

Dandelion
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INT. DINER - SOMEWHERE IN OHIO, 1985 - NIGHT

HAROLD, mid-40s, hunches in a corner booth. Beneath his baseball cap, his eyes dart over the kitsch decor, but take in nothing. His fingers grip a cold coffee cup, his nerves like a neon sign above his head.

A tired WAITRESS glances from the counter. He gives her a shaky grin. She doesn't care.

The diner door opens. Harold pulls his cap down further. Footsteps on the checkerboard floor. They stop at his booth. Someone slides into the seat opposite.

Harold looks up. It's a Man - mid-20s, long dark hair tied back. This is DANNY.

Harold's not expecting this. Before he can speak--

WAITRESS (O/S)
You ordering?

Danny looks up at the Waitress.

DANNY
Root beer, please. You have
raspberry ice-cream?

WAITRESS
Closest is strawberry.

DANNY
I can pretend.

He gives a childlike grin. It disarms Waitress. She walks off with a smile. Harold chuckles nervously. Definitely not expecting this.

HAROLD
So.

Danny waits with a polite smile.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
Sorry, I'm a bit... It's just
so...public. For...this...?

DANNY
Part of the deal, sorry. Have to
make sure you're the kind of
customer we serve.

HAROLD
What do you think I am?

Danny's eyes are strangely vacant.

DANNY
A man in need of a product. A
product we sell.

Harold nods furiously, as if to convince himself.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Simple transaction.

This jogs Harold's memory - he pulls out a CATALOG. Quick as lightning, Danny snatches it away...just as the Waitress returns with the root beer and ice-cream.

Harold freezes like a caught schoolboy as she puts Danny's bill on the table.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Great. Could I get a dozen donuts
to go?

WAITRESS
What kind? We got--

DANNY
Any. Surprise me.

Now, a charming smile. Waitress blushes, heads back.

Harold watches Danny scoop up his ice-cream and dump it into the root beer. As he stirs the fizzing concoction--

DANNY (CONT'D)
Numbers. Only numbers. OK?

HAROLD
Sorry. I didn't know how it...
OK. Uh...127.

Danny takes a gulp of his still-fizzing shake.

DANNY
127's unavailable. Unless you
want to wait.

HAROLD
How long?

DANNY
A week.

Harold frowns. Danny wipes his mouth, waits.

HAROLD
No problem. Uh...119?

DANNY

OK. You know about the deposit?

Harold's nerves return. He pulls out an envelope.

HAROLD

Wasn't easy.

Danny waits. Harold hesitantly slides the envelope across.

Danny pockets the envelope in his baseball jacket, and pulls out a SMALL CARD in one smooth, practiced movement.

DANNY

Time and place.

Harold takes the card. He lets himself smile. Danny has another gulp of shake.

DANNY (CONT'D)

No damages. OK?

Harold's smile fades, replaced by a hit of guilt. Danny drops a few dollars for his bill, stands to leave--

HAROLD

I'm not a monster.

Danny's face is unreadable...till he gives Harold a smile. Is it understanding? Is it pity?

DANNY

My name's Danny.

(puts down extra dollars)

Coffee's on me.

Danny heads to the counter. He takes a box of donuts from the Waitress, pays, and leaves.

Harold sits, staring at the card, numb.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - NIGHT

Danny watches Harold exits the diner quickly, get in his modest car and drives off.

Danny opens the booklet he took from Harold - it's a CATALOG. Inside are B&W photos of CHILDREN. Boys and girls, one per page. Most young, some early teens. Some topless. Pale flesh, wide eyes. Under each is a NUMBER.

Danny stops at number 119 and folds the page corner down.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - OHIO BACKWOODS - NIGHT

Danny drives down a dirt road - it seems like the middle of nowhere...till a clearing appears, bordered by trees thickening into a forest.

He parks, gets out with the donut box, and walks towards a single-storey OLD HOUSE in the middle of the clearing - the only house for miles around.

He heads for the front door, stops, turns and heads for the STORM CELLAR at the side. He pulls out a set of keys, unlocks the padlock, pulls back the door, and steps down.

INT. CELLAR - OLD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pitch black. A dull thud - the storm door closes. A lock clicks - louder, closer. An interior door. It opens, Danny enters in near darkness. He locks the interior door behind him. He flicks a switch on a wall, and the cellar illuminates in dim light.

DANNY
Who wants a donut?

The cellar is full of children.

They sit curled up on bunk beds that run along both walls of the cellar, their eyes shining like subterranean creatures. Trapped. Forgotten.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Or am I gonna have to eat them
all myself?

Flashes of smiles as the Children giggle. Danny grins and makes his way through the cellar, passing out donuts.

One BOY, 12, reaches out, and Danny hands him a donut - on the back of the Boy's wrist is a tattoo: 119-AK. This is Harold's chosen boy from the catalog.

Nearest to the door at the cellar's other end, a TEEN BOY faces the wall. His wrist is also tattooed: 111-ND.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Chocolate or strawberry?

Teen Boy 111 barely glances at him, then turns back.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Maybe later.

Danny places the chocolate donut on Teen Boy 111's bed. Teen Boy 111 kicks it onto the dirt floor, just as--

The lights flash OFF and ON. The Children quickly lie down in bed. Danny stands obediently. He unlocks this door with a different key to the storm door--

BOY 119
Thanks, Danny.

Danny gives Boy 119 a wink, steps through, then shuts the door behind him. A series of locks click.

INT. DARK TUNNEL - OLD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Danny walks down a barely-lit dirt tunnel. He passes by a doorway to a room empty except for a DENTIST CHAIR...

At the tunnel's end, a set of wooden stairs lead up to...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

...a pantry, lined with food and supplies.

One of the walls slides into a recess, and Danny steps out. He slides the wall back in place, drops his keys into a jar marked *Sugar*. He steps into the quaint, homely kitchen--

LUCAS (O/S)
Brown-noser.

LUCAS - lean, crew cut, slightly older than Danny - sits at the table. A pile of NEWSPAPERS rests in the middle of the table, and Lucas flips through one of them, searching the pages, looking for something.

DANNY
Is he here?

LUCAS
Soon.

Danny drops the donut box on top of the newspaper pile. Lucas peers at the last strawberry donut, and grimaces.

LUCAS
You hate strawberry.

DANNY
So do you. Does that mean you
don't want half?

Lucas rolls his eyes, pulls out a switchblade and cuts the donut in half. In unison, they reach for their half and sit, chewing, comfortable in each other's silence.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Anything today?

LUCAS
Find out for yourself.

He nods to the newspaper pile. Danny doesn't move.

Across the house, the front door slams. Danny quickly grabs a newspaper and begins flipping through. He looks up, meets Lucas' eyes - a flash of tension. Lucas nods slightly, in reassurance--

MAN
Who's hungry?

A silhouette stands at the kitchen door - a MAN steps in. We see only cowboy boots, faded jeans, flannel shirt.

LUCAS
I'm OK. Already ate.

DANNY
Me too. Thanks.

The Man drops a bag of Chinese take-out on the table and crosses to the cupboard to pull out three plates.

MAN
I bet you have. You rascals would eat donuts three times a day if I let you. Come on, enough homework.

Danny and Lucas close their newspapers. Victor puts the plates down, then sits opposite them. We see him now - mid-40s, solid, clean-shaven. A nothing-special, middle-aged man...except for his eyes - distant yet sharp, clear yet stormy. Unreadable. Consuming. This is VICTOR.

Danny and Lucas watch obediently as Victor dishes up their food. Victor begins to eat. Lucas follows. Then Danny.

Victor raises an eyebrow. Danny, mid-swallow, quickly pulls out Harold's envelope. Victor pockets it. Lucas rolls his eyes.

VICTOR
Good boy. Any problems?

DANNY
He wanted 127.

Victor chuckles.

DANNY (CONT'D)
I gave him 119.

VICTOR
Who else is on the Washington
order?

LUCAS
(with a mouthful of food)
111, 117, 122, 126, 129.

VICTOR
That all?

LUCAS
Usual number.

VICTOR
Let's throw in the Mary Lou
Retton one.

DANNY
114.

LUCAS
She never disappoints.

VICTOR
They want more stock.

Danny tenses at the word *They*, but if Victor notices, he
doesn't show it.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
More blondes. Maybe a redhead.
Give the customer more of a menu.

LUCAS
Just no more paperboys.

Victor raises another eyebrow.

DANNY
He doesn't want to get up at 4am.

VICTOR
(to Lucas)
You, my boy, could sleep all day
if I let you. If the world was
falling down around you, you'd
still be snoring. Wouldn't you?

Victor ruffles Lucas' hair. Lucas squirms childishly.
Danny watches, like a jealous sibling. Victor turns to
him. Danny looks down at his food.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Hey. Danny Boy.

Victor stands and holds his big arms out. Danny steps into
them, and Victor folds them over him.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
 Good thinking, with the donuts.
 Heart of gold.

Danny rests his head on Victor's shoulder.

LUCAS
 Brown-noser.

Victor releases Danny, cupping his face in his hands.

VICTOR
 My little mouse. How'd I get so
 lucky?

Victor's gaze lasts for a lifetime, or for a second...as
 Lucas watches in silence. Then Victor turns and walks out.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
 (over his shoulder)
 Next time, save me a donut.

INT. MALL - MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN - DAY

A mid-sized suburban mall, decorated in ferns and pastels.

MAEVE, late 50s, wearing a supermarket uniform and
 nametag, stares at a store's window display, smiling.
 Above the window, a sign: *Burlingham's Toys*.

INT. BURLINGHAM'S TOYS - DAY

Maeve searches the boys aisle, passing He-Man, GI Joe,
 Thundercats - all the current big-sellers. She frowns...
 till she spots an ASSISTANT.

MAEVE
 Excuse me? Do you have
 Battleship?

INT. BURLINGHAM'S TOYS - DAY

At the counter, Maeve watches the Assistant wrap a
 Battleship box in kids' birthday paper.

ASSISTANT
 You sure you don't want the
 computer version? We sell a lot
 more of those these days.

MAEVE
 Adam isn't into computers yet. He
 likes puzzles. Adventures.

Maeve is smiling softly. The Assistant nods, uninterested.

ASSISTANT

Does he have a Nintendo? Kids are going crazy for it. They come with adventure games too.

MAEVE

He has one of those electronic... The beeping...it's dreadful!

ASSISTANT

They're pretty old too.

Maeve keeps smiling, a little forced now.

MAEVE

How much is it? The Nintendo?

ASSISTANT

\$179.99.

Maeve bites her lip, but pretends to ponder.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

Maybe next year.

MAEVE

God knows what he'll be fascinated with by then. You know children. Before you blink, they're a different person.

Assistant nods politely, but she doesn't know kids. She puts the box in a bag, giving Maeve a look of pity.

ASSISTANT

Hope he has a nice birthday.

MAEVE

Me too.

Maeve takes the bag and leaves, with a distant smile.

INT. FUNERAL HOME MORGUE - FOX POINT, MILWAUKEE - DAY

1970s disco music blasts from a stereo around the morgue.

OLIVIA, 30, stands over something as her hand moves in a painting motion - the other hand holds a lit cigarette.

She steps back, taking a drag as she critiques her work - it's a female corpse on a gurney, made up for a funeral. Her brush is a make-up brush.

Olivia keeps applying - her movements delicate, fluid, showing an innate grace. The work seems to make her happy.

ALBERT (O/S)
You tryna wake the dead?!

The voice doesn't startle her; she doesn't even look up as ALBERT, her coworker, enters. He turns the stereo down.

OLIVIA
You can't stop the music, Al.
Didn't you learn anything from
the seventies?

ALBERT
Yeah. That the eighties are
better. Can't you at least play
some DEVO?

Olivia takes another drag, keeps working. Albert watches.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
Aren't you afraid they're gonna
sit up and eat your brains?

He chuckles, then quickly regrets his joke.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
Least you get to paint celebs
too, not just dead folk.

OLIVIA
It's local news, not the *Today*
Show.

ALBERT
Yeah. I dunno. I don't think I
could do it. Covering up zits and
scars all day... I mean, you
can't make a turd pretty.

He laughs. Olivia doesn't. He thinks he's gone too far.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
Guess a new coat of paint never
hurt the price of an old house.

OLIVIA
You should go into real estate,
Al, instead of jerking off over
corpses.

Albert's grin disappears. Olivia gives a final dusting of powder, then steps back, satisfied.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Voila. One polished turd.

She gives Albert a smile, and stubs out her cigarette.

EXT. CAMPING SITE - OHIO - DAY

Danny's pick-up truck sits in the dirt parking area.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Danny, in the driver's seat, watches cars drive by.

DANNY

You hungry?

BOY 119 sits in the passenger seat. He looks sick.

BOY 119

No.

DANNY

Need to go to the bathroom?

Boy 119 shakes his head. A beat.

BOY 119

You can just go back, you know.

Danny stares out the windscreen, expressionless.

BOY 119 (CONT'D)

Say I ran away. I won't tell.

Danny says nothing. Boy 119 looks at Danny's wrist - on the underside is a tattoo: 99-WI.

BOY 119 (CONT'D)

Am I gonna be like you?

Danny blinks - like a split-second glitch in a machine.

A CAR pulls in - it's Harold. He parks at the other end.

DANNY

It's like a game. Like you're someone else. You put the old you in a box, real deep. The new you is like a spy, a superhero. He's tough. Then when it's over, the old you comes back out. Easy.

He turns and looks at Boy 119 until he forces a grin.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Sure about the bathroom?

Boy 119 nods. Danny reaches over and ruffles his hair. It's awkward and unnatural, not the way Victor does it.

INT. MOBILE TRAILER - OHIO BACKWOODS - NIGHT

CARMELLA, mid-30s, watches a soap opera on a tiny TV in her kitchen. Everything in her trailer is a shade of pink.

Headlights pass by the window, covered in gossamer curtains. Carmella peers out, sighs, switches off the TV. She swiftly clears away a dirty plate and coffee cup.

She slips out of her sweatshirt and into a silken robe that draws immediate attention to her breasts. She sets her lips in a sensual pout, opens the door--

It's Danny. Carmella's pout disappears.

CARMELLA

Oh.

DANNY

Sorry. I should've called--

CARMELLA

No, it's OK--

DANNY

--in case you were busy--

CARMELLA

I'm not. It's OK.

Her pout has turned into a soft smile. She takes his hand and leads him inside.

INT. MOBILE TRAILER - NIGHT

Danny, fully clothed, sits on the satin-covered bed crammed in the corner. Carmella enters, in a jumper and sweatpants, and lies down.

CARMELLA

Come here, baby.

Danny lies next to her. She puts her arm around him, runs her other hand softly through his hair.

CARMELLA (CONT'D)

Shhh. Shhh. It's OK, baby.

Danny curls into her, like a child, and closes his eyes.

INT. BATHROOM - FOX POINT TOWN HALL, MILWAUKEE - NIGHT

Maeve stands at the mirror, applying blush. She is no longer in the supermarket uniform - instead, a tailored (if old-fashioned) blouse, her hair gently styled.

As she applies her lipstick, she hums a cheerful, bouncy tune, like a nursery rhyme - *Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep*.

She takes a final pleased look at herself - an impressive transformation from her dowdiness.

INT. GRIEF WORKSHOP - FOX POINT TOWN HALL - NIGHT, LATER

Maeve sits in a circle of PEOPLE - most of them mid-40s or older. There is a heaviness in the air, and on their faces.

One of them, WILMA, is in mid-speech:

WILMA

...the hardest thing has been the routines. Making supper for one, not two. One plate. One fork. Shopping. I still buy too much. The little things, you know...

Olivia sits across the room, at the refreshments table. Her gaze wanders, bored.

WILMA (CONT'D)

I know it's silly, but I still dress up for our anniversary. I still bake his birthday cake. I'm still acting like he hasn't gone anywhere. It is silly...isn't it?

The group turn to Maeve. We suddenly realize she's LEADING the group. She nods knowingly, confidently. This is a very different Maeve to the one in the toy store.

MAEVE

That was your life, Wilma. All that you knew. It can be scary to imagine moving on without these routines, checkpoints. These pieces of the picture we have built for ourselves. But no work of art remains pristine forever. There's no point pretending.

WILMA

I--

MAEVE

It's a matter of perspective. Seeing the bigger picture, even if there are pieces missing - your husband, your old life, your routines. Why waste energy staring at the holes in your life? That's for Old Wilma. New Wilma steps back and sees the picture, not what's missing in it. Every hole still leaves behind something beautiful.

Olivia listens, face tense, as if trying not to react.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

A little abstract, hmm? But it's that easy. And it makes losing someone no different than moving house or changing jobs.

(chuckling)

Or shopping.

Wilma has doubts, but she nods. She WANTS to believe.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

I know, I know. The old me didn't believe it. The Old Maeve lost years wondering "why". "Why me".

Olivia flinches. She looks down at her table, focuses on a box of *LITTLE GLOBE* FUNDRAISER CHOCOLATE BARS. A CHILD'S PHOTO is on the wrapper, but it's unclear.

WILMA

And what happened to the old you?

MAEVE

I have a man who loves me. A daughter. A new picture. Life goes on.

Olivia grits her teeth. She looks at Maeve, expecting - HOPING - Maeve will look back. She doesn't.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

And what better note to finish on? See you all next week. And don't forget to buy some candy from Liv. It's for a good cause.

No-one shares her optimism, but they respond with polite smiles.

INT. MOBILE TRAILER - OHIO BACKWOODS - NIGHT

Carmella watches from the window as Danny drives off in his pick-up truck.

She glances at the \$100 note left on the kitchen bench.

