

TURNING

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS, FERRIS WHEEL - MORNING

The large and looming Ferris wheel comes to a stop. There are no passengers in the enclosed pods. Not at this time. The orange sun rears its ugly head just over the horizon beyond.

The pod nearest to the ground, the one still slightly swaying back and forth after its trip, is opened by someone -- Someone not in view.

A broom sweeps up a PILE OF DUST from the floor of the pod into a waiting dust pan. It doesn't take long, as most of the dust is in a single pile.

A few more sweeps and the dust is gone. Whoever is in control of the broom and dust pan walks away. The pod is now clean and ready for use. Waiting for its next passengers.

ELDERLY MAN (V.O.)  
No one stays on top forever.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE GALA - NIGHT

A black-tie event. Elegant. Clean. Shiny marble and glass surfaces abound with drinks being served. There is money flowing through the veins of this room. Light CLASSICAL MUSIC plays.

From this vantage point, everyone in attendance appears to be African American.

Various COUPLES in formal wear. Champagne flutes. A low MURMUR of conversation pulsates throughout the space - A few noticeable levels below a party. More somber in nature.

ATTENDEES break off from the mingling hordes to take in the many historic photographs and artifacts perched atop display podiums. Some of these are available to touch. Most aren't.

This is all about Black History; The kind that's not talked about in white neighborhoods -- Slavery.

REVOLVE around the room, turning, like we ourselves are trying to fit in. Or like we're looking for someone who doesn't.

*Bingo*. OSCAR, 30, his pale white skin stands out amongst this crowd like Waldo in his worst hiding place ever, and although he clearly tried, he's the worst dressed here.

Oscar's hands are clenched tightly around a BOOK that his fingers are currently leafing through, turning the many pages like he's only interested in the pictures and not the words.

The cover of the book reads, '*Pictures of Slavery, The South. Circa 1864.*'

Oscar finds what he's looking for and stops scanning the pages. He glances up and observes the rest of the room, making sure the coast is clear. It is.

He looks back down at the book, lightly COUGHS, and rips out an old, laminated PHOTOGRAPH that had been carefully adhered to the page, quickly pocketing it all in one motion. He turns a few more pages for show, pretending to read.

Emerging from the throng of attendees, KAYA, 24, African American, sidles up next to him, looking down at the book. She is dressed in Gala staff attire.

A thin GOLD NECKLACE shines around her neck, a charm on the end of it reads, '*live*'.

KAYA

A lot of painful memories in your hands...

Oscar spins to meet Kaya's gaze, who smiles warmly at him, seemingly none the wiser. She motions down toward the page.

OSCAR

Yeah, there certainly are.

A plastic WRISTBAND is visible on Oscar's wrist. He looks back down at the page, at the random black and white photo he happened to land on.

The Photograph: *A family of African American slaves in a cotton field. They are frozen in time, loading the cotton up into wicker baskets. The children are helping with the labor.*

OSCAR (CONT'D)

These um, aren't the original photos are they?

KAYA

They are actually. Every photograph in that book is authentic and recently donated.

OSCAR  
Oh, wow... Fascinating.

KAYA  
Isn't it? We're lucky to get the support we did.

OSCAR  
Well, it's for a good cause.

Kaya nods and scans the room.

KAYA  
Good turnout, too.

Oscar uses this brief opportunity to not only close the book, but to give Kaya the once over, as guys do. He likes what he sees... as guys do.

OSCAR  
You work here?

Kaya turns back to face Oscar.

KAYA  
What gave it away? Was it the fact that I'm wearing the same dress as ten other women here or the fact that I walked up and spoke to you?

Oscar CHUCKLES politely and carefully places the book back on its podium.

OSCAR  
Some people just carry themselves differently I guess.

KAYA  
Yeah, well... helps if you own the place.

Oscar flashes her a curious look.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
(off his look)  
It's a family owned event. *My* family, specifically.

OSCAR  
Oh yeah? And you're just, what... general staff?

Kaya shrugs.

KAYA  
Follow the bloodline... wherever it  
leads.

OSCAR  
I guess so.

KAYA  
Even if you have to start at the  
bottom.

OSCAR  
Hell of a bottom...

KAYA  
Thanks.

Oscar gets what she's alluding to.

OSCAR  
No, not that.

KAYA  
Oh no?

OSCAR  
No, um... That's not what--

Kaya LAUGHS.

KAYA  
I just totally trapped you there,  
didn't I?

Oscar grins.

OSCAR  
I just meant, your low point would  
be most people's peak. Just look at  
this place.

Kaya takes everything in, nods.

KAYA  
It *is* beautiful, isn't it?

Oscar stares at Kaya.

OSCAR  
It is.

Kaya notices. The two exchange a smile then avert their eyes  
for a moment. An awkward silence follows. Which always leads  
to a mundane--

KAYA

So what brings you to my neck of  
the woods?

Oscar literally glances at Kaya's neck like there might be a tree or two sprouting - His eyes land on her gold necklace with the 'live' charm on the end.

OSCAR

Long story short?

KAYA

We don't have all night...

OSCAR

Well, I'll just come right out and say it then. I come from a fairly extensive line of people that have a lot of reparations to pay, if you get my meaning.

KAYA

Ah, I see. So is that why you pledged an exorbitant amount of money to our fundraiser?

Oscar's eyes narrow. Nods.

OSCAR

This encounter wasn't exactly random, was it?

KAYA

Everyone's just a number until they're not...

OSCAR

I'll have to remember that one, um...?

KAYA

Kaya.

OSCAR

Kaya. I'm Oscar.

Kaya smiles, sizes him up quickly.

KAYA

You stand out, Oscar.

Oscar makes a show of glancing around the room.

OSCAR  
I hadn't noticed...

Kaya LAUGHS.

KAYA  
Not that. I meant, everyone here is  
dressed to the nines and you're,  
well...

OSCAR  
No longer tenable?

Kaya raises an eyebrow, impressed.

KAYA  
Nice. You have a way with words, I  
like that.

OSCAR  
I've known them for a long time.

KAYA  
You a writer?

OSCAR  
A *writer*? No, no... Not unless you  
count coming up with catchy  
slogans. I'm in real estate.

KAYA  
Isn't everybody... So you in town  
for a conference or something?

OSCAR  
No, just closing a deal I've been  
working on. Only here for a couple  
nights, so...

Kaya just stares at him. Oscar clears his throat.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
Speaking of words...

He motions to the charm on the end of Kaya's necklace.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
Live?

Kaya glances down and takes holds of the charm, rubbing it  
gently between her fingers.

KAYA

Yeah, I think we all forget that we're breathing until we consciously take a deep breath, you know? Sometimes you just need to stop and remind yourself that you're alive. To remember to slow things down and enjoy the fruits of your labor.

OSCAR

I definitely need to remember that.

Oscar and Kaya's eyes lock just long enough to know they are both interested, but not long enough to be too obvious to anyone else. They smile at each other.

INT. GALA - NIGHT (LATER)

CLASSICAL MUSIC. MURMURS of light conversations. Oscar and Kaya walk side-by-side, passing various display podiums and artwork on the wall, deep in their own conversation.

Oscar draws a few quick looks from random black people in the crowd. Nothing too obtrusive, but enough to blip his radar. He focuses on the various displays, absorbing everything.

OSCAR

From the looks of it I probably should've pledged more.

Kaya waves this off.

KAYA

You've been overly generous. I just really feel that, with this museum we're hoping to build, we can use it as a way to embrace a dark past and bathe it in light. To show people we aren't ashamed. That we're *proud* of our roots. That we're proud of our ancestors that got us through the tough times so we can be where we are today.

(beat)

Nothing stays hidden forever.

Oscar and Kaya reach a prominent display podium along the back wall, and it may be the smallest of them all. A sign beside it reads, simply, '*The Root*'.



On top of the podium is a display case that houses a FIG PLANT embedded in soil and dirt. A UV LIGHT shines on the plant inside the case.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
And this is our most valuable possession.

Oscar's gaze locks onto the Fig plant. He slowly steps forward, as if drawn to it.

OSCAR  
It's, um... it's a plant.

KAYA  
A *Fig* plant. The real deal from one of the largest plantations in North America at the time. Original soil and everything. This little miracle has been kept alive for almost two centuries.

Oscar looks at Kaya, intrigued by this. Kaya nods at him.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
A little care goes a long way.

Oscar's eyes flick back toward the UV Light shining on the Fig plant - The bright bulb seems to BUZZ with more intensity as he looks at it. He fiddles with his wristband. Kaya notices.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
It still produces fresh Figs, believe it or not. But it's much more than just another plant to my family and I. There's a story behind this that makes it even more exceptional.

OSCAR  
More exceptional than still thriving and looking the same as it did nearly 200 years ago?

Kaya grins mischievously.

KAYA  
Much more. So let me give you a little context. My great, great grandfather was a slave...

This gets Oscar's attention off of the plant.

KAYA (CONT'D)

On the day he escaped from his owner, he took this very Fig plant with him... Just ripped it from the ground and ran into the swamp with it. He was able to sustain himself on the Figs it produced for days until he found safety. Once he settled, he replanted it and maintained it for the rest of his life. And now here it sits, passed down for generations, tended and cared for not just as another plant in the garden, but as a member of the family, and as a thank you for what it provided.

Oscar and Kaya both stare at this regular looking plant with a deeper history than its roots could ever reach.

KAYA (CONT'D)

In a way, we owe this small plant our lives. And we are beyond honored to have it here on display.

OSCAR

Yeah, no kidding. Your great grandfather sounds like he was a good man.

KAYA

You can add another 'great' to that, but yeah, he is... Or was. And all of this is his story.

OSCAR

History.

Oscar and Kaya smile at each other again. Kaya unconsciously fixes her hair. Oscar stares at her for a moment, seemingly transfixed until--

An ALARM goes off in his pocket, snapping him out of it. He takes out his cell phone and swipes the alarm off.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Ah, time flies. I got to get going.

He pockets the phone. Kaya looks disappointed.

KAYA

Well that sucks.

Oscar pulls out a BUSINESS CARD - Pitch black. He hands it to Kaya, who takes it.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
What's this?

Kaya examines it - Oscar's picture is on it. Underneath it reads, '*Oscar Alexander, Midnight Realty. We Work Around the Clock.*' Followed by his cell phone number.

OSCAR  
(leaning in)  
Everyone's just a number until  
they're not.

Oscar lingers for a moment, enough to give context to what he just said, then walks away.

Kaya watches him go then looks back down at the business card. She fidgets with her 'live' necklace and smiles...

EXT. GALA PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Oscar makes his way toward a black BMW with tinted windows and gets in. He fires up the engine. Nearby, a SHADOW watches from underneath a streetlight, stoic and strong, unflinching.

The BMW pulls out of its parking space, covering the Shadow as it does, then drives away -- The Shadow is gone.

INT. OSCAR'S CAR - NIGHT

Oscar is driving, staring straight ahead. He CLICKS his jaw, clenching then relaxing, like he's resetting it.

He presses a few buttons on the dash, scrolling through a rather extensive contact list. He settles on a name, '*Johnny Boy*', and hits the call button. It RINGS and RINGS.

After a few more unanswered RINGS he hangs up, shaking his head. Annoyed. He drives.

A set of HEADLIGHTS from a larger vehicle quickly approaches in his rear view, pulling up behind, pressuring him to go faster. Oscar just stares at the headlights in the mirror.

OSCAR  
Go around.

After a few more seconds, the HEADLIGHTS do just that, swerving right and speeding past Oscar's car. Oscar watches as a white SUV with tinted windows disappears into the night.

A phone RINGS on the car's speaker system. Oscar quickly hits a button and answers it.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
Johnny what the f-- ?

KAYA (O.S.)  
Oscar?

Oscar looks stunned for a moment, not placing the voice.

KAYA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
It's Kaya.

Oscar's surprised look is quickly replaced with one of genuine excitement.

OSCAR  
Oh, Kaya! Hey. How's it going? I was hoping you'd call... so soon.

Oscar immediately rolls his eyes at himself. Kaya CHUCKLES at Oscar's awkwardness.

KAYA (O.S.)  
Well, I'm glad. Who's Johnny?

OSCAR  
Oh, he um-- he's just a colleague of mine. A friend, actually. Can't get a hold of him.

KAYA (O.S.)  
Ah, I got friends like that too. Just some people's nature I guess. Dust in the wind.

OSCAR  
You can say that again.

A pause on the other end. Then--

KAYA (O.S.)  
So, um... I was wondering. Do you always leave this kind of impression on people?

Oscar smiles.

OSCAR  
I tend to leave lasting impressions, that's for sure. One way or another...

KAYA (O.S.)  
I debated on calling or not,  
especially this soon, and guess  
what? I'm *still* debating...

OSCAR  
You made the right decision.

KAYA (O.S.)  
Time will tell. But I guess you  
only live once, right?

OSCAR  
That's right.

KAYA (O.S.)  
So how does this work exactly? I  
can't be the first girl you've  
handed your business card to and  
got them to call you... Smooth, by  
the way.

OSCAR  
Oh trust me, I'm the furthest thing  
from smooth. I have *zero* game.

KAYA (O.S.)  
I highly doubt that.

OSCAR  
Oh yeah? Watch this. Where do you  
want to go for our first date?

A pause.

KAYA (O.S.)  
Yeah, you're right. That was kind  
of awkward.

OSCAR  
Told you. And no, hanging out and  
chatting by a Fig plant doesn't  
count as a "date".

KAYA (O.S.)  
Ah. Figs. Date. I see what you did  
there. Two entirely different  
plants though, just, you know, an  
FYI.

OSCAR  
No shit? I guess you learn  
something new everyday...

KAYA (O.S.)  
 You should anyway. The smartest  
 people know they know nothing.

OSCAR  
 Exactly. So when do you close?

KAYA (O.S.)  
 Shift ends at 5am. Why? You trying  
 to come back and catch a sunrise  
 with me?

Oscar's happy facade falters for just a moment.

OSCAR  
 No, I'm, uh... not really a morning  
 person.

KAYA (O.S.)  
 I was joking. But now I'm  
 curious... What kind of person are  
 you, Oscar?

Oscar thinks this over for a moment, sensing opportunity.

OSCAR  
 I'm just a guy who doesn't want to  
 have any more regrets in life. And  
 I think I would always regret not  
 taking you out.

KAYA (O.S.)  
 Cute.  
 (beat)  
 So you up for walking the Midway?  
 Would love to go. Hint, hint.

OSCAR  
 Isn't that usually pretty crowded?

Kaya stifles a laugh on the other end.

