

RESURRECTION

by

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INT. BIOMATIX OFFICE / LABORATORY - DAY

GWYN (22, intern) sits at a desk in a large, open plan office adjacent a biotech lab. She speaks to someone O.S.

GWYN

I like him a lot. I mean, he's really smart and funny. Good-looking. He's got a lot of, like, amazing qualities. It's just..

WOMAN (O.S.)

Just what?

GWYN

Well, he's always making these jokes that're, I don't know, just sort of like cutting, y'know? They're like... like he's making fun of me.

WOMAN (O.S.)

He makes jokes at your expense.

GWYN

He's just trying to be funny. That's his sense of humor. But it... I'm, like, I'm not sure if I'm supposed to joke back, or...

WOMAN (O.S.)

You don't find them funny.

GWYN

I mean, sometimes. He's really funny. But mostly the jokes sort of make me feel... on the spot.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Have you asked him to stop?

GWYN

Yeah. Sort of.

WOMAN (O.S.)

And what did he say?

GWYN

He says I'm, like, oversensitive. That they're just jokes. But, I don't know, he says I'm thin-skinned.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Tell him to stop. Why would he continue if he knows they hurt you?

GWYN

I mean, nobody else seems to mind.

WOMAN (O.S.)

If he cared about you, he'd stop.
Why don't you tell him to stop?

GWYN

(slightly exasperated)
'Cause he'll just say it's my
problem and I should get over it.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Tell him to fuck off. Okay? This
guy's a sadist; he likes to cut
people down. You can tell him that.

GWYN

He'd say I just don't get the joke.

ANGLE ON: MARGARET (40s, attractive, athletic) sits on Gwyn's desk, wearing a lab coat and a compassionate expression. She's a bit of a surrogate mother to Gwyn. Or is trying to be.

MARGARET

Well, the sadist never understands
why others aren't enjoying his
sadism as much as he is.

Gwyn doesn't quite understand this. Margaret gives her a little hug. It makes Gwyn uncomfortable, but she acquiesces.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Find someone who makes you feel
good. Will you do that?

GWYN

Yeah. Okay. Yeah.

Margaret gazes on her magnanimously. She looks concerned.

GWYN (CONT'D)

Just, like, *promise* you won't tell
anybody about this, okay?

MARGARET

Of course. Fort Knox.

GWYN

Thanks.

INT. MARGARET'S OFFICE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

One of the few private offices in the office/lab space.

Margaret removes her lab coat, revealing a well-chosen business casual outfit. She gathers items from her desk, puts them in her purse. She surveys the office: aggressively tidy.

She sees a small COFFEE STAIN on her desk. She licks her thumb and rubs it right out.

INT. BIOMATIX OFFICE / LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

The Biomatix lab/office takes up an entire floor of a Manhattan building. A biopharmaceutical company.

Margaret walks past a row of desks. She carries herself with an air of strength and focus, which seems slightly exaggerated, slightly self-conscious. But only slightly.

Most employees have cleared out, but a handful remain. They wish Margaret a good evening. She reciprocates warmly.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Margaret stands, watching the numbers drop: 12, 11, 10...

At 5, the elevator stops. The doors open. No one waits. Margaret peers into the hallway: empty.

The doors start to close, but stop and opens again. Like a ghost is moving in and out. She again checks the hall: no one. An overhead fluorescent flickers out.

EXT. MIDTOWN NYC STREET - EARLY EVENING

Margaret walks. Summer; still bright. It's late rush hour and crowded on the street, but the DIN of the traffic and crowds is soft and muted in that heavy, late summer way.

Margaret's eyes are active. Taking in the landscape, the details. She's constantly on alert.

She stops at a light. Something pulls her attention. She looks down the block: TEENAGERS make out shamelessly on a stoop.

The light changes. She walks.

INT. SUBWAY - EARLY EVENING

Margaret stands in a crowded subway. TINNY, SIBILANT EARBUD SPILL fills the car.

Margaret locks eyes on a YOUNG MOTHER with a sleeping BABY in her arms. The Young Mother's eyes are slowly closing.

Margaret focuses on the baby, studying it intensely. Then she bumps the mother accidentally-on-purpose, waking her.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

Margaret enters. A modest, tasteful two bedroom on an upper floor of a post-war building. Very clean and organized. Many framed PHOTOS of a GIRL, from infancy through adolescence, line the walls. Some include Margaret; others do not.

In the living room is a large picture window looking out onto Manhattan. We're on the 26th floor, so the view is top-notch.

Margaret sets down her bag, removes her shoes. She reflexively begins tidying the living room.

ABBIE (17), enters the kitchen, which opens onto the living room. Unlike her tall, put-together mother, Abbie is small, disheveled. An indoor kid, wrapped in the same hoodie she wears every day.

MARGARET

Hi, smidgen.

ABBIE

Hey.

She grabs a bowl, sets it on the kitchen island.

MARGARET

Are you hungry? I was planning on cooking--

ABBIE

No need.

Margaret enters the kitchen. Abbie fills her bowl with cereal.

MARGARET

Cereal's not a meal. Let me--

ABBIE

Mom. It's fine. I'm going over to Lucy's in a bit.

Abbie grabs milk from the fridge, pours it on her cereal.

MARGARET
You need something more substantial.

ABBIE
(for the millionth time)
I'll get something with Lucy.

MARGARET
That means pizza. Don't get pizza;
let me make you something.

ABBIE
I'll be fine. See? I'm all grown up.

Abbie grabs hold of her breasts, makes a "sexy" face.

MARGARET
Abbie, can you please keep your
hands off yourself for five minutes
while I'm talking to you?

Abbie chuckles wickedly. She plops down in a chair by the kitchen island, eats her cereal.

ABBIE
Want to see something?

MARGARET
(sighs)
Sure.

Abbie takes a beat before COUGHING into her hand. She then presents a HUMAN TOOTH, as if she just coughed it up.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
My God, is that your tooth?!

Abbie cackles, sets the tooth on the kitchen island.

ABBIE
No! It is, in fact, not my tooth.

It's a man's cuspid, crusted with tartar.

MARGARET
Then whose is it?

ABBIE
Dunno. Found it in my wallet.

MARGARET
What are you talking about?

ABBIE

Seriously. It just, like, appeared
in my wallet today.

MARGARET

Well, where the hell did it come from?

ABBIE

(makes 'I dunno' sound)

Reverse tooth fairy, I guess.

Margaret's rattled. She takes a stool.

MARGARET

Oh, God. Smidgen, promise me you'll
be careful, out there. Promise.

ABBIE

Gonna be reckless, mom. Some frat boy
hands me a pill, I'm just going to
take it, no questions asked.

Abbie stands, and takes her bowl to her room.

MARGARET

That's not funny!

Margaret sits, anxiously. She picks the tooth up off the counter top, examines it. Her hand starts to SHAKE subtly.

Swiftly, she throws it in the trash.

EXT. FDR PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY - EVENING

The sun is starting to set. Margaret, in serious exercise clothes, stretches on the walkway running along the East River. She's in excellent shape.

She scrolls through her iPhone and selects a song: "ROAR" by KATY PERRY. Margaret inserts the phone into a strap around her bicep. She starts running along the East River.

Margaret is a very experienced runner - excellent form, tremendous focus, like a Marine. Her steely expression contrasts with the BRILLIANT POP ANTHEM pumping in her ears.

Margaret pushes tremendously hard, exhausting herself, testing the limits of her endurance. It's intense, but also life-affirming, like a Nike ad.

Margaret stops to PUKE in a trash can. When finished, she continues running.

INT. BATHROOM / SHOWER - NIGHT

Margaret showers, vigorously. She's a vigorous person.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Margaret sits on the sofa in the living room, wearing a bathrobe. Her hair's wet. She drinks a bottle of beer.

She picks up her phone, dials. Someone answers.

MARGARET
Abbie's out for the night.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margaret has sex on her bed with PETER (late 40s, appealing). Margaret is on top. They're serenaded by the BUZZ of Margaret's VIBRATOR, which she applies to herself. The sex is nothing fancy, but clearly it's good. Margaret CLIMAXES.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - LATER

Margaret and Peter lie naked in a lazy spoon.

MARGARET
How's the wife?

PETER
Fair. I'm going to go with "fair".

MARGARET
Could be worse.

PETER
That's our motto. It's inscribed on our wedding bands.

Margaret smiles. Peter massages Margaret's neck and shoulders. She closes her eyes, enjoys it.

PETER (CONT'D)
She's taking the kids to her folks' place, weekend after next. I'll have three whole days free.

MARGARET
...interesting.

Peter was hoping for more enthusiasm, but he doesn't press. He continues rubbing.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Do you like Katy Perry?

PETER
Hm?

MARGARET
Katy Perry. The singer.

PETER
Uh... I mean, I know who she is,
but I don't think I'd be able to
identify any of her music.

MARGARET
It's just like bubblegum pop crap
for teenagers. Abbie used to listen
to her constantly in middle school.
Although she'd never admit that now.

PETER
(not seeing)
I see.

MARGARET
But there's this one song that I
just *can't stop listening to*. It's
called 'Roar' and I listen to it
over and over.

PETER
Okay.

MARGARET
It's not new or anything. I just sort
of re-discovered it. It was a big
hit, I think, and it's just this
cheesy anthem all about, y'know,
overcoming adversity, believing in
yourself, not giving up, blah blah.

PETER
Sounds like a winner.

MARGARET
But, despite how insipid this song
is, I fucking love it. It doesn't
say anything, but yet it's...
amazingly uplifting.

PETER
Hm. I... have nothing to add to that.

MARGARET

Right. It doesn't really have anything to do with anything.

Beat. She turns to him.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

What's your energy level? TV or further sex?

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Margaret lies in bed, alone. She opens her eyes.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Margaret showers with characteristic vigor.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Margaret dresses meticulously for work. It has a controlled, ritualistic feel, like almost everything Margaret does.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Margaret packs a bag lunch for herself, also meticulously.

INT. HALLWAY / ABBIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Margaret opens Abbie's bedroom door, peeks in. It's an ungodly mess. Piles of clothes, books, computer equipment everywhere. Abbie is clearly a nerd and serious gamer.

Margaret enters and climbs onto the sleeping Abbie. Abbie GROANS, wriggles her away. Margaret relents.

MARGARET

Morning, smidgen.

ABBIE

Mm.

MARGARET

If you get up, I'll make you breakfast.

ABBIE

Hell, no.

Margaret tries a stealth maneuver to embrace Abbie, who GROANS LOUDER, shakes her off again. Margaret gives up.

INT. BIOMATIX OFFICE/LABORATORY - MORNING

Margaret walks down a corridor, past a row of offices. The space is buzzing with people. Many say hello as she passes by. She reciprocates warmly.

Peter, seated at his desk, gives her a nod. Margaret mouths "good morning" to him.

INT. BIOMATIX CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Margaret speaks before about a dozen researchers, techs, lab assistants, interns (including Gwyn), presenting research results. TESS (50s), Margaret's boss, watches approvingly.

Margaret utilizes PowerPoint, speaks confidently and fluently. She's impressive. Her subordinates regard her with respect.

MARGARET

...binding by appropriate sigma-1 or sigma-2 ligands can induce selective apoptosis. In addition, through cell membrane reorganization, 1037 may play a significant role in inhibiting metastasis and tumor cell proliferation. In short, it's potentially... pretty fucking great.

The audience LAUGHS. Margaret motions to Gwyn and two others.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Interns - you guys didn't hear that.

More laughs. Margaret smiles, moves on to the next slide.

INT. SUBWAY - EARLY EVENING

Margaret rides the subway.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Margaret enters, tosses her bag down on a chair.

MARGARET

I'm home!

She removes her shoes, tidies whatever mess Abbie left behind.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I thought we'd order in. Unless you
feel like cooking, that is. Ha ha.

(beat)

Abbie?

Margaret walks to Abbie's room, knocks on the door, listens.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Smidgen?

She peeks in Abbie's room. Inside, a big mess, but no Abbie.

Margaret tenses. She walks back into the living room, pulls her phone from her bag, and fires off a text to Abbie.

Nervous, she scans the apartment, unsure of what to do.

She sends another text.

Margaret looks up from her phone and out the big picture window. Something catches her eye. She moves toward the window.

A LIGHT flashes in a tall building not far from Margaret's. BRIGHT PULSES OF LIGHT in rapid, irregular intervals burst from a single window, like someone is taking photographs with a very powerful flash. It looks a little like Morse Code.

Margaret is drawn in, hypnotized by the flashing. She's STARTLED when her phone VIBRATES in her hand. A text from Abbie: "@ Lucy's. Sleeping over."

Relieved, Margaret returns her attention to the flashing window, but it no longer flashes.

EXT. EAST RIVER - EVENING

'Roar'. Margaret runs in her brutal way along the river.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Margaret sits on the sofa, wearing a bathrobe. Her hair's wet. She drinks a bottle of beer and watches TV.

Her phone VIBRATES. She answers. A beat.

MARGARET

Oh, really? Not until tomorrow?

INT. HALLWAY / PETER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A door opens, revealing Peter. Margaret stands in the hallway outside his apartment. He gives her a smile.

MARGARET
Evening.

Margaret enters, begins removing her clothes.

INT. PETER (AND HIS WIFE'S) BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margaret lies post-coitally in bed with Peter.

PETER
They've got these sort of rustic, individual bungalow things, right in the woods. I'll send you a link.

MARGARET
Connecticut...

PETER
Yeah. It's quaint. Crazy quaint.

Margaret shifts, reaches down to the floor.

MARGARET
I'm listening.

Margaret pulls her phone out of her bag, checks it.

PETER
I figure we can take the train Friday night and be there--

Margaret GASPS.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret bursts in, marches to the ATTENDANT at the desk.

MARGARET
(breathless)
My daughter.

INT. ER TREATMENT ROOM - NIGHT

The Attendant leads Margaret through the treatment room at speed. He pulls a curtain to reveal Abbie, lying on an operating table. A DOCTOR and a NURSE hover over her.

Margaret GASPS at the sight of the Doctor finishing up a LONG ROW OF FRESH STAPLES along Abbie's thigh.

ABBIE

Hi.

Margaret puts her hand on Abbie's head, brings her face close to hers. Abbie's eyes are puffy. She's shaken, embarrassed.

MARGARET

Oh, Smidgen.

Margaret smooths her hair. Abbie is conflicted, but allows it.

ABBIE

It's no big deal.

MARGARET

How'd this happen?

ABBIE

Riding bikes with Lucy.

MARGARET

You don't know how to ride a bike, honey.

ABBIE

You never let me.

MARGARET

It's dangerous in the city.

ABBIE

Evidently.

MARGARET

Had you... been drinking?

ABBIE

...only a little.

Margaret closes her eyes, exhales.

DOCTOR

All done.

Margaret looks over to the grisly, jagged line of staples.

I/E TAXI - NIGHT

A rainy night. Margaret and Abbie ride in a taxi. Abbie huddles near the window.

Margaret, stricken, takes hold of Abbie's hand. Abbie allows it, but doesn't look at Margaret, doesn't acknowledge it.

INT. ABBIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret tries to tuck Abbie into bed.

ABBIE
Stop tucking me in, please.

MARGARET
There's nothing to be scared of, hon.

ABBIE
I'm not scared.

Margaret ceases tucking, but hovers.

MARGARET
Right. It's just, well,
everything's all right.

ABBIE
I know.

Margaret relents, sits in Abbie's desk chair.

MARGARET
I'm so sorry it took me so long. To
get your text. I was doing work and
my phone was in the other room--

ABBIE
I know. It's fine.

Margaret shakes her head, disgusted with herself.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
Mom...

MARGARET
Stupid. Just, stupid...

ABBIE
Jesus, if you're just going to eat
shit about this, can you do it in
the other room? I'm kinda sleepy
from bleeding all evening.

MARGARET
Abbie! What the hell?

ABBIE
...sorry.

MARGARET
Don't curse, please.

