



Jellyfish Days

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OVER BLACK:

The quiet chatter of CHILDREN builds in volume until--

TEACHER (V.O.)
Class! Settle down.

INT. BALLET STUDIO - DAY

Inside the sun-streaked studio, a dozen EIGHT AND NINE YEAR OLDS - mostly Girls, a few Boys - chatter. At the head of the room, we find their TEACHER (early 30s), exasperated--

TEACHER
Children, take your seats, please!
We need to move on to your solos.

The Children GROAN. We scan the room, landing on an intensely focused ballerina. This is **MADDIE** (8), shorter and a bit more plump than the others. She warms up on the barre, intense focus belying her natural naivety.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
I believe we ended last rehearsal
right before Madelyne's solo.

Maddie's ears perk up. She turns to her Teacher, nervous.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
That okay, Maddie? You ready?

Maddie exhales, closes her eyes. Nerves getting to her. Her friend **JULIAN** (8) leans over, whispering into her ear.

JULIAN
You got this.

TEACHER
We can always push to next week if--

Looking to Julian, Maddie finds the boost of confidence.

MADDIE
I'm ready.

The other Dancers take their seats. They whisper amongst each other. We pick up an audible SNICKER or two. Maddie seems to not notice, though Julian does. He bites his tongue.

Maddie moves to the center of the room. She performs a couple awkward pliés as her Teacher fiddles with the stereo. After a moment, the opening instrumental notes of "**No One Is Alone**" from *Into the Woods* fill the room.

The lights dim and Maddie begins her routine. She's not what you would call a natural. Some stilted movements. An off-balance jump. More muffled laughter amongst the others.

But that fades away as Maddie disappears into her own private world. With our focus on her, Maddie is a premiere dancer. She pirouettes with a swan's grace. This is her happy place.

Slowly, a rhythmic BEEPING accentuates the piece. It grows louder, though Maddie doesn't notice. The beeping comes to a HALT as we hear a door open. Maddie STUMBLES to the ground.

She looks to her Teacher, who speaks in hushed tones with a WOMAN, mid-30s, dark red hair. This is DEB, Maddie's mother. The Teacher and Deb both gaze at Maddie, Deb's face streaked with tears. Maddie and Julian exchange a confused glance.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

We find a distressed Maddie in a harshly lit hospital waiting room, now wearing a jacket over her pink tights. Julian sits next to her, trying to lighten the mood. JULIAN'S MOM (30s) paces nearby, nervously texting.

JULIAN

(grabbing Maddie's hand)

It'll be okay, Mads. Remember when
I was in the hospital last year?
They ran a bunch of tests but then
there was nothing wrong with me!

MADDIE

But he's already been here twice
this year.

JULIAN

That doesn't mean--

JULIAN'S MOM

(harshly)

Julian. That's enough.

The waiting room door swings open, grabbing attention. Deb stands with a DOCTOR. She's barely keeping it together.

MADDIE

Is Daddy okay?

Deb looks to the Doctor, unsure what to say.

DEB

He... uhh-- Your dad wants to see
you, honey.

Maddie reluctantly lets go of Julian's hand as she goes to her mother.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Deb and Maddie enter the room to find **STEVEN** (early 40s), Maddie's father, hooked up to a dialysis machine. Steven looks gaunt, pale. Gravely ill.

MADDIE

Daddy?

Steven opens his eyes to see Maddie, a painful smile.

STEVEN

(struggling)

Come here for a second.

Maddie is scared, not sure what to say. She hugs Deb tightly.

DEB

It's okay, sweetie.

Not wanting to let go, Deb urges Maddie forward. Maddie walks to her dad, taking his hand. Steven barely holds it together. He swallows, lump in his throat. Intense look about him.

STEVEN

Don't piss it all away like I did.

Steven tightens his grip on Maddie's hand.

MADDIE

Daddy, you're hurting me.

Tears come to Maddie's eyes. She's scared.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Daddy, stop!

DEB

Steven!

STEVEN

You've got more than I ever did.

Don't let it go to waste. Please.

Do better than me.

Maddie rips her hand from her father, DARTS out the door.

INT. WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maddie barely makes it into the room before COLLAPSING to the ground in a sobbing heap. Julian rushes to her side, pulling her into a HUG.

He draws Maddie closer, taking her hand in his. We PUSH IN on Julian's hand holding Maddie's. Her sobs bleed into a LOUD, MECHANICAL BUZZING as we cut to--

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INT. TATTOO PARLOR - NIGHT

Tight on two hands holding each other.

MADDIE (O.S.)
Oww! FUCK!

We realize the loud buzzing was emanating from a TATTOO GUN. It puts the finishing touches on an elegant and minimal design of a DOVE FLYING FREE on a woman's inner wrist. The GLOVED HAND of a TATTOO ARTIST wipes away a trickle of blood.

On the chair, we see **MADDIE** (now early 20s) is on the receiving end of the tattoo. Maddie's hard-headed and stubborn, a boxer in the body of a ballerina.

Holding her hand, **JULIAN** (now early 20s) smiles at her, reassuring. He's got big rich-kid-who-doesn't-want-to-seem-rich energy.

Julian's wrist is wrapped in Saniderm, beneath which can be made out a freshly finished tattoo - one of an OPEN BIRDCAGE.

Maddie looks from her tattoo to his, a smile coming to her face. She winces in pain.

TATTOO ARTIST
Just a second...

Maddie closes her eyes. CLICK. The buzzing stops. Maddie gulps from a water bottle. She inspects her tattoo, pleased.

MADDIE
Pretty cool, huh?

Julian places his wrist next to hers.

JULIAN
Looks even better as a companion piece.

The Tattoo Artist rolls his eyes, which Julian catches.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
Hey, I saw that.

TATTOO ARTIST

Sorry, dude, but... it's a cage.
Little possessive if you ask me.

Julian looks to Maddie, who shrugs it off.

MADDIE

It's not a cage. It's home.

TATTOO ARTIST

Whatever you say. All couples' tats
are a kiss of death anyway.

JULIAN

Hey. We've been together since we
were, like, eight, man.

TATTOO ARTIST

Okay, well... that's just weird.

MADDIE

C'mon. Where's the romantic in you?

The Tattoo Artist rolls up his sleeve, showing off TWO WOMEN'S NAMES that have both been ~~crossed out~~.

JULIAN

Okay, well... that's just sad.

INT. JULIAN AND MADDIE'S LOFT - NIGHT

AN INDUSTRIAL-SIZED DOOR spills light into a spacious and trendy loft. Downtown Los Angeles beyond the window. Abstract sculptures around the room. Maddie stumbles in, followed by Julian, who stops her from falling.

JULIAN

Whoa. You okay there?

MADDIE

I think I'm drunk.

JULIAN

Best way to deal with the pain.

Maddie looks into Julian's eyes, smitten.

MADDIE

It's not that weird we've been a
couple as long as we have, right?

In answer, Julian leans in closer, kissing her. Maddie wraps her arms around him. He picks her up, passion escalating--

INT. JULIAN AND MADDIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Maddie and Julian's new tattoos mingle together. The peace is broken as Maddie BOLTS AWAKE. She looks to the time: 7:45 AM.

MADDIE
Shit! I'm late.

Julian groans, putting the pillow over his ears.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
I knew getting drunk on a work
night was a bad idea!

Maddie hops up, disrobing and changing into HOSPITAL SCRUBS. Sprays her hair with dry shampoo. Looks in the mirror, eyeing herself. Bags under her eyes. Spots her still wrapped tattoo.

Thinking again, she takes her shirt off, putting a long sleeve undershirt on then getting back into her scrubs. She leans down to kiss Julian on the forehead before darting out.

EXT. DOHRNII MEDICAL - DAY

Paper bag lunch in hand and bag over her shoulder, Maddie scurries toward a small clinic. A sign reads **DOHRNII MEDICAL**. As Maddie nears the entrance, a group of PROTESTORS come into view. They hold signs with anti-Dohrnii slogans, reading things like: *DOHRNII = SOROS INC.*

KRISTA (O.S.)
(yelling into megaphone)
*What they do is unnatural. It is
evil! It's a plot to destroy our
country and our people!*

Maddie sighs. *This again?* We see the woman with the megaphone - **KRISTA** - 30s, thin, vitriolic, wears a crucifix necklace.

KRISTA (CONT'D)
It's not too late. Step away from
your life of sin and indecency.
Join the side of the light!

INT. REC ROOM - DAY

ELDERLY PATIENTS sit around playing chess and sucking down liquid meals. Maddie makes her way through the room. Nothing about this looks unnatural or evil.

She stops in front of a MAN in his 80s. He's frail, hunched over, perpetually pissed off. This is **GRAMPS**, as Maddie so affectionately calls him.

MADDIE
And how are we today, Gramps?

Maddie's softer in this environment, leading with kindness.

GRAMPS
Same shit, different day.

Gramps huffs as Maddie hands him a cup of pills.

MADDIE
Special delivery.

Annoyed, Gramps washes down the pills with a chug of OJ.

GRAMPS
I only take these for you, ya know?

MADDIE
You doing something for me. *Right.*

Gramps rolls his eyes. Hungover, Maddie rubs at her temples.

GRAMPS
What's wrong with you?

MADDIE
Oh, just-- not feeling my best
today. I'm sure I look like death.

GRAMPS
Oh, please. You look as young as
the day I met you. You always do.
(grumpier)
It's infuriating.

Maddie looks to her tray of pills, work to do.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Maddie sits at a lunch table in the clinic's kitchen, unwrapping her humble looking sandwich. Two fellow NURSES, **AMY** and **LISA**, sit down next to her, already mid-conversation.

AMY
--I just wish I could grab one of
them and ask, "When the hell is the
last time you got laid?"

LISA

I think conservative people have more sex than you think.

AMY

Please. You know that's the "strictly for procreation, my husband's closeted" crowd.

Maddie continues eating her sandwich, not joining in.

AMY (CONT'D)

What do you think, Maddie? You think those wackos outside lead healthy sex lives when they're not warning us we're going to hell?

MADDIE

(mouth full)

I try to think of their personal lives as little as possible.

(swallowing)

I actually feel kinda bad for them.

AMY

Yeah, well, one of them called me a "cunt" this morning so I'm not as forgiving. You know, it's not like we even *perform* the procedure.

As she wipes her hands, Lisa spots Maddie's fresh dove tattoo on her wrist. She grabs Maddie's hand.

LISA

Ooh. Look who just got fresh ink!

Maddie pulls her hand back, wincing.

MADDIE

First of all, oww.

AMY

How cute. So, you wanna go out with us tonight, show off the new look?

MADDIE

Can't. Dance practice.

Amy and Lisa roll their eyes.

LISA

I don't know how you do it. After eleven hours here, my mind is *dead*.

MADDIE
Life is short. Can't waste it.

Lisa and Amy exchange a look, they've heard that before. Maddie smirks, her friends know her well. Amy leans in--

AMY
You know, it might *not* be as short as you think. I heard they're adding the procedure to our health plan. For the top nurses, at least.

That gets to Maddie, she freezes, dropping her sandwich.

MADDIE
No way.

AMY
Just a rumor.

LISA
I'll believe that when I see it.

We push in on Maddie, lost in her own world.

INT. DOHRNII MEDICAL - EXAM ROOM - AFTERNOON

A picture of a JELLYFISH on the wall has text beneath it reading: *LIVE LIFE ON YOUR TERMS*. Maddie takes the blood pressure of a PATIENT (male, 30s). He peruses literature.

PATIENT
Okay, so... I'll be part jellyfish?

MADDIE
Not exactly. We perform a bone marrow transplant that edits your genes and fuses your cellular structure with a DNA strand of the jellyfish species *Turritopsis dohrnii* - the "immortal jellyfish"--

PATIENT
Yeah, I've seen the commercials.
But-- I won't be immortal, will I?

MADDIE
Well, no. But like the *Turritopsis dohrnii*, your cells will age and de-age multiple times before resuming their normal cycle - presumably quadrupling to quintupling your lifespan.

PATIENT

You don't know how long I'll live?

MADDIE

We can't say for sure since the decelerant transplant hasn't been around for that long, but studies show it'll be a significant increase. *Very significant.*

The Patient exhales, still a bit nervous.

PATIENT

I'd be less freaked if it weren't for the whole sterilization thing.

MADDIE

That's a government mandate. We're trying to get around it, but for now, they've decided if you're going to lengthen your life to such a drastic degree, you could contribute to overpopulation if you're left fertile.

PATIENT

(whispering)

Do you ever think maybe this *is* all a big conspiracy after all - a way to mass sterilize the whole world?

MADDIE

The whole world isn't getting the procedure. And if you already have one child, you can still get it--

PATIENT

Well, I don't. My wife and I... I guess none of this bothered you when you went through it.

MADDIE

Oh, I... haven't. You're lucky this is an option for you.

(spinning it)

Look at it this way. Think about the craziest dream you've ever had, even as a kid. Now think about what it would be like to actually have the time to drop everything tomorrow and go do it. *This* gives you that time.

(lost in her own head)

Like...

(MORE)

MADDIE (CONT'D)
 For once you don't even have to
 worry about death because it's so
 far away--

SPLAT! The Patient turns to the sound of the noise as AN EGG hits the window, yolk spreading. He shakes his head.

PATIENT
 I'm sorry. I can't do this.

Maddie watches him go. She walks to the window, looking out angrily at the Protestors, specifically Krista, before quickly shutting the blinds.

Upset, she slightly massages her chest, wincing in mild pain.

In the hallway, Amy walks by, noticing Maddie alone.

AMY
 (peeking her head in)
 You lose another one? Remember what
 I said about the top nurses...

As Amy continues on her way, we PUSH IN on Maddie's hand on her chest.

INT. EAST SIDE DANCE - NIGHT

A group of DANCERS (20s) chatters on as they warm up. An exhausted Maddie pops into the room, wearing street clothes. The group's INSTRUCTOR notes her appearance and her lateness. A fellow dancer, **VICTORIA** (early 20s), smirks.

VICTORIA
 Maddie. So glad you could join us.

Maddie rolls her eyes, turning to her Instructor.

MADDIE
 Sorry, uhh, family thing. I just--

INSTRUCTOR
 Just get ready.

INT. CHANGING ROOM - NIGHT

Maddie quickly undresses and changes into her leotard and tights. She's far from the chubby kid we saw in the opening, her body muscular from years and years of practice.

And once she's in this outfit, all signs of exhaustion dissipate. She's completely, utterly focused.

INT. EAST SIDE DANCE - LATER

The Dancers sit on the floor at attention. Their Instructor paces in front of them.

INSTRUCTOR

Ladies, we have some exciting news.
Looks like East Side Dance's word
is spreading - we've gained the
attention of the *Skyview Theatre*.

Hushed chatter erupts at that.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

They need a female lead for their
upcoming production of *La Sylphide*.

The chatter becomes a palpable buzz. The Instructor clears her throat, silencing the Dancers.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

So, not to put you on the spot but
today... you'll be auditioning for
the company's director - my dear
friend, Mister Ford.

The Instructor motions to **MR. FORD** (late 40s/early 50s) - a balding, well-dressed, and serious-looking man - sitting in the corner of the room. He stands, addressing the group.

MR. FORD

Good evening. I'm sorry this is so
last minute. Seems our previous
lead got an opportunity on Broadway
and, well, you know dancers.

The group laughs nervously amongst themselves. Maddie looks to Mr. Ford, suddenly seized with a look of recognition.

MR. FORD (CONT'D)

But that also tells you a thing or
two about our company. You start
with us and you're in Manhattan in
a year. Which I like to think makes
up for the shit pay--

Mr. Ford notices Maddie. That same look of recognition. He stumbles on his words for a second. He composes himself.

MR. FORD (CONT'D)

--just, uhh... give it your best.

Victoria notices, nudging Maddie. A questioning look.

MADDIE
 Oh... *family friend.*

INT. EAST SIDE DANCE - LATER

Maddie in the center of the room, trying to calm her nerves. The Instructor queues up Maddie's go-to - "No One Is Alone".

As the song starts, Maddie gracefully gets into her routine. She's come a long way since she was a girl, and she takes this immensely seriously. The only issue is she finds it hard not to gaze at Mr. Ford.

EXT. EAST SIDE DANCE - NIGHT

Maddie exits the studio, disappointed, bag thrown over her shoulder. As she rounds the corner, she spots Mr. Ford smoking a cigarette. She tries to sneak past him, until--

MR. FORD
 Maddie.

MADDIE
 (sighs, caught)
 Oh, hey...
 (teasing)
Mister Ford.

MR. FORD
 What can I say? Once you go bald,
 you're officially a *mister*.

Mr. Ford drops his cigarette, putting it out with his heel. Maddie awkwardly looks around, wanting to get out of there.

MR. FORD (CONT'D)
 You, uhh, you've really improved.

MADDIE
 Got my ten-thousand-hours in.

MR. FORD
 Yeah, well, it shows. So... are you interested? We have to narrow down the group before we make a decision, of course.

MADDIE
 (surprised)
 Of course I'm interested. But do you really think I was the best in there? *Better than Victoria?*

MR. FORD

Knowing you... your nerves got to you. So I'm not judging you on this audition alone. I know you can do it.

