

INT. NEW LEAF CHURCH- DAY

On a Sunday morning, New Leaf Church is up and lively. Located in a small city in Oregon. The Choir is hyped, singing praise songs that have everyone on their feet clapping and singing along. As the choir ends the song, everyone claps and cheers for them. The pastor of the church is Pastor Paul Floyd... a man in his early fifties. He gets ups and goes to the podium as the claps are winding down.

PAUL

I'd like to thank our lovely choir for a beautiful praising session. They're quite something, aren't they?

ATTENDEES

Yes!

(some claps)

PAUL

What a great day to be in the house of the Lord. This morning I'd like to tell you a quick story before I begin my sermon. A couple of days ago, someone came to me and asked me how they can be parents and friends to their children at the same time. Do you want to know what I told them?

ATTENDEES

Yes!

PAUL

Okay, I'll tell you. I've noticed that the problem in today's parenting is that it's become more of a popularity contest and looking cool in front of their kids. The word parenting has lost its meaning. Everybody wants to have it all, have their cake and eat it too. We have let our guard down. Today's world is filled with so much darkness and temptations that as parents; there is a need to be worried. See you can't afford to compromise your child's safety. We are not here to be yes men and women to our kids, we are here to guide them... to the Lord.

Some Amens and hallelujah are heard.

Do you think that if you allow them to do whatever they want.. they will like you more? They may... but for how long? There's always something...always. That's why I said to that person that they needed to choose either being a friend or a parent. You choose the role you want to play. So to each one of you parents here today. You will have to make that choice as well, are you willing to risk your kid ending up someplace they have no business being in just to get cool points? Think about that. By the way, for those wondering if this is a part of today's sermon, yes it is.

There are some nods in agreeance and others still taking in the story.

PAUL

Now let's move on to the sermon. I want to talk to you about compromises and what the bible says about them. We all make compromises, don't we? But are there some areas where we absolutely can't compromise? If you'd all turn to the book of Revelation, chapter three verse fifteen to sixteen. When you have it, please stand.

As everyone starts finding the verse in the bible, a teenage girl, around sixteen is watching in the back seat with a blank stare.

PAUL

It says.

"I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth."

You may be seated.

The congregation sits down.

PAUL

So let's talk about being a lukewarm

Christian...

INT. PAUL HOUSE/ KITCHEN- NIGHT

That Sunday evening, Paul is having dinner with his daughter, Allison... the young girl who was seated in the back earlier. No one is talking, they are quietly eating their meal. Paul keeps taking a glimpse at his daughter who is only staring at her plate.

PAUL

How come you sat in the back today?
You're the pastor's daughter. You need
to be in the front center every
Sunday. How do you think it makes me
look?

ALLISON

(shy quiet voice)
I wasn't feeling too well. I didn't
want to keep getting up to go to the
bathroom.

PAUL

This is not the first time you sat way
in the back, I've told you about this
already. Why do you try to hide from
people?

ALLISON

I wasn't hiding.

PAUL

Well, I'm gonna bring you out of your
shell, sooner than later. That's why
I'm gonna give you some
responsibilities in the church from
now on. I want you to be more active
in your father's church. Some people
don't even know you're my daughter.

ALLISON

I don't know.

PAUL

What's there to know? You're doing
it!! You have to be an example,
especially for the young girls like
you in the church. You're the pastor's
daughter... you have a duty to serve
in the Lord's house. Remember what I

said about being lukewarm. There's no compromise, if you have to rearrange your schedule to make it work, that's what you do. Understand?

Allison stays quiet.

PAUL

Are we clear on that?

ALLISON

Yes.

PAUL

Good.

ALLISON

A few of my friends wanted to go shopping this week, can I go?

PAUL

Do you think that's such a good idea? I haven't even met them yet, how can I know if they're a good influence on you or not? I keep telling you, be careful out there Allison... one little detour and your life goes down the hole. And where did you even meet these so-called friends?

ALLISON

They live in the neighborhood. We're only going shopping, at the mall. It will just be for a couple of hours.

PAUL

I said no.

ALLISON

Dad!

Paul slaps the table so hard, it shakes.

PAUL

Have you lost your mind? Who are you raising your voice to? IF I SAY NO, IT MEANS NO! Understand? Now be quiet and finish your meal.

Allison grabs her fork and continues eating without making any eye contact with her father.

INT. OFFICE/ WORKING AREA - DAY

Allison is studying in a small room where she is being tutored by Mrs. Landry, a member of her father's church and a family friend. Allison is working on an assignment while Mrs. Landry reads a book. She hands her the paper once she's done.

MRS LANDRY

Alright, Missy.. let's see how you did.

ALLISON

Not so good, I didn't study that well last night. I suck at History

MRS LANDRY

What... Come on Ally, you had a whole week.

ALLISON

I wasn't feeling good.

MRS LANDRY

Oooh... why didn't you tell me? I wouldn't have given you homework.

ALLISON

It's okay.

Mrs Landry continues to grade her work. Allison looks pensive.

ALLISON

Can I ask you a question?

MRS LANDRY

Sure, what is it?

ALLISON

Do you agree with what my father said on Sunday's sermon? About compromising and taking control of your kids' lives?

MRS LANDRY

Umm... to some degree I agree. As a parent, you have to put your kids' safety and well being as a top priority no matter what, but then again I don't think being too controlling will help in the long run.

ALLISON
So you don't agree?

MRS LANDRY
Every parent has their own parenting style, it's not a matter of right or wrong in my opinion. We all do what's best for our children.

They both laugh.

ALLISON
I feel like he protects me from everything, even the good. I can't even enjoy my own life.

MRS LANDRY
Your father is just trying to protect you, honey. Now you kids may not like it but you will thank us in the long run. When you have kids, it will all make sense.

ALLISON
I'll give my kids the freedom to make their own decisions.

MRS LANDRY
Really? Oh, we'll see about that. Now let's get back to why we're here, I don't think Paul would appreciate paying me to question his parental skills.

ALLISON
Okay. Thank you, Mrs. Landry, for always being there for me and being a great friend.

MRS LANDRY
Awww... it's my pleasure sweetheart. So.... last week we were on the topic of World War I. Let's continue with the textbook and read a few chapters.

INT. NEW LEAF PASTOR OFFICE -DAY

Paul is doing some work in his office at the church. He is going over some documents and typing things on his laptop. Someone knocks on the door.

PAUL
Come in..

MAN
Do you have a minute Pastor Floyd?

PAUL
David? Come on in!

He enters and sits down.

PAUL
How can I help you, my friend?

DAVID
Last week after the sermon, I was
talking to a few members and...

PAUL
And what?

DAVID
Some did not really agree or enjoy the
sermon.

PAUL
Why's that? I thought my sermon was
direct and right on point. There's no
beating around the bush, everyone
knows that.

DAVID
I understand. They just felt it was a
bit much.

PAUL
Well, I don't understand what that
means. Everything I taught, was
straight from the Lord's book. Maybe
they don't want to hear the hard
truth.

DAVID
It's not that, a few of them told me
that the way in which you were
preaching was quite different this
time. Your tone was a bit excessive.
And some felt judged. Maybe you can
tone it down a little

PAUL

Sometimes the word of God can be a hard pill to swallow for some, it can hit you like a ton of bricks. but I'll keep that in mind.

DAVID

Thank you, oh and another thing.

PAUL

There's another thing?

DAVID

I know it's not my business at all to bring this up but...Have you considered getting married again? It would help for the church image. It wouldn't be too bad for you either.

PAUL

That topic David... I will not get into it. I'm not ready for that yet, maybe ever.

DAVID

Paul, it's not good for you to stay alone forever. Everyone wants you to be happy and with someone. This church needs a first lady... again.

PAUL

Look, I'm doing fine alright? My main focus right now is to make sure my daughter's`l on the right path and growing up to be a God-fearing young lady. That's all I need in my life right now.

DAVID

Okay... just know we want to see you happy. And we miss her... we all do. It would be good for you to have some company... other than your daughter. That's all we're saying.

Paul looks at a photograph of his late wife on his desk, he grabs it and stares at it.

INT. ALLISON ROOM - NIGHT

Allison is listening to Christian music while reading a book.

She gets a phone call. She picks up.

ALLISON

Hello!

PHONE (VO)

Ally! I've been trying to reach you all day!

ALLISON

Hey Steph, sorry I've been busy today. I had a lot of homework to do.

PHONE (VO)

You still get homework even when you're homeschooled?

ALLISON

Yeah! It's jus the same as going to school.

PHONE (VO)

No, it's not. Do you get to hang out with your friends during lunch? Do you go to the homecoming dance? I don't think so. Anyways, did you forget about the sleepover? You were supposed to be here an hour ago.

ALLISON

I don't think he will let me come.

PHONE (VO)

Did you even ask him?

ALLISON

I know my dad Steph, he won't agree.

PHONE (VO)

Look, it won't hurt to ask okay? Plus, I need to let my mom know before she goes to work.

ALLISON

Alright.

She hangs up the phone. Allison goes to her father's bedroom. She knocks on his door.

PAUL

Come in.

Allison enters.

ALLISON

Hey dad!

PAUL

Hey, what's up?

ALLISON

Yeah... I wanted to ask you if I could go to Stephanie's. She's having a sleepover and I was invited.

PAUL

Who's Stephanie?

ALLISON

She's a friend of mine, she lives a few blocks from here. Can I go?

PAUL

Absolutely not. I never met her, I don't know what she's like... if she goes to church. That's a no.

ALLISON

Dad!

PAUL

Didn't I just say no? And why do you insist on hanging out with people I never met before? Didn't we just have this same conversation last night?

ALLISON

It's just a sleepover! Dad, I really want to go.

PAUL

For the last time Allison, NO! Walk away before you piss me off even more. I don't want to deal with this today.

She walks away.

ALLISON

(whispers under her breath)
If Mom was here she...

PAUL

What was that? Come back here, young

lady! What were you saying?

Allison is terrified to answer.

Paul slaps her across the face before she could finish her sentence.

PAUL

Don't you ever bring your mother into?
How dare you disrespect her. Now go to
your room!

Paul walks out of the room, leaving Allison still standing in the same spot.

EXT. NEW LEAF CHURCH -DAY

On Sunday morning, the church is in full swing. Allison is outside standing in a corner having an emotional breakdown. Mrs. Landry comes out trying to find her. She hears some sniffing. She finds her crying.

MRS LANDRY

Ally? Are you okay? What's wrong
sweetheart?

ALLISON

I'm okay, it's nothing.

MRS LANDRY

No, it's not, look at you! Now what's
wrong?

ALLISON

I just really miss my mom. It's not
the same without her! I hate my life!

MRS LANDRY

Oh, honey! Come here.

Mrs. Landry pulls her close and hugs her tightly.

MRS LANDRY

I know how hard this must be for you
honey, I'm so sorry you're going
through this, but I want you to know
something. Your mother is looking down
on you and even when you don't see
her, I can assure you that she is with
you all the time. Okay?

ALLISON

It's just so unfair. How can God take her like that when I needed her the most?

MRS LANDRY

I know sweetie, I know. We all miss her. Do you know what I do when I miss my husband? I talk to him. I just sit down and talk to him like we used to talk. I tell him whatever is on my mind and it makes me feel closer to him. I think you should try it, Ally, it would really help. And I'm here for you whenever you feel like talking or anything else, alright?

ALLISON

Thank you.

MRS LANDRY

No problem sweetheart, now are you okay to come in, or do you need a few more minutes.

ALLISON

I'll be there soon.

MRS LANDRY

Okay, take your time.

ALLISON

Alright.

Mrs. Landry rubs her shoulder as a sign of support and comfort and heads back inside.

INT. PAUL AND ALLISON LIVING ROOM - DAY

Allison is watching a movie in the afternoon, the house is quiet. She looks like she is not invested in what she is watching. She hears steps coming from the stairs, it's her father coming to join her in the living room. He sits on the couch next to her and turns off the TV. He faces her.

PAUL

Ally, look... I'm sorry about the other night. I shouldn't have put my hands on you. I should have kept my composure. That doesn't mean I agree with you going out with friends I

don't know though. I want to make sure they are good friends and won't put you in situations you have no business being in.

Allison is just quiet, not even looking at him. She is staring at the turned-off TV.

PAUL

Can you at least look at me when I'm talking to you?

Allison turns her face to him with fear in her eyes.

PAUL

Look, I'm doing all of this to protect you. It's a scary world out there, you have no idea. I have to do everything I can to shield you from it. Sometimes that means I have to take drastic measures because you're the most important person to me... okay?

ALLISON

I'm not a kid anymore dad, I'm growing up. You can't keep me from everything. How am I going to make mistakes and learn from them if you ban me from living my own life?

PAUL

My point is that I have a job to do and that is to protect you, you may not like how I do it but that's not changing anything. It only takes one small mistake and your life goes down the drain, you understand me? I have seen what having too much freedom can do to you. My parents let my older brother do whatever he wanted, he started drinking and using drugs. His friends turned him to a life of crime and he's now locked up forever. All because my parents didn't want to seem strict and trusted the world. I'm not going down that route. I promised myself I would do better than my parents. You might call me controlling but all I'm doing is for your own good. Trust me... you'll thank me later.

He gets up and walks to the kitchen.

INT. DAVID HOUSE/ DINING ROOM - DAY

Paul and Allison were invited to David's house for Sunday dinner. Mrs. Landry is present and a few other church members. Allison is sitting by Mrs. Landry while her father is on the other end of the table.

