

FIRESTARTER

Screenplay by
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Based on the novel by
Stephen King

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FADE IN:

INT. BABY NURSERY - DAY

A COOING NEWBORN, nestled at her mother's breast, feeding. VICKY McGEE rocks the child in a chair by an open window.

26 and bright-eyed, Vicky gazes down at the bundle of joy cradled in her arms. She wipes milk from baby's cheek with a cloth. Then she looks up and smiles at...

ANDY McGEE, standing in the doorway, looking lovingly upon his wife and child. He's 27, with an All-American smile.

Soft morning light filters in, glows Vicky's hair like a halo. A gentle breeze flutters the long, sheer curtains.

An idyllic scene, a heightened reality, dreamlike...

Vicky lays the child gently in the nearby crib, then pulls the string on the colorful MOBILE that hangs above it. The mobile spins slowly, playing a familiar lullaby.

Then Vicky takes Andy's hand, leads him down the hallway toward the bedroom.

IN THE CRIB, the child lies there a moment, staring up at mobile as it spins, spins, spins...

Then a whimper, soft. Then another.

Perhaps she wasn't finished feeding. Or just misses the warmth of mother's embrace. Either way, baby starts to cry.

Quietly at first. Then louder, louder... Then VIBRATIONS.

DOWN THE HALL, Vicky turns into the bedroom. But Andy stops, turns back. A strange feeling hitting him...

IN THE CRIB, the air DISTORTS SLIGHTLY around the child's head as she cries. Like WAVES OF HEAT rising off hot pavement.

Tears come harder now. Pain? Fear? Vibrations grow stronger. Sweat beads on baby's forehead. Flowers wilt across the room.

Then the spinning mobile CATCHES FIRE...

TENDRILS OF SMOKE waft out from the doorway...

Andy RUSHES back to the room... He turns into the doorway... The flaming mobile... Crib full of smoke...

ON ANDY'S FACE as he arrives at the crib, leans over the railing... and gasps in horror at what he sees inside.

His baby's head engulfed in flames. SUDDENLY--

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - PREDAWN

ANDY WAKES WITH A START. He sits up in bed, sweating, trying to catch his breath. Rattled by the nightmare.

He turns to the body lying beside him. It's Vicky, though we don't see her face. Turned away, fast asleep.

Andy climbs warily out of bed and shuffles to the bathroom. Outside the windows, the deep blue of predawn.

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - PREDAWN

LIGHTS POP ON, revealing Andy's naked torso, covered in SCARS. Small and not so small. On his arms, legs, neck. Burn marks.

He's a decade older now, too. Mid-30s.

He splashes water on his face. We might wonder if he's coming off a three-day bender. Lines branch out from the corners of his tired, bloodshot eyes. His short hair flecked with grey.

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Andy shuffles down the darkened hallway, peers into a BEDROOM. But the small bed inside is empty. This gives Andy pause.

ANDY
Charlie?

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Andy enters the kitchen, stops. A FIGURE sits at the table, unmoving. Then a cigarette lighter STRIKES, illuminating the face of the silhouette. A young girl, 11. This is CHARLIE.

ANDY
Where'd you find that?

The flame goes out. Her face becomes silhouette. She tosses a PACK OF CIGARETTES across the table.

CHARLIE
You promised you'd quit.

ANDY
It's not so easy.

She strikes it again. Her serious eyes focus on the flame.

ANDY
Why are you awake, Charlie?

The flame goes out. Darkness.

CHARLIE
Bad dream...

ANDY
Wanna talk about it?

She strikes it again.

ANDY
Put that down, please. It's not a toy.

She sets it on the table. Andy hits the light. We see Charlie more clearly now. She's scared, troubled.

CHARLIE
Daddy... Something feels weird, in my body. Something's changing.

ANDY
...Maybe that's a conversation you could have with your mother.

CHARLIE
I don't mean that thing. I mean the other thing... *The Bad Thing*.

He knows what the Bad Thing is. But he covers his concern. He studies his daughter's eyes. Fear. Darkness. Then, carefully:

ANDY
You remember your tools, right?

Andy glances over to FRESH FLOWERS in a vase on the hutch.

ANDY
Flowers...

Then he turns, looks at a "CAT CLOCK" on the wall, its eyes turning back and forth and back and forth.

ANDY
Clock...

Then to one of CHARLIE'S DRAWINGS on the fridge, a bucolic scene of a forest and a deer by a stream.

ANDY
Forest... Deer...

Saying the words with calm and rhythm, like a mantra.

Finally Andy's eyes settle on Charlie.

ANDY
...and Sweet Charlie.

Charlie breathes, calming. Andy sits at the table beside her, puts his hand on hers.

ANDY
You'll be fine. The Bad Thing's been gone a long time. And you're strong, Charlie. Don't ever forget...

VICKY (O.S.)
Everything okay in here?

They turn. Vicky, now mid-30s too, standing at the door, rubbing sleep from her eyes. Andy looks at Charlie, who smiles back, her fears assuaged. At least for now.

ANDY
How bout I make us breakfast?

He stands again, walks to the fridge, giving Vicky a kiss on the cheek as he passes. Vicky moves to the table, sits next to Charlie and puts an arm around her.

AS WE PULL BACK, taking in this loving family scene, we see a dusty old FIRE EXTINGUISHER hidden in the corner.

We'll soon discover there's one in every room of the house.

MUSIC HITS AS WE ROLL CREDITS:

A discordant sequence. Image and sound distorted, manipulated. As if coming to us from some distant past, a memory...

A BLACK SCREEN

Speckled with video noise, it shudders before late '90s font pops up. The text reads:

LOT Six trial - "3" - 4/5/2003
Dept. of Scientific Intelligence
J. Wanless, MD (lead)

The black screen holds a beat before it cuts to:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY (2003)

Staring into the lens of a Sony Handycam is YOUNG ANDY MCGEE, 21 and fresh-faced, with his whole life ahead of him.

He sits in a chair in front of a bland beige wall, answering a series of questions from an UNSEEN MAN.

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)
Do you exercise?

ANDY
I try to jog, couple times a week. But
I'm not, you know, religious about it.

UNSEEN MAN
Do you smoke cigarettes?

ANDY
Unfortunately.

UNSEEN MAN
Marijuana?

ANDY
...Occasionally. I mean, it's college.

UNSEEN MAN
Ever used hallucinogenic drugs?

Andy wonders how honest he should be.

ANDY
I did mushrooms once. They didn't
agree with me.

A ROUGH SPLICE takes us to:

INT. TESTING ROOM - DAY (2003)

SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE of a different small, windowless room.

A dozen COLLEGE KIDS settle onto cots, as RESEARCH ASSISTANTS
in white lab coats hook them to blood pressure cuffs and IVs.

We glimpse Young Andy among the students.

Some of the White Coats hold syringes, others hold IV bags,
the words "LOT SIX" scrawled upon them in thick black ink.

UNSEEN MAN (PRE-LAP)
Your father's blood type?

BACK TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY (2003)

The same beige space, only now it's YOUNG VICKY in the chair,
20 and wide-eyed. She looks slightly nervous.

VICKY
Do you know your parents' blood types?

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)
Fair enough. Where do they live now?
Your parents.

VICKY
They don't. Died when I was ten.

Beat.

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)
Have you ever had what you would call
an authentic psychic experience?

There's a question out of the blue. Vicky sits back, stares
into the camera. Wondering what this is all about.

HARD SPLICE TO:

INT. TESTING ROOM - DAY (2003)

SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE AGAIN.

Young Andy reclines on a cot, and now we see Young Vicky in
the cot beside him. Other students on cots scattered about.

Needles pierce veins. Blood swirls in syringes. White Coats
drip drugs into the arms of the college kids.

Standing at the front, observing it all, is the old and
ominous DR. JOSEPH WANLESS. He makes notes on paper, watching.

UNSEEN MAN (PRE-LAP)
And you were raised in a group home,
is that correct?

BACK TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY (2003, CONTINUOUS)

CLOSER ON Young Andy. He shifts in his seat, uncomfortable.

ANDY
...Since I was seven, yeah.

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)
So who is your closest living
relative, geographically?
(off Andy's confusion)
What family member lives nearest you?

Andy eyes the Unseen Man, growing skeptical.

ANDY
The ad said this was just an FDA
clinical trial...?

HARD SPLICE TO:

INT. TESTING ROOM - DAY (2003)

The IV drips. Andy is splayed out on the cot, helplessly stoned. He studies his hands as if they're foreign objects.

Vicky giggles, tripping. She stands now, begins dancing to the rhythms in her head. Andy watches her, entranced.

Around the room, strange feelings abound. More tripping and laughter, weaving in and out of the white, antiseptic noise...

VICKY (V.O.)
But most of us, we'll just get the
placebo, right?

BACK TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY (2003)

CLOSER ON Young Vicky. Growing more nervous now.

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)
Either way, it's entirely harmless.

VICKY
How do you know? I mean, that's why
you're testing it, right?

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)
It's standard procedure, ma'am.

She considers it.

VICKY
A thousand bucks, huh?

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)
Not bad for a relaxing weekend spent
lying on a cot, surfing the internet.

ECU on a concerned Vicky, her face pixelated by old video.

HARD SPLICE TO:

INT. TESTING ROOM - DAY (2003)

Several students are standing now, swaying to the music in their heads. One pulls out his IV and dances across the room.

But in moment, things turn...

People grab at their temples as migraines strike like iron spikes. Muscles cramp and seize. Dizziness. The room spins...

And objects fly.

Paper cups, hand towels, IV bags. And a deadly hail of pens and pencils. People duck and cover. Some get struck, go down.

MORE WHITE COATS flood the room. Seizures over here, cardiac arrest over there. It's madness.

Vicky and Andy move toward each other in the chaos, terrified. *Is this real?* She reaches out for comfort. He takes her hand.

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)
Have you experienced phenomena that
appear inexplicable by natural law?

INT. TESTING ROOM - DAY (2003)

ECU ON Young Andy. He's very hesitant now.

ANDY
I don't like these questions.

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)
Just part of the evaluation, sir.

Andy bites at his thumbnail. The man asks again:

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)
Have you experienced phenomena that
appear inexplicable by natural law?

A long beat, then:

ANDY
I saw my parents die in a car wreck.

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)
I'm sorry to hear that. But how was
that event inexplicable?

ANDY
I saw it a week before it actually
happened.

HARD SPLICE TO:

INT. TESTING ROOM - DAY (2003)

UTTER CHAOS. Objects FLY and people SCREAM. Andy and Vicky hide behind a file cabinet, clinging together.

Then A MAN IN THE CORNER grabs at his own terrified eyes. Digs his fingers into the sockets.

And screams like holy hell.

The White Coats descend, wrestle him down, try to sedate him.

WE PUSH THROUGH THE MOB to find the man at the bottom of the pile, thick red blood pouring from his two eyeless sockets.

The eyeballs dangle like charms from his raised hand.

EYELESS YOUNG MAN
I still see it! I still see it!

White Coats grab at his hand, knock the eyeballs loose. But his hand SLAPS the wall, makes a RED SMEAR.

Andy stares at the smear, terrified. Dr. Wanless rushes the camera in a panic--

WANLESS
TURN IT OFF! TURN IT OFF!!!

The tape suddenly CUTS TO A HARSH STATIC FUZZ, as we--

END CREDITS.

EXT. LEWISTON, MASSACHUSETTS - DAY

BACK IN THE PRESENT DAY. Morning sun rising. We find a RUNDOWN SEDAN moving through this small, suburban town in Western Mass. Trees alive with spring foliage.

EXT. STRIP MALL - MORNING

The sedan parks in this retail wasteland. Andy at the wheel, studying his face in the rearview. He drips a few EYEDROPS into his reddened eyes, wipes away the runoff.

He approaches the strip mall -- Dry Cleaners, Jewelry Shop, Shoe Repair -- pulls out a set of keys and opens the door of a nondescript storefront. There's a homemade sign hung in the window: "CONFIDENCE ASSOCIATES." Andy steps inside...

INT. SCHOOL BUS - MOVING - MORNING

Charlie at the back of the bus, in a pair of faded overalls, well-worn sneakers. She sits in silence, holding an old RABBIT'S FOOT. Her thumb runs over the fur in small circles.

She eyes TWO GIRLS in the seat diagonal, watching videos on their phones. Giggling. Best friends. Charlie looks away.

The bus comes to a stop in front of LEWISTON ELEMENTARY. Charlie pulls on her small backpack and files off the yellow bus, following the other kids, one by one...

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Vicky at the table, searching the CLASSIFIED ADS of the local paper. In RED MARKER, she's circled several computer/software postings. But most have been crossed out.

She circles an ad for a "Full Stack Java Engineer," then dials a number on the CORDLESS PHONE.

VICKY

I'm calling about the listing in the Gazette, Java Engineer... No, but I'm quick learner... Not exactly that but... I see, yes, okay... Thanks anyways.

She hangs up then turns back to the paper, undeterred. She turns the page and we see she's circled dozens of ads...

EXT. CONFIDENCE ASSOCIATES - MORNING

OUT FRONT, Andy digs through his pockets for a PACK OF CIGARETTES, with a few smokes left. A beat as he considers it... then tosses the pack in a nearby TRASH CAN. He steps back inside, turns the sign on the front door to OPEN.

ANDY (PRE-LAP)

It's all in your head, that's what they don't tell you...

INT. CONFIDENCE ASSOCIATES - LATER

Andy sits across from DARLA GURNEY, 50s, a big lady. No desk between them, knees-to-knees. Andy is closing out his pitch.

ANDY

...And no pill or diet or exercise routine will ever change that. But my service guarantees within just four weeks -- less than a month -- you'll see the pounds melt away.

He's done this act a thousand times. The trick is making it feel authentic.

DARLA

And all we do is *talk*?

ANDY

I call it "Diet Chat."
(off her look)
Kidding.

DARLA

I don't know, Mr. McGee.

ANDY
Call me Andy.

DARLA
Debbie and Gina swear by your ways,
but a hundred bucks a session... It's
just a lot for my budget.

Andy hates haggling with housewives. But haggle he must.

ANDY
It's a money-back guarantee. And
wouldn't Ricky think your health was
worth it?

Darla screws up her face.

DARLA
How'd you know my husband's name?

Andy back-pedals.

ANDY
You said it. Walking in.

DARLA
I don't think I--

ANDY
You said that Ricky wanted you to be
happy. And that's why you're here.

Darla doesn't exactly seem convinced but--

ANDY
And your friends...

DARLA
...Debbie and Gina.

ANDY
Debbie and Gina. They swear by my ways.

DARLA
I know, but Ricky's hemorrhoids flared
up again -- he's had em since high
school, I guess he wipes too hard --
and I'm worried they're gonna prolapse
like last time -- that's when they
bulge from the anus -- then it's blood
and hospital bills and--

ANDY
(please god stop)
--Let's just try. One session.
(MORE)

ANDY (CONT'D)
If you don't feel healthier by the
time you walk out that door *today* --
mentally, emotionally, even *physically*
-- then it's on the house.

Darla ponders the offer, pulls a Snickers Bar from her purse.

ANDY
Darla. You're here to lose weight.

DARLA
It's for my blood sugar. Helps me
think clear.

Andy takes the Snickers from her hand, sets it aside.

ANDY
Close your eyes.
(she does, reluctantly)
Now concentrate. Think of Skinny
Darla. Imagine her. At the beach.

Darla likes what she hears. Dreaming with eyes closed.

Andy takes a quiet breath, preparing.

Then he seems to summon something from deep within him. A
kind of guttural strength or power. It makes him nauseated
but he swallows it down and...

ANDY
Now look me in the eyes.

She opens her eyes. He is very close to her. Looking deeply
into her pupils. It's powerfully intimate. Darla is disarmed.

ANDY
Don't look away. No matter what.

Then Andy cracks his neck, resulting in a little "pop." Darla
swallows. Andy's stare intensifies. As does his nausea.

But he fights it down, holds the focused gaze. Then:

A LOW RUMBLE rattles the soundtrack... A small SHIVER runs
through Andy... A web of blood vessels BURST in his eyes...

Then Darla's pupils subtly DILATE. Bingo.

Darla stares in rapt attention, as though hypnotized. Andy
breathes through the pain. The clock is ticking.

ANDY
You feel better already, Darla.
Lighter. You're not hungry right now.
You don't like the taste of chocolate.
...And a hundred bucks is a steal.

A tense beat, waiting for a response... Then Darla smiles.

DARLA
You know, a hundred bucks is a steal.

ANDY
Well, I know it's a lot.

DARLA
And I feel better already. Lighter!
She pulls cash from her purse, hands it over.

ANDY
I'm glad to hear it. Don't forget--
He offers the Snickers. She reaches for it -- but stops.
Looks confused.

DARLA
Don't know how I ever liked those
things. Keep it. See you next week!

Darla bounds out of the office, full of surprising energy...