Margaret breathes, trying to calm herself, looks away.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margaret enters, takes off her clothes. In bra and underwear, she looks at her strong, athletic physique in the mirror.

She starts to shake. She sits on the bed, covers her face with her hands, forcing big, slow, measured breaths.

ANGLE ON: Margaret's exposed back. Above her shoulder blades, and scattered below her neck, are a series of CIRCULAR MARKS, about a centimeter wide, of varying degrees of severity.

The CIGARETTE BURN SCARS rise and fall with Margaret's breath.

INT. MARGARET'S OFFICE - DAY

Gwyn sits. Margaret, at her desk, listens. Although tired and rattled, she tries to radiate security and wisdom.

GWYN
I told him I don't want him to make fun of me anymore. I said, y'know, regardless of what he meant - if he just meant to be funny or whatever, regardless, I wanted him to stop.

MARGARET
Then what happened?

GWYN
He said I was trying to change him and that, like, he shouldn't have to change if he wasn't doing anything wrong. You know, like why should he be the one changing instead of me. So I said, can't you just do this for me? And then he asked, um, well, what he'd get, in return.

MARGARET
(tenses)
And what did you say?

GWYN

I said he'd, y'know, be happy
knowing I was happier.

Margaret gives Gwyn a little smile.

MARGARET

Was that enough?

GWYN

No. He wanted me to do something
for him. Things for him.

MARGARET

What kinds of things?

Gwyn looks away.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Were they bad?

Gwyn's expression suggests they were bad.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

And what did you say?

GWYN

(emotional)

I told him... that he's a *PIECE OF SHIT*. I told him he *didn't deserve me*. And I left.

MARGARET

You said that?

GWYN

Yeah.

Margaret wells with relief, pride. She puts her hand on Gwyn's shoulder, forcefully.

MARGARET

You did good. Hear me? You're tougher than leather.

GWYN

Don't tell anyone, about any of--

MARGARET

Never. I promise. (beat) It's going to be a happy ending for you.

GWYN

Thanks, Margaret.

INT. BIOMATIX LABORATORY - DAY

Margaret, restored from her exchange with Gwyn, works alone in the lab. She stops for a moment and texts Abbie: "Status?"

Moments later, she gets a text back: "Shooting heroin".

Margaret sighs, texts: "How's the leg?".

Abbie: "GNAR"

Annoyed and comforted, Margaret resumes working.

EXT. LARGE MIDTOWN COMMERCIAL BUILDING - DAY

Peter stands in front of the building, in a lab coat, vaping hungrily. Margaret steps outside, plants herself next to him.

MARGARET

Hey, cowboy.

PETER

Hey, cow... girl, I guess. Sorry.
How you feeling?

MARGARET

Tired.

PETER

How's Abbie?

MARGARET

Okay. Pretending to be tough.

PETER

Mm. (beat) By the way, it looks
like I can't do next weekend after
all. Jenny's sticking around.

MARGARET

All right.

PETER

I'm sorry about that.

MARGARET

Don't apologize.

PETER

I know, I just feel bad--

MARGARET

You did nothing wrong. If you apologize, it makes me feel like you think I don't understand the rules. I like our situation. Wouldn't have it any other way.

PETER

Right, right. I guess I'm just disappointed. Was looking forward it.

MARGARET

Aw. Look who's being sweet.

Margaret pats Peter's butt. He's deflated by her patronizing tone, but he hides it.

INT. OFFICE / LABORATORY- EARLY EVENING

Margaret walks past a row of desks. She exchanges "good nights" with a few people she passes by.

INT. SUBWAY - EARLY EVENING

A packed rush hour train. Margaret stands, grips a pole with one hand, attempts to read *The New Yorker* with the other.

The train stops; doors open. More people pack the car.

A woman next to Margaret listens to HOUSE MUSIC loudly in her headphones, providing an abrasive soundtrack to the immediate area. Margaret, uncomfortable/annoyed, remains stoic.

The subway lurches forward, SCREECHING through the tunnel.

Margaret stares at SOMEONE'S SWEATY NECK. She feels HOT BREATH pass by her ear. Her hand slips down the pole, touching ANOTHER PASSENGER'S HAND. Margaret FLINCHES, adjusts her grip.

MARGARET

Sorry.

The train pulls into a station. The doors open. No one gets out; a few people get in. Sardines.

The train moves. Margaret exhales and holds on.

She looks down the the car. Through the mass of commuters, she spots a MAN (late 50s/early 60s) in a suit, seated.

The Man is large and powerfully built, yet carries a bulging BELLY.

His appearance suggests a dignified professional, possibly a professor. But a closer look reveals that his haircut is incompetent and self-inflicted, and his second-hand suit is worn and ill-fitting.

At the sight of this Man, Margaret STOPS BREATHING.

Her heart POUNDS in her ears.

Her knuckles go WHITE around the subway pole.

Her body begins to TREMBLE; her jaw CLENCHES.

The Man sits. Margaret LOCKS on him. He doesn't look her way.

The train pulls into a station. The doors open. Margaret LAUNCHES HERSELF toward the open doors, desperately worming her way through layers of bodies.

Commuters COMPLAIN as she forces her way into the station.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Margaret tumbles from the subway, choking on air, pitched forward, legs shaking. The doors close behind her.

Struggling to remain upright, she turns and sees The Man through the subway window, sitting calmly.

The subway RUMBLES into the tunnel. A GASP escapes her throat. Her knees buckle. She staggers to a trash can.

She grips the trash can, convulsing and sucking PANIC BREATHS for a bit before noticing a handful of GAWKING COMMUTERS.

Suddenly self-conscious, Margaret hobbles toward the exit.

EXT. STREET - EARLY EVENING

Margaret emerges onto street level. She looks like her entrails are about to leap out of her mouth.

She propels herself uptown, fighting to breathe.

Margaret begins to RUN, dodging pedestrians, weaving through the rush hour traffic, heart POUNDING LIKE A JACKHAMMER.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

Margaret SHOVES the door open, enters. SLAMS it; LOCKS it.

MARGARET
Abbie!!! Abbie!!!

She runs down the hall and throws Abbie's bedroom door open.

Abbie sits at her computer, headphones over her ears. She looks at her mother: sweaty, blanched, wild-eyed.

ABBIE
What the fuck..?

Abbie pulls off her headphones.

MARGARET
(breathless)
It's fine. It's fine. Are you okay?

ABBIE
Yeah. Are you okay?

MARGARET
I'm... yes... Everything's okay. I just thought... something might've... I'm sorry, honey.

ABBIE
What happened?

MARGARET
Nothing. I feel a little... off.
I'm going to take a shower. Just... don't go anywhere, okay? Love you.

Margaret turns and slowly walks down the hall.

INT. BATHROOM - EARLY EVENING

Margaret showers and CRIES. Water flows over her SCARS.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

Margaret sits at the kitchen island, staring at her laptop. Her hair is wet. She's dressed in sweatpants and a t-shirt.

Very slowly, she types "David Moore biologist" into Google. She hits search, scans the results. Nothing relevant.

She tries "David Moore Central Michigan University". Again, nothing. She closes her eyes.

ABBIE
Hey.

Margaret opens her eyes. Abbie stands there, apprehensive.

MARGARET

Hi.

ABBIE

You sure you're alright?

MARGARET

I, um, I threw up. Must've been something I ate. Feeling better now.

ABBIE

Do you want to, like, lie down or something?

Abbie is clearly freaked out.

MARGARET

What do you want for dinner? I don't want to cook.

ABBIE

I might go to--

MARGARET

I'm going to need you to stay here.

ABBIE

I'm not going to go *biking*, okay?

MARGARET

You go out *too much*.

ABBIE

I go to Lucy's. We play Elder Scrolls.

MARGARET

You get drunk and carve up your--

ABBIE

Mom! I'm 18 years old!

MARGARET

In *three weeks*. Stay home.

Abbie starts hobbling to her room. She stops, turns.

ABBIE

(emotional)

Will you stop? Will you ever stop treating me like I'm a toddler, or, or some sort of retard.

MARGARET

You're not. Any of those things.
You're *remarkable*.

ABBIE

(groans)

If I'm so remarkable, how come you
never let me *do* anything? You
wouldn't even let me go to *Pitchfork*--

MARGARET

Is that what this is about? Not
going to *Pitchfork*?

ABBIE

No! It's... listen, I did what you
wanted, didn't I? I got the grades,
and now I'm going to fucking Yale,
like you insisted. Don't you think
I've earned a little *trust*?

Beat.

MARGARET

We'll order Thai food. We'll stay
in and eat Thai food, okay?

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Margaret and Abbie on the couch, in the cold glow of the TV.
Abbie sleeps. Remnants of a Thai meal litter the coffee table.

A soft KNOCK on the door. Margaret WHIPS her head around and
stares. Eyes fused to the door, she MUTES the television.

Quiet. She drops her gaze to the line of light bleeding under
the door. It holds steady, then falls briefly into shadow, as
if someone outside passed closely by. Margaret BRACES.

She rises and moves to the door. She looks through the
peephole to the hallway outside: empty.

Margaret turns, looks to Abbie. Something catches her eye.

Through the big picture window, she again sees the FLASHING
LIGHT in the window of the building across the way, pulsing
at the same weird, irregular intervals.

She stands, watching the flashes, mesmerized...

A SHARP EXHALE. She shakes herself from her trance and shuts
the drapes. Margaret stands at the covered window, sweating.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Margaret and Peter, in evening dress, sit at a romantic table, sharing fond glances. The TABLE CLOTH has an unusual pattern - light yellow and green flowers over faint polka dots.

A look of concern crosses Margaret's face.

PETER
What is it?

MARGARET
I... I feel...

PETER
It's fine, it's fine, it's fine...

MARGARET
What is it...? The name... of
that... thing? You know. The thing.

Peter shushes her playfully.

A WAITRESS arrives, carrying two plates.

PETER
Fantastic.

WAITRESS
Here you are.

She sets a delicious salmon entrée down in front of Peter.

She sets the other plate in front of Margaret. On the plate, beautifully presented, is a THOROUGHLY SEASONED AND ROASTED MALE HUMAN INFANT, surrounded by delectable sides.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
Bon appétit.

She walks off. Margaret looks at the dead baby on her plate. Something's wrong, but she can't quite put her finger on it.

Peter eats his salmon with relish. Noticing Margaret's reluctance, he makes a "go ahead and eat" motion.

Margaret picks up her fork and knife. Tentatively, she sticks both in the crispy baby flesh. It OPENS ITS MOUTH AND SCREAMS.

INT. APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Margaret convulses awake on the couch. Sunlight slices through the crack in the drapes. Beside her - no Abbie.

She rises, walks swiftly down the hall.

Abbie's door is ajar. Margaret peeks in. Abbie sleeps peacefully under her covers. Margaret's shoulders drop.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Margaret stands outside the entrance to the subway. Commuters flow in and out. She watches.

INT. TAXI - MORNING

Margaret sits, moving slowly through rush hour traffic. She nervously scans the faces of the pedestrians on the sidewalk.

INT. MARGARET'S OFFICE - DAY

Margaret at her desk. She rubs her eyes, unable to work. She does her BREATHING EXERCISES, trying to calm her nerves.

She reaches for her phone and forcefully sends a text. She sets it down and leans back, eyes closed.

Margaret's phone BUZZES. She bolts forward, scoops it up. Text from Abbie: "FOR THE LOVE OF GOD STOP TEXTING ME"

It provides a precious hit of relief.

GWYN (O.S)

Margaret?

MARGARET

What?

GWYN

(flummoxed)

I... just wondering if you could
sign my time sheet...

MARGARET

It's not a good time. I'm not
available every second, okay?

GWYN

...okay.

INT. ABBIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Abbie at her computer, headphones on. She looks over and is STARTLED to see Margaret spying through the cracked door.

Abbie pulls off her headphones.

ABBIE

Okay, now you're just being creepy.

Margaret opens the door. She works to project calm, stability.

MARGARET

It's not creepy to want to look at
your child.

ABBIE

No, but you're doing it in a creepy
way.

MARGARET

I'm sorry.

ABBIE

Mom, what's going on? You're being
even more suffocating than usual.

MARGARET

I'm just, going to miss you.

ABBIE

I'm gonna be 80 miles away.

MARGARET

Who will protect you?

ABBIE

I don't need protection.

MARGARET

I know. You're very strong. But know
that, if anyone so much as touches a
hair on your head, I will find them.
And I will hurt them.

ABBIE

Mom, when you say things like
that... I mean, that's for you, not
me. I don't need to hear it. But you
seem to need to say it an awful lot.

MARGARET

I'm just... trying to tell you that
I love you.

ABBIE

Then just say I love you.

MARGARET

I love you.

ABBIE

Okay then.

INT. MARGARET'S OFFICE - DAY

Margaret sits, TAPPING HER FINGER ON THE DESK. It sounds like a small, racing heartbeat. It seems to comfort her.

The tapping stops. She grabs her phone, dials.

MARGARET

What're you doing?

INT. BIOMATIX BATHROOM - DAY

A single-occupancy bathroom. Margaret and Peter, in their clothes, have sex standing up (sort of). It's awkward.

Peter is a bit worried, keeps looking at the door.

PETER

Wait, I think...

MARGARET

Keep going.

PETER

Wait. I gotta... stop here.

Peter withdraws. Margaret grabs his diminishing cock and tries to bring it back to life.

PETER (CONT'D)

No, it's just... listen, I...

MARGARET

Keep going.

PETER

Just - *stop*, okay? I'm not... into this, whole thing.

MARGARET

Right. (sighs) It happens.

PETER

No, it's not, I mean, you know me. I just, since when do we fuck in the bathroom? What's the great urgency?

MARGARET

I felt like it.

PETER

Well, it's not my thing.

Margaret pulls up her underwear.

MARGARET

If it's not your thing, you shouldn't have agreed to do it.

The opening chords of 'Roar' chime in...

EXT. EAST RIVER - EVENING

'Roar' continues. Margaret jogs ferociously along the river.

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

The shower SCREAMS, puking jets of hot water onto Margaret.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret, hair wet from the shower, enters. Abbie watches TV.

MARGARET

Do you want to drink whiskey?

ABBIE

What?

MARGARET

I figure if you're going to drink, I'd better show you how.

ABBIE

Seriously?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret sits with Abbie. Two GLASSES containing whiskey shots and a bottle of JAMESON rest on the coffee table.

MARGARET

Ready?

Abbie nods.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Wait.

Margaret makes a FIST and KISSES IT, then slowly "punches" Abbie's cheek with her fist-kiss. Abbie's taken aback.

ABBIE

What the hell is that?

MARGARET

Nothing. (beat) 3, 2, 1, go!

They both down their shots. Abbie starts COUGHING.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Aww, c'mon. I raised you tougher than that. Again!

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Margaret assists an unstable, drunken Abbie down the hall towards Margaret's bedroom.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Abbie, clothed and drunk, sleeps in Margaret's arms. Margaret holds her, looking rather guilty for what she's done.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

One of those stores that sells designer clothes at a discount. Margaret goes through the racks. Abbie isn't playing ball.

MARGARET

I haven't even picked anything yet.

ABBIE

Doesn't matter. I'm not gonna wear it.

MARGARET

Smidgen, you can't wear a sweatshirt every single day, okay?

ABBIE

Apparently I can.

MARGARET

If you show up at school looking like
this, people will think you're weak.
That's not what you want to project.

ABBIE

My hoodie gives me strength. It's
the source--

Margaret's attention is yanked across the room. She WATCHES.

ABBIE (CONT'D)

What?

MARGARET

Stay here.

Margaret moves forward, weaving around a few racks. She spots a figure turn and move down a far aisle.

She follows. She reaches the aisle, peers around the corner.

At the far end of the aisle stands THE MAN, idly browsing sports jackets.

Margaret darts out of sight. She stands, gripped by panic.

She moves towards Abbie, grabbing her firmly by the shoulder.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

We have to go.

ABBIE

What? What're you--

MARGARET

We have to go. Would you like that?

