

HOWARD

A screenplay
by
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Family ties. Family lies.

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- - - Draft 11 - - -

WHITE

A colored pencil scrapes by, leaves a line. Then another. This is a SHEET OF PAPER. The drawing progresses through DREAM-LIKE DISSOLVES... a SHAPE and SCENE begin to form.

OFF SCREEN SOUNDS: The inside HUM of a car. Distant MURMUR.

The SHAPE: a car. In the front seats: a MAN and WOMAN.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
...he's in a world of his own with
those pictures.

O.S. SOUNDS: Traffic passes. Thunder CRACKS.

In the rear seats: a BOY-

TITLE CARD: **HOWARD**

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Yeah, well he needs a real friend
in his life.

In the rear seats: -and a GIRL.

The SCENE: a road at night, above... downward blue strokes.

O.S. SOUNDS: DRUMMING rain FADES IN. Another car passes. More thunder CRACKS, closer now.

The SCENE: a SOFT HAND holds the colored pencil LIKE A KNIFE, slashes aggressive strokes... draws an oncoming WHITE VAN... blue strokes are descending all over.

O.S. SOUNDS: the rain is TORRENTIAL. Thunder, overhead.

The SCENE: slashing strokes SCRATCH the paper. The colored pencil is tossed. The paper, CRUMPLED by both hands.

O.S. SOUNDS: The MAN and WOMAN scream. BRAKES SCREECH. CRASH!

BLACK

Heavy *breathing*... subsides.

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

DELLA (27) comes to her senses sitting hunched in bed. NED (28) sleeps next to her. She looks at the TIME - 5:16. "Grumbles" laying back down. She stares up... at the ceiling... which resembles a blank sheet of paper.

INT. KITCHEN, DELLA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Della, still in pajamas, gulps tea, fills a THERMOS next to a fresh RYE SANDWICH. Ned enters, bright and dressed for work.

NED

It's not just an annoying dream.
This thing's overtaking you.

DELLA

And shrinks aren't cheap, the good ones at least.

NED

One appointment, even at a good one, shouldn't cost too much.

DELLA

Who needs counseling at twenty-seven, anyway?

She rubs her head. He takes his SANDWICH and THERMOS.

NED

You apparently, and who promised to look into it if it went on for over a week. Hmm...? *Remember?*

"Remember" triggers a reflex.

DELLA

Yes. I *remember*.

Ambience. Ned nods.

NED

It can only help. Please do it.

DELLA

Ok, little tiger. But you walk carefully today.

NED

Yeah, wait for the signal, right?
(cheek kiss)
See ya.

DELLA

Bye. Oh! *Remember* your lucky green.

He swings back around for a GREEN COAT in Della's hand, then... Della is alone. Her smiles fades... fatigue... a glint of worry.

EXT. BOSTON SKYLINE - MORNING

Clear. The JOHN HANCOCK TOWER's distinct BLUE GLASS glistens.

INT. SMALL COMPANY OFFICE (DELLA'S WORKPLACE) - MORNING

Della enters a bustling space, bag slung and THERMOS in hand. "Greets" CO-WORKERS. Slumps down at her DESK with papers and... SMALL FRAMED PICTURES. She takes a deep swig of hot tea.

BILL (O.S.)
How's the dream life?

DELLA
Hey, Bill.
(turns)
It's all I could hope for.

It's her impeccably dressed boss, BILL (mid 30s), with his SHIRT COLLAR starched like a blade.

BILL
It looks like it completely
overtook you there.

DELLA
Yeah, I haven't been sleeping well
lately. Anyway, what's in stock?

BILL
New assignment: research into
traffic statistics, more
specifically, crashes...

Della's eyes widen to infinity for a second.

BILL (CONT'D)
...you seemed spooked.

DELLA
I... just need some caffeine.

She takes another DEEP SWIG, puts on a cheerful veil.

DELLA (CONT'D)
Mmm nice. Now...?

He dives into a tablet with mounds of materials.

BILL
Yeah... so, a few days ago a car
swerved off the Pike. Witnesses
have different stories. Insurance
claims driver error.

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

The family says it's the car. And to top it all off, it was *raining*.

Della's DREAM FLASH: a rainy windshield... oncoming headlights...

BILL (CONT'D)

So: lawsuit, investigation, and it looks like this thing'll be around...

He looks up, sees her somewhere between scared and confused.

...Della?
BILL (CONT'D)

DELLA
Yeah, sorry. I'm your numbers and history person, I dig.

BILL

Because you're good. Clark's on the main story so have a chat with him. Then... a few of these and you'll have a better desk.

DELLA

Nice, but I'd really like a *world* of my own to work in.

BILL

You may just get it.
(goes, turns back)
Oh, and Della? If you're tired in the morning, might I suggest black coffee over that hipster stuff.

Della holds up her thermos, tea steaming out, smiles.

DELLA

Cheers.

INT. DELLA'S WORKPLACE - LATE AFTERNOON

A heap of papers and too many windows on a computer screen. Della finishes typing an email. Attaches several documents. Drops her finger on the Enter key.

DELLA

Boom. Off you go.

She leans back, yawns, takes a big swig of tea. Looks at her THREE FRAMED PICTURES, treasured memories.

ONE: a selfie with Ned at the Union Oyster House.
TWO: them with waffles on Boston Common.

Della smiles with nostalgia, but is more taken in by...

THREE: a rendition of *"Hansel & Gretel."* The siblings run away from a house in a clearing and towards the woods.

She closes the onscreen windows... the LAST ARTICLE, it's about the Turnpike crash Bill mentioned. She scans it over...

"...family... car crash... heavy rain..." It's got her bugged.

EXT. BOYLSTON STREET, COPLEY SQUARE - LATER

Della waits to cross... a WHITE VAN drives by. Green light. She heads to the BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY glancing at the Van.

Behind her, the Hancock Tower's lit windows form a surreal collage with the reflected evening gradient sky.

INT. READING HALL, LIBRARY - HOUR LATER

Large and busy. Della scans archived road accident stories. Skims yet another screen... ONE STORY stands out... she shivers.

TIME - 6:17. Della looks at the ARTICLE close... closer...

O.S. SOUNDS FADE IN: distant, muted... the inside HUM of a car... DRUMMING rain... a Man and Woman *"talking..."* paper CRUMPLING... the Man and Woman *"scream!"* Brakes SCREECH. CRASH!

Della ZONES BACK IN eyes on the article photo: a mangled car.

HEADLINE: *"A Real Nightmare: Kids Alone and Scarred" (07/98)*
"...heavy rain... parents killed... children, 5 and 3, survived."

TIME ticks to - 6:28. Exactly 11 minutes later.

INT. TROLLEY CAR, BEACON STREET - EVENING

Della sits, eyes locked on the PRINTED ARTICLE, mind racing. A siren WHOOP-WHOOPS, flashing blue-red lights arrive at...

An accident: a WHITE VAN had a head-on with a CAR from which... TWO SHAKEN KIDS are pulled out. Della, face to window, gazes...

...goes to the article: *"children, 5 and 3."* She's taken in... the trolley's HUM... is met by DRUMMING RAIN...

PFFT! The trolley doors open: Coolidge Corner, her stop.

EXT. COOLIDGE CORNER, BOSTON - MOMENTS LATER

Della steps off. No rain. Nor clouds. And the car accident, seen just moments ago, is too far down the road to be seen.

She shakes it off... goes to a nearby supermarket.

INT. LIVING ROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - HALF HOUR LATER

Della enters with light groceries. Ned scans economy stats on a laptop on the sofa, eats a microwave dinner with a soda.

Total Recall plays on TV: Quaid is offered a PILL to wake up.

NED

Hey, I tried calling you, busy day?

DELLA

Hey, yeah. New story at the office.
History, stats, all that fun stuff.

NED

So no shrink. Or you forgot.

"Forgot" triggers a bitter snap.

DELLA

I didn't *forget*... sorry. I feel
fine.

She approaches him, puts down the bags, weans into a hug.

NED

I still think a pro's take would
help. Hmm...?

DELLA

Your breath stinks, little tiger.

She kisses him. He chuckles.

NED

With food like this, it's worth it.
What's your new story about?

DELLA

...car accidents.

Della takes the groceries to the KITCHEN.

NED

Hmm... I got some new orders in. And
a van almost hit me on Boylston.

DELLA

See? Wait for the signal, but that
first part, tell me over dinner.

NED

I just had dinner.

Heading to the BEDROOM-

DELLA
You skipped your veggies.

INT. BEDROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Della changes into a lighter shirt. Something is sticking out from her handbag: the PRINTOUT. She gets her phone, dials.

JOHN'S VOICE
Hey, kiddo

DELLA
Hi, John.

INT. LIVING ROOM, JOHN'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

John (late 50s) is in a nice armchair with a SMALL END TABLE.

JOHN
How's it going?

INTERCUT: DELLA / JOHN

DELLA
It's going. Listen, could I swing by tomorrow after work? There's something I have to ask you about.

JOHN
Can't you ask me now?

DELLA
Well, it might take some time, so I think it's best for tomorrow.

JOHN
Oh ok... you know me, here by six.

DELLA
Let's do six thirty-ish then, muah.

END INTERCUT

JOHN
Goodnight, darling.

On the Small End Table: a FRAMED PICTURE, the twin of DELLA'S HANSEL & GRETEL work desk... a CLOSED PHOTO ALBUM idles by it.

John looks with a shade of worry to a SIDE ROOM... door ajar...

INT. BEDROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Della looks at the PRINTOUT, transfixed.

O.S. SOUNDS FADE IN: closer, muted... a car HUMS. Rain DRUMS.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

...a world of his own with those pict-

Della ZONES BACK IN, recovers her balance. Visibly worried... shrugs it off again. Puts the PRINTOUT into her handbag...

...it's still hanging out... there's a PICTURE... two shaken kids.

INT. LIVING ROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Total Recall is ending. Quaid: "...what if this is a dream?"
Melina: "Well then, kiss me before you wake up!" Click. Off.

DELLA

Ok now: poker face, not sales face.

She deals cards next to finished salad bowls. Ned looks, puts two aside, bites his lower lip, gets two... a quiet "sigh."

DELLA

You wanna fold?

NED

You and your face reading. Here, would I have won?

His cards: 10, 10, 2, 3, 7. Hers: 6, Q, J, 3, 5.

DELLA

Yeah, so mind your surroundings. Also when crossing the street and nearly getting hit by a van.

NED

You know? I've seen that damn white van before. It's got no markings, it's like some ghost.

Della stares off into infinity... off of her look...

INT. BEDROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

MOVE IN ON: the PICTURE... the KIDS' FACES... lost, afraid.

Behind them: the accident... a front-smashed FAMILY SEDAN and... a WHITE VAN... no markings... "like some ghost."

BLACK

INT. REAR LEFT PASSENGER SEAT, CAR - NIGHT - DREAM

CHILD'S POV: Heavy rain. Up front, the MAN and WOMAN...

MAN

...and he's just in a world of his own with those pictures.

...to the right, a BOY (5) browses through a PICTURE BOOK.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Yeah, well he needs a real friend in his life.

THEN -- the adults PANIC... HEADLIGHTS engulf the windshield... BRAKES SCREECH! CRASH!!

BLACK

A tired "grumble."

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - EARLY NEXT MORNING

Ned is sound asleep. Della grips her covers, looks at the TIME - 5:20am. By the nightstand... the PICTURE hanging out.

INT. KITCHEN, DELLA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Della dabbles grumpy in oatmeal and tea. Ned, all dressed, stands in the door irked.

DELLA

I *remembered* today is Union Oyster House night, but I also remembered more of that dream. And didn't you want me to take care of this asap?

Ned gives a begrudging nod.

DELLA (CONT'D)

We can go somewhere else near the Wharf tomorrow.

NED

Ok... anyway. Lucky green-
(cheek kiss)
-gotta go.

DELLA

It's so cute how you do that!

Ned leaves smiling.

EXT. BOSTON SKYLINE - TIME LAPSE

From a clear day with some GLISTENING on the Hancock Tower to an evening with clouds creeping in.

INT. FRONT DOOR, JOHN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

The doorbell RINGS. Soon, SOMEONE opens the door to Della with a QUART JUG of apple cider.

DELLA

Hey uncle, got your fave.

Hugging, their obvious normal greeting-

JOHN

Hey, kiddo. You *always* remember.

INT. LIVING ROOM, JOHN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Nice place, almost posh, but LONELY. There are a few FAMILY PHOTOS: John and Della, just Della, one of her with Ned.

Della sits on a couch. Sees HANSEL & GRETEL on the end table. The PHOTO ALBUM is by it.

DELLA

You still have the book with this picture? Recently, I remembered how you used to read it to me.

JOHN

Oh... yeah, it's somewhere here. Hold on, I'll pour us some.

He goes to the KITCHEN. Della is taken in by the PICTURE...

...Gretel has a BLUE DRESS and BLONDE HAIR... almost like DELLA with a BLUE SHIRT under her jacket and also BLONDE HAIR.

Della takes the PHOTO ALBUM... opens it... to see HER CHILDHOOD before 3 with HER PARENTS. And John in some pictures.

It seems oddly incomplete, there are no FULL FAMILY photos.

THONK! Cider glasses are set on the low table. John sits opposite Della in the armchair.

JOHN

So, dear daughter, what do you want to ask me about?

He *is* her uncle, but raised her like a daughter as we'll see.

DELLA

It may seem weird at first, but... it's about a dream I've been having for the past few weeks. More of a nightmare, really. A family has a car accident. I'm in the back seat, that's how I see it play out.

John hides a veil of worry... inside it grows.

DELLA (CONT'D)

Last night, I also saw a boy. He seemed about five. I'm a kid too, it's just how it feels. Up front, the parents are talking about a picture obsession. They say 'he' so that must be the boy and he *is* looking at a picture book. Then, the car crashes and I wake up.

Ambience. John, "and...?"

DELLA (CONT'D)

A groggy five fifteenish begins. Ned thinks I should see a shrink and I was going to until I saw this in a back issue of the Globe.

She puts the ARTICLE on the table. John takes a deep breath.

DELLA (CONT'D)

Just like my dream, and the date, right after I turned three. Are those my parents? Is that me? And then who's the boy?

(suddenly direct)

Was I *remembering* and not dreaming?

Inside John, a dam breaks... L O N G exhale.

JOHN

Della... at this point, I'll just tell you straight.

(square at her)

Yes, those are your parents, that's you, and that boy... is your brother.

Boom, bombshell.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What I fear might make you very unhappy is that I intentionally kept you from knowing about him.

DELLA

Why...?

JOHN

He's... not well, can't take care of himself, basically he's a prisoner in his own body. I don't know his exact condition, it's filled with anomalies as his caretaker says. He can do many basic things like draw, but that's his whole world.

DELLA

How long have you known about him?
(angered)
How long?

JOHN

Since he was born. He's my brother's child.

DELLA

You lied to me for this long about my- *our family*.

John feels ugly. The PHOTO ALBUM in the corner of his eye.

JOHN

It was just, I'm now sorry to say, convenient. With your amnesia it was easy to raise you as an only child. But your brother was born with something and the crash made it worse.

DELLA

And my parents?

JOHN

I told you everything I knew.

DELLA

Except that they had two kids.

JOHN

Della, please. I was going to tell-

DELLA

When, John? I'm twenty seven. You *know* memories are important to me. And this album, it's *missing* the photos of the *four* of us? Right?

Ambience. The FAMILY PHOTOS, happy memories, stare at them.

JOHN
 ...yes.

DELLA
 Where are they?

JOHN (CONT'D)
 In a box in the study-look, Della...
 It was *awful* losing a brother and
 sister-in-law, who were just as
 great as I told you, *and then* being
 saddled, that's how it felt, with
 two kids I couldn't provide for. So
 I did what I thought best. Have one
 cared for better than I ever could,
 while I gave the other a spotless
 childhood to *remember*. I didn't
 want her to feel the loss I did.

Della understands that as much as she resents it... nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 How about some tea?

DELLA
 My brother, what's his name?

JOHN
 ...Howard. I'll make tea.

