

IN THE BLOOD

by

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INT. OFFICE - MORNING

ETHAN CHANCELLOR, 23, stands still and stares blankly at a copy machine.

He is obviously distraught, confused. Sleepy. The light shimmies left then right then left, and the machine whirs as pages spit out.

Fingers tap on Ethan's shoulder. He turns to find CHRISTINE, late 20s - the Intern Coordinator - standing behind him.

She smiles, then suddenly and passionately kisses Ethan. The kiss escalates, and after several seconds, her fingers slide toward his crotch.

MIKE (V.O.)

Dude?

Ethan breaks the kiss and looks. MIKE BALDWIN, 23, stands at the edge of the cubicle.

Ethan stands alone at the copier, daydreaming.

MIKE

Earth to Ethan? You were gone for a second.

Ethan looks up as Christine walks by carrying a coffee.

Mike catches it.

MIKE (CONT'D)

The boss's daughter. Nice.

Ethan smiles.

ETHAN

Must've dazed off. I uh, didn't sleep. Pulled an all-nighter working on my final paper.

MIKE

You've got like two weeks, man. Chill.

ETHAN

You haven't even started, have you Mike?

MIKE

Not even a little.

They exit, start walking toward a cubby with various mailboxes etc.

MIKE (CONT'D)

You need a girl. Have you been with anyone since Beth?

ETHAN

No time, man. Just school and work.
(beat) And work.

MIKE

Gotta get back in the game. Get a friend who can help you relax.

ETHAN

I just said that. No time. And you gotta be awake enough for a date.

Ethan and Mike watch as Christine walks by.

She smiles at them.

MIKE

You need to get laid. Or at least some coffee.

ETHAN

If I drank it.

MIKE

You are literally the only person who doesn't.

Ethan taps his temple.

ETHAN

It makes my head all funny. I'll stick with my green tea. Besides, I've had a headache the last two days.

The pair start to put print outs into various mailboxes.

MIKE

Two days? Maybe you should get looked at.

ETHAN

Can't. Can't afford it.

MIKE

Drinks tonight.

ETHAN

Can't. Can't afford it.

MIKE

On me.

ETHAN

Mike, you can't afford it either.
They don't pay either of us.

MIKE

I got the cash. Big pimpin' yo. Mad
money.

ETHAN

Big pimpin'? Are we 12 again?
Where did you get money?

Mike leans in, lowers his voice.

MIKE

Donated blood. Plasma pays man. You
should look into it.

ETHAN

Alright, I'm washing dishes until
8:00. Gotta make money to pay rent.
And we can't be out too late, I
told mom and dad I'd ride up for
breakfast tomorrow.

INT. RESTAURANT BACKROOM - DAY

Ethan stashes his backpack in a locker. He scans a card to
punch in and puts on an apron before moving to a sink where
commercial dishes are piled.

He starts loading a wash tray and spraying things off.

Suddenly BOSS, early 40s, stands behind him.

BOSS

Chancellor.

Ethan startles. Collects himself.

ETHAN

How we lookin' tonight?

BOSS

Just you in here so I'll need you
to bust a hump.

ETHAN

Keller called off again?

BOSS

Yeah, the little shit. And no word from Hannah for three days now, I think she's a goner. Thanks for showing up. I can always depend on you.

Boss turns.

The lights overhead start to flicker. Boss is gone - way too fast.

Ethan stands alone in the kitchen. He blinks rapidly, rubs his eyes. The backdoor slams shut.

The light stops flickering.

What the hell?

EXT./INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ethan carries a backpack as he saunters down the sidewalk. He opens main door, enters. Ethan crosses a long corridor to his door.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

He enters a small two-bedroom flat, where the sound of the shower running fills the small living space.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

He sits his backpack down, and opens the fridge, grabs a cup, and pours a large glass of tea from an exceptionally large pitcher.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

He plops onto the couch and grabs his laptop. The shower turns off. Bathroom door opens.

XIOMARA JACKSON, 24, an African-American beauty enters the living room. She wears a bathrobe, her hair in a towel.

Ethan doesn't look up.

ETHAN
Hey Xiomara.

XIOMARA
How was work?

She stands at the end of the couch, pulls the towel off her hair. Starts to rub at her head.

ETHAN
Which one? The internship was same as it has been. Filing. Copying.

XIOMARA
Sounds like my first internship. They make us pay for the privilege of school then dump us in lackey positions, unpaid.

Ethan searches a webpage, scrolls down the screen.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)
It'll get better. I just now got to get some case study work as a grad student.

Xiomara looks directly at Ethan. Her gaze is unmet.

ETHAN
So I need a Bachelor's and a second unpaid internship before I get to actually work in Human Resources.

XIOMARA
Welcome to capitalism. But corporate psychology is a growing field though. You'll be fine. How was the other job?

ETHAN
Exhilarating. Best time I've ever had washing dishes.

She chuckles. She steps toward a bedroom and presses her shoulder against the frame.

XIOMARA
I'm going out tonight.

Ethan stops, looks over his shoulder at her.

ETHAN
That guy from your Psych class?

XIOMARA

Same one.

She smiles.

ETHAN

Good. Have fun.

She keeps looking at Ethan.

XIOMARA

What are you doing tonight?

ETHAN

Having drinks with Mike.

She leans over. Xiomara finishes toweling a stretch of hair. It's intentional, Ethan's sure of it.

He steals a glance at her chest, but corrects himself.

XIOMARA

He's weird.

Xiomara come upright, smiles.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

If you'd met his parents you'd understand. He'd have more social graces if he'd been raised by *actual* wolves.

Ethan continues taking notes.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

He'll be here soon. Until then, I'll be researching a "current events" article to summarize.

XIOMARA

Ugh, Gen Eds. I only ever took one summer class. It's too much. You need that break.

ETHAN

Yeah, I shouldn't have done it. At least it's online so it's flexible.

XIOMARA

Thank God for small miracles, right? I'll see you tomorrow. Don't wait up.

Xiomara disappears into her room.

Ethan focuses on his laptop. He sits up, pulls a notepad from a backpack. Starts taking notes on paper.

TIME LAPSE

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dusk has settled, the last streaks of light spill through the blinds. Ethan looks up as Xiomara's door opens. She wears a sleek dress, and her hair's pulled up. She's got earbuds in.

Ethan stares as she moves to the kitchen and grabs a yogurt. He follows suit, goes to the fridge, and pulls out the pitcher of tea.

She hums as she opens the yogurt and grabs a spoon.

Ethan watches intently, but realizes he's staring, just as she looks up. He can't turn away, mesmerized.

(beat)

ETHAN

You look nice.

She pulls the buds out and smiles wide. She is stunning.

Ethan pours himself a cup of tea.

XIOMARA

Thanks. Thought Mike would be by?

ETHAN

I think he flaked on me.

XIOMARA

He does that. Rest tonight. You work too hard.

Xiomara waits until Ethan looks at her, and slowly licks her spoon. She drops it in the sink, grabs her purse, and opens the door.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)

Night, Ethan.

Xiomara exits, the door falls heavy with a SLAM!

INT. RESTAURANT BACKROOM - NIGHT

Ethan suddenly stands in the backroom at work. The light overhead flickers. The door slams.

Indistinct voices squabble from behind the restaurant. Mike steps forward. The light stops flickering.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan stands in his living room, staring at the door. It bursts opens. Mike has conquered the room.

Ethan startles, jerks his hands up, ready to defend himself. Mike pulls up short. Mike leans back, eyes wide.

MIKE

What's up buttercup? You ready?

ETHAN

Dude! You could've texted me. I'da met you on the street.

Mike smiles. He opens the fridge.

MIKE

And miss your smokin' hot roommate walking by?

Mike pulls out the pitcher of tea. He drinks straight from the container.

ETHAN

She's going out with some jerk tonight.

MIKE

Jerk huh? Interesting development.

Mike wipes his mouth, and puts the tea back in the fridge.

ETHAN

What?

MIKE

Every man who dates your girl is a jerk.

Ethan reaches over and closes the laptop. He organizes his items into a backpack.

ETHAN

Whatever.

MIKE

You mad bro? I'm just putting these psych classes to work.

Mike smiles wide. Ethan grabs his backpack.

MIKE (CONT'D)
What's with the bag?

ETHAN
I've got a paper to finish.

INT. JOE'S BAR - NIGHT

Random college-age kids are drinking around several tables, trying hard to be chic.

Mike and Ethan move to a corner booth. Ethan sits and Mike goes to the bar. Ethan pulls the notebook out of his backpack and starts writing.

Mike comes back with two beers.

MIKE
I can't believe you are working on a paper in a bar. With real paper.

ETHAN
You retain more information when you combine it with a somatic action - like writing. I'm just ready to graduate.

Ethan reaches for the beer. They clink glasses, each takes a drink.

MIKE
You're fine. I read your paper on nature versus nurture. You were born for psychology.

ETHAN
As a practitioner or case study?

Mike laughs, takes a drink of his beer.

MIKE
You moving back home after you graduate?

ETHAN
Doubt it. I like the city.

MIKE
I would. What I wouldn't give to have your parents.

ETHAN

You know I'm adopted right?

MIKE

They've never admitted that. Hey, they wouldn't claim you if they didn't have to.

ETHAN

(mockingly)

Haha. Dick. You still thinking Portland?

Ethan takes a drink.

MIKE

Yeah. I'll take anything to save up. I can't do this traffic anymore. I could do that, though.

He points his beer toward a very pretty BLONDE GIRL.

ETHAN

Ever the gentleman.

MIKE

If you'll excuse me, monsieur.

Mike stands, tips his make-believe hat.

Ethan drinks his beer. He sits alone, watching Mike and Blonde Girl laughing.

Ethan writes onto his notepad.

He sees another COUPLE holding hands. A different GUY tries to hit on a GIRL - she's leaning away.

Suddenly, Christine crosses the bar floor. Ethan waves. Christine smiles.

Behind her walks ADAM KELLER, dark-hair, same build as Ethan. Ethan looks back down at this paper.

Christine ducks into the bathroom. Adam approaches Ethan.

ADAM

Hey.

Ethan looks up. Adam slugs him just above the ear! Ethan ducks to the side for a second, trying not to show his pain. The ringing noise permeates the scene, nearly drowning out the threat.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Don't talk to my girlfriend.

Ethan sits dumbfounded. Everyone continues on as if nothing happened. Ethan finally rocks his jaw.

ETHAN

Seriously, Keller? I covered your shift for you!

Adam smiles and walks off.

Ethan shifts, embarrassed and alone in the corner of the bar. He massages the spot of impact.

Finally, Ethan lifts his bottle and chugs the beer. He takes a deep breath, lays his head back against the wall and closes his eyes for a moment.

EXT. BUS STOP - MORNING

Ethan's eyes open. His head lies tilted back at the same angle, but he now sits in a sun-covered hut.

Ethan jerks up with a start. He looks around confused, and finally stands.

He takes a second, walks to the street corner and looks at the street signs. RADFORD PARK and BROADWAY.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Daylight streaks through the blinds. Ethan opens the door, enters. Xiomara stands in the kitchen making pancakes. She's in a loose fitting bathrobe.

Ethan can't take his eyes off her as he walks by. Xiomara adds some flour to a bowl. Xiomara cracks an egg, stirs it in.

XIOMARA

Out all night, huh? You get lucky?

Ethan chuckles. He leans against the counter next to the butter and syrup.

ETHAN

Not so much. I woke up at a bus stop.

XIOMARA

Oh. That sounds about as good as my night.

Xiomara plops batter in the pan.

XIOMARA

I have extra batter if you'd like a pancake.

ETHAN

That sounds great actually. You cook, I'll clean?

XIOMARA

Here. Eat it while it's warm.

She hands the plate to Ethan. He grabs items from the cupboard, slathers peanut butter then syrup on it, eats.

