

Toluca Lake

written by

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Range / Alain Carles

**INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY**

A large, white, cylindrical fMRI device resembles a space pod.

We see **GAVIN** -- or at least his lower torso -- on an exam table lodged halfway into the center of the machine.

**ALLIE** (20s) stands by the device and holds Gavin's hand.

A voice comes over an intercom:

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
I'm going to get into some personal  
questions, but let me know if  
you're not... comfortable with  
them.

CLOSE ON Gavin's face (mid-20s, mixed race - one half Asian) in a claustrophobic's absolute nightmare of a tube.

GAVIN  
I'm halfway up a giant Fleshlight,  
so sure, let's build on that.

In an adjacent observation room, monitors surround **DR. FISHER** (late 40s). A clean-cut beard and laser-focused gaze suggest a brilliant mind teetering on the edge of obsession.

The doctor reads questions off a sheet of paper.

DR. FISHER  
Are you both able to... physically  
connect? As in, *intimately*.

GAVIN  
No issue there.  
(beat)  
Actually, it's pretty amazing.

ALLIE  
I think he was going more for *if* we  
have sex, not a rating.

Dr. Fisher types a note on his laptop.

DR. FISHER  
Any notable conflicts, or...  
arguments?

GAVIN  
I'd say it's been pretty good.

Allie gives Gavin's hand a slight shake.

ALLIE  
Sure about that?

GAVIN  
I mean, except for the part where I  
need to murder her before she takes  
me out.

Allie rolls her eyes.

The doctor slides the sheet of paper out of his way.

DR. FISHER  
That can complicate things.  
(beat)  
Maybe we should back up a bit. Can  
you take me through the day you  
both first met?

**INT. NEW APARTMENT - DAY**

A clean, compact, furnished space sits silent and otherwise empty.

The front door opens and Gavin ushers in his mother **THANH** (60s, Vietnamese) and **RUBY** (3 years old, Cambodian).

GAVIN  
Ruby, this is your new home.

RUBY  
Home!

Thanh scopes out the place as Gavin tosses his KEYS and PHONE on a small dining table.

THANH  
Where's your apartment?

GAVIN  
Just across the courtyard. Anything  
you need, I'm right there.

Gavin goes to the front door to roll in a set of suitcases. He spots a **COUPLE** stepping out of their apartment next door.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
(to Thanh)  
Want to meet the neighbors?

THANH  
No, no, no -- I don't want anyone  
to see me like this.

GAVIN

Like what?

THANH

Sad old lady.

GAVIN

C'mon, mom.

THANH

Just give me time.

Gavin gives his mother a long hug. She buries her face into his chest and begins to cry.

Gavin spots Ruby staring at Thanh, confused. He steps back and sees a TISSUE BOX on the dining table.

He pulls out a few tissues and hands them to Thanh, then takes Ruby's hand.

GAVIN

Let me show you your very own *room*!

RUBY

Room!

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING CORRIDOR - EVENING**

Gavin closes his mother's door and walks across a small courtyard to his apartment.

He checks his pocket for his keys, but can't find them -- only pulls out his WALLET and a small BOTTLE OF ASPIRIN.

He returns to his mom's place and tries the handle -- *locked*.

Goes to the kitchen window to see Ruby on the couch alone watching a beauty pageant.

Gavin's about to knock on the window, when Thanh appears.

She drops into a seat at the dining table, crying and talking to herself.

Gavin steps back from the window, then turns away, leaving the apartment complex.

**EXT. SANTA MONICA - BLUFFS PARK - CONTINUOUS**

A tall, grassy bluff overlooks the ocean. Park benches face the cliff and a setting sun.

Gavin heads to a bench with an open spot on one end, and the other side occupied by Allie.

He hesitates, but makes his way over.

GAVIN

Mind if I take a seat?

She looks over, then pulls in her canvas bag to make space.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Thanks.

While taking the seat, he glances at a book on Allie's lap.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Reading anything good?

ALLIE

Absolutely captivating.

GAVIN

Oh?

Allie opens the book, revealing entirely blank pages.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

That's one of my favorites. Other books are so constrained by the ideas of others.

(beat)

But that one....

ALLIE

Infinite possibilities.

In this competition of being the last to smile, Allie loses.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

From around here?

GAVIN

Just moved from the D.C. area. You?

ALLIE

East Coast also -- New Hampshire.

(beat)

I'm Allie.

GAVIN

Gavin. Nice to meet you.

(Beat)

What part of L.A. you end up in?

ALLIE

Toluca Lake.

(off Gavin's blank stare)

It's by Burbank.

GAVIN

I just didn't know L.A. had a lake?

ALLIE

I honestly don't know if there is  
an actual lake.

GAVIN

You haven't checked to see if the  
lake exists?

Allie squints. Puts on an overly serious, theatrical face.

ALLIE

If it turns out it doesn't, are you  
suggesting I... pack up and leave?

Gavin attempts to match her tone -- pretends to ponder. Then  
shrugs, a slight grin escaping...

GAVIN

I guess it's okay to live a lie,  
just as long as you're aware of it.

Allie fights back her smile. Nods.

ALLIE

Good to know.

**EXT. RESTAURANT - LATER**

They snack on appetizers at an outdoor table. Allie flashes  
her phone to Gavin.

ALLIE

There is a lake! And it's gorgeous.

GAVIN

No way that's in L.A. You're  
pulling up something else. If it  
was that nice you would've known  
about it. I would've known about  
it.

ALLIE  
I'll confirm in person.  
(beat)  
What part of the city are you in?

GAVIN  
We're-- I mean, I'm just a few  
blocks down the road.

ALLIE  
Who'd you move with?

GAVIN  
This is where things get weird.

Allie eases back into her seat.

ALLIE  
Oooookay. Is a windowless van about  
to pull up?

GAVIN  
We is actually my mom and sister. I  
just moved them here from Cambodia.

ALLIE  
Cambodia?

GAVIN  
It's a long story -- but my parents  
were in the process of adopting  
this three year old from there --  
and then my dad passed away.

ALLIE  
I'm so sorry. When was this?

GAVIN  
Just a couple weeks ago. Right  
after I moved out here.

ALLIE  
Oh my god.

GAVIN  
Now I have them both out here --  
but I don't know the first thing  
about raising a kid. I don't know  
if raising is even the right term  
for this.

ALLIE  
Were your parents in Cambodia to...  
adopt?

Gavin reads the confusion on Allie's face.

GAVIN

They had no plans to adopt,  
especially at their age. They were  
just volunteering at an orphanage  
outside of Phnom Penh and...

(struggling)

It got complicated.

Allie gets the message. Backs off for a beat, then pivots to a warm smile.

ALLIE

Can I see a picture of her?

Gavin reaches into his pocket, then remembers.

GAVIN

Left my phone at their place. I'll  
send you a pic once I have it, that  
is if...

ALLIE

Oh what a move. Melt my heart and  
go right for the digits.

GAVIN

I swear I wasn't trying to get your  
phone number.

ALLIE

Well now I'm just insulted.

The **SERVER** stops by. Leaves a credit card, pen, and receipt.  
Gavin signs the receipt.

GAVIN

I should head back to check on her.

Allie gets up and starts putting her sweater on. As she's turned away, Gavin looks at the PEN in his hand.

#### **EXT. BLUFFS PARK - MOMENTS LATER**

Allie carries her journal as Gavin walks beside her.

GAVIN

What brought you out to that bench?

ALLIE

Was looking forward to a solid  
journaling sesh by the ocean.

(MORE)

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I usually start a new one of  
these...  
(waving her journal)  
...every other month.

GAVIN  
(confused)  
That's like a ninety-minute drive  
from Burbank.

ALLIE  
I initially drove here for an  
audition.

GAVIN  
Actress?

ALLIE  
If you're gonna hold that against  
me, you might not've picked the  
best city for yourself.

GAVIN  
Just heard the usual warnings. If  
an actress is good at what they're  
doing, hard to tell what's real.

ALLIE  
A wise boy once told me, it's okay  
to live a lie, just as long as  
you're aware of it.

Gavin nods. *Well played.*

They leave the bluffs behind, crossing the road toward a row  
of parked cars.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Santa Monica has my favorite street  
signs, with the blue sky, and  
yellow sand.

GAVIN  
Nice attention to detail. That's  
something I'm trying to get better  
at.

She stops at her car and presses her key fob to unlock it.

ALLIE  
This is me.

GAVIN  
Would you like to do this again?

ALLIE

I don't think I can.

(beat)

You're on the westside, I'm in the valley. This will never work.

GAVIN

(nods)

Not sure why anyone would leave the beach.

ALLIE

If you're looking for me, I'll be lounging by my lake.

GAVIN

Maybe we meet in some middle, neutral ground next time?

ALLIE

You'll need to text me with your imaginary phone.

GAVIN

For that I'll need your number.

Gavin pulls the receipt and pen from his back pocket.

ALLIE

Resourceful. That's some attention to detail right there.

GAVIN

It's a work in progress.

ALLIE

(smiling)

My number's six-oh-three five-five-five eight-nine-seven-five.

Gavin scribbles it down.

GAVIN

Six-oh-three area code?

ALLIE

Not giving up my New Hampshire roots yet. *Live free or die.*

He puts the piece of paper away.

GAVIN

Still have my two-oh-two from D.C.

In an attempt to be a gentleman, he opens her door...

ALLIE

Wait!

She realizes it too late. Gavin now sees the passenger's side PACKED with clothes, empty bottles, and papers.

She shuts the door.

GAVIN

Whoa.

ALLIE

(mortified)

Don't look in there -- it's a total disaster. All that stuff's for auditions.

GAVIN

What are you auditioning for?  
Hoarders?

ALLIE

Funny. I wasn't expecting to bring a boy back to my car tonight.

(playful)

I'm not that type of girl.

GAVIN

I'll act like I believe you.

ALLIE

You're actually the first guy I've given my number to in L.A.

(beat)

Aside from lease agreements, casting agencies, and dozens of loyalty programs. Actually, half the city has my number.

Gavin nods. Completely charmed.

GAVIN

Well it was nice to meet you...

(beat)

...on a bench.

ALLIE

(pleasantly bewildered)

...during a sunset.

She gets in her car and closes the door.

After she drives off, Gavin stands in the street and watches her leave.

**EXT. FRONT DOOR OF APARTMENT - LATER**

Gavin knocks on the door of his mom's apartment, then GRIMACES and rubs his forehead.

He takes a few breaths. Composes himself as Thanh answers.

GAVIN

Sorry, left my phone and keys.

He enters and grabs his things.

Then goes to the kitchen, pops an ASPIRIN in his mouth, and chases it with a glass a water.

As he's heading out, he spots Ruby asleep on the couch.

Gavin picks her up and carries her into her room.

**EXT. BUILDING COURTYARD - DAY**

Clear blue skies as Gavin cuts through the courtyard carrying grocery bags.

He opens the door to his mom's place.

GAVIN

Got some lunch!

The apartment sits in darkness with the curtains closed. The only light emits from the TV in the living room. Thanh and Ruby stare at the screen from the couch, almost lifeless.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Have you guys been outside, it's beautiful today. It's beautiful every day.

He sets the groceries on the kitchen counters.

THANH

Too bright. Hurts my eyes. I'll take her for a walk tonight.

GAVIN

(to Ruby)

C'mon, let's go -- we'll get something yummy to eat.

**EXT. THIRD STREET PROMENADE - DAY**

Gavin carries Ruby on his shoulders through the clusters of stores, tourists, and street performers.

He pulls out his phone to take a selfie, briefly fixes his hair then takes a pic.

CLOSE ON his phone as he sends the pic to Allie with the message:

*"Photographic evidence"* followed by a smile emoji.

Seconds later, he gets a response.

*"Service Error 530. Delivery failed. Unknown error."*

He tries to resend his text, and gets the error again.

**INT. GAVIN'S APARTMENT - EVENING**

CLOSE ON his phone as Gavin texts her:

*"Hey, it's Gavin from the bench"*

The phone chimes, an immediate response:

*"Service Error 530. Delivery failed. Unknown error."*

GAVIN

What?

He checks the phone number against what he wrote on the receipt, then tries to call her.

It rings, and rings, and rings.

No voicemail option.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

What the hell?

He sets the phone down and starts rubbing his TEMPLES, straining.

Then the phone rings.

Displays: *unknown caller*.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Hello?

ALLIE (O.S.)  
(over speakerphone)  
Is this Gavin?

