

SHADOW CREEK ISLAND

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. HOUSE - DAY**

A white single-story ranch, pristine and sunlit. Palm trees sway in the gentle breeze—one to the right, one to the left, and a cluster in the backyard. A cheerful "FOR SALE" sign stands in the front yard.

MIKE TUMBLES (32, tall, mustache) and DIANE TUMBLES (32, short, blonde, pregnant) stand beside the sign, their excitement palpable.

Nearby, a photographer (in his 40s, friendly, casual in shorts and a polo shirt) adjusts his camera and grins at them.

PHOTOGRAPHER

First home?

MIKE

Yep!

PHOTOGRAPHER

Congratulations! Welcome to Mims, Florida, Mike, and Diane.

DIANE

Soon to be the happiest couple.

The Photographer chuckles, pulling a bright-red "SOLD" sticker from his bag and handing it to Mike.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Make it official.

Mike peels the sticker and slaps it across the sign. Diane claps, her smile radiating joy.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

All right, big smiles!

Mike drapes an arm around Diane's shoulders while Diane cradles her belly. The camera clicks.

**INT. HOUSE - DAY**

**TITLE: FIVE YEARS LATER**

The house now feels lived-in—family photos line the walls, and toys are scattered on the floor.

At the dining table, CHRISTOPHER TUMBLES (5, messy curls) sits, eagerly eyeing a small birthday cake.

Diane (visibly pregnant) places the cake in front of him. Mike stands behind, smiling warmly.

MIKE

Christopher, before you dig into that cake—

Christopher dives face-first into the cake, smearing frosting everywhere. Diane laughs, grabbing a camera.

DIANE

Perfect. Before you finish that, we've got a surprise for you.

Christopher looks up, his face covered in frosting.

CHRISTOPHER

What is it?

Diane gently takes his hand and places it on her belly.

DIANE

You're going to have a baby brother.

Christopher's eyes widen. Mike blinks in surprise, then beams.

MIKE

Another boy?

Christopher grins, frosting dripping from his chin.

#### **INT. CUTIE'S PIE BAR - DAY**

The bar is cozy, with polished counters and a hum of quiet conversation. Christopher (25) sits across from JESSIE DIRE (21, brunette, piercing blue eyes), who stirs her coffee absentmindedly.

JESSIE

I remember when Nathan enlisted. It felt like he finally found his way.

Christopher takes a slow bite of his blackberry pie, his gaze distant.

CHRISTOPHER

That's what we all thought. But now... he's disappeared—seven months and not a word.

Jessie slams her coffee cup down, frustrated.

JESSIE

You're his brother, Chris. You don't get to give up on him.

Christopher meets her gaze, his voice steady but tinged with regret.

CHRISTOPHER

I haven't. But where do I even start?

Jessie pulls out a photo and slides it across the table. Nathan stands with his unit, smiling, the picture of confidence.

JESSIE

That's not someone who wanted to disappear. Something happened to him.

Christopher studies the photo, his jaw tightening.

CHRISTOPHER

Whatever it is, I'll find him.

**EXT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK**

Sirens flash red and blue across the yard. An ARMY GENERAL stands at the doorstep, facing Diane, Mike, and Christopher.

DIANE

We don't know where he is!

The general's face hardens.

ARMY GENERAL

Your son has classified knowledge. If he's gone rogue—

Christopher steps forward, fury blazing.

CHRISTOPHER

Don't you dare blame her for this?

The general glares.

ARMY GENERAL  
Step back, son, before this gets  
worse for your family.

Mike pulls Christopher back.

MIKE  
We'll handle this.

The general sighs, pulling a file from his briefcase.

ARMY GENERAL  
You don't understand. There's more  
at stake here than your family.  
Nathan was part of something...  
experimental. If he's out there,  
he's a threat—to all of us.

DIANE  
What kind of experiment?

Before the general can respond— BANG!

The general collapses, a bullet through his head. Chaos  
erupts.

CHRISTOPHER  
Get inside! Now!

Mike grabs Diane and Christopher and drags them back into the  
house as a black SUV screeches to a halt outside.

END FLASHBACK

**INT. CUTIE'S PIE BAR - PRESENT**

Christopher and Jessie sit across from each other. The sound  
of forks scraping against plates fills the air as the storm  
outside intensifies.

CHRISTOPHER  
(quietly)  
Any idea? Did he say anything? Get  
together with anyone?

JESSIE  
(takes a deep breath)  
That's the crazy part. Not exactly.  
But the secret part... it's weird.

A flash of lightning illuminates the room, followed by a  
deafening crash of thunder. The lights flicker briefly, and  
the entire bar shakes.

CHRISTOPHER  
(under his breath)  
Oh crap.

The TV above the bar switches on, blaring the weather report.

WEATHERMAN (ON TV)  
(surging urgency)  
For those foolish enough to stay in  
the hurricane's path, we want to  
remind you that Hurricane Nathaniel  
is making landfall. It's going to  
be a doozy. The winds are gaining  
speed...

A violent surge of static interrupts the broadcast, and the  
TV shuts off. Silence fills the bar.

**EXT. CUTIE'S PIE BAR - DAY**

The sky has darkened ominously, with swirling clouds  
overhead. The wind is picking up speed, whipping through the  
trees and sending debris across the street.

Christopher walks outside, heading to his car, but a shadow  
appears behind it. He stops, startled.

JESSIE  
(softly)  
I locked my keys out of the car.

Can you give me a ride to the base?

Christopher's eyes narrow. He opens his mouth, ready to  
refuse, but Jessie's defeated posture stops him. Her  
shoulders slump. He sighs.

CHRISTOPHER  
(sighing, resigned)  
Sure. Hop in.

She looks up, surprised, and gives him an apologetic smile.

JESSIE  
(sincerely)  
I'm sorry.

**INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY**

Christopher drives through the increasingly violent storm.  
The wind howls as rain batters the windshield, and the car's  
tires hiss on the wet road.

Jessie is staring out the window, her mind elsewhere. Christopher's hands grip the steering wheel tightly—his phone rings.

JESSIE  
 (casually, reaching for  
 the phone)  
 I can answer it.  
 (into the phone,  
 professionally)  
 Jessie Dire. How can I help you?  
 (cheerfully)  
 Mrs. Tumbles. How lovely.  
 Christopher is just dropping me  
 off.

She hangs up the phone and turns her attention back to him.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
 (somberly)  
 We have to make a pit stop at your  
 parent's home.

**EXT. HOUSE - DAY**

Christopher pulls up to his parents' house. The storm has worsened, and the sky is a shade of green. Trees bend violently under the pressure of the wind, their branches flying through the air like projectiles. The house's roof is coming apart.

Christopher's parents, Mike and Diane, rush out the front door. They pile into the car.

**INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY**

The car lurches forward, bumping over debris as Christopher accelerates. The wind howls.

Mike looks out the window, his jaw clenched.

MIKE  
 (quietly)  
 There's shelter up ahead. We need  
 to keep moving.

The road ahead is barely visible through the rain. Christopher's knuckles whiten as he grips the wheel tighter.

**EXT. ROADWAY - DAY**

Through the torrential rain, a SHADOWY FIGURE appears in the distance. The figure is barely visible—dressed in a black poncho, walking through the storm like a ghost.

**INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY**

Christopher's gaze locks on the figure, his pulse quickening.

CHRISTOPHER

(softly)

That looks like Nathan. I miss him.

MIKE

(gritting his teeth,  
determined)

We'll find him. I promise.

Suddenly, a loud CRASH rings out. The car swerves violently as a massive tree limb falls across the road. The tires screech as Christopher struggles to regain control.

**EXT. CAR - DAY**

The car flips, tumbling through the air as trees and debris rain around it. The screech of metal against asphalt is deafening.

BLACKOUT

**EXT. FOREST - DAY**

Heavy wind whips through trees. The grey sky looms ominously above. A car flipped on its side is half-buried in the underbrush, and shattered glass glints in the dim light. Mike slowly comes to, gasping for breath. He groans in pain. His body is bent awkwardly inside the car, seatbelt still fastened. He winces, his hand trembling as he fumbles for the seatbelt. He pulls it off, his body falling awkwardly to the car's ceiling.

MIKE

(weakly)

Anyone awake? Can I get some help?

Mike struggles to push himself upright, the blood rushing to his head as he twists his body. He coughs violently, wiping the blood from his mouth. The car is eerily silent—the wind outside howls louder, pushing against the crumpled vehicle.

He looks around, but there's no sign of anyone.

Mike uses every ounce of strength to crawl out of the wreckage. He pushes through the broken glass, his hands scraping as he pulls himself out of the car.

**EXT. CAR - DAY**

Mike struggles to his feet, swaying in the wind. The trees around him are bending violently in the hurricane. He staggers a few steps before looking around, squinting through the torrential rain.

He sees a small, weather-beaten sign: "SHADOW CREEK ISLAND."

**EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - FLASHBACK**

There is bright sunshine. Palm trees sway gently in the breeze. Mike, who is younger now, struggles to keep up with his son, Nathan, a rebellious 20-year-old.

NATHAN

(laughing)

Come on, Father, you're too slow!

MIKE

(panting)

I still don't understand why we can't just walk there.

Nathan shakes his head, mocking his father.

NATHAN

(frustrated)

There's no challenge in walking. No effort. It's too easy.

Mike shakes his head, a look of sadness passing over his face.

MIKE

(grinning, nostalgic)

I remember when all you cared about was causing trouble.

NATHAN

(defiant)

Not anymore. I can't rely on the booze.

**EXT. SHADOW CREEK ISLAND - PRESENT**

The sky is heavy with dark clouds. Mike, disoriented, stumbles forward, his eyes scanning the unfamiliar landscape. He hears something rustling in the trees.

MIKE

(shaky)

H-Hello? Christopher? Jessie?  
Diane?

A red wolf emerges from the trees with large eyes gleaming in the dim light. It snarls, showing its teeth. Mike fearfully backs away.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(softly, trying to calm  
it)

Come on, good boy... stay back.

But the wolf inches closer. Mike retreats, his feet slipping in the wet mud. He backs up toward the water, eyes wide in panic.

The wolf charges. Mike closes his eyes, bracing for the worst.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(shouting)

No!

But instead of attacking, the wolf tackles him gently. It licks his face, whimpering. Mike stares, dumbfounded.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(breathless)

You're trying to warn me... It's  
okay... I'll be safe.

The wolf lifts its head, ears perked. It stares into the distance. Mike's gaze follows.

**EXT. ROADWAY - DAY**

A desolate stretch of road. Abandoned cars overturned and piled up like a graveyard of vehicles. Mike walks cautiously, eyes scanning the horizon. A man emerges from the back of a van—HONG CHEERS (45, Asian), dressed in simple, weather-beaten clothes.

HONG  
(smiling, calm)  
Friend. Welcome to the rest of your  
life.

MIKE  
(frowning)  
Where am I?

HONG  
This is your safety. Your  
happiness. Your health.

Hong gestures to the handful of people emerging from their cars—some seem upset, and others appear oddly calm despite the storm raging around them.

MIKE  
(skeptical)  
The what?

Hong laughs as if this is all just an everyday occurrence.

HONG  
This place is for those who have  
given up, those who have stopped  
searching for a way out or answers  
to what this place is.

Mike looks around, his mind racing to make sense of everything.

HONG (CONT'D)  
We found these cars. We've adapted  
them to survive when the weather  
gets bad.

MIKE  
(soft chuckle)  
That's a pretty wild idea.

#### **INT. HOUSEHOLD - FLASHBACK**

The kitchen is dimly lit. Younger Nathan sits at the table with a computer in front of him. He's looking at something inappropriate, his eyes darting nervously when he notices his father approaching.

MIKE  
(firmly)  
Son, don't do this.

Nathan quickly minimizes the screen, trying to act casual.

NATHAN  
(defensive)  
Do what?

Mike shakes his head, frustration clear.

MIKE  
You're wasting your life. You've  
got so much to offer, but you're  
throwing it all away on... this.

NATHAN  
(angry)  
What are you talking about?

Mike rubs his forehead, sighing deeply.

MIKE  
(sadly)  
I almost lost your mother because  
of my pornography addiction. It  
would be best if you didn't make  
the same mistakes.

Nathan stops, a flicker of realization crossing his face.

NATHAN  
(quietly)  
You think I have this perfect life,  
huh?

Mike's heart sinks, the weight of his son's words hitting him.

MIKE  
(sighs)  
I feel sorry for myself when the  
days are darker outside... but that  
doesn't mean you should drown in  
it.

Nathan shrugs, trying to deflect the tension.

NATHAN  
(grim)  
How do I fight it, Dad? I just  
wanted attention. That's why I did  
all those things.

Mike looks at his son, a hint of understanding in his eyes.

MIKE  
(softly)  
I understand more than you know.

Nathan's eyes harden, and he picks up a bottle of cooking sherry, drinking it in one go. He wipes his mouth and burps loudly, smiling mockingly.

NATHAN  
(smirking)  
You're right. I feel better.

Suddenly, he hurls the bottle at Mike's head. Mike dodges just in time, his face turning to one of disbelief.

MIKE  
(shouting)  
What the hell?

Nathan bolts, laughing as he runs out of the kitchen.

NATHAN  
(teasing)  
Come on, older man! Can you catch me?

Mike stands there for a moment, shaking his head, conflicted.

**EXT. SHADOW CREEK ISLAND - PRESENT**

Mike snaps back to reality, standing at the forest's edge with the red wolf still beside him. The storm intensifies as he looks out across the landscape, uncertain.

**EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT**

The crackling sound of the bonfire fills the air. Mike sits on the ground. The firelight dances across his face, casting flickering shadows. The faces of others around the fire are half-illuminated, their expressions unreadable.

MIKE  
(quietly, to himself)  
What is this island?

HONG  
(chuckling, hands him a plate)  
It's a place where we can relax and take a chill pill.

MARINETTE (wearing loose, earthy clothes) hands Mike a plate filled with beans. She sits next to him, taking a deep breath as she settles into the warm glow of the fire.

MARINETTE

We all used to be in the Army. Then we realized we worked too hard to protect a country that didn't want us.

Mike takes a bite from the plate, chewing thoughtfully. He looks out into the dark expanse beyond the firelight, a hint of concern in his eyes.

HONG

(gesturing to the horizon)  
For way too little. Come on, why aren't we doing more at home?

Mike remains silent, and the tension in his body slowly eases. He looks up at Hong.

MIKE

(softly)  
I'm starting to get a picture.

HONG

(nodding)  
Whenever I feel like working, I deliver food to the other side of the road.

Mike shifts uneasily on the ground.

MIKE

I-I need to find my family.

Hong and Marinette exchange a look, their faces unreadable. The atmosphere shifts slightly.

HONG

(carefully)  
It's so good, and the tips are decent. It keeps me afloat, and there are no bosses, man.

MARINETTE

(with a bitter laugh)  
All bosses are assholes. We work for ourselves.

HONG

(nods, shrugging)  
Every leader is an asshole. We don't want to lead. We want to do as little as possible.

MIKE  
(urgently)  
Listen, have you seen my son?

Around the bonfire, people look at each other, scratching their heads.

HONG  
Honestly. We don't have family and friends to go back to.

Mike shakes his head, frustrated.

MIKE  
(to himself)  
I was like that... didn't have many friends.

He sits back down and stares into the fire. The flames flicker, casting a strange light on his face.

HONG  
Exactly. Who needs people? You have to risk trusting them.

Mike rubs his face. The fire crackles in the silence. The sounds of the night grow louder.

MIKE  
(more quietly, to himself)  
Regardless of how you feel, have you seen anyone come through?

MARINETTE  
(shaking her head)  
Just you, my man. That's all that's come through here for miles.

Mike stands, pacing.

MIKE  
(resolutely)  
I have to go.

HONG  
(sighs)  
It's nighttime.

MIKE  
(stopping, facing Hong)  
No... it's tempting to want to stay and not do anything, but if I do that, I won't...

A man sitting nearby pulls out a weed cigarette and blows the smoke in Mike's direction. He passes it along.

WEED CIGARETTE PERSON

(lazily)

Just chill out, man. Life is  
pointless.

Mike feels the smoke and relaxes. He exhales slowly, trying to calm himself, his body sinking back into the earth beneath him.

MIKE

(softly)

That's nice.

The sound of the fire crackling is louder now.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK**

Mike, younger, slumps onto the couch in front of the TV. The hum of the screen is the only sound. The door to Nathan's room is closed, and there is the faint sound of something crashing inside. Mike's brow furrows in concern. He stands up, walks toward the door, and knocks softly.

MIKE

(calling out)

Pee-You, that stinks.

The smell of smoke wafts from the crack beneath the door. He knocks again, louder this time.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(urgently)

Please open the door now.

NATHAN (O.S.)

I'm busy.

Mike's hand grips the handle, rattling it. He jostles the door open with his shoulder.

MIKE

(irritated)

Please don't make me do this.

The door swings open, and the room is thick with smoke. Nathan, a teenager, slouches on his bed, a half-empty bottle of whisky beside him. He looks up at Mike with a weary, defiant stare.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
(quietly, frustrated)  
Why, Son?