KAYA (O.S.)  
 Wait, who's asking *who* out here?  
 Don't tell me you don't like the  
 cheesy carnival games...

OSCAR  
 Oh, I'm the best at those. I never  
 lose.

KAYA (O.S.)  
 Not even once, huh?

Oscar grins.

OSCAR  
Not even once.

A GUNSHOT RINGS OUT--

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. HILLTOP - NIGHT

A bottle EXPLODES into SHARDS OF GLASS. Various other intact bottles are positioned atop small wooden podiums of varying heights. Below, a SHADOW looking down the scope of a HUNTING RIFLE takes aim at the next bottle--

BAM! The bottle EXPLODES.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS/FERRIS WHEEL LINE - NIGHT

Oscar and Kaya rush into line, squeezing in just ahead of the ROPE CHAIN *snapping* shut behind them. They are both casually dressed for a night at the fair. Jeans and t-shirts.

Oscar holds a fountain soda, his plastic wristband visible on the same hand. Kaya wears her gold necklace with the 'live' charm on the end. She picks at some cotton candy.

The ATTENDANT with the rope chain, 20, African American, flashes them a look like these last two people just fucked up his night. Kaya notices, if no one else. She makes an apologetic face.

KAYA  
Sorry.

The Attendant GRUMBLES something under his breath and makes his way past the various PEOPLE in line towards the front. The Ferris wheel is currently revolving around, full of PASSENGERS in different enclosed pods.

Oscar and Kaya glance at each other and LAUGH breathlessly, filled with the adrenaline of just making it at the last second. They're like kids again.

Kaya takes a bite out of her cotton candy. Oscar looks at the full lineup ahead of them, sipping his fountain soda from a straw.

OSCAR  
Why is it so packed?

KAYA  
 "Oldest ride. Longest line."

Oscar glances at her, expecting more context. He gets none.

OSCAR  
 That another Facebook meme?

KAYA  
 Ric Flair.

Oscar just nods blankly. Kaya studies him.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
 The Nature Boy? Space Mountain?  
 (beat)  
*Wrestling?*

OSCAR  
 I didn't take you for a wrestling fan...

KAYA  
 I'm not really. My brother was kind of obsessed with it when we were younger. Guess you can say I was a fan by proxy. You never watched?

Oscar just shakes his head.

OSCAR  
 Too fake for my taste.

KAYA  
 Oooo, don't ever let him hear you say that. Swap?

Oscar nods and hands Kaya his soda. Kaya gives him the cotton candy. Oscar rips off a piece and chomps it down. Kaya sips from the straw without wiping it off. She cranes her neck and looks ahead to the front of the line.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
 I really hope we get on.

OSCAR  
 Well, we're on the right side of the chain...

Kaya motions toward something she's focused on ahead.

KAYA  
 That attendant he, um... gave me a look. You notice that?



OSCAR  
He's a miserable kid making minimum  
wage and we just added to his  
workload. Can't really blame him.

Oscar rips off another chunk of cotton candy and eats it.  
Offers it to Kaya.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
I'm done with this.

KAYA  
Yeah, me too. Toss it.

Oscar chucks the cotton candy into a nearby garbage bin and  
adjusts the plastic wristband on his wrist. Kaya notices. She  
notices a lot...

KAYA (CONT'D)  
I've been holding off on asking you  
about that, but... yeah, it can no  
longer be ignored.

OSCAR  
What?

Kaya motions to his wristband. Oscar follows her gaze.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
Oh, it's uh, an anti-nausea  
wristband.

This is an eyebrow raiser.

KAYA  
A what?

Oscar CHUCKLES.

OSCAR  
It helps with anxiety and motion  
sickness.

KAYA  
Huh, interesting. Can I see it?

Oscar hesitates for a second.

OSCAR  
Sure.

He takes off the wristband and hands it to her, immediately  
seeming a little more fidgety without it. Kaya passes the  
soda to Oscar and inspects the wristband.

KAYA  
Does it really work?

OSCAR  
Sure does.

KAYA  
Like physically? It's not a placebo  
effect thing?

OSCAR  
No, nothing like that. It's  
actually been proven to relieve  
nausea and vomiting.

KAYA  
Oh yeah? How'd they prove that?

Oscar reaches over and turns the band around, as he does  
this, his fingers gently touch Kaya's wrist, caressing it.

OSCAR  
There's a plastic stud on the  
inside of the band which exerts  
pressure and stimulates the P6  
acupressure point.

KAYA  
Ah, the good ol' P6...

OSCAR  
This one has been revamped though.

Kaya flashes him a curious look.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
I use it as more of a suppression  
thing now. Like a preventative  
measure.

KAYA  
So you don't randomly blow chunks  
everywhere?

OSCAR  
Something like that.

Kaya takes this in. Oscar shakes the soda and takes a sip.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
Hey, Kaya... What do you call a  
shaken carbonated beverage?

KAYA  
I dunno, what?

OSCAR  
A physicist.

A long silence. Kaya is blank faced.

KAYA  
I don't get it.

OSCAR  
A fizz... assist?

Kaya SCOFFS yet can't help but smile.

KAYA  
That's so bad.

Oscar just smiles.

OSCAR  
Your turn.

KAYA  
My turn for what? A joke?

Oscar nods and sips the last bit of the soda, made evident by the AIRY SUCKING SOUNDS that come from the near empty cup.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
Yeah, I got nothing.

OSCAR  
You owe me one then.

KAYA  
I don't owe you shit.

Oscar CHUCKLES and tosses the empty soda cup into the garbage can. Kaya hands Oscar the wristband back. He puts it on and immediately seems to come down a few notches in intensity. He EXHALES slowly, peacefully.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
You're weird.

OSCAR  
I'm old. People get weirder as they age.

KAYA  
You're like 30, calm down.

Just ahead in line, a small girl, EVA, 8, holding her Father's hand, BEN, 35, slowly turns to look at Oscar, befuddled by something.

Eva has a fluffy PINK SNAKE wrapped around her neck, the mouth connected to the tail by Velcro on the other side, like an ouroboros. She turns back around to face ahead.

Kaya stares at the stuffed animal.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
Man, I sure wish I had a pink snake  
like that...

Oscar turns to face Kaya, incredulous.

OSCAR  
That game was rigged and you know  
it.

Kaya pats Oscar's shoulder.

KAYA  
I'll just pretend you won something  
for me, it's all good.

Oscar looks up at the Ferris wheel and shakes his head.

OSCAR  
We're stopping by that booth again  
before we leave...

Kaya LAUGHS at Oscar's intensity. She leans in and nudges him softly.

KAYA  
Don't worry, I'll forever treasure  
what I never had.

OSCAR  
Yeah, yeah... line's moving.

Ahead, the Ferris wheel has come to a stop. The various passengers depart their pods and scurry away into the night.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS/FERRIS WHEEL LINE - NIGHT (LATER)

Ben and Eva open the sliding door and board an enclosed pod on the Ferris wheel. The rest of the people are already on board, nestled safe behind glass in their own pods.

Oscar and Kaya are up next at the turnstile, right at the front of the line. The Attendant steps in front of them, holding a hand up.

ATTENDANT  
Sorry, ride's full.

Oscar and Kaya just stare at him for a moment, baffled. Oscar spots an empty pod a little ways up the wheel. He points to it.

OSCAR  
There's an empty one right there.

ATTENDANT  
(not looking)  
That one's out of order.

OSCAR  
It doesn't *say* out of order...

KAYA  
Yeah, shouldn't it be like taped off or something?

ATTENDANT  
We don't do that.

OSCAR  
Why?

ATTENDANT  
Because it scares people.

OSCAR  
We're literally the only ones left.

ATTENDANT  
It's *full*... What do you want me to do?

Oscar doesn't have an answer for this.

OSCAR  
Can we get on after?

ATTENDANT  
No, I'm not running a rotation at the end of my shift for two people.

OSCAR  
Come on, man. We made it into line before you closed up shop, you have to honor that.

ATTENDANT

I don't have to honor anything,  
buddy. This isn't price matching.  
You know what they pay me here?

The Attendant turns to the console, which has a small microphone attached, looks over all the passengers currently on board, and presses a button.

The Ferris wheel WHIRRS to life and starts moving... Gears GRIND... Eva claps her hands with excitement behind the glass. Ben smiles and puts an arm around his daughter.

The Attendant leans down into the microphone.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

(booming from speaker)

Please remain seated at all times  
and enjoy the ride.

Kaya watches the wheel sadly and SIGHS. Oscar reaches into his pocket and removes his wallet.

KAYA

What are you doing?

Oscar turns to face the Attendant and pulls out a few bills.

OSCAR

For a private ride.

The Attendant eyes the money for a moment, seeing more bills stuffed inside the wallet than what's being offered.

ATTENDANT

Private rides are a premium  
service.

Oscar clenches his jaw and grabs a couple more bills from his wallet. He offers the wad of cash to the Attendant, who takes it and stares up at the Ferris wheel as it rotates, his face blank.

Oscar turns back to Kaya, triumphant. Kaya reaches out and playfully fiddles with his shirt.

KAYA

You didn't have to do that, but...  
not gonna lie, that was kind of  
sweet.

OSCAR

Hey, lose a stuffed animal, gain a private Ferris wheel ride to cap off an amazing first date. Not a bad deal, right?

KAYA

You think this date is amazing? Hm. Interesting.

Oscar looks speechless for a moment.

OSCAR

Is it... not? For you?

Kaya LAUGHS. Clearly she loves torturing this guy.

KAYA

You're doing okay.

OSCAR

So am I off the hook?

KAYA

For now.

Kaya lets go of Oscar's shirt and points an accusatory finger at him.

KAYA (CONT'D)

But I still want that pink snake. That's still on the hook, back at that booth, waiting for me.

OSCAR

Tell you what, I'll *buy* you the booth if you don't mention it again the entire ride.

Kaya smiles and nods.

KAYA

Didn't want to anyway. That's what I call a win/win...

Oscar returns the smile and puts an arm around her. Kaya doesn't seem to mind. They both stare up at the giant Ferris wheel as it turns, a starry night sky as its backdrop.

The Attendant glares at them. Money or not, he doesn't look pleased...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS/FERRIS WHEEL LINE - NIGHT (LATER)

The Ferris wheel has stopped. The last remaining passengers are in the midst of departing.

Eva holds Ben's hand and skips away happily. Ben has the pink snake wrapped around his neck. He checks a notification on his cell phone and shakes his head, disturbed by something.

The Attendant watches them leave from behind the console. He reaches down and grabs an empty white bin before walking over to Oscar and Kaya.

ATTENDANT

Cell phones and keys, please.

Oscar and Kaya just stare at him, blank. The Attendant gently shakes the white bin, emphasizing his point.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

I need to collect them.

OSCAR

Why?

ATTENDANT

It's our policy. We've had these items fall out of the pods before.

OSCAR

How do they fall out? The pods are enclosed.

ATTENDANT

Sometimes people open the door.

KAYA

Wait, the door can open while the ride's moving?

OSCAR

We won't open the door.

The Attendant just stands there holding the white bin out, waiting.

ATTENDANT

These items could injure people below should they come loose.

Oscar makes a show out of looking around the area.

OSCAR

What people?



ATTENDANT

What would you label me as, sir?

Oscar flashes him a look, *Really?*

OSCAR

I didn't see you collect anybody's phones or keys on the last ride.

ATTENDANT

I usually don't when it's that full. It's a lot of work.

Oscar SCOFFS, frustrated.

OSCAR

But now that there's only two of us...

ATTENDANT

Honestly, it's more about liability at this point.

OSCAR

Liability? Come on...

ATTENDANT

I'm not supposed to run this ride for anything less than six people.

OSCAR

Says who?

ATTENDANT

The company that employs me. And *if* you drop your cell phone and it smashes on the ground, I have to fill out a report. That report will raise questions as to why you were even allowed on the ride to begin with. Follow me?

Kaya steps in front of Oscar with her cell phone and keys in hand. She drops them in the white bin, locking eyes with the Attendant as she does.

KAYA

If anything happens to these, I have a particular set of skills...

She makes her way through the turnstile to the pod ahead. Oscar EXHALES a frustrated breath and pulls out his cell phone and keys from his pockets.

OSCAR

You want my wallet too? Social insurance number?

ATTENDANT

No, you can keep those. Unless you have loose change in your wallet then I'd suggest--

OSCAR

Holy fuck.

KAYA

(calling back)

P6, Oscar, P6.... Become one with the wristband.

Oscar tosses his cell phone and keys into the white bin then follows after Kaya.

ATTENDANT

Thank you. Off you go.

The Attendant takes the bin over to the console and puts it underneath, right next to a LONG DUFFLE BAG that has been placed discretely off to the side. He pulls the bag close...

INT./EXT. FERRIS WHEEL, POD 6 - NIGHT

Oscar and Kaya get into pod 6 and take a seat. The Attendant shuts the sliding door behind them, enclosing them in panoramic glass, and heads back to the console. Kaya is still smiling. Oscar is not.

The Attendant hits a button on the console in front of him. Tired machinery FIRING UP... Gears GRINDING... He leans down into the microphone in front of him.

ATTENDANT (V.O.)

Please remain seated at all times and enjoy the ride.

His voice emits from a SPEAKER built into pod 6. Kaya notices a small button beside the built-in speaker that reads, '*Press In Case Of Emergency*'. Oscar doesn't see this, he's too busy staring daggers through the Attendant.

The Ferris wheel rotates slowly until pod 6 begins its ascent into the sky. Kaya lets out a tiny, excited SHRIEK.

KAYA

Oooo, I can't wait to get to the top! I heard you can see for miles.

OSCAR

I can't believe he took our phones  
and our keys. Who does that?

Kaya pats Oscar's leg with her hand.

KAYA

Relax, okay? It's done. Let's just  
enjoy the ride.

Pod 6 continues its ascent, slowly moving to the top of its rotation. As it passes over the hump, the view is astounding - And Kaya is right... You can see for miles through the panoramic glass.

A full moon. Stars fill the night sky. At this height, passengers can see the lights of the nearby city below.

KAYA (CONT'D)

Wow... Beautiful.

Oscar finally relaxes, more impressed with who he has beside him than what is out in front of him.

KAYA (CONT'D)

Now I know why they take people's  
phones away...

OSCAR

Why's that?

KAYA

Because all I wanna do right now is  
take pictures.

Oscar shakes his head.

OSCAR

People have to capture everything,  
don't they?

KAYA

We certainly do.

Pod 6 continues its rotation, now slowly starting to descend. They enjoy the ride and the view. Oscar shifts in his seat.