DAVID

What did you guys think of the Easter program those kids put on? How beautiful was that?

MRS LANDRY

Right! I was in a little corner trying to hide my tears, my little munchkins were so amazing!

PAUL

You did great Rebecca, that was the highlight of today's service.

MRS LANDRY

Oh thank you! I couldn't have done it without Ally though, my little helper.

Ally smiles as other awe in admiration.

MRS LANDRY

This little lady is going to be an amazing Sunday school teacher one day, mark my words.

DAVID

I bet she is, Katie and Jack can't stop bragging about her after class. They say she always plans fun activities and she's so nice. You're doing a great job Ally, we're proud of you.

ALLISON

(shy)

Thank you.

PAUL

Yeah, she's doing alright, I'm doing all I can to turn her into a God-fearing young woman. Although she's always complaining about me being too

controlling and involved in her life. Maybe you guys can help me out here, we've been arguing about it for weeks now. Another person's opinion might help her understand.

DAVID

I mean she's almost eighteen. To me as parents, all we can do is give them advice, help them when they need our support, and pray for them. We're not gonna be with them every second of the day, at some point you have to trust they will do what's right. And there's such a thing called boundaries, I think it applies here.

PAUL

I'm not taking any chances, last week the Walkers came to me crying when they found narcotics in their son's bedroom. Do you think that if they had kept a better eye on their child it would have happened? Absolutely not.

GUEST #2

I understand that Pastor but you have to trust your children as well. If you expect the worst from them, do you think the opposite will happen?

PAUL

Oh I trust her, it's the world out there that I have problem with.

MRS LANDRY

But Ally's such a sweetheart Paul, I don't think you have anything to be worried about. You raised her to be a well-mannered, humble, and kind young lady. She reminds me so much of Maria.

There is silence at the table. Allison and her father's faces turn cold. They both look at each other as Allison is trying to hold back tears.

EXT. PAUL'S CAR - NIGHT

After that Sunday dinner, Paul is headed home with Allison. They are driving in silence on a rainy night.

ALLISON
Dad can I ask you a question?

PAUL
Sure.

ALLISON
Do you hate me?

PAUL
What? How can you even ask me something like that?

ALLISON
Because I think you do. Why is it that everything I do you always judge me and tell me no? I can never get your approval no matter how hard I try, I always follow your rules but you still find a way to make me feel like I'm making a mistake.

PAUL
Allison, you're what's most precious to me in the world. You're all I have left, you're my life. I just wish sometimes you would listen to me and trust the things I do.

ALLISON
But you don't trust me, dad, if you did you wouldn't be so controlling. You always have to know where I am and who I'm with. I can't even hang out with my friends without you panicking. That's not how I want to live my life Dad!

PAUL
Hey hey hey... you watch your tone now young lady. Remember who you're talking to!

ALLISON
(shaky voice)
No Dad, I can't keep quiet anymore. I can't continue to let you dictate my life the way you do, I'm almost eighteen... it's time for me to have more control over my own life! I'm not even doing anything wrong! I'm

respectful and keep the values you and Mom had thought me, there are other kids out there doing worse but their parents do not treat them this harshly. Why can't you trust me that I will do what's right? Why can't you be a normal parent?!

Paul pushes the brakes very hard, almost slamming their faces on the windshield. He grabs Allison by the collar of her jacket.

PAUL

(loud violent voice)

How dare you talk to me like that! Have you lost your mind? Everything I do is for you! Do you know how many sacrifices I make for you? How ungrateful can you be? How many times are you gonna question me about being a parent? DO YOU HAVE A CHILD? What do you know about parenting! NOTHING! The next time this happens, you're gonna regret it big time. Now sit back and shut up!

He lets go of her and continues driving, Allison looks at the window while tears are running down her face and she is wiping them with the sleeve of her jacket.

Once they arrive home, Allison gets out of the car quickly and slams the door. She runs into the house while her father is still in the car, burying his face in the palm of his hand.

INT. ALLISON ROOM - NIGHT

During that night, Allison is in her room. She is packing her clothes and putting them in a backpack. She is making sure to not make too much noise as her father is asleep in the other room. Once she has everything in a few bags, she puts on her shoes and tries to sneak out without being noticed. She slowly opens her door and tiptoes to her father's room. She checks to make sure he is asleep, she walks down the stairs all the way to the front door. As she leaves her home, she looks back again to take a last look.

INT. MRS LANDRY HOUSE- NIGHT

Allison arrives at Mrs. Landry's house in a taxi cab. She grabs her bags and goes to knock on the door. Mrs. Landry

comes to open, she is shocked to see her so late at night.

MRS LANDRY
Ally!? Wha... what's going on?!

ALLISON
I left my house.

MRS LANDRY
Why? What happened?

ALLISON
I can't take it anymore. I had to
leave that house

MRS LANDRY
Come on in! Come on..

Mrs Landry helps her with her bags as they go inside. They sit at the kitchen table, Allison looks defeated.

MRS LANDRY
Ally, what's going on? You're scaring
me right now.

ALLISON
(voice breaks)
I have let my dad use me as a punching
bag all my life, I'm fed up now. I
can't keep letting him treat me the
way he does. I have no voice, no
control, no life. I get slapped and
yelled at for every little mistake I
make, that's not life. I'm not going
back there anymore. It's hell.

MRS LANDRY
I'm so sorry sweetie, I'm sorry for
everything you're going through. Does
your father know about this?

ALLISON
No, I sneaked out.

MRS LANDRY
Ally, you know that's not right.
Tomorrow morning he's gonna wake up
and you won't be there, you're going
to worry him to death.

ALLISON

That's nothing compared to what he has done to me.

MRS LANDRY

I understand, but he's still your father. At least he needs to know you're safe. You owe him that much. Can I at least tell him you're here?

ALLISON

No, not yet. Not until I get to my aunt's first.

MRS LANDRY

Your aunt in Texas?

ALLISON

Yeah.

MRS LANDRY

Did you tell her you're going there?

ALLISON

I'm calling her tomorrow morning so she can buy me a plane ticket.

MRS LANDRY

This is crazy. Okay let me go get your bed ready, are you hungry?

ALLISON

No, I'm okay.

MRS LANDRY

Okay, I'll be back.

INT. PAUL HOUSE - DAY

Paul is grabbing breakfast in the morning, sitting down at the dinning table while having some coffee and eggs. After he's done, he washes the utensils he just used in the sink and goes upstairs to the rooms. He gets to Allison's room. He knocks.

PAUL

Ally?

He knocks again.

PAUL

Allison? Are you awake? Can I come in?

There is still no answer. He opens the door and finds the room almost empty. He notices that some clothes are missing in the closet and things are scattered around. He takes out his phone and calls her. The phone rings a couple of times until he hangs up. He sends her a text.

" Where are you?

Call me as soon as you can, we need to talk."

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Mrs Landry is dropping Allison at Portland international airport. They sit in the car for a while, not knowing what to say. Allison grabs Mrs Landry's hand.

ALLISON

I want to thank you for everything Mrs Landry. You have been there for me than my own father. Thank you.

MRS LANDRY

You know you're like my daughter Ally, I would do anything for you. I just feel kind of guilty that your father doesn't know about this.

ALLISON

I will ask my aunt to call him when I get there. If I tell him now, he will figure out a way to bring me back. I can't take any chances, I will never go back to that house.

MRS LANDRY

Can I at least tell him you were at my house.

ALLISON

Okay.

MRS LANDRY

Ally, are you sure about this? Is there no other option than this? I just feel like your father will not take this well.

ALLISON

At this point, I don't care. I can't be in that house, walking on eggshells all the time. I want to be happy. It's time for me to be happy, I deserve.

MRS LANDRY

Well, I want you to be happy, so if this is what it takes to do that, you have my full support.

ALLISON

Thank you.

Mrs Landry gives her a long goodbye hug.

MRS LANDRY

Ooooooh... I'm gonna miss you so much.

ALLISON

Same here, I'll call you once I'm settled. Please don't tell him until I get there.

MRS LANDRY

I promise. Have a safe flight sweetie! And keep in touch please, I want to know how everything's going. I can come visit you sometimes too if you want.

ALLISON

That would be great, and I promise I will keep in touch with you.

Allison gets out of the car and grabs her bags from the back seat. She waves goodbye to Mrs Landry who is starting to get emotional but trying not to show it. She watches as Allison enters the terminal until she disappears from her view.

INT. PAUL HOUSE - DAY

Paul returns home some hours later, he turns on the lights. He walks upstairs and checks his daughter's room... she's still not there. He looks worried now. He check her nightstand, there's barely anything left inside.

PAUL

(angry voice)

Ally!! Allison!

He calls her phone again. The line is switched off, he starts panicking. He runs to the front door and walks to their neighbor's house. He knocks on the door, a woman opens it.

PAUL

Hi Andrea.

ANDREA

Paul, how are you?

PAUL

I'm looking for my daughter, have you seen her today?

ANDREA

Oh, I'm sorry. I wasn't here the whole day, just got in.

PAUL

Can you please ask your husband or your kids if any of them know anything?

ANDREA

Yeah, I will. I'll let you know if I find anything.

PAUL

Thank you.

ANDREA

Will...

Paul is already running back to his house. Once inside, he sits on the couch looking defeated and angry at the same time. He takes a few deep breaths to calm down. His phone rings. It says Kelly Landry on the screen. He picks up.

PAUL

Hello!

MRS LANDRY (VO)

Paul, hey!

PAUL

Hello Mrs Landry, sorry but right now is not a good time to talk.

MRS LANDRY (VO)

I really need to tell you something, Paul. It won't take long.

PAUL

Is it that important?

MRS LANDRY (VO)

Yes it is.

PAUL

Look, my daughter is missing. I'm trying to find her so I don't think there's anything more important than that. By the way, do you know anything? I know you guys are close.

MRS LANDRY (VO)

That's what I wanted to talk to you about. Allison came to my house yesterday.

PAUL

Is she there right now? How can she leave and not tell me anything? Put her on the phone, let me talk to her.

MRS LANDRY (VO)

Paul, Paul relax. She's not here anymore.

PAUL

What are you talking about?

MRS LANDRY (VO)

I promised her I wouldn't say anything until she got there but my heart wouldn't rest unless I called you. Ally left to go to Texas and be with her aunt. I dropped her off at the airport.

PAUL

Wha... what? You're telling me Ally went to another state on her own?

MRS LANDRY (VO)

Well, she told me she talked to her aunt and she knows that she's coming. She was quite upset.

PAUL

HOW CAN YOU NOT TELL ME SOMETHING LIKE THAT KELLY? I'M HER FATHER!

MRS LANDRY (VO)

I'm sorry Paul, I gave her my word.

PAUL

I don't care what you promised her!
I'm responsible for her and I have a
right to know where she is at all
times!

MRS LANDRY (VO)

She's not a little girl anymore Paul,
you need to realize that. If she feels
like she's not safe and needs to
change the environment for her own
happiness, she should have the right to
do so. You need to realize that you
can't be in charge of her life
anymore, what good is it going to do
if you dictate everything she does?

PAUL

And who are you exactly to tell me all
this? Huh? Just because you lost your
own daughter doesn't mean you can tell
me how to raise mine. Got it? Now I
need you to realize something....
you're gonna regret this if she
doesn't come back. You have my word.

MRS LANDRY (VO)

You're threatening me now?

PAUL

I hope you realized what you just did.
Don't ever call me again, don't even
bother coming to my church.

Paul hangs up the phone, he is speechless.

EXT. DALLAS FORT WORTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

Allison just landed in Texas, she is walking in the arrival
terminal. She gets her bags together and starts looking for
her aunt. She scans around dragging her bags behind her, she
hears her name being called behind her.

WOMAN

Allison!

She turns around. Her aunt, Carol is waving at her. Carol, a
woman in her thirties, with a quirky fashion style and a big

welcoming smile is standing a couple of steps away. She walks towards Allison, grabs her, and hugs her. Allison has tears in her eyes and so does her aunt. It's an emotional reunion.

CAROL

Oh my! Look at you!

(snifs)

You have turned into a beautiful young woman! Ughh.... you look just like your mother.

ALLISON

Hi, Aunt Carol!

CAROL

Thank God you made it safely, come on... let's get to the car!

Carol grabs one bag and they start walking to the parking lot as Carol has her arm around her niece.

EXT. CAROL'S CAR - NIGHT

Carol and Allison are driving back from the airport, Carol is still smiling, but Ally doesn't seem too excited. Carol keeps glancing at her as she drives.

CAROL

Are you jetlagged sweetie?

ALLISON

No, I just can't believe I'm actually here.

CAROL

Me too, but I'm glad you are. I'm not happy about the circumstances that led you here though. I can't even imagine how bad it must have been to leave so abruptly.

ALLISON

It was a long time coming. I'm sure my dad is pulling his hair out right now wondering where I am.

CAROL

I thought you said you would let him know once you landed.

ALLISON

Yeah, I asked Mrs Landry to give him a call. I turned off my phone, I'm sure there will be a million texts and calls. I can't deal with that right now.

CAROL

Are you going to talk to him anytime soon?

ALLISON

No, I'm gonna change my number actually. If he wants to know if I'm okay, he can go through you. I'm done with him.

CAROL

Okay honey, as you wish.