GAVIN  
Allie. Hey, I just tried --

ALLIE (O.S.)  
Sorry, yeah, been having weird  
phone issues. But saw a missed call  
from a two-oh-two and thought it  
must be one of my *many* Washington-  
based *admirers*.

GAVIN  
Sorry to disappoint you then.

ALLIE (O.S.)  
Hey!  
(beat)  
Shit. My phone's about to die in  
case we get cut off -- but I think  
there was something about a neutral  
ground to meet up?

GAVIN  
How's the Grove work for you?

ALLIE (O.S.)  
That works. I'm free Wednesday.

GAVIN  
Great -- oh shit, sorry, I told my  
mom --  
(cringing)  
-- that sounds weird when I say it  
out loud, but I'm taking my sister  
off her hands Wednesday. How's  
Thursday work for you?

ALLIE (O.S.)  
Bring her!

GAVIN  
To the Grove?

ALLIE (O.S.)  
I'd love to meet her.

**EXT. GROVE FARMER'S MARKET - DAY**

Gavin leads Ruby through the maze of food stalls and fruit stands.

They reach a large ROBOT STATUE made of spare mechanical parts. Ruby is transfixed by it.

Allie arrives. Walks over and stands in front of the statue.

ALLIE

Oh my goodness, she's so cute.

GAVIN

This is Ruby.

Gavin kneels next to Ruby and turns her toward Allie.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Ruby, this is Allie.

Ruby looks up, then back at Gavin.

ALLIE

Hi Ruby, it's nice to meet you.

GAVIN

Ruby, say "hi Allie."

Ruby slowly turns back to Allie.

RUBY

Hi Allie.

Gavin smiles proudly, and Ruby grins from ear to ear.

ALLIE

She is sooo precious.

GAVIN

(to Ruby)

Want to go for a walk?

RUBY

Walk!

Gavin takes Ruby's hand and leads them through the market.

ALLIE

Ruby -- that's such a pretty name.

How old are you?

Ruby doesn't respond.

GAVIN

Ruby, tell Allie how old you are.

She looks up at Gavin, then carefully raises three fingers.

RUBY  
Three.

ALLIE  
Three?! You're such a big girl!

Ruby shifts her attention to an ice cream bar in the market.

GAVIN  
Ruby?

ALLIE  
It's okay. Hard to compete with all  
that ice cream.  
(beat)  
How are you handling all this? The  
responsibilities.

GAVIN  
Still trying to figure out where to  
start with the adoption process.

ALLIE  
Are you the one adopting her?

GAVIN  
I might eventually have to take  
care of her.

ALLIE  
Does that mean she's going to be  
your sister or... daughter?

GAVIN  
(confused)  
She's my sister.

ALLIE  
Is that actually official yet?

Gavin considers.

GAVIN  
This is really weird, right?

ALLIE  
Oh it's wildly unusual. Borderline  
kidnapping vibes. But I get it.

Gavin watches Allie swoon over Ruby.

**MOMENTS LATER**

Gavin and Ruby sit across from Allie at a picnic table. Ruby laps away at an ice cream cone.

ALLIE

I have a huge, close-knit family back east. Love them to death, I just didn't find my place. They're all boisterous, always-on partiers. I was always a bit lower key, a strange sort of black sheep.

(beat)

What about you?

GAVIN

Large families on both the Vietnamese and white sides. Since I was mixed, I never really fit in with either. Black sheep at least have identities. Gray sheep confuse everyone.

(beat)

It's why I'm loving L.A. -- plenty of other displaced folks out here.

ALLIE

Interesting strategy. Finding belonging with others that can't find belonging?

GAVIN

Seems to be working out pretty well right now.

**EXT. PARKING LOT - EVENING**

They walk to their cars as the sun sets.

Gavin and Allie hug goodbye, then Allie kneels down to Ruby.

ALLIE

I had a great time with you.

GAVIN

Ruby, can you say *it was nice to meet you*, and do you want to give her a hug?

ALLIE

Only if she's okay with it.

GAVIN  
(to Ruby)  
Do you want a hug?

Ruby nods, but continues to stare at Gavin, both shy and intimidated by all the words.

She stands there as Allie puts her arms around her, but Ruby doesn't move.

ALLIE  
It was so nice to meet you.

Allie lets go.

GAVIN  
Ruby, wave bye.

This she can handle, as she waves toward Allie.

**BEGIN MONTAGE - A COMPLEX COURTSHIP**

**INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT**

Gavin and Allie sit in a theater at half capacity, engrossed in a film.

He leans over and mentions something to Allie.

Two rows back, another **COUPLE** glares at Gavin, bothered by his behavior.

**INT. GAVIN'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

They lie in bed, sharing a laugh.

As Allie sits up, wearing only her bra, Gavin's eyes are drawn to her back right shoulder.

CLOSE ON her HOURGLASS TATTOO formed by the twisting strands of a DNA double helix.

GAVIN  
Love the hourglass.

Allie glances over her shoulder.

ALLIE  
Got a bit too into my majors in college.

GAVIN  
What majors?

ALLIE  
(hesitant)  
Biochem and philosophy.

Gavin's eyes go wide. *Seriously?*

Allie rolls her eyes. Annoyed. Gets up and throws on a shirt.

GAVIN  
What?

ALLIE  
What's behind that shocked reaction  
is why I switched to acting.

GAVIN  
I've just never heard of that  
combination. I think it's amazing.

Allie sits back on the bed. After a beat...

ALLIE  
Never mattered how well I did, all  
the attention would just gravitate  
toward the guys in my group. So  
after undergrad, that was it.  
(beat)  
Hard to keep going when no one  
believes in you.

Gavin stays silent. Just reaches over and puts his hand on  
hers at the edge of the bed.

**EXT. BEACH - DAY**

Gavin and Ruby build a sandcastle while Allie lies out and  
journals behind them.

Gavin stands up and brushes sand off his legs. Turns to  
Allie, but she's missing from her spot.

Confused, he looks around in all directions.

ALLIE (O.S.)  
Gavin!

He spins around again, surprised to see her in the water.

GAVIN  
How'd-

ALLIE  
Bring her over!

He shakes off his confusion and takes Ruby's hand, leading her to the waves.

Ruby breaks free from Gavin and skips back to the sandcastle.

Gavin shrugs back at Allie as they both get a kick out of Ruby's behavior.

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

At the front door, Allie and Gavin enter as Ruby runs up and JUMPS into Gavin's arms.

GAVIN  
Someone's excited to see us.

Gavin sets her down.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
Can Allie get a hug?

ALLIE  
It's okay, don't force it.

Ruby pulls Gavin into the living room. He turns to Allie as she waits by the door.

GAVIN  
Sorry. I don't...

She waves him off with a forced smile.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
(to Ruby)  
Give me one second.

Past a hallway, Gavin peers into his mom's room. CARDBOARD BOXES take up a corner.

Thanh washes her face in the adjacent bathroom. They make eye contact through the bathroom mirror.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
You ready to meet her yet?

Beat.

THANH  
Not like this.

Gavin relents, and leaves.

**END MONTAGE**

**EXT. RESTAURANT - ABBOT KINNEY BOULEVARD - MORNING**

Gavin and Allie have a table on the patio. Allie checks her phone then starts texting.

GAVIN  
Everything okay?

ALLIE  
Oh yeah -- my mom's just checking in.

GAVIN  
Does she know about me?

She sets her phone down.

ALLIE  
(whispering)  
Are other tables looking at us?

Gavin looks over as a **COUPLE** quickly turns their gaze away.

GAVIN  
(louder)  
People know a rising star when they spot one.

ALLIE  
(whispering)  
Shhhh. Stop!

GAVIN  
(quieter)  
What? You are!

ALLIE  
Anywaaaay, yes, she knows about you, and now I'm getting texts from all my family back east freaking out about this new boy in my life.

GAVIN  
Man...

ALLIE  
Or... man.

GAVIN

I meant *man* as in, *man*, I hope I'm not creating a stir with your family, with Ruby and everything.

(off Allie's laughter)

I mean I'm insecure, but not *that* insecure.

Allie sneaks looks at the tables around them.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Look, I don't know how I got so lucky with you. But we should probably have this talk, because it's not just about you and me.

She returns her focus to Gavin.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

I'm realizing I may need to support Ruby a bit more.

ALLIE

You reconsidering being her dad?

GAVIN

(laughing)

No.

ALLIE

She could really use one.

GAVIN

Yeah, well so could I.

Allie backs off the point.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Is this something you can possibly see being part of -- longer term?

Beat.

ALLIE

It'll probably take some time for her to get comfortable with me, but I adore her.

GAVIN

This is wildly unusual.

ALLIE

Now definitely kidnapping vibes.

GAVIN

You concerned about how unusual  
this might *seem* to other people?

ALLIE

I try not to worry too much about  
what others think. I find I'm much  
happier that way.

GAVIN

You were just shushing me to these  
strangers?

ALLIE

Because I don't like being rude.  
Manners still matter.

GAVIN

It's human nature to worry about  
what other's think. It's in our  
DNA.

ALLIE

I hope I have a defective gene  
then. Or a disease that alters it.

GAVIN

Then I hope it's an STD.

ALLIE

Ewwww.

(beat)

Not exactly how I pictured this  
talk would go.

GAVIN

Went pretty great from my  
perspective.

ALLIE

Oh okay. I guess that's all that  
matters then.

GAVIN

I'm trying not to worry too much  
about what others think -

ALLIE

Okay, that'll do.

A **WAITER** stops by and drops off waters.

WAITER

Anything I can start you with?

Gavin lifts a menu.

GAVIN  
(to Allie)  
You ready to order?

Allie nods as the waiter awkwardly chimes in.

WAITER  
Ready whenever you are. Are you  
waiting on anyone else to join you?

GAVIN  
It'll just be us.

WAITER  
Us, as in...?

GAVIN  
(laughs)  
Us, as in her and me.

WAITER  
Oh, is she on her way?

GAVIN  
What? What are you talking about?

The waiter looks around. Completely confused.

WAITER  
I -- let me get the manager.

Gavin turns to the couple dining next to them.

GAVIN  
You guys see that?

The couple quickly looks away, trying to keep out of it.

ALLIE  
What the hell is going on?

Gavin spots the **MANAGER** walking toward them as the waiter trails behind.

MANAGER  
Sir, what's the issue?

GAVIN  
I have no idea.  
(gesturing to Allie)  
He's acting like she's not here.

MANAGER

Who's not here?

GAVIN

What?

MANAGER

Sir, I'm going to have to kindly  
ask that you leave.

GAVIN

What the hell is --

ALLIE

It's fine, let's just go.

They get up, but then Gavin grimaces in pain as he falls back  
into his chair.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

GAVIN

(holding his head)

Just -- got a really sharp  
headache.

Gavin tries to get up again, but his legs collapse under him  
as he passes out.

CUT TO BLACK.

ALLIE (O.S.)

Gavin!

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT**

Monitors and an I.V. connect to Gavin, unconscious in a  
hospital bed.

A **NURSE** swaps out his I.V. when Gavin slowly opens his eyes.

GAVIN

What's going on?

He shields his eyes from the light, slowly absorbing the  
situation. The hospital room. The nurse.

NURSE

Hi Gavin, I'm Cheryl. You had a  
pretty bad spill yesterday.

GAVIN

What's--

THANH (O.S.)

Gavin.

Thanh sits on a cushioned bench in the corner of the room, while Ruby sleeps with her head on Thanh's lap.

She's relieved to see Gavin awake, but starts to cry, which slowly wakes Ruby up.

GAVIN

Mom? Wait -- what happened?  
(to the nurse)  
Did you say yesterday?

The nurse slowly inclines the bed to rise his body up.

CHERYL

You're doing okay. The doctor's going to be here in a minute to talk you through some things.

Gavin tries to sit up, but a pain in his head pulls him back.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Take it easy. You've been out for a while. Just relax for now.

**DR. NAKAMURA** (50s, female) enters and stands by Gavin's bed. She's tall and authoritative, but with exceptional bedside manner to take the edge off any intimidation.

DR. NAKAMURA

Hi Gavin, I'm Dr. Nakamura. Do you mind if I run a few checks while I explain what's going on?

She checks Gavin's eyes with a light.

DR. NAKAMURA (CONT'D)

So you had a pretty nasty fall at a restaurant yesterday. Do you remember anything about it?

GAVIN

Vaguely. I was with Allie...

DR. NAKAMURA

Who's Allie?

GAVIN  
A girl I've been seeing. She's not here?

DR. NAKAMURA  
Do you happen to remember anything from right before you passed out?