OSCAR

I gotta ask you something.

KAYA

Uh oh...

OSCAR

Did you notice anyone staring at us tonight?

KAYA

You mean other than that attendant?

OSCAR

No, I mean... like when we were walking around the midway.

KAYA

No. Did you?

OSCAR

I caught some stares.

KAYA

Okay...

*She knows what's coming.*

OSCAR

Mostly white people.

*And there it is.*

KAYA

Oh.

OSCAR

I don't think they think this is natural.

KAYA

This?

OSCAR

You and I together.

Pod 6 continues to come down to earth... As does Kaya.

KAYA

Do you think that?

OSCAR

No, absolutely not. I don't even see color.

Kaya rolls her eyes.

KAYA

We *all* do, Oscar. Okay? Don't kid yourself. The only question is... does it bother you?

OSCAR

It doesn't at all. It's just--

KAYA

Just what?

OSCAR

I hate knowing what people think.

KAYA

So you're a mind reader now?

Oscar SIGHS. Kaya looks straight ahead. Softening, Oscar gently leans into her.

OSCAR

Look, I'm sorry I brought it up.

KAYA

On the way down too...

Pod 6 is now at the bottom of the rotation, passing by the boarding area. The Attendant, still at his console, eyes them as they pass. Oscar doesn't return the look. Kaya does. And pod 6 begins to climb again.

OSCAR

I just wish everyone would mind their own business.

Kaya scoots over, getting closer to Oscar. She leans in close to his ear.

KAYA

(whispers)

They are.

Oscar can't help but smile. He puts an arm around her and kisses her cheek -- Even *he* looks surprised that he did this.

KAYA (CONT'D)

What was that for?

Oscar shrugs, playing it cool.

OSCAR

Just felt like doing it. That okay?

Kaya nods, a smile plastered on her face that may never leave.

KAYA  
It's okay.

Oscar and Kaya enjoy this intimate moment in a comfortable silence, probably the best kind of silence there is.

Pod 6 ascends up into the crescendo once again; The view is breathtaking. This time, however, when the pod hits the highest point, the very peak -- It stops. The machinery WINDS DOWN... Gears settle and CREAK... Pod 6 sways in the night breeze. And all is silent.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
Um, why did we just stop?

Oscar and Kaya break from their embrace and sit up, looking around.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
Is that supposed to happen?

OSCAR  
I don't think so. I didn't see it stop like this when we were in line...

They both press their foreheads into the glass and look straight down. *It's a long way.*

KAYA  
Whew, that's high...  
(beat)  
How far up would you say we are?

OSCAR  
At least 200 feet.

KAYA  
Yikes. You afraid of heights?

OSCAR  
No.

KAYA  
Yeah, me neither.

Kaya settles back into her seat as she stares out at the expansive view beyond the glass.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
Maybe he's giving us some time up  
here to, you know, enjoy the view.

OSCAR  
Well, I did pay him enough to cover  
his whole shift, so... I'd assume  
that comes with some perks.

Kaya notices a CIGARETTE BUTT on the floor. Above it, she  
locks on to something stamped on the inside of the pod - It  
reads, 'Pod 6'.

KAYA  
Hey, look. Pod 6.  
(points at wristband)  
P6...

OSCAR  
Fun coincidence.

KAYA  
I don't believe in coincidences.

OSCAR  
No? Do you believe in God?

KAYA  
Not anymore. You?

OSCAR  
No.

KAYA  
Well, look at us go... Just two  
lost souls on a Ferris wheel.

OSCAR  
Two peas in a pod?

KAYA  
That works.

OSCAR  
Why don't you believe in God?

KAYA  
I've seen too much.

Oscar CHUCKLES.

OSCAR  
Me too.

A warm smile is exchanged. They cuddle back into each other and gaze out at the full moon and the stars.

Oscar does a quick sideways glance at Kaya, scoping out her profile, her neck, her gold necklace with the word 'live' on it, her shoulder, her--

KAYA

Now the big question...

He looks away.

OSCAR

I'm ready.

KAYA

Do you smoke?

Oscar grins.

OSCAR

I haven't in years.

KAYA

You sure?

OSCAR

I'm sure. I did it once and I'll never do it again.

KAYA

Thank God.

OSCAR

Thank who?

Kaya LAUGHS.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Do you?

KAYA

No, disgusting habit. No thanks.

Kaya motions to the cigarette butt on the floor of the pod.

KAYA (CONT'D)

But to each their own I guess.

Oscar SMACKS HIS LIPS upon seeing the discarded cigarette, then stomps on it with his shoe and grinds it into the floor, leaving behind a small PILE OF ASH.



OSCAR

Did you know that even though smoking is banned on airplanes, the law still requires the bathrooms to have ashtrays?

KAYA

I didn't know that. Why would that be a thing?

OSCAR

Because even though it's illegal, the government knows people will still break the law and smoke, so planes have to have a disposal system for the illegal cigarettes.

KAYA

Makes sense I guess.

OSCAR

Even when they make laws they don't have faith in people to follow them... But I guess that's the problem with laws though, right?

KAYA

What's that?

OSCAR

They're human.

Silence for a long while. It's quiet up here. Peaceful.

KAYA

Hey, Oscar... What do you call a black man flying an airplane?

OSCAR

I don't know, what?

KAYA

A pilot, you racist asshole.

Oscar tries to suppress a LAUGH but can't. Kaya is grinning ear-to-ear.

KAYA (CONT'D)

We're even.

Suddenly, off in the distance, FIREWORKS explode in the sky, lighting up the surroundings in a rainbow collage of color.

Oscar and Kaya look on in wonder with the best seat in the house. The colorful fireworks continue to EXPLODE and rain down to earth, fizzling out in the night.

Kaya smiles and playfully nudges Oscar. *Not bad, huh?* They cuddle up close and watch the show.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. FERRIS WHEEL, POD 6 - NIGHT (LATER)

The fireworks are gone. The silence of the night sky 200 feet above the ground is a stark juxtaposition. The Fairgrounds below look fairly empty; a few scatterings of people saunter toward the parking lot to leave.

Oscar and Kaya watch from above, their arms crossed on the edge of pod 6, their foreheads resting against the glass partition. Kaya looks like a lost puppy dog. Oscar looks pissed off.

OSCAR  
Everyone's leaving.

KAYA  
Yep.

OSCAR  
I swear to God if that kid left us here...

KAYA  
Swear to who?

Oscar doesn't react, not in the mood. Kaya SIGHS.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
He didn't leave us, okay? Let's get that straight right now. He physically stopped the ride. That's a *conscious* act. He knows we're up here.

OSCAR  
We don't know that he stopped it.

KAYA  
We don't know that he *didn't*.

OSCAR  
He has our phones... Our *keys*...

KAYA

I know.

OSCAR

He wouldn't... you know... ?

KAYA

What? Leave us up here and steal our cars?

OSCAR

You said it.

KAYA

You thought it.

OSCAR

I can't even make out our cars from up here, can you?

KAYA

Nope. But if we wait long enough they will be the last two left.

Oscar rubs his wristband, soothing himself. Kaya glances at the speaker with the emergency button next to it. She considers something, points at the button.

KAYA (CONT'D)

I doubt this is classified as an emergency, but... what do you think?

Oscar follows her finger.

OSCAR

(just noticing)

Oh, shit! Yes! And this is 100% an emergency.

He presses the button and leans in close to the speaker.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

(in speaker)

Hello?

No response. He presses the button again.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

(in speaker)

Anybody there?

Nothing.

KAYA  
Yeah, he's definitely not down  
there.

OSCAR  
Maybe it's broken.

Oscar stands up and moves close to the glass. He gazes down, his eyes searching for any signs of movement - There is none. He looks back at Kaya, not knowing what to do. The speaker system CRACKLES to life.

ATTENDANT (V.O.)  
Please remain seated at all times  
and enjoy the ride.

Oscar and Kaya's eyes light up upon hearing this.

KAYA  
Hey now! It works!

Oscar kneels down and presses the button.

OSCAR  
(in speaker)  
Did you forget we were up here?

No response. He presses the button again.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
(in speaker)  
Hey, can you hear me?

Radio silence.

KAYA  
Maybe it's one-way?

OSCAR  
What would be the point of this  
button then, Kaya? He's *choosing*  
not to answer.

KAYA  
Well, he *did* say something when you  
stood up just now. Could be a  
trigger?

Oscar and Kaya lock eyes at this. *Bingo*. They both stand up and peer through the glass, looking down.

The Attendant is directly below at the console, staring up at them, blank faced.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
There he is.

The Attendant is stoic. Unreactive. Kaya stares down at him, concerned.

OSCAR  
Why is he just staring at us?

KAYA  
I have no fucking clue.

Oscar turns and kneels down by the speaker. He presses the button.

OSCAR  
(in speaker)  
Can you start up the ride, please?  
You can just bring us down and let us off.

No response. No movement. The Attendant just keeps looking up at them.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
(in speaker)  
Hey! Can you answer us?!  
(beat)  
Helloooo?!

Nothing.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
What the *fuck*?

KAYA  
Maybe he's like, having a stroke or something...

OSCAR  
(in speaker)  
Let us down!

The Attendant remains unmoving, unflinching, like some comatose zombie that has reached its final destination and doesn't know what to do next.

KAYA  
This is so weird.

Oscar stands and waves his hands furiously back and forth, as if he's trying to snap this kid out of his reverie below. He turns to Kaya, at a loss.

OSCAR  
What do we do here?

KAYA  
I don't know. I mean, he *did* say  
for us to remain seated...

OSCAR  
We were seated! Nothing happened!  
Then we stood up and guess what?  
Nothing happened!

Kaya holds up a hand defensively.

KAYA  
Whoa, don't yell at me. I'm just  
throwing ideas out here.

Oscar EXHALES a breath and rubs his wristband.

OSCAR  
You're right. I'm sorry.

Oscar and Kaya quickly take a seat and wait. The Attendant doesn't move a muscle below. Kaya reaches out and presses the button.

KAYA  
(in speaker)  
There. We're seated. Both of us.  
Let's get a move on.

No response. Oscar glances down through the glass then back to Kaya.

OSCAR  
This is about money. It's got to  
be. It usually is with--  
(beat)  
The kid saw inside my wallet when I  
opened it.

KAYA  
Odd way to go about it.

Oscar presses the button.

OSCAR  
(in speaker)  
You want more money, is that it?

Silence. Oscar releases the button, at a loss.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

What the *hell* is happening right now? Honestly.

KAYA

Yeah, this might be the strangest thing I've ever experienced, and I've been on Tinder.

OSCAR

I mean, I guess it's possible the ride broke with us right at the top. Just seems convenient...

KAYA

Well, he *did* say one of the pods was out of order...

OSCAR

Which was BS.

KAYA

Yeah, you'd think he'd tell us if something went wrong. Maybe he called maintenance and he's just, you know, waiting for them?

Oscar considers this. Thinks something over.

OSCAR

You've been on Tinder?

Kaya shrugs like she's guilty of something.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Alright, whatever. I'll get his attention the old fashioned way.

KAYA

What does that mean?

OSCAR

I'm gonna, you know, yell down at him.

KAYA

Yell down? Can he even hear us this high up?

OSCAR

I don't know. I mean, he should be able to... right?

KAYA  
Through the glass?

OSCAR  
Well, no... I would have to open  
the door.

A look of concern spreads across Kaya's face.

KAYA  
You told him you wouldn't open it.

OSCAR  
I guess I lied.

Oscar gets up and grabs hold of the sliding door.

KAYA  
Just be careful please.

He pulls it open -- The night air flows inside the pod,  
rocking it slightly. CREAK.

OSCAR  
(calling down)  
HEY!!

No response from the Attendant below. No movement. Oscar  
waves an arm.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
(calling down)  
I KNOW YOU SEE ME! LET US DOWN!

Oscar points toward the ground.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
(calling down)  
DOWN!

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS/FERRIS WHEEL LINE - NIGHT

Ground level. CLOSE ON the Attendant as he gazes upwards. He  
doesn't react to Oscar's distant pleas from above, just  
continues to stare up with no emotion on his face.

SLOWLY REVOLVE/TURN behind the Attendant so that we see the  
Ferris wheel and pod 6 high above - Oscar and Kaya both look  
small and insignificant inside of it.



INT./EXT. FERRIS WHEEL, POD 6 - NIGHT

Oscar steps back inside pod 6 and looks at Kaya.

OSCAR  
Do I... what do I throw something  
at him? Like... shock him back to  
life or something?

Kaya warily moves closer to the open door and leans over the edge, squinting and studying the Attendant below.

KAYA  
(calling down)  
ARE YOU OKAY?!

No response. No movement. Kaya turns back to Oscar and throws her arms up. *I give up.*

OSCAR  
I'm gonna chuck a shoe at him.

KAYA  
You're not chucking a shoe.

Something suddenly dawns on Oscar.

OSCAR  
Loose change!

KAYA  
What?

Oscar reaches into his pocket and pulls out his wallet.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
Oh no, you're *definitely* not doing  
that...

OSCAR  
I'm doing it.

Oscar opens his wallet and rummages through it. Folded and tucked neatly inside is an old, laminated PHOTOGRAPH... Kaya catches a glimpse of it. Oscar pulls out a quarter lodged in between some bills and slams the wallet shut.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
Bingo.

Kaya shakes her head.

KAYA

Oh, you must've lost your damn mind. You'll cave in his skull if you hit him from this height, you know that right?

OSCAR

Nah, my luck's not that good... And I just want to wake him out of his coma.

Oscar looks below and rears back his arm to throw. Kaya reaches out and grabs his arm, stopping him.

KAYA

Wait!

Oscar stares at her, confused.

KAYA (CONT'D)

Just be careful, okay? *Please?* I'm not looking to end this date in a jail cell.

OSCAR

I won't go to jail.

KAYA

Maybe *you* won't...

OSCAR

I know what I'm doing, don't worry.

Kaya lets go of Oscar's hand, clearly not happy about it. Oscar takes aim and throws the quarter, watching it tumble down through the air, end over end, until he can no longer see it. He waits... and listens.

The Attendant doesn't budge. He just keeps staring up at them.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

There, I missed. No way he didn't hear that though.

Oscar leans over the edge of the pod and throws his arms up.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

(calling down)

ARE YOU ALIVE?!

No response.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
(calling down)  
I'LL THROW QUARTERS ALL NIGHT,  
DIPSHIT! I'LL MAKE IT FUCKING RAIN!

Oscar turns back to Kaya, shaking his head.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
Unbelievable. He's like a  
malfunctioning android or  
something.

