

7th Circle

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FADE IN :

EXT. UPSCALE HOME - NIGHT

Rain falls in sheets and wind whips the foliage around the shaded windows of an impressive house on a tree-lined street. Shadows move within.

GIRL (O.S.)

(crying)

Don't touch me! I *know*, okay. I know what you did.

A second shadow reaches for her.

FATHER (O.S.)

Sweetheart, please...

GIRL (O.S.)

NO!

Her shadow darts from window to window as she rushes toward the front door. The TEENAGE GIRL, beautiful in any other circumstance, exits the house haggard and desperate and runs barefoot through the rain to a silver Porsche. She looks around nervously and ducks into the car. The engine purrs, the CD player blares, and the tires scream as the sports car speeds away from the house.

INSIDE THE PORSCHE

The girl's breath comes in panicked gasps. She takes a corner too fast, checks the rear-view mirror and punches the gas.

ANGLE ON SERIES OF INTERSECTIONS

as the Porsche flies through several red lights in rapid succession.

INSIDE THE PORSCHE

Another tense look into the rear-view mirror. No one is following the speeding car, but the girl continues to drive as if pursued. Up ahead lies the last intersection before a wooded embankment that runs parallel to the main highway. The girl accelerates as she approaches the yellow light. A truck suddenly enters the intersection - blasting its horn. The girl screams and locks up the brakes, sending the Porsche into a spin that misses the truck by inches. When she dares to open her eyes and breath again, the girl finds her car stalled in the intersection. She tries to restart the engine. Nothing. Another attempt yields the same result. The only sounds are her jagged breathing and the rain on the roof of the Porsche. She looks to her left and sees distant headlights approaching the intersection. Up ahead, she can see movement flickering beyond the trees as cars zip past on the highway.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

The girl gets out of the car and runs for the embankment. She climbs the muddy slope, using weeds and underbrush for handholds, until a rustling sound to the right stops her.

A LARGE ROTTWEILER

watches the girl intently from the foliage. He takes a step closer.

THE GIRL

stays very still, until another sound - to her left - draws her attention.

TWO MORE ROTTWEILERS

rise from their sheltered resting places and step forward into the rain, growling.

THE GIRL

watches helplessly as the rain turns the earth beneath her bare feet to mud and she begins to slip. The car that she saw approaching enters the intersection, but the girl can only watch as the driver slows to avoid the Porsche and then speeds away. The girl gathers the courage to make her move - then throws herself onto the hillside and claws her way toward the two-lane highway above.

GIRL

Help me, please! SOMEBODY HELP ME!

The dogs attack with ruthless efficiency. The first pounces on the girl's supporting leg while the other two tear at her face and grasping hands. The girl manages to kick one of the animals away, but it springs back with increased viciousness. The girl thrashes and screams for her life as the dogs tear her flesh away and find bone with their gnashing teeth. Fighting to the end, she nearly reaches the embankment of the highway before the sodden hillside gives way and she slides back down to the bottom of the hill - where the hungry Rottweilers descend upon her. Thunder masks the girl's final cries as the camera cranes up and back through the trees to the two-lane highway above, and a sign which reads, "Welcome To Shadow Cove".

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. REED'S SUV - MOVING - DAY

Opening titles begin as the luggage-laden vehicle travels a winding two-lane highway which is bordered on either side by towering elms. The setting sun skips off the Atlantic and peeks through the trees.

INT. REED'S SUV - MOVING - DAY

In the passenger's seat, 37 year-old JOSH REED fumbles with his glasses and studies the GPS locator on his laptop while his sexy wife JANE drives.

Teenage daughters Kira and Morgan occupy the back seat.

JOSH

This is nuts. The GPS can't locate Shadow Cove *anywhere* in Massachusetts. It wasn't on the paper maps, either. I mean, exclusive is one thing, but...

Jane smiles.

JANE

We've gone to great lengths to keep out the riffraff.

Josh uses his fingernail to scratch away a spot of crusted ketchup from his ragged Grateful Dead t-shirt.

JOSH

I hate to break it to you, but riffraff is my middle name. I just told you it was Sidney to make a good impression.

Jane checks the rear-view mirror and then casually puts her manicured hand on Josh's thigh - then inches it up toward his crotch.

JANE

Luckily, we make exceptions for brilliant new husbands of prominent citizens.

(voice lowered)

Mmm...I sense growing enthusiasm.

Josh shifts in his seat and glances toward the back seat.

JOSH

(under his breath)

Jane...

In the back seat, MORGAN, just one week shy of her eighteenth birthday, snaps her gum and applies pink polish to her toenails.

MORGAN

Get a room, guys. This geriatric lust thing is really quite disgusting.

KIRA REED, 17, dozes restlessly, her head lolling against the opposite window. Kira's troubled psyche is reflected in her appearance; dark clothes, sallow complexion, and body language which suggests isolation and mistrust. Kira's eyes move beneath their lids and the camera pans from her face - to its reflection in the window.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

The reflection of KAREN REED, Kira's mother, is seen in the window of a heavy steel door. She's dressed in the off-white tunic and drawstring pants which serve as the institution's uniform. Kira's mother shares the same sallow complexion and troubled expression as her daughter. The door is unlocked and Karen enters the visitation area. She smiles when she sees twenty year-old Josh seated at a nearby table, and then hurries to join him. The dark-haired male ATTENDANT who escorts Karen watches the reunion from the door with piercing eyes.

KAREN

(timidly)

Hi.

Josh tries to hide his sadness behind a smile, but he's still young and not yet adept at deception. He reaches across the table to take Karen's hands in his own. Josh's eyes are drawn to the bandages around her wrists.

JOSH

Are you...okay?

Her eyes search his for forgiveness.

KAREN

I don't know. Sometimes. Today was better than yesterday.

Encouraged, he smiles. She averts her eyes and speaks in a whisper.

KAREN (CONT'D)

How can you still love me, Josh? I know how awful it was for you before, but *this*..

JOSH

Maybe if I had a choice - I wouldn't. But I don't. So I do.

Tears well up in Karen's eyes. She places one hand on her belly, as if experiencing a phantom sensation.

KAREN

The worst part is - I never even *thought* about the baby...or you... I just didn't want to be sad anymore.

(beat)

Could they tell... Did they say if...if it was a boy or a girl?

Josh looks away, pained.

JOSH

Karen, please...

KAREN

I need to know, Josh. The doctor says details might make it all more real for me. Sometimes it still seems like a bad dream.

JOSH

When I came home that night...there was blood *everywhere*. But not enough left inside you for two. So... He died.

KAREN

He.
(sadly)
I *thought* it was a boy.

JOSH

They say there's no reason we can't try again when you come home. With medication and therapy --

KAREN

I *do* want to try again. More than anything. And I'll be better, I promise. We'll have a little girl and we'll call her Kira.

JOSH

Kira?

KAREN

The woman in the bed next to mine's name is Kira and I really like her. She talks to me at night when I get scared - makes me feel safe.

JOSH

Okay, *Kira*. But first - you have to get better.

She takes his face in her hands and they share a desperate, passionate kiss that leaves no doubt about their love for each other.

AT THE DOOR,

the attendant with the piercing eyes glares at them.

THE LOVERS SEPARATE

and Josh notices blood seeping through the bandages on Karen's wrists at an alarming rate. It quickly soaks the white gauze and trickles down her arms.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Oh my God.
(to attendant)
Get a doctor - please.

The attendant steps forward into a close-up that emphasizes his frightening eyes.

ATTENDANT

Step back. I'll take her.

INT. REED'S SUV - MOVING - NIGHT

Kira is awakened by a sudden, jarring movement and the sound of squealing tires as Jane swerves into the opposing lane to pass a slower vehicle.

KIRA

Shit.

Groggy and disoriented, Kira tries to shake the bad dream, but something continues to trouble her. She looks around - trying to get her bearings.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Am I awake or asleep?

Morgan glances up from her magazine, which she reads by the glow of a failing penlight.

MORGAN

You slept the last two hundred miles. Bad dream?

KIRA

Yeah. My mother - in a nut house.

Josh glances back at Kira, concerned, but says nothing.

JANE

Kira, you'll have to call your therapist back in Boston tomorrow and ask him if that has any significance.

KIRA

It means I'm fucked up, but we already knew that, right?

(under her breath)

Take fifty milligrams of Lithium and call me in the morning.

Jane whispers a critical comment to Josh that Kira can't quite make out. Josh's defensive response is equally indistinguishable. Then an awkward silence settles in - driving Kira's attention out into the passing shadows. Still drowsy, Kira rolls down the window and sticks her head out, allowing the wind to toss her hair around her face.

The sea of trees that bracket the two-lane highway is backlit by moonlight. Kira listens intently, but hears no signs of life. In fact, she hears nothing at all, except the drone of the SUV's engine and the wind. But as she leans back into the car and starts to raise the window - something catches Kira's eye.

KIRA'S POV THROUGH WINDOW

Three figures are barely visible in the trees. The car moves closer and we see that they are eight year-old triplet boys. One of the children carries a soccer ball in his arms. As the car passes, the boys watch Kira curiously. Kira turns away from the window to address Jane.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Stop the car! There are three...

But when she looks back to the trees - the triplets are gone.

JANE

What? Stop the car?

Kira scans the trees for the children, but sees no sign of them. Finally, she rolls up the window and sits back into her seat, questioning her own eyes.

KIRA

No. It's okay. I thought I saw something...but I guess...I didn't.

Kira rubs her eyes and grimaces, trying to shake the overwhelming feeling of lethargy.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Why can't I wake up?

Jane studies Kira in the rear-view mirror with thinly-veiled annoyance. Morgan offers a supportive smile.

MORGAN

Sometimes the car's headlights reflect off of an animal's eyes - you know, in the woods near the road. When I was little it used to scare the crap out of me.

JANE

Language, Morgan.

Morgan gives Kira an exasperated look intended to lighten the mood.

MORGAN

Yes, mother.

Kira turns her attention to the road ahead and soon sees something else that catches her attention. She moves forward and points.

KIRA

What was that? Up ahead. On the left - to the side of the road. I saw something move.

Jane sighs. Morgan leans forward to get a better look.

MORGAN

It's too dark. I can't see anything. Maybe it was a deer.

JOSH

Jane, slow down and turn on the high beams.

Jane does as requested, but is clearly annoyed.

JANE

See? Nothing.

Headlights emerge from the woods about a half a mile ahead and turn onto the highway. The approaching car accelerates quickly.

JANE (CONT'D)

Finally. There's our turn.

Kira concentrates on the road as her stepmother speeds up. The approaching headlights of what we now recognize as an expensive sports car fall upon a soccer ball as it bounces from the trees and across the roadway.

KIRA

Stop the car!

KIRA'S POV

The speeding sports car is nearly upon them when one of the children that Kira saw earlier runs from the trees and into the road in pursuit of his ball. The sports car slams into the child at full speed and keeps on going. The boy is thrown into the air and his shattered body smashes into the windshield of the Reed's SUV - splattering it with blood and gore. The girls scream and Jane brakes hard, then pulls off the road as the family continues to react in horror.

MORGAN

What was it!?

JOSH

Some kind of animal.

KIRA

Animal!? It was a kid!

Kira hurries from the car, followed by the others.

ANGLE ON ROAD

as the taillights of the speeding sports car disappear into the night.

KIRA SPOTS SOMETHING

half-buried in the underbrush by the side of the road. She walks back toward it with mounting dread and sees that it's still moving. Barely. Kira stops to pull back the shrubs which cover the body, but hesitates when she hears its pitiful whimpers. Gathering her courage, Kira pulls the shrubbery aside to reveal the bloody, twitching body of the little boy. She stifles a scream and turns away - unable to face the child whose eyes stare directly into her own. Josh arrives at the site and pulls Kira close, trying to shield her from the carnage. Jane approaches.

JANE

Oh my god. Is it dead?

KIRA

(horrified)
It?

Kira pulls away from her father to take another look and sees the lifeless carcass of a Rottweiler where she thought the child had been. Her horror is replaced by confusion and fear, but she remains silent.

MORGAN

Poor thing.

JOSH

What was it doing out here?

JANE

The Cove is just down that road.

She indicates the dirt road from which the sports car emerged, which cuts through the woods and down an embankment. Morgan approaches the animal, which now lies motionless.

MORGAN

There's no collar.

Jane returns to the car.

JANE

The windshield's a mess. We'll have to clean it off to see. Honey?

Josh starts back toward the car.

KIRA

We can't just leave it here. We should do something. Bury it.

Jane checks her watch and sighs.

MORGAN

You're right. I'll help. We can bury it over there in the woods.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Kira drives the pointed end a lug wrench into the damp earth at the edge of a hole while Morgan scoops out the loose dirt and leaves with her hands. Both girls are out of breath. The SUV's headlights can be seen at a distance, through the trees.

ANONYMOUS LOW-ANGLE POV,

watching the girls through the trees - creeping closer.

MORGAN

Shit! I broke a nail.

Kira stops to survey the makeshift grave as Morgan catches her breath and examines her nail. The dog's carcass lies near the edge of the hole. Suddenly, Kira feels eyes upon her and she turns.

KIRA

What was that?

MORGAN

I didn't hear anything. But you're freaking me out, okay? Can we just get this over with?

KIRA

Yeah. Give me a hand.

Kira leans down to grab the dog's front legs and Morgan takes the rear. The dog's snout is frozen in a vicious snarl.

MORGAN

Okay.

With great effort, the two girls manage to lift the eighty-pound animal and position him over the grave. Suddenly, we hear a growl. Morgan, fearing that the growl is coming from the animal in her grasp, lets go - and the dog's body drops into the earthen hole with a wet thud.

KIRA

You heard *that*...right?

MORGAN

Yeah. I heard it.

Morgan quickly pushes a mound of dirt beside the hole over the dog and Kira hurriedly assists her.

KIRA

Good.

The girls look nervously over their shoulders as they finish their task. A moment later, Josh touches Kira on the shoulder - making her scream, which makes Morgan scream.

JOSH

Almost done? Jane wants to get into town.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

Kira and Morgan emerge from the woods and hurry back to the SUV, followed by Josh. Once everyone is inside, Jane pulls off the highway and onto the dirt road that leads into town.

INT. REED'S SUV - MOVING - NIGHT

The SUV emerges from the trees, revealing Shadow Cove, a seaside hamlet with the surreal artifice of Disneyland. The homes are uniformly grand and graceful, the greenery is meticulously manicured, and the cobblestone streets are spotless - illuminated by old-fashioned iron lampposts and twinkling lights in the trees. It is, in a word, perfect. In fact, the whole town looks as if it has just received a new coat of paint. Kira is impressed, despite her best efforts to appear blasé. Josh looks back with a big smile.

JOSH

Not bad, huh?

Morgan spots two CUTE GUYS walking toward a brand new BMW convertible and leans over to Kira to whisper as she points them out.

MORGAN

Alan and Paul Jeffries. Great view from the back, but they're wicked snobs.

Kira smiles and begins to relax.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

One of my best friends used to go out with Paul. Says he never lasted more than two minutes. Their dad is a total brainiac. He's got like a 250 IQ - used to teach at MIT before he came to the Cove to work on The Project.

EXT. REED'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The dusty SUV pulls into the driveway of a beautiful three-story Tudor home topped with ornamental spires and surrounded by expansive gardens. In the front yard, a realtor's "For Sale" sign has been amended by the word "Sold". The family gets out of the car and Josh unloads a matched set of designer bags, which he hands to Jane and Morgan. Jane leads her daughter up the walkway and unlocks the front door while Josh and Kira pull their bags out of the SUV, a battered piece of Samsonite for Josh and a khaki duffel bag for Kira.

JOSH

What do you think, K - almost as nice as our two bedroom walk-up in Boston?

KIRA

I liked our apartment.

He puts his arm around Kira and kisses the top of her head.

JOSH

Me, too.

They walk toward the house.

JOSH (CONT'D)

But the chance to make some serious money for the first time in our life, live in a nice, safe place... We needed a change.

KIRA

You mean you needed to change *me* - and *she* decided that --

JOSH

Why do you have to do that? I know you think it's bullshit, but I really do want you to be happy. And that *definitely* wasn't happening in the city. I gotta tell you - some of those kids you were hangin' out with were fuckin' scary. And okay, yeah, I wouldn't mind a little happiness for me, too.

KIRA

What if happy's not an option for me?

JOSH

Then I'll settle for *alive*. Maybe happy will come later.

Kira is touched by her father's simple sincerity. She looks around at the beautiful house and neighborhood and seems intimidated.

KIRA

What happens when these people figure out that we don't belong here?

JOSH

Hey, they think *I'm* a genius. How perceptive can they be?

Kira smiles at her dad and follows him into the house.

INT. REED HOUSE - ENTRYWAY/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

There are no lights on in the room, but a roaring fire crackles in the oversized fireplace. Kira drops her duffel bag by the stairs and steps into the huge, impeccably-decorated living room, illuminated solely by the dancing flames. It looks like a page torn from the latest issue of Architectural Digest.

KIRA

(impressed)
Shit.

Kira sees a bottle of champagne with a red bow tied around the neck, waiting on the flagstone hearth beside a note and a single Waterford flute. She approaches the fire to retrieve the note, which reads, "Welcome Home". Jane enters from the kitchen, crosses to Josh, by the door, and embraces him. Her stylish elegance and his casual, almost adolescent, demeanor make an odd pairing.

JANE

Arlene and Tom must have stopped by. Wasn't that sweet?

(to Kira)

They own the house across the street.

KIRA

Your neighbors have a key to the house?

JANE

(taken aback)

We don't have secrets here in Shadow Cove, Kira.

KIRA

What's with all the furniture?

JOSH

A signing bonus. Can you believe it?

JANE

They *really* wanted him - from the moment they met him.

Jane gives Josh a meaningful look and kisses him again, nibbling his lower lip as she pulls away.

JANE (CONT'D)

And so did I.

Kira turns away from the intimate exchange and Jane starts up the stairs, continuing to make eye contact with Josh.