GAVIN  
Just feeling dizzy.

DR. NAKAMURA  
An ambulance was called. EMTs couldn't get you to regain consciousness so they brought you here. The hospital was able to track down your mother, but after a few hours -- and with you still not up -- your mother gave approval for you to get an MRI.

GAVIN  
That's a first.

DR. NAKAMURA  
MRIs are completely non-invasive.

GAVIN  
I meant getting my mom's approval.

The doctor remains stoic. *Tough crowd.*

DR. NAKAMURA  
I'm afraid it detected some mixed news, so that's why I was brought in. I'm an oncologist.

GAVIN  
Shit.

DR. NAKAMURA  
The bad news is that we discovered an abnormality.

GAVIN  
Abnormality?

DR. NAKAMURA  
A brain tumor.  
(beat)  
But right now it appears benign and highly treatable.

Beat.

GAVIN  
Where's Allie?

Dr. Nakamura stands up and puts away her devices.

DR. NAKAMURA  
The EMTs said bystanders reported  
you were talking to someone who...  
wasn't there.

Gavin laughs. Incredulous.

DR. NAKAMURA (CONT'D)  
Your mom shared there's no family  
history of conditions that might  
lead to this.

(beat)

So I'm thinking -- while it's  
extremely rare -- tumors can  
trigger hallucinations.

GAVIN  
That's not what's going on here.

DR. NAKAMURA  
Has your mother met this girl?

GAVIN  
My mom has refused to meet anyone  
lately.

DR. NAKAMURA  
What about anyone else? Have they  
met Allie?

Gavin takes a minute.

GAVIN  
Ruby...

DR. NAKAMURA  
Do you have any pictures of her?

GAVIN  
Where's my phone?

The nurse brings it over, but it's dead.

CHERYL  
I'll plug it in.

She connects it to a charger close to the bed, and hands the phone to Gavin. He presses the power button.

DR. NAKAMURA

How long have you been seeing her?

GAVIN

A couple weeks.

DR. NAKAMURA

There is a chance you just had this hallucination yesterday.

(beat)

Sorry, I know this is a lot at once.

The phone powers on. Gavin unlocks it and scrolls through his PHOTOS.

GAVIN

Here.

But hesitates. Dr. Nakamura steps closer to view the screen.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Wait a second.

As he goes further into the past, he still can't find any. He turns to Dr. Nakamura, who gives him a sympathetic look.

DR. NAKAMURA

I'm sorry, Gavin.

GAVIN

That's not possible.

(fidgeting)

She...

He sits back in his bed and closes his eyes.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING**

Alone, Gavin stares out the window. Pure silence, when...

ALLIE (O.S.)

Hey.

Her voice pulls his attention. Her eyes are red from crying.

Gavin's eyes widen, but then he looks away.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

I don't know what to say. I'm sorry.

Gavin forces himself to ignore her.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I had no idea.  
(beat)  
Please don't ignore me.

GAVIN  
(whispers)  
This is --  
(shakes his head)  
ridiculous.

ALLIE  
Is that what you feel?

Gavin lays silent. Stares at her.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I don't know what you're thinking.

GAVIN  
Why not?

ALLIE  
I don't know, I didn't make the  
rules. I didn't do any of this.

GAVIN  
Please... just walk away, stay out  
of my head.

ALLIE  
What?! Gavin...

Allie stands in shock. Devastated, but tries to remain  
composed as tears fill her eyes.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
If that's what you feel.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NEXT DAY**

Gavin stands by his bed putting on the shirt he last wore at  
the restaurant, when he hears a knock at the door.

GAVIN  
Come in.

Dr. Fisher enters cautiously.

DR. FISHER  
Gavin, I'm Dr. Fisher. I'm a  
psychologist and professor at UCLA.  
(beat)  
(MORE)

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)

Dr. Nakamura told me about your situation and sounds like it's... pretty remarkable.

(beat)

I was hoping to have a few minutes of your time to discuss it.

GAVIN

You think I've lost my mind.

DR. FISHER

What we see, hear, feel... it's all just an interpretation of electrical signals in our head. And they get garbled all the time.

GAVIN

Not like this.

DR. FISHER

That's what's remarkable. A single, recurring person. What's her name?

Gavin ignores him. Picks his belt up off the bed and starts putting it on.

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)

If you're open to it, I'd like to learn more about your experience.

Dr. Fisher watches Gavin buckle his belt.

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)

Looks like I nearly missed you. I was told you'd be here until tomorrow.

GAVIN

I feel fine.

DR. FISHER

Issues with your health insurance?

Gavin shoots him a look -- half impressed, entirely annoyed.

GAVIN

Each night here's almost two thousand bucks.

(beat)

Lost my coverage when I quit my job to move out here. Was waiting to get a new gig for insurance but...

(beat)

then my dad just died.

DR. FISHER  
I'm so sorry to hear.

GAVIN  
His life insurance was gonna cover  
my family for a bit, but this...  
(flicks his head)  
may wipe all of it out.

**INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE - DAY**

Dr. Fisher reviews brain scans on a table as Dr. Nakamura hands him another set.

DR. NAKAMURA  
Placement of the tumor is right in  
that posterior cortical hot zone.

DR. FISHER  
Where a lot of dream activity takes  
place.

DR. NAKAMURA  
And visual processing.

DR. FISHER  
A waking dream.  
(off Nakamura's nod)  
When are you planning to operate?

DR. NAKAMURA  
No date yet. It's benign for now,  
but we need to monitor it closely.

Fisher continues to focus on the scans.

DR. FISHER  
He's a case study that could be our  
generation's Phineas Gage.  
(off Dr. Nakamura's look)  
In the eighteen hundreds, the  
foreman who survived an iron rod  
going through his brain.

DR. NAKAMURA  
Ah, I remember now.

DR. FISHER  
Evolved our entire understanding of  
the brain. This could do the same,  
but with perception.

DR. NAKAMURA

You have time now, but we need to  
be ready to operate at any moment.

(beat)

Didn't Gage become a recluse and  
die young?

DR. FISHER

Relative to the eighteen  
hundreds...

(shrugs)

he wasn't that young.

**INT. RESTAURANT - DAY**

Ruby and Gavin sit at a small table at a sports bar. Gavin  
stares at his phone as Ruby holds a kids' menu upside down.

Gavin notices the menu. He turns it right side up for her as  
the **WAITRESS** (female, 30s) stops by with some waters.

WAITRESS

(to Ruby)

So young lady, what can I get for  
you and your dad?

RUBY

(confused)

Dad?

GAVIN

Brother.

Gavin sees the waitress' confusion and tries to push through.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

What would you recommend off the  
kids' menu?

WAITRESS

Hmmm, let me see. Any allergies?

GAVIN

None -- that I'm aware of.

The waitress' grin gets a little too tight.

WAITRESS

I'd go with chicken fingers then.

GAVIN

Sounds perfect. And I'll have the  
falafel wrap.

WAITRESS  
Great. I'll order these up.

She leaves as Gavin leans closer to Ruby.

GAVIN  
Do you have any allergies?

Ruby just stares back -- no clue what he's saying.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
Has mom taken you to see a doctor?

He takes a napkin and twists it up to mimic a stethoscope.

RUBY  
Doctor?

Gavin sets the napkin down and stares at this little girl.

His phone chimes.

CLOSE ON a text from Dr. Fisher:

*"I have something to share that may provide some options. Can I stop by?"*

Gavin stares at his phone for a beat.

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

Dr. Fisher and Gavin sit in the living room.

DR. FISHER  
Outside of my day job, I'm a scientific advisor for a couple of startups, and there's one in the Bay Area that I'd love to connect you with.

Gavin looks uneasily back at him.

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)  
They've been focused on memory enhancement by stimulating parts of the brain. I think you could unlock something big there.

Gavin squints an eye. How?

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)  
If they can mimic what's happening  
in your brain, people could have --  
or even revisit -- relationships  
and experiences that would  
otherwise be impossible.

A short, cynical laugh bursts from Gavin. Then after a beat.

GAVIN  
You're serious?

DR. FISHER  
I've cleared budget for an initial  
review, which could lead to  
licensing your data.

GAVIN  
My data?

DR. FISHER  
For the review alone, you'll get a  
hundred thousand.

**INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

Thanh and Ruby sit in the waiting room as Gavin speaks with a **RECEPTIONIST**.

RECEPTIONIST  
Even if she isn't covered, we'll  
need to note her relationship to  
your mom -- how's it recorded?

GAVIN  
I'm not entirely sure.

She looks over at Ruby.

RECEPTIONIST  
How'd she get into the country?

GAVIN  
To be honest, it was a bit of a  
gamble. She had a Cambodian  
passport, and we had Cambodian  
guardianship forms --

RECEPTIONIST  
Wow. Okay. We'll still see her but  
you need to check with an  
immigration lawyer as soon as  
possible to get this sorted.

Gavin drops his shoulders and head in exhaustion.

**INT. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY**

Gavin sits across from **GREGORY** (50s), a well-dressed lawyer parked behind a large desk.

GREGORY

I'm not sure what your dad's plan was. The U.S. banned adoptions from Cambodia decades ago because of human trafficking issues.

GAVIN

*(fuck!)*

Can they deport her?

GREGORY

Yes, technically. But these agencies are so stretched it's not a priority to go after her. She got in the country without a visa?

GAVIN

I showed her passport and Cambodian adoption papers. It was chaos though... my mom had a breakdown at the airport.

GREGORY

That's the only way I can see it happening. Not wanting to hassle a grieving widow.

GAVIN

So what should I do?

GREGORY

Gather all the information you can find -- your dad's death certificate, any other adoption application forms from the orphanage, birth records. See if your mom has any idea of what your dad's plan was.

*(beat)*

Who is going to adopt her? You, or your mother?

*(off Gavin's blank stare)*

Oh boy...

Gregory drops his head, then looks up to share one last bomb.

GREGORY (CONT'D)  
The application, legal, and  
processing fees on this could be  
substantial.

GAVIN  
(exhales)  
What dollar range are we looking at  
here? In the thousands?

GREGORY  
Tens of thousands.

**EXT. BLUFFS PARK - EVENING**

Gavin sits alone at the bench where he met Allie, staring at his phone.

CLOSE ON the screen displaying a New York Times article with the headline:

*"Silicon Valley's Latest Darling: Changing the Way We Think About Thinking"*

Gavin scans the article before he jumps back to Dr. Fisher's text message with the company's name and website:

*"Synapulse.com"*

After a beat, Gavin decides to Google:

*"Dr. Fisher UCLA"*

The first couple results list out:

*"Dr. Noel Fisher, Head of Psychology, UCLA."*

Gavin scrolls a few links down before he spots a link:

*"Tragedy Strikes UCLA Professor's Family"*

He clicks the link and a summary of the article below the title reads:

*"Eleven year old son of department head killed in hit and run."*

BACK TO SCENE as Gavin stares at the screen. Frozen in shock.

## INT. THANH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gavin shuffles through papers spread across the dining table. Thanh takes a seat and sets a folder next to him.

THANH  
That's the last I could find.

GAVIN  
Did dad ever talk to you about any  
plan for adopting Ruby?

Thanh shakes her head.

A small ceramic STATUE OF A TEMPLE sits on the table. Thanh slides it closer to her. She rotates it to occupy her hands.

Gavin turns to watch Ruby. She uses a box as a table for her plastic tea party set.

RUBY  
For you, Sasa. Drink, Sasa.

GAVIN  
(to Thanh)  
What's Sasa?

THANH  
Her imagination friend.

GAVIN  
*Imaginary.*  
(shaking his head)  
We need to get her into preschool.  
She needs to be around other kids.

THANH  
You don't know how lucky she is.  
You should see how crowded her  
orphanage was.

GAVIN  
At least she was with kids her age.

THANH  
She has your father and me. That's  
enough.

Gavin pauses, as Thanh stares at the temple in her hands.

GAVIN  
Mom...

Thanh starts to quiver as her eyes well up. Gavin reaches for her hand, but she pulls away.

She then gets up and storms off into her room.

Gavin turns to Ruby. Unfazed, chatting to her unseen friend.

**INT. DR. FISHER'S OFFICE - DAY**

Surrounded by bookshelves, degrees, and framed articles, Gavin sits on a couch flush against a wall.

Dr. Fisher takes a seat facing Gavin.

DR. FISHER

I can check in with a colleague at the law school. See if he's aware of any workarounds.

(beat)

Is that what brought you in today?

Beat.

GAVIN

What's your *real* motivation for all this?

