

Path of Atonement

By

Iannis Aliferis

SUPER: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- 1 John 1:9

FADE IN

EXT. SKY - DAY

The sun is shining up high in the sky, its rays forming into the sign of the cross.

EXT. COLLEGE - CAMPUS GROUNDS - DAY

A graduation ceremony is in full swing. PARENTS look on proud and, on some occasions, tearful as their SONS and DAUGHTERS walk on stage and receive their mock certificates.

One of the students to receive this is SEBASTIAN STEVENS - 23, clean good looks, dazzling eyes - who beams a big smile to his cheering and cheerful parents, JEFFREY STEVENS, 59 and, NATALIA STEVENS, 52.

EXT. CAR/STREET - DAY (LATER)

(MOVING)

JEFFREY (O.S.)
So I've got some exciting news.

INT. CAR - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

(MOVING)

Jeffrey is driving the car accompanied by Natalia on the passenger side. Sebastian, typing away on his smartphone, is sitting at the back.

JEFFREY
Did you hear me back there?

Sebastian is engrossed in the message he is typing.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
Sebastian!

No response.

Natalia smiles and shakes her head; she's bore witness to this scene a million times.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
 (Even louder)
 Son!

Sebastian looks up annoyed.

SEBASTIAN
 Why're you yelling for?

He returns his attention to the phone.

JEFFREY
 Cause you don't listen to me.

Sebastian presses send and puts the phone away.

SEBASTIAN
 Do too. Just had to send a reply.

NATALIA
 How's Susie, anyway?

SEBASTIAN
 She's fine, mom.

JEFFREY
 As I was saying...

NATALIA
 Is she excited about the trip?

Jeffrey sighs in annoyance.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
 Um, I guess so.

JEFFREY
 OK, fine - this is only regarding your immediate future and the rest of your life.

SEBASTIAN
 What're you talking about?

JEFFREY
 I'm trying to tell you that Ted agreed for you to start at the firm.

SEBASTIAN
 Oh, yeah? Cool. But it'll have to wait till after the South of France, trip.

JEFFREY

Jesus, France will always be there, we're talking about one of the best architectural firms in the country here.

NATALIA

Jeffrey, he's meeting his soon-to-be in-laws.

JEFFREY

I know that -- hell, I'm just...

SEBASTIAN

I'm sure they'll be fine if I start in a month or so.

Jeffrey lets out some air and loosens up.

JEFFREY

Yeah - yeah, of course. And, in fact, you deserve a break, you had a great senior year.

NATALIA

You really did. We're proud of you, son.

Sebastian's phone BEEPS a message and he quickly takes it out of his pocket.

JEFFREY

Here we go again.

On Sebastian's phone is the message: *Ready for tonight, babe?*

EXT. DENVER RESIDENCE - DAY

A small, two-bedroom house in an unassuming neighborhood. The echoes of an argument can be heard coming from within the house.

DAPHNE (O.S.)

What's wrong with you? How could you be so irresponsible?

DOROTHY (O.S.)

Just leave me alone already?

INT. DENVER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY

DAPHNE DENVER - 42, stressed, dark circles under the eyes - is furiously addressing her daughter DOROTHY - 23, a spark of rebellion in her eyes, sides of her head shaven, no brand creative clothing on - who is sitting on a chair by the table and is trying to eat from a bowl of breakfast cereal.

DAPHNE

Why the hell didn't you tell me?
You waited till graduation day, are
you crazy?

DOROTHY

Yeah, I'm all cuckoo.

DAPHNE

You must be.

Dorothy gets up, picks up her bowl, and turns to leave.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

Where're you going? Talk to me. Why
did you drop out of college? What's
going on with you?

Dorothy pauses and turns back to her.

DOROTHY

Nothing's going on. I wasn't
learning anything there. And I
didn't tell you 'cause I knew you'd
go schizo on me and I can't stand
hearing you screech no more. I
mean, that's prob why Dad packed up
and left.

The remark catches Daphne by surprise and triggers her rage. She lashes out at Dorothy with a SLAP.

Dorothy lets the bowl drop from her hand, it breaks on the floor spilling milk and sugary flakes everywhere.

Dorothy is momentarily stunned, then she turns and walks hurriedly away.

Daphne looks at the mess on the floor and gets very emotional. She sits on the chair as tears fill her eyes.

EXT. STEVEN'S RESIDENCE - DAY

Jeffrey pulls up the car into the driveway and parks it next to what seems to be a car wrapped as a gift.

Natalia and Jeffrey share a knowing smile while, in the back seat, Sebastian's watching a video on his phone.

JEFFREY

We're back!

Sebastian pulls his eyes away from the screen, opens the door, and comes face to face with his surprise.

SEBASTIAN

Oh wow.

Jeffrey and Natalia exit as well and they wrap their arms around each other to share the moment.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Is that for me?

NATALIA

Sure is.

JEFFREY

Hard work and sacrifice pay off.

Sebastian seems dumbstruck.

NATALIA

Unwrap it.

He does so and finds underneath a brand-new *Honda Civic* car.

Sebastian is speechless. Jeffrey and Natalia can't stop smiling.

JEFFREY

Well, what do you think?

SEBASTIAN

It's beautiful.

Jeffrey puts his hand in his pocket and produces a set of keys which he dangles towards his son.

JEFFREY

Why don't you take it for a ride?

SEBASTIAN

Hell yeah.

Before he can grab them though, Jeffrey pulls his hand back.

JEFFREY

Be smart and responsible, always.

Sebastian smirks.

SEBASTIAN

Always am.

The father passes the keys to his son.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

MONTAGE

Sebastian is at a lounge area of the club with a young, attractive woman, SUSIE SEJOUR, and they are making out feverishly.

Sebastian is at the bar area with his friends: LOGAN - blonde hair, athletic, clean cut - THOMAS - black, tall, muscular - and Toby - overweight, seems like the odd one out but makes up for it with his jokey demeanor and self-deprivation. They are all downing tequila shots.

Sebastian and Susie are dancing away on a packed dance floor.

Sebastian, Susie, Logan, Thomas, Toby, and three more WOMEN are downing more tequila shots.

MONTAGE ENDS

INT. DENVER RESIDENCE - DAPHNE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Daphne is sitting at a desk in a corner of her room that she has transformed into a kind of an office space. She has a notebook open and is holding a pen but seems too anxious and agitated to write anything.

She suddenly closes her notebook, picks it up and throws it away in frustration.

INT. DENVER RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - NIGHT (SOON LATER)

Daphne walks up to a bedroom door but hesitates, unsure.

She takes in a deep breath, then KNOCKS.

A few seconds later a reply comes:

DOROTHY (O.S.)

Go away.

DAPHNE

Not until we talk.

Daphne waits for a retort but none comes so she KNOCKS again.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Not going away.

Soon the door opens revealing an annoyed Dorothy.

DOROTHY
Make it quick, I'm busy.

She walks back to her bed - which has a huge 'work in progress' collage on it of mystical and psychedelic imagery - as her mother enters the room.

DAPHNE
I've been thinking-

DOROTHY
Oh no.

DAPHNE
Be nice.

DOROTHY
Fine, sorry. Go on.

Look, it's fine if you need some time off from your studies, I know things can get very stressful. I get it. Take some time, take a trip. You can always re-enroll and finish your degree at a later date.

DOROTHY
Not doing that.

DAPHNE
Why not?

DOROTHY
Plan to travel around and work as a disaster relief volunteer for the next few years.

DAPHNE
What, that's insane?

DOROTHY
No, it isn't. Apathy is insane, detachment is insane, working jobs you hate is insane.

DAPHNE

It's called being responsible. Those jobs meant sleepless nights, pain and tears. They paid for food and clothing, they paid the bills and your damn schooling, and now you're throwing it all away. Might as well spit in my face while you're at it.

Dorothy gets up angered.

DOROTHY

Never asked you to do any of that.

DAPHNE

Jesus, what's the matter with you?

DOROTHY

You're the matter. I'm sick of you guilt-tripping me all the time.

DAPHNE

I don't do-

DOROTHY

Yeah, you do.

Daphne sighs.

DAPHNE

Look, I'll make this simple for you. While you're living here, you'll do what I say, do you understand?

Dorothy sneers at her, then grabs her jacket.

DOROTHY

Oh, don't worry, I'll be gone before you know it.

She exits the room in a hurry.

Daphne heads to the HALLWAY and yells after her:

DAPHNE

Fine, don't ever come back here for all I care.

She then hears the front door SLAM.

EXT. DENVER RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Dorothy mounts her scooter and takes off.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Sebastian and Susie are sweating away on the dance floor.

INT. NIGHTCLUB/BAR AREA - NIGHT (LATER)

Susie catches her breath and then downs a glass of water. She then walks over to where Sebastian is laughing away with Logan, Thomas, and Toby - just off the dance floor.

SUSIE

What am I missing?

SEBASTIAN

Tubby stepped in dog poo just before we got in here. He was in the men's room for ages cleaning it away.

SUSIE

Oh no.

TOBY

Can happen to anyone.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

To be fair, women run away from him normally anyway.

They burst out in LAUGHTER again.

THOMAS

The poo probable provided cover for his perspiration stench.

They LAUGH even harder. Toby's taking it well, used to remarks like these, more grateful for the attention than anything.

SUSIE

(Not really meaning it)
You guys are horrible.

Sebastian puts his arm playfully around Toby.

SEBASTIAN

Nah, he knows we love him.

Logan and Thomas punch TOby in the arm - their way of showing affection.

LOGAN
Yeah, we do.

THOMAS
Tubby Toby's our dude.

Susie checks the time and GROANS.

SUSIE
Have to go.

SEBASTIAN
Yeah?

She nods.

LOGAN
Oh, come on, already?

SUSIE
Have a shoot in the morning. I
should have been in bed already.

SEBASTIAN
Come, I'll take you home.

LOGAN
Noooo.

THOMAS
Boo.

Susie puts her hand on Sebastian's chest.

SUSIE
It's OK, I'll grab an *Uber*, you
stay.

SEBASTIAN
You sure?

She nods Yes.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Isn't she the best, guys?

SUSIE
(Addressing the group)
Look after him.

LOGAN
We will.

THOMAS
Yep.

TOBY
Of course.

EXT. STREET/MOTORCYCLE - NIGHT

(MOVING)

Dorothy is on her scooter and is racing through the street, tears in her eyes.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT (LATER)

Sebastian, Logan, Thomas, and Toby exit the club in drunken, exuberant splendor. Thomas is holding his smartphone and displaying a new number he acquired like it's a prized trophy.

SEBASTIAN
(addressing Thomas)
You sure it's a real number?

THOMAS
(defensively)
Yeah.

He looks at the number with slight worry.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Of course, it is. I know it is.

SEBASTIAN
OK then.

TOBY
I'll get us an *Uber*.

SEBASTIAN
Nah, come on, no need.

THOMAS
Not leaving my wheels out in the open all night.

LOGAN
No, no, no.

TOBY
Oh OK, can I catch a ride, then?

SEBASTIAN
I got you, man.

TOBY
Thanks.

They all cross into the parking lot.

LOGAN

You ever gonna get a car, tubby?

TOBY

One of these days.

THOMAS

Sure, sure.