INT. PAUL HOUSE/ OFFICE - NIGHT

Paul is sitting on the deck stairs at night, he looks depressed. Next to him is a bottle of liquor that is halfway done and a whisky glass. His eyes have turned red. It starts raining, he doesn't budge. He is drenched.

INT. CAROL HOUSE/ KITCHEN -DAY

It's Allison's first morning in her aunt's house. She is awakened by Carol who is knocking on her door.

CAROL

Knock knock sleepyhead!

Carol enters.

CAROL

How was your night sweetie?

ALLISON

I slept like a baby. This bed is really comfy.

CAROL

Oh really? Well, I made fresh pancakes! I remember how much you loved them.

ALLISON
(small chuckle)
I still do.

CAROL
Well, come on! Let's go start the day
off right, shall we?

ALLISON
Let me get dressed.

CAROL
Okay, I'll see you in a bit.

Allison and Carol are sitting at the dining table. Carol's condo is quite small but the decoration is sublime, mostly vintage decor. Allison is chowing down the pancakes so fast she's not talking. Carol is amused by it, she watches her while drinking coffee.

CAROL
Well slow down Ma'm! This is not the
last batch of pancakes in the world!
Although it is quite amusing watching
you tear them down.

She slows down.

ALLISON
I didn't eat any of the plane food,
it's disgusting.

CAROL
I know right! Tastes like rubber.
Anyways, let's talk about today's
plan. I'm working till five today so
if you need anything, you call me. I
didn't have enough time to ask for a
day off so I can keep you company...

ALLISON
Aunt Carol, that's okay. I wouldn't
want you to miss work because of me.
I'll be fine. You've done enough for
me already.

CAROL
You're family Ally, you're my
responsibility. I... I owe it to your
mother. I have to live up to it.

ALLISON

I miss her... I miss her a lot. The more distant I am with my father, the more I wish she was here.

CAROL

I know honey, we all miss her. That woman... she was something else. You realize how much of an impact a person has made in life when everyone can feel the void once you have left this world.

It's crazy because I felt like she was more of my mother than my older sister... in a good way I mean. Not only because we had each other, she just had this motherly affection, towards everyone. She never judged me despite all the flaws I had and my misbehaviors, she tried to understand me. Sometimes life can really be so unfair. It shouldn't have been her.

She stops herself from saying anything else.

CAROL

I'm sorry, I kind of got carried away. Let's not start the day pitying ourselves. We're gonna conquer this day and make the best of it! What are you going to do for the rest of the day?

ALLISON

Unpack, get my stuff organized, and get settled I guess. See what I'm missing.

CAROL

Why don't you write them down on a list? Tomorrow we can go shopping, huh?

ALLISON

Okay.

CAROL

Alright, well I have to go to work so call me if you need something. There's some leftovers from last night in the

fridge when you're hungry. I cook on my days off, that's another thing that's about to change since I have company now. So I'll make you a decent meal tonight. I'll see later, okay?

ALLISON

Okay, bye.

CAROL

Take care of yourself...

Carol grabs her purse and car keys.

CAROL

Ally...

Allison looks up.

CAROL

Good things are coming... God has amazing things for you ahead alright? Don't ever forget that.

She nods.

EXT. GARDEN AREA - DAY

Carol is on break at work, she is sitting outside in the garden. It's quiet and peaceful as she eats her lunch. She is on her phone looking at Paul's contact. Suddenly, she gets a call from him. Her hands start shaking as she taps to answer.

CAROL

Hello?

INT. PAUL NEW LEAF OFFICE - DAY

Paul is at his church sitting in his office as he talks to Carol.

PAUL

(sarcastic chuckle)
Carol? It's been a while.

CAROL

Yes, it has, how are you, Paul?

PAUL

I always hated stupid questions so let's cut to the chase. I need you to

bring my daughter back. Otherwise it's gonna turn ugly for you.

CAROL

Paul, she's turning eighteen in a month. You talk about her like she's a little girl who doesn't know what she's doing.

PAUL

SHE'S STILL MY DAUGHTER!

CAROL

Look, that girl had to leave because she wasn't happy Paul. If you care about her, you would let her make her own choices from time to time. You'd rather she stays miserable than stay with me? Wow! There goes the father of the year award!

PAUL

You are not going to teach me about parenting when you failed your firstborn. Maybe you forgot about that. Now I don't want Allison to be anywhere near you, you understand me? Tell her to come home! She won't answer my texts or calls so unfortunately for me, I have to go through you. Do whatever you need to do to bring her back.

CAROL

(sigh)

I'm sorry but she doesn't want to come back. She's made that clear to me and I support her decision. I think you should give her some time and space, both of you could use it. I don't know what's actually going on between you two but I can see in her eyes the hurt and sadness. She needs time to heal.

PAUL

You don't need to know what's going on. Again, she's MY CHILD! All of this wouldn't have happened if you hadn't...

Carol looks hurt.

PAUL

I don't need to repeat what you already know. But if anything happens to my daughter, it's on your head. Tell her...tell her that...

(pause)

Nevermind.

Paul hangs up the phone. Angrily, he slaps everything from his desk on the floor. He walks around the room to cool off. He stops, he has a pounding headache. He walks back to his chair and sits down.

INT. CAROL HOUSE/ GUESTROOM- NIGHT

Allison is laying down in her bed, Carol is also there. Carol is adding some decorations in her room to make it more welcoming.

ALLISON

How was work?

CAROL

Same old same old. Although I got a special call today.

ALLISON

My dad?

CAROL

Yup! It was short but tense.

ALLISON

How mad is he?

CAROL

He's pretty mad but I felt like deep down he was more nervous and worried about than angry. He wants to make sure you're all right.

ALLISON

I doubt that. He's just panicking that he has no one to yell at and control.

CAROL

Wait, what?

ALLISON

He's not who you think he is Aunt Carol.

Carol comes to sit closer to her and pay more attention.

ALLISON

Dad has changed a lot since Mom passed. I don't even recognize him anymore and he scares me.

CAROL

Honey... did he... did he threaten you or hurt you?

Allison starts tearing up.

ALLISON

I don't know what I did to him! He takes his anger out on me all the time, he makes me feel worthless and as if he resents me for mom's death. I can't do anything without consulting him! I don't have a life outside of him, everything I do is wrong... sometimes I feel like he wishes it was me who had stopped breathing and not Mom. I've started feeling the same way.

CAROL

Oh, sweetie... no no no...

Come here.

Allison drops in her aunt's arms while she lets out her emotions.

CAROL

I'm so sorry. I'm very sorry you went through all this. I promise I will keep you safe, I promise. No matter what it takes. Look at me.

They face each other. Carol holds her face

CAROL

God hasn't forsaken you, honey, it will get better from here. All this hurt and pain will pass okay? The hard part is over, now the only way to go is up. Better is coming, trust in him. And I am here to help you every step of the way. Remember, you are loved and cherished, you matter my darling.

You always have, you always will. Now is your time to heal, just like I had to. It's a hurtful process but once you go through it, it's like a breath of fresh air back into your body and life. Trust me...

Carol kisses her forehead and continues to comfort her niece.

INT. NEW LEAF CHURCH- DAY

Sunday service at New Leaf is about to start, the attendees are coming in little by little. The choir is already singing, the church is half full. Paul, David, and a few other church leaders are by the entrance greeting the comers. Paul seems to not be into it.

DAVID

Hello sister Linda, good to see you!

LINDA

You too David. Hello Pastor!

Paul is startled.

PAUL

Sister Linda, how are you?

LINDA

I'm doing just fine.

David notices something is up with him.

DAVID

Are you okay?

PAUL

Yeah, just had a long night.

Paul notices Mrs. Landry walking up to the front door. He runs to stop her.

PAUL

What do you think you're doing here?

MRS LANDRY

What do you mean? I came to church.

PAUL

I thought I made it clear I didn't want you attending my church anymore.

MRS LANDRY

What? You can't be serious Paul.

PAUL

I'm very serious, you don't cross me the way you did and expect me to be all fine and dandy. Now turn around and leave please before I make you. I have that power you know?

MRS LANDRY

Paul, this has been my church for as long as I can remember. You can't ban me from it.

PAUL

Oh really! I think I have the authority to. Turn back!

David walks to them as the situation becomes tense.

DAVID

Is everything okay here?

MRS LANDRY

No, it's not. Paul won't let me attend the service, he's actually banning me from the church.

DAVID

Wait, what? You can't do that.

PAUL

And why not?

DAVID

Paul, anyone is welcome in the house of the Lord, who are you to ban her?

PAUL

I started this church, IT'S MINE!

DAVID

No, it's not. Mrs. Landry, please go inside.

MRS LANDRY

Thank you.

Mrs. Landry proceeds to go inside.

DAVID

I know about Allison Paul, she had told me. Look, I understand your anger and frustration towards her but she did what she thought was best for Ally. If she came to her house and didn't want you to know, there's probably a reason why. I know it's not my place to tell you how to act towards your daughter but maybe it's for the best.

PAUL

Yeah, you're right. It's not your place.

DAVID

All I'm saying is your personal situation is compromising your position in the church. A few people have come to me telling me that their interactions with you were.... not pleasant. If it continues, we're gonna have to make some changes. I'm sorry. Pull yourself together, I'm saying this as a friend. This doesn't look good, I was thinking maybe you should take some time off. Take time to figure things out and calm down, I think you could use a break from leading the church. We're worried about your mental status. I'll ask Brother Clemmons to lead today's sermon.

David pats him on the back and walks away.

BEGIN MONTAGE

INT. CENTRAL OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE - DAY

Carol and Allison are at the administration office of a high school. They are talking with a counselor, she is showing them some brochures. Allison seems excited and so does Carol.

EXT. LOCAL SUPERMARKET- NIGHT

Allison is doing some grocery shopping late at night, she stops to stare at a mother and daughter duo who are having a fun time shopping. She watches in awe.

INT. PAUL BEDROOM - NIGHT

Paul is in his bed sitting down, he has a bunch of family photos gathered all over the bed. He grabs one and stares at it. It's a family portrait of him, his wife Maria and a young Ally.

EXT. CAROL BACKYARD- DAY

Allison is in the backyard, laying on a blanket in the grass. She is drawing a sketch in her notepad. It's a girl locked up in a dark room sitting in a corner with a small window. Behind the window, it's shining and there's butterflies.

INT. NEW LEAF CHURCH ROOM - DAY

Paul is yelling at the choir members, he is throwing things around the room... everyone seems scared of him. He is so angry that he has turned red. David walks in.

INT. CAROL HOUSE/ BATHROOM- DAY

Allison is getting ready to go out, she has on a cute floral dress and doing her hair. She grabs a lipstick on the sink and looks hesitant to put it on, she finally does. Her aunt walks in, she too is dressed. She signals that she looks perfect.

INT. NEW LEAF PASTOR OFFICE - NIGHT

There is a meeting of the church leaders in Paul's office. He doesn't seem pleased to be present. He seems to be the subject of the matter, as he is facing the other leaders of the church. David is talking to him as the others listen.

EXT. PAUL'S CAR - DAY

Paul is driving, his phone is on the car mount. It lights up, it's a calendar alert. He unlocks the phone and taps on the notification. It's a reminder of Allison's birthday. It says "Get Ally's birthday gift" He is crushed. He taps on her contact and is tempted to call her. He pulls his hand away.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Allison has made some new friends, they are having a shopping day at the mall. They enter a store and start looking through the racks. She is bonding with them and having a good time.

INT. CAROL HOUSE/ KITCHEN -NIGHT

Carol is making late-night dinner while Allison does homework. Carol grabs some spaghetti and throws them at her, they start having a food fight. Allison is genuinely happy and loving the silliness.

INT. PAUL HOUSE/ BATHROOM - DAY

Paul just took a shower, he comes out and puts on his towel. All of a sudden, his vision gets blurry. He can't see his steps, he trips on a scale that was on the floor but is able to save himself.

INT. CAROL HOUSE/ GUESTROOM- NIGHT

Allison is hanging a picture of her mother on her wall. She aligns it to make sure it's straight.

END MONTAGE

INT. CALL CENTER - DAY

11 years later.

Allison is now in her late twenties. She works at a call center, she has her own cubicle. It is filled with lots of pictures of her and Carol, a few sketches that make her workspace look less dull. She is about to end a call with a customer.

ALLISON

Alright, Mrs. Anderson, so the payment did go through, I just sent you an email with the confirmation number and your receipt. Is there anything else I can do for you before I end this call?

CUSTOMER (V.O)

No that would be it, thank you.

ALLISON

You are very welcome, have a nice day, and thank you for your time.

The customer hangs up. Allison takes off her headset after the call, her coworker next to her leans back on her chair to talk to her.

COWORKER

Did you get it?

ALLISON

Yes I did!

COWORKER

Ugh... lucky! I only had two today.
This is not good.

ALLISON

We all have good and bad days, or
maybe you need to rethink your sales
strategy.

COWORKER

Maybe I need a new job.

ALLISON

Shhhh! You know these walls have ears.
You might find yourself on the
unemployment line sooner than you
think.

COWORKER

Mhmmm... I wouldn't mind at this
point, Parker has been monitoring me
lately so I know he has noticed that
my sales are going down. Anytime
now... Good thing I put in a few
applications on Indeed this morning.

ALLISON

You'll be fine! He watches everybody.
He's like a hawk.

COWORKER

Well, word around here is that you're
moving up young lady!