XIOMARA

Interesting choice.

ETHAN

It's better than you think.

Xiomara moves back to the stove, drops more batter into a pan, sings softly to herself, sways as she stands over the pancake.

Ethan watches her for a moment, then finally moves toward her. Ethan finishes chewing. His hand reaches slowly for her hip.

He hesitates, then turns to the sink. He wipes his palm on his pants as she turns around.

Ethan re-stacks some dishes in the sink, turns the water on. Adds soap. Goes back to his pancakes.

ETHAN

So what's up today? Class til noon, then practicals?

XIOMARA

You had a very rough night, didn't you? It's Saturday.

She doles out a pancake for herself.

ETHAN

Shit! I'm supposed to be at my parents for breakfast.

Ethan fumbles with his phone. Opens a ride-share app.

XIOMARA

I've got a couple hours open this morning. I can give you a lift.

ETHAN

No, it's okay.

XIOMARA

I'm hanging with my sister this so it's a chill day. Seriously, it'd be nice to get out of the city.

Ethan rubs and rinses a few dishes. He puts things in the dish drainer. Xiomara sits and eats.

ETHAN

Okay. Lemme change real quick. You're a life saver.

XIOMARA

I do what I can.

Ethan trots to his room.

INT. ETHAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Typical of a bachelor - chaos.

Ethan strips, grabs a clean shirt and grabs new pants but before he can put them on...

Both of their cell phones "ding" simultaneously.

Ethan opens his phone.

INSERT GFX: *** URGENT. Quad closed on campus today due to police investigation. Please avoid this area until after 3:00 p.m. ***

XIOMARA

You see this?

Xiomara is at his door. Ethan pulls up his pants, hurries into a shirt.

ETHAN

Yeah. Weird, why would they close the quad? You ready then?

Xiomara smiles.

XIOMARA
Let me grab my purse.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME STREET - MORNING

Xiomara and Ethan pull into a nice suburban neighborhood.

Xiomara parks the car.

INT. - XIOMARA'S CAR - MORNING

Ethan sighs heavily. He reaches for the handle but doesn't open the door.

ETHAN
Thanks. I owe you *big* time.

She smiles.

XIOMARA
I'm sure we can work something out.

ETHAN
You be okay on that drive back?

She taps her phone.

XIOMARA
I've got my driving playlist on here. My dad used to really love road trips. Put on some music and just go. It's my zen.

ETHAN
Yeah? Let me know if you have any to spare.

XIOMARA
Your folks make you nervous?

ETHAN
They just really expect a lot of me. Honor student, salutatorian and all that. Mom wanted me to go into med school but I told her I could make a bigger difference in creating a healthy workplace. Just feels like they wanted me to be something more.

XIOMARA

Don't worry about it. They love you no matter what.

ETHAN

I know, I know. Just hate disappointing them.

XIOMARA

Whoever said you were a disappointment? If they did they were lying.

Ethan smiles.

ETHAN

Thanks for the pep talk. I think I'm just a little fuzzy in the brain.

XIOMARA

When I was still an undergrad, if I couldn't sleep I'd go for a run. The lights on the quad are always on. I wonder if it'll be open tonight.

She puts her hand on his shoulder.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)

Get a run in later, then come back and relax.

Ethan smiles.

ETHAN

That's a great idea. Thanks.

XIOMARA

If that doesn't work, you could always try more coffee.

ETHAN

I don't drink it. Never liked how caffeine makes me feel.

XIOMARA

Don't you drink like three cups of tea a day?

ETHAN

Decaf. With lemon. I must have southern heritage.

Xiomara smiles again, as Ethan finally opens the door.

XIOMARA
You are a rare bird, Ethan
Chancellor.

Ethan gets out of the car.

ETHAN
You have no idea. Be safe driving
back.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - MORNING

Ethan knocks on the door. A middle-aged blonde woman, SARAH
CHANCELLOR, opens the door.

SARAH
Ethan! Good morning! Why are you
knocking?

She hugs him and kisses him.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Did you take a bus?

AXEL (O.S.)
No one takes a bus anymore.

AXEL CHANCELLOR, also blonde, also middle-aged, emerges from
behind the door.

Sarah steps back. Ethan enters the house.

ETHAN
Actually my roommate drove me out.
I knocked to make sure you two were
decent. I don't want that burned in
my memory.

Sarah swats him playfully.

SARAH
We knew you were coming so I made
your dad put on pants.

INT. CHANCELLOR'S HOUSE - MORNING

Ethan steps inside and hugs Axel.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
Morning Dad.

AXEL
Roommate drove huh?

ETHAN
Yeah.

They walk down the foyer.

AXEL
That was sweet of her.

ETHAN
Tell me about it.

INT. CHANCELLORS HOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY

Nice suburban home, nice suburban table. A curio holds keepsakes.

AXEL
So, when are you getting a car?

ETHAN
C'mon Dad. I'm barely paying rent and you want me to add more bills?

AXEL
Just saying you need to grow up some time and take responsibility.

SARAH
Axel, not before breakfast.

ETHAN
How 'bout not after breakfast either?

She disappears into the kitchen.

AXEL
I wasn't trying to stir it up, Sarah. I just think it's past time to get a car is all.

SARAH (O.S.)
I'm grabbing the food. Sit. Don't talk.

Sarah comes back in carrying a platter.

Ethan looks down at the table.

ETHAN

I can't afford a car, dad. My textbooks were over \$600.00 last semester, which meant my loan was tapped out so I had to pay for my summer class out of pocket.

AXEL

I made it work in college. I worked a summer job and paid my own way.

ETHAN

(echoes Axel) Paid my own way. I know. My tuition is 10 times what yours was and I'm *unpaid* at the internship. I am paid at the restaurant but only get about 15 hours a week, at minimum wage.

Sarah doles out food.

SARAH

I'm changing the subject, for the love of God. How's that roommate treating you? And what's her name again?

ETHAN

Xiomarra. And it's good. Really good actually. She's a psych student too, getting her Masters'. And she loves music.

Sarah smiles, sits the serving platter down.

SARAH

I'm glad you found a roommate that you get along with. My first roommate was a vile woman. She never met a person she could stand and I don't think she smiled once the whole semester. I requested a transfer, but they couldn't move me until after Christmas.

Axel swallows a bite of food.

AXEL

Doesn't hurt that she's easy on the eyes, huh?

Sarah snorts as she's drinking juice.

SARAH

Axel.

ETHAN

It's okay, mom. Dad's just a victim of indoctrination of patriarchal society.

They all chew for a moment.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

And no, doesn't hurt a thing.

He grins wide. Axel laughs.

SARAH

Are you staying tonight? I thought maybe we could all go to church tomorrow. Sounds like you both need it.

Axel and Ethan are still laughing.

ETHAN

I'm sorry, Mom. I can't. Gotta work this .

They all eat.

TIME LAPSE

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NOON

Ethan opens the door, walks in, just as Xiomara exits her room as Ethan turns the corner. They nearly collide.

XIOMARA

Oh! Oh shoot!

Xiomara pulls the earbuds from her ears.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)

I did not hear you come in.

ETHAN

Just needed to grab a few things before I go to the restaurant. Sorry. I didn't know if you'd still be here.

XIOMARA

I'm leaving now. Good time with your folks?

ETHAN

About as much as can be expected.

Xiomarra combs her hair with his fingers as she looks at him.

ETHAN

So, sorry I was a little off this morning. I didn't ask about your night. Good time with Sociology dude?

XIOMARA

Ha. No, no.

ETHAN

Not exactly a knight in shining armor?

Xiomara puts in a new earring.

XIOMARA

Maybe. If knights demand putting out and then leave you hanging because you won't. Did I mention his girlfriend followed us to the bar?

ETHAN

Sounds delightful. Girlfriend, wow.

Xiomara puts on her other earring.

XIOMARA

I'm just glad I drove myself. Can't imagine if he'd have been gentleman enough to pick me up. I'd have had to ride home with that dirtball. And I ain't a side chick.

Xiomara fiddles with the clasp of a necklace.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)

I'm having a hard time with this thing, do you mind?

Xiomara turns around and pulls her hair back, exposing her neck.

Ethan stares for a moment.

(beat)

ETHAN

Sure. Maybe we should get a drink tonight. Commiserate together.

Ethan steps up, clips the back of the necklace.

Xiomara still has her back to him. She smiles.

XIOMARA

Thanks. Sure. Why not?

Ethan steps into his bedroom, Xiomara waltzes back into her room and puts on a pair of shoes.

Ethan comes back from his room, looking rather disturbed.

ETHAN

Have you seen my backpack? Mike will be here any second.

The door swings open. Mike comes in.

MIKE

What up? Ready?

ETHAN

Just let me find my backpack.

MIKE

I've got it.

ETHAN

Why do you have it?

MIKE

You left it at the bar last night, numb nuts. Good thing you got people to look after you, right Xiomara?

Xiomara doesn't turn to look at Mike.

XIOMARA

Don't you ever knock?

MIKE

Nice to see you too.

XIOMARA

(to Ethan)
Okay, I'll see you later then.

Ethan watches her leave.

INT. MIKE'S CAR - DAY

Mike and Ethan sit, buckle up.

MIKE
She wants you, you know.

ETHAN
Shut up.

Mike puts the car in gear.

MIKE
Seriously. She wanna give you that
booty.

Ethan smiles. Laughs.

ETHAN
Shut up.

MIKE
How exactly did you end up living
there? What gods shined favor on
you?

ETHAN
She needed a roommate. She put up
an ad on the board at school.

MIKE
And you responded.

ETHAN
She had two other people who wanted
to rent a room this summer. I had
the best credit.

MIKE
Uh huh. And that didn't seem odd to
you at all? The guy with one credit
card, no car, no savings account
has good credit?

ETHAN
No. Man, you're getting in my head.

MIKE
And she's getting in your pants.

Ethan laughs.

Mike drives aggressively.

ETHAN

You're a cretin. How are we friends?

MIKE

Because I have a car.

ETHAN

Did you hear why the quad was closed?

Mike speeds up, cuts off a car. SFX horn honks.

MIKE

Yeah dude. They found a body. Some girl stabbed to death.

ETHAN

Woah.

Ethan smooths at his hair.

They slow for a red-light, but it changes as they near.

MIKE

Get moving, you shit! I'll cut you, you little bitch!

The car in front barely accelerates. Mike whips around it, floors it.

ETHAN

Rage much?

MIKE

More than you know.

Mike white knuckles the steering wheel. Ethan stares out the window as they pass through the city.

EXT. RESTAURANT BACK ALLEY - DAY

Mike rolls the car to a stop. Ethan exits, slings the backpack over his shoulder.

ETHAN

Thanks man. I really appreciate the lift. Be careful out there.

Ethan waves as Mike drives away. As he turns, he sees a figure on the other side of the dumpster. It disappears.

INT. RESTAURANT BACKROOM - DAY

Ethan hesitantly enters through the door, punches in.

A large pile of dishes wait for him. He puts on his apron and gets to work. He reaches into the water, pulls out some silverware. Rinses.

He reaches in again, winces in pain. He withdraws his hand quickly. There's a small incision on his finger, blood pools.

Ethan uses his other hand and carefully fishes in the water.

He pulls out a very large, very sharp chef's knife.

Ethan turns to the first aid kit, puts on a band-aid, then a pair of kitchen gloves and goes back to work.

Light flickers. Door slams. A cat meows from somewhere.

EXT. RESTAURANT BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Ethan stands at the back door in the alley - holding the door open. A cat meows, then hisses from somewhere unseen.

A SCREAM!

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Ethan jerks as STRANGER bumps into him on the sidewalk.

STRANGER

I'm just walkin' here man. Good looking out.

ETHAN

Sorry.

Ethan shakes his head, goes inside.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan enters. He carries a single red rose. He rinses a soda bottle, drops the rose in, puts it beside the refrigerator.

