

Dolly Dimple

PROPERTY OF



NOT TO BE DUPLICATED

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Dolly Dimple

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FADE IN

On the dulled BLACK KEYS of an IBM Selectric typewriter. So close we see particles of dust between them as we move. The once white characters are discolored and worn from use.

Pin drop silent in the room we are in. Except the sound of two people breathing.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(gentle)
Come on.

A LITTLE GIRL giggles, soft and sweet.

WIDER - THE ROOM

Dark wood panelling. Framed photos on walls. Library feel due to abundance of books. Soft afternoon sunlight streams through the window.

PETER MASTERS, 36, sits in a chair at a large oak desk in front of the typewriter. His DAUGHTER KATIE, 4, stands in front of him, eyes even with the keys.

Katie lifts her hands, holds them over the keys like a concert pianist focusing before a strenuous piece. Looks back at her father's face apprehensively. *Like this?*

PETER
Yes. You can do it.

But Katie doesn't. Peter smiles, gently puts his hand over hers, touches her finger to a key.

The golf ball-like element hurls forward, spins and smacks a character on the white bond paper in fresh black ink.

Katie turns to him. A tickled grin breaks out on her face.

FREEZE ON HER IMAGE

Until it slowly disintegrates. Into grain. Into dots. Into her face --

TITLE: TWENTY-FOUR YEARS LATER

-- at her work table in her apartment in NEW YORK CITY. She stares gravely at her laptop screen.

The four-year-old has grown into a beautiful young woman, but presently her face is racked with stress and tension. There is a barely discernible scar on her eyelid.

CONTINUED:

Seconds TICK off. The ticking grows LOUDER. Katie's eyes dart to a clock on her desk: 3:00 A.M.

The desk is a mess of note pads, books, pens and pencils.

Katie nervously chews a fingernail. A thin ring-shaped scar encircles the base of her forefinger.

We glide around Katie and see what's on the screen:

NOTHING.

Except her own stressed reflection staring back at her.

Her eyes flick to THREE PHOTOS on a bookshelf near her desk, in intricate hand-carved wood frames. From our p.o.v. the pictures look like four boxes of white due to the lamp light reflecting off them.

Katie's eyes dart back to the computer screen. Her expression tightens. She brings her hands to her face and hides it in them.

INT. KATIE'S APARTMENT - NEXT DAY

Katie's hair still damp from the shower as she moves through her apartment, quickly flips through mail, mostly BILLS, now and then tossing junk mail in a wastebasket.

A MAILER with boldfaced type, *HAVE YOU SEEN ME?* and a LITTLE GIRL'S PHOTO beneath it gives Katie pause.

Katie glances at the clock, realizes she's late. She shoulders her bag, quickly moves to the front door until:

PHONE RINGS. Once. Twice. Machine picks it up. Voice of a MAN.

MAN (O.S.)

Katie? You home? Kate? It's Dad.
Calling to see how you are...

Katie moves toward her phone, almost there when--

MAN (O.S.)

...and how the writing's going.

This stops her. She listens to his voice.

MAN (O.S.)

Okay, call me when you get in.

Click. Katie's face. Relieved.

EXT. KATIE'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - EARLY AFTERNOON

Katie locks the door. Her eyes pass over her apartment number: 101. She turns. Moves down the long hallway.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Katie passes by JOHNNY the DOORMAN. Short, Puerto Rican, singularly upbeat. Flashes a bright smile for Katie and gestures outside.

JOHNNY
It's a beautiful day! Look!

Katie fabricates a smile. Johnny reads the strain in her eyes, subdues the optimism.

JOHNNY (cont'd)
Well have a nice day, Ms. Masters.

KATIE
Thank you Johnny.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - SUBWAY ENTRANCE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Katie from behind, descending...

INT. SUBWAY STATION - EARLY AFTERNOON

Busy. Katie waits to pass through the crowded turnstile, metro card in hand.

A WOMAN ahead of her holds the hand of a poorly dressed LITTLE BOY with large dark eyes, repeatedly swipes her metro card. Turnstile computer print reads: *zero balance*.

Woman turns back, face stained with frustration. Katie meets her eyes, holds up her own card. Woman looks at her, grateful. Katie smiles, swipes them through and then herself.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - MOVING - MINUTES LATER

Packed. A story in every face. The Woman stands with her little Boy nearby. He watches Katie with unblinking eyes. Katie averts her gaze, looks at various advertisements: hemorrhoids, the new career...her eyes come to rest on a vacation ad with a FATHER, MOTHER and GIRL, arms round each other, splashing gleefully in the ocean, with a headline: *Brazil. It's A State Of Mind*.

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN - SUBWAY EXIT - AFTERNOON

Katie hits the sidewalk, promptly engulfed by Manhattan insanity. At once: an elderly man stumbles to the sidewalk, bike messenger nearly hits Katie, kid with hand-truck screams profanities at turbaned taxi driver, the piercing shrieking brakes of slowing city bus penetrate the brain. And people. People *everywhere*.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - MIDTOWN - AFTERNOON

Katie sees her ghostly reflection in the windowed facade of the building, pats her hair, tries to relax. She feels sweat stinging in her armpits. Gets jostled by a pedestrian.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - LOBBY - AFTERNOON

Centrally processed tranquility. Katie's shoes echo against the marble floor as she walks to the elevator bank.

INT. ELEVATOR - OFFICE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Empty. Katie presses the fourth floor, moves to the back. The door doesn't close right away and two people get on. Three more. And more and more until it is completely packed. Katie is crushed in a back corner.

We drift through the faces and finds Katie's. A bead of sweat creeps slowly down her cheek...

INT. ANANIAS BOOKS - LOBBY - AFTERNOON

Serious New York publishing house, humming with activity. Katie waits in a chair. Sleek table in front of her has Monday morning trades fanned across it. Katie sees a copied list of *top ten best selling books*. She stares. It seems to stare back. And mock her. She covers it with a magazine.

INT. ANANIAS BOOKS - HALLWAY

A FEMALE ASSISTANT, 25, leads Katie down a hallway.

Katie glances into a vestibule as she walks and sees an unattended copy machine rapidly spitting out copies before she steps into the...

INT. CORNER OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Of SABRINA. Katie's editor. 40's, smart and stylish. Knows people, has made some famous. Sabrina is no nonsense yet a bit maternal with Katie. She stands.

SABRINA
Katie!

KATIE
Hey Sabrina.

SABRINA
How are you?

Cheek kisses.

KATIE
Great.

Sabrina indicates seat across from her desk. Katie sits.

KATIE (cont'd)
Thanks.

Sabrina sits down as well. We see a book on her desk: *Inspirations - By Katie Masters*. Sabrina leans forward, looks at Katie expectantly.

SABRINA
So...

An air of tension arrives with these words...

KATIE
It's going *really* well. That's the best way of putting it...slow, but well.

Sabrina tries to hide her disappointment but it's palpable.

SABRINA
You didn't bring anything? I thought we decided--

KATIE
I'm shaping it a bit more, that's all.

SABRINA
(firm)
The clock is ticking, Katie.

KATIE
I know. I know.

Sabrina smiles.

CONTINUED:

SABRINA
No sophomore slump, right?

KATIE
Sabrina, please.

Sabrina nods, assured by Katie's confidence, picks up "*Inspirations*," looks at the cover. Katie locks eyes with Back dust jacket photo of herself. Smiling.

SABRINA
Inspirations did fine for us, but
he's--

She gestures toward the unseen titan in some penthouse office who controls Ananias Books.

SABRINA (cont'd)
--he's telling us we have to cut
titles that aren't moving. Anyone
not selling or being optioned for
film is vulnerable. It's sink or
swim time Katie, and I don't want
you to drown.

KATIE
I'm not drowning, I'm finessing.

Sabrina nods, writes something on her appointment book.

SABRINA
I know it's not easy going from non-
fiction to fiction but--

KATIE
I just need a few days.

SABRINA
Today's Monday so... Thursday?

KATIE
Fine.

SABRINA
The deadline.

KATIE
Thursday.

SABRINA
Then this meeting never happened.

EXT. STREET - MIDTOWN MANHATTAN - KATIE WALKING - AFTERNOON

Katie walks through the heat, stress and noise. The cool facade she maintained with Sabrina melts into tension.

INT. ROBERTSON CHEMISTS - UPPER EAST SIDE - AFTERNOON

Katie waits for the COUNTER PERSON to ring up prescription for her.

COUNTER PERSON (O.S.)
That's four-twenty-nine with your
card.

She opens her wallet and pays. She glances down, her eyes pass over her own image on her license.

Counter Person hands her a small white bag and some change. We see what the prescription is for: XANAX.

EXT. STREET - UPPER EAST SIDE - AFTERNOON

Katie passes a Nightclub, *Epigonia*. Something about the name makes her stare as she steps into the crosswalk. She doesn't see the red light and--

--A HORN BLASTS. Closer. LOUDER. A HUGE BLACK SUV almost hits Katie, *SWERVES* last second. The difference between dead and alive is three feet.

KATIE
(a gasp)
Jesus...

EXT. STREET - UPPER EAST SIDE - AFTERNOON

Children. Laughing faces. Bright colorful clothing. Bounding through the entrance of *Bridge Elementary School* as it lets out for the day.

We find Katie, staring at this sea of innocence. The 5-10 year-old set bid farewell to each other and are collected by nannies and parents.

Anxiety in Katie's face fades as she watches, as though this tableau is lending perspective.

Two exhilarated EIGHT-YEAR-OLD GIRLS chatter. One tosses a knapsack over her shoulder. The other writes in her notebook with unbridled glee.

ANOTHER GIRL exits holding her FATHER'S hand. He looks at something she's written on a piece of paper, smiles proudly at her.

Katie takes in the scene, something in her eyes remembering.

INT. KATIE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Katie's face. In the shower. Tears fall from bloodshot eyes. Water rains down. She slowly slides down the shower wall.

And DISAPPEARS.

INT. KATIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Katie. Staring at her computer screen. The screen still blank. Silent. Except the ticking clock.

Katie inhales deeply. Adjusts herself in her seat. Her eyes fill with resolve. She places her hands on the keyboard.

Eyes. Hands. Nothing happens. The screen taunts her with its emptiness. Ticking clock with its irrevocability. She closes her eyes.

KATIE
(softly)
Fuck.

She opens her eyes. Slowly. They are drawn toward the book shelf near her desk. Toward the four photos in hand carved wood frames. She looks at the images. Studies them.

Her eyes dart to a book on her desk, a book resting on top of her own book, *Inspirations*. It's called *Look Inside*. By *Peter Masters*.

She opens it to a marked page. Reads. Closes it. Lays it back on her desk. Looks at the blank computer screen.

Katie's eyes move to her father's book again. Slowly, with her fingertips, she slides it, to the edge of the table, in tiny increments, until it slides off and *SMACKS HARD* against the floor and we are--

INT. KATIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Katie is on the phone. Paces as she talks.

KATIE
They're doing some tests and I feel
like I should be there for him.

INTERCUTTING - SABRINA - ANANIAS BOOKS - SAME

SABRINA
Katie, it's your *father*, of course.

CONTINUED:

KATIE
I'm really sorry about--

SABRINA
(interrupting)
Something like this gives us
perspective.

KATIE
(relieved)
Thanks.

SABRINA
Just show me what you have when you
return.

KATIE
(not relieved)
Yes, okay.

SABRINA
Don't worry about finessing. And do
me a favor and tell Peter I loved
his last book. Maybe that will
raise his spirits.

KATIE
I will. Thanks Sabrina.

EXT. SANTA BARBARA AIRPORT - TARMAC - DAY

Katie walks from the plane to the small terminal, computer
bag over her shoulder.

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR - MOVING - SANTA BARBARA - DAY

Heading up State Street. Then up a hill through the winding
roads of Mission Canyon.

EXT. CEMETERY GATES - RENTAL CAR - SANTA BARBARA - DAY

Katie pulls to a stop. Gets out. Walks through the opened
gate, moves up a small pathway between headstones of various
shapes and sizes. She carries lilies in her hand.

EXT. CEMETERY - KATIE - DAY

Katie stares at an epitaph etched into a granite headstone:

Eleanor Masters May 18 1949 - June 16th 1989

She touches the headstone lightly with her fingertips. Then
she crouches down, lays the lilies at the foot of the stone.

EXT. STREET - RENTAL CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Katie pulls to a stop on a quiet tree-lined street. She gets out, closes the door.

Katie walks toward a house. Nice. Peeking out from between Sycamore and Eucalyptus trees. She walks across the manicured lawn toward the side of the house.

The address, 429, is stencilled in black on one of the columns framing the front porch.

Katie moves to a high wood gate leading to the backyard, unlocks it.

EXT. PETER MASTER'S BACKYARD - LATE AFTERNOON

Lush. A PATIO in the center with latticework overhead supporting vines and creeping plants. Hummingbirds buzz about a swaying bird feeder just larger than a ring box that hangs from the latticework.

LOUD PIANO MUSIC plays inside the house. Katie walks round the back of the house. Stands outside a sliding glass door. Takes a deep breath and exhales like someone about to get their teeth drilled, and steps inside.

INT. PETER MASTERS'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Katie drops her bags. Looks around the room.

KATIE

Dad?

No reply. Music loud in here, coming from down the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Katie walks down it slowly...

KATIE

Daddy?

Still no answer. She approaches a door. Slowly. She Knocks. Again. No answer. Turns the handle, gently opens the door...

KATIE POV - HER FATHER'S WORK ROOM

PETER MASTERS sits with his back to her, at his desk, deep in concentration, manuscript pages stacked next to his typewriter.

CONTINUED:

Walls around him plastered with framed editions of his books and literary prizes, photographs of himself with well-known literary figures. The ego altar.

KATIE

Dad?

Peter *jerks* around, knocks a glass of water onto his work.

PETER

Damn it!

He jumps out of his chair, *angry*.

PETER (cont'd)

You scared the hell out of me
Katie.

Katie is mortified. Peter scrutinizes his daughter.

KATIE

(wincing)

I'm sorry Dad.

PETER

Get me a... never mind I... *damn*
it...

Peter blots up water with tissues, flings them into a wastebasket. Peter is handsome, rugged at 62, in possession of a thriving self-regard. And contrary to what Katie told Sabrina he's as healthy as a horse.

PETER (cont'd)

Let me turn down the Chopin.

He moves across the room to the stereo, turns it down.

KATIE

I was going to call--

PETER

(cuts her off)

You don't need an appointment
Katie.

Peter moves to Katie, mechanically embraces her.

EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - BACK PATIO - NIGHT

Shadows dance over Katie and her father as they sit beneath large candles dangling from the latticework. They drink. Peter has had a few.

CONTINUED:

PETER

So we're expecting a new Katie
Masters book on the spring list.

KATIE

That's...that's what I came to talk
to you about.

PETER

I'm the first to read it?
Brilliant!

KATIE

It's...not that.

PETER

Not what?

KATIE

I've got an extension.

PETER

(correction)

You *have* an extension.

Katie blanches.

KATIE

Right. 'Have.'

PETER

Why?

KATIE

Why what?

PETER

Why did you get an extension?

KATIE

I needed more time.

PETER

If you're not ready tell them to
fuck off.

KATIE

I'm not you dad.

PETER

I take great pleasure in that.
(beat) Telling them.

KATIE

I can't seem to, I'm all over the
place...I feel like--

CONTINUED:

PETER
You went through this on
Inspirations. You wouldn't let it
go.

The candle illuminating Katie is extinguished by the wind.
Peter's shadow looms over her.

KATIE
I didn't really write *Inspirations*.
I just found people who did good
things and wrote about *them*.

She nods. Peter thinks about Katie's first book.

PETER (cont'd)
The forty-two pages you *did* write
to contextualize their stories were
as good as anything in that book.
Every review said so.

She is surprised and pleased he knows the actual number of
pages she wrote, but...

PETER (cont'd)
Granted it wasn't the most original
piece of work. But these quasi-
spiritual books that remind people
there's good in the world rarely
are.

Ouch. Peter lifts his drink, slowly knocks it back. Katie's
eyes find a ring of water on the table left by Peter's glass.

PETER
It's fiction Katie, not a profile
of some do-gooder from St. Louis.

Katie winces, subtly.

PETER
Dig *deep*. Use your experience.
Imagine a world and make it look
real.
(beat)
Steal from yourself.

KATIE
Well I'm not exactly...

PETER
Not exactly what, Katie?

A long beat. Peter is impatient with her lack of response,
rattles the ice in his glass, slides it across the table.

CONTINUED:

KATIE
Another?

He nods. Katie stands.

PETER
Two cubes, remember?

She nods at him, pads away toward the house...

INT. KITCHEN - A MINUTE LATER

Katie stands at the counter, slicing limes on a cutting board with a paring knife.

PETER (O.S.)
What are you doing here?

Katie turns, looks at him. Peter waits for her to speak.

PETER
Is there something you want to tell
me?

A wall clock ticks away in the silence...*tick, tick, tick...*

KATIE
I just wanted...to see you.

PETER
Uh huh.

Katie drops the lime in the drink, hands it to him.

KATIE
I went to see her today...before I
came home.

Eye contact.

PETER
Is that what you're writing about?

He sips his drink. She looks at his eyes.

KATIE
Do you ever go?

Peter stares into his glass, his answer has a edge to it.

PETER
No.

He looks at his daughter. There is a shift in his mood.

CONTINUED:

PETER
I'm actually a bit tired.
(re: drink)
Think I'll take this one to bed.

He moves to the kitchen door, stops, turns back to Katie.

PETER
I certainly hope you haven't put me
in there anywhere.

Peter disappears into the hallway. Katie looks down at her hand, realizes she still has the knife in it...

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT AFTERNOON

Katie. At the kitchen table. Staring at her computer screen. BLANK. She hears, coming from Peter's workroom, the confident rapid tapping of fingers on keys.

She turns, looks out the kitchen window, sees the small bird-feeder hanging from the latticework. It sways in the breeze.