EXT/INT. CAR/STREET - NIGHT (SOON LATER)

(MOVING)

Sebastian's car is barreling down an empty street.

Sebastian is in the driving seat and Toby is in the seat next to him.

TOBY

Maybe slow down a bit, bro.

SEBASTIAN

You're such a grouch.

TOBY

I'm not.

SEBASTIAN

Are too. Ask anyone.

Toby goes quiet, taken back by that last remark. Insults seem more tolerable when it's a group effort.

They drive in silence for a bit. Sebastian notices the change in Toby's demeanor.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Hey, wanna grab some burgers?

TOBY

Yeah.

SEBASTIAN

You know - hear me out, Toby, if you need a car, man, I can lend you the money. It's no problem.

TOBY

No, no, it's OK.

SEBASTIAN

Look, don't be an idiot, we're friends, what the hell?

TOBY
No, it's not that.

 SEBASTIAN
What then?

 TOBY
I - I already got a car.

 SEBASTIAN
You do?

 TOBY
Yeah, just don't show it to you
guys because - well, it's a piece
of crap.

 SEBASTIAN
So what, you think we'll judge you?
You think we're that fickle?

 TOBY
No - no, not at all. I - I don't
know. It's my bad.

 SEBASTIAN
I mean, yeah, Thomas' kinda fickle,
I guess.

They both CHUCKLE. Then:

 SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
 Seriously though, you should -

Right then, as if out of nowhere, from the right side of an
intersection, Dorothy's scooter comes crashing into them.

Dorothy is flown off the bike and goes crashing onto the
asphalt while the impact makes Sebastian lose control, making
the car drive off the street onto the sidewalk and crash into
a street light column.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Sebastian comes to lying on a bed, his head bandaged up due
to an injury.

In front of him are his parents, Jeffrey and Natalia, both having a look of relief but also deep concern on their faces.

SEBASTIAN

Mum, dad...

Natalia reaches out and grabs his hand.

NATALIA

It's OK, you're going to be fine.

JEFFREY

You were in a car accident. Bloody airbags didn't deploy, can you believe it? Brand new car.

NATALIA

Thank God you had your seatbelt on.

Recollections start to come to Sebastian but he is quite drowsy and confused.

SEBASTIAN

Toby?

JEFFREY

He's gonna be fine, just a dislocated shoulder. He'll come by soon.

Natalia has a tear rolling down her eye now.

SEBASTIAN

What's wrong?

JEFFREY

Look, there's - there is an issue, son. Car hit a young woman; she - she didn't make it. There are two policemen outside who will speak to you now.

SEBASTIAN

Police?

Natalia is full-on crying now. Jeffrey helps her up.

JEFFREY

It'll be fine, don't worry, it'll be OK.

They walk to the door and open it and two POLICEMEN walk in.

Realization dawns on Sebastian and he turns pale.

SUPER: A MONTH LATER

INT. JAIL - CELL ROOM - DAY

Sebastian is sitting on his bed in a small room where he is kept while awaiting trial. He looks faint, disheveled, thin, and desolate.

INT. JAIL - VISITING ROOM - DAY

A guard escorts Sebastian to the table in the visiting room where Jeffrey is already sitting. The father stands and hugs his son, then they both take a sit at the table.

JEFFREY

Your mother sends her love. She wanted to be here but - she tried, it's just...

SEBASTIAN

It's OK.

JEFFREY

She just needs more time.

SEBASTIAN

It's fine, I understand. And hey, they'll be plenty of time for visits soon enough.

JEFFREY

You don't know that.

Jeffrey takes a breath, then forces a smile.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Look, I have great news - I made some calls, you will be trialed at a federal district court. Which means any time sentenced will be taken at a federal prison.

Sebastian's demeanor does not change.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Trust me, son, this is very positive.

SEBASTIAN

Any word from Susie?

JEFFREY

All I heard was that she was staying with her parents in the south of France. That's all.

SEBASTIAN

Oh, OK - good.

INT. DENVER RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Daphne is sitting on the floor looking lost in desperation. The room is dark as the blinds are closed and it is messy - with furniture overturned and with bits of a shattered vase all over the carpet.

The phone starts RINGING and continues to do so until it goes to the answering machine and a MALE VOICE leaves a message:

MAN (O.S.)

Mrs. Denver, this is Henry from HR. I wanted to let you know that your final cheque will be arriving by the end of the week. Good day.

The message ends and the room descends once more to an unearthly silence.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Sebastian, now dressed in a suit - is standing next to his LAWYER as a JUDGE is in the process of passing the final sentence. A crowd of PEOPLE is gathered and sitting behind them, including Sebastian's father and Daphne.

JUDGE

The court does note that the defender has had no priors, that this is his first-ever offense, however, the pain and devastation caused by his foolish actions on the night of the 15th of May warrant time spent in confinement for reflection, introspection, and rumination. Therefore the defendant Sebastian Stevens is hereby sentenced to three years in federal prison and fined the...

All sound is taken away from Sebastian's perspective. He looks on as the judge finishes the sentence, then to his lawyer who seems indifferent, then turns to his father who looks pale as a ghost.

Suddenly though, he finds Daphne - eyes blood-shot red from crying - standing in front of him and looking right at him with utter disdain.

A security guard rushes over and Sebastian turns to him and says:

SEBASTIAN

It's OK.

The guard hesitates on the spot and Sebastian turns back his attention to Daphne.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Fresh tears are now running down Daphne's eyes and she strikes out with a hard SLAP at Sebastian's face. That is when the guard steps in and takes her away.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

(whisper)

I'm sorry.

SUPER: MONTHS LATER

INT. PRISON - DORMITORY - NIGHT

Sebastian - now in prisoner attire - is sitting on his bunk bed looking lost in thought. Around him, various other INMATES are engaged in various activities. Some are playing cards, others board games, some are reading a book or a magazine, yet others are chatting away.

Sebastian suddenly notices something in the distance, by the wall. It is a figure in black, it is Dorothy, she looks at him, alarmed and disheartened.

INT. PRISON - TOILET - NIGHT

Sebastian is at the sink, looking at himself in the mirror, he is in a lot of inner turmoil and his hands are shaking. He lets out a hideous sounding GROWL, then starts banging his head on the metal tub surface over and over again - and soon blood starts gushing from a wound on his forehead.

A large build man, JACOB LEMAIRE - mid-40's, black - grabs him from behind and stops his self-harm.

JACOB

Hey, stop it!

Sebastian struggles to free himself.

JACOB (CONT'D)
It's OK, calm down.

Jacob takes him to the floor and secures him in a hold.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Just calm down, man. It's OK.

Sebastian finally stops struggling, he bursts out in tears instead.

JACOB (CONT'D)
It's OK, let it out, it's OK.

INT. DENVER RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

DREAM SEQUENCE

Daphne is with her daughter Dorothy by the front door of the house. She is holding motorcycle keys in her hand and she offers them to her daughter. Then, with a haunting and twisted smile on her mouth, she says:

DAPHNE
Why don't you go for a ride,
sweetie?

Dorothy takes the keys and exits, followed by her mother.

EXT. DENVER RESIDENCE/MOTORCYCLE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Dorothy gets on the bike, starts the engine, and takes off as her mother watches, an elated yet aberrant expression on her face.

DREAM SEQUENCE ENDS

INT. DENVER RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Daphne wakes up with a jump, she is shaking from fear and dread and she lets out a long, ghastly CRY.

INT. LIQUOR SHOP - DAY

Daphne walks into the shop and starts taking bottles of whiskey and vodka from the shelves and placing them into a basket.

INT. PRISON - DORMITORY - DAY

Sebastian is lying alone on his bunk bed. His forehead is now swollen and covered in dried blood.

Jacob approaches.

JACOB
Hey, how's it going?

Sebastian remains silent.

JACOB (CONT'D)
You really should get that looked at.

Sebastian finally looks at him but does not reply.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Name's Jacob.

He puts his hand out for a shake but Sebastian doesn't move and so he finally retracts his hand.

JACOB (CONT'D)
That's OK, I get it. I was right where you are now. Lost and desperate. In need of some way out.

Up ahead past the various bunk beds and the inmates, towards the end of the room, we get a hierarchy system going with the bunk beds there fashioned as protective barriers to one specially made and decorated bunk bed that resembles a kind of throne. On it, sited like some type of king, intimidated looking, bold headed, and full of tattoos, is inmate MEPHIS.

JACOB (V.O.)
Just heed this advice and watch out, cause the fiend, the enemy, the dreaded one, well, he strikes at us when we are at our most vulnerable.

Sebastian turns and looks at Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN
Just leave me alone already.

Jacob sighs, turns, and walks away.

Sebastian notices her again, Dorothy at the edge of the room, looking at him in utter desperation.

INT. PRISON - DORMITORY - MEPHIS SECTION - AFTERNOON

Sebastian makes his way toward the end of the dormitory and reaches the space where Mephis' hierarchal system stands. Two beds, a coffee table, and lots of MEN are between him and Mephis. Two large men, SLOAN and TYRONE step in front of him, blocking his path.

SLOAN
What'd you want?

Sebastian looks around cautiously, then tells them:

SEBASTIAN
Want to purchase some - product.

The two men look at each other and SNICKER.

TYRONE
Little boy wants product.

SLOAN
You a snitch, little boy?

Tyrone takes out a makeshift knife.

TYRONE
You better not be a snitch.

MEPHIS (O.C.)
Let him through.

CUT TO:

An anxious Sebastian sits down on a stool next to the bunk bed where Mephis is sitting and rolling a joint. On his right hand is a small tattoo of a snake.

MEPHIS (CONT'D)
You Sebastian Stevens?

SEBASTIAN
How'd you know?

MEPHIS
Know everything important within these walls. Been watching you. I see energy, I see voltage. Raw and unseasoned. Brimming and brewing potentiality.

SEBASTIAN
I - I heard you have - pills.

Mephis lights the cigarette and inhales.

MEPHIS
Got lotta things.

He offers the smoke to Sebastian.

MEPHIS (CONT'D)
Magic things. Mind-altering, soul-
shaking.

Sebastian takes the joint and inhales and Mephis smiles revealing some silver teeth.

SEBASTIAN
I got money.

MEPHIS
Money's good but one thing's
better.

SEBASTIAN
What?

MEPHIS
Loyalty.

SEBASTIAN
Oh, I'm definitely loyal.

Mephis, his smile even wider now, opens his hand, revealing a bunch of small pills in his palm.

MEPHIS
Then you shall be rewarded.

INT. PRISON - DORMITORY - NIGHT

Sebastian returns to his bunk bed. As he lies down he looks across the space and he sees her once more: Dorothy, in dark clothes, staring at him now with sadness and disappointment.

INT. DENVER RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - DAY

Daphne is lying on her bed and drinking out of a bottle of vodka. The blinds are drawn and the room is in a mess.

INT. PRISON - DORMITORY - DAY

Sebastian is lying on his bed looking really dazed and under the influence of some substance.

EXT. PRISON - COURTYARD - DAY

It is a cloudy day as Sebastian and Mephis are walking in a circle in the outside recreational space of the prison. Around them, INMATES are engaged in various sporting and physical activities.

MEPHIS

Know you're down in the dumps, but you're young, you bounce back. You gotta look at this for what it is: An opportunity.

SEBASTIAN

Don't feel much like it.

