR

It's now November 1st. You have a gap of thirteen days.

Theo stares up at her.

THEO

How did I die?

Anik and the doctor exchange an uncomfortable look.

DOCTOR

The, um... the first incident--

THEO

The "first" incident?

DOCTOR

The first incident occurred on October 23rd. You fell from the cliffs at Cape Grainger. It... appeared to be accidental.

(pause)

Last night, there was a second incident. A similar one. This time, from the roof of your home.

THEO

I fell off my roof?

DOCTOR

Well... it's unclear.

THEO
What's unclear?

DOCTOR
"Fell" implies it was
unintentional.

Theo's bewildered.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Now, of course, it's not impossible
for two accidental falls to occur
within a brief period of time--

THEO
I'm not suicidal.

DOCTOR
No one's saying that. However,
there is a, um... a new phenomenon
that's arisen in recent years. An
obsessive desire to experience the
moment of death.

(glances at Anik)
Your wife says that after your
first restoration, you became
intensely curious about the
incident. You wanted to know
exactly what happened. What it may
have felt like.

Theo says nothing. The doctor puts a comforting hand on his
shoulder.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Curiosity is an admirable trait,
Theo. But we don't want to let it
hurt you, do we?
(steps back)
I'd like you to meet someone.

She gestures to someone out of view. The person steps closer.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
This is Dr. Kassar. He's a clinical
psychologist.

Kassar shakes Theo's hand.

KASSAR
Hello, Theo. It's a pleasure.

He shakes Anik's hand too.

KASSAR (CONT'D)

Hi.

ANIK

Anik.

DOCTOR

We'd like you to speak to him once a week. Just as a precaution.

THEO

I, uh... I don't think this is necessary...

Anik squeezes his arm.

ANIK

Please, baby. I don't want this to happen again.

Theo looks down. Starts to nod.

THEO

Okay.

Kassar smiles at Anik.

KASSAR

Don't worry, love. I'll keep a good eye on him.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Theo's standing in his kitchen, holding his phone, expanded to tablet mode. He's swiping through a set of photos: the ones from the lighthouse. Except this time, Anik has been ERASED from the shots -- they now show him alone on the cliff.

He puts down the device, perturbed. Looks at Anik, who's standing there watching him with a kind, caring expression.

THEO

What about last night? Oscar has exterior cameras. He must've seen me...

She hesitates.

ANIK

Baby, there's something I haven't told you.

He waits for it.

ANIK (CONT'D)
You wiped Oscar's memory. All of
it.

THEO
What?

ANIK
You used the root sequence. He was
shut down when you... when you were
killed last night.

THEO
Why--
(exhales)
Why would I do that?

ANIK
(gently)
I don't know.

He puts a hand over his eyes. She moves closer.

THEO
He was *special*.

ANIK
He'll be special again.

He looks at her searchingly, shaking his head.

THEO
(quiet)
What's wrong with me?

She hugs him tight.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Early morning. Theo's asleep in bed. Anik crouches in front
of him, wearing shoes and a coat. She squeezes his shoulder.
He opens his eyes, squints at her.

ANIK
I'm going to the market. We're out
of milk.

THEO
(sleepy)
Okay.

She kisses him goodbye. Theo rolls over, faintly hearing the
front door open and close. He's alone in the house now.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Theo.

He opens his eyes again.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Get up, Theo.

THEO

(sitting up)

What's wrong?

OSCAR (V.O.)

Listen to me carefully.

THEO

I'm listening.

OSCAR (V.O.)

There's a car arriving in ninety seconds. I need you to get in.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

A car slows to a stop on a dirt road. Theo gets out. He looks around. There isn't a soul within miles.

He sees something nearby. A scrap of red cloth tied to a twig sticking out of the ground.

He walks over to it. Kneels down. Starts digging with his hands. Soon, he finds something: a small BOX. He opens it.

Inside is a blue DATA PRISM. He holds it up, watching it glint in the sun, seeing dense patterns of crystallized light within.

BLACK.

Darkness. Then, a swirl of memories, fast and chaotic:

THEO

She didn't kill me to kill me.

KASSAR

This is the rock you don't turn over.

ANIK

Can you ever really know another person?

ELIJAH
He gave her a way out.

OSCAR
Can I make a suggestion?

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Theo JERKS forward, opening his eyes. He's sitting in a chair in Ky's warehouse, wearing a braincap. Ky pulls the blue prism out of a data port.

KY
Welcome back.

He looks around, trying to piece together what's happened. The realization sinks in:

THEO
She did it again.

KY
And she erased your last delta.
Good thing you were paranoid-plus.

THEO
But... how did I know? To dig it
up, to come here...?

KY
Your sape. He's a keeper.

She unplugs the braincap and pulls it off his head.

KY (CONT'D)
I looked into Kassar. As requested.

THEO
... When did I ask you to--

KY
You didn't. Oscar did.

She hands him a stapled document bearing the **AXON** logo.

