

Jem & I
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EXT. LAKE PARSIPANONG - NEW JERSEY - DAY

SUMMER, LATE 90S.

13-year-old FRATERNAL TWIN SIBLINGS, JEMMA and ISAAC MANNING, lounge in matching lawn chairs overlooking the lake.

Despite sharing about 50% of their DNA, Jemma and Isaac couldn't be more different. Jemma is the type of girl who'd answer, "The Ramones" when asked if she prefers NSYNC or Backstreet Boys, while Isaac carries the confident swagger of a middle school jock ready to conquer high school. Yet, despite their differences, they're still two peas in a pod.

Out on the lake, a group of KIDS (various ages) swim and play in the murky water, while Jemma and Issac watch in disgust.

JEMMA

Ugh. I can't believe people are actually swimming.

ISAAC

Seriously. I'd rather deep dive into a toilet. At least those get cleaned once in a while...

Jemma snickers.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

You know they're all gonna get pink eye. Or gangrene.

JEMMA

Ringworm.

ISAAC

Scabies.

JEMMA

Hepatitis.

Isaac thinks about this.

ISAAC

Can you get hepatitis from dirty lake water though? I thought it had to be from people. Or poop.

JEMMA

What?

ISAAC
(shrugs)
I don't know.

Typical preteen banter.

JEMMA
Why did we even come here?

ISAAC
Because Mom didn't want to drive us
all the way down to Belmar?

They both sigh. Then Isaac smirks, like he's got a secret.

ISAAC
Hey. Did you know that when people
from New York commit crimes, they dump
the evidence in the Jersey Shore?
(snorts)
Assholes.

JEMMA
Who told you that??

ISAAC
Max.

His smirk widens. Jemma rolls her eyes.

JEMMA
Who told *him* that?

ISAAC
His brother goes to college in Long
Island, and I guess that's what they
say to people from Jersey.

JEMMA
Rude.

ISAAC
Seriously. They picked the wrong place
to dump.

He gestures towards the muddy lake. Jemma snort-giggles and playfully socks him on the shoulder. He swats her back. They start play fighting good-naturedly, like close-knit siblings do.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAKE PARSIPANONG - PRESENT DAY

LATE WINTER.

ADULT JEMMA, now in her early 40s, standing alone, staring out onto the lake. This version of Jemma is more restrained and tight-lipped, barely echoing the carefree, expressive spirit of her younger self.

After all this time, the water still has that same murky, muddy hue. Nothing's changed. Except everything.

EXT. MANNING HOME - LATE AFTERNOON

Jemma parks in the driveway and gets out of the car.

She stares up at her childhood home, a rustic, homey colonial. There's a lot of memories here.

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Jemma walks into the kitchen, where her MOTHER, JANETTE (late 60s) stands, over the sink, peeling potatoes. Janette turns around to greet her.

JANETTE

Hi, Jem.

JEMMA

Hey, Mom.

JANETTE

How was the airport? Keith and the kids get on okay?

JEMMA

Yep. Their plane takes off in about an hour.

JANETTE

Great.

They stand in silence for a beat. Janette toys with the potato peeler in her hands.

JEMMA

(looks around)

Wow. Still feels weird being back here.

JANETTE

Yeah. And you know, as much as I love seeing my grandbabies, I'm glad they're not staying here. Not after...you know...

She trails off, unable to finish. Jemma nods.

JEMMA

Yeah. Me too.

More silence. It's heavy, like there's an elephant in the room they're purposely not addressing.

JEMMA (CONT'D)

(changing the subject)

So. Where's Dad?

JANETTE

Oh, I sent him to the store to get some onions.

JEMMA

Making your famous Shepard's Pie?

JANETTE

I mean, it was our Friday night tradition. Plus, it doesn't feel like we're home until the kitchen is open.

She goes back to potato peeling.

JEMMA

Mom...you know you don't have to do all this, right? You can just sit and relax for a while.

Janette sighs.

JANETTE

No, I know. But keeping busy keeps my mind off...other things.

She's fighting to keep it together. Jemma notices.

JEMMA

(sympathetically)

Okay.

They fall back into silence. Jemma takes a seat at the kitchen table. Janette looks over at her, studying her a bit.

JANETTE

Jemma, are you feeling all right? You look a little peaky.

JEMMA

Um...just a little tired, I guess. I haven't been sleeping well lately. Since the funeral... I've just been having some weird dreams.

JANETTE

Why don't you go take a nap? Dinner should be ready in an about an hour.

JEMMA

You sure you don't need help?

JANETTE

(smiles)

Your father will be back soon. I'll put him to work.

INT. MANNING HOME - JEMMA'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Jemma walks into the bedroom she grew up in.

The room is a mosaic of UC SAN DIEGO memorabilia and 90s nostalgia. A BREAKFAST CLUB movie poster hangs on the wall alongside band posters for BRAND NEW, ENVY ON THE COAST, and BRIGHT EYES. Jemma was the quintessential alt teenager.

Her bed, queen-sized with sleek, modern sheets, is the one thing that reflects the grown-up Jemma we know. The rest of the room is a frozen snapshot of a teenage girl's world.

Jemma settles down on the bed but doesn't go to sleep. Instead, she takes her work laptop from the nightstand and opens it. A RAECOM MARKETING company sticker is splayed across the laptop cover.

CUT TO:

Jemma's going through a rebranding strategy for a client, VISTA CONSULTING, when her phone buzzes.

She picks up her phone and swipes: New message from KEITH DUNN (her husband).

KEITH (TEXT)

Plane's taking off. TTYL

Jemma smiles and texts back: *Fly safe with my babies XO.*

She places her phone down and returns to her laptop. Then, a few moments later, she picks her phone back and opens her CALL LOG.

She lingers on two missed calls from ISAAC MANNING from TWO WEEKS AGO. Followed by her ten-second call back to him. **He never called back.**

INT. WOODS - DAY

JEMMA'S POV - MOVING

Running through the woods. The ground is uneven, scattered with rocks and overgrown roots.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

JEMMA'S POV - CONT'D

Cutting a pair of plastic gloves into pieces, over the toilet.

CLOSE ON: THE SHREDDED REMNANTS OF THE GLOVES, AS THEY LAND INTO THE TOILET.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

JEMMA'S POV - CONT'D

Broken ceramic everywhere. Heavy panting. Grabbing a dustpan and sweeping up the pieces.

Tearing apart a piece of newspaper, stained red, into pieces and throwing them into the trash.

INT. MANNING HOME - JEMMA'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - PRESENT

Jemma jerks awake. Someone's knocking at her door. She groans and sits up.

JEMMA
(hoarsely)
Yeah?

JEMMA'S FATHER/LIAM (O.S.)
(outside her door)
Honey. Your mom says dinner's ready.

Jemma sighs and rubs her face with her hands.

JEMMA
I'll be down in a sec.

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - EVENING

Jemma and her parents sit around the kitchen table. Jemma's FATHER, LIAM (around 70ish, going silver) leads the dinner talk.

LIAM
I ran into Bob Henderson at the store earlier. You know, they used to live down the street from us.

JANETTE
Oh, that's right. How is Bob? And how's Maria?

LIAM
He's good. They're good. They moved over to Hillside a few years ago.
(beat)
Anyway, he told me the police found a dead body in the woods a few weeks ago.

JANETTE
What??

Jemma sharply looks up from her plate.

JEMMA
In Briarwood??

LIAM
In Hillside. They found the body on that trail, what's it called, Hidden Crest.

JANETTE
Oh, my goodness. Was it an accident? Murder??

LIAM
Bob says he heard it was ruled an

accident, but I guess you always gotta wonder if something else was going on.

JEMMA

Isn't that trail pretty rocky in some parts? With steep drops? Honestly weird terrain for Jersey...

LIAM

Yep. Hence why they probably thought the guy just fell and hit his head or something.

JANETTE

What a shame. That poor guy.

LIAM

No kidding.

A beat, as everyone processes the information.

JEMMA

Wait. You said it happened a few weeks ago? So, around the same time as...

She trails off. Liam and Janette exchange looks.

LIAM

(realizing)

I didn't even think about that.
Uh...Bob didn't say exactly when but I'm assuming either a few days before or after...

Everyone's quiet for a moment.

JEMMA

I wonder why we didn't hear anything about it till now.

JANETTE

Well, we were all in California.

JEMMA

But Max and Amanda didn't mention anything either when we saw them at the wake.

JANETTE

Oh, honey. I think everyone was pretty wrapped in other things that day. Not

saying this isn't a terrible situation as well, of course--but like your Dad said, the guy coulda just had a bad fall.

LIAM

Yeah, from Bob told me, the locals talked about it for about three days and then everyone moved on. They also got hit with a big snowstorm around the same time so I'm sure it got lost in the fold...

INT. WOODS - DAY

JEMMA'S POV

Heavy panting. Running through the woods.

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - PRESENT

Jemma drops her fork with a clatter. Her parents immediately turn to stare at her.

LIAM

Jemma? You all right?

JEMMA

Yeah. Sorry.

She picks the fork back up, then changes her mind and puts it back down. She's lost her appetite all of a sudden.

JEMMA (CONT'D)

Did Bob know who the guy was? Was he a local?

LIAM

He didn't say.

(shakes his head)

Still. A dead body in the woods. You always think that stuff never happens in real life, only in the movies...

INT. MANNING HOME - JEMMA'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jemma, showered and changed into pajamas, sits in bed, laptop in front of her.

Her phone goes off. Incoming FACETIME request from Keith. Jemma picks up. We're introduced to Keith (40s, clean-cut)

over video.

KEITH (FACETIME)
We just got home.

JEMMA
How was the flight?

KEITH (FACETIME)
Smooth but long. I'm beat.

JEMMA
I'll bet. How were the kids?

KEITH (FACETIME)
Sponsored by Bluey and iPad.

JEMMA
(chuckles)
Remind me to send her a thank-you
note.

KEITH (FACETIME)
Seriously. That damn cartoon dog knows
what she's doing.

In the background, we can hear Jemma's kids laughing and
running around.

JEMMA (FACETIME)
Can I see them? Say good night?

KEITH (FACETIME)
Yeah.
(calls out)
Kids! Come say hi to Mommy!

Over Facetime, the sound of pitter patter feet and children
screaming and giggling. A few moments later, Keith is joined
by their three adorable kids: MORGAN (7), SKYLAR (9), and
COOPER (5).

MORGAN/SKYLAR/COOPER
(unison)
MOMMY MOMMY MOMMY!!!!

JEMMA
(smiles)
My babies!! I've missed you!

TIME CUT TO:

Jemma's curled up against the pillows, still FaceTiming Keith.

JEMMA

Can you imagine? Just walking through the woods and finding a dead body?

KEITH (FACETIME)

No way. I'd never hike again.

JEMMA

I know. That stuff isn't supposed to happen in real life.

KEITH (FACETIME)

Seriously.

A beat.

KEITH (FACETIME CONT'D)

So. You going to bed soon?

JEMMA

Yeah, I'm just going over the client deck again. You know I have that meeting with Vista on Tuesday.

KEITH (FACETIME)

Oh, yeah. Are you still taking Monday off?

JEMMA

Yeah, I am, but I'm supposed to help Mom get the house organized so the realtor can take pictures for the new listing.

KEITH (FACETIME)

Okay. Just...try and remember to take a break once in a while too.

JEMMA

I know. I will. It's just...I feel like I need to stay busy, otherwise I'll just be stuck in this house with my thoughts.

KEITH (FACETIME)

(sympathetically)

I get it.

JEMMA

I love you. Have a good weekend.

KEITH (FACETIME)

Love you too. Talk later.

JEMMA

Kiss the beans goodnight for me.

She smiles, then blows four kisses at the camera.

EXT. ISAAC'S FUNERAL SERVICE - DAY

Jemma stands with Keith and their kids as Isaac's coffin is lowered into the ground. They're surrounded by family and friends, including Janette and Liam, and Isaac's BEST FRIEND, MAX CHIN (late 30s-early 40s, Asian American), his WIFE AMANDA, and THREE KIDS (Two boys and a girl).

Jemma shifts her gaze across the way...

Standing in the distance, is ADULT ISAAC (same age as Jemma is now) watching them. He has the look of a once confident and charmingly endearing man whose life fell apart in its final moments.

Jemma's eyes go wide as she sees him. Isaac stares silently back at her, his expression unreadable.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

JEMMA'S POV

Bloody hands under a running faucet.

INT. MANNING HOME - JEMMA'S BEDROOM - PRESENT (DAY)

Jemma's eyes fly open as her alarm screams at her from across the room.

She stumbles out of bed and silences her phone.

INT. MANNING HOME - HALLWAY - DAY

Jemma stands in front of Isaac's closed bedroom door. A bulletin board hangs over the door, displaying a sign written in Isaac's teenage handwriting: "CLUB ISAAC!!! VIP ENTRY ONLY." His LACROSSE AND WRESTLING VARSITY LETTERS are pinned on the board beside it.

