IMAGINARY

by

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FADE IN:

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY

The bedroom is filled to the brim with stuffed animals and figurines.

The walls painted lavender, covered with all kinds of fantasy artwork, handmade, all framed and hung meticulously.

Bed neatly made, the sheets a flowery cascade.

It is quickly clear, this is not just the room of a normal teenage girl - it's a sanctuary of creativity. A place where imagination flows. An escape.

In the corner of the room, a canvas.

A HAND makes deliberate strokes along it, washing the blank whiteness with color.

The work is done feverishly, but at the same time, with care.

LEAH MINUCCI steps back from the canvas, setting her brush down, looking at it with a smile on her face.

She stands strong for a 16 year old. Her eyes showing an age much greater than herself. She's a cute girl, a slight shadow hanging over her.

LEAH
Another to be framed.

She smiles at the canvas - a vast field of pastel-colored flowers amidst the drop of a purple sky.

NANCY (O.S.)
Let's go, Leah! If you miss the bus I can't give you a ride today!

With a heavy sigh, Leah prepares herself to leave the safety of her bedroom.

NANCY (O.S.)
Matt won't take you either!

LEAH
(to herself)
As if I'd want him to.
Leah stuffs a couple books into her backpack and slowly opens her door, peeking out into the hallway before leaving, cautiously closing the door behind herself.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Leah sits down at the counter, her mother, NANCY, making toast.

Nancy is perhaps in her early 40s, but has not aged well at all.

A bruise on her cheek, she's an unhappy victim, and everything about how she carries herself shows it.

LEAH
Another good night between you and Matt, huh?

NANCY
It's not your business, Leah.

LEAH
You're my mother.

NANCY
And he's my husband. I'm the adult and you're the child.

MATT enters the kitchen, Leah and Nancy both falling silent. He's a tall, stocky, blond haired, quasi-redneck looking guy.

He completely ignores Leah, focusing on Nancy.

MATT
What'd you make me?

NANCY
Nothing, yet. I just made some toast for Leah.

MATT
Yeah? I'll have it, then.

Matt grabs the toast and begins to eat it.

LEAH
(sheepishly)
She made it for me, Matt.
Matt turns to Leah, shocked by her audacity.

    MATT
    What was that?

Leah doesn't say anything, she looks down at the counter.

    MATT
    You can mumble it but you can't say it to my face?

    NANCY
    Let's just try and have a good morning.

    MATT
    Shut up. I'm not talking to you.

Leah continues to sit there, becoming more visibly afraid.

Matt spits the partially eaten food at Leah and tosses the plate down in front of her.

    MATT
    Grow a pair next time. I'm going to work.

Matt storms out of the kitchen. The front door opens and slams shut.

Leah begins to furiously wipe the chewed up food off of herself, disgusted.

Nancy lights up a cigarette, shaking her head.

    NANCY
    You know better than to make him mad.

    LEAH
    Everything makes him mad. I'm glad you stand up for your daughter.

Leah gets up from the counter, grabs her backpack and leaves.

Nancy stands there a moment before grabbing a bottle of pills from atop the sink and downs two of them with a heavy sigh, closing her eyes.
EXT. HIGH SCHOOL, COURTYARD - DAY

Leah walks through the courtyard, not a friend by her side.

She's the eccentric girl that everyone knows about and
stares at, but nobody actually talks to for some reason.

Various HIGH SCHOOLERS murmur to each other about her and
point as she makes her way to an empty bench and sits down,
taking out a book and waiting for the first bell to ring.

As she's reading, JOHN walks past the bench. He's a typical
high school boy, light build, athletic, handsome.

Leah looks up and stares, her eyes longing for him.

He looks over to the bench and their eyes meet briefly
before he looks away and continues talking to his FRIENDS.

Leah buries her face back in her book, blushing.

The bell rings and she gets up, stuffing her book into her
pack.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Leah sits in the back of the classroom by the window, a
notebook open.

The TEACHER stands at the white board, scribbling down notes
and lecturing the STUDENTS.

Leah scribbles something on her notepad, but it isn't notes.
No, she's doodling again.

She glances out the window.

Outside, she sees herself in a flowing lavender dress,
running around the large oak tree, happily being chased by a
FAUN.

They're laughing and having a good time.

    TEACHER (O.S.)
    Isn't that right, Leah?

Back to reality.

Leah snaps her attention to her Teacher at the front of the
room.
LEAH
I'm sorry, what?

TEACHER
Daydreaming again?

The Teacher walks back to her desk and looks at her notepad.

TEACHER
Interesting notes. Unfortunately this isn't art class.

The students in the class giggle.

TEACHER
Would you mind telling the class how a faun is part of world geography?

More laughter.

Leah slinks down in her desk, embarrassed.

TEACHER
Keep your head out of the clouds. You're no bird. Now I mean it, pay attention.

The Teacher returns to the front of the class and continues on.

Leah glances out the window once more.

There's nothing out there but the oak tree, rustling in the wind.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Another blank canvas, another night of painting.

Leah stands there, swiftly moving her brush, quickly creating the scene from school that she saw from inside the classroom.

The oak tree, the faun, and herself. It's a bright, happy painting.

Outside her room, somewhere in the house, Matt is screaming at Nancy and throwing things around.

Leah closes her eyes, breathing deep.
She continues painting, trying to take her mind off of what's going on just outside the safety of her room.

All goes quiet for a moment, and then the loud sound of a smack breaks the silence, followed by Nancy crying out.

Leah drops the paint brush on the floor, breathing heavily.

She looks towards her bedroom door which thus far has remained closed.

LEAH
(whispering to herself)
Please stay away. Please. Please.

A shadow fills the underside of her door and the handle jiggles.

Thankfully, the door is locked.

Leah slowly and quietly makes her way towards her bed, crawling under the covers, shutting her eyes.

The door handle continues to jiggle.

BAM!

Matt punches the door.

MATT (O.S.)
I'm taking the lock off this door tomorrow! You hear me?

Matt punches the door again.

Leah covers her head with her pillow, curling into a ball.

EXT. FIELD OF PAPER FLOWERS – DAY

It's an endless field of pastel colored flowers, clearly made from tissue paper.

As the wind blows, they rustle together in a strange sort of harmony.

Leah lays in the center of the field, looking up at the purple colored sky with cotton candy-like clouds.

LEAH
It's strange, I find myself here more and more as each day passes.
PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
You sound surprised, as if you haven't created all that surrounds you.

Leah sits up to see PETER THE FAUN standing close by, a smile on his face, playing his flute.

LEAH
You again. I know you.

PETER THE FAUN
As you rightly should.

LEAH
You were outside my classroom today.

PETER THE FAUN
Was I?

Peter the Faun winks at Leah and continues playing his peaceful melody.

LEAH
It's beautiful.

PETER THE FAUN
It'll wake you soon.

LEAH
I'd rather it didn't, if it's all the same.

PETER THE FAUN
But you must.

LEAH
I built this world to escape that nightmare.

PETER THE FAUN
But it's where you belong, Leah. For now.

LEAH
What's your name?

PETER THE FAUN
Don't you know?

Leah closes her eyes, thinking.
Peter the Faun continues playing his flute.
Leah smiles.

LEAH
Peter. Your name is Peter.

PETER THE FAUN
Time to wake up now.

Peter the Faun begins blowing hard on his flute, creating an awful annoying pitch.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY
Leah opens her eyes, her alarm clock blaring. It's morning.

With a groan she rolls over and shuts off the alarm clock, sighing heavily as she prepares to leave her sanctuary.

LEAH
(to herself)
Peter. Peter the Faun.

As Leah gets dressed, she stops, looking at her painting of the oak tree.

She touches the faun on the canvas, smiling.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
Leah enters the kitchen where Nancy sits at the table, smoking a cigarette and drinking, her lip freshly busted.

LEAH
Another souvenir?

Matt quickly steps behind Leah and cracks her over the back of the head, causing her to cry out.

MATT
Just keep giving me reasons, girl. Keep right on pushing.

Leah's eyes water from the pain and she looks at Nancy, who looks away.

MATT
You hoping she's going to say something? Grow up. I pay for everything around here. Without me, you two skanks would be on the (MORE)
streets.

Matt tosses Leah's bedroom door handle on the counter.

MATT
No more lock on your door.

Leah quickly grabs a bottle of water out of the fridge and leaves the kitchen.

MATT
Get your ass to school before I change my mind.

Leah quickly leaves.

Nancy takes her pills and finishes off her drink.

NANCY
Did you have to hit her?

MATT
Excuse me? What was that?

NANCY
Nothing. What do you want for breakfast?

MATT
Nothing. You two have ruined my appetite. You need to do something about that daughter of yours before I do. I'm sick of her mouth.

NANCY
Okay.

MATT
Okay what?

NANCY
I'll talk to her.

MATT
I'm going to work. Why don't you make yourself useful today and clean the house, huh?

Matt leaves the kitchen and Nancy pours herself another drink.
INT. HIGH SCHOOL, GUIDANCE OFFICE - DAY

Leah sits across from her guidance counselor, MR. POWELL, an older fellow with a warm face and kind eyes.

He holds a textbook in his hands which has been covered with all sorts of doodles, apparently done by Leah.

MR. POWELL
For some reason your behavior is causing concern among some of your teachers, Leah.

LEAH
They're just drawings.

MR. POWELL
I know that. And there's nothing wrong with having an imagination. I'll tell you a secret. Can I?

Leah shrugs her shoulders.

MR. POWELL
Us adults would give anything to have our imagination back. For some reason when we grew up, we let it run away from us. We were all so focused on being grown ups that we lost our inner child. That's an important part of who we are as humans, Leah. Don't ever make our mistake and let yours go.

Mr. Powell winks at Leah and she half-smiles.

MR. POWELL
Now, having said that, I still have a job to do. Perhaps you are spending a little too much time in your head. Some is good, but too much can be bad for you. The lines between reality and fantasy can sometimes start to blur. Do you understand?

LEAH
Why does that have to be a bad thing?

MR. POWELL
It doesn't. But you are in school, and the point is to get an education so you can really be (MORE)
MR. POWELL (cont'd)
something special when you become
an adult. Maybe just try to pay
more attention in class, okay? And
maybe keep the doodling on school
property to a minimum.

LEAH
I'll see what I can do, Mr.
Powell.

MR. POWELL
'atta girl.

Mr. Powell hands her textbook back to her and then leans
back in his chair, looking at her more seriously.

MR. POWELL
Is everything all right at home,
Leah?

Leah looks down at the floor,shrugging as she stuffs the
textbook back into her pack.

LEAH
It's all right I guess.

MR. POWELL
You don't have to talk to me, but
it's what I'm here for. If you
ever need anything, my doors are
always open. Even if you just need
someone to listen. I promise I'll
do my best to help in whatever
ways I can.

LEAH
Thanks, Mr. Powell. But really,
there's nothing you or anyone else
can do for me right now.

MR. POWELL
You sure?

LEAH
Yeah. My mom just needs to wake
up, you know?

MR. POWELL
What do you mean by that?

LEAH
Nothing.
Leah stands up and slings her pack over her shoulders, preparing to leave.

LEAH
Will you write me a pass back to class? I'd hate to get bitched at for being late.

MR. POWELL
Of course! We wouldn't want that.

Mr. Powell takes a piece of paper off his desk, scribbles on it, signs it, and hands it to Leah.

LEAH
Thanks. I'll see you around.

MR. POWELL
Take care of yourself, Leah. And remember what I said.

LEAH
Will do.

Leah leaves the office and Mr. Powell sits there a moment, twiddling his pen, thinking.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Leah sits in the corner of the library, between two bookshelves, a mountain of books piled on either side of her.

She's browsing through a book in her hand.

The LIBRARIAN walks over to her, a confused look on her face.

LIBRARIAN
You know the checkout limit is four at any given time, right?

LEAH
I know. I'm just looking through them. I'll put them all back, I promise.

LIBRARIAN
Trying to figure out which ones to take home, huh?
LEAH
Something like that.

With a smile, the Librarian walks away, continuing her work. Leah buries her face back into the book in front of her.

JOHN (O.S.)
Leah?

