

thrown back Rachel

by

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When something makes perfect sense, it begins to exist; And really, the only way anything exists is to make perfect sense.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE: KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING (YEAR 1993)

Rachel Bailey (17), dressed for school, is having breakfast. Her mom, Judith, weekly trudges into the kitchen, wheezing, wearing a head tie to cover her bald head. She faces Rachel, taking a seat at the table.

JUDITH

How many times would I have to tell you before you took out the trash? It really stinks in here. Why d'you always have to be so darn difficult?

RACHEL

Mom, you're seriously ill, you really shouldn't concern yourself with the little things. And besides, the trash isn't full and it doesn't stink; It's just the cancer makes you think everything stinks. I'll take it out when it's full or if it actually starts to stink.

She gets up and kisses her mom goodbye.

RACHEL

Love you, mom. Get over this disease. We need you back

She starts to head out, and her mom motions to her uncleared dishes-

JUDITH

Who's gonna clean this up?

RACHEL

I'll get it all when I get back. I like to do 'em all at once. You can leave yours too.

JUDITH

You can't just leave the kitchen a pigsty and act like everything's okay.

RACHEL
Ma, the little things- Focus on
getting better.

She walks away, and Judith's left, pondering...

JUDITH
(mumbles to herself)
Well you're not helping.

Rachel goes out the front door, shutting it. Judith sighs,
gets up, and hobbles out of the kitchen.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rachel gets into her 1982 Chevy Cavalier and drives off.

INT. HALLWAY BETWEEN BEDROOMS - CONTINUOUS

Judith trudges along the hallway, then stops abruptly,
clutching onto her midriff, in pain, hunching over, too tired
to go on. She begins breathing through her mouth, trying to
staunch the overwhelming nausea that's come upon her. She
hurls on the floor. Becky, Judith's younger sister of 35,
rushes to her aid.

BECKY
Oh my God, Judy! What should I do?

JUDITH
(short of breath, struggles)
I'm fine...I'm fine. Just get the
pills.

Becky rushes into Judith's bedroom.

BECKY (OS)
Which one?!

JUDITH
(painfully mutters)
Blue cap.

She stares at her own pool of vomit on the floor.

EXT./INT. SUBURB / MOVING CHEVY CAVALIER - CONTINUOUS

Rachel, sad and pensive drives through the street on her way
to school. She breaks into tears, sobbing, and pulls over to
the side of the road. She bangs on the wheel, frustrated,
crying.

later, Rachel comports herself, and continues the drive to school.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel parks the Cavalier in the lot. She then opens the visor mirror, staring at her melancholic face... She sighs.

INT. CLASSROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Rachel's sat in front. The teacher, Mr. Phil (50's) is teaching, but Rachel falls asleep. He sees.

MR. PHIL

Rachel... Rachel!

Her eyes come open, and not that she's startled or anything; The girl's resigned; Too tired, troubled and depressed.

MR. PHIL (CONT'D)

I don't remember us ever planning for this class to hold in your bedroom. Oh, am I boring you?

RACHEL

My mom's sick.

She yawns, and Mr. Phil flinches a bit.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I stayed up all night looking after her.

Mr. Phil cocks his head to one side, staring Rachel in the eyes.

MR. PHIL

You don't think my own mom's also sick?! You don't think I too stayed up all night looking after her?!

RACHEL

My mom has cancer.

MR. PHIL

Like there's any other disease in my family. Listen, Rachel, when you have to come to class, you take an oath within yourself, a solemn vow to uphold the honor and sanctity of the class; To offer yourself and

appreciate it in fullness of heart and mind. Nothing short of that is acceptable, Rachel. It's your future. HAVE SOME CLASS!

He holds her stare.

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Rachel sits alone, melancholic, picking at her salad. Her best friends Brenden and Vivian join her at the table, each carrying lunch trays.

BRENDEN

There you are. Where were you? We didn't see you in Chemistry.

RACHEL

I wasn't feeling very well. I had to go see the nurse.

VIVIAN

What's the matter? Are you okay?

RACHEL

I'm fine, it's just...they say it was a panic attack. You know, with everything going on with my mom, I get stressed out.

BRENDEN

Oh.

(he takes her hand)

We're sorry, Rache. Anything you need, just let us know, we're here for you.

VIVIAN

(puts an affectionate hand on Rachel's shoulder)

Don't be so hard on yourself. Things are gonna be fine.

RACHEL

I can't do blind optimism, Vivs.

VIVIAN

Anyway, we're gonna party it out tonight at Fiona's.

RACHEL
 (perks up a bit)
 Oh that's tonight? Yeah.

BRENDEN
 Yeah, cheer up, Rache, there's still a
 lot of good left in this life.

RACHEL
 Yeah I know.

EXT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - LATER

Rachel parks in the driveway and remains in the car, staring into space... She sighs and drags herself out of the car. She sees that the front door of the house has been left open, and she ponders this with worry. She tentatively makes her way into the door. It's dead quiet.

RACHEL
 Mom?

No response. Rachel heads up the stairs.

RACHEL
 Mom?

She comes to her mom's bedroom door, gently pushes it open, sees her mom lain on the bed, eyes shut. She quietly moves to the bedside, sees her mom's breathing- A sigh of relief. Judith's eyes come open, she smiles-

JUDITH
 Hey.

RACHEL
 (smiles)
 Hey.

JUDITH
 How was school today?

RACHEL
 Good. Aced my English test.

JUDITH
 Nice. Try and keep it up this time.

RACHEL
 Yes, mom... Hey, I met the front door
 wide open when I got back. Is Aunty

Becky around?

JUDITH

She went out to get my medicine. She must have neglected the door- Careless as usual.

RACHEL

(nods)

Right.

JUDITH

(cocks her head)

Rachel.

RACHEL

Yeah?

JUDITH

Do the dishes,
(her voice fades)
and take out the tr...

Her eyes go shut as she falls back asleep. Rachel sighs and straightens up her mom's blanket.

RACHEL

(whispers)

You need to rest, Mom.

She heads out the room.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rachel's getting ready to go party. She stares in the mirror, pensive... She manages a hint of smile, then walks out.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

She gets in her car and drives off.

INT./EXT. MOVING CAVALIER / SUBURBS - CONTINUOUS

She turns on the radio- A song she doesn't like- She retunes and retunes, looking for a good one. She finally finds one and starts singing along- And just then the song cuts off, going to static. She pouts, sighs. She pulls over at a house, honking the horn. She has to honk a few times before Vivian hurries out of the house. Rachel glares at her as she joins her in the car.

VIVIAN

I know. I know. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.
I had to use the bathroom last minute.

RACHEL

Hope you didn't forget to wash your
hands this time.

VIVIAN

Come on. You know me.

RACHEL

God, you're so gross.

They drive off. Vivian takes an intent look at Rachel-

VIVIAN

Hey, how you holding up?

RACHEL

Mm, I'm holding up.

VIVIAN

Everything's gonna be fine.

RACHEL

Yeah, maybe. But tonight I loosen up
and have fun. I owe myself that much,
eh?

VIVIAN

(smiles warmly)

You owe yourself that much.

EXT./INT. ROAD THROUGH THE WOODS / MOVING CAVALIER -
CONTINUOUS

The Cavalier drives along a stretch of road in the woods.

INT./EXT. SUBURB / MOVING CAVALIER - MOMENTS LATER

The Cavalier drives along the lamp-lip lonely streets of this suburb. It rounds a bend, and the party house comes into view. Even from afar it sure looks like a lot of fun, with strobe lights beaming out the windows, and the loud music resonating through the beautiful neighborhood.

The Cavalier pulls up at the party house, and the party's raving. There are partiers outside, drinking, playing, brawling, barfing.

VIVIAN

Now that's what I'm talking about; Hot boys!

RACHEL

(staring at the mayhem)
This should be fun.

They get out of the car and head into the house.

INT. PARTY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rachel and Vivian are received by the hostess, FIONA (17), who smiles widely at them.

FIONA

Hey, guys.

RACHEL / VIVIAN

(as they and Fiona kiss cheeks)
Hey, Fiona. Awesome party.

FIONA

Thanks.

Rachel and Vivian move into the party, bobbing their heads to the music, and smilingly acknowledging people they know. They head to the snack bar, and find that okra hors d'oeuvres are widely available. They giggle at this. And besides the regular punch, beer is abundant, and they smirk at this. They try the okra hors d'oeuvres, and they ain't half bad.

VIVIAN

These are actually quite good.

RACHEL

I know, right?

They help themselves to beers, smilingly clinking cans. They munch and chug, moving their bodies to the music.

Brenden stealthily approaches them from behind, tapping both girls on the shoulder, and instantly disappearing and reappearing in front of them, himself holding a beer-

BRENDEN

Too slow.

RACHEL / VIVIAN

Too lame.

BRENDEN
Cool party, eh?

RACHEL / VIVIAN
You bet your ass.

VIVIAN
Isn't it great that Fiona invited us despite the fact that we don't frolic with her in any way at all. Some may say we even snub her.

RACHEL
Naw, come on. It's not that. It's just we move in different circles; is all. She moves with the flamboyant, flashy, mischievous crew. While we maintain our quiet, low key, reasonable fraternity. Hey, some may say she snubs us.

BRENDEN
But being that she invited us to this her cool party, I'd beg to differ.

RACHEL / VIVIAN
Right.

BRENDEN
(quietly)
You know, there are rumors going around that the chick once did time in jail on a drug related charge.

VIVIAN
I wouldn't be surprised.

RACHEL
(quietly)
And her grades don't add up. Everyone knows Fiona Stuart doesn't know jank. So how comes the B's, or even C's. And the way she addresses teachers and staffers on first name even nickname terms is just downright unholy.

BRENDEN
Yeah, the whole thing just points to foul play. Makes one question the integrity of our school.

VIVIAN
I know, right?

RACHEL
Yeah. But here we are, underage-
drinking.
(she smiles, raising her beer)
So, don't ask, don't tell.

BRENDEN / VIVIAN
(raising their own beers, smiling)
Don't ask, don't tell!

They clink cans.

Later, Rachel, Vivian, and Brenden dance to the music, and Brenden's dancing gets really eccentric and awkward, and the girls snicker at him.

Three of them go to the bar and take more beers.

Later still, Rachel stares from a distance as Brenden makes out with some girl. Is she jealous?

Later, from a distance, Vivian shows Rachel a cute boy she's crushing on. This is Jules, a sophomore jock; letter jacket and all. He's deep in conversation with his pals, all of whom pay rapt attention to him as he exhorts and gesticulates wildly; preaching about basketball. Then he gets a call on his chunky, period cellphone in a pouch on his waist, and all his friends blanch with envy.

VIVIAN
Oh my God, he's so cute, and he's got
one of them cellphones. I wish I had
one of those. I'd call him just to
hear his voice, he'd speak to me, and
I'll kiss him through the phone.

RACHEL
'Course you would.

Vivian keeps staring at Jules, smiling, fantasizing.

Later; Rachel, Vivian, and Brenden are headed for the front door, leaving the party, chattering.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Brenden sees Rachel and Vivian off as they get into the Cavalier-

BRENDEN

Okay, guys. See you in school Monday.
And don't forget the homework. Do 'em
and show up on time so we can switch-
Especially you, Vivian, don't let us
down again, we won't let it slide this
time.

VIVIAN

(fed up)
Yeah yeah yeah.

BRENDEN

(waving)
Okay, buh bye.

RACHEL / VIVIAN

(smilingly wave back)
Bye.

They drive off.

INT./EXT. MOVING CAVALIER / SUBURB - CONTINUOUS

VIVIAN

God, he's such a fuss.

RACHEL

(disputes)
Is he?!

INT./EXT. MOVING CAVALIER / ROAD THROUGH THE WOODS - LATER

The Cavalier is the only vehicle on the road, and the girls just stare at the wide, open road ahead, their faces blank. The Cavalier is going at some 34 miles-per-hour when, out of nowhere,

BASH!

it hits something... or someone; Rachel, slamming the brakes. The body mass tosses through the air, landing about 17 feet from the car, and laying motionless; it's a person; a dude. The girls are flabbergasted. They just stare in horror at the motionless victim in the headlights. The victim seems to be a middle-aged man; He shows no signs of life, and he's dressed in a really fancy Italian suit. Rachel's dumbfounded; Vivian, wide-eyed and horrified-

VIVIAN

Oh my God.

RACHEL
(pause)
Oh my God.

The girls gaze at each other; Rachel, trembling.

RACHEL
He came outta nowhere. What are we gonna do? We have to call an ambulance. Oh my God. I gotta go see how he's doing. We need to find a phone.

She moves to get out of the car, and Vivian holds her back.

VIVIAN
(solemn, resolute)
You can't go out there.

RACHEL
(bewildered)
What?

VIVIAN
We have to get out of here. Drive.

RACHEL
What? We can't just leave him here.

VIVIAN
This isn't just gonna go away, Rachel! You hit someone with your car, and you're probably drunk! You'd go to jail! And for what?! He came outta nowhere! Rachel, you don't need this right now. YOUR MOM doesn't need this right now!

Rachel pauses, her face full of horror... Then she drives off, passing by the victim who just lays there motionless, battered and bruised. And in all this, the shimmering glory of his Italian suit prevails. Even, despite his unconscious, distraught demeanor, the guy seems to have something of a smirk on the face.

VIVIAN
It wasn't your fault. He came outta nowhere.

A moment of silence... Then Rachel wheezes, teary-

RACHEL

Goddammit. What the hell was he doing standing in the middle of the road, in the middle of the night?

VIVIAN

Rache, it wasn't your fault, he came outta nowhere!

Rachel, sobbing, wipes tears from her eyes, and Vivian puts a calming hand on her shoulder-

VIVIAN

Rache, I'm telling you, I saw the whole damned thing for crying out loud. The guy came outta nowhere, absolutely nowhere.

RACHEL

Yeah.

She tries to stop sobbing, wiping tears from her eyes.

INT./EXT. CAVALIER / RACHEL'S HOUSE - LATER

Rachel arrives at her house, after dropping off Vivian. She parks in the driveway, gets out the car, and moves to the front of it, checking it out. There are slight dents on the bumper and grille, and a streak of dried blood on the bumper which she quickly wipes off with her handkerchief. Staring at the dents, she sighs. She gets back in the car, rifles the glove compartment for the remote, and as she does, she gets a splinter-

RACHEL

Ow!

She sucks on the finger as she turns on the dome light. She checks out the splinter, carefully picking it out-

RACHEL

Ow ow ow ow ow.

She then carefully searches out the garage remote. She clicks it, but it doesn't work until she gives it a good slapping, and the garage door begins opening ever so slowly, and Rachel sighs. She starts the car, cruising it into-

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Rachel fits the Cavalier in the tight space left among junk

clutter. She shuts the garage, sighs, gets out of the car, and heads into the house.

INT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rachel heads for her mom's bedroom, and as she approaches the door, she hears retching, sobbing, whimpering, and the distraught reactions of Auntie Becky trying to soothe and condole Judith. Rachel's pace slows as she gets disheartened, but she steels herself, rushing into the room-

INT. JUDITH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rachel comes in and finds her mom slumped in bed, looking like hell, in serious pain, and throwing up into a bucket held by Becky.

RACHEL
(panicky, eyes watering)
Oh, Mom!

Judith look at her distraught daughter, Judith herself, undeniably distraught, but trying to stay strong for her juvenile child.

JUDITH
(falteringly, gaspingly)
Hey Rache ... It's okay ... I'm gonna
be fine ... How was your party?

Rachel urgently moves to her gasping, retching, burping mother-

RACHEL
No, mom. Don't worry about the party.
You need to focus on getting better.

She puts an arm around her mom's shoulders.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
You need to relax, Mom, you need to
rest.

She fluffs and straightens Judith's pillow.

JUDITH
(crooked smile)
Yeah, I need to chill out.

And Rachel and Becky smile back, everyone in tears. Judith wipes her face with a towel.

JUDITH
You girls know you're my rock, right?

BECKY
Yeah, no one's a stiffer rock than
you, Judy.

Despite tears, they giggle.

JUDITH
I do my best.

She lays back on the pillow.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
Thanks, girls. I'd be dead without
you.

BECKY
No you won't, sis.

RACHEL
No you won't, mom.

JUDITH
(half sarcastic)
Yeah yeah yeah.

RACHEL
You need to rest, mom.

Rachel and Becky place condolent hands on Judith, and like a spell, her eyes go shut as she falls peacefully asleep. They stare warmly at her as she sleeps, breathing calmly. Then they clean up after her.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JUDITH'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Becky and Rachel hug, condoling each other. Then they bid each other goodnight, and head off to bed.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - EARLY NEXT MORNING

Rachel's still asleep in bed. Then her eyes come open. She pauses, then sits up at the side of the bed, eyes to the floor.

RACHEL
(to herself)
What did I do?

She sighs. Then she's startled by knocking at the door.

RACHEL

Yeah?

BECKY (OS)

Breakfast's ready, Rache.

RACHEL

Okay, thanks, be right there.

INT. DINING ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Rachel haves breakfast with her mom and aunt. Judith looks a lot perkier than she did the night before. They watch the morning news as it plays on the TV.

JUDITH

So how was your party last night?

RACHEL

It was good, it was good. A lot of dancing and playing and chattering.

JUDITH

And boys?

RACHEL

Naah, I don't really pay much attention to the boys.

BECKY

(smiles)

So the girls then.

They giggle. Then something on TV catches their attention. It's news report of a hit-and-run incident just outside town.

Rachel does well to hide her distress as they three watch the news, appalled.

JUDITH

Some people are just plain satanic.

BECKY

Tell me about it.

JUDITH

Hope the victim's no one we know.

RACHEL

Probably not. They say he's from outta town.

JUDITH

Thank God. I really don't want anything spoiling my good mood today.

BECKY

(takes Judith's hand)

So you're really feeling good today, huh?

JUDITH

I sure am! Many times I don't even remember I have cancer. I woke up in the middle of the night to pee, and it's a brand new world.