ALLISON

What! How did you know?

COWORKER

A little birdie told me, is it true?

ALLISON

Well... it's not confirmed yet but
things are looking really good!

They share an exciting moment.

COWORKER

I really hope you get it! It would

help me out a lot. Well... and you too of course. But I'm saying, if we had one of us on the management level, we could have a breather.

ALLISON
Well cross your fingers for me, hopefully, it goes through.

COWORKER
I'll pray for you girl.

Allison looks a bit uncomfortable.

ALLISON
Thanks... but I don't believe in prayers.

COWORKER
Oh... well I'll still pray for you.

ALLISON
Okaaay... Let me get back to these calls.

Her coworker nods, she notices that she made her uncomfortable.

INT. ALLISON CONDO - NIGHT

After a long day at work, Allison arrives at her small condo. She turns on the lights and goes to the kitchen to put the grocery bags away. She places them on the kitchen counter, takes off her coat and starts cooking. Once she is done, she starts eating her dinner while watching TV. She receives a text from Carol, she grabs her phone and reads it. It says

" Couldn't reach you today, I miss you. I want to take you out on a date, why don't we plan something this weekend? Let me know, I love you."

The text puts a smile on her face.

She replies " Sorry, just got home.I'll call you tomorrow. Love you.

She continues eating.

INT. CAROL HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - DAY

Allison went to visit her aunt, they are sitting in the

living room having some snacks. They both have blankets on them, enjoying a nice evening in.

CAROL

More juice?

ALLISON

Oh no thanks. That's enough.

CAROL

So how is work?

ALLISON

It's great! Better than great, I might be getting a promotion soon.

CAROL

Really!! Aweee that's amazing Ally! You really love that job huh?

ALLISON

It's alright, I mean it's not my passion but I don't have any complaints. I've made some friends there, it pays well and there's great benefits... it's good.

CAROL

That's good to hear... what about your personal life? What's going on? We don't hang out as much lately. I have to like quiz you when we actually spend time together.

ALLISON

Trust me, you're not the only one. Brandon think I'm avoiding him. I've been putting in a lot of overtime trying to make my monthly sales goals. If I make it, that promotion is mine. Then I'll move on to my next goal, opening my studio. I have to make it all happen.

CAROL

Quite the ambitious woman are we? Just like your mother. She had such big dreams, I used to tease her about it. She wanted the moon, the stars, the universe. I see more of her side in you than your father.

ALLISON

Well that's good to be honest.

CAROL

So have you talked to him at all?

ALLISON

No, why?

CAROL

Ally... come on. I understand that with everything that happened, you would want to keep your distance but... don't you sometimes wonder how he's doing?

ALLISON

Not really, I couldn't care less.

CAROL

Don't say that. He's still your father. I'm sure he would love to at least know you're doing okay, even just to hear your voice. Don't you owe him that at least?

ALLISON

I don't owe that man anything, he belongs where he is... in the past.

CAROL

I understand but...

ALLISON

Aunt Carol?

CAROL

Yeah?

ALLISON

I came here to relax and wind down, this topic is not helping so can you please drop it?

CAROL

(sighs)

Okay. I'll go get us more snacks, why don't you pick a movie? And nothing scary alright? The last one we watched gave me nightmares for weeks.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD WALK - DAY

Allison is spending time with her boyfriend, Brandon Cohen. They are walking in a quiet neighborhood while eating some ice cream and having a conversation.

BRANDON

This reminds me of our first date,
remember?

ALLISON

How could I forget, I tripped and made
a fool of myself.

BRANDON

(chuckles)
My little clumsy lady.

They both chuckle.

BRANDON

I miss those days.

ALLISON

Why? Are you saying I'm boring now?

BRANDON

No! Of course not? I meant we spent
more time together. I didn't have to
call you and make an appointment to
see you.

ALLISON

What do you want me to say, babe? I'm
trying to win that promotion, it's a
great opportunity for me so I have to
make some sacrifices.

BRANDON

And I'm one of them huh?

ALLISON

Don't say that... you think I don't
feel bad as well? I love spending time
with you.

BRANDON

So what do we do?

ALLISON

How about I make one day free on the

weekend so it's just you and me? I will have nothing scheduled for that day, we can do whatever we want.

BRANDON

Hmmm... I don't know, let me check my calendar.

ALLISON

What?

BRANDON

I'm kidding! I don't need to check my calendar for you, honey. I can give you all seven days of the week without hesitation.

ALLISON

Yeah right... that's because you have your own business and make your own hours.

BRANDON

True, true.

His ice cream is melting and drops on his white t-shirt. Brandon notices.

BRANDON

Oh no!

He tries to finish it.

ALLISON

That's what you get for wearing a white shirt to an ice cream date, who's clumsy now huh?

BRANDON

Oh, you got jokes huh? Come here!

He pulls her closer and gives her a kiss.

INT. ALLISON CONDO/ BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's raining heavily, Allison is having movie night by herself. There's lots of blankets and covers in the bed, some hot tea, and fresh popcorn on the nightstand. A scene comes up in the movie she is watching, a father slaps his daughter... Allison freezes. She has no emotions as her eyes are glued to the Tv but it looks like she is zoned out. She

doesn't realize that her hand has turned into a fist and she smooshed the popcorn.

She turns off the TV, takes a deep breath, and tries to calm down. She lays down and covers herself with all the blankets on the bed.

INT. CALL CENTER - DAY

Allison is on the phone with a client, she seems anxious and frustrated with the customer.

CUSTOMER #2 (VO)

How can my card get charged without letting me know first? What kind of fraudulent company is this?

ALLISON

Ma'm your account shows that you gave permission to charge your card last week with one of our representatives.

CUSTOMER #2 (VO)

That doesn't matter, you should have given me a heads up!

ALLISON

I'm sorry but the amount has been charged, if you would like me to cancel your membership so you won't have to be charged again, I can do that for you.

CUSTOMER #2 (VO)

I don't care about next month! I'm talking about this month! DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING?

ALLISON

MA'M STOP YELLING AT ME! I'M ONLY DOING MY JOB. IF YOU THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER, COME AND TAKE AN APPLICATION, GOT IT! I'M TIRED OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU CALLING IN AND COMPLAINING WHEN YOU'RE THE ONES AT FAULT. IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE MONEY, DON'T START THE MEMBERSHIP!

She hangs up on the customer.

At this point, all the employees next to Allison are watching her have a meltdown with the customer. The manager comes out

of his office and walks to her desk.

MANAGER

Allison can you come with me to my office?

She gets up and walks with him as everyone stares. He closes the door behind them.

MANAGER

What's going on? What just happened?

ALLISON

I'm sorry, I know we're not supposed to yell at the customers but sometimes they can be ridiculous.

MANAGER

What did they say?

ALLISON

They were asking why their card was charged when they had approved the charge already. There's nothing I could do, they started lashing out at me and I lost my temper.

MANAGER

I understand that sometimes our customers have demands that can't be met but we have to remain professional no matter what. Even if they're wrong. I will let it slide this one time because I know you and this is your first time but don't let it happen again, you reflect our reputation and we can't let it get tarnished. If another incident like this happens, I may have to reconsider that promotion and your duration in this company. Am I clear?

ALLISON

Yes Sir, I understand.

MANAGER

Alright. You can go back.

Allison gets up and heads to the door.

MANAGER

Allison?

ALLISON

Yes Sir.

MANAGER

Are you alright? Is there anything else going on? This isn't like you. If there is, we have people you can talk to.

ALLISON

I'm okay Sir. Thank you.

MANAGER

Okay.

Allison returns to her desk, some coworkers are giving her the side-eye. She drinks some water and gets ready for the next call.

EXT. AVERY HOUSE/ BACKYARD

Allison and Byron are invited to a barbecue at their friend Avery and Samuel Davis' house. Their friends' kids are playing on the trampoline with Brandon, who's also having a fun time jumping with them. Allison and Avery set the table. Avery calls them.

AVERY

Guys! The food's ready! Come on!

They come and sit at the table. Brandon sits next to Allison.

AVERY

Okay, who will say grace today?

BOY

I'll do it!

AVERY

Alright Asher, thank you!

ASHER

Dear God, we thank you for all the blessings you have given us. Please protect us from harm and we ask you to bless this food we're about to eat. Amen!

EVERYONE

AMEN!

They start passing around the plates.

GIRL

Mommy, can you pass me the buns?

AVERY

Oh, here honey!

Avery puts two buns on her plate.

ALLISON

Your kids are so well behaved.

AVERY

Oh, please! They're acting polite because we have company. You should see them when it's just us.

ALLISON

I've seen a few of my coworkers' kids and oh boy! I was like I don't know if I can deal with it.

AVERY

Eventually, you get used to it.

SAMUEL

Are you guys planning on having some of your own anytime soon?

Allison seems uncomfortable with the topic being brought up. She looks at Brandon who's already staring at her.

BRANDON

Umm.... I do want to have kids someday, lots of them actually. Being the only child isn't that fun, I want a big family.

AVERY

Oh yeah, it's only fun during Christmas when most of the presents have your name on them. So what about you Ally? Are you ready to have some little munchkins?

ALLISON

I don't know, I haven't thought about

it.

SAMUEL

Well, you have been together for quite some time, right? And it seems like Brandon has already given it some thought. We would love to see you guys as parents.

AVERY

Yes! You two would be such fun parents, especially Brandon. You're like a child inside, I see how you act around the kids and it's the cutest thing! You would be such a fun and cool dad. Right Ally?

ALLISON

Ummm... yeah.

BRANDON

What? You don't think I would? Kids love me!

AVERY

Hopefully, Brandon changes your mind, that way I don't have to.

BRANDON

What do you mean?

SAMUEL

Well, Ally always said she never wanted kids.

BRANDON

Really? Why?

Ally looks like she wants to run away from the table.

BRANDON

Babe you never told me about this. Why don't you want kids?

ALLISON

I don't know, I just don't see myself being a mother. I don't have that in me.

AVERY

How would you know though? You haven't

had kids, trust me once you do... everything comes naturally. Kids really change you, at first I was scared because I was such an irresponsible person but once you become a parent... you learn quickly to be responsible because you have this small human counting on you. Kids change you... for the better.

BRANDON

Yeah, I think so too. But why didn't you tell me this before honey? These are things you talk about with your partner.

ALLISON

I didn't feel the need. Plus there's no rush. It's not like we're starting a family in a couple of years

BRANDON

We're not?

ALLISON

Kids are a huge responsibility, I don't want to rush into it if I'm not ready. Plus there are things I want to accomplish before I start a family. I want to enjoy every chapter of my life, right now I'm focused on progressing with my career. I want to make sure I'm ready for that step.

SAMUEL

I mean that sounds reasonable.

AVERY

Yeah, the last thing you want is to start a family when you're not ready for it. You should take some time to figure things out. Make sure you're on the same page first.

SAMUEL

Yup, you don't want to be like us. Don't fall into the family and friends pressure, figure everything out on your own time.

BRANDON

I feel like I'm ready, but I guess she isn't. I'm glad we had this dinner, it just made me realize we have a lot to talk about.

Allison is just sitting listening to the conversation going on.

INT. ALLISON CONDO/ BEDROOM - DAY

Allison is getting ready for work. She is putting on her pumps, her phone rings. She picks up.

ALLISON

Hello?

CAROL (VO)

Hey sweetie, are you at work already?

ALLISON

Hey Aunt Carol, no I was about to leave though. What's up?

CAROL (VO)

Listen Ally, don't be mad about what I'm about to tell you okay?

ALLISON

Umm...Sure.

CAROL (VO)

I think you need to call your father, I don't know why but I've been having this weird feeling that something's up with him. It really wouldn't hurt to check on him. Last night I had another dream about him, two dreams in one week. That has to mean something. It's been more than ten years, don't you think it's time?

ALLISON

Why don't you call him if you're that worried?

CAROL (VO)

I thought I asked you not to get mad.

ALLISON

I'm not but if you're so worried about

him, you can call him.

CAROL (VO)

Well I can't call him because he blocked my number. I don't think he would block yours.

ALLISON

Look, he's fine Aunt Carol. Plus I don't want that negativity in my life right now, calling him will do just that.

CAROL (VO)

Honey can you have some sympathy? You don't want to look back and regret not checking on him when you still had the chance.

ALLISON

Listen, I gotta go. I'm gonna be late.

CAROL (VO)

I know he has hurt you, but how will you heal honey? You can't run away from your past.

ALLISON

I can, I have and it has worked out quite well actually. I'm gonna hang up now Aunt Carol, I'll talk to you later.

CAROL (VO)

Okay, have a good day. I love you.

ALLISON

I love you too.

Allison hangs up, she grabs her jacket and leaves.

INT. SMALL CHAPEL - NIGHT

Allison enters a small catholic chapel after work. She sits down, there is no one else around. She's silent and looks lost in deep thoughts. She starts having a flashback.

INT. PAUL HOUSE /ALLISON ROOM- NIGHT

BEGIN FLASHBACK

16 years ago

Allison is a ten-year-old, she is watching cartoons in her bedroom. Her mother, Maria comes into her bedroom.

MARIA

Time for bed sweetheart!

YOUNG ALLISON

Nooo! Just one more episode!

MARIA

That's what you said last time I came in here. Come on, we don't want to miss the bus in the morning right?

YOUNG ALLISON

But I like when you drive me to school.

