

UNDYING

Written by
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FROM DARKNESS --

A blurred figure slowly comes into focus. Gangly. Pale. Spectral. As it drifts towards us...

A chilling HOWL rises in our skull. This muffled, haunting keen. Louder. THE FIGURE IS UPON US --

INT. LIVING ROOM - APARTMENT - DAY

-- FIONA, 30's, opens her eyes to see the howling child with a white sheet over his head.

She simply stares, beleaguered on the plush sofa as both kids giggle and smother her.

EMMA, 9, too wise for her own good, yanks the sheet off her brother, OLIVER, 6, a spark-plug of rebellious boy energy.

OLIVER

Did I scare you, mama?

FIONA

Very scary, yes.

She sits up, lithe frame hiding beneath an old hoodie. The streak of blue in her hair a scant cry for who she once was.

FIONA (CONT'D)

What time is it?

EMMA

Five.

FIONA

Oh shit -- Coats! Boots!

MOMENTS LATER --

All three of them don cumbersome rain-gear until Fiona stops in the mirror. Studies herself, torn in two.

OLIVER

Daddy's gonna be home soon!

FIONA

I know, Bug, hang on!

Instead she throws on her vintage patch-strewn cargo jacket, this baggy and impractical badge of honor.

EXT. BROOKLYN HEIGHTS - DUSK

Fiona and her children brave the cold rain as they pass upscale boutiques and smartly dressed families.

INT. FANCY GROCERY STORE, BROOKLYN HEIGHTS - NIGHT

Bubbles swirl around a lobster. This poor fucker moping at the bottom of the tank with all his doomed lobster brethren.

Through the wavy glass, Fiona's face appears. Then Oliver's. Then Emma's. Their gleeful voices muffled as they point.

Fiona makes a lobster face with pinchers and they all laugh.

INT. CHECKOUT LINE, FANCY GROCERY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

The kids run amok on the candy shelf as Fiona loses herself in a text convo -- this lifeline to adult joy.

BECCA: he says he's in his 30's but he looks like a child!

FIONNA: pics?

BECCA: (dating app profile pic of a ripped 20-something)

Fiona snickers. Quickly searches. Sends back a GIF of a built young man porno-fucking a middle-aged woman.

BECCA: LOL WTF do you have that?! Fiona snickers impishly, about to write back when --

RITA (O.S.)
-- Fiona!

She hides her phone and clocks RITA, 40's, a wealthy factory-issued stay-at-home mom with the most punchable of smiles.

RITA (CONT'D)
Greg and I were just talking about
Trevor's good news!

FIONA
Oh. Well. It's not official yet.

RITA
Hey I didn't hear back from you
about the newsletter.

FIONA
Yea, sorry. Crazy week.

RITA
(whispers)
I'd pass it off but no one on the
PTA can write like you.

And as Fiona dies inside a little bit, a horrific high-pitched WHINE startles us to --

INT. KITCHEN, APARTMENT - NIGHT

-- The lobster HOWLS as it's plunged into a boiling pot.

Oliver on his tip-toes trying to get a better look as Fiona rushes about the disaster of a kitchen.

OLIVER
Mama, they're screaming!

FIONA
They're not screaming.

OLIVER
They are, I can hear them!

FIONA
It's just air escaping.

The front door jiggles open.

OLIVER
He's home!

TREVOR, 40, handsome but slight. Well-dressed but unassertive. Constantly torn between duty and self-worth.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Daddy, the lobster's are screaming!

TREVOR
Oh. That's... horrible.

FIONA
I'm a little behind here, sorry.

TREVOR
That's okay.

She notices his hangdog demeanor.

FIONA
Everything alright?

TREVOR
Myers changed his mind.

FIONA
I'm sorry *what*?

TREVOR
It's not dead, but...

FIONA
Aw, babe.

TREVOR
I guess there were complaints about
adding another... someone like me.

FIONA
I'm so sorry.

TREVOR
He just wants me to earn it.

FIONA
You *have* earned it! You've given
your soul to that place!

He shrugs, at a loss. She hugs him tight, but we can see it
in her eyes... she has nothing left to give right now.

INT. OLIVER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mother and son under cozy covers as she reads Olly to sleep.

FIONA
"And the tree said: Come, Boy, and
climb up my trunk and swing from my
branches and eat my apples... "

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

The calm after the storm. Fiona is mired in dishes when
something catches her gaze. Down in the trash bin...

That lobster, staring back up at her with bulging lifeless
eyes. Its shell now hollow. Empty and eaten.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

A blast of hot water. The wall rattles as old pipes protest --
CRUNG-CRUNG-CRUNG! She adjusts the pressure until it stops.

FIONA
Christ...

Fiona scrubs her face. Studies herself, pensive. Applies some fancy skin cream. Rubbing. Rubbing. Desperate.

Sigh. This exhausting routine. She turns out the lights.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Trevor sits up in bed, hammering away at his laptop. Quietly, Fiona climbs beneath the taut sheets.

She studies her husband. His face drawn with failure. Eyes distant, dejected. She sets aside her own needs. As always.

FIONA
Hey.

TREVOR
Hm.

FIONA
The money doesn't matter. The kids are happy here. I'm happy here.

TREVOR
The pipes sound like we're at war.

FIONA
We can fix the pipes. Or, someone can.

TREVOR
What about the rats?

FIONA
City life.

TREVOR
There's poop in the drawers.

FIONA
Builds.... character...?

They laugh together. Much needed.

Then a thought consumes her. Something she's been holding onto. Decides to test the waters.

FIONA (CONT'D)
I know it wouldn't be a *windfall* or anything, but...
(MORE)

FIONA (CONT'D)
 I've been talking to Bex.
 (off his look)
 Just a few reviews here and there.
 Part time. Nothing like before.

TREVOR
 We'd spend your take-home on
 childcare.

He can feel her deflating beside him. Closes his laptop.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
 Sweetheart, I know you miss it. I
 miss it *for* you. But, if there's
 one year I need to be all in...

FIONA
 Yea, no. I get it. Maybe I
 shouldn't go this weekend, huh?

TREVOR
 No, come on, you've been looking
 forward to this.

FIONA
 Did you go to *your* twentieth?

TREVOR
 God no, my classmates *sucked*!

FIONA
 Ha, they really did.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING, BROOKLYN HEIGHTS - MORNING

The classic brownstone, wedged shoulder-to-shoulder with
 others just like it. And the frigid sun begins to climb.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Emma's nimble fingers float across a keyboard. An impressive
 twist on Fanny Mendelssohn's Notturno In G-minor.

Fiona rushes to pack lunches as the piece winds down to its
 resolution.

FIONA
 Beautiful, peeps! You're so ready!

Meanwhile, Olly draws crude renderings of MONSTERS fighting
 one another, growling to himself and making fighting noises.

Fiona opens the drawer and finds a pile of RAT SHIT.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Cucks.

OLIVER
Mama, if Hulk squished Wolverine
would he be dead? Try and guess!

FIONA
Sure, Bug.

OLIVER
Nope. He wouldn't. Wolverine can't
die because he heals super fast.

EMMA
Not if you squish his head, idiot!

FIONA
Alright, hey, how bout no head-
squish talk before 8 a.m. yea?

She turns on the sink and -- **CRUNG-CRUNG-CRUNG-CRUNG-CRUNG!** --
the pipes startle her once again.

Trevor swoops through, crisp suit and shaky pride, refills
his thermos, rushed as always.

TREVOR
Bye, kiddos. See ya tonight.

FIONA
Wait, you're picking them up right?

TREVOR
(whoops)
Yea, what time are you leaving
again?

FIONA
Before traffic. Gonna take the
train to Becca's and ride with her.

TREVOR
Perfect. Hey, for real. Have a
great time. Live it up. Love you.

He pecks her lips and rushes out the door, leaving her there
in domestic purgatory.

EXT. CORRIN ACADEMY PREP SCHOOL - MORNING

Traffic and chaos. Fiona drags a suitcase as she speed-walks with her kids through the sea of calm, happy parents.

Emma begins to drag behind. Fiona notices and rushes back to check on her.

FIONA

Peeps, what's wrong? Your tummy?

Emma nods, clutching her belly.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Think maybe you're a little nervous about the recital?

Emma shrugs. Fiona kneels down to her.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Hey. You already sound amazing and you still have a whole week.

EMMA

I know.

FIONA

Everything's gonna be ok. Promise. We can talk more about it tonight.

EMMA

You're leaving.

FIONA

Right. Duh. Tomorrow night then. Come on, dap me up.

But Emma simply rolls her eyes and brushes past her to join the crush of students as they flood towards the school.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Fiona stands on the crowded train, gazing at her reflection. Patches of darkness making her vanish and reappear.

INT. ELEVATOR, CHERRY BOMB - DAY

Brooklyn dream-pop wafts through the elevator as Fiona rides with her bulky suitcase.

Her eyes scan the posters of local bands, flyers for upcoming concerts. Carefree, youthful excitement.

INT. CHERRY BOMB OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

The doors roll open and the energy only grows. Kinetic chatter echoes through the industrial space. And there's --

BECCA, late 30's, stylish and strong, her bright smile and irreverent humor mask a deep quarry of old wounds.

BECCA

Shit shit shit, I was gonna call.
Major fuckery here.

FIONA

Oh no...

BECCA

Yea, I don't think I can dip.

FIONA

We can go later. I'll just hang.
Grab a coffee.

BECCA

Yea... I dunno.

A reticent beat. Fiona reads deeper, knows her friend well.

FIONA

You okay?

BECCA

One hundred. I swear. It's just
some bullshit over here.

Fiona nods, dubious.

BECCA (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, Babe. But here, take
my car.

FIONA

What? I'm not going alone!

BECCA

C'mon, you've been psyched for
this! And the old Dust Bin crew's
supposed to be there, right?

Fiona considers.

BECCA (CONT'D)

Or, better reason... you've been on
mommy lock ten years now and you're
about to lose your goddamned mind.

(MORE)

BECCA (CONT'D)

I know it. Your kids know it. I think all these people *here* know it just looking at you. See their faces? They're afraid.

Fiona laughs.

BECCA (CONT'D)

Look. Fi. As your day-one, I am *ordering* you. Go. Get shitfaced. Make a damn fool of yourself.

And off Fiona's growing smile, some old school 90's grunge takes us --

INT. BECCA'S MERCEDES, HUDSON VALLEY - DRIVING - DAY

Amber swaths of oak flit past as Fiona rocks out. Drums the steering wheel. Dances in her seat.

Then, up ahead, she notices a sign for "TACO BELL."

FIONA

Nope. Fi. Uh uh. Not doing that.

HARD CUT TO --

EXT. TACO BELL DRIVE THROUGH - DAY

We watch from afar as she takes the hefty brown bag.

FIONA

Um, sorry, is there fire sauce?

INT. BECCA'S MERCEDES, HUDSON VALLEY - DRIVING - LATER

Our girl devours a burrito as she grooves to some Oasis. Mouth full, she belts with all the catharsis in the world.

FIONA

"And sooooo Sally can wait, she knows it's too late as we're walking on by. Her souuul slides away, but don't look back in ang --

-- She spills burrito goop on the leather seat --

FIONA (CONT'D)

-- oh, *fuck me* --

EXT. RIVERSIDE INN, HUDSON VALLEY - DAY

The adorably time-worn hotel looms against a dreary sky.

Fiona pulls into the crowded lot. Looks out at the far-too-thoughtfully-made sign, "WELCOME WEST HILLS CLASS OF 2004!"

She pulls down the visor mirror and wipes the fast-food tryst from her lips.

FIONA

That was bad. Bad choices.

INT. LOBBY, RIVERSIDE INN - DAY

Ski-lodge cozy with wood beams and a crackling fire. Light on her feet, Fiona approaches the baby-faced RECEPTIONIST.

RECEPTIONIST

Good afternoon! Are you here for the reunion?

FIONA

I am, yes.

She slides her license to him. His nimble fingers go to work as her eager eyes scan the lobby for anyone she knows.

RECEPTIONIST

Okay, and I'm seeing a request for the third floor?

FIONA

Oh. Not sure. My friend made the reservation.

RECEPTIONIST

Your friend is smart. Much quieter up there.

Suddenly, her gaze lands on a MAN, sitting in the bar area, reading on his phone...

IAN, 30's, devastatingly handsome, buoyant and lean with puppy-dog eyes. He glances up at her.

She quickly shrinks, acting as though she didn't recognize him. But his gaze is unrelenting. His smile disarming.

Sheepishly, she meets his eyes from across the lobby. Offers a "holy-shit-it's-you!" wave.

For a moment, she is lost. Can hardly breathe at the sight of this man she used to know.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Okay we have you in Room 316. Just
need a card for incidentals.

FIONA
Hm? Yea.

She doesn't realize she's trembling until she struggles to find her credit card.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Here we go...

As the Receptionist runs it, Fiona glances back to the bar again... but Ian is no longer there.

Puzzled, she scans the lobby. No sign of him anywhere.

INT. HALLWAY, THIRD FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Fiona's suitcase rumbles over old hardwood and musty rugs as she drifts past warm sconces and pastoral artwork.

Finally, she arrives at ROOM 316.

INT. ROOM 316 - NIGHT

The door whines open to reveal this cozy, vintage gem.

She takes off her coat and flops onto the bed with a massive sigh. Peace. Quiet. Solitude.

Like a teenager turned loose, she clicks on the TV. Cases the mini-bar. Feels the soft white robes.

Then, a smirk crosses her lips. She opens her laptop and hunkers at the desk. Searches Facebook: "Ian Wilkes, NY."

A long list unfurls but none are the man from the lobby. She closes the laptop, disappointed.

INT. ROOM 316 - NIGHT

Fiona slides her iPhone into the vintage-chic bluetooth radio. HOLE'S "Doll Parts" sullies the quaint room.

Her electric eyes focus in the LED mirror as she applies dark eye-liner.

An old VELVET GREEN JEWELRY CASE clicks open to reveal two badass HOOP EARRINGS with small knots of barbed wire. She regards them like dirty little secrets. Then...

Her aching feet squeeze into a pair of vintage DOC MARTENS.

Finally, she steps in front of the long mirror. Absolutely stunning in a tight black dress.