She heads toward the exit, nearly dragging Abbie behind her.

ABBIE

Mom! Stop! What're you--

MARGARET

SHH! Keep you're voice down. Come on.

Margaret moves ahead, pulling a frightened Abbie along.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

We'll go get ice cream. How does
ice cream sound?

Margaret collides with the exit.

E/I STREET / TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Margaret and Abbie burst onto the noisy, packed NYC street.

MARGARET
We're getting a cab!

Margaret walks out into traffic, furiously trying to hail a cab. There are a bunch of cabs, but none have their light on.

A car nearly HITS Margaret. Abbie JUMPS.

ABBIE
Mom! Be careful!

MARGARET
TAXI!!

ABBIE
GET OUT OF THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET!!

Their screaming attracts the attention of pedestrians. Margaret spots a WOMAN getting out of a cab up the block.

MARGARET
(to Abbie)
Come on!!

Margaret takes off towards the cab. She HAILS frantically. The driver sees her. She turns back to Abbie.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
I GOT THE FUCKING CAB! COME ON!

Rattled, Abbie jogs up to the taxi as Margaret gets in.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
(to driver)
87th and 1st.

The cab moves into traffic. Abbie sits, unnerved, confused.

Margaret looks out the window as they drive past the departments store. THE MAN stands outside.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - DAY

Abbie, tears streaking her cheeks, barrels through the front door and down the hall to her room, Margaret on her heels.

MARGARET
Abbie...

Abbie SLAMS her door behind her and locks it.

ABBIE (O.S.)
Stop being fucking crazy!!!

Margaret stands in the hall. She closes her eyes and BREATHES. She KNOCKS lightly on Abbie's door.

ABBIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Go away!

MARGARET
Smidgen. I'm sorry. I... can you hear me? *Can you hear me?*

ABBIE (O.S.)
Yes, I can hear you!

MARGARET
Things are... challenging for me right now. It's a challenging time.

ABBIE (O.S.)
I don't know what you're talking about.

MARGARET
Well, there are factors, creating stress, in me. You're going away, and... work. It's a transitional period. I need to think. (beat)
Don't be scared. I'm on top of it.

Margaret stands guard. Begins her breathing exercises.

INT. BIOMATIX CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Margaret sits with Tess, two BIOMATIX EXECUTIVES, and TWO CLIENTS at a conference table. All have packets in front of them labelled CENAVEX 2-73.

TESS
...a clean data profile, showing anti-amnesic properties and neuroprotection in several models. I'll kick it to Margaret to break down the trials for you.

Tess turns to Margaret, staring out the window.

TESS (CONT'D)
Margaret?

Margaret turns to Tess. She seems far away, exhausted.

MARGARET
What?

TESS
The trials.

MARGARET
Yes, of course.

She looks to the Clients, the Executives.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
A... phase one single ascending dose...

She struggles. Tess looks concerned; the others confused.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
A phase one... (breathes) It's all
in the packet. It's in the packet.

TESS
Margaret. Are you--

MARGARET
I have to go. I have... um, I mean
I'm not feeling quite--

She arises, BANGING her knee, spilling a GLASS OF WATER.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I mean, I apologize.

She flees the room, doesn't look back.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Margaret sits in a small, well-populated park. She focuses on her hands, trying to will them to stop shaking.

She looks up at the sun, closes her eyes, takes big drinks of air. She lowers her head and opens her eyes:

THE MAN sits on a bench at the other end of the park, wearing the same Goodwill suit, eating a sandwich, reading the *NY Post*.

Margaret freezes. The Man YAWNS.

Slowly, she rises, as if pulled on strings. She walks to him mechanically. He seems unaware of her approach.

She stops a few feet from him, looking at the ground, like a child caught misbehaving.

MARGARET
Go away.

The Man reads the *Post*.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Please, David. Go away.

She steps closer. She can't seem to look directly at him.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
You heard me. I want you away from
my daughter.

MAN
Are you speaking to me?

MARGARET
*Of course I'm speaking to you. Why
are you here?*

MAN
...in the park?

MARGARET
Stay away, from me and my kid.

MAN
You approached me, ma'am.

MARGARET
What do you want?

The Man looks at her searchingly.

MAN
I don't want anything. I'm eating
lunch.

MARGARET
*Whatever you're going to do, do it.
What are you waiting for?*

MAN
I'm used to waiting. Spent a lot of
time waiting. Anyway, I don't know
who you are.

MARGARET
(voice down)
DON'T PLAY FUCKING GAMES. *Why are
you here? Why now?*

MAN
You're mistaking me for someone
else.

MARGARET
Do not play dumb with me, David!

MAN
Who's David? What's your name?

MARGARET
You piece of shit. You goddamn
motherfucking piece of--

MAN
Ben's with me. Right now.

This comment sends a CURRENT through Margaret. She begins to tremble, sweat. Shallow, rapid breaths.

MAN (CONT'D)
(pats his belly)
Here.

MARGARET
THAT'S A LIE!

People look at the shouting woman.

MAN
No need to raise your voice, ma'am.
We're going to go now.

The Man crumples the remains of his sandwich into a paper bag, collects his paper, rises.

MARGARET
Don't walk away from me! *What do
you intend to do?*

MAN
I intend to go home, Margaret.

MARGARET
I thought you didn't know who I am.

MAN

You just introduced yourself. We shook hands. You told me about Abbie. Don't you remember?

The Man smiles, revealing a missing CUSPID in his upper teeth. Margaret GASPS.

MARGARET

Stay away from my daughter!

MAN

(to gawking pedestrians)
I don't know this woman. She's insane.

DAVID walks away. As he exits the park, he tosses the paper bag into a TRASH CAN.

Margaret, drenched in sweat, watches him head up the block. She instinctively advances a few steps, then stops. He turns the corner and disappears.

She stands, stunned. Slowly, her eyes drift downward. She sees David's bag in the trash. On it is a logo and name: BAGEL ZONE.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - DUSK

A LOCKSMITH installs new locks in the apartment door. Margaret stands at the kitchen island, closely monitoring his progress.

Abbie watches from her room with a mix of confusion and dread.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

WHOOSH. Margaret closes the curtains over the picture window.

She walks to the kitchen island. Two place settings; take-out Indian. Abbie sits, looking nervous. Margaret dishes up.

She stops, goes to the front door, checks that it's locked.

She returns to the kitchen island, resumes dishing.

ABBIE

I think you need to see somebody.

MARGARET

Oh?

ABBIE

I think you're having some kind of episode and--

MARGARET

I'm not. Okay? I promise. You have nothing to worry about.

Margaret, projecting normalcy, sits, forces herself to eat.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I've been thinking... You know how you've always wanted to go to London and Scotland, that area? Well, how would you like to take that trip.

ABBIE

What are you talking about?

MARGARET

It'd be a gift. Something nice, before you go.

ABBIE

You already got me a graduation present.

MARGARET

I know. But I feel bad, for the other day and I'd like to make it up to you. What do you think?

ABBIE

Like, together?

MARGARET

No. With Lucy, or... another friend. I'll pay for everything. Two weeks.

ABBIE

What? When?

MARGARET

Any time. Tomorrow, even.

ABBIE

What?

MARGARET

No, it'd be perfect. You and Luce adventuring through Britain. I'll pay for Lucy, too. Or whoever. When you get back, you'd still have two weeks before school.

ABBIE
(rattled)
I... don't want to.

MARGARET
Of course you do. You talk about it
all the time.

ABBIE
Why do you want me to go away?

MARGARET
I don't. I want you to... expand your
horizons. You said I never let you do
anything. Well, this is something. A
pretty cool offer, don't you think?

ABBIE
You can't make me take a vacation.
I'm not going anywhere.

MARGARET
Smidgen, think about it. Talk to
Lucy. (beat) Please.

ABBIE
No.

Margaret looks away. Abbie takes a bite, trying not to cry.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margaret lies in bed, in the dark, staring at the ceiling.
The gears turn behind her eyes.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Margaret showers, her posture and movements (or lack thereof)
telegraph her fatigue.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Margaret dresses. She looks in the mirror - dark circles under
bloodshot eyes. She lifts her chin, INHALES, cowboys up.

EXT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Margaret stands outside a police station.

MARGARET (V.O.)
There's a man. Following me.

INT. OFFICE / POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

Margaret sits in a messy office in the rear of the station. Across a desk sits a uniformed policeman - OFFICER VERDE (male, 40s). He seems tired, skeptical.

OFFICER VERDE
All right. Do you know this man?

MARGARET
Yes. We were... involved. Once.

OFFICER VERDE
Married?

MARGARET
No.

OFFICER VERDE
Children?

This seems to throw Margaret a bit. Beat.

MARGARET
No. No children.

OFFICER VERDE
When did you split up?

MARGARET
Twenty-five years ago.

He gives her a look.

OFFICER VERDE
25 years.

MARGARET
I hadn't seen him since I was 19.
Then, a week ago, he just appeared--

OFFICER VERDE
At your home? Your workplace?

MARGARET
No. On the train, and in a store,
and then again, in a park--

OFFICER VERDE
Public places.

MARGARET

Yes, but places where I *happened to*
be. It's not coincidental.

OFFICER VERDE

No need to get excited. Just trying
to get the facts. Now, has this man
accosted you, harassed you...

MARGARET

Not... exactly.

OFFICER VERDE

Has he been calling or texting--

MARGARET

No.

OFFICER VERDE

Has this man initiated
communication at all?

MARGARET

No. But I know him, Officer. I know
what he's capable of.

Verde takes a beat, irritated by this pushy woman.

OFFICER VERDE

Was he ever violent towards you?

MARGARET

He... made me be violent, to myself.

OFFICER VERDE

To yourself.

MARGARET

Yes.

OFFICER VERDE

25 years ago.

MARGARET

Yes.

OFFICER VERDE

Did you ever report it?

Margaret shakes her head. Verde sighs.

OFFICER VERDE (CONT'D)

Do you have an address for this man?
Phone number?

MARGARET
No.

OFFICER VERDE
Okay. So I understand: your ex-boyfriend, who you haven't heard from in twenty-five years, shows up, in public, a couple of times. He doesn't approach you, doesn't threaten you. He hasn't come to your home or place of employment or contacted you in any way. And you don't know where he lives or how to get a hold of him.

MARGARET
I understand it doesn't sound like much, but I know he's following me. *He's a very dangerous man.*

OFFICER VERDE
Well, what would you like us to do?

MARGARET
I'd like to get a protection order. I'd like him arrested.

OFFICER VERDE
I'm sorry, ma'am, but those aren't options, at the moment. Now, you're free to file a complaint. And I can provide guidelines on how to deal with potential stalkers. But until you've got something - calls, texts, emails - to show this man is harassing you... (shrugs)

MARGARET
Officer, I can't just wait around for him to, to strike--

OFFICER VERDE
There's just nothing we can do, at this point, okay? So just, please, be smart, be careful, and contact us if the situation escalates. *We're here to help you.*

Margaret stares at him with impotent rage.

INT. GUN STORE - DAY

Margaret points a PISTOL. A SALESMAN addresses her.

GUN SALESMAN
Very light, but packs a punch.
Accurate. Good value.

Margaret points the gun at the far wall.

GUN SALESMAN (CONT'D)
I'm not even supposed to let you
hold that thing without a license.

MARGARET
How do I get the license?

GUN SALESMAN
Apply. In New York, usually takes
three to six months to process the--

MARGARET
Can't I buy a gun online?

GUN SALESMAN
Yeah, but any retailer's got to ship
it to a Federal license holder, and
they're going to need to see a
license to release it.

MARGARET
Shit. That's... What's your name?

GUN SALESMAN
Freddy.

MARGARET
Freddy. Okay.

Margaret pauses, sets the gun on the counter. Tentatively, she reaches into her pocket and pulls out a ONE HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL. She lays on the counter with a trembling hand.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Listen, Freddy. I don't have time.
Can you put me in touch with someone?

He eyes her warily.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Please. I need protection now. Not
in six months. Please.

He slides the bill back toward her.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
I... I'm sorry, I--

GUN SALESMAN

Here's what you do: go to an ATM,
get four more of those, come back.
You do that, I give you the number
of a guy upstate. Understand?

MARGARET

I can't... travel upstate--

GUN SALESMAN

He'll ship it. (beat) All right?

MARGARET

How do I know you're not scamming me?

GUN SALESMAN

You don't. 500. Get to it.

INT. HALLWAY / ABBIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margaret KNOCKS on Abbie's door. Beat. She knocks harder.

ABBIE (O.S.)

What?

Margaret opens the door, finds Abbie on her bed, headphones on. She enters and takes a seat at the foot of her bed.

MARGARET

Can you take those off, please?

Abbie removes the headphones, looks at her.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I want you to know that
everything's fine.

Abbie nods almost imperceptibly.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

But I'm going to need you to do
something, okay? I'm going to need
you to be extra careful for the next
little bit. If anyone you don't know
approaches you, tries to talk to you,
go away. Immediately. Don't engage.

ABBIE

Mom, did you just come in here to
tell me not to talk to strangers?

MARGARET

Take this seriously, please.

ABBIE

Take *what* seriously? When are you going to tell me what the hell is going on?

Margaret struggles to assemble a response.

MARGARET

Someone is behaving... erratically. And I worry.

ABBIE

Who?

MARGARET

No one you know.

ABBIE

WHO?

MARGARET

Someone, from work. Someone... I let go. Is upset. Making trouble.

ABBIE

What kind of trouble?

MARGARET

He's angry. Making noises.

ABBIE

Then go to the cops. Or, like, HR--

MARGARET

I *did*. I'm handling it. I just want to be extra careful. Will you do that for me?

Abbie examines her skeptically.

ABBIE

What's his name? This guy.

MARGARET

...David. Moore. Tall man. About 60.

ABBIE

David Moore. Okay. I'll steer clear of tall, old David Moore.

MARGARET

Stay away from *anyone* you don't know. Until I say all clear.

Something's not right. Abbie's not buying it, but she nods.

ABBIE
If you say so.

EXT. BAGEL ZONE - MORNING

Margaret approaches Bagel Zone, a tacky bagel shop/deli. She looks up at the sign to confirm she's at the right place.

INT. BAGEL ZONE - MORNING

Margaret enters. It's empty of customers.

She approaches the counter, attended to by a male EMPLOYEE (17, puffy, shy) wearing a BZ cap and name tag ('LEO').

LEO
Morning. How can I help you?

MARGARET
Good morning... Leo, I was hoping to, well, uh, were you working here, last Wednesday, during the day?

LEO
...yeah.

MARGARET
Okay. So, I'm wondering if maybe you know a man, who comes in here. Was here Wednesday. Big, white man. About 60. David, is his name. Wears a suit.

LEO
Um... I don't know.

MARGARET
You were working Wednesday?

He glances back to the Manager, who is otherwise engaged.

LEO
Yeah. But, I don't know...

MARGARET
It's very important. Please, think back. Tall. Gray hair, gray suit. Looks rather... poor.

A nervous shrug is all she gets. Margaret startles him with:

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Please. Think. Can you do that for me?

He is now clearly unnerved. No idea how to respond.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
(high-pressure soothing)
It's okay, Leo. I just need you to
concentrate, and try to remember.
Does this man come here a lot?

Leo is frozen, silent. He looks at Margaret like she's about to leap over the counter and sink her teeth into his windpipe.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
THINK, GODDAMMIT!

He WINCES. Then, to Margaret's alarm, begins to CRY.

She stands, watching Leo weep, guilt welling inside her.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm sorry for my tone.
It's just... *important.*

The tears continue. He looks at the floor. Long seconds pass.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
David, is his name. I think he
might come here--

Leo FLEES into the kitchen and out of sight.

Margaret stands alone in Bagel Zone. The Manager glares at her from the kitchen, but says nothing.

Margaret moves to the door. She's about to exit when she STOPS SHORT. She presses her face to the glass and sees--

DAVID, in his same shitty suit, emerge from a uniquely dreary six story building across the street. The weathered sign above the door reads THE WORLD HOTEL.