BECKY

Before or After peeing.

JUDITH

Before, during, and after. Three of 'em.

BECKY

Wow!

RACHEL

That's great news, mom!

JUDITH

Yeah, honey. Your mommy's gonna beat this thing. I shouldn't get too excited though. With this disease, you just can't tell. One day, you're feeling perky, or even better than ever; the next, you feel like you'd be better off dead. But really, I never felt this good, and it keeps getting better and better. I really feel this is the one that gets me back to health, I know it.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

It's Judith's funeral. Bagpipes music plays to a melancholic, teary Rachel; Becky, also in tears. The bagpipes is being played by a middle aged man wearing a kilt; The music, beautiful. Friends and family mope as Judith's coffin's lowered into the ground.

Moments later, the funeral service comes to a close, and mourners begin leaving, saying words of condolence and putting condolent hands on Rachel and Becky.

A moment later, Rachel and Becky, arm in arm, trudge their way to the parking lot, head for the Ford Aspire they came in, and Becky gets the door for an utmostly devastated Rachel who barely has her bearings.

BECKY

(sobs)

We're gonna be fine, Rache. Judy's always gonna be with us. We're always gonna be together.

RACHEL

Thank you, Auntie Becky.

(Rachel looks up warmly at her aunt)

Thank you for everything.

BECKY

You're most welcome, Rache. And thank you for the wonderful, strong young woman you are.

RACHEL

You're welcome.

Both women smile warmly at each other, and Becky rounds to the driver's side, gets in and drives off.

INT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel and Auntie Becky have Judith's funeral reception.

INT. KITCHEN - A MOMENT LATER

Rachel's alone in the Kitchen, stood on a spot, staring into space, melancholic.

FRONT DOOR - LATER

Becky and Rachel see off the last of the guests from the reception.

LIVING ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Rachel and Auntie Becky are now alone in the house, and Rachel can't help but break into tears. Auntie Becky hugs her, not doing so well herself. She guides and supports

Rachel, as Rachel sobs her way to bed.

MONTAGE - (Rachel and Auntie Becky overcoming the sorrow of Judith's passing)

--Auntie Becky, still somewhat melancholic, preparing breakfast for two ... Checking on an also melancholic Rachel in her bedroom ... Trying to condole her ... They both, having breakfast together, trying to manage some small talk.

--Rachel and Auntie Becky, sat together at the dining table, looking a bit perkier, Rachel's highschool textbooks, a notebook, and a calculator before them. Auntie Becky points to something in the textbook, explaining to Rachel, and Rachel smiles, nods understanding, writes in her notebook.

--Rachel and Auntie Becky, looking even perkier, sat together on the couch, playing Scrabble, chattering.

--Rachel, in class, paying rapt attention to the teacher ... Raising her hand to answer a question.

--Rachel, having lunch and chattering with Vivian and Brenden in the cafeteria.

--Rachel, studying in the library.

--Rachel, in class, raising her hand to answer a question by the teacher. She gives her answer, and the teacher nods concurrence.

--Rachel, sat at her bedroom desk, studies her textbooks.

--Rachel and Auntie Becky have dinner together, chattering, laughing.

--Rachel, Vivian, and Brenden, watching a movie in Rachel's living room, laughing.

--Rachel, Vivian, and Brenden sat together in the dining room of Vivian's house, studying their textbooks.

--Rachel, Vivian, and Brenden, at a party, drinking, dancing.

INT. HIGHSCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

It's Rachel's, Brenden's, and Vivian's graduation ceremony. The auditorium is packed with the entire graduands dressed in full academic regalia, and Rachel's sat in the front row, wearing a sash with 'salutatorian' embroidered on it. She looks to the podium, covetously watching the valedictorian

(Francesca) (who we may or may not recognize as the girl Brenden was smooching with at the party on the night of the hit and run) give her speech. Francesca concludes her speech, and the crowd roars with applause, a standing ovation.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL AUDITORIUM - LATER

The graduands mingle with each other, and invited friends and family. Rachel, Vivian, Brenden, and Francesca convene with Auntie Becky and other friends and family, chattering, having their photos taken by a photographer.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB - LATER

Rachel along with other new graduates have their graduation after-party. The party's in full swing ... The valedictorian (Francesca) and salutatorian (Rachel) are set up in an arm wrestling match, the entire class cheering them on. Francesca seems to be gaining on Rachel as Rachel wrestles nonchalantly, checking out the manicure on her other hand. And just when Francesca's about to win, Rachel, still checking out her manicure, easily gains and keeps on gaining in one easy, steady arc till she defeats Francesca, blowing on her manicure, and the crowd goes wild.

Later, Rachel's sat at a table, chattering with her friends, eating okra hors d'oeuvres; And as she chomps on a big okra, she slops the tomato sauce filling on her 'salutatorian' sash. Francesca especially guffaws, and Rachel plays it cool, giggling at herself, licking the sauce off the sash.

SERIES OF SHOTS

--Rachel at her bedroom desk, studying her textbooks, and an SAT prep book.

--Rachel taking the SAT, answering fluently, hint of smile on her face.

--Rachel, at her bedroom desk, writing a college application essay on the topic, 'An obstacle I faced, how it affected me, and what I learned from the experience.'

She finishes the essay, puts the papers in an envelope, and addresses the envelope to Harvard College admissions Office.

--At night, Rachel and Auntie Becky are sat together on the couch, watching a movie, laughing.

INT. LIVING ROOM, RACHEL'S HOME - DAY

Rachel's watching TV. Then, her eyes go wide as she sees the mailman outside. She springs up, rushing out.

EXT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rachel meets the mailman sorting mail, moving to put them in the box.

RACHEL

Hey, lemme have them, they're for me.

The mailman ignores her.

RACHEL

Excuse me, I said they're for me, give 'em to me.

The mailman sighs annoyance.

MAILMAN

Listen, lady; I can't just hand you the mail, it goes in the box. Common sense dictates that. So please leave me in goddamned peace, lemme do my goddamned job.

He stuffs the mail into the box.

RACHEL

Okay... I didn't mean to bother you, get on with your job, jeez.

MAILMAN

Thank you.

He finishes up and walks away. Rachel unlocks the box and takes out the mail. She meniacally checks through them, and finds the one from the Director, Harvard College admissions office. She stares at it, nervous-

RACHEL

Oh my God.

She rushes back into the house, calling out; "Auntie Becky, it's here!"

INT. LIVING ROOM, RACHEL'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Auntie Becky Calls back from upstairs; "What's here?"

RACHEL
The Harvard letter.

BECKY (OS)
(pause)
Oh my God.

She appears atop the stairs, rushing downstairs to meet Rachel, eyes wide.

BECKY
What's it say?

RACHEL
(frantic)
I don't know. I can't bring myself to open it.

Becky snatches the envelope from Rachel and begins opening it.

RACHEL
(cringes)
Oh my God. Don't tell me.

Becky stares at the letter, pausing, expressionless.

RACHEL
(nervous)
Oh my God. I didn't get in?

"AAAH!" Becky screams excitement.

RACHEL
(still unnerved)
Oh my God.

BECKY
YOU GOT IN!

"AAAH!" Rachel screams her head off. She and Auntie Becky keep screaming and jumping for joy, holding hands.

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR / HARVARD COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Rachel's starting college. Auntie Becky drives her through the streets of the campus in this rental car. They stare in awe at the awesome buildings and landscape-

RACHEL / AUNTIE BECKY
Oooh. Aaah.

BECKY

Wow, isn't this just the greatest spectacle anyone's ever experienced in their life?

RACHEL

It's something, isn't it?

BECKY

And it's gonna be your home for a good part of four years.

RACHEL

It's gonna be my school alright, but home?-

(she affectionately takes Becky's shoulder)

Home is where the heart is; and mine's always gonna be with you wherever you are.

BECKY

Awn, you're gonna make me cry. I promised myself I was gonna be strong for you.

RACHEL

It's okay. Some people don't have anyone to miss, or that'll miss 'em. So even if we miss, we should also remain grateful.

BECKY

(sighs awe, sadness)

You know, you've grown into such an amazing, intelligent woman.

RACHEL

(with an affectionate hand on Auntie Becky's shoulder)

I learn from the best.

Becky lovingly takes the hand...

BECKY

Thank you.

RACHEL

You're welcome.

Their attention is caught by the beauty and prestige of the

college amenities-

BECKY

It's so beautiful here. I wish I could go to college all over again.

RACHEL

That'd be so rad, you'd be the student every other student goes to for life advice.

They giggle. Becky parks the car in front of a dormitory building. They get out, take out the luggage from the trunk, and go into the building.

INT. DORMITORY BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Rachel and Auntie Becky come into the lobby and meet a receptionist. Rachel checks in, and her and Becky are met by an attendant who helps with the luggage, and leads the women to Rachel's new dorm room.

RACHEL

God, I hope my roommate isn't some sick, twisted weirdo.

Becky and the attendant snicker.

BECKY

(to Rachel)
She's gonna be fine.

They arrive at the room, and the attendant knocks the door.

JOVIAL VOICE FROM INSIDE

It's open.

The attendant opens the door to reveal a room with half of it occupied and decorated by an extreme goth chick complete with white and black face paint; big, dangle nose-ring, stretched ear-piercing, and all. Rachel deflates; "Oh boy." Becky tries to play it cool, and the attendant can't but snicker. The goth girl sizes them up, then turns on her stereo to loud goth music.

GOTH GIRL

(over the loud music)
Hey, you bring anything to eat...
smoke?

Rachel sighs disappointment.

MONTAGE (Rachel's years in college)

--Rachel, sat at her desk in her dorm, studying a stack of textbooks, punching keys on a calculator, and writing in a notebook, while her roommate, the goth, begins noisily bouncing a baseball off the wall. Rachel turns to her, scolding, but the goth doesn't even care. Rachel gives up, shaking her head, and resuming studying.

--Rachel, in class, raising her hand to answer a question by the professor... She gives her answer, and the professor concurs.

--Rachel, studying in the library.

--Rachel, taking an exam.

--Rachel having lunch in the cafeteria and chattering with friends including the goth roommate.

--Rachel, joyously answering her dorm door to receive an equally joyous Auntie Becky who presents Rachel with a gift bag, and Rachel's delighted, both women chattering away as they head into the room.

--Rachel, studying in the library.

--Rachel, studying in her dorm room.

--Rachel, studying in the library yet another day.

--Rachel, taking an exam.

--Rachel, attending a sorority party, and bumping into a cute guy (ALEX). They hit it off.

--Rachel and Alex chattering as they file out of a lecture.

--Rachel and Alex studying together in Alex's dorm.

--Rachel and Alex, dancing together in a night club.

--Alex dropping off Rachel at her dorm ... Seeing her to the door, they smooch, going inside, taking the clothes off each other, and getting on the bed.

--Rachel, taking an exam ... Alex, taking the same exam ... They meet up, chattering as they file out of the exam hall.

--It's Rachel and Alex's graduation ceremony ... As valedictorian, Rachel gives a speech at the podium, wearing a

golden, embellished sash to distinguish her from other graduands. Alex is sat among other graduands, mighty proud of his girl. And Becky's sat among invited guests, also mighty proud and damn near tears. Rachel concludes her speech, and the crowd roars with applause, a standing ovation, Auntie Becky, in tears.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

--Rachel and Alex, in lab coats, at the matriculation ceremony of Harvard Medical School, smiles on everyone's faces.

--Rachel and Alex, attending classes.

--Rachel and Alex, studying in the library.

--Rachel and Alex, chattering over lunch on the patio of a restaurant on campus.

--Rachel and Alex, in lab practice, cutting up a cadaver ... Joking over the cadaver; something obscene; they giggle.

--Rachel and Alex, in their apartment, quarreling heatedly. Rachel angrily gestures a full role of toilet paper in Alex's face, pressing it against his face, and Alex wards her off, exhorting angrily. Then he actually calms down, explaining to Rachel her wrongfulness, motioning to the toilet paper. And Rachel mellows, apologizes, and they smooch, uncladding each other, heading for the bedroom.

--Rachel and Alex studying in the library.

--Rachel and Alex, in lab practice, each fiddling with a cadaver, serious, seems like an exam.

--Rachel and Alex, in lab practice yet again, learning about cancer, CT scans, and MRI's.

--Rachel and Alex, graduating medical school; Rachel giving her speech at the podium, valedictorian again, ecstatic. Auntie Becky, Vivian, Brenden and Francesca in attendance, smiles on everyone's faces.

--Rachel, now a resident doctor at the cancer ward of a hospital, assists in surgery.

--Alex himself, frantic and frenzied, assists as a maimed auto-crash casualty is being rushed to the emergency room on a gurney.

--Rachel and Alex, having dinner in a posh restaurant. The waiter sets down the soup main course on the table, and Rachel picks up her spoon to find a diamond engagement ring hidden under it. She looks at Alex, smiles. Alex goes down on one knee, pops the question, all eyes on them, smiles, Rachel says yes, and the room bursts into cheers and applause. Rachel and Alex embrace, smooching.

--Rachel, at the hospital, performing surgery, being assisted by junior doctors.

--Alex, sat behind his desk at the office, consulting with a patient.

--Rachel, heavily pregnant; and Alex, cuddled up on the couch, watching TV, guffawing.

--Rachel (now 45) and Alex, teaching their now 5 year-old son, Bobby, how to ride a bike. He falls hard, and Rachel and Alex flinch big, rushing to him.

--Rachel, in conference with some senior officials at a Democratic Party branch office ... The meeting comes to a close, and everyone stands up, satisfied, shaking hands.

--Rachel gets home from the meeting, gives her family good news, and they congratulate and embrace her.

--Rachel, at a political rally, campaigning to be governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Alex and Bobby, stood behind her.

--Rachel, at a TV interview, discussing her political agenda and manifesto ... Alex and Bobby, at home, watching Rachel on TV, delighted.

--Rachel at a governorship debate, battling it out with the Republican candidate. Alex and Bobby, in the audience, rapt.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

It's election night. Rachel's sat in conference with her campaign staff, everyone's attention on the TV news report of the vote count in progress. The news report tell of how Rachel leads the polls only by a slight precarious margin over Prof. Harrison Combs of the Republican Party. But then, the vote count is updated, and Prof. Combs surpasses Rachel, though by a slight margin.

Rachel sighs; the conference room, murmuring with worry. She stands up to address her staff, trying to play it cool, but

everyone can see her anxiety as she trembles-

RACHEL

Okay, everyone, we have to stay calm
and be actually prepared in case we
lose this thing.

They all stare at her as she trembles.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

We've done good work. We did
everything right. If we don't win, we
still stand proud we put up a good
fight.

A male staffer beside her stands up, putting a calming hand
on her shoulder, she looks at the hand, then the face- Did he
overstep?

MALE STAFFER

(with his hand still firmly on
Rachel's shoulder)

Rache, it's gonna be fine. We're gonna
win... probably!

Rachel just stares in his face, somewhat disapproving. And
with his hand still firmly on her shoulder, he stares back,
not wavering in the slightest.

Later, Rachel and her staff still watch the news, rapt, as
the final election results are collated. The final results
are announced- Rachel's declared the winner, and the room
bursts into cheers and applause. Although, Rachel's still...
paused, solemn, awestruck-

RACHEL

Yeah!

She regards her staffers, pumping her fists in the

RACHEL

Yeah! Yeah!
(she high-fives her staffers)
This is it, guys. We made it. Great
work, guys. Love you all, love you to
pieces.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - LATER

Rachel gives her victory speech. Alex and Bobby stand behind
her, beaming.

INT. LIVING ROOM, RACHEL'S AND ALEX'S SUBURBAN HOME - LATER
ON

Rachel, Alex, and Bobby celebrate Rachel's victory. A banner hung from the ceiling reads; '*Sweet victory, governor-elect.*' Alex pops a champagne, startling Bobby to drop his juice box, and they giggle. Alex pours the champagne and makes a toast-

ALEX

To my wife; her majesty, the executive
governor of the Commonwealth of
Pennsylvania.

They all smile.

RACHEL

'Her Majesty'? It ain't a monarchy.
And I still am not governor yet: I
haven't been sworn in.

ALEX

(smiles)
Yeah, but it's inevitable now.

BOBBY

(raises his juice box)
To Mommy!

ALEX / RACHEL

(raise their glasses)
To Mommy!

They clink glasses with juice box.

ALEX

So now, you're like gonna get your own
security detail and stuff.

Rachel smiles, drawing close to Alex, putting her arms around his waist, looking him in the eyes-

RACHEL

You're the only security I need.

They kiss.

BOBBY

Ewww!

They giggle.

ALEX

So now, we can have you to ourselves.
No more campaigning, no more press
conferences, TV interviews-

RACHEL

Actually, there's just one itsy-bitsy
interview tomorrow.

Alex pouts.

RACHEL

Don't worry, don't worry. It's the
last one. At least for a long while.

Alex keeps pouting at her, and she draws close to him again,
putting her arms around his waist-

RACHEL

Don't worry, I'ma make it up to you,
promise.

Alex smiles. They kiss.

ALEX

But now that you're governor-elect,
you really should be moving with your
own security.

RACHEL

Yeah, the state's already making
arrangements. By tomorrow, we should
have our own security detail.

ALEX

So, I'm like a total first-lady.

RACHEL

(smiles)

The hottest first lady there ever was.
(she gives him a kiss)
And a responsibility you must take to
heart, and hold with passion.

ALEX

(smiles)

You bet your ass.

EXT. RACHEL'S AND ALEX'S HOUSE - EARLY NEXT MORNING

A motorcade of three government SUVs are parked outside the

house, and Rachel's new security detail hang around the vehicles. Rachel, dressed for a TV interview, comes out of the house and is received by her security detail. They all get in the SUVs and peel out.

