

PEARLS

Based on her short story of the same name and part of the
collection, LOVE IS LOUDER

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PEARLS
Written by Susan Lee Hahn

INT./EXT THE FAMILY PRIUS/THE SKY - DAY

Nine-year old Pearl sits in the back seat, staring out the window, eyes drooping. Her mom drives. Pearl stares at the back of her father's head in the passenger seat in front of her. She smiles as he takes her mother's hand.

The Chicago skyline looms large against the endless expanse of Lake Michigan. The other cars blur by her, hurling forward like time itself. Pearl looks to the sky, her eyes closing.

PEARL (V.O.)

I am... Nine years old. It's the year I invented Future Self, the year I learned how to live forward and backward and string the moments of my life together like a strand of pearls, like my name, Pearl.

Her young voice morphs into the voice of an old woman as soft images from her life roll across the sky with the clouds.

PEARL/OLD WOMAN (V.O.)

It's the year my dad, well, it's not a very good year, but it's the most important year of my life. I don't know this yet, but I sort of do know it because of what's about to happen. I'm getting ahead of myself, or getting behind myself.

Pearl closes her eyes and drifts off to sleep.

CUT TO:

EXT. LINCOLN PARK ZOO - DAY

PEARL TRIMBLE (9, small, spunky, and biracial) holds hands with her father THEO TRIMBLE (40, scruffy and white) as they meander past animals in their habitats at the zoo.

They stop at the kangaroo cage and watch two young kangaroos punch each other in the face like goofy siblings. Pearl is so delighted. Theo's just happy that she's so happy.

PEARL

Did you see that?

THEO
I did! Pretty great.

Theo watches Pearl watch the kangaroos throw another punch.

INT. PRIUS - DAY

Theo and Pearl finish their hot dogs in the front seat of his worn-out Prius outside the zoo. Ketchup drips down her arm.

PEARL
(dramatically)
I'm bleeding!

He lets the ketchup drip down his arm.

THEO
They got me too.

PEARL
I'll save you!

She wipes up his arm, then throws the napkin out the window.

THEO
Pearl!

PEARL
What? It's biodegradable.

THEO
I could get a ticket for littering.

PEARL
Let's not litter because you know
what day it is today, don't you?

THEO
We don't have time to drive there.

PEARL
Unless mom's working late.

THEO
We'll hit rush hour.

PEARL
We can take the train.

Pearl hands him his phone, which has a screen saver of Pearl with her parents at the zoo. She presses Sadie's number. Sadie's voice jumps out of his phone.

SADIE (O.S.)

Hi guys!

PEARL

Are you coming home for dinner?

SADIE (O.S.)

Hi sweetie! No, I can't. I'm sorry.
I've got too much work tonight.

Pearl does a silent happy dance with a big smile.

THEO

Want us to bring you some dinner?

Pearl shakes her head, NO!

SADIE

No thanks, I'll grab something
here. Pearl, do you have homework?

PEARL

Just math, but dad will help me
with it. When are you coming home?

CUT TO:

INT. SADIE'S OFFICE - DAY

SADIE TRIMBLE (40 with a commanding presence and dark skin)
stares at a stack of papers on her desk at the law office.

SADIE

Probably late.

PEARL (O.S.)

How late?

SADIE

After your bedtime. I'll kiss you
good night, even if you're asleep.

INT. PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

Pearl gives Theo a look of glee. He nods.

PEARL

I love you, momma!

SADIE (O.S.)

I love you too, sweetie. Where are
you two now?

PEARL

At the zoo. The kangaroos punched each other in the face.

SADIE (O.S.)

Sounds fun.

THEO

I love you, Sadie.

SADIE (V.O.)

I love you too.

Theo hangs up the phone. Pearl slaps him a high five.

PEARL

Nice work, Theo Trimble.

THEO

Thank you, Pearl Trimble.

PEARL

Let's go! Now!

THEO

We're just going to watch.

PEARL

You can watch. I have other plans.

She whips out a twenty from the pocket of her backpack.

THEO

Where did you get a twenty? You're nine.

PEARL

Picture day. Who needs more photos of me anyway!

She waves it and smiles. He drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. METRA STATION - IRVING PARK PLATFORM - DAY

Theo and Pearl stand on the platform as a couple of homeless people sleep in the corner. She holds his hand, less afraid.

INT. METRA TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

It's crowded with rush-hour commuters. They find two seats upstairs. Pearl takes out her math homework. Theo leans in. The conductor comes and takes money for their tickets.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - DAY

It's opening day at the racetrack. Theo and Pearl exit the train and enter through the iron gates. *Welcome to Paradise!*

First stop, the **Winners Circle** as a small jockey parades around on a thoroughbred horse as the owner, MYRON MARCUCCI (59, Italian suit, mobster smile) poses for a photo.

Another horse walks in front of them and stops. Pearl reaches out and touches its thick, brown coat. The horse whinnies.

Pearl makes a similar sound. The horse turns around and bobs his head, as if in a greeting. She's so happy! Theo smiles.

The horse moves out of the way, but slippery Myron is gone.

A GUN SHOT signals the start of the next race. Pearl and Theo race toward the stairs, then run up them, excited.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - FINISH LINE - CONTINUOUS

Pearl hangs onto the fence as the horses tear around the final turn. Theo stands protectively behind her.

PEARL

Come on, White Foot!

The horse with a white foot catches up to the leader.

THEO

Come on White Foot!

They scream and cheer, but White Foot comes in second.

PEARL

Oh Damn!

THEO

Pearl!

PEARL

What? I like winning.

THEO

We didn't have any money on him.

PEARL

So? We can still root for him.
He really wanted to win. I could
see it in his eyes.

THEO

You do know how to pick 'em!

PEARL

I do!

She scours the racing form. Theo hovers next to her.

EXT. RACETRACK - NEAR BETTING WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Theo and Pearl pick a few horses, then approach the betting window. Theo lifts her up.

GUY BEHIND THE WINDOW

(amused)

What can I do for you, little lady?

PEARL

I'm his front man.

GUY BEHIND THE WINDOW

I can see that.

PEARL

Five each on '**Cheerios Kid**' to win.
'**Go Get 'em**' to place. '**Kid You
Not**' to show.

She hands him twenty. He places the bets, gives her change.

They go back to their perch near the finish line. The race starts. Pearl and Theo cheer. '**Go Get 'Em**' comes in second.

They go to the window and collect their winnings. Theo places the money in her back pack. They hover over the program book and pick a few more horses. She places the bets again.

A **SERIES of SHOTS** as they cheer, win, lose, place bets, etc. Pearl counts the money in her backpack, two hundred dollars.

THEO

Let's save it for a rainy day.

PEARL

I say we bet a hundred, win big,
and get me a puppy.

He hands her the program book. They scour it. She finally points to a horse. He nods, closes the book.

EXT. RACETRACK - BETTING WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

He lifts Pearl up to place the bet.

GUY BEHIND THE WINDOW

You again!

PEARL

'**Fearless Fanny**' to win.

She hands him a hundred dollars. The GUN SHOT startles them.

They run to their spot. CLOSE SHOTS of the horse race: hooves pounding on the dust, horse sweat lathering at the Jockey's knees, a horse's dark eyes aimed at the finish line...

Pearl and Theo scream and cheer for **Fearless Fanny**. It's a photo finish between **Fearless Fanny** and **Chances Are**. They run to the screen to see **Fearless Fanny** lose by a nose.

Pearl takes his hand. Time to go. Then Myron approaches them.

MYRON

(to Theo)

May I have a word?

THEO

With me?

MYRON

Yes! I'm Myron Marcucci.

Myron pauses so it sinks in, then extends his hand.

THEO

I know who you are. I'm Theo
Trimble, nice to meet you.

The two men shake hands. Pearl looks tentative, like she smells a rat.

MYRON

We're on a campaign to make the
racetrack a more family friendly
place. Would you mind if we took a
photo of you with your daughter?

PEARL
No photos! Absolutely not.

THEO
She's shy.

PEARL
I'm not shy! Just NO PHOTOS!

MYRON
Well, I hope you'll come back.
What's your name little girl?

He leans down to Pearl. She leans into Theo's arm.

PEARL
(boldly)
My name is Pearl Trimble.

MYRON
Nice to meet you, Pearl. I'm Myron.

He holds out his hand to shake it, but instead she fist punches it like one of the kangaroos in the zoo.

PEARL
We're not coming back here because
we just lost a hundred dollars and
now I can't get a puppy!

Without flinching, Myron hands her a hundred dollar bill.

THEO
(immediately refuses)
We can't take your money.

PEARL
(innocently)
We can't? Are you sure?

Myron gives her the hundred. Pearl looks pleadingly at Theo.

MYRON
It's gift. I'm hoping you'll come
back and bring your friends.

PEARL
Or is it a *bribe*?

MYRON
It is. I'm hoping you'll use it to
rescue a dog.

PEARL

In that case, we'll take it!

Myron smiles. She's so adorable.

THEO

That's really not necessary.

MYRON

It would make me feel better.

PEARL

Let's help him feel better, dad!

Theo nods. Pearl smiles. Myron hands him a business card.

MYRON

Please be my guest. You look like a smart man who could make himself some real money. It's an exclusive poker game, Mondays and Thursdays. Begins at midnight, Winners' Circle Clubhouse. I hope to see you tonight.

Myron nods at Theo and smiles at Pearl.

CUT TO:

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Their modest bungalow is small and has a lot of warmth. Theo comes into Pearl's room to say good night.

PEARL

God bless mommy and daddy and me. Help us to grow up to be healthy, strong, and wise kindhearted people- and God Bless Myron too.

THEO

Myron? Why him?

PEARL

Because you're going to take a lot of money off of him tonight dad in that poker game. I just know it!

Theo smiles, shakes his head in wonder, kisses her forehead.

THEO

Get some sleep!

PEARL
(Pops up in bed)
One more thing.

She slaps the hundred in his hand and flops back down.

THEO
Pearl! I can't take this.

PEARL
Of course you can. We're a team.
Win big for the team, okay dad?

He gives her a big hug.

INT. THEO & SADIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Theo riffles through his closet, carefully choosing his outfit for the poker game. He hears Sadie's key in the door and jumps in bed with a book on accounting.

Sadie comes in, exhausted. She kisses him, then takes off her clothes as she heads toward the bathroom.

THEO
Are you hungry? There's leftover
pizza or I can make you some eggs.

SADIE
No. I'm just exhausted and furious.

THEO
Furious? Why?

SADIE
I work just as long and hard as
those lawyers do, but I make a
fraction of their pay.

THEO
Ask for a raise!

SADIE
I just got a raise. I can only make
more money with a law degree.

She goes into the bathroom. He dashes out and moves the poker outfit to the edge of the closet and leaves the door ajar. He pretends to read his accounting book as she comes back in.

THEO

If you get a law degree and I get an accounting degree, we'll be set for life.

SADIE

That's a great plan, but how will we afford our lives until then?

He wraps his arms around her, kisses her.

THEO

I love you, Sadie. I really appreciate how hard you work.

SADIE

I love you too, but I need to sleep. Good night, Theo.

She kisses him and is quietly snoring in no time. He watches the clock. At 11:30, he slips out of bed, dresses in his poker clothes, and sneaks quietly out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - NIGHT

Theo drives up, but the gates are closed. As he's backing up, the gates open, as if magically. He drives in. There are no cars in the parking lot. He drives around to the service entrance and sees a row of limos. He parks the Prius.

EXT. WINNERS' CIRCLE CLUB HOUSE - PRIVATE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

An enormous bouncer stands at the door. Theo hesitates. He's about to turn back when Myron comes out and escorts him in.

MYRON

Come on in. Anyone who brings his daughter to the racetrack on opening day is my kind of guy.

INT. WINNERS' CIRCLE CLUB HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Myron has his hand on Theo's shoulder as if he's his new prize. The room is filled with tables of well-dressed poker players and scantily clad women serving drinks and food.

THEO

I'm out of my league here.

MYRON

No you're not. You're smarter and more capable than you give yourself credit for. Come on. Follow me.

Myron shows him to a table. Two mafia types make room for him. They exchange a look with Myron.

THEO

I'll just play a hand or two.

MYRON

(winks to the others)
Go easy on him.

Myron places chips in front of Theo, a thousand dollars.

THEO

I can't...

MYRON

You're good for it. Enjoy!

A SERIES OF SHOTS as Theo plays poker with a high-end crowd. He's good. At first, he's timid, then he relaxes into it. He drinks, but not too much. He's focused. Intense. *Winning*. Myron watches how he carries himself with class and poise.

By the end of the evening, Theo has won ten grand. He's too naive and 'high' from winning to see that he's being set up.

The others leave. Theo pays Myron back the thousand dollars.

THEO

It's what I owe you for the chips.

MYRON

Keep it, kid.

THEO

No. I need to pay you back.