Leah looks up to see John walking towards her. She instantly blushes.

JOHN
That's a lot of books you got, there.

LEAH
Yeah. I didn't know you read.

JOHN
I'm not stupid, you know.

LEAH
No, wait. That's not what I meant. I just -

John smiles and leans down by her, looking at the piles of books around her.

JOHN
Relax. I'm just teasing you. What've you got here?

John begins going through the piles of books -- Mostly fantasy and horror, with a few art-based books thrown in for good measure.

JOHN
Interesting.

LEAH
I can never decide what to read. I like to keep my options open before I decide, I guess.

JOHN
Got any favorites picked out yet?

Leah motions to the book she has in her hand.
LEAH
I think this one. And I'm not sure between these two.

Leah grabs two other books from the pile.

John grabs them both and looks at them.

JOHN
This one.

John hands one of the books to Leah and she reaches to grab it.

Their hands briefly touch and Leah quickly grabs the book, pulling her hand away, blushing even more.

LEAH
Sorry. I wasn't trying to grope you or anything.

John chuckles.

JOHN
Are you always this nervous and shy?

LEAH
Yes. No. I don't know. I don't have a lot of friends so I spend a lot of time alone.

JOHN
And you come here.

LEAH
I don't come here all the time or anything. I'm not a total nerd. It's just someplace to go that's better than home.

John begins scooping up the books on the ground.

JOHN
I'll give you a hand putting these away.

John walks away, disappearing behind some shelves.

Leah quickly gets to her feet.

LEAH
Wait. I'll come with you.
Leah walks the same direction John did, rounding the shelves.

John is nowhere to be seen.

LEAH
Where'd you go?

The library is deathly quiet.

LEAH
John?

Her response comes in the form of a flute being played.
It's an all-too familiar tune.

Leah begins weaving through the bookshelves, which have quickly turned into a maze-like setup.

With every step she takes, the library changes, becoming older and larger the farther she weaves in and out of the bookshelves.

LEAH
Hello? Anyone there?

The flute continues to play, and Leah continues heading to the direction of the noise.

LEAH
Peter, is that you?

As she rounds another corner, she finds herself in the center of the library, a large open area.

Peter the Faun sits in the center on a golden stool, playing his flute.

He sees Leah and stops playing, smiling.

PETER THE FAUN
I was beginning to worry the books had swallowed you up.

LEAH
What are you doing here?

PETER THE FAUN
I should be asking you that very thing. You're in my world, Leah.
Leah looks around and then returns her gaze to Peter the Faun.

LEAH
This isn't real, is it?

PETER THE FAUN
That depends on your perception of reality, doesn't it? It's as real as your mind makes it.

Peter the Faun smiles and resumes playing his flute.

Leah gets closer to him, sitting down in front of him.

LEAH
Is there something wrong with me?

Peter the Faun stops playing and looks at Leah.

PETER THE FAUN
How do you feel?

LEAH
Peaceful.

PETER THE FAUN
Have you got a fever?

LEAH
I don't believe so.

Peter the Faun shrugs.

PETER THE FAUN
Then I wouldn't say there's anything wrong with you.

LEAH
How long can I stay?

PETER THE FAUN
It's time for you to leave now, Leah.

LEAH

PETER THE FAUN
I don't make the rules. Wake up. It's time to go.

LIBRARY - NIGHT
Leah suddenly snaps up at a desk in the library, fully awake.

The Librarian stands beside her.

LIBRARIAN
Did you hear me, young lady?

Leah looks at the Librarian, confused.

LEAH
What? I'm sorry.

LIBRARIAN
I said it's time for you to go. We're closing.

Leah quickly stands up, fumbling for the books on the table in front of her.

LEAH
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to keep you waiting.

In her hurry, Leah drops some of the books and quickly ducks down to grab them.

LEAH
I'm sorry. I'm not trying to make a mess.

The Librarian puts a kind hand on Leah's shoulder.

LIBRARIAN
It's quite all right, dear. No need to be so nervous. Come on, I'll check these out for you.

The Librarian grabs a couple of the books from Leah and with a smile, leads her up front to check them out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leah enters her house and slowly makes her way through the living room, trying to create the least amount of noise possible.

NANCY (O.S.)
You're late! Dinner's on the table!
With a groan, Leah sets her books down on the coffee table and makes her way to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leah enters the kitchen and joins Matt and Nancy at the table who are already halfway through their meals.

In front of Matt sits two empty beer cans. He cracks open a third.

    MATT
    Why the hell are you so late? Where have you been?

    LEAH
    I was at the library.

    MATT
    Doing what?

    LEAH
    Reading.

Matt reaches across the table and smacks Leah across the head.

She immediately looks down at the floor, blinking away tears.

    MATT
    Don't be such a smart ass.

    NANCY
    I'm sure that's exactly what she was doing, Matt. She loves to read.

Matt glares at Nancy in warning, and she returns her complete attention to her food.

Matt then continues eating.

    MATT
    We of course know she wasn't meeting a boy though, don't we? What dumb ass would go after something like that.

That stings Leah.

Nancy looks over to her daughter.
NANCY
Aren't you going to eat something, hunny?

LEAH
I'm not hungry.

Matt grabs the last piece of meat from the tray and puts it on his plate.

MATT
Good. More for me.

Leah glances over to her mother.

LEAH
May I be excused?

MATT
What for? Don't you enjoy our company?

Leah looks back down at the floor.

MATT
I asked you a question, retard.

Leah continues to sit there quietly.

MATT
So, the school called today. Bet you can guess why, Leah.

Leah looks over to her mother, her eyes wide with fear.

MATT
Don't look at her. She's not going to help you. Apparently they're concerned about the conditions of your home life.

NANCY
That's not exactly what they said...

MATT
That's pretty much what they said. What kind of bullshit are you feeding these people, Leah? Don't you get enough attention? Gotta stir up some shit to get some more? Need some sympathy?
LEAH
I didn't do anything.

NANCY
They just said that you've been distracted in class lately and just wanted to check and make sure everything was okay.

Matt slams his hand down on the table to silence Nancy.

MATT
Don't sugarcoat this, Nancy. She's telling lies about us. About me.

Matt looks at Leah, fire burning behind his eyes. He's fuming.

Leah looks at him, terrified.

LEAH
I haven't said anything to anyone. I swear to God!

MATT
It's all right. We're going to handle this later. I'll really give you something to tell them.

NANCY
Matt, don't. It was nothing.

Matt grabs Nancy's plate and slings it across the kitchen, shattering it.

MATT
I told you to shut your mouth. Now clean it up.

Nancy gets up and begins to pick up the broken pieces of glass.

Matt looks at Leah, smiling.

MATT
You go on up to your room. Enjoy yourself while you can. I'll be up after I finish eating to handle this little situation.

Leah's lip begins to tremble and she gets up, leaving the kitchen.
INT. LEAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Leah dashes into her room, slamming the door behind her and goes to lock the door.

It's gone.

LEAH
Damn it.

Leah frantically looks around her room for something to barricade the door with, tears flowing down her face.

There's nothing that will help.

As she continues to look around, something catches her eyes.

The window!

She rushes over to the window and opens it.

She looks back towards her bedroom door and then begins to climb out.

Her bedroom door bursts open and Matt charges in.

MATT
Going somewhere?!

Matt quickly crosses the room and grabs Leah, pulling her back inside.

She screams.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Leah sits in the sand on the beach, once again in her lavender dress.

She looks out to the emerald green sea, the sun resting on the horizon, casting a brilliant blaze of orange and yellow onto the purple sky.

Countless sail boats fill the water with a variety of differently shaped and colored sails.

Multi-colored seagulls fly all around, squawking gently.

Peter the Faun stands next to Leah, placing his hand on her shoulder.
PETER THE FAUN
You just can't stay away, can you?

LEAH
I have no choice, it seems. It's where my mind takes me. It must be where I'm meant to be.

PETER THE FAUN
Careful, you may get stuck here.

LEAH
Would that be such a bad thing?

PETER THE FAUN
I don't know. You tell me.

Leah looks at Peter the Faun and smiles. She returns her eyes to the sea in front of her.

LEAH
I don't think so. It's so beautiful here. It doesn't hurt.

PETER THE FAUN
Don't be fooled, Leah. The darkness you hold inside you can easily pierce this thin veil of serenity in your mind. It can't always be a retreat.

LEAH
But right now, it is. That's all that matters to me. Are there others here?

PETER THE FAUN
You know the answers better than I, Leah.

LEAH
Can I meet them?

PETER THE FAUN
When you are ready, you will.

LEAH
You're not very helpful. You always seem to be speaking in circles.
PETER THE FAUN
I'm simply a guide of sorts created by your mind. I don't hold all of the answers. If I talk in circles, it's because you're not ready for all the answers. Only you can unlock your own secrets.

LEAH
That's an interesting way to look at it.

PETER THE FAUN
It's the only way to look at it.

Leah continues to watch the boat on the sea, calming moving across the water.

The sun hasn't moved.

LEAH
The sun doesn't move.

PETER THE FAUN
I hadn't noticed.

Leah looks at Peter the Faun.

LEAH
If this is all in my mind, don't I have control over it?

PETER THE FAUN
Interesting question. Would you like me to play you a song?

Leah smiles.

LEAH
Of course.

PETER THE FAUN
Excellent.

Peter the Faun raises his flute to his mouth and begins to play a quiet, sad tune.

Leah closes her eyes, listening hard.

Tears slowly flow down Leah's face as the song comes to a finish.
PETER THE FAUN
Apologies. I didn't mean to make you cry.

Leah shakes her head.

LEAH
No, no. It was beautiful, Peter.

PETER THE FAUN
Shall we take a walk?

LEAH
I'd like that.

Peter the Faun offers his hand and Leah graciously takes it, standing up.

The two begin to walk along the beach, the waves quietly crashing beside them.

PETER THE FAUN
You know your visit must come to an end soon.

LEAH
Why does it always seem so short?

PETER THE FAUN
You can only stay for just so long each time. Otherwise your mind may become confused.

LEAH
Confused how?

PETER THE FAUN
Confused in a way that you may have a hard time separating your dreams from reality.

LEAH
My guidance counselor said something similar to me today.

Peter the Faun ignores that remark.

PETER THE FAUN
We will need your help one day.

LEAH
With what?
PETER THE FAUN
Against the darkness.

Leah looks around the sunny environment.

LEAH
I see nothing dark here.

PETER THE FAUN
It's there. Just beyond the borders. Growing closer every day.

LEAH
And what happens then?

Peter the Faun stops walking.

PETER THE FAUN
This is as far as we go this time.

LEAH
What?

CRASH!

Leah turns to the sea and sees two sailboats crash into each other.

They slowly begin to sink.

LEAH
Oh, no. They're crashing! Come on, we have to help them!

Leah turns to Peter the Faun, but he's gone.

CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!

Leah looks back to the sea.

All the boats are crashing into one another and sinking.

CRASH! CRASH!

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY

Leah awakens in her bed, her eye blackened.

Downstairs, Matt is screaming and throwing things around - thus the source of the crash.

Leah groans and buries her head underneath her pillow.
LEAH
So much for sleeping in.

There's a knock on her door.

She tenses.

LEAH
What?

The door opens and Nancy steps in.

NANCY
It's me, sweetie.

Leah rolls over and looks at her mother, who crosses the room and sits down on the bed with her.

LEAH
What's he doing down there?

NANCY
He's just have one of his moments. I guess one of his other workers has been neglecting some of their accounts so they're losing money.

LEAH
He does realize smashing everything in sight accomplishes nothing, right?

NANCY
Apparently not.

Leah examines her mother closely.

LEAH
You're awfully sober this morning.

Nancy looks at her daughter, unsure of what to say.

NANCY
Yes, well, I wanted to make sure you were all right after last night's episode.

LEAH
Because you certainly did nothing to stop it.

Leah rolls back over in her bed, facing away from her mother.
NANCY
What could I have done?

LEAH
He's not my dad. He has no right to put his hands on me.

NANCY
He just would have beat me, too.

LEAH
At least it would have showed you cared for once.