But the second she's out of sight, Andy drops heavy into the chair. All energy drained from him. A massive migraine spikes his temples. He grabs at them, tries to breathe through it.

IN ANDY'S POV, the room blurs. Sounds are distorted in his throbbing head. Quiet sounds are jackhammers, loud sounds are silent. It's disorienting. His heartbeat pounds in his brain.

He grips the chair, white-knuckled. Waiting for it to pass. It only lasts a few seconds, but it's a motherfucker. Then:

A SMALL DOT OF BLOOD forms in the corner of his eye. He wipes it, thinking it's a teardrop. Then he sees the smear of red on his finger. He stares at it, shocked. Wipes it on his shirt.

CUT TO:

INT. LEWISTON ELEMENTARY - CLASSROOM - DAY

A DEAD FROG. Pinned to a styrofoam board, legs spread-eagle. A SMALL KNIFE makes a nervous slice down the middle... but it goes too deep. Frog guts spill onto the styrofoam.

GAVIN (O.S.)
Ewww...

Charlie holds the knife, frowning above the frog. GAVIN stands beside her. 11, buzzcut. He's a dick.

GAVIN
Nice work, goober.

MS. GARDNER (O.S.)
How's it going over here, Gavin?

MS. GARDNER, 20s, approaches. Gavin points at the failed experiment, distancing himself from it.

GAVIN
Amish girl killed our frog.

CHARLIE
It was already dead.

GAVIN
But now it's extra dead.

Charlie darkens, embarrassed.

CHARLIE
I'm not Amish.

MS. GARDNER
It's okay, Charlie. To make an omelette, you gotta break a few eggs. Or a few frogs, I guess.

Charlie doesn't quite follow the analogy. Gavin turns back to his desk, shaking his head. Ms. Gardner leans in, whispers.

MS. GARDNER
Let's be honest, a quick Google search will show you all the frog guts you want, perfectly dissected. We don't even need to do this anymore.

She smiles, but Charlie doesn't, because:

CHARLIE
I don't have a computer.

MS. GARDNER
Right, sorry.
(thinking)
You ever go to the public library? You can use the computers there, you know. Maybe ask your mom to take you?

CHARLIE
Too much screen time can cause health problems in children. Like insomnia.

Feels more like something she's been told than something she actually believes.

MS. GARDNER
I think a *little* screen time would be just fine. Help your grades, too.

Charlie darkens again, slinks back to her desk. Gavin SNICKERS behind her, others too.

MS. GARDNER
Quiet, class.
(walks toward the front)
Who can identify the different organs
in this diagram of the frog...?

As the teacher talks, Charlie pulls a SKETCHBOOK from her desk. She turns through DOZENS OF DRAWINGS until she finds a blank page. She starts to doodle. Gavin leans forward.

GAVIN
Is it true that Amish families share
the same bathwater? Cause that's weird.
You're weird.

Charlie closes her eyes, GRITTING HER TEETH with anger...

Then SMALL WAVES OF HEAT appear around her. Like the kind that rise off hot pavement.

Charlie opens her eyes, shocked.

An old thermometer hangs on the wall. Its mercury RISES a bit. The edge of Charlie's drawing CURLS slightly. She covers it.

Gavin sits up, confused. Wipes his forehead, suddenly warm.

Charlie looks nervously around her desk, eyeing OBJECTS. She whispers the names to herself:

CHARLIE
Notebook. Pencil. Desk. Shoes. Floor...

Other kids glance over. She continues the mantra, TOUCHING different items, saying their names as she does.

CHARLIE
Paper. Eraser. Ruler. Calculator...

Ms. Gardner hears her muffled words up front.

MS. GARDNER
Everything okay, Charlie?

Charlie swallows down her fear, breathes deep, exhales. The heat waves disappear at last.

CHARLIE
...Yes, Ms. Gardner. Everything's fine.

But her eyes tell us a different story.

EXT/INT. MCGEE HOUSE/ANDY'S CAR - EVENING

Andy's car pulls into the drive and parks. The modest house is not exactly rundown, but could certainly use some work. Neighbors on either side, but not too close.

He drips eyedrops into his bloodshot eyes. Looks down at the dried smear of blood on this shirt. He begins to unbutton it.

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Charlie on her bed, drawing in her sketchbook with colored pencils. Intensely focused.

We may only now notice how antiquated the McGee house seems. No iPhones or laptops in sight, no screens of any kind.

NOW WE SEE: Charlie's drawn a picture of Gavin from school. His face looking all screwed-up.

Studying her pencils, Charlie hesitates a moment before... Grabbing the red and drawing flames on him.

Sweat beads break out of her forehead as she colors furiously, adding more flames and smoke before--

VICKY (O.S.)
Charlie, wash your hands!

--Charlie pauses, looks at what she's drawn, curious, as though it was done in some kind of haze. She scribbles the drawing out, burying it beneath a layer of black.

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Dinner at the humble table. Andy, in a t-shirt now, serves Charlie some chicken casserole. She pokes around with her fork, looking dour. Vicky notices, tries for family bonding.

VICKY
Let's play "best and worst."

Charlie's not excited. So Andy puts on his game face.

ANDY
I'll go first. Best thing that happened today was... I got three new clients!

VICKY
That's... a lot.

Concern in her voice. He pulls a wad of cash from his wallet.

ANDY
A lot of money, indeed.

Vicky is not amused.

ANDY

And the worst thing was... nothing,
really. Had a pretty good day.
Charlie?

She shrugs, her mind elsewhere.

VICKY

I'll go next. Worst thing, still can't
find a job. Called about six more
openings today.

Andy puts a kind hand on hers.

VICKY

But the best thing...

Vicky puts on another smile.

VICKY

...Is that I'm sitting here right now,
with the two people I love more than
anything else in the world.

They wait for their daughter to smile in return, basking in
the warmth of their wonderful family bond. Instead:

CHARLIE

What's a diaphragm?

Well then.

CHARLIE

I heard Jenny Wolski talking about it
in the bathroom.

Vicky and Andy exchange looks. He defers to her on this one.

VICKY

Well, Charlie. A diaphragm is a...
contraption of sorts. It goes inside a
woman's vagina.

Charlie raises her eyebrows.

VICKY

And its function, really, is to block--
(wait a sec--)
Who is Jenny Wolski and why is she
talking about diaphragms? She's ten.

CHARLIE

She has boobs.

VICKY
She does not have boobs.

CHARLIE
They're small but they're boobs.

VICKY
And boobs have nothing to do with
diaphragms! Let's change the subject!

Andy stifles a laugh.

VICKY
How was school? Besides Jenny
Wolski and her non-boobs. Are you
liking Miss Gardner any better?

And just like that, Charlie darkens again.

ANDY
What is it, Charlie?

Charlie sets down her fork, wipes her face with a napkin.

CHARLIE
I hate that school.

Vicky's smile drops. They've been through this before.

CHARLIE
I hate the kids. The books. The food.
I hate everything about it.

VICKY
But your teacher's nice, right?

CHARLIE
Who cares?!

ANDY
C'mon Charlie. It's important, making
friends, being a regular kid.

The word stings. *Regular*. Vicky touches Charlie's hand.

VICKY
We want you to have a normal life.

But Charlie pulls her hand away, laughs.

CHARLIE
We can't even have smartphones. All I
want is stupid wifi. That's normal.

VICKY
I know it's hard, living this way. But
this is just... how it is right now.

Charlie stands in a huff--

CHARLIE
You don't know how it feels.

VICKY
Sure I do. I was a kid once.

CHARLIE
Not like me.

Vicky smiles sadly. Like she knows something Charlie doesn't.

Charlie walks out of the room, passing a fire extinguisher hidden behind the china cabinet.

Andy and Vicky share a look.

CHARLIE (PRE-LAP)
Bed. Backpack. Window. Wall. Lamp...

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie lies on her bed, still in her clothes. Fighting back tears. She faces the wall, on which is taped a small POSTER:

*5 Things You Can SEE
4 Things You Can TOUCH
3 Things You Can HEAR
2 Things You Can SMELL
1 Thing You Can TASTE*

She glances about the bed, touching things as she names them.

CHARLIE
Pillow. Poster. Blanket. Rabbit's Foot.

Vicky enters, sits on the bed beside her. Charlie turns farther away from her mom.

CHARLIE
Fan. Birds. Breathing.

VICKY
Anything you want to talk about?

Charlie swallows down her shame, takes a breath. Then:

CHARLIE
It happened again.

The news hits Vicky like a slap, but she stays calm.

CHARLIE
I got mad at school. This boy made fun of me. Called me weird.

Vicky's heart breaks. She rubs Charlie's back.

VICKY
Of course you're not weird.

CHARLIE
I'm worse.

VICKY
Oh, honey...

Vicky brings Charlie into her arms and rocks her daughter.

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Andy studies his face in the mirror again. Pressing on it. He's in a t-shirt and boxers. He splashes water on his face. Lets it drip into the sink.

Vicky sits on the edge of the bed in her nightgown. We see her arms and legs now, and we see more SCARS. Like Andy's.

VICKY
Three years... We got too comfortable.

ANDY
Why now? It's too early for puberty...
Right?

VICKY
Not for Jenny Wolski, apparently.

He grabs a towel, dries himself. They are quiet a beat.

VICKY
Scared her to death. When it happened.

ANDY
Charlie needs to be scared.

VICKY
She needs to be trained.

ANDY
Jesus--

VICKY
Our responsibility is getting her ready, making her strong. For when they come.

ANDY
Our responsibility is protecting her.

VICKY
Training her is protecting her!

He turns away...

ANDY

I'm not gonna fight about this again.

...And just heads out of the room.

PRE-LAPPED *shouts* of kids, *squeak* of sneakers take us to...

INT. LEWISTON ELEMENTARY - GYMNASIUM - DAY

...Where DOZENS OF FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADERS race around in a loud and furious game of dodgeball.

Ms. Gardner watches on with the GYM TEACHERS.

Charlie hangs at the back of the scrum. As balls fly, tagging kids out, she weaves and dodges but doesn't throw hers. It's a game of attrition and she's attempting to wait it out.

The chaos diminishes as the dozens of kids are whittled down to only a handful -- Charlie one of the remaining few.

Ms. Gardner catches Charlie's eye, gives her an encouraging thumbs up and a smile.

Charlie lights up, for the first time, an optimism and comfort that's lain dormant until now and--

SMACK!

--a ball hits her square in the head. Hard. Charlie stumbles backwards and falls on her butt.

Gavin fist-bumps his JERK BROS as they jeer.

Charlie eyes them with anger... Then SMALL WAVES OF HEAT appear around her again. Stronger this time, PULSING.

HEAT fills the room. Everybody feels it.

Kids stop playing. The look around, confused.

MS. GARDNER

You okay, Charlie?

She kneels to help Charlie but CHARLIE JUMPS UP--

MS. GARDNER

Hey, where are you--

--AND RUNS OUT THE DOOR in a blind panic.

INT. LEWISTON ELEMENTARY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

CHARLIE RACES DOWN THE HALLWAY, anger threatening to take her. She rushes into the BATHROOM, disappears behind the door.

INT. LEWISTON ELEMENTARY - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charlie rushes to a row of THREE FAUCETS against the wall. One by one, she turns the faucets on FULL BLAST and stares at them, her eyes wide with panic.

INT. LEWISTON ELEMENTARY - HALLWAY - SAME

Ms. Gardner steps into the hallway.

MS. GARDNER

Charlie!

She moves quickly toward the bathroom.

INT. LEWISTON ELEMENTARY - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN as Ms. Gardner rushes in--

Then she stops in her tracks. There's no sign of Charlie, but the room is FILLED WITH THICK STEAM from the faucets, like a sauna on high. All the mirrors are fogged.

Ms. Gardner pulls at her now-damp blouse, full of confusion.

MS. GARDNER

Charlie...?

She moves down the line of stalls. The room PULSES with strong vibrations. She bends to look for feet. Sees none.

Moving stall by stall, her heart pounding in her ears -- the steam thick like fog; the place is frightening.

MS. GARDNER

Please Charlie... Whatever's going on...

Then the SOUND OF SEARING, like paper and plastic. THICK SMOKE rises swiftly from inside the last stall...

MS. GARDNER

Charlie?

THEN THE DOOR OF THE STALL BLASTS OFF ITS HINGES, smashes into the wall, the metal bent and melted--

The high windows SHATTER-- Ms. Gardner is KNOCKED BACKWARDS--

THE CEILING TILES CHAR BLACK AND CRUMBLE, covering her in ash.

She stares in silent horror at the utter destruction, smoke rising from the stall like a fresh crater. A long beat...

Then out from the wreckage walks little Charlie McGee.

Ms. Gardner looks at Charlie like she's an alien.

MS. GARDNER
Holy. Shit.

Charlie looks ashamed.

EXT. LEWISTON ELEMENTARY - LATE AFTERNOON

After school. A POLICE CAR parked in front of the building.

INT. LEWISTON ELEMENTARY - HALLWAY - DAY

Charlie sits in a chair outside an office door, rubbing her rabbit's foot.

DOWN THE HALL, the scene of the crime. A COP outside the bathroom. Talking to a JANITOR, taking notes.

PRINCIPAL LEWIS (PRE-LAP)
You can imagine our concern, Mr. and Mrs. McGee. Such a reckless act, she endangered the whole student body...

INT. LEWISTON ELEMENTARY - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Andy and Vicky sit across a blocky desk from PRINCIPAL GERALD LEWIS, 60s. Next to him sits a shell-shocked Ms. Gardner, bits of ceiling tile still in her hair.

PRINCIPAL LEWIS
...The strange thing, however, is that the police have found no evidence of what she used to cause the explosion. The cherry bomb or whatever.

VICKY
Please don't call it an explosion.

PRINCIPAL LEWIS
The bathroom stall *exploded*, ma'am. What would you like me to call it?

VICKY
It makes her sound like a terrorist.

Andy puts a calming hand on her knee. *Don't antagonize.*

PRINCIPAL LEWIS
This is a very serious incident, you understand.

ANDY
We do. Of course we do.

MS. GARDNER
Someone could have been gravely injured--

VICKY
--And we're extremely sorry. It won't happen again.

PRINCIPAL LEWIS
How can you be so sure?

To this Vicky has no retort.

PRINCIPAL LEWIS
I have no plans to file any formal complaints or charges. Neither myself nor Ms. Gardner believe this was malicious. But the Superintendent reserves that right, since it was school property that Charlene damaged.

Andy and Vicky are overwhelmed.

PRINCIPAL LEWIS
And all of this will go on her permanent record, of course.

ANDY
Of course.

Vicky eyes the Principal, distressed. THEN:

A SATELLITE IMAGE

It shows a neighborhood street, buildings on either side. Not unlike a Google Maps image. Until:

A HEAT BLAST registers on the image, inside one of the larger buildings. The key indicates extreme temperatures.

WE SEE plumes of heat emerging from the building's windows. White-hot against the dark background.

OFF-SCREEN, a hand types on a keyboard. The image rewinds and plays again, and again. The blast of heat, enormous.

TEXT ON SCREEN: 13:49. 16 Mar 2021. 42.4832238, -73.0690267.
A phone RINGS briefly before it is drowned out by...

INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

...PULSING ELECTRONIC MUSIC, throbbing and loud. Peeling paint lines the walls, the carpet dirty and ragged. The kind of place one lives because they have no other options.

IN DARKNESS WE SEE: the silhouette of a TOWERING MAN sitting naked on a bed. His back to us. He's just gotten out of the shower. His skin steams.

His back is covered in tarot-themed tattoos. Long black hair falls into a thick braid. He's wearing headphones, nodding in time to the harsh, industrial beat. They call him RAINBIRD.

The CELL on the nightstand vibrates and illuminates. Caller ID reads "Unknown." Rainbird lowers his headphones, brings the cell to his ear. But says nothing. After a beat:

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER (O.S.)
Is this Rainbird...? John Rainbird?
This is Captain Jane Hollister, DSI.
(no response)
Jesus, are you there?

RAINBIRD
...Yes.

The kind of voice that rattles cages.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER (O.S.)
There we go. Wasn't easy getting your number. A lot of different addresses. Lot of names...

INT. "SHOP" HQ - CAPTAIN HOLLISTER'S OFFICE - SAME

CAPTAIN JANE HOLLISTER sits at a desk in an over-lit office. Late 40s, came up the military ranks. Tough or tender, as the job requires. Framed photos of her bull terriers on her desk.

The dog pics are joined by OPEN FILES, papers spread out.

SCANNING ACROSS THEM, WE SEE: PHOTOS OF RAINBIRD taken surreptitiously. From CCTV and surveillance.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
(on the phone)
I'm reactivating you, Rainbird. If that would be of interest.

Her eyes study a picture of Rainbird with a mop in his hands. One of several of him working as a JANITOR.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
You'll still be cleaning up other people's shit. Just not... literally.

The joke falls flat.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

Look, I know your story. The Shop used you up and threw you out, like so much unwanted trash. Wasn't right. But that was the old guard. I'm the new.

