

# **Firefly**

by  
Derek Neville

**FADE IN:**

**INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING (1988)**

GRANT JACOBSON hurriedly enters a spacious, dimly lit Italian restaurant. He's in his mid-twenties, but you'd never know it, his tie is on wrong and he probably has the same haircut as when he was fifteen.

He stops in the DINING ROOM and searches over the many candlelit tables. He finds who he's looking for.

A woman sits alone at a corner table, this is SOPHIE JACOBSON. TWENTIES. The type of girl who just talking to you'd think she'd been out of college for years.

She's also nine months pregnant. Grant slides into a chair across from her.

**GRANT**

Funny thing, I thought you meant the other Italian restaurant across from --

**SOPHIE**

You lost the directions I gave you didn't you?

He caves.

**GRANT**

(you got me)  
Yeah.

They both laugh softly, this is starting to feel like a first date.

**SOPHIE**

Did you get to put out any fires?

**GRANT**

No, but they let my drive the truck.

Sophie laughs, but not a fake one, she really likes his humor.

**SOPHIE**

Is it still snowing out?

**GRANT**

It's not too bad. That trash can on wheels we call my car fishtailed a few times though.

She giggles like she's fifteen again and clutches her stomach. It's hard not to like his candor.

**SOPHIE**

Stop making me laugh, it hurts.

**GRANT**

I'm sorry.

**SOPHIE**

Don't be.

He touches her hand and no one says anything for a long time.

When she looks at him -- her GREEN EYES are holding the flame of the candle.

**GRANT**

(soft)

That's a look that will make me feel alive today.

**SOPHIE**

(smiling)

I know.

She looks off across the dining room as a woman in a crimson dress with STRIKING GRAY EYES -- takes her crying baby into the bathroom.

Grants eyes have spotted the dessert tray at moment.

**GRANT**

So what's good here? The dessert tray is kind of sub par --

**SOPHIE**

We still haven't decided on a name yet.

**GRANT**

Don't worry about it, we've got plenty of time.

**SOPHIE**

No, we've had nine months. I have to use the rest room. Think about it while I'm gone?

He nods but it's hard to tell if he's listening, though she doesn't seem put off at his attitude.

She gets up from the table, her eyes still vibrant. He stares at her till she turns the corner.

**INT. WOMEN'S REST ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

A pristine looking rest room, spotless. The type where they play soothing elevator music over twenty year old speakers.

We MOVE down the line to one of the stalls. Sophie stands in the doorway shaking uncontrollably.

A PUDDLE OF WATER rests at her feet. She fights her way over to the sink, she moans as her stomach contracts. She slides down the wall next to the sinks.

TWO WAITRESSES COME STROLLING IN.

**WAITRESS # 1**

Did you see that jerk at table five? He left me two bucks.

The other waitress spots Sophie.

**WAITRESS # 2**

Jesus Christ --

**SOPHIE**

(soft)  
My water just broke.

The first waitress who was whining about tips stops talking, she turns to face Sophie.

**WAITRESS # 1**

Oh God...Oh God...Hang on we're going to get someone to help you.

The two dash out of the rest room. Sophie's MOANS echo off the walls, this place is about as comfortable as a museum right about now.

**INT. WOMEN'S REST ROOM - LATER**

A bed has been made out of TWO BENCHES and a DINING ROOM CHAIR. Sophie's face and clothes are covered in sweat and her dress is severely stained.

She holds something wrapped in a soft blue blanket. We can't see it but WE HEAR SOFT COOING.

GRANT kneels beside her stroking her hair back. The first waitress who no one likes to tip is having a real bad night. The second waitress ushers in a nicely dressed older man.

**WAITRESS # 2**

Sophie, this is Dr. Regan.

Even though he appears to be in his late fifties, DR. REGAN stills looks like the guy you'd want in your corner if you needed emergency spinal surgery.

His eyes squint from years of intense study as he glances over the room and kneels down by Sophie.

**DR. REGAN**

Are you going to be okay?

Sophie nods as sweats trickles down her face.

THE BABY STARTS TO BECOME AGITATED.

**WAITRESS # 2**

An ambulance should be here any second.

Regan nods up at her.

**DR. REGAN**

Have you guys decided on a name yet?

Sophie and Grant exchange looks.

**SOPHIE**

(soft)  
Sarah.

**DR. REGAN**

Beautiful name.

He gestures for the bundle of blankets in her arms and she hands him the wrapped child. He lowers the baby to his lap and unwraps her.

Sophie can't see her baby anymore, she studies Dr. Regan as he looks down and examines the child. He doesn't look up for what seems like forever.

**SOPHIE**

What's wrong?

THE BABY BEGINS TO CRY.

Regan finally glances up, he appears SHAKEN. All the confidence we had in him just vanished out the bathroom door.

He makes eye contact with Sophie and Grant. A CHILL runs up their back. He shoots a look to the waitress.

**DR. REGAN**

What happened during the birth?

She's a wreck.

**WAITRESS # 1**

Nothing...it was really quick actually but then there was...

She trails off -- Regan gives her a hard stare.

**DR. REGAN**

Then there was what?

**WAITRESS # 1**

When I came back in there was this blinding orange light. I mean absolutely blinding -- I don't know for sure -- but when I looked up she had already given birth.

Regan looks back down and everyone becomes still. He looks to Sophie.

**DR. REGAN**

Did you clean this baby off.

**SOPHIE**

No. Why?

THE CRIES FILL THE ROOM.

Regan mutters something to himself but we can't hear. He unwraps the infant for Sophie to see.

**DR. REGAN**

(soft)

Never in my life have I seen anything like this.

The baby is PERFECTLY CLEAN. Not a mark on her. She shows no sign of having just been in the womb.

ORANGE LIGHT dances up the infants arms. It's a soft light, but it's present nonetheless.

It runs up her body and disappears around her face.

No one moves, no one says anything. The baby seems to reach toward Sophie...

THE BABY'S SHRILL CRIES ECHO OFF THE WALLS...

**INT. HONDA CIVIC (PARKED) - DAY (TEN YEARS LATER)**

We're peeking over the shoulder of a YOUNG GIRL drawing in her SKETCHBOOK. The sketch is a highly detailed drawing of a man sitting on a park bench feeding pigeons.

The woman in the driver's seat is SOPHIE, the ten years gone by have been very kind to her and she is just as beautiful as we remember. She chats away on a CELL PHONE the size of a TV remote.

**SOPHIE**

(into phone)

Richard, I realize you want to sell the house on Barrett's Hill but our asking price is way too high.

(beat)

Fine, look I'll talk to the Miller's on Friday and see if I can convince them to buy a house that has a family of nine kids next door.

(beat)

No, forget it Richard, I need to go I have to drop my kid off and I have an appointment at noon.

(beat)

No Richard, goodbye.

She hangs up the phone. She hasn't changed a bit, just as assertive. This woman's a fighter.

We now see the girl sitting in the passenger seat --

This is Sophie's ten year-old daughter SARAH JACOBSON. She has light red hair and green eyes.

**SOPHIE (CONT'D)**

(re: sketchbook)

You're becoming quite the artist.

**SARAH**

Mom?

**SOPHIE**

Yes love.

**SARAH**

Do you think I can come to work with you today?

**SOPHIE**

You know the answer to that. Besides, you don't want to be inside on a nice day like this. You want to be down there --  
(she gestures to the park)  
having fun with your friends, acting silly, you know kid stuff.

**SARAH**

I don't like any of those kids.

**SOPHIE**

C'mon Sarah, what about Alex huh? I thought you liked her.

**SARAH**

Well I did, till she told Jeremy to steal my drawings and throw them in the pond, she only did it because she has a crush on him.

**SOPHIE**

He already apologized for that and his mom bought you the sketchbook you're drawing in. And hey, Darren's gonna' be there, you like him don't you?

Sophie has her.

**SARAH**

He's alright, he doesn't really say much.

**SOPHIE**

Yeah? Neither do you. You guys will get along great.

**SARAH**

I guess.

Sophie stares at her daughter for a long moment.

**SOPHIE**

What do I always tell you?

**SARAH**

Not again mom, please.

**SOPHIE**

That --

**SARAH**

(annoyed)

-- life is what I make it and I should be thankful for what I have, yes I know. You've been telling me since I was five.

**SOPHIE**

I know, that's because I almost lost you and if I had you wouldn't be here right now. That's why I want you to appreciate what this life gives you.

Sarah gives up -- Sophie is such a mom.

**SARAH**

I know.

**SOPHIE**

Okay then, go out there and have some fun. Remember Vanessa is going to give you a ride, Claire will be there when you get home.

Sarah looks alarmed.

**SARAH**

Where are you going?

**SOPHIE**

Your father and I are going out to celebrate our anniversary.

**SARAH**

Oh.

**SOPHIE**

So you be good for Claire, don't give her a hard time.

Sarah suddenly regresses.

**SARAH**

Whose going to tuck me in?

**SOPHIE**

I will when I come home and you're  
fast asleep.

Sarah's not buying it, but decides not to say anything.

**SARAH**

(soft)  
Okay.

**SOPHIE**

(whispers)  
I love you and I will see you very  
soon.

Sarah nods her head as Sophie leans in to kiss her on the forehead.

**SOPHIE (CONT'D)**

Have a good day.

Sarah nods again and quietly climbs out of the car.

**EXT. PARK - DAY**

The park is ALIVE WITH PEOPLE on this warm, early summer afternoon.

KIDS RUN FREE on a massive jungle gym. Adults -- maybe on their lunch break -- ride bikes down the trails or JOG the exterior of the park or WALK THEIR DOGS.

We see a group of TEENAGERS playing touch football off in the distance.

A blonde woman in her late thirties waves Sarah over. Her name is VANESSA FRASER. She looks like the woman in the grocery store with too many kids; hair frazzled and food stains on her shirt and pants.

She stands with her friend DIANE COTTER. THIRTIES. And apparently thinks she's still in her twenties based on her clothing choice.

**DIANE**

Tell me again why I agreed to this.

**VANESSA**

(sighing)  
Because you're a good friend and  
Linda has the flu.

**DIANE**

I'm touched, but it feels like someone has taken a jackhammer to my skull. So how long do we have to watch these little shits for?

**VANESSA**

Hey. They're good kids, it's only for a couple hours.

Up ahead on the cement trail a wannabe ROLLER BLADER takes a DIVE and falls hard onto the cement skinning a knee.

**DIANE**

(re: roller blader)  
Hello there.  
(to Vanessa)  
Would you look at that? Think he needs someone to kiss it better?

Vanessa agrees with a smile -- why not? She's got no social life anyway.

Before she can take off, her daughter ALEX FRASER tugs on her arm.

**ALEX**

Mom I'm thirsty, can I have something to drink?

**VANESSA**

Maybe later. Why don't you go play with a ball or something?

Alex sighs -- clearly used to this. She runs back to join her friends. Vanessa and Diane both are in the process of removing their WEDDING RINGS.

Sarah sits in the grass watching her friends play some weird game which seems to be who can yell the loudest while running like a bat out of hell.

She watches Diane and Vanessa heading toward the fallen roller blader a few yards away. She quickly chases after them.

**SARAH**

Vanessa?

She stops and spins around.

**VANESSA**

(what the hell?)  
What Sarah?

**SARAH**

I was wondering...

She pauses like most kids in mid-thought.

**DIANE**

Spit it out kid.

**SARAH**

I was wondering if I could stay  
with you guys. I promise I won't  
talk or anything.

Vanessa bends on one knee.

**VANESSA**

Well, you see Diane and I need some  
adult time right now. Time away  
from kids. Sometimes when you hang  
out with little kids all the time  
like we do, you forget what it's  
like to be an adult.

Diane nudges Vanessa gesturing to where our fallen roller  
blader is currently being helped by a YOUNGER WOMAN with  
bottle blonde hair.

**VANESSA (CONT'D)**

You can understand that right? Why  
don't you see what Jeremy is up to?  
He always comes up with cool little  
games for you guys to play.

Sarah's look says otherwise, but these two don't catch it.

**SARAH**

(whispers)  
I'm afraid of Jeremy.

Diane rolls her eyes, this kid will not leave.

**DIANE**

Why?

**SARAH**

He threw rocks at me and they hit  
me in the head.

**VANESSA**

Now you're making things up. Go play with your friends there's no need for you to be hanging around with us. GO!

Sarah says nothing, she runs down the hill toward the rest of the kids.

**DIANE**

That's Sophie's daughter right?

**VANESSA**

Yeah.

**DIANE**

She's a little freak huh?

**VANESSA**

She's different I'll give you that.

**EXT. INFIELD - MOMENTS LATER**

Sarah walks toward the group of kids we saw earlier like it's the Green Mile or something.

A few of them appear to be in talks with a GROUP OF KIDS around twelve or thirteen. ("What do you want to play?" "We got enough for kickball.")

A KID standing off to the side quietly approaches Sarah from behind. His name is DARREN SHEPHARD. TEN.

His chestnut colored eyes are very trusting. Though it's hard to see his face under the mess of hair on his head.

**DARREN**

Hey, a couple of the older kids were thinking of starting up a kickball game.

(beat)

You should play.

She decides to lie.

**SARAH**

Yeah. Sounds fun.

**JEREMY (O.S.)**

Would you guys stop fucking around? We're choosing sides.

The voice belongs to JEREMY BERTOCHI and it's not too much of a stretch to believe this ten year old kid just swore.

He could be Ralph Macchio's younger brother, he's a tough-looking Italian kid with piercing blue eyes -- he's been negotiating the kickball game with the older kids.

**EXT. INFIELD - MOMENTS LATER**

Every kid's worst nightmare -- choosing sides for kickball. Jeremy and an OLDER KID with straw colored hair appear to be self appointed captains.

Sarah and a SHORT KID wearing a cast are the last two to be picked -- this is torture.

**OLDER KID**

Alright, we get Greg.

Greg is the kid in the cast and looks stunned he was picked at all. Jeremy's face flashes hot with ANGER.

**JEREMY**

What are you doing? I don't want her on my team. I'd take the gnome in the cast before I'd take her.

**OLDER KID**

Sorry, but he's my brother. If I don't pick him my mom gets ripshit at me.

Everyone begins to disperse toward the backstop and the field. Jeremy walks between kids to get to Sarah. He means business --

**JEREMY**

Listen special ed, you're playing right field and if you fuck anything up, I'm going to throw something a lot harder than a rock at your skull.

Sarah can only stare, this kid sends a chill down her back.

**JEREMY (CONT'D)**

What the hell are you looking at? Do you understand English? Get out there

**EXT. RIGHT FIELD - MOMENTS LATER**

DOWN AT HOME PLATE -- the older kid we saw earlier kicks dirt off the plate obviously mimicking the pro's on TV --

And we MOVE over to DARREN -- covering first like Wade Boggs in his prime. The wind moving the hair out of his eyes.

He waves his hand at SARAH telling her to move back, we all know what this means -- so does Sarah.

JEREMY PITCHES.

It's booted foul. We can't hear what Jeremy's saying but he's clearly cursing out our batter --

The kid looks like he wants to kill Jeremy and he's gonna take it out on the ball, he puts everything he has on the next pitch and --

KICKS THE LIFE OUT OF THE CHEAP RUBBER BALL.

The ball goes sailing toward right field but well of Sarah's head. She doesn't even flinch. ON SARAH as --

The balls SOARS INTO THE THICK WOODS BEHIND THE OUTFIELD.

The older kid begins rounding the bases -- his team by the backstop goes nuts --

Jeremy kicks the dirt by the pitchers mound, real mature. Darren can't look at Sarah.

Jeremy walks off the pitchers mound and into the INFIELD where the second baseman would play.

**JEREMY**

(yelling)

Go get the friggin' ball it's the only one we have.

Sarah looks toward the WOODS -- which look creepier now than they did before. They're DARK. Lifeless. Yeah right she's going in there.

**JEREMY (CONT'D)**

(yelling)

What the hell are you waiting for?  
Stop standing around like a  
freaking retard and go get the  
ball.

She glances over at Jeremy and back at the woods --

She has the look that any ten year old would have if asked to go waltzing into the woods with strange shadows.

She hesitates then...She slowly begins walking into the DARK FOREST. AND WE HEAD --

**EXT. INFIELD - DAY**

Back to the infield for a moment as Darren watches Sarah walk toward the woods. He steals a look at Jeremy who has a real asshole grin on his face.

Darren makes a decision.

**DARREN**

Hey I'll go get the ball, no big deal.

Jeremy suddenly GRABS him hard by the left arm.

**JEREMY**

(through his teeth)  
Don't even think about it. If that little ginger wants to play with us, then she need to start pulling her weight around here.

He shoves Darren back.

**JEREMY (CONT'D)**

Got it?

Darren doesn't say anything -- God could this kid be anymore of a nightmare? Finally Darren reluctantly nods his head.

**EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER**

Sarah stands at the foot of the RAGGED TRAIL that leads into the woods covered with SHADOWS by the taller trees. Only a little bit of SUNLIGHT pokes it's head through the openings in the brush.

She walks slowly at first looking for the RED BALL -- we spot it wedged between some bushes not even ten feet down.

She breathes a SIGH OF RELIEF and quickly walks toward it. This might not be so bad -- She rubs her arms for warmth against the cool breeze blowing in.

