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Social Justice Through Storytelling: Sugar Land

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Social Justice Through Storytelling:

Sugar Land

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements of the University Honors Program
of Loyola Marymount University

by

Alexa Garster

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SUGAR LAND

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FADE IN:

EXT. HUNTSVILLE UNIT PRISON, TEXAS - DAY

Card: Huntsville Unit Prison, Texas, July 2009

It is more beast than building, with red brick walls that tower and loom behind thick chain link fences on every side. The shadows of the guards cast like black clouds on the wall.

The grass is too green, too well-groomed. Sun-kissed violets, orchids, and irises sit in nearby flower beds, in full bloom.

High above, birds chirp and dance as they roam a blue sky.

INT. EXECUTION ROOM - DAY

A body struggles on a gurney beneath its restraints. Blue veins pulse under the skin. Fingers tremble, tremble again. Eyes spasmodic. Cheeks without color. Words lost on the lips.

A pair of older hands reach out to the body. They, too, tremble. These are the hands of the EXECUTIONER (early 60s).

He presses down on a syringe. The liquid seeps out from the needle and under the skin. For just a moment, the fists open and close, open and close on the gurney.

The Executioner watches until the body falls still at last.

INT. EXECUTIONER'S RESIDENTIAL HOUSE - DAY - LATER

The Executioner hangs up his coat and hat in the hallway. Sounds of the TV drift from another room.

WIFE (O.S.)

I saw on the news them cicadas are
comin' in hordes this summer, like
some damn cavalry.

The Executioner walks down the hallway in silence.

WIFE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Somethin' about an extra dry
season. They like the dry heat
cause it's good for the matin'. Sue
says we'll be hearin' them singin'
round these parts for weeks.

The Executioner ascends the staircase, lugging his feet up the steps as if they were thousand-pound weights.

WIFE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'll tell ya, God's sure got a
strange sense a humor, don't he?
Sendin' us a dry season now. Ain't
he already seen our pockets?

Upstairs, the Executioner shuts the bedroom door behind him.

Moments later: a single BANG.

The gunshot echoes throughout the house.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. LIBBY'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Close up on LIBBY CLEMENS (29, an anesthesiologist with unkempt hair, dark circles under her eyes, and a kind, honest smile) as she wakes from a nightmare.

She's sweating, panting, trying to still her breathing.

Soon, she comes out of it, out of whatever scared her, and hops out of bed to get ready for the day.

INT. MEMORIAL HERMANN SUGAR LAND HOSPITAL - DAY

Libby peruses paperwork while she stands by a Receptionist's desk.

LIBBY
Do you know if Mrs. Hernandez
called to fill her prescription
yet?

The Receptionist hesitates. Libby's face falls.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
Don't tell me...

RECEPTIONIST
She said she just can't afford it
right now.

LIBBY
You're kidding me. That's three
this week.

RECEPTIONIST

People don't have money for groceries, let alone for medication.

Libby rubs her temple. She sighs.

LIBBY

Okay, I want you to call up Mrs. Hernandez and tell her that instead of 300mg of Neurontin three times a day, she can take 600mg of Gabapentin two times a day. It's the generic brand, costs a lot less. If she can't afford that, then tell her to take 800mg of ibuprofen three times a day.

RECEPTIONIST

And if she can't afford that?

LIBBY

Tell her a kidney sells for \$260K on the black market, but she didn't hear it from me.

Libby winks, then checks her watch and hurries off.

INT. HOSPITAL, SARAH'S ROOM - DAY

Libby enters the room of SARAH (8, sickly). Sarah's parents, BETH and DANIEL THAW (early 40s), stand in the corner.

LIBBY

How are we doing in here? All settled in for this afternoon?

SARAH

It's just for an hour, right?

LIBBY

Just for an hour. Two at the most.

SARAH

What if I don't wake up?

LIBBY

You'll wake up.

SARAH

But what if I don't?

LIBBY

You will. I promise.
 (to Beth and Daniel)
 Mind if we step outside for a
 minute?

INT. HOSPITAL, OUTSIDE SARAH'S ROOM - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Libby closes the door to Sarah's room behind her, then hands a clipboard and paper packet to Beth and Daniel.

LIBBY

I'll need you to fill this out. Standard questionnaire, just helps us evaluate her condition and prepare for all possible complications. We need to know allergies, reactions, family history, etc.

Libby points to a section of the paper.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Here you'll list all of her surgeries, with the most recent one first. With a case like this, it's important that we --

BETH

She loves to bake. Did you know that?

Libby is taken aback.

BETH (CONT'D)

Her favorite dessert is red velvet cupcakes. We bake them together every Sunday...I mean, we haven't been able to lately...but, but she always wears a pink apron with green and blue polka dots.

DANIEL

Honey, stop --

BETH

She loves horses, monopoly, and she wants to be Batman when she grows up.

Beth's tears stain the clipboard.

DANIEL

Shh, shh.

BETH

Please. That's our daughter in there.

(holding up the clipboard)

I've done this more times than you can count. And I don't care about any of it. Any of it!

(beat)

I just care about my little girl. I just want to know she'll be okay.

Libby places a soft, caring hand on Beth's shoulders.

LIBBY

Hey, look at me. I've done this more times than you can count. She'll be okay. I'll see you in a bit.

Libby offers a reassuring smile.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY - LATER

Libby stands in the hallway, choosing a boxed peanut butter and jelly sandwich out of a vending machine.

She picks it up and heads past the Receptionist's desk to the break room. As she does, she peers from afar into the room of ROBERT (80). He's in there alone.

LIBBY

Has Robert's family been notified that he's woken up from surgery?

RECEPTIONIST

Yes.

LIBBY

Did they show?

The Receptionist shakes her head no.

INT. HOSPITAL, ROBERT'S ROOM - DAY

Robert's face lights up when he sees Libby enter.

LIBBY

Mind if I sit with you? I don't really like to eat alone.

Robert reaches across and grabs a small container of Jell-O from the nightstand.

ROBERT

Me neither.

LIBBY

So how're you doing, Robby? Didn't put up too much of a fight with those surgeons today, I hope?

ROBERT

I made sure to give 'em hell. I think they'd all been expectin' me to croak right there on the table, so I said to them first, "I may be old but I'll be damned if I go quietly." And here I am.

LIBBY

Well, I know it's gonna take a lot more to kill you than anything anybody here could put you through.

ROBERT

They've certainly been givin' it their best shot, I'll tell ya that.

Libby picks up the TV remote.

LIBBY

So what'll it be today? *Dr. Phil* or re-runs of *I Dream of Jeannie*?

ROBERT

Jeannie. I'll be dreamin' of Barbara Eden tonight, if you know what I mean.

Robert winks. Libby can't help but laugh.

INT. HOSPITAL, SARAH'S PRE-OP ROOM - DAY - LATER

Libby kneels beside Sarah's bed. The parents stand nearby.

LIBBY

Well, it's about time, huh? You ready?

SARAH

I don't need the annessia.

Libby holds back a soft smile at this.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I'll be good during the surgery. I won't cry or scream or anything, I promise. I'll sit still, like a good girl.

LIBBY

I know you'll be good. But I just want you to be able to sleep and dream about all the things you're gonna do when you wake up.

(beat)

I mean, think of all the cupcakes you're gonna eat after this. All the horses you're gonna get to ride once you feel better...

SARAH

What if it doesn't work? What if I don't fall asleep?

LIBBY

It'll work. And it'll be so fast you won't even notice it. Your eyes will be open one minute, then closed the next. And when you open them again, it'll all be over.

CARL (40, professional), Libby's supervisor, pokes his head into the room. He taps on his wristwatch.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

I know, I know.

CARL

We're on a schedule around here, Lib.

LIBBY

Can you just give us a minute?

Carl lingers in the doorway. He glances at Beth and Daniel.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Please.

CARL

Five minutes.

LIBBY

Okay.

Carl nods and walks away. Once he's gone:

SARAH
I'm scared.

LIBBY
It's okay to be scared.

Libby motions for Beth and Daniel to come over. They bend down and each give Sarah a kiss, stroking her hair.

BETH
We'll be waiting right here for you, my darling.

DANIEL
They're gonna take good care of you.
(glancing at Libby)
Aren't they?

LIBBY
Absolutely. And guess what? I have a surprise for you.

Libby reaches into her pocket and pulls out two stick-on temporary tattoos, one of Batman and one of Robin.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
I thought after your surgery we could put these on together. I'll be Robin, and you can be Batman. How does that sound?

Sarah breaks into a wide grin, nodding excitedly.

SARAH
He's my favorite superhero!

LIBBY
Is that right? Well, guess who's my hero?

SARAH
Who?

LIBBY
Right now, you are.

Sarah blushes, smiling again. Libby tucks the temporary tattoos back into her pocket. Then:

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Now, all you have to do is look at me, and keep looking at me while we count together, until you're not counting anymore. Okay?

Libby pulls out the anesthesia needle.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Ready?

SARAH

Ready.

Libby administers the anesthesia into Sarah's IV as:

LIBBY/SARAH

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine...

Sarah's eyes open and close, open and close. Libby holds her hand until the girl's eyes don't open again.

INT. HOSPITAL, SARAH'S OPERATING ROOM - DAY

Libby, Carl, and two other Surgeons hover around an operating table, on which lies Sarah, hooked up to a ventilator.

A small group of Medical Students/Interns stand against the wall, observing.

CARL

Alright, everyone. This is Thaw, Sarah. Eight years old. Case of chronic myelogenous leukemia. High-risk. This is her sixth bone marrow transplant in the past three years. She's on 15mg of Midazolam every ten seconds until we begin, then Dr. Clemens here will monitor the maintenance dosage for the remainder of the procedure.

The Students take notes.

CARL (CONT'D)

Let's begin.

INT. SARAH'S OPERATING ROOM - DAY - LATER

Carl wipes sweat away from his forehead.

Libby keeps one hand steady on the ventilator over Sarah's face, the other hand on the machine.

CARL

As you can see, the patient has advanced thrombocytopenia, along with --

BEEP.

The Doctors all look to the heart-rate monitor.

BEEP.

CARL (CONT'D)

(to Libby)

What's going on?

Libby bends down to listen over Sarah's face.

LIBBY

Irregular breathing. Drop in heart rate.

The beeping of the monitor slows even more.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

65 BPM.

She watches the monitor.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

60 BPM.

Panic sets in on her face.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

52 BPM.

CARL

You're sure the initial dosage was 15mg to start?

LIBBY

I'm sure, I'm sure.

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

45 BPM. Progressive bradycardia. The oxygen saturation in her blood will start dropping soon. She'll go into hypoxic arrest.

CARL
You have to do something about it.

LIBBY
If she's having anesthetic
toxicity, I could give her a
reversal agent, but right now we
don't know if it's a mechanical
failure or procedural interference,
and that could --

CARL
40 BPM. God dammit, Libby. We don't
have a choice.

LIBBY
Somebody get me Flumazenil!

Another Surgeon runs to a medical cabinet, reaching in and
grabbing a vial.

Libby begins to administer the medication into Sarah's IV.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
I'm starting with 2mg over fifteen
seconds.

BEEP. BEEP.

CARL
36 BPM. It's not working!

LIBBY
Just wait.

BEEP.

CARL
32 BPM.

LIBBY
Just wait!

CARL
28 BPM. Up the dosage now.

LIBBY
But --

CARL
I said now!

Libby fiddles with the IV.

LIBBY
Another milligram.

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP. A little quicker this time.

CARL
35 BPM. Rising.
(beat)
45 BPM.
(beat)
62 BPM.

Libby looks down at Sarah lying on the table, and she breathes a slight sigh of relief. But it's short lived, because SARAH'S EYES FLICKER BENEATH THE LIDS.

CARL (CONT'D)
The hell was that?

LIBBY
The Flumazenil. We overcompensated.
It's a rebound effect.
(beat)
She'll become conscious if we don't match it again with more Midazolam.

Sarah's eyelids twitch again. Libby starts to administer more anesthesia into the IV, but Carl stops her.

CARL
Are you insane?!

LIBBY
Do you want her to wake up? She'll *feel everything!*

CARL
God dammit!

Libby administers Midazolam again.

She waits.

Carl waits.

The other Surgeons all wait.

But the heart-rate monitor slows, slows, slows, until the beeps are few and far between.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DUSK

Libby sits slumped in a chair. Her face pale. Her eyes empty.

Across the room, Carl delivers the news to Beth and Daniel.

BETH
(inconsolable)
That's my baby girl in there!

Nearby hospital patients and staff look on uncomfortably at the scene.

Beth points to Libby from across the room.

BETH (CONT'D)
She promised us! She promised she'd
be okay!

Libby's eyes are wide, shocked. She's speechless.

CARL
I'm so sorry.

Carl touches the parents' shoulders softly, then looks over at Libby. He tilts his head, motioning for her to follow.

INT. CARL'S OFFICE - DUSK - MOMENTS LATER

Carl takes a seat in his office, Libby across from him.

They don't look at each other.

CARL
It's a tricky business we're in,
Lib. It wasn't supposed to happen
like this.
(beat)
It's just a coma. She's not dead.

LIBBY
Just a coma?

CARL
Look, there were unanticipated
complications. And the body doesn't
always react properly, even when
the protocol is followed to a T.
And when the patient is young like
that...

LIBBY
Is that something the lawyers are
drafting up for us to say?

CARL
 We're looking at more than a
 malpractice lawsuit here, Lib.

Carl chews on his words. Can't spit them out. But, then:

CARL (CONT'D)
 The Board may have your license for
 this. And the hospital, well, we
 just can't afford this type
 of...publicity right now, while
 you're under review.
 (beat)
 I have to ask you to take a leave
 of absence.

LIBBY
 How long?

Silence.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
 This place is my home.

