

**ROT**

written by

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FADE IN:

**EXT. IDYLLIC SUBURB - DAY**

A peaceful neighborhood washed out in a dreamy, Brady-Bunch sheen. The sun is shining, the birds singing.

Everything clean and fresh.

The delighted SCREAMS of children echo through the air...

**EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY**

Beneath the cloudless sky, the doors of a HIGH SCHOOL burst open. A flow of RESTLESS TEENAGERS stream out into the light.

Among them: **MARSHALL**. 14, small and awkward-looking.

He moves stiffly, jostled by the throng —

He trips over another student's feet, knocking a textbook from her hands.

He scurries on the ground for it, grabs it, looks up to see —

A GIRL. A little older than him.

Their conversation is inaudible under the babble of the exiting crowd, but they exchange smiles as he returns the book.

The girl LAUGHS at something Marshall says.

Red-faced, Marshall excuses himself. Turns away and onto the sidewalk.

Unseen by Marshall, a group of OLDER KIDS link up with the girl...

They watch Marshall go.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

The flow of students has become a trickle. Everyone split off into their own little groups.

Marshall walks alone. He picks at his thumb absentmindedly. It looks raw and inflamed.

His hand twitches. As if he wants to do more, but —

He looks around. Self-conscious.

The other students are distracted by their own conversations.

He surreptitiously rubs at his wrist. Hard. Like there's a mosquito bite under there.

He rubs and rubs. His sleeve pulls up to reveal a large, irritated RASH, spreading up his arm from the picked thumb.

*Infected.*

Marshall jolts. Yanks down his sleeve. Takes a deep breath.

He squeezes his arm tight, but stops rubbing.

**EXT. MARSHALL'S HOME - DAY**

Marshall approaches an unobtrusive BUNGALOW.

The windows are covered up with blankets. Some junk and broken furniture scattered on the front lawn.

**ON THE PORCH**

Marshall glances around.

Across the street, an ELDERLY NEIGHBOR rocks on a patio chair. He eyes Marshall.

Marshall looks away. He pulls open the door, just wide enough for him to get inside.

**INT. MARSHALL'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

Marshall's nose unconsciously wrinkles as he shuts the door behind him.

The house is musty. Dim.

The darkness barely disguises the state of the house: every inch is FILLED WITH JUNK. Still-wrapped bulk items, bags of clothes, piles of rubbish.

Hills and valleys of indistinguishable refuse.

Marshall's eyes pass over it all without note.

MARSHALL  
Mom. M'home.

A fly buzzes around Marshall's head. He blinks but doesn't bother swatting it.

He follows a carved path through the hoard, taking care to step on less-stained sections of carpet, and into —

### **THE KITCHEN**

Marshall opens the fridge. It's PACKED TO THE BRIM with congealed beverages, sticky tupperwares, long-spoiled meat and vegetables.

He abandons the fridge and reaches up to search the packed cupboards. An unidentifiable GRIME sticks to every surface.

He pulls down a seemingly unsullied box of Raisin Bran. Opens the top, peeks inside:

For a second, it looks fine. But then: movement. Flecks of bran rearranging of their own accord. Ants.

He flicks the box closed, shoves it back. He reaches farther...

His fingers grasp a pre-packaged NATURE BAR.

He unwraps it. Safe from contamination. He takes a bite.

The house is too quiet.

MARSHALL

Mom?

Dim cracks of sunlight peek through the curtains in —

### **THE LIVING ROOM**

Marshall pokes his head in. The room is similarly packed and unusable. Above the fireplace sits a framed photograph of Marshall and his PARENTS.

Beside that, a PORTRAIT OF MARSHALL'S FATHER. A small URN on the mantle in front of it.

But there's nobody here.

Marshall twitches the curtain closed.

He steps back into the hall. His eyes are drawn to —

### **A BEDROOM**

The door is half-open. He rests his fingers on the handle...

Marshall hesitates, afraid of what he might see —

He shoves the door open.

The room inside is piled high with clothes, boxes, ephemera.

The only clean spot is a section of the bed —

A small woman lies there. Motionless. **MARSHALL'S MOTHER.**

Surrounded on all sides by rubble, almost nest-like.

She's in an unnatural position, one foot on the ground, as if she fell there and never got up.

Marshall stares. Knowing instinctively what her odd-looking pose must mean, but unable to react.

He doesn't move closer. Just looks at her.

*Creak.*

The sound of the front door opening. Marshall turns to see —

It's the GIRL FROM SCHOOL. Alone.

Gawking at the inside of his house.

Marshall and the girl lock eyes.

She panics. Turns on her heel and runs.

Marshall hurries after her. Doesn't look back at his mother.

He stumbles and slips on hoard as he gropes for the door —

#### **EXT. MARSHALL'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

Marshall races to catch up with the girl, who hurtles towards the GROUP OF OLDER KIDS: they sent her to do recon.

The kids see Marshall running and EXPLODE in gasps and hyperactive giggles. They clamber over one another to get away.

MARSHALL  
Stop. Stop!

The kids SCREAM in exaggerated fear and delight. Caught up the feverish excitement of such a bizarre spectacle.

The girl lags behind. She glances back at Marshall.

MARSHALL  
Please.

Marshall sprints towards her. He loses his balance and staggers to the ground, GRABS the girl's leg —

The girl SHRIEKS. Like he's a horror-movie monster.

The other kids laugh and yell. The girl drags Marshall for a pace or two. She stumbles.

His grip falls down her leg and onto her shoe.

He isn't letting go.

MARSHALL  
Please don't tell.

Frenzied and desperate, spurred on by the deranged noise of the group, the girl wriggles her foot out of her sneaker.

She rushes to catch up with the group. Doesn't look back.

Marshall lies in the grass as the sounds of their hysteria fade into the distance.

The girl's shoe clutched tight in his hand.

CUT TO:

**EXT. TORONTO - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY**

A CAR drives through the streets of present-day Toronto. Amongst the ordinary bustle of human life in the city, we note:

Wet garbage leaks from burst bags.

Vomit dries on the sidewalk.

A stained mattress is placed out for collection.

Half-eaten fast-food sits abandoned on a bus bench.

The clattering DIN of CONSTRUCTION NOISE carries us to —

**EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY**

Random junk and pieces of debris are BURIED UNDER DIRT in a bustling downtown construction site.

The wide foundation of a future office tower, several stories deep, is being filled in.

**MARSHALL**, now 29, throws his hard hat and safety vest on as he steps out of his car and passes through the entrance gate.

He's filled out since his malnourished childhood, but carries some premature aging and paranoia around his eyes.

The work site is a CACOPHONY OF SOUND: men yelling, machinery banging, dude-rock playing from a tinny speaker.

Marshall makes his way down to the bottom.

At the subterranean level, a group of YOUNGISH WORKERS chat.

WORKER

She's like, "If you watch that shit, then you don't really love me."

The other guys giggle and groan. Marshall hovers near them.

They notice him. Their conversation quiets.

They disperse and get back to work.

#### **EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - LATER**

Marshall works on a temporary walkway. Another CONSTRUCTION GUY holds a strip of wood steady.

He waits impatiently for Marshall to line up his nail gun perfectly.

CONSTRUCTION GUY

Come on, man.

The guy gestures to a passing worker.

CONSTRUCTION GUY

He takes fuckin'...

He waves his hand. *Forever*. The other guy snickers.

Marshall fires the nail gun. *BANG*.

#### **INT. SANDWICH SHOP - DAY**

Marshall waits in line at a cramped sandwich place.

The construction site is visible through the shop windows. The noise reverberates through the glass.

There are only a few seats, all occupied by CONSTRUCTION GUYS.

Marshall pretends to study the menu board. But his eyes repeatedly stray towards the girl working the counter.

Her name tag reads **LIV.** 26, dyed black hair, killer eyeliner. Looks a little out of place in the corny sandwich uniform.

Marshall steps up to the counter.

LIV  
Hey.

MARSHALL  
Hi.

A smile of mutual recognition. He's a regular.

MARSHALL  
Uuuuuh. Could I get a -

LIV  
Turkey on white. No veggies. No dressing.

MARSHALL  
(sheepish)  
Yes.

LIV  
If you're feeling adventurous, you could toast it.

MARSHALL  
Oh, no. Too risky for me.

Liv grins. Works on the sandwich. Silence bubbles up.

Marshall searches for something else to say...

The BRAYING LAUGHTER of the construction guys interrupts. He turns around to look.

The guys are huddled around a phone. They shush each other, trying and failing to be discreet about whatever's so funny.

Liv rings him up.

LIV  
Six twenty.

MARSHALL  
Thanks. Uh...

Liv looks at him. Expectant.

MARSHALL  
Thank you.

He takes his sandwich.

LIV  
See you tomorrow.

Marshall almost says it back. But the boisterous presence of the construction guys is overwhelming. He smiles, nods instead.

He avoids looking at the guys on his way out.

He opens the door, letting in the freshly irritating sound of JACKHAMMERING —

**EXT. CITY PARK - DAY**

Marshall sits on a park bench and eats his sandwich alone.

The surrounding buildings are packed tight, all identical glass towers. So many overlapping shadows that the ground is in permanent shade.

Despite the clear weather, nobody is outside. The streets are unpopulated. Trimmed grass and a play structure with no children in sight.

Marshall doesn't seem to mind.

MARSHALL  
(softly)  
"See you tomorrow."

He smiles to himself.

**INT. CONSTRUCTION OFFICE - DAY**

Marshall punches his time card.

Behind him, the construction guy from earlier convenes with his buddy. Both (again) preoccupied with the phone screen.

CONSTRUCTION BUDDY  
Je-sus Christ.

CONSTRUCTION GUY  
No shit, right? "Mistress  
Aquarius." I knew it was her.

Marshall hesitates as he steps out. Glances at the phone —

**ON THE SCREEN**

A girl who looks a lot like **LIV** poses in a tight leather getup. Making come-hither eyes at camera.

The two notice Marshall staring. The guy clicks his phone off.

CONSTRUCTION GUY  
What?

MARSHALL

Nothing.

Marshall shuffles out. The guy murmurs something to his buddy.

**INT. NURSING HOME - BEDROOM - DUSK**

Marshall sits in a chair and watches television with his **GRANDMOTHER**: frail, quiet. Reclined in her bed.

The room is sparsely furnished. The changing light of the television plays across their faces. Some noisy game show.

Through the walls, the **MUFFLED MOANS OF AN OLD MAN** emerge.

Whether from pain or complaint or pleasure, it's hard to tell.

CARETAKER (O.S.)

I know, I know. Just lay back  
down.

The moaning continues under the ringing bells and cheers of the game show.

Marshall glances at his grandmother.

She doesn't seem to hear it.

He looks back at the TV.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

Marshall's car pulls into the parking lot of an **OLD FIVE-STORY WALKUP**.

An **UNDEVELOPED CONCRETE LOT** nearby holds the promise of yet another tower next door.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Marshall descends the stairs to the **SEMI-BASEMENT LEVEL**. Gray walls and gray linoleum lit by harsh fluorescents.

His footsteps echo. The place seems even bleaker for its zombie-apocalypse-esque emptiness.

He approaches the door to his apartment: #1.

He slides his key in.

**Creeeak.** Another door opens behind him.

Sensing eyes on him, Marshall turns to see —

An OLD WOMAN pokes her head out of the door to #2: **MARGARET**. A ghoulish recluse.

Her TV volume is cranked up to max. Soap opera voices reverberate in the empty hall.

Marshall politely raises a hand in greeting.

MARGARET

Mmmmm.

Margaret slides her door closed, nodding all the while. The blare of her television bleeds through the walls.

Marshall turns the key.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Marshall showers. The room is hard to make out, filled to the brim with steam.

The water seems to SIZZLE as it hits Marshall's skin.

Boiling hot.

We hear the rough scrubbing of a hard-bristle NAIL BRUSH —

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Marshall opens the bathroom door into a compact STUDIO APARTMENT. His sanctuary.

Kitchen, bedroom, living space, all one room. One closet.

The only piece of furniture is a simple bed. A DESKTOP COMPUTER sits on the floor.

The space is minimalist in the extreme, stripped bare of any personal touches or decor.

His ONE LARGE WINDOW sits at exactly GROUND-LEVEL. A view of the parking lot and street beyond.

The whole place as clean as if he had just moved in.

Marshall pushes his wet hair back. He turns on a single lamp (the only light fixture) and pulls a box of dry pasta out of the cupboard.

He opens the fridge: it's equally clean and desolate.

He grabs a stick of butter, habitually examines it before placing it on the counter. He sets a pot of water to boil.

He takes a bowl from the cupboard. Looks it over. Pulls a spoon from the drawer. Holds it up to the light to inspect it.

This routine is taken up with an air of unconscious habit. Relaxed and peaceful.

While the water boils, Marshall sits at his floor-computer. Types into the search bar:

**MISTRESS AQUARIUS**

Results pop up. Videos, pictures, a fan page.

He hesitates. Unsure about clicking any further.

At that instant, the POWER GOES OUT.

Marshall looks around. Outside his window, the streetlights are still visibly working.

He rises and heads for an ELECTRICAL PANEL near the front door. He opens the cover.

His fingers hover, uncertain, over the indistinguishable black switches.

*BANG, BANG.*

A knock at his window: **KEITH**, 40s, a New Yorky blend of gruff and approachable.

Keith waves at Marshall. Signals that he's going to come down.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER**

Marshall opens the door for Keith.

KEITH  
Saw your lights go out.  
Electricals are shit in the  
building this time of year.

Marshall swallows. Unsure what to say.

KEITH  
Keith. We haven't met. I'm the  
super.

MARSHALL  
I'm Marshall.

KEITH

I know. Seen your name on the rent  
cheques. You're quiet.

MARSHALL

I guess I don't get out much.

KEITH

May I?

Marshall lets him in. Keith takes in the sight of Marshall's  
practically empty apartment.

KEITH

When you moved in, did you forget  
to bring your things?

Marshall grimaces: unsure if Keith's making fun of him.

Keith glances at the electrical panel.

KEITH

What, you never reset a breaker  
before?

MARSHALL

No.

Keith is caught off-guard.

KEITH

Really?

(after a thoughtful beat)

Well, that's okay. Sometimes you  
miss things. It's this one.

Keith clicks the breaker. Marshall's only lamp turns back on.