NATHAN  
(shouting, choked)  
The truth is that I want easy  
things in life. I don't want to  
have to work this hard!

Mike's face softens.

MIKE  
We can find a job.

Nathan grabs the bottle of whisky and takes a swig.

NATHAN  
(bitterly)  
You can't get me anything. I've  
seen the days when you do nothing  
but watch TV.

Mike shakes his head, a sigh escaping him. He places a hand  
on Nathan's shoulder.

MIKE  
(gently)  
You're right, honestly. I haven't  
done much, and I'm not motivated.  
But you can, and as your parent,  
I'll make sure you are motivated.

Nathan chuckles, bitter.

NATHAN  
(mocking)  
I'm joining the Army.

Nathan stumbles to his computer, quickly filling out a form  
on the Army website. Mike's face hardens with concern.

MIKE  
(shouting)  
Son, don't you dare.

Nathan doesn't look up, his fingers typing faster.

NATHAN  
(sarcastically)  
What else, Papa? Sit at home, stay  
out of shape, touch with reality?  
Where the hell do you find those?

Nathan swings, knocking over the bottle.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
(enraged)  
I'll never have to see you again.

Mike, blood boiling, takes a deep breath.

MIKE  
(quietly, resigned)  
I give up.

Nathan swings at Mike, hitting him with the bottle. Mike stumbles back, blood trickling from a cut on his forehead.

NATHAN  
(shouting)  
Get off of me, old man!

Mike's hands tremble as he touches his bleeding head.

MIKE  
(under his breath)  
Fuck this, too much work.

With one final glance at his son, Mike storms out of the room, slamming the door so hard that the entire house shakes.

**EXT. ROADWAY - PRESENT**

The fire crackles in the silence. Mike's face is hardened, his resolve unshaken. He stands and looks at the dark road ahead, determination burning.

MIKE  
(to himself)  
I'll find them. I will.

He walks away from the bonfire. The road stretches out.

**EXT. CAR - DAY**

The sound of crows cawing breaks the silence.

Mike's eyes flutter open, disoriented. He blinks rapidly as his vision sharpens. His breathing is heavy, and panic is creeping in. The bed is unfamiliar—crumpled sheets and dim lighting surround him. He sits up quickly, his heart racing.

MIKE  
(voice hoarse)  
Holy crap... what happened?

Mike looks around the car. His hands tremble. The interior is scattered with items, worn and beaten by time.

He turns to find Hong slouched in the driver's seat, asleep, his head leaning back against the headrest.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(urgent)

Hong! Hong! What the hell is going on?

HONG

(grinning, barely awake)

You took a little vacation in your mind. It's fantastic.

Mike's eyes widen in confusion. He swings his legs off the bed and forces himself to stand, barely able to keep his balance.

MIKE

(shaking his head,  
desperate)

I've got to go. My family...  
they're out there.

Mike pushes against the dashboard, fumbling with the car door. He kicks the trunk, rattling it in a panic.

HONG

(smiling, not concerned)

You can't leave once you're here.

MIKE

(stern, defiant)

Watch me.

Suddenly, Marinette steps into the car, her silhouette framed by the harsh sunlight blocking his way.

MARINETTE

(soft, warning)

Mike, you don't want to do that.

Mike grits his teeth. His frustration peaks as he shoves past her, trying to break free of this place's invisible hold over him. But before he can reach her, she punches him in the gut with deadly precision. He gasps, collapsing to the ground.

MIKE

(breathless)

Why? What the hell?

MARINETTE

(flatly)

I may think life is pointless, but we were all part of the Army and its experiments. We know how to fight. You're going to screw up our existence.

Mike doubles over on the ground, trying to catch his breath.

MIKE

(weak, disoriented)

What... experiments?

Marinette extends a hand to him. Her eyes are cold.

MARINETTE

(somber)

You can't leave if I tell you about it.

Mike is still clutching his gut. He looks at her outstretched hand, then takes it with reluctance.

MIKE

(gritting his teeth)

I'll attempt not to.

MARINETTE

Deal.

**EXT. ROADWAY - DAY**

The road stretches before them, the sand kicking up in the hot breeze, the heat shimmering.

Mike walks next to Marinette. His expression is clouded with confusion and desperation.

MIKE

(urgent)

Why can't we leave, Marinette?

She glances at him, her face unreadable.

MARINETTE

I knew what we signed up for when we joined the army, but I didn't realize how bad it would get.

She pauses, a brief flicker of something distant in her eyes.

MARINETTE (CONT'D)

(somber)

The army gave us some antidepressant meds. But it had... strange side effects. None of us give a shit about our lives anymore. We don't want friends. We don't wish for closeness. All we want is to live in cars and finish our lives.

Mike's eyes widen as he processes her words.

MIKE

(softly, horrified)

Everyone in this village?

MARINETTE

(nods)

Yep. Somehow, we manage our strength to wake up in the morning... but none of us care.

MIKE

(low, contemplative)

It's not entirely working because you're self-aware of it.

MARINETTE

(shaking her head)

I didn't take my medicine today. It gives you a temporary high before leaving you as desperate as before.

She swallows a pill from her pocket, popping it into her mouth.

Suddenly, a RED CAR roars past them, its engine revving loudly. A BLUE CAR follows, speeding aggressively, engines growling. Both cars race down the road at breakneck speed.

MIKE

(watching in awe)

Wow!

MARINETTE

(dry)

We may someday be suicidal, but we still know how to have fun.

The red car veers sharply, cutting off the blue car. The blue vehicle flips violently into the sand, spinning and crashing with a deafening sound. Mike runs toward the wreckage.

MIKE  
(panicking)  
Holy crap. Are they hurt?

Marinette watches calmly. She takes another pill.

MARINETTE  
(deadpan)  
If I were you, I wouldn't do that.  
They prefer to be dead.

MIKE  
(angry, disbelieving)  
You can't be serious.

Mike rushes to the flipped blue car. Its engine is smoking. He leans down, checking for signs of life in the twisted wreckage.

MARINETTE  
(soft, almost warning)  
If you attempt to leave, you'll  
start a whole massive wave of  
people dying for you to stay.  
Literally.

Mike looks up from the car, horror spreading across his face. He reaches toward the passenger, whose body is twisted at an unnatural angle, face obscured.

MIKE  
(faint, trembling)  
What is this place?

MARINETTE  
(somber)  
This place is where we all end up.  
This place is... nothing.

Mike's hand hovers near the passenger. The air is thick with tension.

#### **EXT. RACEWAY - FLASHBACK**

The roar of engines fills the air. Dust clouds swirl around the racetrack as cars zoom past, tires screeching. Mike stands outside the gates, the thrill of speed palpable in the air. Swallowing nervously, he walks up to the TICKET COUNTER, his hands shaking slightly.

MIKE  
(softly, almost to  
himself)  
One ticket, please.

The Ticket Counter Attendant, a weathered man, eyes Mike.

TICKET COUNTER ATTENDANT  
Forty-five fifty, with tax.

Mike pulls out his wallet, his fingers brushing over the credit cards. He hands over his card, his eyes downcast.

MIKE  
(gruffly)  
Thanks.

The attendant glances up, recognizing the name.

TICKET COUNTER ATTENDANT  
Mike Tumbles? Nathan's father?

Mike freezes for a moment.

MIKE  
Yes. Is he inside?

TICKET COUNTER ATTENDANT  
(quietly)  
I don't know, but... man, that guy  
was cool once. Then he just pushed  
everyone away. What happened to  
him?

MIKE  
I don't know. I can't say. I barely  
even like myself.

The attendant gives him a sympathetic look. He slams the register drawer shut and hands Mike his ticket.

TICKET COUNTER ATTENDANT  
(half-heartedly)  
Good luck, man.

Mike takes the ticket, shoves it into his wallet, and walks away without a word.

#### **INT. RACEWAY STANDS - DAY**

The air is thick with the smell of gasoline and burnt rubber. Mike sits in the stands, scanning the crowd.

His eyes fall on Nathan, who emerges from the throng of spectators and walks toward him with a purposeful stride.

NATHAN  
(awkwardly)  
Hello, Father.

Mike stands, a smile creeping onto his face. Nathan offers his hand. Mike hesitates before shaking Nathan's hand.

MIKE  
(surprised)  
How have you been?

NATHAN  
The Army's treating me decent.

MIKE  
That's good... I'm glad.

They sit down next to each other.

NATHAN  
I used to want to be stubborn like you. Like, take on the world.

MIKE  
I'm glad you didn't.

NATHAN  
(slightly smiling)  
I still go to see that counselor.

A BLUE CAR speeds by, leaving the rest of the cars in its wake. It's so far ahead that it might lap everyone else.

MIKE  
(half-smiling)  
Outside help is good, even though some Tumbles men are too stubborn.

Nathan watches the blue car, eyes narrowing.

NATHAN  
(grimly)  
Yikes. It helps somewhat, but I still think life's a pointless mess—no point in giving money or anything. People suck.

Mike laughs again, but there's no absolute joy in it.

MIKE

You have to channel that anger into something good.

NATHAN

(staring at the blue car)  
I hear you. But the counselor always says,... God's watching over me.

The blue car swerves, cutting dangerously close to the other vehicles, its engine screaming.

MIKE

(shaking his head)  
Yeah, I walked away from counseling because of that. Some invisible entity watching over us after we die?

NATHAN

(sarcastic)  
Yeah, I get it. You weren't invested.

Mike shrugs, his mind elsewhere as he watches the blue car continue to wreak havoc.

MIKE

Some days, I think the only thing worth following is the damn wheel.

The blue car swerves too sharply, crashing into the wall with a deafening crash. It flips over, skidding across the dirt track. Mike jumps to his feet, adrenaline kicking in.

NATHAN

Dad, you know some stuff?

MIKE

Before I dropped out, I was an EMT. Let me see what I can do.

**EXT. ROADWAY - PRESENT**

Mike sprints toward the wreckage. The car is engulfed in flames.

MIKE

(shouting)  
We can pull you out of this!

Marinette, cold and detached, watches from a distance.

MARINETTE

I'm telling you, let him go. It's best if you just let it go.

Mike unbuckled the seatbelt of the Racecar Driver, dragging him to safety. The upside-down car is close to the flames.

MIKE

(grunting)

I've got you. Hold on!

The gas tank suddenly ignites, the explosion rocking the scene. Mike stumbles back, shielding the driver. He pulls off the helmet, revealing the face of the Racecar Driver, no older than 18.

RACECAR DRIVER

(weakly)

Why? I was supposed to go out like an action star.

Mike stares at him.

MIKE

(softly)

My son and I are starting to reconcile.

The Racecar Driver pulls himself toward the wreckage, futilely attempting to return to the chaos.

RACECAR DRIVER

(crawling)

Tell your son you love him. That's enough. It's all you need to know.

MIKE

(panicking)

Enough for what?

RACECAR DRIVER

I don't see people anymore. I see enemies of everyone. Let me go.

Mike grabs him to stop him from getting into the wreckage.

MIKE

(shouting)

It doesn't have to be like this!

MARINETTE

I told you, don't try to help.

The Racecar Driver crawls back into the flames, his body engulfed as he lets out a final scream.

MIKE  
(voice breaking)  
What is wrong with this place?

Marinette approaches him.

MARINETTE  
Life is pointless.

Mike takes a step back, horrified. Marinette pulls a jagged piece of metal from the wreckage, slashing it across her wrist. Blood drips to the ground as she smiles grimly.

MARINETTE (CONT'D)  
Let me bleed out.

Mike's eyes widen in shock.

MIKE  
(fighting for control)  
I won't let you do that.

MARINETTE  
Let it happen. It's the only way.

MIKE  
You don't have to end like this.

Silence.

#### **INT. HOME - FLASHBACK**

In a hallway. Mike stands in front of a door. He knocks once.

MIKE  
(shaky voice)  
Nathan, you've been in there for  
forty-five minutes.

No response. He knocks again, louder this time.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
(a little more urgently)  
I got to run to the store. When I  
get back, you need to be out.  
You'll get through this. You know  
what not to do.

Still waiting for an answer. Mike's eyes narrow. He stands there a moment longer, waiting for something, anything.

He shakes his head, defeated. His gaze shifts down the hallway. The hairs on the back of his neck stand on end. He exhales slowly.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
(to himself, resigned)  
I hate to do this...

Mike steps back, takes a deep breath, and throws himself against the door. It splinters on impact, and wood cracking echoes through the house. Mike's face tightens, and emotions swirl in his eyes.

#### **INT. BATHROOM - DAY**

The bathroom is small and cluttered. The mirror reflects a note hastily written:

"Jessie left me. I've fucked up enough times to know that life has no meaning. Goodbye."

Mike's eyes lock on the note. He moves towards the bathtub slowly, dread settling in his chest. He freezes at the sight of his son, Nathan, unconscious, slumped against the tub. The water around him is a bright red, thick with blood. Mike's breath catches, eyes wide in horror.

MIKE  
(panicked)  
No, no, we aren't going to do this.  
We are not going to play this game.

He quickly pulls Nathan from the tub, his hands slick with blood. He drags him out, desperation fueling every movement.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
(pleading)  
Come on, come on, stay with me,  
buddy. Please, don't do this...

Mike's face twisted in a frantic urgency as he carried Nathan from the bathroom—the sounds of his heavy breathing.

#### **INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

The sterile brightness of the hospital room, which includes Balloons, stuffed animals, and antidepressant medication, litter the surroundings. Nathan lies motionless on a ventilator. Mike stands beside the bed; a doctor in his mid-40s watches him with a concerned but clinical gaze.

DOCTOR  
(calmly)  
All signs point to him coming out  
of the coma soon.

Mike nods slowly. His fingers drum nervously.

MIKE  
(gravelly voice)  
What can we do to ensure he won't  
relapse?

The doctor pulls out a brochure and shows it to Mike.

DOCTOR  
This new drug, Pixie Lordan  
Hydroskis. It's an experimental  
antidepressant. It tricks the brain  
into thinking everything is okay.

MIKE  
(dryly)  
Say that four times fast.

DOCTOR  
(unfazed)  
The side effects can be severe—if  
the person has alcohol or drugs, it  
could trigger a psychotic break. It  
can also cause extreme nausea, even  
vomiting.

Mike's hand runs through his hair.

MIKE  
(rubbing his temples)  
I've never been a big believer in  
medicine myself.

DOCTOR  
I'll give you time

#### **INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY**

Mike paces back and forth in the sterile, white hallway. He's biting his nails, eyes darting in every direction. Three ARMY SERGEANTS approach from the end of the hallway. They're all in their early thirties, their expressions unreadable. As they get closer, Mike places a hand on one of their arms, his fingers trembling slightly.

MIKE  
(almost accusingly)  
You teach them to stifle their  
emotions?

The sergeant hesitates, then looks at him coldly. The tension between them crackles.

ARMY SERGEANT  
(with a forced smile)  
That's not the case.

MIKE  
(gritting his teeth)  
That's bullshit.

The sergeant steps closer, clearly unphased.

ARMY SERGEANT  
(calmly)  
Old way of doing things is over. We  
teach self-control. Not to kill  
unless there's an absolute reason.

Mike's eyes narrow. His fists clench by his sides.

MIKE  
(voice dripping with  
venom)  
I ought to kill you where you  
stand. See how it feels.

The sergeant's face remains stoic, though his lips twitch slightly.

ARMY SERGEANT  
(with a smirk)  
You're going to love this.

Mike stops pacing. He glares at the sergeant, waiting.

ARMY SERGEANT (CONT'D)  
They want to give your son a  
dishonorable discharge.

MIKE  
(snaps)  
Fuck you.

The Army General steps forward, face as hard as granite.

ARMY GENERAL  
We'll leave him alone. But he can  
never talk about the Army again.

Mike's breathing becomes more ragged, his fists trembling.

ARMY SERGEANT  
There's a program.

MIKE  
(breathing heavily)  
What program?

The sergeant hesitates. There's a cold calculation in his eyes.

ARMY SERGEANT  
(quietly)  
I can't go into too many details.  
He stays in the Army, gets to keep  
everything, and this gets swept  
under the rug.

MIKE  
(gritting his teeth)  
I hate all of you military guys.

ARMY SERGEANT  
(leaning in)  
If all goes well, he'll never have  
to face depression again.

Mike's fists tightened, and his knuckles whiteened.

MIKE  
(through clenched teeth)  
I swear to God if that didn't sound  
great... Would I see him again?

ARMY SERGEANT  
(nodding slowly)  
Yes. After the program.

Mike stands frozen, the weight of the decision.

#### **INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

The room is sterile and quiet except for the rhythmic beep of the heart monitor. The hum of the machines fills the silence as Mike stands next to the bed, staring at his son, Nathan, hooked up to the ventilator. Nathan's face is pale, his eyes closed.

Mike leans down and gently kisses Nathan's forehead.

MIKE

(whispering)

I hope you never have to feel the weight of everyone against you again. Life has so much to offer.

He pulls away, his eyes lingering on his son. Mike sighs deeply.