She turns to the fridge - tacked on front is a POLAROID of a TINY BABY GIRL in an incubator. Carmella blinks away tears. She pockets the money, switches her soap opera on.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MAEVE'S HOUSE - FOX POINT, MILWAUKEE - NIGHT

Olivia creeps through the room, as moonlight cuts through the shutters on the windows overlooking the street.

She passes a mantelpiece filled with SNOWGLOBES...and the couch, where Maeve is dozing.

Olivia switches on the porch light. She stares out into the dark, as if she doesn't trust the shadows. She can see the VACANT LOT across the street, overgrown with weeds--

MAEVE
(stirring)
Liv...? The light...?

OLIVIA
I did it.

MAEVE
You're such a good girl.

Olivia's gaze hardens at the WRAPPED PRESENT on the coffee table - it's the Battleship game.

OLIVIA
Go to bed, Mom.

MAEVE
(dozing off)
Good girl...

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Olivia heads to her bedroom, stopping to glance at the CLOSED DOOR at the end of the hall. A novelty license plate on the door reads *Adam's Room*.

INT. OLIVIA'S BATHROOM - MAEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As 1970s music echoes from a record player in her bedroom...Olivia sits on the bathroom floor, masturbating.

An IMAGE flashes into her mind - an OLDER MAN, late-40s, manicured beard, glasses, distinguished-- a PROFESSOR.

Olivia stops suddenly.

CUT TO:

Olivia washes her hands furiously in the sink.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - OHIO BACKWOODS - DAY

Dawn. Danny drinks coffee on the porch as the sun rises. A floorboard creaks behind him - Danny tenses.

VICTOR (O/S)
Almost missed curfew, mister.

Victor stops behind him.

DANNY
Went to see Carmella.

Victor chuckles. He rests his hands on Danny's shoulders. Like a gentle vice.

A BLACK VAN pulls into the small BARN next to the house.

VICTOR
Never late, my Lucas. Like clockwork.

DANNY
This the one from Raleigh?

VICTOR
Mm-hm. Need to get him prepped for Washington.

DANNY
I thought we had enough.

Danny waits, unable to sense Victor's expression.

VICTOR
You're right. Let the kid settle in.

Victor squeezes Danny's shoulders and goes inside.

INT. PREP ROOM - OLD HOUSE - DAY

A NEW BOY, with red hair, sits crying in the dentist chair...as Lucas tattoos a number onto his pale wrist.

Danny watches at the doorway leading to the dark tunnel.

New Boy yelps in pain. Lucas grips his wrist hard.

LUCAS
Course it's gonna hurt.

New Boy begins to sob loudly. The floorboards above creak with footsteps. Lucas glances at Danny.

Danny quickly crosses the room and opens a closet, revealing crates marked with NUMBERS. He searches through them, pulls out a faded TEDDYBEAR in a MAGICIAN'S OUTFIT with a top hat.

He crouches next to New Boy.

DANNY

Here.

New Boy stares at the teddybear. Danny grins encouragingly--

FOOTSTEPS on a staircase. Danny shoves the teddybear at New Boy and quickly moves back. Lucas tattoos faster.

Victor is suddenly a silhouette in the doorway. Lucas steps back as Victor enters and kneels to New Boy's level.

VICTOR

(peers at New Boy's tattoo)
Pretty neat, eh? Bet you're the only kid you know with one of those. 'Cause they're for big boys, aren't they? Brave boys.

New Boy gets the hint, meekly meets Victor's gaze. Victor smiles, runs a finger over New Boy's fresh tattoo: 130-NC.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

This is magic, you know. It tells me where you are. Because you're mine now. You belong to me.

New Boy - now BOY 130 - stares at Victor, stunned.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

And if you try to leave me - if the thought so much as pops into your little head - I'll know. And everything you remember will be taken away. Everyone you love, gone. Deal?

It's too much for Boy 130. He begins to sob. Victor ruffles his hair.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

(to Danny)
You boys should take a nap. Gonna be a long night.

Danny looks quizzically at Victor.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

You're doing the drop-off yourselves. I'll get this one

(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
settled in. You can handle it,
can't you?

He gives Danny a wink. Danny, surprised, nods. Lucas watches with narrowed eyes.

LUCAS
I'm driving.

INT. GOSCH & SONS MARKET - FOX POINT - DAY

Maeve, in her uniform and nametag, stands at the counter before a MALE CUSTOMER, late 20s. As she scans his items, she inspects him up and down, searching for something.

MAEVE
That'll be \$4.55.

Male Customer hands over a five. She takes it, her gaze lingering on his hands. She frowns, as if disappointed.

MALE CUSTOMER
(disturbed)
Uh...keep the change.

MAEVE
May I suggest...?

She nods towards the end of the counter, where a half-full box of her Little Globe fundraiser candy bars sits.

EXT. GOSCH & SONS MARKET - NIGHT

In the parking lot, Olivia opens the boot of her crappy Pinto, and takes a full box of the Little Globe candy.

She tips the candy bars into the nearby dumpster. We see another glimpse of the Child's Photo on the wrapper - it's a BOY WITH BLONDE HAIR. She puts the empty box back in the Pinto, and stuffs a bunch of money notes into the money slot on the box.

She slams the boot. She checks her watch, sighs. She pulls out a cigarette and lights up.

INT. OLIVIA'S CAR - NIGHT

The shadowy town of Fox Point passes by the window as Olivia drives, with Maeve in the passenger seat. Dreary '70s folk music blasts from the stereo. Maeve bears it, then turns the volume down. Olivia grits her teeth.

As they approach the house - a worn two-storey with a porch - they see a SILHOUETTE in the living room window.

OLIVIA
He needs to start showing a
warrant.

MAEVE
He knows I leave the door open.

Olivia careens into the driveway. Maeve grabs her purse.

OLIVIA
He can't get drunk in his own
house?

Maeve applies lipstick from her purse.

MAEVE
It's hard for men to
compartmentalize their feelings.
So they deaden them. It wasn't
easy for Peter, you know.

OLIVIA
Yeah. Didn't he miss a couple
weekends at the golf course?

She is out of the car before Maeve even opens the door.

INT. KITCHEN - MAEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Maeve, Olivia and former Sheriff PETER PILLSBURY - late
50s, with a belly growing over what was once muscle - eat
dinner at the table. The silence is heavy. A tomb.

OLIVIA
Can't we put some music on?

MAEVE
Not at dinner, Liv. You know
that.

Maeve 'tsks' to herself, amused. Peter smiles warmly at
Olivia. She looks down at her food.

PETER
So. How's work, Olivia?

OLIVIA
People die. I paint them. Polish
the turds.

Another 'tsk' from Maeve, but it's half-hearted,
unoffended. Peter IS offended, but he hides it.

PETER
I meant the TV station.

Olivia shrugs.

PETER (CONT'D)
 (chuckling)
 Plenty of turds there. Reporters,
 I mean. What they get away with--

Olivia laughs out loud. Peter's smile hardens. He clears his throat, picks up a small box from his feet.

PETER (CONT'D)
 Well. Time for presents.
 (turns to Maeve)
 For you, sweets.

Maeve takes the box politely...and pulls out a SNOWGLOBE.

PETER (CONT'D)
 Been a while. Thought your
 collection needed a new friend.

Maeve shakes it - inside, snow falls on a tiny fairground.

MAEVE
 Oh. It's lovely, Peter--

OLIVIA
 What do they get away with?

PETER
 Sorry...?

OLIVIA
 The reporters.

Peter is suddenly pinned by Olivia's gaze.

PETER
 I was just making conversation--

OLIVIA
 Those mean reporters. Ruining the
 reputation of town sheriffs with
 their questions and criticisms--

MAEVE
 Liv--

PETER
 It's OK, sweets.
 (to Olivia)
 Olivia. Please. This is all old.
 Can't we just have a normal
 conversation? A normal dinner--

OLIVIA
 Gonna need a lot more snowglobes
 to fill the hole you helped dig.

MAEVE

Enough, Liv. You're excused.

OLIVIA

Or what, you'll fucking ground me?--

PETER

No, because you're an adult, Olivia. You need to start acting like one, if you plan to keep living in this house.

Olivia raises an eyebrow. Peter instantly regrets his words. Maeve keeps eating.

PETER (CONT'D)

Aren't you tired of this, Olivia? I'm not some bad guy. I care about your mother, about you. You know that. I'm just...tired. I just...what else can I do...?

He's not a man of words, and Olivia knows it. She lets his pathetic sentence hang, then...

OLIVIA

She doesn't leave the door open for you. You know that, right?

Olivia gets up. She grabs her keys and leaves the house.

Peter sighs. Maeve pats Peter's hand with a chuckle, as if she's just watched an amusing play. She gets up and takes Olivia's dish to the kitchen.

Peter picks up the snowglobe and shakes it, watches the snow fall. He drops it back into the box.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - OHIO BACKWOODS - NIGHT

Danny stands by the open back doors of the black van...as one by one, the Children step up from the storm cellar, into the van. Heads down. They know where they're going.

Lucas stands by, holding a GUN by his side.

The last one, Teenage Boy 111, glances at the road beyond the truck.

LUCAS

Yo. Move it.

Teenage Boy 111 sees Lucas' gun. He gets in.

Victor watches from the porch. He gives Danny a wave. Danny waves back. Lucas slams the van door shut.

EXT. AIR FIELD - NIGHT

The van sits alone near an air strip, as a small PRIVATE PLANE takes off.

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

The Children watch clouds pass the windows. Their faces are tense. They're dreading what happens once they land.

The only excitement is from BOY 127, a blonde kid straight off a cereal commercial, pressing his nose to the glass.

BOY 127
Look how high we're going! We
might go right to the moon!

TEEN GIRL 114, with a Mary Lou Retton haircut, laughs.

TEEN GIRL 114
Why not? Should we do it?

He ponders, as if it's a serious option, then shrugs. She cuddles him, like a protective big sister.

Teen Boy 111 watches with a sneer. He sees Danny staring at him. Danny nods. Teen Boy 111 looks down.

Up front, Lucas sleeps.

INT. TOMLIN'S BAR - NIGHT

A sad relic of the seventies - wooden bar, cabaret piano, brick arches and green lamps.

Olivia sits at the bar, swirling a Stinger. Her gaze wanders to a SAD BEARDED MAN, mid-50s, alone at a table at the back. He is handsome but worn, respectable but faded, as if he's been sitting there for a decade.

Olivia stares at him, as if willing him to look at her--

MAN (O/S)
Liv? What are you doing here?

Olivia snaps out of it to see her coworker SANDRO, early '30s, too slick and sharp for a place like this. Olivia is embarrassed for a beat, then a switch flips in her.

OLIVIA
You first.

SANDRO
Drinks with the channel sponsor.
Some old dinosaur.

He chuckles at the dated decor. Olivia smiles flatly, goes back to swirling her drink.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Can I get you another?

Olivia swallows her drink in one gulp and slides over the empty glass.

CUT TO:

Olivia and Sandro sit opposite each other in a booth. Olivia takes a long gulp of another Stinger.

SANDRO

Slow down, Liv - don't want you painting me up like Frankenfurter for tomorrow's show.

OLIVIA

That might help your ratings.

He hides his surprise with a sip of his bourbon.

SANDRO

This place looks like my folks' den. What's the attraction?

Olivia isn't listening - she's looking past him, to Sad Bearded Man, who is eyeing every young woman who passes... as if he might recognize them.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Want a dance? I'm pretty good.

OLIVIA

Not my thing. But feel free to give me some entertainment.

Sandro turns, follows Olivia's gaze to Sad Bearded Man. Olivia quickly turns back.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I mean, all those women just dying to throw themselves on someone famous...

She motions at a few mid-40s WOMEN on the dance floor.

SANDRO

I'm flattered you think reading a teleprompter for local news makes me a celebrity.

(curiously)

Maybe I'm just not your type.

OLIVIA

You don't want things getting awkward while I'm covering up your zits, do you?

Sandro grins. He glances around the bar, then back.

SANDRO

We're all programmed, you know.
Attraction, desires, fetishes,
all that. The seeds are planted
before we even know ourselves.
When we're practically kids.

Olivia grimaces.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Not in a pervert way. But it's
anything - a sight, a smell, a
touch - anything that hits you
during puberty, when your body is
buzzing with all those hormones.
You know, like permanently horny.
It doesn't even need to be sexy.
But your mind links that sight or
smell, whatever it is, with that
hormonal rush. And that tiny
moment kickstarts a desire that
dictates your sexual destiny for
the rest of your life. Which is
why every woman with a run in her
stockings gives me a hard-on.

(awkward chuckle)

Not at work, of course. That
would be unprofessional.

Olivia looks down at her drink.

OLIVIA

You sound like a real expert, for
someone who just reads a
teleprompter.

SANDRO

Ha. Does a college paper count?
Tutor thought I was some deviant.
But it's human nature. Nothing to
fight or be ashamed of. Nothing
wrong with having a type. So what
if you like craggy old guys with
beards? Maybe we're all
deviants--

OLIVIA

Maybe you don't know shit.

Sandro reels back. Olivia stabs her straw into her drink.

SANDRO

You're not like the last make-up
girl, Liv. I'll give you that.

Olivia raises an eyebrow.

SANDRO (CONT'D)
For one thing, she didn't
moonlight at a funeral home.

OLIVIA
There's no bullshit with the
dead. No pretending. They're
dead.

SANDRO
I get it. After what happened
with your brother--

Olivia spills - or knocks - her drink over. She laughs
quickly. Sandro comes to the rescue with napkins.

SANDRO (CONT'D)
I don't mean to pry. I heard
about it from the wardrobe girls.
(beat)
I just mean, I get it. I get you.

Olivia simply stares at him.

OLIVIA
You really don't know shit,
Frankenfurter.

She stands to leave--

SANDRO
Hey, look, I'm sorry--

OLIVIA
Gotta get home. My mom gets
worried I'll disappear next. I'm
her pride and joy, so...

SANDRO
(apologetic)
Right. Course.

Olivia hesitates, as if considering apologizing, but
deciding not to. She pushes through the dance floor,
passing Sad Bearded Man. He is still alone.

EXT. ZODIAC CASINO CARPARK, WASHINGTON DC - NIGHT

A NEW VAN pulls up behind the massive Zodiac Casino. At
the service entrance, GUARD 1 waits.

INT. NEW VAN - CONTINUOUS

From the passenger seat, Danny watches Guard 1 speak into his walkie-talkie.

LUCAS
Showtime.

Danny turns to Lucas, in the driver's seat. A moment of silent reassurance. No words needed.

INT. PASSAGEWAY - ZODIAC CASINO - NIGHT

Guard 1 leads Lucas and the Children through. Danny takes up the rear. SOUNDS - music, voices and the trill of slot machines - echo through the thick walls. They could be close or a million miles away.

INT. SERVICE ELEVATOR - ZODIAC CASINO - NIGHT

They ride the elevator up, with Guard 1.

GIRL 122 is mouthing the rising numbers on the display. As they get higher and higher, she stops, suddenly afraid. She reaches out and takes Danny's hand. Danny lets her. He sees Guard 1 glaring at him in disgust.

Ding! The elevator stops at floor 39.

INT. 39TH FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Guard 1 leads them down a decorated hallway. At the end is a large DOORWAY, where GUARD 2 waits.

Guard 1 stops, mutters to Guard 2, who glances at the Children, then down to his clipboard.

GUARD 2
I've got six.

LUCAS
One more, in case. On the house.

Lucas gives a polite smile. Guard 2 shrugs, indifferent, and opens the door. Danny steps forward--

GUARD 1
Age restrictions. Sorry.

He's still glaring - he's NOT sorry. Danny steps aside. Lucas gives Teen Boy 111 a soft push.

TEEN BOY 111
(through gritted teeth)
C'mon.

He herds the Children inside. A glimpse of the room's interior - ornate, expensive - before the door closes.

GUARD 1
(with a sneer)
Why don't you boys go play?

INT. MAEVE'S BEDROOM, MAEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Maeve lies in bed, with Peter on top of her, moving up and down.

PETER
(panting)
Sweets...are you OK?

Maeve stares up at the roof - she's still wearing make-up, but underneath her face is lifeless.

MAEVE
It's perfect. Everything's perfect.

He tries to look at her, but she wraps her arms around him, pinning him in place. He moans, and thrusts harder.

INT. GAMING FLOOR - ZODIAC CASINO - NIGHT

On the casino floor, rich men in cowboy hats toss dice, drink, cheer, shout. Sparkly women drip from their arms. Money is won and lost.

Danny and Lucas watch from the bar, like aliens observing life on another planet. Lucas' gaze lingers on the scantily-clad women.

LUCAS
Gonna use the can.

He leaves. Danny keeps watching, clutching his root beer--

A SOUND catches his attention - it's POP MUSIC, faint over the ding!ding!ding! of slot machines.

He focuses. The slot machines fade and the music seeps through, loud, clear. Somehow, he knows this song.

He stands and follows the music, weaving through the maze of gaming tables and slot machines, to a...

INT. DINING THEATER - ZODIAC CASINO - CONTINUOUS

...with tables of patrons facing a stage, where two DANCERS perform to the music - it's a synth-pop remix of 1970's *If You Could Read My Mind*.

The performance draws Danny in - the Dancers' choreography, the lyrics, melody...it stirs something--

A BURLY MAN - an obvious bodyguard - pushes past Danny and heads to the center table. He whispers to a grey-haired MAN IN A TUXEDO. The Tuxedo Man stands, turns--

FLASHBACK:

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Young Danny, 12, lies pinned to a bed. A MAN is on top of him, pushing Danny's face into the mattress. He can't move, can't scream, can't BREATHE--

PRESENT:

INT. DINING THEATER - ZODIAC CASINO - NIGHT

Tuxedo Man passes by Danny...and the music DISTORTS...