They both laugh at the minimal effect the light has.

A musical tone sounds. Marshall's desktop has BOOTTED BACK UP —

A LEWD IMAGE of LIV'S ALTER-EGO clearly visible on the screen.

Marshall DARTS TOWARD IT —

Keith makes a show of covering his eyes.

KEITH

Whoa, hey there.

Marshall frantically minimizes the window.

MARSHALL

Sorry. That wasn't —

KEITH

Hey, it's all good. I'm the one  
who barged on in here.

Keith's laugh is sincere: *no big deal*. Any previous tension has evaporated. Marshall eases up.

MARSHALL

Thanks. Sorry I never introduced  
myself.

KEITH

Ah, it's not your fault. I'm in  
and out. One of my guys just quit  
so I'm running around doing  
cleanups shorthanded.

MARSHALL

In the building?

KEITH

Ah... no. Bio-cleaner. It's a  
side-gig. Don't tell management.  
Just got off a hoarding job -

Marshall's eyes widen.

KEITH

Yeah. I know.

(beat)

Well. Anything else you need, you  
let me know. My office is in the  
laundry room.

MARSHALL

Thanks, Keith.

KEITH

Your water's boiling.

He points. Marshall looks back. Indeed it is.

**INT. MARSHALL'S DREAM - MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

On Marshall, sleeping.

An unseen fly *buzzes* softly. Getting louder. Closer.

Marshall twitches, but doesn't wake.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Marshall exits the building, unlocks his car. He spots Keith loading up a BLUE VAN. The logo on the side reads:

**TORONTO CLEANUP AND RESTORATION**

Keith waves. *Morning!* Marshall waves back.

Marshall gets into his car. Lost in thought.

LIV (PRE-LAP)  
Bad news. You're about to try  
something new.

**INT. SANDWICH SHOP - DAY**

Marshall looks at Liv across the counter.

LIV  
No turkey.

MARSHALL  
Oh. Uh...

His eyes dart across the menu board — just as the construction crew walks in.

They're loud today. Hyped up. The other patrons shift uneasily.

CONSTRUCTION CREW  
He's a fuck-ing clown, bro/I'm a  
clown?/You're a fucking bitch/etc.

Liv sighs. Clearly annoyed, but reluctant to confront them.

Marshall sees her discomfort. He breathes. Psyching himself up. He turns around —

MARSHALL  
Guys. C'mon.

Agonizing silence.

Out of Marshall's view, Liv looks at him appreciatively.

Then the crew ERUPTS in jeers.

CONSTRUCTION CREW  
"Guys, c'mon."/Shut the fuck up/  
etc.

Marshall hustles out of the shop with his head down. Liv watches him go.

**EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY**

*Bang!* The nail gun fires.

Marshall focuses on his work amid the chaos of the construction site. The construction guy brays to his friend again —

CONSTRUCTION GUY

It's like a lose-lose. Cause she could shave but, then you have to, like, look at it —

Marshall tries to ignore them. His attempt at confidence long gone. His eyes glaze over —

CONSTRUCTION BUDDY

It just looks like a fuckin' organ man.

*Bang!*

CONSTRUCTION GUY

This one girl I met at Rebel. She shaved, right. But she had this like, ripe zit.

Construction buddy bursts out laughing —

CONSTRUCTION GUY

Like, right there. It's nice you shaved, but —

**BANG!**

The construction guy gasps.

Marshall comes to. Clocks the position of his nail gun:

Directly in line with the construction guy's hand. A fresh nail PIERCED through the webbing between his thumb and forefinger.

A beat of total shock from Marshall.

CONSTRUCTION GUY

Fuck. What the fuck!

Before Marshall can say anything, other workers push him aside.

OTHER WORKERS

Holy shit/Get Jack over here/etc.

**EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY**

Marshall exits the construction office, shoulders hunched. His hardhat and safety vest in the FOREMAN's hands.

The construction crew stares at him as he leaves. Marshall keeps his eyes to the ground.

He pushes open the perimeter fence, crosses the street to his car and closes the door.

He pulls out without another look at the workers, the trailer, any of it.

As he rounds the corner, he passes the SANDWICH SHOP. He takes a regretful, humiliated glance at it... and accelerates away.

**INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - PARKED - DAY**

Marshall sits parked out front of a desolate shopping plaza, staring into the abyss.

In a store across the plaza, a TEENAGE WORKER gawks in Marshall's direction.

Marshall looks away, self-conscious... then looks back.

The teenage worker has a FRIEND now. They break down in snorts.

It's unclear if they're making fun of Marshall, or just joking amongst themselves.

Marshall shrivels, certain they're mocking him.

He turns the keys. Starts the car.

The teenagers do not notice him driving off.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - DUSK**

The apartment is dark, except the soft glow of the computer screen lighting Marshall's face.

He clicks through various JOB SITES. Uploads his resume. Types in his information.

He closes one tab and reveals the search results for MISTRESS AQUARIUS from the previous evening.

Marshall stops typing.

His face crumples. He brings his knees up and falls onto his side.

He puts his face in his hands. Barely holds it in.

**INT. MANUFACTURING PLANT, OFFICE - DAY**

Marshall sits across from an INTERVIEWER in a cramped office. *The interviewer's voice is muffled, nearly inaudible.*

He pours Marshall a cup of coffee. Marshall eyes the coffee pot: he notes a layer of grime on the glass.

Marshall accepts the cup, which also has stains on it. The interviewer sits back down.

Marshall smiles. Trying to be normal. But he can't force himself to drink from the cup. He puts it down on the desk.

The interviewer eyes him.

Beneath the desk, Marshall picks nervously at his thumb.

It's no longer infected as in his childhood, but light scarring suggests it's a habit he hasn't kicked.

His eyes dart between the cup, the pot, the clock on the wall, the interviewer's mouth.

He picks too hard —

Blood BLOOMS from Marshall's thumb. He gasps, covers the area with his hand. Looks up.

The interviewer raises an uneasy eyebrow.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Marshall steps out of his car. He spots some blood on his steering wheel. Frustrated with himself, he wipes it clean.

He closes his door, looks up —

And spots Keith's van parked across from him.

An idea strikes him.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY**

Several washers and dryers clatter with full loads. Marshall approaches a door at the back labelled "SUPERINTENDENT". He knocks.

KEITH (O.S.)

Yeah.

MARSHALL

It's Marshall.

CLANG.

Marshall looks behind him. A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN collects her clothes from the dryer.

She meets Marshall's eye. Suspicious.

Keith opens his door. Dozens of dated SECURITY CAMERAS line a wall behind a cluttered desk, showing the halls of the apartment building.

All deserted.

KEITH

What can I do ya for?

MARSHALL

You said the other day you were short-staffed.

KEITH

Oh. Y'know when I said "anything you need" I wasn't thinking you needed a job.

MARSHALL

I didn't. Until - the other day. I worked in construction.

(losing his nerve)

So. Even if there's anything I can do around here...

KEITH

I doubt it. They barely pay enough to keep me on call.

MARSHALL

Oh. Right.

KEITH

Construction, huh. I got a couple buddies just got laid off. Tough right now. Crews getting squeezed.

MARSHALL

Yeah...

Marshall taps on the door frame. Watches the laundry lady return to her apartment on the video monitors.

MARSHALL

Well. No harm in asking, right.

He turns to leave —

KEITH  
You get grossed out easily?  
(off Marshall's look)  
Judging from your apartment.

MARSHALL  
I like cleaning.

KEITH  
It's not like regular cleaning.  
You familiar with biohazard or  
trauma remediation?

MARSHALL  
Like crime scenes?

KEITH  
Mostly not. A lot of it's just,  
people die, nobody finds 'em for a  
while. That kind of thing.  
Infestations —

MARSHALL  
Hoarders.

A touch of intensity there.

KEITH  
Right.  
(beat)  
You don't need to be certified,  
just online safety stuff. Most of  
the training happens on the job.

Marshall nods. Keith looks him over. Skeptical.

KEITH  
You need a strong stomach for this  
kind of thing. Most people think  
they have it, but they don't. I  
used to be a firefighter, so it's  
hard to phase me.  
(beat)  
You have any experience with  
death?

Marshall laughs a little.

KEITH  
Sorry to be blunt. But it's heavy  
stuff. Not for everybody.

MARSHALL

My dad passed when I was young. My mom when I was in high school.

(beat)

I found her. So. I know what a dead body looks like.

KEITH

Jeez. I'm sorry. Figured it'd be a grandparent or something.

MARSHALL

Got the big ones out of the way, I guess.

Keith snorts. Marshall cracks a smile.

KEITH

Hey. Sense of humor. That's good.

(remembering their earlier exchange)

Never reset a breaker, huh.

He nods to himself.

KEITH

You free tomorrow?

MARSHALL

I'm free now.

Keith chuckles.

KEITH

We'll start tomorrow.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Marshall sits at his computer. He clicks through an online training module about the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Beside an image of a SMILING MAN in a biohazard suit, Marshall reads the text on screen:

**...restore the home or business to its original state prior to the unplanned event...**

Marshall looks uncharacteristically relaxed. Buoyed by a hint of real self-assurance. His attention wavers —

He moves the cursor to the **MISTRESS AQUARIUS** tab.

His cursor hovers, ready to close the tab. He thinks for a moment, indecisive...

He sets his jaw. Stands up.

**EXT. SANDWICH SHOP - NIGHT**

Marshall approaches the shop. He spots Liv inside, in the middle of helping a lone CUSTOMER.

He hovers outside, pretends to be looking at something else.

He hears the rattle of the cash register closing.

LIV  
(muffled)  
Have a good one.

The customer exits. Marshall takes a breath and opens the door.

**INT. SANDWICH SHOP - CONTINUOUS**

Marshall walks up to the counter. Liv looks pleased to see him.

LIV  
Almost didn't recognize you  
without the vest. Turkey's back.  
White, no veggies, no dressing?

MARSHALL  
Yeah - no.

Liv's fingers hover over the register.

LIV  
Don't tell me you found another  
sandwich place. I thought we had  
something special.

MARSHALL  
No, I - I haven't been in  
because...  
(fuck it)  
I got fired.

Liv takes this in.

MARSHALL  
Honestly, I wasn't good at it. I  
uh - shot this guy with a nail  
gun. He's fine, but. It is frowned  
upon.

LIV

Really?

MARSHALL

Yeah.

LIV

Wow, you weren't good at it.

MARSHALL

No. And I didn't like it. And – I  
don't think they liked me very  
much.

LIV

They don't like me, either.

They smile at each other.

MARSHALL

But I'd like to see you, still. If  
you want.

LIV

Like a date?

MARSHALL

Oh, well, I don't know if I was  
asking you –

LIV

I'm asking you.

Marshall blushes.

MARSHALL

Sure.

LIV

I'm free tomorrow night.

Marshall nods. Tries to contain his excitement. Doesn't want to  
say anything to ruin this.

LIV

I'll give you my number.

**EXT. OLD MAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Marshall follows GPS directions to a parking lot behind a tall  
apartment building. He spots KEITH'S VAN, parks next to it.

Keith waves at him as he exits. Across the street, a BUS sets  
off from the stop.

KEITH  
And here comes Timour.

**TIMOUR**, mid-20s, ambles over to them from the bus stop. Ukrainian, five-foot-nothing. Wears shorts wherever he goes.

KEITH  
This is Marshall. Timour's been with me for about a year now.

Marshall and Timour shake hands. Timour grimace-smiles. A little awkward, like Marshall.

KEITH  
So. This is gonna be a pretty standard scenario.

Keith opens up the back of his van and pulls out folded WHITE BIOHAZARD SUITS, masks and duct tape.

They all pull the white suits over their clothes.

KEITH  
Elderly gentleman passed away in his armchair. Few days before anyone called in a wellness check. His remains were removed by the funeral home, and we do the rest.

Timour hands Marshall the duct tape to seal his gloves to his suit sleeves.

KEITH  
Any fabric, anything porous that fluids have penetrated, we dispose of. Everything else, we clean.

They catch sight of a tired-looking MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN hovering near the door.

KEITH  
The daughter. I'll talk to 'er.

Keith pulls down his mask. Heads over to the woman.

TIMOUR  
Here. For the smell.

Timour hands Marshall a tub of VAPORUB. A white strip already covers his top lip. He pulls his mask on.

Marshall looks at the VapoRub. It's well-used, dug into by who knows how many fingers.

MARSHALL

I'm okay.

TIMOUR

Sure? Once it's in there, it  
doesn't go away.

MARSHALL

What does it smell like?

TIMOUR

Decomp? Ah... you ever leave raw  
meat in the sun for a week?

The woman hands a set of keys to Keith, looking reassured.  
Keith strolls back to Marshall and Timour.

KEITH

We're gonna find out how squeamish  
you are, Marshall.

(beat)

He had a dog.

**INT. OLD MAN'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Keith, Timour and Marshall unlock and enter the apartment.

Marshall sniffs. Squints a little. It is a strong smell.

TIMOUR

See?

Marshall nods, but keeps breathing. Determined to tolerate it.

The place has the dusty air of an elderly person's long-term  
living space. A window left open to air it out.

A fly buzzes.

Accumulated knick-knacks and family photographs are neatly  
arranged on a side table.

A dish left to soak in the sink.

A doily rests on top of an old tube TV.

Across the from TV sits a couch and a LEATHER ARMCHAIR —

Stained with the distinct DARK OUTLINE of a seated man. It  
almost looks like a GREASE STAIN.

TIMOUR

That's why you dry off after a swim.

Marshall blanches, shocked by the glib-ness. But Keith laughs.

KEITH

See, when you look at it at first it doesn't seem like that big a deal.

Keith points out the wall behind the armchair: MAGGOT TRAILS stain the walls.

KEITH

But we'll need to do a bug bomb for the flies. They start laying eggs within hours. And we'll treat the wall with Killz and repaint.

He eyes the carpeted floor beneath the armchair.

KEITH

Older folks always have carpets. We'll have to remove that and scrub the sub-floor.

They move further in. Timour reaches out an arm in front of Marshall.

TIMOUR

Watch it.

Marshall looks down and sees a thick LOG OF FECES.

Marshall follows Keith through a small hallway, stepping over more feces, until he reaches —

**INT. OLD MAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

A neat room, bed made. It's lonely-looking. The floor has still more feces on it, smaller and more numerous.

