

TURNKEY

Written by

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EXT. REMODELED HOUSE - NIGHT

The sound of wind is the only thing heard in the neighborhood before the ruckus of a brawl becomes apparent.

INT. REMODELED HOUSE - NIGHT

Drenched in frosted plastic and white walls, the vacant home holds only a pair of lights on. Which leaves brooding shadows across the dust-covered floor.

Heavy blows are heard being landed as well as grunts pressed out of bruised ribcages.

In the middle of the floor is a hole in the concrete that looks purposefully cut out so that something could fit right in. Following the scraping of feet, a massive thud silences the brawl. Leaving again the wind outside to sing by itself.

Bits of cracked concrete are dragged underneath a pair of legs prior to being dumped into the hole. The electrical hum of a concrete mixer flicks on. Hearing the moist cement collapse on itself as it is rolled around.

A hand reaches out of the hole before wet cement starts to cover it, forcing it back down.

SUPERIMPOSED TITLE: "TURNKEY"

As the thick drops of concrete fill the hole INTRO CREDITS ROLL.

The lights around the barren home flick off one by one. Gradually leading to pitch-black darkness just as the slush of pavement flattens out with the top.

CUT TO BLACK.

Feminine groans strain behind closed lips. They are accompanied by the grinding of teeth until-

INT. HOUSE (BEDROOM) - MORNING

THUD!

A heavy cardboard box is plopped down onto another. Poking through the open flaps up top are various items, ranging from knick-knacks to a few photographs that are not clearly seen.

Dragging her painted fingernails across the side of the box is NIA EDMONDS (30's).

Donning thick, long hair that meets her skinny shoulders, Nia doesn't wear an ounce of jewelry or make-up. But a dull green shirt that has the sleeves rolled up.

She's sweating, even though the morning sun barely peeks in right over her shoulder.

Nia unravels a new box, folds the flaps, and taps the bottom before setting it on her dresser. Reaching out and grabbing more personal belongings, Nia stockpiling everything into the new box.

Most items seem to belong to her, like a couple of statues and other minor assortments. But she does seem to pack away a few objects that don't appear to be hers. Whether it be the snapback hats or sticks of deodorant, she packs them both away.

Nia finds a routine and tosses more items inside the box. Not really caring if it's safe, more so just making sure it fits.

Downstairs a door opens and slams shut. Heavy footsteps come up the stairs and down the hallway.

Nia casually stops putting things away, leans on a box, and watches the door.

The loud footsteps precede the whack of the bedroom door opening into a handful of boxes.

PARKER MILLER (30's) has a mean beard that shows bits of gray for his young age. His hair up top is vaguely receding yet nothing too noticeable at this point in time. His maroon shirt is covered in dirt, and bits of dried cement.

Parker immediately falls forward into bed.

Nia watches him as he exhales into his pillow.

NIA

You don't need to slam the door  
that hard.

PARKER

Hmmm.

NIA

Gonna wear off the hinges.

PARKER

No, I ain't.

NIA

Are too.

Nia resumes packing up the room, not being the quietest she could be. Choosing to take the most obnoxious path possible, or at least it feels so to Parker.

Parker lifts his head and points.

PARKER

Can't you do another room or something?

NIA

I want to start here. So here I am.

PARKER

Save this for last.

NIA

I don't want to, if I wanted to do it last, I would have done it las-

PARKER

Nia, please... Not now.

NIA

You know, if we hired a couple of muscly movers they could make my life a breeze.

PARKER

No lover-boy movers.

NIA

Why?

PARKER

A. Because moving companies are a scam, everyone knows it. They hold your belongs hostage and charge whatever coin they want. And B. Because your track record isn't the cleanest.

NIA

Therapist said to forget it happened.

Parker buries his head again as Nia proceeds to keep packing up the boxes.

PARKER

You call a realtor yet?

NIA  
What, with these free hands that  
are packing up an entire house? All  
by themselves?

PARKER  
I'll help when I wake up.

NIA  
I'll be tired by then.

PARKER  
Here.

Parker reaches into his pocket and snatches out a business  
card, reaching out for Nia to grab it.

NIA  
What's that?

PARKER  
Look at it.

NIA  
I see it's your business card. What  
will that do me?

PARKER  
Read it.

Parker flicks his hand and slings the card, letting it smack  
a wall. He then pulls his arms in and clicks a nearby box fan  
on.

Nia picks up the card, on her own time, and reads the back of  
it. There are three names listed in blue pen, each having a  
telephone number beside it.

NIA  
Are these realtors?

PARKER  
The best of the best.

NIA  
Says who?

Parker doesn't answer as his breath becomes heavier and  
heavier.

Nia flips it over to see the logo "Hobson's Choice  
Construction".

NIA (CONT'D)  
Ya'll need a new logo.

Nia strolls out of the room, card in hand with an arm tucked full of boxes and duct tape.

INT. HOUSE (SPARE BEDROOM) - MORNING

Upon entering the blandly decorated room, Nia places the flat cardboard down.

Folds open a box and tapes the bottom. But once about midway, the clear tape stops, leaving the leftover traces of the roller. Nia sighs and drops the box.

INT. NIA'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

While sitting behind the wheel of the vehicle, Nia clicks her tongue against the wide of her teeth. In doing so, she finds a rhythm and grooves to it. All while her eyes watch ahead, passing houses beside her.

Letting her fingers tap against the wheel to add to the makeshift melody, she spots a blue sign poking out in the front of someone's yard.

It reads "Desmond Walker - The only real realtor you'll ever really need". A number is typed out below that goes by way too quickly when Nia passes it.

She comes to an intersection at the same time as another car. Not knowing exactly who was there first, Nia takes the leap in assuming she was. Pressing on the gas and crossing, the blue minivan she passes disagrees. Laying on the horn the entire time, Nia responds back with a polite wave.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

The overwhelmingly white surrounding is countered with black shelves. A raspy voice sings through aged speakers screwed into the ceiling.

With a shopping cart in front of her, Nia wanders down the aisle and examines the choices. She comes across some markers that she tosses in, followed by a pair of pink packages of stuffing and four rolls of black tape.

Heading to the end of the aisle, her tongue once again clicks, only this time to the music from above. Even though it actually isn't her cup of tea.

While rounding into the next aisle a cart peeks out, almost knocking into hers. Nia backs up and lets the person come forward, gesturing with her hand to come on out.

Taking the initiative, the person pushes forward and reveals themselves. YASMINE HOWELL (Mid-40's) A woman with a baggy yellow sweatshirt that has some dancing logo on it.

YASMINE  
Well, look who it is.

NIA  
Take a look.

YASMINE  
Oh, come here.

Yasmine extends her arms out and gives her a hug.

Nia accepts, hiding a displeased expression as soon as her face can't be seen.

YASMINE (CONT'D)  
How are you doing? Doing well? You look well.

NIA  
Well... I'm well.

YASMINE  
You look it.

NIA  
I heard. What brings you to this side of the bridge?

YASMINE  
Even though money stuffs our pockets now, shopping cheap is how you end up keeping it.

NIA  
Always oozing with knowledge. How is the new place?

YASMINE  
Oh, it's... Wonderful. Now before you say anything about the hesitation, I'll tell you why. There's this darn spot that perfectly shines into my eyes when I clean the kitchen. Always bounces off the cabinet.

(MORE)

YASMINE (CONT'D)

Of course, I couldn't predict that when buying it.

NIA

Must have been the dream home, it didn't take you long to move after you put your house for sale.

YASMINE

I fell head over heels for it. It's astonishing how cheap we got it. All the credit goes to our realtor.

NIA

That's the boat we float in right now. Finding the right one and after our first experience moving-

YASMINE

The one who stole your mother's jewelry box?

NIA

One and only.

YASMINE

You need Desmond.

NIA

Desmond...  
(Pulls out list)  
Walker?

YASMINE

The one and only.

Nia flips the paper to show her the list. Yasmine grabs it and examines each name.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

Well, I don't recognize the other names, but that's Desmond.

NIA

I saw his sign up in the Morgan's yard.

YASMINE

The Morgans are moving?

NIA

Seems so. Who would have thought Mrs. Morgan actually would leave that collapsing cave.



YASMINE

That's what a dead husband will do for you.

NIA

What's that?

YASMINE

Be actually useful.

NIA

How is Benson?

Nia takes a bundle of cardboard boxes beside her.

YASMINE

The most I can tolerate of him now is when I rub my cold feet against him. Hearing him whine is my white noise to fall asleep to.

The boxes slam into the cart.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Pushing her cart with a little more velocity than her companion, Nia heads toward her car. Beside her is Yasmine who taps something into her phone.

YASMINE

Okay and... And... Sent.

NIA

Thanks again.

YASMINE

It's got his email and a link to his new page.

NIA

He might have to start paying you for advertising him.

YASMINE

I wouldn't mind that. Would give me an excuse to fit into his busy schedule.

NIA

Easy on the eyes?

YASMINE

Easy on the eyes, the lips, and the hips. Now, he's a little awkward, but you'll get over it... He even has big hands.

NIA

You were checking out his hands?

YASMINE

I had to take a mental picture so I could know what I was imagining with Benson.

Nia laughs.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

It's fine, I know he thinks about someone else. Probably my cousin April. Got one peek at her and suddenly remembered foreplay exists.

Nia opens the trunk of her car as Yasmine immediately lifts some bags and places them in Nia's car.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

Sorry, if I don't help I'll be thinking about it all afternoon.

NIA

No worries. Getting quite sick of the cardboard cuts.

Nia shows off her band-aid hand.

YASMINE

Aww, sweetie. Have you us-

NIA

Done everything in the book. Just accepting my fate at this point.

They finish placing all the items in the trunk and close it.

NIA (CONT'D)

Thanks again.

YASMINE

Of course... Have you heard about those missing people recently? Was talking to my girlfriend about it.

NIA

Vaguely.

YASMINE

She was going on about how it was similar about ten or so years ago. Ten or thirteen. I told her to shut up and drink. Ride that buzz.

NIA

Life is easier when you are buzzing.

YASMINE

Did you get the text?

Nia takes out her phone.

NIA

Uhh.... Yeah? Yeah, got it.

YASMINE

Okay, well I ought to head off. Sang in your ear for long enough. Make sure to tell Desmond, Yasmine says-

(Blows kiss)

He'll understand.

NIA

You didn't take a trip down adultery street, did you?

YASMINE

Oh no, honey. If I did, I'd rock his world like it was 1988-

NIA

All right, well "I'll tell him you said "Hi".

YASMINE

Please do! And let's meet up for drinks before I leave. I'm going to San Fran the 17th. So anytime until then.