The sound of her father typing GROWS...ECHOES...becomes...

POUNDING

Louder. And LOUDER. Takes us to...

EXT. DAY - RUNNING SHOES POUNDING AGAINST

PAVEMENT...THEN GRASS...THEN DIRT...

WIDER REVEALING

Katie running hard in the hills near her father's house, pushing, punishing herself for her inability to break through. Drive, energy, fierce aerobic breathing. She reaches a crest of a hill, begins to descend, gaining speed...

Faster now, faster, faster...

TOO FAST.

Something trips her up and she... *PLUNGES OVER THE SIDE*

EXT. RAVINE - DUSK

Katie tumbles out of control through brush and dirt. Stops twenty feet down in a twisted heap. She lies there. Dazed. Slowly sits up. Bloody scrapes on her knees and arms.

CONTINUED:

She lays there, trying to comprehend what just happened. She gingerly stands. Something ten feet away catches her eye.

A PATCH OF PINK.

Half buried under brush and leaves. Katie stares. Looks up at the road. She's going to leave. Looks at the patch of pink.

Road, pink, road, pink. Katie is torn. But drawn. She moves toward it, drags it out.

It's a child's knapsack, weatherbeaten from what looks like years of exposure. Adorned with faded bits of ribbon, corroded key chains and a plastic "D" attached to a loop with tiny rusted chains fastened to half dollar-sized mirrors.

Katie unzips the rusted zipper and looks inside.

A child's rotted red sweater. Eight pencils rubber banded together. Katie takes them out, holds them in front of her eyes, sees long-nosed Pinocchio faces where erasers should be. Looks back in the knapsack. Sees a school textbook.

And three 8 1/2 x 11 notebooks.

Katie removes one of them. The cover has a hand written title: *Dolly Dimple*. Faint and faded from the elements.

Katie opens it. The pages are brittle from the elements, but dense with a child's writing in different colors: blue, black, red and green.

Katie flips through, surprised at the density, length and precision.

About every ten pages there are drawings: a man's angry face, an airplane, a box, a woman's face, a finger and an eye.

She pauses on a page. On one side of facing pages she sees the letter "D," on the other side its mirror image.

She turns back to the beginning. And she's immediately sucked in...

KATIE'S POV - NOTEBOOK FRAGMENT

"my name is Dolly Dimple and this is my story"

KATIE'S EYES

Reading on. And on. Oblivious to the blood running down her knee from the fall.

KATIE'S POV - NOTEBOOK FRAGMENT

"twisting turning falling, hoping for the beginning to end"

KATIE

Reads these mysterious words, completely caught up...

TWO VOICES up on the street break her concentration.

An ELDERLY COUPLE briskly walk past. They pause at the top of the ravine, begin stretching as they talk...

KATIE FREEZES

Crouches in silence. Noiselessly slides the notebook back into the knapsack and sticks it under some brush. She sneaks behind a small tree. *Shhhhhhhh...*

The couple continue to talk and stretch. Katie waits. Breathing quietly. Then slowly, without a sound, she sneaks back up the hill behind brush as the night begins to fall...

INT. PETER MASTER'S KITCHEN - MIDNIGHT

Katie sits in front of her blank computer screen. Gazes at it. She slowly types: *D O L L Y D I M P L E*.

She stares at the words. For a long time. And they at her.

She selects. And DELETES.

INT. PETER MASTER'S HOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - 3:00 A.M.

Katie is in bed. Katie cannot sleep. The bedside clock ticks relentlessly in the silence. Here eyes stare at the ceiling like it's descending upon her...

EXT. RAVINE - TWENTY MINUTES LATER - NIGHT

A flashlight beam pierces the darkness, searching...

EXT. RAVINE - NIGHT - KATIE

On her knees, digging like an animal, BREATHING HEAVILY, filth encrusted fingernails illuminated by the flashlight. She's wearing a black windbreaker.

She locates the pink of the knapsack, reaches for it, pulls it out. Her eyes widen as she unzips it. She takes out one of the notebooks. She feels it in her hands. Her breathing slows.

CONTINUED:

She shines the light across the cover and reads: *Dolly Dimple*

KATIE'S FACE

Pained. Torn. *Desperate*. Is she really capable of this?

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - 4:30 AM

A DRAWER opens, reveals a large black fountain pen. Katie takes the pen. Stands at the counter, writes A NOTE:

Dad. Have to get back to work. Katie.

Katie shoulders her computer case, grabs her travel bag, turns off the light. Slowly, blindly, she creeps her way through the darkness, across the creaking kitchen floor, and disappears into the

BLACK

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - MORNING

Hard cuts. Noise. Bustle. Concrete. Glass. Stress and energy.

TITLE: TWO WEEKS LATER

INT. CLOSE ON - TEETH - CHEWING A FINGERNAIL - PULL BACK

Slowly. VERY slowly. Reveal Katie's tense face. She is looking right at us. Hold this.

SABRINA (O.S.)

I'm completely blown away, Katie.

Katie lets out a silent sigh of relief. Her face relaxes.

INT. ANANIAS BOOKS - SABRINA'S OFFICE - NEW YORK - MORNING

Katie sits across from Sabrina. Sabrina holds a manuscript in her hands, knocked out by it. She puts it down on her desk, touches it like it's treasure as she excitedly speaks. Cover page reads: *Dolly Dimple*.

SABRINA

It's just so...*imaginative*. Somehow - God they just love this upstairs - somehow you've spoken to kids *and* adults. And I love it, Katie. Much, much broader target market. The character, the storytelling, just fantastic. And unexpected.

CONTINUED:

SABRINA (cont'd)
(eye contact)
Your father is going to be so proud
of you.

We MOVE IN on Katie and feel the discord in her eyes...

EXT. STREET - UPPER EAST SIDE - NOON

Quiet street. Trees and townhouses. A WOMAN bent over between cars. Vomiting. She straightens up. It's Katie.

Katie wipes her chin with her sleeve, stumbles onto the sidewalk and heads up the street.

INT. KATIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NEXT DAY - AFTERNOON

Curtains drawn. Katie sits on the floor in her underwear. In the dark. Her guilty eyes glow with shame.

INT. KATIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - ONE HOUR LATER

Katie sits on the edge of her bed. She stares at her phone, tense, grasping for resolve. She picks up the receiver, dials.

VOICE (OS)
HarperCollins.

KATIE
(hesitant)
Sabrina Constantine... please.

VOICE (O.S.)
Who's calling?

KATIE
Katie Masters.

VOICE (O.S.)
Yes Ms. Masters. One moment.

Katie on hold. Katie waits. Katie looks like she wants to disappear. She waits. And waits some more.

INTERCUTTING

SABRINA
Katie!

KATIE
(voice weak)
Sabrina?

CONTINUED:

SABRINA

Hi!

Katie clears her throat, draws a deep, tremulous breath.

KATIE

Sabrina, I...just...I--

SABRINA

(off Katie's flimsy voice)
What'd you do, go out and
celebrate?

KATIE

(voice cracks)
...I just wanted...

To tell you. Katie's eyes close. Tight.

KATIE (cont'd)

To say...

The truth. Her chance. Is closing. Tighter. A vise choking her. She can't breath.

KATIE (cont'd)

Thank you for...

Her eyes open.

KATIE (cont'd)

For believing me.
(correction, quick)
Believing in me.

SABRINA

I never, not for one second,
doubted you. Do you understand me?
You've got the Master's gene!

Katie brings her hand to her forehead. She makes a fist. Tightens it. She grimaces.

SABRINA (cont'd)

I know how hard it is to do this.
Just sit back and enjoy the ride.
And I'm going to be with you every
step of the way.

Katie hangs up. Slowly turns to the closet mirror and sees her face. Can she live with what she sees there?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

You've got stress lines around your
eyes...

INT. BACKSTAGE - MAKE-UP ROOM - CHARLIE ROSE SHOW - SIX MONTHS LATER

Katie, with VERA, 40, a make-up artist. Both illuminated by lights framing the mirror. Katie is nervous. The flip side of the smiling personality on the dust jacket of *Dolly Dimple* sitting on the make-up table and reflected in the mirror.

VERA
Watch me make them disappear.

INT. CHARLIE ROSE SHOW - NIGHT

Katie with CHARLIE ROSE. She's uneasy, trying to mask it.

CHARLIE ROSE
Was it easier for you having a famous writer as a father? Or harder?

KATIE
I'd have to say it was harder.

Charlie looks down at his notes...

CHARLIE ROSE
Then you must find some pleasure in the fact that sales of *Dolly Dimple* have outsold all his books put together.

KATIE
If I had known so many people were going to read the book I would never have dared to...write it...

CAMERA FLASH! KATIE'S FACE IN *VOGUE*.

FLASH CUT: Katie removes a check for \$300,000 from an envelope.

INT. CNN STUDIOS - "LARRY KING LIVE"

Katie talks with LARRY. A *little* bit more at ease now.

LARRY
...I understand. Now, you're donating twenty percent of your earnings on *Dolly Dimple* to missing children's funds, why?

Katie shifts uncomfortably in the glare of the studio lights.

CONTINUED:

KATIE

It's an opportunity to do something good, and I'd like to take advantage of it while I can...

CAMERA FLASH! KATIE'S FACE IN *HARPER'S BAZAAR*.

FLASH CUT: Katie flushes her Xanax prescription down the toilet.

INT. TODAY SHOW - MORNING

Katie sits with KATIE COURIC. Steaming coffee on the table between them. Katie is transformed. Confident. New hairstyle. Stylish clothes. Lording over her little sublet in TV land.

KATIE

I think every writer uses his or her own experience in one way or another.

KATIE COURIC

(nothing implied, smiling)
And this is yours?

KATIE

You could say that.

CAMERA FLASH! KATIE'S FACE IS IN *PEOPLE*

FLASH CUT: Katie and Sabrina at a book party. Glowing. Drinking. All eyes on Katie.

INT. PETER MASTER'S HOUSE - HIS STUDY - MORNING

Peter. From behind. Standing mannequin still. Listening to *Fresh Air with Terry Gross* on NPR.

TERRY GROSS (O.S.)

(the synopsis)

A psychological fantasy written by an imaginative eight year-old girl chronicling her turbulent emotions.
(beat) Why do you think Dolly Dimple has struck such a chord?

INT. NPR STUDIOS - "FRESH AIR" WITH TERRY GROSS - DAY

Katie, headset on, speaks into a microphone. Terry Gross sits across a table from her.

CONTINUED:

KATIE
(self-possessed)
I think people are responding to
the way this character has
processed that experience.

TERRY GROSS
(nodding)
I think so too. It's written in
childlike prose, but it possesses
the wisdom and soul of someone much
older. It's a very distinct voice.

KATIE
I certainly hope people think so.

BARNES AND NOBLE - NYC - KATIE READING - NIGHT

Packed house. Two hundred people. Rapt. Silent. Focused on
Katie. She presents the passage with confidence and emotion.

KATIE
And she lay with her eyes closed,
afraid to open them, knowing she
would soon be going to a strange
place, a place far away.

The AUDIENCE ERUPTS IN APPLAUSE.

Katie accepts it, face glowing. She turns away from the crowd
and...very subtly...the glow fades away...

The sound of applause becomes distant as we go...

I/E. UNDERWATER - DAY

Shafts of sunlight glimmer and bend. A distorted human form
drifts dream-like through quivering prisms.

KATIE (V.O.)
...a place before the place before
the place that was certain to bring
her harm...

TITLE: ONE YEAR LATER

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - BACKYARD - POOL - DAY

Katie's face breaks surface and she draws a deep breath. Her
wet face glistens in the sun.

She climbs out, towels herself off, looks across her large
backyard to her Spanish style house.

EXT. IVY RESTAURANT - BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

Al fresco. Flawless California weather. Sabrina and Katie doing the coffee and desert after doing the lunch.

SABRINA
Have you thought about a sequel?

KATIE
Will you let me enjoy this one?

SABRINA
Everyone keeps asking me what you're doing next. I'm sure you have some secret up your sleeve.

KATIE
Let's get a check.
(signals for it)
I've got that flight this afternoon to Portland for the book signing.

Sabrina takes out her wallet. Katie waves it off.

KATIE (cont'd)
No no, it's mine.

Katie places a credit card on the check. A WAITER takes it away. Sabrina looks around, up at the deep blue sky.

SABRINA
I should get a place out here, too.

The waiter returns, places the card and receipt on the table, says the next line like he'd say "thank you for coming."

WAITER
Here you go you fucking thief.

And Katie goes PALE...

Sabrina smiles up at him like he said nothing. He walks off.

SABRINA
Thanks for lunch sweetheart.

Sabrina sees Katie's face...

SABRINA (cont'd)
Hey... you all right? Katie?

KATIE
I'm fine... I'm okay.

SABRINA
You're white as a ghost.

CONTINUED:

KATIE

No...yes...I'm...maybe...I ate...

Katie trembles as she signs the check. They stand.

SABRINA

Come on, I'll walk you to your car.

Sabrina takes Katie by the arm, guides her toward the exit. The waiter smiles at them as they leave.

WAITER

Have a nice day...

INT. AIRPLANE - BUSINESS CLASS - LATE AFTERNOON

Katie. Mid-flight. Lost in thought. Having white wine. Staring out the cabin window.

EXT. BORDERS BOOKSTORE - PORTLAND OREGON - DUSK

Long line of mostly female teens clutching copies of *Dolly Dimple* spills out of the entrance and snakes fifty feet down the sidewalk.

INT. BORDERS BOOKSTORE - PORTLAND OREGON - DUSK

A LARGE TABLE in a cordoned-off section of the store. Katie in the middle of a signing. Flanked by TWO STORE MANAGERS. One person near the front of the line stands out from this young mostly female crowd:

NICHOLAS ANDREWS

Late-thirties. Handsome. Watchful. Holds *Dolly Dimple* to his chest. Something compels Katie to look at him more than once as he inches toward the front of the line. Strange to have a man among all these kids. And maybe flattering. Nicholas finally reaches the table...

NICHOLAS

(looking right in her
eyes)

I've been waiting a long time to
meet you.

Katie blushes. They look at each other. He holds up his copy.

NICHOLAS

(sincere, a bit shy)
It's for my daughter. It's her
favorite.

CONTINUED:

Katie smiles as she takes the book. Though we get the feeling "my daughter" may have caused a little disappointment.

KATIE

And what's your daughter's name?

NICHOLAS

Just the initials "D.A." would be fine. If that's... okay.

KATIE

Anything special you'd like me to write?

Beat.

NICHOLAS

Well...she's...she has...cancer. So something upbeat...would be nice.

Stops Katie cold. She looks up at Nicholas.

KATIE

I'm very sorry, really.

Nicholas appreciates the compassion. Katie opens the book, writes: *To D.A. - I'm glad you like my book. Maybe one day you'll be a writer, too. Love, Katie Masters.*

Nicholas takes the book and reads.

NICHOLAS

A message of hope.

KATIE

Yes.

Instead of turning away, he lingers...

KATIE (cont'd)

(intuiting)

Yes?

NICHOLAS

(hesitant)

I know this might be an imposition but... would it be too much to ask you to come by and see her? I don't live very far...and, it would sure put a smile on her face. Not that an autographed copy of Dolly Dimple won't.

KATIE

(sighs, she'd like to)

I have a flight to catch....

CONTINUED:

Katie checks her watch. Looks up at Nicholas's eyes.

KATIE (cont'd)
I... just don't know how I could.

NICHOLAS
(sees the folly)
You know what, forget it. Just
thought I'd ask. But this...
(the book)
...it'll mean the world to her.

Nicholas takes her hand. Looks deep into her eyes.

NICHOLAS
Thank you.

He holds her hand a beat too long, releases it, backs up while maintaining eye contact. He turns and walks away.

Katie watches him push through the exit doors as she absentmindedly takes a book from her next fan.

EXT. BORDERS BOOKSTORE - SIDEWALK - ONE MINUTE LATER

Nicholas walks up the street.

KATIE (O.S.)
Hello? Excuse me...

He turns. Sees Katie standing there. She catches up with him.

KATIE (cont'd)
What's your name?

NICHOLAS
Nicholas. Nicholas Andrews.

She looks at the man with the sick daughter.

KATIE
Write down your address Nicholas.
I'll be there in an hour.

Nicholas gives Katie a look of pure gratitude...

EXT. RENTAL CAR - APPROACHING NICHOLAS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Katie navigates her rental car up a dark rising road to Nicholas's house. It has tall trees surrounding it and a winding stone path leading to the door.

EXT. NICHOLAS'S HOUSE - PORTLAND - NIGHT

Katie walks up the path toward the front porch. She's about to knock when the door opens. Nicholas smiles.

NICHOLAS
Hi. Thanks so much for coming.

INT. NICHOLAS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Katie steps inside. Leaves her coat on as she won't be here long.

NICHOLAS
Drink?

KATIE
A glass of water would be great.

He walks to the kitchen. Katie looks around the living room, thinks: *where's the girl? Where's the mother?* Nicholas returns with water.

NICHOLAS
I really can't thank you enough for doing this.

KATIE
It's the least I could do. I can't imagine what it's like to go through something like this.

NICHOLAS
(re: room, unkempt)
Sorry about the mess. It's just the two of us here.

KATIE
I understand.

They face each other. Strangers. Close.

NICHOLAS
(genuinely interested)
Can I ask you... I bet you've probably answered the question a million times...

KATIE
Yes?

NICHOLAS
How did you come up with it? The story I mean.

CONTINUED:

KATIE
Dolly Dimple? I just...went deep
inside myself, really tried to
access things...

Katie falters. Nicholas stares at her. Unblinking.

NICHOLAS
Yes?

KATIE (cont'd)
Things...about...about...my
childhood...

Awkward silence. Time to do that good deed...

NICHOLAS
Forgive me, you've got that flight
to catch.

Nicholas gestures toward the hallway.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
She's just down the hall... last
door on the right.

