PLEASE OPEN THE CURTAINS

A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting,

By

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August 2015
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Please Open the Curtains is an exploration of a young killer’s psyche and the effects that teenage murder has on a small community and an already broken family. From a mixture of self-hatred, internalized homophobia and homicidal ideation, a young teen girl is overwhelmed with the darker side of her mind and gets lost in it until one day, the beginning of our story, she just gives up any sense of control. She realizes this is all supposed to happen, as it has happened before. She feels powerless and victim to a fate that does not need to be hers. The Catholic guilt ridden teen falls prey to thoughts of her soul in eternal flames and to suicidal ideation. “Please Open the Curtains” is an homage to the great Sarah Kane who was a partial inspiration for the protagonist Fidelia Webber, who is a tragic playwright who ends up taking her own life. Characters inspired from real life and from concepts associated with Buddhism like karma and reincarnation.
"PLEASE OPEN THE CURTAINS"

FADE IN:

EXT. WEBBER HOUSE - NIGHT
The empty night sky engulfs the small Webber house below. WIND RUSHES through - AN OPEN WINDOW.

INT. FIDELIA’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS
The wind blows past the curtains. The room is quiet. FIDELIA WEBBER, 16, dark hair and frail. She lays on the floor, curled up in the fetal position.

In the mirror, she sees a BLONDE GIRL, 16, she has never seen before. She sees the girl lift a note for her to read:

INSERT: "WHAT WILL HAPPEN, ALREADY HAS HAPPENED AND ALWAYS WILL HAPPEN..."

The Blonde Girl smiles but it fades and so does she.

Fidelia weeps. The room barely lit by the exposed moon, darkens around her.

She shuts her eyes tight. Face contorted in agony.

FIDELIA
I don’t want this. I don’t want this. I don’t want this.

INSERT: SEVERED LIMBS FALLING. ENDLESS.
Fidelia’s eyes pop back open. She slams her fists against her temples. Over and over.

INSERT: BLOOD FLOWING. FOREVER.
She hits again, harder with each strike. Crying out louder.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. "BASSMNT" CLUB - NEXT NIGHT
On the marquee: "Q LAZZARUS - REUNION SHOW" Q
LAZZARUS: "GOODBYE HORSES"
INT. DOWNSTAIRS
The double doors OPEN up on -

INT. MAIN STAGE - CONTINUOUS
The CROWD. All dancing. Cramped. Through the sea of people WE SEE -
FIDELIA, alone in the crowd. Not dancing. Watches Q LAZZARUS on stage.

Entranced.

Q LAZZARUS
(singing)
"Hoo, hooo-hooo, hoo-hoo..."

The crowd SWAYS to the double drum beat. Fidelia, stuck in the middle. Transfixed by the melody.

Q LAZZARUS (OS)
"You told me--- I see you rise- But, - it always - falls."

Fidelia focused on Q Lazzarus, her arm stretches out to the crowd.

Fidelia sees A BLONDE GIRL, dancing alone.

Q LAZZARUS (OS)
"I see you come -"

The Blonde Girl looks up. Eyes lock. It’s the same girl.

Q LAZZARUS (OS)
"I see you go - "

The Blonde approaches her.

Q LAZZARUS
"You say, - "All things pass, into the night."

Fidelia watches her dance a few feet away. Fidelia moves closer to the stage.

The Blonde Girl flanks behind her. Too close.

BLONDE GIRL
(singing along)
"And I say, "Oh no sir, I must say, you’re wrong..."
Fidelia, uncomfortable.

BLONDE GIRL
((singing along))
"I must disagree, oh no sir, I must say you’re wrong."

Fidelia inches away.

Q LAZZARUS
"Won’t you listen to me...You told me, I’ve seen it all before. I been there, I’ve seen my hopes and dreams a lying on the ground..."

Q LAZZARUS (OS)
"I’ve seen the sky -

She’s closer.

BLONDE GIRL
Sorry, do you know where -

Fidelia points to the corner bathroom as the CEILING OPENS UP revealing the NIGHT SKY AND STARS.

Q LAZZARUS
"just begin to fall -

CONFETTI falls onto the crowd from above. They CHEER and continue singing along and dancing.

Q LAZZARUS
"And you say -"

The Blonde Girl heads to the bathroom. Pulls Fidelia’s arm, suggestive. Smiles, lets go.

Q LAZZARUS (OS)
"all things pass into the night..."

The Crowd pushes to the front, making a gap.

Q LAZZARUS AND CROWD
(singing along)
"And I say, "Oh no sir - I must say, you’re wrong. I must disagree - oh no sir - I must say, you’re wrong. Won’t you listen to me... Hoo, Hoooo--"

Fidelia cuts through to the bathroom door.
INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Single stall. The toilet FLUSHES. Stall door opens. Blonde Girl steps out and looks up.

    BLONDE GIRL
    I remember you.

    FIDELIA
    Sorry, I don’t know you.

Blonde Girl pulls Fidelia in close for a QUICK KISS. BLONDE GIRL
    I never forget a face. Especially a pretty one like yours.

The Blonde Girl GIGGLES. Fidelia enters the stall.

STALL

Fidelia back against the door. Trembles. Balls up her fists and HITS her thighs. Bites her knuckles with each blow.

    KNOCK,
    KNOCK.

    BLONDE GIRL (OS)
    Hey, are you alright in there?

    FIDELIA
    Yeah. I’m fine.

Fidelia hears the girl leave. Door shuts.

    FIDELIA
    Be calm. Just count and breathe: one... two...
    three..

Fidelia steps out of the stall. She’s gone. She runs the water over her face and neck, wads up the paper towels and dries off. Looks briefly in the mirror, turns away.

INT. MAIN STAGE

Fidelia steps out and scans the crowd for the girl...

FRONT DOORS

Blonde Girl at the double doors, looks back and sees Fidelia. She smiles, beckons Fidelia to follow.
Q LAZZARUS
“Goodbye horses...I’m flying over you...Goodbye horses...I’m flying, flying, over you -- hoo, hoo--"

She weaves through the crowd.

EXT. "BASSMNT" - NIGHT
Cold night air. Fidelia looks to the left, doesn’t see the Blonde Girl. She slips her cell out of her pocket and quickly shuts it off.

    BLONDE GIRL (OS)
    Over here!

Fidelia looks up and sees the Blonde Girl standing under the lamp-post. The Girl calls Fidelia over.

Fidelia catches up with her.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO STREETS - MIDNIGHT
Fidelia and the Blonde Girl continue down the dark street, towards the historic Balboa Park...

Fidelia stops.

    FIDELIA
    I don’t think this is a good idea.

    BLONDE GIRL
    Why? Is this your first time?

    FIDELIA
    Yeah...I’m sorry, I think I should go.

Blonde Girl holds her hand and smiles, tugs her to follow.

    BLONDE GIRL
    It’s my first time too...come on. I want to show you something.

EXT. BALBOA PARK - VALLEY - MIDNIGHT
A vast park with trees that go on for miles amongst vibrant green hills.
Fidelia and the Blonde Girl go down a secluded dirt road. Hands clasped. The road leads to a flat VALLEY with weeds, yellow lilies and wild sage.

Fidelia and the Girl lay in the grass.

The Blonde Girl’s hand lingers over to Fidelia’s shoulder, grips it, pulls her in for a kiss. Fidelia pulls away.

**FIDELIA**

Please don’t kiss me.

The Blonde Girl GIGGLES and smiles. Pulling at Fidelia’s shirt.

**BLONDE GIRL**

Please don’t tease me.

The Blonde Girl brings Fidelia’s arms around her neck and shoulders. Kisses Fidelia’s neck.

**BLONDE GIRL**

We wouldn’t be here if we both didn’t want to...

Fidelia smiles slightly, then frowns. The Blonde Girl’s eyes are closed. Kissing Fidelia’s neck, lifting Fidelia’s shirt.

Fidelia’s hands reach for the Girl’s hair. She smiles. Fidelia’s eyes close.

**INSERT: THE GIRL’S SEVERED ARM, FIDELIA KISSES THE ARM, OPENS HER EYES IN FEAR AT THE BLOOD.**

Fidelia opens her eyes. Fearful. The Blonde Girl’s eyes, still closed, she didn’t notice.

**BLONDE GIRL**

I knew you wanted me.

**ECU:** Fidelia’s hands grip the Blonde Girl’s neck seductively at first then tighter, both hands choking her.

Fidelia’s eyes watering as she chokes harder.

**CU:** The Blonde’s smiling face fades JUST LIKE IN THE MIRROR.

The Blonde struggles. Fidelia’s grip tightens. **FIDELIA CRIES OUT LOUD.** There is only -

**DISSOLVE TO:**
EXT. BALBOA PARK - VALLEY - DAWN

Silence.
BLONDE GIRL’S BODY, arms stretched across the grass.
Fidelia lies beside her. Her hand glides over the dead girl’s arm.
Fidelia fingers trail up and twirl with the girl’s blonde locks.
The Blonde Girl’s eyes are still open. BLOODSHOT.
Fidelia sits up and looks at the dead girl. She hears the calls of BIRDS in the distance.

CUT TO:

EXT. WEBBER HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

Fidelia, disheveled, creeps around the back to a cracked open window -

INT. FIDELIA’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Fidelia quietly crawls into her room. She plops to the floor in despair.
She CRIES. Slides open a drawer and removes a small BLADE and band-aids. Presses the blade down into her wrist...blood.

EXT. FIDELIA’S ROOM - HALLWAY

Her mother, MARY WEBBER, 50, heavy Tagalog accent. She heads down the hall to her room, passes Fidelia’s bedroom. Stops at the door with her hand against the frame.

MARY
Honey...are you awake yet?

She listens, puts her hand on the doorknob, tries it –
INT. FIDELIA’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS
But it’s locked. Fidelia sits against the door, covers her mouth. Waits and hears the sound of A DOOR SHUT.

The HALLWAY LIGHT emits from under her door.

MARY’S BATHROOM
Mary washes her face in the sink and exhales, looks at her face, freckles blush her cheeks.
She opens the cabinet and removes a box of BAND-AIDS. It’s empty. She tosses it in the trash, confused.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER
Fidelia opens the knife drawer. Various cutlery. She pulls out the MEAT CLEAVER. The blade is new.
She cuts through the side door to the-
GARAGE
Fidelia grabs her suitcase hidden behind storage.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BALBOA PARK WOODS - HOURS LATER
Fidelia sits and stares at the dead body. Beside her is the same MEAT CLEAVER.
The Blonde Girl’s eyes are still open. Fidelia shuts her eyelids. SIGHS.

FIDELIA
I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I--fuck, fuck, fuck. I can’t take this.

Fidelia holds the cleaver to her own NECK, she presses down and SOBS. Collapses beside the body. She hits the ground. Frustrated.
Fidelia bundles up her jacket and SCREAMS into it. Muffled.
She picks it up again, stretches out the Blonde Girl’s arm across an old tree stump. Fidelia raises the cleaver high above.
Fidelia takes two long deep breaths. She CHOPS through the Blonde Girl’s wrist.

A silver bracelet falls off her wrist. Fidelia picks it up, looks at the heart-shaped charm. Wipes off the specks of blood.

Reads the inscription: "To my darling daughter." Drops it in her pocket.

**EXT. RIVER NEARBY - LATER**

Fidelia settles by the stream and scrubs the blood off her hands in the cold water. Her eyes glazed over. Vision blurry.

She opens up her suitcase: SEVERED BODY PARTS.

On top is the bloody meat cleaver. She rinses off the blood in the river.

A strange bush nearby. The leaves SHAKE. Fidelia, paranoid, puts the cleaver back in. Shuts it.

A skunk dashes out. Fidelia SIGHS. She watches it dart by. Fidelia drags the suitcase down the way.

**EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - WOODS - DAY**

The house is small and forgotten. Fire-pit in front.

Fidelia struggles. She drags her suitcase inside the small forgotten house.

**INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

A small room with yellow wallpaper.

She collapses in the corner beside the suitcase. Dizzy, faint. Sees a sink in the corner.

Fidelia wanders over and runs the water. Sips.
EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Fidelia dumps her bloody clothes in the fire-pit and covers them with dry leaves. Puts on a clean shirt and pants.

Lights a MATCH and sets it on FIRE. Watches the flames die out as the clothes scorch.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

A humble church. The sun peaks through the stain colored glass.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

A full congregation. Fidelia, sleep deprived, enters late.

Everyone praying with bowed heads. Fidelia sits in the first pew with her parents.

Mary whispers to Fidelia.

MARY
Fi, where have you been?

ELLIOOT WEBBER, her distant father, late 40’s, former Navy. Separated for years.

Fidelia’s uncle and Mary’s brother- FATHER MICHAEL, 40, a quiet man. He finishes his prayer.

FATHER MICHAEL
For who has faith, only they shall have His forgiveness. For God loves us all...and we are all His sinners, so repent my children and call to Him.

CONGREGATION (ALL)
Amen.

Zoned out Fidelia, looks off through the window. Rubs her hands against her pants. Mary holds Fidelia’s hand still in hers.
EXT. CHURCH - LATER

Mary and Elliot wait for Fidelia. Elliot keeps looking at his watch. She LIGHTS another cigarette and puffs.

    ELLIOT
    I can’t make it.

    MARY
    You know how Fidelia looks forward to this all week--

He takes a very long drag. Mary SIGHS. He blows the smoke before responding.

    ELLIOT
    I don’t want to talk about this, Fidelia’s coming back. You want her to hear this?

INT. CHURCH - CONFESSIONAL

Father Michael exits the confessional booth, sees Fidelia still sitting in the pews. She gets up to leave, sees her uncle, tries to avoid eye contact.

Father Michael veers to Fidelia before she reaches the doors.

    FATHER MICHAEL
    Fidelia...having a rough morning?

Fidelia shakes her head.

    FATHER MICHAEL
    It’s not good to fib in God’s house.

    FIDELIA
    I haven’t slept much. I’m sorry Father Michael.

    FATHER MICHAEL
    Is it Mary? Have you two been fighting again? I can talk to her if you need me to...

    FIDELIA
    I just haven’t been feeling well lately. Sick or something, sure I’ll be alright.
Father Michael smiles, kisses her forehead, crosses himself and her.

FATHER MICHAEL
Apart from the confessional, you know you can talk to me when you need to.

Fidelia faintly smiles back as she leaves.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS
Fidelia exits the church doors. Mary and Elliot already in the car, trail beside her.

Mary and Elliot call out to her from the car.

MARY
Honey, get in the car.

Elliot parks.

FIDELIA
Go on without me. I just feel like walking.

MARY
You don’t want to be with your family?

FIDELIA
Mom, just stop it. Please.

Mary quickly turns away from Fidelia.

FIDELIA
Jesus Christ.

Elliot reproaches Fidelia.

ELLiot
Come on honey, just get in the car. You know how your mother is.

FIDELIA
I know. A Cancer.

ELLiot
Don’t say that about your mother, she can hear you.

Fidelia continues walking along the sidewalk, her parents trail beside her in the car.
FIDELIA
Nevermind, dad. Thought you two hated being in
the same car together, huh?

Silence.

FIDELIA
We’re going to the movies tomorrow, just me and
you, k?

ELLIO'T
I’m sorry hon’ I can’t make it. We’ll -

FIDELIA
Reschedule, I know. Great...I love you too dad.

Fidelia rushes off and turns a corner. Wipes her eyes.

EXT. ELLIO'T’S APARTMENT - DAY

Fidelia stops at the end of the street. She looks up at her dad’s dark apartment windows.

She looks over at the grassy hill in the backyard. Strums her fingers against the steel fence. Fidelia kicks at the busted fence. Notices a spot of BLOOD on her shoe.

She drops down immediately to clean it off, licks her finger and tries to rub it off. It’s gone. She SIGHS.

BACKYARD:

Fidelia spots her old mountain bike propped against the wall. She hops the fence.

Her bike is rusted over. She kicks the old worn out tires.

ELLIO'T (VO)
It’s okay honey, you’re doing great. I’ll be right
here behind you. That’s it, you got it now.

FIDELIA (VO)
I’m doing it dad, I’m really doing it! Dad?

Looks down at her wrist and unclasps the Blonde Girl’s silver bracelet. She lifts a heavy stone, puts it underneath, changes her mind...takes it back.
In the wind, Fidelia hears a familiar voice.

    BLONDE GIRL (VO)
    Hey...is this your first time?

Fidelia looks frantically around but doesn’t see her.
Fidelia sees her bloody cuticles. Shoves her hands deep in her pockets. Continues walking, clutching the silver bracelet.

EXT. WEBBER HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY
Fidelia passes by their old swing set.
She crosses the grass to the side of the house. She climbs up a tree with ladder steps. It reaches up to her window.

INT. FIDELIA’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS
Fidelia lies down exhausted in bed. Stirs. Looks at the bracelet, dangling from her fingertips.

A gentle KNOCK.

    MARY (OS)
    Honey, where were you today?

Fidelia, doesn’t answer.
She gets up and pockets the bracelet. Puts her hand on the doorknob about to turn it -

    MARY (OS)
    Well I have some pancit for you when you’re hungry. Goodnight honey, I’m going to the casino, kay?

Fidelia releases the knob. Silence again. She clutches the bracelet in her hand and bites her knuckle. Hard.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
Mary grabs her purse from the chair and heads to the door. Looks back at Fidelia’s bedroom door as she locks the door behind her.
INT. FIDELIA’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Fidelia in despair. Totally alone.

FIDELIA
Fuck, why’d you have to leave me alone mom...I can’t be alone right now.

Looks down at the bracelet.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Fidelia HIDES the bracelet in the back of the toilet. It slinks to the bottom.

Immediately, Fidelia THROWS UP in the sink. COUGHS, eyes teary, spits.

Runs the water. Swirls down the drain.

EXT. MAR VISTA HIGH SCHOOL - NEXT DAY

A dismal building of beige and puke green. The grass is splotchy.

INT. MAR VISTA - BATHROOM - DAY

Fidelia washing her hands. Vigorous.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Fidelia enters the theatre. She sits down on the stage and reads.

The room is old and charming. Handcrafted wooden panels line the back wall. The door swings OPEN - a bright light blazes through as -

AMANDA JOHNSON enters. Cute, 18, red Mohawk. Like a young Mia Farrow. Fidelia looks up to see her, eyes squint in the light.

AMANDA
Sorry I didn’t know anyone was here.
Fidelia’s eyes adjust. Sees her clearer. She gets up to leave.

    FIDELIA
    It’s alright, I was just leaving.

    AMANDA
    Oh wait, I didn’t mean you had to leave. Is that the list?

Amanda wanders over to the cork board posted against the side wall. She reads it, turns around. Excited.

    AMANDA
    Holy shit, I made it. I got to the second round of auditions!

Fidelia, quiet.

    AMANDA
    I’m sorry, forgot to introduce myself. I’m new here...Amanda Johnson. Are you in the theatre too? Actor?

    FIDELIA
    Actually...

Fidelia gets up and points to her name written on the board as the playwright. Amanda, impressed.

    AMANDA
    Wow, well I’ll see you at auditions tomorrow.

    FIDELIA
    Yeah.

    AMANDA
    I didn’t make it to the first audition. But I know Mrs. Willoughby from the academy. Practically my acting coach. Anyway, gotta go. It was really nice meeting you, Fidelia.

Amanda leans out her hand and shakes Fidelia’s. Fidelia quickly lets go. Her hands tremble. Amanda’s already gone.

CUT TO:
INT. CLASSROOM - DAYDREAM

BAM. BAM. *Classical musical* plays over.

Blood splashes onto the eraser board. Red on white.

Students SCREAM for their lives. Some cower under their desks. Others scramble for an exit.

Fidelia shucks the shells. Loads up more ammo.

Walks down the aisle of desks. Students whimper as she gets closer.

Shoots again. Again. Again. Again. BAM, BAM, BAM. Fidelia places the barrel under her chin. BAM.

END

DREAM.

CUT TO:

INT. ADRIAN WEBBER’S CAR - REMOTE ALLEY - PRESENT

PUNK ROCK roars over the speakers.

ADRIAN WEBBER, 21, Fidelia’s gay brother. Scrawny, handsome and tattooed. LIGHTS up a cigarette.

    ADRIAN
    Fi, aren’t you happy?

    FIDELIA
    I don’t know anymore, are you?

    ADRIAN
    You’re gonna be fine, like you always are.

Fidelia sees Adrian’s fresh NEEDLE tracks on his arm as he rolls down his window.

    ADRIAN
    You’re no fuck-up like me, remember?

    FIDELIA
    Adrian, you’re not a fuck-up. You’re doing better, right? Dad thinks you are.
ADRIAN
Some days I’m better, other days I’m not. How ’bout you?

FIDELIA
I hope you still go to your meetings. Are you sure you’re-

ADRIAN
You sound like mom. Please don’t start.

FIDELIA
Whatever.

ADRIAN
Whatever to you. She hates my guts Fi.

FIDELIA
Are you serious?

ADRIAN
What?

FIDELIA
Mom doesn’t hate you.

Adrian puffs and blows smoke out the window.

ADRIAN
Maybe when you come out, she won’t hate you too.

FIDELIA
It’s not like I’m on drugs...

Fidelia SIGHS and looks at the time. Adrian, upset.

FIDELIA
I gotta get going.

Adrian REVS up the car.

ADRIAN
Then get out.

FIDELIA
What? Are you joking?

ADRIAN
Take the fucking trolley, I don’t need you giving me another lecture

(MORE)
ADRIAN (cont’d)
today, alright? I already have mom and dad for that.

FIDELIA
I’m sorry, okay? It just...slipped out. You know I didn’t mean it, fuck, Adrian.

Adrian, silent. Fidelia exits the car.

CUT TO:

INT. WEBBER HOUSE - LATER THAT DAY

Fidelia sits at the counter and reads a note from Mary.

MARY (VO)
"Fidelia, I have to work overtime tonight, so I had to leave early. Dinner’s in the fridge for you. I love you honey."

Fidelia grips the note as she heads into - THE KITCHEN

She opens the fridge and looks in, uninterested. Grabs a Capri-Sun, removes the straw, about to poke it through -

She crumples Mary’s note as she SLAMS THE CAPRI-SUN against the fridge door. It BURSTS all over the floor.

FIDELIA
Fuck!

INT. MARY’S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Fidelia sneaks into her mother’s room. It’s immaculately clean. She opens the -

CLOSET

Fidelia kneels down and removes a DUFFEL BAG. It’s dad’s from his Navy days.
INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Fidelia grabs the shovel and puts it in the duffel.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

It’s cold out. Fidelia walks between the tombstones to the final row of graves. Carries the duffel bag.

She passes behind the only mausoleum and drops her bag. She removes the shovel. Starts digging.

A light drizzle of rain starts...she keeps digging. Looks up every now and then.

HEADLIGHTS seen from the front gates. Fidelia stops, hides behind the wall. The car passes.

Fidelia opens up the bag, removes something wrapped up in black cloth. She unfolds it: the meat cleaver.

She wipes off the handle and the blade. Looks like new. Covers it back up. Drops it into the hole.

Fidelia looks up into the sky as the rain pours. She fills up the hole.