Theo insists. Myron takes it. Theo passes the final test.

MYRON

I respect a man who isn't looking for a handout. See you on Thursday. You're good. The kind of man I like to have around.

CUT TO:

INT. PRIUS - NIGHT

Theo drives away with his money tucked next to his heart.

EXT. THEIR HOUSE - NIGHT

The Prius pulls up. Theo glides it into the driveway.

INT. PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

He strips off his cigar-scented clothes, puts them in a bag, grabs a towel, and goes to the side of the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. THEIR HOUSE/ SIDE YARD - CONTINUOUS

Theo turns the cold hose on himself. It's hard not to scream. He dries off with a towel he hid in the bushes, tiptoes inside, clutching the clothes and money in his pocket.

INT. THEO & SADIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Theo slides quietly into bed. He reaches for Sadie - empty. Sadie sits in a chair, seething with anger.

SADIE

Washing off the scent of another woman with the garden hose? *Clever.*

THEO

It was cigar smoke.

SADIE

She smokes cigars?

THEO

There is no *she*, Sadie.

SADIE

Then where were you?

THEO

A poker game.

SADIE

You're not gambling again.

THEO

It was one poker game.

SADIE

Theo, it's never *one poker game*.

THEO

We need the money, Sadie.

SADIE

I know we need the money!

THEO

I've been looking everywhere for another job, but I can't find one.

Theo spreads the money on the bed - *nine thousand dollars*. Sadie stares at it, then hits him, hard. He smiles.

SADIE

This is the last time! Promise me.

Pearl knocks on the door. It opens a crack. She slides in.

PEARL

I heard you guys talking...

She sees the bills on the bed. Theo gives her a look. She jumps on the bed, dances and sings so the money is airborne.

PEARL (CONT'D)

We're rich, we're rich, we're very, very rich... Yay dad!

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DROP OFF LINE - PRIUS - DAY

Their Prius is next in line. She hesitates.

INT. PRIUS - DROP OFF LINE - CONTINUOUS

Pearl grabs her backpack and gives her dad a kiss.

PEARL

Nice work, Theo Trimble.

THEO

Thank you Pearl Trimble. You know not to say anything to anyone...

PEARL

Of course! See you after school.

Pearl glides toward school, waves at him. It's a happy day.

INT. SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Pearl sits behind BUZZ GORMAN, an over-sized kid with jail time in his future. He turns around and scowls at Pearl.

PEARL
What?

BUZZ
Did you do the math homework?

PEARL
Yes.

BUZZ
Let me see it.

PEARL
No.

BUZZ
You're a twerp.

PEARL
You're a jerk.

MS. STELLA (28, earthy and slightly eccentric) leads them in a morning meditation after the *Pledge of Allegiance*.

MS. STELLA
Let's start today with a meditation to help you manifest your dreams and tap into your inner power.

BUZZ
(To Pearl)
I'm going to manifest the answers to your homework.

PEARL
(to Buzz)
I'm going to manifest that you don't smell like rotten eggs.

MS. STELLA
Close your eyes. Imagine that you can become anything that your heart desires. Trust in yourself, in your current self and in the person you are becoming. Breathe in, breathe out. Let your thoughts flow with your breath, moving gently, like the branches of a willow tree.

Pearl looks peaceful and calm. Buzz eyes her homework.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Pearl eats lunch with her best friend, MARTA REYES (big-boned, kindhearted, Latina). The two are opposite in their appearance and kindred spirits in their quirkiness.

Buzz teases Marta relentlessly. She doesn't flinch.

BUZZ
(chanting)
Marta Farta. Marta Farta.

PEARL
Don't listen to him. He's an idiot.

BUZZ
Oh, you're a genius? I saw how many math problems you got wrong!

PEARL
At least I did the homework!

Marta and Pearl share a chocolate brownie. Buzz snatches it from her and runs across the schoolyard, gobbling it up.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - PRIUS - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS as Theo picks Pearl up each day after school

INTERCUT with his poker games. At first he's winning (sunny days), but then he hits a losing streak (cloudy days).

-They go to the marina and watch the boats (sunny/winning)

-They explore Millennium Park and the BEAN (sunny/winning)

-They walk along the lake and watch the waves (cloudy/losing)

-They play frisbee golf in the park (sunny/winning)

-A rainy day: Field Museum, dwarfed by dinosaur bones (Theo loses again)

-At the library, Theo takes out books on poker
(Thunderstorms/ Theo loses again, really big this time)

CUT TO:

INT. WINNERS' CIRCLE CLUB HOUSE - NIGHT

INTERCUT scenes of Theo at the high-stakes poker. The crowd at the table changes as Theo sits in the same chair - wins big, loses big. He's hooked.

Myron 'spots' him some more chips. Theo keeps playing until he loses them all. This happens several times over different nights (change of clothes). Myron nods to the dealer.

MYRON

Theo, I have to cut you off. I'm
sorry. House rules.

Theo leaves the table. Myron follows him outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. WINNERS' CIRCLE CLUB HOUSE - NIGHT

The sky is filled with stars and Theo is filled with dread.

THEO

I owe you about a hundred thousand
dollars, which I don't have. I
don't know how it got so high.

MYRON

How do you plan to pay me back?

THEO

I don't know. Sell a kidney?

MYRON

You can work it off.

Theo looks like he's staring at an oncoming train.

THEO

I can't work for you, Myron, I've
got a family and I'm not cut out to-

MYRON

(tone turns dark)
I've met your daughter, Pearl.
She's quite precocious.

Myron's sardonic smile strikes terror in Theo's heart.

THEO

Was I that easy of a mark?

MYRON

You could've walked away anytime.

Theo stares at Myron, unflinching. He's in too deep to walk away. He knows he has been played, knows what he has to do.

CUT TO:

INT. EL TRAIN - DAY

Theo sits on the train, dressed like a businessman, a locked briefcase by his side. He reads the paper, sweating bullets.

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - THE LOOP - CONTINUOUS

Theo walks down LaSalle Street during rush hour to a bank. He goes in, emerges after a few moments without the briefcase. SOUND of a shutter clicking.

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - THE LOOP - CONTINUOUS

It's a different day, different disguise, but the same Theo who delivers a briefcase to various banks and buildings.

This "Money Laundering" MONTAGE speeds up and is accompanied by the SOUND of a shutter clicking as Theo walks in and out of various buildings downtown, delivering money for Myron.

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - THE LOOP - CONTINUOUS

Theo drops off another briefcase, then hustles in the rush hour crowd. Something's different. He stops. Waits.

The crowd rushes by him in a powerful wave. Theo braves the oncoming swarm until he's face-to-face with a burly man.

THEO

What do you want?

FBI AGENT

Theodore Trimble, I hereby subpoena you to testify as a witness before the Grand Jury in the case of the People Vs. Myron Marcucci.

He stuffs the subpoena in Theo's jacket pocket.

THEO

What! No! This can't be happening.

Theo tries to slip out of his grasp, but two armed officers move in on him and escort him to a nearby car.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI HOLDING CELL - DAY

Theo sits in a small room and faces a reverse mirror on the wall. The FBI Agent sits across the steel table from him.

FBI AGENT

By agreeing to testify, you'll be granted complete immunity from prosecution.

THEO

Testify! I don't know anything.

FBI AGENT

We're prepared to arrange for you and your wife and your daughter to enter the witness protection program, if you chose to do so.

THEO

Like you guys could protect me or my family! I've got nothing to say.

FBI AGENT

Without immunity, I must warn you that you will be tried and most likely convicted for several felonies related to money laundering. We have evidence against you. If I were you...

THEO

You're not me. I'm hardly me.

FBI AGENT

We understand that this is difficult decision.

THEO

I don't know what was in the briefcases. They never told me.

FBI AGENT
And you never looked?

THEO
The briefcases were all locked.

FBI AGENT
I'll tell you what, you give me *one piece of information* and I'll let you call your wife.

THEO
I'll tell you what, you let me make *one phone call*, which I'm legally allowed to do and I won't press charges for harassment.

The FBI Agent gives him his phone back for a moment. He calls Sadie who doesn't pick up. He leaves her a voice mail.

THEO (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Sweetheart, it's me. I've been subpoenaed to testify before a Grand Jury, but *I know nothing*. It's too hard to tell who's clean and who's corrupt these days, so I'm not taking any chances. After I hang up this phone, I will not say another word until I'm out of here. They've told me that I will be thrown in jail for contempt of court if I don't cooperate. I want you to know how much I love you and Pearl. There's nothing more important to me than you two. *Nothing*. Please be careful and take care of Pearl. Tell her I love her. I love you, sweetheart. I'm so sorry. I'm just so sorry...

Theo hangs up the phone. Motions that he's zipping his mouth.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Pearl stares at the clock, which moves from 3:15 to 3:30 to 4:00 to 4:30 to 5:00, then to two minutes to 6:00. Sadie bursts in, flustered and edgy.

SADIE
(to the Principal)
I'm so sorry.

PEARL
Where's dad?

SADIE
I'll explain in the car.

Sadie hustles her out and apologizes to a frowning PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON (50+, overweight with cartoon features).

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Sadie hustles her to the car. Pearl refuses to take one step further. She's in a panic.

PEARL
TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED TO DAD!

SADIE
I'll tell you in the car.

PEARL
Did he die?

SADIE
No, he's alive.

PEARL
Was he kidnapped?

SADIE
No.

PEARL
Abducted by aliens?

SADIE
No!

PEARL
In a car accident?

SADIE
No. He's fine, physically.

PEARL
Then why isn't he here?

SADIE
It's complicated.

PEARL
Is he in big trouble?

SADIE
I don't know.

PEARL
Does it have to do with Myron?

SADIE
Who's Myron?

PEARL
The man from the racetrack.

Sadie has a look. She hustles them into the car.

INT. PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

Sadie's tone gets serious. She motions to Pearl to strap in.

SADIE
You have to forget about Myron.
Never say his name ever again.

PEARL
Only if you tell me where dad is.

SADIE
He has been asked to be a witness
in a very important trial.

PEARL
They want him to snitch?

SADIE
He doesn't know anything, so he
can't tell them anything. You don't
know anything either, Pearl. Do you
understand? **Nothing at all.**

Sadie drives distractedly. Pearl gets worked up.

PEARL
Is Myron going to kill dad?

SADIE
I told you, never say Myron's name.

PEARL
You just said his name!

SADIE

Do you know Myron's last name?

Pearl looks out the window as images blur into her tears. The sky melds with the watery landscape as Pearl cries.

PEARL

Nope. I know anything at all.

SADIE

It's going to be okay, Pearl.

PEARL

(Screams frantically)

WE HAVE TO SAVE DAD!

Pearl is frantic. Sadie pulls the car over, hugs Pearl as she cries.

CUT TO:

INT. PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

Pearl has calmed down a bit and stares out the window.

SADIE

Your dad and I love you very much.
We're a family and we have to keep
it that way. You can never say
anything to anyone about this.

PEARL

I hate him.

SADIE

Your dad?

PEARL

No! I love dad. *Him*. Whose name I'm
not supposed to say.

SADIE

Your dad made choices.

PEARL

Dad was just trying to help us.

SADIE

I'm sure he was, he still is...

CUT TO:

INT. PEARL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pearl lays in her bed looks up at the spot where Theo should be sitting. She hears Sadie softly crying in the next room.

PEARL
 (softly)
 God bless Mommy and Daddy and me.
 God bless Daddy... *please.*

INT. SADIE & THEO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pearl sneaks into her parents' room and curls up in the closet on top of a pile of Theo's clothes. She falls asleep.

CUT TO:

INT. DREAM SEQUENCE - HIGH RISE - OLD WOMAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

An old woman with wild, white hair is propped up in her bed, surrounded by a dozen or so women, all of different ages. The old woman's voice rattles as she struggles to breathe.

OLD WOMAN
**Where's the little one! I must see
 the little one right now...**

Nine-year old Pearl slinks toward the back of the crowded room, frightened. A wild-haired teenager tries to grab her.

WILD-HAIRED TEENAGER
 (to Pearl)
 She means you!

PEARL
 I want my dad!

WILD-HAIRED TEENAGER
 She doesn't have much time. She
 needs to tell you something NOW!

Pearl escapes the dying woman's bedroom and runs through the upscale apartment. She searches all the rooms for Theo.

Large windows overlook an infinite lake and endless sky. A male figure is on the balcony as if floating in mid-air.

Pearl runs to the sliding glass doors and pounds on them, struggles to open them. The man turns around. It's Theo.

PEARL
 DAD! DAD! DAD!

The teenager scoops her up and carries her to the other room. She struggles to get free, but the teenager is too strong.

WILD-HAIRED TEENAGER
She needs you.

PEARL
LET ME GO!

INT. DREAM SEQUENCE - OLD WOMAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She brings Pearl to the dying old woman who takes her hand.