JANE (CONT'D)

Morgan's already upstairs. I'm going to bed. Anyone else coming?

JOSH

Be right there.

He picks up their bags.

JOSH (CONT'D)

K, your bedroom's the third on the right - on the second floor. If you need us, we're at the end of the hall. `Night.

Kira yawns.

KIRA

(under her breath)

Have fun.

Josh hurries up the stairs as Kira stares into the fire, feeling suddenly very sleepy. Eyes still on the flames, she sits on the couch. Her eyelids begin to droop...and then they close.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. REED HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Kira is awakened by the pop of a dying ember. The fire has dwindled to a faint flicker, which casts eerie shadows on the walls. Kira stands and stretches, then picks up her duffel bag at the foot of the stairs and starts up. As she climbs the stairs, Kira rests her hand on the ebony railing.

But halfway up the stairs, she feels something odd and looks to the banister.

ANGLE ON RAILING,

where Kira's hand is stuck to a thick, tar-like substance. She pulls it away from the banister, creating stringy strands - like spider's webs.

KIRA GRIMACES

at the disgusting mess on her hand and continues up the stairs.

INT. REED HOUSE - SECOND STORY LANDING - NIGHT

Kira stops on the darkened landing and looks down the hall. From the door at the end, to her left, muffled moans and groans can be heard. The sounds of sex intensify and Kira turns away from her father's bedroom door to start off toward her own room. Kira's feet suddenly feel very heavy and she looks down.

ANGLE ON CARPETED HARDWOOD FLOOR

Kira lifts her foot with great effort, ripping away the carpet beneath, which has adhered to the bottom of her shoe. As the carpet tears, Jane moans loudly. The hole, where the carpeted "runner" once was, shows the hardwood floor beneath and oozes blood from its edges, as if the woolen fabric had been flesh. Kira repeats the tearing process with her other foot and Jane's lustful cries seem to correspond.

KIRA MAKES IT TO HER BEDROOM DOOR

and turns on the light, which spills out into the hallway.

KIRA'S POV OF HALLWAY,

where the carpet is in tact and perfectly normal.

KIRA LOOKS AT HER HAND,

which shows no trace of the tar-like substance from the stairway banister.

KIRA

What the fuck...?

INT. KIRA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

The light goes on and Kira enters with her make-up bag in hand. She unzips the bag, extracts a prescription pill bottle, and shakes a Lithium capsule into her trembling hand. Kira pops the pill in her mouth, turns on the faucet, and uses her cupped hands to collect enough water to down the pill. She then throws cold water onto her face and blots it with a decorative hand towel. She looks into the mirror at her red-rimmed eyes and pale complexion. The sounds of raised voices draws Kira's attention away from the mirror and into the bedroom.

INT. KIRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kira emerges from the bathroom and crosses the spacious room to the open window which faces the front of the house. There she overhears an argument in progress in the house across the street. DILLON ASH, the teenage son of Arlene and Tom, stands near the computer in his room - gesturing towards it and yelling at his parents in his bedroom on the top floor. Kira can't make out the particulars of the unhappy teen's rant, but the simple fact that someone else in this "perfect" little town is unhappy - about anything - seems to comfort her. Kira goes to her duffel bag and begins to unpack.

INT. REED HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - MORNING

Kira opens the front door, revealing TOM and ARLENE ASH - who were just about to knock. The dapper couple is in their early sixties and exhibit all of the physical frailties and eccentricities of their years. Tom wears a skipper's cap and a navy blue blazer that bear the gilded crest of the local yacht club, while Arlene is dressed in a chiffon cocktail gown and is dripping with diamonds - despite the early hour. Arlene's garish lipstick has been applied with failing eyes, but those eyes twinkle with a childlike spark of curiosity. She extends an armful of freshly-cut roses to Kira.

ARLENE

There she is! Welcome, welcome, welcome! You must be Keera! I cut these from my garden just for you.

TOM

I believe it's pronounced Kira, dear.

Arlene waves off the correction and hugs Kira as if she was a long-lost relative.

ARLENE

Pish. Keera...Kira - all that matters is that she's made it home safe and sound. It's *so* good to have you here, kid.

KIRA

Uh...thanks.

Morgan steps into the doorway and Arlene clutches her bony hands to her chest.

ARLENE

There's the birthday girl! Welcome home, dear.

MORGAN

It's not for another week.

ARLENE

A week? Is that all?! We'll barely have time to make all the arrangements. You know, a girl's eighteenth birthday is nothing to sneeze at.

TOM

Quite an event around here. Quite an event, indeed.

ARLENE

Oh, I remember my eighteenth birthday... All the boys in town ogling me...

TOM

We did *not* ogle.

ARLENE

Oh pish. You did too ogle.

She leans forward to address the girls in a conspiratorial tone.

ARLENE (CONT'D)

And nowadays they'll do more than that if you let them. And if I was your age again - I would.

TOM

Where's your Father? I want to congratulate him on his inclusion in our little project. Quite an honor.

KIRA

What *is* The Project? Every time I ask him - he changes the subject.

TOM

As well he should.

ARLENE

(whispering)

It's all very hush hush. Top Secret. Gonna change the world.

TOM

No single person knows the full scope of The Project, except for Mr. Smythe, of course. Everyone works on their section, according to their area of expertise, but we leave the Big Picture to him. Only way to guarantee security. Where did you say your father was?

KIRA

In the kitchen, I think.

TOM

Thank you, dear.

He enters the house and Arlene follows.

ARLENE

I'd better find Jane. We gotta get crackin' on those arrangements.

Her dangling earrings rattle as she turns in the doorway to whisper one last word of advice.

ARLENE (CONT'D)

Go out and have *lots* of sex. It's good for the soul. What I wouldn't give to trade places with you girls. Some of those young boys at the high school are...

TOM (O.S.)

Arlene...

ARLENE

What do you want now, you stuffy old coot?!

She waves off the girls and closes the door.

KIRA

How long have you known them?

MORGAN

All my life. They've always been bizarre, but their son's all right. Dillon. He's a junior.

Morgan and Kira start off for school.

EXT. KIRA'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Kira and Morgan walk through the residential section on Shadow Cove, which boasts some of the most beautiful homes in the world. The girls talk as they walk.

KIRA

What is it with this place? Is *everyone* rich?

Morgan thinks for a moment.

MORGAN

Pretty much.

KIRA

What did they all do to *get* rich?

MORGAN

They came to the cove to work on The Project. Mr. Smythe - this lawyer guy who heads it up, and leads the town council, is this eccentric billionaire who brings computer geniuses from around the world to work on his thing. Mother says Mr. Smythe wants to make everyone so comfortable that they never have to worry about anything but their work. She introduced your dad to him and he offered him a job on the spot.

KIRA

So *everyone* in Shadow Cove works on this project but *no one* asks what it is?

Kira shakes her head in disbelief and continues to gawk at the pricey real estate.

MORGAN

I'm sure they *ask*, but he's not telling.

(imitating Tom Ash)

It's all very hush-hush.

EXT. SHADOW COVE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Morgan and Kira approach the high school, which looks more like a hybrid country club/Ivy League college. The parking lot is filled with a variety of shiny new sports cars and beautifully-restored classics. STUDENTS mill around the campus in no particular hurry to get to class, dressed in designer clothes and openly indulging in the latest designer drugs. Obscene decadence would be an understatement. Kira can't believe her eyes.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Kira enters a room that looks like a well-appointed corporate boardroom and checks the slip of paper in her hand. Satisfied that she's in the right place, Kira takes an empty chair at the marble conference table in the center of the room. The other students seated at the table look her over and whisper speculatively amongst themselves. SHANE, flanked on either side by empty seats, makes eye contact with Kira and nods in acknowledgement. MR. PRITCHETT, a beanpole nerd in an expensive suit, enters after the bell - talking on a cell phone.

MR. PRITCHETT

No, Allison. I *understand* what you're saying, but frankly my dear - I don't give a shit.

A few students chuckle. Pritchett raises a forefinger in a request for silence.

MR. PRITCHETT (CONT'D)

We sell at seventeen. All of it.

The teacher checks the time on his gold Rolex.

MR. PRITCHETT (CONT'D)

I'm gonna be tied up here for the next few minutes.
Call me in an hour with an update. Ciao.

He snaps shut his cell phone and spots Kira.

MR. PRITCHETT (CONT'D)

(genuinely pleased)

Class, this is our new student - Kira Reed. Be *nice* to her...

(mock-sinister)

...or you will feel my wrath.

The students whisper and stare, making Kira feel even more freakish. Pritchett grimaces and dry-swallows a pair of aspirin.

FEMALE STUDENT

Hard night, Mr. P?

The teacher addresses the pretty student with a lecherous smile.

MR. PRITCHETT

As a matter of fact, yes it was. And well worth the effort, but we're not here to discuss my sex life, Sandra. We're here to discuss *economics* and how you will use the golden wisdom which I will now impart upon you to go out and conquer the world.

MALE STUDENT

Now we're talkin'.

Mr. Pritchett massages his aching temples with his fingertips.

MR. PRITCHETT

Toward this end we will be watching the first half of the film Wall Street today, because there are valuable lessons to be gleaned from the strategic errors made by the protagonist Bud Fox as he attempts to conquer the world - and because I had way too much fun last night, so it hurts to talk.

Another chuckle ripples through the classroom. Pritchett presses a button and a large white screen lowers from the ceiling.

He then he signals to the PROJECTIONIST peeking through the glass panel at the back of the room that separates the booth from the classroom.

MR. PRITCHETT (CONT'D)

Take notes. This *will* be on the test. And remember class, *greed is good*.

Kira watches in amazement as the teacher reaches for his cell phone and leaves the room. The lights dim and the film begins.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Kira enters the dining room and shakes her head in continued amazement. STUDENTS sit at round tables covered with linen tablecloths. Several bay windows offer spectacular views of the ocean. Kira spots Morgan and joins her.

KIRA

I've seen a lot of freaky shit in my life, but this place is insane.

MORGAN

I know - a little excessive, huh?

KIRA

We're talking Fantasy Island on fucking steroids. I keep looking around for that midget in the white suit.

MORGAN

Too bad we were just gone for the summer. I was curious about Boston schools.

A WAITER approaches. He wears a white suit, but is of average height.

WAITER

Have you decided, Miss Reed?

Kira is about to ask how he knew her name, but instead just laughs - glances at her menu - and then looks toward a neighboring table. Everyone is eating thick, rare steaks.

KIRA

What have you got without meat in it? I don't eat anything with a face.

WAITER

For *you* - I'm sure the chef will be happy to create something special that meets that qualification.

KIRA

Cool. Thanks.

Morgan hands the menus back to the waiter.

MORGAN

Turkey club, please.

The waiter nods and exits.

KIRA

I could get used to this.

On the other side of the room, BARCLAY SMYTHE, an older cheerleader, pointedly ignores ANGIE, a disheveled junior who is extremely upset. Barclay and her CHEERLEADER FRIENDS are trying to eat lunch and Angie is trying, with little success, to get them to listen to her. The would-be confrontation escalates until Angie sweeps the plates off of the table and storms out of the room amid clattering dishes and the hushed silence of the student body. As Angie exits - Shane and his best friend BOBBY enter. The students break into a collective, speculative murmur while Shane and Bobby approach Kira's table and sit. Shane has an easy charm and winning smile that attracts Kira immediately, despite her efforts to appear aloof.

SHANE

Did we miss something?

MORGAN

Just Barclay and the slut squad snubbing that junior.
Angie whats-her-name.

Shane looks at Kira and then back to Morgan, awaiting an introduction.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Shane Harper - Kira. My new step-sister.

Morgan then acknowledges Bobby, an acne-scarred film geek who often mimics his favorite movie performances when he speaks.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

That's Bobby. Don't get too close. He bites.

She pulls back the sleeve of her blouse to reveal a crescent-shaped scar on her forearm.

SHANE

Jesus, Morgan - when are you gonna let up on the guy. He was, what, five years old?

MORGAN

(to Kira)

I took his bike, so he bit me like a l-i-t-t-l-e girl.

Bobby does his best De Niro.

BOBBY

Are you talkin' to me? I *know* you're not talkin' to me.

Morgan laughs at Bobby as he continues his ridiculous imitation. Shane turns to Kira.

SHANE

Step-sister? Man, that's gotta be some kinda record. What'd her mom do - drug him and drag him to the courthouse?

Just as Kira is about to respond - the waiter brings their food, and Barclay passes the table on her way out. She exudes an overt "sluttiness" that seems odd for a girl so beautiful and popular.

BARCLAY

Slumming it, Shane?

SHANE

(*with mock sincerity*)

Just trying to get over you, Barc.

She hisses seductively in his ear.

BARCLAY

You *know* you'll never have it as good as you did with me.

She gives Kira a searing look and exits. Shane turns to Bobby.

SHANE

I don't know about *as good*, but it'll never be as *often*. That girl could not get enough. I mean could n-o-t. She was wearin' me out. And that body - definitely built for speed. Talk about a smooth ride...

He gives Bobby a high-five.

BOBBY

Tell *me*. I've still got the tapes in my closet. Prime weasel whackin' material. That is a nasty, nasty girl.

(*to Morgan*)

Wanna come over and see `em some time, Morgan? Get a few pointers...

Morgan has tuned out the guys' childish machismo, but Kira has had enough. She grabs her books and stands to leave.

SHANE

Uh-oh. I think we crossed the line, Bobby. New Girl looks insulted.

Bobby starts to rock and stare like Dustin Hoffman in Rain Man.

BOBBY

Uh-oh. Definitely crossed the line. *Definitely* crossed the line this time. W-a-y over the line.

SHANE

What, they don't have jokes where you come from?

KIRA

There's too much testosterone in the air for me. I gotta get out before I grow a penis. There are already too many dicks around here as it is.

Shane is caught off guard by the rebuff, but Bobby's amused.

MORGAN

Hold on - let me grab my books.

KIRA

That's okay. I'll see you later.

Shane watches Kira leave, impressed by her spunk.

MORGAN

Anyone ever tell you how smooth you are?

Shane looks appropriately admonished. Morgan takes a bite out of her sandwich.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Didn't think so.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Kira walks the halls in search of an uninhabited spot. She passes a group of OLDER LETTERMAN JOCKS, who leer openly. Their expressions show both lust and hostility. Kira turns a corner to escape the jocks' collective gaze and she spots Angie at an open locker - stuffing its contents into her backpack. Kira approaches as the other girl tears the snapshots and magazine photos from the inside walls of her locker and hurriedly jams them into the overstuffed pack.

KIRA

In a hurry?

Angie glances at Kira.

ANGIE

You're new.

KIRA

First day.

ANGIE

One of your parents got hired to work on The Project, right?

KIRA

My dad. Yours, too?

ANGIE

My mom.

(amused)

Barclay's dad's an equal opportunity employer.

She manages to stuff the last item from her locker into her backpack and slams the door closed. Panic is building beneath her angry exterior.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Do yourself a favor. Don't ask what The Project is. In fact, don't ask *any* questions. My best friend had a big mouth - like me - asked too many questions... She disappeared a week ago and nobody gives a shit.

The lettermen round the corner and Angie lowers her voice as she hurries toward the main doors.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

It's like she never existed.

KIRA

Where are you going?

Angie opens the doors and backs out, taking a nervous look around before proceeding.

ANGIE

As far away from Shadow Cove as three hundred and eight bucks will take me.

The door closes and Angie is gone. The letterman discuss something amongst themselves while watching Kira. As she looks at them, Kira begins to feel very tired. She walks away from the group of guys and ducks into the girls' bathroom.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GIRLS' BATHROOM - DAY

Kira waits by the door - listening intently as the lettermen approach the bathroom. She fights to keep her eyes open as she listens to their hushed conversation on the other side of the door. A hand touches Kira's shoulder and she jumps.

SOPHOMORE

Hey - are you okay?

KIRA

Shit!

(beat)

Yeah, it's just... There were these guys...

The SOPHOMORE opens the door and Kira sees that the lettermen have gone. The other student looks at Kira as if she was a freak and exits. Kira yawns and moves into the bathroom - really noticing it for the first time.

KIRA'S POV OF BATHROOM

The girls' restroom looks like a ladies lounge at an opera house or an exclusive department store. The walls are papered in red velveteen and the matching antique divans in the center of the room have wooden accents, gilded with gold.

KIRA GOES TO ONE OF THE BLACK MARBLE SINKS

and turns the heavy brass handle of the cold water faucet. She bends down to splash water onto her face and when she stands - Kira sees the room reflected in the mirror. But the room has changed. The red velveteen has been replaced by blood oozing down decayed, fleshlike walls. And the divans have become rough-hewn instruments of torture. Kira looks to what were the private enclosures housing the toilets and now sees stinking pits dug into the earth, spilling over with excrement. Kira looks to the last such pit and is horrified to see a rotting zombie squatting over it as flies buzz around the zombie's head. Kira closes her eyes again and lowers her face, in order to splash more cold water upon it, but she discovers that the water has turned to blood - pouring over her hands from a rusted pipe. Kira screams and closes her eyes tightly, until she hears the sound of a flushing toilet. She opens her eyes slowly - only to discover that the room has transformed back to its original condition. The last toilet enclosure is unlocked from the inside and Kira braces herself, but what emerges is just another OLDER SENIOR. Kira stares at the other girl, trying to make sense of her own insanity. The girl watches Kira carefully as she washes her hands and exits the room.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - FRONT STEPS - DAY

Kira hurries outside and takes several deep breaths as she tries to collect her thoughts. Then she notices Shane, sitting on the steps - to one side. He holds a large swan, fashioned from tinfoil, on his lap. Annoyed and confused, Kira sighs and turns to reenter the building. Shane stands and approaches.

SHANE

Hey, don't leave.

He holds out the swan.

SHANE (CONT'D)

I brought your lunch. I had them wrap it up.

KIRA

(suspiciously)

How did you know where I was?

SHANE

I didn't. But this is where *I'd* go if a vulgar prick offended *me* on my first day.