He walks to his bedroom.

INT. ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ethan quickly changes into shorts and a hoodie. He ties up his shoes.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

Ethan jogs alone. Various buildings, lights, etc.

He jogs at a decent pace and eventually loops back around and down his street to his apartment building.

INT. ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ethan stands wrapped in a towel, hair still damp from a shower.

He dresses in nice clothes and exits the room.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ethan pours a large glass of tea, chugs. He peeks around the corner.

Xiomara gets ready in her room, her door rests half open. She's in jeans and a fancy top.

Her hair is down. She looks relaxed, but nice.

Ethan slips back to his bedroom.

INT. ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He opens a drawer, puts on more deodorant. He checks his hair, decides it looks good enough, and exits.

Xiomara has emerged and works on fastening an earring when Ethan enters.

ETHAN

You look nice.

XIOMARA

Thanks. You too. Ready?

Ethan smiles and opens the door.

INT - JOE'S BAR - NIGHT

Ethan and Xiomara enter the bar. They find a table.

ETHAN
Want a drink?

XIOMARA
Vodka cranberry.

ETHAN
You got it.

Ethan weaves through the crowd to the bar. Xiomara sits quietly, smiling, looking around the room. She fishes out her phone and updates social media.

Ethan returns a moment later with the drinks.

XIOMARA
Thank you.

ETHAN
So tell me about your day?

Ethan works on his drink while Xiomara talks.

XIOMARA
It was good to see my sister. We had fun. My nephew has gotten so big. Shame his father is a waste of life.

Xiomara finishes her thought and looks up. She stares at a man across the room.

Beat.

Ethan looks around too.

ETHAN
You okay? Something wrong?

He follows her eyes. She's looking at a guy who's got his back turned to them.

Dark hair. Similar build to Ethan.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
Sociology dude?

XIOMARA
Yeah. I'm sorry. Give me just a minute.

Xiomara stands, walks across the room. The guy is sharply dressed, looks a little out of place at a college bar. He does not turn around.

Ethan sits alone, works slowly on his drink.

He looks up at Xiomara. She's giving the guy a piece of her mind. Her brow furrows, and the stern look never leaves her face.

The bar noise drowns out whatever words are said.

Xiomara finally stops talking. Guy tilts his head slightly, opens a hand and explains himself.

Ethan watches helplessly from across the bar. He works on his drink.

Xiomara suddenly smiles. She starts to fidget with her hair. Guy laughs too. Xiomara turns and walks toward Ethan. Not wanting to be caught staring, Ethan diverts his eyes.

Xiomara gets to the table.

XIOMARA

Sorry. Give me a few minutes, He
wants to dance real quick.

Ethan nods, forces a smile. Xiomara walks back toward guy. She reaches him and they disappear into the crowd.

Ethan sits alone. A tense few moments pass.

Christine moves through the crowd, looking for someone.

She waves at Ethan. He pretends he doesn't see her.

Ethan suddenly lifts his drink, chugs it down. He places two single bills under his cup and walks out the front door.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Ethan wanders away from the bar and heads down a less populated road.

He soon finds himself well away from the bar, and mostly away from occupied parts of town. The only light comes from the street lamps overhead.

As Ethan walks, his shoulders slumped. He's looking down, defeated.

Suddenly the streetlight furthest behind Ethan extinguishes. He doesn't notice.

Then the next one closer. Then the next. Suddenly the darkness approaches rapidly. Ethan is oblivious. Finally, he crosses under a street lamp and notices the shadows change behind him.

He turns to see the lamp behind go out. Ethan looks forward, the light furthest down the street goes off. Then the next closer.

As the lights in view suddenly go out, Ethan takes a step backward, directly under the street lamp. The last one in front of him blinks out.

Then the one overhead.

All goes black.

EXT. THE PARK - MORNING

Ethan lies face down on a patch of grass. A small dog sniffs at him. Ethan lifts his eyes to a judgmental stare of an OLDER WOMAN. Ethan shifts, sits up. He stands as the woman and the dog leave.

EXT. THE APARTMENT - MORNING

Ethan shuffles down the street. He looks weary, confused.

INT. THE APARTMENT - MORNING

Ethan enters, door closes softly. He starts for his room.

Xiomara's door opens.

XIOMARA

Making this a habit?

ETHAN

I blacked out. Woke up in a park.

XIOMARA

That's not good. I only saw you have the one drink.

ETHAN

I only had the one drink. I think. Went for a walk.

(MORE)

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Dunno what happened. Sorry I just left. I didn't want to hold you back.

XIOMARA

Well how noble. (beat)

Xiomara grabs a protein bar from the pantry.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to run off like that. I just had some things I had to say to him.

ETHAN

I get it. We were just out for a drink anyway.

Xiomara nods.

XIOMARA

If it matters, I wasn't done talking to him when his girlfriend interrupted us.

ETHAN

Oh, he is classy.

XIOMARA

Then he had the nerve to swing by here and apologize face to face.

She rubs her head.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)

Should have known, classic womanizer. You working today?

ETHAN

Yeah.

XIOMARA

You look tired.

ETHAN

Yeah, I don't feel like I slept. I might've walked to the other side of town. I don't remember.

XIOMARA

I'm worried about you. Maybe you should see a doctor about the blackouts. Sometimes that's serious.

ETHAN

Yeah. I'll see about it.

XIOMARA

You should call off. Get some rest.

ETHAN

Can't afford it. I'll rest when I'm dead.

Xiomara nods. Ethan steps toward his room.

XIOMARA

Ethan?

He turns.

ETHAN

Yeah?

XIOMARA

Thanks for the flower.

Ethan smiles and ducks into his room.

INT. RESTAURANT BACKROOM - DAY

Ethan clocks in. Throws stuff in a locker. An enormous pile of dishes wait at the sink once again. Ethan suits up and scrubs dishes.

A light overhead starts to flicker.

The light catches on the carver's knife. Ethan thumbs it lightly. The back door slams.

He studies his reflection in the blade. A cat meows and hisses from somewhere.

The overhead light flickers. Then fails.

TIME LAPSE

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Light comes back up.

Ethan blankly stares as the copier goes. Papers buzz out of the side.

Christine walks by. Ethan gathers pages, steps to a cubicle. Sits. Before he can even log in, Mike stands at his back.

MIKE

Dude. We should go get wings after this.

ETHAN

Won't have time before class, and have my other job afterward til 11.

MIKE

Classes are cancelled. You too distracted by your siren of a roommate to get the notice?

Ethan tries to hide his smile.

ETHAN

Shut up. Why are classes cancelled? Did you call in a bomb threat?

MIKE

Not this time. All kidding aside, some other chick was murdered just off campus. Some Psychology grad student.

ETHAN

That's terrible.

MIKE

Stabbed to death last night. Someone said she was coming home from a frat party so it was probably one of those.

ETHAN

Yikes.

MIKE

Yeah. Crazy times out there. So wings?

ETHAN

I'll need to raincheck man. I took Xiomara out for a drink last night so I'm broke.

Mike smiles widely, sits on edge of the desk.

MIKE

All right, my man. Did you give her some?

Ethan smiles.

ETHAN
You are a piece of work, man.

MIKE
Piece of something.

Mike stands, thrusts hips. Ethan hesitates, his expression changes.

ETHAN
She didn't even hang with me. Guy she's chasing - dickbag from her class - was there. She ended up with him.

Mike cocks his head.

MIKE
You let dickbag get up on your girl? You shoulda thrown down.

Mike punches the air.

ETHAN
You're a misogynist, and a barbarian. How are you single?

Mike pats Ethan on the back.

MIKE
I'll teach you all the ways to woo women later.

Mike walks down the hall to another room. Ethan leans forward to start typing.

INT. RESTAURANT BACKROOM - DAY

Ethan is not typing. He's actually tapping his fingers against the rim of the sink.

He jolts up straight. Looks around in a panic.

Boss walks through.

BOSS
Chancellor? What are you doing here? You aren't supposed to come in until 8.

ETHAN
Oh. I must've written it down wrong.

BOSS

Well, if you're here, go ahead and get going. I'll call Chase to come in later. You stay until 4:30?

Ethan nods.

Boss takes a step and stops.

BOSS (CONT'D)

Oh, by the way, Keller quit. Said you'd know why.

Ethan shrugs his shoulders.

ETHAN

Any word on Hannah?

Boss comes in closer.

BOSS

No one told you, huh? I hate to be the one, man, but she was stabbed to death a few nights ago. They found her body on the quad, but they think she was killed somewhere else.

Ethan stares blankly, shocked.

Boss nods, walks away. Ethan finally goes back to washing dishes. He wipes his hands, turns and grabs a towel.

He walks to the back door where a pile of trash waits.

EXT. RESTAURANT BACK ALLEY - DAY

Ethan steps out the back door with both hands full of trash.

He tosses the first bag, no problem. As he lifts the second bag, it suddenly starts leaking. The fluid drips, then runs red, blood red.

Ethan jumps back from the bag. Blood spills from the edge of the bag, pools around the dumpster. Ethan scrunches his face, hard, closes his eyes.

A cat hisses from somewhere.

He opens his eyes. There's no leak from the bag. No blood. He tosses the bag and steps back inside.

INT. DOCTORS EXAMINING ROOM - DAY

Ethan sits on the edge of a bed. He strums his finger nervously.

A DOCTOR walks in.

DOCTOR

Mr. Chancellor. What brings you in on such short notice?

ETHAN

I don't know how to explain it, doc. I'm like spacing out and ending up in weird places.

DOCTOR

Okay, tell me what that means.

ETHAN

The other night, I was at the bar. Next thing I know, I'm waking up in a park. And this afternoon, I was typing at my desk then I'm suddenly at the restaurant where I work. I didn't drive there. I don't remember the bus or walking there. It was a few blocks away.

Doctor listens with a stethoscope. Then checks Ethan's hands.

DOCTOR

Push up.

Doc forces down against Ethan's hands. He pushes back.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Any issues with your legs? Or perhaps the bowels?

ETHAN

No.

DOCTOR

Any tingles or spiderweb sensations?

ETHAN

No.

DOCTOR

Any bells or voices that other people don't hear?

ETHAN

No, doc.

DOCTOR

I'm just being thorough. I'm going out on a limb here - but you're really stressed out, yes?

ETHAN

Yeah.

Doc looks in his ears.

DOCTOR

College.

ETHAN

And internship. And part-time job.

DOCTOR

Headaches?

ETHAN

Some.

DOCTOR

And a girl?

ETHAN

Doc.

DOCTOR

Just being thorough.

Doc pats his legs.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Vision issues?

ETHAN

No.

DOCTOR

Drinking in excess?

Doc checks his pulse.

ETHAN

I wouldn't say excess.

DOCTOR

Well stop it. All of it. Any drug use?

ETHAN

No.

Pulls up Ethan's pant leg, pinches at the skin.

DOCTOR

I also mean aspirin, Vicodin, Percocet or whatever the cool kids are doing these days?

ETHAN

No. And I've never been a cool kid.

DOCTOR

We'll need to get some tests done. I'll refer you to a neurologist. HMOs always take a week to get approval. In the meantime, get a full family history from your folks, okay? Schizophrenia, dissociative disorders, anxiety, mania. Any family issues might be important.

ETHAN

Okay.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

Ethan exits a ride-share vehicle. DRIVER has his window down.

Ethan taps at his phone. The driver's phone dings.

DRIVER

Thanks.

ETHAN

Thank you.

Ethan walks down the sidewalk to a house and knocks on the door.

SARAH

Ethan?

She smiles wide. Hugs him.

INT. CHANCELLOR HOUSE FOYER- DAY

Ethan follows Sarah into the kitchen.

INT. CHANCELLORS HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Axel stands next to the stove, chopping vegetables.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Look who I found.