EXT. TV STATION HOUSE - LATER

The motorcade arrives at the TV station house, parking in the lot. Rachel and her bodyguards get out of the cars and walk to the entrance of the building where they meet the press, loitering at the entrance, waiting for Rachel. She confers with them, giving straight answers to their rowdy, endless questioning, telling them how she intends to uphold transparency and eradicate corruption by controlling state revenue in a way that finances projects by providing the resources and know-how for the projects directly, as opposed to providing monetary funds for the projects, and having state funds become exposed and vulnerable, disappearing down the chain. Rachel's on a roll, showing she knows governance and policy when, *PHHT!*; muffled gunshot. Rachel's been shot in the torso. She drops down, holding onto her abdomen. People scream, clearing quick; even some of Rachel's security flinch too far for their duties. Although, not the cameramen and photographers, those lot try to remain there, filming the carnage. Rachel's security doesn't know what hit her. A supposedly lady journalist rushes to a parked motorbike and peels out quick, professional, suspicious. Rachel's security's just overwhelmed in the pandemonium. They wield their handguns, gazing around, wide-eyed, panicked.

ONE SECURITY WOMAN

Call an ambulance.

(she checks Rachel's pulse)

Shit!

Rachel's just lain there, bloodied, motionless. Is she dead? If not, what's going on in her mind? What's she really experiencing as it is?... And we-

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CHEVY CAVALIER / HIGHWAY THROUGH THE WOODS - NIGHT
(YEAR 1993)

Rachel now has to relive her distant past when she was 17 years old and hit someone with her car and fled the scene of the accident.

Just as that night in 1993, Rachel and Vivian ride the Cavalier, looking onto the headlight-lit road through the woods when:

BAM!

they hit something... or someone. The body mass tosses through the air; Rachel, slamming the brakes. The victim, a middle-aged man in a brand-new, shimmering Italian suit, lays unconscious. Now Rachel's even more discombobulated than the first, original time this happened. She can't seem to fathom what's going on. She looks to Vivian, shocked, panicked-

RACHEL
VIVIAN?!

Vivian just stares wide-eyed at the victim...

VIVIAN
Oh my god.

RACHEL
(totally bewildered)
What? How? Am I...?

VIVIAN
(panicky)
Dude, you just hit someone with your car.

Rachel, speechless, keeps gazing back and forth between the victim, lain on the road; and Vivian-

RACHEL
Oh my God!

VIVIAN
Rache, we gotta get outta here! It wasn't your fault, he came outta nowhere.

Rachel just stares at her, bemused, horrified.

VIVIAN
You don't need this right now! YOUR MOM doesn't need this right now! Come on, drive! We can't be here!

Rachel tentatively hits the gas, driving by the unconscious victim and pulling away, thinking she must be dreaming, and then pinching herself, but she doesn't wake up. She pinches really hard, over and over again, but nothing, she doesn't wake up. She remains bewildered by the whole incident re-enacting itself.

VIVIAN

What the hell was he standing in the middle of the road for?

RACHEL

(mumbles, spooked)

Beats me.

EXT./INT. SUBURBAN ROAD / CAVALIER - LATER

After Rachel's dropped Vivian off and is now riding alone, she arrives at her old neighborhood, driving slowly through it, staring it up and down like it's the strangest place on Earth. She still really can't believe the situation. She approaches her old home, stopping at a distance, staring at it, mind racing. She proceeds to the house and parks in the driveway. She just remains in the car, staring at the house, near tears... She sighs. Then she recalls when she got shot while speaking to the press. She saddens. She then opens the visor mirror, staring at her 17 year-old face... Her head drops, disappointed. She begins rifling the glove compartment for the garage-door remote, but then she abruptly takes out her hand from the glove compartment, takes out a small flashlight from her purse, turning it on, and using it to carefully search out the garage remote, finding it. She parks in the garage.

INT. CAVALIER / GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Rachel sighs, gets out of the car, and heads for the house door, taking out a key from her purse, opening the door and going in.

INT. LIVING ROOM, RACHEL'S OLD HOME - CONTINUOUS

The house is darkened, quiet, eerie. She turns on the light, coming to the loneliness of the living room, looking around: Her long-lost home. The old life she once had. She's touched. She hears footsteps, someone's coming from upstairs. She pauses, stunned, mind racing... Her mom, Judith, appears, sauntering down the stairs, wearing the head-tie to cover her cancer baldness. Rachel's thrown to be in the presence of her late mother- Her eyes well up, and she'd burst into tears, but she knows she has to try and contain herself-

RACHEL

Mom?

JUDITH

Oh hey, honey, how was your party?

Rachel holds back emotions. She rushes to her mom, hugging her. Judith's surprised. She puts her arms around Rachel.

JUDITH

Oh honey... Is everything okay?

A tear trickles down Rachel's cheek-

RACHEL

It's just.. It's just, I'm glad to see you looking a bit better.

JUDITH

Oh yeah, honey, I've been feeling better and better since tonight. Hopefully this time it'll actually progress to full health.

Rachel stares at her mom, knowing what's probably coming, fighting back tears.

MONTAGE (Rachel spending quality time with her mum)

--Rachel, her mom, and Auntie Becky have dinner. They chatter and laugh. Rachel relishes every moment.. a second chance, and she knows her mom probably won't be around long.

--Another day, Rachel and her mom, playing Scrabble, chattering, laughing.

--Rachel and her mom, sat on the couch, going through a photo album, pointing, giggling.

--Rachel, her mom, and Auntie Becky, sat on the couch, watching a movie, laughing.

--Rachel, her mom, and Auntie Becky, having a picnic at the park.

--Rachel and her mom, strolling along the bank of the Allegheny.

--Rachel, her mom, and Auntie Becky, having a great time at a bowling alley.

INT. LIVING ROOM, RACHEL'S AND ALEX'S SUBURBAN HOME - DAY
(PRESENT DAY)

Alex is snacking on a sandwich and coffee, whilst watching TV and laughing loud, oblivious to the peril befallen his wife. The TV show ends and he changes the channel to find a news

report of Rachel's shooting- He has to do a spit-take with his coffee, then freezes, horrified... His phone begins ringing, he answers it, panicky-

ALEX
 (on phone)
 (pause)
 Where is she?

(pause)

ALEX
 (on phone)
 I'll be right there.

He ends the call and finds Bobby standing at the threshold to the hallway, staring at him. Bobby sees Alex's panic and starts to panic himself-

BOBBY
 Daddy, is everything okay?

ALEX
 (feigns composure)
 Heyyy champ, no need to worry,
 everything's gonna be fine. Mommy's
 been shot, we need to go to the
 hospital.

Bobby, shocked, stares wide-eyed at his dad, mouth gaping. And Alex just stares back... then drops his stare, ashamed-

ALEX
 (staring at the floor)
 Go get your coat.

Bobby runs off. Alex remains horrified, staring into space.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Rachel, bloodied, comatose, and wearing an oxygen mask, is being rushed to the emergency room on a gurney. She begins flat-lining, and they grab a defibrillator and shock her. No response. They have to shock her a couple of times before she regains pulse.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY (1993)

17 year-old Rachel is at the supermarket, grocery shopping. She rounds an isle and comes to see... the bagpiper from her mom's funeral, with the bagpipes, and in kilt, just as at the

funeral, although Judith is still alive here. He stares Rachel in the eyes, solemn. She holds his stare, and he begins to play; the same beautiful tune from the funeral. Rachel just stares at him, touched, eyes welling up... She then walks away, teary, as he continues to play, his eyes following her.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - CONTINUOUS

She comes out to the parking lot, heading for the Cavalier. Teary, she puts the groceries in the car, gets in, and just sits there, sobbing.

INT. DINING ROOM, RACHEL'S HOME - NIGHT

Rachel has dinner with her mom and aunt. They're having a great time, chattering, laughing.

INT. HALLWAY / JUDITH'S BEDROOM - LATER

Rachel quietly goes into her mom's bedroom, staring at her sleeping mom, mind racing. She sits at the bedside, sad... She sighs. She straightens her mom's blanket and quietly leaves the room.

INT. JUDITH'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Judith's really sick in bed. A dismayed Rachel sits at the bedside, tending Judith. Judith's shivering, she struggles to speak to her sobbing daughter, trying to offer a consolatory smile as she speaks weakly, stutteringly-

JUDITH

Hey Rache ... life's a bitch, ain't it? ... There I was, thinking I was getting better ... And now ... I don't even remember what it felt like.

Rachel sobs.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Hey, don't cry ... We must learn from this ... We must be larger than life ... I love you, honey.

RACHEL

(crying)
I love you, Mom.

Judith passes on, eyes open. Rachel, crying, sinks her face into her mom's lifeless torso, languishing in self-pity.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Yet again, it's Judith's funeral. The poignant, beautiful bagpipes music is being played by the bagpipes man, and Rachel couldn't be more melancholic. The bagpipes music continues as Rachel and Becky stare in sorrow as Judith's coffin's lowered into the ground.

INT. LIVING ROOM, RACHEL'S HOUSE - DUSK

After having the funeral reception in the house, Becky tries to condole Rachel. They cry their way to bed.

INT. CAFETERIA, HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

Rachel's best friend, Vivian, sits by herself, having lunch and playing Sudoku in a newspaper. Rachel appears with her own lunch tray and joins Vivian. She's gotten over the passing of her mom again, and is now upbeat and chatty.

RACHEL

Hey, you. What'chu doing?

Vivian brightens.

VIVIAN

Just playing the good ol' Sudoku.

She solemnly takes Rachel's hand-

VIVIAN

How you holding up?

RACHEL

Hey, no need to worry about me, I'm fine. The pain don't last forever. Plus when life hands you lemons, you make lemonade-

She raises her juice box.

VIVIAN

That's orange juice.

RACHEL

And I'd rather drink lemonade. They ran out. So you see.

Vivian nods, smiling.

RACHEL

(solemn, quiet)

So the guy we hit the other night,
thank God he didn't die.

VIVIAN

Uh 'we'? How does that figure?

RACHEL

Yeah 'me', whatever. Thank God the guy
didn't die, or get maimed or anything.

Vivian now flips her newspaper to a page with the story of
the hit and run.

VIVIAN

Yeah it says here, his name is Dr.
Joshua Kent, a dentist from New York
City.

RACHEL

What was he doing lurking in the
middle of the road in the middle of
the night. And in the woods for that
matter.

VIVIAN

It doesn't say. He was unwilling to
comm-

They shut up as they see Brenden approach with his lunch
tray.

BRENDEN

Hey guys, what are we talking about?

The girls eye each other, confused.

RACHEL

Uhhh, just Fiona's party last month.

VIVIAN

Yeah, Fiona's party was so much fun.
Can't wait for someone else to throw
another crazy party.

BRENDEN

(smiles)

Yeah, I guess it was fun. Not for the
dude y'all hit with a car though.

Rachel is shell-shocked, confused... She then glares at Vivian.

VIVIAN
"Y'all"?! Why does everyone keep thinking two of us were driving the car at once?!

RACHEL
(glaring severely at Vivian)
'Everyone'?!

VIVIAN
I only told Brenden.
(Rachel keeps glaring)
I swear!
(Rachel just keeps glaring)
Come on, we don't keep secrets from each other.
(she smiles)
We're the three amigos.

Rachel still glares, and Brenden's amused, eating his lunch.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
We trust each other.

BRENDEN
(affectionately takes Rachel's hand)
Raaache, she's right- I wouldn't keep anything from either of you. We grew up in each other's faces for Christ's sakes.

RACHEL
It's not about trust; It's about freedom. I wouldn't tell you cuz if you found out, you become legally liable, and if the police asked you about it and you lied, you could get in trouble.

BRENDEN
(half mocking)
Jeee! Wow, thanks! Since when are you a bullshit lawyer?

VIVIAN
(to Rachel)
No one's gonna find out.

RACHEL

That's if you can keep your mouth from blabbing to every stranger.

Vivian gestures zipping her mouth shut.

BRENDEN

Turns out, the poor dude you two hit with a car is my uncle from New York.

RACHEL

What?!

VIVIAN

(to Brenden)

'You two'?! I did not do this!

BRENDEN

Your ass was in the car in its full weight, and it went and hit some poor dude; You're an accessory. Or an *ass-essory*.

Rachel giggles, while Vivian tries to be as serious as she can and not laugh-

VIVIAN

What?!

BRENDEN

(to Rachel)

I don't know how you could be laughing when you ran over my uncle and left him for dead.

RACHEL

I didn't run him over, I merely bumped into him-

BRENDEN

With your 2 ton vehicle. And left him for dead.

RACHEL

He came out of nowhere! He might as well have planned the whole thing to ruin my life.

BRENDEN

Are you sure you weren't just drunk?

RACHEL
As long as I vividly remember exactly
what happened, it's irrelevant.

VIVIAN
'Vividly'?! Who the hell are you?:
'Lady Rachel of Poshtinton'?

RACHEL
(smiles)
Yeah, some of us have actually been
paying attention in English class.

VIVIAN
Yeah, enough to start sounding like an
old fart.

They giggle. And Brenden goes solemn, facing Rachel-

BRENDEN
There you go again laughing about
almost killing my uncle. It hurts my
feelings.

Rachel sighs exhaustion.

RACHEL
(solemn)
Brenden, I'm sorry I hit your uncle
with my car, when he appeared in front
of it from absolutely nowhere at all.

VIVIAN
Yeah by all reason, he hit the car
with his body. He just wasn't strong
enough.

And Rachel motions Vivian to Brenden like, 'what she said!'

BRENDEN
(kind of agrees)
Yeah, Uncle Joshua's always managed to
place himself in every weird situation
imaginable.

RACHEL
What the hell was he doing in the
middle of the road in the middle of
the night? And in the woods for that
matter. Is he some kinda accident-
prone wizard?

BRENDEN

I don't know, probably some crazy, weird stuff like extreme yoga or voodoo or something. The man does stuff.

RACHEL

Well, tell him to keep it civil. No one wants to get into trouble with the law just for crossing paths with him. I never panicked so much my entire life. I'm the real victim here.

BRENDEN

No, I don't think you want me talking to him about you.

RACHEL

Right.
(then to Vivian)
Gimme the page with the story.

VIVIAN

(she pulls out the entire double leaves)
So you can keep it as a souvenir to remind yourself how fast life can go from absolute fun to downright horrifying.

Rachel reflects, recalling when she got shot, speaking to the press.

RACHEL

Trust me, I already know plenty about that.

Brenden notices that the Sudoku page is part of the double leaves containing the hit-and-run article Vivian's removed.

BRENDEN

Your Sukodu's in it.

The girls giggle.

VIVIAN

(mocks)
What?

BRENDEN

(smiles)

I should just shut up now.

VIVIAN

It's not 'Sukodu', dude; It's Sudoku.
Say it with me, Su-do-ku.

BRENDEN

(hints a smile)

Whatever.

He takes out a pair of scissors from his pocket and begins cutting the Sudoku page from the hit-and-run page.

RACHEL

So you just go about your day carrying scissors in your pocket.

BRENDEN

Hey, you never know when you'll need to help friends cut a hit-and-run page from a Sudoku page in a newspaper when the hit-and-run driver happens to be one of the friends, and the victim happens to be your uncle.

VIVIAN

Man has a point.

They giggle. Rachel takes the hit-and-run page, looking it over. Vivian continues her Sudoku.

BRENDEN

What's the game all about, anyway?
Just seems like you're giving yourself more homework.

VIVIAN

Spoken like a true goofball. Here, lemme show you-

She begins explaining the game to him... Rachel's looking over the hit-and-run article, then she stares off into space, recalling when she got shot speaking to the press...

RACHEL

Hey, guys?

VIVIAN / BRENDEN
 (eyes twinkling)
 Yeah?

RACHEL
 (pause)
 Uh, never mind, it's nothing.

BRENDEN
 Is something bothering you?

RACHEL
 No, it's nothing. I'm fine.

VIVIAN
 Sure?

RACHEL
 Yeah, it's nothing, I'm good.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rachel, half lain in bed, has the hit-and-run page and a phone book set before her. She leafs through the phone book, and comes to a page with info on 'Kent Dentistry', 'Joshua Kent, DDS' Rachel writes out the phone number and New York City address in a small note book. She then stares off into space, recalling when she hit someone with her car, and when she got shot speaking to the press. She sighs.

RACHEL (VO)
It all makes perfect sense. Now I know, the only way to get back to the present-day, regular world, to get my life back and really be free again, would be to make restitution for my transgressions- Especially my heinous sin of hit-and- run.

INT. STUDY, RACHEL'S HOUSE - A MOMENT LATER

Rachel comes into the darkened study in her home, finding the light switch and turning it on. She moves to the shelves, takes out a map and unrolls it. It's a map of New York City. She takes it, and exits the study, turning off the lights.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Rachel packs an overnight bag, putting the map in the backpack.

INT. JUDITH'S BEDROOM - A MOMENT LATER

The bedroom is dark, and only dimly lit by moonlight filtering through the curtains. The door swings open, and Rachel comes in, turning on the lights. She stares at the framed photo of her mom on the dresser... She sighs. She goes into the closet, turns on the light and swings a mirror open to reveal a safe in the wall. She dials in the combination, opens it, takes out a wad of cash, closes the safe and exits the closet. She goes and picks up the photo of her mom on the dresser, staring at it, eyes twinkling. She sighs. She takes the photo out of the frame and exits the bedroom, turning off the lights to leave the room dark, quiet, eerie.

INT. ICU ROOM, HOSPITAL - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

Rachel's husband and son stand before her comatose, intubated body. Alex has an arm around his son's shoulders, their faces distressed. Bobby begins sobbing, Alex draws him close.

BOBBY

Daddy, is Mommy gonna die?

Alex, near tears, tries to be strong for his son-

ALEX

Son, now, everyone in this hospital's doing everything they can to make sure your mommy stays alive. And your mom's a fighter. She always has a solution for everything. She's gonna beat this, I know it. Your mom's gonna be fine. She's gonna be fine.

He draws his son into a hug; Bobby doesn't see a tear trickle down his father's cheek.