She finally reaches the bush that the rubber ball has inhabited. A SMALL SMILE comes across her face, she bends down to pick up the ball...

A LARGE FIGURE MOVES QUICKLY FROM SOMEWHERE BEHIND HER.

SHE STANDS UP ABRUPTLY -- staring dead ahead into the forest. She holds the ball between her hands. She looks down at them and they're SHAKING -- she's afraid to turn around -- TWO DEEP BREATHS AND...

There's nothing there. She grins again, relieved. She begins walking quickly back the way she came --

A TWIG SNAPS...

She stops suddenly -- the HAIRS on the back of her neck standing straight up. Breathing heavily she can almost feel SOMETHING creeping up behind her. Her head WHIRLS to look behind her -- nothing -- no one.

Already OFF BALANCE she is not prepared for the STAGGERING FIGURE that is quickly coming toward her when she glances to the left.

SHE SCREAMS IN FRIGHT AND SURPRISE.

The figure is actually A HOMELESS MAN. Well over fifty five. FILTHY. With white hair that curls around his ears. He has DRIED BLOOD on his face.

He holds TWO DIRTY HANDS with long yellow fingernails to the side of his stomach -- blood leaks out between them -- and his gray sweatshirt has a large wet CIRCLE OF BLOOD stained onto it.

**HOMELESS MAN**

(soft)

I need...help.

Sarah tries not to panic. If she had any voice left she'd scream till she was deaf.

**SARAH**

Okay, okay, I'm going to get someone to help you -- just wait here.

**HOMELESS MAN**

I think I'm...dying.

He suddenly STUMBLE FORWARD as he passes out from loss of blood. She tries to hold him up -- but she's only ten -- they both FALL HARD TO THE GROUND.

Half of his body lies on top of her. She tries to muscle her way out from under it...not happening. She finally loses it.

**SARAH**

(hysterical)

Somebody help me!!!

ON SARAH till --

**EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - AFTERNOON**

We see DARREN pulling grass out of the infield. He watches as Jeremy kicks DIRT at Vanessa's daughter Alex -- who uses her hand to brush it out of her white blonde hair.

**JEREMY**

What the heck is taking her so long?

**DARREN**

I'll go find out.

**JEREMY**

(not listening)

Know what? I bet she took off with our ball just to get back at me. She wants me to go running into the woods and make a big fool out of myself. Well joke's on her. C'mon let's go play something else.

The OLDER KID who kicked the home run is leaning against the fence with the last few remaining members of his team.

**OLDER KID**

(yelling)

Hey are we playing or not? I got to be home by four.

**JEREMY**

No. We're going to play tetherball, we'll rematch you losers tomorrow.

**OLDER KID**

Whatever.

Jeremy watches the rest of the kids leave and shakes his head in DISGUST.

**JEREMY**

(to self)  
Pussies.

He faces Alex and Darren.

**JEREMY (CONT'D)**

First one there gets to serve.

He BOLTS for the TETHERBALL PIT and Alex SCRAMBLES after him. Darren doesn't run -- he stares off into the woods where Sarah went -- he wants to go, he should...

**JEREMY (CONT'D)**

Forget about her. C'mon.

Darren stares for a long moment, then runs to catch up with his friends.

**EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON**

Sarah SLIDES OUT from under the HOMELESS MAN -- her shirt and hands stained with the MAN'S THICK BLOOD -- She gets up panting.

He lays on his back now, eyes closed tight. She searches around frantically for something -- anything that can help her -- she finds nothing -- no one is coming.

**SARAH**

(screaming bloody murder)  
SOMEBODY HELP!!

The woods SWALLOW HER CRIES. She might as well be drowning. Water fills her eyes, she wipes the tears away angrily.

Then --

THE HOMELESS MAN AWAKENS WITH A GASP.

She JUMPS BACK. A beat. She hesitates for a moment -- then going against her better judgment -- she RUNS over beside him.

**HOMELESS MAN**

Help me...please.

**SARAH**

I don't know if I can -- you won't stop bleeding. I need to find Vanessa.

He grabs her arm HARD.

**HOMELESS MAN**

Don't you leave me.

She carefully pulls his sweatshirt up to reveal A DEEP STAB WOUND right where his intestine would be.

WARM BLOOD gushes out of the open wound. Sarah turns a shade of white -- but thinking quickly she takes her sweater off and wraps it tightly around the wound. Smart girl. The man grunts against the pressure.

**SARAH**

I saw this on TV once. I don't know if I'm doing it right.

The man gives a half smile.

**HOMELESS MAN**

(very soft)

Thank you.

SARAH INHALES DEEPLY -- The man focuses his gaze on something, but we can't tell what he's looking at.

**HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)**

Why do your hands glow?

She's taken off guard.

**SARAH**

What?

He gasps for air, this is painful to say.

**HOMELESS MAN**

Why...do your hands glow?

Sarah glances down at her hands and they are indeed GLOWING --

ORANGE YELLOW LIGHT dances up them, resting softly at her fingertips.

**SARAH**

(whispers)

I don't know.

She studies her hands -- watching the light move across them. This is kind of cool, experimenting she touches her arm... nothing happens.

She looks down at the homeless man -- curious she touches his arm -- SHE WATCHES THE LIGHT LEAVE HER HANDS AND ENTER HIS FINGERTIPS -- IT TRAVELS RIGHT UP HIS ARM AND INTO HIS FACE.

She looks back at her hands even more curious now. She tears the BLOOD SOAKED SHIRT off the wound and tosses it aside.

Very...very slowly she bring her hands down on the wound...

HIS BACK SHOOT STRAIGHT UP -- as though he's being shocked.

Thick orange light travels up his body causing him to glow like a human light bulb. The yellow light RACES back up Sarah's arm and into her face.

ON THE WOUND -- it's actually closing up till it disappears completely leaving only the dried blood. Light pours out of the man one last time before his body sinks back down to the cool earth.

The yellow light pumping out of Sarah's hands SOARS THROUGH HER BODY ONCE MORE -- before ending WITH A KICK that send her back a few yards.

**EXT. TETHERBALL PIT - AFTERNOON**

A SMALL FIST SMASHES A YELLOW TETHERBALL -- it belongs of course to Jeremy.

The rubber ball RIPS AROUND THE OTHER END OF THE POST. Alex tries to serve it back but misses miserably. Darren catches the balls and lets it stop there.

**JEREMY**

Man, you guys suck.

VANESSA comes walking toward the pit. We see DIANE on a bench not far behind smoking a cigarette. Vanessa puts a hand up shielding her eyes from the intense afternoon sun.

**VANESSA**

Alright guys, time to go. I told Jeremy's mom I'd have him home fifteen minutes ago.

Jeremy PUNCHES the ball so the rope it's attached to wraps itself around the metal post.

**JEREMY**

Good, I'm not feeling this game anymore.

Jeremy, Darren and Alex walk with Vanessa who is completely oblivious that Sarah is missing --

**EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER**

-- And STRUGGLING TO BREATHE. She glances over to the homeless man, he's taking deep breathes but his eyes are open and looking around.

She crawls toward him, we hear every BREATH, every MOTION.

**SARAH**

(whispers)

Are you okay?

Long pause, he's not even sure. He feels his side, runs his fingers over the old wound -- nothing there -- he smiles and begins to cry.

**HOMELESS MAN**

I think so.

She breathes a sigh of relief, tears runs down her face as she takes his hand.

**SARAH**

(soft)

I think you'll be alright.

He closes his eyes, but the tears run through the lids anyway. He can't believe it, he was dead.

**HOMELESS MAN**

Are you an angel?

She does a half laugh half gasp -- is he serious? -- beat.

**SARAH**

(very soft)

No.

**EXT. PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON**

Vanessa stands in the open doorway of her mini-van as she ushers all the kids inside. Diane sits in the front fooling with the radio.

Vanessa checks to make sure all the kids are seat belted. Satisfied she begins to close the van door -- then she stops.

She pulls the door open again -- wait a second -- she does a quick scan of the PASSENGERS.

**VANESSA**

Where's Sarah?

**JEREMY**

She went home.

**VANESSA**

What?

Jeremy stares out the window, he's enjoying this.

**JEREMY**

Yeah, she decided to walk home.

**VANESSA**

She lives four miles from here, she would not walk home.

Feeling braver than he has all day -- Darren decides to speak up.

**DARREN**

She's in the woods.

**VANESSA**

The woods?

**DARREN**

Yeah. We were playing kickball and the ball went into the woods behind the baseball field.

Vanessa puts her hand to her forehead.

**VANESSA**

So no one went in after her? No one waited to see if she would come out?

No one answers.

**DIANE**

(under breath)

Someone's going to be in trouble.

**VANESSA**

Do you know what kind of people live in those woods? Huh?

Still no one answers -- they're in trouble.

**VANESSA** (CONT'D)  
Strangers. Bad people who do bad things. That's who.

Darren has heard enough -- he UNBUCKLES and runs out of the van and back into the park.

**VANESSA** (CONT'D)  
DARREN!

Frustrated she stares at Diane; who lights another cigarette.

**DIANE**  
I guess we're not going to McDonalds?

Vanessa looks at her, she could kill her.

**EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - CONTINUOUS**

HARD, QUICK FOOTSTEPS --

Darren FLIES ACROSS THE INFIELD and into the outfield on a mission, he has to find her. We try to keep up as --

**EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS**

Darren ENTERS THE WOODS -- eyes dart in a million different directions...where is she?

HE FINALLY FINDS HER -- kneeling beside a FILTHY LOOKING MAN. The first thing he notices is the BLOOD ON HER HANDS -- HER FACE AND HER SHIRT -- Dirt from her tears have left streaks on her face.

He can only look around in disbelief as he tries to catch his breath. She smiles warmly at him as if to assure him everything will be okay.

**EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - EARLY EVENING**

An AMBULANCE is parked in right field. A FEW ONLOOKERS stand off to side trying to see what happened.

Sarah stands partially cleaned up with a dark wool blanket around her. Vanessa has her arm on Sarah's shoulder. Darren, Alex and Jeremy stand to the right of them.

We head over to the inside of the ambulance. TWO EMTS DIAGNOSE THE MINOR INJURIES OF THE HOMELESS MAN.

**EMT # 1**

Looks like we have a minor gash to the side of the head. Cuts and abrasions on his arm --

**EMT # 2**

(to the man)

What did you do buddy? Lose a fight with somebody?

He's of no help -- he's out of it.

**HOMELESS MAN**

(incoherent)

She healed me -- I'm fine -- I was dead...now I'm fine...all better.

**EMT # 2**

Sounds like he's a little buzzed too.

**EMT # 1**

Yeah, we should probably take him back to the hospital, let him sober up. He's gonna need stitches to his head.

**EMT # 2**

How's the girl?

**EMT # 1**

Okay I guess. A little shaken up. She was covered in this guys blood. All I can guess is he stumbled out of the brush looking for the nearest person.

**EMT # 2**

What do you think the cuts are from?

**EMT # 1**

Well, I know there are some homeless people like this guy who live in the woods behind the park. He probably got in an altercation with someone over the last can of beans -- who knows? The weird thing is, the girl is covered in a fair amount of blood and so is he. Though none of his wounds would produce that much blood.

**EMT # 2**

What the hell happened here

**EMT # 1**

I don't know.

They load the homeless man up into the back of the ambulance. Some of the bystanders have left.

So WE HEAD BACK over to Vanessa and everyone else. She keeps Sarah close while making sure the other kids are out of earshot.

**VANESSA**

Do you want to talk about what happened?

Sarah shakes her head -- she's not close to ready.

**VANESSA (CONT'D)**

It's okay, that man won't hurt you. You're safe now.

Sarah stares right into Vanessa's eyes.

**VANESSA (CONT'D)**

Do you want to come back to my house? Have a sleepover? I can call Claire to let her know if you want me to.

Sarah shakes her head. Vanessa is beginning to feel hopeless...

**VANESSA (CONT'D)**

What do you want baby?

ON SARAH --

**SARAH**

(whispers)  
I want my mom.

Vanessa stares at her for a long minute.

**VANESSA**

Let's get you home.

**INT. MINI-VAN (MOVING) - EARLY EVENING**

The van is SILENT. You really could hear a pin drop and yes even Diane is quiet for a change. Jeremy stares mindlessly into his Gameboy as Alex looks over his shoulder.

Darren sits in the way back -- WATCHING CARS GO BY. Sarah sits next to Alex. Lost in her own world.

VANESSA WATCHES SARAH IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR -- she's staring at her hands that are still partially covered brown with dried blood.

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL AREA - EARLY EVENING**

We find ourselves in a NICE WORKING CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD that has seen better days.

The mini-van comes to a stop at a curb. It's attached to a walk leading up to a TWO-STORY HOUSE with an aging porch.

Vanessa kills the engine and climbs out. She comes around and lets Darren and Sarah out.

He stares at Sarah for a long second. Then finally walks the short distance to his tan house next door to hers.

**VANESSA**

See you next week Darren.

He doesn't reply.

**VANESSA (CONT'D)**

(to Diane)

I'll be right back, I just have to talk to her babysitter.

Diane checks her watch.

**DIANE**

Make it quick please -- I want to be back in time for *Friends*.

**EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - PORCH - SECONDS LATER**

The two stand alone on the porch. No one knows what to say. Before ringing the doorbell, Vanessa bends down on one knee in front of Sarah.

**VANESSA**

Are you going to be okay tonight with Claire? I know she can sometimes get...preoccupied with other things.

Sarah nods her head. Vanessa continues to stare at her --

She's running out of things in her mom arsenal. She licks her thumb and wipes the dirt off Sarah's face.

**VANESSA (CONT'D)**

Your mom would kill me if I ever let anything happen to you. You scared me half to death tonight.

Sarah looks to her as if to say: "You don't know the half of it."

**VANESSA (CONT'D)**

You'll call me if you need anything?

Sarah nods again.

**VANESSA (CONT'D)**

Okay.

She stands up and rings the doorbell. After a few seconds Sarah's babysitter opens the door --

This is CLAIRE GIBBONS and she is the exact opposite of what you'd think someone with the name Claire would look like. She is eighteen with short black hair, Buddy Holly glasses and an eye ring.

**CLAIRE**

I was wondering where...  
 (looks at Sarah)  
 ...you guys had been.  
 (looks to Vanessa)  
 What happened?

Vanessa looks to Sarah -- where to begin?

**INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER**

We can hear Vanessa and Claire whispering but it's impossible to make out what they're saying.

So WE MOVE TO the living room off the foyer where Sarah watches TV -- the BLUE LIGHT flickering off her face.

After a few minutes Vanessa heads for the door.

**VANESSA**

(to Sarah)

Okay Sarah, have a good night and  
I'll see you next week okay?

Sarah forces a smile. Vanessa smile back and heads out the door. Claire locks it behind her and comes into the living room and switches off the TV.

**CLAIRE**

Hey. There's some mac 'n cheese on  
the stove for you. I have some  
friends coming over. So why don't  
you have some dinner and get  
cleaned up for bed?

**SARAH**

Okay.

**INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Sarah WATCHES HERSELF IN THE BATHROOM MIRROR as she brushes her teeth. Her hair is still damp from her bath. She takes a sip of water out of a paper cup and spits toothpaste out into the sink.

She stares down at her hands -- they appear to be normal -- she glances up at her reflection...unsure of the PERSON SHE SEES...

**INT. SARAH'S ROOM - SECONDS LATER**

A CLUTTERED ROOM with stuffed animals and dolls. A toy chest sits in the corner and artwork from her sketchbook is taped up to most of the walls.

She rolls the covers of her bed away, walks over near the door and shuts the light out. She crawls quickly under the covers.

After getting comfortable, she turns over to her left where her stuffed bear lies -- she smiles warmly at him.

**SARAH**

(soft)

How was your day?

No response from the bear. She tucks it under her arm and turns over on her side.

**INT. SARAH'S ROOM - NIGHT - HOURS LATER**

The only light is the moonlight coming in from the window over her bed. Sarah is sound asleep on her side.

We move slowly up from the bed --

SOPHIE IS SUDDENLY STANDING ON THE OTHER SIDE.

THE WIND RIPS AGAINST THE WINDOW -- Sarah stirs and wakes slowly. She turns over surprised to see her mother.

**SARAH**

(whispers)  
-- mom?

Sophie doesn't answer.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

(whispers)  
...mommy?

Sarah sinks back down to the bed -- getting scared now. The light from the moon falls on Sophie's face.

SOFT TEARS -- roll down her face. She's whispering something inaudible.

Sarah crawls out from under the covers and leans forward in her bed -- STRAINING TO HEAR -- Sophie doesn't flinch.

**SOPHIE**

(very soft)  
Good night, sweetheart --

THE DOOR TO SARAH'S ROOM FLIES OPEN...

The light from the hallway falls on Sarah's face. A shadow steps into the light.

**CLAIRE**

Sarah?

Sarah squints into the light.

**SARAH**

What's going on?

Claire has the cordless phone in her hand, she sniffles as she wipes tears from her eyes.

**CLAIRE**

Sarah, get up.

**SARAH**

What's going on?

**CLAIRE**

Sarah -- there was an accident.

**SARAH**

Where's my mom?

**CLAIRE**

They were in an accident sweetie.  
C'mon get dressed, I need to take  
you to the hospital. Hurry.