The closet door is open. Inside is cluttered with random boxes and ephemera.

Almost hidden on the floor, on top of a worn-looking dog bed...

The motionless CORPSE OF A LAP DOG.

Not visibly decomposed yet. It's almost sweet-looking and could be asleep, if not for its emaciated midsection.

Marshall takes it in. Keith watches his reaction.

Timour pops up between them.

TIMOUR

You think he took a bite?

KEITH

Probably.

TIMOUR

Cool.

He glances at Marshall.

TIMOUR

Or, not cool. Very sad.

Keith snorts. Marshall takes a breath.

MARSHALL

So what do we do first?

**INT. OLD MAN'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Keith sets down a portable radio on the kitchen counter. Tunes it to a pop station. CHEERFUL, HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC plays over:

REMEDIATION MONTAGE:

- The men set off BUG BOMBS
- Timour vacuums up the dead flies and larvae
- Keith removes a dog-sized body bag from the bedroom
- Marshall and Timour move the furniture out of the way
- Marshall pulls up the carpet as Keith pulls down the wallpaper
- The trio cut up, wrap and dispose of the ruined armchair in marked BIOHAZARD BAGS

END MONTAGE.

Marshall wet-cleans the couch. Pressing hard to remove flecks of muck. A little out-of-breath.

In the background, Keith de-gloves while Timour drops his paint brush into the bucket.

KEITH

Let's call it lunch.

Marshall looks around the thoroughly trashed-looking apartment.

TIMOUR

Don't worry. We're done, it's gonna be a whole different place.

KEITH

This afternoon we'll finish here, bedroom closet. Should be good.

MARSHALL

And under the bed?

Keith looks at Marshall inquiringly.

**INT. OLD MAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY**

Marshall points to a section of floor beside the bed.

MARSHALL

You said the dog probably...

Keith crouches and peers at the floor. It's partially in shadow, barely visible, but definitely there: a FLUID STAIN.

KEITH

Oh shit.

MARSHALL

I figured that's where he - you know. Took it.

KEITH

You're right.

Timour and Keith exchange a look. Impressed.

KEITH

Good catch.

**EXT. OLD MAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Keith, Marshall and Timour eat lunch in the back of Keith's van. Coffee and donuts. Marshall has a plain bagel.

TIMOUR

What do you think he was watching?

Marshall and Keith look at him.

TIMOUR

You know, when he -

He makes a face. *Croaked.*

KEITH

I think it's best to know as little as possible.

TIMOUR

Marshall?

MARSHALL

The news? Maybe the History Channel.

TIMOUR

What, cause he was old? That's what old people watch?

MARSHALL

(laughing)

I don't know. What do you think?

TIMOUR

Oh, porn. Like hardcore, sickening pornography. How do you think the heart attack happened?

Timour's contagious giggle infects them all. Keith shakes his head. Marshall grins. Thrilled by this unfamiliar camaraderie.

**INT. OLD MAN'S APARTMENT - LATER**

Timour wraps a cord around a machine labelled "NANO AIR FILTER" while Marshall picks up another labelled "OZONE MACHINE".

Marshall takes a long look around.

The apartment has been restored. The furniture tastefully re-arranged to de-emphasize the gap left by the armchair.

The floors are clean, the walls now a neutral off-white.

Marshall takes it in. Clearly satisfied with their work.

KEITH

One last thing.

Keith fills a simple VASE with water from the kitchen tap. From one of his equipment carriers, he pulls a single WHITE LILY.

Keith rests the vase on the kitchen counter and gently places the lily inside.

The water catches the warm afternoon sunlight from the window.

**EXT. OLD MAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER**

The sun sets as the men pack up Keith's van. Marshall closes the back doors.

MARSHALL

Okay. This was... thank you for -  
uh. Thanks for the opportunity.

He hovers. Waiting for clarification. *Did he get the job?*

Keith nods, drawing out the moment. Amused by Marshall's awkwardness.

Feeling wrong-footed, Marshall turns to leave.

Keith laughs. *Just fuckin' with ya.*

KEITH

Good job today. You handled it.  
You up for another one in a couple  
days?

Marshall smiles. He shoots Keith and Timour a thumbs-up.

**INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

Marshall and Liv sit across from each other at a generic American-style restaurant.

A waiter sets a greasy, dripping burger down in front of Liv.

LIV

You're really not going to have  
anything?

MARSHALL

I'm okay. Have a thing about food.

LIV

Thing being...?

MARSHALL

Certain textures. Wet... anything  
that spoils easily.

LIV

Limited options.

MARSHALL

Yeah. I don't usually eat out.

LIV

Oh, well. We should probably end  
the date now then.

It takes Marshall a second. He's instantly flustered.

MARSHALL

I didn't mean —

LIV

I'm kidding.  
(beat)  
But we could've done drinks. You  
should've told me.

MARSHALL

Maybe we can... do drinks next  
time.

They smile.

LIV

So perishable food... intolerable.  
But not decomposed human remains.

MARSHALL

Well, I'm not eating them.

LIV

So what's it like?

MARSHALL

You don't want to hear about it  
over food.

LIV

I have an iron stomach.

She digs into her burger.

MARSHALL

Okay, um — it's just, you know,  
someone dies in their house. The  
body's natural processes break  
things down.

Liv nods, chewing: *still with you.*

MARSHALL

Those processes create gasses...  
so they bloat... and...

She swallows. Her smile widens. He grins back.

MARSHALL

Liquify. Except for hair and cartilage and stuff. And flies are attracted, so they lay eggs. And we clean it up.

LIV

How does that feel?

MARSHALL

It's... satisfying. Like nothing ever happened.

(beat)

What about you? Your work?

LIV

Me?

(beat)

It's just meat and cheese and frozen bread. Only slightly less off-putting.

Marshall absorbs this. *She doesn't talk about the other thing.*

Liv rests her hand conspicuously on the table. Palm-up.

Marshall wants to reach out...

But he's too aware of the people around him. Too shy. He can't do it. He closes his eyes, irritated with himself.

Liv notices his hesitation. She reaches out and touches her hand to his.

They meet eyes.

LIV

So. You live close?

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Marshall unlocks his door. Gestures inside. Liv enters.

She takes in the sight of Marshall's bare-minimum apartment with wide eyes. But no comment.

He waits for her to say something. Antsy.

MARSHALL

Sorry about the mess.

Liv doesn't laugh.

LIV

I hear you can learn everything  
about a person just by seeing  
where they live.

MARSHALL

I'll give you the full tour, then.

He takes two steps toward the center of the room. Gestures vaguely around.

MARSHALL

That's the tour.

Liv snorts.

The two of them consider each other in the dark. The only light comes from Marshall's open curtains...

Footsteps outside.

A PEDESTRIAN walks past Marshall's window. The pedestrian stares nosily in — until he meets Liv's eye. He quickly looks away, passes the window.

LIV

Are you going to close those?

MARSHALL

You want me to?

LIV

Someone might see.

MARSHALL

See what?

Marshall exhales. Embarrassed. It's obvious what she meant.

LIV

Never hooked up with a girl on the  
first date before?

He's too shy to answer. Liv looks at him carefully. As if she's aware of his shame.

As if she likes it.

LIV

The more you avoid something, the  
more power it has over you.

Liv crosses the distance between them. Tilts her head up. Marshall slowly, uncertainly, leans forward and kisses her.

It's gentle. Slightly dry.

LIV  
You really don't know what you're  
doing, do you?

Liv wraps her arms around Marshall's waist and guides him towards the bed...

**INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - MOVING - DAY**

The next morning, Marshall drives through a crummy residential area. He's zoned out, not paying attention —

He hits a speed bump hard. Readjusts his speed and position.

His hand moves unconsciously to his crotch.

He pulls up at a stop light. Glances at the driver beside him. They're not watching.

Marshall stares off into the distance and touches his groin.

FLASHBACK TO:

**LAST NIGHT**

Liv, in a lacy bra, straddles Marshall in bed. They kiss. Marshall strains to reach her...

Liv pushes him down onto his back.

MARSHALL  
What should I —

Liv touches a hand to his mouth. She puts her hands on his chest. Presses him firmly into the mattress.

Stay.

He whimpers. Paralyzed with arousal.

LIV  
Good boy.

She takes his hand, slowly guides it between her thighs.

He hesitates, his fingers tremble —

BACK TO:

**MARSHALL IN THE CAR**

He exhales. Blinks slowly. Blissed out and pleasuring himself to the memory...

*BEEP BEEP!*

Marshall yanks his hand away.

It's Keith. He waves from his van, parked in the driveway of —

**EXT. HOARDER'S BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS**

Marshall parks on the street. Adjusts himself. Exits his car.

Keith's van has a JUNK REMOVAL TRAILER attached to it. Timour rises from the curb to greet them both.

The front lawn is LITTERED with random broken furniture, propane tanks, boxes of junk.

Signs of neglect mark the home's exterior. The windows are half-covered with blankets.

A hoarder home.

Marshall steels himself as the trio don their bio-suits.

KEITH

Marshall, this'll either be your nightmare or your wet dream.

Marshall laughs apprehensively.

**INT. HOARDER'S BUNGALOW - FOYER - DAY**

Keith struggles to open the door.

A MOUNTAIN OF JUNK is piled up throughout the house. Peaks and valleys of hoard, stains everywhere, too much to take in.

Keith and Timour wade through the waist-high clutter. Marshall hovers near the entrance.

He breathes steadily through his mask.

MARSHALL

She didn't die here?

KEITH

Nah. Hospital. Family tried to do this themselves but they had no idea how bad it was.

Marshall swallows. Takes a hesitant step forward...

His foot SLIPS on a loose piece of cardboard. He reaches out to steady himself, his hand catches the wall —

Which is covered in BLACK MOULD.

Marshall yanks his hand back, lets out a noise of disgust. A dark, wet-looking stain on his white glove.

He stops in his tracks. Blinks hard.

Keith and Timour, walking ahead, haven't caught his discomfort. He collects himself. Follows them through the house.

KEITH

So, we'll wanna tackle the  
bathroom today...

**INT. HOARDER'S BUNGALOW - BATHROOM - DAY**

Keith gestures inside. The toilet is piled high with EXCREMENT. The tub and sink both filled with crud.

KEITH

As you can see, the occupant had  
been living without running water  
for some time.

Marshall forces himself to look at it.

**INT. HOARDER'S BUNGALOW - TEENAGER'S ROOM - DAY**

Marshall opens the door to a small bedroom. A little messy, but only to a standard-teenage degree. It's an oasis in this house.

TIMOUR

One less room to work on.

Marshall takes in the details of the lonely room. His eyes land on a box of PRE-PACKAGED NATURE BARS on the desk.

Keith clicks his tongue.

KEITH

Poor kid.

TIMOUR

Least my parents were just drunks.

Marshall closes the door.

**INT. HOARDER'S BUNGALOW - HALLWAY - DAY**

Keith gestures through a doorway towards the master bedroom.

KEITH  
Mostly junk in there, seems like.

Keith and Timour proceed ahead of Marshall. As he passes the darkened mess, half-hidden in shadow —

A half-second blurred glimpse of something.

A WOMAN'S FIGURE. Hunched over in the corner of the bedroom.

Marshall freezes. He looks again: just clothes hung on a lamp.

KEITH (O.S.)  
Marshall.

He turns.

KEITH  
Where do you think we should  
start?

**INT. HOARDER'S BUNGALOW - BATHROOM - DAY**

The bathroom is now (mercifully) clear of human waste. Only room for one person. Marshall scrubs hard at the moldy walls with a heavy-duty sponge.

His face gets redder by the second. Panting from the effort.

Timour returns from outside with an empty wheelbarrow. He clocks Marshall's agitation.

TIMOUR  
(from the doorway)  
Tap out?

Marshall doesn't respond.

He's scrubbing too hard. It's furious, compulsive. The friction tears pieces off the sponge.

The MOLDY BLEACH-WATER drips down the wall...

Marshall gasps. His arms finally give out. He catches his breath, glares at his handiwork:

One asymmetrical patch of clean wall, surrounded by grime.

TIMOUR  
Nice.

Marshall nods, though he's clearly dissatisfied.

**INT. HOARDER'S BUNGALOW - KITCHEN - LATER**

Expired food, soiled cooking implements, cat food and litter are scattered everywhere.

Marshall kneels in front of the REFRIGERATOR, placing items into a garbage bag. Timour and Keith clear out the cabinets.

Marshall stares into the PACKED SHELVES. It strongly resembles his own childhood fridge.

His movements slow. He seems almost hypnotized by the incomprehensible depths of the fridge.

His fingers tremble at the entrance...

As if compelled, he reaches DEEP INSIDE.

His hand pushes slowly through tight layers of packaged meat and unidentifiable bagged goo...

Past his elbow...

Marshall's eyelids flutter.

His hand reaches the back wall. He breathes heavily.

FLASHBACK TO:

**LAST NIGHT**

In bed. Liv guides Marshall's hand inside her —

BACK TO:

A soft scuttling sound. Movement —

Marshall YANKS his hand out — right as Timour passes behind him. Timour barely dodges his elbow in time.

TIMOUR  
Ay! Watch it!

Marshall staggers back.

Keith looks over from the other side of the kitchen.

MARSHALL  
There's something alive in there.  
In the back.

Keith squats in front of the fridge. He peers into the shelf Marshall was working on...

KEITH  
Ah. Yeah. That's - oop.

Keith leans back.

A ROACH skitters out over the pile of food. It crawls towards Marshall, as if drawn to him —

Marshall STOMPS on it. Out-of-breath. Agitated.

KEITH  
That's a nest. We'll do pest control after this.

Keith eyes Marshall. Timour stares.

Marshall nods. Avoiding their eyes. He steps out.

**INT. HOARDER'S BUNGALOW - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Marshall trains his gaze on the relatively clean walls and ceiling. Trying to calm himself.

His eyes wander from the ceiling panels to the mantle...

Floating above the wreckage: a GRADUATION PHOTO of a sweet-looking, bespectacled TEENAGE GIRL.

Marshall stares into her flat smile. He closes his eyes. Mortified.

**EXT. HOARDER'S BUNGALOW - DUSK**

Marshall and Timour chuck large items and stuffed garbage bags into the junk trailer. It's already half-full.