MARIA

I know you do! Time for prayers.

YOUNG ALLISON

Do we have to?

MARIA

What, you don't like praying together?

YOUNG ALLISON

I just feel like I'm talking to myself.

MARIA

Honey just because you don't hear God speaking directly to you doesn't mean he is not listening. He responds to us in a different way.

YOUNG ALLISON

How?

MARIA

Like when you ask him for something while you're praying and it happens? That's his way of responding to us and letting us know that he hears and listens to us. You can also tell he is talking to you when you have peace in your heart and feel joy, all that comes from God.

YOUNG ALLISON

Like that time when I asked him to make you feel better when you were sick and you did?

MARIA

Exactly honey. Now you get it.

YOUNG ALLISON

So the only way I can talk to him and he responds is if I have something to ask him?

MARIA

No, not really. You can talk to him anytime. You can tell him anything, good , bad.... anything. God is our father honey, think of him as another parent. We are his children and he loves us all dearly. You can go to him for anything and he will listen, that's how much he loves us. Just like you come to us when you have something exciting to share or you had a bad day, or you just want to talk... you can go to him as well. He wants us to be comfortable around him. Does that make sense?

YOUNG ALLISON

Yeah.

MARIA

Alright, now go ahead and tell him whatever you want to tell him, whatever is in your heart.

Allison closes her eyes and holds her mother's hand.

YOUNG ALLISON

God, I thank you because you are my father. I thank you for giving me an A on my test today, I want to be your friend and talk to you whenever I want to. Please help me with my project next week so I can be top of the class and make my Mom and Dad happy. Amen

MARIA

AMEN! That was great honey, do you still feel like you're talking to

yourself?

YOUNG ALLISON

No. It's like I'm talking to a friend

MARIA

Alright, where's my goodnight hug?

Allison hugs her mother tight.

MARIA

Goodnight my darling.

YOUNG ALLISON

Goodnight Mom.

Maria turns off the lamp and lets her daughter go to sleep.

END FLASHBACK

INT. SMALL CHAPEL - NIGHT (CONTINUED)

Allison has tears coming down her eyes. She dries her eyes with the sleeve of her jacket.

ALLISON

You know you and I haven't been on good terms for a while now. I know you see my heart and know what I'm thinking so I won't have to repeat it. You haven't been a good friend, friends are supposed to be there for each other... through good or bad.

(voice starts breaking down)

You haven't... when things started going downhill, you weren't there for me. Not as a friend or a parent. WHAT HAPPENED? You watched my father beat me like a thief and did nothing! I THOUGHT IT WOULD GET BETTER BUT IT NEVER DID! You took the person I was the closest to and I had nothing left! How do you do that? I thought you said you'd walk with us through the good and bad? You let me go through so much horror and you did NOTHING! How do you expect me to be loyal to you when you weren't? That's not fair. And now you're trying to bring up my past when

I worked so hard to forget it and move on. Are you trying to hurt me? Huh? Why are you trying to open up scars that were healing? I don't want to see that man again! I will never forgive him and that's that! Please, just let me live in peace and try to find my own happiness. Let me be happy... I deserve to be happy... again. Just, let me have the little peace I have now, don't take it from me either. PLEASE!

Allison runs out of the chapel breaking down, she gets into her car and slams the door shut.

INT. WILLIAM AND MIRANDA HOUSE - DAY

Byron is having breakfast with his parents William and Miranda Roberts. The diner table is full of delicacies, from bacon, pancakes, scrambled eggs, and lots of other treats.

MIRANDA

Brandon, did you know that your cousin Kelly is getting married next month?

BRANDON

I know, she called me. Didn't they just meet a few months ago?

WILLIAM

Hey, when you know... what's the point of waiting?

BRANDON

Yeah, I think so too.

MIRANDA

Well?

BRANDON

Well, what?

WILLIAM

When are you planning on giving us a big wedding and some grandkids? I want them to know me while I still have good hair.

BRANDON

I've been thinking about it, we had a

dinner with some friends and that topic was brought up. Ally seemed weirded out by it and hesitant. Kind of caught me off guard.

WILLIAM

Are you guys having problems?

BRANDON

No, we're good. It's just been kind of challenging to spend time together lately because of her work, other than that... everything is good. She definitely wasn't excited about moving to the next chapter.

MIRANDA

That's odd, usually, women around her age jump to joy when a topic like that is brought up. Or maybe she wants to be absolutely sure you're the guy for her. She may think you're moving too fast.

BRANDON

But I would want her to let me know if I was, I could understand that.

WILLIAM

Or it could be something else causing her to act like that.

BRANDON

I don't know... I also don't want to ask her why she reacted that way because when you try to get Ally to be more open about something, she gets more closed off.

MIRANDA

Give her some time, she will come to you when she's ready. But we still want grandkids.

INT. BRANDON CONDO - NIGHT

Brandon is watching a football game when someone knocks on the door. He goes to answer, it's his girlfriend. He smiles as soon as he sees her.

ALLISON

Hi honey!

BRANDON

Well this is a surprise!

The kiss and she enters. They sit next to each other.

BRANDON

This is the first time you came over without letting me know, I don't know if I should be excited or nervous.

ALLISON

Umm... I just wanted to come over so we can have a little talk about us. I feel like after that dinner, you were probably confused and didn't know what to think.

BRANDON

That's true, I was kind of caught off guard. I mean things are going well, our relationship is good and healthy. I don't see why we wouldn't want to start talking about the next step.

ALLISON

I know, I was just kind of caught off guard as well when the topic came up. We don't really talk about moving forward with our relationship. So when it came up and we were with our friends, I didn't know what to say. But you know I love you and I take this relationship seriously.

BRANDON

So how would you feel if I told you that I'm ready to spend the rest of my life with you?

Allison pauses for a second.

ALLISON

You trust me right?

BRANDON

Of course.

ALLISON

You're a good guy, just the right guy I have always wanted. I don't want to sound cliché by saying this so hear me out. The issue here is not with you, it's with me. I just have some things going on and when I picture myself taking my relationship with you to the next level, I want to be excited and over the moon. If it were to happen anytime soon, I feel like that excitement wouldn't be there and my personal situation would overshadow that. Do you know what I mean? I am being totally honest with you because you deserve to know the truth. I'm dealing with some things, and I can't talk about it right now, so please be patient with me.

BRANDON

I understand babe. I was just nervous that maybe we both wanted different things. If it's about timing, I don't have a problem with that. Let me know when you're ready because I am.

ALLISON

Thank you for understanding.

BRANDON

Of course honey. I love you

ALLISON

I love you too.

BRANDON

So what do you have planned for this weekend? Want to do something together?

ALLISON

I have the art showcase remember? You have to be there too.

BRANDON

Oh yeah! I'm sure you're gonna kill it.

ALLISON

I feel bad because I haven't been

putting in enough time, it's like a hobby nowadays. But I love and I feel like that's what I actually want to do with my life.

BRANDON

So why are you trying to get a promotion at the call center if you have a different calling?

ALLISON

A promotion means more money which wouldn't hurt. Maybe once I save up I can open a studio and really get my career going.

BRANDON

It's all you've been talking about these days, you must really want it.

ALLISON

You have no idea.

BRANDON

I've seen how you light up when you're painting or even talking about it, the glow in your eyes is hard to ignore. If you put in your whole heart into it, it would definitely be a success. I actually know a couple of people who can help you.

ALLISON

Really? Aww... thank you babe!

She kisses him on the lips.

BRANDON

So are you hungry honey? I have some leftover Chinese food from last night.

ALLISON

Yeah, I could eat.

BRANDON

I'll go heat it up.

INT. EVENT SPACE - NIGHT

It's Allison's art showcase tonight. The room is filled with her friends, her aunt Carol is present, her boyfriend,

William, Miranda and other people. There are a variety of paintings in every corner of the room. Allison is walking around welcoming guests with her boyfriend. She walks to the center of the room, clicks the glass to get everyone's attention.

ALLISON

Hello everyone! Can I please get your attention for a second? First of all, I'm so grateful for you all being here on my special night and I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. I have been working hard for years to make this event happen and now it's here and I couldn't be anymore excited.

People cheer.

ALLISON

Thank you! Thank you. So like I was saying, this has been a long time coming. Of course there were some struggles but I have amazing friends and a great partner who help me to keep moving forward no matter what. So I want to take this moment to say... thank you! I can't wait to share this piece of myself with all of you and I hope you guys love my art. With that being said, I'll let you all walk around and take a look at the paintings, I'll be around for questions. Thank you, guys and enjoy!

The audience claps. Brandon hugs her as she walks towards him.

BRANDON

I'm so proud of you babe, this is amazing!

ALLISON

Thank you, I can't believe I finally did it! After all these years of talking about it... man I feel good! I really hope they love my pieces.

BRANDON

They will. You worked very hard on this and it shows. This art thing

means a lot to you huh?

ALLISON

I really did. It helped me get through some of my hardest times. It became my therapy, that's why I want to keep doing this.

BRANDON

Honey, I'm gonna go and take a look around again. Can I take pictures? I have a friend who might be interested.

ALLISON

Yeah! Sure. I'm gonna go do rounds too and see if they have questions.

BRANDON

Alright babe.

Brandon goes from painting to painting, most of them tell a story of a girl growing up and the stages of her life. From being a little girl not giving a care in the world, to a teenager trying to fit in. Although the paintings tell a narrative, all the paintings are dark colored some kind of darkness about her in each stage, they are dark and not colorful.

He comes across the last painting, he stops for a while. It's a girl hiding behind her father's coat and trying to take a sneak peek outside. Her father has wrapped her in his coat and the only thing you can see is her little eye trying to look outside. Brandon is captivated by it, he takes a photo of it.

EXT. RESTAURANT PATIO - DAY

Allison and her aunt Carol are having lunch at a local restaurant. They are halfway through their lunch date.

CAROL

So did you sell some of your art last night?

ALLISON

I did! I sold more than half of them!

CAROL

No way! Aww... I'm so proud of you.

ALLISON

Thank you! I can't believe it. It feels amazing when you do something you love, even better when you get paid for it.

CAROL

I just love how your face lights up when you talk about your passion.

ALLISON

Sometimes I feel like quitting that job and just doing this full time but I don't want to be hasty you know?

CAROL

Life gets better with a little spontaneity. I say go for it, I mean of course not be foolish but a little risk never hurt nobody.

ALLISON

When I have enough money for a studio, I'm definitely quitting that job.

She gets a call. It's Brandon.

ALLISON

Excuse me.

She picks up.

ALLISON

Hello?

BRANDON(VO)

Hi honey! How are you?

ALLISON

I'm good, just having lunch with Aunt Carol.

BRANDON(VO)

Oh, am I interrupting? I kinda had some news for you.

ALLISON

No, you're not. What's the news?

BRANDON(VO)

A family friend is interested in your

paintings and wanted to meet you. I sent him some pictures and he loved them, he said he wants to meet you.

ALLISON

No way! Are you serious?

Carol is bugging Allison to know why she sounds so excited. Allison signals her to wait.

BRANDON(VO)

Yes! He wants you to bring some of them to his house this weekend if you can. This guy is very well connected, this could be great opportunity honey.

ALLISON

Oh my goodness! No way! I will definitely make sure I'm available this weekend.

BRANDON(VO)

So is that yes?

ALLISON

Yes!! Most definitely yes!

BRANDON(VO)

Perfect! so I'll let him know you will meet him this week. Would you like me to come with you?

ALLISON

Yeah, that would be great!.

BRANDON(VO)

Before I forget. He has another friend that is also interested so he will be there too.

ALLISON

So should I bring all the paintings?

BRANDON(VO)

No, I don't think that's necessary. Just a few.

ALLISON

Oh, this is such great news! I owe you one.

BRANDON(VO)

I know you do! How about a date tomorrow night as a thank you?

ALLISON

Done! Well honey I have to go, I'll talk to you later.

BRANDON(VO)

Okay, see you, babe. Love you.

ALLISON

I love you too.

Brandon hangs up.

CAROL

What? What happened?

ALLISON

You're not gonna believe this! One of Brandon's friends also wants to buy some of my paintings! Can this week get any better or what?

CAROL

You are on a roll young lady! Wait who's the guy?

ALLISON

He didn't tell me many details but he said that he's well connected in the industry.

CAROL

Oh how wonderful! I'm happy for you.

ALLISON

I know! I'm so excited! Maybe this is my golden opportunity to finally advance my career.

CAROL

Exactly!

ALLISON

I'm kind of getting nervous now.

CAROL

Just be yourself and everything will go how it's supposed to.

INT. BRANDON FRIEND HOUSE - DAY

Allison and Brandon arrive at his friend's house. An upscale, modern house in the suburbs. They are still sitting in the car.

BRANDON
Are you ready babe?

ALLISON
I'm so nervous.

BRANDON
Don't be, it's gonna be fine. Come on,
let's go.

ALLISON
Okay.

Brandon gets the paintings that are covered with wallpaper to keep them safe out of the backseat. Allison is taking some deep breaths to reduce her anxiety. They ring the bell, a man opens.

MAN #2
Brandon! Longtime no see!

BRANDON
Hello Mr Peterson! How are you?

MR PETERSON
I'm doing fantastic! Come in....

Brandon lets Allison enter first.

BRANDON
So this is Allison Floyd, the artist
and my beautiful girlfriend.

