

END OF SCENE

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - ESTABLISHING - DAWN

Rows upon rows of cookie-cutter houses with perfectly parallel mow lines in each lawn. The neighborhood is silent with no one around, like a ghost town with regular lawn care.

One row of houses backs up against an abandoned, overgrown park. The park has a rusted merry-go-round and a sandbox.

EXT. EM AND RORRI'S HOUSE - DAWN

There's a boring, boxy blue car in the driveway: safe, not at all flashy. A sign above the front door of the house says:

"EM & RORRI MICHAELS"

INT. EM AND RORRI'S HOUSE - DAWN

A house, not a home. Dated, muted. The living room has a puke green sofa that looks painful to sit on. There are framed photos of the couple's parents and grandparents, but no photos of Em and Rorri. The walls have tacky, gold, patterned wallpaper that looks like it's from the 1920s.

INT. KITCHEN - DAWN

A curly-haired brunette woman preps breakfast, wearing a 1950s-style dress, apron, and high heels. This is EM MICHAELS (30s-40s): fair skin, freckles and a natural beauty that's hidden behind makeup and the fact that she tries too hard.

She moves in quick, precise, jerky motions.

Right before sunrise, Em places two picture-perfect breakfasts at the table. One meal is indulgent and the other is healthy with half a grapefruit. The table has two candles, never burned, sitting atop a tasseled tablecloth that's perfectly symmetrical to the sides of the table. *Perfectly.*

Em's husband, RORRI MICHAELS (30s-40s), sits down right at sunrise and eats his indulgent meal like a robot low on batteries. Rorri has deep, chocolate skin that drowns in a too-big suit and tie, like he's still trying to fill someone else's shoes. He stares at a newspaper with only Lorem Ipsum filler words. The two are in their own worlds.

Em eats her grapefruit in a way that won't ruin her lipstick.

EM
How is it?

RORRI
(without looking up)
Good.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-Foyer: Rorri puts on his coat and grabs a briefcase. He kisses Em on the cheek and leaves.

-Kitchen: Em hand-dries and puts away dishes, making tiny adjustments along the way to make sure they're perfect.

-Office: Em sits at her desk in front of a typewriter. Her fingers sit on the keys, but she doesn't type.

-Office: Em now sits in front of an easel, holding an empty paintbrush in front of a blank canvas.

-Bedroom: Em vacuums the carpet. Perfect vacuum lines.

-Kitchen: Em hand-vacuums the rug. She combs the tassels, trimming a straggling tassel that's just a bit too long.

-Back porch: Em cross stitches in a rocking chair. The backyard is void of any typical outdoor noises. The only audible sound is the CHAIR SQUEAKING a BA-DUM pattern. Pretty blue skies. No wind or signs of wildlife.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Em wears a frilly, old-fashioned nightgown. Off screen, the front door opens and closes.

RORRI (O.S)
I'm home.

Em pinches her cheeks. She pulls her boobs to make cleavage. Rorri walks in, turns on his sink, and washes his hands.

EM
How was your day?

RORRI
(without looking up)
Good.

Em tries to be sexy. Rorri walks out of the bathroom.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rorri wears old-man silky PJs and watches a history show on an old box TV. Em serves tea and sits on the opposite side of the sofa, reading a cheesy unrealistic romance novel that's literally titled A Cheesy Unrealistic Romance Novel.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Em and Rorri silently brush their teeth. Em brushes quickly and methodically. Rorri does a slower, lazier brush.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bedroom is minimalist, no feeling of comfort or romance. The only decor is a gold-framed beach painting (like one you'd see in a crappy motel), two bedside tables with lamps, and a corner bookcase. The books are the same size and hue, with subjects limited to history, cars, romance, or cooking.

Em and Rorri lie on opposite sides of the bed. He reads a book literally titled A Book About Cars From the Library, a plastic barcode on the spine. She reads a copy of Ideal Magazine ("So you exceed expectations" on the front).

INSERT - ARTICLE INSIDE IDEAL MAGAZINE

"10 Ways To Get Your Man's Attention: #1 Men don't do subtle. Cut to the chase. #2 Use your hands, not your words."

BACK TO EM AND RORRI

Em turns to Rorri and clears her throat. No response. As she reaches for his crotch, he turns away and sets down his book. He pecks Em on the lips, but never makes eye contact.

RORRI

Goodnight.

He turns off his lamp and lies on his side, facing away from Em. Em stares at the ceiling.

EM

Goodnight.

She turns off her lamp. Rorri faces away from Em. Em lies on her back with perfect sleeping posture, hands by her side.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAWN

Em flutters her eyes open. She's in the same perfect position as the night before. Even her hair somehow looks good. Rorri is still lying on his side, SNORING lightly.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAWN

Em covers her freckles with makeup. She puts on red lipstick.

INT. MASTER CLOSET - DAWN

Em wears a 1950s dress, squeezing her feet into high heels.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Breakfast. Indulgent for Rorri, healthy for Em. He slowly robot-eats and reads Lorem Ipsum. Em daintily eats.

The day is similar to the prior day in its dialogue and movement, but other details slightly differ (outfits, hair, meals) to show it's the "same shit, different day."

EM
How is it?

RORRI
Good.

SERIES OF SHOTS

The daily routine repeats, faster and faster. Outfits and movements differ slightly, but the basics remain the same:

-Foyer: Rorri puts on his coat and grabs his briefcase. He kisses Em on the cheek and leaves.

-Kitchen: Em hand-dries dishes, placing them just so.

-Office: Em sits at her typewriter but doesn't type.

-Office: Em stares through a blank canvas.

-Bedroom: Em vacuums the bedroom.

-Kitchen: Em hand-vacuums the rug. Trims straggling tassel.

-Back porch: Em cross stitches in a rocking chair. BA-DUM.

-Living room: Rorri and Em sit on opposite sides of the sofa. He watches a history show. She reads cheesy romance.

-Bedroom: They lie in bed, turn off their lamps, and sleep.

-Another day: Em wakes up. Makeup. Heels. Breakfast. Foyer. Dishes. Office. Vacuum. Cross stitch. Blue skies. Sleep.

-Another day: Em wakes up. Breakfast. Dishes. Vacuum. Sleep.

-Another day: Em wakes up. The day quickly gone, they sleep.

EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

Em cross stitches in her rocking chair. The CHAIR SQUEAKS its BA-DUM pattern. Suddenly, a new sound joins: the MERRY-GO-ROUND SQUEAKS off screen. Children GIGGLE.

A GUST of WIND knocks the needle out of Em's hand. The needle falls and sticks in the top of her foot. She DOESN'T FLINCH, and continues the motion of STITCHING WITHOUT her NEEDLE.

A stronger GUST of WIND knocks the cross stitch out of Em's hand and interrupts the rocking chair's squeak pattern.

Em shakes her head and blinks as if waking from a daydream. She looks at her hands and wiggles her fingers.

She picks up the cross stitch, removes the needle from her foot, wipes a drop of blood and rubs it between her fingers. The MERRY-GO-ROUND SQUEAKS faster. A THUD off screen.

LILY (O.S.)

Ow! I'm okay. I'll be okay!

Em exerts effort to lift her head and look to the park by her backyard. HER BODY FIGHTS against her CHANGE in MOVEMENT.

EXT. BACKYARD PARK - DAY

A 6-year-old girl, LILY, dusts off her bottom from a fall. Lily has bright, curious eyes, caramel skin, and long black hair. She wears a onesie shoved into white cowgirl boots with tassels and holds a brown stuffy dog by its ear. Lily moves fluidly, like she's the physical embodiment of music and joy.

A 7-year-old wannabe-rockstar boy with orange hair, freckles, and red Converse "PLAYS DRUMS" using tree twigs on an upside-down BOWL. This is CHASE, Lily's best friend. Chase is an unabashed kid who makes awkward look good.

He sees Em and stops playing.

CHASE

Hiiii! Wanna be in my band?

He waves really big to Em. Lily follows his line of sight.

LILY

Shh! What are you doing?

CHASE

She won't hear us anyway.

Lily meets eyes with Em. Wide-eyed, Lily does a tiny wave.

BACK TO EM

Em stares blankly, unaffected. She returns to her cross stitch and ROCKING CHAIR PATTERN.

EXT. BACKYARD PARK - DAY

Lily slouches.

CHASE

Told ya.

He goes back to "PLAYING DRUMS." A big GUST of WIND knocks into the kids and twirls around them. Lily giggles.

LILY

Wind is playful today. Do you think that means it's soon?

CHASE

Prolly. Storm's coming.

They stand and look in the distance at a PERFECTLY CLEAR SKY.

Chase sits on the merry-go-round and pats next to him. Lily sits. He pulls and hops on the merry-go-round. Lily squeals.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Tell her!

LILY

We're not esposed to!

CHASE

Says who?

The merry-go-round spins. Lily hesitates, finding courage.

LILY
 (sing-songy; quietly)
 When the storm comes, don't run for
 cover. Let it wash awaaaay.

CHASE
 Louder!

Lily grips the merry-go-round with her leg and holds the
 brown stuffy dog to the sky.

LILY
 (singing loudly)
 When the storm comes, don't run for
 cover!

CHASE AND LILY (CONT'D)
 Let it wash awaaaay! La la LAAA!

The children laugh as the merry-go-round stops.

BACK TO EM

The back door shuts behind Em as she robotically goes inside.

EXT. BACKYARD PARK - DAY

The kids wobble dizzily off the merry-go-round. Lily stomps.

LILY
 You made me break rules.

Lily turns away from Chase with a slight smile, as if she
 enjoyed breaking a rule for once. Chase kicks dirt.

QUICK CUTS:

-Master bathroom: Nighttime routine. Rorri and Em brush their
 teeth. Em holds HER HAND under the FAUCET, turning the WATER
 ON and OFF, ON and OFF. She stretches her jaw.

-Master bedroom: They turn off their lamps. Em lies on her
 back, Rorri lies on his side facing away from her.

-CLOSE ON EM as she closes her eyes. She sleeps.

DREAM SEQUENCE - EXT. BEACH - DAY

An elderly WISE MAN sits in a lawn chair, fishing. We see his
 back and his balding, white hair.

His chair has a folded red blanket on it with a bucket and a bowl next to it. Wise man is what everyone wishes their grandpa was like: patient, loving, loyal, and a little mischievous.

An elderly WILD WOMAN with wild, gray hair walks away from Wise Man to a beautiful beach house. This is Wise Man's wife, a brave woman who'd help everyone heal their trauma if she could. She hugs a large stone to her chest.

WATER LAPS. Their own private beach.

Wild Woman enters the beach house and closes the door.

EM (V.O.)
Where's she going?

WISE MAN (V.O.)
She's got work to do.

The beach house is now decrepit. Windows with bars, front door boarded up. Wild Woman stares blankly out of the window.

EM (V.O.)
It looks like she's in prison.

WISE MAN (V.O.)
Perspective's funny like that.

EM (V.O.)
So you just watch and do nothing?

WISE MAN (V.O.)
Sometimes that's the most powerful thing to do. She'll come back. She always does.

The BEACH WIND blows.

WISE MAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You've got work to do, too. It's time to wake up.

He casts his line to the sea. WAVES CRASH.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

THUNDER. It's dark and STORMING. Em lies on her back, hair perfect and arms perfectly by her sides. Her eyes move rapidly under her eyelids. The WIND HOWLS. The voice of the Wise Man from Em's dream overlaps with THE WIND.

WISE MAN/THE WIND (V.O.)
It's time to wake up.

Off screen, the children do a few TINY KNOCKS on the GLASS WINDOW. Em's face grimaces as she tries to wake herself up.

CHASE (V.O.)
(quietly; far away)
It's not working.

LILY (V.O.)
It will. Hurry, let's go!

The storm adds HAIL to the mix outside. A tree's BRANCHES SCRATCH the WINDOW as the WIND tests the tree's strength.

Slowly, with much effort, EM'S POINTER FINGER MOVES. Then, her other fingers move.

The WINDOW SHATTERS as the TREE BRANCH BREAKS through it.

Em's eyes open and she GASPS FOR AIR, as if breathing after being held under water for too long.

The STORM grows LOUDER with the open window. Em flinches at the sounds and, with effort, puts her hands to her ears.

Lightning lights up the room, showing LILY now SITTING ON THE BOOKCASE as if she totally belongs there. Lily smiles fondly.

LILY
There you are. It's time!

CHASE (O.S.)
(from hallway)
It is time! Time to plaaaay!

Em scrambles to turn on her lamp. When she does, Lily is gone. CHILDREN'S GIGGLES come from the hallway.

EM
How is it?

She shakes her head in confusion at her words-the first words she'd normally say after waking up. She frantically taps Rorri. She struggles to speak, her jaw used to other words.

EM (CONT'D)
W-wake up! S-someone is here.

He snores. Em goes to stand up but FALLS TO THE FLOOR like a wet noodle. Unable to stand, she crawls to the closet. She winces as her knees and hands get cut by bits of glass.

INT. MASTER CLOSET - NIGHT

Em feels around for some sort of weapon. The closet lights up from the lightning. Her eyes widen at her weapon of choice.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Em holds her weapon (a stiletto) as she walks, squatted close to the floor to keep her balance. She looks in the office.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Lightning strikes: LILY now STANDS on a CHAIR in a corner of the room. She's smiling at the ugly wallpaper. Em walks in.

EM

Hey!

(slowly; with effort)

What are you doing in here?

LILY

Hey! What are you doing in here?

Chase walks behind Em, holding two drumsticks. Lily and Chase operate how most young kids do: without any awareness around personal space or boundaries. Like, *Of course we belong here.*

CHASE

Where's the drum set?

EM

What drum set?

CHASE

-- Ugh! Grownups are the worst!

He harrumphs up against the wall of the office.

EM

You, you need to leave.

Lily SUDDENLY STANDS IN FRONT OF Em. Em gasps, but Lily TWIRLS as if to show, *Don't be scared! It's just me!*

LILY

So do you, silly goose!

EM

Get-Get out of my house! Now!

THUNDER. Lightning flashes. The kids are gone. Em puts her back against the wall and gasps for air. She calms her breathing and rolls her eyes at herself. *They're just kids.*

She balances herself and walks to the hallway.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Em looks out the back window and sees Lily and Chase NOW DANCING IN THE RAIN. She sets down the deadly stiletto and grabs something CRINKLY from the pantry: a pack of POP TARTS.

Something catches her eye: ugly, dated, gold wallpaper.

She puts the Pop Tarts in her nightgown pocket and moves toward the living room, grabbing things to steady herself.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She touches the dated furniture, the pictures of her grandparents and Rorri's grandparents, the old box TV.

GIGGLES from Lily and Chase outside grab Em's attention.

EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Em wobbles outside, stopping on the last porch step. There's a STEADY DOWNPOUR, but the hail and wind have settled.

She holds out the pack of Pop Tarts as if attracting a dog with a bone. She leans forward, but won't step off the porch.

EM

(slowly; over the rain)

Hey! Hello? Are you okay? D-Do you need food? Sorry I yelled.

Droplets hit Em's face. She backs up. Lightning shows Lily splashing in puddles with Chase. He sees Em and points to the drumstick, clearly still mad about the drum set situation.