Without sleeves, we finally see her myriad of tattoos. Disparate, snarky, chaotic. Badges of honor from wilder days.

Soon, a wistful smile crosses her face. For the first time in a long time, she feels like she's wearing her own skin.

But suddenly, Courtney Love's rebellious voice is woefully subsumed by obnoxious 90's dance music as --

INT. BALLROOM, HOTEL - NIGHT

-- The cheesy reunion rages. Insecure 30-somethings let loose with free booze and rote stories.

And here's Fiona, helping herself to the open bar as she scans the room, quietly hoping to see Ian again.

Suddenly, she's accosted by LAILA, fake as fuck, with her tall, gawky husband, CHAD.

LAILA

Fi-fi!

FIONA

(kill me)

Oh wow! It's been so long!

They hug, straining for sincerity.

LAILA

Chad, this is Fiona. She and I ran the school newspaper together.

CHAD

Oh, nice! Good to meet you.

FIONA

Same.

LAILA

I didn't expect to see you here!

FIONA

No...?

LAILA

Figured you'd be off, I dunno,
following a band or...
(to Chad)
She writes for Pitchfork.

CHAD

(no clue what that is)
Oh. Wow!

FIONA

I mean, not anymore. So.

LAILA

Oh shit. What happened?!

MOMENTS LATER - Fiona's now trapped in another conversation with her stout classmate SANDY and her wife.

SANDY

Yea, we're actually expanding into
the northeast soon.

FIONA

Wow. Good for you!

MOMENTS LATER - Perky LAUREN treats Fiona as if they're long lost besties.

LAUREN

They actually niced it up and
raised the rates but I figured what
the heck, it's where we had prom!

FIONA

(wishing death)
Thanks again for organizing!

MOMENTS LATER - Fiona gulps another drink in front of ZACH, condescending and self-absorbed.

ZACH

Columbia... literature, right?

FIONA

Journalism.

ZACH

That's right, cause the music
thing!

FIONA

Cause the music thing, yea.

MOMENTS LATER - wealthy and stunning KIMBERLY.

KIMBERLY

I thought keeping my own hours
would be easier but it's just, with
the Zooms and the emails and
managing a team like that --

FIONA

-- Sorry, excuse me one second, I
just remembered something, sorry --

Fiona hurries away and we follow through the dizzying crowd.
The laughter and the music now daggers in her guts...

EXT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

She makes haste down the long hallway to the quiet lobby bar.

FIONA

Hi there. Um, can I trouble you for
a water?

She steadies herself, the party now a mercifully distant din.

IAN (O.S.)

Well, you outlasted me.

Her breath catches when she sees him there, his crooked smile
and big round eyes.

FIONA

Ian! It was you!

Awkwardly, they hug.

FIONA (CONT'D)

I almost didn't recognize you
before. You're...

IAN

Not a scrawny little nerd?

FIONA

Definitely no.

IAN

I'll let you in on a secret.
(leans close)
Deep down, I still really am.

She laughs. Electricity in the air.

IAN (CONT'D)
Meanwhile, you haven't changed,
like, at all.

FIONA
Is that... a good thing?

IAN
I believe it is, yes.

FIONA
Honestly I have, though. Tonight's
just pretend.

IAN
So we're both pretending then.

FIONA
Right on.

IAN
To pretending.

He raises his glass. His gaze enchanting. Fiona's brain
stumbles, she can barely speak.

FIONA
Man... it's been so long.

IAN
Chewie's graduation party.

FIONA
That's right. And then we all
just...

IAN
Adults.

FIONA
Adults.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Ha, Chewie though. Where's he at?

IAN
I think he became a pastor.

FIONA
Fuck off! He did not!

IAN
I'm *serious*!

They both crack up. Nervously, she touches her hair. And that's when she realizes...

FIONA
Oh shit -- my earring.

IAN
Uh oh.

FIONA
Please don't tell me it fell off in there.

IAN
C'mon, I'll help you look.

FIONA
God no, I wouldn't go back in there for one a my own kids.

IAN
Ha! Well. We could have our own party here. I basically already am.

FIONA
Then why'd you even come tonight?

IAN
I'd ask you the same thing.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Flame kisses cigarette as Ian lights her up. The air damp and chilly but they hardly feel it. Invincible now. Young again.

IAN
What about that one?

FIONA
I had this in high school remember?

IAN
No, on your shoulder. The big one.

They're talking about her tats, and he's referring to a gothic rendering of drooping flowers.

FIONA
Amaranths.

IAN
Dead ones?

FIONA

Not dead. That's just how they
roll. Symbol of eternal youth.

IAN

Huh. When'd you get it?

FIONA

About a year before I became a mom,
quit my job, and gave up on life.

She belts out laughing and so does he.

IAN

Man, that's still blowing my mind.
Quitting a gig like that.

FIONA

I mean, seven shows in five nights,
6am deadlines...

IAN

Yea, but that's what you always
wanted, wasn't it?

FIONA

(beat)

Things change.

IAN

Fuckin' adults.

FIONA

Fuckin' adults.

Ian smiles a compassionate smile. Then, he musters his most
earnest amateur singing voice...

IAN

*"Keep on dreamin', girl, cause when
you stop dreamin' it's time to
die."*

She grins and laughs and begins singing, too.

FIONA

*"As we all play parts of
tomorrow..."*

FIONA AND IAN

(singing together)

*"...Some ways we'll work and other
ways we'll play.*

(MORE)

FIONA AND IAN (CONT'D)
*But I know we all can't stay here
 forever, so I wanna write, my words
 on the face of today. AND THEN
 THEY'LL PAINT IT!"*

They both air-guitar. The DOORMAN gives them a sideways look. They shrink and crack up.

IAN
 Sorry, we'll stop.

FIONA
 Sorry about my friend.

They laugh like impish teens. But then, even louder...

FIONA AND IAN
*"And ohhh, as I fade away... they
 all look at me and say..."*

And here they are, harmonizing horrendously into the brisk night air. The only two people in the world right now.

INT. ELEVATOR BANK - NIGHT

Fiona mashes the button as they continue to laugh.

FIONA
 How's your Debbie doing?

IAN
 Heh, my Debbie?

FIONA
 Yea, your Debbie.

IAN
 Honestly, I worry about her. All alone in that house.

FIONA
 Same house?

IAN
 Same house.

FIONA
 Man. That house was the house.

IAN
 Cause she'd buy you guys beer. Not cause we were actually friends.

FIONA
We weren't friends?!

IAN
You were nice to me at least.

FIONA
I liked hanging out with you!

IAN
I'm just bustin' balls.

FIONA
I know.

An awkward beat as the old elevator whines towards them.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Does she still do those crazy cat
paintings?

IAN
The ones you and Becca used to make
fun of?

FIONA
(an old inside joke)
"Quick, how many cats?!"

IAN
See? All you guys were dicks!

FIONA
Oh man, Becca's still a dick.

They both crack up as they step into...

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

An awkward silence sets in as the doors close. Now hurtling
towards some unknown fate. Then, Fiona sniffs the air.

FIONA
Oof. Ammonia.

IAN
Someone probably hoarked.

FIONA
Oh god, I hate throw up.

IAN
Really? I love it!

FIONA

You know I've only thrown up three times my whole life?

IAN

Liar.

FIONA

I swear. Fifteen years, puke free. Even pregnant.

IAN

You're like a vomit superhero!

They laugh hard. The elevator DINGS. The doors roll open.

FIONA

Oh... this is me.

IAN

Sure you're good?

FIONA

One hundred.

IAN

What?

FIONA

Percent. One hundred percent.

IAN

Oh.

She staggers off but Ian stays, holding the doors.

IAN (CONT'D)

Drink lots of water. Eat something. Get room service!

FIONA

Damn you for giving me that idea!

IAN

Hey, if Rocket Eddie's was still open, I'd be calling us a cab.

FIONA

Mmm, that sounds so good right now.

IAN

(smiles)

Was awesome seeing you, Fi.

Suddenly she steps back in and hugs him. Harder than she meant to. The doors start to close but he catches them.

Beat.

FIONA
Almost had to take me with you.

IAN
Wouldn't be the worst thing.

And that's where she has to draw the line. That's where she has to tear herself away.

FIONA
Um... tomorrow? Brunch maybe?

IAN
For sure. I'll text you.

Shakily, she backs off the elevator. He floats that adorably crooked smile as he vanishes behind the closing doors.

INT. ROOM 316 - SAME

Fiona staggers through the door, tipsy as hell. She steadies herself against the crusty old wallpaper.

FIONA
Okay. Here we go.

She wrestles out of her boots, nearly falling. Winces at the fresh blisters on her feet.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Ow. Ow.

We follow as she draws a bath and begins to shimmy off her nostalgic battle-armor. But then...

Something slows her. A distracting thought. Wistful. Yearning. She doesn't even realize she's smiling when --

Her phone suddenly VIBRATES on the counter, startling her.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Jesus.

She checks the ID -- "*HUSBAND PERSON Face-timing.*"

Her conflicted eyes. The rising steam from the tub. And finally, mercifully... the ringing subsides.

"3 missed calls"

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Fiona sinks into the steamy bath. Closes her eyes. Revels in the high of this evening. She even catches herself giggling.

Soon, her hand wanders down between her legs. A soft moan escapes her throat as she sinks deeper... deeper... deeper --

-- KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK! -- she shoots upright! *What the fuck?!*

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Fiona pulls on that soft white robe as she tip-toes to the eye-hole and peeks out. Her heart sinks. *Oh shit oh shit.*

FIONA
Um, hang on!

She glances in the mirror. Tousles her damp hair. Then, finally, she opens the door for him.

IAN
I didn't wake you did I?

FIONA
No, I was just...

IAN
Close your eyes.

FIONA
(laughs)
What...?

IAN
It's a surprise. Just do it.

Nervously, she does as he asks. For a moment, we think he may touch her. Or kiss her. But then...

IAN (CONT'D)
Okay, open.

She opens her bright eyes to see, right in front of her face, the missing EARRING.

FIONA
What?! Where was it?!

IAN
By the DJ booth.

FIONA
You went back?!

IAN
One last recon. Couldn't sleep.

FIONA
Ohmygod, thank you so much.

He places it gently in her hand. She makes sure he doesn't let go. A long, quivering silence. Until suddenly --

-- She kisses him, surprising even herself. He does not protest as she pulls him into the room --

-- The EARRING tumbles to the carpet as the door falls shut and momentum carries them to the bed.

Her robe slides open and he touches her damp skin.

IAN
You sure this is okay?

She doesn't know the answer, but she nods anyway. *And that's when they absolutely devour each other.*

Hands everywhere. He kisses her neck. She tugs at his hair.

Once he's inside it's still not enough. She's clutching heedlessly to flesh. Nails digging. Needing. *Need*ing...

She didn't mean to, but she glances at the floor-to-ceiling mirror -- seeing herself with this man --

It's suddenly all too real, but she can't stop. Sharply, she looks away.

She can hear her own heavy breaths in her skull. Inescapable. The blood rushing through her ears. Pleasure and remorse --

This hellish cacophony inside her head growing louder... Louder... *LOUDER...* and --

EXT. RIVERSIDE INN - DAWN

A babbling brook heaps icy water over glistening rocks. The old inn sits alone as a new dawn breaks the foggy horizon.

INT. ROOM 316 - MORNING

Silver sun bleeds through heavy drapes. Fiona's bleary eyes pry open. Her pale, sweaty forehead throbbing.

FIONA

Oh god...

She rolls over. The bed is empty. Slowly, she sits up. *Was it a dream?* She surveys the room. Notices...

The bathroom door is half shut.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Ian?

No response. Only the gentle thrum of heating ducts.

Painfully, she drags herself from the bed. Blistered feet on rough carpet.

She nudges open the bathroom door. Empty. But that's when she notices, there on the counter...

THE EARRING. Staring back at her. *Mocking her.*

Panic grips her chest. Guilt batters her guts. She feels ill. It's in her throat now -- *uh oh!* --

She rushes to the toilet and folds to her knees, retching. Pale and miserable.

Finally, she falls against the cold tub. Clocks her phone on the counter... her real life on the other end of it. And...

Suddenly, that phone seems to BUZZ. She reaches for it but it's off. The sound is not coming from the phone at all...

It's coming from the toilet beside her.

Cautiously, she creeps on her hands and knees. Trembling, she peeks over the lip of the bowl to see...

The large brown insect bats its veiny wings against the porcelain.

Fiona watches, mesmerized, as THE MOTH clanks aimlessly against the bowl.

Suddenly -- *IT TAKES FLIGHT!* -- startling her. She swats at it but... now it's nowhere to be found.

Exhale.

INT. BECCA'S MERCEDES, BROOKLYN - DRIVING - DUSK

A gloomy pall hugs the city as Fiona crosses the Brooklyn Bridge. Youthful glee now replaced by crushing anxiety.

She fidgets with the gold chain on her neck. It's now we see the pendant: two letters E & O ("Emma and Oliver")

EXT. BROOKLYN HEIGHTS - DUSK

Fiona drags her suitcase from the car. Looks up at the quiet apartment. *This peaceful life she just betrayed.*

EMMA & OLIVER
(pre-lap)
Mommy!!

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Emma and Olly run to hug her as she slinks through the door.

FIONA
Hey -- *oomf!* Hi, munchkins.

Trevor comes over to greet her as well. Walls closing in.

OLIVER
Mama, what'd you bring us?!

FIONA
What?

EMMA
You said you were gonna get us
presents.

FIONA
Oh, kiddos, I know but they didn't
have any presents there.

OLIVER
Nooo, that's not true! Are you just
joking, Mama?

FIONA
Mama needs a minute, okay?

Abruptly, she races off down the hall. The kids follow at her heels but she throws the door shut, locking it.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Just a sec, please!

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Fiona goes to take a deep, deep breath but it gets caught in her throat. Suddenly, there's nothing but anguish.

We watch as the denial melts away and she absorbs this new reality. Cheater. She is a cheater.

Trevor knocks gently.

TREVOR (O.S.)

Fi?

She wipes a tear. Pulls it together and unlocks the door.

FIONA

Hey. Sorry. Feeling kinda... *blech*.

TREVOR

Too much fun?