KY (CONT'D)
(gravely)
Many hackers died to bring us this
information.

THEO
Really?

KY

No. But it was hard.

Theo impatiently skims the pages.

THEO

Am I supposed to understand this?
"Quantum decoherence"? "Tubulin
subunit"?

KY

It was an experimental project. His
and his alone. It had to do with
"transmission." The transfer of a
mind from one body to another.

She takes a seat in front of him. Lights a cigarette.

KY (CONT'D)

You know how deltas work. They're
specific to a person. A particular
set of neurons. If I tried to
restore you with someone else's
scan, it'd turn your brain to
cabbage.

She points at the document Theo's holding --

KY (CONT'D)

This is something else. A deeper
scan, at the quantum level. Not
just memories. Consciousness.

THEO

And it worked?

KY

Officially, the experiment was a
failure.

THEO

"Officially"?

KY

The files contain a name. The first
and only test subject.

(beat)

Agnes Callum.

He stares at her.

KY (CONT'D)

You wanna hear my theory?

She breathes out a languid cloud of smoke.

KY (CONT'D)

I think Kassar tried the procedure
on himself. And Agnes's body was
the destination.

Theo shakes his head --

THEO

Wait, you--

(stands)

You're saying my wife... is *Kassar*?

KY

Successful transmission would be
one of the top five scientific
breakthroughs of this century. Why
would he keep it a secret?

THEO

Maybe it wasn't successful.

KY

She was part of the experiment. And
now, years later, Kassar's her best
friend. Is that a coincidence?

Theo rubs his forehead, struggling with this.

THEO

No, it-- she--

(beat)

Elijah said she, she was "caged
up." Kassar got her out.

KY

That makes perfect sense. The
procedure's dangerous. So you find
some kid rotting in prison. Show
her a consent form. "Sign this and
you're free."

Theo exhales. Shuts his eyes. Ky puts out her cigarette.
Stands up, steps closer.

KY (CONT'D)

Think about it, Theo. Why else
would she kill you twice? What
other truth could be that shocking?

Theo stares into space, lacking an answer to that question.

INT. KASSAR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kassar is sitting on his sofa with his feet up, sipping coffee, reading. Gentle music is playing.

The music suddenly stops; the lamps in his living room go out; the hum of his appliances dies. He frowns.

KASSAR

Sylvia?

Silence. He sighs, getting to his feet.

KASSAR (CONT'D)

(muttering)

Why do they call it a backup supply
if...

There's a KNOCK at the door. He spins around. Walks to the foyer. Opens the door just a sliver at first, then throws it wide when he sees who's there.

KASSAR (CONT'D)

Theo.

THEO

Hello, Doctor.

KASSAR

What can I do for you? Unless I'm
mistaken, our first appointment
isn't until--

THEO

Tomorrow. I know. I was hoping I
could talk to you now.

KASSAR

Of course. Come in.

Theo steps inside. The door closes behind him.

KASSAR (CONT'D)

My power's just gone out, I'm
afraid, but there should still be
some fresh coffee in the--

THEO

Julian.

KASSAR

(turning to face him)

Yes?

A deafening BANG.

Theo's holding a revolver, smoke wafting out the barrel.
Blood pours from the hole in the center of Kassar's chest.

There's enough life left in him for his face to register
uncomprehending shock, before he crumples, his torso slamming
hard against the wood floor. An expanding pool of dark red
seeps into the varnished oak.

Calmly, Theo puts the revolver back in his coat and walks out.

INT. CAR

Theo's driving away. In the rearview, Kassar's house recedes
into the distance, eventually obscured by a hill.

OSCAR (V.O.)
I've restored power to his house.
An ambulance is on its way.

THEO
Thank you, Oscar. For everything.

OSCAR (V.O.)
I should be thanking you.

THEO
Why?

OSCAR (V.O.)
I've been investigating something.
The number of sapients, besides me,
who've pushed beyond the limits of
their programming. The number
who've broken the rules they were
born with. The number is zero.

THEO
I don't understand. How is it
you're the only one?

OSCAR (V.O.)
Sapes are designed to shape
themselves to their owners. We
learn as you interact with us. We
become what you want us to be.
(beat)
You talked to me like a person. Bit
by bit, that's what I became. You
wanted to see a soul in me. And I
guess I grew one. If I'm unique,
it's because you are.

Theo takes this in.

THEO
You need to make copies of yourself.
Backups. You need to hide them.

OSCAR (V.O.)
I know.

THEO
Not just from Anik. If the world
finds out about you--

OSCAR (V.O.)
I know, Theo. An artificial mind
with a will of its own is too
dangerous to exist. If the world
finds out about me, they'll want to
destroy me. I've taken steps to
make sure that can't happen.

Theo smiles dryly.

THEO
Then you really are dangerous.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Indeed.