Kira studies the tinfoil sculpture with utter disbelief, which then turns to amusement that catches her by surprise. The collision of her morbid fantasies and this surreal reality suddenly take their toll. She accepts the swan and sits, dumbstruck, on the steps.

SHANE (CONT'D)

You okay?

KIRA

Not even close.

SHANE

Look, I can be a real asshole sometimes.

(beat)

Okay - most of the time. But, hey, I'm rich and I'm smart and I'm cute... You can understand how I might get carried away with myself every now and then. Right?

KIRA

Is that supposed to be an apology?

He flashes a charming smile.

SHANE

Well, yeah... Not so good, huh?

KIRA

The worst.

Overwhelmed by the gravity of her situation, Kira opts for avoidance. She opens the "to go" swan and tastes a piece of the vegetable souffle that the chef cooked for her. As soon as the food is in her mouth, Kira reacts.

KIRA (CONT'D)

This is amazing.

She offers some to Shane and he accepts.

SHANE

Not bad - for rabbit food.

She continues to eat as she watches him - watching her. The attraction is strong between them. Neither speaks for a moment, and then:

KIRA

I'm very fucked up and I'm *never* going to sleep with you.

He considers her statement carefully.

SHANE

I can live with that.

KIRA

(incredulous)
You can?

SHANE

Sure. Who said anything about *sleep*?

She laughs and offers him another bite of her lunch.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY - DAY

The library is a ultra-modern facility in which less than a third of the space is occupied by books. The bulk of the area is devoted to state-of-the-art computer terminals at which several students sit working. Kira looks through the shelves until she finds what she's looking for: a book on genetic links to mental illness. She takes a quick look around before thumbing through the pages.

FRESHMAN 1 (O.S.)

I heard he's a drug smuggler and he keeps his stash in there.

Kira looks up from her reading and peers through the books on the shelf - into the next aisle where TWO FRESHMEN are whispering.

FRESHMAN 2

That's lame. Why would he keep drugs in an old vault? It's probably just filled with cash and valuable shit like diamonds and stuff. Joey says he's got more money than that Trump guy.

Kira walks to the end of the aisle and looks around the corner to the far side of the room where an antique "walk-in" style vault door juts out from the antiseptic sterility of the library's gleaming walls.

NICK

Can I help you find something, Kira?

Kira looks at the old, disheveled librarian who now studies her with gentle curiosity. His decidedly "low-tech" demeanor seems out of place here. He mops his sweaty brow with a handkerchief.

KIRA

You know my name?

NICK

We don't get many new arrivals here in the cove, so when we do - it's something of an occasion. As you may have noticed, we're a pretty closely-knit community. I'm sorry if I scared you.

Drawn to Nick's smiling eyes, Kira relaxes a bit - feeling comfortable for the first time since her arrival.

KIRA

That's okay. I was just looking around.

Nick follows Kira's eyes to the vault.

NICK

Ah...Mr. Smythe's infamous vault. You've heard the rumors already. What's in it this week? Gold bars stolen from Fort Knox? Dirty secrets used to blackmail high-ranking politicians?

KIRA

Drugs. Or cash.

Nick clucks his tongue and shakes his head sadly.

NICK

How banal. There was a time when that old relic inspired all sorts of imaginative tales and sinister speculations.

KIRA

(amused)

But you won't say what's *really* in the vault?

He leans in close and Kira smells something odd on his breath, which she can't quite place. Nick smiles and blots his brow again.

NICK

If I did - what would the sophomores have to talk about at lunch? Besides, imagination is man's greatest gift - and facts are the surest antidote.

KIRA

Sometimes I wish I had a little *less* imagination.

Nick glances down at the book in Kira's arms and whispers:

NICK

You're *not* mad, Kira.

KIRA

(taken aback)
What?

NICK

That I won't tell you what's in the vault.

KIRA

Oh... No.

NICK

Good. I'd hate to start things off on the wrong foot.

Nick's attention is drawn by an IMPATIENT STUDENT, seated at a computer terminal. The student curses and thunks the CPU with his hand.

NICK (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me. I see a kindred spirit in need of assistance.

KIRA

Can I get on a computer, too?

Nick responds as he walks away.

NICK

I think terminal six is open.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY - LATER

Kira refers to her homework as she tries to look up information on the computer, but she keeps getting error messages. Kira makes a frustrated sound and leans back in her chair.

SHANE

You have to enter the subject of your search as a question. Like that game show.

He sits in the chair beside Kira and drops his books onto the table.

KIRA

That's stupid.

SHANE

Actually, it's the smartest search engine in the world. We designed it here in the cove.

He slides his chair closer and Kira moves over to make room for Shane at the keyboard. He quickly types in commands as he speaks.

SHANE (CONT'D)

With other engines you enter the name of a person or a phrase and it brings up *everything* with those words in it. Very inefficient. But with this one - you type in a question and it not only gives you cross-referenced data, like the other one would, but it also tries to *answer* the question - taking cues from the way you asked it.

He brings up dialog box that asks for the search question and turns to Kira.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Watch. I'll type in a question.

ANGLE ON COMPUTER SCREEN

Shane types, "Will she go out with me?".

KIRA

(amused)
So...what's the answer?

SHANE

You tell me.

She smiles and looks from his eyes - to his lips, wondering what it would be like to kiss him. But instead, she reaches past him to hit the "Enter" key on the keyboard. The computer's response comes back almost immediately: "Yes".

KIRA

How did you do that?

He returns to the keyboard and quickly "undoes" what he had done to the computer, before Nick catches him.

SHANE

I'd tell you - but then I'd have to kill you.

Kira smiles, impressed.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Kira and Morgan start home. Shane and Bobby pull up in a black Lamborghini.

SHANE

Wanna ride?

KIRA

Nice. Very understated.

SHANE

They were out of red.

Kira and Morgan approach the car and Bobby moves to the back seat to make room for them.

EXT. ACCIDENT SITE - DAY

A COP directs traffic as teenage drivers slow down to gawk at the carnage. Angie lies dead on the sidewalk, eyes wide and staring, in an expanding pool of her own blood. Shane's car reaches the site.

INT. SHANE'S CAR - DAY

BOBBY

Houston, I think we have a problem.

MORGAN

Is that the girl from the cafeteria?

KIRA

I was just talking to her a few hours ago.

SHANE

What about?

KIRA

She wanted to get out of Shadow Cove.

BOBBY

Well, I guess that's *one* way to do it.

As the Lamborghini passes, the DRIVER of the car that hit Angie, and a PARAMEDIC, stand by the side of the road. They seem more interested in Kira than in the dead body at their feet. Their cold, blank stares send a shiver up Kira's spine.

EXT. REED HOUSE - DAY

The Lamborghini pulls to the curb and the girls climb out. Morgan starts up the walkway, toward the front door. Kira looks back in the direction of the accident, distracted.

SHANE

You gonna be okay?

KIRA

I didn't really know her, but it's just so creepy. Did you see those guys staring at me?

SHANE

Maybe they were staring 'cause *you* were staring. We still on for tonight?

KIRA

Can we do it another time?

SHANE

Aw, man - you're backing out on me?

KIRA

No. Just...not tonight.

He sighs and starts up the car.

SHANE

Okay, whatever. Mañana.

He waves and pulls away from the house, then rounds the corner. Kira sees sixteen year-old Dillon Ash unhappily wheeling the trash cans out to the curb. He makes eye contact and nods.

DILLON

Hey.

KIRA

How's it going?

DILLON

(wryly)

It sucks royally, but thanks for askin'.

Kira smiles.

KIRA

I know the feeling.

(MORE)

KIRA (CONT'D)

(beat)
I'm Kira.

DILLON

Dillon.

She starts to turn away.

KIRA

See ya later, Dillon.

He starts back toward his house, but decides to tell Kira something that's on his mind.

DILLON

Hey Kira, the curtains on your bedroom window - they're uh...pretty thin. Wicked thin, actually. Anyone who wanted to - could see right through `em.

She's amused by his awkward avoidance of eye contact.

KIRA

Is that so?

DILLON

Yeah. I uh...just thought you should know.

Arlene opens the front door and yells toward the street.

ARLENE

D-i-l-l-o-n... Come on in, sweetie - supper's ready. And stop flirting with Kira. She's too old for you.

Dillon's cheeks flush and he groans in embarrassment. Kira commiserates.

KIRA

Parents...

DILLON

Yeah. Can't live with `em - can't kill `em.

He returns to his house and Kira does the same.

INT. REED HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Kira picks at the vegetables in her plate as Jane gives Josh a second helping of rare roast beef. Josh seems puzzled as he reviews the programming notes from today's work.

MORGAN

...but I *hate* being the center of attention. Can't we just invite a *few* people over?

JANE

Morgan, this is a *tradition*. I'm sorry if it's not what you'd like, but Arlene and I have been doing nothing but planning this party for the last week. If you had a problem with it - you should have said something sooner.

MORGAN

I did. You just didn't listen.

JANE

(to Josh)

It's so good to see my friends again. I had lunch with Ellen Mays today.

(to Morgan)

You remember Ellen. Her daughter was in one of your classes last year.

Morgan remains rooted in a sullen silence. Jane sighs and turns her frustration on Kira.

JANE (CONT'D)

It wouldn't surprise me if lack of protein in your diet is at the root of your problems, Kira.

She reaches for the roast beef.

JANE (CONT'D)

How about a little meat.

KIRA'S POV OF JANE AS SHE REACHES FOR THE MEAT,

which has morphed into what appears to be a fleshy portion of a human cadaver. Kira looks from the serving plate to Jane and now sees her as a black-eyed ghoul. When Kira shifts her eyes from Jane - to her own plate - she sees rotting vegetables peppered with furrowing maggots.

KIRA PUSHES AWAY FROM THE TABLE

and covers her mouth with her hand.

JANE (CONT'D)

Where are you going? You know, I went to a lot of trouble to try to find a vegetarian dish I thought you would like.

Kira catches another glimpse of the "food" on her plate and begins to wretch. She runs from the table and up the stairs. Concerned, Josh sets his work aside and starts after her, but Jane stops him.

JANE (CONT'D)

Honey, please don't encourage this crazy behavior.

MORGAN

Maybe she's sick.

JANE

(pointedly)

Yes, maybe she is.

INT. KIRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

We hear the toilet flush and water running in the sink before Kira exits the bathroom - blotting her mouth and sweating forehead with a towel. She pops a Lithium capsule into her mouth and swallows it dry as she crosses to the vanity and sits. Kira takes an old photo of her mother and father, that's been taped to the mirror, from its place and studies it. After a moment, she opens her bedroom window, reaches for the library book on the genetics of insanity, and begins to read. But the sound of Dillon's raised voice draws her away from the book. Kira looks across to Dillon's bedroom, where another argument can be heard. The computer has been destroyed and Dillon is trying to stuff the clothes from his bureau into a bag, but his aging parents are trying to stop him. His window is closed, but the shades are open - so Kira can see more than she hears. Arlene grabs her son's arm and he pulls away abruptly - sending her off balance. She falls to the floor and Dillon seems apologetic, though still determined to leave. Tom gets in Dillon's face and the confrontation escalates. Arlene regains her feet and begins to shriek at her son - trying to strike him with her withered fists. Kira laughs at the absurdity of the situation until Dillon pushes Arlene away once again and Tom backhands him. A fist-fight breaks out between father and son and Arlene runs screaming out of the room. A moment later, Kira sees her enter the kitchen and pull a meat cleaver from a drawer.

KIRA

Oh, shit...

Back in the bedroom, Dillon has little trouble subduing his father - until he returns his attention to packing and Tom reaches for an aluminum baseball bat leaning in a corner of the room.

KIRA (CONT'D)

No, no, no, no...

Just as Kira is about to run for help - Tom raises the bat and swings with every bit of strength he can muster. The weapon glances off the back of Dillon's skull with a crack loud enough for Kira to hear. Dillon is thrown forward onto the bed and he turns to face his father - hands raised in a defensive posture as he wails in agony.

But Tom shows no mercy, bringing the bat down again and again - spraying the walls with blood - panting with the effort - his face contorting into a mask of hate. Finally, Dillon stops fighting...then stops moving. Tom steps back to catch his breath, spittle hanging from the corner of his mouth. Kira watches in horror, paralyzed. Then Arlene joins her husband at the door, with the meat cleaver in hand, and they discuss something in tones far too calm for the situation. Dillon's bloody hand suddenly appears on his window, smearing the glass as he pulls himself up to face Kira - screaming. Arlene and Tom descend upon their son with bat and blade in hand. Kira ducks to the side of her window. She waits a moment, and then peeks around the curtains - only to find Arlene standing in the window, staring directly at her.

MORGAN

Are you all right?

Kira pulls the curtains closed with a violent jerk and runs away from the window - to the door where Morgan stands.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

What is it?!

Kira grabs Morgan's hand and tries to drag her to the window, but Morgan resists.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing?!

KIRA

They killed him. They fucking *killed* him, Morgan!
I saw it.

Morgan follows her sister to the window, but is clearly skeptical. Kira rips the curtains open and looks across to Dillon's bedroom, but the shade is down, the lights are off and there is no sign of the blood smear on the window pane.

KIRA (CONT'D)

(panicked)

It was there, Morgan. I *know* it was there. I swear to God.

MORGAN

What was there?

KIRA

The blood...

Morgan watches Kira pace the floor of her bedroom.

KIRA (CONT'D)

He wanted to leave - and they fought.
(MORE)

KIRA (CONT'D)

He pushed the old lady and the husband killed him with a baseball bat. And the old lady...

MORGAN

Arlene?

KIRA

Yeah - Arlene... She came in with a fucking butcher knife.

MORGAN

To kill Dillon?

KIRA

No, he was already dead. I don't know what she was going to do with the knife.

Morgan doesn't know how to respond.

KIRA (CONT'D)

I did not imagine this, Morgan! I'm not crazy, okay?
(trying to convince herself)
I'm *not*.

MORGAN

(gently)
Should I get your dad?

KIRA

No.

She sits on the bed, running the whole thing over again in her mind, but when she speaks again - Kira sounds less certain than before. Morgan sits at the vanity and notices the open book.

KIRA (CONT'D)

It was *real*.

MORGAN

Have you been taking your...you know... medication?

Kira rises and returns to the window. Morgan goes to the door.

KIRA

I know what I saw, Morgan.

Morgan hesitates, wanting to believe, but she can't. Finally, Morgan exits and closes the door - leaving Kira alone with her troubling thoughts.

INT. KIRA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Kira opens the medicine cabinet and reaches for a bottle of prescription sleeping pills.

INT. REED HOUSE - JOSH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Perplexed, Josh takes a break from his work at the computer to rub his eyes and finish a nearby can of Coke. Kira approaches the room, in her nightclothes, and stops in the open doorway. She seems frightened.

KIRA

Dad?

JOSH

Hey, come on in. You up for a game of Half-Life?
The work is crap tonight, anyway.

Kira enters the room and sits.

KIRA

No thanks. I need to talk about mom - and me.

Josh's expression turns serious.

JOSH

Okay.

KIRA

Did she ever...see things...that weren't there?

JOSH

No. She got depressed. A lot.

KIRA

She died at Boston General, right? Of pneumonia.
Because the day we came here - I dreamed she was
in a *mental* hospital.

Josh suddenly looks worried and very guilty.

KIRA (CONT'D)

And you were there, visiting. Her wrists were
bandaged like she'd --

JANE (O.S.)

Josh...

Kira stops talking and Josh looks to the hall.

JOSH
Yeah?

JANE (O.S.)
Honey, I need you.

Josh stands.

JOSH
Let me just see what she needs.

Kira sighs and stands to leave.

KIRA
(frustrated)
Forget it.

JOSH
No, stay. I'll be right back. We *should* talk about this.

Josh leaves the room and Kira waits for a moment and then steps into the adjoining bathroom, closing the door behind herself.

INT. REED HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Josh moves down the third-floor hallway to the stairs and finds Jane finishing the climb up from the second story. She wears a short silk robe with nothing beneath. As soon as Josh sees the look in her eyes - he knows what she wants.

JANE
Come to bed. I'm lonely.

She moves closer to kiss his neck.

JOSH
I'll be down in a few minutes. Kira and I are talking.

Her mouth finds his and she reaches under his shirt.

JANE
Talk later. I need you *now*.

He begins to respond - then gently pushes Jane away.

JOSH
This is important to Kira.

She lowers her hand to his zipper and looks into his eyes.

JANE

And *this* is important to me.

Fighting temptation, he pushes her away once again and starts back to the office.

JOSH

I'll come to bed as soon as we're through.

But Jane's not giving up. She smiles devilishly and "stalks" him back to the office. When they arrive at the door, they see no sign of Kira. Jane approaches Josh again, but this time he doesn't resist.

JOSH (CONT'D)

She must have gone back to her room. I should go down.

Jane drops her robe and whispers:

JANE

Yes, you should...

INT. REED HOUSE - BATHROOM ADJOINING OFFICE - NIGHT

Kira washes her hands, suddenly feeling the effects of the sleeping pills. She turns to exit, hears sounds coming from the next room, and hesitates before opening the door. Kira turns the knob and pushes it open - just a crack.

KIRA'S POV THROUGH PARTIALLY-OPENED DOOR

Jane straddles Josh as they make love, seated on the swiveling chair he uses at the computer. Josh is clothed, except for his pants and underwear, which are around his ankles. But despite the fact that Jane is naked and Josh is not - she is clearly in charge. Jane kisses Josh passionately and increases the tempo, as if putting on a show for Kira's benefit. She swivels the chair so that Josh's back is toward the door and she faces it - before kissing Josh again and biting his lip hard enough to draw blood. Jane then leans back to make eye-contact with Kira, Josh's blood still on her smiling lips.

KIRA CLOSES THE BATHROOM DOOR

and locks it. Feeling repulsed, trapped, and woozy from the effects of the pills, Kira sits on the bathroom floor, leans back against the wall, and closes her eyes.