Della's gaze drifts to the PICTURE and ALBUM as John goes.

INT. KITCHEN, JOHN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

John stops at the counter. Shades of the past on his face.
 And a SMALL TEAR. He wipes it away quick.

INT. LIVING ROOM, JOHN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Della's life churns in her head... FAMILY PHOTOS... the ARTICLE...

MEMORY FLASHES: rain... lights... "*screams...*" CRASH... two kids.

...now she's deep into the PICTURE of Hansel & Gretel... sees...
 the SIDE ROOM... door ajar... on a DESK... many STACKED PAPERS.

INT. STUDY, JOHN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Della inspects the PAPERS, all are LETTERS from 'Howard' to
 'Uncle John' written with childish enthusiasm and DOODLES.

There are also newspaper CLIPPINGS and magazine ARTICLES
 about the new research techniques of a 'DR. CRONEN.'

JOHN (O.S.)
 Della?

Turning, she spots OTHER PAPERS tucked away. She takes some... a PHOTO slips out... a YOUNG MAN about Della's age.

The letters are the same, but addressed to '*sister.*' A lot. Della "*gasps*" shuffling through them...

JOHN (O.S.)
So now you know it all.

DELLA
He was *asking* about me, he remembers everything. And you *ignored* him?

JOHN
He knows you as a three-year-old. Just read one of those.

A LETTER: "*Hi uncle what games does Della play at kinder garden? I draw her with a flower for her school finish.*"

ITS DOODLE: a yellow-haired stick figure with a pink flower.

JOHN (CONT'D)
He's gotten better at writing, but has no clue you've grown up.

DELLA
What if I visit him?

Ambience. The PHOTO gazes at them from the desk.

DELLA (CONT'D)
Well?

JOHN
Well... at this point, that's wholly your decision, but he may very well see you as just some random person.

DELLA
I still want to see him.

John nods slowly... off of Della's dour look...

INT. LIVING ROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - HOUR LATER

Ned munches a takeout sandwich with a beer. Reviews economy stats, inventory spreadsheets, and work orders on his laptop.

Front door: Della with WINE, a BAKERY BOX, and small smile.

NED
Hey... feeling better?

INT. LIVING ROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

They're on the couch. In the BAKERY BOX, brownies.
Della takes a big bite... then a hefty sip of wine.

Beside her, Ned reads the PRINTED ARTICLE and NEWS CLIPPINGS.

NED

The dream's a memory *and* you have a
brother...? Now *that's* something.

DELLA

He's been at this Seattle
institution since fall '98.

NED

A loony bin? What's his deal?

He she didn't like that, is about to apologize when-

DELLA

Institution. A condition that his
doctors can't pin down. The only
reported case. And this, May '98.

She gives him a PHOTO: Parents and Della... and Howard.

NED

How's *your* head... ok? I still think
you should see a pro. Just be wary
of miracle pills.

DELLA

I want to talk to this Dr. Cronen.

NED

When? And ticket, hotel, moolah?

DELLA

John gave me some. I'll ask for
time off next week or just go that
weekend.

NED

But I only have evenings this month
with all the stuff at the shop.

DELLA

You don't have to go, it'll just be
two or three days.

(off his dour look)

But tomorrow, we can do dinner on
the Wharf, *remember?*

NED

Yeah, I forgot... it's game night tomorrow. I'm meeting the guys.
(off her dour look)
Oh come on, I'm not spiting you.

DELLA

I know... you're too good for that...
(hugs him)
...my little tiger.

NED

You really want to go way over there to Seattle?

DELLA

I have *nearly half* of my childhood to remember... slash learn about.

Ned nods. Della raises a brownie to his mouth. He bites, chews like a smiling kid. Della smiles too.

INT. DELLA'S WORKPLACE - MID-MORNING

Della, at her impressively arranged desk: staples several bunches of sheets... finishes typing-

-an email: "*Incoming! P.S. If you're lucky this will only take your head over for a week.*"

She glances at HANSEL & GRETEL, takes the papers to a desk. It's empty. She "*sighs.*" There is only one other CO-WORKER.

DELLA

Hey Jen, where's Clark?

JEN (CO-WORKER)

Already left to fly around town. You know, the usual.

DELLA

Wonderful. Half the time he's here he stares out that window.

JEN

I know, but... *you know...*

Della's phone BEEPS, a TEXT. One quick glance, she "*scoffs*" at the empty desk and her neat stack of papers. Walks off.

INT. BILL'S OFFICE, DELLA'S WORKPLACE - MOMENTS LATER

Hugely cramped with a work desk, papers, and boxes.

BILL

Today you just had to prep the numbers, *remember?* Good job, I'll see you Monday. Rest up.

"*Remember...*" Della grinds her teeth, fidgets a bit. Bill is already back to work tapping and sorting.

DELLA

...I had a family situation come up, so could I take some time off?

BILL

Della, we're all in for Fall, going for the big league. Remember?

That word again. Now she hates *herself* for losing track.

DELLA

...it's just, I haven't seen my brother (in a while)-

BILL

(over)
You have a brother?

DELLA (CONT'D)

Yeah, he's not very well, it's complicated, but he's all the way in Seattle, so-

BILL

So unfortunately Della, that's what weekends are for. Seattle is six hours out of Logan, you can make it there and back on a weekend.

DELLA

You know, it's Saturday. *Remember?* Will next weekend be any different?

Befuddled, Bill snaps to a PLANNER APP, sorts a tempest.

BILL

Holyshit, you're right, I'll uh... tell you what... don't worry about next Saturday... that Monday... come in at ten. Bring extra large coffees.

DELLA

...I'll make that work, thanks. But coffee, Bill? Try fresh air.

BILL

I run on coffee *and* along Storow on Sundays. The fresh air part.

Della leaves happy enough. Bill dives back into his work.

EXT. COPLEY SQUARE - AFTERNOON

Above, light gray clouds move. Below, the Library.

INT. READING HALL, LIBRARY - SAME TIME

At a computer terminal, Della *TAPS* and *CLICKS* to a dark-blue tinted and information-packed *WEBPAGE*:

The Expanding Horizons Institute - "We Create New Visions"

Founded in 1948 by Solomon Cronen. Grandfather of...

DR. DAVID CRONEN, current EHI head. His *PICTURE*: a cheerful man in a lab coat. White hair parted and slicked, neat beard, late 50s. A tailor shop ad merged with a doctor.

He's accomplished in his field. There is a lot of material about sleep-related research. From out of a long list, some *ARTICLES* catch Della's eye.

ARTICLE #1: "Formerly Hopeless Patients See Their Own World"

ARTICLE #2: "In Dreams: The World Within"

ARTICLE #3: "Lucid Dreams, a Parallel Life"

She prints them and the Institute overview, saves copies to her *THUMB DRIVE*.

INT. LIVING ROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - LATER, AFTERNOON

Della books a plane ticket online. Checks the *TIME* - 4:46.

She skims the *PRINTED ARTICLES*... stops at a picture of EHI. It's a *RECTANGULAR BUILDING* with *ONE SLIGHTLY ROUNDED WINDOW* that stands out. She puts that page aside.

Shuffles through more papers when... *HOWARD'S PHOTO* from John's study slips out... twirls to the ground. "*Did I take that...?*"

O.S. SOUNDS FADE IN: The inside *HUM* of a car. *DRUMMING* rain.

CUTAWAY: a *HAND* draws a *YELLOW ZIGZAG* on a blank sheet.

CRASH! Della jolts zoning back in. There's a storm outside. Another *FLASH* and *BOOM!* Hands to her face, a deep "*uuugh...*"

She pushes the papers aside. Leans back in her chair. Reaches for her large mug, empty... "*sighs.*"

She doesn't see it, but: *TIME* ticks to - 4:57. Exactly 11 minutes later. Like her previous zoning out.

INT. BATHROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

The shower: a *WHOOSH* of warm relief. Della closes her eyes. Water *DRUMS*... the inside *HUM* of a car...

Della opens her eyes to see-

INT. REAR LEFT PASSENGER SEAT, CAR - NIGHT - VISION

-heavy rain on a car window... up front, the Man and Woman...

MAN

...he makes them all day and he's
just in a world of his own with
those pictures.

...to her right, the Boy with the BOOK, a TRAVEL GUIDE.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Yeah, well he needs a real friend
in his life.

The Boy looks up at her... PANIC! HEADLIGHTS! *SCREECH!* CRASH!

BLACK

DRUMMING water...

FADE IN:

INT. BATHROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - 11 MINUTES LATER

Thick steam. Della cranks the water off, yanks the curtain open heaving breaths. Steps out, wraps a towel.

She opens the door, steam expands out. Her phone *R-RINGS-*

INT. BEDROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

-R-RINGS. Cool air relief. Fanning herself down she sees the INCOMING CALL: it's John... *R-RING*... Della stares... *R-RING*...

INT. LIVING ROOM, JOHN'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

John is in his armchair... air of unease... the line *connects*...

JOHN

Hey, kiddo... got the trip set?

INTERCUT: DELLA / JOHN

DELLA

...next weekend.

JOHN

Ah, so no time off. Both of you are really pushing yourselves these days, don't get overwhelmed, but... listen, if you want any more of those letter-

DELLA

John, are you ashamed of Howard?

HANSEL & GRETEL are on the End Table. John *"sighs..."*

JOHN

No... I could've told you earlier.

DELLA

Everyone I know... family memories from each summer, Thanksgiving, Christmas... but I had only you.

Ambience... John is about to say something when-

DELLA (CONT'D)

I love you like an uncle *and* father, but can't fathom why you *hid* Howard. My spotless childhood came at a brother's expense.

JOHN

...I'm sorry... I was afraid you might you be hurt by what you discover.

DELLA

I discovered that I doubt the *one* person I used to fully trust. *That-*

END INTERCUT

John stews in the bitterness, knows he can't complain.

DELLA (CONT'D)(O.C.)

-hurt. Goodnight, John.

The call ends. He looks to HANSEL & GRETEL again. Nods.

INT. BEDROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Della stares off, feels that bitter pill was necessary.

BEEP, a TEXT from Ned: *"The Sox are knocking it out of this world! 8 run lead! Will be back 10ish"*

DELLA

I suppose you earned that one.

INT. LIVING ROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Della gazes at FULL FAMILY PHOTOS, pre-digital, only a few. A small smile begins to curl... she puts them into an ENVELOPE, slides it into a NICE FOLDER with her research materials.

Goes to shutdown her laptop... something catches her eye...
ON SCREEN: the EHI Building in HD with the ROUNDED WINDOW-

CROSS FADE:

EXT. ROUNDED WINDOW, EHI, SEATTLE - NOON - WEEK LATER

-covered from within, reflects cloudy sky as seen by-

EXT. FRONT, EHI BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

-Della who stands across the street. Next to the RECTANGULAR BUILDING, a PLAQUE: 337 Circle View Drive. Green light.

DR. CRONEN (PRE-LAP)

Ahh! You must be Della!

INT. LOBBY, EHI - MINUTES LATER

Della turns, sees... Dr. Cronen's picture come to life.

DELLA

Dr. Cronen?

The Doctor smiles extending his hand.

INT. FIRST FLOOR, EHI - MOMENTS LATER

They walk in a clean, mildly eventful hallway. There are some other side rooms, including a LOUNGE AREA.

Della is impressed, yet investigating, as she looks around.

DELLA

A 'special' wing?

DR. CRONEN

Yes, for patients who require special care. And more security.

(off her look)

I'm sure you've heard all the clichés about a place like this.

DELLA

Dangerous breakouts?

DR. CRONEN

Fiction really loves that one. But the most fearsome thing, where all troubled people are truly confined, the mind.

He stops, unlocks an ELEVATOR with a CARD - *BEEP*. Enters. Della follows. He uses the CARD again, the doors-

INT. ELEVATOR, EHI - CONTINUOUS

-close, the elevator *HUMS* going up.

DR. CRONEN

Howard has been looking forward to today, even adjusted his pictures.

DELLA

I'm all grown up?

DR. CRONEN

Usually the changes are subtle, but you seem to have given Howard a creativity spurt.

DING. Sixth floor. The doors open to-

INT. HALLWAY, SIXTH FLOOR, EHI - CONTINUOUS

-silence. Della sees a SIGN: "*Coma Ward*" but she DOESN'T SEE-

-a NETWORK of ROUTERS and CABLES along the ceiling going into each room. It's not hidden, yet not obvious.

DR. CRONEN

Howard's special care program uses some spare rooms next to this ward.

In ROOM #6: four beds are in use. Near the WINDOW with a NICE VIEW, ONE IS EMPTY, yet set for a patient.

DR. CRONEN

We aim to keep everyone comfortable.

INT. LOBBY, SPECIAL WING, EHI - MOMENTS LATER

The ROUTERS and CABLES run along the ceiling into all doors.

Della and Dr. Cronen cross to a large front desk. Dr. Cronen motions and they're let through double doors.

INT. HALLWAY, SPECIAL WING, EHI - MOMENTS LATER

They turn into a hallway where a JANITOR shines the floor.

JANITOR
Watch your step, please.

The end of the hallway... a WINDOW with closed BLINDS.

DR. CRONEN
Please wait here just a minute.

He enters a room. Della is drawn to the window...

...the BLINDS blend into the wall. Della peeks outside, sees from where she approached. The WINDOW... NOT the rounded one.

DR. CRONEN (O.C.)
They're ready for you.

INT. WAITING ROOM, SPECIAL WING, EHI - MOMENTS LATER

Della enters. There is a LARGE PAINTING of a NICE ESTATE.

Dr. Cronen presses a button, the PAINTING PARTS... reveals a TWO-WAY MIRROR and a ROOM... SOMEONE sits focused at a TABLE.

DR. CRONEN
That's Howard. In his own world.

Della gazes... *her brother*. He's drawing. Plenty of finished pictures are on the table. And a THERMOS, while a SATCHEL hangs from his chair. An EMPTY CHAIR waits.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
Today, I think he's ready to take more people into his mind. Just go easy with him, talk about his drawings, really get into them.

Della nods... ready. Dr. Cronen opens the door... she follows him-

INT. HOWARD'S ROOM, SPECIAL WING, EHI - CONTINUOUS

-her gaze locked on Howard. In a far corner... ANOTHER DOOR.

The walls are a clean white, almost like sheets of paper waiting for Howard's colored pencils to fill them in.

DR. CRONEN
Howard?

He stops drawing, looks up. Howard has the appearance of a young man in his late 20s, the mannerisms of a child.

DR. CRONEN
Howard, I have someone here who'd
like to meet you.

Della takes another step as Howard's gaze shifts to her.

DR. CRONEN
Howard, this is Della, your sister.

DELLA
Hi, Howard.

Dr. Cronen pulls out the EMPTY CHAIR... Della sits.

Howard scans his PICTURES, there's a GIRL with YELLOW HAIR.
He LEANS TO... HUGS Della who's surprised, accepts the gesture.

DR. CRONEN
That's my cue. Take your time.

He leaves, talks to SOMEONE as he closes the ENTRY DOOR...

SCRIBBLES. Howard puts a finished DRAWING in the middle of...

A SERIES of a CITY with a distinct, tall, BLUE BUILDING.
First, it's clear... then darker... darker... finally a YELLOW
ZIGZAG - a LIGHTNING BOLT - just like the CUTAWAY earlier.

He proudly shows Della the first picture, a LUMINOUS SUNRISE.

DELLA
Nice, well done. This is a little
story?

HOWARD
I made it rain.

DELLA
Do you like the rain?

He puts the PICTURE back in place. Starts on a new blank
sheet, blue pencil first. His HANDS are very gentle.

HOWARD
It can be good.

DELLA
You draw a lot.

ON THE SHEET: a PERSON in a blue shirt.

HOWARD
You have family outside, don't you?

DELLA

Yeah. My, *our* Uncle John and my husband. In Boston.

HOWARD

Do you have kids?

DELLA

No.

He stops, looks her square.

HOWARD

Do you want to?

DELLA

(smiles)

We gave it some thought and... probably sometime, soonish, yes.

He goes back to drawing, there's ANOTHER PERSON now, a MAN.