She closes the door leaving Sarah all alone in the dark. She looks up to where Sophie was standing, but she's gone.

**INT. SAINT JOSEPH'S MEDICAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT**

In the middle of the hallway we see GRANT sitting in a hard backed chair. That boyish charm we remember from last time completely gone from his face.

He holds his head in his hands -- A LARGE GASH runs across his forehead, it's shiny with fresh stitches.

A POLICE OFFICER approaches him -- an older man with a cops mustache and a five o'clock shadow. Definitely not the guy you want to pull you over...ever.

**OFFICER HOLLIS**

Mr. Jacobson? I'm Officer Hollis.  
I'm sorry to bother you, but I need  
to ask you a few questions. Can I  
ask how the accident happened?

**GRANT**

A truck forced us off the road.

**OFFICER HOLLIS**

Okay. Who was driving?

**GRANT**

Me.

**OFFICER HOLLIS**

I spoke with the driver of the pick-up -- he's fine by the way. He said when you hit him --

**GRANT**

No. He hit us.

**OFFICER HOLLIS**

At about what speed would you say you were traveling?

**GRANT**

He came out of nowhere, I took my eyes off the road --

**OFFICER HOLLIS**

That's not what I asked, Mr. Jacobson.

**GRANT**

I don't -- I don't know how fast I was going.

(beat; overwhelmed)

Why are you asking me these questions?

**OFFICER HOLLIS**

Sir. These questions I'm asking you are standard procedure when there's a fatality.

**GRANT**

(pissed)

My wife is in surgery. She's not dead.

**OFFICER HOLLIS**

Right. So she is. You have anything to drink tonight?

**GRANT**

I didn't do this. It's not my fault.

**OFFICER HOLLIS**

Didn't say it was. Night Mr. Jacobson.

He jots something down in a note pad and walks away quietly.

**SARAH**

Daddy!

Grant looks up -- shocked to see his daughter.

Claire leads her down the hallway. She runs all the way down to her father. He catches her in his arms, letting out a big moan as he hugs her.

**GRANT**

How are you doing sweetie?

**SARAH**

When can I see mom?

He looks at her -- he wants to answer...but he can't.

**GRANT**

I don't know honey. I don't know.

From around the corner, A SURGEON in scrubs approaches Grant and Sarah, he shakes Grant's hand.

He's young, but he's got the face of a doctor, the one that tells you you're in good hands.

**SURGEON**

Grant Jacobson?

Grant nods.

**GRANT**

-- How's my wife?

The surgeon hesitates.

**SURGEON**

First, I want to tell you that we did everything we could for her. She suffered severe brain trauma and most of her right side was crushed.

**GRANT**

-- Jesus.

He looks to Sarah and dammit if her eyes aren't already watering. The doctor looks at her as well.

**SURGEON**

Would it be possible to talk to you in a private moment?

Grant nods and they walk away from Sarah down an adjacent hallway.

**SURGEON** (CONT'D)

I didn't want to say this in front of you daughter, she's already gonna' be traumatized enough as it is.

(beat)

Here's the situation -- as of a few minutes ago, you and the driver of the pick-up are the only survivors of this accident.

Grant's eyes water, he knows what's coming --

**SURGEON** (CONT'D)

There's nothing more we can do for her. The injuries were too severe...

ON SARAH -- she stares at her hands as an idea pops into her head. She looks over at her dad.

**GRANT**

(to surgeon)

Can I talk with my daughter please?

**SURGEON**

Sure, go ahead, take all the time you need.

Grant looks to his daughter as she makes her way over. He bends down on one knee in front of her. No idea how he's going to explain this one.

**SARAH**

Can I see mom now?

**GRANT**

I don't think you're going to be able to.

**SARAH**

I can help her daddy.

He stares at her for a long time -- God if that didn't just break his heart.

**GRANT**

Your mom -- your mom...has gone to...some place else now sweetie.

Sarah starts to lose it.

**SARAH**

You don't understand. I can help her -- just like I helped this man in the park today. Please just let me see her.

**GRANT**

You can't baby. I'm sorry.

**SARAH**

(crying)  
Please daddy -- I can save her...please.

That might be the last knife in his heart --

**GRANT**

Baby, I know you think you can but you can't. She's gone.

Sarah can't stop the tears now --

**SARAH**

Daddy -- Please believe me. I can help her.

She might as well be talking to a wall.

**GRANT**

Claire's going to take you home.

**SARAH**

NO!

Claire comes running down the hallway. She grabs Sarah by the hand -- SARAH TRIES FIGHTING HER WAY BACK --

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

(between sobs)  
No -- No -- NO!  
(beat)  
Please...daddy...please.

Sarah LOSES IT ALL NOW and Claire has to scoop her up over her right shoulder.

HER CRIES ECHO OFF THE WALL -- as Grant stares stunned. The double doors finally close on the hallway.

**INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - FOYER - HOURS LATER**

The front door SLAMS SHUT. Grant stands in the foyer with his jacket in his hands for a long time -- what a fucking night.

Sarah sits staring at her father through the railing posts on the stairs. He begins to walk slowly toward the kitchen...stops -- AND LOOKS AT HIS DAUGHTER.

**GRANT**

Go to bed Sarah.

Sarah stares -- but doesn't move. She watches her father head into the kitchen.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

INTERCUT WITH SARAH ON STAIRS.

Grant sits alone in the dark. He takes long pulls on a glass of scotch. He turns his head to the side -- listening.

**GRANT**

I said go to bed -- don't make me repeat myself!!

SARAH FLINCHES -- she's never seen her dad act like this before -- she runs up the remaining stairs to her bedroom.

Grant slouches over on the couch -- he's SHAKING HARD -- then we realize he's crying.

BLACKOUT:

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON (PRESENT DAY)**

EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD SARAH JACOBSON sits motionless on a hospital table in a squeaky clean room. Her eyes are fixed on an abstract point on the wall across from her.

WE CAN HEAR THE SOUNDS OF A HOSPITAL --

The torso of a PHYSICIAN stands to her right -- we can hear him speak but we never see his face.

**PHYSICIAN (O.S.)**

I should have the results of the CAT scans along with the rest of the tests in a few days.

**SARAH**

Okay.

**PHYSICIAN (O.S.)**

I can tell you right now there's nothing to worry about. Just take it easy for the next couple of days.

**SARAH**

Sure.

**PHYSICIAN (O.S.)**

Would you like to talk about those markings on your back?

Sarah looks up -- he's hit a nerve.

**SARAH**

(soft)

No.

**PHYSICIAN (O.S.)**

Okay. Why don't we schedule an appointment for this Friday...

THE PHYSICIAN'S WORDS FADE AWAY -- as Sarah focuses intently on the abstract point on the wall across from her.

**INT. WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

A spattering of children accompanied by adults sit and wait. Sarah walks back into the waiting room and grabs her jacket from the coat rack on the far wall.

As she heads for the door -- A LITTLE BOY RUNS INTO HER -- He look to be six or seven and he's wearing his lunch on his T-shirt.

His mother, A HEAVYSET WOMAN in her forties looks up from her magazine --

**HEAVYSET WOMAN**

(God dammit!)

Jeffrey!

(beat)

I told you to stop running around.  
Get the hell over here.

She means business -- we might add she's also wearing her lunch on her shirt's collar. She focuses her attention back on her article.

Sarah smiles warmly at the boy -- bends down and pulls some CANDY out of her jacket pocket.

She puts her index finger to her lips ("Shhh.") -- she places the candy in the boys hand and folds his fingers around it. He smiles and runs back toward his mother.

**INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - FOYER - EARLY EVENING**

Sarah quietly hangs her jacket on the hook near the front door. She attempts to quickly get past the doorway to the living room but --

**VOICE (O.S.)**

Sarah. Is that you?

She stops frozen -- so close.

**SARAH**

Yeah dad.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME**

Sarah stands nervously in the doorway of the living room. Once beautiful and ornate -- now dirty and disorganized. The kind of place where you can't find anything. Sarah currently focused on --

A WELL-WORN LEATHER CHAIR. It's back facing us. But someone's in it -- A MASCULINE HAND reaches to the small table next to the chair, picks up a GLASS OF SCOTCH...

CLINKS the ice cubes as he gently rotates his wrist. And finally --

GRANT JACOBSON peers around the chair. Still extremely handsome -- hairline thinning. Very intense. Glassy eyes.

**GRANT**

Where you been?

**SARAH**

The library.

Grant shakes his head -- knows this is a lie.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

Why are you home from work so early?

Grant sighs, downs a swallow of his drink --

**GRANT**

I got laid off.

**SARAH**

Again? Dad -- that's the third job  
this year.

He gazes at her. We're not used to this look -- this is a  
look of hate. ANGER.

**GRANT**

You don't think I know that?

**SARAH**

Have you thought about talking to  
Chief Sawyer?

He sets the glass down hard -- getting pissed.

**GRANT**

No. I haven't. You know why?  
(beat)  
Because usually when they tell you  
to never come back -- that's  
usually what they mean.

Sarah shudders in the doorway.

**SARAH**

I just thought since you and Mr.  
Sawyer were friends --

**GRANT**

You thought nothing. You don't know  
a damn thing about anything. Okay?  
(beat)  
It's probably why you get poor  
grades in school -- you don't know  
what it takes...

She can feel herself getting upset -- we can tell this isn't  
the first time he's made her feel this way.

**SARAH**

-- Sorry.

**GRANT**

Don't start boo-hooing either --  
you know how I hate when you do  
that.

He sighs gets up with a grunt --

**GRANT (CONT'D)**

How's this for an idea? It'd be real considerate of you to make some dinner. I haven't eaten since this morning.

(beat)

So how about you stop worrying about trying to fix everything? And get in the kitchen.

She nods quietly -- doesn't want to cry. This is not the Grant we remember.

**INT. SARAH'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

A small, messy bedroom. Canvases and paints. CDs and clothes and posters and food -- but it's comfy, definitely a teenage girl's room.

She glances at her watch as she pulls her sketchbook out of her bag -- CRACKS A WINDOW -- and slips on a pair of headphones. She slinks down onto the bed -- focusing intently on her DRAWING.

All her movements seem to be carefully thought out. A breeze blows in from the window -- she closes her eyes tight AS THE MUSIC BEGINS TO DROWN EVERYTHING OUT -- eyelids getting heavy.

We drift into...

**INT. EMERGENCY RECEPTION AREA - DREAM**

PURE SILENCE. Then THE DISTINCT SOUND of DEEP WHISPERS.

A CLOSED EYE. SNAPS OPEN as we hear something that sounds like the air being sucked from the room and --

SARAH BOLTS UPRIGHT INTO FRAME. And we're in a depressingly milky corridor of a hospital. She's confused. Disorientated. Trying to remember --

We hear VOICES. Distant, but not too distant, right around the corner maybe.

And whatever the fuck is going on, Sarah is DRAWN TOWARDS that sound so --

We FOLLOW HER as she leaves the corridor and enters --

**INT. WAITING ROOM - DREAM**

An empty waiting room. A TV IN THE CORNER PLAYS THE NEWS. Not a soul is in here except --

A TEN-YEAR OLD BOY with sharp gray eyes sits on the floor playing with cars. He's covered in A WHITE LIGHT from somewhere above but we don't see the source.

Sarah sits on the floor across from him. Waiting for a sign or something when --

**TEN YEAR OLD BOY**

Here you can play.

He hands her a little toy bus.

**SARAH**

Wh -- What's happening?

**TEN YEAR OLD BOY**

You know what's happening. Don't try to fix everything.

Sarah pulls away -- FREAKED.

**SARAH**

Do I know you?

**TEN YEAR OLD BOY**

My name is Joel. You will remember my face when you see it again.

**SARAH**

I don't understand --

**TEN YEAR OLD BOY**

I am afraid.

**SARAH**

Of what?

**TEN YEAR OLD BOY**

Of the person behind me -- make them leave.

Sarah doesn't know what to say to that. And that's when it happens --

Sarah goes WHITE.

She's looking PAST Joel. WAY down the hall behind him. And the SOUND DROPS OUT as we follow her gaze --

There. Down the hall. A FIGURE.

We can't see their face, more of a shadow than anything. Just standing there. Facing us. Facing Sarah. And it's fucking CREEPY.

**SARAH**

(oh my God)  
Who is that?

Joel doesn't answer.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

Joel. Who is that?

**TEN YEAR OLD BOY**

Don't look at them -- they will go away if you don't look.

**SARAH**

I don't know how to help you.

He looks her dead in the eye -- sending a chill down her back.

**TEN YEAR OLD BOY**

Hurry.

**SARAH**

Hurry to where?

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a TATTERED BUS TICKET. He hands it to her -- it's definitely covered in DRIED BLOOD.

ON THE TICKET -- It's a bus trip from Philadelphia to Boston.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

The date on this ticket hasn't happened yet.

**TEN YEAR OLD BOY**

Don't be afraid. When the time comes you will do what is right.

**SARAH**

I think you have me confused with someone else. I can't -- do anything.

**TEN YEAR OLD BOY**

No, you can help us all.  
 (realizing something)  
 You must or we all pay the price.  
 (beat)  
 That's a beautiful locket you wear.

Sarah puts her hand to her neck -- feels the SILVER LOCKET there.

**TEN YEAR OLD BOY (CONT'D)**

My mom gave me something like that when I was born. I don't wear it though, I think it looks stupid.

A beat. Joel takes the toy bus from Sarah's limp hand. He smiles up at her and goes back to playing. He pushes the toy bus across the floor where it RICOCHETS OFF THE LEG OF A CHAIR -- and we CUT TO:

**INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING**

And here's GRANT, motionless, passed out in front of the TV. He stirs, then wakes with a grunt. He gets his bearings and shuts off the TV as he gets up from his chair. WE FOLLOW AS --

**INT. KITCHEN - SECONDS LATER**

THE LIGHT CLICKS ON in the kitchen. Grant walks slowly in. Still wiping sleep from his eyes. He heads over to the counter and pours himself ANOTHER DRINK.

He sets the bottle of scotch down -- takes a long pull of his drink -- closes his eyes to it. Lets out a long sigh. Rubs a hand across his face.

He glances at the clock on the microwave -- 8:23 P.M. -- He surveys the empty kitchen. SLAMS HIS GLASS DOWN HARD...

**GRANT**

Doesn't listen to a goddam' thing I say.  
 (beat)  
 SARAH!

**INT. SARAH'S ROOM - EVENING**

Sarah AWAKENS WITH A START in the silent room. She's shaking. Tears run down her face -- she wipes them away, exhaling deeply.

GRANT'S YELLING echoes up through her room. She yanks the headphones off. Listens --

**GRANT**  
(downstairs)  
SARAH!! WHERE ARE YOU?

FEAR runs across her eyes. Oh. SHIT. She quickly cleans everything up -- runs over near her door and turns out the light. She slides her closet door open and climbs inside...

**INT. CLOSET**

She closes the closet door and climbs near the back -- it's fairly dark inside. She takes DEEP HARD BREATHS.

**SARAH**  
(whispering)  
Please let him think I left...  
Please let him think I left...

She breathes harder now. Quicker.

FOOTSTEPS are heard out in the hallway. Out of fear she begins crying -- the footsteps stop right outside her bedroom door --

**SARAH (CONT'D)**  
-- No.

SOMETHING FALLS OVER in the room. Sarah jumps as it crashes loudly to the floor.

**GRANT**  
(in bedroom)  
Where are you?

SOMETHING ELSE crashes to the floor. The light shifts around as the footsteps stop in from of the closet -- she has to grab her arms she's shaking so bad.

**SARAH**  
Please go away.

A beat -- THE CLOSET DOOR SLIDES OPEN VIOLENTLY -- Grant stands on the other end. Light from the bedroom falls on Sarah's face. He reaches in and grabs her by the arm --

**GRANT**  
Come here --

He THROWS her to the ground -- she remains there afraid to get up.

**GRANT** (CONT'D)

I gave you one thing to do -- make dinner. What's the matter with you?

**SARAH**

I'm sorry.

**GRANT**

Sorry doesn't cut it anymore.  
You're always sorry.

She tries to get up -- but he pushes her back down -- knocking over a canvas.

**GRANT** (CONT'D)

(out of it)

You're an embarrassment. You know that? Your mother thought you were some miracle baby.

(bursts out emotionally)

You took my life away you little shit.

(beat)

I didn't want a kid. This would all be so much easier if you'd just had gone and died in the womb like you were supposed to.

This hangs in the air -- harsh words meant to sting. Sarah's eyes fill with water.

**SARAH**

Please don't hurt me.

**GRANT**

(are you nuts?)

Hurt you? Hurt you? I can't stand you.

(beat)

Every time I look at your face I see my wife -- my Sophie -- and every time you remind me she's gone.

(beat)

It's like you're blaming ME!

(beat)

Hurt you? I can't stand to look at you -- let alone touch you.

Sarah sits on her knees crying -- he SMACKS her across the face.

**GRANT** (CONT'D)

Stop crying -- I hate it when you cry.

**SARAH**

I can't help it.

She can't either -- he gazes down at her -- he's FUCKING SCARY in this moment, we don't know this man anymore.

**GRANT**

(calmly)

I have no choice. You need to be punished. We all have to pay the price Sarah.