FLASH FRAME:

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Viewed from an anonymous POV, Josh's face fills the screen, panting and grunting in an act of animalistic intercourse with the unseen person beneath him. But as he moves while staring into the camera, Josh seems unlike himself: darker, more aggressive - almost sadistic in his thrusts.

IN THE NEXT BED,

A fearful FEMALE PATIENT turns away from the violent act of sex, pulling the sheets over her face and covering her ears in an attempt to block out the sounds. From this vantage point we can see Josh atop Karen.

KAREN SEEMS DRUGGED

and confused. As Josh's movements quicken, she looks into his eyes and sees something that frightens her.

KAREN'S POV OF JOSH

as his face gradually changes to that of the sinister orderly in the first dream sequence. His piercing eyes glare as he climaxes with a wolfen howl.

INT. REED HOUSE - BATHROOM ADJOINING OFFICE - MORNING

Kira awakens, covered with sweat. She looks around the room, wild-eyed, trying to gain her bearings - but she's gone from one nightmare to another. The bathroom now contains nothing but a dripping wooden spigot, in place of the sink, and a fetid pit where the toilet was. The walls of the room are rotting clapboard, crawling with bugs, and the floor is dirt.

INT. REED HOUSE - JOSH'S OFFICE - DAY

Kira exits the bathroom, but the nightmare persists. The "haunted house" theme continues through the office, in which the only consistent element is Josh's computer, which looks just as it did before, but now sits atop a wooden table at the center of the room. Kira sees moving shadows outside the windows, and fluttering sounds - like birds, or bats - beyond them, but she lacks the courage to move closer. Kira backs away from the windows on creaking floorboards and steps out into the hall.

INT. REED HOUSE - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Desperate to get out, Kira hurries through the decrepit hallway and down the rickety stairs.

INT. REED HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kira descends the stairs and enters the room. The designer couches have been replaced by decaying wooden benches and the beautiful hearth is now a gaping, black hole surrounded by charred gray stone. Kira moves closer and sees bones in the fireplace ashes. Amazed by the vividness of this dream, she reaches out to touch one of the splintered, rotting benches, but just as she makes contact - a voice from behind makes her turn.

JOSH

Kira?

In the blink of an eye - the room returns to its former beauty. Josh stands nearby with a box of cereal in his hand.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Where'd you go last night? I got back to the office and you were gone.

Kira tries to compose herself.

KIRA

I...went back to my room. I was tired.

JOSH

What happened?

KIRA

Happened?

His eyes drop to her hand.

JOSH

You're bleeding.

Kira looks down at her hand and sees blood dripping from her index finger. Upon closer inspection, she discovers a large splinter lodged in its tip. She looks at the couch - and then to her father, confused.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Josh has all of the first aid supplies out. In fact, far too many supplies for such a minor injury. Kira is perplexed by the splinter and Josh is nervous, though not about the wounded finger. He uses a pair of tweezers to remove the largest piece of wood.

JOSH

Did that hurt?

KIRA

You don't have to do this. I can handle it myself.

He holds her finger under running water to rinse away the blood.

JOSH

Hold on. There's still some left in there.

He begins to prod with the tweezers.

KIRA

It's fine. I'm gonna be late.

JOSH

I wanted to answer your question - last night. There are some things you have a right to know. About your mother.

KIRA

Like?

JOSH

She was in a psychiatric hospital. Several times. You caught me off guard in the car that day. I didn't think you knew.

KIRA

I didn't. It was like I was having *her* nightmare. I saw you - and this guard with freaky eyes --

Josh is jolted by the last comment.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Ow! Shit...that hurt.

He rinses the blood away and puts the tweezers aside.

JOSH

There - I think I got it all.

He reaches for the Neosporin and tries to sound casual.

JOSH (CONT'D)

You said a guard?

KIRA

He was watching you and her when you came to visit.

She hesitates, feeling awkward as she remembers the sexual part of her dream.

KIRA (CONT'D)

And then I saw him again. Last night.

JOSH

What was he...doing?

Kira senses that her father is still withholding a crucial piece of information.

KIRA

She died in there. Didn't she?

Josh avoids her eyes, focusing instead on applying a gauze bandage.

JOSH

The day after you were born.
(with great difficulty)
Someone left a pair of scissors out and she...

He's unable to complete the sentence.

KIRA

I was named for the woman in the bed next to her,
wasn't I?

Josh looks up at her, pale as a ghost.

JOSH

How could you know that?

Kira considers her next words carefully.

KIRA

He raped her.

Josh can't bear to answer, but the tears welling up in his eyes confirm Kira's conclusion.

EXT. REED HOUSE - DAY

Kira exits the house with the previous conversation still very much on her mind. When she reaches the sidewalk, Kira looks over to the Ash's house and sees Arlene digging up the flowerbeds in her front yard. Kira crosses the street.

EXT. ASH HOUSE - DAY

Once again, Arlene is overdressed for the occasion. Her "gardening outfit" consists of a pink gingham sun dress, a frilly white smock, and garish diamond earrings. She's uprooted almost every flower in her garden, creating a mess - and an ominously substantial mound of soil. She uses the trickling garden hose to dampen the spot in which she's working - to soften the earth - and then tosses the running hose aside, onto the mound of dirt. She looks up from her digging and smiles.

ARLENE

Morning, dear. Sleep well?

Kira steps closer to the pile of soil.

KIRA

What?

ARLENE

Your bedroom light was on all night. I thought maybe you were having trouble sleeping.

KIRA

No, I'm fine. Is Dillon around?

Arlene returns to her digging.

ARLENE

He's gone, dear.

KIRA

Gone where?

ARLENE

To visit his cousins up in Portland for a couple of weeks. He's been restless lately - you might have heard him last night. He wanted to stay for a month, but we couldn't stand to be away from him that long - him being our one and only and all. I'm surprised you didn't hear him - he pitched quite a fit. Comes from getting everything you want, I suppose. But you've got to draw the line somewhere. Spare the rod, spoil the child.

Kira's eyes are drawn to the mound of dirt.

ARLENE (CONT'D)

I know, I've made a real mess of things. But I just woke up this morning and decided I was bored with everything out here. You know, my roses have placed first in the flower show for the last five years.

(confidentially)

The secret's in the fertilizer.

(beat)

Besides, sometimes it's good to start all over again. Like you with your troubles in Boston.

Kira is caught off-guard by Arlene's comment.

ARLENE (CONT'D)

Jane said your father told her all about it. Had him worried half to death with the drugs and the staying out all night. Even spent the night in jail once.

(titillated)

I'll bet *that* put a scare into you - all those prostitutes and lesbians wanting to rub up against you.

She takes a break to wipe the sweat from her brow with her forearm.

ARLENE (CONT'D)

But that's all behind you now. You're here with us
and we'll keep a good eye on you.

Arlene smiles, but her eyes are deadly serious.

ARLENE (CONT'D)

Watch your shoes dear.

Kira looks down at her shoes, which are in the path of the run-off from the water-soaked mound of earth. But the run-off isn't water - it's blood. Kira jumps back.

ARLENE (CONT'D)

It only takes a little water to ruin a nice pair of shoes.

Kira looks from Arlene's face, back down to her shoes, but what appeared to be blood just a moment ago is now only muddy water. While Arlene's back is turned, Kira studies the mound - and begins to recognize a shape, just beneath the surface of the soil.

MORGAN

I thought you were going to wait for me?

Kira reacts with surprise and then hurriedly walks away from the house with Morgan.

ARLENE

Are you ready for the big event, Morgan?

MORGAN

Not really, but my mother is - and I guess that's
what counts.

Arlene waves cheerfully.

ARLENE

You girls be good. We'll see you tonight.

INT. REED HOUSE - NIGHT

Tuxedoed WAITERS circulate through the CROWD, which consist of nearly every adult in Shadow Cove. Several of Morgan's FRIENDS are also in attendance. Jane flutters from guest to guest with broad smiles and kisses for all. Everyone at the party is dressed to the nines, but despite their outwardly festive demeanor - there is an underlying mood of somber anticipation. Kira accepts a caviar canapé from a passing server, takes a bite, and immediately regrets it. She spits the fish eggs into her napkin and tries to wash the taste away with a swig of champagne.

TOM

It's an acquired taste.

Kira turns to find Tom watching her - a little too closely. She takes an involuntary step back and adjusts the uncomfortable formal gown that Jane forced her to wear.

TOM (CONT'D)

Soon we'll be throwing one of these for you. Just a few months, if I'm not mistaken.

Kira nervously scans the room for a friendly face. Several of the guests who meet her searching eyes turn to one another and whisper.

KIRA

(under her breath)

Yeah. I can't wait.

TOM

You know, this is not an event to be taken lightly. The eighteenth birthday marks the end of childhood and the beginning of a new life. A new life with new responsibilities.

KIRA

I think I see some friends. Excuse me.

She turns and starts away before Tom has time to comment. As Kira crosses the room, the teeming mass of people part like the Red Sea to allow her passage. She tries not to react as they smile and stare and whisper in her wake.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Shane and Bobby finish their champagne and snatch more from a passing waiter's tray. Bobby, who has already had quite a bit to drink, is the first to spot Kira in her formal gown. He whistles through his teeth in admiration.

BOBBY

Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world - she walks into mine.

SHANE

Wow.

She checks out his tux and smiles.

KIRA

Not bad yourself.

SHANE

Hey - what time was Morgan born?

KIRA

I don't know. Why?

An EAVESDROPPING GUEST addresses Shane.

GUEST

Nine thirty-five.

Kira gives the guest an odd look and turns to Shane for an explanation. He checks his watch.

SHANE

Ten minutes...

BOBBY

Gather the horses, pilgrim. The sun's settin'.

KIRA

You just got here.

SHANE

I'm not into all the countdown craziness. Besides, tonight's Bobby's birthday, too. We're gonna go out and celebrate.

Bobby reaches into his suit coat pocket and flashes Kira his silver flask.

BOBBY

I've already started.

KIRA

What craziness?

Kira hears an excited murmur behind her and she turns to see Morgan descending the stairs like an old-time movie star. She wears a white sequined gown and looks absolutely breathtaking. The guests break into spontaneous applause and Morgan blushes. As the clapping continues, Morgan spots Kira in the crowd and gives her a look of awkward embarrassment.

BOBBY

If we hit it hard we can make the late show at the Rialto.

SHANE

Sounds good.

KIRA

You guys are really gonna bail on me for a movie?

Shane leans over and kisses Kira, catching her completely off guard.

SHANE

Come down later if you feel like it.

He stops at the front door.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Hey, that was our first kiss.

Kira smiles, despite her exasperation.

KIRA

And it may be our last.

Shane makes a pained face and clutches his hand to his heart, as if wounded, then exits. Morgan makes her way through the congratulatory crowd to Kira and they embrace.

KIRA (CONT'D)

You look amazing.

MORGAN

I'm so nervous. I'm afraid I'll trip over my dress or something with everyone watching.

KIRA

Your mom really went nuts.

MORGAN

These things are always like this. It's insane. You'll see.

Kira shifts inside the uncomfortable formal gown again. An ELEGANT COUPLE wave from across the room and make a beeline for Morgan, who turns to whisper in Kira's ear.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

I can't stand them - Mr. and Mrs. Mays. Shane's mother knows her, too. Shane says Mrs. Mays is so uptight - if you fed her coal she'd shit diamonds. I bet if you got *all* of mother's friends together they could open a jewelry store.

Kira laughs, shocked by her stepsister's uncharacteristically crude comment.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Well they *could*.

(quietly)

I think I had a little too much champagne before I came down.

The Mays reach the girls and Mrs. Mays gives Morgan a furtive hug and an "air kiss".

MRS. MAYS

Congratulations, Morgan darling. You look stunning.

Morgan opens her mouth to respond, but Mrs. Mays cuts her off.

MRS. MAYS (CONT'D)

And this must be Kira, the one we've been hearing so much about.

Kira nods, but is careful to stay out of hugging range. Jane appears at Morgan's side.

JANE

Why are you over here hiding in the corner? I've been looking all over for you. It's almost time.

Morgan shoots Kira an exasperated look as her mother drags her away through the crowd. As Morgan and Jane pass, the guests grow quiet and their attention is drawn to the platform at the center of the room.

KIRA

What time is it?

MR. MAYS

Nine thirty-four.

Kira slips off into the sea of people to make her way to the stairs. As she begins to climb them, a hush falls over the guests - and then they begin to count in unison.

CROWD

Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one...

Everyone cheers and raises their glasses in congratulations to Morgan amidst a rain of confetti and multicolored streamers expelled by explosive New Year's Eve party favors. Kira watches the eruption from the stairs and then continues on up. But then she feels someone's eyes upon her and turns to find MR. SMYTHE watching her, with his daughter Barclay on his arm. He is a dark, charismatic man - surrounded by women who hang on his every word. Looking more like a movie star than a lawyer, Smythe smiles at Kira with dazzling white teeth and raises his glass. She offers a perfunctory smile in return and exits.

INT. JOSH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Kira enters the room, unnoticed by her father who is working feverishly on the computer.

KIRA

You look nice in a tux.

He tugs at the collar.

JOSH

How the hell does James Bond wear one of these things while he's saving the world? I can't even *type* in it.

He turns toward her with a look of urgency.

JOSH (CONT'D)

You okay? Something wrong?

KIRA

Not anything I can explain. I just don't like this place.

JOSH

The place itself is better than the people. What a bunch of stiffs.

Kira smiles and steps into the room. Her father pushes his chair away from the computer and gestures for her to sit on his lap. She does.

KIRA

How long do we have to stay in Shadow Cove?

JOSH

If I can't crack this program they have me working on soon, they'll probably *make* us leave.

KIRA

Good.

His eyes return to the screen.

KIRA (CONT'D)

It's all just numbers and symbols.

JOSH

That's what all programs look like from the inside. They don't get all the user-friendly buttons and graphics until the end.

KIRA

What's it supposed to do?

JOSH

That's what's driving me nuts. Smythe told me he wanted a Net interface script that would act as a conduit between the end user and the core program the other guys are working on.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

But the specs he gave me aren't consistent with an interface. They're more, I don't know - destructive. Executed the way he wants it - it would have the architecture of a virus. And I *know* he wouldn't go to all this trouble just to crash some little old lady's email in Iowa. I suppose you could infect banking systems and steal money that way, but he doesn't need more money.

(beat)

It just doesn't make sense.

KIRA

Does Mr. Ash work on The Project, too?

JOSH

(still distracted)

No. I think his son does.

KIRA

Dillon? He's just a kid.

JOSH

Some of the best hackers in the world are *just* kids.

Kira hesitates before she speaks.

KIRA

Arlene said he went to visit his cousins or something.

JOSH

I know. Mr. Smythe called me today to ask if I knew anyone good to fill in for him.

KIRA

Why would they need someone to fill in - if he's only gonna be gone a couple of weeks?

Josh shrugs - and Jane appears in the doorway with a document in her hand. Kira stands.

JANE

Honey, we have guests.

JOSH

But they're all so boring.

Jane places her hands on Josh's shoulders and Kira starts for the door.

JANE

You really need to sign the contract for the house.
Mr. Smythe asked me about it.

She hands it to Josh and he sets it aside.

JOSH

I'll take a look at it later.

JANE

I've already read it. I just need your signature.

She sits in his lap, knowing that Kira is watching.

JOSH

I'll sign it before I come to bed.

JANE

(like a little girl)

You promise?

He kisses her.

JOSH

Promise.

KIRA

I'm gonna go.

Jane continues to "make eyes" at Josh.

JANE

Bye.

Kira makes a small, annoyed sound and exits.

INT. KIRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kira kicks off her shoes as she enters the room and closes the door. She unbuttons her dress while crossing to the window. Kira looks across to Dillon's room, but the shades remain down and the lights off. She steps out of the gown and crosses to the dresser to grab some casual clothes. When she turns - Kira finds Morgan standing in the open door. Kira jumps and holds the clothes in front of her.

KIRA

Shit, you scared me.

MORGAN

Are you going somewhere?

Kira starts to answer, but then she senses something odd about Morgan. She seems cold and humorless.

KIRA

You have a fight with Jane or something?

MORGAN

You know, she went to a lot of trouble - and it's an important night for me. But I guess you're just too *special* to be bothered with my little party.

KIRA

Special...?

Kira tries to act casual, despite a sinking feeling that something is very wrong. She turns away and slips into her clothes.

KIRA (CONT'D)

That's probably the *last* word I'd use to describe myself.

Kira slips her shirt on over her head, grabs a pair of sneakers and backs toward the door.

KIRA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I told Shane and Bobby I'd meet them. I'm already late.

Kira hurries out of the room and down the stairs.

KIRA (CONT'D)

I'll see you in the morning. Happy birthday.

EXT. ASH HOUSE - NIGHT

Kira exits her house and quickly crosses the street. She stops in front of the Ash house and looks at the garden, where new flowers have been planted, but the ominous mound of dirt remains. Kira steels her courage and takes a step onto the lawn. Then she feels eyes upon her once again and turns - to find Morgan's silhouette watching her from the bedroom window. Kira turns away from the Ash house and continues on down the sidewalk nervously.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Kira walks down a dimly-lit and sparsely-populated street in search of the movie theater. Her paranoia is in full bloom. A pair of TWENTY-SOMETHING COUPLES out on double date pass and as they do, they stare at Kira with blank expressions. She turns a corner and walks faster.

ANONYMOUS POV

Someone follows Kira, amidst the sounds of whispering.

KIRA LOOKS BACK OVER HER SHOULDER,

but sees no one following her. She spots a busy street ahead and speeds up.

THE ANONYMOUS POV SHOT

continues to follow Kira, gaining ground. The whispering grows louder.

KIRA BEGINS TO RUN

toward the busy street, looking back over her shoulder.

THE ANONYMOUS POV SHOT

moves closer, now within plain view of Kira, but she sees nothing.