Lily puts her hand out to catch rain. She nods to Em.

LILY

Let it wash away!

Lily moves her hand in the rain, emphasizing her movement. *Like this!* Em puts her palm out. Raindrops plop on her palm.

Suddenly, LILY IS MUCH CLOSER to Em. Startled, Em jumps back.

LILY (CONT'D)
 Hehe, sorry! No need for scaries.
 What's it feel like on your skin?

EM
 Uh. Cold?

LILY
 Too easy! What's it smell like?

EM
 What are you d-doing out here? It's
 dark. The storm! It's dangerous!

LILY
 Silly. What's it smell like?

Lily closes her eyes and takes a whiff. Leery, Em does, too.

FLASHBACK - INT. SAILBOAT CABIN - DAY

The BOAT CREAKS and WATER LAPS. The boat's name is Arabella.

YOUNG EM'S POV - OPEN HATCH DOOR TO DECK

On the sailboat's deck, Em's dad, WILBUR, wears short shorts and long hippie hair. He's one of the men in the photos in Em and Rorri's living room, except much younger.

WILBUR
 Emmy! Come say hi to the seagulls!

He caws at the seagulls. He smiles toward Em's mom, KATHRYN (30s, reserved), who smiles back at him. Kathryn looks like she belongs at a resort rather than on a sailboat.

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO EM - (BACK TO PRESENT)

Em opens her eyes and, losing her balance, sits on the steps.

LILY
 Caw! Caw! Good! How's it taste?

EM
 H-how did you do that?

Lily opens her mouth and points to her tongue. Chase pops up.

CHASE

Arber-elda is a pretty boat name.

EM

Arabella. Take me back. Please.

Em clenches her eyes shut. The kids watch her and wait, swinging their arms. Em opens one eye at the kids. They wave.

Suddenly, Lily is directly in front of Em, holding her hand out to Em. Em hands her the Pop Tarts. Lily grabs Em's hand and tries to urge her off the last step.

LILY

Yay! So much faster this time.

Right before Em's foot touches the earth, she JERKS BACK and shuffles backwards up the steps.

EM

What is this? Who are you?

CHASE

You don't reco-nize us?

LILY

Oh yeeaa! Grownups see color first.
We spent a whole day green once.
Bumble bees were sooooooo confused.

Lily and Chase laugh and snort with each other.

EM

What are you talking about? Why were you in my house? And h-how do you know about my dad's boat?

CHASE

Ugh, Emmy! Maybe she's not ready.

LILY

She is too. You'll see.

EM

How do you know my name?
Did you go through my stuff?

A GUST of WIND knocks Em down a step. She lands on her butt.

LILY (CONT'D)

See? Wind thinks she's ready!

The kids go to help Em.

EM

Stop! Get away from me! Get away from my house!

LILY
But it isn't a --

CHASE
(to Lily)
-- Leave her alone. It's okay.

Em curls up in a little ball and rocks back and forth. Lily stares at her and reaches her hand to Em.

LILY
(to Em; teary-eyed)
Please. Please try. You can do it.
It's all a mirror. A big magical
mirror. Remember? Remember?

Lily tries to touch Em's heart, but Em jerks away from her. Chase puts his hand on Lily's shoulder to lead her away.

LILY (CONT'D)
But it's not what she thinks!

When Em looks up, there's no storm or children. Em squints to the dark. *Is this a dream?* She goes inside.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAWN

Em's eyes open. She's LYING ON HER SIDE, hair disheveled.

Rorri hasn't budged. Em looks to her hands, then to the window and floor. No cuts, no broken glass. She shakes her head, then settles back into the routine robotic motions.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAWN

Em, in a put-together 1950s-housewife outfit, puts the finishing touch on her makeup and hair. She pulls at her boobs to make her cleavage perkier in her bra.

She stills and stares in the mirror, looking deeply into her own eyes. She lifts her hand to touch the mirror. A SNORE from OFF SCREEN startles her out of the moment.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Em and Rorri eat their usual breakfasts. Rorri has bacon, eggs, and toast. Em has half a grapefruit and one egg.

EM
How is it -- Ugh.

She swats away the rehearsed words.

EM (CONT'D)
 (carefully, with effort)
 I think it stormed. Last night.

RORRI
 Good.

EM
 I guess. I don't remember the last
 time it stormed. Do you?

Em picks up a piece of Rorri's bacon and stares at it.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. FOYER - DAY

Holding the bacon, Em is suddenly in the foyer, out of sorts as to how she got there so fast. The front door is open and Rorri is gone. She closes the door and breaks the bacon in half. Then:

EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

The bacon pieces are now two twigs. Em sees her reflection in the window. Her HAIR LOOKS LONG, BLACK AND STRAIGHT, and then SHAVED, and then WAVY AND WHITE. When she touches her hair, it changes back to normal. She turns around to see:

INT. SECOND BATHROOM - DAY

The twigs are a now suddenly pair of scissors. A mysterious, warped VOICE speaks up from... somewhere.

UNKNOWN VOICE
 Pretty girls have long hair.

Em stands still, eyes wide. *Where did that voice come from?*

It's that bully we all have in our heads: THE VOICE OF
 LEARNED STORIES, ENGRAINED IN OUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND.

Em looks in her other hand. She's holding a lock of her hair. She gasps and drops the hair. She slaps herself in the face.

EM
 Get it together.

SAME - LATER

Em finishes pinning her hair to hide the short piece. She smiles to make sure there's no lipstick on her teeth. She stands to the side, sucks in her tummy, and walks out.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Em tries to get back in the hang of her normal routine:

-Kitchen: Em hand-dries DISHES, but they CLINK and CLATTER.

-Office: Em stands and stares at her typewriter.

-Office: Em sits in front of a blank canvas. She flips it on its side and cocks her head to the side. Perspective.

-Bedroom: Em vacuums the bedroom carpet.

-Kitchen: Em hand-vacuums the rug. She combs the tassels, trimming the straggling one. She holds scissors in one hand and the trimmed tassel in the other. When she lifts her head:

EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

Em suddenly sits on the back porch, cross stitching. The scissors are now a needle. The tassel is now gray thread.

Em jumps out of the chair and lets everything fall to the ground. She shakes her head, paces, and looks at her palms.

She looks at what she's stitched: an antique key.

She walks in the back door.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Em mouths and uses hand motions as she replays her day, trying to figure out what she's missing. She sees the rug.

The darn straggling tassel is back.

Em rolls her eyes and opens the drawer with the scissors. Without looking, from muscle memory, she grabs for the scissors, but comes back empty-handed.

She tries the same motion again. No scissors. She searches through messy drawers, a stark contrast to the anal-retentive organization typically visible in the house. No scissors.

She finds a calendar. It has no numbers or days.

EM
My goodness...

She stumbles toward the foyer. Her steps make a mess of the rug and its tassels, but she's too distracted to notice. Before she makes it too far, the voice stops her:

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE
Wives take care of their husbands.

THE VOICE ENTRANCES EM. She nods and turns around.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Em cleans the dishes (again), just so. She settles back into her robotic, well-rehearsed motions. GIGGLES in the backyard. Em squints at the sound, but continues cleaning.

A KNOCK on the WINDOW. No response from Em.

LILY (O.S.)
I think she's stuck again.

CHASE (O.S.)
This one's an oozy.

LILY (O.S.)
I think you mean doozy.

WISE MAN/THE WIND (V.O.)
It's time to wake up.

A GENTLE WHISPER OF INTUITION, Wise Man and Wind are subtler voices than the bullying voice of subconscious stories.

A GIANT THUNDER CRACKS outside, causing Em to leap. It's enough to break her free of her entranced movement.

She stumbles backward away from the "cleaning corner" of the kitchen. She looks at her hands and what she's doing, her brow furrowed. *How did I end up here again?*

She looks around the kitchen, at the wallpaper, then down at her outfit. She stares at her foot: very high heels.

INT. MASTER CLOSET - DAY

Em throws clothes from the closet onto the bedroom floor.

Em scoffs and sighs as she searches. Everything is 1950s housewife-esque or something from an elderly woman's closet.

Her shoes are high heels or slippers. She grabs an old-lady sweater. Her face scrunches like she's holding a dead skunk.

She takes off the high heels and stretches her toes. *The freedom.* She slides into a pair of slippers.

She checks Rorri's side: business attire, white t-shirts, silk pajama pants, and an old-man robe.

EM
(under her breath)
Where are your hoodies?

His shoe options are loafers, slippers, or gray Crocs. She grabs a pair of his PJ pants and one of his white t-shirts.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

Em stares in the mirror. She holds the t-shirt and PJ pants in front of her to see how they'd look. She shakes her head.

EM
No...

INT. MASTER CLOSET - DAY

Em finishes putting everything back, including her husband's clothes. She checks that the level of organization meets her standards and walks out.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Em kneels down to look under the bed, but her dress pulls on her mid-section and arms, making movement challenging. She takes off her apron to see if she can reach further.

Her DRESS RIPS as she reaches.

EM
Shit.

INT. MASTER CLOSET - DAY

Em looks at the clothing on her side, then at Rorri's side.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

EM WEARS RORRI'S PJ PANTS AND SHIRT. She looks under and around everything.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Em opens drawers, moves the sofa.

EM

Where is everything?

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

Em searches under the sink and removes a bucket and other cleaning supplies. She leans on the counter, sweating.

She looks in the mirror. The sweat and intense movement caused her mascara to run and her lipstick to smear.

SAME - LATER

Em dries her makeup-free face after washing it. She TRACES FRECKLES AS THEY EMERGE, like playing connect-the-dots.

EM

Hello? Hello. Hello?

She pulls her hair down and scratches her scalp. She takes off her bra from under her shirt, grabs her braless boobs and pulls them up, then lets them drop and sag.

She frowns at the sight and puts the bra back on, followed by blush and lipstick. She ties the t-shirt in a cute knot and rolls the sleeves up to make it more "feminine."

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Em looks through kitchen cabinets, then eyes the uneven rug tassels. She catches herself obsessing.

EM

Stop.

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE

Pretty girls have long hair.

She grunts at the voice and tries to kick the tassels on the rug, causing her to awkwardly lose her balance and fall.

She gets up, rubs her butt, grabs scissors from their normal drawer (where they've returned), and waves them in the air.

She stops and slowly looks at the scissors. *Wait, how did the scissors get back in here?*

Scissor-happy with wild eyes, EM CUTS OFF ALL THE RUG'S TASSELS, then the TABLECLOTH'S FRINGE. She collects the fringe and tassels in her hand: *Take that, jerk voice.*

EM
(mocking)
Pretty girls. Pretty girls.

INT. SECOND BATHROOM - NIGHT

There's a pile of fringe and tassels on the counter. Em looks at her hair. She takes scissors and CUTS OFF HER PONYTAIL. She runs her hands through her hair and shakes her head.

EM
Nothing to say now, huh?

Off screen, the front door opens and closes.

RORRI (O.S.)
I'm home.

Em moves from freedom to panic at her now-unkempt hair.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Em runs to the office, holding hair, fringe, and tassels.

EM
Shit shit shit shit shit shiiiiit.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

She shoves the pile of trimmings into the trash can.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Em rounds the corner. Rorri walks the opposite way.

EM
Hey, I'm not done yet. I just --

He WALKS RIGHT INTO HER, without missing a step. She stumbles out of his way. She lowers her head and sighs.

EM (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'll fix it.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Rorri washes his hands. Em walks in, catching her reflection. Her HAIR IS BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL LENGTH, her CLOTHES BACK TO THEIR 1950s STYLE. She gasps and breathes frantically, running her hands through her hair.

EM
My hair. My clothes!

RORRI
Good.

EM
What? No. Something isn't right.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Em rummages through the trash can, but finds no hair, feathers, or tassels. There's nothing but crumpled paper.

She kneels down, struggling to do so in her high heels. She grunts and tosses them at the wall. One of the stilettos RIPS AND PEELS BACK A BIT OF WALLPAPER. There's BLUE underneath.

Em searches under her desk. She grabs the trash can and empties it on the floor. She uncrumples one of the papers.

INSERT - UNCRUMPLED PAGE

The paper has one single sentence, typed:

"And they lived happily ever after."

BACK TO EM

Every page is exactly the same. Em's breathing quickens.

Em stands, holding the papers, when suddenly:

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAWN

In the same position, Em holds the uncrumpled papers. Except now they're the new day's newspaper. She's in her nightgown.

She looks at the newspaper in her hands, seeing that the text is Lorem Ipsum with the phrase "same old stories" dispersed.

She frantically looks through the rest of the newspaper. It's all the same filler text. *Is this some kind of joke?*

She walks down the steps, looking back and forth. As she makes it to the bottom step, she ends up in the:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Rorri sits at the table right at sunrise. Em runs in, frantic. She's now suddenly fully dressed and made up.

EM

I was going to say something. I feel it behind my jaw. I...

Rorri doesn't budge.

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE

Wives take care of their husbands.

Entranced again, she sets the newspaper on the counter.

EM

Right, breakfast.

RORRI

Good.

She turns and sees Rorri moving through the motions of eating breakfast, but HE HAS NO FOOD. He stares at where the newspaper would be in his hands, but there's nothing there.

EM

What are you doing?

No response. He keeps interacting with air.

EM (CONT'D)

Um, okay. Very funny. Hey!

She looks at his eyes: glossy and blank. She shakes him.

EM (CONT'D)

Okay seriously, you're freaking me out. Babe? Rorri? Hey, Rorri!

Hands shaking, Em puts her hands to her mouth. Rorri continues the rehearsed daily motions of eating, drinking, and reading the paper even though he has no food.

Without taking her eyes off him, Em pats around on the counter, grabbing a feather duster. She follows his eating motions and puts the feather duster in his hand. He uses it like a fork, HITTING HIMSELF IN THE FACE with feathers.

Em watches, then cautiously reaches out to him when:

INT. FOYER - DAY

Em and Rorri suddenly stand in the foyer. Em furrows her brow and stands perfectly still, aside from her head, which follows the slow yet precise pattern of Rorri's movements.

He kisses her cheek and walks out. She stands, eyes wide.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Em looks around and blinks, as if trying to figure out algebra, but it isn't quite clicking. She tugs on the neck of her blouse and fans her face.

She opens a window. A GUST of BREEZE tickles her skin. She closes her eyes and inhales deeply, holding it.

WISE MAN/THE WIND (V.O.)
It's time to wake up.

Em exhales and opens her eyes at the voice.

EM
That voice. From my dream.
(to the open window)
Can you hear me? Hello?

She runs to the back door.

EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

Em talks to the sky as if that's where her dreams are.

EM
Hey! Hello? Anyone?

No response.

Em tries to walk off the porch, but SOME UNSEEN FORCE physically STOPS HER from making it past the bottom step.

She tries again. Same thing.

EM (CONT'D)
What the...?

She tries climbing over the railing, but HER BODY SHAKES as she's PHYSICALLY UNABLE to leave the porch.

EM (CONT'D)
No no no. Come on. Come on!

She leans over the porch railing and looks next door. She looks one way, then the other. Silence and stillness.

EM (CONT'D)
Hello? Is anybody out there? HELLO?