The Army Sergeant watches from the corner, his posture stiff, arms crossed. The Doctor stands near the bedside, ready to remove the ventilator tube.

DOCTOR

All right, let's get this done.

The doctor removes the tube from Nathan's throat. There is a brief pause. The room feels eerily still.

The power flickers, and the lights dim and then go out entirely. The machines give a soft BEEP before cutting to silence.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

They need to fund these hospitals.

The POWER returns and the machines come back to life, but Nathan remains motionless. Mike's face tightens, and anxiety rises.

MIKE

How long till he wakes up?

The doctor, unfazed, glances at the machines.

DOCTOR

Give it a second.

Nathan's eyes flutter open slowly. He sits up—a sharp COUGH.

MIKE

(relieved)

I am so relieved.

Nathan, still groggy, looks around in confusion.

FADE TO BLACK

MIKE (V.O.)

That would be the last time I saw you. Even the Sergeant claimed they couldn't find you.

**EXT. ROADWAY - DAY**

The world is chaotic. Mike is seen running down a deserted, cracked highway, Marinette slung in his arms. She's bleeding heavily, her face pale, her breathing shallow.

MARINETTE  
(struggling to speak)  
What is your deal?

MIKE  
(gritting his teeth)  
I hate to repeat the Army, but we  
do not leave a fellow human behind.

Marinette's blood stains his shirt as he moves faster, desperation on his face.

MARINETTE  
Life is so meaningless. Since you  
came here, you've tried to bring  
meaning to it. Your son's better  
off just falling off this planet.

Suddenly, a CROWD of PEOPLE in their cars begins to gather, watching them. Mike's eyes flick over them. Some are indifferent, some murmuring.

**PERSON IN CROWD**

Let her die. It's the way of the world.

Mike's eyes widen, and he keeps his focus on Marinette.

MIKE  
Need help?

Marinette's body begins to lose color. Her breath gets shallower, and her vision blurs.

MARINETTE  
(weakly)  
We were told that our pain could  
stop the day the cars raced down  
the road.

Her eyes closed. Her body goes limp in Mike's arms. Her last breath is a mere RATTLE.

MIKE  
(panicking)  
I need someone to help! Please!

A BIG GUY bursts from the crowd. He's enormous, towering, with a KNIFE in hand. Mike sees him, recognizing that he might be their only chance.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
 (pleading)  
 Thank you! Can you make that hot  
 stop the bleeding?

The Big Guy doesn't respond. Instead, with a sudden, horrifying motion, he STABS Marinette repeatedly. The sound of the knife SLASHING through flesh is sickening. BLOOD sprays up, dripping from Marinette's mouth as she dies with a twisted SMILE on her face.

Mike freezes, his mind struggling to comprehend what just happened.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
 (voice trembling)  
 What the fuck...

The Big Guy looks down at the knife in his hand, then at Mike, a confused expression taking over his face.

BIG GUY  
 (low, disbelieving)  
 You're next.

Mike doesn't wait. His heart was pounding, and he sprinted down the road, adrenaline surging through him. The crowd of onlookers begins murmuring again.

#### **PERSON IN CROWD**

Get that son of a bitch! They don't deserve to live any more than the rest of us deserve to die!

Mike's feet pound the cracked asphalt, but the Big Guy is close behind. Mike can hear the SCREAMS and shouts from the crowd growing louder as he runs.

PERSON TWO  
 (coughing)  
 I have cancer. Why?

The Big Guy, overcome by rage, turns and SLASHES through the crowd, cutting down a couple of people in a frenzy. They BLEED OUT; their SMILES are grotesque as they die.

Mike's heart races. He turns a corner, looking over his shoulder. Hong, a mysterious figure, watches from a distance. Hong snaps his fingers, calling the Big Guy's attention.

BIG GUY

Oh my god... what have I done?

The Big Guy stumbles toward Mike, his hands shaking.

MIKE

Please stay away from me!

BIG GUY

I'm a murderer.

Hong steps forward from the shadows, his voice calm, almost soothing.

HONG

It's all right. You are a killer.

Mike recoils, fury and confusion warring inside him.

MIKE

Shut the fuck up.

Hong smiles softly, like a teacher explaining a lesson.

HONG

Yes. The drug... it was  
experimental, don't you remember?

The truth of Hong's words hits Mike like a ton of bricks.

Mike backs away from the Big Guy, his hand gripping the air as if trying to tear the illusion apart.

MIKE

(softly, to himself)  
God... What have we all become?

#### **INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - FLASHBACK**

The sterile white walls of a cold, clinical hospital room. Machines beep faintly in the background, and IVs hang like lifelines. DR. HONG, an older, sharp-eyed doctor, stands by the bed, looking at a clipboard. He speaks in a calm, almost detached tone.

HONG

(gesturing to a syringe)  
It's a new drug... revolutionary.  
It could change everything.

**EXT. ROADWAY - DAY**

The sun is harsh, casting long shadows on the cracked pavement. In his late twenties, battle-worn but alert, Mike stands frozen in a quiet, desolate road. His eyes, disbelief.

MIKE  
(stunned, confused)  
You're the doctor?

Big Guy, broad-shouldered, towering over Mike, steps forward, his eyes hollow. He places a heavy hand on Mike's shoulder.

BIG GUY  
(voice low, resigned)  
He's right. I can't ever go back.

Mike doesn't move, his gaze flicking between the Big Guy and the approaching DR. Hong, who claps his hands together and steps toward them, all smiles, like a conductor preparing for a performance.

HONG  
(with an eerie calm)  
It's all you. It's always been you.

The Big Guy slumps, pulling his arms tight across his chest as he fights back tears—his voice trembles.

BIG GUY  
(desperate)  
They're going to take me away.

Mike stares at him, a flicker of hope in his eyes, but it's quickly replaced with a hardened resolve. He leans in, gripping the Big Guy's arm tightly.

MIKE  
(urgent)  
Don't listen to him. You have the will to fight all of this.

Hong grabs Mike, yanking him back, his grip cold, malicious.

HONG  
(mocking)  
You're a killer. And branded in this universe, at least.

The Big Guy looks from Mike to Hong with a tortured expression. He's lost, trapped in a maze of his own making.

BIG GUY  
(pleading)  
What do I do?

MIKE  
(gritted teeth,  
determined)  
You fight. Fight with all your  
might to change everything. Accept  
the consequences. Get the help.

Hong scoffs, laughing darkly.

HONG  
(cynical)  
That sounds like much work. Life's  
meaningless, man.

Mike stands tall, violently shoving Hong's hands off him. The atmosphere is tense as the two men stand in a silent battle.

MIKE  
(defiant)  
It's everything.

The Big Guy stares around him, his eyes flickering between Mike's passionate words and the growing darkness inside Hong. He suddenly stands, his movements jerky as though trying to shake off an invisible weight.

HONG  
This is my favorite part.

The Big Guy grabs a knife from his belt, the blade gleaming cold in the harsh light. His eyes lock with Mike's, a final moment of understanding passing between them. Then, without hesitation, he plunges the knife deep into his neck—blood splatters across the pavement, a horrific, final act.

MIKE  
(horrified, yelling)  
Fuck! No!

The Big Guy collapses to the ground in a heap.

Hong shrugs, indifferent, his expression cold as he watches the scene unfold before him.

HONG  
(chuckling)  
That was not what I saw coming. He  
was supposed to stab you.

Mike stumbles back, the shock of the moment still coursing through him. His hands tremble as he looks down at the lifeless body of the Big Guy, the blood still flowing in sickening rivulets.

MIKE  
(angrily)  
What is wrong with you?

Hong laughs, his eyes wild, lost in his world of torment.

HONG  
(sighing, dark)  
Fucking everything. I have nothing to live for. I want to die. I'm too much of a coward to do it.

Mike steps forward, trembling, and pulls the knife from the Big Guy's neck, his expression grim. He turns toward Hong with the blade in his hand, his voice full of disgust.

MIKE  
(coldly)  
I don't believe in killing... but I think you're a monster.

Without hesitation, Mike drives the knife into Hong's stomach. Hong gasps, doubling over in pain, his face twisting in shock.

HONG  
(weakly)  
You are a killer as well.

Mike stares at him, his face a mask of determination.

MIKE  
No. I am a survivalist.

Hong falls to the ground, clutching his stomach. Blood pools around him as he gasps for air.

Mike drops the knife, his hands shaking. He looks at the blood-soaked ground, his chest heaving with ragged breaths. His eyes are wild, searching for clarity, but only confusion and regret fill them.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
(whispers to himself)  
What have I become?

Mike turns and stumbles into the nearby forest, his steps uncertain. The forest seems to close around him, and the shadows grow longer and darker.

FADE TO BLACK

JESSIE (V.O.)  
I love you, Nathan. Yet, at the  
same time... I hate you.

**EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**

Jessie, breathless, her clothes torn, runs through the dense forest. Her face is streaked with dirt and sweat as she pushes forward, glancing over her shoulder.

JESSIE  
Come on, you bastards.

The sound of snarling wolves echoes through the trees. The RED WOLVES are closing in fast, their red eyes glowing in the darkness. Jessie trips, her hands scraping against the rough ground as she falls hard onto her knees.

In a matter of seconds, the wolves surround her. They growl, hungry, and their teeth bared as they circle her. Jessie's breath quickens as she scans the pack. She's trapped.

**INT. APARTMENT - FLASHBACK**

Younger Jessie sits across from Nathan, both of them tense. Jessie watches him, her expression a mixture of concern and confusion.

JESSIE  
(soft but insistent)  
We've been together for three  
years. You can tell me anything.

Nathan shakes his head, tapping his foot nervously.

NATHAN  
(hesitant)  
You don't want to know about this.

Jessie's face hardens with frustration.

JESSIE  
(raising her voice)  
Secrets are what rip us apart! The  
counselor said that.

NATHAN  
 (guilt-ridden)  
 I'm sorry, Jessie. This is too  
 worrisome...

Without warning, Jessie hurls a plate from the table at Nathan. He dodges just in time.

JESSIE  
 (furious)  
 Fuck you! You've lied about the  
 women so many times!

**EXT. FOREST - PRESENT**

Jessie's voice echoes in the wind: "Empty." It's a whisper. The forest feels alive around her, but she's alone. She looks up, searching for salvation that doesn't come.

JESSIE  
 (disappointed, defeated)  
 Nothing. I get nothing.

Jessie drops to the ground, curling into a ball, her body tensed for the worst. The wolves circle closer. Their noses twitch, but then, oddly, they move along. Jessie watches them, confused but relieved.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
 (to herself, bitter)  
 Where are you, Nathan?

She gets back on her feet, her gaze darting around, sensing the wolves are still near. They're watching her, waiting for the right moment.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
 (determined)  
 I hope this works.

Jessie hides in the leaves, breathing shallowly as she waits, the sounds of the forest closing in around her.

**INT. BAR - FLASHBACK**

The scene shifts to a lively bar. Music pulses in the background, lights flashing. Jessie, KATE HUBERT, and TONYA SPELLING are laughing and dancing. The energy is infectious, but Jessie keeps her eyes on the crowd.

Suddenly, she notices Nathan across the room. He's with a group of guys. They howl-loud and wild.

JESSIE  
 (mocking)  
 Howling? How lame.

TONYA  
 (teasing)  
 Have a heart, Jessie. They're part  
 of the outfit, the Wolves. They're  
 vicious... and kind.

JESSIE  
 (sarcastic)  
 Ha. That's funny.

KATE  
 They also have pretty large cocks.

Jessie turns to Kate, surprised.

JESSIE  
 I take it you have -

**EXT. SHADOW CREEK ISLAND - PRESENT**

The chilling howls of wolves echo in the air. Jessie is jolted awake by the sound. She looks around urgently, her breath visible in the cold night air. Her eyes narrow as she scans the dark forest ahead.

JESSIE  
 Nathan is here. I know it.

The sound of a wolf's deep, guttural growl reverberates from the shadows, warning her. The lone wolf, silhouetted by the moon, yawns lazily before turning its head and locking eyes with Jessie. It growls again—a low, ominous sound that vibrates the air.

Jessie stands, her muscles tense, her heartbeat quickening. She clenches her fists.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
 I'm not afraid of you.

**EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**

The crunch of leaves beneath Jessie's boots is the only sound as she moves swiftly through the forest. The howling intensifies, and Jessie's breath becomes quicker. The air thickens with an eerie presence.

Suddenly, she feels movement around her. Glowing eyes pierce the darkness. There are not just one but many wolves, their bodies hidden by the thick trees. The wind rustles the leaves, amplifying their growls. The pack surrounds her.

Jessie's confidence never wavers. She grins.

JESSIE

I got a lot of stamina.

She takes off running, weaving through the trees with surprising agility, the wolves hot on her trail. They snarl as they close in. Jessie's heart pounds in her chest, but she pushes herself harder, her legs moving faster than ever.

### **INT. BEDROOM - FLASHBACK**

The scene is intimate and charged with electricity. Disheveled, Jessie leans against Nathan, both of them half-dressed. She pulls him closer.

JESSIE

(breathless)

Oh god. You have stamina.

Nathan smirks, brushing a strand of hair from her face.

NATHAN

You got a lot more than I do.

They both laugh, their chemistry palpable. Later, the bedroom is quiet except for the soft hum of the night. Jessie is now wearing a shirt, and Nathan slips on his. They both get into bed, but there's a weight to the silence between them.

JESSIE

(softly)

Are you planning to kick me out?

NATHAN

(shrugging)

You can stay if you want.

Jessie shifts uncomfortably, glancing at Nathan's wolf tattoo, now faint, its edges starting to blur as though it's losing its form. She reaches for Nathan's arm.

JESSIE

That's not a real tattoo?

Nathan stiffens, tries to pull away. Jessie's grip is firm.

NATHAN  
(coldly)  
Get off of me.

JESSIE  
You're not part of the howling  
wolves?

Nathan's sighs, frustrated.

NATHAN  
I'm in the army—just part of a  
regular division. Women don't like  
that.

Jessie pulls back, standing up from the bed, a mixture of  
anger and disappointment flooding her.

JESSIE  
You lied to me?

NATHAN  
(defensive)  
Half-told the truth

Jessie glares at him, taking a few steps back. She shakes her  
head, disbelief on her face.

JESSIE  
That's not acceptable. I can't.

Nathan stands up quickly, trying to close the gap.

NATHAN  
Admit it, you're all the same. You  
wouldn't have looked at me.

Jessie steps forward, getting right in his face. There's a  
simmering tension between them.

JESSIE  
That's not true. I—

Nathan grabs her, pulling her into a kiss. Jessie is caught  
off guard and shoves him back hard. She grabs him by the  
neck, pulling him back to her and kissing him with a ferocity  
that surprises them both.

NATHAN  
I think I'm going to like this.

**EXT. FOREST - PRESENT**

Jessie is running again. The wolves are closing in, and the ground beneath her feet becomes blurred. A wolf lunges from the shadows, its jaws snapping just inches from her skin.

She ducks, narrowly avoiding its bite, but the momentum carries her forward. She crosses a bloody line—guts and entrails spill from the remains of an unfortunate creature. The wolves hesitate, their growls turning into low whimpers.

JESSIE

I wore you out.

The wolves growl again but stay back.

**EXT. SHADOW CREEK ISLAND - NIGHT**

Jessie breaks through the trees, emerging onto the edge of a cliff. She looks out over the island, but nothing else is in sight. Just the vast, empty expanse. She inhales deeply, then shrugs, brushing the fear aside.

Without hesitation, she starts climbing the cliff, her fingers gripping the jagged rock face. The wind whips at her, but her movements remain focused and fluid.

**INT. ROCK CLIMBING USA - FLASHBACK**

Jessie stands at the top of a massive climbing wall. She hesitates for a moment before she slips—she's falling. But the rope catches her, snapping her back up.

JESSIE

(grumbling)

Damn!

At the bottom, Nathan watches with a stopwatch.

NATHAN

What did I say? Take your time. You have plenty of it.

Jessie, breathless, glares at him.

JESSIE

If we don't hurry, though, or I hesitate, I'll lose time and footing. And fall.

NATHAN

Jessie, you got this.

She takes a deep breath, her fingers tightening on the rock.

JESSIE  
(mutters)  
Just like you had Charlotte the  
other night.

Nathan's face tightens.

NATHAN  
(defensive)  
I thought we were moving past this.  
She was a one-time thing about  
three weeks ago.

Jessie rolls her eyes.

JESSIE  
(sarcastic)  
Two nights ago. Not three weeks  
ago. Yet I keep coming back.

Nathan's shoulders slump.

NATHAN  
(with a sigh)  
I got drunk. I made a mistake. You  
know I'm getting clean.

Jessie's fingers slip on the rock. She catches herself, but her expression hardens.

JESSIE  
(coldly)  
I've heard that one too many times.

Nathan stares at her, frustration creeping into his voice.

NATHAN  
You want to pass the climbing test?  
Climb the best walls in the world.

Jessie scoffs, but her determination is evident. She grabs the rope again and climbs, higher this time—pushing through her doubts, fighting for every inch of progress.