Katie hesitates, then moves into the hallway...

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
Yes...down there...

INT. HALLWAY - KATIE

Walking down the long dark hallway. A sliver of light pours
out from the bottom of a door at the end. She looks back at
Nicholas...

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
(smiling)
Go ahead, she'll recognize you from
the dust jacket.

Katie puts her hand on the doorknob...turns it...pushes it
open...steps into...the BEDROOM...

AND KATIE'S FACE

Turns paper white. Her eyes are horrified. There is no little
girl in here. And no good deeds to be done. *Colors. Letters.*

THE WALLS ARE PLASTERED

With the SAME NOTEBOOK PAGES Katie found in the knapsack.
Covered with the same meticulous colorful handwriting and
drawings. Red. Blue. Green. Black. Shit!

CONTINUED:

Katie is surrounded. By the words she stole. By the world she called her own.

NICHOLAS (O.S.)
You must recognize these. *Right?*

Katie whips around, *terrified*. The glass of water slides from her hand and *EXPLODES* against the floor...

And NICHOLAS is in her FACE. He's not the sincere man Katie met at the book signing. He's not the kind father who greeted Katie at the door. He is intense. Focused. *Fierce*. He glares at Katie, calm and powerful...

Katie's eyes dart between Nicholas and the walls, shocked.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
They're my daughter's. She
disappeared four years ago.

Katie. Too stunned to speak. Nicholas steps closer.

NICHOLAS
What have you done with her?

Katie's mind is racing.

KATIE
Oh my God.

NICHOLAS
You're going to have to do a lot
better than that.

KATIE (cont'd)
(words come fast)
I didn't have anything to do with,
I found a knapsack, there was a
notebook, a year and a half ago--

NICHOLAS
A year and a half ago?

KATIE
In Santa Barbara. In a ravine.

NICHOLAS
A ravine?

KATIE (cont'd)
It was, it had been there, a long
time, I swear I didn't--

NICHOLAS
In Santa Barbara?

CONTINUED:

KATIE

Yes.

NICHOLAS

Yes? Yes *what?*

KATIE

I didn't have anything to do with it.

He moves in closer -- she steps back like someone in front of an exploding ball of fire.

NICHOLAS

With *what?* *What* didn't you have anything to do with?

KATIE

It was there. I *found* it.

NICHOLAS

What did you find?

KATIE

A knapsack, I swear to you, I found a notebook inside--

NICHOLAS

(triggers memory)

A pink knapsack?

KATIE

Yes.

NICHOLAS

Jesus!

KATIE

Oh God...

NICHOLAS

Oh *God?* Why? Why "*oh God?*" What do you know? That *means* something. What do you know? *Tell* me! *TELL ME!*

KATIE

(cracking, recoiling)

I'm telling you the truth. I swear to you. I don't know anything.

Nicholas's fierce gaze is burning holes in her eyes.

NICHOLAS

Where's...my...daughter?

Katie is coming apart, trembling. Tears of fear are welling up in her eyes.

CONTINUED:

KATIE
I *don't* know.

EXT. RIDGE - SANTA BARBARA - 12:00 NOON

Two SHAPES by a car. From a distance. Hard midday sun.

MAN'S VOICE (OVER)
Where? (beat) *Where?*

EXT. RIDGE - SANTA BARBARA - CLOSER - KATIE AND NICHOLAS

Nicholas, in great shape and strong, easily scrambles down the sharp incline to the dusty floor of the ravine.

NICHOLAS
(calling up to Katie)
Where exactly was it?

Katie slowly climbs down, nervously searches.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
Where?

She rapidly scans the area, under the gun, sees some tall bushes.

KATIE
There.

Nicholas walks over. Inspects the area. Finds nothing.

He suddenly drops to his knees, begins tearing through dirt and leaves, scouring the bushes, searching for any clue that will lead him back to his daughter.

Nicholas stops. He stands, looks at Katie, eyes wet, shakes his head.

NICHOLAS
(remembering...)
You should have seen her...

Katie watches him.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
What were you doing here?

KATIE
My father...lives near here. I was running.

NICHOLAS
What did you do with the knapsack?

CONTINUED:

Katie looks down. And she hates the shameful words.

KATIE
I threw it away.

A piercing look from Nicholas.

NICHOLAS
You threw it away? The only
tangible evidence...the only clue
that someone could use to find her.
And you threw it away.

Katie's face is pure shame. Nicholas walks up to her, he's inches from her face...

NICHOLAS
(quiet)
Why can't you write your own
goddamn story?

Nicholas walks away, up the hill toward the street, leaving her all alone...

EXT./INT. KATIE'S CAR - SANTA BARBARA - TOP OF RAVINE - THREE MINUTES LATER

Nicholas sits in the passenger seat. Stares straight ahead. Katie approaches. She gets in. Nicholas is silent, doesn't acknowledge her. *Should she start the car? Where is she going?* Finally, Nicholas turns to her.

NICHOLAS
I just want to know. Why? Why did
you do it?

Katie slowly looks up and meets his eyes. They're not accusing. Just asking. A simple question.

KATIE
(how weak it sounds now)
I don't know...I used to... write
stories... when I was young...and
when I found it...it was
something... something I might have
written at that age-

NICHOLAS
(cuts her off)
That sounds like the psychology of
a plagiarist - I could have written
it therefore it's mine.

What can she say to this? Nothing.

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
Drive.

EXT. BUTTERFLY BEACH - SANTA BARBARA - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Nicholas stands at water's edge, looks out at the ocean.
Katie stands at a distance. Waves roll in and crash. The
silence is killing her.

KATIE
I'm sorry.

He turns, looks right at her.

NICHOLAS
You're sorry?

KATIE
I'd do anything to take it back, to
take it all back.

NICHOLAS
Anything? Did you do anything when
you found it? Did you call anyone?

Katie has "no" written all over face. Nicholas shakes his
head.

NICHOLAS
I think...I think you know more
than you're saying.

KATIE
(raw sincerity)
I told you everything. I'm not
lying. I swear to you Nicholas.

Silence. Except the waves. He scrutinizes Katie.

NICHOLAS
I'm going to call the police. And
the people who handled the case.
You tell them what you know and
we'll let them take it from there.

Katie looks like the breath has been punched out of her. He
turns, trudges away through the sand. Katie chases after him.

KATIE
(the caged animal)
No.

He keeps walking, doesn't look back.

KATIE
Nicholas *no!*

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS
It's the only way.

KATIE
Please.

Nicholas is still moving. She grabs his shirt. He still doesn't stop.

KATIE
I'll deny it.

He wheels around *fast*.

NICHOLAS
You'll deny it? You'll fucking deny
it?

KATIE
(recoiling, pleading)
No. *Please*, Nicholas, let me try to
help. What can the police do?
There's no evidence.

A good point.

NICHOLAS
You just don't want anyone to know
what you've done.

KATIE
I have money.

NICHOLAS
From the book.

KATIE
I'll give you my time.

NICHOLAS
I *have* time. What I *want* is my
daughter.

KATIE
Nicholas. *Please. Listen.* I'll do
anything it takes. You've got to
let me help you.

NICHOLAS
What can *you* do to help *me*?

INT. KATIE'S CAR - SANTA BARBARA - MOVING - MINUTES LATER -
DAY

Katie drives, *jittery*, a woman trying to save her own ass, a
woman trying to help.

CONTINUED:

KATIE

If you thought it was your ex-wife who kidnapped her, I mean, did you tell the police?

NICHOLAS

Of *course* I did.

KATIE

Why would she...were you guys...

NICHOLAS

We weren't anything. *She* had problems. Drugs. It got out of control. I was working a lot...it got so I couldn't trust Dolly would be safe with her. We tried shrinks, rehab, nothing worked. I finally...

The next words come hard. And with a shade of regret.

NICHOLAS

I threw her out and got full custody.

KATIE

Was she allowed to see Dolly?

NICHOLAS

She left, just disappeared from Dolly's life. She was crushed. She didn't understand. (beat) But we got along. We were even happy after awhile.

Nicholas pauses. Katie face. She wants more.

NICHOLAS

Then, a year to the day she lost custody, I went to pick up Dolly -- she'd wait in this park for me to get off work -- and she wasn't there.

A beat. Pain on Nicholas's face. As if it was yesterday.

KATIE

I'm so sorry.

NICHOLAS

The police did the best they could, the NCMEC tried to help. But after awhile other cases come along and it's some other parent's turn to go through hell.

Nicholas rolls down the window like he needs the air.

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS

A private investigator I hired
couldn't find Dolly's mother.
That's what made me think it was
her. Daughter disappears, no trace
of the mother...

KATIE

How old was she?

NICHOLAS

Eight. She'd be twelve now.

Katie thinks about the little girl. Santa Barbara Airport
looms in front of her.

KATIE

How did the knapsack get here?

NICHOLAS

I have no idea.

(looks right at her, cold)
And I have no idea why I'm telling
you any of this.

EXT. KATIE'S CAR - SANTA BARBARA - MOVING - DAY

Approaching the entrance to the airport...

INT. KATIE'S CAR - MOVING - SAME

Katie turns into airport departures. Katie's desperate
barrage of questions hasn't ended yet.

KATIE

What was her name?

NICHOLAS

(short)

Dolly. I *told* you. Like her
notebook. The Dimple part was her
imagination.

KATIE

No, I mean her mother's name.

NICHOLAS

Evelyn.

KATIE

Evelyn must have someone...someone
she talks to.

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS
There's only *her* mother. Dolly's
grandmother. In Miami.

Katie pulls in front of American West terminal.

KATIE
Are they close?

NICHOLAS
Are you close with your mother?

KATIE
She died. When I was eight.

NICHOLAS
Sorry to hear it.

Katie waits for him to continue.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
Evelyn convinced her mother I was
the husband from hell. God knows
what she told her. I've written and
called, asking if she knew if Dolly
was okay. Just a yes or a no.

KATIE
What does she say?

NICHOLAS
She doesn't *say* anything. Because
she doesn't respond. She won't talk
to me.

A TRAFFIC COP BLOWS his whistle, signals for Katie to move
on. Nicholas looks at the dashboard clock: 3:00. Then at
Katie. When their eyes meet, his pain makes her want to reach
out for him, but as she does...

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
I have to get home.

Nicholas exits, pops the door closed. Katie sits frozen
behind the wheel. Cop blasts whistle at her again, *angry*.

INT. ANANIAS BOOKS - CENTURY CITY OFFICES - CONFERENCE ROOM -
TWO DAYS LATER - MORNING

Katie, MARTIN SCORSESE, an EXECUTIVE and Sabrina sit around a
large table, mid-meeting. Katie is distracted. Sabrina has
her hand placed on a hard backed edition of Dolly Dimple.

CONTINUED:

SABRINA

These are Katie's words. This is her story. My job is to protect them for her.

SCORSESE

Yes of course, and she'll...

(now to Katie)

you will have as much or as little involvement in the process as you wish. I like to keep the writer involved. In my experience it keeps the integrity of the source material.

Katie nods blankly. Sabrina, unseen by the others, watches Katie closely, wonders what gives.

EXECUTIVE

Katie, you're going to get everyone telling you...

Katie's cell vibrates and crawls against the glass table like a threatening insect.

EXECUTIVE (cont'd)

...they will guarantee this and that and their approach is better, but adaptation is particularly fragile. We don't want people saying "I loved the book but the movie..."

Executive stops. Katie isn't listening. She's staring with fear at the trembling LCD screen on her cell: *Nicholas Andrews. 503.636.3289. Looks at the executive: gotta take this.*

KATIE

Sorry.

(into phone)

Hello?

NICHOLAS (O.S.)

Evelyn's mother.

KATIE

What?

NICHOLAS (O.S.)

She might talk to you.

Katie stands, walks to a far corner of the conference room. Scorsese, Sabrina and the executive talk in the b.g.

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS (O.S.)
Meet me at LAX in forty-five
minutes.

KATIE
Now?

NICHOLAS (O.S.)
Not *now*. In forty-five minutes.
Continental has a flight leaving
for Miami in two hours. There's
seats available in first class.
Meet me at security with two
tickets.

KATIE
But how... I'm in a meeting--

NICHOLAS (O.S.)
You're a writer. Make up a story.

Click. Katie freezes. Slowly turns toward the conference
table.

KATIE
Something's... come up... I have to
go. My father... he needs me...

Katie grabs her bag from the table...

KATIE (cont'd)
I'm really very sorry.

And blows out of the room. Sabrina, Scorsese and the
Executive turn to each other, concerned...

EXT. MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - RUNWAY - DAY

A CONTINENTAL AIRLINES JET screeches against the runway...

EXT. RENTAL CAR - MIAMI - STREET - DAY

Parked across from a Spanish style mall. Katie and Nicholas
inside.

INT. RENTAL CAR - LOOKING OUT - THRU WINDSHIELD - DAY

A high archway frames the entrance to the mall. Six wood
signs hang from the archway identifying businesses within.

ANGLE - NICHOLAS AND KATIE

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS
Inner Light, that second one,
that's her place. Remember our
story.

Nicholas hands Katie two photos. She looks at them.

NICHOLAS
That's Dolly. When she was eight.
And Evelyn.

Katie nods, gets out of the car, moves toward the mall, puts
on large sunglasses as she walks.

Nicholas, in the car in the b.g., brings a cell phone to his
ear.

INT. MALL - MIAMI - DAY

Katie enters. Passes tourist shops, comes to *Inner Light*, a
boutique selling paintings, prints, candles, crystals,
incense and books on spiritual growth and self-improvement.

INT. INNER LIGHT - DAY

Katie walks in, sets off a soft electronic chime. Keeps her
sunglasses on. Light is pleasing, anti-mall. Mystical music
plays. DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER, 65, sits at a table. Just putting
down the phone. She picks up a book, reads, glances over
bifocals at Katie, returns to her book. Katie browses, the
casual shopper with time on her hands. She pauses in front of
a watercolor of a muscular black horse. Plays the role of
serious customer, evaluates it.

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER (O.S.)
One of the better ones, isn't it?

Katie looks over and smiles.

KATIE
Beautiful. You have good taste.

Dolly's grandmother stands, walks over to Katie. They regard
the painting.

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
Thank you. It's one of my
favorites.

KATIE
It might be good for my daughter's
room. She's been through some tough
times.
(looks at her now)
She really likes horses.

CONTINUED:

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
Most little girls do. How old is
she?

KATIE
She's...eleven.

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
I have a granddaughter about that
age.

Dolly's Grandmother brushes something off the frame, about to
turn away.

KATIE (cont'd)
(must keep her engaged)
Her father and I, we went through a
nasty divorce.

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
Oh, I'm sorry to hear it. I hope
things have calmed down for you.

KATIE
They have. Thank God.

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
(smiling)
Well let me know if you'd like a
price.

Katie can't let the fish off the line.

KATIE
(don't want to impose)
Would it be possible to... use your
bathroom?

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
Of course.
(motions to door opening
into a short hallway)
It's just through there. There's
two doors on the left. It's the
second one.

KATIE
Thanks so much.

INT. INNER LIGHT - HALLWAY

Dingy and dark compared to the bright store. Katie walks.
Slowly. *Searching*. Sees a door cracked open. The *first* door.
She pauses, peers in. A small office -- mahogany desk, packed
bookshelf, fax, files and phone.

CONTINUED:

Katie sees a GLASS FIGURINE on the desk...PICTURES ON THE WALL...she's too far away to make them out...but from here it looks like...Katie *whips* around when she hears--

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER (O.S.)
(sweetly)
No no...the *second* door.

Katie smiles, embarrassed...

KATIE
Oh...I'm sorry...right...

Dolly's Grandmother gazes at her. Nods. Smiles. Follows Katie to the bathroom with her eyes.

INT. BATHROOM

Katie. Thinking. Breathing hard. Looks out the small bathroom window. Sees Nicholas. Waiting. For her. To deliver.

She silently cracks the bathroom door open... peers down the hallway toward the front of the store...WAITS...sees Dolly's Grandmother pass by...steps out into...

INT. HALLWAY

Katie. Sliding against the wall. Hears the ELECTRONIC CHIME in the front...waits...waits in the dark...can't move...hears VOICES. Grandmother with customers.....it's *clear*...she BOLTS into...

INT. OFFICE

Moves quickly across the floor. Eyes scanning the room. Looking on shelves. Looking *everywhere*.

A wall. On the other side of the desk. Drawing scrawled with kid's writing -- *to grandma*. And the grandmother's photos. *Pay dirt*.

KATIE...looks....Boom! A girl...About eight. Yes.

Boom! Another photo, same girl but *older*. She's with a woman. *Dolly and Evelyn?* Has to be. In a strange hand-carved wood frame. Katie leans way across the desk for a better view...hears VOICES...footsteps... COMING down the hall.

FREEZE. KATIE.

Better think fast...because in six seconds...

INT. HALLWAY

Dolly's Grandmother walks. We move with her. Step by step. She approaches the office door. And as she enters she's STOPPED. By the sight and sound of a woman crying...

KATIE.

Standing in front of the desk. Quietly weeping. Clutching the beautiful 12' glass figurine of the intertwined bodies of a mother and daughter. Looking down at it.

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
(baffled)
What? Are you...are you all right?

Katie turns toward Dolly's grandmother, eyes wet.

KATIE
I'm so sorry...to be in here...

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
Yes...

KATIE
But...I saw *this*...and...my
daughter...it just reminded me...

Dolly's Grandmother softens. Through her surprise at Katie being in here.

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
Do you want to sit down...or...

KATIE
(grateful)
Thank you. Yes.

Katie sits, studies the figurine. She's emotionally fragile.

And the Academy Award goes to...

KATIE
I'm so sorry about this. I have no
right.

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
It's okay. I understand.

KATIE
You are so kind.

Katie looks to the photos on the wall behind the desk. Points to the photo in the hand carved wood frame.

KATIE
Is that...