Timour tries to catch Marshall's eye.

But Marshall ducks his head, hurries back inside. Ashamed.

KEITH (PRE-LAP)  
Good work today. Place'll be livable again in no time.

**EXT. HOARDER'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT**

The three men exit the house. The lawn is clear of debris. Keith starts up his van.

Marshall paces unsteadily down the driveway. Just as he reaches his car — Timour claps a hand on his shoulder.

TIMOUR  
You wanna give me a ride?

Marshall takes a second to absorb the request.

MARSHALL  
Sure. Where do you live?

TIMOUR  
No. You need to unwind. I give you directions.

Marshall gestures toward his car. *Hop in.*

**INT. BASEMENT BAR - NIGHT**

A bar packed with COLLEGE STUDENTS. A shitty cover band makes a racket near the door. Marshall and Timour sit in a booth.

Timour is mid-anecdote, revved up. A couple empty pints in front of him.

TIMOUR  
The girl wakes up. We've had this beautiful night of passion. I'm still asleep. I'm naked. Cock out. I guess she can't find her phone so she looks at mine. And that very second, Keith is sending me pictures of this job we're doing later. Gore-fest, right?

MARSHALL  
Jesus Christ.

TIMOUR  
No explanation. Just pictures of these fucking chewed-up body parts. So obviously she's like, "Holy fuck, this guy's a fucking maniac!"

Marshall bursts out laughing, nearly spilling his pint.

TIMOUR  
So she runs screaming out of my apartment. She's naked, I'm naked. I'm running, covering my cock and balls with my hand trying to explain.

(MORE)

TIMOUR (CONT'D)

And I'm yelling at her, I'm like  
"It's my job! It's my job!" and I  
see her sort of stumble down the  
stairs. And I'm watching her cause  
I think she's gonna fall, I'm not  
watching my own feet, so then I  
fall down the stairs. I'm tumbling  
and stumbling with my dick flying  
around and she's like "This guy's  
trying to kill me!"

Marshall's overcome by can't-breathe laughter. Timour takes a long drink.

TIMOUR

Never heard from her again. I  
guess she thinks she escaped a  
serial killer or something.

(beat)

You have to laugh. You laugh or  
you die.

Marshall wipes tears from his eyes.

TIMOUR

So what about you, man? You seeing  
someone? You gotta piece?

MARSHALL

Sort of.

TIMOUR

Hell yeah. Hell yeah. What's she  
like?

MARSHALL

She's cool. She's really cool.

Marshall hesitates.

TIMOUR

Oh Christ. What is it? She got an  
extra toe or something?

MARSHALL

No. She's uh... more experienced  
than me.

TIMOUR

How experienced are you?

Marshall stutters.

TIMOUR

What?!

(full volume)

Are you a virgin?

MARSHALL

I haven't had a girlfriend before.

TIMOUR

And she's been with a lot of guys?

MARSHALL

I mean... yeah. Maybe. I think so.

I don't know.

Timour takes a thoughtful sip of his drink.

TIMOUR

Look, I've had sex with virgins before, alright? And they are fucking awful. Seriously. Don't know what they want, they're dry, they're nervous. No confidence.

MARSHALL

Thanks.

TIMOUR

No, I'm saying... a girl like that, she'll tell you what she wants.

MARSHALL

She does.

TIMOUR

Yeah, man! Yeah. See? It's hot.

Timour hoots. Marshall laughs along.

TIMOUR

Wow. Never had a girlfriend. You're like, ten feet tall.

MARSHALL

Maybe it seems like that to you.

TIMOUR

Hey, hey. You wanna dick-measure? In your position?

MARSHALL

No, no. I never had a girlfriend because...

(MORE)

MARSHALL (CONT'D)  
(steeling himself)  
That house we went to today. My  
mom was... like that. So. Imagine  
bringing a girl home to that.

Timour absorbs this.

MARSHALL  
So, if I was off today -

TIMOUR  
Don't sweat it. Hiring you was  
sort of like hiring three people.

Curiosity burns on his face.

TIMOUR  
She was always that way? Your mom?

MARSHALL  
Not exactly. She was anxious and a  
little paranoid that bad things  
were gonna happen. Then my dad  
died.

(he laughs)  
And she just... never got over it.

TIMOUR  
What was it like?

MARSHALL  
I guess it's like the frog  
boiling. You don't really notice  
at first. And then you see how  
other people live and... you  
notice. You try to tune it out.

TIMOUR  
Hm.

MARSHALL  
But it stays on your skin. This...  
residue. All the time.

TIMOUR  
When you lived there.

MARSHALL  
(beat)  
Yeah.

Timour takes a long drink, and from Marshall's POV we seem to  
catch the briefest look of disgust cross his face.

In an instant, it's gone.

TIMOUR

Well. Would that all our family  
bullshit gave us superpowers.  
Fuckin' Mr. Clean.

Marshall laughs. Timour chugs the last of his drink. He signals the waitress, who drops a bill on their table.

TIMOUR

You wanna hit the club?

MARSHALL

I don't dance.

TIMOUR

Yeah, I didn't think so.

Timour throws down his card and stands. He slaps Marshall on the shoulder.

TIMOUR

I gotta piss. Don't think so hard,  
okay?

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - LATER**

Marshall stumbles into his apartment. Pours a glass of water, checks for cleanliness, then chugs it. Flops onto the bed.

He lies there for a moment.

The glow of his desktop screensaver lights up the room. He leans over, gropes for the mouse and types with a kind of slack focus.

Liv's voice pipes out of the speakers...

LIV (V.O.)

You're a pathetic, disgusting boy,  
aren't you?

Marshall reaches a hand beneath his waistband. Liv giggles. Mocking.

LIV (V.O.)

You're nothing. You're worthless.

His eyes widen. Liv's laughter carries on. Louder and louder —

LIV (PRE-LAP)

Tell me your darkest secrets.

## INT. CAFÉ - DAY

Marshall and Liv sit across from each other at a coffee shop. The buzz of airy conversation surrounds them.

LIV

Don't you get impatient? You know the basics but you're still waiting to uncover the shit that actually matters. Why waste time?

MARSHALL

I guess.

LIV

Let's do questions. One hundred percent honesty.

(beat)

Do me.

MARSHALL

Okay. Um. Where did you grow up?

LIV

Jesus.

MARSHALL

Okay, okay.

(after a breath)

What do you like about me?

LIV

Superficially, your height. Your hands. And your face shape. Not-superficially, your shyness. I like the way you sometimes can't look me in the eye. Like I'm some God that'll burn your retinas out if you look for too long.

Marshall laughs.

MARSHALL

Wow.

LIV

What's your worst fear?

MARSHALL

Uh. Heights.

(off her look)

What?

LIV

I don't like being lied to.

MARSHALL

I honestly don't know. I never  
thought about it.

LIV

Fine. Best sex you've ever had?

Marshall glances around: there's a MOTHER and CHILD within  
earshot. The child looks at him. He lowers his voice.

MARSHALL

I've never had sex.

Liv smiles, as if she'd already figured.

LIV

I'm surprised you'd tell me that.

MARSHALL

Do you like that I told you?

LIV

Yes.

MARSHALL

Does that count as my question?

LIV

Yes! What's my most attractive  
feature?

MARSHALL

Your personality.

LIV

Ouch.

MARSHALL

No, not like — you're... I think  
you're beautiful.

LIV

(smiling)

Good.

MARSHALL

What's the worst sex you've ever  
had?

An impulsive joke: but he instantly cringes at how it sounds.  
The playfulness disappears for a moment. Liv shakes her head.

LIV  
You get a freebie, I get a  
freebie.

Marshall lets it pass.

LIV  
My turn. How's your relationship  
with your mom?

MARSHALL  
She's dead. What's your biggest  
turn-on?

LIV  
When a guy does what I want. Why  
do you think some things turn us  
on and not others?

Marshall glances around again: the mother and child are gone.

MARSHALL  
"Society". Porn, maybe. I don't  
know. What do you think?

LIV  
Childhood. Wasn't that the first  
time you ever felt aroused?

Marshall doesn't say anything.

LIV  
Maybe not aroused exactly. But  
thrilled or embarrassed or  
anything that excited your nervous  
system. You remember. It trickles  
down and mutates.

(beat)  
A friend of mine told me she  
remembers the exact moment of her  
first sexual thought. She was  
watching this movie on cable when  
she was six or something. And this  
violent kidnapping scene comes on.  
It's uncomfortable to think about  
a child being horny, but that's  
what she said. And that's still  
her favorite fantasy.

MARSHALL  
But it is a fantasy.

LIV

Well she's never been kidnapped,  
so I guess we wouldn't know, would  
we?

MARSHALL

Is there any way to stop it? Do  
you think you can teach yourself  
not to like something? To like  
something else, instead?

LIV

I've never tried.

Marshall notices how closely they've leaned into each other.

LIV

Why would you?

Marshall makes a hard effort to look Liv in the eye.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Marshall kneels on the floor in front of the bed, going down on Liv. Her moans build in pitch and frequency as she climaxes.

He raises his head. They gaze at each other. On Marshall, obedient and yielding. On Liv, in control.

She strokes the side of his face. Twists her fingers through his hair, pulls his head back.

Her lip curls. It's mocking, demeaning. Marshall drinks it in.

LIV

You want this, don't you?

Marshall nods.

Liv guides him back up to the bed. Lays him on his back.

She moves down to his waist. Pulls off his boxers.

He gasps as he enters her for the first time. He squeezes his eyes shut.

LIV

Look at me.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Marshall's eyes snap open — the next morning.

He glances at Liv, sleeping beside him. Takes in this miraculous sight for a moment.

But he's distracted by the LOW BARITONE of male voices.

His head hangs off the edge of the bed. He stares upside-down through his window.

A handful of MEN IN HARDHATS survey the EMPTY LOT beside the apartment. Clipboards in hand.

Marshall watches them.

He smacks his lips. Grimaces. *Morning breath.*

He rises for the bathroom.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Marshal notices LIV'S TOOTHBRUSH sitting on the bare countertop. He smiles, marvelling at her forwardness.

He picks up his own toothbrush from the cup and brushes his teeth.

Try as he might not to focus on it... his eyes are drawn back to Liv's toothbrush.

He grabs it. Holds it up to the light. Inspecting it.

He catches his own eye in the mirror. In the room behind him, Liv murmurs as she stirs.

Marshall quickly wipes the counter underneath where Liv's toothbrush sat.

He places her toothbrush firmly in the cup.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - LATER**

Marshall prepares coffee. Tries to ignore the growing sound of workers outside. Liv relaxes in bed behind him.

He pops two pieces of plain white bread into the toaster.

MARSHALL

What if I told you my worst fear  
is my childhood home?

LIV

Really? Why?

MARSHALL  
It's where I found my mom.

Liv nods. Processing this.

LIV  
So, what? I show you mine now?

Marshall is taken aback.

MARSHALL  
You don't have to. I just wanted  
to -

LIV  
Sorry. That wasn't nice.  
(she laughs)  
You know what my mom used to say  
about men? She said men were like  
pit bulls. You could take a pit  
bull that's had a perfect life.  
Socialized, trained, never abused.  
But there are stories about this.  
You forget to feed them once and  
they will rip the skin off your  
face. Try to aggravate it, a lab  
is never gonna do that. But it's  
always in a pit bull to do that,  
even if you think they love you.  
Even if they think they love you.  
But they don't actually know what  
love is.

MARSHALL  
You don't believe that?

LIV  
Of course not. She only thought  
that way because of my stepdad.

MARSHALL  
Bad marriage?

LIV  
Awful. I used to think of his  
place as like, a house of horrors  
or something.

MARSHALL  
You didn't like visiting.

LIV  
I had nightmares about it.  
(MORE)

LIV (CONT'D)

I screamed and cried and made a whole scene every time. Obviously that made everything worse when we got there.

Marshall eyes her. Making assumptions.

LIV

I went back, though. Years later. His place was for sale. I saw the open house sign. I just walked in. Without any of his stuff in it...

(beat)

It was just a house.

Click. The toast pops: burnt.

MARSHALL

Shit.

She grabs two fresh pieces of bread, pops them in the toaster.

LIV

I'm sorry. About your mom. Do you think about it a lot?

He picks at his thumb unconsciously. Liv stands and takes his hand to stop him. She kisses his thumb.

MARSHALL

I wish I hadn't looked.

**EXT. SUBURBAN MURDER HOUSE - DAY**

Marshall parks on a wealthy-looking suburban street, behind Keith's van. Identical grey McMansions copy-pasted ad nauseam.

The house at the end of the street buzzes with activity: CRIME SCENE TECHS and a CORONER.

Timour and Keith stand by the curb, deep in conversation, watching as the techs remove YELLOW TAPE from the perimeter.

Keith spots Marshall approaching and waves. Timour instantly shuts up.

KEITH

Hey, Marshall.

MARSHALL

Hey. What are we talking about?

KEITH

Oh, Timour was just telling me —  
it's not important.

*Were they talking about him? Marshall tries to shake it off.*

MARSHALL

What are we...

The coroner drives off. The movement of his car reveals —

A CURBSIDE MEMORIAL.

Flowers, stuffed animals, and trinkets placed in front of a PHOTOGRAPH of a PREGNANT WOMAN.

The photo has been obviously cropped to cut out a MAN, whose arm is wrapped around her waist.

**INT. SUBURBAN MURDER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

An erratic RED STREAK runs down the side of the marble kitchen island. A thick pool of congealed blood soaks the tile floor.

Timour cracks his neck. Marshall twitches.

MARSHALL

Smells different.

KEITH

Blood does.

TIMOUR

Feels different.

KEITH

That's your caveman instincts.

(beat)

We're repulsed by decomps because  
it can make us sick. Fresh blood  
activates a different membrane. We  
think the danger's still here.

Keith steps around the dried blood pool.

KEITH

We're gonna be working here and in  
the master.

TIMOUR

How long was she in there, before  
he —

Timour does a too-accurate impersonation of someone shooting themselves in the head.

KEITH  
Couple days. So we got some maggots.

A piece of generic art on the wall behind them reads:

**WHEN YOU LOVE WHAT YOU HAVE  
YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED**

**INT. SUBURBAN MURDER HOUSE - LATER**

We track through the house and see the men at their various tasks.