Nancy sits there a moment, stung by Leah's words. She stands up.

NANCY
I do care, whether you believe it or not. I'm doing my best, you know. You could help.

Nancy quickly leaves the room, her eyes welling up.

LEAH
You're the parent. You should be taking care of me.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
Nancy enters the kitchen and grabs her bottle of pills off the window sill.

She pours herself an alcoholic drink and takes her pills with it.

Matt enters the kitchen.

MATT
Waste no time getting trashed.

Nancy doesn't say anything.

Matt grabs a beer out of the fridge.

NANCY
Everything okay with work?

MATT
You're funny.
Nancy finishes her drink.

    NANCY
    Listen, about last night -

Matt shoots Nancy a look, stopping her mid-sentence.

    MATT
    You got something to say about that, Nancy?

    NANCY
    It's just...I don't know. I guess not.

    MATT

Matt leaves the kitchen.

Nancy pours herself another drink.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY

Once again, Leah is painting.

However, this time she is moving much slower. She is taking her time. Concentrating.

As the hours tick by and the paint runs out, she finally steps back, looking at her work.

On the canvas is an elaborate castle scene.

She smiles.

    LEAH
    The perfect place to live.

Setting down her brush and taking off her apron, Leah gathers up a notepad and leaves the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leah walks through the living room, heading for the front door.

Matt and Nancy are sitting there, watching TV.

Nancy looks like a zombie, drunk and drugged out of her
Matt looks over to Leah.

**MATT**
And where do we think we're going?

**LEAH**
The park.

**MATT**
What for?

**LEAH**
Just something to do. Somewhere to go.

**MATT**
You don't like being home with your mother and me?

**LEAH**
It's the weekend. Normal kids go out on weekends.

**MATT**
You're not normal. You don't even have any friends. You spend all your time in your room painting your little fairy pictures and when you're not doing that, you're reading.

Leah looks to the ground, unsure of what to say.

**LEAH**
I'll be home by dark.

**MATT**
What makes you think I'm going to let you go?

**LEAH**
I was telling my mother. Not you, Matt.

**NANCY**
GO. I don't care what you do.

Matt looks over to Nancy, irritated.
MATT
After the shit she pulled yesterday, you're going to let her go out?

NANCY
She's just a kid. She needs a life. At least someone in this house should be happy.

MATT
Have another drink.

Seeing the opportunity, Leah quickly exits the house.

MATT
You're not back by dark, you better stay gone, cause your ass will be toast!

EXT. PARK - DAY

Leah sits on the park bench, sketch pad on her lap, drawing the lake scene in front of her.

Gorgeous blossoming trees surround the lake, their stray leaves scattering in the wind.

As Leah sketches, a HOBO approaches her.

HOBO
Can you spare any change?

Leah looks up at the Hobo.

LEAH
I'm sorry, I don't have anything on me at all. I don't even have a job.

HOBO
That's all right. That's quite all right. Do you mind if I sit with you a minute?

LEAH
Please do.

Leah moves her pack out of the way and the Hobo sits down beside her.
HOBO
What are you working on?

LEAH
Just doing some doodling.

HOBO
Can I take a look?

LEAH
Sure.

Leah hands the Hobo the sketch pad and he looks at her drawing of the late.

HOBO
That's lovely.

LEAH
Thank you.

The Hobo continues going through the pages of the sketch book.

He hands it back to her.

HOBO
Those aren't just simple little doodles, young lady. You've got quite the talent. Don't go wasting it and throw it all away.

LEAH
You're very kind. Can I ask you something?

HOBO
Sure.

LEAH
How did you...you know. Why are you homeless?

The Hobo thinks for a moment, trying to piece together the right words to say.

HOBO
I was foolish, I guess. At one point in my life I had it all. House. Car. A lovely wife. The head of a large business. Then I got greedy and stupid and it all came crashing down around me.
LEAH
How long has it been?

HOBO
Three years. In a way I'm grateful, I suppose. It taught me a lot about myself and how precious life really can be. I take nothing for granted now.

LEAH
Do you think you'll ever bounce back?

HOBO
No. No, it's too late for me. I had my time to shine. I've accepted my fate. I'm content living out the rest of my days like this. People see me and think, "I'll never let that happen to myself." It makes me feel good in a way that I can affect people like that.

LEAH
I guess that's good.

HOBO
No matter how tough life gets, it's important not to give up. You can make anything positive. Just remember that there's always someone worse off than you.

With that, the Hobo stands up.

HOBO
I'll be on my way now, I think. Thanks for the chat, young lady. You've quite the gift. Don't be afraid to pursue that. Don't take no for an answer.

LEAH
Best of luck to you, sir.

With a wink, the Hobo turns and walks away.

Leah returns to her sketch pad and continues drawing.

As she continues drawing, something catches her eye across the lake.
In the distance, by one of the trees, she sees Peter the Faun.

He puts his flute to his mouth and starts to play, the music lightly carrying over across the lake to her.

She slowly stands up, stunned.

LEAH
Wake up, Leah. You're dreaming. You fell asleep on the bench.

Leah pinches herself, but she doesn't wake.

The music from Peter the Faun's flute gets louder.

Leah quickly gather up her stuff and begins to make her way around the lake to the other side.

As she gets closer, the music gets louder.

She finally reaches the tree and the music stops.

LEAH
Peter?

Leah rounds the tree -

Only to find John sitting there, listening to his I-Pod.

He looks up at her, surprised, and pulls out his earbuds.

JOHN
I'm sorry, what? I couldn't hear you.

Leah immediately blushes.

LEAH
Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you were someone else.

JOHN
Oh, that's okay.

Leah quickly turns to leave.

JOHN
Hey, you're Leah, aren't you?

Leah slowly turns back around to face John, avoiding eye contact.
LEAH
How do you know my name?

JOHN
I've seen your artwork around the school. Plus we have Geometry together, remember?

LEAH
Oh, yeah. Right. Duh.

JOHN
Your work is really good.

Leah blushed even more.

LEAH
Thanks. Your football is really good. Er, I mean you play well.

Leah silently curses herself for sounding stupid.

JOHN
Thanks, but it's really nothing special. Anyone can play football. Not a lot of people can be an artist.

LEAH
I'm not really an artist.

JOHN
Well I disagree. What brings you out here? Meeting your boyfriend?

LEAH
No, I don't have one of those. I just come out here to draw and get out of the house, you know?

JOHN
Yeah, I know what you mean. You maybe want to take a walk?

Leah's face turns positively crimson and she smiles a bit, toothy smile.

She looks up at John, still smiling, but the smile slowly fades.

Something behind him catches her eye.

On the other side of the lake, standing on the top of one of
the trees is a large BIRD-LIKE MAN - ASHRAH - flapping his wings.

JOHN
What?

John turns around to see what Leah is looking at.

JOHN
What are you looking at?

John sees nothing on the other side of the lake, just trees and benches.

LEAH
You don't see it?

JOHN
See what?

LEAH
I'm sorry, I have to go.

Leah quickly walks away.

JOHN
Wait, what about our walk?

LEAH
I'm sorry!

Leah continues walking away, not looking back.

John watches her a moment and then looks back over the lake, trying to see what she says.

There's nothing.

JOHN
What the hell?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leah rushes through the front door, slamming it behind her and races up the stairs.

Matt watches her as she goes.

MATT
Quit slamming the doors! You got home just in the nick of time!
INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY

Leah enters her room and closes the door.

She tosses her bag down on her bag, grabs a stack of sketch papers and begins rifling through them.

She freezes as she reaches one.

She slowly brings it closer, examining it.

On the page is a charcoal sketch of a large, black bird-man, amidst a sky filled with crows.

She slowly sets the paper down and sits on her bed, staring blankly across the room.

NANCY (O.S.)
Dinner is almost ready!

MATT (O.S.)
Get your ass down here!

LEAH
I'm not hungry!

MATT (O.S.)
I'm not interested! Let's go!

With a sigh, Leah gets up from her bed.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leah begrudgingly joins Matt and Nancy at the table.

MATT
Home just in time. Cutting it awful close, aren't we, Leah?

LEAH
I guess.

MATT
Don't test my limits.

LEAH
I'm not trying to.

MATT
Good. Now, isn't this a nice family dinner?
Nancy takes out her bottle of pills and begins to open it, a glass of wine in front of her.

Leah quickly snatches the bottle out of Nancy's hands.

NANCY
What are you doing?

LEAH
What are YOU doing? How long are you planning on taking these? And with alcohol? Are you trying to kill yourself?

NANCY
Give them back, Leah. Right now.

LEAH
No.

NANCY
Have you forgotten that I am still your mother?

LEAH
Start acting like it, then! Just once I'd like to see you sober.

MATT
Give Nancy back her pills.

Leah glares at Matt and sees the anger building in his eyes.

LEAH
Screw you.

Without hesitation, Matt swings.

Leah ducks out of the way and quickly gets up from the table, running through the house, popping pills the entire way.

Matt and Nancy get up and run after her.

NANCY
Don't take those! They'll hurt you, baby!

LEAH
Let's see how you like it!

Leah rushes up the stairs, Matt and Nancy charging after her.
MATT
Get back here, you little bitch!

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Leah bursts into her room, slamming the door behind her - not that it will do much good.

She finishes the bottle before Matt and Nancy break in.

Leah shakes the empty bottle in front of them.

LEAH
Too late.

Matt smacks her hard across the face, laying her out across the floor.

Nancy rush to Leah's side, gripping her unconscious daughter's hand.

NANCY
Oh, baby. Why did you do this to yourself?

Nancy turns back to Matt.

NANCY
Call the paramedics!

MATT
She's fine. I didn't hit her that hard.

NANCY
She just took an overdose of my medication you idiot! She needs the hospital!

MATT
It's her own fault. I'm not wasting my money on an ambulance ride.

NANCY
Then get the car ready and we'll take her!

MATT
She's your daughter. You do it, you drunken whore.
With that, Matt leaves the bedroom.

Nancy kisses the top of her daughter's head.

    NANCY
    Hold on, sweetie. I'm going to take care of you.

EXT. FIELD OF PAPER FLOWERS - DAY

Leah once again wakes up in the field of paper flowers, in her lavender dress.

She looks around, smiling.

The wind rustles the flowers and she closes her eyes, listening. She is at peace.

    PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
    Back once more, I see.

Leah opens her eyes to see Peter the Faun standing in front of her, his arms crossed.

    LEAH
    I plan on staying this time.

    PETER THE FAUN
    You haven't got much choice now, have you? At least, not yet.

    LEAH
    What do you mean?

    PETER THE FAUN
    In due time, Leah. In due time. We've got a long journey ahead of us. Best get moving.

    LEAH
    I'm content where I am, if you please.

Peter the Faun extends his hand.

    PETER THE FAUN
    If YOU please, there's more to see and much to do.

Frowning, Leah takes Peter the Faun's hand and stands up.

The two begin walking through the field.
LEAH
Where are we going?

PETER THE FAUN
To the heart of it all.

LEAH
To do what?

PETER THE FAUN
To make your choice.

LEAH
And that would be?

PETER THE FAUN
I wouldn't know, would I? The choice is yours, after all. I can't pretend to know the choice you're going to make when the time comes for you to choose.

LEAH
You have an interesting way of speaking, Peter.

PETER THE FAUN
Yes, you do.

Leah leans down and picks a flower from the ground, looking at it in wonder.
She smells it, a look of wonder on her face.

LEAH
It smells so good!

PETER THE FAUN
Did you want it to smell bad?

LEAH
Well, no. I just didn't expect it to smell of anything at all.

PETER THE FAUN
Interesting.

Leah places the flower in her hair.

LEAH
Are we going to meet others?
PETER THE FAUN
I expect we certainly will. If you want to, that is.

LEAH
Again with your riddles. You know I don't fully understand all of this yet, don't you?

PETER THE FAUN
All in good time, dear Leah. All in good time.

Peter the Faun smiles and winks at Leah.

The two reach the edge of the field, a large forest standing before them.

LEAH
Through here?

Peter the Faun gently squeezes Leah's hand.

PETER THE FAUN
This is the Enchanted Forest. Do not be frightened.