PEARL
I just want my dad.

OLD WOMAN
I know. You'll see your dad again.

PEARL
I will? When?

OLD WOMAN
Listen to **Future Self**. She'll help you.

PEARL
Who's Future Self? Who are you?

SADIE (V.O.)
PEARL! Pearl where are you?

Sadie calls out to her, invading the dream.

CUT TO:

INT. PEARL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sadie checks under the bed, frantic to find Pearl.

SADIE
PEARL! Where are you?

INT. THEO'S CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Pearl sleeps snuggled up in Theo's clothes. She's half conscious as she hears her mother calling her name.

She opens her eyes a sliver and sees FUTURE SELF for the first time, a shimmery, nearly transparent replica of herself, only slightly older and already dressed for school.

Future Self motions for Pearl to get up, but Pearl sinks back into her father's clothes, wrapped up in his smell.

SADIE

PEARL!

Sadie bursts into her bedroom and grabs her phone. She calls Theo's phone, screams at it as it goes to voice mail.

SADIE (CONT'D)

(frantic)

THEO! I CAN'T FIND PEARL! I know you won't hear this, but I can't do this without you.

Pearl emerges from the closet, still half asleep.

PEARL

Mom?

SADIE

(hugs her tightly)

Don't do that!

PEARL

Don't do what?

SADIE

What were you doing in there?

PEARL

Sleeping. It smells like dad.

Pearl cries in her mother's arms.

SADIE

Come on, get dressed for school.

PEARL

I'm not going to school.

SADIE

You have to go to school.

PEARL

I don't want to go to school until dad's back.

SADIE

Pearl, I know it's hard, but you have to go to school so I can go to work and have some of the lawyers there help me figure out how to help dad. We need to do something so we can all be together again.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL CROSSING - DAY

Sadie stops at a red light at the crosswalk of a busy intersection in front of Pearl's school.

SADIE

Does your dad always pull into the drop-off line?

PEARL

You're supposed to, but I can cross the street by myself. It's okay.

SADIE

Are you sure it's allowed?

PEARL

It's fine. You'll be late.

SADIE

Be careful!

PEARL

Are you picking me up at 3:15?

SADIE

I signed you up for the after school program. I have to work.

PEARL

I'll go to Marta's house.

SADIE

Is it okay with her mother?

PEARL

It's fine. Marta's my best friend.

SADIE

Where does she live?

PEARL

It's in the school directory.

SADIE

I'll pick you up at Marta's at six.

The light turns green. Sadie doesn't move. Cars honk angrily as Pearl grabs her back pack and jumps out of the car. She presses the button to cross as Sadie drives away.

Pearl starts to cross the street when *Future Self* waves *frantically from the other side of the street, motioning for her to STOP.*

Pearl stops as a HUGE JEEP makes a right turn on red and barrels down the street in front of her, narrowly missing her. Pearl is fine. Future Self is gone.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The second bell rings. Pearl runs into school.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

She arrives as her teacher, Ms. Stella begins a meditation.

MS. STELLA

Okay, class. Close your eyes. Today you're going send someone you love some extra energy. Think of a special person and imagine a shower of light pouring down on him or her. That light is pure love and healing energy. Now add your own love to that light, making the energy even brighter, like a sun shower.

Pearl puts her head in her arms, sobs quietly. After the meditation, Ms. Stella looks at her. Pearl looks away.

Ms. Stella hands out a pop quiz in math. The class groans. The clock reads 8:00 AM.

MS. STELLA (CONT'D)

Take out your calculators. You have fifteen minutes. Begin now!

Pearl can't find her calculator. She squints and conjures a shimmery, fifteen-minutes-older version of Future Self.

The wall clock reads 8:15 as Future Self hears the answers to the quiz as Ms. Stella rattles them off. Present-time Pearl jots down the answers from Future Self.

MS. STELLA (CONT'D)
 (from Future Self)
 Number one- 385.2, number two-
 687.021, number three - 6, number
 four - 19.5

Pearl gazes outside as the others take the quiz. The clock ticks forward and arrives at the "real" 8:15.

MS. STELLA (CONT'D)
 Time's up. Pass your papers to the
 person in front of you.

Pearl passes hers to Buzz who snatches it up. Ms. Stella reads the same answers that Pearl got from Future Self.

MS. STELLA (CONT'D)
 (Present version)
 Number one- 385.2, number two-
 687.021, number three - 6, number
 four - 19.5

Buzz grades Pearl's paper (*all correct*). The kid in front of him grades Buzz's paper (*all incorrect*).

BUZZ
 (aggressively to Pearl)
You think you're so great!

MS. STELLA
 Anyone get a hundred?

BUZZ
 The Twerp did.

Ms. Stella glances down at her paper with no calculations.

MS. STELLA
 Pearl, please explain how you
 arrived at the first answer.

PEARL
 I, uh, can't remember.

MS. STELLA
 What do you mean?

BUZZ
 She cheated!

PEARL
 Obviously, not off of you, *Buzz*.

MS. STELLA
What was your first step?

PEARL
My first step?

BUZZ
When you were a baby...

MS. STELLA
How did you start the calculation?

PEARL
I did it in my head.

MS. STELLA
Without writing anything down?

Pearl nods. Ms. Stella looks at her - *Is she's a genius?*

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Pearl and Marta sit on the outskirts of the playground. Buzz throws a football around with some guys, taunting her.

BUZZ
Hey twerp, who'd you cheat off of?

Pearl ignores him. He throws the ball and moves closer to her, so his next catch is almost on top of her.

Pearl and Marta move and sit in the middle of a big cement 'tunnel' and finish their lunch, isolated from the others.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - FIVE MINUTES LATER - CONTINUOUS

Pearl sees a slightly-older Future Self who motions for her to stay in the tunnel. Pearl nods.

The bell rings and all the other kids go back into school. Marta starts to go back in, but Pearl stops her.

PEARL
Let's stay here.

MARTA
Why?

Future Self gives Pearl a 'five-minute' sign with her hand.

PEARL
It's a surprise.

Marta and Pearl huddle in the middle to avoid being seen. The schoolyard clears out. Future Self points to the sky. A few moments later, the sky bursts open with a spectacular sun shower.

Pearl dashes out and twirls around in the bright downpour. Marta joins her as a rainbow arcs overhead. With joyful irreverence, they dance and sing, even when Principal McPherson yells at them from the lunchroom door.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON
Girls! Come inside. RIGHT NOW!

Pearl dances and splashes and turns her head to the sky. She takes Marta's hands and swings her around. McPherson looks infuriated as other kids race out to play in the sunny rain.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Pearl and Marta sit across from McPherson, happily drenched. He's angry. They pretend to take him seriously.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON
What do you have to say for yourselves, young ladies?

PEARL
We were hypnotized by Ms. Stella.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON
Hypnotized? I doubt that.

PEARL
She gave us a meditation this morning about white light pouring down like a sun shower on someone you love.

MARTA
She's magical. It was like she predicted the sun shower.

McPherson gives them both a look as Ms. Stella enters.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON
They say you hypnotized them with your morning meditation. You know how I feel about that *stuff*.

MS. STELLA

It's not hypnosis. It's relaxation
and self empowerment. It's like
gymnastics for their consciousness.

PEARL

We love gymnastics.

MS. STELLA

(to Pearl and Marta)

I see you girls put our morning
meditation into practice.

PEARL

We couldn't resist!

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

This is not acceptable. They need
consequences for their actions.

MS. STELLA

I'll have them stay after school
and clean the chalkboard with me.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

You're making it too easy on them.

MS. STELLA

They're kids.

Ms. Stella holds her ground. He gives in.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

I don't want to see you two in here
ever again. Do you *understand me*?

Pearl gives Ms. Stella a look of gratitude. She nods.

CUT TO:

INT. MS. STELLA'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Pearl and Marta are the only ones left as Ms. Stella grades
papers. They're wearing gym clothes and wipe the chalk board.
Pearl takes two erasers and claps them together. Dust rises.

PEARL

(deeper voice)

I am a Genie. You now have three
wishes. What do you wish?

MARTA

What do you wish?

PEARL

I wish my dad would come home.

Ms. Stella looks up.

MARTA

I wish I had a dad.

MS. STELLA

Thanks for your help, girls. You can go to the gym for the after school program.

PEARL

We're going to Marta's today.

MS. STELLA

Marta's, are you sure?

PEARL

Yes! My mom said I could go.

MARTA

We're getting picked up.

The girls exit. Ms. Stella gives them a questionable look.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Pearl and Marta walk confidently through the parking lot, waving to an invisible driver as if they're being picked up. They sneak away, holding hands and giggling.

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - WEST SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Pearl and Marta walk home from school through a somewhat rougher neighborhood with a lot of graffiti and gang symbols.

They pass a fruit stand. Marta grabs two apples, hands one to Pearl. They run before the owner (an old man) can catch them.

EXT. MARTA'S WALK-UP - CONTINUOUS - DAY

The unlocked front door swings open into a dilapidated staircase. The stairs are dark, dank, and crooked, like looking into a cavity-infested mouth.

INT. MARTA'S WALK-UP - CONTINUOUS

They walk up four flights to her tiny apartment. The first room has a makeshift kitchen, small couch, television, two chairs, and one table.

The other room has a full-sized bed, a dresser, and her snoring mother, ERNESTA REYES (35+, generous physique).

PEARL

(quietly)

How come your mom is sleeping?

MARTA

(full voice)

She works nights at a factory and cleans houses in the mornings. This is her only bedtime.

PEARL

Shhhh! You'll wake her.

MARTA

She won't wake up. She's too tired.

Marta kisses her mother's forehead and speaks Spanish to her. Her mother replies, hugs her, goes back to sleep, exhausted.

Marta turns on the television to simulate their presence, opens the fridge (empty) and motions for Pearl to follow her.

CUT TO:

INT. SADIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sadie peeks her head in one of the corner offices and waits for ALTHEA FRANKLIN (50+), a powerful, African American woman, well-dressed and business-like.

SADIE

Ms. Franklin, a word?

Althea looks up, she see the desperation on Sadie's face and motions for her to come in and sit down. Sadie enters.

ALTHEA

I heard about your husband.

SADIE

I'd love any advice from you. What do you think we should do?

ALTHEA

Well, they're trying to get him to testify against a mob boss, so there's no easy answer. If he does know something that could enhance their case against Myron Marcucci and he agrees to testify, they'll grant him full immunity from prosecution and offer him - and you and Pearl - the witness protection program. If he accepts their deal, he must cooperate.

SADIE

What if he doesn't know anything?

ALTHEA

Whether he knows something or not, I suspect he's not speaking to anyone - not even to you and Pearl - to send a message to Myron that he's not going to talk. It's a known fact that the Marcucci family has eyes and ears everywhere.

SADIE

What would you do if you were in this situation?

ALTHEA

I don't know. I might do the same thing, hold out in limbo and hope for the best. It's still the safest route when it comes to protecting his family.

SADIE

How long can he remain in limbo?

ALTHEA

That depends on his will. Indefinitely, I guess.

SADIE

But what if he *really* doesn't know anything?

ALTHEA

I don't know what to tell you. I'll help you in any way that I can. I'll take this on pro-bono.

SADIE

Thank you.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - WEST SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Pearl follows Marta around the streets in her neighborhood.

They arrive at the back of a taco truck. Marta greets the owners who give her and Pearl several small bags of garbage.

Marta and Pearl traipse to various garbage cans and dumpsters within a three-block radius. Then return for more garbage.

After they finish, one of the taco guy pays them with food. Marta speaks to them in Spanish and asks for more. He asks her in Spanish if her friend is a snitch.

MARTA

She's not a snitch.

PEARL

No one in my family is a snitch.

Pearl's voice cracks. The guys give them two bags of food. Marta weaves through the streets and arrives at a homeless camp set up underneath the highway underpass.

Future Self lurks on the other side of the underpass. Marta whistles softly. A thin, middle-aged woman in a slip emerges from a pup tent. Marta hands her the food.

HOMELESS WOMAN

Marta! You are my angel!

Slip Woman is so ravenous that she devours a taco in seconds. Future Self emerges from the shadows and shoos them away. Pearl doesn't understand at first, but Future Self looks frantic and insists that they leave immediately.

PEARL

(to Marta, anxious)

We have to go!

Pearl runs away. Marta follows her. Within moments, police sirens wail toward the area.

They hide out of sight and watch as the homeless people are rounded up and taken away by a police paddy wagon.

MARTA

How did you know that was going to happen?

PEARL

I don't know. I just know stuff.

MARTA

Do you know where your dad is?

PEARL

I wish. I keep asking Future Self, but she never tells me.

MARTA

Who?

PEARL

Never mind.

Marta clutches the remaining bag of food and sniffs it in. They each eat a taco. Marta is careful to save some.