CARL
 I'm sorry.

EXT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DUSK

Libby's brother, TRACE (33, well-built, with a thin smile and deep-set eyes), sits on the curb smoking a cigarette. His body covered in tattoos, most of them patriotic in nature.

Beside Trace sits a mangy stray dog, resting against his leg as Trace pets him.

Libby pulls up in her car and rolls down the window. She makes an effort to put on an air of normalcy, to act casual.

LIBBY
 Who's your friend?

TRACE
 Pigeon.

LIBBY
 You named the dog Pigeon?

TRACE
 That's right.

LIBBY

Funny sort of name for a dog, don't you think?

TRACE

Doesn't make no difference to him. He don't know if he's a dog or a bird or a lizard or a --

LIBBY

--I see your point. Let's go.

Trace stands up, hesitates. He looks to the dog. Libby sighs.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Last one?

TRACE

Last one.

INT./EXT. LIBBY'S CAR - DUSK - MOMENTS LATER

Libby drives, Trace rides in the passenger seat smoking another cigarette out the window. Pigeon rides in the back.

LIBBY

How's therapy?

Trace shrugs, careful not to look at her.

TRACE

How's work?

Libby shrugs, careful not to look at him.

Silence persists.

EXT. CEMETERY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Libby parks outside a small cemetery. She reaches into the backseat and grabs a bouquet of flowers.

LIBBY

You coming?

TRACE

Think I'm good where I am, thanks.

Beat.

LIBBY

It'd be nice if you came for once.

TRACE

I did go. For years, I went. Then
one day I put it behind me.

LIBBY

I'm glad it was that easy for you.

Libby gets out of the car.

EXT. CEMETERY - DUSK

Libby maneuvers through the cemetery, as last coming to kneel
before a modest plot, with a headstone that reads:

**IN MEMORY OF ELIZABETH CLEMENS, DIED APRIL 1996, BELOVED
MOTHER, REMEMBERED ALWAYS.**

She picks up a week-old withered bouquet of flowers and
replaces it with the fresh one.

She sighs, waiting for awhile before she speaks. Then:

LIBBY

I keep having this dream. The same
one, over and over and over again.
There's a fire, small at first. But
then it spreads and it spreads,
until it burns the whole town down.
The people, they always make it out
in time. The dogs, the cats, the
birds, always long gone. They all
live...everyone and everything
except the caterpillars, stuck in
their cocoons.

Long pause.

Libby takes deep breaths to hold back the tears.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

You remember the time I brought
home that crow with the broken
wing? Thought I was going to fix
him right up. You told me if I did,
I could keep him. Dad said there
was no way in hell I'd ever be able
to do it, that I was foolish for
thinking so, but I was obsessed
with the stupid thing. I didn't
eat, didn't sleep. And what a
circus it was for awhile there,
huh? All that cawing and scratching
and biting. But I sure did it.

(MORE)

LIBBY (CONT'D)

I did it. Set that wing straight, got it walkin' and flyin' again. It even stayed around for a month or so. And then when it flew away for good, you remember? Flew right into the neighbor's brick wall -- dead before it even hit the ground. Damn bird was blind.

(beat)

I did all the right things, Mom.

Libby looks up, letting the wind stroke her face, trying, with everything she has, not to cry.

INT. LIBBY'S CAR, CEMETERY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

As Libby gets in, Trace stares out the window, frowning.

TRACE

She can't hear you, you know.

Libby starts the car, ignoring him.

TRACE (CONT'D)

You're better off goin' go to a fuckin' priest for that shit.

INT./EXT. CITY OF SUGAR LAND - NIGHT

They drive home through the streets of Sugar Land. An affluent, clean, picturesque place, as if plucked from a real estate advertisement for idyllic small-town living.

EXT. LIBBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A shack amongst mansions, Libby's modest one-story house sticks out like a sore thumb amidst the others, as if the rest of the neighborhood continued to grow and flourish while her little house was left behind long ago.

INT. LIBBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Inside, a stack of dirty dishes sit by the sink. The trash can overflows. Numerous bottles of alcohol lie about. Cigarette butts pile up in the ashtray.

As Libby and Trace enter, Pigeon runs in after them and joins with a group of other dogs and cats, all strays that have been picked up over the years.

INT. LIBBY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Libby and Trace sit at the table eating TV dinners. Whiskey for Trace. Water for Libby.

Libby picks around her food, not eating. Trace notices.

TRACE
So should I ask?

LIBBY
Ask what?

TRACE
If there's somethin' wrong...or, or
somethin'?

LIBBY
You just did, didn't you?

TRACE
Is this about earlier?

LIBBY
What? No.

TRACE
Then what? Is it money?

LIBBY
No.

TRACE
Well how long you gonna let those
bills pile up? You think I don't
see the statements? The notices?
The "PAST DUE"'s?

LIBBY
I'm working on it.

TRACE
Well the banks these days don't
really have time for you to "work
on it."

(beat)
Look, if you need me to pick up a
couple extra shifts at the
grocer's, all you have to do is
ask.

LIBBY
Jesus! Just leave it alone, okay?
It's not about that.

A moment of silence. Libby's face softens and her mouth opens, the words stuck on her tongue.

She wants to tell him, but --

Trace stands up from the table and grabs his jacket.

TRACE

Listen, I been in war and I been on the streets. And let me tell you, it's a bit of a toss up which one's worse.

LIBBY

Where are you going?

TRACE

Work.

And with that, he leaves the house.

EXT. PORN THEATRE - NIGHT

Trace walks up to an old, dilapidated porn theatre. A cheap yellow electric sign reads "ADULT FILMS & NAKED GIRLS."

The sidewalk is filthy, littered in trash and covered in piss. Two figures embrace and grunt in the alleyway shadows.

INT. PORN THEATRE - NIGHT

As Trace enters, his boss ANDY (mid-40s, oily forehead, patchy mustache) stands behind the counter.

ANDY

You're late.

TRACE

What, big crowd on a Tuesday?

ANDY

You're lucky nobody else wants to be cleaning up piss and cum.

TRACE

Yeah, I'm countin' my lucky stars.

Andy huffs as Trace brushes past him.

Trace walks to the back room and changes into his janitor's uniform. He grabs a trash can, a couple mops, rags, etc.

INT. AUDITORIUM AT THE PORN THEATRE - NIGHT

Trace opens the door to an auditorium. The place is a mess: spilled sodas, popcorn, candy, plus condom wrappers and thongs lying about. The carpet grungy and dark, masking all sorts of stains. A few sex toys litter the ground.

Trace wrinkles his nose, sighs, and begins his work.

INT. LIBBY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Libby clears the dinner plates and begins to clean the dishes. Her eyes wander over to the mail on the counter.

She walks over, picks up a handful of letters, and throws them as hard as she can against the wall.

They flutter to the ground like white birds.

She then hits a button on the phone, checking voicemail. There are 3 messages.

The first one:

COLLECTION AGENCY VOICE (FILTERED)
This is Bill Johnson, representing
WDB collection agency --

Libby skips to the next one:

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)
(gruff, quiet, slurred
words)
Hey, uh, it's me. Just calling to --

Libby hesitates for just a second, caught off guard, then skips to the next one:

WARDEN GREENE (FILTERED)
This is Warden Greene from Polunksy
Unit Prison, calling for Miss
Elizabeth Clemens. You have been
identified as a potential candidate
for an immediate job opportunity
here at Polunksy, in conjunction
with the Huntsville Unit.
Unfortunately, I cannot disclose
the details of the position in this
message, but I invite you to come
hear us out in person. Significant
compensation will be provided.
Thank you.

INT. LIBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Libby turns out the lamp, getting into bed. Her room is small, simple. Tall stacks of books and newspapers sit on the floor, along with a cardboard box full of old photographs.

In another corner are a few stuffed animals, tattered and dusty. A couple of dolls, too. Things that should've been thrown away long ago.

On top of her dresser is a SOBRIETY MEDALLION. Five years.

INT. LIBBY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAWN

As Libby gets ready to leave the house, she notices Trace asleep on the couch in his pajamas. She nudges his foot, but he doesn't move. She kicks his leg a little harder. He wakes.

TRACE

The hell, sis?

Libby plays the second voicemail message again for Trace:

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

(gruff, quiet, slurred
words)

Hey, uh, it's me --

She cuts it off even sooner this time.

LIBBY

If you wanna talk to him, that's
your choice. But I told you I don't
want him calling the fucking house.

Libby storms out the door.

INT./EXT. CAR, OUTSKIRTS OF SUGAR LAND - DAY

Farther out from Sugar Land, as Libby drives along the dirt roads, along the farm routes, she sees various Protestors holding signs like:

"RECESSION OR ROBBERY?"

"GIVE ME LIBERTY, NOT DEBT!"

"WE ARE THE 99%"

EXT. POLUNSKY UNIT PRISON - DAY

Libby pulls up to the prison, parks her car, gets out. She stands in the parking lot, observing the cement walls and electric fence that surrounds all sides.

INT. OFFICE OF THE WARDEN - DAY

Libby shakes hands with WARDEN GREENE (40s, handsome, confident) as she enters. In the corner of the office stands OFFICER GOODMAN (late 50s, stern).

WARDEN GREENE
Elizabeth Clemens?

Libby nods.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)
Thank you for coming. Please, take a seat.

LIBBY
It's Libby, actually.

WARDEN GREENE
Well, we appreciate you coming in to see us about the position.

LIBBY
No trouble.

WARDEN GREENE
We're in a bit of a situation here. Do you who know Anthony Jones is?

LIBBY
Sure. I've seen him on the news sometimes.

WARDEN GREENE
How much would you say you know about him?

LIBBY
About as much as the regular Dateline NBC viewer, I guess.

WARDEN GREENE
And are you aware of his upcoming execution?

LIBBY
I am now.

WARDEN GREENE

And how do you feel about it?

LIBBY

I don't see how my opinion matters much.

WARDEN GREENE

It just might.

LIBBY

Well, are you asking me because you want to know my politics on capital punishment or 'cause you just want to know how I feel about a murderer?

WARDEN GREENE

I'm asking you because our resident executioner...well, uh, he retired unexpectedly about a month ago, vacating the position at a rather inconvenient time.

LIBBY

(half-joking)

Oh I see, so you're asking me if I want to execute Anthony Jones?

An awkward silence. Then:

LIBBY (CONT'D)

You're not serious?

WARDEN GREENE

Quite serious, in fact. You see--

But Libby is already standing up, ready to leave.

LIBBY

--I can see now it was a mistake to come down here. Sorry to have wasted your time.

WARDEN GREENE

Five-thousand. In cash.

LIBBY

Excuse me?

WARDEN GREENE

That's the first installment. You'll get the rest when the job is done.

(MORE)

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)

(beat)

Even more if you decide to...take up the occupation permanently. We've got another execution scheduled just two months from now.

LIBBY

Well, seeing as though I'm a doctor, I don't really intend to make killing people my life's work.

WARDEN GREENE

I'm not gonna lie to you, we're desperate here.

LIBBY

I just don't think I'm right for it.

WARDEN GREENE

No? Well--

LIBBY

Sorry, let me rephrase that. I *know* I'm not right for it.

WARDEN GREENE

You're trained. You know all the techniques. And we've exhausted our efforts with all other medical and prison personnel by now. Bottom line is, you're skilled in an area most people aren't.

(beat)

And if it's anonymity you're worried about, don't be. We keep the identities of our executioners strictly confidential.

LIBBY

It's not anonymity I'm worried about.

WARDEN GREENE

Look, Jones's execution is in a week. If you decline, the job will have to go to someone less... talented.

(beat)

You ever seen a botched execution?

Libby shakes her head.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)

Didn't think so.

(gesturing to Goodman)

He's seen one. Seen quite a few,
actually. Haven't you?

OFFICER GOODMAN

Yes, sir.

WARDEN GREENE

Not a pretty sight, is it? Watchin'
Joe Smith from Smallville,
Somewhere fumble around with a
needle, trying to tell a vein from
an artery.

Libby sighs, rubs her temple. Moments of silence pass.

LIBBY

I need some time to think about it.

WARDEN GREENE

We need your answer by the end of
tomorrow.

LIBBY

Alright.

WARDEN GREENE

That man's gonna die. Period. But
that don't mean the dying part has
to be any harder than it needs to
be.

LIBBY

I said alright.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Most of the Bar Patrons are coupled up, drunk, smitten with
one another, confident yet clumsy in their flirtations.

Libby sits at the bar alone, but she wears loneliness well.

The Bartender, ALEX (late 30s, friendly face), pours Libby a
glass of water from a plastic water bottle.

ALEX

Cheese fries, sweet potato fries,
or loaded tots?

LIBBY

What?

ALEX

Which one you like? I'm thinkin' of expanding the menu.

LIBBY

Oh. I guess sweet potato fries.

Libby's suddenly caught in a memory...

LIBBY (CONT'D)

My parents, they used to take Trace and I to the state fair every summer. They saved up for months just to buy the tickets... We'd get there and they'd let us pick out one treat each, anything we wanted. Trace and Dad split deep-fried cheesecake. Mom and I, we always wanted cinnamon sugar sweet potato fries with a honey spice dip...best treat in the whole world.

Beat.

ALEX

Really? Because I'm thinkin' tots.

Libby laughs, snapping from her reverie. She playfully throws a bar towel at Alex, but once he walks away, she stares off into the distance, lost in thought again.

Out of the corner of her eye, she notices that she's caught the attention of an attractive Male Bar Patron (late 20s).

EXT. STREETS OF SUGAR LAND - NIGHT

Trace walks along the street, hood up, hands in his pockets, a cigarette hanging out of his mouth. He's alone for awhile, until the faint sound of MOTORCYCLES echoes in the distance.