**EXT. CLIFFSIDE - PRESENT**

The sun begins to rise, casting a soft orange glow over the rugged cliffside. Jessie is scaling down a steep, jagged rock face. Her fingers dig into the craggy surface, but her foot slips as she shifts her weight.

JESSIE  
 (under her breath)  
 Shit!

She teeters for a moment, eyes wide, then, with a grunt, she catches herself. She lets out a relieved laugh, brushing sand off her clothes as she lands with a soft thud.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
 (laughing)  
 Shit! That was close.

She stands and surveys the area, dusting herself off. She freezes as she spots something unexpected—a NAKED MAN (early 30s, wiry, with dark, tattered hair) bathing in the shallow waters below. He's blissfully unaware of her presence.

JESSIE (CONT'D)  
 (calling out, waving)  
 I thought I was the only one here.  
 (pauses, sheepish)  
 I don't mean to intrude.

The Naked Man looks up slowly, his smile wide but unsettling. His eyes are an unnatural shade of red. His teeth are bloodstained like he's just come from feeding.

NAKED MAN  
 (grinning widely)  
 I haven't seen one of you.

He steps out of the water, dripping. His body is sinewy, his skin pale under the rising sun. He walks toward her with slow, deliberate steps.

NAKED MAN (CONT'D)  
 (predatory gleam)  
 Boyfriend? Honey, it's all free  
 love in the commune. Why don't you  
 let me show you?

Jessie's instincts flare. Her gut twists. Something's off about him—something primal.

JESSIE  
 (stepping back, wary)  
 Do you see another guy around here?

The Naked Man stops, his smile still vast but increasingly sinister. His shadow seems to grow, extending unnaturally long behind him.

NAKED MAN  
 (voice low, coaxing)  
 It's all good here. Free,  
 liberated. You can be free too.

Jessie's eyes dart to the cliffside behind her. She takes a half-step back, her heart racing.

JESSIE  
 (defiance)  
 That's all right.

But the Naked Man's grin widens as he drops to all fours with unnatural speed and agility. He howls at the moon—his body contorting as if something monstrous is stirring inside.

NAKED MAN  
 (animalistic)  
 Come on, join me!

In a flash, he lunges toward her. Jessie's instincts explode—she turns on her heel and bolts for the cliff.

JESSIE  
 (shouting)  
 Stay off of me, you fuck!

The Naked Man is fast—too fast. He's closing in. Jessie looks behind her, desperate. And then—

THREE PINK ARROWS pierce the air with a sharp whoosh.

The Naked Man's chest is struck—he stumbles, his mouth open in a silent scream. The air crackles with tension.

From the shadows steps VENUS APHRODIATE (32, confident, alluring, and deadly), holding a bow. She surveys the scene with cold, practiced eyes. She lowers her bow and strides toward Jessie, her movements fluid and graceful.

VENUS  
 (coolly)  
 That's not how you should be  
 approached at all.

Jessie, still shaken, stares at Venus, grateful but confused.

JESSIE  
 (breathless)  
 Than—thank you.

Venus pulls her arrows from the Naked Man's corpse with practiced ease, her face impassive.

VENUS

You must be tired, lost, and  
confused. I'm Venus. Let me show  
you around the village.

**EXT. VILLAGE - DAY**

A secluded village nestled between dense foliage. Huts made of wood and palm fronds are scattered along the shore, with folding chairs placed casually around bonfire pits. The people here are relaxed, walking around completely naked. The dense, overgrown forest surrounding them.

Venus leads Jessie through the village, her eyes scanning the area as they walk. Jessie follows. The people seem oblivious to their presence, continuing their leisurely activities.

JESSIE

Nudist colony.

Venus shakes her head, smiling slightly.

VENUS

Not exactly. A free love colony.  
When anyone's feeling... horny,  
they can pick someone.

Jessie stops in her tracks, shocked.

JESSIE

This entire island?

VENUS

No, just this area.  
(pauses)  
The gods have chosen us.

**INT. BEDROOM - FLASHBACK**

Jessie sits on the edge of a bed in a cramped, dimly lit apartment. Nathan is leaning against the doorframe, watching her. Jessie's eyes focused on her hands.

NATHAN

(with frustration)  
Okay, what's going on?

Jessie shakes her head, her lips tight.

JESSIE

I'm not in the mood.

Nathan stands up straighter, pacing, frustration.

NATHAN

For the sixth month in a row?

Jessie stands up slowly, her face set in resolve.

JESSIE

It's a lot.

Nathan stops pacing, his hands on his hips as he looks at her, confused and slightly hurt.

NATHAN

Jessie, I became clean for you. I haven't cheated in six months. Scratch that, eight months. It took me two months to get you back.

JESSIE

It's not just that.

Jessie turns and walks towards the window, her face conflicted. Nathan follows, stepping closer.

NATHAN

Babe, I am working so hard on this. If you tell me what it is.

Jessie turns back, finally meeting his eyes, her expression a mix of anger and concern.

JESSIE

The project. I need to know that it's not dangerous.

Nathan's face falls. He takes a moment to collect himself.

NATHAN

(nervously)

I'm pleading with you. It's for your safety.

Jessie crosses her arms, frustration rising in her voice.

JESSIE

Why can't we be in this together? A relationship isn't just one-sided.

Nathan's shoulders slump as he drops to his knees, defeated. Jessie's heart softens, but she holds her ground.

NATHAN

(quietly)

This project—it's not good. A group of us is trying to take it down. Stay out of this.

Jessie's eyes flicker with hurt and suspicion.

JESSIE

Tell me what we're taking down.

Nathan pulls out a photograph of him with his buddies, their faces solemn, against a dark backdrop. Jessie looks closer.

NATHAN

(reluctantly)

Okay. So—\*

The camera cuts to black, leaving Jessie's unspoken questions in the air, her future uncertain.

#### **EXT. VILLAGE - PRESENT**

The island sun beats down as Jessie walks through the village, eyes darting nervously at the people around her. The only fully clothed person in a sea of bare skin. Her hand instinctively reaches for her pocket, pulling out the old photo of Nathan. Her fingers tremble as she stares at it.

JESSIE

Rodger?

Her voice isn't a question but more a tentative recognition. RODGER CLEEMS (23), a naked man in his prime, strolls past her, unaware of her gaze. He's confident, moving freely as if the island's lack of clothes were the most natural thing in the world. He looks up.

RODGER

(grinning)

That's me. Hey, listen, can I get you something? You're way overdressed.

Jessie freezes momentarily, a smile tugging at the corner of her lips, but it's more out of discomfort than amusement. She raises her hand in a 'stop' gesture.

JESSIE

No. I need some information.

Rodger raises an eyebrow, the smirk never leaving his face. He's not deterred.

RODGER  
(chuckling)  
If you get down on your knees, I'll  
give you all the information.

Jessie recoils slightly, her face hardening.

JESSIE  
(incredulous)  
Does that work around here?

Rodger shrugs nonchalantly as if his proposition is nothing.

RODGER  
It works all the time.

Venus steps in. Her presence is commanding and oddly serene. She places a hand on Jessie's shoulder and looks at Rodger with a playful scolding expression.

VENUS  
Rodger is one of our stallions.  
He's the German variety.

Rodger suddenly neighs. Jessie watches in horror, her eyes widening. A shadow shifts beneath him as his arousal grows, and Jessie instinctively takes a step back. Her face reflects both confusion and disgust.

JESSIE  
(disbelieving)  
I want to know about this project  
you were working on with Nathan.

Rodger stops, suddenly deflated, his earlier confidence dimming slightly. He looks at Jessie as if trying to recall.

RODGER  
(distracted)  
The name sounds very familiar..

Venus snaps her fingers, her voice turning sharp.

VENUS  
(to Rodger)  
Make her more comfortable.

Rodger's eyes narrow, and he hesitates, pondering for a moment. He's not entirely sure how far he wants to take this.

JESSIE  
(firmly, backing up)  
Stay back.

Rodger sits down on the sand, submission.

RODGER

Nathan... I knew him. He's here, on this island. He sacrificed a lot.

Venus steps forward, her smile teasing yet enigmatic.

VENUS

You've given me little choice.

With a mischievous flick of her wrist, Venus whistles. Immediately, a NAKED YOUNG WOMAN (early 20s, fresh-faced) runs toward Rodger, tackling him to the ground with unrestrained fervor. She kisses him passionately.

YOUNG WOMAN

I couldn't take it anymore.

Venus watches, a smirk playing on her lips. She turns to Jessie, who stands frozen, conflicted.

VENUS

(to Jessie, teasingly)  
This doesn't turn you on?

Jessie locks eyes with Venus, her gaze hard and unwavering.

JESSIE

(calm, almost too quiet)  
I mean, quite possibly.

Jessie leans in in an unexpected moment of vulnerability, her lips brushing against Venus's. The kiss is tense, but it's not passion—it's power. Jessie's fingers slide towards Venus's quiver, fingers grazing the sharp tips of arrows.

Venus reacts immediately, pushing Jessie away with a low growl, her eyes narrowing in anger.

VENUS

(hissed)  
What is the meaning of this?

JESSIE

I just needed a weapon.

Venus's anger flickers, but she quickly regains her composure. Her voice is low, threatening.

VENUS

You were meant to come to this village to feel love.

**EXT. STADIUM - FLASHBACK**

The bright lights of a bustling stadium shine. ERICA WILLIAMS (19, looking fragile and remorseful) approaches Jessie with a hesitant step, her eyes avoiding direct contact.

ERICA  
Jessie? I'm sorry.

Jessie turns slowly, her eyes icy. She steps forward, balling her fists. She's about to strike Erica but stops.

JESSIE  
(low, menacing)  
Was he worth it? He told me after  
rock climbing.

ERICA  
(tears in her eyes)  
We just kissed once.

Jessie clenches her jaw. Anger builds within her.

JESSIE  
(sarcastically)  
At the party. You ruined my  
relationship.

ERICA  
(voice trembling)  
I know... and our friendship. I've  
been asked to give this to you.

Erica hands Jessie a six thousand-dollar check. Jessie stares at it in disbelief, her breath catching.

JESSIE  
(furious)  
What the hell is this?

ERICA  
It's how much our friendship was  
worth. I can do more if you want.

Jessie snatches the check and rips it in half.

JESSIE  
You can't put a price on betrayal.

ERICA  
(regretful)  
I get it. I want you to know I'm  
rooting for you two.

JESSIE  
 (deadly calm)  
 We will never, ever get back  
 together.

**INT. STADIUM - DAY**

Jessie sits alone in the stands with a hot dog, the world around her seemingly distant. The game is ongoing, but she's lost in her thoughts, her mind elsewhere.

The ANNOUNCER's voice booms over the loudspeakers.

ANNOUNCER (O.C.)  
 (excited)  
 That is halftime! Will Jessie Dire  
 please come down to the front?  
 You've won the grand prize!

Jessie looks up in confusion. She's caught off guard but shrugs, unsure whether she should care. She sets the hot dog down and walks toward the front of the stadium.

**EXT. FIELD - DAY**

Jessie steps onto the field, the lights flickering out, plunging everything into darkness. Panic spreads through the crowd, with little kids screaming in confusion.

PARENT (O.S.)  
 It's all part of the show.

Jessie looks around, anxiety creeping in. What's happening? A spotlight suddenly shines down on her, blinding her momentarily. The sound of a marching band fills the air, but it's not any regular band—it's the ARMY MARCHING BAND performing for her. She can barely comprehend the scene unfolding in front of her.

The crowd's murmurs crescendo into cheers as Nathan, clean-shaven and looking handsome in his military uniform, steps into the light. A microphone is in his hand.

NATHAN  
 Jessie, first of all, I promise I'm  
 not asking for marriage.

Jessie's eyes widen.

JESSIE  
 (pointing at him)  
 Good, because you wouldn't get it.

Nathan raises his hands, trying to calm her down. His voice is steady, pleading.

NATHAN  
 (softly, reassuringly)  
 I'm not asking you to take back  
 your friends who did stuff with me.

Jessie steps forward, her eyes filled with betrayal, her voice shaking with emotion.

JESSIE  
 (strained)  
 I'm going to kill you. There's a  
 thin line between love and hate.

Nathan gestures for her to wait, then turns to an AA SPONSOR (40s, no-nonsense) standing beside him. The AA Sponsor looks at Jessie, his face serious.

AA SPONSOR  
 I'm Nathan's AA sponsor. This man  
 has put more effort into becoming  
 alcohol-free than most people put  
 into anything else.

Nathan looks back at Jessie, his gaze softening.

NATHAN  
 No more alcohol, no more mistakes,  
 no more anything but you, baby.

Jessie folds her arms, her heart heavy with everything she's endured. She looks like she's about to walk away, but then—

The Band plays, and Jessie runs over to Nathan's arms.

#### **EXT. VILLAGE - PRESENT DAY**

The sun hangs low, casting long shadows across a dusty, barren village. Jessie stands at the center of the dirt path, eyes locked on Venus. Venus cracks her neck with a sickening snap, a casual grin forming on her lips.

VENUS  
 (sweetly)  
 Come on, Jessie. Whatever love you  
 desire, we can give it to you. You  
 could be a love machine.

Jessie takes a step back, a defiant sneer on her face. Her grip tightens around the arrow she's clutching.

JESSIE  
 (under her breath)  
 Get wrecked, bitch.

Venus sighs dramatically, rolling her eyes.

VENUS  
 (slowly, warning)  
 Don't make me sic the whole  
 village.

Jessie's eyes dart behind Venus, and what she sees makes her stomach churn. The Young Woman, naked and feral, has sunk her teeth into Rodger's neck. Blood spurts from the wound, drenching the woman's face as she drinks deeply, her eyes filled with a twisted ecstasy. Rodger, half-conscious, groans, barely able to comprehend what's happening.

RODGER  
 (laughing weakly)  
 I love this... oh yeah, baby...

Rodger's body goes limp, blood spraying out in thick spurts, staining the woman's face. She doesn't stop, her hunger insatiable. Unfazed by the gruesome sight, Venus watches with a detached, almost bored expression.

VENUS  
 (shrugs)  
 That's just our resident Black  
 Widow. She gets off bywell, killing  
 the men she sleeps with.

Jessie recoils, disgusted.

JESSIE  
 This whole place is fucking sick.

Venus's gaze sharpens, an amused but dangerous smile tugging at the corners of her lips.

VENUS  
 Oh, but it's also a place to have  
 whatever you desire.

As if on cue, THE BLACK WIDOW jumps in front of Venus, her eyes glinting with lustful intent. She licks her lips as she inches closer to Jessie, her breath heavy.

BLACK WIDOW  
 (seductively)  
 I'd love to know what your whole  
 body tastes like.

Jessie takes a startled step back, but before she can react, a LARGE-NAKED MAN appears behind her, blocking her path. The man is massive, his body glistening with sweat. He stands there, imposing and naked, with an unsettling grin.

Jessie's heart races as she looks around—she's surrounded. Venus steps closer, her voice low and coaxing.

VENUS

Want to know what desire feels?

Jessie's body shakes. The Arrows are in her hand, her only defense. She steps back slowly, trying to maintain her calm.

JESSIE

(shaking her head)

Why are you like this?

The Large Naked Man steps forward, a smirk twisting his lips.

NAKED MAN

(grinning)

Anal doesn't hurt after long.

Venus leans forward, her tone dripping with malice.

VENUS

(whispering)

I'll be licking you.

The Black Widow crouches before Jessie, her eyes gleaming with predatory hunger.

BLACK WIDOW

(softly, with dark  
amusement)

I'll be sucking your blood... It'll  
be a win for all of us.

Jessie's grip tightens around the arrow. She's shaking, but her resolve hardens.

JESSIE

(under her breath)

Shit.

Jessie feels cornered, desperate, and has no way out. But then, in a split second, her instincts take over.

With a quick, fluid motion, Jessie raises the arrow and stabs the Large Naked Man in the groin, piercing him deeply. The man gasps, his eyes wide with shock and pain. His body convulses as he lets out a guttural scream.

NAKED MAN  
 (shocked, breathless)  
 Are you into that type of pain?

He stumbles back, collapsing to the ground, writhing in agony. Jessie doesn't hesitate. She turns on her heels and runs, her heart pounding.

JESSIE  
 (panicked)  
 This is too much.

The Black Widow screeches in frustration, leaping after her, but Jessie is already gaining distance. Jessie barrels forward, the sound of pursuit echoing in her ears.

As Jessie races through the village, the horizon ahead darkens, and the sky turns a deeper shade of red. She can hear the scurrying of feet behind her.

**EXT. DARK VILLAGE - NIGHT**

Jessie, bloodied and disheveled, stumbles into view, breathing hard. Her eyes flicker.

Her body jerks as if haunted by unseen memories.

VENUS (O.S.)  
 You can't outrun this forever.

A chilling voice echoes from behind her. Jessie spins around, heart racing, eyes wide in panic. The Black Widow and Venus appear just as monstrous as before.

Jessie's grip tightens on the bow in her hands. Venus grins, her lips pulling into a wicked smile, blood still glistening on her teeth from the wound Jessie inflicted.