Axel turns around. Smiles

AXEL
Hey! What brings you home?

ETHAN
Hi dad. Classes were cancelled so I
wanted to come talk. About
something important.

Axel looks at Sarah.

AXEL
Sure.

Sarah sits down. Ethan and Axel follow suit.

AXEL (CONT'D)
Is your roommate pregnant already?

Axel winks. Ethan laughs.

ETHAN
You're as bad as Mike. No.

SARAH
Seriously Axel?

Ethan tries to gather his courage.

AXEL
What? It's an honest question.

ETHAN
Has anyone in our family ever gone
crazy?

(beat)

Sarah and Axel look tensely at one another. Sarah reaches for
Axel's hand.

SARAH
Okay, why do you ask?

ETHAN

I've kind of been blacking out, I think. I went to the doctor on campus today and he asked me to get some family history.

AXEL

What do you mean blacking out?

ETHAN

Like chunks of time are missing. I won't even remember falling asleep but wake up somewhere else.

Axel lets go of his wife's hand, steps out of the room.

SARAH

Doctor ordered tests?

ETHAN

Yeah. I'll go back in a couple days.

Sarah reaches over, takes Ethan's hand.

SARAH

It's gonna be okay, honey.

Ethan looks at her for a moment.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You know your dad and I love you very much. So very much. Since the first time we held you.

Ethan furrows his brow.

ETHAN

Right. Okay.

SARAH

It wasn't that we wanted to keep it a secret, we just didn't find the right time to tell you.

ETHAN

Tell me what?

Axel re-enters the room with a small shoe box.

SARAH

You were adopted, baby. We tried and tried, but couldn't have our own.

Ethan sits up a little.

AXEL
You're still our son.

Ethan takes a deep breath.

ETHAN
Yeah, guys, I know. Honestly.

SARAH
Really?

ETHAN
Seriously, I don't look like either one of you. You're both blonde and blue-eyed. I'm dark with brown eyes. Seventh-grade science made me suspicious.

AXEL
Oh. You're a smart guy. Take after my side.

Ethan laughs.

ETHAN
You're an idiot. Do you know anything about my birth parents?

Sarah looks tense again.

AXEL
That, uh, that's where this gets complicated.

SARAH
And it's the biggest reason we didn't really tell you.

Ethan opens the shoe box.

SARAH (CONT'D)
The caseworker didn't go into details too much.

Ethan thumbs through adoption papers. There's a picture of a Hispanic woman.

ETHAN
My birth mom?

Sarah nods.

AXEL
She couldn't keep you.

ETHAN
They say that.

SARAH
Something horrible happened, baby.

ETHAN
She's dead?

SARAH
No, I don't think so. I mean why
she couldn't keep you.

(beat)

Ethan's eyes widen a little.

AXEL
But we wanted you. We could give
you a safe place and love that she
couldn't.

ETHAN
So you don't know who my biological
father is?

AXEL
Did you *just* start blacking out?

ETHAN
Just the last week as far as I
know. Why, did he do it too?

SARAH
Your biological dad said that he
had issues with blackouts. He
didn't know what he was doing.

ETHAN
Did you know him?

AXEL
No, no. He testified that to the
jury. After your mom. And the other
women.

(beat)

ETHAN
Oh. Um, I see.

Ethan stares down at the picture in his hand. He shifts it behind the adoption paper. Looks at the name and the caseworker.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Thanks for being honest with me.
What's for dinner?

Ethan gets up, hugs them both. Kisses mom.

She lingers for a moment, then disappears into the kitchen.

Ethan swallows hard and looks at Axel.

ETHAN

I need to borrow \$100. It's important. Please don't give me a hard time but I will pay you back.

Axel studies him for a moment. He nods.

AXEL

Okay. But you'll pay me back?

Ethan locks eyes with him.

ETHAN

Yeah. Promise.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ethan opens the door slowly and enters the dark apartment with a small bag in his hand. He sets the keys down, pours a glass of water.

Xiomara's door rests closed, but light comes from the other side of it.

Ethan steps toward her door, raises his hand to knock, but hesitates for a beat.

He lowers his hand, tiptoes back to the table and retrieves the bag, then goes into his room.

INT. APARTMENT ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ethan sits on his bed with his laptop open. The laptop shows him sitting on the bed with the laptop.

He waves his hand and a picture snaps. There's a motion-activated webcam on his small desk by the door.

Satisfied, Ethan puts the laptop to the side, grabs the empty glass on his nightstand, and strides to the kitchen.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

A new flower bouquet has replaced the single rose in the vase.

Ethan sets the glass in the sink. He turns to find Xiomara standing beside him.

He jumps, startled.

ETHAN

Jesus.

XIOMARA

Sorry. I thought you heard me.

ETHAN

It's okay.

XIOMARA

Thought you were working.

ETHAN

Got switched. You're up late.

XIOMARA

Just couldn't sleep. Thinking about the girls who were killed.

ETHAN

Oh, yeah. Terrible.

XIOMARA

News said three of 'em now. All students.

ETHAN

Wow.

XIOMARA

Want a beer?

ETHAN

Trying to quit.

Xiomara opens a beer.

XIOMARA

Well I need something to relax so I can get to sleep.

She drinks.

ETHAN

Wish I could. I went to talk to my
parents tonight. Can't stop
thinking about it now.

Ethan stops and grabs a glass. He pours himself a cup of tea
from the pitcher in the fridge.

XIOMARA

Did they give you grief about
something?

ETHAN

No. No. Just. Other things.

She puts her hand on his shoulder.

XIOMARA

Get a run in, then come back and
relax.

Ethan smiles.

ETHAN

New flowers?

Xiomara smiles.

XIOMARA

Adam dropped them off. As an
apology.

ETHAN

Adam?

XIOMARA

My sociology guy. The jerk.

ETHAN

Wait, Keller? Adam Keller?

XIOMARA

You know him?

Ethan shakes his head and walks away. Xiomara watches. His
door smacks shut with a BANG! She jumps a little.

INT. APARTMENT ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ethan ties his shoes. Leaves.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

He jogs under a street lamp, crosses over some other streets.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Ethan runs through a park. He's keeping a decent pace.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

He turns a corner, runs past a building. He turns another corner.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Suddenly he's in the hallway of his apartment building. Ethan takes a full three strides before he stops.

His eyes dart in panic. He huffs for breath. How did he get inside?

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan opens the door slowly. Paces toward his room.

Xiomara's light is off.

INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ethan takes a quick shower. He steps out, starts toweling off. The bathroom door opens.

Xiomara steps in, bleary eyed.

Ethan just freezes. Xiomara turns, startled.

XIOMARA

Sorry. Oh, I'm sorry.

Her eyes examine him.

ETHAN

It's okay.

He wraps his towel around himself.

XIOMARA

I figured you were in bed a long time ago.

Xiomara finally turns her gaze.

ETHAN

I just got back from my run.

Her head snaps back to him, stunned.

XIOMARA

You ran for almost three hours?

Ethan just blinks.

ETHAN

What? No, just down to campus and back. (beat) I think.

XIOMARA

Ethan, it's after two. You left before eleven.

Ethan grips at the towel, nervously.

ETHAN

I don't understand. I didn't drink.

XIOMARA

I'm really worried about you.

Ethan just brushes past her, opens the door, and exits.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)

Ethan?

INT. APARTMENT ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ethan lies down. No sooner than his head hits the pillow...

INT. APARTMENT ETHAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Suddenly his door flies open.

MIKE

Good morning, sunshine!

Ethan rolls over.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Get up and let's get this show on the road.

Ethan doesn't say a word. Just blinks.

(beat)

MIKE
What's up, buttercup?

Ethan still doesn't reply.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Okay. Drastic times.

Mike dives onto the bed.

He quickly maneuvers Ethan into a wrestler's hold, Mike's legs around his waist, pinning down Ethan's arms.

Ethan bites Mike, fairly hard. Mike relents, rolls out. Stands.

ETHAN
Seriously? This is how today starts? After the week I've had?

MIKE
You? How about my best friend left me at a bar without a word. How about my best friend went on a date and didn't tell me? And then left work early yesterday and stood me up for wing night? Never mind the bite.

(beat)

ETHAN
Sorry about yesterday. I went to a doctor, then went to see my parents.

Mike sits up on Ethan's bed.

MIKE
Woah. What's going on?

ETHAN
I'm adopted.

MIKE
Dude, everyone knows you're adopted. We've talked about it since we were 12.

Ethan nods.

ETHAN

They confirmed it last night. My birth mom gave me up because she was raped. My biological father murdered nine women.

Mike's mouth drops. He's searching for words.

MIKE

Well damn.

ETHAN

And that's *after* the blackouts, man.

Mike sits forward.

MIKE

Wait, blackouts?

Ethan turns, fidgets with something on his dresser.

ETHAN

I don't remember leaving the bar. When I went out with Xiomara, I left - went for a walk. I woke up in a park on the other end of town. I don't remember leaving work yesterday. And there's a good hour missing from last night. I went for a jog at 11:00 but came home after 2. I saw the doctor because I have no earthly idea what happened during any of those times.

MIKE

Brain cancer, man. My uncle kinda flipped out when he had brain cancer. Temporal lobe dysplasia or some shit.

ETHAN

Doc ordered some labs. Asked about family history. So I had to go see my folks.

Mike sits for a second just staring at Ethan.

MIKE

Well, look, if it's cancer we'll figure something out. I got your back.

Mike stands.

Ethan looks over.

MIKE (CONT'D)

We don't work today. We go to a
strip club, live it up while we
can.

Mike sways his shoulders and hips in a quasi-sexy shimmy.

Ethan smiles.

ETHAN

Stop. You're embarrassing yourself.

Mike keeps dancing, gets closer to Ethan.

MIKE

Oh, no. No. I'm embarrassing *you*.
Big difference.

Ethan jumps out of bed, opens the door, runs out. Mike dances
after him.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ethan opens the door. Goes to the couch.

He pulls his notepad from his backpack.

Starts taking notes. His phone beeps again.

GFX: *** Another body found on campus. Classes cancelled for
remainder of the week. For your safety, do not go anywhere
alone. The buddy system saves lives! ***

Ethan settles into the cushion.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ethan has nodded off on the couch. The door opens.

Xiomara enters.

Ethan hears her, stirs. She's carrying bags. He pops up,
scurries to the door. Takes a bag from her.

XIOMARA

Thanks.

Ethan sets it on the table.

ETHAN

Sure.

XIOMARA

It's hot in here, why didn't you turn on the A/C?

ETHAN

It wasn't too bad earlier. I kinda passed out on the couch.

XIOMARA

Good. I'm glad you got some sleep. You feeling better?

ETHAN

Never better, you?

XIOMARA

Okay. Nervous that my roomie has gone cuckoo.

She sets the grocery bags down.

ETHAN

Cuckoo. That's the technical term, right?

Ethan starts unpacking the bags.

XIOMARA

You learn that one in grad school.

ETHAN

If I get there and don't end up in the asylum first.

Xiomara unpacks as well.

XIOMARA

Well at least you'll make the rubber pajamas look good.

Ethan smiles.

ETHAN

If it matters, I felt better after my run.

XIOMARA

I told you it would help.

Xiomara finishes, walks to the couch. A news program is on the TV.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)
Any word from the doctor?

ETHAN
Not yet. Waiting on insurance.

XIOMARA
Capitalistic health care.

Xiomara just shakes her head.

ETHAN
I might make a habit of it. Running
I mean.

XIOMARA
Glad I could help.

She eyes him. He stands looking at her.

Finally, she turns. Ethan also exits to his room.

TIME LAPSE

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan emerges from his room, ready for a run. He trots out the front door.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

Ethan jogs out on the sidewalk again, gets into a good rhythm.