She starts pacing. She ponders the events of the past 24 hours and finally snaps:

EM (CONT'D)
WHAT. THE FUCK. IS HAPPENING?!

She breathes heavily, waiting for a response from... Someone. She slows her shaky breath.

EM (CONT'D)
What did you say in the dream...
Perception? Perspective! And...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Em sits cross-legged, breathes, and closes her eyes to attempt to meditate. She readjusts her posture. (It's obvious she's never meditated before.)

EM
I can do this. I can do nothing.
I'm calm. I am a calm person.

Eyes scrunched closed, she chews on her cheek and shakes her leg. Beat. She peels open and squints one eye.

EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

The ROCKING CHAIR TOPPLES down the STEPS. Em stands at the top of the steps, out of breath. The chair lands right-side-up on the ground, facing her. It rocks, taunting her.

She walks down the steps and reaches for the chair. She stays stuck, unable to reach it. She flails her arms. *Seriously?!*

SAME - LATER

Em sits on the steps with her head beneath her knees. Random furniture and house items are strewn on the back lawn. A GUST of WIND twirls around her. She looks up. *I can solve this.*

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Em's hair is in a messy bun. Windows open. STEADY RAIN. Em moves the furniture and trashes the place, to take some sort of action. A WIND GUST makes a framed PHOTO FALL and SHATTER.

EM

Sorry, gramps and meem-meem.

She HAND-VACUUMS the GLASS and opens the frame. A FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER falls out from behind the photo. She opens it.

INSERT - NOTE

Words in rushed handwriting:

Rorri ~~Michaels~~ ti

BACK TO EM

She scrunches her face at the note.

EM (CONT'D)

Rorri Michaels... ti? T.I.? When did I write this?!

She shoves it in her pocket and gets a determined look.

She grabs the other framed photos and walks to the back door.

QUICK CUTS: BACK PORCH

-Em removes the back of a frame carefully. No secret note.

-Em rips the back of a frame off. Nothing behind it.

-Em smashes a framed photo and SHATTERS the GLASS. Nothing.

-She SMASHES the rest of the FRAMES and throws them in the yard. Her hand bleeds from cuts from the glass.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Em runs her hand under the water, rinsing the cuts. She turns off the sink and wraps a towel around her hand. Disheveled, she takes her hair down and tries to fix it.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Em waits for Rorri, rubbing her temples and shaking her leg.

The front door opens and Rorri enters. She quickly yet cautiously stands. He puts his work stuff away, robotically.

EM

Hey. Are you okay? You really freaked me out this morning --

RORRI

-- I'm home.

EM

Yea, I can see that.

She squints at him, then shakes her head, like a dog shaking when their hackles are raised. Trying to ignore the obvious.

EM (CONT'D)

The house is a disaster. But in my defense, something really weird is going on. I-I'm fairly certain I can't leave? The house? Like, actually. And look what I found.

She pushes the note toward him. He walks to the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

He walks. She follows.

EM

It looks like my handwriting, but I didn't write it. Or I don't remember writing it. Which is scary, right? Is it a code, maybe? A code. Hah! Listen to me!

He doesn't stop.

EM (CONT'D)

Hey, what is it with you?

He keeps walking. She scoffs and walks the other way.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Rorri enters the bathroom and begins his nightly routine.

RORRI

Good.

He pauses and FIGHTS HIS NORMAL MOTIONS to LOOK UP to where Em would normally be. She's not there.

SAME - LATER

Em stands alone in a frilly nightgown with wet hair. Her hand is wrapped with bandages. She grabs lipstick, then stops.

EM

It's just Rorri.

Em looks deep into the mirror reflection of her eyes.

EM'S POV - HER REFLECTION

The CAMERA ZOOMS slowly into Em's reflection until the CAMERA FALLS INTO her reflection's pupil. Em yelps.

CUT TO BLACK.

EM'S IMAGINATION - SAME TIME

Pitch black. Silence. A BUZZING sound starts.

EM

What's that sound? Hello? Let me out. Let me out!

BACK TO EM'S POV

The CAMERA RAPIDLY ZOOMS OUT of Em's reflection.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Em grunts and pulls backwards, pulling herself out of her reflection. She stumbles and shakes her head.

Em looks down and sees that her hand is on the CLIPPERS and they're BUZZING. She quickly turns them off, confirms that her hair is intact, and shoves the clippers under the sink.

EM
Get. It. Together.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rorri sits on the sofa, watching history TV. Em walks in and sets two mugs of tea on the table. With a deep RUMBLE, the STORM starts again outside.

She sits and stares at the same old history channel. She changes the way she's sitting, like she just can't get comfortable. Rorri sips his tea and watches TV.

She gives Rorri the stink eye, picks up her cheesy romance book, and reads.

SAME - LATER

She tosses the cheesy romance novel.

EM
Who reads this shit?

Beat. Em grabs the remote and changes the channel, but only two shows are available: a history channel or an old-fashioned romance. She turns off the TV, stands up, and walks around. Em grabs a framed picture of Rorri's grandparents.

EM (CONT'D)
I can't find any photos of us.

The TV turns on. Rorri holds the remote, but hasn't moved. Em snags the remote from him and aggressively turns off the TV. She dunks the remote in his tea. *Take that, fucker.*

Rorri stares at the off-TV, sipping his remote-control tea. Em starts breathing rapidly, as if the walls are closing in.

EM (CONT'D)
My skin feels tight. It's all so disorienting, isn't it? Ha, of course it isn't. Melting into the sofa watching the same shit over and over. Dressed like a grandpa.

She looks at her outfit and rolls her eyes, since she's also dressed like a grandma. She RIPS OFF THE NIGHTGOWN and STANDS TOPLESS in TUBE SOCKS and TAN, HIGH-RISE OLD-LADY PANTIES.

EM (CONT'D)

It's like I woke up inside a dream
with you in it. Only you won't wake
up. Is this hell? Am I in hell?

She peers down at her old-lady underwear. *Granny panties?!*

EM (CONT'D)

Oh now I know I'm in hell.

She looks at him. He still stares at the off-TV.

EM (CONT'D)

Seriously? Nothing?!

She grabs her boobs and mashes them around at him. Her
playful confidence dissipates as she looks at her body.

EM (CONT'D)

Yea, I get it. Not quite the same
as when I was 20.

She waits for some sort of reassurance, and doesn't get it.

EM (CONT'D)

Fuck this.

She sniffles and walks out, taking the nightgown with her.

INT. MASTER CLOSET - NIGHT

Em looks between the t-shirt and PJ pants in one hand and the
nightgown in the other. She breaks into tears. *Why is
something so simple so fucking challenging?*

EM

This is the definition of insanity.

She breathes until she calms her tears. *Keep it together.*

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE

Pretty girls. Pretty girls. He'd
rather have a pretty girl.

EM

Oh, fuck off!

INT. SECOND BATHROOM - NIGHT

Em grabs the scissors and stares at her hair in the mirror.

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE
But pretty girls have long hair --

EM
-- No! Shut up!

She screams as she cuts off chunks of her hair.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Em stares at herself and her short, messy hair in the mirror. She laughs a bit maniacally. She clicks on the CLIPPERS.

SAME - LATER

Head shaved, eyes wild, she stares into the mirror. She waits to hear the voice with the old story. Silence.

EM
Ha. Ha! HAAAA!

She rubs and scratches her neck, itchy from hair clippings.

SAME - LATER

SHOWER WATER RUNS. Her granny panties land in the trash can.

She hops in the shower to rinse off hair trimmings. Beat.

She peels back the shower curtain to look in the mirror. She rubs her hand through her hair. Droplets fling everywhere.

She does a laugh/cry/scream and goes back to showering.

SAME - LATER

Em looks in the mirror at her shaved head and clean face.

EM
You look like a boy.
(beat)
I kinda like it.

Em hears Rorri coming and goes to wrap a towel around her head like one with long hair would. Rorri enters and starts his nighttime routine. Em watches the slow robotic repetition of his movement. She rips off the towel and tosses it.

EM (CONT'D)
It's my hair, so deal with it.

It's the FIRST TIME she's EMBRACED A DIFFERENT LOOK.

EM (CONT'D)

Also, your balls are starting to sag! So, gravity affects us all.

She turns off the sink while he's brushing his teeth, then marches out.

RORRI TURNS THE SINK BACK ON. She slides in at the sound.

She turns the sink off again. He brushes his teeth as if nothing changed. She squints at him and leaves.

He turns the sink back on. Em runs in.

EM (CONT'D)

Ha!

She watches as he finishes his nighttime stuff and walks out.

Em bonks her head against the mirror.

EM (CONT'D)

(to herself)

What are you doing?

In the mirror, she sees the unfolded note on the counter. She squints. She grabs the note and holds it up to the mirror. The message shows backward:

it ~~3~~ ~~EA~~ ~~AM~~ ittor

She holds the note to the mirror and squints at it. She uses her fingers to cover the letters that are marked out (L, E, H, C, I). THE REMAINING LETTERS SPELL: IT S A M IRROR.

EM (CONT'D)

It Sam... It's a... mirror? What?

MEMORY FLASH - EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Lily and Chase stand in the rain as Em sits on the steps.

LILY

It's all a mirror. A big magical mirror.

END MEMORY FLASH.

BACK TO EM - (BACK TO PRESENT)

She considers it for a moment, then rolls her eyes.

She taps her fingers on the counter, contemplating. She shoves the note in her pocket and walks out.

QUICK CUTS:

-Em checks behind and under every mirror in the house. She checks windows and anything at all reflective.

-She makes the house even more of a mess, finding nothing.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Em sulkily walks in, crumples the paper, and throws it away.

EM

Stupid.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Their lamps are off. Em lies stiffly in bed. The WIND HOWLS and HAIL PATTERS on the roof. She tosses and turns.

WISE MAN/THE WIND (V.O)

It's time to wake up.

Restless, Em turns on her lamp and sits up. Her gaze finds the bathroom. She pines after the note, then shakes her head.

She turns off the lamp and stares at the ceiling.

INT. KITCHEN - DAWN

Em fills up a glass of water. SHE WEARS OLD 1950s ATTIRE AND MAKEUP, but HER HEAD IS STILL SHAVED. She's yet to notice her look. Her jaw drops. Everything she moved around is now back to normal. She spins around, taking it all in.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAWN

She looks in the mirror and gasps at the 1950s look combined with the shaved head. She laughs and rubs her head.

EM

Oh my. It stayed. Why did it stay?

She wipes her face with a rag to remove all of the makeup.
She rips off the high heels.

EXT. BACK PORCH - DAWN

Em looks for the kids but sees no one. She grunts and tosses the high heels way out into the backyard.

EM
And stay out!

She storms inside, SLAMMING the BACK DOOR.

INT. MASTER CLOSET - DAWN

Em changes into cozy men's PJs. She goes to tie the front of the shirt into a cute knot, then stops herself. She CHOOSES COMFORT OVER AESTHETICS: makeup-free, shaved head, loose PJs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Em stands with her arms crossed. She stands sexily at first (out of habit), then shakes her head and moves to a pose that's comfortable. She takes a breath to prep herself.

Rorri enters at sunrise, sits down, and grabs the newspaper. He goes through the motions of eating even though there's no food. Em looks like she's used to this behavior by now.

EM
(motioning to her look)
What do you think?

She wiggles as she waits for his inevitable canned response.

RORRI
Good.

EM
(dramatically)
Oh my gosh thank yooou. I call it,
"existential crisis."

She "flips" where her hair would be and does a playful catwalk like a model.

RORRI CHUCKLES.

She turns on her heels and scurries toward him.

EM (CONT'D)
Did you just laugh?!

Nothing. She FLASHES HIM. Zero response.

EM (CONT'D)
You did. You laughed.
(snaps in front of his
face)
Hello? Heeellllloooo? Anyone home?

Em shoves him a few times. His body sways back to its original position with each shove. He continues "eating."

She covers her chest, self-consciously.

EM (CONT'D)
I can't.

She walks to the back door.

EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

It's muggy and mushy outside, with clouds waiting by.

EM
Hello? Are you out here? I-I'm
sorry. I do need your help.

Suddenly, Em sees Lily at the backyard park. Lily is stacking patties of mud while wearing Em's high heels.

EM (CONT'D)
Hey there! Hi!

Lily looks up. Em waves. Lily looks back down.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. FOYER - DAY

Em suddenly stands in the foyer IN A 1950s OUTFIT, but her HAIR is still SHAVED and she's BAREFOOT. Some changes are sticking. Some are not. Rorri goes to kiss her cheek in the daily routine way. She catches his face and pushes it away.

EM
Knock it off.

She looks at her outfit.

EM (CONT'D)
 Goddammit! What the literal fuck!

She feels her head: still shaved. She sees her bare feet. She rubs her lips: no lipstick.

EM (CONT'D)
 I don't get it.
 (to the ceiling)
 Let me out! I want out!

Em closes her eyes to focus.

EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

Em opens her eyes. She teeters on the bottom step.

LILY (O.S.)
 Mudburger?

Lily plops into the mud right by the back porch and holds up a patty of sloppy mud. Em eyes her fancy 1950s outfit and looks at the ground. She sits on the step and puts her feet on the ground. Her TOES SQUISH in the MUD.

LILY (CONT'D)
 The more dirtier you get, the more fun you're having. That's a fact.

Em gulps, nods, and plops her butt right into the mud, with her back still touching the steps.

They make a mudburger assembly line.

EM
 I normally can't go this far.

LILY
 Can't, or won't?

EM
 My name's Em, or Emmy. But you already knew that. What's yours?

LILY
 You can call me Lil-eeee.

EM
 Hi, Lily. I'm sorry I yelled at you and that little boy.

Lily continues the mudburger assembly line.

EM (CONT'D)

Why were you out in the middle of that storm? At night? And that was you in my house, right? It's not okay to break into people's houses.

LILY

It's not really a house, but you already knew that.

EM

What?

LILY

Those make me dizzy.

EM

Houses?

Lily points to the merry-go-round.

FLASHBACK - EXT. CAROUSEL - NIGHT

A younger, more colorful Em and Rorri ride and play on a carousel. They laugh. No one else is around, maybe no one else in the world. It's raining warm, delicious, summer rain.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. BACKYARD PARK - (BACK TO PRESENT)

LILY

Life's a big loopy loo.

EM

Do you-do you know what a nervous breakdown is?

LILY

No. Is it the same as a stress?

EM

Kinda. What do you think stress is?

LILY

A stress is when you want to be here right now but your brain takes you other places instead.

Em nods, clearly impressed.

EM
Are you thirsty? Or hungry?

Lily holds up a mudburger. *This is lunch. Duh.*

EM (CONT'D)
Ah, right. Of course.

LILY
Once upon a time, I was painting
and I wanted so bad to get the
color just right and so I kepted
adding more and more colors.

Em waits for the end of the story, but Lily says nothing.

EM
And did you? Get the color right?

LILY
No silly goose I got a brown blob.

EM
(feigns understanding)
Oh, okay.

LILY
Just try softer.

Lily scooches to Em and puts her muddy hand on Em's heart.

LILY (CONT'D)
From here.