KIRA RUNS FASTER,

still looking back over her shoulder, spurred by the whispering sounds that she now hears all around her. She runs blindly toward the curb of the busy street, until a hand grabs her by the arm - stopping her just before a truck speeds by, blaring its horn. Shane releases Kira's arm after the truck has passed. He's still dressed in his formal attire, although he has removed his tie and unbuttoned the top buttons of his tuxedo shirt.

SHANE

(concerned)

Man, that was close. What were you trying to do?

Kira looks around for whatever had been pursuing her, but senses that it's gone.

KIRA

Find you.

SHANE

Well, you did. And I'm glad.

Bobby staggers from a nearby storefront and pukes into a city trash can.

SHANE (CONT'D)

I've gotta get him home. Wanna come?

Kira nods in the affirmative and follows Shane, stealing one last look over her shoulder.

INT./EXT. SHANE'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Bobby sits in the back, in a stupor, while Kira looks in rear-view mirror and out the passenger side window to see if they're being followed.

SHANE

So she walked in on you. Big deal. Don't girls hang around together in their underwear all the time? Slumber parties and shit like that.

KIRA

Only in guys' fantasies and bad horror movies. It wasn't just the fact that she walked in. There was something else. The way she looked at me. Like that old movie - it was on TV a couple of weeks ago... The one about the woman who moves to this town where all the women start turning into perfect little robot housewives.

BOBBY

Stepford Wives. 1976. Directed by Bryan Forbes. Starring the oh-so-edible Katharine Ross.

KIRA

Yeah, that's the one. I'm telling you - five minutes before that bizarre countdown thing Morgan was *hating* the party and ragging on her mother's friends. Twenty minutes later she was looking at me like a Stepford Wife.

SHANE

Look out Bobby - in a couple of hours you're gonna sprout breasts and an apron.

BOBBY

(gypsy accent)

At three fourteen - when the moon is full -I will change into a hairy, murdering housewife with a taste for scrubbing toilets...and *blood*.

(seriously)

All I ask is that you get me to a mirror in time to watch my titties grow.

Shane looks at the car's digital clock.

SHANE

Only an hour to go.

(MORE)

SHANE (CONT'D)

(to Kira, mockingly)

We'd better get him home.

Bobby throws his head back and writhes in pain.

BOBBY

Hurry - I can feel it starting. Ah! Oh, fuck - it hurts!
Help me, Kira! Shoot me with a silver bullet before
I scrub again!

Kira can't help but smile as Bobby thrashes around in the back seat.

KIRA

Ha, ha.

Bobby suddenly stops and sits bolt-upright, assessing his condition.

BOBBY

I think I'm gonna blow my nachos.

EXT. BOBBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shane pulls the Lamborghini to the curb and Bobby staggers out to vomit onto the lawn.

KIRA

That's what you get for being an asshole.

Bobby starts toward his front door, waving weakly as Shane pulls away. When he reaches the porch, Bobby musters the strength for a fearsome werewolf howl.

INT. SHANE'S CAR - NIGHT

Shane looks back in the rear-view mirror as they drive away, smiling.

KIRA

Okay, so maybe I'm a being a little paranoid, but I
know people have been staring at me.

(beat)

And there are other things.

SHANE

Like what?

She starts to tell him about her "visions", but then decides against it.

KIRA

Forget it. It's my problem. I'll deal with it.

SHANE

(sincerely)

If you're *serious* about this - I could probably listen with a straight face.

KIRA

Right. Because you want a few more laughs.

SHANE

No. Because I wouldn't mind knowing you a little better before things go too far.

KIRA

How far is too far?

He shrugs noncommittally as they reach a four-way stop and it begins to rain. Shane switches on the windshield wipers.

SHANE

Where to?

They make eye contact and Kira makes a decision.

EXT. SHANE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Lamborghini sits at the curb of another beautiful home. The rain has reached its full intensity. The curtains are pushed aside in a darkened upstairs bedroom window.

INT. SHANE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Shane's tux has been arranged on a chair by the window as if it was an over-dressed scarecrow.

SHANE

It's still raining.

He drops the curtains back in place and uses a nearby baseball cap to complete the gentleman scarecrow - then turns away to rejoin Kira in bed.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Shit, it's cold out there.

Kira laughs as she watches him scurry naked across the room and jump under the covers with her.

SHANE (CONT'D)

(shivering)

You saw that episode of Seinfeld where the girl walks in on George when he's changing after swimming in

(MORE)

SHANE (CONT'D)

the lake, right? You know - the "shrinkage factor"?
Well, keep in mind - the same thing applies to
freezing cold bedrooms.

She smiles at his insecurity and snuggles closer. He looks toward his creation by the window.

SHANE (CONT'D)

That should keep your monsters away.

KIRA

What if this is all in my head? What if I really *am*
just...

She watches for a dismissive laugh or smile, but finds only genuine concern.

SHANE

Crazy?

(beat)

I don't know.

KIRA

But *you* don't believe me?

He studies her wounded fingertip as he ponders the question.

SHANE

If I do - then that'd make me crazy, too. Right?

KIRA

Maybe.

SHANE

Okay. I do.

She bites his bare chest hard enough to make him yelp.

KIRA

Do you believe *everything* the crazy girls you sleep
with say?

SHANE

No. Just you.

KIRA

Why?

SHANE

I don't know. It doesn't make any sense - and if you tell anyone, I'll deny it, but... I think I do.

KIRA

Then how do you explain it?

He pulls Kira closer and kisses her.

SHANE

Can we work on *that* part later.

ANONYMOUS POV AS BEDROOM DOOR IS OPENED SLIGHTLY

Someone watches Kira respond to Shane's kiss - and then the couple makes love.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL COURTYARD - DAY

Kira exits the building, looking for Shane. She finds him walking away from a table where Bobby is seated with the group of lettermen that followed Kira through the halls. Shane looks troubled.

KIRA

What happened?

SHANE

He blew me off.

KIRA

Same thing happened to me with Morgan.

Kira looks at Shane, waiting for some sort of acknowledgement.

SHANE

Yeah, okay - it's weird. He hates those guys. He's probably just fucking with me for bailing on him last night to be with you.

Kira looks over to the lettermen's table and Bobby meets her eyes, but doesn't respond. Barclay Smythe eats a fudge brownie as she exits the building with her friends. Morgan is now among them. Barclay purposely brushes against Shane while passing. She licks the chocolate frosting from her lips and makes eye contact.

BARCLAY

Got condoms?

Barclay's friends snicker as they exit. Kira starts to make a comment, but Shane gives her a "don't give her the satisfaction" look.

KIRA

Did you see Morgan?

Shane watches Morgan and the other girls walk away.

SHANE

Yeah. She looked like one of them.

(beat)

I've gotta stop by the library for a minute. You wanna come?

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

As Kira and Shane approach the library, they see Jane and Mr. Smythe exiting. Jane shakes Mr. Smythe's hand and gives him the contract bearing Josh's signature. Kira pulls Shane out of sight until Jane leaves. Shane and Kira then follow Mr. Smythe, and the contract, into the library.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Shane and Kira watch as Mr. Smythe hands the contract to Nick, who approaches the vault.

KIRA

My father said something about The Project last night. He said that his part looked like it was supposed to be a computer virus. Why would Mr. Smythe spend all this money just to make a virus?

SHANE

And if he *is* - what does it have to do with what you've been seeing?

Mr. Smythe leaves the library and Nick unlocks the vault, which attracts the attention of several nearby students. But Nick only opens the vault enough to enter - and then he emerges a moment later to secure the walk-in safe.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Try to get more details from your dad tonight. I'll get on my father's terminal after he goes to bed and see what I can find. In the meantime, stay away from Morgan and your stepmother. Just in case you're *not* crazy.

INT. REED HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kira enters the room without turning on the lights and opens the refrigerator, but finds nothing appealing. The remains of a large, rare leg of lamb look especially disgusting. Kira closes the refrigerator door and finds Morgan standing there.

Her smile turns on as if was remote-controlled.

MORGAN

Whatcha doin'?

KIRA

I thought I was hungry. But I'm not.

MORGAN

Mom and I are gonna to write thank you notes. You should see all the wonderful gifts I got. Wanna help? It'll be fun.

KIRA

I...uh...wanted to talk to my dad. Have you seen him?

MORGAN

He's probably working. You sure you don't want to help? It'll be fun.

Kira walks away.

KIRA

Maybe later.

INT. JOSH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Kira enters to find her father typing away. She closes the door and sits near him, but he doesn't look away from his work.

JOSH

What's up?

KIRA

Did you figure out the problem with The Project?

JOSH

Problem?

KIRA

The virus thing. Because I think something's really wrong in this place. At first I thought it was just me, but now... Have you noticed how Morgan's changed since the party? She's gotten really...weird.

Josh turns to face Kira for the first time since she entered and we see the same subtle "blankness" evident in Morgan and Bobby.

JOSH

No, the only odd behavior I've noticed lately is *yours*. And I think you're wrong about this place. Shadow Cove is our home now and we have to try to fit in. Can you do that for me, K? Can you try to fit in?

Kira backs toward the door, horrified by the change in her father.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I just want you to be happy. You know that, don't you?

KIRA

Yeah. Sure.

He gives her a "dead-eyed" smile and she exits.

JOSH

`Night.

KIRA

Good night.

INT. KIRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kira dials the phone as she paces. Her bedroom door is locked and the chair from her vanity has been wedged beneath the knob for added security. The phone on the other end of the line begins to ring and is picked up immediately.

SHANE (O.S. - FILTER)

(whispering)

Kira?

KIRA

Yeah. Did you find anything?

SHANE (O.S. - FILTER)

No. He's been on the computer all night, but the mainframe for the whole network is in the school library. You up for it?

She looks back toward her barricaded door.

KIRA

Right now I'd rather be *anyplace* but here.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GROUNDS - NIGHT

The wind shakes the trees and scatters the fallen leaves across the campus. Kira and Shane hurry across the courtyard and peer out from behind a building near the library.

SHANE

I don't see anyone. You ready?

She nods "yes" and Shane starts toward the library building with Kira close behind.

EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

They make it to the front doors and find them locked.

SHANE

I guess that would have been too easy.

Shane scans the area for signs of danger, but everything is quiet.

KIRA

Let's check the windows. Maybe they forgot to lock one of them.

SHANE

You take that side of the building and I'll go this way.

KIRA

Be careful.

He takes another nervous look around.

SHANE

That's what they always say in the movies right before the boyfriend gets hacked to death by the psycho killer. A goodbye kiss would guarantee it.

KIRA

Then I'll kiss you later.

SHANE

Good idea.

Kira goes her way and Shane goes his.

ON KIRA'S SIDE OF THE BUILDING

She looks inside the windows.

KIRA'S POV THROUGH LIBRARY WINDOWS

Her view of the room is blocked by bookshelves.

SHE TRIES TO OPEN A WINDOW

and finds it locked, then continues on to the next.

ON SHANE'S SIDE OF THE BUILDING

He tries two windows, but both are locked. Then a faint light shift in an upper window draws Shane's attention. He reaches for the sill and pulls himself up to take a look.

SHANE'S POV THROUGH LIBRARY WINDOW

The door to an office inside the library has been opened - allowing the light within to spill out into the reference area. We can see some of the CPU towers that comprise the network's mainframe inside this office. Nick exits the room, yawning, and crosses the main room of the library - to the vault - where he spins the ancient dial to locate the first number of the combination lock.

SHANE ADJUSTS HIS POSITION

in an attempt to get a better look at the combination, but a sound stops him. He turns and finds a large Rottweiler baring his teeth and uttering a low, threatening growl. A second Rottweiler approaches from the other side and sees Shane. He prepares to attack. Just as Shane is about to make a run for the school's main building, two hundred yards away, he hears Kira's voice nearing.

KIRA (O.S.)

They're all locked. Did you find anything?

Shane speaks without moving.

SHANE

(urgently)

Get out of here, Kira. Run. Now!

The dogs take a threatening step closer, just as Kira rounds the corner.

KIRA

What's wrong --

Kira falls silent when she sees the dogs, but when they turn their attention to her - the growling and snarling stops abruptly, though the animals' focus on the two teenagers remains absolute.

SHANE

I think they like you.

KIRA

Great.

Shane makes a subtle movement and the dogs turn back to him - growling and snarling again.

SHANE

What the... What did I do?

Kira takes a cautious step closer to Shane and the dogs back away in an equal amount. They continue to watch her carefully, but remain silent. Shane looks around nervously as the dogs wait for them to make the next move.

SHANE (CONT'D)

I think they used to have three of these. For security.

KIRA

You could have mentioned it sooner.

SHANE

Sorry.

Kira takes another step toward Shane and the dogs step back.

KIRA

Does the other one look like these two?

SHANE

Yeah. Larry, Moe and Curly.

KIRA

Curly's not coming. We buried him on the way into town.

Shane looks around, formulating a plan.

SHANE

Maybe if we can make it to the main building...

Kira's eyes dart to the building - and back to the dogs.

KIRA

Okay, let's try. Get behind me.

Shane does as instructed and together they begin to back toward the main building. The dogs follow, laser-focused, but stay ten feet away.

SHANE

Why you?

KIRA

Why me *what*?

SHANE

Why do the dogs like *you*. Why do *you* see all the weird shit?

KIRA

I'm crazy. Remember?

They reach the building and move toward a basement window. Shane finds a large rock and breaks the glass. The Rottweilers snarl and take a step closer.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Good dogs... Nice dogs...

Shane cleans away the jagged shards of glass left in the frame and slips into the basement.

SHANE

Okay. I'm in.

Kira kneels down, very slowly, and backs into the opening - never breaking eye contact with the dogs.

SHANE (CONT'D)

I've got you. Drop down.

Kira pushes herself back into the hole and the moment she looks away from the dogs - they rush forward, barking and growling.

INT. SCHOOL BASEMENT - NIGHT

Kira slides through the window and drops ten feet to the basement floor, guided by Shane. The dogs charge the window and Shane grabs the first thing he sees - a fifty-pound bag of dried beans. He steps up on a wooden crate and jams the burlap bag into the broken window in an attempt to block the dogs' entrance. The animals tear at the bag with their teeth while Shane fights to secure it. Just before he manages to block the window completely, Kira catches a glimpse of one of the Rottweilers as his eyes glow red and his shape shifts into a hideous creature.

KIRA

Did you see that?

He steps down from the window once it seems secure, but the dogs can still be heard attacking the heavy fabric of the bag with their teeth and claws on the other side.

SHANE

I saw two very pissed-off guard dogs, if that's what you mean. We'd better get out of here. I don't know how long this will hold them.

Shane pulls the chain to illuminate the single bare bulb in the storage area. Kira gets her first good look at the room and is terrified.

KIRA'S POV OF THE BASEMENT

The swinging light bulb reveals that the floor is carpeted with hissing snakes - and the walls are crawling with nasty-looking bugs.

A SIX-INCH LONG MILLIPEDE

crawls from the wall - onto Kira's hand. She screams.

KIRA

Oh shit!

Kira shakes the ugly critter off and backs away from the restless serpents.

KIRA (CONT'D)

It's happening again.

Shane looks around, but sees nothing unusual.

SHANE

What's happening?

KIRA

You don't see *this*?

SHANE

All I see - is that if we don't get out of here *now* we're fucking puppy chow.

EXT. BASEMENT WINDOW - NIGHT

The dogs are already making headway with the bag. They've managed to tear several small openings in the burlap and now expand the holes with their teeth and claws, allowing the beans to drain from the sack.

INT. SCHOOL BASEMENT - NIGHT

From Shane's perspective, the room is just an ordinary twenty by twenty by twenty-foot storage space. But the room does lack one thing: a door. Shane spots a walk-in refrigerator in the far corner. He takes Kira's hand and pulls her toward it.

SHANE

C'mon.

Kira closes her eyes and grimaces as she allows herself to be led through the snakes. When they reach the walk-in refrigerator Shane opens the door and looks in while Kira continues to avoid the reptiles at her feet.

SHANE (CONT'D)

It looks like there's a door on the other side. Let's go.

Kira takes a step into the refrigerator and recoils.

KIRA'S POV OF WALK-IN REFRIGERATOR

The fetid remains of several human bodies hang from meat hooks, carved like beef. The rusted chains squeak as the torsos sway and their blood drips in pools on the floor.

KIRA STEPS BACK

into the snake-infested storage room.

KIRA

I can't go in there.

SHANE

We have to. It's only meat.

KIRA

No...it's not.

EXT. BASEMENT WINDOW - NIGHT

The Rottweilers have released enough beans to diminish the volume of the bag. One of the animals manages to wedge his snout through the window.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

The dog barks as he makes headway.

SHANE

We have to go. *Now!*

Kira nods her head and takes his hand just as the first dog makes it through the window and hits the floor running. Shane pulls Kira into the meat locker and slams the door shut an instant before the snapping dog reaches them. The second guard dog wriggles through the window and leaps into the room.

INT. MEAT LOCKER - NIGHT

While the dogs howl and claw at the metal door, determined to get through, Kira averts her eyes and dodges the hanging bodies en route to the door on the other side of the refrigerator. Shane reaches the door and tries to open it. While he struggles with the latch, Kira sees globs of decaying flesh stuck to the walls around a meat-grinder - and scratches on the door, as if someone had tried very hard to claw their way out. The sound of the dogs scratching the metal door grates on Kira's nerves like fingernails dragged across a chalkboard.

KIRA

Would you open the fucking thing already.

SHANE

It's stuck.

He throws his body against the door.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

The dogs have managed to claw through the first of two layers of aluminum sheeting from which the door has been constructed. Their paws bleed, cut by the jagged metal, but the Rottweilers persist.

INT. MEAT LOCKER - NIGHT

While the dogs howl, Shane continues to batter the door with his shoulder until it finally gives way. He and Kira escape the meat locker and close the door.

INT. SCHOOL KITCHEN - NIGHT

As they pass through the kitchen, Kira sees rotting food on blood-stained cabinets and whispering shadows on the walls - following them.

SHANE

This place looks pretty spooky at night.

KIRA

You should see it from inside my head. Let's just get out of here.