Margaret, watches David, frozen, afraid, unprepared. He ambles up the block. She grasps the door handle, looks at The World, back at David. With sudden force, she--

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

--THRUSTS open the door and steps onto the sidewalk. She can still make out David in the distance, stopped at a newsstand. She stands still, watching him pay for a newspaper.

When the transaction is complete, he keeps walking.

It takes a moment to kick in, but Margaret moves. She trails him falteringly, breathlessly, struggling to keep him in sight.

David turns a corner and out of view. Margaret speeds up. She reaches the corner and peers down the block. He's gone.

Her head spins, searching frantically, as if expecting ambush, but there's nothing but city and strangers and noise.

She walks a few yards down the block, craning her neck, but there's no sign of David. She stops. She's lost him.

INT. BIOMATIX LABORATORY - DAY

Margaret works in the laboratory, alone. Her expression is blank as she looks through a very high-end MICROSCOPE.

Suddenly, she drops to her knees, releasing three SHORT, PIERCING SCREAMS. Then: quiet, still, for a few moments.

She then rises and resumes her work, as if nothing happened.

INT. BIOMATIX / MARGARET'S OFFICE - EVENING

The office has mostly cleared out. Gwyn collects her things from her work station and heads down the corridor.

A light in Margaret's office. Gwyn stops, peers in. Margaret sits in the dark. Gwyn KNOCKS.

Margaret turns, looks at her. She looks shaken, exhausted.

GWYN
Hey. Dark in here.

MARGARET
Yeah.

GWYN
(wistful sigh)
Just nine more days. Went so fast.
(beat)
Um, will you be doing my
recommendation, or will--

MARGARET
Me.

GWYN
Cool. (beat) Okay, well, good night.

She turns to leave. Margaret stops her.

MARGARET
Gwyn.

GWYN
Yeah?

MARGARET
Do you think you could kill someone?

GWYN
What?

MARGARET
If you had to. Them or you.

GWYN
(uncomfortable chuckle)
Um... probably not. (beat) Why?

Margaret shakes the question off, looks away.

GWYN (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

MARGARET
No.

GWYN
Do you want to talk about it? I'm
actually like a really good listener.

Margaret looks at Gwyn's eager, credulous face. She can't
decide if she wants to hug her or smack her.

MARGARET
Have you ever done anything bad?

GWYN
Bad? Like... I mean, yeah. Sure.

MARGARET
I did something very bad. When I
was young. Unforgivable.

GWYN
What? (beat) I won't tell, promise.

Margaret studies Gwyn, as if assessing a possible threat.

GWYN (CONT'D)
Fort Knox.

Pause. Margaret closes her eyes. Then she opens them again, looks away from Gwyn.

MARGARET
I was 18.

[Note: The below is intercut with fleeting, silent FLASHBACKS]

MARGARET (CONT'D)
And I... well, my parents - they were biologists. They're dead now. But, after high school, I took a year off, and I went with them to a research facility, on the Queen Charlotte Islands, off the western coast of Canada. I drew a lot, at that time. Wanted to be an artist. I thought being in nature would somehow stimulate me, creatively. But it didn't. It was just cold. Harsh. Boring. There was almost nobody else around. But there was this... man. Another biologist, from some bullshit university in Michigan. David, was his name. And he was young, and handsome. Charismatic.

CUT TO: The camera follows a tall MAN in the distance, walking proudly through a hemlock forest on a cold autumn morning.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
And he noticed me. Of course he did. An 18 year-old girl in that remote place. And he went about it right - charmed mom and dad first. They just fell in love with him. He was a flower child like them, big talker. And before you knew it, it was the four of us, all the time. He'd tell us stories, entertain us. He'd give me wine, pills. He was the most impressive man I'd ever met.

CUT TO: Push in on the figure of a skinny TEENAGE GIRL in the distance, her back to us, sitting on a small, rocky beach along the ocean. She's DRAWING in a large pad, working with tremendous intensity despite the wind and the cold.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
It was like he dropped a bomb on me. Pure adoration. I'd never felt anything so powerful as his attention. I moved into his quarters. My parents, they were hippies. Naive.
(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 Stupid. I said I was grown up and
 they believed me.

CUT TO: The bare arms of the Teenage Girl reach around the bare back of a LARGE MAN and hold tightly.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 At first, it was wonderful. Together, every second. I was his muse; I inspired him. He said he was on the verge of a breakthrough. I didn't question it. He was a visionary; I was a kid. All I knew was, for the first time, I felt important, felt seen. So I didn't object, when he started asking me to do things. Kindnesses, he called them. Just small things at first: cleaning, cooking. He told me to stop drawing. Told me not to wear shoes. Even outside. But the kindnesses, they evolved. Became tests. Endurance tests. Meditation, for hours, or fasting, for days, or... poses. Stress positions.

CUT TO: A TEENAGE GIRL performs the sitting "Murga punishment" in a forest. The ground is dusted with light snow. The girl is trembling, inadequately dressed for the cold.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 They made him so happy. After a kindness, he'd shower me with affection, praise. Give me gifts. Let me sleep through the night. And the more I did, the more inspired he became. Said he could hear God whispering his name. Said he could see the future. And I believed him. Every goddamn thing he said. Whatever he requested, I could hack it, and I was proud of that. Each time, it'd get a little harder, he'd need a little more. And I'd do it. If I couldn't, he'd tell me to burn myself with cigarettes. But I could hack that, too.

(pause)

When winter came and my parents left, I stayed. I was so stupid and fucked up I didn't realize I was pregnant. Five months before I even noticed.

CUT TO: The belly of a gaunt Teenage Girl, showing evidence of pregnancy. She runs her hands along the bump.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

He told me not to tell anyone. Said the baby was an enemy, a spy. He forbid me from giving birth. I tried to stop it, but it kept growing. And, no matter what I did, no matter how much I could take, David wasn't inspired anymore.

(pause)

I gave birth on the bed. No doctors; no drugs. My baby was small, but healthy. A boy. I looked at him and immediately I knew why I'd been put on this earth. I named him Benjamin.

CUT TO: A THREE WEEK-OLD BOY squirms on a BLANKET patterned with light yellow and green flowers over faint polka dots.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

For a few weeks, it was okay. David paid no attention, but I cared for him; I loved him. I didn't think I could love anything more than David, but Ben proved me wrong. And David saw this. One day, he told me to drive into town for supplies. I'd never let my baby out of my sight until then.

CUT TO: A beat-up FORD PICKUP heads down a road, surrounded by rugged Canadian wilderness in springtime.

CUT TO: Large, male HANDS collect the baby boy in his blanket.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

When I got back, two of Ben's fingers were on the counter. That's all that was left. I begged David to tell me what he'd done with him, but all he'd say is that he'd eaten him up. Swallowed him whole. "He's in my belly now, Maggie." That's all he would say, over and over. Until I believed him.

CUT TO: Large, male hands coated in baby blood wash themselves with bar soap and steel wool over a worn metal sink.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

So I went to bed and stayed there. I stopped eating. My baby was dead.

CUT TO: The now frighteningly thin Teenage Girl lies curled up in a single bed, her back to us. The girl and the bed are in a cramped, dirty utilitarian dwelling.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

But David, he kept saying... he wasn't. He was just... *inside*. In his belly. He could feel him moving, fighting. Hear him crying, crying out for me. And, after a while, I could hear him, too. Suffering, screaming, *trapped*, but alive. I wanted so bad to believe it, and David made it so.

CUT TO: The Teenage Girl's frail hands caress the large, hairy belly of a man. The outline of a TINY HAND slowly makes itself visible through the abdominal flesh, as if REACHING for her. She places her hand over it, lovingly.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

It went on for weeks. I did what I could for my baby - tried to soothe him - but David wouldn't let me near unless... the kindnesses, became very hard. And I did my best. But I guess I wasn't as tough as we thought.

(pause)

I ran. Stole some money, the truck. And ran. Not back home. East. Where I figured he wouldn't find me. And here I am.

Margaret looks at Gwyn.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I've never told anyone that in my whole life. You should be honored.

Gwyn is utterly freaked out, scared. No idea what to say.

GWYN

...I don't... understand...

MARGARET

I let it happen. I let him use me. I let him hurt me. Poison my brain with lies. And I let him kill my child. (beat) I could've controlled it, Gwyn. But I failed. And I ran.

Margaret's tone distresses Gwyn further. She becomes emotional.

GWYN

I don't know... What is this? Is this
some kind of joke? Or, like, a *test*?

Margaret feels pangs of guilt, regret.

MARGARET

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have--

GWYN

I don't like being made fun of.

MARGARET

I know. You're right. It was a joke.
Wasn't funny. Just, forget it. Never
happened. Go home. I'm sorry.

Gwyn wipes her eyes, steadies herself.

GWYN

It's okay. (beat) Feel better.

Gwyn flees. Margaret sits alone in her dim office.

INT. HALLWAY / ABBIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret peers into Abbie's room. Abbie works on her computer, earbuds in, oblivious to Margaret's gaze.

Satisfied, Margaret heads down the hall toward her bedroom.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margaret sits on the bed, nervous. She examines a POST-IT with a phone number scrawled on it in pencil. She dials.

RINGING. She looks out the window. The light FLASHES once in the window of the building across the way, seizing her attention. She waits, but it offers no more.

MAN (O.S./ON PHONE)

Hello? (beat) Hello?

MARGARET

Yes. Hello. I'm sorry, I, well, I
got this number from... Freddy,
from, from Caso's. He said you could
help me get something, quickly. Do
you know who I mean - Freddy? He--

MAN (O.S./ON PHONE)

I know 'em, yeah.

MARGARET

Okay. Does that mean you can... I
mean, can we make a deal?

Pause. She can hear the Man thinking on the other end.

MAN (O.S./ON PHONE)

Might be able to help you out.

MARGARET

Oh. Thank you. Very much, I--

MAN (O.S./ON PHONE)

What're you're looking for?

MARGARET

A... a gun.

MAN (O.S./ON PHONE)

Yeah, can you be more specific?

MARGARET

A handgun.

MAN (O.S./ON PHONE)

(disdainful chuckle)

What kind? What you need it for?

MARGARET

To protect my daughter.

EXT. STREET / WORLD HOTEL - MORNING

Rush hour. Margaret stands in a doorway across the street from The World Hotel. She stares at the entrance to the hotel, waits. We sense that she's been there for some time.

The door of the World opens. Margaret REACTS. A YOUNG WOMAN in rough shape emerges, heads up the block. The door slowly swings shut. Margaret stands down.

The closing door is halted. It opens again. DAVID emerges into the sunlight and heat, again in his suit. Margaret's eyes dig in, follow him as he heads up the block.

This time, she's ready. She springs from her position and begins tailing him, closing in, keeping him in her eye.

He turns a corner. She breaks into a jog to keep up.

She turns the corner, spots him, and follows at a distance for half the block until he enters a CRAPPY DINER.

She crosses the street and advances toward the diner. She stops when she sees David, seated at a table in the window.

She watches, frozen for a few beats. She claws together the courage, crosses the street, and enters the diner.

INT. DINER - DAY

A WAITRESS sets a CUP OF TEA before David. She walks away, revealing Margaret, standing, breathing shallow, rapid breaths.

He smiles broadly, conveying what feels like genuine warmth.

DAVID

Good morning, Maggie. So glad you could make it. Have a seat. Please.

She takes the open seat at his table. As before, she can barely meet his eye. He looks at her with great fondness.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You look beautiful. Still beautiful.

MARGARET

You look like shit.

DAVID

True. But *distinguished* shit. (laughs)

MARGARET

Get out, of New York. Now. You leave, I won't do anything. I never saw you.

DAVID

I love New York.

MARGARET

If you don't leave, I will do whatever I have to do. I will--

DAVID

It's okay. We'll be fine. Better than fine. All of us. You, me, Abbie--

MARGARET

Did you just threaten my daughter?

DAVID

Threaten? No. I don't make threats. Seems to me you're the one making the threats at this table.

MARGARET
You're goddamn right I am.

David takes a sip of tea.

DAVID
She's leaving soon. All grown up.

MARGARET
Don't you dare talk about my--

DAVID
Where's her father these days?

MARGARET
She doesn't have one.

DAVID
That's quite a trick.

MARGARET
I went to bars, met men. It was easy.

DAVID
She must be delighted.

MARGARET
She doesn't need a father.

DAVID
Every girl needs a father.

This registers as a threat. Margaret eyes him as he sips tea.

MARGARET
I've gone to the police. I can have
you arrested at any time--

DAVID
Arrested? For what? Drinking tea in
a diner? Sitting in a park?

MARGARET
You're following me.

DAVID
Following you? You're following me.
Approached me. Sat down with me.

Margaret's frustration mounts. David sips his tea.

MARGARET
Why are you here?

DAVID
He's still inside me.

MARGARET
Don't--

DAVID
In my belly. Suffering.

MARGARET
Don't you dare--

DAVID
Every day he cries and he
screams: "Where is mother?
Why did she abandon me?"

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Shut up, just shut your face--

Margaret closes her eyes tight, shakes her head slowly.

DAVID
*I tell him to let go. I say:
your mother ran. Ran from her
baby. But he refuses. Hangs
on. He should hate you. But
he yearns for you.*

MARGARET (CONT'D)
No...
Lies... you *lying...*

MARGARET (CONT'D)
(fighting tears)
...insane fucking PIG.

DAVID
Protest too much. I know you know.
He's alive. I kept him so. I took
good care. He's here, *thanks to my
charity*. Any minute I could drink
battery acid, burn him to a crisp,
and shit him out, chunk by chunk.

David retreats, chagrined by his outburst.

MARGARET
I thought you don't make threats.

DAVID
If the boy's dead, where's the threat?

MARGARET
What do you want?

DAVID
A kindness.

This hits Margaret like a punch in the gut.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It would be... right, if, from now on, you didn't take the subway to work. Instead, you walk. Barefoot. No shoes; no socks. Every day.

MARGARET

I won't.

DAVID

It'd be best, for everyone.

MARGARET

Or what? *Huh?* What?

DAVID

I'm giving you a gift. Don't you see? I'm offering complete control. Just do this very simple thing, and life goes on, undisturbed.

MARGARET

Until the next thing. Then the next.
I know how this works.

DAVID

No. I'll vanish. I promise you. Just do as I ask - don't follow me, don't meddle in my affairs. Do this; leave me be. And I disappear.

MARGARET

You arrogant fucking... *I don't do what you say anymore.* Understand? I don't take orders; I don't negotiate; I don't look away. So whatever you think you're doing, it'll fail. Because I'll be there, ready. You come after my daughter, I'll kill you. I swear to God I will.

DAVID

If you kill me, you kill him.

MARGARET

There is no him.

He shakes his head, leans back, digs into his pocket, places its contents on the table: four wadded DOLLARS, a WERTHER'S ORIGINAL, a crumpled RECEIPT, some lint, and his ROOM KEY.

DAVID

I just want you to be happy.

He unwads, smooths the singles on the tabletop. Margaret looks at the key. The TAG and ROOM NUMBER (408) are visible.

DAVID (CONT'D)
That's why I'm here.

David rises, weights the dollars with the salt shaker.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You wouldn't be able to live with
yourself if something happened.

He turns. As he exits:

DAVID (CONT'D)
Barefoot. Every morning. All I ask.

INT. MARGARET'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Margaret paces, phone to her ear.

MARGARET
*I can't wait that long... I need it
yesterday, goddammit... I'll pay
more. Whatever it takes... No.
There's got to be-- ...fine, fine...
I said fine. Just get it here.*

She slams the phone on her desk, suppressing panic.

EXT. FDR PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY - NIGHT

Margaret runs along the dark, empty walkway, 'Roar' pumping in her earbuds. She looks POSSESSED.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margaret lies on the bed, in her running clothes and a pool of sweat. She stares at the ceiling. In a very quiet, whispery voice, she sings a LULLABY. It seems almost involuntary, as though isn't aware that she's doing it.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Margaret showers, leaning against the tile to stay upright.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Margaret, looking as though she didn't sleep at all, stands in front of the mirror, dressing vehemently. She's misbuttoned her shirt, but doesn't seem to notice.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Margaret stands outside Abbie's closed door.