LEAH
I'm not. Shall we go in?

PETER THE FAUN
We shall.

The two step into the forest.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy returns to Leah's room and leans down to try and pick her up.

She struggles and struggles but she just doesn't have the strength, nor the coordination, to pick up her daughter off the floor.

She cries in frustration.

NANCY
Matt! I can't pick her up! I need your help!

MATT (O.S.)
Oh, for Christ's sake!
Matt thunders up the stairs and enters the room, shoving Nancy out of the way.

    MATT
    Move.

Matt scoops up Leah and leaves the room with her.

    MATT
    Get off the floor!

Nancy composes herself and gets to her feet, following Matt.

EXT. LEAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Matt throws Leah in the back seat of the car, closing the door.

Nancy stumbles out of the house, fumbling with her car keys.

    NANCY
    Matt, I really don't think I'm able to drive.

    MATT
    That's your problem, isn't it?

    NANCY
    That's not fair!

Matt gets right in Nancy's face.

    MATT
    I'm not the one that forces you to get plastered every day. If she
dies it's on you. I did my part.
Grow up and be a parent.

Matt shoves past Nancy and goes back inside, slamming the door behind him.

    NANCY
    Why don't you try being a real man you piece of shit! If it wasn't
for you, I wouldn't be like this and she wouldn't have done this!
It's all your fault!

NEIGHBORS standing outside watch Nancy's tirade.

She turns around, seeing them.
NANCY
And what do you all think you're looking at?!

Nancy gets in the car, starts the engine, and drives off.

EXT. ENCHANTED FOREST - DAY
Leah and Peter the Faun step through the forest.

It's a lush explosion of life - Huge trees taller than skyscrapers. Countless plants and flowers, all accented by the bright powerful rays of the sun which beam through the canopy beautifully.

Birds and frogs sing proudly and dart around. In the distance comes the sound of running water.

LEAH
It's gorgeous here.

PETER THE FAUN
Were you expecting anything less?

LEAH
Yes. I mean, no. Well, I don't know, really.

PETER THE FAUN
Slow down, you're confusing yourself.

LEAH
There's just so much here!

Leah looks around in amazement.

Giant mushrooms loom all around in shades of red and turquoise.

LEAH
Do we have to leave here?

PETER THE FAUN
Oh, yes. There is much for us to do and the journey ahead is still quite long.

LEAH
Are you going to start explaining yourself or what?
PETER THE FAUN
Explain myself? What is there to explain about myself that you don't already know? I am Peter the Faun and I am your friend. What else is there?

LEAH
I meant about why I'm here.

PETER THE FAUN
Oh, you know that answer much better than I do.

Leah stops walking, frowning at Peter the Faun.

Peter the Faun stops walking and faces Leah, shrugging his shoulders.

LEAH
You're avoiding and I don't like it.

PETER THE FAUN
Perhaps you'll like this.

Peter the Faun takes up his flute and begins to play a tune.

Leah listens, smiling at the sweet notes Peter the Faun is playing.

Suddenly, a huge grouping of butterflies of all shapes, sizes and colors come dancing around Leah and Peter the Faun.

Leah begins to laugh, extending her arms as the butterflies dance around and perch themselves on her.

Peter the Faun continues to play whilst smiling himself.

Suddenly, a long, slimy red tongue whips through the air, snatching one of the butterflies.

LEAH
Hey!

The tongue whips back into the mouth of a large yellow toad with black spots.

The toad - FRANCIS - burps.

The butterflies scatter.
FRANCIS  
Sorry 'bout tha'.

Peter the Faun looks over to Francis, shaking his head.

PETER THE FAUN  
Uncalled for, Francis.

FRANCIS  
Couldn't help meself. All in the instincts, dontcha know.

LEAH  
Spit it back out!

FRANCIS  
I can't.

LEAH  
Can!

FRANCIS  
Can't!

Leah gets right in front of Francis.

LEAH  
Open your mouth.

Francis purses his lips tightly, shaking his head.

LEAH  
Open.

Francis slowly takes a step back, but quicker than expected, Leah shoves her hand inside Francis' mouth and pulls out his long, slimy tongue.

The butterfly quickly flies out and away.

Leah releases Francis' tongue.

FRANCIS  
But I'm so hungry!

PETER THE FAUN  
We don't eat our friends, Francis.

FRANCIS  
Wha' am I s'pose ter eat, then?

LEAH  
Plants.
Francis scoffs at Leah and turns his attention to Peter the Faun.

**FRANCIS**
Wha' she doin' here, anyway?

**LEAH**
Do you know who I am?

**FRANCIS**
Aye. We all do.

Francis returns his attention to Peter the Faun.

**FRANCIS**
She goin' ter fix our lil' problem?

**PETER THE FAUN**
I imagine so, should she so desire.

**LEAH**
I would appreciate it if you guys wouldn't talk about me like I'm not standing right here.

**FRANCIS**
Would ya like some company to the edge o' the forest? Things've got a bit dodgy 'round these parts lately. Might get lost and find yerselves on the wrong side o' the bark, if ya know what I mean. I'd hate for somethin' ter happen ter the wee lass.

**LEAH**
Again, still standing right here.

Peter the Faun turns his attention to Leah.

**PETER THE FAUN**
Apologies, my dear. Leah, this is Francis, King of the Toads in this forest.

**FRANCIS**
Not like ya need a proper introduction. Already saw it fit ter cram yer hand in me mouth. Poor manners these humans have nowadays.
LEAH
You were eating the butterfly!

FRANCIS
And I'll do it again as soon as yer not lookin'!

LEAH
You won't!

FRANCIS
I will!

LEAH
Won't!

Peter the Faun raises his hands the interject.

PETER THE FAUN
If I make a suggestion. We've got a lot of ground to cover and the more time you two waste with your petty bickering, the more the darkness spreads.

FRANCIS
(Quietly under his breath)
Will.

LEAH
I'm not going anywhere with him unless he promises not to eat anything more.

FRANCIS
Well then I s'pose yer not gettin' very far then, are ya?

Peter the Faun kicks Francis' side and he grunts.

Francis looks up at Peter the Faun in anger.

FRANCIS
Oi! You kicked me!

PETER THE FAUN
Stop being stubborn, Francis.

FRANCIS
Oh, fine!
LEAH
Shake on it.

Leah extends her hand.

After rolling his eyes and sighing, Francis extends his tongue and grips Leah's hand with it, shaking.

LEAH
Ew!

Leah wipes the slime off on her dress.

FRANCIS
Oh, ya didn't have any problem when ya were rippin' it out o' me mouth!

PETER THE FAUN
Stop!

FRANCIS
This way.

Francis hops off.

Leah and Peter the Faun follow him.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Nancy runs inside the hospital, looking around frantically.

NANCY
I need help! My daughter is out in the car! She took a lot of pills! I can't carry her! Please, someone help get her!

An ORDERLY rushes over to her.

ORDERLY
Where is she, ma'am?

NANCY
Right out here in my car!

The Orderly rushes outside.

Nancy stumbles a bit, clutching her head and groaning.

A NURSE rushes over to Nancy.
NANCY
I'm fine. Just help my daughter.

The Orderly enters the hospital with Leah in his arms.

ORDERLY
I need a stretcher, here!

The Nurse runs around the corner and returns a moment later with one.

The Orderly sets Leah down on it and the Nurse begins pushing it back towards the emergency room.

Nancy struggles to keep the pace.

NURSE
What did she take?

Nancy struggles to answer the question, fighting to stay conscious herself.

NURSE
You need to stay with me so I can help her! What did she take?

NANCY
Oxycodone.

The pushes the stretcher into an operating room.

Nancy tries to answer but DR. SAMSON steps through the doors to stop her.

DR. SAMSON
I know you're worried but you can't be back here. I'm Dr. Samson, I'll be taking care of your daughter. Have a seat out in the lobby and let us work.

Dr. Samson returns to the operating room, letting the doors close behind him.

Nancy drops to her knees, breathing heavily, trying to stay alert.

EXT. ENCHANTED FOREST - DAY

Thinking that the other two aren't looking, Francis shoots out his tongue, snagging a dragonfly.
LEAH
Hey!

FRANCIS
Wha'?

LEAH
I saw that! We had an agreement!

FRANCIS
You can take yer agreement and shove it straight up yer -

A HUGE BIRD swoops down suddenly, scooping up Francis and carries him off.

PETER THE FAUN
Francis!

LEAH
Let him go!

The bird climbs high up into the air, coming to rest high above the canopy atop a huge, thick tree that is covered with mushrooms growing along its trunk.

PETER THE FAUN
We have to save him! Come on!

Leah and Peter the Faun run through the forest until they reach the huge tree.

They look up. It seems to climb forever.

LEAH
Now what?

PETER THE FAUN
You have to get up there!

LEAH
Me? What about you?

Peter the Faun looks down at his hooves, simply shrugging.

PETER THE FAUN
You're having a laugh, right?

Leah once again looks up at the towering tree.

LEAH
It's so high! How am I supposed to get up there?
PETER THE FAUN
Climb.

LEAH
There are no limbs to grab onto.

Peter the Faun touches one of the mushrooms.

PETER THE FAUN
These wind around the entire tree. They go all the way up.

LEAH
They won't hold my weight.

PETER THE FAUN
They will if you believe they will.

Leah just sort of looks at Peter the Faun, dumbfounded.

PETER THE FAUN
You can do it. Believe in yourself. You are stronger than you know.

With a sigh, Leah approaches the trunk and grips a mushroom.

Closing her eyes, she lifts herself up - and the mushroom holds.

PETER THE FAUN
I told you. Everything you ever need is inside you, Leah! Now climb! Save Francis before it's too late!

LEAH
What about the bird?

PETER THE FAUN
I'll distract her!

Determined, Leah begins the long climb to the top.

EXT. TREE TOP - DAY

The top of the tree is flat. There are no branches. No leaves. Just a large bird nest.

Francis cowers between two large speckled bird eggs as the large bird circles above, cawing.
FRANCIS
Don't eat me. Don't eat me. Don't eat me.

The sound of Peter the Faun's flute echoes through the air.
The large bird takes off towards the sound.

EXT. ENCHANTED FOREST - DAY

Peter the Faun runs through the forest, playing an annoying tune.
The large bird flies over head, swerving in and out of the trees, chasing him.
It swoops down, trying to snatch him up with its talons.
Peter the Faun ducks out of the way.

EXT. TREE TOP - DAY

Leah pulls herself up to the top of the tree and onto the large nest, gasping for air.

FRANCIS
Finally! I was nearly bird food, doncha know!

LEAH
How about a, "Nice to see you? Thanks for saving my life?"

FRANCIS
Can't be arsed, dearie. Can't be arsed. Let's go!

Leah turns around and Francis pounces onto her back. She stagger.

LEAH
What are you doing?

FRANCIS
I can't climb down meself!

LEAH
You're a frog!

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
She's coming back! Hurry!
FRANCIS
It's yer fault!

LEAH
How?! 

The large bird appears, squawking.

Leah stumbles back from fright, bumping into one of the large eggs.

It rolls to the edge of the nest and then falls.

With a high pitched roar, the large bird charges Leah, slamming into her, knocking her off the top of the tree, tumbling to the earth far below.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Leah lays in a hospital bed, her eyes slowly open.

Nancy sits in a chair beside the bed, holding her hand.

Leah looks around, confused.

LEAH
(groggy)
Where am I?

NANCY
The hospital, sweetie.

Leah rubs her eyes with a groan.

LEAH
Why couldn't you just let me sleep?

NANCY
No mother could.

LEAH
When did you decide to take an interest in being my mother again? Is it because I used up all your pills?

This cuts Nancy, but she pushes through it.

NANCY
I know I haven't been the best mother lately -
LEAH
I can't even remember the last time we did something together. The last time you didn't have a drink in your hand or pills in your mouth.

NANCY
I remember. Leah looks at her mother, surprised — waiting for an explanation.

NANCY
The fair was in town a few years ago. I remember you had gotten sick. It was the last weekend it was going to be there and you insisted you had to go. I told you no so many times but you cried and pouted and insisted — so I took you. Matt met us there. Do you remember?