Jemma can't bring herself to open the door.

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jemma enters the kitchen just in time to hear the tail end of a phone conversation between Janette and her neighbor, ABIGAIL.

JANETTE

*...Thank you so much for looking out.
Glad to hear you're okay. Yeah, yeah,
we'll see you soon. Bye.*

She hangs up. Jemma gives her a questioning look.

JEMMA

What's going on?

Janette sighs and shakes her head.

JANETTE

That was Abigail from next door. There was a wildfire in San Marino last night.

JEMMA

What???

JANETTE

Yep. About 30 houses hit so far. Thankfully, it looks like they've contained it. But South Pasadena is currently on standby evacuation watch.

JEMMA

(exhales)

Oh, no.

JANETTE

Our house is fine.

JEMMA

(stammering)

Keith and the kids--

She fumbles for her phone.

JANETTE

They're fine. He called about an hour ago. Orange County is safe.

Jemma breathes a sigh of relief.

JEMMA

I just woke up I didn't have time to check the news--

JANETTE

Honey, it's okay. I was up early anyways, and I saw the news on my phone. The fire started in the middle of the night. I immediately called Keith, who was also up because of his jet lag. He wanted to call you, but I told him as long as he and the kids were all right, to just let you sleep.

JEMMA

I'm going to text him.

She quickly sends a message to Keith: *Talked to Mom. Glad you guys are safe. Call you later. XO*

JANETTE

Listen, honey. I think your father and I are gonna head back to Pasadena, just for a bit. Check on the house, make sure everything's okay. In case the fire spreads and we need to evacuate.

JEMMA

But if the fires are still going on you shouldn't--

JANETTE

Abby says it's been contained for a few hours; they just haven't extinguished it all yet. Plus, it's just been so windy and with the ongoing drought--

JEMMA

All right. Just be careful. And don't stay at your house, go to my house--

Her phone buzzes. Keith's texted back: *Me too. XO*

JANETTE

Yes, I already planned it out with Keith. Dad and I will stop by our place first, get our things together.

Then we'll head down to your place.
Once everything is settled, we'll come
back to Jersey.

JEMMA
Are you sure?

JANETTE
Yes. I mean, we need to prep the house
for the market...

She trails off. You can hear her pain in her silence.

JEMMA
(swallows)
Okay. I can stay here and hold down
the fort until you get back.

JANETTE
What about your work?

JEMMA
Melanie's given me the okay to work
from home until further notice.

JANETTE
Okay. Then it's settled.

They both fall silent. Then they quickly hug each other.
Janette's crying a bit.

JANETTE
It's just one thing after another...

JEMMA
(hugging her)
I know. But it's going to be okay.
It's going to be okay.

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - FLASHBACK

TEEN JEMMA stands by the mixer, while TEEN ISAAC dumps a vat
of chocolate chips into the mixing bowl. They're both wearing
Christmas themed pajamas.

ISAAC
Come on, let me in on some of that
mixing action!

JEMMA
No way. You can't be trusted.

ISAAC

I don't know what you're talking about.

JEMMA

Dude. You're like a dog. You're just gonna eat all the dough and there'll be nothing left to bake!

Isaac responds by playfully grabbing at the mixer. Jemma blocks his grab; he retaliates by tossing a handful of chocolate chips at her.

JEMMA

Wow. Dick.

She takes her hand off the mixer to flip him off. Isaac mischievously swipes at a chunk of dough at the rim of the bowl. He brings it to his mouth and licks.

ISAAC

Yum.

Despite scolding him, Jemma can't resist and samples some of the dough herself. Pretty soon they're both digging into the bowl with their bare hands.

ISAAC

Look who's a dog now!!!

He dodges as Jemma throws a piece of dough at him. The dough lands on the kitchen floor just as Janette walks in. She surveys the scene before her and shakes her head, sighing in exasperation.

JANETTE

Jemma Lynn and Isaac Michael. What are you doing to my kitchen?!

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - PRESENT

Jemma stands alone in the now empty and quiet kitchen. The room suddenly seems much larger.

INT. MANNING HOME - BATHROOM - LATER

Jemma stands over the sink, washing her hands. While the water runs, she stares up at her reflection in the mirror...

INT. MANNING HOME - BATHROOM - SAME

JEMMA POV

Washing her hands. She looks down at the sink, the water is stained red.

INT. MANNING HOME - BATHROOM - REALITY

Jemma gasps. Looks down at the sink again. Water is clear again. Unnerved, she quickly turns off the faucet. She examines her hands. They're clean.

JEMMA
What the hell?

INT. MANNING HOME - JEMMA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Jemma sits cross-legged on her bed, working on her laptop.

Downstairs, the doorbell rings. She stops typing. The doorbell rings again.

Jemma doesn't move. She's not expecting anyone...

She waits a few moments. The doorbell rings a third time.

Finally, Jemma gets up and cautiously walks out of the room...

INT. MANNING HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Follow as Jemma treads her way down the hall towards the stairs. Past the master bedroom, then Isaac's.

She hovers at the top of the stairs, peering down at the front door.

She nearly trips down the steps as the doorbell rings once more.

JEMMA
Shit!

She grabs the railing to keep her balance. Then she hurries down the stairs to the front door.

INT. MANNING HOME - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Jemma cautiously peers into the peephole:

A WOMAN (30s-40s) stands anxiously on the doorstep, holding a bouquet of lilies.

Jemma doesn't recognize her. But she opens the door anyway.

EXT. MANNING HOME - DOORSTEP - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON:

The woman's surprised expression as she sees Jemma.

WOMAN

Hi. Is this the Manning residence?

JEMMA

Yes, it is. Can I help you?

WOMAN

Oh. Great. Uh, sorry I rang the doorbell so many times. It's just I saw a car in the driveway, and I took an uber all the way from the train station--

(beat)

I'm Camille. Camille James. I'm...I was...*I'm a friend of Isaac's.*

SCREEN BLACK.

INT. MANNING HOME - FRONT DOOR - SAME

Jemma stares blankly at CAMILLE.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

You must be Jemma.

JEMMA

(recovers)

Uh. Yes. Sorry. Hi. Um, Isaac--

CAMILLE

(hurriedly)

--I heard the news from Max Chin. I'm so sorry for your loss.

She quickly holds out the bouquet to Jemma. Jemma takes it, visibly relieved that she doesn't have to break the news again.

JEMMA

Oh. Thank you.

CAMILLE
I'm really sorry.

JEMMA
Thank you.

She literally has no idea what she's supposed to do or say next. Camille is a complete stranger. Despite this, however--

JEMMA (CONT'D)
Uh...would you like to come in?

CAMILLE
Yeah. Yeah, I'd love to.

CUT TO:

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jemma and Camille sit in the living room. Awkwardly.

JEMMA
Um.

CAMILLE
So.

JEMMA
...How do you--how did you know my brother?

A pause.

CAMILLE
(sighs)
He was uh...he was my ex-boyfriend.

JEMMA
(shocked)
...Sorry?

CAMILLE
Yeah. I don't know why I didn't just say it earlier. Isaac and I were together the past six months or so. We just broke up about two weeks ago. Literally right before...

She trails off and looks down at her lap. Jemma deducts immediately.

JEMMA

Oh. I'm sorry.

Camille looks back up at her.

CAMILLE

Yeah. It was pretty unexpected.

JEMMA

I'm sorry. I just...I had no idea
Isaac was even seeing anyone.

CAMILLE

It's okay.

She notices Jemma's expression.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Isaac told me you live out in
California, and you guys don't see
each other that much. So, I didn't
expect you to know who I was. But he
did mention you to me. He spoke pretty
fondly of you.

(smiles)

He'd always be like, "Jem and I". He
talked about you a lot. How you were
born together on May 21st, the start
of Gemini on the Zodiac. Which is the
also the Twins sign, I think? Punny
coincidence.

She chuckles. Jemma can't bring herself to respond. *What else
does she not know about her own brother?*

CAMILLE

Anyways. I think I should probably
explain why I'm here. A few weeks ago,
Isaac randomly showed up at my
apartment, in the middle of the week
and he never does that.

(clarifies)

We usually see each other on the
weekends because I live in the city.
So, when he just showed up out of the
blue, I was confused but he was like,
shook. Just standing there, like a
deer in the headlights.

EXT. CAMILLE'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - FLASHBACK

ISAAC

...I can't...I can't do this anymore.

CAMILLE

(bewildered)

What do you mean?

ISAAC

I'm sorry.

With that, he abruptly turns and hurries back down the steps.

CAMILLE

(calling out)

Isaac! Isaac, wait!!

But Isaac ignores her calls. Camille quickly hurries down the steps after him. However, by the time she reaches the sidewalk, he's already gotten into his car and driven off.

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - PRESENT

Camille sighs sadly.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

That was the last time I saw him. I tried calling him after, but he wouldn't pick up any of my calls. Then a few days later, I get a call from Max, who tells me that Isaac ki--

She stops, abruptly. Jemma stifles a sharp breath. They both know what she was about to say.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Max sent me the funeral details, but I couldn't bring myself to go. Honestly, I was still in shock. Then earlier today, I was walking by Penn Station and... something just came over me. So, I hopped on a train and now I'm here.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

By the way, I'm really sorry about just showing up like this.

JEMMA

(quickly)

It's okay. Really. Don't worry.

CAMILLE

Max told me you and your parents were back in town and staying at the house, and he said it would probably be okay if I came by, so I did.

JEMMA

Thank you.

CAMILLE

I just...I want you to know that I really...cared about him.

Her voice cracks. Jemma bites her lip.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

(tearful now)

I know we weren't really dating that long at all, but I thought what we had was special. I thought he did too. I just. I don't understand. I don't understand what happened. We were happy. I thought. He seemed happy. I just...I just can't stop wondering why?

She starts crying. Jemma stays silent, but she's wondering the same thing.

INT. MANNING HOME - FRONT DOOR - A LITTLE LATER

Jemma stands by the door. Camille, on the doorstep, turns back to her.

CAMILLE

Thank you again for talking with me.
It was really nice to meet you.

JEMMA

It was nice to meet you too. Thank you for coming by. And thank you for the flowers.

CAMILLE

I wish...I wish we got to meet earlier. In different circumstances, maybe.

She smiles wistfully at Jemma, who smiles sadly back.

JEMMA

Me too.

INT. MANNING HOME - HALLWAY - EVENING

Jemma stands outside Isaac's bedroom. Then, slowly, she turns the knob and opens the door.

INT. MANNING HOME - ISAAC'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Isaac's room, like Jemma's, is a nostalgic time capsule of his youth.

Isaac's shelves are lined with sports trophies. His walls decked out in vintage NEW JERSEY NETS and NEW YORK JETS memorabilia, alongside band posters and other late '90s to early 2000s teenage relics. A RUTGERS SCARLET KNIGHTS PENNANT hangs on the wall above his bed.

Jemma pauses in front of Isaac's untouched bed, the sheets still perfectly tucked in. She looks up, her gaze lingering on the ceiling fan above her...

INT. MANNING HOME - ISAAC'S BEDROOM - DAY

The bottom of Isaac's feet, dangling in mid-air.

INT. MANNING HOME - ISAAC'S BEDROOM - PRESENT

Jemma drops to her knees on the floor. She curls up against the carpet, finally breaking down into sobs.

Alone in her brother's childhood bedroom. *Where he hung himself.*

INT. CAR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

TEENAGE Isaac and TEENAGE Jemma are in the car. Isaac, wearing his varsity wrestling jacket, is behind the wheel, while Jemma, hair streaked in purple and eyes lined in black kohl, rides shotgun. Nelly's "Country Grammar" is blasting from the stereo.

JEMMA

On the way back, I'm driving.

ISAAC

...Says who?

JEMMA

Excuse me?? We--as in plural--got our licenses today.

ISAAC

Yeah, well, you're older.

JEMMA

...By two minutes!!!

And you know what they say
about older people and
driving...better leave it to
the young ins.

Shut up!!!

ISAAC (CONT'D)

But hey. You wanna drive home? Fine.
That leaves me free to get blitzed.

He smirks at her.

JEMMA

On that note...you can crawl home!

They both crack up. As Isaac continues driving, Jemma turns up the volume on the stereo. Together, they break into a routine that's clearly been rehearsed to perfection to the chorus. Perfectly yin to yang.

INT. MANNING HOME - ISAAC'S BEDROOM - PRESENT

Jemma sits on the floor with her buried in her arms, sobbing.

INT. MANNING HOME - ISAAC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark.

Jemma opens her eyes. She's still lying on the floor. Slowly, she gets to her feet.

She hears footsteps. Alarmed, she turns towards the door, opened ajar. Somebody (Isaac?) walks past the door.

JEMMA

Who's there??

No answer. The footsteps continue down the hall.