Trace stops in his tracks, turns around, and peers into the dark street. Soon enough, the motorcycles approach, clearly in a race. They're rushing, revving, roaring like tigers.

Trace takes his hands out of his pockets, but they tremble violently at his sides. He watches the motorcycles pass him.

The sounds are so close now, so loud, so deafening as they fly by. Even once the motorcycles are gone and out of sight, Trace shuts his eyes, keeps them closed.

He stands still but for the trembling in his hands. Sweat drips down his face, down his neck. He's somewhere else now -- on a different night, in a different city, across the world.

Trace opens his eyes at last. He picks up his pace and turns a corner, where he enters

A LIQUOR STORE.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Libby and the Male Bar Patron sit together at the bar now, talking in hushed whispers.

The Male Bar Patron leans in, resting a hand on Libby's thigh.

EXT. PORN THEATRE - NIGHT

Trace walks up to the front of the porn theatre. He carries a bottle in his hand, wrapped in a brown paper bag. He drinks whatever is left of the bottle in continuous swigs, then smashes it on the ground.

INT. LIBBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Libby and the Male Bar Patron kiss passionately as they open the door, enter the house. The man begins unhooking his belt, unzipping his pants, unbuttoning his shirt. Libby takes him by the hand and guides him to the

BEDROOM,

where they fall into bed and have sex. But it's quick, even awkward. The man climaxes. Libby does not.

INT. AUDITORIUM AT THE PORN THEATRE - NIGHT

In one of the rows, two Theatre Patrons (one man, one woman) engage in sex acts.

Trace flips on the light switch.

MALE THEATRE PATRON
What the hell's this about?

TRACE
I'm sorry, but you gotta go when
the show's over.

MALE THEATRE PATRON
 Hey pal, does it look like the
 show's over to you?

Male Theatre Patron gestures to Female Theatre Patron, who performs ORAL SEX on him.

TRACE
 Well, *pal*, when the credits are
 done, it means you're done.

FEMALE THEATRE PATRON
 Oh, easy there, tough guy. You're
 next.

She winks at Trace.

Trace maneuvers down the aisle, closer to them now.

TRACE
 I'm only gonna ask you one more
 time to get the fuck out of my
 theater.

MALE THEATRE PATRON
 And I'm only gonna ask you one more
 time to step off--

Trace PUNCHES THE MAN. The hit is direct, hard, Trace's military training evident.

Male Theatre Patron spins around and gets a hit on Trace as well. They two men fight it out, knocking against the curtains, the chairs, clashing against each other.

Female Theatre Patron screams as she watches.

Andy rushes into the auditorium and breaks up the fight.

ANDY
 (to Trace)
 Ah, Jesus Christ. What the fuck,
 man? What the fuck are you doing?!
 You know what, I don't even care.
 Get the fuck away from here. Now.
 You're done.

Trace spits out some blood before he walks away.

INT. LIBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Male Bar Patron sleeps soundly beside Libby, but their bodies don't touch. She tosses and turns, tosses and turns.

At last she moves closer to him, laying her head gently on his chest. Then, she picks up his arm and wraps it around herself, over her shoulders. He doesn't notice, doesn't wake.

This is what matters to her. To feel touched, to feel protected, to feel loved. Or at least to be able to pretend.

INT. LIBBY'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Libby wakes to an empty bed.

She takes a moment to let it pass, the sadness that comes with knowing how easily people come and go, come and go.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - DAWN

Libby goes for a jog. She's slower at first, but picks up her pace, holds her head higher now, trying to outrun the tears.

INT. LIBBY'S HOUSE - DAWN

When she returns, Libby finds Trace asleep on the couch. His face bloody, still in his janitor's uniform.

She sits down beside him, sighs. He wakes up, groggy.

LIBBY

You just get in?

TRACE

Yes.

LIBBY

(re: his uniform)

You haven't been working at the grocer's, have you?

TRACE

No. I was workin' at the porn theatre down on 8th street. Key word bein' "was." I beat the shit out of a customer.

LIBBY

Did they deserve it?

Trace has to think on it. Then, almost sheepishly:

TRACE

I don't know.

A moment of silence.

TRACE (CONT'D)
Go ahead. Say it.

LIBBY
What?

TRACE
I'm unreliable. Irresponsible.
Reckless. Can't hold down a job. I
mean, that's what you wanna say,
ain't it?

LIBBY
No. Not today.

INT./EXT. CAR PARKED AT THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Libby pulls up in front of the therapist's office. Trace remains in the passenger seat. In the backseat is a bouquet of fresh flowers.

LIBBY
You didn't have to lie to me.

TRACE
Yeah, I did.

LIBBY
Why?

TRACE
What would I have said, huh?

LIBBY
You could've just talked to me.
When did we stop talking to each
other?

TRACE
I don't know, Lib. But I do know
I'm fucked up. I'm just so fucked
up. And there's no talkin' bout
that kind of shame.

Trace opens the door, gets out of the car.

EXT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

As Libby pulls away in her car, Trace watches until she is completely out of sight.

He turns around, looks at the building. He starts walking away. He's going somewhere...but not therapy.

INT. MEMORIAL HERMANN HOSPITAL - DAY

Libby walks into the hospital, in sweatpants and an oversized sweatshirt with the hood up, covering her face. She holds a bouquet of flowers, careful not to draw attention to herself.

INT. SARAH'S ROOM - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Libby stands in the doorway for several moments.

Inside, Beth and Daniel sit sleeping up in chairs, exhausted.

Sarah lies motionless on the hospital bed, hooked up to machines. She looks as if she, too, could be sleeping.

Libby takes a deep breath and enters. She tiptoes throughout the room, careful not to wake Sarah's parents.

Libby quietly sets the bouquet of flowers on the windowsill.

INT. LIBBY'S HOUSE, LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Libby does laundry, taking clothes one by one out of the washer and putting them into the dryer. When she pulls out her scrubs, she hesitates for a moment. Puzzled.

There is a dark stain on the coat pocket. She examines it closely, the ink-like blot. Libby then reaches inside. She pulls out the two temporary Batman and Robin tattoos.

They're smeared, warped now, and sopping wet. Barely recognizable. She clutches them tightly, caught in a trance.

EXT. LIBBY'S BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Libby stands outside on the porch, the door shut behind her.

She pulls out the phone from inside her jacket. She dials. Someone picks up on the other end of the line.

LIBBY

Hi, Warden. It's Libby.

She stands still on the porch for awhile. She looks out into the darkness, into the sky, listening to the cicadas sing, watching as moths circle around her porch lights -- as they're drawn in and doomed by the flames.

INT. POLUNSKY UNIT PRISON, OFFICE OF THE WARDEN - DAY

Warden Greene sits at his desk, Libby across from him.

WARDEN GREENE

Twenty-four hours before the execution, Jones will be transferred over to the Huntsville Unit. About an hour's drive away.

LIBBY

It doesn't happen here?

WARDEN GREENE

No. It happens at the "Death House," as it's known. Jones's execution is scheduled for 10:00am on the thirtieth. Before he's transferred, you'll meet with him here.

LIBBY

Why?

WARDEN GREENE

The preliminaries, mostly. Checking vitals, a brief medical history, things of that nature. Once he's been transferred, you're free to go home, get your rest, and we'll see you again the morning of.

Libby laughs.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)

Something amusing?

LIBBY

It's just funny.

WARDEN GREENE

A man is going to be executed and you think it's funny?

LIBBY

I think it's funny that a man is gonna be executed and you're acting like he's just going in for an ordinary medical checkup. Like once he's done, I can give him a lollipop and a pat on the back and send him on his way.

WARDEN GREENE

I've done this enough times to know
a thing or two about how to act.

EXT. STREETS OF SUGAR LAND - DAY

Trace walks up and down the streets, peering into various shops, stopping by one or two storefronts. He wears ill-fitting slacks and a slightly wrinkled button-down shirt, but he looks put together for once -- as best as he can be.

INT. CAR WASH STAND - DAY

Trace walks up to the counter, where a female Car Wash Manager (50s) sits reading a newspaper. She doesn't glance up as Trace walks in.

TRACE

Ma'am?

CAR WASH MANAGER

Yes?

TRACE

Are you hirin'?

She gives Trace a once-over. She's not impressed.

CAR WASH MANAGER

Hiring?

She lets out an overexaggerated laugh.

CAR WASH MANAGER (CONT'D)

Do you read the paper?

TRACE

What does that have to do with
washin' cars?

CAR WASH MANAGER

It don't have anythin' to do with
that. It has to do with
understandin' the times, and if you
understood the times you'd know I'm
not hirin'.

TRACE

I'll work for cheap. I'll work
weekends and nights --

The Manager waves her hand, dismissing him away.

INT. OFFICE OF THE WARDEN - DAY

Libby signs a piece of paper on the warden's desk, then pushes it towards him.

WARDEN GREENE

Thank you.
 (pulling out an envelope)
 Now, here's the first installment.

The Warden hands Libby the envelope. She peers inside, briefly fingers through the bills.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)

And you should know...this payment is off-the-books, so to speak. Your discretion is appreciated.

Libby lets an awkward pause fill the air. The Warden shifts in his seat, uncomfortable...

He clears his throat.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)

Did you happen to catch the game last night?

LIBBY

What?

WARDEN GREENE

The Cowboys. I got a good feeling about this season, though I don't know what Phillips was thinking when he drafted that Williams kid. Sure, he knows how to rush a QB, but that doesn't mean --

LIBBY

--I don't really follow sports.

WARDEN GREENE

Ah.

Libby and Warden share another awkward beat.

EXT. TOY STORE - DAY

On the street, Trace walks past a toy store, but a "NOW HIRING" sign in the corner of the window catches his attention. He backtracks, stands staring at the sign in disbelief. He smooths out his hair, his shirt, his pants.

INT. TOY STORE - DAY

Trace walks up to the counter, where an acne-covered Teenage Male Cashier stands by the register.

TEENAGE MALE CASHIER
Can I help you with something, sir?

TRACE
Yeah, uh, I don't know if it's some sort of a mistake or not, but you got a hirin' sign out front, and I'm lookin' for a job.

Out of the corner of his eye, Trace notices a Little Boy and his Mother shopping.

The boy picks up a toy gun from one of the shelves.

TEENAGE MALE CASHIER
Well, I just work here at the register, so I don't know much about that...but you could talk to the boss if you want.

TRACE
Yeah, okay.

The Male Cashier calls for the manager over his radio. Then:

TEENAGE MALE CASHIER
He'll be up here in a sec.

TRACE
Thanks.

As Trace steps off to the side and leans against the counter, he watches the little boy intently, playing with his toy gun:

LITTLE BOY
(pretend firing)
Bang!

Trace breaks out in a slight sweat. Twitches a little.

LITTLE BOY (CONT'D)
Bang! Bang bang!!

The Little Boy squeals in delight as he zooms around the store with his gun, but Trace's hands have started to tremble, and his breathing picks up.

The Cashier notices this.

TEENAGE MALE CASHIER
Sir, are you alright?

LITTLE BOY (O.S.)
BANG BANG!

Trace shuts his eyes tight.

LITTLE BOY (CONT'D)
BANG BANG BANG BANG!!!!

Trace grips the counter, eyes closed, steadying himself.

TEENAGE MALE CASHIER
Sir...?

The Male Cashier extends a hand to Trace, slowly touching him on the shoulder, but the second he makes contact, Trace's eyes shoot open and he spins around.

TRACE
Don't touch me!

He tries to make his way out the door, but knocks into a shelf, sending a few toys crashing onto the floor.

TRACE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I didn't mean...I'm
sorry...

Just as he says this, the Manager appears (60, with a kind face). He watches as Trace hurries out of the store.

EXT. STREETS OF SUGAR LAND - DAY - MINUTES LATER

Trace runs down the street, far enough away from the store, then sinks down against a wall.

He pulls out his cellphone. Dials a number.

TRACE
Hey, what are you doin' right now?

INT. OLD CHURCH - DUSK

Trace sits in one of the empty pews, fidgety.

He looks around at the people...at the hanging lights...at the stained glass windows...trying to find how he might fit in here...

He grabs a Bible and flips through it, not really reading it but perhaps looking for some meaning in the touch, in the way the pages purr as they slip in and out of his fingers...

After awhile, the church doors open and from behind we follow CAMILA (30, Latina, buzz cut, good posture, strong arms) walk down the aisle and take a seat next to Trace.

TRACE

Hey.
(beat)
Been awhile.

Trace turns to look at Camila. She was stunning at one time, but dark circles under her eyes, chapped lips, and hollow cheeks now mar whatever beauty once resided there.

Camila takes in the church. She smiles, laughs a little.

CAMILA

Aren't you supposed to lose God in war rather than find Him? That was the real fun part, I thought.

Trace shrugs.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

No, seriously. Since when are you religious?

TRACE

I'm not, I just...I was just thinkin' maybe it's not too late to start, you know? I could be that guy. I could believe in this shit.

He gestures around him, but a few Church Patrons cast a disapproving glance at Trace's foul language.

Camila giggles.

TRACE (CONT'D)

So how you been?

CAMILA

Good.

But Trace notices that Camila's forearms are covered in needle marks and bruises.

TRACE

Good?

CAMILA
That's what I said.

Camila notices Trace staring at her arms now. She tugs down on her sleeves uncomfortably.

TRACE
I guess you're not the only one in
bad shape.

They sit in silence for a moment more. Then:

CAMILA
Why'd you call?

TRACE
I don't fit in here anymore.

CAMILA
None of us do.

TRACE
People look at me like I'm crazy.

CAMILA
Aren't you?

TRACE
Are you?

CAMILA
Oh, I'm as crazy as they come.

At that, Camila stands up and gets up on the pew. She starts to sing and dance -- tapping her feet, twirling around, skipping from one pew to the other.