EM
Agh! You got mud on my dress!
(surprised by her words)
Sorry. I don't care about the mud.
Or the dress. Can't get rid of it.

Lily stands up and freely rubs her mud hands on her clothes.

LILY
Sometimes you just gotta jump in
and get dirty. You can worry about
how to clean up later.

EM
Do you always speak in riddles?

LILY
That's how we outsmart it.

EM
Outsmart what?

LILY
The part of you that wants to stay
stuck.

Lily blows a kiss and waddles OFF SCREEN, wearing Em's heels.

EM
Wait! Outsmart what? What did you
mean that my house isn't a house?

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

Em holds the crumpled note up to the mirror again.

EM
Mirror. It's a mirror... What is?
Obviously this is a mirror.

She looks in the mirror and sees that Lily left a perfect muddy handprint on her chest. Em puts her hand on it.

The CAMERA FALLS INTO her reflection.

FLASHBACK - MONTAGE

Scenes of the beginning of Em and Rorri's relationship, as they embrace their individuality and fall in love:

-Grade school age: Em and Rorri make airplane noises and run around Em's childhood backyard with their arms out like wings of an airplane. Em's dad runs with the kids, arms out to his side. Em's mom (stereotypical housewife attire) stands in the doorway with her arms crossed, holding a broom.

-Middle school age: Rorri and Em hang in the living room of Em's childhood home where the WALLPAPER EXACTLY MATCHES EM AND RORRI'S present-day wallpaper. Em's parents argue in the background. Rorri sees Em's frown, stands up, and spins until he gets dizzy and collapses. Em smiles and does the same.

-Preteen: Em chases after a moving truck with her dad driving it. She collapses to the ground. Rorri picks her up and fireman-carries her over his shoulder back to her mom's home. Em's mom reaches out to her daughter. Em slaps her hand away.

-Teenage: At a fair, Rorri and Em laugh and chase each other in the rain. Em has free, wild hair and wears no makeup.

-College age: In a garage, Em flails and dances while Rorri sings an impromptu song and plays the drums. Rorri wears a hoodie. Em wears mis-matched socks. They laugh.

-Early 20s: Rorri gets down on one knee to propose. Em kneels down to his level and tackles him to the floor. He kisses all of her freckles.

-At a beach, after their wedding, Em wears a wedding dress and Rorri wears a suit with his pant legs rolled up. Barefoot and careless, they laugh and chase seagulls.

-The door swings open to their new house. Em carries Rorri on her back, then they fall laughing on the floor. They kiss.

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO EM (BACK TO PRESENT)

Em COMES TO, staring in the mirror. She smiles, fondly, then the CAMERA YANKS BACK INTO her reflection.

FLASHBACK - MONTAGE

Scenes of the progression of Em and Rorri's relationship, as they both move from individuality to learned "norms":

-They stand in the kitchen of their current house, Em wearing lipstick and an apron, and Rorri in a suit and tie. Settling into roles. He tries to kiss her lips, but she turns her head for a cheek kiss so her lipstick doesn't get smudged. They smile lightly at each other but don't hold eye contact.

-Em tidies the living room while Rorri sits on the sofa.

-Em and Rorri stand in the master bathroom. He tries to talk to her and she ignores him. He rubs his head.

-Lying in bed, Em faces away from Rorri. He tries to spoon her and caress her. She pretends she's asleep. He rolls over.

-Em serves breakfast. They eat at the kitchen table. He tries to make a piece of buttery toast dance toward her. She scoffs and rolls her eyes. He tries again. She grabs both their dishes and puts them in the sink.

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO EM (BACK TO PRESENT)

Em COMES TO, staring in the mirror. She slaps the mirror.

EM
 Ow. Oh, so I'm the bad guy? No! He
 got lazy. He stopped trying. I do
 everything! I do it all!

Em gets PULLED BACK INTO her reflection. She yelps.

FLASHBACK - INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Rorri helps clean. Em stops him because he's doing it wrong.
 He rubs his head in silent frustration and sits at the table.

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO EM - (BACK TO PRESENT)

Em COMES TO and paces, her breath becoming quick and shallow.

EM
 Yea, but --

WISE MAN (V.O.)
 -- It's time to wake up.

She speaks to the ceiling.

EM
 It's him. He ignores me! He won't
 give me the slightest bit of
 affection. Nothing I do is ever
 good enough for him. He just wants
 me to be this perfect little wife!
 Cooking, cleaning. He doesn't care
 about me, not really.

She angrily crumples the note and throws it away again.

EM (CONT'D)
 As if I can control how he treats
 me. That's my fault somehow? Ha!
 I'm the one stuck in this cookie-
 cutter, bullshit life! This house!

She paces again, still telling off the ceiling.

EM (CONT'D)
 I guess this is it? My life? I've
 done all the right things. And?

Her breathing gets faster until a near-panic attack.

WISE MAN (V.O.)
It's time to wake up.

EM
Let me the fuck out!

She storms out of the bathroom.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Em stands in front of her easel and blank canvas. She holds a paintbrush and a tube of green paint. She moves the tube toward the paintbrush, but can't get herself to squeeze it.

EM
Just fucking paint something, you
lazy piece of shit.

Em tries to paint. Her hand shakes in refusal.

LILY'S VOICE
Try softer.

EM
What does that even mean?!

She clenches her jaw and sets the brush down.

She sits in front of her typewriter. She finally gets her fingers moving. A smile creeps on her face.

SAME - LATER

Looking smug, like she's proven everyone wrong, Em grabs the page from the typewriter and looks at what she's written.

INSERT - TYPEWRITER PAGE

The crisp, white paper has one sentence on it: "And they lived happily ever after."

BACK TO EM

She crumples the paper and throws it as if it's on fire.

EM
I didn't write this!

She screams and kicks the trash can. She knocks over the canvas and easel. The tube of green paint falls, putting a splotch on the carpet. But the splotch is white, not green.

She grabs the tube of green paint and squeezes a bit onto her hand. It's white. She grabs a red tube and squeezes it. Black. She frantically grabs more paint. NO MATTER WHAT COLOR the PAINT TUBE is, it all comes out either BLACK or WHITE.

She snarls at the ceiling and walls of the room.

EM (CONT'D)

You won't even let me paint?!

She squeezes paint on the floor. She tosses the paintbrush and scoops paints with her hands. She moves to the walls and paints abstract swooshes on top of the old, golden wallpaper.

Em's fingernail catches a bit of the wallpaper. It's the same area that her high heel ripped. Em grips the corner and pulls. Wallpaper pulls back to show a lovely sky underneath. A breeze hits her face from the wall. She gasps.

Em pulls with all her might, but THE WALLPAPER WON'T BUDGE.

SAME - NIGHT

Em lies face down on the carpet. Her 1950s dress still has dried mud on it. She has paint smeared all over her. The office is a muddy, black-and-white-painted mess.

She hears the front door open and close.

RORRI (O.S.)

I'm home.

EM

(face smooshed in the
carpet; sarcastically)

NEAT.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Em leaves her office and stomps toward the kitchen to gather tools. Rorri walks the other way. She avoids him.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Em tries to rip down the wallpaper with lots of tools: a knife, pliers, scissors, and kitchen tongs. The wallpaper won't budge. If a bit peels back, it quickly reattaches.

LILY
It's all a magical mirror.

Em glances back at Lily, who's finger-painting on the canvas.

EM
It's wallpaper. Ugly old wallpaper.

LILY
Is it ever really just wallpaper?

EM
Stop with the riddles! Please?

LILY
That's the only way you listen.

EM
I'm tired of trying to decipher everything you say.

LILY
I don't know what that means.

EM
Decipher? It means figuring it out.
What is it with you and mirrors?

LILY
I can show you if you want.

EM
Finally! I mean yes, please.

Lily holds her stuffy dog by one ear and holds him up to Em. Em grabs the stuffy's ear and looks down at him. She rubs his ear in between her fingers, as if it's familiar.

They leave the office. Lily's painting is full of color.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rorri sits on the sofa, watches the history channel, and goes through the motions of sipping tea, even with nothing in his hand. Lily and the stuffy dog lead Em to the back door.

EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Lily leads Em down the steps. Em pauses on the last step.

EM
Can't you tell me here?

Lily shakes her head no and hops off the steps.

EM (CONT'D)
I can't leave.

LILY
Can't, or won't?

Lily canters off, not looking back.

EM
Can't. You think I want to stay here? The house won't let me. It's like I'm bound to it.

LILY (O.S.)
If you want a bee-cipher...

EM
Watch.

Em walks down the steps and leans forward in anticipation of a force keeping her stuck. She keeps going, stumbling off the steps and into the backyard.

EM (CONT'D)
Wait. Why did that work? How did that work?

She pantomimes her motions, trying to memorize specifics as if that's the trick. She looks off screen toward Lily and walks, cautiously, toward her.

EXT. BACKYARD PARK - NIGHT

Lily grabs a bucket from its hiding place in a bush. She pulls out a half-full container of bubbles.

EM
How did you do that? How come I can leave?

LILY
Catch the bubbles.

EM
I really don't have time to play.

Lily blows bubbles at Em. Em sighs and rushes to catch bubbles, popping most and making the others float away.

EM (CONT'D)
Why am I doing this again?

LILY
This time, keep real still.

Em takes a deep breath, does a light eye roll, and nods. She puts her hands out, palms up. Lily blows bubbles.

The bubbles slowly float toward Em. One kisses her face and pops. Multiple bubbles land in her hands.

EM
Okay, now what?

Lily closes her eyes, stands, and sways in the breeze.

LILY
Shh. Listen.

Em looks around, sighs, and closes her eyes.

Em gently sways back and forth with Lily. After a long beat, the music of nature suddenly appears, each sound distinct from the other. CRICKETS CHIRP. LEAVES RUSTLE. BIRDS TWEET.

EM
I can hear birds. There are birds!

The sun fully sets as they mirror each other's movement.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Em continues swaying, eyes closed, then opens her eyes. Her brow furrows and she glances around the office.

EM
Lily?

She sees that much more of the old wallpaper has peeled back, showing blue skies and the top of a tree. She gasps and runs to the wall, but the wallpaper reattaches. She tries walking slowly instead, and the wallpaper peels back again.

She tugs at the wallpaper, but it doesn't budge.

She sees Lily's painting. It's colorful and still a bit wet. Em touches the colorful paint and looks at her hand: gray.

EM (CONT'D)
This makes no sense.
(louder; to the ceiling)
This will magically clean itself,
right? Right?

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rorri's in bed, reading his book about cars. Em walks through the room, flips him off, and goes into the bathroom.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Em grabs old towels and cleaning supplies from under the sink. She fills a bucket with water.

She looks in the mirror at the handprint on her chest, then glances into the master bedroom at Rorri.

MEMORY FLASH - INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

Em speaks to the ceiling.

EM

It's him. He ignores me! He won't give me the slightest bit of affection. Nothing I do is ever good enough for him.

END MEMORY FLASH.

BACK TO EM (BACK TO PRESENT)

She sets down the supplies and gets close to the mirror.

WISE MAN/THE WIND (V.O)

It's time to wake --

EM

-- Shh! Give me a second.

(under her breath)

It's all a mirror. It's him... He ignores me...

She points at herself in the mirror. She looks down at her finger and sees who she's pointing to. Beat.

EM (CONT'D)

No. What? No.

She puts her hands to her head, thinking. Then, it clicks.

EM (CONT'D)

What, I ignore me? I won't give me affection? Nothing I do is good enough for me? Is that it? Did I BEE-CIPHER the riddle? Do I win?

Silence.

EM (CONT'D)
Whatever. Even if that's true.

She closes the bathroom door.

EM (CONT'D)
That doesn't excuse his bullshit.

WISE MAN/THE WIND (V.O.) LILY'S VOICE
It's time to wake up. It's all a magical mirror.

EM
Fine. Fine! If it shuts you up,
I'll play along.

Beat. Nothing. She looks up at the ceiling and claps.

EM (CONT'D)
Hello? Am I inconveniencing you?

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE
He's never affectionate with me.

EM
I'm never affectionate with me. How
am I supposed to be affectionate
with myself? Face pets? Nipple
tweaks? What, buy myself flowers?
Give myself little toe massages --

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE
-- He ignores me, doesn't care
about me. He just wants me to be
this perfect little wife.

Em lets out a long, exhausted sigh.

EM
Blah blah. Uh, I ignore me. I don't
care about me. I just want me to be
this perfect little wife.

She puts her hand to her chest. *Ouch*. She furrows her brow.

EM (CONT'D)
Okay, I get it, alright? But it
doesn't change the fact that he
expects me to do everything.

Silence. Beat.

EM (CONT'D)
I expect me to do everything?
 (beat)
 Oh, what a mindfuck.

She sits, her arms wrapping around her in a hug, as if her arms intuitively know what to do. She looks awkward at first.

She gets up, locks the bathroom door, then sits back down.

She flops her arms around herself and pats herself on the back with a mediocre, forced hug.

EM (CONT'D)
 There ya go. Affection! We good?

She gets up, does finger guns in the mirror, and unlocks the bathroom door. She turns the knob. The door won't open.

EM (CONT'D)
 Really?! Come on!

She backs up, then flails herself at the door.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Rorri sits still, reading his book. There's loud BANGING and irritated muffled words coming from behind the bathroom door.

EM (O.S.)
 Help! I'm stuck and it's awkward.

He turns the page.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Em's face is pushed up to the crack in between the doorframe.

EM
 (to the ceiling)
 I did the affection. Open the door!

She hurls the bucket at the door. WATER SPLASHES everywhere.

SAME - LATER

Em lies on her back on the floor, with the bucket on her head. The bathroom is a disaster. She's out of breath.

INSIDE THE BUCKET

Pitch black. Em's breathing is amplified. Long beat.

EM
(whispering)
I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Beat. She snuffles. Her voice wells up.

EM (CONT'D)
I didn't know. I'm sorry. I do
support your dreams, I do. I'm
sorry. I'll do better, I swear.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Em hugs herself, head still in the bucket, and quietly sobs.

A LOUD CLINKING THUD echoes from the kitchen.

She pops up, hitting her bucket head on the bathroom door. She feels around with her hands, grabs the door handle, and the door easily opens.

She takes the bucket off her head and cradles it by her side.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Em walks in and turns on the light. The golden wallpaper in the kitchen is starting to peel off, too. There's something lumpy under the rug. She puts the bucket on top of the table.

The KITCHEN TABLE SCREECHES as Em pushes her weight into it.

She lifts the rug. There's a CELLAR DOOR in the floor.

She tries to open the cellar door. It CREAKS but won't open. It's locked and has a keyhole, but no apparent key.

SAME - LATER

Em lays defeated on top of the cellar door, clearly having tried (and failed) to open the door with various tools. She sets down the crow bar she's holding.

LILY'S VOICE
Try softer.

EM
You're a very... pretty door.

She awkwardly pats the door. Nothing. She yawns.

EM (CONT'D)
 (to the cellar door)
 This isn't over. Don't go away.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The dirty dress is strewn on the floor rather than being "correctly placed" in the hamper. Rorri sleeps on his side.

Wearing Rorri's PJs, a showered Em climbs in bed.