He listens.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

Something's happened. And I need it handled with the utmost discretion. I understand that was your specialty.

Another beat, waiting. She can play the long game. Finally:

RAINBIRD (V.O.)

What is the target?

A small smile of victory curls her mouth as she eyes the computer monitor before her: Young Andy on the screen, muted. The VHS interview tapes we saw at the opening.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

One for which you are... *uniquely qualified*. The runaways. Lot Six. But unlike the others, I need for you bring this quarry back alive. That something you can handle?

Rainbird is silent.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

I'll take that as a yes.
(then, a change of tone)
I have to say, I'm almost excited to be working with you. Heard a lot of stories coming up.

Static on the other end of the line.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

Okay, I get it. Strong and silent. Gotta maintain the image. I'll have Major Puckeridge send over the details.

(then)

Impress me.

She hangs up the phone.

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlie on her floor, drawing. Her idle doodling has manifest in a DARK FIGURE that rises, enormous, from a splotch of scribbling. Black hair in a long braid. Rainbird.

She studies the ominous stranger, curious.

VICKY (PRE-LAP)
We've barely been here a year...

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - LAUNDRY ROOM/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Andy pulls a suitcase down from the storage cabinet. Vicky paces in the doorway behind him, angry and protesting.

VICKY
...Charlie's finally getting comfortable.

ANDY
That blast was like a siren call. How long before they find out?

VICKY
It won't go past the local police.

ANDY
I bet it already has.

He pulls down another suitcase, a duffel bag.

VICKY
So your answer is to jerk her out of yet another school, keep her anxious and scared?

ANDY
You saw what she did to that bathroom! This is so much worse than we thought.

VICKY
We're making it worse. Moving every couple years, never getting settled. It's unstable. And instability leads to anxiety, and anxiety--

ANDY
--can burn down the fucking house. Yeah, I know. You have a better idea?

VICKY
We teach her to control it. Like you.

He turns on her sharply--

ANDY
Look at my eyes!

Vicky stares at his reddened, hemorrhaged eyes, quieted.

ANDY
Every time I use it, it chips away.
Takes a little bit of me.

He moves to the hamper, pulls out the shirt with the stain.

ANDY
My eyes literally bleed now! Is that
what you want for her?

VICKY
God. Why didn't you tell me?

He has no answer. Then:

VICKY
...But that doesn't mean it will
happen to her.

He just tosses the shirt back in the hamper, exasperated. She
stares at her hands, quiet and ashamed, because:

VICKY
I'm scared.

This stops Andy.

VICKY
What she did in that bathroom... What
if there was another kid in there? Hit
with all that heat. Can you imagine?
And it's only gonna get worse, the
older she gets. I don't have your
power. I can't push her if she loses
control. I can't make it stop...

Andy hurts for his wife. But still:

ANDY
We've blown our cover. If they catch
her, they will lock her in a cage. For
the rest of her life. And God knows
what they'll do to her then...

The thought is overwhelming.

ANDY
We're safer together. You know that.
We need to leave.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
If who catches me?

Charlie's standing behind them. Eyeing the suitcases.

ANDY
You're supposed to be in your room.

CHARLIE
You were yelling.

That quiets them. Time for truth:

ANDY
It's not safe here anymore, Charlie.

CHARLIE
Safe? What...

Vicky picks her up, sets her on the washing machine. Then she thinks. How does one say this?

VICKY
Do you know what a fugitive is?

Odd question.

CHARLIE
A bad person.

ANDY
Some are, yes.

VICKY
Are we bad people, Charlie?

CHARLIE
No. And you're not fugitives.

But now she's wondering...

ANDY
Do you know why we have to move every year or so?

CHARLIE
For your work.

He shakes his head, no.

ANDY
Because bad people are after us. And if they find us, we'll go to jail.

CHARLIE
Kids don't go to jail...
(growing scared)
Do they?

VICKY

This is not how we wanted to tell you--

ANDY

But we can move again. We can get away from here, away from these bad people.

CHARLIE

But *why*? Why do they want us?

ANDY

Because of the things we can do. The pushing. The heat.

CHARLIE

(realizing now)

But I ran to the bathroom so I wouldn't hurt anyone--

VICKY

And that was the right thing--

CHARLIE

(getting upset)

I tried to throw it in the water but it didn't work--

ANDY

Charlie, stay calm, sweetie--

CHARLIE

And now we're in trouble and we're gonna go to jail and it's my fault--

Charlie's starting to lose it. The room begins to warm.

ANDY

No no no--

VICKY

C'mon Charlie, five things you can see.

CHARLIE

I don't know why you're so mad at me--

VICKY

We're not mad--

CHARLIE

Why does Dad get to use it but I can't? It's not fair!

VIBRATIONS around the room. The air getting hotter.

VICKY

Breathe, Charlie. C'mon! You're okay--

CHARLIE
I'm not okay! Stop saying that--

VICKY
Andy...

CHARLIE
I'm not okay, I'm not okay, I'm not
okay, I'm not okay...

Andy grabs Charlie's shoulders, holds her, while he stares
deep into her trembling eyes.

ANDY
Charlie, you have to calm down.
Charlie holds his gaze for only a second before--

CHARLIE
I'M NOT OKAY!

--WAVES OF HEAT SUDDENLY FILL THE AIR, distorting it. Sweat
runs down Andy's face, mats Vicky's hair.

Vicky fights through her fear, steps in front of Andy, and
pulls Charlie into an embrace.

VICKY
Use your tools, honey. Breathe!

Charlie pushes away, fighting. The temperature SOARS. Vicky's
scared but she holds Charlie tight.

VICKY
C'mon! Breathe!

But she can't. Or she won't. Andy moves to the kitchen, eyes
wild with fear. He finds the fire extinguisher, picks it up.

VICKY
Five things, come on...

Charlie takes a deep breath, and another. Struggling against
the power. Vicky rubs her back.

CHARLIE
Shirt. Iron. Dryer. Soap. Mommy...
(touching things)
Ironing board, wall, Mommy's shirt...

As Charlie calms, the room slowly cools. Heat waves disappear.

VICKY
That's it, that's it...

CHARLIE
How come Daddy gets to use what he can
do but I can't?

VICKY
Just calm first, okay? Calm...

...And then it is calm. At last.

Charlie wipes her tears, hurt and scared and ashamed. Vicky stands, exhausted but relieved. Andy sets the extinguisher down, frayed and edgy.

ANDY
Good job, baby.

CHARLIE
I'm not a baby.

ANDY
Jesus, Charlie--

VICKY
He didn't mean it like that.

CHARLIE
I'm not a baby!

ANDY
Then stop acting like one!

HEAT WAVES reappear through the laundry room and kitchen.

VICKY
Andy!

CHARLIE
I don't want to be like this!

But Andy is exhausted, his patience spent.

ANDY
All we've ever done is try to protect
you--

CHARLIE
You lied to me. You lie all the time.
I hate who I am! And I hate YOU!

THE AIR DISTORTS WILDLY between all of them -- a blast of heat -- then Vicky's arms CATCH FIRE.

VICKY
Agghh!

Charlie falls backward, knocked off her feet by the force of her power, like the kick of a rifle.

ANDY

Oh god--

Andy TACKLES Vicky, smothering the flames with his body.

At last they go out.

Vicky SCREAMS in agony. BLISTERS cover her bare arms, raw skin exposed beneath the white foam.

Charlie grabs the cordless phone, dials 911.

911 OPERATOR (ON PHONE)

911, is this an emergency?

CHARLIE

My mom needs an ambulance--

VICKY

No!

Charlie, confused. The pain is extreme but Vicky swallows it.

911 OPERATOR (ON PHONE)

What's your address?

VICKY

I'll be okay, I promise.

But the tears in her eyes tell a different story.

911 OPERATOR (ON PHONE)

What's your address, dear?

A long beat...

Finally Charlie hangs up. And the room begins to cool.

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - LATER

Andy spreads ointment on Vicky's bloody wounds, delicate. She winces in pain, immense. But she fights through.

VICKY

Can they trace our address from the call?

ANDY

I don't know. If they come, we'll just tell them it was a grease fire or something.

THROUGH THE WINDOW, we see Charlie pacing outside, rubbing her rabbit's foot raw. Her tear-stained eyes glance at her parents every few seconds.

VICKY
She can't stay out there all night.

ANDY
Are you ready for her to come in?

A long beat, then finally Vicky shakes her head. No.

Andy wraps gauze over the blisters. It hurts like hell. Tears leak from Vicky's eyes.

ANDY
I can take her somewhere. Ice cream or
a movie. Let you rest a bit.

Vicky nods, lips trembling. She is a study in contradictions.
Mother's love, mortal fear.

EXT. MCGEE HOUSE - NIGHT

Andy steps outside. Charlie still pacing in the driveway.

ANDY
Hey kiddo. How about I take you for
Moose Tracks? Would you like that?

CHARLIE
Is Mommy okay?

ANDY
She will be.

Charlie glances through the window. Sees her mother at the table, arms wrapped in bandages. Charlie lowers her head.

CHARLIE
...It was supposed to be you.

Her words quiet, barely audible.

ANDY
What's that?

CHARLIE
It was supposed to be you.

She walks to the car. Andy holds, quieted by her words.

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - NIGHT

Vicky stands at the window, watches the car back out of the driveway. She gives a soft wave as the headlights pull away.

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Vicky folds her clothes and puts them in a suitcase, opened on the bed. Resigned now to a life on the run.

But the packing is painful with burned and bandaged hands. She closes the lid, picks it up -- but it slips from her injured grip. Clothes spill all over the floor.

She sits on the bed, broken. Tears form in her eyes. She bends to pick up the mess when she hears...

Something? Nothing? She listens quietly. The house is silent. Must be her imagination, until... A door creak? Footsteps?

VICKY

Hello?

There is no response. She walks to the...

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Vicky moves down the darkened corridor. Suddenly nervous. The house remains utterly silent, but for her footsteps...

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She flips on the lights. But the kitchen is empty. Suddenly-- A KNOCK at the front door. She startles, turns.

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Vicky approaches the front door, cautious. Then she sees, through the window, a POLICE CAR. She takes a breath, opens the door, revealing OFFICER PIERCE.

OFFICER PIERCE

Ma'am. I'm just following up on an emergency call earlier tonight.

VICKY

Yes, sorry about that. It was nothing.

He clocks her bandages.

OFFICER PIERCE

Are you sure about that?

VICKY

...It was a grease fire. On the stove. My daughter overreacted.

Officer Pierce is skeptical. He speaks quietly.

OFFICER PIERCE
Ma'am, if you or your daughter need
help--

VICKY
It's nothing like that. Honestly.

He holds another beat, reluctant, then finally nods.

OFFICER PIERCE
You have a good night, then.

He turns to go. Vicky exhales relief, closes the door. She listens as the engine cranks, and the car pulls away.

She turns to the living room -- but stops in her tracks. Someone sits in a chair across the room. Cloaked in darkness. How long have they been there?

VICKY
Who are you?
(no response)
How did you get in?

Still nothing. Vicky's nerves starting to fray.

VICKY
You can't just walk into someone's home--

The shadow stands, huge, and steps slowly from the darkness...

Rainbird. We see him now in full, for the first time:

The giant is Native American -- Cherokee -- with a face that is harsh and scarred, though not from nature. Something terrible happened to this man. He is a nightmare come to life.

Vicky swallows down her terror. Rainbird's eyes find her bandaged hands. She slips them behind her back on instinct.

RAINBIRD
Where did they go?

He steps closer. She backs up.

RAINBIRD
Your husband and the girl?

She doesn't answer. So he grabs her by the face, pulls her close. And looks into her eyes. As if trying to read them.

RAINBIRD
"Ice cream... or the movies?"

Vicky, terrified. *How did he....?*

RAINBIRD

Did you think you were special?

He lets her go. She falls into a wall, breathes heavy, scared.

VICKY

You weren't part of Lot Six...

RAINBIRD

Before they could test their poison on pretty white co-eds, they had to use lab rats. Those with no recourse. People no one would look for. The reservation...

(then)

They scarred my face and fried my brain. I believe you know the feeling. The power, too. So don't be stupid.

Vicky holds her ground. Then, with utter conviction:

VICKY

Charlie burned me, it's true. The little bitch. Goddamn monster. I told him to take her, take her so far away I'd never see her again. She ruined my life. I hate her.

Her heart races. Praying he believes her. He studies her frightened eyes. Finally:

RAINBIRD

You're a bad liar.

A tense beat...

Then a LAMP on a nearby cabinet FLIES WILDLY ACROSS THE ROOM toward Rainbird -- he DUCKS and it SMASHES INTO THE WALL.

RAINBIRD

...And you're out of practice.

Vicky PULLS AWAY and DASHES toward the hallway--

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She rushes down the dark hall into--

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She slams the door shut behind her, locks it. Looks around, panicked. Dashes to the bathroom, just as--

Rainbird KICKS DOWN THE DOOR, storms into the room--

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vicky slams the door, locks it, searches for a weapon. Toothpaste, hairbrush, soap, all worthless.

BOOM.

Foot on the door. Vicky grabs a razor from the tub.

BOOM.

She desperately tries to pull the blade from its plastic casing. But her bandaged hands make it hard.

BOOM.

The casing in her mouth, she pries free the blade. She cuts her tongue -- *agh!* -- spits out the razor.

It hits the ground and the blade pops free.

Blood runs from her mouth as she grabs the razor. She hides it behind her back as--

THE DOOR SHATTERS AND BURSTS OPEN.

Vicky cowers in the corner. Rainbird enters, stands above her.

RAINBIRD
Brave. But ignorant.

She stares up at him, heart racing. Razor cupped in her hand.

VICKY
How could you work for them? Help
them?! After what they did to you?

RAINBIRD
Better to live my life on the run? In
constant fear, like you?

His eyes study hers.

RAINBIRD
Drop the blade, or I'll use it on you.

But she doesn't drop it. She holds it out, defiant. He looks at her with a warrior's respect.

RAINBIRD
Do you ever wonder... what the eyes of
the dying see?
(then)
I don't. Not anymore.

The blade trembles in her hand...

THEN HE CHARGES HER--

She kicks at him, but he's so much stronger than she is. She slaps at his hands but he grabs her wounded arms and SQUEEZES.

VICKY

Agghh!!

The blade falls from her hands. He grabs her throat now. Vicky jerks and contorts, struggling.

He brings her face close to his, very close, looking into her wide, bulging eyes...

But something dark and ferocious seems to boil up within her, until suddenly--

THE CABINET DOORS BURST OPEN--

EVERYTHING INSIDE pelts Rainbird in a telekinetic spasm--

A barrage of cans, splinters of wood, lightbulbs--

It is quick and brutal and he tumbles backwards, bleeding--

Vicky crawls for the door, but Rainbird grabs for her, catches her ankle, yanks her back--

AND SUDDENLY HE IS ON TOP OF HER.

Pinning her with his knees, all is instantly quiet, but for the pulsing of the air and their labored breathing.

Cuts and bruises all over Rainbird's face. Vicky's too. BLOOD smears the floor as they bleed together in the silence.

VICKY

My daughter's stronger than you.
She'll find a way.

Rainbird almost admires her. He carefully wraps his fingers around her throat, then leans in close to see her eyes in ECU, PUSHING into the deep wells of her pupils as--

INT. ANDY'S SEDAN - NIGHT

Andy and Charlie drive home, finishing their root beer floats. Charlie has calmed, but her thoughts remain heavy and sad.

EXT. MCGEE HOUSE - NIGHT

Andy's car moves up the quiet street, pulls into the driveway and parks. The house is dark; no lights are on.

INT. ANDY'S CAR - SAME

Andy shuts off the engine. Charlie studies the house, holding an empty cup of soda.

CHARLIE
Do you think she'll forgive me?

ANDY
She's your mom. She will always
forgive you. No matter what.

This gives Charlie solace. They climb out of the car.

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Andy enters the darkness -- but Charlie stops at the door.

CHARLIE
I feel weird...

Andy glances back, concerned, but plays it off:

ANDY
Too much root beer.

A tense beat before he finds the lights. They finally POP ON--
But the room is empty.

ANDY
She's probably asleep. I'll go check.
(re: her float)
Throw that away, put on your PJs.

Charlie heads for the kitchen. Andy drops his keys and wallet on the kitchen table, walks toward the bedroom...

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Andy enters the shadowy hall. The floor creaks beneath him...

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Charlie throws the float cup in the trash, washes her hands in the sink. She dries her hands with a towel, then sees--

DROPS OF BLOOD on the floor. Leading to the laundry room...

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

Andy enters the room, dark as pitch. But doesn't turn on the light. He approaches the bed, quiet... Sees a lump beneath the covers... But it's a pillow. He turns to the bathroom...

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - LAUNDRY ROOM - SAME

...Just as Charlie enters the laundry room, following the blood trail. Across the floor, up to the closet ironing board.