Trace looks around. There are only a few other Church Patrons scattered here and there, but they all stare incredulously at Camila from their pews.

TRACE
(embarrassed, but amused)
Stop that.

CAMILA
Why? Because *He* wouldn't like it?
Because He'll smite me where I
dance?

TRACE
Keep your voice down.

CAMILA

Well, let me tell you something --
He didn't seem to give a damn about
what I did or what you did or what
anybody else did in the war, so he
sure as hell shouldn't care now.

Camila grabs Trace by the hands and pulls him up to his feet.
He stands there awkwardly while she just twirls around him.
He doesn't join in, but doesn't protest anymore either.

INT. LIBBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Libby sits alone on the couch eating a TV dinner. She watches
the news.

NEWS REPORTER (FILTERED)

In just a few days, forty-seven-
year-old Anthony Jones will be
executed at Huntsville --

But Libby has muted the TV.

She stays this way -- eating her dinner while watching the
images on the TV flicker with no sound.

INT. DEATH ROW UNIT, POLUNSKY UNIT PRISON - DAY

Card: **8:00am, September 29th -- TWENTY-SIX HOURS TO EXECUTION**

Warden Greene, followed by Officer Goodman, leads Libby
through the Death Row Unit.

An aisle of cells, of solid steel doors that tower over Libby
as she makes her way through. Each door has a single barred
window through which the interior room is glimpsed.

Libby crinkles her nose. The floor is dirty, disgusting.

Not a single sound is heard except for their footsteps.

LIBBY

It's...it's so quiet.

WARDEN GREENE

What did you expect?

As they walk down the corridor, Libby crosses her arms. She
tries to keep her glance forward, but her eyes keep drifting
from side to side, from cell to cell.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)
 I guess cement walls and steel
 doors don't make good
 conversationalists, do they?

Libby stops in her tracks. For a brief moment, she closes her eyes. But whatever she feels scares her, and her eyelids bounce open as quickly as they closed.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)
 Besides, quiet days are good days.
 It only gets noisy on the days when
 somebody...

LIBBY
 Oh.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOLDING CELL - DAY

The cell is small, roughly 8 by 10 feet. A metal-framed bed with a small mattress sits in one corner. There is also a steel sink and toilet. On the back wall, a single window.

Libby is let in by Officer Goodman, who enters with her and closes the door. Goodman assumes his position in the corner.

ANTHONY JONES (47, an African-American man with white hair, tired eyes, and a slim, malnourished body) sits in a metal chair behind a metal desk.

His hands and feet are both cuffed.

ANTHONY
 Hmph.

LIBBY
 What?

ANTHONY
 I wudn't expectin'...well, you.
 Didn't think it'd be a girl.

LIBBY
 Well, I didn't expect me either.

Libby takes a seat. She looks Anthony up and down, really taking him in for the first time. She looks uneasy.

ANTHONY
 You ain't the first one to look at
 me like that.
 (beat, thinking)
 Might be the last one though.

Libby shifts in her seat, uncomfortable.

LIBBY

Look, I'm just here to do a basic evaluation. Check your vitals, medical history. Anything that might be useful to know for --

ANTHONY

--Why?

LIBBY

Excuse me?

ANTHONY

I don't see what's useful 'bout it. A dead man's a dead man in the end.

LIBBY

Let's just start with a couple questions. Have you ever been hospitalized?

ANTHONY

Here and there.

LIBBY

For what?

ANTHONY

My daddy liked to tell doctors I was good at fallin' outta trees.

Libby hesitates briefly, makes a note on her pad.

LIBBY

Any allergies?

ANTHONY

No.

LIBBY

Ever received a blood transfusion?

ANTHONY

No.

LIBBY

Do you know your blood type?

ANTHONY

I dunno nuthin' 'bout blood types,
but I know when ya stick that
needle in, there'll be red comin'
outta me just like ev'body else.

LIBBY

Have you ever had any of the
following?: abnormal bleeding...

ANTHONY

No.

LIBBY

Anemia?

ANTHONY

No.

LIBBY

A sexually transmitted disease or
any other condition that could be
transferred by needle?

ANTHONY

When I was fifteen I got a nice
case a gonorrhoea. You can thank
daddy fo' that one.

Libby clears her throat. She makes another note on her pad.

LIBBY

That's enough for now. I'll be back
in a little bit for a physical.

Officer Goodman lets Libby out of the cell.

INT. PRISON BATHROOM - DAY

Libby stands in front of the bathroom mirror, splashing water
over her face. Then, she washes her hands over and over
again, scrubbing them clean.

When she's done, she stares at her reflection.

She stays in the bathroom for awhile.

EXT. PRISON BATHROOM - DAY

When Libby emerges, she notices Warden Green leaning against
a wall nearby.

WARDEN GREENE

You're probably feeling bad for him right about now, is that right?

LIBBY

I'm not feeling anything.

WARDEN GREENE

Because I wouldn't blame you if you did. With a past like his? Kind of hard not to pity the bastard.

LIBBY

Not me. Guess I'm not the pitying type.

But her face, her posture, her voice...the Warden isn't convinced.

WARDEN GREENE

No? Well, just in case, I find it helps to think of the people he hurt. To think of those two men...how young they were, how kind, how smart. One of them about to graduate with a degree in architecture, the other one just three weeks away from his Peace Corps departure date.

(beat)

And to think about how Jones shot them from behind with a Smith & Wesson 500 Magnum, then bashed their faces in with a tire iron for good measure.

Libby looks like she might be sick, but tries to hide it.

She brushes past Warden Greene without looking at him.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOLDING CELL - DAY

Libby sits across from Anthony once more. His arm is hooked up to a blood pressure machine. She writes in her note pad.

As she unwraps his arm and begins the physical examination, she looks disgusted to touch him. She starts on his chest, then moves to his stomach, arms, legs, etc. Repulsed.

His body is just a mere shadow of what it once was. His bones fragile, his skin leathery and prematurely wrinkled, his teeth yellowed, his joints stiff, his frame wooden and stick-like, with sores on his backside, blisters all over.

ANTHONY

I never been this close before.

Libby won't acknowledge his words. But he continues to talk anyway, lost in his own world now.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

I mean I always been countin' down my death -- by years, by months, by days. But now I can count by hours. Tomorrow, I'll count by minutes.

Again, nothing from Libby.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Whenever my mama comes to see me, she says, "maybe yous can get a stay. It happens." But I always says back to her, "Mama, do I look like the kinda guy it happens fo'?"

Anthony snaps from his thoughts. He eyes Libby.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

You got a mama?

Libby swallows, but still won't respond. Or even look at him.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Oh, I get it, I get it. This must be the part where you figured out you better than me. That havin' any kind a words with me wud just be a waste a your precious breath.

She takes a moment to decide what to say. Then:

LIBBY

I don't think I'm better than you.

ANTHONY

'Course ya do. That's okay though. I mean, ya probably are. It ain't all that hard to be better un me, after what I done.

Beat.

LIBBY

So why'd you do it?

ANTHONY

You know, everybody's always comin' to me with that question, wantin' some kind a answer that'll make it all make sense.

(beat)

If I has to look God in the eye and answer for what I dun, then I guess that's what I'll do.

A moment of silence hangs between them. Libby backs away, finished. She starts to pack up.

She frowns for a moment, thinking. Then:

LIBBY

I'm just trying to do my job.

ANTHONY

You and all the other people 'round here. Just you remember sumthin'.

LIBBY

What?

ANTHONY

They call mine a crime and they call yours a job. But it don't make no difference in the end. You gonna be standin' in front a God jus the same, singin' the same verse as me.

Libby tries to form words...but a reply never comes.

EXT. POLUNSKY UNIT PRISON - DAY

Libby and Warden Greene stand together outside, watching as Anthony is escorted away in handcuffs by security from the prison through the courtyard, through the parking lot, and finally into a white van with tinted windows.

The van doors are shut behind Anthony. The car pulls away.

Libby and Warden Greene watch in complete silence until the van is out of sight and all that remains are dust particles floating atop the dirt road.

WARDEN GREENE

See you tomorrow, then.

Beat.

LIBBY
Go Rangers, right?

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Libby sits at the bar, drinking a glass of water. JASON (30s) sits beside her, drinking a single glass of bourbon.

They laugh together, smile, blush -- their connection genuine.

LIBBY
Bullshit.

JASON
I swear!

LIBBY
Let's see it.

Jason sticks his long tongue out and successfully touches his nose with it.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
Well, I must say I'm impressed. Are there any other bodily tricks you feel the need to show me?

JASON
Hold up. What do you think this is, some sort of side show where I make a complete fool out of myself while you just sit there and watch?

Libby shrugs, laughs.

JASON (CONT'D)
No, no, no. A trick for a trick. So come on, whaddya got?

LIBBY
Alright, fine.

Libby opens up her mouth and makes a three-leafed clover shape with her tongue.

JASON
What a cop out. You can't do something with your tongue, that was my thing!

LIBBY

Oh, sorry, I guess I didn't realize
you had a monopoly on tongue
tricks.

Libby and Jason laugh again. They smile as they look into each other's eyes. Jason leans in and kisses Libby. She kisses back, grabbing his face with her hands.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Libby and Jason exit the bar together, holding hands and kissing periodically.

She looks happy for a change. Carefree. Hopeful.

They maneuver over to Jason's car, which is parked along the street. Jason reaches into his pocket and pulls out the keys.

Libby stops dead in her tracks.

LIBBY

What are you doing?

JASON

I thought you said you wanted to
get out of here.

Libby's demeanor has changed abruptly. She no longer smiles or laughs. She stops holding Jason's hand.

LIBBY

I did. I mean I do, but...

She looks from Jason to the car, to Jason again.

JASON

Oh, come on, I've had one drink.

He's right, but Libby doesn't care, doesn't want to hear it. One drink or a hundred, it's all the same to her...

LIBBY

Just let me drive.

JASON

It's fine. See?

Jason walks a perfect straight line with arms outstretched, alternating touching each fingertip to his nose.

JASON (CONT'D)
 You're safe with me, I promise. And
 when we get home, I have a couple
 more tricks I can show you...

Jason leans in to kiss Libby again, but she pushes him away.

JASON (CONT'D)
 Okay, what the hell's the matter
 with you?

LIBBY
 What's the matter with me? What's
 the matter with you?! If you get in
 that car, you're gonna kill
 somebody!

JASON
 What are you talking about?!

LIBBY
 You can't just gamble on someone
 else's life like that!

JASON
 It was one goddamn drink!

Libby's red in the cheeks, with fire in her eyes.

LIBBY
 You don't get it, you just don't
 get it.

While Jason stands there bewildered, Libby hurries away, her
 arms folded and her eyes misty.

EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Trace and Camila approach the grounds of an elementary
 school. Behind a chain link fence lies a large playground.

They carry bottles of alcohol in their hands, intoxicated.

Camila tries to open the gate, but it's locked.

TRACE
 Let's just go.

CAMILA
 You scared?

TRACE
 No, I just wanna go.

Camila starts to climb the chain link fence.

TRACE (CONT'D)
You're askin' for trouble.

Camila sits atop the fence, one leg on either side.

CAMILA
Always am.

Camila giggles, winks at Trace, then hops down on the other side. She motions for him to follow.

Trace hesitates for a moment, wanting to leave her, wanting to join her...

He takes a step forward. Camila applauds him as he makes his way up the chain link fence.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Trace and Camila swing side-by-side on the swing set, slowly, lightly, as if floating. They stare up at the night sky, at the stars shining above them, at the softly glowing moon.

Their hands drape loosely by their sides, fingertips nearly brushing those of the other, but not quite.

INT. LIBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Libby lies awake on her bed, tossing and turning. She stares at the ceiling, breathing in and out. She rolls over on her side, stretches out her hand across the empty bed beside her.

The silence of her house -- suffocating.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Libby maneuvers through the kitchen quietly, slowly, herself maybe unsure of what she's doing...what she's looking for...

She stands before a closed cabinet, fingering over the wood, tracing the outline of the handles for a moment or two.

She opens the cabinet, eyeing Trace's collection of alcohol inside. She stares at the bottles without touching them.

But then, at last, Libby pours herself a glass of whiskey. Three fingers. No ice.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Libby flips through the TV channels, until finally landing on a sports channel. The Rangers game is on.

Her whiskey drink in hand, she watches the game. Perhaps she doesn't really watch, but as a comfort to herself looks on intently, feigning an interest in the shouts and cheers that save her from silence.

INT. HUNTSVILLE UNIT PRISON, ANTHONY'S CELL - NIGHT

Anthony sits alone in his new cell, eating his last meal: a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Outside his cell sits a Guard keeping watch, but he's fallen asleep in the chair.

Anthony finishes his last bite --

He stands up from the table --

Walks over to a wall --

Stares at it for a few moments, then a few moments more --

Before at last he BASHES HIS HEAD AGAINST THE WALL.

Once...

twice...

three times...

until he can't do it anymore, and his limp body sinks to the floor in a pile of blood.

EXT. HUNTSVILLE UNIT PRISON - DAWN

Card: 8:00am, September 30th -- TWO HOURS TO EXECUTION

A white van skirts the outside of the Huntsville Prison and pulls into the back parking lot.

The Warden, Officer Goodman, and Libby emerge from the van.

Libby's gotten very little sleep. Eyes dull. Hair unkempt. Cheeks pale.

Warden Greene, too, seems less put-together than usual. Dressed sharply, hair styled, but there's something different in his face, in his eyes, in the way he carries himself.

INT. HUNTSVILLE UNIT PRISON - DAY

Libby, Warden Greene, and Officer Goodman stand inside the front doors. Ahead of them lies a complex security system:

First: they sign in, filling out extensive paperwork.

Then: they're buzzed in the first door.