MOVE IN SLOWLY on the unconscious, comatose Rachel. CLOSE ON her face. SFX: FAINT BUZZING OF AN ALARM CLOCK.

And we-

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. 17 YEAR-OLD RACHEL'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Rachel's alarm clock BUZZES loudly, waking her up. She taps it off, sits up on the bedside, eyes to the floor, pensive.

RACHEL
 (to herself)
 It's show time.

She springs off the bed...

Later, Rachel's freshened up in street clothes. She zips up the overnight bag, moves to her desk, and begins writing a letter:

RACHEL (VO)
Dearest Auntie Becky,

I'm gonna be away for a while. I don't want you worrying, and really there's no need to because I'm only doing what needs to be done for me to be free again: It's a long story and one you may not be inclined to believe; Hell, I myself didn't believe it till I woke up with it again and again and saw how it all adds up and makes perfect sense. I need you to trust me on this, and I really am sorry it has to be this way, but I really have no choice. I don't hope to be gone for too long, and if all goes well, I'll be back Thursday. Thank you for everything you're doing for me. You really are my mother figure. I love you.

She finishes writing and puts a weight on the paper, then gets up, picks up her backpack and heads out, sneakily, looking out for Auntie Becky, and trying not to make a sound. The hallway is clear. She sneaks through it, and down the stairs, then peeks into the living room and kitchen... clear. She heads to the front door, and just as she touches the door knob, Becky appears behind her-

BECKY
 Rachel.

Rachel startles, freezes in position, contemplative... She turns around and sees Becky standing there, arms folded.

RACHEL
 Auntie Becky, I was just...

BECKY
 (poised, solemn)
 What are you doing? Where are you

going? Why d'you have luggage?

Rachel sighs despair, herself solemn-

RACHEL

You won't understand.

BECKY

(moving slowly, poised, ominously
toward Rachel)

What won't I understand? I know
everything, Rachel. I know that you
think you're a lot older than you
look.

Rachel's eyes go wide.

BECKY (CONT'D)

Even older than I.

Rachel shrinks in fright as Becky moves into her space.

BECKY (CONT'D)

I know that you're actually a married
woman with a kid. I know that you're
stuck here looking for redemption.

Now Becky's face to face with Rachel, eyeballing her. Rachel,
frightened, just stares back.

BECKY (CONT'D)

I know you need to get back to your
life-

RACHEL

(spooked. hoarse)
Auntie Becky, how do you-

BECKY

Oh, Rachel Rachel Rachel. How could I
not know? Look around you,
(she gestures around)
It all adds up. It all makes complete,
perfect sense. None of this is
regular! You need to open your mind to
the fact that this isn't your regular,
normal world; and things are not going
to play out the normal way; You know
this, but you keep forgetting. You
just keep dropping guard, and it's a
sure-fire way to self-destruct in this

universe where everything connects to
you; Where you,
 (she pokes Rachel solemnly, softly
 on the forehead)
-really can be God.

She pauses, then eases back from Rachel's face.

 BECKY (CONT'D)
Here I am whining about what you
probably already knew. But really,
what I'm saying in essence is; This is
the perfect life anyone could ever
wish for. You will live forever. Why
would you ever want to forsake it?

 RACHEL
 (her eyes well up)
I have a family to get back to.

 BECKY
I AM your family!

 RACHEL
I know. It's just...

Rachel's short of words. Becky sighs sadness.

 BECKY
Rachel, I respect whatever decision
you make on this. I just want you to
know I'll always be here for you no
matter what. I just want you to really
check within your heart; Is it worth
it? This risk you're about to take...
All for what? To get back things that
wouldn't hold a candle to what you
could achieve if you remained here?
Come on, Rache, look at the bigger
picture here; You've got yourself a
second chance; You've got yourself a
do-over, and you can make it perfect,
you can create heaven.

 RACHEL
Exactly. That's exactly what I'm
doing. And it involves getting back to
my husband and son.

Becky sighs sadness.

BECKY
 I respect that, Rachel. I just needed
 for you to know your options... I
 guess this is goodbye then.

Becky pulls Rachel into a hug, smiling warmly. A tear rolls
 down Rachel's cheek.

RACHEL
 (sobbing)
 Thank you. For everything.

BECKY
 I'll always be here for you.

RACHEL
 You know I'm gonna come back no matter
 what.

BECKY
 I know.

They break the hug, looking each other in the eyes, smiling
 warmly. Rachel heads out the front door, looking back at her
 auntie, smiling sadly. Becky returns the smile. Rachel exits,
 shutting the door.

EXT. BUS STOP - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel's sat alone at the bus stop, head bowed, twiddling her
 thumbs. A bus approaches and she looks up, but it doesn't
 slow down, it just keeps on speeding, and as it passes by
 her, a passenger (an elderly woman of 60s) sticks her head
 out a window of the speeding bus, "DAMNED CRIMINAL!" yells
 she, violently throwing a to-go cup of coffee at Rachel, who
 has to quickly dodge, springing off the bench-

RACHEL
 (perplexed)
 Hey!

The cup smashes into the bench, right where Rachel was sat,
 hot coffee splashing everywhere. Rachel contemplates the
 incident, staring at the bus as it pulls away. Then she goes
 and sits on the part of the bench that isn't soaked in
 steaming coffee, bows her head, sighs.

Later, Rachel's still sat on the bench, waiting for a bus.
 She's slouched, head propped up by an arm. She's tired and
 drearied, the world around her, lonely and quiet. Then she
 hears a whisper; "Hey." She turns around, but no one. The

whisper calls again, "Hey." She turns the other way... still no one. "Down here," says the whisper.

RACHEL
 (looking all around, bemused)
 Who said that?

"I'm on the ground, genius," says the voice. And Rachel looks down to find a lizard staring at her, grinning widely.

LIZARD
 How are you doing?-

It keeps grinning. Rachel isn't that surprised at this point; She's really more, apprehensive-

RACHEL
 (stutters)
 W-w-w-what d'you want?

LIZARD
 You look like you could use a lift.
 Hop on-
 (it hunches it's back, wiggling it)
 I'll get you there.

Rachel stares blankly...

RACHEL
 No, thanks. I'm already in so much trouble for squishing someone else, wouldn't wanna add you to that list.

LIZARD
 Come on, it's gonna be great! We'll have so much fun!

RACHEL
 Nooo, I'd rather not. It'll only get us in more trouble.

LIZARD
 Hey, you're the only one already in trouble as is; "It'll only get *you* in more trouble." Not me.

RACHEL
 Right.

LIZARD
 Well, if you're not gonna take the

ride... You know, you really don't gotta wait this long for anything.

RACHEL
(still a bit apprehensive and bemused)
How how d'you mean?

LIZARD
I'm just saying, it's not that bad here. You can get things done a lot easier than you think. Sure it may come at a cost, but you can always bear that. All you gotta do is put your mind in the right place. Like the bus you've been waiting ages for now. Why not just visualize it and optimize-

Just then, an oncoming bus appears on the horizon, and Rachel and the lizard watch.

LIZARD
Yup, that's exactly what I'm talking about. You sure learn fast.

RACHEL
I'm not sure exactly what you're talking about, but thanks.

LIZARD
You're welcome.

Another lizard runs by the talking lizard, and the talking lizard smiles, gazing at it.

LIZARD
(to Rachel)
I gotta go chase some tail. You know how it goes.

The lizard runs off, chasing the other lizard, and calling out to Rachel, "Stay safe." Rachel sighs. She watches as the bus pulls over in front of her, and two passengers alight: her husband, Alex; and son, Bobby. She just stares at them, mesmerized. Alex leads Bobby on, holding his hand, and they only glance at Rachel, incognizant, walking away, and she wants to call out, but stops herself, staring, eyes welling up. The bus driver looks onto her, expecting her to indicate, but she just sits there, staring with welled up eyes at her husband and son walk away.

BUS DRIVER

Lady, you gonna get in or what?

Rachel gets up from the bench, trudging into the bus-

INT./EXT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

Rachel gets in the bus to find all passengers severely glaring at her, even a few kids. She contemplates them, and then finds the only empty seat, in the back, and as she moves to it, all glaring eyes follow her. She sits down and the bus moves on. So many of the passengers make side-talk and turn back, glaring at her. Some two men sitting side by side keep doing it, getting more and more agitated with each other, one of them taking out a handgun; and the other, trying to wrestle it from him. Rachel watches as they wrestle for the pistol raised in the air. Other passengers remain calm, not even paying much attention to the pistol tussle. Then, as the men wrestle for the gun,

BANG!

it goes off, and they keep struggling for it. The other passengers remain calm and unafraid, not being so much interested in the gun struggle. Rachel herself tries to remain calm, and not attract any attention to herself, and she does a good job of it. She just watches the gun struggle, apprehensive. Some passengers stick their fingers in their ears to avert any further blasts, but they seem absolutely unafraid and relaxed. And as the gun struggle continues, the contender that initially took out the gun headbutts the other hard in the face, taking the gun from him, turning back, and glaring directly at Rachel. She blankly holds his glare as he contemplates her a moment, then turns away, putting the gun back in his pants. The other contender remains in his seat, cool as if nothing ever happened. And just then;

"SURPRISE!"

all passengers scream for joy, startling Rachel, and gazing at her, big smiles on their faces. *"HAPPY BIRTHDAY, RACHIE!"* they scream, popping confetti and blowing party horns as Rachel just stares at them, blank. *"HAPPY BIRTHDAY, RACHIE!"* screams the bus driver, honking the horn with derisive excitement, all passengers echoing him, screaming for joy, pumping their fists in the air while looking directly at Rachel. And then, one of the passengers stands up with a birthday cake and carries it toward Rachel, despite the moving bus. Rachel just stares, blank, and as the cake is delivered, it turns out, it's not for her; It's for the man beside her, and the cake bringer smilingly presents it to

him, "Happy birthday, man."

BIRTHDAY MAN

Thanks a lot, man-

He takes the cake, excited, shaking hands with the bringer-

BIRTHDAY MAN (CONT'D)

I really appreciate.

CAKE BRINGER

(smiles)

Anytime, man.

He moves back to his seat, giddy with the movements of the bus.

Rachel stares at the cake, and it actually reads, 'Happy birthday, Richie.' Not 'Rachie.'

BIRTHDAY MAN

Wow! Thanks, guys. You'd think people you don't know won't care. I'd never been so happy to be wrong. Y'all are the loveliest strangers anyone could ever hope to come across. I love y'all.

"We love you too, man," says other passengers, whooping and applauding, the driver honking the horn in revelry, everyone screaming, "Yeah! Yeah!" pumping their fists in the air. And Rachel takes in the melee; The only one not hysterical.

A moment later, after the melee has died down, Rachel thinks she hears someone whisper to her; "Hey. Hey," calls the whisper. Rachel looks around... no one in particular. "Hey, Rachel," the whisper continues, and Rachel looks down and sees that the top of the cake has morphed into a face, her face, with frosting on. She just stares at the cake-face, blank.

CAKE FACE

Rachel Rachel Rachel, just look at you now.. Hoping to have a piece, despite everything you've done. Craving cake even when you've been such a naughty *naughty* girl. You've had so many chances to redeem yourself, so many! And yet here we are with you struggling to get a grip on things. Well, you can't eat your cake and have

it! I'd never been so disappointed in anyone, Rachel, never! Shame on you, Rachel. Shame on you!

Rachel just stares at it.

CAKE FACE (CONT'D)

Oh you want a piece? Would you like some juice to have with it?

(forceful)

Well you can have as much juice as you want, you lazy, no good, law breaking, bone breaking criminal!

The atmosphere in the bus now darkens like it's about to rain, but the weather outside is still bright and sunny. Lightning and thunder play inside the bus, and it starts to rain orange juice, just inside the bus, not outside. Rachel bows her head in despair as she gets drenched by orange juice.

BIRTHDAY MAN

Oh not this again!

(he tries to shield his cake and face by hands)

Why does this always happen to me?

Some passengers hold umbrellas over their heads. Rachel stares at the cake face as it gets battered and disfigured by it's own rain of orange juice.

CAKE FACE

(quickly, somewhat gurglingly)

But I believe in you, Rachel. You can make things right.

The cake face morphs back into the cake, disappearing. Rachel sighs. The juice rain persists.

BIRTHDAY MAN

Driver, hit the gas. We gotta get outta this bus.

ANOTHER PASSENGER

Driver, drop me here. I can walk the rest of the way.

Rachel just sits there, face down, drenched by the juice rain, staring at the cake, longing; watching it get soaked and destroyed by the juice rain... melancholic. And every now and again, she wipes the rain from her eyes. And this time,

as she takes her hand off her eyes-

INT. PARTY, UNKNOWN LIVING ROOM - DAY

-she finds herself standing in a party in the living room of some unknown house. A banner hung from the ceiling reads, '*happy birthday, man*'. Rachel gazes around, confused, lost. Then someone taps her from behind, and she turns around and sees a smiling Brenden-

RACHEL
(kind of surprised)
Hey!

BRENDEN
(smiles)
Hey.

RACHEL
Like, whose house is this?

BRENDEN
It doesn't matter, Rache. As long as it's right where you're supposed to be.

RACHEL
(pause)
Right.

Brenden puts an arm around her shoulders leading her on-

BRENDEN
Come, I'll show you to the right people.

He walks her across the living room, toward some other partiers.

BRENDEN (CONT'D)
Although, this party's kinda lame;
Bunch of old farts.

RACHEL
Yeah. What are you doing here, anyway?

BRENDEN
Come on, don't play dumb, Rache. By now, we all know what this is..
Anyway, I was on the bus. You didn't see me cuz I was laying low. Remember

those guys with the gun?

RACHEL

Yeah.

BRENDEN

They were after me. They knew I was gonna try and help you.

RACHEL

Yeah. Thanks, man.

BRENDEN

What are friends for? Anytime.

He takes Rachel to some woman of late 40s drinking and chatting with friends. Brenden and Rachel stand right before her, and she notices them, but doesn't really pay much attention.

BRENDEN

(to Rachel)

This is Sarah Crawford. She once hit someone with her car on her way back from getting her kids from school. She was drunk.. and high! She didn't flee the scene of the accident, she called 911. Of course she spent 4 years in prison, but she got out with a clean slate, and life had never been so perfect.

Rachel just stares.

BRENDEN (CONT'D)

(he fondly takes Mrs. Crawford's shoulder)

Ain't that right, ma'am?

MRS. CRAWFORD

(smiles)

I'd never been so clear. I'd never felt so pure.

And Rachel just stares, her eyes beginning to water.

BRENDEN

(to Rachel)

(re: a fat man of age 60s among Sarah's friends)

And this is Chuck.

Chuck nonchalantly waves at them.

BRENDEN (CONT'D)
 He once shot someone, a kid actually,
 for calling him 'fat ass.'

Chuck bows his head, ashamed.

BRENDEN (CONT'D)
 He turned himself in, spent 15 years
 in jail, and turned his life around.
 And now he runs the bar over on
 Atterton Street.

CHUCK
 Actually it's a strip club.

BRENDEN
 As long as it's legit.

CHUCK
 (nonchalant. nods)
 Yeah.

Brenden, now motions to a woman of late 30s, a distance away,
 dancing on her own, sipping a drink.

BRENDEN
 (to Rachel)
 And that's Melanie. Boy don't even get
 me started on that one. She shot her
 husband in the back, twice-

Just then, by coincidence, Melanie, dancing on her own, makes
 her hand into a pistol and gestures shooting the pistol
 twice, mouthing as she shoots; "Bang bang."

BRENDEN (CONT'D)
 -cuz-
 (he solemnly sighs)
 he wouldn't just pee IN the toilet
 seat. She was so sorry.

Rachel just stares blankly at Melanie.

BRENDEN (CONT'D)
 Her husband wouldn't press charges,
 but Melanie opted to see an anger
 management shrink. And today, she's
 the most sought after animal trainer
 in the entire state.

BRENDEN (CONT'D)(CONT'D)
 (he then looks Rachel in the eyes)
 Exactly what point am I trying to
 make, Rachel? Why am I showing you all
 these people?

Rachel lowers her gaze, her head bowed in sadness and shame.

BRENDEN (CONT'D)
 Isn't it clear as crystal, Rachel?
 These are people who made heinous
 mistakes in their lives, even worse
 than what you did; But they didn't let
 it corrupt them. They didn't yield to
 temptation. They came clean. It was
 rough but it was worth it, and now
 they have beautiful lives and are at
 peace with themselves. What more could
 anyone ask for Rachel? What more?

Rachel just stares to the floor, eyes watering.

BRENDEN (CONT'D)
 There you were running for governor,
 exhorting people to believe and trust
 in you, promising them transparency;
 Well, what kinda transparency could
 you give them, when you yourself
 happens to be someone lying about her
 credibility and criminality; Someone
 that damned well could be a
 manslaughterer-

He says this with a flash of profound disappointment and
 disgust, and a tear trickles down Rachel's cheek, Brenden
 wiping it off by hand-

BRENDEN (CONT'D)
 Raaache.. there really is no reason to
 weep. There's always an opportunity.
 There's no dead end. Life is always
 giving us chances to redeem ourselves.

Rachel, teary, looks up at Brenden-

RACHEL
 How can you be so sure?

BRENDEN
 (looks her in the eyes, solemn)
 Because it makes perfect sense, and
 that's all it takes for anything to

exist.

Rachel just stares him in the eyes, smitten by this... She sighs.

RACHEL

Thank you.

BRENDEN

(smiles)

Anytime, Rache.

RACHEL

I gotta get going.

BRENDEN

Oh yes, you do.

RACHEL

How do I get to the bus station from here?

(she looks the room over and around)

Whatever this place may be.

BRENDEN

Seriously, Rache, you really don't remember this place?

RACHEL

No, I do not.

BRENDEN

Come on, this used to be May Tate's house.

RACHEL

Who?

BRENDEN

May B. Tate; The lady that sold your mom the house. You've been here a couple'a times with your mom.

RACHEL

I really can't remember.

BRENDEN

Yeah, you've had lots to think about since then.