INT. MANNING HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jemma bursts into the hall, where she sees the familiar back of a tall MALE, heading towards the stairs.

JEMMA

Isaac??!!

The MAN stops in his tracks. Slowly turns around...it is indeed ISAAC. He looks the same as he did in Jemma's funeral dream. ***This is Isaac the day he died.***

ISAAC

Hey, Jem.

JEMMA

Wh-what are you doing here?

ISAAC

I've been waiting for you, silly. What took you so long?

JEMMA

I...what?

ISAAC

(grins)

Jem and I, back together again. Who'da thunk?

JEMMA

What are you talking about?

ISAAC

Come on. I wanna show you something.

Still smiling, he turns and continues down the stairs. Jemma has no choice but to follow him.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

Jemma suddenly finds herself in the middle of the woods at dusk. Her expression says it all: How did she get here?

She sees Isaac walking ahead of her. She follows him, running to catch up to him. However, every time she's just about to fall into step with him, he speeds up, forcing her to fall back behind him.

JEMMA

(calling out)

Isaac, wait! Slow down!

Frustrated, she speeds up. Then, all of a sudden, Isaac

stops. Jemma hurriedly catches up to him, angrily socking him in the shoulder, reminiscent of their younger days.

JEMMA

What the hell are you doing? Is this a joke??

Then, she sees the wide-eyed, horrified expression on Isaac's face--

INT. MANNING HOME - ISAAC'S BEDROOM - PRESENT (DAY)

Jemma jolts awake. She sits up, realizing that she spent the night on the carpet.

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Jemma, showered and changed, makes breakfast as she talks on the phone to Keith, who's at their house in California. In the background, we can hear the voices of their children and Jemma's parents.

JEMMA

I didn't even know he was dating anyone. The last girlfriend he brought home was...Avery.

INTERCUT JEMMA/KEITH

KEITH

Wasn't that like...15 years ago or something?

A beat, as he walks into his office and shuts the door. The background noise fades out.

JEMMA

Yeah. They were only together for about 2 years before they broke up and she moved to Seattle. It was before you and I got serious.

KEITH

...And he's never dated anyone since?? Bullshit.

JEMMA

I mean dated *seriously*. That breakup hit him hard. I think he thought she was the one.

KEITH

Damn. Really?

JEMMA

Why do you sound so surprised?

KEITH

No, it's just...don't take this the wrong way, but the Isaac I knew was...kinda a ho.

JEMMA

Keith!

KEITH

I'm just saying! From guy to guy, your brother was cool, but he was just a player. I'm not like dissing him or anything but he just...didn't seem like the settling type. I didn't know his relationship with Avery though.

JEMMA

You talked to him about relationships?

KEITH

Well, no. But all the times I saw him; he was always single pringle. And he seemed more than fine. Like he intentionally meant for it be that way.

(beat)

Wait. Why do you sound so surprised about all this? You guys were like, two peas in a pod.

JEMMA

...Key word being were. Yeah, we were really close when we were younger, but after you and I got married, and the kids came along, Isaac and I sort of just drifted apart.

KEITH

Yeah, well. That happens.

JEMMA

Yeah.

KEITH

So, what was she like? Camille.

JEMMA

She was nice. I mean, I felt bad because she was like, telling me how much she loved Isaac and how she was looking forward to a future with him, while I'm sitting there like an a-hole because I didn't know she existed until about five minutes ago.

(sighs)

She was pretty shaken up because they had broken up right before it happened. I think the poor girl just wanted some closure.

KEITH

Damn. Did she say why they broke up?

JEMMA

She said he broke it off out of nowhere. He apparently drove to her apartment in the city just to tell her he couldn't do it anymore and then bounced.

KEITH

That's cold.

JEMMA

Yeah. And you know what's weird? She kind of reminded me of Avery.

KEITH

(amused)

That's not weird. That's...Freudian.

JEMMA

Shut up.

KEITH

(still laughing)

What? It just kinda sounds like he wasn't over her. Avery, I mean.

JEMMA

Yeah. Well. Too late now.

She shifts a bit.

JEMMA (CONT'D)

I remember when I first moved to LA, we'd talk all the time. Skype, then

when FaceTime became a thing. He'd fly out to LA; I'd go back to Briarwood. Then after my parents moved to LA for my dad's work, that's when things started shifting. Plus, after we got married and had the kids, we started doing holidays in LA and the back-and-forth stuff just kinda stopped.

KEITH

True. But the kids still have a ton of great memories with their Uncle Isaac.

JEMMA

No, I know. It's just he and I stopped talking about anything personal.

KEITH

You think...maybe he was depressed or something?

Jemma doesn't answer. Now, she'll never know. Keith seems to pick up on her silence.

KEITH

Babe, you can't beat yourself up over this. It wasn't your fault.

JEMMA

(pained)

I didn't try hard enough to keep in touch. If he was suffering, I should have known. I should have checked in on him more and I didn't.

KEITH

Isaac's a grown man, Jemma. You couldn't make him open up if he didn't want to.

JEMMA

You don't get it though. Isaac and I used to talk about everything. If something was really bothering him, he would have told me.

KEITH

I don't know. I don't really talk about stuff like that with my sister.

JEMMA

That's you. Me and Isaac were different.

KEVIN

Oh, right. I forgot. You two got that twin Gemini thing.

JEMMA

(sighs)

Not anymore.

KEITH

Look. Nobody knew this was gonna happen. Not you, not your parents, nobody.

JEMMA

He called me.

KEITH

What?

JEMMA

Isaac. The day he died, he called me twice. I remember, my phone was in my bag, and I was driving the kids to soccer. When I called him back, he didn't pick up.

KEITH

You can't think like that. You didn't know.

JEMMA

But I should have! I should have known. He's my twin brother. Like, aren't we supposed to have like some psychic thing where we can like read each other's minds or at least know if one of us is gonna go kill themselves??

KEITH

Jem...

JEMMA

Isn't that the point? What was the fucking point then?

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

Jemma sits at the kitchen table, drinking coffee. Her plate of Avocado toast lays half-eaten in front of her, next to a box of KLEENEX. Several crumpled-up tissues are scattered about.

Jemma sniffles a bit, but she's not crying anymore. She takes her phone and scrolls...stopping as she lands on a new post from AVERY LEE (30s-40s), Isaac's EX-GIRLFRIEND from a million years ago.

JEMMA
...Speak of the devil.

She smiles quietly at the sheer coincidence. Avery's post is a tribute to her husband, CAMERON MOORE (40ish, African American).

Jemma swipes through the carousel of photos. The last one is of Cameron and Avery on their wedding day. By looks alone, Avery isn't exactly a stunner. But she's the ultimate girl next door. Minimal makeup, carefree.

Jemma reads the caption then notices the hashtags at the end: #RIP #Angel #GoneTooSoon

This is an obituary. Cameron's dead. Jemma gasps.

She quickly googles Cameron's name. The first result that pops up is a local news report: **MAN FOUND DEAD ON HIDDEN CREST TRAIL IN HILLSIDE.**

JEMMA
Oh, my God.

INT. JEMMA'S APARTMENT - LOS ANGELES - 15 YEARS AGO

Jemma and Isaac are sprawled out on Jemma's couch, eating pizza and watching TV. A spark of youthful ingenuity still lingers between them.

JEMMA
I like you guys together. Avery seems really sweet.

ISAAC
Yeah. She's pretty great.

JEMMA
You know, when Mom and Dad first moved

out here and you told them you wanted to stay in Briarwood, I was kinda worried.

ISAAC

Why?

JEMMA

I just thought...you might get left behind.

ISAAC

Thanks a lot.

JEMMA

I just meant--things change, people do too. I didn't want you to feel like you couldn't.

ISAAC

I'm fine.

JEMMA

I know you are. But there's more to life than Briarwood.

ISAAC

(defensive)

I know that.

(then)

You still feel that way? About me?

Jemma smiles.

JEMMA

Nope. Besides, if you hadn't stayed in Briarwood, you and Avery wouldn't have met.

ISAAC

Exactly.

They grin at each other. Understanding.

ISAAC

What about you? You been seeing anyone since Asshole Matt?

JEMMA

Actually...yes.

Isaac raises an eyebrow at her.

ISAAC

...I've been in town for a whole weekend, and you just now spring this news on me? I thought we were a squad. What about Jem & I??

JEMMA

I wasn't holding out. I just didn't want to jinx it.

She can't hide her smile though. Isaac gives her a playful nudge with his elbow.

ISAAC

This jinx gotta name?

JEMMA

(laughs)

Keith.

ISAAC

Hm. Sounds a *tad* less douchey than Matt.

Jemma playfully flips him off. Isaac laughs harder.

JEMMA

Definitely not a douche. I like him. A lot.

ISAAC

Good. I hope it works out.

JEMMA

Me too.

(smiling)

And who knows. Maybe these could be the ones.

She glances back at Isaac, who's suddenly quiet. After a moment, he smiles. Quietly hopeful.

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - PRESENT

Jemma stares at the news report in disbelief. Cameron was the guy they found in the woods. Of all coincidences...

JEMMA
(to herself)
Cameron...Cameron...

Where has she heard his name before?

INT. JEMMA'S APARTMENT - LOS ANGELES - 13 YEARS AGO

Jemma paces back and forth across her living room as she skypes Isaac.

JEMMA
(accusingly)
What did you do?

INT. MANNING HOME - ISAAC'S OFFICE/SECOND BEDROOM - SAME

Isaac, who's got Jemma on speaker phone, does dumbbell reps in front of the TV.

ISAAC
I didn't do anything.

INTERCUT JEMMA/ISAAC

JEMMA
I don't get you. Avery was perfect for you. I've never seen you as happy with anyone else.

ISAAC
You don't think I know that?

JEMMA
So, then what happened?

ISAAC
(sighs)
She got a job in Seattle.

He puts the weights down and wipes at his face with a towel.

JEMMA
What? When?

ISAAC
A month ago.

JEMMA
Well okay. Phones exist. Skype exists. Planes exist. I mean look at us.

ISAAC

Jem--

JEMMA

Maybe you need to fly out to Seattle.

ISAAC

(harder now)

Jem.

JEMMA

...What?

There's a pause, before Isaac answers.

ISAAC

Seattle is where *Cameron* lives.
Avery's ex-boyfriend from college.

JEMMA

...So?

ISAAC

So... she got a job in Seattle.

This is code for "they got back together."

JEMMA

(after a beat)

No. Are you serious?

ISAAC

Yeah.

JEMMA

Did she--was she--

ISAAC

No. Well...she swears she wasn't--they weren't. But UConn had an alumni event a few months back, and she went. Cameron was there. I guess they reconnected. She realized she wasn't over him. And then she started applying to jobs in Seattle.

JEMMA

So, when did they get back together?

ISAAC

I don't know, I'm not sure they did.

JEMMA

Wait, so they're not actually back together? Then it's not too late, you can still--

ISAAC

No. Jem.

JEMMA

WHAT?

ISAAC

Because you're missing the point. She saw him, then came home and immediately applying to jobs in the city that he lives in. I don't think I really need to spell it out.

You can practically hear the period at the end of his sentence.

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - PRESENT

JEMMA

Shit.

This is the same Cameron. She scrolls back to Avery's obituary post. Cameron's got one of those, approachable, nice-looking faces. He's far from a heartthrob, but the more Jemma looks at his photo, the more attractive he seems. In a way, he's like the male version of Avery.

JEMMA

Huh.

Now she gets it. She continues scrolling down Avery's page, until she lands on an ULTRASOUND PICTURE, dated a few weeks before the Cameron post.

Her eyes widen. **Avery's pregnant.**

INT. GROCERY STORE - LATER THAT DAY

MAX (O.S.)

Jemma!

Jemma, browsing through a selection of free-range eggs, looks up to see Max Chin approaching her. He's pushing a shopping cart filled with fruits, vegetables, and kids' snacks.

JEMMA

Max. Hi.

They quickly hug hello.

MAX

How are you? I totally meant to call you after the service, see how you guys were doing--

JEMMA

Oh, it's okay. You've got a lot going on too.

MAX

So, how are you holding up?

JEMMA

I'm holding.

She looks down. Max nods sympathetically.

MAX

(softly)

Yeah. Same.

Jemma looks back up at him, managing a wry smile.

JEMMA

How are Amanda and the kids?

MAX

Good. They're good. By the way, you should totally give Amanda a call. She'd love to see you.

JEMMA

Yeah, I'll definitely do that.

MAX

How long are you staying? Are Keith and the kids still with you?

JEMMA

Actually, no. Everyone's back home in LA now. Except me.

MAX

Oh, wow. Even your parents?

JEMMA

Yeah. They uh...had some stuff to take care of. But they'll be back at the end of the month.

MAX

Ah. So, you're all alone in that house, huh?

JEMMA

Yeah.

Max winces sympathetically.

MAX

Sorry.