MARGARET

Text me every hour on the hour, to let me know you're okay. Just write 'ok'. That's all. Can you do that?
(silence)
I'll make it worth your while. \$20, per text. How does that sound?

INT. ABBIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Abbie cowers on her bed, freaked out.

MARGARET (O.S.)

Good way to make some pocket money, don't you think? (beat) Smidgen?

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Margaret stands outside a subway entrance, waging an internal battle. Commuters flow in and out. She makes a painful decision.

MARGARET

Mother-fucker.

Margaret grimaces, reaches down and strips off one of her SHOES. Then the other. She stuffs them both in her bag.

A beat, then she moves up the block, barefoot.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Margaret walks to work barefoot. She moves quickly. Her expression of pride is obviously fraudulent.

EXT. MIDTOWN COMMERCIAL BUILDING - MORNING

Margaret arrives outside her office building. She stops in front of the revolving door. Pedestrians stream around her.

She turns, presents herself to an unseen audience, making sure she's visible, her naked feet are visible. She calls out to David, wherever he might be.

MARGARET

Happy, you piece of shit?? Now you disappear! Now you fucking disappear!

Passers-by eye her curiously. She turns, enters the building.

INT. MIDTOWN COMMERCIAL BUILDING FOYER / LOBBY - MORNING

Margaret quickly, clumsily puts on her shoes in the foyer.

She enters the lobby, walks past the security desk and the elevators and enters the stairwell.

INT. MIDTOWN COMMERCIAL BUILDING - STAIRWELL

Margaret stands in a dark corner under the stairs. She checks the time on her iPhone. She waits.

CUT TO:

Margaret sits on the floor. She's been there for some time. She checks the time. Enough has passed. She rises and exits.

INT. MIDTOWN COMMERCIAL BUILDING - HALLWAY

Margaret walks down a back hallway towards a door with a red EXIT sign hovering above it. She pushes the door open.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Margaret emerges into an alley behind the building. She looks around: the coast is clear. She walks toward the street.

EXT. STREET / DINER - MORNING

Intense heat. Margaret sweats as she conceals herself in a doorway across the street from the diner, watching David, sitting at the same table, drinking tea and reading the paper.

He pays, rises. Margaret huddles further into the doorway.

David exits and begins ambling north. She stealthily follows.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREETS - DAY

David walks. Margaret stalks.

He strolls aimlessly, turning random corners, headed nowhere, block after block through the blander parts of Midtown East. She follows as closely as she can, careful to avoid detection. But it doesn't seem to matter - he never turns around, always looks straight ahead, totally oblivious.

EXT. PARK - DAY

David sits on a bench. The sun beats down. He must be boiling in that suit, but seems not to mind. He pulls moist crackers from his pocket, feeds a few pigeons. He's quickly surrounded by a mob of scrounging gutter fowl.

Margaret watches from afar, face coated with thick perspiration like molasses.

David looks up. She moves behind a tree. David squints, then returns to nourishing the revolting pigeons.

I/E APARTMENT BUILDING VESTIBULE / WORLD HOTEL - NIGHT

Margaret leans against the wall in the vestibule of a shabby apartment building, looking like an upright cadaver. Through the door, The World is visible across the street. Again, she sings the LULLABY to herself, barely audible.

Her phone VIBRATES. A text from Abbie: the 'OK' EMOJI. The 13th in a line of 'OK' emojis, sent throughout the day.

She returns her gaze to the hotel. A moment passes.

She REACTS. David emerges from the hotel, heads up the block. Margaret's eyes follow him. She exits.

EXT. STREET / LIQUOR STORE / FDR DRIVE - NIGHT

As before, Margaret follows David at a healthy distance.

Unlike in the daytime, with its crowds and cacophony, the city at night is curiously empty, silent. David and Margaret seem to be alone on the streets. A car passing feels like an event.

David enters a LIQUOR STORE. She waits for a few.

David emerges with a PLASTIC SHOPPING BAG in hand, heads east.

Margaret follows until he reaches the FDR Drive.

She stops as David walks up the steps of a PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE. He crosses over the FDR and slowly makes his way along the riverside walkway. Margaret cautiously ascends the bridge steps, keeping an eye on David as he recedes in the distance.

Just as she's about to dash across the bridge, David stops and takes a seat on a bench looking out on the river.

Margaret stops. David is clearly visible from her spot on the bridge. He pulls a pint bottle of CHEAP VODKA from the shopping bag, unscrews the top. Margaret FLINCHES at the sight of the booze. It seems to anger her, worry her. She shakes it off.

David sips from the bottle, staring at the moonlit water.

Margaret doesn't move from her spot on the bridge. She studies David hatefully as he drinks to the sound of the cars WHOOSHING by behind him. He's all alone on the walkway.

EXT. FDR - LATER

Margaret huddles on the bridge, still casing David, now passed out on the bench. The empty bottle at his feet.

Despite her exhaustion, she fidgets, impatient. She leans in, clutches the fence.

MARGARET
(whispered)
What's your game, you piece of shit?
What the hell are you up to?...

He sleeps. Dead to the world.

Frustrated, she pushes off the fence, rises. She takes a final look at David's before descending the steps at speed.

EXT. WORLD HOTEL - NIGHT

A TAXI comes to a halt outside The World. Margaret emerges, shuts the door. The taxi drives off.

Margaret reviews the hotel's sickly gray facade.

INT. WORLD HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

The lobby is bleak. Behind a Plexiglass partition is the DESK CLERK (60s) a gaunt woman from a foreign land. She scrutinizes Margaret as she enters, moves through the lobby to the elevator.

The Desk Clerk is instinctively suspicious.

DESK CLERK
(heavily accented)
What you here for?

MARGARET
I'm... visiting a friend.

DESK CLERK
Come here.

Margaret, confused, approaches her.

DESK CLERK (CONT'D)
What friend?

MARGARET
...David. Moore--

DESK CLERK
No David.

MARGARET
I know he's staying--

DESK CLERK
No David here.

MARGARET
There is. He's--

DESK CLERK
Rent room or get out. (beat) Rent
room or get out.

MARGARET
How much?

INT. THE WORLD / FOURTH FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Margaret walks down the squalid, dim hallway, holding a ROOM KEY. No sound from the street, nor from any of the rooms. Just a FAINT WHISTLE from the inadequate air conditioning. It's like the city of New York has evaporated entirely.

She reaches room 408, stops, looks down the hall. At the far end, an ancient SECURITY CAMERA stares at her threateningly.

Margaret turns her back to the camera and reaches into her bag. She removes her WALLET and pulls out her INSURANCE CARD. She moves to slide the card between door and jamb when she stops. The door isn't flush with the frame. It's OPEN.

Margaret steps back, uneasy. She KNOCKS softly.

Nothing. She KNOCKS again, harder. Nothing.

She holds her breath and gives the door a PUSH. It opens readily onto a dark room.

INT. DAVID'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Margaret steps inside. The room is empty. The BEDSIDE LAMP is on. A pink handkerchief is draped over the shade. Dim pink light suffuses the space.

The room is tiny, grimy, reeking of mildew. The single, grease-coated window looks out into the air shaft. A small, mirrorless sink dangles from the wall. The carpet is rotten, crispy, and promiscuously stained. Bedbugs are nearly audible.

Yet it's very tidy. Everything in its place, as if expecting company. The bed is severely made, military-style. Over it hangs a faded print of an 18th century pastoral painting.

Margaret steps in further, holding the door open. She surveys the space: On the tiny dresser are a few BODEGA CANDLES, a months-old *New Yorker*, a pair of READERS, a few LIBRARY BOOKS.

Margaret re-checks the hall: all clear. She closes the door.

Urgently she begins searching the space. She checks under the bed: nothing. She digs through a DUFFEL BAG on the floor: among the socks and underwear, she finds a bulging DOPP KIT.

She unzips it. Inside is a large collection of plastic PRESCRIPTION BOTTLES. She checks the labels - antipsychotics, antidepressants (CLOZAPINE, CITALOPRAM, etc). Of various ages, from various pharmacies in various states.

Margaret zips the kit, returns it to the duffel. She looks to the far wall: a piece of PAPER and a PHOTO are taped to it. The candles are huddled near these items. She moves in closer.

Margaret pulls out her phone and shines the flashlight on the photo: An old POLAROID, badly faded. In it, a TALL, HANDSOME MAN IN HIS 30s stands in the forest, his arm around a skinny, bespectacled TEENAGE GIRL. They smile broadly, clearly in love.

Margaret becomes emotional. She'd forgotten this photo ever existed. There she is - before the fall.

Beside the photo, a small, faded NOTEBOOK PAGE. On it, is barely discernible pencil, is a handwritten POEM, fringed by a meticulous geometric PENCIL DRAWING. From Maggie to David. The photo and poem and candles all look rather pitiful together, as if assembled by a child.

Margaret shakes it off, opens the top dresser drawer: folded thrift store shirts and a worn FILE FOLDER. In it she finds a Metrocard, EBT card, receipts. She unfolds sheets of yellowing paper: DISCHARGE FORMS from Western State Psychiatric Hospital in Lakewood, WA, dated two years prior. She studies the pages a moment, returns them to the file.

She opens the lower drawer, is TAKEN ABACK. One item there, wrapped in light blue tissue paper, like a gift. Faintly written on it in pencil is an 'M'.

She reaches in, takes hold of the package. Something soft, cloth. Blood rushes in her ears as she peels away the tissue.

She GASPS, DROPS IT, and RECOILS, instantly overcome. The partially opened gift sits on the floor like a landmine.

After a beat, she rushes back to it, tears off the tissue--

A BABY BLANKET unravels onto the floor. Faded, filthy. With a pattern of yellow and green flowers over faint polka dots.

Margaret kneels over the blanket, mesmerized, emotional.

She doesn't register the door open slowly behind her...

Or the figure silently oozing into the room...

A sudden SCREAM--

FIGURE
YOU GET OUT!

JOLTED, Margaret crumbles into a protective ball on the carpet. Panic. Behind her the DESK CLERK HOWLS.

DESK CLERK
GET OUT! GET OUT! NOW NOW NOW!

Margaret scrambles to her feet, grabs the blanket in her fist. The banshee Clerk shreds her vocal chords. Full fury.

DESK CLERK (CONT'D)
GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT

Margaret pushes past the Desk Clerk and into the hall.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Margaret moves down the hallway, towards the glowing red EXIT sign, blanket in hand. The Desk Clerk follows, bludgeoning her with SCREAMS. She'd hurl stones if she had some.

DESK CLERK
GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT

Margaret doesn't look back. She escapes into the stairwell.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - PREDAWN

Margaret, shattered with fatigue, enters, removes her shoes.

Down the hall, a bleary Abbie emerges from her room, in her sleepwear. Their eyes meet for a second.

MARGARET
Good morning, baby.

Abbie wordlessly goes into the bathroom.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - DAWN

The first rays of sunlight creep into the room. Margaret sits on her bed, clutching Ben's blanket, examining it, overwhelmed.

She brings the blanket to her face and INHALES DEEPLY, as if by doing so she can breathe in something of her lost child. This seems to have a narcotic effect.

CUT TO:

Margaret wakes with a sickening intake of breath, as if she'd been suffocating in her sleep. The blanket still in her grip.

She looks at her bedside clock - 8:33. Late.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Margaret enters. She catches sight of herself in the mirror. On her shirt, over her nipple - small, wet SPOTS.

Startled, confused, she examines the fabric, the leakage.

CUT TO:

Margaret bends over the tub, under the shower head. She turns on the COLD water. She SHRIEKS when it hits her head.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Margaret, dressed, circles the living room ferociously, like a caged panther, throwing punches, GRUNTING, trying to psyche herself awake, alert. It's violent, atavistic, a bit scary.

Churning SCORE builds from the rhythm of her movements, bridging into the following MONTAGE:

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

- A) EXT. STREET - MORNING - Heat. Margaret walks through the rush hour crowds, barefoot, unsteady, limping slightly.
- B) INT. STAIRWELL - MORNING - A sweaty, depleted Margaret waits in the stairwell.
- C) EXT. STREET - DAY - Margaret, in sunglasses, hair back, walks with grim determination through the crowded streets. In the distance, David continues walking nowhere. She follows.
- D) EXT. MCDONALDS - DAY - Margaret hides behind a bus stop, watching David read the *Post* at a table by the window.

She checks her phone: a LOOOOONG stream of OK EMOJIS from Abbie. She returns her gaze to David.

E) I/E LINCOLN TUNNEL - DAY

A black car travels through the Lincoln Tunnel. Inside, Margaret huddles in back. Light floods the interior as the car emerges into New Jersey.

F) EXT. PARKING LOT / SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

Margaret exits the Uber and walks towards a large shooting range in a strip mall.

G) INT. SHOOTING RANGE - DAY - Margaret waits at the front counter. Displayed on the wall: MANY DOZENS OF GUNS of all shapes and sizes. A sign reads 'Over 100 Guns For Rent!'.

H) I/E LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT - David buys a bottle of vodka from a CLERK behind a bulletproof divider. DOLLY IN, past David, towards the clear plastic door. Across the street, Margaret crouches in the murk, watching.

I) EXT. STREET - DAY - Margaret's bare feet, walking across the street, among a deluge of other pedestrian feet, all shod.

J) INT. SHOOTING GALLERY - DAY - Gun enthusiasts fire guns at targets, wearing ear guards. An INSTRUCTOR provides Margaret with guidance on how to aim a HANDGUN at a TARGET POSTER.

K) FDR DRIVE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE / WALKWAY - NIGHT - Margaret sits on her perch on the pedestrian bridge, watching David, passed out on the bench, empty bottle at his feet.

L) INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - DAWN - Margaret lies in bed, on top of the covers, clutching Ben's blanket like a life raft. She looks dangerously tired, but her eyes are open.

M) EXT. FDR PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY - DAY - Margaret traverses the area around David's bench, now empty. She surveys the landscape: walkway, river, passing cars. She runs her eyes across the pedestrian bridge. Nestled in a corner under the bridge is a TRAFFIC SURVEILLANCE CAMERA. Distant, but visible.

She shifts her back to the camera. She checks over her shoulder, then slowly raises her arm, pointing toward the bench and an invisible David.

N) INT. SHOOTING GALLERY - DAY - Margaret fires a HANDGUN. She doesn't look natural or comfortable, but she approaches it with fierce resolve. She fires five shots, then pauses, focuses hard on the target, then FIRES HER FINAL BULLET.

O) EXT. FDR PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY - NIGHT - The BULLET penetrates the skull of the sleeping David. His skull spits a jet of blood, snaps back, and hits the bench.

P) FDR PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY - DAY - Margaret stands over the bench, making a "gun" with her fingers, as if she'd just fired the fatal shot. She drops her arm and walks briskly away.

Q) EXT. FDR PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE / WALKWAY - NIGHT - Rain. Huddled on the bridge, a soaked Margaret stakes out David, sipping vodka on his bench. He looks more alive than she does.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - MORNING

Margaret, a filthy wreck, snaps to attention. She looks around, disoriented. She recognizes her door.

At her feet, on the door sill, is a USPS EXPRESS MAIL BOX. Slowly, painfully, she leans down and collects the box.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Margaret throws open the door and finds Abbie and Peter sitting in the living room, poised to intervene.

MARGARET

What the hell are you doing here?

PETER

Margaret...

MARGARET (CONT'D)

(to Abbie)

What is he doing here?

PETER

Relax. Why don't you have a seat?

MARGARET

Answer the question.

ABBIE

I called him.

MARGARET

You did *what*?

PETER

She's concerned. I'm concerned. You haven't been to work in a week. You haven't returned my calls, my texts--

MARGARET

You just let a *total stranger* into our house--

ABBIE

He's your boyfriend, isn't he?