LEAH
Before he moved in with us and showed us what he really is.

NANCY
We were there maybe an hour. It was chilly out. You kept coughing and sneezing. I knew you were miserable and running a fever — but you insisted you were having a great time.

LEAH
Of course I was. I was at the fair.

NANCY
You wanted a gold fish. The three of us stood there for an hour trying to sink a ball into one of those little bowls. When Matt finally got one in, you fell to the ground from your fever and we had to take you home. But you got your fish.

LEAH
Probably the only decent thing he's ever done for me.
Nancy takes Leah by the hand.

NANCY
I do love you, Leah. Very much. I never want to see you hurt. I never want you to end up like me. Afraid and pathetic and — useless.

LEAH
You don't have to be that way. We can leave. Tonight. We can just get in the car and drive far away, just you and me. It'll be like it was.

A tear steams down Nancy's face.

NANCY
We'd never make it. This is where I have to stay. I made my choices and I'm okay with that. But you promise me something.

LEAH
What?

NANCY
As soon as you can, you get away. Run as far and fast as you can. Don't look back.

LEAH
I'll take you with me.

NANCY
I can't leave Matt. Through everything, I do love him.

LEAH
How can you love something like that?

Nancy leans over her daughter and kisses her on the forehead.

NANCY
You need to rest. I'll be right here.
With a heavy sigh, Leah nods her head and closes her eyes, drifting away.

TIME LAPSE

It's much later in the night.

Leah once again opens her eyes. She looks over to Nancy - asleep.

From somewhere in the hospital, Leah hears the faint sound of a flute being played. She perks her ears, listening intently.

She looks out into the hallway.

Ashrah glides past the door, glancing into her room before moving on.

Leah slowly sits up in bed.

LEAH
(whispered)
Hello?

Leah pulls the IV out of her arms and slowly climbs out of bed, stumbling as she tries to find her balance, still groggy and light-headed.

She steps out into the hall to see a trail of black feathers skittered down the hall. She follows them.

LEAH
(whispered)
Is someone here?

Leah continues stumbling down the hallway, gripping the wall for extra support.

The music from the flute grows louder the further she goes.

She stops dead as she rounds the corner - Ashrah is floating above a young CHILD, flapping his wings as the child sleeps.

LEAH
Who are you? What do you want?

Ashrah turns and looks at her, his red eyes burning deep into her soul.

Fear grips Leah and she slowly begins to back up - right into Dr. Samson.
DR. SAMSON
What are you doing out of bed?

Leah turns around and faces the doc, startled.

LEAH
Don't you see -

Leah turns to point to the Child sleeping in the bed, but there's no Ashrah.

DR. SAMSON
You need to be resting, Leah. Come, let me help you back to your room.

LEAH
No, you don't understand. It was right there. You didn't see it?

DR. SAMSON
You're just a little out of you. Some more rest and you'll be fine.

LEAH
(quietly)
He was there again. I know he was.

INT. NANCY'S CAR - DAY

It is now morning and Nancy and Leah are heading back home.

NANCY
Don't ever try anything like this again, Leah. You're too important to just throw yourself away on pills.

LEAH
I could say the same to you.

NANCY
I need them. I have a prescription for them.

LEAH
Right. Got yourself topped off while you were at the hospital, did you?

Nancy looks at her daughter.
LEAH
A whole night sober. You must really be feeling it, huh?

NANCY
Can't we just have a nice quiet ride together?

LEAH
Can't you just stop taking them?

NANCY
You know how I hurt when I don't have them.

LEAH
It's called addiction. They have classes for it. Maybe you should look into them.

NANCY
Maybe you should remember your place, Leah. I get it, you're concerned. I'm an adult. I'm your mother. You do as I say, not as I do. Period.

LEAH
Moodiness is kicking in, I see.

NANCY
Hush.

The two sit in silence for a few moments. Leah is clearly angry. The silence doesn't last long.

LEAH
I thought maybe this would have woken you up. I guess not.

NANCY
You don't get to do that.

LEAH
Do what?

NANCY
What you're trying to do. Just no. Stop.

LEAH
'kay.
The silence continues.

NANCY
School tomorrow.

LEAH
'kay.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY
Leah and Nancy step inside the house.
Matt looks up from the couch at them, a beer in his hand.

MATT
Hey! The suicidal pill-popper returns! How'd it feel to be your mother for a day?

Leah just glares at Matt, who begins to chuckle.

MATT
Did you really need MORE attention, Leah?

LEAH
No.

MATT
So you really were trying to kill yourself? How sweet. And pathetic.

LEAH
I'm going to sleep.

Leah begins to climb up the stairs.

MATT
Next time try using a razor blade! It's a more sure-fire way to get the job done!

Nancy glares at Matt.

MATT
What? If she hates her life so much, who am I to stop her from tapping out? I'm being "supportive."

NANCY
Whatever, Matt.
Nancy storms past Matt and heads to the kitchen.

Matt chuckles yet again.

MATT
That's right! Wouldn't want to miss a dose! Maybe I'll get lucky and you'll both end up offing yourselves.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Leah sits in class, doodling on her paper.

She looks across the room to see James looking back at her.

Their eyes meet. He smiles. She blushes, looks away.

The phone in the class rings and the Teacher answers it.

TEACHER
Leah, Mr. Powell in the guidance office wants to see you.

LEAH
Should I take my stuff with me?

TEACHER
You might as well.

Leah scoops up her stuff and exits the classroom.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, GUIDANCE OFFICE - DAY

Leah steps in the doorway of Mr. Powell's office and knocks.

He looks up from his desk with a smile, motioning for her to enter.

MR. POWELL
Come on in, Leah. Close the door behind you, if you would.

Leah closes the door behind her and sits across from Mr. Powell, who maintains his smile.

MR. POWELL
So, how are you doing?

LEAH
I'm fine.
MR. POWELL
Anything going on?

Leah shrugs, shaking her head.

Mr. Powell sighs, finally losing the smile.

MR. POWELL
Look, I'm sure you already know why I've called you down here, Leah. I would appreciate it if you would just level with me. I just want to listen to what you have to say. It's my job to follow up on these kinds of things.

LEAH
What kinds of things?

MR. POWELL
Your hospital visit.

Leah looks down at the floor.

MR. POWELL
You want to talk about it at all?

LEAH
What's there to say?

MR. POWELL
There's plenty to say. The question is whether or not you want to say anything at all.

Leah shrugs again, not looking up at Mr. Powell.

MR. POWELL
If you don't want to talk to me, I can set it up so that there's someone you can talk to. I have friends in the field...but you have to talk, Leah. Someone needs to determine if -

LEAH
If I'm crazy?

MR. POWELL
No! No, of course not, sweetie. That's not it at all. We just all want to know if you're going to try to hurt yourself again. Maybe you might need some more serious (MORE)
MR. POWELL (cont'd)
help. We just want what's best for you - to make sure you're all right.

Leah looks up at Mr. Powell finally.

LEAH
Really? Since when has that mattered to anyone?

Mr. Powell leans forward, listening intently.

MR. POWELL
Do you really feel like nobody cares about you?

LEAH
It doesn't bother me. I do my thing. I have my painting. And my dreams. God, do I dream. I dream some really crazy stuff. I have an entire world in my head. You know the best part about it? I'm wanted there. I'm content there. It's peaceful. I don't have to worry about where the next blow is going to come from or how I'm going to be made fun of that day. I think of my mother as sober and I don't fret over whether or not she's going to make herself comatose.

MR. POWELL
Is that why you took those pills, to prove a point?

LEAH
I guess. Not like it did much good. She's right back to popping them like candy. For the brief time I was in the hospital though, she was almost how she used to be.

MR. POWELL
How did she used to be?

LEAH
She used to be my mother.
Tears stream down Leah's face and she takes a moment to compose herself.

Mr. Powell offers her a tissue, but she declines.

LEAH
I'm fine.

MR. POWELL
Tell me about this dream world.

LEAH
It's nothing. Silly. Every kid has this sort of thing in their mind. I know I'm a bit old for it, but it's all I can do to keep going.

Mr. Powell nods his head, processing and collecting his thoughts.

MR. POWELL
How much time do you spend in your head?

LEAH
This really isn't important, Mr. Powell. I'm missing class. I'm fine, really.

MR. POWELL
You're not fine, Leah. Look at you. I hate to say it, and I don't want you to take it the wrong way, but you're a wreck. Your home environment is not healthy. I have to report it to somebody.

Fear encompasses Leah.

LEAH
No. No, you can't do that. If you bring someone to our house...he'll kill me, Mr. Powell. I know he will. He'll kill us both.

MR. POWELL
Then we need to get the police involved.
LEAH
I've only got two more years and then I can go. Just leave it alone. I shouldn't have said anything.

MR. POWELL
Are you working?

Leah shakes her head.

MR. POWELL
Where can you go without any money? Even college costs to stay on campus. A lot. You can't do it on your own. You need help and your home life clearly isn't fit to do it for you. Let me help you.

LEAH
I appreciate your concern, but just drop it. Please. I'm begging you. You don't know what it's like for me.

MR. POWELL
I'm trying to understand. Talk to me some more.

LEAH
No. I'm done talking. Write me a pass back to class, please.

Leah stands up and extends her hand for Mr. Powell to put a pass in it.

With a sigh, Mr. Powell writes the pass. He holds on to it.

MR. POWELL
It's completely your decision whether or not you talk to me. But I sincerely hope you do, Leah. Sometimes it's helpful just to have someone to talk to, to lift some of that burden.

LEAH
You're not going to report any of this, right?

MR. POWELL
As much as it goes against my better judgment, for you - for now, I won't. You must come see me (MORE)
MR. POWELL (cont'd)
every day, now. If I begin to feel
like things are getting worse or
you're in more danger, I have to
report it. Not only for my job,
but for my own person.

LEAH
I can take care of myself. I've
been doing it long enough now.

Leah grabs the pass out of Mr. Powell's hand and leaves the
guidance office.

Mr. Powell leans back in his chair with a sigh, rubbing his
eyes, thinking about what is right for him to do.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAY - DAY

As Leah walks down the hallway, the bell rings, and STUDENTS
pour out into the hall, making their way to their next
class.

Leah swiftly moves through the ocean of people, untouched,
unnoticed - until she bumps into John.

LEAH
Oh, shit. I'm sorry. I didn't mean
to.

John looks at her, smiling, and again Leah blushes, looking
down.

JOHN
It's all right. I was actually
hoping I would run into you.

LEAH
What? Why?

JOHN
I wanted to ask you to the dance
in a couple weeks.

Leah looks up at John, her eyes wide with shock and
excitement.

LEAH
Why? I mean, you really would want
to go with me?

John chuckles.
JOHN
Yeah, of course. I wouldn't have asked if I didn't.

LEAH
But...why?

JOHN
Why not?

Leah looks down again, shrugging.

JOHN
Is that a no?

LEAH
No! I mean, not no as in I'm not going. No as in yes it's not a no. Er, ah you know. Right? You do know?

JOHN
I'm pretty sure you're trying to say yes?

Leah nods, a huge smile spreading across her face.

JOHN
Great. Can I have your cell number, then? I'll text you later.

LEAH
Oh, I don't have a cell. I can give you my house phone and you can call, but you really don't want to do that.

JOHN
Okay?

LEAH
Nevermind. Why don't you give me your number?

Sure.

John takes Leah by the hand -- she breathes in sharply out of nervousness and excitement -- He writes his number down on her hand.

JOHN
Call me.
With a smile and a wink, John walks away, heading for class.

Leah stands there, beaming. She looks down at the number on her hand and slowly begins walking though the hall in a daze.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL, COURTYARD - DAY

Leah sits on a bench in the courtyard, staring down at her hand, a large smile on her face. She's lost in the moment.

The sound of large beating wings snaps her out of her daze and she looks across the courtyard.

Ashrah flaps above the courtyard, his feathers raining down upon the crowd of STUDENTS, who completely disregard them.

Leah quickly stands up and backs up - tripping herself with the bench and knocking her on her back.

    LEAH
    Ow.

Of course, several students see this and begin to laugh at her.