**IN THE KITCHEN**

Timour buffs the floor, 80'S POP MUSIC blasting from a boombox, the buffer zhooshing loudly...

KEITH (O.S.)  
Often when you're talking to family, they'll say "oh it's just blood on the bed or the carpet".

**IN THE HALLWAY**

PERSONAL PHOTOGRAPHS line the wall, the couple growing from high school-age to early 30s. The HUSBAND has a perfect white smile that doesn't reach his eyes.

KEITH (O.S.)  
But you can see here, that's all brain tissue and splatter there.  
There's part of her lower palette.  
Gotta look everywhere. Here.

Keith enters the hall, hauling two bright red BIOHAZARD BAGS out of...

**THE MASTER BEDROOM**

A large COUPLES PORTRAIT on the wall: a fall scene in matching outfits, jeans and white shirts. A NEW CRIB sits in the corner of the room, the mattress still shrink-wrapped.

A half-drunk glass of water sits on the bedside table. The tranquil scene looks all the more bizarre for —

An explosive shotgun-blast spray of dried blood that soaks the pillows, the headboard, and the wall above.

The blast spray forms an asymmetrical halo around Marshall's head as he leans over to slice up the mattress: several layers deep and still wet with dark fluids.

He yanks a boxcutter across a layer of foam —

*Shick.*

Marshall doesn't feel it, but the hard slash catches his glove, **SLICING IT OPEN** and revealing his slightly-bloody picked thumb.

He pulls up the stained foam, drops it in another bio-bag...

In the momentary quiet, the sound of Keith and Timour's **LAUGHTER** reaches him... he pauses.

The mix of laughter and pop music is disorienting.

Marshall leans on the bed frame, tries to hear their words...

Unseen by Marshall, a small MAGGOT wriggles across the wood — towards his torn glove.

He strains to hear Keith and Timour —

And the maggot slowly inches into the hole in Marshall's glove.

It takes him a second to register the sensation.

He FLICKS his hand. Looks at his glove... and sees the hole.

A moment of confusion.

Then he looks back down at the bed frame, maggots scattered across it.

He lets out an involuntary dry-heave. He stumbles into —

### **THE MASTER BATHROOM**

Marshall tears his glove off, shakes his hand towards the bathroom counter.

Nothing comes out.

He scrubs his hands in the bathroom sink. Shoves a soap bar under his nails. Digs into it.

KEITH (O.S.)  
You alright in there?

Marshall holds his hand up to the light —

The picked wound on his thumb undulates...

As if something is beneath the skin.

He GRABS his thumb. Blinks — and it's gone.

**EXT. SUBURBAN MURDER HOUSE - NIGHT**

Keith closes the van's back doors.

KEITH  
Night, boys.

Marshall shuffles to his car. He's clammy. Jittery. As Timour passes by —

MARSHALL  
You want to get a drink?

TIMOUR  
Ah, can't. Clubbing tonight.

MARSHALL  
Oh — cool. That's okay. Uh —

He teeters on the edge of asking to join. But his confidence is shaken. He doesn't have it in him.

MARSHALL  
Goodnight.

TIMOUR  
Night.

Marshall watches him go.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY**

Marshall enters the building. He rubs his thumb unconsciously against his leg, slumps down the hall toward his door. As he unlocks it...

*Creak.*

Margaret's door opens behind him.

Marshall forces a smile, raises a hand like usual. As he turns back to his own door —

MARGARET  
Ah.

She opens her door a crack wider.

MARSHALL  
Can I help you with something?

MARGARET  
Oh, yes. Yes.

She opens the door further. Gestures for Marshall to come in. Uncertain, he follows —

**INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

Margaret's apartment is dark. Dusty, cluttered with knickknacks, lots of fabrics.

The deafening ever-present soap opera blares on her TV.

Marshall's eyes dart around the shadows. Margaret isn't a hoarder, but there are resemblances... piles of objects...

He spots an URN atop the TV as she leads him through.

MARGARET  
Just here.

A scuttling — Marshall twitches.

MARGARET  
You know, I hear when you have company. These walls are so thin.

MARSHALL  
(dry)  
Really? I never noticed.

They pass the kitchen counter. In a corner sits a BOWL OF FRUIT. Old, nearly rotten.

Fruit flies orbit the bowl. Almost invisible in the dark. But we (and Marshall) see.

Margaret disappears into her BATHROOM.

MARGARET (O.S.)  
It's just come loose...

Marshall slowly approaches the bathroom. At this angle, in this light, it looks a bit like...

His mother's bedroom door. He stops in his tracks.

MARSHALL  
Margaret.

Margaret doesn't respond.

A chill runs up Marshall's spine...

He TWITCHES, flicks his hand. Is there something on him?

If there is, we can't see it. He takes a step back.

MARSHALL

Sorry, I...

He slips out the door.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY**

The soothing white noise of the shower running.

Over this, the scrub of Marshall's fingernail brush is fast and frantic. Trying to scrub the day off himself.

A hard bristle catches his thumb — and pulls off more skin.

Marshall GASPS. Blood spurts in the flow of hot water. The brush clatters in the tub.

He squeezes his thumb tight.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Marshall completes his "plain pasta" routine.

BzzZZz.

Marshall twitches. Looks around for whatever bug made that noise. Just starts to relax again when —

BzzZZZZZZ!

He swats wildly. A HUGE BLACK FLY buzzes around the kitchen area.

The fly zips toward the living area. Marshall grabs a spatula and follows it.

The fly lands on the wall right beside the lamp. The bulb casts a nice, long shadow away from it...

Marshall tiptoes across the room, ever-so-gingerly raises the spatula to just an inch above the fly...

SMACK!

Missed. Marshall hits the wall again in frustration.

The fly BUZZES near his face. He swings the spatula violently through the air. Whoosh. Nothing.

He follows it back into the kitchen, towards the counter, the buzzing stops, Marshall doesn't hesitate —

SPLAT!

The spatula squashes the fly into the cabinet with a satisfying slap. He pulls it off without thinking —

Dropping the fly straight into his pristine pasta.

By Marshall's standards, now totally inedible.

Marshall drops the (now also unusable) spatula to the floor. He raises the heels of his hands to his head. Frustration boiling over.

MARSHALL  
(silent)  
*Fuck.*

A KNOCK at the door.

MARSHALL  
Liv?

KEITH (O.S.)  
Keith.

Marshall takes a deep breath. Moves to the door. Opens it.

Keith holds a cheque in his hand.

KEITH  
Here ya go. I hope that's okay.  
I'm old school. No direct deposit.

Marshall takes the cheque. Tries to settle down.

KEITH  
You're feelin' okay?

MARSHALL  
Yeah, yeah.

KEITH  
A lot of people realize it's not  
for them pretty fast.

Marshall nods.

KEITH  
It's great having three hands  
again.

Keith's smile is fatherly. He moves to leave.

KEITH  
Well. Night.

MARSHALL  
Uh — how does...

Keith turns.

MARSHALL  
How does it make you feel? The  
job?

KEITH  
Sometimes it's not easy. But...  
fulfilled, mostly. We carry  
something for people. And that's  
good.

Marshall nods, though we sense he's struggling to reconcile  
this with his own rattled emotional state.

Footsteps at the end of the hallway —

KEITH  
Why, hello.

Liv pops up beside him. She scoots into Marshall's apartment.

LIV  
Hi.

MARSHALL  
Liv. This is Keith. Our super.  
Also my boss.

Keith squints at Liv.

KEITH  
Have we met already?

MARSHALL  
No.

LIV  
I don't think so.

Recognition dawns on Keith's face: the girl from Marshall's computer. He glances at Marshall.

MARSHALL  
G'night Keith.

Marshall closes the door.

MARSHALL  
Did you eat?

LIV  
Yeah. You?

MARSHALL  
Lost my appetite.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Under the sheets, Liv grinds on Marshall, her hand around his neck. They make noises of mutual pleasure.

MARSHALL  
Tell me I'm worthless.

A beat of hesitation from Liv. Familiar phrasing.

She pushes past it.

LIV  
You're worthless.

Marshall moans. He's so into this, desperate to lose himself after today —

MARSHALL  
I'm a pathetic, disgusting boy —

He catches himself. But not before he sees her recognition —

Liv SLAPS Marshall across the face.

MARSHALL  
(even more aroused)  
Oh my god.

Liv pulls him out of her.

MARSHALL  
Wait, wait —

He's already climaxing. He comes onto the sheets.

MARSHALL  
No...

He looks at the wet sheets with dismay.

LIV  
How long have you known?

MARSHALL  
I —

Marshall's eyes dart between Liv and the sheet stain.

LIV  
You pig.

Marshall looks at her with the beginnings of contrition — but he's also genuinely aroused by her sincere hatred.

LIV  
Oh my god. What the fuck is wrong  
with you?

Liv hurries off the bed. Grabs her things from the other side of the room.

MARSHALL  
No, no. Wait, wait, wait. Liv.

Liv's already at the door. Marshall stumbles in front of her, blocking it.

MARSHALL  
Please don't go.

LIV  
Move.

Marshall (still naked) slides down the door until he's on his knees in front of her.

MARSHALL  
Please. Please.

LIV  
What are you, a stalker?

MARSHALL  
I didn't know. I didn't know at  
first.

LIV  
So when? Before or after you asked  
me out?

Marshall doesn't answer.

Liv groans. Grabs the door handle. Gives it a yank. Marshall leans back against it.

MARSHALL

I wanted to ask you out.

LIV

But you didn't.

MARSHALL

I swear, it had nothing to do with it. I don't mind.

LIV

Fuck you.

MARSHALL

If anything —

LIV

What?

Marshall gestures towards his own nakedness.

LIV

It's my business, Marshall.

MARSHALL

I know. I know. I'll do any —

LIV

Don't talk.

She regards him: his nudity, his devotion, his proneness.

LIV

You are the most disgusting thing that's ever happened to me.

Marshall nods.

LIV

You're beneath me. You're repulsive.

Marshall's breath comes faster.

LIV

And you made a mess.

Liv regards him with true distain. Loathing.

LIV

Lick it up.

Marshall seems to shiver. He rises from his position on the floor. And walks back towards the bed.

Liv watches him go. Her grip still tight on the door handle, seems to consider turning it —

She doesn't. She takes her hand off the handle.

**EXT. MARSHALL'S DREAM - SUBURBAN MURDER HOUSE - NIGHT**

Marshall stands on the empty street facing the murder house.

No cars. No streetlamps on. No house lights on.

The front door of the house is OPEN. Nothing behind it but a dark view inside the foyer.

Something about the open, unattended door is unbearably eerie.

An inescapable sense of living presence inside.

Marshall stares through the door frame, trying to discern any movement —

A light flicks on upstairs.

Just a light. No sign of a person.

**INT. MARSHALL'S DREAM - SUBURBAN MURDER HOUSE - NIGHT**

Marshall moves slowly through the dark house. Shadows everywhere. But no movement.

He passes the kitchen, the floor perfectly clean...

He walks up the stairs...

Down the hall... warm light spills out of the master bedroom...

Marshall's footsteps make no sound. The quiet is unbearable.

He braces himself. Breathing heavily. Turns the corner —

The master bedroom is empty. Completely empty.

No bed, no crib, no flooring. The light is coming from the bathroom.

The sudden buzz of a fly makes Marshall twitch.

He turns to the bathroom, where he hears...

The sound of the shower running, and beneath it —

An androgynous voice weeping. The voice is neither masculine nor feminine, neither old nor young.

It's pathetic, repulsive...

But Marshall is compelled. He steps into the bathroom. Just as pristine as the rest of the house.

A shuddering human shape convulses behind the shower door, its dull sobs muffled by the water...

Marshall reaches out to open the shower door. As he YANKS it —  
AN EXPLOSION OF SOUND jolts us back —

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The BLAST of JACKHAMMERS next door startles Marshall awake. He lies alone in bed. Liv is gone.

Marshall comes to. He breathes in and out. Furrows his brow.

As if he smells something awful.

He sits up in bed.

Takes a deep breath in through his nostrils —

And gags.

He THROWS the covers off him. Bumps into the wall as he hurries to the bathroom —

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Marshall HEAVES into the toilet. But no vomit comes.

He spits. Rinses his mouth in the sink. He grabs at the countertop — and sees Liv's toothbrush is gone.

A twinge of pain on Marshall's face.

He reaches out a shaking hand and turns on the shower.

He climbs in without waiting for the water to warm up. Closes his eyes. Lets the water run over him.

A perfect, peaceful moment...

He opens his eyes.

A long strand of Liv's hair is stuck to the shower wall.

Marshall's jaw tightens.

He pulls the shower head off its mount and sprays the hair until it slithers down the drain.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Marshall emerges from the bathroom.

*BRRRRRRRR!* The jackhammers start up again. Marshall twitches.

A swarm of CONSTRUCTION GUYS, a mess of work pants and heavy boots, mill around outside his window.

The walls vibrate with the noise.

Marshall takes in the sight of the empty bed. The barely-visible stain on the sheets.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY**

The clattering of washers and dryers.

Marshall shoves his sheets into the machine. Sets it going.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY**

Marshall locks his door. Sniffs the air. His nose wrinkles.

Something still smells off out here.

But he can't locate the source of it. He shakes his head.

He stops in the middle of the hallway. Stares at Margaret's door. Waiting for her to peek out.

Nothing happens.

**INT. NURSING HOME - BEDROOM - DAY**

Marshall sits with his grandmother, watching television as usual. His leg bounces up and down. Restless.

The sounds of exciting cinematic action...

**ON-SCREEN**

A BAD GUY TAUNTS a captive female HOSTAGE. She's tied to a chair, tape over her mouth.

Marshall checks his grandmother. Still enjoying the film. He gets out of his chair.

**INT. NURSING HOME - BATHROOM - DAY**

Marshall pulls out his phone. Dials Liv.

He puts the phone to his ear. It rings. And rings.

The line BEEPS for voicemail.

Marshall bites his lip. Struggles to come up with something to say. He hangs up.

**INT. NURSING HOME - BEDROOM - DAY**

Marshall re-enters his grandmother's room.

GRANDMOTHER

It's late.

Marshall looks out the window. Low afternoon sun.

GRANDMOTHER

I have to leave soon. I'm having dinner with my daughter.

MARSHALL

(familiar routine)

I know. I just talked to her.