DELLA

Who are they?

He puts long yellow hair on the first figure. Smiling, he SHOWS her the FINISHED PICTURE.

Della realizes her blonde hair and blue shirt... "Me?"

HOWARD

Yes, your family.

DELLA

Wow, spot on. My husband even has a green coat like that.

HOWARD

(shows color pencil)

It's teal.

DELLA

Ok, teal it is.

He sets everything aside in a few swift moves. Opens his THERMOS... warmth steams out. He takes INTERRUPTED GULPS.

DELLA

I have one of those, too. It's with me every morning.

HOWARD

Do you like milk?

Della digs in her handbag, puts HER THERMOS on the table.

DELLA

At this point I do more tea.

HOWARD

Dr. Cronen says milk is good for growing. What's tea?

DELLA

Well, it's... also boiled, but it's really just water with special leaves that give it a nice taste.

HOWARD

That's weird.

DELLA

But very good. Maybe you can try it-

Howard puts his HAND to his FOREHEAD. "SIGHS" deeply.

DELLA (CONT'D)

Everything all right?

He "grumbles..." eyes closed... starts to shake a little.

DELLA

Howard?

She leans in, a louder "grumble." His eyes open - BLOODSHOT. Howard starts to "GROAN" in pain, convulse. Della is shocked.

The FAR CORNER DOOR swings open. TWO NURSING STAFFERS stand there for a second, then swiftly approach Howard.

Della stands aside. They rein in Howard's erratic movements, administer a SYRINGE... he lulls down. The ENTRY DOOR opens... Dr. Cronen is rushing up.

DR. CRONEN

I'm very sorry, we have to cut this short, please wait outside.

Della can only comply. Just as she CLOSES THE DOOR, she sees them putting a funnel to Howard's mouth and pouring the milk.

INT. WAITING ROOM, SPECIAL WING, EHI - MINUTES LATER

Della stands fidgeting. There's only one small table light. The two-way mirror is closed. She wants answers... above her...

One of the ROUTERS with CABLES also going into Howard's room... the door SHOOTs open, startles Della.

DR. CRONEN
I'm terribly sorry about that.
Howard's on some new medication.

DELLA
What happened?

DR. CRONEN
Howard usually starts his drawings
right after five and goes overtime
so he doesn't sleep much. Due to
his treatment, he's unable to take
sleeping medication-*but tomorrow,*
you have enough time, right?

DELLA
Uh... yeah, in the morning. My flight
leaves at two.

DR. CRONEN
Great, how about... eight thirty?

DELLA
Ok, I'll be here.

DR. CRONEN
Let's get you a VIP tag.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER, AFTERNOON

On a nightstand, a RED TAG. On the bed, Della reading her
PRINTED ARTICLES about EHI. Checks her phone: three bars.

NED (PRE-LAP)
Hey, how was the *institution*?

INT. MOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

She's on the phone, now leaning back comfortably.

DELLA
It was good. Howard likes to spend
his days drawing. And apparently
sleeps very little.

NED (O.C.)
Just like his sister.

Della's eyes widen to infinity for a few seconds.

NED (CONT'D) (O.C.)
Dell?

DELLA
...yeah... you're right.

NED (O.C.)
*Perhaps you can really uncover
 something, you're good at that.
 Anyway listen, I still have things
 to sort through here at the shop.
 I'll call you when I get home, ok?*

DELLA
 Ok, talk then, byeee.

Click. The call ends. She pulls out the PICTURE ENVELOPE...

...sees what she doesn't remember, grasps for nostalgia. Void.
 She sags on the bed staring off to infinity... R-R-RING!

Her PHONE SCREEN: Calling - *"Uncle John."*

No calls or texts from him since last Saturday... R-R-RING!
 She mentally fumbles... R-R-RING! She picks up.

JOHN (O.C.)
*Hey, kiddo... I talked with Cronen,
 he said... something I feared.*

She's silent... nods slightly, *"I kind of see his point."*

INT. LIVING ROOM, JOHN'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

HANSEL & GRETEL are on the end table.
 John is a little more at ease than last time... a little.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Della?

INTERCUT: DELLA / JOHN

DELLA
 I'm happy that I saw Howard myself.

JOHN
 ...good... what did you talk about?

DELLA
 Caught up, on family. He drew a
 picture of me and Ned actually.

JOHN
 He's taking more in than I thought
 possible. Good, good.

DELLA
 What do you mean?

JOHN

Oh, just... it's good you saw him.
But I... hope you understand why I
was hesitant to tell y-

DELLA

John, you weren't hesitant, you
were sure I'd never know, but I, by
chance, found an article.

JOHN

...again, sorry... I really wish I told
you earlier. You were always good
with caring for those close to you.

She's moved, but would even try to hide it in a face-to-face.
He senses he's not getting more out of her, wishes he could.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I still have some things, but call
me when you're done tomorrow, ok?

DELLA

Yeah.

JOHN

Have a good night, kiddo.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - SAME TIME

DELLA

You too... uncle.

Click. She stares at her phone...

CUTAWAY: a HAND draws quick BLUE STROKES on a blank sheet.

...then sees the shower.

INT. LIVING ROOM, JOHN'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

John sits still, his mind is racing in the lonely apartment.
The FAMILY PICTURES poke out from nearby. He's uneasy.

On the low table: his laptop... open to a TICKET BOOKING SITE.
He changes the date from a few days out to TOMORROW MORNING.

Then he quickly dials a number.

INT. BATHROOM, MOTEL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Della idles in misty warmth. Eyes heavy. The *DOWNPOUR* mutes...
her eyes droop... close... she hears a muted *voice*...

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
 ...in a world of his own with those
 pictures.

She opens her eyes, sees-

INT. REAR LEFT PASSENGER SEAT, CAR - NIGHT - VISION

CHILD'S POV: -a rainy window... the Boy with the Travel Guide...

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
 ...needs a real friend in his life.

He looks at her, EYES RED. HEADLIGHTS... SCREECH! CRASH!

BLACK

...DRUMMING water...

FADE IN:

INT. SHOWER, BATHROOM, MOTEL ROOM - 11 MINUTES LATER

DELLA'S EYES gaze through the falling water to-

EXT. FRONT, EHI BUILDING - NEXT MORNING

-the Rounded Window. She waits in the rain across the street.
 She doesn't see... a (the?) White Van drive by...

DELLA (PRE-LAP)
 What do you remember?

INT. HOWARD'S ROOM, SPECIAL WING, EHI - MINUTES LATER

HOWARD
 There was lots of rain. It was hard
 to see... sometimes... bad things
 happen when it rains.

He goes back to drawing a sunny outdoor scene.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 So when I make it rain, I want to
 make good things happen.

A few strong pencil strokes and he finishes a BIG HOUSE in a
 large COUNTRY ESTATE with a RED CAR parked in front.

DELLA
 Where is that?

HOWARD
 I'll show you.

He gets up shouldering his SACHEL, walks to-

DELLA

What? Where are you going?

-the CORNER DOOR, opens it, reveals... an APARTMENT.

HOWARD

I can show you everything.

Della looks unsure... is startled by an INTERCOM.

DR. CRONEN'S VOICE

*It's ok Della that's just Howard's
living rooms. Call me from there if
you need anything.*

Della nods, "mutters" some reassurances.

CEILING CAMERA POV: Howard leads her to the Corner Door.

INT. HOWARD'S SPECIAL ROOMS - MOMENTS LATER

Living room, bedroom, bathroom, and playroom - all very nice and packed with DRAWINGS and KIDS' ART MATERIALS. Also his THERMOS along with some PASTA CANS on a low table.

On the wall, a LINE OF PICTURES: a mansion, a mansion with a large garden, then also with wide lawns, and finally a large ESTATE. He PINS the NEWEST PICTURE at the end, stands proud.

DELLA

Where is this?

Howard brings his hand up to his head, scratches it.

HOWARD

It's not that far. I want a real friend to go with.

DELLA

Well, maybe one day we'll go there.

Other drawings on this section are details from the ESTATE: an OLD STYLE GATE, an ESTATE DRIVEWAY, and TALL VASES.

Nearby, ONE PICTURE stands out: a GOLDEN MAN standing over a forest with a TORCH high above his head.

DELLA

Is he in your place, too?

HOWARD

Not yet, right now he's here.

He takes a BOOK from his SACHEL. It's a TRAVEL GUIDE.
He shows Della a page with a HEADLINE: *"Don't just Imagine!
Experience! A New World of Ancient Wonder!"*

There are renditions of the ancient COLOSSUS OF RHODES as it
has appeared in art, one resembles Howard's.

DELLA

Where did you get that book?

HOWARD

It's from mom.

DELLA

Can I see it?

(off his look)

Are you afraid your little sister
will take your book?

HOWARD

(laughs)

No!

DELLA

Can you just hold it closer then?

He does. She looks, it may be the one from the dream.

DELLA

Nice. And you drew those yesterday.

On another wall: the LINE OF PICTURES with the tall, BLUE
GLASS BUILDING with a strong DARK VERTICAL LINE now set from
STORMY to LIGHTLY CLOUDY to a LUMINOUS SUNRISE.

Howard nods, walks to a WALL SWITCH, *CLICK*... The wall rises...
it's a large WINDOW BLIND blended into the walls. It reveals...
the ROUNDED WINDOW with rain beyond.

HOWARD

I want it to stop. Sometimes bad
things happen when it rains.

DELLA

You're safe here in your nice room
and with Dr. Cronen always close.

HOWARD

I don't want you to go when it's
raining.

DELLA

Aw, don't worry. I can deal with
the rain.

Howard looks unsure, almost sad. She extends her arms. He looks confused. She steps closer... HUGS him.

DELLA
You, big brother, hugged me
yesterday.

HOWARD
You like it?

DELLA
Yes. Ok, so I was surprised, but
you can always hug your family. We
can hug when we see each other.

Howard looks like a kid on Christmas Morning. Then - almost on reflex - he goes to his THERMOS, pours HOT MILK into the THERMOS CAP, offers it to Della.

DELLA
Oh, uh, no thanks, I really don't
do milk. Sorry.

He downs it in a shot, plain face.

DELLA
Howard? Do you like that milk?

HOWARD
(shrugs)
I shouldn't skip breakfast, it
helps me grow.

DELLA
And these, would you want to try to
draw something else?

The WALL COLLAGE of the ESTATE: PICNIC TABLES on the grounds... MANSION WINDOWS, one with a WHITISH BLUR... the parked RED CAR.

Della now sees an empty PARKING SPACE drawn next to this Car.

HOWARD
These will help me adjust to the
real world since they're real.

DELLA
What about that?
(Colossus)
That's not real anymore.

From his shirt, Howard pulls out PAPERS... the APARTMENT LAYOUT and some HALLWAYS, more detailed than his other drawings.

HOWARD
 (slightly hushed)
 These aren't finished yet, they can
 get around those.

He gestures up with his eyebrows, slight, but definitely up.

Della sees the CABLES and right in the middle of the ceiling...
 a ROUTER... a standard wifi router? Looks like it.

DR. CRONEN (O.C.)
 Knock, knock!

He's in the door. Della reflexively - nondescriptly - folds,
 gives the PAPERS back to Howard turning the attention to..

DELLA
 Impressive wall collage, Howard's
 quite the artist.

DR. CRONEN
 Yes he is. How's it going today?

She begins to read Dr. Cronen's face: subtle, poker-style.

DELLA
 Good. We're on hugging terms, so
 we're definitely family now.

HOWARD
 We'll hug every time we see each
 other.

DR. CRONEN
 ...great, but Howard, it's your mid-
 morning time now.
 (to Della)
 Food and meds.

HOWARD
 Can Della come, too?

DR. CRONEN
 I'm sorry, Howard, but she can't.

Howard's shine droops.

DELLA
 I'll visit again. Draw some nice
 things for me, ok?

HOWARD
 (!!!)
 When?

DR. CRONEN
 We'll arrange that now and I'll
 tell you as soon as you're done.

He motions to the two NURSING STAFFERS now in the doorway.
 They have GREEN SHIRT TAGS, approach Howard, take his hands.

DR. CRONEN
 We have some macaroni and cheese
 waiting for you.

Della feels something off, resigns that this isn't her field.
 She just smiles, waves to leave Howard feeling bright.

DR. CRONEN
 Your flight's at two?

DELLA
 Yes.

DR. CRONEN
 Ok, let's discuss further visits,
 that is, if you're interested?

DELLA
 Of course.

DR. CRONEN
 Great. In my office.

Leaving, Della notices a PICTURE: two KIDS by a BIG HOUSE in
 a GREEN CLEARING. Scribbled: "*brother & sister.*" The girl has
 a BLUE SHIRT and BLONDE HAIR... just like Della and Gretel.

INT. DR. CRONEN'S OFFICE, EHI - MINUTES LATER

Tome lined bookcases. Cabinets with many collected ARTIFACTS.
 Next to a BIG DESK, two FOLDED COTS, while on Desk...

...in a prop stand: an OLD REVOLVER.

DELLA
 This is your world?

DR. CRONEN
 (laughs)
 Yes, I work and get away in here.

He sits at the Desk, flips up a FLAT SCREEN with a calendar.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
 Let's see, Howard's schedule is
 pretty much the same each day, but
 what works for you?

DELLA

Well... between work, more work, and travel time... a weekend every two, three months seems possible, but I could write to Howard more often. Hasn't he been writing me?

DR. CRONEN

About that... I take it your uncle showed you the letters?

DELLA

Yeah.

DR. CRONEN

I must confess that it was my decision to keep the letters from you. I felt it best Howard deal with as few people as possible until an opportune time. It came earlier than anticipated, but seems to have gone well.

Della nods along, but really she's playing poker.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)

Honestly, any decision would've had its problems. When Howard grows attached to something, he doesn't let go. As of late, it's been the weather, rain in particular, and this has significance due to his- well, *your mutual* past.

DELLA

How long has he been writing me?

DR. CRONEN

He started soon after coming here.

Dr. Cronen sits back, digs deep. Looks her straight.

BEHIND DELLA: his memories are "DRAWN IN" onto a COUCH that seemingly blends with a TAPESTRY above it, there he is...

...a younger Dr. Cronen-

INT. DR. CRONEN'S OFFICE, EHI BUILDING - 1998 - FLASHBACK

-on the couch with Howard (at 5-6) who browses a TRAVEL BOOK. No good, Howard drops it onto a mass of other travel books.

Flips through another. Hurried fingers, flying pages.

DR. CRONEN (V.O.)(CONT'D)

At first, all he remembered was
this one book that I'd never seen
before, but soon found one that
satisfied him.

Howard stops. Smiles. Looks close. There's the COLOSSUS OF RHODES with the HEADLINE: *"Don't just Imagine! Experience! A New World of Ancient Wonder!"* He hugs the book.

INT. HOWARD'S SPECIAL ROOMS - DAYS LATER - FLASHBACK

Howard draws endless copies of the Colossus: whole or various details - face, hands, legs, etc - all based off of his favorite version - and in places them in a PICTURE ALBUM.

Dr. Cronen looks around impressed. Shows Howard a NEW BOOK with a PICTURE: the STATUE OF LIBERTY. Howard looks curious.

DR. CRONEN

People who made this one also liked
the one you like so much, Howard.

Howard takes the book, a photographic study of Lady Liberty. He flips pages, sees all the details. Smiles.

INT. HOWARD'S SPECIAL ROOMS - DAYS LATER - FLASHBACK

All over, renditions of the Statue and NEW THINGS: Liberty Island, its details, the NYC skyline, the Colossus in place of the Statue and... the Colossus and Statue SIDE BY SIDE.

INT. DR. CRONEN'S OFFICE, EHI - PRESENT

Dr. Cronen holds the last picture up.

DELLA

Could be a couple. Or a brother and
sister.

DR. CRONEN

I told him, euphemistically, that
his- *your* parents couldn't visit.
He accepted that, it took a while,
but he did. Not so with you.

Off of Della's intrigued look...

INT. HOWARD'S SPECIAL ROOMS - 2003 - FLASHBACK

Howard scribbling letters to his little sister, Della. There's a pure idealism in the delightful mess and doodles.