Leah slowly gets back on her feet and scrambles to flee the courtyard.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY

Leah sits nervously on her bed, looking at her painting on Ashrah. After a few moments, she tosses it to the floor.

Getting up from her bed, she goes to her desk and picks up her phone, looking at her hand and dialing the number on it.

    LEAH
    Hey, it's Leah. You gave me your number at school. Of course you know that, though. Right. Um. I'll just call you later. You must be busy.

Leah hangs up the phone, biting her lip.

She looks around her room at all her paintings and begins to pull them all down, tossing them to the floor.
INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Leah enters the kitchen to see Nancy sitting at the table, drink in hand, bottle of pills on the table in front of her.

LEAH
What's this?

Nancy glances over at Leah, shrugging.

NANCY
Nothing you need to worry about hunny. I just have a headache, is all.

Leah stares at her mother in disbelief, fighting back tears.

LEAH
It's nice to see I mean so much to you, mom.

NANCY
It's not like -

Leah storms out of the kitchen.

NANCY
Leah!

INT. LIVING ROOM

Leah races past Matt and runs out the front door.

MATT
Where the hell does she think she's going?!

EXT. PARK - DAY

Leah sits on a bench at the park, staring out across the water.

She leans her head back, closing her eyes.

In the distance, the sound of a flute.

Leah shakes her head to try to shake the sound away. It grows later.

LEAH
I don't need you anymore.
PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)

But we need you, Leah.

Leah turns her head to see Peter the Faun standing there right before her.

She quickly gets up in shock.

LEAH

You can't be here.

Peter the Faun looks around, perplexed.

PETER THE FAUN

Why not?

LEAH

Because you're not real!

PETER THE FAUN

And yet here I am. I'm as real as you make me, Leah. I exist. You hear me. You see me. Reach out. You'll feel me. We need your help.

Leah shakes her head, backing up.

LEAH

No. None of this is real. None of it. I don't need you. I can live my own life in my own world.

PETER THE FAUN

You've been doing that from the start. The question is, which world is more real, Leah?

LEAH

Just leave me alone. I can't do this anymore. It's time for me to grow up! Just stop it! Go away!

Leah looks around. She's alone at the park. All is quiet.

INT. LEAH'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leah walks through the front door and into the living room, where Matt is sitting in his recliner, apparently waiting for her, a big smile on his face.

MATT

Did you have a good time?
Leah looks down at the floor, shifting her feet.

MATT
Oh, don't worry. I'm not mad. Actually, I haven't been so amused by you in a long time.

LEAH
What did you do?

MATT
Oh, nothing. Somebody called for you today.

Leah's heart drops.

MATT
Oh boy. What did he say his name was? James? Jim?

LEAH
(whispered)
John.

MATT
John! That's it! I can't believe you actually had the balls to talk to a guy, let alone give him your number. The guy must be a total faggot.

LEAH
He's not.

MATT
No? He sounded like it to me. Maybe he's just a fat ass, then. You a chubby chaser, Leah?

LEAH
No.

MATT
You're a sensitive girl. Some guy could just come into your life, walk all over you, and leave you completely broken. What kind of father would I be if I allowed that to happen?

LEAH
You're not my father.
Matt laughs.

MATT
Thank God for that, right? I'd be horribly disappointed. In any case, you don't gotta worry. I don't think he'll be calling again. Ever. In fact, I doubt he'll even talk to you.

Leah's eyes water and she turns away, storming up the stairs.

Matt continues laughing, quite proud of himself.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - NIGHT
Leah throws herself onto her bed, sobbing.
She looks down at the number on her hand and cries harder.

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
Wake up already!

EXT. HOT AIR BALLOON - DAY
Leah opens her eyes and find herself lying in a hot air balloon with Peter the Faun looking down at her.

PETER THE FAUN
Didn't think you were ever going to come around. You're missing all the good parts.

Peter the Faun extends his hand and Leah takes it, climbing to her feet.

She looks out - countless brightly colored hot air balloons fill the sky, as do several multi-colored winged creatures of all sorts - some resembling people.

The sun lights the sky magnificently, causing the balloons to shine brightly. The land far below is bright green and lush with life.

Leah takes everything in, smiling. She turns.

LEAH
How did we get here?
PETER THE FAUN
After your encounter with that horrible bird, Francis and I had to carry you out of the forest. He led us all the way through, bless his heart.

LEAH
Vile frog.

PETER THE FAUN
Come now. You shan't talk about your friends in such a manner. Moving onward, we stuffed you inside this basket and off we rose. It's the fastest way to get across the land, don't you know.

LEAH
But where are we going?

PETER THE FAUN
why do you insist on asking questions for which you already know the answers?

LEAH
Why can't you ever just talk straight with me?

PETER THE FAUN
Is this a question game? I do so enjoy playing games while I'm traveling. Makes the time go much quicker.

LEAH
I want an answer, Peter.

With a sigh, Peter the Faun points out and Leah looks to the direction he's pointing.

In the vast distance shrouded by fog and darkness, is the outlines of a large black castle.

LEAH
And what are we going to do when we get there?

PETER THE FAUN
You'll know what to do when the time comes.
LEAH
Is it a long journey?

PETER THE FAUN
You've got plenty of time.

LEAH
Plenty of time for what?

PETER THE FAUN
To choose. Go on. Best get a move on!

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Leah wakes up in her room, slowly rousing herself.

She looks at the clock - 3:15am.

With a groan, Leah gets out of bed and heads out of her room.

INT. KITCHEN

Leah walks into the kitchen to find Nancy sitting there, several empty bottles of beer in front of her, as well as a bottle of pills.

She's staring into the abyss.

LEAH
This what you've been doing all night? I'm glad you're so on the wagon.

Nancy doesn't say anything, just continues staring out.

LEAH
Mom?

Leah approaches Nancy and touches her shoulder.

LEAH
Mom?

Nancy snaps out of her trance and looks up at Leah, smiling.

NANCY
Oh, it's you. Why are you just getting home so late?
LEAH
I'm not. I've been home since dark.

NANCY
Of course you have. Always such a good girl, Leah.

Leah grabs the bottle of pills from the table.

LEAH
I think you've had enough. Time for bed, Mom.

Leah turns away from her mother and opens the fridge, looking for something to drink.

NANCY
I can't even really remember what life was like before Matt anymore. Isn't that something? Seems like it's always been this way.

Leah stops searching for something to drink and looks at Nancy.

NANCY
Thank God for you. Don't know what I would do if I didn't have you around to keep me sane.

LEAH
Go to bed, Mom.

NANCY
The child parenting the parent. Such a twist.

Nancy gets up from the kitchen table and leaves the kitchen, leaving Leah standing there, baffled.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Leah takes some books out of her locker and crams them into her book bag.

As she slams the locker and looks away, she catches a glimpse of John just down the hall - who spots her and, looking slightly afraid, turns the other way and leaves the hallway.

Tears well up in Leah's eyes and she fights through the sea
of students in the hallway and throws herself inside the girls bathroom.

INT. GIRLS BATHROOM

Leah rushes inside one of the stalls and barricades herself inside, crying quietly to herself.

SOMEONE moves in the stall next to her.

    PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
    No tears, Leah.

Leah's eyes widen, her ears perk up.

    LEAH
    Peter?

    PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
    Leah?

    LEAH
    This is the girls bathroom!

    PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
    So it is!

    LEAH
    You can't be in here.

    PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
    Where? In the girls bathroom? Or in your world? I won't get caught, I promise.

    LEAH
    Leave me alone today.

    PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
    Have you made your decision yet?

    LEAH
    This is not the time or place to talk about that, Peter!

    GIRL (O.S.)
    Why do you keep calling me Peter?
    All I asked was for some toilet paper.

Leah sits there silently, horrified.
GIRL (O.S.)
Hello?

Leah grabs some toilet paper and hands it under the stall to the GIRL sitting next to her.

GIRL (O.S.)
(quietly)
Weirdo.

The toilet next her flushes and the girl apparently exits the stall and the bathroom.

Slowly and quietly, Leah opens her stall door and peeks her head out, looking around to make sure nobody else is in the bathroom.

Shaking her head, Leah steps out from the stall and makes her way to the sink, splashing water on her face.

LEAH
Get it together, Leah.

Leah continues to splash water on her face and glances in the mirror - only to see Ashrah's reflection in the mirror, just outside the window.

Leah quickly looks over at the window - nothing is there.

LEAH
Stop. Just stop it.

Leah storms out of the bathroom.

Outside, a black feather slowly floats past the window.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL COURTYARD - DAY

John makes his way around the courtyard, wandering aimlessly.

Leah runs up to him from behind.

LEAH
John!

John ignores her and keeps walking.

LEAH
John, please wait.

With a sigh, John stops walking and turns to face Leah.
LEAH
I heard that you called last night.

JOHN
I don't want to talk about it. Forget about the dance.

LEAH
Why are you being like this?

JOHN
Your dad told me I was never supposed to talk to you again, and if I called the house looking for you, he'd kick my ass. You seem like a cool girl, but it's not worth it. I'm sorry. I'll see you around.

John walks away from Leah, leaving her standing there, hurt.

INT. LEAH'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leah walks through the door to find Nancy sitting on the couch, waiting for her, a smile on her face for the first time in ages.

LEAH
Where's Matt?

NANCY
They're working late out of town tonight, and since he's going to have to be back first thing in the morning, he's just staying there.

LEAH
It's just us tonight, then?

NANCY
It's just us.

Leah beams.

NANCY
Go get changed. We're going out tonight.

LEAH
Really?
NANCY
Really. Go on!

Leah races upstairs to go get ready.

EXT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - NIGHT

Leah and Nancy sit outside, enjoying ice cream together.

LEAH
That was an amazing movie. Did you like it?

NANCY
It was interesting.

LEAH
You didn't like it, did you? I'm sorry. We could have gone to see something else.

NANCY
Absolutely not. That's what you wanted to see, that's what we saw. It was just different. very artsy, I suppose. How's your ice cream?

LEAH
It's good. Want to try?

Nancy leans forward to take a lick and right as she does, Leah smears the ice cream over her nose, laughing.

Nancy stands up, smiling.

NANCY
That is it!

Nancy chases Leah across the parking lot with her ice cream, both of them laughing and hollering excitedly.

INT. LEAH'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leah and Nancy are curled up on the couch together, candles burning, enjoying the peace and quiet.

NANCY
Today was fun. We should do it more often.

Leah smiles, her eyes starting to tear up.
NANCY
What's wrong? Why are you crying?

LEAH
You don't know how long I've wanted my mother back. For the first time since I can remember, I feel like a normal girl should with her parents.

Leah snuggles up on Nancy, embracing her tightly.

NANCY
You mean the world to me. I don't mean to be a bad mother. I really don't. It's just -

LEAH
Why don't we leave? Right now. We'll pack a few bags and hit the road. He'll never find us and it can be like this all the time.

NANCY
Oh, how I wish sometimes. It's not that simple, Leah. You just don't understand.

LEAH
No, you don't understand how I feel all the time.

NANCY
Believe me, I do, sweetie. I do. I promise I'm going to make a better effort. I promise. I haven't felt so alive in years.

LEAH
You going to keep this promise?

NANCY
Yes.

Nancy wipes the tears from Leah's face.

NANCY
Come on, time for bed. School in the morning.

LEAH
Can't I stay home with you?
NANCY
School's important. At least
tomorrow is Friday! Come on. Off
to bed.

Leah kisses her mom on the cheek and stands up.

LEAH
I love you, mommy.

NANCY
Love you too, princess.

Leah makes her way upstairs to her room.

After a moment, Nancy opens up her purse and takes out her bottle of pills.

EXT. LABYRINTH ENTRANCE - DAY

Leah and Peter the Faun stand before the entrance of a large labyrinth.

The large black castle looms ahead in the distance.

PETER THE FAUN
Closer still every day. In fact, we're nearly there, as long as we can make it through here. That shouldn't be a problem for you, of course. You do know the way.

Leah looks at the challenge ahead.

LEAH
Say I do know how to get through, then what? What happens then? We go to this castle and what? Beat the bad guy?