EXT. WEBBER HOUSE- FIDELIA’S WINDOW - LATE NIGHT

Fidelia, drenched, climbs up the side to her bedroom window. Struggles but eventually gets it open. She crawls inside.

INT. FIDELIA’S ROOM

Fidelia tears off her soaking jacket and shirt. Heads straight into the -

BATHROOM

Fidelia runs the water. Avoids looking in the mirror. Takes off the rest and steps in the -

SHOWER

Fidelia cranks up the hot water, it steams over her, hotter. She takes a breath and - switches it to extreme cold.

Exhales. Kneels her forehead against the cold tile.
INT. THEATRE CLASS - NEXT MORNING

Fidelia lifts her head off the desk. Rubs her eyes and YAWNS.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY, late 50’s, her eccentric theatre teacher, continues her lecture to an ambivalent room of STUDENTS.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
So you see from Checkov’s play, The Cherry Orchard, if any of you even finished reading it, doubt that...but if so, you’ll see that in the first act he introduces the gun. This is where the rule originates from, if you see a gun in the first act, it must go off by the third act. Now can anyone give me any modern day examples of this?

Amanda shoves a note to Fidelia. Fidelia reads the scrap of paper and scribbles, hands it back.

Amanda looks at it, smiles.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
Amanda Johnson, do you have an answer? Or is your mind a blank like the rest of these buffoons?

Amanda smirks, side glances to Fidelia.

AMANDA
Yeah, well, I know it’s a student play but in Fidelia’s there’s a noose in the beginning and in the end, the hero shoots himself.

Fidelia smiles.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
Speaking of Miss Webber, speak with me after class. We have things to discuss.

She smiles at Fidelia.
EXT. SIDEWALK - SCHOOL - LATER

Fidelia and Amanda walk to Amanda’s apartment, a few blocks from school.

    AMANDA
    Insomnia sucks doesn’t it?

Fidelia CHUCKLES. YAWNS again.

    AMANDA
    You need caffeine. So what were you and Mrs. Willoughby talking about?

    FIDELIA
    Eh. I need to work more on the play.

    AMANDA
    Thought you were already done?

    FIDELIA
    Mrs. Willoughby suggested I change some stuff around. I need to work more on Bruce’s dialogue.

    AMANDA
    What’s wrong with it?

    FIDELIA
    I need to...make it more honest.

EXT. AMANDA’S APARTMENT - DAY

Amanda and Fidelia approach her door.

    AMANDA
    Sorry it’s messy.

Amanda unlocks the door.

INT. AMANDA’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

It’s not messy. It’s quiet. A gentle breeze blows in from the open window. Amanda walks down the hall to her-
INT. AMANDA’S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

It’s even cleaner in her room. Books line the shelves from ceiling to floor. Fidelia scans the book titles.

Amanda drops off her backpack. Shuts the door behind Fidelia.

AMANDA
I can help you with the dialogue if you’re open to it.

Fidelia spots a copy of Crime and Punishment. Smiles.

FIDELIA
Maybe...we could see how it goes. We do need to rehearse together anyway.

Fidelia sits down holding her briefcase.

AMANDA
I think it’s great you wrote a play about being a gay teen.

FIDELIA
Yeah. Didn’t have anyone to talk to, so I wrote instead.

AMANDA
Can I ask you something?

FIDELIA
Depends what it is.

AMANDA
What’s it like being so open about it? I’m guessing your friends and family know.

FIDELIA
I haven’t told my family.

Amanda looks concerned and surprised.

AMANDA
Wow, what a way to come out.

Amanda opens her mini-fridge. Fidelia gapes at the fridge full of Coca-Cola cans.
FIDELIA
Thought I liked caffeine.

Amanda POPS open a can, SLURPS. POPS another. Hands to Fidelia.

AMANDA
One more question?

FIDELIA
Sure.

Fidelia sips.

AMANDA
Do you dream often?

FIDELIA
No, I don’t really dream.

AMANDA
I had a nightmare about that girl...that girl who went missing...I think she died... Did you know her?

FIDELIA
No...I heard about her though. Mrs. Willoughby told me. What happened in the dream?

AMANDA
I see her running...it’s dark, hardly any light outside. I don’t know where she’s going but she’s scared. Then it’s like I only hear her feet, but then it’s her, she’s screaming. Then it’s done. It changes and I feel like I’m in water but I can’t breathe, then I wake up.

FIDELIA
That’s an intense dream.

AMANDA
Yeah, you’re lucky you don’t dream much. Her face is gonna be plastered everywhere. Like on milk cartons, school’s probably gonna be crazy over this.
CONTINUED:

FIDELIA
I hope she’s okay.

AMANDA
Me too...I hope they find her. Sorry we got all morbid there for a minute. She could still be alive.

FIDELIA
You’re apologizing to the wrong person, you know. So can we -

Amanda quickly grabs her script from her bag and turns to the page. Finds her mark.

AMANDA
(in character)
" Please just let me help, tell me what’s wrong."

Amanda puts down the script, no longer in character.

AMANDA
Can I make a suggestion...Okay, what if this conversation happened between Bruce and Bentley instead?

Fidelia ponders.

FIDELIA
Yeah. Bentley’s the only one that can stand the truth.

AMANDA
Didn’t you want Bruce to be more honest?

FIDELIA
Yeah I do...He’s tired of lying all the time.

CUT TO:

EXT. LA JOLLA HOSPITAL - NEXT MORNING
The bright white hospital overlooks the beautiful Pacific Ocean.

PARKING LOT
Mary rolls her blue Honda Civic into the empty lot. Mary steps out, in her scrubs with her long black hair tied in a neat ponytail.
INT. LA JOLLA HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Mary strides down the empty hall, footsteps ECHO with authority.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOCKER ROOM

Mary places her name tag squarely on her right breast pocket.

It’s clear these other EMPLOYEES are hospital maintenance and janitorial staff. They smile as she passes by. Standing nervously like new soldiers in a platoon.

MARY
Good morning everyone.

VIRGIE, 45, Filipina, Mary’s only friend at work. Their lockers are next to each other.

VIRGIE
Morning Mrs. Clean.

Mary CHUCKLES.

MARY
Virgie, how was your weekend? Did you go to Viejas on Saturday?

VIRGIE
Yeah, fresh out of luck. Lost two hundred bucks this time.

MARY
Better than me. I had a terrible night last time.

VIRGIE
You wanna go with me next time? Might improve your luck.

MARY
Oh yeah maybe. Might have plans with Fidelia for once but you never know.

Mary looks down at her phone. Photo of Fidelia on her screen. She sighs, no new calls. SHUTS OFF.

CUT TO:
EXT. DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO - FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Fidelia, eyes on the fast approaching car, her feet about to step into the road, into oncoming TRAFFIC.

    FIDELIA (VO)
    Hit me, hit me, HIT ME, HIT ME, dear God please
    let this car hit me. Please, please, please. I deserve
    it. I want to feel my bones break and my body
    crushed.

But the car turns the corner and drives off. Fidelia watches it go. She crosses the street.

CUT TO:

INT. DAD’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Elliot still has a military crew cut and a beer belly. He lights up a cigarette and chain smokes at his desk.

An annoying KNOCKING at the door. Elliot gets up to answer it.

Adrian’s at the door. Scratches at his sweater sleeve, Elliot doesn’t notice. Invites him inside.

    ELLIOT
    Adrian, how much do you need now?

Adrian hangs his head. Shuts the door.

    ADRIAN
    Like five hundred bux, dad.

    ELLIOT
    What’s it for?

    ADRIAN
    Rent...

    ELLIOT
    I hope that’s the truth Adrian, I can’t keep doing
    this.

    ADRIAN
    Yeah, yeah I know, just between us. I’ll pay you
    back dad. Please just don’t tell mom, I got fired
    again okay?

Elliot reluctantly opens his wallet and hands Adrian cash.
EXT. CINEPLEX THEATRE - DAY

A locally run movie theatre. Fidelia waits in line to buy tickets.

The girl in front of her turns around, it’s Amanda.

AMANDA
Hey! Are you here for Darko too?

TICKET GUY calls Amanda next.

AMANDA
One please for Donnie Darko.

TICKET GUY
Showing starts at three o’clock. Here you go...
Next!

Fidelia steps up to the window. Amanda lingers by the entrance.

TICKET GUY
Welcome to the Cineplex, which movie? The same I’m guessing?

FIDELIA
Yes, please.

Fidelia hands him a ten dollar bill. Hands her the ticket stub.

INT. CINEPLEX THEATRE - 3 - LATER

Fidelia eats popcorn and watches Donnie Darko. Amanda sits next to her, sipping on a large soda.

Another person’s phone RINGS annoyingly. Fidelia puts her phone on silent.

MOVIE SCREEN:

Donnie Darko, trancelike state, floods the high school.

CUT TO:
INT. LA JOLLA HOSPITAL - ROOM - DAY

Through the wide windows is the perfect view of the Pacific Ocean and the beaches below.

Mary parts the blinds to let some light trickle in. She looks out at the waves as they CRASH against the rocks below.

EXT. LA JOLLA HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - LATER

Mary smoking by her car. On her phone, dials a number, Fidelia’s photo POPS up on the screen.

It RINGS. No answer. She leaves a voice-mail.

MARY
(into phone)
Hey honey, I know I’ve been busy with work so I made sure to get your birthday off, maybe we should have dinner, I’ll cook your favorite lumpia. Well I’ll see you at home soon. Love you honey.

Finishes her cigarette.

CUT TO:

EXT. THEATRE PARKING LOT - TRASH - LATER

Fidelia and Amanda stand between the trash and the gate surrounding the lot.

AMANDA
I think things happen for a reason.

FIDELIA
What do you mean?

AMANDA
Like in Donnie Darko...he had to die but it was for a reason. So that the girl could live...

Amanda takes out a flask of vodka. Takes a swig. Hands it to Fidelia. She shakes her head.

AMANDA
You don’t drink?
FIDELIA
I don’t really like to drink. I like staying in control.

AMANDA
It’s just vodka? It’s fun.

FIDELIA
I like having fun, I just don’t need to drink to do it.

AMANDA
Wanna taste?

Fidelia shy, smiles, shakes her head. Amanda takes a quick swig.

AMANDA
Guess you don’t know how to take a shotgun either?

FIDELIA
Like a shot of vodka?

AMANDA
(chuckles)
Never-mind. So are you nervous about directing?

FIDELIA
It’s all I can think about.

Fidelia looks away, Amanda doesn’t notice.

AMANDA
I don’t see what else could be on your mind. I’d be so stressed out if I were you.

FIDELIA
I can handle it.

Amanda checks her watch.

AMANDA
Think we should head back now...mind if I stop by my house real quick?

Fidelia scans the time, nods.
EXT. AMANDA’S APARTMENT - LATER

Florida Street. Fidelia stands by the stop sign. She stares at a little brown and white house on the corner. Bushes of yellow roses catch her eye.

AMANDA (OS)
Someone else lives there.

Fidelia turns to see Amanda leaving her house.

AMANDA
Well my aunt actually, but her husband’s a perv so I keep my distance. Sucks you know... about families.

The house’s curtains are drawn. She hears a PLANE OVERHEAD. Fidelia LOOKS UP and recognizes her tennis shoes hanging from the telephone wire. She smiles.

FIDELIA
I miss that house.

AMANDA
You used to live there?

Fidelia starts walking down the block away from the house. Amanda continues to prod.

AMANDA
Why did you move?

FIDELIA
I don’t wanna bum you out with it.

AMANDA
Divorced or are they separated?

Fidelia nods.

FIDELIA
Same thing pretty much. It all turned to shit after that.

Amanda, still listening.

FIDELIA
Well...my parents split up when I was seven. It’s actually my earliest childhood memory. Pretty depressing right? I shouldn’t have said anything –
AMANDA
You know...you should be thankful your parents are still alive.