Guiltily she nods. He laughs and wraps his arms around her.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Awww, you're a danger to yourself and others.

FIONA

Guess so...

She sinks into him, trying to find home. But then, his nose crinkles.

TREVOR

Woo. You smell like a hospital.

FIONA

I think I'm sweating vodka.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Silence save the distant din of midnight traffic.

Fiona watches her slumbering husband. His calm, fetal state. Chest rising and falling. So simple and content.

She traces with her eyes as large rats skitter up the inside of the walls. Her gaze soon landing upon...

A large brown WATER STAIN, mocking her with its rot.

Suddenly, her phone VIBRATES on the nightstand -- *fuck!* She scrambles to click it off!

Beat.

Trevor hardly stirs.

Then, cautiously, she checks... **"UNKNOWN CALLER"**

Her eyes swim with panic. She turns the phone off entirely. With an exhale, she sinks back into her pillow and --

-- IAN LAY RIGHT BESIDE HER, GAZING WITH LUST -- !!

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

-- Fiona jerks awake, gasping. *Fuck!!*

Beat.

Takes inventory. The bed is empty. She can hear Trevor flitting about in the bathroom.

She checks her phone again... **"UNKNOWN CALLER."** And not just one, but *EIGHT missed calls*.

Her heart sinks. Frantically, she deletes the entire call history.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Fiona wedges Oliver into his adorable sweatshirt. Their innocent morning routine now mired in crippling guilt.

FIONA
Handsome boy.

OLIVER
It's itchy.

FIONA
Girls'll be chasing you down the
street. Or boys.

OLIVER
Neither! Ew!

She laughs at her goofy guy. Then taps on the bathroom door.

FIONA
Peeps? You okay in there?

EMMA (O.S.)
(annoyed)
I'm *fine!*

EXT. CORRIN ACADEMY PREP SCHOOL - MORNING

Fiona seems to move in quicksand as she ushers Emma and Oliver to the front steps.

FIONA
How's your tummy? Did you poo?

EMMA
Mom, what the hell?

FIONA
Mom's are allowed to ask that.

EMMA
Not here!

FIONA
Piano at four.

EMMA
I know.

FIONA
I know you know. Love you so much.

But Emma simply turns and walks off with her brother.

Helpless, Fiona stands there, watching her precious cubs vanish amidst the throngs of blossoming children.

Suddenly, the guilt floods back into her guts. Shouldering glances from passing pedestrians. *Feeling judged.*

Trembling, she digs out her phone and begins to text.

INT. GRUNGY CAFE, BUSHWICK - LATER

The narrow brick haunt hums with youth and possibility. An untouched scone sits between the two old friends.

BECCA
Someone from our class?

FIONA
You can't tell anyone.

BECCA
Babe, fuck no, I got you.

Fiona buries her face in her palms. Suddenly, she can't help but crack a smile. She even giggles a little.

BECCA (CONT'D)
Ohmygod. Fi. You're smit!

FIONA
I'm not!

BECCA
Was it Steve Derby? I heard he just
got divorced.

She shakes her head.

BECCA (CONT'D)
Oh -- OH! Kieth Birwood! Wait, no
he got fat on Insta.

Fiona continues to shrink.

BECCA (CONT'D)
C'mon, you can't blue-ball me like
this! Not like this!

FIONA
(reticent)
It was Ian.

BECCA
Ian...?

FIONA
Wilkes! He got hot!

BECCA
Damn. That's dark. Even for me.

FIONA
Why's that so hard to believe?

BECCA
Um, cause he's not alive. For
starters.

FIONA
See now that's dark.

BECCA
(beat, realizing)
You knew about that... right?

FIONA
Wait, for real? When?

BECCA
I dunno, like 12 years ago.

Fiona. Gobsmacked.

BECCA (CONT'D)
You sure it wasn't James Killebrew?
Those two coulda been twins.

FIONA
No. What? I *know* Ian. He was in our
crew.

BECCA
Fringe crew.

FIONA
We went to prom together!

BECCA
Pity date.

FIONA
Friend date!

BECCA
Either way, it wasn't Ian.

FIONA
Well it wasn't *James fucking Killebrew*.

BECCA
How drunk were you?

And as the world seems to sink out from under her...

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

THWUNK. Fiona shuts the door. Stands there in the middle of her empty home, mind racing.

She sheds her damp coat and plops down at the kitchen table. Opens her laptop and Googles:

"IAN WILKES OBITUARY, POUGHKEEPSIE, NY"

Sifts through disparate results before clicking on one. The old article appears.

"IAN R. WILKES. 1986 - 2012. Service to be held at OAKWOOD CEMETERY..."

She scrolls down further to reveal the deceased's portrait. And sure as shit, there he is. *Seemingly trapped in time.*

For a moment she's lost in those eyes of his, round and innocent, his crooked smile so endearing and --

She swallows the lump in her throat. Tenuously, she creeps to the intercom. Presses the button.

FIONA
Hello?

Nothing. She presses again...

FIONA (CONT'D)
Hello?

Still, no answer. She hurries to the window and looks down at the quiet street. The damp, empty sidewalk. *No one out front.*

She closes the drapes. Takes a deep, shuddering breath. And that's when...

knock. knock. knock.

She whips around, eyes ablaze. The front door. The steady rain. Her racing heart.

Slowly, she musters the strength. Quietly, she creeps across room. Cautiously, she leans into the eye-hole...

The foggy, fish-eyed visage of THIS FAMILIAR MAN.

Her face goes white. She steps back from the door, unable to comprehend.

knock... knock... knock...

She flinches with each one. *This waking nightmare. It can't be real.*

Finally, she is able to open her mouth, quaking so fiercely she can barely form the words...

FIONA (CONT'D)
...I can't...

Silence.

Waiting for another knock. But now, there is nothing. Only the distant rumble of thunder.

She summons the courage to peek through the eye-hole once more and...

A simple smudgy vantage of the now empty hallway.

She hears the elevator DING. She hears her NEIGHBORS chatting out there. Normalcy. Safety.

She unlatches the chain, nudges the door open, and peeks out.

The NEIGHBORS wave. She barely remembers to wave back as they vanish into their apartment.

The hallway falls silent again. And that's when she notices the wet boot-prints. Leading from her doorway, down the hall.

Cautiously, she follows them. One wet print... after another. And another. And another...

But then... the trail abruptly ends.

Suddenly, her nose twitches. Something pungent, like ammonia. Quickly, she scrambles back inside and slams the door.

But we hold here. On this empty hallway. For just a moment too long...

EXT. APARMENT BUILDING - LATER

From afar, we push towards the stoic building. And soon, we can see this one window with the curtain nudged open...

Closer still, we recognize Fiona's ashen face peering out through the streaks of rain. *Like a ghost all her own.*

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

She lets the curtain fall shut. Goes back to her laptop.

Facebook search: JAMES KILLEBREW. Handsome profile picture.
Indeed a slight resemblance to Ian.

MOMENTS LATER -- she paces as the phone rings.

FIONA
(into phone)
Oh, hi. Um, my boss stayed there
last weekend and we need an
itemized receipt for accounting.
(beat)
James Killebrew.

She drifts back over to the window as she waits. Nudges the curtain open and peeks out again... the empty sidewalk.

FIONA (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Are you sure?

Suddenly, an incoming call beeps. She checks the ID.

FIONA (CONT'D)
 Oh shit! *Shit shit shit* --
 (answers quick)
 -- Hi I'm so sorry I'm on my way --

EXT. CORRIN ACADEMY PREP SCHOOL - DUSK

Emma sulks on the front steps, waiting all alone in the dreary cold as Fiona comes racing up, winded.

FIONA
 Peeps! I'm so sorry, I totally lost
 track of time, I'm so, so sorry.

A dour-faced TEACHER watches disapprovingly through the rain-streaked window as Fiona hugs her daughter.

FIONA (CONT'D)
 Are you okay?

Emma just pouts. Fiona tries to force some levity.

FIONA (CONT'D)
 Hey you gotta admit. Been a long
 time since I did that.

But Emma won't even meet her eyes.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

FWOOM! Smoke and chaos as Fiona hurries about, desperate to nourish her family. *This maternal penance.*

OLIVER
 Mama, can I have a snack?

FIONA
 We're about to eat dinner, Bug!

OLIVER
 But I'm *starrrrvinggg!*

FIONA
 Olly, I said no -- ow *FUCK!*

She's cut herself. Bad. Sucks on her finger. Olly's jaw drops.

OLIVER
Did you just get blood?!

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Red drops dapple the counter as she fumbles to open the cabinet mirror. Finds some bandaids. Closes it to reveal --

-- HE'S STANDING RIGHT BEHIND HER!!!

FIONA
FUCK!!

TREVOR
Whoa!

FIONA
Scared the *shit* outta me!

TREVOR
What happened?

FIONA
Nothing, I'm fine.

TREVOR
Wait no, lemme help.

He takes her sliced finger and jams it under the faucet. She winces at the pain as the sink turns red.

FIONA
Ow ow ow -- STOP!

TREVOR
Fi, you have to clean it.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Silence.

Close on that finger. She fidgets audibly with the blood-soaked bandage. Itching. Picking.

Wider, we find her standing in the doorway, watching Emma sleep. Racked with guilt and fear. Suddenly --

-- *FWUMP!* A noise from the kitchen. She tunes her ears to a TINY RUSTLING sound.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

Her bare feet creep towards the dark kitchen. Rounding the corner to find... THE BIG BROWN RAT twitches on the floor --

Fiona *SHRIEKS!*

TREVOR (O.S.)

Babe?

He comes rushing around the corner and sees it, too. Lying there, thrashing with spasms as blood leaks from its mouth.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Oh god...

FIONA

Just let it die, right?

Beat. She sees Trevor's face turning gray. Pats his chest.

FIONA (CONT'D)

I got it.

Slowly we push towards the rat, its black eyes fixed in agony. Spine crooked, legs twitching.

Close. *Close...*

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

-- *THUNK!* Fiona drops a plastic bag in the dumpster.

FIONA

Uch...

INT. BATHROOM, APARTMENT - LATER

She twists the shower knob. Water gushes. But then, she turns it off, stricken with curiosity.

Gently, she presses her ear to the wall, listening for those labored pipes. Turns the knob again.

But again, *silence. No more rattling.* Meanwhile...

She doesn't see THE SILHOUETTE through the foggy glass door. She doesn't see him Watching her. Motionless. But then...

As she begins to wet her hair, she notices his shape.

FIONA
Finish with your work?

The FIGURE does not respond.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Trev?

Still, nothing. A chill runs up her spine.

Instinctively, she covers herself. This silent stand-off. The water hammering down.

Then, mercifully, the FIGURE turns and leaves.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Trevor...?

Again, no response.

Slowly, she reaches a trembling hand. Wraps her fingers around the door. Heart in her throat, she tugs it open...

But there's no one there. The bathroom is --

-- OH FUCK THERE HE IS! -- wait nope, just Trevor --

TREVOR
Were you talking to me?

FIONA
Were you just in here?

TREVOR
When?

FIONA
Just now.

TREVOR
I was in bed. Are you okay?

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Morning chaos! A bluetooth speaker oozes indie-rock tunes as Fiona frantically crafts an Insta-worthy breakfast.

OLIVER
I can't find my socks!

FIONA
They're in the basket!

He starts tearing the laundry apart, tossing it everywhere.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Bug, I just folded those!

Trevor swoops through, startled by the mess.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Don't say anything.

TREVOR
I didn't!

FIONA
I can *feel* you saying something.

TREVOR
(laughs)
I'm not!

FIONA
Gonna clean when I get home -- Em,
don't forget your piano bag!

EMMA (O.S.)
(from the bathroom)
What?!

One song ends and a new one begins.

TREVOR
Hey, you notice the pipes?

FIONA
What?

TREVOR
The noise is gone. Maybe the
weather change. Who knows.

Fiona's face suddenly goes white. Because that next song is
Blind Melon's "CHANGE" (the one she and Ian were singing).

Slowly, she turns to face the blue-tooth speaker... this
beating heart beneath the floorboards!

Quickly, she fumbles for her phone and skips the track.

INT. SUBWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The doors suck closed and the crowded train chugs away, Fiona ushering her cubs into the corner, claustrophobic as hell.

They rock and sway in the metal tube. Fiona's wary eyes scanning the dense crowd of commuters. Then, suddenly...

THERE HE IS. The tousled hair and dark peacoat. Strong hand gripping the steel bar as he gazes off the other direction.

Fiona. Can't. Breathe.

Then, slowly, he begins to turn towards her!

She makes herself smaller as he locks eyes but...

It's not Ian. Just some clean-shaven BUSINESSMAN.

Exhale.

The adrenaline wanes. And strangely, she almost seems disappointed.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING, BROOKLYN HEIGHTS - MORNING

Wind rustles the orange and yellow leaves. Slowly, we push towards that lonely building. Closer. Closer...

INT. HALLWAY, APARTMENT BUILDING - SAME

DING! Fiona steps off the elevator. We follow quietly as she treks down the dim corridor.

She hears the doors roll shut behind her. And then she hears them roll open again.

Beat. She turns. The elevator just sits there, wide open.

That familiar chill runs up her spine. That acrid odor in the air. She steels herself and unlocks the apartment door.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Fiona checks over her shoulder once more as she steps inside. And when she turns, her face drops...

The apartment is immaculate. The morning mess erased. Every surface sparkling clean.

FIONA

Trev?

Slowly, she approaches the laundry basket Olly had ripped apart not an hour ago. Everything crisp and tidy now.

Trembling, she takes out her phone and texts TREVOR:

"Did you come back and clean the apartment?"

She hovers over her phone, waiting. *Desperate for a reply cause holy shit is she losing her mind?* But then, suddenly --

"CHANGE" blares from the bluetooth speaker again!

FIONA (CONT'D)

Jesus --

She races over and clicks PAUSE. The music stops.

Silence save the hum of the running dishwasher.

FWOOM! The song resumes on its own. LOUDER this time --

She clicks PAUSE again but this time it doesn't work. Tries to turn the volume down but it only seems to grow LOUDER!

FIONA (CONT'D)

Stop --

THE BEATING HEART FOR ALL TO HEAR!