RACHEL

Yeah.

BRENDEN

But it's okay, it's irrelevant. You can still make it all work.

RACHEL

Good to hear. Hey, how d'you get to the bus station from here? Or how do I get to New York City from here? Isn't there some kinda portal or teleporter or something?

BRENDEN

Like it's gonna be that easy. Rache, you're on punishment. You don't get any favors. Why not just ask to get outta this coma, and get back to your beautiful, hypocritic life and go on to be governor of Pennsylvania; Ahn-ahn, ain't gonna happen. Here there are steps you must take, experiences you must pass through. I'm not saying it has to be difficult. It'll only get difficult where you refuse to think free and optimize. And trust me, it'd really sting. But I know you're wise enough now not to cut corners. It may never be difficult, but trust me it must always be remarkable, and it must always indicate to you that repercussions are inevitable.

RACHEL

So I must face the repercussions of the hit-and-run.

BRENDEN

No, not so much the 'hit' as the 'run.' It's the unideal.

RACHEL

But I'm sorry. I'm truly sorry.

BRENDEN

Of course you are, Rache. But repercussions have nothing to do with repentance; Repercussion must run it's course, repentance notwithstanding. And you say you're sorry, Rachel, but

to what extent? You need to be totally sorry. You need to see where you're still getting things wrong. You need to pass through experiences that'll indicate them to you. You need resolve. And where eventually you refuse to resolve your life, you're just going to have to die.

They stare each other in the eyes a while.

BRENDEN

So...the bus to New York; You gotta get going.

He puts an arm around her shoulders and leads her on to a hallway between bedrooms. The lights in the hallway keep flickering for some reason, and Rachel can't help but be a bit apprehensive. Brenden opens a bedroom door, and inside are two clowns in bed. The clowns face them processing...

ONE CLOWN

Hey. Close it.

BRENDEN

(he shuts the door)
Wrong door.

He opens the next door, and inside is the 45 year-old, regular-world Rachel lain intubated and comatose in her ICU bed. 17 year-old Rachel peers in, staring with self-pity.

BRENDEN

(he shuts the door)
Nope, absolutely not.

They move over to the next door, Brenden opens it, and inside is the bagpiper from Rachel's mom's funeral, staring at them. He begins playing the pipes, but Brenden shuts the door abruptly.

BAGPIPER (OS)

Screw you.

Brenden rolls his eyes, he and Rachel heading for the next door.

RACHEL

Any day now.

BRENDEN

Patience, patience, my subconscious friend. The house has to have its fun too.

RACHEL

And I gotta get my life back.

Something Rachel has just said makes Brenden stop dead in his tracks, pausing, pondering, mouthing...

BRENDEN

'Life back'... Left back.
(then he realizes)
Left back! Rache, you're a genius!

He hurries back to the door behind his left-hand side, the same door they just previously opened that had the piper in it.

BRENDEN

Of course! It makes perfect sense.

He opens the door again, and this time the inside is not a bedroom, but the interior of a bus almost full of passengers waiting to depart.

BRENDEN

Now we talking. This is the bus to New York.

RACHEL

How d'you figure?

Brenden motions her to an electronic message board in the bus that reads, 'duh!' And Rachel sees, but is still confused, even a bit panicky-

RACHEL

(to herself)
What?

The passengers stare angrily at her, themselves murmuring.

ONE PASSENGER

(loudly)
We've been waiting all goddamned day!
Of course this is the bus to New York, lady! We've been waiting all day! What other bus would be relevant at this point?!

RACHEL
 (to herself)
 Well if that's the way it works.

ANOTHER PASSENGER
 (fed up)
 Just get in, let's get outta here.

Brenden motions the only empty seat, in the back of the bus,
 to Rachel-

BRENDEN
 There you go.

Rachel gets solemn.

RACHEL
 So this is goodbye.

BRENDEN
 For now. You still have to come back
 home. Even though not this overly
 mature version of yourself.

Rachel smiles.

RACHEL
 But none of this is even real. How
 could we be together again?

BRENDEN
 And who are you to say this isn't
 real? Perception is reality, Rachel.
 Perception is existence, and existence
 is perception. Just because something
 is strange and rare to you doesn't
 mean it's not real; doesn't mean it's
 not in the system, doesn't mean it's
 not cosmic. All of this-
 (he motions around)
 -is as real as it gets. And if you
 begin to undermine that, trust me
 you'll only find yourself in desperate
 situations, and life will only get
 more difficult. Don't undermine the
 Karma: It is constant.

Rachel stares at him, pondering...

RACHEL
 Thank you... for everything.

BRENDEN

Hey, what are friends for?

Rachel hugs him.

RACHEL

I'm gonna miss you.

BRENDEN

I'm gonna miss you too.

ANNOYED PASSENGER

Lady, we can't stay here forever!

RACHEL

Okay okay!

She and Brenden stare each other in the eyes, solemn, a tear trickling down her cheek, Brenden wiping it by hand.

BRENDEN

We're gonna be fine.

RACHEL

Sure we are.. Good bye.

BRENDEN

(solemn)

Good bye.

He and Rachel look each other in the eyes, smiling warmly. Rachel walks into the bedroom door / bus, making her way to the only empty seat in the back, passing by angry, glaring passengers.

ONE PASSENGER

Finally!

ANOTHER PASSENGER

(groans)

All goddamned day.

Rachel takes her seat and looks out the window at Brenden. They wave each other goodbye, solemn, smiling warmly. And the bus starts to move away, the hallway becoming less and less visible as the bus detaches itself from it. Rachel and Brenden wave their last goodbyes as the hallway and Brenden disappear from view and the bus emerges in-

EXT./INT. DRIVEWAY, SUBURBAN HOUSE / MOVING BUS / ROAD -
CONTINUOUS

The bus drives on the driveway, exiting into the street, Rachel looking back at the house.

A moment later, Rachel, feeling sleepy, reclines in her seat; her eyes, beginning to shut, and just as they shut,

BLAST!

the deafening blast of a gunshot. She jerks awake, eyes wide, gazing around... Nothing. She ponders a moment, then reclines back. And again, just as her eyes shut, a second *BLAST!* She jerks awake to find the man (50s) in the seat right in front of her, glaring back at her, smoking pistol raised in the air, and her eyes go wide. They stare at each other a moment.

GUN MAN

(smoking pistol raised in the air)
You don't get to rest, honey. No rest
for the wicked and evil.

He now stands up, turning to face her, and as he does, the bus swerves, and he loses balance, awkwardly giddy and grappling for the backrest of his seat for balance, and once balanced, he faces Rachel, gesticulating with the pistol as he speaks-

GUNMAN

You must think you're some big-time hotshot, moving around town free and fine like you did nothing wrong-
(Rachel just stares blankly at him. Other passengers start to pay attention to the standoff, glaring at Rachel.)
-Like you did nothing terrible, nothing despicable! Or is it because-
(he motions to all other passengers)
-we're restraining ourselves? Trying to be patient, to be thorough-
(the other passengers now look like they could devour Rachel any second)
Don't think for one second you're off the hook. You're not supposed to feel safe. Even, at any second now, we could lose our cool and throw you under the bus, run you over, leave you for dead.

Rachel holds her blank stare, the gunman getting right in her

face-

GUNMAN
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE THAT?! HUH?! HUH?!

His eyeballing and frowning persists, and Rachel just stares back, blank. Then he backs off, turning away, getting back in his seat-

GUNMAN
Oh, and by the way, I'm your father.
Maybe we could spend some quality time
if we ever get a chance.

Rachel stares at the back of his head, then purses her lips, disapproving. The other passengers still glare at her, then finally turn away. Then all of a sudden, all passengers, except Rachel, burst into song, a cheerful sing-along; startling Rachel. She watches as they sing for joy, the woman sat right beside her, gesticulating the song intently in Rachel's face, and Rachel can't help but hint a smile.

EXT./INT. HIGHWAY THROUGH DESERT / MOVING BUS - LATER

The sun shines broiling hot as the bus barrels down this highway in the middle of the desert... The only vehicle on the road.

EXT./INT. HIGHWAY THROUGH DESERT / MOVING BUS / GAS STATION - LATER

The bus slows, exiting into a gas station, and Rachel notices the name of the gas station: *'real as it gas.'* She sighs.

The bus parks at a pump, and passengers begin alighting to stretch and use the convenience store. As *"Rachel's dad"* gets up from his seat, he turns around, glaring at Rachel-

RACHEL'S DAD
Better not think you're free to move
about anywhere-

Other passengers begin glaring at Rachel again, some coming to stand behind *her dad* in solidarity, and this time, Rachel glares back.

RACHEL'S DAD (CONT'D)
Keep your ass glued to that seat till
we get to New York and then we'll
decide exactly how to make you feel
the befitting.. agony.. that you so

dearly deserve.. honey.

A moment of silence as they keep glaring at each other.

RACHEL

Ha bloody ha! You don't think I know
by now, exactly what's going on?
Listen, I know I messed up, messed up
big-time. In fact, that's the only
reason I'm here.. trapped in my own
mind or whatever-

Her dad seems to have no idea what she's talking about. He
looks to his fellow confronters beside him-

RACHEL'S DAD

What the hell is she talking about?

The confronters shrug, clueless.

RACHEL

I mean, I don't even take the
goddamned bus! Never! I mean, I have
nothing against bus people, I'd take
the bus under the right circumstances.
But, my point is, your kind of people
can't get in my face and start
dictating me what I can and can't do-
This is still America!

Her dad and the other passengers just stare blankly at her.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

And besides, the events of these past
few days have left me infinitely
intelligent, and now I could never be
distressed because it makes perfect
sense.

(the confronters exchange looks)

So...

(she stands up, glaring her
confronters in the face)

get outta m'face.

She pushes her way through her dad and the rest of them, who
just stare at her, defeated. She heads for the exit, but
stops abruptly when something drops to the floor in front of
her. It's a toy car. Rachel stoops to pick it up, but pauses,
staring at it like it's peculiar: The little toy car is an
exact replica of her Chevy Cavalier. She stares at it,
intrigued, picking it up and marvelling. She then moves to

hand it to whoever dropped it, and as she looks, she sees that the person is her kid, Bobby, and sat beside him; her husband, Alex; Father and son. She freezes, staring at them, eyes twinkling. They hold her stare, incognizant, Bobby longing for his toy. Rachel smiles, handing it to him-

RACHEL

Here you go, little fella-

She ruffles his hair, smiling at Alex, who smiles back.

BOBBY

Thank you.

ALEX

Thank you, miss.

RACHEL

(eyes twinkling. big smile)

My pleasure.

She continues for the exit.

EXT. BUS / GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Rachel steps out of the bus along with some other passengers, of which some stand around, and others along with her, head for the convenience store.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Rachel meets the cashier(f, late 30s) whose has her face buried in a magazine.

RACHEL

Hello, where's the bathroom?

CASHIER

(mumbles, without looking up from her magazine)

Customers only.

Rachel didn't quite hear her.

RACHEL

What?

CASHIER

I said customers only. Come on, lady, you know these things-

She eyes Rachel, who takes out a dollar, leaving it on the counter.

RACHEL
Where is it?

CASHIER
(points)
Turn left there.

Rachel hurries away.

INT. BATHROOM STALLS - CONTINUOUS

Rachel opens a seemingly unoccupied stall to find... the bagpiper from her mom's funeral, sat on the toilet, kilt down. He has the bagpipes, ready to play, while staring Rachel in the eyes, solemn. She stares back, and they stare each other a while; Rachel's eyes, welling up, a tear trickling down. Then, the piper, without taking his eyes off Rachel, begins playing.. the beautiful, poignant tune from her mom's funeral. Rachel stares, eyes welling up. She then drops her gaze, but remains frozen, staring at the floor, languishing in self-pity, and the piper keeps playing, tranquil, beautiful, staring at the frozen, melancholic Rachel... Rachel then turns around, trudging to the next stall, sighing.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - LATER

Rachel comes back into the store from the bathroom. She moves to the shelves and picks up a bag of chips, a pack of cookies, and a soda. She moves to the cashier, setting them before her, and the cashier stares at them, solemn... appalled. And Rachel observes.

CASHIER
Whoa whoa whoa whoa whoa.
(she begins vigorously shaking her head no)
You can't have all of these at once!

RACHEL
Of course I'm gonna pay for 'em,
what's the balance?

The cashier tightens her glare-

CASHIER
Don't play coy with me- It's not about
the money. It's never about the money.

CASHIER(CONT'D)
(Rachel's kind of shocked)
Don't act shocked with me!
(she motions to the snacks)
You, especially; can't have all of
these at once- You have to put
something back.

RACHEL
Why?

CASHIER
(pissed)
Listen, bitch;
(Rachel tightens her glare)
You can't expect me to explain
everything to you.

She puts the bag of chips aside, and bags only the cookies
and soda-

CASHIER
Here, you can have these, enjoy.

RACHEL
(fumes)
I want my goddamned chips!

She grabs the chips, and the cashier also grapples for it.
They try to tug it out of each other's hands, and the bag
rips open, chips flying everywhere-

RACHEL / CASHIER
Look what you done, you stupid bitch!

Rachel's frustrated but not shocked. The cashier, however, is
seething-

CASHIER
You evil bitch. You think you can have
it your way every single time. You
walk around high and mighty like
everything has to fall into place for
you. Well, not this time, and never
anymore.

RACHEL
(exasperated)
What?

CASHIER

(furious)

What makes you think you deserve for things to always go your way?! What d'you live by, and what makes it right?!

Rachel mellow.

RACHEL

(softly, timidly)

I-

CASHIER

SHUDDUP!.. You think everyone and everything's stupid, don'tcha?! What d'you think makes you you?! And what d'you think makes you feel?!

Rachel remains mellow, eyes to the floor.

CASHIER

That's it! I'm calling security.

She pushes a panic button under the counter and a siren goes off with flashing lights. It's loud and serious, and Rachel just stands there, moping, defeated. And from all directions, four security people in suits rush to the scene. Rachel's apprehensive. They surround her-

SECURITY PEOPLE

GET ON THE GROUND! GET ON THE GROUND!
HANDS WHERE I CAN SEE 'EM!

And before Rachel can comply, they push her to the ground, pinning and frisking her.

RACHEL

Hey!... Come on, guys, ain't this a bit excessive?

ONE SECURITY WOMAN

(cuffing Rachel's hands behind her back)

No. It's juuust right.

They get Rachel to her feet, walking her to the exit, vigilantly pointing their pistols at her like she's some dangerous beast.

SECURITY WOMAN (CONT'D)
 (as she nudges Rachel on)
 Come on, by now you should know it all
 makes perfect sense.

RACHEL
 (rolls her eyes)
 Right.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE / GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Just as they step out of the convenience store, they're met
 by a barrage of machine gun fire, and two security people
 instantly drop to the ground, hit, dead. Bystanders scream,
 fleeing.

RACHEL
 (flustered)
 What the...!

REMAINING TWO SECURITY MAN AND WOMAN
 (overwhelmed)
 Shit!

They rush Rachel, they three taking cover behind a parked
 car, drawing out their pistols, and the rounds keep coming,
 obliterating the windows of the car.

RACHEL
 What the hell's going on?!

SECURITY WOMAN
 Who's asking whom? For all we know,
 you planned this.

RACHEL
 (over persistent gunfire)
 What?! Yeah, I planned it within the
 one second you and your goons were
 assaulting and abducting me- God rest
 their souls- Or not!

SECURITY MAN
 You have a lot of nerve talking about
 Davy and Sammy like that.

BANG BANG BANG...! more and more rounds come in, and Rachel
 starts to panic, struggling with the handcuffs behind her
 back, to no avail-

RACHEL

Get these off of me!

SECURITY MAN

Just keep your head down 'fore you
lost it too.

He and his partner peer around the car, trying to see where the shots are coming from, and they see two militia men in front of a motel across the highway, training M16's at their position. They fire back with their pistols, and the militia men, unfazed, resume fire, wreaking havoc on the cover car and store windows.

SECURITY WOMAN

Who the fuck are these guys?!-

She winces from the blasts of the incoming fire.

SECURITY MAN

And what the fuck do they want?!

More and more deafening rounds keep smashing in.

SECURITY MAN

It ain't worth it, Mel.
(he moves to Rachel, undoing her
cuffs)
That's it, you're free to go, get
outta here.

RACHEL

(rubs her sore wrists)
'Free to go'?! Free to go where?! I
don't know those guys! You stinky
gorillas put me in this fucked up
situation for nothing, and you sure as
hell are gonna get me outta it.

MEL

You don't know 'em?! Then what the
fuck good are you?!

She puts her pistol to Rachel's head.

RACHEL

Aw, come on, is there anyone here that
doesn't wanna kill me?!

SECURITY MAN

She's right, Mel,

SECURITY MAN(CONT'D)

(he puts a dissuading hand on his partner's raised gun)
 this has gone on for long enough.
 Enough of this senseless violence.
 (he motions to his other colleagues, dead on the ground)
 Look what it got Davy and Sammy.

Mel still keeps the pistol on Rachel's temple, mean scowl on her. Rachel returns the glare, unafraid, fed up.

SECURITY MAN

Come on, Mel, you don't wanna do this.
 It ain't worth it. She ain't worth it.

MEL

(tense, torn, through grit teeth)
 How could you be sure?! How d'you know
 it doesn't come back and bite us in
 the ass?!

SECURITY MAN

Come on, Mel, she ain't our problem.
 Just look at her. The way I see it,
 she's got enough problems of her own.

BANG BANG BANG...! More and more rounds come in, shredding the car.

RACHEL

Oh yes I do.

MEL

SHUDDUP!

Mel is extremely anxious, her pistol trembling on Rachel's head.

SECURITY MAN

(desperate)
 Mel Mel Mel, Come on, it's gonna be
 fine. The situation has to go
 somewhere from here; Somewhere right.

Mel contemplates a moment, trembling in anxiety. Then she agrees, lowering her pistol, limp; head and shoulders slouched in regret-

MEL

You're right. You're right, Tom. I
 can't believe how stupid I've been.

