

Dandelion
by
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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 is 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
Someone in need of a product. A
product we sell.

Harold nods furiously, as if to convince himself.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Simple transaction.

As if 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 catalog he took from Harold - it's a catalog of CHILDREN. B&W photos of boys and girls, one per page. Most young, some early teens. Some topless. Pale flesh, wide eyes. Beneath each photo 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, till it ends at a clearing bordered by a grove of 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 into place, drops his keys into a jar marked *Sugar*. He steps into the kitchen--

LUCAS (O/S)
Brown-noser.

LUCAS - lean, crew cut, slightly older than Danny - sits at the table in the quaint, dated-but-homely kitchen.

DANNY
Is he here?

LUCAS
Soon.

Danny drops the donut box on the table. 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.

Across the house, the front door slams. Lucas' and Danny's eyes meet - a flash of tension. Lucas nods faintly.

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.

He puts the plates on the table, then sits opposite them.
We see him now - mid-40s, solid, clean-shaven. A
nothing-special, middle-aged man...except for his eyes.
They are 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
Gonna need more stock. Blondes.
Maybe a redhead. Give them 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 palms.

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 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...
(imitates with her hands)
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)
It's OK. 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
Well. 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.

ALBERTO (O/S)
You trying to wake the dead?!

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

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

ALBERTO

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

Olivia takes another drag, keeps working. Alberto watches.

ALBERTO (CONT'D)

Aren't you afraid they're gonna sit up and eat your brains?

He chuckles, then quickly regrets his joke.

ALBERTO (CONT'D)

Least you get to paint celebs too, not just dead folk.

OLIVIA

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

ALBERTO

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.

ALBERTO (CONT'D)

Guess a new coat of paint never hurt the price of an old house.

OLIVIA

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

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

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Voila. One polished turd.

She gives Alberto 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 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 - a subtle-yet-impactful 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. 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 is touched. She looks at Maeve, expecting Maeve to
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.

A fifty-dollar note rests on the bench.

She turns to the fridge, where tacked on front is a POLAROID of a TINY BABY GIRL, lying in an incubator. Carmella blinks back tears. She switches her soap opera back 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, Mom.

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 dressed as a MAGICIAN.

He crouches next to New Boy.

DANNY

Here.

New Boy stares at the teddybear. Danny smiles--

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?

New Boy hides his face in the teddybear's fur.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

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 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 \$8.75.

Male Customer hands over a ten. 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 drinks too much.

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 grins 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. The
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 little
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
Hey! We don't talk like that in
this house.

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

PETER (CONT'D)
Olivia. I'm not some bad guy.
Don't you know that by now? I
care about you mother, I care
about you. 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, heavy. They're dreading what happens once they land.

The only excitement comes from BOY 127, a blonde kid straight off a cereal box, 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 looks around at the dated decor and chuckles. 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 sitting opposite each other in a booth. Sandro's head is blocking Olivia's view of Sad Bearded Man. Olivia takes a long gulp of another Stinger.

SANDRO

Slow down - 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 looks away dismissively.

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.

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, permanently horny. It doesn't even need to be sexy. But your mind links that sight or smell, whatever it is, with that sexual excitement. And that tiny moment impacts 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

The dead don't expect much. Just to look pretty in their coffins.

SANDRO

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

Olivia spills - or knocks - her drink over.

OLIVIA

Fuck.

Sandro, shocked, 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, a GUARD waits.

INT. NEW VAN - CONTINUOUS

From the passenger seat, Danny watches the Guard 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

The Guard 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 the Guard.

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 the Guard glaring at him in disgust.

Ding! The elevator stops at floor 39.

INT. 39TH FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Guard leads them down a decorated hallway. At the end is a large DOORWAY with another GUARD.

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 through the door. 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. 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 pop music - it's an energetic remix of an older original.

The performance draws Danny in - the Dancers' graceful movements, the melody of the music...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 NAKED MAN is on top of him, pushing Danny's face into the mattress. He can't move, he can't scream--

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 of the casino, 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 sadly, 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 shakes her long blonde hair back, grabs an elastic, pulls her 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 down 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'. 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 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...

Her words fade, and 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 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, looks around the group encouragingly.

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

Fine. 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 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)
You could share your story next
time, if you like. My mom can
help. With the loss. The...gap.

CLAY

That's why I'm here. Fill that
goddamn hole right over.

He chuckles, as if it's all a big joke. He pulls a dollar
bill from his pocket, hands it over. He 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.

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. BATHROOM - OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

Danny sits on the bath edge, eyes scanning a newspaper...
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--

BACK TO PRESENT:

Danny, now at the sink, stares at his reflection in the
mirror. 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...

Maeve smiles to herself, the TV reflected in her eyes.

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. He holds up the newspaper.

VICTOR

Look what I found in the trash.

Lucas holds innocent hands up. Danny sits up quickly.

DANNY

That was 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

And look what we almost missed.

DANNY

Sorry.

VICTOR

Is that your word of the week? Or is my little mouse just 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 the golden boy, 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 can scout Kentucky, and Danny--

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.
(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 hands.