NIA

Sounds good.

YASMINE

Take care!

NIA

Will do.

YASMINE

Bye!

Nia waves goodbye and hops into her car. She takes a deep breath and studies her hands. Stretching her fingers in and out, loosening a few of the bandages.

INT. NIA'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Cruising down the same street she was in earlier, Nia plucks a hot fry out of a fast-food bag that sits next to her.

NIA

(Burning her tongue)

Ah, ah, ah.

She chews with her teeth showing to not burn her cheeks or tongue. Using a sip of soda to wash it all down before placing it back down.

Nia reaches the stop sign and sees the realtor sign up the street. With no cars around her, she drags out her phone and the list. She dials the number and waits.

A car approaches on her right and comes to a stop as it continues ringing. Nia waves them on and checks the mirror behind her to make sure it's clear.

Ring. Ring.... Ring. Ring.... Ring. Ri-

PHONE (O.S.)

Hi, you've reached the phone of Desmond Walker. The only real realtor you'll ever really need. Sorry, I can't come to the phone, I must be making a deal or having a meal. Leave me your name, number, and preferred time to call back. Thanks.

NIA

Hi... Uh, Desmond. This is Nia Edmonds, I have a- I'm selling my house and need a realtor... Like a real realtor... I don't know why I expected a laugh anyway, my number is three one seven, six five six, zero seven six seven. And uhh anyt-

PHONE

Your message has been saved. Thank  
you.

Nia lowers the phone and dips her hand back into the bag to  
tear out another fry. As she crosses the intersection she  
once more burns her mouth.

NIA

Ah, ah, ah.

INT. HOUSE (KITCHEN) - AFTERNOON

Nia has a half-eaten sandwich in front of her, while her  
phone is tucked underneath her ear.

NIA

-Six five six.

Footsteps come down from behind her. Showing Parker reach the  
bottom and trudge forward to the table.

NIA (CONT'D)

Zero seven six seven. And anytime  
before ten works. Thank you.

Nia hangs up and tosses the phone down.

NIA (CONT'D)

No one answered.

PARKER

Huh?

Parker grabs a chicken sandwich that was set out for him.

NIA

Not a single one.

PARKER

How many times did you call?

NIA

Once. I don't want to blow up their  
phone.

PARKER

Try again in an hour.

Parker grabs his food and saunters away.

NIA

Wait.

PARKER

What?

NIA

Am I genuinely gonna be packing  
this whole house by myself?

PARKER

I told you, the highway bits got  
extended until the end of the  
month. I'll do what I can before I  
leave.

NIA

Hmm.

Parker kisses her on the head while she takes a bite of her  
food.

PARKER

And don't be going out late or  
anything, a few guys on the crew  
said some people were missing.

NIA

Maybe everyone is riding the train  
and moving on out.

PARKER

Maybe.

Parker kisses her again and heads towards the stairs,  
skipping on up.

Nia keeps eating her food, growing dull with each bite. To  
help the time pass, she plucks out her phone and scrolls  
through articles.

Among the countless headlines that don't stick out, a local  
news channel article catches her eye. It reads "Three locals  
gone missing in three months". She clicks on the link and  
waits for it to load. While doing so, she takes another bite.

RING! RING! RING!

Nia's phone rings while she chews her food quickly, although  
she isn't able to swallow it in time ahead of answering.

NIA

(Mouthful)

Hello?

DESMOND (V.O.)

Uhh, hello?

Nia quickly swallows.

NIA  
Sorry, hello. Hi.

DESMOND (V.O.)  
Is this Nia?

NIA  
This is. Who's asking?

DESMOND (V.O.)  
This is Desmond Walker, the  
realtor.

NIA  
Oh, Desmond, Hi. Yeah, this is Nia.

DESMOND (V.O.)  
Hi Nia.

NIA  
Hi Desmond...

There is an awkward silence.

DESMOND (V.O.)  
So I heard you might be looking to  
sell a home?

NIA  
You heard correctly. Currently in  
the market for being put on the  
market.

DESMOND (V.O.)  
Great, I'd love to help you out on  
that in whatever way I can.

NIA  
Perfect. But I guess what's first  
is, what's your commission rate?

DESMOND (V.O.)  
Coming right out the gate. Well,  
it's five percent.

NIA  
Is that good?

DESMOND (V.O.)  
Are you asking me?

NIA

Yes.

DESMOND (V.O.)

I'd say it's the best rate you'll get.

NIA

Sold.

DESMOND (V.O.)

Let's hold off on that kind of talk. I'd like to take a gander at the place first.

NIA

Good point. I could just be calling from a shed for all you know.

DESMOND (V.O.)

Wouldn't be my worst call. How does tomorrow sound?

NIA

Tomorrow works great. Can we do around 10?

DESMOND (V.O.)

Uhh, I'm not sure. I have to check in on some remodel work early. So what about 1? P.M. of course.

NIA

Yeah, that works just great.

DESMOND (V.O.)

Nice, penciled in for 1- what's your address?

Nia smirks.

INT. HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - AFTERNOON

With a fresh box being sealed and labeled "Movies", Nia tosses it onto the floor. Music vibrates through the tv speakers as she takes a sip from her soda cup.

Nia's head bounces up and down to the beat while starting another box.

The orange sun streaks in through the window creating a mini spotlight. One that she in-fact uses as a spotlight, lip-syncing along, using the straw as a microphone.



Forgetting that she was packing, her mind slips to a completely new mindset. But just as she takes hold of the moment, steps can be heard coming down the stairs, stopping her midway. Giving her the chance to take a sip and go back to normal.

Parker reaches the bottom step, wearing a white shirt with the logo "Hobson's Choice Construction". There is a black stain along the side that sticks out in an otherwise clean shirt.

PARKER

Look at the progress you've already made.

NIA

I wouldn't go down that road.

PARKER

I woke up late, slept through the alar-

NIA

I heard.

Nia takes down a shelf along the wall that contained movies.

PARKER

If I'm feeling it when I get back in the morning, I'll start moving the boxes into the garage.

NIA

If you say so.

PARKER

What's wrong?

NIA

Huh?

PARKER

Something's up with you. What? What did I do?

NIA

No, it's-

(Raises hand)

I just cut my hand a couple of times.

PARKER

How di-

NIA  
Don't think you've ever truly  
understood how clumsy I am.

PARKER  
I don't think that's being clumsy.  
More so sadistic.

NIA  
I didn't do it on purpose.

PARKER  
That many times though?

NIA  
When you're the only on-

PARKER  
Alright, alright... Alright.

Nia undrills a screw from the shelf with a drill.

Parker waits for her to finish.

PARKER (CONT'D)  
You call those people again?

NIA  
One called back.

PARKER  
Which one?

NIA  
You driving down 13th street?

PARKER  
Yeah.

NIA  
You'll see his face in the Morgan's  
yard.

PARKER  
Desmond?... That one?

NIA  
Already know his name.

PARKER  
When I talked to Mrs. Morgan she  
mentioned him. Couldn't stop  
talking about him.

NIA

He'll be over in the afternoon. You might see him.

PARKER

Maybe. Okay, I gotta scoot. Love you.

NIA

Don't forget to call Emily about the-

PARKER

She emailed me. Said the porch is done and the office is almost done as well. The rain had slowed them down over the past slew of days.

NIA

Think they'd be used to that in Seattle.

PARKER

You'd think. Okay, bye.

NIA

Bye.

They share an air kiss from across the room before Parker leaves.

Nia picks up her cup and clicks the remote for the next song to play. The moment it starts she slides into the orange spotlight to sing-

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

As orange streetlights line the single-lane road, two men are briefly illuminated as they travel under the lights.

MAN #1 strolls partially ahead of MAN #2 since he's talking on the phone and holding a grocery bag.

MAN #2

I'll be back in like a minute, chill... No, I got the one I wanted to see... I don't want to sit through all that. They only made it because they had to, not because they wanted to- Look I'm down the road, just wait... Okay.

Man #2 makes a kissing noise into the phone prior to hanging up.

MAN #1

Did you just kiss her through the phone Soulja boy?

MAN #2

At least I got someone to kiss.

MAN #1

You gotta get yourself a new one.

MAN #2

Nah... she ain't bad. Worst thing so far is she spits when she starts talking too quick. Her phone needs a paper towel after we talk.

MAN #1

Better than that one girl that-

MAN #2

No, don't. I gag every time you talk about it.

MAN #1

I mean I almost pu-

Man #2 puts his hand on the others shoulder.

MAN 2

(Gagging)

No, for real.

Man #1 snickers and goes to egg him on but in the corner of his eye he sees a figure down at the end of the street behind him. It sprints towards the two of them and shows quite a bit of hustle.

Man #2 sees his buddy's demeanor change and where he watches. Upon pivoting he also sees the figure charge for them. It stays on the sidewalk and is briefly seen wearing a hoodie when passing under the orange light.

Neither men say anything yet rotate to face it, mentally ready for anything.

The figure comes closer and seems to slow down and drift into the street, passing the men. Both men twist and watch him jog on past. Heavy breaths are exhaled above the scrape of sneakers on pavement.

As he goes further down the road the two men continue on forward. Neither one talk at first, just watching the figure make it to the end of the street and turn to proceed on out of sight.

MAN #2

...Bro you was tensed up.

Man #2 smacks Man #1's arm.

MAN #1

Nah, I-

MAN #2

I was too, I was too. Who the hell jogs this late?

They carry on their way.

MAN #1

Killers or people looking to get killed.

MAN #2

Was he... was he running quicker? When we first turned, I felt he was booking it.

MAN #1

I couldn't tell. Maybe, why?

MAN #2

Guess no reason... Didn't you know someone who went missing from somewhere around here?

MAN #1

You talking about Deion?

MAN #2

Yeah, him. That was recent too, wasn't it?

MAN #1

I'm not sure he's missing, I think he just left town.

Man #2 treads down a driveway towards a house.

MAN #2

Alright, I'll hit you this weekend, I think Meg is working so...

MAN #1

Sounds good.

They nod and go their separate ways, Man #2 into the house, while Man #1 lingers down the road. His hands slide into his pocket as he walks on. Keeping his head down he nears the end of the street.

However, what catches his attention is the sprinting sound again from far behind. When he pivots back he sees the figure once again. Coming down the same side of the road and again, sprinting faster than usual.

Man #1 sees this but decides to keep on going, not wanting to watch him race from one end of the street to the next. So he paces towards the stop sign while the steps from far behind get closer and closer.

Man #1 rounds the corner and keeps going.

Still, the steps dart closer and noisier with more heavy breaths.