FIONA (CONT'D)

-- *STOP!*

She grabs the cord and rips it from the wall.

Silence.

Breathless.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bathroom door is closed. The shower churns behind it. Those pipes still blissfully silent.

Fiona lay wide awake, staring at the ceiling. That brown stain seems SMALLER than before.

Soon, the shower cuts out. She closes her eyes and pretends to be asleep.

Listens as her husband towels off. Listens as he pads from the bathroom and climbs into bed beside her.

He kisses her cheek. She forces a sleepy smile. He strokes her hair and kisses her neck.

She tries to hold him at bay but something stops her... she rolls over and opens her eyes.

FIONA
Are you naked?

TREVOR
Possibly.

FIONA
You love that joke.

TREVOR
(laughs)
It's my only move!

FIONA
I'm so tired.

TREVOR
(kissing)
This'll take, like, ten seconds.

FIONA
Aw, babe. Not tonight. I can't.

He deflates.

FIONA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I love you.

TREVOR
I love you, too.

He kisses her head and then lets her be. But his mind can't stop churning. Then, from the silence...

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Did something happen in
Poughkeepsie?

FIONA
(beat)
Like what?

TREVOR
I dunno. You've been different.

FIONA
I told you what happened.

TREVOR
You didn't.

FIONA

Well, for starters, it was a soul-crushing reminder of how I gave up all of my dreams, currently make zero use of my talent, and contribute nothing to society. So. Ya know. Just been sitting with that I guess.

TREVOR

I'm sorry. That sounds hard.
(she shrugs)
You can tell me these things you know.

FIONA

You're dealing with your own shit.

TREVOR

Hey, what? No. We're a team.
Always. I miss that. I miss you.

FIONA

I know. I miss you, too.
(then,)
We need a night.

TREVOR

Like a date?

FIONA

Drop the kids at your mom's. Grab that omakase you love in Queens.

Trevor smiles, eyes fixed silently upon her.

FIONA (CONT'D)

What?

TREVOR

I love you so much. You know that right?

She smiles and nods. The guilt has become unbearable.

INT. SUV, LONG ISLAND - NIGHT - DRIVING

The concrete jungle gives way to verdant lawns and single-family homes, a far cry from their tiny apartment.

Fiona looks radiant as Trevor drives. He places a hand in her lap. She smiles for him, trying to feel something.

In the backseat, Olly is giddy while Emma sulks.

OLIVER

Grams and me are gonna play Uno.
Are you gonna play too, Emma? Emma,
are you gonna play, too --

EMMA

-- I don't know, stop talking!

OLIVER

I'm just asking --

EMMA

-- I said I don't know!!

TREVOR

Whoa. Guys. Chill.

FIONA

Peeps, you okay? Tummy stuff?

Emma pouts silently. Fiona and Trevor exchange a concerned look. Then, with calm confidence, Trevor takes charge.

TREVOR

I always hated sleeping at my
grandma's house.

Emma looks up, intrigued.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

It smelled like cat pee and she
didn't have any fun games. And she
had this creepy sculpture of a huge
wooden hand in the guest room, and
when she'd turn out the lights it
looked like a giant spider waiting
to eat me. I never slept one second
when I was there.

Emma finally cracks a smile.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

But hey. Mom and me have a special
night planned, and we are so, so
grateful that you're being brave
for us. Yea?

Emma nods. Fiona squeezes Trevor's hand, genuinely loving him for that.

EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE, LONG ISLAND - EVENING

The door barely opens before Olly sprints inside. Trevor's shit-don't-stink mother, RUTH, 70, steps back with a laugh.

FIONA
Olly, manners!

OLIVER (O.S.)
(from way inside)
Hi, Grams!

FIONA
He's excited.

RUTH
Aw, so am I. Of course I am.

Fiona hugs a gloomy Emma.

FIONA
I love you, Peeps. You're gonna be
okay, you'll see.

Emma drags herself inside without a word to Ruth.

TREVOR
She's been having a hard time.

Ruth instinctively looks to Fiona with silent judgement.

FIONA
Her recital's soon. So. Tummy
stuff.

INT. SUV - DRIVING - NIGHT

Fiona bristles with anger now as they drift down the LED thoroughfare.

FIONA
I did everything she would've
wanted.

TREVOR
Lovey, I know, but... that's just
how she is.

FIONA
Not with you! You're perfect!

TREVOR
I'm her son.

FIONA
And I'm your wife.

TREVOR
She adores you.

FIONA
Ha! She thinks I'm a maniac. Always
has.

TREVOR
C'mon.

FIONA
Quitting the music beat didn't
change that. Not a fucking bit!

TREVOR
Okay so... who cares? She's a cunt.

FIONA
Whoa!!

They're both suddenly laughing now.

TREVOR
What, she is! Her own friends don't
even like her. Why do you give a
shit what she thinks?

FIONA
I mean... I don't really.

TREVOR
Right. So...

She gazes out the window as the magnificent city floats past
in the distance. *All of it so far away right now.*

Trevor ruminates. An idea brewing. Suddenly, he hits his
blinker and exits.

FIONA
What're you doing?

TREVOR
(grins)
It's a surprise.

FIONA
I don't like surprises.

TREVOR

You'll like this one. But you
fucked up wearing nice shoes.

And off her piqued curiosity...

INT. THE DUST BIN ROCK CLUB - NIGHT

WHAM! We're punched in the face by thunderous drums and blaring speaker stacks.

Fake smoke and warm beer fill the basement venue. Trendy 20-somethings lose their shit for a shoe-gazing dream-pop act.

Trevor seems completely out of place as they shoulder their way to the sticky bar. But for Fiona, *this is home*.

FIONA

(over the music)

We don't have to do this!

TREVOR

You don't want to?!

FIONA

I do! But...

TREVOR

Then let's fucking do it!

He leans towards the inked up BARTENDRESS.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Um, 'scuse me!

She doesn't hear him or doesn't care. Fiona laughs and takes charge, nudging him aside leaning all the way over the bar.

FIONA

Hey! Two whiskeys, two beers!

INT. THE DUST BIN - LATER

Trevor and Fiona toss back shots. Laughing in a way they haven't in forever. The music consuming them both.

FIONA

Dance with me!

TREVOR

How do you dance to this?!

FIONA
Just throw your shit around!

He tries and she laughs and he laughs and they get close and she takes a swig of beer but suddenly, something stops her...

Something's caught in her mouth. Grimacing, she reaches in and plucks it out...

THE MOTH. Brown and motionless. Soaked in foam.

Her heart begins to sink.

Suddenly, the insect shivers back to life, flicks its wings and takes flight --

She traces it through the crowd, up into the bright lights and diving back down again where her eyes find...

A FIGURE, backlit by strobing lights. She cannot see his face, but his form is unmistakable.

Her blood runs cold. She tucks herself behind Trevor who is now ignorantly grooving along.

TREVOR
They're actually pretty good!

She scans the sea of dancing youths but The Figure is no longer there.

Just then, the band pivots into a nasty yet seductive grunge version of "This Magic Moment."

The lights swirl. The bass overwhelming, rattling our ribs. Fiona's eyes swivel through the chaos and --

-- *There he is again. The FACELESS FIGURE. Working his way through the swarm. Coming right TOWARDS HER!*

The dizzying lights. Frenetic crowd. The noise in her skull. Swarming like bees.

Louder and LOUDER and --

-- Abruptly, she grabs Trevor by the arm.

FIONA
Let's go outside --

EXT. THE DUST BIN - SAME

We can still hear the faint dirge of "This Magic Moment" as Trevor chases her into the sodium-vapor alley.

TREVOR
What's wrong?

FIONA
Nothing. I just wanna go home.

TREVOR
Already?

She moves closer, pushing down the dread and summoning every ounce of seduction she can.

FIONA
There are no children at home.

TREVOR
Correct.

FIONA
So why are we *here*?

He smiles. And suddenly, that dark, dangerous spin on "This Magic Moment" becomes non-diagetic as we go --

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

-- Fiona and Trevor stumble through the front door, kissing and grabbing and needing, as --

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- The song still growls beneath us as Trevor tackles her onto the bed. All this pent up sexual energy.

But Fiona struggles as he kisses her. Strains as he shimmies off her skirt. Tenses as their nude bodies press together.

TREVOR
You okay?

FIONA
Yea. Just... hang on.

She reverses swiftly like a wrestler and gets on top, desperate for control.

TREVOR

That good?

FIONA

Don't talk.

She sets the pace. *Trying to lose herself.* That E & O pendant bouncing off her dappled breast bone.

She doesn't see him standing there in the darkness. She doesn't know anyone else is in the room until...

...IAN climbs onto the bed behind her, gently touching her nude back...

That chill runs up her spine. Fear laced with pleasure.

He kisses her shoulder. Her nape. Her ear. Pressing closer. Wrapping her up. Claiming her as his own...

And she fucking loves it.

The song grows in intensity. A raspy collision of romance and danger as --

Primal sounds begin to escape her throat. It's scary and beautiful and cathartic all at once as suddenly --

-- She climaxes and so does Trevor. Loud and ferocious and surprising to them both.

Finally, she flops over beside him, both catching their breath.

TREVOR

Oh god. Holy shit. Oh wow.

He wraps his arms around her and she lets him, but her eyes are unsteady now as she scans the dark room...

No one else is here.

Soon, her waning ecstasy turns to guilt. And then emptiness.

Euphoric, Trevor kisses her cheek, her neck, her shoulder. Then climbs out of bed and heads to the bathroom.

And off Fiona's haunted eyes...

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Silence. Fiona pulls on a robe as she pads into the hallway, easing the bedroom door shut behind her.

For a moment, she simply stands there, searching the darkness, *almost expecting to see him.*

Then, she creeps past the kids' empty rooms. Peeks into each. The stuffed animals and photo collages. This innocence.

She glances back over her shoulder to make sure the bedroom door is still closed. And then, reluctantly, her lips part...

FIONA
(whispered)
Ian?

The distant din of traffic. The gentle gush of heating vents. She feels silly having said that out loud.

But just as she's about to go back to bed, something catches her eye. Something that turns her face white.

We do not see what she sees as, cautiously, she drifts forward into the living room.

We do not see it until she is standing right over it, looking down at the kitchen table, paralyzed by the sight...

A simple vase packed with AMARANTHS. The purple and green flowers drooping listlessly over the edges.

Quickly, she grabs the vase and dumps it in the trash.

She tears some paper towel and drapes it to hide the salacious evidence.

Beat. Thinking.

Nope.

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Quietly, she slips into her boots, her winter coat. gingerly, she unlocks the deadbolt, wincing at every tiny noise.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Fiona stands rigid, holding the vase of drooping flowers in her hands.

DING! The elevator stops on Floor 2. The doors roll open and a YOUNG WOMAN dressed for party time steps in.

The doors roll shut. Awkward as hell. The Young Woman clocks the amaranths.

YOUNG WOMAN
Those are pretty.

FIONA
(beat)
Thanks.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

-- *PLUNK!* Into the dumpster. She eases the heavy lid shut. She doesn't see his faint silhouette at the end of the alley. Motionless. Watching her. Suddenly, there's a sharp pang in her abdomen. She doubles over, wincing. Agonizing.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Fiona writhes, clutching her gut and dancing with urgency. The elevator could not move any slower.

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

She hurries in, tearing off her coat.

FIONA
Ow ow ow...

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

She fumbles desperately to get her pajamas down and plops onto the toilet, grimacing as she pees.

Nauseating pain. She sweats profusely as she grits through the whole ordeal until...

Finally, mercifully, it's over. Breathless, she goes to wipe. BRIGHT RED BLOOD on the toilet paper.

She stands and looks down into the bowl. And off her look of absolute shock...

INT. APARTMENT - DAWN

Pale blue light whispers through the curtains as Fiona sits, catatonic on the couch.

MOMENTS LATER -- her fingers flutter on the keyboard,
Googling.... **"maggots in pee"**

She feels queasy as she scrolls through the results. A handful of fringe articles but nothing helpful.

Just then, Trevor shuffles in. She quits out of the browser right before he hugs her from behind and gives her a peck.

TREVOR

Mm. My queen.

FIONA

Morning.

He pours some coffee, still high from last night's tryst.

TREVOR

Did you sleep?

FIONA

A little.

TREVOR

Go back to bed. So quiet without the kids.

FIONA

Gotta pick them up soon.

TREVOR

I'll do it.

FIONA

What? No. You have work to do.

TREVOR

It'll get done.

That surprises her. Makes her smile even.

FIONA

Who are you?

TREVOR

Go back to bed.

FIONA

I gotta go grocery shopping.
There's nothing for dinner.

TREVOR

We'll go out for pizza.

He can see her wrestling inside. Smiles brightly.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Hey. Everything's gonna be okay.

FIONA
I know. I'm just... hanxiety.

TREVOR
Hasn't hit me yet. Think I may
still be drunk. Gonna shower.

And as he disappears off down the hall, Fiona's eyes grow dark and sullen again.

Then, she re-opens the browser. And she hates herself for this but, well, fuck it... she types "**are ghosts real?**"

And just as quickly --

FIONA
Oh fuck off.

She slaps her laptop shut and a rumble of THUNDER takes us --

EXT. CLYDE'S PIES, BROOKLYN HEIGHTS - NIGHT

The family races, shouting through sheets of rain --

TREVOR
Wait, here here here!

-- He grabs the door to the pizza shop as they all slosh to a halt, laughing and squealing.

INT. CLYDE'S PIES - LATER

Cozy, cramped, and greasy. Trevor tears slices for his family as Oliver draws intently on the back of his menu.

Meanwhile, Emma eagerly tells a story, struggling to hold anyone's attention.

EMMA
And then Mr. Sharma sent her to the office!

FIONA
Did he?

OLIVER
That has pepperonis.

TREVOR

It's not the spicy kind.

EMMA

...But now she's mad cause she
thinks *I snitched!*

Fiona clocks Oliver's drawing... the crude rendering of a
lean man with WIDE ROUND EYES and a CROOKED SMILE.

Beat. Horror.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Mom, did you hear me?

FIONA

Hm? Yea. So you snatched, or...?

Emma scoffs, irritated. And off Fiona's ominous look...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

That DRAWING. It trembles in her clutch now. The lean, round-eyed man. And wider we find...