He passes several streetlights, rounds a corner near a dormitory.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

He leaves campus and runs through the park.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

He loops back, comes back through the same path and onto the same sidewalk.

Ethan turns a corner. His earphone falls out.

As he reaches for it, the quiet night shatters with a shrill scream.

WOMAN (O.S.)

AHH!!!

Ethan jolts to a stop. He looks in each direction, frantically trying to find the source of the scream.

Ethan jogs to a little grove of trees. No signs of the victim.

Jogs back to the other side. Nothing.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan enters and walks quietly toward his room.

Xiomara's door lies open. She sleeps on her side in a purple negligée.

Ethan stands for a moment, examining her. The oscillating fan causes the fabric of the negligee to ripple around her hips.

Ethan watches himself touching Xiomara's leg, running his fingers to her hips.

He swallows hard, still standing in the hall.

INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ethan showers.

INT. APARTMENT ETHAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

He lies in his bed, wide awake. He rolls over and it's daylight.

Ethan stretches as he gets out of bed.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - MORNING

Ethan steps out. He looks worn.

Xiomara again stirs at a bowl, wearing only her bathrobe.

XIOMARA

How ya doin?

ETHAN

Barely slept.

Ethan sits at the counter.

XIOMARA

Yeah me too. When it's this hot I just want to take all my clothes off when I sleep. Can only take off so much though.

She watches his face, hoping for a reaction.

ETHAN

Yeah, tell me about it.

She scrambles what's in the pan.

XIOMARA

Want some eggs?

ETHAN

No thanks. Trying to quit.

Xiomara turns, pulls out a cutting board. She sets to chopping green onions. CHOP. CHOP. CHOP.

XIOMARA

No beer, no eggs. Next thing I know you'll swear off sex. I'm not about that life.

Ethan fixates on the knife. CHOP. CHOP.

ETHAN

Well, not exactly my choice. On any of the above. Beer blacks me out, eggs give me heartburn, and ladies aren't exactly lining up at my door.

XIOMARA

Are you lining up at any doors?

(beat)

ETHAN

I'll keep that in mind.

Ethan stares at the blade. Xiomara swings it as she speaks.

XIOMARA

You have to be a little more assertive sometimes. And you have to get the doctors to listen to what you are saying about your episodes. I think you're just too stressed. Maybe a blood pressure issue. Are you even listening?

Ethan snaps his gaze up.

ETHAN

Sorry. Yeah. Just sleepy. Dazing out.

Xiomara finishes her scramble. She reaches into the fridge for some cheese.

ETHAN

Mind handing me?

Ethan points. Xiomara hands him an apple.

Ethan walks into his room. Xiomara puts eggs on her plate.

She steps to the coffee maker and pours a cup into a travel mug. Ethan comes back out with his backpack.

XIOMARA

Don't be a weirdo. Drink some coffee and wake up.

Ethan stops. Xiomara turns and hands him the cup.

Ethan smiles. Looks her in her eyes. She smiles too.

The gaze lasts a little too long.

ETHAN

Uh. Thanks. See you in a bit. Have a good day.

Xiomara lowers her eyes, still smiling.

XIOMARA

You too.

Ethan walks out the door.

INT. MIKE'S CAR - MORNING

Ethan opens the door. Sits. Mike looks at the cup.

MIKE

Little early for whiskey.

ETHAN

(mocks)
Ha ha. Coffee.

Mike starts to drive.

MIKE
Since when do you drink coffee?

ETHAN
Occasionally.

MIKE
Did she make it for you? She made
it for you. You scamp.

Ethan looks out the window.

MIKE (CONT'D)
She wants you awake tonight, man.
Wants you awake so she can show you
something!

Ethan laughs nervously.

ETHAN
Just drive.

They drive in silence for a beat.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
Do you think I could kill someone?

Mike laughs.

MIKE
I've known you all your life, dude.
You could only kill someone if you
were protecting your family.

Ethan nods. Drinks coffee.

INT. OFFICE- MORNING

Ethan walks to his cubicle. People in the office are buzzing,
lots of talk.

Christine appears at Ethan's opening.

Again, she doesn't say a word, just lunges at Ethan, kissing
him, straddles his lap, wraps herself around him on the
chair.

Ethan shakes his head, dismisses the daydream.

CHRISTINE
Can you make copies of everything
in here please?

She hands him a folder.

ETHAN
Just one of each?

CHRISTINE
Yes, please.

She looks around a little cautiously.

Then sits down on the edge of the desk.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Do you feel like your campus is
safe?

Ethan turns his chair to see her better.

CHRISTINE
I just moved into the Pinewood
Apartments, across the street from
it. And five girls get killed in
the neighborhood.

ETHAN
Five? I thought there were four?

Christine fidgets with her hair.

CHRISTINE
They found a girl this morning in
the park beside my building. Same
as the first one, stabbed a dozen
times.

Ethan sits up straight.

ETHAN
I, uh, I'm so sorry. I hadn't heard
that yet.

Christine picks up a paper clip and just fidgets with it.

CHRISTINE
It's okay. Just makes a girl
nervous. My boyfriend works a lot
now, between being a T.A. and he
started his clinicals. And his grad
classes run until late. It's rare
that I see him before midnight, if
he comes over at all. And my poodle
isn't exactly a guard dog.

Ethan laughs.

ETHAN

I imagine not. There are security guards on campus. And everyone is going to be on high alert now. So you shouldn't worry.

CHRISTINE

Thanks. Hey, uh, did something happen the other night?

Ethan swallows hard.

ETHAN

What, uh, what do you mean?

CHRISTINE

Well I was trying to say hi at the bar. And you didn't respond.

ETHAN

Oh. I just assumed you were waving at your boyfriend.

She sighs a heavy sigh.

CHRISTINE

Did he say something to you?

ETHAN

No. Nothing I haven't heard before.

CHRISTINE

Well, I'll get out of your way and let you work.

Christine smiles half-heartedly.

CHRISTINE

If Adam gives you grief, just tell me. He's kind of an ape sometimes. He was adopted but spent years in the foster system so he's got some baggage.

ETHAN

Don't we all. I'm sure he just wants to protect you. Especially with the present circumstances.

She leans in for a real hug this time.

CHRISTINE

Thanks for the reassurance.

Christine smiles as she passes beyond the cubicle wall.

Mike appears in the opening.

MIKE

Dude. Are you banging everybody?
Share the wealth.

Ethan shakes his head.

ETHAN

She was asking me about the murders
and campus being safe. She just
moved into Pinewood.

MIKE

She gave you her address! Oh man,
what is it about women wanting to
give you some?

Ethan just blinks.

MIKE (CONT'D)

You okay, man?

ETHAN

Yeah. I, uh, can I tell you
something?

Mike sits. Ethan leans closer.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I was running last night. In the
park. I thought I heard a scream.

Mike sits back.

MIKE

Did you hear from the doctor yet?

Ethan cocks his head a little.

ETHAN

No, why?

MIKE

Because the body they found this
morning had been dead for like four
days. So she wasn't screaming last
night.

Ethan sighs.

Mike gets up.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Call your doc, man.

Mike leaves. Ethan goes to the copy machine and starts copies.

His phone rings. Ethan answers.

ETHAN
Hello?

CASE WORKER (V.O.)
Mr. Chancellor? This is Dara Skelly with Child and Family Services. We spoke a few days ago about your adoption.

ETHAN
Yes, hello. Thank you for getting back to me.

CASE WORKER
Your birth mother still lives in the area. I took the liberty to reach out to her and she agreed if you'd like to contact her.

Ethan paces. He grabs a pen and jots down a phone number.

EXT. ELLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ethan exits another ride-share in a residential neighborhood. The area looks a little run-down, lower income housing.

ETHAN
Thanks.

He pushes a button on his phone.

Car leaves.

An ELDERLY WOMAN is at the corner. She has a walker but is struggling with pushing forward since it is not a leaning curb.

Ethan supports her elbow, smiles.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
You've got this.

The older woman smiles, and re-assured, moves the walker to the street.

Ethan balances her as she steps down.

He looks across the street. There are several driveways. He walks with her for a few steps.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Thank you, young man. I'm good from here.

Ethan smiles.

Ethan stroll up the sidewalk up to the small house. There is a large ornate cross on the door.

Ethan reaches up to knock on the door, but a voice comes from the corner of the porch.

ELLE (O.S.)

You look like him.

Ethan turns.

ELLE GARCIA sits on the edge. She's a middle-aged Latina smoking a cigarette.

ETHAN

Sorry, I didn't see you.

ELLE

It's all right. Come sit.

Ethan moves to her, sits beside her.

She studies him, takes a drag.

ELLE (CONT'D)

You look like him. Sure as I'm sitting here.

Ethan isn't sure how to respond. He rubs his hands on his pants.

ELLE (CONT'D)

That's not a bad thing. He was a good-looking man. A pretty monster.

She forces a smile. Ethan turns toward her a little.

ELLE (CONT'D)

I worked as a cleaning lady at this restaurant. He was a line cook in the afternoons, working his way through college.

(MORE)

ELLE (CONT'D)

I had a girlfriend who was a waitress and she introduced us. I had no idea what kind of man he was. The things he did outside.

Ethan purses his lips.

ELLE (CONT'D)

People talk about The Night Stalker or the Green River Killer. But your father never got that same reputation because all of his victims were Latinas. He told the court he liked women who "smelled like a burrito," that sick bastard. He stabbed and killed nine women that he admitted to.

Elle's voice cracks as she says it. Her hand shakes a little as she lifts it to her face. She takes another drag.

ELLE (CONT'D)

I would have been ten had it not been for a nosy neighbor who saw him come in the window.

She pushes her hair behind her ear.

ETHAN

That's so terrible. I'm so sorry. I don't know how you got through it.

She points to the cross above the door.

ELLE

I prayed. I prayed every day. I asked God for forgiveness because I felt like it was my fault, that I invited the devil in. And the case worker agreed, said I should not have left my window open in a neighborhood like mine. We didn't have no air conditioner, can you imagine? My girlfriend told me to get an abortion but my heart ached so much and I thought that you deserved a chance to live, mijo. But your father was so vile, a devil in the flesh. I couldn't forgive him. I tried. All the way to the end, I tried. I watched, the day they injected him. I thought I'd feel relief, but I didn't. Just sadness. Sadness.

Ethan slowly raises his hand. Softly touches her back.

She sobs. Ethan rubs for a moment.

ETHAN

Do you know anything else about him?

ELLE

His lawyer said he was mentally ill. He didn't know he was doing it. But he talked to me the whole time. Said I would like it. That little juanitas like me were lucky a white man would have them. He had a knife - one of the knives from our kitchen at work. He recognized me after he pushed me to the floor and that changed things for him. He hesitated. And that gave the police enough time to catch him.

She sobs again.

ETHAN

I'm so sorry. I don't know what to say. Maybe it was a mistake for me to come.

Elle wipes her eyes.

ELLE

No, it's good for me. There's kindness in you, mijo. You're concerned about right and wrong. It helps me know I made the right choice.

Ethan hugs her. She leans into him.

ELLE (CONT'D)

I asked the case worker once about your family. He said they were white and had a house in the valley and that you had a nice life. I thought it best to just let it be.

Ethan breaks the hug.

ETHAN

I've had a pretty nice life. Thank you.

ELLE

Thank you. Would you like some coffee?

Ethan smiles.

ETHAN

I would love some coffee.

TIME LAPSE

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan comes the door, walks into the living room. Xiomara rests on the couch. She looks like she's been crying. Ethan stares for a moment before he can muster the words.

ETHAN

You okay?

XIOMARA

I knew her. Destiny. The one they found this morning. We had a class together.

Ethan sits on the couch.

ETHAN

I'm sorry, Xi.

Xiomara cuddles against him.

XIOMARA

I was a little envious of how pretty she was. Ericka too.