CONTINUED:

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
(follows Katie's gaze)
Oh. That's my granddaughter. With
my daughter.

KATIE
And I thought my daughter was
pretty.

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
She's a special girl. She's been
through a lot too.

KATIE
Do you get to see her much? (beat)
I mean, does she live around here?

Katie wants this information so bad. Is that why Dolly's
Grandmother is suddenly uneasy?

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
They're...well...right now...

The CHIME in front RINGS. Dolly's grandmother glances toward
the sound. Then at Katie. Chime rings again.

DOLLY'S GRANDMOTHER
Excuse me one minute.

Instant she's gone Katie reaches over the desk to the Dolly
and Evelyn picture, lifts it off its hook from the bottom of
the frame with her fingertips, balances it against the wall,
tries to tip it back into her hand and bobbles it and LOSES
control and it falls to the floor between the desk and wall
with a LOUD CRACK!

The shape of the square frame doesn't match the darker round
outline on the wall but Katie doesn't see this as she
frantically reaches down between the wall and desk. She peers
into the space, heart racing...

KATIE
Shit...

She hears a muffled "goodbye" from the front, looks toward
the doorway, hears FOOTSTEPS, grabs the edge of the heavy
desk, *heaves* it away from the wall...FOOTSTEPS...reaches
down, snatches the frame...FOOTSTEPS...*jumps* to her feet,
stuffs the frame in her bag, rushes for the office door to

INT. HALLWAY

And almost SLAMS right into Dolly's grandmother who is on her
way in. She stares at Katie, shocked. Katie spins past...
she's already halfway down the hallway...

CONTINUED:

KATIE

I'm sorry... I have to go

Dolly's grandmother watches her leave ... *what the hell?*

EXT. MIAMI STREET - EIGHT SECONDS LATER - DAY

Katie bolts, toward car, adrenaline rushes, distraught mother act fades, face brightens. Eye contact with Nicholas. He reads her face. His eyes come alive, he starts the car, leans over and opens the passenger door. Katie jumps in and the car screeches away.

INT. RENTAL CAR - MIAMI - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Pulled over on the side of the road. Industrial warehouses and fields outside. Nicholas looks at the framed picture. Emotions pour through him. Katie watches him.

NICHOLAS

Dolly's definitely older here.

KATIE

Can I look?

He hands it to Katie. She doesn't look. She flips it over, removes the backing, dumps out the photo, hands it back to Nicholas. He looks at his daughter again.

Katie examines the frame. Sees a word engraved on a small metal plate riveted to the back. "*iguatemi*." She turns to Nicholas.

KATIE

(re: photo)

Look at the back. See if it has anything about where it was processed.

He turns it over. Written in faded black ink...

NICHOLAS

There's numbers, 429429 and "s.p."

Katie looks back at the metal plate on the frame, stares at the word "*iguatemi*."

EXT. MOTEL - MIAMI - POOL SIDE - DUSK

Katie moves across the grass to a small patio, approaches a sliding glass door. The sheer curtains within billow in the breeze. She looks inside, sees Nicholas sitting at a table.

CONTINUED:

He looks at the photo under a table lamp. The hand-carved frame is on the table.

Katie taps on the glass, Nicholas looks up, startled, inadvertently knocks over his drink. He jumps up, frame and photo in hand, avoids the liquid spilling off the table.

NICHOLAS

Damn it.

He gestures "come in." Katie steps inside. Nicholas grabs a hand towel, soaks up the liquid.

NICHOLAS

You scared me.

KATIE

I was going to call first.

NICHOLAS

You don't need an invitation.

Chopin plays on the radio. Nicholas tosses the towel in the bathroom, sits back at the desk, frame and photo in his hand.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)

Sit.

Katie sits on the bed. He tosses the frame to her.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)

It was made in Brazil. São Paulo. I should have known.

Katie doesn't follow.

NICHOLAS

You can kidnap someone and take them there. There's no legal way to get them back.

KATIE

Why?

NICHOLAS

The extradition laws.

He stands, walks to the sliding glass door. Sees a family playing in the setting sun. He turns to Katie.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)

I've called about flights to São Paulo. We can get something tomorrow.

Miami is one thing, but *Brazil*?

CONTINUED:

KATIE
Tomorrow?

NICHOLAS
(coolly)
Yes.

KATIE
You're going to Brazil?

NICHOLAS
We're going.

Right? But...

KATIE
Nicholas, you...don't *need* me. I
have so many things going on right
now, in L.A. I've got to get back.
You...you know where to go now.

He moves across the room toward where she sits.

NICHOLAS
You're really busy, huh? Lots of
big meetings and stuff? Back in Los
Angeles?

He's getting closer to her. She feels it.

NICHOLAS
You writing another book?

Whoa.

KATIE
Look, I'll give you the money you
need, finance everything, like I
said I would.

He looms over her now, looks down on her.

NICHOLAS
Like you said you would? I remember
something else you said.

Her own words. Right back in her face.

NICHOLAS
(each word kills)
"I'll do *anything* it takes..."

Nicholas has Katie over a barrel. And it looks like he
wouldn't think twice about dropping her in...

EXT. AERIAL SHOT OF SAO PAULO, BRAZIL - MORNING

It is the third largest city on earth. Imposing. Scary.
Incomprehensibly vast and mysterious.

EXT. GUARULHOS INTERNATIONALE AEROPORTO - SAO PAULO - MORNING

TITLE: GUARULHOS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. SAO PAULO, BRAZIL

Katie and Nicholas emerge from the terminal through automatic doors. Instantly confronted by a wall of heat, foreign language, noise, chaos and exhaust. Nicholas' cell rings. He turns away from Katie. Speaks into the phone. Snaps it shut.

Katie looks at him. He shrugs.

NICHOLAS
Wrong number.

They walk ten feet and then OUT OF NOWHERE A YOUNG BRAZILIAN THIEF blasts toward and Katie violently rips the necklace from her neck. Katie shrieks as the thief races toward the parking complex.

An AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD runs after him. Thief is flying, outrunning the guard, getting away clean, but he is

SUDDENLY AND VIOLENTLY CRUSHED when he runs into the path of a rental car TRANSIT BUS.

People stop. Then they go directly back to their business. Like it happens everyday...

But Katie stares, horrified. She looks at Nicholas but he's walking toward the dead thief. He leans over and unclenches his fist, takes the necklace. Katie watches this until her eyes find a large faded billboard: *Welcome to São Paulo!*

INT. TAXI - ENTERING SAO PAULO - LATE MORNING

Inching along in a river of traffic. Katie and Nicholas. Katie looks out at São Paulo, a sprawling megalopolis that doesn't quite fit together, a surreal melange of dismal slums, European Colonial architecture and high rises that either gleam with life or look utterly abandoned.

EST. FATA MORGANA HOTEL - SAO PAULO - LATE MORNING

A large hotel in the City Center.

INT. FATA MORGANA HOTEL - LOBBY - FRONT DESK - SAME

Katie and Nicholas with a BRAZILIAN DESK CLERK at the check-in counter.

The Clerk looks up from hotel computer, smiles.

DESK CLERK
I will need a credit card please.

Nicholas looks right at Katie. She recognizes his expression:
like you said you would.

Katie reaches into her purse...

INT. TAXI - SAO PAULO - MOVING - AFTERNOON

Katie and Nicholas in the backseat, riding through São Paulo. Nicholas glances down, sees the ring-shaped scar around the base of her forefinger. Katie feels his eyes on her. When she looks up at him he looks away...

INT. SAO PAULO POLICE DEPARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Katie and Nicholas approach a raised counter. A CLERK looks up lazily from a soccer headlined newspaper. Katie reads haltingly from the language guide in a Brazil travel book.

KATIE
Eu... preciso... de ajuda?

CLERK
(bored)
What sort of help?

NICHOLAS
Is there a Lieutenant Bramos here?

CLERK
Yes. Who should I say is here?

NICHOLAS
Nicholas Andrews.

The clerk is suddenly more attentive. He nods and leaves. Katie looks at Nicholas.

KATIE
How did you know his name?

NICHOLAS
I called earlier. From the hotel.

INT. LIEUTENANT BRAMOS'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

BRAMOS (49) sits behind a large desk. He grandly rises when Katie and Nicholas arrive, gestures to his nervous young partner FERNANDO to situate them in chairs across from him.

Fernando keeps glancing at Katie, averts his eyes each time she tries to make contact. They sit.

BRAMOS
So... kidnapping. In Brazil, we are famous for it. We understand the value of flesh and blood.

Bramos rubs his hands together.

BRAMOS (cont'd)
So, tell me your story.

NICHOLAS
My daughter, her name is Dolly Andrews, she disappeared. Four years ago. We think she might be here in São Paulo.
(to Katie)
You have the frame?

Katie removes the frame from her bag, hands it to Nicholas. Nicholas places the photo of Dolly and Evelyn and the frame on Bramos's desk.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
The frame was made here. In São Paulo.

Bramos nods. Nicholas places the photo of Dolly and Evelyn and the frame on Bramos's desk.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
The frame was made here.

Bramos looks at the frame. He turns in his chair, takes a frame exactly like it from the wall near his desk. There's a dark round circle where the square frame was.

BRAMOS
They are sold everywhere in São Paulo. You are in the right place.

He holds up the frame. It contains a picture of a ten-year-old BOY with big brown eyes.

BRAMOS (cont'd)
My son.

He lays it down, picks up the photo of Dolly and her mother.

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS
The girl is my daughter.

BRAMOS
How long did you say she has been missing?

NICHOLAS
Four years.

Bramos leans forward, picks up the photo.

NICHOLAS (O.S.) (cont'd)
The girl is my daughter.

BRAMOS
I see. How long did you say she has been missing?

NICHOLAS
Four years.

Bramos looks at the DARK HAired WOMAN standing next to Dolly, his thumb obscures Dolly's face. The woman is in her late 30's, staring out through haunted eyes.

BRAMOS
Who is the woman? Very familiar.

KATIE
You *know* her?

BRAMOS
I did not say that. Just familiar.
The face...you know how these things are.

NICHOLAS
Evelyn Spencer, my ex-wife. She might go by my last name, Andrews. Does that sound familiar?

Bramos shakes his head "no".

NICHOLAS
She lost custody of our daughter Dolly, and we think she may have brought her here.

Bramos nods sagely.

BRAMOS
This story is not so unusual.

Bramos is staring at Katie. He stands, moving around his desk toward Katie, watching her face all the while. She tenses. He moves closer, closer, stares at the tiny scar on her eyelid.

CONTINUED:

BRAMOS (cont'd)
A kindred spirit.

Katie looks at him curiously...

BRAMOS (cont'd)
Your scar.

Katie's hand instinctively moves to her eyelid.

KATIE
A car accident. When I was a little girl.

BRAMOS
I have one too.

Bramos slowly raises his shirt and reveals a ghastly scar stretching across his stomach. He's inches from Katie's face. She recoils. Bramos drops shirt, moves back around his desk.

BRAMOS (cont'd)
Someone tried to cut me in half.
(amused at the memory)
Can you imagine?

Bramos looks at Nicholas. *The deal.*

BRAMOS
If you want to find your daughter, you have two options. The straight road -- one of these agencies here in São Paulo -- you can imagine what it will be like. A man sitting at a computer, acting sympathetic to your predicament and doing nothing about it. Perhaps he has his own sad story to tell. (beat) Or, the road less travelled. I know people. People that know things. And if they do not know they can find out. It is by far more effective, and much more expensive.

NICHOLAS
You're not giving us a choice.

BRAMOS
Oh yes, you have a choice. I have just described it to you. Rules of Brazil. What can I say?

KATIE
I have money.

Bramos looks at Katie. Then at Nicholas. He is thinking.

CONTINUED:

BRAMOS

Will you be so kind as to give me a
moment alone with the little girl's
father?

Without waiting for her response Bramos addresses Fernando.

BRAMOS (cont'd)

(Portuguese, English subtitles)
Fernando... take the lady out.

Fernando *jumps* at the sound of his name, indicates Katie
should follow him. Katie stands, reluctant, confused, looks
at Nicholas. He gazes at her blankly.

EXT. BRAMOS'S OFFICE - CORRIDOR

Fernando leads Katie away from Bramos's office. Keeps
glancing back nervously at her as they walk. They reach a
waiting area. Noisy. Other cops mill about. And handcuffed
criminals. Fernando motions for Katie to sit on a wooden
bench.

He doesn't leave, his eyes anxiously dart around. He stares
at Katie again.

KATIE

What?

Fernando takes one step closer to Katie. He looks desperate,
as if he needs to tell her something.

KATIE (cont'd)

(nervous whisper)

What?

He doesn't answer. His eyes nervously glance back and forth.
Then he slowly shakes his head and backs away...

EXT. RUA AUGUSTA - SAO PAULO - 20 MINUTES LATER - NIGHTFALL

Nicholas and Katie walk fast on a crowded sidewalk.

NICHOLAS

He called his people. They want a
hundred thousand dollars. To start.

The amount stops her in her tracks.

KATIE

What?

NICHOLAS

Tomorrow. That's not a problem, is
it?

CONTINUED:

Nicholas continues walking. Katie catches up.

KATIE
And you *trust* him?

NICHOLAS
You heard what the alternative was.

KATIE
Why did he want me to leave?

NICHOLAS
I don't know. You better call your bank.

INT. FATA MORGANA HOTEL - KATIE'S ROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Katie. Insomnia. Tossing and turning. Twisted sheets like ropes holding her hostage.

CLOSE-UP - CASH COUNTING MACHINE - IN ACTION - MORNING

Rapidly counting cash, the RED L.E.D. numbers GROWING...

WIDER - INT. SAO PAULO - BANCO INTERNATIONALE - MORNING - NEXT DAY

Katie. Exhausted. Sits across a desk from a FEMALE BANK TELLER, waiting.

A MALE BANK MANAGER takes two stacks of bills off the cash counter, one in each hand, moves through the bank to Katie.

Nicholas sits on a chair nearby. Watching Katie.

EXT. RENTAL CAR - WINDING ROAD - ABOVE SAN PAULO - NIGHT

Winding up a dark road through decimated neighborhoods. Squalor. Shanties. Scary.

INT. SAME

Katie and Nicholas. On a silent mission. Katie drives. Nicholas looks at a map.

EXT. RENTAL CAR - ABANDONED POWER PLANT - ABOVE SAO PAULO - MIDNIGHT

The outlines of burned-out buildings and electrical towers are scarcely visible in the inky darkness around the car.

INT. RENTAL CAR - SAME

Katie and Nicholas. Nervous. Silent. Waiting. The only sound is the sound of their breathing. Until this:

A RUMBLING sound. Growing. GROWING. Getting close. They look at each other, twist around as it approaches. Where is it coming from? They see NOTHING.

It sounds powerful, scary, like it could crush them...it is GOING TO CRUSH THEM...

Two huge black SHAPES BLAST BY. On both sides. So close the rental car SHUDDERS.

Katie and Nicholas glance at each other, terrified. They look through the windshield. At nothing but black.

SUDDENLY BRIGHT WHITE LIGHTS BLIND THEM.

Headlights. Coming from TWO HUGE BLACK SUV's pointed directly at them through a cloud of dust. Like they are targets.

Katie and Nicholas are BLINDED, squinting against the light. They turn to each other. A shared sentiment uttered only with the eyes: *Holy shit...*

The headlights flicker off and on. Once. Twice. Three times. A signal.

NICHOLAS
(nervous whisper)
Remember....hands up.

Nicholas lifts a canvas bag from between his legs. Opens the car door. Katie gets out on her side.

EXT. RENTAL CAR

Nicholas and Katie are blinded. They walk slowly towards the light. Nicholas holds the bag out away from his body.

THE SUV SOUND SYSTEMS SUDDENLY ERUPT, LOUD AND POWERFUL: The disturbing and shrieking sound of birds, squawking and cawing, louder and louder and LOUDER--an aviary on acid at feeding time.

Katie and Nicholas look at each other: what the hell?

Lights flash. Another signal. Nicholas and Katie drop to their knees. Nicholas lets the bag fall from his hands.

A MAN steps out of the truck, moves in front of the SUV's headlights. A scary muscular silhouette. A SECOND MAN emerges from the other SUV.

CONTINUED:

Man #1 moves toward the bag. Man #2 moves toward Nicholas. Man #1 picks up the bag, looks inside. Man #2 whips out a handgun. Pushes the barrel against Nicholas's temple.

Katie is frozen with fear, she can't not hear the man cock the gun...

Nicholas's frightened eyes glow in the blazing light.

The men in control speak in Portuguese. Then they walk away and disappear into the blinding lights.

Doors slam. Lights flash again. Katie and Nicholas stand, hustle back to the car...

THE RENTAL CAR

Nicholas. Scared. Katie. Worse.

NICHOLAS
Let's get out of here.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

She's sitting on the edge of the bed. Staring at the wall. Phone rings.

KATIE
Hello?

NICHOLAS (O.S.)
Bramos called. He said they will
make contact again in a day or two.

KATIE
What are we supposed to do now?

NICHOLAS
Wait.

KATIE
Okay.

She hangs up the phone.

KATIE
(whispering mantra)
Okay...okay...okay...

EXT. SAO PAULO - STREET - NOON

Hard midday glare. Katie walking on a crowded street, eyes focused straight ahead. Sees a bookstore. Stops.

CONTINUED:

Behind the glass a huge display, *Dolly Dimple* is there in the Portuguese translation. She stares, unsettled...

A VOICE
(whispered, disembodied)
You should've at least changed the
title.

Katie *whips* around... nobody there. Just a thick river of pedestrian traffic...

EXT. SAO PAULO STREET - TEN MINUTES LATER

Katie walks on a sidewalk crowded with shoppers and stalls vended by sad-eyed but hopeful Paulistanos. Everything for sale here, from precious stones to alligator skins to faux Rolex and Piaget.

Katie passes them all until one stall catches her eye...