MR PETERSON
Well, it's a pleasure to meet you Miss
Allison.

ALLISON
Same here Mr Peterson! Thank you for
having us. Lovely home!

MR PETERSON
Oh thank you! Why don't we sit down in
the living room? Please follow me.

They make their way in the hallway and enter a luxurious living room that is beautifully decorated with big colorful paintings. They sit down.

MR PETERSON

So Brandon sent me an email with pictures of your work and I was amazed. I wanted to connect with you and know more about you and your work. I tried to google you but nothing really came up. Do you do this full-time?

ALLISON

Oh no, I work at a call center so on my day-offs, I try to paint as much as I can. I've had a passion for art since I was ten. I kind of started taking it seriously when I moved here.

MR PETERSON

So it's more of a hobby?

ALLISON

Before, yes it was. Right now I'm trying to save up so I can open my own studio and go full time into this.

MR PETERSON

That's awesome! I think you have some real talent, when I showed it to my wife, she insisted I get in contact with you. I want to surprise her for her birthday. Can I see more of your work?

ALLISON

Definetly!

Allison and Brandon take the pieces out of the wrapper and put them on the coffee table, she hands him the first one. He starts going through them and putting them on the side when he's done with each one. He gets to the last one, It's a teenage girl who is walking and becoming a young woman .

MR PETERSON

Oh this is nice! Something like this could work. I love this one. Actually, I think I'll take this one. I know she will love this.

ALLISON

That's great! Would you like me to wrap it nicely for you?

MR PETERSON

That would be awesome! Thank you!

ALLISON

Yeah I can drop it off in a couple of days. Let me write a few of things down, give me a sec.

MR PETERSON

Her birthday is next week so if you could get it ready by then, that would be terrific.

Someone enters the room, Allison is writing things down in her notepad and checking her calendar, she doesn't lookup.

MR PETERSON

Well look who finally shows up!

MAN #3

Hello! Sorry, I'm late.

MR PETERSON

I didn't think you'd make it in time. Um... Let me introduce you to my friends.. this is Brandon Roberts.. his family and I are good friends. And... Allison?

Allison looks up.

ALLISON

Yes?

MR PETERSON

This is my friend, Paul. He's also interested in your paintings.

Allison looks at the guest, she's in a state of shock. She's barely breathing by looking at the man in front of her... it's her father Paul. Paul has gained a lot of weight, he's grey-haired now and wears sunglasses. Paul can't believe his eyes either, they are standing in silence just looking at each other speechless. Brandon and Mr. Peterson are confused.

BRANDON

Babe? Are you okay?

MR PETERSON

Do you guys know each other?

Allison starts having a panic attack.

PAUL

Ally? Is that you?

Ally starts tearing up.

BRANDON

Wait you know my girlfriend?

MR PETERSON

Am I missing something?

PAUL

Oh my God... It's really you!

MR PETERSON

What's going on here? Paul?

PAUL

This... this... It's my daughter Ally.

BRANDON

Your what?

Paul starts tearing up.

PAUL

I can't believe this! It's really you!

He embraces her after ten years apart. Allison has turned to stone, she's still in shock. She doesn't hug him back, keeping her arms tight close to her sides. Paul is full of emotions, he touches her face, in disbelief.

PAUL

My Goodness! Look at you! Oh, thank you God! This is a miracle.

MR PETERSON

Paul, can you explain to us what's happening here?

PAUL

This is my daughter, I haven't seen her in ten years.

(sniffles)

Allison grabs her purse. She runs out of the room.

PAUL

Ally? Ally?

Brandon runs towards her, so does Paul. Mr. Peterson is left in the room still standing in the same spot while holding the painting he was about to purchase.

Ally gets in the car.

ALLISON

Brandon, let's go!

He gets in the car fast, she gets frustrated when it doesn't start. She is so emotionally stressed she doesn't realize she has not started the car. She finally pushes the start button.

BRANDON

Honey, honey... what just happened? Is that really your father?

ALLISON

Let it go! Okay?

Ally starts driving off once she sees her father running to the car.

PAUL

Ally, Ally? Please, we need to talk. I need to talk to you! Ally!

She leaves her father in the driveway watching them drive off.

INT. ALLISON CONDO - NIGHT

The couple arrives home, Allison is frustrated... she throws the keys and her purse on the table. Brandon follows her to her bedroom. She collapses on her bed.

BRANDON

Honey, what's going on?

Allison is staring at the ceiling, she doesn't respond.

BRANDON

Is that really your dad?

She nods her head.

BRANDON

Wow... how come you never mentioned him to me? Don't you think I should know about him? So what happened between you two?

ALLISON

I don't want to get into it. It's a long story.

BRANDON

Well, I have all the time in the world to hear you out.

ALLISON

I can't... Can we talk in the morning?

She gets up.

BRANDON

Babe, what's going on?

ALLISON

IN THE MORNING BRANDON! PLEASE JUST GO!

Brandon seems confused by her sudden attitude, he leaves her alone. After he leaves, Allison has a panic attack. She starts throwing her bedsheets and covers on the floor and breaking things in the bathroom. She's a mess.

INT. CAROL HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - DAY

Brandon arrives at Carol's house. He knocks on the door. She opens.

CAROL

Brandon! Hi, come in!

BRANDON

Thanks, Carol.

CAROL

Well, what a surprise!

BRANDON

I'm sorry for showing up unannounced, I just had to talk to you about something.

CAROL
What's going on?

BRANDON
What happened between Allison and her dad?

CAROL
What? How do you know about him?

BRANDON
Last night Allison and I went to meet up with a potential buyer. Her dad was there, it was crazy. She ran out so quickly and she wouldn't tell me anything.

CAROL
Wait... stop ... hold on a second. Did you meet Paul?

BRANDON
Well not really, they were both so emotional there was no time to properly introduce myself.

CAROL
You're joking, right?

BRANDON
No, I'm not. Since last night, Allison hasn't picked up my calls or answered any of my texts. I don't know what to do.

CAROL
I don't think I'm hearing this right, you met Ally's father? Here in Texas?

BRANDON
Yeah! Where else would I meet him?

CAROL
Paul Floyd!?

BRANDON
Yes! Who is this guy? What's up with him ?

CAROL

(sigh)

I don't think I'm the one who should say anything Brandon, maybe you should wait till she's ready to talk.

BRANDON

She won't talk to me, I think I pushed her away the more I tried to get it out of her.

CAROL

Ally and her father's relationship is complicated. Actually nonexistent. She moved here as a teenager to get away from him.

BRANDON

Why?

CAROL

Please don't make me say anything else, it's not in my place.

BRANDON

Carol please, I will go crazy if I keep wondering and trying to guess what the problem is.

CAROL

Her father was physically abusive to her since her mother passed away, he was always controlling of her and wouldn't let her do anything. When she turned eighteen she moved here and never talked to him since.

BRANDON

Why? What caused all of that?

CAROL

No one knows, their relationship was never the same since her mother died. He became a completely different person.

BRANDON

So what do we do about Ally? I'm worried about her now, she looked traumatized last night.

CAROL

Yeah, this can't be good. She always made it clear she never wanted to see him again, now he pops out of nowhere. I'll go see her today and as for you, just give her some space. When she's ready to speak about it, she will come to you. Okay?

BRANDON

But I want to make sure she's okay. She won't talk to me.

CAROL

She's still in shock, this is like a ton of bricks hitting you on your head. Give her some time.

BRANDON

Alright, just let me know if she's okay.

CAROL

I will.

BRANDON

I'm gonna go, I'll talk to you later.

CAROL

Alright, drive safe.

BRANDON

Thank you.

Carol closes the door behind him.

INT. MR PETERSON HOUSE - DAY

Paul and Mr. Peterson are sitting in the living room, they are having a conversation. Mr Peterson hands him a cup of coffee.

PAUL

Thank you. Henry, I need to see my daughter. Do you have her number?

MR PETERSON

So she's really your daughter?

PAUL

Yes! That is my daughter, I haven't

seen her since she was seventeen. She ran away and moved here to be with her aunt.

MR PETERSON

It's crazy that we have been friends for a while and you never mentioned you had a daughter.

PAUL

I don't really like to talk about it. It's too complicated.

MR PETERSON

Why, what happened?

PAUL

I can't really get into that right now. I have to see her!

MR PETERSON

I'm sorry but she left before I got her number.

PAUL

What about that guy she was with?

MR PETERSON

Oh Brandon? Yeah, I have his number.

PAUL

Call him, maybe he can help me get to her.

MR PETERSON

Are you sure she wants to see you? From what I saw last night, she wasn't over the moon when she saw you.

PAUL

It doesn't matter, I have to meet her again. This is my chance to get this right, I have to make this right. God has given me an opportunity to redeem myself, I'm not gonna waste it. Even if it takes eternity for her to see me, I'll wait as long as it takes.

MR PETERSON

Are you sure about that? Did you forget something?

PAUL

Can you please get in contact with that guy?

MR PETERSON

Alright, Alright. I'll give him a call.

INT. ALLISON CONDO/ BEDROOM - DAY

Allison is sitting on the floor in her bedroom, she looks like a mess. Her mascara is coming down her face from crying, her hair is not combed. She looks like she hasn't slept in days. She hears footsteps coming up, the door opens... it's Carol.

They stare at each other first without saying a word. Carol comes to sit next to her.

CAROL

Brandon told me what happened, I couldn't believe it. I don't really know what to say.

Allison starts to breakdown.

ALLISON

I was at a point in my life where things were starting to look great for me, and he shows up... why can I never catch a break? WHY IS HE DOING THIS TO ME?! WHY IS HE HERE? HE HAS NO RIGHT TO COME HERE

CAROL

Ally... Ally... relax, please. Don't work yourself up too much sweetie, it's not healthy. And don't give him that much power, otherwise, you will never have control of your life.

ALLISON

What am I supposed to do now? I feel like I just took a thousand steps backward. He's like a nightmare that's here to stay and I don't know how much longer I can take it, I'm gonna lose my mind Aunt Carol!

CAROL

Okay... it's okay honey. Come here.

Carol comforts her with a hug as Allison cries in her arms and lets go of her emotions.

INT. CALL CENTER - DAY

Allison is in the breakroom of her work drinking some coffee. She looks zoned out. She is sitting on a small table staring at nothing. She has a flashback.

INT. PAUL HOUSE - DAY

BEGIN FLASHBACK

Twelve-year-old Allison is working on some crafts in the living room, the stove is on in the kitchen. The food starts to burn, she doesn't notice. Paul is in his room ironing a shirt. He smells the burnt food. He rushes to the kitchen and turns off the stove. He's angry.

PAUL

ALLISON!

ALLISON

Yes Daddy!

PAUL

Come here!

Allison joins him in the kitchen.

PAUL

Didn't I tell you to watch the stove?

ALLISON

Yeah...

PAUL

Well did you do?

ALLISON

I forgot.

PAUL

You forgot huh? Yet you don't forget to eat now, do you? What are you doing over there anyway? Did you finish your homework?

Allison is quiet.

PAUL

Are you deaf? Did you finish your homework?

ALLISON

(nervously)

No.

Paul smacks her across the face. He slaps her again.

PAUL

How many times do I have to remind you to do your homework? Huh? Why do I have to waste my breathe every minute telling you things you should already know? Do you have any common sense? Can you ever listen?! You're good for nothing Ally! Go and do your homework now! You better be finished by the time I come back or we're about to have a serious talk.

Allison goes back to the living room, she grabs one of the drawings she was working on. It's a father's day card she was making. She tears it apart while wiping her tears away.

INT. CALL CENTER - DAY (CONTINUED)

Allison has rage in her eyes now, she throws the coffee cup on the glass door, it breaks. The other employees working in the other room are startled. She starts throwing everything on the ground, from paper plates, forks, and other utensils. Her supervisor comes in. Everyone is standing outside the breakroom watching her.

MANAGER

Allison! Have you lost your mind? What do you think you're doing?

She breaks down again.

MAN

I'm sorry Allison, this is the last straw. This kind of behavior is not acceptable in this company. You are terminated from this job, vandalizing the company's properties is bound for immediate termination. I don't know what it is you're going through but this is not the way to deal with it.

Two security guards enter the room.

MANAGER

Please follow security and turn your badge in. We will not press any charges because you have been an important asset to this company, we will let you go free but you have to leave the premises right now.

She goes to her desk, gets her purse and other belongings from her cubicle.

The guards escort her to the lobby. She hands them her badge and walks out of the building. Once she gets to her car, she sits quietly for a while trying to make sense of what just happened.

INT. LOCAL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Paul is sitting in a booth at a restaurant, he is waiting for someone. The waiter comes to him.

WAITER

Sir are we ready to order?

PAUL

Not yet, I'm still waiting for someone.

WAITER

Okay, I'll be back to check on you.

PAUL

Thank you.

Paul seems nervous, he is shaking his legs under the bale. Brandon walks into the restaurant a few minutes later, Paul signals him. He walks towards him. Paul gets up to greet him.

PAUL

Hello again.

BRANDON

How are you doing?

PAUL

I've seen better days really.

BRANDON

Hmm.

They both sit down.

PAUL

Thank you for meeting me.

BRANDON

You guys couldn't stop ringing my phone so I figured why not? Plus, I wanted to confirm whether the things I heard about you were true or not.

PAUL

What kind of things?

BRANDON

Not so great things actually. It sucks that we have to meet this way for the first time. It's unfortunate really. Considering the fact that you're the father of my girlfriend.