Hoping to hear the steps go further away, Man #1 is caught off guard when he peers behind him to see the hooded figure advance to the end of the street and come straight towards Man #1.

Man #1 readies himself again. The figure drifts out into the street and passes him. Man #1 exhales to relieve the tension, afraid to admit he is nervous. Never the less glad the footsteps go on further away.

Attempting to calm his nerves he takes a duet of deep breaths. And just as the footsteps seem to get further away, they instead grow louder and faster.

Confusing Man #1 enough to whip backward. And not five feet away is the hooded figure, lunging forward to crash into Man #1.

INT. REMODELED HOUSE - DAWN

As a hint of blue morning light makes its way into the windows, they are suddenly overpowered by the construction lights flicking on. Revealing the covered cement hole that is now dried up.

Beside it is a new hole, showing the rough edges of being freshly made just hours ago.

The sound of a body being dragged gets closer until it's flung into the crevice. As the body settles into its position O.C. The cement maker is switched on and thunderously hums.

INT. HOUSE (BEDROOM) - MORNING

Blending with the compressed air that squeezes out of Nia's lungs, the sound of the cement maker drifts away. Leaving only the struggle for air from her lips.

Footsteps come up the stairs, methodically and taking their time.

Never waking Nia, the heavy heels reach the top and head towards the bedroom. As they get closer they quiet down with less weight behind them.

The bedroom door is heard being opened, followed by silence.

(Beat)

Nia's legs twist and her shoulders rollover. Stretching herself out, Nia starts to wake up, opening her eyes.

WHAM!

Parker lands in the bed beside her, jolting her fully awake.

Nia groans and extends her toes, cracking some.

Parker responds with a muffled groan of his own. Nia yawns and moistens up her dry mouth with her tongue.

NIA  
Morning.

PARKER  
Night.

NIA  
How was work?

Parker responds with the same groan he did before, only even less enthusiastic this time.

NIA (CONT'D)  
How much is left on it?

Sticking with the same tone, Parker gives a groan.

Nia rolls over and watches him.

NIA (CONT'D)

So did you come straight to bed or  
be the best and move tho-

PARKER

I'll do it later.

NIA

...Sure.

Nia turns over except is stopped by Parker pulling her back  
in.

PARKER

I will. I promise.

NIA

I said sure.

PARKER

But you said it like "Sure".

NIA

I sure did.

PARKER

Stop.

NIA

Make me.

Parker yanks her in closer and kisses her. It's brief at  
first since Nia doesn't put that much effort into it. All  
until she rubs his forearm, building some intensity until she  
attempts to get on top.

But the moment her lips leave Parkers, he falls asleep due to  
exhaustion. Nia, now fully awake, rolls her eyes and steps  
off the bed.

INT. HOUSE (KITCHEN) - MORNING

Pressing her index finger into a black and blue plastic  
button, Nia watches as coffee drips out into her green mug.  
Though instead of watching it fill up she makes her way into  
the living room.

The Camera focuses on the cup and sees her blur into the  
background, pick up a remote, and hit several buttons to the  
O.S. TV.

The coffee finishes as music sways out from the speakers.



Nia tosses down the remote onto the couch and makes her way back to her mug. This time with a little sway in her hips along with the beat. She puts a little bit of milk and sugar into her cup as her phone on the counter vibrates.

A text pops up from a contact labeled Kacie. It reads "I made some gingersnaps, I'll trade with you for some of that wine."

Nia smirks and responds back "Of course, just make sure to wait until it's safe. You know, when the moon is out." She puts down her phone and whisks her coffee together. Nia surveys around the kitchen, planning what all could be packed away.

Tasting the first sip, a calm exhale precedes the swallow.

BZZ! BZZ!

Nia looks at her phone again to see a text from Parker. "Can u turn it down". Nia takes another sip, this time sighing as she makes her way over to the living room.

INT. HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Nia sets her cup on a nearby box and reaches for the remote.

BZZ! BZZ!

Nia pulls up her phone to see a new text from Kacie. With the remote dangling in her other hand, never lowering it down, Nia reads the message. "I wouldn't have it any other way. Plus I need to hear about this realtor. Drove past Morgan's place, cuter every time I see him."

Nia types back, "Are you sure you don't want to mov-

Footsteps stomp down the stairs which lead to Parker reaching the bottom. He shouts something, however, Nia doesn't hear it until she lowers the volume finally.

NIA

What?

PARKER

Gotta play it that loud?

NIA

I was turning it down.

Nia raises the remote.

PARKER

Didn't have to be that loud in the first place.

NIA

Okay, I was in the kitchen and wanted to hear it. If I want to listen to music while I pack up this entire house with no help, I'll listen to music.

PARKER

How the hell am I supposed to sleep?

NIA

Plug your ears, if you're tired enough, you'll sleep. I've seen you fall asleep damn near standing up.

PARKER

Look, it doesn't need to b-

NIA

Yeah, yeah. I got it. If you don't mind I'm on the clock right and need to get started.

Nia cleans up a nearby drawer and puts items into a box.

Parker bites his lip and heads back up the stairs.

The music, now quieter changes songs as Nia shoves the objects into the cardboard. Growing angrier and angrier she only does a couple more before standing up.

Grabbing her coffee, she sits on the couch and puts a movie on. She opens her phone and deletes the unfinished text to Kacie. Instead typing "I'm taking the day for myself. So only thing planned is meeting the realtor".

CUT TO:

Nia lays the opposite way on the couch and munches on pretzels. Watching the credits roll on the TV, Nia pays more attention to the shapes of the snacks she chews.

BZZ! BZZ! BZZ! BZZ!

Nia snatches her phone from the coffee table and sees that her mother is face-timing her. She answers it without even sitting up, using a rather unflattering angle.

On the other end, FIONA (57) answers with the camera far too close to her shiny lips. Her thick sunglasses cover her eyes even though she is in a shaded area outside.

FIONA

Nia.

NIA

What?

FIONA

Sit up when you're talking to me.

NIA

I'm tired.

FIONA

Now.

Nia eats one more pretzel and sits up on the couch.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Now listen, I was talking to Barbra and she said there was some nice property out in Redmond.

NIA

I've told you a hundred times, we aren't looking for property anymore. The house is almost don-

FIONA

I'm not stupid, I know about the house. I'm talking about Barbra said she might know someone wanting to bring some tourists in.

NIA

Just claim you saw some Ufo's. Seems to be enough to start.

FIONA

I know you're kidding, but I heard something weird last night over the house.

NIA

Oh, yeah?

FIONA

Yeah. Was a weird scrapping sound. Similar to when that branching was scraping the roof. Remember that?

(MORE)

FIONA (CONT'D)

Your father thought someone was in the attic.

NIA

Sure do. Woke us all up to help him look.

FIONA

He was brave, but only with an audience. And he knew that.

NIA

Well if it sounds like that branch, could it just be that branch?

FIONA

Your father cut it before he passed.

NIA

Could it have possibly, I don't know, grown back?

FIONA

You can take this attitude of yours, walk outside and leave it on the porch because I'm not about it.

NIA

Sorry. Just in a mood today.

FIONA

You always get like this, is it that time of the month?

NIA

Okay, no. I do not, and that has nothing to do with it.

FIONA

Are you sure? Is the possibility of grandkids on the table?

NIA

You know Parker and I never really wanted kids.

FIONA

Clearly.

NIA

Would rather focus on establishing ourselves first.

FIONA  
You already have a house.

NIA  
Yeah but this next one will be in a better area.

FIONA  
You don't live in an awful area.

NIA  
But apparently, there's been some missing people around here lately.

FIONA  
So? That doesn't count as an excuse.

NIA  
I'm not using it as an excuse. Mor-

FIONA  
It sounds like it.

NIA  
Once we get packed, realtor hired... maybe.

FIONA  
Well, too late now anyway. Your father had all the love to give to a grandchild but I don't have the energy for it. You haven't hired a realtor yet?

NIA  
I got one coming over today.

RING! RING!

NIA (CONT'D)  
Speaking of.

FIONA  
Huh?

NIA  
I gotta go mah, he's here.

FIONA  
Who is?

NIA  
The realtor, I gotta go.

FIONA

Okay, well I'll send you the link  
to the property and the man's info.  
I think-

NIA

Okay, send it. Love you!

FIONA

Love you too.

They both wave to each other as Nia gets closer to the front door. After hanging up, Nia slides the phone into her pocket.

INT. HOUSE (FRONT DOOR) - DAY

Nia's hand rests on the silver door handle, feeling a type of nervousness in her stomach she hasn't felt in a while. Fortunately, she overcomes it and opens the door.

Standing a few feet back with his arms behind his back is DESMOND WALKER (30). Hauntingly handsome with clean-cut hair up top and no beard. The glow from his white teeth counterbalance his blue shirt.

DESMOND

Nia?

NIA

Desmond Walker?

DESMOND

You are correct.

NIA

Almost didn't recognize you without  
that beard.

DESMOND

That's usually the response I get.  
Some say the beard looks better in  
the photo.

NIA

Those people are wrong... Clean-  
shaven is the way to go.

DESMOND

So you're looking to sell this  
beautiful home?

NIA

You are correct.

DESMOND

Well, if it's anything like what  
I've seen so far, I can't wait to  
see more.

Nia not knowing if he's talking about the house, or herself  
invites him in.

NIA

Come, save your opinion until the  
end.

Desmond gently steps inside.

DESMOND

If only that was common for people  
to do.

NIA

What?

DESMOND

Hold their opinions until the end.

NIA

We make our dough off judging books  
by their covers.

DESMOND

We?

NIA

Humans, you know, us.

DESMOND

Oh... yeah, those lovely little  
devils.

Desmond scans around and takes mental notes. He notices Nia's  
hand with the bandages.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

You alri-

NIA

Yeah, yeah. I'm just, the clumsy  
type.

DESMOND

Same here.

NIA

(Points)  
Don't mind the boxes.

DESMOND

I'm used to it. Do you mind if I get the tour?

NIA

I'm terrible at being a tour guide. So feel free to drift around.

DESMOND

You know, I honestly prefer that.

NIA

You do?

DESMOND

Yep. Lets me view it from the buyer's perspective. How they would feel when walking in.

NIA

Makes sense, I guess.

DESMOND

No guessing required. It works.

Desmond roams through the living room.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

Pretty big living area.

NIA

Can fit many lives within it.

DESMOND

Looks like it. Got some tall ceilings. People love that.

NIA

I wonder why.

DESMOND

Makes their house feel bigger than it is. Not to say that this isn't big enough. How long have you lived here?

NIA

In this house or Indiana?

DESMOND

Both?



NIA  
Six years in this house. Seven in  
Indiana.