She sighs regret, then faces Rachel, eyes twinkling-

MEL

I'm sorry, kid. I should'a thought better. I should'a been better. I guess sometimes, it's better to be human than professional. We're gonna help you outta this. Where d'you wanna go?

Rachel looks up at the bus she came in, and it's surprisingly packed with all the passengers she came with. They all stick their heads out the windows, looking directly at her, beckoning and exhorting; "Come on! Make a run for it! You can make it!"

MEL

That's where you wanna go?

RACHEL

I guess. Yeah.

MEL / TOM

Okay.

They begin rendering prolonged return fire at the assailants across the road, who are forced to run for cover behind parked cars, but immediately start firing back, rendering a barrage of deadly hell at Rachel and the security men; the impact noise, deafening; and Rachel, Mel, and Tom, covering their ears, grimacing, remain still behind the car, desperately hoping not to get hit, and a while passes before the rounds let up, single intermittent shots sustaining, Mel and Tom returning the favor.

On the bus, someone takes out a megaphone and sticks their head out the window- It's *Rachel's twisted dad*.

RACHEL'S DAD

(with megaphone)

Rachel, honey; I know you have so much self-doubt and low self-esteem cuz you couldn't live up to all the hopes and standards I've expected of you the few minutes we've known each other riding the bus together. But I believe in you, kid. I believe in you so much that if there's anyone I'd ever ask to help me detox from Vicodin; it's you, kid. Now make a run for it and make me the proudest dad I've always ran away

from being. COME ON! COME ON!
(he begins cheering her on-)
Raachel! Raachel! Raachal!...

All other passengers join in, chanting joyfully, "Raachel!
Raachel! Raachel!..."

TOM
That's your dad?

RACHEL
I bloody hope not.

MEL
Okay, you're gonna have to make a run
for it. Are you sure you can do this?

RACHEL
I don't gotta be sure, but I sure as
hell can NOT remain here.

MEL
Backup'll be here any second now, you
don't gotta do this.

TOM
Backup'll never let her go scot-free,
Mel. They'll lock her up and throw
away the key.

MEL
He's right, you gotta make a run for
it, kid.

RACHEL
Right.

TOM
And please, try not to get shot..
again.

RACHEL
Right. Thank you.

MEL / TOM
Anytime, kid.

MEL
And sorry for almost shooting you in
the head earlier.

RACHEL
Ah, it's okay.

TOM
So, you ready?

Rachel looks at the bus, then at the militants' position across the highway. She steels herself.

RACHEL
I sure am.

The security men reload their pistols and start rendering prolonged fire at the assailants-

MEL / TOM
Go!

Rachel makes a run for it, and the militants open fire at her, while also returning fire to the security people. Rachel runs with all her might, screaming like a warrior as bullets strafe around her. She's just about to make it to the door of the bus, when suddenly, the bus drives off, and her eyes widen, astonished; "*Are you kidding me?!*" She keeps chasing the bus furiously, the gunplay continuing around her. The bus stops a short distance away, and the passengers keep exhorting her, especially her dad with the megaphone; "Come on! Honey, you can make it! Come on!"

And just as she's about to make it to the door again, the bus moves off again.

RACHEL
Aw, come on!

She keeps running after it, dodging rounds, and the bus stops again, this time the passengers are guffawing at her, especially her dad, through the megaphone. She gets to the bus, rushing into it, panting.

INT./EXT. BUS / DESOLATE HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

All passengers are guffawing at Rachel, including *her husband* and *son*. *Her dad* guffaws in her face with the megaphone... "Be faster next time, honey. Don't be such a disappointment..." And just then, the bus starts taking automatic gunfire, "Shit!" he exclaims through the megaphone as passengers scream, ducking for cover, the bus peeling out immediately. Then the shots let up, and passengers are relieved. *Rachel's dad* faces her-

RACHEL'S DAD

All the shit I do for you, kid.

She just stares at him, somewhat fascinated... She sighs.

Moments later, the bus has left the gunfight, and is now driving along a safe part of the highway, it then slows down, making a U-turn, going back to the gunfight.

RACHEL

Whoa whoa whoa, what's going on?! Why are we turning around?!

No one answers, or even look at her. They just ride the bus, remaining calm, solemn.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

(trying to get anyone's attention)
Hey, hey, why are we turning around?!
What's going on?!

Again, no response. And the gunfight can now be heard again as the bus gets closer and closer to it.

RACHEL

Why are we going back to the gunfire?!

No one acknowledges her. The bus is now approaching the militants' position, and Rachel resigns to silence, head bowed, pensive, as the gunfight is now in view from the bus. One of the militants hails prolonged automatic fire at Mel's and Tom's position, while the other comes into the open with an RPG and lines up a shot at the position-

RACHEL

(petrified)
Holy shit.

EXT. COVER CAR / CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Mel peeks around the car, her face instantly filling with horror as she sees the-

MEL

RPG!

Mel and Tom make a dash for it, and just then,

BPHOO!

The militant fires the RPG, and it blows up Mel's and Tom's

cover car- Are Mel and Tom blown up? We can't tell.

RACHEL
(gobsmacked)
Holy shit.

Other passengers aren't even concerned by the return to the mayhem, they just ride the bus, calm as if nothing's happening. Mel and Tom are nowhere to be seen, and the gunfight's over. The militia men now pay full attention to the incoming bus, and their rifles hang loose from their shoulders, but they ominously keep a hand on it as they don't take their eyes off the bus. And Rachel just watches them, pensive, as the bus approaches them. They wave the bus into the parking lot of the motel, and the driver complies.

EXT./INT. MOTEL PARKING LOT / BUS - CONTINUOUS

The bus parks, and the militants stand by, guns ready. Rachel peeks at them, pondering. All other passengers begin alighting, and Rachel's stumped-

RACHEL
(to herself)
What the hell's going on now?

She remains seated, pondering, as other passengers including *her twisted dad* pass by her.

RACHEL
(to *her dad*)
Hey, what's going on? Why have we come here?

He doesn't even acknowledge her, just keeps on walking... Then, *her husband*, Alex; leading *her son*, Bobby, on, pass by her, and she stares at them, longing. They glance back-

RACHEL
(smiles)
Oh, hello again.

ALEX
(smiles back)
Hi.

Rachel stares at him, eyes twinkling-

RACHEL
Why have we stopped here?

ALEX

Oh, we're here to stay the night. It's policy.

RACHEL

(looks at her watch)
But it's only one o'clock.

ALEX

(smiles)
Yeah, but this is the only motel for a thousand miles that serves salad with peanut dressing. There's a lady on the bus, she's deathly allergic. She's supposed to die on the trip.

Rachel's eyes go wide, but she immediately acclimates-

RACHEL

Sure. Thanks.

ALEX

Anytime.

Rachel smiles, turning to Bobby-

RACHEL

How you doing, little guy?

Bobby smiles back. She ruffles his hair-

RACHEL

Gosh, you're such a cutie.

BOBBY

Thanks, miss.

RACHEL

You're welcome, my dear; and thank you.

BOBBY / ALEX

You're welcome.

They continue on their way. Rachel looks outside at the militants, pondering her next move. The militants are ushering the passengers toward the motel office, everyone calm, even chatty. Rachel sighs gets up and heads for the exit, and on exiting, she heads after passengers toward the motel office. As she walks, she looks to the other side of the road where she was taking cover with Mel and Tom in

front of the convenience store: Only destruction, no signs of life.

One of the militants sees her lagging behind, staring at the other side of the road-

MILITANT

Come on!

Rachel startles and quickly joins the other passengers crowding up in front of the motel office, murmuring.

EXT. MOTEL OFFICE - A MOMENT LATER

The office door swings open, and the crowd goes silent as a woman (early 30s), in a cowgirl's outfit, and with an Alsatian on a leash, comes out to address them-

ALSATIAN LADY

(with authority and condescension)

Now listen, I know some of you here think you have a natural right to be given shelter in this motel- That since you came on the bus as a legitimate middle-class or somewhat below middle-class, or downright shit-poor passenger, at least you should be given shelter here.. But sorry, that's not how this works-

Rachel's dad, within the crowd, with his megaphone, has to interrupt to complain-

RACHEL'S DAD

(with megaphone. rude)

Hey hey hey hey hey! Listen, lady; you know better than to come out of your little, dingy, smelly office and start addressing a crowd of thirty people in a low, tiny voice like you don't give a shit. Either raise your voice, or get a goddamned megaphone like a reasonable fella.

(then to fellow passengers)

Am I right, guys?

No one concurs, they don't even acknowledge him, and he has to concur for himself-

RACHEL'S DAD

(with megaphone)

Yeah! Yeah!

The Alsatian lady just stares at him, blank, ominous; then she unleashes the Alsatian, urging it to draw blood. Growling and barking with rage, it rushes straight for *Rachel's dad* whose eyes go wide as he drops the megaphone, quickly wriggling way to the back of the crowd, disappearing. The dog picks up the megaphone in its mouth, and heads back to the lady, offering it to her. She smilingly takes it, fondling the dog-

ALSATIAN LADY

Thanks, Judy.

Rachel cocks her head. The lady gives the dog a treat, then she faces the crowd, speaking with the megaphone-

ALSATIAN LADY

So, as I was saying, not all of you have a room here. Some of you are so pathetic that even the smallest of broom closets, we simply can't give to you. The best we can do is let you sleep under the bus-

She points.

ONE CROWD MEMEBER

We ain't sleeping in no bus!

ALSATIAN LADY

(enraged)

BE QUIET!

The Alsatian seconds her with a ferocious bark, and the crowd goes absolutely silent.

ALSATIAN LADY

Come on, don't flatter yourselves, I didn't say 'in the bus.'

(she scoffs)

I said 'under the bus.'

The crowd begins murmuring.

ALSATIAN LADY

Silence!

The crowd absolutely complies.

ALSATIAN LADY

Now, you can see, the interior of the bus is out of bounds.

Passengers look and see that the doors of the bus are being guarded by the militia men, rifles at the ready, and one militant smugly regards the crowd, and faces in the crowd fall with sadness, including Rachel's.

ALSATIAN LADY

So, any of you thinking of forcing your way into the bus, or the building, I wonder what makes you think it's worth your life... And by the way, some of you are going to have to share a room, that's the way it all fits. So, for those of you that have a room, you'll find the key in your pockets.

The crowd murmurs.. whimpering, some exclaim joy, and one man in the crowd, dressed in combat-style outfit laments to the lady; "Which of our pockets? I have like twenty for Christ's sakes.

ALSATIAN LADY

That's your problem. You can't expect to be spoon-fed every step of the way.

She and her dog get back in the office, shutting the door.

Rachel's dad, in back of the crowd, desperately searches his pockets, and it takes a while before he finds something, taking it out, holding it to his face; It's a key. He stares at it like he's stumbled upon diamonds... Then he heaves a sigh of relief-

RACHEL'S DAD

(solemn)

I'll be damned... I'm not as terrible as I thought.

He clenches the key tight in his fist as if not wanting it fly away, savoring it.

RACHEL'S DAD

(jitters with excitement)

Yes! Yes!

Rachel herself desperately searches her pockets, and it would seem she doesn't have a key, but then, she checks an inside

pocket of her blouse and there's something... *bam!* it's a key. She stares at it, sighing relief, the number on it, '202'. She sees a lot of the crowd has dispersed, making their way to their rooms, while the many who don't have a room stand and cluster around, panicky, suspicious. She makes her way into the building.

INT. STAIRWELL, MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Rachel's trudging up the crowded stairs when someone taps her shoulder from behind, she turns around, and it's *her twisted dad*. He's with some big fat guy who also tends to her.

RACHEL'S DAD

(polite)

Hey. You got a room?

RACHEL

Yeah.

RACHEL'S DAD

Great. You're gonna have to give it to my buddy here Greg. He didn't get a key.

(then to big fat Greg)

You're sure you checked all your pockets?

BIG FAT GREG

Yeah!

RACHEL'S DAD

Under your tits?

BIG FAT GREG

Yeah.

RACHEL'S DAD

Belly flap?

BIG FAT GREG

Yeah.

Rachel's dad sighs sadness.

RACHEL'S DAD

(to Rachel)

So you see he'd be completely hopeless without your help. Big guy like this can't fit under no bus, he'll get like super blisters or something, but you,

you're just the perfect size, you'll have no trouble at all sleeping under the bus. Just for a night.

Rachel just stares at them, blank.

RACHEL'S DAD (CONT'D)

Come on, just for a night. Tomorrow morning, we'll all get back on that bus and be on our way to New York, come on.

Rachel sighs, then faces Greg-

RACHEL

Have fun sleeping under the bus. Tell me how it was in the morning.

She turns away, continuing on the stairs.

RACHEL'S DAD

(pissed off)

You ungrateful little brat! What have you ever done for me? I brought you into this world and gave you the freedom to do whatever the hell you wanted- I got out of your face all these years for you to be free and experienced, and this is how you repay me? It's alright.. We'll see who has the last laugh. *Daddy always wins, twerp!*

EXT. MOTEL OFFICE - SAME TIME

Alex and Bobby are outside the door, and Alex knocks the door. No response. He knocks again. Nothing. He gets pissed and bangs on it, frightening Bobby-

BOBBY

Daddy, stop!

The Alsatian lady furiously swings the door open-

ALSATIAN LADY

WHAT?!

Alex mellows-

ALEX

Oh sorry, it's just, I think there

must be a mixup; My son here got a key
and I didn't, and security's telling
me I don't have a room.

ALSATIAN LADY

Yeah, so?

Alex's eyes go wide-

ALEX

Well he can't be on his own- I have to
always watch over him.

ALSATIAN LADY

Then turn in his key and he can sleep
with you under the bus. But, no key,
no room. That's the policy.

ALEX

(desperate)

That can't be right. I...

ALSATIAN LADY

Shut up! If you knock on this door
again, you'll get thrown out of the
premises. And shot.

She slams the door hard in Alex's and Bobby's faces,
startling them. Alex remains frozen... hopeless.

BOBBY

(panicky)

Daddy, is everything okay?

INT. BALCONY HALLWAY, MOTEL - SAME TIME

Rachel comes to the second floor of the motel, and from the balcony hallway, she looks across the highway to the gas station where she and the security people were taking cover from automatic fire... The destruction... the havoc. Then she sees someone come out of the strafed convenience store- It's the cashier woman she had a tussle with earlier, and strangely enough, from the substantial distance, the cashier woman instantly finds her, looking directly at her, flipping her the finger. And Rachel flinches. She just stares back, and the cashier woman heads back into the store. Rachel now sees something downstairs at the bus: The security woman and man she was taking fire with (Mel and Tom) are with the militia gunmen that were hailing them the hell of automatic fire. They stand together, chattering and giggling; all buddy-buddy. And Rachel's eyes go wide.

RACHEL
(mumbles to herself)
Well, there's a new one.

Tom now meets eyes with Rachel's, and he just casually looks away, continuing his chatter.

RACHEL
(to herself)
'Course.

She now looks the entire arid landscape over, from the motel grounds to the horizon in all directions she can manage. The wind howls and it's a lonely, eerie world... She sighs, then continues for her room. She comes to room 202, her room, puts the key in the hole, bit it's jammed, it won't turn. She tries the handle, the door won't open. She keeps trying, jiggling the key and handle... nothing. She stops, checking the numbers on the door and key again, both 202, correct. She sighs.

RACHEL
What now?

She continues with the door, struggling and jiggling. Then she thinks she may have heard a sound coming from inside; sounded like maybe a toilet flushing. She can't be sure. She continues struggling with the door.

VOICE FROM INSIDE
Hey hey hey, who the hell's trying to
break into my room?!

Rachel freezes, contemplative.

RACHEL
Hey, is someone in there?

VOICE FROM INSIDE
Yeah! Who the hell are you?! And what
the hell are you doing?!

RACHEL
Oh, I'm trying to get into my room, I
was checked into this room.

VOICE FROM INSIDE
Lemme see your key.

The door unlocks and swings open and it's Rachel's best friend, Vivian.

RACHEL
(wide-eyed)
Vivian!... What are you
doing here?!

VIVIAN
(wide-eyed)
Rachel!... What are you
doing here?!

VIVIAN
Rache, you following me?

RACHEL
Are you kidding me?

VIVIAN
Whoa whoa whoa whoa, make me
understand, what are you doing here?

Rachel just stares at her, pondering...

RACHEL
Listen, the only way this works is if
you first tell me why in the world
you're here, and then I know if I can
trust you to tell you why I'm here; If
it's safe.

VIVIAN
The reverse is also true.

RACHEL
For all I know, you may not be the
Vivian I know and trust.

VIVIAN
Nice try. It's nice that you're the
first one to say that, so you seem
real and authentic and I start to
think you're the Rachel I know and
trust- Not gonna happen.

RACHEL
Why in the world would you think I may
not be the Rachel you know and trust?

VIVIAN
Let's just say things right now aren't
really as normal or regular as what
I've been used to all my life.

RACHEL
And why are you answering exactly how
I would?

Vivian pauses a moment, contemplating Rachel.

VIVIAN
Nice try! I don't trust you!

Rachel herself pauses, contemplating Vivian.

RACHEL
Well, I can't trust you too. And we
don't even have to trust each other,
we only have to share a room.

A moment of silence.

VIVIAN
Hey, lemme see your key.

She sees Rachel's key in the keyhole, the number on it, 202.

RACHEL
And yours?

Vivian pulls her key out of the other side of the door,
showing Rachel; It's 202. Rachel looks Vivian in the eyes,
solemn-

RACHEL
Hey, if it really is you... It's nice
to see you. I could really use a
friend.

Vivian pauses. Is she touched?

VIVIAN
How could you be happy 'bout something
you're not even sure exists?

RACHEL
(sighs)
Seems like something Vivian would say,
but I still can't trust you.

VIVIAN
Fair enough.

Rachel joins Vivian in the room, shutting and locking the
door-

RACHEL
Can't trust anyone here.