VENUS (CONT'D)  
 There's nowhere to hide, Jessie.

BLACK WIDOW  
 You're so close. Don't you feel it?  
 The temptation, the pull?

Jessie stares back at them, clutching the bow.

JESSIE  
 Please, ... leave me alone.

She tries to step back but is met with the rocky edge of a CLIFF, the water below crashing angrily against the jagged rocks. She is cornered.

VENUS

Can you outrun us? We are forever,  
Jessie. You are nothing but a  
passing moment.

Jessie tightens her jaw, and her knuckles are white from gripping the bow. The Black Widow steps forward.

BLACK WIDOW

Give in, Jessie. You can't deny it.

Jessie raises her bow, her aim unwavering. Venus and the Black Widow falter, momentarily caught off guard.

JESSIE

I don't want this. I don't want to  
become you.

With a swift motion, Jessie releases an arrow. The Black Widow screams as the arrow pierces her stomach. Blood splatters in the moonlight.

BLACK WIDOW

What—why?

Jessie's eyes never leave the Black Widow. Venus moves toward Jessie with terrifying speed, but Jessie is quicker. She draws another arrow and fires. The arrow strikes Venus in the eye with a sickening squelch. Venus stumbles back.

VENUS

No!

The arrow remains lodged in her skull. Venus falls, lifeless, to the ground with a final, wet thud. Jessie stands motionless for a second, eyes wide with disbelief. She wipes the blood from her face.

JESSIE

You're not me... You're not me.

Jessie pulls the arrow from the Black Widow's body, her fingers trembling. She drives it back into the Black Widow's chest, more profound, harder. Her hands are slick with blood as she wipes it across her face. Her breathing is labored, every movement a battle.

BLACK WIDOW

You... you're... like us now...

Jessie presses the arrow in again. The Black Widow's life fades away in a bloody gasp.

BLACK WIDOW (CONT'D)

There's... more than one of me...

Black Widow's body goes still. Jessie stares at her, shaking, covered in their blood. She turns her gaze to Venus, still crumpled on the ground.

JESSIE

What the hell does that even mean?

VENUS

You can't kill us all...

Jessie breathes heavily, wiping the sweat from her brow. Her arms fall to her sides, empty of their weapons.

JESSIE

I don't care anymore.

Jessie stumbles back to the village, her heart racing.

In the distance, a Naked Couple gorges themselves on the necks of their lovers. Blood pours from their victims, pooling on the ground beneath them.

Jessie stares, her expression vacant, horrified.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Oh, shit...

She scrambles for the bow, panic flooding her system.

The moon rises higher, casting a ghostly glow on the bloodied village. The scent of death is thick,

A man leaps at her from the shadows, his bloodied face twisted with rage.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

No!

Jessie, heart pounding, turns to face the cliffside. Her fingers graze something sharp—a piece of paper caught in the wind. It's the photo she once showed Christopher. She holds it in her hand. The wind blows it out of her grasp. She watches the water crash violently against the rocks below.

Her eyes dart back to the approaching villagers.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Have any of you seen Nathan?

A man leaps toward her.

Jessie doesn't hesitate. She steps backward. The cliff is all left between her and the menacing crowd behind her.

**EXT. VILLAGE - DAY**

Wild-eyed and disheveled, Jessie steps cautiously into a hauntingly quiet village. Her eyes scan the area. A small fire crackles nearby. Venus's bow, dark and foreboding, lies abandoned beside the flames.

Jessie hesitates, urgently moving toward the bow, trying to stay as silent as possible.

JESSIE  
(whispering to herself)  
Just don't make any noise.

A NAKED COUPLE lounges near the fire, their bodies tangled in a passion-filled embrace. Their moans mix with the crackling of the fire, oblivious to Jessie's presence.

MAN  
(smirking)  
Halt, honey. I'll see my next meal.

WOMAN  
(playfully)  
What? You just ate. I'm starving.

The woman sinks her teeth into the man's neck, blood spurting in wild streams.

JESSIE  
(shocked, whispering)  
Oh, shit...

Jessie backs away quickly, but her eyes widen in horror as she sees more WOMEN around the village—each one sinking their teeth into their lovers' necks. Blood fountains through the air, staining the ground beneath them.

The Woman from earlier turns her head to Jessie.

WOMAN  
(grinning)  
Can't you see?  
(coughing)  
Women are the superior creatures.

Jessie stares at her, processing the grotesque scene. She looks down and notices she only has three arrows left.

JESSIE  
More than three arrows...

Jessie spins, scanning the village. The Villagers are closing in, blood still dripping from their mouths, their faces twisted in hunger.

**EXT. VILLAGE - PRESENT**

Jessie is running—sprinting with everything she's got.

Three arrows fire through the air, each hitting a villager square in the chest. They fall with a sickening thud, but the others keep coming.

VILLAGERS  
(taunting, shrieking)  
You can't hide from love forever!

JESSIE  
Fuck off!

Jessie runs toward the edge of the village, her breath ragged and uneven. She reaches the cliffside. The vast, open water crashes against the rocks below.

VILLAGERS  
Man, you stupid bitch!

She glances over the edge, her eyes scanning the turbulent water below. She takes a deep breath..

A MAN leaps at her. He's fast, too fast. Jessie's instincts kick in as she stumbles backward, her foot slipping. The wind howls as Jessie falls toward the cliffside, the water below rising to claim her.

**EXT. HOUSE - DAY**

Dark clouds smother the sky above. Diane looks around nervously at the edge of an old, dilapidated house. She checks behind her as though she expects to be followed. The house before her is ancient, with the number "1060" fading on the front door.

DIANE  
(whispering)  
Home?

**EXT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK**

Diane is raking leaves in the yard, a task made more complicated by the thick layer of cigarette butts littering the ground, turning to Nathan, who watches her with a smirk.

DIANE  
(angrily)  
Again?

NATHAN  
(shrugs)  
What?

DIANE  
(disappointed)  
This is going to ruin your health.

NATHAN  
(laughing)  
Come on, Mom. It's not as bad as  
your cooking.

DIANE  
(fuming)  
You know how your grandmother died.  
Three packs a day. You're going to  
end up just like her.

Nathan coughs, clearing his throat.

NATHAN  
I just swallowed some air.

Diane shakes her head, frustrated, and returns to raking the leaves with more vigor.

**EXT. HOUSE - PRESENT**

Diane stands before the weathered door, knocking softly. The door creaks open, revealing TRIMANE DUBLIQUE (35, Jamaican).

TRIMANE  
I'm not interested. You all come by  
here all the time. I'm not  
converting to some white god.

DIANE  
(pleading)  
Wait, please. I'm not trying to  
convert you to anything.

Trimane steps back, and his face hardens.

TRIMANE  
 (gruffly)  
 What do you want then, woman?

Coughing drifts from within the house. CHLOE WHITE (35, Australian) emerges, her face flushed.

CHLOE  
 (half-laughing)  
 It's no accident you ended up here.  
 The Army brought you here. They  
 have the technology.

She chuckles darkly, masking a hint of delirium.

TRIMANE  
 (sighs, glancing at Chloe)  
 You'll have to excuse my wife.  
 She's had a bit too much of supply.

Diane sees the house overtaken by wild pot plants—the walls consumed by nature.

CHLOE  
 I swear, it sucks to be lost.

Diane, exhausted and desperate, clenches her fists.

DIANE  
 I can find them on my own.

TRIMANE  
 (softly, but firm)  
 Nonsense. I know what it's like to  
 be lost without knowing where  
 you're going. Come on, I insist.

Diane hesitates, a sliver of doubt crossing her face. Her hand tightens around the car keys she holds, just in case.

DIANE  
 (whispering to herself)  
 I hope you're right.

**EXT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK**

Diane and Nathan are working in the yard. It's a crisp fall day, and the leaves swirl gently as they rake them into piles. The scene is peaceful and mundane.

NATHAN  
 (half-smirking)  
 So, I quit smoking.

Diane glances up at him, a smile creeping across her face, though it's tempered with a sense of skepticism.

DIANE  
I'm proud of you.

Nathan shrugs, raking leaves without much enthusiasm.

NATHAN  
I didn't do it for you.

Diane rolls her eyes but hides a faint smile.

DIANE  
I understand. It's great that  
you're clean and sober.

Nathan stumbles across something hidden in the leaves—a small, weathered packet that catches his eye. He picks it up.

NATHAN  
Did you leave a recipe down here?

He holds it up, but Diane's eyes widen. She grabs it.

DIANE  
Please, give me that.

She pulls the packet away, clutching it tightly. He looks at her, eyebrow raised.

NATHAN  
Do you smoke weed?

Diane rolls her eyes, trying to brush it off casually.

DIANE  
It's healthier than cigarettes.  
Plus, I need a vacation sometimes.

Nathan is taken aback, and his disappointment is evident on his face. He lets out a frustrated sigh.

NATHAN  
How often?

Diane doesn't meet his gaze. She begins raking the leaves more forcefully.

DIANE  
Once or twice a day.

Nathan steps closer to her.

NATHAN  
Ma, you're addicted.

Diane freezes.

DIANE  
I am not. I can stop. I will stop.

Nathan shakes his head, disappointed. He takes a step back.

NATHAN  
When? When?

Diane's hand clenches around the rake. She turns away from him, staring at the endless sea of leaves.

DIANE  
When life becomes less stressful. I  
can finally just fucking relax.

Nathan sighs, steps forward, trying to hug her, but Diane pulls away, shoving him off with a harsh movement.

NATHAN  
What the fuck?

DIANE  
I have to work full-time, cook,  
clean, and do everything.

Nathan's face falters. She continues raking, tears threatening to spill as she hides her face from him.

#### **INT. HOUSE - PRESENT**

Diane entered a dimly lit room. The smell of something strong and earthy hits her nose immediately.

DIANE  
That smells quite good.

Trimane, sitting at a cluttered table, glances up. He gives a slight, almost apologetic smile.

TRIMANE  
I try to scare Chloe away from it.  
We sell it. It's the only way to  
live in this god-forsaken place.

Diane begins to walk through the house, her steps slow and deliberate, as she takes in the cluttered space, the overgrown plants, the haze in the air.

She comes upon a photo on the wall, a picture of an Army troop, and stops dead in her tracks. Her fingers graze the frame, and then she points at the familiar face in the photo.

DIANE

This is my son. Have you seen him?

Trimane snatches the photo from her hand quickly.

TRIMANE

That shouldn't be out, sorry.

Diane's face tightens, concern rising in her chest.

DIANE

I want to know if he's okay.

Chloe, lounging in the corner with a half-empty bottle.

CHLOE

Wow, relax, Trimane, she's not here to steal business.

Trimane shoots Chloe a warning look.

TRIMANE

I don't know. I don't remember.

DIANE

How did you come to find this home?

Chloe lets out a small, unhinged laugh, but Trimane cuts her off sharply, his voice rising.

TRIMANE

Shut the fuck up. This isn't some episode of Lost. We aren't in Purgatory. At least, I don't think.

Chloe chuckles, but it's tinged with an edge of madness.

CHLOE

We woke up here. We had a mortgage and a life. Trimane knows how to grow some shit. Ha-ha-ha.

Diane looks around the room, her gaze falling on the smoke haze, the plants, and the worn furniture.

DIANE

It's okay. I'm not here to judge.

Trimane's eyes narrow.

TRIMANE

That's enough.

Diane steps forward, trying again.

DIANE

Please. He's gone missing.

Trimane exhales sharply.

TRIMANE

The best-case scenario is death.

Diane's heart stops for a moment.

DIANE

What? Why?

CHLOE

Tell him, Trimane. Tell him.

Trimane shakes his head, a dark look crossing his face.

TRIMANE

I couldn't. You don't want to know.

Diane's jaw clenches her fear.

DIANE

I can handle it.

TRIMANE

This whole island... it's an experiment. This entire place.

DIANE

Uh-huh.

TRIMANE

I think ours is addiction. I can't get enough cocaine.

CHLOE

I have to get high every day.

Diane nods slowly, her addiction lurking behind her words.

DIANE

I quit cold turkey one day.

**INT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK**

The room is dim, the soft light of the television flickering in the background. Smoke wafts through the house as Diane sits on the bed, a cigarette in hand. Her eyes half-lidded, she inhales deeply.

LATE NIGHT HOST (O.S.)  
Cold turkey mustard mayo.

The doorbell rings. Diane glances at the clock. It's 1:30 a.m. She sighs and turns off the television.

DIANE  
I'll act like I'm asleep.

She sways as she stands, a little off-balance. She stumbles slightly as she turns off the light and climbs back into bed.

NATHAN (O.S.)  
Ma! I need help. Please help me.

Diane shoots up from the bed, panic in her eyes. She pulls on a robe and stumbles toward the door.

DIANE  
What the hell? Nathan.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The door opens, and Diane stands face to face with Nathan, his eyes wide and crazed, his face covered in white powder. Behind him are three police officers. Nathan runs into the house and hugs Diane, his arms shaking.

POLICE OFFICER  
We not only found him coked out of his mind. He was trying to sell some of this weed.

Diane turns, clutching Nathan. The weight of the moment is crushing. She looks around the room.

**INT. HOUSE - PRESENT**

Diane, her hand clutching a small packet of weed, eyes glazed over as she inhales. A smile tugs at her lips, her smile slowly fades as the haze of the drug takes its toll. Her expression hardens, and she slowly sets the packet down, standing from the chair with resolve.

DIANE

(softly)

I knew from that moment forward I  
had to get rid of my addiction.

Trimane, seated at a cluttered table across from her, watches her with a cynical smirk. The room is heavy with the scent of drugs and disarray. He reaches across the table, tapping a few white powder lines onto a mirror.

TRIMANE

Touching. Do you want any coke?

Diane's gaze hardens. She looks at the table, where a few pounds of coke sit next to glass pipes and half-empty bags.

#### **INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

The kitchen table is a chaotic mess. Piles of coke line the surface, and Chloe is cutting open a bag, ready to snort—the knife slices through the powder, creating a small, crystalline mound. Chloe leans down, snorting it up.

CHLOE

This is the best.

Diane stands at the kitchen door, her hand gripped tightly around the frame. She shakes her head.

DIANE

No. I need to find my son. You know  
it's getting late.

Trimane looks at her through the haze of smoke, his voice dropping to a warning tone.

TRIMANE

You don't want to go back.

Diane steps toward him, unwavering.

DIANE

I need to.

Chloe, still laughing lightly from her high, grins devilishly at Diane. She shoves the packet of coke aside and leans toward Trimane, her voice playful but dark.

CHLOE

We can put on a show for Trimane.  
Snort coke off each other's asses.

Diane recoils, looks at Trimane, who stares back with a knowing grin. The weight of the moment hangs heavily.

DIANE  
(disbelieving)  
Oh, dear God, no.

Trimane stands slowly, a predatory movement that chills Diane's spine. He takes a step closer to her. Diane takes a cautious step back.

Trimane pulls a gun under his jacket, the cold metal glinting in the dim light.

TRIMANE  
(slowly)  
This island will eat you alive with everything it's got.

Diane's heart pounds in her chest. She squares her shoulders, eyes locked with Trimane's.

DIANE  
That's why I need to find Nathan and the others.

She moves toward the door, but Trimane steps in her way, raising the gun to her chest. The room falls into a heavy silence as the tension mounts. Chloe watches.

CHLOE  
After all, you've seen, should we just let you walk out of here?

Diane looks to Trimane. Trimane cocks the gun, the sound echoing in the quiet room.

TRIMANE  
You don't have to snort coke off my wife's ass. But you do have to do some drugs. I need you to forget.

Diane swallows nervously, her chest tight with fear, but her eyes flicker with defiance. She lifts her chin.

DIANE  
(softly)  
Consider it forgotten.

Her fist is hidden behind her back, clenched and ready. Her hand shakes slightly as she holds it there. The gun is still aimed at her.

Trimane watches her. The gun lowers slightly momentarily.

Diane's fingers curl tighter around her fist.

**INT. DOJO - FLASHBACK**

The dojo is quiet and disciplined. We see Diane standing at attention, eyes focused. DOJO CAPTAIN (56, seasoned martial artist) stands opposite her, guiding her through a crucial move. Nathan mirrors her stance.

DOJO CAPTAIN  
(calmly, authoritative)  
You can do this. Fight the urge.

DIANE  
(quietly, to herself)  
I've got this.

Nathan glances over at her, offering a silent reassurance.

NATHAN  
(grinning, more confident)  
We got this.

The Dojo Captain shows them the next step.

DOJO CAPTAIN  
(slowly, demonstrating)  
I can show you this, but it's a last resort and should only be used when the stakes are high.

NATHAN  
(laughing slightly)  
No drugs, no alcohol, none of that stuff, right?

DIANE  
(nodding firmly)  
That's right. We're walking away from all of it.

The Captain holds his arm like a gun, his hand forming a sharp, pointed gesture. Diane mimics him, creating her own "gun" with her hand.

Dojo Captain moves with precision. He grabs Diane's wrist, flipping her upside down. She lands on the mat with a thud.

Diane blinks, seeing two of everything.