DR. CRONEN (V.O.)(CONT'D)
 After years of pictures, he just...
 started...

INT. DR. CRONEN'S OFFICE, EHI - PRESENT

Della's mind churns under a perfect poker face.

DELLA
 He knew I was alive?

Dr. Cronen... shakes his head.

INT. HOWARD'S SPECIAL ROOMS - 2007 - FLASHBACK

Howard finishes yet another letter to "*Little sister.*"
 Hands it happily to Dr. Cronen who takes it just as bright.

DR. CRONEN (V.O.)
 But this is where I am potentially
 to blame for wrongdoing.

INT. DR. CRONEN'S OFFICE, EHI - 2007 - FLASHBACK

Howard's letters have piled up, bulge out of a box.

DR. CRONEN (V.O.)(CONT'D)
 As with your parents, I gently had
 tried to convince him that you
 couldn't visit, but he wouldn't
 stop and I couldn't just lie that I
 sent them, so they went to the-

INT. STUDY, JOHN'S APARTMENT - PRESENT

MOVE IN ON: one of many letters with a big "*Uncle John.*"

DR. CRONEN (V.O.)(CONT'D)
 -one person who could take them.

INT. DR. CRONEN'S OFFICE, EHI - SAME TIME

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
 And I urged him, it was *me* please
 understand, to not tell you, you
 still were very young.

Della understands, yet doesn't fully like the answer.
 Dr. Cronen reaches to a drawer.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
 After a while, I asked your uncle
 for a photo and...

The PHOTO: a younger Della with a STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM CONE making a peace sign. She smiles, pure nostalgia.

DELLA

The summer right after high school.

Dr. Cronen reveals a DRAWING: a yellow-haired girl in a graduation gown with a PINK FLOWER making peace sign. Scribbled beneath: *"My sister Della done with school, June 7"*

Mind churning, Della remembers...

MEMORY FLASH: Howard's letter doodle, a yellow-haired stick figure with a pink flower.

DR. CRONEN

He drew that without ever seeing the photo.

DELLA

June seventh wow... that's when I finished high school in twenty thirteen.

DR. CRONEN

Yes, how did he know?

DELLA

I remember from my uncle's pictures that I had a similar quote unquote graduation in kindergarten, gown and all, but the date?

DR. CRONEN

Interesting, isn't it?

DELLA

I mean, it's not just my high school that had graduation then.

DR. CRONEN

Pardon if it's seems cliché, but I think you and Howard are connected.

Della has a gist of what he's getting at.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)

Siblings can often innately read each other, share moods and sensations even when apart and especially if they feel strongly about each other. Howard certainly holds you dear as a sister, and up until just yesterday-

INT. REAR LEFT PASSENGER SEAT, CAR - 1998 - FLASHBACK

No sounds, SLOW MOTION: headlights engulf the backseat as young Howard and Della look at each other...

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)(V.O.)
 -your last shared experience was
 very intense. What would have been
 a tragic tearing apart of a family-

CRASH! The image CONVULSES and BACKS OUT of-

INT. DR. CRONEN'S OFFICE, EHI - PRESENT

-Della's eye blinking with the memory/dream.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
 -brought about a stronger
 connection between the two
 survivors. For you, it finally
 manifested in that dream.

Della is moved.

DELLA
 ...and yesterday, Howard's eyes?

DR. CRONEN
 Howard has what are called lucid
 dreams much more often than most
 people, you know what those are?

DELLA
 Basically, dreams that feel real?

Off of Dr. Cronen's slight nod...

INT. HOWARD'S ROOM, SPECIAL WING, EHI - FLASHBACK

Early morning. Howard is drawing a PICTURE... the one from the...
 OPENING SCENE, the car in the rain. His eyes: not quite
 closed, not quite open, yet his mind must be running wild.

DR. CRONEN (V.O.)
 Howard's drawings are his dream
 diary, but he can also draw-

A SERIES OF TIME CUTS: Howard creates drawings previously
 seen: the estate, the red car, and the tall blue building.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)(V.O.)
 -something first then dream about
 it. He can create lucid dreams.

INT. DR. CRONEN'S OFFICE, EHI BUILDING - PRESENT

He is looking at Della straight with a PICTURE: a CAR surrounded by aggressive blue strokes, rain.

DR. CRONEN

This is from a few weeks ago when-

DELLA

I started having the nightmare.

DR. CRONEN

As I said, you seem to have given Howard a creativity spurt. Lucid dreams haven't been studied much, but can potentially heal trauma... and uncover old memories, as you've seen, and as is important to you.

Della sags in her seat staring to infinity.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)

The last few weeks put us on a cusp. Would you be able to visit Howard more?

DELLA

Yes, but... I'm still on the same timetable.

DR. CRONEN

That's fine. We can stay in touch.

He flips out a pristine BUSINESS CARD, slides it to her.

DELLA

Thank you, and for making this visit happen.

DR. CRONEN

It proved worth it. Howard was very receptive.

DELLA

But right now, unfortunately, I gotta catch my flight.

DR. CRONEN

Let's swing by the lobby first.

They leave... *silence*... still on the Desk... the PICTURE/PHOTO PAIR of Young Della... on the DESK'S OTHER SIDE - that was UNSEEN by Della - in a LARGE OPEN DRAWER...

...many CRUMPLED DRAWINGS: the Car surrounded by aggressive blue strokes of rain. There must be at least sixty of them..

...in ANOTHER DRAWER: a Trolley Car in rain. Not crumpled.

Also seen here... CABLES running from under the Desk... the WALL... along it until... a CABINET with ARTIFACTS... one of them is a...

...disguised ROUTER with a RED BLINKING LIGHT just like the-

INT. HOWARD'S ROOM, SPECIAL WING, EHI - SAME TIME

-Router right above Howard's drawing table and blended into the colors of the ceiling. Cables run from it going to-

INT. HOWARD'S SPECIAL ROOMS

-each room here which, dead center, has a Router.

Howard is in the living room drawing... a room - his first interior to be seen - with many COUCHES. Looks comfy...

...but not Howard who persists as in an after-school test.

INT. LOBBY, SPECIAL WING, EHI - MINUTES LATER

A Router looms above as Della gets a "FAMILY VISITOR" CARD.

DELLA

Thank you so much.

DR. CRONEN

My pleasure. Now, those stairs lead right to a building-side bus stop where you can go to the airport.

There is an incognito DOOR on the far side of the lobby.

DELLA

Oh, ok. Six floors down sounds better than up. Thanks, again.

DR. CRONEN

We'll see you soon, Della.

That's odd... she doesn't make much of it, just smiles back. And goes to the DOOR... turns around.

Still by the desk, Dr. Cronen waves. She waves back, enters-

INT. STAIRWELL, SPECIAL WING, EHI - CONTINUOUS

-lights BUZZ on. A boxy spiral goes down to an open door. Rain POUNDS some windows. Building activity MURMURS.

She starts with a brisk pace... not seeing the Cables and Routers spiraling down with her... *FOOTFALLS* until...

...the first landing... *FOOTFALLS*, one floor down... *FOOTFALLS*... second landing... *FOOTFALLS*... a *PASSING BLUR* catches her eye...

...a *ROUTER*? She turns to follow the cables -- *SLIPS!*

BLACK

INTERCUT FLASHES: the CHILD'S POV from the memory/dream..

O.S. SOUNDS: The distant rain getting *LOUDER*..

MAN	HOWARD (O.S.)
(muted)	Sometimes... bad things...
...a world of h... th- pictures.	

INTERCUT FLASHES: slashing blue pencil strokes.

O.S. SOUNDS: ...even *LOUDER*..

WOMAN	HOWARD (O.S.)
(muted)	...happen when it rains.
...a real friend in his life.	

INTERCUT FLASHES: the dream... drawings... the crash... *CRUMPLE*..

O.S. SOUNDS: ...*TORRENTIAL* rain. PANIC! *SCREECH!* CRASH..

BLACK

Quiet... a distant *MURMUR* closes in... *COMMOTION*... "voices..."

FADE IN:

DELLA'S P.O.V. - SOMETIME LATER, STILL DAY

Eyes open a sliver... more... she sees... a sheet of paper?
No, it's a *CEILING*... she turns her head slowly, to see...

DR. CRONEN
...you know she's not just a visitor-

He's nearby now dressed in a suit, talking with *SOMEONE* also in a suit... a *MAN*. She can't see any other details.

She "*gasps*..." sitting up-

INT. LOUNGE AREA, FIRST FLOOR, EHI - CONTINUOUS

-on a *COUCH*, an ice pack falls off her head- pain stings!

DR. CRONEN (O.C.)
 Are you with us? ...I'm terribly
 sorry about that, close call.

She's still dazed. He puts the ice pack back on. "Ouch."

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
 I was heading out to lunch when I
 heard from the janitor. There was a
 leak in the stairwell due to an
 open window. Again, very sorry.
 (to Man)
 Could you wait in the lobby? Tell
 them we'll be 10 minutes past, but
 we are coming.

Zoning in, Della sees the Man nod and leave... but what she
 DOESN'T SEE: there are NO ROUTERS and CABLES here.

DELLA
 What happened? I remember stairs...

DR. CRONEN
 Stairs I recommended you take.
 How's your head?

DELLA
 It feels like it's all here. The
 ice helped, thanks.

DR. CRONEN
 You'll be wearing that for a few
 days, but nothing else is wrong.

DELLA
 Yeah, um... it happens. I feel
 stupid, imagine not being able to
 walk down stairs.

DR. CRONEN
 I should feel stupid.

DELLA
 No it's fi-
 (click)
 My flight! What time is it?

DR. CRONEN
 It's almost one. Don't worry, I'll
 call you a cab. On me.

DELLA
 Oh no, you (don't have to...)

DR. CRONEN
 (over)
 Please, I insist.

EXT. FRONT, EHI BUILDING - MINUTES LATER

A picturesque sky, just cleared up. A taxi pulls up.

DELLA
Thanks again.

DR. CRONEN
Sure thing, just watch your head
there.

He watches the taxi ride off... smiles.

INT. TAXI, STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Della rubs her head, winces. The TAXI DRIVER stares blankly ahead, doesn't seem like a talker. She checks her phone...

A message from Ned: "*Thinking of you by the Charles :-)*" with a SELFIE... the Hancock Tower is in the distance behind him.

She smiles replying, "*Going to the plane now. Brownies or ice cream for the eve?*" Then realizes...

The Hancock Tower... Howard drew a building just like it.

BEEP, a new message... John. She thinks... TAPS the screen off.

INT. HOWARD'S ROOM, SPECIAL WING, EHI - SAME TIME

CLOSE UP: a sheet of paper. Howard shades a PINK CIRCLE.

He adds RED SPOTS. Stops. Sips milk. A glint of dislike. Puts his hand to his heart... a faint paper *CRUMPLE*...

Behind him... up in a corner... the Ceiling Camera. Above him... dead center on the drawing table... the Router. Both looming.

EXT. BOSTON SKYLINE - LATE EVENING

Lightly cloudy, more clouds moving in. Lights flicker on, including on the Hancock Tower.

EXT. COOLIDGE CORNER, BOSTON - SAME TIME

A trolley pulls away. Della is on the platform. She calls Ned, no answer. Texts have no replies. She "*sighs*."

DELLA
Ice cream it is. And it's all mine.

She heads to the nearby supermarket not seeing behind her... the White Van STOPS as someone crosses on a YELLOW SIGNAL.

INT. LIVING ROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - EVENING, LATER

The 2012 remake of *Total Recall* plays on TV.

Ned snoozes on the couch. On the low table, several beer bottles and his laptop with a heap of papers and folders.

DELLA

...I suppose you earned that.

INT. KITCHEN, DELLA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

She puts some ice cream in the fridge. Remembers something.

Her phone... John's message: *"Wish we could've gone together, the first time in your life our family would be together."*

She can't hold back... a glint of a smile. Nods. Dials...

JOHN (O.C.)

Hey kiddo, you made it back? Cronen said you had a-

DELLA

A slip and a head bump, nothing some ice and ice cream can't cure.

INT. LIVING ROOM, JOHN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

He's on the COUCH. His laptop is off and unplugged.

JOHN

(laughs)

I remember the first time you said that. After track team tryouts your freshman year in high school. You did well, but scraped your knee at the end. So I got you a large strawberry sundae at Herrell's.

INTERCUT: DELLA / JOHN

Della is driven to nostalgia, smiles.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You were always resilient. Now I'm sure I should have told you about Howard earlier... a few years, at least. But... how d- earl-r t-ay go?

The line CUT IN and OUT. Della moves closer to the WINDOW. She's also moved enough to sound happy talking to John.

THEN - her HEAD BUMP aches, a little wince. Ned awakes.

DELLA (CONT'D)
Uh... hey, sleepyhead.

NED
When'd you get back?

DELLA
About 10 minutes ago. You and Sam
Adams have a good time?

NED
Yeah, reason being... I got a major
contract set: UMass Boston hired us
to refit their smart podiums.

She swoops down onto his lap, kisses his forehead.

DELLA
Wow! Congrats! My hard working
little tiger.

NED
Oof, easy, but yeah, living the
dream.

Her HEAD BUMP, a pulse of pain.

DELLA
...ok, but please cut down. There are
good occasions, but not the usual
Sunday evening.

NED
No problem, lots of late evenings
are in stock at the shop. You ok?

She's pretending to scratch her head.

DELLA
Yeah, just tired. Drink some water
and go shower. I'll clean up here.

NED
I don't need a shower, I need some
of you.

DELLA
And soon I'll be in the shower.

INT. BATHROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

MOVING DOWN past rising steam... Della and Ned are in the shower embracing with a kiss... TURNING and MOVING out-

INT. BEDROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

-OVER the bed... to the nightstand... DOWN to Della's HANDBAG... inside... the EHI PRINTOUTS and... the PICTURE of Howard...

...his EYES... turn RED.

BLACK

Calm *breathing*... a nice ALARM.

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Della opens her eyes, zones in, feels fresh.
Turns off the alarm on her phone. Ned also wakes up.

NED

Wow, a normal six thirty again.

DELLA

Slept like a log.

NED

How's your head?

DELLA

Mmm... better.

NED

Good stuff. And good morning.

EXT. BOSTON SKYLINE - MORNING

A luminous sunrise, but strangely, no buildings glisten.
Uncannily like one of Howard pictures.

INT. DELLA'S WORKPLACE - MORNING

A wall clock shows 9:30. Below it, the office *BUSTLES*.
Della enters with big TAKEOUT COFFEES. And her tea THERMOS.

DELLA

A round on me, everyone!

Jen and busy CO-WORKERS look up delighted, go get a drink.

BILL

Wow, Della, you know that wasn't an order nor me ordering anything.

DELLA

Yeah, that's why I am sticking to this. Leafy, herbal, and delicious.

BILL

And totally not mainstream.

Della "mmms..." with a loong sip.

BILL (CONT'D)

Listen, I was expecting you at 10, so just chill out for a while.

DELLA

Ok, what's in stock? Where's Clark?

BILL

He's out sick.

DELLA

Wait, really?

BILL

Yeah, rain must have gotten to his head over the weekend.

DELLA

Ok... you're the hell or high water type and now a cold's in your way?

BILL

People need a break sometimes. Speaking of which, if you need time to visit that brother of yours, just let me know.

An odd beat. *"Am I even in the right office?"*

DELLA

...will do.

BILL

(checking watch)

Ok... nine forty... one, see me at ten.

As he goes, Della sees his COLLAR, it's ODDLY DISHEVELED as if PULLED BACK. The last time it was "like a blade."

The office HUMS. She checks her watch and phone... TIME - 9:41. The wall clock, same. Della... *"I got here 11 minutes ago..."*

DELLA

Jen, is that the real Bill or a pod person?

JEN

He's always in a pod, that office.

DELLA

Yeah, but he's *never* this chill.

DELLA'S DESK - MINUTES LATER

Della leans back. Takes a BIG SWIG of tea... WINCES, head pain. She looks at her SCREENS, plenty to do... by the computer...

...her FRAMED PICTURES: Dinner. Waffles. HANSEL & GRETEL...