She senses something. *Someone.*

Charlie turns to see the dark silhouette she sketched in her notebook. In the flesh. Standing in her kitchen. Rainbird.

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - SAME

Andy hits the lights. Sees dozens of toiletries scattered about. What the hell? Shattered mirrors. The busted door...

...And blood. Lots of blood.

ANDY

Charlie!

He bolts out of the room...

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - KITCHEN/LAUNDRY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

...And into the kitchen, where Rainbird holds Charlie in his grip, his hand covering her eyes. Vicky's RAZOR at her throat.

RAINBIRD

Surrender.

They lock eyes with each other.

ANDY

Where's my wife?

RAINBIRD

...Indisposed.

Andy widens his eyes and cracks his neck, using *the push* on Rainbird. WE SEE blood vessels pop in the sclera of his eyes.

ANDY

Let her go.

Rainbird stands stone-still, unmoved.

ANDY
Let her go.

More vessels burst in Andy's eyes, the sclera is red, bruises form as the flesh below his eyes swells with blood. And the razor at Charlie's neck slips slightly before...

CHARLIE
 Daddy?

...Rainbird's face cracks into a smile.

Andy, stunned -- why doesn't the power work?

CHARLIE
 Daddy...

That's when all of them notice the room PULSING. Low heat and dull vibrations make the air waver and distort.

ANDY
 You feel that? Let us go or it'll only get worse.

Rainbird's heavy hand remains fixed over Charlie's eyes.

RAINBIRD
 She has no aim without sight. If she's like the rest of us.

A beat as that hits Andy -- *the rest of us?*

RAINBIRD
 You know what it costs, don't you, Andy? To hurt someone. To take a life. Would you ask that of your own child?

Andy swallows; the words hit him deep. He steps forward.

Rainbird presses the razor against Charlie's neck. Andy stops. Charlie points toward the laundry room, though she can't see.

CHARLIE
 Daddy, there's... blood.

Andy looks that way, sees the blood. The temperature rises.

CHARLIE
 Where's Mommy...?

NOW THE HEAT SOARS. Candles MELT. Lids POP OFF mason jars.

CHARLIE
 Where's Mommy? Tell me now!

THE ROOM VIBRATES WILDLY, distorting everything. Rainbird watches the shuddering destruction with fascination.

The heat SHATTERS A LIGHTBULB -- the shards fall upon Rainbird. Cabinet doors fall, the heat weakening their thin hinges. The closet door opens and the ironing board drops--

And Vicky's dead body falls out.

CHARLIE
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!

A MASSIVE PULSE OF HEAT knocks both Andy and Rainbird to the ground -- the razor leaves a thin cut on Charlie's neck.

Andy scrambles to his feet and grabs Charlie--

ANDY
Don't look, just breathe, stay calm--

He pulls her toward the side door, but Charlie looks over her shoulder, desperate for her mother, anger boiling within...

And just before Vicky's body disappears from view, Charlie reaches out her hand toward her dead mother--

CHARLIE
MOMMY!

AND THE ROOM IS HIT WITH A TSUNAMI OF INVISIBLE HEAT. Plates shatter. Steel warps. Electrical sparks.

Rainbird's clothes are charred, the skin on his hands blackens, his eyebrows are singed from his head...

Andy turns around at the sound -- shock and awe -- then they slip through just before the heat takes it--

But Rainbird remains in the kitchen, staggering to his feet, staring at the breadth of the destruction.

Rainbird looks at his hands, the blisters, the second-degree burns... and *smiles*. He cannot hide his wonder.

EXT. MCGEE HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Andy and Charlie exit into the dark night, race toward Andy's car. They climb in, then Andy realizes--

ANDY
My keys--

They jump out of the car just as Rainbird charges at them.

ANDY
Shit...

Andy pulls Charlie into the neighbor's yard. They run, as...

INT. MCGEE HOUSE - LAUNDRY ROOM - SAME

Splayed out on the floor, Vicky's desiccated body is covered in flakes of paint and the falling snow of crumbling drywall.

EXT. MAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Andy and Charlie reach the main road. Charlie in shock, her eyes wide and glassy. Andy spots HEADLIGHTS approaching.

A beat, thinking...

THEN HE STEPS INTO THE STREET in front of the moving car--

Driver SLAMS THE BRAKES.

The car SKIDS OUT inches before Andy. He walks to the door as the angry driver, DWAYNE, 30s, climbs out--

DWAYNE

The hell is wrong with you?!

As Andy approaches, he summons the deep strength. Nausea strikes him, he nearly vomits. This night has been too much.

Dwayne sees the sickness in his eyes.

DWAYNE

...You okay, man?

Andy locks in on Dwayne from a few feet away.

ANDY

I just need some help.

Now the LOW RUMBLE, the shiver runs through Andy. He winces in pain, fights to hold eye contact.

DWAYNE

Are you sick? I don't want--

Andy GRABS Dwayne by the collar, brings his face close... Andy's eyes widen, he cracks his neck and--

--Dwayne's eyes instantly DILATE. BUT IN ANDY'S POV, Dwayne BLURS, the sound of the engine like a howling tornado.

ANDY

This is an Uber.

Dwayne blinks slowly, then:

DWAYNE

The hell are you talking about?

Andy's legs buckle. He fears it didn't take, and the pain is so strong. But he fights through.

ANDY
You drive people for money. And I need
you to take me and my daughter.

Charlie watches in fear from the corner. Looking behind her -- where Rainbird appears in the road, approaching.

CHARLIE
Daddy! He's coming!

Finally--

DWAYNE
Where would you like to go, sir?

--Andy turns around to see Rainbird running at full speed towards them...

ANDY
...East, towards the coast.

Dwayne scrambles into the car as Andy buckles over, clutching his stomach, and yells to Charlie for help.

ANDY
C'mon, Charlie!

She runs into the road -- other cars approaching -- helps Andy into the back seat where he quickly passes out.

Dwayne shifts into gear and peels away...

Just as Rainbird reaches the roadside, catching a glimpse of the license plate.

INT. DWAYNE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER (DRIVING)

Andy is spread across the backseat. Charlie pulls his unconscious head into her lap.

CHARLIE
Daddy... Oh Daddy...

Blood pours from Andy's eyes. The push did more damage this time than it's ever done. Charlie wipes blood away from Andy's face with her sleeve, looks to Dwayne.

CHARLIE
Do you have any tissues?

Dwayne glances warily at them in the rearview.

DWAYNE
I don't, I'm sorry.

Andy's eyes flutter awake. He struggles to pull a handkerchief from his back pocket. Charlie takes it, dabs blood from his cheeks. Then the realization begins to hit her.

CHARLIE
Mommy... He killed Mommy...

ANDY
Shhh...

CHARLIE
We have to go back for her.

Andy uses nearly all his strength to reach up and put an arm around his daughter.

ANDY
I've got you, Charlie. Mommy's gone.
But I've got you, I promise...

She closes her eyes in pain and the air shimmers around her as the heat begins to emerge yet again...

ANDY
Just try to rest, Sweetie. Please.
Please, just rest...

Andy catches sight of Dwayne's eyes in the rearview.

ANDY
...Let's enjoy this beautiful morning.

Dwayne is momentarily confused, glancing up at the night sky -- *this beautiful morning?*

Charlie clenches her teeth, wincing as the windows start to steam, and then... She exhales. Breathes slow. The car cools.

Andy passes out, bloody tears rolling down his face.

Charlie leans back, eyeing the passing landscape, exhausted, and wipes away tears.

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Dwayne's car passes beneath a large green sign:

90 EAST TO BOSTON

INT. DWAYNE'S CAR - DAY (DRIVING - VISION)

TIGHT ON ANDY, still asleep on Charlie's lap. Handkerchief soaked red. Charlie sleeps, too.

A bright morning. Greenery swooshes by. Dwayne's cell rings. He stares at it a curious beat, then answers via Bluetooth.

DWAYNE
...Hello?

A woman on the car speakers. DWAYNE'S WIFE.

DWAYNE'S WIFE (V.O.)
Where are you?!

DWAYNE
Morning, babe.

DWAYNE'S WIFE (V.O.)
Morning? The hell you talking bout,
Dwayne?

Charlie wakes, groggy.

DWAYNE
Easy. I've got a customer. She can hear.

DWAYNE'S WIFE (V.O.)
She?!

DWAYNE
Yeah *she*. I'm just taking a fare.

DWAYNE'S WIFE (V.O.)
What in God's green asshole are you
talking about, Dwayne?

DWAYNE
I said I'm just... taking a fare?

Dwayne looks at the highway, the passing signs... and the little girl in the backseat. Like he's coming to from a fog.

And suddenly the DAYLIGHT DISSIPATES -- the passing greenery quickly darkens, lights blink on. It is ACTUALLY NIGHT.

DWAYNE
(realizing)
...On this beautiful morning.

Andy pushed the images into Dwayne's mind.

CHARLIE
Daddy. Wake up, Daddy.

DWAYNE WHIPS A HARD RIGHT -- barely catching an off-ramp.
Charlie shakes Andy.

CHARLIE
Daddy! Wake up!

Andy moans groggily. VIBRATIONS fill the car as Dwayne stares
Charlie down in the rearview mirror.

DWAYNE
I don't know who the hell you people
are, or what you did to me...

He pulls the car onto the shoulder of the ramp, throws it in
Park and spins to the backseat. Andy's eyes finally open.

DWAYNE
...But you better get your bleeding
butts out right now, or I'll have the
cops here in five minutes.

Andy sits up, tries to find Dwayne's eyes again.

ANDY
It's okay, pal. Just keep driving,
like I said.

But Dwayne grabs him by the collar.

DWAYNE
Get out. Or I'll drag your ass out.

Andy puts up his hands in surrender.

ANDY
Okay, okay... Let's get out, honey.

Charlie opens the door and scoots out. Andy follows.

EXT. ROADSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Dwayne screeches off, throwing dust in his wake.

Then Andy and Charlie are alone. On the side of the road. In
the middle of the night.

CHARLIE
What happened, Daddy?

ANDY
I'm too weak. It slipped away.

He takes her hand and they walk into the dark night, until at
last they disappear.

INT. ABANDONED CAR - LATER

CRASH! Andy breaks the passenger window of an ABANDONED CAR on the side of the highway. Headlights speed past. He reaches through and opens the door, brushing glass off the seat.

CHARLIE
Whose car is this?

ANDY
I don't know. But they won't need it tonight.

Charlie climbs into the backseat. Fast food bags and soda cans litter the car. A mess.

CHARLIE
Gross...

Andy walks around the side, pulls the orange IMPOUND WARNING STICKER off the side window then gets in front.

CHARLIE
Where are we going?

ANDY
Don't worry about that.

CHARLIE
Because you don't know.

To this he has no retort. He takes off his jacket, wads it up into a makeshift pillow and hands it back to her.

ANDY
It's late. We're tired. Get some sleep.
We'll figure out a plan. I promise.

She lays down on the jacket. But she doesn't close her eyes.

Andy settles in the front seat. Looks out into the night. Wonders how he's going to get them out of this mess when...

WE SEE A FLASH of Vicky at the table, those beautiful eyes.

...Andy crumbles, emotional.

Charlie eyes him from the backseat as he cries. She's worried, never has seen her father like this before.

CHARLIE
I miss her too.

Andy tries to gather himself.

CHARLIE
But we're strong, right?

Andy nods. Charlie sits up.

CHARLIE
And we can do things.

ANDY
We can.

CHARLIE
When the power comes, the feeling...
I wonder if maybe I let it go, all the
way, then... maybe I can control it,
you know?

But Andy knows the bitter truth.

ANDY
The only way to really control it,
Charlie... is not to use it.

Charlie sits with this. The ominous specter of her power.

YOUNG NURSE (PRE-LAP)
It's this way, ma'am...

INT. VETERANS HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MORNING

A YOUNG NURSE ushers Captain Hollister down a corridor. Hollister wears a sharp skirt and jacket combo, carries a CARTON OF CIGARETTES in her hand.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
He get a lot of visitors?

The nurse snickers, but it wasn't a joke. They come to a set of metal doors. The Nurse swipes her card, the doors unlock and they move through, passing a sign:

HERMAN PYNCHOT PSYCHIATRIC WARD

INT. VETERANS HOSPITAL - PSYCHIATRIC WARD - CONTINUOUS

The Nurse leads Hollister to a heavy wooden door. She knocks, then opens without waiting for a response.

YOUNG NURSE
Dr. Wanless, you have a guest.

INSIDE THE ROOM, it's all shadows. A man stands by the lone window, wearing a hospital gown, his back to us.

Dr. Wanless, the man from the Lot Six experiments. But he's older now, feeble. Hacks and coughs frequently, his diseased lungs doing their best to keep him alive.

An ashtray rests precariously on the window ledge. Wanless shreds an unlit cigarette with his shriveled hands, dumps the tobacco into the tray in small little mounds.

YOUNG NURSE
(to Hollister)
Would you like me to stay? Or should I call a guard to assist you?

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
I'm quite capable, thank you.

She nods and exits, leaving the door cracked behind her. Hollister gently closes it shut, then turns to Wanless.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Good morning, Joseph. I brought you something. Your favorite brand, too.

She sets the carton of smokes on the unmade bed. Wanless makes no move for it. We still haven't seen his face.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
I'm Captain Hollister. Newly appointed, DSI.

Still nothing. Wanless fishes another cigarette from the pack, begins to shred it like the other. Hollister sits on the bed.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
So how do you like this place? If it's not to your standards, we'd be happy to move you elsewhere. Just say the word. Our government owes you a great debt, Doctor, always will--

WANLESS
Why are you here, Captain?

His face remains turned to the window, a mystery.

WANLESS
I made calls to your predecessor. They went unanswered. I visited. He never saw me. For years. And now, they stuff a new face in the same suit and that face comes knocking on my door, completely oblivious to--

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
(crossing her legs)
--With all due respect, Doctor, I don't think Captain McConnell would've done much for this skirt. He doesn't have the legs for it.

Wanless sneers.

WANLESS
Completely oblivious to the dire
 nature of the situation we've created.

She takes that in a beat, then *smiles*, for she knows:

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
 We found them, Joseph. The runaways...

At this Wanless turns to us at last. His once-strong face is shriveled and jaundiced, his yellow eyes hard as stone.

She pats the bed next to her.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
 Shall we talk?

INT. ABANDONED CAR - MORNING

Andy wakes, shields his eyes from the bright sun. His cheek red from a night pressed against the window. Stiff neck, tired bones. He turns to Charlie... But she's gone.

ANDY
 Charlie!

He scrambles quickly out--

CHARLIE (PRE-LAP)
 C'mere, kitty kitty...

EXT. VACANT LOT - MORNING

Charlie kneels in a VACANT LOT by a row of empty WAREHOUSES. A STRAY CAT lingering nearby, but it's cagey.

CHARLIE
 It's okay, I'm nice.

The cat runs away, Charlie chases after it.

CHARLIE
 Don't run off, c'mon...

She corners the cat near a dumpster. It sees an escape route but Charlie stares, cracks her neck and...

CHARLIE
 I won't hurt you.

...with a *rusty screech*, the dumpster moves a foot, blocking the cat. The push but, unlike Andy, there is no blood. Charlie moves closer. She reaches out her hand to pet it--

BUT WITH A HISS, THE CAT LUNGES AT HER, scratches her hand--

CHARLIE

Ow!

HER ANGER SENDS THE POWER OUT -- the cat is knocked backward by the heat blast -- more focused, almost tactical.

Charlie covers her mouth with her hand, shocked as Andy rounds the corner in a panic, sees something horrible. We only hear--

THE HIDEOUS, GARGLED CRIES of the mutilated cat.

CHARLIE

(confused, scared)

...He scratched me.

Andy looks at the cat, then back at Charlie.

ANDY

Honey, he's in pain. You have to put him out of his misery.

CHARLIE

But I didn't mean to...

Her eyes water. But Andy holds firm.

ANDY

This is what it costs.

The power. The curse. She looks back at the cat, tortured.

At last she exhales, steps toward the cat. WE GET a brief glimpse of the half-charred, still-living thing.

THEN HOLD ON ANDY as we hear a BLAST off-screen...

EXT. VACANT LOT - LATER

Andy and Charlie pat down a MOUND OF DIRT, a makeshift pet grave. They stand, dust off their bloodied hands.

CHARLIE

Can we say a prayer?

Andy, exasperated. He closes his eyes and prays... awkwardly.

ANDY

Dear God. Please bless this cat. Let him, or her, be happy in... Cat Heaven. Amen.

CHARLIE

...And bless Mommy too.

That hits Andy. Charlie places a small stone at the top of the grave. They hold a beat, thinking of her.

ANDY

Mommy wanted you to learn more about your power. Because it's special. Different from hers and mine. She wanted you to learn how to control it. But... that worries me. Because too much and it'll hurt you. Like it hurts me.

CHARLIE

But I don't feel the heat when it happens.

ANDY

It hurts you from the inside, I mean.