DIANE (CONT'D)  
(grinning, breathless)  
Wow! That was—

NATHAN  
(concerned, calling out)  
Uh-oh. Did you hit her too hard?

Diane springs up without hesitation, wiping the mat dust from her clothes. Her movements are swaying.

DIANE  
(laughing)  
Nope. That's... better than anything I've ever felt.

NATHAN  
(grinning, impressed)  
That's awesome!

DIANE  
(laughing, exhaling deeply)  
It's better than taking drugs. I'm telling you, this is amazing.

The Dojo Captain smiles proudly.

DOJO CAPTAIN  
(approvingly)  
I love to hear it. Remember this feeling—you're in charge. Always.

Diane kicks the air with a celebratory bounce.

NATHAN  
(laughing)  
This is exciting!

The Captain's face softens, imparting wisdom.

DOJO CAPTAIN  
If you find yourself in a situation where you need to defend yourself, remember that you're in control.

#### **INT. HOUSE - PRESENT DAY**

Trimane is holding a gun at Diane's chest. His grip tightens.

TRIMANE  
I hate to do this. Take the drugs.

Chloe stands in the background as she watches the scene unfold. She crosses her arms, smirking.

CHLOE

Drugs will make you feel alive.

Diane looks down at the gun. A spark of defiance ignites in her. Without warning, she grabs Trimane's wrist, flipping his hand and causing the gun to fall to the floor. He's caught off guard and crashes to the ground.

DIANE

I've been clean and sober for years. I'm not doing that.

She stands over him, unshaken.

CHLOE

(surprised, then furious)  
What the fuck, bitch?!

Chloe lunges, grabbing Diane's hair. But Diane is faster. She kicks Chloe in the stomach with force, sending her crashing backward into the wall with a loud thud. Chloe slides down, stunned, rubbing her head.

DIANE

Do you think that was going to work? You're so high you don't even know the difference.

Chloe laughs, albeit nervously.

CHLOE

(almost admiring)  
Nice.

The doorbell rings. Trimane scrambles to his feet.

TRIMANE

Listen, get the hell out of here.  
You can leave through the back.

DIANE

Who's at the front?

CHLOE

Ha-ha. You'll be sorry.

Tremaine doesn't respond. His hand reaches for the bottle of vodka in the fridge.

#### **INT. CAFE - FLASHBACK**

Diane and Nathan sit at a small café table, drinks in hand. Nathan holds a Mojito, and Diane sips her wine.

NATHAN

The dojo was great. I feel better.  
Like... cleaner.

DIANE

I wouldn't say I like the fact that  
we used fake IDs to get you booze,  
but... I guess it's okay.

Nathan shrugs, indifferent.

NATHAN

It'll be fine, I promise.

They exchange a look, taking a sip of their drinks.

**INT. HOUSE - PRESENT DAY**

Diane makes a break for the door. Trimane grabs Chloe's vodka  
bottle, his frustration mounting in his eyes.

TRIMANE

(snarling)

Hey!

He hurls the bottle at Diane as she rushes toward the door.  
The bottle flies past her, smashing into the wall.

DIANE

Please help me!

TRIMANE

Fuck.

The bottle narrowly misses Diane. She slams the front door  
open and rushes outside.

**EXT. HOUSE - DAY**

As Diane bursts through the door, she is immediately met by  
TOMMY WILLIAMS (48, imposing, burly, muscular). He steps  
forward, his demeanor calm yet commanding.

TOMMY

Miss, what seems to be the problem?

Diane pulls away from him, clearly rattled.

DIANE

(desperately)

These people are deranged. You  
don't understand!

Tommy looks back toward the house, his eyes narrowing.

TOMMY

What the hell happened in there?

Trimane stands in a trembling heap.

TRIMANE

Tommy, it was a mistake. We didn't mean for it to get like this.

Diane rushes down the stairs, but TONYA (43, tough and muscular) and MISTY (44, lean and fast) intercept her. They grab her by the arms and pull her back toward the house.

TOMMY

(shouting)

What did I say about attracting new clients?

TRIMANE

(nervous)

We always need to get them high—feed them the stash.

TOMMY

That's the only way to survive.

Diane struggles against their grip.

DIANE

What experiment? What the hell are you talking about?

Tommy's laughter deepens. He pulls out a gun and shoots Chloe without hesitation. Chloe drops dead in a sickening instant.

TRIMANE

No... no, she was my lover...

TOMMY

She was using too much of my stash. She became a liability.

TRIMANE

I tried to keep her under control, but she was cunning. Secretive!

TOMMY

That's not good. We have ways of dealing with that.

Tommy snaps his fingers. Tonya injects Diane with a syringe.

DIANE  
What the hell?

Everything fades into fuzzy darkness as her vision blurs

**INT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK**

The kitchen is softly lit. Diane stands by the counter, gazing at a picture of Nathan, her hands gripping a cup of coffee. Her face is a mix of exhaustion and hope.

DIANE  
(softly, to herself)  
When life was good, everything was.

She pours something from a flask into her coffee, her movements slow, deliberate. The door creaks open behind her. It's Christopher, his face filled with concern, eyes scanning her, yet he doesn't approach immediately.

CHRISTOPHER  
Mom... I promise we'll make sure  
Nathan is taken care of.

Diane hesitates, swirling contents of her cup.

MIKE (O.S.)  
This isn't the end.

Mike enters, his expression grim. His hands are stuffed into his jacket pockets, and his eyes don't quite meet Diane's.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
We'll find a way to help him.

Diane sighs deeply, her shoulders sagging as she sets the flask on the counter. She forces a small smile.

DIANE  
I hope so.

Christopher watches his mother with a tight expression. Mike looks at Diane one last time before heading out of the room. Diane stands there, alone for a moment. She lifts the cup to her lips, taking a sip. Her eyes close.

**EXT. BACKYARD - PRESENT DAY**

Diane's face is pale, her hands tied to a wooden chair. She stirs, slowly waking from unconsciousness. The edges of her vision are blurry. She blinks and tries to focus.

She sees Tommy, burly and calm but menacing, standing beside her and watching her closely. The wind rustles faintly.

DIANE

What... is going on?

Tommy takes a deep drag from a joint, blowing the smoke towards her face.

TOMMY

This island. This place. It makes you addicted.

Diane's eyes flicker with a hint of recognition as the smoke hits her. She smiles faintly.

DIANE

That's... good.

Tommy's smile widens. He exhales another puff of smoke, letting it hang in the air. Tanya stands off to the side, watching the exchange.

TOMMY

See? It's all good. Now... how much of this stuff are we buying?

Tanya glances at Diane.

TANYA

Don't try anything stupid. Your hands are tied, and we're watching.

Diane's eyes narrowing. She gives Tommy a sly look.

DIANE

I want all the drugs. Every single one. Fuck this life.

Tommy laughs a deep, guttural sound that fills the space.

TOMMY

You're fucking with us.

Diane looks at him, her eyes burning with defiance.

DIANE

Am I taking the place of Trimane?

Trimane, bleeding from his nose, sits unconscious in the chair. His body is limp, lifeless. The overdose is evident.

Tanya's eyes narrow as she watches Diane's reaction.

TANYA

We can make this go away

Diane stays still, but her mind is racing inside. Her pulse is steady, and she knows she has to act.

DIANE

Please, give me some more of that  
smoke, lover boy.

Tommy grins a wolfish smile, taking another hit from the joint. He leans close to Diane, putting his mouth near hers as if to share the smoke.

TOMMY

That's the right stuff.

Tanya watches with a sense of dark anticipation, but Diane's eyes flicker. In one swift movement, Diane lunges forward, biting Tommy's tongue hard. She pulls back quickly, ripping a chunk of it with her teeth, and spits it on the ground. Tommy gasps, his hands clutching his bleeding tongue.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

You... fucking bit-

Diane blows the smoke back into Tommy's face

DIANE

I know something you don't know.

Tommy, enraged, slaps her across the face. The impact stings.

TOMMY

What the hell is that?

Diane's gaze sharpens.

Tommy's furious expression.

**EXT. REHAB CLINIC - FLASHBACK - ESTABLISHING**

The sun is setting, casting long shadows over the sterile parking lot. The rehab clinic looms ahead. Diane stands outside, her posture stiff, her gaze distant. She takes a slow, deep breath.

A police car rolls up, its tires crunching on the gravel. The engine cuts off. The officers inside glance at each other. The door opens.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Are you sure about this?

Diane steps forward, her face a mask of determination and heartbreak. She pulls a thick wad of cash from her bag—hundreds, crisp and new. The officers exchange a glance before taking the money.

DIANE  
(softly, but firm)  
I want you to know... I'd do anything for you.

NATHAN  
(struggling in handcuffs)  
What the fuck?

DIANE  
I gave you life. I messed up and became addicted myself.

Diane turns away for a moment.

NATHAN  
Why? Why the hell?

Diane swallows, her eyes glistening with tears.

DIANE  
I couldn't track you down myself. I called in some favors.

Nathan looks at her, face a mixture of rage and confusion.

NATHAN  
Please, give me my booze.

Diane's eyes well up with tears.

#### **INT. REHAB CLINIC - FLASHBACK**

TITLE: THREE MONTHS LATER

The hallway of the rehab clinic, passing by the bare walls and empty chairs. The sound of muffled voices echoes. Diane peeks around the corner of a room, watching Nathan.

Nathan is seated on a chair, talking to a PSYCHOLOGIST (mid-40s, professional but empathetic). Nathan catches sight of his mother and opens the door.

NATHAN  
Mother.

Diane steps into the room. She smiles at him, her face a mixture of pride and guilt.

DIANE  
You've done well.

NATHAN  
So have you.

Diane swallows nervously.

DIANE  
I still have tough days.

Nathan nods, his eyes searching hers.

NATHAN  
The drugs they give me...

DIANE  
They make you forget.

Nathan laughs softly, a bitter edge to it.

NATHAN  
Yes, exactly.

Diane looks at him momentarily.

DIANE  
You want to take them all.

Nathan nods, his eyes hollow.

NATHAN  
It's tough not to. Sometimes, the  
urge to drink, smoke weed... or do  
anything vital is powerful. I have  
to isolate myself to fight it.

Diane shakes her head, reaching into her bag with trembling hands. She pulls out a bottle.

DIANE  
Same here. When the urges hit me...  
I go into a dark room.

Nathan watches her, understanding flickering in his eyes.

NATHAN  
I'm sorry.

Diane's heart aches.

DIANE  
I hear you.

The lights flicker and then go out entirely.

NATHAN

That's good because of the urge.

Diane stands still.

DIANE

I'm going away for a bit.

Nathan's expression shifts immediately, panic in his eyes.

NATHAN

What? To jail?

Diane swallows hard, her throat tight with emotion.

DIANE

I gave booze to an underage minor.

**EXT. REHAB CLINIC - FLASHBACK**

Diane is in handcuffs and being led to a police car. Nathan watches in shock, his face pale with disbelief. His world feels like it's unraveling.

NATHAN

No... this is all wrong.

Diane glances over her shoulder at him.

DIANE

Sweetheart, it's precisely what it needs to be. I'm not great. It wasn't a good idea.

Nathan starts to run toward her, his hand outstretched.

NATHAN

Mom, wait!

Three HOSPITAL GUARDS rush to intercept him, holding him back as Diane nods slightly, signaling that it's okay.

DIANE

I don't have much time.

NATHAN

I'll do whatever it takes to get better. I'll defeat this illness. It won't take a hold of me.

Diane looks at him with tears in her eyes.

DIANE  
Addiction can be a costly thing.

Nathan's face a mixture of confusion and heartbreak.

NATHAN  
I thought we had a good life.

DIANE  
We had some life. But our  
addictions drew us further away.

Nathan turns to the police officer.

NATHAN  
How long is she going away for?

POLICE OFFICER  
Three months. It'll be so she  
understands the consequences.

DIANE  
I was neglectful.

NATHAN  
I'll miss you, Mom.

Diane shakes her head. She turns away as the police place her  
in the vehicle.

DIANE  
One more thing... please take every  
opportunity to celebrate the small  
wins, no matter what.

Nathan nods, a mix of pain and resolve in his eyes.

NATHAN  
I will try my hardest.

Diane smiles through her tears.

DIANE  
Good. I love you, Nathan.

#### **INT. POLICE CAR - FLASHBACK**

Diane doesn't look away as the vehicle accelerates, her  
fingers trembling slightly as they grip the cold, hard  
surface of the seat. The officer beside her glances at her,  
then turns his eyes back to the road.

POLICE OFFICER  
 (softly)  
 Do you think that worked?

Diane's lips part.

DIANE  
 Yes, he will grow better. I'll see  
 him again in three months.

DIANE (V.O.)  
 (hauntingly)  
 I wish I had known then that it  
 would be the last time I saw you.

**EXT. BACKYARD - PRESENT DAY**

A slight breeze tugs at the leaves, Diane, visibly hardened, stands facing Tommy.

TOMMY  
 (angrily)  
 You don't know shit.

Diane stands tall, her eyes sharp as she locks eyes with him.

DIANE  
 I know enough that I've scarred  
 your tongue. I know that your buddy  
 over there is dead.

Tommy looks over his shoulder, confused, but before he can react, Diane's hand shoots to the gun she retrieved from the fight, her aim steady.

TOMMY  
 (eyeing her nervously)  
 Who are you talking about?

Suddenly, BAM. BAM. BAM. Three quick shots ring out, and Tommy is sent tumbling to the ground, shock.

DIANE  
 (coldly)  
 I also know how to use the gun I  
 found while we were fighting.

Diane stands, breathing heavily, her fingers still gripping the gun. Her eyes dart around, scanning the space, calmly begins to untie herself from the chair.

TANYA  
(screaming in horror)  
Shit, oh my god... Tommy!

Diane doesn't flinch. She turns her gaze toward Tanya, who is trembling, her hands covered in Tommy's blood. Tanya pushes at Tommy's lifeless body, futilely trying to revive him. Diane steps forward.

DIANE  
(calm but forceful)  
He's gone. How do I find my son?

Tanya, now panicked, looks up.

TANYA  
Fuck you! I don't even know who  
your son is!

Diane's face twists with frustration, and before Tanya can react, she grabs her by the hair, yanking her upwards. She brings the gun to Tanya's face, but when she pulls the trigger...

**CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.**

The gun is empty.

Diane's expression shifts to one of cold resolve. She throws the gun aside and grips Tanya by the throat, bringing her face close, whispering through clenched teeth.

DIANE  
I'm looking for my son, Nathan. I'm  
not messing around.

Tanya snarls, pushing back with unexpected strength, wrapping her arm around Diane's neck in a tight headlock. Diane gasps for air, her vision blurring. Tanya, shoves Diane.

TANYA  
(snarling)  
Do you think I give a damn?

Tanya blows a robust line of cocaine into Diane's face. Diane coughs violently. Her eyes flash with anger.

DIANE  
(fighting through it)  
Damn it.

Tanya grins, pulling her face close to the blow again.

TANYA

I know you want some more.

Tanya slams Diane onto the table, the glass shattering under the impact. Diane staggers to her feet, her body buzzing with adrenaline. She grabs a chair and swings it hard, striking Tanya across the face. Tanya stumbles back. She picks up more cocaine, her eyes wild with insanity.

TANYA (CONT'D)

(snarling)

With enough of these drugs, I can't feel a damn thing.

Tanya lunges at Diane, but Diane ducks and counters with a powerful roundhouse kick. The force sends Tanya crashing backward into a table, snapping it in two.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Yeah, well... here you go.

Tanya throws a handful of blow in Diane's face, and Diane recoils, her nose bleeding.

DIANE

I hate you.

Tanya sneers, wiping the blood from her lips.

TANYA

You also like it.

DIANE

(ferociously)

I don't care that I'm relapsing. I will go back on drugs. Just tell me where my son is.

Tanya laughs cruelly, blood spurting from her mouth.

TANYA

(laughing)

Never in a million years.

With that, Diane throws herself at Tanya, pounding her face with brutal punches. Each strike lands with a sickening thud. Tanya gasps, struggling to catch her breath, but Diane doesn't stop. The punches come faster, harder. Finally, Diane stands up, panting, her hands covered in blood.

DIANE

Please. Tell me where he is.

Tanya is barely conscious now, blood trickling from her mouth. She laughs weakly.

TANYA  
(weakly)  
Your son... he's not here. He beat  
addiction... We tried, but he was  
too good.

Diane pauses, her anger fading slightly, replaced with hope.

DIANE  
(faintly smiling)  
Did he win? That's... exciting.

Tanya coughs again, her face a mess of blood and bruises.

TANYA  
(sneering)  
You're too old to beat yours.

Diane's face hardens, and she shakes her head.

DIANE  
That's not true.

Diane kicks Tanya one last time, sending her to the ground. The force of the blow crushes Tanya's face beyond recognition. She's dead.

Diane, breathing heavily, looks around the backyard, her chest rising and falling with each labored breath. Her hands are shaking, blood dripping from her knuckles. She approaches the gate slowly, staring at Tanya's body.