Oscar sits back down, collecting his thoughts and pocketing his wallet. Deep breath.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
So what are our options?

KAYA  
Well, we figure out whatever this  
guy is up to and find a way to  
change it, or... we wait.

OSCAR  
Wait for what?

KAYA  
Morning.

Oscar shakes his head vehemently.

OSCAR  
No, no way. I'm not staying up here  
in this cramped little pod all  
night.

KAYA  
Yeah, I'll try not to be offended  
by that, hold on...  
(beat)  
Nope. Can't do it. Definitely  
offended.

OSCAR  
It's not you.

KAYA  
You can't think of this like an  
opportunity? Glass half full kind  
of thing?

OSCAR  
He has our *phones*, Kaya. Okay? Our  
*keys*.

(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)

He can do a number of things with those, and any one of those things is bad news for us.

KAYA

Yeah sure, he can do a lot with that stuff. Whatever. But as of this moment he's literally standing below us doing *nothing*.

OSCAR

For now.

KAYA

Well what's worse, Oscar? Seeing or not seeing a monster?

Oscar just stares at her, waiting for the point.

KAYA (CONT'D)

Think about it. If he has all these sinister plans in place, then what's he waiting for? He has us where he wants us, no?

Oscar considers this.

KAYA (CONT'D)

Exactly. And as long as we can see him, what's the worst he can do?

Oscar fiddles with his wristband for a moment, thinking it over. Unsatisfied, he leans out of the door.

OSCAR

(calling down)

I'M CALLING THE COPS WHEN I GET DOWN THERE! YOU HEAR ME?! YOU CAN STAND YOUR ASS BEHIND BARS!

(beat)

I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME!

He comes back into the pod, his face reddened. Kaya looks below for a moment, gauging the Attendant's reaction - There is none. Silence. A light gust of wind makes pod 6 SHUDDER and CREAK.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

He's probably doing this because I'm with you. I mean, let's call a spade a spade.

KAYA

What?

OSCAR

People don't like mixed couples,  
Kaya. They just don't.

KAYA

Oh, not this again...

OSCAR

It's the truth and you need to face  
it. You think I didn't catch all  
the side-eyed looks at the Gala  
when you were showing me around?

KAYA

People don't like *people*, Oscar.  
Stop with this shit.

Oscar rubs his eyes and GRUNTS, frustrated.

KAYA (CONT'D)

You're pissed. I get it. So am I.

OSCAR

I need to get down, that's all  
there is to it. I can't stay here  
all night, I have... meetings.

KAYA

Meetings? You work in real estate,  
right? Led me to believe that  
you're pretty successful?

OSCAR

Yeah, I do okay.

KAYA

So you make your own hours then.

OSCAR

In a way. But we work around the  
clock, it's kind of our--

KAYA

It's a catchy slogan, Oscar. And  
that's all it is. How many houses  
have you sold at 3am?

Oscar is blank-faced.

KAYA (CONT'D)

Exactly. My family is in real  
estate. I know the deal. The more  
successful you are the more freedom  
you have, that's just how it works.

OSCAR  
(relenting)  
Fair enough.

KAYA  
So what's this issue you're having?  
Unless you just don't want to be  
here with me anymore?

OSCAR  
No, no, I told you it's not that. I  
really like being with you.

KAYA  
Okay...

Kaya just stares at him. Oscar nods, relenting. He SIGHS.

OSCAR  
Cards on the table?

KAYA  
Well, you've already called a spade  
a spade...

OSCAR  
I'm not the biggest fan of heights.

Kaya stares at him, deadpan.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
And because of that, I'm... you  
know, not feeling the greatest up  
here.

KAYA  
Are you for real?

Oscar doesn't break eye contact.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
Then why the hell would you let me  
convince you to go on this ride if  
you didn't like heights, Oscar?!  
Why would you lie to me?

OSCAR  
It's a first date, Kaya. What am I  
supposed to say? "Sorry, I'm kind  
of scared of that kiddie ride but  
hey, wanna make out?".

Kaya considers this.

KAYA  
Okay, I see your testosterone-  
fuelled dilemma.

OSCAR  
Well, good.

Oscar gazes out at the skyline.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
Women judge a book by its cover so  
men can never be an open book.

Kaya absorbs this thoughtfully. She looks at Oscar, her eyes softening as she does. She scoots close to him and leans her head on his shoulder, fiddling with his wristband.

KAYA  
I thought this bracelet was  
supposed to help.

OSCAR  
It's a *wristband*.

KAYA  
(sarcastically)  
Oh, my apologies.

OSCAR  
And it *is* helping, trust me. It  
would be a lot worse up here if I  
didn't have it on.

KAYA  
That's ominous. Anything I can do?

OSCAR  
Not really. All I want is for this  
kid to finish his little prank so I  
can get my feet on solid ground,  
punch him in the breadbasket, then  
leave here with you. Is that too  
much to ask?

KAYA  
Sounds reasonable to me.

Oscar reaches out and presses the intercom button.

OSCAR  
(in speaker)  
Lets get this show on the road!

No response. Oscar and Kaya both lean their heads out of the open door and gaze down -- The Attendant is still staring up at them, motionless. Oscar flashes him the finger before going back inside the pod.

KAYA

Let's just try to chill out, okay? He can't stand there forever. Worst comes to worst, we stay the night up here and when the park opens tomorrow, we'll be let down and the kid will be fired. And hey, maybe we'll end up with free tickets to this place for life. You can win me my pink snake and we won't step foot on this stupid wheel ever again. Sound good?

OSCAR

It does actually. In theory. But you mentioned the snake again, so...

KAYA

Ahh. I did, didn't I?

Oscar smiles, briefly.

KAYA (CONT'D)

There's that smile. You see? This is just going to be a funny story for us to tell when it's all said and done. Something we look back on and laugh at, no matter what happens. It's just part of the journey.

Oscar nods in agreement.

OSCAR

The journey *is* the destination.

KAYA

That's exactly right. Now close the door.

Oscar does as he's told and sits back down beside Kaya. They gaze out into the night, trying to get lost in the beauty of it all, but mostly trying to ignore the Attendant staring up at them from below.

PULL IN close to the night sky; The blackness of it only occasionally interrupted by a little ball of light... A single star *flickering*.



CLOSE ON the little beacon of light...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

HEADLIGHTS blare to life before dimming again. The only other vehicles in sight are currently leaving the parking lot.

INT. BEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Ben is seated behind the wheel, buckling up. Eva is in the backseat, already buckled in. Her attention is fully consumed by the iPad on her lap. The fluffy pink snake is on the seat beside her.

Ben grabs a vape from a cup holder and takes a hit. He rolls down the window and blows the smoke out into the air, glancing in the rear view mirror as he does.

BEN

Did you have fun tonight?

Eva swipes at something on her screen, not hearing him or ignoring him. Same thing.

BEN (CONT'D)

Eva.

Eva looks up.

BEN (CONT'D)

Did you have fun?

She smiles and nods.

EVA

Yeah. Are we going to your place now?

BEN

Aw, babe. I wish. But you know your mom is expecting you back.

EVA

(pouting)

Okay.

BEN

Next time, I promise.

Eva returns to her iPad. Ben takes another hit off his vape then shifts the car into drive and turns out of the parking space.

BEN'S POV: The car's HEADLIGHTS illuminate the parking lot, two piercing cones in the darkness. Suddenly, a BLUR OF A SHADOW whips by, some kind of FIGURE, fast as a blink. EXIT POV.

Ben's eyes widen. He GASPS and SLAMS on the brakes. SCREECH. Eva's head snaps up, looking around, confused.

EVA  
Dad? What happened?

Ben gazes out of the front windshield, searching for something, adrenaline surging.

BEN'S POV: The car's HEADLIGHTS capture nothing but blackness and WISPS OF FOG settling. Nothing else is there. EXIT POV.

Ben scans the area in front of him.

BEN  
I, uh... thought I saw something.

EVA  
What?

Ben continues to dissect the parking lot with his eyes.

EVA (CONT'D)  
What did you see, Dad?

BEN  
Something, I mean, I think somebody jumped in front of the car...

Eva looks ahead, not moving a muscle. Ben makes double sure the coast is clear.

EVA  
(quietly)  
Why would someone do that?

Ben shakes it off, meeting Eva's eyes in the rear view mirror. He opens his mouth to respond--

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
To get your blood pumping.

Ben quickly spins toward the open driver's side window. A SHADOW engulfs the car as quick as a gunshot. **BLACK.**

The attack is instantaneous and impossible to make out any details, but what we do know, without a doubt, is that Ben's SCREAM is followed sharply by Eva's...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS/FERRIS WHEEL LINE - NIGHT

The Attendant glances back over his shoulder upon hearing something in the distance. He listens, eyes narrowing. All is quiet. He turns and slowly looks back up at the Ferris wheel.

INT./EXT. FERRIS WHEEL, POD 6 - NIGHT (LATER)

It's quiet up here. Kaya is asleep on Oscar's shoulder.

Oscar is wide awake. He looks antsy. His leg is bouncing up and down nervously. He glances at the moon - It has made its way across the starry night sky to the west.

Oscar turns his attention to the gold chain on Kaya's neck, CLICKING his jaw as he does, resetting it. He gives Kaya a gentle nudge.

OSCAR

Hey, you up?

Kaya lets out a soft exhale.

KAYA

(eyes closed)

I like you, Oscar...

She opens her eyes, completely void of sleep.

KAYA (CONT'D)

But if you think I'm sleeping with you on the first date, you got another thing coming.

Oscar smiles politely and gazes out at the night sky.

KAYA (CONT'D)

He still down there?

Oscar doesn't even look.

OSCAR

He is.

Kaya looks for herself -- The Attendant is still staring up at them. She leans back out of sight, definitely worried.

Deciding something, Kaya leans forward and presses the button near the speaker. She brings her other hand close to the speaker and SNAPS her fingers twice.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

KAYA  
Trying to snap him out of it. Did  
it work?

Oscar looks over the edge, shakes his head no.

OSCAR  
It did not.

Kaya notices Oscar's leg bouncing nervously up and down.

KAYA  
How long do you think we've been up  
here?

OSCAR  
Hours. I don't know anymore.

KAYA  
Yeah, times like this I really wish  
I had a watch. Cell phones kind of  
double for those nowadays, don't  
they?

Oscar ignores this. Just focuses ahead, his leg bouncing.

OSCAR  
I can't just sit here and do  
nothing.

KAYA  
Well what are you gonna do about  
it? We're stuck.

Oscar presses his face into the glass and stares down at the wheel itself.

OSCAR  
I was thinking of climbing down.

Kaya CHUCKLES at this. Oscar is still looking down, studying the infrastructure. Kaya's face turns serious.

KAYA  
You're serious...

Oscar nods.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
 So wait, let me get this straight... You're afraid of heights but you're thinking of climbing out of a Ferris wheel 200 feet above the ground?

Oscar thinks it over.

OSCAR  
 Yes?

KAYA  
 Okay, three things. One: You can't. Two: You're just as crazy as zombie boy down there. And Three: What's the rush? You can't wait this thing out with me? I'm pretty good company, no?

OSCAR  
 You don't get it.

KAYA  
 You're right, I don't.

OSCAR  
 I can't stay here, Kaya. Period. End of story.

Kaya just stares at him like, *What the fuck?*

KAYA  
 You're married, aren't you?

OSCAR  
*What?*

KAYA  
 That's the only thing that makes sense right now.

OSCAR  
 I'm definitely not married.

KAYA  
 That's what married people say.

Oscar SIGHS and takes hold of her hand.

OSCAR  
 It's not what this is, okay? At all. I promise.

(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I'm just having a hard time being up here for this long without any control of the situation. I don't do well not having control.

(flashes wristband)

Hence this.

KAYA

I mean, you're dressing it up nice but you're still trying to sell me on the fact that you'd prefer to risk your life climbing down this thing rather than spend the night up here with me, *safely*.

Oscar stares at her for a moment, weighing his options.

OSCAR

You don't know that we're safe...

KAYA

Well what's he gonna do, huh? Dislodge the wheel and send us rolling end-over-end through the city?

Oscar thinks it over, shakes his head vehemently.

OSCAR

I'm sorry, but I can't wait around to find out.

Oscar slides open the door and positions himself at the edge of pod 6, charting his path down before taking a seat with his legs dangling off. The height is *dizzying*.

KAYA

And what if you fall, Oscar? What happens then? I don't want your death on my conscience. Not to mention you'd be leaving me up here with this psychopath at the helm.

OSCAR

I'm not gonna die.

Oscar turns to face Kaya and drops himself down over the edge so that only his head is visible. He finds a foothold. All Kaya can do is stare at this point.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I'll just be really, really badly injured.

KAYA  
 Okay, just stop! This is crazy! Get  
 back inside!

OSCAR  
 I got a foothold, hold on...

Kaya's eyes avert to the Attendant below.

KAYA  
 Wait! He's moving...

Oscar looks over his shoulder -- The Attendant is walking  
 back toward the console below.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
 What's he--?

The Attendant settles in behind the console. The speaker  
 CRACKLES to life.

ATTENDANT (V.O.)  
 Get back in your pod, please.

Kaya spins to face the speaker.

ATTENDANT (V.O.)  
 Please refrain from attempting to  
 leave the ride until it has come to  
 a complete stop.

OSCAR  
 (calling down)  
 WE ARE STOPPED!

The Attendant presses two buttons in quick succession.  
 Machinery WHIRRING... Gears GRINDING... The wheel NUDGES  
 forward - Kaya lets out a startled YELP as--

Oscar is FLUNG TO THE SIDE, nearly thrown off the wheel  
 completely-- He *just* manages to maintain his grip. The wheel  
 stops as quickly as it started. Oscar takes the hint and  
 begins to pull himself up into the pod, straining.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
 Okay, okay...

Kaya's attention snaps back to Oscar, a look of concern on  
 her face.

KAYA  
 Get back inside!

Oscar continues to struggle to pull himself up.

OSCAR  
(straining)  
I'm trying!

Kaya grabs a hold of both of Oscar's wrists and pulls with all her strength. Oscar instinctively tries to yank his wrist away that has the wristband on it.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
No, wait!

The wristband SNAPS in half under the strain and falls to the ground below -- Oscar watches it drop like it's his kidney tumbling out of his body.

KAYA  
Sorry!

Oscar looks back up toward Kaya, who is straining to hold him; her gold necklace with the word '*live*' hanging down toward him, more prominent than ever.