(suddenly)

Listen, if being at your house is too much, you can always come stay with us.

JEMMA

Oh. That's really sweet of you guys but I'm okay.

MAX

It's really no trouble--

Thanks. It's okay. It's kinda nice to get some work done in peace and quiet for once. Besides, I'm kind of holding down the fort until my parents come back.

MAX

Are they coming back to stay?

JEMMA

Not to like...live here. I don't think any of us really want to do that. They're going to sell the place. Finally.

(dry chuckle)

Been a long time coming, if I'm honest.

MAX

(whistles)

Damn. End of an era.

In more ways than one. They fall silent, both knowing the reason Jemma's parents kept the house for so long.

MAX

(eventually)

Well. If you need anything at all,
while you're here, don't hesitate to
reach out. We're here for you.

JEMMA

Thanks. That means a lot.

(more)

And thank you. For always looking out
for him. You've always looked out for
him.

MAX

Of course. He's my boy.

Another beat of silence. Max looks down at his watch.

MAX

Well, I better get going. It was nice
seeing you.

JEMMA

Yeah. You too.

As Max turns his shopping cart around, Jemma unexpectedly
calls out to him.

JEMMA

Hey, Max?

Max looks back around.

MAX

Yeah?

JEMMA

Did...Isaac ever...say anything to
you? About...about if he was going
through something? Like, if he was in
trouble or--

MAX

Not that I can remember. Why?

JEMMA

Oh. No reason.

She hastily pulls a carton of eggs from the shelf and places
it in her basket.

MAX
(suddenly)
Actually.

Jemma snaps back up to him.

MAX (CONT'D)
I spoke to him, briefly, the day...the morning before it happened. We were supposed to watch the Nets game together, but I had to cancel because I had to drive Emmy and Eli to swim practice. Amanda was gonna drive them but then Ollie came down with the flu, so she had to stay home and look after him.

He sighs, heavily.

MAX (CONT'D)
Isaac seemed fine when I called him.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Max is hunched over on the couch, on the phone with Isaac. In the background, Amanda tries to calm down their screaming kids.

MAX
Sorry to bail like this, dude.

ISAAC (V.O.)
It's cool. No worries.

MAX
Try again next time?

Over the phone, Isaac pauses.

MAX (CONT'D)
Isaac?

ISAAC (V.O.)
Yeah. Yeah. Next time...

INT. GROCERY STORE - PRESENT DAY

ON MAX

Who swallows. Hard. Regret now written all over his face.

MAX

He paused. After I said, next time.

JEMMA.

Max. You didn't know.

MAX

But I could have stopped him.

JEMMA

I don't think so.

MAX

(not finished)

Camille called me the next day. You know, Isaac's girlfriend? And she was all frantic because Isaac drove to her house two days earlier and broke up with her. He wouldn't explain why just kept apologizing and left. Wouldn't answer any of her calls. He hadn't told me any of this, so I end up calling him, but he doesn't pick up either. That's why I ended up going over to your house.

EXT. MANNING HOME - FRONT STEPS - FLASHBACK

Max stands on the front steps and calls Isaac. No answer.

MAX

Dammit.

He starts pounding on the front door.

MAX

ISAAC!!!! ARE YOU IN THERE???

He's met with silence. Finally, Max digs into his pockets and pulls out a key, labeled "Isaac Spare." He takes the key and unlocks the front door.

INT. MANNING HOME - CONTINUOUS

Max walks inside the house. It's silent. Cold. Something's not right.

MAX

Isaac?

He enters the living room. An empty bottle of scotch lays on

the coffee table next to Isaac's phone. Max quickly picks up the phone and swipes: Several missed calls from Camille, him, and Jemma.

MAX

Shit.

He hurries out of the living room.

INT. MANNING HOME - ISAAC'S OFFICE/SECOND BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Max bursts into Isaac's office. It's empty. Futon bed hasn't been slept in.

INT. MANNING HOME - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Max hurries down the hall until he reaches Isaac's room.

The door is ajar. Breathing heavily, Max slowly pushes the door open...

INT. GROCERY STORE - PRESENT DAY

Max's face is pale.

MAX

I was too late.

SCREEN BLACK.

INT. MANNING HOME - JEMMA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Jemma sits in bed, staring at her last text exchange with Isaac: A series of poop emojis, back and forth between them. She starts to type back, then quickly stops.

A new message from Keith pops up in her notifications:

KEITH (TEXT)

Skylar wanted me to send you this.

He attaches a photo: A homemade SCRAPBOOK, titled "Us & Uncle Isaac."

Jemma stares at the photo, her eyes filling with emotion. She texts him back:

JEMMA (TEXT)

Aw. They made this?

KEITH (TEXT)

Yep. They want to do a show and tell presentation of the whole finished scrapbook when you get back.

JEMMA (TEXT)

I can't wait. :')

INT. JEMMA AND KEITH'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Isaac dashes into the living room, chased by Skylar, Morgan, and Cooper, who are shrieking with laughter.

Isaac mimes falling over as the kids pounce on him with glee.

ISAAC

Man down! Man down!!! SOS!!!

SKYLAR

Uncle Isaac let's play Monster!!!!

MORGAN/COOPER

(chiming in)

Yeah yeah!!! We wanna play Monster!!!

Isaac promptly fake dies on the floor. This makes the kids giggle even harder.

MORGAN

He's not really dead! Come on, Uncle Isaac get up!

She playfully pokes him in the stomach. Cooper and Skylar join in. Pretty soon they're all poke-attacking him.

ISAAC

AGHHHHHHHHHHH!

SKYLAR/MORGAN/COOPER

AGHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!

Laughter explodes in the room as Isaac leaps to his feet.

ISAAC

YOU WOKE THE MONSTERRRRR!!!

The kids freak out and all run off in different directions, scrambling for a "safe" base, which is any piece of furniture not touching the ground.

Isaac drops to his knees and raises his hands over his head

in defeat.

ISAAC
NOOOOOOO!!!

The kids laugh hysterically as he mimes melting into the ground.

MORGAN/SKYLAR/COOPER
WE WIN WE WIN WE WIN!!!

ISAAC
Awww come on. No fair! I'm old, I
can't run as fast as you guys!

The kids jump off from their respective safe bases and tackle Isaac once more, as Jemma walks into the room. She surveys them and the scene with amusement.

JEMMA
What's going on here?

MORGAN
We're playing Monster!!!

JEMMA
Monster, huh? I heard that's Uncle
Isaac's favorite game.

She smirks down at Isaac, who groans as he's three-way tackle-hugged by his nieces and nephew.

ISAAC
You Manning-Dunns don't play fair!

MORGAN/SKYLAR/COOPER
Let's play again! Let's play again!

They proceed to tug at Isaac's arms and legs, trying to get him to play with them again. Isaac good-naturedly gives in, while Jemma watches them with a fond smile on her face.

INT. MANNING HOME - JEMMA'S BEDROOM - PRESENT

Jemma reopens her text log with Isaac. Her finger hovers on the call button next to his name.

She calls him. **The rings sound oddly close, like he's in the room with her.** Finally, there's a beep followed by:

ISAAC (V.O.)
*Yo. It's me. I'm not here. Leave a
message and maybe I'll get back to
you. Maybe I won't. Peace!*

Jemma hangs up. She gets up and walks over to her dresser, where Isaac's phone lays, connected to its charger. She's been keeping his phone charged this entire time.

INT. MANNING HOME - JEMMA'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jemma tosses and turns in her sleep.

INT. BAR - EVENING - 15 YEARS AGO

Isaac stands at the bar, waiting for the BARTENDER (30s male).

BARTENDER
What can I get you?

Isaac is about to answer, when he suddenly notices Avery standing next to him.

ISAAC
Uh. Ladies first.

Avery, surprised at his chivalry, smiles. Isaac, now really noticing her for the first time, smiles back.

AVERY
Thanks.
(to the bartender)
I'll have a Soco and Lime, please.
And... whatever he's having.

Now it's Isaac's turn to look surprised.

ISAAC
You didn't have to do that.

AVERY
Neither did you.

Isaac grins.

ISAAC
I'll take a Jack and Coke. You can put
both drinks on my tab. Isaac Manning.

He turns back to Avery and winks. She shakes her head and

laughs.

AVERY

Smooth.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SAME NIGHT

Isaac and Avery walk side by side, deep in conversation.

ISAAC

Come here often? Don't think I've ever seen you...

AVERY

Almost never. I only came here tonight because my friend wanted to go out.

ISAAC

You from the area?

AVERY

Yeah. Hillside. I moved back in with my parents after college.

ISAAC

Small world. I live in Briarwood.

AVERY

Really? Born and raised or

ISAAC

Yes, ma'am. I promise it's not as lame it sounds. I went to Rutgers. And now I work at SkyReach over in Hanover.

AVERY

Rutgers? I thought you said you weren't as lame as you sound...

She's teasing. Isaac laughs, appreciating her sense of humor.

ISAAC

Damn. You really know how to stroke a guy's ego.

They laugh some more.

AVERY

I like that you're proud of where you came from.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Yeah. Well, can't say the same for the rest of my family. They all moved to California, but my parents decided not to sell the house I grew up in, so it's just me living there now.

AVERY

That's cool. Got the whole place to yourself, huh?

ISAAC

Guess so.

(more)

What about you? You thinking about getting your own place someday?

AVERY

I don't know. I gotta find a job that pays more than nothing first.

ISAAC

What'd you major in?

AVERY

(laughs)

Art history. At UConn.

ISAAC

UConn?? And you're calling me lame??

AVERY

(chuckles)

I just really wanted to get outta New Jersey.

They both chuckle now.

ISAAC

How do you feel about being back in Jersey now?

AVERY

Well. When I first moved back, I was pretty bummed. I had just gone through this really tough breakup and was in permanent wallow mode. But after a while, you just have to let go, you know? Move on with your life.

ISAAC

True. Sorry to hear about your breakup though.

AVERY

Thanks. It's okay. It wasn't meant to be. Anyways, I never really hang out in these local spots anymore, but my friend from high school who moved to Florida just came back for the weekend, and she wanted to go out. So that's how we ended up here.

ISAAC

Well. I'm glad you did.

He bumps her shoulder slightly.

AVERY

Me too.

She bumps him back, flashing him a smile. Isaac smiles back at her, smitten.

INT. MANNING HOME - JEMMA'S BEDROOM - PRESENT

Jemma opens her eyes to a dark room.

She rolls over and squints at the clock on her nightstand.
5:21 A.M.

Sighing, she closes her eyes once more, trying to get back to sleep. A few moments go by, she opens her eyes again.

CUT TO:

INT. MANNING HOME - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jemma turns on the faucet and splashes water onto her face.

INT. MANNING HOME - ISAAC'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jemma stands in the middle of the room, staring up at the ceiling fan above her. The early morning sun peeks through the windows.

JEMMA

(out loud)

Isaac? Are you there?

She looks around the room. Silence. She sighs.

JEMMA

I think...I'm dreaming as you. I'm having these dreams. But I don't think they're mine. They're yours. Your life. Your...memories.

JEMMA

Am I crazy? Or are you trying to tell me something?

She pauses, as if hoping he might somehow answer.

JEMMA

(feeling foolish)

Please.

INT. MANNING HOME - ISAAC'S OFFICE/SECOND BEDROOM - LATER

Jemma enters Isaac's office/second bedroom, on the phone with Janette.

JEMMA

...Yeah. I'm in his office now.

(looks around)

You want me to start putting all the stuff in boxes?

JANETTE (V.O.)

Just tidy it up so that it looks less...you know.

JEMMA

...like a 40-year-old frat boy lived here?

JANETTE (V.O.)

(laughs)

Exactly.

JEMMA

I'll do what I can.

JEMMA (CONT'D)

Hey, Mom?

JANETTE (V.O.)

Yeah?

JEMMA

You didn't tell the realtor about... you know, did you?

JANETTE (V.O.)

...No, I didn't. But I think by law,
if a potential buyer asks, we need to
tell them.

JEMMA

Okay.

She hangs up, then surveys the room.

Isaac's desk has a two-monitor set up, not for work, but for gaming. There's a 50-inch LED TV mounted to one wall, with hookups to his XBOX and PS5. Some dumbbells and rack weights are crammed in one corner, next to the closet. A futon mattress stretches along the back wall.

Jemma snorts at the sight of the futon.

JEMMA

Poor Camille.

INT. MANNING HOME - BASEMENT - LATER

Jemma, carrying a large cardboard box labeled "ISAAC STUFF", walks down the steps into the unfinished and mostly empty basement.

A few dusty cardboard boxes, all labeled "ISAAC STUFF" are stacked in the corner. Jemma makes her way to the corner and stacks the new box on top of the stack.

As she walks back, she notices a few pieces of broken ceramic scattered on the ground.