Fidelia looks at Amanda, stunned. Amanda adjusts the locket on her necklace, remembering someone.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAR VISTA THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

A single spotlight, center stage. Fidelia stares out into the void. She speaks. Lines memorized.

FIDELIA/BRUCE
(in character)
"I stand here before you, but do you really see who I am? Now whenever I look in the mirror, I can’t recognize who I see anymore. The face staring back at me is devoid of emotion. His face is blank and these eyes...these empty eyes. Empty...that’s the word.
Choices that’s another word...but if this mind and body cannot connect, then how are these actions determined? Who decided? Did I decide just because my hand, these hands...or am I just the puppet that fate strings along at its whimsy...I don’t know anymore.

Amanda/BENTLEY approaches Fidelia. Lays hand on shoulder. She’s nervous, voice shakey.

AMANDA/BENTLEY
(in character)
I see you Bruce... I want to release you from your chains of denial... of the truth, but why... yeah, why? Tell them, or tell me, what do you really want Bruce?...think before you act next. Now answer me this, what do you need Bruce?

Fidelia takes her time, stares at the floor then looks back up into the empty theatre seats.
FIDELIA/BRUCE
I need...to be free of this existence.

BLACK OUT. Lights come back on.

Mrs. Willoughby speeds past the curtain and pulls Fidelia to the side.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
There’s something wrong. How do you feel about it?

FIDELIA
I can change something, is it the dialogue again? It’s too over the top. I thought I trimmed it down.

Willoughby SIGHS, pulls Fidelia further out of earshot of the others. Wipes her brow.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
She’s not here, she was supposed to be here. Don’t you feel like something’s missing?

Fidelia scans the actors on stage.

FIDELIA
Looks like everyone’s here.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
I thought she was sick but...I called her mother and she’s missed school all week. I just -

Willoughby trying not to sound panicked.

FIDELIA
I don’t understand.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
Amanda’s just an understudy...I had someone else in mind for your love interest. If that blondie doesn’t show up though, it’s all on Amanda. Do you think she can handle it?

Fidelia looks back at the stage, sees Amanda.

FIDELIA
Yeah, I think she can.
INT. STAGE - LATER

Supper time.

*All high school age besides MAMA and PAPA, played by middle-aged actors.*

Fidelia/Bruce abruptly shown by a single spotlight in the corner. Perched on top of a chair with a noose around the neck.

**FIDELIA/BRUCE**

"If the airway is constricted, and full suspension achieved, this method, at least initially, is likely to be very painful...

Tightens the noose.

**FIDELIA/BRUCE**

"...as the person struggles for air against the compression of the noose and against the weight of their own body, being supported entirely by the neck and jaw."

**MAMA**

Bruce, how was your day at school?

**FIDELIA/BRUCE**

Fine.

It’s as if they don’t see Bruce hanging himself. He tips over the chair.

**MAMA**

Have any homework tonight?

No response as Fidelia/Bruce struggles to breathe.

**MAMA**

Well, after we eat, your father and I are going out to the casino to play some slots. So wish us good luck, okay?

**RACHEL** perks up.

**RACHEL**

We’ll have the place to ourselves tonight?

**BEATRICE** chimes in.
BEATRICE
You do, I won’t be here.

MAMA
What are your plans tonight?

BEATRICE
I’m meeting some friends.

RACHEL
Guess I’ll be chilling at home with Brucey.

MAMA
We’ll be back soon, I promise. Be careful and go to sleep early tonight.

Exit Mama and Papa.

Beatrice uses the phone and calls her friend.

BEATRICE
Hey...yeah. They just left. Yeah I’m free now. I’ll meet you at the park. Alright, see you then, bye.

Beatrice hangs up the phone. Rachel gives her the look.

BEATRICE
Fuck you, Rachel.

RACHEL
Aren’t you forgetting something?

Rachel opens up her wallet, takes out cash.

RACHEL
I know you’re just going to steal it out of my purse anyway, so at least I know it’s going straight into those veins of yours.

Rachel opens her wallet, takes out some money and hands it over reluctantly to Beatrice.

Exit a pissed off Beatrice.

Fidelia/Bruce hangs limply from the noose. Exit Rachel. The rope is pulled, Fidelia/Bruce lifted to the heavens. Lights fade to BLACK.
EXT. MAR VISTA THEATRE - BACK DOORS - NIGHT

Fidelia and Amanda squat together on the curb. The back doors are open as the other actors move about.

AMANDA
Your family, they really are that-

FIDELIA
Complicated?

AMANDA
Sad.

FIDELIA
It doesn’t even matter. All of it. To be honest... I’m sure they don’t care.

AMANDA
You know you can’t see into the future, right? You also can’t read minds?

FIDELIA
Well...maybe my brother might show up if he’s not too fucked up on stuff.

AMANDA
You need to work on your optimism.

Fidelia looks up at the dark sky, the stars are dim, hidden behind the storm clouds.

AMANDA
"Remember the light, believe the light." So, what’s the story behind the title?

FIDELIA
It’s not even mine. It’s a line from Sarah Kane’s *4.48 Psychosis*. I’m not sure what it means but it makes me feel...hopeful.

AMANDA
Who’s Sarah Kane?
FIDELIA
She’s my favorite playwright. It was her last play before she killed herself.

Amanda looks concerned. She reaches into her bag and pulls out her I-pod, untangles the headphones and hands one to Fidelia. Smiles.

AMANDA
I want you to listen to this song. Let’s compare music taste.

FIDELIA
Alright.

Puts the left bud in her ear. HEARD OVER THE SPEAKERS:
Q LAZZARUS: "GOODBYE HORSES"

Fidelia immediately takes it out, smiles.

FIDELIA
It’s actually my favorite song.

AMANDA
Holy shit, really? I just heard it for the first time the other night. I went to this show -

Fidelia drops the headphone.

FIDELIA
You were there?

Amanda nods.

AMANDA
Yeah my friend from drumline invited me. It’s like his favorite music in the world. It was pretty sweet man.

FIDELIA
Wish I went to that...

Fidelia sees Mrs. Willoughby beckons them inside.
INT. THEATRE - AFTER SCHOOL REHEARSALS

STAGE lights come on.

The theatre door SLAMS SHUT as Mrs. Willoughby enters and slumps down into a seat. Her face says it all.

She groups the students around her.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
This is perhaps one of the toughest things I’ve had to say in my life...the missing girl is presumed to be dead. The police, they -

Fidelia and Amanda shut the door behind them.

FIDELIA
Mrs. Willoughby, what’s wrong?

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
Oh dearie. The police think the girl wasn’t kidnapped or a runaway... They think she’s dead.

AMANDA
But it’s only been a few days.

Fidelia sinks into her seat. The others GASP.

FIDELIA
Mrs. Willoughby...I’m sorry but we can’t have rehearsals right now. Everyone!

Fidelia rises and heads to the doors, props it open.

FIDELIA
Go home.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
Fidelia, are you sure about this?

FIDELIA
One hundred percent.

One by one they pass by her.

FIDELIA
Rehearsals rescheduled for Friday night.

ON STAGE:
INT. NIGHT CLUB - FRIDAY NIGHT

80’s synth pop plays as a CROWD dances underneath a cliche discoball that hangs from the ceiling.

The beats are steady and upbeat.

The crowd parts for us to see - BRUCE/FIDELIA dances awkwardly in the middle. Alone.

A YOUNG MAN, BENTLEY/AMANDA dances nearby.

BENTLEY/AMANDA
I haven’t seen you here before, or have I?

BRUCE/FIDELIA
I’m really not supposed to be here.

BENTLEY/AMANDA
Where are you supposed to be?

BRUCE/FIDELIA
Back home...

BENTLEY/AMANDA
Don’t leave. We just started talking. Hey -

BRUCE/FIDELIA
I’m sorry. I really gotta go.

BENTLEY/AMANDA
I like the way you dance.

Bruce/Fidelia turn to leave. Bentley/Amanda holds his arm.

BENTLEY/AMANDA
Why are you leaving?

BRUCE/FIDELIA
...I don’t know. Does it matter?

BENTLEY/AMANDA
Stay and dance with me.

Bruce/Fidelia stays. Curtains drop.
EXT. MAR VISTA COURTYARD - NIGHT

Fidelia talks with a stressed out Mrs. Willoughby who chain smokes. They stand in front of a MEMORIAL SHEET for the missing girl...it states in big letters: "WE WILL FIND HER, NEVER LOSE HOPE."

It’s covered with marker writing and hearts.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
Can you imagine anything more awful than this?

Fidelia kicks the grass at her feet.

FIDELIA
I can’t imagine someone who could do this...they must be a monster.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
...it’s easier to say that a monster or crazy person did this but...I think someone just lost their way...and this girl got caught in the thick of it.

Willoughby finishes her seventh cigarette, smushes it under her shoe. Fidelia listens closely.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
These sort of things aren’t supposed to happen...not here at least. You know like New York or someplace. I just hope they find her in one piece.

FIDELIA
It’s scary when it really happens and it’s not just on t.v. or in the movies.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
Doesn’t feel real, does it?

FIDELIA
Nothing really does.

Mrs. Willoughby puts an arm around Fidelia’s shoulder trying to console the unconsolable.

FIDELIA
I’ve been thinking about it... and I want to cancel opening night. We can’t do the play like this.
Mrs. Willoughby looks appalled.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY
I hope someone finds that poor girl but...like we say, "the show must go on." Everything will happen the way it's meant to...I'll see you back inside, five minutes.

Amanda comes out the back door and smokes a few feet away. Mrs. Willoughby returns inside. Fidelia walks over to Amanda.

FIDELIA
Hey. You did great.

AMANDA
Feels like I'm struggling through every line.

FIDELIA
It doesn't come off like that.

AMANDA
Not with my character...with yours. Hey...can I take you somewhere later?

FIDELIA
It's like almost midnight.

AMANDA
Not right now. Tomorrow. I wanna show you something. Please? It'd mean a lot to me.

Fidelia nods.

EXT. FRAZIER PARK - NEXT DAY

A simple town. Feels like forever 1955. Small stores, one stop light and one gas station.

AMANDA (VO)
I grew up here. We both did, my best friend Scott, we met when we were just ten...
EXT. OLD TUNNEL - LATER

Amanda leads Fidelia through the foliage to the opening of the old tunnel. Covered with graffiti from years past. Amanda points out her signature sign.

AMANDA
We used to think of this place as an escape. Somewhere to run away to.

A gentle stream passes through. Fidelia’s shoes filthy with mud. They bend down as they enter the tunnel.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Amanda leads the way to the end of the tunnel. Fidelia looks at the bricks that line the walls.

AMANDA
We used to come here all the time. It’s special, like a place to get away from it all.

FIDELIA
What’s special about it, exactly?

Fidelia follows after. The tunnel opens out to a valley below with rocks and a random shopping cart.

AMANDA
This is where....he left his suicide note here.

FIDELIA
Suicide note...man. I’m sorry Amanda. I don’t know what to say besides sorry.

AMANDA
I haven’t brought a lot of people here. Actually, you’re the only person I’ve brought here.

Fidelia looks at Amanda, she points to the spot on the wall with the quote:

QUOTE: "DEATH, BE NOT PROUD, THOUGH SOME HAVE CALLED THEE MIGHTY AND DREADFUL, FOR THOU ART NOT SO." - JOHNDONNE, DEATH, BE NOT PROUD
AMANDA
It’s short but it says a lot...

FIDELIA
Why are you showing me all of this?

Amanda looks away from the engraving, then at Fidelia.

AMANDA
Because I’m worried I’m about to lose another friend. Maybe even a best friend or potential to be.

FIDELIA
What...what do you mean?