VIVIAN
(smirks)
Outside or inside.

RACHEL
Yeah, the irony; room 202. I guess if
it were 333, Brenden would also be
here.

VIVIAN
Who's Brenden?

Rachel pauses, contemplating her.

VIVIAN
(smirks)
Kidding. Brenden Cole. Our best friend
since kindergarten.

RACHEL
(lowers her gaze)
Whatever. Anyone here could know that.

VIVIAN
(solemn)
Yeah.

RACHEL
(re: what a mess the room is)
How neat and tidy. Typical Vivian.

VIVIAN
Hey, this is how I met it when I moved
in. And it's just some shitty motel,
not my home.

RACHEL
Language, language, my friend. And
this-
(she motions around the untidy
room, smiling)
seems like your home.

VIVIAN
(hints a smile)
Whatever.

Rachel starts settling in, taking off her backpack,
straightening the bed-

RACHEL

I gotta freshen up and get some sleep.

VIVIAN

Can you trust me not to stab you in your sleep?

RACHEL

Seems like the kinda joke Vivian would make. I think things are moving in the right direction here.

VIVIAN

You keep saying things to make me trust you, but if only you knew the experiences I've had, and how it would be downright impossible for me to believe just one fact and not consider all the infinite adverse possibilities it could really be.

Rachel stares at Vivian, mesmerized-

RACHEL

Hmm, seems like something Vivian would say, or try to say, but in shabby, less precise language-

Vivian's also staring at her now, mesmerized.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

On one hand, you seem like the Vivian I know- On the other, you seem like a way older, more experienced person-

She now starts slowly advancing toward Vivian as she speaks, staring her in the eyes, confident, poised.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Or a way older, more experienced version of yourself.

(Vivian is frozen, blank)

Of course, I see it now. It makes perfect sense. It makes perfect sense that you also be here and we meet like this, Vivian. Vivian from 2022.

(Vivian just stares at her, blank)

Vivian, I know it's you. Don't worry; it is I, your best friend, Rachel. From 2022, just like you. We're both way older than we look, aren't we?...

Come on, Vivian, can't you see it makes perfect sense? We both have to make restitution for what we did that night I hit someone with a car. It makes perfect sense I'm here cuz I hit someone with a car and left 'em for dead. I hit, you urged me to run, and I ran. We need to make restitution for this.

Vivian keeps staring at her, eyes welling up, a tear trickling down-

VIVIAN
Rache, is it really you?

RACHEL
Of course it's me, Vivian. We both want the same thing. It has to be me, and it has to be you. We have to help each other.

Vivian, teary, just keeps staring at Rachel, contemplating...

VIVIAN
Oh my God, Rache.
(she rushes Rachel, hugging her, sobbing)
I'm so happy to see you!

RACHEL
Oh Vivs, it's great to see you too!

They embrace, sobbing, looking lovingly in each other's eyes, smiling warmly.

VIVIAN
You were to be state governor.

RACHEL
(wistful, solemn)
Yeah, but I guess we can't bullshit our way through life.

VIVIAN
(sobbing)
Oh no we can't.

Rachel wipes Vivian's tears, condoling her-

RACHEL

Oh Vivs, it's okay, we're gonna be fine.

VIVIAN

(suppressing tears)

I know. It's just, how could we have been so selfish?

RACHEL

It comes with inconsideration, Viv's, it comes with inconsideration. The irony being that selfishness is guaranteed to compromise one's own self.

VIVIAN

(solemn)

Yeah.

RACHEL

How did you find yourself here? Me, I think I got shot giving a press conference. The whole thing happened so fast. That's the last thing I remember from the regular world.

VIVIAN

What?! Who would want to shoot you?!

RACHEL

I dunno, some crazy, mindless creep.

VIVIAN

Wow! You got shot. How'd it feel?

RACHEL

Yeah, you know how people say the pain will only be a quick flash and then you pass out?

VIVIAN

Yeah.

RACHEL

They're wrong. Way wrong. The pain is an incredibly overwhelming hell. You loose faith in everything. You just wish you didn't exist.

VIVIAN

Damn!

RACHEL

So how did you you get here, in this twisted past?

VIVIAN

(sighs disappointment)

You know, it's funny; The irony, and I know you're gonna blame me for this, but-

(again she sighs)

I got hit by a car.

RACHEL

Whoa! But then, I'm not that surprised, am I?

VIVIAN

No you're not.

RACHEL

Vivian, I've told you countless times, look both ways of the road before you cross. It's not your living room, it's not a fashion runway, it's an extremely dangerous place.

VIVIAN

Well, you don't gotta tell me anymore. Now I know for a fact. I know from experience.

RACHEL

But you never seem to learn.

VIVIAN

Well at least I ain't gone and hit nobody with a car.

They crack a smile.

RACHEL

But you went and urged somebody to flee the scene of the accident and not take responsibility for their actions isn't that why you're back here with me?

VIVIAN

(hints a smirk)

Are you absolutely sure it's really me?

RACHEL

I realize I don't have to be. I just have to do what seems useful.

VIVIAN

(half mocking)

Yeah let's do what seems useful so we can be free from this nightmare and have our lives back.

RACHEL

Yeah. So how exactly did you get hit by a car?

Vivian sighs disappointment, and Rachel smirks.

VIVIAN

So, I'm having a super busy day at the office, and actually had to skip lunch when in fact I barely had anything for breakfast, hurrying and hauling ass to get to the office forty minutes early to have enough time for the day's shit-load of work. And then on skipping lunch, I took solace in the fact that I still had my closing-time hotdog to look forward to. And I tell you, Rache; I enjoy that closing-time hotdog more than lunch itself, you know how I love my hotdogs, I *luh* me a good ol' hotdog.

(then she goes hysterical)

I luh hotdogs, yeah! Hotdogs, yeah! I just luhhh-

RACHEL

(smiles, then mock-exasperation)

Yes, Vivian; I know you love your hotdogs. You *luhhh* them, more than life itself.

VIVIAN

You know, right?

RACHEL

Yes, I know.

VIVIAN

So, the office got so intensive and painstaking, that looking forward to the closing-time hotdog became the only thing keeping me going. And by closing-time, I was craving it so bad, I was getting the jitters. Then, on closing, I grab my purse, dashing out of the office, into the street; And can you believe this, there's only one hotdog guy, and he's across the street; Of all times for there to be only one hotdog guy, and for him to be across the street; it is now, now that I need the hotdog more than life itself. And as if that isn't.. evil enough, the hotdog guy's closing; that son of a bitch is packing his wares back in the truck, about to shut the counter, get on the wheel, and peel out. And I scream with everything I've got; 'No!' sprinting across the street, 'Hotdog! Wait! Ple...' And just then, I get hit by a car, find myself tossing in the air, just like the guy you hit; Wait, you sure it wasn't you? I mean you've done that kinda thing before.

RACHEL

(smiles)

It wasn't me, Vivs, hitting someone with a car is not a mistake you'd wanna make more than once a lifetime.

VIVIAN

Okay. So I find myself tossing through the air, legs hurting like a bastard, and then I land on the road, hitting my head; And next thing I know, I'm reliving the time when you're fleeing after I urged you to flee after you hit someone with a car. So, that's how I found myself here in this twisted past.

RACHEL

Typical Vivian. You got baited here with a hotdog.

VIVIAN

Yup.

RACHEL

Were you even sure the crossing light was on 'walk' when you started crossing?

VIVIAN

It had to have been, Rache, my hotdog was in jeopardy.

RACHEL

Nice way to live. And how did it work out for you? You didn't even get the bloody hotdog after all. You only got bloody, no hotdog, just bloody.

VIVIAN

Well there's the irony, Rache, there's the irony; I didn't get the hotdog. And in fact, as I went comatose, and still am, I haven't had a hotdog since then.. in the regular, present-day world. Not in this twisted past, though. In this twisted past, I've been having as many hotdogs as I want, binging; *yum yum yum*, tastes so good. And I tell you, Rache, hotdogs had never tasted so good; so damn good; For some reason, the hotdogs here in 1993 taste remarkably better than those in 2022; Maybe it's climate change or something, Rache, but I swear it's remarkable, even scary cuz I think I may already be addicted to the ones here, and when I wake up from this coma and get back to the regular, present-day world, I wouldn't have the excellent hotdogs anymore; *I wouldn't have the excellent hotdogs anymore*, and the old, regular hotdogs wouldn't gimme the fix I need! What am I gonna do, Rachel?!-

She puts panicked hands on Rachel's shoulders, staring her in the eyes, wide-eyed. And Rachel just stares back, hint of smile-

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

How am I gonna live?!

VIVIAN (CONT'D)(CONT'D)
(then she gets an idea)
Rache, you're governor-elect!

RACHEL
In a manner of speaking.

VIVIAN
(desperate, looking Rachel in the
eyes, and with exhorting hands on
Rachel's shoulders)
Promise me when you get into office,
you'll do something about this hotdog
deterioration issue.

RACHEL
(solemnly looks Vivian in the eyes)
Vivs, I promise.

VIVIAN
Thank you.

RACHEL
So, how long have you been here?

VIVIAN
Here in this weird past, or here at
this motel?

RACHEL
Actually both.

VIVIAN
Well, I've been in this weird, twisted
past, or realm now for a couple'a
days-

RACHEL
(chuckles)
'Realm'.. Vivian... Go on.

VIVIAN
That would be Mrs. Vivian to you,
thank you very much.

RACHEL
Yes ma'am. So you've been in this
realm a couple'a days, so have I. I
wonder if our experiences coincide or
we've each been having distinct
figments of each other. Although, you
didn't act very surprised when I found

us reliving the moment I hit someone with a car.

VIVIAN

And you didn't act surprised when I found us reliving the moment when I've urged you to flee after you hit someone with a car. So I guess our world's didn't coincide then.

RACHEL

Yeah. So how long have you been at the motel then?

VIVIAN

About forty minutes.

RACHEL

Interesting. I too have only been here forty minutes. How did you arrive?

VIVIAN

Uhhh, I came on the bus in the parking lot.

Rachel cocks her head, surprised.

RACHEL

Uhhh, I don't think you did.

VIVIAN

Now, what makes you say that?

RACHEL

I was on that bus.

VIVIAN

Really?! You were on the bus?!

RACHEL

Yep. I rode that bus all the way from Colton; and hell, I remember the faces of everyone on it, people I never even met before in my life. You weren't there.

VIVIAN

(chuckles)

Oh really?

RACHEL

Yes.

VIVIAN

Well, that's what I wanna explain, if only you'd shut up a sec.

RACHEL

Okay, I'm listening.

Vivian ponders a moment... then sighs disappointment.

RACHEL

This should be good.

VIVIAN

I was on the bus, but not on the bus per se-

Rachel cocks her head, half mocking.

VIVIAN

I was in the cargo compartment.

RACHEL

(giggles)

What?!

VIVIAN

I rode in the cargo compartment of the bus all the way from Milliband to here.

RACHEL

(giggles)

Well, why?

VIVIAN

The tickets were sold out, so I snuck into the cargo compartment and hid among luggage.

RACHEL

Damn! What was it like?

VIVIAN

It was terrible at first, but then it started to smell like shit, so...

Rachel can only laugh...

RACHEL

Why always you?! Why always you, have to ride in the shit holes of buses that smell like shit?!

VIVIAN

Keep laughing it up, we're in this together, anything happens to me, way worse gonna happen to you, honey. You were the one who went and hit someone with a car.

RACHEL

Yeah, and I did that by accident, but you went and purposely told someone to flee the scene of their accident and abandon the injured victim. Yeah, I don't think that makes you a lesser monster.

VIVIAN

Whatever, my real problem now is how to get back in the cargo compartment tomorrow morning.

RACHEL

(giggles)

Yeah that's a problem.. mostly for you though. Tomorrow morning, I'm so on that bus and way outta this dump.

VIVIAN

Yeah, it's great to know I've got a friend who's got my back no matter what.

RACHEL

Yeah, lucky you.

Vivian ponders a moment, solemn...

VIVIAN

Hey, you ever wonder if we're really ever gonna make it back to the regular world, back to our families?

RACHEL

(solemnly sighs)

Never leaves my mind. But if there's anything I've learned from my experiences here, it's that, life is

always giving us chances to set things right. It's never too late to get back what you once had. So, whether or not we get our lives back is up to us. It all depends on how we handle or even respect this whole ordeal.

VIVIAN

Sure.

Rachel begins taking off her clothes, getting ready to go take a shower-

RACHEL

Now I gotta go freshen up, get something to eat, and get some sleep.

Just as she gets to the doorway of the bathroom, she turns, facing Vivian, solemn-

RACHEL

Hey Vivs, don't worry, it's all gonna work out.

VIVIAN

(solemn)

Sure.

RACHEL

And about the bus, you don't have to ride in the cargo compartment anymore. There's someone from the bus they say gotta die in the motel before the bus leaves tomorrow morning, you can just take their seat.

VIVIAN

(still solemn)

Sure.

Rachel continues to step into the bathroom, but stops as Vivian calls out to her-

VIVIAN

Hey Rache-

Rachel turns, facing her, both girls staring each other in the eyes, tranquil-

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Thank you.

RACHEL
 (warm smile)
 Hey, anytime, Vivs.

Both girls hold warm smiles. Then Rachel continues into the bathroom.

EXT./INT. MOTEL PARKING LOT / BUS - NEXT MORNING

At the parking lot, Rachel and Vivian, ready to travel, make their way back to the bus along with other passengers. Those who slept under the bus still sit on the ground beside it, in their blankets, having their morning coffee, stressed out, cold, and disheveled. They stare at those making their way to the bus (people that had rooms to sleep in), envious, humiliated. Rachel sees big fat Greg among the unprivileged, glaringly shaking his head at her, she averts her gaze.

RACHEL
 (to Vivian)
 If only we can get to sit together,
 right beside each other.

VIVIAN
 (wisfully)
 Yeah.

The girls get in the bus, and just as they enter, to Rachel's astonishment, she finds big fat Greg settled in his seat, waiting for the bus to depart-

RACHEL
 (bewildered)
 What the!

Greg meets her eyes, blank. She stares at him, pondering...

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 How did you get up in here so fast?!
 Is there two'a you?! That would be way
 too heavy!

She looks out the window at where she just saw him as she was getting in the bus, and he's no longer there alright. She faces him, puzzled...

GREG
 Don't read too much into it.

RACHEL
 (acclimates)
 'Course.

VIVIAN
 Who's this guy?

RACHEL
 Just some guy on the bus.

Greg just sits there, in his own thoughts, not paying attention to them.

VIVIAN
 (whispers)
 Maybe he can help us.

The girls just stand there, contemplating... Greg faces them.

GREG
 Look, I'm not just some guy on the bus. You may not know me that well, but I know you better than you think.
 (the girls stare at him)
 I know that you're lost. You come from far *far* away and long *long* beyond and you're stuck here, trying so desperately hard to get back what you once had and to where you really belong. I know that you're way more clever and more experienced than you let on. And your experiences, as horrific as they were; you cherish them. You cherish them cuz they helped you resolve your lives. And now you two need something. And it turns out you can't get it without my help.
 (then he motions to Vivian)
You, need to get in the seat of the unfortunate jerk who won't be rejoining us.
 (then he motions to the empty seat right beside him)
 Well that seat is right here. You can take it, no one's stopping you.

Vivian moves to get in the seat, and big fat Greg has to get up to make way for her- It's not easy.

GREG (CONT'D)
 But then again, you two would like to

sit together, right beside each other,
wouldn'tcha?

Rachel bows her head, sighing disappointment.

GREG (CONT'D)

Yeah, disappointment's right, Rache,
disappointment's absolutely right. Now
why in the world would I do you any
kinda favors, Rachel? I wanted one
thing! One little thing, Rachel! And
you spat in my face. A simple regular
no would'a sufficed, but you chose to
blow me to bits-

RACHEL

Not quite how I remember it.

GREG

To burn me to ashes, even with bad
breath.

Rachel cocks her head, checks her breath-

GREG

Yeah it stinks.

RACHEL

(shakes her head)

No it ain't.

GREG

Now, you can either stand here a
loser, or go back to your seat and
ride the bus in shame.

VIVIAN

Dude, seriously she's a really great
chick once you got to know her.
Whatever issues you might have with
her, I'm sure there's a perfectly
reasonable explanation.

GREG

(to Vivian)

You do realize she isn't real, right?

Rachel rolls her eyes, cracking a smile.

VIVIAN

It wouldn't matter. Then again, you

wouldn't be any realer than her, would you?

GREG

Whatever.

VIVIAN

Then again, *again*; Of what good would it be you, sitting here with boring old me when you can sit in Rachel's old seat with that lovely crazy-attractive hottie-

She motions to Rachel's old seat with the crazy-attractive hottie sat beside it, and Greg doesn't look; Instead he looks straight at Vivian-

GREG

Yes, you are the most boring thing on the face of the Earth.

VIVIAN

(concur)

What have I been saying?! Look-
(she motions to the attractive hottie-)

This could be the beginning of something beautiful, look.

Greg takes a look, and just like that, *poof*, he's disappeared, vanished from his seat, from plain view; and the girls flinch, startled-

RACHEL / VIVIAN

Whoa.

They smile at their fortune, and then look and see Greg already settled in Rachel's old seat, chatting with the hottie.

VIVIAN

How awesome. Everyone wins.

RACHEL

(she gets in the seat)

Vivian, you're my hero. Yay! I think things are gonna be better here on out.

VIVIAN

Yay!

They hug. They start chattering away as the bus driver gets in his seat and tries to start the engine, but it won't start; It just whines and whines and whines.

DRIVER
Oh, come on!

RACHEL
(to Vivian)
Oh, what now?

VIVIAN
Well, we can only wait and see.

DRIVER
(to all passengers)
The battery must'a knocked itself loose.

He steps out of the bus and opens the battery compartment, and as he fiddles the battery, daylight flickers on-off; day-night: Day instantly becomes pitch-black night, and switches over again and again like a faulty light bulb.