A display of BLACK FOUNTAIN PENS, larger than standard size. The odd size attracts Katie. A rail-thin MAN, 60, smiles at Katie, pops the cap off one of the pens. A vicious four inch blade glimmers in the sun. The Man smiles proudly. SUDDENLY JABS aggressively at the air with the blade, in case Katie doesn't understand how these things work...

EXT. AVENIDA PAULISTA - SAO PAULO - LATER

Katie walking. The eight lane boulevard is packed with two-way traffic. She looks toward the idling cars as they wait for the lights to change.

Inside one of the cars, Katie sees the profile of A WOMAN'S FACE. It *stops* Katie. The woman, slow and dream-like, turns to Katie...

EVELYN SPENCER.

Recognizable from the photo. The dark hair. The haunted eyes. She gazes at Katie, expression enigmatic...

Lights change, traffic lurches forward. Katie tries to keep up... car is ahead of Katie now and through the back window she sees a man's partial profile...

Bramos?

Katie *explodes* into a run as the car accelerates. Car slows a little. *Good*. Now the car pulls ahead again. *Shit*. Katie can barely keep up.

Car moves up Avenida Paulista, turns down a small steep

ONE-WAY STREET

CONTINUED:

And accelerates away. Katie stops. Strangely, the car stops. Thirty feet away.

Mysteriously idles there for no reason. A *game*?

Katie explodes into a run again and she's FIVE FEET AWAY when the car guns it and disappears around a corner.

Katie puts her hands on her knees, gasps for air...

NICHOLAS (O.S.)

You saw her, or you think you saw her? There's a difference, Katie.

INT. NICHOLAS'S ROOM - TWENTY MINUTES LATER - AFTERNOON

Katie is pacing back and forth. Nicholas leans against the doorway of the bathroom, watching her.

KATIE

It was Evelyn, I'm almost sure--

NICHOLAS

What do you mean, with *Bramos*?

KATIE

They were in a car, together, I chased them.

NICHOLAS

You chased them? While they were in a car? And you were *running*?

KATIE

Yes.

NICHOLAS

What? A police car?

KATIE

No, just a car.

NICHOLAS

Not a police car?

KATIE

No.

NICHOLAS

What kind of car?

KATIE

I don't know, like a...

Katie trails off...drowning in a sea of frustration...

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS
You don't know.

KATIE
I swear it looked like them.

NICHOLAS
Sit.

KATIE
She was staring right at me.

NICHOLAS
Katie.

KATIE
Now I'm not even sure--

NICHOLAS
(hard)
Sit *down*.

Katie stops pacing...sits. Looks up at Nicholas. Eyes bloodshot. Katie looks down at the floor.

NICHOLAS
You're exhausted Katie. Your mind is playing tricks on you. You just need to sleep.

EXT. SAO PAULO SKYLINE - NIGHT

Glittering. Massive. Manhattan Skyline times five.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM - HOTEL FATA MORGANA - SAME TIME

Katie. Dead sleep. Phone rings. Her eyes burst open. She fumbles for the receiver.

KATIE
Hello.

No answer.

KATIE
Hello?

Silence. She sits up in bed, hangs it up. Waits. Hears nothing. But this: weeping. Outside her door. Creepy. She pulls on a robe, steps to the door, opens it. Nobody.

She follows the sound down the dim hallway. Turns a corner. Ceiling light flickers on and off.

CONTINUED:

She gets closer to the sound. Moves toward a door.

Behind it the cries of the woman become more tremulous and strange. Then suddenly STOP. Katie stands in the silence.

EXT. SAO PAULO - BRAS DISTRICT - NEXT AFTERNOON

Vast slum teeming with impoverished Brazilians. Dingy commercial real estate amongst squalid high-rise apartment buildings. The little girl's crying GROWS LOUDER...

ANGLE ON - KATIE AND NICHOLAS

Approaching. Stopping at the sight of this. Katie gathers herself, looks at a paper in her hand. Gestures to an old building just past the kids.

KATIE
It's just up here.

She looks at a piece of paper in her hand...

KATIE
We don't have anything to lose.

INT. DEPARTAMENTO DE APOIO TECNICO DA DIRETORIA DA CRIANCA E DO ADOLESCENTE DE PERNAMBUCO - MINUTES LATER - AFTERNOON

TITLE: TECHNICAL SUPPORT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS OF THE STATE OF SAO PAULO

Fiscally malnourished offices covered with fake panelling blanketed with fading posters of smiling trusting kids who had no idea what the future held in store.

RENATO, a Brazilian MAN in his thirties with a kind face, is with Katie and Nicholas.

Dolly and Evelyn's photo lays next to his computer. Renato types the name *Dolly Andrews* into the search database for NCMEC -- National Center For Missing and Exploited Children.

He hits *search*. Renato picks up the photo while he waits.

RENATO (cont'd)
The girl is beautiful.
(turning to computer)
Strange. There is nothing coming up for Dolly Andrews.

RENATO
When was the NCMEC filing?

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS
Three years ago.

Three years. Katie turns, looks at Nicholas.

KATIE
I thought you said four years ago.

NICHOLAS
(brushing it off)
That's what I said. Four years ago.

Renato writes it down on a note pad.

RENATO
Four years.

Renato and Nicholas turn back to the screen. Katie looks hard at Nicholas's profile. He *feels* it. He doesn't react.

RENATO (cont'd)
She should still be there. (*beat*)
NCMEC would have notified Interpol.
Let me look there because it does
not exist a central database in
Brazil. A central database for
stolen cars exists, but none for
missing children. Cars are very
important in Brazil.

KATIE
Did you tell them to close it out?

NICHOLAS
God no.

RENATO
When's the last time you saw it?

NICHOLAS
Four months ago. I'm addicted to
the stories. How they disappeared,
how they were found. It's like
reading about people who have the
same disease as you.

Renato looks directly at Nicholas.

RENATO
I know this disease. My baby sister
was kidnapped. That is why I do
this.

Renato signs off the computer. Turns to Katie and Nicholas.

CONTINUED:

RENATO (cont'd)
I will need a couple of days to get
information from Interpol. You
should speak with your case person
at the NCMEC and find out about
Dolly's file. And call me.

Nicholas reaches out to shakes Renato's hand.

NICHOLAS
I will. Thank you.

INT. SAME - A MINUTE LATER

Katie and Nicholas round a corner on their way out and they
are abruptly face-to-face with a huge wall blanketed with a
sea of photos of innocent smiling children.

Brazilian. German. Dutch. French. American...

All missing. Katie and Nicholas stop and stare. Completely
overwhelmed.

INT. KATIE'S HOTEL ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Katie sleeps. A fierce *BAM!BAM!BAM!* on the door snaps her
awake. She bolts up in the darkness, switches on the bedside
lamp, squinting eyes adjusting. *POUNDING ON DOOR* continues.

KATIE
(half asleep)
Hello?

NICHOLAS (O.S.)
It's Nicholas! Open the door!

Katie jumps out of bed, unlocks the door. Nicholas bursts
into the room, clutching a CHILD'S ORANGE AND BLACK T-SHIRT
and a piece of CRINKLED BROWN PAPER.

KATIE
(waking up)
What!?

NICHOLAS
(holds up T-shirt)
This is hers! They sent it. It came
with this note.

He holds out the note. Katie takes it, blown away by the
words--

I am alive

CONTINUED:

--written in Dolly's hand. Recognizable. From her notebook.
And the walls in her bedroom.

KATIE
...her writing.

NICHOLAS
She's alive, Katie. She's here.

RRRRRRRRRING! of the phone SCARES THE HELL OUT OF THEM.

Katie looks at Nicholas. Phone rings again. Katie answers.

KATIE
Yes?

WHISPERING VOICE (O.S.)
Look...outside...your...door...

Click. Katie holds the phone, bewildered. Absently places it
back in the cradle...

NICHOLAS
What?

Katie moves to the door, opens it. Nicholas walks behind her.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
What Katie?

She looks down the hall in both directions. Nothing. Nothing
at all... except -- and this is bizarre -- except a little
box swaying back and forth above their heads. Their eyes meet
in mutual confusion as they step into...

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - SAME

The box is the size of a ring box. Dangles and spins slowly
from an almost invisible thread. Nicholas stretches up and
pulls it down. They step inside Katie's room, bewildered.

ON THE CEILING

The thread. Recedes. Disappears. FOOTSTEPS scamper.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM

Nicholas, apprehensive, stares at the box. Katie braves it.
Unties the string. Removes the top. Sees some cotton. Pinches
it with forefinger and thumb, lifts it...

And Katie's face goes pale...

CONTINUED:

KATIE'S POV - CLOSE ON - OPEN RING BOX

A little girl's forefinger. Sheared off. At the base. A tiny little sunflower ring still on it.

NICHOLAS

Sees it. The ring. The blood. He spins away...unleashes a terrible groan...

The severed finger rests on a small folded piece of paper with writing and dried blood on it. With trembling hands Katie pours the finger into the lid of the box. Puts it down on a table. Removes the paper and reads:

\$150.000.00 dollars. obelisk. noon tomorrow. leave and go. any authorities end of story. instructions thursday night.

Katie looks toward Nicholas. He's turned away from her. Face buried in his hands...

Katie suddenly *BOLTS* out of the room...runs to the elevator, rapidly punches the "up" arrow. Looks up at the floor indicators. 1,2,3,4. Floor two is lit up. She looks behind her. Sees room numbers. Starting with four. There is no floor above her.

Katie looks down the hall. Sees a door -- EMERGENCIA. She bolts toward it, *SLAMS* through it and flies UP THE STAIRS and through another door to the--

ROOF OF THE HOTEL. Tar and gravel. Night air. Two large vents whirl in the darkness. She looks around. Nobody in sight.

Katie crunches across the roof top. Toward the edge. Looks right over. A wind comes...she loses her balance a little...she regains it...and right then

A BLACK SUV *BLASTS* out of an alley next to the hotel and *RACES* up the street.

Katie stands at the edge... totally unhinged...

HARD CUT - INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - A MINUTE LATER

Katie. Moving. Down the hallway. Hears screaming. Crashing. From *her* room. Walks faster. Steps through the open door just as...

INT. ROOM - SAME

NICHOLAS unleashes a guttural scream and *smashes* a mirror with a lamp and shatters it to pieces. The room is trashed.

CONTINUED:

She watches him, shocked and scared. Barely able to say...

KATIE
Nicholas....

He turns, looks at her. Devastated. Breathing. *Hard*. Grips Dolly's note in his fist.

NICHOLAS
This... is not... happening.

Katie stares, mind twisting in a million directions...

INT. SAO PAULO POLICE DEPARTMENT - BRAMOS'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Nicholas and Katie sit across the desk from Bramos. They are completely exhausted.

BRAMOS
You were desperate, you needed help. When you deal with people like this--

NICHOLAS
They cut off my daughter's fucking finger! Call them *off*. Make them *stop*.

Bizarre look from Bramos. Gazes at Nicholas. A subtle nod. Like someone who is impressed by a performance. Katie puts her hand on Nicholas's arm and tries to calm him.

BRAMOS
I cannot "make them stop." But I can...and I *will*...ask them to be more...civilized.

NICHOLAS
Please.

Emotions cool. But just a little.

KATIE
I saw you. I saw you with her. In a car.

BRAMOS
(a beat, he's puzzled)
You saw me with who?

KATIE
Evelyn. Nicholas' ex-wife. The little girl's mother.

Bramos raises his eyebrows.

CONTINUED:

BRAMOS

You saw *me* with Evelyn Spencer? The woman you are looking for? When?

KATIE

Three days ago.

BRAMOS

But this is a strange twist in our story. If I was with the woman we are looking for, Evelyn Spencer, wouldn't I have contacted you and Mr. Andrews?

KATIE

I know what I saw.

BRAMOS

You saw me with Evelyn Spencer? The woman we are looking for?

KATIE

Yes.

BRAMOS

When?

KATIE

Two days ago.

Bramos stares at Katie. She stares right back. She does not blink.

BRAMOS

Two days ago?

Bramos's eyes never leave Katie's. He's deciding something. He picks up the phone. Presses a button, speaks Portuguese, hangs up.

He holds up a finger to Katie and Nicholas...*one minute. Then, almost to himself...*

BRAMOS

The writer's mind works in curious ways, Ms. Masters. Composites. Fantasies. Obsessions. Is it not possible, Ms. Masters, that this entire thing is all in your mind?

Katie looks at him. Troubled. Quizzical. A little pissed.

KATIE

How did you know I was a writer?

CONTINUED:

Before Bramos answers, Fernando enters, makes eye contact with Bramos, grimly drops a manila envelope on his desk and leaves.

Bramos slides it across his desk to Katie and Nicholas. They look at each other. Nicholas reaches for the envelope.

BRAMOS (cont'd)
Perhaps you should allow Ms.
Masters, since she is so convinced
about what she saw.

Nicholas passes the envelope to Katie. She opens it slowly, eyes flicking up at Bramos as she does.

She slides out a stack of 8x10 photographs. We see it. Katie sees it. Nicholas sees it: grisly black and white crime scene photos. A WOMAN. DEAD. Bloody. It's EVELYN SPENCER.

Nicholas gasps. The photo trembles in Katie's hand. They look at Bramos, dumbfounded.

BRAMOS (cont'd)
Only last night, I remembered...
that's where I had seen this woman
before. She looked familiar when
you showed me her picture.
(re: photos)
They came across my desk some time
ago.

Bramos reaches across the desk, picks up one of the pictures, sits back in his chair and looks at it sadly.

BRAMOS (cont'd)
It is terrible. I am very sorry.

Nicholas stares at Bramos...trying to make the connections.

NICHOLAS
But...

BRAMOS
...who has your little girl?
You did not think your ex-wife
would cut off your daughter's
finger, did you?

Nicholas's eyes lock on the bloody photo of Evelyn's corpse. It hits him full force now. If Evelyn was the path to his daughter that path is closed...

BRAMOS
Amazing your daughter was found at
all. Thousands of homeless children
roaming the streets...

CONTINUED:

BRAMOS (cont'd)
being sold for their organs, or to
men with curious tastes. They say
São Paulo is hell for those who
have not sinned.

(beat)
You are sure the writing on the
note is hers?

NICHOLAS
Yes.

BRAMOS
Then she is alive. That is what
matters. I will get a message to
the people we are dealing with and
emphasize you are prepared to do
anything they say. And tell them
there is no reason for violence.

KATIE
What happened to her?

BRAMOS
Who?

KATIE
Evelyn.

Bramos shrugs.

BRAMOS
No one knows.

INT. TAXI - MID-MORNING

Katie and Nicholas. Riding. Nicholas gazes out the window
with lost eyes. Katie watches him.

KATIE
Nicholas.

He turns.

KATIE
I'm sorry about Evelyn.

NICHOLAS
I just want my daughter back.

He turns away, stares at the window at Sao Paulo.

NICHOLAS
I remember being alone in the house
for the first time. It was how
Dolly and I left it, how two people
left it.

CONTINUED:

Katie watches him.

NICHOLAS

I saw her pajamas on the floor in the hallway...she was always late getting ready for school. We'd fight because it took her so long to get dressed. I remember...I could still feel her presence.

He turns to her now.

NICHOLAS

It's rare to put your demons to sleep, to live in a way that your conscience doesn't haunt you. I read a passage, in Dolly's book, your book but her words: "when the monster stared at her, she wanted to disappear."

(beat)

I realized later that the monster was me.

Katie locks eyes with Nicholas now.

KATIE

I...I wrote those words.

EXT. IBIRAPUERA PARK - LATER - AFTERNOON

The Central Park of São Paulo. Katie and Nicholas sit on a bench.

NICHOLAS

...but you must have known... someone, somewhere, would find out.

KATIE

When you do something you know is wrong, it's like you are outside of yourself, you can see yourself doing it but your desperation, or fear, makes you do it anyway.

A piece of paper on the wind somersaults past them in the grass. They watch it.

KATIE (cont'd)

It almost blinds you, excuses you, like it's not you, but...

NICHOLAS

...someone else doing it.

CONTINUED:

KATIE

Yes. And you incorporate the lie slowly, and soon enough it's a part of you, part of what people see when they look at you.

They are silent for a moment. Nicholas looks at Katie's profile.

NICHOLAS

Did you want to be a writer because of your father?

KATIE

That fact that he did it made me know it was possible. But I loved to write.

(Katie lightens a bit as she remembers)

I'd write everything...what my mother and I did, things we talked about, trips we took. Just...these little stories. And my father would help me.

NICHOLAS

Nice to have someone like that helping you.

KATIE

He'd push me, even though I was so young. He wanted me to use my imagination, to write what I felt. And writing...it was my way of connecting with him. His acceptance meant everything. He was the first to see anything I wrote.

(beat)

But then...everything changed. His career started going badly. He started to drink. He would hide in his room for days.

Nicholas watches her face.

KATIE (cont'd)

When he was around he and my mother would go at it. Hard. Their fighting scared me. And if I remember...she was intense. I still wrote, but he had little patience for me. But I kept trying because I felt if I could make him happy then they wouldn't fight so much.

Katie. Uneasy now.

CONTINUED:

KATIE (cont'd)
 One night I wrote this long
 fantasy, it just poured out of
 me...it was almost unconscious.
 (beat)
 A little girl and her mother went
 to this beautiful place, to get
 away from the father. And the
 little girl was so happy that it
 was just her and her mother.
 Happier than she'd ever been.
 (beat)
 I was so young I didn't realize
 what I showing him...what it was
 saying...

FLASHBACK: KATIE (8) knocks on her father's WORK STUDY DOOR.
 She wears denim overalls, has bright hopeful eyes.

She knocks again. No answer. She opens it. Steps in. Peter
 Masters stares at his typewriter, at the blank sheet of paper
 rolled into it. He doesn't know she's there. Until...

YOUNG KATIE
 Daddy?

He turns. Not happy to be bothered. He's been drinking.

...Peter, A MINUTE LATER, stands, reads her story. She chews
 her nails, stares up at him, to see if he's pleased.