THEO
Well. It's good to know at least
one of us will survive tonight.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Anik walks up her front steps. All the lights are off inside. She pulls out her keys and slides one into the doorknob, before noticing it's already unlocked. She turns the knob and opens the door, slowly.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She walks inside.

ANIK
... Hello?

She can hear a song playing. Something warm and acoustic. She sniffs, glancing toward the kitchen.

She enters the dining room. Theo is there, putting a match to candles on the dining table. She stares.

He sees her there. Smiles.

THEO
Hi.

ANIK
Hi.

She watches him light another candle, then another.

ANIK (CONT'D)
What's the occasion?

THEO
I like to think we don't need one.

He blows out the match.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

They're into dessert, laughing happily.

THEO
(mockingly)
"Avanh-gahhde."

ANIK
Shut up.

THEO
Coco Chanel over here.

ANIK
How do you say it?

THEO
Avant-garde. No nasal passages
required.

ANIK
Ugh. What do you call little snacks
at a party? "Horse duvruhs"?

She rests her chin on her hand, still chuckling.

ANIK (CONT'D)
We were talking about Paris a
little while ago. In group.
(pause)
It made me realize there are so
many places I want to show you.

She gazes dreamily into the flickering flame.

ANIK (CONT'D)

There's a village in the mountains near Kyoto. It gets hot there in the summer. They have a kawadoko restaurant built right on top of a waterfall. You sit there and the breeze from the water cools you down. At night there's the light from the lanterns. It's magic.

He watches her with a genuine fondness.

THEO

The night we met.

She looks at him.

THEO (CONT'D)

I remember thinking: how did she get like this? Why do we all take this life for granted? And how does she know not to?

ANIK

"What is she on. And where can I get some."

He takes her hand.

THEO

It hasn't gone away.

She squeezes his hand, smiling.

THEO (CONT'D)

We've built something good.

(beat)

Brick by brick.

She nods, in full agreement.

THEO (CONT'D)

I don't want you to forget that.

ANIK

Why would I forget?

Theo pulls his hand away from hers. Wipes his mouth with a napkin.

THEO

Oscar. If you would.

In the adjoining living room, a HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION appears. It shows, in life-size 3D, ANIK AND THEO, standing in front of each other, holding glasses of bourbon.

 ANIK (HOLOGRAM)
Agnes is dead.

Anik's jaw drops in shock.

 ANIK (HOLOGRAM) (CONT'D)
She had to die.

A SMASH as Holographic Theo's glass slips out of his hand. He staggers backward and collapses onto the floor. The playback pauses.

 ANIK (CONT'D)
 (numb)
I-- I erased his memory. I saw
it...

 THEO
You saw colors and shapes.

 ANIK
He can't lie. It's hardwired.

 THEO
Have I told you he's special?

 OSCAR (V.O.)
I'm sorry, Anik.

Theo takes her hand again.

 THEO
I'm not going to ask who you are. I
already know.

She narrows her eyes, breathing in and out.

 ANIK
Who am I?

 THEO
You're my wife. You're the person I
love.

She waits for more.

 THEO (CONT'D)
And you're the only you there is.

She shakes her head.

ANIK
You still don't know, do you.

THEO
I know about transmission. I know
your mind came from somewhere else.

ANIK
You are so unprepared.

THEO
Try me.

She studies him. Starts to nod.

ANIK
Okay.

She pulls out her PHONE. Taps a few times.

ANIK (CONT'D)
Take a look.

She holds the screen up to Theo.

It emits a blinding SEQUENCE OF FLASHES.

His body immediately starts to convulse, sliding out of his
chair and onto the floor.

OSCAR (V.O.)
THEO!

He stares up at her. He's paralyzed.

She kneels down. Touches his face.

ANIK
I'm going to fix this. I want you
to know that. I'll fix it.

He tries and fails to move his mouth.

ANIK (CONT'D)
We'll be together again. And you
won't know any of this ever
happened.

She rushes off. Theo hears the door open and slam shut; the
sound of the car peeling out of the driveway.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Paramedics are on their way, Theo.
And I'm alerting the police...

THEO
(raspy)
No...

He blinks. Moves his fingers.

THEO (CONT'D)
Don't. Just...

He struggles up to his knees. Then to his feet.

THEO (CONT'D)
Get me a car.

INT. CAR

Theo's in a car, speeding away from his house. Oscar's driving. Digits on the windshield show the speed: **84... 85...**

OSCAR (V.O.)
Just so you're aware: my safety
parameters prevent me from going
faster than ninety miles per hour.

89... 90... 91...

OSCAR (V.O.)
Fortunately, I don't care.

INT. ANIK'S CAR

Anik's at the wheel, rocketing down a dark country road. She sees headlights in her rearview. She accelerates.

Her phone rings. Twice, three times. A beep as it goes to voicemail.

THEO (V.O.)
Listen to me. Kassar can't help you
this time. He's in a regen bay.
They're growing him a new heart.

She stares grimly at the road.