MADDIE

Look, it's not that I don't want to, but...

She looks to him apprehensively.

MR. FORD

You want to earn it yourself. You really haven't changed. Well... earn it tomorrow.

Maddie nods. She and Mr. Ford part with a forced smile.

INT. LOFT - NIGHT

Maddie enters to find Julian hard at work on a late dinner. She drops her bags, PLOPPING down on the couch, spent.

MADDIE

I... think it might be time to give up dancing.

Julian sets his oven mitts down, concerned.

JULIAN

What? Why would you say that?

MADDIE

You're the artist around here. Someone has to work, and right now, I'm not able to give it my all.

JULIAN

You're the artist, Maddie. There's a reason I'm the one who gave up dancing. I don't understand why you don't just quit your job.

MADDIE

Because I don't want to live off your parents! It makes me sick that we don't pay rent here.

JULIAN

It's not a big deal.

MADDIE

It is to me. Because then what? We have to have two-and-a-half kids, a dog, and a white picket fence, all before thirty? That's the deal for taking their handout, right?

JULIAN

Maddie, come on...

Julian sits beside her, comforting.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

The whole point of not paying rent is so you can focus on dancing. What's going on with you?

Maddie shakes her head. He doesn't get it.

MADDIE

It's just... at work today, they said the top nurses might get the procedure added to our care package. For free. So, maybe I should be focusing my attention there right now. And then dancing can be... something I do later.

Julian pulls back at the sound of that.

JULIAN

What about... what about *kids*? I mean, I'm not saying we need to focus on that *now*, but--

MADDIE

Look, it's probably nothing anyway. Just a rumor. We can talk about it if and when it becomes a reality.

Maddie closes her eyes. Julian's not sure what to say beyond--

JULIAN

Okay.

Maddie exhales, lightly touching her chest and grimacing. Julian notices, though he chooses not to say anything.

EXT. DOHRNII MEDICAL - DAY

Trying to ignore the protestors, Maddie paces to the entrance. But she's--

--SMACKED in the face with a DEAD JELLYFISH. Stunned and disgusted, Maddie wipes the wet slime off her face. She turns to see Krista, the protest leader, eyes full of hate.

INT. DOHRNII MEDICAL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A television HUMS as it turns on. Standing next to it is **JIN**, an intimidating Doctor and Maddie's boss. Maddie and the other **NURSES** sit and watch as Jin presses play. An angry **CABLE NEWS HOST** addresses the camera--

CABLE NEWS HOST (ON TV)
 ...if we were meant to live
 hundreds of years, we would live
 hundreds of years. The fact is
 Dohrnii wants to CHANGE YOU into
 something unnatural. They, along
 with their government backers, want
 to take away your right to have
 children. Yet, for all their
 intellectual posturing, it's a
 procedure they won't even get
 themselves.

A photoshopped image of a man with jellyfish tentacles for arms appears, text beneath reading: "DON'T GIVE UP YOUR HUMANITY". Jin pauses the segment, sighing.

JIN
 You get the point. We're this
 week's favorite target. And there's
 some unfortunate truth to it - most
 of us haven't gotten the procedure.

Lisa taps Maddie's leg - *this is it.*

JIN (CONT'D)
 I know there've been rumors, but
 now our hand feels forced. We are
 adding the decelerant transplant to
 your health plans. Starting
 immediately.

Some cheers from the nurses. Amy and Lisa high five.

JIN (CONT'D)
 We strongly recommend you take
 advantage of this. *Strongly*. Your
 spouses will be added in six months
 time as well.

Maddie takes this in, clearly full of anxiety. Lisa leans over, giddy with excitement.

LISA

Good thing Forrest and I waited on
having a second! How excited is
Julian gonna be?

Off Maddie, wondering that same thing. Again, she grabs at
her chest, in pain but not wanting to share it.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - EVENING

Maddie's still preoccupied, her face betraying the thoughts
running through her mind.

MR. FORD (O.S.)

Stop, stop.

We see now she's in the second round of auditions - and she
just fucked up. Music cuts out, the other DANCERS eye her,
especially Victoria. Mr. Ford puts his head in his hands.

MR. FORD (CONT'D)

Maddie, can we chat?

EXT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - MOMENTS LATER

Maddie and Mr. Ford stand outside the theater. He touches her
arm, wanting to be comforting.

MR. FORD

What's going on with you?

MADDIE

(eyeing his hand)

I just have a lot on my mind.

MR. FORD

You're in the second round. If you
really want this, you need to--

MADDIE

Maybe you didn't pick the best
dancers.

Mr. Ford pulls his hand back, crossing his arms.

MR. FORD

Again with the self-sabotage. I
picked you for a reason. I see
something in you I don't see in the
others. But I need you to see it.

MADDIE

I did see it! I just-- I don't know if I can do this with you. I was doing great before you got here.

MR. FORD

All that... It's ancient history. Now I'm just a guy in a position of minor prominence in the local theatre scene.

(leaning closer)

This is a big opportunity, Maddie. I know how long you've worked to get here. *So give it your all.* If you want to rehearse more, my family's out of town this weekend. I'm around.

Off Maddie, wondering if she really can do this.

INT. JULIAN AND MADDIE'S LOFT - NIGHT

Julian works with a HAND TORCH, soldering a TITANIUM RING. He looks up at the sound of the door, turning the torch off.

Maddie strides in, collapsing on the couch again. Julian waits for her to acknowledge him, then tries to hide his annoyance when she doesn't--

JULIAN

Dinner's cold.

MADDIE

Really long day.

JULIAN

Aren't they all?

She springs up, trying to force renewed energy.

MADDIE

I'll heat it up.

INT. JULIAN AND MADDIE'S LOFT - LATER

Maddie and Julian sit across from each other, warmed up pizza in front of them. Maddie eats ravenously.

MADDIE

Hey, so...

(swallowing)

(MORE)

MADDIE (CONT'D)
 They made a big announcement at
 work today about the... the thing.
 It's on our medical plan now.
 Spouses six months later.

JULIAN
 (avoiding her gaze)
 What do you want me to say to that?

MADDIE
 So we can't even discuss it?

JULIAN
 You're right, let's discuss.

Maddie continues eating, buying herself some time.

MADDIE
 Look, yes, the procedure does sound
 interesting to me. I love you,
 Julian. I wanna do this *with you*.
 Experience everything life has to
 offer. *You and me*.

JULIAN
 You say that, Maddie, but it seems
 like you want to experience
 everything *except* having kids with
 me. I mean, why do you want to do
 this *right now*?

MADDIE
 I don't know how long we're gonna
 have this opportunity for free.
 Would your parents really pay for
 us to do this later? I can't afford
 it. And what if those wackos are
 successful? What if it becomes
 illegal and we lose our chance?
 (getting emotional)
 You don't get it. Seeing my dad,
 there's this-- *shadow of death*.
 Every day, I'm scared it's coming
 back. For you. For my mom. For me.

Silence follows.

JULIAN
 I hear you, Maddie. But I thought
 we both wanted to start a family,
 the kind neither of us had. I'm not
 crazy, right? We talked about that.
 (MORE)

JULIAN (CONT'D)

That you would dance for a while
and when the time was right we'd
start a family.

MADDIE

That's what I'm talking about.
There's all these strings attached
to living here for free. Plus,
like, what if we got married and we
found out I couldn't have kids?
You'd divorce me?

JULIAN

Of course not. But I know you can,
because you were *already pregnant!*
And you told me when we-- when--

Julian tears up, struggling to get the words out.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

You said we would have kids later.

This subject is clearly emotional for Maddie too. She touches her chest, anxiety getting to her. Before Julian can say anything about it--

MADDIE

You can't hold me to a promise I
made when I was a teenager.

JULIAN

Well, I don't feel any differently now. I want kids. More than one. I don't know if any amount of time is going to replace that for me. I'm asking you to consider what I want.

MADDIE

Fine. But does that mean you're gonna consider what I want too? I don't want to be like my dad - I don't want my life to run out before I'm ready.

JULIAN

I understand that. But I'm a little concerned your dad is dictating your life from beyond the grave.

(emotion rising)

You know, it's not like he was unfairly struck down in his prime, *the guy drank himself to death*. It was his own fault.

MADDIE

That is not true! His liver failed--

JULIAN

Yeah, how do you think that happened, Maddie? Maybe your mom is too "nice" to tell you, but you should know the truth about the guy you base your whole life around.

Way over the line. Maddie stands, rushing out the door and slamming it behind her.

Julian stares forward, regretful. He closes his eyes, swiping the plates off the table in anger.

EXT. SUBURBS - NIGHT

The shattering plates melt into an INTENSE PATTER OF RAIN. Maddie walks through it, her sopping hair sprawled onto her shoulders, as she approaches one of the cookie cutter homes. She knocks repeatedly on the door, until--

--Mr. Ford answers, surprised to see her there.

MR. FORD

What-- what're you doing here?

A loaded silence. Maddie grabs Ford, pulling him into her as she KISSES him hard. At first hesitant, he quickly lets it happen. They move inside as he shuts the door behind them--

INT. MR. FORD'S HOUSE - DAWN

Maddie lies in bed next to Ford, watching him sleep. Her eyes drift around the room, where she sees countless pictures of Ford's FAMILY, his WIFE and his FOUR KIDS, their smiling faces glaring at her, accusing her.

Suddenly overwhelmed by guilt, Maddie silently gets out of bed, pulling her clothes on. She rushes out of the room, and we hang back to see Ford's eyes open, watching her go.

INT. JULIAN AND MADDIE'S LOFT - MORNING

Maddie crawls back into bed with a sleeping Julian. She throws her arm around him, their tattoos mingling together, her dove returning to its home on his wrist. He groans awake.

JULIAN

...I'm sorry.

MADDIE

No, I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking
about what life is really about.

She holds up the titanium ring we saw Julian working on.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

This is what I want. With you.
(emotional)
Will you marry me?

He looks at the ring, a grin spreading across his face.

JULIAN

Sure cheaped out on the ring, huh?

Maddie playfully punches him. He grabs the ring, putting it on and kissing her. They share a smile, the picture of bliss.

Maddie pulls back, in pain. Again touching her chest.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Okay, that's not the first time
I've seen you do that.

MADDIE

Ohh-- It's nothing. I think I'm
just stressed.

JULIAN

Promise me you'll see someone about
it, okay? *Promise*?

Though she nods, there's reluctance in her eyes.

DOCTOR (PRE-LAP)

...and how long have you been
having these symptoms?

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Maddie sits on an exam table, rapping her fingers against her knee. For someone who works in the medical field, you'd think she'd feel more comfortable on this end of the conversation.

MADDIE

A couple weeks.

The DOCTOR wears a stethoscope, listening to Maddie's heartbeat. He's all-business, little bedside manner.

DOCTOR

Any family history of illness?

MADDIE

Uh, yeah, my dad. He had liver issues. That's... he died young.

DOCTOR

Alcohol related?

Maddie is taken aback by the bluntness of the question.

MADDIE

Uhh, I don't know. I think so...

The Doctor is focused as he moves the stethoscope around.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Is there anything I should be worried about?

DOCTOR

Just take a deep breath. We'll be done here in a second, then we'll run a chest X-ray on you.

MADDIE

Are you sure that's necessary?

DOCTOR

Just take a deep breath.

Maddie reluctantly complies, face now filled with worry.

INT. X-RAY ROOM - LATER

Sitting perfectly still, Maddie's eyes slightly water as she quietly stares forward. She wears a lead jacket while an X-ray is performed on her chest. Her face tries desperately to mask the severe panic inside.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Staring up at several X-rays of her chest, Maddie isn't sure what to make of it. She can't stand being here. She closes her eyes, only to see a FLASH of her father Steven on his hospital deathbed.

Maddie shakes herself out of it. She looks up to the clock, ticking impossibly slow.

Each second an eternity.

The door POPS open and in comes the Doctor.

DOCTOR

Sorry to keep you waiting, Miss Drake. What is it they say about doctors and punctuality--

MADDIE

Am I gonna be okay?

The Doctor smiles, reassuring.

DOCTOR

Straight to the point it is.
(pointing to the X-ray)
What you have is called
cardiomyopathy. That may sound like
a mouthful, but I assure you -
you're going to be okay.

Maddie finally exhales. The Doctor's words fade away as we push in on Maddie's face.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

That's not to say it's nothing.
This is rare for someone your age.
You must be under an incredible
amount of stress. It's worth
considering lifestyle changes:
reducing physical strenuousness,
cutting back alcohol consumption,
avoiding high stress situations...

Tight on Maddie's face, we CUT TO--

INT. JULIAN AND MADDIE'S LOFT - DAY - MONTAGE

-Maddie's lips tighten, forming a bright smile. Dressed to the nines, something in her eyes says she's elsewhere. A homemade sign on the wall reads, "WE'RE ENGAGED!" Julian and Maddie welcome GUESTS into the carefully decorated area.

-DEB, now fifteen years older than we last saw her, pounces on Maddie, an enormous hug between the two.

-Julian greets his PARENTS, cordial handshakes exchanged between them. Maddie rushes to his side, a forced smile.

-MOS, Julian gives a speech to the large GATHERING, everyone emotional at his words, except his parents.

-Maddie holds a BABY awkwardly as it CRIES. Julian appears, taking the baby and SOOTHING it. Maddie watches him - it's clear he's a natural at this, and it kills her to see it.

INT. JULIAN AND MADDIE'S LOFT - EVENING

Exhausted, Maddie joins Deb on the couch, the remains of the party all around them.

DEB
Where's Julian?

A loud SNORE from the bedroom answers her question.

MADDIE
I think he had a bit too much wine.

Maddie searches her mom's face for a reaction to that.

DEB
You know, your father would be
really happy for you. A little
surprised you're getting married so
young, but happy nonetheless.

Maddie smiles at that, nostalgic.

MADDIE
What do you think it was he wanted
to do? That he didn't get to?

DEB
Oh, lots of things. Travel the
world, climb mountains, skydiving,
the usual bucket list. But you
know... You were his dream, Maddie.
He just wanted to see you grow up.
That alone would've been enough.

Maddie takes that in, hiding her emotion.

MADDIE
Was he... was he an alcoholic?

Deb considers carefully what to say.

DEB
He... he did drink a lot, yes.

MADDIE
But, like, did he *die* from it?

DEB
Why are you asking me this now?

MADDIE

I just... I had a little health scare and they asked me about family history--

DEB

Health scare? What happened?

MADDIE

Nothing. That's why I said "scare". Look, I was just thinking about Dad and... Sometimes I wonder if the decelerant transplant could've...

DEB

It doesn't cure diseases, Maddie.

MADDIE

Yeah, but... *maybe.*

(summoning courage)

I was thinking about getting one. They, uhh, just added them to our health plan. You know, with all that time I could finally really go after dancing. Not that nursing wasn't a sensible backup plan. I'm not saying I regret that. Just... when I was at the doctor, I kept thinking - what if I don't get the procedure and something happens? What if it's already too late?

(stopping herself)

God, don't listen to me. I don't know what I'm saying.

DEB

How... how does Julian feel?

MADDIE

He wants kids. I mean, he says he wants me to go after my dreams, but more than anything - he wants kids. Even after what we went through...

DEB

Do you?

MADDIE

I want... *him*-- And the procedure. I want both. But I...

Deb clearly has reservations, but before she can voice them, Maddie continues, trying to force cheeriness.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Maybe I could pass mine on to you.
Then I can give you lots of
grandkids. And you could watch them
have grandchildren of their own.

Something about that overwhelms Deb, a sob bursting forth.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Mom, what's wrong?

DEB

I'm sorry. I didn't want to do this
right now. I was trying to just...
have it be your day.

(struggling)

I can't get one. Because... like I
said, it doesn't-- it doesn't cure
diseases, Maddie.

Maddie's face falls as she realizes what Deb is saying--

MADDIE

...how bad?

DEB

Stage three. Ovarian.

Maddie nods, trying to hide her feelings. For a moment, she's
REPLACED by her 8-year-old self, all of it rushing back.

DEB (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. This is your day. But I--

She's cut off by a hug from Maddie. Deb closes her eyes,
comforted by Maddie's love. But Maddie's eyes are wide open,
a thunderstorm behind them.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Maddie's lit in a soft orange glow as a WEDDING DRESS comes
over her head as if by magic. Next comes a VEIL, positioned
perfectly with her styled hair. She gazes at herself in the
mirror. Despite looking incredible, she seems unsure.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. EXAM ROOM - SAME

The dress is replaced by a hospital gown, the veil by a
surgical cap. The lighting is harsh, deep blue. Maddie looks
into the mirror as the door opens, Lisa poking her head in.

LISA
You ready?

Maddie takes a moment, wanting to answer honestly.

MADDIE
Yeah.

LISA
Julian here to drive you home?

MADDIE
He's at an art gallery opening out
of town, but I'm gonna... I'm gonna
take care of myself.

That gets to Lisa, she puts a comforting hand on Maddie's.

LISA
How about I take you home?

INT. OPERATING ROOM - LATER

Maddie lies on the operating table, ready. Anesthesia is administered, and as her eyes droop closed, we--

FADE TO BLACK.

The opening strings of "No One is Alone" begin as we CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Julian, looking handsome in a sharp suit, stands in front of a wall of greenery. A PASTOR stands by. In front of them, a small crowd of about fifty PEOPLE awaits the bride's arrival.