Ethan puts his arm around her.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)

She was the first one. I'm kind of scared. I mean I go out sometimes at night. I walk to my car or to the library. I used to run, like I told you.

ETHAN

Look, I'll go with you if it makes you feel safer.

She smiles.

XIOMARA

Thank you. I bought a gun.

ETHAN

What?

Ethan leans forward.

XIOMARA

I know when you moved in I said no weapons, but I'm really nervous. We're on the ground floor and someone could get in the window pretty easily if they tried.

Ethan takes a deep breath. He hugs her.

ETHAN

Shh. It's okay.

She lingers in his embrace.

XIOMARA

You're a really good listener, Ethan. I appreciate that more than you know.

ETHAN

I'm glad I can be a useful mammal.

Xiomara laughs. She looks into his eyes intently.

XIOMARA

Who says stuff like that? You are a rare bird.

She strokes his arm, tenderly.

ETHAN

(beat) I, uh, should go for my run.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

Ethan loops around the campus.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

He jogs. Once again, he hears someone scream.

WOMAN (O.S.)

AHH!

He stops running. Ethan stands still on the campus trail. Silence captures the night.

Again, he searches for the source of the scream. He puts his hand to face, smudges blood on his brow. Ethan doesn't notice.

Stands for a beat. Silence. Complete silence.

He jogs home.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan again enters the front door and heads straight to his room. Xiomara is on the couch with a headset on, her head bouncing a little in rhythm. She doesn't look up.

INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ethan steps into the shower again. He flips over shampoo, to wash his hair, but as the liquid hits his hand, he drops it and winces.

Blood mixes with shampoo on the floor, water washes it away. Ethan pushes his hand under the stream, and then studies it.

He's got a couple small scratches on his palm that are bleeding.

He scrubs, concerned, then turns the water off. The bathroom door creaks open.

Xiomara enters, still wearing her headset. She's now wearing a bathrobe.

As she closes the door, Ethan opens the shower curtain.

Xiomara has her back turned, takes off her robe.

Ethan examines his hand, but then reaches for his towel.

She turns around just as Ethan looks up. Both stare for just a second.

Ethan breaks the trance first, covers himself with a towel, careful to also conceal his hand.

(beat) Xiomara takes her headphones off, then wraps her bathrobe around herself.

XIOMARA

I'm sorry. Didn't realize you were home.

ETHAN
Sorry too. Didn't realize you'd
need in.

They stand there for a moment.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
I, uh, I'm done.

Ethan scoots by her.

XIOMARA
Thanks. Good night.

Xiomara disrobes again before Ethan closes the door.

INT. APARTMENT ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ethan lies in bed, isn't sleeping. Just stares. Light dances
on the ceiling.

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

Ethan stands at the copy machine. The light slides back and
forth.

He has large bags under his eyes and a blank expression.

He gets the copies, and as he puts them into a manila folder,
he has bandages on his hand. He walks a couple cubicles back
and hands them to his COWORKER.

COWORKER
Thanks, Ethan.

Ethan doesn't reply, just slinks to his cubicle.

As he sits down, Mike appears behind him.

MIKE
What is the psychological impact of
making paper copies in the digital
age? There's a crises of conscience
there somewhere.

Ethan stares at him, blankly.

ETHAN
What?

MIKE

Forget it. I was trying to be deep.
Dude. I waited for you for like 20
minutes this morning.

ETHAN

Sorry, I, uh, I think I took a bus
in. Wanted to be here early.
Couldn't sleep.

MIKE

Couldn't text either, apparently.

ETHAN

I wasn't thinking. I'll figure out
a way to make it up to you.

Mike starts sorting a large pile of mail.

MIKE

Well don't get all weepy on me,
man. Just text me next time. You
look like shit.

ETHAN

Not sleeping much. Been trying to
run until I'm tired, but doesn't
seem to be working.

MIKE

Get some coffee.

ETHAN

Yeah, maybe I'll run into Christine
in there.

MIKE

You haven't heard?

ETHAN

Heard what?

MIKE

She's missing, man.

Ethan's mouth drops.

ETHAN

What?

MIKE

No one's seen her since last night.
She went for a walk and didn't come
back.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

I guess her boyfriend knocked on her door for a while this morning and when no one answered, he convinced the landlord to let him in. I don't think any one would be too concerned, but someone killed her dog. Boyfriend found it, said it was stabbed to death.

Ethan glances down at his hand. He tucks it into his pocket. Looks at Mike.

ETHAN

Well shit. I hope she's okay.

Mike puts his hand on Ethan's shoulder.

MIKE

Me too buddy. For your sake. You need to get laid, bad.

Ethan pushes Mike's hand away.

ETHAN

Not a good joke, man.

MIKE

Look, I'm worried about her, okay? And I'm worried about you too. Did you get your test results?

INT. HOSPITAL LAB - DAY

Ethan wears a hospital gown, slides into a CAT scan. The machine whirs.

SCAN TECH

Just hold still.

Ethan lies there. The machine whirs.

SCAN TECH

You heard about all these murders right? These girls probably had it coming, that's what I think. I mean to be stabbed 27 times isn't a crime of passion, right? That's personal. That's vendetta. Some chick was jealous. Either that or it's Illuminati man.

Ethan just lies there.

INT. RESTAURANT BACKROOM -

Ethan awkwardly sprays down some dishes. He favors his wounded hand.

As he sorts the dishes, he grabs a large kitchen knife. It has blood on it. Ethan stares, wide-eyed.

Light overhead still flickers. The backdoor slams. A cat hisses from somewhere.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM -

Ethan enters the room. Xiomara is in the kitchen.

XIOMARA

Hey.

Ethan doesn't look at her.

ETHAN

Hey.

He walks to his bedroom. Comes back without his backpack.

Xiomara talks to fill the silence.

XIOMARA

I've got a lot of school work, but wanted a sandwich first. You hungry?

ETHAN

No, I'm okay. Thanks. And I'm with you. Have a paper to finish.

He pours a glass of water as she sets to slicing an onion.

CHOP. CHOP!

Ethan watches the blade slide through the round flesh. He's mesmerized.

CHOP. CHOP!

The knife, the blade. The way her breasts move as she cuts.

He forces words out.

ETHAN

You really holding up all right?

XIOMARA

They had a memorial at Chambers Hall today. I'm trying to stay so busy I don't think about it.

ETHAN

That's a good plan. You know where to find me if you need to talk.

Xiomara smiles, finishes compiling her sandwich.

Ethan grabs his water and goes to his bedroom.

INT. APARTMENT ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He sits on the edge of his bed, typing fervently - occasionally sipping at the glass of tea on the nightstand.

Ethan types a few more words, closes his laptop.

He stands and changes his shirt. Ethan reaches for his shoes, slides them over to the bed. He wiggles his feet in.

He reaches down to tie them, but there is a dark-red splotch on the left shoe. Dried blood.

He rubs it with his fingernail. It doesn't rub off.

INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ethan stands at the sink. He wets his hand and rubs at the shoe. It takes a few strokes, but the smudge finally gives.

Ethan stares at the red for moment. Then he wipes it away emphatically.

Ethan marches back to his room, pulls up the laptop. He feverishly scrolls through the pictures from his webcam.

Walking in, then out, in, out. Nothing odd or unusual. He stops at the one from two nights ago. Marked 1:47 a.m.

It's blurry, but Ethan's hand has blood on it. And some on his shirt. Where is that shirt?

Ethan pops up, grabs his clothes hamper. He dumps the laundry out and frantically sorts the items. Nothing. Just normal, not-bloodied clothes!

Ethan's hands curl into fists and he huffs. Finally, he just plops on the bed, ties up his shoes, and leaves.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ethan stops at the fridge, grabs a glass and pours a quick cup of tea. He sucks it down and hurries out the door.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

Ethan races across his same, usual path. He leaves campus and into the park.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

As Ethan runs, the overhead light behind him turns off.

Ethan doesn't notice. Keeps running. It happens again. The light immediately overhead flashes out, finally Ethan notices.

He slows his run, looks back. A dark figure lurks in the distance behind him.

Suddenly Ethan sprints.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

Ethan rounds the corner, but much wider than normal.

He pulls up, tries to hurdle a bush but fails miserably and wipes out, crashing and rolling to a stop under a street lamp.

The light overhead snaps out, and black envelops him.

INT. APARTMENT ETHAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Ethan's eyes pop open in his bedroom.

Both hands are bandaged. Ethan grunts as he sits up. He groans as he stands.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - MORNING

Ethan stumbles into the kitchen. He's limping a little.

Xiomara is at the stove, she pulls cinnamon rolls from the oven. The kitchen is a mess, lots of dishes, ingredients left out.

XIOMARA

I made cinnamon rolls if you'd like one.

Ethan grabs a plate from the cupboard, takes one.

ETHAN

Thanks.

Ethan sits down. She looks at his bandages, his limping gait.

XIOMARA

So, did you get lucky last night?

Ethan chews as he leans against the counter

ETHAN

I didn't go out last night.

Xiomara shrugs.

XIOMARA

Okay, you don't have to tell me.
It's fine.

Ethan stops chewing.

ETHAN

I went for my run, showered, went to bed.

Xiomara grabs her own plate.

XIOMARA

If you don't want to talk about it we don't have to. I asked you where you were going and you didn't answer, just walked out. I assumed it was a date or something and you just didn't want to say.

Xiomara looks for a place to set her plate down.

Ethan notices.

ETHAN

Sorry I haven't been doing as many dishes. Been a crazy week.

Ethan pops a bit of cinnamon roll into his mouth.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Go head and sit. I'll clean.

Xiomara gets to the counter, sits.

XIOMARA

Were you drunk again? Your hands
actually hurt?

Ethan pours some soap into the sink.

ETHAN

No. I don't know where I went.

Xiomara chews now. Ethan scrubs dishes. He shakes his hand as
the stinging soap hits the wound.

XIOMARA

Did you hear back from your doctor
at all?

He shakes his head, and winces again as the water finds his
wound.

ETHAN

Nothing looked abnormal during the
scan though. Results will be in
later today, so I'm gonna go down
there in a bit.

XIOMARA

I'm really getting worried about
you, Ethan.

Ethan stares, silent for a moment.

ETHAN

I can't believe I went out last
night. If I'm honest with you, I
don't remember showering even.

XIOMARA

You did. Put on some decent jeans
and a polo and left. You were
dressed like you had a date.

ETHAN

Definitely didn't. I'm really
scared that this keeps happening.

XIOMARA

Stay in with me tonight. So I can
keep an eye on you. And we can
talk, I can put some of these
classes to use.

Ethan sprays off some dishes, puts them in the drainer.

ETHAN

Yeah, I mean, okay. You can evaluate me or whatever. I'm gonna get changed.

INT. ETHAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ethan changes his clothes. Sits on the bed, grabs his backpack.

Ethan reaches into his backpack and grabs his ear buds.

His face goes pale. He also withdraws a single polaroid shot.

A young woman lies dead in a bush. No face, just legs stretching from the brush.

INT. DR. OFFICE - DAY

Ethan sits nervously on the exam table.

DOCTOR 2 comes in, reviews Ethan's chart.

DOCTOR 2

Well, Mr. Chancellor, looks like mostly good news. I don't see any abnormalities. No signs of stroke or physical injuries.

ETHAN

That's good. So what's up then?

DOCTOR 2

Clean bill of health, physically speaking. Your blood pressure is a little high but otherwise you're solid.

ETHAN

Doc, I've been losing time. My roommate says I'm leaving at weird hours and I don't know where I go.

DOCTOR 2

I understand that it's alarming. A lot of college students get stressed out and lose track of time.

ETHAN

No, doc. I literally black out and don't know what happened.

Doctor 2 pauses for a moment.

DOCTOR 2

I know you are concerned. I can refer you to our psychiatry team. Mr. Chancellor, do you know if you had any trauma in your life? Sudden loss of a loved one, witnessing something horrible that your mind might block?