CHARLIE

Actually...
(a little sheepish)
It kind of feels good.

ANDY

Felt good to me, too. At first. But good won't last. C'mon...

They head back toward the abandoned car.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER (PRE-LAP)

As you know, the runaways have a young daughter, they call her Charlie...

INT. VETERANS HOSPITAL - DR. WANLESS'S ROOM - MORNING

Wanless now sits across from the Captain, concerned.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

...I want to help her.

WANLESS

You want to use her.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

Girl can't help what she is. Poor thing was brain-fucked from birth. That's on us, and I'll take the blame -- even though I was in grad school when y'all orchestrated this shitshow. But here's the good news, Doc: you're looking at it all wrong. This is an opportunity. A chance to turn past failure into present success.

WANLESS

When life hands you lemons, make lemonade? You really are naïve.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

Lemonade was always too sweet for my tongue. I say when life hands you lemons, you ask for salt and tequila, jump up on the bar-top. You *maximize the moment*.

She leans in for the hard sell.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

I want you to come back, Doctor Wanless. I want you to help me.

Wanless shreds another cigarette, bits of tobacco under his nails. Hollister watches and waits. At last:

WANLESS

The girl's power is in its infancy. But she's growing, becoming a young woman. Soon the power will grow too. And some day, Captain, she may be capable of creating a nuclear explosion simply by the force of her will.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

And your answer to this is... *what?* To kill her? Put her down like a rabid animal? She's a *child*, for God's sake. We have an obligation to help her. Keep her safe.

WANLESS

And *exploit* her...

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

So high and mighty you are now. Do I believe our nation is worth defending? You bet your hairy balls. It's my job. *Our* job. And if her powers can aid us in our efforts, all the better. Don't lecture me on morality, Doctor. You developed Lot Six. You gave it to those kids.

WANLESS

And it was a mistake.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

Too fucking bad! It's done. Open your eyes. Our world is on the cusp of destruction. If saving Charlie's life means giving us an edge, you better believe I'm gonna welcome it with open arms. I'm gonna fight for our country.

WANLESS

Right or wrong, yes. You're deluded, Captain. Blind to your greed.

(MORE)

WANLESS (CONT'D)
Heed my words carefully: Terminate the girl. Or one day she will destroy us all. Do you hear me? Terminate her!

Hollister eyes him a hard beat, then stands.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
I hoped this would go better, I really did. The offer stands. Call for me when you realize I'm right.
(then)
Enjoy the smokes. They're better if you stick em in your mouth.

She leaves Wanless shaking with frustration, hacking...

EXT. ACCESS ROAD - MORNING

Charlie sits on the roof of the car now, throwing rocks. Another car passes, Andy waves... but they drive on.

ANDY
People suck.

Andy walks back to the car, sits on the hood. Charlie tosses another rock, thinking about it all.

CHARLIE
They won't really put us in jail...?

ANDY
I committed a crime. A bad one.

CHARLIE
But me?

Andy eyes her. Is she ready for the truth?

ANDY
They'll study you. Try to figure out what makes you tick. On the inside.

CHARLIE
Like the frog...

They sit with that heaviness.

An old FARM TRUCK rattles by, the driver gives them a look... Then he hits the brakes, pulls to the shoulder.

CHARLIE
You think it's safe?

ANDY
I think we need to get off this road. But we have to be clever.

AT THE TRUCK

An old man eyes the approaching twosome in the side mirror. IRV MANDERS, 70. He rolls down his window as they near.

ANDY
Didn't think anyone was gonna stop.

IRV
For this purty little miss? A shame.
What's your name, sweetheart?

Charlie is cagey but--

CHARLIE
I'm Roberta. But they call me Bobbi.

IRV
Well, Bobbi, where you headed today?

ANDY
Boston. My wife's visiting her sister
and... ran into a little problem.

Irv eyes Andy shrewdly.

IRV
Did she now?

ANDY
Labor, actually. Roberta's got a new
brother. One-forty-one this morning.

IRV
Well, good news for a bad day. Need a
jump? Flat tire?

ANDY
I wish. Rental car's a lemon. We're
just trying to get to the baby, and by
the time they send somebody out
here... We'll just deal with it later.

Irv is dubious. But he is not unkind.

IRV
Boston's a haul. But hop in and I'll
get you thirty miles closer anyhow.

Andy and Charlie move around the truck, climb in. Irv shifts into gear and the truck pulls back onto the highway.

INT. MANDERS TRUCK - MOVING - MORNING

Irv drives. Charlie's head rests on her father's shoulder. Andy in turn rests his head against the window.

IRV
Long night?

ANDY
Didn't sleep much. Excited, you know.

IRV
Gettin close to lunchtime. The wife and I usually put out a little sandwich spread about now. Why don't you come to the house, fuel up for a bit.

ANDY
I don't know, the baby's waiting...
He looks at Charlie; dark shadows line her eyes.

ANDY
...But Roberta needs to eat.

IRV
Coming up...

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

The truck turns off the main road, onto dirt and gravel.
Middle of nowhere.

EXT. MANDERS FARM - DAY

A long, unpaved driveway leads to a rustic house in the distance. The truck kicks up dirt as it moves down the drive.

Tall grass and weeds rise up on either side. An old cattle pen sits empty. A rusted-out Toyota on blocks.

ACROSS THE YARD, a host of CHICKENS wander free.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The truck parks in front of the house. Closer now, we see dirty windows, fading paint. Andy and Charlie climb out. He eyes the scene, wary. Puts an arm around Charlie.

IRV
Come on in, let's get some food in your bellies.

Irv heads for the house. Andy and Charlie reluctantly follow.

INT. FARMHOUSE - FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

A house full of darkness and shadows. Curtains pulled closed over all the windows. A BLAST OF LIGHT as the front door opens. Irv leads Andy and Charlie inside.

IRV
The missus likes to save on the power
bill, if you know what I mean.
(calling out)
Essi, we're home!

There is no answer. Irv flips on lights, leads them into...

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Pale fluorescents flicker to life. Dirty plates stacked on the counter, more in the sink.

IRV
Pardon the mess.

ANDY
If this is a bother you don't have to--

IRV
Nonsense. The girl is hungry.

Irv walks to the fridge, calls out.

IRV
Got some guests for supper, Essi!
Little Bobbi and her dad...
(to Andy)
Don't think I caught your name.

ANDY
...Frank.

IRV
Bobbi and Frank!

CHARLIE
Can I go see the chickens?

IRV
Of course. They'd be thrilled to meet
you, ma'am.

Charlie smiles, heads out the front door. Andy watches her go, wary, then turns to find Irv pulling food from the fridge. Meats, cheeses, chips, soda, bread...

IRV
Think this'll do?

ANDY
It's plenty. You're very generous.

Andy begins assembling a sandwich from the bounty, covertly checking the cheese for mold. Irv pulls a can of Keystone Light from the fridge, cracks it open and hands it to Andy.

IRV
Cold beer for the new dad?

ANDY
Thanks.

Andy takes a long pull. It's... not great.

IRV
So whaddya do, Frank? To keep the lights on?

ANDY
I'm a... life coach.

IRV
No shit? Like Tony Robbins on TV?

ANDY
Not really.

IRV
Ha, I saw that documentary on Netflix! Ol' Tony cusses like a sonuvabitch but folks seem to like him.

ANDY
They do...

IRV
People'll give you their life savings just to tell 'em they're special.
(chuckles to himself)
Life coach. Man, what'll they think of next. The whole world's gone to hell.

Andy tenses. Irv eyes him, picking at the tab on his beer.

IRV
Probably oughta call your wife, huh?
Check in on the baby.

ANDY
...Yeah, probably should.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - SAME

Charlie wanders through the chickens, dropping bread. They peck around, nibbling. Charlie moves around the house...

AT A SIDE WINDOW

Charlie looks up at the dirty glass, a couple feet above her head. Curious, she looks around for something to stand on.

An old wooden milk crate, tossed in the grass. Charlie grabs it, flips it over and sets it beneath the window.

She steps on it; the wood is old and weak. Not quite high enough, so she goes up on her tip-toes. The wood might give at any moment or the window screen. Her eyes reach the glass...

IN CHARLIE'S POV, looking into a shadowy room, its door cracked open... She scans the room, cluttered with books and knick-knacks, before--

CRASH! The screen gives way and Charlie tumbles headlong into the dark room, stirring up plumes of dust motes.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Irv turns his head at the dull vibration. Andy follows his glance, nervous. Then Irv turns back, ignoring.

IRV
...You were saying?

Andy tries a casual shrug.

ANDY
Just a lifestyle choice, that's all. You see these kids, heads buried in their phones. It's not healthy. So anyway, that's why I don't have one.

IRV
Uh-huh...

Irv pulls out a bulky Android phone.

IRV
Well. You can use mine.

He opens a browser. Much to Andy's chagrin.

IRV
What hospital's she at? I'll Google the number.

Andy reaches for the phone--

ANDY
I'll type it in for you.

Irv pulls away.

IRV
Don't get handsy. Which hospital?

Andy, exasperated.

ANDY
There's no hospital. And no baby. No
nothing. But I guess you figured that.

IRV
Considered it, certainly. Thanks for
telling the truth. So what's the rest
of it, "Frank?"

INT. FARMHOUSE - STUDY - SAME

Charlie stands and cautiously examines the room. Slowly
adjusting to the darkness. Sees books, boxes and--

--THE WHITES OF TWO EYES STARING AT HER FROM THE SHADOWS--

CHARLIE
Agh!

Charlie gasps, covers her mouth as she backs away from a
hulking wheelchair that holds ESMERALDA "ESSI" MANDERS, 60s.
A quadriplegic with brain damage. Unable to move or speak.
Hooked to a machine that helps her breathe.

Charlie settles, realizing she shouldn't be scared.

CHARLIE
...Hello.

Essi's eyes are hollow, starting straight ahead.

CHARLIE
My name's Char-- uh, Roberta. You're
Essi?

OFF ESSI'S EYES, as they flick to Charlie for the first time.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Irv studies Andy with a hard eye as Andy nervously drinks.

ANDY
It's not what you're thinking.

IRV
How you know what I'm thinking?

Irv's on edge now. Andy locks eyes with him, considering a
push when--

CHARLIE

--I'm sorry, I didn't mean...

--Charlie emerges the study, looking frazzled and spent. Something happened in there, but what?

Irv leaps up and races over...

CHARLIE

The window was open.

IRV

Like hell it was.

Irv is angry and suspicious. Andy puts an arm around Charlie.

ANDY

We-- We should get going. We've caused you too much trouble already.

Irv eyes the troublemakers...

IRV

Oh yeah? Where you heading? How you getting there, *Frank*?

Andy shrugs. He doesn't know.

Irv looks at Charlie, scared, head buried in her father's arms. He exhales, calming.

IRV

Look, I overreact sometimes. Especially with the missus. I apologize.

Andy glances toward the study. He still hasn't seen her.

IRV

...Oh, how rude of me.

They walk to the threshold of the study, look in. Essi is where we left her, staring at the ceiling. But they are not close enough to see the fear and anger now alive in her eyes.

IRV

Essi, this is Frank. I guess you already met Roberta.

Andy is humbled by the sight of her.

IRV

She was making a left out on Route 14 and some a-hole ran a light. She never saw it coming...

Charlie eyes the old man, dubious.

ANDY
I'm so sorry.

IRV
It was thirty-two years ago next month. Lost our son that day, too... But Essi's alive, and for that I'm more than grateful.

It may feel a little forced, but that's understandable.

The three of them stand there in the awkward silence, looking at Essi. What are they going to do now?

EXT. ABANDONED CAR - DUSK

As the sun sets, Rainbird's car pulls off the side of the road behind the abandoned car where Andy and Charlie slept.

INT. ABANDONED CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Rainbird looks inside, runs his fingers along the back seat where Charlie slept. Looking, feeling.

He find the coagulating blood. Rubs the liquid between his fingers, then closes his eyes and sniffs them.

WE WATCH as a strange expression passes across Rainbird's face, a weird sort of *knowing*. His eyes open and he turns and looks to where Charlie burned the cat...

EXT. VACANT LOT - DUSK

Now he stands over the cat's grave. Sees the little rock headstone. A curious sight.

He looks off into the purpling sky. Where have they gone?

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Night has come. Clouds gather, obscuring the moon.

INT. FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Andy tucks Charlie into the single bed. He has made himself a pallet on the floor. He pulls the covers over her.

ANDY
Sleep, okay? As much as you can.

He gives her a kiss on the forehead, but as he pulls away--

CHARLIE
Are we really going to Boston?

ANDY
I just made that up.
(off her look--)
I'm trying to figure it out, honey.

They are quiet a beat.

ANDY
I've always liked Boston, though.
Because that's where you were born.

CHARLIE
You said I was born in New Haven,
Connecticut and there was a blizzard.

No reason to lie anymore.

ANDY
It was Boston.

CHARLIE
Why would you lie?

ANDY
It's a long story.

She looks at him. *I'm waiting...*

So Andy sits on the bed beside her, runs a hand through her hair. Looks out the window. Remembering that day.

ANDY
The birth itself was... relatively
uneventful, all things considered. But
your body temperature was off the
charts. And you cried non-stop. From
the moment you arrived.

Charlie considers this.

ANDY
We sat up with you, all day, all night,
wondering what to do. The doctors were
perplexed. And everyone was exhausted.
By the third night we could barely keep
our eyes open... And that's when they
took you.

CHARLIE
The bad people?

Andy nods. She listens.

ANDY

It was late, two in the morning. I had dozed off. Mommy was sleeping too. And somehow, they snuck in... By the time I woke up and realized what happened, it'd been more than an hour. I chased them in the car -- I used to get these feelings, intuitions...

CHARLIE

Like I had at the house. Before we found Mommy.

Andy nods.

ANDY

...So I could sense where they were.

A beat as Andy trails off, lost in the memory. Charlie tenses, sensing the story didn't have a happy ending.

CHARLIE

What did you do?

Off of Andy's gaze as WE FADE TO:

EXT. REST STOP - NIGHT (TEN YEARS AGO)

A BLACK SEDAN idles in an empty REST STOP PARKING LOT. CARS buzz past on the interstate.

The driver's side door opens, a HEAVY-SET MAN gets out and walks towards the bathrooms. As he heads inside...

...a YOUNG ANDY, 27, creeps towards the car, staying low.

INSIDE THE CAR: A MAN IN STREET CLOTHES, 40s, sits in the passenger seat with an INFANT CHARLIE in his lap.

Window open, he breathes in the night air as the infant coos in her sleep. Young Andy appears at the window.

He grabs the Man in Street Clothes. The Man looks at Andy... The pop is heard. The Man's eyes instantly DILATE.

ANDY

Give her to me.

The Man gives Andy the baby. Andy strokes the child's head, relieved but emotional. He leans back into the window.

ANDY

I need you to leave my family alone.
To forget we ever...

He pauses, studying the blank expression on the face of the Man. Like he's not even there.

ANDY
...Existed.

Charlie begins to wake. Andy tries to settle her, desperate to keep her calm. *Shhhh, shhhh...*

Staring at his child's beautiful, innocent face, anger boils over in Andy.

He turns back to the impassive face of the Man in Street Clothes. Andy sets his jaw. Narrows his eyes...

ANDY
When your partner comes back... you're
going to shoot him in the head. Then
you're going to forget how to breathe.

The Man studies Andy with glassy eyes. At last he nods, okay.

Andy walks away from the car, heading towards the darkness. He is swallowed by the shadows before the Heavysset Man emerges from the rest stop, walks to the car.

WE STAY WITH ANDY as we see, out of focus, in the distance...

The Heavysset Man slides into the car...

Then a MUZZLE FLASH and a BOOM. Glass shatters. Brains fly.

Then the Man in Street Clothes stumbles out of the car, hands around his own throat, strangling himself...

He collapses in the lot.

Andy and Charlie drive away.

ANDY (V.O.)
Those guys probably had wives, kids.
People they loved...

BACK TO SCENE

As the weight of Andy's story hits Charlie.

ANDY
...Like I love you. But in that
moment, I didn't care.
(then)
Listen to me, Charlie. You don't come
back from something like that. Not all
the way. Not ever.

A darkness settling over her. He takes her face in his hands.

ANDY
Promise me. Promise you'll never use
your gifts to hurt people.

She is reluctant, but finally:

CHARLIE
...I promise.

Andy smiles, grateful. He takes her face in his hands.

ANDY
I love you. Sleep now.

She rolls to her side, closes her eyes.

INT. FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - PREDAWN

Andy sleeps next to Charlie. The clock on the nightstand reads 5:12 AM. Through the window, the deep blue of coming dawn.

SOFT NOISES float in from somewhere in the house. Andy slowly wakes, listens. Sounds like voices. He stands, careful not to wake Charlie, and quietly walks out of the room.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Andy walks into the kitchen. The murmur comes from the LIVING ROOM, the blue-gray flicker of a TV. Irv must've left it on.