Here: they go through a metal detector -- removing keys, wallets, jackets, watches, jewelry, belts, etc.

Now: they're buzzed through a second door.

Next: the body check -- they're frisked by members of security, patted down slowly and thoroughly from their heads, shoulders, torso, legs, all the way down to their feet.

Lastly: they're buzzed through a third gate now...

Warden Greene and Officer Goodman go through this routine indifferently, robotically. They've done this before.

But not Libby. She looks around, stunned at the spectacle.

INT. HUNTSVILLE UNIT PRISON - DAY

As soon as the Warden, Libby, and Officer Goodman are buzzed through the last gate, a Huntsville Officer runs over to them, panting, horrified.

WARDEN GREENE

What the hell's going on?

HUNTSVILLE OFFICER

It's Jones. Last night, or, or, or
early this morning, I don't know --
but he, he --

The Officer gestures down the hallway as they all hurry off.

INT. HUNTSVILLE MEDICAL WARD - DAY

Warden Greene and Libby stand outside the medical ward, peering through the glass at Anthony as he lies on a gurney, bloodied and unconscious.

A team of Prison Personnel work frantically to revive him.

Libby stares blankly on at the scene.

LIBBY

Why?

WARDEN GREENE

These things happen. We like to pretend they don't. But sometimes, you know, these men just can't --

LIBBY

I don't mean why'd he do it. I mean why are they undoing it?

Libby and Warden Greene continue to watch for awhile longer, until finally one of the staff members nods from behind the glass to the Warden.

WARDEN GREENE

Looks like he's gonna make it.

Libby scowls.

INT. EXECUTION CHAMBER - DAY

Card: 9:55am -- FIVE MINUTES TO EXECUTION

Anthony lies on the gurney, restrained by the leather straps that hold down each of his appendages, chest, and head.

He looks dazed, weak, barely conscious as is. His head haphazardly wrapped in bandages, bloodied through.

Officer Goodman stands in one corner of the room, while Warden Greene stands in the other.

Libby enters the chamber. The Warden holds out a mask to her.

WARDEN GREENE

You'll have to put this on over your mouth and nose. Don't want any of the witnesses working out who you are.

Libby puts on the mask, as well as her gloves.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)

At ten a.m., we'll begin.

Libby assembles the chemicals together on a metal stand:

a vial of THIOPENTAL,

a vial of PANCURONIUM BROMIDE,

and a vile of POTASSIUM CHLORIDE.

Libby moves over to Anthony and begins the process:

First: she cleans his arm. Swabs it with a cotton ball.

Second: she ties a ligature just above his elbow. Makes sure it's tight. The veins pulsing purple and blue underneath.

Third: Libby grabs the needle. Holds it above his forearm.

Fourth: at last, she INSERTS THE NEEDLE. It pierces the skin, a clean entry.

Libby looks to the clock: **9:59am**. She breathes deeply.

Anthony's bandage unwraps slightly from his head. Libby glances a hint of the wound underneath before rewrapping it, her wrist grazing the blood as she does.

The clock reads: **10:00am**.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)

Goodman?

Warden Greene gestures to Officer Goodman, who pulls back the curtain to reveal a separate glass chamber where the Witnesses all sit. Libby scans the people one by one:

Some are mad, some somber. Some scared, some neutral.

Libby sees what appears to be Anthony's Mother, weeping uncontrollably behind the glass. Libby then glances at the others, the relatives of the victims. They cry, too.

A microphone is lowered down from the ceiling.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)

Any last words, Mr. Jones?

A moment of silence --

Anthony strains to lift his head off the gurney --

And then --

ANTHONY SPITS IN LIBBY'S FACE.

Libby stands frozen. Shocked.

A few Officers rush over and tighten Anthony's straps as Libby wipes the spit off her face. Then:

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)

Miss, you alright there? Okay.
Let's go ahead and begin.

Libby takes the lock tip off the first syringe. She fills it with Thiopental and attaches it to the stopcock of the needle in Anthony's arm.

Libby presses the syringe slowly. The liquid begins to flow from the syringe into the needle and into Anthony's arm.

A liquid drop catches Libby's attention. She panics, searching for a leak. But she realizes it's Anthony:

He's wet himself in fear --

the urine drip...

drip...

dripping...

onto the cold floor.

Soon, his eyes begin to flicker. Open, closed, open, closed.

His breathing labored. In, out, in, out, in, out.

Libby waits until Anthony's eyes are closed for good.

Then: she repeats the process with the second syringe, this time with Pancuronium Bromide.

Anthony's lips begin to change color -- shades of pink, shades of red, then shades of purple.

His skin becomes blotchy -- little red dots spreading over him like a disease, like ants crawling in sand.

Then: Libby picks up the last syringe, fills it with Potassium Chloride.

Libby looks up, taking in the room, taking in the people.

Her hand remains steady as she brings it closer and closer to Anthony --

And finally, inserts it into the needle.

She waits.

They all wait.

Waiting, waiting, waiting.

At last, his heart stops pounding. His chest stops expanding.

Libby leans down to Anthony, checking his breathing.

Nothing.

She puts a hand on his neck, checking his pulse.

Nothing.

She puts a hand on his wrist, checking pulse there.

Nothing.

Libby nods once at Warden Greene, just once.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)
(to Officer Goodman)
Time of death: ten o' nine a.m.

Officer Goodman writes this down on a clipboard. Libby remains standing still in the middle of the room. A statue.

The curtains close. Libby rips off her mask and exhales.

INT. HUNTSVILLE UNIT PRISON - DAY

Libby rushes through the prison, making a break for the doors. But she's stopped by a Security Guard.

FEMALE SECURITY GUARD
I gotta follow protocol, ma'am.
Ain't no easy passage going in or
outta here.

The Security Guard begins to perform another pat-down over Libby. It's long, agonizingly so. Libby can't stand still -- her legs shaking, her arms twitching, her fingers tapping.

At last, the Security Guard finishes the body check.

Now, the metal detector. Again. Libby strips in a rush -- her keys, wallet, jacket, etc -- everything taken off in a mess, in a flurry. She kicks off her shoes and hurries through.

She lunges for the gate, the one that will get her to the outside door beyond.

But it's locked.

Libby looks desperately to the Security Guard.

FEMALE SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)
You gotta wait for the buzz, ma'am.

And there it is: BZZZZ. Libby pushes open the gate, flying through it barefoot, not bothering to grab her shoes.

Once through the gate, she barges out the doors --

EXT. HUNTSVILLE UNIT PRISON - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Libby sprints across the back lawn. She comes to a halt in the middle of the grass and stands there.

She catches sight of Anthony's body bag being wheeled from the prison to the back parking lot.

Warden Greene appears beside Libby.

LIBBY
What happens now?

Libby watches as the body bag is loaded into a van, the doors shut behind it, and the vehicle pulls away from the lot.

WARDEN GREENE
By this time tomorrow, he'll be just one of a hundred little white crosses sticking outta a plot of dirt.

Libby watches as Officer Goodman exits the prison now. He walks farther and farther away from the prison.

LIBBY
What's he doing?

WARDEN GREENE
He goes for a lot of walks.

Warden Greene reaches into his pocket and pulls out an envelope filled with cash and hands it to Libby.

She accepts it without looking at it or at him.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)
You did well.

Libby scoffs.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)
You did. You know, maybe it's not the profession you dreamed about when you were a little girl.
(MORE)

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)

Maybe it's not something you intended or even wanted to do well at. Maybe you wish you could take it back.

(beat)

It's a hard thing, what we do.

Libby continues to look off, her expression unreadable.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)

The next execution is in two months. Think about it.

Awkward pause. A heavy silence hangs between them. Then:

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)

Guess I'll be going now. Game's on tonight.

He turns to go, begins walking away. But he stops for just a moment. With his back still turned to Libby:

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)

And Libby? If you think about it too much...

He trails off. Doesn't have the words. He looks back at Libby briefly, almost shaking his head, then continues on his way.

INT./EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY - LATER

Libby drives along the road, hands gripping the steering wheel.

She pulls up to a red stoplight. Cars line up behind her. She stares off, no longer paying attention.

The light turns green. She doesn't go. She doesn't even see it. Just stares ahead.

A car behind her HONKS. One car, then two, then three, until the discordant sounds of HONK AFTER HONK fill the street.

Libby snaps out of it at last. She pushes down hard on the gas pedal, hurtling through the intersection.

INT. LIBBY'S HOUSE - DAY - LATER

Libby rushes inside, throwing her belongings on the couch. She stands in the middle of her living room.

INT. LIBBY'S BATHROOM - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Libby barges into her bathroom and kneels in front of the toilet, waiting, as if going to vomit. But she doesn't.

Instead, in one swift and violent motion, she reaches into her jacket pocket, pulls out the envelope of cash, takes out the bills, and THROWS THEM INTO THE TOILET.

It was impulsive, stupid, and she knows it. But the bills flutter everywhere, falling into the toilet bowl.

Libby lets herself go for just this moment -- she cries.

Yet, soon she wipes the tears away from her eyes, fixes herself up, then reaches into the toilet bowl.

Slowly, one by one, she begins to pull out the bills upon bills that have seeped into the water.

Then: a KNOCK at the bathroom door.

INT. LIBBY'S HOUSE, OUTSIDE BATHROOM - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS

Trace stands outside the bathroom door, knocking.

TRACE

Lib?

Nothing.

TRACE (CONT'D)

Lib, you okay in there?

INT. LIBBY'S BATHROOM - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS

Libby composes herself, takes a few deep breaths. Then:

LIBBY

I'm fine.

TRACE (O.S.)

You sure?

LIBBY

I said I'm fine.

Libby remembers something, then checks her watch.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

You ready to go then?

Brief pause from the other side.

TRACE (O.S.)
Uh, yeah, sure. I'm ready.

LIBBY
Great. I'll be out in just a minute.

INT. LIBBY'S HOUSE, OUTSIDE BATHROOM - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS

Trace lingers outside the door for a moment, hesitating, almost saying something else. But he decides against it.

EXT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Libby pulls up in the car outside the therapist's office. She stares blankly out the window.

On the bottom of Libby's shirt is a small spot of blood. Trace notices this.

TRACE
What's that?

LIBBY
What?

TRACE
That.

Trace gestures to the blood on her shirt. Libby looks down at it, noticing it for the first time. She places a hand over the stain. A slight panic comes over her, but she hides it.

LIBBY
It's nothing. Tomato juice.

TRACE
Really? Tomato juice? That's what you're goin' with?
(beat)
You used to be more creative than that.

LIBBY
I'm not going with anything. It's what it is.

Silence between them. A long silence.

TRACE
You're not bein' stupid again, are
you, Lib?

LIBBY
No.

TRACE
Because I thought we were long done
with that.

LIBBY
We are.

Beat.

TRACE
Let me see 'em.

LIBBY
What?

TRACE
I said let me see them.

Trace gestures to Libby's wrists. She looks down at them, unconsciously tucked between her legs.

She steams in anger, in long-forgotten shame.

LIBBY
Go fuck yourself.

Trace gets out of the car.

EXT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Once Libby drives out of sight, Trace takes off as usual.

EXT. SUNNY VIEW CARE FACILITY - DAY

Trace approaches a three-story building: white, impeccably clean, with gaudy burnt-orange shutters on every window.

A sign on the front lawn reads: "SUNNY VIEW ASSISTED LIVING".

INT. SUNNY VIEW CARE FACILITY - DAY

Trace enters the common area, where a handful of Senior Citizens sit in chairs at circular tables, playing bingo.

Trace leans against the wall, observing. A peppy female Recreation Leader (20s) reads out the next bingo tile.

RECREATION LEADER

B-14.

A few Senior Citizens smile, converse excitedly.

RECREATION LEADER (CONT'D)

B-5.

(beat)

N-44.

(beat)

O-68.

ROY (early 70s) stands up from the table.

ROY

BINGO!

He waves his bingo card in the air.

RECREATION LEADER

Alright, it looks like we have a winner! Why don't you read out your numbers back to me so I can double check them, then we'll have you come on down and collect your prize!

ROY

(reading off his card)

B-5. I-19. N-44. G-50. O--

PAUL

This is BULLSHIT!

All eyes look to PAUL CLEMENS (64, hard features but soft eyes -- the face of a much older man), who throws his hands up in the air.

Trace turns red with embarrassment, rolls his eyes, and buries his head in his hand.

RECREATION LEADER

Excuse me, Paul? What seems to be the problem?

PAUL

I'll tell you what the problem is, Glorified Baby Sitter. The problem here is that Roy's won bingo the past four weeks in a row now.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

You wanna stand there and tell me that ain't some Grade-A fuckin' horse-shit?

RECREATION LEADER

Watch your language, Paul. And as for your concern, I can assure you the system is fair. Roy's just a lucky guy.

The Recreation Leader flashes a big toothy grin to the crowd, trying to diffuse the situation.

PAUL

Lucky guy my ass!

ROY

Oh, lay off man.
(under his breath)
Loser.

Off in the corner, Trace whispers to himself:

TRACE

Shit.

Paul gives Roy a sharp look, then abruptly stands up from the table and meets Roy in the middle of the room. They stand face-to-face.

RECREATION LEADER

Come on, now. That's enough. Both of you sit down.

PAUL

What'd you just say?

ROY

You heard me. Or did you forget to put in your hearing aid today?

PAUL

You motherfucker.

Paul PUNCHES ROY IN THE FACE, but not hard enough. Roy retaliates and PUNCHES PAUL BACK.

EXT. SUNNY VIEW CARE FACILITY PATIO - DAY

Paul and Trace sit in lawn chairs on the back patio. Paul wears nothing but a brown robe.

A Kleenex hangs out of his bloody nose.

TRACE
Christ, Dad.

PAUL
I know.