DESMOND  
You didn't have this built, did  
you?

NIA  
No, no. Only remodeled.

DESMOND  
Always easier to sell a turnkey.

NIA  
Turnkey?

DESMOND  
A place that's already been  
remodeled. What parts did you redo?

NIA  
The garage and back porch.

DESMOND  
I'd love to take a peek.

NIA  
Of course. This way.

INT. HOUSE (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

Nia and Desmond push through the kitchen, briefly stopping.

DESMOND  
I love this island.

NIA  
Mhmm. I'm indifferent on it.

DESMOND  
Why's that?

NIA  
Oddly placed. If it was more this  
way-  
(Gestures)  
It would fit better. At least, I  
think so.

DESMOND  
You aren't wrong. What exactly is  
it you do?

NIA  
I'm a professional, amateur  
architect.

DESMOND  
Is that so?

NIA  
It is.

DESMOND  
That's ironic.

NIA  
How so?

DESMOND  
Always wanted to be an architect in  
my teen years. Didn't have the  
creative touch so I settled on  
this.

NIA  
If you want to hear about irony,  
you probably won't believe me. But  
I was on the phone an-

DESMOND  
You're right, I don't believe you.

NIA  
Stop. I was saying, I was on the  
phone and mentioned that you were  
coming over and sure enough, you  
rang not a couple of seconds later.

DESMOND  
I got impeccable timing.

NIA  
Clearly.

INT. HOUSE (GARAGE) - CONTINUOUS

Parked in the middle of the garage is a black SUV. Meanwhile  
Desmond steps out onto the cold concrete with his burgundy  
shoes.

DESMOND  
So what all did you have done?

NIA

My uhh, my husband wanted more space. To fit the car and be able to work as well.

DESMOND

How long have you been married? If you don't mind me asking- is the garage door new as well?

NIA

(Nods)

Had it replaced when we moved in. And uhh, about eight years.

DESMOND

How is it?

NIA

The door or being married?

DESMOND

Both.

NIA

They work but starting to get some wear and tear on it.

DESMOND

On the door?

NIA

Sure. Want to see the back porch?

DESMOND

Do you mind if I take some photos beforehand?

NIA

Go ahead. I think you missed a few rooms already though.

DESMOND

I'll get them on the way out.

Desmond steps back to take a photo with his phone while Nia maneuvers back into the door to hide herself.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

You can hop in.

NIA

I wouldn't want to people think that I come with the house.

DESMOND

Are you sure? It'll help make  
selling a lot easier.

NIA

Will it though?

DESMOND

No, I'm just spitballing.

NIA

Isn't that for ideas?

DESMOND

Huh?

NIA

Spitballing is when you toss out  
ideas.

DESMOND

You are correct, I'd like to change  
my word choice. I'm just bullshi-

Nia's phone rings before she silences it.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

Feel free to take that. I don't  
want to hold you from anything.

NIA

No worries. If it's important  
they'll call back or leave a  
message.

Nia leans against the doorframe and watches Desmond take one  
last photo.

DESMOND

Could I see upstairs?

INT. HOUSE (UPSTAIRS) - DAY

After Nia reaches the top of the steps, she circles around to  
put her finger over her lips.

NIA

(Whispered)

Sorry, my husband's sleeping.

DESMOND

Must be a midnight oil burner.

NIA  
He works in construction.

DESMOND  
Ohh.

NIA  
Yeah. They're working on Dan Jones road.

DESMOND  
But will they ever finish? Because all my life, that road has been under construction.

NIA  
Not sure... So I take it you grew up here?

Desmond takes a photo of the hallway as Nia hides.

DESMOND  
Yes, ma'am.

NIA  
No ma'am. Please. I'll own it once I'm the age, but not until then.

DESMOND  
My apologies. It's a habit. But yes. I grew up in Caramel.

NIA  
I think I went to a pottery store up there?

DESMOND  
You might've.  
(Points to a room)  
Can I go in here?

NIA  
Sure.

Nia opens the door for him, he steps in and takes a photo.

DESMOND  
How many bedrooms?

NIA  
Three bed, two and a half bath.

DESMOND

Are you moving somewhere bigger or smaller? Wanting the simpler life?

NIA

Oh no, bigger. Way bigger.

DESMOND

Ohh.

NIA

Okay, not that much bigger. But in a better state. No offense.

Desmond finishes and takes some photos of the bathroom in the hall.

DESMOND

No offense. Indiana is Indiana. You drive through us to get to somewhere better.

EXT. HOUSE (BACK PORCH) - DAY

Desmond follows Nia onto the wooden porch that has a grill and a dinner table. Behind it is a green yard that could use a cut.

NIA

Mind the long grass. Haven't cut it in a couple of weeks.

DESMOND

Don't worry. I got a gal who mows lawns for me.

NIA

A girl?

DESMOND

Yep. So what state do you have your heart set on?

NIA

Washington.

DESMOND

D.C. or state?

NIA

State. Seattle to be specific.

DESMOND  
I hope you love rain.

NIA  
I adore it actually.

DESMOND  
Really?

NIA  
Yeah. I grew up there when I was younger.

DESMOND  
So you're moving back?

NIA  
That's the idea.

DESMOND  
Any particular reason? Again, I know Indiana doesn't have much, especially for a professional amateur architect.

NIA  
Yeah... It's kind of hard to talk about-

DESMOND  
Don't spill it unless you want to. I'm not here to make you uncomfortable.

NIA  
Don't worry. This is the most comfortable I've been in a while.

DESMOND  
Glad I can help?

NIA  
We uhh, we want a new start. A fresh start to put it better.

DESMOND  
I get that.

NIA  
Yeah... we had some issues last year and... Went through some turmoil. Parker and I... Parker's my husband.

DESMOND

I figure.

NIA

Sorry... Anyway yeah. Just looking to start brand new. I got some potential clients that want to build a theater, so when I get all settled in, I plan to dive back into designing.

DESMOND

You know, I probably shouldn't say this, but it's not the worst idea to be getting out of town.

NIA

Why's that? The missing folk?

DESMOND

You've heard?

NIA

Only a little.

DESMOND

Yeah, that's what I'm getting at. The majority of my clients moving lately have brought that up. All I know is: it's great to have more clients, but the property value around here is... we'll just say it's dipping. Not significantly, but.... enough.

NIA

Guess it's a tit for tat.

DESMOND

In a way. Good thing I can sell water to a fish. So no worries in that department.

NIA

Great.

DESMOND

Well, I'll just say I am loving the home and believe I could help you out.

NIA

Even greater. And you say your commission is about five percent?



DESMOND

Yeah. How much did you buy this house for?

NIA

About three hundred and fifty.

DESMOND

That's not the worst, especially for the time you bought it.

NIA

Twas a bargain.

DESMOND

I can tell. Well, I have to go run over to a client's house for a quick meeting, but it was nice meeting you.

NIA

Likewise.

INT. HOUSE (FRONT DOOR) - DAY

Desmond takes some last photos of the living room and kitchen ahead of making it to the door. Nia opens it as she watches him draw near.

DESMOND

Smells great in here as well.

NIA

Does it? I can't tell.

DESMOND

It does. A couple of places I've had recently almost smell as if something died in them.

NIA

What's the work around for that?

DESMOND

Candles. Candles, candles, and disinfectant spray.

NIA

Now that must be overwhelming.

DESMOND

Overwhelmingly good.

NIA

Clean with a slice of death.

DESMOND

For when you sell to caretakers.  
Anyway, it was great meeting you,  
and would love to try and set up  
another meeting.

NIA

Of course. My schedule's wide open  
besides packing.

DESMOND

Perfect. I'll start throwing some  
paperwork together and then we can  
discuss the asking price.

NIA

Sounds like a deal.

DESMOND

Shake on it?

Nia smirks and the two shake.

NIA

This isn't legally binding is it?

DESMOND

Only if you want it to be.

NIA

Guess time will tell.

Desmond tucks back his hand, letting his fingers gently  
caress Nia's fingers on the way back.

DESMOND

Talk soon.

NIA

Text if you have any questions.

DESMOND

Will do.

They both wave to one another until Nia shuts the door. She  
hides a smile before sniffing the air. Pleased with what she  
smells, she takes her phone out to see who called.

A missed call is on her notifications as well as two texts  
from Kacie. "Mind if I come over a little sooner?"

INT. HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - AFTERNOON

Nia, with music fairly low now, maintains packing away a shelf of books. Her head shifts back and forth to the music as she hums it to herself.

Rough footsteps make their way down the stairs to lead Parker to the bottom. Nia looks up at him only for a glance before back down.

PARKER  
How did it go?

NIA  
With?

PARKER  
The realtor.

NIA  
Good.

PARKER  
Good.

NIA  
Yep.

(Beat)

NIA (CONT'D)  
Are you gonna move those boxes?

PARKER  
I can do a pair but I gotta head out.

NIA  
Then don't worry about it. I'll do it.

PARKER  
I'm sor-

NIA  
Aren't you gonna be late?

PARKER  
... Not-

NIA  
Look, my favorite part of the song is coming up, so why don't we talk about this later.

PARKER  
What's up your-

NIA  
Now is not the time Parker.

Parker's shoulders dip down.

PARKER  
All right.

NIA  
Have fun at work.

PARKER  
I'll be thinking of you.

NIA  
Glad to be associated with wet  
cement.

PARKER  
That's not what I mean.

NIA  
Okay.

PARKER  
It's not.

NIA  
Don't want to be late, better giddy  
on up.

PARKER  
Can we talk?

NIA  
If you move the boxes, sure.

PARKER  
I said-

NIA  
I heard you before.

PARKER  
... You don't have to be so cruel.

NIA  
I'm not cruel... just tired. Sorry.

PARKER  
... Okay.

Parker, wanting to say more, decides to stay quiet and head over to her for a kiss goodbye. They smooch, one side more passionate than the other, thanks to Nia's lack of motivation.

Parker withdraws his lips and takes one last gaze until walking out of the room towards the garage.

After hearing the door to the garage open, Nia stops packing and thinks about it. Choosing to call it for a day and instead move the boxes into the garage.

She picks up a few boxes and hauls them away. One by one the stack of boxes files down until disappearing.

INT. HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - NIGHT

Laying on the couch, chewing on the red straw, Nia watches TV without actually paying attention. Thinking about if she wants to start the delve into her social media apps, a ring at the doorbell stops her.

Checking the time on her phone, "9:38 P.M." she curls a brow while heading to the door.

This time there is a knock that Nia interrupts when opening the door. Standing on the doormat with a blue tupperware full of cookies is KACIE JENSEN (30's). Her short frizzy hair bounces over her ears but not much longer since even her red earrings hang lower.