A huge grin spreads across Julian's face as he sees Maddie walk down the aisle. She wears an immaculate white dress, the stuff of fairy tales. She beams back at Julian.

In the crowd, Deb, now bald from chemo, tears up at the sight of her daughter on her big day.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

The song continues as the Pastor speaks MOS. Tight on Julian's face. He takes Maddie's hand, sliding on her ring.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. WEDDING VENUE - NIGHT

Julian's hand guides Maddie into the middle of the dance floor as the GUESTS watch, snapping photos. Maddie looks deeply into Julian's eyes. Again, he beams.

JULIAN

Ready to give these people a show?

Maddie nods. As Julian leads, we see them perform an incredibly well-choreographed ballroom dance. It's clear these two know what they're doing. They glide effortlessly across the dance floor, the envy of everyone in the room.

EXT. WEDDING VENUE - NIGHT

Julian and Maddie exit the venue to a crowd of Friends and Family raining rice upon them. Maddie looks exquisite. But just as a bright camera bulb FLASHES, we harshly cut to--

INT. LISA'S CAR - NIGHT

Eyes gently opening, a zoned out Maddie stares out at the city as Lisa drives. Maddie takes a second to adjust to her surroundings, reality setting in.

LISA

She awakens. How are you feeling?

Maddie blinks, breathing deep.

MADDIE

Uhh... the same, I guess?

LISA

It takes a while to set in.

Maddie winces in pain, letting out a small grunt.

LISA (CONT'D)

Yeah, expect a little bit of pain this week. But you should be all better in time for the wedding.

That gets to Maddie. Lisa parks outside her apartment building. Maddie sits a second before she grabs the handle.

LISA (CONT'D)

Walk you up?

MADDIE

I think I'll manage.

LISA

You know you don't have to do
everything on your own, Maddie?

Maddie just stares back. Lisa knows her better than that.

EXT. JULIAN AND MADDIE'S LOFT - NIGHT

As Maddie does her best to walk in a straight line, she fumbles around for her keys, propping herself up against the wall. Confused, she's sure she hears the faint sound of MUSIC from inside her apartment. She opens the door--

INT. JULIAN AND MADDIE'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

--to find Julian on the other end. He drinks a glass of wine while listening to a record. He turns to see Maddie, smiling.

JULIAN

There you are!

Maddie is taken aback, wondering if she's seeing things.

MADDIE

Julian-- I thought you were out of town.

JULIAN

Ehh, I got to the airport and realized - I don't need to go to some stuffy gallery opening. You've been so busy lately, I thought-- I thought we could spent some time together this weekend. Maybe go up to the cabin?

(grabbing the wine bottle)
Should I pour you a glass?

Out of it, Maddie stares back.

MADDIE

You're supposed to be out of town.

JULIAN

Right... and I decided not to be.
(eyeing her)
Something the matter?

Maddie shakes her head, trying to straighten her composure as she walks toward Julian.

MADDIE

Oh, no. I'm fine... I just need to
use the restroom--

Maddie takes about three steps before she FAINTS, collapsing to the ground. Julian drops the bottle, rushing to her side.

JULIAN

Maddie?? Oh, God--

Julian taps at Maddie's now pale cheeks, feels for a pulse as her eyes flutter open. She exhales, totally out of it. Julian breathes a huge sigh of relief.

MADDIE

Where am I?

JULIAN

We're in our apartment. Jesus,
Maddie, what just happened?

Maddie sits up. She blinks, slowly coming back to herself.

MADDIE

It's-- it's okay. I'm okay.

Julian rushes to grab a bottle of water, handing it to Maddie. She drinks it as Julian feels her forehead.

JULIAN

God, you're burning up. Maybe we
should get you to a hospital.

MADDIE

No, no. I'm... fine.

JULIAN

Maddie, you just fainted.

MADDIE

People faint. It's no big deal.

Maddie takes a deep breath, still a little discombobulated.

JULIAN

No big deal? I've never seen you
faint before.

Julian spots BANDAGES around her waist beneath her shirt.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

What is this? What's going on?

MADDIE

Julian. I'm fine. Seriously. They said I would be a little out of it for a few days.

JULIAN

Who said that?

Nervous, Maddie realizes what she just said.

MADDIE

Oh-- nobody. I'm... just confused.

JULIAN

I'm taking you to the hospital.

MADDIE

(grabbing Julian's arm)

No... don't.

Maddie looks back, trapped. She has to tell the truth.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

I didn't wanna tell you like this.

JULIAN

Tell me what?

MADDIE

That... I'm... I got the procedure.

Julian can't muster a response, stunned into silence. He backs away from her.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

(talking fast)

There was a lot of pressure at work, and then I freaked out at the doctor. And when my mom said she was sick, I realized if I get sick, it'll be too late. It was now or never--

Dumbfounded, Julian nearly falls onto the bed. His silence is eerie, chilling Maddie. Impatient, she keeps rambling.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to do it like this. But... now you can too. And we can be with each other for practically forever. God, just say something!

JULIAN

...you can't be serious. This can't
be happening.

MADDIE

We can adopt a hundred babies if
that's what you want.

Julian exhales, trying to contain his dumbfounded fury.

JULIAN

Adoption? Really?

(anger breaking through)

What-- what the hell is wrong with
you, Maddie?!

MADDIE

We can be together for hundreds of
years now. We can do *anything*--

JULIAN

Except the one thing that I want!

MADDIE

You said you'd consider it...

JULIAN

So did you! You know what? Maybe we
are just together because we always
have been.

MADDIE

You don't mean that!

She grabs his hand, desperate.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

We're together because we went
through something. *Together*.

JULIAN

No, Maddie, *you* went through
something. I was just there.

Julian stands, running his hands through his hair.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

That *shadow* you talked about? Is it
gone now?

Maddie has no answer, tears threatening to burst free.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

I didn't think so.

And he's out the door. Maddie sits in silence, gutted. She looks to the bottle of wine leaking onto the carpet as her tears flow.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MADDIE'S CAR - DAY

Dressed in black, Maddie wipes away mascara-smeared tears. The rare appearance of a rainy LA morning outside. Through her windshield, black-clad MOURNERS approach a church.

Outside, an easel props up a PICTURE OF DEB, her red hair shining radiantly, beneath text reading: *IN MEMORIUM - DEBORAH ALICE DRAKE*. Maddie looks away, fixing her makeup in the rearview mirror.

A KNOCK on the window startles her. Maddie looks to see MR. FORD, dressed in his Sunday's finest. He offers a consoling look, points to the passenger seat. Maddie stares for a moment before unlocking the door. He takes a seat.

MR. FORD
Sorry about the rain. Certainly poetic though.

MADDIE
What're you doing here?

MR. FORD
I always loved your mom. I just wanted to... pay my respects.

It's a bit awkward, but it's clear Ford means it.

MR. FORD (CONT'D)
I was so sorry to hear she passed.
Hell of a fighter. Always was.
(off Maddie's silence)
You know we can put the audition process on hold for now if--

MADDIE
I don't wanna talk about that now.

MR. FORD
Right. That was stupid.
(exhales)
Are you okay? That's a... stupid question too, sorry.

MADDIE
 (pointing to her makeup)
 Do I look okay?

A slight smile from Ford as he really looks at Maddie.

MR. FORD
 Minus the mascara tears and all,
 you look good. You look beautiful.

Maddie and Ford look to the church, it's clear that it's time to go in. Ford puts his hand on Maddie's, comforting squeeze.

MR. FORD (CONT'D)
 I guess I should head inside.

MADDIE
 Wait--

Maddie pulls Ford's hand closer, flipping it over and pulling up his shirt sleeve to reveal on his wrist--

--the birdcage tattoo. Maddie smiles sadly at the sight.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
 Just wanted to make sure it was
 still there.

Ford looks Maddie in the eye.

MR. FORD
Forever.

Off that revelation, Ford exits the car. After a moment of composing herself, Maddie follows. We watch through the rainy window as she walks up the church steps into--

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Maddie makes her way up the aisle past the seated Mourners to Deb's open casket - and we now see her body is elderly - looking thirty years older than the last time we saw her.

As Maddie leans down to kiss Deb's forehead, we cut to--

INT. GRAMPS' HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

In her hospital scrubs, Maddie enters Gramps' room, where he's dozed off in front of a HOLOGRAPHIC TELEVISION. We get a better look at the medical equipment - for the first time noticing it's more advanced than anything from our time.

Gramps stirs from his sleep, grumpy.

GRAMPS

Just when I thought I had a moment's peace.

MADDIE

Ready for your bath?

GRAMPS

Okay, you've got my attention.

As Maddie helps Gramps remove his johnny gown, she pauses on his wrist, where we again spot the birdcage tattoo, now faded after all this time.

And with that, we get the full picture: Julian, Mr. Ford and Gramps are one in the same - we've been witnessing three different time periods in Maddie's now elongated life.

Maddie surveys Gramps' body, heartbroken at his fragility.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

We move closer to Maddie as she addresses the Mourners.

MADDIE

My mom, even if she didn't always show it, was a very positive person beneath it all. And she didn't have a lot of reason to be...

INT. JULIAN AND MADDIE'S LOFT - NIGHT

Back with Maddie after Julian walked out, she stares out at the skyline, all out of tears.

MADDIE (V.O.)

When we lost my dad, she told me it would hurt. But that life would go on. And eventually it did.

INT. GRAMPS' HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Maddie watches Gramps as he sleeps, knowing that his time is coming to an end.

MADDIE (V.O.)

I know she had this Tom Sawyer-like desire to see her own funeral.

(MORE)

MADDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 She wanted to make sure people
 showed up and they were plenty sad.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Back with Maddie and her eulogy.

MADDIE
 So even if she isn't here to see
 this - you all would have given her
 exactly what she wanted. Or maybe
 she's more like Tom Sawyer than I
 thought and she's hiding out in the
 rafters. You there, Mom?

Small laughter spreads through the room. Maddie sighs.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
 And I guess it's my duty to honor
 her memory by telling you even when
 things like this happen, things
 that *really* hurt - life will go on.
 I don't know how, but it will.

With that, the following three scenes unfold in SPLIT SCREEN--

INT. JULIAN AND MADDIE'S LOFT - NIGHT - SPLIT SCREEN

A tear-streaked Maddie marches to the bathroom, where she
DRAMATICALLY HACKS AWAY AT HER HAIR.

CHYRON: 2025

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - NIGHT - SPLIT SCREEN

In her black funeral attire, Maddie enters her mother's
 house, heading straight for the bathroom. A bottle of dye in
 her hands. She turns the faucet on and plops her head in,
DYEING HER HAIR DARK RED, a match to her mother's hair.

CHYRON: 2051

INT. MADDIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - SPLIT SCREEN

In hospital scrubs, Maddie enters the living room of a small,
 two bedroom house, walking to the bathroom. She grabs a pair
 of scissors and begins to SNIP HERSELF A SET OF BANGS.

CHYRON: 2083

This is how we'll tell things apart going forward - Short Hair Maddie in the first timeline, Red Hair Maddie in the second, and Bangs Maddie in the third.

We PUSH IN on **Short Hair Maddie** as the other two fade away.

For now, we're staying in **2025.**

Maddie's expression turns steely, and she wipes her tears away, no use for them anymore.

She exits the bathroom, her eye catching on a BOTTLE OF WINE on the kitchen counter. She saunters closer--

Maddie uncorks it, gazing at the liquid in a new way.

INT. DOHRNII MEDICAL - KITCHEN - DAY

Maddie sits with Amy and Lisa, eating her lunch voraciously. She seems totally fine. Her friends eye her.

LISA
Was everything okay after I dropped you off?

MADDIE
Yeah, why wouldn't it be?

Amy and Lisa share a glance. Uh oh.

AMY
Maddie, we, uh... we know you and Julian broke up.

MADDIE
Oh. Yeah. *It happens.* But hey, now I have more time to focus on other stuff. Actually, now I have a lot more time, am I right?

Maddie laughs alone. Her food gone, she glances to Lisa's. Disturbed, Lisa pushes her plate in Maddie's direction.

In deep denial, Maddie SHOVES a handful of fries in her mouth.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

LOUD IRRITATING MUSIC plays as Maddie downs a whiskey sour in the packed bar. Lisa and Amy's uncomfortable looks persist.

MADDIE

I'm taking a break from dancing too. It's just time to really, like, *embrace life*. Live it up, ya know? No distractions.

AMY

Right.

Maddie finally acknowledges her friend's attitudes.

MADDIE

Weren't you the ones always trying to get me to come out with you? Well... here I am!

LISA

We just want you to be okay.

MADDIE

(loudly to Bartender)
I'll be okay as soon as I get a couple more drinks--

As Maddie slaps the bar, we CUT TO--

INT. MADDIE AND JULIAN'S LOFT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Short Hair Maddie GROANS, head pounding. As her eyes open, she sees a BUSINESS BRO next to her in bed. She grimaces, extracting herself from the covers and standing. Extending her leg, Maddie nudges him. He rolls over, eyes opening.

BUSINESS BRO

(smiling)

Hi.

MADDIE

Hi. Could you, uh... please leave?

Business Bro's smile fades quickly.

INT. MADDIE AND JULIAN'S LOFT - KITCHEN - LATER

Maddie stands alone in her kitchen, drinking coffee. She compels a feeling of calm, one soon interrupted by the sight of a LETTER on the floor near the door. She furrows her brow, making her way to it. As she opens it--

JULIAN (V.O.)

Maddie, I asked my parents to let you stay a while longer so you can keep dancing and not have to worry about rent. They agreed to six months. I'll come get my things some time while you're at work.

Maddie's hand slightly trembles. She stops it, trying to keep her emotion at bay. A long silence and another sip of coffee.

INT. DOHRNII MEDICAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Maddie rushes down the hallway in her scrubs, Amy hustling to catch up to her.

AMY

Hey. You okay?

MADDIE

(annoyed)

Amy...

Amy stops Maddie, leveling with her.

AMY

Look, I get it. When me and Tom broke up, oh man... Lisa has Forrest so she doesn't understand. But if you're gonna get crazy... I want to be there. You need someone to tell you when it's too much.

Maddie betrays nothing, resuming her pace away from Amy.

MADDIE

(over her shoulder)

As long as you can keep up with me.

Amy grins, and MUSIC STARTS as we CUE LIVING IT UP MONTAGE:

INT. BAR - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Maddie and Amy participate in a SHOTSKI with two DUDES as Lisa disapprovingly looks over their shoulders. The Dudes start chatting them up, and Lisa heads for the exit.

INT. BAR - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Another night. Maddie barely clings to the barstool, drunk past the point of no return. Amy helps her toward the door.

INT. MADDIE ~~AND JULIAN~~'S LOFT - BEDROOM - MORNING - MONTAGE

Maddie stumbles out of bed, sunlight piercing her brain. Her place is a mess, takeout containers and clothes everywhere.

INT. DOHRNII MEDICAL - DAY - MONTAGE

Maddie talks to a PATIENT, clearly hungover and uninterested. From outside the room, Jin watches, concerned.

INT. BAR - NIGHT - MONTAGE

A drunk Maddie dances the night away with Amy by her side. She's frozen for a moment when she sees across the room--

--JULIAN. Emotion makes a brief appearance on her face, but when she looks again, it's just some other RANDOM GUY.

Composing herself, Maddie leans over to Amy--

MADDIE
I wanna do something crazy!

AMY
Like what?

EXT. MOUNT WHITNEY - DAY - MONTAGE

Maddie and Amy, drenched in sweat, reach the peak of Mount Whitney. A sign displays, "Elevation 14,505'". Breathing hard, Maddie produces a flask, taking a swig before offering it to Amy, who waves her off.

Maddie looks around, unsatisfied. *Not crazy enough.*

INT. AIRCRAFT - DAY - MONTAGE

Maddie and Amy stand on the edge of a plane eighteen thousand feet above the ground. Wind whips their hair all around their faces. Each has an INSTRUCTOR strapped to their back. Maddie's is right around her age, attractive and confident.

Maddie takes a deep breath as she steps off the plane, SCREAMING her head off--

INT. BATHROOM - DAY - MONTAGE

Maddie and the Instructor have aggressive sex in what appears to be the bathroom of the skydiving facility.

INT. MUSIC HALL - NIGHT - MONTAGE

A hammered Maddie screams in Amy's face as a BAND plays onstage in a dingy music hall.

MADDIE
Listen to me! Listen... We are
gonna live forever.

AMY
(whooping)
Yes! I mean, not forever, but for,
like, a really, really long time.

Maddie shakes her head, grabs Amy's face, pulling her closer.

MADDIE
No. Forever.

INT. MADDIE'S LOFT - NIGHT - END MONTAGE

Maddie and a HOT GUY smash through the door, MAKING OUT. As they make their way to the bedroom, Maddie realizes--

--at least half of the things in her apartment are gone: all of Julian's art and workspace, their record collection, a couple pieces of furniture.

And for the first time since she wiped them away, Maddie holds back tears. She runs her hand along the space where Julian used to work. Hot Guy looks on, confused.

HOT GUY
Are you okay... ?