YOUNG KATIE (cont'd)
 Do you like it daddy?

...Peter reads. Grimaces. His eyes narrow, furious. He
 annihilates it, and her, with a scathing--

PETER MASTERS
What the fuck is this?

--and the pages mangle in his fist. He rumbles past her into
 the hallway. Young Katie's face contorts, the tears come...

...Peter storms INTO KATIE'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM, rips pages of
 her writing and drawing from the walls...

...Katie, crying hysterically now, jumps on her bed, grabs
 his arm, screams "*stop it! stop! please don't!*"

...Eleanor flies down the hallway toward the screaming...

...Peter rips down more pages. Eleanor bursts into Katie's
 room the exact moment Peter flings Katie off his arm. She
 inadvertently trips off the bed and her head BANGS against
 the floor. She screams out in pain...

CONTINUED:

...Eleanor rushes to her...lifts her...holds her in her arms...looks at Peter with raw hatred....

ELEANOR
Keep your hands off her!

...Peter storms past them to the door, whirls on them...

PETER
(scathing)
You two can have each other.

...and blows out of the room...

...Eleanor tries to comfort Katie. The pain in Katie's cry isn't from the fall, it's from the rejection, the separation, the slamming door, the father gone...

PRESENT - IBIRAPEURA PARK

Katie and Nicholas

KATIE
I was only doing what he told me.
His rejection...it paralyzed me, I
lost myself. My imagination totally
shut down. And my confidence...
just didn't exist. So I'd write
about other people. That was easy.
I kept trying to go back, as I got
older, to look inside myself, to
tell my own story, to see what was
there. And all I found was fear,
fear that I couldn't ever find it
again, that I'd never have a story
to tell.

Nicholas thinks about her words.

NICHOLAS
Maybe that's your story.

Silence. Nicholas looks at his watch his watch. Looks at Katie. Knows what it means.

EXT. SAO PAULO - THE OBELISK - NOON

Katie and Nicholas. Standing near the base of the 235 foot tall Washington Monument-like memorial. Katie holds the bank bag. Tourists stroll about, taking snapshots.

NICHOLAS
Just leave it.

CONTINUED:

KATIE
Just leave it?

He nods. She drops the bag at the base of the monument, near a trash can. Looks around. Nobody pays attention to it. She looks at Nicholas.

NICHOLAS
They're here. I can feel them.

INT. KATIE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Katie watches a movie dubbed in Portuguese. Phone in her room rings.

KATIE
Hello?

A frenzied WOMAN yelling in rapid Portuguese. Not into the phone but to someone in the b.g. We hear the FRANTIC VOICE of a MAN. Wrong number. Katie's about to hang up...

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Katie Master?

KATIE
Yes?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Fernando, from police, want you to know, *you don't know*, what is the story.

KATIE
What?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Bramos...the American man...and the girl! *It's not what you think.*

KATIE
What are you talking about?

Katie hears the man yell in Portuguese.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
You don't know! Meet *tomorrow*, Fernando, he *knows*, Instituto Butanta, three o'clock!

KATIE
Say it again!

CONTINUED:

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Instituto Butanta. Do not tell any
people.

Line goes dead. Katie scrambles for a pen, writes it down.

INT. FATA MORGANA HOTEL - HALLWAY - TWO-THIRTY - THE NEXT
AFTERNOON

Katie walks, tentatively, moving toward the lobby...

KATIE'S POV - THE LOBBY

Looking around the corner...nobody except a Desk Clerk
working on a computer.

INT. LOBBY

Katie walks briskly, heading for the REVOLVING DOORS. She
steps in and SPINS to daylight and she's

STARTLED when she's SUDDENLY FACE-TO-FACE with Nicholas.

NICHOLAS
(startled)
Katie. Where are you going?

KATIE
(counterfeit cool)
Just...to get some air...

NICHOLAS
Don't wander too far from the
hotel. They said it could be
dangerous.

KATIE
Okay. Thanks.

Nicholas watches her walk away.

EXT. INSTITUTO BUTANTA - SAO PAULO - THREE O'CLOCK

Leading center in the world for study of poisonous snakes.
Open to the public. Slithery reptiles everywhere on the zoo-
like premises, coiled behind glass in ornate kiosks, piled on
each other in grassy habitats. About 80,000 snakes here.

And it creeps Katie out. Fernando hasn't shown up. Katie
looks at her watch: 3:00.

Time passes. People come and go. The sun beats down.

CONTINUED:

Katie checks her watch again: 4:00. Still no Fernando...

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
(English, thick accent)
I do not understand...

EXT. SAO PAULO STREET - PUBLIC PHONE - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Katie is on the phone, tense. Blaring noise from traffic makes it hard to hear.

KATIE
It's Fernando...I'm not sure what
his last name is. He worked with
Lieutenant Bramos.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Do you want to speak with
Lieutenant Bramos?

KATIE
(quick)
No.

WOMAN VOICE (O.S.)
Hold on...

Katie holds. And holds.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
You're calling for Fernando?

KATIE
Yes.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
I am sorry to say...Fernando
was...killed. This morning. In the
line of duty.

Katie gasps...

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
May I ask who is calling please?

Katie, stunned, slowly hangs up the phone...

EXT. SAO PAULO STREET - HALF HOUR LATER

Katie walking alone. Disoriented. Words ricocheting around her brain..."Bramos"...*"the American man"*..."the girl"...*"not what you think"*...

EXT. SAO PAULO - ANOTHER STREET - MINUTES LATER

A BLIND WOMAN seems to stare at Katie, unsettling her. She stops, looks around. She's lost...not sure where she is...she takes off her bracelet and slides it in her pocket...

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - MINUTES LATER

Katie walks. Past a bar now. She suddenly stops. Perplexed look on her face.

She slowly turns back. Frames her face with her hands and peers in the window...

It's Nicholas. Sitting at a small bar table. Facing Katie. But somehow not seeing her. He's with a MAN. The man's back is to Katie.

Katie moves down the length of the window to get a better view...peers inside again...

Someone crosses the bar, obstructs her view. They pass and Katie glimpses who Nicholas is with and it looks like...*damn it*...someone blocks her view again.

They clear out of the way...and it's just a flash, a split second, but she sees... *Bramos? With Nicholas? What the fuck?* Bramos slides a thick envelope across the table to Nicholas.

Katie's eyes burn with confusion as she spins away from the window and blasts toward the entrance of the bar...

INT. BAR - DUSK

Packed. Loud. Music. Katie shoves through...it takes *time*, crowd is *thick*, it's like they're *purposely* holding her back.

Katie finally squeezes through the sea of people. Sees Nicholas. He's sitting at a small bar table. And he's alone. She gets closer. He looks up, surprised to see her there.

NICHOLAS

Katie.

Katie looks at Nicholas. Down at the table. Sees a shot glass in front of him. And right across from him there's a wet ring of water. Where someone's glass must have been.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)

What are you doing here?

Katie's eyes dart around the bar. To the ring. To Nicholas. To the ring. Back around the bar. *Searching*. Afraid to ask.

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
Who are you looking for?

Katie is off balance.

KATIE
I just saw--

NICHOLAS
What did you see *now*, Katie.

KATIE
Are you alone?

NICHOLAS
Of course I'm alone. Sit.

She doesn't. Her eyes are glued to the wet ring on the table.

The WAITER appears. With a glass of water. Katie's eyes follow it. As he puts it down. Directly on the *ring* of water. Nicholas nods to him.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
It's a glass of water, Katie.

He lifts it. Drinks. She can't take her eyes off the ring...

EXT. BAR - SIDEWALK - TEN MINUTES LATER - DUSK

Katie and Nicholas. Making their way through the teeming POST-WORK CROWD and STREET VENDORS. Katie lags a step behind. A STREET MUSICIAN plays the trumpet. Nicholas and Katie reach an intersection.

SUDDENLY! A GUN SHOT. Out of NOWHERE.

TWO MORE SHOTS now. Glass SHATTERS. People *scream*. Hysterical Portuguese. People HIT THE GROUND! Or *RUN*. To get the hell out of there. A man GROANS. Is he hit? Alarms go off. In cars. In stores. People knock each other over trying to get away. Nicholas covers Katie. A moment passes. Silence. ANOTHER SHOT! Then silence. Heads. Looking up. All around. Frightened rodents. Terrified eyes. Is it safe?

A LOW RUMBLE. *Approaching*. Growing LOUDER. *Closer*.

A MOTORCYCLE. Parting a sea of people in its path. Its path leads *directly* to Nicholas and Katie. A straight line. RIDER wears a shiny black helmet and black leather.

Katie and Nicholas freeze. People scramble. Dive out of the way. Rider skids, stops, in front of Katie and Nicholas... REVS his engine, throws a briefcase at their feet and *guns* it. He's *gone*.

CONTINUED:

Nicholas picks it up, tries it. Locked.

NICHOLAS

Fuck!

INT. NICHOLAS'S HOTEL ROOM - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Nicholas tries to jimmy the briefcase lock with a room service wine opener, *angry*, losing patience, he suddenly EXPLODES, *stabs* into the leather, rips up a corner and tears the top open, revealing...

A T-SHIRT.

Garish. Tourist variety. With a happy face. And this legend: *"Brazil. It's A State Of Mind."*

Katie and Nicholas look at each other...afraid to lift up the shirt. But Katie does. Sees a black envelope. Opens it, looks inside.

A note, which she removes, and something else, something so small she can't make it out.

She shakes the envelope and empties it on the table. It's almost fake looking, like it was torn off a doll, but as they look closer and see the thin line of blood where it was sliced off they understand it is a very real

EYELID WITH LASHES ATTACHED

Nicholas backs away, INSTANTLY NUMB...

Katie is *horrified*. Looks at Nicholas. The eye lid. The shirt. The note. Unfolds it with trembling hands.

any authorities girl dies. \$350.000.00 unmarked U.S. send the writer alone. tomorrow night

And instructions for A PLACE to make the drop.

Katie is reeling. Her heart is pounding. Especially when her eyes, ever-so-slowly, re-read the words...

send the writer alone

INT. BANCO INTERNATIONALE - SAO PAULO - NEXT MORNING

Katie. Stressed. Sitting next to Nicholas. Talking with a BANK MANAGER. A Latin corporate puppet in a suit made for humans.

CONTINUED:

BANK MANAGER

(monotone)

The transfer can be made, but it
will take at least forty-eight
hours for our bank-

KATIE

I've already contacted my bank and
they assured me-

BANK MANAGER

(monotone)

There is a procedure for this
amount and we must have the correct
paperwork prepared-

KATIE

(rising)

Today, I must have the money today-

BANK MANAGER

(monotone)

And Banco Internationale's policy
requires that-

KATIE

(the explosion)

Shut Up!

Entire bank freezes. And stares. Bank Manager is in shock.
Now Katie has his attention.

KATIE (cont'd)

(cold)

I've spoken to my bank in Los
Angeles. They'll wire the money to
this bank. It's five a.m. there now
and my bank opens at nine.

Bank Manager nods "okay" as Katie and Nicholas rise to leave.

EXT. SAO PAULO - STREET - MINUTES LATER

Katie and Nicholas. Walking. Fast.

NICHOLAS

You have to go alone Katie.

KATIE

I can't.

NICHOLAS

You're going to.

KATIE

You go.

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS
It's my *daughter*.

KATIE
I can't go alone.

Katie suddenly grabs Nicholas's arm, stops him.

KATIE (cont'd)
(pleads)
Go with me.

NICHOLAS
We have to play by their rules.

KATIE
Please Nicholas.

NICHOLAS
You brought this on yourself.

He turns, walks on...

KATIE
No.

Nicholas stops, whirls around.

KATIE
I'm not doing this by myself.

Nicholas moves toward her, intense. Backs her up against a wall. *Grabs* her by the wrist.

NICHOLAS
You are gonna fucking *finish* this thing.

She stares at him, terrified.

NICHOLAS
Do you *hear* me?

He lets go of her...

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
(calm, threatening)
Do you want me to make a phone call?
(leans in, face to face)
Should I? Yes? No? Yes? (beat)
Send. The writer. Alone.

Katie. The caged animal. The bars closing in around her...

INT. RENTAL CAR - MOVING - OUTSIDE SAO PAULO - NIGHT

Hard rain. An impenetrable blackness. Katie squints as she tries to see past the rain dousing the windshield...

Katie's eyes dart between the map on the seat and the windshield.

BLINDING HEADLIGHTS SUDDENLY fill the rear window. Katie tries to see the reflection in the rear view mirror but it's a blazing rectangle of white light.

EXT. DESERTED ROAD OUTSIDE SAO PAULO - THE TWO CARS - MOVING - NIGHT

Katie speeds up. Car stays on her. Katie accelerates. Car doesn't lose an inch. She drives *faster*. Car stays right with her.

In a split second, she looks from the blaring mirror to the windshield.

A split second. Enough time. To register she has drifted off the road. And realize there is a rusted out broken-down delivery truck. RIGHT in front of her.

AN EXPLOSION OF SHATTERED GLASS AND TWISTING STEEL.

Happens so fast it's hard to process it happened at all.

It takes a moment. Then Katie realizes. Where she is. What happened. And as she looks up, dazed, we go to -

HER POV

A RUST-COLORED SEDAN skids to a stop fifteen feet away and idles. Katie sees figures in the car.

Katie's eyes widen. She looks out her windshield, which is half gone...

KATIE'S POV

TWO MEN wearing SKI MASKS jump out of the sedan. March toward her car. One approaches her door, one moves toward the front passenger window. Katie is surrounded.

KATIE

Instinctively fumbles for the lock control, hole in the window notwithstanding, *slaps* it down just as they reach for the handles.

CONTINUED:

MASKED MAN #1, at her window, peers in at her. Makes eye contact. Gestures casually for her to open the door. She doesn't. His eyes are emotionless.

He steps back. With a violent KICK he SMASHES out the window behind her.

Katie instinctively reaches back to hold down the lock but Masked Man #1 grabs her hand through the broken window, easily moves it out of the way and unlocks the door.

He opens it graciously for MASKED MAN #2, who has come around from the other side.

Masked Man #2 bows gratefully and before sitting down behind her, meticulously dusts glass off the seat.

INT. KATIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Masked Man #2, right behind Katie. He is quiet. Very quiet. Everything is. Until...

MASKED MAN #2
(ear shattering)
WHAT IS THE FUCK-KEENE STORY!?!?!

Katie cringes under the power of his voice.

KATIE
Where's the little girl?

Masked Man #1 has gone around to the passenger side front seat. Masked Man #2 leans forward from the backseat and unlocks the door for him.

Masked Man #1 gets in, starts rifling the car, under the seats, in the glove compartment, spreads Katie's legs and looks under her seat. Peers at her underwear.

MASKED MAN #1
Mmmmmmmmm...

A GUN IS COCKED in the backseat. Katie pleads...

KATIE
Please, where is she? Please give
me the girl...

MASKED MAN #2
Money first. Girl second.

Katie turns toward the backseat. Make's eye contact with Masked Man #2.

KATIE
The money's not here.

CONTINUED:

MASKED MAN #2
(negotiable)
Girl first, money second?

KATIE
(relieved)
Yes.

Masked Man #2 casually leans out the broken window. *Screams* something in Portuguese toward the sedan.

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - SEDAN - NIGHT

The door opens. Dolly appears. Bare feet and legs first. Then the rest of her, small arm held tightly by a MASKED MAN #3.

Wait: Dolly's face is obscured by cloth fabric draped over her head and shoulders. A rope around her neck holds it in place.

MASKED MAN #2
(from backseat, like
thunder)
Siiiiiiiiiii!

MASKED MAN #3 grips Dolly with one hand and slowly raises a gun to her head with his free hand.

MASKED MAN #3
(holding Dolly)
Um, dois, tres, quatro,

INT. RENTED CAR - NIGHT

Katie frantically rips the keys out of the ignition and throws them back toward Masked Man #2 in the backseat.

KATIE
In the trunk!!

Masked Man #2 casually leans out the window...

MASKED MAN #2
No.

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - SEDAN - NIGHT

Masked Man #3 lowers the gun away from Dolly's head.

INT. RENTED CAR - NIGHT

Masked Man #2 looks at the keys, shakes them, looks at Katie.

CONTINUED:

MASKED MAN #2
Good *girl!*

And gets out of the car.

EXT. RENTED CAR - TRUNK - NIGHT

Masked Man #2 opens the trunk, sees a BRIEFCASE, reaches in, snaps it open, sees the money, nods, closes the case, slams the trunk, walks back toward the rust-colored sedan with case in hand. Masked man #1 follows him.

Masked Man #2 walks up to the man holding Dolly. Looks back at Katie, who is petrified behind the wheel of her car.

KATIE'S POV

He says something to Masked Man #3. Masked Man #3 ever-so-slowly raises the gun to Dolly's temple...

KATIE
No!!!!

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - NIGHT

Katie frantically storms out of her car...

Masked Man #1 and #2 get in the sedan....

Katie bolts toward Dolly and Masked Man #3 as he cocks his gun, barrel whispering against the fabric on Dolly's head.

Sedan starts. Katie lets loose a SCREAM, lunges for the gun, masked Man #3 jerks it away and SMASHES Katie on the head with the butt of it in one quick motion and Katie tumbles to the ground in a heap.

KATIE'S POV

Splintered collage-like images. We HEAR: BAP!! One dry cold gunshot. Car doors slam. Tires squeal. A car speeds away.

Katie is seeing in triple vision now. Now double vision. A SECOND CAR speeds away. Katie's. The world comes into focus. Katie sees two little feet. And as she climbs to her knees, she sees...

DOLLY

Standing *right* in front of her. *Yes!* They didn't shoot her! Katie hears a sad whimper from beneath the cloth.

CONTINUED:

KATIE
(a relieved whisper)
You're okay...

Katie holds Dolly tight, presses her face against Dolly's chest. Katie begins untying the rope...slowly...carefully...