MARTA

Let's bring the rest to my mama.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - MURAL - CONTINUOUS

They meet a group of teenagers painting a colorful mural. Pearl paints the lowest spot, while Marta climbs up on the ladder. She's naturally artistic and a great painter.

A pack of street dogs grab the bag of food and devour it in front of them. Pearl and Marta exchange a look. Future Self taps her wrist to warn Pearl about the time.

PEARL

We have to go! Now!

CUT TO:

EXT. MARTA'S WALKUP - DAY

They run back to Marta's as Sadie pulls onto her street. They sit on the stoop, as if they've been waiting for her.

SADIE

How did you know I was here?

PEARL
You said six o'clock.

SADIE
It's only five forty-five. I came
early to thank Marta's mom.

MARTA
Hi Mrs. Trimble. Sorry to hear
about Mr. Trimble.

SADIE
What did you hear about Mr.
Trimble?

MARTA
That he couldn't pick up Pearl
today. Pearl can come over every
day after school. My mom loves her.

SADIE
Thank you. I'd love to meet your
mom and make arrangements with her.

MARTA
She's busy right now, but I'll let
her know. Bye Pearl. See you later.

PEARL
By Marta. Thanks!

Marta waves, dashes inside, quick to close the door. Pearl
gets in her mother's car. Sadie looks suspicious.

CUT TO:

INT. PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

Sadie looks at the house, the neighborhood.

SADIE
Why didn't she want me to meet her
mom?

PEARL
She's embarrassed because they're
poor, poorer than we are.

SADIE
We're not poor, Pearl.

PEARL

And her mom doesn't speak English very well, but she's really nice.

Sadie hands her a cell phone. Pearl's eyes get wide.

SADIE

I want you to keep this with you at all times.

PEARL

I get a phone!

SADIE

You have to turn it off during class. We need a way to get a hold of one another now that your dad-

PEARL

What did you find out?

SADIE

Nothing, yet.

PEARL

All those fancy lawyers and nothing? When's he coming home?

SADIE

He might be there indefinitely.

PEARL

What does *indefinitely* mean? Like forever?

SADIE

He'll be home again. I know he will. I just don't know when. He's not talking to anyone, even us because he wants everyone to understand that he's not a talker. It's his right to *Plead the Fifth* for now.

PEARL

What does that mean?

SADIE

It's from the constitution of the United States. It means he doesn't have to say anything that could incriminate himself.

PEARL

What does incriminate mean - make him a criminal?

SADIE

Yes. Let's talk about something else. How was school?

PEARL

Good. I got a hundred on my math quiz.

SADIE

Really! That's great. What did you do at Marta's?

PEARL

Nothing. Just watched TV.

Sadie looks at her suspiciously.

SADIE

You know I can tell by your face when you're lying. Why is there paint on your knees?

PEARL

Marta likes to paint. She's a really good artist!

CUT TO:

INT. PEARL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sadie comes in and hugs her, listens to her prayers.

PEARL

God bless Mommy and Daddy and me and Marta and Marta's mom and all the people and the dogs in the world who don't have a home or who are hungry or afraid or sad or lonely or quiet.

PEARL/SADIE

Amen.

SADIE

You are a wonderful person, Pearl.

PEARL

I don't think I am.

SADIE
Trust me, you are.

PEARL
What if I don't believe in God?

SADIE
Because of your dad?

PEARL
Just because.

SADIE
You don't have to believe in God.

PEARL
I don't?

SADIE
You don't have to believe in
anything that you don't want to
believe in. God will still believe
in you.

PEARL
Do you believe in God?

SADIE
Most of the time.

PEARL
What are we supposed to believe in
if we don't believe in God?

SADIE
Kindness. Each other. Maybe that's
all God is. I honestly don't know.

PEARL
You're my mom. You're supposed to
know stuff like this!

SADIE
What I know is that Daddy and I
love you so much. Get some sleep
and try to stay in your bed
tonight, okay? I'm right here.

She hugs Pearl who holds onto her for a few extra seconds.

CUT TO:

INT. SADIE & THEO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's late. Sadie's asleep. Pearl sneaks into Theo's closet, wraps up in his clothes and snuggles in to go to sleep.

PEARL
(whispers)
Future Self, wake me before my mom
wakes up. Okay?

Future Self shimmers into the other corner of the closet and gives her the 'thumbs up' as Pearl falls asleep.

CUT TO:

INT. DREAM SEQUENCE - OLD WOMAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pearl continues the same dream about the dying old woman.

OLD WOMAN
You gave us all the gift.

PEARL
What gift?

OLD WOMAN
Future Self.

The room full of women mutter, stare at her.

PEARL
I don't know who you are or what
I'm doing here. I just want my dad.

OLD WOMAN
I know.

PEARL
Do you know where my dad is?

OLD WOMAN
He's everywhere.

PEARL
No he's not! He's somewhere and I'm
going to find him.

OLD WOMAN
You will. You will find him.

PEARL
When?

OLD WOMAN

Soon.

PEARL

I WANT TO BE WITH HIM NOW!

Pearl storms out. The old woman motions to the others.

EXT. DREAM SEQUENCE - OLD WOMAN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Pearl runs through the rooms toward the balcony where Theo stands, looking out onto the vast sky.

PEARL

DAD!

Theo turns around and tries to open the sliding glass doors.

THEO

Pearl!

PEARL

DAD!

They manage to get the doors open a sliver as bright light slices into the old woman's apartment, washing over Pearl.

CUT TO:

INT. THEO'S CLOSET - DAY

A slice of sunlight wakes Pearl. Future Self motions for her to get up and go back to bed. Sadie stirs. Pearl dashes out.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DROP OFF LINE - PRIUS - DAY

Marta walks up to school by herself.

INT. PRIUS - DROP OFF LINE - CONTINUOUS

Sadie sees Marta walking to school by herself.

SADIE

Marta walks to school? Doesn't her mom drive her?

PEARL

She likes to walk.

SADIE
Does her mom pick her up?

PEARL
Uh, yes.

SADIE
Pearl. That's your lying face.

PEARL
Sometimes her mom picks her up.

SADIE
I want you to go to the after
school program. It's safer.

PEARL
No, it's not! Buzz goes there and
he always picks on me. I hate him!
I'll be safer at Marta's, trust me.

Sadie hands her two bags.

SADIE
Your lunch and snacks for after
school. Do you have your phone?

Pearl nods, hugs her mom, and dashes out of the car.

CUT TO:

INT. MS. STELLA'S CLASSROOM - DAY

The clock inches toward 3:15, the end of the school day. The bell rings. Buzz and several others are herded to the gym for the after school program. He sneers at Pearl.

BUZZ
Your dad forget you again today?

PEARL
He didn't forget me.

BUZZ
How come he didn't pick you up
yesterday? I saw you leave with
Marta *Farta*.

PEARL
He got a job, that's why!

BUZZ
You're a liar.

PEARL

I am not!

BUZZ

I'll bet he's in jail, which makes you 'Jail Bird's Daughter.'

Pearl gets flustered and red-faced.

PEARL

Shut up, you stupid idiot!

BUZZ

'Shut up you stupid idiot' - *J.B.D.*

Marta swoops down and takes Pearl with her outside.

MARTA

My mom should be here any minute.
Have fun in detention, Buzz.

BUZZ

It's not detention!

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Pearl and Marta weave their way around the school busses and the cars in the pickup line. They head to the streets.

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - WEST SIDE - DAY

A **Series of Shots** as Marta and Pearl take out the garbage for the taco truck guys. They hustle back and forth, depositing bags in various receptacles within a three-block radius.

CUT TO:

INT. SADIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sadie tracks Pearl via her cell phone and sees her ricochet around the neighborhood. She's glued to the screen.

SADIE

What are you doing?

Sadie calls her phone, but Pearl doesn't pick up. It's still on silent from being at school.

EXT. TACO TRUCK - DAY

The taco truck guys fill two bags and hand one to Marta and one to Pearl. Pearl looks so proud of herself.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Marta and Pearl climb the four flights, bags of food in hand. They enter her apartment. Ernesta is already snoring.

Marta puts the food away as Pearl takes out her cell phone and sees that her mother has called eight times.

CUT TO:

INT. SADIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sadie sees that they're back at Marta's house.

SADIE
(tries to sound calm)
Hi sweetie. How was school?

PEARL (O.S.)
Fine. I'm at Marta's. How come you called so many times?

SADIE
I just wondered where you were?

PEARL (O.S.)
I'm right here!

SADIE
Did you go right home from school?

INT. MARTA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Marta bites into a warm taco, hands it to Pearl.

PEARL
No. We did some stuff and picked up tacos. They're delicious!

Pearl takes a big bite and makes an 'it's *delicious*' face.

MARTA
(whispers)
What time is she coming?

PEARL
What time are you coming?

SADIE (O.S.)
I'll be there at six. Is that okay?

PEARL
Yes. I love you. Bye.

SADIE (V.O.)
Bye.

Pearl hangs up the phone, stuffs it in her backpack. They finish the taco. Marta turns on the television.

MARTA
What do you want to do?

PEARL
What do you want to do?

MARTA
What was your favorite thing that you used to do with your dad?

PEARL
My favorite thing was to go to the animal shelter and play with the puppies. We'd pretend that we were thinking about getting me a puppy. Actually, *I wasn't pretending.*

Marta goes into the bedroom, rifles through her mom's pockets, finds her wallet, takes out her Ventra card.

MARTA
Let's go!

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - THE EL - DAY

Marta leads Pearl through the streets to the EL stop. They use her mom's Ventra card and take the EL into the city.

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - THE ANTI-CRUELTY SOCIETY - DAY

Marta and Pearl walk around the outside and look in the windows with the puppies and other rescue dogs. Behind one window is a young couple playing with a small, mixed breed.

MARTA

Not them...

Behind another window is a young mom and her two boys.

MARTA (CONT'D)

Not them...

Behind the third window is an elderly man with two puppies.

MARTA (CONT'D)

There's our guy!

Marta gets the man's attention and explains through gestures that they want to join him, but need him to come get them.

MARTA (CONT'D)

(she shouts)

Pretend we're your grandchildren.

The girls wave at the elderly man and look longingly at the puppies. The man motions for them to wait, then comes out.

INT. ANTI-CRUELTY SOCIETY - CONTINUOUS

The elderly man escorts them in, past the woman behind the desk who gives him a questioning look.

ELDERLY MAN

They're with me.

MARTA

We're his granddaughters.

He walks them quickly down the hall.

ELDERLY MAN

Hello granddaughters. I'm Hank.

PEARL

I'm Pearl.

MARTA

I'm Marta.

PEARL

Thank you so much. We really just want to play with the puppies.

MARTA

You're doing us a big favor. Her dad used to take her here and-

Pearl gives Marta a 'keep quiet' look.

HANK

You're doing me a favor. I need help deciding which one to take.

The girls go crazy for the puppies. Hank smiles. After a while, the girls convince him to take them both.

PEARL

Everyone needs a good friend.

MARTA

Like us. We have each other.

The girls each have a puppy in their arms when the door opens and a police officer enters.

POLICE OFFICER

Which one of you is Pearl Trimble?

Pearl looks terrified and starts to shake.

PEARL

Did my dad die?

POLICE OFFICER

No. Your mother called. She tracked you down from the GPS on your cell phone. I'm guessing you're not supposed to be here?

PEARL

So my dad didn't die?

POLICE OFFICER

I don't think so. But I think you're not going get that puppy. Your mom sounded pretty mad.

Pearl starts to cry and buries her face in the puppy. Marta hugs her. Hank looks heartbroken and slips Marta a twenty.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTI-CRUELTY SOCIETY - CONTINUOUS

Sadie pulls up in their Prius. The officer waits outside with the two girls. Sadie looks mad and also relieved.

SADIE

(to the officer)

I can't thank you enough, officer.

POLICE OFFICER
They're fine. Just had themselves a
little adventure.

SADIE
They're nine years old.

PEARL
Marta is ten.

SADIE
(to the officer)
Thank you! I appreciate it.

CUT TO:

INT. PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

Pearl sits in front, Marta in the back. Sadie is so mad she's
speechless. They arrive at Marta's home.

MARTA
It's all my fault, Mrs. Trimble.
Pearl was so sad about her dad and
I just wanted to make her happy.

SADIE
How did you even get there?

MARTA
We took the EL. My mom doesn't have
a car, so we always take the EL. I
know my way around the city pretty
well. I just wanted to help Pearl.

She shows Sadie the Ventra card. Sadie softens.

SADIE
Thank you for being a good friend
to Pearl. She won't be coming back
to your house after school anymore.

PEARL
Mom, *please*.

Sadie gives her a stern look.

MARTA
See you tomorrow, Pearl.

PEARL
Bye Marta.

Marta gets out. Pearl watches her go.

SADIE

You cannot run wild like this,
young lady. It's not safe!

PEARL

Why?!