AMANDA
You’re pretty depressed, it’s just obvious. I know you don’t want to talk about it but -

FIDELIA
You’re right...I don’t wanna talk about it.

Amanda grabs a pebble and CHUCKS it down the tunnel, skids across the ground. Hands Fidelia a rock.

SMACKS it against the side wall, it CLACKS down the length of the tunnel.

AMANDA
It really sucks. He didn’t even leave a real note. This is it.

FIDELIA
Really?

Amanda nods her head.

AMANDA
I’ll never know why now...

FIDELIA
Did you know he wanted to, you know.

AMANDA
I had a feeling...but I didn’t reach out to him. I wanted to but...I thought I couldn’t help. Afraid I’d make it worse somehow like I always do. I didn’t want to

(MORE)
AMANDA (cont’d)
make the same mistake twice. Your play...it’s like this long elaborate suicide note. Have you ever thought of it like that? I just...didn’t know if that was intentional or if I’m just reading too much into it.

Fidelia stops tossing rocks and looks at Amanda.

FIDELIA
It’s like...you can see through all my bullshit. You just...see me.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WEBBER HOUSE - FLASHBACK

The house is small, simple, but well taken care of. A TAXI pulls up front and waits.

Arguing and SCREAMS are heard from inside. The door SLAMS WIDE OPEN. A YOUNGER ELLIOT stands there with his suitcase ready.

He walks towards the taxi.

ELLiot (VO)
Don’t worry honey, this is only temporary, remember?

FIDELIA (VO)
Please don’t leave daddy, make mommy forgive you. Please don’t leave me alone.

Elliot loads up his suitcase in the taxi’s trunk.

ELLiot (VO)
You need to stay and take care of your mother now. Can you do that for me? Please, Fi?

FIDELIA (VO)
Yes, daddy...I love you!

Elliot steps into the taxi. It drives off.

DISSOLVE TO:
INT. MARY’S CAR - BEACH SIDE - PRESENT

Mary sits in her car, chain smoking and crying behind her sunglasses, stoic and strong.

The waves crash loudly against the rocks to the side of her car.

Mary checks her phone as - Father Michael TAPS ON HER WINDOW. She unlocks the door for him.

MARY
I’m sorry, I just don’t know who else to talk to right now.

FATHER MICHAEL
Mary, I’m your brother, you’re supposed to ask me for help. It’s okay, come here.

He holds her, she cries, wipes her eyes.

MARY
It’s like...she doesn’t even want to be around me anymore.

FATHER MICHAEL
She’s been like this for months. She’s a teenager, remember?

MARY
I don’t know what to do. I don’t know what’s wrong because she won’t tell me anything and I just, I can’t do this by myself anymore.

FATHER MICHAEL
You can’t do this on your own. What about Elliot?

MARY
No. He’s gone too.

FATHER MICHAEL
So what if he left? I’m sure if anything was really wrong, she would tell Adrian.

MARY
He’s worse than she is. He never calls, only when he needs something from us, you know?

Father Michael looks out the window.
FATHER MICHAEL
I’ll talk to her. Tomorrow, I will talk to her. Okay?

MARY
Alright. Thank you Michael...

INT. FIDELIA’S ROOM - DAY
Fidelia in her room furiously scrubbing at the floor for dried specks of blood she missed.

A KNOCK at the door. Soft, un-threatening.

FIDELIA
Yeah?

FATHER MICHAEL (VO)
It’s me, Father Michael. I wanted to talk to you if you are feeling up to it?

FIDELIA
Maybe later...I just feel sick and can’t really move right now.

She wipes her brow, cleans the floor faster. Wipes it all up. Quickly covers it up with the spare rug from under her bed.

She goes to the door and listens.

FATHER MICHAEL (VO)
It’ll just take a moment. Please Fi. Do it for me.

FIDELIA
(calls out)
I’m sorry...I’m already in bed and took medicine. I’ll talk to you tomorrow, Father Michael...I promise.

Fidelia cries quietly and locks her door. As she does, a NOTE slips underneath the frame. She reads it.

INSERT: "PLEASE COME FIND ME WHEN YOU’RE READY."

She lays it on the cabinet.

Fidelia looks out the window and watches as–
EXT. WEBBER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS
Mary and Father Michael back out of the driveway.

INT. FIDELIA’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS
Fidelia waits till they drive off. She hurries to her closet, tears through her clothes, can’t find what she’s looking for.

INT. HALL CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER
Fidelia finds a medium sized chest, convenient wheels on the bottom. Relieved.
She takes it out.

INT. FIDELIA’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS
Fidelia wheels the chest into her room, beside her bed. She lifts the blood soaked carpet and places it inside the chest.
Wads up paper towels and cleans up the rest with BLEACH. COUGHS. Covers her mouth from fumes.
She picks up her cell, ADRIAN’S CALLING.

  ADRIAN (VO)
  Hey did you still need that ride or what?

  FIDELIA
  Yeah, I’ll be ready in a few minutes. Are you on your way already?

  ADRIAN (VO)
  Well you told me you were in a hurry...

  FIDELIA
  I am, thanks, so see you soon?

  ADRIAN (VO)
  I’ll honk when I’m outside. Be there in a few.

Fidelia hangs up. Rushes to the bathroom to wash her hands.
BATHROOM

Fidelia dumps her face in the water. Replenished. Looks in the mirror for once. Then shuts her eyes.

FIDELIA
Just get rid of it already...if they find her, it’s all over.

Her eyes POP open. She sees the BLONDE GIRL in the mirror. She’s LAUGHING AT HER.

BLONDE GIRL’S VOICE
I remember you from somewhere...

Fidelia shakes her head, hits her head over and over till the Blonde Girl goes away.

BEDROOM

Fidelia sits at her desk and types at a furious speed. Bites her lower lip just to feel something.

FIDELIA
"Dear Father Michael, my worst regret and greatest fear has come true...I cannot claim Him now after what I have done...and He will not forgive me for this sin."

CAR HORN HEARD.

Fidelia peeps out the window and sees Adrian’s car. Quickly pulls out the letter and hides it in her copy of Crime and Punishment, hides it in her desk.

She wheels out the chest.

EXT. WEBBER HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Adrian’s car parked in the driveway. Unlocks his trunk as Fidelia comes out with the chest.

FIDELIA
Sure you don’t mind? I really can just use the trolley or something.

ADRIAN
I can only take you to the downtown station, you know I hate those one way roads. Drives me insane.
Helps Fidelia lift the awkward chest inside the trunk. Barely fits.

FIDELIA
Yeah I can catch the bus from there.

ADRIAN
Pretty neat lookin’ chest.

Adrian leans in to look at the lock closer. Fidelia, nervous.

ADRIAN
Where’d you get it? Thrift store?

Fidelia hugs Adrian. Distracting him.

FIDELIA
Hey, I’m sorry about before. I just say stupid things sometimes, you know?

ADRIAN
Don’t worry about it. I deserve it, I fucked up so much with you guys. Glad at least you still keep me in the loop. Gosh, Fi, getting all sappy here, right?

Fidelia, smiles, guilty.

FIDELIA
I don’t know what I’m gonna do without you.

ADRIAN
Hey...we’re both still alive right?

Adrian hugs her and opens the side door for her. Notices something is off with her. Can’t place it.

INT. ADRIAN’S CAR - DRIVING ON HIGHWAY

Adrian nodding his head to the MUSIC on the radio. Looks over to Fidelia, smiles.

ADRIAN
Hey sis...you know if you’re ever feeling down about well you know...being gay and all. Well what I’m saying is...you can talk to me, alright?
Fidelia turns.

FIDELIA
I know I could tell you. I can count on you.

ADRIAN
I’m sorry, I let you down but like man I feel something good is gonna happen. Like fuck, maybe mom will finally win the lottery after all those daily lottos.

Fidelia, doesn’t respond. Stares out the window. Rubs her fingers against her jeans.

EXT. DOWNTOWN TROLLEY STATION - DAY
Fidelia waits at the station, stands next to her chest. Boards the next trolley.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - LATER DAY
Fidelia cautiously approaches the front door, keeps a look out for anything or anyone.

INT. ROOM - DAY
Fidelia unloads the SEVERED BODY PARTS from the first suitcase to the CHEST. She leaves the suitcase in the fireplace. Sets it ABLAZE. Fidelia struggles to pull the chest out of the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. TROLLEY STATION - LATER DAY
Fidelia lugs the chest to a nearby seat. Pockets her ticket stub. Minds her own business. Calm and composed. Ready.

EXT. CHURCH - EVENING
Fidelia stands outside the church with the chest beside her. She shivers as GUSTS OF WIND go through.
She tilts the chest on its side as she brings it up the steps to the church doors.
Fidelia can’t open the doors. Pure dismay and panic set in.

She runs her hands through her hair, on the verge of losing it.

**FIDELIA**
If God or Father Michael can’t help me, then there is no need to save my soul, is there? God answer me for once...Please...

She looks up only as the sky leaves her more empty than before.

Fidelia grabs the chest and drags it down with her.

**EXT. CEMETERY - MAUSOLEUM - LATER**

Behind the church...Fidelia, runs out of breath, dragging this chest behind her.

She reaches the ROSE GARDEN.

Fidelia slides the chest amongst the thick bushes. Against the brick wall, in the thickest portion of shrubbery.

Exhausted, rests amongst the roses beside the chest.

**FIDELIA (VO)**
They’ll find you here, then what will become of me?

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. ROOF TOP - NIGHT**

Fidelia and Amanda on the brick rooftop of an apartment building.

Amanda sits cross legged beside Fidelia. Fidelia watches a mosquito buzz around the flickering light-bulb over their heads.

Amanda LIGHTS up her pipe for Fidelia, she puffs lightly and immediately COUGHS.

**FIDELIA**
Fuck, my throat.
AMANDA
Sorry, should’ve warned you first.

Fidelia, confused. Amanda lights up, inhales deeply, leans close to Fidelia.

FIDELIA
What are you --

Amanda locks lips with Fidelia, blows the smoke in her mouth. Fidelia, caught by surprise, eyes pop OPEN with the sudden inhale of smoke.

Amanda sits back and smiles as Fidelia blows out a huge cloud. COUGHS again.

AMANDA
Smoking helps me relax, helps me focus on my character.

Amanda jumps up and runs over to the other side of the rooftop. Fidelia watches, worried. Too high for this.

FIDELIA
Hey come back.

Amanda stands on top of the lawn chair amongst the other dusty furniture on deck.

AMANDA
(in character)
"My king...my liege...oh how the mighty have fallen. Once my great father ruled over this wondrous land, this kingdom was such a sight to see. If only we could remember...but now, behold it in its ruins. No wonder the beauty of what was is now gone from our memories."

Amanda encroaching closer, playing a part of a General, to the impressed Fidelia. An old Welsh/British accent.

AMANDA
"What will become of it? I am...fearful. We shall not perish. This castle will never crumble. I cannot be demolished. I am a marble statue, untouchable, with beauty unmatched by any other man. My strength shall bring honor back to my family’s name. My reign will be

(MORE)
AMANDA (cont’d) never ending, no one will dare stand in my way, and anyone who does...I shall vanquish them!"

Fakes a stabbing blow to the ground with an imaginary sword.

CUT TO:

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Amanda on stage. Fidelia sits center.

AMANDA
"I have seen my destiny...and it is glorious. I am immersed in gold and nothing shall touch me. Nothing I say! My time has come, soon I will rise to power. All shall bow before me, they will call me liege, call me lord...I will be their king. My face will be on the army’s flags and my likeness will be imprinted on currency. My people will chant: LONG LIVE THE KING."

Amanda bows, pipe in hand, takes another hit. Amanda

mischievously smiles.