PETER THE FAUN
I always knew you had the answers inside. now you're beginning to understand.

LEAH
I understand nothing. Why is this even hear? Does it even matter?

Peter the Faun is taken aback.
PETER THE FAUN
We're all very disappointed to hear you say that.

LEAH
That's just tough, isn't it? I can't be expected to fix everything. You an do this yourselves.

PETER THE FAUN
And how, dear Leah, if I may be so bold, do you expect us to do that? This is your creation. It is your undoing.

Leah looks past the labyrinth to the looming black castle.

LEAH
It doesn't seem so bad. Why not let it be?

Peter the Faun picks up his flute and plays a quick, sharp tune.

PETER THE FAUN
Prepare yourself.

LEAH
For?

With a brash neigh, a flying horse, SERENITY dives down from the sky, landing with a soft thud, wings flapping brazenly.

LEAH
Whoa.

PETER THE FAUN
You refuse to acknowledge the darkness you've allowed to manifest here Climb on.

LEAH
Is it safe?

Serenity looks to Peter the Faun.

SERENITY
I have no time for her games, faun. What you ask of me is dangerous and if she does not trust me, I will not waste the effort.
PETER THE FAUN
No, no. Of course not. She trusts you, Serenity.

Peter the Faun turns back to Leah, smiling.

PETER THE FAUN
It's perfectly safe, I assure you. I'll be waiting right here for your return. I can't make it through the maze without you, after all.

LEAH
You're not coming?

PETER THE FAUN
Serenity is a proud beast. It is enough shame for her to carry even one passenger.

With some hesitation, Leah slowly approaches Serenity.

LEAH
It's lovely to meet you.

Leah bows her head.

SERENITY
I'm a Pegasus, not a hippogryph. Climb on and let's get this over with.

Peter the Faun helps Leah climb on to Serenity.

PETER THE FAUN
Go easy on her.

SERENITY
Hold on tight, little girl.

Serenity bucks, then takes off running.

Leah graps her as tightly as she can.

With a few flaps of her wings, Serenity soars into the air.
EXT. SKYLINE - DAY

Serenity soars through the sky, Leah holding on tight.

Up, up, and away, zooming past the black castle and cruises over the land beyond.

SERENITY
Look down and see. What once was a bright, lush world is now a place of darkness and decay - spreading like wild fire.

Leah looks down at the world below, shrouded in shadow and fog - virtually a desert, everything is dead and crumbling.

Thunder roars, rain starts to pour. The wind howls.

LEAH
What's happened? Where's it coming from?

SERENITY
It pours from that castle - where the castle came from, only you can answer that. And only you can fix what's been done before it's too late.

Serenity circles around, heading back towards the castle.

Lightning cracks, thunder rumbles.

EXT. LABYRINTH ENTRANCE - DAY

Serenity lands gracefully and Leah climbs off of her, with Peter the Faun's help.

PETER THE FAUN
Now you must understand the gravity of our situation.

SERENITY
I hope you're not wasting time with her, Peter. I'll do nothing further.

Serenity gallops off and launches herself into the night sky, heading away from the black castle.

Leah looks to Peter the Faun, who motions to the labyrinth.
PETER THE FAUN
Shall we begin, love?

LEAH
Actually, I don't think that will be needed.

Leah shifts her feet uncomfortably.

PETER THE FAUN
Leah?

LEAH
This is all going to go away now. Things will go back to the way they were. Better, even.

Peter the Faun motions to the labyrinth.

PETER THE FAUN
This is the only way.

LEAH
I won't be back, Peter. Things are better now. This...darkness...it'll all be gone. This isn't my life. This can't be my life. I need to live in the real world, where I'm needed. Where I'm supposed to be.

PETER THE FAUN
You're needed here. By your logic, which doesn't all together make much sense, you're supposed to stay here.

LEAH
I'm going, Peter. I promise you, this will all be gone. I just can't stay here.

PETER THE FAUN
Don't you understand? There is no "here" without you.

LEAH
You'll live on in my paintings. I'll be watching.

Leah moves forward and kisses Peter the Faun on the cheek, a tear running down her face.
LEAH
Thanks for always being there when I needed you.

PETER THE FAUN
I'm always here. Need has nothing to do with it.

Leah looks into Peter the Faun's eyes and smiles.

LEAH
Goodbye, Peter the Faun.

Leah turns and begins to walk away.

PETER THE FAUN
If things were really fixed, this castle wouldn't be standing here before me!

LEAH
(calling back)
Give it time!

PETER THE FAUN
(to himself)
We're running out of that.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY
Leah wakes up in her bed, smiling.

The sun is already out. Birds are chirping outside. It's going to be a beautiful day.

INT. KITCHEN
Leah enters the kitchen, dressed and ready for school.

Nancy is already up and about, cooking something on the stove.

LEAH
Morning.

Nancy turns and greets Leah with a smile.

NANCY
Good morning. I'm making eggs.

LEAH
I don't eat eggs, mom.
Since when?

Since I decided I was against the slaughter of little baby chickens. This happened years ago.

(frowning)
Oh. Guess I forgot.

Leah approaches her mom and kisses her on the cheek.

The gesture is still appreciated, mom.

Nancy smiles again.

Leah turns to leave.

I'll be late if I eat, anyway. Think of something for us to do this weekend!

Okay! Bye!

Bye!

Nancy continues to smiles for a moment longer, then looks at the clock.

Her smile fads and she takes the pan of eggs and throws it into the sink.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE OFFICE - DAY

Leah sits across from Mr. Powell, beaming.

You should see her, Mr. P. It's like she's my mother again. The way she used to be. I hadn't seen her smile in years and she's smiley and happy and we're going to keep doing stuff. We're doing something this weekend. I think she's finally snapped out of it.
Mr. Powell smiles.

MR. POWELL
That's really excellent news, Leah. I can't tell you how much it please me to hear that.

Leah's smile fades.

LEAH
Why do I feel a "but" coming on?

MR. POWELL
I just...don't want you to get too excited just yet. These transitions take time. Change is never fast and it's never easy. She'd probably going to have a few more relapses. She'll have her good days and her bad days. You need to expect that and not get too bummed out when they happen.

LEAH
No, I know. I'm not going to. It's just...

MR. POWELL
I know, it's an exciting thing. You've been waiting for this for a long time, haven't you?

Leah nods her head, then begins fidgeting with her hands.

LEAH
Maybe now she'll finally see that she needs to leave Matt. She'll see that she can do it. she doesn't need him. We'll have each other and we'll do things on our own.

MR. POWELL
My fingers are crossed for you, Leah. They really are. However, I think your mother is going to need a lot of help to do that. Outside help. Maybe she should see someone.

LEAH
My mom's not crazy, Mr. Powell. She doesn't need to see anyone.
MR. POWELL
I've never said that word to you. You see me. Does that make you crazy? I don't think so. Sometimes people just need someone on the outside to talk to. It's easier to have your eyes opened when there's another person helping you do it.

LEAH
Can't I do that?

MR. POWELL
Doesn't really work that way. Not only are you her daughter, but you've been going through all of this abuse and trauma with her. She sees you as biased, whether she means to or not.

LEAH
I guess I can understand that.

MR. POWELL
We'll talk more about that a little later down the road. In the mean time, I'm just glad you had such a great time with your mother. Here's to a great weekend with her, as well!

Mr. Powell and Leah both smile brightly at one another.

EXT. LEAH'S HOUSE - DAY
Leah walks up the sidewalk to her house - Matt's vehicle is in the driveway.
From outside, Matt can be heard shouting.

LEAH
Oh, no.

Leah slowly and cautiously makes her way up to the front door.

INT. LEAH'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY
Leah walks into the living room.
Matt is standing over Nancy - who has a shiner - screaming.
MATT
I mean, really. That's really cool. I'm out busting my dick to support your lazy, good for nothing as and your equally useless daughter, and you're out having a grand old time with MY money!

NANCY
I - I just thought -

MATT
There's the problem! You "THOUGHT!" You're too stupid to think!

LEAH
She's not stupid, Matt.

Matt turns around at Leah, practically snarling.

MATT
There you are! I've been waiting for you. You put her up to it, didn't you? Just one more way for you to piss me off, right?

Leah doesn't say anything, her courage gone.

MATT
Got nothing to say? I bet you had plenty to say when you were filling her head with ideas on how to blow my money.

LEAH
I'm going to my room.

Leah heads for the stairs.

MATT
Yeah, you just wait up there for me. I'll up be up to take care of you after I finish with this slug down here.

Leah climbs the stairs, trying to hold back the tears so Matt doesn't see her cry.
INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM

Leah curls up into a ball on her bed, burying her face in her pillow and gripping a stuffed animal tightly.

TIME LAPSE

Leah peeks her head out from under the pillow - listening. The house is unnaturally quiet.

Leah gets off her bed and slowly walks out of her room.

INT. HALLWAY

Leah creeps down the hallway.

The door to her parents room is partially closed, the sounds of Matt snoring emanating from them.

Leah heads for the stairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Nancy is sitting up on the couch, asleep.

Leah makes her way over to her, curling up next to her.

LEAH
You don't have to stay down here, you know. You can come up to my room with me.

Nancy doesn't respond.

Leah sits up and examines her mom - then notices the empty bottle of pills in Nancy's hand as well as the empty beer bottles on the coffee table.

LEAH
Mom?

Leah shakes Nancy.

LEAH
Mommy? Wake up.

Leah shakes Nancy more violently, then checks her pulse.

LEAH
MATT!
INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Leah and Matt sit across from each other in the waiting room. Leah's is devastated, Matt is pissed.

MATT
I can't believe you dragged me out of bed for this.

LEAH
She overdosed, Matt. What was I supposed to do?

MATT
Let the junky choke to death on her own puke.

LEAH
It's your fault she's like this. You did it!

MATT
Excuse me?

Leah has finally found her nerve. She stands, fuming.

LEAH
You heard me. Your constant abuse and berating. That's why she's a "junky" as you call it. I hope you're proud! It takes a real big man to kick around a couple of girls! Your daddy really raised you right, huh? Such a catch you turned out to be!

Matt stands up in a rage, then examines his surroundings, catching himself.

MATT
You're real tough while there's all these people around, aren't you? Finally found your voice.

Matt leans in real close, lowering his voice to a whisper.

MATT
We'll see how tough you are once you get home. And good luck getting there. I'm not driving you.

Matt gets out of Leah's face and heads for the door.
MATT
I'm out of here. Don't bother to call if she wakes up.

Matt leaves and Leah sits back down in her seat.

Dr. Samson steps into the waiting room.

DR. SAMSON
Hello again, Leah.

Leah stands up.

LEAH
How is she? Can I see her?

DR. SAMSON
I've got her vitals stable, but beyond that, I can't do much else. We just have to wait. Where's your dad?

LEAH
That scumbag is not my dad. It's just me.

DR. SAMSON
You can see her. Come on.

Leah follows Dr. Samson out of the waiting room.

INT. NANCY'S ROOM

Dr. Samson ushers Leah into the room and exits, closing the door behind him.

Leah makes her way to Nancy, hooked up to IV's and sleep, grips her hand, crying.

LEAH
We were supposed to run away together. Everything was going to be so much better. We can't do that if you don't wake up.

Nancy doesn't stir. Her monitors don't fluctuate.

LEAH
You're in your own world now though, aren't you?

Leah leans down and kisses her mother's hand, a tear running down onto it.
LEAH
I love you, mommy. Be seeing you.

Leah leaves.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Leah walks through the hospital doors, into the night.

With a deep breath, she steps out onto the street -- right into traffic.

EXT. LABYRINTH ENTRANCE - DAY

Peter the Faun stands right in front of the entrance, just staring at it.

Leah approaches him from behind. He doesn't turn to greet her.

PETER THE FAUN
I knew you'd come back.

LEAH
Is there ever anything you don't know?

PETER THE FAUN
Not unless you really don't want me to.

Leah gently touches Peter the Faun's shoulder.

LEAH
What do you say, old friend? One last adventure?

Peter the Faun turns, smiles.

PETER THE FAUN
Last adventure? My dear, this is simply our new beginning.