SADIE

Because you're nine years old.

PEARL

So.

SADIE

You could be in danger.

PEARL

I'm not in danger. Marta knows what
she's doing. She has street smarts.

SADIE

I'm not talking about Marta.

CUT TO:

INT. PEARL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pearl is in bed when Sadie comes in to say good night.

SADIE

Do you want to say your prayers?

PEARL

Nope. I'm done praying.

SADIE

Did you have fun with the puppies?

PEARL

Yep. Hank was nice too.

SADIE

Who's Hank?

PEARL

The guy who let us play with the
puppies with him.

SADIE

You have to be so careful.

PEARL
I know, but nothing happened.

SADIE
I wish I could get you a puppy.

PEARL
I don't want a puppy.

SADIE
No?

PEARL
The puppies also made me sad
because they made me think of dad.

SADIE
Dad would want you to be happy.

PEARL
I'm not happy without dad.

SADIE
Maybe we can both try to find a way
to be a little happy every day.

PEARL
That's why I went to the animal
rescue shelter!

SADIE
I know.

PEARL
I look into my future and try to
imagine dad coming back, but I just
can't see it right now.

SADIE
I'll tell you what. Let's find some
small piece of happiness every day,
then enjoy it twice, once for us
and once for dad. He'd like that.

PEARL
But I want him to enjoy the
happiness with me.

SADIE
I know. I do too.

Pearl cries and Sadie holds her until she falls asleep.

CUT TO:

INT. DREAM SEQUENCE - OLD WOMAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Pearl and Theo stand on opposite sides of the sliding glass doors. Pearl tries so hard to open them, but can't make them budge past the sliver of the opening.

In the slice of white light beaming through, Pearl can hear her dad's voice clearly, calmly.

THEO

We'll be together again. I promise.

PEARL

When? I ask Future Self every day
and she never gives me an answer.

THEO

You just have to believe.

PEARL

Believe in what?

The wild-haired teenager approaches Pearl, gently this time.

WILD-HAIRED TEENAGER

Pearl, she wants to say goodbye.

PEARL

Where is she going?

The teenager reaches out her hand. Pearl looks at Theo. He nods. Pearl takes her hand and walks to the other room.

WILD-HAIRED TEENAGER

I know you don't understand all of
this right now, but someday, it'll
all make sense. I promise you.

CUT TO:

INT. PEARL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Pearl wakes up crying. She runs into her mom's room and climbs in her mom's bed. Sadie hugs her. They fall asleep.

CUT TO:

INT. MS. STELLA'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Pearl has her eyes closed during the morning meditation.

MS. STELLA

Imagine a bright ball of light that slips over your head and surrounds you with a protective membrane so nothing can hurt you. Inside this energetic egg, you can heal anything, *any emotional pain.*

Ms. Stella watches Pearl closely. The meditation ends and the class opens up their collective eyes. The day begins.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

After lunch, Pearl and Marta draw an elaborate design on the blacktop with chalk as Pearl quietly explains her plan.

MARTA

I'm coming with you.

PEARL

Okay, but you can't tell anyone.

MARTA

I'm the best secret-keeper.

PEARL

You're the second best secret-keeper. My dad's the best.

MARTA

We'll have to take the Metra.

PEARL

I've got the schedule on my phone.

MARTA

You're not taking your phone!

Pearl gives her a look.

PEARL

If we take the 3:40, we'll get there by 4:10. We have to be on the 4:45 to get back by 5:15. If we miss that train, the next train isn't until 5:25, which gets in at 5:55.

MARTA

Does that give you enough time?

PEARL

Can we use your mom's train card?

MARTA

It doesn't work on the Metra. But we can use this.

Marta pulls out the twenty dollar bill from Hank.

PEARL

Where did you get that?

MARTA

Hank gave it to me. When you were crying on his puppies.

The bell rings. Marta and Pearl go in, ready for the plan.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM - DAY

The schoolyard is peppered with kids of different ages, all playing in their own groups. Pearl and Marta hideout in the cement tunnel and wait for the others to go inside. They sneak around the front and escape.

CUT TO:

INT. MS. STELLA'S CLASSROOM - AFTER SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Ms. Stella looks up from grading papers and sees the two of them escaping. She grabs her purse and car keys.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - THE WEST SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Pearl and Marta jog as quickly as they can to the Metra stop about a mile away. The two are breathless as they arrive.

Ms. Stella spies them from her car as they dash up the platform as the train approaches. She parks. Waits.

EXT. METRA STATION - IRVING PARK PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

The train arrives with an over-powering rumble and a shrill noise as it strains to stop. They climb on, holding hands.

CUT TO:

INT. METRA TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Pearl snakes her way to the upper seating area. Marta follows. The ticket-taking conductor approaches them.

CONDUCTOR
Where to?

PEARL
Arlington racetrack.

CONDUCTOR
Betting on the horses today?

Marta hands him the twenty.

MARTA
Two round trip tickets.

CONDUCTOR
You're a little young to be going
to the racetrack by yourselves.

PEARL
Our grandmother lives near there.

MARTA
She's picking us up.

CONDUCTOR
She's not driving you home?

PEARL
She hates rush hour traffic.

The conductor give them their tickets and five dollars back.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - DAY

Pearl scours the Winners Circle looking for Myron. Marta is so excited and distracted with everything. Pearl is focused.

Five minutes, then ten minutes, still no sign of Myron.

At her usual betting window, Marta hoists her up, but only gets her high enough to barely see over. She keeps slipping.

PEARL
Remember me?

GUY BEHIND THE WINDOW
Where's your dad today?

PEARL
I need to see Myron.

GUY BEHIND THE WINDOW
Who?

PEARL
Myron. You know, *Myron*.

GUY BEHIND THE WINDOW
I don't know no Myron.

PEARL
Please! It's about my dad.

GUY BEHIND THE WINDOW
I'm sorry, kid. Really.

PEARL
If you don't know Myron, who does?

The guy behind the window nods toward a thug.

GUY BEHIND THE WINDOW
Red shirt. Big beard. You didn't
hear it from me, deal?

Pearl nods, thanks him and motions for Marta to stay behind.
She approaches the THUG (45+ with an intimidating presence).

PEARL
Excuse me, sir.

THUG
You lost, kid?

PEARL
I'm looking for my uncle, *MYRON*.

THUG
I don't know no Myron.

PEARL
I'm his niece.

THUG
He doesn't have a niece.

PEARL
If you don't know him, how do you
know he doesn't have a niece?

THUG

I don't know who you are, but you don't know what you're doing.

PEARL

I do know what I'm doing.

THUG

I ain't taking you to Myron.

PEARL

I'll scream and tell everyone that you kidnapped me.

THUG

You're bluffing.

PEARL

Try me.

THUG

Don't matter. Cops know me.

PEARL

And all these people with their cell phones? They know you too?

The Thug stares her down, but she doesn't flinch.

THUG

Wait here.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - CONTINUOUS

The Thug walks quickly away. Pearl runs after him and tries to remain unseen. He turns around and doesn't see her following him. She ducks out of sight and tracks him.

Future Self points to a door with a sign on it that reads: DO NOT OPEN. ALARM WILL SOUND. Pearl hesitates. Future Self insists. She opens it. No alarm sounds.

EXT. RACETRACK - STAIRWELL TO SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Pearl hears the Thug lumbering up the steps. She hears him reach the top and follows him, quickly and quietly, then hides in a nearby Women's Room.

Future Self alerts her when the Thug is gone and shows her the door code. Pearl unlocks the door and opens it.

CUT TO:

INT. MYRON'S PRIVATE SKY BOX - CONTINUOUS

A gunshot goes off as another race begins. Myron watches from his private skybox, chair swiveled away from the door.

Pearl watches the race as herself, then as Future Self as she witnesses the end of the race before it actually happens.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

It's **Lucky Number Nine** in the lead,
Don't hold Your Breath in second,
Love at First Bite in third...

Future Self witnesses the end of the race before it happens and points on the monitor to the winner, **Lucky Number Nine**.

The race is over. Lucky Number Nine wins. Myron swivels around, somewhat surprised and rather annoyed.

MYRON

Who are you?

PEARL

You remember me, I'm Pearl.

MYRON

What do you want?

PEARL

I want my dad back!

MYRON

How did you get in here?

PEARL

Never mind.

MYRON

I'm not talking to you. It's for your own good.

PEARL

(Louder)

I said, want my dad back! Where is he?

MYRON

I don't know where your dad is. I don't even know *who* your dad is.

PEARL

Yes you do. You invited him to a poker game. I was there.

MYRON

Let me make this perfectly clear, ***I don't know your dad. I never met him before. You don't know me. We never met.***

PEARL

You're the reason he's not home.

MYRON

He's the reason he's not home.

PEARL

He's not a snitch.

MYRON

He's got nothing to snitch about. He made sure that he knew nothing.

PEARL

My mom says he can still *plead the Fifth*.

MYRON

Your father is a very smart man. I hope he's smart enough to make the right decisions and get himself out of this mess. But even if they let him go, he still owes me a lot of money.

PEARL

How much money?

Pearl stands up to him, defiant.

MYRON

More than you have in your piggy bank. Please go. You're breaking my heart, kid. There's nothing you can do to help your father. You're a brave kid. Forget you ever saw me.

Myron stares her down. She doesn't flinch. He extends a hand for her to shake. She fist punches it like a kangaroo.

PEARL

Are you sure he doesn't know anything?

MYRON

Positive. He made sure of it so he wouldn't have to lie. He told me he's a very bad liar.

PEARL

I am too.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - CONTINUOUS

Pearl races down the stairs, dodges through the crowd, and finds Marta in the same spot where she left her. The two girls race as fast as they can to the train station.

CUT TO:

EXT. METRA STATION - ARLINGTON RACETRACK - CONTINUOUS

They arrive as their train pulls away. Pearl slumps on the bench, near tears. Marta puts an arm around her.

MARTA

We'll get on the next train.

PEARL

Unless we can fly from the train station to school in five minutes, I'll be in even bigger trouble now.

MARTA

Your mom will forgive you.

PEARL

My mom deserves better than this.

MARTA

So does your dad. So do you.

PEARL

I wish I had magic.

MARTA

You do have magic. You always know stuff before it happens.

PEARL
That's not magic. *That's weird.*

MARTA
So did you see him?

PEARL
I did.

MARTA
What did he say?

PEARL
He says he doesn't know where my dad is and that my dad owes him a lot of money.

MARTA
How much money?

PEARL
He wouldn't tell me.

MARTA
We don't have any money, anyway.

Future Self sits at the end of the bench, taps her temple.

PEARL
Maybe I should... *get a headache?*

Future Self shakes her head 'no' and taps it again.

MARTA
What?

PEARL
Maybe I should... *get a new finger?*

MARTA
What are you talking about?

Marta looks in the direction of where Future Self sits, but sees nothing. She looks at Pearl.

PEARL
(To Future Self)
Maybe I should think about what Myron said about my dad.

Future Self nods, gives her the thumbs up.

MARTA
What did he say?

PEARL

He said my dad's a very smart man
and made sure that he knew nothing.

CUT TO:

EXT. METRA STATION - IRVING PARK PLATFORM

The train pulls into the station. Pearl sees Future Self pointing to the stairs at the far end, the ones they ran up. Marta runs toward the closer stairs, but Pearl insists.

PEARL

Not those stairs, these.

MARTA

But these are closer.

Pearl runs in the direction of Future Self. Marta follows.

EXT. METRA STATION - STREET - CONTINUOUS

Pearl and Marta see Ms. Stella in her car. She honks, waves.

MS. STELLA

Get in.

INT. MS. STELLA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The girls look amazed, grateful, and confused.

PEARL

What are you doing here?

MS. STELLA

What are you doing here?

PEARL

We went looking for my dad.

MS. STELLA

Did you find him?

PEARL

No.

MS. STELLA

Where did you take the train to?

PEARL

I plead the Fifth.

MS. STELLA
Do you even know what that means?

EXT. SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

They arrive at school a few moments after six. Ms. Stella pulls up behind Sadie who's leaning against her car. Pearl runs up to her mom and hugs her. Sadie looks surprised.

SADIE
Why aren't you in school?

Pearl looks at Marta, then Ms. Stella.

MS. STELLA
I took the girls for a quick drive to show them some murals. Marta is our class artist.

SADIE
That was nice of you. I didn't know you were part of the after school program.

MS. STELLA
I help out sometimes. I'll see you girls tomorrow in class.

PEARL
(to Sadie)
Can we give Marta a ride home?

SADIE
Sure. Do you have your phone?

PEARL
Oops! I left it in my desk.

Pearl dashes back inside with Ms. Stella.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Principal McPherson witnesses this interchange. He leaves.

INT. MS. STELLA'S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pearl gets her phone and hugs Ms. Stella.

PEARL
Thank you!