GRANDMOTHER

Did you? What did she say?

MARSHALL

She said she'd come and get you. But dinner will be late, so you should eat something here with us, just to keep you going.

Grandmother nods, satisfied. Marshall sits. He watches her.

Her head bobs constantly on her neck. It's both unsettling and mesmerizing.

MARSHALL

What's her name?

GRANDMOTHER

Who's name?

MARSHALL

Your daughter's name.

GRANDMOTHER

Catherine.

HOSTAGE TAKER

(on TV)

*Nobody's coming to save you now,  
beautiful.*

MARSHALL

What's Catherine like?

GRANDMOTHER

Oh, she's beautiful. Beautiful.

HOSTAGE TAKER

(on TV)

*If I didn't know better, I'd say  
she liked it.*

MARSHALL

Does she have a family?

GRANDMOTHER

Yes. A lovely husband. And eh...  
yes.

Grandmother trails off. A moment passes.

MARSHALL

What about her house?

Grandmother's brow furrows.

MARSHALL

What's it like?

She smiles vaguely. Already, it seems, having lost track of the conversation.

A hint of frustration bubbles up in Marshall's expression. He hangs his head, ashamed.

His grandmother reaches out to him. Her hand covers his. Her skin is pale, nearly translucent.

He looks at her, hoping for words of comfort —

GRANDMOTHER

I'll need to leave soon. My  
daughter is expecting me for  
dinner.

Marshall nods.

MARSHALL

I'll go get her.

He throws himself out of his chair.

**INT. NURSING HOME - DAY**

Marshall storms through the main hall of the nursing home. All sterile and transient. Navy carpet. Wooden hand rails.

He passes the open doors of other rooms. One after another.

Room after room of identically vague, vacant interactions.

*Obliterated pasts.*

He pulls out his phone. Dials another number. It rings.

The pounding of his shoes becomes —

**INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT**

A THUMPING BEAT of loud electronic music.

Flashing strobe lights light up the chaotic thrashing of an UNDERGROUND RAVE.

Timour is embedded in the crowd, jumping up and down, punching the air like his life depends on it.

Marshall watches the chaos from the crowded bar.

His eyes are faded. His hair and clothes soaked with sweat. He chugs the last of his drink.

RAVE GIRL  
— you do?

Marshall jumps. Apparently just realizing he's in a conversation with the RAVE GIRL beside him. She makes buy-me-a-drink eyes.

MARSHALL  
I do...?

He takes a guess. Leans down and screams in her ear:

MARSHALL  
Trauma remediation.

RAVE GIRL  
What?!

MARSHALL  
Trauma remedi — like crime scenes.

RAVE GIRL  
Like dead bodies?

MARSHALL

No, coroners take the bodies away.  
And it's not always that, it's  
like. Bugs. And — it's basically a  
cleaning service.

RAVE GIRL

Right.

The Rave Girl is already gone, moving on to a better mark.

Timour crashes into Marshall.

TIMOUR

Wuaaaaah! Is this what you wanted,  
man?

MARSHALL

What?!

TIMOUR

C'mon. C'mon.

Timour slaps him on the back, pushing him towards —

#### A PRIVATE BOOTH

Timour and Marshall collapse into the booth. From here, the roiling crowd looks like a single, enormous organism.

MARSHALL

You do this all the time?

TIMOUR

Not really. Few nights a week.

Timour produces an unlabelled water bottle from inside his pants. Places it in a discreet corner of the booth.

TIMOUR

Here. You gotta rehydrate.

MARSHALL

It's okay.

TIMOUR

Take it.

MARSHALL

I'll get water from the bar —

TIMOUR

I'm not doing mom right now, man.  
Drink.

Marshall eyes the water bottle. But he's drunk enough that his compulsions are just a faint whisper.

He uncaps the bottle. Takes a few quick gulps. Makes a face at the taste.

Timour wiggles his eyebrows.

MARSHALL

What is it?

TIMOUR

Like two points.

MARSHALL

What?

TIMOUR

Each. Drink half. I'll have the rest.

Marshall looks out at the hundreds of bodies flailing about. Something in him seems to unclench.

Takes another long, deep drink —

**INT. DANCE CLUB - SOME TIME LATER**

Marshall is at the center of the floor now. Obviously wasted, high and dancing foolishly, but no more than anyone around him.

The music is a dark, metallic drone. The same drop repeats over and over.

Marshall writhes with the thick crowd, part of the organism. The movement of the other dancers presses in on him...

He swings around with wild abandon.

Looser and freer than he's ever been.

His mouth hangs open as he gazes up at the ceiling, a slack smile spreads across his face —

WOMAN

Ha.

The quiet sound of a woman's laughter rises - impossibly - above the noise.

The spell is broken.

Marshall looks around. Between the bodies, he barely catches a glimpse of a WOMAN STARING IN DISGUST...

She and Marshall lock eyes.

She turns away, absorbed by the crowd.

The music keeps repeating. *Thump, thump, thump*. It takes on a sinister quality.

Marshall follows her.

He pushes through the crowd, a sea of wasted faces, disrupting the other dancers, until he reaches her.

His hand falls on the woman's shoulder. She turns.

Is it the same woman? Maybe. But the smirk is nowhere to be found.

MARSHALL

Why did you look at me like that?

The woman pulls his hand off her. She can't hear him. Looks back with total confusion.

Unsettled, she attempts to back away.

He grabs her arm. His jaw clenched unnervingly from the MDMA.

A SKINNY RAVE GUY nearby SHOVES Marshall away from the woman, knocking him off-balance.

The Rave Guy looks at Marshall like he's afraid of him.

MARSHALL

Don't look —

He THROWS HIMSELF towards the Rave Guy, crashing into him.

MARSHALL

At me. Like —

He raises a fist, swings it wildly in the direction of Rave Guy's head —

Rave Guy throws an arm up, blocks Marshall's blow. Using strength that only comes from raw panic, he pulls Marshall over, rolls on top of him —

The pit devolves into chaos. A bubble of violence surrounded by oblivious dancers.

The crowd around them starts to notice and freak out. More guys push forward, grab Marshall by any free limb.

Devouring him.

Timour pushes through.

The music reaches a deafening crescendo. Timour SHOUTS inaudibly at Marshall, at the crowd.

**EXT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT**

A BOUNCER shoves Marshall and Timour out into a dingy alleyway. Slams the metal door behind them.

TIMOUR

The fuck, man?! It was just molly.

MARSHALL

(spluttering)

Bad reaction.

TIMOUR

Fuck. I was rolling, too. Fuck.

MARSHALL

Sorry. I'm sorry. I didn't eat.

Their voices are tinny after the din of the rave.

Timour shakes his head. Starts walking away.

TIMOUR

Freak.

MARSHALL

What?

TIMOUR

(turning back)

I said you freaked out. Why can't you just be fucking cool?

Timour walks off. Leaves Marshall standing on the sidewalk.

**INT. SUBWAY - MOVING - NIGHT**

The subway rattles along underground. Marshall sits rigid in his seat. Still covered in sweat, his arms tensed up. Looks pretty tweaky.

A few late-night RIDERS eye him warily.

The subway seats are stained. A mysterious, opaque liquid pools on the floor with the grime and sneaker scuffs.

QUICK POP

Suddenly, Marshall descends onto all fours in front of the pooled liquid, opens his mouth, extends his tongue —

BACK TO

Marshall, still seated. Imagining things. He closes his eyes. Tries to control his breathing.

He rubs at his thumb, almost unconsciously.

Rubbing becomes scratching. Hard scratching.

The rider closest to Marshall gets up to change seats.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Marshall stumbles inside. He beelines for his bed, before realizing —

It's unmade. He left his sheets in the washer.

MARSHALL

Ahh.

He trips over to the bathroom. Doesn't turn the light on. His weight hits the floor with a soft *thump*.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY**

Bright daylight.

Marshall's eyes open. Still on the tile floor of his bathroom. He wrinkles his nose.

*That smell again.*

Before he can fully come to —

Marshall RETCHES. He scrabbles to pull himself up, towards the toilet —

Too slow.

He VOMITS. Half in the toilet and half onto his hands gripping the seat.

The very sight of the vomit on his hands makes him retch again.

He practically falls towards the shower and turns on the water.

He leans his whole torso into the bathtub.

He takes several deep breaths as the shower spray soaks his hair, face, shirt.

As the water rinses his hands, he notices a RED RASH on the edge of his hand, running down his wrist from an origin point on his ruthlessly picked thumb.

He touches the rash lightly with his fingers. It's tender.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Marshall steps out of the bathroom. A bit wobbly. The floorboards creak wetly under him.

He stops. Raises and drops his foot against the floor.

It sinks and creaks like the wood was laid atop wet sponges.

Marshall doesn't know what to make of this. Is he imagining?

*Bzzz, bzzz.*

Marshall jumps. His phone, dropped on the floor behind him, rattles urgently. He reaches for it —

*BRRRRRRRRRR!*

Marshall jumps again. The jackhammers outside.

MARSHALL

Fuck.

He takes a breath. Picks up his phone:

A call from KEITH.

**INT. SUICIDE APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY**

Marshall, Keith and Timour are mid-clean of a lonely-looking bachelorette apartment.

Timour and a woozy-looking Marshall silently strip a BLOOD-SOAKED BED.

Marshall tries and fails to catch Timour's eye.

MARSHALL

Hey.

He points to the blood stain.

MARSHALL

Heavy period.

Timour doesn't laugh. Keith chuckles, but it sounds polite.

Marshall picks up a worn-looking TOY RABBIT perched on the mattress. He gestures with its little arms.

MARSHALL  
(funny voice)  
Oh boy. Better stock up on  
tampons.

Timour gives Marshall a terse look. Obviously still annoyed with him.

Marshall moves away. Awkwardly places the rabbit in a bio-bag.

Alone in the corner of the room, he feels it again.

*An itch.*

Marshall rubs his arm against his hip. Trying to be subtle.

No use. He scratches through the bio-suit material at his palm, even up to his forearm and bicep.

KEITH  
Marshall.

Marshall realizes what he's doing. Stops himself.

KEITH  
You good?

Marshall nods. Back to work.

**INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Marshall drives home in traffic. The thrum of car engines is unusually loud.

Someone HONKS. Marshall blinks hard. Each noise disturbs him.

He turns on the radio to drown it out.

Morrissey's voice moans out of the stereo:

MORRISSEY  
(on the radio)  
*I am the son  
And the heir  
Of a shyness that is criminally  
vulgar  
I am the son and heir  
Of nothing in particular*

Marshall listens.

He doesn't bob his head or appear affected. He just listens.

MORRISSEY  
(on the radio)  
*You shut your mouth  
How can you say  
I go about things the wrong way?  
I am human and I need —*

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK**

Marshall pulls into the apartment parking lot. Cuts the engine. The radio turns off.

He opens his door, is about to step out when he spots —  
Keith, rounding the back of the building.

Not wanting to talk, Marshall closes his door again. He watches Keith in the rearview as he disappears into the building.

A knock on Marshall's window startles him.

It's Liv.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Marshall sits on the bed while Liv stands opposite him.

MARSHALL  
I didn't think I'd see you again.

LIV  
You called a lot last night.

MARSHALL  
(no memory of this)  
I...

LIV  
It's not that you knew. It's that  
you didn't tell me.

Liv walks to the spot Marshall stood on earlier. It squelches, distracting him for a second.

MARSHALL  
Okay.

LIV

I'm not your fucking sex  
therapist. You used me.

MARSHALL

Then what are you doing with me?  
Why are you here?

Liv regards him. Trying to suss out if he's being smarmy.

MARSHALL

Because you know how desperate I  
am for you to forgive me? You're  
the only one who gets to use?

LIV

You can't keep things from me.  
You're not allowed.

MARSHALL

I don't want to keep anything from  
you.

His sincerity mollifies Liv for a moment.

MARSHALL

I'm sorry for the calls. If I said  
anything - I was... very drunk.  
Bad week.

LIV

God. You're such a mess.

Marshall looks down at his shoes. Liv comes in close. Lifts his chin. Kisses him.

She takes a couple deep breaths. Pulls back a bit.

LIV

Do you shower after work?

MARSHALL

Yes.

Liv looks at him.

MARSHALL

Yes.

LIV

I can smell something.

MARSHALL

Is this a game?

LIV

No, I really smell something.

MARSHALL

You do?

Marshall rises. He checks his garbage can. Clean.

MARSHALL

I don't know what it is. I smell  
it, too. Thought I was  
imagining...

Liv watches him.

MARSHALL

(to himself)

It's not me.

A knock at the door distracts them both.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

Marshall opens the door. Keith stands in the frame, cell phone in hand.

KEITH

Hey, Marshall. Sorry to bother.  
Just wondering...

Keith gestures across the hall to Margaret's door.

KEITH

You spoken to her lately?

MARSHALL

No.

KEITH

No? She hasn't poked her head out  
recently?

MARSHALL

I mean - yeah, maybe a couple  
weeks ago.

KEITH

Her son called. He hasn't heard  
from her. Wants me to check in.

They look at her door. It's silent in the hall — the dull babble of Margaret's television is absent.

MARSHALL  
Her TV's off.

KEITH  
Right. When you did speak... did  
she say anything about blackout  
curtains?

Off Marshall's inquiring look —

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

Keith and Marshall stand in front of Margaret's ground-floor windows. Keith points at the largest pane.

By the light of the streetlamp, Margaret's LIVING ROOM can be seen through her blinds.

Keith steps to a second, smaller window. Gestures towards —  
Total blackness.

KEITH  
See what I mean? I'm sure she had  
sheer curtains before. Don't  
remember it being like that.

Marshall stares into the thick, black void.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Liv hovers in Marshall's door frame. Marshall and Keith stand in front of Margaret's.

Keith knocks. No answer.

KEITH  
Margaret?

They listen. No sound inside.

KEITH  
Margaret.

Keith produces his master keys.

**INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER**

Keith pushes the door open. Letting a ray of harsh light into the dark apartment.

KEITH

Margaret, your son called to check  
on you. I'm coming inside.

Keith and Marshall move through the entryway. Nothing seems amiss. The lack of TV noise allows us to hear —

A muffled, irregular insect hum in the background. And the gentle drip of water.

With each step, Marshall notices the carpeted floor squashes just like his own. Even moister.