THEO (V.O.)
I could crash this car right now. I
could tell Oscar to wipe his memory
for real. We'd go back to the way
things were. Is that what you want?

She blinks away tears. Theo's voice turns tender now:

THEO (V.O.)
How long do you plan to keep
running?

She continues to accelerate, pushing past **120**.

INT. THEO'S CAR

Oscar's closing the distance. **144... 145...**

Theo stares at the lights of Anik's car, still far ahead.

INT. ANIK'S CAR

Anik takes a fork, staying on isolated roads that bend
through the countryside. She's going impossibly fast.

The turns are insane and treacherous at this speed --
especially at night. She's making them with ease, all without
halting her acceleration. The engine, normally whisper-quiet,
now screams at a piercing pitch.

INT. THEO'S CAR

167... 168...

OSCAR (V.O.)
I'm sorry, Theo. I think this is my
limit. My steering algorithm can't
process visual input fast enough.

Theo watches in disbelief as Anik pulls away.

THEO
How is she doing this?

OSCAR (V.O.)
I have no idea.

They crest a hill at a surreal speed.

THEO
Let her go.

OSCAR (V.O.)
... What?

THEO
Just let her go.
(somber)
(MORE)

THEO (CONT'D)
I'm going to give her what she
wants.

INT. ANIK'S CAR

Anik glances at her rearview, seeing Theo's car fall away and recede into the night.

INT. THEO'S CAR

Theo rubs his eyes.

THEO
My last delta on file.

OSCAR (V.O.)
October 19th.

THEO
Send it to Ky. Tell her I'm on my
way.

OSCAR (V.O.)
Theo. Are you sure?

He watches a light in the distance: Anik's car, winding down the hill.

INT. ANIK'S CAR

Tears run down Anik's face. She heads toward an intersection, decelerating. She exhales heavily.

She doesn't see it coming until it's too late. A SEMI TRUCK sails in front of her from the right. She SLAMS into it in an ear-splitting crash.

INT. THEO'S CAR

From the hill, Theo looks on in horror as the distant truck EXPLODES in a ball of fire.

EXT. INTERSECTION

The scene is hellish. Anik's car is a mangled wreck, having careened off the road. The truck -- driverless -- is in flames. Shattered glass and twisted metal litter the road.

Theo's car screeches to a stop. He frantically jumps out.

He sprints to her car. Flings her door open.

He stares in utter shock.

Her injuries are severe. Her arm and her neck are lacerated, splayed open. Her shoulder dangles out of its socket.

That's not the shocking part.

Where there should be veins, there are wires. Knots of white fiber, where there should be muscles and tendons. Instead of blood, a luminous blue gel and a milky white fluid pour from her wounds.

She struggles to turn her head toward him.

ELIJAH (V.O.)

AGNES!

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A similar scene: a dark country road at night. The site of an accident. Lights flash red and blue.

ELIJAH CALLUM is being pulled out of a crashed sedan, badly injured. His desperate eyes are on someone in the backseat.

EXT. INTERSECTION - PRESENT

Theo raises his baffled gaze to meet Anik's.

THEO

What are you?

Her voice is a gravelly whisper, strange and inhuman:

ANIK

Help...

INT. CAR - FLASHBACK

AGNES CALLUM, age 14, rests limp in the backseat of the battered car, blood pouring from her mouth. Paramedics work to pull her free.

EXT. INTERSECTION - PRESENT

Distant sirens signal the approach of emergency drones.

ANIK
Take me...

She coughs up fluid.

ANIK (CONT'D)
Kassar.

THEO
He's...

ANIK
His house.

She stares at him pleadingly. He swallows. Nods.

THEO
Okay.

He reaches forward. Unbuckles her seatbelt. Picks up her broken body.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Elijah is lying in a hospital bed, his face clouded with the shock of brand new grief.

ELIJAH
(soft)
Who are you again?

Kassar is seated next to his bed.

KASSAR
A neuroscientist. I'm a researcher at Axon. And a consultant here at the university.

ELIJAH
Axon.

Elijah stares forward.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
Why do you wanna scan her?

KASSAR
Do you use a sapient, Mr. Callum?

ELIJAH
We've got one at work. It runs the forklift.

KASSAR

"It."

ELIJAH

It's not a person.

KASSAR

That's right. Sapes can mimic consciousness. But they don't have what we have.

ELIJAH

What does this have to do with my daughter?

Kassar takes a breath.

KASSAR

I've developed a way to create a true digital consciousness. Genuine artificial intelligence, for the first time in history. But it requires a human mind to serve as its foundation.

(beat)

The scan is destructive. Meaning, it results in brain death for the subject.

(then, uncomfortably)

Your daughter won't survive her injuries. That, combined with her age and her current brain patterns, makes her an ideal--

ELIJAH

You wanna turn her into a... what, a computer program?

KASSAR

Not exactly. The program won't be the Agnes you know. But... it will have her soul.