EM
 I'm afraid to go back to sleep.

She scoots toward him. She puts her hand on his back. She whispers, more to herself than anything.

EM (CONT'D)
 It wasn't the carousel like we tell people. It was in first grade. Ms. Ransom's class. Lights off, nap time. You said you wanted to kiss every one of my polka dots.

She touches the freckles on her cheek. Rorri's eyes open.

EM (CONT'D)
 I told you, that will take a very, very long time. You said, at age, what? I was 6 so you were 7? You said we had our whole lives. Just dove right in, like you were so sure. Then you kissed me here.

She points to a specific freckle.

EM (CONT'D)
 That was our first kiss. I acted mad since we broke the rules. But I felt like I could fly. I haven't thought about that in forever.

She scoots closer to him and big spoons his back.

EM (CONT'D)
 Come back. Help me break the rules.

He closes his eyes.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAWN

Em's eyes pop open. She slowly peeks under the covers to see that she's STILL IN RORRI'S PJs, NOT a nightgown. (She's in comfortable outfits until the script states otherwise.)

Em hops up and squeals. She scurries to the master bathroom.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAWN

Em turns on the light and looks in the mirror. Shaved head, no makeup. She touches her freckles and the fine lines by her eyes. She grabs her saggy boobs and smiles. The bathroom is still a mess from the night before, but she doesn't notice.

INT. KITCHEN - DAWN

Em runs in. The rug is peeled back showing the cellar door.

EM
Still here!
(singing opera)
It's woookiikiiiiing!

She tries to open the cellar door. Still locked.

INT. OFFICE - DAWN

Em canters in and sees that the paint is still everywhere.

EM
Aw, come on.

She tries to pull the wallpaper back further. It won't budge.

She leaves the room. The wallpaper peels back a little bit, as if it's peeking to see if she's gone.

She returns with the bucket. She stands in front of the wall and puts the bucket on her head.

EM (CONT'D)
I LOVE MYSELF AND I AM NICE.

She peeks from under the bucket. Nothing has changed. She takes the bucket off and speaks into it. It echoes.

EM (CONT'D)
Heelloooo! I did the thing!

She scoffs, tosses the bucket, and leaves the room. She walks back in, sets the bucket upright, pats it, and leaves again.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Em hands Rorri his coat and briefcase.

EM
You must be so tired.

She caresses his cheek. His eyes are glossy, almost teary.

FLASHBACK - EXT. CAROUSEL - NIGHT

Rorri hops off the carousel. Em slips. Rorri catches her.

EM
You caught me!

He looks into her eyes and rubs his nose on hers.

RORRI
I see you.

They look at each other with sparkles in their eyes. Rorri winks at Em. They go to kiss, but Em comes to in the:

END FLASHBACK.

INT. FOYER - (BACK TO PRESENT)

Rorri goes to kiss Em on the cheek, but she intercepts and makes it a lip smooch. She grabs his cheeks and puts her forehead to his.

EM
(intensely)
I see you. Do you hear me? I know we've been stuck. I know I can be impossible. But you've never given up on me. I won't give up on you. I'll find a way to wake you up. We'll find a way out of here.

RORRI
No.

Em gasps.

EM
No?

RORRI

No.

He kisses her cheek and walks out the front door. She stands, mouth agape. *Did he just say no to me?*

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Em chases after Rorri, who's already made it off the bottom steps. She stops before she makes it to the bottom step.

EM

Wait! No to which part? Do you-do you not want to leave?

The CAR STARTS and DRIVES away.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Em paces. She tugs on the cellar door. It doesn't open. She stomps and motions to the foyer, where the sweetness was.

EM

I tried softer. So soft. Velvety soft. Puppy breath soft. So...?

She motions to the cellar and waits for a response, but doesn't get one. She grabs the handle, assumes a squat position, and pulls until her forehead veins pop.

EM (CONT'D)

So you're saying no to me, too?
Fine. I'll just break my way in!

The RUG FLIPS to COVER THE CELLAR. The TABLE MOVES ITSELF on top of the rug, KNOCKING Em on her butt.

She sits, eyes wide.

She tries to peel the rug up but can't. She feels around for the lump of the cellar door. It's still there.

She panics at a thought and looks toward the office.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Em peeks at the wallpaper. It's almost all the way closed up.

EM

Shit. Look what you did.

The BIT OF WALLPAPER still peeled back REATTACHES ITSELF IN RESPONSE to her words. Em goes to grab it, but stops.

EM (CONT'D)
No. I'm tired of fighting.

EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

Em sits on the bottom step with her bare feet on the ground. She smooshes her toes into the mud. She breathes deeply and listens to BIRDS CHIRPING. She spins a daffodil in her hand.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Em sits cross-legged on the floor, staring at the wallpaper. She closes her eyes and breathes deeply. She sways gently. The volume turns up on the landscape behind the wallpaper. BIRDS CHIRP, BREEZE TICKLES, LEAVES RUSTLE. Em smiles.

While her eyes are closed, the wallpaper peels back slightly.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Showing Em doing her own thing and leaving Rorri alone, without trying to change him or the house. They're coexisting without her trying to wake up him, or take care of him, or get any sort of reaction from him.

She's effectively doing nothing without trying to do nothing.

The wallpaper peels back more, the kitchen rug becomes less taught. CHANGE is HAPPENING by her mere PRESENCE and AWARENESS. She notices changes but doesn't engage with them.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Some days later. The kitchen table is in its normal spot. Rorri robotically eats. Em sits on the counter and eats, messier than usual. She hums to herself.

RORRI
Good.

EM
(to herself)
It is good.

RORRI
(not looking up)
Th-thank you.

She smiles and nods at him, without planning a response.

EM
Welcome. I wanted to.

She realizes her words.

EM (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Huh. I actually wanted to.

QUICK CUTS:

-Foyer: Rorri grabs his own stuff and kisses the air where Em would be. Em isn't there. He pauses briefly, then leaves.

-Kitchen: Dirty dishes pile in the sink.

-Master bedroom: Vacuum cleaner sits unused.

-Kitchen: Rug is pulled back. Its tassels are a hot mess. There's a daffodil gently lying on the cellar door.

-Back porch: Cross stitch sits, untouched.

-Backyard park: Em looks for the kids. No sign of them. Em pulls the merry-go-round and watches it spin.

-Living room: Em and Rorri sit on the sofa. Rorri watches TV and sips tea. Em is in her own world, reading or thinking. Rorri reaches out and intertwines his pinky with hers. She gently scooches closer to him and he leans his head on hers.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

It's right past sunrise. Em slides into the kitchen, running late. RORRI STANDS at the STOVE, COOKING FOOD.

Em's eyes go wide. She tiptoes backward until she's almost off screen, except for her head peeking around the corner.

Rorri places his plate on the table. He stops and looks directly at Em. She hesitantly smiles.

EM
Hey.

He sets a plate on the kitchen table in front of her spot. He sits down and settles back into a routine trance. Em cautiously sits at the table. She looks at her plate.

It's a smiley face made of cut fruit and scrambled eggs.

EM (CONT'D)
Wow. Thank you.

A piece of EGGSHELL CRUNCHES between her teeth as she chews.

EM (CONT'D)
Ew. There's an eggshell.

She spits her bite into a napkin. Rorri abruptly stands up and his CHAIR FALLS BACK on the FLOOR. He walks to the foyer.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Rorri grabs his coat. Em tiptoes in.

EM
Hey. Are you okay?

Long beat. Rorri grabs his other items.

EM (CONT'D)
Thank you for cooking.

RORRI
Nothing I do is good enough for you.

EM
Wait, I know this one! Um, nothing you do is good enough for you. See?

She smiles like she's given him the best gift. He storms out.

EM (CONT'D)
Just look in the mirror!
(to herself)
Ugh, I sound like a jerk.
(to Rorri)
That's not how I meant it!

He shuts the door as if he's going to slam it, but then slows down at the last minute to close it gently.

EM (CONT'D)
That was different.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Of EM SETTLING into her new, SOFT and SURRENDERED ROUTINE:

-Backyard park: Em walks barefoot and picks flowers.

-Kitchen: Em sets flowers on the cellar door and pets the door. She looks up at the ceiling and uses her hands and a touch of sarcasm to present the "softness" of her actions.

-Office: Em sets flowers on the floor by the wallpaper.

-Master bathroom: Em puts the remaining flowers in a small vase for herself. She looks in the mirror and coyly smiles.

HER PATIENCE with BLISSFUL NOTHINGNESS begins to WEAR OFF:

-Bedroom: Em lies on her tummy and reaches with her toes until she can touch the vacuum cleaner. She knocks it over.

-Kitchen: Em moves stuff from one cupboard to the next.

-Living room: Em tries to meditate. She grunts and gives up.

EXT. FRONT YARD - EVENING

Em walks heel to toe, heel to toe, counting the steps of the front yard. She stops at the edge and looks both ways. There's no one. She chews on her lip. *Fuck, this is boring.*

EM

HELLO?!

No response. She squints her eyes. *If no one can hear me...*

Em takes a deep inhalation, down to her toes.

EM (CONT'D)

AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!

She breathes and smiles.

EM (CONT'D)

FFUUUUUUUUUCCKKKK YYYO00000UUUU!!!

She laughs until the laughter topples over the line into crying. She sits and holds herself.

EM (CONT'D)

(voice cracking)

HELP ME! Someone help me.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Em and Rorri lie in bed next to each other. Em looks over at him, chewing on the inside of her cheek. Rorri reads the same ol' car book. Restless, Em props up on her elbows.

EM

(raw)

I'm sorry, but this is torture! You know how much I hate radio silence. My thoughts start to turn on each other like, like hungry gerbils. I feel like I'm properly crazy. You know how I feel about that word. I'm trying so hard to try softer and to give you space or whatever. But I'm so afraid that one wrong step means I'll lose you entirely again. Or lose myself. We've always been able to be our full selves together. I don't want to feel like I'm walking on eggshells, and I do! Sitting around and doing nothing when we could lose all this at any moment is wildly counterintuitive.

Rorri doesn't budge. Em stands and paces.

EM (CONT'D)

This can't be all there is. Like the door in the kitchen floor. There's something important down there. Why else would it be locked? And what happens if we go down there and the house erases all our efforts? Are we stuck? Do we die?

She sits in front of him.

EM (CONT'D)

And can we talk about the fact that we're in a house where doors appear and things move? Like, heelllloo? Better question: Is this even real? Am I in a coma? Did you finally convince me to try acid and this is, like, the most twisted, boring trip ever? Is this schizophrenia?

No response. She lowers his book and looks at him. She kisses his forehead and lies down next to him.

EM (CONT'D)

I want to say that it's okay, and that you can take your time. And it is, and you can. I'm just so tired. And there are all these blind spots I can't figure out. I can't fix this house-whatever this place is-without you. I don't want to.

(MORE)

EM (CONT'D)

And I shouldn't have to! It's ours,
not just mine. I can't pretend that
any of this is normal anymore. I
won't. I'm done pretending. Just-
Please come back. Come back to me.

Em rolls on her side away from him and stifles her cries. She
talks to whomever or whatever will listen.

EM (CONT'D)

I can't do this anymore. Please
don't make me do this anymore.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Em sits on the kitchen table next to two plates of food. She
has bags under her eyes from crying all night.

It's past sunrise. She perks up when she realizes Rorri
hasn't arrived on time for breakfast.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Em moves through the hallway carefully, but quickly.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Rorri sits by the bed, topless and sweaty. Em runs to him,
clearly nervous to say or do the wrong thing.

EM

Are you back-back?

RORRI

Good--I mean, uh. Hi? Hi, sweets.

She grabs his face and looks into his eyes. He smiles.

EM

Look at me. Oh, there you are!

They hug until a palpable tension returns. He rubs his jaw.

RORRI

My mouth. Feels funny.

EM

Come on, we don't have much time.
I'll get you all caught up.

RORRI

T-time for what? Your hair!

She instinctively covers her head with her hands. He rubs her shaved head playfully. She swats his hand.

RORRI (CONT'D)

You, you look badass.

EM

I thought you'd hate it.

RORRI

Why?

EM

I don't know.

She smiles and helps him up. He's wobbly.

INT. MASTER CLOSET - DAY

Rorri messes through his clothes. Em stares at him, grinning.

RORRI

Where are all my hoodies?

Em shrugs. Rorri opens a drawer. It's full of perfectly matching women's socks in OCD organization.

RORRI (CONT'D)

Matching socks? Since when?

EM

Right?! No clue. So yea, the wallpaper starts to peel off but then it plasters back to the wall.

RORRI

-- Good.

He puts his hand to his mouth.

RORRI (CONT'D)

Why do I keep saying that?

EM

It's okay. I'm used to it.

He furrows his brow at her. *What's that supposed to mean?*

EM (CONT'D)

Not in bad way. It's just, you've been sort of stuck. We both were. But you're moving and talking better than I could at first.

Rorri nods and looks through Em's old-lady clothes.

She opens a drawer of perfectly folded old-man silky pajamas. Rorri points to himself. *This is MY stuff?*

Em moves aside a robe to reveal gray Crocs. He gasps.

EM (CONT'D)

The whole house is like this.

RORRI

There's more Crocs?

She laughs and guides him out of the closet.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Em leads Rorri through the kitchen. Holding his Crocs, Rorri walks around and touches things. He's on a rant, though his speech isn't quite right yet.

RORRI

Yea, b-but Crocs?! "Gimme plastic shoes. With holes. These toesies need circulation."

Em chuckles, sits at the table, and presents breakfast and a newspaper. Rorri sits down, too.

RORRI (CONT'D)

Oh. Thanks. Thank you.

EM

What's wrong?

RORRI

I appreciate it. Pleasedontgetmad. Um, I... I don't like bacon.

He winces in preparation for a huge response.

EM

What?! Why didn't you tell me?

RORRI

I just did.

EM

Well, now I feel dumb. You've been forcing yourself to eat it so you don't, what, hurt my feelings?

Em grabs the bacon off his plate and puts it on hers.

RORRI

Seem ungrateful. Make you mad, yea.

He opens and "reads" the newspaper. Still mostly Lorem Ipsum, with a few choice phrases scattered for the detail-oriented movie-watcher to see, like "soften" and "rewrite."

EM

I'd rather you be honest and hurt my feelings than play make-believe.

He squints his eyes at her. *Would you really, though?*

He grabs a spoonful of grapefruit without asking.

EM (CONT'D)

No wait I-I measured it all out.

His face goes sour from the grapefruit.

RORRI

How can you eat this? It makes my eyeballs sweat and my nose hurt.

EM

I like eating healthy food.

He makes the buttery toast dance and moves the paper aside.

EM (CONT'D)

Sttooooppp.

RORRI

There's got to be something. Some sort of food you secretly want.

She shrugs and shakes her head no. They quietly eat. He makes the buttery toast dance again.

RORRI (CONT'D)

(playfully high-pitched)

Eat me. Eaaaatt mmeeee!

She tries to ignore him, then rolls her eyes and gives in.

EM

Fine! Pop Tarts.

RORRI

"Adequate." What every man wants to hear. Everyone feels pressure. Not to-I don't mean to downplay yours. I dunno. Um. This convo is getting a little heavy for breakfast.