They turn the corner, past the kitchenette, head down the hall towards a bathroom door...

The insect drone becomes louder and louder...

Keith cracks it open —

**INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The insect buzzing arrives in full force as Keith pokes his head inside.

What appeared to be blackout curtains from outside is in fact a THICK LAYER OF FLIES — caking the bathroom window completely.

It's carnage in here. The walls, door, and mirror are all splattered with entrails.

Keith nearly slips on the copious water on the floor. It's soaked. Margaret's bath overflowing.

The tub is half-full with a thick, pink-purple soup. In the middle of it is Margaret... or Margaret's remains.

Her head and arms, resting on the rim of the bathtub, are recognizable but decomposing. The rest of the tub is a mess of unidentifiable flesh.

The bathtub faucet continues to flow at a light trickle.

Marshall steps in front of Keith. Turns off the faucet.

He turns around to see —

Liv. Frozen behind Keith in the doorway. Taking in the horrifying sight.

## INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - LATER

EMTs shuffle through the hall. Liv stands in the door frame, her arms wrapped tight around herself.

A CORONER exits Margaret's apartment, pushing a COVERED GURNEY. Keith comes out after.

KEITH  
You busy tomorrow?

Marshall shakes his head.

KEITH  
Management wants this done ASAP.  
Her son's gonna come by as well.

MARSHALL  
Why?

KEITH  
People have strange impulses in  
moments like these. Maybe he wants  
to case the joint before his  
siblings.

LIV  
What happened?

Keith seems to suddenly remember Liv is there. No jokey-jokes. He clears his throat.

KEITH  
Slip and fall, seems like. Safety  
rail was loose.

Marshall tenses. Remembering Margaret's request for help: "it's just come loose".

LIV  
And it looks like that?

KEITH  
When a person dies in water, the  
body soaks it up. You leave them  
there for however long... they -  
ah - burst.

An uncomfortable beat.

Liv looks at Marshall, expecting... something. But Marshall appears unaffected.

KEITH  
It's a shame. Very nice lady.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Marshall closes the door behind them. Liv lingers, dazed, in the entryway.

LIV  
Is it always like that?

MARSHALL  
We don't normally see the bodies.

Liv sits down. She grips her thighs. Shaken. So much for iron stomach.

MARSHALL  
I'm gonna shower.

LIV  
Could I join you?

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT**

The heat of the water fogs up Marshall's bathroom.

Liv steps through it. She pulls her clothes off, dropping them on the floor.

She embraces Marshall in the shower. The water washes over them both, clean and fresh. Relief.

Liv opens her eyes. She looks at the rim of the bathtub.

It's the same prefab model as Margaret's: the same details on the rim where her decaying arms sat.

Liv quickly closes her eyes again. Upset. She grabs his hair —

Marshall interprets this as a cue. He breathes heavy, bends down (he imagines) as she wishes.

MARSHALL  
Tell me what to do.

LIV  
No, can we just — let's just.

MARSHALL  
What? Come on.

With almost frantic urgency, he gets on his knees, touches her thighs, moves between her legs —

LIV  
Let's just kiss.

MARSHALL

Why?

He blurts it without thinking. It was barely audible, but...

Liv's mouth tightens. She heard. In that tiny beat as he realizes what he's said, something fractures between them.

Marshall rises to his feet. Shakes his head a little.

MARSHALL

Sorry.

LIV

It's okay.

MARSHALL

I don't know why I —

LIV

It's fine.

He leans in. They kiss.

Liv accepts it. Trying to ignore the seismic shift that just occurred. Marshall opens his eyes.

He stares at the rim of the bathtub.

This tentative kiss becomes —

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Marshall and Liv locked together in bed. He breaks their kiss, thrusts into her in a very traditional missionary setup.

Marshall looks at the wall. Closes his eyes. Concentrating hard on something that is not the present moment.

Liv notices his distraction. She turns his face towards hers. Searching for connection.

They meet eyes.

Marshall's face falls. He looks down. Grimaces.

MARSHALL

Sorry. Sorry.

Marshall pauses his thrusting. Waits a moment.

MARSHALL

I... fuck. No.

He rolls off her. Stares up at the ceiling.

Liv is unresponsive. Hurt.

MARSHALL  
It's... earlier.

LIV  
You're still thinking about it.

MARSHALL  
So are you.

Liv thinks for a moment. Then climbs off the bed. She collects her things. Heads for the door.

Marshall can only stare at the ceiling.

*Click.*

The front door closes. Liv is gone, again. For good.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - DAWN**

Marshall lies in bed. Still awake. Dark circles under his eyes.

A construction worker starts hammering outside. *Bang, bang.* It's loud, but Marshall barely reacts to it.

*Bang.*

*Bang.*

**BANG!**

**INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Sunlight strikes the haze of bug bomb residue in the air, still venting through one of Margaret's open windows.

Marshall stands in the doorway, looking dazed.

KEITH  
You here?

Marshall comes to. Trying to pull himself together.

MARSHALL  
Yes. Yeah. Skipped breakfast.

KEITH  
Bad idea.

MARSHALL

No Timour?

KEITH

Nah, it's out of his way. This one's pretty contained. Just the bathroom and the carpet. Figure we can handle it.

**INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY**

Keith steps toward the bathroom window and slides the sheer curtains open.

The light hits Margaret's liquified bathtub remains, and the piles of dead flies on the mantle, with sickening brightness.

Keith pulls out a large bottle —

MARSHALL

What's that?

KEITH

Oh —

An awkward beat: Keith's not bothering to teach him anymore.

KEITH

For something like this, we have chemicals we use so we can drain safely. But there's gonna be more matter in there, so... we gotta get that out first.

Keith opens up a red bio-bag. Marshall kneels down. Sticks his gloved hand into the tub.

He makes an involuntary noise.

KEITH

What?

MARSHALL

Thought it'd be warm.

Keith's laugh fades into the background. The sound of Marshall's heavy breathing grows louder...

*Marshall's gaze is pulled closer to the entrail soup.*

*His eyelids begin to flutter.*

INTERCUT: QUICK POPS

- Marshall's POV as he and Liv have sex: a barely-perceptible stain on his wall. He can't take his eyes off it...
- Water runs down Liv's legs in the shower, becoming thick and discolored, like milk...
- Child-Marshall chows down on a bowl of Raisin Bran...

*Marshall drifts closer and closer to the tub.*

*He leans forward, starts to fall —*

**SPLASH!**

Marshall blinks. Still kneeling beside the tub.

He pulls a translucent sheet of what looks like wet parchment out of the tub.

*Margaret's skin.*

Marshall swallows.

KEITH  
Shouldn't have skipped breakfast?

Marshall shakes his head.

Someone knocks at the front door.

KEITH  
That'll be her son.  
(eyeing Marshall)  
Why don't you do the living room.

Marshall nods.

**INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Squelching sounds emit from the bathroom as Keith works on the bathtub.

**FRANK**, 50s, hovers in the doorway, watching Marshall work. He holds a mask over his face, avoiding looking at the bathroom.

*Rrrrip.* Marshall YANKS up a section of soaked carpet from the floorboards. The subfloor exposed to the open air.

FRANK  
Whoa. Do I pay for that?

MARSHALL  
Um.

Marshall glances toward the bathroom. Unsure how to handle  
irate bereaved.

MARSHALL  
I'm not sure.

FRANK  
Do you have to take it up?

MARSHALL  
She – the water is... it's a  
biohazard. Anything wet. We have  
to incinerate it.

FRANK  
Alright, alright.

Frank paces, searching for a target for his agitation.

FRANK  
It is – it is fuckin' ridiculous  
that this happens. At all. You  
know? What happened to "eyes on  
the street"?

MARSHALL  
Sorry.

FRANK  
That's how people are now. Nobody  
looks. Nobody cares.

*Rrrrrrrrip.* Marshall pulls up another section.

Outside, curious passersby slow down to peek through Margaret's  
window. Marshall meets their eyes and they look away.

FRANK  
That's this fuckin' city. They'll  
see you bleeding out on the  
sidewalk and they'll say, hey,  
golly, that's none of my business.

Marshall pulls up the end of the carpet strips. He rolls them  
up, roughly places them in a bio-bag.

FRANK  
A sweet old woman is... for two  
weeks. And nobody notices. That's  
– that's crazy. I had to call this  
fuckin'...

Frank raises his voice in Keith's direction —

FRANK

Not even the guy who cashes the  
cheque, huh. Not even her fucking  
neighbors —

MARSHALL

Nobody ever visited her.

Frank stops pacing. Zeroes in on Marshall.

MARSHALL

Might've made a difference, too.  
Maybe a visitor would've noticed.

FRANK

And how the fuck would you know?

MARSHALL

I live across the hall.

FRANK

Jesus. Full-service building.

*Rrrrrrip.*

Frank's knocked back on his heels a bit. But he rallies.

FRANK

Across the hall. So there's my  
fuckin' point, right there. You  
just, la la, went about your life.  
For two weeks. While she...

MARSHALL

It's a quiet building.

FRANK

So you should see things. You  
should see when an old lady needs  
help.

Marshall pauses. Guilt and regret creeping in.

MARSHALL

I'm sorry.

Frank scoffs. He picks up an apple from Margaret's fruit bowl.

A couple FRUIT FLIES float off: Marshall tries to ignore them.  
Back to his work.

FRANK

I heard you when I came in. The  
way you talk about it. Laughing.

Frank takes a juicy bite.

FRANK  
Business as fuckin' usual.

Rrrrrrip. Marshall pulls up another section of carpet —

FRANK  
I don't know what kind of person  
could do this and laugh about it.

Stuffs it in a bio-bag —

FRANK  
It's sick. You're a real sick  
person, you know? It's pathetic.

A snort bursts out of Marshall.

FRANK  
What's that?

MARSHALL  
I — sorry. I'm sorry.

But he can't stop giggling. He tries to clamp it down, aware of  
how offensively inappropriate it is.

But like a wave, it builds from a huff into a full-throated  
laugh. His body is rigid.

FRANK  
You're disgusting, man. You sick  
fuck. What the fuck is wrong with  
you?

Marshall would give anything to stop laughing, but he can't.  
Tears well in his eyes.

Keith emerges from the bathroom.

FRANK  
The fuck is wrong with this guy?

KEITH  
Marshall.

Still in the throes of uncontrollable laughter. He can barely  
choke out —

MARSHALL  
I'm sorry. I'm sorry —

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Marshall stands near Keith as Keith loads up his van with biohazard boxes and bags.

The construction site next door is oddly quiet.

KEITH

You represent my business. I can't have you acting like that around the bereaved.

MARSHALL

I'm sorry.

Keith shakes his head. He shuts the van doors.

MARSHALL

I haven't been sleeping. It won't happen again.

KEITH

Marshall... this was probationary. It's a small team. You need everybody bringing the same game, man. You gotta find the humor.

Keith climbs into the van.

KEITH

I told you this isn't for everybody. And I'll say this...

(beat)

I don't think you actually like this job. It upsets you. It's not good for you.

MARSHALL

But I need to do it. Please.

Keith starts up the engine.

KEITH

Take a break. Hang out with your ah - girl. You'll find something better.

Keith's positivity rings false. He drives off. Leaving Marshall alone in the lot.

**INT. MARSHALL'S DREAM - MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM  
- NIGHT**

Marshall stands in the shower, dripping wet and naked, just finished showering. But he doesn't get out. Just stands there.

The rash has spread all over his right arm, up to his chest and neck.

His hand moves compulsively toward the rash.

He scratches harder and harder, inflaming it —

The lights in the bathroom go out. Marshall freezes.

He flicks the light on and off. Nothing.

He looks at the bathroom door. It's wide open. Darkness outside.

He steps out and wraps a towel around his waist.

**INT. MARSHALL'S DREAM - MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Marshall moves toward the CIRCUIT PANEL. He opens it up. Clicks the breaker.

Only one light turns back on. In the kitchen area. He moves towards it.

It's the fridge light. The door is half-open.

He opens the fridge door all the way, grabs unseen food and moves to the counter, leaving the fridge door open.

Staying on his oddly blank face, we hear the sounds of him making a sandwich: the soft slice of bread, the rustle of lettuce, the unpeeling of a lunch meat package.

Slowly, the sound begin to change...

The slap of wet meat.

The squelch of moldy vegetables.

**REVEAL:** Marshall's plate is a midden of ROTTING MEAT AND PRODUCE, jumbled together in a grotesque parody of a meal.

He grabs a handful of the heap and takes a bite out of it.

And another. He doesn't react at all —

Until he hears a soft sound from the hallway.

**INT. MARSHALL'S DREAM - APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT**

He opens the door. Steps out into the empty hall. Lights off out here, too.

A single red emergency light at the very end of the hall has come on. It barely reaches Marshall.

From somewhere, he hears the muffled sound of weeping.

Marshall looks around for the source of it.

There's nobody at either end of the hall.

His gaze falls on Margaret's door.

**INT. MARSHALL'S DREAM - MARGARET'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The single ugly ceiling light makes Margaret's things look oddly flimsy and unreal.

At the far end of the living room, Marshall sees the tiny silhouette of a WOMAN'S FRAME.

The sound of weeping emanates from her, despite her total lack of movement.

Marshall is rooted to the spot. Unwilling to get closer.

*Skitter, skitter.*

Marshall looks around him. Roaches scuttle across the walls in chaotic lines. He twitches away from them, closer to the woman...

Slowly, she turns around, toward the light.

The woman is a living corpse.

Could be Margaret, could be his mother. Too decayed to tell.

Her hair is thinning, skin green and black from rot, stomach bulging with un-vented gasses.

Marshall opens his mouth but can't scream. He throws himself at the door behind him —

WHAM. The door closes.

The woman takes slow steps toward Marshall as he claws at the door, wrenching at the handle —

**INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY**

Marshall jolts awake. His lips are cracked. Dehydrated.

At first, it looks like he's in his own bathroom. The clean, porcelain surface of a familiar tub...

He raises his head.

The tub is surrounded by cleaning equipment left behind from yesterday. Wallpaper ripped off the walls.

This is Margaret's bathroom.

Marshall gazes around, disoriented.

Suddenly, he seems to feel something inside his mouth. He moves his jaw strangely, trying to dislodge it...

He coughs, spits it out.