PAUL

It is, but at least I know the other man in my daughter's life.

BRANDON

Other? From what I heard, your position in her life has long been terminated.

PAUL

Who told you that?

BRANDON

Carol.

PAUL

Listen, I'm not here to be judged by the things I have done. I'm here to see if you can help me get in contact with my daughter, you're my last resort. Carol won't even answer my calls so I'm pretty much at your mercy.

BRANDON

You still didn't answer my question, is it all true?

PAUL

Exactly what have you heard about me?

BRANDON

That you used to hurt Ally physically, you controlled her so much that her only option was to run away as a teenager. Basically, I heard that you were a monster. What kind of parents does that to their child? How cruel do you have to be to hate your flesh and blood like that?

PAUL

(sarcastic chuckle)

Hey hey! I don't need to explain myself to you, you don't know me. Anyways, will you help me?

BRANDON

And you think I will help you get in contact with Ally again after everything I heard? What kind of boyfriend would that make me? Sorry but that's not happening.

PAUL

Look, I'm not the person I was ten plus years ago okay? People do change. I'm here because I want to start a new chapter with my daughter, I want to make things right. Please, just ask her to meet me. Just once.

BRANDON

I don't know...

PAUL

What's there to know? I mean What do you have to lose?

BRANDON

Umm... I can lose Ally because of helping you. I already pushed her away by asking too many questions about you and now I don't know the status of our relationship. What do you think me trying to help you would do? I would lose her for good and I'm sorry, that's too high of a price for me to pay. I don't think I can help you, I'm sorry.

PAUL

Please.... I'm begging you. I have to see her, I don't have much...
(sigh)
it's very important for me to see her.

BRANDON

I'm sorry, I can't. You have a good night.

Brandon leaves.+

INT. CAROL HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - DAY

Carol is working in her front yard, cleaning out dead leaves. A car parks in her driveway. She can't identify who it is, the person is wearing sunglasses. She stops what she's doing and goes to see who it is. The man gets out, it's Paul. Carol is stunned. Paul walks to her, takes off his sunglasses.

PAUL

Hello Carol.

CAROL

So it's true? You actually came all the way here.
(chuckles and shakes her head)

PAUL

I'm here for good reasons, I'm not here to start trouble.

CAROL

Why are you here Paul? I thought Ally made it quite clear that she wanted nothing to do with you anymore. What are you doing here? You've caused enough trouble already...

PAUL

I need to see her. That's all I want.

CAROL

For what? To hurt her again? Or to just ease your consciousness and make yourself feel better? Just go back, it's best for everyone. There was peace before you came, I want to keep it that way.

PAUL

You have no right to tell me what to do with my daughter, you hear me? It doesn't even concern you. Why does everyone feel like they have the right to my daughter more than me!? It's insane.

CAROL

YOU LOSE THAT RIGHT A LONG TIME AGO WHEN SHE BECAME YOUR PUNCHING BAG! WHY ARE YOU HERE?

PAUL

I HAVE TO!

CAROL

WHY!?

PAUL

BECAUSE I'M DYING!!

There is silence. Paul starts tearing up.

PAUL

I'm dying Carol.

INT. WILLIAM AND MIRANDA HOUSE - NIGHT

Brandon is in his condo, having a conversation with Mr. Peterson who came to pay him a visit.

MR PETERSON

How's Allison doing? I've been trying to reach out to her to get the painting but she never returns my calls.

BRANDON

That makes the two of us. She's been ditching mine as well. I actually haven't seen her in weeks.

MR PETERSON

That was quite a night huh?

BRANDON

That would be an understatement. Till today I'm still confused. Maybe you can enlighten me.

MR PETERSON

I'm in the dark like you Brandon, I can't really help you.

BRANDON

But how do you know Paul?

MR PETERSON

I met Paul when I went to Oregon. It was around the time when I had lost my former wife and daughter. During my stay there, I went to a few support groups, that's where Paul and I first met. He was also grieving, he said he had lost his daughter and his wife had passed away years ago. He was a mess, couldn't tell him anything without him yelling at you. Everyone was scared of him, myself included.

One time we were paired together for an activity, we started confiding in each other. We became good friends, he would check up on me... I would do the same. We pretty much went through the whole healing process together. A few months later, I left but we kept in contact. He was there for me, more than some family members really.

BRANDON

Did you know he had a daughter?

MR PETERSON

He didn't really talk about her that much. I didn't try to ask because he would get so angry, it was crazy. It's a sore subject for him.

BRANDON

So why is he here?

MR PETERSON

Paul is really sick. He was financially struggling and couldn't even afford to go to the hospital. I told him to come here and I would take care of it.

BRANDON

What do you mean? What's wrong with

him?

MR PETERSON

His kidneys are failing. The doctor gave him a few months, that's why he really wants to reconcile with his daughter before it's too late.

BRANDON

Wow... does Ally know about this?

MR PETERSON

No, that's why I came here to talk to you. Please try and help him, you can't imagine how the guy feels. I know he has made some mistakes in the past, but he is clearly trying to make it right. If we don't help him, we're no better.

BRANDON

(deep exhale)

This is too much.

MR PETERSON

I understand, just give it some thought okay? The sooner the better though.

INT. LOCAL PARK - DAY

Allison is sitting alone at a park bench, she looks sad. Someone walks behind her, touches her on the shoulder. It's Brandon, he comes and sits next to her. Ally does not seem pleased about his presence.

BRANDON

Hey you! long time no see.

ALLISON

How did you know I was here?

BRANDON

I went by your house and you weren't there. I know this is one of your favorite spots so...

ALLISON

If you don't mind, I'd like to be alone.

BRANDON

Ally, why are you pushing me away? Did I do something? I'm trying to see how I can help you... what can I do?

ALLISON

NOTHING! Why can't you guys just leave me alone? Is that too much to ask?

BRANDON

I'm not your enemy Ally, I just want to...

ALLISON

TO WHAT? What can you do? Oh, you want to side with my enemy is that it?

BRANDON

He's not your enemy honey, he's just a man who's broken inside.

You can see the anger in Allison's eyes as she looks at him. Brandon notices that her collar is uneven, he tries to fix it. Immediately, Allison has a flashback of the time her father angrily grabbed her by the collar in the car, the night they had dinner at a friend's house. She gets up hastily. Brandon is confused, she starts running to her car.

BRANDON

Ally! Ally!

She has started driving off. It starts pouring rain.

INT. CONSULTATION ROOM - DAY

Paul is talking to his doctor at a hospital. The doctor has some results he is looking at as Paul sits on the bed waiting for him to say something.

PAUL

Doctor Stevens? You've been looking at those papers for a while... I feel like I should be in the know.

DOCTOR STEVENS

I just got the lab results of your eFGR tests. It's not looking good. We're running out of time Mr Floyd. Have you found anybody?

PAUL

No. It's hard when you have pushed practically everyone out of your life because of your arrogance and attitude. Not that many people are willing to give you their organ.

DOCTOR STEVENS

This is a time-sensitive matter Paul, time is running out pretty quickly. We're running out of options.

PAUL

How long?

DOCTOR STEVENS

One month. I'm sorry. We need to act right now, otherwise...

PAUL

Doc, I got it.

Let me go talk to the nurse, I'll be right back.

Paul looks hopeless.

INT. CAROL HOUSE/ GUESTROOM- NIGHT

Allison is sleeping in her old room at Carol's. She is awoken by feeling her hair being stroked. It's Carol. She wakes up.

ALLISON

What time is it?

CAROL

It's eight hun. You've been sleeping since this morning.

ALLISON

I figured if I spend more time sleeping, I would escape the tragedy called my life. Let me do it in peace.

CAROL

Umm... Ally can you come with me for a sec? I have something to show you.

ALLISON

What? You know I hate surprises.

CAROL

Just come.

Allison gets up from the bed, puts on her slippers, and follows her aunt. As they walk, she looks at her aunt's face, she seems a bit. They go into the living room. Carol who has been walking in front of her the whole time, steps to the side to show Paul standing in front of them.

ALLISON

Are you kidding me?

CAROL

Honey, just hear him out, please.

ALLISON

I don't have time for this.

She starts walking back.

PAUL

Ally... I know me and you don't have a pretty past but I believe I deserve at least ten minutes of your time. Please, I'm begging you.

Alluison turns around.

ALLISON

You don't even deserve a second of my life.

PAUL

I know, but please hear me out.

CAROL

I'll leave you two alone.

Carol goes to her room. There is an awkward silence. Allison goes to sit down, her father follows.

ALLISON

What do you want... Paul?

PAUL

I'm not here to ask you for forgiveness because I know I don't deserve it. I don't have any explanation or excuse to give you for how I treated you and I won't try to find some. I know I lost the privilege

to be called your father and I have to live with that for the rest of my life...

Allison seems to not be phased about what he's saying.

PAUL

It took me a lot of time and courage to face you after all these years, but I have to tell you something while I still can.

ALLISON

You know you've been rambling... if you could get to the point that would be awesome.

PAUL

I have kidney failure, the doctor has given me a few months. I have no donor. I have made peace with it. I know we haven't spoken in years... I just thought you should know.

Allison seems angry.

ALLISON

You come here after ten plus years.. and drop some news like this. What do you want me to say to that? You thought I would forgive you just like that because you're sick? I know that's not what you thought would happen. I bet it's just your conscious eating you up.

PAUL

Look, I don't want you to do anything. Just seeing you was enough. Brandon told me what you were having a hard time lately. Ally... I'm not gonna ask you to forgive me because I know I don't deserve it. I just want you to be happy and live a good life. Don't punish yourself because of me. Go out there and enjoy life. You might not believe it but, I love you dearly. I thought about you every single day since you left, I punished myself in a lot of ways hoping it would ease my guilt and consciousness for what I had

done to you. It never worked, the guilt ate me to the core even more. Don't be like me, and I hope and pray the man you marry is nothing like me. And maybe when you can one day... pray for me. Pray that God has mercy on me and forgives my sins. Please... please... don't let my past mistakes steal your joy and make you push those who love you away.

Ally has tears coming down as she listens to her father.

ALLISON

Get out.

Paul gets up, teary-eyed. He kisses her forehead and leaves. Ally loses it and sobs.

INT. ALLISON CONDO/ BEDROOM - NIGHT

Allison is sitting by the window, watching the rainfall. She notices a bright light coming from the back, she turns. Her eyes widen by the sight in front of her, it's Maria paying her a visit. She is beautiful and glowing, with long hair flowing. She looks immaculate. Allison can't believe her eyes, she seems frightened and happy at the same time. Her mother smiles at her, she walks to her. Her mother's glow lights the room. Allison starts getting tears.

ALLISON

Mom?

MARIA

Hi honey!

ALLISON

Mom!

Allison tries to hug her but can't, her hands go through her mother. Maria brushes her daughter's face.

MARIA

(emotionally)

Wow! Look at you! You have turned into such a beautiful woman!

(sniffles)

ALLISON

Mom, is this really you? Is this actually happening? How do I know it's real?

MARIA

It's as real as you want it to be
honey.

ALLISON

I missed you Mom! You don't know what
I have been through.

MARIA

I know sweetie, I know everything. I'm
so sorry you had to go through that
much pain, it broke my heart watching
you suffer like that. And your father.

ALLISON

You were watching me the whole time?

MARIA

Yesm even when you didn't see me I was
there.

ALLISON

Life has beat me to the ground so much
that I don't know how to pick myself
up anymore Mom. I don't know how much
longer I can fight, might as well give
up. I don't know what ever did to God
to put me through so much pain. Maybe
you do.

MARIA

I love you honey, I love you so very
much. You are a strong person, God has
amazing things for you... he's not
done with you yet okay? I know the
past hurts, but the good thing is...
it's not permanent and we're not meant
to move in that direction! Look right
ahead, the future is waiting for you!
I can't tell you why we go through bad
times but I know this... God will use
those bad times for our good. He has
his reasons, we don't always have to
know what they are... as long as we
trust him that in the end it will turn
out okay. Which it always does, no
matter how impossible it may seem.

ALLISON

But why does he need to use my own
father against me?

MARIA

Ally... you need to let it go honey. You need to let it go so you can let God work his wonders in your life, don't hold onto past things that have no place in your present.

ALLISON

He stole so much from me, I lost a big part of myself. It's hard to forgive him, I don't know if I can do it.

MARIA

Forgiveness doesn't just benefit the one in the wrong. It's a chance to let go of the hurt and give yourself a chance to move on to better things. The more you keep holding on to these things, the more you are punishing yourself. Why would you want to punish yourself for things didn't do? Hmm?

ALLISON

Dad has hurt me for so long Mom, it's gonna take some time.

MARIA

I know he has honey, and take all the time you need. It's a long journey ahead but in the end, it will be worth it. I want to see my family reunited once again. I can't bear to see you both like this.

ALLISON

I would do anything to put things back the way they were. When we were all happy and together. I miss you terribly.

MARIA

I'm always with you, always. I want to see you happy okay? Let God heal you, baby, leave it all to him. Trying to punish your father for his actions won't do as much as you letting God take control of the situation. He wants you to surrender and give all your worries and hurt to him, that's all he wants you to do. Trust him that he will make it all okay. Life is too

short to live in anguish, cherish every minute while you still can. Especially with your father, we all deserve a second chance. Sometimes we don't know how to deal with loss, in the process of trying to heal ourselves... we become a completely different person. Talk to him. Hmm? I love you, baby. Take care of yourself, okay?