FIDELIA
I shouldn’t have doubted you.

AMANDA
...I’m sorta used to it. Not being...

FIDELIA
Not being...perfect?

AMANDA
Just not...good enough.

Amanda perks up.

AMANDA
Truth or dare.

FIDELIA
...dare.
AMANDA
Tell me a secret. Quid pro quo. But something you haven’t told anyone before.

Fidelia considers lying.

FIDELIA
When I was a kid, I...killed my sister’s hamster.

Amanda LAUGHS OUT. Fidelia, CHUCKLES.

FIDELIA
I tried to teach it how to play dead.

AMANDA
Guess it worked.

FIDELIA
Worked too well.

Amanda, flirty, touches Fidelia’s hip. Fidelia pushes her away, aggressive.

AMANDA
Sorry...

FIDELIA
No, I’m sorry. I didn’t wanna -

AMANDA
Wanna what?

FIDELIA
Can we stop, please?

AMANDA
Okay, sure. That’s alright.

Fidelia, surprised.

FIDELIA
Quid pro quo...why do you even like me?

AMANDA
You like putting me on the spot, don’t you?
FIDELIA
Just trying to get more into the role right, this is all about acting after all. You are Bentley.

Amanda’s offended.

AMANDA
If you cared...I can’t explain it. I just like you. Why’s that so hard to believe?

Fidelia looks at Amanda for the first time with a fresh set of eyes.

Too late.

AMANDA
Sorry, I gotta go.

Amanda gets up to leave but Fidelia tugs at her sleeve.

FIDELIA
Don’t leave.

AMANDA
Why?

Pause.

FIDELIA
Can I take you somewhere?

AMANDA
Now?

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - LATER NIGHT
Amanda and Fidelia lurking around the church building. Fidelia stares up at the dark night sky.

AMANDA
So, what’s this about Fi?

FIDELIA
I lied to you.

AMANDA
About what?
FIDELIA
I didn’t tell you the truth. I don’t wanna lie anymore. Not to you at least.

Amanda, concerned yet curious.

AMANDA
Why’d you lie?

FIDELIA
Why does anyone lie?

AMANDA
Fi, it’s getting late.

FIDELIA
To protect themselves from the truth, to protect others from knowing the truth...it’s a hard thing to handle. You know? I don’t really know how to even say it. Then you’ll ask me questions like why and I can’t -

Amanda listening. Sits on the curb-step.

AMANDA
You don’t have to tell me Fidelia. It takes time to open up to people.

FIDELIA
I don’t have anymore time.

AMANDA
Now, you’re scaring me...

FIDELIA
I knew that’d happen. I was afraid it would...at the risk of pushing you further away...

Fidelia takes Amanda’s hand and leads her to -

---

FIDELIA
unless you’re already afraid of me?

THE ROSE GARDEN

Fidelia sits down by the rose bush and immediately starts crying.
FIDELIA
I could tell you it was an accident, I didn’t mean to do any of it...but how much of that would be a lie or to justify this. I am the scourge of the earth...the scum at the bottom of the sea not worth eating...at the same time that I feel so empty, I still feel nothing. Nothing at all.

Fidelia shows the chest to Amanda by the brick wall. Amanda looks at it, already knowing what’s inside somehow.

AMANDA
Fidelia...

FIDELIA
(through tears)
I bet you really like me now, huh? You need to know who I really am. Now, go ahead, go.

Amanda holds Fidelia tightly as she SOBS uncontrollably yet still trying to gain composure.

AMANDA
I’m not going anywhere.

FIDELIA
Why not? Just leave me alone.

AMANDA
Because you need my help. I can’t leave. Look, we can’t fix this. But - I can help you hide it.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELLIOT’S APARTMENT - CAR - DAY

Elliot opens the passenger door for his sister, SHELLY WEBBER, 40. An unbalanced woman with good will.

INT. ELLIOT’S CAR - ON THE ROAD - LATER DAY

Shelly bombards Elliot with questions. He’s irritated.

SHELLY
What are you doing, Elliot?
ELLIOT
I don’t know...but I’ll figure it out.

SHELLY
You know Mary is gonna lose it.

ELLIOT
I just need to get away from all of this.

SHELLY
What about Fidelia and Adrian?

ELLIOT
Adrian only calls me when he needs something and Fidelia...she doesn’t call at all.

Elliot drives on in silence.

INT. WEBBER KITCHEN - LATER
Elliot and Mary at the table. He stirs his coffee and sugar. Mary stares at the spoon in silence.

ELLIOT
I’m sorry, I just think this is what’s best for me to do right now.

MARY
You’re just moving over there because you don’t wanna be around your family.

ELLIOT
That’s not it at all. I love you and the kids...but you don’t even want to talk to me, so -

MARY
I don’t want you to keep getting Fidelia’s hopes up. She needs her father more.

ELLIOT
Where are you all the time?

Mary storms out of the room and retreats to her bedroom. Door SLAMS.
INT. MARY’S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS
Mary sits on her bed and WEEPS. She smokes a cigarette. Elliot waits by her door and KNOCKS. Nothing.

ELLiot (VO)
Mary...come on, open the door...I’m sorry Mary...

Mary cracks open the window, blows out the smoke.

EXT. WEBBER HOUSE - CAR - DRIVEWAY
Elliot leave the house and get back in his car.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIEJAS CASINO - MORNING
Early. Nearly empty parking lot. The lights of the casino seen through the misty clouds.

INT. VIEJAS CASINO - MORNING
A chaotic frenzy of bright flashing lights and chain cigarette smoke that lingers overhead.

Mary sits at the slots in a daze.
She DROPS another coin into the slot. Beside her are several empty cups and a full tray of ash.

CUT TO:

INT. CARROWS RESTAURANT - LATER THAT MORNING
It’s a slow day. Elliot on his phone, it RINGS. No answer.
Shelly returns to the table from the bathroom. Sits, looks concerned at Elliot.

SHELLY
Mary probably hates me even more now, bet she blames me for this. Any word from Fidelia?

Elliot hangs up his phone. Shakes his head.
ELLIO T
No answer. My own daughter won’t even talk to me.

SHELL Y
Maybe she’s just busy.

ELLIO T
She always seems busy nowadays...

SHELL Y
Think she’s hiding something from you?

Elliot picks at his eggs with his fork.

ELLIO T
I don’t know.

She doesn’t respond. He eats his eggs.

SHELL Y
Maybe everything’s fine with her. Try again tomorrow? You don’t always have to jump to the worst case scenario.

D I S S O L V E  T O :


A wheelbarrow, a shovel, cement mixture. Check and done. Amanda and Fidelia stand beside it.

FIDELIA
Feels like you’ve done this before.

Amanda snickers.

AMANDA
My cousin’s a construction worker, taught me a few things. You know, in case this acting thing doesn’t pan out.

FIDELIA
Where are we gonna lay it out?

AMANDA
I’m supposed to lay up some bricks over there in the corner. Can you help me?
CONTINUED:

In the corner of the back wall, there’s a gaping HOLE.

FIDELIA
What happened?

AMANDA
My dumbass friend set a cherry bomb off. Well...former friend. Thought it’d be funny.

Fidelia approaches the trash bin. About to lift the lid -

AMANDA
Wait, here.

Hands her a face mask.

FIDELIA
(putting it on) Thanks.

Amanda puts one on as well. They lift the lid. Inside is a bubbling liquid mixture of formaldehyde and the Blonde Girl’s decomposing body parts.

AMANDA
Sure you’ve never done this before?

FIDELIA
I read a lot.

Amanda wheels over the barrow full of cement mixture.

FIDELIA
We’re gonna layer it. So cement mixture, a very thin layer at the bottom here. Then some sand and mix in -

Fidelia points to the trash bin.

FIDELIA
On top and then repeat. The top layer will be mostly cement so that most of her will be at the bottom.

Amanda picks up a stack of red bricks.

AMANDA
Then we pile up the bricks and hide it all away.

Amanda shovels in a thin layer of cement for the base of the floor. Fidelia sprinkles on top the sand mix.
Amanda pours a thin layer of the formaldehyde mix. Followed immediately by Fidelia with cement and bricks.

LATER

The hole is filled up with a fresh brick wall. Fidelia and Amanda wash out the wheelbarrow.

EXT. IMPERIAL BEACH PIER - NEXT DAY

Elliot stands at the end of the pier, puffing on a Marlboro.

Fidelia swats at the smoke, pretends to COUGH, gets his attention.

FIDELIA

Ahem. Dad!

Elliot stomps out his cigarette butt.

Fidelia picks it up and tosses it in the trash.

FIDELIA

Jeez dad.

ELLiot

Well what, you’re the cigarette police now? I’m sorry officer, I’m so sorry.

FIDELIA

No. Did you eat yet?

ELLiot

No. Did you?

Elliot looks towards the pier side restaurant.

Fidelia, eyes downward stuck on the rushing water below. Seen through cracks in the wood.

ELLiot

Wanna get those waffle fries like old times?

Fidelia smiles, looks up and heads towards the front doors.
EXT. BEACH - SAND - LATER

Fidelia and Elliot sit at the tide’s edge. They eat waffle fries with ketchup.

Elliot looks off towards the waves. SIGHS.

   ELLIOT
   You know I still love your mother very much. I still
   think about her sometimes.

   FIDELIA
   I know you do, dad.

   ELLIOT
   I can’t tell Mary that and neither can you.

   FIDELIA
   I wish things could just go back to the way they
   were.

   ELLIOT
   Me too.

   FIDELIA
   Should I talk to her about it, dad?

   ELLIOT
   No, that’s alright hon’.

Elliot goes to the water, dips his feet in.

Fidelia sits and watches him. The sun sets in the background and the orange brightens the sky.

EXT. WEBBER HOUSE - BALCONY - DAY

Mary smokes, sitting and finishing her nails. She looks up to see Fidelia as she SHUTS the front door.

Fidelia joins her.

   MARY
   Back already, huh, your dad stood you up again?

   FIDELIA
   No, he didn’t. We had lunch and talked.
MARY
What’d you talk about? He saying dumb stuff about me again... He’s always saying something.

FIDELIA
No, mom, he wasn’t. Fuck, why can’t we just talk like normal people?

MARY
Oh you think we’re not normal?

FIDELIA
Do you think this is normal, mom?

Fidelia leaves, slides the door SHUT. Mary continues smoking.

INT. FIDELIA’S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER
Fidelia digs through her closet.

She takes out the Q Lazarus show ticket stub and uses it as a bookmark in Crime and Punishment on her nightstand.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
Mary sits and watches "Wheel of Fortune", incorrectly guessing at the words with utmost certainty.

MARY
Harold and...hm...ma--Maury? Who’s with Harold...

Mary eyes wander over to Fidelia’s door. The light is on. Hears CLACKING from the typewriter.

MARY
Honey?

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS
Fidelia stops typing.

MARY (OS)
I’m making dinner, I hope you’re hungry.
INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Mary walks off into the kitchen to cook.

She checks under the lid, steam seeps out. It’s *chicken adobo*. She scoops out two portions for her and Fidelia.

    MARY
    (calls out to Fidelia) Come on out and eat, I made your favorite, you know.

EXT. WEBBER FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Amanda KNOCKS.

She waits. Mary opens the door.

    AMANDA
    Hello Mrs. Webber, my name’s Amanda Johnson. Fidelia invited me over for dinner.

    MARY
    Oh, she didn’t tell me. I don’t think we have enough for the three of us.

    AMANDA
    I’m sorry, that’s okay, um, is she home?

    MARY
    She’s in her room. I think she’s asleep.

    AMANDA
    Thanks anyway Mrs. Webber. It was nice to meet you -

Mary shuts the door.

    AMANDA
    Well, alright then...