INT. MANNING HOME - BASEMENT - FLASHBACK

The same basement, where a high school party is in full swing. A beer pong table set up in the middle of the room, a keg in the corner, while teenagers stand around drinking shitty beer out of cliché red solo cups.

TEENAGE Isaac and TEENAGE Max have just crushed a round of beer pong against two other guys from the Briarwood Varsity wrestling team, JAKE EVERETT and KYLE GAYNOR.

ISAAC

HELL YEAH!!!! 3-0 SUCK IT!!!

MAX

WE GOT HOPS! And you...got got.

He and Isaac laugh and high five each other while Jake and Kyle fume.

JAKE
Get fucked.

ISAAC
You mean like you just did??

He, Max, and even Kyle burst into laughter. Jake hurls a ping pong ball at him--he quickly dodges out of the way, still laughing--as Jake storms off.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT/OTHER SIDE - SAME

TEENAGE Jemma leans against the wall next to the keg, nursing a solo cup while her friend ANGEL (late teens, quirky cute) jabbars on.

ANGEL
Last summer, at theater camp, I let
him stick his drumstick up my--

She's interrupted by Jake sauntering up to them.

JAKE
Jemma Manning. Looking good.

He stops in front of the keg and refills his cup, leering at her. Jemma gives him a Daria stare in response.

JEMMA
...Do I know you?

JAKE
Aw, don't be like that, babe. What are
we doing tonight?

JEMMA
We're not doing anything.

ANGEL
Yah, excuse you. We were having a
conversation, and I don't remember
inviting you into it?

Jake ignores Angel and leans in closer to Jemma, invading her space.

JAKE

(slurs)

I've never been with a goth chick before. Maybe you could pop my cherry tonight?

He winks at her. Jemma is revolted.

JEMMA

Ew.

(to Angel)

Let's move.

She pushes herself off the wall and starts to walk away, but Jake reaches out and grabs her by the wrist. She immediately shakes him off with a murderous look on her face.

JEMMA

Don't do that again.

JAKE

Don't tell me you're playing hard to get. That's cool, I could use a little cardio.

JEMMA

Get away from me.

ANGEL

Yeah, leave her alone. Creep!

They both try to leave, but Jake blocks their path. Now, Jemma's pissed.

JEMMA

Move. I'm not going to tell you again.

JAKE

Ooh, feisty. I like a woman who can give me a hard time.

Jemma responds by dumping her solo cup in his face. Around them, the other partygoers are noticing the commotion. Meanwhile, Jake, now covered in Natty Ice, isn't smiling anymore.

JAKE

Bitch!

He advances on her but is roughly yanked back by none other than Isaac, who walked by just in time to witness the

exchange.

ISAAC
What the hell do you think you're
doing??

He shoves Jake into the wall. Beer goes spilling everywhere.
Jake angrily shoves him back.

JAKE
Don't touch me, bro.

ISAAC
Keep your shiesty hands off my sister
then.

JAKE
Not my fault she's a stuck up prude.

ISAAC
(snarls)
What did you say?

He shoves Jake again, but Jake just smirks nastily.

JAKE
Ooh. Like sister, like brother.

ISAAC
Shut up.

JAKE
Make me.

ISAAC
What are you, ten? Just stay away from
her or get out of my house.

He turns back to Jemma and Angel.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
You guys good?

Before Jemma can respond, Jake, still behind them, calls
after Isaac:

JAKE
Looks like *bitch* runs in the family!

Isaac spins back around and decks him in the face.

JEMMA
ISAAC! NO!

But it's too late. Jake and Isaac start going at each other, while the rest of the partygoers cheer them on.

INT. MANNING HOME - BASEMENT - PRESENT

Jemma swipes up the broken ceramic pieces with a dustpan.

She dumps the pieces into the metal trashcan by the wall. Then she walks back over to the stairs and sits down on the bottom step, staring around the empty basement.

INT. MANNING HOME - BASEMENT - FLASHBACK

TEENAGE ISAAC sits on the bottom step, nursing his black eye with a beer can. The party's over and the basement is trashed. Solo cups and beer everywhere.

The basement door opens. TEENAGE JEMMA stands at the doorway, holding an icepack and a garbage bag. She walks down the stairs and sits down next to Isaac. She hands him the icepack and garbage bag; he takes both and hands her the beer.

Jemma cracks the beer open and takes a sip.

JEMMA
Mom's gonna kill you when she gets home tomorrow. The kitchen is a war zone.

ISAAC
Yeah. Well.

JEMMA
You really didn't have to do that you know. Beat the crap out of Jake for my sake.

ISAAC
Of course I did. He's a bottom feeder.

JEMMA
Well yeah, but you still didn't need to do that.

She gives him a small smile. Isaac shakes his head.

ISAAC
I'm sorry I called you a bitch the

other day.

JEMMA

Forget it.

ISAAC

No, I'm serious. You were just looking out for your friends. I shouldn't have...and I'm sorry. I don't know why it took Jake calling you that for me to realize.

JEMMA

(shakes her head)

Just...you need to stop hooking up with my friends. Especially when you're just gonna ditch them after.

They both chuckle.

ISAAC

You're right. I'll work on that.

JEMMA

To be fair, I was a bitch to you the other day. But that's because you were being a prick.

She smirks at him.

ISAAC

Call it even?

JEMMA

Yeah.

They fist bump each other.

JEMMA (CONT'D)

For the record...I'm not a prude. I don't care who you hook up with. I mean, I don't wanna know or need to know about it, but I don't care what you do. It's just when you hit on my friends and don't call them back, you look like an asshole, and I look like an asshole because we share DNA.

(adds)

So, either call them back or keep it in your pants. Deal?

Isaac laughs.

ISAAC

Deal. I promise not to hook up with
any more of your friends.

(then)

Except Jamie. She's pretty cute. Might
try and hit--

He cracks up, dodging as Jemma socks him in the shoulder.

INT. MANNING HOME - BASEMENT - PRESENT

Jemma gets up and slowly walks back up the stairs and out of
the basement, closing the door behind her.

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jemma lays curled up on the couch, watching an 80's horror
movie on TV. A few takeout containers are scattered on the
coffee table.

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Isaac turns on the faucet and lets the water run.

He pulls on a pair of plastic gloves and picks up a
bloodstained rock with sharp, jagged edges, and starts
scrubbing it clean under the water.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE PARSIPANONG - EVENING

Isaac stands by the edge of the lake, holding the same rock,
now clean, in his gloved hands. Thick snowflakes drift
steadily down through the air and melt as they hit the water.

Isaac hurls the rock as hard as he can into the water. It
lands with a plop, then sinks and disappears down into the
murky darkness.

In the distance, the faint sounds of sirens can be heard.

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - PRESENT (NIGHT)

Jemma's eyes blink open. Not again.

She slowly sits up, realizing that she fell asleep on the
couch.

On TV, the horror movie she was watching is still playing. She grabs the remote and turns off the TV.

INT. MANNING HOME - JEMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jemma tosses and turns in bed, her eyes screwed shut, trying desperately to get back to sleep.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. MANNING HOME - JEMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The clock on Jemma's nightstand reads 2:21 A.M.

Jemma lays wide awake, staring at the ceiling.

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jemma yanks open the medicine cabinet and frantically rummages through it. There's a half-open bottle of NyQuil stashed in the corner.

She pulls it out, examines it, then unscrews the top and chugs it down. Almost immediately, she chokes and gags on the medicine.

ISAAC (O.S.)

Damn, Jem. Easy on the 'Quil.

Jemma spins around, coughing and gasping. Isaac's standing in the doorway.

JEMMA

You!!!

She screws the top back on the NyQuil bottle and throws it at him. He catches it, swiftly, with his right hand.

ISAAC

Yeah. It's me.

JEMMA

SHUT UP!!!!

ISAAC

Just let me explain.

JEMMA

GET OUT OF MY HEAD!!!

ISAAC
I'm not in your head.

JEMMA
(hysterical now)
Yes, you are. You're in my head, in my dreams. My nightmares. You won't leave me alone.

ISAAC
They're not nightmares.

JEMMA
Then what are they?? Huh?? Why are you always in them?? You're dead. You've been dead for weeks...

Her voice breaks. Isaac nods sadly.

ISAAC
Yeah. I know. But that doesn't mean I'm not still here.

He walks a few paces and gently places the NyQuil down on the kitchen table. Jemma quickly backs herself against the counter, staring distrustfully at him.

JEMMA
How...how are you doing this? Why are you here? Am I going crazy?

ISAAC
You're not crazy.

JEMMA
(accusingly)
I...I saw something in my dream. You...you were washing blood off a rock. Then you threw that same rock into a lake.

JEMMA (CONT'D)
What did you do?

ISAAC
(shakes his head)
...It's complicated.

JEMMA
THEN FUCKING EXPLAIN IT!!!!

She chokes on her sob, unable to keep herself from crying.

JEMMA (CONT'D)

You didn't even leave a note. You never said goodbye. You just left us here. Mom cries all the time. Dad won't even mention your name. And now you won't stop haunting me. Every time I close my eyes, you're there. You're always there, but you're not really there, and I don't know what you're trying to tell me. I don't know what you want me to do. What do you want me to do??

She breaks off, sobbing uncontrollably. Isaac stands there, watching her with remorse. Then he slowly walks over to her and gently places his arms around her. She doesn't hug him back, but she doesn't push him away either.

ISAAC

(murmurs)

I'm sorry. I screwed up, Jem. I screwed up so bad.

Jemma finally looks up and gives him a desperate, searching look.

JEMMA

What happened, Isaac? Just...tell me.

ISAAC

Like I said, it's complicated.

JEMMA

Try.

ISAAC

Why don't I show you instead?

JEMMA

Huh?

ISAAC

That half bottle of NyQuil you just chugged should help.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Isaac walks down the aisle. He stops, then looks over to see Avery, coming down the other end.

She stops when she sees him. They stare at each other.

AVERY

Isaac?

ISAAC

(shocked)

Avery.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

...Uh. Wow. You're here.

AVERY

Just for a little while. I'm visiting my parents for a bit.

CAMERON (O.S.)

Babe, I couldn't find any two percent, so I just got whole--

CAMERON appears, holding a carton of WHOLE MILK. He abruptly stops in his tracks when he sees Avery and Isaac standing there.

AVERY

Hi, honey. Whole is fine.

CAMERON

Who's your friend?

AVERY

Oh. Uh, this is Isaac. He's...an old friend.

Isaac flinches slightly at "friend." But just as quickly, he recovers, nodding at Cameron, who flashes him a good-natured smile back.

CAMERON

Hey, man.

Isaac watches as Cameron walks over to Avery, placing the milk inside the shopping cart. Then he quickly places his arm around her waist, his hand grazing over her stomach.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - PARKING LOT - DAY

Isaac bursts out into the parking lot, alone. He speed walks to his car and gets inside, slamming the door shut.

He leans forward and rests his head against the steering wheel, closing his eyes. He looks pained.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

YOUNGER Isaac and YOUNGER Avery on the dance floor together. Laughing and smiling. In love.

INT. ISAAC'S CAR - DAY

Isaac pulls into a cul-de-sac and parks. He gets out of the car and walks towards the entrance of the woods.

EXT. WOODS/HIDDEN CREST TRAIL - DUSK

Isaac walks down the trail, rough and uneven in places, scattered with rocks, granite, and tree roots. The sky above is heavy with dark gray clouds, signaling an approaching storm.

All of a sudden, Isaac stops in his tracks and stares straight ahead.

A few yards away, stands Avery, with her back to Isaac, teetering over a ledge of uneven, rocky terrain. There's a steep drop down to more rocks below.

From where Isaac is standing, he can't see what she's staring at. He moves a little closer to get a better look. Then he sees there's somebody lying on the rocks.

Isaac gasps and immediately stumbles backwards, stepping on a branch. It snaps.

Avery hears it and whips around, wild-eyed. She's gripping a sharp rock with jagged edges in her right hand. Both the rock and her knuckles are stained with blood.

A BEAT -- as she spots Isaac. They STARE at each other. Then Isaac makes a run for it.

AVERY
No...NO!!! ISAAC!!!!

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - PRESENT (MORNING)

BRRRRINGGGGGGGGGG!!!!

Jemma's eyes snap open. Immediately, she groans and shields her eyes from the harsh glare of the morning sun.

JEMMA
(annoyed)
...No...no...come on...

Still groaning, she heaves herself upright and realizes she's on the floor next to the couch. Somewhere to her left, her phone continues screaming at her. She finally finds it lodged between the couch cushions.

Jemma silences her alarm then glances over at the table, where a half-empty bottle of NyQuil sits. And then it hits her.

JEMMA
Oh, shit!

CUT TO:

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Jemma sits, fidgety and distracted, at the kitchen table. Her hair is hastily pulled up into an updo and she's wearing a blazer over her pajama bottoms.

Her laptop is open in front of her, where a video call with her boss, MELANIE DIAZ (female, mid-50s) is taking place.