Nia throws on a smile that Kacie doesn't reciprocate.

NIA

What?

KACIE

When were you going to tell me?

NIA

Tell you...?

KACIE

You're moving! Why didn't I hear about it?

NIA

Seems you have.

KACIE

Yasmine called me. Wouldn't stop blabbering- Can I come in?

Nia nods and steps back. Kacie enters and hands over the cookies.

KACIE (CONT'D)

These are gingersnaps. Willie made extra and we don't need the sugar since we met our calorie intake.

NIA

Thank you.

Kacie examines the house, seeing the boxes being stockpiled in each room.

KACIE

Oh, this is breaking my heart.

NIA

I thought I told you.

KACIE

No plum, you didn't.

NIA

Might be getting log-headed lately with all this changing.

KACIE

What's going on? When did this all come about?

Nia points into the living room for them to sit on the couch. As they take their seats, Nia opens the lid and bites a cookie.

NIA

Well... to begin, the opening of the Willow Opera house was a hit.

KACIE

Every time someone visits we take them around the city. I point out the theater every single time. Claiming I know "The Crafty Architect".

NIA

It's still riding the wave apparently. And so are we. The check we got was... a bit dirty, I'll just say that.

KACIE  
Enough to take your car for a  
waxing?

NIA  
Enough to let me sit on my cushions  
for five months and not bat an eye.

KACIE  
My girl.

Kacie bumps shoulders with her.

NIA  
Yeah, yeah... But instead of doing  
that, which was tempting... We  
decided to go find a place  
somewhere... different.

KACIE  
Was that the only condition?  
Different.

NIA  
One of the big ones.

Kacie stands and heads for the kitchen.

KACIE  
Willing to leave friends behind?  
Can I grab a drink?

NIA  
Go for it.

KACIE  
No, like a drink-drink.

NIA  
Sure... Not worried about the  
calories?

KACIE  
I'll just drink it with my eyes  
closed. Won't count.

NIA  
If only... but yeah, found a plot,  
threw some designs together and  
they are making it now.

KACIE  
You must be excited! Designing your  
dream home?

(MORE)

KACIE (CONT'D)

I know I'd put a sunroof in each room. Just make everything so bright.

Kacie finishes making a drink in a wine glass and takes a sip.

KACIE (CONT'D)

So when is the big day? When do I start looking for a new friend and loathing whoever moves in here? They won't get my gingersnaps.

NIA

About a month or two. Depends on the realtor.

KACIE

Are you using that big bull Desmond? Yasmine kept claiming she could climb that mountain.

NIA

Have you met him?

KACIE

Not selling my house or looking for a new toy. Mine works just how I need it.

NIA

He was over here earlier.

KACIE

Was he?

NIA

Mhmm.

KACIE

And?

NIA

And what?

KACIE

Is he a hunk?

NIA

Don't believe that word is used anymore.

KACIE

Then why did I say it?



NIA  
He's... Not bad.

KACIE  
Do I need to worry? Prepare for a  
rehash of last year?

NIA  
No... No.

Nia keeps eating the cookies, leaving only two left.

KACIE  
Some of those were meant for  
Parker.

NIA  
I'll tell him what he missed.

KACIE  
What does he think about moving?  
And this macho realtor?

NIA  
He's uhh... He's okay with it.

KACIE  
Really?

NIA  
Yeah... Yeah.

KACIE  
Are you two good? I know last year  
was rough. With everything that  
went on.

NIA  
Yeah... Yeah, we're good.

KACIE  
Was scary for a while there.

NIA  
We got past it... He forgave me.

KACIE  
Oh, how big of him. And he's fine  
with Desmond?

NIA

I won't pounce the realtor.  
Anyway, he's already talking to a  
few construction companies up  
there. Has a pair of interviews  
lined up.

Kacie downs her drink, which forces her to turn back and  
refill it.

KACIE

You know, I read a couple articles  
the other day and it's probably not  
the worst idea to move.

NIA

Why's that?

Nia eats the last cookie.

KACIE

Heard about some people going  
missing.

NIA

Everyone goes missing at some  
point.

KACIE

Yeah, but these are close.

NIA

How close?

KACIE

Did you hear about the Morgans?

NIA

Yeah, I couldn't live in the same  
house after that.

KACIE

Right and that's only what, two  
streets over?

NIA

Well, then add it to the list of  
reasons of why we're moving.

KACIE

All the victims are men though, so  
maybe we're safe.

NIA  
I guess, you hungry?

KACIE  
Sure. I mean, you ate all the  
cookies, but sure.

NIA  
I want something savory.

Nia takes out her phone while Kacie decides to refill her glass.

Scouring which place to order from, she finally orders some food. Except before she puts the phone away she receives a text from Desmond.

This jolts her to be more attentive, leaning up a bit. The text reads "Hey, do you know the square footage? Was slightly flustered and forgot to ask."

KACIE  
Is that Parker?

NIA  
Uhh, yeah.

Nia types back, "No worries, being flustered happens unexpectedly sometimes. I unfortunately don-

BZZ! BZZ!

Another text pops up, this time from Parker. Nia doesn't even give it the time of day, swiping up for it to go away. She finishes her text and sends it. When done she holds the phone across her chest to wait for the response.

Attempting to overanalyze her answer, she opens her phone to read the text she sent. And as her fingers rest above the keyboard, Desmond responds back. "Do you mind if come over tomorrow to get an estimate? It won't take long, I promise."

Nia answers back "Of course. What time works best for you? I can open my schedule anyway needed".

What is unknown to her and Kacie is the fact that there is someone in the kitchen behind them. Watching their every move and never moving.

BZZ! BZZ!

Desmond's text comes in, "I'll let you know when I'm coming, to give you some time to get ready." Nia answers back "I'm always ready".

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT/MORNING

An establishing shot of the house helps show the transition from night to day. Letting the murky sky fill in above the home.

INT. HOUSE (BEDROOM) - MORNING

Not much light comes through the curtains, just enough for us to be able to see Nia, lying awake in bed with Parker passed out beside her. Her fingers tap her collarbone as something clearly runs through her jagged mind.

A snore squeezes from Parker's nose, which gives Nia the motivation to get up and leave the room.

INT. HOUSE (KITCHEN) - MORNING

In the middle of a sip of her coffee, Nia leans against the countertop island. She looks over it as Desmond's words repeat in her head.

BZZ! BZZ!

Nia gets a text from Kacie. "Hey, sorry about last night. Wine got a little too in my head and let my mouth ramble. What do you have going on today?" Nia responds, "Realtor is coming over for square footage, but should be free after. I'll text you when he's gone."

INT. HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - MORNING

More of the room is packed away and a difference is ultimately being noticed. A few empty bookshelves awkwardly sit in the corners of the room as Nia puts together a new box.

As the tape is placed upon the bottom side of the cardboard, Nia slows down and stops. Her teeth bite the inside of her cheek as her brain still soars with thoughts. She takes a deep breath, puts the box down, and takes a step towards the door.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Nia strides through the aisles of the store once again. This time she grabs some packing paper. That and enough bubble wrap to where she won't have to visit the store ever again.

Sirens are heard outside passing the store, something Nia doesn't quite pay attention to. Instead she heads to the register, getting in line behind a pair of folk.

DESMOND (O.C.)  
Fancy meeting you here.

Nia whirls around to see Desmond get in line behind her.

NIA  
Oh, uhh you too.

DESMOND  
Sorry, I'm not stalking you, I promise.

NIA  
If you were, I'm not sure speaking would be the best option.

DESMOND  
Would sort of ruin the whole concept.

Nia nods.

She scans his cart and what he buys. Boxes of staples, a pair of binders, and lastly a medium-sized mallet.

NIA  
I didn't know they sold hammers here.

DESMOND  
They don't. But they sell mallets.

NIA  
Plan to already renovate my home?

DESMOND  
Not sure it's needed. Also, I would wait until the paperwork is signed.

NIA  
Good point.

DESMOND  
I'm good at those.

NIA  
I bet you are... So, are you just going to end up following me home?

DESMOND

No, not yet. I have some things to take care of, but then I'll be over. I can't believe I forgot about the footage. Never happened before.

NIA

(Smirks)

Glad to be your first.

DESMOND

Me too. What are you shopping for?

NIA

Just had to get some wrapping paper and stuff.

DESMOND

Don't plan to use a moving company?

NIA

(Scoffs)

No... I'll never trust those neanderthals again.

DESMOND

That bad?

NIA

Enough to want to avoid talking about them.

DESMOND

Oh, sorry.

NIA

No worries. It's not you, just horrible memories.

DESMOND

I get it. Any bum with a truck can be a "Moving Company". That's why I recommend people do it themselves. Like you.

NIA

Like me.

They share a brief smile with one another, as another cop car is heard passing the store outside.

DESMOND

Have you seen all those cops out  
and about today?

NIA

Only a couple. But no more than  
usual.

DESMOND

I saw about five on just the drive  
here.

NIA

Must be busy with all the  
jaywalking.

VOICE (O.C.)

Next!

The cashier motions for Nia to come forward.

NIA

Well, I guess see you in a couple  
hours?

VOICE

I guess so.

The two smile at each other before going about their separate  
tasks.

EXT. HOUSE (DRIVEWAY) - DAY

Tugging the green hose tighter to her heel, Nia dowses the  
front yard with cold water under the clear sky. She takes her  
time doing it while resting her hand on her hip.

A car drives past until a voice she hasn't heard in months  
catches her ear.

VOICE (O.C.)

Morning!

Nia spins to see PHILLIP (55). An older man who is balding up  
top, yet donning a chunky beard below. His gut tests the  
limits of his last belt loop while he trudges on the other  
side of the street, only to cross over to Nia.

NIA

Morning... Even though I think it's  
noon.

PHILLIP

You can say morning, afternoon, and night. Yet saying "Noon" just doesn't sound right.

NIA

We can try it.

PHILLIP

Good noon to you.

They both cringe at the way it sounds.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

See?

NIA

Boy, I miss these conversations.

PHILLIP

Do I sense sarcasm?

NIA

Not a bit. I've honestly longed for these.

PHILLIP

Is it true what I heard?

NIA

Yes, yes. I am moving. Leaving the Hoosier state from someplace better.

PHILLIP

Well, add that to the list of common items between us.

NIA

You're moving?

PHILLIP

In the upcoming months. Or whenever I can, honestly.

NIA

Is that so? Where will you grow your new roots?

PHILLIP

Tennessee.

NIA

Why Tennessee?



PHILLIP  
Why not? It's got more going on  
than this pit of depression.

A vehicle comes down the street and approaches the house.