EM

Sorry. I've been cooped up and I have so many thoughts and words.

He touches her hand.

RORRI

Gimme time to warm up and catch up.

EM

Of course.

Beat. Em rubs her forehead.

RORRI

You know what kills you faster than Pop Tarts?

EM (CONT'D)

Tell me other things you don't like. Bacon. What else?

RORRI (CONT'D)

Stress. Stress will kill you faster than Pop Tarts. That's science.

EM

What else don't you like? Tell me.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Em and Rorri sit on the sofa.

EM

Interrogate you? I don't interrogate you. What do you mean, interrogate?! What specifically does that mean?

He smiles at her. Beat. (The answer is in the question.)

EM (CONT'D)

Oh, ha. That's embarrassing.

He winks at her. Em stands up and motions to the kitchen.

EM (CONT'D)

So, yea. This place isn't us. It's all wrong. I moved the table there. I cut the tassels off the rug.

She walks around and points to the outdated decorations.

RORRI

It's not that bad. Why'd you put everything back?

EM

I didn't. It put itself back. Which is as impossible as it is true.

He cocks his head to the side at her.

RORRI

You're saying our furniture moves itself?

He pokes the sofa, then assumes a karate pose.

EM

Everything resets itself. Except recently. Except for some stuff. Like my hair. Maybe I'm getting the hang of it? Not sure how.

RORRI

What do you mean, resets itself?

EM

I don't know how to explain it without sounding crazy.

His eyes go big at the word "crazy."

EM (CONT'D)

"Craaaaazy." It's just a word.

RORRI

Let the record show that I do not think, and have never thought, that you are that word.

EM

Give it time. I recently had a very intimate moment with a bucket. Oh! And this is still here. C'mere.

She walks to the kitchen.

RORRI

You did what now?

He follows her.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

She pushes the kitchen table and looks at Rorri.

RORRI

Oops, my bad.

He pushes with her. The table easily moves. She lifts the rest of the rug to expose the entire cellar door.

EM

I deciphered a code-don't ask; long story-and this showed up.

RORRI

That's always been there. Right?

EM

I think I'd remember a creepy door. You'd've used it to prank me.

RORRI

True. I don't know, honey.

EM

Please at least try to suspend disbelief. Even for a moment.

RORRI

Okay, sorry. What's in there?

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE

Men like tiny, quiet women.

Em grunts, stands up, and paces.

EM

It's locked.

RORRI

Where's the key?

She gives him a "Seriously?" look.

RORRI (CONT'D)

Oh, right. That's why it's, yea.

(beat; to cellar door)

Open sesame!

It doesn't open.

EM

Magic isn't gonna work.

RORRI

Says the person who told me our furniture moves itself.

She sighs and walks to the back porch.

EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

Em looks over the porch railing. It's WINDY and there are clouds. Rorri comes out. He sits in a rocking chair.

RORRI

I was joking. I thought we were joking.

EM

I swear I'm telling the truth.

RORRI

I'll just look at your nose.

She covers her nose.

RORRI (CONT'D)

Your nostrils flare when you lie.
Built-in lie detector.

EM

You've never told me that.

RORRI

Your mom taught me. It was our little secret.

EM

I didn't know she paid that much attention.

RORRI

Of course she did.

EM

(flaring nostrils)
I think your Crocs are sexy.

He blows a raspberry. They laugh.

EM (CONT'D)

I don't know how literal all this is. But it all seems so, so familiar. Does that make sense?

RORRI

Nope.

She exhales.

RORRI (CONT'D)

I'm trying. It's a lot to take in.
Like water out of a firehose.

EM

Hey, you knew what you were signing
up for when you married me.

RORRI

I was a smart young fella.

Em sighs and moves her neck to pop it. She paces.

EM

I fought all of this, too. All I
remember is there was a storm and
kids in our backyard. One of them
is my friend. I caught bubbles.

RORRI

It never storms here.

EM

And our house isn't a house?
Whatever that means. Super vivid
dreams. Voices. And... I don't
remember anything before that.

RORRI

That's why I like it-why we like it
here. It's always perfect weather.

EM

I never said that. I love
storms.

RORRI (CONT'D)

Our very own happily ever
after.

EM (CONT'D)

Wait, what did you just say?

RORRI

Happily ever after. You know, "And
they lived happily ever after."

EM

Trippy. I apparently wrote myself
notes and hid them throughout the
house. One of the notes I found-it
says that. Exactly those words.

RORRI

Like a fairytale.

She rolls her eyes.

RORRI (CONT'D)
 Happily ever after! Galloping
 into the sunset. That's what
 everyone wants.

EM
 Because if they wrote what
 actually happens, no one
 would read it. The stories
 conveniently end after the
 honeymoon phase, right before
 shit hits the fan.

RORRI (CONT'D)
 Ouch.

EM
 Does this look like happily ever
 after? I can't leave. I can make it
 to the edge of our lawn. That's it.
 Getting that far took, I don't know
 how long because I don't even know
 what day it is. And I've yet to see
 anyone else aside from the kids.
 And the old people in my dream.

RORRI
 Why do you want to leave so badly?

EM
 Have you not heard anything I've
 said? This house is fucked. Just
 wait. You'll see. At least you get
 to leave every day. Maybe I can try
 to go with you to work tomorrow?

RORRI
 I don't go very far.

She sees her cross stitch of an antique key, grabs it, perks
 up, and runs inside. Rorri looks over his shoulder at her.

RORRI (CONT'D)
 Aaanndd we're going back inside.

He pushes himself out of the chair and walks inside.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Em squats to the side of the cellar door. She drops the cross
 stitch on the door. Nothing happens. She looks pissed.

RORRI
 (laughing)
 What'd you expect?

Em aggressively rubs the cross stitch on the cellar door.
 Nothing happens. She sighs. Rorri walks to the fridge.

EM

I've seen weirder things.

RORRI

Probably locked for a reason.

He sits at the table with a small wheel of cheese.

EM

I've gotta know what's down there.
Maybe our actual clothes? Or
something to explain all this. Or,
like, a fucking tunnel or
something. Are you hungry again?

RORRI

I like grazing. Is there some
looming deadline? What's the hurry?

EM

I told you. Sometimes stuff resets.
At first, it was every night. And
the rest seem random but I think
there's a pattern. Like, when I try
too hard the house fights back or
something. This has taken a lot of
work and repetition and patience.

She motions to her PJ pants, shaved head, and makeup-free
self. He smiles. She stops and looks down at herself.

EM (CONT'D)

It takes more effort for me to look
like this than all prim and proper.
It's like muscle memory. Trust me.

She points to her nose to show she's telling the truth.

RORRI

Nostrils check out. I like your
look. I can see your polka dots.
Just gonna eat cheese and listen.

Rorri walks to the fridge and gets cheese and a carton of OJ.

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE

Wives take care of their husbands.

Somewhat entranced by the story/voice, Em instinctively gets
a glass, grabs the carton of OJ from Rorri's hands, and fills
the glass up with orange juice.

RORRI

Here, I can do it.

She sees what she's doing, grunts, and paces.

EM
Sorry. I'm sorry.

She plops into her seat. Rorri puts the OJ away. He kisses his biceps for a job well done and sits at the kitchen table.

RORRI
(eating cheese)
Dispensing disbelief for a moment.

EM
Suspending.

RORRI
That's what I said. Do you get a warning before the rebirth thing?

EM
Reset. I don't think so? There's something more going on here. I can feel it. It's like an itch I can't scratch, or-or a splinter I can't reach. I'm gonna figure it out.

RORRI
Figure what out? Life?

Em shrugs.

RORRI (CONT'D)
Because philophos-philosospher-shit
I can never say it. Smart people!
Dedicate their whole lives to that.

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE WISE MAN/THE WIND (V.O.)
Men like tiny, quiet women. It's time to wake up.

Em stands up and screams at the ceiling. Rorri cautiously walks to her and touches her shoulder.

EM
Sorry. They won't shut up.

RORRI
Uh, who?

EM
It's these voices. Sometimes I hear them, like out there. But sometimes they're more of a feeling. Kind of.

Rorri chews cheese and cocks his head to the side.

EM (CONT'D)
It's official. I'm fucking crazy.

At HER NEGATIVE WORDS to herself, the RUG MOVES to COVER the CELLAR DOOR. RAIN suddenly DOWNPOURS outside.

EM (CONT'D)
It moved! Did you see it? And look!
A storm! I told you. I told you!

RORRI
(pets Em's face)
Babe, I think you're tired.

She swats his hand away and walks to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

She walks to the back door, opens it, and stares outside.

EM
What do you think Lily meant about
the house not really being a house?
I can't stop thinking about it.

RORRI
Who's Lily? Sweetie?

EM
What did she say about the storm?

RORRI
What storm?

EM
What do you mean, what storm?

She motions outside. Rorri tries to close the door. She tries to hum the tune she'd heard from Lily and Chase.

EM (CONT'D)
When it comes, don't run for cover.
I think I need to go out there.

RORRI
What, now? Why?

She flings open the door and runs on the back porch.

EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Em runs down the steps. Rorri rushes outside.

RORRI
Stop! No!

Em stops on the last step.

EM
I need to go in the storm.

RORRI
Don't go. Please.

EM
Why not? You leave every day!

RORRI
No, I...

She walks up the steps. He sits in a rocking chair.

EM
You what?
(beat)
Hello?

She sits in the rocking chair next to him. Beat.

RORRI
Shit. I don't leave.

EM
Yes, you do. I see you every day.

RORRI
I drive to the end of our road.

EM
Yea, okay. And then?

RORRI
And then nothing. I park. I stay
there, all day. Then I come home.

EM
What? What do you mean? Why?

RORRI
Can we go back inside, please?

EM
Show me.

RORRI
There's nothing to see.

EM

Well then what's the big deal?

Em stands and walks to the steps to go into the rain. He speaks right before she can step off of the porch.

RORRI

I'm scared! I'm fucking terrified.
Okay? Please. Honey, please.

She looks back at him. She reaches out into the rain and pulls back her hand to show him that it's wet.

EM

It's just rain.

RORRI

Is it, though?

Em squints at Rorri. He holds his hand out to her.

RORRI (CONT'D)

Come on. Let's go inside. Please?

She softens to him. She sighs and walks up the steps.

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE

See? Men like tiny, quiet women.

That fucking voice! The voice jars Em loose. She breaks away from Rorri and runs down the stairs into the rain.

RORRI

Emmy! No!

She keeps running, going around the side of the house. Rorri scurries to the bottom step, then stops himself.

RORRI (CONT'D)

Fuck. Fuck!

He runs back inside the house.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Rorri swings open the closet door. He grabs a coat and the keys to his car. He opens the front door, puts the coat over his head, gathers courage, and runs out the front door.

INT. RORRI'S CAR - NIGHT

The windshield wipers move rapidly to fling away the heavy rain. Rorri has the hazards on and drives as slowly and quickly as he can. He peers out of the windows.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD ROAD - NIGHT

A soaking-wet, barefoot Em runs on the sidewalk. As she gets FURTHER from their home, the HOUSES get LESS and LESS DETAILED. They begin to look like BOXES or FILLER HOMES in an ARCHITECTURAL BLUEPRINT. Em keeps running, unaware of this.

Rorri's car pulls up alongside her. He manually rolls down the passenger window a tiny bit, shielding himself from rain.

RORRI

Please get in the car.

EM

No! I've never made it this far!

RORRI

I'll take you wherever you want to go. Just get in the car. Please.

Em looks over at him and slows down. He stops the car. She hesitates, then opens the car door and sits inside.

INT. RORRI'S CAR - NIGHT

Em sits, dripping wet. Her clothes cling to her body. She rubs her hand back and forth through her shaved hair, spraying water. Rorri shields himself.

RORRI

You're getting everything wet!

She stares at him. He starts to drive, slowly, methodically. Em peels off her soaking wet shirt and lops him in the face with it. He screams and swerves and slams on the brakes.

RORRI (CONT'D)

What the fuck, Em?!

She sits, arms crossed over her bare breasts.

RORRI (CONT'D)

You've made your point.

He pulls into a driveway to turn the car around.

EM

No! Show me! I don't wanna go home.

RORRI

We're safe there.

EM

We're stuck there!

She goes to open the door, but he locks it.

RORRI

It's my job to protect you.

EM

Your job? Do you hear yourself?

RORRI

What we have is good, Em. You may not see it now. But there's nothing drastically better out there.

She reaches over to grab the wheel. He slams on the brakes.

EM

If we're so happy, then where are all the pictures of us, huh?

RORRI

There are pictures of us.

EM

No, there aren't. What are you so afraid of? What's out there?

RORRI

You're topless, first of all.

EM

Oh, who gives a shit?

She rolls down her window and flops her boobs outside. She screams loudly while jiggling her boobs with her hands.

EM (CONT'D)

I have nipples! And so do you!

He pulls at the waist of her pants.

RORRI

Stop! What'll the neighbors think?!

She sits back inside and scoffs. *What neighbors?*

RORRI

(weary)

Who are you even talking to?

EM

You said. You even said that you knew. You left the house but didn't leave the neighborhood. Right?

RORRI

Okay...

EM

Right? You said that?

RORRI

Yea, I --

EM

-- Well how the fuck were you awake enough to know? To have the awareness that you left and did absolutely nothing each day?

RORRI

It's freezing out here.

EM

But you couldn't wake me up? Or touch me? Or kiss me? Or tell me you hate bacon, for fuck's sake?

RORRI

Let's talk about it at home, okay?

EM

What do you do out there all day?

RORRI

Nothing. I don't want to talk about it.

EM

Which is it? Nothing, or you don't want to talk about it?

(beat)

Oh my god. Oh my god! Is there a different question I should be asking right now?

RORRI

What?

EM
I can't believe you! After everything!

RORRI (CONT'D)
(genuinely confused)
What?! What's wrong?

She slaps his chest and screams. *Fucking cheater!*

RORRI (CONT'D)
No! It's not-OW!-it's not that! I would never!

EM
I! Don't! Believe you!

She tries to fight with him. He won't fight back. She looks back at the house and stops her fight.

EM (CONT'D)
Where are the windows? And door?

Rorri notices his hands are wet. He puts them in his jacket. Em starts pounding on the house's walls and screaming.

EM (CONT'D)
Is anybody in there? Hello? HELLO?!
My asshole husband is trying to hold me HOSTAGE!

He looks genuinely gutted at that sentence.

RORRI
Stop! Fuck. I read romance novels!

He scrunches his face in shame. She stops and looks at him.

EM
You what?

RORRI
That's what I do all day, okay? I chill and I read and that's it.

EM
Why would you hide that from me?

RORRI (CONT'D)
Let it go. Let's go home.
Please.

EM (CONT'D)
It's not our home. There's something going on here, Rorri. Are you in a totally different world from me right now? I mean, look!

She motions to the houses with no doors or windows.

EM (CONT'D)

I know you just woke up but please see me. I need you to see me.

She points at her nostrils. *I'm telling the truth!* Rorri looks up and around, then stares at his naked, unhinged wife.

RORRI

I do see you. And look at you. You're acting fucking crazy.