...she's TAKEN IN... SEES the SCENE PLAY OUT. The siblings run from the house into a GREEN PLAIN with the woods far off, but the plain gets BIGGER, the woods move further away...

THEN -- Della stops her chair from tipping back.

She ZONES IN looking at the picture, it's back to normal. She also sees the TIME - 10:01. "*Sighs*" getting up.

INT. BILL'S OFFICE, DELLA'S WORKPLACE - MOMENTS LATER

It's still packed, but much neater, almost like her desk.

BILL

Storrow was *very picturesque*. But today... the rain must have gotten to Clark's head over the weekend.

That's weird, Della has heard this part.

BILL (CONT'D)

Do you want to take his piece?

But this is: a total surprise. She's wide eyed, happy.

BILL (CONT'D)

You did some good research for the previous story, but he ended up doing the main part. Now, since you already did the background, you take this one to the front.

DELLA

Wow... um, thanks!

BILL

Feel free to take it to the library, just remember, copies for the thumb and cloud, use this one. A new desk is a new world. Welcome.

On the desk, a FANCY THUMB DRIVE. She's as elated as confused, like when an improbable dream comes true.

EXT. COPLEY SQUARE - AFTERNOON

Green light. Della crosses Boylston Street, sees a moving gray cloud clump reflected in... the Hancock Tower which has...

...a characteristic DARK VERTICAL LINE. Just as Howard drew it. SCREECH. The White Van stops for a yellow signal jaywalker.

INT. READING HALL, LIBRARY - TWO HOURS LATER

Della closes several onscreen windows, work for her latest assignment, sits back... *"sighs."* Opens her eyes to see...

Dr. Cronen's Business Card nearby. She dives into the previously PRINTED ARTICLES, now worn and marked up.

ARTICLE #1: *"Formerly Hopeless Patients See Their Own World."*
"...socially alienated people encouraged to draw according to the dreams they like... from solo to solace..."

Gazing deep into the text, she mouths: *"Howard."*

ARTICLE #2: *"In Dreams: The World Within"*
"...our dreams echo our own subjective experience... a funhouse mirror of the real world..."

This one grabs her... somehow. She can't place it, feels off.

ARTICLE #3: *"Lucid Dreams, a Parallel Life"*
"...things which are actively thought about or persistently in our subconscious, are more likely to manifest in dreams..."

Something is definitely not quite in place. She goes back to the EHI WEBPAGE... their ARTICLES, a long list, but the one topic she definitely expected to see that's not there is...

DELLA

...Howard... why aren't you here? Or anywhere?

Suddenly, her HEAD BUMP HURTS... also her FOREARM. She leans back, puzzled by the new pain, other arm is ok- but *there!*

ACROSS the large READING HALL, a FIGURE in a LONG WHITE COAT... just standing... apparently looking at her. She sits up, scans.

The FIGURE is gone. Many other people walk about.
She shakes it off, gets up to leave.

INT. HOWARD'S SPECIAL ROOMS - AFTERNOON (PST)

Howard flips through his Colossus Album. It's precious.
He's holding back a smile. Turns the page... goes eyes wide.

The picture here: the Colossus and Lady Liberty side by side.
He's confused... fascinated... *THUMP*. Closes the Album, goes to...

...drawing an ESTATE PICTURE. Above him, and on his mind... the
Router, its lights blink. And the CEILING CABLES run along-

INT. HALLWAY, SIXTH FLOOR, EHI - CONTINUOUS

-going into all rooms. Beyond the TRANSOM WINDOWS... plenty of
comatose patients... including in ROOM #6. Below...

Dr. Cronen exits smiling, noting on a clipboard.

STAFFER ONE (O.C.)

Dr. Cronen, you have a visitor.

STAFFER ONE, with his GREEN SHIRT TAG, approaches along side
SOMEONE wearing a "FAMILY VISITOR" CARD.

Dr. Cronen "*sighs*" then immediately nods.

DR. CRONEN

You should have called.

JOHN (PRE-LAP)

I would've have done it-

INT. STUDY, JOHN'S APARTMENT - EVENING (EST)

JOHN (CONT'D)

-sooner, but... this is all of them.

The LETTERS lay chronologically. Della is already browsing.
John feels he should say something... after a few seconds-

JOHN

Tea? While you work?

Della stops, looks at him. Still resents his hiding Howard.
Really doesn't want to feel like this toward her *only* family.
She smiles, nods, "*sure.*" John feels a relief.

Within seconds, Della is back to shuffling through letters.
Many have MARGIN DOODLES. She eyes all the details.

In the LOWER RIGHT: two people at a table on lawn.

In the TOP RIGHT: a person in a front of a RECTANGULAR BUILDING with an ODD DOOR.

SIDE MARGINS: rain and shine.

Along the TOP and BOTTOM: a person going from left to right.

LETTER DATES and PICTURE PROGRESSION are RANDOM. One day, a top margin DOODLE, then a bottom or side, or a stick person further along or behind again.

Della sorts the pictures by common elements... soon ROWS form.

JOHN (O.C.)

Tea incoming.

DELLA

I found something, look...

She places the final few. The LETTERS are in THREE ROWS.

FIRST ROW, side margin: a skyline with a BLUE BUILDING goes from sunny to stormy with a YELLOW BOLT in the last doodle.

SECOND ROW, top margin: a person walks to the ODD DOOR in the RECTANGULAR BUILDING that's fully seen in the last doodle.

THIRD ROW, along the bottom: a person walks to someone at a table in a LARGE LAWN that's only in the last doodle.

DELLA (CONT'D)

...the dates don't line up, but there are three little comic strips here. I saw Howard drawing series of pictures, and this is the Hancock on Copley. Look at the slit.

First row, the BLUE BUILDING has a long dark VERTICAL LINE. John is genuinely surprised, puts the tea down, looks close.

DELLA (CONT'D)

It thundered the day I booked my ticket, but this one looks like Cronen's institute.
(rectangular building)
You visited Howard before, right?

JOHN

You think that's me?

DELLA

Could be, but... why isn't in order?

JOHN

I don't know, but you're quite the reporter, kid... it's half past six, you've been working since when?

DELLA

Mind and body in different time zones-
(head aches)
-uuugh, where's that tea?

JOHN

(handing cup)
How's your head?

DELLA

It needs some of this.
(gulp)
Milk tea?! You're lactose intolerant.

JOHN

It's just a little, recently I remembered how I used to like it.

DELLA

Almond or soy, your gut will thank me. Or stick to cider. And the back of your collar's standing up.

An odd surprise, he fixes it. She doesn't finish the tea.

DELLA (CONT'D)

Cronen probably hasn't spotted these. When'd you last contact him?

JOHN

A while ago. I've never talked much with him.

DELLA

He's taking care of your son, basically.

JOHN

...I know... but we're so far apart and he's got those studies.

DELLA

Come on, John. You're *consenting* to Howard being there? You're his *legal* guardian. You were shown his accommodations...? Right?

JOHN

Yes.

DELLA

(deep sigh)

Think of Howard like he's *your* child. The way you treated me.

Ambience. A confused shade of guilt befalls John.

DELLA (CONT'D)

But speaking of Cronen's studies, did you notice that Howard's in *none* of the published articles, yet seems to be Cronen's main patient?

Her head pain pulses again, she resigns to the milk tea with INTERRUPTED GULPS... just like Howard drank his milk.

JOHN

I browsed that, but it's not my field. I just know he's taking care of Howard in a way I know I can't.

Della puts down the cup, that cold look of resentment is back much to John's displeasure.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I... haven't been the best father figure. I should... see him, too.

Ambience... mutual nods.

INT. LIVING ROOM, JOHN'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

The few FAMILY PHOTOS line a shelf section. On the low table, the Picture Envelope and more of the FULL FAMILY photos.

Della and John are on the couch looking at the Photo Album.

JOHN

Ever since you grew up, it's been like this. But a steady job, a nice place, and my books... it's enough.

(off her look)

Hey, don't worry, you have your father's personality, I don't.

Della smiles, mouths "ok." Then notices... HANSEL & GRETEL.

DELLA

When did you first read me that story? Did I ask you to read it?

JOHN
 ...yeah, you did. You said you liked
 the picture. Here...

He goes back into the STUDY... seconds later...

...he's back with a NICE PICTURE BOOK: "*Hansel & Gretel*" with
 the same cover as the SMALL FRAMED PICTURE: a boy and girl
 run toward the woods from a house in a large clearing.

DELLA
 When you visited Howard, did you
 read it to him?

JOHN
 I did, actually. He liked it, too.
 Even drew a version of this cover.

DELLA
 A story about a brother and sister.
 And we both liked it... our way of
 remembering before knowing.

Off their mutual look...

INT. HOWARD'S SPECIAL ROOMS - LATE AFTERNOON (PST)

Howard pins a SIXTH PICTURE to the ESTATE SERIES:

(1) A mansion... (2) with a large garden... (3) with wide lawns...
 (4) a big estate... (5) larger with a RED CAR... (6) even larger
 with the faint frame of an SUV next to the parked RED CAR.

DR. CRONEN (O.C.)
 Very good progress, Howard. But
 remember, that one is for later.

He's pointing at Howard's Colossus Album. Howard reluctantly
 closes it, places it on his nearby SATCHEL.

HOWARD
 Will she visit again?

DR. CRONEN
 Yes, Howard. She will.

Howard puts his hand to his heart... a faint paper *CRUMPLE*... his
 GAZE moves... to the PICTURE of two KIDS by a BIG HOUSE in a
 FOREST CLEARING, his version of the "*Hansel & Gretel*" cover.

His deep gaze MOVES DOWN... to the margin with-

CLOSE UP: -scribbled writing, "*brother & sister.*"

INT. TROLLEY CAR, BEACON STREET - EVENING (EST)

Della sits, eyes deep into: *"In Dreams: The World Within"*

"...dreams reflect our desires, fears, and everyday experience... things that have slipped beneath the veil of the conscious... we've seen it all before, just don't always remember."

As if on cue, she looks... the WHITE VAN approaches from ahead. Della, face pressed to the window, watches it pass by.

This is where she saw the head-on accident. She's taken in... the trolley's HUM IS MET BY... DRUMMING rain...

PFFT! The trolley doors open: Coolidge Corner, her stop.

EXT. COOLIDGE CORNER, BOSTON - MOMENTS LATER

Della steps off. No rain... nor clouds... and this is well down the road from where she just saw the Van.

People walk, stare blankly into phone screens or just ahead. They seem too much like NPCs. Della *"sighs"* tired, walks off.

INT. LIVING ROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - EVENING, LATER

Della is on the couch deep into more reading. Eyes tired, she puts down the article, rubs her forehead, picks up another.

Article: *"Formerly Hopeless Patients See Their Own World."*
"...if it can be imagined, then, on some level, it can be experienced... dreams are experiences... we can create them..."

Della's HEAD BUMP and FOREARM ache again. TIME - 7:33. She pushes the PAPERS aside. Tea cup, empty. Another *"sigh."*

She slumps on the couch, curls up. Her eyes droop... CLOSE... She tries turning over... CAN'T...

She doesn't see it, but: TIME changes to - 7:44... Exactly 11 minutes later... just like before...

Della OPENS her eyes, SEES that she's in-

DARK SPACE

-a gray light bubble amidst DARKNESS WITHOUT END.

She's FLOATING in FETAL POSITION. Above, passing ceiling lights, yet: no ceiling, no sounds, no color...

NED'S VOICE
...ey, sleepyhead!

INT. LIVING ROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

She JOLTS up breathing deep, zones in... HEAD and FOREARM ache.

NED

How was your nap? You feel ok?

DELLA

Yeah, just, ugh... what time is it?

NED

Eight twenty... eight.

DELLA

I closed my eyes like a minute ago.

NED

Then you had a good nap. But now-

He swoops down, lifts her up to... FETAL POSITION in his arms. She can't help but see... this was *just* in the vision.

NED (CONT'D)

-let's go to bed. You really ok?

DELLA

Yeah... let's go, honeymoon express, but massage first.

NED

Sure! We aim to keep everyone comfortable!

And she's *heard that* before. Off her look hiding disquiet...

INT. BEDROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - HOUR LATER

Ned sleeps. Della feels ODDLY AWAKE. Reaches for her HANDBAG, pulls out the EHI Building photo... with the ROUNDED WINDOW... it has a BLUR... like one of Howard's MANSION WINDOW pictures.

Her aches return... eyes heavy... "yawn..." they close, she slumps... the photo twirls down... next to the PICTURE of Howard...

...his EYES... turn RED.

DARK SPACE

The light bubble. Greyed out colors. Passing overhead lights. Della floats in FETAL POSITION... just like she was carried...

...a gentle plop onto a SINGLE BED... She can only move her eyes.

Nearby, a ceiling light, still NO CEILING. The FLOOR ENDS a few feet from the bed. Darkness without end. Distant murmurs.

There *must be* some shape to this place- but *there!*

A HUMAN FIGURE... just within the range of the light. Then... ANOTHER. Too far to be discernible. Della's heart *POUNDS*.

BLACK

...*DRUMMING* water...

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

Della jolts awake, sweaty and alone. The shower is running. Her alarm *RINGS*. Her headache pounds. Forearm, too. "*Ugh...*"

INT. KITCHEN, DELLA'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Della sips from her tea mug. Ned's lunch, already made.

NED

See a pro. Period. Money doesn't matter. I just landed that huge contract, *remember?*

"*Remember*" again. He's probably right, but she won't show it.

NED (CONT'D)

Well?

She looks him straight, nods.

NED (CONT'D)

Ok, dig. You're good at that.

Della's headache pulses again, wince. The pain seems to come at particular moments.

NED (CONT'D)

I want to see you bright and sunny, so figure out where this nightmare thing took you. Anyway, gotta run.

And he's gone. No cheek kiss. Della sits alone... mouthing some of the words since she's heard many of them before. When?

EXT. BOSTON SKYLINE - MIDDAY

Gray-white overcast like a dirty sheet of paper.

EXT. BOYLSTON STREET - SAME TIME

CLOSE UP: a printed article, *"Lucid Dreams, a Parallel Life"*

Della exits a sandwich shop with a DRINK. Her eyes deep into the reading: *"...piecing together remembered dreams reveals a parallel life... a melody to the bass line of normal life."*

Not looking up, she DOESN'T SEE people move out of her way like video game NPCs. She is passing a RECTANGULAR BUILDING-

EXT. LIBRARY, BOYLSTON STREET - CONTINUOUS

-enters a REVOLVING DOOR... across the street... unseen by her (and likely you until now): the WHITE COAT FIGURE... staring..

INT. LOBBY, LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Sign: *"No Food or Drinks."* Her drink is nearly full. Lobby far side, FIVE SMALL COUCHES by stairs. Della sits.

Back to the article: *"...things she heard, people she saw... in the days leading up to the episode... repeated in her dream... albeit in a different order, one could call it dream logic."*

DELLA

Dream logic... just like...

She takes out HOWARD'S LETTERS. There are more DOODLE SERIES throughout the various letters. She sips while reading.

One doodle: A person walking to a RECTANGULAR BUILDING with an ODD DOOR... something about how it's drawn, as if with added lines to show the Odd Door moving back and forth really fast.

The accompanying letter, the first of that series:
"I want to tell Della to be careful in the rain."

A doodle series: a dark blue rectangle gets brighter, turns into a light blue oval with the Sun in it.

On the series' final letter: *"I am happy it stopped today."*

Finally, a series with a RED CAR approaching a large mansion.
"Looking forward to your visit" on each one.

In this series, there's a tower, looks like a RADIO MAST, moving across the page until... the only apparent placement match is a YELLOW STICK FIGURE with an UP STRETCHED ARM.

DELLA (CONT'D)

...these, they were out of order-

HEAD PAIN! Also her ARM... and SHIN. *"Ugh..."* but *there!*

ACROSS the LOBBY, the WHITE COAT FIGURE by the door among usual traffic. Della definitely sees it now. She scoops up her stuff, heads to the REVOLVING DOOR.