TRACE
Seven facilities in four years.
That's gotta be some sort of a
record, don't you think?

PAUL
Probably.

TRACE
You just like makin' my life hard
or...?

They share a small laugh, followed by silence.

INT. SUNNY VIEW CARE FACILITY - DAY

Paul and Trace stand by the front desk. Paul holds all of his personal belongings, while Trace signs a piece of paper that says "ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INVOLUNTARY DISCHARGE."

Trace checks his watch. He sighs.

EXT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Paul and Trace walk up to the building and wait by the curb.

TRACE
Lib ain't gonna be happy about
this, you know.

PAUL
I figured as much, but she'll come
around.

TRACE
I don't know about that.
(beat)
Lib's real strong. Like Mom was. I
think sometimes you forget that.

In the distance, Libby's car rounds the corner of the street, coming towards them.

Trace eyes his father, taking him in. He shakes his head.

TRACE (CONT'D)

So this is the impression you're gonna make on her after all these years?

PAUL

What do you mean?

Trace looks Paul up and down in his robe, half-amused, half-irritated. He sighs.

TRACE

Couldn't have worn anythin' else, huh Dad?

Libby's car pulls up to the curb. She slams to a halt, turns off the engine, then jumps out of the car with fire in her eyes, rushing over to Trace and Paul.

LIBBY

What the hell is going on here?

TRACE

(to Paul)

Here we go.

LIBBY

No fucking way, no fucking way!

TRACE

Lib, please--

LIBBY

(to Paul)

You bastard. You're sick, you know that? You're sick.

(to Trace)

I told you I never wanted to see him again.

TRACE

I know, but I didn't have a choice! I couldn't just leave him there.

LIBBY

What are you talking about?

Trace gestures back towards the direction they came from.

TRACE

At Sunny View! He was being discharged! I couldn't just leave him--

Trace stops dead in his tracks, realizing his mistake, but it's too late.

Libby takes a step back from them, reeling from the betrayal.

LIBBY
But...but therapy?

Trace hangs his head low.

PAUL
Lib, look. It was me--

LIBBY
Shut up.

PAUL
It's not his fault--

LIBBY
I said shut up!

Libby looks straight at Trace. Pure hurt in her eyes.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
How long, Trace?

TRACE
Awhile.

LIBBY
But I thought it was helping, I thought you were getting better...

TRACE
Come on, Lib. You know there ain't any "gettin' better" from it. No collared woman ever gonna understand what it's like to be in a war.

Libby takes yet another step back. She swallows hard.

TRACE (CONT'D)
Look, I'm sorry, I am. I didn't wanna lie to you, I didn't wanna hurt you. But it happened, and I can't fix that.

LIBBY
You're right, you can't.

TRACE

But right now, he doesn't have
anywhere else to go.

LIBBY

That's not my problem.

TRACE

He's your goddamn father, so yeah,
it is.

LIBBY

He's not my father.

This is a blow to both Trace and Paul, who stand there
speechless at the curb.

Libby hurries back to the driver's side of her car and gets
in, leaving Trace and Paul standing there.

TRACE

Where the hell are we supposed to
go now?

From inside the car:

LIBBY

You know the way home.

TRACE

It's an eight-mile walk, and we
don't have money for a cab.

LIBBY

Like I said, you know the way.

Libby speeds off.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Libby slides into a seat at the bar. Alex greets her with a
friendly smile. He pours her a glass of water from a bottle.

For the first time, a hint of disappointment creeps into her
face at this.

ALEX

There you are.

LIBBY

Thanks.

She drinks it down anyway. Her hands tremble a little bit. She rubs her head.

ALEX

Bad day?

She doesn't hear him. He coughs to get her attention.

LIBBY

Hmm?

ALEX

I said, bad day?

LIBBY

I'm fine.

Libby observes the other Bar Patrons around her. A lot of them are wasted, so drunk they seem foolish. Foolish, but happy. Their troubles forgotten for the evening.

INT. BAR - NIGHT - LATER

Libby sips water out of her glass again. TOM (late 20s, overly handsome, overly confident) leans against the bar, rattling off while Libby only half-listens.

TOM

So that's the main problem, right? There isn't enough communication between the marketing team and the guys who report the sales. If there isn't reliable communication, then there's no reliable measurement of ROI -- that's return on investment, in case you're wondering -- and if there's no reliable ROI, I have a hell of a hard time getting the big guys to increase our budget.

Tom gulps down his bourbon. Libby looks like she could be sleeping with her eyes open.

TOM (CONT'D)

I mean, right? Like are you fucking kidding me? How am I supposed to distribute a budget between the traditional and digital platforms if I don't even know what the fucking ROI is? Like, come on guys, gimme a fucking number. At least a ballpark figure. Right?

A moment of awkward silence. Libby realizes that Tom is waiting for an actual response.

LIBBY

Oh. Ummm...I guess--

TOM

--I tell ya, people think the advertising business is all glitz and glam, but they don't have a fucking clue, man. Like, so what if I've got a six-figure income? It's hard work, and it drains you. Just drains you, you know?

LIBBY

I bet.

TOM

You'd be surprised at the shit I have to deal with. People don't have a clue.

(beat)

What is it you said you do for a living?

LIBBY

I didn't.

Tom finishes his drink. He leans in closer to Libby, resting his hand flirtatiously on her thigh.

TOM

So, do you want something a little stronger?

Libby takes a long pause, really thinking this over. She looks to her glass, to Tom, back to her glass again.

TOM (CONT'D)

You either do, or you don't.

LIBBY

Yeah. Yeah, I do.

INT. LIBBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Libby and Tom barge into Libby's house. Libby is drunk. She stumbles all over the place, knocking into furniture, giggling uncontrollably.

She bumps into a corner table, which causes the lamp on top to crash onto the floor.

TOM
Whoa, easy there.

LIBBY
(slurring)
It's just a lamp.

Libby stares at the lamp on the floor for a moment.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
(slurring)
It's just stuff. All of it. Just
stuff. Doesn't mean anything.

TOM
What are you talking about?

She picks a book up off the coffee table, momentarily flips through it. Then, she throws it across the room.

She picks up a pillow now. Throws it, too.

Picks up an unlit candle. Throws it.

TOM (CONT'D)
Hey, now, what the hell is this?

Libby takes up her giggling again. This has become incredibly funny to her. Or at least freeing.

She continues to throw things all over the living room until at last she picks up one of Trace's leftover beer bottles and hurtles it at the wall, causing it to SHATTER.

Tom rushes at Libby, gripping her arms fiercely and restraining them at her sides.

TOM (CONT'D)
What the fuck are you doing?! Are
you crazy or something? Jesus.

Libby kisses him, shutting him up.

INT. LIBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Libby and Tom lie naked in bed, covered in sheets. The effects of the alcohol remain.

A question hangs on Libby's lips for awhile. Then, quietly:

LIBBY
Have you ever seen someone die?

TOM

What?

LIBBY

Have you ever been there when somebody died? Have you seen it with your eyes?

TOM

You're kinda a morbid girl, aren't ya?

LIBBY

Have you?

TOM

No.

Tom's BlackBerry beeps on the night-stand next to the bed. He reaches for it immediately. He reads an e-mail.

TOM (CONT'D)

Man, I can't catch a break with these jerk-offs over at the main branch.

He types furiously away on the BlackBerry.

TOM (CONT'D)

I mean, it's past midnight and they want me to look over some figures. When does it fucking end, am I right?

LIBBY

What do you think of the Cowboys this season?

TOM

(not listening)
What was that?

LIBBY

(monotone, a recitation)
I've got a good feeling about them this year, but I don't really know what Phillips was thinking when he picked Williams, even if he does know how to rush a QB.

But this doesn't work either. Tom just types, types away.

Soon, Tom swings his feet over the edge of the bed, starting to get dressed. Not even going to stay till morning.

Libby lies in silence on the bed, watching him get ready to leave her.

TOM

Uh, I'll see you around then, Lily.

Libby starts to open her mouth to correct him, but doesn't.

Tom stands up. He's still on his BlackBerry.

TOM (CONT'D)

It was fun.

LIBBY

Yeah.

TOM

Right. So, see you around.

LIBBY

See you.

Tom gives Libby a final nod, then leaves the bedroom.

A moment later -- the sound of the front door as it opens and closes. He's gone.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Libby, now in a robe, maneuvers into the kitchen. She begins opening cabinets one by one, looking for something specific.

She finds it. The bottle of whiskey Trace loves so well. She picks it up, fingering it over in her hands for a moment.

She starts to carry it back to her room.

PAUL (O.S.)

You're better than that.

Libby halts at the sound of his voice, then peeks her head around the corner of the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Paul just looks at her, sadness in his eyes. Libby leans against the doorway and crosses her arms, still tipsy.

LIBBY

Finally made it home then, did you?

PAUL
So, now it's my home, is it?

LIBBY
Where's Trace?

PAUL
He went out.

LIBBY
Surprise, surprise.

PAUL
Easy, Lib. He loves ya. Just not
too good at showin' it sometimes.

LIBBY
Whatever.

Libby starts to leave the room, head back down the hallway.

PAUL
You're so much better than that
guy, Lib. Than Mr. BlackBerry.
(beat)
There's nobody in the world who
deserves you. I've always thought
that.

At this, Libby turns around, slowly.

LIBBY
Okay, let me tell you what you
don't get to do. You don't get to
come to my house, pretend to know
my life, and tell me what I am. You
have no idea, no idea about me.

PAUL
I know you're stubborn, just like
your mother. But kind like her,
too. Almost too kind.

He sighs.

PAUL (CONT'D)
But you know what? You got my eyes,
Lib. So I know when you're scared,
too.

LIBBY
Stop it, just stop it.

PAUL

You're my daughter whether you
wanna be or not. Sure, it's unfair
and sure you might not like it, but
that fact means I know you a little
better than you think.

LIBBY

No, it doesn't! It just means you
remember the little girl you used
to read bedtime stories to until
you were so wasted you couldn't see
the words on the page.

Libby stares at Paul, he stares back.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

And to think...

She looks up at the ceiling, exasperated.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

To think you hid it so well! All
those stories you just bullshitted
the endings to because you had no
fucking clue what they actually
were!

(beat)

I mean, I didn't even know you were
a drunk until the night she died.
After I pulled myself from the car
and saw her body halfway out the
windshield while you were just...

Libby has to pause, has to really hold back the tears.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Just sitting there! In the front
seat! With that stupid blank look
in your eyes!

(beat)

You fucked up my whole life, you
know that? My whole goddamn life!

PAUL

I know. And I'm sorry, I'm so
sorry.

(beat)

But please, Lib. You're also better
than that bottle right there.

Paul gestures to the bottle of whiskey in Libby's grasp.

LIBBY

I've been trying to be. But maybe
I'm just not.

(beat)

I guess like father, like daughter,
right?

Libby leaves Paul wide-eyed on the couch.

EXT. CAMILA'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Camila's house is modest, small. It's a little dirty, a little run-down. It sits just behind the railroad tracks.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Camila and Trace stand facing each other on opposite sides of Camila's bed. Camila takes off her shirt, slowly. She's muscular, strong, but her skin is blotchy and scarred.

She unbuttons her jeans now. Slides them off, slowly.

They look at each other for a moment. Unsure, out of practice, but there's no going back.

Camila unhooks her bra. Her underwear off next. As if on reflex, she momentarily covers herself with her arms, embarrassed, uncertain.

But Trace looks at her and smiles softly.

TRACE

It's okay.

Camila lets her arms dangle at her sides. Standing naked, it becomes even more apparent just how damaged her body is: huge scars, burns, needle marks, bruises, even self-harm cuts.

Trace runs his eyes over her body, half-sad, half-comforted.

Trace takes off his jacket. He pulls his shirt off over his head. Then, his jeans are off. Finally, his underwear.

His body is like hers. Bruised, broken. He's covered in tattoos, of course, but they don't cover everything.

They stare at each other in mutual silence.

At last, they move onto the bed. They're slow, awkward in their movements, yet neither of them mind. They lean in to each other, looking into each other's eyes...

And then, a kiss. A small one at first. But soon another, and another, until they're kissing passionately.

But then --

A RUMBLE. Slight, then not-so-slight. The rumble grows louder and louder. Trace pulls back from Camila.

TRACE (CONT'D)

What's that?

CAMILA

The train.

TRACE

What?

CAMILA

The train!

But the train's rumbling is so loud that Trace can barely hear her. The house begins to shake, items rattle on shelves.

Trace can't take it anymore. He's sweating, trembling, with wild eyes. He hops off the bed and stands panting in the middle of the room.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

Trace?

TRACE

Make it stop.

Trace holds onto his head as the rumbling continues.

CAMILA

Trace!

Camila leaps out of bed and goes to him, putting her arms around him gently. He flinches at first, even escaping her grasp, but she begins to sing softly, almost a whisper:

CAMILA (CONT'D)

"Arrorró mi niño,
 arrorró mi sol,
 arrorró pedazo,
 de mi corazón.
 Este niño lindo
 ya quiere dormir;
 háganle la cuna
 de rosa y jazmín..."

The tune is melodic, haunting. Trace's breathing slows as the train's rumbling gets quieter and quieter.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

"Háganle la cama
en el toronjil,
y en la cabecera
pónganle un jazmín
que con su fragancia
me lo haga dormir.

Arrorró mi niño,
arrorró mi sol,
arrorró pedazo,
de mi corazón."

The train has passed by now. The room is utterly quiet.

TRACE

I'm sorry.

CAMILA

What for?

TRACE

I just wish I could stop. All of
it.

CAMILA

I don't.

TRACE

You don't?

CAMILA

No.

TRACE

Why not?

CAMILA

Same reason I live here. In this
house, and not a block away, or
two, or three.