Her expression drops. His eyes go wide: he knows he fucked up. He puts his hands out to her apologetically. Gently.

The voices and stories get louder, overlapping one another.

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE

Men like tiny, quiet women.
Pretty girls have long hair.

LILY'S VOICE

It's all a magical mirror.
Try softer. It's a mirror.

EM

I'm not crazy. I am not.

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE

Wives take care of their husbands. Their husbands.

WISE MAN/THE WIND (V.O.)

It's time to wake up. You have work to do. Perspective.

RORRI

Of course you're not, baby. I know.

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE

And they lived happily ever after. Happily ever after.

SUBCONSCIOUS VOICE

(warped, twisted, yelling)
Crazy. Crazy. Crazy. Crazy.

Em crouches down and presses her hands over her ears.

EM

Stop. Shut up, stop it.

RORRI

I don't know why I said that. I'm so, so sorry.

He squats next to her and rubs her back. The stories overlap with RAIN and WIND, louder and louder until Em opens her mouth to scream. ALL SOUNDS STOP and only SILENCE comes out.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

The sun peeks in through the window. Em's in bed in a frilly nightgown. Her hair is back. She's expressionless, with puffy eyes. Strands of her hair lay on her face.

RORRI (O.S.)
 Wakey wakey, eggs and bakey!
 (beat)
 There's no bakey. I couldn't think
 of a word that rhymes with "fruit."
 Aside from toot.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Em walks in, wearing matching socks. Rorri, wearing an apron, pulls a seat out for Em and she sits. He puts a plate of food in front of her. It's a smiley face of fruit and eggs.

RORRI
 How is it? I put extra eggshells!

She eats slowly. No response.

RORRI (CONT'D)
 Your hair. It's pretty. I liked it
 the other way too. Both. All ways.
 I bet you would rock a mullet.

She rolls her eyes and blows hair from her eyes. *Idiot.*

RORRI (CONT'D)
 I, uh, cleaned the kitchen. I hope
 I did it right. My way of saying,
 "Sorry I was a dick."
 (beat)
 Not that it's your job to clean the
 kitchen. That's not how I meant it.

She looks under the kitchen table at the rug. No lumps. She pokes at her food, stands up, and walks to the foyer.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Rorri walks in. Em stands there, holding his briefcase and coat out in front of her, as still as a statue.

RORRI
 I'm not going anywhere.

EM
 Guess that makes two of us.

She cuts her eyes at him, drops the items, and walks out.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Em stands outside of her office, staring in. Rorri peeks in.

EM'S POV - HER OFFICE

The mud and paint splatters are gone. The wallpaper looks wrinkly, like it had peeled back and been reattached too many times. Only the top corner is barely peeled back.

BACK TO EM AND RORRI

Em sighs and sniffles. Rorri tries to see what Em is seeing.

RORRI
What is it?

EM
The wallpaper.

Em closes the door and walks OFF SCREEN.

EM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
At least we'll be safe.

Rorri goes to say something, then stops.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Em crawls back in bed. Rorri pokes his head in the room.

EM
I thought leaving was the answer.
It wasn't. Only the view changes.

RORRI
My mom used to say, "Wherever you
go, there you are."

She rolls over and puts a pillow over her face.

RORRI (CONT'D)
(softly)
I'll be here when you're ready.

Silence. Rorri's eyes fill with guilt. He closes the door.

SAME - LATER

PEBBLES CLINK on the bedroom window. Em peels open an eye at the sound. She walks to the window and opens the curtain. Lily and Chase stand outside. She opens the window.

CHASE

Ready to join our band?

EM

I can't play with you anymore.

Lily's face shows pure, unfiltered heartbreak.

LILY

But-but why not?

EM

I don't even know if you're real.

CHASE

What does real mean, anyway?

LILY

But, the mudburgers.

EM

I was having illusions of grandeur.

Lily stomps.

LILY

I don't know what grandroar means!

EM

I'm just me. This is me. This is my life. And I can't play anymore.

LILY

That's not true.

(to Chase)

Tell her that's not true!

Em closes the window. Lily sobs, and runs back toward the park. Chase gives Em a mean look, then chases after Lily.

Em closes the curtain and crawls back in bed. Her face is expressionless, but a tear slides down her cheek.

SAME - NIGHT

Rorri walks in and sits on the bed next to Em.

RORRI

Are you awake?

EM
That's a loaded question.

RORRI
Come on, I have something for you.

He pulls on her arm, gently.

RORRI (CONT'D)
It'll be fuuuun.

EM
I'm allergic.

RORRI
Do you need a fireman carry?

She hides herself completely under the covers.

EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Rorri walks on the porch and down the steps, with Em over his shoulder, wrapped in a blanket. He sets her on the steps.

Rorri holds up a dinner plate.

RORRI
You said you wanted to break rules
with me. And, I know you like art.

EM
I didn't think you could hear me.

RORRI
I pay attention, even if it doesn't
seem like it.

EM
What's the plate for?

Rorri throws and SHATTERS a PLATE on the walkway. Em jumps.

RORRI
You said some things reset. If this
resets fast enough, we won't have
to clean up!

EM
You're missing the point.

RORRI (CONT'D)
I thought you could glue the
broken pieces and do a mosaic
thing. Would that disappear,
too? Huh. I wonder.

EM (CONT'D)

It already reset. We're too late.
The cellar door is gone.

RORRI

Here, you try. Let out some anger!

He hands her a plate. She looks at him, her jaw set.

RORRI (CONT'D)

I guess it's kinda stupid. Heh.

EM

We are so wildly different.

She sets down the plate with the others and stands up.

RORRI

That's good. We balance each other.

EM

Yea, you're the grounded one. I'm
the crazy one. Excuse me.

She walks inside. He exhales and looks at the broken pieces.

RORRI

I'm gonna clean this up, just in
case! Don't want to mortally wound
the mail person. Ha. Em? Emmy?

She's gone. He puts the broken pieces in a box.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Rorri opens the door and sets the box of broken plates on the floor. He sees the wallpaper corner peeling back.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rorri gently pets Em's face. She blinks her eyes open.

RORRI

Hey, I fixed the wallpaper in your
office. I saw it was peeling off.

Any light or hope left in Em's eyes goes out. *All my work is gone.* She nods, barely, then closes her eyes.

He kisses her forehead and walks out, closing the door.

DREAM SEQUENCE - EXT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

The beach house is decrepit. The WIND RUSTLES and SAND BLOWS onto the beach house door and windows. Ocean WATER LAPS.

EM (V.O.)

I don't want to be here.

A PRIMAL SCREAM from the house. A LARGE STONE SHATTERS the downstairs WINDOW. An arm sticks out the now-open window.

Wise Man stands, ready. He puts the stone in his bucket and puts the large metal bowl over the broken glass. He lays the blanket on the bottom window frame and helps Wild Woman climb out. She steps on the bowl and hops down.

We see Wild Woman, physically disheveled, with free and alive eyes. She grabs Wise Man's face and kisses him, deeply.

Wild Woman looks at Em. She hands Em the STONE and points to the house. Em gently tosses it. It PLUNKS on the porch.

EM

I don't want to break anything.

WILD WOMAN

(whispering in Em's ear)

Wait til you see what's underneath.

Wild Woman smiles, grabs the stone, primally screams, and throws the stone at the front door. The WOODEN BOARDS FALL down, revealing a beautiful red door. She hands Em the stone.

Em screams lightly and throws the STONE. It CRACKS a WINDOW.

Wild Woman howls like a wolf and tosses the metal bowl at the house. OLD PAINT and WOOD FALLS OFF, REVEALING a BEAUTIFUL HOME underneath. Em and Wild Woman take turns throwing items.

EM

(breathless; to Wise Man)

Have you been waiting this whole time?

WISE MAN

She always comes back. Each time, she falls a little more in love.

Wild Woman dances, freely.

EM

With you?

WISE MAN

With life.

Em nods. She throws sand in the air. Sand rains down, sloughing the exterior of the house, which is now new.

EM

It's beautiful.

WILD WOMAN

Imagine there was no house at all.

EM

Where would we sleep?

Wild Woman laughs wildly and dances more. She reaches out to Wise Man, who takes her hand and slow dances with her.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Em blinks opens her eyes as Rorri cracks open the door.

He "sexily" lifts his leg through the door. He's wearing Crocs. He swings open the door and does a dramatic walk in to his own tune while flinging a kitchen towel around.

RORRI

(voicing a "sexy" tune)

Ba-dum ba-dum-dah!

He "accidentally" drops the towel, gasps, then bends down to get it, shoving his butt toward Em. She doesn't laugh.

He sits on the bed next to her. They sit in silence.

RORRI (CONT'D)

I'm sorry for what I said. It was the heat of the moment, and there was the storm. And-I'm sorry.

EM

So you did see the storm.

He sighs, then nods. She closes her eyes.

EM (CONT'D)

You were right.

He rubs his eyes with one hand. She scooches away from him.

RORRI
I wasn't. You're not...

EM
Crazy?

RORRI
Yea. And I know it's an off-limits word. My brain was like, "Don't say it don't say it" and then...

He pantomimes barfing.

EM
If a single word has that much power over me, that's on me.

RORRI
Are you still mad at me?

EM
It's all a magical mirror, Rorri.
Goodnight.

He traces her freckles and kisses her on the forehead.

RORRI
Goodnight.

He lies in bed next to her and grabs the same book he's been reading, A Book About Cars From the Library.

EM
There are other books.

RORRI
This one's fine.

Em rolls her eyes, faces away from him, and goes to sleep.

SAME - NIGHT

THUNDER and LOUD WINDS. Em turns on her lamp. A HUGE crack of THUNDER that sounds like a plane crashing. Rorri and Em jump.

EM
Okay, I know you can't ignore that.

Rorri turns on his lamp. He rubs his eyes.

RORRI
You're right. I can't.

The WIND HOWLS. HAIL PATTERS on the roof. Their lights flicker in and out and then off.

RORRI (CONT'D)
Well that isn't good.

The TREE'S BRANCHES scratch against the WINDOW with the wind.

EM
I think we need to get down.

RORRI
What?

EM
Get down!

Em pushes Rorri off his side of the bed and she rolls down with him just as the TREE BRANCH SHATTERS through the WINDOW.

RORRI
Are you okay?

Em nods. RAIN POURS through the window. THUNDER. He grabs his Crocs and a blanket and wraps it around Em. They run out.

INT. SECOND BATHROOM - NIGHT

Em and Rorri scurry into the bathroom as the STORM CONTINUES.

RORRI
Get in.

He urges her into the tub and climbs in after her.

RORRI (CONT'D)
It's the center of the house. The safest place.

Em nods. They hold each other (and he holds his Crocs) as more GLASS SHATTERS in the house and the storm carries on.

RORRI (CONT'D)
What's with all the storms?

EM
To get our attention.

RORRI
It's working.

Em sees that Rorri is cradling his Crocs.

EM

You grabbed your Crocs?!

He looks down.

RORRI

They bring me comfort!

She rolls her eyes and smiles. *I'm still pissed at you, but you're cute and hard to be mad at.* They hunker down together. The lights GO OUT completely. It's pitch black. THUNDER.

EM

I wish we had some candles.

RORRI

If only one of us thought to bring a pair of shoes-OH WAIT.

He shoves his feet in the Crocs and climbs out of the tub. She hands him the blanket and he covers himself with it.

EM

Be careful.

RORRI

Careful is my middle name.

EM

I thought Danger was your middle name?

RORRI

I am both carefully dangerous and dangerously careful.

He flings the blanket around himself like a cape. His CROCS SQUEAK as he leaves the bathroom.

Long beat. A LOUD CRASH and SHATTERING.

EM

Rorri! RORRI!

She stands up and runs toward the door, COLLIDING into him. She hugs him, deeply.

EM (CONT'D)

Oh my god, I thought. I thought...

RORRI

I'm okay.

SAME - LATER

Pitch black aside from the burning candles set around the bathroom. The storm has died down aside from STRONG WIND. Em and Rorri sit across from each other in the tub.

EM

So. Romance novels, huh?

He drops his head and chuckles.

EM (CONT'D)

I think it's endearing.

RORRI

Really?

She nods.

RORRI (CONT'D)

Huh.

EM

When did we stop talking to each other? Like, really talking?

RORRI

I think we got caught up in life. We held back on little things at first. After a while it built up.

EM

Where did we go wrong?

RORRI

Getting married.

She gasps and looks at him. *Excuse the fuck outta me?*

RORRI (CONT'D)

Not the act of getting married. You're still my miracle and I love you more every day.

EM

(sarcastically)
Yea okay.

RORRI

I do. I don't have a nose lie detector but trust me. Lack of love isn't what got us here. Maybe we tried too hard to "be married." Instead of be ourselves.

EM

I just don't know how we let it get this far.

RORRI

We're here now. Come here.

She lays back on him and he holds her, kissing her face. She starts to fall asleep. He whispers into her ear.

RORRI (CONT'D)

I'm gonna kiss every one of your polka dots.

EM

(sleepily)

That'll take a very very long time.

SAME - DAWN

Em and Rorri lay together in the tub, bundled up and asleep. All that's left of the storm is a LIGHT WIND.

WILD WOMAN/THE WIND (V.O.)

It's time to wake up.

Rorri's eyes open.

RORRI

Babe. I think the storm's gone.

Em groans and sits up. Rorri climbs out of the tub and flips the light switch. Still no electricity.

RORRI (CONT'D)

Stay here. I'll check the damage.

She reaches for him.

EM

Stay just a little longer, please.

He gets in the tub. They sit, pinkies intertwined.

RORRI

I'm sorry, for everything. For what I said. Trying to force you to stay here. That was fucked up. I like it here. It's home, to me. I want it to be that for you, too. But...

EM

I'm sorry, too. For all the resentment. I don't even remember why I was so angry. And I'm sorry I said you were holding me hostage.

RORRI

(smiling)

You're way too strong-willed to be held hostage by anyone.

(beat)

But I won't hold you back. If you want to go, go. I don't want our relationship to feel like a prison. That's not fair to either of us.

Em sits up rocket-fast and grabs Rorri's hand.

EM

A prison?

RORRI

Yea. To me, this-what we have-is perfect. Even with the bumps and obstacles. And I guess it all looks different to you. And it shatters my heart to think of losing you --

EM

-- That's it!

RORRI

What is?

EM

This isn't a house at all.

RORRI

Exactly, it's a home. Our home.

EM

But only in the sense that it's familiar. Aside from that... Whoa. Whoa! Is that what all this is?

She laughs, hops out of the tub, and holds her hand out to him. He climbs out. She hops on his back. Piggyback ride.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAWN

Rorri walks in with Em on his back. No evidence of a storm.

RORRI
What-what happened?

EM
Welcome to a nightly reset.

RORRI
But why?

EM
Starting over, I guess. Babe, look!

She points to the framed picture on the wall. What used to be a dated beach painting in a gold frame IS NOW A PHOTOGRAPH of EM AND RORRI at their BEACH WEDDING. The frame is modern.

Em flails to hop down. She touches the picture.

RORRI
Told you we had pictures of us.

EM
See? It's all coming back. We're coming back! It's working! Wait, what did we even do? We just talked. That's all it takes?!