She drops the rope to the ground...

Slowly begins to lift the fabric off Dolly's head...

Raises it gently... lifting it off ... just a few more inches now... slowly... slowly... slowly... revealing ...

A LITTLE BOY

With big unblinking eyes. Staring directly into Katie's. His face is so close. Beat.

The little boy *bolts* away into the darkness.

Katie, still on her knees, beseeches the night sky...

KATIE (cont'd)
No...

BLACK SCREEN

And the sound of uneven footsteps...

EXT. SAO PAULO - A DESERTED ROAD - SUNRISE

The distorted outline of a human shape. Moving in the distance, backlit by the dawn's early light.

The only thing we see on this flat nowhere landscape.

CLOSER

It's Katie. Walking. Shell shocked.

BLACK SCREEN

The sound of uneven footsteps...

EXT. SAO PAULO - DESERTED ROAD - SUNRISE

The distorted outline of a human shape moving in the distance. Backlit by dawn's early light.

CLOSER. It's Katie. Walking. Unsteady.

INT. HOTEL FATA MORGANA - LOBBY - SAN PAULO - AN HOUR LATER -
EARLY MORNING

Katie steps in, unsteady. A few guests read the papers and drink coffee. A family checks in at the front desk.

Katie looks like she's been through hell. Katie *has* been through hell. Her eyes burn with anguish and humiliation.

NICHOLAS

Rushes toward her. She looks at him, bursts into tears. Nicholas knows. He puts his arms around her, to comfort her. She puts her arms up, begins pounding at him.

All she's been through manifests itself in raw fury. He holds her tighter. Her punches subside.

Briefly.

Then she explodes, breaks from his grasp, flails at his face. Stunned guests turn toward Katie and Nicholas.

NICHOLAS

Katie...

Nicholas backs away. Katie is crying. And furious.

KATIE

Tell everyone Nicholas! Make your fucking phone call. Tell them my dirty little secret! Katie Masters, plagiarist! Katie Masters, thief!

Desk Clerk walks out from behind the counter, moves tentatively toward Katie and Nicholas...

DESK CLERK

Please...

Nicholas tries to reach out for her...

KATIE

Don't...don't.

(beat)

I'm leaving. I'm leaving this fucking place.

She turns away and rambles toward the elevator.

INT. KATIE'S HOTEL ROOM - SAO PAULO - NOON

Katie sits on her bed. Holds herself. Rocking herself. Eyes wide. Doesn't respond to...

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS'S VOICE
(outside door)
Katie? Katie?

INT. KATIE'S HOTEL ROOM - EARLY EVENING

The moment her eyes open. She doesn't know where she is at first. She sits up on the bed, dazed.

Touches the gash on her head. Winces.

She stands...unsteady, moves into the bathroom. Looks into the mirror, into her own eyes.

INT. KATIE'S HOTEL ROOM - HOUR LATER - NIGHT

Katie's bag is almost packed. She moves to the dresser, opens the top drawer, sees the penknife she bought from the vendor. She slides it into a compartment in her bag.

Katie moves to the phone. Picks it up.

KATIE
Prepare my bill. I'm checking out.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

Katie walks. Stops. Stares at a door at the end of a long hallway.

Move with her. She gets closer. She sees that it's ajar. She stands outside. Knocks.

KATIE
Nicholas?

She knocks again. Waits. No answer. She gently pushes the door open. It softly bumps into a Maid's cart. The bed is stripped. The Maid sings in Portuguese in the bathroom.

Katie looks around at this room she's never been in before.

Eyes scan. Lock on a chair outside the bathroom. Where the maid cleans: a pair of Nicholas's pants. Hanging over the back of the chair.

A flash of reddish-pink protrudes from one of the back pockets.

Katie moves into the room. Around the bed. Silently. Tries to get a better look.

CONTINUED:

The sound of room door behind her SLAMMING SHUT makes her jump. Nobody there.

The Maid runs water in the bathroom. The chair is in front of the bathroom door. Katie moves as close as she can without stepping into the Maid's view to get see. And she does.

Message slips. A lot of them. Katie stares. Thinks.

THE MAID'S FACE appears right in front of Katie's and they both shriek! Katie stares at her. Catches her breath. Thinks.

KATIE (cont'd)
Nicholas?

Katie indicates. *Is he here?* Maid stares at Katie with suspicion. Says something in Portuguese. Moves toward the phone.

KATIE (cont'd)
(intense)
No. Wait.

Maid stops cold at the power of Katie's voice. Katie removes the messages from Nicholas's pants pocket. She reads the first message.

It's from Renato.

The second: Renato. Third: Renato. Fourth: Renato. Fifth: Renato. Sixth: Renato. Seventh: Renato.

THEY ARE ALL FOR KATIE MASTERS, ROOM 404.

Katie. Devastated. Not understanding. Trying to figure. Heart pounding.

She takes one of the messages, puts the rest back...

INT. FATA MORGANA HOTEL - CORRIDOR - A MINUTE LATER

Katie walks toward the lobby. Stops. Thinks. Turns back down the long empty corridor toward the back of the hotel and steps out into the night.

EXT. STREET - PUBLIC PHONE - FIVE MINUTES LATER - NIGHT

Katie holds a message slip, reads numbers off it as she dials. It rings twice.

KATIE
Renato?

A WOMAN'S VOICE.

CONTINUED:

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
We are closed. Call tomorrow.

KATIE
No. Please.

Silence.

KATIE (cont'd)
I need to speak to him. Now.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Who is this?

Katie fingers her necklace. Silence.

KATIE (cont'd)
I have a girl he is looking for. A
little girl. I need to speak to
him. Tonight.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Wait.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - LATER - NIGHT

A poor neighborhood not quite ghetto. Katie walks in the
entrance.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - HALLWAY

Katie. Looks between a piece of paper in her hand and cheap
aluminum numbers dangling from filthy doors. She stops,
knocks.

Door opens. A loose-skinned Brazilian MAN, old and young at
the same time, like a Latin Iggy Pop, looks at Katie with
rheumy eyes. He wears jeans and nothing else. "Renato" is
tattooed across his chest.

KATIE
I'm looking for Renato.

He shakes his head "not here."

KATIE
I need to speak to him. It's
important.

They stare at each other for a moment.

KATIE
Please.

CONTINUED:

MAN
Club Vaqueiro.

KATIE
Where?

He stares at her blankly.

KATIE
Donde?

He withdraws into the apartment. Katie waits. A WOMAN in the apartment across the hall moans as she reaches orgasm. Katie turns to the sound. Katie turns back. The Man is holding out a piece of paper. Katie takes it.

INT. TAXI - SAO PAULO - NIGHT

Katie rides in silence.

EXT. CLUB VAQUEIRO - NIGHT

Small. Dark. Sinister. DEAFENING BEATS pump within. Katie walks to the door and goes inside.

INT. CLUB VAQUEIRO - NIGHT

Loud. Sternum thumping. HARD CORE GAY MEN. Lining the bar. Perched on stools. Vultures waiting to feed.

Eyes turn to Katie as she enters. Like she's a freak.

She moves into the club, tries to make a connection with someone, anyone.

She moves toward a MAN. 20's. Blond. Emaciated.

KATIE
Renato?

The man looks at her. Points weakly. To the back of club.

INT. CLUB VAQUEIRO - HALLWAY

On either side small rooms with curtains. Dim yellow light. Like dressing rooms. Undressing rooms.

Katie ducks down, see two sets of denim legs shoved together.

Keeps moving.

CONTINUED:

In the next room the curtain is pulled open a few inches. Katie sees a man's fist, covered in blood, glistening in dim light, opening and closing.

Katie cringes, moves on. Calls out.

KATIE

Renato?

No response. A MAN suddenly stumbles out of one of the rooms, bounces against the wall, falls at Katie's feet.

Out cold. No, he's not. He bursts out laughing.

Katie steps over him, looks into the room he came from. Renato is there, shirtless, a wasted idiot grin on his face, eyes like slits and small fresh cuts on his chest.

He looks at her without recognition.

KATIE

Renato.

Renato is out of it. He reaches into his shirt pocket, pulls out a small bottle of amyl nitrate, opens it, snorts vapors into his nose. His head lolls to the side.

KATIE (cont'd)

Hey. Hey.

He doesn't move. She grabs his face in her hands, tries to point his eyes at her face.

KATIE (cont'd)

I came to see you. With Nicholas Andrews. Wake up!

A glint of recognition in his wasted eyes. Katie stares at him. SLAPS him in the face.

KATIE (cont'd)

Hey!

POV RENATO: three Katies. Two Katies. He's trying to focus. Now there's one of her.

Back to scene: She holds the message in front of his eyes.

KATIE (cont'd)

Why were you calling him? Why?

RENATO

Who?

KATIE

Nicholas Andrews!

CONTINUED:

He rubs his face with his hands. Limply blinks at her.

RENATO
I called him. But he never called
me...

The amyl nitrate bottle falls from his fingers and clatters
to the floor. The music in the club grows even louder.

RENATO (cont'd)
Never. I went back...

His head rolls, his eyes close...

KATIE
You went back?!

She slaps him again.

KATIE (cont'd)
C'mon!

RENATO
Nothing was...ever entered for her.
No Interpol, no NCMEC...

Katie's mind orbits. Renato finds a window of clarity and
speaks through it.

RENATO (cont'd)
There is no little girl. The little
girl does not exist. She is an
invention. Understand?
(long wasted beat)
...there's no record of Nicholas
Andrews in the United States. He
does not exist either. This man is
telling you stories... he's making
it all up.

Katie stands stock still, in a daze. She backs away from
Renato, away from his words, out of the tiny room, unstrung,
trips over the guy passed out on the floor...

She gets to her feet, stumbles out through the dark deafening
club...

INTO THE STREET

Katie, unsteady, eyes wide, heart thumping...stands mannequin
still in the middle of the street.

Slowly...perceptibly...her eyes fill with rage.

And REVENGE.

INT. FATA MORGANA HOTEL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The SOUND of footsteps. We're moving toward a room. At the end of a long hallway. Closer. Closer. We knock on the door.

NICHOLAS (O.S.)

Hold on.

The door is unchained. It slowly opens. Nicholas JUMPS. Bewildered. By the look in her eyes. That she's there.

KATIE

Aren't you going to invite me in?

NICHOLAS

I thought you left.

She seems to have changed shape somehow. She seems raw and serene.

KATIE

I'm getting the first flight out tomorrow morning.

Nicholas nods slowly.

NICHOLAS

You okay?

KATIE

I'm fine. I just need a drink.

NICHOLAS

Come in.

She does. Sits on the edge of the bed. There is piano music on the radio.

KATIE

Straight vodka.

Nicholas nods. She watches Nicholas make her a drink at the mini-bar. He keeps glancing back at her.

TV is ON with sound OFF.

He brings it to her. She downs half. Nicholas takes a seat across the room at a small table.

KATIE

How are you holding up?

NICHOLAS

I'm okay.

She looks at him sympathetically.

CONTINUED:

KATIE

It must be... painful for you. To
be this close and then...nothing.

Nicholas nods sadly.

KATIE (cont'd)

It just has to be.

A silence. She stands, walks closer to him.

KATIE (cont'd)

Can I ask you something, Nicholas?
Before I leave?

NICHOLAS

Yes.

KATIE

Why did it take you so long to
contact me?

NICHOLAS

(hesitation...)

I don't know...I mean...I don't...
watch much TV.

Katie slow burns toward the image on the TV. Then makes
loaded eye contact with Nicholas.

NICHOLAS (cont'd)

The Dolly Dimple phenomenon... I
didn't even know it existed until I
saw something at Borders. Your book
signing.

KATIE

Uh-Huh.

Nicholas looks at her suspiciously.

NICHOLAS

Why are you asking me that now?

KATIE

Just wondering.

She drains the rest of her drink. Nicholas notes it. She
gently rattles the ice in her glass.

KATIE (cont'd)

Thirsty.

She moves to the bar. Watches him closely in the reflection
of a mirror. Pours herself a shot of vodka.

CONTINUED:

She turns, looks at him. Sips from her drink. Sexy. With her free hand she runs her fingers over the rim of her glass.

KATIE (cont'd)
There's something else.
(long beat)
How long ago was it...that she
disappeared...your "daughter" I
mean.

He stares at her. Silent.

KATIE (cont'd)
Was it three years? Or was it...
four? I've never been quite clear
on that.

The chair he's sitting in creaks as he shifts in it.

NICHOLAS
What?

It suddenly feels very hot in this room. Maybe because Katie's playing with fire. She moves a bit closer to it.

KATIE
(smiling)
You must know.

Nicholas's eyes burn black. Katie throws out the next lines like loaded dice.

KATIE (cont'd)
Or maybe you don't.
(beat)
Since you don't have a daughter.

NICHOLAS
What are you talking about?

Katie moves to a dresser, sets her drink on it. She looks right in his eyes.

KATIE
Why don't you tell me..."daddy?"

Two sets of eyes burn at each other. Beat. Beat. Beat.

Nicholas *suddenly blasts out of his chair* across the room and Katie thrusts her hand into her back pocket and Nicholas comes at her and her hand is impossible to pull out of her pocket and he's getting closer...he *LUNGES* for her and she spins out of the way and bolts for the door but she *trips on a chair* and falls and--

CONTINUED:

--Nicholas dives at her legs from behind and she tries to claw away but he's on top of her now, he's flipping her over, getting a grip on her neck and

Katie fight's him off with one hand and rips her other hand out of her pocket and she grips a black object and Nicholas has her by the neck and *he doesn't see--*

THE PENKNIFE

--she bought from the street vendor and she uncaps it with one hand as he chokes her and the blade gleams and flashes as Nicholas violently jerks Katie's neck hard on each word as he screams...

NICHOLAS

What...the...fuck...*is*...this?!?!

Katie's face. Red. Eyes bulging. Gag sounds from her throat. Choking to death...and yet...

In one shocking motion Katie slams the knife into Nicholas's rib cage and he screams in shock as he rolls off her.

She holds on. Katie on top now. Straddling him. She attacks blade first and Nicholas desperately grabs at her hands and tries to contain her.

KATIE

You killed her! You killed her!

Katie's hand slips free and she brings the knife down...

KATIE

You fucking bastard! You killed her!

Adrenaline rush, primal instincts, violence exploding...

SLASH SLASH SLASH...the knife whips through the air so fast it's a blur and we see a *flash of PETER MASTERS' face* where Nicholas's face is but it is so fast we don't know if we saw it at all...

Katie brings the knife down with all her force and she is almost in shock when she sees...

The handle of the penknife. Protruding from Nicholas's chest. The blood spreading round and red over his T-shirt.

And his eyes. Wide open. Staring at nothing. But death.

PHONE RINGS! Katie unleashes a shriek and JUMPS LIKE IT'S THE SCARIEST SOUND she's ever heard. It rings again.

She moves toward it. It rings again. Picks it up and hears...

CONTINUED:

A CREEPY WHISPERING VOICE.

VOICE (O.S.)
You want her?

Katie tries to speak. The words won't come.

VOICE (O.S.) (cont'd)
You want the little girl?

The word will not come. Katie cannot get it out. Takes the force of her entire will just to blurt--

KATIE
Yes.

VOICE (O.S.)
She is here.

KATIE
What!?

VOICE (O.S.)
Room 1...0...1...

Katie looks at Nicholas. Dead. On the floor.

KATIE
(horrificed)
Oh my God...

The phone falls from Katie's hands...

INT. HOTEL FATA MORGANA - HALLWAY

Katie blasts down the hallway to the door with EMERGENCIA in bold red letters and blasts through to--

INT. HOTEL - STAIRWELL

--and races down FOUR FLIGHTS of stairs to the FIRST FLOOR and bursts through the door to--

THE HALLWAY

--and she sees numbers on the door in front of her--119 and she breaks into a run and the room numbers flash by...117, 115, 112, 108, 106, 103...

She stops. At room 101. Puts her hand on the doorknob. Turns it slowly. Apprehensively. Slowly opens the door.

INT. ROOM 101

A dim bulb sways from the ceiling and throws shadows about the room. Walls and floors are scraped and caked with filth.

The room is otherworldly, like a dark corner of someone's memory, like it's not even part of this hotel.

Katie steps inside.

Against the back wall, twenty-feet away, she sees...

DOLLY

Appearing in and out of shadows as the bulb swings. Flat on her back on a low wooden bench, like an offering on an altar.

Katie moves toward her. When she is close she sees Dolly's hand. Wrapped in blood-stained gauze. And her eye covered with a blood-stained wrap. The other eye is closed.

Katie stares. Terrified. Moves closer to Dolly. Closer.

She reaches her. Drops to her knees. Looks at Dolly's lifeless bandaged face. Katie sees her chest. No rise and fall.

KATIE
What have they done?

She gently unravels the blood-stained gauze from her hand.

It takes time. When she removes it she sees...the hand...is perfectly intact. No blood. No nothing.

Katie's eyes widen with confusion. She begins removing the wrap on Dolly's face. She is tender, almost like she doesn't want to inflict pain on Dolly's poor dead body.

Katie lifts it away from her face, away from her eye.

Dolly's eyelid is entirely untouched.

The purest silence imaginable descends on the room, until...

A LOUD CHORD!

DOLLY'S EYES BURST OPEN!

KATIE JUMPS BACK!

AND SO DO WE!

Katie is staggered. Katie is shocked.

CONTINUED:

Even more so when Dolly sits up. The light sways, illuminates her face, it takes two seconds to realize -

--we are looking at, and recognizing, an EIGHT-year-old girl we have seen before. From the flashback in Ibirapuera Park.

This isn't Dolly. IT'S KATIE. Looking at HER YOUNGER SELF.

Young Katie and Katie stare at each other. Into each other. They are each other.

YOUNG KATIE
(eerie, calm)
You finally found me....

Katie looks like she has just seen...her Younger Self. Or God. Or a ghost. She puts a hand over her mouth--

KATIE
(a whisper)
Oh my God...