With a surge of power, Kaya pulls Oscar up into pod 6 with a forceful GRUNT.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS/FERRIS WHEEL LINE - NIGHT

The Attendant slowly glances down at the broken wristband on the ground nearby. He looks back up at the Ferris wheel as Oscar is yanked back inside pod 6.

The Attendant turns quickly and heads back behind the console... to where the long duffle bag sits...

INT./EXT. FERRIS WHEEL, POD 6 - NIGHT

Oscar lies face down, his face pressed to the floor of pod 6 with his feet hanging out of the door.

OSCAR  
(breathless)  
You broke my wristband.

KAYA  
(breathless)  
Fuck your wristband.

Oscar rolls to his side.



OSCAR

I think...  
(beat)  
Yeah, this isn't good.

But Kaya's attention is elsewhere. She GASPS and covers her mouth with her hand, her eyes locked on something below.

KAYA

He's got a gun.

Oscar spins around to look -- The Attendant below is looking up at them while holding a HUNTING RIFLE lazily at his side.

OSCAR

What the fuck?!

Oscar scrambles into the depths of the pod, escorting Kaya away from the door like she is his primary concern. Kaya looks terrified.

KAYA

Why does he have a gun?

OSCAR

Stay here.

Oscar rushes back and leans out of the doors.

KAYA

Get away from there! Close the doors!

OSCAR

(calling down)  
ARE YOU FUCKING INSANE?! PUT THAT AWAY!

The Attendant doesn't react. Oscar throws his arms out.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

(calling down)  
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?! HUH?!  
WHAT?!

The Attendant brings the hunting rifle up and takes aim down the scope. Oscar freezes. *Shit.*

A GUNSHOT rings out -- The bullet ricochets off the next pod over, the one slightly below, shattering the glass. SMASH!

Kaya SCREAMS. Oscar ducks down and rushes to her side.

The Attendant below adjusts his aim slightly, aiming directly at pod 6. Seeing no signs of movement, he lowers the rifle and heads back to the console.

Oscar has an arm around Kaya, who is curled in a ball in the corner.

KAYA  
He's gonna kill us!

Oscar just stares at his bare wrist, the one the wristband should be on, getting angrier by the second. His jaw CLICKS.

OSCAR  
No... Not like this...

ATTENDANT (V.O.)  
Please remain in your pod. Do *not* attempt to leave again.

Kaya gathers her courage and lunges for the small button.

KAYA  
(in speaker)  
You just fucked yourself! You're firing a *weapon*, shithead! The cops are gonna be on their way any second!

Radio silence on the other end for several moments.

ATTENDANT (V.O.)  
That's the thing about gunshots, they sound sort of like fireworks, don't they? Hard to tell the difference. Now tell your *boyfriend* to do as I say and sit still or the next one goes right in his breadbasket.

In a fit of rage that he can no longer control, Oscar rushes to the speaker, *shoves* Kaya out of the way, and presses the button.

OSCAR  
(in speaker)  
I'm gonna fucking kill you, you hear me?! You fucking nigger! You're *dead*! You don't know who you're fucking with! FUCK YOU!

No response. Oscar collapses into a seated position, breathing heavily. Seething.

Kaya is paralyzed with fear, her eyes wide in shock. She slowly edges away from Oscar to the opposite side of the pod, studying this unrecognizable monster in front of her.

KAYA  
J-just calm down, okay? Take a  
breath. Breathe.

Oscar glances at her, a HEARTBEAT reverberating in his ears. *Thump-thump. Thump-thump.* He swallows the lump in his throat. Begins to GAG and DRY HEAVE.

Kaya looks on in terror, not knowing what to do, or where to go. *There is nowhere to go...*

Oscar's eyes suddenly snap up to meet Kaya's -- There is a different intensity in them now. Something unhinged. Something *primal*. And they're bloodshot.

OSCAR  
I can't--

Kaya pushes herself back into the wall of the pod, glancing below -- The Attendant is aiming his hunting rifle directly at pod 6.

KAYA  
Oscar...

Oscar stumbles to his feet and looks out at the Attendant, who is staring down the scope, ready to fire again. Oscar's head snaps back to Kaya, eyes burning with some sort of rage...

KAYA (CONT'D)  
I NEED YOU NOW!!

Oscar turns on a dime and LUNGES at Kaya, attacking her or protecting her - *From the outside looking in, what's the difference?* Kaya SCREAMS. A GUNSHOT rings out. BAM!

Oscar's momentum is immediately halted as he careens off to the side from the force of the bullet, his head SMASHING off the side of the pod--

CUT TO **BLACK.**

SILENCE. THEN, FROM THE **BLACK**--

*MANY HEARTS PUMPING RAPIDLY... NEARLY IN UNISON...*

*HEAVY BREATHING...*

DULL FOOTSTEPS ON DRY GRASS...

CHAINS CLINK AND CLANK AROUND...

FADE IN:

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

A field of crops. Bugs BUZZ in the dark. TORCHES are lit at even intervals leading to a BARN in the distance. The dead of night is eerily silent.

FIRST PERSON POV: A WHITE HAND holds a LANTERN. It lights the way as we walk through the field, surveying the scene.

Various AFRICAN AMERICAN SLAVES, holding shovels and farming equipment, shirtless and sweating in the night's humidity, stand up and stare at us as we pass. Guarded. They are scared.

One WARY SLAVE in particular attempts to back away, but is halted immediately by STEEL SHACKLES that are attached to a ROPE CHAIN wrapped around his ankle.

The White Hand with the lantern continues to stroll along, heading toward the Barn at the end of the field. The light in the lantern flickers and goes out. **BLACK.**

Somewhere, off in the distance, a man SCREAMS out in agony.

BACK TO:

INT./EXT. FERRIS WHEEL, POD 6 - NIGHT (LATER)

Oscar's eyes shoot open. He GASPS for a breath and sits up, immediately stopped and choked by something. He GAGS and SPUTTERS, reaching toward his neck...

His fingers caress the STEEL COLLAR fastened around it. The collar is attached to a familiar ROPE CHAIN that is wrapped around the pod's door handle and locked with a pad lock.

Oscar winces at the uncomfortable confinement, tries to yank himself free from the steel collar - There's no escape.

Kaya sits calmly in the corner of pod 6, staring at Oscar with a new demeanor, the light in her eyes replaced with a jarring indifference.

OSCAR

Kaya... what-- what happened? What is this?

KAYA

Take a second. You'll get there.

Oscar stares at the rope chain, confused. He runs his other hand along it up towards the steel collar, feels around it, looks for any sort of latch or release mechanism - There is none.

OSCAR

What's on my neck?

KAYA

A collar.

OSCAR

A coll--? Can you... can you help me out here...?

Kaya just stares at him, dead behind the eyes.

Oscar grimaces and brings a hand down to his stomach. Looking down, he sees the BULLET HOLE in his gut; DRIED BLOOD has imprinted on the floor of the pod. *His* blood. His shirt is stained red.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

He shot me...

KAYA

He sure did. Wasn't but ten minutes ago too but the blood's already dry. How's that happen?

Oscar GROANS and yanks at the steel collar.

OSCAR

Why is there a fucking collar around my neck, Kaya?

KAYA

Well that's what you do to rabid animals, right? Chain them up in the shed somewhere...

Oscar looks stunned.

OSCAR

I don't understand. What are you doing?

Kaya SIGHS.

KAYA  
 We have your phone, okay? Your  
 contacts? The jig is up, Oscar.

Oscar looks about to respond but winces and doubles over from the pain in his stomach. Kaya slowly reaches out and presses the button next to the speaker.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
 (in speaker)  
 Our friend here seems to be feeling  
 some slight discomfort in his um,  
 breadbasket.

The speaker CRACKLES to life.

ATTENDANT (V.O.)  
 Well, whatever pain he's feeling  
 right now? It's not from that  
 expertly placed bullet, I assure  
 you that.

Kaya points at the speaker confidently.

ATTENDANT (V.O.)  
 So what else could it be?

KAYA  
 (feigning)  
 Yeah, what else could it be...

Oscar locks eyes with Kaya, things starting to sink in. Kaya just grins. Oscar claws at the steel collar like a madman, trying to rip it off with sheer force. Doesn't work.

ATTENDANT (V.O.)  
 Hunger pains, maybe?

KAYA  
 How 'bout thirst?

Oscar stops struggling, now fully realizing the predicament he's in.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
 (to Oscar)  
 Yeah, the past always catches up  
 with us in the end, doesn't it? You  
 can't expect one like yours to not  
 come back and bite you. That would  
 be pretty hypocritical.

Oscar shakes his head, refusing to believe what is happening right now. Refusing to give in. To *admit*.

OSCAR

I have no idea what's happening right now, Kaya. None. So whatever you *think* you're accomplishing with this... stunt. Trust me, it's a mistake.

KAYA

Oh, stop with the bullshit, Oscar. Okay? No more lies. No more scurrying into your little hole whenever your dark secret is threatened with seeing the light of day. I'd say it's about time to face it head on, wouldn't you? Nothing stays hidden forever, remember?

Oscar pulls himself up onto the seat, wincing in pain as he does so. He looks out of the panoramic glass.

Pod 6 is at the very top of the wheel's rotation, high in the sky. The door is still open. The moon has set in the west; the last remnants of the night cling to life.

Below, the Attendant, now with the hunting rifle hanging lazily at his side, stares up at the pod from behind the console.

Oscar tries to get up, but the rope chain linked to the collar isn't long enough, it won't allow him to stand. He scans the ground, searching for any other signs of life. Finds nothing.

He leans back inside pod 6. His bloodshot eyes dart back and forth within their sockets. Searching for a way out. Something... Anything... *His only lifeline is right in front of him...* Kaya.

OSCAR

I was-- I was protecting you...

KAYA

What?

OSCAR

From the bullet. I wasn't--  
(beat)  
It could've hit you.

KAYA

Could've, but didn't. My brother Anthony? He's kind of a good shot. Great, actually...

OSCAR  
Your brother?

Kaya stares at him, unflinching, waiting for it to sink in.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
Oh, the wrestling lover...

KAYA  
Bingo.

Oscar nods slowly with realization.

OSCAR  
I mean, I guess it makes sense now  
that I think about it... You two  
sort of look alike.

KAYA  
We all look alike to you.

Oscar absorbs everything. Retooling. Adapting.

OSCAR  
So who are you, Kaya? Who are you  
*really*?

Kaya casually shrugs.

KAYA  
I'm just a gal who doesn't want any  
more regrets in life. And I think  
I'd always regret not taking you  
out...

Oscar smiles, impressed. *Well played.*

KAYA (CONT'D)  
Now then, you and I? We have some  
shit we need to talk about.

Kaya pulls out Oscar's wallet from her pocket. She opens it and removes the old, laminated photograph, slowly unfolding the photo and smoothing out the creases in her lap.

The Photograph: A few *White Men with lanterns* oversee various *Slaves holding shovels and farming equipment as they work in a field at night. The Slaves are chained up by their ankles. One of the white overseers is OSCAR, exactly the same age, wearing mid 1800's attire and smoking a cigarette.*

Kaya tosses the photograph at Oscar. It lands at his feet.



KAYA (CONT'D)  
Circa 1864. It's a duplicate, by  
the way. Plenty more where that  
came from.

Oscar doesn't even glance at it. He knows what it is.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
Now why you kept that in your  
wallet and didn't burn it, I'll  
never know... But I guess even  
serial killers revisit dead bodies  
on occasion, don't they?

Oscar steps on the old photograph and kicks it away into the  
corner like it's nothing. Kaya pulls out Oscar's broken  
wristband from her pocket.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
And I found your wristband down  
there, you know... while Anthony  
was chaining you up...

She tosses it at Oscar, who catches it.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
I hear it's been 'revamped'...  
(beat; shakes head)  
Give me a break.

Oscar studies the wristband that's been snapped in half. He  
tosses it like trash into the corner with the old photograph.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
You just love dropping those little  
breadcrumbs, don't you? Probably  
makes you feel cunning or  
something. But *thinking* you're  
smart doesn't necessarily mean you  
are. In fact, it probably means the  
exact opposite. But hey, the  
placebo effect is a hell of a drug,  
ain't it? Not quite as addictive as  
the past though...

Oscar just stares at Kaya, at a loss for words.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
Yeah... I got all the dirt on you.

Oscar glances out of the window of pod 6, staring off into  
the horizon beyond, lost in his own thoughts.

OSCAR

So what's the point of this, Kaya?  
Where does this all lead?

KAYA

You should know the answer to that.  
Follow the bloodline, remember? It  
will take you right back to the  
beginning. Back to my great, great  
grandfather... You might know him.

Oscar slowly turns back toward Kaya, the arrogant look on his  
face says he probably does.

KAYA (CONT'D)

He was in that picture you just  
kicked away, by the way. The one  
you ripped out of that book at the  
Gala while being about as subtle as  
a Bond villain while you did it.  
But you already knew that, didn't  
you? I mean, you were there... The  
real question is: How didn't you  
know that I know?

Oscar CLICKS his jaw, resetting it. He looks almost bored by  
all of this.

KAYA (CONT'D)

So we'll start at the bottom. Percy  
Owens, my great, great grandfather,  
born August 12th, 1844... That  
makes him 180 years old. Should be  
impossible, right? To be that age  
and to still have a heart beating  
in your chest. A modern day  
miracle. Religious in scope. Halle-  
fucking-lujah. Except, that's not  
exactly impressive, is it? Those  
years are merely a blip on the  
radar compared to you ain't it,  
"Massa"?

Any semblance of confidence on Oscar's face has now melted  
away, his features may as well be carved out of granite.  
Nothing moves. Kaya grabs hold of the 'live' charm on the end  
of her gold necklace and holds it up.

KAYA (CONT'D)

You only live once, right?

She turns the charm around - It now reads, 'evil', the 'e'  
backwards. She unhooks a small clasp on it and turns it  
upside down.

KAYA (CONT'D)

Bullshit.

Something dark and dry cascades down from the charm... DIRT. There isn't much, but there's enough to see a small mound of it accumulating on the floor of pod 6.

A gust of *wind* rocks the pod. CREAK. Some of the dirt blows out of the open door and falls below.

Oscar's eyes widen with panic, he lunges for what's left, throwing himself down onto his stomach, ignoring the *snapping* of the rope chain and the tightening of the steel collar around his neck.

He plugs one nostril and sniffs, inhaling all the remaining dirt on the floor like it's a small pile of cocaine.

KAYA (CONT'D)

(shaking head)

Look at you...

Kaya watches this pathetic wretch at her feet sniffing up the remaining particles of dirt. She looks at her charm and snaps the clasp shut.

KAYA (CONT'D)

The root of all evil... You're God damn right.