Dr. Fisher sits back. Exhales. Nods an understanding.

DR. FISHER

I didn't feel that'd be... appropriate to share.

GAVIN

I'm getting used to how things aren't as they seem.

DR. FISHER

I didn't want to put that pressure on you.

GAVIN

You put plenty of pressure.

DR. FISHER

Not that type of pressure.

Beat.

GAVIN

Tell me about Synapulse.

**EXT. THIRD STREET PROMENADE - DAY**

Gavin piggybacks Ruby through the promenade. He looks around intently, while also still trying to engage with Ruby.

They pass the restaurant he last had dinner with Allie, but she's not there.

**VARIOUS LOCATIONS**

-- Gavin drives by the bluffs along the beach, while Ruby sits strapped into a child's seat in the back. Gavin slows as he passes the bench where he met Allie. Empty.

-- Gavin takes Ruby through the Getty museum's garden. Ruby runs around the water installations, while Gavin looks around, disappointed.

**INT. GAVIN'S CAR - LATER**

As they leave the Getty parking lot, Gavin recounts...

GAVIN  
If you're looking for me... I'll be  
lounging by my lake.

**EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - LATER**

Gavin walks Ruby along a narrow street in front of a row of large houses planted closely together. Gavin peeks between the houses, when he catches a glimpse of a LAKE.

He guides Ruby through a narrow opening to small, grassy backyard with a full view of the water.

GAVIN  
Holy shit, it is gorgeous.

RUBY  
Gorgeous.

Gavin looks around for any sign of Allie. But nothing.

ELDERLY LADY (O.S.)  
This is private property!

An **ELDERLY LADY** (70s) walks down nearby stairs from a raised patio to her backyard. As she reaches the ground, she catches sight of Ruby.

ELDERLY LADY (CONT'D)  
Sorry, I didn't see her.

GAVIN  
I'm sorry. We couldn't find any  
other way to get to the lake.

ELDERLY LADY  
There aren't many.

GAVIN  
It's gorgeous here. Why don't more  
people know or talk about this?

ELDERLY LADY  
Selfishly, we don't want them to.

GAVIN  
The town has lake in the name.

ELDERLY LADY  
You'd be surprised how little that  
matters. The more people learn  
about this the more of a hassle it  
is. I'm too old for this shit.

The lady turns back to her stairs, while mentioning over her shoulder...

ELDERLY LADY (CONT'D)  
You're lucky she's cute. She your  
daughter?

GAVIN  
Sister.

She pauses. Turns back to Gavin.

ELDERLY LADY  
Oh... sorry.

GAVIN  
I've been getting that a lot.

The lady eyes Ruby for a bit -- trying to make out this sibling arrangement.

ELDERLY LADY  
What's her name?

Gavin looks to Ruby, who's staring out at the lake. He glances back at the lady and furrows his brow.

GAVIN  
(to Ruby)  
Can you answer her question?

Ruby and the lady look toward each other, then over to Gavin, then back at each other -- a Mexican standoff of confusion and suspicion.

Gavin stares at the lady and tilts with his head to Ruby. Go ahead.

ELDERLY LADY  
(to Ruby)  
What's your name?

RUBY  
Ruby.

Gavin breathes a sigh of relief. The lady notices this, utterly confused.

ELDERLY LADY  
(to Gavin)  
You doing okay?

GAVIN  
I'm good. We're good.

The lady stares for a beat.

ELDERLY LADY  
Okay, I give up. What's the situation with you two?

GAVIN  
(smiles, humoring her)  
My dad passed away a few weeks back, leaving me with a shut-in mother and an undocumented orphan.

The lady shakes her head.

ELDERLY LADY  
(under her breath)  
I can't escape this shit.

GAVIN  
Then I found out I have a brain tumor.

ELDERLY LADY  
Holy shit. I'm sorry to hear.  
(beat)  
Life can be a real pain in the ass.

GAVIN  
(laughs)  
Yep.  
(beat)  
What can't you escape?

ELDERLY LADY  
Resettlement headaches. Used to be  
with the state department. Thirty  
years. Mostly helping refugees.

Gavin fights back a chuckle.

ELDERLY LADY (CONT'D)  
What?

GAVIN  
For someone who helped refugees,  
you're sure protective of your  
territory.

ELDERLY LADY  
I believe in the orderly and safe  
movement of people across areas.  
(off Gavin's smirk)  
And I'm retired now.

GAVIN  
I wasn't asking for help.

Beat.

ELDERLY LADY  
Where's she from?

GAVIN  
Cambodia.

ELDERLY LADY  
(impressed)  
How'd they pull that off?

GAVIN  
They didn't.

Beat, as she struggles to negotiate something in her head.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
We'll get out of your hair.

ELDERLY LADY  
God dammit.  
(beat)  
Give me a second.

The lady walks into the lower level of her home.

GAVIN  
(to Ruby)  
Interesting lady.

RUBY  
(struggling)  
In-resting lady.

After a moment, she returns, carrying something in her hand.

ELDERLY LADY  
The original Toluca is tied to the  
Aztecs.

She hands Gavin a TURQUOISE ARROWHEAD.

GAVIN  
It's beautiful.

ELDERLY LADY  
Take it.  
(beat)  
I'm as atheist as they come, but  
there's something powerful about a  
totem. To help get you through  
shit.

Gavin's a bit weirded out, but mostly touched.

GAVIN  
I'm Gavin by the way.

ELDERLY LADY  
Elaine.

**INT. GAVIN'S CAR - LATER**

Driving back through the city.

RUBY  
I'm hungry.

GAVIN  
Let's grab something...

Gavin sees a street sign for the Grove.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
...in neutral ground.

## EXT. GROVE FARMER'S MARKET - LATER

Gavin sets a tray in front of Ruby seated at a small table. Ruby stares at a glistening plate of creamy mac and cheese.

GAVIN  
Have you ever had mac and cheese?

RUBY  
Mac-a-chee?

GAVIN  
*Oh wait to see what you're in for!*  
And it's pasta shells. My favorite.

Gavin takes a fork to sample it. He revels in the flavor.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
Not too hot. Here.

He takes a forkful and brings it to Ruby's mouth. At first she motions away from it, then looks at Gavin.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
Try it -- it's delicious.

Ruby takes the bite. After a second, her eyes light up.

RUBY  
More delicious, please!

Gavin hands her the fork. She devours the dish. She's in heaven as Gavin scans the area.

LATER

As they walk through the market, Ruby pulls Gavin's hand and points back.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
Allie.

Gavin spins around.

GAVIN  
Where?

Ruby points to the ROBOT SCULPTURE.

RUBY  
Allie.

Gavin's shoulders drop. He kneels down to Ruby.

GAVIN

Do you know how you have Sasa and  
only you can see her? That's like  
Allie for me.

RUBY

Like Sasa?

GAVIN

Sasa's only in your head. Allie's  
only in my head.

Ruby nods, and Gavin picks her up to hug her, then turns to  
carry her away, when he spots --

Allie

She sits at a table holding a cup of coffee.

Gavin freezes, as Allie gives him a wave.

He walks over to her table carrying Ruby.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Hi.

ALLIE

Hi.

GAVIN

That's all you were waiting for?

Allie shrugs.

**EXT. THE GROVE - MOMENTS LATER**

Ruby plays in a courtyard as Allie and Gavin watch her.

GAVIN

It's this gorgeous lake.

ALLIE

I told you! You didn't believe me.

GAVIN

How'd you know about it though?

ALLIE

I don't know. It is in the name.

GAVIN

Right?

Beat.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
Sorry about what I said at the  
hospital.

ALLIE  
You were going through a lot...

Allie looks away, fighting to maintain composure.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
...but that was really difficult to  
hear.

Beat.

GAVIN  
How'd you know to show up at the  
farmer's market?

ALLIE  
You're the one that makes up these  
rules.

GAVIN  
I guess.

ALLIE  
What changed your mind? To come  
looking for me.

GAVIN  
Just realized what we had was...  
pretty remarkable.

ALLIE  
Glad you finally came to your  
senses.

GAVIN  
Not sure that's the best way to  
describe it...  
(beat)  
How are you dealing with this all?  
I can't imagine what you're going  
through.

ALLIE  
Technically, you are imagining it.  
But yeah, it's taking a bit to  
process.  
(beat)  
(MORE)

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I never liked the perception  
everyone has that L.A. is filled  
with fake people.  
(grinning)  
But look at me now.

Gavin lets out a rueful laugh, shaking his head. His expression shifts, curiosity mingling with concern.

GAVIN  
(hesitant)  
Can I ask you something?  
(off her cautious nod)  
Where do you go... or, what do you  
experience when we're not...

ALLIE  
(softly)  
Together?  
(beat)  
I can only seem to go where we've  
had memories. And then sit with my  
thoughts.  
(beat)  
The memories are good. The  
thoughts...  
(a painful smile)  
...they vary.

Gavin stares at her. Taking in the weight of her words.

After a long beat, he looks out to Ruby.

GAVIN  
Even Ruby.

ALLIE  
What about her?

GAVIN  
She seemed different when you were  
around, so much happier.

ALLIE  
Maybe it was just cause you were  
happier.

They continue to watch Ruby dip her hand in a fountain.

GAVIN  
It's my luck that I meet the girl  
of my dreams, and turns out she's  
slowly killing me.

ALLIE  
That's not funny.

GAVIN  
It's true.

ALLIE  
It's not something to joke about.  
Unless that's how you're coping  
with it but you, or we, or... you  
should probably talk to someone  
about this. Like a professional.

GAVIN  
I actually have someone.

**EXT. SANTA MONICA STREET - NIGHT**

Gavin steps out of his apartment building. He hustles away  
from the complex and jumps on a call.

DR. FISHER (O.S.)  
Gavin?

GAVIN  
(quiet)  
I found her.

DR. FISHER (O.S.)  
Fantastic!

GAVIN  
I'll bring her in to see you as  
soon as I can, it's just -- she  
can't know about the licensing deal  
or any of the money yet.

DR. FISHER  
What's the concern?

GAVIN  
I was pretty awful to her to get  
her to leave me. If she learns *why*  
I went back to her...  
(beat)  
There's a real chance we'll lose  
her.

## INT. PRESCHOOL - DAY

Gavin, Allie, and Ruby follow a **WOMAN** (50s) through the hallway of a small school. She leads them to the door of a room full of uniformed kids Ruby's age.

WOMAN

This group is the caterpillars, most of our two and three-year-olds. This would be Ruby's class.

ALLIE

Oh my goodness. They are so cute.

GAVIN

Adorable.

WOMAN

It's a great age.

## EXT. STREET - LATER

Gavin straps Ruby into her car seat with Allie standing behind him.

GAVIN

You want to go there?

RUBY

Go there!

ALLIE

(laughing)

I love her.

(beat)

I missed her.

Gavin and Allie get into the car.

GAVIN

Thanks for coming along for this.

ALLIE

(glowing)

Felt what it would be like to be a parent, you know.

(beat)

Is that weird to say?

GAVIN

Yes.

She waves him off.

ALLIE

With everything we're going through, I still feel really lucky.

GAVIN

*Lucky?*

ALLIE

Easy now. As far as tumors go, you could do a lot worse than me.

GAVIN

If you put it that way, I have to admit...

Gavin reaches over and takes her hand.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

...you're definitely growing on me.

Allie pulls her hand back. Groans out a laugh.

**INT. DR. FISHER'S OFFICE - EVENING**

Dr. Fisher leads Gavin into his office and closes the door.

DR. FISHER

How's it going?

GAVIN

(whispering)

Quieter.

DR. FISHER

What does she know about the fMRI?

GAVIN

Nothing yet. I'll set you up with questions, then you introduce it.

Dr. Fisher nods as Gavin opens the door and calls to Allie.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Ready to jump in?

Allie steps into the room.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Have a seat.

Allie sits at the end of the couch.

Dr. Fisher turns to the couch. Allie is no longer there (note: perspectives will frequently shift). He looks back at Gavin, then to the couch.

DR. FISHER  
Hi Allie. It's a pleasure to meet you.

Allie appears back in the scene. She watches Dr. Fisher stare at the wrong end of the couch.

ALLIE  
This is really weird.

GAVIN  
She's actually on that end of the couch.

Gavin takes a seat on the unoccupied side.

DR. FISHER  
Oh, sorry.

GAVIN  
If you focus your eyes right here.

Gavin takes his finger and gently puts it right between Allie's eyes. She looks at his finger cross-eyed.

DR. FISHER  
I'll do my best.  
(to Gavin)  
So how are you feeling?