The material SPLATS onto the porcelain.

Marshall looks at it.

It's unidentifiable. But vaguely fleshy, vaguely reminiscent of...

He takes raw, shuddering breaths. Barely containing his horror.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY**

Keith sets his morning coffee on his desk. Takes a cursory glance at his security cameras —

He sees Margaret's door wide open. Furrows his brow.

**INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY**

Keith opens the bathroom door. Sees Marshall hunched over in the tub, moaning incoherently.

KEITH  
The fuck?

Marshall reacts like Keith's voice is a gunshot.

He leaps out the tub and SHOVES past Keith. Sprints out of the apartment.

**INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Marshall speeds down the highway. He drives manically. The rash has spread to his face. It's bright red, hot-looking.

His car speeds off, farther and farther from the city.

**EXT. MARSHALL'S OLD SUBURB - DAY**

Marshall's car turns onto a quiet street. Outside the window, he sees his OLD HIGH SCHOOL. Looks much smaller and duller than it did before.

Marshall slows on the curb out front.

The sidewalk is awash in end-of-day chaos. Parents pick up their kids.

A TEACHER, about Marshall's age, stands by the door. She catches Marshall's eye.

Marshall squints. Seems to recognize her. But it's unclear if she recognizes him: maybe she's just staring back at a strange man.

Before it can be made clear, Marshall drives away.

**EXT. MARSHALL'S HOME - NIGHT**

Marshall pulls up outside a small bungalow.

His childhood home.

He sits in his car for a minute, just looking at it.

The street is silent.

The home's familiar exterior is cast in the warm glow of the streetlamp. The lawn is tidy. No cars in the driveway.

Marshall steps out of the car. Looks around.

There's no elderly neighbor on the opposite patio now.

He approaches the home. Touches the screen door. Just the same.

He opens the screen door and tries the front. Locked. Walking carefully, he steps around the corner of the home towards...

**THE BACKYARD**

He tries the back door. Locked, too. Searches around for a key, doggie door, anything —

A kitchen window has been left open a crack.

Marshall digs his fingers under it, jerks it upwards. It gives. He shoves his torso inside —

**INT. MARSHALL'S HOME - CONTINUOUS**

And falls awkwardly onto the countertop. He recovers, rises, looks around him.

All the air goes out of his lungs.

The kitchen is not only clean, but RENOVATED. It doesn't even look like the same place.

Marshall takes slow steps through the room. His movements oddly vacant, like he's sleepwalking.

The only light comes from the streetlamps outside.

**IN THE KITCHEN**

He runs a hand along the spotless surfaces. Opens the fridge. It's well-stocked, neat and tidy.

**IN THE LIVING ROOM**

The spot where his father's portrait/urn used to sit is now occupied by a flatscreen TV.

The family who live here don't have a coffee table, so the room seems cavernous compared to when we last saw it.

Marshall steps into the middle of the room.

He turns his head, which becomes a turn of his entire body. He twirls around strangely for a moment, his arms outstretched.

An open door down the hall catches his eye. His mother's door.

**IN THE BEDROOM**

Marshall approaches the door. Again, he can only look inside. He doesn't cross the threshold.

It's a YOUNG CHILD'S ROOM now. Giant foam puzzle pieces line the floor.

A chill runs up his spine. A presence.

He leans out of the bedroom, just like when he was a kid. He takes in the sight of the front door. The exact same angle.

He almost expects to see someone outside...

But there's nobody there. Just the soft clatter of the screen door in the breeze.

He takes a breath.

Suddenly, voices and a RATTLE AT THE BACK DOOR —

A **FAMILY OF THREE** enter through the back. They don't see Marshall at first.

MOM

It was red wine, Garrett. God, it was embarrassing.

DAD

It'll come out. Christ.

MOM and DAD are halfway through taking their shoes off when the KID taps dad's arm. Points at Marshall.

Mom gasps. Everyone freezes.

Marshall and the family regard each other in the darkness. The family with unmistakable terror.

A bizarre moment of total stasis.

*SOUNDS OF THE FAMILY AND MARSHALL'S BREATHING CONTINUE OVER:*

**INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT**

Marshall drives. He's on the highway. Headed back into the city. Rain begins to fall on his windshield.

The headlights of cars behind him blur and undulate.

The skin on his face is so raised and irritated it almost looks like it's calcifying.

*The sound of breathing is gradually replaced by the RADIO:*

Only static. Nothing clear.

Lights flash ahead. Road workers. Marshall slows down.

Some noisy highway improvement project... the familiar sound of jackhammering draws nearer.

Marshall feverishly fiddles with the radio dial.

He blinks hard. Rubs at his eye.

More static on the radio.

He rubs hard and harder and harder.

The racket of the road work gets louder and louder —

MARSHALL

Ah!

Marshall covers his eye. The veins on his hand pop out, clenched tight.

BANG!

Another car REAR ENDS Marshall's, whiplashing him forward.

He hits the wheel hard, a sharp HONK emits.

He stays where he landed. The honk drones on and on.

The other DRIVER nearly falls out of his car, hurries up to Marshall. He knocks on the window.

DRIVER

Holy shit. Are you okay?

Marshall slowly leans back, ending the honk. He rolls down his window. Looks at the driver.

Marshall's eye socket is SWOLLEN SHUT. His visible skin is now gruesomely inflamed.

In his open right hand is the squashed residue of his eyeball.

DRIVER

I am so sorry, dude.

The driver doesn't notice Marshall's dire-looking physical condition. Too busy searching for a pen.

DRIVER

I didn't even see the sign —

A car honks behind them. It sets off a chain of impatient honking.

Suddenly, Marshall looks afraid. He doesn't want to be seen.

The traffic ahead opens up. Marshall floors it.

DRIVER

Hey!

He's already gone.

**INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT**

Marshall staggers out of his car into a sterile emergency waiting area. He approaches a RECEPTIONIST. His right hand clenched in a shaky fist.

RECEPTIONIST

What is your medical concern today?

He waits for her to look up and see his bumpy, scarlet face or his swollen-shut eye socket. She just types away.

RECEPTIONIST

Yes?

Marshall stares at her. Willing her to look at him —

She doesn't. A dreamy sense of unreality dawns on Marshall.

He slowly turns, taking in the waiting room FULL OF PEOPLE.

Everyone avoids looking at him.

He slowly relaxes his right fist... and wipes the residue of his eyeball off on his pants.

He steps back outside, abandoning his car.

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

Rain pours down. Marshall trudges along without an umbrella. He moves gingerly, as if he hasn't eaten in days (he hasn't).

Passing PEDESTRIANS keep to themselves.

A familiar DOOR BELL startles him out of his stupor.

He's at the sandwich shop.

**INT. SANDWICH SHOP - NIGHT**

Marshall enters. A single WORKER stands at the center of the too-bright counter.

Marshall's temporarily blinded by the light.

MARSHALL

Liv?

He moves closer. It's not Liv. Just one of her CO-WORKERS.

Marshall sways on the spot.

Co-worker speaks lazily to the order screen, also not looking at him.

CO-WORKER  
What can I get started for you?

MARSHALL  
Is Liv here?

CO-WORKER  
Nope.

MARSHALL  
Could you tell her something for me?

CO-WORKER  
Um —

Co-worker shoots a tiny glance back —

And we see that Liv is standing behind the counter, out of sight. Listening.

CO-WORKER  
Sure. Yeah. What is it?

MARSHALL  
Could you look at me, please?

Finally, the co-worker LOOKS RIGHT AT HIM —

Her face remains blank.

As if there's nothing wrong with him at all.

MARSHALL  
Um.

Marshall smiles. He lets out a shaky laugh. What to say?

A DIRTY SPOT on the vinyl countertop distracts him.

He rubs at it with his thumb. It doesn't disappear. Obviously the dirt is under the vinyl.

MARSHALL  
It doesn't come out.

Marshall gives it one more try. His hand shakes.

MARSHALL  
How do you stand it?

CO-WORKER  
I don't know. You get used to it.

Liv listens. Motionless.

Co-worker shifts around, uncomfortable.

CO-WORKER  
Man, are you gonna get something?  
I don't know how to help you right  
now.

MARSHALL  
Turkey on white. No veggies. No  
dressing.

The co-worker punches it in.

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

Marshall's hand trembles as he tries to hold onto his sandwich.  
He's starving.

As carefully as possible, he peels off the paper wrapping —

His finger slips and touches the sandwich bread.

He can't eat it.

He drops it on the ground, where it becomes soaked by the rain.

He looks around: everything around him is dirty, contaminated.

Wet garbage leaks from burst bags.

Vomit on the sidewalk.

A stained mattress.

He can't escape it. He hurries down the street.

In the shop, Liv emerges from behind the counter and stares out  
the window after him. Indecision on her face.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Marshall fumbles with his keys. Desperate to get inside.

His physical situation is dire.

His remaining eye has contracted, exposing the pink membrane  
around it. He breathes through his mouth. His lips are dried,  
shriveled away, his teeth and gums jutting out between them.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Marshall lurches inside. He makes his slow way to the kitchen sink. gingerly pours a glass of water.

He raises it to his lips, desperate...

But he has to check the glass.

He nearly cries from this realization. He holds the glass up to eye-level...

It looks completely clean, but —

His hand shakes violently. Like a rabid animal afraid of water.

Revolted, he drops it into the sink. It SHATTERS.

Marshall sinks to his knees and lets out a long, pitchy moan.

Lacking any more energy or willpower, he crawls to an empty corner of his living area.

He props himself up against the wall.

His right arm flops limply at his side. Where the irritation began. It's covered in deep scratches.

One scratch has re-opened the wound on his thumb. A thin flap where the skin has pulled back.

He digs his nails in as deeply as he can —

And pulls his skin up. Slowly.

He sighs. A nearly masturbatory sigh.

He keeps pulling, back and back, revealing wet-looking connective tissue and fat.

Marshall can't look away, can't stop. His breath comes uneven, excited.

*Finally relieved.*

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Liv stands outside Marshall's apartment door. Her hair wet. Tension and indecision on her face.

Only silence on the other side of the door.

We're with her in this moment: to look or not to look.

She lightly touches the door handle.

QUICK POP:

14 year-old Marshall's hand, resting on the handle of his mother's bedroom door.

BACK TO:

After a painful beat, something changes in Liv's expression. Her anxiety is replaced with something melancholic.

She lets go of the handle. Turns. Walks down the hall.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT (OR IS IT A DREAM?) - LATER**

Some time has passed, the sound of the rain outside has slowed to a dull drip.

Marshall's soft moans and little gasps are the only sound in the pitch dark apartment.

A SILENT FLASH OF LIGHTNING illuminates him:

Marshall pulls the last strip of skin off his face. His remaining eye stands out, stark white, against deep red muscle.

The drip of rain is actually the steady drip of Marshall's blood onto the floor.

His unblinking eye never wavers from the ground-floor window...

Where all seems dark. Then...

Another BURST of lightning reveals:

A CROWD OF PEOPLE stand outside Marshall's window. Watching him without emotion.

The lightning continues to flicker silently, like the endless pop of paparazzi flash bulbs.

Marshall speaks slowly, each word agony to articulate:

MARSHALL  
Could you tell?

The crowd do not react. An affectless chiaroscuro nightmare.

MARSHALL  
People always tell.

Slowly, his gaze drifts away from the crowd at the window. It lands on some blank spot on the floor. His head droops to the side.

Marshall stops moving.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Workers file into the site. Starting up their day's work. The ground floor is nearly filled in now.

Not far away, Marshall's apartment window sits dark and silent.

Faint morning light filters into the spotless room. A barely-visible figure sits huddled up in the corner, utterly still.

A strange sight, if anybody happened to look.

But nobody looks. The workers carry on.

**INT. SANDWICH SHOP - DAY**

*Ding.* The sandwich shop door.

Marshall's old construction crew walks in. One guy takes the lead: the same one Marshall nail-gunned.

He rests his arms on the counter. Liv notices his injured hand, wrapped in a fabric bandage. He moves his hand —

Revealing the dirty spot under the vinyl.

The sight of this stirs something in Liv. She stares. Troubled. Absorbed...

The construction guy eyes up Liv as he contemplates his order. A smirk of recognition on his face.

Liv seems tempted to avoid him, to keep her eyes on the spot...

The guy chuckles.

Liv wrenches her gaze away from the dirty spot. She glares right back at him.

LIV

What?

The construction guy looks away, flustered.

**INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT**

In slow-motion, Timour dances as hard as ever.

The same RAVE GIRL who approached Marshall approaches him for a drink. Timour buys her one, eagerly.

**INT. NURSING HOME - BEDROOM - DAY**

Marshall's grandmother rests in her bed, watching the sunset. Peaceful.

A photograph of a young Marshall and his mother sits unnoticed on her nightstand.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Keith parks his blue van. Walks right past Marshall's window, where again, the body is quite visible.

But he intentionally looks away.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - SOMETIME LATER**

Keith heads down the hall towards his office. Takes an unconscious glance at Marshall's door as he passes...

Keith slows. Stops. Turns.

Marshall's door is dead silent.

Keith looks at it. There's something haunted about it.

He slowly approaches the door. And sniffs.

**INT. MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - DAY**

A team of two CLEANERS attend to Marshall's apartment. They wear unfamiliar branded bio-suits that read: **ANDY'S REMEDIATION**.

Cleaner 1 pulls up the laminate floorboards in the corner. Stained a dark, congealed red with Marshall's body fluids.

CLEANER 1  
It's like animals. Animals die in  
the corner.

CLEANER 2  
Yeah.  
(MORE)

CLEANER 2 (CONT'D)

(beat)

Wait, no. I thought animals "went"  
in the corner?

CLEANER 1

Oh yeah, right.

Cleaner 1 grabs a pack of cigarettes. Steps out.

Cleaner 2 yanks up the floorboard, revealing the particle board subfloor underneath.

Through the window, Cleaner 1 lights up a smoke. Cleaner 1 looks inside. Knocks on the glass.

CLEANER 1

(muffled)

Wow. He was right there, huh. And  
nobody saw.

Cleaner 2 nods. He looks at the corner where Marshall died. His fluids have seeped into the subfloor, staining it.

The cleaner picks up a hard brush. He dips it in a large tub of disinfectant.

He gets to work scrubbing the last of Marshall away.

FADE OUT.