The world slows down...their eyes meet...

FLASHBACK:

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Young Danny, whimpers, helpless. Through his tears, he sees a BOY in the next bed. A MAN is on top of him too. The Boy looks at Danny, eyes glistening--

PRESENT:

INT. DINING THEATER - ZODIAC CASINO - NIGHT

Danny freezes. Tuxedo Man passes without a second glance.

Sounds resume, the distorted music plays normally. It's as if nothing happened.

But Danny can't move. He watches Tuxedo Man step into the elevator. Several other rich, WELL-DRESSED MEN enter with him. They shake hands. They know each other.

The doors close. Danny watches the floor numbers rise on the display...and stop on the 39th floor.

EXT. ZODIAC CASINO CARPARK, WASHINGTON DC - NIGHT

Danny stumbles out, panting, disoriented. He drops to his knees, heaving, as if fighting some poison.

DANNY

(soft)

"...where's your Mama
gone...little baby bird...

...where's your Papa gone..."

The strange words confuse him, but somehow calm him. His body relaxes.

VALET ATTENDANT (O/S)
Buddy? You OK?

Danny blinks, trying to focus.

VALET ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
Lose everything, huh? See it all
the time. That's gotta bite.

Valet Attendant chuckles, shuffles off. Danny stares at the concrete beneath him, trying to focus.

DANNY
"Far, far away..."

INT. OLIVIA'S BATHROOM - MAEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Olivia leans against the toilet, masturbating.

A FACE flashes into her mind - the Sad Bearded Man from Tomlin's bar--

She kicks her feet into the wall, moans in pleasure...

EXT. ZODIAC CASINO CARPARK - CONTINUOUS

DANNY
"...far, far away..."

INT. MAEVE'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maeve wipes off her make-up in the mirror. Behind, Peter is asleep in her bed.

MAEVE
(singing)
"...far, far away-ay-ay..."

She looks at her bare face. SOMETHING has changed within her. A tiny piece. It makes her smile.

INT. OLIVIA'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Olivia washes her hands - a faint smile on her lips.

She looks at her reflection. She pulls her long blonde hair into a bun, like a dancer. It suits her.

INT. BLACK VAN - DAY

Dawn. Lucas drives down an empty road. Danny, in the passenger seat, stares out the window at the rising sun.

LUCAS
You OK?

Danny won't look at him. Lucas frowns.

DANNY

Think I'm coming down with something.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - OHIO BACKWOODS - DAY

Victor watches Lucas and Danny unload the Children. Teen Girl 114 holds onto a shaky Boy 127 as if he'll blow away.

Teen Boy 111 pushes past the younger kids and hurries into the cellar, head low and embarrassed.

Danny's gaze meets Victor's. He forces a smile, gives Victor a thumbs up. Victor grins.

INT. GRIEF WORKSHOP - FOX POINT TOWN HALL - NIGHT

The attendees sit in a circle, as Wilma talks.

Maeve sits in the center again...but she isn't 'present' today. Her eyes are vacant, distracted.

WILMA

I was going to visit Bob's grave today. I do most days, before I even think about shopping or anything. He used to grow wonderful sunflowers, so I always bring a fresh bunch. He loved our garden...always digging away...

(takes a steadying breath)

But I said to myself, "Not today, Wilma. Look at the rest of the picture. What else is there?"

(smiling proudly)

So...I ran some errands, things I had been putting off. And...I could. It was...easy.

She looks at Maeve for approval. Maeve isn't listening - she is somewhere else.

MAEVE

Adam loves dandelions.

Olivia looks over sharply from the refreshment table. The group listens in surprise.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

There's a vacant lot across our street. It's overgrown and full of weeds and dying trees...but there are dandelions, scattered about, here and there. When he first saw them, he thought they were flowers. So he began picking them for me. Now it's our little

(MORE)

MAEVE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 thing. Most 12-year-old boys are too busy getting into trouble, having adventures. Adam's like that too, but still...different. Led by the heart.

(pauses with a smile)
 Now every day he cuts through the lot on his way home from school, just to pick them for me. Like a brave little adventurer.

Wilma begins crying. Maeve doesn't notice.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
 He gets scared sometimes. But there's a song I sing to him, when he's not so brave...

She's suddenly lost in another world--

OLIVIA
 Mom.

Maeve breaks from her trance, sees the Group's concerned looks. Olivia has walked over, looking wary.

MAEVE
 Forgive me. I feel... I might be coming down with something.

WILMA
 It's alright, dear. It was nice to hear it. Really.

Maeve clears her throat, smoothes her hair, ready to disappear back into her polished, collected self--

OLIVIA
 Does anyone else want to share?

Maeve gives Olivia a sharp look. Olivia ignores it.

MAN (O/S)
 Share what?

Olivia looks at the MAN and barely hides her shock - it's Sad Bearded Man from Tomlin's bar. His name is CLAY.

OLIVIA
 I guess...something you remember.

WILMA
 I think that would be lovely.

Clay frowns - he doesn't like the sound of that. But others nod eagerly - it's what they've been waiting for. Olivia looks defiantly at Maeve. Maeve forces a nod.

MAEVE
Why not? Who's next?

INT. GRIEF WORKSHOP - NIGHT, LATER

Olivia, at the refreshment table, watches Maeve chat to Wilma.

CLAY (O/S)
Doesn't charity candy always
taste like crap?

Clay stands before her, peering at one of the candy bars.

OLIVIA
Well. It's more for the cause.

CLAY
(reading)
"Little Globe..."

OLIVIA
Missing Children's Fund.

CLAY
Sounds like a waste of chocolate.

He tries to grin, but his pain is visceral in his sunken eyes. Olivia sees it straightaway. She smiles politely.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Sorry. It's my first time, got my
back up. Not really one to sit
around talking about feelings.

OLIVIA
Neither is my mom. Strictly
big-picture stuff with her.

CLAY
Yeah, I got that.
(beat)
Your mom, huh?

They both look at Maeve, who frowns as Wilma talks. Olivia rolls her eyes, turns back, sees Clay staring at her, as if he knows her from somewhere else. She blushes.

CLAY (CONT'D)
(picks up candy bar)
So, what's the deal? I buy a few,
and my kid magically comes back?

OLIVIA
(startled)
Oh. I'm...sorry to hear...

Clay shrugs. Olivia smiles sympathetically.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Well, people keep coming back, so
I guess the meetings help. With
their loss. The...gap.
(beat)
Or they just like being
steamrolled by my mom.

CLAY
Sounds good to me. Fill that
goddamn hole right over.

He chuckles, as if it's all a big joke. He hands over a
dollar bill and pockets the candy.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Yeah. This is gonna taste like
crap. I can tell.

He grins awkwardly and leaves, as Olivia stares after him.

INT. OLIVIA'S CAR - NIGHT

Olivia drives Maeve home. Maeve stares out the window,
humming her trademark tune.

OLIVIA
I didn't mean to take over.

MAEVE
Hmm?

OLIVIA
They liked it.

MAEVE
If you say so.

OLIVIA
(a beat)
You were different tonight.
Talking in present tense.

MAEVE
Oh. Was I?

Maeve shrugs, keeps humming. Olivia grits her teeth.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
(singing)
"Where's your Mama gone, little
baby bird--"

Olivia turns a sharp corner, spilling Maeve's shopping bag
in the backseat. Olivia looks back, sees a ROOT BEER
BOTTLE roll out of the bag. Her face tenses.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Watch where you're going, Liv.
You don't want another ticket.

Before Maeve can begin singing again, Olivia switches on the radio, drowning her out. Maeve winces.

INT. KITCHEN - OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

Danny, at the table, flips through one of the newspapers from the 'homework' pile. He's unfocused, distracted... till he stops dead at an article:

BURLINGHAM HONORED AS INDIANA CHILDREN'S CHAMPION

"Toy store tycoon Roy Burlingham is to be named the 1985 Indiana Children's Champion for his charity, BurlingHands, which assists homeless juveniles across the midwest..."

Danny reads on, stunned...

"Burlingham, currently expanding his toy-store empire across sites in Washington, will receive the award at the Noblesville Town Hall this weekend."

Below the article is a PHOTO of Roy Burlingham - it's Tuxedo Man from the Zodiac Casino.

FLASHBACK:

--a SKINNY BOY crying on the floor of a fancy hotel room

--a MAN over him, pointing a gun

--Skinny Boy screams

--a GUNSHOT--

PRESENT:

Danny stares at his reflection in the window over the sink. He sees himself, for the first time. He is AWAKE.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Danny pushes out the back door, down the porch, into the patchy backyard...and vomits.

His eyes fall on the PATCHES in the grass, positioned evenly around the yard. They are the size of GRAVES. And beyond, bordering the yard, are the woods.

INT. CELLAR - OLD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Boy 119 stirs in his bed. He wakes...and gasps at a SILHOUETTE above. The silhouette kneels - it's Danny. Boy 119 cowers...until Danny wraps his arms around him.

DANNY
You won't be like me.

BOY 119
Promise?

Danny turns his head...and sees the rest of the Children watching from their beds, their eyes shining with hope.

INT. TV STUDIO - MILWAUKEE - DAY

Olivia stands off-camera with the TV CREW as Sandro and his FEMALE CO-ANCHOR deliver a story to camera:

SANDRO
(into camera)
...with the Cornhuskers losing
the season-opener to Florida
State, 13-17.

Olivia is distracted, her thoughts elsewhere.

SANDRO (CONT'D)
Now to the disappearance of a
local boy that has sent
shockwaves through the closeknit
community of Whitefish Bay. Jay
Doland, a 14-year-old at
Whitefish Bay Junior High, was
last seen leaving school on
Monday, but never arrived home...

Olivia looks up, the words hitting her--

SANDRO (CONT'D)
...both law enforcement and Fox
Point locals feeling a sense of
deja vu at the disappearance,
which comes 13 years after
12-year-old Adam Mills vanished
from Fox Point just a block
from home, seemingly into thin
air...

The world fades away for Olivia, Sandro's words echoing in her ear. She is suddenly disoriented, and everyone's gaze is on her, staring, even Sandro, as he talks on...

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - MAEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Maeve sits on the couch, watching the broadcast on TV.

SANDRO

(on TV)

...but Sheriff Clifford Steel and
deputies are confident of a more
optimistic outcome in this case,
and are asking anyone with
information to come forward...

As the TV flickers in her eyes...Maeve smiles.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Olivia dances amongst a crowd of twentysomethings. It's the first time we have seen her move to music - there's a hint of grace, of formal training, but it's lost in her angry movements to the harsh music. It's as if she's trying to release something that won't budge.

A PREPPY GUY, barely 21, sidles up. She opens her space to him, moves with him, but still apart, still dancing alone.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Preppy Guy presses Olivia to the wall. Olivia looks up at the ceiling's neon lights, grimaces as Preppy Guy's fingers creep up her thighs--

She shuts her eyes...and CLAY'S FACE appears in her mind--

INT. HALLWAY - MAEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Maeve stands at the door to Adam's room.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHTCLUB - CONTINUOUS

Olivia smiles at the image of Clay's face...and lets Preppy Guy's hands disappear under her skirt--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maeve opens Adam's door and steps inside.

INT. KITCHEN - OLD HOUSE - DAY

Lucas, wearing rubber gloves, dyes Danny's hair at the table. He works silently, expertly coating Danny's blonde roots with dark dye.

Danny tilts his head as the dye drips, and Lucas catches it. It's like choreography, routine. No words needed.

They both tense instinctively. Behind them, Victor stands in the doorway, holding the newspaper Danny was reading.

VICTOR
Someone forgot to do his
homework.

Lucas holds innocent hands up. Danny sits up quickly.

DANNY
Me. Sorry.

Victor walks over, drops the newspaper open on Danny's lap. An advertisement has been circled in red:

WANTED - ADVENTURE CLUB HQ'D IN KENTUCKY RECRUITING LOCAL YOUTH. BOYS, ALL TYPES, 12 AND UNDER. MUST HAVE SPIRIT. PROMPT REPLIES.

VICTOR
Is my little mouse getting lazy
now that winter's coming?

Lucas obediently moves, and Victor sits, pulls on a glove and gently rubs the dye into Danny's hair.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Nice job on Washington, boys. I'm
hearing good things.

LUCAS
127 was a star, as usual.

VICTOR
Shame about 111. You kids can't
help growing up, can you?

He swirls his fingers around Danny's hair.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Think it's time to get him
started on Green. Lucas, you go
scout this Kentucky order--

Danny gasps - Victor's fingers are like pincers--

DANNY
Let me do Kentucky.

Danny sits up, nods towards the newspaper advertisement.

VICTOR
Aren't you full of surprises
lately?

DANNY
I'll make it up to you.

Victor stares at Danny, with eyes that could drown him.

VICTOR

OK. Make it up to me. Find me something...special.

(beat)

'Cause I'd hate to start you back on Green too.

Victor pulls off his glove, walks out. Dye drips down Danny's face. He wipes it, smearing it across his cheek.

DANNY

Hey. Do your job.

LUCAS

Shit. Sorry.

Lucas wipes Danny's face gently...almost tenderly. Danny's mind is elsewhere, FORMING A PLAN.

INT. MAEVE'S HOUSE - FOX POINT, MILWAUKEE - DAY

Morning. Peter enters, spilling early light in the hall.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peter creeps up the stairs, turns to Maeve's open bedroom door...and sees the empty bed.

PETER

Sweets?

Reluctant, Peter turns to the other end of the hallway - LIGHT shines under Adam's door. Maeve is still in there.

INT. KITCHEN - MAEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Peter opens the fridge. His gaze moves from granola...to a six-pack of BEER. He hesitates, then takes a can.

As he drinks, he sees his snowglobe on the counter - still in the box. He sighs. He crosses the living room and puts the snowglobe on the mantle, with the rest of Maeve's collection.

INT. MAEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Peter dozes on the couch, empty beer cans around him.

A SOUND wakes him - someone opening the front door. Peter jumps up, pulls out the concealed gun in his boot--

Olivia stumbles in, drunk and tired. She sniggers at the sight of Peter with his gun.

PETER

(embarrassed)

Sorry. Habit.

OLIVIA
 (sees his beer cans)
 Getting an early start?

Olivia pushes past.

PETER
 You heard the news, Olivia?

OLIVIA
 Why are you the only person in
 the world who calls me that? It's
'Liv'. L-I-V.

She kicks off her heels and begins climbing the stairs.

PETER
 We can't let her jump to
 conclusions. Not yet.

OLIVIA
 Huh. Sounds like what you said 13
 years ago.

Peter is silent. Olivia rolls her eyes.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 I'll take care of her. Why else
 am I still here?

PETER
 Us both.

Olivia slams her bedroom door behind her.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - CINCINNATI, OHIO - DAY

Adam drives the truck down the highway. Ahead, he sees a
 turn-off for Kentucky...and he drives past it.

EXT. DOLAND HOUSE - WHITEFISH BAY, MILWAUKEE - DAY

MRS DOLAND, early 40s, looking weary, opens her front
 door...to find Maeve on her doorstep.

MAEVE
 Mrs Doland? I'm sorry to disturb
 you. I know this is a very
 difficult time.

MRS DOLAND
 (sighs)
 Are you a reporter?

MAEVE
 I'm Maeve Mills. I live just over
 in Fox Point. I was hoping to
 speak to you--

MRS DOLAND

Look, we've been answering questions about Jay from reporters and police and god knows who else for three days--

MAEVE

This is about Jay. It's about both of our sons. My Adam.

MRS DOLAND

You're... Oh. My name's Ruth. I'm sorry, I haven't slept much--

MAEVE

Ruth, have the police told you anything? Do they have a suspect? Reports of unknown vehicles near Jay's route from school?

MRS DOLAND

I-I don't think there's much to tell. Jay was coming home...and he just...never...

She shrugs, tears glistening in her eyes. Maeve nods.

MAEVE

Just like my boy. They know it. They know more than they're saying. You can't just sit around waiting--

MRS DOLAND

(taken aback)

My husband's at the station now. He doesn't want me talking to anyone without him. He prefers me...calm. Anyway, he thinks Jay's just run off to make us worry. He's done it before. Just...not for this long.

Maeve steps closer. Mrs Doland fold her arms protectively.

MAEVE

Ruth...you feel it, don't you? Don't talk yourself out of it. Don't be afraid. We know, don't we? Our boys didn't run away.

Mrs Doland clutches her stomach at the thought she has been avoiding. Maeve almost smiles.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Ruth...they're going to bury it if you let them.

MRS DOLAND
(tearfully)
No, I trust them. They've
listened to us--

MAEVE
They have to. Because of my boy.
Because they buried him.

Maeve grabs Mrs Doland's wrist.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
But he's not dead. Jay may not be
either. Maybe it's the same.

This is a different Maeve. Like a switch flipped, she is
suddenly older, lined with pain. DESPERATE.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
Tell me, Ruth. Please.

Mrs Doland stares at Maeve, as if seeing her future self.

MRS DOLAND
I really don't know anything.
It's just Jay playing a trick.
Everything will be fine.

She closes the door, leaving Maeve standing there,
shaking, struggling to regain control.

INT. MOTEL - NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA - DAY

Danny stands at the desk as a CLERK processes his booking.

CLERK
Any luggage, sir?

Danny holds up a simple black backpack.

DANNY
Just here to see the sights.

CLERK
I hope you like disappointment.

He chuckles. Danny forces a chuckle back.

CLERK (CONT'D)
OK. And a credit card, sir?

DANNY
Don't have one, sorry.

CLERK
Well...we need it for security.

Danny pulls a 100-dollar bill from a thick wad in his wallet. He slides it over. Clerk, startled at first, discreetly pockets it.