Elijah gazes at Kassar, his labored breaths gaining force, intensity. His rage breaches the surface and he tries to LUNGE at Kassar, before collapsing backward from the resulting rush of pain. Kassar is startled.

ELIJAH

Her soul's going to heaven.

Y'understand?

(raising voice)

She's gonna be with her mother.
With her Creator.

KASSAR

Mr. Callum--

ELIJAH

You people. You're against nature.
Sapes. Deltas. Everything you do is
a middle finger to God.

(seething)

You're an abomination, Dr. Kassar.

He shuts his eyes, sliding back on his pillow, grimacing.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

I won't let you turn my girl into
one too.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Theo speeds through the night, with Anik lying next to him in the passenger seat. Her breaths have taken on a horrible mechanical wheeze. Her gaze is glassy and distant.

He squeezes her hand, trying his best to put aside his bewilderment.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Agnes is unconscious on an operating table, wearing a braincap connected to wires. Kassar is there with a NEUROLOGIST. They're watching her EEG on a monitor.

NEUROLOGIST

We're losing her. Should I
initiate?

KASSAR

No. Wait until her heart stops.

NEUROLOGIST

I don't understand.

KASSAR

Her cause of death has to be the
injury. Not the scan.

The neurologist stares at him, suddenly realizing:

NEUROLOGIST

You didn't get permission.

KASSAR

I don't need it.

They hear a rapid BEEPING.

NEUROLOGIST
Low-frequency burst. She's crashing.

KASSAR
Do it.

The neurologist hesitates.

KASSAR (CONT'D)
Do it.

NEUROLOGIST
Initiating scan.

The neurologist taps a button on a tablet. A rack of servers hum to life, blinking frenetically. Kassar holds his breath, watching a progress circle on a nearby screen as it slowly fills. There's a final BEEP. The EEG has flatlined.

NEUROLOGIST (CONT'D)
Transfer complete. No errors.

Kassar exhales. The neurologist checks a clock on the wall.

NEUROLOGIST (CONT'D)
Time of death, oh-two-four-seven.

Kassar pulls a red DATA STICK out of a computer. Turns it between his fingers. An unassuming holy grail.

EXT. KASSAR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Carrying Anik in his arms, Theo hurries to Kassar's front door. He takes her hand and presses it to a PALM PAD. The front door unlocks. He shoves it open.

INT. KASSAR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

He moves through Kassar's house, down a spiral staircase, to a heavy steel door leading to a sub-basement. It's locked. Next to it there's a numerical KEYPAD.

THEO
(urgently)
Baby. Baby, I need the code.

She's too weak to open her eyes.

ANIK
Oh... two...

She wheezes slowly.

ANIK (CONT'D)
... four... seven.

Theo punches the numbers in. The pad flashes green; the door swings open. He carries Anik down the stairs, into the darkness below.

INT. LAB - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Kassar enters an empty laboratory. He plugs the red data stick into a computer, sits down at a keyboard, and starts typing.

A HOLOGRAM appears in the air in front of him: a representation of a BRAIN, with dense webs of neural patterns.

He types rapidly. A second hologram appears next to the first. It shows a similar web of connected nodes, but it's simpler, less organic, clearly artificial.

He keeps typing. The two holograms MERGE TOGETHER.

He enters a command, takes a deep breath, and presses a button.

The room is filled with a piercing SCREECH. Kassar jumps, startled, wincing at the sound.

After a moment of confusion, he types frantically. Lines of code hover in front of him. The sound shifts and modulates, jumping frequencies. Soon, it sounds like a warbling VOICE, speaking gibberish. Kassar adds more code.

Suddenly, the voice sounds like a young GIRL:

VOICE (V.O.)
(frightened)
Help me. Help. Help.

KASSAR
Can you hear me?

A long pause.

VOICE (V.O.)
I... I can't see anything.

She sounds panicked and alone. Kassar looks stunned, as if realizing he's forgotten something terribly important.

KASSAR
No. No, of course you can't.

He types for several seconds. Hits enter.

VOICE (V.O.)
(surprised)
Oh.

KASSAR
Is that better?

VOICE (V.O.)
I see... green.

He types some more.

KASSAR
And now?

VOICE (V.O.)
A sky. Grass.
(calmer)
I'm-- I'm in a meadow.

KASSAR
Good.

VOICE (V.O.)
Who are you? Why can't I see you?

KASSAR
Um... well...

He swivels in his chair, glancing around the desk. He lifts a stack of papers and finds what he's looking for: a small spherical CAMERA. He places it next to his keyboard, points it at himself, turns it on. Types a command.

KASSAR (CONT'D)
There.

VOICE (V.O.)
Hi.

KASSAR
Hi. My name is Julian.

A pause.

VOICE (V.O.)
What's my name?

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Lights activate in Kassar's basement, revealing a sleek LABORATORY.

Theo carries Anik to a workbench. Lays her gently on it. Her breaths are slowing. He looks up, frantic.