GAVIN  
Can't say I've been happier.

Allie smiles warmly to Gavin, as he smiles back. Dr. Fisher watches Gavin intently.

DR. FISHER  
You're fully aware you're balancing two realities.

GAVIN  
Takes a little getting used to.

Dr. Fisher grabs two pieces of paper and a pen from his desk.

DR. FISHER  
Mind if I do a few quick tests?

Allie and Gavin share a glance as he scribbles on one sheet.

He takes the two sheets of paper, and reveals one sheet in Allie's direction, while using the other sheet to block Gavin's view of the first sheet.

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)  
Can you ask her to --

GAVIN  
She can hear you so you can talk to her directly. I'll just relay her response back.

DR. FISHER  
Okay great. Allie, what number do you see?

Allie looks at Gavin, then slowly turns to look at the sheet.

ALLIE  
I can't see anything. It's just a blur.

GAVIN  
She just sees a blur.

Dr. Fisher sets down the papers and takes a note.

DR. FISHER  
Can I try another test?

ALLIE  
Not like that.

GAVIN  
(to Dr. Fisher)  
Let's not do any more like that.  
It's bothering her. Bothering both of us actually.

DR. FISHER  
Absolutely. I'm so sorry.

GAVIN  
We're all in new territory here.  
(beat)  
Are there other ways to explore this?

**INT. FMRI ROOM - DAY**

Back in the room with the large device resembling a space pod.

Gavin's inside with Allie standing by him.

In the observation room adjacent, Dr. Fisher sits next to **SAMUEL** (30s, handsome tech bro) and presses a button to turn on the intercom.

DR. FISHER  
Starting it up now -- you'll hear  
some noise but won't feel a thing.

The whir of the machine picks up.

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)  
Let's start with telling us what  
you ate for breakfast.

GAVIN  
Um... eggs and avocado toast.

Dr. Fisher eyes the monitor.

DR. FISHER  
Can you ask Allie how her day was?

GAVIN  
How was your day?

ALLIE  
Started abnormal, and then just got  
aggressively stranger.

Gavin laughs as Dr. Fisher and Samuel watch a scan of his brain on screen light up in different parts.

DR. FISHER  
Can you share her response?

GAVIN  
*It started abnormal, and then just got aggressively stranger.*

CLOSE ON a monitor in front of Samuel that shows the conversation converting to text in real-time.

SAMUEL  
Everything's looking good. I'll  
step out for this.

Samuel slides a sheet of paper with questions in front of Dr. Fisher, who bristles when he reviews it. Then concedes as Samuel leaves the room.

DR. FISHER

I'm going to get into some personal questions, but let me know if you're not... comfortable with them.

**INT. GAVIN'S CAR - LATER**

Allie and Gavin sit in the parking lot of the building.

ALLIE

Can't say I loved it.

GAVIN

I'm sorry.

ALLIE

At least it gets us facing the reality of our situation.

(laughing)

Whatever that is.

Gavin smiles, but it quickly fades.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

It's a shitty situation if we look at it that way. Let's take advantage of all the opportunities.

GAVIN

Like what?

Allie struggles to come up with something, but then...

ALLIE

Everything we do, the cost is half-off, right? Dinner, movies, travel.

Gavin eyes her.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

It's up to us how we look at this.

**MONTAGE**

-- Catching another movie in a theater.

-- On the Catalina Express, Allie, Gavin, and Ruby skip along the ocean in a large speedboat.

-- They sit together in a restaurant where Ruby inhales a dish of mac and cheese.

GAVIN

(to Allie)

It's the pasta shells. She's picked up my fine culinary palette.

-- In a high-end department store, Allie and Gavin shop for new clothes. She holds up a few dresses against her body. He does the same with a shirt and sports coat.

They check in into the same fitting room. Gavin pins her against the wall as they kiss passionately.

**END MONTAGE**

**EXT. BALCONY - GAVIN'S APARTMENT - EVENING**

Gavin slides the glass door behind him and takes a call, keeping the phone against his ear.

GAVIN

Okay, clear now.

DR. FISHER (O.S.)

They loved the data. They want more and want to license it all.

GAVIN

What numbers are we talking about?

DR. FISHER (O.S.)

After a couple more sessions, it can get close to seven figures.

GAVIN

Holy shit.

DR. FISHER (O.S.)

Congrats, Gavin.

Gavin exhales in deep relief.

DR. FISHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

They asked me to double check with you on the *imagination or memory* question.

GAVIN

Why?

DR. FISHER (O.S.)

It's an important label they need to anchor on for training their models. Do you remember at all interacting with anyone that looked identical to Allie?

GAVIN

Not anyone *identical* to her. Unless she was passing by and I subconsciously saw her.

DR. FISHER (O.S.)

*Subconsciously* is okay. They're looking for front and center core-like memories.

GAVIN

Definitely not then.

DR. FISHER (O.S.)

Perfect. That level of certainty is critical.

GAVIN

Why can't they just train two separate models for imagination and memory?

DR. FISHER

Training a foundational model like this costs about five million.

Gavin looks back through the door into the apartment.

GAVIN

(quieter)

They -- can they try to re-create Allie?

**INT. GAVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Gavin wakes up, looks over and finds he's alone in bed.

GAVIN

Allie?

He ambles out of the bedroom into the living area.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Allie?

For a second, he's nervous. But then a TAP at the window of his balcony grabs his attention. Allie sits outside.

**EXT. BALCONY - GAVIN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER**

Gavin slides the balcony door behind him. Takes a seat as they listen to the sounds of the ocean.

GAVIN  
Doing okay?

Allie looks over, and shrugs.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
What's wrong?

ALLIE  
I feel like I'm in a slingshot. The happier I am, the further I'm being pulled in one direction. And I start to feel the tension. I know the more I get pulled this way...

Gavin stares at his hands.

GAVIN  
I get it. Before I met you, I barely felt anything.  
(beat)  
Now I feel the pull, and I know I'm in for it.

They share a long look.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
But whatever the cost, I feel it's worth it.

Allie responds with a sad, but reassuring smile.

**INT. BEDROOM - GAVIN'S APARTMENT - MORNING**

Allie lies asleep in bed as Gavin wakes up next to her. He gets up and sits at the edge of the mattress, staring at her.

A few KNOCKS hit against the front door, and a muffled but playful Ruby can be heard.

RUBY (O.S.)  
Gav-in!

Again, knocks, but slightly louder.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
Gaaaaaaav-in!

Gavin looks toward the door, then back at Allie. He takes a deep breath, and closes his eyes.

There's one last knock, followed by the faint clopping of flip flops taking Ruby away. Then silence.

Gavin opens his eyes. Then lays back down by Allie's side.

**EXT. PRESCHOOL ENTRANCE - MORNING**

Gavin and Allie lead Ruby up the walkway. Allie beams with joy watching Ruby waddle up with an oversized backpack.

GAVIN  
Big day, girlie! You excited?

RUBY  
(nodding)  
Excited!

Once they enter the building they're greeted by a **TEACHER** (mid-20s, attractive, vivacious).

TEACHER  
You must be Ruby! My name is Miss Tara and I'm going to be your teacher. We're so excited to have you here.

She turns to Gavin and extends her hand.

TARA  
Miss Tara. Nice to meet you.

GAVIN  
Gavin. Hi.

Allie watches the exchange -- beaming just a little less. A bystander to it all.

LATER

Gavin, Allie, and Miss Tara stand outside Ruby's classroom.

TARA  
She's doing great.

GAVIN  
Thanks for being so warm to her.  
Warmly... welcoming.

Allie cringes.

TARA

It's my pleasure. She's adorable.  
So are you her... guardian? If you  
don't mind me asking.

GAVIN

Brother...

(shrugging)

We're in the process of figuring it  
out.

TARA

Interesting. You have a... partner?

GAVIN

(looks over to Allie)

Yeah, I... do.

TARA

(curious)

Oh?

ALLIE

No. Not me. Don't mention me.

GAVIN

(confused)

It's... my mother, and me.

ALLIE

That sounds really off.

GAVIN

I mean, not an... Oedipus thing or  
anything like that.

ALLIE

Oh my god.

TARA

(laughing)

Thanks for clearing that up.

**INT. GAVIN'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER**

As soon as Gavin shuts his door.

GAVIN

What just happened in there?

ALLIE

I think she's great.  
(off Gavin's stare)  
I think this is good for you.

GAVIN

What is?

ALLIE

To meet someone, and someone nice.

GAVIN

What are you talking about?

ALLIE

I'm not going to be here forever.

GAVIN

None of us are.

(beat)

You want me to be with someone  
else?

ALLIE

As much as I don't love the idea,  
it's hard to ignore what's best for  
you.

GAVIN

I'll worry about myself.

**INT. FMRI ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY**

While Gavin's inside the machine, his right hand extends out to hold a wired CONTROLLER. Allie stands next to him.

Samuel and Dr. Fisher monitor from the observation room.

DR. FISHER

(over intercom)

What's fourteen squared?

GAVIN

Oh gosh.

After a few beats...

ALLIE

One ninety-six.

Gavin presses the button on the controller.

GAVIN

Dammit.

(laughs)

Four times fourteen... forty and  
sixteen... fifty-six... one ninety-  
six?

(beat)

She's right.

DR. FISHER

(over intercom)

She got it when you pressed?

GAVIN

She's clearly a few steps ahead of  
me. Kind of freaks me out -- being  
with someone this much smarter.

DR. FISHER

As a bonus, we can probably isolate  
where in the brain typical male  
insecurities lie.

ALLIE

(grinning)

On second thought, these tests  
aren't all that bad.

## LATER

Dr. Fisher steps out of the observation room as Gavin's bed rolls out of the machine.

DR. FISHER

I have to say... what you have is  
pretty remarkable.

Allie squints, bristles, then looks over to Gavin.

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)

Most couples are influenced by how  
they look to people outside the  
relationship -- the value a partner  
can bring to the other's identity.  
But what you have is *truly* about  
what you feel for each other.

Gavin looks over to Allie, whose squint fades to warmth.

GAVIN

Hate to burst your theory, doc, but  
she's trying to set me up with  
another girl.

DR. FISHER  
I think I can guess why.  
(off Gavin's solemn nod)  
Then that reinforces my point.

**EXT. PATIO - DAY**

Allie and Gavin lean on a wooden railing overlooking Toluca Lake.

ALLIE  
Gorgeous.

GAVIN  
(smiles)  
I told you.

Elaine steps out of her house with two glasses. She hands an ice water to Gavin as she keeps her whiskey.

ELAINE  
Sure that's all you want?

Gavin motions his glass toward the lake.

GAVIN  
Can't ask for more than this.

She raises her whiskey...

ELAINE  
Sure you can.

...takes a swig.

ALLIE  
(laughing)  
I like her.

ELAINE  
How the girls in your life doing?

GAVIN  
Ruby's settling in. My mom's still finding her way.

Elaine sighs. Nods for a beat.

ELAINE  
I've been through so much shit -- cancer twice, widowed -- you'd have to wonder why I'm still here.

GAVIN  
I'm sorry to hear.

ELAINE  
She needs to talk to someone who  
understands her.

Gavin turns back toward the lake.

GAVIN  
She won't talk to anyone. Barely  
leaves her apartment.

A beat passes as Elaine backs off the topic.

ELAINE  
Did you ever find that girl you  
were after?

ALLIE  
(grins)  
You shared quite a bit with her.

Gavin slowly turns back to Elaine.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Does she think I'm a real...

GAVIN  
(smiles)  
Yeah.

ELAINE  
Oh, that's wonderful.  
(beat)  
Going as well as you'd hoped?

GAVIN  
Everything I imagined.

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

Gavin tosses his phone on the couch as they enter the home.

GAVIN  
We can do business class to London  
-- I'll reserve two seats together.

ALLIE  
How can you afford that?

GAVIN

I should be getting some decent-sized checks soon.

ALLIE

That's for Ruby and your mom.  
I also don't know if we should be making a trip like that.

GAVIN

Why not?

ALLIE

Let's see what the doctors say.

Gavin looks away as his enthusiasm hits a wall.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

We can't keep avoiding it.

GAVIN

I'm taking advantage of the opportunities.

ALLIE

(taking a deep breath)  
I'd like to have that date set.

GAVIN

You want a countdown for this?

ALLIE

Don't you want to know?

GAVIN

Not really. You think most people would want to know when *exactly* their relationship will end?

Allie eyes brim with a mix of pain and compassion.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

What?

ALLIE

It's not just when the relationship ends.

(beat)

It's when I do.