UNSEEN BY HER: on FOUR of the FIVE SMALL COUCHES... PEOPLE are laying... as if sleeping.

The WHITE COAT FIGURE, now out in the street, still staring. Della filters through the REVOLVING DOOR-

EXT. LIBRARY, BOYLSTON STREET - CONTINUOUS

-she's looking all around... where...? *There!* Across the street... the WHITE COAT FIGURE... just stares. Crossing signal: RED.

Della tries to get a good look... traffic keeps whipping by. The FIGURE writes on a CLIPBOARD then again looks at her.

The signal turns YELLOW. Della steps forw- BRAKES SCREECH! Shocked, she falls back spilling her drink.

BLACK

Loud DRUMMING rain.

FADE IN AS:

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)
...a world of his own with those pictures.

INT. REAR LEFT PASSENGER SEAT, CAR - NIGHT - VISION

Della sees the Boy, EYES RED, an intense right gaze at her. Her heart POUNDS out of her chest.

WOMAN (O.C.)
...he needs a real friend in his life.

His EYES GLOW. Panic! HEADLIGHTS ENGULF the car interior... BRAKES SCREECH! CRASH!

EXT. CROSSING, BOYLSTON STREET - DAY

Della hits ground as a WHITE VAN stops inches from her. A few seconds, she zones in...

VAN DRIVER
Are you with us? ...I'm terribly sorry about that. Close call.

"-what? I've heard that before!" His phone RINGS, he answers.

VAN DRIVER (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Tell them I'll be 10 minutes past,
 but I *am* coming.

"*That too!*" Della is unhurt. Some passers-by look on blandly. Others carry on oblivious. The WHITE COAT FIGURE... gone.

VAN DRIVER (CONT'D)
 Are you ok?

DELLA
 Yeah, um... it happens. I feel
 stupid, imagine-

VAN DRIVER
 I should feel stupid. How's your
 head?

Della's eyes widen to infinity... she's heard the latter and...
said the former...

DELLA
 Don't worry about it. I have to g-

The LIBRARY - RECTANGULAR! The ODD DOOR, the REVOLVING DOOR...
'moving back and forth really fast' like in Howard's doodle.

Off of her wide eyed look...

EXT. SIDE STREET, NEAR LIBRARY - MINUTES LATER

Quiet, no traffic. Della rubs her HEAD, FOREARM, and SHIN.
 Looks around... the White Coat Figure... nope. Ok, ease down.

She takes out Cronen's CARD, eyes it close.

DR. CRONEN (PRE-LAP)
 Della! Calling so soon?

EXT. SIDE STREET, NEAR LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Della leans on a traffic barrier, one hand to her head.

DELLA
 Yes. I think I need your help.

INT. DR. CRONEN'S OFFICE, EHI BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Cronen is just entering. His clipboard is in one hand.

DR. CRONEN
 Oh? What's going on?

INTERCUT: DELLA / DR. CRONEN

DELLA
My nightmares...

DR. CRONEN
Go on...

DELLA
...disappeared for a while. I thought
it was due to the closure of seeing
Howard, but they're back...
(emotion breaks in)
...and I think they're getting worse.

DR. CRONEN
Ok, ok. First, don't worry. It's
uncomfortable, but you're whole
place in life has, in a sense, been
redefined. That's never easy.

DELLA
(immediately)
Do I need treatment? Like Howard?

DR. CRONEN
Listen, this whole thing has hit
you hard. It's one reason your
uncle and I were cautious.

DELLA
Or is it this head bump?

DR. CRONEN
I would say... there's probably more
for you to remember.

Della staggers, weak knees, sits on the traffic barrier.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
Then, only then, will you have
closure. So we can, shall we say,
put your mind and body at rest.
When can you visit again?

INT. HOWARD'S ROOM, SPECIAL WING, EHI - SAME TIME

Howard sits, looks sad. Takes a gulp of milk... looks calmer.
In front of him, a drawing of... a WHITE VAN.

He swipes the sheet away, it spin glides, lands on the floor...

CLOSE ON SHEET: another lands on top of it, a WHITE VAN near a person... then closer to the person... even closer... a few more... the person is fallen before the Van.

The ENTRY DOOR opens, Staffer One enters.

STAFFER ONE

Howard, the Doctor will be awake soon to check your work.

Howard nods, plain face. Inside, he's unhappy. He looks at his colored pencils, grabs one... holds it tight like a dagger.

Looking at his Colossus Album sticking out from his Satchel, Howard brings a hand to his chest... a faint *CRUMPLE*...

INT. DR. CRONEN'S OFFICE, EHI BUILDING - DAY

On his desk, Howard's picture: the COUNTRYSIDE ESTATE with a RED CAR parked in front. And also a BIG SUV that looks like a close match in art style, but *definitely not* the same.

OUT OF FOCUS just beyond the picture: the REVOLVER STAND.

DELLA (O.C.)

Thank you, this means a lot.

DR. CRONEN

Ok, Della. See you soon.

Click. The call ends. He puts the picture down, sees... all six ESTATE PICTURES in order. He smiles. Profoundly happy.

EXT. SIDE STREET, NEAR LIBRARY - SAME TIME

Della feels a bit better, no pains... no White Coat Figure. FOUR PEOPLE walk independently of each other on the street.

GLITCH! For JUST A SECOND the people APPEAR to be on the ground, as if SLEEPING - just like the FOUR PEOPLE on the SMALL COUCHES in the LIBRARY LOBBY - but then KEEP WALKING.

Della shakes her head. GLITCH! She squints. Normal again.

One WOMAN walks while on the PHONE, passes Della making an awkward eye contact...

WALKING WOMAN

...that would make him just like his sister...

She continues. Della rubs her head. Shivers... she's *scared*. And up above, it resembles-

OVERCAST SKY

-a sheet of paper... a COLORED PENCIL scrapes by, makes a line. Then another. It now SEAMLESSLY *is* a sheet of paper-

INT. HOWARD'S ROOM, SPECIAL WING, EHI - CONTINUOUS

-as a SHAPE begins to form. A grid? Howard draws more lines, begins shading. Nearby... thermos steam... router lights.

The SHAPE... a WINDOW... a GRAY DAY beyond... grayer... ever more...

INT. LIVING ROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

BEYOND WINDOW: a cloudy gradient of gray to dark thickens.

On the TV, an oddball sci-fi movie, *eXistenZ*. Allegra: "*It's like real life. There's just enough to make it interesting.*"

Ned is tapping at his laptop. He saves a big file, proud of a day's work. Della enters, puts on a tired poker face, smiles.

NED

Set! You're locked in place now!

(to Della)

Hey... dinner's on the stove.

DELLA (PRE-LAP)

Wait, really?

INT. LIVING ROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Ned sets plates of CANNED PASTA on the table... beneath Della's poker face, she remembers...

MEMORY FLASH: Howard's pasta cans on his low table.

NED

Nostalgia, used to eat it as a kid.

DELLA

A kid's mind is happy with the simplest things. Maybe I should look there.

A pulse of pain... a small wince that probably wasn't hidden.

NED

Speaking of looking...?

DELLA

...yes. I'll... visit EHI again, soon.

He finds that hard to believe, sheer disappointment.

DELLA (CONT'D)
 If they helped my brother, why
 can't they help m-?

NED
Della, it's... you're a hell or high
 water type... now a bad dream's got
 you gunning it cross-country?

DELLA
 Try waking up for weeks heart
 pounding before ten hours at the
 office.

NED
 I am no stranger to long office
 hours, but I'm not stupid.

That was a bitter curveball.

NED (CONT'D)
 Look... what I'm saying is, many
 people don't sleep well and work
 overtime. So help with this is
 right around the corner... Right?

This all sounds familiar. The TV goes to STATIC. Click. Off.
 Ned turns to his laptop and papers, "*sighs*."

NED (CONT'D)
 I still have some things here. You,
 get some rest so you can finally
 figure this out.

And he's at his laptop as if Della's not even there. On the
 table... the plates have only SAUCE REMNANTS. Did they eat...?

Off of Della's disquieted look...

INT. BEDROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

FROM THE LIVING ROOM: sounds of the TV and Ned working.

Lights off. Della is as frustrated as afraid. "*I've always
 found answers...*" Eyes HEAVY... droop... close... the lights TURN ON.
 She opens her eyes to find herself on-

DARK SPACE

-the SINGLE BED with PLASTIC HEAD and FOOTBOARDS.

FIVE LIGHTS hang from nothing. She can only move her eyes.
 The TWO FIGURES... their faces just beyond the light.

A THIRD FIGURE appears behind... grabs their COLLARS... yanks!
They struggle on the edge of the light... VISUALLY CONTORT.

Della's eyes bloom wide, her HEART *POUNDS* out of her chest,
she's breathless, can't make a sound... she jolts-

INT. BEDROOM, DELLA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

-awake. Pulse racing. Alone. From the outside, *DRUMMING* rain.
From the kitchen, *WHISTLING*...

CUTAWAY: steam blowing from a kettle.

INT. KITCHEN, DELLA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Della enters... sees Ned. Looks at the TIME - 6:50am.

Ned eats MILKY oatmeal, sips a large tea mug... one of Howard's
habits and one of Della's... he hasn't noticed Della.

He eats sloppy, like a kid, stares NPC-like until-

DELLA

Hey, when did you go to sleep? And
when did you get up?

NED

Last night soon after you. Then I
got up a little while ago.

DELLA

I must have been totally out.

NED

Good, slept like a log. Still, go
see that shrink sometime.

DELLA

Who? Cronen?

Ned just nods. This is odd. He's so... mechanical.

NED

It might go well, I can always
help.

DELLA

Ok... good to know. Haven't seen you
eat oatmeal in a wh-

DELLA'S POV: GLITCH! For a SECOND she's ON THE GROUND looking
at a CEILING LIGHT hanging from DARKNESS. Then she's BACK UP
in front of Ned. He finishes his breakfast. Gulps tea.

NED
It's not bad. I shouldn't
skip breakfast.

HOWARD (O.C.)
(muted)
...shouldn't skip breakfast...

"Howard said that!" She rubs her eyes, a glint of fear.
All of this is unnoticed by Ned.

NED (CONT'D)
You're tired, this whole
thing has hit you hard.

DR. CRONEN (O.C.)
(muted)
...whole thing... hit you hard...

"...and Cronen said that!" She squints, looks around, can't
make any sense of it. Ned just eats staring blankly.

DELLA'S POV: GLITCH! Now the TWO FIGURES are seen there.

NED (CONT'D)(O.C.)
You should be laying down.

Della feels the ironic timing like a cruel joke.

NED'S POV: Della VISUALLY CONTORTS like she saw in her dream.

To her, these are the GLITCHES, but Ned doesn't react... just
gets up and goes... Della sees the back of his COLLAR, it's
disheveled and...

...the door closes... she is alone... looks at the TIME - 7:00am.

GLITCH! Longer now, she sees... the DARK SPACE... the room around
the BED - five ceiling lights, two contorting figures, and
the third standing still behind them...

TIME ticks to... 7:01. *Exactly 11 minutes* since she got here.
Della feels a spine-shudder... shivers. Her nerves... shredded.

EXT. BOSTON SKYLINE

Miserable, gray with aggressive curtains of rain.

INT. BILL'S OFFICE, DELLA'S WORKPLACE - DAY

It seems to be more cleaned up now. As if to Della's liking.

BILL
Sure, we're all in for Fall... but we
aim to keep everyone comfortable.

Beneath a poker face smile, Della remembers those very words...

INT. DR. CRONEN'S OFFICE, EHI BUILDING - DAY

On his desk, Howard's PICTURE: Hansel and Gretel at a wooden
table on a nice grass lawn next to a mansion on a CLEAR DAY.

Next to it, the prop stand with the OLD REVOLVER.

DR. CRONEN (O.C.)
 ...he'll be very happy to see you
 again so soon... Ok, next weekend...
 You too, Della. Bye for now.

He smiles hanging up. Looks to Howard's ESTATE PICTURES.
 The BIG SUV... he touches it up a little with a pen. Perfect.

RAINY SKY - TIME LAPSE

PULLING BACK as it clears up to light puffy clouds-

INT. ROUNDED WINDOW - SEAMLESS

-washed away as the Sun shines. It's a *'light blue oval with the Sun in it'* just as one of Howard's letter doodles.

EXT. EHI BUILDING - CONTINUOUS, AFTERNOON

Della is crossing the street, eyes on the ROUNDED WINDOW.
 As if on cue, she looks... the WHITE VAN idles at the light.

The sun glares... she can't see a driver... hurries on.

INT. LOBBY, SPECIAL WING, EHI - MOMENTS LATER

Della flips out her "FAMILY VISITOR" CARD.

The Clerk, "ahh..." hands her AN ENVELOPE with her name on it.
 Inside... a note:

Della, we are in another building today. My staff's errand car is at the side of the building. Take the side stairwell and come to 373 Redondo Vista. The GPS is set. -Dr. Cronen

Still in the envelope: a car key.

INT. STAIRWELL, SPECIAL WING, EHI - MOMENTS LATER

At the bottom of the boxy spiral... the door is open.

DELLA
 Watch your step.

She descends... *FOOTFALLS* until... the first landing. *FOOTFALLS...*
 one floor down... *FOOTFALLS...* second landing... a *PASSING BLUR...*

The *ROUTERS!* She turns to see -- *CLUNK!* Below... The third
 floor *DOOR SWINGS OPEN*, a JANITOR sets a "wet floor" sign.

JANITOR
 Watch your step, please.

Della, a nervous smile, remembers: "...a funhouse mirror of the real world." Yet this isn't all that fun. But the BLUR...

...an old SPLOTCH on the wall with STREAKS coming out... cables?

EXT. SIDE ACCESS ROAD, EHI - MOMENTS LATER

Della sees... a RED CAR, an inconspicuous Easter egg.

INT. RED CAR, ACCESS ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Della turns on the GPS. 373 Redondo Vista looks far out. Uneasy, but the answers must be there. She starts the car.

EXT. SIDE, EHI BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Della drives out past a BUS STOP. On the building... floor 6... the Rounded Window. Covers drawn.

I/E. RED CAR, COUNTRY ROAD - LATER, STILL AFTERNOON

The city FADES OUT, countryside FADES IN. Sparse traffic. Cell phone signal bars are at one. GPS still indicates ahead. A tall RADIO MAST appears around a bend.

DELLA

Must be somewhere, finally.

On the phone. Service bars climb to two... three -- *RRRUMBLE!* It rushes past from the front with a quick DOPPLER EFFECT.

She SKIDS to a STOP. Quiet. The phone *DINGS*. A text from... Dr. Cronen: "*Finding your way all right? Call if need be.*"

She goes to dial- sees a GATED ENTRANCE among thick roadside trees up ahead. The GPS screen indicates this spot. "*Ok...*"

I/E. RED CAR, GATED ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Open gate, old style... like in a previously seen drawing...

DELLA

...Howard's special place...

One bend down the road, a MODERN GATE with SECURITY. Della shows her "FAMILY VISITOR" CARD. The Gate opens to-

EXT. ESTATE DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

-wide lawns, perfectly manicured. Up ahead, a MANSION, the center of a COUNTRY ESTATE... just as Howard drew it.

Off to the side, beyond trees: the tall RADIO MAST. The Sun hangs high, shadows are minimal all around.

I/E. RED CAR, FRONT, MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

Della parks. Texts back to Dr. Cronen: "*Just arrived.*"
POCKETS the CAR KEY. Turns to see Staffer One who's-

STAFFER ONE
Please, this way.

-just there? His GREEN SHIRT TAG has no name. He motions again and starts to walk. Della... follows to catch up.

DELLA
Where's Dr. Cronen?

STAFFER ONE
He'll be able to join you shortly.

DELLA
This place, Howard drew it, but it wasn't mentioned on the Institute website or in any publications.

It has nice grounds and a hard to pin style. There are many people, STAFFERS and PATIENTS about. Seems like a spa resort.

STAFFER ONE
It doesn't need publicity, it's just to care for those who need it.

Della isn't entirely convinced. Keeps her poker face to mask a powder keg of unease, curiosity, and determination.