**SARAH**

No. Please. I'm sorry --

He stands over her -- shadow engulfing her face -- she looks up at him with ABSOLUTE FEAR...

Then the bedroom door SLAMS SHUT. And we're helpless to stop anything.

**INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - LATE MORNING**

TODAY'S YOUTH flood the hallways. Rummaging through lockers. Looking for books for the next class.

It's loud and obnoxious -- a thousand indecipherable conversations seem to be going at once.

Sarah quietly shoves books from her locker into her shoulder bag. She moves very stiffly. Her sleeve is rolled up -- very gently she touches her fingertips to the BRUISES.

Her hands won't glow at all --

A SHADOW falls onto her face from the other side of the locker door.

It belongs to eighteen-year old DARREN SHEPARD --

He still has the mop of brown hair and the chestnut colored eyes -- there's something about him he looks like the type of person you can't help but feel confident in. Trusting.

**DARREN**

Hey.

She nods hello. He stares at her -- but she avoids eye contact.

**DARREN (CONT'D)**

Where were you first period?

**SARAH**

I wasn't feeling good. I slept in.

He knows this is a lie -- but he can't tell her that.

**DARREN**

Your dad was cool with that?

**SARAH**

He left early for work.

She shoves some books into her locker. He glances at her arm with the sleeve up -- DARK PURPLE BRUISES COVER IT -- he stares intently for a second then looks to the ground.

OFF DARREN -- who knows something is rotten here. Thinking he isn't looking she pulls the sleeve back down.

**DARREN**

Are you going to that assembly for Jeremy?

**SARAH**

When is it?

**DARREN**

Last period. I just figured since you were there -- when he died -- you'd want to go. They may ask you to say something. They already asked me but I declined. I don't speak well to large groups.

**SARAH**

He was your friend, not mine. You should say something.

Not the response he wanted but --

**DARREN**

Well, I'll save you a seat in case you change your mind.

They stand there, not speaking a word.

**DARREN** (CONT'D)

I was wondering --

But something's caught Sarah's eye down the hallway.

**SARAH**

Hold that thought okay? We'll catch up later -- promise.

He wasn't expecting that either -- he nods okay -- stunned. She smiles sweetly and heads down the hallway toward SOMEONE OR SOMETHING OUT OF FRAME And lest we be curious what she just saw...

**INT. GYMNASIUM - AFTERNOON**

We're now surrounded by a congested number of STUDENTS and PARENTS sitting in folding chairs. Some cry while others hold their head down solemnly. Definitely not your typical high school assembly.

A BLOWN UP PHOTO OF JEREMY BERTOCHI stands near the stage. Eighteen when the photo was taken -- his piercing blue eyes stare out into the crowd.

THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL stands at a podium delivering a speech --

**PRINCIPAL**

The loss of Jeremy Bertochi is a blow to our school community. Not just a star athlete but a highly respected young man with a bright future ahead of him...

His words FADE AWAY -- as WE MOVE to the back of the gym --

We see SARAH watching intently through the little glass window of the gymnasium door. WE HOLD ON SARAH AS WE --

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

A PAIR OF WORN RUNNING SHOE HEELS being DRAGGED across pavement --

We're moving really fast...hand-held...disorienting...we hear the sound of HEAVY BREATHING...EXERTION...

And OH SHIT, those shoes are on the feet of a BODY...and not just any body but Jeremy's body...

And SARAH's the one dragging it.

She's sweaty -- soaked from the pouring rain -- clutching the wrists of a bloody-face Jeremy as she PULLS him away from SOMETHING ON FIRE...

And Sarah GRITS her teeth, her arms BURN with the effort but he's DEAD WEIGHT and it's so hard -- each step backward a Herculean effort -- she finally pulls him a safe distance away.

We PULL BACK to find her -- RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET. Smack dab in the suburbs -- across the street a PICKUP TRUCK is smashed into a telephone pole. And just as we're wondering WHAT IS GOING ON --

**INT. GYMNASIUM - AFTERNOON**

We're making EYE CONTACT with the smiling photo of JEREMY. The lights from the gymnasium give him an almost ethereal glow.

We're ON DARREN now sitting in the front row -- he stares down at the empty seat to his left.

**INT. DARREN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER**

We HEAR THE PATTERN OF RAIN ON GLASS...And we find DARREN'S REFLECTION in a window being pummelled by RAIN.

**VOICE (O.S.)**

So are you one of tomorrow's  
brightest minds yet?

He smiles. And he turns away from the window to face --

LINDA SHEPARD. His MOTHER. Late forties. Signs of a woman of once striking beauty rest on a tired face RUN DOWN from years of working two jobs.

**DARREN**

No not yet.

Linda sits at the kitchen table organizing photos for a photo album. Darren grabs a drink from the fridge as Linda looks up from what she's doing --

**LINDA**

You know a "Hello" when you got home would be nice every once in awhile.

He SIGHS as he takes a pull from a can of soda.

**DARREN**

I'm sorry --  
 (sarcastic)  
 How was your day mom? Mine was  
 good. Did you win the lottery by  
 any chance?

She SMILES -- this is playful mother and son banter -- we definitely get a sense of understanding between them.

**LINDA**

Did you get to talk to her today  
 like you wanted.

She's hit a NERVE -- smile's gone.

**DARREN**

No -- no I didn't.

**LINDA**

Why not?

He doesn't want to talk about it -- not now.

**DARREN**

It's complicated mom. I don't know.  
 She has a boyfriend.

**LINDA**

You know the truth isn't as scary  
 as you might think. She'll never  
 know how you feel if you don't tell  
 her.

We've all heard that before and Darren nods and we know he has too.

**LINDA (CONT'D)**

It doesn't hurt to have a little  
 faith in things.

He sighs again -- this is the absolute last thing he wants to get into --

**DARREN**

Mom -- I've had a long day and the  
 last thing I need right now is a  
 feel good speech on faith or  
 destiny or fate or any of that  
 other stuff you're always rambling  
 on about.

He heads over to the table.

**DARREN** (CONT'D)

(means this)

No one is meant to be with anyone.  
The fact that two people fall in  
love is pure luck. Fate doesn't  
happen for any of us. No one is  
watching out for us. We're all on  
our own.

Wow. Very cynical. Maybe the events from earlier triggering  
it -- Linda can only stare at her son -- a beat then, she  
smiles.

**LINDA**

Maybe it's time you changed your  
opinion on that.

She takes a PHOTOGRAPH from the shoe box and slides it across  
the table toward him. It's a picture of SARAH AND HIM at ten-  
years old -- smiling into the camera on a sunny day.

**INT. LOFT BEDROOM - EVENING**

A cramped, typically messy loft bedroom of an eighteen-year  
old guy. Clothes and trash and food clutter the floor. EVERY  
INCH OF THE WALLS is covered by posters or pictures from  
magazines.

The guy who lives here, EVAN DUNNE. Sarah's BOYFRIEND. He  
lays on his bed taking a hit from a JOINT.

There's a KNOCK ON THE DOOR -- and this is a real oh shit  
moment as he puts out the joint and tries to clear the air  
away.

He heads over to the door and pulls it open to reveal SARAH  
on the other side. We can tell this is the last person he  
wants to see --

**EVAN**

-- Sarah? What are you doing here?  
Who let you in?

**SARAH**

Your dad -- can we talk please?

He moves away from the door to let her into the room. He  
stares everywhere else but her face. He seems a little  
distracted --

**EVAN**

What do you want?

**SARAH**

Why have you been avoiding me at school? I tried calling but you weren't answering.

**EVAN**

Phone's dead.

**SARAH**

Oh. Listen, I need to talk to you about something that's been bothering me. I really feel like I can't tell anyone else right now.

He continues to stare at the ground.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

Last night I had this dream while I was awake. I was walking down a corridor in a hospital and there was all this whispering -- then there was this little boy sitting by himself on the floor in the waiting room. I had never seen him before in my life.

(beat)

When I talked to him he told me I was the only one who could help him. It was so real --

**EVAN**

You're being serious aren't you?

**SARAH**

Dreams sometimes foreshadow real life. Call it a vision -- a premonition, whatever, but I need your help.

And Evan is completely motionless now, staring across the room at an abstract point on the wall --

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

He handed me a tattered bus ticket from a Philadelphia bus terminal, the destination on the ticket was Boston -- the date on the ticket hasn't happened yet -- he must still be there. Something very bad is going to happen --

**EVAN**

Sarah...  
 (empty)  
 ...I can't do this.

She was so heavy into her story she doesn't follow what he's saying --

**SARAH**

Do what? Have you been listening to me?

Evan hasn't been. He looks her in the eye, and from his face, she gets it.

**EVAN**

...this isn't working anymore.

She stares for a long moment. Thunderstruck. Mortified --

**EVAN** (CONT'D)

-- you couldn't have expected it to.

**SARAH**

-- what?

He walks past her to the window and looks out. Guilty as hell, but fronting with all the pride of a young man. Sarah turns toward him -- she barely moves, her whole being in shock.

**SARAH** (CONT'D)

Are you breaking up with--?

**EVAN**

It's just too much to handle, you -- you're -- different and I don't know how to explain it. The whole thing with Jeremy and the --

He stops and we get the faint idea what he's talking about and she knows it, her face wracked with hurt.

**SARAH**

(softly)  
 But you said you didn't care...that you understood -- that you loved me.

**EVAN**

I know, yeah...well now it's real.

**SARAH**

You're high -- you don't know what you're talking about. You can't just...change your mind.

**EVAN**

How the hell am I supposed to understand this Sarah? I've got my own -- it's not normal -- the thing with your hands!

And there it is -- he knows -- she fights back the tears.

**SARAH**

I knew this was gonna happen. If you hadn't abandoned me --

**EVAN**

Perfect. Blame someone else. Get out of here with your abandonment crap alright? This is just great --

**SARAH**

Hey don't try to justify what you're doing by making this about -- you promised me.

**EVAN**

I'm not doing anything. Okay? I'm out Sarah. Done. I don't want to be a part of this -- I can't help you.

**SARAH**

(Holy Shit)  
-- you think I want to be this way?! That I want my life to be like this?!

I need you're help -- you promised me!

Where are you going?! Why won't you help me?! Look at me!

**EVAN**

You know I don't think that.

-- I can't help you --

-- I'm outta here --

**EVAN (CONT'D)**

(blurts out)

I'm scared of you --

They both stop talking. He can't look at her -- the truth is finally out there in the open. A beat...he grabs his keys off a bureau and leaves -- closing the door softly.

Sarah stands there, just in trauma. She cries now. A beat then -- she notices a small PICTURE FRAME on the ground. She picks it up and blow the dust off.

ON PICTURE FRAME -- a prom photo of Evan and Sarah -- she wipes the tears away as she stuffs it into her shoulder bag.

**EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT**

Sarah walks alone on the wet sidewalks of her neighborhood. She approaches her house -- it's completely dark. She pauses at the foot of her walk.

Glancing next door at DARREN'S HOUSE we see a light on in the upstairs bedroom.

**EXT. DARREN'S HOUSE - LAWN - CONTINUOUS**

A SMALL ROCK hits the window pane where the light's coming from. No answer -- a beat, then ANOTHER SMALL ROCK pings off the glass.

Finally the window opens -- Darren sticks his head out and looks down at SARAH.

**DARREN**

-- Uh, hey...what's up?

**SARAH**

Remember I told you to hold that thought? How about it now?

COLD BREATH escapes her lips.

**DARREN**

It's late I don't --

**SARAH**

Can we go for a drive?

He doesn't say anything for a moment, this is a tough call, finally --

**DARREN**

I'll be right down.

**EXT. PARK - OUTFIELD - LATER**

We find Darren and Sarah sitting on the hood of his DUSTY FORD EXPLORER.

His HEADLIGHTS shine into the woods we remember all too well, it sounds like there's a thousand living species making noise in unison out there.

A THICK FOG creeps across the top of the grass on the field.

**DARREN**

When was the last time we were out here? Like two Thanksgivings ago?

**SARAH**

It's been a long time. Funny how things change huh?

A COLD BREEZE cuts toward them.

**DARREN**

God -- it got cold real quick.

**SARAH**

I know, feel.

She extends her hand and places it in his.

**DARREN**

They're frozen. I wish I'd known it was this cold, I'd have brought you another sweater.

She smiles as a long silence settles between them.

**SARAH**

I need to ask you a favor. I'll totally understand if you say no.

(beat)

I'm only asking because I've known you all my life and I can trust you.

**DARREN**

(jokingly)

You didn't do the paper for physics? Listen you didn't have to drag me all the way out here for that. You can borrow mine.

She has to laugh -- there's a nascent connection between these two that was missing last time.

**SARAH**

It's a little more complicated than that -- I need you to take me somewhere.

**DARREN**

Okay...can I ask where?

**SARAH**

I'm -- not sure yet.

**DARREN**

(seriously?)  
You're not sure?  
(beat)  
What do you want me to do, jump in my car and keep driving?

**SARAH**

No -- yes. I just need to get away from here.

**DARREN**

Why?

**SARAH**

How long have you lived next door to me?

**DARREN**

My whole life.

**SARAH**

Then you know why.

We get a feeling that they've been down that avenue before. He hesitates before continuing --

**DARREN**

This is about your dad?

**SARAH**

(reluctant)  
Yes...sort of...I don't know.

**DARREN**

You realize we're still in school?  
We can't just pack up and leave.

**SARAH**

This is more important than that.

**DARREN**

Do you at least have some idea where you want to go?

**SARAH**

I think I have family south of here. Once we get far enough away, you can leave me there and head back.

**DARREN**

How far south? If you need money for a plane ticket I can --

**SARAH**

I'm scared of flying and I'm not quite sure how far south they are. Trust me if I could afford a car I would have left by now

(beat)

I'll understand if you say no -- I realize I'm asking a lot.

**DARREN**

I'll take you.

**SARAH**

Really?

**DARREN**

Yeah, you're my best friend.

(sincere)

I'd do anything for you.

**SARAH**

Thank you -- I know that doesn't sound it, but that means a lot to me right now.

**DARREN**

(smiles)

It'll do.

They stare at each other for a moment, she sees something in his eyes for a second --

**SARAH**

(whispers)

Is there something else you wanted to say.

His smile melts away, the LOOK is gone. She lost him and she knows it.

**SARAH** (CONT'D)

When can we leave?

**DARREN**

Tomorrow morning is fine, give me time to leave a note for my mom.

**SARAH**

Yeah, is she gonna flip out?

**DARREN**

She'll understand. What two competent teenagers haven't tried to run away before? It's like a rite of passage.

(serious)

She's always saying I should try to help more people -- says it'll make me feel better as a person or something like that.

(beat)

Here's my chance, better not screw it up.

**EXT. DARREN'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MORNING**

DARREN

Throwing two backpacks into the backseat of his car --

**INT. DARREN'S EXPLORER (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS**

He climbs into the driver's seat and we find SARAH sitting in the passenger side. Neither looked like they've slept.

**DARREN**

It's a good thing I leave before my mom -- you leave a note or anything for your dad?

**SARAH**

I don't want him to know where I'm going. He never came home last night anyway.

Darren clocks this for a minute -- then unfolds a MAP on the center console.

**DARREN**

Okay -- you said you wanted to head south. I was looking at this last night before I went to bed. I figure we'll head somewhat southwest towards Pittsburgh.

**SARAH**

Alright, sounds good.

**DARREN**

It's about an eight hour drive. So I hope you know some good road games.

**SARAH**

(smiling)

I might know a couple.

**INT. DARREN'S EXPLORER - DRIVING - EARLY AFTERNOON**

Darren drives, Sarah sits shotgun listening to the music from the radio, moves her mouth along with the words.

**DARREN**

I didn't know you liked Sublime.

**SARAH**

Who doesn't like Sublime?

**DARREN**

You hungry?

**SARAH**

Getting there.

**DARREN**

Sweet, we'll stop at the next place we see.

He smiles at her and turns up the music. And we MOVE IN on Sarah's eyes as the Southern California twang of SUBLIME brings us into --

**INT. SUBURBAN HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

A HOUSE PARTY. Someone's parents are definitely out of town -- the place is getting TRASHED.

The MUSIC pumps into the room from somewhere at the back of the house.

Teenagers come and go, every other one of them seem to be holding the customary red party cups. We move through some kids till we reach the couch were we find --

SARAH

Crammed on the couch, looking completely out of place. Next to her we find EVAN -- holding court with some of his friends.

SOMEONE BUMPS INTO HER -- falls right onto her lap and we realize who it is -- ALEX FRASER. Dressed real trampy, though still a knockout. Eyes red from crying. Drunk. Pretty seriously drunk.

**ALEX**

I'm so sorry -- Sarah? -- What's up with you? We never talk anymore.

Sarah smiles -- she sees the utter sincerity and vulnerability on her face.

**SARAH**

I know. We don't really hang out in the same crowd anymore.

**ALEX**

I miss you -- I'm so disappointed in myself, I broke one of my own rules.

**SARAH**

What's that?

**ALEX**

You're not supposed to have someone else get your drink at these things.

She stumbles back toward Sarah, and she has to catch her this time, no one really notices though.

**SARAH**

Okay -- lets get you to lie down for a moment.