NIA  
Does it?

PHILLIP  
Look let me have some high hopes.

NIA  
I guess.

The car stops by the driveway and out steps Desmond. Nia and Phillip turn to see him get closer.

PHILLIP  
Is it me or has Parker gotten  
taller?

NIA  
This is Desmond, my new realtor.

DESMOND  
Well not officially. Not until you  
sign these.

Desmond holds up a pair of papers with a tape dispenser in his other hand.

PHILLIP  
A realtor huh?

DESMOND  
Realtor, appraiser, failed  
architect. Whatever floats your  
boat.

PHILLIP  
My boat needs a selling. And by  
boat, I mean my house. And by  
house, I mean the structure that I  
call my own, or at least until I  
get kidnapped.

DESMOND  
Huh?

PHILLIP  
I was working towards the topic of  
those missing people.

DESMOND

Oh.

NIA

Took the long way around.

DESMOND

Is that why you're moving?

PHILLIP

No. I know it'll all work itself out. I'm leaving because, why not?

NIA

That's his only answer.

DESMOND

I see.

PHILLIP

Those missing people will resolve themselves. Always does. Just like it did fifteen or so years ago.

This strikes a chord with Desmond.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

(To Nia)

You weren't here yet, were you?

NIA

No. Parker was, I was still in Florida.

DESMOND

I was here.

PHILLIP

Remember how everyone was clamoring? But it worked itself out. We moved on.

NIA

Did you ever find out what actually happened? What about the families of the missing people?

PHILLIP

If you don't think about it, everything figures itself out.

NIA

Ehhh-

DESMOND  
(To Phillip)  
So where are you located?

Phillip points down the street behind himself.

PHILLIP  
Head down to the end and take a  
left on Kitner. House 892.

DESMOND  
Not the one with the massive  
American flag out front is it?

PHILLIP  
Why in fact-

NIA  
He's former military.

PHILLIP  
Not former. Once you serve, you  
don't ever really stop.

DESMOND  
Unless you're discharged.

PHILLIP  
... Well yeah, that's the  
exception. But I wasn't  
dishonorably discharged. I was  
medically discharged after I asked  
for antidepressants.

DESMOND  
That's it?

PHILLIP  
For them at the time, it's all they  
need.

DESMOND  
Well, I'd love to take a glance at  
the place.

PHILLIP  
Please do. Why don't you come over  
around six-thirty. I can throw some  
burgers on the grill. We can talk  
and walk.

NIA  
Sounds like a date.

Both men switch to Nia with an uncomfortable gaze in their eyes.

NIA (CONT'D)

Kidding.

Nia finishes washing the plants.

DESMOND

What's your number? I'll text you before heading over.

(To Nia)

Did you get my text earlier?

NIA

My phones inside.

DESMOND

Ah.

PHILLIP

Actually, do you mind if we do around seven? I got to head into town, and they just started construction on Dan Jones.

NIA

That's what Parker is working on.

PHILLIP

Well, he is going to be busy for quite some time.

The two men exchange numbers prior to Phillip taking a step back.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Well, might as well finish my walk. Gotta keep that blood pressure low if I want to continue eating what I want.

DESMOND

Great meeting you.

They shake hands and Phillip waves to Nia, who waves back and switches the hose off. Wrapping it up and putting it away.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

What a character.

NIA

He keeps me on my toes.

DESMOND

Most clients of mine don't water their plants once they put the house on the market.

NIA

Well... It's not officially on it right?

DESMOND

Correct.

NIA

Then there's your answer.

DESMOND

How is your day so far?

NIA

I've had worse.

DESMOND

And better?

NIA

Safe to assume so, yes.

Nia hangs the hose on a mounted reel on the side of the house.

NIA (CONT'D)

I see you brought a tape measurer.

DESMOND

Quite observant.

NIA

Only when I need to make conversation.

DESMOND

Ahh, talking to me is equal to pulling teeth huh?

NIA

Oh no, not at all... Just hate awkward silences.

DESMOND

Awkward silences only lead to more awkward moments.

NIA

Well, I guess we should head in.

DESMOND

After you.

INT. HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - DAY

Nia closes the door behind them as Desmond hands her the papers.

DESMOND

You and your husband can read these over and let me know how they look.

NIA

Parker doesn't enjoy reading. Would rather be told the spark notes.

DESMOND

Is he sleeping again?

NIA

Like a log.

DESMOND

Lucky him.

NIA

Yeah... Lucky him. So what room do you want to do first?

DESMOND

Uhh, I guess I can begin here.

Desmond extends the tape measurer.

DESMOND (CONT'D)

Could you hold it here?

NIA

Sure.

Nia bends over and holds the end of the tape as he hikes across the room.

DESMOND

You've made some progress since yesterday.

NIA

Not really. But I'll pretend like that's true.

Desmond kneels down and reads the number. He quietly repeats it to himself as he types it into his phone.

NIA (CONT'D)  
So, how long have you and Mrs.  
Walker been together?

DESMOND  
If that's your way of finding out  
if there is competition, it's not  
subtle.

NIA  
Who said competition?

DESMOND  
You're right. You'd sweep the court  
in that case.

NIA  
If it was a competition, my coach  
would hate me playing for the  
rival.

Desmond measures the opposite direction with Nia's help.

DESMOND  
I'm not sure what you are implying  
or if I should figure it out.

NIA  
You can interpret it how you want.

DESMOND  
And I will.

Desmond reads the number and does the math on his phone. Nia  
waits and watches him.

NIA  
Are you thirsty? Water, soda, fill  
in the blank?

DESMOND  
I'll take a water if you don't  
mind.

Nia smiles and heads into the kitchen.

INT. HOUSE (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

Nia fills a cup of water from the sink as Desmond enters and  
takes a measurement.

NIA  
So how does that work?

DESMOND  
What, finding the footage?

Nia nods and hands him the cup.

DESMOND (CONT'D)  
It's so easy even a cavem-

NIA  
No quoting commercials in this household.

DESMOND  
Oh. I didn't know that house rule.

NIA  
Not many do.

DESMOND  
Well, you just take the width times the length. Take that number and add it with the others from the house.

NIA  
I see... Guess it's not that hard.

DESMOND  
Caveman worth.

Nia points at him.

NIA  
Breaking my rules.

DESMOND  
I was always considered a trouble-maker.

NIA  
Were you ever suspended or got Saturday school?

DESMOND  
Saturday school, once.

NIA  
Same.

DESMOND  
What were you in for?



NIA

Got caught stealing a muffin in the breakfast line.

DESMOND

What a criminal.

NIA

I know. Those darn blueberry muffins sometimes just hit the spot on a Monday. What about you? What caused your short weekend?

DESMOND

Oh, it's kind of a confusing story. There was this weird kid that would mess with me and the girls I was talking to an-

NIA

Multiple girls?

DESMOND

Hey, you gotta cast a wide net to see what you catch.

NIA

Didn't care what you caught?

DESMOND

Not entirely at the time. But my criteria has been redefined.

NIA

How so?

DESMOND

I don't know if it's the most... appropriate.

NIA

We're all adults here. Aren't we?

Nia gives him a hint of a smile, which he naturally responds back with but attempts to hide it by drinking the water.

DESMOND

You know... Never mind. I'll do the garage.

NIA

Never mind what?

DESMOND

Nothing.

NIA

Are you sure?

Desmond looks towards the stairs.

DESMOND

Yeah... Yeah, I'm sure.

Nia presses off the counter and rounds the island towards Desmond, gingerly dragging her finger on the counter.

NIA

I prefer my realtor to be brutally honest.

DESMOND

And I prefer to keep my controversial thoughts to myself.

NIA

And what makes you so... controversial?

Nia stands next to Desmond, staring up at him, after gazing over his wide shoulders.

DESMOND

A lot.

NIA

Like?

DESMOND

...I'm not taking the leap, unless you jump first.

NIA

I couldn't possibly take the leap... I've only known you for a day. Barely know a thing about you.

DESMOND

You could get to know me better.

NIA

Could I?

Nia inches closer to Desmond who lifts the cup to take a sip, however, Nia stops him.

NIA (CONT'D)  
Mind if I quench your thirst?

Nia closes her eyes and gives Desmond a kiss. It is a peck at first, yet Desmond lifts her up and puts her on the counter-top. Their kissing grows more and more intense, Desmond wrapping his hands around her hips to tug them closer to his own.

As more aggression is thrown behind each movement, Desmond slides off her pants before Nia puts her hand on top of his head to push him down.

INT. HOUSE (UPSTAIRS) - CONTINUOUS

The hallway is relatively quiet, but vague moans come from downstairs.

At the end of the hall, is the bedroom door. It appears completely shut from a distance, although the closer we get, a sliver of a crack is revealed. The moans downstairs grow more and more.

INT. HOUSE (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

Nia is pressed up against the wall. A gentle gasp tries to escape her lips for only Desmond covers her mouth with his massive hands.

Playing into it, they hold eye contact with one another before his hand slides off and they remain kissing. Her arms wrap around him as he lifts her up.

EXT. HOUSE (FRONT PORCH) - AFTERNOON

The sun lowers behind the house as a car passes by out front. A breeze caresses the plants as it passes by.

The front door opens and out parades Desmond. Behind him is Nia who shuts the door once she is outside. The two adults stare at each other during an awkward silence, causing each other to laugh.

DESMOND  
So... Uhh.

NIA  
So?

DESMOND  
Can't say I've been in this  
position before.

NIA  
What positions have you been in?

DESMOND  
(Laughs)  
I mean-

NIA  
I know what you mean.

DESMOND  
Good... good.

NIA  
So what now?

DESMOND  
Well, unfortunately, didn't get  
what I actually came here for.

NIA  
Guess that means you have to try  
again.

DESMOND  
I guess so... Well, I'm uhh, I'm  
gonna go.

Desmond checks his watch.

DESMOND (CONT'D)  
Make a stop before heading over  
to... uhh, what was his na-

NIA  
Phillip. Phillip Nickels.

DESMOND  
Phillip. I'll uhh, I'll text you  
about rescheduling.

NIA  
I'll see if I can fit you in.

DESMOND  
Please do.

They smirk at each other once more as Desmond heads to his  
vehicle.

NIA  
Got your tape measu-

Desmond raises his hand to show he has it. They wave to one another before he opens his car door and sits down.

INT. HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - AFTERNOON

Nia plops herself on the couch and takes a deep breath. A smile creeps along her lips that she tries to hide. Flicking on the TV.

After some time passes her phone vibrates on her lap.

Nia opens it to see a text from Desmond. "I'm limping through the store right now because of you." Proud of herself, Nia types back until she hears Parker's footsteps reach the bottom step.