Amanda slinks off.
INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Fidelia’s bedroom door opens. She slips into the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Fidelia opens the fridge, stares inside, shuts it closed. She turns and sees Mary at the counter.

FIDELIA
Did someone knock at the door?

MARY
It was your friend, maybe you should answer it next time.

FIDELIA
Was it Amanda?

MARY
I don’t know her name.

FIDELIA
That better not have been Amanda. You just met her, you forgot her name already?

MARY
Why? What’s so important about her? She your girlfriend or something? Are you a bakla just like your brother, hm?

FIDELIA
She’s my best friend! Fuck! Why does it even matter if I am or not?

Fidelia surprised at her own words. Rushes out.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMANDA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Amanda returns home, disappointed, keys limp in her hand as she turns the corner.

...sees Fidelia waiting for her. Amanda smiles.
AMANDA
You look like you could use a jacket.

FIDELIA
I just couldn’t stay there for another minute.

AMANDA
Wanna go inside?

Fidelia nods.

INT. AMANDA’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Amanda and Fidelia on the couch. Close.

FIDELIA
I don’t know what happened. She just...doesn’t understand. She wants me to be someone I’m not.

AMANDA
Nobody’s perfect.

FIDELIA
I just wish she knew that.

AMANDA
Hey I’ve been wanting to ask you something...could we cuddle?

FIDELIA
I don’t know...I want to but -

AMANDA
But what? You don’t like me like -

FIDELIA
I just don’t wanna ruin things with you.

AMANDA
Why would it ruin things?

FIDELIA
Well you know, if we cuddle then that leads to other stuff happening after the cuddles.
AMANDA
But...I’m asexual. So it never gets past cuddles.

FIDELIA
But don’t you like me? and like wanna kiss me and stuff?

AMANDA
I do like you. I do wanna kiss you. But not much more. Sorry if you’re disappointed. But yeah like I said, nobody’s perfect.

Amanda looks bummed. Fidelia leans closer and lays her head against Amanda’s shoulder. Shuts her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AMANDA’S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING
Fresh morning rain hits the window sill. It’s cloudy and windy.

EXT. DONUT SHOP - CONTINUOUS
Shop has clear windows, we see the DONUT MANAGER inside, rearranging donuts on display.

POLICE CAR parked out front. A COP returns to his car with coffee, chomps on an old fashioned. Amanda passes him by as she -

Opens the door. She reads - POSTER PASTED ON THE DOOR: "MISSING GIRL, PLEASE CALL 1- 800- FINDHER".

INT. AMANDA'S APARTMENT - LATER MORNING
Amanda quietly re-enters the apartment with a bag of donuts and two cups of fresh coffee.

She brings the coffee and donuts to a sleeping Fidelia on the couch.

It’s close to Fidelia’s nose, she smells the coffee.

FIDELIA
Beautiful.
AMANDA
I thought to cheer you up, we have coffee and donuts.

Fidelia sits up as Amanda hands her the coffee.

FIDELIA
Thanks. For the coffee and for letting me crash.

AMANDA
You are my director after all. It’s the least I can do.

Fidelia smirks. Sips the coffee. Amanda sits beside her.

AMANDA
I feel better having you stay over than out on the streets. Something could’ve happened. There is a girl missing, maybe there’s some crazed killer out there.

FIDELIA
They still haven’t found out anything?

AMANDA
The volunteers combed through the woods but ended up empty.

FIDELIA
That sucks. I wonder what happened to her...

AMANDA
I really didn’t even wanna mention it. How do you feel about chocolate?

FIDELIA
The same way that Willy Wonka does.

DISSOLVE TO:

LIVING ROOM - MUCH LATER
Amanda carries a plate with a decadent chocolate cupcake. Fidelia sits and waits, she looks back and smiles at Amanda.
Amanda sets the plate on the table, kneels down (genuflects) at Fidelia’s side.
FIDELIA
You know you only genuflect when you’re about to propose.

She looks at the cupcake. Confused.

AMANDA
Will you...be the woman...to eat this cupcake?

Fidelia, grins.

AMANDA
I know that not only chocolate but molten chocolate is the true way to your heart.

FIDELIA
This is true.

BEAT.

FIDELIA
What if I don’t like the cupcake or I get tired of it...

AMANDA
Won’t know till you try.

FIDELIA
Then...why don’t we try.

Fidelia, smiles, takes the cupcake and smushes it in Amanda’s face, and licks it off playfully.

INT. WEBBER LIVING ROOM - PRESENT

Fidelia unlocks the door, Amanda follows in behind her. Drops the bags on the kitchen chair.

AMANDA
Thanks I can’t hold it for another second.

Amanda scurries over to the bathroom. Fidelia opens the PATIO DOOR.
EXT. PATIO - CONTINUOUS

Fidelia looks out, sees the empty two chairs. Finds an empty pack of Virginia Slims.

Sees another note from Mary, it’s short:

MARY (VO)
"Went to Viejas...your lumpia’s in the microwave. Take a look in the garage, happy birthday honey."

INT. MARY’S CAR - ON THE ROAD - ANOTHER NIGHT

Mary behind the wheel, drives at a snail’s pace. Tense. Fidelia’s fingertips tap along the car door.

MARY
I don’t know what to do with you anymore, Fi, if you keep -

FIDELIA
Go ahead, ma.

Mary turns on the radio, switches through every station then shuts it off.

FIDELIA
Say it already.

MARY
I think you should live with your dad for a while.

FIDELIA
Are we going to talk about it? Or is your mind already decided on it, I bet that’s it.

MARY
I can’t keep doing this with you. If Elliot isn’t going to help me with you, maybe you should talk to Father Michael.

Mary grabs her cigarettes and torches up. Rolls down her window.

Fidelia, annoyed, rolls down her window. Stares out at the cars whizzing past.
FIDELIA
Fine, ma...whatever you want. Let’s just go home.

EXT. FIDELIA’S APARTMENT - PARKING - LATER
Mary parks her car in the spot left over. Fidelia quickly, agitated, gets out of the car.

INT. FIDELIA’S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
Fidelia opens her door and rushes in, Mary, follows after her.
Mary sits on the couch and continues smoking her cigarette.

EXT/INT. FIDELIA’S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS
Fidelia storms in her room, giving up. Mary heard from the living room.

MARY (OS)
Fidelia, what are you doing in there?

Mary storms over to the bedroom door, stands firmly at the door.

MARY (OS)
Open this door.

FIDELIA
Why should I? Oh wait...you wanna talk now?

MARY (OS)
Come on, Fidelia.

FIDELIA
Like you care mom. You couldn’t stand to hear it anyway. You know what -

Mary walks away as Fidelia finally opens up the door. Fidelia frustrated. Follows after Mary into the –
FIDELIA
It doesn’t even matter anyway mom, just go back to the casino or work.

LIVING ROOM
Mary puffs on her cigarette, doesn’t even look at Fidelia. She keeps her eye on the clock.

FIDELIA
You’re not gonna say anything?

MARY
Say what? I don’t want to say anything anymore, you’re just going to scream again at your mother.

Fidelia, tired of it, shoves the letter in Mary’s hands. She goes back to her room.

DOOR SLAMS.
Mary stares at the letter.

FIDELIA’S BEDROOM
Fidelia paces back and forth in her room. She stops. Her gaze fixed on the closet door.

CLOSET
A noose hangs from the beam.

Her hands tremble and shake as she reaches for the rope.

IN THE CLOSET
Fidelia shuts the door. Dim. She smiles momentarily. Sees a step stool, places it underneath the noose.

She steps up.

LIVING ROOM
Mary on the couch, reading, quiet.

Mary in tears, drops the letter and rushes over to Fidelia’s bedroom door.

She KNOCKS gently at first.
MARY
Honey...

FIDELIA’S CLOSET

MARY (OS)
Fidelia? Honey, I read your letter.

Fidelia, noose around her neck, teetering off the edge of the chair. About to fall.

MARY (OS)
Why did you lock your door? Come on, open the door.

Fidelia loses balance. The rope tightens.

EXT. FIDELIA’S BEDROOM DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Mary BANGS on the door, angry.

MARY
I got to break down the door now, huh?! Fidelia!

Mary slams her shoulder repeatedly into the door to no avail.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL DISPENSARY - DAY

Elliot surges inside, obviously angry. He approaches the counter, RINGS the bell.

Adrian comes out from the back room. Shocked to see his dad.

ADRIAN
Dad, why are you here? I’m working.

ELLIOt
I thought you got fired. So where’s all my money going to?

ADRIAN
I don’t know why you’re hounding me when you have your own problems to deal with.
ELLiot
I’m dealing with one right now. You’re a fucking liar, I know you’re using again.

Elliot turns and walks away from Adrian. Frustrated.

EXT. MARY’S APARTMENT - BALCONY - LATER DAY
The sky is cloudy now. Slight breeze blows through the open sliding back-door.

Mary shuts the door, turns and heads to the-

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS
Mary empties out her ashtray in the trash. Father Michael, seated at the table, his hands trembling.

MARY
What’s wrong Michael?

Mary looks at her brother intently, worried. He looks down at his hands.

FATHER MICHAEL
I don’t know how to even say these words right now.

MARY
Tell me...why are you so-

FATHER MICHAEL
Afraid?

He nervously LAUGHS. Rubs his cheeks, exhales, slowly.

FATHER MICHAEL
Your daughter has confessed to me...

MARY
What are you saying Michael?

Father Michael looks at her, then at Fidelia’s shut bedroom door.

FATHER MICHAEL
There’s nothing we can do to change what’s happened. The past is gone. But right now, Fidelia, she needs you.
Mary heads to the bedroom door. She gently KNOCKS. No answer.

INT. FIDELIA’S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mary opens the door to find the window, wide open.
The wind blows the curtains, Mary sticks her head outside and yells.

MAR
Fidelia! Y

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Fidelia sits amongst the rose bushes behind the mausoleum.

FIDELIA (VO)
I just wanna give up already, they’re bound to find me out. I messed up somewhere down the line, something I missed along the way. A single drop of blood...something so small...insignificant.

As her handgun dangles from her wrist, Fidelia touches the petals on the roses, staring at the ground where beneath the Blonde Girl lays forever.

FIDELIA (VO)
I wish this feeling would just go away.

EXT. AMANDA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Fidelia desperately BANGS on the front door. Amanda opens it, sees a distraught Fidelia.

AMANDA
Hey what’s wrong?

FIDELIA
My mom and I had a fight.

AMANDA
About the play?
FIDELIA
About you.

INT. AMANDA’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Fidelia, crying on the couch. Amanda hands her a cup of water. She drinks, slowly breathes.

AMANDA
What’d she say?

FIDELIA
Nothing...she wouldn’t even look at me.

Fidelia lays her head in Amanda’s lap.

FIDELIA
She didn’t say a single word...but she didn’t have to. She just gave me that look.

Amanda holds her tight.

FIDELIA
Adrian told me this would happen.

AMANDA
The silent treatment?

FIDELIA
The disappointment.

AMANDA
What? She doesn’t hate you. She’s your mother and she loves you. Got it?

FIDELIA
She might love me now but she won’t after she finds out-

AMANDA
Finds out about what? What are you talking about Fi? You’re not making any sense.

FIDELIA
She’s not coming. I didn’t tell her.

Amanda stops. Grabs the phone, dials Fidelia’s home number. It RINGS. Amanda covers the receiver.
AMANDA
Tell her to come tonight. It’s never too late Fi.

Fidelia reluctantly takes the phone. Sniffles, leaves a message for Mary.

FIDELIA
(into the phone)
Hey mom...are you home? I guess you’re not home but I hope you can make it to the play. I saved some seats for you, Adrian and dad. I’m really sorry about what I said...I love you mom.

Fidelia smiles as she ends the call.