Fiona stands all alone in a dark corner of the apartment, trying to comprehend what she's looking at.

She shakes her head and tosses it aside because *no, it couldn't be.* But then... the dread still gripping her...

INT. OLIVER'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Quietly, Fiona slides into bed beside cozy little Oliver and begins rubbing his back.

FIONA

Hey, I really like that drawing you
made tonight.

OLIVER

(yawning)

Thanks.

FIONA

Is that Daddy?

OLIVER

No, it's your friend.

FIONA
 (beat)
 Which friend?

OLIVER
 The one that came to Gram's house.
 He was gonna give us a ride home.

Fuck fuck fuck what the fuck?!

FIONA
 This morning?

OLIVER
 (nods)
 He said he wanted to help since
 you're so busy and tired. But he
 was a stranger so I told him no.

FIONA
 Oh. Sweetheart. That's very smart
 of you. You did the right thing.

She's trying to be sweet, trying to soothe her child to sleep. But we can see her eyes are bursting with dread.

OLIVER
 Can you keep rubbing my back?

FIONA
 Yea, Bug.

And off her harrowing thoughts...

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

FWUMP. Two pillows plop onto the hardwood. Fiona Sinks into a comforter. This makeshift bed between her two cubs' rooms.

Emma rolls over and, through her cracked bedroom door, sees the odd sight of her mother nestled on the floor.

EMMA
 Mom?

FIONA
 Hm?

EMMA
 What're you doing?

FIONA
 (beat)
 Go back to sleep.

EXT. CORRIN ACADEMY PREP SCHOOL - MORNING

Harsh wind whips. Fiona pulls Emma and Olly close as they stop in front of the school.

FIONA
 I want you guys to promise me something, okay? Listen. Both of you. Don't go anywhere alone today.

EMMA
 Why?

FIONA
 Stay with your teachers, your friends, just... nowhere alone.

EMMA
 Mom what's wrong with you?

OLIVER
 Yeah you're freaking us out.

EMMA
 Just trust me, okay? It's very important.

Her children exchange unsettled looks before joining the swarm of students, funneling towards the school.

And here's Fiona, utterly helpless as we SMASH TO --

EXT. FREEWAY - CITY OUTSKIRTS - MORNING

-- *FWOOM!* Her SUV hustles past the boxy tenements and the big green sign which reads "HUDSON VALLEY - 51 miles"

INT/EXT. SUV/HUDSON VALLEY - DRIVING - DAY

Grey mist clings to the withering trees. Fiona grips the wheel with shaky determination.

Soon, rural highway turns to suburban sprawl. Quiet strip malls and dour tract houses.

She rounds a bend past WEST HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, a towering gothic brick building dappled in fall colors.

The cross-country team jogs along the perimeter. A puppy-love couple smooches in the parking lot.

The sudden flood of nostalgia rips the wind from Fiona's chest.

INT/EXT. SUV/POUGHKEEPSIE SUBURBS - DRIVING - DAY

A frigid sun claws its way over tall gnarled trees.

Fiona turns into the cozy upper-middle class enclave. Big lonely houses with wide lawns and faceless neighbors.

EXT. OLD CRAFTSMAN HOME - DAY

A diseased birch sags in the front yard. Cautiously, Fiona begins to turn into the driveway. Then stops. Considers.

Feeling intrusive, she backs up and parks on the street. A DOORBELL pre-laps us to --

EXT. CRAFTSMAN - MOMENTS LATER

The old patina door whines open, and shrunken in the entryway, we meet...

DEBBIE WILKES, 70's, Boho garb masking classist angst. Her plastic face barely registers the evisceration of seeing...

FIONA, standing there on her porch like an angel or a devil. Neither of them knowing what to say.

Until finally...

FIONA

Hi, Debbie. I, um... can I talk to you about something?

Suddenly, Debbie lunges forward and hugs Fiona as hard as anyone ever has. Startled, Fiona hugs back.

INT. WILKES HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Hot water roils on the stove as Debbie clatters about the kitchen.

Fiona drifts through the familiar home. Groaning floorboards and warm nostalgia, all of it mired now in loss.

And then, there they are, just as she'd joked with Ian -- the eccentric CAT PAINTINGS. They're goddamned everywhere!

She can't help but smirk at that. But soon, her eyes are drawn to a series of FAMILY PORTRAITS...

Ian as a toddler. Ian as a frail but handsome adolescent. Graduation cap. Biking trip. Family dinner.

Year by year, the light in his eyes seems to dwindle.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Fiona dithers on the floral-print sofa as Debbie arranges an elaborate tea presentation. Meticulous yet charged.

FIONA

This's all so pretty.

DEBBIE

Oh, it's nothing.

Suddenly, the doggy-door BURSTS open and a ghost-white Wheaton Terrier barrels towards her, wagging and licking.

FIONA

Whoa -- Sammy?!

DEBBIE

(laughs)

Gosh no. Sammy's been gone for years.

FIONA

Right. Guess it's been... yea.

DEBBIE

Same breed, though. This is Jimmy.

FIONA

Aw. Hi, Jimmy! Oh you're a love! He's so sweet.

DEBBIE

You've been well?

FIONA

Um, sure. I guess so.

DEBBIE

Your kids are adorable. I see them on Facebook.

FIONA

Oh. Thank you.

Debbie smiles and sips her tea. Fiona decides to do the same. The silence unbearable. Then, mercifully...

FIONA (CONT'D)

Um. So. I was at the reunion last week. West Hills.

DEBBIE

That's right, the twentieth.

FIONA

(dying inside)

I'm sorry. I, I don't mean to bring this all up.

DEBBIE

Oh, sweetheart. It's okay. I've made my peace. How was it? The reunion?

FIONA

Well. To be honest... it brought up a lot for me. About Ian.

DEBBIE

I can imagine.

FIONA

The feeling was so vivid. You know? It was almost like, like I could see him there.

Her eyes find Debbie but the woman's affect doesn't change one bit. A stoic, repressed detachment.

Like a ticking bomb.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Anyway, I just, I needed to share that feeling with someone. Someone who might... also feel it.

DEBBIE

I see him every day.

Beat. Fiona's heart sinks.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

At the breakfast table when I pray.
In the evenings when I sit on the
porch, I still imagine him riding
his bike right up that driveway.
But it's a blessing. The memories.

FIONA

For sure.

DEBBIE

Can I ask you something? At the
risk of seeming, well,
confrontational. It's not.

FIONA

K.

DEBBIE

Why didn't you come to the funeral?

Fiona lets out a heavy sigh, struggling like hell.

FIONA

I didn't even know he'd passed. Not
until recently.

Debbie's eyes seem to darken. Fiona begins flailing.

FIONA (CONT'D)

It's crazy, I know. But we didn't
keep in touch or anything and...

DEBBIE

He loved you so much.

FIONA

(beat)

It was so long ago.

DEBBIE

You were the only one who
understood him. Who was kind to
him.

FIONA

(struggling)

He was a really special person.

Debbie offers a terse smile. The fraught tea presentation.
The weird cat paintings. Fiona begins to feel panicked.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Um, sorry. I really need to pee. Is the bathroom still...

DEBBIE

Yep. Right upstairs to your left. I'll put on some more water.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, WILKES HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Still reeling, Fiona crests the old staircase, fighting the urge to fall apart. But then...

Something slows her. Something at the very end of the hall...

The closed bedroom door.

A horrible thought sets into her guts. She tunes her ears and hears Debbie clattering about the kitchen, distracted.

Then, cautiously, she begins to creep forward.

INT. THE BEDROOM - SAME

Surreptitiously, she slips inside. Painfully, she turns to confront this surreal space... IAN'S CHILDHOOD ROOM.

Frozen in time.

Sepia drapes and dusty pillows. Shelves packed with CD's and comics. Walls lined with old guitars and video equipment.

She drifts through the dark space. Clocks the indentation on the bed. Debbie sat here recently, all alone.

She carries forward to a collage of crinkled old music posters. Nirvana, Soundgarden, and of course, Blind Melon.

Then, she notices... the old combo TV/VCR has a tape resting in its cradle. Unmarked. Forgotten.

Cautiously, she checks over her shoulder. And then, hand trembling... she pushes it in.

The VCR absorbs the tape, grinding, whirring, straining, until finally, it clicks into place.

The TV blinks to life. The staticky old VHS begins to play.

BOISTEROUS laughter startles her! Quickly she turns the volume down, checking over her shoulder once more.

The jittery scan-lines resolve into this grainy time capsule of Fiona's youth...

Her and Becca and other friends in the parking lot at a burger joint, pretending to bow to its neon excellence and...

They devour greasy burgers and chili fries and smile with braces and slurp milkshakes and...

Here's Fiona, suddenly arrested by the site of her younger self. This blithe ass-kicker with boundless dreams.

Young Fiona flips off the camera, laughing with a mouthful of fries.

She doesn't realize she's smiling. Wistful. Lost.

The video jitters and resolves once again to reveal a peaceful lake. Becca flies screaming from a rope-swing and...

Becca and Fiona sip contraband beers with the rest of their tight-knit crew. Damp hair, sandy feet, zero fucks.

For a moment, Fiona forgets where she is or what she's doing. Suddenly transported to the last time she knew herself.

But then...

Ian's camera slowly zooms in. Closer on Becca and Fiona. Closer. Closer. Until soon, it's just Fiona.

Closer and closer and closer. Pixilating now. She glances up and the camera cuts out. Taking us to...

School orchestra concert. Strings and horns. Adorably messy as the camera, once again, pushes closer... closer...

Fiona grooving the fuck out of her stand-up bass, completely unaware as Ian's lens zooms closer... closer... digital noise mars her alabaster face but the camera holds here forever...

Fiona's stomach begins to curdle. The reality of what she'd never noticed back then, it's hitting her in waves now.

Scan-lines thrust us to a high-school baseball game, but the camera is not focused on the players. It's pushing towards...

Fiona in the bleachers, holding hands with her THEN-BOYFRIEND. He's a jock and she's clearly bored.

Fiona's heart begins to race as the jittery image flickers in her haunted eyes...

Young Fiona flips off the camera again.

Young Fiona works on the yearbook, unaware there's a camera watching from afar.

Young Fiona walks alone through the school parking lot, backpack slung. Ian's lens meticulously following her...

And then...

We're outside a suburban home, pushing slowly towards a lamplit window...

Young Fiona at her desk, struggling to study. Ian's lens pushing closer... closer...

Suddenly she glances up and the camera ducks into the bushes.

Fiona feels sick. And it's only getting worse.

Different day. Camera watches from afar as she walks up her front porch and disappears inside.

Nighttime now. Zooming towards that same window as Young Fiona changes into her pajamas. Bra and panties...

Closer... CLOSER...

And it's now we can hear the excited BREATHING behind the camera...

Louder... LOUDER... and --

DEBBIE (O.S.)
What're you doing?

-- She whirls to see Debbie, irate in the doorway.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Why are you in here?!

FIONA
Sorry, I was just --

DEBBIE
-- You can't be in here!

FIONA
I'm sorry.

But Debbie is on fire now, physically ushering her out!

DEBBIE
You need to leave!

FIONA

Wait -- I need your help --

DEBBIE

-- LEAVE! NOW!

FIONA

Please --

DEBBIE

--GET OUT!

The power of her voice is startling as tears spill from her fragile eyes.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

-- GET THE FUCK OUT OF OUR HOUSE!

EXT. WILKES HOUSE - SAME

-- Fiona tramples across the frigid lawn towards her car, leaping behind the wheel and speeding away.

She checks her rearview to see the house growing smaller in the distance and --

EXT. MAIN ROAD - SAME

-- Rain gathers on the windshield as she swerves onto the main road. She wants to cry, wants to scream but --

-- *HOOONNNKKK!!* -- Nearly collides with an oncoming truck --

FIONA

-- *shit* --

She corrects course, catching her breath. It takes her a moment to wrangle her frayed nerves.

Finally, settles down. Then, she checks her rearview and --

-- HE'S SITTING IN HER BACKSEAT, EYES DARK WITH BETRAYAL --

-- She doesn't even get a chance to scream before the telephone poll fills the windshield --

-- *WHAM!!* Airbag and shattered glass as we CUT HARD TO --

INT. WAITING AREA, URGENT CARE - DAY

Stillness.

Quiet.

Becca's knee bounces as she scrolls on her phone.

Sheepishly, Fiona emerges with a bandage on her head and some paperwork in her scraped up hands.

A quiet beat as Becca looks her over. Then shrugs.

BECCA
Cancún was worse.

Fiona tries to laugh.

INT. BECCA'S MERCEDES - DRIVING - DAY

Becca bristles as she navigates the dark and rainy highway. Fiona sulking silently in the front seat.

BECCA
You have to tell him.

FIONA
I can't...

BECCA
And the cops! This is *serious*!

FIONA
And say what? Our dead friend from
high school is stalking me?

Becca goes quiet. Fiona wilts. Embarrassed and frustrated.

FIONA (CONT'D)
I don't expect you to believe me.

BECCA
Look, I *do* believe someone is
fucking with you and you need to do
something about it. Posthaste.

FIONA
It was him. He was there. In that
hotel -- those *earrings*, you
remember the ones we bought in
Prague together?

BECCA
I dunno, Fi...

FIONA

I lost one at the party and he
found it! Brought it to my room!
Physically put it in my hand!

Becca doesn't know how to react, and she can sense her best friend feeling smaller and smaller beside her.

BECCA

Alright, look. I'm not saying it's Ian. But, *hypothetically*. How's it work?

FIONA

How's what work?

BECCA

If it's him. Can you see him? Do you talk to him? Do you *text*??!

FIONA

I don't even know. It's just, it's a feeling. Or...

BECCA

But you say stuff and he says stuff back?

FIONA

Sometimes. Sorta.

BECCA

Well then tell him straight up. Tell him you're out. Can't do it.

FIONA

It doesn't work like that.

Becca sighs, losing patience now. But then, Fiona sits up straight, charged with a new idea.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Turn around.

BECCA

What?

FIONA

Back to Poughkeepsie.

EXT. OAKWOOD CEMETERY - DUSK

The sky's grown darker and the rain heavier as Becca's Mercedes reluctantly creeps up the gravel road.