Danny glances at a rack of mediocre souvenirs, and his gaze is drawn to a row of SNOWGLOBES. He takes one gently, like a precious artifact. It's a child in a field.

CLERK

OK, you're all set, sir. Sir?

Danny shakes the globe...and from the field, tiny DANDELION FLAKES swirl around the child.

DANNY

I'll takes this too.

EXT. PARK - NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA - DAY

Danny sits on a bench at the top of a hill, watching the NOBLESVILLE TOWN HALL below, as delivery vans drive around to a service entrance, where staff unload food and decorations, running in and out of the hall.

He scans every movement with machine-like dexterity, his eyes taking in every detail --

BOY (O/S)

Is that a Polaroid?

Danny turns to a BOY, 10-ish, wearing butterfly wings attached to his shoulders with elastic. He is pointing down at the POLAROID CAMERA next to Danny.

DANNY

Sure is.

BUTTERFLY BOY

Oh. Why?

DANNY

Well, you never know when you'll need to capture something.

BUTTERFLY BOY

Are you a...reporter?

DANNY

(after a beat)

Good guess. I write stories for a magazine. For kids.

BUTTERFLY BOY

Oh.

They stare at each other.

DANNY
Would you like me to interview
you? For my magazine?

Butterfly Boy shrugs.

DANNY (CONT'D)
OK--

BUTTERFLY BOY
Wait.

He sits, pulls out a squashed pack of cigarettes. He
lights one with a match from a box, takes a drag...and
tries desperately not to cough.

DANNY
(smiling)
OK. So. What's your name?

BUTTERFLY BOY
Zachary. Want one?

Danny hesitates...then takes a cigarette, puts it in his
lips. Butterfly Boy hands him the box of matches. Danny
lights it, breathes in...and nearly chokes.

BUTTERFLY BOY (CONT'D)
(laughing)
You never smoked before?

DANNY
(laughing)
There are lots of thing I haven't
done.

BUTTERFLY BOY
But you're a grown-up.

Danny's smile fades. He watches Butterfly Boy smoke.

DANNY
Where are your parents?

BUTTERFLY BOY
At work.

DANNY
You come here by yourself a lot?

Butterfly Boy nods. He begins digging a hole.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Always at this time?

BUTTERFLY BOY
Mostly. My babysitter has school
till 2:30. But I don't need her.

DANNY
Wow. You're a brave boy.

BUTTERFLY BOY
I play soccer, you know.

DANNY
(leaning closer)
Do you? Do you play it here?

Butterfly Boy nods...as sadness washes over his face.
Danny instinctively reaches for the camera.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Can I take a photo of you?

BUTTERFLY BOY
Will it hurt my eyes?

DANNY
Oh. That's just the flash.

With cigarette in one hand, Danny aims the camera at
Butterfly Boy, who sits up and starts to smile.

DANNY (CONT'D)
No smile. Just like you were.
Look at me with those eyes.

Butterfly Boy stares at the camera, a little confused. The
camera flashes--

FLASHBACK:

INT. PREP ROOM - OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Danny, 12, sitting shirtless in the dentist chair,
is blinded by the FLASH! of a Polaroid camera--

PRESENT:

INT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

Butterfly Boy covers his eyes.

BUTTERFLY BOY
Owie!

Danny lowers the camera, his hands trembling, his face
white. He drops his cigarette.

BUTTERFLY BOY (CONT'D)
You look like you're gonna puke.

Danny shakes his head. Butterfly Boy picks up Danny's cigarette, drops them both in the hole he dug and covers it over. He watches Danny panting.

BUTTERFLY BOY (CONT'D)
Can I tell you a secret?

Danny nods. He squeezes Butterfly Boy's box of matches.

BUTTERFLY BOY (CONT'D)
I don't like soccer.

DANNY
Oh.

BUTTERFLY BOY
I wanna do dance lessons.

Danny stares down at the Town Hall.

BUTTERFLY BOY (CONT'D)
Is that stupid? My dad said so.

DANNY
My sister's a dancer.

BUTTERFLY BOY
Really? On stage and everything?

Danny's lips tremble, surprised by his own words.

DANNY
She might be. Now.

BUTTERFLY BOY
Want me to show you--

DANNY
Go home, Zachary.

Butterfly Boy looks confused.

DANNY (CONT'D)
There are bad people here.

BUTTERFLY BOY
But I come here all the time--

DANNY (CONT'D)
Don't come here again. Not by yourself. You promise?

BUTTERFLY BOY

But--

Danny looks at the ground, as if afraid to look at him.

DANNY

Go.

(pushes Butterfly Boy)

Go!

Butterfly Boy grabs his cigarette pack and runs off.

Danny raises the camera...and smashes it to pieces on the bench. The photo of Butterfly Boy flutters to the ground.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA - DAY

Danny puts the photo of Butterfly Boy in an ashtray, lights a match from Butterfly Boy's squashed box. He sets the photo alight and watches it burn.

INT. MILWAUKEE COUNTY SHERIFF STATION - NIGHT

Peter stands in the office of Sheriff Steel, staring at a wall of B&W photos. In one of them, a younger Peter, as Sheriff Pillsbury, receives a medal from the Mayor.

SHERIFF STEEL (O/S)

Runaway.

Peter turns to Sheriff Steel, who sits at his desk, glancing carelessly at files and statements.

PETER

You sure?

SHERIFF STEEL

Fight with parents. Disappears the next day. Textbook.

Sheriff Steel sits back, crosses his arms, satisfied. Peter approaches, eyeing the files on the desk.

PETER

Was there a grey van? A Dodge?

SHERIFF STEEL

(eyes narrowing)

Paperboy saw a black van, around dawn. But it wasn't anywhere near Jay's route home. In fact, one of his friends said Jay jumped the back fence after school. Could've easily made it to the highway.

Peter nods, unsatisfied. He glances at the files.

PETER

I assume there were clothes
missing from his room? Money
taken from the parents' wallets?

Sheriff Steel's gaze flick to his files, then back.

SHERIFF STEEL

You telling me how to do my job?

Peter grins apologetically, steps away.

SHERIFF STEEL (CONT'D)

Kids run off, Peter. Just like
the Mills kid. I read your notes.
Nothing new. Nothing for you.

Peter can't decipher Sheriff Steel's cloudy eyes. Sheriff
Steel knows it, and chuckles.

SHERIFF STEEL (CONT'D)

Don't worry, Golden Boy. No-one's
taking your photo off the wall.

Peter almost winces.

PETER

I'm just worried about Maeve. I
don't want this to...

SHERIFF STEEL

To what? It's been 12 years--

PETER

13.
(beat)
Yeah. She's fine.

SHERIFF STEEL

If she's not, she's a damn good
actress.

INT. OLIVIA'S CAR - NIGHT

Maeve drives around the streets, peering into the
darkness. Searching. As she drives, she sings:

MAEVE

(singing)
"Wheres your mama gone
Little baby bird
Where's your papa gone
Far, far away..."

INT. GRIEF WORKSHOP - FOX POINT TOWN HALL - NIGHT

Olivia sits in Maeve's chair, facing the group circle. They are waiting. She clears her throat nervously.

OLIVIA

Um. Hi. My name's Liv. Maeve's daughter. Well, you know that.

She sees Clay in the circle. He gives her a nod.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

(more confident)

But you probably recognize me as the woman who polices the Jell-O molds at the refreshment table.

The group chuckles. Olivia takes a breath, relaxes.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I guess my mom couldn't make it tonight. But...well...I'm here. I'm not qualified. I do make-up on dead people. But I'd like to hear your stories...and maybe you might like to tell them. Maybe it'll help.

Clay gives her a wink. She can't help smiling.

INT. GRIEF WORKSHOP - LATER

An OBESE WOMAN in a muumuu in mid-speech:

OBESE WOMAN

...and I don't think I'll ever replace him. Not my Patrick.

(deep breath)

But it is good to talk. It keeps him...here. With me.

She sighs, finished. The group murmurs politely.

OLIVIA

Your husband sounded like a wonderful man.

OBESE WOMAN

(offended)

Patrick was my cat.

Clay laughs - surprising Olivia AND himself. Olivia tries to stop herself from smiling--.

OLIVIA

(stammering)

Oh. I am...really sorry...I...

CLAY

Guess it's my turn, huh?

Olivia gives Clay a grateful look. Clay clears his throat.

CLAY (CONT'D)

I'm Clay. Actually moved here a couple years ago, from Nebraska. That's where we lost Lily.

(chuckles)

Daughter, not dog.

He glances at Olivia. Now SHE gives the encouraging nod.

CLAY (CONT'D)

The County Fair - that was the last time I saw her. Sarah, my wife, didn't want her going - she was a worrier. Always thought the worst. Used to drive me nuts. So Lily and me, we used to gang up on her. Make up crazy, worst-case scenarios. Sarah knew it was a joke, but she still didn't like it. Maybe that's why Lily was always...more mine. Little smiles between us. Funny looks. Girls are always closer to their dads. She used to...

His hands begin to shake. He sits on them.

CLAY (CONT'D)

...used to climb onto my lap and watch *The Fall Guy* with me. Even when she got too big. Going on eleven, but she still did it. I never watched much TV, but she knew I liked that show, so she kept still. Curled up on my chest...like a little mouse. We'd both fall asleep--

His voice breaks. He struggles, pushes on.

CLAY (CONT'D)

So I let her go to the Fair. I wanted to keep her mine. To love me more. To have those smiles--

He suddenly crumples, unable to hold in his tears--

CLAY (CONT'D)

I still feel her...but there's nothing there, nothing to hold. And Sarah won't even look at me...everything...hurts...it all

(MORE)

CLAY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
hurts. What was the point of it
 all?! All those years...for...

He clutches his sides, desperately battling his grief. The group watches awkwardly, till he composes himself.

Olivia, wide-eyed, has heard every word...and it's hit her differently than the rest of the group. Clay chuckles, embarrassed. Wilma pats his shoulder.

WILMA
 How do you feel?

CLAY
 Like I need a fucking drink.
 (as Wilma gasps)
 'Scuse my French.

He smiles at Olivia. There's a lightness in his eyes, like a weight lifted. Olivia smiles back.

EXT. TOWN HALL - NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA - NIGHT

Roy Burlingham, in a tuxedo, exits the service door of the Town Hall, to a limousine on the curb, where a DRIVER waits. He gets in, and the Driver closes the door.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

As the Driver drives, Roy pulls a little vial from his tuxedo, tips some COCAINE onto a finger, and snorts it.

ROY BURLINGHAM
 Jesus Christ.
 (to Driver)
 How about some music, Ned? Your
 choice. Just something easy.

No response from the Driver. He snorts more cocaine, glancing out the window - trees pass by.

ROY BURLINGHAM (CONT'D)
 What the fuck...? You forget
 where the hotel is?

DRIVER
 My memory's fine, sir. Yours?

Roy peers at the Driver, though he sees only a sliver of his face, lit by moonlight.

ROY BURLINGHAM
 Ned...?

This isn't Ned. Roy tenses.

ROY BURLINGHAM (CONT'D)
Where's Ned?

The Driver doesn't reply. Roy tests the door handle - it's locked. He looks at the car phone - the cord has been cut.

Roy looks in the rear-view mirror, catching just a glimpse of the Driver's eyes before he looks away.

ROY BURLINGHAM (CONT'D)
What do you want, my friend?

The Driver says nothing.

ROY BURLINGHAM (CONT'D)
Money? Easy.

He pulls a checkbook and fountain pen from his tuxedo.

ROY BURLINGHAM (CONT'D)
Ain't my first rodeo, my friend.

The Driver brakes hard. Roy is flung onto his knees.

He touches something wet. He squints in the darkness - it's a leg. He follows it...to the slumped body of his REAL DRIVER. There is a bloody mess at the body's groin, dribbling down the legs. Roy GAGS.

The Driver exits the car. Roy watches him through the window as he walks calmly to the back. Roy grabs his FOUNTAIN PEN, stuffs it in his jacket.

The Driver opens the back door, and waits. In the moonlight, Roy sees a TATTOO on the driver's wrist: 99-WI.

EXT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Roy steps out slowly, coming face to face with Danny.

FLASHBACK OF IMAGES:

Young Danny, 12, pinned beneath the Man - it's a younger Roy Burlingham--

The Skinny Boy cries on the floor, as a SECOND MAN pulls him towards the bathroom--

Roy swears, gets off Danny, takes a gun from his waiting BODYGUARD, points it at Skinny Boy, and shoots--

PRESENT:

Danny stares at Roy, like a child facing a room of darkness. Roy can't look back.

ROY BURLINGHAM
Thought you kids were...
programmed. Are you broken?

DANNY
I don't know.

ROY BURLINGHAM
What do you want?

Danny opens his mouth, but doesn't know what to say.

DANNY
Don't you...remember me?

Roy reluctantly looks up, searches Danny's face.

ROY BURLINGHAM
You would've been young. You grew
up.

Danny nods. Roy fumbles in his tuxedo pocket.

ROY BURLINGHAM (CONT'D)
Let me give you something...

DANNY
I don't want money--

Roy yanks out his fountain pen and jabs the sharp end at
Danny's neck--

Danny grabs Roy's wrist, swings him around, slams him into
the limousine. He twists Roy's wrist until it snaps. Roy
SCREAMS, the sound echoing all around them.

Danny drags Roy, throws him on the limousine hood--

ROY BURLINGHAM
Please! I've got a family! I've
got children! I--

DANNY
Lie down.

Roy's eyes go wide. He hesitates, then screams--

ROY BURLINGHAM
Help! Help me!

Danny punches Roy in the face. Roy lands on his back on
the dirt road, dazed and bloody.

DANNY
Have you ever had the weight of a
man on top of you?

Roy rolls over onto his stomach, spits out blood. He tries to crawl, but Danny presses his foot on Roy's back.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Do you want me to tell you what
it's like?

ROY BURLINGHAM
I'm sorry. Please. I'm sorry. But
I'm not the only one...

DANNY
Just the first.

ROY BURLINGHAM
...please...it's...the way I am!
I can't help it...

Danny freezes. He takes his foot off, listens as Roy sobs.

ROY BURLINGHAM (CONT'D)
...I'm not a monster...

A switch flips in Danny. He rolls Roy over and shoves something FLESHY AND BLOODY into Roy's mouth. He clamps his hand over Roy's mouth.

DANNY
It's like suffocating. It's like
dying.

Roy chokes on the fleshy gag...till his body goes still, his eyes roll back, and he stops breathing.

Silence, except for Danny's panting. He looks at his bloody hands, and is suddenly disoriented. All he can do is wipe his hands in the dirt to get rid of the blood.

INT. HALLWAY - MAEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Maeve enters wearily. As she removes her coat, a floorboard creaks. She turns eagerly to the dark hallway, eyes wide...

Peter switches on the light.

PETER
Just me, sweets.

Maeve hides disappointment behind a smile.

MAEVE
Peter.

PETER
How was group? You finished late
tonight?

MAEVE
I canceled it. Rhonda's got the
flu, so I covered her shift.

A beat, as Peter registers this.

PETER
I drove past the store. I didn't
see you.

MAEVE
(dismissive)
Oh. Must've been on my break.

She looks at him - his eyes are questioning. She smiles,
amused, and holds up a Gosch & Sons SHOPPING BAG. See?
Peter chuckles an apology. He takes the shopping bag, his
hand gently holding onto hers--

MAEVE (CONT'D)
Coffee?

She squirms out of his grip and heads to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

As Maeve sets the kettle on the stove, Peter opens the
fridge to unpack the shopping bag...

PETER
Where's Olivia?

MAEVE
At the TV station, I think.

Peter stops - the fridge is full of bottles of ROOT BEER.

PETER
She doesn't work tonight.

MAEVE
Oh.

Peter opens the freezer - several tubs of RASPBERRY ICE
CREAM are stacked inside. He closes the freezer slowly.

He turns and watches Maeve scoop coffee into a cup - a
faint smile is on her lips.

PETER
Bit late for coffee, isn't it?

MAEVE
Aren't your days of interrogating
over?

Peter holds up his hands in surrender. Maeve turns to watch the steam escape from the kettle. Peter moves behind, gently brings his arms around her.

PETER
Why don't we go away?

Maeve chuckles, still eyeing the kettle.

MAEVE
I can't afford it--

PETER
I'll pay--

MAEVE
Neither can you.

Before Peter can respond, the kettle begins whistling. Maeve slides away from him and begins pouring coffee.

PETER
Sometimes I think you're not even here.

Maeve looks up from the coffee, surprised.

PETER (CONT'D)
You look at me, you talk to me...but it's...half full. You touch me, but you're not...there. I can feel it. What are you saving yourself for?

Maeve moves to him, takes his hand.

MAEVE
I'm here, Peter. You've always had me. All of me.

She takes his hand and puts it on her breast.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
How deep do you think I am, anyway?

Peter pulls his hand off and cups her face. He looks into her eyes, searching, DESPERATE to see something in them. Maeve leans in and kisses him.

PETER
I stink like beer.

MAEVE
I like it.

Leading him by the hand, Maeve takes him upstairs.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA - NIGHT

In the shower, Danny scrubs the blood off his fingers. As he does, he smiles.

INT. BIG BURGER BARN, MILWAUKEE - NIGHT

Clay sits opposite Olivia in a booth, surrounded by the tacky, childish decor of the Big Burger Barn.

OLIVIA
Thought you needed a drink?

CLAY
Sorry. It was Lily's favorite,
back home. Guess it grew on me.

OLIVIA
Oh.

CLAY
We can go someplace else.

OLIVIA
No, it's OK.
(beat)
But next time, my choice.

CLAY
(surprised)
What'll your friends think, you
out with some grumpy old man?