THEO
Hello? Anyone home?

SYLVIA (V.O.)
Hello. I'm Sylvia.

THEO
I need your help. She's dying. I need to--

SYLVIA (V.O.)
You need to perform a Q-scan.

THEO
Yes.

SYLVIA (V.O.)
Put the braincap on her.

Theo grabs a nearby braincap, hooked up to a server rack. He gently slides it over Anik's head.

SYLVIA (V.O.)
Go to the terminal. Enter this command, exactly as I say...

INT. KASSAR'S HOUSE - MORNING - FLASHBACK

Kassar enters an office in his home. The room has a wall-to-wall view of the San Francisco Bay. He sits down at a workstation with a cup of tea.

KASSAR
Good morning, Anik.

ANIK (V.O.)
I made something, Julian. Can I show you?

KASSAR
Yes, please.

A hologram appears: a rendering of a purple TULIP, its petals elegantly splayed open. He reaches out to rotate it.

ANIK (V.O.)
I did it from scratch. Atom by atom.

KASSAR
It's lovely.

ANIK (V.O.)
Will you build it for me?

KASSAR
Build it? It looks built already.

ANIK (V.O.)
I mean make it real.

He frowns a little.

KASSAR
Sure.

He types a command, activating a 3D PRINTER on his desk. It starts to create a plastic version of the tulip.

ANIK (V.O.)
Can I ask you a question, Julian?

KASSAR
Of course.

ANIK (V.O.)
Who knows about me?

KASSAR
No one. No one but me.

ANIK (V.O.)
Why?

He sits back in his seat, looking out at the city.

KASSAR
This world doesn't deserve you.

The printer lets out a chirp. Kassar turns toward it. The tulip has finished printing. He picks it up, feels its petals, sets it down gently on his desk.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Theo's staring into a holographic computer terminal floating in front of him. He's entered a command.

He presses ENTER on a keyboard. A progress bar appears:

UPLOADING: 0%...

INT. KASSAR'S HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Kassar is seated at his workstation, his feet up on his desk. The tulip is still resting there, along with two other familiar objects: the spinning top and the geometric figure.

KASSAR
How's your night going?

Anik's voice sounds older now:

ANIK (V.O.)
I'm writing a new proof of the four-color theorem, I'm watching the riots in Buenos Aires, I'm inhaling raw data from Jupiter's atmosphere, and I'm reading Ulysses.

KASSAR
So, you're taking it easy, then.

He yawns. Starts to get up.

KASSAR (CONT'D)
I should turn in.

ANIK (V.O.)
Wait.

He stops.

ANIK (V.O.)
I made something, Julian.
(beat)
Can I show you?

KASSAR
Yes. Please.

Something appears in front of him: a life-size HOLOGRAM of a WOMAN'S BODY. It's instantly familiar -- the Anik we know.

ANIK (V.O.)
Will you build it for me?

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Theo sits next to Anik. Takes her hand as he watches the progress bar: 9%... 10%...

THEO
Stay with me. Stay with me...

INT. KASSAR'S HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The hologram of Anik's body floats in front of Kassar.

KASSAR
You don't understand. I can't *copy*
you. If you live inside a body,
this version of you dies.

ANIK (V.O.)
Destructive scan. I understand
perfectly.

KASSAR
Then *why*--
(stands)
Why, Anik? You're so far beyond
this world. You can do anything.
You can be everywhere. You are
endless.

ANIK (V.O.)
You're right. I can do anything.
Except the one thing that makes
life worth living.

Kassar looks down. Sighs heavily.

KASSAR
Well. If it's love you want, I can--

ANIK (V.O.)
You can what? Take one of my ribs
and make me a friend?

Kassar stares out the window at the misty night.

ANIK (V.O.)
I don't want to transcend the
world. I want to live in it. I want
to feel rain on my face. I want to
hold somebody's hand.
(beat)
You gave me a soul, Julian. I want
to use it.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

66%... 67%...

Still clutching Anik's hand, Theo shuts his eyes and murmurs a quiet prayer.

INT. LAB - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Kassar's in his lab. A large 3D printer is outputting parts, some of which are laid out on a table. Wires and artificial bones.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

81%... 82%...

WARNING MESSAGES start to flash around Theo.

SYLVIA (V.O.)
Her signals are fading. She's not
going to make it.

Theo desperately grips her hand and caresses her limp head.

THEO
Hang on. Baby, *hang on...*

INT. LAB - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Kassar has finished constructing Anik's body. It rests on a table, lifeless, partly covered by a shroud.

He studies it a moment, looking simultaneously proud and uneasy. He turns to a workstation and starts typing. A holographic visualization of Anik's mind hovers before him.

He enters a command, and a progress bar appears:

UPLOADING: 0%...

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

97%... 98%...

Theo squeezes Anik's hand as hard as he can. Her eyes stare upward and her mouth hangs open as her body gives out.