MARGARET

I don't *have* a boyfriend.

ABBIE

Don't treat me like I'm a fucking infant. I know what you guys do.

MARGARET

Don't curse.

PETER

The point is: we're here to help.

MARGARET

I'm fine.

ABBIE

You're not fine.

Margaret looks at Abbie, clearly hurting. Then to Peter.

MARGARET

Can I speak to you alone?

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Margaret walks in, sets down the box. Peter follows.

MARGARET
Shut the door.

Peter shuts the door behind him.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
How dare you come here uninvited?

PETER
It's important for me to know that
you're all right--

MARGARET
I am all right. As far as you're
concerned, I'm always all right.

PETER
Margaret, we're friends. And when I
see a friend who's having trouble--

MARGARET
I'm handling it, ok? I'm doing what
I have to do to protect my daughter,
and myself, and keep us from harm.

PETER
What... harm?

MARGARET
None of your business.

PETER
I have the number, of a good woman,
a psychiatrist.

MARGARET
Stop. You're overstepping. I owe you
nothing. If I don't return your calls,
you suck it up. That's the deal. You
don't pop in, and you certainly don't
discuss me or anything else with my
goddamn daughter.

PETER
What *harm*, Margaret?

MARGARET
If you think that I'd allow anything
to happen to her, you are mistaken!
I will do anything, sacrifice
anything for my children.
Understand? For them, I'm
unstoppable. I'm a goddamn champion.

PETER

*Children? When was the last time
you slept?*

MARGARET

Get out, now. (beat) Now.

Peter looks at Margaret solemnly.

PETER

Fine.

As he turns to leave, he pulls a BUSINESS CARD from his pocket, sets it on the bureau.

PETER (CONT'D)

This is the person I mentioned.

MARGARET

Out.

Peter walks out. The front door OPENS and CLOSES.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Margaret enters the living room. Abbie sits on the sofa.

MARGARET

If that buzzer rings, you don't answer. For anyone. Do not open that door. Do not leave this apartment, ever, for anything, unless you're with me. Understand?

ABBIE

You can't keep me prisoner. I'm an adult.

MARGARET

You're a child and you'll do what I fucking say!

Abbie recoils. Margaret is shocked by her own outburst. She instinctively goes to Abbie.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Oh, God. Baby, I'm so sorry I yelled.

She tries to put hands on Abbie, but Abbie retreats.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Please, I...

Margaret takes a seat on the sofa penitently.

ABBIE

You lied to me. I called your office. Nobody named David Moore ever worked there.

Margaret closes her eyes.

MARGARET

He's not from the office. He's... from when I was young. When I was a different person. And he wants to hurt me. Tear us apart. But I won't let that happen. I'm sorry I couldn't tell you. I was ashamed.

Abbie becomes emotional. Margaret puts her hand on her knee.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

What is it, baby?

ABBIE

Mom. You're lying to me again.

MARGARET

I'm not. I promise you.

ABBIE

There's no man. You're making this up, to control me, to keep me here.

MARGARET

No.

ABBIE

I'm leaving, and you won't be able to, anymore. And you can't take it.

MARGARET

No, smidgen. That's not right.

ABBIE

You have to let me go.

MARGARET

I know I do. Come here.

Margaret takes her in her arms. Abbie allows it.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

It'll all be over soon. I promise.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - DAY

Margaret enters. Closes and locks the door.

CUT TO:

Margaret, sitting on her bed, uses a SCISSORS to slice open the USPS BOX. She pulls out handfuls of styrofoam peanuts.

In the box is an object thoroughly armored in BUBBLE WRAP and PACKING TAPE. She tears through the dense wrapping, revealing a .38 caliber SNUB NOSED REVOLVER and a small box of BULLETS.

Margaret stares at the weapon fearfully. She feels its weight in her hand, closes her eyes, tries to reconcile herself to the reality of it.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Margaret forces herself to load her gun along to a YOUTUBE INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO dedicated to this particular weapon.

She snaps the cylinder into the frame.

EXT. FDR DRIVE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE / WALKWAY - NIGHT

Margaret, in her usual place, watches David, passed out on his bench. She's alert. Radiantly nervous. Adrenaline flooding her skull. She looks around - except for the cars whizzing beneath her, there's no one in sight.

She reaches into her bag and produces LATEX GLOVES. She pulls them over shaking hands. She again reaches into her bag and produces a black BALACLAVA, which she wraps over her head.

Then she reaches in and pulls out the GUN. She looks at it, grips it firmly. She returns her hand, still holding the gun, into her bag and keeps it there.

She rises, crosses the bridge, and descends the steps onto the pedestrian walkway. She walks quietly towards David.

She stops a few feet from him, in the exact spot where she practiced. She again scans the area. All clear. The two of them are not visible to passing cars.

Margaret can barely breathe. It's actually happening.

She pulls the gun from her bag and points it at his head.

She searches for the will to fire. Do it. Now.

The gun vibrates. Her trigger finger twitches.

David's eyes open. He seems neither shocked nor afraid.

DAVID
If you kill me, you kill him.

They hold like this. Margaret's eyes are filled with anguish as tries to compel her body to execute. David is calm.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Well?

She battles. Every pore silently screaming.

She can't. Her quaking hand slowly drops. David looks on her with sympathy.

Then, with sudden violence, he LUNGES and seizes Margaret's wrist. Holding it firm, keeping the gun pointed at the ground.

Panic. She tries, fails to wrench her wrist from his grip.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Let go. Finger off the trigger.

It hurts, but she won't release the gun. The exertion is fierce, but oddly static, like an arm wrestling match.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It's okay. You don't need it.

It's clear she won't give in. It pains him, but David knows what needs doing. He KICKS at her ankle. She collapses to the concrete. Her arm twists in his grip. She CRIES OUT.

He peels the gun from her hand. He grabs the balaclava and strips it off, throwing it aside.

He fights for breath. She struggles to rise.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Don't move. I have a gun.

She stops. David drops back down on the bench, gun in hand. He recovers his breath, studying her through unfocused, inebriate eyes. Her eyes are filled with hate.

DAVID (CONT'D)
He's here. Right here. That's why you couldn't fire.

MARGARET
He's dead.

DAVID

Then why isn't there a great, big
hole in my brain this very second?

Margaret has no answer.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You love him so much. More than
anything. And he loves you.

MARGARET

You killed him and he's fucking dead!

DAVID

All these years, all he wants, is
his mother back. That's all.

David takes to his feet with some difficulty.

DAVID (CONT'D)

He's very upset, that we're arguing.
Listen. Can you hear him cry?

David takes a step, hovering directly over Margaret. Gun
dangling at his side.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Shh. Listen. Can you hear?

He reaches out. She slaps his hand away.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Listen!

MARGARET

He's dead!!

David grabs her hair and pulls her head against his stomach,
holding the gun to her temple.

DAVID

Listen to your son.

Silence as David holds Margaret's ear to his gut. She closes
her eyes, controls her breathing. The sound of her
RESPIRATIONS, the RIVER, the PASSING CARS.

Then - the faint, muffled sounds of a CRYING BABY, from
within David's belly. Margaret's eyes open.

DAVID (CONT'D)

He can't understand why you allowed
this to happen. Why you let him get
hurt; why you *ran*.

Margaret tries to shut out Ben's SHRIEKING, will it away.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What kind of mother abandons her
child when he needs her most? Are you
going to fail him, Maggie? Again?

David shifts her head so he can see her face.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Is Ben in my belly? *Is he?*

She looks on the verge of cracking. She opens her mouth, but instead of answering, she SPITS. It's clumsy. It runs down her lip, chin, like she's spit on her own face.

MARGARET
Stay... away... from my *daughter*.

David regards her tenderly - he doesn't buy this act of defiance for one second.

DAVID
She's just a substitute.

He releases her head. She falls to the ground. He steps away, takes a breath, shakes it off.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I held up my end. But you - you
followed me, tried to kill me. In
breach, of our deal. So I think this
calls for a kindness.

He steps to her.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Assume a position. In the park.
Ruppert Park. Two o'clock, 'til dawn.
Every night. Until further notice.

Margaret's moist eyeballs throb with rage.

MARGARET
Go near her and I'll kill you.

David SIGHS, tiring of her bluster. He leans in close.

DAVID
What happens next is entirely in
your hands. If you want to keep her
safe, then do as I ask. And she
stays safe. It's that simple. I hold
up my end, Maggie. Always have.

David inhales deeply, stands upright.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Stop following me. Get back to your
life. Back to work. Take the position
in the park. Normalcy - from now on.
(off the gun)
Not the time for recklessness.

He pockets the gun, starts towards the pedestrian bridge.

MARGARET
I'll kill you, David. I will!

Margaret watches him walk away. Then she CRUMPLES - guilt,
self-rebuke. She SCREAMS through gritted teeth.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Margaret enters the dark apartment, barely able to stand. She
looks like she just wandered out of a battlefield.

She removes her shoes, looks to Abbie's room. The door is shut.

She moves into the kitchen, leans against the island, closes
her eyes. A moment. Then she slowly peels her eyelids open.

There. Outside. Through the picture window: the FLASHING
LIGHT, pulsing from the building across the way.

Margaret watches it a moment, tries to decipher it's message.
It confounds her. She becomes frustrated.

She staggers across the room, puts her hand on the window.
She focuses on the light, as if it carries vital information
that she can't quite grasp it.

MARGARET
What? What??

The light continues its frenetic pulsing.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
WHAT???

Margaret PUNCHES the window, nearly topples over. The thick
glass doesn't crack. She punches it again, harder, wincing.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Come on, you fucker! Tell me!!

It flashes mutely.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
TELL ME!

She PUNCHES the window again, full-force. A web of CRACKS explodes outward from the contact point. Margaret tumbles to the floor, delirious, furious. She squirms, but can't muster the strength to stand. The light flashes.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
(feeble whisper)
Tell me, you fucker...

Her head falls back on the sofa.

CUT TO: an EXT MLS shot. Through the cracked window, Margaret sits in a heap on the floor like a discarded doll.

The camera retreats from her, framed by the cracked window. She gets smaller and smaller as the image encompasses other windows, other buildings, the city around her, becoming a wide POV from the source of the flashing light.

From here, Margaret looks like a small animal dying in a cage.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The FRONT DOOR OPENS. Margaret's head rises off the carpet. She's curled on the floor by the sofa. Early morning sunlight pours through the cracked window.

Abbie, carrying a BACKPACK and DUFFEL BAG, stands by the open door, about to leave, but not quite able. She looks scared.

MARGARET
(softly)
Happy birthday.

ABBIE
(trying to be brave)
Don't come after me. Don't call me.

MARGARET
Baby... I fucked up.. I... I just...
left him there. With that man... I
should burn in hell, for what I did.

Margaret can see that Abbie is confused, disturbed by this.

ABBIE
Go to the doctor. You'll be okay.

Abbie closes the door behind her. A beat, then:

MARGARET
Abbie, no!!

Margaret frantically assembles herself and RUNS to the door.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Abbie stands by the elevator. Margaret moves toward her.

MARGARET
Don't go.

ABBIE
Go back inside. Call the doctor.

MARGARET
Smidgen, please.

Margaret reaches Abbie as the elevator doors open. Abbie enters. Margaret follows.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Abbie works to remain stoical. She won't look at Margaret.

MARGARET
He wants to hurt you.

ABBIE
Nobody wants to hurt me.

MARGARET
If you stay, I can protect you. I won't fail you again. I promise.
You don't have to be scared.

The doors open.

ABBIE
The only thing I'm scared of is you, mom.

Abbie exits the elevator. Margaret follows.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Abbie walks through the foyer to the door. Margaret follows a few feet behind.

MARGARET
Abbie. Abbie, no.

Abbie opens the door, goes outside.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Please, baby. No.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING / STREET / SUBWAY - CONTINUOUS

Once outside, Abbie picks up the pace, striding away from the building. Margaret keeps up, trailing ten feet behind.

MARGARET
Abbie, stop! Talk to me, please!

Margaret speeds up, closing the gap. Abruptly, Abbie breaks into a RUN and rounds the corner. Margaret gives chase.

Once around the corner, Margaret encounters a SUBWAY ENTRANCE. She races down the steps, nearly tumbling, falling.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - CONTINUOUS

Margaret enters just as Abbie pushes through the turnstile. It's a secondary station entrance - one turnstile, FLOOR TO CEILING BARS, no attendant.

NOISE. A train hurtles into the station.

Margaret throws herself against the turnstile, shakes the bars violently. No means of entry.

MARGARET
Abbie! Come back!

Abbie briskly moves down the platform.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Abbie! Don't do this! ABBIE!!!

The train comes to a halt. The doors open. Abbie enters. Margaret continues to HOLLER futilely.

The doors close. The train leaves the station.

Devastated, Margaret rests her head on the bars. The station goes quiet, save for Margaret's rapid, convulsive BREATHING. A PANIC ATTACK expands throughout her body.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Margaret slowly walks, weaving slightly, down her block, towards her building. Around her, the city undulates in the heat. Sounds melt into a SOFT DRONE.

She looks up, stops. Up the block: a familiar face. PETER, across the street from her building. Seemingly spying.

He looks up, sees Margaret. He realizes he's been spotted, tries feebly to cover.

MARGARET
Mother-fucker.

Margaret marches towards him. He gives a little wave.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING??

Peter braces himself.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
JUST WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU THINK
YOU'RE DOING??

Margaret breaks into a SPRINT, running at a full, rageful gallop towards Peter. Peter turns and RUNS.

Margaret CHASES Peter through the street. Peter attempts some evasive maneuvers, but Margaret is too fast for him. She catches up and TACKLES him to the pavement. Hitting the concrete REALLY HURTS. Peter CRIES OUT.

Pedestrians are alarmed to see a woman throw a man to the pavement. They're equally alarmed when she grabs him by the hair and starts SLAPPING THE SHIT OUT OF HIM.

PETER
STOP! MARGARET!! PLEASE!

MARGARET
Were you fucking spying on me??

Margaret PUNCHES Peter, bloodying his nose. She eases up, looms above him. A small crowd has gathered.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Why are you here?

PETER
I was worried! Jesus, I'm bleeding...

MARGARET

What did I tell you? Stay away from
me. My children are in danger. I
don't have time for your bullshit!

PETER

You're not well. You need help.
And, and...

MARGARET

And what?

PETER

...I'm in love with you.

Preposterous.

MARGARET

You've got to be fucking kidding me!

PETER

Didn't you know?

MARGARET

Fucking men. Can't put your dick in
anything without deciding you hate
it or you love it.

(gets right in his face)

You don't love me. You just *annoy*
me. Impede my mission once more,
I'll beat you 'til you're dead.

The small crowd watches the terrifying woman walk away.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Margaret enters violently, slams the door. She tears down the
hallway, enters the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Splashes water on her face, her head, hair. Water everywhere.
Looks in the mirror. Her expression is cruel, predatory.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Margaret, still wet, strips her torn, filthy top from her
torso. Her arms and shoulders are covered with bruises, cuts.

She starts to undo her jeans, but stops abruptly. She closes
her eyes, fighting something off.

A wave of overwhelming exhaustion engulfs her. She sways, trying to stay upright. She shakes her head to and fro, but its no use. The room swims.

Her legs start to give. She staggers to the bed and collapses.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's dark. Margaret wakes on the bed. She looks around, disoriented, gathers her bearings.

She rises quickly, grabs her phone, checks it - no calls; no messages. She presses a button, holds it to her ear. Pause.

MARGARET

Where are you? Abbie. Call me. As soon as you get this. Let me know you're safe. Don't question it; just do it. I love you.

Her arm drops to her side. She paces. Frantic. She stops, looks at the clock: 1:23.

She's stands still, knowing what must be done.

EXT. RUPPERT PARK - NIGHT

CU: Margaret, eyes closed, sweating, enduring.

The camera WITHDRAWS, revealing her to be SQUATTING... on the ground... in a small UES park. Torso pitched forward, hands CLASPED BEHIND HER BACK. A "stress position". Her legs tremble.