MEPHIS

You're wrong, esse. This's life teaching ya to toughen up, to look out for number one.

Jacob has finished doing some reps from a dumbbell and puts the weight down, then looks across the yard to Sebastian and Mephis and his expression morphs into that of extreme worry.

MEPHIS (O.C) (CONT'D)

You got a blade?

SEBASTIAN (O.C.)

Blade?

Sebastian and Mephis continue to walk and talk.

MEPHIS

This what I mean, you gotta be smart, you gotta be ready to defend yourself. It's a dog-eat-dog world out there and more so in here. Kill or be killed. Know what I'm saying?

A GUARD motions to all the prisoners that recreational time is now over.

Mephis and Sebastian stop walking and Mephis grabs Sebastian by the arm.

MEPHIS (CONT'D)

Look under the pillow, got a lil something for ya.

INT. PRISON - DORMITORY - DAY

Sebastian reaches his bunk bed, lifts his pillow, and sees a makeshift knife and some pills underneath.

INT. BARRED CELL - NIGHT (LATER)

DREAM SEQUENCE

Sebastian wakes up on a mattress inside a small prison room. The only source of light coming from a tiny barred window opening where the moon's rays have managed to slither their way in.

Sebastian jumps up in a panic and rushes to the bars, grabbing them with both hands.

SEBASTIAN

No, please, let me out, please.

He seems to be all alone.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Please!

Nothing.

He plummets to the cold concrete floor in desperation, CRIES of anguish escaping his mouth.

DOROTHY (O.S.)

I know you feel alone and hopeless,
but it's only an illusion.

Sebastian looks toward the voice and sees a figure emerge from the darkness. It is Dorothy, dressed in black per usual. She walks over to him and sits on the floor next to him.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

He's rooting for you, you know.
Don't cast him off, for that leads
to true desolation.

SEBASTIAN

Who?

DOROTHY

I think you know who.

SEBASTIAN

Why're you even here, after - after
what I did to you?

DOROTHY

Sebastian, you're the one that's
going to have to offer forgiveness.

Sebastian looks at her surprised and confused. She smiles warmly at him and stands back up.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Know that he won't give up on you
so don't give up on yourself.

Right then an awful sound is heard, like the HOWL of a wild animal.

SEBASTIAN

What's that?

DOROTHY

The dreaded one. He's close.

Dorothy steps back into the darkness and disappears.

DOROTHY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

He wants to claim you for his own.
Don't let him in.

The HOWL is heard again, stronger this time and Sebastian moves away from the bars in fear and scoops until his back reaches the side wall.

He is breathing heavily and waiting but all seems quiet now.

Suddenly the cage door flings violently open and slams onto the bars and Sebastian lets out a CRY.

DREAM SEQUENCE ENDS

INT. PRISON - DORMITORY - DAWN

The CRY carries Sebastian from the dream world into the waking one. All around him, MURMURS, INSULTS, and COMPLAINTS from his fellow INMATES for interrupting their sleep.

INT. PRISON - DORMITORY - DAY

Sebastian is lying on his bunk bed looking dazed and confused. In the rest of the area, the other INMATES continue to do their various activities.

In the dormitory, guests arrive, and they are accompanied by Jacob.

These include a pastor, BEN BAILEJ - mid-40s, a bible in his hands - and his two pupils, GARY and FRANK, mid-20s, and holding on to various leaflets, and literary printouts.

Strangely, the hierarchal system at the end of the room is not evident now, and Mephis nowhere to be seen.

Jacob and the guests make the way to Sebastian.

JACOB

Sebastian, got a moment? There's someone I would like you to meet.

While lying down and not looking at him Sebastian replies:

SEBASTIAN

Go away.

JACOB

This is pastor Ben from the chapel of the Beloved Disciple. He helps run various church-affiliated groups including one for addiction. He would like to talk to you about God.

A surge of anger invades Sebastian and he sits up fast and faces Ben.

SEBASTIAN

Oh, is that right? You want to talk about God, do ya?

BEN

I can see that you are suffering, son. The Good Book tells us that this is an opportunity for growth, for us to come face to face with parts of ourselves that we would have otherwise ignored.

SEBASTIAN

Should I be thankful to God for the pain, for the misery? Is that it?

BEN

We are all tested, we all go through hardship. But through our relationship with him we find poignancy which leads us to grace.

SEBASTIAN

You don't know what you're talking about.

INT. PRISON - DORMITORY - NIGHT

Sebastian picks up the Bible. He gets onto his bunk bed, opens the book, and starts to read from it.

EXT. DENVER RESIDENCE - DAY

A man in his late forties, DAVID DENVER, walks up to the front door and presses the BUZZER.

He waits for a while but no one answers so he PRESSES it again.

After a while, he KNOCKS on the door but once more, nothing happens.

He tries to look through the windows but that doesn't prove conclusive, and so finally tries the front door and finds it unlocked.

INT. DENVER RESIDENCE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

David enters the house.

 DAVID
 Sis, it's David, you in?

He walks further into the house and finds it to be dirty and messy.

 DAVID (CONT'D)
 Sis, Daphne!

He enters into the LIVING ROOM...

And finds Daphne on the floor next to vomit and empty bottles of vodka. She seems to be confused, her skin clammy, and she seems to be having trouble breathing.

He rushes to her side.

 DAVID (CONT'D)
 Oh God, oh Jesus. Daphne?

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Daphne is unconscious on a bed with a drip machine attached to her vein administering fluids, vitamins, and glucose into her body. She is also being given oxygen therapy through a nasal cannula that is attached to an oxygen tank.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

A worried-looking David is pacing up and down while talking on his cell phone.

DAVID

They told me alcohol poisoning. I don't know, have to wait, they'll -- no, there isn't anyone else - she's my sister, Triss, what'd you want from me? I'll - no, listen, a couple of days, that's all. I postponed the trip, we rescheduled the meeting already. Fine - fine, yeah - let you know. Love ya.

INT. PRISON - LIBRARY ROOM - DAY

Sebastian is pushing a tray of books as he makes his way along a long bookcase, placing books back in their spot on the shelf.

EXT. PRISON - YARD - DAY

Mephis is sitting on steps with his CREW and he seems to be simmering with quiet anger as he looks across the yard at the weights section where Sebastian and Jacob are working out together and sharing some laughs between the sets.

INT. PRISON - LIBRARY ROOM - DAY

Sebastian is sitting by the table where he has placed various books. He is reading from the Bible once more.

He suddenly stops as he feels a presence and as he looks up, he sees Mephis having entered the room. Behind him, Sloan and Tyrone stand guard at the entrance.

Sebastian casually closes the Bible and places another book on top of it.

Mephis takes a seat next to him.

He doesn't say a word for a while, just stares at him uncomfortably.

Then:

MEPHIS

Been busy, eh?

SEBASTIAN

I - guess.

MEPHIS

Thought we was amigos.

SEBASTIAN

No, no - we're cool.

Mephis lets out a LAUGH.

MEPHIS

We cool, he says. Alright, Seb boy,
we cool.

Mephis looks at the book that is covering the Bible and Sebastian gets even more nervous.

MEPHIS (CONT'D)

Books are cool, too, no? Some books
though, they're - poison.

Mephis looks right back at Sebastian.

MEPHIS (CONT'D)

They make a man traitorous,
treasonous, treacherous.

Sebastian's right hand starts to shake slightly.

MEPHIS (CONT'D)

But you, you're loyal. Isn't that
what you told me once?

SEBASTIAN

Y - yes.

The snake tattoo on Mephis hand seems to be moving.

MEPHIS (O.C.)

Yes! You're loyal, perhaps even
devoted and zealous, no?

Mephis takes Sebastian's trembling hand, turns it palm up,
and leaves a bunch of pills in it.

Mephis winks at Sebastian.

MEPHIS (CONT'D)

Like I say, we're friends.

JACOB (O.S.)

What's going on?

Jacob muscles his way past Sloan and Tyrone and enters the room, while Sebastian pockets the pills.

Mephis gets up, passes by Jacob, and smiles wickedly at him.

MEPHIS

Nothin' esse, just two amigos
chatting away.

Mephis reaches up to his two men at the exit, then turns his head back.

MEPHIS (CONT'D)

Don't be no stranger, Seb.

Mephis, Sloan, and Tyrone all leave.

INT. PRISON - TOILET - NIGHT

Sebastian is alone in front of the sink. He has the pills in his hand and he seems indecisive about what to do with them.

Sebastian throws the pills down the sink and opens the tap to let the water flow down.

INT. PRISON - VISITING ROOM - DAY

Sebastian is sitting by a table opposite Toby.

TOBY

It's good to see you again, sorry I
didn't come earlier.

SEBASTIAN

Don't worry about that, just glad
to see you now.

TOBY

You're - keeping well.

SEBASTIAN

Been exercising lately.

TOBY

Good, good. Funnily enough, I
joined the gym, actually.

SEBASTIAN

Oh great.

There is an awkward pause.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
You seen the guys at all?

TOBY
Oh, I mean - no, don't hang out
with Thomas and Logan much anymore,
to be honest.

INT. PRISON - DORMITORY - DAY

A guard in his mid-thirties, FRED, approaches Jacob's bunk bed as Jacob is lying forward and reading a book.

FRED
Get your ass up. You got a visitor.

JACOB
I do?

FRED
You calling me a liar?

JACOB
No, just wasn't expecting anyone.

FRED
Just come on already!

INT. PRISON - CORRIDOR - DAY (LATER)

Fred is really taking his time as he's escorting Jacob to the visitor's room.

JACOB
Why're we dragging our feet here?

FRED
Told ya to shut the hell up.

INT. PRISON - DORMITORY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Mephis and a lot of his CREW approach Sebastian at his bunk bed as Sebastian is lying there and playing catch and throw with a baseball.

MEPHIS
Still got the blade?

Sebastian lets the ball fall on the bed and sits up, clearly nervous.

SEBASTIAN

Um - lost it.

Mephis and produces a new makeshift weapon.

MEPHIS

Got ya covered. After all, what are amigos for, right?

Sebastian does not take the new blade.

SEBASTIAN

What's going on?

MEPHIS

Turf war. We making a play, gonna slay us some Nazi scum that decided to sell our product on the sly and I want you by my side.

SEBASTIAN

Me?

MEPHIS

Time to see how loyal you be.

Sebastian contemplates the situation, his whole body tenses up.

SEBASTIAN

No, no - I can't.

MEPHIS

Can't or won't?

SEBASTIAN

No. Please. No.

MEPHIS

Thought we was pals.

SEBASTIAN

I - I don't want to get involved.

MEPHIS

Yet you wanted my pills, which I gave you, eagerly, freely.

SEBASTIAN

And I - I appreciate that. But - I can pay - I just don't want no violence.

Mephis places his face right next to Sebastian's.

MEPHIS

You don't want no violence.

Mephis smiles sarcastically, and wide - half his teeth are metal replacements.

Think you're made for violence. You were magnificently - violent that night when the motorcycle crossed your path.

Sebastian starts to tremble.

SEBASTIAN

How..? That was - an accident.

MEPHIS

Yeah, sure it was. Know what I think? Think you enjoyed it, think, no - know, you did it on purpose.

Sebastian pushes him away and gets to his feet.

SEBASTIAN

I did not, I -- let me be, OK.