She turns the charm around so that it reads, '*live*' once again.

KAYA (CONT'D)

This charm here? It's why you were so drawn to me, Oscar. I mean, it certainly wasn't my *charming* personality that drew you in. Wasn't my looks. And it damn sure wasn't my skin, regardless of whatever sick fucking fetish you have.

Oscar slowly turns onto his back, his eyes closed as he savors the dry dirt dripping down into the back of his throat. The ends of his fingertips lightly paw at Kaya's legs as if he's in some form of drug-induced euphoria.

Kaya kicks his hand away with little effort.

KAYA (CONT'D)

Dirt from the fig plant. From *your* plantation. That's all it took to get you to the Gala...

(MORE)

KAYA (CONT'D)

You've always been drawn to it.  
Hell, you were bursting at the  
seams the second I got you near it.  
Probably would've snatched it right  
then and there if not for what was  
protecting it.

Instinctively, Oscar begins rubbing his wrist.

KAYA (CONT'D)

That Fig plant has always been a  
source of power for you. Along with  
the dirt and soil that fed it. You  
craved it. Craved being back to  
when you had total control over  
everything. You just had to possess  
the last remnant of your  
plantation, at all costs... Self-  
preservation be damned. You  
couldn't resist getting a final  
taste of a once glorious past  
that's been long demolished and  
paved over, your kingdom now  
nothing but cannon fodder,  
commercialized and turned into a  
strip mall. Everything you held  
dear now non-existent and rendered  
obsolete by a black family who rose  
to power because you chose not to  
choke the patriarch in its crib.

(beat; shrugs)

Oops.

Oscar closes his eyes and finally allows the floodgates to  
open, to remember what he has suppressed for far too long...

OSCAR

(whispers)

Percy...

FLASH CUT:

INT. BARN - NIGHT

The wary, shackled Slave from the old, laminated photograph,  
PERCY, 20, is tied face first to a wooden support post, his  
back exposed, his arms wrapped around the post and tied off  
at the wrist on the other side. He WHIMPERS in pain.

Percy's back looks like hamburger meat, raw and bloody. SLASH  
MARKS everywhere. He closes his eyes, trying to wish the  
nightmare away.

A chubby, young-looking White Man, JOHNNY BOY, brandishing a long whip, steps back from Percy, red faced and breathing heavily, admiring his work.

JOHNNY BOY

Ay, take a look, Oscar.

A SHADOW is leaning against the back wall of the barn eating a split-open Fig, watching it all unfold.

OSCAR/SHADOW

Like a God damn work of art, Johnny Boy. We should cut it off his filthy back and frame it. Probably fetch a good price at auction now that Lincoln set all the monkeys free...

Oscar steps into the light, dressed in mid 1800's attire but otherwise looking exactly the same. He makes his way closer to Percy, focusing in on the blood pouring down his back. He takes another bite of the Fig, finishing it off, CRUNCH, and kneels down beside him.

Percy's eyes begin to close, partially passing out from the savage beating he just took. Oscar SLAPS him across the face.

OSCAR

Stay with me.

Percy snaps back to consciousness. Alert. Oscar reaches into his pocket and pulls out another Fig.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

You know about Figs, don't you? I'm assuming you do because you keep stealing them from my field. But I don't think you're aware of the history behind them.

(taps Percy on forehead)

Let me educate you. Figs are known for their restorative powers. Restorative means healing. Ancient Olympians would receive Figs for their athletic prowess. In Greek Mythology, when Zeus was pursuing Ge and her son Sykeus, Ge metamorphosed into a Fig tree in order to save her son. You see, real power lies in perceived vulnerability. It lies in being underestimated. And the Bible says, 'He asks as man, Jesus answers as God.

(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Jesus answered and said unto him,  
Before that Phillip called thee,  
when thou wast under the Fig tree,  
I saw thee: not having beheld him  
as man, but as God discerning him  
from above'.

Oscar holds the Fig in front of Percy's face.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

So as your God, not ruling from  
above but right here in front of  
you, I have to inquire... What in  
the holy Hell gave you the idea  
that this belongs to you?

Percy swallows dryly.

PERCY

(weakly)

You'd quote the Bible to me, demon?

Johnny Boy steps forward, jaw clenched, whip at the ready.  
Oscar holds his hand out, stopping him.

OSCAR

Why not? They're just words, Percy.  
They belong to everyone.

Percy SPITS a wad of blood on the barn floor.

PERCY

(weakly)

But they shall all sit under their  
own vines and under their own Fig  
trees, and no one shall make them  
afraid...

Oscar raises his eyebrows at this, impressed.

OSCAR

Hear that, Johnny Boy? We got  
ourselves a smart nigger here.  
Impressive. But that's like calling  
a piece of shit a polished turd...

(beat; leans in)

You're still just a piece of shit,  
Percy. Get it? If I step on you  
while passing by you better stand  
up and apologize for soiling my  
boots. Now--

Oscar tosses the Fig up into the air and catches it.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

You steal these from me because you grow them, right? I get that. You believe you are entitled to them because you planted the seeds. But the seeds--

Oscar pinches the Fig and pushes it in, pulling it apart, revealing the tender fruit inside.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

The *seeds*... They belong to me.

Oscar pops one half of the Fig in his mouth, savoring it. He tosses the other half to Johnny Boy, who catches it and eats it up like a hungry pig. CRUNCH. Percy lets his eyes drop to the floor.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

You're not entitled to shit. You're not *owed* anything. But I am owed something, Percy. I'm owed your eternal gratitude because I am the reason for your being. I am the reason why you breathe your next breath. And the reason why, one day, that process will stop for you altogether. And since I own you, and everything that stems *from* you, I will always possess you. You and any little children I allow you to have. And their children after that. On and on. Until the end of time. Each and every one of them can call me daddy.

Oscar grabs Percy's face violently and turns it toward him.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Because in the end, it's all just fruit from the poison tree, ain't it?

He squeezes Percy's face tighter.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

*Ain't it?!*

PERCY

Yes, sir.

OSCAR

Sorry?

PERCY

Yes, master.

Oscar cocks his head to the side like a curious dog.

OSCAR

You know what? I think I prefer  
"massa", if it's all the same to  
you. Rolls off the tongue a little  
better, wouldn't you say?

PERCY

(nodding)

Massa.

Oscar lets go and pushes Percy's face away with disgust. He  
wipes his hand on his pants, like he's removing some sort of  
stain. He stands up and begins pacing in front of Percy.

OSCAR

This is my property, boy. As is  
everything on it. And a man always  
feels his strongest at home, don't  
he? As he should. It's his kingdom,  
after all... small as it might be.  
But for something like me...  
something far beyond a man... This  
property, the dirt and the soil and  
everything that grows from it,  
might as well just be an extension  
of my own body. Ain't that right,  
Johnny Boy?

Johnny Boy CRACKS the whip into the side of the barn,  
practising.

JOHNNY BOY

That's right, boss.

OSCAR

Just an extension of my limbs and  
my joints. With every new seed  
planted, my arm grows. My shoulder  
grows. My leg grows. And hell,  
listen to this one, Johnny Boy...  
My *knee grows* too...

A pause. Then, getting it, Johnny Boy bursts out LAUGHING.

JOHNNY BOY

Oh, I get it! My *negros*... Good  
one, Oscar!



Oscar flashes a sly grin and stops pacing directly in front of Percy. He stands tall, looming over him.

OSCAR

They grow until I'm a giant amongst men. The overseer of everything. So just because I allow you to sit on my broad shoulders from time to time and have a tiny peek at the world, don't mean you're God... It means you're beholden to the God that put you there.

JOHNNY BOY

And next time I whip ya, boy... which is pretty damn soon... I ain't gonna *beholden* back.

Johnny Boy glances at Oscar for approval. Oscar looks semi-impressed and gives him a small, silent clap. If Johnny's smile could extend off of his face, it would. He rears back excitedly and CRACKS the whip against the side of the barn.

Oscar kicks Percy's chain. CLANG.

OSCAR

So do as your told and eat the scraps I allow you to have. And thank me for the privilege. I may even say you're welcome from time to time.

Percy clenches his jaw, holding it all in. But he still says--

PERCY

Yes, massa.

Oscar licks his lips at the blood leaking out of Percy's back wounds. He opens his mouth, exposing two teeth that seem to have been sharpened to a point -- FANGS.

OSCAR

You're still one of the lucky ones, Percy. Be thankful I like to play with my food before I eat it.

(beat)

Now, Johnny Boy...

Johnny Boy pauses mid-swing.

JOHNNY BOY

Yeah, Oscar?

OSCAR

20 more lashes, to be sure he understands.

Percy MOANS. Oscar steps away and nods at Johnny Boy as he passes. Johnny Boy gets into position behind Percy, rears back and does what he does best. CRACK! Percy GRUNTS, trying to bear it. CRACK! Eventually, he SCREAMS.

As Oscar leaves the Barn, he glances into a darkened corner, lit only by a flickering torch--

A shirtless White Man, ISIAH, tall and thin, sucks on the neck of an unconscious SLAVE. Isiah rips his fangs out of the jugular vein and tilts his head back, savoring the wet blood on his face. He licks it dry, making eye contact with Oscar as he passes.

ISIAH

(euphoric)

God damn...

Oscar grins and leaves the Barn, his eyes blazing with the fumes of the Turning happening right behind him... CRACK!

BACK TO:

INT./EXT. FERRIS WHEEL, POD 6 - NIGHT

Oscar is lying on his back, holding his eyes tightly closed. Reminiscing.

KAYA

Time doesn't heal all wounds,  
Oscar. Some cut too deep into the  
soul.

Oscar slowly opens his eyes and nods to himself. A new resolve. He sits up, straining as he does.

OSCAR

You're good, Kaya. Really had me  
thrown for a loop. Doesn't happen  
often.

KAYA

Always be wary of a woman who  
approaches you, Oscar. No matter  
what the circumstance.

OSCAR

Yeah, whatever... This has Percy's  
dirty fingerprints all over it.

(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)

(beat)

Speaking of which, will we be expecting the old Coon at some point?

Kaya just stares at him. Oscar grins.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Didn't think so. He doesn't have it in him to face me head on. Never did. Makes sense why he just pawned this little hit off on you and your brother. He's scared.

Kaya just stares at him. Oscar lifts his chin up and swallows, trying to loosen the steel collar around his neck somehow.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Why did you stay on here with me anyway? You could've just left...

KAYA

We couldn't exactly take the chance of losing you on the home stretch, now could we?

OSCAR

But *you*? Alone up here with me? Not your brother with the gun?

Kaya reaches into her pocket and pulls out the quarter Oscar threw down.

KAYA

A hunting rifle isn't very effective at close quarters.

She tosses it at Oscar's chest, it hits and drops to the floor with a CLANG.

OSCAR

More effective than you though, that's for sure.

KAYA

You think so?

OSCAR

I know so. I may be chained up but I can still reach you. Right now. At this very moment...

(snaps fingers)

Like *that*.

KAYA  
Yeah, you probably could.

OSCAR  
And with everything on the table  
now, you're not afraid?

KAYA  
Can't say that I am.

OSCAR  
You should be. You've backed an  
animal into a corner... May leave  
me with no other choice.

KAYA  
Oh, Oscar, I'm a smart black  
woman... I never spend the night  
with a man without protection.

Kaya lifts up her shirt, revealing a small UV FLASHLIGHT clipped onto her belt. She points it at Oscar and clicks it on. BUZZ -- Oscar instantly recoils and holds out a hand defensively. The skin on his palm BOILS and BUBBLES. He SCREAMS in pain.

Kaya clicks the light off. Oscar grips his smoking hand tight.

OSCAR  
Fuck! What the *fuck*?! I was just  
*joking*!

KAYA  
Your jokes suck, Oscar.

Oscar stares at his trembling hand, the skin already blistering.

KAYA (CONT'D)  
Thought you were never gonna smoke  
again...

Oscar SEETHES at the jab.

OSCAR  
Tell Percy, when you see him, tell  
him he's a fucking coward for not  
doing this himself.

KAYA  
He's no coward. He just doesn't  
need to lower himself for the likes  
of you.

Oscar CHUCKLES at this defiantly.

OSCAR  
He ain't any better, sweetheart.

KAYA  
He's lightyears better.

OSCAR  
And you know his whole story, huh?

KAYA  
I do.

OSCAR  
Oh, please. You don't know shit,  
kid. You've been around for about a  
half a hiccup.

Oscar attempts to stand up but is constricted by the rope chain. Kaya reaches for the UV flashlight.

KAYA  
Easy, now... Don't do anything  
you'll regret.

OSCAR  
You never had that UV light before.  
I would've sensed it. You were at  
risk.

KAYA  
It was a calculated risk, yes.

OSCAR  
And who did the math? Who decided  
that you should be up here alone? I  
doubt it was *your* idea. And I know  
it wasn't your autistic brother's  
down there.

Kaya moves her hand close to the UV flashlight's switch.

KAYA  
Keep it up and the next one goes  
right where the sun don't shine.  
Pun intended.

Oscar holds his hands out defensively.

OSCAR

I'm just saying. Think about it. Percy allowed you to be locked up here all by yourself with only your brother below to protect you. And yeah, your brother hit his shot when it counted, sure... But what if he missed? It was a lucky angled shot from 200 feet below, Kaya. That's all it was. And I was *protecting* you, by the way. Not attacking you. But even if I wasn't, how safe were you really? Who would put someone they loved in this sort of predicament? This *danger*? I'm sorry but I got to wonder, does Percy *really* care about you? Or is he only interested in his own vengeance, even if it's at your expense?

KAYA

His vengeance *is* my vengeance, don't you get it? I have no life without him.

OSCAR

Doesn't mean you owe him it.

Kaya hesitates. Oscar capitalizes.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

The only reason your plan even got to this point is because I decided not to do anything to you. He didn't influence that decision at all.

KAYA

But he knew I would influence *you*.

OSCAR

Maybe so, Kaya. Maybe so... But that's a hell of a risk to take with a beautiful soul like you.

Kaya briefly looks away, gazing out of the glass of pod 6 and into the night. Oscar's face softens.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Regardless of what I am, my feelings for you were genuine. They were strong and immediate. Organic.

(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)

And it had nothing to do with some dirt you carried around in a locket...

(beat)

I just wanted you to know that.

Kaya SIGHS, not believing a word of it.

KAYA

There's no escaping this, Oscar. You're a racist fucking manipulative asshole... and that's your good side.

Oscar nods at this, *touché*, and gazes out the window.

OSCAR

You ever ask Percy about how he escaped the plantation? I mean, not just the surface stuff, like *really* delve into it.