The two pass through the gates leading into the labyrinth.

INT. LABYRINTH - DAY

Leah and Peter the Faun make their way through the labyrinth, Leah leading with hardly the slightest bit of hesitation.
LEAH
It's strange. I've never been here before and yet...I feel like I know the way.

PETER THE FAUN
As it very well should be. Is this not a fabrication of your very own imagination? Everything here is your creation, whether you're aware of it or not.

LEAH
I guess.

The two wind through the twisted, curving passages, surrounded by sand, stone, and cobwebs.

The place grows dim as the darkness looms overhead. Lightning flashes.

PETER THE FAUN
The deeper we get, the more the darkness will pervade.

LEAH
There's no going back, Peter.

PETER THE FAUN
No. Indeed not.

Finally, they reach the end of the labyrinth, the gate to the castle just up ahead.

Standing guard in front of that gate - a hulking MINOTAUR.

PETER THE FAUN
Best if you let me do the talking.

Leah and Peter the Faun slowly approach the Minotaur, and Peter the Faun graciously bows.

He looks over to Leah.

PETER THE FAUN
(whispered)
Bow!

With a sigh, Leah bows.

MINOTAUR
State your business.
Leah and Peter the Faun straighten up.

PETER THE FAUN
Good sir, we have come to pay your master a visit.

MINOTAUR
The master isn't seeing visitors.

PETER THE FAUN
Be that as it may, we've come a long way and would be very appreciative if -

MINOTAUR
I know it is no easy task to make it this far and for that I commend you. However, the master is not taking visitors and I must ask you to turn around and go back from where you came.

LEAH
No.

The Minotaur grunts, becoming angry.

MINOTAUR
Do not test my patience. Faun, control your mortal while she is a guest in our world.

LEAH
A guest in your world? A guest? In your world? I created this entire world. I am the master. It is YOU that is a guest in MY world. You and your master. And you have over stayed your welcome. Now stand aside.

Peter the Faun stands there, both flabbergasted and amused.

The Minotaur raises his spiked mace.

MINOTAUR
Now you've -

LEAH
MOVE!

With the blast of Leah's voice, the Minotaur goes flying through the gate and shatters on the ground like glass.
She stands there, shocked.

PETER THE FAUN
You're beginning to understand.

The sky grows pitch black and the lightning cracks, the wind picking up.

PETER THE FAUN
We mustn't tarry! There's not much time left!

INT. BLACK CASTLE - DAY

Leah and Peter the Faun step inside the Black Castle, its entrance hall standing before them.

The ceiling reaches high. The floors decorated with all kinds of dark, twisted furniture. The walls are covered with Gothic art. The main staircase lies straight ahead of them, twisting and curving its way to the main door.

PETER THE FAUN
It was so beautiful, once.

LEAH
This has always been here?

PETER THE FAUN
do you not recall? 'Twas one of your first creations.

Leah thinks hard.

LEAH
No. I have no memory of this place.

PETER THE FAUN
You're hiding it.

Leah slowly begins to back away, fear gripping her.

LEAH
I can't do this. we shouldn't have come here. We need to go. We have to get out of here. Now.

Leah turns towards the door and pulls on it. It doesn't budge.
PETER THE FAUN
Do not be afraid. You're stronger than this. Always remember how strong you are, Leah. We can do this. YOU can do this.

Leah pulls on the door one final time before collapsing to the floor, crying.

LEAH
I'm not, Peter. I try so hard all the time to prove that I am and that I can do anything I put my mind to, but I'm tired. I'm tired of lying to myself. I'm tired of hiding and just being okay.

Peter the Faun crouches next to Leah and places a comforting hand on her shoulder.

PETER THE FAUN
You've allowed yourself to come this far. Don't stop yourself now. Don't let the darkness win.

Leah sits there quietly, lost in thought.

PETER THE FAUN
Come on, Leah. we have to keep moving. On your feet!

Peter the Faun stands up and offers Leah his hand. After a moment of hesitation, she takes it and is pulled back up.

LEAH
Lead the way.

Peter the Faun and Leah climb the twisted stairs.

The main door bursts open and out jumps Matt, only he's become a twisted GOBLIN creature.

Leah stops dead, fear once again taking her.

GOBLIN MATT
And where do you think you're going, little girl? We're not taking any visitors!

Peter the Faun looks at Leah, who just stares, terror-stricken.
GOBLIN MATT
What's the matter, girl? cat got your tongue? Shall I rip it out of your mouth for you?

Matt cackles. It's an ugly sound.

PETER THE FAUN
Stand aside, goblin!

GOBLIN MATT
Silence, Faun, or I'll tear your legs off and have them for stew. You have no power here.

Peter the Faun's legs begin to quiver and Matt laughs again. He looks to Leah.

GOBLIN MATT
Isn't this cute. You've come all this way just to turn around. All these creature resting all their hopes and dreams on you, and what do you do? You disappoint. People shall always remember Leah, the big disappointment! No go! I'll not warn you again!

Anger wells up inside Leah. She tightens her fists.

GOBLIN MATT
Aw, look. She's getting upset. Is the little baby going to cry? Squirt out a few tears. It's been so long since I've tasted them!

He cackles.

LEAH
I'm not afraid of you.

Matt stops laughing.

GOBLIN MATT
What did you say?

LEAH
I'm not afraid of you!

GOBLIN MATT
I'll show you fear, girl!

With a snarl, Goblin Matt rushes forward.
NO!!

The word is roared as if from a lion - the room shaking from it.

Goblin Matt covers his ears and cries out, suddenly terrified - and begins shrinking. Down, down, down. To the size of a baby, sitting there crying.

Peter the Faun looks at Leah, smiling proudly.

PETER THE FAUN
I knew you would find the strength inside you.

LEAH
I will fear no more.

PETER THE FAUN
Your true test lies just beyond that door.

LEAH
Let's go.

Leah presses forward, but Peter the faun does not move. She looks back, puzzled.

LEAH
Aren't you coming?

Peter the Faun shakes his head, smiling.

LEAH
Why not?

PETER THE FAUN
It's not my place. This you must do on your own. You don't need me anymore.

LEAH
But I want you with me.

PETER THE FAUN
I apologize but that's just not how it's going to be. I'm so proud of you, Leah. Never forget how strong you truly are.
LEAH
Will I see you after?

Peter the Faun smiles, but it is apparent he's holding back tears. He shrugs.

PETER THE FAUN
Only time will tell. Get in there, Leah. Save this world. Your world.

LEAH
How will I know what to do?

PETER THE FAUN
You'll know.

Leah moves towards Peter the Faun, leans in, and kisses his cheek. A tear streams down his face.

LEAH
Farewell, Peter the Faun. Can I ask of you one final thing?

PETER THE FAUN
Of course, my lady.

LEAH
Play me a song.

Peter the faun smiles and picks up his flute. He plays. Soft. Beautiful. Somber.

Leah turns to the door and closes her eyes, preparing herself with the sound of Peter the Faun's swan song.

With a deep breath, eyes still closed, Leah opens the doors and walks through them.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

The throne room is a large, dome-like room with a huge glass window overlooking the land. In the center sits a black, spiny pedestal, a dark crystal resting on top. In the back sits a large black throne.

Leah enters, taking everything in.

A FIGURE stands at the crystal pedestal, their back to Leah.

Ashrah swoops down from the ceiling, landing with quiet grace.
Leah backs up a bit.

FIGURE
I must admit, I didn't think you'd come this far. Ashrah disagreed with me, of course.

The Figure's voice is female with just the slightest tinge of darkness behind it, but it sounds quite familiar...

LEAH
Ashrah?

Ashrah expands his wings, identifying himself.

FIGURE
I thought you'd be brighter.

The Figure turns, revealing herself to be DARK LEAH - a carbon copy of Leah, although much paler, bleaker, dark.

DARK LEAH
Although I suppose I am the best of you, after all. I shouldn't expect much.

Leah's eyes widen, her chin trembling.

LEAH
Wh - Who are you?

DARK LEAH
I'm you. You're me. One in the same. Only not.

Dark Leah makes her way over to Leah, circling her slowly, taking her in.

DARK LEAH
All the pain and hate and sadness and guilt that lives inside you, eating away at your soul like a pestilence - gave birth to me. You created me, Leah.

LEAH
You're the one poisoning this place.

DARK LEAH
YOU'RE the one that has poisoned this place. I'm simply the embodiment of what's inside you.

(MORE)
DARK LEAH (cont'd)
Look in a mirror, you know it to be so.

LEAH
I didn't want this to happen...

DARK LEAH
Tut! Come.

Dark Leah offers her hand and after some hesitation, Leah takes it.

Dark Leah leads Leah over to the crystal.

Ashrah follows.

DARK LEAH
Have you any idea what this is?

LEAH
No.

DARK LEAH
This is the heart of it all. The power source that keeps all of this running. The hand of God, if you will. And if this is the hand of God, the one who controls it, is God.

Leah reaches out to touch it, but it shocked.

DARK LEAH
Tut. It is not yours to touch. Not anymore. You handed it over to me long ago, Leah.

LEAH
You're killing it.

DARK LEAH
You've killed it, remember?

LEAH
No.

DARK LEAH
Yes. Accept it.

LEAH
It's not too late to fix.
Dark Leah laughs.

**DARK LEAH**
If only that were true.

Dark Leah walks away from the crystal and stands in front of the huge window, looking out over the land. The sky black, spreading as far as the eye can see.

**DARK LEAH**
Isn't it gorgeous?

Leah doesn't move. She just stands there, staring at the dark crystal.

Dark Leah turns to Leah.

**DARK LEAH**
Still in denial? Go ahead, keep stuffing it deep down inside you. Let it consume you, it's delicious!

Leah looks up at Dark Leah, a tear rolling down her cheek.

**LEAH**
I forgive you.

Dark Leah shakes her head as if fighting nausea.

**DARK LEAH**
You're talking foolish now.

Dark Leah takes a few steps towards Leah.

**LEAH**
I can't keep it inside anymore.

Dark Leah stumbles as she walks to Leah, clutching her stomach as if sick. She groans.

**DARK LEAH**
Ashrah, take her away.

Ashrah takes off into the air, but does not grab Leah. He soars towards the large window.

**DARK LEAH**
What are you doing, you stupid bird!
SMASH!

Ashrah smashes through, disappearing into the darkness.

LEAH
Come here. I have something for you.

Dark Leah wretches.

Leah takes the final few steps towards her and then wraps her arms around her, embracing her tightly.

Dark Leah cries out.

LEAH
Let it go. Let it all go. Forgiveness. Forgiveness is what we need. I love you.

Dark Leah begins to cry black tears.

The wind begins to roars, blowing violently through the broken window.

Slowly, Dark Leah brings her arms up - and returns the hug.

In a brilliant flash of light, the two become one. All is still.

Leah stands there, alone, collecting herself. She looks around. The darkness is still looming outside.

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
(whispered)
You'll know what to do.

Leah looks at the dark crystal and slowly walks up to it.

She slowly reaches out and touches it - it begins to glow. Brighter, brighter, brighter - BOOM!

BLAST TO WHITE

The blinding white light slowly begins to fade and with that - the darkness is gone.

Leah stands in a throne room no longer dark. The crystal in the center now a bright, beautiful gem.

Leah makes her way to the window and looks out into the land beyond - the sky is blue. The sun is shining brightly. Everything is green and alive. Her world restored. Lush.
Vibrant.

Ashrah flies back inside the window, now a gorgeous white instead of black.

LEAH
It's perfect.

ASHRAH
I knew you'd come if I called. You always said you would.

Leah looks at Ashrah, realization hitting her.

LEAH
You were really there, weren't you? All this time.

Ashrah nods his head humbly.

ASHRAH
You will stay this time?

Leah looks back out the window at all the beauty outside.

LEAH
This is where I belong, isn't it? What more could I need?

NANCY (O.S.)
Leah.

Leah's eyes widen and she turns.

Nancy stands there - no longer beaten. No longer abused. No longer sad or strung out. Just gorgeous and full of life.

Leah smiles brightly and the entire room seems to brighten with it.

FADE OUT.