#### **EXT. HOUSE - DAY**

Diane opens the gate, stepping into the open air. The sound of gunfire echoes in the distance, cutting through the silence. A flock of birds bursts from the trees above, their wings beating in unison as they fly away, free. Diane watches them for a moment, her expression unreadable.

She turns her back on the chaos behind her.

#### **EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY**

The sun blazes down. Christopher cautiously approaches a campsite surrounded by makeshift barriers. A flicker of movement catches his eye.

JOHNNY NASHVILLE (32 rugged and on edge) steps out from behind a tree, shotgun trained on Christopher's gut.

JOHNNY

You just stepped on my family's property. That's a mistake, friend.

CHRISTOPHER

I don't want any trouble.

Johnny smirks, finger itching on the trigger.

JOHNNY

Well, trouble's all you're getting.

Christopher raises his hands, his voice calm but desperate.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm looking for my brother.

Johnny cocks the shotgun, his expression dark.

JOHNNY

Try again.

CHRISTOPHER

No, I swear ... it's the truth.

From the nearby tent, HONEY NASHVILLE (32 sharp-eyed and battle-worn army fatigues, moves with authority), steps out, brushing blonde strands from her face.

HONEY

I think he's telling the truth, Johnny. Put it down.

Johnny motions for Honey to retreat.

JOHNNY

I've got this handled.

CHRISTOPHER

Please, tell him I'm friendly.

The shotgun remains pointed at Christopher.

JOHNNY

On this island, friend, you're either food or foe. Which is it?

Johnny's grip tightens. Christopher shuts his eyes, a bead of sweat rolling down his face.

CHRISTOPHER

My brother's name is Nathan Tumble.  
Have you heard of him?

Johnny hesitates and lowers the shotgun.

JOHNNY

Wait a second... you're  
Christopher? I'm sorry about that.

Johnny sets the gun down, his posture relaxing.

CHRISTOPHER

It's okay. Is Nathan alive?

JOHNNY

I believe so. I thought you were  
one of them.

CHRISTOPHER

Them? Who?

A monstrous screech pierces the air.

WHOOSH!

A GIANT BIRD,, dives from the sky. Its talons impale Johnny  
swiftly, lifting him into the air.

HONEY

JOHNNY!

Honey screams. The bird tears into Johnny mid-flight, blood  
raining down before it soars away.

CHRISTOPHER

(terrified)

What the hell was that?

Honey grabs Christopher's arm, her grip iron-strong.

HONEY

We've got seconds. Inside. Now.

CHRISTOPHER

What was—

HONEY

In the fucking tent!

Christopher scrambles into the tent, Honey diving in.

**INT. TENT - DAY**

The tent is stark inside—maps, weapons, and supplies scattered. Honey zips the entrance shut, her hands trembling.

CHRISTOPHER  
(starting to panic)  
What the hell just happened?

HONEY  
The island's apex predator. Don't ask questions. Just stay quiet.

Christopher paces, his breaths heavy.

**INT. ROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT**

The hum of a PlayStation fills a dimly lit room. CHRISTOPHER (15) sits cross-legged on the floor, controller in hand.

CHRISTOPHER  
I'm about to rock Sephiroth!

NATHAN (10), holding a steaming cup of soup, waddles in. He slurps, spilling soup onto the console.

NATHAN  
Oops.

The PlayStation sparks and dies.

CHRISTOPHER  
(aghast)  
What the fuck?!

NATHAN  
(defensive)  
I didn't do all that!

Christopher glares, his face red with anger.

CHRISTOPHER  
You short-circuited my PlayStation!

Nathan shrugs nonchalantly.

NATHAN  
Relax. It's just a game.

CHRISTOPHER  
Just a—this thing costs two hundred bucks! I can't replace it!

Nathan smirks, slurping the last of his soup.

NATHAN  
Men have to eat.

Christopher storms over, fist clenched.

CHRISTOPHER  
You're not a man. You're a weenie.

Nathan's expression darkens. He slams the cup onto the floor, soup splattering everywhere.

NATHAN  
Say that again, and I'll-

The door bursts open. Diane and Mike, their parents, step in.

DIANE  
Enough! Christopher.

NATHAN  
Not anymore. He's a crybaby.

Christopher's face crumples, tears of frustration streaming.

MIKE  
Lay off each other.

CHRISTOPHER  
I'll get my revenge.

NATHAN  
(laughing)  
In your dreams!

BACK TO PRESENT

**INT. TENT - DAY**

Honey glances at Christopher, her expression unreadable.

HONEY  
If Nathan's still alive.

Christopher's fists clench.

**INT. TENT - DAY CONTINUED**

The interior of the tent gleams with reinforced metal walls and intricate panels.

CHRISTOPHER  
What the hell is this?

HONEY  
It's our fortress. It keeps us  
protected from anything out there.

CHRISTOPHER  
Seems like it's worked so far.

Honey leans against the wall, arms crossed.

HONEY  
I came here to find Nathan. We were  
stationed here together.

Christopher narrows his eyes, scrutinizing her.

CHRISTOPHER  
Were you the one with whom he  
cheated on Jessie?

Honey lowers her gaze.

HONEY  
Your brother was very charming.

Christopher paces the cramped space, noticing a concealed  
flap in the corner. He pulls it aside, revealing a COMMAND  
CENTER brimming with monitors, controls, and equipment.

CHRISTOPHER  
How big is this tent?

HONEY  
It connects to underground bunker.

Christopher scans the complex setup.

CHRISTOPHER  
You're good with electronics.

Honey chuckles, her tone laced with pride. She gestures  
toward a group of soldiers—JACKSON, TOMER, KALEB, and  
JACOB—all wearing tattered army fatigues, working diligently  
at their stations.

HONEY  
My squad is good with their hands.

Christopher glances at her, skeptical.

CHRISTOPHER  
You don't seem too torn up.

HONEY

Johnny? He's our security system.  
Advanced A.I.

JACKSON

We're trying to make each version  
better than the last.

TOMER

Yeah, but the last one was too  
aggressive. You're lucky he didn't  
shoot you on sight.

CHRISTOPHER

How long have you been here?

JACKSON

Three, maybe four months—or years.  
Time doesn't mean much here.

HONEY

This island was a military  
experiment. They wanted to see how  
people held up.

CHRISTOPHER

What's the plan to get off?

TOMER

The water. We're working on a plan  
to make a run for it.

HONEY

But who the fuck knows if the Army  
planted weapons to keep us in?

CHRISTOPHER

(skeptical)  
Sounds dicey.

HONEY

It sure is.

Christopher exhales sharply, shifting his stance.

CHRISTOPHER

Do you know where Nathan is?

Honey glances at the squad before answering.

HONEY

We believe he's in the nest.

CHRISTOPHER  
The nest? You mean the giant bird  
that just attacked us?

JACKSON  
Yeah. And there's more than one.

TOMER  
We think the Army uses this island  
as a weapons-testing zone.

CHRISTOPHER  
So all of this... is about weapons?

JACKSON  
Pretty much.

Christopher smirks bitterly.

CHRISTOPHER  
Yeah, I know all too well what  
that's about.

The group exchanges uneasy glances as distant screeches echo  
through the metal walls.

**INT. BEDROOM - FLASHBACK**

Nathan (13) sits cross-legged on the bed, engrossed in his  
Nintendo 3DS. The room is cluttered. Christopher (18) BURSTS  
through the door, his face flushed with frustration.

NATHAN  
(annoyed)  
Don't you knock? I could be...  
well, you know, touching myself.

CHRISTOPHER  
You never are.

NATHAN  
Oh, I do it plenty. I don't want  
you to know about it.

Christopher paces, running a hand through his hair. Nathan  
stays focused on the game, unbothered.

CHRISTOPHER  
You punched me the other day. I'm  
guessing it was an accident?

NATHAN  
(smirking)  
Oh, snap! Hang on, gotta catch this  
TRI-STAR.

CHRISTOPHER  
Excuse me?

NATHAN  
You were bragging to your friends  
about the white lies. I felt it  
was... appropriate to punch you.

CHRISTOPHER  
That's none of your business.

Nathan shrugs nonchalantly.

NATHAN  
You've been an A-hole lately.

CHRISTOPHER  
And it would be best if you made  
some friends.

NATHAN  
Whatever. It brought you down a  
notch.

Nathan triumphantly pumps his fist.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
Yes! Caught the rarest Pokémon.

Christopher SNATCHES the 3DS and SMASHES it to the ground.  
Nathan's jaw drops as he turns beet red.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
What the fuck?!

Nathan moves to pick it up, but Christopher KICKS it aside.

CHRISTOPHER  
Are you even listening to me?

Nathan's fists clench, trembling with rage.

NATHAN  
Do that again, and you're getting  
more than a punch.

Christopher SHOVES Nathan. Nathan SNAPS, throwing a punch  
that lands squarely on Christopher's nose. Blood flows.

CHRISTOPHER  
 (muttering through pain)  
 Big mistake.

Nathan tackles Christopher to the floor, pummeling him with punch after punch. Christopher tries to defend himself.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)  
 Oh! Stop! Damn it!

NATHAN  
 Only when you learn to respect me!

The door SLAMS open as Mike storms in, grabbing Nathan and pulling him off.

MIKE  
 Enough! Both of you!

Nathan wrestles against Mike's grip, still fuming.

NATHAN  
 Just because you're older doesn't  
 mean I can't beat your ass!

Christopher wipes blood from his face, glaring at Nathan.

**EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY (PRESENT)**

Christopher stands with Honey, Jackson, Tomer, Kaleb, and Jacob outside the fortified tent.

CHRISTOPHER  
 So, we have a rescue, Nathan.

JACOB  
 (skeptical)  
 I don't think you get it. We were  
 fifty-strong once.

HONEY  
 The birds brought us down to five.

Tomer and Kaleb exchange glances, whispering.

TOMER  
 (eyeing Christopher)  
 He doesn't scream "army-trained."

Christopher trips over a root, nearly falling. Kaleb smirks.

KALEB  
 Not precisely bred for combat.

CHRISTOPHER  
(ignoring them)  
I think Nathan somehow brought me  
here. Yeah, he's a selfish prick...

HONEY  
He's the key to getting off the  
island?

Christopher nods firmly.

CHRISTOPHER  
Exactly.

KALEB  
We don't leave anyone behind.

CHRISTOPHER  
So, what are we waiting for?

The group chuckles grimly.

TOMER  
Avoid getting turned to bird food.

JACKSON  
The second we step into their  
territory, we're done for.

CHRISTOPHER  
We don't leave anyone behind.

JACOB  
There's leaving no one behind.  
Walking into a death trap.

HONEY  
We've been trying to breach their  
nest for twenty days.

Jacob steps onto a log, surveying the area.

JACOB  
Every day, we lose more people.

CHRISTOPHER  
I'd walk eight million miles for  
Nathan.

JACOB  
Growing up in a loving family.

CHRISTOPHER

(snapping)

We fought ninety percent of the time. But he's my brother. And we don't leave family behind.

The group falls silent. Honey nods thoughtfully.

HONEY

So, what's your plan?

Christopher scans the group.

CHRISTOPHER

I need one other person—someone to act as bait.

HONEY

(laughing)

Like a honey trap for a bear?

CHRISTOPHER

Exactly.

JACKSON

That's a suicide mission.

Christopher's gaze is steely, unwavering.

CHRISTOPHER

Then we better make it count.

The screeches of distant birds pierce the air.

**EXT. FOREST PRESERVE - FLASHBACK**

The sunlight filters through the dense trees. Nathan (16), shirt damp with sweat, sprints along a winding trail, his sneakers kicking up dust—Christopher (21) trails behind, struggling to keep pace.

NATHAN

(taunting)

Keep up, older one.

CHRISTOPHER

(breathless)

I'm not old.

NATHAN

(grinning)

You wanted to do this.

Nathan abruptly stops, grabbing a water bottle from his pack. He takes a long swig, then shakes his head violently, spraying water droplets into the air.

CHRISTOPHER

That alcohol is going to catch up.

Nathan stares at him, wiping his mouth with his hand.

NATHAN

You criticize every little thing I do. Do you realize that?

Christopher bends over, hands on knees, catching his breath.

CHRISTOPHER

Your drinking. It's a lot.

NATHAN

(smirking)

Well, what isn't? Dad can't keep a job. Mom's strung out. And you? You're always on my case.

Christopher straightens up, wincing as he cracks his back. Nathan stretches casually, one hand resting on a tree.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm trying to bring peace.

Nathan laughs a bitter sound that echoes through the woods.

NATHAN

Peace? By tearing me apart?  
Analyzing everything I do, telling me I'm wrong?

Christopher starts pacing, his frustration bubbling over. A couple of ONLOOKERS jog past, giving them a curious glance.

CHRISTOPHER

I only do it because I care.

Nathan spins around, his face hardening.

NATHAN

Why the hell should I believe that?

CHRISTOPHER

(snapping)

I don't give a damn.

NATHAN

People who care, let me be.

Christopher sighs and starts jogging again. Nathan lingers.

CHRISTOPHER  
Nathan, we can do stuff together.

NATHAN  
Like what? What can you do for me  
that I can't?

Christopher glances over at him.

CHRISTOPHER  
A safety net.

NATHAN  
(arching an eyebrow)  
What?

CHRISTOPHER  
(Serious)  
I'm trying to save you from the  
consequences. The real world isn't  
as... forgiving as I am.

Nathan stops abruptly, pushing Christopher back.

NATHAN  
This is what you call "friendly"?

Nathan bolts, sprinting deeper into the woods. Christopher  
watches him go, helpless.

CHRISTOPHER  
(quietly)  
We're family.

NATHAN  
I'll be fine on my own.

**INT. TENT - NIGHT - PRESENT**

A dim lantern casts flickering shadows. Christopher, Honey,  
Jackson, Trent, and Tomer are huddled around a makeshift  
table. The atmosphere is tense.

HONEY  
(flatly)  
So, one of us is going to be bait.

CHRISTOPHER  
(steadfast)  
I'm getting my brother out.

Jackson bursts into the tent, the flap swinging behind him.

JACKSON  
It's nightfall. We should sleep.

CHRISTOPHER  
(shaking his head)  
No.

Trent exchanges a concerned glance with Honey.

TRENT  
We've got to fight these bastards  
again sooner or later.

JACKSON  
(leaning against the wall)  
Is it better in their territory?

HONEY  
The last time we tried this, we  
went from fifty to... five.

CHRISTOPHER  
(quietly)  
But you're still here.

An uncomfortable silence settles over the group.

TOMER  
We should show him.

JACKSON  
(firmly)  
Shut your mouth, Tomer.

TOMER  
(ignoring him)  
No, I mean it. He should see.

Honey hesitates, then nods reluctantly.

HONEY  
All right.

She moves to a corner of the tent, revealing an enormous EGG glowing faintly. It stands as tall as a person, its surface shimmering like polished marble.

CHRISTOPHER  
(staring in disbelief)  
What the hell is that?

JACKSON  
 (flatly)  
 A bird's egg.

CHRISTOPHER  
 (stepping back)  
 Were you seriously going to leave  
 one of your men behind... for that?

HONEY  
 (defensive)  
 We thought it could feed us.

Tomer shifts uncomfortably.

TOMER  
 I'm sick of the death. I lost all  
 my friends in this war.

JACKSON  
 (grim)  
 War doesn't make friends. It just  
 makes corpses.

HONEY  
 (softly)  
 Victory means nothing if there's no  
 one left to share it with.

Christopher clenches his fists, his voice rising.

CHRISTOPHER  
 Nathan's still alive. One of your  
 men is alive. That's what matters.

HONEY  
 (uncertain)  
 We don't know for sure.

JACKSON  
 (quietly)  
 We're confident he's still there.

Tomer nods, his resolve hardening.

TOMER  
 He's right. We've been cowards.

CHRISTOPHER  
 (firm)  
 Let's stop talking and start doing.

The group looks at each other. The lantern flickers, casting  
 shadows on the egg.

**EXT. ALLIGATOR ALLEYWAY - FLASHBACK**

A dense, humid swampland stretches endlessly, shrouded in mist. Christopher trudges ahead cautiously, sweat dripping down his face. Behind him, Nathan keeps a slower pace, his eyes scanning the eerie surroundings.

NATHAN  
(quietly)  
We haven't always gotten along?

CHRISTOPHER  
(smiling faintly)  
That's an understatement.

NATHAN  
(Serious)  
I wanted to bring you here... to  
show you something.

Christopher pauses by the edge of the murky water, crouching.

CHRISTOPHER  
(gesturing to the water)  
Let me guess—snapping alligators?

In the distance, a family of alligators basks silently on a muddy bank, their scales gleaming under the fading sunlight.

NATHAN  
I'm so sorry for everything.

Christopher straightens, his brows furrowing.

CHRISTOPHER  
What do you mean?

Nathan's hands tremble as he reaches into his jacket.

NATHAN  
I didn't expect... it to turn out  
this way. I thought having an older  
brother would be great.

Christopher notices Nathan's movements, his body tensing.

CHRISTOPHER  
Nathan, we've hit some bumps, sure.  
But that's what family does—we  
fight and figure it out.