Then something catches his ear. The voice of a NEWS REPORTER.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)
...Cooper has been a fugitive from
justice the past nine years, since
killing two federal agents in
Massachusetts in February 2010...

Andy pales. He walks to the threshold of the room.

ON THE TV, an old college photo of Andy fills the screen, the name "Aaron Jeffrey Cooper" emblazoned across the bottom.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)
...He most recently went under the
alias Andrew Francis McGee--

Then the news report FREEZE-FRAMES. Andy looks to the recliner, sees Irv's hand holding a remote. He REVERSES the TiVo, plays the news story again.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

Police are on the lookout tonight for Aaron Jeffrey Cooper, suspected of killing his wife and kidnapping his daughter yesterday in Lewiston, Massachusetts. The thirty-seven-year-old Cooper has been a fugitive from justice for the past ten years, since killing two federal agents in Massachusetts in February 2010. He most recently went under the alias Andrew Francis McGee, and had been living in Lewiston with his wife and daughter for the past year--

FREEZE-FRAME again.

ANDY

It's not true.

Irv turns to Andy, startled.

ANDY

I killed those agents when they took my daughter. That part's true. But I didn't kill my wife. Or kidnap my girl. Surely you know that.

IRV

I don't know shit, especially bout you.

Irv stands, angry. And drunk. Perhaps only now do we see the several empty beer bottles littering the coffee table.

ANDY

Just take it easy, Irv.

IRV

You come in my house, eat my food, drink my beer, and all the time you're a goddamn wife-killer.

He lurches toward Andy -- who pivots, holding the recliner between them.

ANDY

I didn't kill her, Irv.

Irv grabs an empty bottle and hits it against the wall -- but it won't break. He hits it again, and again. But nothing.

IRV

Shit.

SO HE LUNGES AT ANDY. But he's slow and ungainly and--

ANDY

Irv, please.

--Andy easily knocks him backwards on his ass.

CHARLIE
Leave my Daddy alone!

CHARLIE stands across the room. Irv struggles to get up as--

--The window above him SHATTERS, splinters of glass rumble down over his shoulders.

IRV
Holy--

ANDY
Don't, Charlie!

VIBRATIONS all over the room.

CHARLIE
You're a horrible old man!

Irv stares at her like he's seen a ghost.

IRV
...You think *I'm* horrible?
(points at Andy)
What did he do to your mother?

CHARLIE
What did you do to your wife?

Irv is baffled and angry, shaking his head. Andy looks at Charlie in shock -- his daughter can read minds.

CHARLIE
--You were driving that day, and you
were drunk, and you drove in the wrong
lane and hit a car head-on that's how
Justin died and she got hurt--

IRV
--shut that little bitch up--

ANDY
--Easy!--

CHARLIE
--She said she's been in hell for
thirty years and it's all your fault!

IRV
STOP IT!

Irv LUNGES at Charlie -- but Andy steps in and KNOCKS HIM to the ground again. Irv moans on the floor.

Andy pulls Charlie to him. She's crying now, confused.

Irv mumbles something we can't quite make out.

ANDY

What?

IRV

...I called them. *The cops.*

Andy jolts upright.

IRV

When I first saw the news story.
I called them...

ANDY

Jesus, Irv.

IRV

Like I said, I overreact sometimes.

CHARLIE

Daddy--

She is looking out the window. Through the blue of predawn,
far in the distance, coming up the drive...

HEADLIGHTS.

Irv turns back to Andy and Charlie:

IRV

You two hide. I'll take care of this.

CHARLIE

You're drunk, Irv.

Irv runs a hand through his hair, straightening it.

IRV

Oughta make this interesting, then.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - PREDAWN

TWO SHERIFF'S SUVs pull up to the house. SHERIFF PERRY and a
DEPUTY emerge from the lead vehicle, TWO MORE COPS from the
other. They draw their pistols. Sheriff calls out:

SHERIFF PERRY

Aaron Jeffrey Cooper, surrender! Leave
the girl inside. Hands on top of your
head. Come on out now. MR. COOPER!

The front door opens, the officers ready but...

Irv steps out. Wobbly. He raises his hands in peace.

IRV
 I'm sorry, Wendell. I was mistaken.
 I thought I saw the man and the
 girl... but I was wrong.

Beat as Sheriff Perry turns, looks back at the other men.
 Then he returns his gaze to Irv.

SHERIFF PERRY
 You sounded pretty convinced on the
 phone, Irv.

IRV
 You know, just last month I saw this
 documentary on TV about...
 (stumbling down the steps)
 ...I, uh, can't recall the exact name
 but it was something like waking
 dreaming. There was a fella on there
 who dreamt he swallowed a cockroach
 and jumped up and made himself puke.
 Seemed so real.

SHERIFF PERRY
 You saying you called us out on
 account of a dream?

IRV
 Pretty convincing one too. News was
 on, I drifted off... and I'm drunk.

SHERIFF PERRY
 Clearly. Wanna know what I think?

IRV
 Not particularly.

SHERIFF PERRY
 I think we're here. And this man,
 Cooper, he's considerably dangerous.
 Even if you were just dreaming it,
 Irv, I'd like to search your house.

INT. MANDERS HOUSE - STUDY - SAME

Andy and Charlie huddle beneath the desk in the study, near
 Essi. They can hear Irv and the Sheriff out the window.

CHARLIE
 Will they go away?

ANDY
 I don't know. But I'm here.

She's growing nervous. Andy feels it already. He holds her
 hand. But the room gets warmer. Sweat breaks out of his face.

ANDY
C'mon, Charlie. Stay with me.

CHARLIE
I don't want to go to jail.
Tears in her eyes. The heat is rising.

ANDY
No one's going to jail. Look at me!
(she does)
I'm here for you. I'll protect you.
VOICES RISING OFF-SCREEN. Footsteps on the porch.

INT. MANDERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - PREDAWN

Sheriff Perry, gun in hand, follows Irv inside. Looks around the room, wary but settling.

IRV
I'd be more than happy to oblige you,
Sheriff. Thing is, Essi's in quite a
bad way. I don't want to wake her.

SHERIFF PERRY (O.S.)
We'll be quiet.

IRV
If you wake her, I'll be mighty
pissed. And you don't want that.

Sheriff eyes him.

SHERIFF PERRY
You threatening me, Irv?

INT. MANDERS HOUSE - STUDY - PREDAWN

The heat keeps rising. Vibrations now, items on the desk
SHAKE lightly as Andy tries to calm Charlie.

ANDY
Think of Essi, she's right there. You
don't want to hurt her. So let's
breathe, breathe...

CHARLIE
Essi is like the cat...
(off Andy's confusion)
She *wants* to die.

That hits Andy in the gut as...

THE DOOR OPENS. Irv and Sheriff Perry stand in the doorway, the light illuminating Essi, sleeping in her wheelchair.

Andy and Charlie remain as still as possible.

SHERIFF PERRY
Awfully hot in here.

IRV
My Essi gets chills.

UNDER THE DESK: Andy holds Charlie tight as tears form in the corner of the girl's eyes. Paper stacked beneath the desk starts to warp, curl, and... burn, *smoking*.

The underside of the desk starts to char.

ANDY
(in Charlie's ear)
C'mon honey, breathe, breathe...

Charlie breathes... and calms.

ANDY
That's it, that's it. See? That's control, Charlie. That's beautiful.

Sheriff Perry seems satisfied and...

IRV
As you can see, just me, sleeping wife, dumb TV, hot-ass room, and a case of Keystone. A regular Tuesday.

...slowly closes the study door. The voices of Sheriff Perry and Irv move back out onto the porch.

Andy and Charlie relax. The CRUNCH OF GRAVEL as the cops walk back to their cruisers.

Andy and Charlie emerge from under the desk and tiptoe to the window, looking out to see...

EXT. MANDERS HOUSE - PREDAWN

...Irv pats Sheriff Perry on the back as the Sheriff opens his car door and the other officers get back in their cars.

IRV
Sorry to drag you out here.

SHERIFF PERRY
Might be a good idea to lay off the bottle a bit, Irv. Consider--

CRACK!

--Sheriff Perry's head snaps back as a bullet rips through his forehead.

The gunshot is followed by five others in quick secession -- a SHOOT-OUT ensues.

INT. MANDERS HOUSE - STUDY - PREDAWN

Andy and Charlie duck, glancing over the window sill to see gunfire erupting from the darkness.

The cops fire back but don't last long. Each is torn apart by heavy hitting tracer rounds.

Irv races inside -- but he's hit in the knee, legs crumpling under him as he hits the front porch. He screams.

Charlie sees him, bleeding and begging. Her anger rises...

ANDY
Charlie, no...

Then the window above them SHATTERS from a bullet blast. Charlie SCREAMS and--

EXT. MANDERS HOUSE - PORCH - PREDAWN

--THE FRONT DOOR EXPLODES OFF ITS HINGES, a thousand shards of wood and glass. FLAMES lick the walls but dissipate.

ANDY
Charlie!

Charlie runs out of the now door-less entrance to find Irv nursing a bloody wound on his leg.

CHARLIE
I'm sorry, I'm sorry...

Andy quickly follows to the porch just as Rainbird emerges from the darkness, a scoped rifle in hand.

ANDY
Charlie, run.

Andy makes his way down to the gravel driveway to face off against Rainbird. The big man slings his rifle onto his back.

ANDY
Run, Charlie! Run now!

Rainbird clocks Charlie but Andy yells--

ANDY
Look at me, asshole!

Rainbird turns back to him.

ANDY
C'mon. Fight like a man.

Rainbird almost smiles. He steps forward.

Andy focuses, locking eyes with Rainbird. Trying to *push*.

Rainbird is momentarily stunned by Andy's push, his own sclera speckled with spots of blood as vessels burst.

ANDY
RUN CHARLIE RIGHT NOW!!

Charlie gets up, still holding Irv's hand. But Irv pulls away and waves for her to leave him before...

IRV
Just go. Go now!

...She darts down the steps and runs around the back of the house. Charlie races out into a stubbled field.

Andy pushes harder than he ever has, with everything... The damaged sclera re-bleeds; gore runs in rivulets down his face.

But Rainbird steps forward, somehow *pushing back*...

Andy fights, struggling. His eyes bleed, his head shakes. This is different than we've seen, deeper, more painful...

CRACK!

The butt of Rainbird's rifle clocks Andy across the jaw. He goes down hard -- the spell is broken.

Andy struggles back up to see Rainbird gone, chasing Charlie.

Then... Andy smiles.

ANDY
Gotcha.

EXT. FIELD - PREDAWN

Rainbird runs to the middle of the field -- far from the house -- when he stops and looks around. No sign of Charlie.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
Daddy!

...Rainbird spins around, sees Charlie in the far distance, at the front of the house -- *how?* Realizing he's been fooled, we see what he's discovered in a series of QUICK FLASHBACKS:

ANDY'S EYES, pushing Rainbird moments ago--

RAINBIRD'S EYES, tracking Charlie to the BACK OF THE HOUSE--

ECU ON ANDY'S EYES, bleeding and struggling as never before--

THE VISION OF CHARLIE seems to vaporize, like an apparition--

AS THE REAL CHARLIE runs past Andy toward the woods in FRONT OF THE HOUSE.

Andy made Rainbird see things that weren't there.

RAINBIRD
Clever. Very clever.

EXT. MANDERS HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - PREDAWN

Andy, wrecked from the push, mouth bloodied from the rifle. He summons his strength to wave towards the woods, where Charlie waits behind a tree, pale with panic.

ANDY
Go! Go...

He can barely speak. Charlie shakes her head, doesn't want to.

ANDY
I'll come for you. Now go!

Rainbird appears around the edge of the house.

Charlie's eyes dart between Andy and Rainbird...

AT LAST SHE RUNS, quickly vanishing in the thick overgrowth.

Andy exhales deeply, then drags himself towards one of the dead cops, reaching for his gun but--

Rainbird's boot finds it first, kicks it away.

Rainbird leans down to Andy, who rolls to his back, wheezing.

RAINBIRD
She is special. More special than even you understand. Can you see the beauty inside your terror?

ANDY
(spitting up blood)
Touch her and I'll fucking kill--

THE STOCK OF THE GUN GOES CRACK IN HIS FACE.

Andy is instantly knocked out, nose broken. Rainbird stands, turns to the forest and watches, waiting.

SHOP CARS careen into the farm's driveway, sending pebbles scattering. AGENTS jump out, armed, and race into the trees. One drags Andy's unconscious body away.

Rainbird doesn't move, a smile spreads across his face as...

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER (O.S.)
What in the unholy hell happened here?

...Captain Hollister appears behind the giant, gun drawn. She looks at the dead cops, scattered about the yard.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
You were ordered to wait for backup.

Rainbird doesn't turn, stays watching the trees. The flicker of flashlights deep in the woods as the Agents search.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Where is she?

RAINBIRD
Take the father. The girl will follow.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
I hired you to follow.

Rainbird says nothing. Hollister studies his scarred face.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
She too strong for you? Or maybe
you're scared?

RAINBIRD
My fear is ecstasy. She is a god.

There's a glimmer in his eyes.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Then it appears we have a conflict of
interests.

She looks down at the dead cops again.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Jesus...

Rainbird remains stoic.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
I'm pulling you off the job.

RAINBIRD
If you must.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
 McConnell was a dumbass but he was
 right about one thing: you're gone,
kemosabe. Guess I learned my lesson...

She signals to Shop agents who run over, weapons drawn, and--

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
 Take this shitbird to the Shop.

--they kick Rainbird to the ground. Amazingly, he lets them.

EXT. WOODS BY DIRT ROAD - DAWN

CHARLIE RUNS THROUGH THE FOREST as fast as she can. The rising sun bleaching the trees and leaves around her.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

FAR AWAY FROM THE FARM NOW, finally she slows and stops, catching her breath. Winded and every muscle aching.

She looks around. Tall trees enclose her beneath their canopy, keeping out the light.

The woods expand in all directions. There is no north or south, east or west. There is only the woods.

Charlie sits on a log and starts to cry. Sobs drown out the chirp of birds and flutter of insects.

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

The sun fading. Charlie wanders, lost. Afraid. Wondering what to do, how she will find her way out. How she will survive.

IN A CLEARING, she gathers wood, makes a pile on the forest floor. But there's UNDERBRUSH everywhere, she does not clear it. If it catches fire, the whole forest could go up.

Charlie stands over the pile of wood, focusing... Gathering the nerve to use her power. She swallows, nervous...

Then she pushes out the heat. The wood catches fire -- she smiles -- but then it gets away from her, spreads wildly.

CHARLIE
 Oh no--

THE UNDERBRUSH AFLAME, it climbs every tree in sight.

Charlie cries, running away from the flames, until suddenly--

HER HEAD BURSTS INTO FLAMES.

Her face blisters and burns, the skin peels away.

Charlie gives a guttural, blood-curdling SCREAM--

THEN SHE WAKES UP.

She'd fallen asleep by the unlit wood pile. She sits up, scared. Trying to settle her nerves, Charlie says her mantra.

CHARLIE

Trees, rocks, wood, sky, clouds...

She stands, clears away the underbrush. As she touches it:

CHARLIE

Leaves, sticks, dirt, twigs...

The temperature dropping, she shivers.

Then she focuses on the unlit fire. She swallows, nervous...

THEN SHE LIGHTS IT.

The wood catches, but nothing else.

She smiles, relieved by her newfound control. She warms herself by the fire.

A loud POP from the fire brings her attention to the shadows surrounding her. And, in the flickering light, she sees it:

A silhouette. A man standing in the darkness, just like in her drawing. Just like Rainbird.

CHARLIE

You...

Charlier straightens, frightened, her face flushing but the silhouette doesn't stir. The air begins to vibrate, the fire growing and growing in size to reveal--

Rainbird is not watching her from the shadows. There is nothing there, only a conical pine. Charlie exhales, as...

EXT. FOREST/ROADS/SMALL TOWN - NIGHT

...WE DRIFT over forest and follow a road as it transitions from trees to more roads then the lights of a small town and then past it... Miles and miles and miles...

Until finally we descend to an OLD HOTEL, somewhere on the coast of Massachusetts.

Stately and classic, more than a century old, part of a massive compound of white wooden buildings that stretch across the beachfront.

WAVES CRASH on nearby rocks, their sounds ECHO through the hazy air. Another CRASH, a spray of water, and we move into--

INT. "SHOP" HQ - RAINBIRD'S CELL - NIGHT

A cold and sterile place. We find Rainbird, blindfolded, cuffed to a metal bar on the wall. A prisoner now.

WE CONTINUE MOVING, out of his room and down the hall, descending stairs and floors until we find ourselves in--

INT. "SHOP" HQ - ANDY'S CELL - SAME

A ROOM MADE OF GLASS, where we find Andy, unconscious, strapped to a chair. Eyes covered in blacked-out goggles.

Harsh light beams down from overhead.

Andy weakly lifts his head. Does he know where he is?