CUT TO:

INT. WEBBER LIVING ROOM - SAME
The apartment is empty. Fidelia’s voice-mail goes unheard. The machine flashes red with a new message.

EXT. WEBBER HOUSE - CAR - DRIVEWAY
Mary sits behind the wheel, frantically dials Adrian’s number.
It just RINGS.

MARY
Fuck this shit.

EXT. ADRIAN’S APARTMENT DOOR - LATER
Deafening 80’s music heard from inside.
Mary KNOCKS at Adrian’s door. Her keys CLANG against the frame. Nothing...She looks through the window, then looks down at the dirty welcome mat.
Lifts it up, finds a spare key. Opens the door to–
INT. ADRIAN’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

A complete mess.

Mary enters, looks around worriedly. Cautious, makes her way down the hall. As she steps into -

ADRIAN’S BEDROOM

The door is a-jar...she GASPS, sees Adrian’s body on the carpet. Covers her mouth with her hand and immediately wells up in tears.

A fresh needle in his arm.

Mary drops to her knees in tears, clutching her son’s body. Quickly she takes out her cell phone and dials: 911.

MARY
Hello, please help me, my son he’s dying from this fucking needles in his arms. We’re at -

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

POLICEMEN AND WOMEN walk about. Police sketches and the Blonde Girl’s photo on the cork board wall.

Father Michael enters, grates his teeth and grips his hat.

He sits in a chair outside the CHIEF’S OFFICE. He sighs, kisses his Rosary.

INT. CHIEF’S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Father Michael talks with the CHIEF, he listens intently. Concern spreads across his stoic face at Father Michael’s words.

FATHER MICHAEL
I know who killed that girl...I think I know who did it...but I’m afraid.

CHIEF
Father, I can’t go off of –
FATHER MICHAEL
I know who killed that girl.

Chief looks shocked.

CHIEF
Who?

CUT TO:

EXT. WEBBER HOUSE - NIGHT
Elliot unlocks the front door with his spare key for emergencies.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
Elliot walks inside. Sits down on the couch to tie his shoe. He calls out, expecting to find Mary home.

ELLiot
Mary? Where are you?

He wanders down the hall to -

FIDELIA’S BEDROOM DOOR
He KNOCKS first.

Tries the KNOB. Peeks inside the empty room. Continues down the hall to -

MARY’S BEDROOM
Also empty. Elliot lingers for a moment before shutting the door, breathing in the perfume still in the air.

EXT. ADRIAN’S APARTMENT - LATER
Elliot pulls up, alarmed as he exits his car and sees Mary sitting out on the stoop.

He walks over to her. She gets up. SLAPS HIM.

MARY
You did this. You were giving him money for drugs!
ELLIOT
Mary, what are you -

MARY
No more lies, Elliot. For once, okay. Come on, we have to go to La Jolla hospital and check on Adrian. He has to get some stomach pump thing and I don’t -

ELLIOT
It’s alright, Mary. I’ll drive.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - OPENING NIGHT

The actors huddle together behind the curtain and pray to Shakespeare.

FIDELIA
We hope to honor the great and almighty tonight. Without Him, we would be nothing. We pray to William Shakespeare for the ability to be open and honest tonight on that stage.

After the huddle, they disperse to their spots. Fidelia and Amanda stand by the curtain, waiting.

FIDELIA
I hope it ends well tonight.

AMANDA
Of course it will.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THEATRE/ STAGE - OPENING NIGHT

Fidelia eyes scan the crowd but look disappointed. She refocuses.

Stage is set up as a bright WHITE ROOM with a television set and two opposing chairs.

Bruce/Fidelia. Sits in a chair.

Enter Father Michael, flashcards in hand. Sits. Rorschach test.
CURTAIN RISES.

FATHER MICHAEL
Bruce, I just want you to tell me what you see, alright?

BRUCE/FIDELIA
Okay. I can do that.

FATHER MICHAEL
Let us use what we have at our disposal and see if we can help you.

He holds up a flashcard.

BRUCE/FIDELIA
I don’t know. I guess it doesn’t really look like anything to me. Tar?

FATHER MICHAEL
Okay. Try harder than that.

He scribbles on the back of the card.

FATHER MICHAEL
It’s subjective, just so you know, you can’t be wrong or right even.

Bruce/Fidelia nods.

FATHER MICHAEL
(holds up card)
What do you think this is supposed to be?

No answer.

FATHER MICHAEL
Guesses are welcome.

BRUCE/FIDELIA
Alright, this one’s weird, it looks like a curved spine.

Father Michael writes down more. Holds up the next card. Bruce/Fidelia, worried.

FATHER MICHAEL
Don’t think too hard.
Nothing, again.

Father Michael immediately rises from his seat, pockets the flashcards and hustles over to a machine and wheels it over.

FATHER MICHAEL
Do you know what this machine is used for in the hospital?

BRUCE/FIDELIA
No...what’s it used for?

FATHER MICHAEL
There’s proven research that shows many young men with your problem have found this machine to be their savior in times of tribulation...mostly used in electro-shock therapy.

Bruce/Fidelia looks at the machine.

FATHER MICHAEL
Are you ready, Bruce?

BRUCE/FIDELIA
Ready for what?

FATHER MICHAEL
For the machine.

Fear escalates.

FATHER MICHAEL
Well that was the first part of your treatment...can you roll up your sleeve for me please?

Bruce/Fidelia slowly rolls up one shirt sleeve. Sweats, heavy breathing.

Father Michael wraps the band around Bruce’s/Fidelia’s arm. He flips a switch on the machine.

FATHER MICHAEL
The machine measures your pulse and heart-rate as you keep your eyes on the screen.

BRUCE/FIDELIA
What screen?

Background: A white sheet drops down, ceiling to floor.
The television BLASTS WITH STATIC. Bruce/Fidelia covers his ears in pain.

Father Michael leaps up and ties down Bruce’s/Fidelia’s hands to the chair. Yanks his head back by the hair, faced towards the screen.

FATHER MICHAEL
Please keep your eyes on the images.

Some stay on screen for 2 seconds, the others 5 or 10.

Dismembered bodies. Bruce/Fidelia shuts his eyes, Father Michael sends a QUICK TEST ZAP. Eyes POP back open.

Quick images varied with homosexual sex and insatiable violence.

FATHER MICHAEL
I’m sorry Bruce, this will go by quickly. I’ll be back in ten minutes...the pain will increase but remember...the worst part’s already over.

Father Michael smiles. Pats Bruce’s/Fidelia’s head and leaves the room. Complete darkness.

Suddenly, a COUNTDOWN appears...10, 9, 8.

The machine starts a rhythmic BEEP. The images slowly materialize back on screen...Bruce/Fidelia stiffens up.

Keeps eyes on the screen with each painful image. Shocked to see... The images stop on Bentley.

The machine continues to BEEP.

Bruce/Fidelia tries to look away, the machine ZAPS. Looks back at Bentley’s/Amanda’s image. This time...his face is bloody and beaten.

MORPHS INTO THE BLONDE GIRL’S IMAGE. DISTORTED, TWISTED, MANIACAL.

Fidelia truly SCREAMS.

Lights fade to black. The curtain drops.
INT. THEATRE / STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Silence as the curtain rises. Amongst the theatre goers, WE SPOT - MARY, ELLIOT AND ADRIAN, all seated together.

LIGHTS up on SCENE 13:

INT. MCCORMICK’S LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Mama sits on the couch. Enter a beaten down BRUCE/FIDELIA.

MAMA
Bruce, where have you been? What’s happened to you?

BRUCE/FIDELIA
(in character) I’m sorry, Mama...

Fidelia/Bruce walks over to the couch and sits down next to Mama.

MAMA
I don’t wanna worry like this, okay?

BRUCE/FIDELIA
Yes, Mama.

MAMA
...what if you got hurt and I wasn’t there to do anything about it. Like, I can’t even imagine -

BRUCE/FIDELIA
(crying) Oh Mama...I--

Bruce/Fidelia SOBS. She holds him tightly.

MAMA
Oh Bruce, please, just tell me.

BRUCE/FIDELIA
I can’t!

MAMA
I can help you, let me help you.

BRUCE/FIDELIA
I’m sorry Mama.

Bruce/Fidelia hugs Mama tighter and cries.
MAMA
You’re safe here, Bruce. I got you, I got you. I love you Bruce, I love you.

Mama kisses Bruce/Fidelia’s forehead. Enter Papa from upstairs. He’s quiet, moves towards the couch. Papa sits with Bruce/Fidelia.

MAMA
You need to tell us Bruce..

BRUCE/FIDELIA
I...I’m sorry Papa. I went to get help. I don’t want you to hate me anymore.

PAPA
What happened?

BRUCE/FIDELIA
To the church.

PAPA
Why?

BRUCE/FIDELIA
To get help from Father Michael. I knew he could help me.

MAMA
We don’t understand.

BRUCE/FIDELIA
Of course you don’t! Don’t you understand? It’s all too late for me...

Bruce gets up and wanders to the other side of the room.

MAMA
Tell us what’s going on...

BRUCE/FIDELIA
That boy...the one we heard about in the news. I knew him.

PAPA
What do you mean, you knew him? Honesty, son, remember it.
BRUCE/FIDELIA
We were lovers once. My only one.

PAPA
Son, that boy’s been gone for a while now. Do you know where he’s run off to?

BRUCE/FIDELIA
...he ran off into the rose garden. I never saw him again. I loved him, dad. Do you still love me? Now that you know?

Before Papa can respond. Bruce/Fidelia pulls out a HANDGUN from behind, COCKS IT, points it to head.

MAMA
Bruce!

PAPA
Son, don’t do this, please!

BRUCE/FIDELIA
Don’t you understand yet? I love you, but they are coming for me any minute now.

Fidelia PULLS THE TRIGGER. BANG.

Lights fade to BLACK. Curtains drop. THEATRE

Audience APPLAUDES. FRONT

DOORS

Several POLICE enter the theatre with Father Michael trailing behind.

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Behind the curtains...the actors GASP. Fidelia really bleeds from the head. Amanda SCREAMS as she touches the red. Others come around to try and help.

Amanda desperately applies pressure to the wound. Panicking. SHE YELLS AND SCREAMS. INAUDIBLE.
EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A black casket, ready to be lowered. White roses lay on top.

Mary, Elliot and Amanda stand together. Father Michael, bible in his hands, reads.

FIDELIA IS IN THE CASKET.

FATHER MICHAEL
"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away..."

As the casket is lowered into the ground and the bagpipes play...

Elliot’s hand reaches over for Mary’s.

FADE TO:

INT. WEBBER HOUSE - AFTERLIFE

CU: Elliot’s hand rests on Mary’s. Everything seems brighter than usual.

LAUGHTER heard from the KITCHEN, travels through the house to -

FIDELIA’S BEDROOM

The laughter stirs Fidelia. She rubs her eyes in disbelief. She sits up in her bed, her room is different yet familiar. *Deja-vu, it’s their old house.* Eyes widen.

She gets up and listens at the door, gently touches it to see if it’s real or not. It is. She opens it and listens...

MARY (OS)
Oh we have more pancakes by the stove Adrian, why don’t you have some more, you so skinny.
Still!

They all LAUGH, sound happy. She opens

her door to the -
KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Fidelia finds her family together again. Mary, Elliot and Adrian... together and happy at the breakfast table. She smiles. She’s back at home.

Mary gets up and hugs her warmly, kisses her cheek.

MARY
Honey, we’ve been waiting for you to feel better.
You were asleep for so long.

Elliot calls out.

ELLiot
Finally she’s back home. Come on, join us!

ADRIAN
Yeah, Fidelia, we’ve missed you!

Fidelia sits down at the table and smiles. Content.

FADE TO BLACK.