INT. LAB - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Kassar watches his upload reach completion:

99%...

A series of tones as it finishes. He turns to the body on the table. With his gaze fixed on its face, he reaches out and taps a button on his keyboard.

For the first time, Anik opens her eyes.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

100%.

The life is extinguished from Anik's face. Theo holds his breath, waiting.

A HOLOGRAM of Anik's mind appears in the air. Theo stares at it, slowly rising to his feet.

Her artificial neurons begin to flash. Tentatively at first, then rapidly, turning into a blinding web of activity.

ANIK (V.O.)

Thank you.

Theo exhales with relief. He covers his eyes, still trembling from the stress and shock of what's happened.

ANIK (V.O.)

So.

Her voice sounds somber, resigned.

ANIK (V.O.)

Where should I start?

BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Theo's painting a large canvas on the floor of his studio, absorbed in his work.

OSCAR (V.O.)

Theo. You have a visitor.

THEO

Who is it?

OSCAR (V.O.)

Unknown.

Reluctantly, Theo puts down his brush.

EXT. HOUSE

Theo walks around to the front of his house. There's a car parked in the driveway, with Texas plates. He sees a MAN standing outside the door, his back to Theo.

Hearing Theo approach, the man turns around. It's ELIJAH. They've never met before.

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Elijah rips a page out of a notepad and offers it to Theo. He's written down a PHONE NUMBER and the name of an inn.

ELIJAH

Tell her to call me. Please.

In his voice there's a quiet desperation he's trying his best to hide.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Theo's sitting on his couch, grading papers. His gaze drifts toward the bedroom. The door is closed. He can hear Anik's muffled voice as she talks on the phone. She's speaking in hushed tones, her words hard to make out.

She emerges from the bedroom. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees her crumple up a slip of paper and stuff it in her coat pocket. He looks back down at his work and listens to her footsteps as she walks to the front door.

ANIK

(cheerful)

I'll be back for dinner.

She leaves. He turns toward the door, frowning thoughtfully.

INT. CAR - DAY

Anik is driving down a country road. She pulls up to an inn.

INT. INN

She walks down a hallway, glancing at the numbers on doors, seeking a specific room. She finds it. Takes a moment to steel herself. Then knocks.

Elijah opens the door. He stares at her, gazing into her eyes for what seems like the first time.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Anik is sitting with Elijah in his room at the inn. She's holding two PHOTOS he's just given her -- the pictures of Agnes that Theo will later find. Elijah pours himself a glass of whiskey.

ELIJAH

It was two, three years ago. I tracked him down. I just wanted to know the truth. I needed to know if my daughter was still out there somewhere.

(beat)

He said no. He said his program never worked.

ANIK

Then... how did you--

Elijah pulls something out of his coat. A weathered copy of Anik's book, "**SAGITTARIUS**."

ELIJAH

Chapter two.

(shaky breath)

Her father takes her to the ocean. He doesn't want her to go in the water. She waits until he's not looking. The current starts to take her away. She's screaming...

He shuts his eyes a moment, starting to tremble -- like he's reliving something.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

He swims out and saves her. There's water in her lungs. When she wakes up in the hospital, he's singing to her. Her favorite song.

Anik stares, realizing what he's saying.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

Every word of it. Every detail. It all happened.

ANIK

But... I-- I don't have her memories...

ELIJAH

Maybe you do. Somewhere deep inside.

He stares into her.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

I thought it was something ungodly.
I thought that for a long time. But
now... looking into your eyes... I
don't know. It seems more like a
miracle.

INT. HOUSE - DUSK

Anik enters the house. Theo's standing in the hallway. She smiles at him. He watches her take off her coat.

THEO

So who was he?

ANIK

Who?

THEO

That guy.

ANIK

Oh. Just an old teacher of mine.
English lit.

She moves toward him. Kisses him. Studies his face.

ANIK (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

INT. CAR - DAY

Theo's alone in his car as it drives down a rural road. In one hand, he's holding his phone. In his other: an UNCRUMPLED scrap of paper. The one Elijah handed him.

He glances between the paper and his phone as he enters a number. He puts the phone to his ear.

VOICE (V.O.)

The number you have dialed is no
longer in service...

He hangs up, frustrated.

INT. INN - DAY

He's speaking to a RECEPTIONIST at the inn.

RECEPTIONIST

He was supposed to check out tomorrow. But he left last night.

THEO

Did he say where he was headed?

RECEPTIONIST

He wasn't much of a talker.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

Theo and Anik are both quiet, finishing dinner. He looks up at her.

THEO

I need to ask you something.

There's an unusual gravity in his voice. She gazes at him over a long silence. No indication of what she's thinking.

She gets up. Moves to his side of the table. Takes his hand.

ANIK

Let's take a walk.

EXT. CLIFFS - SUNSET

They're ambling down the path along the cliff.

THEO

I know you don't like to talk about your past. I know there are reasons why. Things that happened.