She looks to the couch -- that's not an option.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

C'mon, lean on me, we're gonna go lay down alright?

She puts one of Alex's arms around her shoulder and leads her from the living room.

**INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - LATER - FLASHBACK**

Sarah lays Alex down onto a king size bed up in the MASTER BEDROOM. She's out for the count now -- Sarah pulls the covers up around her. LIGHT from the hallway falls onto the bed.

**VOICE (O.S.)**

Thank you for bringing her up here.  
You can go now.

Sarah JUMPS at the sound of that VOICE. She looks over to reveal -- JEREMY -- standing in the doorway -- causing the shadow of his silhouette to fall onto her face.

**SARAH**

I think she just needs some rest.  
She had a lot to drink.

**JEREMY**

I know. So why don't you leave us  
alone?

This is getting creepier. Sarah's not sure where this is going but --

**SARAH**

I don't think --

**JEREMY**

I said you can go now.

He steps aside to let her pass -- she's helpless, she knows she can't stand up to him. Reluctantly she gets up and heads out into the hallway.

He grins at her, but it's not friendly in the least bit. Then slowly he closes the door in her face and Sarah might of just watched a piece of herself die.

We make the connection. Jeremy -- the kid whose about to destroy Alex's life -- and in a few short hours --

Is going to end up getting dragged away from a burning car by Sarah.

**INT. DARREN'S EXPLORER - DRIVING - LATE AFTERNOON**

Sarah AWAKENS WITH A JOLT. She winces in pain as she lifts her stiff neck from the window -- she tries to focus her eyes, get a grip on her surroundings.

She looks to the driver's seat -- Darren glances at her, surprised to see her awake.

**DARREN**

Hey -- I thought I was tired. Don't know if you're hungry still but there's a diner down the road here.

**SARAH**

(dry)  
I'm starving.

He nods and looks over at her rubbing her neck, something about her demeanor has changed in the last hour.

**DARREN**

You alright?

They look at each other now. Face to face. A beat.

**SARAH**

I'm fine. Bad dreams.

He realizes that's all he's going to get.

**DARREN**

Okay. Let's eat.

**INT. DINER - LATE AFTERNOON**

The diner is dirty, more than a little run down, the type of place where you have to be careful what you order. If there is ever a cook on duty, he's no where to be found now. A FEW LOCALS sit up at the bar minding their own business.

A handful of people occupy the tables that grace the exterior of the diner. We MOVE across several empty tables before we land on -- A TIRED OLD WAITRESS seating Darren and Sarah.

They place a drink order and Sarah begins looking around taking it all in -- she makes EYE CONTACT with a FILTHY LOOKING TRUCKER at the bar. He shoots her a look that makes her skin want to crawl off her body.

**SARAH**

(whispers)  
What's with all the dirty looks?

Darren looks around.

**DARREN**

Well, for some people this is the local watering hole and if you're not a local like us or like that guy --

He indicates a MAN dressed in a expensive business suit sitting up at the bar. He's obviously out of place as he talks business lingo into a cell phone.

**DARREN (CONT'D)**

-- you don't really belong here. I don't think they like outsiders. Let's just try to keep our eyes on our own table.

**SARAH**

Good idea.

The waitress returns with their drinks and they place their order promptly. The diner is silent except for the low mumbling amongst the few occupied tables.

A TV in the corner that's supposed to be background noise is the loudest thing in the place.

ON THE TV -- SALLY SCHEXNAYDER an overzealous daytime hostess is interviewing a WHITE HAired MAN about his success story.

**SALLY**

So let me get this straight, before you started organizing local blood drives, you were homeless for about six years before you got your act together?

**WHITE HAired MAN**

After my wife left me in eighty seven I had a breakdown. I was broke. So I stole things -- I hurt people -- and even sold drugs for awhile.

(struggles; hard)

I sold drugs to kids -- young kids. It's still something that keeps me up at night. After getting arrested a few times, I hit bottom. I was living on the streets and in the woods.

**SALLY**

So something happened to you? You had what you call a revelation, an epiphany if you will. Can you shed some light on that?

**WHITE HAired MAN**

I'd have to go back several years...

His words FADE AWAY --

ON THE MAN WITH THE CELLPHONE -- He's becoming increasingly loud over at the bar. Now we get a good look at him. Short professional looking hair. He has a real swagger about him, a lawyer's swagger -- a wannabe Gordon Gecko -- he wears a VIBRANT YELLOW TIE.

**YELLOW TIED MAN**

(into phone)

Bobby -- I don't give a damn what the prosecution has up their sleeves. All I ask is that you're ready by Monday morning.

(beat)

They have no case -- I don't care if their mother is the devil himself, they have no argument.

(beat)

So what if they belong with the dad? That's not our job. I don't pay you to have a conscience and I don't pay you to have morals. And I don't care if that woman locks those kids in the basement or whips the snot of them. All I care about is one thing -- winning.

He pauses to take a bite out of a MESSY CHEESEBURGER. He spills ketchup on his tie.

**YELLOW TIED MAN (CONT'D)**

(still on phone)

Shit. No Bobby I'm not talking to you, I just spilled ketchup on a two hundred dollar tie.

A WAITRESS comes over to him.

**YELLOW TIED MAN (CONT'D)**

(into phone)

Hang on --

**YELLOW TIED MAN (CONT'D)**

(to waitress)

Excuse me, my burger is cold, send it back. By the way I said medium not charred, thanks much.

She gives him a dirty look but he doesn't see it. EVERYONE is staring at the man now. We head back over to Darren and Sarah's table.

**SARAH**

That man is making me very uncomfortable.

**DARREN**

He seems to have that effect on people.

**SARAH**

He should leave.

**DARREN**

I'm sure one of the truckers will take care of that for us.

The waitress returns with the man's burger -- but he's already packing up his things.

**YELLOW TIED MAN**

Between the bite I had and looking at you -- I'm not really hungry anymore so you can hang onto that. This should cover it.

He throws TWO DOLLARS down onto the counter and walks out of the diner still on his cell phone.

Sarah's hand begins to SHAKE.

**DARREN**

You okay?

**SARAH**

I just got one of those feelings like when the hair stands up on the back of your neck.

**DARREN**

He's gone -- I'm wondering if the pie is any good.

She grabs his hand.

**SARAH**

Can we go now?

Her face is white.

**DARREN**

Yeah, why?

**SARAH**

I'll explain later. Let's just go now.

**DARREN**

Let me get the check.

They begin gathering up their stuff --

A GUN SHOT RINGS OUT FROM THE PARKING LOT.

OUT THE DINER WINDOW -- We see a black BMW tear out of the parking lot. Tires SCREECHING as it heads down the road.

Sarah goes rigid. The diner goes absolutely silent. No one moves. The BELL on the outside door jingles loudly. SLOW FOOTSTEPS as someone comes up the stairs leading into the diner, a beat -- then --

A MAN ENTERS THE DOORWAY -- it's the lawyer -- the yellow tied man.

He stumbles into the diner. Looking sickly. SWEATING. Struggling to breathe. He clutches his side, BLOOD gushes through his fingers. He takes real slow steps forward -- still no one moves.

**YELLOW TIED MAN**

I've been mugged...I need help.

He falls to the ground and onto his back. Breathing shallowly. All the color drained from his face.

**YELLOW TIED MAN (CONT'D)**

(incoherent)

He -- shot -- me.

He lies on the ground crying in pain -- BLOOD RUNS ONTO THE FLOOR. No one comes to his aide. They just watch.

**DARREN**

Oh my God.

Sarah looks down at her hands -- they're GLOWING ORANGE LIGHT. Darren's not paying attention. She sticks them in her pockets where they glow faintly.

**DARREN** (CONT'D)

I think my cell phone is in the car  
let me go --

She walks slowly toward the wounded man.

**DARREN** (CONT'D)

-- Sarah?

**SARAH**

Just don't leave okay?

**DARREN**

I won't.

She kneels down next to the man. He latches onto her arm. Still lucid, but the PAIN of every breath, every word, every motion... it's fucking PALPABLE.

**YELLOW TIED MAN**

I don't want to die.

**SARAH**

(whispers)  
Just relax.

She pulls her hands out of her pockets -- the ORANGE LIGHT rests at her fingertips.

**YELLOW TIED MAN**

Oh God. Are you death?

**SARAH**

No. If you don't let go of my arm  
though I can't help you.

Darren walks over timidly. He and Sarah exchange a look. His brain just SCRAMBLED right now. She RIPS open his shirt and it's bad -- The bullet went clean through him --

**DARREN**

Can...I help?

**SARAH**

Just support his head.

He holds his head up. She presses her GLOWING HANDS down onto the wound -- his back SHOOTs straight up as though he's being shocked.

The ORANGE LIGHT runs through his body and up into her face. Her hands glow BRIGHTER -- the wound slowly starts closing up. The light surges through him one more time --

A THUNDERCLAP WITH NO SOUND follows -- and the man's body drops back down to the floor. The final surge forces Sarah back onto her hands. She takes deep BREATHS. Sweat runs down her face.

Darren can only sit and wrack his brain on what the hell he just saw. The man takes GASPS FOR AIR. She crawls back toward him. He puts his hand to his former wound --

**YELLOW TIED MAN**

How -- how did you do that? I'm supposed to be dead.

**SARAH**

(weak)

What's important is that you're alive now.

**YELLOW TIED MAN**

Why would you help me?

**SARAH**

Sometimes we need a second chance to erase all the mistakes we've made.

(beat)

Who you were...what you did before this -- before you were shot -- it doesn't really matter.

(beat)

Don't ruin those kids lives.

He starts to CRY HARD TEARS.

**YELLOW TIED MAN**

(whispers)

Tell whoever is watching out for us I said thank you.

The words hang in the air. She looks over to Darren --

**DARREN**

Let's go.

He pulls her up onto her feet and helps her walk out of the diner. It's UNCOMFORTABLY SILENT. All anyone can do is look at the man with shock and confusion.

THE WAITRESS who served the man touches his forehead almost to see if he's alive. A few people stare out the diner's door as the HEADLIGHTS from Darren's car run across it.

The only sound is the TV --

**WHITE HAired MAN**

-- And then this little girl came out of no where. Except she wasn't like any little kid I'd seen before. She had a light around her.

**SALLY**

A light?

**WHITE HAired MAN**

Yeah it was this weird orange light. Almost like a firefly. It was so blinding this light.

(beat)

It's like when they say you have someone watching out for you on the other side. This girl was like my guardian angel in the flesh.

(beat)

She gave me a second chance and I wasn't about to fail twice. I almost died but she saved me and I was forever changed...

**INT. DARREN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM- NIGHT**

Linda lies on top of the kicked out sheets of her bed. Insomnia-ville. CANNOT FUCKING SLEEP. She looks at the CLOCK RADIO. 1:51 A.M. DAMN. She gets out of bed.

**INT. DARREN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

RUNNING WATER from the sink as Linda pours herself a glass of water. She moves to the window and looks out at the twinkling lights of her neighborhood.

She stares out, wondering about a lot of things...SUDDENLY -- POUNING ON HER DOOR -- She puts the water down and moves to the DOOR --

**GRANT (O.S.)**

Liindaaa. Open the door!

Yeah. Grant. She opens her front door TO REVEAL A DRUNK Grant Jacobson holding onto the door frame to steady himself --

**LINDA**

You're the last person I thought  
I'd see standing on my porch.

**GRANT**

It's been a long time.

**LINDA**

Not since Sophie died.

**GRANT**

Look -- I didn't want to come over  
here. Sarah didn't come home and I  
thought maybe --

**LINDA**

Grant, it's almost two in the  
morning. She didn't tell you did  
she?

**GRANT**

Tell me what?

**INT. DARREN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER**

Grant paces about the kitchen -- the NOTE Darren left for his  
mom on the kitchen table. Linda passes him a cup of coffee,  
he takes it, but doesn't take a sip.

**GRANT**

I can't believe you let her go.  
Have you called them? Do you know  
where they're going?

**LINDA**

No I haven't called. I don't want  
to intrude, it's not my business.

**GRANT**

Not your business? You're supposed  
to be an adult here. How do you let  
two teenagers take off on their own  
like that?

Grant's ANGER is sobering him up -- Linda tries to calm him  
down. We might notice a genuine shorthand between the two. A  
HISTORY --

**LINDA**

I know just as much as you do on  
this situation.

**LINDA (CONT'D)**

She asked Darren to take her somewhere because he's her best friend. I trust my son to do the right thing.

**GRANT**

Oh please. He's a loser just like your husband Dan was. I knew I should have stopped her from coming over here a long time ago. What the hell would he know about taking care of another person's life?

**LINDA**

He would never hurt her. He'll probably take better care of her than you would.

**GRANT**

Give me a break. He's what seventeen?

**LINDA**

-- eighteen. --

-- and he'll take better care of her? What the hell is that supposed to mean? --

-- What do you think she's running away from? --

-- Enlighten me --

-- You. --

-- That's bull shit and you know it.

He gives her a hard look -- clearly agitated that this woman is hitting a NERVE.

**LINDA**

I've seen the bottles piled up in the trash -- heard the shouting and the arguments -- I've even watched the police cruisers go by your house. I bet you've even smacked her around a few times.

(beat; real)

I know you miss Sophie. She was my best friend and I miss her too. The thing is no matter how many glasses of scotch you have before bed to deal with it -- it won't go away till you let go. You can't get her back. Time to let go Grant.

(beat)

**LINDA** (CONT'D)

How do you think Sophie would feel  
if she knew what you were doing?

Okay. She's getting too close. He can't stand here for this  
any longer --

**GRANT**

You got all the answers to my life  
don't you? You know what? I'm glad  
Sarah's gone. I don't need her. I  
hope she stays gone. I don't care  
to ever see her again, she's been a  
cancer long enough.

**LINDA**

You don't mean that.

**GRANT**

Stop thinking that you know me  
'cause you don't. If she does come  
back tell her she's not allowed  
home anymore.

**LINDA**

-- I can help you. Let me help.

**GRANT**

I'm going to say this once -- stay  
the hell out of my life!

He storms out of the kitchen -- seconds later the DOOR SLAMS  
causing Linda to jump.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

A CLAUSTROPHOBIC ROOM -- crammed with two beds and a small TV  
mounted to the wall, the bathroom is about as big as a  
closet. The only light in the room is the one on the night  
table between the beds.

A BACKPACK drops down onto the bed nearest the door -- we  
PULL BACK to reveal DARREN. We also see SARAH sitting on the  
bed behind him -- he unpacks with his back to her.

No one is saying anything.

**SARAH**

Darren -- please say something.

**DARREN**

I think we overpaid for those chicken sandwiches they had no flavor whatsoever.

**SARAH**

I'm being serious.

**DARREN**

What do you want me to say? That what I witnessed back there scared the shit out of me? That I had a white knuckle grip on the steering wheel all the way over here?

We do see he is generally scared -- but maybe he's something else too...HURT.

**SARAH**

Believe me I wanted to tell you, but the time was never right. I didn't want you to find out like this.

She honestly means this and he can tell.

**DARREN**

How does it work?

**SARAH**

(confused)  
How does what work?

**DARREN**

That light on your hands. How does it work?

She debates whether or not she wants to get into this. She's NERVOUS. Shit -- he is, too.

**SARAH**

I'm not entirely sure. My hands just start glowing when someone is injured -- when I touch them -- I can heal the part of them that's...broken. It's weird though because it only happens at certain times.

**DARREN**

What do you mean?

She reaches over into her bag and PULLS OUT A SHEET OF PAPER.  
She motions for his hand --

**SARAH**

Watch --

She slices a PAPER CUT on his finger -- he flinches at the  
prick of pain and sucks the blood from his finger.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

See my hands don't glow. I can only  
help certain people too. One time  
when I was thirteen I was outside  
in my yard and this stray dog bit  
my neighbor. He had this massive  
bite on his arm -- when I went over  
to help him my hands didn't glow.

**DARREN**

How long have you known you could  
do this?

**SARAH**

Since I was ten.

**DARREN**

How many people have you helped?

**SARAH**

Four -- remember when we were  
ten and you convinced me to  
play kickball? And I had to  
go fetch the ball in the  
woods --

**DARREN**

-- oh my God that homeless  
guy. You helped him? --

**SARAH**

That's the first time my hands  
glowed. There was him -- the guy in  
the diner -- this little boy who  
broke his arm falling out of a tree  
in his yard and then this girl in  
my Spanish class.

**DARREN**

(floored)  
Unbelievable.

**SARAH**

Like I said I can only help certain  
people. It's like when I help them  
I give them a second chance at  
something. They were all on this  
one course and I changed it.

**SARAH** (CONT'D)

It's the only reason I can guess why they glow at certain times and not at others.

**DARREN**

What was the one course they were on?

And as Sarah continues, we SIT on Darren as her words play OFF SCREEN. So much going on for him right now. His deep feelings of confusion and SYMPATHY for her.

**SARAH**

The guy in the diner now has the chance to change two kid's lives for the better. The boy in the tree was trying to shove his sister who had autism out of his tree house. The fall alone would have killed her -- but he slipped and instead he got hurt --

(beat)

The girl in my Spanish class I had to help because for the first time it became very personal. She also had an abusive father and she was going to kill him when he burned her face on the stove.

**DARREN**

She obviously didn't go through with it right?