INT. MERCEDES - SAME

Becca parks amidst the rows of damp headstones. Fiona peers out at the lonesome funeral home. About to exit when --

BECCA
Can I ask you something.

She looks back.

BECCA (CONT'D)
Is there maybe a part of you that
doesn't want this to end?

Fiona frowns. Indignant.

BECCA (CONT'D)
Just something to think about.

Swiftly, she exits the car and slams the door.

Alone now, Becca takes a deep, shuddering breath. The cracks in her own armor finally beginning to show.

EXT. OAKWOOD CEMETERY - LATER

Fiona exits the quaint funeral home clutching a map. Begins searching the long rows of disparate graves.

Her feet squish wet leaves as she scans all these relics of lost souls. Until finally, there it is...

The modest headstone. So innocuous and surreal all at once...

"IAN ROBERT WILKES. THE GENTLEST OF HEARTS, THE BRIGHTEST OF SPIRITS."

And here's Fiona. Upon the grave of this man who haunts her. The biting cold. The dithering rain.

Finally, she summons every ounce of mettle she has left. And as odd as it feels, she parts her lips, and she speaks.

FIONA
So. Not sure how this works. But if
you can hear me...
(beat)
(MORE)

FIONA (CONT'D)
That night. It was awesome. I
mean...

She glances around to make sure no one else is listening, because this is the fucking *truth*.

FIONA (CONT'D)
...I *felt* something. For the first time in a long time. And I wanted to thank you for that. I'm grateful for it, I really am. But I can't do this anymore. We can't. I have a family, and... look maybe sometime down the line, or... in our next life. Is that a thing?

Silence.

FIONA (CONT'D)
I need you to hear this. Ian. If you really care about me, you'll let me go.

The headstone. The rain. The nothingness.

FIONA (CONT'D)
I hope you can see that. I'm sure you can. You've always been so thoughtful...
(beat)
I hope you find some peace. You deserve it. You're a good person.

She chews on that for a moment. Finally, she decides that's enough, turns and walks off into the sheets of cold rain...

But we stay here, lingering on that headstone, for a beat too long before...

INT. BECCA'S MERCEDES - DRIVING - NIGHT

The glittering city grows larger on the horizon as Becca and Fiona ride in silence. Neither knowing what to say.

Then, from the awkward stalemate...

BECCA
Do you feel any different?

FIONA
(lost)
I dunno...

Another heavy silence. Then...

BECCA
Can I ask you one more thing?

FIONA
(sighs)
What...

BECCA
You eat Taco Bell in my ride?

Fiona belts a much needed laugh. They both do.

BECCA (CONT'D)
I can still smell it!

FIONA
I know, I'm sorry. I thought I
cleaned it.

BECCA
Grilled Stuffed?

FIONA
They don't have it anymore!

BECCA
Fuck off, for real?!

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Becca helps Fiona through the door of their dark, quiet home. Trevor rushes over and hugs her.

FIONA
Ow --

TREVOR
Sorry.

He looks at her face, the scrapes and the bruises, his eyes flickering with relief and concern all at once.

FIONA
I'm sorry.

TREVOR
Don't be sorry.

FIONA
The car...

TREVOR

It's a car. We'll get a rental.
You're okay that's all that
matters.

She nods and sinks into him, finding true north. But then...

TREVOR (CONT'D)

What were you doing in
Poughkeepsie?

FIONA

(beat)

I told you.

Her eyes flit conspiringly to Becca.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Her dad had a doctor's appointment
and needed a ride.

BECCA

He and I still aren't talking.

TREVOR

Oh. Sorry to hear that.

BECCA

So yea, this is sorta my fault.

FIONA

Shut up.

TREVOR

Bec, no. You woulda done the same
for her.

BECCA

(shrugs)

Anyway. I should dip. Recital's
Thursday, right?

FIONA

Yea, dinner before at Vito if you
wanna join.

BECCA

For sure.

And off Trevor, trying to mask his suspicion...

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Fiona tosses and turns. Finally, achingly, she sits up. Climbs out of bed.

Trevor opens his eyes, watching her hobble to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The light clicks on, harsh and blinding. She fumbles with the fresh Rx bottle. Goes to fill a glass of water and --

-- **CRUNG-CRUNG-CRUNG-CRUNG!** -- The pipes rattle just as they used to. She pops the pill and gulps it down but then...

Her brow furrows. She stares at the faucet. Twists it again.

CRUNG-CRUNG-CRUNG-CRUNG!

Sure enough, the noise has returned. And ironically, she has a glimmer of relief about it.

INT. APARTMENT - DAWN

Soft blue light whispers through the curtains.

Fiona pads into the kitchen. Opens the drawer to find a fresh pile of RAT SHIT. Strangely, it makes her smile. Because...

Maybe Ian really did hear her. And off her hopeful look...

BOISTEROUS LAUGHTER pre-laps us to --

INT. VITO ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Old-school waiters and wine-drunk regulars. Olly scribbles on a placemat as Trevor and Fiona laugh with Becca.

TREVOR

It's so sweet of you to come see
her play.

BECCA

Little secret? This's just for me.
I'm gonna break an article on her
musical genius before anyone else.

FIONA

That mean Cherry Bomb's got the
tab?

They all laugh. All except Emma. She hasn't touched her food. The heaping plate of pasta staring back at her.

Fiona senses her daughter's distress. Discretely, she sidles up close.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Fresh air?

Emma nods.

EXT. SIDEWALK, BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Emma hunkers on a stoop as Fiona rubs her back, present and warm.

FIONA
You're nervous. That's a good thing.

EMMA
How's that a good thing?

FIONA
Means you care. Ask any performer. Nerves make you sharper.

EMMA
I don't like the way it feels.

FIONA
You don't have to. But just remember... it's yours. You own it. Hell, I bet even Taylor Swift gets tummy stuff before a show.

EMMA
I doubt it.

FIONA
You'd be surprised. Grown ups get that feeling, too. I get it a LOT.

EMMA
(perks up)
You do?

FIONA
(nods)
And I'm not even a performer! But you know what makes it even worse?

EMMA

What.

FIONA

Ignoring it. Trying to pretend it's not there. It sounds wacky, I know. But the truth is, you wanna make it your friend. That feeling.

Emma considers.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Can I give you a little trick?

EMMA

Oh no.

FIONA

Deep breath, in through your nose.

EMMA

Not one of these.

FIONA

C'mon, in through your nose. Out through your mouth.

Reluctantly, Emma does.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Now. Welcome the feeling in. Say "Hi, Feeling."

EMMA

Oh god, stop.

FIONA

Shhh. Repeat these words. Ready? "*I am here. I am me. I am powerful.*"

Emma groans.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Just try it!

EMMA

I am here. I am me. I am powerful.

FIONA

Good. Again, but *believe* it.

EMMA

(sighs)

I am here. I am me. I am powerful.

FIONA

There. Now how do you feel?

EMMA

Really really stupid.

They both laugh. Fiona kisses her on the forehead.

FIONA

Trust me. It works. I love you more than anything, okay?

EMMA

More than Olly?

FIONA

Yea, but don't tell him.

They both roar now as we go abruptly to --

EXT. CORRIN ACADEMY PREP SCHOOL - NIGHT

Brisk wind rips down the sidewalk, stirring up autumn leaves and city trash.

Parents file towards the auditorium with nice clothes and misguided expectations.

INT. AUDITORIUM, CORRIN PREP - NIGHT

Hunting for seats, Fiona waves to some friends, a blithe about her we've yet to see. As if a storm were lifting.

Meanwhile, Olly is already bored and moping. Becca notices and has an idea.

BECCA

Pst, Ol. You wanna play a game?
It's called "Who's Farting?"

Now he grins. Becca sits next to him and points out at the sea of well-dressed adults.

BECCA (CONT'D)

When there's this many people in one room, the odds are very high that at any given moment, at least one of them is farting. Look -- there. The guy in the blue sweater.

Olly is rapt now.

BECCA (CONT'D)
 See his mouth? See that? He's
 squeezing one out!

Olly cracks up. Becca does, too.

OLIVER
 What about her? She looks like
 she's farting!

He said it way too loud and some people turn around. Becca and Fiona both crack up and shush him at the same time.

TREVOR
 Guys. Seriously?

But that only makes them laugh harder. And that laughter carries over to --

INT. ORCHESTRA HALLWAY, CORRIN PREP - SAME

-- 4th grade orchestra kids laughing and wrestling, being young and silly and having fun.

But then, at the end of the hall we find Emma. Pacing all alone. Queasy and wan as a deafening applause takes us --

INT. AUDITORIUM, CORBIN PREP - LATER

An INDIAN BOY with a cello awkwardly bows. The ORCHESTRA INSTRUCTOR whose father never respected him checks his notes.

ORCHESTRA INSTRUCTOR
 Thank you, Nihar. Very moving.
 Okay, now we go to the piano. One
 of our brightest stars will be
 sharing her luminous interpretation
 of Fanny Mendelssohn's Notturno in
 G-minor. Please welcome Emma
 Gorman.

The applause thunders in Emma's chest as she stands paralyzed in the wings.

She takes a deep, deep breath and begins to creep forward. Quietly, she mumbles her mother's sage words.

EMMA
*I am here.... I am me... I am
 powerful.*

That lonely piano in the middle of the stage. The blinding spotlight. All the dark faces out there.

EMMA (CONT'D)

*I am here. I am me. I am powerful.
I am here. I am me. I am powerful.*

Fiona, Trevor, and Becca all share proud smiles. From out here in the crowd, she looks calm. Confident. Ready.

Emma sits and the applause quickly fades.

Her tiny fingers are poised majestically over the keys, but her face is desperately pale. Cold sweat gathering.

She closes her eyes. Drawing from her well of strength.

And here's Fiona, nodding from afar. *Willing her girl.*

Until finally...

Emma opens her eyes. And just like that, she begins to play. Confident. Fluid. *Soulful.*

Trevor and Fiona beam. He squeezes her hand. This proud moment bringing them closer together.

The crowd is *profoundly* moved. It's immediately clear this is not your average recital.

Emma's entire body is in it now. Ivory and fingers all one fluid organism.

Fiona finds herself mouthing each note, nodding her head. But suddenly, something's crawling on her arm --

She flicks her wrist, shaking it off.

TREVOR

You okay?

FIONA

Yea, just a bug.

But looking down at the dark floor... she sees it there. The fat white MAGGOT, twisting and writhing.

And as Fiona's stomach begins to sink...

Emma hammers the keys with vigorous passion. This alchemy of everything within her tiny being!

Until suddenly, she freezes. The piano goes quiet. Ringing out in the cavernous auditorium...

Beat.

Silence.

Her tiny fingers hover motionless above the keys.

She tries to breathe through her nose. Tries to close her eyes. Tries to calm herself.

No one moves or makes a sound.

Fiona's dying inside, her little girl trapped on that stage.

Emma chokes back tears. The room beginning to lilt and spin.

EMMA

I am here. I am me. I am powerful.

Deep breath. Summoning strength.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I am here. I am me. I am powerful.

She places her hands back on the keys.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I am here. I am -- BLARRGH!!

-- THE FOUNTAIN OF CRIMSON BLOOD EXPLODES from her mouth and splatters across the ivory --

-- The crowd GASPS as she pitches sideways to the floor with a gut-wrenching *THUD* and --

EXT. BUSY STREET - NIGHT

-- It's pouring rain as we hustle frenetically behind the blistering ambulance --

INT. AMBULANCE - SAME

Fiona clutches Emma's pale and feeble hand.

FIONA

I'm right here, sweets. You're gonna be okay.

But Emma does not react. Blank and emotionless. Soon, she begins to stir, eyes bursting with fear.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Em...

Absolute dread at the sight of her own mother!

FIONA (CONT'D)
Sweetheart, it's okay. I'm here.
Mommy's here.

But that gaze is unrelenting -- and it seems to burn with silent accusation.

The EMT's leery glance is not lost on any of us.

FIONA (CONT'D)
What's wrong? Emma, what's wrong?!

But Emma pulls her hand away, recoiling in terror. Her mouth hinging open, she lets out a horrific howl.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Emma, sweetheart, please -- !!

INT. ICU - LATER

Silence.

Respite.

Through the glass we view Emma, now fully unconscious. IV's and wires tendrils upward like some misery marionette.

Slowly we push towards her as her tiny chest rises and falls.

The machines beep. The oxygen whirs. Closer. Closer....

INT. LOBBY - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A quiet tv. A distant phone call. Olly curled asleep on the scratchy couch.

And here's Fiona, knee bouncing as she stares at the linoleum floor, processing all the failure and remorse.

Suddenly, the automatic doors whisk open and Ruth hurries in.

TREVOR
Mom...

Mother and son embrace, cathartic.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
She's okay. She's stable.

RUTH

What happened? Is she sick?

TREVOR

They're still doing tests.

RUTH

Why isn't someone in there?

TREVOR

She's resting, she needs to rest.

RUTH

Poor baby. How could this happen?

Fiona feels Ruth's gaze as she asks that question. Wishes she could disappear.

EXT. FRONT CIRCLE, HOSPITAL - LATER

Brisk night air. Sirens in the distance.

Fiona nurses a cigarette as Downtown Brooklyn looms above like some waiting monster.

Surreptitiously, she glances back inside to THE LOBBY where...

Trevor now speaks furtively with two DOWDY WOMEN, their faces solemn as they clutch some official-looking binders.

Just then, all three of them turn to clock Fiona --

-- She ducks out of sight, panicked thoughts racing through her brain.

Suddenly, the automatic doors suck open and the two Women file towards the parking lot without a word to her.

One woman glances back before getting in her car. Fiona offers a polite nod. The woman's smile is obligatorily.

Cautiously, Trevor makes his way over to her. A long deafening silence between them.

Then...

TREVOR

Where'd you get a cigarette?

FIONA

I had some. What was all that?

TREVOR

What?

FIONA

The heavies.

TREVOR

Just, insurance stuff. The firm switched providers so it's been all this... confusion.

FIONA

They think I did this.

TREVOR

What?

FIONA

They only wanted to talk to you.

TREVOR

I told them you needed space.