Olivia shrugs. The SERVER arrives.

OLIVIA
Cheeseburger and fries, please.
And a cherry Coke.

She catches Clay staring at her. He clears his throat.

CLAY
Same.

The Server leaves.

OLIVIA
Grumpy old men drink cherry Coke?

CLAY
I'm deep as a river.

He grins. Even smiling, she sees traces of grief worn into his face - it seems to entrance her. He clears his throat.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Dunno what came over me at the group. Usually keep it together.

OLIVIA

I'm tired of people pretending. You should've seen my mom after Adam - pulling citizen's arrests on every guy she didn't recognize walking down Main Street. But now she's June Cleaver.

CLAY

Lucky for me. I live on Main.

Olivia nods.

CLAY (CONT'D)

What did your father do?

Olivia quickly reaches for a cigarette.

OLIVIA

He gave it six months. Then bought a big house just for himself on the other side of town. The great escape.

CLAY

Must've been tough on your Mom. Just you and her.

Olivia shrugs, goes to light her cigarette--

CLAY (CONT'D)

You shouldn't do that.

OLIVIA

(amused)

OK, 'Dad'.

Their gaze holds. Olivia puts the cigarette away. Clay grins awkwardly, then removes a worn PHOTO from his wallet and hands it to Olivia.

It's LILY, 11, clutching a TEDDYBEAR in a magician's outfit. We've seen this teddybear before.

Lily has long blonde hair and wide, dark eyes...just like Olivia. Olivia notices this. She hands the photo back.

CLAY

'Magic Boo Bear'. She took that guy everywhere. Even to summer camp. Then she came back saying all the other girls were playing with lipstick and bras.

(MORE)

CLAY (CONT'D)
So I got her a backpack to hide
it in.

OLIVIA
You must've been a good dad.

He slides the photo back in his wallet as the Server
brings the drinks. They both sip cherry Coke, and giggle.

CLAY (CONT'D)
I stopped doing things like this.
Sarah... We've never been the
same. She blames me. She should.
(shrugging)
So why should I get to do things
that make me happy?

He looks away, over to the checkerboard dance area, where
a LITTLE GIRL dances on the feet of her FATHER.

Olivia follows his gaze. She smiles at the Little Girl and
Father...then her smile fades.

CLAY
I'd ask you to dance, but they'd
probably think you were my
daughter.

Olivia turns to him - his head is down, sobbing softly.
Startled, she hands him a napkin...but he grabs her
hand, like it's a lifeline. She doesn't pull away.

OLIVIA
You're probably the first person
ever to cry at Big Burger Barn.

Clay chuckles, his grief fading. Almost reluctantly he
removes his hand from hers.

CLAY
Wait'll you try the food.

They laugh - it's genuine. They are both glad to be there.

INT. HALLWAY - MAEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Peter shuffles into the hall, half asleep. He sees LIGHT
beneath Adam's bedroom door - Maeve is in there.

Peter is suddenly wide awake.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - OHIO BACKWOODS - DAY

Danny parks the truck on the dirt road.

INT. PICK-UP-TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

He stares at his hands - clean, except for faint dried blood under his fingernails.

He looks at the Old House....opens the glove box...pulls out a blood-stained SWITCHBLADE. He goes to open the door--

FLASHBACK:

Young Danny lies curled up on his bed, in the cellar of the Old House, crying softly.

A hand touches his shoulder - it's Younger Victor...but with softer, kinder eyes.

YOUNGER VICTOR
Do you want to know a trick,
Danny Boy?

Young Danny's cries subside. Younger Victor sits down.

YOUNGER VICTOR (CONT'D)
Make it a game. A game of
pretend. Like you're someone
else. A spy, or a superhero, on
an adventure. Tough. Brave. The
real Danny is still in there...
just asleep, deep in a hole. And
when it's over, you pop back out.
Safe. What do you say?

Young Danny doesn't know what to say.

YOUNGER VICTOR (CONT'D)
That's OK. You listen, don't you?
Like a little mouse.

Younger Victor opens his arms. Young Danny reluctantly leans into them...and begins crying again.

YOUNG DANNY
What about the boy that got shot?

YOUNGER VICTOR
You just need a better
imagination than him. I'll help
you. I'll keep you safe. My
little mouse.

Young Danny wraps his arms around Younger Victor. Younger Victor smiles--

INT. PICK-UP-TRUCK - PRESENT

Danny smiles, lost in the memory. His grip on the switchblade loosens--

A GUNSHOT echoes from the Old House. Danny jolts.

INT. OLD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Danny enters, gripping his switchblade.

DANNY

Lucas?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Danny steps into the kitchen...to see Lucas, pointing his gun through the open back door, at a SILHOUETTE on the porch--

It's Teen Boy 111, frozen, facing the woods past the yard.

DANNY

Lucas...

LUCAS

He's gonna be so mad, Danny.

Danny tucks his blade into his jeans. He reaches out and pushes Lucas' gun down, to Lucas' confusion.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Danny steps onto the porch. Teen Boy 111 has a bullet hole in his shoulder, and fresh BURN MARKS on his naked chest. Like torture marks.

Teen Boy 111 doesn't takes his eyes off the woods.

TEEN BOY 111

Did you promise everyone? Or just your favorite?

DANNY

Paul...listen...

TEEN BOY 111

(surprised)

You know my name.

Danny takes a slow step towards him--

Teen Boy 111 BOLTS like a fox, sprinting across the yard, towards the woods.

Lucas runs out to the porch, raises his gun--

DANNY
(pushing Lucas' gun away)
Don't!

BANG! A bullet hits Teen Boy 111 in the neck. He drops.

Danny shuts his eyes. Victor walks across the yard, lowering a rifle. It was HIS shot.

Victor steps up the porch, brushes past them--

VICTOR
Take the body downstairs. Let
them see it.

Lucas nods obediently. Victor goes inside. Danny doesn't move. Lucas sees Danny's hands shaking.

INT. MAEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Olivia enters the house...to see a NEWS CREW in the living room, and Maeve on the couch, talking into a TV camera. Sandro sits opposite, a notepad in his lap.

MAEVE
...so I'm urging anyone in the
area who might have seen
something, to speak to the
Milwaukee County police. Every
detail is important when
something like this happens.
Every second is precious--

OLIVIA
Mom...?

MAEVE
Oh. Liv. How's my make-up?

Peter, standing in the corner, waves to Olivia, but she ignores him. She glares at Sandro.

SANDRO
(hastily)
Let's cut there for now.

Olivia pushes out the front door. Sandro follows guiltily.

EXT. PORCH - MAEVE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As Olivia watches Maeve through the living room window behind Sandro...

SANDRO
Look, she called us. At the crack
of dawn--

OLIVIA
Why would she call you?

But she already knows why. She sees Peter sit down next to Maeve and stroke her hair, which Maeve barely notices.

SANDRO
She thinks she can help. You know, encourage the public. Speak from experience--

Olivia scoffs. She lights a cigarette...then throws it away.

OLIVIA
Fox Point's expert on missing kids. Something like that?

SANDRO
Look, I'm not trying to stir anything up. She wanted to talk. To be honest, she seems pretty together. Solid.

OLIVIA
Of course she does.

SANDRO
We just wanted to puff up the Doland story. We don't need it.

Maeve turns, looks out the window, meets Olivia's eyes. Olivia sees a spark in Maeve's eyes. The start of a FIRE.

Olivia turns back to Sandro.

OLIVIA
Ask her about the presents she still buys Adam. Ask her why she's so talkative now that someone else's kid is missing. That's a story, if you know how to dig it out, Frankenfurter.

She goes back inside, leaving Sandro shellshocked.

INT. MAEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Sandro and Maeve face each other, the camera rolls again. Olivia and Peter watch, from opposite sides of the room.

SANDRO
...you said "every second is precious". I assume you're speaking from experience, considering the similarities to your son's disappearance?

MAEVE

I just know what Mrs Doland is going through. Ruth.

SANDRO

But Sheriff Steel has refuted any claim of a connection between Jay Doland and your son. Do you believe that to be true?

Maeve purses her lips.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

According to the Sheriff, there's strong evidence that Jay simply ran away--

MAEVE

They said that about Adam too.

(shrugging)

Every mother knows. I felt it. And that was evidence enough, for me. Not for those in charge.

Her voice is now edged with anger...and Sandro hears it.

SANDRO

You mean Peter Pillsbury? He was sheriff at the time?

Olivia sees Peter tense. It makes her smile.

Maeve half-nods. Her eyes are growing distant...

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Well, your husband, at the time, is on record saying that you hindered the case by refuting evidence that Adam was a runaway.

Olivia's face falls.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

I believe he called you overemotional, hysterical--

MAEVE

My husband was a college Professor. He had his reputation. And Peter...he had a spotless record. He wanted something clean. An easy answer.

(almost to herself)

It's funny. These powerful grown men so terrified of what they'll lose. To let a little boy just fade away... It's monstrous. Evil.

(beat)
And I'm just as bad. I let them.

Maeve suddenly remembers Peter is there - his face is unreadable.

SANDRO
(leaning in, earnest)
Mrs Mills, can you tell me about
Adam's presents?

Maeve looks at Olivia. Olivia looks back, daring Maeve.

MAEVE
Just a habit. I buy them to...
commemorate him. Flowers on a
grave.

SANDRO
So, you're not speaking with me
today in the hope that Jay's
disappearance will renew interest
in your son?

Maeve stares at him. Sandro thinks he's gone too far.

SANDRO (CONT'D)
I just mean...you don't hold
any hope that Adam's still out
there?

MAEVE
I hope that Jay Doland is found
alive and well. And that all the
pieces come back together again.
That everyone can be happy.

Olivia looks across to Peter...but he's gone.

INT. KITCHEN - OLD HOUSE - DAY

Danny, at the table, stares at a bag of take-out burgers.
Victor stands at the sink, washing up dishes.

VICTOR
What are you waiting for? Dig in,
Danny Boy.

Danny takes a burger, begins to eat. He's cautious,
feeling Victor's eyes on him as he chews.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
So. How was Kentucky?

DANNY
Nothing special.

Victor cocks his head.

DANNY (CONT'D)
We have standards, don't we?

VICTOR
Blame yourself for that. You
raised them.

Danny fills his mouth with more food.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Good, Danny boy?

DANNY
Mm-hm.

A beat. Victor seems to be waiting for something.

DANNY (CONT'D)
How did 111 get out?

VICTOR
Easy mistake. Lucas had just
started him on Green. Kid had
more fight in him than they
usually do after the first round.

Danny glances through the window - Lucas is outside,
filling in a LARGE HOLE in the yard.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
I heard Lucas' shot from the
barn. I saw you on the porch.
(beat)
You let him run.

DANNY
I...thought I could talk to him.
Less chance of damage.

Victor turns to Danny, wiping his wet hands on his jeans.

VICTOR
Shame. I picked him a really
great piece. *Adagio For Strings*.
You know it?

Danny shakes his head. Victor's eyes burn into him.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
We need some music. Yeah?

Victor walks out. Danny tenses in the silence.

A CLASSICAL RECORD begins playing from the living room.
Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake.

Horror washes over Danny--

EXT. OLD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lucas hears the music. He puts down his shovel, drops to his knees and curls into a ball, as if in a trance...as if he has no control...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Danny stares at the living room doorway, his mind racing. He hears a VOICE in his mind:

YOUNG VICTOR (V.O)
Make it a game...like you're
someone else...the real Danny...
still in there...just asleep...

Danny drops his head to the table, slumps down, just like Lucas. Victor approaches Danny from behind.

VICTOR
You still there, little mouse?

DANNY
I'm here.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lucas' body is frozen. Tears stream from his eyes. His jeans are wet with urine.

INT. OLD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Victor walks around to face Danny. His shadow towers over him.

VICTOR
You still love me?

DANNY
Mm-hm.

Danny doesn't dare look up. He focuses...and wets himself. Victor notices. He nods, kneels to Danny's level.

VICTOR
What would you do for me?

DANNY
Anything.

Victor stares into Danny's eyes. Years and moments pass through their gaze.

VICTOR
There you are.

Victor stands, ruffles Danny's hair. He takes a PIECE OF PAPER from his pocket, puts it on the table - a new order.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Take Lucas with you this time.

He leaves. A second later, the music stops. Danny, shaking with fear, slowly reaches out for the paper.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lucas begins to cry.

INT. MAEVE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Peter is stuffing his belongings into a duffel bag. Maeve enters cautiously. Peter doesn't turn around.

PETER
Done in a sec. Don't have much.
You know me. Easy and clean.

Maeve sits on the edge of the bed.

PETER (CONT'D)
That was your cue, sweets. To say
"Sorry." "Don't go". Anything.
But why start now?

He yanks the zipper on his bag...and tears it off.

PETER (CONT'D)
Shit!

Maeve winces. Peter sits on the bed, staring at the zipper. He's waiting for Maeve to speak.

MAEVE
Where will you go?

Peter chuckles - this isn't what he wanted to hear.

PETER
My brother lives in Cincinnati.

With a sigh, he grabs his bag and heads for the door.

MAEVE
The interview...I didn't mean--

PETER
(turning back)
Aren't you sick of the bullshit,
Maeve? All these years I've been
trying to make things right, give
you something back...a goddamn
life! But none of this is you!
All this time, you've been gone!
(tearing up)
You think I don't see the way you
look at those boys, in the store,
(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)
on the street, the ones Adam's
age? That's where you are. And
all I get are your scraps.

MAEVE
Peter...if they find Jay...they
might find Adam--

PETER
Yeah, maybe you'll get lucky.
Maybe one of those kids will be
him, and everything will fall
back into place. But would it
have killed you to give me what
you're saving for him, just once?

Before she can reply, Peter walks out.

EXT. MAEVE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Peter storms out, with the snowglobe he gave Maeve. He
pushes past a shocked Olivia...

OLIVIA
Peter...I didn't mean--

His hardened gaze cuts her off. For once Olivia has no
words. Peter sighs. He throws his bag in the car.

PETER (CONT'D)
This anger in you, this acting
out, it's not because of me. I
know. And it's gonna eat you
alive sooner or later. Trust me.

He throws the snowglobe in after the bag.

PETER (CONT'D)
I did the best I could. You just
deserved better. Liv.

He gets in the car and drives away.

INT. MOBILE TRAILER - OHIO BACKWOODS - DAY

Carmella opens the door...to see Danny.

DANNY
Sorry. I didn't know where else
to go.

INT. MOBILE TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Carmella sits at the tiny table, with cups of coffee.
Danny stands at the window, watching the road.

CARMELLA

You don't wanna lie down?

Danny shakes his head. Carmella begins to notice something different about him...and isn't sure if she likes it. She looks down at the 99-WI tattoo on his wrist.

CARMELLA (CONT'D)

You never told me what it means.

DANNY

Our magic number. Who came before
us, who came after. Where we fit.
(points to 'WI' in tattoo)
They ship us out of state, but
this tells them where we came
from. Sometimes they'll send us
cross country. Used to be easier.
Change our hair, the way we look.
Some kids get teeth pulled. Some
get surgery.

Carmella was not expecting this.

CARMELLA

Kids..?

DANNY

Whatever the buyer wants. Till
they don't want us anymore.

CARMELLA

You mean...a ring?

DANNY

I don't know. Like a net. A giant
net across the whole country.
Running beneath us.

CARMELLA

What do you...do...?

DANNY

Guess I'm a salesman.

Carmella gets up, lights a cigarette, takes a shaky drag.
She glances at the Baby Girl Polaroid on her fridge.

CARMELLA

Do you...hurt them?

Danny shakes his head.

CARMELLA (CONT'D)
 You let other people.

He finally looks at her. She sees the answer in his eyes.
 He looks away.

DANNY
 They don't let you go. Even when
 you get too old. Always another
 level. They just pull you down--

INTERCUT with flashes:

-Teen Boy 111, strapped in the dentist chair, as Lucas
 injects him with liquid in a syringe. Music plays in the
 background - *Adagio For Strings*

-Teen Boy 111 screams as Lucas shocks him with a cattle
 prod

-Teen Boy 111's face sweats beneath fluorescent lights

-A FACE close to Teen Boy 111, whispering

DANNY (V.O.)
 Green, Orange, Red. Levels of
 promotion. Each one worse...each
 one makes you want to die. To
 disappear. When you get to Red,
 you do. You go to sleep, half of
 you. The fight...goes out. And
 something else wakes. It does
 what it's told. Does anything to
 stop the pain. It's like...
 dreaming when you're awake.
 You're one of them. You do what
 they do. You can't help it.

-Teen Boy 111, beneath a harsh light, eyes covered by a
 mask. His mouth is slack, his muscles limp...as *Adagio For
 Strings* continues

DANNY (V.O.)
 And all the time, the music
 plays. Your own special song. And
 if they think you're coming
 back...the music plays again. And
 you're back at the start, slowly
 dying. Wishing you could.

-HANDS remove the mask - it's now Young Danny beneath. He
 stares into the proud eyes of Younger Victor. We are
 seeing Danny's promotion--

CUT BACK

to Danny, now sitting at the table. Carmella watches
 warily from the counter.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 But something went wrong...
 something broke--

INTERCUT with flashes of:

-Danny watching the dancers at Zodiac Casino, as *If You Could Read My Mind* plays...as Ron Burlingham turns to him, meets his gaze...as it all happens at the SAME TIME, a freak coincidence, a perfect storm--

CUT BACK

CARMELLA
 What do you mean?

DANNY
 I remember.

He puts his face in his hands. Carmella's cigarette burns away, but she doesn't notice.

CARMELLA
 Then you can leave. Tell the
 cops--

DANNY
 Who do you think we sell to?
 Businessmen too. Politicians.
 Fathers. I told you, it's
 in everything. Through
 everything.
 (beat)
 I have another job tonight.