Ethan shakes his head.

ETHAN

Nothing that I'm aware of.

DOCTOR 2

Well, I'll have the nurse give you the information. Stress can do a lot of things to a person. Try to get more exercise and find a way to relax.

ETHAN

I don't have time to relax! I've got an unpaid internship, classes, and a part time job to make ends meet.

DOCTOR 2

I know it's rough. But college will be worth it in the end. Come with me, I'll walk you over to the psychiatrist.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - DAY

Ethan and Doctor 2 enter a small waiting room. It's empty, save for a receptionist.

As they approach the glass, Adam is sitting on the other side.

DOCTOR 2

Hey Adam. I need you to do an intake for this young man. I'll follow up with Dr. Earnest later.

Doctor 2 turns to Ethan. Adam stands up, grabs a clipboard.

DOCTOR 2

Adam will help take care of you.
The psychiatrist will call you in a
few days to set up an appointment,
okay?

ETHAN

A few days? Not sure it should wait
that long.

Doctor 2 pats his shoulder and leaves.

Adam emerges from behind the desk and motions Ethan to sit in
a chair.

Ethan hesitates, but finally sits. Adam sits.

ADAM

Okay. Let's start with name.

Ethan glares at him.

ETHAN

Seriously? (beat) Ethan.
Chancellor.

ADAM

What brings you here today?

Ethan just stares at him.

ETHAN

You have no idea who I am?

Adam stops writing, looks Ethan in the face.

ADAM

Of course I do. You are the
worthless dishwasher at the
hellhole I used to call work,
before I got in here. You're also
the one who keeps hitting on
Christine. I won't have it.

Ethan stares back, a little angry.

ETHAN

So you can try to bang my roommate
and that's cool, but I'm not even
allowed to talk to your girlfriend -
who happens to be my boss?

Adam smiles. Laughs a little.

ADAM

Is that what she told you? Women are all the same, man. Liars. Frauds.

ETHAN

That's a horrible thing to say about someone you're supposed to love.

ADAM

Love? Love is a biological glitch created to produce an offspring. It's oxytocin and dopamine. You're a psych student, you should know that by now.

ETHAN

Are you even concerned that she's missing?

ADAM

What makes you think she's missing?

ETHAN

She wasn't at work today.

ADAM

Rumors swirl on wheels of flapping tongues. Usually propelled by estrogen.

Ethan sits back a little.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I'm going to try to be a professional now. What brings you in?

ETHAN

I'm not sure I'm comfortable telling you.

Adam taps the pen against the clipboard.

ADAM

Ethan. See, I can write whatever I want in here and Dr. Earnest will believe me. Want me to write that you're a compulsive liar? Maybe you have a history of killing kittens? Or how about you like to masturbate with your own feces?

Ethan clenches his fists. Finally he just blurts.

ETHAN
I've been blacking out. Episodic
blackouts. Losing time. I'm
adopted. My father was a rapist.

Adam purses his lips and looks at Ethan. He nods slightly.
It's a judgmental glare.

ADAM
Fugue states. Interesting. How
interesting. How long has it been
ongoing?

ETHAN
A couple of weeks. I think.

ADAM
You think? You aren't sure?

Ethan shakes his head.

ADAM
I need a verbal confirmation or
denial.

ETHAN
No. I'm not sure.

Adam scribbles more notes.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Given your family history of
violence, I'd say you should get a
call soon from one of our staff.
It's going to be important that you
aren't alone. Do you have someone
who can be with you tonight?

Ethan nods.

ETHAN
My roommate. We'll be home all
night.

Adam scribbles some notes.

He leans in, way too close to be professional.

ADAM (CONT'D)
You should *definitely* stay away
from Christine.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ethan emerges onto a street. He pulls out a phone and calls.

ETHAN
Mike, hey bro. I, uh, I might need
your help. Can you give me a lift?

EXT. ELLE'S HOUSE - DAY

Ethan steps up to the door with the cross on it and raps.

A tense moment passes, Ethan just looks around. Elle finally answers the door.

ETHAN
Hey.

ELLE
Oh. This is a surprise.

She steps outside. Ethan backs up a step or two.

ETHAN
I should have called first. But I
needed to talk again.

ELLE
You troubled?

Ethan is fidgeting.

ETHAN
I just don't know where else to go.
Did my dad have any relatives?

ELLE
No, no. The family I encountered
twenty years ago are all gone. What
is it, mijo?

Ethan hesitates.

ETHAN

I've been blacking out. Losing time. Not sure what I'm doing in between.

Elle steps back. She covers her mouth.

ELLE

He is not you. You are not him. I told you there is kindness in you.

ETHAN

Was he blacking out? You said he didn't know what happened.

ELLE

He lied. The devil lived in him.

ETHAN

Does that mean the devil lives in me? Sins of the father visit the son, right?

Elle reaches out, touches him.

ELLE

No, no. It doesn't have to be that way. Ask God for help.

ETHAN

I don't know how.

ELLE

Just pray. Then listen. People often forget to listen for God to reply.

Elle touches his shoulder.

ELLE (CONT'D)

I will pray for you, too. I always have.

Ethan nods. He leaves the stoop, marches to Mike's car.

INT. MIKE'S CAR - DAY

Ethan sits, closes the door. Mike sits for a moment.

ETHAN

It's okay. Drive.

Mike starts the car.

MIKE

I'm really worried about you man.

ETHAN

Yeah. Just going crazy, nothing to see here.

MIKE

Look, you aren't a killer. *That's* crazy. You didn't enjoy dissecting animals. You remember our fetal pig in Bio? You wouldn't touch it. I had to be the one to cut it.

Ethan rubs at his eyes.

ETHAN

I had a dream it was a baby.

MIKE

What?

Ethan balls his hands into a fist.

ETHAN

I had a dream that it was a human baby. I started to skin it and it screamed and cried. So I couldn't do it.

MIKE

That's messed up.

ETHAN

I've always been a little messed up.

Ethan looks out the window.

ETHAN

I fit the profile, right? Like textbook. White -- well half-white - - middle class. Protestant. But with secrets.

MIKE

Yeah, dude, you just described me too! We all got secrets.

Ethan lays his head against the window.

MIKE (CONT'D)

How did he do it? Your dad. How'd he rape and kill them?

(Beat)

ETHAN

I don't really know. Threatened them with a big knife and then stabbed them I guess.

MIKE

But not her?

ETHAN

No.

MIKE

Why not her?

ETHAN

I dunno. Some neighbor saw him creep in and called the cops. She said she couldn't have an abortion. God wanted me to live.

Mike navigates a turn, but then looks at Ethan.

MIKE

You were supposed to live man. What would I be without you? You've bailed my ass out a hundred times. When my parents got divorced. When Mr. Brown caught me looking in his daughter's window.

Ethan laughs.

MIKE (CONT'D)

C'mon, when I got my car impounded, who bailed me out? That's your character man. You help people. Nobody is born evil anyway. Nature vs. nurture, right? Even if someone was born evil, but raised in a good place, they would take after the good.

(beat)

ETHAN

I don't know what happens when I'm out. Xiomara said she'll keep an eye on me tonight though.

Mike bobs his head.

MIKE

All right. Finally gonna be tapping
the roommate.

ETHAN

You are incorrigible.

MIKE

I think you meant encouraging. Huh?

Ethan doesn't respond.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Huh?

Ethan smiles.

ETHAN

You're such an ass.

They drive off into the setting sun.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Ethan walks into the apartment. Mike follows.

Xiomara paces, talking on the phone. She disappears into her
room.

ETHAN

See you tomorrow man.

Mike smiles, pulls up his arm. He's holding Ethan's backpack.

Ethan steps back.

ETHAN

Why do you have that?

MIKE

You left it in my car again, dude.

Mike sees Ethan's face drain.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Dude?

ETHAN

You? You've had my pack before too.
You have a polaroid camera?

MIKE

What?

Ethan erupts.

ETHAN

Do you have a polaroid camera?!?!
Are you deaf and stupid?

Mike drops the bag and walks out the door. Ethan rests against the wall for a beat.

He sets to work making dinner, then retreats to his bedroom.

INT. APARTMENT ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ethan reaches down beside his bed, pull his backpack up.

He digs around for something from the front pocket. There are no headphones.

He opens the front zipper, fishes around but no luck.

He opens the back zipper, puts his hand in. The expression on his face changes.

He slowly pulls his hand out and to his dismay, holds the large chef's knife from the restaurant.

He puts it back, zips the bag. He hesitates, then slides the bag under his bed before leaving.

TIME LAPSE

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan finishes something on the stove, turns the burner off.

Xiomara finally emerges from her room.

XIOMARA

It smells great.

ETHAN

Thanks. I've been getting tips from the cooks at the restaurant.

XIOMARA

Need help?

ETHAN

Chop the lettuce maybe?

Xiomara grabs the kitchen knife and cutting board.

She aggressively sets to work. CHOP.

XIOMARA

Sorry I was on the phone. Whitney is having issues with her baby daddy. I'm like 'Surprise! You slept with an idiot and got pregnant and he's still an idiot.'

Once again, he fixates on the knife. CHOP! CHOP!

ETHAN

Sorry to hear that. Your sis okay?

Ethan swallows hard.

XIOMARA

Yeah. Child Support is behind again. I hate him. I hate him so much I'd like to slice open his balls and pull out his intestine!

Xiomara dumps the lettuce into a colander and washes it. Ethan again fixates on her as she swivels the colander under the water. Her hips sway. He forces his gaze back to the pan in front of him.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)

I don't want to talk about that anymore. What did the doctor say?

Xiomara goes to the fridge and gets out some wine.

ETHAN

No sign of injury or tumor. He asked me about trauma.

Ethan turns the burners down to warm. He grabs a cup from the cupboard and tosses open the fridge. He pours a cup of tea.

XIOMARA

Maybe the adoption was traumatic.

ETHAN

I told you I was adopted?

XIOMARA

Yeah, last night.

(beat) Ethan gulps down his tea.

ETHAN

I don't remember saying that.

Ethan starts washing dishes. Xiomara sets the table.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
You don't have to do this, you
know?

XIOMARA
You are so clueless. It's cute.

Ethan scrubs at dishes.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)
Its important to me to know that
you're okay.

Ethan grabs the pan from the stove. He turns to the table,
puts the pan on a hot plate.

A bouquet of flowers fan from a vase on the table. Xiomara
smiles and sits down.

A door closes with a thud in the distance. A cat meows
somewhere.

Ethan turns back to the sink and he's standing in the plaza
just off campus.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

Ethan spins back around. His hands are empty. Ethan stops
moving. He stands still.

ETHAN
No. No. God.

He slowly looks around. He finally starts walking.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan enters the apartment. The lights are off. Food still
sits on the table. Bouquet rests there as well.

Xiomara's door sits closed.

INT. APARTMENT ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ethan goes into his bedroom. Sitting on top of his bed is a
handgun. Ethan pulls out his phone and texts Mike.

INSERT GFX: I need you to come over. Now.

TIME LAPSE

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Ethan sits on the floor. He holds the handgun.

Mike barges in. Ethan doesn't look up.

ETHAN
I killed her.

Mike sees the gun in Ethan's hand.

MIKE
Okay. Easy buddy. Who?

ETHAN
All of them. Pretty sure I killed
all of them. But I think I killed
Xiomara tonight.

MIKE
Okay, calm down. Talk to me.

ETHAN
She wanted to stay with me tonight.
I was washing dishes and suddenly
I'm outside. It's the same thing
all over again.

MIKE
Okay, that doesn't explain
anything. Where'd you get a gun?

Ethan trembles.

ETHAN
And I get home and there's food on
the table and her door is closed.

MIKE
Okay, let's just go check on her.
Just give me the gun.