MS. STELLA

Pearl, I'm sorry about your dad,
but you can't go off to the
racetrack by yourself ever again.

PEARL

How did you know we went to the
racetrack?

MS. STELLA

I wasn't sure, but I checked the
schedule. Why the racetrack?

PEARL

My dad and I used to go there.
Please don't tell my mom.

Principal McPherson walks in.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

Ms. Stella, a word.

Pearl tries to duck out. He stops her.

PEARL

I have to go. My mom's waiting.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

Not so fast. Did you take the girls
off campus?

PEARL

It's all my fault.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

No doubt.

MS. STELLA

Pearl has been distraught for the
last few weeks since her dad has
been gone. I thought it would help
to have some extra time with me.

PEARL

Marta's poor!

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

What does that have to do with you
leaving the after school program
unauthorized?

PEARL

Every day after school, Marta
empties garbage for the taco truck.

(MORE)

PEARL (CONT'D)

Then they give her food as payment.
That's how she and her mom eat. She
doesn't want anyone to know.

Principal McPherson exchanges a look with Ms. Stella.

MS. STELLA

I'm just trying to help them.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

(to Pearl)

I have to count this as another
demerit. You know the rules. Three
demerits and you're expelled.

PEARL

Can we not tell my mom right now?
She cries a lot since my dad-

Pearl can't finish the sentence. She's near tears. Sadie
honks the horn. McPherson nods. Pearl dashes out.

CUT TO:

INT. PEARL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sadie tucks her in bed, senses something's off.

SADIE

Pearl, tell me what's going on. I
know when you're hiding something.

PEARL

I'm not the same since dad left.

SADIE

Do you want to talk about it?

PEARL

Could I be going crazy?

SADIE

I think you're just really sad.

PEARL

But *I'm different*.

SADIE

That could be a good thing.

PEARL

If dad never comes back, will we
end up as poor as Marta?

SADIE

We'll be fine. It really upsets you that Marta is poor.

PEARL

It really upsets me that she doesn't have a dad. I don't want to be a kid without a dad.

SADIE

I don't want that for you either. Maybe she's not that poor.

PEARL

She is. Trust me. She has to empty garbage all around the neighborhood for a local taco vendor so she and her mom can have some food.

SADIE

Is that what you girls were doing before the puppies when I saw your GPS go haywire?

Pearl nods.

PEARL

She's my best friend.

SADIE

I know. She's a good friend.

Sadie kisses her, turns off the lights.

PEARL

I have an imaginary friend who looks like me.

SADIE

Is that so? When did you meet her?

PEARL

When dad left. I ask her all the time when I'm going to see him. Am I crazy?

SADIE

No. You just have a great imagination.

PEARL

I think Future Self is real.

SADIE

Does she say when you're going to see him?

PEARL

No. But I have to tell you something else.

SADIE

What's that?

PEARL

Dad doesn't know anything.

SADIE

What do you mean?

PEARL

He really doesn't know anything about *You-Know-Who*. Dad is a good secret-keeper, but that's why he's not telling them anything. He made sure that he didn't know anything so he wouldn't have to lie. They can test him with that machine that I've seen on TV.

SADIE

The lie detector?

PEARL

Yeah.

Sadie kisses her.

SADIE

I love you, Pearl. I'll do everything I can to get your dad back. I promise.

PEARL

He really doesn't know anything.

SADIE

How can you be so sure?

PEARL

I just know dad. I got my bad lying skills from him.

SADIE

Get some sleep. I love you!

CUT TO:

INT. DREAM SEQUENCE - OLD WOMAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

The wild-haired teenager sits with her next to the old woman.

OLD WOMAN
You're nine, right?

Pearl nods.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
I'm nine too, *ninety-nine*.

PEARL
That's old!

OLD WOMAN
We're actually all the same age at
the same time, we just can't always
see it that way.

PEARL
Are you my grandmother?

OLD WOMAN
No.

PEARL
An angel?

OLD WOMAN
You don't recognize me?

PEARL
Nope.

OLD WOMAN
Do you recognize anyone?

Pearl looks around the room. The women smile at her.

PEARL
I just want to see my dad.

OLD WOMAN
We're the ones who speak to you.

PEARL
Who speaks to me?

OLD WOMAN
We all do!

PEARL
Why?

OLD WOMAN
To help you.

PEARL
Help me do what?

OLD WOMAN
Live.

PEARL
I don't understand, but thanks for
speaking to me, whatever you say.

The woman are all touched. She's so innocent and kind.

OLD WOMAN
We want to thank you.

PEARL
Me? I didn't do anything.

OLD WOMAN
It was you.

PEARL
Is my dad going to die?

OLD WOMAN
Yes. Eventually. Everyone dies.

PEARL
I don't want my dad to die.

The old woman closes her eyes, near the end of her life.

OLD WOMAN
Only the body dies. Remember that,
Pearl. Energy just transforms.

CUT TO:

INT. THEO'S CLOSET - NIGHT

Pearl wakes up and buries her head in Theo's clothes, sobs.

INT. PEARL'S BEDROOM - DAY

As Pearl gets dressed, Future Self appears and points to a
photo on the desk of her with Theo at the zoo.

PEARL
I'm going to the zoo?

Future Self points to Theo.

PEARL (CONT'D)
With my dad?

Future Self points to Theo again.

PEARL (CONT'D)
Am I going to see my dad today?

Sadie comes into the room.

SADIE
Who are you talking to?

PEARL
Just my imaginary self.

SADIE
Please tell your self that we need
to leave in two minutes.

Pearl looks over at Future Self who smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DROP OFF LINE - THEIR PRIUS

Pearl gets out. Sadie calls after her.

SADIE
You're signed up for the after
school program today. I'll pick you
up at six.

As Sadie pulls away, Buzz taunts her.

BUZZ
Wait until after school, twerp.

PEARL
I'm not a twerp!

BUZZ
You're **J.B.D.** - Jail Bird's
Daughter. Seen your old man?

PEARL
Shut up, Buzz!

CUT TO:

INT. MS. STELLA'S CLASSROOM - DAY

During the morning meditation, Buzz steals her phone while they all have their eyes closed.

MS. STELLA

We live in both a physical world and an energetic world. Imagine that your body is surrounded by a sphere of energy, like living inside an egg filled with your own light and breath. Now imagine that your energy can travel like a shooting star. Picture someone you love. Breathe in. Breathe out. Beam your energy over to that person. Know that *they can feel it*.

Ms. Stella walks around the class. She stops at Pearl who has a very intense look on her face, eyes closed.

CUT TO:

INT. SADIE'S OFFICE - ALTHEA FRANKLIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Sadie speaks with Althea, her mentor and friend.

SADIE

I found a precedent, Lang Vs. The State of Tennessee. A similar case of an uncooperative witness who was offered immunity and still refused to testify. The defendant's attorney ordered a lie detector test, which proved that he really didn't know enough about the case to be of any value, so they let him go.

Althea looks at the case, then at Sadie.

ALTHEA

You'd make a great lawyer, Sadie.

SADIE

I'd like you to file a motion to give Theo a lie detector test. He'll pass it. I know it in my heart. If he really doesn't know enough, they can't detain him.

ALTHEA

You run the risk of him revealing something unpredictable, which could dig him in deeper.

SADIE

It's a risk I'm willing to take.

ALTHEA

Is it a risk he's willing to take?

SADIE

Let's ask him.

ALTHEA

There's one more thing.

SADIE

What's that?

ALTHEA

If he passes the lie detector test and they let him go because he's not a viable witness, he may no longer have immunity from prosecution.

SADIE

Could they prosecute him?

ALTHEA

They could. They might. They probably will. You'll also lose your opportunity for the witness protection program.

SADIE

We don't want the Witness Protection program. We don't want these hoodlums to bully us out of our own lives. I can't pull Pearl out of school and relocate her. Theo's parents are gone, but I still have both of my parents.

ALTHEA

Your husband still owes them money.

SADIE

I know.

ALTHEA

Even if he gets out without having said a word about them, they're still going to want their money.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI HOLDING CELL - DAY

The FBI Agent escorts him from his cell. Theo is silent. He's taken to a small interview room. Althea motions for him to sit. The FBI Agent leaves him there.

ALTHEA

Theo, I'm Althea Franklin, one of the partners in the law firm where your wife, Sadie works. I've agreed to take on your case pro bono.

Theo nods his gratitude, still silent.

ALTHEA (CONT'D)

I understand that you haven't said a word to anyone for over a month.

He nods.

ALTHEA (CONT'D)

Good for you. I've been asked by your wife to present an option for your release. There's a precedent whereby a reluctant witness proved that he didn't have the appropriate information by voluntarily submitting to a lie detector test.

Theo perks up, nods his interest.

ALTHEA (CONT'D)

As your council, should you choose to receive my services...

Theo nods as if agreeing to use her services.

ALTHEA (CONT'D)

I must inform you that I'm not convinced that this is the best option, considering the situation.

He looks quizzically at her.

ALTHEA (CONT'D)

A lie detector test can prove that you don't have the pertinent information that the prosecutors are looking for right now. However, you'll lose immunity and won't be completely exonerated from testifying in the future. You could also be prosecuted for a felony, like money laundering, even if you didn't know anything specific. A prosecutor would argue that your knowledge of what you were doing was implied, which is a compelling and logical argument that would most likely convince a jury of your guilt. You'll be a free man in the eyes of the law, but not so in the eyes of the men to whom you owe a lot of money. Think about it.

Theo and Althea look at one another. He understands the weight of his options. His eyes fill with tears.

ALTHEA (CONT'D)

Your wife is a very smart woman. She came up with this plan, found the case law, and asked me to file a motion. She'll make a great lawyer someday.

Althea gets up to leave. Theo stands.

THEO

I'll take the test. I don't know enough to be a useful witness and I miss my family so much.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Marta and Pearl work on a mural on the back wall of the schoolyard. Buzz throws a football, which lands near them.

BUZZ

Having fun, J.B.D.?

Buzz catches a pass almost on top of her. Pearl catches a glimpse of Future Self. She motions for Pearl to push Buzz.

Buzz looks in the direction that she's looking, but sees nothing.

Future Self 'fast forwards' a scene where Buzz runs for a pass, falls forward, and cracks his head open, convulses, and looks seriously injured.

Pearl looks at Buzz. *Future Self is insistent.*

Buzz's friend calls to him, pumps up for the throw. Buzz nods to him, runs in the direction of the upcoming injury. The football leaves his hand, spirals in the air toward Buzz.

Future Self is frantic! She urges Pearl to intercede. Pearl rams into Buzz. He falls backward onto his butt and farts.

Everyone laughs. Buzz is enraged and embarrassed. He grabs Pearl and shakes her. He lifts her up by the arms. She squirms and kicks him in his privates to get free.

Buzz drops her, clutches his privates, falls to the ground, and cries out like a wounded animal. Principal McPherson races out. Buzz can't get up. They call an ambulance. Pearl looks at Marta. *She's in big trouble.*

CUT TO:

EXT. FBI BUILDING - DAY

Althea emerges from the building with Theo. Sadie leans against the Prius that's parked in a loading zone nearby. He thanks Althea, takes Sadie in his arms and kisses her.

INT. THEIR PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

Theo looks at her, both are very emotional.

THEO

I'm so sorry, Sadie.

SADIE

Not as sorry as you're going to be
if you ever do that to us again!

THEO

I wish I could take it back.

SADIE

You can't!

Her phone rings. It's Pearl's school. She answers it.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Pearl sits across from Principal McPherson. The wall clock over his head reads 1:10.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

(to Pearl)

We have a zero-tolerance policy for physical violence. I called your mother. You're being expelled.

PEARL

What? No!

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

This is your third demerit, Pearl.

PEARL

My first demerit was dancing in the rain. I'm a kid. That's what we do.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

Your second demerit was leaving school grounds unauthorized.

PEARL

I was helping a friend.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

Your third demerit was physically injuring another student and sending him to the hospital.

PEARL

It was self defense.

McPherson turns to his computer, ignores her. She slumps. The clock overhead reads 1:30 as she sees Future Self do a 'happy' dance. Pearl mouths the word, *dad?* Future Self nods.

Principal McPherson looks at her. It's still only 1:15.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

Wait in the waiting room. I have work to do and you're distracting me.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pearl sits by herself. Marta appears on the other side of the glass panel next to the door. Pearl opens the door.

PEARL
I'm going to see my dad today!

MARTA
I thought you were expelled.

PEARL
Yeah, that too, but My DAD!

MARTA
How do you know?

PEARL
Future Self told me!

The door to McPherson's office opens. He leads her to the nurse's office (no windows), closes the door.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON
Being expelled is a serious thing.
It'll go on your record and could
impact where you go to high school,
which affects your college options,
which affects your whole life.

Pearl goes into the room, still looking too happy. He closes the door. Pearl sits alone. She closes her eyes to meditate.