KAYA

He told us everything. Including what you did to him.

OSCAR

Hm. I especially like the part where he told you that he survived on Figs while he spent his days in the swamp hiding from his oppressors. Creative stuff.

Kaya just stares at him. Oscar grins.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

When you've been here longer than a fart in the wind, maybe ask him again to tell you the *real* story.

KAYA

Whatever it is, it won't change a thing.

OSCAR

You sure? Because when it comes down to it, Kaya, every creature, human or not, is only interested in one thing... Survival. They will do whatever it takes to ensure that next moment of life, and will live with the consequences, whatever they are.

(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)

(beat)

Are you prepared to do the same?

Kaya nods, but she's unsure. Oscar sees it.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I don't think you are... But there's a way out of this. For the both of us. Now give that button a press for me, will you? I want your brother to hear this, too.

Kaya doesn't move right away, considers her options.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

What? Do I need to say please?

Kaya flashes him a *fuck you* look. Then, more out of morbid curiosity than anything else, she reaches out and presses the button next to the speaker.

KAYA

All you.

OSCAR

Thank you.

(beat; clears throat)

Now that we're all here... I think I can help you and your family.

KAYA

Help us with what?

OSCAR

Catch the rest of us.

KAYA

We don't need your help.

OSCAR

Oh, I think you do. There's plenty more of us than what's in my cell phone. The ones whose information I can't save are the ones you want.

KAYA

We know.

OSCAR

So why sever a limb when you can cut off the head?

Kaya releases the button and points at the speaker like she knows what's coming.



ANTHONY (V.O.)

Because cutting off the head is too quick. We want you to *feel* it.

KAYA

We're not interested in making any deals, Oscar.

OSCAR

You may live to regret that.

KAYA

But I'll *live*... unlike you.  
(motions behind)  
Speaking of which, your executioner is about to poke his head up to say hello. Wave back.

Oscar slowly looks out at the horizon through the panoramic glass -- An ORANGE TINT is now in the sky. The sun is coming. Slowly but surely.

ANTHONY (V.O.)

You're out of time, asshole. And guess what else? An old friend of yours is here to see you off...

Oscar looks into Kaya's eyes, getting a sense of who it is. Kaya nods in the affirmative, like she's read his mind. *Because she has.*

KAYA (V.O.)

What, you thought it was gonna be just me and you riding off into the sunset together?

Oscar hears her loud and clear even though her mouth didn't move an inch. He GRUNTS and crawls to the edge of the pod and looks down, resembling a curious dog in a collar.

Anthony walks out from behind the console holding the hunting rifle. He stops in his usual position below, staring up--

But Oscar is looking at something else... *Movement*. Just a familiar SHADOW seemingly *flickering* and *darting* in and out of the light. Then he sees him.

An Elderly African American Man now stands at the console. This is PERCY OWENS... And he presses a button. The Ferris wheel comes to life. Machinery WHIRRS... Gears GRIND... It starts to move.

Oscar looks on in bewilderment, his fate waiting patiently below him.

He scrambles back into the pod and presses his back against the wall. He pins himself there, desperate for a solution.

OSCAR

You said he wasn't coming.

KAYA

I never said that. You told yourself that.

Oscar yanks at the steel collar and rope chain. He SMASHES the padlock with his foot. Nothing works.

KAYA (CONT'D)

Just stop.

Oscar glares at Kaya.

OSCAR

You need to let me go, Kaya. *Now*.

KAYA

What part of a collar around your neck makes you believe that's even a remote possibility?

OSCAR

Please. You don't know what you're doing here. The chain reaction you're gonna cause...

KAYA

Not the best choice of words there, big guy. And I think you've hurt enough people for one lifetime.

Oscar THRASHES around in his restraints.

OSCAR

You think Percy gives a fuck about human life?! Huh?! He didn't survive on Figs, Kaya! He survived on human blood! The blood of other runaway slaves!

KAYA

Bullshit.

OSCAR

It's true! He's no hero! He's a fucking pariah!

KAYA

I know what he is! I know *who* he  
is! I know because I know who I am!  
And he did what he had to do!

The Ferris wheel continues to descend to the bottom. Oscar is getting more and more desperate by the second.

OSCAR

Let me go and I'll turn myself in.

KAYA

To what? A bat?

OSCAR

Funny. How about this, free me or  
I'll rip that black fucking face  
off.

Kaya stares right back, unblinking. *There he is...*

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Last chance.

Kaya unhooks the UV flashlight and aims it at Oscar, poised to click the button if need be.

Oscar cowers low in the pod. He claws desperately at the collar, ripping at it with all his might. Nothing budes. He locks onto Kaya and opens his mouth wide, showing his *FANGS*, like a cornered, injured animal trying to defend itself.

Kaya clicks on the UV flashlight, not taking any chances.  
BUZZ.

Oscar recoils away and curls into a ball in the corner, the UV light BURNING any and all exposed skin. He SCREAMS in pain and with an unbridled rage... a rage that comes from not being able to control a God damn thing anymore.

Oscar tries to stand and lunge at Kaya but the pain is too immense. He's held down by it and the rope chain working in tandem. All he can do is SHRIEK.

The Ferris wheel slows to a stop at pod 6's lowest point. Kaya clicks off the UV Flashlight and quickly leaves the pod.

Oscar goes still, WHIMPERING, several sections of his skin SMOKING and BUBBLING. The open door reveals nobody in the boarding area.

Oscar waits for several seconds for something to happen...  
But nothing does.

He sits up a little, looking out and scanning left to right --  
The panoramic glass suddenly SHATTERS on one side. SMASH!

Anthony, holding the butt of the hunting rifle in front of  
him, flips the rifle around and walks through the open door.  
He aims down the barrel at Oscar, who starts to make a move.

ANTHONY

Don't! Or I'll put one right  
between those bloodshot eyes.

Oscar stops and SPITS a wad of blood at Anthony. It lands by  
his shoes.

OSCAR

Unchain me and we'll see what's  
what you fucking Spook.

ANTHONY

No doubt. But tell me, what's the  
recovery period for a gaping  
headshot wound at close range? I've  
always wondered about that. They  
say the inside of your head looks  
like a split Fig...

(aims down sight)

And I really want to know if that's  
true...

PERCY (O.S.)

Lower the rifle, Anthony.

Anthony pauses, then does just that. He moves to the side.  
Percy steps into view. Old. His skin ravaged by time.

PERCY (CONT'D)

In fact, just put it down  
altogether. We don't need it  
anymore.

Anthony does as he's told and leans the rifle in the corner.  
Oscar can't take his eyes off of Percy. He tries to look  
strong, confident, not afraid. Everything he isn't.

OSCAR

You coming along for the ride,  
Percy?

PERCY

Wouldn't miss it for the world,  
Oscar.

Percy steps into pod 6 and kneels down to face Oscar. They stare at each other for a moment. Oscar, clearly vulnerable, the skin on his face half burned. Percy, clearly in charge.

Kaya reappears in the open door and leans on the side of the pod, her arms crossed, watching.

Percy flicks Oscar's collar with his fingers and follows the rope chain to the padlock and back to the steel collar again. His eyes shift up, meeting Oscar's gaze.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Who's the nigger now?

Oscar gets a kick out of this. He actually LAUGHS.

OSCAR

Killing me means nothing, old friend. I'm a spoke in the wheel. It'll just keep turning without me.

PERCY

That's why we mean to take out the wheel. Ain't that right, babies?

KAYA

That's right.

PERCY

And we're already neck deep into it, ain't we?

ANTHONY

Yes, sir.

OSCAR

You have no idea the door you're about to step through. It's a revolving one. It goes nowhere.

PERCY

Let us worry about that.

Kaya locks eyes with Oscar.

KAYA

That cigarette butt you stomped out? Probably shoulda held on to that. As a keepsake, if nothing else.

Anthony produces a familiar pitch black business card - *Midnight Realty*. But this time, Johnny Boy's round, smiling face is on the front of it. He tosses it at Oscar's feet.

ANTHONY

Yeah, your chubby friend squealed like a pig getting roasted on the spit.

PERCY

Sure did. Johnny Boy was about as satisfying as it gets. But I have a feeling that *this* ride will exceed even him. And just so we're clear... I never blamed Ol' Johnny for what he did to me. He was a loyal dog. He only did what you told him to. But that didn't buy him a reprieve. As much as he begged for one. And cried. And screamed, like a baby for his momma.

Oscar clenches his jaw.

OSCAR

I should've tore your head off, Percy... when I had the chance. I really should've.

PERCY

Oh, come on now. Your bark has always been worse than your bite. Ain't that right, Kaya?

KAYA

That's damn right.

Percy SLAPS Oscar across the face.

PERCY

Bitch.

Oscar's blood boils to an explosion. He bellows out a SHRIEK of rage and LUNGES for Percy, who is ready for it.

Percy grabs Oscar's head with surprising lightning quick speed and SMASHES him nose first into the floor, the blood bursts out like an exploded grenade. Percy holds him there.

Kaya glances over at Anthony, who has a familiar blank look on his face.

KAYA

Anthony...

No response. A *snapping* sound -- *Percy's Fingers*. Anthony snaps out of his daydream state.

PERCY  
Stay with me.

Anthony jumps into action like an unleashed dog, landing on top of Oscar. Oscar thrashes around like a rabid animal, his nose gushing blood, trying to slash and claw at his captors, *snapping* his sharp fangs at their limbs.

ANTHONY  
I've been waiting my whole life for this.

KAYA  
He really has.

Anthony wrangles Oscar up in a chicken wing wrestling maneuver, hooking both arms behind his back in the process. He looks up at Kaya.

ANTHONY  
Who said wrestling was fake?

Kaya shrugs.

KAYA  
Not me.

Anthony wrenches back and SNAPS one of Oscar's arms. CRACK! Oscar CRIES OUT in anguish. Percy stands up and watches the pain on Oscar's face. Absorbs it. Enjoys it.

PERCY  
Anthony...

Anthony looks up at Percy while maintaining his dominant position. Oscar WHIMPERS.

ANTHONY  
Yes, sir?

PERCY  
Break his other one... to be sure he understands.

Anthony doesn't hesitate. He wrenches back again. CRACK! Oscar SCREAMS. Anthony lets go and stands up. Oscar's arms hang loosely at his sides; he squirms around like a fish out of water.

PERCY (CONT'D)  
Now, you two get on outta here...  
It's about that time.

Anthony rushes to Percy and hugs him. Percy wraps his arms around Anthony.

PERCY (CONT'D)  
You take care of your sister now,  
yeah?

Anthony nods, wiping some tears away.

ANTHONY  
I love you.

PERCY  
I love you too.

Anthony breaks the embrace and grabs the hunting rifle out of the corner before leaving, passing Kaya as he goes, unable to look back. Percy locks eyes with Kaya.

PERCY (CONT'D)  
Really though, you gotta look out  
for him.

KAYA  
I know.

PERCY  
Like we talked about, yeah?

Kaya nods.

PERCY (CONT'D)  
Come here, kid.

Percy and Kaya embrace in a long hug. They close their eyes, savoring the moment.

PERCY (CONT'D)  
I don't gotta say it, do I?

KAYA  
Nah, ruins it.

PERCY  
Agreed.

Percy kisses Kaya's forehead and lets her go.

PERCY (CONT'D)  
Now look, this may be the end of my  
journey, but it's just the  
beginning of yours. There's a lot  
more of these freaks to collar.

(MORE)



PERCY (CONT'D)

And God knows there's a lot worse  
out there than this one.

Percy KICKS Oscar on the floor. *Get a kick outta that, asshole.* Oscar YELPS.

PERCY (CONT'D)

So don't you ever stop, you hear  
me? Not for any thing or any one.  
Listen to your mother and father...  
But above all, listen to your  
*instincts*... because they're better  
than most.

A tear rolls down Kaya's cheek.

KAYA

I will.

Percy wipes the tear away.

PERCY

My special girl... You be strong  
now.

KAYA

I'll miss you.

PERCY

Hey, I was never supposed to be  
here anyway. You were never  
supposed to know me.

KAYA

And I'll forever treasure what I  
never had.

Percy smiles and nods reassuringly.

PERCY

Go. Let me finish my story.

Oscar continues to MOAN on the floor like some broken  
cowardly monster. Kaya quickly leaves pod 6, never looking  
back.

Anthony stands just outside at the console, tears streaking  
down his cheeks. He presses a button and fires up the Ferris  
wheel. Machinery WHIRRING... Gears GRINDING... It begins its  
ascent.

Percy grabs Oscar by the back of the collar and yanks him up  
into a seated position.

Oscar BELLOWS OUT in pain. His arms dangle at weird angles. His nose is still bleeding profusely, flowing like a river down into his mouth.

OSCAR

You sure you wanna do this?

Percy just stares at him.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

It's gonna hurt bad... Like *real* bad. For the both of us.

PERCY

How's your pain tolerance, Oscar? Mine's been built up over the years...

OSCAR

Long as you're sure.

PERCY

Sure?

(scoffs)

The only thing sure in this life is that we come into the world screaming and leave it the same way. Everything else is just a show. A rigged carnival game. Just another redundant Ferris wheel ride, ain't that right?

Oscar COUGHS up some more blood. He looks up into Percy's face, studying it.

OSCAR

How did you get so old? I thought I took care of that problem for ya.

PERCY

I stopped giving in to the urges decades ago. Looks like you haven't.

OSCAR

I thought black don't crack...

PERCY

White just might.

Oscar smiles at this.

PERCY (CONT'D)

You feel that?

Percy glances over his shoulder at the horizon as the wheel nears its peak height; He is framed by the black and orange sky beyond the broken glass of pod 6. Light and dark combining. A majestic picture. A painting, really...

And the sun is so close to rearing its ugly head.

PERCY (CONT'D)

This time... this exact *moment*, right here and now... it's so precious. Look at that sky. The light and dark mixing together to form one... It doesn't happen for long. Just for a few minutes every evening. But seeing it now, all I can think of is the breathtaking beauty of it all. It's been an eternity since I've experienced it. Since I've even dared to look...

The Ferris wheel slows and comes to a stop, right at its peak height, the closest point to the sun... Far away from all the dark holes of the earth where evil things hide.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Thank you, babies.

Percy takes off his shirt, revealing the litany of SCARS on his back from the beatings he took over a century ago.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Scars are a beautiful thing, ain't they? A blessing with no disguise. They toughen your hide. Help you withstand the pain. And they never let you forget...

OSCAR

I certainly never forgot about you, Percy.

Percy slowly turns around.