MEPHIS

Nope. You either with me or you against me, esse. What's it gonna be, Seb, boy?

INT. PRISON - VISITING ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Fred takes Jacob to a table where a man in his early forties, NATE, is waiting. Jacob does not seem to recognize who this is as he takes a seat across from him.

NATE

Hey, Jacob.

JACOB

I know you?

NATE

Nope.

A realization dawns upon Jacob.

JACOB

You work for Mephis, don't you?

Fred shrugs his shoulders.

Jacob rushes to his feet as Nate starts to LAUGH and he springs for the exit.

GUARD (O.S.)
Hey, no running, inmate.

INT. PRISON - DORMITORY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Mephis punches Sebastian in the face and drops him to the floor. INMATES all around them are CHEERING Mephis on.

Mephis gets on top of him and starts punching away at Sebastian.

Just as Sebastian is on the precipice of losing consciousness, he sees Jacob launch himself at Mephis and get him off him.

Then he passes out.

Jacob squares off against Mephis and Mephis takes a makeshift knife out and wields it in front of Jacob.

MEPHIS
Been meaning to gut you like a fish
for a while now.

JACOB
Try it. Come on.

GUARDS rush into the space and Mephis drops the weapon and kicks it away.

Chaos ensues. Inmates scatter about as guards start hitting those nearest with their batons.

Jacob rushes to a helpless Sebastian and shields his body from the deluge of panic-stricken feet.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Daphne awakes in bed from heavy slumber. She is without the oxygen assistance and the drip, and looking stronger, although still pale and malnourished.

A NURSE walks into the room. She looks into her eyes and checks her pulse.

NURSE
And how are we feeling?

No response.

NURSE (CONT'D)

You gave us a scare but you are better now. You'd be dead if not for your brother.

DAPHNE

(almost a whisper)
David?

NURSE

Yeah. Oh...

She reaches into her pocket and produces a leaflet.

DAPHNE

...almost forgot, he wanted you to have this.

She gives it to Daphne.

NURSE

I'll bring breakfast in half an hour. Light and - tasteless really but you gotta try and eat it.

She smiles at Daphne warmly and exits.

Daphne looks at the leaflet. It is an advert for a Christian-based Addiction Anonymous meeting that takes place in the basement of a chapel.

Daphne crumbles up the paper and throws it in the bin that is by her bed.

INT. PRISON - INFIRMARY ROOM - DAY

Sebastian, face all bruised up, wakes up in bed and finds Jacob in a seat next to him, head low as if in prayer.

SEBASTIAN

Hey.

Jacob looks up and smiles.

JACOB

Hey.

SEBASTIAN

What happened?

JACOB

You took quite a beating but you're a tough son of a gun. You'll be OK.

SEBASTIAN

Mephis?

JACOB

Like a roach, he's crawled back
into the shadows, for now.

Sebastian tries to move but sharp pain shoots up through his
body and he MOANS.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Easy there, broken ribs. In fact,
you're lucky to be alive.

Sebastian's demeanor turns really serious as he says:

SEBASTIAN

Not lucky.

He looks right at Jacob.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

When Mephis was above me - his
hands and feet striking away at me -
I wasn't feeling neither pain nor
fear - but a sense of justness, of
restitution - that would have been
punctuated by my death.

Melancholy but also contemplation befall Jacob.

JACOB

You're doing him a disservice.

SEBASTIAN

What'd you mean?

JACOB

Sebastian, you believe God hasn't
forgiven you, that he can't, but he
knows what's in all our hearts. He
can see your anguish, your pain,
and regret. It's you who hasn't
forgiven yourself. That's what's
keeping you stuck, that's what's
keeping you bound. God has shown
you the door but it's up to you to
open it and step outside.

SEBASTIAN

Don't think I can do that.

JACOB

It's the final and biggest demon
that you'll have to overcome.

BEAT.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I get out tomorrow but I hope you
accept the invite and come join me
and Ben at the chapel. We do good
work there and we can use all the
help we can get.

Sebastian nods and they shake hands.

SEBASTIAN

Thank you for everything.

JACOB

See you on the outside, friend.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Daphne is asleep but she's having a nightmare.

She wakes up in fear and tries to catch her breath.

She notices something by the edge of her pillow. She picks it
up and sees that it is the Christian leaflet that she had
crumbled up and disposed of only it looks good as new. She
looks at it confused and confounded.

INT. PRISON - TOILET - NIGHT

Sebastian is in front of the sink and looks at himself in the
mirror.

Suddenly he looks away in fear.

SEBASTIAN

I - I can't.

A hand softly covers the top of Sebastian's right hand and
Sebastian notices someone next to him. It is Dorothy - now
dressed in white - who smiles at him.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

DOROTHY

I know and I've long forgiven you.
Now you have to do the same for
you. Look in the mirror and say the
words.

She nods encouragingly to him.

Sebastian turns and looks right at himself in the mirror and
he takes a long breath in.

He lets it out and then says:

SEBASTIAN

I forgive you.

It is like a ton of bricks are lifted off Sebastian's
shoulders and he breaks out in tears of release.

He turns to Dorothy and they embrace tightly.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN

SUPER: SIX MONTHS LATER

EXT. PRISON - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Sebastian exits from the prison and is greeted by his father,
who embraces him tightly.

INT/EXT. CAR - DAY

(MOVING)

Jeffrey is driving the car and Sebastian is sitting quietly
in the passenger seat.

The father turns and looks at his son with gratefulness.

SEBASTIAN

You're staring again.

JEFFREY

Sorry.

SEBASTIAN

It's alright.

JEFFREY
You eaten, you hungry?

SEBASTIAN
No, I'm fine.

JEFFREY
Your mother, she's cooked up a storm.

SEBASTIAN
She didn't have to.

JEFFREY
Yes, she did.

There is a pause in the conversation.

The car slowly makes its way from the outskirts to a more suburban setting.

Jeffrey's face beams up upon recollection of some important news.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
Hey, can't believe I haven't told you already.

SEBASTIAN
What?

JEFFREY
Susie's been in touch. She's coming over to visit some friends and she said she'd like to see you.

SEBASTIAN
Oh, really? Susie?

JEFFREY
Yes, yes! Said she's really eager to talk to you.

SEBASTIAN
It's been a long time. Did she say why?

JEFFREY
I think she's missed you, son.

Sebastian is about to say something but stops himself.

INT. STEVENS' HOUSE - DAY

Natalia is hugging her son tightly, tears running down her eyes.

NATALIA

I'm so sorry, I just couldn't do it. I couldn't see you like that, it would have destroyed me.

SEBASTIAN

It's OK, Mom, I know. I'm here now, it's all good.

INT. STEVENS' HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Sebastian and his parents have finished having a big lunch. There are so many dishes on offer, that portions of food have been untouched on various plates.

Jeffrey unbuckles his belt, while Sebastian downs copious amounts of soda.

NATALIA

Right, shall I bring the pie, then?

SEBASTIAN

Oh Mom, no, I'm absolutely stuffed.

NATALIA

But it's coconut cream, your favorite.

She stands to go for it.

SEBASTIAN

No, I'll have some for breakfast, promise. Besides, I need to rest now, I'm starting a job tomorrow and I need to get up quite early.

She hesitates, then sits back down.

NATALIA

What job?

SEBASTIAN

I'm starting as a Christian aid assistant at The Beloved Disciple Chapel.

Jeffrey and Natalia look at each other in surprise.

INT. STEVENS' HOUSE - SEBASTIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sebastian is lying in bed in the dark but he's not asleep. Faint VOICES are heard coming from another room - it sounds like he's parents are having a heated debate about him.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Sebastian - dressed in jeans, shirt, and tie - puts his hand out for Ben to shake but the pastor ignores the gesture and hugs him instead.

Jacob is standing by and he breaks out a smile.

BEN

So good to see you again.

SEBASTIAN

You too.

INT. CHAPEL - BASEMENT - DAY (SOON LATER)

Ben leads Sebastian and Jacob down into the basement room of the chapel which is full of chairs, a table, food supplies, and a coffee maker.

BEN

Here is where the meetings take place, every Monday and Thursday evening at 8:00. Sometimes I administrate, sometimes Jacob. You can act as an assistant to us and you can also help keep this space clean and keep supplies stocked up.

SEBASTIAN

Sounds good.

BEN

I have to attend to a baptism now, Jacob will take you next door to see those facilities and meet the rest of the gang.

EXT. CHAPEL/SIDEWALK/COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY (SOON LATER)

Jacob and Sebastian have exited the chapel and are walking to the next building along.

JACOB

How does it feel to be back out?

SEBASTIAN

A bit weird, to be honest.

JACOB

It's normal, that'll go away after
a while.

Jacob and Sebastian come to a stop in front of what looks like a big old storage space that has a sign on the front that says: "Beloved Disciple Community Centre, All Welcome".

Currently, a van is parked on the road, in front of the building which seems to be delivering food supplies. A young woman - LEAH LOCKHEART - has picked up big boxes of supplies and seems to be struggling to carry them inside.

Sebastian rushes to her side taking her by surprise. She catches herself staring into his eyes in admiration, gets annoyed with herself, and turns her face away from him.

SEBASTIAN

Here, let me help.

LEAH

Don't need it.

She rushes past him but trips and falls, bringing the supplies down with her. Food spills all over grass and concrete.

Leah is covered with food, an annoyed look on her face, Sebastian looks embarrassed and Jacob is trying not to laugh.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Look what you've done.

Sebastian goes to her and tries to help.

SEBASTIAN

I didn't do anything?

LEAH

You distracted me.

She slaps his hand away.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Don't need your help.

Sebastian sighs.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Just go and help Jacob get the rest
of the stuff out of the van.

Sebastian walks to Jacob who's picking up boxes out of the van and who's got a smile on his face.

SEBASTIAN

What crawled up her butt?

Jacob passes a box to him.

JACOB

Leah's a feisty one. I think you'll get on great.

SEBASTIAN

I doubt it.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - KITCHENETTE - DAY (SOON LATER)

Jacob and Sebastian enter through a back door into a kitchenette space. They place the boxes and cartons of supplies on some counters.

JACOB

This is where we prepare the food.

He points to a door.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Through there's the main space,
with some tables and lots of beds.

Sebastian opens the door and takes a look at the space inside. There are PEOPLE present who are sleeping on various beds.

SEBASTIAN

You get good turnouts?

JACOB

Depends. Most people come and go.
Some do come back regularly. Come,
let's finish unloading and I'll
make us some coffee.

SEBASTIAN

OK, cool.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - KITCHENETTE - DAY (SOON LATER)

Jacob is making a double espresso on a coffee maker while Sebastian is sitting by a table.

SEBASTIAN

So, is it just us and - Leah, then?

JACOB

Gary and Frank are on assignment, they'll be back next week. There's also Suniel and Mai Ling, married couple, both down with the flu at the moment. It's good you're starting today.

The side door opens and Leah emerges from the bathroom. She has tried her best to clean herself up. Her hair is wet and she has an old tee shirt on. Sebastian can't help but stare at her making her feel self-conscious.

LEAH

What, got something stuck on my face?

SEBASTIAN

No, no, you're great - I mean, you're totally clean.

Jacob, who can't help but smile to himself again, brings over a coffee pot and three cups.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Oh great, coffee.