But then Maddie's eyes jump to the kitchen, where her trusty old friend booze awaits her. She grabs the bottle, taking a large swig. An almost instant sense of calm comes over her.

Maddie grabs Hot Guy's shirt, dragging him to her bedroom.

EXT. DOHRNII MEDICAL - DAY

HUGE SUNGLASSES on her face, Maddie meanders toward the entrance, ignoring the PROTESTORS she's gotten so used to. Krista, the leader from earlier, screams into a MEGAPHONE.

KRISTA
*One, two, three, four/no jellyfish
anymore!*

The crowd joins her, chanting along. Krista spots Maddie--

KRISTA (CONT'D)

Hey, you! It's not too late to save
yourself. Best do it now before the
government shuts this place down--

This time, Maddie doesn't run. She turns, looks right at her.

MADDIE

FUCK. YOU.

She strides inside, Krista glaring after her.

MADDIE (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)

And do you have children?

INT. DOHRNII MEDICAL - EXAM ROOM - DAY

Maddie interviews a nervous YOUNG WOMAN.

YOUNG WOMAN

No, I don't have any.

Maddie jots that down as the Young Woman shifts, anxious.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

How, uh... how has this been for
you?

MADDIE

What?

YOUNG WOMAN

Like, being a jellyfish. Do you
like it?

Pausing, Maddie looks up, as if considering this for the
first time. She smiles. It's hard to tell if it's genuine.

MADDIE

Of course.

INT. MADDIE'S LOFT - NIGHT

Maddie enters her loft, exhausted after a long day, shutting
the door behind her. She flips the light on and GASP--

--Her mother, Deb, sits on the couch, waiting for her. Deb's
hair is gone from chemo, but she still looks strong.

MADDIE

Jesus, Mom! I didn't give you a key
so you can come in and scare the
shit out of me.

DEB

I ran out of options, Madelyne.

MADDIE

Madelyne? I'm in trouble, huh?

Deb sighs, already fully over Maddie's attitude.

DEB

I've texted, called. What do you
want me to do? You're icing me out.

MADDIE

I've been busy, okay?

DEB

Busy out every night? I see your
social media. Or should I say this
performance you're putting on for
Julian.

MADDIE

It's not a performance. I'm living.

Maddie paces to the fridge, pulling out a beer. Deb eyes it, choosing not to say anything. But Maddie sees the look--

MADDIE (CONT'D)

What?

DEB

I didn't say anything.

MADDIE

Can't I enjoy a drink after a long
day of work?

DEB

I didn't say anything.

MADDIE

Would you be concerned if I was
still in the dark?

DEB

Would you be drinking like this if
you were? Did it ever occur to you
that I was *protecting* you?

(changing tact)

(MORE)

DEB (CONT'D)

Look, Maddie, when people die, you--
you just talk about the good
things. You don't...

MADDIE

Well, I don't get to remember
anything good. Just him dying.

DEB

I didn't come here to fight--

MADDIE

And the reason I'm drinking after a
long day to begin with is *because*
I'm a nurse, something you
encouraged me to do.

(impersonating)

"Dancing's not a real career,
Maddie. You need a backup plan."

DEB

I'm so sorry that I wanted you to
think sensibly!

MADDIE

Think sensibly? Is that what you
told yourself when Julian and I...
when you made me go through with--

DEB

Maddie, you were *kids*! I thought I
encouraged you to do what was best
for you both...

Deb stands, eyes her exit. Maddie can't be reasoned with now.

DEB (CONT'D)

It was wrong of me to come in
without your permission. I've seen
enough of this show before to know
it's time for me to go.

MADDIE

Just tell me this, were you ever
gonna tell me the truth?

DEB

God, you want the truth so bad?!

Maddie's taken aback by her mother's anger.

DEB (CONT'D)

Your father's last words to you,
the ones you treasure so much.

(MORE)

DEB (CONT'D)

They were about drinking. He was scared you'd end up like him.

Deb looks around at the mess of Maddie's apartment.

DEB (CONT'D)

Like *this*. A drunk fool.

Maddie takes that silently.

DEB (CONT'D)

By the way, the reason I was calling, the reason I came... The first round of chemo went well, *really well*. I'm not out of the woods, but it's looking good. That's... all I wanted to tell you.

As Deb turns, we see how much that really means to Maddie. But she doesn't know how to say it. And the second Deb is out the door, the bottle is at Maddie's lips.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Maddie downs a shot, exhaling and turning to Amy. She scopes out the thin crowd, unimpressed.

MADDIE

Not a lot of talent here, huh?

AMY

It is a Wednesday night.

MADDIE

It's LA! No one has jobs. They're supposed to be partying like us.

Amy takes a gulp of her beer, summons some courage.

AMY

Look, it's been a few months of this. The partying, the drinking. It was fun at first, but...

MADDIE

Oh, great, here it comes.

AMY

What did I say when this started?

MADDIE
I don't know. Something about Tom?

Maddie flags the BARTENDER for another shot. Amy scoffs.

AMY
Fuck you, Maddie.

Maddie barely reacts, downing her shot.

AMY (CONT'D)
I'm the one who's been here. I've
been out every time you wanted to,
and what do I get for it?

MADDIE
Man, you sound like my mom now.

AMY
I said I wanted to do this so I
could tell you when it's too much.

Maddie waves the Bartender down again, ignoring Amy.

AMY (CONT'D)
Hello?

MADDIE
What? You need me to react to that?
Leave if you're gonna.

Amy grabs Maddie's hand, emotional.

AMY
It's too much, Maddie.

Maddie rolls her eyes. Amy heads for the door without a look back. The Bartender drops off Maddie's shot.

MADDIE
What do you say? Is it too much?

BARTENDER
Uh... no?

MADDIE
Exactly right, my man!

Maddie takes the shot, looking down into the glass emptily. She looks up--

MADDIE (CONT'D)
Pretty dead tonight, don't you--

She cuts herself off. The Bartender's gone. And she is alone.

INT. MADDIE'S LOFT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Maddie struggles to pull herself out of bed. She sits up, realizing her hands are shaking. Touches her chest, hurting again. She takes a deep breath... but it doesn't stop.

INT. MADDIE'S LOFT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

In her scrubs now, Maddie pours herself some coffee, hands still jittering. She takes a sip but it doesn't help.

She eyes the whiskey on the counter, thinking.

EXT. DOHRNII MEDICAL - DAY

Maddie comes around the corner, spotting the usual round of Protestors. Ugh. Krista of course shouts into her bullhorn--

KRISTA

Here she comes! Queen of profanity!

Maddie rolls her eyes, heading for the entrance, but this time Krista is emboldened, blocking Maddie from the door.

MADDIE

Can you just move?

Fire in Maddie's eyes. She pushes forward, grabbing the door handle and yanking it against Krista's forceful objections.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

What is your problem? Don't you have anything better to do?

KRISTA

There's nothing more important than stopping people from making the biggest mistake of their lives.

Maddie continues to yank, Krista tries to hold the door shut.

KRISTA (CONT'D)

Don't you realize how selfish it is, what they do here? And how selfish does that make you?!

Maddie lets go of the door, Krista stumbling back. Maddie raises her fist and *DRIVES IT INTO KRISTA'S FACE*.

Krista falls to the ground as the crowd gasps. She grabs her face, a gash above her eye bleeding profusely.

Undeterred, Maddie grabs the door handle--

INT. DOHRNII MEDICAL - CONTINUOUS

--entering the facility, only to see a SHOCKED JIN staring right back at her, having just witnessed all of that.

INT. DOHRNII MEDICAL - JIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Maddie petulantly folds her arms, sitting across from Jin.

JIN

This could open us up to a huge lawsuit. What am I supposed to do here, Maddie?

MADDIE

I'll save you the trouble. I quit.

Jin wrinkles his nose, in disbelief.

JIN

Is that-- Are you drunk?

MADDIE

No, I--

Maddie starts to deny but changes her mind. Finally she lets her guard down, and we see her in a really vulnerable place.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

You know... you could've stopped me. Why did you encourage us to do it? You could have stopped me.

JIN

I know you're going through a hard time, but there must be some reason you wanted the procedure. Don't you see how much time you have left?

It falls on deaf ears, Maddie's already out the door, into--

INT. PIROUETTE DANCE STUDIO - DAY

Maddie rushes into the studio, interrupting a rehearsal. The music cuts, and the INSTRUCTOR looks to her, concerned.

INSTRUCTOR

Maddie, I, uh, wasn't--

MADDIE

I'm back. I'm ready to be back.

Everyone looks uncomfortable. Maddie has a manic energy that feels almost scary.

INSTRUCTOR

Okay, um, suit up.

INT. PIROUETTE DANCE STUDIO - LATER

The rehearsal continues, Maddie now joining in, but... she is not cutting it. Missing moves, flailing limbs. This doesn't look at all like the dancer we've come to know..

The Instructor moves to correct her, but Maddie sees the sympathetic look on her face and it enrages her.

Without a word, Maddie turns on her heel, gathers her belongings, and leaves.

INT. BAR - DAY

Maddie plops herself on a stool, the only person in there. The BARTENDER is surprised to see her.

BARTENDER

Bit early, isn't it?

MADDIE

You want my money or not?

INT. BAR - NIGHT

As the party rages around her, Maddie's drinking takes on new form. She's hunched over, shitfaced, bitter, sad, angry, all shining through now there's no one she cares about to see it.

Done, she tosses some bills onto the bar and unsteadily rises from her stool. As she heads for the exit, her attention is caught by SOMEONE crying in a nearby booth alone. The Crier's head is down on the table, their face obscured.

Maddie considers what to do, eyes bouncing between the exit and the Crier. She decides she wants to be with someone as miserable as she is, tossing herself down into the booth.

MADDIE
Why're you crying?

The Crier lifts their head, and Maddie's stunned to see that it's KRISTA.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
YOU.

Krista immediately raises her hands--

KRISTA
Please don't hit me again.

Maddie doesn't know what to do, so she just repeats herself--

MADDIE
Why're you crying?

Krista glares skeptically at Maddie.

KRISTA
Can you just leave me alone?

Maddie shakes her head, finally finding a kindred spirit.

MADDIE
Look... I think you totally *suck*.
But... I don't have anyone either.
So why the hell are you crying?

Krista looks up at that, realizing Maddie means it. As she opens her mouth, we TIME CUT through the rest of the night:

-Krista gestures emphatically, telling a story.

KRISTA
So, turns out he was way more into conspiracy theories than he was into me, but I just wanted it to work so badly.

-Sitting closer now, Maddie pours her heart out.

MADDIE
Part of me knew he would never really consider it. But I still did it. I just... had to.

-Krista holds back tears.

KRISTA
And, like, I don't even believe any of it.
(MORE)

KRISTA (CONT'D)
 I'm forcing it all for this *moron*.
 Like, I don't even know who this
 person is I was trying to be.

-Maddie comforts Krista as she cries.

MADDIE
 Hey, this is a good thing. *We're free*. We can do anything we want.

She's trying to convince herself just as much as Krista.

-Maddie and Krista drink, all smiles now.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
 Every friendship should start with
 one person harassing the other
 until they punch them in the face.
 That's just true.

Krista messily clinks her glass to Maddie's.

KRISTA
 I totally deserved it. I was such a
 bitch!

Downing her drink, Krista **YELLS**, taking us into--

INT. BAR - NIGHT - MONTAGE

-Maddie & Krista living it up, DRINKING, DANCING, ROMANCING.

-Another night, another outfit, another boy.

-True partners-in-crime downing shots and getting into loud
 arguments with other BARGOERS.

-Different nights and apparel blur by, the PRE-LAP of
 KNOCKING taking us to--

INT. MADDIE'S LOFT - MORNING

KNOCKING at the door rings out through the apartment as a
 hungover Maddie rubs her eyes awake, grumbling to the door--

MADDIE
 Just a sec!

She pulls it open, revealing the last person she ever
 expected to see: JULIAN. She's stunned into silence.

JULIAN

Hi.

Maddie gapes at him, unsure what to do.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Could I... come in?

MADDIE

Uh, yeah, come in.

Julian enters, shutting the door behind him. Maddie puts some distance between them as Julian looks around at the wreck of a space, concerned. An awkward silence persists.

JULIAN

I, uh, I'm here because yesterday was... uh, you were supposed to move out.

MADDIE

Oh. That was *yesterday*?

JULIAN

Yeah, my parents are, uh, they're gonna rent it out, so we kinda... need you to go.

MADDIE

Yeah, sorry, I wasn't paying attention to the date or anything.

JULIAN

No, it's cool, I get it. Living that crazy single life.

MADDIE

Well, you kinda forced me into it.

Julian looks down, embarrassed. Can't really argue that.

JULIAN

That's not-- Look, I also... I wanted to come by because I was talking to your mom--

MADDIE

Oh, Jesus, here we go--

JULIAN

Maddie, I'm worried about you.

MADDIE

You don't get to worry about me.
I'm doing great, so... don't worry.

JULIAN

It doesn't... look like you are.

MADDIE

Oh, sorry I forgot to hire a
fucking housekeeper.

JULIAN

I mean, like - I heard you quit
your job. And that would be okay if
you were doing something else. Why
aren't you dancing or *something*?
You've got all this time now and--

MADDIE

What's the point, Julian? None of
it matters anymore without...

Maddie plasters a smile on her face.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

I'll get out, okay? But I would
prefer if you left now.

JULIAN

(reluctant)

Alright.

Julian opens the door and turns back to say something, but he thinks better of it, leaving silently.

Maddie swallows, visibly straining to hold her emotions back. And behind her, we see time speed up out the window, the sun setting and rising, back and forth, faster and faster.

KRISTA (PRE-LAP)

Wait, you just never left?

INT. MADDIE'S LOFT - DAY

Maddie and Krista watch trash TV as they drink beer. It didn't seem possible, but the loft is a bigger mess.

MADDIE

What're they gonna do - drag me
outta here?

KRISTA

You are crazy. When was that?

MADDIE

I don't know, like two or three months ago.

KRISTA

They haven't called the cops?

MADDIE

Julian must be holding them off.

KRISTA

Guess he's good for something.

(grinning, drunk)

You know, we've talked about him so much. You gotta finally show me a picture of this guy.

MADDIE

We're not doing this.

KRISTA

C'mon! Is he hot? I bet he's ugly.

MADDIE

(mock offense)

How dare you!

They giggle as Maddie pulls up social media. She shows Krista Julian's profile, and Krista grabs the phone from her.

KRISTA

Okay, Julian. I... kinda get why this is so hard for you now.

MADDIE

Stop. And I'm doing great.

KRISTA

Is he still single?

MADDIE

You bitch--

KRISTA

I'm joking. Lemme peep the tagged photos, that's where the truth is.

Krista's mood chills, smile fading. She clears her throat, tossing Maddie's phone back to her.

MADDIE

What?

KRISTA
Nothing, just, uh, done looking.

Maddie eyes the phone, curious.

KRISTA (CONT'D)
Don't. Just leave it.

But she's already pulled it back up, seeing what Krista did--
JULIAN AND ANOTHER WOMAN POSING AT THEIR ENGAGEMENT PARTY.

MADDIE
No...

Maddie lets the phone drop, Krista goes into comfort mode.

KRISTA
It's okay. It's gonna be okay.

MADDIE
It hasn't even been a year!

Maddie stands, pulling from her beer deeply.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
I need something stronger.

She finds a bit of whiskey left among the empties.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
This is bullshit. When was that
photo taken?

Maddie downs the whiskey as Krista checks the phone.

KRISTA
(hesitant)
Um...

MADDIE
When?!

KRISTA
One hour ago.

MADDIE
I need something stronger...

INT. MADDIE'S LOFT - LATER

Maddie does a line of coke as Krista waits her turn.

KRISTA
Told you my guy would come through.

MADDIE
Bullshit. Bullshit. Bullshit.

She stands, pacing around the room.

KRISTA
(epiphany)
You know what we should do?

Maddie's eyes bulge, having the same idea--

MADDIE/KRISTA
Go over there!

INT. MADDIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Maddie takes a *very* wide right, honks incoming.

MADDIE
Fuck you!

The Girls laugh as Maddie revs her engine.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
I'm gonna chew him out. I'm gonna
make a *huge fucking scene*.

KRISTA
Yes! He deserves it.

Maddie looks back at her phone, flipping through pictures from the engagement party. Looking closer, she sees JULIAN'S PARENTS standing with the couple, BEAMING WITH HAPPINESS.

Unable to look at it, she drops the phone, turning up the radio. She grabs at her chest, wincing in pain. An upbeat song comes to a close as the DJ speaks--

RADIO DJ (O.S.)
*...I sure hope that one gets you
into the weekend spirit! Live it up
while you can - cause if you
haven't heard, the fight to outlaw
decelerant transplants is
officially headed to the Supreme
Court, so we might not all be
living hundreds of years after all--*

Maddie's eyes grow wide at that. Nervous, Krista changes the station as Maddie floors the accelerator.

KRISTA

Hey, let's not get too crazy now.
You already did it. It's not like
it'll be illegal to be you.

MADDIE

Yeah... just illegal to *become me*.

Gripping the wheel tightly, Maddie DANGEROUSLY SWERVES out of her lane to pass traffic, on the wrong side of the street. She looks back at the picture of Julian's engagement party.