ANDY
(barely a whisper)
Charlie, stay away from here...

Then his head droops again, as--

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

--CHARLIE WAKES, in the middle of the forest. Morning light filters through the trees.

ANDY'S VOICE ECHOES in her mind, along with the sound of CRASHING WAVES. A strange sound, an ocean in the forest.

CHARLIE
Daddy...?

The sound carries her eyes to--

THE OLD HOTEL. An apparition in the deep woods. Only there a moment, then it fades away with the sound of the waves.

Charlie stands, confused and hungry. Dirty and cold. Still no sense of direction. Just trees surrounding on all sides.

She sets off through the trees.

LATER

Charlie comes to a stream. The water looks clean, she drinks. Her stomach GROWLS, she holds it.

Then she follows the river downstream.

STILL LATER

Charlie walks the river's edge. Then she spots, sitting under a low bush... A RABBIT, munching roots.

She stops, quiet. An idea forming in her mind... She swallows, steps closer, gathering her will...

Then she summons something from deep within her.

CHARLIE
(whispering to herself)
Control it...

The heat rises, the air shimmering around her before, Charlie narrows her eyes and the BUSH BURSTS INTO FLAMES.

The rabbit runs. Charlie explodes with frustration.

CHARLIE
Agghh!

A MONTAGE OF SIMILAR ATTEMPTS FOLLOW:

A GREY SQUIRREL skitters from a wave of heat. FROGS pop like popcorn in the shallows. A CROW on a branch explodes in puff of smoke and feathers...

A despondent Charlie collapses in a frustrated heap and begins to sob. The forest hums, oblivious to her.

EXT. FOREST - LATE AFTERNOON

The sun low, the shadows deep. Charlie clomps through the underground, branch-lashed and exhausted.

She stops short, startled:

A DEER looking up at her from the river's edge. It's a buck, with huge antlers. It stands frozen.

As does Charlie. Heat rises. Leaves wilt on trees.

Charlie breathes deep. Then her eyes narrow, focusing in on the deer. She whispers:

CHARLIE
*Hooves... Fur... Antlers... Nose...
Eyes...*

The deer stares back at Charlie as if in a trance, the air warping around it from the heat, as WE HARD CUT TO:

THE DEER

Cooking over a fire.

LATER

Charlie eats the meat, gaining energy. But she's filthy, covered in gristle and blood, hair matted with sweat and dirt. Hasn't showered in days.

SHE FOLLOWS THE RIVER

Until at last she sees, far in the distance...

Light.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK ROAD - DAY

A empty two-lane in the middle of nowhere. A thick line of trees on either side. But no traffic, only quiet.

A long beat, then Charlie McGee steps out of the woods. Into daylight. She's a different girl now. She has power, control.

She sets off down the road.

EXT. ANOTHER BACK ROAD - DAY

The sun is high in the sky as Charlie walks a lonely back road, sprinkled lightly with houses and cars.

She eyes the houses as she passes them. Laundry hangs from a line in one yard. A small CHILD plays on his jungle gym.

Then LAUGHTER draws Charlie out of her reverie.

IN THE DISTANCE, THREE BOYS approach on bikes. They cruise past Charlie, wearing backpacks and ballcaps. On their way home from school, they're probably thirteen.

A few yards past, they circle back, pass by again. Checking out this weird kid, her clothes dirty and torn, hair a mess.

They circle her slowly, but she keeps her head down.

FIRST KID
Where you goin?

SECOND KID
What happened to your clothes?

THIRD KID
What happened to your face?

They all laugh. Charlie keeps walking, ignoring them. Until:

FIRST KID
Don't you ever bathe, weirdo?

Charlie stops. The boys stop. Anger bubbles inside her. She stares at the First Kid. Is she trying to *push*?

Then the familiar LOW RUMBLE, the SHIVER through her body and she cracks her neck before his pupils dilate.

CHARLIE
I'd like your bike, please.

A long, tense beat... Then the kid steps off his bike. He hands it over. The other two are baffled.

SECOND KID
The hell are you doing, Dale?

Charlie turns to the Second Kid, and it happens again. She leans in and -- *pop* -- his eyes dilate. It's easy for her.

She points to his backpack.

CHARLIE
Is your lunch in there?

SECOND KID
PB&J.

CHARLIE
Give it to me, please.

He pulls off his pack, hands it over. Mild confusion on his face, as though he knows what he's doing but isn't sure why.

THIRD KID
Guys...?

Third Kid is really wigged out. Charlie looks him up and down. Brand new Converse, pristine jeans, fancy jacket. She looks at her own clothes. Holes in her knees, shoes ripped...

MOMENTS LATER

ON THE WHEELS OF THE BIKE as Charlie rides off. WE MOVE UP TO REVEAL her new Converse, clean jeans, and nice jacket. The pack strapped to her back, eating a sandwich, and smiling...

IN HER WAKE, the boys watch is vague bemusement, Third Kid in bare feet and tightie-whites.

Suddenly Charlie hits the brakes, skids out, turns back.

CHARLIE
Which way is the coast?

They stare blankly.

CHARLIE
The coast, dummies. Where the water is.

A beat, then they all point vaguely east. She rides off.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUS DEPOT - DUSK

THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR, we see Charlie ride up, drop her bike on the sidewalk and walk through the doors. She heads straight for the bathroom.

INT. BUS DEPOT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Charlie washes her face in the sink, cleans herself. A WOMAN nearby eyes Charlie in the mirror, curious.

Charlie watches her a beat, then sticks out her tongue. The woman minds her own business.

INT. BUS DEPOT - NIGHT

Charlie approaches the ticket booth, focused and determined. A CASHIER in thick glasses waits behind the glass.

CASHIER
Can I help you, young lady?

CHARLIE
Is there a bus that goes up the coast?

CASHIER
There is, but I'm afraid you'll need
an adult to--

Charlie concentrates, pop, and the Cashier's pupils dilate.

EXT/INT. COAST OF MASSACHUSETTS / BUS - DAWN

A GREYHOUND BUS makes its way up the coast of Massachusetts, as the sun rises over the Atlantic.

INSIDE the sparsely-filled bus, Charlie sits alone, her weary but attentive eyes focused out the window. HOTELS pass by. She eyes each one, but sees no match for the image in her head.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER (PRE-LAP)
Rise and shine, Mr. McGee. Or is it
Mr. Burton? Or Mr. Rozelle?

INT. THE OLD HOTEL - ANDY'S CELL - MORNING

Andy's head is drooped and lifeless. Eyes still hidden behind the blacked-out goggles. He can see nothing.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER (O.S.)
No more pseudonyms, Cooper. No more
running. Just you and me now. Wake up.

Captain Hollister SLAPS Andy's face. Andy rouses slightly. Flanked by Armed Guards, Hollister sits in a chair almost knee-to-knee with Andy.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Rainbird, the man who fucked up your
face, killed your poor wife -- which,
of course, my office had nothing to do
with, gave no such order -- he's
convinced you and your daughter have
some sort of... spiritual connection?
Telepathy or whatever. Why not, right?
So tell me where Charlie is. Right now.

ANDY
Go to hell...

Andy can barely make the words.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Rainbird doesn't strike me as an
especially imaginative individual.
Wouldn't be like him to just make it
up. Call her.

Andy turns away.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
You compel her to come here and I'll
ensure she's safe.

ANDY
It's not *her* safety I'd be concerned
about...

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Was that a threat?

ANDY
Charlie's coming. I can feel her rage.
And she will destroy you.

His words impact her, despite her efforts to resist.

OFF ANDY, confidently stoic...

INT/EXT. COAST OF MASSACHUSETTS / BUS - DAY

The sun is high in the sky now. Light reflects off the water, makes Charlie squint. Hours have passed, no sign of the hotel.

Charlie is losing hope. And growing anxious. Feeling alone, scared. Missing her father, her mother.

The bus grows warmer. Sweat beads on a CHUBBY GUY sitting near Charlie. He loosens his tie, calls to the BUS DRIVER.

CHUBBY GUY
Think the A/C is broke, man.

BUS DRIVER
Think your diet is broke, man.

More heat now, low vibrations. OTHER PASSENGERS look around, confused. Charlie breathes, trying to keep the power at bay.

Then she sees it.

THE HOTEL FROM HER VISION, stretched across the beachfront.

Charlie runs up to the front of the bus, grabs the Driver's shoulder and he turns to look at her as -- POP...

...His pupils dilate and he suddenly SLAMS THE BRAKES.
Passengers are THROWN FORWARD.

CHUBBY GUY
What the hell, man?

Zoned out, the Driver grabs the PA:

BUS DRIVER
This is our first stop at, uh...
wherever we are.

He opens the door and Charlie exits.

CHARLIE
Thank you.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

The bus pulls away, revealing Charlie's in a small beach town. Mostly empty here in the off-season.

Charlie stands across the street from the old hotel. Observing it. Several cars fill the lot. Looks benign, unassuming. A MAN exits the building. A WOMAN parks, walks inside.

Charlie wonders if she's made a mistake. Wonders if her father is even alive, or if it's all in her imagination.

She walks to a nearby bench, takes a seat. Her eyes locked on the old hotel, she waits...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. "SHOP" HQ - NIGHT

Moonlight dances off the ocean. Waves crash. Most of the cars have left the lot of the old hotel; only a few remain. But the bench where we left Charlie is empty. Where is she?

AT THE FRONT DOORS

AGENT DONNIE JULES steps out, simple suit and leather briefcase, talking on his phone. A keycard hangs from a lanyard around his neck. He walks across the lot to his car.

AGENT JULES

...How was the nausea today? I'm sorry, babe. But first trimester's almost over, right? There's light at the end of the tunnel...

He opens the door and climbs into the car -- but doesn't see Charlie slip into the backseat opposite him.

INT. JULES' CAR - CONTINUOUS

Agent Jules settles in, closes the door, clips his seatbelt.

AGENT JULES

Need me to grab anything? Still craving hot sauce and peanut butter? Or maybe I'll be your hot sauce. *Ha.* Okay then, be home soon. Bye.

He hangs up, cranks the car and shifts into the Reverse. He turns to back up -- and he sees her. He jams the brakes.

AGENT JULES

What the hell--

CHARLIE
Put it in Park.
(he doesn't)
I don't want to hurt you, sir. Put the
car in Park.

AGENT JULES
...It's you.

He shifts into Park and reaches for the door to escape -- but
the doors instantly LOCK. Charlie's power.

A BANK OF SCREENS - SAME

A SECURITY GUARD watches the silent screens from a desk. We
see the various rooms and hallways around the hotel.

And we see the PARKING LOT, where Agent Jules' car is parked.
From the high angle and grainy image, we can't see anything
inside. Just a parked car. All looks normal.

CUT TO:

INT. JULES' CAR - SAME

Jules puts his hands over his face, turns away from Charlie.

CHARLIE
Give me your phone.

He pulls his phone from a hip holster, hands it backward,
keeping one hand over his face. She takes it, tosses it aside.

CHARLIE
And the card around your neck.

He pulls the lanyard from around his neck, gives it to her.
She reads his name off the badge/swipe card.

CHARLIE
Do you have a gun, Agent Jules?

AGENT JULES
...I'm just a tech. They don't let us
carry them.

He mumbles, terribly frightened.

CHARLIE
This says you're an agent.

AGENT JULES
We're all agents. It's just a title.

CHARLIE
So this is the Shop?
(no answer)
Is this the Shop?

AGENT JULES
...Yes.

CHARLIE
Is my father inside?

The car slowly HEATS UP. Jules begins to sweat.

AGENT JULES
What's happening? What are you doing?

CHARLIE
I don't want to hurt you. But I will.
Is my father in there?

AGENT JULES
I don't know! I swear. I don't have
that kind of clearance.

THE HEAT RISES SWIFTLY, oppressive. Jules bangs on the door
but can't open it. He's terrified, stammering.

AGENT JULES
Stop, please! Why are you doing this?
I mean, if he's here he'd be down at
the bottom, but it's restricted, only
for the top guys...

The heat is SEARING NOW. The air is thick. Agent Jules is
breathing hard but slowly, cautiously reaches to his holster.

CHARLIE
Who else is in there?

AGENT JULES
(gasping to breathe)
Just the night crew... Computer techs,
scientists, security guards...

CHARLIE
And the giant man?

Jules carefully, silently pulls his gun without Charlie
seeing. He positions it under his arm, aimed at her.

CHARLIE
Answer me. Is the giant inside?

AGENT JULES
Please, stay calm. We can work--

Charlie glances up at the rearview mirror and sees the gun in Agent Jules' hand and A BLAST GOES OUT OF HER, reactionary.

Jules is BLOWN into the windshield. Side windows BUST OUT. Fire CONSUMES the front seat.

CUT TO:

A BANK OF SCREENS - SAME

We see broken glass on the ground outside the car, but the image is small. The guard doesn't even notice.

INT. JULES' CAR - SAME

The fire dissipates. Charlie takes in her destruction. Tears form in her eyes, overwhelmed by what she sees.

Agent Jules has been blasted through the steering wheel. It protrudes from his stomach like a growth.

The skin has burned from half his face, his skull exposed. His torched hair smolders. Clothes burned into flesh, skin charred on arms and legs. A horror.

Yet somehow he is alive. He tries to breathe, coughing blood. His lungs sound like a wet vac. His eyes wild with a fear most men have never known. Charlie's tears turn to anger.

CHARLIE

You lied to me. Said you didn't have a gun. But you're just like the others. Liars, liars who make things worse.

(and)

I didn't want to hurt anyone!

An awful darkness falls upon her, a change. Bloodshot eyes become blank and callous. She mimics her father:

CHARLIE

He's in pain, Charlie. You have to put him out of his misery.

Charlie breathes deep. Agent Jules' eyes go wide, he mouths the word NO... Then she blasts him to ash. Swift and brutal.

CHARLIE

...This is what it costs.

There is no going back now. She slips out the door.

CUT TO:

A BANK OF SCREENS - MOMENTS LATER

As Jules' car CATCHES FIRE.

SECURITY GUARD #1
What the hell?

He hits a buzzer.

EXT. "SHOP" HQ - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Jules' entire car is engulfed in flames. GUARDS and AGENTS flood into the lot. Two of them carry fire extinguishers.

They douse the car.

EXT. "SHOP" HQ - SIDE ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie swipes Jules' keycard, slips inside. Unseen.

EXT. "SHOP" HQ - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

The smoke clears and they see what remains of Agent Jules. He is unrecognizable. A Guard pulls out his phone, dials.

INT. "SHOP" HQ - CAPTAIN HOLLISTER'S OFFICE - SAME

Captain Hollister answers her phone.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Yeah.
(listens, then)
Shit, sorry... But we're ready.

INT. "SHOP" HQ - SIDE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Charlie creeps to the corner of the main hallway, peers out.

It's quiet. This floor of the old hotel looks like it hasn't changed in a hundred years. Victorian furniture, dressed to the nines. But it hides a darkness beneath.

Charlie glances up, sees a CAMERA in the corner. A red light indicates it's recording. A quick glance down the hall and she sees two others. She pulls her head back, thinks.

Then leans out, focuses on the cameras. Red lights ZAP OUT.

CUT TO:

A BANK OF SCREENS - SAME

As half the screens suddenly go dark. But there's no guard to notice -- he's out in the parking lot with the others.

CUT TO:

INT. "SHOP" HQ - MAIN HALLWAY - SAME

Charlie creeps quickly down the hallway, ducking beneath windows and doors to avoid being seen.

THEN VOICES DOWN THE HALL -- Charlie ducks down a hallway.

She waits... TWO AGENTS pass, don't see her. She breathes, looks around. Sees an ELEVATOR down the hall.

AT THE ELEVATOR

Charlie punches the DOWN button.

DING! The doors open, she steps on.

INT. "SHOP" HQ - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The doors close behind Charlie. She studies the buttons. Seven floors descend beneath her, each labeled with a number.

The bottom floor is labeled RESTRICTED. She hits it.

The elevator descends. Charlie waits in the quiet hum. The elevator lurches to a halt. *DING!*

INT. "SHOP" HQ - BOTTOM FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The doors open to a DARK CORRIDOR, subterranean. Harsh domes of light shine down from overhead.

There is no one in sight. This is curious.

Charlie moves slowly through the hallway. Turning corners, left and right. Walking by empty rooms that look like cells.

She walks and walks until... CLANK--

All the lights go out. Pitch black.

Charlie footsteps stop. All we hear is her breathing.

But WE SEE HER in night-vision, as if from a camera. Her hands scrambling along a wall, trying to feel her way.

WE TURN TO REVEAL: There are THREE ARMED GUARDS in night-vision goggles watching her.

Cautiously, a bit panicked, Charlie feels along the walls and begins to move again, the Armed Guards moving in front of her.

They close doors ahead of her, leading her...

She turns a corner, then another, merely feeling her way, but moving faster, getting more comfortable until--

BOOM.