Jacob pours coffee into the three cups.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

I'm Sebastian by the way.

He puts out his hand.

LEAH

Leah.

She shakes it. She then proceeds to grab a cup and a spoon and put lots of sugar in her coffee while Sebastian looks on amused.

SEBASTIAN

So, what's in the itinerary for today?

LEAH

Same as always, really. Lots of cooking, lots of cleaning, lots of serving. You're up for it?

SEBASTIAN
I'll do my best.

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

The bus's door opens and an exhausted Sebastian walks out. He starts walking along the sidewalk.

EXT. STEVENS' HOUSE - NIGHT (SOON LATER)

Sebastian comes upon the front door. LAUGHTER and VOICES are heard coming from within.

INT. STEVENS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Sebastian walks into a noisy room and finds Susie finishing telling a story to a captivating audience that includes his parents and his friend, Toby.

SUSIE
So then we're turned upside down in
our bench seats and suddenly
there's aerial vomit dropping about
hitting the people behind us right
in their faces.

They all start LAUGHING.

NATALIA
Oh no.

SUSIE
I think he puked the entirety of
the ride. Poor guy was so pale
afterwards.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)
Guess I shouldn't have had all
those oysters after all.

They all turn to the location of the voice and see Sebastian standing there.

Susie gets to her feet.

SUSIE
Sebastian...

SEBASTIAN
Hey, Susie.

TOBY
Hey man, how's it been?

 SEBASTIAN
Not bad, thanks, Toby.

 JEFFREY
Susie here was in the neighborhood
and decided to drop by.

There is a slight pause of awkwardness between them all.

Then:

 NATALIA
Toby, why don't you join me and
Jeffrey in the kitchen for some hot
chocolate and let these two have a
catch-up?

 TOBY
Oh, yes, definitely Ms. Stevens,
would love a hot cup.

The parents and Toby head to the room's exit, then look at
both Susie and Sebastian one final time.

After they're gone, Sebastian and Susie look at each other.

 SUSIE
You look well.

 SEBASTIAN
You look more beautiful than ever.

Susie bites on her bottom lip.

 SUSIE
Look, I'm so sorry - I, I just
couldn't - I didn't...

 SEBASTIAN
Don't worry about any of that. I'm
just glad to see you again.

 SUSIE
I'm glad too.

Sebastian walks towards her. They look at each other unsure.

Sebastian makes the move and hugs her and she reciprocates.

SUSIE (CONT'D)
So much exciting stuff has
happened.

They pull away.

SEBASTIAN
Come, you can tell me over a cup of
chocolate.

INT. STEVENS' HOUSE - SEBASTIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Sebastian is lying on his bed and is reading a passage from
the Bible.

There's a KNOCK on his door.

He secures the bookmark binder in place and closes the book.

SEBASTIAN
Come in.

His father opens the door and enters.

JEFFREY
Hey sport, long day eh?

SEBASTIAN
A little.

JEFFREY
How was work?

SEBASTIAN
Was alright.

JEFFREY
Good, good. Did - Susie tell you
about Rotterdam? She mentioned she
had a phone number for you.

SEBASTIAN
Look, Dad - I don't see myself
going back to all that. I'm on a
different path now.

JEFFREY
All I'm saying - all I and your
mother want is for you to have an
open mind, and to know that it's
never too late. That's all.

Sebastian sighs.

SEBASTIAN
Fine, OK, I'll keep an open mind.

JEFFREY
That's good, son.

He walks to the door.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
I'll let you get some sleep.

Jeffrey's about to exit but hesitates and smiles.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
Susie sure looked nice, didn't she?

Sebastian smiles too.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
Yup, sure did.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
'Night, son.

SEBASTIAN
'Night, Dad.

The father exits and Sebastian picks up the Good Book again. He is about to turn to the saved page but hesitates. He places the book down, and reaches to the bedside table and picks up a card.

He looks at it. It is about an architectural firm in The Netherlands and there are an address and telephone details on it.

INT. CHAPEL BASEMENT - NIGHT

Sebastian carries a bag of groceries to a long table where Ben is standing. They begin to open packets of biscuits and place them on plates.

Various individuals start to gather in the space.

BEN
You OK with continuing this?

SEBASTIAN
Sure.

Ben proceeds to say hello to all the people that have entered the room.

Sebastian sets some bottles of soft drinks on the tables and then distributes plastic cups as well.

Then he sees Leah enter the space and he goes up to her.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Hey, you're here to facilitate as well?

LEAH
No, I'm not.

She walks by him and takes a seat on one of the chairs that are stationed in such a way as to form a circle.

INT. CHAPEL BASEMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Every seat is now full and the meeting is well under way. Ben is at the top of the circle and next to him sits Sebastian. Leah is in one of the seats and in another one is a man in his mid-forties, ZMEI, who spots deep-colored hair, earrings as well as a small tattoo of a snake on his hand.

A black man in his 30's, JAMES, sitting next to Leah is saying a few words:

JAMES
...that is all I have to say today, not very exciting, I know, but that's not a bad thing sometimes, is it now?

BEN
No, it isn't, James, thank you for sharing your truth today.

Ben looks at Leah.

BEN (CONT'D)
Leah, do you wish to say a few words?

LEAH
Sure, why not? Hi. I'm Leah and I'm an alcoholic. I - I'll be honest, I wasn't going to come in today. The voice within felt powerful and overbearing as I woke this morning. It was telling me I don't need this group, that I'm better than that. That I am all-powerful and could handle a few cold ones, that I could...

(MORE)

LEAH (CONT'D)

Well, you can imagine the rest. I don't know if it was a maleficent force egging me on or my own stubborn ego, all I know is that it took looking at Lydia, my eight-year-old, to make me realize...

Sebastian notices eyes on him and as he turns his gaze to the right, he notices that Zmei is looking directly at him in a somewhat sinister way. Sebastian quickly returns his attention to Leah.

LEAH (CONT'D)

...once more that I was having, yet again, a moment of weakness.

INT. CHAPEL BASEMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Everyone is still sitting in a circle but the meeting seems to be coming to an end.

BEN

Thank you to all who have shared with us today and to those who weren't able to, that is absolutely fine, perhaps they will wish to do so next time. To finish off, I'd like to recite a small passage from Matthew 11:28-30: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

INT. CHAPEL BASEMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Sebastian walks up to the table where Leah is having coffee and finishing a sandwich.

SEBASTIAN

Hey, that was a really nice speech.

LEAH

(while chewing)
Thanks.

SEBASTIAN

You should bring your daughter
around some time, I'd love to meet
her.

Leah downs the rest of her coffee.

LEAH

I can't really talk now, have to
get to my job at the diner.

SEBASTIAN

Oh - right, OK.

LEAH

I'll see you tomorrow.

SEBASTIAN

Yep.

As Leah exits, Sebastian notices Zmei talking to James,
something about his energy makes Sebastian feel apprehensive.

INT. STEVENS' HOUSE - SEBASTIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sebastian walks into his room and picks up the card with the
architectural firm's information on it.

He hesitates.

EXT. STEVENS' HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT (LATER)

Sebastian is pacing excitedly up and down and talking on his
cell phone.

SEBASTIAN

...yes, this Friday is doable, I
will confirm tomorrow by e-mail. OK
- great. Me too, really look
forward to it - oh, I will send you
the designs in a few minutes. Thank
you.

INT. STEVENS' HOUSE - SEBASTIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT (SOON LATER)

Sebastian is going through his desk drawers and his files
looking for his old design drawings. He finds some and opens
them up, looking at them fondly.

INT. CHAPEL - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Sebastian has finished laying out the food on the table as Jacob welcomes the attendees to the meeting.

The next person though to enter the basement startles Sebastian - for it is none other than Daphne, and although she looks much older than Sebastian remembered, he recognizes her immediately.

Sebastian looks on as Jacob tries to ease the doubts of a ghostly-looking and agitated Daphne.

Sebastian starts walking towards them.

JACOB

I won't put you on the spot, I promise.

DAPHNE

You did last time.

JACOB

I ask everyone if-

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)

Daphne?

Sebastian walks up to them but Daphne doesn't seem to recognise him.

JACOB

You two know each other?

Suddenly, enlightenment comes to her and she lets out a soft GASP.

Sebastian turns to Jacob.

SEBASTIAN

Jacob, can you please give us a second?

JACOB

Of course.

Jacob walks toward some of the other people gathered around, one of whom includes Zmei.

Sebastian and Daphne stare at each other.

DAPHNE

Why are you here?

SEBASTIAN
I - want to help.

Daphne, visibly shocked, turns and starts to hurriedly walk away.

Sebastian goes after her.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
I saw her.

Daphne, slightly ahead of him, stops.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
I saw Dorothy.

She turns to him in shock.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
She came to me in my darkest times,
she helped me out.

Daphne tries to contain her emotions.

Then:

DAPHNE
Why don't I ever see her?

SEBASTIAN
Don't know. Don't know how these
things work. Maybe it'll be too
much for you. Or...

DAPHNE
What?

SEBASTIAN
Too much for her - to see you like
this.

Daphne seems to contemplate his words.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Please, stay.

DAPHNE
Fine, whatever.

INT. CHAPEL - BASEMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Everyone, including Daphne, Sebastian, and Jacob, are sitting in a circle as the meeting is now underway.

There is a speaker who's saying a few words, it is Zmei. People seem to be captivated and LAUGHING away at the story he's recounting.

ZMEI

...swear to God, I was in a living room I'd never seen before, in my wet boxer shorts staring at a bewildered stranger and all I could think of saying was: Hey, how's it going?

People LAUGH even more, all apart from Sebastian, he looks at everyone's reaction with slight apprehension.

INT. CHAPEL - BASEMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

The meeting has come to an end and everyone is around the coffee and snacks table, eating, drinking, and socializing.

Sebastian looks on with clear uneasiness as Daphne is conversing with Zmei and seems quite taken by him.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Sebastian and Susie are having a meal together.

SUSIE

Heard you had an interview.

Sebastian looks at her surprised.

SEBASTIAN

Yeah, yesterday.

SUSIE

My friend Michael who works at the firm, he told me. Said you did really well.

SEBASTIAN

Oh, really? I thought I blew it.

SUSIE

No, not at all. They have a few more interviews to do before making a final selection but I really think it looks promising.

SEBASTIAN

Won't hold my breath.

SUSIE

No, come on. I want you hopeful and optimistic, none of this feeling sorry for myself crap.

He's taken back by her but in her excitement, she reaches forward grabbing his hand.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

I really believe they will say yes. There's true power to that. Don't you feel it? And imagine, how cool would that be? We'll be in the same city again both of us pursuing our dream careers.

Her enthusiasm seems to rub off on him.

SEBASTIAN

It would be great.

SUSIE

It would and it will. I know it'll work out for you. It'll be your second chance.

Susie squeezes his hand tenderly.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

Our second chance.

SEBASTIAN

What?

SUSIE

When I saw you again the other day - I realized what I was suppressing all this time. I never got over you, Sebastian. God, knows I tried. I tried for a clean break, no looking back but it didn't work. I want us to be together again, we're great together. Let's give it another shot. what'd you say?

Sebastian doesn't seem to know what to say.

EXT. DENVER HOUSE - NIGHT

Zmei, holding a paper bag full of different spirits, KNOCKS on the front door.