EXT. SIDE, MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

They round a tight corner, pass some TALL OUTDOOR VASES with PINK FLOWERS, again like in a drawing by Howard. And *there-*

-in a nice grass lawn at some grouped PICNIC TABLES, building a large LEGO HOUSE... Howard adds FLAT GREEN PIECES all around. Wears a his shoulder Satchel.

The Staffer motions for Della to join him.

STAFFER ONE
The Doctor will join you soon.

She nods, goes to Howard. The Staffer leaves.

DELLA
Hello, big brother.

Howard is happy, hugs Della who suddenly feels better: her head, forearm, shin... no pains. Howard goes back to the Lego, focuses on an elusive perfection.

DELLA
So... *this* is your special place?

HOWARD
Yeah... I come here sometimes.

DELLA
And you build here instead of draw?

HOWARD
Yeah, I built here.

He displays the LEGO HOUSE, impressive and similar in color and shape to the MANSION. Della eyes it from all around.

DELLA
Wow. That's really something.

HOWARD
You want to stay here?

DELLA
I can stay here for a while.

HOWARD
You have to *want* to stay here...
otherwise... you should go...

DELLA
For now, I want to stay here with
you.

HOWARD
You've been in here too long...

DELLA
Howard, I just got here.

HOWARD
You don't really want to be away
from him... but Dr. Cronen-

In the LEGO MANSION... 2nd floor window... a WHITE LEGO FIGURE.
Della's eyes widen, shoot to a 2nd floor MANSION WINDOW-

-a WHITISH BLUR like Howard drew? No! The WHITE COAT FIGURE!

HOWARD (CONT'D)
-is always watching.

POV THROUGH WINDOW: Gazing down like the CEILING CAMERA in
Howard's Room. Della turns back to the table-

-to the window again... both FIGURES are gone.

DELLA

Howard... what's going on? What is this place?

HOWARD

I can make him stop, but you need to want to be here... or... like Hansel and Gretel...

GLITCH! The DARK SPACE... with the WHITE COAT FIGURE. On the lawn, Della stumbles knees weak, shocked.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

...run away... you don't-

GLITCH! The BED in the DARK SPACE. The WHITE COAT FIGURE is writing on a CLIPBOARD. The OTHER TWO visually contort.

Della's heart *POUNDS*. Her head, forearm, shin... SHOOTING PAIN.

HOWARD (CONT'D) (O.C.)

-want to be here.

GLITCH! The DARK SPACE... the WHITE COAT FIGURE looks at her. The TWO FIGURES still contort. Della... can't... move...

On the lawn, she's swaying, writhing, her legs are jelly.

Howard stands still... and sad... his sister is suffering.

DELLA'S POV: Howard looks at something behind her... she turns... the world SPLUTTERS... TURNS GRAY... TILTS and she-

HOWARD

I won't let y-!

DELLA

...How-

DARK SPACE

-lays still on the SINGLE BED. METAL frame and guard rails. Headboard by a WALL. Nearby... TWO FIGURES, faces just beyond the light. All is still... Della's *BREATHING* and *HEARTBEAT*.

The THIRD FIGURE grips OTHER TWO's collars CHOKING them. Della gazes right at them... her nerves slowly calm down...

The TWO FIGURES begin to VISUALLY CONTORT, but... the process CAN'T PROCEED... it's broken... her focus is disrupting it.

Della's *BREATHS* and *HEARTBEAT* ease down... the LIGHT EXPANDS... There are FOUR MORE BEDS here. The FRONT TWO FIGURES...

...Ned and John. The THIRD... has a LONG WHITE COAT. Della sits-

EXT. SIDE, MANSION - CONTINUOUS

-heaving breaths... zones in -- *RRRUMBLE!!* Louder than before. Della regains focus... sees that TREES around the grounds are now much FURTHER BACK... her gaze comes to-

-the tables: FLAT GREEN PIECES cover the whole table space with the Lego mansion in the middle.

DR. CRONEN (O.C.)
Don't worry, we've got-

She whips around, sees the Doctor with the two Staffers.

Staffer #1 holds Howard whose face is a gradient from unhappy to uncomfortable. Staffer #2 has Howard's SACHEL.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
-you. Della, terribly sorry, but this isn't working. I can explain everything, in my office.

She's not trusting anybody right now.

DELLA
Explain it here. Now.

DR. CRONEN
Well... there is a lot going on in your life, adding to your stress.

DELLA
No, no, no, this isn't about me, it's about him, *my brother*.

Howard seems to feign calmness, thoughts deep on the-

DR. CRONEN
It's also about you. Allow me to speak honestly and in full, ok?

-RADIO MAST behind him, the Doctor, and Staffers. Della sees it starting to GLOW YELLOW, her poker face belies nothing.

DELLA
...go right ahead.

DR. CRONEN
Piles of work, little time for your marriage, *and* a sick brother. That can shock even the best of us. You should, in my professional opinion, ease down. You're going against too much current.

Della seems to agree... nods... thinking about the past few days.

DELLA
Why do you need both of us?

DR. CRONEN
What?

DELLA
Howard and me. You need *us*. For an experiment.

A veil of nervousness hidden by a quick retort-

DR. CRONEN
I don't follow you, Della, you need-

With CUTAWAYS to the mentioned ARTICLES and MOMENTS:

DELLA
Let's see if you can follow *your own words*: 'formerly hopeless patients see their own world.' You encouraged yours to draw their dreams, 'a funhouse mirror' for 'socially alienated people.' But Howard is more, 'he can *create* lucid dreams.' He didn't just draw this building, but every detail here: the gate, the driveway, *the car I took*. 'We've seen it all, just don't remember.' Well I do.

Dr. Cronen can't help by be impressed. Smiles. Nods along.

DELLA (CONT'D)
And I gave him 'a creativity spurt' that you want to rein in. It's what you've been doing to him all this time. Lucid dreams can 'potentially heal trauma,' but that's *not* what you're doing. *What is this place?*

DR. CRONEN
Quite the reporter you are, but-

Della doesn't miss a beat, looks to Howard whose mind churns.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
-allow me to clarify-

DELLA
Howard, draw what you want-

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
-NO!

The Doctor can't hide his nervousness, sees she's on to him.

DELLA

You *know* he can tear this place to shreds, it's *his* lucid dream. One off the cuff thought 'I wish these jerks just go away' *then* what?

Howard's mind is a storm... deep "*breaths*," hand to his chest. The Staffers are nervous... Dr. Cronen plays a backup move.

DR. CRONEN

Della, this is irresponsible! You *actually* think you are inside a picture? Remember, you called me for help, so *allow me* to help you.

DELLA

If we're not inside a picture or dream, then what's that?

Around the RADIO MAST, the golden light intensifies like it's being PENCIL SHADED DARKER, lines appear in STROKES...

DR. CRONEN

Howard! Not here-!

RRRUMBLE! A new ENTITY enters this world... a RIPPLE rushes past them with a quick DOPPLER EFFECT displacing everything slightly like a stone falling into a pond.

Della has kept her balance, is going for Howard who yunks his SATCHEL... they RUN and for a few seconds see...

The RADIO MAST is now a GOLDEN MAN with a TORCH high above his head standing over the forest. Stunning, beautiful.

They keep pace even as Howard smiles with an epiphany...
"...that's mine and Della likes it."

Dr. Cronen and his Staffers zone in - they really didn't see that coming - but *there!*

DR. CRONEN

Don't let them leave!

Della stops at the tight corner, tips the TALL OUTDOOR VASES, blocks the way with a pink flowery mess.

EXT. FRONT, MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

Howard's SATCHEL STRAP gets caught on a railing.

DELLA

Howard, come on! Leave it!

He yanks, BREAKS the strap taking the SATCHEL. They run...

A FAMILIAR IMAGE: brother & sister rushing from a HOUSE in a BIG CLEARING... but now... it's up to the RED CAR.

Nearby, there is also a BIG SUV... *the* SUV from the drawing. It's a close match in style, but *definitely not* the same.

I/E. RED CAR, FRONT, MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Howard fidgets all about, holds his SATCHEL close. Della digs into her pocket... the CAR KEY is gone, "*shit!*" She realizes...

DELLA

Howard, can you make a car key?

HOWARD

This is Dr. Cronen's car. We take it here sometimes.

DELLA

I know, but this is your world. You can make it as you want.

HOWARD

Do you like it?

DELLA

Yes, but we need to change a few things.

He's breathing hard, head pounding, confused.

DELLA (CONT'D)

We can make it better, how you really want, but first the keys.

(arm on Howard)

Howard, please let me drive. I don't want this world. I want you to change it, for us, your family.

HOWARD

Eleven minutes to change... eleven minutes... but... ugh...

He "*gasps,*" his EYES GLOW RED! Della has a flash of terror! *THUNK!* The left side doors POP OPEN. *VROOM!* The engine,

The Staffers are at the railing, Dr. Cronen following.

DELLA
Thank you, Howard. Get in!

Howard stumbles in the back. Della slides behind the wheel.

DELLA
Belt!

Click, click! She floors it, swerves around, *ZOOMS* down the ESTATE DRIVEWAY running down the now much bigger lawns.

EXT. FRONT, MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Cronen and the Staffers *"cough up"* dust and gravel. The Doctor slams the CAR KEY to the ground, is striding for-

DR. CRONEN
Damn it! Call gate security!

-the BIG SUV which starts by itself.

I/E. RED CAR, ESTATE DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Speeding along towards the grounds' tree line.

Della, white knuckles on the wheel, recalls Ned's words:

DELLA
'A bad dream's got you gunning it cross-country?' Yeah, actually.

Howard is tense, *"mumbling out"* his thoughts and worries.

HOWARD
Eleven minutes, for a change, soon.

The GATE - in the tree line - comes into view... it's closing.

DELLA
Howard, keep it open!

HOWARD
I can't.

DELLA
It's your world!

HOWARD
The gate is Dr. Cronen's... eleven minutes now...

They're practically on top of gate- *RRRUMBLE!!!*
The ROAD STRETCHES OUT. The GATE is far off again.

MIRRORS: the BIG SUV is catching up.

I/E. BIG SUV, ESTATE DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Cronen drives "muttering" curses, gazing hawkishly.

I/E. RED CAR, ESTATE DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Bouncing along. Ahead, the GATE-

DELLA

Howard! Draw for you! For us!

EXT. GATE, ESTATE DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

-is moving BACK and FORTH like a tug of war between-

INT. RED CAR, ESTATE DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

-Howard who's digging in his SATCHEL, but STARING AHEAD, focused even more than on the Lego House or his drawings.

INT. BIG SUV, ESTATE DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Cronen is focused all the same, right at that GATE.

I/E. VEHICLES, ESTATE DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Della eyes the GATE... it's fidgeting back and forth... IT OPENS.

The cars shoot through, swerve along the GATED ROAD bend. And whip out the OLD GATE, turning, almost drifting-

INT. RED CAR, COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

-Della whirls the wheel, straightens the car... realizes...

DELLA

He didn't want us to crash... we need to wake up... Howard, make a car in front of us.

Smiling warm at him through the rearview mirror-

DELLA (CONT'D)

It'll be the last one, I promise.

Howard is tense, nods. Takes ART SUPPLIES from his SATCHEL.

HOWARD

I have to make this one different.

I/E. BIG SUV, COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Cronen starts to line up for a pit maneuver... the world begins to darken... the weather! Up in the-

-SKY, sunny to gray as clouds roll over in seconds.

I/E. RED CAR, COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Howard is drawing... a CAR IN RAIN. Aggressive blue strokes... rain starts *DRUMMING*, the sky darkens, thunder *CRACKS*.

Della tenses at the wheel, knows - DREADS - what's next...

...LIGHTS SHINE... oncoming HEADLIGHTS... Della's heart skips... it's a VAN - *THE WHITE VAN* - the Ghost... it veers into their lane...

INT. BIG SUV, COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Driving calmer now-

DR. CRONEN

Ok, Howard. We'll do it the hard way.

INT. RED CAR, COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Della is in a parallel of her own nightmare... turns to Howard.

DELLA

We're doing this for us.

SLOW MOTION: He's comforted as Della shines a warm, big sister smile... HEADLIGHTS ENGULF the windshield... CRASH!

The car interior CONVULSES and SHOOTS OUT of-

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, COMA WARD, EHI - NIGHT

-Della's wide eyes that now see... a BRIGHT CEILING LIGHT.

Beyond a WINDOW, the VOID OF NIGHT. She's in a single bed... metal frame and guard rails, plastic head and footboards.

NOT the DARK SPACE. There are FOUR OTHER BEDS... all occupied. *BUZZING!* Where? *BZZZ!* A COUCH... SOMEONE is asleep on it...

...JOHN with a blanket and water bottles, both fresh and spent. His WRIST STRAP *BUZZES*. He wakes up, goes eyes wide.

DELLA

John...?

JOHN

Della...! I... came out here after I heard you fell... into a... a coma.

Della, on instinct, goes to poker face mode.

DELLA
What's that on your wrist?

JOHN
Oh, it signals when you're awake.

DELLA
How long was I out...?

John nervously FIDGETS with his EAR. He's still groggy.

DELLA (CONT'D)
Well?

JOHN
Four days.

Della, deep breaths, gets her bearings. Sees a WARDROBE.

DELLA
Ok look, I don't know how to say this, but Cronen is experimenting with Howard in this 'special wing.'

JOHN
What? 'Experimenting?'

Della CHUGS a water bottle... above, a CEILING ROUTER with faint lines running out of the room.

DELLA
See that? That's some sort of signal that Cronen's using.

The people in the beds! The VAN DRIVER, the WALKING WOMAN, the JANITOR, and the TAXI DRIVER.

No time to waste, Della goes to the Wardrobe, finds her clothes, begins to dress.

DELLA
While I was out, I saw these people, the things Howard drew, the mansion, and all that. Cronen studies sleep states and it looks like he's experimenting with this *whole* wing using that signal. I need to get it out. And wait, you didn't know about any of this?

John just shakes his head with a weak, "no..." Della scoffs.

DELLA (CONT'D)
 Everyone's been keeping secrets,
 and some, very dirty secrets.

JOHN
 Della, you're in patient... garb, and
 it's the middle of the night.

Della goes for the door... sees a SIGN: "Room 6." MEMORY FLASH!

INT. HALLWAY, SIXTH FLOOR, EHI - FLASHBACK

Della sees a SIGN: "Coma Ward." FLASH! And in ROOM #6, four
 beds are in use. Near the WINDOW with a NICE VIEW, ONE IS
 EMPTY, yet set for a patient...

DR. CRONEN
 We aim to keep everyone
 comfortable.

...it was set for her. FLASH!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, COMA WARD, EHI - PRESENT

Della has a glint of sheer fury... SILENTLY opens the door.

JOHN
 Della, where will y-?

DELLA
 First, out of here.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY, COMA WARD, EHI - CONTINUOUS

Quiet. Only the nightlights are on. Nearby, a T-intersection.

JOHN
 There's a stairwell this way.

Tiptoes down the hall, up ahead... a LIGHT TURNS ON, reveals...
 the WHITE COAT FIGURE. Della FREEZES. It walks toward them.

Della jumps out of her skin. The FIGURE passes under lights...
 closer... closer... her heart POUNDS out of her chest.

John is oddly calm seeing her react like this.

JOHN
 Della, just stay calm...
 ...
 Saw what, Della...?
 ...
 There's nothing, Della.

DELLA
 ...
 I saw that!
 ...
 Th-that's not real!
 ...
 There! It's coming here!

She SCRAMBLES the other way... sees the FIGURE there too!
No, there are TWO. The other hallway... a THIRD! All close in
on Della at the T-intersection.

DELLA
Th-they're not real!

JOHN
You're in shock. You've slept for
four days and now you think-

Della starts to hear ANOTHER "VOICE."

JOHN / DR. CRONEN'S VOICE
-that you're awake. Just relax.

In a pool of light at the T-intersection, they all meet...
Della, John, Dr. Cronen, and the two Staffers.

DELLA
What the hell are you? And why were
you talking like him?

Dr. Cronen's right ear, a BLUETOOTH SET. John's... an EARPIECE.
He clearly feels bad, sinks back still looking on.