Shane leads Kira out of the kitchen and through the dining room, pursued by the shadows.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - EXIT DOOR - NIGHT

Kira is first through the door and seems relieved to be outside. As they pass the basement window, both teens jump at the sounds of the dogs - trying in vain to reach the broken window - and the intruders. Shane and Kira hurry past the window and back to the library as the dogs howl and the wind blows.

OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY

Shane boosts Kira up to peer into the upper library window on the side of the building.

KIRA

The vault door is open.

SHANE

Nick was in there before. Can you see him?

KIRA

No.

AT THE LIBRARY'S FRONT DOORS

Nick steps out into the wind, drawn by the dogs' howls. He pulls his patched cardigan close and begins to walk around the building.

SHANE LOWERS KIRA TO THE GROUND

and raises his forefinger to his lips. As Nick's footsteps approach from one side of the building - Kira and Shane circle around the other way. When they reach the front of the building, they slip inside unnoticed. As Shane and Kira pass, the library doors are slammed shut by the wind.

NICK REACTS TO THE SOUND

and hurries to the doors. He finds himself locked out and searches his pockets for the keys.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Shane retrieves Nick's keys, from a desk near the door, and pockets them as he and Kira avoid the windows on their way to the office. But when they reach the vault, Kira stops Shane and gestures toward it. Their footsteps echo as they approach. Shane hesitates at the entrance, then pushes the massive iron door back on squealing hinges. The vault is revealed to be perfectly ordinary: a ten foot square enclosure with several sets of shelves that reach from floor to ceiling - all bearing antique books of various shapes and sizes. Shane pulls one of the oversized volumes from the shelf and opens it. Kira looks over his shoulder.

SHANE

What language is that?

KIRA

Looks like Italian.

Shane returns the book to the shelf and withdraws another, but the text in the second book is in another foreign language. Kira goes to a different shelf and begins to look through the well-preserved volumes.

EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Nick rattles the doors and then steps back in frustration. He gets an idea and returns to the side of the library.

INT. VAULT - NIGHT

Kira closes the book in her hand.

KIRA

They're Bibles. All in different languages.

SHANE

Smythe collects old Bibles? That's it? *That's* the big mystery?

Kira reaches up to replace a book on the top shelf and inadvertently knocks over a massive black Bible, which falls to the floor with a hollow thud and cracks a tile.

EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

At the same moment that the tile cracks - Nick breaks a window with a rock.

INT. VAULT - NIGHT

Shane looks toward the sound of breaking glass.

SHANE

What now?

Kira reaches down to retrieve the fallen book and notices the cracked tile.

ANGLE ON TILE

Kira touches the crack - and a corner of one of the three-foot square tiles falls inward - leaving a hole.

KIRA LOOKS TO SHANE

and he stoops down to investigate. Kira sticks two fingers into the hole and lifts up the corner of the tile. Shane helps lift it away - revealing a hole that leads twenty feet down. They lean over the hole to get a better look.

POV OF HOLE

At the bottom - off to one side - a dim light flickers, implying an adjoining space.

KIRA AND SHANE HEAR GLASS

fragments falling to the floor in the library and look to each other for a decision.

NICK CLIMBS THROUGH THE BROKEN WINDOW,

grunting and groaning with the effort. Once inside, he takes a moment to search the area for his keys and then gives up, cursing his failing memory. He then approaches the open vault.

NICK'S POV OF VAULT

as he nears. Kira and Shane are nowhere to be seen, the tile is in place, and the missing fragment is not obvious at a casual glance.

NICK TURNS OFF THE VAULT LIGHT,

swings the iron door closed, then locks it. The only light in the room is the faint flicker seen through the missing piece of tile.

INT. BENEATH THE VAULT - NIGHT

Kira and Shane listen as Nick locks the vault.

SHANE

What now, Nancy Drew?

Kira slides past him and continues down the ladder.

SHANE (CONT'D)

That's what I was afraid of.

Once she reaches the bottom of the ladder, Kira sees a network of catacombs spreading out beneath Shadow Cove like a spider's web. The tunnels stretch as far as the eye can see and are lined with shelves overflowing with documents. The only light sources are burning torches - mounted to the earthen walls of the catacombs at thirty-foot intervals. Shane reaches the bottom of the ladder and takes a look around.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Holy shit.

KIRA

Please tell me you see this.

SHANE

Tunnels, torches, papers... It's got a nice medieval vibe goin'.

Kira approaches the nearest shelf and pulls out a document.

KIRA

So why can you see *this*, but not the rest of it?

SHANE

I don't know. Maybe it's not - protected - or something.

KIRA

Protected from what?

SHANE

Hey, don't ask me. I'm making this up as I go along. I see secret tunnels and flaming light fixtures on the walls and I think witches and curses and shit.

Kira studies the document in her hand. It looks ancient. A distant torch hisses and pops, adding to Shane's nervousness.

SHANE (CONT'D)

What is it?

KIRA

A contract.

SHANE

For what?

Kira looks up, suddenly pale despite the orange glow of the firelight.

KIRA

Somebody's soul.

SHANE

Get the fuck outta here.

He takes the contract from Kira for a closer look.

SHANE (CONT'D)

(reading)

Archibald Freemont Andreeson. 12 August... 1892.

KIRA

Look at the second page.

He turns the page.

SHANE

More names. Mrs. Elizabeth Andreeson...and Archibald Freemont Andreeson junior.

(reading)

Bound by thine father and master to abide by mandate of thee document upon passing of thine ten and eighth year.

Shane looks to Kira for a translation, but he fears he already knows.

KIRA

He sold *his* soul, his wife's - and his *kid's*. On his eighteenth birthday.

Shane throws the document back on the shelf as if it was a snake.

SHANE

No, no, no...

He walks away with his hands up, as if distancing himself.

SHANE (CONT'D)

That's bullshit. Right? It has to be. I'm not even sure I believe in *God* - much less... Okay, if it was a contract for that guy's... Then it would have be signed in, you know... Right?

Kira lifts the first page of the contract to look at the signature.

KIRA

I guess not.

Shane takes another step back, feeling trapped and panicked.

SHANE

How can you be so fucking calm?

KIRA

I've been scared ever since we came here. At least now I know what I'm dealing with.

SHANE

Dealing with? *Dealing* with?! How the hell do you *deal* with this?!

Kira is at a loss for a response. Shane turns and continues down one of the endless tunnels.

SHANE (CONT'D)

(urgently)

Are they alphabetical?

Kira checks the contract after the one they had been reading.

KIRA

It looks like it.

SHANE

All right.

He stops to check a contract and then continues into the catacombs. Kira gets the idea and begins to hunt for her father's contract.

INT. CATACOMBS - LATER - NIGHT

The flames of the torches burn lower, sputtering as they consume the dwindling oxygen in the tunnels. An anonymous POV shot travels through the passageways until it nears Shane. Sensing a presence, Shane looks up abruptly. His clothes are rumpled and his face is covered with sweat.

SHANE

Did you hear something?

Kira calls out from another passageway.

KIRA

What?

Shane looks around, but sees nothing.

SHANE

Forget it. It's getting hot in here.

He notices the dwindling flames of the torches and increases the pace of his search.

KIRA (O.S.)

I think I found it.

Shane pulls another contract from the shelves and the blood drains from his face as he reads it.

SHANE

(quietly)

Me, too.

Kira seeks Shane out, carrying her father's contract in her hand.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Bastard.

KIRA

Your father signed it?

SHANE

Yeah. He signed it.

KIRA

My stepmother signed for herself and Morgan fifteen years ago. But there's something weird about the one she got my father to sign.

She hands it to Shane and he thumbs through the pages.

SHANE

You're not on it.

Kira looks concerned and confused by the exclusion, rather than relieved. Shane returns his attention to the contract bearing his name - and rips it up into twenty pieces before tossing it to the ground.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Fuck him.

As if triggered by the action, a sudden gust of wind sweeps through the catacombs - extinguishing the torches in the immediate vicinity. Shane pulls Kira close, in a protective gesture, and then the torches relight themselves. Kira looks down at the shredded document, which is now whole again.

KIRA

I guess it's not that easy.

SHANE

Let's get out of here.

THE ANONYMOUS POV SHOT

tracks them as the torches flicker again and the flames grow dim. Kira wipes the perspiration from her forehead.

KIRA

I'm getting dizzy.

SHANE

The fire's using up the oxygen.

They hurry down the tunnel in search of an exit.

KIRA

This place is like a maze. I don't even know how to get back to where we *started*.

Shane leads the way, walking fast, leading Kira by the hand.

SHANE

C'mon. There's gotta be another way out.

Kira senses the presence.

KIRA

Shane...

He walks faster, shooting a look over his shoulder.

SHANE

I know. I feel it, too.

They break into a run and round a corner. All the tunnels look the same, lined with shelves loaded with millions of documents - some new and some ancient.

INT. CRYPT - NIGHT

The metal grating embedded on the floor of the crypt is pushed out. Shane and Kira emerge a moment later, sweating and short of breath. The crypt is empty.

KIRA

Where are we?

SHANE

I don't know.

Shane goes to the heavy stone door and tries to push it open.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Give me a hand.

Kira obliges and together they manage to move the door.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

As they step out of the crypt, Shane notices a bronze plaque near the door.

SHANE

Please tell me this is a coincidence.

(reading)

Karen Elise Reed. Beloved wife and mother. Nineteen fifty-eight to nineteen eighty-three.

KIRA

That's was my mother's name.

SHANE

She's buried in Shadow Cove?

KIRA

No. That's why the crypt is empty.

SHANE
Somebody's fuckin' with us.

He looks around nervously.

KIRA
What now?

SHANE
I guess we try to act normal until we figure out what to do.

He checks his watch.

SHANE (CONT'D)
We should get you home before your parents miss you.

KIRA
They won't. Besides, I don't want to be alone.

Shane embraces her.

INT. SHANE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shane unlocks the front door and leads Kira into the house.

KIRA
What about your dad?

SHANE'S FATHER emerges from the kitchen with a sandwich in hand.

SHANE'S FATHER
He's right here - so don't do anything you wouldn't want him to see.

Kira takes a startled step back. Shane's father's eyes roam across her body in an inappropriate manner. Even when Shane speaks to him - his father's focus is on Kira.

SHANE
Dad... You're up late.

SHANE'S FATHER
Couldn't sleep. What's your excuse?

KIRA
We were studying.

SHANE'S FATHER
Biology?

SHANE

Trig. And then we...caught the late show at the Rialto.

SHANE'S FATHER

No school tomorrow?

SHANE

Yeah. We were just going up.

Shane's father continues to stare.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Oh - sorry. Dad, this is Kira.

Shane's father extends his hand and Kira accepts it - reluctantly.

SHANE'S FATHER

Nice to see you again, Kira.

KIRA

We haven't met before, Mr. Harper.

His smile is lecherous.

SHANE'S FATHER

You're right. We haven't.

Shane puts his arm around Kira's shoulders to guide her away from his father and up the stairs. Shane's father takes a bite of his sandwich.

SHANE

You two keep it down up there. I've gotta get up early tomorrow.

INT. SHANE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Shane follows Kira in and shuts the door.

KIRA

Tell me that wasn't bizarre.

Kira sits on the bed. Shane goes to the window and scans the street for anything suspicious and then closes the curtain.

SHANE

He's *always* been a pervert. I meet a new "girlfriend" every other week. Usually in the kitchen - the morning after.

Shane looks for something that could be used as a defensive weapon, but the closest he can find is his lacrosse stick - which he carries back to the bed. Shane props the stick up against the wall, within arm's reach, and joins Kira. He sits on the bed and leans back against the wall. She lies across his chest.

KIRA

I have friends back in Boston who would *kill* for a father that would let them bring someone up to their bedroom at two in the morning.

(beat)

Right now, I just wish I had mine back. He probably hasn't even noticed I'm gone.

She closes her eyes.

KIRA (CONT'D)

I'm so tired.

Shane strokes her hair and alternates his focus between the room's two entry points: the window and the door.

SHANE

Go to sleep.

KIRA

(thick-tongued)

What about you?

SHANE

I'm gonna stay up for a while.

He kisses the top of her head and then sits guard as Kira sleeps.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - LACROSSE FIELD - DAY

The ball is put into play for the last time and the COACH calls out instructions to both sides as the scrimmage game concludes. Shane is on the side comprised of mainly UNDERCLASSMEN and Bobby plays on the team with the older seniors. Bobby and his TEAMMATES play with ruthless intensity - delivering punishing body checks that are way out of line for a practice game. But rather than curbing the violence - the coach encourages the guys to play harder.

COACH

Get in there, Harper! What - are you afraid they're gonna mess up that pretty face?!

Exhausted and dripping with dirt and sweat, Shane covers Bobby as the opposing team moves the ball down the field toward him - and the goal. Bobby runs to the left, jockeying for position, and Shane sticks with him.

BOBBY

Back off. You're starting to piss me off - and your girlfriend's not here to protect you.

SHANE

Oh, you *can* talk. That's the first thing you've said to me since your birthday. I was starting to think they took your tongue, too.

Bobby elbows Shane in the head - knocking him to the ground.

BOBBY

What can I say. Things change.

ANGLE ON CHEERLEADERS AT THE SIDELINES,

practicing their routines. Barclay and Morgan head the group.

BACK TO SCENE

Shane gets up and continues to shadow Bobby as the ball travels toward them, downfield, and Bobby continues to batter Shane as he attempts to find his way clear for a pass.

SHANE

Maybe there's a way to reverse this thing. Maybe if we--

Bobby delivers an elbow to Shane's stomach and shoves him to the ground again. Shane coughs and groans as he struggles to his knees.

BOBBY

What *thing*? And who says I'd want it reversed if I could? You'd be amazed how good it feels to just not give a shit.

Bobby kicks Shane in the head and laughs.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Like that. That *really* felt good.

Shane clambers to his feet and staggers into centerfield after Bobby.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Over here! I'm clear!

(to Shane)

And the girls - they do *everything*. It's fucking amazing, man. You'll see - if you live that long.

SHANE

I'm not giving up on you.

The PLAYER carrying the ball hurls it toward Bobby, who catches it in the webbing at the end of his stick and rushes toward the goal. Shane tries to catch him, but his injuries slow him down. Bobby makes a goal just as four players from his team converge on Shane at full speed from different directions - battering him mercilessly. Shane collapses in a heap onto the muddy field and the dead-eyed players climb off of him as the Coach blows his whistle, signaling the end of the game.

COACH

Now *that's* the way to do it! Nice job! Okay, men - let's hit the showers.

Shane rolls in the mud, clutching his sides, as Bobby's teammates congratulate him on the goal and smirk at Shane's agony. One of the UNDERCLASSMEN stops on the way to the showers.

UNDERCLASSMAN

Man, those guy's are assholes. You okay?

Shane tries to stand, but ends up collapsing back onto the field.

SHANE

I think I'm just gonna hang out here for a minute. I'll be okay.

The younger student nods and hurries to join the rest of the team as they disappear into the locker room. Shane closes his eyes and takes a series of deep breaths in an attempt to push past the pain.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Shane enters the locker room holding his ribs and makes his way slowly through a changing area fit for an exclusive country club. The last of the other PLAYERS finish dressing and exit as Shane enters and unlocks his locker, then gingerly sheds his soiled clothes.

INT. SHOWER ROOM - DAY

The locker room is empty except for Shane, who turns off the water and wraps a towel around his waist. He heads for the sauna, walking like an old man.

INT. SAUNA - DAY

Shane ladles cold water onto the hot rocks, creating a burst of steam that fills the sauna. He uses his towel to buffer the heat of one of the slatted wooden benches before collapsing onto it and leaning back to close his eyes. The sauna door opens quietly and an indistinguishable figure enters - then lowers itself beneath the mist.

Shane relaxes until he feels hands on his thighs and he looks down to see Kira kneeling between his legs.

SHANE

What are you--

She raises her forefinger to her lips and her head ducks beneath the steam. Shane looks toward the window in the steam room door, but sees nobody else in the locker room. Somewhat apprehensive, but increasingly interested, he puts his head back and starts to enjoy the experience.

ANGLE ON SHANE'S THIGH

as long, blood-red fingernails scratch his flesh hard enough to draw blood.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Ow! Shit...

He looks down to find Morgan's face peering up at him from her kneeling position, with a devious smile on her face.

SHANE (CONT'D)

What the--

Shane tries to move away, but Morgan's claws dig into him and her eyes glow demon red. She snarls and bares pointed teeth, then plunges her open mouth down into the steam.

EXT. LACROSSE FIELD - DAY

Shane awakens from his dream with a start.

SHANE

...fuck!

Shane looks up into the sun from his supine position on the field - until Barclay Smythe and Morgan cast their shadows over him.

BARCLAY

Bad dreams?

MORGAN

Or *good* ones?

The girls snicker as Shane tries to get his bearings. Barclay turns to leave and the short pleated skirt of her cheerleader's uniform swishes back and forth.

SHANE

(groggy)
Hey, Barc - you know I can see your underwear from down here.

BARCLAY

No you can't. I'm not wearing any.

The girls walk away while Shane gets to his feet and checks his watch.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY AFTERNOON

Shane hurries in and finds Kira working at one of the computer terminals. He gives her a guilty kiss and sits.

SHANE

Sorry I'm late.

Just as Kira is preparing to ask about the cuts and bruises on Shane's face - Nick approaches with an armload of books. He sets the books down and blots his forehead with a handkerchief.

NICK

Okay, demonology and the occult. Why do you want these?

Nick looks to Shane for an answer, but he only looks confused.

KIRA

We're working on a paper. For extra credit.

Nick shrugs, apparently satisfied, and then goes to assist another STUDENT.

NICK

You're lucky we've got a lot of books on the subject. Mr. Smythe is quite keen on theology.

Shane waits until Nick is out of earshot, then speaks in a whisper.

SHANE

Are you nuts?

KIRA

We have to do *something*.

SHANE

So what's the plan?

Kira retrieves one of the books Nick brought and thumbs through it.