Soon, Daphne opens the door and she lets him inside.

EXT. CHAPEL/PICK UP TRUCK - DAY

Leah is standing next to a small truck and looking agitated. The back of the truck is full of blankets, water bottles, and food supplies.

She takes out a cigarette, lights up and inhales.

She checks the time on her phone.

Sebastian rushes up to her.

SEBASTIAN

Hey.

She takes another big drag from the cig.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Didn't know you smoked.

LEAH

Why would you?

He's taken aback by her hostility.

LEAH (CONT'D)

You're late.

SEBASTIAN

Sorry, had a bad night. I did message you.

LEAH

You think that makes it OK?

She throws the smoke down, steps on it, and gets into the truck, in the driver's seat.

INT. TRUCK - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

(NOT MOVING)

A visibly upset Sebastian gets into the passenger seat and slams the door.

SEBASTIAN

What's your problem with me?

LEAH

I know your type, that's all.

SEBASTIAN

Oh yeah, what type is that?

LEAH
You really want to know?

SEBASTIAN
Yeah.

LEAH
The one that sticks around long enough to feel so good about their selfless, holiest than holy act, only for then to just piss off to something "better", just to tell everyone they meet how great they were.

SEBASTIAN
You think I'm that fickle?

Leah is about to reply but hesitates. Something about the look in Sebastian's eyes makes her regret her words.

LEAH
Don't know -- maybe.

Sebastian sighs.

SEBASTIAN
Look, if my attitude and energy have contributed to you feeling this way, I'm sorry, I'm just here to do my best. I don't want any friction between us, I just-

LEAH
OK, fine, just forget it already. We'll be late.

She starts the engine and takes off.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

EXT. LARGE SIDEWALK - DAY

Sebastian and Leah take blankets from the back of the truck and start distributing them to various HOMELESS PEOPLE that are situated in that area and sleeping in tents and various handmade covers.

Sebastian and Leah give out bottles of water and sandwiches.

Leah is having a cigarette and watches on as Sebastian engages in a game of soccer with a group of people.

His attitude is really cheerful and energetic and he is liked by everyone. She can't help but smile.

Leah is coerced in joining into with the soccer game.

Sebastian has the ball and she goes to take it from him but they tangle up together and fall. Sebastian falls first and Leah lands on top of him. For a moment, they stare intensely into each other's eyes.

MAN (O.S.)

You OK?

The spell breaks and they get off each other, and Leah helps Sebastian to his feet.

INT. TRUCK - AFTERNOON

(NOT MOVING)

Sebastian and Leah, both sweaty, are taking a breather and downing some bottled water.

Leah wipes her chin with the back of her hand.

LEAH

You know, you're really good with people, a natural.

SEBASTIAN

Yeah?

LEAH

Yeah.

SEBASTIAN

Thanks.

Their eyes lock together again and they both become aware of a certain attraction. Awkward silence fills the air and they proceed to sip their water in silence.

Then:

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Don't hate me for saying this but you really should stop smoking.

LEAH

One addiction at a time, Sebastian, one at a time.

They both SMIRK at each other.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Look, sorry about this morning, I shouldn't have lashed out to you like that.

SEBASTIAN

No, look, I understand, I should have caught the bus earlier. There was an incident on the way and it had to re-route, so I was late coming in.

LEAH

You don't have wheels?

SEBASTIAN

I - I don't drive these days, haven't since - the accident.

LEAH

Sorry, I didn't mean to pry.

SEBASTIAN

It's OK.

They fall silent again.

LEAH

What about a scooter?

SEBASTIAN

What about it?

LEAH

Would you drive that, do you think?

SEBASTIAN

I guess. Maybe. Last time I drove one was during summertime when I was 17 and was delivering food.

LEAH

Yeah, I've done that.

SEBASTIAN

Hated it.

LEAH

Me too.

They burst out in short LAUGHTER, then lock eyes once again.

Leah manages to break away and look at the time on her phone.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Have to go, have to pick up Lydia.

SEBASTIAN
Oh sure.

LEAH
I'll drop you off.

SEBASTIAN
It's not inconvenient?

LEAH
No, not at all.

She starts the engine.

SEBASTIAN
So, no father in the picture.

Leah hesitates.

LEAH
Nope. Took off soon as.
Disappearing act.

SEBASTIAN
Sorry, I'm prying now, aren't I?

LEAH
No, it's OK.

She takes off.

EXT. STEVENS' HOUSE/INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Leah parks the truck on the curve outside the Stevens' residence.

SEBASTIAN
Thanks.

LEAH
My pleasure.

They can't help but look into each other's eyes once more.

SEBASTIAN
Tomorrow?

Leah nods Yes.

Sebastian turns and opens his door but Leah leans to him and puts her hand on his shoulder, turning him around.

They come face to face and -- they kiss.

As the kiss ends, Leah caresses Sebastian's face tenderly, smiles, and starts the engine.

Sebastian exits the truck and watches her leave, his expression has the uniqueness of displaying equal part elation and befuddlement.

INT. STEVENS' HOUSE - SEBASTIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sebastian is in bed and he is drawing and working on a building design.

There is a KNOCK on the door.

SEBASTIAN

Enter.

Both his parents walk into the room, both evidently pleased to see him working on a design.

JEFFREY

Hey, sport.

NATALIA

Sorry to interrupt you.

SEBASTIAN

It's fine. What up?

JEFFREY

We just wanted to let you know that, you know, although we absolutely love having you here-

NATALIA

Tremendously so.

JEFFREY

Yes. But if you happen to decide to go to the Netherlands, that we would absolutely support that decision and, although we'd miss you, we would be happy and proud of you.

SEBASTIAN

Aren't you proud and happy for me now?

NATALIA
Of course, we are.

JEFFREY
That's not what we meant. We just -
we feel that -- you know, this
Bible stuff is a phase you're going
through and that you might miss a
great opportunity and forever
regret it afterward.

Sebastian gets up from the bed and grabs a jacket.

SEBASTIAN
You don't have to worry, I'm all
full up on the regret part.

He walks to the exit.

JEFFREY	NATALIA
Where are you going?	Don't leave.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Just need some air.

NATALIA
Let's talk about this.

Sebastian hesitates at the opened door. He turns to them.

SEBASTIAN
It's not a phase.

He exits.

INT. CHAPEL BASEMENT - NIGHT

Sebastian - a look of slight concern on his face - watches on
as the AA meeting is coming to an end, with Ben officiating
it. Leah and Zmei are present but Daphne is a no-show.

Sebastian suddenly notices that Zmei has a somewhat off-
putting smile on his lips and his uneasiness deepens.

BEN
God, grant me the serenity to
accept the things I cannot change.
The courage to change the things I
can, and the wisdom to know the
difference. Amen.

EVERYONE present repeats: AMEN.

INT. CHAPEL - BASEMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Everyone is having a hot beverage as well as food and they are socializing.

A concerned Sebastian walks up to Ben who has just finished conversing with James.

SEBASTIAN
Sorry, Ben, have you heard from Daphne?

BEN
No, I haven't. Do you think we should give her a call?

SEBASTIAN
I'm worried about her, yes. I don't know, just got a feeling.

BEN
OK, I will give her a call from the office.

SEBASTIAN
Thanks.

As Ben heads to the office, Sebastian notices Leah stuffing herself with food. She notices him and smiles with slight embarrassment.

Sebastian walks to her.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Hey.

LEAH
Hey, sorry, have to start work soon and I need all the strength I can get.

SEBASTIAN
No need to apologize.

He picks up a sandwich and takes a big bite.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Hmm, they're surprisingly good.

LEAH
I know, right?

Sebastian finishes chewing his bite.

SEBASTIAN

So, um - about - you know.

LEAH

Yeah, yeah, I had some thoughts on that.

SEBASTIAN

Oh OK. What did you - surmise?

LEAH

I mean we work together, right?

SEBASTIAN

Yes, true, true.

LEAH

So, like, it was just that one time, it doesn't mean anything, right?

SEBASTIAN

Yep, yep, right.

LEAH

No need for any complications.

SEBASTIAN

No, not at all.

Leah notices that Sebastian has some sauce on his lip.

LEAH

Oh, stand still.

She wipes it away with her finger but her hand remains on his face. They are staring into each other's eyes once more.

Movement nearby makes them disengage and act as if nothing was happening. It is Ben, he comes up to them.

BEN

Nobody picked up. Do you want to pay her a visit?

SEBASTIAN

I think so, yes.

BEN

OK, I'll drive us there.

LEAH

What's going on?

SEBASTIAN
Just need to check up on someone.
I'll see you later.

EXT. DENVER RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Sebastian and Ben walk anxiously to the front door and KNOCK.
No one answers.

BEN
Maybe she left town or something.

SEBASTIAN
No, she's in there.

Sebastian tries the door and finds it open. He turns and looks at Ben for advice.

BEN
I guess we should go in.

INT. DENVER RESIDENCE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

They walk into a dark house and Sebastian finds a switch and illuminates a hallway.

SEBASTIAN
Mrs. Denver, hello.

They look around and in various messy rooms for her.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Hello, anyone home?

They finally walk into the BEDROOM...

And find her on the floor, unconscious, an empty bottle next to her.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Oh no.

They go to her and she comes to with a startle.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
It's me, Sebastian and Ben.

DAPHNE
What's - happening?

BEN

I think we need to get you to the hospital.

DAPHNE

No! No, hospitals, not again.

SEBASTIAN

I think we should.

DAPHNE

No!

She starts to fight them off.

SEBASTIAN

OK, OK, no hospital, but let us help you here and now.

She stops struggling.

BEN

Let's get her to the bed.

They lift her and place her on the mattress.

BEN (CONT'D)

I'll bring some water and put some coffee on.

Ben heads to the kitchen.

Daphne looks at Sebastian.

DAPHNE

It - it wasn't your fault. You weren't responsible - I killed her.

Sebastian is taken aback. Daphne starts to cry.

SEBASTIAN

No, no, you shouldn't blame yourself for that.

DAPHNE

It's true.

Ben comes in with a glass of water.

Sebastian helps her sit up and she starts to drink.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

Ben pours hot coffee into a cup.

Sebastian is throwing empty bottles into a bin.

Sebastian starts to fill up the bathtub with hot water.

Ben helps Daphne sip some coffee.

Sebastian lays some clean clothes on a chair in the bathroom.

Daphne soaks in the bathtub.

Sebastian mops the living room floor.

Ben comes back into the house holding a bag of groceries.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE ENDS

INT. DENVER RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Daphne is back on the bed with a fresh set of clothes on. Sebastian is feeding her some soup. Ben is tidying up the room. He picks up a thick-skinned, glossy-covered notebook from the floor that is in bad shape due to having been dozed and covered in alcohol.

DAPHNE

Ah - just throw that thing away.

Ben flicks through the pages, there's some writing inside but it's been badly damaged and is unreadable.

SEBASTIAN

You write?

DAPHNE

Tried to, never got anywhere.

SEBASTIAN

Perhaps it's something-

The lights go out leaving them in darkness.

DAPHNE

Sorry, they warned me that would happen.

Ben takes out his smartphone and presses the flashlight, providing a bit of illumination to the room.

BEN

What now?