CARMELLA
 Don't go--

He gets up suddenly, peers out the window.

DANNY
 He's out there.

CARMELLA
 (peers out window)
 There's no-one there--

DANNY
 He's gonna hurt the kids if I
 don't fill the order--

CARMELLA
 (grabbing his hand)
 Who's 'he'? Danny, listen--

DANNY

The man who pays you, who do you think?! I shouldn't have come--

He pushes past her, for the door, but she pulls him close, trying to calm him as he begins to sob--

CARMELLA

Danny, tell me how I can help--

DANNY

I don't know!

(panting)

I can't get out...I don't know how...Carmella...

She pulls his hands to her breasts, presses their groins together, fills up Danny's senses. She kisses him, drowning his sobs...till he relinquishes--

INT. BEDROOM - MOBILE TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

They make love on the bed, Carmella wrapped tightly around Danny as he thrusts. His panic has given way to something deeper, something desperate to break free...

INT. WARDROBE ROOM - TV STUDIO - NIGHT

Olivia cleans her make-up brushes, as the live camera feed from the news studio plays on a monitor, showing Maeve's pre-cut interview with Sandro.

SANDRO

(on TV)

...your husband, at the time, is on record saying that you damaged the case by refuting evidence that Adam was a runaway.

MAEVE

My husband was a college Professor. He had his reputation.

SANDRO (V.O)

Mrs Mills' former husband, Raymond Mills, memorably opposed his wife's reaction to their son's disappearance...

Olivia freezes as--

The story cuts to archival footage - a DISTINGUISHED MAN, late-40s, manicured beard, in mid-interview on the street. It's the PROFESSOR.

PROFESSOR

We have full confidence that
Sheriff Pillsbury is doing
everything he can...

He nods towards a younger Peter, mid-40s, uniformed.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

But I'm sure this is just a silly
children's game that'll be sorted
out. Adam is a good boy, and
we're a happy family. He'll
quickly realize that he'd rather
be at home with us. Together.

He smiles, but like his speech, it is clinical, cold.

Olivia can't take her eyes off him.

The story cuts back to Maeve's interview--

MAEVE

...these powerful grown men so
terrified of what they'll lose.
To let a little boy just...fade
away...

Sandro enters the room...and sees Olivia, with her hand up
her skirt, masturbating--

SANDRO

(shocked)

Uh...

Olivia snaps back to reality, pulls her hand away. She
rushes out, embarrassed.

INT. ADAM'S ROOM - MAEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We see inside Adam's room for the first time...

An entire wall is covered with NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS of his
disappearance - a schizophrenic collage with no order...
except to Maeve, who kneels before it, flipping through
more old clippings spread out before her.

Her eyes search wildly for something new, some CLUE...
until she freezes at a headline: *Trail Cold in Custer
Girl's Disappearance.*

Below it is a B&W photo of Clay, with his wife SARAH,
holding a school portrait of their missing daughter, Lily.

Maeve smiles.

INT. GRIEF WORKSHOP - FOX POINT TOWN HALL - NIGHT

The group is in mid session - they are smiling, some are laughing. The general mood has flipped 180 degrees.

WOMAN

...and I've put photos of him all
around the house, every room.
Like a goddamn ghost.
(chuckling)
No wonder my friends don't come
to visit anymore.

CLAY

I just keep my Lily's photo in my
wallet. The guys at work think I
got a gambling problem, the
number of times I open that
thing.

MAN

That's nothing. I cut my wife's
face out of our wedding photo and
stuck it on her pillow.

OLIVIA

That's nothing. We put my
brother's face on a candy bar.

The group laughs, surprised at Olivia's participation. So is SHE. Clay gives her an encouraging nod.

Olivia clears her throat.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I didn't know my brother.

She sees the group's shock...and Clay's. She shrugs.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

We never talked. I walked him
home from school every day 'cause
he was scared of his own shadow,
but we never...talked. I was late
for every dance class, but as
long as Adam had his bodyguard...
(sighing)
He and Mom had this...special
thing. Her little dandelion. But
he wouldn't go in that vacant lot
on his own to pick those stupid
things. I had to go in with him.
Every day.

The group listens, a little shocked with her honesty.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I wanted to go to New York. Be a dancer. I saw *Pippin* for my birthday. "I can do that. Easy." My mom wouldn't have even noticed if I left.

WILMA

What about your father?

A smile flickers on Olivia's lips, then fades.

OLIVIA

He just had to be her little dandelion that day, didn't he? He just had to go in there by himself that day--

A door opens - everyone turns to see Maeve entering.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Mom...?

Maeve's wide eyes pass over everyone till she sees Clay.

MAEVE

I saw your picture. You're the one who lost his little girl.

Clay and Olivia share a surprised look.

OLIVIA

Mom. His name's Clay.

MAEVE

Why didn't you tell me he was in the group, Liv?

OLIVIA

It's...private. You know that.

MAEVE

It's my group, Liv!

CLAY

Well, your daughter's doing a pretty good job of it, ma'am.

Maeve doesn't even flinch at Clay's tone.

MAEVE

(to Clay)

Please, there's a boy missing--

CLAY

Your son, I know.

MAEVE

N-no. His name is Jay Doland.
He's been gone for days now, and
no-one knows anything. And--

OLIVIA

Mom--

MAEVE

Maybe there's something you know,
from when your little girl...
Something to connects the dots--

CLAY

Jeez. All the way in Nebraska?
Eight years ago?

MAEVE

Still, there might be a
similarity in the files,
suspects--

CLAY

Nope. No suspects--

MAEVE

Or witness statements, to help
the police--

OLIVIA

Mom, stop--

MAEVE

Please! Just speak to the
Sheriff! Every detail is impor--

OLIVIA

Jay Doland's back, Mom.
(reluctant)
Sandro told me at work. A
runaway, like they said.

The words slowly register to Maeve. She sees everyone
staring at her in shock. She pulls her cardigan around
herself, reaches up to smooth her hair--

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Just go home, OK?

Maeve hesitates, then deflates. She shuffles out.

INT. MOBILE TRAILER - OHIO BACKWOODS - NIGHT

Carmella lies in bed, with Lucas on top of her, thrusting forcefully, angrily, as if he's driven by something dark.

Carmella squeezes her eyes shut and endures...

INT. MOBILE TRAILER - LATER

Lucas puts on his boots, as Carmella watches from the bed. An Ohio news station plays on TV:

NEWSREADER

(on TV)

...authorities across several states can breathe a sigh of relief, with missing Milwaukee boy Jay Doland reunited with his parents...

Carmella looks at Lucas as he watches the broadcast - his face is tight.

NEWSREADER (CONT'D)

...the city no stranger to the trauma of lost children - 12-year-old Adam Mills vanished into thin air 13 years ago...

The TV shows a B&W photo of a boy - the same photo on the Little Globe Chocolates. It's Danny, as a child...but Carmella still recognizes him.

Carmella glances at Lucas - he is watching HER.

LUCAS

Who doesn't love a happy ending?

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - OUTER OHIO - NIGHT

Peter sits alone, staring at his coffee. He listens, distracted, as a Waiter behind him takes an order.

WAITER (O/S)

You want raspberry ice-cream...in the root beer?!

Peter's breath catches.

MAN (O/S)

Please.

The Waiter brushes past Peter. Peter steels himself. Slowly, he turns around...

It's Danny, alone at a table, staring at a piece of paper in his hand. The order.

WAITER (O/S)
(to Peter)
More coffee, sir?

Danny looks over. He meets Peter's gaze. They REMEMBER.

Peter turns back, numb.

WAITER (O/S) (CONT'D)
Sir? Coffee? Yes?

Peter looks up at the Waiter, still shellshocked. He turns around - Danny has gone.

PETER
Shit.

Peter jumps up, but the Waiter grabs him--

WAITER
Hey! You gonna pay or what?

Peter shrugs him off--

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - CONTINUOUS

Peter runs outside - there's no trace of Danny.

PETER
Shit!

INT. PETER'S CAR - NIGHT

Peter speeds down the dark road...till he sees a BLACK VAN ahead.

He accelerates, overtakes the Black Van, then veers across and cuts it off. He brakes, throwing up dust.

Through the rear-vision mirror, he watches the dust clear, revealing the Black Van, waiting.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Peter gets out of his car. The Van's door opens, and Danny steps out.

Peter takes his baseball cap off and crushes it in his shaking hands.

PETER
Root beet and raspberry
ice-cream. That was your
favorite, wasn't it?

Danny shakes his head firmly, trying not to look back at the Van.

DANNY
I don't know you.

PETER
Sure you do. 'Deputy Dawg'. What
you kids used to call me.

Peter steps closer. Danny shakes his head again, but it's weaker, fainter. Peter steps closer.

PETER (CONT'D)
Just on my way to Cincinnati.
Long way from Fox Point, huh?
(beat)
For both of us.

Danny can't speak. Peter doesn't know what else to say. They stare at each other, till Peter can't take it.

PETER (CONT'D)
You know me.

He reaches for Danny, as if he might disappear any second. Danny lets himself be pulled into Peter's arms. Peter begins to cry.

PETER (CONT'D)
Where've you been, Adam?

DANNY
(faint)
I have a curfew.

PETER
(laughs, confused)
You're all grown up now, son.

Peter's laugh echoes across the darkness. He clutches Danny tighter. Danny wants it to last forever, but he grits his teeth, tries to pull away--

DANNY
You have to go. Please--

PETER
I'm not letting you outta my
sight. Your mom's waiting--

A car door slams, cuts him off. Over Danny's shoulder, Peter sees Lucas, with a GUN by his side.

PETER (CONT'D)
Who's that?

Danny steps back obediently. Peter sees tears in his eyes.

Peter's instincts kick in, and he reaches for the gun in his boot--

But Lucas is quicker. He shoots Peter in the head.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Maeve stands opposite the Doland house. A police car is parked in the driveway.

The front door opens, an OFFICER exits. Inside, we see Ruth, her HUSBAND...and JAY DOLAND.

Maeve watches Ruth hug Jay, as the door closes on them.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Danny rolls Peter's body down an embankment off the highway, as Lucas watches.

LUCAS
How'd you recognize him?

DANNY
He recognized me.

Lucas' eyes narrow. He looks away.

LUCAS
Well, we missed the order. What are we gonna tell Victor?

DANNY
Say they didn't show. That's all.

LUCAS
He'll find out.
(beat)
Aren't you worried?

DANNY
Course I am.

Danny gives a brave grin. Lucas' face is unreadable. Then he gives a nod, and gets in the van. Danny's grin fades.

INT. KITCHEN - MAEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Olivia chops vegetables. She's distracted, unfocused.

The front door opens. Olivia turns back to the counter, as Maeve walks in, smiling.

MAEVE
Oh, Liv. You're a good girl.

OLIVIA
I told you to come home.

MAEVE

We needed some things.

Olivia stares at Maeve's empty hands. Maeve goes to the fridge, takes out a beer. Olivia watches her take a gulp.

OLIVIA

Peter's hobby rub off on you?

Maeve picks up a tomato, inspects it, puts it down. She takes another gulp of beer.

MAEVE

Peter's gone.

OLIVIA

(sighing)

Well, well, well. Another one
bites the dust, huh, Mom--

Maeve whirls around and SLAPS Olivia, hard enough to knock her back against the counter. They stare at each other, shocked, stunned. AWAKE.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I've been waiting for that.

Then, as if a switch is flipped, Maeve picks up the knife and begins chopping.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Don't. I'm so sick of you
disappearing like that.

Maeve ignores her. Olivia pushes the vegetables aside--

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I'm so sick of being trapped in
this...this fucking tomb! I can't
live like this!

MAEVE

(soft)

Do you think I'm going to take
that pain away, Liv, just because
I'm your mother?

Maeve turns to her, her gaze clear as crystal.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

You can try to humiliate me. You
can call Peter a failure. It's
easier to blame someone else. But
I want you to feel this for a
long time. Because you left him.

Olivia's face falls.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
Where did you go, that day?

Olivia's lips tremble...

MAEVE (CONT'D)
(screams)
Where did you GO?!

Olivia reels back, like a scared child. Maeve's anger holds...then suddenly deflates. She wanders into the...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...and stops at the window.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
I'm tired too, Liv.

Olivia approaches her cautiously.

OLIVIA
So stop the pretending. Stop with the group--

MAEVE
(laughing)
And be some grieving old lady selling groceries?
(soft)
None of you know, do you? When you brush it aside, when the neighbors make sad faces, when no-one calls on his birthday - that's my fuel. Because I'll find him one day. Can you imagine the look on their faces? I'll play this as long as I have to. It's my heartbeat.

She stares at the vacant lot across the street, with the dandelions swaying.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
Every breath I take, I keep a bit inside. Everything, I hold back. So I have something left, when he comes home.
(shrugging)
I'm old, Liv.

OLIVIA
I'm still here.

MAEVE
It's not the same. You and your dad...you never...felt things the way we do.

Olivia grits her teeth. Maeve turns to her.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
If Adam comes back, so will your
dad. Don't you want that? You
play his records all the time--

OLIVIA
I hate him, Mom.

Maeve sees PAIN in Olivia's eyes. In this moment, she realizes that she doesn't know her daughter.

She turns back to the window, ashamed.

MAEVE
I can't help it, Liv.

Olivia goes upstairs.

Maeve reaches out to turn the porch light on...but her hand wavers. For the first time, she's unsure.

INT. OLIVIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Olivia throws clothes into an open suitcase on her bed.

She flips through her crate of vinyl records, throwing random ones into the suitcase. She stops...and hesitantly pulls out a RECORD. She runs her fingers softly over the cover - *Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep* by Middle of the Road.

She puts the record on the player, drops the needle. She looks out the window as the song begins:

SONG
(over record player)
"Last night I heard my Mama
singing a song

"Whoa, chirpy-chirpy, cheep-cheep

"Woke up this morning and my Mama
was gone

"Whoa, chirpy-chirpy,
cheep-cheep..."

Olivia looks out over the vacant lot. In the darkness, the trees look like SILHOUETTES of people staring back at her.

FADE TO DREAM SEQUENCE:

INT. VACANT LOT - DAY

Danny stands at the edge of the lot. The afternoon sun shimmers over the swaying dandelions.

SONG (CONT'D)
(over record player)
"Where's your Mama gone, little
baby bird?

"Where's your Papa gone, little
baby bird?

"Where's your Mama gone?

"Far, far away

Amongst the trees and tall grass, Danny sees CHILDREN.
Hiding. Waiting.

SONG (CONT'D)
(over record player)
"Far, far away-ay-ay-ay-ay"--

CUT TO PRESENT:

INT. OLIVIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Olivia snaps the needle off the record. She opens the window and hurls the record into the night--

INT. DANNY & LUCAS' ROOM - OLD HOUSE - DAY

Danny suddenly wakes in his bed. He squints at a silhouette in the corner - it's Lucas.

LUCAS
Victor wants you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - OLD HOUSE - DAY

Danny enters. Like the kitchen, it's cozy, homely - knick-knacks, photos of smiling people on the wall. The kind of trinkets a REAL family would own. A Hallmark-card facade.

A record player sits on a shelf, with an album resting against it: *Swan Lake*.

Victor sits in a recliner, facing away, watching the TV. Onscreen, a REPORTER stands by a road, in mid-sentence:

REPORTER
(on TV)
...the body of Roy Burlingham was
found here some hours after
leaving the charity gala...along
(MORE)

REPORTER (CONT'D)
with the toy tycoon's driver,
found dead in the vehicle, with
his genitals removed...

VICTOR
Monsters. World's full of them.
Eh, Danny Boy?

Victor spins around in his recliner to face Danny. There is a sudden sense that they're now equals - and this surprises Victor.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Another order, just came in.
Lucas knows the way.

Lucas, in the doorway, keeps his head down. Victor and Danny hold their gaze.

DANNY
Fine.

Victor's surprise turns to sadness. He spins back to the TV. His eyes glisten with tears.

Danny picks up his backpack and heads for the door.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Danny drives, with Lucas in the passenger seat.

DANNY
Where's the job?

LUCAS
Keep driving. I'll tell you when
we're close.

Trees pass, throwing shadows through the van. Danny sees Lucas' GUN tucked by his leg. Lucas' hand is on the hilt.

DANNY
You're from Colorado, aren't you?
(Lucas is silent)
I remember. I'm from Milwaukee.
Did I ever tell you? Fox Point.

He laughs suddenly as he remembers...

DANNY (CONT'D)
Nice place. Safe. But I still
made my sister walk me home. She
couldn't wait to get out of
there. I never understood why.
(beat)
I think she hated me.

His smile fades.

DANNY (CONT'D)

That day Victor took me...I knew it. Something was waiting in that lot. But I wanted to punish Liv for wanting to leave. I wanted to prove I didn't need her. So I went in by myself.

LUCAS

Bet you got what you wanted.

Danny looks at Lucas' shadowed face.

DANNY

You're my best friend, you know. That's why he gave us the same song.

(beat)

You're my best friend, and I don't even know your name.

LUCAS

I didn't tell him about you, Danny. I didn't need to--

DANNY

That's not my name. And you're not Lucas.

LUCAS

You're so stupid. You think he doesn't know you? You think he can't read your fucking thoughts?

DANNY

Not if you wake up. Just wake up. Don't you want to go home?

Lucas looks out the window, into the darkness.

LUCAS

Carmella knows about you. I'll have to kill her. He'll make me.

Danny fights to stay calm--

DANNY

Remember the boy who was crying? Remember him?

FLASHBACK:

Young Danny in bed, pinned beneath Roy Burlingham, looks across at the BOY in the next bed, beneath another MAN.