(beat)

It keeps me grounded. Sometimes, I
feel I might just float away, like
a balloon. Scares the hell outta
me.

Camila laughs, a sad laugh. She pauses for a moment.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

But then I hear the rumbling, and I
feel it. I feel the ground under my
feet. I feel the walls shake.

(MORE)

CAMILA (CONT'D)

And I know I'm still here. Then I'm not so scared anymore.

A moment of silence. Trace contemplates something.

TRACE

Why that song?

CAMILA

What do you mean?

TRACE

The song you were singin'. What was it?

CAMILA

My mama used to sing that to my brother Luca and I each night before we went to bed. When he left for the war, she kept singing it to me. When he didn't come home, she kept singing it all the same. Mama must've thought she could sing him back to her.

Camila looks down at Trace's hands. They still tremble slightly at his sides.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

Come on, I wanna show you somethin'.

Camila takes Trace by the hand, leads him out of the bedroom.

INT. CAMILA'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Trace sits in an arm chair, naked but for a blanket wrapped around him.

Camila enters the room, wrapped in a blanket herself. She stands in the doorway.

CAMILA

So. You wanna know my secret?

TRACE

What secret?

Camila gestures to Trace's hands. They still tremble a bit. He hides them in embarrassment.

CAMILA

Mine used to be real bad, too. Just like that. But I've got a good trick now. Wanna know what it is?

TRACE

Sure.

Camila pulls out a basket of knitting supplies from behind her back. She breaks out into a smile.

TRACE (CONT'D)

You're kiddin', right?

CAMILA

Scout's honor.

TRACE

You know, you don't really strike me as the knitting type.

CAMILA

Yeah? What type do I strike you as?

TRACE

I don't think there's a type for you.

CAMILA

Good.

Camila takes out some yarn from her basket.

TRACE

What do you think you're doin'?

CAMILA

Trust me?

Trace is hesitant, but at last nods for her to go on.

Camila gets up, goes behind Trace, and begins to wrap the yarn around his fingers carefully, expertly. The process is hypnotic, soothing.

Camila pulls out the rest of her kit, setting it up in Trace's hands.

Slowly, gently, Camila places her hands atop Trace's, matching up perfectly to his trembling fingers.

Then, the work begins. Their four hands become two hands, moving steadily in perfect harmony, lost in the fabric, entwined by the thread. All traces of trembling gone.

They are silent for a long time. Then:

TRACE

Thank you.

CAMILA

What for?

TRACE

It's just -- I got my outer bits
and pieces in all the right places,
but everythin' inside is scrambled
up like eggs. I mean, for years I
was nothin' but a trigger or a
bullet or a bomb or some flames.

(beat)

I don't know...I just...I always
been war, I always been death. But
tonight -- tonight I feel like I
could be a little bit more.

Camila kisses Trace on the forehead, her hands locked in his.

INT. LIBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Libby tosses and turns in bed. Her now half-empty bottle of
whiskey sits on the night-stand beside her.

She breathes heavily in her sleep. Then --

She wakes up in a panic. Panting, sweating. She looks at the
foot of her bed and there, sitting on top of the blankets, is
a FIGURE. A shadowy figure, a human figure.

LIBBY

Hello?

The figure looks like a woman.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Mom?

A SECOND FIGURE then appears. This one looks like a male...
almost like Anthony Jones, but Libby can't be sure...

LIBBY (CONT'D)

No...

A THIRD FIGURE appears. This one looks like a child, a small
girl...

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Sarah?

The three figures stare back at Libby with blank expressions.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Hello?

(beat)

Hello!

(beat)

Answer me! Please!

Silence.

Libby throws her pillow at them, and the figures disappear within seconds. She pulls the blanket up to her chest.

She looks around the room. Alone. Terrified.

INT. LIBBY'S KITCHEN - DAWN

The next morning, Libby makes breakfast in the kitchen. Dark circles under her eyes, hair disheveled.

She tries to crack an egg, but the yolk breaks all over her hands. She rests against the counter, breathing steadily.

Paul appears in the doorway.

PAUL

Rough night?

Libby doesn't answer.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You know, your mom could never cook for shit either.

LIBBY

Why can't you stop it?! Just stop bringing her up like that! You don't have the right.

PAUL

Oh, Lib. It's okay to talk about her.

LIBBY

Not for you.

Paul moves into the kitchen, closer to Libby.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

What don't you get?! I don't even wanna be around you, much less play "happy household."

PAUL

You gotta eat, don't you? I do, too. So I'm gonna stand here and make myself some eggs. I could make enough for two, if you want.

Libby shrugs him off and moves to the kitchen table, where she sits down and rests her head in her hands.

INT. LIBBY'S KITCHEN - DAY - LATER

Paul sets down two plates of eggs on the kitchen table, one in front of himself and one in front of Libby.

Libby's eggs are in the shape of a smiley face. Libby eyes her father for a moment, deciding.

She doesn't smile, doesn't say anything, but begins to eat.

They sit in silence and eat. But at least they sit together.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Paul watches TV on the couch, sipping on a beer. Libby hurries past him, on the way out the door.

PAUL

Where ya goin'?

LIBBY

(on reflex)

None of your business.

Libby stops at the door handle, letting it go. She closes her eyes for a moment, then opens them again, calmer now.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

(softer)

I just have to check on something.

INT. MEMORIAL HERMANN HOSPITAL - DAY

Libby walks through the hospital, dressed in sweats and a baggy sweatshirt once again, hiding her face.

INT. HOSPITAL, SARAH'S ROOM - DAY

She stands at the doorway of Sarah's room, breathing heavily. She stares wide-eyed at the child lying on the bed.

Libby checks behind her, then enters.

She approaches Sarah and looks at the monitor, mesmerized by the BEEP-BEEP-BEEPING of the heart-rate. Libby puts her hand under Sarah's nose, savoring the breath that comes in, out.

Libby breathes a sigh of relief.

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

Libby turns around, startled.

LIBBY
Carl. I'm sorry, I just...I just
wanted to make sure she's okay.

Carl hesitates, then takes a step inside the room.

CARL
You're a good doctor, Libby. No
matter what happens.

Libby looks at Carl, puzzled. He shuffles from foot to foot.

CARL (CONT'D)
Look, I...
(beat)
I was going to call you, but since
you're here I'll just tell you now.
(beat)
They settled on a date, for your
preliminary hearing. December 2nd.

Carl digs around in his pocket for a folded piece of paper. He hands it to Libby. She looks it over.

CARL (CONT'D)
Our insurance company will appoint
you a lawyer. You'll want to meet
with him in the next few weeks or
so, to get your bearings in order.

LIBBY
Okay...

CARL
I know this is overwhelming, but
try to remain positive. These
things happen all the time. You can
still come out alright.

Libby looks to Sarah.

LIBBY
Will she?

CARL
I'll keep you posted.

Libby nods and starts to exit the room.

CARL (CONT'D)
And Lib? You can't keep coming back here like this. Just please, stay away until it's over.

LIBBY
Sorry.

Libby, head down, leaves.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Libby purchases a single bottle of whiskey from the Liquor Store Cashier (50s, male).

LIQUOR STORE CASHIER
Just the one?

LIBBY
Yeah, that's it.

LIQUOR STORE CASHIER
You sure?

LIBBY
Mhmm.

LIQUOR STORE CASHIER
Because we're havin' this deal where you can get two for twenty, instead of the one for \$12.99.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Libby emerges from the liquor store, two brown bags in hand. A Man (40s) leans against the wall, smoking a cigarette, drinking from a bottle himself, and reading a newspaper.

Something on the newspaper catches Libby's eye. A headline that reads:

CONVICTED MURDERER ANTHONY JONES EXECUTED AFTER SIXTEEN YEARS ON DEATH ROW.

Libby looks at the newspaper in the man's hands. He notices her stare. They make eye contact.

Libby twitches, breaks out in a small sweat --

She can't tear her eyes away from this man --

It's as if he's looking at her too closely, too intently --

They hold eye contact a little longer. Libby grows more and more paranoid. Does he know? How could he?

Then, she bursts out, hostile:

LIBBY

What?

MAN READING NEWSPAPER

Sorry?

LIBBY

Nothing, I --

(beat)

Nothing. Sorry.

MAN READING NEWSPAPER

(under his breath)

Crazy bitch.

The Man tosses the newspaper onto the ground and shuffles off. Libby picks up the paper and shoves it into her pocket.

INT. LIBBY'S HOUSE - DAY

Libby sits on the couch, drinking from her new bottles of whiskey. She's a little drunk already as she stares off.

Scattered envelopes and bills lie before her on the coffee table.

After a moment, she begins to look through them. She sorts through the different notices and statements, attempting to shove various checks into each of the envelopes.

Her hands move sloppily, unsteadily. She doesn't pay much attention, simply going through the motions haphazardly.

Every so often she spills a few drops of whiskey onto one of the papers -- smearing the ink, staining the checks, etc.

But she doesn't get through much before a look of self-disgust washes over her. She sits back on the couch and sighs, pushing the envelopes far away from her.

She hasn't noticed Paul sitting in a chair across the room.

PAUL
What aren't you tellin' me, Lib?

Libby is startled for just a second, but recovers.

LIBBY
Nothing you need to concern
yourself with.

Trace enters the house.

TRACE
Hey.

LIBBY
Yeah.

He looks from Libby to Paul, back to Libby. He closes the door behind him and steps further into the room, only just now realizing that Libby has been drinking.

He stares at her for a moment, unable to hide his shock.

TRACE
What the hell's goin' on here?

LIBBY
What does it look like?

Trace shuffles from foot to foot, uncomfortable.

PAUL
Think I'll take a walk.

Paul gets up, eyes Trace as he passes him, then leaves the house. Trace stands there a moment more. Then:

TRACE
Don't you have work?

LIBBY
Yeah.

TRACE
You...takin' a sick day?

LIBBY
You could say that.

Another awkward beat, longer this time.

TRACE

You know, it's...it's okay to ask for help.

LIBBY

Yeah, because you know all about that, do you?

TRACE

Right. Well, maybe you're the one who could use some therapy.

LIBBY

I'm fine.

TRACE

Yeah? You're fine?

LIBBY

Yeah.

TRACE

Really?

LIBBY

Yes.

TRACE

Because from where I'm standin', it sure doesn't look that way.

LIBBY

Then why don't you tell me what it looks like?

TRACE

It looks like you're sittin' on your ass gettin' wasted at three o'clock in the afternoon when you've got patients over at the hospital who need you, who count on you to be there for them! So what the fuck are you doin', Lib? Where the fuck is this comin' from, huh?

LIBBY

What the fuck am I doing? You wouldn't know, would you?

TRACE

What does that mean?

LIBBY

It means you're never at home! Half the time you're out lookin' for the next job to get fired from, and the other half you're off doing God knows what! And that doesn't even cover the times you were visiting dad behind my back. So I don't need you or him to come walking in here, actin' like either one of you suddenly give a shit.

TRACE

Alright. I get it.

Trace backs away from Libby and heads for the front door, grabbing his jacket.

EXT. CAMILA'S HOUSE - DUSK

Trace walks up to Camila's house and knocks on the front door.

No answer.

He knocks again.

No answer.

TRACE

Camila? Listen, I know you're not expectin' me or anythin', but my sister and I kinda got in a fight, I mean we're always in a fight, and I just --

The door opens. Camila is flustered, unprepared. Only her head peeks out from behind the door.

CAMILA

Hey. What's up?

Trace is suspicious. He can tell something's off.

TRACE

Nothing, I just...

He looks hard into her face.

TRACE (CONT'D)

Can I come in?

Camila hesitates. She's happy to see Trace, but he's caught her at the wrong time...

CAMILA

I'm kinda busy. In the middle of something. You wanna come back later?

Trace stares at her. He sees now that her skin is flushed, her mouth dry, her pupils constricted.

Camila reaches up and itches her face. She twitches a little.

TRACE

What are you doing?

Camila doesn't answer.

Trace steps forward and pushes the door open. He can see now that Camila's right arm has been tied above the elbow, and her left arm holds something behind her back.

TRACE (CONT'D)

What's that?

CAMILA

Nothing.

TRACE

Don't lie to me. Please, don't lie to me.

Camila hesitates briefly, but slowly brings her left arm down to her side, where Trace sees the needle grasped in her hand.

Trace stands in anger, in shock.

TRACE (CONT'D)

Are you fuckin' serious? Why you doin' this?

CAMILA

When I'm with you, I'm with you. What I do on my own is my business.

TRACE

Yeah? Well I'm with you right now, and I wanna know why you're still shootin' up like some back alley drug addict. I thought...

He trails off, almost embarrassed by his own foolishness.

TRACE (CONT'D)

You know, I just -- I just thought
you were done with this.

Camila looks at him with kind eyes. She isn't mad, just
resigned. Matter-of-fact.

CAMILA

No. You didn't. You wanted me to be
done with this. Hoped I'd be done
with it. But you didn't really
think that a few nights with you
were enough to turn around
something I've been turning to for
years now, did you?

Trace stands dumbfounded. He thinks on this for a moment.

TRACE

No. I guess not.

Camila steps out of the doorway, closer to Trace. Very close.

CAMILA

It's not so bad, is it? We all have
our vices...

Trace doesn't answer. He sighs, rubs his head, processing.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

You could try it, if you want.

He fidgets, but something pulls him in...

INT. SEEDY BAR - NIGHT

Libby enters a bar, but a different one this time. Much
seedier than Alex's bar.

She stands at the entrance, glancing around for something, or
someone. After a moment, she spots what she's looking for.

Libby slides into a stool next to Paul.

LIBBY

"Go for a walk" my ass.

PAUL

I'm that predictable, huh?

Libby orders a whiskey from the Bartender. He slides it to
her. They sit and drink for a moment.

LIBBY
How do you do it, Dad?