DR. CRONEN
Della, I am, we are trying to help.

DELLA
Bullshit!
(to John)
Why didn't you just tell me?

DR. CRONEN
Della, you've suffered head trauma.
You're confusing reality and dream
since you're not really awake. Let
me help you.

Della, in no position to fight or run, just sizes up details.
John just tries to calm the situation. Dr. Cronen takes out a
capped VIAL with a PILL inside, POPS it open.

DELLA
And what's that?

DR. CRONEN
It's an acknowledgement of your
desire to wake up for real. To get
out of this confused state. Here
you'll fall asleep, end this
perception of consciousness.

DELLA

In that case, I could just dive
down that stairwell.

JOHN

Della...

DR. CRONEN

Yes... you could. But is another
traumatic episode what you really
want? We're trying to end this
peacefully.

He motions with the VIAL, slips the PILL into her hand.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)

Take the pill.

Della puts it in her mouth, eyes Cronen. He's calm.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)

Swallow it.

She looks over to John. He can't hold back a TEAR.
She SPITS the pill out, *STOMPS* it, looks Cronen square.

DELLA

Miracle pills are so fucking
cliché.

DR. CRONEN

All right... you want to up the ante,
so be it. But you're not leaving.

Just as Della makes a move, Dr. Cronen motions...
Staffer One takes out a SYRINGE. Staffer Two, a NIGHTSTICK.
The Doctor draws a gun - the OLD REVOLVER.

DELLA

(poker face)

You should know, I work for an
indie paper, they're itching for a
story, I haven't been back in four
days, they'll ask questions, and
you sure as hell can't bribe, drug,
or kill everybody.

DR. CRONEN

Don't worry about that.

The Staffers move closer. The SYRINGE is full.

DELLA

Keep that away from me.

JOHN
 Doctor, is this necessary?

DR. CRONEN
 You knew it could come to this. Not
 that we wanted it to, but it did.

DELLA
 You abandoned your son to a mad
 scientist.

Lying to Della hit John hard before, now even more.

DR. CRONEN
 'Mad scientist!' Now there's a
 cliché, but you are one empathetic
 young lady so the world and its
 progress are too cold for you.

DELLA
 Shove it.

The SYRINGE inches closer... liquid DRIPS down the needle...
 Howard's VOICE shoots through a walkie-talkie.

HOWARD'S VOICE
*I want to see my sister and uncle.
 Or I'm not drawing anymore.*

DR. CRONEN
 Shit... Stop!

The SYRINGE and NIGHTSTICK back down. The GUN jolts into
 Della's gut, she winces. John is unnerved.

DR. CRONEN
 Let's have a proper family reunion.

INT. HOWARD'S SPECIAL ROOMS - MINUTES LATER

The door BURSTS open. Dr. Cronen comes in followed by Della
 and John in tow by the Staffers. CRUMPLED and TORN PAPERS
 litter the ground... pictures of the Estate.

DR. CRONEN
 No! Howard, you must build more!

Howard looks at Della. His eyes are RED, hair frayed, he
 sweats and shakes all over, a victim turned into a monster.

Della holds back torrent of emotion, just ONE TEAR seeps out,
 she sees he's clutching the picture with "brother & sister."

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)

Well now... remember what we agreed,
Howard. That way we can all live
like a happy family.

DELLA

Howard, I don't want our family to
live like this.

DR. CRONEN

You, shut it!

Howard struggles between his heart and his fear.

DELLA

Do what you want, Howard.

DR. CRONEN

Gag her!

JOHN

Doctor, please.

Staffer Two PINS Della's arms with the NIGHTSTICK.

DR. CRONEN

It'll all be over soon, John. Your
retirement will be exactly as you
want to make it.

Della is shocked to hear this as Staffer One GAGS her mouth.
Howard collapses distraught next to... his THERMOS.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)

What you saw is only the beginning,
albeit of the final step, a lucid
dream park. Oh yes, if I harness
his power, I'll be able to give
anyone a dream vacation overnight
right here. Overworked people, such
as yourself, will finally have a
guarantee of good sleep. For the
stresses *and terrors* of modernity,
this is *the cure!*

JOHN

'Monetization of lucid dreams.'

DR. CRONEN

Oh please, semantics! The result is
better than anything out there-

Beyond the ROUNDED WINDOW, the horizon shows a faint glow.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
-but it has to be tested.

JOHN
He has to want-

DR. CRONEN
Irrelevant!

HOWARD
I don't want this!

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
Howard, this isn't about what you or anyone else wants. This is about a future in which *we*, yes you, your sister and uncle, you're part of this as much as my staff and I, so yes *we* can create something truly great, but like all things, it will cost something.

HOWARD
You're not being fair, Dr. Cronen... you're hurting people...

DR. CRONEN
Howard-

HOWARD (CONT'D)
...don't hurt anybody or I won't build for you!

He hits his THERMOS spilling MILK and partly DISSOLVED PILLS.

DR. CRONEN
Howard, you've forgotten. *I* eased your headaches. *I* gave you your power. Without *me*, you have nothing!

Ambience. Howard's gaze weans into greater confidence.

HOWARD
...I create the dreams.

The Doctor just nods, draws the REVOLVER.

DR. CRONEN
Then there won't be anything. No uncle! No sister! Just the pain in your head and enough medication to keep it steady. Whoever takes you after me can only look into my files. You *need* to draw and get it out, through that-

The ROUTER and CABLES on the ceiling, but... something's off..

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
-or you go mad with sleepless pain.

HOWARD
No!

Cronen is dumbfounded. Della holds back teary fury.

DR. CRONEN
Well... it seems bringing Della in was a bad idea. You picked up on her relentlessness. I told you that you were connected. I just never thought an older brother could be out done by his *little* sister.

BANG! Right into Della's GUT. John and the Staffers recoil. Howard just flinches. Della, eyes wide, shock... then weakness... she crumbles with a sad look to Howard.

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
She's only wounded. With medication she'll be all right. And asleep.

STAFFER ONE
Doctor, wh-

DR. CRONEN (CONT'D)
Just bandage her! Get her back to her ward.

The Staffers scramble with first aid. John tries to help.

JOHN
Cronen! This too far!

DR. CRONEN
Nothing is too far for this! And you'll see her healthy and strong again, don't you worry. Now Howard-

His eyes are still RED, but now he's more poised.

HOWARD
You want what's bad, Dr. Cronen, what's not fair. And you just hurt my sister, *my family*.

DR. CRONEN
And what about your head? How much does that hurt?

HOWARD
Don't worry about that.

He takes the PAPERS out from UNDER HIS SHIRT. Looks at John and a weak Della who recognizes them from her visit.

Howard snaps a dagger stare at Dr. Cronen and the Staffers.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
You're not waking up.

DR. CRONEN
Howard, focus!

HOWARD
(to Della)
That last one was different.

Something is different... the ROUTERS, they're just drawn in mockups, the lights don't actually blink.

Howard shows DRAWINGS of the SPECIAL ROOMS and the HALLWAYS they were just in... but they're ending in BLANK PAGE SPACE.

GLITCH! Della sees a FLASH of a ROOM IN DAYLIGHT.

DR. CRONEN
(reacting from *his* glitch)
Howard... where are we-

HOWARD
(eyes glow)
Sleep well, Dr. Cronen.

He begins to TEAR THE PICTURES along CREASES. *RUMBLE!*
A WALL FALLS AWAY to reveal... a DARK VOID!

More tearing, the ROOM AROUND THEM CRUMBLING AWAY... *RUMBLE!!*
The Staffers fall away into the DARK. Cronen hangs on, gets his bearings on Howard. Della lays helpless-

-John pulls Cronen away... *RUMBLE!!!* The FLOOR DROPS OUT from under Della, John, and Howard.

But Cronen... left stuck on a SECTION OF FLOOR surrounded by...

...D A R K N E S S W I T H O U T E N D...

Della, John, and Howard... falling... they pass the Staffers who've fallen onto sections of floor floating in the VOID.

Della's tired look goes wide eyed-

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, COMA WARD, EHI - DAY

-JOLTS awake, arms up, heaving, sweating, blinking through a HAZE TO CLARITY, she pushes out from the sludge of slumber.

The room is BATHED IN DAYLIGHT from a nearby WINDOW.

Nearby, on the COUCH, John with his water bottles and a "FAMILY VISITOR" CARD also jolts awake.

DELLA

If all existence is pain then I'm definitely here. And that son of bitch, he shot me.

Della's hip, no wound. BRUISES on her FOREARM and SHIN. Her HEAD still ACHES, but feels more in line with reality. Her mind and body are in the same timezone now.

The other four beds... the same people.

Della gazes hard at John.

JOHN

Oh Della, I'm so sorry.

Her one family member growing up... the person who gave her a good childhood, but betrayed her adulthood. She's torn.

BEEPING! The four COMA PATIENTS start to wake. Alarms *RING!* Patients' alarms. In the whole ward. The ROUTERS and CABLES go haywire, spark, *SIZZLE...* what's going on?

INT. HALLWAY, SIXTH FLOOR, EHI - MOMENTS LATER

Della, back in her own clothes, steps out of Room #6. On the ceiling, the ROUTERS seem burned out, overcharged.

Activity *bustles*. Doctors, nurses, and others run, make calls, get their bearings. The WHOLE WARD is waking up.

Della shows her "FAMILY VISITOR" CARD to a nervous nurse-

NERVOUS NURSE

...p-please wait in the lobby.

-who runs off "*calling*" to fellow staff. Everyone's demanding answers, yet no one has them in this confusion. And there's...

...John, sorrowful, looking at Della. Her gaze stays cold with... the faintest, yet genuine, glint of warmth.

Off her torn look...

INT. LOBBY, SPECIAL WING, EHI - MOMENTS LATER

Buzzing with staff all about trying to get a hold of the situation. Visitors wait confused, concerned.

Della enters. Follows the path she took four days ago. John catches up to her. They stop. Gaze at each other.

He breathes deep, struggles to hold his gaze...
Mouths: "forgive me." A sad old man. Her uncle.

Della... the slightest of nods.
They head through the double doors together.

INT. HALLWAY, SPECIAL WING, EHI - MOMENTS LATER

Della and John walk, tangible unease between them. They see...

DELLA

Howard!

Rushing up, she sees he's on a waning second wave of
adrenaline, eyes bloodshot, face pale. Della comforts him.

DELLA (CONT'D)

Where's Cronen?

Off Howard's intense, almost convulsing, look...

INT. DR. CRONEN'S OFFICE, EHI BUILDING - SAME TIME

MOVE IN ON: the couch with Dr. Cronen in a weird sleep state.
His eyes are in REM. His body, small fidgets.

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

He's having... a bad dream. They all
are.

PAN TO: The STAFFERS are likewise on the now unfolded cots.

INT. HALLWAY, SIXTH FLOOR, EHI - CONTINUOUS

There's a fury emerging from Howard now.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

He hurt you. I'm going to hurt him.
They hurt you. I'm g-

DELLA

Howard... please, don't hurt anybody.
(holds his hands)
I don't want you to. I really hope
you don't want to either. You're
angry, that's hurting you so you
want to hurt others. Cronen did
that to me because he was angry.

He breathes easy... his eyes... turn normal. They all relaxes.

DELLA (CONT'D)

I know a way to make this better.
We'll make this better.

Ambient *MURMURS* as the situation *RUMBLES* beyond the walls.

JOHN

I didn't know Cronen was using the whole ward for this.

DELLA

Looks like we all found out something new about those we know.

A bitter pill. For the whole family.

RINGTONE! John's phone, Ned is calling.

INT. FIRST FLOOR, EHI - MINUTES LATER

Elevator doors open. Della, John, and Howard step out.

As they walk, Della recognizes the LOUNGE AREA where she "woke up," but their goal is up ahead: a MAN in a TEAL COAT by the front desk, Ned. He sees them. Della turns to John.

DELLA

I'm writing an exposé so you have a few days to tell him the family side of the how and why.

John slowly nods, they're on the same uncomfortable page.

INT. LOBBY, EHI - MOMENTS LATER

NED

Dell! You're...

DELLA

Awake.

She swoops into his arms. Relief. Warmth. He's befuddled.

NED

What's going on? What happ-?

DELLA

Looooong story... which I'll have to write about after we *all* talk.

John nods.

NED

Ok... Hi, John. And this is...?

DELLA

Howard, your brother-in-law.

JOHN

I should warn you, Ned, Howard is Della's *older* brother.

DELLA

Yeah, you better watch out.

HOWARD

Be good to my sister. Please.

NED

As good as she's been to me and she's been very good.

JOHN

A Herrell's strawberry sundae *could* make today even better.

Ned smiles. And Howard. John too, yet his thoughts run deep.

Della... wants in her heart of hearts to love her uncle again and at least keep this moment happy. She nods... smiles.

DELLA

Sure, but I'll have to take a rain check. Got a story to write. Things to consider.

John knows what she means.

Medical staff from other facilities and paramedics arrive. Police coordinate traffic outside. This will be a busy day and an interesting story.

NED

Hey, how about...

Ned starts a group huddle, almost hug, arms on shoulders. Whips out his phone set to selfie mode. Every gets close.

NED (CONT'D)

Welcome to the family. Just... on an odd day.

Sunlight shines into the lobby, they smile- *CLICK!*

EXT. BOSTON SKYLINE - TWO WEEKS LATER - DAY

Clear and sunny. The John Hancock Tower glistens like it did before Della left for Seattle.

INT. DELLA'S WORKPLACE - SAME TIME

On Della's loaded and impressively arranged desk, her FRAMED PICTURES: the ORIGINAL THREE plus-

-the FAMILY SELFIE Ned snapped.

Della is typing, rechecking, and flipping through sheets. Energized, but hasn't forgotten her THERMOS. Stop. Sip. Nice.

JEN (O.S.)

Della, check those hits!

Della has expected this. She switches windows, refreshes... sees TENS OF THOUSANDS of views and shares of her EXPOSÉ.

"Revelations Shudder Respected Institution" by Della Caruso

"'Nightmares and Dreamscapes' are not only fiction... ethics abandoned for self-interest... established researcher, Dr. David Cronen and his team, marred by deep scandal... human experimentation with sleep states... research and archives of Cronen's studies are still up for debate as to their use."

Della smiles as Jen appears with a coffee cup.

JEN

Not bad. Cheers, by the way.

DELLA

Couldn't have done it without you.

Della's thermos and Jen's cup *TINK*. Bill exits his office.

BILL

Really great job, Della. We're going to need an upgrade soon.

DELLA

A bigger office?

BILL

Soon enough, but for starters, I did some rearranging, this will be an intern's desk, so you, there.

He's pointing to some PACKAGED DESKS by a WINDOW.

BILL (CONT'D)

The start of our overhaul. Got new computers coming in this week, too.

DELLA

Ok, a better equipped office.

BILL

And in all likelihood, we'll be at
a new address within a few months.

DELLA

A new world.

BILL

Sure. Shall we?

Everyone nods, gets to unpacking the new stuff.

BEEP! Della's phone, a TEXT from John:

*"Saw your piece, quite the reporter you are, kiddo. I still
hope we can grab that Herrell's sundae sometime soon."*

Della gazes at the phone... curls a small smile... begins typing.

INT. LIVING ROOM, JOHN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

On the end table- *BEEP!* John's phone, a TEXT from Della:
"Sure thing. I'll swing by today with both of yours fave."

John smiles with a big relief he had been hoping for.
He looks to the STUDY, the door now wide open and-

INT. STUDY, JOHN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

-Howard is busy at the desk... like he was first seen at EHI.

MOVE IN ON: Howard... *SCRIBBLING*... he puts a SHEET aside onto a
decent pile. Starts up on a new one... on the FINISHED SHEET-

-a DRAWING: John, Ned, Howard, Della, and... their Parents.
The family that wasn't able to be together at a picnic on
Boston Common, as seen in the skyline, on a sunny Spring day.

Howard stops, gulps some apple cider. He looks better. Happy.
Gazes outside at the sunny day. Smiles. Continues drawing.

CLOSING CREDITS