**SARAH**

No. I talked her out of it. She eventually went to go live with her grandmother.

**DARREN**

I don't know what to say. All this time -- it's like you've had this second life, I don't know how you deal with it.

**SARAH**

(has to smile)

One day at a time just like everyone else.

(beat; serious)

**SARAH** (CONT'D)

I never know when I'm going to pass a car accident on the side of the road and my hands will start glowing or when a man who was mugged in the parking lot will enter the restaurant I'm eating in.

(beat; whisper)

The only person I can't help is myself.

She pulls up her sleeve -- we see the DARK BRUISES on her arms. Darren CLOCKS this and she pulls her sleeve back down.

**SARAH** (CONT'D)

I can't heal myself -- ironic huh?

**DARREN**

No. It's not ironic. It's sad.

**SARAH**

There is a boy I need to help in Philadelphia.

**DARREN**

Philadelphia?

**SARAH**

I have a feeling that something bad is going to happen to him. I saw him in a dream -- that's never happened before.

(beat)

I'm sorry I lied. I should have told you from the beginning but I was so afraid you'd say no.

Darren takes this in. His brain fucking SCRAMBLED right now. All he can really manage is --

**DARREN**

Well, other than the fact that it's about thirty miles in the other direction of the way we came -- I guess I'm glad you finally know where we're going.

(beat)

You could have told me. The truth doesn't always have to hurt.

**SARAH**

I know. I just didn't want you to think I was like a weirdo or something.

**DARREN**

I don't know why I'd think that.

She looks up at him -- he's smiling at her -- maybe he does understand all this.

**DARREN (CONT'D)**

(serious)

Life has dealt you a lot of bad hands. I know. Me too. You've never made an excuse for any of them. I watched you save a man's life tonight. I know you think you're weak -- but you're not.

(beat; means this)

You've come so far from that timid little girl I used to know.

**SARAH**

I don't know about that.

**DARREN**

I'll never forget the night we were playing some board game at my house and a moth got caught in the light and I remember watching you take that moth in your hands and release it outside.

(beat)

I'll never understand how someone's whose whole life has been surrounded by loss can care so much about preserving life.

From Sarah, a little, sad laugh:

**SARAH**

I don't know about you, but it's been a long day.

He smiles, yeah it has. He helps her onto her feet.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER**

Darren comes out of the small bathroom dressed for bed. Sarah lays bundled up under the blankets of her bed. He climbs into his and shuts off the light.

They lay in the dark for a long minute then --

**SARAH**

(whispers)  
It's so cold in here.

**DARREN**

I think the heater is broken.

HE TURNS OVER -- A BEAT --

**SARAH**

(whispers)  
Darren?

**DARREN**

(rolling back over)  
Yeah.

**SARAH**

Can I ask you a favor?

**DARREN**

Of course.

**SARAH**

Will you...hold me?

**DARREN**

(soft)  
Sure.

He climbs out of bed and goes around over to hers. He slowly climbs in -- HESITANTLY he places his arms around her -- and pulls the covers over them.

**DARREN (CONT'D)**

You're shaking.

**SARAH**

I'm trying to stop.

**DARREN**

It's okay. Don't worry about it.

They lay there still for a moment -- this actually isn't as awkward as one might think.

**DARREN (CONT'D)**

I was thinking just now, that for as long as I've known you I don't know your middle name.

**SARAH**

(soft laugh)  
It's Jane.

**DARREN**

Like -- "Me Tarzan, you Jane?"

**SARAH**

(laughs)  
Yes. That's probably why I never told you.

**DARREN**

Will you do me a favor?

She nods next to him.

**DARREN (CONT'D)**

Whatever happens when we get to Philadelphia -- whatever happens down the road -- don't change. There's not enough people like you out there. You're perfect the way you are.

**INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - STUDY - MORNING**

We see a mantle of PHOTOGRAPHS. This is the type of room where you don't want to touch anything.

It looks like it's been years since anyone has been in here yet here is

GRANT

Lying on a leather couch with a PICTURE FRAME on his chest.

**GRANT**

I can't remember exactly when I knew I loved you. It might have been that first night -- but I do remember when I realized I would do anything for you. Do you remember when the heater broke in our old apartment and we had to wear five sweatshirts to bed?

(beat; smiles)

I recall you shivering next to me and I so badly wanted to do anything so you would never have to feel like that again. All I could do was hold you to keep you warm.

**GRANT** (CONT'D)

(beat)

What I really miss is our walks.  
Especially in the park during  
autumn. How come we never got a  
dog?

(smiles; realizes)

Oh I forgot, you were allergic.

He manages a small smile -- which quickly FADES...

**GRANT** (CONT'D)

I don't know how to do this anymore  
Sophie. How do I do this without  
you? You always made things better,  
just one look -- the one you do  
where you make me feel like  
everything is going to be okay.

His eyes suddenly fill with tears -- he wipes them away,  
ASHAMED.

The silence is suddenly broken by a RINGING PHONE from  
another room in the house...he lets it ring twice and then he  
reluctantly gets up from the couch.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - MORNING**

It's early. Sunlight barely makes it through the shades. We  
MOVE across the room and find DARREN lying next to SARAH.

ON DARREN'S HAND -- it rests comfortably in Sarah's --  
reassuring.

We PULL BACK as Darren wakes and looks up to check to see if  
Sarah is too -- nope still out. He looks around the room  
wondering how in the hell he got here.

Sarah STIRS and wakes slowly -- looking over at Darren  
sleepily. They exchange a groggy "good morning."

**DARREN**

You even sleep with that thing on  
huh?

He gestures to the SILVER LOCKET Sarah wears around her neck.  
She puts her hand to her chest feeling it there --

**SARAH**

Not usually. I forget it's there  
half the time. My mom gave it to me  
when I was born.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

She said anytime I was sad or afraid I could open it up -- that this way she would always be with me -- that probably sounds really stupid.

**DARREN**

Actually it's really nice. You have something to remember your mom by. That's cool.

**SARAH**

The thing is it must have broken a long time ago because I don't remember. It's welded shut or something -- I can't open it any more.

**DARREN**

Let me see --

He grabs the locket and holds it between his fingers -- tries to POP IT OPEN -- but it won't budge. He shakes his head and adjusts it back around her neck.

**DARREN (CONT'D)**

Weird -- anyway we got a long day ahead of us. I'm going to take a shower and put our stuff back in the car.

He climbs out of bed and heads into the bathroom. And we stay with Sarah. Moving closer. CLOSER. And finally, we're right on the LOCKET as --

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - LATE AFTERNOON - FLASHBACK**

CLOSE ON THAT SAME LOCKET -- but eight years ago.

TEN YEAR OLD SARAH walking home along the sidewalks of her neighborhood. The sun is slowly setting behind her --

THREE SHADOWS suddenly appear before her on the sidewalk. She turns around and has to hold a hand to her face to block the sun --

TEN YEAR OLD JEREMY wearing a little league uniform and TWO MEAN FACE KIDS with sinister grins wait behind her. They each sit atop BMX BIKES. She tries not to panic --

**SARAH**

Hi guys.

She smiles sweetly at them. They don't smile -- not even close.

**MEAN KID # 1**

Shut your mouth freak!!

She jumps back STARTLED.

**MEAN KID # 2**

(re: sketchbook)

What's that?

**SARAH**

Nothing.

Jeremy jumps off his bike. He approaches her and she backs down from him. He RIPS the sketchbook from under her arm.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

No. Please don't.

He hands it to the first kid. He takes it and begins RIPPING PAGES OUT. He crumples them and throws them INTO THE WIND --

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

(fighting tears)

NO!

**JEREMY**

I believe you were told to shut up.

She takes off down the street. Jeremy looks at the other two and grins -- they grin back. They rapidly begin PICKING UP ROCKS, each cradle a bundle in their shirts --

Sarah is running down the road as fast as her legs will take her. TEARS STREAK HER FACE. We hear CHAINS JINGLING as the bikes come up fast. We watch Jeremy WIND UP AND THROW --

THE ROCK HITS HER HEAD with a sickening noise. It's the most horrifying thing to hear. She's pelted SEVERAL MORE TIMES each hitting harder than the last -- she SCREAMS OUT IN PAIN before collapsing to the ground.

The bikes SKID TO A STOP -- Jeremy and the others walk over. BLOOD AND TEARS run down her face. Jeremy stands over her. SMILING. He crouches down beside her --

A BEAT -- he takes her socks and shoes off. Then he starts PULLING HER CLOTHES OFF --

**MEAN KID # 1**

Dude. What the hell are you doing?

**JEREMY**

Humiliating her.

**MEAN KID # 2**

We already hit her with the rocks.  
I think that's enough. She's out of  
it. This is going to get us in deep  
shit.

**JEREMY**

Go home then.

The two back down -- JEREMY RIPS HER SWEATER OFF --

**SARAH**

(stuttering)

Why are -- why are...you  
doing...this?

**JEREMY**

Because I hate you. Because you  
keep trying to steal my best  
friend. That look in his eyes when  
he sees you makes me sick.

We already can guess that there's only one person he could be  
referring to. And WE CUT TO --

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - MORNING**

Darren walking out of the bathroom after a shower. He starts  
packing up their belongings --

**DARREN**

It's all yours.

Sarah smiles weakly from the bed -- Darren doesn't catch it  
as she quietly drags herself into the bathroom.

**EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER**

Darren begins loading up the back of his FORD EXPLORER. He  
goes to toss Sarah's bag in -- but he forgot to zip it up and  
ALL THE CONTENTS FALLS OUT onto the cement.

He curses and starts gathering the items up: make-up, a  
journal, a tattered copy of Stephen King's "Firestarter" and  
something else -- A PICTURE FRAME -- he stops everything.

ON PICTURE FRAME -- a prom photo of Sarah and Evan.

He holds it for a moment. Just staring at it. HURT. Maybe even a little...JEALOUS.

And OFF DARREN -- we hear a KNOCK AT THE DOOR --

**EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - PORCH - DAY**

Linda KNOCKS AGAIN at the front door to Sarah's house -- still no answer.

She wants to leave. Something's keeping her here though. She tries the door -- it's open.

**INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

Linda pokes her head in. Nobody appears to be around. She quietly closes the front door --

**LINDA**

-- Grant?

No answer. She heads into the living room and WE FOLLOW --

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Linda wonders around the room. She notices a DIRTY BUTTON-DOWN WORK SHIRT neatly hanging over the back of a chair.

She looks at the COFFEE TABLE -- a chaotic, ugly representation of Grant's STATE OF MIND.

A TORN MAGAZINE, MEDICATIONS, BILLS, RECEIPTS, CIGARETTE PACKETS. Linda also clocks THREE mostly empty bottles of SCOTCH.

We hear KITCHEN TILE CREAK and so does Linda and she heads toward the back of the house --

**INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Here's GRANT. Sitting on the floor of his kitchen with his back against the cabinet door. Face FLUSHED. He looks like he might have been crying.

**GRANT**

I don't have a means to end it.

**LINDA**

-- end what?

**GRANT**

My suffering. I don't have the means to put it to rest. Make it go away.

**LINDA**

Grant what are--?

**GRANT**

I can't end it can I?

He gets up from the floor and over to the ANSWERING MACHINE on the counter -- hits the PLAY MESSAGE button --

**ANSWERING MACHINE**

Hi Sarah, this is Dr. Scanlon. I'm calling with your test results from the other day. Sorry I didn't get a hold of you sooner -- I tried calling Thursday night but no one answered. Anyway I have your results...I would suggest sitting down first.

(beat)

The results of the CAT scan would indicate that you have a small tumor about the size of a quarter on the left side of your brain. We believe it to be cancerous. Now there's nothing to worry about just yet, but I would like you to come in so we can run some more tests.

(beat)

Please call me at my office anytime in the next few days I will be in and out all weekend. Thank you.

The machine CLICKS OFF -- Linda puts a hand to her mouth, absolutely STUNNED.

Grant slides into a chair. He is NOT DRUNK. In fact, he's extremely lucid. Plain. And SAD.

**GRANT**

My daughter -- is not like me. She's real, simple, follows her heart...just like her mom used to. She's a good girl. A good woman.

(beat)

As of late, she thinks I hate her.

**GRANT (CONT'D)**

That I blame her for everything and I don't blame her for feeling that way because I made her feel that way. I did that. You know what I really feel?

(hard to say)

Pride. I'm proud of her. Because to put up with me...to live with me...that takes more courage than...

(there isn't a word; so)

I don't know if she's gonna make it or not and there's a phone here and I should call her and tell her everything.

(beat)

Tell her I love her.

(beat)

Bring her home. One call and I can fix...everything. I could take all her pain away.

ON LINDA. Taken by all this. Affected by it. So she asks the question we all want the answer to --

**LINDA**

Why don't you?

And Grant knows the answer instantly --

**GRANT**

I can't do it alone. I need help.

OFF GRANT'S LOOK WE CUT TO:

**EXT. INTERSTATE - NIGHT**

Our DUSTY OLD EXPLORER bustles down a two-lane HIGHWAY.

**INT. DARREN'S EXPLORER - DRIVING**

The RADIO serves as background noise only when it's not FADING IN AND OUT OF RECEPTION -- Sarah stares out the window and Darren can't seem to let his eyes leave the road.

The radio suddenly hisses STATIC and it's obvious they've lost the station. Annoyed -- Darren shuts it off. They ride in silence. Sarah looks over wondering what's up.

**SARAH**  
 What are you thinking about?  
 You haven't said anything  
 since we left the motel.  
 Look, if last --

**DARREN**  
 I'm thinking about last night  
 mostly -- what we talked  
 about. Something's been  
 eating at me and I want to  
 stop thinking about it... but  
 I can't.

She TENSES up.

**SARAH**  
 What is it?

**DARREN**  
 When you were there that night with  
 Jeremy -- did your hands glow?

A BEAT -- it occurs to us we've been wondering the same  
 thing. He looks at her for a response.

**SARAH**  
 Well, by the time I got there, the  
 paramedics had already announced  
 him dead --

**DARREN**  
 You're lying. When you lie  
 your face gets red.

**SARAH**  
 Darren -- I don't know how --

-- Answer me something --                      -- Darren you don't --

-- Answer me something Sarah.                  -- yes.  
 Can you do that?

Did you...let Jeremy die that  
 night?

Her heart might as well be in her throat. The words won't  
 come --

**SARAH (CONT'D)**  
 What?

**DARREN**  
 You heard me.

**SARAH**  
 I don't understand --

**EXT. DARREN'S EXPLORER (MOVING) - EVENING**

The SUV suddenly thrusts right and the car SCREECHES OFF THE  
 ROAD -- it tears into a DIRT PARKING LOT OF A GENERAL STORE.

It' fairly empty. Two dry, old gas pumps rest quietly off near the WOODS that stretch it's fingers around the store.

**INT. DARREN'S EXPLORER - PARKED**

Darren SLAMS THE SHIFTER INTO PARK. He can't deal with her. Part of this is ANGER --

**DARREN**

It's a yes or no question.

**SARAH**

The answer is yes.

Not the answer he wanted to hear.

He rubs a hand over his face and stares out the window into the night -- FIREFLIES soar through the darkening skies.

**DARREN**

I don't know what to say -- -- Darren.

**SARAH**

I don't know what to say to you. You have to understand why.

**DARREN**

What do I have to understand? Look. Sarah. I'm real sorry for whatever bad experiences he may have cause you -- I admit he did some horrible things when he was younger --

**SARAH**

I know you don't know what happened that night. But...  
(simple; real)  
I just need you to try to hear what I'm telling you. Okay?

Darren nods. He knows what's coming. And we can FEEL the fear of the truth spreading through him. Maybe he doesn't want to know, but he HAS TO...

And OFF SARAH as the SOUND OF THUNDER BRINGS US BACK TO...

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

A lonely street. It's late. RAIN pours in sheets onto this neighborhood. And here's SARAH walking home -- her hood up and walking with her head down against the rain.

Fifteen yards or so ahead walking clumsily on the sidewalk is JEREMY. He's YELLING and talking gibberish to himself.

A BEAT-UP PICKUP TRUCK cruises by -- SPLASHING WATER up at Sarah.

INSIDE THE PICK-UP -- A MAN. On the early side of fifty. KIND FACE.

Through the windshield we watch the truck COME UP FAST toward where Jeremy is walking. Without warning JEREMY STUMBLES OFF THE WALK -- the man tries to SWERVE out of the way but it's useless.

THE TRUCK RAMS INTO JEREMY -- his body bounces off the grill. All this before Sarah's eyes.

The truck LOSES CONTROL -- ROCKETING TOWARD A TREE -- KICKING UP DIRT, TEARING THROUGH DENSE FOLIAGE -- SIDEVIEW MIRRORS FLYING OFF INTO THE ROAD -- IT SMASHES INTO THE TREE. BURSTS into flames as we go--

BACK INSIDE THE PICK UP -- SMOKE filling the cabin. The windshield shattered into a million pieces. The driver looks to have a severely broken neck. He's dead.

Sarah RUNS toward Jeremy who lays in a heap halfway down the road. His arms are positioned CROOKEDLY by his side. He MOANS in pain -- she has to get him away from the burning truck so WE'RE CLOSE ON --

A PAIR OF WORN RUNNING SHOE HEELS being DRAGGED across pavement --

Right. We've been here before. And we realize she's trying to save Jeremy... who at this moment is a mess. When he talks it's like he's taking the LAST BREATH OF HIS LIFE.