PAUL
Do what?

LIBBY
Get up every morning.

PAUL
Ah.
(beat)
Well, it's not without difficulty,
I'll tell you that.

LIBBY
So how, then? How do you look at
yourself in the mirror? How do you
cross paths with people on the
street and look them in the eye?

PAUL
Are we talkin' about me or you now?

Libby shrugs.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Well, to start I wake up each
morning and count the things I've
done wrong. There's many, and it
hurts. But then I count the things
I've done right. There's only a
few, but it helps. Helps a lot.

LIBBY
You think that'd work for me?

PAUL
Whatever you're going through...I
think it's worth a shot.

Paul lays down a few bills for the bartender, then gets up
from his stool. He places a soft hand on Libby's shoulder.

PAUL (CONT'D)
That list? Of the things I done
right? You and your brother are at
the top.

LIBBY
Must be a shitty list.

Libby and her father look at each other, then both break into
a smile, even share a small laugh together.

INT. SEEDY BAR - NIGHT - LATER

Libby sits alone in the same spot as before, on her third whiskey by now. She rubs her temple.

Her phone lights up, BUZZING, but she doesn't recognize the number.

It buzzes again...

And again...

Ringin', ringin', ringin'...

With no answer.

She lets it go to voicemail, unconcerned. But when her phone beeps again, it reads:

ONE NEW VOICEMAIL --

so she picks it up and --

as she listens, she sucks in her breath, bringing her hand to her face.

INT. MEMORIAL HERMANN HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Libby runs through the hospital, frantic as she passes from station to station, room to room.

At last she comes to a

PATIENT'S ROOM,

where Trace sleeps on a bed hooked up to multiple machines.

Libby rushes to his side and kneels down beside him. She clutches his hand.

In a corner of the room, Camila sleeps curled up in a chair.

CARL (O.S.)
He'll be okay.

Libby turns around to see Carl standing in the doorway.

LIBBY
What the hell happened?

CARL
Heroin overdose. Non-fatal.

LIBBY

What? No...that doesn't even make sense. He doesn't do that stuff. I mean he drinks and smokes, but he wouldn't do that.

CARL

You're right. According to his blood tests and medical history, it looks like this was the first time. The quantity he injected, combined with the purity of the substance, combined with --

LIBBY

But he's going to be okay?

CARL

Yeah. Just needs to recover.

Libby sighs in relief. Carl leaves.

In the corner, Camila wakes up. She goes pale at the sight of Libby. She stands up, slowly walking over to Libby. Much hesitation in her steps.

CAMILA

You must be Libby. I'm so --

LIBBY

How could you?

CAMILA

It was so stupid, I was so stupid.

LIBBY

Get out.

CAMILA

It wasn't his fault, really. I gave him too --

LIBBY

I said get out.

Camila heads for the door, ashamed. Beaten. She stops in the doorway, turning around to face Libby.

As if the thought has just occurred to her for the very first time, she says:

CAMILA

I love him, you know. Always have.

Libby still won't look at Camila.

CAMILA (CONT'D)
 I'm just not good for anyone, I
 don't think.
 (beat)
 I wanted to be good for him, but...

She trails off, shuffling from foot to foot in the doorway.

CAMILA (CONT'D)
 And to think he could've...

She trails off yet again, looking up at the ceiling. Won't dare finish that sentence.

CAMILA (CONT'D)
 Well, that's a thought I'll have to
 live with every day for the rest of
 my life, isn't it?

Moment of silence.

CAMILA (CONT'D)
 I am sorry. I am. And I wouldn't
 blame you if you don't forgive me.
 (beat)
 But if it's okay with you, I'm
 gonna forgive myself.

This strikes Libby. She looks at Camila for the first time, whose eyes pool with tears. Camila grinds her teeth, bites her lip. She's weak right now -- she hates being weak.

CAMILA (CONT'D)
 I have to.

This resonates deeply with Libby...her features soften, just a little...but she won't say anything.

Camila nods once to Libby, then leaves the room at last.

INT. TRACE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - THE NEXT MORNING

Trace wakes up, groggy. A little startled, he looks around, letting his eyes settle on the room, on the machines...

LIBBY
 Shhh, you're fine, I'm here. Dad's
 downstairs in the cafeteria.
 (MORE)

LIBBY (CONT'D)

I told him to go and see if he can bargain with the chefs about whippin' you up some of that deep-fried cheesecake you used to like.

TRACE

You remember that?

LIBBY

Course I do.

They look at each other, sharing a long moment of silence.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

You're my big brother. What would I have done without you, huh? You're all I have.

TRACE

I know.

LIBBY

What were you thinking?

TRACE

I was thinkin' we all got ways of killin' ourselves. Some ways are slower than others. Some are faster. Some hurt, some don't.

LIBBY

What are you talking about?

TRACE

I was ready to die in the war, Lib. I was ready to fight and I was ready to die. I'd made peace with that. I don't think I was ever meant to come out the other side.

(beat)

War was hard. Killin' was hard. But this --

Trace gestures all around him.

TRACE (CONT'D)

-- this is harder. What comes after.

(beat)

You don't know what it's like.

LIBBY

I do know.

TRACE

What?

LIBBY

I do know what it's like.

Libby buries her head in the sheets for a moment. A wave washes over her, one mixed with relief and shame.

TRACE

What did you do, Lib?

Libby pulls out the crumpled up newspaper from earlier, with the Anthony Jones headline. She hands it to Trace.

He stares at it in shock.

TRACE (CONT'D)

I didn't know.

LIBBY

I didn't tell you.

She takes a deep breath.

Libby opens her mouth and lets it all come out. We don't hear what she says, but this moment is enough for both of them.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CAPTAIN JOE BYRD CEMETERY - DAWN

Morning dew glistens upon the blades of grass as Libby walks through the cemetery, holding a bouquet of flowers as usual.

We follow her feet as she passes by gravestone after gravestone, at last coming to kneel before...

the grave of Anthony Jones this time. For this cemetery is not her mother's, but a prison cemetery.

Libby sets the flowers down, then places a hand atop the newly-mounded grave. The touch fleeting, but gentle.

INT./EXT. CAR PARKED OUTSIDE GUN STORE - DAY

Libby pulls up outside a gun store, Trace in the passenger seat. He wears an employee uniform polo and jeans.

Libby stares out the window, frowning, uncertain.

LIBBY
Did it have to be here?

TRACE
Lib...

LIBBY
Alright, alright. I'm sorry.

TRACE
You don't need to worry about me.

LIBBY
Just promise me you're okay here?

TRACE
You know, Lib, it might not make much sense to you, but this is it. This is gonna be it. Somewhere I know I could be helpful, could make use of myself for once.

LIBBY
You could be helpful lots of places.

TRACE
Yeah, but it's more than that. I wanna feel like I belong. I wanna know that when I'm talkin', people are listenin' to me. That they wanna understand the same things I wanna understand.
(beat)
For so long I been tryin' to stay away from the things that scare me. But I don't wanna do that anymore.

Libby looks at Trace with a softness in her eyes, as if seeing him in a new light.

LIBBY
Okay. I trust you.

TRACE
It'll be alright.

LIBBY
I know.

TRACE
Thanks for the ride.

Trace is the first one to smile. Libby smiles back.

LIBBY

Anytime.

Libby watches with an almost proud expression as Trace hops out of the car and goes inside the store.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY

Libby takes a seat across from the lawyer, MR. ALLMAN (50s).

The office is cold, sterile, metallic, with a single desk and two thin chairs. A single window. The walls barely decorated.

In front of Mr. Allman sits a note pad, on which he scribbles from time to time.

MR. ALLMAN

Alright, Miss...Clemens, is it?
Well, here's how this is going to work. We're gonna have to go over all the details and documents related to your professional history, which include past medical records and treatment notes, then we're gonna have to go over the case-specific circumstances of the patient's medical history and treatment --

LIBBY

--Sarah.

MR. ALLMAN

Sorry?

LIBBY

The patient. Her name's Sarah.

MR. ALLMAN

Right...

Mr. Allman writes something in his note pad. Then, he flips through a couple documents, scanning the pages.

MR. ALLMAN (CONT'D)

Well, let's just work through the interrogatories then. Have you ever been named as a defendant in a lawsuit arising from alleged malpractice or negligence before?

LIBBY

No, never.

MR. ALLMAN

Has your license to practice medicine ever been suspended before now?

LIBBY

No.

MR. ALLMAN

And has any disciplinary action ever been taken against you in reference to your license before now?

LIBBY

No.

Libby shifts in her seat, uncomfortable, unsure how to act on the receiving end of an interrogation...

MR. ALLMAN

Can you state for me the exact start and end dates on which you saw the patient for --

LIBBY

--Sarah.

Mr. Allman clears his throat, masking his irritation.

MR. ALLMAN

-- the dates on which you saw Sarah for the purpose of providing care or treatment?

LIBBY

Yeah...I guess it must've been August --

And on and on it goes.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY - LATER

Libby's tired and clearly talked out. Mr. Allman, too, wipes sweat away from his brow, rolls out his cramped wrist, etc.

At last he organizes all the paperwork in a neat stack, a smug grin on his face.

MR. ALLMAN

Well, well, well, Miss Clemens, I'd say we're in good shape here.

(MORE)

MR. ALLMAN (CONT'D)

With a clean record like yours, and seeing as though you followed the exact protocol for the procedure, and since the patient was already high-risk and in an unstable condition, I don't think the family has much of a case.

LIBBY

(flat)

Oh.

MR. ALLMAN

But, just in case, there are a few defense strategies we could talk through.

LIBBY

Defense strategies?

MR. ALLMAN

Rejection of expert testimony, reduction of damages, absence of causation, things of that nature.

LIBBY

But I thought you said they don't have a case?

MR. ALLMAN

I did, but it's best we have a few tools tucked under our belt anyway, to help you get out of it if they do.

Libby frowns...displeased...

LIBBY

I'm not trying to get out of anything.

(beat)

I mean, the hospital's my home, and I wanna do what I can to get back there, but...but if they find I've done wrong, I wanna be able to accept that.

Mr. Allman laughs sardonically.

MR. ALLMAN

That's not really how it works, or at least not how I do things. You know how many malpractice lawsuits I've dealt with? Eighty-seven.

(MORE)

MR. ALLMAN (CONT'D)

You want to know how many of those cases I won? Eighty-seven.

LIBBY

You must be very good at what you do.

Libby gets up from the chair to leave. Just as she heads out the door, Mr. Allman calls to her:

MR. ALLMAN

Fort Bend Courthouse. Two weeks. I'll see you there, Miss Clemens.

Libby nods once, then continues on her way.

INT. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BUILDING - THE NEXT DAY

Libby sits amidst a crowd of AA Members (of varying ages, genders, and ethnicities).

One by one, each of them gets up to the podium to share their story. We can't hear them, but watch along with Libby as each of the men and women stand up and speak.

Libby listens with compassion, with kindness in her eyes. She won't get up and speak today, but maybe some day.

At some point, she glances around the audience. As she looks from person to person, her eyes meet the eyes of another --

those of Warden Greene. He's sitting there, watching her closely, has likely spotted her long before she spotted him.

Their eyes meet and hold. It is a moment if not of warmth, then at least of familiarity and mutual understanding.

At last, Libby nods at him, and he nods in return.

INT. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BUILDING - DAY - LATER

Once the meeting ends and the crowd begins to disperse, Warden Greene approaches Libby.

LIBBY

Small world.

WARDEN GREENE

It is, isn't it?

Beat.

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)
Have you given anymore thought
to...?

LIBBY
Yeah, I just, I don't think so...I
mean, I'm not sure. I'm not sure
about a lot of things lately.

WARDEN GREENE
Who is?

LIBBY
Guess I just don't know if I can
put myself through that again...if
it's the right thing for me to be
doing.

Warden Greene sighs, taking a moment to look around at all
the people, at the men and women huddled together in circles,
sharing their stories with one another.

WARDEN GREENE
I understand. But if you change
your mind, the execution is in two
weeks.

LIBBY
Two weeks?

WARDEN GREENE
December 2nd. You know the way.

Libby frowns just slightly at this...knitting her eyebrows
together as she thinks...

WARDEN GREENE (CONT'D)
And if not, well...

He nods politely at Libby, just once, then walks away.

INT. LIBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Libby takes off her jacket and shoes, then walks over to her
dresser.

She stares at the five-year sobriety medallion, then picks it
up, fingering it over once or twice, the gold color
glistening in her grasp...

before she softly drops it into the trash.

She takes out a new medallion from her pocket, smaller, a dull red: 30 days sober. Libby places this one on her dresser now, in the same spot as the old one.

But something like a smile plays at the corners of her mouth.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As Libby enters the living room, she notices Paul heading out, with just a small bag strung over his shoulder.

LIBBY
You leaving, then?

PAUL
I think you've put up with me long enough.

LIBBY
More than enough.
(beat)
So you gonna be okay?

PAUL
Oh, I'll be just fine. Can't say the same about the next sorry place that takes me in, though. You?

LIBBY
I'll be fine, too.

But something clouds her expression...Paul notices this.

PAUL
You know, I've found that what we set out to do isn't always where we end up. Maybe because where we end up is actually where we were needed most all along.
(beat)
I love you, Lib.

Libby nods at him in return.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Tell Trace I'll give him a call.

LIBBY
I will.

They share a look...of what, it's hard to tell...but Paul leaves the house with a kind of hope in his eyes.

INT./EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Card: December 2nd.

The day is silent but for a slight winter breeze that whispers through the trees of the land...

Libby drives along in her car. She comes to a fork in the road, where she sits there for a moment or so...

At last she turns on her blinker as tiny snowflakes drift down around her from a gray sky, dancing in mid-air until they fall to the ground, mixing in with the dirt and mud.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.