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?

Before he can reply, 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
Funny. 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

Yes, 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 odd 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. And they know it too. 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 been
attentive and they've listened--

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 take 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 and
hitch-hiked.

Peter nods, unsatisfied. He glances at the files.

PETER

Any clothes missing from his
room? Or money taken from the
parents' wallets?

Sheriff Steel leans over the desk, blocking the files.

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)
My mom couldn't make it tonight.
But rather than cancel...
well...I'm here. I'm not
qualified. I do make-up in a
morgue. 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
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 avoids Danny's eyes.

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
I know. You were the first.

ROY BURLINGHAM
...please...it's just...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 a sigh behind a smile.

MAEVE

Peter.

PETER

How was group? You finished late tonight?

MAEVE

I cancelled. Rhonda's got the flu, so I covered her shift.

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

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Peter watches Maeve fill the kettle and switch it on.

PETER

Where's Olivia?

MAEVE

At the TV station, I think.

PETER

She doesn't work tonight.

MAEVE

Oh.

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 making coffee.

PETER

Sometimes I think you're not even here. You know?

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 in there. I can tell. 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 with a top hat. 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. 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 take a sip of 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. You'll be bawling too.

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 in the lines on his palms.

He looks at the Old House....opens the glove box...pulls out a blood-stained SWITCHBLADE. He goes to open the truck 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 over his naked chest - Danny recognizes them.

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

TEEN BOY 111
Did you promise everyone? Or just
your favorite?

DANNY
(soft)
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, a
rifle in his hand. It was HIS bullet.

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 window behind Sandro...

OLIVIA

Whose bright idea was this? Make my mom the expert on lost kids?

SANDRO

Hey, 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 Mave and stroke her hair, which Maeve barely notices.

SANDRO

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

OLIVIA

She's a fucking saint, isn't she?

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

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

You don't know her, Sandro.

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, in
my heart. That was evidence. 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 let them. I'm just as bad.

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. Like
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)
But you already knew that. And
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, petrified. 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
I love you.

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 turns back--

PETER
Aren't you sick of the bullshit,
Maeve? All these years I've been
trying to make things right, give
you something...a goddamn life!
But you're gone! 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,
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, holding the snowglobe he gave Maeve. He pushes past a shocked Olivia on the porch, throws his bag into his car--

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

PETER
Yeah, you did.

Olivia has no words, for once. Peter sighs.

PETER (CONT'D)
I know. This anger in you, it's not 'cause of me. But if you don't figure out where's it's coming from, it'll eat you alive. Trust me.

He throws the snowglobe in the car.

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 everything.
Through everything.

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 Polaroid of the Baby Girl 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...dies. And something else, something deep, 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 the pop song plays...as Ron Burlingham turns to him, meets his gaze...all happening at the same time--

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?
Police. Lawyers. Businessmen.
Politicians. Fathers. It's too
deep. It's...in 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

Stupid! I shouldn't have come!
I'm sorry--

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 how!
(panting)
Carmella...I can't get out...

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...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 stops 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 on Broadway. 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?

OLIVIA

(beat)

He would've.

She laughs harshly.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

It's like one big joke. Like Adam knew what I was gonna do, and had to be a brat and ruin it. Why that day? Why'd he go in there by himself on 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 now 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 in my notes.
I remember.

DANNY

I don't know you.

PETER

Sure you do. 'Deputy Dawg'. What
you kids called me back in Fox
Point.

DANNY

You're a long way from home.

PETER

Got family in Cincinnati, so...

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

PETER (CONT'D)
But you know me.

He walks forward and reaches for Danny, as if he might disappear any second. He pulls him in. He's REAL.

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

DANNY
That's a long story.

PETER
It's OK. You got all the time in the world.

DANNY
I have a curfew.

PETER
What do you mean? I'm not letting you out of my sight, son.

Peter laughs, and it echoes across the darkness. He clutches Adam tighter, tears spilling from his eyes...

PETER (CONT'D)
Your mom's waiting for you--

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 - his eyes are wet.

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, wearing a cliched rebel punk outfit.

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. Nothing else.

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.

She opens the freezer...and sees a tub of raspberry ice-cream. She grits her teeth, slams the freezer door.

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 and takes out a beer. Olivia watches as Maeve opens it and takes a large 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
(dramatic sigh)
Well. Guess I'm the only person
who hasn't gone and left you--

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 13 years 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 can't live like this! It's like
I'm trapped in a fucking tomb!
I'm so sick of it!

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. With the workshop--

MAEVE
 (laughing)
 And be some grieving old lady selling groceries? Who'd want that?
 (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 act as long as I have to. It's my heartbeat.

She stares at the vacant lot across the street, with the dandelions swaying gently.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
 Every breath I take, I keep a bit inside. Everything, I hold back. For him. So I have something left, when he comes home.
 (shrugging)
 I'm old, Liv.

OLIVIA
I'm here. 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 my father.

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'm sorry, Liv. I can't help it.

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.