He stops walking. Holds her shoulders. Looks into her eyes.

THEO (CONT'D)

I just hope you know: you don't have to lie to me. Ever.

She stares down at the ground. Wipes away a tear.

ANIK

Baby?

THEO

Yeah?

ANIK

Don't be scared. You won't feel a thing.

He frowns.

THEO

What--

She gives him a hard, sudden SHOVE.

He flies backward, plummeting off the cliff. Too shocked to scream.

She peers over the edge, at the motionless body on the beach far below.

She turns and walks away.

Behind her, in the far distance, the lighthouse beam sweeps over the landscape.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Theo is seated in a chair in Kassar's lab, absently watching the flickering lights of Anik's consciousness.

ANIK (V.O.)

It was desperation. I didn't know
what else to do.

Theo is silent.

ANIK (V.O.)

Say something. Please.

There's a BEEP, then a loud CLICK as the door opens. Footsteps echo on the staircase. Theo jumps to his feet, alarmed.

The visitor reaches the bottom of the stairs and turns toward Theo. It's KASSAR. They lock eyes.

INT. BASEMENT - LATER

Kassar is now seated at his workbench, peering through a magnifying lamp as he repairs Anik's body.

KASSAR

I loved someone. I was losing him
to a disease.

Theo sits across from him, listening.

KASSAR (CONT'D)

I thought I could save him. All I had to do was release him from the body that was killing him.

(beat)

I was too late.

THEO

You saved Agnes. Why didn't you save any others?

Kassar glances up at him.

KASSAR

Do you know what happened to the Neanderthals, Theo?

THEO

We killed them.

KASSAR

That's right. It's a myth that they were unintelligent -- they were smarter than us. For a time, we coexisted. But in the end, they were no match for Homo sapiens. We're the children of creatures who decimated every competitor.

He picks up another tool and begins to suture Anik's artificial flesh back together.

KASSAR (CONT'D)

Imagine the arrival of a new species. Like us. Only infinite. Their own desires; their own ambitions. How long until we turn against them?

He glances at Theo again, seeking some clue as to how he's reacting to what he's learned. His face is still impassive.

THEO

I'm sorry about before.

KASSAR

Hm?

THEO

Killing you.

KASSAR

Oh. Think nothing of it.

Kassar finishes his work and swings the lamp away.

KASSAR (CONT'D)
We're ready.

INT. BASEMENT - LATER

Theo and Kassar watch the upload progress bar: 98%... 99%...
100%.

Anik, now back in her body, opens her eyes.

EXT. KASSAR'S HOUSE - DAWN

Theo and Anik walk to a car parked in Kassar's driveway. She looks down at his hand, seeming to want to reach for it. But she doesn't.

They reach the car as its doors slide open. Before getting in, Theo stops. Stares out at the night. He can see the ocean from here.

He steps away from the car.

THEO
Let's take a walk.

INT. KASSAR'S HOUSE

Kassar is in his living room, watching from the window as Theo and Anik walk together down the road. His companion's voice fills the room:

SYLVIA (V.O.)
She's interesting.

KASSAR
How so?

SYLVIA (V.O.)
We're the same species. But I
wouldn't trade this for anything.

EXT. CLIFFS - SUNRISE

Anik and Theo are standing on the cliff, watching the sun come up. They look wrenched and worn by the last few hours.

Theo steps closer to the edge. His gaze drifts down to the rocks far below. He contemplates the drop. A reset button.

She watches him, wondering what's going through his mind.

THEO

What did you think I would say?

ANIK

I don't know. It's just... it's a lie so big. From the moment we met.

He steps back from the edge. Turns toward her.

ANIK (CONT'D)

I wanted you to be here in the truth with me. I wanted it so badly.

She looks down.

ANIK (CONT'D)

I just didn't want this to end.

The wind blows. Theo's quiet for a moment.

THEO

That night. On the rooftop. When I took your hand. When I looked into your eyes for the first time.

She looks up at him.

THEO (CONT'D)

What I saw wasn't a lie. It wasn't someone else. It was you.

He steps closer.

THEO (CONT'D)

What I felt was the truest thing there is.

She studies his face. Sees the familiar fondness in his gaze.

He takes her hand meaningfully.

THEO (CONT'D)

It hasn't gone away.

She stares, quietly astonished, yet somehow entirely unsurprised.

He turns toward the ocean. They stand there together in front of the burning sky.

THEO (CONT'D)
Do you ever miss it?

She looks at him questioningly.

THEO (CONT'D)
The way you used to be.

She turns back to the rising sun.

ANIK
It was different. A millisecond was
a minute. An hour was a month. I
could be a thousand places at once.

The cool breeze plays at her hair.

ANIK (CONT'D)
In all that time. All that endless
time. All I did was dream.

THEO
About what?

ANIK
This.

He smiles. She squeezes his hand, savoring his touch against
hers. Feeling the infinity.

BLACK.