The Boy looks over, eyes glistening. It's Young Lucas.

In the background, Skinny Boy cries.

Young Danny and Young Lucas hold their gaze, like a lifeline between them...and behind them, Roy Burlingham takes his gun and shoots Skinny Boy--

PRESENT

Lucas shuts his eyes, as if trying to contain something...

DANNY (CONT'D)
Tell me your name.

LUCAS
How can I go back...with the things I've done...?

DANNY
We'll go together.

LUCAS
You're already gone, Danny Boy.
You were never really here.

FLASHBACK:

The GUNSHOT echoes, and Skinny Boy's cries are silenced. Young Danny shuts his eyes...but Young Lucas doesn't - his eyes turn blank and empty, as if he's switched himself off from the pain, the humiliation. He turns away.

PRESENT

Lucas opens his eyes - they're blank. He reaches for the gun--

LUCAS
Pull over.

DANNY
Lucas--

LUCAS
Pull over!

Lucas yanks the wheel from Danny. Danny pulls back--

The van veers off and SLAMS into a tree--

Danny and Lucas FLY FORWARDS--

INT. MOBILE TRAILER - OHIO BACKWOODS - NIGHT

Carmella lies in bed, wide awake. A soft CLINK! from outside startles her.

EXT. MOBILE TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Clutching a flashlight, Carmella approaches her worn Chevy behind the trailer - a MAN is unhooking it.

CARMELLA

Hey!

The Man freezes in the flashlight beam - it's Danny.

CARMELLA (CONT'D)

What are you doing?!

DANNY

I need a car. Sorry.

Carmella sees Lucas' gun at Danny's feet. She keeps the flashlight beam on him. She notices a CUT on his forehead.

CARMELLA

You OK?

DANNY

I want to go home.

He clutches his backpack like a child waiting for permission.

CARMELLA

(softening)

Your mother must miss you.

Danny nods. Carmella lowers the flashlight.

CARMELLA (CONT'D)

OK. Let's go. Just don't get blood on my seats.

INT. CARMELLA'S CHEVY - NIGHT

Carmella drives. Danny stares out the window, hugging his backpack in his arms.

CARMELLA

I know who you are. You're famous. Kinda.

DANNY

I'm dead. For a while. That's all I need, a little while.

CARMELLA
What about Lucas?

CUT TO:

Lucas, his body shattering the windscreen of the van--

CUT BACK:

Danny shrugs. He switches on the radio. Country music plays softly.

CARMELLA
The other day...I know you didn't want that. What we did.
(shrugging)
Guess I don't have much imagination. Sorry.

DANNY
I'm sorry you're part of this.
You don't deserve any of it.

Carmella looks up at the BABY POLAROID from her fridge, now tucked in the sun vizor.

CARMELLA
Neither do you.

Danny turns away, to the window. He sighs, exhausted.

DANNY
I'm so sick of the night.

Carmella doesn't know what to say. Danny closes his eyes.

The dawn sun peeks over the horizon, like molten gold.

CARMELLA
(smiling)
Wow. Look at that.

Danny is asleep. Carmella's smile fades.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

In the silent room, Olivia stares at the CORPSE of an Elderly Man on a gurney. It's as if she's seeing something else, beneath the pale skin.

She snaps from her trance, begins sponging foundation onto the skin - gently, as if tending to a loved one.

The Corpse's HAND drops from the table.

Olivia dusts powder over the foundation.

The Corpse's hand touches her leg. She flinches.

The Corpse's hand slowly rises up her leg.

Olivia's breath quickens. The brush shakes in her hand.

The Corpse's hand moves over her crotch.

She tries to apply rouge to the Corpse's cheeks...as the Corpse's hand moves under her shirt.

She grits her teeth, stifles a whimper. She fumbles in her make-up kit...but the Corpse's hand moves to her breasts, freezing her in fear, making her gasp--

OLIVIA

Do you love me, Dad?

The stairwell light switches on - Albert pokes his head into the room.

ALBERT

Liv? Who you talking to?

Olivia looks down - the Corpse's hand is still. It NEVER MOVED.

OLIVIA

(shakily)

Today's turd. Who else?

ALBERT

Right. Didn't hear any music, so...just checking you're OK.

OLIVIA

I'm OK.

He starts back upstairs--

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Thanks, Al.

Albert half-stops, shrugs, then continues up.

Olivia stares at the Corpse...then SLAPS her make-up kit onto the floor. It spills everywhere.

INT. GOSCH & SONS MARKET - DAY

Maeve works at the checkout. She is wearing no make-up.

PATTY (O/S)

Look, Tiffany, it's Mrs Mills.

It's PATTY, her neighbor, 50s, and daughter TIFFANY, 12. They pile all sorts of candy on the counter.

PATTY (CONT'D)
Just a little treat for Tiffany -
she made Color Guard. Didn't you?

Tiffany chews bubblegum disinterestedly. Maeve begins scanning Patty's items.

PATTY (CONT'D)
And she gets to perform at the
Fall Festival. Won't you, Tiff?

Tiffany pops a bubble. Maeve gives a weak smile.

MAEVE
I used to love the Color Guard.

Patty notices Maeve's muted behavior.

PATTY
Getting chilly, isn't it, Maeve?
(as Maeve smiles faintly)
It was around this time, wasn't
it? Fall? When...?

MAEVE
Was it?

PATTY
I remember how cold it suddenly
got, when we were searching the
fields. You know, that fall
chill, like a slap in the face.

Maeve nods, peers at a barcode.

PATTY (CONT'D)
I've always wanted to say,
Maeve...how I admire you. To be
so brave. You're made of stronger
stuff than the rest of us--

MAEVE
Don't be modest, Patty. I heard
your lovely little dog ran away
last week. And look at you, out
and about. You're practically
Helen Reddy.

PATTY
Well...yes, it was a shock--

MAEVE
Then you should join a support
group. It's bad to keep those
feelings inside, you know. You'll
never get on with life.

PATTY

Oh. I don't mean... I really
don't think it's the same as--

MAEVE

It isn't? That's \$4.28.

Patty fumbles in her purse, grateful to stop talking. She
sees a box of Little Globe candy bars on the counter.

PATTY

And one of your special candy
bars, please. Tiff loves those.

MAEVE

Don't you think you have enough?
Your Tiffany will be dead from
diabetes at 25.

She turns to Tiffany with a cold gaze.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Would you like that, Tiffany?
Your life over before it's begun?
Your mother being brave for the
rest of her life?

Tiffany stops chewing. Patty pushes a \$5 note at Maeve.

PATTY

Here. Keep the change.

Patty pulls Tiffany to the exit.

MAEVE

(calling out)

Don't worry, your little dog will
turn up. I can feel it.

EXT. CLAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clay opens the door to see Olivia - it shocks him.

OLIVIA

Hey, neighbor. Feel like a drink?

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Maeve walks alongside the road, heading home.

EXT. MAEVE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The sun sets as Carmella's Chevy pulls up.

INT. CARMELLA'S CHEVY - CONTINUOUS

Carmella looks at Danny - his head is down, hands shaking. She gently puts her hand on top of his.

CARMELLA

So.

Danny looks out the window...and sees the vacant lot, still there. He turns the other way...and sees his house. The porch light is on.

EXT. PORCH - MAEVE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Danny stands under the porch light, smiling in its glow. Carmella stands on the steps, arms folded, nervous.

Danny knocks. No answer. He knocks again. No answer.

CARMELLA

Maybe they moved?

Danny grasps the doorknob, turns it...and the door opens.

INT. MAEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Danny stares at Maeve's snowglobes on the mantelpiece. He runs a finger across one, wiping away dust.

Carmella watches from across the room.

CARMELLA

Guess we wait...?

Danny wanders around the room, as if he's in a museum.

Carmella sees a framed photo of Maeve and Olivia, both smiling. Hidden in shadow behind is another framed photo - it's Young Danny.

She turns...to see Danny slowly climbing the stairs.

CARMELLA (CONT'D)

Danny...?

He doesn't hear her. At the top, he disappears from view.

INT. ADAM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Danny, in the darkness, switches on the light, illuminating typical teen boy things - posters, trophies, puzzle boxes, action figures...

...but he stares at the wall of newspaper clippings. Younger versions of himself smile back in black-and-white. He sees boxes of Little Globe candy stacked alongside. It's the last thing he expected.

He turns...to the pile of WRAPPED PRESENTS in the corner of the room. He picks one up. The tag reads: *On your 21st, beautiful boy. Forever, Mom.*

SOMEONE moves behind him--

FLASHBACK:

Young Danny, walking through the vacant lot, senses SOMEONE behind him--

PRESENT:

A HAND touches his shoulder.

DANNY

Mom...?

MAEVE (O/S)

Here you are.

Danny can't move, but Maeve's hands turn him around. No shock or tears on her face - just a smile.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

See? I knew.

It's like a dream. He reaches out...grabs her...falls into her arms...and cries. She chuckles, brushing his hair with her fingers, rocking him back and forth.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

(singing)

"Last night I heard my Mama
singing a song

"Whoa, chirpy-chirpy, cheep-cheep

"Woke up this morning and my Mama
was gone..."

DANNY

(laughing/crying)

"Chirpy-chirpy...cheep-cheep..."

MAEVE

You remember, don't you?

Danny nods.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

I've been waiting for you, baby.
Your whole life...it's waiting.

Danny stares at the clippings, the presents...

DANNY
There's so much.

MAEVE
So we'll start at the beginning.

Maeve leads him to the bed. She lies down, and Danny curls up like a baby in her arms, just as he did with Carmella.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Carmella listens, clutching her chest.

INT. TOMLIN'S BAR - NIGHT

Olivia drops some coins into the jukebox. She pushes the buttons for her selection, closes her eyes...

The song begins - a spirited disco tune. She smiles, starts moving to the beat, leaning against the jukebox.

Clay watches from the bar, looks awkwardly at the BARTENDER. Olivia crosses the empty dance floor and jumps onto a bar stool next to Clay. She immediately finishes her Stinger.

CLAY
What time does this place open?

OLIVIA
Ha.

CLAY
Just thought you were more of a heavy-metal bar. Something angry.

OLIVIA
Pfft! Tonight I'm a goddamn cheerleader!

She tries to spin around on her bar stool...then realizes it's bolted down.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Admit it. You're just upset 'cause it's not Big Burger Barn.

CLAY
It's nice. Like rewinding time.

Olivia motions to the Bartender for another Stinger.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Liv...you OK?

OLIVIA
You're wrong. I'm not angry.

Clay nods. A beat. He fumbles in his pocket, pulls out a GOLD CHAIN BRACELET. He slides it across to Olivia.

CLAY
You said you're a dancer, didn't you?

Olivia picks it up - a BALLERINA CHARM glints under the bar's green lamplight.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Lily did dance lessons too.
So...made me think of you.

OLIVIA
Oh. Clay, I...

CLAY
Take it. You have to.
(a beat)
I'm not going back to the group.

OLIVIA
(beat)
Whats-a-matter, too many feelings?

CLAY
Liv...I...can't.

She looks at the ballerina charm.

OLIVIA
(half-laughs)
But you already gave up Big Burger Barn.

She sees his guilt in the slump of his shoulders, in his grip on his glass - it's never letting him go.

OLIVIA
I stopped dancing. The day after.

She shrugs, takes a gulp of her refilled Stinger.

CLAY
Hey, take it easy--

OLIVIA
Who are you, my dad? Want me to sit on your lap? I'm good at that.

Clay is startled. Olivia grins dismissively.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Sorry. I'm fucked up.

CLAY
Liv--

OLIVIA
I am. I'm sick. I'm sick.

She listens as the disco song climaxes in the background.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
But it's not my fault. We're
programmed, you know. The way we
feel. The things we do.

(beat)
The people we love... It's not
our fault. I just found that out
recently. And all this time I
thought I could run away from it.

CLAY
From what?

OLIVIA
I was going to New York, the day
Adam walked home alone. I was the
one leaving.

She hesitates, trying to find the words...

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Something was wrong. I felt it.
So I watched the bus drive off,
and I went home. Adam didn't.
(laughing)
And I'm still home. Everyone else
has gone...and I'm stuck.

She takes a long gulp of her Stinger.

CLAY
Your folks would've lost both
their kids on the same day.

OLIVIA
My mom thinks he'll come back.

CLAY
Then you'll get to rewind time
after all.

Olivia nods...but there is dread on her face.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Liv...what were you running from?

Olivia turns to him, her eyes dark.

OLIVIA
Music's stopped.

She goes to stand--

CLAY
My turn.

He heads to the jukebox. Olivia watches him - from the back, he looks like SOMEONE ELSE.

If You Could Read My Mind begins playing from the jukebox. It's not the same version Danny heard in the Zodiac Casino - this is the original: - simpler, slower, dream-like.

OLIVIA
I danced to this. Junior talent show.
(soft)
Adam watched me.

CLAY
Then you lead.

Clay stands there, hand out. Under the lights, he's a silhouette - he could be ANYONE. She takes his hand. They step onto the dance floor. Olivia feels Clay's hand around her waist. She faces him, takes a step, and he follows.

As green lamplight flickers over them, they dance to the dreamy music.

OLIVIA
I saw you here before. Before you started coming to group.

CLAY
I saw you too. For a second...you looked familiar.

OLIVIA
You too.

He hesitates, then gently runs his fingers down her hair.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
I'm leaving. Tonight.

CLAY
(taken aback)
New York?

OLIVIA
It doesn't matter. I just...

She laughs, but it's nervous, scared.

CLAY
If you need something
temporary...till you sort things
out... My wife won't mind. She...

He shrugs. Olivia rests her head on his shoulder. Clay closes his eyes. They dance on, intertwined like puzzle pieces that fit to make a tiny perfect moment.

OLIVIA
It wasn't your fault, you know.

CLAY
It wasn't yours.

She looks up...but it's NOT Clay. It's the Professor, with tears in his eyes.

Olivia leans in and KISSES the Professor deeply. It's rough, angry, passionate--

The Professor tears his lips away...but it's now Clay.

CLAY
Liv, don't...!

Olivia stares as if she doesn't know who he is.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Liv. You're like...a daughter to me.

Olivia drops her hands.

OLIVIA
I feel sick.

EXT. TOMLIN'S BAR - NIGHT

Olivia vomits in the gutter.

Clay watches from the bar door, disturbed.

INT. ADAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Maeve and Danny lie on his bed, her fingers stroking his long dark hair.

MAEVE
You look so different. This hair...

DANNY
Where's Dad? And Liv?

MAEVE
They're still here. They've been
waiting too.

DANNY
It wasn't Liv's fault.

MAEVE
Of course it wasn't.
(beat)
Where have you been, baby?

A beat.

DANNY
That's a long story.
(hesitant)
Lots of places. Ohio, now.

Maeve tries to smile.

MAEVE
Not far. Not at all.
(touches cut on his head)
They hurt you.

DANNY
I've done bad things, Mom.

MAEVE
Shh. It's OK now.

Danny wants to say more, and Maeve senses it--

MAEVE (CONT'D)
You have the best heart of all of
us, you know. That never goes
away. Whatever you did...it
brought you back to me.

Danny nods, wanting to believe. He shuts his eyes.

DANNY
Will you take care of me?

MAEVE
(smiles, kisses his hair)
Till you're all grown up.

INT. OLIVIA'S CAR - NIGHT

Olivia stares out the window at a modest brick building:

Fox Point Academy of Dance

INT. FOYER, FOX POINT ACADEMY OF DANCE - NIGHT

Crammed with framed photos of posing dance students.

Olivia stares through glass doors into the empty dance studio, as CYNTHIA, the owner, appears with a set of keys.

CYNTHIA

Lucky you caught me, Liv. Not
that I mind - I wish all my old
students came back for a visit!

Olivia smiles politely, as Cynthia searches for the key to unlock the studio doors.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

How's your mother? It's been...
well...a long time. Hasn't it?

OLIVIA

She's better.

CYNTHIA

(finds the right key)
Ah, there you are!

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Olivia's footsteps echo in the empty studio. Cynthia waits at the door, watching her.

CYNTHIA

Are you alright, Liv?

Olivia nods. She stares at her multiple reflections in the mirror-lined walls.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

I've always wondered...how you
could just...let it go. Just
stop. I could never have done
that.

Olivia shrugs. Cynthia, expecting more, purses her lips.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Well, then. Ten minutes, OK?

She walks out, a little dissatisfied.

Olivia goes to the stereo on a far table. She presses
'play'. Stirring classical music begins - *Swan Lake*.

She pulls her hair back into a bun...closes her eyes...

FADE TO:

EXT. VACANT LOT - DAY

In the middle of the dandelions, Young Danny spins in a circle. The world blurs around him.

He sees something in the blur - a MAN cross-legged on the ground, with a YOUNG GIRL in his lap. She is crying.

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Olivia opens her eyes...and begins to dance. The world disappears, like old skin being shed, and her training, her innate grace, awakens...

She kicks head-high, leaps, each extension flinging away guilt, pain...replaced by the thrill of what she used to do, what she can STILL do. She is free, untouchable...

...as she begins a series of 'chaine' turns, like a spinning top across the floor, faster and faster, as if she could take flight and disappear...

INT. VACANT LOT - CONTINUOUS

Danny tries to stop spinning, but he can't--

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Olivia lifts a leg, arches back, into a movement her body remembers...but she's older, slower, spinning too fast--

INT. VACANT LOT - CONTINUOUS

Danny falls down. He sees the Man clearly now - it's the Professor...and his hand is under the Young Girl's skirt...

PROFESSOR

You don't feel it, do you? No.
This is nothing for my Olivia.
Nothing for my brave girl...