FIONA

(beat)

The way they looked at me...

TREVOR

No one's looking at you.

FIONA

Your mom is. Your mom *definitely* is.

Trevor hangs his head. Struggling. Then, he glances back inside to make sure Olly is still asleep.

TREVOR

Can you just tell me one thing?

She finally meets his eyes. It's the hardest thing he's ever had to say out loud...

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Her blood-work had, um, brodofarcum or brodo -- I dunno, rat poison.

(off Fiona)

I know you'd bought some.

FIONA

What are you asking me right now?
You think I'd hurt her?

TREVOR
No.

FIONA
I'd *never* hurt her.

TREVOR
I know --

FIONA
I'd never hurt either of them!

TREVOR
I know, I know --

FIONA
How could you even ask me that?

TREVOR
I'm not. I'm sorry.

She flicks her cigarette.

FIONA
I wanna see her. Is that okay? Am I allowed to see my daughter?

TREVOR
I think so.

INT. ICU - MOMENTS LATER

Startlingly close on Emma's pale flesh. Damp and veiny. Her tiny chest rising and falling as the machines blip and whir.

And here's Fiona, staring down at this nightmare-come-true. Her daughter's frail body strewn with wires and tubes.

Quietly, she kneels. Gently, she strokes Emma's damp hair.

FIONA
I'm here, Peeps. Mama's here.

Slowly, we push in on Emma's clammy face. Slowly, we push in on Fiona, trying to be strong.

FIONA (CONT'D)
You're gonna be okay, I promise.

Suddenly, Emma twitches. Stirs. Groaning.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Shhh. It's okay.

The MAGGOT curls from her nostril -- its translucent body writhing towards freedom --

FIONA (CONT'D)

-- *FUCK!*

-- Fiona lurches back as the larvae flops onto the sheets and Trevor comes rushing in behind her --

TREVOR

-- What's wrong?

FIONA

There was a maggot!

TREVOR

Shhh, don't wake her up.

FIONA

It crawled out of her nose I saw it!

TREVOR

I don't see anything.

FIONA

She's not safe here.

TREVOR

What are you talking about?

FIONA

She needs to be at home.

TREVOR

What?

FIONA

Olly, too.

TREVOR

Olly's fine, he's with my mom.

FIONA

No, they need to be with me!

TREVOR

Let's step out.

FIONA

No -- no!

He has to grab her now, physically restraining her, pulling her towards the hall.

A NURSE rushes towards the commotion, signaling for a hefty SECURITY GUARD to join but --

TREVOR
Wait don't do that --

FIONA Whoa whoa it's okay -- TREVOR (CONT'D)
-- Sorry. We're okay.

The Nurse and Security Guard slow, both glaring, on edge, ready for anything.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Sorry, we're just...
(beat)
It's a rough night.

Her and Trevor are forced to nod in agreement.

NURSE
Maybe get some fresh air, yea?

She and the Security Guard cautiously retreat, leaving Trevor and Fiona once again to the crushing silence.

Fiona catches her breath, dithering inside. Finally, she makes her choice. Meets Trevor's eyes.

FIONA
I need to tell you something. And I need you to listen because I'm your wife. Batshit as it might all sound.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - LATER

Bleary-eyed nurses refill coffee and make easy banter. Their blithe complacence a stark contrast to...

Over here at this far-off booth. Fiona trembles, fidgeting with an untouched mug. Across from her, Trevor looks ill.

FIONA
I was me again. I wasn't a mom. Or a wife. Or a PTA darling. And I guess I just... I acted out.

Trevor glares with more indigence than he's ever known possible.

TREVOR
Why are you telling me this right now?

FIONA

Because...

TREVOR

Our daughter is fighting for her life.

FIONA

It's *why* she's fighting for her life.

Beat.

FIONA (CONT'D)

He was an old friend. And we reconnected. His name is Ian Wilkes and he's been dead for twelve years.

(off Trevor)

I don't know how to explain it, but he's still here somehow. He's been stalking me, since that night. He brought me flowers -- *amaranths*! He poisoned the rats in our kitchen, he even tried to help with the kids and that's when I told him to stop.

(beat)

And then he got angry. And now he's trying to hurt us. He *is* hurting us. Our *kids*.

And all of Trevor's ire, all of his confusion, it suddenly turns to sadness. He looks at her differently now.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Don't do that, don't look at me like that.

TREVOR

Fi...

FIONA

I need you to believe me. We can fix this together.

He hangs his head and sighs. Then, mercifully...

TREVOR

Sweetheart. You need help.

FIONA

No. That's not --

TREVOR

-- And I'm here for you.

FIONA

Please listen to me.

TREVOR

I love you so much. We all do.

And here's Fiona, realizing she'll never have an ally. Her defeated eyes lilting over to...

....Trevor's JACKET, heaped on the table. The rental car KEY-FOB exposed in its pocket. She pretends she never saw it.

Trevor reaches across the table and touches her hand. Loving. Condescending.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

There's a doctor here. Karen Wanewright. She's very smart.

Fiona's eyes darken with anger and betrayal but she chooses to remain calm. *Deciding her course.*

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Maybe it's worth talking to her.
Yea?

Fiona stares with stoic resolve. And as she nods her head we are --

EXT. LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY - LATER

-- *FWOOM!* That rental car runs the gauntlet of towering old tenements which stand sentry along the neon freeway --

INT. RENTAL CAR, LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY - SAME

Fiona grips the wheel with feral conviction. A lone wolf now.

Her phone rings incessantly but she tunes it the fuck out as a frantic KNOCKING pre-laps us to --

EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

-- She's pounding on the regal front door.

FIONA

Ruth! It's me!

The light upstairs blinks on.

FIONA (CONT'D)
It's an emergency!

She can hear her mother-in-law moving around inside. She can hear the rickety staircase.

Soon, she can hear her on the other side of the door, doing nothing. Saying nothing. Waiting for Fiona to leave.

Like a ghost.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Ruth, please! Olly's in danger.

RUTH (O.S.)
I can't let you in.

FIONA
What? *Why?!*

RUTH
They told me not to...

Fiona steps back, reeling. She clocks some NEIGHBORS, peeking out their windows. Tries to force some calm.

FIONA
Ruth. Don't listen to them. You have to trust *me*. I'm his *mother*. You can understand that, right? Mother to mother?

She listens, and she waits. But nothing happens.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Ruth?

RUTH (O.S.)
The police are on their way.

FIONA
Wait, no! No no no don't do that.
Ruth! FUCK!

She kicks the door and immediately regrets it --

FIONA (CONT'D)
-- Sorry. I'm sorry.

Suddenly, there's a SCREAM from upstairs. A blood curdling howl no parent should ever have to hear from their child.

FIONA (CONT'D)
 OLLY! Ruth, what's happening?! TALK
 TO ME!

She throws her shoulder into the door. Desperate. Out of her fucking mind. But then, she remembers...

A collection of rocks by the porch. She lifts one to find a rusty old house-key.

INT. RUTH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

FWOOM! The door flings open and --

-- We run with Fiona, bounding up the steps. Frantic, disorienting, Olly's SCREAMS growing louder and louder as --

-- She rips around the corner into --

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- Ruth is trying to comfort the boy but he's howling relentlessly, eyes wide open yet his body still asleep --

OLIVER
 -- Helllp! Mama, helllp!!

Fiona forces her way in and wraps her arms around him.

FIONA
 It's okay, Bug, it's Mama. I'm here. Mama's here.

She feels his pajamas. His sheets. Damp with urine.

FIONA (CONT'D)
 Oh, sweetheart. It's okay.

But he's not even responding. His gaze is set far away, tiny chest lurching with rapid breaths.

FIONA (CONT'D)
 I'm here, baby doll. I'm here.

She holds him closer, running her fingers through his curly locks. But then, her breath catches. Because...

...there are clumps of hair, tangled around her fingers.

FIONA (CONT'D)
 No...

Testing, she plucks at his scalp -- more of it coming out in patches!

RUTH
What're you *doing*?!

FIONA
No no no no no....

RUTH
Stop it -- why are you doing that?!

Then, abruptly, Olly stops crying. His wide round eyes blazing into hers. An eerily sweet smile unfurls.

OLIVER
Do you love him, Mama? Is he your boyfriend?

He belts a loud, goofy laugh!

OLIVER (CONT'D)
He told me you're meant to be together!

FIONA
Was he here? Did he come back here?

OLIVER
(sings)
Ian and Mommy sitting in a tree --

FIONA
Olly, stop --

OLIVER
-- *K-I-S-S-I-N-G.*

FIONA
STOP IT!

The boy cackles uproariously. She shakes him hard, trying to break him from this fugue state but --

RUTH
-- That's enough!

Ruth tries to pry her away but Fiona SHOVES her a little too hard. The frail woman crumples to the floor.

Beat.

And that's when she hears the distant SIRENS.

No time to apologize now. Urgently, she hugs her son. As if it's the last time she ever will.

FIONA
I'm gonna fix this, Bug, I promise.
I love you forever and ever.

INT. RENTAL CAR, HUDSON VALLEY - DRIVING - NIGHT

SHOOM! Fiona grinds the steering wheel, dithering between stoic resolve and complete emotional implosion.

Out the window, the tall, gnarled trees loom. Taunting her. *Judging her.*

EXT. WEST HILLS HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

The SUV races past this beacon of nostalgia, leaving it behind in the darkness.

INT. RENTAL CAR, POUGHKEEPSIE - LATER

As Fiona weaves through the sleepy suburbs, her confidence begins to waver. Foot easing off the gas. Because...

Up ahead, the childhood home of this man who still haunts her. But this time, she steels herself against the shame.

This time, she pulls into the driveway.

EXT. WILKE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Fiona marches up the damp front walk and raps on the door. Silence save the crick of windblown branches.

She knocks again, harder. Still no response.

Then, the feral WHINE catches her ear. A DOG, injured or scared.

She creeps down off the porch and follows the noise, skulking through the wilted flowers along the side of the house...

FIONA
(hushed)
Jimmy...?

The WHINE grows louder as she draws nearer.

Soon, she comes upon the regal Wheaton Terrier, pacing back and forth, agitated and scared. *Something has it spooked.*

FIONA (CONT'D)
Jimmy. Hey. What's wrong, kid?

Cautiously she approaches, his visage hidden in shadow.

FIONA (CONT'D)
It's okay, boy. Where's your mama?
She inside?

The dog shrinks down, shivering hard.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Are you hurt? It's okay --

-- Suddenly he SNAPS at her with a horrific YELP --

She lurches back, barely avoiding his razor teeth!

Then, just as quickly, the dog bounds off into the woods.

Gone.

Fiona catches her breath, gathers her wits, and turns to face that house once again.

INT. BACK HALLWAY, WILKES HOME - SAME

The door squeaks open. Fiona slinks inside. The hall dark and quiet save the incessant THRUM of the washing machine.

She surveys the laundry room. Clothes neatly folded, some up on racks. 90's rock t-shirts. Ripped baggy jeans. Hoodies...

Ian's childhood threads.

Fiona's stomach sinks as she presses on down the dark hallway.

FIONA
Hello...?

As she moves past the living room, she sees that same TEA SET, still sitting out, untouched. *As if frozen in time.*

INT. UPSTAIRS - SAME

The old wooden steps groan as Fiona crests the landing. And there she sees the faint light coming from Ian's bedroom.

FIONA
Debbie...?

Trembling, she creeps closer. Cautiously, she nudges the door open. And there she sits...

DEBBIE WILKES, at the edge of Ian's bed. *Waiting.*

The gaudy woman has no makeup or frills now. Her armor down, voice frail and resigned.

DEBBIE
He told me you were coming. And
that you'd be upset.

A chill runs up Fiona's spine.

FIONA
He's hurting my kids.

Debbie grinds her teeth, painfully torn.

FIONA (CONT'D)
I know you can make him stop.

The frail woman sighs. Her lips quiver with heartache. Mournfully, she shakes her head.

DEBBIE
He doesn't listen anymore. He's not the same boy I raised. He's not the same sweet Ian you grew up with. He's something different now. Something selfish and cruel.

Finally, Debbie meets her gaze. Both of them sharing this burden together.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
When I tried to start my life again... it made him angry. He doesn't want me to be happy. He doesn't want any of us to be happy.

FIONA
(beat)
Debbie. Is he here right now?

She shakes her head no.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Where is he?

DEBBIE

Same as always. That room where he took his own life. Room 316.

Fiona blanches with revelation.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I blamed you. Did you know that?
Ever since you ditched him at prom.
(beat)

I always thought you were the reason he was dead. But I was wrong. You're the reason he's still here.

The world begins to fall out from under her, because Fiona finally understands what she has to do.

INT. ICU - NIGHT

The gentle BLIPS and WHIRS of life-saving machines. Slowly, we find Emma, comatose, on a ventilator now.

As we move past her, we can see out into the hallway where...

Trevor listens to the doctor. We cannot hear the words. We can only see Trevor as he struggles to stay upright.

Suddenly, he reacts to something in his pocket. Pulls out his phone and asks the doctor for a moment.

TREVOR

(into phone)

Baby, where are you?

INTERCUT WITH --

INT. RENTAL CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Fiona's eyes swim with dread and resolve all at once. Unable to speak...

TREVOR

Fi? Are you there? Emma took a turn, please come back.

Her heart sinks. Trevor can barely get the words out.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

They had to put her in a coma. She has one of those big tubes...

Her eyes swell with tears but she fights to stay strong.

FIONA
I'm gonna fix this.

TREVOR
There's nothing to fix. Just come back.

Quickly she hangs up. Resolute yet devastated. All she can do now is focus on the road ahead.

INT. LOBBY - HOSPITAL - LATER

Becca's there now, trying to console Trevor as he paces.

BECCA
I'll check your apartment while I call around Poughkeepsie.

He shakes his head, lost. Becca moves closer, hugs him.

BECCA (CONT'D)
I'll find her, alright? You just worry about your baby.

EXT. SUBURBAN THOROUGHFARE, POUGHKEEPSIE - NIGHT

CRSHHH!!! That rental car splashes through potholes as it barrels through this torrential storm.

INT. RENTAL CAR - DRIVING - SAME

Fiona remains steadfast as she cranes to see through the sheets of rain.