KRISTA

(knuckles whitening)

Maddie, seriously. *Slow down*.

Maddie BLOWS THROUGH A RED LIGHT. A police car LIGHTS UP.

KRISTA (CONT'D)

Maddie...

MADDIE

(in her own world)

You think you can just write me
off... you think you can just
forget about me.

Krista's eyes POP OPEN WIDE as she spots a MOTHER AND CHILD crossing the upcoming intersection. Krista SHRIEKS--

KRISTA

MADDIE!

Maddie sees them, spinning the wheel to the right. She avoids the Mother and Child, hitting a slick in the road.

The car launches into a TAILSPIN, headed right for a PARKED CAR. Just as Maddie's car SLAMS into it we--

CUT TO BLACK.

WE FADE BACK IN on our split screen of the three Maddies, this time PUSHING IN on **Red Hair Maddie** after her mother's funeral. And now, we'll be spending some time acquainting ourselves with Maddie's new life in **2051**.

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Staring at herself in the mirror, RED HAIR MADDIE surveys her dramatic new look. It's bold - and, as we'll soon see, fitting to a new outlook...

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Maddie emerges from the bathroom, hair now dry. Just as she's about to plop down on the couch, the DOOR OPENS to reveal **GRAYSON** (30s), tall, dark, and handsome with shoulder-length hair. Grayson too wears funeral attire.

GRAYSON

Maddie! There you are. Thank God.
You just... *disappeared*. Are you--

Grayson stops himself, taking in Maddie's new look. She's suddenly self-conscious.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)

...you did something to your hair.

MADDIE

(embarrassed)

You hate it, don't you?

Grayson approaches, a sympathetic look on his face.

GRAYSON

Just a *surprise* is all. We were just at a funeral.

MADDIE

I shouldn't have left without telling you. It's just...

Pulling her into his embrace, Grayson rubs Maddie's back.

GRAYSON

You do whatever you need to do.

Hugging Grayson tightly, Maddie leans on his shoulder.

MADDIE

Thank you.

GRAYSON

Oh, I talked to that guy from the dance company... Julian, was it? *Nice guy*. You didn't mention he was a family friend...

OH SHIT. Maddie hides a look of surprise.

MADDIE

Oh, yeah... *childhood friend*. Obviously, not a jellyfish like us.

GRAYSON
 (smirking)
 Ahh, maybe he's not so great then.

Pushing in tight on Maddie's face, guilt pouring off of her.

EXT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - DAY

A nondescript self-driving sedan pulls up in front of the Skyview Theatre. Maddie hops out, gym bag in tow, wearing sweats and a hoodie pulled up above her head.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

Maddie enters the space, which is populated by a few other male and female DANCERS, including her rival Victoria - who we met earlier. Mr. Ford speaks to the small assembled crowd.

MR. FORD
 We'll begin rehearsals for our lead roles in a few minutes - starting, of course, with The Sylph.
 (noticing Maddie)
 Maddie, I'd be remiss if I didn't take note that you're tardy.

Maddie's a little taken aback by his tone.

MADDIE
 I know. I... I'm sorry. It won't happen again.

MR. FORD
 See to it that it doesn't.

As Maddie removes her hoodie, she immediately receives the stares of everyone in the room. Victoria furrows her brow.

MR. FORD (CONT'D)
 ...and you dyed your hair, I see?

Maddie doesn't know how to answer with more than a shrug. Victoria leans over to another Dancer, whispering--

VICTORIA
 So, they're totally fucking, right?

The Dancer stifles a laugh, Maddie suddenly self-conscious.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - LATER

An empty stage adorned solely with an empty chair. A second later, Victoria takes the stage. Closes her eyes, inhales. A couple shoulder rolls to shake off any last nerves.

Over speakers, the sprinkling notes of *La Sylphide's* first act kick in. Victoria opens her eyes, alive with focus, crouching down into first position.

Her moves are graceful and poetic. Her pose impeccable.

In the audience, we find Mr. Ford - it's impossible to read his reaction.

In the wings, Maddie stands in wait. Even if you can't tell whether Victoria is any good or not - Maddie gnawing at her nails assures us she is.

She looks to Mr. Ford, wondering if he's as impressed as she is. As the music hits a climax, we CUT TO--

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - LATER

The same empty stage we just saw with the same empty chair. Maddie makes her way to center stage, crouching down. The music starts over again and Maddie gets to work.

She mirrors Victoria's moves almost exactly - *perhaps even stronger and more graceful than her?* Maddie is in the zone.

As the piece progresses, you can feel Maddie's confidence increasing with each step. Unable to stop herself, she looks to Mr. Ford - and this time, it appears he's wearing the tiniest smile imaginable.

Unfortunately, Maddie's attention turns to Victoria stifling a laugh to another Dancer. In an instant, Maddie's confidence is SUCKED AWAY and she accidentally HITS the chair, a loud echoing CLATTER as it slams onto the stage.

From Maddie's perspective, we see Ford's smile has vanished, along with her conviction in herself.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Maddie takes her time changing, standing apart from the other Dancers. Disappointment radiates off her as she shoves her dancing attire into her bag. We notice a small, scraggly SCAR on her shoulder - a result of her car accident during her reckless time as Short Hair Maddie.

She picks up the end of Victoria's light conversation with another Dancer--

VICTORIA
Drinks tonight?

DANCER
Ugh, I can't. I'm seeing this guy again. I wish though.

VICTORIA
You don't like him?

DANCER
He's fine and all. It's just...
he's one of those jellyfish people.

VICTORIA
Yikes. How old is he?

DANCER
I couldn't ask. It's so weird...

Maddie bites her tongue, not a hill she's going to die on. But still, it sucks to hear.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - LATER

Maddie watches the other Dancers file out through the now-dim theatre toward the lobby and into the night. Rather than follow them, she hangs back. She stares at the stage, wishing so bad she could *finally* fulfill her dream.

Maddie takes a seat in the audience, front and center. She sits with her thoughts for a while - and when we next see the stage, we see her there, *just as she was as a little girl.*

At first, Maddie's mesmerized watching her younger self, but then her ungracefulness takes hold and errors pile up.

It's too much, Maddie shakes her head, sharply exhales. As she turns to leave, she finds Mr. Ford standing in the aisle.

MR. FORD
Maddie... you're still here?

MADDIE
Figured I'd get one last look at the place.

MR. FORD
I haven't made final decisions yet.

MADDIE

Oh, just stop, Julian. I don't know what this hot-cold thing is with you, but we both know I fucked that up. You only let me get this far because we... don't make me say it.

MR. FORD

Maddie, sit down. Please.

Reluctant, Maddie complies. Ford takes a seat next to her.

MR. FORD (CONT'D)

You are a great dancer. You always have been. And right now, you're the best I've seen you - but *only* when you get out of your head.

(pointing to the stage)

When you're up there, you can't be thinking about Victoria. Or your dad. Not even your mom. I'm not trying to be insensitive, but there's only one person you should be thinking of, and that's Maddie.

Maddie eyes him, unsure.

MR. FORD (CONT'D)

Because I'm telling you, if I can justify making you my lead, I *will*. And if you are my lead, this job will get you to the job that will change your life. So... why don't you give it one more shot?

Maddie stares back, inspired. He points again to the stage.

MADDIE

Oh, like now?

Ford pulls out his phone, plays the track. The music's quiet, but it's enough. Maddie scrambles for her ballet shoes, quickly putting them on and rushing to the stage.

But we don't see her performance, hanging on Ford's face - where his wry smile soon returns, even larger than before as the music SWELLS in volume overcoming the scene.

EXT. DEB'S HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

Loud punk rock takes over as a greasy Grayson works on his MOTORCYCLE - inspecting the air filter. He bangs his head along, mouthing the words.

The music lowers in volume, and he turns to see Maddie standing at the entrance to the garage.

MADDIE

You've really taken over in here.

GRAYSON

Hope that's okay. It's such a bigger space than we had before.

MADDIE

Yeah, yeah, I want this to be your home too.

Grayson picks up a rag, wiping his hands.

GRAYSON

So. How was it?

MADDIE

(optimistic)

I crushed it.

GRAYSON

Damn right.

As he goes in for a hug, Maddie stops him.

MADDIE

You definitely look like you could use a shower.

Grayson looks down at himself, nodding in agreement. He cheekily raises an eyebrow.

GRAYSON

Well, you *smell* like you could use one... care to join me?

Off Maddie's smirk--

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - LATER

Steam fills the room. Inside the shower, Grayson gently pushes Maddie back against the tile.

She looks into his eyes, they share a smile. He moves his body closer to hers, kissing her.

Maddie closes her eyes, wrapping her arms around his neck. But when she opens them, she sees the face of Mr. Ford.

MR. FORD
What's wrong?

Maddie again closes her eyes, shaking her head. As she opens them, Grayson is once again in front of her.

GRAYSON
Maddie, you okay?

MADDIE
Sorry. Just a little exhausted.

GRAYSON
We can go to bed if you want.

MADDIE
No... it's okay.

As Maddie kisses Grayson again, her eyes slowly shut...

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight illuminates a lightly snoring Grayson. Next to him, however, Maddie is wide awake, staring at the news playing softly on the TV.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)
--and there'll be a vote tomorrow
on the state of Washington's
proposal to secede from the United
States, an attempt for the
progressive stronghold--

Maddie shuts the TV off. She taps on her chest nervously, looking over to Grayson. She nudges him. No reaction.

MADDIE
Grayson.

He lightly rumbles in his sleep.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
Grayson.

GRAYSON
(groaning)
What?

MADDIE
(staring at the ceiling)
I just... want to make sure you
know that if I get this, like, if
my chance really is finally here, I
need to give it my all. *Everything.*

GRAYSON
 (half-asleep)
 Can we talk about this tomorrow?

MADDIE
 This is serious.

Grayson rubs the sleep from his eyes, scooting closer.

GRAYSON
 Maddie... I agreed to this deal
 when we first met. For me,
 extending my life was all about
 more bikes and open road. But it
 was clear you did this to chase
 something. So, if the time's come
 for that, I can sacrifice now -
 cause we've got a lot of time left
 to spend together.

MADDIE
 Fuck. Good answer.

GRAYSON
 And the rest of our time starts
 with me going back to sleep.

Grayson pulls the covers tighter and almost instantly drifts back to sleep. Maddie's touched, but there's still a lot on her mind. *As La Sylphide's dramatic overture kicks in--*

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - DAY

We find Maddie sitting front row center, along with the other Dancers. Ford stands on the stage, reading names from a list MOS. As the overture hits its first climactic strike - we focus closely on Ford as his lips mouth "Maddie".

And just in case it wasn't clear - the smile Maddie can't hide, coupled with a look of revulsion on Victoria's face - confirm that Ford has just declared Maddie the lead.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Maddie changes, staring at Victoria across the room, whispering to other Dancers while stealing a look her way.

Okay, enough of this shit. Maddie CHARGES toward her, getting right up in Victoria's face.

MADDIE

Alright, we're too old to play
these games. What's your problem?

Victoria is surprised by Maddie's directness.

VICTORIA

Oh, come on. You know you should
not be the lead.

MADDIE

And you should?

VICTORIA

You said it, not me.

MADDIE

Effie is still a big role.

VICTORIA

But it's not the lead.

Maddie bites her cheek, there's no getting through to this one. But she can't help pushing further.

MADDIE

Mr. Ford chose me for a reason.

VICTORIA

(laughing caustically)

I know he did.

The other Dancers laugh as well. Maddie's eyes narrow.

MADDIE

Come opening night, I will prove
that I am the better dancer.

VICTORIA

For your sake, I actually hope you do. Because if you keep making mistakes like you have so far and you're still The Sylph - I'm willing to walk rather than be embarrassed up there with you, and I'm sure a few of the other dancers agree with me.

(turning away)

So, if you don't do better than me, there might not even be an opening night. Good luck.

Victoria leaves Maddie in her wake. Off Maddie, wondering how much of that is true--

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - LATER

--on Maddie's face as she's officially set to begin rehearsal as The Sylph.

We're back on the rehearsal scene of the Sylph's enchanting of the male lead James Reuben, played by DAVID (20s).

Maddie pirouettes across the stage as David follows close behind. Once again, she can't help peering offstage at Mr. Ford, looking for some sign of approval.

He's hard to read, and Maddie keeps her attention on her performance. David follows, skills on display.

When Maddie next turns to Mr. Ford's chair, he's no longer there. She looks down the aisle to find him pacing toward the exit doors, pushing them open.

Maddie comes to a stop, David a short moment later.

DAVID

Hey, what's the deal?

MADDIE

Our director just... left. Let's take a breather.

David nods, hands behind his head to catch his breath.

Through the circular windows in the exit doors, Maddie spots Ford in an ARGUMENT with someone, unclear who. She moves to try to get a better view. David notices.

DAVID

So... is it true?

MADDIE

(not paying attention)

Is what true?

DAVID

You know... *the rumors*.

MADDIE

I have enough going on with Victoria constantly up my ass--

DAVID

Okay. Sorry.

MADDIE

I knew Mr. Ford a while ago. It wasn't anything like what you're thinking. My focus is *this*. I'm not gonna let anything get in the way.

David just nods, looking meek.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

If you had *any* idea how long I've been at this... Just. Never mind--

DAVID

Whoa, whoa. Look. I'm sorry. Even if it were true--

(off Maddie's glare)

Okay. It's not true. And, the other stuff... I get it. I mean I graduated Juilliard over a year ago and this is my first job. I'm *almost twenty-five*. My career should be a lot further along.

That cuts like a knife. Maddie looks back to the window, seeing now that Ford is actually arguing with his wife **HILLARY** - who we may recognize from their family photos.

Hillary looks to the window, and for a split second we're almost sure they lock eyes. Hillary's face contorts. *Does she recognize Maddie?*

Not willing to worry about this anymore, Maddie turns back to David - fire in her eyes.

MADDIE

Let's go through it again. NOW.

Fast-paced music starts up as we begin our REHEARSAL MONTAGE--

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - DAY - MONTAGE

Maddie and David's characters racing after each other. Both shiny with sweat, they've been at this a while.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY - MONTAGE

Tight on Maddie's feet as she stands on pointe. Though her form is graceful, there's pain written all over her face.

EXT. DEB'S HOUSE - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Maddie steps out of a car, barely keeping herself upright as she walks to her front door. The driverless car takes off.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - NIGHT - MONTAGE

The majority of the company on stage, a larger arrangement. David stands in the center with Victoria then Maddie.

Mr. Ford paces the stage, eyes darting between the two women. He approaches Maddie, correcting her form.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY - MONTAGE

Sweat hits the floor. Maddie back in studio alone, giving her all after regular hours.

EXT. DEB'S HOUSE - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Car pulls up again, Maddie steps out. Stronger now.

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Grayson smiles at the sight of Maddie's entrance. She makes it to the couch then immediately passes out. Grayson, though disappointed, places a blanket on her.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY - MONTAGE

Tight on Maddie's feet as she stands on pointe. Her form is graceful, her face as unemotional and smooth as marble. Mr. Ford watches from the audience, allowing an approving smile.

EXT. DEB'S HOUSE - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Car pulls up again, Maddie steps out. Stronger yet.

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Maddie enters the house, no sign of Grayson.

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - MONTAGE

Finding him passed out on top of the bed, Maddie grabs a blanket from the closet, placing it on top of Grayson.

She sits beside him, watching his body rise and fall. We can't tell if she feels close to him or a million miles away.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - END MONTAGE

We find Maddie in the middle of practicing her second big solo of the show - and she's absolutely CRUSHING IT.

David and Victoria stand on opposite sides of the stage amongst the rest of the company. David smiles, it's clear that Maddie has really gotten there. Victoria's steely face can't hide the intense envy threatening to burst out of her.

As Maddie continues, she maintains her poise and composure. This is all second nature to her now.

In front of the stage, Mr. Ford watches it all go down. He's mesmerized. He's pushed Maddie where she needed to go.

As the musical piece winds down, Maddie performs a big descending pirouette until her body unwinds on the ground.

Finished with her electrifying performance, her chest slightly heaves up and down. She locks eyes with Mr. Ford. They can both feel it - *they've done it--*

INT. FORD'S OFFICE - LATER

Mr. Ford and Maddie BURST into the room KISSING as Ford kicks the door shut. He throws Maddie up on his desk, practically tearing her clothes off as she unbuckles his belt.

INT. FORD'S OFFICE - LATER

Maddie and Ford lie on the floor, both staring straight forward. Reality is beginning to set in.

MADDIE

I thought we weren't going to do that again.

MR. FORD

So did I.

Mr. Ford runs his hand gently over her shoulder scar.

MR. FORD (CONT'D)

I thought you'd be more different than I remembered.

MADDIE

So did I. But it's hard to change
too much on the inside, when
everyone keeps seeing the same
thing on the outside.

Before they get too emotional, Maddie changes the subject.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

I take it Hillary didn't love the
news that I was in your show?

MR. FORD

Yeah, well... how'd, uhh, your guy
handle your big break being in a
show directed by your ex-fiancé?

Maddie's silence answers that question.

MR. FORD

Ahh, you haven't told him...

MADDIE

Don't judge me. Something tells me
you probably left out the part
about us *sleeping together* in this
conversation with your wife.