She walks into the master bathroom.

EM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Is it honesty? Is that the trick?

RORRI
Maybe there isn't one simple trick?

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

Rorri enters. Em looks for the mirror note in the trash can.

RORRI
What am I missing?

EM
These walls. The newspaper. The-the frill and the scentless candles. The resets! The fear! The kids!

She looks at him, waiting for him to get it. He doesn't.

RORRI
I-I don't see what the trash can has to do with fear and candles.

EM

This isn't real. Not really real.
 No. We're experiencing it, sure.
 But what's real is what's beyond
 this and within this. We learn all
 this first. We learn all about it,
 immerse ourselves, only to discover
 it isn't real. Clever! Ha!

RORRI

What do you mean, isn't real?

She gently grabs his shoulders.

EM

This place is us.

RORRI

Us like ours?

EM

No, I mean it's literally us. It's
 what we've built. It doesn't look
 like it now. All this crap grew on
 top of it. But we're still us,
 under it all-my mom's wallpaper and
 your dad's horrible sofa. Behind
 the locked doors. It's like pulling
 weeds to see flowers in a garden.
 That picture is proof. God, babe.
 We woke up just in time.

Rorri looks around, trying to catch on. She kisses his cheek.

EM (CONT'D)

I have to do something before the
 next reset.

RORRI

There's another reset? When?

EM

Hopefully not, but I have no idea.
 Sometimes they make sense.
 Sometimes they just happen. We'll
 learn more in time, I hope. It's
 all part of rebuilding. Ideally we
 tear all this down and get back to
 us and that becomes our default.
 And the resets stop altogether.

RORRI

Tear down what? The house?

EM

Yes! No. Kind of. I think we can make lasting change. Make it easier for us if we get stuck again. But please, let's not get stuck again.

She kisses him on the cheek and rushes out.

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

There's something I need to do. You cool to do our own thing for a bit?

RORRI

Do our own thing?

EM (O.S.)

Like, you do whatever you want, I do what I want. We meet up later.

RORRI

You're still mad.

She jogs to him and grabs his hands.

EM

No, I'm not mad. You were scared. I was your mirror. It happens. I did the same thing to you, and I'm sorry. We'll do better this time.

She canters out. Rorri rubs his head and follows her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Em moves from one framed photo to the next until she finds the one with the note. She removes the frame's backing and takes out the crisp, folded note.

Rorri sits down on the sofa and turns on the TV.

RORRI

Is this gonna bite me in the ass?
Me sitting here watching TV?

EM

You know the stuff I was pissed at you for? I was actually pissed at myself! I mean, not all the time. Sometimes you're just an ass.

RORRI

This is indeed correct.

They peck on the lips.

RORRI (CONT'D)
And sometimes you...

EM
Can be a bit controlling?

RORRI
A bit, huh?

She playfully gasps and growls at him. He watches her leave.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Em sits at the desk. She blows dust off the typewriter. She feeds new paper into it. She glances into the trash can, which still holds crumpled paper with the same old story.

Suddenly, she becomes aware of the robust soundscape in the room. BIRDS, CRICKETS, FROGS, and even a STREAM can be heard. The wallpaper wall catches her eye. Her jaw drops.

The WALLPAPER is COMPLETELY GONE. The WALL shows a BEAUTIFUL PAINTING of a LANDSCAPE that matches the SOUNDS. The painting moves like a real landscape. Em is about to touch it.

RORRI (O.S.)
Told you I fixed it.

Em flings around to see Rorri leaning in the doorway, looking especially sexy. He winks at her.

EM
But you said it was peeling back.

RORRI
It was. I figured, knowing you,
you'd wanna see what's underneath.

EM
How did you pull it all down? I
tried! I tried everything.

RORRI
(shrugs)
Gently.

EM
Okay I didn't try that.

They laugh.

RORRI

It's still our house, to me. It's home. I kind of get what you were saying-on some level-but I'm happy here. I'll help you rebuild or redecorate. I'll hold down the fort while you explore. I thought this could be where you go, if you wanna explore but don't wanna go out-out.

(beat)

Do you like it?

She runs and jumps and wraps her legs around him.

She kisses his face. They rub their noses together, then rest their foreheads against one another's.

RORRI (CONT'D)

I got afraid. I'm sorry. Some of this I understand, but some of it scares me. If I can't control it, I can't protect you.

She leans her head back and opens her mouth to speak.

RORRI (CONT'D)

I know, I know. It's not my "job."

They press their foreheads together again. A sweet moment.

He rubs his nose on hers, sets her down, and walks out.

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

You have work to do!

Em smiles at the landscape, then sits back down at her desk.

EM

Okay, future self. What'll get your attention? Intrigue? Expletives?

WILD WOMAN (V.O.)

Riddles.

Em nods. *Obviously*. She types, slowly at first. Then effortlessly. Each key CLICKS as it stamps the fresh paper.

SAME - NIGHT

Em has a small pile of papers she's typed. She finishes the last one, sets it on the pile, and smiles at it.

She high fives herself, grabs the papers, and walks out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rorri sits on the sofa. Em puts a folded sheet of paper in the A Cheesy Unrealistic Romance Novel book.

She pauses for a moment, then hands the book to Rorri.

EM

Have you read this one yet?

RORRI

Um... I don't think so.

EM

Give it a try.

She skips OFF SCREEN. Rorri fans open the pages of the book. A piece of folded paper falls out. He opens it.

INSERT - TYPED PAGE

The unfolded page reads:

"When the storm comes, don't you dare fucking run for cover."

BACK TO RORRI

Rorri puts the folded paper back where he found it. He snuggles up on the sofa and opens the book to page 1.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Em moves through the house, placing clues for future her:

-She folds a note into Social Ideal Magazine.

-She puts a note in the stitch pattern on the back porch.

-She puts a folded note in the pocket of her kitchen apron.

-She inserts a few other folded papers in the pockets of her nightgowns and bath robe in the master closet.

-She takes her final note and folds it around the original "mirror" note that fell out of the framed photo. She places both notes in the back of the same framed photo.

Then:

-Em and Rorri face each other in bed, talking and laughing. Her hair is messy and she's not at all "trying" to be sexy, which makes her sexier than ever. Rorri touches her freckles, then grabs her waist and moves on top of her. They take off each other's shirts, smiling, kissing.

-Em and Rorri are asleep, intertwined like a pretzel.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAWN

Em searches for the kids as the sun rises. She's got her wavy hair in a messy bun and wears some of Rorri's clothes.

EM

Excuse me! Can I be in your band?

CHASE

(from right behind Em)

You mean it?!

Em turns around. Lily and Chase hold hands. Lily's head is down, her hair covering one of her eyes. She holds the brown stuffy and kicks dirt with her white tasseled cowgirl boots.

Em squats down to get on Lily and Chase's level.

EM

I figured out who you are.

LILY

I knew the whole time, but you wouldn't listen. You never listen.

EM

I know. I'm so sorry. I was stuck. I'm here now. I'm right here.

Em holds her arms open to Lily. Lily eyes her, then the ground, then leaps forward into Em's arms. Chase curls his lip at the icky emotions.

Em holds her arms out to him, too. He comes in for a quick hug, shoves his arms out to the side and airplanes away.

Em wraps her arms around Lily and rocks back and forth.

EM (CONT'D)

I still don't understand why we all look so different.

LILY

Sometimes grownups don't want the whole truth all at once.

Chase "flies" back in.

EM
(to Chase)
Do you want to meet him?

CHASE
I have my very own polka dots.

He points to his face. Em laughs.

EM
I see that! They're very nice. But
do you want to meet --

He shoves his arms out to the side like an airplane, and makes buzzing noises as he jogs around the backyard.

LILY
He'll see him when he's ready.

Em frowns and glances back at the house. They sway back and forth, humming their "when the storm comes" tune.

Chase keeps buzzing as an airplane to the bushes in the park.

EM
Thank you for waking me up. I'm
sorry I didn't come play sooner.

Chase buzzes to Em and hands her two beautiful drumsticks.

CHASE
Here. To practice.

EM
I got the gig?

CHASE
Temp-temporality. Temporarily. For
a little bit.

Em puts them in the elastic of her waistband. Chase goes back to zooming around like an airplane. Lily squeezes Em, then takes off as her own airplane.

EM
See you soon! Love you!

RORRI (O.S.)
Who are you talking to?

Em spins to see Rorri on the back porch. He yawns and scratches his crotch in a "just woke up" kind of way. He's WEARING SWEATPANTS and a HOODIE. And Crocs.

She looks at the kids. Lily shakes her head no. *He can't see us.* Em nods. DISTANT VROOMING from the kids, then nothing.

EM
It's just us!

She airplanes over to him. He grabs her by the waist.

EM (CONT'D)
Oh my god! A hoodie! And sweats!

RORRI
Praise the cheese gods. All your socks are mis-matched again, too.

She gasps and squeals.

RORRI (CONT'D)
What are these?

He grabs the two drumsticks, which are actually just twigs.

EM
Drumsticks! Want to join my band?
I'll be guitar, though. Obviously.

RORRI
(laughing)
What?

She slaps him on the butt and skips inside. He smiles, sets down the twigs, and walks inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rorri is in the kitchen. Em walks in from the hallway, putting on colorful mis-matched socks. She sits on the sofa.

EM
Can I tell you a secret?

RORRI (O.S.)
You can tell me anything, any time.

EM
Granny panties are so very unfortunately comfortable.

He laughs.

RORRI (O.S.)
 Oh you haven't experienced comfort
 until you've tried on these bad
 boys. These are un-fuckwithable.

He comes in the living room and does a "sexy" pose to flaunt his Crocs. They laugh. He sets down two glasses of OJ.

RORRI (CONT'D)
 Check this out. 2-wheel drive.

He shows the Crocs with the strap up. Then, strap down.

RORRI (CONT'D)
 4-wheel drive.

EM
 Why would you need 4-wheel drive?

RORRI
 In case you need to get somewhere
 rugged, fast. Close your eyes.

She closes her eyes.

RORRI (CONT'D)
 Now put out your hands.

She puts her hands out and feels around on his face in a silly way until she makes it to his pecs. She squeezes them and then nods with a face that says "I approve." He laughs. She starts moving her hands down toward his crotch.

RORRI (CONT'D)
 (high-pitched)
 Not that --
 (clears his throat)
 -- What am I saying? Yes, that. But
 first. Gimme your hands.

She smiles and puts her hands out, palms up.

RORRI (CONT'D)
 Open.

She opens her eyes. Her jaw drops and her eyes get big.

EM
 Oh, you're baaaaad.

A Pop Tart WRAPPER CRINKLES and twinkles in her hand.

Em hops up on the sofa and jumps. Rorri holds another pack of Pop Tarts in his hands. They smile at each other.

EM (CONT'D)
Are we really doing this?

He nods, fervently. She takes a deep breath, then nods.

They hold up their wrapped Pop Tarts and clink them together.

They open their wrappers and take bites. Her mouth is in heaven. She dances her Pop Tart in the air.

RORRI
How is it?

EM
Soooo gooooooooooooood!

RORRI
See? I was right. Not dead.

Em feels something in the Pop Tart package. She empties it.

EM
Babe.

RORRI
(mouth very full)
What?

An ANTIQUE KEY TWINKLES in Em's palm.

RORRI (CONT'D)
Is that?

EM
It fell out of my Pop Tart wrapper!

They freak out in excitement. Em's face drops.

EM (CONT'D)
The cellar door disappeared. That's a weird sentence, when I hear it.

RORRI
Nah, it came back. After you fondled the trash can, I think.

EM
Why didn't you say something?

RORRI
I just did.

She playfully pinches him and canters into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Rorri and Em move the table aside and lift up the rug. Em pats the table in a gentle, friendly way. She squats down, puts the key in the keyhole, and looks to Rorri. He nods.

She turns the key. The CELLAR DOOR CLICKS OPEN. Rorri hesitates, holding the door down.

RORRI

What we have here is good. It is,
it's good. It's a good life.

EM

This is all us, Rorri. I mean,
look. A cellar door under a rug?
Can it get anymore obvious?
Literally swept under the rug. This
is the crux of the rebuilding work.
Will you come with? Please?

She tries to open the cellar door. He holds it closed.

RORRI

I'm happy here.

EM

Are you? You hide to read romance.
You don't even play music anymore.
I know you. This isn't happiness.
It's complacency. It's fear.

RORRI

It's also my choice, isn't it?

EM

What are you saying? What about us?

RORRI

I'm not going anywhere. I'll hold
down the fort. That's how I help.

EM

Okay, then I'll stay.

RORRI

No, you won't. Here.

He hands her the Crocs.

RORRI (CONT'D)

In case you have to get somewhere
rugged, fast.

She laughs through tears and puts on the Crocs in 4-wheel drive. They meet, forehead-to-forehead.

RORRI (CONT'D) EM
I see you. I see you.

She puts her hand tenderly on his hand.

EM (CONT'D)
I'm okay. I'll be okay.

Rorri sadly smiles and opens the cellar door, but looks away instead of looking inside. Em peers inside.

She starts to walk down the stairs, then stops. She and Rorri look at each other with a knowing sadness in their eyes, like she's going on a trip for an undetermined amount of time.

She wipes a quick tear then walks down the steps.

She sticks her hand up from the cellar, expectantly.

EM (CONT'D)
I'll come back.

RORRI
I know. I'll be right here.

EM
Good.

Rorri nods, smiles, and puts a Pop Tart in her hand. She closes the cellar door. Rorri sits for a bit, smiles with sad eyes, then grabs the OJ jug from the fridge.

INT. LIVING ROOM -DAY

Rorri sits on the sofa. He adjusts his body to make sure he has a view of the cellar door. He opens the romance novel, eats his Pop Tart, and drinks OJ right from the jug.

CAMERA PANS through to house to show that, as Em dives deeper into the unknown, the HOUSE begins to EFFORTLESSLY REARRANGE ITSELF. The WALLPAPER PEELS OFF and DISAPPEARS. Em's APRON transforms into cute, punny KITCHEN TOWELS.

Rorri continues sitting on the old, green sofa he inherited from his dad. He reads the romance novel.

CAMERA PANS TO one of the framed photos in the living room. It's now of EM and RORRI when THEY WERE LITTLE KIDS. Lil Em has short, curly hair, holds a stuffy dog, and wears white tasseled cowgirl boots.

Lil Rorri has his same beautiful dark skin and smirk. He wears red Converse and holds two drumsticks. Lil Em has her pinky finger intertwined with Lil Rorri's pinky finger.

FADE TO BLACK.

Beat. A PLINKING sound on a WINDOW.

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Another PLINKING sound on the window. Rorri scrunches his face and closes the book. There's GIGGLING outside.

EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

Rorri opens the back door and looks around.

RORRI'S POV - EMPTY PORCH

He looks back and forth, and sees nothing. Beat.

CHASE (O.S.)

Hi!

CAMERA PANS DOWN with Rorri's POV to show Chase and Lily.
(He's now able to see the children.)

BACK TO SCENE

Rorri and the kids stare at each other. Chase holds up two twigs.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Wanna be in my band?

Rorri inhales to say something in response.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.