ALLISON

I love you too Mom.

Maria starts fading away, leaving Allison sitting in a dark room.

INT. BRANDON CONDO -DAY

Brandon is coming into his driveway, he notices Allison standing by his front door. He gets out of the car, walks towards her.

BRANDON

Heeey honey.

ALLISON

I... I... I wanted to say I'm sorry for how I behaved towards you. You didn't deserve it, I shouldn't punish you for the things you aren't responsible for. You have always been there for me and loved me unconditionally, I know you would never hurt me. I didn't want to invest so much in us because of fear that you would get taken away from me too. You deserve all my love and trust. Someone recently told me to enjoy life to the fullest and the gifts we receive from God... you're the best gift he has ever given me. I'm going to cherish it for the rest of my life. I love you, Brandon, with all my heart. Can you give me a second chance to make it right?

He walks closer to her, kisses her forehead, and grabs her in his arms as they embrace.

INT. CAROL HOUSE/ KITCHEN -DAY

Paul is at Carol's. He is eating lunch while Carol washes the dishes. There is a photo of Maria and Carol on the countertop next to the sink, Paul notices it. Carol turns around to look at him, she sees him staring at the photo.

PAUL

Do you miss her?

CAROL

Every single day.

PAUL

I can't imagine what life would be like if she was still...

CAROL

It's not healthy to think like that Paul, it won't do you any good. Just remember her and pray for her, that's all she would want.

PAUL

Hmmm... can I ask you something?

CAROL

Yeah, what is it?

PAUL

Did she say anything when...

CAROL

I don't think that's a good topic.

PAUL

I just want to know...

Carol sits down next to him.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. PAUL HOUSE - NIGHT

A young Paul is in his bedroom with his wife Maria. You can hear the thunderstorm and heavy rain from outside. Maria is getting ready to go out, grabbing a few things and putting them in her purse. Paul is standing in a corner watching her get ready, he seems impatient.

PAUL

Honey you need to hurry up, I need that notebook.

MARIA

Can't you just pick it up tomorrow morning? Look how it is outside Paul!

PAUL

I need that book, Maria! I have to make sure I wrote down all my notes for tomorrow's sermon.

MARIA

How did you even forget it?

PAUL

I don't know, it slipped me. I have too many things to remember in a day. Excuse me if I miss one thing.

MARIA

Honey you know I hate driving at night, especially in weather like this. I'm not comfortable, Can't you go instead?

PAUL

You're the one who's not doing anything! I have to finish preparing my sermon. Would it kill you to do this one thing for me? Geesh...

MARIA

Okay... okay... I'll go.

PAUL

THANK YOU!

MARIA

Give me a kiss.

PAUL

You'll get one once you come back, that will be your reward.

MARIA

Oh really? Okay, your loss.

Maria puts on a coat and grabs her purse. She runs quickly to her car to not get drenched.

Maria is on her way to pick up the notebook, she's driving slow in the rainstorm trying to see in between the wipers going crazy. She gets a phoncecall. She picks it up.

MARIA

Hello?

CAROL (VO)

Heey sis! What are you doing?

MARIA

Oh hey, Carol! Ugh... Paul is making me drive in a storm to get his note that he forgot at the church.

CAROL (VO)

Why couldn't he get it himself?

MARIA

You already know how he is. I'm always picking up his slack.

CAROL (VO)

I really don't know how you deal with him everyday. Anyways, so I need you to do me a quick favor. I'm trying to make Mom's pecan pie, I wrote down the ingredients, can you verify and see if I have everything?

MARIA

Carol, I'm driving.

CAROL (VO)

Oh, come on! It will take a few seconds, I have some guests coming anytime now and I don't want to embarrass myself. Please.

MARIA

Okay, let me pull over and check.

CAROL (VO)

Thanks, you're the best!

MARIA

Oh, wait! When are you coming to see your niece? It's been years, she misses you. She asked me about you a few days ago.

CAROL (VO)

I know, I've been busy. I'll make it up to her.

MARIA

She's your niece Carol, she wants to spend time with you. You're like her big sister.

CAROL (VO)

I promise, I will try to come this summer, how about that?

MARIA

Alright, I'll hold you up to it.

CAROL (VO)

Okay, let me know about the ingredients, please!

MARIA

Got it! Love you!

Carol has already hung up. She opens her text messages and sees the list, she tries to read it while driving. She gets to the last item on , there is a honk. Maria looks up, there are bright lights... she gasps. A semi-truck crashes with her. The car flips several times and ends up in a ditch. Maria dies instantly.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. CAROL HOUSE/ KITCHEN - NIGHT (CONTINUED)

After recalling the tragic accident, they both have tears in their eyes.

CAROL

I feel like such a monster whenever I think about that call. She had told me she was driving, all I cared about was getting that darn recipe!! Why couldn't I just be patient? Now look where my selfishness got me, I lost my sister because of it. I'm so sorry Paul, this is all my fault.

PAUL

No, it's not. I should have been the one that went that night, I'm the one who's selfish here... I'm the one who

takes everything for granted. Maria didn't deserve to be treated like that. Every night when I go to bed, I still hear her say " Give me a kiss" and that whole scene replays in my mind. I... I... can never escape the guilt. I always put myself first, even before my own family. Never cared about anybody than myself. Now look at me, trying to ask people for a kidney.
(sarcastic chuckle)

I'm a joke. I just have to accept my fate. At least I'll die knowing I apologized to Allison. Carol, I'm sorry for all the pain I have caused you, and Ally. If I don't see her again, please tell her how much I love her.

CAROL

Deep down, I think she knows you do love her. I'm sorry I can't help you, if I hadn't smoked so much... maybe I could have helped you out.

PAUL

No, you have done more than enough. You took care of my daughter like she was your own, that's all I could ask for. Thank you!

CAROL

We're family at the end of the day... we only have each other.

PAUL

Thank you, Carol, you take care of yourself alright?

Paul gets up, they have a long hug. Carol wipes her tears. She watches him walk towards the door and disappear into the darkness.

EXT. MR PETERSON HOUSE - DAY

Paul is bringing bags outside and putting them in a cab waiting for him. Mr. Peterson and his wife come out to say their goodbyes. They help him put the last ones in the backseat.

PAUL
I think that's everything!

MR PETERSON
So this is it huh?

PAUL
Yeah, pretty much.

MR PETERSON
Paul, you know it doesn't have to be like this. We can go to the hospital right now and we can get it sorted out.

PAUL
I'm okay with how things are now. This is how I want it to be.

MRS PETERSON
Paul, please.. think about this.

PAUL
I already have Sarah, I'm happy guys! It's time. Can't mess with God's timing. I've done the most important thing I needed to do. What else is there?

The cab rolls down the window.

CAB DRIVER
Are we going anytime soon?

PAUL
Yeah.. yeah.. sorry. Guys I have to go, I'll call you.

Paul hands Mr. Peterson a handshake, he pulls him and hugs him as Mrs. Peterson watches emotionally. She hugs him as well.

He gets in the car, waves goodbye to them as the cab drives away. He turns back around with watery eyes.

INT. WOOD CABIN- DAY

In a forest somewhere, there is a small cabin. Inside, Peter is keeping his hands warm by the fireplace. He seems weak, his eyes are puffy. He sits down on the couch, there is a letter on the small table. He grabs it and it reads

PAUL (VO)

My dearest daughter, I never thought I would be writing a letter to you to say goodbye. There are so many things I wish I could redo in my life, the way I treated you would be on the top list. You deserved a much better father, someone who would lead you and be there for you. After your mother died, I made a promise to myself that I would do everything in my power to keep you from harm. The sad reality is that I did more harm to you than protected you from it... I can never forgive myself for that. I made it seem like I didn't trust the world but deep down, I didn't trust myself about how good of a job I had done raising you. Maybe I didn't want to believe it... because I didn't want to fail your mother and you. My ego got in the way, I failed you, Ally. I'm deeply sorry for that, there are not enough sorry in the world I can say to make it right. I pray to God that you forget any memory you have on me if it means you can move on and be happy. I wish you all the happiness in the world... I love you.

Paul.

He puts the letter down, gets up, and goes to the kitchen. He washes a dish, warms up a burrito. As the food is getting warmed up, he gets a phone call. He takes out the phone from his jacket, answers.

PAUL

Hello?

INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE - DAY

Paul's doctor, Doctor Stevens is on the other line.

DOCTOR STEVENS

Hello Paul, do you have a moment to talk?

INTERCUT- PHONE CONVERSATION

PAUL

Hi Doctor Stevens, yeah we can talk.

DOCTOR STEVENS

I have some news for you... someone donated a kidney. You have a donor Paul.

Paul is silent.

DOCTOR STEVENS

I was calling to see if this news might change your mind.

PAUL

How... who?

DOCTOR STEVENS

The person wants to stay anonymous. I think it's a miracle, maybe this is a sign that you should reconsider. What do you say, Paul? I know as a doctor I'm not supposed to add my own input but, I don't think this is just a coincidence. So what do you say?

Paul can't believe the news.

INT. SURGERY ROOM - NIGHT

Paul has decided to get a kidney transplant, he is in the surgery room... he was given some anesthetic. There are a bunch of doctors and nurses working on him. The doctor is making an incision to his lower abdomen, starting the procedure.

INT. ALLISON CONDO - DAY

Allison is in her bed, reading a book. Brandon and Carol bring her some food to her room. He sits next to her, kisses her forehead.

EXT. LOCAL PARK - DAY

4 months later

Paul is feeding some ducks at a park, once he's done, he goes to sit on the bench. He looks happy, staring at kids playing with their parents. He looks healthier too. There is a voice from behind him.

ALLISON
Mind some company?

Paul looks back to the view of his daughter smiling at him. She comes and sits next to him, Paul's smile gets even bigger.

ALLISON
How are you Dad? You look good.

PAUL
I'm better than ever, now that you're here.

ALLISON
It's good to see you.

PAUL
How have you been sweetie?

ALLISON
I'm good, can't complain. I'm about to open my studio so I'm pretty stocked about that.

PAUL
Can I attend the grand opening?

ALLISON
Of course.

PAUL
Sometimes when I look at your paintings, I can't believe how good you are. I never knew this was one of your passions. You never talked about it.

ALLISON
I didn't want it taken from me. It was my escape from... everything.

PAUL
Yeah, I understand. Thank goodness there's at least one thing I didn't take from you. I'm so proud of you for following your dreams. I know your mother is too.

ALLISON
Yeah, I know. She told me.

PAUL

She what?

ALLISON

I don't know if it was a dream or a vision, but I saw her. We talked about me and you, she made me see things from a different perspective.

PAUL

Honey, you saw Mom?

ALLISON

Yeah, I did. And she was beautiful as ever. Always smiling.

PAUL

I'm sure she was. I don't know if I could face her.

ALLISON

Dad, you need to stop blaming yourself.. she doesn't. There's no way you could have stopped what happened. That's just how life is, there are things we can't escape... death being one of them. Like you said, it's time to move on and be happy... you deserve it as much as I do. Everyone deserves a second chance.

PAUL

I feel like life I didn't deserve it though, but I'm gonna make the best of it. I just wish I knew who was the donor, I couldn't thank them enough. I wonder how their life's going, what they're doing right now.

ALLISON

Why do you want to know so much?

PAUL

You never know in life, they may be in need one day... I want to return the favor. I want a name, to go with the prayer I give for them every morning and night.

ALLISON

Well, I think they're doing just fine.

Probably enjoying a nice day at the park with their father. Cherishing every moment spent and trying to catch up. Thinking to themselves " Life is to short, forgive, move on and be happy."

PAUL

Wait, how would you...

Paul realizes he is sitting across from his donor. They both get teary-eyed. He hugs her.

EXT. FLORAL GARDEN - DAY

A year later, it is a special occasion. Allison and Brandon are getting married. There are a few guests, watching her walk down the aisle with her father. He gives her hand to Brandon, kisses his daughter's forehead. Instead of going back to sit down, he walks around them and stands in front of them to officiate the wedding.

PAUL

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to celebrate love and a special union between Allison and Brandon. God says he who finds a wife... finds a good thing. Brandon, consider yourself the luckiest man in the world...

There are some laughs. Brandon and Allison are staring deep into each other's eyes.

During the reception, Paul is having a father-daughter dance. It's a beautiful moment, Allison can't stop smiling.

PAUL

You look beautiful honey

ALLISON

Thank you, Dad, and thank you for giving me away. I couldn't be any happier. I don't know why I feel Mom's presence strongly right now, she's probably watching over us.

PAUL

She is, she always is.

Paul twirls her around, he noticed a glowing light in a corner. He looks to see his wife standing watching her

husband and daughter dance. Paul smiles while trying to hold back tears. Allison doesn't understand what he's looking at. Maria smiles at him. Allison pats her dad on the arm.

ALLISON

Dad? Are you okay?

Paul is startled.

PAUL

Yeah, just saw someone I know. Someone I have missed a lot.

ALLISON

Oh okay, just be careful with your steps because you're staring so hard.

PAUL

That would be a scene now wouldn't it?

They both laugh as they continue their dance. Paul takes another glimpse to see if she's still there. She is gone, her mouth " I love you" while still staring at the corner. He kisses his daughter while they finish their dance.

THE END.