MR. FORD

Well, I didn't plan on making a
habit out of it.

Annoyed, Maddie rolls away from Mr. Ford, standing up.

MADDIE

Yeah, well-- *why not?* I'm here now.

MR. FORD

Excuse me?

MADDIE

What's keeping us apart? You got
what you wanted. *You have four*
kids. Isn't that why we broke up?

Ford's turn to be irritated as he gets to his feet, putting
his clothes back on.

MR. FORD

Of course you still think that. We
broke up because you made an
enormous decision without telling
me.

(MORE)

MR. FORD (CONT'D)
And that part of you is obviously
still there since you haven't
thought to tell your boyfriend we
almost got married.

That hurts. Maddie stares back, eyes watery.

MADDIE
You're a hypocrite. We're both
cheating on someone here. I'm just
the one willing to admit how right
it still feels.

Mr. Ford wants to wipe her tears away, but can't.

MR. FORD
Look... you're one of the best
dancers I've ever seen. When you
boil it down, isn't that what you
really wanted out of this?

Maddie bites her lip. He doesn't get it. Still. She hurls his
own words right back at him.

MADDIE
Of course you still think that...

She charges past Mr. Ford, leaving the office.

MR. FORD
Maddie, wait!

But she continues on into the night.

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

At their dining table, Grayson cuts into his dinner. Maddie's
plate barely touched. Her eyes suggest she's somewhere else.

GRAYSON
Look at us - dinner on a Friday
night like a couple normies, huh?

Grayson turns to Maddie, expecting at least an attempt of a
laugh. He notes her full plate.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)
You really should eat something.
You're looking a little skinny.
(taking another bite)
Not that that's a bad thing. I know
dancers always look--

MADDIE

Julian and I used to be engaged.

GRAYSON

(swallowing)

Julian...? Your dancing coach?

MADDIE

Director. Sorry, not the time to correct you.

A painful moment of silence.

GRAYSON

Why didn't you tell me this sooner?

MADDIE

I don't know. It's... it's weird. I didn't know how to bring it up.

GRAYSON

I think you just say "Julian and I used to be engaged". But, like, way earlier than you just did.

Maddie hangs her head. Grayson hard to read.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)

This is fucked up, Maddie.

MADDIE

I know. And... I'm sorry.

Grayson finally drops his silverware. He stands up, running his hands through his hair.

GRAYSON

This isn't something I would be mad about if you just told me up-front.

He can't help himself from pacing.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)

And now I'm paranoid. You're gone a long time every day, Maddie.

MADDIE

(trying to cover)

That's just kind of how it is.

GRAYSON

I know that. And I was okay with it. But now, I have to ask...

She avoids his gaze as he summons courage to form the words.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)
Has anything happened with you two?

Maddie is silent. Grayson's face falls.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)
Oh, my God. I need to go.

MADDIE
Can we just talk about this?

GRAYSON
(headed to the door)
I can't be here right now.

MADDIE
Wait, please...

GRAYSON
I'm sorry, Maddie, but whatever you
say right now is going to make me
hate you. So just... don't.

Grayson grabs his jacket off the coat rack, storming out and slamming the door behind him.

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Morning rays pour in. Maddie sits alone in bed. Her eyes red. A night of crying. Grayson's side of the bed still made.

Maddie looks at her shiny phone of the future, many unanswered calls to Grayson. She drops her phone, running her hands down her face, and visibly making a bad decision...

She gets up, quickly throwing on a pair of sweats and a t-shirt. Paces out of the bedroom into--

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maddie grabs her purse, makes her way to the door. But just as she opens it, she finds a **RANDOM MAN** (early 30s) standing in front of her. His hand is raised, about to knock.

MADDIE
(confused)
Yes?

RANDOM MAN
Oh... uh, I'm looking for--

MADDIE
(impatient)
Grayson?

RANDOM MAN
Uh... no.

MADDIE
Then you're at the wrong house.

Maddie shuts the door and charges past him.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
Fucking LA.

INT. BODEGA - LATER

Maddie rushes to the back of a rundown bodega - even in the future some things never change.

She stops as she reaches the alcohol. *Dare she?*

A bottle of vodka catches her eyes. Maddie stares at it. It's all she can see. She knows she shouldn't.

But still, the temptation...

...it's too much. Maddie outstretches her hand, almost grabs the bottle before--

KRISTA (O.S.)
Maddie?

Turning, Maddie spots Krista, looking almost exactly as she did when we last saw her.

MADDIE
Krista...?

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Krista and Maddie sit on a bench with a view of the evolved Los Angeles skyline - almost Manhattan-esque - dense, filled with glass-and-metal buildings. Drones are a common sight. And, of course, homeless shanty towns thrown in the mix.

KRISTA
...after the accident, I freaked out about mortality and all that. I was fortunate enough to get the procedure right before it became illegal.

(MORE)

KRISTA (CONT'D)

Joined the world's most exclusive club. I meant to reach out, but... we were kind of a dangerous combo, don't you think?

MADDIE

Too bad they didn't have self-driving cars back then.

(guilty)

During my probation, I wasn't allowed to drink. I resisted it at first, but... one day I realized I just... didn't want to anymore. And I swear, I haven't had a drop since. But of course, the moment I succumb to temptation you're there for it.

KRISTA

Like I'm your guardian angel.

MADDIE

That, you definitely are not.

KRISTA

(mock offended)

Hey, I settled down. Found a real partner this time. A woman actually, Natalie. We've been doing a lot of traveling, seeing the world. And now we're back in LA. Unfortunately one of us has to get a job. Where's all this free shit we were supposed to have in socialist America?

Maddie laughs.

MADDIE

I got a job... finally. Like, a *dancing* job.

KRISTA

Wait, you started doing that again? That's amazing!

MADDIE

Yeah... and guess what? Julian is the director.

Dropping her jaw, Krista processes that.

KRISTA

Shut the fuck up.

MADDIE

Yeah, he's all bald and married and dad-like and shit now--

KRISTA

--and you're totally having an affair with him?

MADDIE

...and I'm totally having an affair with him.

Krista shakes her head, not even slightly judgmental. She gives her friend a hug.

KRISTA

Oh, Maddie. What the hell are we going to do with you?

Maddie hugs Krista back, resting her head on her shoulder.

MADDIE

You'll come to the show, right?

KRISTA

You know I love me some drama.

MADDIE

It's a ballet.

KRISTA

I'm not talking about the performance.

MADDIE

Right.

Maddie smirks, glad to have her friend back.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATER - NIGHT

Rehearsal again. Maddie and David finish one of their larger numbers, Maddie fully in it. As they leave the stage, they're replaced by the rest of the company - at least thirty people.

Maddie watches the group, briefly locking eyes with Victoria, who admittedly is giving the performance her all.

EXT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - NIGHT

Dancers from the company exit onto the street outside.

Many chat in groups, though Maddie is by her lonesome. She heads for her car, but as she grabs the handle--

MR. FORD (O.S.)
Maddie?

She turns back, face falling slightly seeing Mr. Ford.

MADDIE
Yeah?

MR. FORD
You know... with dress rehearsal
tomorrow, I just wanted to say that
- I really think you're ready.

MADDIE
I *am* ready.

MR. FORD
(awkward)
Well... great. See you tomorrow.

As Mr. Ford turns to leave--

MADDIE
I told Grayson about us.

MR. FORD
Oh... you mean... about our past?

MADDIE
Yeah. And, also the part about us
sleeping together... now.

Mr. Ford stares back, scrunching his face.

MR. FORD
Okay...

MADDIE
It felt like the right thing to do.
And... I'm pretty sure he's done
with me now.

MR. FORD
I'm sorry to hear that.

MADDIE
(emotional)
I didn't become a jellyfish to
chase something. You know that. I
did it, because I felt like I was
being chased.

(MORE)

MADDIE (CONT'D)

By death, time, ending up like my dad. I think I threw myself so hard into dancing because I had to justify what I did. To you. To us.

Maddie forces herself to go on.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

I think what I want more than anything is just *one moment* of peace. And the last time I felt that... was with you.

Eyes watery, Ford swallows his emotion.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

(laughing harshly)

Now I'm telling you this a few days before the show because I cannot let myself have anything good--

Mr. Ford interrupts Maddie with a PASSIONATE KISS. She allows it to happen. But just as she lets herself fall into him, he pulls away suddenly.

MR. FORD

No, no, I'm sorry. I can't...

Maddie avoids his gaze, as hurt as she's ever been.

MADDIE

...you chose your kids over me before they even existed. I don't know why I thought you'd choose differently now. I just... I wish I felt that strongly about anything.

Ford realizes there's nothing else to say here.

MR. FORD

See you tomorrow.

MADDIE

See you tomorrow.

As Mr. Ford walks away, Maddie turns her attention back to her car... only to see Grayson waiting for her.

Silence. Beneath his cold exterior, Grayson's heart breaks. Neither of them speaks, and he simply HOPS on his motorcycle and speeds away. Maddie watches him vanish into the night.

INT. CAR - LATER

Maddie's car comes to a halt in Deb's driveway. Before she gets out, she sees the same RANDOM MAN who knocked on her door earlier sitting in a car outside her house.

The Random Man catches her eye. He cringes, caught.

EXT. DEB'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Not in the mood for any foolishness after what just went down with Grayson, Maddie CHARGES to the Random Man. She harshly knocks on his window. After a moment, he rolls it down.

MADDIE

Okay. Who are you?

RANDOM MAN

I'm sorry. I'm not trying to come off like a stalker or anything.

MADDIE

Well you're doing a pretty bad job at that. So... what do you want?

The Random Man rubs the back of his neck.

RANDOM MAN

I was hoping just to talk to you.

MADDIE

About?

RANDOM MAN

I wish there was a less awkward way to get into this... My name's Tanner... Tanner Langley.

Maddie's brow furrows. *Why does she know that name?*

RANDOM MAN (CONT'D)

And, uh... I'm your-- I'm your son.

Wait, WHAT?

RANDOM MAN (CONT'D)

I found your info online. Maybe I should've reached out digitally or tried to call you first. It's...

Stunned, Maddie stares back at the Young Man (now **TANNER**).

TANNER

When I knocked on your door the other day, and then when I actually saw you... I mean, I knew you were a jellyfish, it's just so *trippy*, I mean, my mom looks *younger* than me--

Maddie's expression turns steely.

MADDIE

Could you please leave?

TANNER

What...

MADDIE

Look, I'm dealing with a lot right now. And this... I-I just can't.

TANNER

Oh... okay. Maybe we can exchange numbers? Arrange something later--

MADDIE

Just go before I call the cops.

Tanner takes that in, hurt and embarrassed. He looks away, rolling up the window.

TANNER

Sorry to have bothered you.

Maddie watches him drive away, emotionless.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Sunshine and a vibrant blue sky. From a distance, we watch Maddie make her way through the headstones, finally pausing at one and sitting down.

MADDIE

Hi, Mom.

Now closer, we see Maddie looking at her mother's headstone, which bares the phrase "Fighter Until The End".

MADDIE (CONT'D)

I thought with the big day coming up, I should come and tell you how excited and happy I am.

Maddie looks up to the sky, giving up the facade.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

But, if I'm being honest - I'm not happy. Maybe it has to do with the absolute state of destruction my personal life is in... I met me and Julian's biological son the other day. And I did not handle it well. I never... I thought when we gave him up, I'd never see him again. We were just kids. And just so you know, I... I don't blame you for encouraging me to have him and give him away. I'm glad I did. God... it feels like so long ago now.

Turning her focus back to Deb's headstone--

MADDIE (CONT'D)

I don't know. It's all starting to feel like it was... *selfish*. I miss the feeling I used to get when I was helping people. In the early days when I was a nurse. Maybe you were right all along... I'm sure you *love* hearing that.

Maddie exhales, not wanting to be here anymore. She touches the grass, feeling a last bit of connection with her mother.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

I hope you'll be able to see me tomorrow. And I sure hope I make you proud.

Standing up, Maddie takes one more look before turning away and heading back down the road.

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maddie types away at her computer. We see over her shoulder she's composing a social media message to "TANNER LANGLEY".

We only catch a fraction of it: "*Tanner, Let me start by telling you how sorry I am for my actions the other night. When I first heard those words out of your mouth...*"

Maddie finishes typing. She closes her eyes, taking a deep breath. She winces, finally forcing herself to hit send.

Message sent, she shuts her laptop, gets under the covers, and clicks her lamp off. Darkness.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Maddie stares at herself in the mirror. She's in full Sylph attire - it's dress rehearsal. She breathes deep. It's time.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - NIGHT

The room lit for the performance. Aside from Ford and a few others, it's mostly empty. The orchestra pit is full of MUSICIANS in the middle of the overture.

As it comes to an end, the sparkly notes of the first performance begin and the curtain raises.

Onstage, David sleeps in a chair while Maddie comes to life. She dances around him, her moves FLAWLESS.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - NIGHT

Now in the middle of the ballet, David stands center stage while Maddie and Victoria perform on both sides of him. It's a quietly intense scene. Maddie and Victoria do their very best to keep from looking at each other.

As the scene builds in intensity, we hear the enormous THUD of a door bursting open. Though Maddie doesn't break focus, what she doesn't see is HILLARY storming down the aisle.

Maddie finally spots her, nervously continuing to dance as Hillary heads around the pit--

--CLIMBING ONSTAGE.

HILLARY
You piece of shit!

Hillary charges right for Maddie, who breaks her stride. In the audience, Ford rushes to the stage.

MADDIE
What the hell are you do--

Hillary reaches Maddie, who throws up her hands an instant too late, receiving a punch right to the eye.

MR. FORD
Hillary!

David and Victoria scramble away, eyes wide open and mouths agape. The music comes to a fractured ending as some Musicians go on longer than others.

HILLARY

Who the hell do you think you are?

MADDIE

I don't know what you're--

HILLARY

Don't deny it. Your little
boyfriend told me everything!

David and Victoria exchange looks as Ford pulls Hillary back.

MR. FORD

Hillary, this is not the time or
the place for this.

Hillary's attention is still on Maddie, enraged.

HILLARY

Do you know how hard it is to
compete with someone who doesn't
age? Do you?!

Victoria's ears perk up at that.

MR. FORD

Hillary, please. Let's go home. We
can talk about this.

Hillary relents, anger turning to ache.

HILLARY

Just...
(grief taking over)
...just leave me alone.

Hillary heads back onto the floor and charges out the door.
Ford turns to the stunned dance company, deeply embarrassed.

MR. FORD

I'm sorry, everyone. Continue the
performance. I'll see you tomorrow.

Mr. Ford heads after Hillary as Maddie watches him choose
someone or something else over her yet again.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Maddie grabs her bag, not even bothering to change, rushing
to get out of there before the other Dancers come in. She
presses her palm to her chest, holding back tears. But as she
reaches the door, Victoria appears.

VICTORIA
So... how old are you? *Really?*

Maddie ignores her, pulling the door open.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
It's pretty sad you've had so much
longer than the rest of us and
you're still not even that good.

Face blank, Maddie jogs out into the night.

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Maddie brushes her teeth mindlessly, placing her toothbrush back in its place, realizing... it's alone. Her brow furrows, and we follow her as she races to--

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

--now empty. As Maddie surveys the room, she's plagued by FLASHES of finding Julian's stuff gone from their loft.

History repeating itself yet again.

INT. DEB'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Maddie sits on the side of her bed, knee anxiously bouncing. She looks down at her dance bag, contemplating.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE DRESSING ROOM - EVENING

A resolute Maddie looks deeply at herself in the mirror, ready for this. She applies concealer to the bruise forming around her eye. Nothing is going to stop her.

She stands, and we see she's already in her costume. Other Dancers surround her, readying themselves.

Victoria bursts into the room, distraught--

VICTORIA
He's not coming. Mr. Ford is not
coming!

The others devolve into nervous chattering. *What do they do?* But Maddie stands tall, taking charge--

MADDIE
Hey!

The room goes silent as they look to Maddie.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
 I'm going out there. I've put way
 too much into this to stop now. If
 you want, join me.

She looks pointedly at Victoria.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
 If not-- don't let the door hit ya.

And with that, Maddie's out, headed for her debut.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - NIGHT

From the wings, Maddie looks into the crowd, completely full, everyone talking amongst themselves. Her eyes land on an empty seat with a sign marked: "RESERVED - GRAYSON MURPHY".

Her face falls, but then she sees Krista, lighting up. Krista shoots Maddie a double thumbs up, points beside her to--

--Tanner. Maddie's emotional seeing her son there, and she gives him a tentative wave. After a moment, he waves back.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - LATER

The house lights go down, and the audience falls into silence. Krista smiles in anticipation.

We focus on the stage. As the curtain goes up, we see our star, Maddie, readying herself for her big premiere.

The music kicks in, and we remain on stage with her, watching what we've seen pieces of in full for the very first time.

Maddie is at the peak of her power, pouring every ounce of emotion she's feeling into this, a woman possessed.

And we're right there with her--

--the--

--whole--

--damn--

--time.

And as she nails the end of the solo, she's met with a THUNDEROUS round of applause.

Stage right, Victoria stands amongst the universally impressed Dancers. Her eyes are watery - she can't stop herself from joining the applause.