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Olivia is suddenly off balance, her body forgetting how to compensate, and she falls--

INT. ADAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Danny gasps awake from the dream. Through the window, he sees the pitch-black of night.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Carmella, asleep on the couch, is woken by Danny.

DANNY

Time's up. We need to go.

Carmella sits up, disoriented. Danny heads for the door--

MAEVE

Adam...?

The stairwell light switches on. Maeve stands at the top. Danny doesn't look at her.

DANNY

Sorry, Mom. I'm late.

(to Carmella)

Let's go--

MAEVE

Adam!

Danny flinches. Maeve descends the stairs slowly.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

No.

DANNY

Mom--

MAEVE

You're not leaving.

DANNY

I have to. They're waiting back home--

MAEVE

(grabbing at him)

This is your home! I'm your mother--

Danny turns to her, holds her by the arms.

DANNY

Listen. I'm not the only one--

MAEVE

I don't care about the others!

DANNY

They're kids, Mom! They're me!

Maeve doesn't hear - she's blinded by fear, confusion. She clutches at him, but he pulls away.

DANNY (CONT'D)
I said I'd save them.

He pushes Carmella towards the door.

MAEVE
You'll kill me if you go, Adam.

DANNY
I can come back.

He knows this is a lie. So does she. She walks off into the kitchen.

CARMELLA
Danny...don't...

Danny looks at Carmella - her eyes are full of tears.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Danny enters...sees Maeve leaning against the counter...

DANNY
Mom...?

He turns her around...and sees a KNIFE in her hand. Her left wrist is slashed, blood trickling to the floor...

MAEVE
I would've kept you safe, baby...

DANNY
Mom...no--

She drags the knife across her right wrist--

DANNY (CONT'D)
God...

Maeve drops the knife, falls to her knees...and SCREAMS. It's a gruesome, guttural sound, her soul cracked open, spilling out everything she has been saving. Pain, anger, betrayal. Years of it.

It hits Danny like a sledgehammer. He watches Maeve's blood pool on the floor--

Carmella pushes past, grabs teatowels from the counter and attempts to wrap them around Maeve's flailing wrists.

CARMELLA
(to Danny)
What are you doing?!

Danny drops to his knees - he can't look at Maeve.

CARMELLA (CONT'D)

Danny! Help!

MAEVE

'Danny'.

She chuckles - it's a sound of defeat, of surrender.

DANNY

'Adam'.

Danny reaches out, takes Maeve's hands, holds them.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I'm Adam, Mom. Please.

Maeve stops flailing, her sobs softening. Carmella ties the teatowels around Maeve's wrists.

CARMELLA

Tell me you remember how to get
to a hospital?!

EXT. ACADEMY OF DANCE - NIGHT

Olivia rushes out of the Academy, clutching her injured wrist. Cynthia watches from the window, bewildered.

INT. OLIVIA'S CAR - NIGHT

Olivia speeds down a road towards home.

A Chevy passes in the opposite direction. Olivia catches a glimpse of Danny's face...but it's gone too fast.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Maeve stares up at fluorescent lights as Danny carries her through a hospital hallway. People rush around her, and suddenly she is on a gurney, and Danny is gone.

As she is wheeled away, Maeve looks back - Danny is just a blurry silhouette in the hallway, floating away from her.

She senses someone next to her.

MAEVE

Liv...?

CARMELLA

It's me. I'm here.

Maeve closes her eyes.

INT. MAEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Olivia enters, holding her wrist.

OLIVIA

Mom?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Olivia pulls a packet of frozen peas from the freezer and presses it to her wrist...then notices the pool of blood at her feet.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Olivia picks up the phone. She hesitates, then dials.

OLIVIA

(into phone)

Uh...it's Liv. Olivia. Uh, Mom's not here...and there's a big mess of blood...and Peter's gone and and I don't know how to reach him and...

(reluctant)

And I'm scared. I need help. Please.

She hangs up. She crouches down, and waits.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Danny drives Carmella's Chevy down the empty highway.

INT. CARMELLA'S CHEVY - CONTINUOUS

Danny's eyes are distant, haunted.

FLASHBACK:

INT. CARMELLA'S CHEVY - NIGHT

Carmella speeds down the road.

In the back, Danny holds Maeve in his arms. The teatowels around her wrists are soaked in her blood.

CARMELLA

Which way?

DANNY

Left, straight, second right.

Maeve stares out the window, eyes hollow.

DANNY

Mom...?

She doesn't answer.

DANNY (CONT'D)

(sings softly)

"Last night I heard my Mama
singing a song

"Whoa, chirpy-chirpy,
cheep-cheep..."

Maeve doesn't speak. Her breath comes shallow.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Stay awake, Mom. That's why I
came back...

MAEVE

My brave boy, all grown up. I
already knew.

Danny presses his face into her hair.

DANNY

Mom...I'm scared...

MAEVE

Oh...my dandelion.
Just...pretend. It's easy...

Olivia's car drives past. Danny looks up, sees Olivia. He
RECOGNIZES her.

PRESENT, CARMELLA'S CHEVY:

Danny's gaze softens at the memory. Behind, the dawn sun
rises, spilling over his shoulders, bathing him in light.

INT. MAEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Olivia sleeps crouched in the hallway.

She jolts awake, and looks for the pool of blood on the
floor. It's still there. Not a dream.

She gasps in pain - her wrist is swollen and purple.

SOMETHING catches her eye across the room...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She takes one of the SNOWGLOBES off the mantelpiece - she's never seen it before. She shakes it... and the tiny dandelion seeds swirl around the boy in the field. It's Danny's snowglobe.

Olivia's breath catches--

The phone rings. She jolts, runs over to it.

OLIVIA
(into phone)
Yes? Oh. This is Liv.
(beat)
Is she OK?
(beat)
I'm coming.

She holds the receiver, frozen to the spot. Then she raises the receiver...and SMASHES it against the phone base, again and again, until it breaks off the wall.

INT. OLIVIA'S CAR - DAY

Olivia speeds down the highway, CRYING UNCONTROLLABLY.

She passes a SIGN for a wealthy gated estate.

A beat of indecision...her face hardens in resolve...

She veers off into the estate entrance.

EXT. WEALTHY ESTATE - DAY

A large, modern house, all fancy brick and glass - the complete opposite to Maeve's home.

The door opens and out shuffles an OLDER MAN in pajamas, 60s, with a grey beard and rumpled hair. The PROFESSOR.

He bends down to pick up a newspaper. He senses something, his eyes move across the lawn...to Olivia.

PROFESSOR
Olivia...?

OLIVIA
Mom's in the hospital.

PROFESSOR
Oh. I... What happened? Is she--

OLIVIA
I left you a message. Last night.

Professor stares at her, his lips trying to form words.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
She's OK. She just hurt her
wrist. I'm going there now. I
just wanted to...

Her words leave her. Professor wrings his hands.

PROFESSOR
Dear. Well...she's resilient,
your mother. Strong. I'm sure
she'll be fine.
(trying to smile)
It's nice to see you, even under
the circumstance. I'd hoped you'd
come by. I have all these empty
rooms, and no visitors. Only me.
(beat)
Would you like to come in? Talk?

Olivia sees fear in his eyes. He's afraid of her.

OLIVIA
(turning away)
I just came to tell you about
Mom--

PROFESSOR
Olivia...

She turns back. Professor clears his throat.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
I've been wanting to say...when
you were younger...
(beat)
I never meant to hurt you. What I
did...with you...to you... I
didn't mean to...

He steps forward nervously.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
I just need to know that you're
OK. You are, aren't you?
(beat)
You're resilient too. You take
after your mother, you know.

OLIVIA
I'm OK.

PROFESSOR
I do love you, Olivia.

She sees desperation in his face, in his wringing hands.

OLIVIA
I love you too. Still.

Professor sighs in relief--

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
But so what?

His face falls. We see him as Olivia sees him now - just a lonely old man in pajamas.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
No-one's ever gonna visit you.

She gives him a pitying smile - as if it's the last thing they'll ever share - then turns and walks to her car.

INT. CARMELLA'S CHEVY - OLD HOUSE, OHIO - DAY

Danny stares at the Old House, as the woods behind it light up with the morning sun.

He sees Carmella's Baby Polaroid, tucked in the sun vizor. He puts it into his pocket. Then he reaches down and takes Lucas' gun.

INT. OLD HOUSE - DAY

Danny steps through the living room, floorboards creaking in the silence. He glances at the recliner - it's empty.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He steps in - empty. He turns to the pantry...and sees the fake wall has been pushed open.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Danny steps onto the porch...to see the Children sitting in a line across the grass - they've been there for hours.

Danny steps off the porch towards them...then stops, sensing something.

VICTOR (O/S)
Tick-tock, Danny Boy.

Behind him, Victor steps from the shadows of the porch. He holds a RIFLE in his hands, pointed at Danny.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Trouble with the van?

Danny keeps his eyes on the line of Children. Among them is Boy 130 (New Boy), clutching Teddybear Magician.

DANNY

Where's Corey? And Kara?

Boy 119 begins to cry. Danny sees two Children at the end - Boy 127 and Teen Girl 114. They are lying back on the grass, clutching each other...but they AREN'T MOVING.

VICTOR

Tick-tock. Rules.

Danny's shaking hand closes tight around his gun--

VICTOR (CONT'D)

(cocking his gun)

Don't.

Danny looks at the Children, watching. He drops Lucas' gun onto the grass. Victor steps down the porch.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Come.

Danny glances at Boy 119 - a moment passes between them.

Danny walks obediently to Victor, eyes down. Victor lowers the rifle.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

We can't stay here anymore.

You've left a trail of
breadcrumbs right back to it.

What are we gonna do?

Danny says nothing.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

They'll send cleaners.

They both know what this means.

DANNY

Tell them I broke. They can fix
me. They can do whatever they
want. It doesn't matter.

VICTOR

It matters, Danny Boy.

(with a faint smile)

I knew I'd never keep you. There
was something in you that we
could never stamp out. Not like
Lucas, any of the others. And I
was so scared it would make you
leave me.

DANNY
I tried to.

VICTOR
But here you are.

Danny shrugs.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Look at me, Danny. Can't you?

Danny does...and sees TEARS in Victor's eyes.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Do you love me? Even after all
this...what I am...?

DANNY
(surprised)
Tell me what you are.

Victor flinches, as if he's never been asked this. For the first time, Danny sees Victor's shame. And behind it, PAIN. LONGING. We can see who Victor was BEFORE.

VICTOR
You know.

Danny looks down to Victor's wrist, at the faded tattoo:
71-CA.

DANNY
We're all monsters.

VICTOR
Not you. You came back. That's
what I saw in you. That heart.

DANNY
I do bad things. We can't do
those things and not pay.

Victor's hope flickers. His hand tenses around his rifle--

DANNY (CONT'D)
But I love you. I always have. I
can't help it.

Victor sighs happily. He opens his arms, and Danny steps into them.

VICTOR
My little mouse. Don't you know
you've always been my favorite?

Danny rests his head on Victor's chest, like a boy in his father's arms. They step and turn, a slow dance...as Victor hums *Swan Lake*--

Danny wraps his arms around Victor, pinning him in place.

DANNY
That's not my song anymore.

VICTOR
Course it is--

Bang! Victor gasps. Danny lets go.

Victor steps back, stunned. He tries to lift his rifle, but he topples forward...revealing a BULLET HOLE in his back...and Boy 119 behind him, shakily holding Lucas' gun.

Danny stares, breathless, at Victor's body. He looks at Boy 119...and smiles.

DANNY
Good boy--

Bang! Boy 119 shoots Danny in the chest. Danny collapses.

BOY 119
(whispers)
Sorry, Danny.

Boy 119 drops the gun, turns, and runs.

Danny's heartbeat thuds. His breath echoes in his head. His vision fades as he watches the Children running off into the woods...disappearing like dandelion seeds on the wind...

...and he begins to laugh.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

Carmella nervously watches Olivia speak with a DOCTOR outside Maeve's room. Olivia has a splint on her wrist.

Carmella heads to the vending machine. She pulls out some coins, counts them, and swears--

OLIVIA (O/S)
Need change?

Carmella looks up to see Olivia, and tenses.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Don't mean to scare you. You're the lady who brought my mom in.

CARMELLA
Carmella.
(shrugs)
Wasn't sure what to do. I'm kinda stranded now. He took my car.

Olivia's breath catches.

OLIVIA

He...?

But she already knows.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - LATER

Carmella and Olivia sit, clutching cups of coffee.

OLIVIA

What's he like?

CARMELLA

To be honest...I don't know. I
don't even think he knows.

Olivia nods slowly.

CARMELLA (CONT'D)

He's soft. Beneath it all.

OLIVIA

Sounds about right.

CARMELLA

He wanted to stay. But they
would've hurt the others if he
didn't go back. He was...

OLIVIA

Stuck.

Olivia sees Carmella looking at her bandaged wrist.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I didn't try to do myself in.

CARMELLA

Sorry. None of my business.

OLIVIA

Just a fracture. It'll heal.

She stares at the ceiling, blinking away tears.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

My little baby brother.

She suddenly laughs softly.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I need a cigarette. You?

Carmella shakes her head. Olivia walks off to the exit,
stops, looks back.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Carmella nods - she has no idea what to say.

INT. MAEVE'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Maeve is asleep in bed, looking pale and old. Her wrists are heavily bandaged.

Carmella sits beside, watching Maeve's chest rise and fall.

CARMELLA

I lost a baby. A tiny little girl, just on seven months. She was so small, I could've held her in one hand. But they kept her in the hospital, with all these machines in her. And three months in, she was still so small. She just...wouldn't grow.

(struggling)

I was stupid back then. I had bad friends. Drank a lot. That's what did it. Nobody said it out loud, but...

Her hand instinctively pats her pocket, then she realizes she no longer has the Polaroid.

CARMELLA (CONT'D)

She just stopped breathing.
Winked out, like a little star.

(soft)

I never got to touch her. Never sang to her. All those things a mother pictures in her mind... there's so many holes. Missing pieces.

She reaches out, fiddles with the edge of Maeve's blanket.

CARMELLA (CONT'D)

I'd be a good mother.

Maeve turns her head slowly to face Carmella.

MAEVE

You will. I can tell.

Carmella smiles. Maeve looks out the window.

CARMELLA

He might come back. One day.

Maeve pats Carmella's hand, like a mother who knows better.

MAEVE

Is my daughter here? I need her.

CARMELLA

I'll get her.

Carmella leaves. Maeve closes her eyes to rest.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - OHIO BACKWOODS - DAY

Danny's corpse is dragged across the grass by TWO MEN - the Cleaners - towards a BLACK VAN.

They throw his body in the back, next to the bodies of Victor, Boy 127 and Teen Girl 114.

A THIRD MAN stacks the numbered crates from the prep room into the van, covering up the bodies.

A FOURTH MAN picks up Teddybear Magician from the grass. He wipes off the dirt, inspects it. The Teddybear stares back with shiny button eyes and sewn-on lips that seem to hold a secret. He chuckles, puts the Teddybear under his arm.

Door slam in the silence as the Men get in the van. They drive off down the dirt road...

...leaving the Old House behind, engulfed in FLAMES, burning to the ground, bits of ash swirling upwards...

CUT TO:

EXT. LIVING ROOM - MAEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

...tiny dandelion seeds swirling in water, trapped in a globe - it's Danny's snowglobe.

A LITTLE BOY, 3, with BLONDE HAIR, shakes the globe in his hand, giggling.

LITTLE BOY

Magic!

He is talking to Carmella, who's wearing a NURSE UNIFORM. She is packing her purse, rushed, but she smiles at him.

CARMELLA

That's right, clever boy. You know, Auntie Maeve knows a place with lots of magic.

Little Boy turns excitedly to Maeve, who sits cross-legged next to him. She is healthy, glowing, happy.

MAEVE

Yessir. Would you like to see?

Little Boy nods. Carmella and Maeve share a smile.
Carmella kisses Little Boy on the head.

CARMELLA

Be good, Danny Boy. Mommy loves
you.

She waves goodbye to Maeve and heads out the door...

FADE TO:

INT. STUDIO, FOX POINT ACADEMY OF DANCE - DAY

A WOMAN, hair tied in a bun, walks across the studio to
the stereo and presses 'play'.

Swan Lake begins. She turns - it's Olivia, facing a group
of students. They are all GIRLS except for a single BOY.

OLIVIA

Show me how it makes you feel.
Ready?

She smiles at their eager faces. She nods, and they begin.

FADE TO:

INT. CLAY'S HOUSE - DAY

Swan Lake continues over as...

Clay's wife SARAH sits staring out the window, catatonic.
Across the room, Clay is asleep in a recliner.

A SHADOW moves softly towards him - it's LILY, 11, in a
flower dress, just as she was the day of the County Fair.

She climbs onto his lap, and rests her head on his chest.
He dreamily puts his arms around her...and smiles.

EXT. VACANT LOT - DAY

Swan Lake continues over as...

Maeve chases Carmella's son, LITTLE DANNY, through the
lot.

MAEVE

I'm gonna catch you, Danny! And
I'm gonna tickle you!

The world suddenly quietens, like fading whispers. Maeve
turns - there is SOMEONE in the tall grass, watching.

She sees a glimmer of BLONDE HAIR, a FACE - it's Adam - her Adam - 12 years old, frozen in time.

He grins shyly. She smiles back...then turns away from him. She begins to walk, starts to run...

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Here I come, Danny! Auntie
Maeve's coming! I'm gonna find
you! And there'll be tickles!

Little Danny jumps out from a tree, shrieking with laughter. Maeve chases him through the lot, around dying tree trunks, brushing past weeds and sending dandelion seeds dancing high into the air...higher...and higher...

FADE OUT.