VIVIAN
(in the flickering darkness)
Or wait and *not* see.

RACHEL
(sarcastic)
Oh here we go. Now we can rest assured everything's gonna be fine here on out.

The flickering daylight's only strange to Rachel and Vivian, all other passengers just act as if it's nothing unusual, not paying it any attention. And the flickering stops on the pitch-black darkness just as the driver finishes fixing the battery.

RACHEL / VIVIAN
(sarcastic)
Great.

Then the night lights in the bus come on, and the driver gets in, starts the engine, and peels out, continuing on the long haul this all-of-a-sudden nighttime.

EXT./INT. HIGHWAY / SPEEDING BUS - A MOMENT LATER

The bus tears it through the desolate nighttime highway;

Rachel and Vivian, chattering, having a good time, when Vivian yawns and begins feeling very tired, her speech slurring, and her eyes beginning to shut.

RACHEL

Oh, so now you're bailing on me.

VIVIAN

(weak and tired)

No, it's just.. I feel-

She goes completely limp and unconscious, snoring.

RACHEL

'Course.

(she then tries to nudge Vivian awake)

Hey Vivs, this isn't the kinda place to be asleep in. Wake up-

(Rachel herself then yawns and begins feeling faint as she tries to wake Vivian, her voice slurring-)

Waake uuuppp.

She goes completely limp, keeling over on Vivian's bosom, struggling to keep her eyes open but they keep going shut. And in her intermittent vision, she sees some passengers ominously and eerily glancing at her and Vivian, whispering among themselves, converging on her and Vivian, and she can't move a muscle; She's helpless; She can't keep her eyes open.

BLACK

Rachel, completely disoriented, comes slowly to consciousness, to the loud juddering sound of a helicopter, and finds herself sat in an airborne helicopter, strapped in; Vivian, strapped in beside her, unconscious, this lightning-infested nighttime. Rachel taps Vivian, whispering-

RACHEL

Vivian.. Vivian.. Vivian, wake up.

She looks in front for the pilot, no one-

RACHEL

Oh boy.

She starts flailing Vivian to wake her-

RACHEL
Wake up, Vivian, wake up!

Vivian slowly comes awake squinting-

VIVIAN
Rache?

RACHEL
Hey, Vivs, how are you doing?

VIVIAN
(terribly disoriented)
I don't... what... how...

Then it all pours back in in a flash-

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Oh. I remember everything. And it's
not very good.

RACHEL
You okay?

VIVIAN
I'm fine, Rache, and you?

RACHEL
Fine.

VIVIAN
When did we get in a helicopter? And
why's there no one flying it?

RACHEL
Your guess is as good as mine. But it
seems we're over New York City.

Sure enough, the helicopter flies over the skyscrapers of
Manhattan in its nightlights and splendor.

VIVIAN
Yeah.

Every now and again, the lightning flashes in the black sky,
sometimes too close to the copter.

Then Rachel's mom, Judith, her voice is unmistakable from the
onboard radio-

JUDITH'S VOICE

Oh my God, girls, are you okay?

The girls are thrown. They ponder this a moment, bewildered, eyeing each other, touched.

RACHEL
Mom?

VIVIAN
Mrs. Bailey?

JUDITH'S VOICE

(through radio)

Yes, honey, you didn't think I was gonna leave you forever, did you?

RACHEL

Where are you?

JUDITH'S VOICE

I'm the helicopter.

RACHEL

What?

JUDITH'S VOICE

I *am* the helicopter. I reincarnated.

The girls are silent, puzzled.

JUDITH'S VOICE

Don't read too much into it.

RACHEL / VIVIAN

(tentatively)

Okay.

JUDITH

I got you outta that horrible bus. They were gonna eat you.

RACHEL

(bemused)

Oh thank you... Mom.

VIVIAN

(equally bemused)

Thank you, Mrs. Bailey.

JUDITH'S VOICE

Come on, it's the least I could do. How are you girls doing?

RACHEL
Fine. I guess.

VIVIAN
Yeah.

JUDITH'S VOICE
Thank God. So girls, I'm taking you to
your destination, to see the man you
hit with a car and make things right.

RACHEL / VIVIAN
Okay.

JUDITH'S VOICE
Hey girls?

RACHEL / VIVIAN
(solemn, attentive)
Yeah?

JUDITH'S VOICE
I'm proud of how far you've come, and
the responsible women you've become.

RACHEL
Thanks, mom.

VIVIAN
Thanks, Mrs. Bailey.

RACHEL
Hey Mom.

JUDITH'S VOICE
Yes, sweetie.

RACHEL
I'm sorry I didn't do the right thing
in the first place.

JUDITH'S VOICE
Oh it's okay, honey. We live and we
learn. The important thing is we
learn.

RACHEL
Yes, Mom.

JUDITH'S VOICE
So, girls, we're almost there, get
ready. You need to face the situation
with calm, focus and resolve. Okay I'm
landing now.

RACHEL
 Mom, will I see you again?

JUDITH'S VOICE
 Oh, honey; if it were up to me, I'd
 never leave from beside you, but life
 has a way of putting people apart and
 not giving them much clue how things
 are gonna go. But I have a feeling
 I'll always be there when you need me.

Rachel's eyes well up. Vivian puts a condoling hand on her.

RACHEL
 Thank you, Mom.

JUDITH'S VOICE
 Anytime, honey. I love you.

RACHEL
 I love you too, Mom.

The helicopter... or Judith, descends for the rooftop helipad
 of a glass skyscraper. It's being waved in by rifle-wielding
 security people with rottweilers that bark ferociously at it,
 and the girls look on, pensive. They eye each other-

RACHEL
 We're gonna be fine.

EXT./INT. ROOFTOP HELIPAD / HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

The helicopter touches down, surrounded by the security
 people, rifles and barking rottweilers trained at the girls.
 They advance, storming into the copter-

SECURITY PEOPLE
 HANDS WHERE I CAN SEE 'EM!

The girls comply, and the rottweilers have to be held back,
 they'd just tear the girls to bits. The security men
 apprehend the girls, cuffing their hands behind their backs,
 shackling their ankles, frisking them, and heading them out
 of the copter, rifles vigilantly trained. The girls languish
 in self-pity, tears trickling down their cheeks. And just as
 they're about to exit the copter-

RACHEL
 Good bye, mom. I love you.

JUDITH'S VOICE
 (scarcely audible over radio
 static)

I love you too, hπ*#...

The girls are walked out of the copter and toward an elevator.

EXT./INT. ROOFTOP / ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

They all get in the elevator, the rottweilers lunging for the girls, who flinch and whimper; the rottweilers, being held back by the security people. The elevator starts descending, everyone silent... Then-

ONE SECURITY MAN
 Girls, I'm gonna level with you. It's way worse than you could possibly imagine.

The elevator stops just on the top floor, and they exit into-

INT. LONG, WHITE, STERILE HALLWAY BETWEEN SCIENCE LABS - CONTINUOUS

The security people head the girls along this hallway.

SECURITY MAN (CONT'D)
 I mean the man's been planning this for years, seething. You ruined his life, paralyzed him from the neck down-

The girls turn sharply, staring at the security man... He giggles-

SECURITY MAN (CONT'D)
 Kidding. But he's pissed. And he believes in revenge, obsesses over it actually.

The labs along this hallway are eerie; Through the glass walls, apparatus can be seen that tell of experiments being carried out on humans, or even dead bodies or at least their parts.

SECURITY MAN (CONT'D)
 I mean, I'd be surprised if he doesn't run you two over with a trailer truck. Or maybe that's too quick and painless compared to what you did to him.

They arrive at a door with name tag, 'Joshua Kent, DDS', and the security man knocks the door, with code. "Come in!" says as jovial voice from inside, and the security man uses a key card, then punches in a code on a keypad-

SECURITY MAN

(to Rachel and Vivian)

I'd be shitting myself right now if I were you.

The door automatically slides open to reveal a spacious dentist's office. The security people walk the girls in.

INT. DENTIST'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The man sat behind the desk doesn't pay much attention to them, he just keeps his face buried in a newspaper.

SECURITY MAN

Sir, they're here.

The man behind the desk looks up; This is Dr. Joshua Kent, the man Rachel and Vivian hit with a car and abandoned.

DR. KENT

(smiles. polite)

Oh the girls are here. And why d'you have them all bound and shackled up? I mean, we can all be cool, can't we?... Remove the chains.

The security people proceed to remove the cuffs and shackles.

SECURITY MAN

At your own risk, man. You know they're way more vicious than they look.

DR. KENT

(jovial)

Nonsense!

(then he faces the girls)

We're all here to make peace, aren't we?

RACHEL / VIVIAN

(keenly nodding)

Absolutely!

DR. KENT

Great. Take a seat.

The girls tentatively sit at the desk, and they and Dr. Kent stare each other's faces, a moment of silence...

DR. KENT

Well, you girls didn't come all this way for nothing. Spill the beans.

The girls are extremely solemn-

RACHEL

We're really really sorry for hitting you with a car and abandoning you with your injuries.

VIVIAN

We're terribly sorry, and if we could go back to that night, the night of the accident, we'll handle things totally differently, we won't just leave you lain injured and unconscious on the road, we'd call for help. We're horribly sorry for what we did, it was selfish and stupid.

Dr. Kent just stares at them, smile on his face, and the girls can only look apologetic.

DR. KENT

(smiling)

Apology accepted.

RACHEL / VIVIAN

Thank you, thank you very much, it means the world to us.

DR. KENT

You're welcome. I'm not the kind to hold a grudge.

RACHEL

Sir, you're a really good man. Brenden's lucky to have you an uncle. Yeah, you probably don't know, we're best friends with your nephew Brenden.

VIVIAN

Yeah, really great guy himself, must run in the family.

DR. KENT

Yeah, Brenden's my nephew alright...

But that ain't mean I particularly
like him. Or give a shit who he choose
to call he friends.

Awkward silence. The girls hold his stare, he doesn't glare,
just a blank stare. The atmosphere, tense.

VIVIAN
So we're cool?

DR. KENT
(amiable)
Course we are!

RACHEL
So we can go?

DR. KENT
Uh no, that's a whole nother thing
entirely.

The girls eye each other, look to Dr. Kent-

RACHEL	VIVIAN
Eh, why?	What d'you mean?

A moment of silence...

DR. KENT
Aren't you gonna ask me what I was
doing standing in the middle of the
road in the middle of the night?-

He smiles, smug.

RACHEL
Yes I am, I absolutely am! And also,
you seem to have come out of
absolutely nowhere.

Dr. Kent now glares at them, ominous, but they don't waiver,
they seem bold, and a moment passes, silence.

RACHEL
Well?

Kent just holds his glare.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
What were you doing in the middle of
the road in the middle of the night?

DR. KENT
Hunting.

RACHEL / VIVIAN
At night?

DR. KENT
It's the best time.

And just like that, in his seat, without moving a muscle, Dr. Kent instantly morphs into a werewolf, and the girls flinch a mile; the security men guffawing.

Dr. Kent- the werewolf, continues, in his regular voice-

WEREWOLF
You see, I forgive you, and we're cool, but the whole other thing now's that you're here.. and vulnerable. When I have people here, I have to have my way with 'em.

The girls aren't terribly scared.

VIVIAN
What d'you mean, "have your way with 'em"?

The werewolf springs to its feet, incensed-

WEREWOLF
I gotta run some tests!-

He bangs on the desk.

VIVIAN
What kinda-

WEREWOLF
(enraged)
YOU CAN SHUT UP NOW!.. GODDAMMIT!-

He pounds his desk with both fists, and the girls flinch, holding his glare, not terribly scared.

WEREWOLF
(to his security detail. Re:
Rachel and Vivian)
PREP THEM!

The security people grab hold of the resisting, struggling

girls, subduing them and carrying them to two dental chairs across the room, the rottweilers barking furiously at the girls who wriggle vigorously, trying to break free.

RACHEL
Let us go!

VIVIAN
We've done everything
right!

RACHEL
We made up for what we did!

SECURITY MAN
Better shut up, girls, talking
bullshit'll only make it worse.

The girls are set in the dental chairs and nicely strapped in to full rigor, their mouths gagged open for surgery. They won't give up trying to break free, jerking, gagging, gurgling; And werewolf Dr. Kent, still stood behind his desk, just stares blankly at them, still, focused, ritualistic... He then slowly starts toward them, one step at a time, savoring every moment, and as he arrives in front of them, they don't struggle anymore, they just lay there, still, staring, mouths gaping. He then ominously picks up a pair of pliers, staring the girls in the eyes, solemn...

WEREWOLF
I'ma pull out all your teeth.

He lunges toward Rachel's teeth, but then, something snatches his attention, stopping him dead in his tracks.. A strange, unusual sound. Sounds like music. And surely it is. Bagpipes music. Coming from somewhere outside the door. Everyone pauses, processing...

WEREWOLF
What the fuck is that?!

The security detail eye each other puzzled, hesitant; and the werewolf's incensed-

WEREWOLF
GO CHECK IT OUT, YOU GODDAMNED
PUSSIEEES!

The security detail sheepishly train their rifles to the door and start advancing rather slowly to it, breathing hard as the bagpipes music grows louder and louder. Even the rottweilers are sheepish. And the werewolf is disgusted-

WEREWOLF
Jesus fucking Christ, guys! You're

fucking worthless, you know that?!

But the security detail keep their sheepish pace, breathing hard. They reach the door, crack it and peer into the hallway... nothing, but the music, and they sheepishly move out, looking the hallway up and down. The last security person moves out and the door slides shut.

A moment later, the werewolf can only wonder what's going on as the music now seems to be right out the door, the beauty undeniable.

WEREWOLF

What the hell is this?

He quickly takes out a handgun from his waistband and points it to the door, waiting. The door begins shuddering...

WEREWOLF

Who the fuck is that?!

No response, and panic ensues, his raised pistol, trembling.

WEREWOLF

I say, who is it?!

No response. The door now slowly slides open... and standing there, as the baggies music plays, are the security detail, rifles at ease, eyes to the floor, frozen... creepy.

WEREWOLF

(to the security detail)

(with his pistol still raised)

Well?

The security detail don't respond. They just remain there, frozen, eyes to the floor.

WEREWOLF

What the fuck is going on here?!

Then the security detail mindlessly make way within their midst, to reveal... the bagpiper from Judith's funeral.

WEREWOLF

What the fuck?!

And the bagpiper, in his kilt, playing ever so beautifully steps slowly forward into the room, toward the werewolf, who keeps the pistol pointed at the piper's head; the security detail, towing behind the piper.

WEREWOLF

Who the fuck are you?! Hands where I
can see 'em! Drop the pipes!

But the piper and security detail can't be affected, they
just keep on the advance.

WEREWOLF

That's it! Had enough!

And the werewolf tries to pull the trigger, but his hand's
stiff, frozen, frozen in the music-

WEREWOLF

What the!

Panic fills his face, and he keeps trying to pull the
trigger... but his hand won't budge-

WEREWOLF

What the fuck is going on here?!

The girls can only watch, in their awkward positions, mouths
gaping. Then the piper stops the music, gazing at the girls a
moment... He resumes, a different, beautiful tune. Everyone's
still, enchanted by the music, tranquil. The werewolf pistol
drops to the floor as he begins morphing back to human, going
limp as the music plays, collapsing to the floor, morphing
back to human in the beautiful music. And when fully morphed,
he just remains lain, totally still. And as the music
continues, two security men move to the girls and stick the
barrels of their rifles in the girls' gaping mouths. The
girls don't show fear, they just eye the security men with
their rifle-barrel-inserted gaping mouths, calm. And the
piper now takes his lips off the pipes, gazing at the girls,
solemn...

PIPER

It's the only way.

He resumes the music; The security men, with their rifles in
the girls' gaping mouths, ready to shoot. The music, so
beautiful. And just then we-

CUT TO:

INT. ICU ROOM, HOSPITAL - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

45 year-old Rachel, in her ICU bed, wearing an oxygen mask,
her eyes come open as she awakes from coma, solemn. The
room's quiet except for the beeping of the life monitor. She

takes off the oxygen mask, and removes the drip tube from her hand. She sits up, looks around, no one. She gets outta bed, moves to the window and looks down at the hospital parking lot, and busy streets beyond, seems like year 2022, her regular world. She sighs, solemn, staring out at her world...

ALEX (OS) BOBBY (OS)
Rache? Mom?

She spins around and finds her husband and son staring at her, astounded. She brightens-

RACHEL
Oh my babies!

They converge, hugging, kissing.

RACHEL
(teary)
I've missed you half to death.

ALEX
(equally teary)
You can only imagine what a wreck
we've been without you.

BOBBY
Mommy, we thought you were a goner for
sure.

RACHEL
(cracks a smile)
And miss all the fun time with you and
Daddy, not a chance-

She ruffles his hair, warm smiles on everyone's faces, extremely grateful and relieved to be reunited.

Later, Rachel's on the phone with someone, conversing keenly, jovially, gigglingly.

EXT. FRONT STEPS, PENNSYLVANIA STATE CAPITOL - DAY (3 WEEKS LATER)

It's Rachel's governorship inauguration ceremony. She's being sworn in as governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Alex, Bobby, Aunty Becky, Vivian, Brenden, and Francesca stand solidly behind her, beaming, as she takes the oath of office in front of hundreds of guests.

After taking the oath of office, she gives her inaugural

speech, and the crowd listens, rapt. And as she finishes, the crowd roars with applause, a standing ovation. Rachel looks back at her applauding family and best friends, nods, smiles, tears. She faces the crowd, taking in the ovation, solemn, grateful, in awe... And then, her eyes catch something... Just in the front row of the audience, hard to miss, it's big fat Greg, and right beside him, *her twisted dad*. The men are in suits, staring straight at her, stood-applauding. *Her dad* tips his hat to her, nods, smiles. And Rachel just stares at them, blank, in her glorious ovation, pondering, solemn... in awe.