MELANIE (VIDEO)
Brittany and Chuck will both be on the Vista call. You can start by showing them the deck and then we'll open the floor to questions.

JEMMA
(distracted)
Uh huh.

MELANIE (VIDEO)
How are you doing, by the way? How's New Jersey?

JEMMA
...Oh, ya know. Cold.

MELANIE (VIDEO)

Oh yeah, I heard there was snow and more snow then a cold front icing everything over.

JEMMA

That's east coast weather for you.

MELANIE (VIDEO)

Well, with all that inclement weather, at least you guys don't have to worry drought induced wildfires! Not like us...

She chuckles dryly.

JEMMA

(barely listening)

Right...

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

Avery stands there, wide-eyed, her hands covered in blood.

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - REALITY

ANGLE ON: JEMMA, WHO BLINKS.

And stares...at the PowerPoint deck in PRESENT MODE on her laptop screen. Another blink...and Jemma realizes *she's* the one presenting.

Visibly panicking, Jemma's gaze darts quickly towards the bottom corner of her screen, where Melanie and the TWO REPS from VISTA CONSULTING, CHUCK and BRITTANY, are all smiling expectantly back at her in their individual camera frames.

JEMMA

(swallows)

Um...so.

She clears her throat.

JEMMA (CONT'D)

(reading screen)

We've come up with a new slogan that's going to present Vista as the ideal consulting partner for companies to level up. We're calling it Vista: "Your Partner in Prime...everything from engagement, retention,

conversion..."

She pauses, then blinks again. Her vision blurring slightly as she stares at the screen...

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Isaac, standing over the sink, scrubbing at the blood on his hands.

Behind him, stands Avery, holding a knife. As he continues scrubbing at his hands, she drives the knife into his back.

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - REALITY

ON: JEMMA

Whose eyes widen in horror as she screams.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Jemma sits frozen in her chair. The meeting presentation is over.

Now it's just her and Melanie on the call, with Melanie staring at her on camera, a look of concern on her face.

JEMMA

(stammering)

I'm...I'm so sorry. I don't know what came over me.

MELANIE (V.O.)

It's okay. I know it's been a rough few weeks for you.

JEMMA

I...I ruined the presentation. I'm so sorry.

MELANIE (V.O.)

(wry smile)

No, you didn't. But it was something.

Jemma facepalms.

JEMMA

They must think I'm a nutjob.

MELANIE (V.O.)

It's really not that big of a deal.
After you signed off, I went over the
rest of the presentation with Chuck
and Brittany, and they were both
impressed by the new strategy.

(she pauses)

You do good work, Jemma. I just think
sometimes you put too much pressure on
yourself when you could simply ask for
help.

Jemma can only nod blankly.

JEMMA

I--I haven't been sleeping very well
lately--

MELANIE (VIDEO)

Don't worry about it. Everybody has a
limit.

JEMMA

I'm really sorry about this.

MELANIE (V.O.)

Don't be.

(adds)

Grief can be an all-encompassing
thing. You're human. I think you need
to let yourself remember that
sometimes.

JEMMA

I'm fine. Really. I promise it won't
happen again.

MELANIE (V.O.)

Listen...Why don't you go ahead and
take a few days? I think it'll be good
for you...

INT. MANNING HOME - JEMMA'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Jemma lays in her bed, on the phone with Keith.

JEMMA

(heavily)

...It was mortifying.

KEITH (V.O.)
What exactly happened?

Jemma pauses. Unsure how she's supposed to explain what she saw to Keith.

KEITH (V.O. CONT'D)
Babe?

JEMMA
I took some NyQuil last night because
I was having trouble sleeping and--

KEITH (V.O.)
(groans)
...Jem, you gotta stop with self-
medicating--

JEMMA
--*I wasn't self-medicating!* I just
really needed a good night's sleep,
and I thought this would help.
Obviously, it didn't, and now I might
get fired.

Over the phone, Keith sighs.

KEITH (V.O.)
Dude, Melanie is not gonna fire you
over a five second meltdown on Zoom.
Don't you remember that guy who was
having an affair with your CFO's wife
then tried to fight him in the parking
lot after hours? And somehow, they're
both still at Raecom...
(adds)
I think you'll be okay.

JEMMA
You think I'm overreacting.

KEITH (V.O.)
No. I just think you need to relax.

Now it's Jemma's turn to sigh. If only he knew...

JEMMA
Well, I'm on mandatory leave for the
next few days so I'll have plenty of
time to "relax." All right?

KEITH (V.O.)

Jem...

JEMMA

(exasperated now)

What?

KEITH (V.O.)

Why do you always do this?

JEMMA

What are you talking about?

KEITH (V.O.)

Acting like you're somehow forced to
bear this burden of whatever it is you
think you have to alone.

JEMMA

What's that supposed to mean?

KEITH (V.O.)

(scoffs)

Oh, come on. Like you didn't realize
forcing yourself to stay all alone in
the house your brother just killed
himself in wasn't gonna somehow maybe
fuck your psyche up just a little.

A beat.

JEMMA

Wow. Screw you.

KEITH (V.O.)

Babe, come on.

JEMMA

I gotta go.

KEITH (V.O.)

Look, all I'm saying is that I think
you need to stop punishing yourself
for something you didn't do, and you
had no control over--

He's abruptly cut off as Jemma hangs up on him.

TIME CUT TO:

Jemma, still lying on her bed, staring up at the ceiling.

Finally, she sits up and grabs the NyQuil bottle from her nightstand. She unscrews the cap and chugs it down, making a face.

She gets up and draws the blinds on all the windows. Then she gets back into bed and pulls a sleep mask on over her eyes. She lays back down and exhales.

JEMMA
(out loud)
Come on. Please work.

FADE INTO:

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

Isaac stumbles his way back through the woods.

AVERY (O.S.)
Isaac, stop!!

Finally, Isaac stops. He slowly turns around. Avery stands behind him, tears streaming down her face.

AVERY (CONT'D)
Please. I can explain.

She shakily places a hand over her stomach.

AVERY (CONT'D)
...I'm pregnant.

This takes Isaac by surprise. He quickly glances from her hand on her stomach, to her other hand, still clutching the bloody rock.

AVERY (CONT'D)
(stammering)
He--he's been--I was afraid he was--

ISAAC
What happened? What did he do?

Avery just shakes her head, unable to continue. She silently holds up the rock, about the size of an apple, with jagged, sharp edges.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
You hit him with that?

He gestures to the rock. Avery nods wordlessly. Isaac

exhales, sharply, then quickly turns and walks back down towards the rocks.

AVERY
(calls out)
Isaac, wait!

Isaac ignores and keeps walking. He climbs up the shallow, rocky hill, and stares down over the edge.

Several feet down, Cameron lays, dead, eyes open and spread-eagled, on his back. A pool of blood spills out from under his head, spreading across the hard slab of stone that broke his fall.

Isaac quickly looks away, recoiling at the sight. He quickly turns and hurries down the hill, heading back to where Avery stands, still clutching the bloody rock in her fist. She's visibly trembling, eyes wide and locked on him as he approaches.

A gust of wind cuts through the air, and sleet begins to fall from the sky.

ISAAC
We gotta get out here. Now.

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Avery sits on the sofa, holding a crumpled tissue in her hands. Isaac stands across from her, beside the coffee table, where the blood-stained rock rests on a piece of newspaper.

ISAAC
(to Avery)
Start from the beginning.

Avery lets out a deep breath and fidgets with her tissue.

AVERY (CONT'D)
Cam and I never really planned on having kids. I was never a kid person myself; you remember that.
(Isaac nods)
I didn't even think it could happen, at my age. But it did, and he was over the moon about it. And at the time, I was too. I told myself this happened because it was supposed to. This would make everything okay, and we would be fine.

She shakes her head.

AVERY (CONT'D)

He had cheated once before, at the start of our marriage. We almost broke up for it, but he swore to me it would never happen again. I made myself believe him. But I guess that was part of the problem.

INT. AVERY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Avery looks over at Cameron's sleeping figure on the bed next to her. Then she picks up his phone to see a new message from CHELSEA:

CHELSEA (TEXT)

Miss you. Can't wait for our Vegas date this weekend ;)

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

AVERY (CONT'D)

He'd been hooking up with his coworker during their pharma conferences. She accidentally texted him on his personal phone instead of his work. I was about two months into my first trimester.

She lets out a deep sigh.

AVERY (CONT'D)

I don't know why I didn't confront him this time. I guess I just didn't want to accept that he was still the same person that he always was. Snakes don't change their nature, even if they shed their skin. Or become a father.

(sighs)

But...he's still my husband. And I've been in love with him since I was 18.

She pauses, wiping at her eyes with the tissue.

AVERY (CONT'D)

After we ran into you at the store, we went back to my parents' house. We got into this argument--

INT. AVERY'S PARENTS HOUSE - DUSK

Avery and Cameron stand in the hallway, in the middle of a heated argument.

AVERY

No, I told you, I don't want you smoking in the house!

CAMERON

Not *in* the house, down in the basement!!! Babe, come on! It's like twenty degrees outside! You want me to freeze to death then?

AVERY

Because dying of cancer is so much better.

CAMERON

Oh, jeez here we go--

AVERY

No really Cam. Do you even care at all that I'm pregnant? You know, with your baby?

CAMERON

What's that supposed to mean???

AVERY

It means you don't seem to care about endangering your future child as long as you get your fix.

Cameron's expression immediately hardens.

CAMERON

The fuck is that supposed to mean??

AVERY

You're a selfish asshole. You've always been.

She's emotional now, lashing out at him. He doesn't appreciate this. He grasps her by the arm. Enraged, Avery tries to shake him off.

AVERY

Get--off--!

CAMERON
Say that again.

AVERY
LET GO!!!

But Cameron, furious now, tightens his grip on her. They begin to struggle with each other in an incensed game of tug-of-war, until Cameron yanks a little too forcefully and Avery stumbles, losing her balance and slamming into the wall.

She cries out in pain as a shocked Cameron realizes what he's done.

CAMERON
Baby, I'm so sorry are you all right??

But Avery immediately recoils from him. Horrified by what he's done, Cameron grabs his coat in a rush, not saying another word before he hurries out of the house.

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

AVERY
He just...lost it. The way his face looked when it happened, I don't think he expected to lose control like that.

ISAAC
Has he ever...you know, before?

Avery shakes her head.

AVERY
He's never been physically violent. But he's always had a temper. And I've always had one too.
(heavily)
Maybe it was the realization that things weren't getting any better, and now I was carrying his child...that something inside me just snapped. I couldn't...I wouldn't risk letting him hurt me. Us. Anymore.

She looks backs at Isaac, unblinkingly this time.

AVERY (CONT'D)
I decided to go after him. In my head I was running through all the ways I was going to tell him I wanted a

divorce. The car was still in the driveway, so I knew he had probably gone into the woods. Sure enough, I found him down by the rocks. He had his headphones in, so he didn't hear me coming...

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

Avery, standing at the bottom of the hill, watches Cameron at the top, with his back to her, puffing away at his stog. There's an odd look in her eyes.

Abruptly, Avery picks up an apple sized rock with sharp, jagged edges. Then, in one fell swoop, she charges up the hill and slams the rock as hard as she can into the back of Cameron's head.

Cameron lets out a strangled yell and stumbles, grabbing at his head. He attempts to turn around, but Avery hits him again, harder, and he falls forward, toppling over the edge onto the rocks below. He lands on his back, smashing against the granite.

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

There's a glazed, almost dissociated look on Avery's face now.

AVERY

...I don't even really remember doing it. It was almost like I became someone else. And once I hit him, I couldn't stop, and I just kept going.

She starts shaking her head, frantically, as if she's just now realizing what she's done.

AVERY (CONT'D)

(breathes)

Oh, God...I killed him. I killed Cameron.

(hyperventilating now)

I killed my husband. I'm a murderer.

She's sobbing again. Isaac watches her with an odd, pensive look on his face.

ISAAC

Sounds like he was really putting you through it.

Avery stops crying for a moment to stare at him. Confused.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I mean. You were upset. Scared.
Emotional. You found out he was
cheating again and this time while you
were pregnant with his baby. Then, you
get into an argument about his smoking
and he doesn't seem to care that he's
hurting you...both of you. To top it
all off, he knew you were in a fragile
state, and he still got aggressive
with you. You could have been
seriously hurt.

Avery finally picks up what he's trying to imply.

AVERY

...Yeah.

ISAAC

I don't blame you.

AVERY

Really?

ISAAC

No. I think you got caught up in your
emotions and you did something you
didn't mean to. It just...sucks that
it happened the way it did.

His White Knight mode, for better or worse, has kicked in.

AVERY

I'm sorry.

Isaac just shakes his head.

AVERY (CONT'D)

No. I am. I'm sorry. For hurting you.
For leaving the way I did.

She's referring to them now. This catches Isaac off guard, he
wasn't expecting this.