This surprises her and almost causes her to drop her phone.

NIA  
Sneaking down the steps now?

PARKER  
Huh?

NIA  
Didn't hear you come down.

PARKER  
Oh. Yeah.

Nia keeps her phone down and hidden.

NIA  
How did you sleep?

PARKER  
Good enough.

NIA  
Gotta get that beauty sleep.

PARKER  
You know it.

Parker sees Nia click her phone off and put it on the coffee table.

PARKER (CONT'D)  
I might be home earlier tonight.

NIA  
Is that so?

PARKER  
Yeah, we are almost done, finally.

NIA  
That's good.

PARKER  
Yep... Hey uhh, take this with a  
grain of salt... but I heard  
something earlier.

Nia's stomach sinks.

NIA  
Huh?

PARKER  
Yeah. While at work, some of the  
guys were talking.

Nia sighs in relief to herself.

NIA  
Got some juicy gossip?

PARKER  
You could say so. John was talking  
about how someone he knew went  
missing. His cousin.

NIA  
Oh.

PARKER  
Yeah, his family called him and  
asked him to help look for him.

NIA  
Guess we are moving just in time.

PARKER  
What got me was apparently his  
cousin was thinking about putting  
his house on the market... So he  
talked to a realtor.

NIA  
Which one?

Parker stays quiet.

NIA (CONT'D)  
Not Desmond I hope.

Parker continues to stay quiet.

NIA (CONT'D)  
Oh.

PARKER  
I don't know if it means  
anything... Maybe next time he  
comes over, make sure I'm awake.  
I'd love to meet him.

NIA  
Of course.

PARKER  
Maybe call those other realtors,  
just to be safe.

NIA  
Uhh, okay.

PARKER  
Okay?

NIA  
Yeah.

PARKER  
All right, well I'm gonna head out.

NIA  
Okay.

PARKER  
Love you.

NIA  
You too.

Parker paces over and gives her a kiss. He tastes something on his lips but thinks nothing of it before leaving. As the door to the garage opens, Nia now uncomfortably sits on her couch and watches her phone instead of the TV.

INT. PHILLIP'S HOUSE (BACK PATIO) - NIGHT

As the sun hides below the horizon, Phillip grills up some chicken. He slathers it in barbecue sauce and seasoning ahead of flipping.

Behind him is a sliding glass door that is left open. Inside the house are a few lights that are on guiding the way into the kitchen.

Phillip peacefully hums to himself while flipping the last chicken.

He plucks out his phone and sees that he doesn't have a text. So he pulls up Desmond's contact and sends him a text. "Hey, this is Phillip, do you still plan to come over? If not, we can resched-

TING!

A noise comes from inside Phillip's house.

He revolves around, checking what may have caused it. Nothing pops out to him yet his eyes do glare into a shade-filled corner past the kitchen. Phillip shakes it off and finishes the text he sends.

While looking down at his phone, a figure moves inside his house. Moving from one pitch-black area to another.

Phillip switches down the heat some on the grill and heads inside.

INT. PHILLIP'S HOUSE (KITCHEN)- CONTINUOUS

Phillip slides the glass door behind him shut and pivots back to his house. He makes his way toward the kitchen and opens the fridge. Grabbing a package of potato salad to set on the counter.

The open pantry door behind him is covered in shade, hiding something inside it.

Phillip closes the fridge door and passes the shade-filled pantry to place the salad on the counter.

Light footsteps come from somewhere O.S. and stops Phillip cold. He turns back and attempts to listen for more but doesn't hear anything.

Phillip takes a step forward towards the open pantry door, however, he suddenly stops.

(Beat)

Listening extremely closely, Phillip hears a muffled breath come from the shaded area. His heart starts to race as his feet pull him back to the counter.



Trying to potentially convince himself he didn't hear correctly, he perks up his ears to try again. And sure enough, underneath the quiet hum from the A.C, breathing is heard clear as day.

Phillip's hand reaches into his pocket and takes out his cell phone. He lowers his volume all the way down and dials 911. As it rings he takes another step back. Following only two rings, a voice is heard on the other end.

PHONE

911 what is your emergency?

Phillip, afraid to be heard, whispers into the phone.

PHILLIP

(Quietly)

I... I think someone is i-

PHONE

Hello?

PHILLIP

(Moderately louder)

I think som-

A figure dressed in entirely black bolts out of the pantry and tackles into Phillip. Knocking the phone to the ground, almost breaking it.

A struggle is heard O.C. before Phillip cries out.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

NO! NOO-

The snapping of a bone silences Phillip once and for all.

PHONE

Hello?... Are you there?

The heavy breathing from the figure is heard again, this time more verbose since they don't need to hide anymore.

INT. HOUSE (BEDROOM) - MORNING

Oddly matching with Parker's sleeping breaths, the sound of exhaled air frustrates Nia, who lies in bed next to him. More thoughts race through her mind, while her hands hold her phone tightly.

Parker twists over and rests his arm on Nia. Something she doesn't seem too fond of as she tucks away and stands up from the bed.

INT. HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - MORNING

Reaching the bottom of the stairs, Nia decides to skip the coffee this morning. Choosing to get straight to packing the boxes. She fills a box with miscellaneous items around her. However, with each new item she grabs, her desire weakens.

Gradually ending up throwing the items inside harder and harder. Eventually, she stops and starts to reconsider. She stares into the box and begins to convince herself to maybe think about staying.

Riding the high, Nia takes the items out of the box and places them back. She finishes the first box and moves on to the next. Ripping the tape off and taking some photos of her and Parker together out.

After setting it on a table she dully stares at the photo. But before too long, the doorbell rings. Nia, mildly confused, checks the time on her phone. "9:23".

Another ring at the door causes her to put the phone down and head over to it. Upon opening it, Nia finds two police officers on her porch.

NIA

Uhh, hello?

OFFICER #2

Hi, are you Nia Edmonds?

NIA

How can I help you, officers?

OFFICER #1

How are you this morning?

NIA

Good?

OFFICER #1

Good. Good.

OFFICER #2

The reason we're here is just to ask a couple of brief questions if you don't mind.

NIA

Okay?

OFFICER #2

Did you speak with Phillip Nickels yesterday? Around-

(MORE)

OFFICER #2 (CONT'D)

(Looks at notepad)

Noon?

NIA

I did. Is... Is everything alright?

OFFICER #2

We received a phone call from Mr. Nickel's residence yesterday night. The operator claimed to hear a struggle before sending a unit over.

OFFICER #1

Upon arriving, we found the home vacant and the grill on.

A concerned gaze falls upon Nia's face.

OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)

And we have a testimonial from a neighbor of yours that claims you might have been the last person to see him.

NIA

Yeah, yeah I was out front watering the plants when he walked by. He stopped and we chatted.

OFFICER #1

Do you remember what you talked about?

NIA

We just chit-chatted. Talked about me moving. How he was planning to move too.

OFFICER #2

Did he say where?

NIA

Tennessee. But in a couple of months. Can't imagine he left late last night or something.

OFFICER #2

Did he mention anything about what his plans were for the evening?

NIA

Not entirely... He was going to go into town, get some food, and then-

Nia catches herself early before saying Desmond's name.

OFFICER #2

Then?

NIA

Said he was gonna grill out and relax.

OFFICER #1

That's it?

Nia nods.

NIA

He was a homebody most nights.

OFFICER #1

I see.

NIA

Do you think it has something to do with the missing people?

OFFICER #1

It's too early for any assumptions. We can't say anything for certain until we have more information.

NIA

I see.

OFFICER #2

Nothing else worth mentioning? Nothing seemed odd with Mr. Nickels?

NIA

I can't say I noticed anything. We only talk once in a blue moon. So besides some catching up, we mainly talked about moving.

Officer #2 writes down on his notepad while the first officer glances behind Nia.

OFFICER #1

You seemed to be pretty packed up already.

NIA

Things are still up in the air.

OFFICER #1  
Not enough for you to hold on  
packing.

NIA  
Am I a suspect or something?

OFFICER #2  
No ma'am. Only gathering  
information.

NIA  
Obviously.

Officer #2 finishes his notes, puts away the notepad, and pulling out a card to hand over.

OFFICER #2  
If you think of anything or hear  
anything, feel free to give me a  
call.

NIA  
Will do.

Nia takes the card and stares back at the men.

OFFICER #2  
Well, that should be all. We will  
get out of your hair, have a nice  
day.

Nia fake smiles and nods while the other officer seems to take another look behind her before pivoting. Nia curls her upper lip ahead of closing the door.

Exiting back into the living room over to where her phone rests, Nia picks it up and makes a call.

KACIE (V.O.)  
Hello?

NIA  
Kacie.

KACIE (V.O.)  
Yeah?

NIA  
What are you doing?

KACIE (V.O.)  
Counting down the hours until it's  
socially acceptable to drink. Why?

NIA  
I just talked to a pair of police  
officers who knocked at my door.

KACIE (V.O.)  
What? Why? What did you do?

NIA  
Nothing. I didn't do anything. But  
they were asking about Phillip.

KACIE (V.O.)  
Nickels?

NIA  
Yeah.

KACIE (V.O.)  
Wh-

NIA  
Apparently, he's gone missing.

KACIE (V.O.)  
(Gasps)  
No!

NIA  
Yeah.

KACIE (V.O.)  
Why were they talking to you?

NIA  
I talked to him yesterday. He  
showed up and we chatted about  
moving. Someone saw us talking,  
that's why they came here.

KACIE (O.S.)  
What did Phillip say?

NIA  
Nothing. Nothing weird at least.

KACIE (V.O.)  
What about the cops?

NIA  
They were just asking basic  
questions... But I sort of lied.

KACIE (V.O.)  
You what?

NIA

Okay, not entirely. But I didn't tell them that Desmond was over. And that the two fellas got to talking and planned to meet up later.

KACIE (V.O.)

Desmond and Phillip?

NIA

Yeah.

PHONE

Why didn't you tell them?

Nia falls silent as her eyes drift to the stairs. She takes a number of steps away over to the other side of the room. Lowering her voice to speak into the phone.

NIA

I uhh... Me and Desmond spent the afternoon together.

KACIE (V.O.)

Together?... Like... Together-

NIA

Kind of.

KACIE (V.O.)

There's no kind of. Either you did or didn't.

NIA

We did.

KACIE (V.O.)

What did you do?

NIA

Activities?

KACIE (V.O.)

Activities?

NIA

Come on, you know what I mean.

KACIE (V.O.)

You didn't!

NIA  
I... I got caught up and stuff...  
happened.

KACIE (V.O.)  
Nia, no... After last year, you-

NIA  
I know... I know.