This lands hard on Gavin. Her fear etched in her face, now mirrored in his own.

He takes her hand to comfort her.

GAVIN  
I'll talk with Dr. Nakamura.

ALLIE  
When?

GAVIN  
I'll reach out to her...

Gavin suddenly kneels over against the couch.

ALLIE  
What's wrong?!

He winces, but waves her off.

GAVIN  
I'm fine -- just something I ate.

He straightens himself up and walks to the bathroom.

ALLIE  
Is it your stomach, or...

A loud THUD in the bathroom, and Allie rushes to the open door, finding Gavin lifting himself up from the floor.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Oh my god!

She jumps up and runs to the living room.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I'm calling Dr. Nakamura right --

She picks up his phone from the couch, then remembers how futile that is.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Fuck!

She THROWS her phone across the room.

Gavin leans against the doorway of the bathroom, witnessing her helplessness.

**EXT. SANTA MONICA STREET - MORNING**

Gavin walks alone down the street from his apartment, holding his phone to his ear.

GAVIN

How's the testing going? When are they gonna be ready?

DR. FISHER (O.S.)

Sounds like they've hit some roadblocks.

GAVIN

Roadblocks?! They can't figure it out?

DR. FISHER

You're still getting paid. What's your concern?

GAVIN

You got me back into this! I...

(beat)

I don't want to lose her again!

DR. FISHER

Gavin, I'm... I'm so sorry.

**INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY**

Allie stands by Gavin, who's seated on an examination bed. Dr. Nakamura closes the door behind her.

DR. NAKAMURA

I'm afraid the tumor is growing.

Allie covers her mouth.

DR. NAKAMURA (CONT'D)

It's still benign but it can start doing damage to parts of your brain.

She pulls up her laptop.

DR. NAKAMURA (CONT'D)

Let's get a date scheduled. I have June twenty-nine open. That's in two weeks. Can we lock that in?

Gavin turns to Allie.

DR. NAKAMURA (CONT'D)

Gavin?

Allie takes a step back.

DR. NAKAMURA (CONT'D)  
We shouldn't wait much longer.

GAVIN  
I'm not ready yet...

ALLIE  
What are you doing?

DR. NAKAMURA  
I want to be clear, you don't have  
much time. We're talking about  
brain damage and... possibly death.

Allie starts to get louder and visibly shaken...

ALLIE  
Listen to her!

Dr. Nakamura takes off her glasses.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Set a date!

Gavin continues to ignore her.

DR. NAKAMURA  
Is she here with you now?

ALLIE  
Gavin!

Allie continues to yell, but her volume goes down. We just  
see her screaming but on mute.

GAVIN  
No.

Allie freezes.

DR. NAKAMURA  
But this is because of her...

GAVIN  
I just need some time to think  
about this.  
(beat)  
Do you have any sense when it might  
become malignant or cause damage?

DR. NAKAMURA  
It can range from a few days to a  
year. Let's not wait to find out.

**INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - LATER**

Allie and Gavin walk through the hallways together, intermittently passing other people.

ALLIE  
What are you thinking?!

Gavin doesn't respond. Just reaches into his pocket and puts on wireless earbuds.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Gavin?!

GAVIN  
I'm doing this so I can talk  
without anyone calling the cops.

She gets it.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
You heard her, it's still benign.

They exit the hospital and into a large parking lot.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
I'll get the surgery -- in time.

They reach his car.

ALLIE  
I can't believe that you're even  
thinking like this.

GAVIN  
You're asking me to kill you.

ALLIE  
And you're forcing me to kill you!

**INT. GAVIN'S CAR - LATER**

Stuck in traffic. Gavin stares into space.

ALLIE  
What about Ruby?

GAVIN  
What about her?

ALLIE  
She needs someone to take care of  
her!

GAVIN  
I can barely take care of myself!

Trembling, Gavin takes a beat to collect himself.

ALLIE  
You're taking a big risk by waiting  
like this.

GAVIN  
It'll be fine.

Allie vehemently shakes her head.

ALLIE  
You can't do this to her. She's  
lost her biological parents, your  
dad, and now you?

Gavin has no answer. Back to his dead stare.

**INT. THANH'S APARTMENT - EVENING**

Thanh, Ruby, Gavin, and Allie sit around the dining table with the small ceramic temple at the center.

GAVIN  
(to Thanh)  
Allie thanks you for having us for  
dinner.

Thanh gives a curt smile as she dishes out food to plates in front of Gavin and Ruby.

ALLIE  
This is next level awkward. Maybe I  
should go.

GAVIN  
(to Thanh)  
Thank you for being open to this.  
It means a lot to me.

His mom nods as she takes her seat.

ALLIE  
She must think this is *absolutely*  
crazy.

GAVIN  
(to Thanh)  
Do you think this is crazy?

ALLIE  
Gavin!

Thanh clears her throat.

THANH  
Everything is crazy.

Allie turns to Thanh, surprised.

ALLIE  
What does she mean?

GAVIN  
(to Thanh)  
What do you mean?

A pregnant beat as Thanh considers.

THANH  
Special gifts can come from things  
we think are there, but are not.

She gestures to Ruby, to Allie's utter confusion.

Allie turns to Gavin to ask, but sees the most earnest smile  
she's witnessed rise on his face as he nods in understanding.

Allie holds back her curiosity.

GAVIN  
Dinner looks amazing. You seem to  
really be settling in.  
(beat)  
Ready to hang some pictures up? I  
can help you unpack those boxes.

THANH  
No point.

Gavin takes a bite of food then sighs deeply.

GAVIN  
Why not?

THANH  
It's not my home.

GAVIN  
You have to *make* it your home.

THANH  
I mean this country. I need to go  
to my home.

GAVIN

You've lived in the U.S. longer  
than Vietnam. How's it --

THANH

You don't know anything about my  
life before your dad.

GAVIN

I know enough. You literally had to  
escape that place.

Thanh ignores him.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

What about Ruby?

ALLIE

Gavin, let's not --

THANH

We can get everything we need  
there. She'll have the best life.

(beat)

We don't belong here.

GAVIN

You can't just move her to a third  
world country cause you *feel* like  
it. She'll have a much better life  
and education here.

Thanh refuses eye contact.

THANH

How do you know?

(beat)

So she can be like you?

GAVIN

That happens to a kid with a mom  
like you.

ALLIE

Gavin...

THANH

Then maybe I should just go. Ruby  
would be better without me then.

GAVIN

You can't just --

Thanh leaves the table and goes into her room.

Allie pulls at Gavin's arm.

ALLIE  
Gavin...

He finally looks over to Allie.

GAVIN  
What?!

He follows her attention to Ruby, who's sitting quietly in her chair, TEARS trailing down her face.

Gavin buries his face in his hands.

ALLIE  
Do something.

Gavin picks Ruby up from her seat, and holds her.

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

Gavin collapses on his couch, staring at the ceiling.

GAVIN  
Sorry I took it there.

Allie sits on the couch beside him.

ALLIE  
What was that thing she said about Ruby and special gifts from things that aren't there?

Gavin slowly turns his gaze to Allie.

GAVIN  
When they were volunteering at the orphanage, a newborn girl arrived.  
(beat)  
During her check-up, they discovered she was HIV positive.

ALLIE  
Oh my god.

GAVIN  
The orphanage wasn't prepared for this. Had limited resources, wasn't sure how to handle her with the other children in such close quarters.  
(beat)  
(MORE)

GAVIN (CONT'D)

So my parents decided to foster her and figure things out from there. They brought her home, cared for her for a couple months. Then, when she was nine-months old, they tested her again.

(beat)

No sign of the virus.

ALLIE

What?!

GAVIN

HIV is detected based on its antibodies, which gets passed down from an HIV-positive mother. After around six months, HIV antibodies get washed out of the system if there's no actual virus.

ALLIE

(quoting under her breath)  
Things we think are there, but are not.

GAVIN

Her mother must've taken this anti-retroviral medication that gives it a fifty-fifty chance the virus doesn't pass on to the child. When my parents discover this all, she's pretty much already family.

(beat)

There was no sending her back.

Allie stares into space as she processes.

A furious series of KNOCKS rain on the door. Gavin gets up and opens it to find Dr. Fisher slightly out of breath.

DR. FISHER

We have to talk.

Gavin looks back in the apartment.

GAVIN

Let's walk, just you and me.

**EXT. STREET - LATER**

Dr. Fisher and Gavin walk together toward the promenade.

DR. FISHER  
Nakamura told me about your conversation.

GAVIN  
I don't expect anyone to understand.

DR. FISHER  
Does Allie understand? Is she asking you to do this?

GAVIN  
No. She's pretty upset with me.

DR. FISHER  
Then what's the reason?

They walk up to a coffee shop.

**INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER**

A handful of patrons fills the space. Dr. Fisher brings coffee to a table where Gavin sits.

DR. FISHER  
Look, this... it's my fault.

GAVIN  
It's not.

DR. FISHER  
I brought you the offer.

ALLIE (O.S.)  
What?!

Gavin turns around to see Allie standing behind him.

GAVIN  
Shit.

DR. FISHER  
What?

ALLIE  
What's he talking about?!

DR. FISHER  
You okay?

Gavin drops his head.

ALLIE  
What's this offer?

He turns back to her.

GAVIN  
(to Allie)  
Let me explain.

DR. FISHER  
Oh no.

GAVIN  
With the tumor and the treatment, I  
needed money. A lot of it.

ALLIE  
And?!

GAVIN  
A company offered to license the  
data from our research.

ALLIE  
What?! When?

Gavin stays silent, which says it all.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
You said it was...

She stares at the ground.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
...pretty remarkable.

Dr. Fisher looks around behind Gavin.

DR. FISHER  
I'm so sorry. I'm so terribly --

GAVIN  
Stop.

DR. FISHER  
Is she saying something?

GAVIN  
She's not here anymore.

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

Gavin closes the door behind him. Checks the living room. It's empty. Then checks the balcony, and she's not there.

Finally, in the bedroom he finds her in bed.

GAVIN  
I'm sorry.

ALLIE  
Why'd you keep that from me?

He sighs. She gets it.

She remains motionless. Gavin walks over to the bed and lays next to her, putting his arm around her.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I think we can use anything that makes our goodbye easier.

GAVIN  
Don't...

ALLIE  
I shouldn't have trusted him. I knew something was off. He just saw you as a cash grab.

GAVIN  
It's not about that.

Gavin turns to his phone and starts typing.

ALLIE  
What is it then?

Gavin shows the screen to her. Allie sits up to reads it, then covers her mouth.

GAVIN  
A chance to see his son again.

**LATER**

They continue to lie in bed, with Allie's back to Gavin.

He strokes her arm softly.

ALLIE  
That feels *really* nice.

He looks closely at his fingertips gliding over the tattoo on her back shoulder.

GAVIN

I can't get over all the details.  
The hourglass ink on your skin. The  
peach fuzz on the back of your  
neck.

She shifts away from him.

ALLIE

Okay we were having a moment but  
now I'm back to feeling like a  
science experiment.

GAVIN

Stop.

ALLIE

No. We're in a really tough spot,  
and you're making this impossible.

Gavin rolls away, lies on his back, and closes his eyes.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

I love you. But we both know what  
you have to do.

GAVIN

I don't know how.

**INT. GAVIN'S APARTMENT - MORNING**

The sound of a door closing wakes Gavin up. He turns to his side but Allie isn't there.

He gets up and walks to the living room.

GAVIN

Allie?

He checks the balcony. Nothing.

He finds a note on the coffee table, and picks it up.

CLOSE ON the letter:

*"I love you. But we both know what I have to do."*

He freezes, then RUSHES out of the apartment and through the courtyard of the building, looking around.

Then RUNS out of the complex and looks out on the streets. Spinning around, distressed, looking for any sign of Allie.

**INT. GAVIN'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON**

Gavin crouches forward on his sofa. Defeated.

There's a quiet knock on the door as it softly swings open. The sound of flip-flops slapping against feet signal Ruby walking into the apartment.

RUBY

Gavin!

Gavin turns to look at her -- his face worn from tears. He tries to wipe it clean. Ruby stops in her tracks.

GAVIN

Hey sweetie.

RUBY

Sad?

GAVIN

I'm okay.

RUBY

What's wrong?

GAVIN

I just miss my friend.

RUBY

Allie?

Ruby looks around the room. Walks over to move a chair in front of his desk. She climbs the chair and stretches over to grab the TISSUE BOX at the end of the desk.

Gavin stares at her in surprise as she brings the box to him.