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 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 came...I knew it. Something...waiting in that lot. But I wanted to punish Liv for hating me, for wanting to leave. I wanted to prove that 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. 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 your name's not Lucas.

LUCAS

You're so stupid. You think he doesn't know you? You think he can't read your fucking thoughts?

DANNY

Then wake up. Just wake up, Lucas. Don't you want to go home?

Lucas looks out the window, into the darkness.

LUCAS

He'll tell me to kill Carmella. He will, I know.

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.

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, looks out the window. He sighs, exhausted.

DANNY
I'm so sick of the night.

CARMELLA
(a beat)
We'll fix it.

The dawn sun peeks over the horizon, like molten gold.

CARMELLA (CONT'D)
(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 breathing 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 - Alberto pokes his head into the room.

ALBERTO

Liv? Who you talking to?

Olivia looks down - the Corpse's hand is still. It NEVER MOVED.

OLIVIA

(shakily)

The turd. Who else?

ALBERTO

Right. Didn't hear any music, so...just checking you're OK.

OLIVIA

I'm OK.

He starts back upstairs--

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Thanks, Alberto.

Alberto 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. W on'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, it was quite a sad--

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.

MAEVE (O/S)
Here you are.

DANNY
Mom...?

Danny can't move, but Maeve's hands turn him around. No shock or tears on her face - just a smile.

MAEVE
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
(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 laughs through his sobs.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
You remember that? That always
cheered you up.

Danny nods.

MAEVE (CONT'D)
I've been waiting for you, baby.
Your whole life...it's all
waiting.

Danny stares at the clippings, the presents...

DANNY
There's so much.

MAEVE
We'll just 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, glancing 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! I'm a freaking 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 to any more
workshops.

OLIVIA
Oh.
(beat)
Whats-a-matter, too many
feelings?

CLAY
Liv...I...can't.

Olivia sees his guilt. She looks at the ballerina charm.

OLIVIA
I stopped dancing. The day after.
(shrugging)
Hey, you had it worse. You gave
up Big Burger Barn.

She 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)
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
That was the day Adam walked home
alone. I was at the bus stop. I
was going to New York.
(harsher)
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's
gone, and I'm here. Fucking
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.

A LOVE SONG begins echoing through the bar. It's the same song that Danny heard in the Zodiac Casino, but it's the original version - slower, dream-like. Olivia smiles.

OLIVIA
I danced to this. Junior talent
show.
(soft)
Adam was there.

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 the workshop.

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 him. It's the Professor, with
tears in his eyes.

Olivia leans in and KISSES the Professor deeply. It's
passionate, rough, angry--

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)
I can't, 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
Lots of places.
(hesitant)
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--

MAEVE (CONT'D)
Whatever you did...it brought you back to me. You have the best heart of all of us, you know. That never goes away.

Danny nods, wanting to believe.

DANNY
I just wanted to go back.

MAEVE

We have. Can't you feel it?

As Maeve combs his hair, Danny closes his eyes.

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.

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, anger...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? This
is nothing. Nothing for my brave
girl. My brave Olivia.

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 am, Mom. 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

Not 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

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 I'm kinda freaking out and...

(reluctant)

And I trust you more than that moron sheriff. So...I need you.

(beat)

Hurry, Peter. 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)
You've gotta stay awake, Mom.
That's why I came back...to show
you...

MAEVE
My brave boy, all grown up. I
already knew.

Danny presses his face into her hair.

DANNY
No...I'm scared, Mom.

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)

Peter? Oh. Yes, this is her.

(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. She is CRYING UNCONTROLLABLY.

She passes a SIGN for a wealthy gated estate.

A beat of indecision...

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, straightens, his eyes moving across the lawn...to Olivia.

PROFESSOR
Olivia...?

OLIVIA
Mom's in hospital.

PROFESSOR
Oh--

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
She's OK. It was an accident at home. 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, you know, and no visitors. Only me.

Olivia sees fear in his eyes. He's afraid of her.

OLIVIA
(turning away)
Just wanted to tell you.

PROFESSOR
Olivia...

She turns back. Professor clears his throat.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
I've been wanting to say...when you were younger...
(beat)
...the...things I did with

you...to you... It wasn't meant
to hurt 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 are resilient. 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,
you know.

She gives him a last pitying smile, 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 Magic Boo Bear.

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 does, Danny Boy.
(beat)
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.

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
Tell me what you are.

Victor hesitates, as if he's never been asked this.

VICTOR
You know.

For the first time, Danny sees Victor's shame. And behind
it, a LONGING. We can see who Victor was BEFORE.

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

But I did 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 in breathless disbelief at Victor's body. He
looks at Boy 119...and smiles.

DANNY

Good boy--

Bang! Boy 119 fires into Danny's chest. Danny collapses.

BOY 119

Sorry, Danny.

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 sits nervously, watching 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
Yeah. 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)
But 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 Magic Boo Bear from the grass. He
 wipes off the dirt, inspects the bear's sewn-on smile. He
 chuckles, puts it 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. Love 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, sending up dandelion seeds into the air, high into the sky...

FADE OUT.