**JEREMY**

Help...help...help me.

Sarah glances at her hands -- ORANGE LIGHT RUNS THROUGH THEM.

**JEREMY (CONT'D)**

Pl -- Ple -- Please.

She extends her hands down toward him...then she stops. FEAR runs across Jeremy's face.

**JEREMY** (CONT'D)

(incoherent)

Wh -- What are -- what are you  
doing? Help me...I know you can...I  
know you can.

She touches his head.

**SARAH**

Only God can help you. You just  
have to find your way to the light.

**JEREMY**

I'm...I'm...dying.

**SARAH**

I know. It'll be over soon.

She wipes the tears forming in her eyes.

**JEREMY**

You...can't do...this to me.

**SARAH**

I have to. For me. And for anyone  
else's life you've destroyed. I'm  
sorry Jeremy you don't have a  
second chance.

He starts to CRY -- GASPS -- the slowly he closes his eyes  
and rests his head against the pavement. He's gone.

HEADLIGHTS from an oncoming car WASH OVER THEM. Sarah puts  
her face to shield her eyes from the light. We hear a CAR  
DOOR OPEN and SOMEONE approaching fast.

Sarah lowers her hand to reveal -- EVAN -- just staring as  
RAIN pours down on them. Just fucking EVERYTHING but okay  
with what he sees.

A long moment of SILENCE between them -- SOAKING WET but  
oblivious to the rain. He can't stop looking at Sarah's  
GLOWING HANDS --

**INT. DARREN'S EXPLORER - PARKED - EVENING**

A moment of CALM. Sarah looks up at Darren. And Darren looks  
back quickly at her. AN ALMOST EXCRUCIATINGLY LONG BEAT.  
Sitting here. Wondering who's gonna talk first because  
there's so MUCH to say --

And Darren finally turns to her and it almost looks like he's just...OVERWHELMED -- and he notices her SMILING.

**DARREN**

Why are you smiling?

**SARAH**

Have you ever smiled just to keep from crying. I'm afraid if I don't smile I'm going to lose it.

This HURTS him. She tries to smile again, but she cries now.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

Do you think I'm a bad person?

**DARREN**

(whispers)

No.

**SARAH**

What are you thinking?

**DARREN**

Lots of things. I promise you one of them is not about how I think you're a bad person.

(beat)

What I think is you let God play God this time and no one should hold you responsible.

(beat; soft)

The fact Jeremy was hit by a car is not your fault. It was an accident. It's not your fault.

**SARAH**

-- I know.

**DARREN**

The bruises on your arm -- not your fault. Don't ever believe they are. You hear me?

She nods. Wipes some tears away --

**DARREN (CONT'D)**

You are a good person with the weight of the world on her shoulders. Do not give up now. Do not break down -- someone is counting on you.

**SARAH**

-- I know.

Darren takes her into his arms and holds her. She LOSES IT now and SOBS with her face pressed into his shoulder. He holds tighter. Finally she lifts her head away.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

Sorry if I got your shirt all wet.

**DARREN**

Don't worry about it.

**SARAH**

(smiles)

You're a good friend, I don't give you enough credit for that.

**DARREN**

Hey -- I didn't think I was going to be able to handle all of this. For awhile I was thinking your boyfriend would have been better for the job.

**SARAH**

What?

Okay. Now he's hitting a NERVE --

**DARREN**

Correct me if I'm wrong, usually two people who are in love -- you and Evan -- they do these types of things for each other.

**SARAH**

What type of things?

**DARREN**

Being there for one another. I'm sure he had a logical reason for not taking you --

**SARAH**

Is that what you think? You're my friend Darren. You're not filling in for anyone. Why would you think that?

**DARREN**

Maybe I think that because you carry a photo of the guy with you in your bag. Maybe I think that because every time I've wanted to say something to you...he's there.

Well. There it is. All the cards on the table. Darren knows. Sarah knows too. And it's painful and REAL...

**SARAH**

So this is what this is all about. You think you're earning brownie points or something by taking me.

(beat; honest)

Here's an update Darren -- I'm not in love with Evan. He wouldn't take me because he's scared of me. I told him the truth...and he freaked.

(simple; real)

The reason I have the picture is because I'm afraid to let go. Okay? I'm weak.

She climbs out of the car and SLAMS THE door. He smacks his hand down on the steering wheel and climbs out after her.

**EXT. PARKING LOT - GENERAL STORE - EVENING**

Darren slams the door shut -- Sarah stands on the other side of the car with her arms crossed.

**DARREN**

I'm sorry. That wasn't fair.

She turns to face him --

**SARAH**

You answer me something.

**DARREN**

-- what?

**SARAH**

Why did a photo in my bag bother you so much?

Darren sees where this is going. And he doesn't like it one fucking bit. Starts walking away from her, but SHE FOLLOWS --

**SARAH** (CONT'D)

No. Do not do that.

He STOPS WALKING and looks to her.

**DARREN**

Do what?

**SARAH**

Do not shutdown on me when  
I'm talking to you --

I'm not shutting down --

-- yeah? Then tell me what  
you want to say. I know your  
facial expressions too.

He can only look at her. Kinda speechless. Here's his big  
moment --

**DARREN**

I don't have anything to say.

**SARAH**

-- yes you do.

**DARREN**

-- no I don't.

**SARAH**

You do. You said before that  
anytime you wanted to say something  
to me you couldn't. Now's your  
chance...

(beat)

I promise I won't get mad.

They stop walking, alone now. Face to face. Intimate. A beat.  
Another beat. And here it comes...

**DARREN**

I don't have anything to say.

Well, that wasn't exactly what she wanted to hear.

He goes back around the side of the car and climbs back in.  
She looks at him. And there's no mistaking that look. Part of  
it ANGER. Part of it SADNESS. And part of it FAILURE...

She walks up the steps into the GENERAL STORE --

**INT. DARREN'S EXPLORER - PARKED**

Darren rests his head on the steering wheel -- beside himself  
right now.

WE RACK FOCUS behind Darren's head to see a GAS CHUGGING PICKUP rumble into the dirt lot --

From his window Darren watches a MAN step out of the truck. He's bald. FORTIES. Goatee. Looks like he just got off parole.

Darren looks away at the EMPTY SEAT where Sarah was sitting and sighs --

OUT THE WINDOW BEHIND HIM -- we see the bald man pull a SHOTGUN out of his truck and head into the store -- Darren looks back at the truck but the MAN'S ALREADY INSIDE.

**INT. PARKING LOT - GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS**

Darren steps out of his car and slowly heads toward the entrance of the store -- WE FOLLOW FROM BEHIND as he walks up the steps inside...

**INT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS**

A brightly lit store. You can almost smell the scent of STALE OVERCOOKED HOTDOGS and KIELBASAS.

The BELL RINGS as Darren enters and searches for Sarah -- it doesn't take long to find her. The BALD MAN is HOLDING UP THE STORE at the counter --

He has the SHOTGUN pointed steadily between SARAH and the STORE CLERK -- a young man in his late twenties with bleached hair.

The bald man turns on a dime and suddenly Darren is looking at the business end of the shotgun. SWEAT runs off the bald man's head. He's JUMPY -- on edge.

**BALD MAN**

You have real bad timing kid.  
Listen to me -- why don't we  
pretend this never happened --  
how's that sound?

Darren nods.

**BALD MAN (CONT'D)**

Okay then. Turn around real slow.  
Get in yer car. And drive away --  
can you do that?

Darren nods again. The STORE CLERK PIPES UP --

**CLERK**

Hey man -- do as he says -- go call  
the cops!!

The bald man WHIRLS around and STICKS THE GUN in the clerk's  
face --

**BALD MAN**

I think I told you to shut yer trap  
didn't I?

Darren LOCKS EYES with Sarah -- he gestures with his hand to  
come toward him -- he takes a FEW STEPS CLOSER -- the bald  
man FLIES BACK AROUND --

**BALD MAN (CONT'D)**

HEY!!!

HIS FINGER SQUEEZES THE TRIGGER --

**BLAM!**

The SHOTGUN BLAST is horrifyingly loud in the empty  
store...the blast carries Darren's body THROUGH THE GLASS  
DOOR as it shatters easily.

**SARAH**

DARREN!!!

The bald man shakes almost like he can't believe what he just  
did -- but back to business now -- he tosses a GARBAGE BAG at  
the clerk.

**BALD MAN**

Filler up -- make it quick.

Sarah races out the door -- he watches her go as the clerk  
frantically tries to fill the bag.

**EXT. PARKING LOT - GENERAL STORE - SECONDS LATER**

Darren lays about five feet in front of the stairs he  
CLEARED. Sarah rushes to his side. He lays MOTIONLESS. His  
chest in disarray and he doesn't look to be BREATHING...

He's either dead or unconscious -- she can't tell.

**SARAH**

This isn't happening --

The BALD MAN comes trucking down the stairs -- he doesn't look twice at Sarah or Darren. He hops into his truck and BURNS RUBBER OUT OF THE LOT --

**SARAH** (CONT'D)

I can save you -- just don't die on me.

She cradles his head -- at that moment the STORE CLERK comes to the doorway and CLOCKS the two --

**CLERK**

Ohh shit -- I'll can an ambulance.

He runs back inside. Sarah glances at her hands...THEY'RE NOT GLOWING --

**SARAH**

(whispers)  
-- oh no.

Painful realization washes over her face -- she can't save him. She lies across him and sobs into his shoulder. God, she just wants to lose it. But she doesn't...not yet.

**SARAH** (CONT'D)

Don't you dare leave me here to do this all alone. I need you. Do you hear me Darren?  
(beat; soft)  
-- I need you.

Darren doesn't answer her --

**SARAH** (CONT'D)

...I'm so sorry....this is all my fault. I should have never talked you into bringing me out here -- you're the best friend I've ever had and I'm sorry if I never told you that. You mean the world to me...

-- and suddenly Sarah is crying. It just caught up to her that's all. And she weeps, resting her head on the back of her hand. A TEAR from her face falls onto his forehead -- she wipes it off and kisses him there.

The FIREFLIES above take flight in the night sky -- she looks around for help but no one is coming. She wipes the tears away angrily -- closes her eyes tight as she can -- but the tears overflow anyway...it's over now.

Sarah looks at her hand behind Darren's head -- it's GLOWING BRIGHTER THAN EVER -- she holds her hands up -- LIGHT RUNS THROUGH THEM --

**SARAH** (CONT'D)

-- thank you.

And Sarah gathers her strength -- shows a small sign that she's not someone to give up. She SNIFFLES, gathers herself. Knows she must.

She rips his shirt up -- SINKS HER HANDS DOWN ONTO HIS CHEST...ORANGE LIGHT RUNS THROUGH HIS BODY -- his back convulses as if he's being shocked. The light travels into his face -- after a moment his body sinks back to the ground.

Sarah is PUSHED BACK onto her hands -- she BREATHES heavily and then scrambles back over towards him.

**SARAH** (CONT'D)

-- Darren? Can you hear me?

He's still out. And he's not BREATHING. The wound didn't even close up -- Sarah stares at him in disbelief. She PANICS. She's lost. Her hands still glow -- she takes a DEEP BREATH and --

She presses her hands into him HARD -- ORANGE LIGHT FUNNELS INTO HIS BODY HARDER THAN BEFORE -- his body convulses again. Sarah PRESSES HARDER -- light pours out of him stronger --

A BUBBLE OF LIGHT SURROUNDS THEM AS TIME SEEMS TO STOP -- light charges up her face and she DIGS her fingers into his chest...the WOUND slowly...SLOWLY starts to close...A THUNDERCLAP WITH NO SOUND --

The bubble of light surges back into them and Sarah is KICKED about five feet backward -- SWEAT covering her face and neck. She INHALES deeply and literally CRAWLS back toward Darren.

Her hand extends on top of him and she PULLS herself up next to him -- he's AWAKE now and LOOKING AROUND unsure of his surroundings --

**DARREN**

...was I...out long?

**SARAH**

(smiles; through tears)

-- No. Not long.

**DARREN**

-- my back hurts.

**SARAH**

(weak laugh)

It should. You went through a glass door.

**DARREN**

-- ouch.

She laughs and wipes her eyes.

**SARAH**

I thought you had left me here all alone.

**DARREN**

-- what? And let you drive my car?

**SARAH**

Well you're going to have to.  
You're in no shape to drive.

**DARREN**

This is true.

He sits up with a MOAN. She very carefully helps him to his feet --

**SARAH**

We'll find a nearby motel.  
Stay there till morning --

-- No?

**DARREN**

-- No.

Keep driving toward  
Philadelphia -- we have to  
get there by tomorrow  
remember?

At that moment an AMBULANCE and TWO POLICE CRUISERS enter from the other end of the lot. In a matter of SECONDS, EMTS and COPS are on the scene.

The cops run up and into the store as the EMTS surround Darren and Sarah, who is pushed out of the way as Darren begins being fitted to a STRETCHER.

Sarah fights frantically back toward the vehicle...

**SARAH**

-- wait. Hold on. He's fine. You  
don't need to take him -- he's  
fine. Listen to me --

One of the EMTS turns toward her --

**YOUNG EMT**

Look. He's covered in blood. He doesn't look fine to me -- if you want to ride in the ambulance to the hospital -- you can -- but I need you to calm down. Can you do that?

She nods -- he gestures to the back of the ambulance. She hesitates for a moment then CLIMBS ABOARD...

**INT. AMBULANCE (MOVING) - NIGHT**

Sarah sits in the confined space in the rear of the ambulance. We see Darren strapped down to a stretcher --

ON SARAH'S HAND -- crusted with DRIED BLOOD and clutching Darren's hand also crusted with stale blood.

The vehicle RATTLES gently as the two lock eyes. A smile crosses Darren's face as he squeezes tighter --

**SARAH**

-- what?

**DARREN**

Nothing. Just thinking how we can't seem to catch a break on this road trip.

**SARAH**

Were you expecting something else?

**DARREN**

No. Wasn't expecting to get shot though.

She doesn't laugh -- not even close.

**DARREN (CONT'D)**

Sorry.

**SARAH**

Sometimes life is a series of disappointments. At least you're alive to experience them.

**DARREN** I know. I know -- I never said thank you.

**SARAH** -- you don't have to.

I should though -- -- but you don't have to.

What do you think my second chance is?

The words hang in the air. She leans closer to him --

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

I think your second chance is to go and continue to be the person you are -- to continue to care about people and to take care of them when they are in need.

(beat)

Your second chance is an opportunity to live a full life Darren. Get married -- have beautiful children -- take care of your mom when's she old.

(beat)

Hopefully you will never remember tonight but at the same time never forget what you learned.

**DARREN** What's your second chance?

**SARAH** --I don't have one.

She looks away --

**DARREN** (whispers)  
I can save you --

**SARAH** -- I don't need you to.

**DARREN**

Those things you said are great but I would have done them anyway. I'm ready to tell you what I have to say.

**SARAH**

You don't have to. Not now.

**DARREN**

I have to. I'm not like you, I don't have visions of the future.

**DARREN** (CONT'D)

I don't know what's going to happen a day from now -- a week -- tonight was enough evidence things can change in an instant. I almost died without telling you what you mean to me.

**SARAH**

I already know.

**DARREN**

No. You don't. Do you remember all the times when we used to play when you were little? You would get lost and I'd have to save you. I don't think those feelings will ever go away. You are a part of me.

(beat)

You've been broken for a long time. I know. Sometimes I get scared for you -- because you've been through so much and I'm afraid one day you won't be able to take it anymore.

(beat; hard to say)

Sometimes, at night, when it's hard to sleep -- I go back to this time I saw you laughing and you were smiling and your face...was so full of life. It makes my own bad dreams go away. So I lay awake and I say to myself: Please, please don't let her smile be gone tomorrow.

**SARAH**

-- Why?

**DARREN**

I found myself questioning things for a long time the other night. Maybe things do happen for a reason. Maybe -- I was blind. I realized that if what you and I have isn't the work of things happening for a reason -- then I don't know what is.

**SARAH**

(whispers)

I'm tired of being afraid -- vulnerable -- but I'm not sure I can make all the beasts go away.

**DARREN**

Don't be afraid to try.

**SARAH**

I'll try not to be.

**DARREN**

I have a feeling things are going to get really tough pretty quick. You need to be real strong now.

**SARAH**

I know --

**DARREN**

Promise me you'll hold on.

**SARAH**

I promise.

He SQUEEZES her hand --

**EXT. PHILADELPHIA - CITY SCAPE - ESTABLISHING**

OLD PHILADELPHIA AWAKENS...a golden sun dances on the waters of Penns Landing. Historical old ships sit docked in the harbor. The dark bronze surface of the LIBERTY BELL reflects the dawn --

INDEPENDENCE HALL stands watch as the city begins to stir -- a thirty foot statue of Ben Franklin makes a stunning silhouette against the morning sky --

THEN SOCIETY COMES CRASHING IN...

LIGHTS come on in homes and condos -- Jeeps and other all terrain vehicles start down COBBLESTONE STREETS -- restaurant signs spark to life against dark store backdrops...