He takes the tissues, and pulls her in for a tight hug.

**INT. THANH'S APARTMENT - EVENING**

Gavin kisses Ruby goodnight. Turns off the light and leaves the room. Stops when he sees Thanh in the living room watching TV.

GAVIN

Hey mom.

She doesn't respond. Gavin walks over to her.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry about what I said.

Thanh reaches over to a remote and turns off the TV.

THANH  
It's okay.

GAVIN  
How have you been feeling?

Thanh's eyes start to swell. Gavin takes a seat next to her.

THANH  
I can't be here.

As Thanh starts to cry harder, Gavin begins to tear up also.

THANH (CONT'D)  
I don't think you can understand.

GAVIN  
Can you try to help me?

Beat.

THANH  
I met your father when I was  
twenty-five. I was young and  
beautiful. Your father made me feel  
so beautiful since the day we met.  
I was always twenty-five to him.  
(beat)  
Then one day, I just wake up, and  
see this sixty year old in the  
mirror. I'm what everyone else  
sees. Old Asian woman.

GAVIN  
You're still beautiful.

THANH  
Stop.  
(beat)  
No one sees me here.

GAVIN  
That's because you never go out.

THANH  
You won't get it. You can't.

Beat.

GAVIN

How does moving to Vietnam change anything?

Beat.

THANH

I don't know.  
(beat)  
It's where I was young.

Gavin relents. Realizes he won't understand.

GAVIN

What about Ruby?

Thanh looks down. Begins to cry again as Gavin moves closer to hold her. And lets her cry into his chest.

**INT. UCLA CAMPUS - DAY**

Gavin and Dr. Fisher occupy a park bench at the sculpture garden on campus, surrounded by various abstract art pieces.

GAVIN

I have a pre-op appointment next week, then it happens right after.

Dr. Fisher nods, staring blankly into the garden.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Sorry the observation got cut short.

DR. FISHER

It went on longer than it should've. How're you feeling?

GAVIN

Trying to find ways to keep occupied.  
(beat)  
One thing I couldn't figure out...

DR. FISHER

What was that?

GAVIN

The first night I met her, her car was really messy. Piles of stuff.

DR. FISHER

It seemed like everything about her  
was perfect, right?

(off his nod)

I suspect you needed something  
imperfect to make it real.

Gavin processes this.

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)

Take lucid dreaming -- the ability  
to have full control of anything in  
your dreams. People create their  
perfect partner but they never feel  
anything. They just don't buy it.

GAVIN

So that mess made her real?

DR. FISHER

You tell me.

GAVIN

All those degrees on your walls  
might actually be worth something.

DR. FISHER

Oh good. That's the external  
validation I've been craving.

Gavin stands up from the bench.

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)

We should probably talk about the  
next steps with the data and  
licensing.

GAVIN

Been thinking about it. I don't  
know if we should enable that for  
everyone.

A heavy beat, especially for Dr. Fisher.

DR. FISHER

You're probably right -- once you  
re-opened the door, you were  
willing to risk everything.

(beat)

If I had a chance to see my son, I  
don't know how I'd be able to step  
away again.

Dr. Fisher stares out to the garden, as Gavin -- crestfallen -- watches him closely.

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)  
(quiet, more to himself)  
Being a father was the greatest  
gift.

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

Gavin cleans up his apartment.

While removing dishes from his desk, he spots the TURQUOISE ARROWHEAD from Elaine.

Picks it up. Turns the arrowhead in his hand.

Then pockets it.

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

Thanh opens the front door to Gavin.

GAVIN  
If you *really* want to go back to  
Vietnam, I'll help you.

She puts her hand on her heart -- in relief, pain, joy.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
But first, you need to do something  
for me.

**EXT. TOLUCA LAKE - DAY**

Gavin and Ruby walk along the lake by Elaine's house. He looks up to her patio to see Elaine and Thanh sitting together and laughing.

**EXT. PATIO - CONTINUOUS**

The two women lounge in Adirondack chairs facing the water. The happiest we've seen Thanh.

THANH  
What a view.

ELAINE  
I quite like it.

THANH  
I met my husband at a lake.

Elaine looks over.

ELAINE  
Where?

THANH  
In Hanoi.

Elaine nods. Lets some time pass, then...

ELAINE  
Your son cares a lot about you.  
(beat)  
You have a lot of love here.

Thanh nods and smiles tightly. A smile that won't let out words without letting out tears.

LATER

Elaine walks down her steps and quietly waves over Gavin. He steps away from Ruby while keeping an eye on her.

ELAINE (CONT'D)  
Your mom is a hot ticket.

GAVIN  
(laughing)  
I have no idea what that means.

ELAINE  
She's a riot.

GAVIN  
I haven't heard her laugh like that  
since...

ELAINE  
I told you... she needed someone  
that's been through it.  
(beat)  
I don't have great news though.  
Sounds like she really needs to  
head back to Vietnam.

GAVIN  
She give you any clear reason why?

ELAINE  
For some people, their totem might  
be a country.

Gavin drops his head. Elaine puts her arms around him.

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

Ruby stands on a step stool, brushing her teeth with Gavin.

GAVIN

Don't forget the insides.

She twirls the toothbrush around. Then washes the toothpaste out of her mouth.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Good job.

They walk to her bedroom where she leaps onto a small mattress on the floor. Gavin tucks her in.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Do you like me tucking you in?

RUBY

Yes!

GAVIN

Well I'm going to miss a few days,  
but after that I hope to do it a  
lot more.

RUBY

More!

He grabs a children's book and starts to read it to her.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING COURTYARD - NIGHT**

Gavin closes the door to Thanh's apartment, then makes his way across the courtyard to his place.

ALLIE (O.S.)

Hey.

He turns to see Allie by the entrance to the complex. He's stunned for a beat.

GAVIN

What are you doing here?

ALLIE

You didn't think I would leave  
without saying goodbye?

GAVIN  
All your actions seemed to indicate  
exactly that.

ALLIE  
(smiles)  
I guess that was the plan.  
(beat)  
I had to check on you. You seem  
well?

GAVIN  
We have our date.

ALLIE  
When?

GAVIN  
In two days. I check into the  
hospital tomorrow though.

Allie nods, as her eyes start to gloss over.

ALLIE  
That's good.  
(beat)  
How do you feel?

GAVIN  
Bittersweet.

ALLIE  
Bittersweet.

Beat.

GAVIN  
Are you feeling it?

ALLIE  
The tension?

**INT. GAVIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM**

They lie in bed, staring at his ceiling together. He makes a comment, and she laughs out loud.

LATER

Gavin plays guitar as Allie twirls around in the bedroom with a bedsheet around her. He stops playing just to watch her.

LATER

Sitting up in bed, they stare at each other, eyes filled with tears. Sharing laughter in the throes of imminent heartbreak.

**EXT. BALCONY - GAVIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Allie and Gavin sit and stare out at the neighborhood.

ALLIE

What's happening with the data?

Beat.

GAVIN

I decided to go ahead with the licensing.

ALLIE

What?

GAVIN

I know it's a long shot, but if they succeed... could be a shot at seeing you again.

ALLIE

That won't be me.

GAVIN

What do you mean?

ALLIE

That'd be some machine. Not me. How does that even feel right to you?

GAVIN

Is this making you jealous?

ALLIE

Shut up.

GAVIN

Holy shit. It is.

ALLIE

Don't you get it? She may be like me but she won't be me.

GAVIN

I'll take you however I can get you.

ALLIE

Then it's just about you. Not me.

GAVIN  
What other choice do I have?

**EXT. THIRD STREET PROMENADE - DAY**

Gavin holds Ruby's hand as they walk with Allie along the promenade.

Allie points into a store.

ALLIE  
Can we go in here?

Gavin leads Ruby into the store, filled with antiques and random gifts. She's mesmerized.

Gavin takes Ruby over to Allie standing next to a table filled with JEWELRY.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Look at these...

Hanging on a tree-shaped necklace holder, Allie points.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Can you get Ruby that for me?

Gavin looks closely at it.

GAVIN  
You're serious?

ALLIE  
(smiling)  
It's a symbol of pure joy to her.

Gavin takes the necklace and purchases it from a CLERK.

Then Gavin kneels down to Ruby. Clasps the necklace around her neck.

GAVIN  
This necklace is from Allie, okay?  
I always want you to remember that,  
okay?

RUBY  
Okay!

Gavin stands back up as a tear-filled Allie stares at Ruby.

ALLIE  
I'm already missing her.

CLOSE ON the necklace's pendant, which is the shape of a seashell, identical to the pasta in her mac and cheese.

**INT. GAVIN'S CAR - AFTERNOON**

Gavin and Allie drive along a freeway. Hand in hand.

**EXT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

Elaine opens her front door to Gavin. She steps out and gives him a hug as Allie watches. Smiles.

ELAINE

Good luck. You're gonna do great.

(beat)

It'll be a bit miserable but you're going to do great.

GAVIN

(laughs)

Thanks.

He hands her a thin folder.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Here're copies of the docs you asked about.

ELAINE

From the orphanage?

(off his nod)

Thanks. Can't promise I'll find anything, but will ask around my old team.

**INT. THANH'S APARTMENT - EVENING**

Gavin hugs his mom and Ruby.

Allie wipes tears from her face as she sees Ruby for the last time.

**INT. UBER - NIGHT**

In the backseat of the car, Gavin and Allie hold hands.

## INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Gavin lies in a partially inclined bed as Allie stands by. A **NURSE** inserts an I.V.

She checks the I.V. bag, then steps out of the room.

Allie sits on the bed by Gavin's side.

ALLIE  
You going to be okay?

Beat.

GAVIN  
I know you're being strong for me.  
(beat)  
You don't have to be.

Allie's lower lip trembles. She tries to speak, but instead, tears spill down her cheeks.

ALLIE  
I'm sorry. I'm...  
(beat)  
I'm scared.

Gavin has no words. Just puts his hand on her back as his eyes well up.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Just try to tell myself that soon  
I'll be gone, and none of this will  
matter.

GAVIN  
Allie...  
(beat)  
I can try to bring you back.

She shakes her head.

ALLIE  
She won't be me.

Gavin sits up and puts his arms around her as they cry together.

Dr. Nakamura and the **ANESTHESIOLOGIST** appear outside the door, having a discussion.

Allie notices them. Turns to Gavin as she wipes her tears.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I love you.

GAVIN  
Allie...

Gavin lies back on the bed as the doctors enter.

He keeps hold of Allie's hand.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
All of this will matter.

**MOMENTS LATER**

The anesthesiologist puts a clear plastic mask over Gavin's nose and mouth.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST  
Just relax and enjoy the nap.

Gavin looks to Allie one last time, before closing his eyes.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST (CONT'D)  
I'm going to countdown from five...

A quick series of FLASHBACKS, each silent except for a --

*BREATH*

Allie twirls in Gavin's room wearing only a bedsheets.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST (CONT'D)  
Four...

*BREATH*

Gavin glides his fingertips over her tattoo on her back shoulder as they lie in bed.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST (CONT'D)  
Three...

*BREATH*

Allie sits at a table holding a cup of coffee at the Grove.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST (CONT'D)  
Two...

*BREATH*

On the bench, the couple introduces themselves.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST (CONT'D)  
One...

*BREATH*

CUT TO BLACK

A small light slowly grows.

POV OF GAVIN

as his eyes open to blurry shades of white.

Takes a couple beats for things to come into focus...

**INT. RECOVERY ROOM - HOSPITAL - EVENING**

A pair of **NURSES** check his vitals as Dr. Nakamura walks into the room.

DR. NAKAMURA  
Gavin -- you're just waking up from surgery. I'm happy to say it went well. How are you feeling?

GAVIN  
Like shit.

DR. NAKAMURA  
That's completely expected.

Gavin scans the room again, then lays his head back and closes his eyes.

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

Gavin hobbles into his apartment, followed by Thanh and Ruby.

He takes a seat on the couch as Thanh gets him a glass of water from the kitchen.

THANH  
Take it easy for the next few days.  
We can help get whatever you need.

Gavin accepts the water. Then glances at the empty balcony.

**EXT. BLUFFS PARK - DAY**

Gavin sits with Dr. Fisher on the bench where he met Allie.

DR. FISHER

Are you missing her as much as you  
thought you would?

Gavin stares at the ocean and nods.

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)

How did lucid dreaming go?

GAVIN

It's like you said...  
(beat)

A puppet show I'm putting on for  
myself. Like trying to tickle  
yourself.