ISAAC

That was like a lifetime ago.

AVERY

I know. But it needed to be said. You

didn't deserve that. You were always
so good to me. And I should have
treated you better. I'm sorry.

Isaac stays silent. But he *did* need to hear that.

AVERY

For almost two decades, I've tried to
quit him, but I've never been
successful. I always relapse.

(wistfully)

He's just...he was that guy for me,
you know? Every girl has one.

ANGLE ON: ISAAC

Still silent, but his face says it all. He's completely torn.
On the one hand, he just witnessed his ex-girlfriend murder
her husband, the man she left him for. But on the other hand,
it's AVERY. She's terrified, pregnant, and on the verge of a
breakdown. He can't help it. He needs to help her. Because in
a twisted, fucked up way, she's that girl for him. And like a
bad addiction, he can't seem to quit her either.

ISAAC

(finally)

...Let's get you cleaned up.

INT. MANNING HOME - BATHROOM - LATER

Avery's sitting on the counter, while Isaac leans against the
sink.

ISAAC

Are your parents home?

AVERY

No. They're in Florida right now,
until Monday, because they've had a
trip booked to the Keys since last
year. Cam and I coming here was
actually kind of last minute. We just
wanted to get a visit in before I got
too pregnant to travel.

ISAAC

Okay. So, nobody but you and Cam at
the house this weekend.

Avery stares at him, confused by this.

ISAAC
(clarifies)
No witnesses.

AVERY
(realizing)
Oh. Right.

Isaac pushes himself off the sink and walks over to the window. He peers out into the dark driveway, covered in a light dusting of snow.

ISAAC
(observing)
The snow's already sticking. If nobody's found him yet, by the time the police do, it might just look like a bad accident.

AVERY
What if somebody's already found him?

ISAAC
In this weather? Nah. Besides, it's already pitch-black outside.

He nods, as if confirming his own thoughts.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I think you're okay. Now your alibi...

He leans back against the sink, now deep in thought.

ISAAC
He goes out for a smoke. Meanwhile, you decide to take a nap, 'cuz you're sleeping for two. A few hours later, you wake up. He's not back home yet. Now, you're worried.

Isaac pauses, thinking. Then realizes something else.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
He had his headphones in, right? So that means he had his phone with him?

AVERY
I think so. Yeah.

ISAAC
Get your phone out.

AVERY

What?

ISAAC

Do you have your phone with you?

AVERY

Yeah, but--

ISAAC

Take it out.

Avery does. Isaac quickly takes from it and checks the time.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I'll drive you back to your place.
While we're in the car, I want you to
call his phone. Let it ring. Make sure
you do this before you call the cops.

AVERY

Why?

ISAAC

We gotta make this look legit. Think
about it. If you wake up from a nap
and find your husband hasn't come
home, you're naturally gonna call him
first, right?

AVERY

...Right.

Isaac continues pacing back and forth.

ISAAC

By the time we get back to your house,
it'll have been a few hours. That's
just enough time to fit waking up from
a nap, realizing he didn't come home
and then going to look for him.
Assuming the police will scour the
scene, if they find your footprints,
it'll line up with your story.

AVERY

But wait. What about you? You were
there too.

Isaac pauses. Good point.

ISAAC
Shit. You're right.

AVERY
By the way. Why were you in that neck
of the woods, anyway?

Isaac immediately shifts, looking sheepish. Then he sighs.

ISAAC
Well. After I ran into you, I couldn't
stop thinking about you. About us.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I hadn't seen you since...well since
you left. And then I got to thinking
about how I used to drive you back to
your parents' place all the time after
we hung out. I think that route is
ingrained in me at this point. I don't
even think I realized what I was
doing, I just got into my car and
started driving until I ended up by
your house. Then I chickened out and
drove past. I ended up parking in that
cul-de-sac down the road. That's how I
ended up on the trail.

He looks away, embarrassed. But Avery reaches out and grabs
his hand.

AVERY
(softly)
I'm glad you did.

Isaac looks back up at her, surprised. But he can't help but
smile too.

AVERY
I just don't want them to come after
you.

Isaac shakes his head.

ISAAC
If they do, I'll just tell them the
truth. I was going for a walk before
the storm hit. I live in the area, so
that shouldn't be too hard to believe.

They lock eyes, staring at each other. Both processing.

AVERY

Do you think they'd be able to place us there at the same time though?

ISAAC

I thought about that. They might...but here's the thing. Hidden Crest is like the only hiking trail in this area, so it gets a ton of foot traffic. Our tracks won't be the only ones they find. Plus, with all the snow, they might not even pick up on it.

They both consider this for a moment.

AVERY

God, I should have watched more crime shows...

They both chuckle despite themselves.

ISAAC

Unless someone, one of your neighbors happen to see us walk out together, I think we'll be okay.

Avery nods slowly.

AVERY

Well. If anyone does, I'll just say that we were old friends who happened to run into each other at a really bad time. I told you what happened, and you came back with me to the house. You wanted to stay with me until the police came, but I didn't want you to be stuck out in the storm. So I told you to go home.

A beat, as they continue staring at each other. ***Would this actually work?***

ISAAC

(nods)

Okay. That's what we'll go with.

He turns his attention to the rock sitting on the table.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I'll...take care of that.

AVERY
Really? You'd do that?

Isaac squeezes her hand.

ISAAC
Anything.

INT. MANNING HOME - THE NEXT DAY

Isaac opens the door to find Avery is standing on the snow-covered doorstep, bundled in a long winter coat and heavy scarf.

AVERY
(breathlessly)
Hi.

ISAAC
Avery? What are you doing here?

AVERY
They stopped the investigation!

ISAAC
What?

AVERY
Are--are you busy? Can I--?

He quickly gestures for her to come inside. She does. He shuts the door then turns back to stare at her.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Why were you driving?? There's like a foot of snow outside. SkyReach already told us we're working from home the rest of this week--

AVERY
It's okay. They started plowing like an hour ago, and there's no one on the road.
(she pauses, sidetracks)
You're still working at SkyReach.

She smiles faintly. Isaac is confused.

ISAAC
Yeah?

AVERY

Nothing. I just...I like how some things just don't change.

Her smile lingers. Isaac doesn't know what to say to this.

AVERY (CONT'D)

(back on track)

Anyways. You're right. There's about a foot of snow outside. Which is why they halted the investigation.

ISAAC

You...you talked to the cops?

AVERY

Yes. After you dropped me off, I called 9-1-1 and told them exactly what happened. They brought it, hook, line, and sinker.

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

A tearful Avery standing with HILLSIDE POLICE at the crime scene, watching as the MEDICAL EXAMINERS place Cameron's corpse into a body bag. Meanwhile, the snow falls steadily, creating a blanket of snow mixed with slush on the ground.

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Isaac's practically radiating with relief.

ISAAC

Wow. Okay. So...they didn't try and question you more?

AVERY

They did, but it was more for formalities than anything since I was the one who found him. They had to rule me out and since my alibi checked out, they just had me tell them what happened from my end so they could file the police report. Then they let me go home.

AVERY (CONT'D)

Then this morning, I get a call from the medical examiner's office, and they said the autopsy report determined Cam's cause of death as

blunt force trauma to the head, but there wasn't enough evidence to confirm if he died before or after he hit the rocks. They did say the angle of how he fell likely contributed to his death. So, for now, they're tentatively ruling it as an accident, unless new evidence suggests otherwise.

She sighs, visibly relieved.

ISAAC
Wow. That's--that's--

AVERY
GREAT.

Isaac winces, unsure if "great" is the right term for the current situation.

AVERY (CONT'D)
Thank you.

She gives him a meaningful nod. Isaac manages a nod back.

ISAAC
I got you.

Avery promptly throws her arms around him, hugging him.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Whoa. Easy...

He's silenced by her kissing him. Shocked, Isaac quickly pulls away.

AVERY
It's okay.

ISAAC
But...what about...?

Avery responds by kissing Isaac again. This pushes Isaac off the edge, and he kisses her back, eagerly.

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Isaac and Avery are on the couch. A throw blanket covers them both. Avery is laying against Isaac's chest. He's playing with her hair.

AVERY

This was nice. Reminds me of old times.

ISAAC

Yeah.

However, from the look on his face, it's clear he's not as comfortable as she is.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Avery.

Avery looks up at him.

AVERY

Yeah?

ISAAC

Not that this wasn't fun, actually it was more than fun, it was amazing--but are you sure you're okay?

AVERY

What do you mean?

ISAAC

I mean...you just lost your husband.

Lost...or killed. He doesn't clarify that though.

AVERY

(tightly)

I know.

ISAAC

I know he hurt you. And I know you did what you thought you had to, but--

AVERY

--But what? What did you mean by that?

Suddenly, she's not smiling anymore. She abruptly moves herself out of Isaac's arms, then turns to face him.

AVERY (CONT'D)

...Do you not believe me?

ISAAC

What? No. Of course I believe you.

AVERY

(defensive now)

Then what did you mean by 'I did what I thought I had to do?' You think I meant to do it? Like I planned out the whole thing?

Thrown, Isaac sits up as well.

ISAAC

No. That's *not* what I'm saying.

AVERY

You don't know what I've been through with him. I wasn't safe with him anymore.

ISAAC

...I know.

They stare at each other for a beat. Silent. Then, just like that, Avery's defensiveness dissolves. She relaxes back against him, as Isaac places his arms around her. But there's something different in his demeanor now...

TIME CUT TO:

Isaac wakes up to see Avery standing over him. She's dressed in her coat and scarf.

ISAAC

Hey. What's going on?

AVERY

I have to go. Home.

ISAAC

Oh. Okay.

AVERY

My parents finally got on a flight back, they'll be landing in a bit. All the flights were canceled yesterday because of the snow.

ISAAC

Oh, right. Of course.

He sits up on the sofa. There's something different in Avery's demeanor.

AVERY

My in-laws are flying in from Seattle
too. Funeral stuff to plan...

She trails off, distracted. Preoccupied.

ISAAC

Let me walk you out.

AVERY

No. It's okay. I think you better stay
seated.

Isaac stares at her but remains seated. Avery stands there
for a beat, her chest heaving. Then, unexpectedly, she starts
to cry.

AVERY

(sobbing)

Cameron didn't cheat on me.

ISAAC

...What?

Avery just shakes her head and continues crying.

ISAAC

(staring)

Avery. What are you talking about?

A BEAT.

AVERY

I slept with my coworker.

ANGLE ON: ISAAC, STUNNED.

We stay on Isaac, while Avery continues...

AVERY (CONT'D O.S.)

I'm sorry I lied to you. I didn't know
what else to do.

ISAAC

(breathing heavily)

No. No.

He gets up from the couch, shaking his head frantically,
trying to stay calm.

AVERY (O.S.)
Isaac, I'm sorry.

Isaac keeps shaking his head. He can't believe what he's hearing.

ISAAC
No. No. You can't. This isn't...

He's babbling now. He doesn't know how to process what she's telling him.

BACK TO AVERY

Who watches Isaac, her face full of remorse now.

AVERY
The baby isn't Cameron's. I didn't want him to find out.

Isaac just stares her, speechless.

AVERY (CONT'D)
I went out for happy hour one night after work a few months ago. Cam was away on business trip, and I stayed out drinking with one of my coworkers, Ebon.

INT. EBON'S CAR - NIGHT

Avery and Ebon stumble out of the bar, giggling and holding onto each other to keep from falling over.

AVERY (V.O.)
We had a few too many martinis that night and one thing led to another...

Avery and Ebon hooking up in the backseat. They're both wasted.

AVERY (V.O. CONT'D)
I was too drunk to remember to tell him I was off my birth control...

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Avery takes a deep breath.

AVERY (CONT'D)
...When Cam got back from his trip, my

period was late. He didn't think anything of it, just assumed it was from before he left, but I knew. And let's just say, Ebon's a lot *paler* than Cameron was. One way or another, he was gonna find out the baby wasn't his.

She shakes her head.

AVERY (CONT'D)

I didn't...I didn't know how to tell him. Cam. I mean, I agonized over it in my head, a million different scenarios but--

ISAAC

(cuts her off)

So, you decided to kill him?

His tone is unnervingly calm. But his expression is anything but. Avery is completely thrown by his reaction.

AVERY

No. I--I panicked. I told you. I just panicked.

ISAAC

(shakes his head)

No, you didn't.

AVERY

Wh--what do you mean?

Issac just stares her down.

ISAAC

Who the fuck are you?

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Younger Isaac sees younger Avery for the first time.

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Now, older Isaac sees older Avery for what she really is. And he's disgusted.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

You lied to me. You stared me right in the face and lied about him cheating

on you, so I'd feel sorry for you and believe you didn't kill him on purpose.

AVERY
(tearfully)
I didn't do it on purpose! I was just...I was panicking, and I wasn't thinking straight!

ISAAC
I don't believe you.