Back onstage, Maddie breathes hard, tears silently streaming down her face. As the stage lights dim, we--

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE BACK IN on our familiar split screen of the three Maddies. This final time, we PUSH IN on **Bangs Maddie** as the other two fade away.

We'll watch Maddie's story continue on in **2083.**

INT. BANGS MADDIE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT - MONTAGE

Maddie soaks in a bath, scrolling through restaurant menus on her holo-phone. Sighing, she picks one, clicking "Reorder". She's a creature of habit now.

INT. BANGS MADDIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME - MONTAGE

Maddie lies on the couch, watching the news. A KNOCK at her window. She turns to see a DELIVERY DRONE holding her food.

INT. BANGS MADDIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME - MONTAGE

Maddie absentmindedly scrolls her phone as she quickly eats her lo mein, still having that insatiable appetite.

INT. BANGS MADDIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME - MONTAGE

Maddie lies in bed reading, lamp on next to her. She yawns, tossing her tablet aside and shutting off the light.

INT. BANGS MADDIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING - MONTAGE

Maddie's eyes open as she's woken by her alarm - 6:00 AM. No emotion as she rolls out of bed.

She makes her way to her dresser, upon which we see SEVERAL FRAMED PICTURES of Maddie onstage in different productions, another of her standing in front of her own picture outside a NYC theatre. A successful career, *another life*, behind her.

INT. BANGS MADDIE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - SAME - MONTAGE

Maddie wears her work scrubs, pulling her hair into a ponytail. She checks herself in the mirror, forcing a smile.

INT. REC ROOM - DAY - MONTAGE

Maddie distributes BREAKFAST TRAYS and PILLS to the OLD FOLKS. She eyes Gramps across the room, avoiding him.

INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON - MONTAGE

Maddie paces down the hallway, pausing outside Gramps' room. Inside, he's being visited by a now elderly Hillary along with an army of CHILDREN and GRANDCHILDREN. Maddie smiles sadly at the sight before continuing on her way.

EXT. HOSPICE - EVENING - END MONTAGE

Bangs Maddie exits the building in her civilian clothes, pulling her coat tightly around her.

EXT. TANNER'S HOUSE - EVENING

Maddie stands on the doorstep, holding a pie tin. The door swings open to reveal Tanner, now in his early 60s. He grins wide, pulling Maddie in for a hug.

TANNER

Hey, Mom.

INT. TANNER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Maddie eats dinner with Tanner and his GRANDKIDS: OLIVIA, 7, and LIAM, 2.

OLIVIA

Maddie?

Maddie smiles at Olivia, warmth we've never seen from her.

MADDIE

Yes, sweetie?

OLIVIA

Why don't we call you Grandma?

A sigh from Maddie, not surprised to hear this question now.

MADDIE

Well, I'm actually your grandpa's mom... so I'm really your *great-grandma*. But Maddie's easier than great-grandma, don't you think?

TANNER

(rolls eyes)

Oh, I'm *sure* that's the reason.

LIAM

Great-grandMaddie!

Tanner smirks at Maddie, who stifles a laugh.

OLIVIA

But, if you're Grandpa's mom... why do you look so young?

TANNER

Some people are just lucky, Liv.

Tanner winks in Maddie's direction.

INT. TANNER'S HOUSE - LATER

Maddie helps Tanner with the dishes as the kids watch a holographic movie in the background. Practically the whole room is illuminated.

TANNER

Hey *gam-gam*, could you toss me that towel?

MADDIE

If you call me that one more time...

TANNER

So cranky in your old age.

Maddie laughs it off. She focuses back on the sink, psyching herself up.

MADDIE

Hey, I wanted to let you know that, uh... your da-- Julian is not doing very well.

Tanner doesn't meet her gaze, drying his plate vigorously.

TANNER

Okay.

MADDIE

Look, I just think--

TANNER

I've already said I'm willing to meet the guy. He's the one who--

MADDIE

No, I know. I get it.

TANNER

So, what do you want me to do?

MADDIE

I just thought you should know.

TANNER

Okay... thanks for telling me.

Maddie's shirt is tugged and she looks down to see Olivia.

MADDIE

Yes, dear?

OLIVIA

Maddie, will you play with us?

Maddie looks to Tanner for permission.

TANNER

(re: dishes)

I got this.

He can't help but smile as he watches Maddie go off to wrestle with Olivia and Liam.

INT. GRAMPS' HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A stark contrast as Maddie tentatively enters Gramps' room, a scowl on his face.

GRAMPS

Come to dope me up again?

MADDIE

I'm nothing if not a generous drug dealer.

Maddie hands him his pills, and he swallows them with a swish of day old water beside him.

A beat while he wonders why she's still there.

GRAMPS

What, you don't trust me?

He sticks his tongue out to prove he took them. It puts the hint of a smile on Maddie's face.

MADDIE

Julian, I wanted to talk to you about something.

GRAMPS

Oh, Christ, here it comes.

Maddie sits beside his bed, taking his hand.

MADDIE

I know last time we talked about this, you weren't receptive, but--

GRAMPS

Maddie, no.

MADDIE

I know you. You're going to regret it if you don't meet your son.

GRAMPS

I have three sons already. I have five grandsons. What do I need another son for?

MADDIE

He wants to meet his father.

GRAMPS

Aren't you the one who decided to give him up?

She pulls her hand back, crossing her arms.

MADDIE

That is not fair.

Gramps looks away, regretful of that comment.

GRAMPS

Sorry, I just... I can't do it to Hillary. It'd be yet another reminder of the woman I betrayed her with. Bad enough you work here.

MADDIE

You're running out of time to change your mind. I don't want--

GRAMPS

Don't you talk to me about running out of time! You think in my last days this is what I want? I don't want some new connection.

(looking out the window)

I want out of this place!

Gramps is breathing heavy, fired up.

GRAMPS (CONT'D)

I want to go out into the world, where no one's gonna poke and prod me and make me swallow a hundred pills a day. You wanna do something for me, you do that. Otherwise... no thanks.

Maddie nods, not wanting to look at him.

KRISTA (PRE-LAP)

You can't force him to meet Tanner.

INT. BANGS MADDIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Maddie gets ready for bed, a hologram of Krista behind her.

MADDIE

Maybe I could just bring Tanner to his room one day.

KRISTA

Right. That seems like a good idea.

MADDIE

How about you suggest something then?

KRISTA

How about obeying his wishes?

MADDIE

But what about Tanner?

Krista can't help but giggle.

KRISTA

Look at you now... Thinking only of others. Where's the Maddie of our youth?

MADDIE

Yeah, well... speaking of others,
how's Natalie?

KRISTA

Good, good.
(leaning closer)
Starting to look real old, though.

NATALIE (O.S.)

How dare you!

NATALIE, Krista's middle-aged partner pops into her hologram.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Hi, Maddie. Just showing you that
I, in fact, look amazing.

Maddie laughs as Krista takes over the screen again.

KRISTA

I should go. But, Mads, seriously,
drop this, think about yourself for
once. Maybe come up to Washington.
It's a lot cooler here since we
seceded. Also... your bangs look
dope.

As Krista's hologram dissipates, Maddie lies down to go to sleep, staring blankly at the ceiling.

EXT. HOSPICE - DAY

Sun shines brightly down on the medical facility.

INT. GRAMPS' HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Maddie quickly pushes a wheelchair into the room, peering back into the hallway to make sure no one's there. Gramps eyes her quizzically as she softly shuts the door.

GRAMPS

What's this?

MADDIE

You're getting your wish.

EXT. HOSPICE - SAME

Maddie rushes Gramps (now sitting in the wheelchair) through the exit, a self-driving cab waiting out front for them.

INT. CAB - SAME

Maddie and Gramps buzz with nervous excitement as they watch the hospice fade into the distance.

GRAMPS

You're gonna get in big trouble.

MADDIE

As long as you're happy.

A smile comes to Gramps' face, maybe the first we've seen.

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - DAY - MONTAGE

The sun shines brightly down on them as Maddie walks Gramps through Griffith Park. She spots a fruit cart. Gramps grins as she pushes him to it.

EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER - DAY - MONTAGE

Maddie pushes Gramps through throngs of PEOPLE to the pier's edge, and he closes his eyes and listens to the waves hitting the shore. Feeling the warmth of the sunshine on his face.

INT. HEAL THE BAY AQUARIUM - DAY - MONTAGE

A smack of JELLYFISH waft softly as they swim through the tunnel. Underneath, Maddie and Gramps gaze upon them.

EXT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - AFTERNOON - END MONTAGE

Maddie and Gramps stop on the sidewalk, something grabbing their attention. Both downcast at what they're seeing.

GRAMPS

It was so beautiful before.

REVEAL the Skyview Theatre, now in a state of disrepair, abandoned and breaking down.

MADDIE

I bet we can still go inside.

INT. SKYVIEW THEATRE - SAME

Maddie carefully navigates Gramps through the remains, beams of light streaming in via broken windows.

They reach the stage, intact but much worse for the wear. Gramps looks to it all, overwhelmed.

MADDIE
Hey, it's okay.

GRAMPS
Sometimes it feels like my memories are blending together, like... I can see my whole life all at once.

Maddie peers at the stage, for a moment seeing Red Hair Maddie performing at the height of her powers.

MADDIE
I understand. More than you know.
(lighter)
Technically we are the same age.

Gramps chuckles harshly.

GRAMPS
Technically.
(regretful)
You know, I read all the reviews after. They said you were tremendous.

MADDIE
Well, I had a great director.

GRAMPS
I wish I'd gotten to see it. See all their minds blown watching you.

Maddie smiles a sad, nostalgic smile.

MADDIE
I guess you never did get to see me in a big production, huh?

GRAMPS
That's... not exactly true.

Curious, Maddie raises an eyebrow.

FLASH OF: A PACKED Broadway theater, Ford among the crowd.

GRAMPS (CONT'D)
Midsummer Night's Dream. A few years after you moved. I was in New York for the weekend, and... I couldn't resist.

FLASH OF: Ford, emotional, joins a standing ovation.

MADDIE
That's very sneaky of you.
(sly grin)
So... what did you think?

FLASH OF: Red Hair Maddie greets fans. Ford watches from afar, sadly turning away and disappearing into the crowd.

GRAMPS
You were... *spectacular*. But it wasn't the same as seeing what we created. Together.

A bittersweet feeling hangs in the air.

MADDIE
I could... do it for you now?

GRAMPS
You don't still remember?

Maddie looks away, almost embarrassed. Gramps laughs.

GRAMPS (CONT'D)
Course you do. Why'd I even ask?

She climbs on the stage, getting in position. But she stops--

MADDIE
I'm gonna be rusty though. And I don't even have my shoes. I'm in regular clothes--

GRAMPS
You don't have to prove anything to me.

Maddie takes a deep breath, readying herself, before launching into the opening of *La Sylphide*, the same moves we saw her perform in the last timeline. And yes she is a little rusty, a bit unvarnished, but the raw nature of this performance and seeing the look on Gramps' face... well... it might just be even better than the last time she did it.

Finishing up, Maddie takes a dramatic bow before stepping off the stage and returning to Gramps. Silence sets in, before--

GRAMPS (CONT'D)
You never should've given it up.

FLASH OF: Red Hair Maddie, fans gone now. No longer on stage, she just feels... empty.

MADDIE

Your dreams don't mean much if you
have no one to share them with.

GRAMPS

Mads...

MADDIE

We should get you back.

GRAMPS

Ahh, you're breaking my heart.

She reaches for his wheelchair, but he waves her away--

GRAMPS (CONT'D)

One second.

Using all the force he can muster, Gramps pushes down on the wheelchair arms, taking a moment to shakily stand on his own. Maddie nervously spots him.

MADDIE

You okay?

He nods, eyes watery as he reaches for her. She steadies him, and they slowly sway. A final dance, very limited by his poor mobility. But we can see how much it means to them both.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

You should sit back down.

GRAMPS

Give me one more minute.

She acquiesces, holding him tightly so he doesn't fall. Holding him like she never wants to let go.

GRAMPS (CONT'D)

You got me.

MADDIE

I do.

INT. CAB - EVENING

The cab stops in a tree-lined suburban neighborhood. Gramps looks around, confused.

GRAMPS

Where are we?

MADDIE
I'm sorry... I had to, Julian.

Outside the car, Tanner appears on the sidewalk, giving a hesitant wave. Gramps eyes him, working overtime to suppress his emotions. So many rushing to the surface.

GRAMPS
So... that's him, huh?

Maddie nods, hopeful she did the right thing. Gramps sighs.

GRAMPS (CONT'D)
I guess he's not a bad looking kid.

INT. CAB - LATER

Maddie now sits alone, watching through the window as Tanner wheels Gramps down the sidewalk back toward the cab.

INT. CAB - LATER

Maddie and Gramps sit in silence as the car drives them through rush hour, traffic zipping by at seemingly hundreds of miles an hour. Maddie waits for him to say something.

GRAMPS
You were right, Maddie.

She absorbs that, grateful for those words.

GRAMPS (CONT'D)
And you better enjoy me saying that. It's the last time you're gonna hear it.

MADDIE
Of course you couldn't let that compliment sit there by itself.

A chuckle from Gramps.

GRAMPS
Never.

Maddie moves her hand closer to his, their dove and birdcage tattoos mingling together once more.

MADDIE
I'm sure Hillary will understand.

GRAMPS

Look, my... resistance wasn't
really about Hillary. I... thought
if I met him, I'd have to relive
all the pain of losing you. That he
would be too much of a reminder.

Maddie sits with that.

MADDIE

Was he?

GRAMPS

Of course. But it was worth it.

MADDIE

You know, I just...

Maddie holds tears back as she struggles to speak.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

The universe keeps bringing you
back into my life, and I thought if
I could get you to meet him, that
it might make up for everything
I've done to you, all the chaos and
hurt I've brought to your life.
Because I just want to know... when
you go... that we're at peace.

GRAMPS

It may be hard to believe, but you
brought a lot more comfort to my
life than pain, Maddie. If I've
made you think otherwise these last
few months, it's just because...
I'm old, okay?

They both smile through their emotion.

GRAMPS (CONT'D)

I thought I was gonna have more
time than I did. I realize that's
foolish to say now. It just... *it*
goes by so fast. I wouldn't trade
Hillary, or my family, for anything
in the world. But...

Maddie puts her hand on top of Gramps'.

GRAMPS (CONT'D)

If I *really* knew how fast it was
gonna go, maybe-- maybe I would've--

MADDIE
It's okay, Julian. You made the
right decision.

Maddie tightens her grip on his hand, full of emotion. She turns to look out the window as the city passes her by.

A few moments later, the cab finally pulls into the hospice parking lot. Maddie wipes her eyes, readying herself to lose her job for fulfilling Julian's last wish. She exhales.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
Here we go. Ready?

She's met with no answer, and she turns to see--

--JULIAN IS DEAD.

Sound fades from the scene. Maddie's eyes bulge as she reaches over to check his vitals. Sensing nothing, she opens her door, SCREAMING MOS for help. We pull back as NURSES sprint toward the car.

EXT. HOSPICE - NIGHT

An ADMINISTRATOR watches stoically as Maddie carries her things out of the building, disgraced and depressed.

INT. BANGS MADDIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Maddie sits on the edge of her bed in her underwear. She's out of it, almost not even there. Lying next to her is a BLACK DRESS - funeral attire.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Maddie pulls up in her self-driving car to a packed parking lot. Lots of PEOPLE milling about. She looks to the picture outside - one of Julian in his Mr. Ford days.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Making her way inside, Maddie goes completely anonymous in the sea of black suits and dresses. She's almost overwhelmed by how many Attendees have gathered. How many people were a part of Julian's life... a life she never got to know.

Maddie makes her way to a pew, sitting toward the back of the packed church. At the head of the room, Hillary addresses the crowd, delivering her eulogy MOS.

Finding it hard to look at Hillary, Maddie turns her attention to a LITTLE GIRL in one of the pews. She sees a QUICK FLASH of herself - looking like she did in the opening.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Julian's casket is carried by pallbearers as Maddie watches in the crowd. From her perspective, the pallbearers become those she's lost: on one side the three Julians, on the other Deb and Steven.

Maddie can't watch any longer, turning away.

INT. MR. FORD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Maddie exits the kitchen doorway into the living room. As she uneasily makes her way through the room, she picks up nods of condolence here and there, though nobody recognizes her.

Around the room, Maddie gets a look at various PICTURES of Hillary and Julian's life together: them at their wedding, Christmas with their children, backyard parties with the grandchildren and extended family.

The family she could have had. The *life* she could've had. Looking at it all sucks.

She eyes the drink table across the room, her guard hopelessly down as we cut to--

INT. MR. FORD'S HOUSE - LATER

Maddie leans against the wall, doing her best to not engage with anyone. There's a droopiness to her eyes that suggests she's had a few more drinks than just the one she's holding. She's fixated on something across the room.

From Maddie's POV, we see the object of her attention: JULIAN'S URN, resting on the living room mantle.

As if magnetically pulled, Maddie moves to the urn. Reaching it, her eyes glaze over. Confronted with the harsh reality yet again.

She tentatively reaches out--

--closer--

--closer--

HILLARY (O.S.)