INT. STEVENS' HOUSE - BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Daphne is sitting on a single bed in a small room full of exercise equipment and storage boxes. Sebastian places her suitcase by her bed.

Jeffrey and Natalia - both in robes - are at the entrance looking slightly confounded.

NATALIA

Oh, there's some leftover lasagna in the fridge, if she's hungry.

SEBASTIAN

No, that's fine, mom. You guys go back to sleep.

DAPHNE

Sorry for being such an inconvenience.

NATALIA

Not at all.

JEFFREY

No, it's absolutely fine.

JEFFREY

Anything you might need, just let us know.

DAPHNE

Thank you.

JEFFREY

Well, good night.

NATALIA

'Night.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

Good night.

Sebastian waves at them.

The parents leave.

SEBASTIAN

I hope this will be comfortable for you for the time being.

DAPHNE

Why are you helping me?

Sebastian takes a moment to think about this.

He looks back at Daphne.

SEBASTIAN

Because I want to.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - MAIN ROOM - DAY

SUNEIL, MAI LING, and Sebastian are serving food to various HOMELESS PEOPLE.

David, Daphne's brother enters the building and approaches the food tables.

DAVID
I'm looking for Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN
That's me.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - DAY (SOON LATER)

Sebastian and David are standing outside the building.

DAVID
I just wanted to thank you for helping my sister out.

SEBASTIAN
It's fine.

DAVID
I'm going to take care of the house bills as soon as possible.

Sebastian nods.

David sighs.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I wish I didn't live so far away. I feel hopeless sometimes.

SEBASTIAN
No, she's told me what a big help you've been.

DAVID
She has?

SEBASTIAN
Yeah. You've saved her life, probably more than once.

DAVID
I'm so worried about her. She's been to the emergency room twice in the past six months.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
I don't think she will survive
another big relapse.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Sebastian is walking along with Susie on the sidewalk.

SEBASTIAN
Walking was a good idea, I'm
stuffed.

SUSIE
Oh, I'm all for walking. I walk all
the time in Rotterdam, cycle a lot
too.

SEBASTIAN
You really love it there, don't
you?

SUSIE
Yes, and I know that you will love
it too. Just give it a chance,
you'll see.

Sebastian sighs.

SEBASTIAN
I - I don't know, Susie. I - I just
don't know.

SUSIE
I know change can be scary but
sometimes it can lead to something
worthwhile. And you won't be alone.

She stops walking beside the entrance to a hotel.

SUSIE (CONT'D)
This is me.

SEBASTIAN
Oh, OK.

SUSIE
Thanks for walking me.

SEBASTIAN
My pleasure.

Susie leans in and starts kissing him, taking him by
surprise. He gives in and kisses her back.

SUSIE
Would you like to come up?

SEBASTIAN
Yes - but...

SUSIE
What?

Well, thing is, I really need to
check up on Daphne. Make sure she's
OK.

SUSIE
That's very noble of you,
Sebastian. Rain cheque then?

SEBASTIAN
Yeah, for sure.

He kisses her quickly on the cheek.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Night.

He quickly turns away from her. A slightly apprehensive Susie
watches him walk away.

INT. STEVENS' HOUSE - BASEMENT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Sebastian KNOCKS on the door leading to the basement.

There is no answer.

INT. STEVENS' HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

He opens it and starts walking down the steps, careful not to
make much noise.

SEBASTIAN
(Little more than a
whisper)
Mrs. Denver?

No answer.

He reaches the ground level and notices Daphne lying on the
bed. He proceeds apprehensively.

The room is shadowy, the only light present coming from the
open door above.

Sebastian stands on top of Daphne, trying to focus his eyes on her.

And that is when she opens her eyes and SCREAMS.

Sebastian SCREAMS as well.

 DAPHNE
What're you doing?

 SEBASTIAN
Sorry, was just checking up on you.

 DAPHNE
That was so scary, don't do that.

Sebastian starts to backpaddle.

 SEBASTIAN
Really sorry.

 DAPHNE
OK.

He reaches the staircase.

 SEBASTIAN
Will you be at the meeting today?

 DAPHNE
I might if you don't scare me to death until then.

 SEBASTIAN
Right. Bye.

He rushes up the staircase.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Sebastian is sweeping the floor.

Leah enters the chapel excitedly.

Sebastian sees her come up to him and puts the broom aside.

 SEBASTIAN
Hey, what's up?

 LEAH
Have a second?

SEBASTIAN

Sure.

She grabs him by the hand.

LEAH

Come with me.

She guides him to the exit.

EXT. CHAPEL - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Leah guides Sebastian along the sidewalk to the curb where a scooter awaits.

SEBASTIAN

What's this?

LEAH

Your new wheels. Well, not new exactly, they're very used but still in decent condition.

Sebastian's really taken back.

SEBASTIAN

I can't accept this.

LEAH

You better.

SEBASTIAN

No, it's too much.

LEAH

No, it's fine, I got it next to nothing from this cousin of mine. He owed me a favor.

She hands him the keys.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Here, try it out.

Sebastian doesn't move.

LEAH (CONT'D)

You don't like it?

SEBASTIAN

I - love it.

He looks into her eyes and she looks back.

LEAH
Take the keys, then.

Sebastian takes the keys, then he grabs her, and brings her to him.

SEBASTIAN
Complications be damned.

They kiss passionately.

INT. CHAPEL BASEMENT - NIGHT

Another meeting has ended and everyone is gathered together by the table for some refreshments and to socialize. Ben and Jacob are both there and talking to people, Leah is stuffing herself with food as always and Sebastian is looking on in apprehension as Daphne is talking away with Zmei.

Sebastian stares on, almost in a trance and does not notice that someone has entered into the room. He instead focuses on how animated Zmei manages to get, it's as if he is putting on some type of performance for Daphne. Suddenly though, Zmei looks Sebastian's way, catching him off guard and Sebastian looks quickly away.

And that is when Sebastian sees something even more disturbing: Susie is there in the room and she is chatting away to a clearly disconcerted Leah.

Sebastian rushes towards them.

SUSIE
I think Rotterdam will be a breath
of fresh air for him to be honest.

SEBASTIAN
(to Susie)
What're you doing here?

Leah is standing there agitated and biting on her nail.

SUSIE
Wanted to surprise you.

LEAH
You've planned to go away?

SEBASTIAN
I don't -

Susie grabs his hand and leans in for a kiss. That's too much for Leah and she darts away in pain and anger.

Sebastian pulls away from the kiss and notices that Leah is exiting the room.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Leah?

Susie pulls him to her.

SUSIE

Is there something you're not telling me, Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN

You shouldn't have come here.

SUSIE

That's not a nice thing to say to me.

Sebastian sighs.

SEBASTIAN

We'll talk about it later.

He pulls away from her and rushes after Leah.

EXT. CHAPEL - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Sebastian gets outside but Leah is nowhere to be seen.

INT. STATIONERY SHOP - DAY

Sebastian and Toby are browsing through a shelf full of different colored notebooks.

Sebastian picks up a purple-covered one.

SEBASTIAN

How about this one?

TOBY

Yeah, it's nice.

Toby picks up a gold-colored one.

TOBY (CONT'D)

I like this one best.

SEBASTIAN

Cool, let's get both.

INT. STATIONERY SHOP - PEN SECTION - DAY (SOON LATER)

Sebastian and Toby are choosing some pens.

INT. STATIONERY SHOP - CASH REGISTER - DAY (SOON LATER)

Sebastian and Toby are purchasing the items they have chosen. A CASHIER hands Sebastian the receipt and some change.

CASHIER
Thank you so much.

SEBASTIAN
Thanks.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Sebastian and Toby are sitting down and having a cup of a hot drink each and some muffins too.

TOBY
Did you talk to Leah, then?

SEBASTIAN
She's not returning my calls or answering any of my messages.

TOBY
I'm sure she just needs some time to cool off.

SEBASTIAN
But it's infuriating. I didn't do anything wrong.

Toby bites into a muffin.

TOBY
(with a full mouth)
Can I be honest?

SEBASTIAN
Of course.

Toby wipes his mouth.

TOBY
I think you're at an impasse of sorts, unsure about who you're meant to be and what you're meant to be doing and that's now causing you blockage and friction.
(MORE)

TOBY (CONT'D)

I think you're going to have to make a choice soon.

Sebastian's taken aback by Toby's words.

He sighs.

SEBASTIAN

I think you might be right.

Toby takes another bite from the muffin. Sebastian smiles.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

When did you become such a Yoda?

Toby shrugs his shoulders.

TOBY

(full mouth once more)

Nah, thing is, just read a lot of books, and sometimes something sticks, I guess.

SEBASTIAN

Well, you got some muffin sticking to your chin now.

Toby grabs for some tissue and they both start to LAUGH.

INT. STEVENS' HOUSE - FRONT OF BASEMENT - NIGHT

Sebastian is in front of the door leading to the basement. He is holding onto a bag with goods from the stationary shop. He KNOCKS on the door but there is no answer.

NATALIA (O.S.)

She's gone now.

Sebastian turns to his mother.

SEBASTIAN

What'd you mean?

NATALIA

She said the electricity's restored and that she had to go back there and meet someone.

SEBASTIAN

Really? Did she mention who?

NATALIA

No. Oh, but Susie's here to see you. I think she has exciting news.

INT. STEVENS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Sebastian, still holding the bag from the stationary shop, enters the living room and finds Susie waiting there. She is beaming with excitement and holding onto a bottle of champagne.

SEBASTIAN

Susie, what's going on?

She rushes over to him.

SUSIE

You're in. They choose you. They're going to make you an offer. My friend told me. You'll be an architect's assistant with a good starting salary and all the perks and benefits.

SEBASTIAN

What? No.

SUSIE

It's true.

SEBASTIAN

Oh wow.

They hug each other.

SUSIE

Look out for the call tonight.

Susie lifts the bottle.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

We should celebrate.

SEBASTIAN

But - I don't drink.

SUSIE

Oh, right. That's OK, let's just open it, I'll take a sip, you don't have to have any.

Susie opens the bottle and takes a swig from it. She places the bottle down, takes the stationary shop bag from Sebastian, and places it down as well. She then takes Sebastian's hands in hers.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

I think we should move in together. Give it a proper go. This is what was always meant to be. That opportunity was taken from us, stolen, but we can have it back now.

Sebastian looks at their hands pressed together, then at the bottle, and finally at the bag that has inside it the items he got for Daphne.

A realization comes to him and he moves away from Susie.

SEBASTIAN

I need to go.

SUSIE

Now, why?

SEBASTIAN

I think someone's in trouble.

SUSIE

What're you talking about?

Sebastian takes her hands in his and faces her.

SEBASTIAN

I'm so sorry, Susie, I cannot come with you. I wish I had realized this earlier but I'm not who I once was, my life's different now. But I promise you that I'll always be your friend and I'll always be here if you need me.

He kisses her on the side of the face, picks up the bag, and rushes out of the house.

EXT. SCOOTER/STREET - NIGHT

(MOVING)

Sebastian is anxiously driving the scooter in the street.

EXT. SCOOTER/DENVER RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Sebastian parks the scooter and rushes to Daphne's house noticing that a light is on inside.

He KNOCKS on the door.

There is no answer.

He notices the curtain move on the side window and someone looking out.

SEBASTIAN

Hey, open up.