Nathan pulls gun from his jacket, pointing it at Christopher.

NATHAN

(voice trembling)

I always wanted things to keep going... but this is the end.

Christopher instinctively takes a step back, his foot splashing into the water.

CHRISTOPHER

You don't have to do this, Nathan. Whatever you're thinking—it doesn't have to end here.

Nathan cocks the gun, his expression twisted in desperation.

NATHAN

You don't understand. They promised me money—for booze, for drugs.

Christopher raises his hands and palms open.

CHRISTOPHER

You're not thinking straight. We can fix this together.

Nathan's gaze flickers, unsure. Behind them, the alligators stir, drawn closer by the commotion.

NATHAN

(laughs bitterly)

Fix this? You've never tried to fix anything. All you've ever done is point out what's wrong with me.

Christopher steps forward cautiously.

CHRISTOPHER

I was a kid, Nathan. I didn't know how to help. But I'm here now. I want to help you.

Nathan lets out a shaky breath, his hands trembling.

NATHAN

No. You'll tell them. You'll ruin everything, just like Mom did to Dad. Nobody keeps secrets. Nobody.

CHRISTOPHER

You're scared, Nathan. I get it. But shooting me isn't the way out. Hand me the gun.

Nathan hesitates momentarily, then raises the gun to the sky and fires, the shot echoing through the swamp. The alligators freeze, startled by the sound.

NATHAN  
(near tears)  
I can't do this anymore.

Christopher takes a step closer.

CHRISTOPHER  
Then don't. Please give me the gun.

Nathan lifts the gun toward Christopher, his eyes wild.

NATHAN  
No! I need to be free.

One of the alligators lunges, snapping its massive jaws. Christopher dives backward into the swamp, yelling.

CHRISTOPHER  
(agonized)  
Argh!

Gunshots ring out as Nathan fires wildly at the approaching alligators. The shots scare them off, and they retreat into the murky water.

NATHAN  
(terrified)  
When I go missing... don't come  
looking for me!

Christopher struggles to his feet, soaked and furious.

CHRISTOPHER  
Goddamn it, Nathan!

Nathan points the empty gun at Christopher, pulling the trigger repeatedly—only the dull clicks of an unloaded weapon.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)  
You're out of bullets, kid.

Christopher lunges at Nathan, tackling him to the ground. They wrestle furiously, the gun falling into the mud.

NATHAN  
(struggling)  
I don't need your help! I just  
wanted to be left alone to suffer.

Christopher pins Nathan down, breathing heavily.

CHRISTOPHER  
Too bad. You're not getting that.

Nathan's nose bleeds, broken from the scuffle.

NATHAN  
(through gritted teeth)  
You don't want me to be free. You  
want to control me.

Christopher loosens his grip.

CHRISTOPHER  
I want you to survive, Nathan.

They freeze as a PARK RANGER approaches, his flashlight cutting through the gloom.

PARK RANGER  
Is everything okay here?

Nathan glares at Christopher, then smirks.

NATHAN  
Officer, this man tried to kill me.  
He's holding me hostage.

Christopher stares at Nathan in disbelief.

CHRISTOPHER  
You son of a—

Nathan stands, brushing himself off.

NATHAN  
I'll find you with the right  
timing.

He turns and disappears into the darkness.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)  
You brought us to this island.

**EXT. BIRD'S NEST - PRESENT - NIGHT**

Jackson, Tomer, Kaleb, Jacob, Honey, and Christopher trek through a dense, dark forest. The air is tense, and fallen trees and branches crack underfoot.

KALEB  
 (whispering)  
 I hope to hell this works.

TOMER  
 (grinning nervously)  
 Christopher, you're the genius  
 here. Let's see it in action.

JACKSON  
 (grimly)  
 We just entered the bird's nest.

CHRISTOPHER  
 It's time to set the trap.

Honey gives Christopher a sideways glance.

HONEY  
 God, I hope you're right.

Tomer scatters birdseed along their path.

JACOB  
 (grumbling)  
 This won't work. They're  
 carnivorous. Do you all realize?

KALEB  
 We've got to try something.

CHRISTOPHER  
 (nodding)  
 Let's stick to the plan.

Honey exhales, walking beside Christopher.

HONEY  
 You're pretty intelligent... and  
 handsome, you know.

She brushes her hand against his hairline playfully.

CHRISTOPHER  
 (distracted)  
 Thanks. We should keep moving.

HONEY  
 After this, we should go.

Christopher shakes his head.

CHRISTOPHER  
 I'm not really into...

Before he finishes, Honey lets out a gasp.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

What?

He turns to see a massive BEAK piercing through Honey's stomach.

JACOB

(screaming)

Oh my God!

The GIANT BIRD lifts Honey into the air and violently rips her apart. Blood sprays as the bird devours her.

KALEB

(horrified)

Not her. Not her!

CHRISTOPHER

Stay calm!

Jacob raises his gun, shaking with rage.

JACOB

(firing wildly)

Die, you bastards!

Tomer steps forward, his voice trembling.

TOMER

Christopher, this is some trap.

Suddenly, FOUR GIANT BIRDS descend, circling the group with predatory intent.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, crap.

JACOB

This needs to be better.

TOMER

Can we communicate with them?

JACOB

(snapping)

What?!

TOMER

Sometimes, creatures can be reasoned with...

He steps forward, cautiously addressing the birds.

TOMER (CONT'D)  
 We mean no harm. We're just looking  
 for someone. Let us pass.

The birds momentarily pause, their heads tilting as if  
 considering his words.

JACOB  
 (relieved)  
 It's working.

Tomer takes another step closer.

TOMER  
 See? Communication—

A claw slashes through him, lifting him into the air. Another  
 bird clamps its beak down, severing him in half.

JACOB  
 (screaming)  
 You motherfuckers!

CHRISTOPHER  
 Jacob, keep it together!

Jacob fires wildly, but the bullets ricochet harmlessly off  
 the birds' tough feathers.

JACOB  
 They're invincible!

CHRISTOPHER  
 We need to think, not panic.

JACOB  
 Think? We're bird food!

The circle of birds tightens. Christopher looks around.

CHRISTOPHER  
 Wait... the leftover bullets!

JACOB  
 What?

One bird lunges, impaling Jacob with its beak, then tossing  
 him into another bird's jaws.

CHRISTOPHER  
 Jacob!

Christopher ducks under a low-hanging branch, narrowly avoiding a claw swipe. He spots the trail of unused bullets Jacob had dropped.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)  
Time to improvise.

He grabs a match from his pocket and strikes it, lighting the trail of bullets.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)  
Burn, you bastards.

The trail ignites, leading to an explosion. The forest erupts in flames, creating chaos among the birds.

The giant creatures CAW and screech, retreating.

Christopher stumbles through the smoky forest, coughing.

He pushes forward, leaving the burning chaos behind.

**EXT. CABIN - NIGHT**

Christopher cautiously approaches the eerie, dimly lit cabin. He examines its exterior, tense, as CLAWING and HISSING echo.

CHRISTOPHER  
(to himself)  
It seems dangerous... but it's  
better than nothing.

He edges closer and suddenly is flung backward by an invisible FORCEFIELD. He groans, picking himself up.

NATHAN (O.S.)  
Hold on. Give me a second.

The forcefield flickers and powers down. Christopher looks up to see the cabin door creak open, revealing Nathan.

CHRISTOPHER  
Nathan? Is that you?

NATHAN  
(smirking)  
Took you long enough. About damn  
time the cavalry showed up—or just  
you.

**INT. CABIN - NIGHT**

The cabin is cluttered with strange electrical equipment and makeshift devices. Christopher scans the room in disbelief.

CHRISTOPHER  
What the hell is all this?

NATHAN  
A poor man's science lab. I've come  
down with something... trying to  
fix myself.

Christopher hesitates, eyes wide with concern.

CHRISTOPHER  
Can I help?

NATHAN  
I've been waiting.

CHRISTOPHER  
Jess gave us a hint.

NATHAN  
Jess? She's here?

CHRISTOPHER  
I don't know. We got caught in some  
hurricane and stranded here.

NATHAN  
I hate to break it to you, but  
there's no leaving this place.

Christopher's heart sinks. Nathan coughs violently.

CHRISTOPHER  
What happens when you try.

NATHAN  
The tide drags you back to shore.  
And this sickness doesn't help.

They exchange a somber look.

CHRISTOPHER  
It's good to see you, bro.

Nathan collapses into a recliner rigged with electrodes and a bizarre control panel.

NATHAN  
You can flip that switch.

CHRISTOPHER  
What kind of plan is this?

NATHAN  
An exorcism.

Christopher stiffens in shock.

CHRISTOPHER  
What did they do to you?

NATHAN  
It's not about what they did—it's  
what I became. Just trust me.

Nathan grips the armrests, signaling to Christopher.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
Please do it now.

Christopher hesitates, then FLIPS THE SWITCH. Sparks fly, and electricity courses through Nathan's body. He convulses violently, smoke rising from the chair.

CHRISTOPHER  
Jesus Christ!

NATHAN  
(through gritted teeth)  
Don't stop!

The electricity cuts out abruptly, plunging the room into darkness. Heavy breathing and low growth fill the air. Shadows dance around the cabin, sinister and mocking.

CHRISTOPHER  
Nathan? Are you okay?

The lights flicker back on. Christopher sees Nathan slumped in the chair, unmoving.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)  
Nathan?

Christopher inches closer. Suddenly, Nathan's torso EXPLODES as a grotesque, GIANT ADDICTION MONSTER bursts from his body. The creature is horrifying—neon green skin, glowing red eyes, a grotesque blue nose, and bloodied fangs.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)  
No... my brother!

Christopher feels a tap on his shoulder and spins around. Nathan stands behind him, unharmed.

NATHAN  
I'm right here. It worked.

CHRISTOPHER  
What the hell is that thing?

Nathan stares at the monster with grim determination.

NATHAN  
That's the addiction monster. It  
feeds on the weaknesses of others.

Christopher grabs Nathan's arm, panicking.

CHRISTOPHER  
I think it's time we run.

NATHAN  
For once, I agree with you.

The two lock eyes, before bolting toward the back door as the monster SCREAMS and lunges after them.

**EXT. CABIN - NIGHT**

The brothers burst out into the forest, sprinting as fast as possible. The monster tears through the cabin, its massive form glowing ominously in the dark. The chase is on.

**EXT. CABIN - DAY**

Nathan and Christopher sprint from the crumbling cabin, the towering ADDICTION MONSTER roaring as it breaks through the remains and expands in size.

NATHAN  
That thing just got bigger!

CHRISTOPHER  
And uglier!

They weave through the dense forest, glancing back as the monster's guttural cries echo closer.

**EXT. FOREST - DAY**

Nathan stumbles over a root but quickly regains his footing. Christopher helps steady him.

CHRISTOPHER  
When did all this start?

NATHAN

Army days. Some "super-soldier" experiment. I was their guinea pig for addiction.

CHRISTOPHER

Figures. Addiction destroys everything it touches.

The monster's cries morph into a deep, echoing howl. Suddenly, a PACK OF WOLVES bursts through the underbrush, eyes glowing unnaturally bright.

NATHAN

Okay, what now? Those wolves don't look like they want to be friends.

CHRISTOPHER

We don't have a choice.

The brothers sprint faster, dodging branches and leaping over obstacles. They reach a sheer cliff overlooking jagged rocks and crashing waves below. Nathan, leading, doesn't see the edge in time and plummets.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Nathan!

Christopher dives, grabbing Nathan's wrist. Nathan dangles precariously over the edge.

NATHAN

Great. Beat addiction to die like this. Perfect.

Christopher struggles to pull him up when a hand clamps on his shoulder. He looks up in shock.

CHRISTOPHER

Dad?

NATHAN

Wait, what?

Mike, their father, pulls them both to safety superhumanly.

MIKE

Let's worry about introductions later. We've got company.

The wolves surround them, growling. The three are trapped between the pack and the cliff.

CHRISTOPHER  
I think I've got an idea.

NATHAN  
Think or know?

Christopher steps forward, trembling but determined. He stretches out his arms and howls. The wolves hesitate.

MIKE  
Werewolf cosplay? Bold move, son.

Nathan exchanges a look with Mike, and they join in, howling in unison. The wolves stop, cock their heads, then begin howling too. The pack parts, clearing a path.

CHRISTOPHER  
I guess that's our cue. Move!

They dash past the wolves, who calmly watch them disappear.

**EXT. FOREST - LATER**

The group pauses at a fork in the trail, breathless.

NATHAN  
Left?

They shrug and follow Nathan down the left path.

**EXT. HOUSE - DUSK**

They arrive at a decayed house with ominous familiarity. Crows pick at lifeless bodies strewn across the yard.

MIKE  
What the hell happened here?

CHRISTOPHER  
Looks like they didn't make it.

Rustling from the bushes. The group tenses as DIANE emerges, bloodied but alive.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)  
Mom?

DIANE  
Howdy, boys.

They rush to her, embracing her tightly.

CHRISTOPHER  
We thought we lost you.

DIANE  
I wish you had. I've relapsed. Not  
by choice, however. This island...  
it's something else.

NATHAN  
It's okay. We get it.

Diane breaks away, wiping her nose. Blood streaks her hand.

MIKE  
We'll get you clean. Together.

In the distance, the Addiction Monster roars again, louder  
and angrier.

DIANE  
What in God's name is that?

CHRISTOPHER  
An army experiment went wrong.

Nathan looks at the group, determination.

NATHAN  
We've got to get off this island.

DIANE  
And how do you suppose we do that?

MIKE  
We'll figure it out. But we can't  
stay here.

Nathan looks toward the horizon, the setting sun painting the  
sky blood red. The distant roar of the monster reverberates  
through the trees. The family moves as one.

NATHAN  
Come on.

They disappear into the forest, the sound of the monster's  
cries hauntingly close.

**EXT. HOUSE - DUSK**

The house burns brightly in the fading light. The flames  
crackle and flicker in the growing dark.

DIANE  
 (looking at the fire)  
 We could burn this place. It might  
 get some attention.

NATHAN  
 (squinting at the blaze)  
 Also, unwanted attention.

MIKE  
 It's worth the risk.

**EXT. HOUSE - LATER**

The house is engulfed in flames, and the heat radiates off the inferno. The approaching footsteps of the Addiction Monster shake the earth.

CHRISTOPHER  
 (staring at the fire)  
 Holy hell...

NATHAN  
 (looking ahead)  
 There's a roadway.

**EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT**

Nathan, Mike, Diane, and Christopher walk quickly along the narrow roadway, their faces illuminated by the distant glow of the burning house.

MIKE  
 You don't want to go near that RV.

DIANE  
 You took destructive action, too.

MIKE  
 They handled that themselves.

They walk silently, their feet crunching on the gravel.

NATHAN  
 (frustrated)  
 How the hell do we get out of here?

LOUISE (O.S.)  
 (shouting from a distance)  
 Over here!

Everyone looks over, spotting LOUISE GERMANO (32) standing by the cliffside. Below the edge is a small boat.

NATHAN  
 (shaking his head)  
 I already tried that, Louise. The tides bring us right back.

Louise strides closer, her gaze intense.

LOUISE  
 (smirking)  
 Jesse tried to stop us from getting on this boat. She's a murderer.

Louise moves in closer to Nathan.

NATHAN  
 (taken aback)  
 What are you doing here?

LOUISE  
 (seductively)  
 Jessie was always wrong for you. But me? I'm all the woman you -

She opens her mouth wide, revealing teeth that grow into sharp knives.

CHRISTOPHER  
 (reacting)  
 Shit!

Before Louise can move, Christopher shoves her, and as she stumbles, THREE ARROWS suddenly fly through the air, striking Louise in the chest and pinning her to the ground.

JESSIE (O.S.)  
 (shouting from behind)  
 Well, we all survived.

Nathan turns to see Jessie emerge from the shadows, her bow still raised. She lowers it and looks at him, a mix of relief and bitterness in her eyes.

NATHAN  
 (hugging Jessie)  
 I didn't know you were in the car.

Nathan moves to kiss her, but she shoves him away.

JESSIE  
 (angry)  
 Well, fuck you too.

The deep, terrifying cry of the Addiction Monster echoes through the night. The group jumps into action, rushing toward the cliff's edge. Without hesitation, they leap into the water below, diving towards the waiting boat.

**EXT. BOAT - DAY**

The boat rocks gently as it drifts away from the shore. Mike, Diane, Christopher, Nathan, and Jessie are on the ship, their expressions grim as they face the open water ahead.

JESSIE

(Stern)

We've got to get some speed if we make it out.

NATHAN

(looking at her, hopeful)

That's fine. Do you think... we can patch things up when we get back?

Jessie looks at him, and her expression hardens.

JESSIE

No.

The boat picks up speed, the roar of the Addiction Monster growing faint in the distance.

MIKE

(quietly)

I hope we can escape this place.

The group turns to look back at Shadow Creek Island. They see the Addiction Monster, still massive, looming over the island. The fire continues to rage, and the wolves are visible in the distance, their eyes watching like predators, waiting for them to fail.

FADE TO BLACK

**THE END**