It's clearly extraordinarily uncomfortable, but she persists. She will be there until daybreak.

INT. BATHROOM / BEDROOM / KITCHEN - MORNING

Morning routine, calmly and swiftly:

- Margaret showers.
- Margaret dresses for work.
- Margaret prepares a bag lunch.

INT. STREET - MORNING

Margaret walks to work, barefoot.

INT. BIOMATIX OFFICE / LABORATORY - MORNING

Margaret, in shoes, exits the elevator and walks past a row of work stations. Co-workers MURMUR, look at her strangely, mutter hellos. She doesn't respond.

Margaret passes Gwyn's desk, says nothing.

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

Tess (Margaret's boss) sits at her desk, concerned. Margaret sits across from her, wearing an expression of brittle pride. She's gaunt. The circles under her eyes are coal black.

TESS
You look tired.

MARGARET
I feel strong.

TESS
Are you sure--

MARGARET
I'm well enough. I'm ready to work.

Tess wants to believe her.

INT. MARGARET'S OFFICE - DAY

Margaret, in her lab coat, sits at her desk, stupefied.

Her phone BUZZES. She grabs it. A text from Abbie: THE OK EMOJI. A rush of relief. She tears up, touches the emoji.

Her DESK PHONE RINGS rudely. She answers.

MARGARET
Yes?

VOICE (O.S./ON PHONE)
Someone's up front to see you.

INT. BIOMATIX CORRIDOR / RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Margaret strides down the corridor, enters reception.

She halts when she sees David, in his suit, a batch of YELLOW CARNATIONS in hand. He chats convivially with the RECEPTIONIST.

David looks over at the frozen Margaret.

DAVID
Maggie.

He steps towards her, presents the flowers.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Is there someplace we can talk?

INT. BIOMATIX OFFICE / LABORATORY - AFTERNOON

Peter, still bruised from his confrontation with Margaret, peers around the wall of his cubicle, watching, leery.

At another end of the office, a worried Gwyn also watches:

Through the glass partition enclosing the CONFERENCE ROOM, David is visible, standing, holding a cup of coffee, staring at Manhattan through the windows on the far side of the room. Margaret tensely sits in a chair at the conference table.

It's odd. This is clearly not a professional meeting.

INT. BIOMATIX CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

DAVID
Ballion. What is that? French? Felt
strange, asking the girl for
'Margaret Ballion'. What was wrong
with Walsh? It's a fine name. Maggie
Mary Walsh. Love saying that.

David steps to the other side of the room, looks through the partition and into the buzzing offices.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Margaret Ballion to these cretins.

He smiles at her. Her gaze is fixed on the buildings outside.

David takes a seat at the table. He leans close to Margaret.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Tell me. How was it, last night?

He gazes upon her reverently. She won't meet his gaze.

DAVID (CONT'D)
They still work, don't they? The
kindnesses. Still ease the pain.
Quiet the noise. Make you proud.
(beat) You're incredible. Just
needed permission.

He looks at the office, Margaret's colleagues.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Look at them. They truly have *no idea*. Do you realize that I'm the only person who can *see you*? Who knows who you really are? These people - they don't have the first inkling of what you're capable of. They're soft. Every one. But not you. You're a born warrior. A champion.

Margaret looks at the floor.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm the only one who knows. So I'm the only one who can see the hole, right there, in the center of your heart. This life, this... character you made. *Ballion*. Did you think she would fill it? Did you think this job would fill it? You made a *daughter*, to fill the hole, but even that didn't work. Because nothing will heal you. Nothing, except him.

He leans in closer.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I carried him, kept him perfect, so you could be with him again. Do you want that? Do you want him?

He examines her. She forces a blank expression. But he can see, behind her eyes, her resistance wavering.

He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a folded NOTE CARD.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Come to this room. Tonight. 10 o'clock. Be with your son. It's been 27 years, Maggie. Be with him.

Pause. She turns, meets his eye.

MARGARET

Fine.

INT. BIOMATIX OFFICE / LABORATORY - AFTERNOON

David walks down the corridor. Margaret follows, saying nothing, looking at no one.

David reaches Peter's workstation. He pats him on the shoulder.

DAVID
Afternoon, stud.

Peter, baffled, watches them pass.

INT. BIOMATIX RECEPTION AREA / ELEVATOR - DAY

David stands in the elevator. Margaret in the reception area. He smiles at her softly. The elevator doors close.

INT. MARGARET'S OFFICE - EARLY EVENING

Margaret in her office. She reaches into her bag and produces Ben's blanket. She holds it to her face and BREATHES IT IN.

GWYN (O.S.)
Knock.

Margaret turns. Gwyn stands there nervously.

MARGARET
Hey.

GWYN
Just wanted say that I'm glad you're
feeling better.

MARGARET
Thank you.

There's an awkward, melancholic feeling between them, like a couple in the wake of a painful break-up.

GWYN
Um, who was that guy earlier?

MARGARET
Client.

Gwyn knows this isn't true. Doesn't press.

GWYN
Tomorrow's my last day.

MARGARET
My goodness. We'll have to do
something special for you.

GWYN
Oh, that's not necessary.

Margaret gives her a wan smile. Gwyn doesn't know what to say.

MARGARET
You haven't seen that guy again,
have you?

GWYN
What?

MARGARET
The... asshole.

GWYN
Oh. No.

MARGARET
Good. You're very strong.

GWYN
Thanks. (beat) See you tomorrow.

She turns to leave.

MARGARET
I helped.

GWYN
Excuse me?

MARGARET
I helped. Right? I've helped you.
With... things.

GWYN
Yeah. Of course. A lot of things.

MARGARET
Good. (beat) I'll make sure your
letter is glowing.

GWYN
Thanks.

Gwyn, relieved, gives a little nod, exits.

INT. BIOMATIX OFFICE / LABORATORY - EARLY EVENING

Margaret walks down the corridor towards the exit, carrying Ben's blanket. Most of the office has cleared out.

INT. SUBWAY - EARLY EVENING

Margaret rides the subway, still holding the blanket.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL MANHATTAN BLOCK - EARLY EVENING

Margaret, trying to be invisible, stands in the doorway of a building, staking out a brownstone across the street.

Abbie emerges with LUCY (18), an awkward girl with Marfan Syndrome. Margaret squeezes herself further in the doorway, as she watches Abbie and Lucy walk down the street.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margaret sits on her bed, laptop at her feet. She turns on the camera. Her image appears on screen. She hits record.

MARGARET

Abbie. If you're watching this, it means--

Her voice catches. She holds back tears, stops the recording, collects herself. Then she takes a breath, starts over.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Abbie. Smidgen. If you're watching this, it means something happened. Something went wrong.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Margaret combs her wet hair. Her message continues in V.O.

MARGARET (V.O.)

I wrote everything, in a letter, a long time ago. I hoped I'd never have to give it to you. It's what happened, to me. Every word is true.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margaret dresses.

MARGARET (V.O.)

I'm so sorry I couldn't tell you. I'm so sorry I lied. I thought I could make it all okay. But I was unlucky, in what happened.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margaret prints out a document from the printer on her desk.

MARGARET (V.O.)
But Abbie, I was so lucky - so
lucky - to have you.

She folds several pages and places them in an ENVELOPE.

MARGARET (V.O.)
A million deaths would be worth the
18 years I spent with you.

She writes 'Abbie' in pen on the envelope.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Margaret wraps her ankle with DUCT TAPE.

MARGARET (V.O.)
I love you; I admire you. I hope
you understand why I needed to do
what I did.

She presses a STEAK KNIFE against the tape on her ankle, and
wraps the blade with more tape, securing it in place.

MARGARET (V.O.)
If you don't - if you're angry or, or
confused - I'm sorry. But I know,
once you have a child of your own,
you'll understand.

She holds it by the handle and YANKS the knife from the
makeshift sheath. Seems to work okay.

CUT TO:

She tapes a small PARING KNIFE to her forearm.

MARGARET (V.O.)
Once you become a mother, your own
life doesn't mean much anymore. You
become disposable.

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ON-SCREEN / MARGARET'S VIDEO:

Margaret, on her bed, speaking to the laptop camera.

MARGARET (V.O.)
Gloriously disposable.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret, dressed and ready, sets the ENVELOPE on the coffee table. On top of it she places a FLASH DRIVE.

She produces her phone, sends Abbie a text: 'I love you forever'. She pockets the phone.

Nothing left to do. She looks at her apartment, at the clock: 9:29 pm. She closes her eyes, breathes, foraging courage.

INT. HALLWAY / ELEVATOR / FOYER / STREET - NIGHT

Margaret, moving deliberately, but with tremendous focus, walks to the elevator.

She presses the button. The elevator opens. She gets on.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Margaret rides the elevator, keeping it together.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

The elevator doors open. She walks through the foyer, through the front door, and into the street.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

She turns, heads down the sidewalk, keeping her head high.

She walks, struggling to keep her emotions in check.

But she can't. Her face is steely, but tears roll down her cheeks. She marches down the street, every step bringing her closer to violence.

EXT. STREET / NEW YORK HILTON MIDTOWN - NIGHT

Margaret stands on a street corner across from the MIDTOWN HILTON. She looks up at the immense, hideous structure.

She crosses Sixth Ave. Traffic, tourists, pedestrians, noise. No one notices her. Completely anonymous.

She approaches and enters the building.

EXT. NEW YORK HILTON MIDTOWN LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Margaret passes through the vast lobby. TRAVELERS and STAFF drift about. She walks straight to the wall of elevators.

EXT. NEW YORK HILTON MIDTOWN LOBBY - NIGHT

Margaret waits for the elevator next to a TOURIST FAMILY: mother, father, child. The elevator doors open.

INT. HOTEL ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The elevator ascends. The Family CHAT in hushed, self-conscious elevator tones. Margaret looks straight ahead, like a soldier.

The Family gets off on 6. She rides to 17 alone.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY / DAVID'S ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret exits the elevator, heads down the hallway, soundless save for her breathing and the rushing of blood in her ears.

She reaches room 1708. Stops. She lifts her hand to knock.

Margaret's hand slowly drops. She closes her eyes.

MARGARET

David.

Pause. No sound. She waits.

The door OPENS, revealing David, smiling. She's taken back. He's TRANSFORMED. Dressed in casual KHAKIS and BUTTON-DOWN SHIRT. Clearly brand new, never washed. Socks but no shoes.

He's showered. His hair has been professionally cut. On his neck are tiny, fresh shaving scabs. He reeks of Old Spice.

Although awkward in execution, the overall effect is one of acute *normalcy*. He looks like a benign, handsome middle-aged man with a paunch. Someone's uncle, father, husband.

DAVID

Thank you for coming, Maggie. It means a lot to me. Come on in.

His manner is calm, pleasant. Humble.

Margaret enters. He shuts the door. She looks at the room: a suite. The cheapest suite, but a suite nonetheless. It's nice, immaculate, utterly banal. There's a view onto Sixth Avenue.

On the table is an open bottle of cheap WHITE WINE and a glass, as well as a pitcher of WATER and a bowl of CASHEWS.

David looks at Margaret, half dead with exhaustion, barely standing, dirty, wearing an old sweatshirt.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You look wonderful.

He moves toward the table, the wine.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I wanted to get something at the Carlyle, or the Plaza, but... it's not bad, though, right? There's a view, here. And some wine. Can I get you a glass? We can order room service, too, if you're hungry.

Margaret hovers near the door. She lightly touches her forearm.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Okay. Well, let me know if you change your mind. Please, sit.

She scans the space, alert to danger, threats.

MARGARET
Where is it?

DAVID
Hm?

MARGARET
The gun. Show it to me.

DAVID
No. That's all done with.
(off her expression)
It's gone. In the river. None of that, anymore.

She studies his face, trying to determine if he's lying.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I have something here for you.

Her muscles tighten. David picks up a MANILA ENVELOPE from a chair and sets it on the bed. He smiles reassuringly.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It's okay. Please. Go ahead.

He backs away. Margaret approaches the bed and picks up the envelope. Leery, she opens it, producing an old, yellowed piece of GRAPH PAPER, folded into a square.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I saved it for you.

Margaret unfolds the 11x17 paper. It's very fragile, nearly crumbling in her fingers: an obsessively-detailed LATTICE DRAWING. The result of many hours of meticulous teenage labor.

She trembles. Her knees give a bit.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Do you recognize--

MARGARET
Yes.

She lowers herself to the bed. David sits in a chair.

DAVID
I thought they might not let me keep it, so I hid it away. Went back for it, when I could. Kept it safe.

He looks at her, solemnly regarding the paper.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I remember you drawing it, when I first saw you. There, on the beach. You were transfixed. I walked up to you, but you didn't seem to notice, even when I was just beside you. So I said, "And who might you be?" Thinking you'd be startled. But you just turned and calmly looked at me through those funny brown glasses and said, "If you have five seconds, I'll tell you everything there is to know--

MARGARET
"The story of my life." I said,
"The story of my life."

DAVID
Right. It was very witty, I thought.

MARGARET
It's a lyric. A song lyric. I didn't make it up.

DAVID
Still. I was impressed.

He looks at the floor demurely.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Every morning, there you'd be, on that beach. With your pad. No matter the weather. Working for hours on the same drawing. Or swimming, in that frigid water. I was amazed you could endure it. You didn't know, but I was watching--

MARGARET
I knew. I always knew.

DAVID
Of course you did. You always saw right through me.

MARGARET
You just watched, and watched. And never said another word. Then one day, there you are, in our place, getting my parents shit-faced. On that disgusting homemade wine.

DAVID
Chokecherry wine.

MARGARET
It was all very smart, what you did. You knew exactly what you were doing. Exactly what you wanted.

DAVID
So did you. I'd done nothing. Said nothing. No overtures, no... indications--

MARGARET
There were indications.

DAVID
--when the gifts started appearing, at my doorstep.

MARGARET
I was a *child*.

| | |
|--|--|
| DAVID | MARGARET (CONT'D) |
| A pinecone. An apple. A moth. Each night, something different, for six nights. | A stupid child. You just kept coming around and coming around... |

DAVID
Then, the drawing. Finally
complete. Rolled up, tied with a
bow. I was so moved.

MARGARET

DAVID
Two nights later, there you were.
At my door.

MARGARET
I had nothing else left to give.

DAVID
And within minutes, a world that for a lifetime had seemed so cruel, so disordered, became... immaculate.

Margaret turns her head, as if to hide from the memory.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Do you remember? In the morning. How stunned we were. When the sun came up, and we realized it'd all been real. Do you?

MARGARET
Of course I remember.

David becomes emotional. Tears up.

DAVID
That time. The life, we made. Was
holy. It was *perfect*. (beat) Am I
wrong? If I am, tell me. Please.
Did I just imagine it all?

She looks at him. Doesn't contradict him.

DAVID (CONT'D)
God, Maggie... *I missed you so much.*

Margaret watches as he works to contain his emotions. She remains stoic, but there are glints of sympathy in her eyes.

DAVID (CONT'D)
...it's too bright.

He rises, goes to a lamp by the window, turns it off. He hovers in a dim corner, as if trying to be unseen.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I never abandoned you. After you left, I looked. Everywhere I could. For weeks. Months. But I couldn't find you. And I panicked. I couldn't imagine a life without you. (beat) *Heartbreak*. That's why they put me away. The greatest pain there is.

He steps forward a bit, into the light.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I see you. So clear. I know how hard it's been. How you've had to fight, and be so strong, all alone, for so long. And you did it. Goddammit, you did it. Unfailingly. Heroically. But starting tonight, the hard part is over. From now on, there's going to be no more pain. Nothing more to prove. No more sacrifices. You can stop fighting. You can *breathe*. And just be, exactly who you are. Maggie, the war is over. And you won.

He tentatively approaches, sits on the bed, not too close.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm here to help you find peace. God knows you've earned it. Would you like that? After everything, some *relief*?

She doesn't answer. He inches closer, whispers.