He tries the door but it's locked so he starts kicking it. On the fourth kick, he manages to break it and enter into the house.

INT. DENVER RESIDENCE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Sebastian enters into the living room which has loud MUSIC playing and finds Zmei standing there next to Daphne. There are loads of full bottles of hard spirits on the coffee table.

Sebastian switches off the music. Daphne, glass of hard spirits in her hand, looks up realizing that he is there.

DAPHNE

Sebastian?

He looks at Zmei.

SEBASTIAN

You need to leave now.

ZMEI

What do you care, she's a grown woman, she can do as she very well pleases.

SEBASTIAN

Get out. Take all that poison you brought here and get the hell out!

Zmei doesn't move, he just smiles in that off-putting way of his.

Sebastian rushes over to him, grabs a hold of him and they scuffle.

DAPHNE

Stop it!

Suddenly, a sound like a SWISH, is heard.

There is a knife in Zmei's right hand now and the snake tattoo seems to move. Zmei Proceeds to stab Sebastian in the gut with the knife.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

No!

Daphne rushes over to Sebastian who is now lying on the floor and bleeding in his midsection.

Zmei legs it out of there.

EXT. DAPHNE RESIDENCE - NIGHT (LATER)

An ambulance and a police car are parked at the front of the house.

INT. DAPHNE RESIDENCE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

PARAMEDICS place Sebastian's body on a gurney and take him out of the house.

A POLICE OFFICER is talking to Daphne.

INT. DAPHNE RESIDENCE - NIGHT (LATER)

Daphne is alone now in the living room.

She notices the bag that Sebastian had with him and goes to it. She picks it up and, in horror, sees blood on the outside of the bag, Sebastian's blood.

She opens the bag and finds the notebook and the pens and she breaks down in tears.

As the tears subside, she notices the bottles of alcohol. She picks them all up and heads to the KITCHEN...

There, she empties each bottle's contents down the sink.

She heads back to the LIVING ROOM...

And freezes in the spot as in front of her is Dorothy.

Mother and daughter embrace tightly.

DAPHNE

I'm sorry.

DOROTHY

Please don't blame yourself,
everything is as it should be.

Tears fill up Daphne's eyes.

DAPHNE

I miss you.

DOROTHY

I'm always with you. You need to
stay strong and have faith.

DAPHNE

I'll try.

DOROTHY

I have to leave now.

Dorothy wipes away her mother's tears.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

You should rejoice, I've witnessed
God's glory - it is breathtaking.

And with that, she is gone.

Daphne falls to her knees and takes in deep breaths, shaken
by the encounter.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Daphne arrives at the visitor's space in the hospital to find
Jeffrey, Natalia, Ben, Jacob, Toby, and Leah already there,
anxious and waiting for news.

DAPHNE

What have they said so far?

JEFFREY

They're optimistic, the bleeding
didn't seem severe and they are
just trying to determine that no
vital organs have been damaged.

The door opens and DOCTOR SYDNEY TAYLOR enters the room and
smiles, putting everyone instantly at ease.

DR. TAYLOR

It's OK, he's going to be fine.
There was no need for surgery and
sonography indicated no organ
ruptures. Furthermore, white blood
cell count and the liver function
test provided satisfactory results.
The patient is resting at this
moment, you'll be able to see him
in a few hours from now.

Everyone sighs in relief and gives their thanks to the doctor.

Doctor Taylor smiles and exits the room.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Daphne, determination evident on her face, is trying to choose the best pumpkin.

She picks up some self-rising flour as well.

INT. DENVER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY

Daphne is placing ingredients carefully on a tray - it looks like she is making a pie.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Sebastian is lying in bed while his parents, Jeffrey and Natalia, are talking to him.

NATALIA

... so we told them all that they
needed to go and get some rest,
they were here practically the
whole night. They can see you
today. By the way, the people you
work with seem very nice.

SEBASTIAN

Anyone else from work apart from
Ben and Jacob?

Natalia and Jeffrey look at each other and smile knowingly.

JEFFREY

Why yes, son, there was actually
someone else here. Sorry, totally
slipped my mind.

SEBASTIAN

Who?

NATALIA

A lovely girl by the name of Leah.

JEFFREY

How come you never told us about her?

NATALIA

She seemed very upset about what happened and very worried about you. But yes, you should have invited her over for dinner.

SEBASTIAN

But you didn't seem to have much interest in what I have been doing.

Jeffrey puts his hands on Natalia's shoulder and she places her hand on his.

NATALIA

You're right. We should have been more attentive and supportive of you.

JEFFREY

And we will be from now on, son, you'll see.

Sebastian smiles warmly at his parents.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

Sebastian is in bed recovering and reading the Bible when a NURSE knocks on the opened door, pops her head through, and with a smile says:

NURSE

You got another visitor.

Sebastian puts the book down as Daphne enters the room holding on to a plate with a pie on top.

SEBASTIAN

Oh, hey.

Daphne places the pie on the bedside table.

DAPHNE

Baked a pumping pie, know how bad
food can be in this place.

SEBASTIAN

Great, thank you.

Daphne reaches down and kisses him on the temple.

DAPHNE

No, it's me who has to thank you.

SEBASTIAN

No, it's OK, you-

DAPHNE

I saw her.

SEBASTIAN

You did?

Daphne sits down on a chair and sighs.

DAPHNE

She was so beautiful. Is beautiful.
I don't know if I would have ever
seen her again if you didn't come
into the house when you did. So
thank you.

Sebastian smiles.

SEBASTIAN

Glad it all worked out OK.

Daphne smiles too.

DAPHNE

There's still an uphill mountain to
climb, of course.

SEBASTIAN

Yeah.

DAPHNE

But what say you we do it together?

SEBASTIAN

I would like that a lot.

DAPHNE

But first, how bout some pie?

SEBASTIAN
Yes, please.

SUPER: A WEEK LATER

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Sebastian, wearing an apron, is behind tables and is serving soup to a lineup of HOMELESS PEOPLE.

Jacob comes over with a huge pot of hot soup and he places it on the table next to an almost empty pot.

SEBASTIAN
Jacob?

JACOB
Yeah?

SEBASTIAN
Is Leah coming in today, do you know?

JACOB
Don't think she is. Spoke to her yesterday. Said she needed some more time off.

SEBASTIAN
Oh, OK.

JACOB
Hang in there, buddy, she'll come around.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

INT. CAFE - DAY

Daphne is sitting at a table and drinking a coffee. She takes out of her bag one of the notebooks that Sebastian got for her and a pen and starts to write.

INT. LEAH'S PLACE - CHILD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Leah has finished reading her daughter, LYDIA, a bedtime story as she can see that she has fallen asleep.

She gets up, puts the book away, pulls the covers up to over her daughter's shoulders, and kisses her head.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Ben is sitting at a bench and is throwing some pieces of bread to the ground where pigeons have gathered.

EXT. HOUSE/BACK GARDEN - DAY

Jacob throws The Duke ball to his ten-year-old son, JACK, who catches it and then throws it back to his father.

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

Toby has built up a sweat as he runs on the treadmill.

INT. STEVENS' RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sebastian is at his desk and workstation and he is looking at various photos and designs of the community center and drawing various architectural ideas on a piece of paper.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE ENDS

INT. CHAPEL BASEMENT - NIGHT

An addiction meeting is taking place, one that Jacob is facilitating. Sebastian - melancholic looking - is present and so is Daphne who is currently speaking. Leah, though, is absent.

DAPHNE

...so I'm still writing, every single day. I guess it's a habit now but it's a lot cheaper than drinking.

Everyone present CHUCKLES.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

But it's a lifesaver, for when the bad thoughts come, and they do come, I make sure to write them down and in doing so, I exorcize them from my being.

INT. CHAPEL BASEMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

The meeting has come to an end and everyone is now socializing.

Sebastian is looking at the sandwiches with a sombre and wistful expression that does not go unnoticed by Daphne who walks up to him holding on to two cups of hot chocolate.

She offers one to him and he accepts.

SEBASTIAN

Thanks.

DAPHNE

Hate seeing you like this.

Sebastian sips his chocolate.

SEBASTIAN

I'll get over it.

DAPHNE

Yep.

SEBASTIAN

I just...

DAPHNE

What?

SEBASTIAN

I thought I would see her again and that we would talk about things. But she's kept away.

DAPHNE

Why don't you go to her?

Sebastian looks at her confounded.

SEBASTIAN

To her?

DAPHNE

Yes, you can do that, you know, silly boy. It's allowed.

SEBASTIAN

But - should I?

DAPHNE

Do you love her?

SEBASTIAN

Yes.

DAPHNE

Then go. Go right now. Go.

Sebastian gets excited.

SEBASTIAN
OK, OK. I'll go now.

DAPHNE
Yes.

SEBASTIAN
Thanks.

DAPHNE
Go already.

Sebastian bolts it out of there.

INT. LEAH'S PLACE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leah is on the couch holding on to her daughter Lydia and they are both watching cartoons on the television.

The doorbell RINGS.

LEAH
Be right back, honey.

Leah stands and heads to the door.

LYDIA
Don't be long, mommy.

INT. LEAH'S PLACE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Leah looks through the front door's peephole and is surprised to see Sebastian standing outside.

She quickly tries to fix her hair and tidy her clothes.

The bell RINGS again.

LEAH
Alright, alright already.

Leah opens the door.

LEAH (CONT'D)
What'd you want?

SEBASTIAN
To talk to you.

EXT. LEAH'S PLACE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Leah steps outside.

LEAH
Why?

SEBASTIAN
Because you're avoiding me.

LEAH
I'm not.

SEBASTIAN
Are too.

LEAH
I'm not!

Sebastian sighs.

SEBASTIAN
Can we at least talk inside?

LEAH
Fine. Five minutes, I'm spending
time with my daughter.

SEBASTIAN
Fine, five minutes.

INT. LEAH'S PLACE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Leah and Sebastian step into the living room where Lydia is watching television.

LEAH
Lydia, this is my work colleague,
Sebastian.

LYDIA
Hello.

SEBASTIAN
Hello, Lydia, how're you?

LYDIA
I'm good, thanks. Will you watch TV
with us?

SEBASTIAN
Oh, don't think so, just gonna talk
to your mother for five minutes.

LEAH
Won't be long, baby.

She takes Sebastian and leads him to the KITCHEN...

LEAH (CONT'D)
So talk.

Sebastian looks at her, suddenly tongue tied.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Well?

SEBASTIAN
Why are you staying away?

LEAH
I - I was confused, had things to think about. Look, I don't want things to be weird at work, if we're going to-

SEBASTIAN
I missed you.

Now it's Leah's turn to get tongue-tied.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
So much that it got difficult to breathe.

Leah remains silent, she's slightly shaking.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
I need you to know that I'm not going anywhere.

He walks closer to her.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Did you hear me? I'm not leaving, ever. I don't want to be anywhere that's away from you.

Leah snaps out of her initial daze and she moves to him so they are face to face.

LEAH
Well, good.

SEBASTIAN
OK, then.

LEAH
Great!

SEBASTIAN
Fine!

They kiss.

INT. LEAH'S PLACE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (SOON LATER)

Sebastian is sitting on the couch with Leah and Lydia and they are all watching cartoons on the television.

FADE OUT

THE END