KIRA

I was hoping something in one of these would give us an idea.

SHANE

An idea of what?

KIRA

How to beat him.

Shane's look of amusement changes to one of concern.

SHANE

You *are* kidding...right?

She doesn't respond, but instead focuses on a passage in the book.

KIRA

Lucifer was his name when he was still an angel. It means bringer of light. But I found all these other names for him, too.

Shane reads her handwritten list.

SHANE

Old horny? Well, they certainly are *that*. The old gentleman, Old Harry... Clootie? All he needs is a couple of blowfish and he could start up a band.

KIRA

Mephistopheles is his formal name, but he seems to prefer Lucifer.

SHANE

He prefers?

KIRA

There are passages in one of these books that quote the devil. He always refers to himself by the name God gave him.

SHANE

Lucifer.

KIRA

Bringer of light.

She refers to another book.

KIRA (CONT'D)

And there's something in this one that says that a contract with Satan can be canceled within a year of it's signing by a...

She locates the applicable passage and reads.

KIRA (CONT'D)

...purification of fire.

SHANE

Great. We have to light your sister and Bobby on fire? They'll be thrilled.

She ignores his sarcasm.

KIRA

But the earliest references to Satan are in this one. It's written in Aramaic.

Kira sees the question in Shane's eyes and answers it.

KIRA (CONT'D)

An ancient form of Hebrew.

(referring to book)

See here... Each character of the Aramaic alphabet has a numeric equivalent.

SHANE

Like a code. What's this group of characters?

KIRA

It's Lucifer in Aramaic - if I translated it right.

She closes the books and refers to a final volume.

KIRA (CONT'D)

But this is what I really wanted you to see.

Shane reads the cover.

SHANE

Centuries, by Nostradamus.

KIRA

It's a book of prophecies. One of them says that Satan will return to earth around the year two thousand - as the lord of numbers.

Shane makes the connection.

SHANE

The Project.

EXT. MR. SMYTHE'S ESTATE - NIGHT

Kira and Shane skulk from one wing of the sprawling estate to another, scuttling from shrub to shrub. They stop near a large window and catch their breath in the shadows. Shane scans the grounds nervously.

SHANE

I keep waiting for those fucking dogs to jump out and bite me on the ass.

KIRA

Shhh...

SHANE

I don't even know what we're looking for.

KIRA

Confirmation.

They hear chanting inside the house and peer cautiously through the window into an elegant salon.

POV THROUGH WINDOW

Encircled by black-robed RITUALISTS, a scruffy TWENTY-SOMETHING HITCHHIKER, stripped down to his ratty boxer shorts, hangs upside-down at the center of the room. His feet are affixed by a heavy iron screw which has been threaded through his metatarsal bones - into a marble block in the ceiling. His arms have been nailed, outstretched, to a six-foot board - creating the overall impression of an inverted crucifixion. The man's body is covered in superficial cuts, each about three inches long. Some of the wounds have begun to clot, but others flow freely. Blood from a gash on the man's chest follows gravity down the curve of his neck, into the hitchhiker's matted beard, before dripping into a stone chalice positioned directly beneath him for that purpose. Mr. Smythe watches from an oversized and gilded antique chair with his daughter, Barclay, sitting on the floor at his feet. The people in the circle chant in an ancient language while Smythe leans forward to give his daughter a passionate kiss and slip his hand into her robe to cup her bare breast. After the kiss and the grope - Smythe grows bored.

MR. SMYTHE

Let's get on with it.

One of the women in the circle stands and approaches the hitchhiker. Like the others in the room, she wears a silver pendant on a chain around her neck which bears an Aramaic character. She produces an old-fashioned straight razor and slits the victim's belly, producing a cut far deeper and longer than the others.

The hitchhiker cries out in pain and weeps.

HITCHHIKER

Please don't kill me! No, please, please... If you let me go - I promise I won't tell anyone. I swear to God.

The woman doesn't respond to the pleading victim as she walks around the circle, making a choice, and then stops in front of one of the men in the group. She offers him the razor and he stands to accept it. She then sits in his place while he approaches the hitchhiker and cuts a deep, eight-inch gash starting at the inside of the wrist and continuing up the forearm. Blood pours from the severed artery, the hitchhiker's eyes flutter closed, and he begins to babble incoherently. The man with the razor returns to the circle, makes his selection, and passes the weapon to someone else. He then discards his robe and joins the first woman on the floor, where they begin to have sex while Mr. Smythe observes.

SHANE PULLS KIRA AWAY

from the window and whispers:

SHANE

That's enough confirmation for me. Let's get the hell outta here.

They turn to escape the horrific scene and Mr. Smythe's AGING BUTLER grabs Shane by the shoulder.

BUTLER

Looking for something, young man?

Shane tries to break free, but the old man is stronger than he looks. Kira tries to run, but the Butler grabs her with his other hand.

KIRA'S POV OF BUTLER,

who now looks cadaverous and possessed.

BUTLER (CONT'D)

I think Mr. Smythe would like to have a little talk with you, girl.

Kira fights back and together she and Shane barely manage to escape.

INT. SHANE'S CAR - NIGHT

The car pulls over in front of Kira's house.

SHANE

This is a bad idea, Kira. We've gotta get outta town - like *now*.

KIRA

I'm not leaving my dad and Morgan in this place.

SHANE

We'll get help and come back for them.

KIRA

I want to try to talk to my father again.

SHANE

You can't talk to him, anymore. You saw his signature. It doesn't matter if he was tricked or not. He signed.

KIRA

I've gotta try.

She gets out of the car.

SHANE

Fine, you try to talk to him and I'll go to my house and grab some shit. I'll be back in ten minutes. If anything goes down in there you get the hell out - with or without your Father.

She nods in agreement and starts toward the house. Shane speeds away.

INT. REED HOUSE - NIGHT

Kira unlocks the front door and peers into the darkened house. She steps inside and closes the door. Jane emerges from the shadows near the window, naked, and takes a sip of the cocktail in her hand as she studies Kira with a barely-disguised hunger.

JANE

Been out exploring? Or just fucking?

She steps closer, positioning herself between Kira and the stairs that lead up to the bedrooms.

KIRA

I'm sorry I'm so late. Is my father still up working?

Kira averts her eyes from Jane's body.

JANE

No, we've been fucking.

Kira takes a step forward. Jane holds her ground at the foot of the stairs.

KIRA

I need to talk to him.

JANE

He's asleep. It'll have to wait until morning.

Kira steels her courage and takes a step closer.

KIRA

It can't. I have to talk to him now.

Kira stops a foot away from Jane and continues to avert her eyes as she waits for her stepmother to move aside. Jane seems to enjoy Kira's discomfort.

JANE

You know, at first I really wanted us to be friends.
But you can be such a little bitch.

Jane takes another drink and smiles seductively.

JANE (CONT'D)

I like that about you. You've got passion. Heat.

Kira tries to pass, but Jane continues to block her.

JANE (CONT'D)

Are you hot *now*?

Kira takes a step back, frustrated.

KIRA

Look, I really want to see my father, Jane.

JANE

And I really want to see you, Kira. Without all those clothes.

Kira gives up and backs toward the door.

JANE (CONT'D)

But I guess *that's* not going to happen, either.

Kira exits and Jane calls after her.

JANE (CONT'D)

Have fun.

EXT. REED HOUSE - NIGHT

Kira exits the house and waits nervously at the curb.

INT. REED HOUSE - NIGHT

Jane watches from the window as Shane's car pulls up and Kira gets it. The Lamborghini speeds away and Jane reaches for the phone.

INT./EXT. SHANE'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Kira lifts Shane's partially-open gym bag off of her lap and as she's about to toss it into the back seat - she sees a gun inside.

KIRA

What's this for?

SHANE

Just being a good boy scout. It's my father's.

Kira zips the bag closed and tosses it in the back.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Everything okay at home?

KIRA

Only if having my naked stepmother put the moves on me qualifies as okay.

SHANE

You know, if she still had a soul - the thought of that could really do it for me.

He checks the rear-view mirror and turns a corner.

KIRA

I couldn't get to my father.

SHANE

Mine was banging some bimbo. What is it with these people. I thought *I* was horny.

Shane spots headlights moving up behind him.

SHANE (CONT'D)

We've got company.

The officer inside the police car behind turns on the flashing lights.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Do we pull over - or make a run for it?

KIRA

They don't know that we know, right? So we should act normal.

EXT. STREETS OF SHADOW COVE - NIGHT

The Lamborghini pulls over, followed by the squad car, and OFFICER WALTERS steps out. He approaches the Lamborghini and waits for Shane to roll down the window.

OFFICER WALTERS

In a hurry, Shane?

SHANE

Just going for a drive, Mr. Walters.

OFFICER WALTERS

Jane Reed seems to think you're runnin' off with her stepdaughter, there.

SHANE

Nope. Just driving.

The officer uses his flashlight to peer into the back seat.

OFFICER WALTERS

All the same, I told her I'd bring you two back home.

KIRA

Okay. We'll get going, then.

OFFICER WALTERS

The thing is - I *promised* her I'd bring you back. So, why don't you two climb into the cruiser. You can pick up the car in the morning.

Shane and Kira exchange a look.

OFFICER WALTERS (CONT'D)

Come on, son. Your car will be fine.

SHANE

I'd really rather--

The officer rests his hand casually on his holstered weapon.

OFFICER WALTERS

I'm afraid I have to insist, son.

Kira and Shane step out of the car and reluctantly walk toward the cruiser. Officer Walters opens the door for Shane and he gets in.

KIRA

Oh, I forgot my bag.

She starts back toward Shane's car.

OFFICER WALTERS

It'll be there in the morning.

KIRA

But I need it tonight. It's got my toothbrush and stuff in it.

The Officer arches his eyebrows and cracks a smile.

OFFICER WALTERS

Just goin' for a *drive*, huh?

Kira smiles and ducks into the car, but the officer reaches in through the open window and grabs the bag before Kira can.

OFFICER WALTERS (CONT'D)

I'll get that for you, Miss.

Kira hesitates, and then joins Shane in the back of the squad car. The officer moves to close her door and hands her the gym bag with a sly smile.

OFFICER WALTERS (CONT'D)

Here you go.

INSIDE THE SQUAD CAR

Kira takes the bag and the officer returns to the driver's seat. He starts up the car and does a U-turn in the street. Kira looks nervously from Shane to the bag.

OFFICER WALTERS (CONT'D)

I hope you kids have protection. There's all sorts of things out there you can catch, you know.

Shane quietly unzips the bag, revealing his Father's gun.

SHANE

Yeah, we have protection.

OFFICER WALTERS

That's smart. I know the parents don't like to think about you kids out there doin' things to each other, so they usually don't say enough about it.

The cop looks at Kira in the rear-view mirror and she sees him as the ghoul he really is.

OFFICER WALTERS (CONT'D)

But you look like a girl who knows her way around a bed.

He smiles, revealing black gums. Kira tenses up and gives Shane a look that says, "It's happening again".

SHANE

(whispering)

Are you sure?

She nods subtly as the cop continues to eye her lecherously. Shane pulls the gun from the bag and hesitates, then whispers to Kira again.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Are you *really* sure? Because...

Kira nods emphatically, never taking her eyes off the cop.

SHANE (CONT'D)

(to cop)

Her stepmother called you at the station?

OFFICER WALTERS

No, Jane called me on my cell. I was on the way home. She said she wanted to keep it unofficial.

SHANE

So, no one else knows that you came to get us.

The officer winks at Shane in the mirror.

OFFICER WALTERS

Our little secret.

Shane levels the gun at the back of the officer's head - pressing it against the metal grating that separates the front seat from the back.

SHANE

Pull over.

The officer looks over his shoulder and sees the gun.

OFFICER WALTERS

Now, Shane - you *really* don't want to do this.

SHANE

You're right - I don't. But I will if you don't let us out.

The officer begins to slow the car - and then twists around without warning. He breaks through the grating with his bare hand and grabs the gun. Shane tries to pull the trigger, but nothing happens.

OFFICER WALTERS

You forgot the safety, son.

Shane fights to hold onto the gun - reaching forward with his other hand and switching off the safety. The gun goes off immediately - blowing the top of the cop's head off. Kira screams and the officer slumps forward. His dead weight compresses the gas pedal and the car speeds toward a building. Kira and Shane brace themselves.

EXT. STREETS OF SHADOW COVE - NIGHT

The unguided squad car races up an embankment and flips as it crashes into the building and bursts into flames.

BACK INSIDE SQUAD CAR,

Shane and Kira try unsuccessfully to open the doors while the smoke and flames build. Finally, Shane kicks out a side window and helps Kira from the burning car.

EXT. STREETS OF SHADOW COVE - NIGHT

Shane and Kira take cover behind the building just before the car explodes and PEOPLE rush to the scene.

SHANE

Are you all right?

KIRA

Yeah. Where do we go now?

SHANE

We can't get back to the car without being seen. And if we can't get out of town - maybe we should go back to the library to see if we can hack into the mainframe. If we can find out what The Project *is* - that might be a start.

KIRA

Okay. Let's go.

They slip around the back of the building.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Kira emerges from behind a building and calls to the guard dogs, who lie outside the library door.

KIRA

Here, doggies... Come here - I've got something for you.

The dogs jump to attention and walk cautiously toward Kira.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Come on, guys... It's okay...

Kira backs around the corner, out of sight, and the dogs follow. A moment later we hear a heavy thud, followed by a pathetic whimper and a growl from the second Rottweiler. Then we hear another thud - silencing the growl. Kira and Shane round the corner and he tosses aside the two-by-four he used on the dogs.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Are they dead?

SHANE

No, but they're gonna wake up with a headache. Let's make sure we're not around when that happens, okay?

They cross to the library and Kira stops at the broken window that has been boarded up.

KIRA

Should we try to get in here?

Shane pulls Nick's keys from his pocket and jingles them.

SHANE

Or we could just use the keys.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY - INNER OFFICE - NIGHT

Shane unlocks the door and they enter. The room is filled with the high-tech equipment that comprises Shadow Cove's network mainframe. Working in the dark, Shane sits at the keyboard and boots up the system. The start-up screen is a dialog box requesting a password.

SHANE

Shit. I was afraid of that.

KIRA

Is that it? We can't get in?

SHANE

Most people use their birthday or social security number as a password.

KIRA
Does *he* even have a birthday?

SHANE
Beats me. You're the expert.

Kira gets an idea and leans over to type three numbers - and then hit enter. A message reads "Invalid Password".

SHANE (CONT'D)
(amused)
666? Please.

Kira gets another idea and hurries out of the room.

KIRA
A number, right?

SHANE
Or a series of them. Where are you going?

KIRA (O.S.)
Be right back.

Shane continues to make guesses and enter passwords, but none are accepted. Then Kira returns with a book and sits beside him.

SHANE
What's that?

KIRA
The book on Aramaic.

SHANE
(catching on)
The coded alphabet.

KIRA
Maybe if we translate his name.

SHANE
But *which* name?

Kira thinks about it for a moment before answering.

KIRA
The name God gave him.

Kira tears the page with the numeric equivalents from the back and sets it beside a passage in the open book.

KIRA (CONT'D)

This is Lucifer in Aramaic.

SHANE

There are only five symbols. They look like hieroglyphics.

KIRA

The Aramaic alphabet only has twenty-two characters. The first character of his name should be equivalent to...

She runs her finger down the numeric-to-character translations on the torn page until she finds the one she's looking for.

SHANE

Sixty?

KIRA

Yeah.

Shane enters 60 into the password dialog box while Kira looks up the rest of the characters.

SHANE

What's next?

KIRA

Eighty.

Shane types 80.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Then three hundred...five...and nine.

Shane types in the last number and hits enter, but the invalid password dialog appears again.

SHANE

Shit. It was a great idea.

Defeated, Kira looks back down at the book. But then she spots something that gives her hope.

KIRA

Wait. Maybe I got the last one wrong. Try two instead of nine.

Shane types 608030052, hits enter, and the hardware around them whirs to life. He looks at Kira, impressed.

SHANE

I've never gone out with a smart chick before.
Comes in handy when you're fighting the forces of
evil.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

One of the Rottweilers starts to regain consciousness. He lifts his head sluggishly, looks around, then whimpers and goes back to sleep.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY - INNER OFFICE - NIGHT

Kira paces as Shane studies a series of graphs and schematics on the computer screen. He looks troubled.

SHANE

Oh shit...

KIRA

Can you tell what it is?

He opens another file and studies it carefully.

SHANE

I hope not. I mean, I hope I'm not really seeing
what I think I'm seeing.

KIRA

Why?

SHANE

It looks like a virus - like your dad said. But not a
computer virus.

KIRA

What do you mean?

SHANE

They've been translating genetic code into a numeric
code...and then trying to turn *that* into a living virus.

KIRA

My dad said he was working on some sort of interface
between computers and users. Over the Internet.

Shane nods in agreement as he looks through another file.

SHANE

That makes sense.

(MORE)

SHANE (CONT'D)

This virus has been programmed to spread from computers - to people. It could infect everyone who uses the Net...or email...

KIRA

Infect how?

Shane turns away from the computer to look at Kira and we see that he's afraid.

SHANE

Look, this shit is way over my head. But, from what I see here, I think the virus was designed to destroy...

He stops and gives a nervous laugh, suddenly feeling ridiculous.

SHANE (CONT'D)

There's no way. It's too fucking out there.

KIRA

What is it? What's the virus designed to destroy?

His smile evaporates and his tone turns deadly-serious.

SHANE

The human soul.

EXT. SHANE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shane and Kira approach on foot, walking fast. Shane carries his gym bag.

KIRA

Do you really think your program might work?

SHANE

I don't know, it's a pretty basic bug. It only takes up two floppies. I used it last year to wipe out some bad grades in English. But that wasn't on the mainframe.

KIRA

But you said if we can download it *into* the mainframe...

SHANE

Yeah, it might do some damage. Once we're inside - the hub of the system should be wide open.