ETHAN
I can't. I tried.

Ethan starts to cry. He points the gun at Mike.

MIKE
Okay.

ETHAN
Go check on her. Please!

Mike swallows hard.

MIKE
Okay.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mike steps into the short hallway, goes to the opposite door.

Mike raises his hand and knocks.

No reply. A tense moment passes.

Mike raises his hand and knocks again.

INT. APARTMENT ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Ethan hears Mike knocking. Ethan's trembling and crying increases. Ethan slowly raises the gun to his head.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Mike brushes his hands on his pants. He takes a deep breath.

Mike pushes open the door and quickly enters.

INT. APARTMENT XIOMARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Xiomara sits on the edge of her bed in her nightie, headphones in her ears.

She startles to see Mike barge in. Her room looks normal, windows down, curtains drawn.

XIOMARA
What the hell?!

MIKE
You're alive!

Mike calls over his shoulder.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Ethan, she's alive!

INT. APARTMENT ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ethan's still quivering, but he lowers the gun.

INT. APARTMENT XIOMARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Xiomara pulls up her blanket to cover herself.

XIOMARA

Please get out.

MIKE

I'm so glad you're okay.

He jumps forward and hugs her. Xiomara just shakes her head.

XIOMARA

I'll come talk in a minute. Please
stop touching me.

Mike returns to Ethan's room.

INT. APARTMENT ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Mike collects Ethan. Ethan hands him the gun. Mike sets the safety, pointed away from Ethan.

He then pulls Ethan to his feet and they go out to the living room.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Xiomara wears a bathrobe as she waltzes out to the couch.

Ethan and Mike are sitting together. Mike holds the handgun.

Xiomara sits.

XIOMARA

I'm not going to ask how you got my
gun. Would you know anyway?

Ethan shakes his head. She holds out her hand.

ETHAN

(chokes tears)
I thought you were dead.

Mike turns to Xiomara. Hands her the gun.

MIKE

Sorry I walked in on you.

XIOMARA

It's okay. Ethan, I know you're struggling. I'm not mad. Just worried. Someone out there is killing women and you're having blackouts.

ETHAN

Last thing I remember I washed some dishes. Then suddenly I was outside running.

XIOMARA

You were helping with dishes. I served you a plate, and I asked you if you liked me. As more than a friend.

Mike turns to Ethan, makes a fist and smiles.

ETHAN

Seriously?

MIKE

Told ya!

Xiomara smiles. Shakes her head.

XIOMARA

Yes, seriously. But you didn't answer. You stood straight up and hurried out the door. I couldn't grab you or get you to listen to me. You just left.

Ethan purses his lips.

ETHAN

I've been talking to doctors. And my biological Mom.

Xiomara nods.

XIOMARA

You also told me about your Dad.

Ethan nods.

ETHAN

My Dad? Oh, I really don't remember that.

XIOMARA

You have been through some trauma, Ethan. You're too stressed and you're dissociating. You just need some counselling.

Mike pats Ethan on the leg.

MIKE

See. No way.

He turns to Xiomara.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Where the hell did he get a gun?

Xiomara fidgets with her hair.

XIOMARA

I've known three of the five girls who were murdered. Well, interacted with anyway. I bought a gun for my safety.

Mike stands.

MIKE

Well it's obviously dangerous given tonight's circumstances. Give it to me.

XIOMARA

No. (to Ethan) Do you go into my room often?

ETHAN

No. I mean, I don't think so.

MIKE

Okay. We can all agree that the unstable don't need firearms.

(turns to Ethan)

You aren't killing anyone.

(to Xiomara)

Can you help this guy relax? I'll leave you kids to it.

Xiomara reluctantly gives Mike the gun. Mike stands up, walks out the door.

MIKE (O.S.)

Finally.

Xiomara scoots closer to Ethan. She lays her head on his shoulder.

XIOMARA

I want you to be okay. I tried to talk to you before you left. It was like you couldn't hear me.

ETHAN

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to leave.

Xiomara looks up.

XIOMARA

It's okay. You're here now.

She strokes his face, pulls his chin and kisses him.

Ethan's eyes widen for a moment, but then he gives in and enjoys it.

After a moment, Xiomara breaks the kiss and smiles. Ethan smiles too.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)

You know what we need? Music. I'll be right back.

Xiomara steps into her bedroom.

INT. APARTMENT XIOMARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Xiomara strides into the dark bedroom, pops the button on the light on her nightstand.

She turns to grab her bluetooth speaker. The curtain blows in a breeze; the window is open.

A shadowy figure DARK HAired GUY lunges from the corner.

He tackles Xiomara onto the bed, grabbing her mouth.

INT. RESTAURANT BACKROOM - NIGHT

Ethan washes dishes. The light overhead flickers. The back door slams.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan hears a thud.

ETHAN

Xiomara?

He stands, moving cautiously toward her room.

EXT. RESTAURANT BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Ethan stands at the back door, propping it open as he looks down the alley. A cat meows, then hisses from somewhere off screen.

Ethan hears something behind the dumpster. He walks forward to see a hand, holding a large kitchen knife, swing down as a woman gasps and cries softly.

INT. APARTMENT XIOMARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The figure on top of Xiomara rears back. The glint of a knife shines.

Ethan makes it to the doorway.

ETHAN

Xiomara?

The figure looks up.

Ethan lunges forward into the assailant. The knife plunges into a pillow. Ethan and the masked man roll onto the floor.

The window is clearly open behind them. The figure scrambles and jumps out the window.

Ethan casts a quick glance to Xiomara, she looks unharmed.

ETHAN

You okay?

XIOMARA

I think so.

Ethan bolts out the window.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

He strides flawlessly as he darts after the figure.

Ethan's training and persistence shines as he quickly gains ground.

The figure runs through the quad and into the park. Ethan stretches his hand forward, grabs the person.

They crumble to the ground.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Ethan quickly maneuvers to the top. He starts throwing punches. The attacker drops the knife.

The masked man reaches for it, grabs it. He plunges the knife into Ethan's left side.

Ethan howls in pain, half-falls into a bush, but manages to kick the perpetrator in the head.

The knife falls from his side.

As the figure collapses, Ethan's head phones fall out of his jacket pocket. The figure wears Ethan's jacket.

Ethan grabs the ear buds.

The figure on the ground strains to get back up. Ethan pushes out of the bush, stomps on the person's hand.

He rips the mask off of the figure.

Adam lets out an angry groan.

ETHAN

Adam?

Adam laughs.

ETHAN

What?

Ethan stumbles back, shocked.

Adam stands.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Benzodiazepine, since we're here.

ETHAN

I'm sorry, what?

Adam stares, the hatred on his face is terminal.

ADAM

Condensed valium, you dipshit.
You're not half as smart as
Christine said. High doses causes
blackouts and delusion, even
disassociation. I dropped it in
your drink at the bar. And your tea
in the fridge when I was there with
Xiomara. Nice shithole, by the way.

Ethan turns his head slightly, trying to put the pieces
together.

ETHAN

You planted the shoes. And the
picture. Hannah.

EXT. RESTAURANT BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Adam stands up from behind the dumpster. Ethan ducks, hides
behind the other side of the dumpster.

Adam slides HANNAH's limp body down the alley a few
businesses, and tucks her into a bush - nearly covering her
entire body.

Ethan peeks out from behind the dumpster. The alley is empty.

He stands slowly, gulps in the night air. He wipes his hands
nervously before stepping forward.

He crosses the dumpster to see a fair amount of blood
splatter. There are several broken pieces of wood and pallets
piled beside the blood that pooled beside it.

Ethan steps down the alley way to the bush. Hannah's legs are
barely visible. He breathes hard and collects himself.

ETHAN

Hannah?

He steps forward, just as Adam emerges from the shadows
behind him, and whacks him in the back of the head with a
board.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

The two stare at each other for a moment. Adam lunges for the
knife, comes up with it again.

ADAM (CONT'D)

You've proven unstable now. Others have noticed. Your boss, your friends. Even your parents. You have a case file with Mental Health.

ETHAN

But Mike and Xi know, Adam. They saw you.

ADAM

It's cute that you think any of you will live through this. Turns out it was you all along. Your bloody jacket and shirt will be all the evidence they need to convi...

Ethan lunges forward, catching Adam off guard.

They crash to the ground.

Adam plunges the knife into Ethan's side again and turns to scramble.

Ethan howls, but his rage doesn't relent. He rolls, wraps legs around Adam's waist.

Ethan flips around, roars in pain and anger, and wraps Adam's neck in a strong headlock.

Ethan grunts as he pulls tight. Adam claws at Ethan's arm, but Ethan's grip doesn't relent.

Ethan huffs and strains, face contorting in pain as Adam finally goes limp.

Ethan holds on for a few moments longer. Sweat drips from his face. He squeezes for all he can. He's only pulled out of it by the sound of Xiomara talking to a dispatcher.

Xiomara rushes toward them.

XIOMARA

Got them. Just off the southeast corner of the quad.

Ethan finally lets go of Adam's neck. Guy slumps to the side. Xiomara steps to Adam. She checks his pulse.

Ethan leans back, favoring his injured side.

XIOMARA

I don't think he's breathing. Adam.

Xiomara steps back.

XIOMARA

(to phone dispatch)

His name is Adam Keller. We were in Social Norms class together. We, uh, kinda dated once or twice.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

I'll alert the officers who are on their way.

XIOMARA

My boyfriend was stabbed in the incident. Is there an ambulance too?

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Is he hurt badly?

XIOMARA

Yes. Adam stabbed him with a big knife. It's still in him.

DISPATCH

Okay. Don't move him, don't remove the knife. We'll send paramedics, too.

XIOMARA

Please hurry.

Pinball lights bounce around the park as Xiomara hangs up the phone and comforts Ethan.

Ethan collapses into her, going limp on the ground. She sits with him, and cradles him as best she can.

XIOMARA

You're okay. You're okay now.

Ethan's eyes strain to stay open. The lights on the fringes of the park go out - one by one, until finally the light overhead goes out.

TIME LAPSE

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

The door opens. Xiomara enters first. Ethan leans hard into Mike.

MIKE

Okay buddy.

ETHAN

It's not that bad.

MIKE

Okay Mr. two-surgeries-and-sixteen-stitches.

Ethan groans as he sits on the couch.

ETHAN

Okay.

XIOMARA

Don't move, Ethan. You're going to finally relax. For at least two weeks.

Ethan smiles.

ETHAN

Yes ma'am.

Xiomara struts into her room.

MIKE

I'm proud of you, man. I told you that you weren't a killer. And that she wanted to give you some.

ETHAN

Thanks. But I am a killer now. Even if I didn't mean to.

MIKE

That one's forgivable. You were protecting your family.

ETHAN

I can't believe it was him.

MIKE

I can't believe he made you think it was you.

ETHAN

Almost.

MIKE

I'm glad you're okay man. I meant what I said about not being good without you. Don't forget about me when you two get married.

ETHAN

You'll always be my buttercup.

Mike smiles wide.

Xiomara comes back out of her room.

MIKE

You got him?

Mike walks toward the door.

XIOMARA

Yeah. I got him. And I'm not letting him go.

She wraps a hand over Ethan's shoulder.

MIKE

Oh, I forgot to mention, I have a date tonight.

Ethan strains to sit up taller.

ETHAN

No kidding?

MIKE

Yeah. With Christine!

ETHAN

She's alive?

Mike grins wide.

MIKE

Yeah man, she went to her granny's for a few days. Guess the psycho killed her dog while she was gone.

ETHAN

That's awful, why are you smiling?

Mike pulls his hands up in front of him, like a beggar.

MIKE

Because tonight, I get to be her puppy!

He howls as he turns and walks out the door. Ethan looks up at Xiomarra.

ETHAN

Wolves.

She nods, laughs, and then softly kisses Ethan.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END