DR. FISHER

You open to meeting new people?

Gavin shrugs.

GAVIN

Any news on the data and testing?

DR. FISHER

That's what I wanted to talk to you  
about. Don't get your hopes up, but  
they say they have something ready  
to test.

GAVIN

Really?!

DR. FISHER

It'd have to take place in their  
headquarters in the Bay area. Are  
you still interested in--

GAVIN

How soon can *they*?

**INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY**

Gavin and Dr. Fisher walk swiftly toward their gate.

**INT. LOBBY - SYNAPULSE - DAY**

A number of **EXECUTIVES** greet Gavin as he enters the building. Gavin shakes hands, but his energy is clear -- let's get on with it.

LATER

Gavin wears a surgery gown as he signs release papers.

LATER

A large robotic arm gently grafts a tiny chip to a small shaved portion on the side of Gavin's head.

**INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - SYNAPULSE - LATER**

A team of **TECH EMPLOYEES** stand with Dr. Fisher and Samuel as Gavin sits in a chair alone in a pristine white room.

Dr. Fisher presses the intercom.

DR. FISHER  
Feeling alright, Gavin?

Gavin gives a thumbs up while keeping his gaze straight ahead at a CLOSED DOOR.

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)  
We're activating the BCI now.

Gavin inhales in anticipation, while the room also collectively holds its breath.

Then, after a couple of beats... nothing.

Samuel checks the monitors.

SAMUEL  
Not sure what's happening. The BCI is active and registering.

DR. FISHER  
Look...

From Gavin's POV, we see the door slowly OPEN.

BACK TO SCENE as Gavin straightens up in his chair.

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)  
Are you seeing anything, Gavin?

Allie now stands at the open door. Gavin's eyes widen as she slowly takes a step toward him.

DR. FISHER (CONT'D)  
Gavin?

Allie flinches slightly at the voice over the intercom, then continues toward Gavin -- now smiling. Pure joy.

GAVIN  
It's... her.

The observation room ERUPTS in cheers.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
Allie?

Allie smiles warmly as they stare at each other.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
Hi...

Then Allie's smile fades, taking Gavin's excitement with it.

DR. FISHER  
(to Samuel)  
What's going on?

GAVIN  
Allie, are you--

ALLIE  
She may be like me but she won't be  
me.

GAVIN  
(confused)  
What...

Allie starts to shake her head and step back.

ALLIE  
She may be like me but she won't be  
me.

DR. FISHER  
Gavin, everything okay?

ALLIE  
I didn't make the rules.

Allie turns and leaves the room.

Gavin sits back in his chair and closes his eyes, grimacing.

DR. FISHER  
Go check on him!

A team rushes into the room to help Gavin.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - TECH COMPANY - LATER**

Samuel and Dr. Fisher debrief with Gavin as the rest of the employees wait outside the closed room.

DR. FISHER  
You doing okay?

GAVIN  
Sorry it didn't work out.

SAMUEL  
Don't apologize. We just made history together.

DR. FISHER  
(to Samuel)  
This is more than a product test.

Samuel clears his throat. Nods. *I know.*

Then makes his way to the door.

SAMUEL  
I'll leave you both to discuss.  
(beat)  
We can build on this. It's just a matter of time.

And leaves the conference room.

GAVIN  
I'm sorry. I thought we had it.

Dr. Fisher drops his head.

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

Gavin's phone vibrates on his coffee table.

CLOSE ON the screen as Elaine's name pops up.

BACK TO SCENE as Gavin steps into the room and answers.

GAVIN  
Hello?

ELAINE (O.S.)  
(over speakerphone)  
I think I may have found your dad's  
workaround.

GAVIN  
What?

ELAINE (O.S.)  
The dates on the adoption forms go  
back almost two years. Since then  
your parents were just hanging out  
in Cambodia, right?

GAVIN  
Yeah.

ELAINE (O.S.)  
I connected with a former  
colleague. She shared an obscure  
clause that the U.S. will recognize  
an international adoption after a  
child has been with the family for  
two years. Regardless of country.

(beat)  
So your dad adopted her in  
Cambodia, and was just going hang  
out there for two years to get  
around the ban.

Gavin collapses in utter relief on the couch.

#### **MONTAGE - MOVING ON**

-- Gavin meets with Gregory in his office.

GREGORY  
I think we have a path here.

-- Gavin wears a dress shirt and his sports coat from  
earlier, but this time in a JOB INTERVIEW.

-- Gavin walks into an open office with a start up vibe, and  
greets smiling **CO-WORKERS**.

-- Gavin and Ruby hug Thanh goodbye at the airport. They all  
cry as Thanh grabs her carry-on and walks to her gate. Gavin  
picks Ruby up to console her.

-- Gavin moves into a new apartment, and leads Ruby into her  
new bedroom.

-- A **WOMAN** with a clipboard examines Gavin's new apartment. Gavin and Ruby sit on the couch anxiously.

Later, the woman sits with Ruby one-to-one asking her questions.

-- In a small courtroom, a **JUDGE** (70s) makes an announcement, then smiles to Gavin and Ruby, who stand near his bench.

Gavin hugs and picks up Ruby, carrying her over to the judge for a picture of the three of them together.

**END MONTAGE**

**EXT. TOLUCA LAKE - DAY**

Gavin helps Ruby out of his car, parked in Elaine's driveway.

They ring the doorbell and Elaine appears, welcoming them in.

**LATER**

They stand on Elaine's balcony overlooking the lake.

**ELAINE**

How's your mom doing?

**EXT. HOAN KIEM LAKE - DAY**

Seated on a bench, Thanh gazes out to the lake in Hanoi.

**GAVIN (V.O.)**

She made it out there.

**BACK TO ELAINE'S BALCONY**

**GAVIN**

Haven't heard much from her, but  
also not expecting to.

Gavin takes out the TURQUOISE ARROWHEAD. Hands it to Elaine.

**GAVIN (CONT'D)**

Was it really from the Aztecs?

She shrugs, and hands it back to him.

**BACK TO HOAN KIEM LAKE**

A TEMPLE -- resembling Thanh's small CERAMIC STATUE -- stands on a small island in the middle of the water.

ELAINE (V.O.)  
We get to decide what the things in  
our life mean to us.

Thanh puts her hands together on her lap, as a tear trails down her face, and catches the edge of her smile.

**BACK TO ELAINE'S BALCONY**

Gavin watches Ruby stand tall on her tiptoes, just peeking over the railing at the lake.

GAVIN  
We do.

Beat.

He turns back to the arrowhead in his hand, then pockets it.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
It helped me through, just like you  
said.

Gavin goes to give her a hug.

GAVIN (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

Ruby sees them, and walks over to also hug Elaine.

ELAINE  
(laugh-crying)  
Like I also said, I've been through  
so much shit -- but this...  
(beat)  
...this is why I'm still here.

LATER

Gavin drives out of Elaine's neighborhood when Ruby spots the storefront of a Barnes & Noble. She points.

RUBY  
Books!

GAVIN  
Alright, let's pick something up  
for the ride home.

## INT. BARNES &amp; NOBLE - LATER

Gavin and Ruby huddle in a corner of the kids section on the top floor, picking out books.

Ruby adds a book to the stack on the floor, then picks them all up.

GAVIN

Maybe we should just do one at a time.

She pulls them tight to her chest.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Alright, but with that many books you better start reading them to me soon. Deal?

RUBY

Deal!

He walks her to the escalator and they start heading down to the lower floor.

Then Gavin freezes.

He looks across to the escalators going UP, and sees Allie.

She glances his way, and for a second they make eye contact.

Gavin -- stunned and confused -- looks away. When he gets off the escalator he walks to a nearby wall. Leans against it.

He blinks hard, and looks around. Looks at his hands, and the books around him.

RUBY (CONT'D)

You okay?

GAVIN

Just had the weirdest...

He looks around again, then takes Ruby's books and sets them on a shelf.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

We'll come back for these -- just come with me for a second.

Gavin takes Ruby to the other side of the floor to ride the escalator back UP.

They return to the top floor, and Gavin looks around.

RUBY

What?

GAVIN

I thought I saw someone.

Gavin takes Ruby from aisle to aisle to aisle. Snaking through the entire top floor.

He then leads her to the coffee shop, stepping around the line to order drinks.

He scans the area.

Nothing.

RUBY

What is it?

GAVIN

I... must've imagined something.

He takes a deep breath. Turns back when he almost runs into Allie

She stands, wearing a tank top with a book in her hands, having just stepped away from the coffee shop's cashier.

Gavin's frozen.

ALLIE

Excuse --

(beat)

...Gavin?

Gavin's slow to speak. He looks at Ruby, who looks up at Allie.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

It's Allie.

GAVIN

Of course...

She looks annoyed, but kneels down to Ruby.

ALLIE

Is this your sister?

Ruby's eye contact follows Allie down. Gavin's eyes widen.

*Is this actually her?!*

GAVIN

This is Ruby. Ruby, Allie.

Ruby looks up at Gavin, confused. She points to her necklace. Gavin gives a slight nod back.

ALLIE

Nice to meet you. You're adorable.  
You getting some books today?

Ruby nods excitedly as Allie stands up.

CUT TO:

**INT. PARKING GARAGE - EVENING (FLASHFORWARD)**

Gavin buckles Ruby in her car seat, closes the door, and hastily gets on his phone.

GAVIN

It's Gavin. Look, I don't even know where to start, but I'm so sorry.  
It was memory.  
(beat)  
It wasn't imagination. It was memory.

**BACK TO BARNES & NOBLE (PRESENT)**

ALLIE

You getting some books today?

Ruby nods excitedly as Allie stands up.

Gavin stares at Ruby, still in shock.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

She's really precious. You better take good care of her.

Allie gives a curt smile and starts to walk away.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

I'll see you around.

(to Ruby)

It was nice to meet you --

CUT TO:

**INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY (FLASHFORWARD)**

Dr. Fisher walks swiftly toward his gate.

**INT. LAB - SYNAPULSE - DAY (FLASHFORWARD)**

Dr. Fisher sits under a large robotic arm that grafts a tiny chip to the side of his head.

LATER

He sits in the chair in the same pristine white room.

SAMUEL  
(over intercom)  
You ready?

Dr. Fisher keeps his eyes closed as he nods.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)  
Activating the BCI.

CLOSE ON the doctor's face as he breathes steadily for a couple beats, then slowly opens his eyes.

His expression turns to disbelief -- then to pure joy -- as his eyes start to well up.

YOUNG BOY (O.S.)  
Dad?

Beat.

RUBY (PRE-LAP)  
Dad?

**BACK TO BARNES & NOBLE (PRESENT)**

Ruby yanks on Gavin's arm -- trying to shake him from his trance.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
Daddy!

Gavin jolts out of it. Looks up to find Allie walking to the other side of the coffee area.

GAVIN  
Wait!

Allie stops and turns.

Gavin hustles Ruby over to her, then struggles to find any words.

ALLIE  
Honestly, a call would've been nice.

GAVIN

What?

(beat)

I tried.

Gavin pulls out his cell phone.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

I swear -- here's the number I tried.

He shows the contact info under her name. She's suspicious, but eyes him back.

ALLIE

You have six five. It's seven five.

Gavin purses his lips and slowly nods. Then his nod turns to a head shake.

GAVIN

Dammit. I'm -- so sorry.

ALLIE

Attention to detail.

GAVIN

Still a work in progress.

ALLIE

(laughing)

I'll be honest. I thought once you saw the mess in my car, you were like, *check please*.

GAVIN

No. Not at all.

He looks at the book in Allie's hand.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Another journal?

ALLIE

(nodding)

Every other month.

GAVIN

Do you happen to have some time to grab an early dinner or something?

ALLIE

Ah, I'm sorry, I can't. I'm actually seeing someone now.

GAVIN

Oh...

They linger in awkward silence for a couple beats.

ALLIE

I'm just kidding.

(beat)

I'd like that.

(beat)

How could I say no to the boy I met  
on that bench?

GAVIN

During a sunset.

ALLIE

Yeah, that was crazy. For a bit  
there I thought I'd just imagined  
all that.

GAVIN

Yeah... same here.

A beat, as they soak in the moment. Then...

BARISTA (O.S.)

Allie!

ALLIE

Give me one sec.

Allie turns and steps over to the counter to get her drink,

Gavin watches her, grinning ear to ear. Then...

CLOSE ON her back right shoulder.

Bare.

No hourglass. No tattoo.

CLOSE ON Gavin's face as his smile fades into the  
realization...

*Is this actually her?*

END