PEARL
(quietly to herself)
Future Self, show me when I get to
see my dad again...

CUT TO:

EXT. DREAM SEQUENCE - OLD WOMAN'S APARTMENT - BALCONY - DAY

She's instantly catapulted back to the dream and stands on the opposite side of the sliding glass door from Theo.

Her nine-year-old self slides her fingers through the slit in the doors, yanks with all her might to get to Theo.

Theo slides his fingers through the opening in the doors higher up. He yanks with all his might to get to her. She's about to slip through the crack to him, when...

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - NURSE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Principal McPherson opens the door and motions for her to follow him. She grabs her backpack.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Her parents' silhouettes are backlit by the sun streaming into the room. Pearl screams and runs to Theo.

PEARL

DAD!

THEO

PEARL!

They hug, cry. She holds onto him. McPherson looks at Sadie.

SADIE

It's complicated.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

I can see that, but we're here because Pearl is being expelled.

SADIE

Expelled! For how long?

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

Three days with adult supervision.

PEARL

(smiling at Theo)

Three whole days!

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

It's school policy.

SADIE

What did she do?

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON

I'll let her tell you.

PEARL

I kicked Buzz in the balls.

SADIE

Pearl! You what? Why?

PEARL

He picked me up and started shaking me. It was self defense.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON
The other boys who were there said
Pearl pushed Bartholomew first.

PEARL
Bartholomew? That's Buzz's name?

She stifles a laugh, looks at Theo.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON
This isn't a laughing matter.

PEARL
But I had to push him or he'd get
hurt much worse.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON
You didn't *have* to do anything.

PEARL
I did! I could tell that he was
going to fall forward and crack his
head open with blood gushing
everywhere so I pushed him
backwards on his butt to save him.

THEO
How did you know that?

Pearl gives him the 'I'll tell you later' look.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON
You have quite the imagination,
young lady. Bullying of any kind
won't be tolerated. There's
something else that your parents
should know. Ms. Stella told me
about your math quizzes.

SADIE
What about them?

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON
She gets a hundred every time
without using her calculator.

PEARL
I did not cheat!

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON
No one said you were cheating. We
just want to do some testing.

PEARL
To see if I'm crazy?

Theo smiles. He adores her.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON
To see if you're a genius.

PEARL
Oh, I'm not a genius. I can tell
you right now. No need for testing.

PRINCIPAL MCPHERSON
Then how do you explain your
ability to do all those math
problems in your head?

PEARL
The answers just *come to me*.

She looks at Theo. He can tell that she's got a secret.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Theo, Sadie, and Pearl stand at their car.

THEO
She'll be fine with me.

PEARL
I want to stay with dad. *Please*.

SADIE
This isn't a vacation, Pearl. It's
a punishment for kicking a boy in -

PEARL
The nuts! He's nuts and I saved him
from a big injury by pushing him.

SADIE
No, young lady. You gave him a big
injury by kicking him.

THEO
(to Pearl)
What do you mean, *you saved him?*

SADIE
You're going to have to have a
punishment. *This is not okay.*

PEARL
What's my punishment?

SADIE
I don't know. We'll talk about it.

PEARL
Haven't I already had the worst
punishment of all?

Sadie looks at them. No chance of splitting these two up.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - THE LOOP - DAY

Sadie drives the Prius, pulls over and gets out to go to work. Theo hugs Sadie, lingers. Pearl hugs Sadie, then Sadie goes into the building.

Pearl hugs Theo, then she hits him, suddenly furious.

THEO
Pearl...

PEARL
How could you do that to me?

THEO
I'm so sorry.

PEARL
I went crazy. I really did.

THEO
You have every right to be angry.

PEARL
I'm more than angry. *I'm damaged.*

THEO
No you're not. *You're perfect.*

PEARL
After you were gone, I stopped
being a normal person. *Something's
wrong with me!*

She cries. He hugs her.

THEO
Nothing's wrong with you, Pearl. I
promise you.

PEARL
You don't know that.

THEO
I know. You're still my precious
Pearl and you always will be.

PEARL
What really happened with Myron?

THEO
I will explain everything to you
one day, but not today. Today I
just want to spend time with you.
How about the zoo?

They get in the car. He looks at her lovingly, seriously.

CUT TO:

INT. THEIR PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

They strap in, he's about to drive away.

PEARL
If only I had known that all I had
to do was to kick Buzz in the balls
and I'd get to see you, I would've
done it much sooner.

Theo laughs so hard that he cries, then laughs, then cries.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ZOO - DAY

Pearl and Theo watch the Kangaroos. The zoo is relatively
empty since it's a week day and during school hours. Pearl
sees Future Self give the 'one-two' punch, then five fingers.
Pearl nods. Theo follows her gaze, sees nothing.

THEO
What are you looking at?

PEARL
Not what, *who*.

Pearl sees the two kangaroos punch from Future Self's
viewpoint. Future self holds up three fingers, disappears.

Pearl takes a few steps and stands in Future Self's place.

PEARL (CONT'D)

Three minutes.

THEO

What happens in three minutes?

PEARL

The kangaroos punch each other in the face.

Theo checks his watch. They wait. Three minutes later, two kangaroos punch each other in the face, right on schedule.

THEO

How did you know that?

PEARL

Future Self told me.

THEO

Who's Future Self?

PEARL

She's me, only older.

THEO

When did you start seeing Future Self?

PEARL

Right after you left. I told you I went crazy!

THEO

Tell me more about Future Self.

PEARL

Okay, but you have to promise not to tell anyone else.

THEO

I promise.

PEARL

In case I really am crazy, I don't want something bad to happen to me.

THEO

You're not crazy; you're unique.

PEARL

I might be a little crazy.

THEO
Do you actually see Future Self?

PEARL
Sometimes I see her. Other times *I am Future Self and I feel her.*

THEO
What does she look like?

PEARL
She looks like me, but kind of shimmery, like light. She disappears after she tells me something she wants me to know.

THEO
Like what? Give me an example.

PEARL
Like to stop crossing the street or the answers to a math quiz.

THEO
Is that how you get them all right?

PEARL
Is it cheating if I got the answers from my own self?

THEO
Tell me more about Future Self.

PEARL
She shows me what's going to happen in the future, so I can decide.

THEO
So you can change the future?

PEARL
Sort of. That's what happened with Buzz. Future Self showed me Buzz falling and cracking his head open.

THEO
That must have scared you.

PEARL
She showed it to me twice and insisted that I push him. She's really bossy sometimes.

THEO

Can you conjure Future Self anytime
or does she just appear randomly?

PEARL

Both. It's sort of like fast
forwarding a TV show, except it's
my life.

Pearl squints her eyes, sees Future Self about ten paces
ahead of her. Future Self points to a woman jogger.

The jogger stops in front of the Flamingos. As if out of
nowhere, a pigeon poops on her head. She curses loudly. Pearl
stands in the spot where Future Self just stood.

PEARL (CONT'D)

In about 30 seconds, a bird is
going to poop on a lady's head and
she's going to swear.

The female jogger approaches, stops at the flamingos, a
pigeon poops on her head. She curses. Pearl looks at Theo.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. METRA TRAIN - DAY

They park in the lot and get on the train. They sit in the
upper deck, looking out the window. Pearl squints as the
train pulls into the station at the racetrack. She sees
Future Self walking in, holding Theo's hand.

EXT. RACETRACK - DAY

Theo hesitates, takes out a twenty, and hands it to her.

THEO

One bet. Just to see if it works.

She holds his hand with the twenty in it, just like she
witnessed moments ago as Future Self.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - FLASH FORWARD FIFTEEN MINUTES - CONTINUOUS

Pearl sees Future self at their favorite spot with Theo. Then
Pearl *becomes* Future Self and watches the end of the race.

The horses charge toward the finish line. The horse, **Gallilea** comes up from behind and wins the race. Theo and Pearl cheer wildly. He hugs her, swings her around.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - PRESENT MOMENT - CONTINUOUS

Pearl looks up at the window at the names of the horses.

PEARL
(to Theo)
Gallilea to win.

They go to their favorite betting window. He motions for her to place the bet. She declines, so he places the bet.

They take the same seats, so they're in the same spot as their future selves were in her premonition.

The race begins. Theo has an addicts' look of glee and torture on his face. It's thrilling and tense.

Gallilea wins the race - again! Theo and Pearl cheer wildly. He hugs her, swings her around. She savors the moment twice.

Theo cashes in and tucks the money in Pearl's backpack. The two look at the board. He's in anguish, conflicted. She's so happy to be with her dad.

A SERIES OF SHOTS of their day at the races. Pearl predicts the winning horse each time. Her back pack bulges with cash.

Finally, his cell phone rings. A photo of the three of them pops up. It's Sadie. He freezes. Pearl motions for him to not answer it. She quickly texts:

PEARL (CONT'D)
(recites her texts)
Hi mom, Dad's driving. Should we pick you up at work? No. What time is your train? 6:15. Great. See you there!

She hangs up, hands him back the phone. They race to the train with Theo carrying the heavy back pack.

CUT TO:

EXT. METRA STATION - ARLINGTON RACETRACK - CONTINUOUS

They nearly miss the train. They get on. It pulls out.

EXT. METRA STATION - IRVING PARK PLATFORM - DAY

Pearl and Theo get off the train and race to their car in the lot. Moments later, Sadie's train pulls into the station.

INT. THEIR PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

Theo pulls in to pick her up, so happy to see her. She gets in. He takes her hand. She looks suspicious.

SADIE

What did you two do this afternoon.

PEARL/THEO

We went to the zoo.

SADIE

Anything else?

PEARL/THEO

Nope.

They're a little too rehearsed. She examines him closely.

THEO

What?

SADIE

Something's up.

THEO

I'm just really happy to be here.

PEARL

Me too! I'm really happy to be with my mom and my dad together, like a family again.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - DAY

As soon as they enter, Pearl goes immediately to her room with her heavy backpack. Theo takes the moment alone with Sadie to kiss her.

THEO

I'm going to straighten this out.

SADIE

What did you two really do today?

THEO
I dreamt about you all day. Coming
home, sliding into bed with you...

He kisses her again. She's hesitant, knows something's up.
Pearl emerges without her backpack, but with her homework.

PEARL
Dad, help me with my homework?

THEO
Sure.

SADIE
I'll make dinner.

Theo and Pearl work on her homework, a secret surrounds them.

INT. PEARL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Theo comes in to say good night. She points to under the bed.

THEO
You want to say your prayers?

PEARL
I stopped saying my prayers.

THEO
How come?

PEARL
I didn't see the point.

THEO
Maybe Future Self will see the
point someday.

She hugs him really hard.

PEARL
Promise me you'll never go away
again.

THEO
Not if I can help it.

PEARL
Dad?

THEO
Yes?

PEARL
How much do you owe them?

THEO
Let's not talk about it.

PEARL
Just tell me the number.

THEO
A hundred thousand dollars.

PEARL
When you were gone, I could only
fall asleep on top of your clothes.

THEO
I heard. Stay in your bed tonight,
okay?

PEARL
So you can have some time alone
with mom?

THEO
You're growing up way too fast.

INT. SADIE & THEO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In their bed, Theo wraps his arms around Sadie. They start to
kiss. She starts to cry.

SADIE
It's not over, is it?

THEO
I don't know.

SADIE
You can't work for him again.

THEO
I know.

SADIE
How are you going to pay him back?

THEO
I don't know. I just want to enjoy
this moment with you, Sadie. You
and Pearl are my whole life.

They kiss and are both so emotional.

INT. PEARL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Later, Sadie comes in to check on her and sees a hundred dollar bill under her pillow. She snoops around.

CUT TO:

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Pearl and Theo finish breakfast. Eager for some time alone together. Sadie comes out dressed in jeans.

PEARL

Mom! Don't you have to go to work?

SADIE

I'm taking the day off.

THEO

That's great! Join us.

Pearl gives Theo a look. He's happy to be with Sadie.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ZOO - DAY

Theo, Sadie, and Pearl wander around the zoo on a beautiful spring day. Pearl looks anxious. Sadie looks suspicious.

The hot dog vendor opens his cart for business. Theo gets two hot dogs slathered in ketchup. Pearl lets her drips down her arm like old times.

PEARL

I'm bleeding. Help me!

SADIE

When are you two going to come clean?

PEARL

When we're done eating.

Theo knows the look on Sadie's face. He stops eating.

SADIE

Will one of you please explain to me why there was *nearly ten thousand dollars* under Pearl's bed?

They stop, exchange a look. Pearl speaks first.

PEARL

It was my fault. I made him do it.

SADIE

You're nine.

THEO

It's not her fault.

SADIE

Gambling is what got us in this mess in the first place. I can't take it anymore, Theo. I just can't. You have to get help and you have to leave our house. It's not safe for us if you get in trouble again. It's not safe for us now. I love you, but I have to protect us.