Then, up ahead, there it is. Its warm lights smeared through the windshield...

THE RIVERSIDE INN. That quaint, three-story cradle of tryst.

INT. LOBBY, RIVERSIDE INN - NIGHT

The doors swish open. Fiona crosses the threshold into the empty lobby as coffeehouse music teases the silence.

She sees the cozy fireplace is no longer burning, now just a hollow chamber of ash. She sees the bar is now dark and shuttered, almost as if it never even existed.

For a long moment she stands there, spiraling. Until the CONSIERGE, 40's, startles her back to reality.

CONSIERGE
Can I help you?

FIONA
(beat)
I need a room.

CONSIERGE
Excellent, we have a few options
tonight.

FIONA
A specific room.

CONSIERGE
Oh. Tell me the number and we'll
see if it's available.

FIONA
(a fact)
It's available.

INT. BECCA'S MERCEDES - DRIVING - NIGHT

Becca dials as she drives. Straight to voicemail.

BECCA
C'mon, Babe. Come back to us.

INT. HALLWAY, THIRD FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

DING! The elevator yawns open and Fiona steps off. Her nose twitches. That acrid odor, just like before.

She steels herself and drifts down the timeworn hallway. The warm sconces and pastoral artwork, all so familiar now.

Soon she approaches that drab, unceremonious doorway...

ROOM 316

And suddenly, all that conviction, all that drive, it evaporates. There is nothing now but *paralysis*.

She looks down at the key-card in her hand. Trembling, she raises it to the sensor, but... nothing happens.

She swipes again. Still nothing. Instead, she simply tries the handle. CLICK. Already unlocked.

INT. ROOM 316 - SAME

The door whines open. She fumbles to turn on the lights.

And there it is before her... the same vintage wallpaper, same wood floors and musty rugs. All so innocuous.

CLACK! -- She startles when the door falls shut behind her. Steadies herself, trying to breathe.

For a moment, she listens to the lurch and thrust of the old heating ducts.

She swallows the lump in her throat. Manages to part her chapped lips. And from the deafening silence, she speaks...

FIONA

Ian...?

Beat.

Nothing.

For a moment, she reconsiders everything. For a moment, *she fears they all may be right about her.*

But then...

KSHHHHH!!! -- She jumps at the sudden noise.

Cautiously, she creeps towards the sound. Trembling, she rounds the corner to see...

The BATHTUB is filling with warm water.

She whips around, head on a swivel, tracing for any signs of this man... but the room remains empty.

She remembers to breathe. In through the nose, out through the mouth. *Stay strong. For Emma. For Olly.*

Finally, she nods in silent agreement, forcing herself to play along with this fucked up game.

With quivering fingers, she unbuttons her jeans. And with her trembling voice, she offers up two simple words...

FIONA (CONT'D)

I'm here.

Then, like ripping a band-aid, she kicks off her pants, peels off her blouse, and kills the faucet -- *THUNK!*

Silence.

The warm, placid tub.

Drip.

Drip.

Finally, she steps into the water.

INT. FIONA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Becca charges into the dark apartment.

BECCA

Fi?!

We follow her towards the bedroom, heart racing. She flips on the lights but the room is empty.

BECCA (CONT'D)

Fi!

She checks the bathroom. Also empty.

BECCA (CONT'D)

Shit --

She turns to leave but something stops her. There, on the dresser...

THE GREEN VELVET EARRINGS CASE. The memories Becca so readily dismiss, suddenly flooding back to her.

With bated breath, she clicks the case open. We do not see what she sees. Only her look of revelation as we go --

INT. BECCA'S MERCEDES - MOMENTS LATER

-- *FWOOM!* Speeding back through Brooklyn, phone ringing over the speaker as we INTERCUT WITH --

INT. ICU - SAME

Trevor, haggard and sleepless beside his ailing daughter, answers the phone with what little strength he has left.

TREVOR

Hey.

BECCA

I know where she is.

INT. ROOM 316 - NIGHT

The bedroom is vacant. Uncomfortably silent. Slowly, we push towards the nightstand and the faux-vintage radio.

Close. Closer...

Suddenly, it blinks to life and the lush acoustic opening chords drift from its tiny speakers...

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

...Blind Melon's "CHANGE" wafts through the desolate space, but the nostalgia no longer registers for Fiona.

Instead, her eyes remain stolid and blank.

Remorse.

Resentment.

Then, her gaze casts down the length of her body, buoyant in the warm bath. Her painted toes. Her tattooed ankles...

This storybook of betrayal and failure.

Then she notices... the faint silhouette through the shower curtain. Impossibly tall, motionless.

Carefully, she peels back the curtain and her face falls. Because right there, hanging on the bathroom door....

The sexy black dress from the reunion. It looms over her. *Beckoning.*

A beat as she summons that courage once again...

FIONA
Hello...?

Still, there is no answer.

Reluctantly, she rises from the bath, quickly covering with a towel, vulnerable and scared.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Just like that fated evening, Fiona slips into the nostalgic black dress. Eyes herself in the LED mirror.

This time, she hates what she sees. Now just this portrait of pain and disappointment. Of lost youth and vacant hope.

She can hardly even stomach the sight.

Shamefully, she lowers her gaze. And that's when she sees it there on the counter before her...

THE TWO BARBED WIRE EARRINGS...

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The sharp point pierces her ear, twisting audibly through the taut, fleshy hole.

Then, finally, she turns to face the plush white bed.

The final note of "CHANGE" rings out. But then, those same opening chords start right back up again.

Prisoner. She is a prisoner of her own past.

And so, with all the regret in the world, she drifts forward. Crawls across the soft sheets and sits against the headboard.

Terrified, she tucks her knees to her chest. And she waits.

Seemingly forever...

That song on repeat, grating her nerves now. Its wistful croon becoming something else. Something hellish...

Chaotic and distorted. Like swarming insects.

The blood fills her skull. Louder and LOUDER and --

-- **KNOCK.** **KNOCK.** **KNOCK.**

She startles as the radio suddenly cuts out.

Beat.

Silence.

And again... **KNOCK.** **KNOCK.** **KNOCK.**

Her wide frightened eyes.

It takes forever for her to move her body. For her bare feet to creep across the old wood floor.

Tenuously, she presses against the eye-hole to discover...

That familiar smudged SILHOUETTE, gazing back at her as it has so many times before.

She can hear her own heartbeat now, thundering in her chest. This visceral, bone-chilling dread.

But she touches that **E & O** pendant. Takes a deep, deep breath. *Summoning the strength her family needs.*

And finally, she opens the door for him.

IAN WILKES. In the flesh. Smiling quaintly as if nothing's wrong.

He eases the door shut, sealing them both inside. His eyes so sweet, so boyish and kind.

But here's Fiona, struggling to hide her immense terror.

IAN
What's wrong?

He takes a step and she flinches back.

IAN (CONT'D)
Hey. It's okay.

FIONA
Make it stop...

IAN
It can.

He holds out a friendly hand. But her attention is suddenly drawn to the light fixture above...

A MOTH, fluttering aimlessly against the bulb. *CLINK. CLINK.*

FIONA
I can't.

IAN
You have to.

FIONA
They need me.

IAN
I need you more.

FIONA
(indignant)
I'm their mother.

His eyes remain stolid. Heartless. And Fiona can't hold back any longer. Her face twisting with ire.

FIONA (CONT'D)
You're confused.

IAN
But I love you.

FIONA
No you don't. Not *this* me. You love
some other me... from back then.

IAN
You're still you.

FIONA
(a fucking fact)
No. I'm not.

A perilous beat. A silent standoff. Then, abruptly...

IAN
Your daughter won't make it through
the night.

Fiona's heart shatters. A tear races down her cheek.

The MOTH flutters faster overhead.

Suddenly, dread turns to rage. Primal, maternal desperation.
And without warning, she LUNGES --

FIONA
-- *Fuck you* -- !

-- He pushes her back but she will not stop!

FIONA (CONT'D)
-- *Leave her alone!*

-- Swatting and screaming and clawing!

FIONA (CONT'D)
-- *Leave us alone!*

-- She drives her entire body into him and they tumble into
that full-length mirror --

-- Shattered glass and sliced flesh --

-- She continues to thrash and punch but Ian remains calm and
controlled, holding her at bay as her wounds begin to open --

FIONA (CONT'D)
You want me?! Fucking kill me! You
child! You pathetic child!

IAN
I don't want to hurt you.

FIONA
Fuck you! Hurt me! You're nothing!
You're a child!

And now, instead of pushing her away, he wraps his arms around her. Embracing her. Emotional.

IAN
Fiona, please...

And as the blood gushes fast from her wounds, she begins to grow weak, slowly fading into him...

IAN (CONT'D)
It's okay. I'm sorry...

FIONA
...fuck you...

IAN
I'm not gonna hurt you.

FIONA
...you're nothing. You're no one...

IAN
I'm sorry...

Both of them aching with sadness, Ian helps her fold down onto the bed.

Her hazy eyes lilt up to that light fixture again. TWO MOTHS now. Then a THIRD. Circling like buzzards.

Her blood quickly blossoms across the bright white sheets. She sobs and she bleeds and she tries to fight but...

She is too weak now.

And here they are. These two morbid lovers. Ian holding her gently, lovingly, as the life leaks from her body.

FIONA
My babies. Don't hurt them.

IAN
I won't.

FIONA
Promise me.

IAN
It'll all be over soon.

And that's when her waning eyes notice his hands upon her...

Brown with rot, fingers gnarled and decayed!

She looks to that cracked mirror where she first watched herself give everything to him. But this time...

He is not a man. Rather, a creature made of sinew and bone, holding her with all the love in the world.

And yet, she is no longer scared. She is no longer fighting. She squeezes her eyes tight. Accepting this fate.

This penance.

This sacrifice.

The sheets soaking red.

The MOTHS up above. *Clinking and humming.* Ringing inside her skull. Louder and louder and *LOUDER...*

But suddenly --

-- the door FLINGS OPEN -- a flood of warm light and blurred silhouettes, familiar voices and impossible SAFETY but --

-- Just before she can see who it is we --

SNAP TO BLACK

Silence.

Nothingness.

Then, from the hopeless abyss...

BEEP... BEEP... BEEP.... A heart monitor. And...

...A blurred figure slowly comes into focus. Gangly. Pale. Spectral. As it drifts towards us we realize...

INT. SOMEWHERE - DAY

...It's OLIVER and he's shouting at us but his words are garbled and damp, as if under water. And right behind him...

EMMA. Healthy and alive now, her tiny voice beginning to break through...

EMMA

Mom, it's us!

OLIVER

Mama, we love you!

Fiona's face, pale and confused. She cannot seem to speak. All she can do is gaze at her two beautiful children...

These angels.

Finally, as a soft smile melts across her lips. She lets her heavy eyes fall shut. And once again, we drift to...

DARKNESS.

A low wind howls through our skulls. The cozy din of rustling leaves and far away traffic.

EXT. BROOKLYN HEIGHTS - MORNING

Stark light glistens off the blinding sheets of snow. A rare sunny winter morning.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

The fridge opens with a healthy hum. Trevor snatching ingredients with a pep in his step.

We follow in his flow-state, like a seasoned chef now, fixing this beautiful breakfast for his family.

In the living room, Emma practices piano as Olly draws his monsters.

TREVOR

Ol, you sure you don't wanna try some cheddar in this?

OLIVER

I like the white one!

TREVOR

I know, bud, but what'd we talk about?

OLIVER

Having an open brain.

TREVOR

Yea, something like that.

OLIVER
K, I'll try it I guess.

TREVOR
That's my guy!

And over here on the couch, we find Fiona, healthy and smiling as she watches Trevor take command of the stove.

She's never felt more at peace.

EXT. SIDEWALK, BROOKLYN HEIGHTS - MORNING

Hands in pockets, Fiona lags behind her family, taking her time to appreciate the trees, the birds, the neighbors.

Emma and Olly run ahead, packing snowballs and throwing them at one another.

TREVOR
Guys! Wait --

-- *THWUNK!* Olly drills him in the chest. He laughs.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Whoa now! Where'd that arm come from?!

OLIVER
I throw hardest in my class!

TREVOR
Ah, okay. But can you field?!

OLIVER
What's that mean?

He scoops a fistful and chucks it at his squealing son who screams and runs away.

Fiona watches on with so much love in her heart, yet something dark still tugs behind her haunted eyes.

EXT. CORRIN ACADEMY - MORNING

Emma and Olly wave goodbye with soggy gloves, then scramble up the salted steps into their school.

Fiona stands beside her husband, watching their two miracles hurtle through the best years of their lives.

She can't help but crack a wistful smile as they vanish inside. And now we are --

INT. CORRIN ACADEMY - SAME

-- Following Emma as she treads through the halls. Her classmates moving in cliques as she walks alone....

But that's okay. She likes alone.

And we continue to follow her, rounding the corner into the classroom where she takes a seat by the drafty window.

The bell RINGS and the students settle in.

She doesn't see her mom and dad lingering on the sidewalk across the lawn, watching her with pride and admiration.

TEACHER (O.S.)

Wow! Okay, I am *freezing*. Who got fooled by the sunshine today?

Some students joke and chatter, but we pay them no mind. Instead, we are slowly pushing past Emma...

...pushing towards that window and her parents outside.

Closer.

Closer...

Trevor and Fiona. Neither saying a word to one another.

Neither even acknowledging the other.

Then, abruptly, Trevor shoves his hands in his pockets and treks off, back the direction they came.

But Fiona does not follow. She does not even move as...

We continue our slow push... through the window... closer and closer as she peers in at her brilliant daughter.

And the closer we get, the more we see the desperation in her eyes. The loss and the regret. The torture and the dread.

It seems like forever since she even blinked. Just looming there, listless on the frigid sidewalk.

She doesn't see the man in the dark overcoat approaching from behind. She doesn't know he's there until...

IAN lays a gentle hand on her back. She turns to face him, forcing a painfully requisite smile.

He pecks her on the lips and takes her hand in his.

"LIKE I USED TO" by Sharon Van Etten and Angel Olsen creeps in, underscoring the romance of a perfect Brooklyn morning.

Together, the two lovers stroll off down the sidewalk.

Forever.

THE END