--and stares, stupefied. She's looking into the mirror of time. Young Katie nods sagely.

YOUNG KATIE
Composites. Fantasies. Obsessions.
Remember?

Katie nods, trancelike. She looks down at her own hand. Sees Nicholas's blood. Guiltily looks up at her younger self.

YOUNG KATIE (cont'd)
You had to kill him.

Young Katie smiles with unnerving serenity.

YOUNG KATIE
But now you have to understand why.

Katie looks into her eyes, frightened she doesn't understand.

Young Katie picks up a notebook and some colorful pens on the bench beside her. Cover reads: *DOLLY DIMPLE*.

YOUNG KATIE (cont'd)
You *must* recognize this.

Katie is on the border of insanity and clarity, darkness and revelation. She's starting to feel the light and focus shifting in this world.

YOUNG KATIE (cont'd)
Right?

Katie nods, slow and trance-like.

CONTINUED:

YOUNG KATIE (cont'd)
Steal from yourself.

Young Katie looks deep into Katie's eyes. So do we. They shine with epiphany. Clarity. Understanding.

YOUNG KATIE (cont'd)
Right?

Katie nods, face transforming, a subtle hint of a relieved smile. Young Katie looks at the notebook. Then at Katie. She gently TOSSES IT INTO THE AIR...toward Katie...

FOLLOW THE NOTEBOOK as it sails softly through the air toward Katie in SUPER SLO-MO.

We see *Dolly Dimple* slowly spinning...through air...through light...through time...

The space in which it floats grows darker.

It silently comes to rest on a patch of pink and we hear:

Rural night silence.

WIDER - REVEALING EXT. RAVINE - SANTA BARBARA - NIGHT

A flashlight beam slowly passes over the notebook: *Dolly Dimple*.

The notebook lays on top of a pink knapsack.

We slowly find KATIE. On her knees. Holding a flashlight. Staring at the knapsack and notebook.

THE SAME NIGHT. THE SAME TIME. The exact moment we left her when she was about to steal it. Still wearing the black windbreaker she wore when she slipped out of her father's house.

KATIE'S EYES

Sparkling. With relief. And deliverance. And wonder.

Katie slowly runs her fingers across the handwritten *Dolly Dimple* title, reads the words with reverence.

Katie gently slides the notebook into the knapsack. She covers it with leaves and brush. And leaves it.

She stands and climbs up out of the dark canyon.

BLACK

CONTINUED:

SFX: ROARING SUPERSONIC HOWL

KATIE (O.S.)
...and it was like all these things
in my subconscious just erupted.

HARD CUT - KATIE'S APARTMENT - NEW YORK - NEXT MORNING

Katie is on the phone. Katie is glowing. She looks out the window at the city like she and seems to reflect its glow and energy.

KATIE
I think I was pushing too hard,
trying to force it.

INTERCUTTING - INT. ANANIAS BOOKS - SABRINA - NEW YORK - SAME

SABRINA
I could tell you were stressed when
you were in the office. You tried
to hide it but I knew.

KATIE
I have my story now. I've got all
the pieces, now all I have to do is
write it. I always thought it so
was ridiculous when I heard writers
say...

(mock profound)
It just came to me, all at once.
All I had to do was transcribe it.

(real voice)
But it sort of happened like that.
It was like a dream. My dream.

(Katie does Dorothy Gale's voice
of wonderment from Wizard Of Oz.)
"But it wasn't a dream, it was a
place. And you were there. And my
father was there. But you couldn't
have been, could you? This was a
real truly live place. And I
remember some of it wasn't very
nice."

Sabrina laughs at Katie's spot-on Judy Garland impersonation.

SABRINA
I knew you'd come through. Listen,
why don't we go and celebrate your
breakthrough. I'm having dinner
with someone I think you'd like to
meet. Why don't you join us.

CONTINUED:

KATIE
Perfect. I'd love to.

SABRINA
Le Bernadin. Tonight at nine.

INT. LE BERNADIN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Elegant, expensive mid-town French. Katie escorted to a table by a maitre d' and greeted by GORE VIDAL and Sabrina. Sabrina gestures toward Gore.

SABRINA
Gore Vidal.

Gore stands, shakes her hand, smiles.

VIDAL
Hello.

KATIE
It's a pleasure, really.
(to Sabrina)
This *is* a surprise.

She takes a seat. A WAITER appears.

WAITER
A cocktail Madame?

KATIE
Absolutely.

INT. LE BERNADIN - LATER - NIGHT

Dinner is over. Drinks and conversation continue...

GORE VIDAL
The truth is, you can't put real people in a novel because a novel, if it's alive, will distort them to satisfy its own designs. Then they're no longer real. Usually, fiction is a composite of experience and imagination.

KATIE
George Bernard Shaw said if you can't get rid of the skeletons in your closet you better teach them to dance.

CONTINUED:

SABRINA

Nasty neighbors who hate little
doggies become wicked witches of
the west.

Laughter. Split-second Katie/Sabrina smiling eye contact as
they remember Katie's *Wizard of Oz* riff a few hours before.

SABRINA

(to Katie)

Speaking of the writing process, do
you want to talk about your idea?

KATIE

Here?

SABRINA

If you'd rather wait, that's fine.

GORE VIDAL

(a little push)

I'd love to say I was there in the
big moment.

KATIE (cont'd)

Is this my pitch Sabrina? Is this
"official?"

SABRINA

Only if it's good.

GORE VIDAL

Nothing like a little pressure.

Katie focuses. Great energy here as she launches into it.

KATIE

Okay ... there's this writer, and
she's blocked. She is desperate,
her editor is *waiting*, to put it
mildly, but the writer puts her
off, lies to buy time, but the
pressure is building, and the
writer has nothing. She's also the
daughter of this famous writer so
she has *that* pressure as well. So
she finds this story, written by a
little girl, this mysterious little
tale about her mother and father,
about her life, but written in a
strange and beautiful way.

Vidal is looking at Katie with extreme doubt. And a bit like
someone trying to figure out the punch line to a joke as it's
being told.

CONTINUED:

KATIE (cont'd)

So the desperate writer takes the notebook, transcribes it to her computer, fills in some holes, adds some flourishes and gives it to her editor and--

SABRINA

She *flips* for it.

GORE VIDAL

Of course she does.

KATIE

It becomes this huge hit, this monster. *Too* big given the fact that she stole it. (*beat*) But then...the little girl's father shows up...

SABRINA

Blackmail!

KATIE

Yes. The father blackmails the writer.

GORE VIDAL

Wait a minute this--

Sabrina shushes Vidal with a touch on the arm.

SABRINA

Let her go Gore. This is fascinating.

KATIE

But it turns out, the grown-up writer is recalling an incident that blocked her as a child-

Vidal cuts her off.

GORE VIDAL

(*irritated*)

You're joking, right?

Katie looks at Vidal, baffled. Sabrina isn't tracking...

KATIE (cont'd)

What do you mean, joking?

A long Beat. Vidal stares at Katie warily.

GORE VIDAL

You're serious?

CONTINUED:

Vidal looks at Sabrina: *don't you know?* Heavy discomfort ricochets around the table.

SABRINA
Can somebody here enlighten me? I
hate feeling stupid.

Gore VIDAL
Your client here is pitching you
the number one book on the New York
Times best-seller list.
 (to Katie)
Or did I just ruin the punch line?

A beat. A *long* one.

KATIE
Wait. I need a little help here.

Gore VIDAL
It looks like you've helped
yourself already.

KATIE
What are you talking about?

SABRINA
 (awareness)
Wait a minute... is it that book
everyone's talking about?

Gore VIDAL
It's called Dolly Dimple.

SABRINA
Yes.

Gore VIDAL
Written by a little girl. Hence the
media frenzy.

Katie...slipping into darkness...trying to hold onto the
light...

KATIE
I'm the little girl. That's my
story!!

Gore VIDAL
 (cold)
She's eight. Years. Old.

Sabrina tries to hide her embarrassment, focuses on Gore like
she's trying to crop Katie out.

CONTINUED:

SABRINA
Who's it by?

GORE VIDAL
Katie Masters.

SABRINA
(recognition)
That's Peter Masters daughter,
isn't it?

Vidal nods. Katie's eyes ping-pong between them, bewildered and searching, then...

KATIE
I'm Katie Masters.

Sabrina ignores her. To keep the conversation sane. For Gore.

SABRINA
What's it about?

GORE VIDAL
Guilt.
(beat)
She was responsible for killing her
own mother.

A blanket of dread washes over Katie. She shakes her head...

KATIE
(soft, desperate)
No...no...that's not it.

Sabrina looks at Gore, her eyes projecting apology. Gore looks more than ready to leave.

Katie is suddenly scared, *manic*. She whips her handbag out...

KATIE(cont'd)
I'll show you...I'll show you who I
am.

...sticks her hand in, feels round for her I.D. -- expression growing disconcerted because...the bag is empty, except...and we see this right when she does...except EIGHT PENCILS WITH PINOCCHIO HEADS rubber banded together.

She lifts them out, slowly, mortified, stares at them like they are reality waving goodbye...

As the SOUND in the room seems to get sucked out of it...

CLOSE ON - THE PINOCCHIO PENCIL FACES

So close the long-nosed smiling faces look diabolical.

CONTINUED:

Katie...looks up... AND SEES...nothing...

Restaurant is EMPTY. A large room, white table cloths and dim light, the constant distant electric hum of appliances in the kitchen.

Vidal and Sabrina are GONE. So is the sanity in Katie's eyes.

EXT. LE BERNADIN - SECONDS LATER - NIGHT

Katie stumbles out, searches the empty street, whirling...

...she breaks into a run...fueled by panic, eyes wide, and as she runs...

IMAGES FLASH through her mind...pieces of a puzzle we've seen before...we hear her heavy breathing and running footsteps as we

FLASHBACK: Peter stands in his study, reads her story. She nervously chews her nails, stares up at him...

*YOUNG KATIE
Do you like it daddy?*

...Peter reads. Grimaces. Eyes narrow. He whirls on her, annihilates it, and her, with a scathing...

*PETER MASTERS
What the fuck is this?*

...and mangles the pages in his fist. He rumbles past her out of the room. Young Katie's face contorts, tears come...

...Peter storms into KATIE'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM, rips pages of her writings and drawings from the walls...

...Katie, crying hysterically, jumps on her bed, grabs Peter's arm, screams "stop it daddy! stop! please don't!"

...Eleanor bursts in Katie's room...at the very moment Peter flings Katie off his arm...

Katie trips off the bed...her head BANGS against the floor.

...Eleanor rushes to her daughter...lifts her...holds her in her arms...looks at Peter with raw hatred....

*ELEANOR
You monster...Keep your hands off her!*

...Peter storms past them to the door, whirls on them...

CONTINUED:

PETER
(scathing)
You two can have each other.

PRESENT...

Katie runs, in a panic, eyes wide, more IMAGES OF THAT NIGHT flashing through her mind...

FLASHBACK: Young Katie in bed. Covering her ears, hiding from the sound of her parents viciously screaming somewhere in the house.

PRESENT...

Katie runs, breathless, tears streaming down her face...

FLASHBACK: Late night...Eleanor silently slips into Katie's room, moves next to her bed...covers Katie's mouth with her hand... shhhhh...

Katie's eyes flick from her Mother's eyes to the LED screen on the clock in her room: 3:00 A.M.

...Katie and Eleanor sneak through the living room to the front door...suddenly Katie spins away, runs down the hall. Eleanor stares, frightened she will wake Peter.

...Young Katie runs back into the living room, a pink knapsack in hand.

...Eleanor pulls Young Katie across the lawn through the rain toward a Volvo station wagon in the driveway...

PRESENT...

Katie runs across a busy intersection...

KATIE
(breathless)
It's my story...

FLASHBACK: sheets of rain plaster the Volvo. Eleanor squints as she tries to see past the rain dousing the windshield... Katie sits in the passenger seat, scared...

Eleanor's eyes fill with fear at a sudden BLAST OF LIGHT in the rear view mirror.

Eleanor accelerates. The car behind stays on her. Katie sees her mother's fear and it terrifies her.

Eleanor accelerates more. The car behind doesn't lose an inch.

A car coming toward them illuminates the slick watery road and the face of the driver behind them: PETER MASTERS

CONTINUED:

Eleanor drives faster. Car behind moves faster. Faster. Eleanor turns to Katie, gives a look of reassurance.

Katie turns from her mother's eyes, to the windshield...in an instant she sees printed words on the side of a newspaper delivery truck: The Santa Barbara Sun. The Truth, Told.

RIGHT in front of them...

AN EXPLOSION. SHATTERED GLASS. SCREAMING AND TWISTING STEEL.

So fast it's hard to process ELEANOR'S CAR HAS BLASTED INTO THE SIDE OF THE TRUCK...

PRESENT...

Katie runs...the past descending, through her pain we see something inside her eyes, trying to overcome...

*KATIE
(breathing hard, gasping)
It wasn't my fault...*

FLASHBACK: Young Katie. On the street next to the totalled Volvo. BLOOD on her HAND AND EYE, IN SHOCK, quivering, holding Eleanor's lifeless head in her hands...

*YOUNG KATIE
Mom? Mom? Mom?*

We see the stunned face of Peter Masters as he gets out of his car, eyes widening in horror.

Peter's eyes meet his daughter's. The current between them a chasm of darkness that Katie will not emerge from until the...

PRESENT...

...Katie...remembering, running, something in her being exorcized as she faces the past, as she sees the truth...

*KATIE
This is my story...*

Katie blasts heads toward the entrance to her APARTMENT BUILDING, breathless, covered in sweat, eyes wild, fierce breathing, aerobic overload...disappears into...

HER APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY

And blasts through the lobby and to...

THE HALLWAY...

CONTINUED:

As apartment numbers flash by...125, 123, 121...119, 117, 115, 112...108, 106, 103...

she stops at the last one at the end...breathless. *Almost falls* against the door. Her chest heaves. She gasps for air.

She looks up, stares wild-eyed at the door: apartment # 101

Suddenly and furiously she starts to pound against it. Harder. Harder. And *harder*...

KATIE
(frenzied)
It's mine! Let me in! Let me in!

Idea forming. Idea as flesh. Letting go and letting in. She beats against the door, strange delirium appearing in her eyes, her mind going all the way and...

WE MOVE THROUGH THE WALL TO

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

The room. A room we recognize. We have been here before.

We keep moving.

From outside we hear muffled screaming and pounding.

We find A WOMAN. Sitting. Completely still.

We move closer. Her back is to us. And to the door.

We are beside her now. We see her hands cover her face.

The pounding and screaming echo from somewhere far, far away now...*it's mine...it's mine...*

The woman's hands slowly fall from her face. She turns her head. Toward the door, toward us.

Slowly. Profile first. Now all the way.

IT IS KATIE

She looks at the TICKING CLOCK. It reads 3:00 A.M.

We are at the beginning. The circle is complete.

Something comes alive in Katie's eyes.

They dart to the THREE PHOTOGRAPHS on the shelf near her desk, taking them in, moving over them, absorbing their detail.

CONTINUED:

CLOSE ON - THE PHOTOS

- Katie, aged 7, at a desk writing, smiling gleefully for the camera. Pink knapsack on the desk next to her.

- Katie at the same age, her mother Evelyn on one side and Peter on the other, on holiday, all smiling...

- Katie at age 12 with her father. Katie's expression is blank, her sad eyes look haunted.

THE CLOCK on her desk clicks from 3:00 AM to 3:01 AM

Katie looks at her computer screen.

Her eyes come alive as the picture puzzle of her life falls into place and becomes clear...

KATIE
(whispered)
Steal from yourself...

A moment passes...it crystalizes in her mind. Then...

Katie's fingers fly across the keyboard. The SOUND of her fingers hitting the keys EXPLODES...

...we push in on her sparkling eyes...the sound grows LOUDER. LOUDER. LOUDER!

HARD CUT TO -

HER FATHER'S WORK ROOM - SANTA BARBARA - DAY

SILENCE. PETER MASTERS sits, his back to us, at his desk, deep in concentration, book in hand.

The only sound is his rhythmic breathing.

We move closer, as Peter's eyes read the last words of the last page.

He looks older, weaker, as if what he has read has aged him somehow.

And as if he cannot fully digest what he has just read. He closes the book.

Turns it over and stares at the title: *DOLLY DIMPLE*

He sits in silence. The currents of emotion flowing through him are palpable.

A CHILD'S VOICE behind him sends a shiver down his spine.

CONTINUED:

YOUNG KATIE'S VOICE
Do you like it daddy?

Peter is afraid to look. Peter can't not look. Peter slowly turns to look.

And standing before him is not a little girl, but Katie.

Looking calm.

Powerful.

They stare at each other a long, long time.

She looks at her book. In his hands.

PETER
I've tried many times to do what
you've done.
(beat)
To write about it.

He shakes his head.

PETER
When I'd get near that place... I
lacked the strength to face it head
on. I tried every trick I could
think of... but the inventions rang
false. Or maybe I couldn't disguise
myself enough to handle it.

Katie tries to meet his eyes, but he looks away.

There is a long silence.

Peter's face tightens.

When he looks at her again his eyes are moist.

He stands. Stares at her.

PETER
All I was doing...I just wanted you
two to come home. To not leave me.
I just didn't want you to leave me
alone.
(beat)
So tell me, whose fault is it that
you lost your mother, and I lost
my wife.

There's a silent communication between them, a mutual understanding being born.

Katie looks at his eyes. They are searching for forgiveness.

CONTINUED:

Peter looks away, wipes his eyes quick and subtle.

Like he doesn't want her to see.

But she sees.

Katie waits for him to meet her eyes. He does.

PETER
I'm sorry Katie.

Hold this moment.

KATIE
That's all you ever had to say.

Katie's eyes move over her father's face.

Their eyes meet. They can see each other now.

The weight and space between them seems to dissolve into thin air.

THE END