**EXT. AMBULANCE (MOVING) - MORNING**

We see our AMBULANCE pull into the parking lot of the University of Pennsylvania Hospital. We MOVE over to where another ambulance is UNLOADING PEOPLE into the ER WING --

**INT. ER WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

We catch up with SARAH following DARREN'S STRETCHER into the WAITING ROOM of the ER -- it's strangely active this early in the morning.

Sarah tries to follow into the ER wing but TWO NURSES keep her back -- rejected, she finds herself confined to the waiting room.

The TV above her head suddenly catches her attention: A YOUNG NEWS REPORTER COMES ON -- the words "Breaking News" flash down at the bottom of the screen...

**NEWS REPORTER**

(on TV)

This is Danielle Dreiberg -- right now I'm standing about fifty feet away from the scene of a horrific tragedy that took the downtown Philadelphia area by surprise this morning. Behind me you can see local firefighters cleaning up the debris from the accident. It took firefighters an hour to remove the Greyhound bus you see to my left -- from the building it crashed into.

(beat)

Now, this was no typical accident. The break cables were tampered with and the culprit could be someone internally as my sources have informed me.

(beat)

The bus was carrying a little over half of it's fifty five seat capacity when it crashed head-on into the office building of James Czerlonka and associates -- it caught fire and authorities are still trying to get a head count, but there is believed to be few survivors. They have been taken to nearby University of Pennsylvania Hospital...

ON THE TV SCREEN -- behind the reporter we see the bus from the accident, surrounded by AMBULANCES, FIRE TRUCKS, POLICE CRUISERS and a healthy mix of NEWS VANS and ONLOOKERS...

Sarah goes rigid. This is why she's here...this has to be it. And for the first time she notices all the people in the waiting room -- on cell phones -- calling loved ones, crying, trying to figure out what the hell is going on.

Sarah heads to the front desk where a WORN DOWN RECEPTIONIST is trying not to lose it --

**SARAH**

-- excuse me?

**RECEPTIONIST**

Can I help you?

**SARAH**

I'm...uhm...looking for someone I know from the accident that was on TV --

**RECEPTIONIST**

You and everyone else hun. Got to be patient -- we haven't even got rooms set up for most of these survivors yet -- half are in the ER. The only one in recovery is a ten-year old boy. He was the first person they pulled --

**SARAH**

Where is he?

**RECEPTIONIST**

Down the hall. I'm not sure the doctor will --

And she's already off --

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

A TEN-YEAR OLD BOY lays hooked up to the machines trying to save his life. His eyes are closed. Comatose.

Sarah enters slowly...it's hard to tell if she recognizes the boy as this is a horrible scene for anyone to take in.

At that moment, A DOCTOR enters in -- FORTIES -- definitely the real deal -- he means business. Straw colored hair. Hard set face.

**DR. VEIDT**

Good morning. Are you a family member? Sister?

**SARAH**

Uhm...no...close friend -- friend of the family.

**DR. VEIDT**

I'm Doctor Veidt, neural surgery.  
I'll be observing him for the next  
few days.

**SARAH**

How is he?

**DR. VEIDT**

We've managed to stabilize his  
immediate injuries. He's suffered  
severe head trauma though, we'll  
have to wait for the swelling in  
his brain to go down before we can  
determine the full extent of his  
injuries. I got to be honest with  
you -- we're looking at widespread  
damage.

**SARAH**

Is he going to die?

**DR. VEIDT**

These machines are sustaining his  
life.

**SARAH**

What if he wakes up?

**DR. VEIDT**

I can't say right now -- that he  
will wake up.

**SARAH**

Can he hear us at least?

**DR. VEIDT**

I'd like to think so. There's no  
telling how long he'll be like  
this. Could be a day -- a week, or  
years. We'll just have to wait and  
see.

Sarah can only nod.

**DR. VEIDT (CONT'D)**

You'll have to excuse me. I'm being  
paged. We'll talk more when I get  
back.

Sarah grabs the boy's hand and can feel herself on the verge  
of tears -- she looks to her hands...but they're not glowing  
yet.

**VOICE (O.S.)**

-- his name is Joel.

The voice belongs to a WOMAN WITH STRIKING GRAY EYES -- she looks to be in her early forties. Gray streaks run through her red hair. A face with no evident humor. There's definitely something a little off about her...

**AURY**

My name is Aury -- this is my son.  
He was in that bus accident on the news. Wasn't wearing his seat belt. When it crashed -- he was thrown to the front of the bus.

And she says this with such calm -- like she's not even talking about her son.

Sarah clocks Aury's appearance...something occurs to her --

**SARAH**

If you don't mind my asking, what was he doing on the bus? Was he alone?

**AURY**

He was taking a trip - alone. We had an argument and he tried running away. He said he was going to New Hampshire --

**SARAH**

I'm from --

**AURY**

For the last six months he's been having dreams about a "girl with red hair." Two mornings ago he woke up and told me he had communicated with her and that he needed to find her.

Sarah can almost feel her heart racing --

**SARAH**

He's the reason I'm here. I've been having dreams about him too. He did communicate with me.

**AURY**

I figured as much. I tried to warn him no good could come of this and now look at him.

**AURY** (CONT'D)

And the sad part is you can't even  
save him -- you're hands aren't  
glowing.

What? Sarah takes a step back -- not sure if she just heard  
what she thought she did.

**SARAH**

What did you just --

**AURY**

That's a beautiful locket.

**SARAH**

(off-guard)

Uhm...yeah my...mom gave it to me  
before she died.

**AURY**

Can I have a look at it?

Still shaken, Sarah takes it off her neck and goes to hand it  
to Aury -- WHO LETS IT SLIP THROUGH HER FINGERS -- and it  
falls to the floor where it CRACKS OPEN...

**SARAH**

-- oh no.

She bends down to pick it up -- when she looks up Aury pulls  
out the SAME SILVER LOCKET FROM AROUND HER NECK --

She looks down at her shaking hands -- the locket is open now  
inside is a PICTURE OF AURY IN HER TWENTIES...what the hell??  
And holy fuck does Sarah just go still. FREAKED. Christ, she  
almost wants to cry. Tears start to form --

**AURY**

Sarah Jane Mason was born on  
December eleventh nineteen eighty  
eight.

**SARAH**

(whispers)

-- that's my birthday.

**AURY**

I know. I will always know.

**SARAH**

Then...if you're...Joel is...

**AURY**

Your brother.

**SARAH**

I...can't...

FLASHCUT:

**INT. WOMEN'S REST ROOM - EVENING (1988) - FLASHBACK**

We see TWENTY SOMETHING AURY sitting in a bathroom stall. She's CRYING as she clutches a BABY wrapped in a bundle of blankets -- she wipes TEARS from her eyes, her dress is a disheveled mess.

**AURY**

Please...just stop...just stop for me okay? Stop glowing.

She pulls the blanket back revealing the infant is indeed GLOWING ORANGE LIGHT --

**VOICE (O.S.)**

My water just broke.

Aury looks up -- she tries to peek through the small opening in the stall door but she can't see anything.

**INT. WOMEN'S REST ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

A YOUNG GRANT JACOBSON comes rushing into the restroom with a WAITRESS. He drops down next to SOPHIE JACOBSON who has blood running from her thighs --

**WAITRESS # 2**

I'm going to see if they've called an ambulance yet.

Grant nods -- GRANT AND SOPHIE TALK IN DEEP WHISPERS --

**SOPHIE**

-- sweetheart?

**GRANT**

-- yes.

**SOPHIE**

I think I lost it.

**GRANT**

(good God!)  
-- the baby?

**SOPHIE**

I can't feel it inside anymore -- I think I had a miscarriage.

**GRANT**

-- Jesus Christ.

**SOPHIE**

(crying)  
I think I lost it.

He PULLS HER CLOSE. She sobs hard into his shoulder SHAKING UNCONTROLLABLY. Suddenly we see the torso of Aury standing next to them --

They look up as Aury's hands reach down and hands them the infant in the blankets. Sophie takes the bundle and looks up at the woman.

**AURY**

Her name is Sarah Jane. She is only a few weeks old. Please take care of her -- I hope you can give her a better life than I can. She is very special.

Grant stares up in UTTER DISBELIEF...is this woman serious? Sophie cradles the infant in her arms.

**SOPHIE**

I don't know what to say...thank you. I can't take her though -- you're her mother. I don't even know you.

**AURY**

Your nature...your spirit -- your goodness...will raise this child. You can give her something I can't right now. There is no happy life. Not for this child. Not without you.

Sophie looks to Grant -- then back to Aury.

**SOPHIE**

-- thank you.

Aury starts to leave -- she accidentally brushes by the WAITRESS coming back into the restroom. THEY EXCHANGE LOOKS AND WE HEAD BACK TO...

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING**

Sarah can only stare at Aury for a moment. Something authentic -- almost genuine about the story...but she doesn't want to hear it. She heads for the door --

**SARAH**

I don't...I can't do this right now  
I --

**AURY**

I had what you have you know. The gift -- the light.

This stops Sarah in her tracks.

**AURY (CONT'D)**

Had it when I was born -- just like you did. Parents thought they could handle it and they almost did. It laid dormant till I was ten till my father slipped on the ice outside our house one night.

(beat; this is tough)

They shipped me off so fast -- wanted to run tests on me. Send me away. So imagine my surprise when after giving birth to you I realized I had passed this curse onto you. You took it from my body...saved me really.

**SARAH**

So why'd you abandon me? You could've helped me --

**AURY**

Now I have Joel to worry about. He's like you...different. Sometimes when he's around things happen I can't explain. I couldn't let him find you and ruin everything I was trying to protect him from.

**SARAH**

What did you do?

**AURY**

I work for the bus company.

Those words hit us like A BRICK TO THE FACE...And we're getting CLOSER -- all SOUND FADING AWAY --

CUT TO:

FLASHCUT: UNDERGROUND PARKING. BUS TERMINAL. WE SEE AURY SLIDE OUT FROM UNDER THE BUS WE SAW ON THE NEWS. SHE ROLLS OFF THE PALETTE AND DUSTS HERSELF CLEAN. SHE CHECKS TO SEE IF ANYONE IS AROUND AND RUNS FOR IT...

CUT TO:

FLASHCUT: BUS TERMINAL. AURY IS STANDING AT THE WINDOW WATCHING JOEL BOARD THE BUS WE JUST SAW HER UNDER. SHE'S CRYING.

SMASH CUT BACK  
TO PRESENT:

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING**

And that's all it takes; tears comes to Sarah's eyes now. She doesn't sob, she's just saddened, and tries to keep it together.

**SARAH**

-- oh my God. What have you done?

**AURY**

I did what I thought was best for you. I was twenty-one when I had you -- your father left before you were born. I was working three jobs. I wasn't ready for a kid. I didn't want you to have my life. I don't want Joel to know anything about this life.

**SARAH**

Who are you to decide what's best for me? You're not my mother and you never will be.

(beat; emotional)

You're very sick. Joel isn't going to get a chance to know anything about this life...you took that away -- my God all those people...

**AURY**

I'm only human Sarah. Maybe I don't have what it takes, but I can guarantee you would piss yourself if you had to make the sacrifices I have.

**SARAH**

-- sacrifices?

**AURY**

-- you took my life away.

And Sarah is WALKING AWAY now, it's just TOO FUCKING MUCH...

**AURY (CONT'D)**

The most frightening thing in this world -- is not knowing if we belong. Feeling out of place and trying to be accepted for who we are.

**INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS**

Sarah stumbles into the hallway. And she's just BREATHING. Fast. ADRENALINE still pumping with the weight of what she just endured. And Sarah STOPS --

We're HAND-HELD. DISORIENTATED. She looks around her. Literally COMING APART AT THE SEAMS. No idea where she is. But we're starting to SLOWLY SPIN AROUND HER -- she braces against the far wall and puts a hand to her mouth.

A NURSE approaches her --

**NURSE**

Miss, you okay?

Spinning FASTER NOW. Sarah stumbles to her feet and the nurse tries to hold her upright -- but she goes deadweight and almost takes the nurse down with her --

And we're getting FUCKING DIZZY we're SPINNING SO FAST and we SLAM INTO --

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER**

THE COMPLETION OF THAT WILD SPINNING AS WE FINALLY REST ON --

DARREN. And he's sitting up on the table in a HOSPITAL ROOM. A DOCTOR checks his heart rate -- the door suddenly opens to reveal -- LINDA SHEPHARD -- looking FRAYED.

**DARREN**

-- mom?

**LINDA**

-- oh my God -- the guy on the phone was making it sound like I'd have to come down and identify your body.

**DARREN**

A few stitches and some painkillers. When did you get here?

**LINDA**

An hour ago. We took the first flight out as fast as we could.

She hands a BACKPACK over to him --

**DARREN**

What's this?

**LINDA**

Change of clothes. I'll meet you in the waiting room.

**INT. WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Darren finds Linda in the corner of the WAITING ROOM watching the news. She hands him a cup of coffee.

**LINDA**

You guys have caused quite the commotion around here you know that?

**DARREN**

What are you talking about?

**LINDA**

I talked to Sarah's doctor -- apparently the young boy she made you drive all the way out here for...is actually Sarah's brother. His mother is Sarah's real biological mother.

**DARREN**

-- what? I though Sophie --

**LINDA**

I was surprised as you are. I guess Sarah's parents adopted her when she was an infant and never told her.

**DARREN**

How is she handling it?

**LINDA**

She has something a little more important to worry about than that.  
(beat; hard to say)  
Sarah's been seeking medical treatment privately for the last few months -- her doctors have diagnosed her with cancer.

This takes the wind right out of his sails --

**DARREN**

--my God. How can she...mom?

**LINDA**

Take it easy now. She's going to have an operation tomorrow to remove the tumor on her brain.  
(beat; means this)  
You're going to have to be her support system now. She's going to need you more than ever. You hear me?

He nods --

**DARREN**

What about her mom?

**LINDA**

For now she's going to have to get herself some help. She's suffering from severe depression.

**DARREN**

And her dad?

**LINDA**

He's working on getting a second chance.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON**

The room is silent. Just the whirring of the machines keeping the person in the hospital bed going and that person just happens to be SARAH -- IVs are hooked up to her arms -- she lays ASLEEP. PEACEFUL...

The door slowly opens and GRANT walks in. He approaches the chair across from the bed timidly, but doesn't sit right away. He doesn't say anything for a long time -- just STARES at his daughter.

**GRANT**

Hey there kiddo. How you feeling?  
Doctors said there's nothing to  
worry about...

Grant hears the words echo in the room -- realizes how false they sound. Sarah doesn't stir --

**GRANT (CONT'D)**

I can't say sorry because it won't describe or makeup for what I've done to you. I don't want you to forgive me. I don't want you to feel sorry for me -- I don't want you to feel anything toward me. If you hate me...I deserve that.

(hard to say)

I don't know if you know this but I can't look at myself in the mirror anymore. I don't recognize myself. All I see is...a coward.

He sits and grabs Sarah's hands --

**GRANT (CONT'D)**

That night we were arguing -- your mother and I. About whether or not to tell you about being adopted. I wanted to tell you, felt you had a right to know. Your mom didn't want you to, she felt you'd be better off. God -- she loved you. She adored you so much...

(beat)

I've made a lot of mistakes and you know what I realized? I really did want you, but I got lost along the way...forgot why I loved you.

He rubs her hand and it almost looks like she SQUEEZES BACK --  
He smiles now and wipes the tear starting to form in his eye.

**GRANT** (CONT'D)

I'm trying to get help. I am. And I  
hope...

(beat; emotional)

One day you can let me be your  
father again. Because I know the  
things I'm feeling inside and I  
want one day to hold you and tell  
you I'm so proud of the person  
you've become. Sophie was right --  
you are special...I was just too  
blind to see.

The door behind him opens -- DARREN comes in. He pauses as he  
makes eye contact with Grant. There's a long silence between  
the two...

Finally Grant gets up and Darren flinches as he gets close to  
him -- he HUGS DARREN. TIGHT. He grabs his head and mouths  
something in his ear but we can't hear it...but it sounds  
like "thank you."

They part and Grant leaves the room. Outside the window the  
sun is struggling to come out. Darren approaches the bed  
quietly -- SITS DOWN in the chair across from Sarah.

HE GRABS HER HAND AND HOLDS IT IN HIS -- SUDDENLY HER FINGERS  
START TO MOVE IN HIS PALM...

He looks down surprised -- then up at her. She opens her eyes  
slowly and greets him with a heart melting smile.

**SARAH**

(weak)  
-- hey.

**DARREN**

(smiling)  
Hey.

**SARAH**

Would you take me somewhere if I  
asked you to?

**DARREN**

(has to smile)  
Of course. Where to?

**SARAH**

(whispers)

I think I want to go to the park.  
The trees are amazing this time of  
year. Fall is my favorite season.

**DARREN**

You got it. You know what?

**SARAH**

What?

**DARREN**

I think I know what my second  
chance is now.

It's her turn to SMILE. She touches her hand to his face and  
he closes his eyes to it. He takes her hand from her face and  
HOLDS it in both of his...

We MOVE over to the window to find the ORANGE LIGHT of the  
SUN -- slowly sneaking up on the windowsill for the entire  
world to see.

FADE TO BLACK.