INT. SHANE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shane opens the front door and peers in. He then leads Kira in and they move quietly up the stairs. Near the top - they step on a creaky floorboard.

INT. SHANE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Shane's father slices roast beef for a sandwich. He looks up from his cutting when he hears the squeak. The phone rings and he answers it.

SHANE'S FATHER

Hello?

(beat)

Hi, Jane - what's wrong?

As he listens, knife in hand, Shane's father looks toward the staircase.

INT. SHANE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Shane rifles through his desk in search of the floppy disks. Kira waits nervously by the window. Finally, Shane finds them.

SHANE

Okay, let's get outta here.

They go to the door, but find Shane's father waiting when they open it.

SHANE'S FATHER

I can't let you leave.

Shane sees the knife in his father's hand. He and Kira back into the bedroom as he reaches into his gym bag.

SHANE

We're not doing anything. We're just...

Shane falls silent as his father brandishes the knife.

SHANE'S FATHER

I'm sorry, son. I can't.

Shane pulls out the gun and points it at his father's head. This time he switches off the safety.

SHANE

I know what you did.

(beat)

Get out of our way.

Shane's father takes another step closer, shaking his head sadly.

SHANE'S FATHER

They won't let me.

Shane and Kira are backed into the corner. Shane's father moves within striking distance. Shane presses the muzzle of the gun against his father's forehead and his eyes jump from the knife - to his father's weary eyes.

SHANE

(miserable)

Please don't make me. Dad...please.

Shane's father pulls back the knife, preparing to strike.

SHANE (CONT'D)

I swear to God. I'll kill you.

SHANE'S FATHER

(sadly)

I'm already dead.

Shane's father brings the knife forward, but Shane closes his eyes and squeezes the trigger before the blade makes contact. The shot echoes in the tiny room and Shane's father falls dead. His expression is one of relief.

EXT. SHANE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shane wipes tears from his cheeks roughly as he rushes from the house. Kira follows.

SHANE

(determined)

C'mon.

KIRA

Back to the library?

SHANE

Yeah. After we stop at a gas station.

The question is on Kira's lips, but she remains silent.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Kira and Shane look back over their shoulders as they trudge through the cemetery. Each lugs two five-gallon containers of gasoline. They enter the crypt that bears Kira's mother's name.

INT. CATACOMBS - NIGHT

Shane and Kira douse the contracts with gas as they move through the tunnels on their way toward the library.

Shane tosses an empty container aside and opens another.

KIRA

I don't know about this.

SHANE

You said purification by fire. At this point - we've got nothing to lose.

ANOTHER SECTION OF THE CATACOMBS

Kira rounds the corner coughing and gagging from the fumes as she splashes the last of her gasoline onto the contracts. Shane emerges from another tunnel and discards his empty container. The ladder to the vault waits before them. Kira goes up first.

INT. VAULT - NIGHT

Kira pushes the loose tile up and away, then climbs into the dark vault. Shane follows, grimacing.

SHANE

Man, these fumes...

KIRA

Tell me again why we didn't go back in through the front doors.

Shane goes to the vault door and starts working on the exposed tumblers.

SHANE

I don't think the dogs are gonna like you quite as much after our last visit. Besides, vaults are made to keep people *out* - not in. Houdini made a living off that fact.

Shane struggles to see what he's doing in the dark and Kira reaches into the gym bag and extracts a box of matches. She pulls one out and prepares to strike it.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Don't light that unless you mean it.

Kira remembers the fumes and looks back down into the catacombs. Shane does something that causes the heavy metal tumblers click and he pushes the door open a fraction of an inch.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Abacadabra.

Kira looks back down to the match and Shane nods. She lights the match and tosses it down into the hole in the vault floor.

We hear the whoosh of flames below and the interior of the vault is illuminated by the dancing orange glow. Kira picks up Shane's gym bag and follows him into the darkened library.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY - NIGHT

As soon as the teenagers exit the vault, Mr. Smythe emerges from the shadows and grabs Shane. Shane tries to wrestle free, but Smythe is too strong.

SHANE

Kira - get out of here!

Smythe pulls Shane back toward the office, which contains the mainframe. His fingernails suddenly appear long and razor-sharp around Shane's throat. Mr. Smythe smiles, revealing rotted yellow teeth in place of the pearly whites he flashed at the party.

MR. SMYTHE

He's right, Kira. This is not for your eyes.

Kira pulls the gun from the gym bag and trains it on Smythe - following them toward the office.

KIRA

Let him go.

As if daring Kira to act - Smythe nicks Shane's throat with the nail of his forefinger, drawing blood. Kira advances and tries to level the gun at Smythe's head, but Smythe taunts her by ducking behind Shane. Kira's fear turns to anger - and then to rage.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Let him go!

She aims the gun and advances on Smythe, glaring at him with flat, black hatred.

MR. SMYTHE

Be sure, Kira. Be *very* sure.

They enter the office and Kira sees Nick at the keyboard. She points the gun at him and he appears amused.

KIRA

Move!

Nick does as instructed, moving to the door as Kira steps to the center of the room. Then Nick notices the smoke coming from the vault and rushes to investigate.

NICK

What have you done?

Kira watches Nick rush into the vault and then she turns the gun back on Smythe, who does his best to stay behind Shane. Something occurs to Kira.

KIRA

Why are you afraid of a *gun*?

Smythe continues to taunt her.

MR. SMYTHE

Why are *you* afraid to shoot it?

She fires without hesitation. Her expression is cold and her concentration absolute.

KIRA

I'm not.

The shot misses both Smythe and Shane's heads by inches. Smythe tightens his grip on Shane's throat and Shane fights for breath. Kira squeezes the trigger three more times - emptying the gun - but none of her shots hit their mark. Smythe laughs and Kira discards the gun.

SMYTHE

You lose.

Smythe snarls as his nails pierce Shane's flesh and he prepares to rip his throat open.

KIRA

(enraged)
NO!

Shane and Smythe's hair is blown back by a blast of super-heated air that emerges from Kira as she screams. Then Smythe shrieks in pain and pulls his hand away from Shane's throat. The veins in Smythe's hand bulge and ripple, as if the blood within was boiling. Then the rippling effect travels up Smythe's arm - to his neck - and finally to the side of his face, which bulges with building pressure. Smythe's face contorts and bubbles and he continues to scream - until his head finally explodes. The headless body slumps to the floor and Shane fights to catch his breath.

SHANE

What the fuck happened?!

Kira tries to shake off the trance-like state that had overtaken her.

KIRA

I don't know.

SHANE

Did *you* do that?

KIRA

(frightened)
I think so.

SHANE

How?

KIRA

I don't know. I got angry and all of the sudden I just felt like I could.

She looks at Shane with more fear and confusion than ever. Then they hear a noise coming from the vault and Shane rushes into the other room.

SHANE

Nick.

Kira walks carefully past Smythe's corpse and puts the gym bag on the desk.

AT THE VAULT

Shane slams the steel door closed and locks Nick inside.

BACK AT THE COMPUTER

Kira averts her eyes from Smythe's headless body as she locates the discs. Shane reenters the office, takes the floppies from Kira, and sits at the keyboard. The mainframe is already up and running.

KIRA

Does it matter where you...put it in?

Shane works quickly, looking through the files on the system, opening various folders and documents.

SHANE

Only if we want it to work. I've gotta upload it into a file that's part of the core program.

INSIDE THE VAULT

The smoke rises from the catacombs into the vault, obscuring Nick.

NICK

Kira!

BACK AT THE COMPUTER

Shane opens - then closes another document and Kira spots something.

KIRA

Wait. Open that one up again.

SHANE

We don't have time for this, Kira.

He reopens the document, which appears to be a database of women's names.

SHANE (CONT'D)

It's just a list of names and addresses.

Kira points to her mother's name on the list.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Your mother?

KIRA

Why is she on *his* list?

Shane double clicks the Karen's name and her birth and death dates appear, along with her last known address.

KIRA (CONT'D)

That's a mental hospital in Boston.

Shane closes Karen's file and opens another woman's.

SHANE

Another nut house.

He opens two more files.

KIRA

They were *all* in mental hospitals.

(beat)

Can you print out this list?

Shane moves his cursor to the print icon and clicks it.

SHANE

Done.

Kira goes to the printer to wait for the document while Shane continues his search for the best entry point into the program.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Okay, I think this one'll work.

INSIDE THE VAULT

The smoke continues to build as Nick hammers on the vault door and screams.

NICK

K-I-R-A!

BACK AT THE COMPUTER

The ground trembles and the windows rattle. Shane and Kira exchange a look and she hands him the discs. He quickly slips the first floppy into the drive and a crude graphic which reads, "HAVOC" appears on the monitor. Shane clicks the "Upload" button to start injecting his homemade virus into the heart of The Project. A "Loading" progress bar shows the contents of the first floppy being transferred onto the hard drive in percentages. At fifty percent - the first floppy ejects itself from the drive and a dialog box bearing the same HAVOC logo reads, "More Please...". Kira hands the second disc to Shane.

AT THE VAULT

The library begins to shake more violently, until the vault door explodes outward and hurtles across the room before crashing through a bank of windows. LUCIFER exits the vault, tearing away chunks of flesh that had served as the "Nick Shell". As he moves toward the office, Lucifer discards the useless flesh - revealing himself.

AT THE COMPUTER

Shane looks toward the door just as he was about to slip the second floppy into the drive. The building starts to shake apart and the walls explode outward as Satan nears.

LUCIFER

KIRA!

The wall in front of the main terminal blows apart and a large chunk of flying plaster knocks Shane out of his chair and across the room. He hits the back wall and slides to the floor, unconscious. Kira runs to his side.

KIRA

Shane?!

She tries to revive him.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Wake up. Please...

Kira grabs the list of names which includes her mother's and retrieves the second floppy - then jams it into the drive. As soon as the HAVOC dialog appears on the screen - she hits "Upload". The progress bar progresses upward from fifty percent. Lucifer appears in the doorway, surrounded by a halo of blinding white light. Everything near him is affected by his heat. The paint on the walls blisters and peels...papers burst into flames...and the plastic casings of the CPUs begin to melt. Kira backs away from the monitor as the HAVOC progress bar hits one hundred percent and the monitor explodes - spraying glass everywhere.

Kira shields her eyes and cowers in the corner near Shane.

LUCIFER

Do you really think you've won? You can't win.
This game began ten thousand years before you and
will continue ten thousand years after your bones
have turned to dust.

KIRA

Those people who signed your contracts... They're
free now.

Lucifer laughs.

LUCIFER

This place is only one of many. But *you* are one of a
chosen few.

Kira looks down at the names in her hand and remembers her nightmare.

KIRA

It was you.

Lucifer transforms into the hospital orderly with the piercing eyes.

LUCIFER

I only gave her what she wanted. That's all I *ever*
give them.

KIRA

She thought you were my father.

Lucifer changes into Josh and extends his hand.

LUCIFER

I am, K. And I always was.

He takes another step forward and becomes Shane. His footsteps melt the flooring.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)

I can be anything you want - and everything you
need.

Kira stands over the real Shane, protectively.

KIRA

Why me?

LUCIFER

Just as I was *his* favorite - your mother was mine. That's why I brought you here. That's why I showed you the truth. Just like God - I gave you free will to choose.

KIRA

I'll never join you.

LUCIFER

I don't have to *ask*, you know.

KIRA

If you could just take what you wanted from me - you would have.

Lucifer is amused by her false bravado. Shane regains consciousness, but is still disoriented.

SHANE

What happened...?

Kira helps him to his feet and supports his weight. She takes a step toward the door, and Lucifer. Shane sees him and reacts.

SHANE (CONT'D)

What the fuck...

KIRA

(to Lucifer)

I don't think you'll hurt me. I don't know why, but you want me alive.

As she nears Lucifer, the intense heat blows her hair back onto her sweaty forehead and ignites stray threads in her sweater.

LUCIFER

(warningly)

Don't...

Kira steels her courage and walks straight toward Lucifer. But at the moment of contact, he evaporates into a wall of fire. Kira walks slowly through the flames and emerges on the other side. Her sweater has caught fire in patches and she pats the flames out with her hands. Kira then realizes that the flames didn't burn her skin. In fact, she didn't even feel them. She reaches back into the wall of fire to test her observation - and the flames seems to avoid her flesh.

LUCIFER (OS) (CONT'D)

You can't walk on water, but you can do *other* things.
Let me show you...

The flames dissipate and Kira hurries Shane back into the library, away from the voice. The ground begins to buckle and rock like the deck of a ship on a stormy sea and Lucifer reappears - then transforms, one last time, into Kira's mother.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)

You're already damned, Kira. If you stay - to a life of immeasurable pleasure. If you leave - to one of fear and doubt.

(mockingly)

Was it real...or only in your mind? Insanity will be *your* Hell, until you take your own life and join me in mine.

IN THE LIBRARY

Kira looks toward the front doors, but the entire wall is ablaze. Shane becomes more coherent and looks around for an alternate route.

SHANE

The tunnels.

They run into the smoky vault.

BACK IN THE OFFICE

Lucifer returns to his true form and bellows:

LUCIFER

N-O-O-O-O!

The office is torn apart by hurricane winds and the walls of the library blow away as Satan howls.

INT. CATACOMBS - NIGHT

Kira and Shane descend the ladder to find most of the contracts burned - or burning. The earth continues to rumble and dirt rains down upon them as they race through the tunnels.

ANGLE ON CONTRACT

as it wafts to the floor while it burns. We see Josh's signature charred to ash by the flames.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Shane and Kira exit the crypt and fight the building storm while crossing the cemetery. Hysterical RESIDENTS of Shadow Cove run rampant through the streets. Those who are under eighteen and have been released from their "contracts" scramble to escape the storm - and the town - while SOULLESS CITIZENS wander aimlessly, moaning and wailing.

EXT. REED HOUSE - NIGHT

Kira and Shane run to the front door and enter.

INT. REED HOUSE - NIGHT

Morgan stands in the middle of the wrecked living room - screaming hysterically. She is disoriented and desperate. Kira tries to embrace her, but Morgan fights her at first - confused - and then clings to her.

MORGAN

What happened?! Where is everyone? I can't remember anything, Kira. Why can't I remember anything?!

KIRA

It's okay, now. But we've gotta get out of here.

The front wall of the room buckles and the bay window explodes. Morgan screams again and Kira passes her off to Shane.

KIRA (CONT'D)

I've gotta find my dad. I'll meet you at the car.

SHANE

Okay. Be careful.

Shane hurries Morgan from the house while Kira races up the stairs.

INT. JOSH AND JANE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kira pushes aside the door, which has already fallen off its hinges, and calls into the room.

KIRA

Dad?! Are you in here?

She returns to the stairs and goes up to the third floor.

INT. JOSH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Kira enters to find Josh seated at the computer - in a daze.

Dad? KIRA

JOSH
(distracted)
I was doing something...but I can't remember what.
I hate it when that happens.

The howling wind tears away a section of the roof - revealing the swirling black void outside. Josh reacts as if this is the first time he's notices the storm.

JOSH (CONT'D)
What's going on, K?

She pulls him out of his chair and toward the door.

KIRA
We're getting out of here.

JOSH
But my work...

Kira hurries him into the hallway.

INT. REED HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kira reaches the top of the stairs and Jane leaps out of the shadows - sending them both tumbling down the stairs. Josh runs down the stairs in pursuit as another quake shakes the house hard enough to break the banister apart. Josh tries to maintain his balance while Jane tries to choke the life out of Kira.

JOSH
What are you doing?! Jane!?

Kira tries to fight back, but Jane is ruthless. Josh grabs Jane and tries to pull her off of Kira, but she turns on him with the sunken, glowing eyes of a demon. She hisses like a venomous snake and Josh backs away, horrified. Jane returns her attention to Kira and Josh looks around for a weapon. He rips one of the heavy oak posts from the broken banister and swings it as hard as he can. The first blow shatters Jane's shoulder, but barely slows her down. Josh swings again - crushing her skull with a hollow, wet, crunch - and then he continues to bludgeon his once-sexy wife until her lifeless corpse slumps to the floor. Josh helps Kira up and they rush down the remaining stairs and out the front door.

EXT. STREETS OF SHADOW COVE - NIGHT

Josh speeds through town, dodging soulless citizens. Kira watches from the passenger's seat while Morgan and Shane sit in the back. Many of the other HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS race towards the highway in terror.

A group of OVERDRESSED ZOMBIES, including Arlene and Tom Ash, block Josh's passage and he stomps on the gas. The SUV plows through the ghouls - spraying gore and black blood everywhere. Josh uses the windshield wipers to clear his view. Shane sees Bobby wandering the streets in confusion.

SHANE

Stop - I see Bobby!

Josh slams on the brakes and Shane hurries out of the car - and helps Bobby in.

SHANE (CONT'D)

C'mon, man. We're gettin' the fuck outta Dodge.

Shane gets back into the car and Josh accelerates up the embankment -through the brush - and onto the main highway as the wind howls and Shadow Cove sinks into the ground.

KIRA'S POV THROUGH CAR WINDOW

of the passing trees as the SUV joins the other cars in their exodus from the Cove. In the woods, among the trees, we see two of the three triplets that we saw on our way into town...watching Kira.

KIRA LOCKS HER DOOR

and sits back in her seat, physically and mentally spent. A stunned silence falls over the car's passengers and Kira closes her eyes.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. TRUCK STOP - DAY

Dusty and dented, the SUV pulls into a truck stop and Kira opens her door. No one in the car has slept.

KIRA

Be right back.

She starts toward the rest room, but stops when she hears an odd scraping sound on the road behind her. Kira turns as a dark wind blows from the direction of Shadow Cove. What looks like a flurry of leaves appears to be following the SUV down the highway. The leaves are blown on a gust of wind toward Kira - and they settle at her feet. But when Kira looks down at the leaves, she realizes that they're not leaves at all...they're ashes from the contracts she burned. Kira hops back into the car and closes the door.

KIRA (CONT'D)

That's okay. I can wait.

Josh returns to the highway and the SUV speeds away.

FADE OUT:

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