Lights go on at the end of the hall. SHE STOPS IN HER TRACKS.

ANDY'S CELL, walled in glass. Her father inside, strapped to a chair under bright white light, his head hanging limp again.

With each step she draws closer to her father...

Her speed increases...

AT ANDY'S CELL

She reaches the cell, bangs upon the thick glass wall.

CHARLIE

Daddy!

She bangs some more, but Andy's head remains lifeless.

She looks for a door, a way to get in. There is none. The glass is thick as cinder block, and sealed from all sides.

CHARLIE

Daddy! Wake up!

Faint movement now. Andy struggles to open his eyes. Then he does. And he sees her. Finds strength for the briefest smile.

ANDY

You came...

His voice echoes from a tinny speaker above her. But then his smile drops.

ANDY

...But you shouldn't have.

The three Armed Guards appear behind her.

Then, as if on cue, Captain Hollister EMERGES FROM THE SHADOWS behind Andy, whose head slumps again.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
It wasn't supposed to be this way,
Charlie. Wasn't supposed to be
difficult.

She sits in a chair nestled snug against Andy. Back-to-back,
she uses Andy's body as protection from Charlie and the heat.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
But your father won't cooperate. He's
forced my hand.

She keeps her eyes turned away from Charlie.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Stay calm, dear. Try to burn me and
you'll burn your daddy, too.

To this Charlie has no response.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
But you know that, right? Because
you're not stupid. Not at all. You're
a very bright girl. I can tell.

Andy fades in and out of consciousness.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Charlie, this place can be your new
home. It's safe. Protected. We'll take
good care of you here. Your father
too. As long as you cooperate.
(then, with a smile)
My name is Captain Hollister. You can
call me Jane. I run this facility.

CHARLIE
You sent the giant to kill my mom.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
No... No, I wouldn't do that. Rainbird
is a rogue agent, acting alone and out
of control. Like an animal. I'm deeply
sorry for what happened to your mom.
And I can assure you that the man who
did it, the giant, he's been punished.

CHARLIE
Where is he?

Hollister can hear the anger in her voice.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
You want to hurt him, don't you?

She doesn't answer. But they both know it's true.

CHARLIE
My dad needs a doctor.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
And we'll get him help. We have good
people here. Trust me, I--

CHARLIE
NOW.

Hollister holds, not about to be ordered around by a pre-teen.

CHARLIE
Call a doctor right now... or I'll
hurt myself.

Charlie holds out her arm, looks at it... Then her jacket
sleeve CATCHES FIRE.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Don't, Charlie--

The flame runs up Charlie's arm.

CHARLIE
Call a doctor right now! DO IT!

ANDY
Charlie, stop!

Andy can hardly keep his eyes open.

A long beat, Charlie's eyes boring holes through Hollister...
It's a game of chicken.

Then Charlie pulls off her jacket, stamps out the fire.

Andy's head droops again. His eyes are fully bloodshot, past
the point of no return.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
You're a very determined young lady. Use
it wisely and it'll take you far in this
life. I should know.

CHARLIE
You do bad things here, I can feel it.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
No, friend. We make things better.
We make *people* better. Stronger.
More powerful. People like you.

Not the answer she was expecting.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Haven't you realized, Charlie? You're a
real-life superhero.

Charlie starts pacing now, turning circles.

CHARLIE
(quietly)
Five things I can see.
(her mantra)
Floor, lights, chair, straps, Daddy...

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
You're very *special*.

VIBRATIONS fill the air around Charlie.

CHARLIE
Four things I can touch.
(she touches things)
Glass, jacket, hair, shirt...

Hollister senses the vibrations, but can't feel them inside
the thick-walled cell.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
You don't have to get upset. No one
will hurt you here.

CHARLIE
Three things I can hear. *Speakers,*
breathing, lies...

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
I'll protect you. Like my own
daughter.

CHARLIE
I don't believe her, Daddy.

ANDY
Good. Just believe me, Charlie.

Andy swallows, gathering strength. Charlie is confused, but
her father's words calm her. The vibrations recede...

ANDY
I love you, Charlie. And Mommy loved
you. So much. You're such a good girl.

CHARLIE
But I'm not... I hurt someone,
outside... I broke my promise...
I'm so sorry, Daddy...

Tears form in her eyes. VIBRATIONS return.

ANDY
It's okay, honey...

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
But is it, though?

ANDY
Don't listen to her, Charlie. I know
you'd never hurt someone on purpose...

CHARLIE
I wouldn't, I swear.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
The man you killed, just now. His name
was Donnie.

ANDY
(to Hollister)
You fool, don't upset her.

But Hollister is emboldened, rolling the dice.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Donnie had a wife. And his wife had a
baby, inside her belly.

ANDY
Please...

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
A baby who will never know her daddy.

ANDY
Goddamn you.

CHARLIE
I'm sorry, I'm so sorry...

Vibrations stronger now. But the Captain won't stop.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
He's the first person you killed. And
he can be the last. But only if you
let us help you.

CHARLIE
I don't want to hurt anyone...

ANDY
I know you don't, honey...

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
The world out there, it's not built
for special people. It can't handle
your kind of power. But here, we can.
After all, we made you.

Andy summons something from deep inside himself, then he finds his daughter's eyes.

ANDY

But if you don't hurt someone, right now Charlie, you'll never get out of here alive...

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

The hell are you saying?

Andy's stare intensifies. BLOOD DRIPS from the corner of his bloody eyes. Like his brain is breaking. Charlie, confused...

CHARLIE

Daddy, what are you...?

But just as she realizes what's happening -- her eyes DILATE.

ANDY

You have to burn it all down, Charlie...

(he looks at Hollister)

Starting with her.

Hollister presses her body against Andy's, protecting herself.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

Whoa, easy now. Burn me and you burn him too.

Charlie just stares, but in disbelief or hypnosis, it's impossible to say...

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER

(real fear now)

You have no one else, don't forget that. No family. Where will you go if you hurt us? We're your family now...

A beat of terrible tension, waiting... Finally:

CHARLIE

I love you so much, Daddy.

Then her gaze turns from Andy... And she focuses on Hollister. She exhales slowly and cracks her neck -- the push.

Instantly, the Captain's pupils dilate. Charlie leans in and the Armed Guards step closer.

A tense beat before the lights flicker. Suddenly brightening.

CHARLIE

Let my Daddy go.

THE TEMPERATURE RISES.

Hollister wraps her arms around Andy and squeezes hard.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Don't do this!

IN AN INSTANT the cell is pulsing with heat. Charlie's stare intensifies. Hollister begins to tremble...

Muscles twitch and contort, violently...

CHARLIE
Let my Daddy go. Now.

Then CURLS OF SMOKE rise from the Captain's nostrils... her ears... her mouth...

Charlie is burning her from the inside out.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
Stop... Stop...

She pulls herself from Andy, steps back, waves to the Armed Guards. They stand down, holstering their weapons.

Smoke stops curling from her nostrils and mouth. Hollister coughs several times to clear it. Wipes away sweat and soot.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
(to the Armed Guards)
Go on. Open it up.

With a clank, a lock is undone and a door to the side of the glass cell opens. Hollister ushers Andy out, undoes his handcuffs. Beaming, Charlie runs to her father.

Andy sweeps her up in his arms.

ANDY
Sweet Charlie.

The moment is heightened, dreamlike...

CHARLIE
I kept my promise.

ANDY
Yes, you did.

Holding his daughter, Andy turns to the Captain.

ANDY
We're leaving.

Charlie narrows her eyes and Hollister nods, controlled.

CAPTAIN HOLLISTER
We have what we need.
(to the Armed Guards)
They're cleared to leave. No one
stands in their way.

The Armed Guards step aside as Andy carries Charlie down the hallway, the lights bright enough to remove all shadows.

INT. "SHOP" HQ - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie steps out of the elevator hand-in-hand with Andy to find TWENTY ARMED SOLDIERS waiting, AUTOMATIC RIFLES lowered.

Andy is awed as they walk between the Soldiers who part as though they're in the presence of royalty.

They make their way through the front doors and out to...

EXT. "SHOP" HQ - NIGHT

...Where the night is quiet, stars twinkle overhead and the moon full, shining down on them. Gravel crunches underfoot.

Andy stops, takes Charlie's hands. His eyes sparkling.

ANDY
I'm so proud of you. Your mother would
be too. You're going to change the
world, Sweet Charlie...

They look up -- SNOWFLAKES drift slowly down from the sky.

Charlie smiles and hugs Andy close... But WE PUSH in on Andy to see his pupils are DILATED...

The pupils open LARGER and LARGER as...

WE PULL BACK -- reversing through imagery we've just seen:

Stepping outside; passing the soldiers by the elevator; the lights flickering brighter; Captain Hollister waving the Armed Guards back, to REVEAL...

Andy is NOT OUTSIDE but still in the--

INT. "SHOP" HQ - ANDY'S CELL - NIGHT

--AND HE IS ON FIRE.

Oblivious to the heat, Andy is lost in the pushed reverie.

Burning violently with the Captain wrapped around him. Charlie has pushed the escape, the kept promise, into his mind.

But it was too easy. It was a lie.

Hollister's mouth moves frantically, but her lungs and vocal cords cannot make words. Sounds choked with hisses and smoke.

The skin on the Captain's face bubbles, then bursts. Her hands and arms and chest follow suit.

The heat in the room is remarkable now. The foot-thick glass MOANS AND CRACKS.

Andy smiles, eyes glazed over in a beatific fugue state with Hollister's burning body wrapped around his own, and...

ANDY

Charlie...

CHARLIE

I love you so much, Daddy.

Andy's eyes roll back in his head, as the fire consumes his body and Charlie, no tears in her eyes, focuses on Hollister, roasting meat before she falls, crumbling, to the floor.

Dead.

THE GLASS WALL SHATTERS-- CHARLIE IS BLOWN BACK by the force--
ALARMS SOUND-- SPRINKLERS RAIN DOWN--

Charlie climbs slowly to her feet, rattled but alive. She stands alone as water rains upon her, clearing the smoke.

No remains of Andy or Hollister to be found.

Blasted to nothing.

Charlie breathes.

CUT TO:

A BANK OF SCREENS - SAME

As MILITARY TRUCKS storm the parking lot. ARMORED GUARDS file out, head into the building. HUGE GUNS at the ready.

CUT TO:

INT. "SHOP" HQ - BOTTOM FLOOR - SAME

She turns away from the scene of destruction, sprinklers still raining on her.

The hallway behind her is empty. She walks.

She passes an open office, where an IT GUY hides in a corner, holding a stapler for protection.

IT GUY
I don't know anything, I don't care--

Charlie BLASTS HIM WITH FIRE. Swift and brutal. Only a charred skeleton remains.

She steps back into the corridor just as--

A DOOR BURSTS OPEN DOWN THE HALL. TWO GUARDS race out, guns drawn. Charlie sends out the power--

THEIR HEADS CATCH FIRE like human matchsticks. They fall to the ground, flailing. Even the sprinklers can't relieve them.

Charlie marches by them toward the door they sprang from.

UNTIL ONE OF THEM GRABS HER ANKLE--

HE YANKS HER UPON HIM. She slaps and kicks at the burning man until finally the agent dies and the fire is out.

She scrambles to her feet, holes in her jeans from the burns. She's covered in blood and black flesh, soaked with water.

She stumbles to the door. It opens onto:

INT. "SHOP" HQ - WEST STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

She looks up. The stairs run seven floors to the top. To freedom. She starts up--

Just as GUARDS burst through two floors above. Charlie reaches the next level, heads through the door, back into--

INT. "SHOP" HQ - LEVEL SIX - CONTINUOUS

--a hallway that stretches out before her. Endless doors line the hall, countless corridors bisect it.

Charlie marches down the hall, undeterred. A DOOR OPENS behind her and an AGENT leans out, gun drawn.

Charlie feels his presence and spins -- THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT, pinning the agent between the door and doorframe.

AGENT

Agh--

He drops the gun. The door presses in on his sternum, his face. His breathing is labored, trying to pry it off, but it won't budge. Charlie heaves forward--

--and we hear the soft crack of breaking bones, then the agent goes limp. Charlie watches the life go from him.

She ends the power and he drops like a stone.

She keeps walking. TWO SOLDIERS leaps from a corner with AUTOMATIC RIFLES and FIRE--

But Charlie sends out the heat the BULLETS DISINTEGRATE in mid-air. They keep shooting, but nothing hits her.

She continues toward them. Their guns empty. They stand their, slack-jawed.

Then she THROWS THE HEAT and it blasts them into the back wall -- and through it. Just a smoldering crater is left.

Charlie spins to see a FEMALE AGENT racing away.

CHARLIE

Stop!

The agent obeys, throws her hands in the air. She's trembling.

FEMALE AGENT

P-Please...

She drops to her knees as if in surrender. Tears in her eyes.

FEMALE AGENT/GAIL

I don't want to hurt you. My name's Gail... I have two kids, two beautiful kids... Rebecca and Liv...

Charlie listens. For a moment. And *does not see* the TWO ARMED AGENTS sneaking up behind her...

GAIL

I just wanna get home to them...

...But she *feels* them, and suddenly turns on them, sending TWO SPIRALS OF HEAT instantly through them. A hole in each man's chest, punched clean through. The size of a softball.

They drop dead to the floor.

GAIL

...Fuck me.

Charlie turns hard on Gail -- and a BLAST OF HEAT COLLAPSES HER CHEST, burns her torso. She falls dead to the floor.

Charlie continues on.

INT. "SHOP" HQ - EAST STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie enters the stairwell -- where FORTY ARMED SOLDIERS stand above her, AUTOMATIC RIFLES LOCKED AND LOADED.

LEAD SOLDIER
Surrender now and you'll live.

But he's barely finished when a WAVE OF FIRE SWALLOWS THEM WHOLE. Bodies fall past Charlie to the bottom of the stairs.

Then there is only the sound of the flickering flames against the spray of the sprinklers. There is no one left to kill.

Charlie marches up the stairs, through the fire and corpses. Then onto the top floor...

INT. "SHOP" HQ - MAIN HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

...Back where she started. Charlie walks the empty hallway. Sprinklers raining down, but she doesn't care. She throws open doors with her mind, searching. But the rooms are empty, too.

She passes a window -- and sees her reflection. It stops her. Blood and darkness cover her. A little girl, lost.

She blinks. As if coming to from the fog. The push is lifting.

And as she stares at the frightful image, a strange thing happens. The sprinklers wash away the blood.

Charlie emerges from beneath the mask of destruction. The last strains of hope. She reaches the last door, throws it open...

And there he is. Alone, strapped to a chair like her father. His face bloodied and bruised from a brutal beating.

Rainbird.

They stare at each other a long, tense beat.

CHARLIE
You have powers. Like me.

RAINBIRD
My powers are nothing like yours.

CHARLIE
I'm just a little girl.

She steps in, closer. Right up to him.

CHARLIE
You did terrible things. To people
I love.

He holds, stoic. Then opens his arms.

RAINBIRD
Do what you've come for.

She studies his scars.

CHARLIE
They made you do it...

RAINBIRD
Did they?

She considers this. Looks into his eyes.

CHARLIE
This building is on fire.

Then she focuses on the straps that bind him... they smoke,
crumble, fall to the floor. His arms and legs are free.

CHARLIE
You should leave if you want to live.

Then she turns and walks away.

Rainbird watches her go, quietly astonished.

EXT. "SHOP" HQ - PREDAWN

The blackened windows do not betray the devastation inside.
The front door opens. Charlie exits into the quiet night.

She walks through the parking lot, heading for the beach.

MOMENTS LATER, Rainbird exits. Follows her path like a shadow.
Charlie glances back, sees that he's clear of the building...

Then the Old Hotel explodes. As though hit by an atomic bomb.

It lights up the sky, the ocean.

Wood and glass and metal and brick blast into the night. The
heat shatters windows hundreds of yards away.

The power takes something from Charlie. She buckles, but
keeps walking. Rainbird continues behind her.

EXT. THE BEACH - DAWN

Charlie reaches the surf, as the Old Hotel burns in the distance behind her. She takes off her shoes. Her toes dabble in the water. She splashes some on her face, cleans it.

She glances behind her, but Rainbird is gone. She looks into the darkness a long beat, but cannot see him.

She sits on the sand, staring out at the water. Tapped out, exhausted. She falls back on the sand. Her eyes close.

A long beat. Charlie asleep on the beach.

Then two feet appear beside her. Rainbird bends, lifts her up.

The sun breaks the horizon, creeps into the sky. We frame them against the red orb glowing.

The little girl and the monster.

Charlie's eyes slowly open. She looks up at the man. Then back at the hotel, far in the distance. Engulfed in flames.

Firetrucks and cop cars arrive on the scene. People film the devastation on their phones.

Charlie watches it all for a moment, then turns back to Rainbird. She nods, then her head droops again. She sleeps.

He walks down the beach, carrying the girl... On their way to who knows where.

FADE OUT.

THE END