Avery's pleading with her eyes now.

AVERY
Isaac...

ISAAC
Did you lie about him getting rough with you? Huh? Did you make that up too??

AVERY
(shaking her head)
Isaac, no you don't understand--

ISAAC
You know what, I think you better go.

AVERY (CONT'D)
Isaac, Isaac what are you going to do? If you tell them, you know what's going to happen right?

Is this a threat? Isaac stares back at her.

ISAAC
You killed an innocent man, Avery. I watched you do it. And then you had me help you cover it up.

A beat. Avery wipes her eyes. Then, she stands up straighter. Suddenly, her demeanor shifts. She's no longer groveling.

AVERY
Yes, and you helped me to get rid of the evidence.

EXT. LAKE PARSIPANONG - EVENING

Isaac throws the bloody rock into the water.

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Isaac's jaw clenches. She's right.

AVERY (CONT'D)

By the way. I didn't ask you to help me. You chose to do it on your own. You're in this just as much as I am now.

(more)

...And if you do tell the cops what you saw, *they're going to want to know what you did.*

Isaac exhales sharply. Avery, still holding his gaze, tilts her chin slightly, as if challenging him.

AVERY (CONT'D)

The cops said they were tentatively ruling it an accident but that they'd hold off closing the case until after the storm passed. Now, there's about a foot of snow outside. We're about to get hit with another cold front. By the time the ice thaws, these small-town cops will have already moved on to the next mall theft or drug bust at the local high school.

Isaac says nothing. Avery gives him a defiant look.

AVERY (CONT'D)

We're basically home free. Unless, of course, you wanna play the straight man...

ISAAC

Fuck you.

AVERY

What are you gonna do, Isaac? Are you gonna give me up? Or let me go?

It's like she's taunting him now with her words. Because they both know he's never been able to do either or...

ISAAC
(finally)
Get the fuck out of my house.

EXT. CAMILLE'S APARTMENT - MANHATTAN - EVENING

Isaac walks up the steps of a brownstone building.

He repeatedly rings the buzzer. Moments later, a confused Camille appears at the door. Her expression changes to surprise when she sees Isaac.

CAMILLE
Isaac? What are you doing here?? I've
been trying to reach you, why didn't
you call me back??

ISAAC
I'm sorry.

CAMILLE
What?

ISAAC
I can't...I can't do this anymore.

CAMILLE
...What do you mean?

ISAAC
It's not you, okay? I want you to know
this is not your fault. It's never
been you. It's me. I'm the problem.
And I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. You
deserve better. I'm sorry.

He turns and speeds back down the steps, ignoring Camille's calls out to him. He doesn't let her see the agony on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. MANNING HOME - BASEMENT - LATER

Isaac walks down the stairs, carrying two shopping bags, a crumpled piece of newspaper under his arm, and a baseball bat.

He drops the shopping bags, newspaper, and baseball bat onto the concrete floor. The sound echoes across the room.

Isaac reaches into one of the bags and starts pulling out ceramic plates, cups, and saucers. Cheap ones from Walmart.

He lays everything out on the basement floor. Then he picks up the shopping bags and newspaper and walks over to the trashcan by the wall.

He smooths out the crumpled newspaper, staring down at the specks of dried blood. Then, he swiftly tears the newspaper into pieces, letting the scraps fall into the garbage. He shoves the shopping bags on top, burying everything into the trashcan.

He leans down and picks up a plate. Then he angrily hurls it at the wall like a frisbee. The plate smashes to pieces.

He picks up two cups. Smashes both of them. Then another. And another.

His face is contorted with pain. Breathing heavily, he picks up the baseball bat and smashes a row of plates. He keeps smashing until he finally breaks down into sobs.

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Isaac walks into the living room, carrying a bottle of Scotch and a glass.

He slumps down on the sofa and places the bottle and glass on the table. He opens the bottle, starts to pour some into the glass, then changes his mind and drinks straight from the bottle instead.

He picks up his phone. Scrolls through his contacts...and pauses over Jemma's name. His finger hovers the call button.

He changes his mind and keeps scrolling. He lingers over Max's name. Then his Mom's. Then his Dad's. ***But he doesn't call any of them.***

Finally, Isaac places his phone down and continues drinking.

He drinks until he passes out.

INT. MANNING HOME - LIVING ROOM - SOMETIME LATER

Isaac wakes up from his drunken stupor. He sits up. Feels around for his phone. Three missed calls from Camille. He ignores this.

He decides to call Jemma instead. The call goes to voicemail.

He angrily throws the phone on the ground.

He reaches across the table and swipes the Scotch bottle, now half empty. He drinks some more. He coughs and groans, then tosses the bottle aside.

He grabs the phone from the floor and dials Jemma once more. He lets it ring once before quickly hanging up.

He places his phone on the table. He hunches over and cradles his head in his hands. His breathing is coming out in wracked, stressful pants.

MAX (V.O.)
Sorry to bail like this.

MAX (V.O.)
Try again next time?

ISAAC (V.O.)
Yeah. Yeah. *Next time...*

Isaac raises his head and exhales. ***He knows now there will be no next time.*** Slowly, he gets to his feet and walks out of the living room and towards the stairs...

ANGLE ON: ISAAC'S PHONE

Ringling, as Jemma calls him back. The ringing continues against the backdrop of Isaac's footsteps echoing up the stairs.

INT. MANNING HOME - JEMMA'S BEDROOM - PRESENT (EVENING)

Jemma wakes up and pulls off her sleep mask. Her face is wet with tears.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. LAKE PARSIPANONG - DAY

Jemma walks along the lake. The murky water is still mostly frozen, and around her, the ground is covered with a light coat of icy snow.

Jemma stops still. Then turns around. Isaac's standing behind her.

ISAAC
Hey, Jem.

JEMMA

(blurts out)

Are you a ghost? Or am I dreaming again?

ISAAC

I'm not a ghost.

JEMMA

I know what happened. I know what she made you do.

Isaac lowers his gaze to the ground.

JEMMA (CONT'D)

You were...you were trying to tell me this whole time, weren't you? You were trying to show me what happened.

Isaac looks back up at her and nods. As absurd as this all is, Jemma is somehow relieved by this revelation.

JEMMA (CONT'D)

So... you're not a ghost? You're just like some Freddy Krueger version of my brother?

ISAAC

(smiles)

Well. Freddy was killing people in their dreams so...

JEMMA

You know what I mean.

ISAAC

Right. Uh. I don't know. I mean, I don't know what I am. Or what this is, exactly. But I don't think...I don't think I'm a ghost.

JEMMA

Then why haven't you moved on?

Isaac actually looks perturbed by this.

ISAAC

I think...I'm just stuck.

(continued)

I could see you guys, you know. You, Mom, and Dad, when you were all in the

house together. But it was like I was watching you from the other side of a two-way mirror. I could see you guys, but you couldn't see me. It was like we weren't on the same plane.

JEMMA

That's because you're dead.

She didn't mean for it to come out so deadpan. But Isaac laughs.

ISAAC

Yeah. True. But I think we're still connected, you and I. Through your subconscious.

JEMMA

What do you mean?

ISAAC

Like, I can somehow connect with you when you're sleeping. I can't do it when you're awake, because we're not on the same plane anymore, but when you're asleep, it's like a portal opens and I can actually interact with you.

Jemma sighs.

JEMMA

This is crazy.

ISAAC

Maybe. Maybe not.

JEMMA

Easy for you to say. How am I supposed to explain any of this anyone? They'll have me committed.

ISAAC

Do you remember cans with strings?

JEMMA

Huh?

ISAAC

It's a game from when we were kids. You take two coffee cans, drill holes

at the bottom, and then you run a really long piece of wire or string through the holes connecting the cans. Then, each person takes one can, and you stand really far apart, and one person speaks into their can while the other listens with theirs, and they can hear what the other is saying.

JEMMA

Okay...

ISAAC

It's like that. You're on one end of the string, and I'm on the other. Your subconscious is the thread that connects us.

A beat, as Jemma considers this.

JEMMA

I guess that makes sense.

ISAAC

You get it now?

JEMMA

Yeah. Yeah. I do. I mean, looking back, I first started having these dreams around the time of your funeral. At first, they were kinda fuzzy, and I was only getting snippets. But then, the longer I stayed at the house, the dreams started getting clearer and longer, more vivid...until it was like I wasn't even dreaming anymore, I was watching your--

ISAAC

--My memories.

JEMMA

Yeah. Like I was in your head.

ISAAC

I just wanted you to know what happened.

They stand there, silent, for a moment. Then--

JEMMA

...I'm sorry.

ISAAC

For what?

JEMMA

For not being there for you when you needed me. I got so caught up in my own life, I didn't realize you were hurting. And I'm sorry.

ISAAC

It's not your fault.

JEMMA

But I should have reached out. I shouldn't have just stopped calling.

ISAAC

(shakes his head)

I was the one who screwed up. I was the one who couldn't handle it.

JEMMA

But you didn't have to handle it, alone. You have me. I'm here now.

Isaac smiles. There are tears in his eyes now.

ISAAC

I'm sorry I gave up.

He pauses, chest heaving.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I just...I couldn't. I couldn't live with it, knowing what I did. What I helped her do. An innocent man was killed, and I helped her get away with it. *She's* gonna get away with it because of me.

He shakes his head.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I couldn't face telling you guys. Not you. Mom and Dad. Max. Camille.

(regretfully)

I cheated on my girlfriend for what? For the...woman who broke my heart a

million years ago then used me for her sick play. And I fell for it. Twice.

JEMMA
(quietly)
It's okay.

ISAAC
I couldn't let her go. Why couldn't I just let her go???

JEMMA
Because you loved her. You would have done anything for her.

ISAAC
I'm a chump.

JEMMA
No. Just human.

INT. ISAAC'S CAR - LATER

Jemma and Isaac are sitting in the car, with Jemma behind the wheel and Isaac in the passenger seat.

ISAAC
You're driving my car.

He grins at Jemma, who shrugs.

JEMMA
Somebody has to.

ISAAC
Good. I'm glad.

JEMMA
So. What now.

ISAAC
I don't know.

They sit there, in silence, for a beat. Then, Jemma turns on the stereo. "Country Grammar" starts playing.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Nice.

He grins at her. She grins back...and turns up the volume.

INT. ISAAC'S CAR - PRESENT (DAY)

Jemma opens her eyes. She's in the car, alone.

Outside, the sun reflects down on Lake Parsipanong's murky water.

Jemma stares at the empty passenger seat for a moment. Then, she turns her keys in the ignition. The engine starts, and as the Bluetooth speakers connect, "Country Grammar" begins playing once more.

INT. MANNING HOME - BASEMENT - LATER

Jemma walks down into the basement, carrying another cardboard box. She stacks the new box on top of the stack.

As she walks back towards the stairs, she suddenly spots the trashcan by the wall, overflowing to the brim.

CUT TO:

INT. MANNING HOME - KITCHEN - SAME

Jemma empties the trashcan into the kitchen garbage. As broken pieces of ceramic, crumpled shopping bags, and torn newspaper tumble out, a scrap of newspaper, stained red, floats out onto the floor.

Jemma puts the trashcan down and picks up the torn piece, examining it. The red stain isn't paint or pen. It's darker, congealed. **Blood.**

FADE TO BLACK.

SLOW FADE IN:

EXT. AVERY'S HOUSE - SEATTLE - EVENING

A car drives up and parks in front of the house. The passenger door swings open, and Avery slowly steps out. Her stomach is noticeably larger. Meanwhile, EBON (white male, late 30s), gets out from the driver's side.

AVERY

Thanks for taking it easy over the speed bumps.

EBON

Of course. I had precious cargo in the car.

He winks at her. She leans up and gives him a kiss.

AVERY

You're gonna be a great dad.

She gives him her trademark Avery smile. Ebon takes her hand and holds it, intertwining their fingers. Like all the others, he's smitten with her.

CUT TO:

INT. RENTAL CAR - SAME

Jemma, sitting in the driver's seat, watches Avery and Ebon walk into the house. She's parked across the street.

Jemma glances down at the Ziplock bag on her lap. Inside the bag are the pieces of bloodstained newspaper. The same newspaper used to wrap the bloody rock that Avery hit Cameron with.

CUT TO:

INT. AVERY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The doorbell rings.

Avery walks into the hallway and over to the front door. She opens the door, and her eyes widen in surprise.

Jemma's standing on her doorstep. It takes Avery a moment to process.

AVERY

...Jemma?

(more)

Jemma Manning??

JEMMA

Hi, Avery. Long time no see.

AVERY

(recovering)

Oh. Wow. Wow. This is such a surprise.
What are you doing here? How did you
even find--?

ANGLE ON: AVERY

Who quickly stops talking. She's staring, presumably, at Jemma. We stay on her, watching as her expression shifts from

surprise to unease. Then, her face pales as we

CUT TO BLACK.

The end.