Maddie?

Maddie whips around, Hillary behind her. Others take notice as a tense silence reverberates off the women.

Unsure what to do, Maddie gulps down her drink, pacing toward the back door--

EXT. MR. FORD'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Maddie pops out of the door, STUMBLING. She looks around for her car, clearly not remembering where she parked. She pulls out her keys, presses the unlock button many times.

MADDIE

Come on!

YOUNG GUY (O.S.)

You need some help?

Maddie turns, spotting a YOUNG GUY amongst a group of other TWENTY-SOMETHINGS smoking pot behind the house.

MADDIE

Sorry. I'm just looking for my car.

YOUNG GUY

What's the rush?

One of the Twenty-somethings, a YOUNG WOMAN, smirks.

YOUNG WOMAN

He's saying he thinks you're hot!

YOUNG GUY

(annoyed)

What the fuck?

Maddie brushes it off, pressing her key again.

YOUNG WOMAN

But seriously, we're going to a party... should be fun. Being around all this death, why not live it up, right?

Maddie stares at the Young Woman, those words pushing her to regress to a Younger Maddie. She sighs.

MADDIE

Not like I can find my car anyway.

EXT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

Bangs Maddie and her new group of Twenty-something Friends all hop out of a self-driving cab. Loud bass emanates out of the house, it's a total rager.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - KITCHEN - MONTAGE

Even crazier inside than expected. Maddie & Friends DO SHOTS. A DJ bumps ultra-minimal high bass robot music of the future.

YOUNG GUY
Isn't this song awesome?!

MADDIE
(clearly lying)
Oh... for sure.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - LIVING ROOM - MONTAGE

Young Guy preps a line of cocaine, offers Maddie a rolled up bill. She's drunk enough for this to seem like a great idea.

EXT. HOUSE PARTY - BACKYARD - MONTAGE

Young Guy NODS RAPIDLY as someone hands Maddie a futuristic-looking vape pen.

MADDIE
(out of it)
...like maybe death finally
releases us from this fixed, one
way flow of time and allows us to
see all of our life at once in a
four-dimensional context, you know?

Staring into her eyes, Young Guy's clearly fallen for Maddie.

YOUNG GUY
TOTALLY.

Behind Young Guy, Maddie spots her Short Hair and Red Hair counterparts, watching her. She rubs her eyes, and when she looks again, they're gone.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door BURSTS open. Maddie and Young Guy making out passionately as she pushes him toward the bed. Maddie crawls on top of him, quickly unbuttoning his shirt.

YOUNG GUY

Uhh... I, uh... think I really
like you--

MADDIE

Stop talking.

Maddie finishes unbuttoning his shirt, pulling it open to eye his boyish but chiseled physique. She kisses his chest.

Young Guy flips Maddie onto her back, leaning down to kiss her as she runs her hands down his abdomen.

YOUNG GUY

This isn't too fast, is it--

Maddie shuts him up with another kiss. Things are escalating quickly... until he notices that she's started crying. Concerned, Young Guy stops.

YOUNG GUY (CONT'D)

Hey... are you okay?

MADDIE

I'm fine. Kiss me.

Young Guy complies, though reluctantly. After a bit more kissing, he stops. She's doing her best to hide her emotion, but it's not easy when she's as fucked up as she is.

YOUNG GUY

Seriously, what's wrong? I mean, if it's the funeral thing - I totally get it.

MADDIE

It's not that--

But she stops herself, something about this guy pushing her to open up a little.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

...do you know how many funerals I've been to? And sometimes I just think... how many am I gonna have to go to? Is this what I chose? To be alone?

YOUNG GUY

I used to always be such a mess when it comes to stuff like that. But, then I realized, it's just another part of life.

(MORE)

YOUNG GUY (CONT'D)
And like, yeah - I mean, he was my
grandpa. So it sucks. But he was
old. And--

MADDIE
I'm sorry, your grandpa?!

YOUNG GUY
Yeah... did you not... know that?

MADDIE
Oh, God--

YOUNG GUY
What's wrong... oh fuck-- we're not
related, are we?!

Pushing him off of her, Maddie JUMPS to her feet.

MADDIE
I need to get out of here.

YOUNG GUY
Wait--

She stumbles, the room spinning as she charges into--

INT. HOUSE PARTY - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maddie races past the youthful debauchery. She pulls out her phone, doing her best to order a cab while seeing double.

In front of her, Red Hair Maddie and Mr. Ford make out on the dance floor.

MADDIE
No...

Young Guy follows Maddie while buttoning his shirt. From her view, he's replaced by Julian--

JULIAN
Stop! Let's talk about this--

EXT. HOUSE PARTY - CONTINUOUS

Maddie bursts out. Thirty-feet away, her self-driving cab pulls up rapidly - passenger door opening by itself.

She hops in. Just as the car is about to take off, Young Guy reaches it, pounding on the window.

YOUNG GUY
*You're not gonna tell my parents,
 are you?!*

The car speeds off, leaving Young Guy in a cloud of dust.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

Maddie lies down in the backseat, looking much worse for the wear. She opens a bottle of water, CHUGGING IT.

We see FLASHES of Julian: youth, middle-age, final years.

Maddie squeezes her temples, trying to wish away the spins.

More FLASHES: of her father, her mother.

It's all too much. Maddie breathes deep, but there's no stopping this from coming up. She VOMITS all over the cab, and it comes to an IMMEDIATE STOP.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
Violation recorded. Please exit the vehicle.

MADDIE
 What? I didn't do anything--

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
Please exit the vehicle or I will be forced to notify the police.

Giving in, Maddie grabs the door handle.

MADDIE
 Fine. I'm leaving.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
A cleaning fee will automatically be charged to your account, and your rider rating will be lowered.

Maddie steps out into the night as the cab again takes off. She flicks it off.

MADDIE
Fuck you... CAR!

She turns her attention to the long road to Julian's house.

EXT. MR. FORD'S HOUSE - TWILIGHT

The sun is on the verge of rising. Maddie - covered in dust, exhausted and still a little fucked up - FINALLY spots her car. She touches her chest, wincing in pain. She pulls out her key, unlocking it remotely.

She walks the last few steps to her car, then PASSES OUT cold before she can even enter it.

FADE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINOUS DESERT ROAD - DAY

A small road etched into the side of the mountain is the only sign of humanity in the nature-filled landscape. A CAR zooms past us, headed up the mountain.

INT. HILLARY'S CAR - DAY

TIGHT ON Maddie in the passenger seat as she blinks herself awake in the blinding sunlight. Confused, she surveys her surroundings, realizing *Hillary is sitting next to her.*

HILLARY
(clearing throat)
Morning.

MADDIE
What... What's going on? Where are we?

Gazing outside at the familiar landscape, Maddie tries to make sense of where she is.

HILLARY
You know, Julian told me you had a drinking problem.

Maddie looks down, ashamed.

HILLARY (CONT'D)
You may not know I worked as a substance abuse counselor for many years.

MADDIE
I didn't know that.

HILLARY
How long were you sober?

MADDIE
 Coming up on fifty-six years.
 Before yesterday.

HILLARY
Wow.

MADDIE
 Ever heard of anyone breaking that
 long a stretch?

HILLARY
 I've never heard of anyone *lasting*
 that long a stretch. I think it's
 really admirable.

Maddie looks to her in surprise.

MADDIE
 How can you... how can you say
 anything nice to me right now?

HILLARY
 I spent a lot of time being angry
 with you, Maddie. Years. But...
 eventually I realized the only one
 I was hurting was myself. Maybe
 that sounds naive or weak, but I
 choose to believe there's a lot of
 strength in forgiveness.

Despite herself, she does get a little emotional.

HILLARY (CONT'D)
 You were Julian's first love. You
 never aged a day. How on Earth was
 I supposed to compete with that?

MADDIE
 You say that... but you won. You
 got Julian, and... all of it.

Hillary looks to Maddie, sensing her pain.

HILLARY
 Not all of it... You got to spend
 his last day with him.

MADDIE
 I'm... I'm sorry. But he-- he was
 talking about you... at the end.

Hillary takes that in, quietly gloating.

HILLARY

I know how badly he wanted out of that place, so I... I understand why you did it. I'm sure he was grateful. That's why I thought... we should do this together.

MADDIE

Do what? Where are we going?

HILLARY

Oh, come on. You really can't guess by now?

Maddie stares out the window, finally realizing--

INT. MADDIE'S CAR - AFTERNOON - FLASHBACK

We're back with Short Hair Maddie, driving up the same road she's currently on with Hillary. She comes around a bend to--

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS - FLASHBACK

A charming cabin sits alone, surrounded by lush trees. Short Hair Maddie parks, and she steps out, taking a deep breath of the fresh mountain air.

She looks around for a moment, the view calming, before heading around the back of the house. In the midst of the rocky landscape, Maddie locates the one discolored rock, opening the back of it to find a KEY inside.

INT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - BATHROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Maddie lies in a luxurious bubble bath, searching again for inner peace. She touches her shoulder scar self-consciously.

INT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - MAIN AREA - LATER - FLASHBACK

The inside of the cabin is even more charming than the outside. Maddie comes downstairs in a bathrobe, making her way to a wine fridge in the kitchen. She stares for some time then finally grabs a bottle, uncorking it--

JULIAN (O.S.)

Maddie?

Maddie jumps, nearly dropping the bottle. She whips around to see Julian standing in the doorway, confused. They stare at each other a moment before Julian closes the door behind him.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

I hate to say this, but your family cabin privileges kind of ended a year ago when our relationship did.

MADDIE

Yeah, of course, sorry. I just-- it seemed like based on social media you were in the city and I thought fresh air would do me some good.

Julian nods, letting the silence resume. Maddie's not sure what to do. Julian eyes her glass of wine.

JULIAN

I heard what happened from your mom. I don't think you're supposed to be drinking.

MADDIE

You gonna report me?

Julian approaches her slowly, keeping his distance.

JULIAN

Maddie...

MADDIE

I haven't been drinking. But I thought tonight could be an exception, because I'm actually here to... say goodbye. To you. I just didn't realize you'd be here for it. So... what are you doing up here? Where's Hillary?

JULIAN

She's out of town for work. And I just... wanted to enjoy the view.

MADDIE

Sorry to get in the way of that.

He looks to her meaningfully. You could cut the tension.

JULIAN

You're not.

Maddie changes the subject--

MADDIE

I think I'm gonna... go back to dancing again.

JULIAN

I always thought you should.

MADDIE

I know you did.

(moving closer to him)

You were... you were the best thing
I had. And I never...

She moves closer, kissing him softly. He lets it happen.

JULIAN

(pulling away)

Mads.

MADDIE

Please. Please.

She kisses him again, but this time he resists.

JULIAN

We're not doing this. I'm sorry.

Julian looks into Maddie's eyes for a long beat before heading for the stairs. He doesn't look back.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

I'll see you in the morning.

Maddie watches him go, powerless.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - AFTERNOON

Back in 2083. The sun just starts to set on the mountaintop, spilling glorious orange light down onto the landscape below.

Hillary's car pulls in beside the cabin, and she and Bangs Maddie both step out into the chilly mountain air.

They pull their coats tighter against the cold as they make their way toward a rocky path leading further up the mountain. Maddie holds **JULIAN'S URN** in one arm as she steadies Hillary, who struggles with the incline.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCKY INCLINE - MORNING - FLASHBACK

Julian and Short Hair Maddie head up the same trail.

JULIAN

I'm sorry about last night.

Maddie snorts a laugh.

MADDIE

You're sorry? I nearly died of embarrassment this morning.

JULIAN

Trust me, I wanted to, but...
things have changed. For good.
And... a lot of it is my fault.
(looking to his tattoo)
I was always so scared of losing
you. That fear made me act in ways
I'm not proud of. But please know I
never wanted to lock you in a cage.

MADDIE

I know that. And ironically, I
think I locked myself in one...

Julian takes that in, not sure what to say, until--

JULIAN

Here we are.

Maddie looks up to see they've arrived at a lookout point, a
picturesque vista all around them.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

This was always my favorite sight
in the world growing up.

He gazes back at Maddie.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Maybe second favorite.

MADDIE

It's beautiful. I can't believe
you've never taken me here before.

JULIAN

Hillary's pregnant, Maddie.

Maddie can't hide how much that hurts to hear.

MADDIE

(full of shit)
I'm happy for you.

But she can't even pretend a little bit--

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Happy you found someone to give you some babies. She probably even has money too, huh?

Julian scoffs sadly, disappointed.

JULIAN

You know, she never makes a big deal out of the money. You could never stop talking about it, but it's not important to her.

A guilty look from Maddie. Unable to not feel bad for her, Julian places his hand to her cheek.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Nothing can ever replace you in my heart. I hope you feel the same.

Looking back in his eyes, Maddie struggles to say anything.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Good luck, Maddie. Maybe we'll meet again someday.

Julian turns to the trail, away from her, leaving her behind. Maddie watches as he grows smaller in the distance.

EXT. ROCKY PATH - SUNSET

Bangs Maddie and Hillary finally make it to the end of the path, Hillary exhausted and breathing a sigh of relief.

MADDIE

You gonna be okay to get back down?

HILLARY

I'm a lot stronger than I look.

Maddie grins, handing Hillary the urn as they both look out at the beauty before them.

HILLARY (CONT'D)

He always said this was his favorite sight in the world. *After me, that is.*

Maddie smirks, but decides to let her have that one.

MADDIE

It's a great place to do this... and I appreciate you including me.

HILLARY

I just want him to feel as much love as possible. Even if some of that has to come from you.

They share a smile. Hillary sighs as she readies herself to open the urn.

HILLARY (CONT'D)

I didn't think it'd be so hard to say goodbye.

MADDIE

I've said goodbye to him more than once. It's never easy.

Maddie reaches for Hillary's hand, helping her.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

But it's easier together.

They turn the urn over, both holding tears back, watching as his scattered remains take flight.

HILLARY

What did he say about me?

MADDIE

What?

HILLARY

You said he was talking about me.

MADDIE

Yeah... he said... he said you were an amazing partner, that you had a beautiful family, that he couldn't have been happier with his life.

Hillary can't hold the tears in, pulling Maddie in for a hug. Maddie lets herself give in to the hug, almost at peace.

INT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - LATER

Maddie and Hillary step back into the cabin, bathing in its warmth. Maddie flops onto the couch, emotionally drained. Hillary turns the TV on. It drones in the background, neither really paying attention to it.

BUZZ. Maddie's phone goes off, a text from Krista: "Did you see the news? You definitely need to visit now!"

Curious, Maddie looks up at the TV, where the PRESIDENT of the REPUBLIC OF WASHINGTON is speaking--

PRESIDENT (ON TV)
...the great Republic of Washington will continue to be a *progressive* beacon for the future, one of America's rebirth, and we'll begin by correcting one of the biggest errors of our recent past. As of next month, decelerant transplants will once again be legal within our borders...

Off Maddie, allowing herself a glimmer of hope.

MADDIE (PRE-LAP)
One ticket to Seattle.

EXT. HYPERLOOP STATION - AFTERNOON

Maddie purchases a ticket from an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT
Just one?

Maddie nods, finally okay with that.

MADDIE
Just one.

INT. HYPERLOOP - LATER

Maddie wanders the fairly empty vessel, sidling into a seat. As she gets comfortable--

GUY (O.S.)
Mind if I sit here?

Maddie looks up to see a handsome GUY, mid 20s. She eyes the many empty seats around them.

MADDIE
Oh, uh, sure.

He sits, nervous energy radiating off him.

GUY
You been on one of these? They're kinda freaky but... ninety minutes LA to Seattle? Can't beat that.

MADDIE
You'll get used to it.

GUY
So, are you going up there to get
the procedure, too?

Before Maddie can answer--

GUY (CONT'D)
I'm thinking about it. I mean, I'm
pretty sure I wanna do it, but I...
don't know... what do you think?
God, I bet I sound like a lunatic.

Maddie smiles, completely understanding his emotions.

MADDIE
I get it. I've actually been a
jellyfish for a long time. And, at
first, I thought... well I didn't
know if I made the right choice. I
didn't know what I should focus on
in my life, and I thought the
procedure would give me clarity on
that. It didn't. But after all this
time... now I know I made the right
decision.

GUY
Wow. So... what *did* you decide to
do with your life?

Maddie laughs to herself. That's a loaded question.

MADDIE
I... went after my dream. I helped
people. I had a great love. And
what comes next... I still don't
know... and that's what's great
about it. So... I really think you
should go for it.

(teasing)
At least before your hair turns
completely gray.

Guy's brow furrows. He touches his hair.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
I'm just teasing.

GUY
You're one to talk. You've got a
couple gray hairs there yourself.

MADDIE

Oh, please.

GUY

I'm serious. Go look.

Disbelieving, Maddie rises, scooting past Guy, who immediately regrets his words.

GUY (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to offend you!

Maddie races down the aisle, bursting into--

INT. HYPERLOOP - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She looks in the mirror, shocked to see that sure enough--

TWO GRAY HAIRS have found their way onto her right temple. Her hands shake as she PLUCKS one from her head.

As Maddie takes it in, emotion overwhelms her. She can't help but smile wide, her eyes watering.

She's not immortal after all.

The End