THEO

Sadie, I'm so sorry.

PEARL

I can predict the future.

SADIE

Pearl, don't lie to cover up for your father.

PEARL

I'm not lying! You know my lying face. This is not it. You heard the principal. They think I'm a genius because I said I did the math problems in my head. I didn't. Well I sort of did. I asked my Future Self for the answers. I really can see into the future!

SADIE

You have a wonderful imagination.

THEO

She's not making this up.

SADIE

So you did cheat on the math tests?

PEARL

Is it cheating if you get the answers from yourself in the future?

SADIE

Pearl, you can't go through life making up stories.

PEARL

I'm not making up stories. It's true! I can see myself in the future. I proved it at the racetrack. Ask dad.

THEO

We didn't lose one race.

SADIE

That's it. We're going home. You can't lie to me, Theo.

THEO

I'm not. I swear to you.

CUT TO:

INT. THEIR PRIUS - DAY

Sadie drives. Theo sits in front, Pearl is in the back. No one says a word. The tension in the car is palpable.

Pearl gets a quick glimpse of Future Self with her parents as they walk through the entrance of the racetrack. She catches Sadie's glance in the rearview mirror, mouths her thanks.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - DAY

It's early, not too crowded. Sadie and Pearl wait in line to bet while Theo hangs back and hides under a baseball cap.

SADIE

(to Pearl)

Now what?

Pearl squints but can't find Future Self. She panics.

PEARL

I don't know.

SADIE

We're going home.

PEARL

I need dad.

Sadie motions for Theo. They trade places so Sadie stands away from them and Pearl is alone with Theo.

THEO
You okay?

PEARL
I can't find Future Self.

THEO
Future Self is still here.

He kneels down so they're eye-to-eye.

PEARL
What if she went away forever and I never see her again?

THEO
She didn't go away forever and neither will I. Even when you can't see me, I'm still be here, just like Future Self.

He puts his baseball cap on her head backwards. She hugs him.

Over his shoulder sees Future Self with the baseball cap on backward, standing with her parents and cheering wildly.

EXT. RACETRACK - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER - CONTINUOUS

Pearl stands between Sadie and Theo wearing the backwards baseball cap as they cheer for "**No Holds Barred**" a horse that comes from behind on the last stretch and wins by a nose.

They wait for the photo finish, then cheer and hug each other. Sadie is transformed. Pearl looks happier than ever.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - PRESENT MOMENT - CONTINUOUS

Pearl comes back to the present moment with joyful tears.

PEARL
No Holds Barred.

THEO
That's right. No Holds Barred. I will love you no matter what.

PEARL

No Holds Barred is the name of the horse who wins the next race.

Theo hugs her, then places the bet.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - THEIR FAVORITE SPOT - CONTINUOUS

The race unfolds exactly as it did for Future Self. **No Holds Barred wins**. Sadie is so excited, she seems transformed. She hugs Theo, then Pearl. They all hug. Pearl gets to live this joyful moment twice.

SADIE

How much did we win?

THEO

Almost a thousand dollars.

Montage of their 'winning morning' as Pearl jumps back and forth from her present self to her Future Self to predict the winners.

They take turns placing the bets and cashing in the tickets. Pearl's backpack gets weighed down with all that cash.

A few times, Future Self sees the Thug and warns Pearl. She reroutes her parents and they sit out a couple of races.

Pearl's vision starts to blur as she's ricocheting between the present and future too quickly. It takes its toll on her.

She takes Theo's hand. He looks down. She doesn't look good.

PEARL

I don't feel well.

THEO

We're taking a break.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - FOOD COURT - CONTINUOUS

Theo and Pearl sit at a table in the far section. Pearl rests her backpack against the wall, still on her back. Sadie gets in line to get food for them. They're alone.

THEO

This is the one and only time that we're going to ask Future Self for this kind of help. Do you understand?

PEARL

Because it's cheating?

THEO

Because it's not good to keep bouncing from the present to the future.

PEARL

Why not?

THEO

Because it's not good for your psyche.

PEARL

I don't mind.

THEO

I mind. I love you too much to let you miss your own life. Stay here in the present moment and live your life one moment at a time, string these moments all together like a strand of pearls and you've got yourself a beautiful life. You deserve a beautiful life, Pearl.

PEARL

So I shouldn't become Future Self so much?

THEO

Just be here in the **Right Now**. Don't miss your life, Pearl.

PEARL

Whose money is this anyway?

THEO

It's all yours, Pearl. You can save it for college, buy yourself a new car, put a down payment on a house.

PEARL

Can I get a puppy?

Theo smiles, puts an arm around her, kisses her forehead.

THEO

I heard about the puppy fiasco.

Pearl suddenly gets a glimpse through Future Self's eyes, then experiences a terrifying scenario.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - FOOD COURT - FIVE MINUTES INTO THE FUTURE

Pearl sees the Thug approach their table. He stands in front of Theo, points a gun with a silencer at her dad's side, and motions for him to get up. Pearl is about to scream.

THUG

(to Pearl)

If you make a peep, I'll shoot. I'm not bluffing.

The Thug leads Theo away. Across the busy restaurant, Sadie orders food, unaware of what's going on. Theo turns around and gives Pearl a heartbreaking look. Pearl is frozen.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - FOOD COURT - PRESENT

Pearl comes back to the present. She jumps up.

PEARL

I'm going to the bathroom. I'll be right back.

THEO

Wait. I'll get mom.

Pearl runs toward the bathroom, backpack still on. Theo goes to Sadie. The Thug paces nearby.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - PATH TO MYRON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Pearl dodges people, finds the back door, races up the staircase, runs down the hall, and enters the code to Myron's office. She stops. Terrified.

INT. MYRON'S PRIVATE SKY BOX - CONTINUOUS

Myron sits at his desk. He looks up as she enters.

MYRON

What are you doing here?

PEARL

I want my dad back.

MYRON

Your dad is back. I've been watching you win all morning.

PEARL

I want my dad *all the way back*.

MYRON

How did you do it?

PEARL

Do what?

MYRON

Win every single race?

PEARL

I'm his good luck charm.

Pearl takes off her backpack and plops it on the desk.

MYRON

Does your father know you're here?

PEARL

No one knows I'm here. You don't even know I'm here. You don't even know me.

MYRON

What exactly are you doing here?

PEARL

I'm paying you back.

She stands on the chair, opens up the back pack and dumps the money on his desk. He looks up at her.

MYRON

You're giving me all this money?

PEARL

Yep. It's mine. I won it fair and square. You saw it for yourself.

CUT TO:

INT. RACETRACK - WOMEN'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sadie and Theo stand outside the bathroom. The Thug spies them and starts to move in, hand on the gun in his pocket.

Sadie calls Pearl's cell phone, frantic.

SADIE

She wasn't in there. If she doesn't answer, I'm calling the police.

Theo looks around and sees the Thug moving toward them.

CUT TO:

INT. MYRON'S PRIVATE SKY BOX - CONTINUOUS

Pearl's phone rings. She ignores it.

PEARL

Leave my dad alone.

MYRON

What do you mean?

PEARL

That big fat guy. I don't want him to hurt my dad.

MYRON

Are you going to answer that?

PEARL

Nope.

MYRON

It's probably your mother.

PEARL

If I don't answer it, my mom will worry, then track me right here with the GPS on my phone. She's done it before. Do we have a deal?

Her phone stops ringing. Pearl stands on the desk so they're eye-to-eye. She extends a hand. Myron pretends to fist punch it, then he shakes it. She looks at the money. He nods.

CUT TO:

INT. RACETRACK - OUTSIDE THE WOMEN'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sadie looks up. The Thug moves in on Theo, gun at his ribs.

THUG
(to Theo and Sadie)
Not a word from either of you.

The Thug stops, holds the earpiece closer, speaks into it.

THUG (CONT'D)
What? Really?

The Thug pushes Theo and moves away. Sadie and Theo can't figure out what just happened. The Thug retreats, disappears. Moments later Pearl screams for Theo and runs toward them, tears streaming, arms open. Just as she's about to fly into his arms.

INTERCUT:

EXT. DREAM SEQUENCE - OLD WOMAN'S BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

The balcony door in the old woman's house is now wide open. Pearl comes running toward Theo, arms open.

EXT. RACETRACK - OUTSIDE THE WOMEN'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pearl runs into Theo's arms. He swings her around, hugs her. The same visual in the dream sequence occurs simultaneously.

Theo notices her empty back pack. He looks at her quizzically. She nods. He hugs her and holds her close.

CUT TO:

INT. THEIR PRIUS - DAY

Sadie drives, Pearl leans her head against the window in the backseat. She's half awake and hears her parents talking. Theo takes Sadie's hand. Pearl looks at the cars on the highway, the city skyline in the background, and the clouds that move quickly overhead with images from her life that blur through her half-open eyes in her dreamlike state.

This is the same scenario as the opening narration.

INTERCUT:

INT. DREAM SEQUENCE - OLD WOMAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pearl sits next to the old woman as she takes her last few breaths.

PEARL
Why am I here?

OLD WOMAN
So you can take all of us with you.

PEARL
Who are you?

Pearl looks around the room, which is filled with her Future Selves, stretching forward decades into her life. They smile.

OLD WOMAN
You know us. We're you, or the you that you'll become someday.

PEARL
You're all my Future Selves?

OLD WOMAN
We've had a beautiful life because we learned how to help each other, thanks to you, our precious Pearl.

The old woman takes her last breath with her eyes wide open. She releases an energy like a lavender mist that swirls around Pearl and merges with Pearl's nine-year old energy.

Pearl walks toward the door like a bride walking back down the aisle as her Future Selves release their vibrational energy and color. As she passes each one of them, they add new colors and textures to the vibrant circle of energy that already surrounds her.

The wild-haired teenager is the last to unleash her energetic spirit. She hugs Pearl and transmits a shimmering, colorful rainbow of light that propels Pearl toward the balcony.

As Pearl runs to Theo, she becomes airborne. Images from her life burst open, like a parachute catching the wind.

INT. THEIR PRIUS - PRESENT - CONTINUOUS

Pearl opens her eyes a slit to see the rush of cars on the highway and her life's memories explode like fireworks. She hears faint voices of her Future Selves reciting their ages.

Flash Forward:

- Pearl (10) Her birthday, Theo presents her with a puppy
- Pearl (12) kisses her first boy. She wipes her mouth.
- Pearl (13) and Theo at Sadie's graduation from Law School
- Pearl and Marta (15) in High School. Pearl becomes the wild-haired teenager, fierce and colorful. They graduate together.
- Pearl (20) in College, then Vet School
- Pearl (25) with Marta at a gallery opening for Marta's art
- Pearl (30) as a bride, Marta hands her the bouquet.
- Pearl (33) at Marta's wedding, Pearl hands her the bouquet.
- Pearl (35) as a new mom. Sadie and Theo hold her baby.

Flash Backward:

- Pearl(97) dances at her great granddaughter's wedding.
- Pearl (93) looks at a scan of her bones, riddled with cancer. She shrugs, hugs her daughter who's in her seventies.
- Pearl (85) listens to a jazz concert, gets up and dances.
- Pearl (75) Falls in love, kisses a man good night in bed
- Pearl (60) At her dying mother's bedside (Sadie is 87)
- Pearl (55) At her father's funeral, Marta on one side, Sadie on the other side. Pearl has two children in their twenties who console her.

Intercut glimpses of her at nine in the car with her parents and at ninety-nine, newly-deceased with eyes-wide-open.

Then a smattering of jumbled images from various stages of life meld together. Images from her life speed up to a crescendo as Pearl's voice merges with the old woman's voice.

PEARL/THE OLD WOMAN (V.O.)

Like the stories I may never tell
 or the memories I may soon forget,
 all of my Future Selves fill me up
 with the energy of our life. All
 those moments swirl around my nine-
 year-old self. I feel them energize
 my body with love and a powerful
 force like light or magic. I hug
 all of them, embracing every moment
 of my life at the same time.

(MORE)

PEARL/THE OLD WOMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It's not the final moment of my life because everything happens all at once. Without linear time, there is no before and after. There is only life, and life can only be found in the moment, in the **right here, right now moment.**

INT. THEIR PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

Theo looks back at Pearl with a great, timeless love.

EXT. DREAM SEQUENCE - OLD WOMAN'S APARTMENT - BALCONY

Pearl runs into Theo's arms. He lifts her up and twirls her around. The sun eclipses what's left of their bodies as she becomes the sunlight with him.

INT. THEIR PRIUS - PRESENT - CONTINUOUS

Pearl opens her eyes a sliver. She sees Theo who has turned around and is looking at her. He takes her hand.

THEO

My precious Pearl, *we're almost home. Are you with me?*

PEARL/OLD WOMAN

(Nine-year old)

I am...

FADE OUT.