PERCY

Oh, I never forgot about you either...

FLASH CUT:

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Oscar, adorned in blood-soaked mid 1800's attire, holds an unconscious 20 year old Percy in his arms.

He is hunched down over him, his fangs stuck deep in his neck. Sucking. Drinking. Turning him.

Oscar yanks his head back, mouth agape, fangs fully exposed, his face covered in blood. He swallows and savors every drop. Pure ecstasy. And Percy begins to twitch...

BACK TO:

INT. FERRIS WHEEL, POD 6 - NIGHT/MORNING

OSCAR  
How did you find me?

PERCY  
Long story short?

OSCAR  
We don't have all night...

FLASH CUT:

EXT. FARMHOUSE, FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

A beautiful, rustic country farmhouse sits alone on acres of property. Private. Not a soul for miles. Literally. The many porch lights are on.

Below the lights, Percy sits on the front porch in a rocking chair, waiting. Rocking. He sips a glass of Fig juice as he does. There's a stuffed PACKAGE on his lap, wrapped in brown paper.

Bugs BUZZ in the deepest depths of the darkness. The sound of an approaching CAR ENGINE cuts through the silence of the night like a blade. Percy stops rocking as the engine closes in.

A black car with tinted windows pulls up outside the house on the dirt road, kicking up dust as it brakes. Percy watches patiently. Takes another sip of the Fig juice.

A tall, thin White Man gets out of the car wearing a Clergy shirt -- The one feeding in the barn all those years ago -- Isiah. He walks around the car and up the pathway to the house, pocketing his cell phone as he does. Percy eyes the MANILA ENVELOPE in his other hand, sealed shut.

Isiah saunters up to the front porch and stops. The two creatures of the night stare at each other for a moment.

ISIAH  
Nice night.

PERCY  
Ain't it always?

Isiah steps up onto the porch and hands Percy the manila envelope before quickly moving back.

PERCY (CONT'D)  
Don't gotta open it, do I?

Isiah just stares at him. Percy grabs the stuffed package off his lap and drops it at his feet. Isiah steps back up onto the porch and takes it then retreats once again. He feels the weight of the envelope in his hands.

ISIAH  
I don't have to open this, do I?

Percy takes a slow sip of his Fig juice.

Isiah exposes a LONG, JAGGED NAIL on his pinky finger, slicing through the brown paper, creating a small slit. He plunges his pinky inside, twists, then pulls it out covered in dirt. He sticks his pinky with the dirt on it in his mouth and SMACKS HIS LIPS, tasting it... The look on his face says he's not disappointed.

ISIAH (CONT'D)  
Mmm. My old stomping grounds...

PERCY  
Get off my property, boy.

Isiah keeps his eyes locked on Percy's, but only for a moment. With a sly grin, he breaks eye contact first... then he turns and leaves.

PERCY (CONT'D)  
See you around.

ISIAH  
(walking away)  
I doubt it.

Isiah casually checks his cell phone as he heads back to his car -- A picture of Ben is on it. He scrolls through Ben's various social media posts, researching his next victim...

BACK TO:

INT. FERRIS WHEEL, POD 6 - NIGHT/MORNING

Oscar nods, taking it all in.

OSCAR

Well, well... No honor amongst  
thieves, huh?

Percy just glares back.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I mean, I guess I shouldn't be  
surprised. Isiah was always kinda,  
you know... flaky. But to sell me  
out for a tiny taste of the land  
that I once owned... Heh. You can  
say the irony isn't lost on me.

PERCY

You of all people should know the  
pull of that place. You're no  
better. Just one addict criticizing  
another.

OSCAR

It's *my* land.

PERCY

Not anymore it ain't.

OSCAR

No, you're right about that. But  
owning property is a lot like  
sucking humans dry... you never  
forget your first. Ain't that  
right, Percy?

Percy remembers--

FLASH CUT:

EXT. SWAMP - NIGHT

Percy, 20, his back badly scarred and bleeding, runs at a  
full sprint through the swamplands. He looks over his  
shoulder as he goes, his eyes wild and terrified.

EXT. SWAMP - NIGHT (LATER)

Percy hides behind a thick tree trunk, breathless. DOGS BARK  
in the distance as they hunt for runaways -- MOVEMENT off to  
the side.

Percy's head snaps toward the sound like prey listening for a predator.

An escaped Female Slave, SADIE, 18, African American, hides behind a tree stump in the mud. She locks eyes with Percy, terrified as she grips a torn up FIG PLANT. Tears drop from her frightened eyes.

Percy looks as if he's being pulled toward her. A rapid HEARTBEAT reverberates in his ears. *Thump-thump. Thump-thump.* Sadie senses something is wrong... She darts out from her hiding place and begins to run away.

Percy catapults after her, quickly catching up and knocking her down to the mud. He climbs on top, staring down at her like a dying man in a desert seeing a puddle of water.

Percy's FANGS come out for the first time. This *hurts...* Sadie's eyes widen. She SCREAMS. Percy sinks his fangs deep into her neck, ripping and tearing at her jugular vein until blood explodes outwards like a geyser. He drinks.

When Percy finally comes up for air, he is covered in blood. The sound of DOGS BARKING in the distance is closer now.

Terrified, Percy quickly stands up. He spots the Fig plant lying in the mud beside what's left of Sadie. Thinking it over, he snatches it up and makes a mad dash out of the area.

BACK TO:

INT. FERRIS WHEEL, POD 6 - NIGHT

Percy's eyes lower to the floor of pod 6 as the memory floods his senses. Oscar is grinning.

OSCAR

Regardless of what you tell your family, you know deep down that you didn't escape on your own. I simply let you off the leash after I had my way with you. Sent you out into the world to do my bidding. And you did just that, didn't you? Like a, how did you put it... loyal dog?

Percy looks up, his eyes blazing.

PERCY

I don't do what you say anymore, Oscar. Get that straight right now.

OSCAR

Doesn't matter, because I know what you *did*. Saw the aftermath with my own two eyes. When the dogs found whatever-her-name's body, I had me a good look before I fed her to the gators. I was proud of you, Percy, not gonna lie. Even as I sit here, I *still* am. And I gotta say, pretty clever cover story about those Figs being what sustained you in the swamp. You were already thinking on your feet and covering your tracks, even then. You were so new... just a baby, really. It's impressive.

(beat; grinning)

Amazing what stories last the test of time, am I right?

PERCY

And I have a lot of stories to thank you for, don't I?

OSCAR

This is one of those times where I say you're welcome.

Oscar unleashes an evil, bloody grin. Percy takes a DEEP BREATH and closes his eyes for a moment, savoring something. *He's going to enjoy this.*

PERCY

It's getting stronger.

Oscar nods, clenching his jaw.

OSCAR

There's um, one more thing I gotta ask you before... you know, we go to Hell together.

Percy waits.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

What did you tell your family? I mean, about who you are? How do you even *have* a family, is the better question. How do you live with this? I've been alone forever and a day it seems, and... I just don't know how you did it. You got some loyal kids down there, you know? It's got me curious.

(MORE)



OSCAR (CONT'D)

(beat)

How'd you pull it off?

Percy considers everything asked, only for a moment, but it's enough to take us there...

FLASH CUT:

EXT. FARMHOUSE, FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Percy rocks slowly in his rocking chair under the many porch lights, a far away look in his eyes. There's a STAINLESS STEEL BUCKET beside the chair. Bugs BUZZ in the darkness.

Kaya and Anthony sit on the porch stoop in front of him, listening intently.

PERCY

We knew what they were pretty quickly after getting there... Wasn't a thing we could do about it though. Just had to play along. There's no fighting back against those things. Only surviving. Considered myself lucky to only get the whip for as long as I did, messed up as that is. Saw plenty of brothers not get as lucky. They'd get dragged away from the fields for some minor infraction and I never saw them alive again. But I saw the bodies, that's for sure... All them bodies getting pulled outta that barn one-by-one. All shriveled up and drained of life...  
(deep breath)  
Not a fate I'd wish on my worst enemy.

Percy takes a moment to collect himself.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Then it happened to me, like I always knew it would. Lincoln setting us free was the worst day of my life cuz I knew what was coming down the pipeline. I knew, no matter what, I would never escape the clutches of at least one of 'em. The one that owned me. The one that considered me his property.

(MORE)

PERCY (CONT'D)

The one that looked at me with as much empathy as I look at a blade of grass on this here lawn.

(beat)

Oscar Francis. Goes by Alexander now... I knew he'd never let me walk as I was. Knew it deep down in my soul. Man had a hard-on for me from the beginning. And sure enough, my instincts were right cuz he ended up changing me forever. Turning me from a man... into this.

Percy opens his mouth, revealing *two small fangs* to Kaya and Anthony; small enough that it seems they have been recently grown. Kaya and Anthony both bow their heads, like they already knew this, but are unable to look.

PERCY (CONT'D)

I've been one of those monsters much longer than I haven't. It's kinda like a younger sibling outliving an older one and surpassing them in years. Just feels wrong, you know?

(beat; shifts in chair)

Anyway... we've been hidden amongst people for centuries now. Monsters in disguises. Like the God damn Nazi's after the war. And without a war as a distraction, we can't be as bold. So what did we do? Well we *suppressed*, that's what... Suppressed for so long our powers began to fade. Until our influence over everything became almost nil. Truth is, we feed off of fear more than anything else. The blood is secondary to it. I dare say almost a byproduct of it. I've always believed that fear changes human blood. Makes it warm. Ready for consumption. But as soon as humans stopped fearing us, we lost our control over them. And what's a God with nothing to control?

KAYA

Just a man.

PERCY

That's right. Yet we continue to live, don't we? Eternal beings in a dying world.

(MORE)

PERCY (CONT'D)

Moving around place to place like a parasite to avoid being recognized. To avoid being studied and made into a commonality that can be controlled and manipulated. Cuz you can bet your life that that's what would happen. So we separate, each of us far from the next, like the continents once did. Hoping against all hope that our true faces never see the light of day.

(beat; shakes head)

But what goes around comes around, don't it? Every damn time.

(beat)

No one stays on top forever.

Percy picks up the stainless steel bucket beside him and places it in his lap. He pulls out a pair of PLIERS from within.

PERCY (CONT'D)

And in the end, you gotta do what you gotta do.

He opens his mouth, revealing his two small fangs. He brings the pliers up to one and clamps down on it, hard. Kaya and Anthony look away, again.

Percy yanks and pulls, *crunch*, wrenching the small fang out of his mouth with a tug. Blood pours out of the wound. He examines the small fang in the plier's grasp, sharp and pointed. He drops it in the stainless steel bucket, *clink*, and spits out all the blood.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Sorry, babies. This part takes awhile. It's like pulling teeth...

Then he does it again with the other one. *Crunch. Clink.* After both fangs are out, he places the stainless steel bucket back down next to the chair, bleeding profusely from the mouth.

PERCY (CONT'D)

And what's done is done. But a venomous snake still produces venom when you remove the fangs, don't it? It just can't distribute it anymore. So, yes, it can continue to live, mind you, with a little help. And it can continue to kill. But it can no longer *infect*...

(beat; nods)

(MORE)

PERCY (CONT'D)  
 And *that*, my babies, is what you  
 call a win/win...

BACK TO:

INT./EXT. FERRIS WHEEL, POD 6 - NIGHT/MORNING

Oscar looks up at Percy standing over him, silhouetted by the ever rising sun on the horizon through the broken glass of pod 6. Percy shakes his head. *He won't tell him this part...*

PERCY  
 Some things are better left unsaid.

The sun rises, poking its head out, about to fully take over the sky... but just the tip is enough to fuck these things.

Percy grimaces. His back begins to SMOKE and SMOLDER -- The scars on his back turning to concrete before CRACKING and CRUMBLING away line-by-line.

Gritting his teeth through the pain, much like he trained himself to do over a century earlier, Percy yanks Oscar up from the bottom of the pod by the rope chain. Into the light.

Oscar's eyes open wide instantly. The pain... the shock... it's immense. Something he has never felt before. His mouth falls open, like a drowning man desperate for a last breath that never comes. He continues to SMOKE and CHAR as his skin CRACKS and falls away like brittle shards of glass.

PERCY (CONT'D)  
 We're all made of the same stuff in  
 the end.

And the sun rises.

Oscar BELLOWS OUT in agony, trying to squirm free. But he can't escape the collar or Percy's grasp - The grasp of someone with over a century's worth of torment behind it.

Percy's skin continues to CRACK and fall away, but he doesn't scream. Instead, he smiles.

PERCY (CONT'D)  
 Die with me, brother.

And the sun rises.

Percy and Oscar both turn to stone and CRACK one last time, collapsing and crumbling into TWO PILES OF DUST and ASH. Then, everything is silent and beautiful... The sun continues to rise.

After a few moments of nothing, the Ferris wheel fires up and begins to move... Machinery WHIRRING... Gears GRINDING... It rotates around until pod 6 descends out of view... and keeps going after that...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS, FERRIS WHEEL LINE - MORNING

Pod 6 is now at the very bottom, the boarding area, its door open. Glass broken. The pod next to it, the one slightly above, has some broken glass as well; remnants of the gun shot.

Anthony walks into view holding a familiar broom and dust pan in one hand and the fluffy pink snake, now coated in BLOOD, in the other. Kaya steps up beside him.

KAYA

You found the snake...

Anthony nods and hands it to her. Kaya looks it over and lightly touches the dried blood. Her jaw clenches.

KAYA (CONT'D)

Isiah...

(beat)

It's his turn next.

ANTHONY

Yep.

Kaya lets the pink snake hang lazily at her side as they look over the damage of pod 6. Taking it all in. Thoughtfully.

KAYA

What are you gonna tell everybody?

Anthony shrugs.

ANTHONY

That I found it like this. And that they probably should get some nighttime security.

Kaya nods.

KAYA

Yeah, about time we move on from here.

Anthony steps up to the door of pod 6 and looks down into it - There are two piles of dust and ash on the floor next to a steel collar attached to a rope chain. The broom and dust pan hovers over both piles.

ANTHONY  
(quietly)  
Which one is his?

Kaya is silent for a moment.

KAYA  
Does it matter?

Anthony nods slowly.

ANTHONY  
It matters.

Kaya and Anthony stare down at the two piles for a moment.

KAYA  
I mean... at this point, what's the difference?

Anthony considers this.

ANTHONY  
I don't know, I just--  
(beat)  
I don't really wanna mix them.

Kaya shrugs.

KAYA  
Why not?

Anthony turns to look at Kaya, blank faced as ever.

Kaya waits for an answer...

There is none.

CUT TO **BLACK.**