DAVID (CONT'D)

He's right here. He's awake.

A bit closer.

DAVID (CONT'D)

He knows you're here. Would you like to feel?

Ever so gently, he reaches over and takes her hand. He lifts it slowly, resting it on his abdomen.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Do you feel him? Do you feel?

MARGARET
...yes.

DAVID
He's reaching out to you. Do you
feel his little hand?

She nods. David places both hands on her's. They commune with Ben. Margaret is stunned, trapped between wonder and terror.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Do you have anything to say, to him?
He can hear you.

She looks at him.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It's okay. Say something. He'll
respond to you.

Margaret is afraid.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Nothing bad will happen. I promise.

Margaret looks down to his belly, their hands.

MARGARET
(softly)
...Ben.

Margaret GASPS, RECOILS. *He reacted.*

DAVID
It's okay. It's okay. See? He says
hello. Here, put your hand here.

She's overwhelmed. Speechless. It's all too much.

DAVID (CONT'D)
He needs you, Maggie. It's okay.

He takes her hand. She hesitates, but allows him to slowly bring her trembling hand back on his belly.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Do you want to say hello? To your
son? Say hello.

Tears form in her eyes.

MARGARET
Hi... baby... my baby...

DAVID

That's right. Good. Now, tell him
how you feel.

She chokes up.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Anything. Anything you want. He's
here.

MARGARET

(emotional)

Ben.... Ben, I... I'm... sorry. For
being a bad mom.

It's all she can say. David wraps an arm around her, pulls her into an embrace. He holds her hand firmly to his belly.

DAVID

He *forgives you*. You're forgiven.
You're loved.

They hold like this, very close. Margaret's shoulders spasm along with her tears. He continues to whisper soothing words.

At first, it seems Margaret is calming, her breath slowing. But her body does not quiet. Her spasms become more pronounced.

She moving in the wrong direction. Becoming agitated. David draws her in closer, tighter, but she needs out. She extracts herself from his arms. He gives her space.

She looks at him fixedly, something powerful welling up from within, like an electric current. A shocking realization.

MARGARET

David.

DAVID

Yes?

MARGARET

He's alive. My son is alive.

David is relieved. He nods, touched. Gratified.

DAVID

He is.

MARGARET

He's... inside you...

DAVID

Yes.

MARGARET
Suffering.

DAVID
No. He's so happy, to be with you.

MARGARET
He's suffering. You said. He
needs... he needs... DAVID (CONT'D)
He has everything he needs.

MARGARET
He needs to be held. Fed.

DAVID
He's happy now.

MARGARET
He needs his mother.

DAVID
He *has her*. And she has him.

Margaret slowly rises to her feet.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Maggie. Sit. Come here.

She steps back from him, creating distance.

MARGARET
I failed him.

DAVID
It's okay. Just relax.

MARGARET
I left him alone. And you put him
inside.

As she speaks, she continues to retreat, slowly pulling up
her sleeve. David notices, around her forearm, DUCT TAPE.

DAVID
I had no choice. Because of what
you did. But I took care of him,
brought him back. For you.

He sees the handle of the PARING KNIFE.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What are you doing? Maggie, what--

MARGARET

Thank you, for bringing him back. I have him now. And he has me. We don't need you anymore.

She YANKS the knife from the duct tape. David is nervous.

DAVID

Now, now. You're... tired. Let's sit down... collect our thoughts.

Now she slowly advances. Shaking, but determined.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Talk to me. What's happening?

MARGARET

I'll do anything, for my children.

DAVID

Just wait a moment. Take a deep breath. Relax.

She THRUSTS her arm forward, like an reflex. The knife JABS into the side of David's neck, above the collar bone. She withdraws it quickly. The wound is superficial, but within moments it's BLEEDING generously.

David is STUNNED. It takes him a moment to grasp what's happened. He cups his hand over the spurting wound.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Maggie... I'm... I'm cut. I... let's sit. Let's sit and talk.

She STRIKES again with the blade. A quick SLICE across his ear. He BARKS in pain and recoils, STUMBLING backward.

DAVID (CONT'D)

STOP THAT! JUST STOP! Put it down!
Put the knife down!

He tumbles backward to the bed, sits. Hands on his bleeding neck, ear. The shock of the attack makes speaking difficult.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm okay... alright... You're very emotional right now... not thinking clearly.... But Ben is so happy, so... no more, okay? Mistakes happen, but put the knife down now.

Margaret approaches slowly. The air is thick with adrenaline.

DAVID (CONT'D)

He's *crying*. Do you hear? He's crying
because mom and dad are fighting...
Please don't hurt him.

She steps toward him with the bloody knife.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Stay where you are. MAGGIE! STOP!

Another step. She's too close. He LUNGES, TACKLING her onto
the carpet, landing on her body, pinning her beneath him.

She feebly tries to STAB at his back but he quickly gets hold
of her wrist, SLAMMING her hand to the floor.

She's trapped. Immobilized. Blood drips on her face as he
strips the soiled knife from her hand. Her other hand PUNCHES
weakly at his back, but he ignores this.

Once he has the knife, David lies still, trying to catch his
breath. They lie there for a while, as if they just finished
making love. Finally, David speaks:

DAVID (CONT'D)

Don't move. Or I'll stab you in the
heart.

He peels himself off of her. GRUNTING, brandishing the knife,
he rises to his knees and then, shakily, to his feet.
Margaret remains motionless.

He backs up, to the bed. Sits, bleeding, panting. She watches
him, waits. He becomes DISTRAUGHT.

DAVID (CONT'D)

*Why?? Why did you do that? I can't
fathom this. I, I did everything I
was supposed to. It's what you
wanted. There was no other way.*

Margaret sits up, watching him BLUBBER and BELLOW. She
discreetly draws up her pant leg, revealing the STEAK KNIFE
taped to her ankle. He's oblivious.

DAVID (CONT'D)

*I come to you with the greatest gift,
and this is what you do? Without me
there is no him. Can't you see that?
We're one. And we love you.*

She PULLS out the knife. David sees.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Stop that. Do not move.

Margaret SCRAMBLES to her feet. She stands, ready for combat.

David creaks to his feet. Wounded and afraid.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Just stay where you are.

MARGARET
I won't let you hurt him any more.

Margaret ATTACKS.

David HURLS HIMSELF TOWARD HER, DEFLECTING HER KNIFE, WRAPPING HIS ARMS around her torso in a defensive BEAR HUG.

He propels them against the MEDIA STAND, CRACKING the TELEVISION and SLAMMING Margaret's body and head against the wall, knocking the wind out of her. Concussing her. A standing lamp COLLAPSES. The bulb SHATTERS. The room dims.

David REARS BACK, SQUEEZING with all his strength. He POUNDS HER INTO THE WALL, trying to incapacitate her, knock her out. She would scream but there's no air in her lungs.

He rears back again, more slowly now. Trying to hang on, stay on his feet. Very little left. Drenched with sweat and blood.

Margaret seizes the moment, SHOVES her knife into his RIBS. He reacts reflexively, JAMMING his knife between her spine and right shoulder blade. She emits a SILENT HOWL, goes limp.

He drops her to the ground. The air RUSHES back into her lungs. Her breathing is labored - her lung punctured.

A knife protrudes from David's side. It's deep. He regards it with bafflement. Then he looks at Margaret, on the soiled carpet, GASPING, knife embedded in her back.

DAVID
Let's be quiet now... and think.
We'll... do some thinking...

She starts to CRAWL to him across the carpet. Pulling herself forward with her arms, like a tarantula.

DAVID (CONT'D)
No. Maggie. Please. No more... we
need to... the hospital...
together... we can... a story... it
doesn't have to be over...

Margaret stops at his feet. She gently placing her left hand on David's foot. A tender gesture of apology, submission.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(crying)
Oh God.... somebody hurt you... but
I'll save you... We can be a family--

She GRIPS his ankle suddenly, TIGHTLY, throws her right hand over her shoulder and YANKS the knife from her back. In one continuous motion, she DRAWS THE KNIFE ACROSS THE BACK OF HIS ANKLE, slicing the Achilles tendon like a rubber band.

David SCREAMS and TUMBLES halfway onto the bed. Margaret swiftly plunges her knife THREE TIMES into his thigh.

He slides off the bed, onto the floor. It's an ungodly mess: blood everywhere. The room suddenly smells of fresh excrement.

David, replete with new, wet holes, lies still. He's conscious, but too weak and wounded to move much. Certainly to stand. He keeps his watery eyes fixed on Margaret.

She's on her knees, holding the knife. Losing blood.

DAVID (CONT'D)
...say something. Talk to me. I'm
bleeding. Please. Talk to me.

She stares, dead-faced, like she may pass out.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You're killing him. You're
murdering your own son. God, it
stinks. It stinks in here...

She shakes off a blackout, staggers to her feet, to the TELEPHONE. She strips the cord from the phone and the wall.

She returns to David, drops to her knees, landing next to his mutilated leg. She sets down her knife, grabs his wrists, wraps the PHONE CORD around them. He barely puts up a fight. He speaks slowly, weakly, through the pain, slurring.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You're a murderer.... Baby killer.
He was so wrong about you... Hates
you. You're a terrible mother.

WHEEZING, she ties his wrists tightly to the BEDPOST.

MARGARET
(soft, hoarse)
I'm a good mother.

DAVID
If I die, he dies.

MARGARET
Then I'll do it while you're alive.

She finishes. David lies on the carpet, arms above his head, bound to the bed. Consciousness starting to slip.

Margaret draws as much oxygen as she can, then SWINGS her leg over him, straddling. She takes hold of the knife jutting from his side, PULLS IT OUT. David GASPS and starts QUIETLY SOBBING. The GUSHING wound adds to the puddle on the floor.

She positions herself over his torso, unbuttons his shirt.

DAVID
Please don't.

With the knife, she SAWS down the front of his undershirt.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It's not my fault... I just did
what you wanted...

She RIPS opens the v-neck, exposing David's chest and abdomen, wet with sweat and blood. She adjusts the knife in her hand.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Your happiness is more important
than anything...

Margaret THRUSTS the blade into David as hard as she can, just below the sternum, creating a GUSHING WOUND. He makes a CHOKING sound as blood leaks from his mouth across his cheek. His eyes are still open. He keeps trying to talk.

DAVID (CONT'D)
...I would've done anything...

She holds tightly to the submerged knife and, with a mighty effort, begins working it downward, inch by inch. His voice is getting softer and softer. He SHIVERS convulsively.

DAVID (CONT'D)
...I came back... I came back...

She battles to form a deep incision down David's abdomen. The work of cutting David seems to lend her renewed strength.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Because... I see you... Maggie... I
see you.

He goes silent. Clinging tightly to consciousness, she works the incision down through David's navel. It's a godawful mess.

A tiny little RATTLE, then David is motionless, silent. Dead.

Margaret registers this, discards the knife. A sudden urgency. She doesn't have much time.

She touches the wound with her right hand, pressing her fingertips into the gash, working them inside. Her HOARSE, LABORED BREATHING mixes with the MOIST SOUNDS of Margaret's digits penetrating David's belly.

After some digging, she's knuckle-deep. She gives a couple of good pulls to the right, opening the wound some. Then she digs in with her left hand. Soon she's got a strong, two-handed grip on either side of the expanding wound.

She stops, holding onto the walls of the cut. She rests her head on David's chest, closes her eyes, summoning the will.

Margaret sits up and, with all her strength, JERKS THE WOUND WIDE OPEN, SCREAMING as she does so.

She stops. Now the wound looks like a HUGE, GAPING MAW. It's not pretty, but it allows access to David's insides.

She dives in, extracting entrails by the handful and tossing them aside. It's tough going, but she's possessed. She manages, chunk by sloppy chunk.

She's CLOSE. She can feel it. She's a MACHINE, clearing the guts. She GRUNTS; her veins BULGE; she gnashes her teeth. She's not recognizably human any more.

Progress. Progress. Margaret yanks out a big piece of meat.

Then she HALTS. She sees something.

She sits up, retracts her coated hands from the body. Her face softens. A vague sense of wonder. Something ILLUMINATES her face dimly and warmly from below.

Margaret's eyes glisten and fill with IMMENSE PRIDE.

A little smile. Her face is quite still, yet water GUSHES from her eyes, carving skinny pathways through the drying blood on her cheeks. Her rasping voice is barely audible.

MARGARET

Hey, you.

CUT TO: OH shot. Margaret kneels over David's body, splayed open, surrounded by miscellaneous viscera.

In the chasm in David's middle lies a THREE WEEK-OLD BABY BOY, asleep. He's all bloody, and he's MISSING TWO FINGERS from his right hand, but he's breathing and resting calmly. Looking damn good, all things considered.

Margaret marvels at her boy, every inch the loving mother.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Nice to see you again.

Margaret leans in and collects the baby from David's body.

She holds him close. He fusses a little bit, wakes up.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
I saved you. I saved you.

She lovingly tends to her baby son. Blood pours down her back. The sounds of Sixth Ave faintly audible in the distance.

FADE OUT.

INT. ABBIE'S ROOM - DAY

Abbie finishes packing a bag. Other LUGGAGE sits on the floor, as well as a few boxes. She looks at the bags, her room, nervous. She's done.

She collects herself, walks into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY / KITCHEN / MARGARET'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Abbie pauses. SOUNDS of activity in the kitchen.

MAN (O.S.)
Abbie?

ABBIE
Yeah.

Abbie enters the kitchen. Peter is there, wearing an apron that says 'World's Okayest Cook', preparing food clumsily.

PETER
Can you ask your mom how many eggs
she wants in her omelette?

ABBIE
Sure.

Abbie turns to leave.

PETER

Sure you don't want any? Going to
be scrumptious!

ABBIE

No, thanks.

Abbie heads down the hall to her mother's bedroom. She enters, stands near the doorway.

ABBIE (CONT'D)

Mom.

ANGLE ON: Margaret sits in a comfortable chair. She holds a sleeping Ben, smartly dressed in a onesie and little hat.

Margaret's face and arms are covered in BRUISES and SCRATCHES. She sits up awkwardly, her breathing strenuous. The BANDAGE over the stitches in her back juts out from under her collar. She looks tired, but content.

ABBIE (CONT'D)

I'm all packed.

MARGARET

(smiles)

Okay, smidgen.

Her voice is gravely and soft due to the injuries. Abbie hovers, seems to want to say something more.

ABBIE

Um, Peter wants to know how many eggs you want.

Margaret looks admiringly at her daughter.

MARGARET

Do you want to hold him?

ABBIE

Okay.

Abbie walks to Margaret, collects Ben. She stands, holding him a bit awkwardly. He wakes partially, squirms a little.

ABBIE (CONT'D)

Hey, little fatass. Hey, you.

Abbie touches his nose, cheeks. He reaches up with his right hand and wraps his three remaining fingers around her finger.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
(whispered shout)
The claw! *The claaaaw!*

Margaret smiles.

Mom. I-- ABBIE (CONT'D)

PETER (O.S.)
All you guys have is mozzarella! Is that okay? I guess it'll have to be...

Margaret rolls her eyes at the silly man. Abbie smiles.

MARGARET
What is it?

MARGARET
What, baby?

ABBY
I want you to know. I don't feel
scared anymore. You made everything
okay. So I'm not scared.

MARGARET
(gratified)
C'mere.

Abbie approaches.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Closer.

Margaret makes a fist, KISSES it. Then she gently rubs the fist into Abbie's cheek, punching her with the kiss.

ABBY
Thanks, mom.

Margaret is happy. She watches Abbie bounce Ben. It's perfect.

DOLLY IN on Margaret's face. Her expression is one of love and contentment. Then a flash of consternation in her eyes. A touch of distant panic, as if something in the very back of her mind is softly knocking on the door, trying to tell her something, but she can't quite grasp it.

Awareness seeps into Margaret's consciousness. Her eyes widen. Something frightening, or something glorious. Overwhelming.

Margaret inhales tremulously and HOLDS HER BREATH.

CUT TO BLACK