KACIE (V.O.)  
Did he make the first move or did  
you?

NIA  
... Me. By a long shot.

KACIE (V.O.)  
Nia-

NIA  
I said I know.

KACIE (V.O.)  
So... you didn't tell the cops  
about Desmond because?

NIA  
I don't know. I don't know. I got  
flustered, nervous, all the above.

KACIE (V.O.)  
Do you, I don't know, do you think  
Desmond did an-

RING! RING!

The doorbell rings once again.

KACIE (V.O.)  
Was that your door?

NIA  
... Yeah.

KACIE (V.O.)  
Who is it?

NIA  
I don't know.

Nia heads to the door and takes her time answering it.



KACIE (V.O.)  
Nia, be careful.

When the door opens up, Desmond is seen on the porch. He holds a mallet in one hand with his other behind his back.

NIA  
(Into phone)  
I'll call you back.

KACIE (V.O.)  
Nia, who is it?

NIA  
Bye.

Nia ends the call and fake smiles at Desmond.

NIA (CONT'D)  
Howdy.

DESMOND  
Howdy.

NIA  
What's with the uhh... Mallet?

DESMOND  
Oh, I was hoping to nail this in  
the front yard.

Desmond reveals his realtor sign from behind his back.

NIA  
Oh.

DESMOND  
If that's all right.

NIA  
Shouldn't the papers be signed  
first?

DESMOND  
Oh, is that not done?

NIA  
Nope.

DESMOND  
Oh... sorry. I uhh, well maybe I  
was looking for any excuse to come  
back over.

NIA

The square footage wasn't enough?

DESMOND

It... It was. I didn't text, I'm sorry. This is just bad timing.

Desmond steps back to leave.

NIA

No, no... It's fine. You can put it up.

DESMOND

You sure?

NIA

Yeah.

DESMOND

You seem... Off.

NIA

Must be because I didn't have my coffee.

DESMOND

That could be it.

NIA

I was up late last night watching a movie. What about you? Talk with Phillip for a while?

DESMOND

No, not at all. I got sidetracked for a bit and was late. I knocked on the door and called but got nothing. I imagine he went to sleep, once you're over fifty, bedtime comes rolling in early.

NIA

Hmmm.

DESMOND

Is it okay if I poked in for a moment? I have to use the restroom.

NIA

Uhh, Yeah. Yeah, of course.

Nia steps back and lets Desmond in. Giving him more space than she has anytime before.

DESMOND  
Okay if I leave this right here?

NIA  
Sure.

Desmond places the mallet and the sign on the floor.

DESMOND  
And whe-

NIA  
(Points)  
First door on the right.

DESMOND  
Gotcha, thank you.

Desmond heads past and enters the bathroom.

Nia stays in her original spot, watching him leave. Her eyes drift back down to the mallet while her heart races. Debating whether to grab it for potential self-defense or believe she is in no danger. Both splitting her right down the middle.

Nia extracts the card given to her by the cop and examines the number.

The toilet flushes O.S. prior to a sink is heard running.

Nia places her hand on her phone and takes a step toward the stairs. The bathroom door opens and Desmond heads back over.

DESMOND (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
I take it that doesn't get used  
often. With how clea-

Desmond stops talking which scares Nia.

She tightens her fist before rounding the corner to see Desmond stopped in the living room, staring at the picture frame Nia placed back on the table.

Nia doesn't say anything, only watching him. When Desmond switches up, he has an entirely new look about him. Almost as if he saw a ghost.

NIA  
What?

DESMOND  
Who... Who's this?

Desmond points to Parker in the photo.

NIA  
That's Parker.

She points upstairs as Desmond shakes his head, places the photo down, and backs up towards the kitchen.

NIA (CONT'D)  
What?

DESMOND  
No... No.

NIA  
What?

DESMOND  
That's... That's Daniel.

NIA  
Who? What?

DESMOND  
No, no, no.

NIA  
What the hell is goi-

Desmond drifts up to Nia and gets a cold shiver when he looks behind her. This gaze sends goosebumps down Nia's arms as she slowly twists.

By the front door, now holding the mallet in his gloved hands, is Parker. He doesn't say anything, yet his hands grip the handle tighter and tighter.

NIA (CONT'D)  
Parker... What are you do-

PARKER  
(To Desmond)  
How's it been, bud?

Nia switches to Desmond, who keeps taking tiny steps back.

DESMOND  
No.... No....

PARKER  
Yes.

NIA  
Parker what is going on.

PARKER  
That's a long story... But I'll  
shorten it for you.

Parker takes a step forward, which pushes both Nia and  
Desmond back a step.

PARKER (CONT'D)  
Our new realtor and I go back,  
quite some time.

The look of dread heightens on Desmond's face.

DESMOND  
I thought you die-

PARKER  
You thought wrong... I told you I'd  
get the last laugh.

NIA  
Parker! What i-

PARKER  
My name isn't Parker... At least  
not anymore. And that's thanks to  
Mr. Handsome over here.

Parker takes another step forward.

PARKER (CONT'D)  
You see, Parker had a history of  
sleeping with whoever was willing.  
It's always been a weakness, a  
crutch of his. He just can't seem  
to help it.

DESMOND  
It was one ti-

PARKER  
One is enough in my book. One is  
plenty. Whether it be your best  
friend sleeping with your  
girlfriend.

(Switches To Nia)  
Or your girlfriend sleeping with  
your best friend.

NIA  
I thought we were pas-

PARKER

Did you not hear me? One and done.  
That's my rule. One chance. Which  
you took and ruined last year  
sleeping with that CEO.

NIA

Park-

PARKER

SHUT UP!! You stupid little shell  
of a human. A disgusting, ransacked  
whore... I knew you'd sleep with  
him.

(Points to Desmond)

And I knew he wouldn't turn it  
down. It's in his blood, it's his  
instinct. Like a horny little  
rabbit.

Parker gets closer, which pushes Nia and Desmond closer.

PARKER (CONT'D)

Aww, look at you two. Huddling  
together.

DESMOND

What do you want?

PARKER

Nothing that I haven't gotten or  
done.

DESMOND

Done?

PARKER

You ever figure out how those holes  
at your remodeled house got done?  
Or better yet, did you ever look  
inside them? Because I think you'd  
be surprised at what you'd find. Or  
well, actually you wouldn't.  
Because it sort of seems as if,  
you're the one that did it.

DESMOND

Did wha-

PARKER

DON'T INTERRUPT... I wasn't done  
spilling the beans... You know what  
all those missing people have in  
common?

Desmond and Nia stay quiet.

PARKER (CONT'D)  
Come on, guess. You can do it...  
GUESS!

(Beat)

PARKER (CONT'D)  
Their clients or potential clients.  
People wanting to move... People  
who've contacted you or vice versa.

DESMOND  
You killed them?

PARKER  
No... You killed them. The moment  
you spoke to them.

NIA  
You don't have to do thi-

PARKER  
Oh, don't pull that cliché. You are  
just as guilty. In-fact, maybe  
Desmond here, afraid of being found  
out, wanted to keep you quiet. I  
mean, you already talked to the  
police. Thanks to that helpful call  
from a "Neighbor".

NIA  
You called the cops?

PARKER  
It's easy to do it anonymously  
these days. A bit too easy if you  
ask me. And after years of trying  
to move on from what he did,  
(Narrows in on Nia)  
You're actually what broke me.

NIA  
Me?

PARKER  
You broke me. Shattered, defiled,  
degraded me. And I was never going  
to forgive you. Never.

DESMOND  
Willing to kill innocen-

PARKER

No, no. You two caused this. I acted on it, but you caused it.

NIA

So what's the plan here? Killing both of us?

PARKER

Well, more so saving. Or attempting to at least.

Another step forward brings everyone into the kitchen.

INT. HOUSE (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

Nia and Desmond are on one side of the island while Parker is on the opposite.

PARKER

I figure, in this scheme of mine. I tried saving you, Nia. But Desmond was able to finish the job before I got here. And filled with rage, I dented Desmond's skull with this mallet he used on you.

NIA

Why are you telling us this?

PARKER

Because I'll never be able to tell anyone else. And it's just too juicy to sit on this entire time. Plus it's not as if you'll be able to tell anyone.

NIA

Baby, plea-

PARKER

If you speak another word... well, actually I don't think threats can get any worse than this.

DESMOND

All because of a high school mistake?

PARKER

High school is a very influential time. Molds the habits we carry for the rest of our life.



Parker drags out his phone and dials 911.

PARKER (CONT'D)  
 And grudges don't die, they only  
 simmer.  
 (Into phone)  
 Please help! Someone broke in and  
 just killed my wife! Help!! HEEL-

Parker hangs up the phone.

Nia cries as Desmond grabs a knife from the counter behind  
 him. However, before he can pivot back-

BANG!

Desmond is shot in the head and falls dead to the ground.

Nia gasps yet has no words come out of her mouth.

PARKER (CONT'D)  
 A knife wasn't going to do much for  
 him.

Parker places the gun on the table, reaches over, and knocks  
 a box onto the floor, followed by a few more.

PARKER (CONT'D)  
 Gotta make it seem like there was  
 some struggle.

Unsure of what to do, Nia stays frozen.

PARKER (CONT'D)  
 Such as a deer in the headlights,  
 my lord you are pathetic. Are you  
 going to even fight back? You know,  
 at least try and scratch me, get  
 some DNA under your fingernails or  
 something?

Nia has more tears fall down her cheeks.

PARKER (CONT'D)  
 All right then... Your choice.

Parker readies the mallet in his hand.

PARKER (CONT'D)  
 You ready?

NIA  
 I... I...

PARKER

I loved you.

Parker has a tear of his own fall before he grits his teeth and raises the mallet. Widening his eyes and letting out a growl-

EXT. HOUSE (DRIVEWAY) - DAY

A cool breeze whisks past the plants along the front of the house. A brief shriek comes from inside the house until they fall silent.

Cop sirens approach in the distance, getting closer and closer.

A cop car parks in the driveway and two officers sprint towards the front door. Before they get there, Parker falls out the door and cries out.

PARKER

HELP! HELP!! My wife!! She's-

One of the officers rushes in while the other pulls Parker into the yard for safety.

Parker doesn't make it far before collapsing with tears.

PARKER (CONT'D)

NO!!! NOOO!!!

The other officer hustles inside to back up the other.

Parker's outburst continues as his face is buried in his hands.

OFFICER #2 (O.S.)

I need an ambulance immediately.  
There's... there's a pair of  
bodies.

Parker gently lifts his head to stare directly into the Camera. His tears feel genuine until an awful smile crawls its way across his lips.