

WRIT LARGE

ABSENSE OF COURAGE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Rising smoke billows into the sky.

Fresh skids marks scar the asphalt, surrounded by twisted automobile debris.

INT. CAR - DAY

Strapped into the driver's seat is the MAGGIE TEMPLE, late 30s, a motherly visage covered in cuts and scrapes. She MOANS in pain, struggling to perceive her surroundings.

Through the windshield, asphalt stares back. The world outside the car is upside down.

Her voice barely registers.

MAGGIE

Alex?

Through blurred vision, she spots a body in the road. Adrenaline kicks in. Maggie thrashes. Trying to get free. The seat belt keeps her chained to the driver's seat.

Maggie unlatches the belt. Tumbles into the roof of the car.

She SCREAMS - Her foot is wedged near the accelerator.

Maggie pulls. GRITS her TEETH through the PAIN and rips her mangled foot away from its prison.

INT. STREET - DAY

Maggie crawls through a busted window of her upside down car. Attempts to get up. Her gaze fixated on the body.

The shattered bones in her foot give out and she collapses. She drags herself to the body in the road.

MAGGIE

Alex? Baby, can you hear me?

The body doesn't budge.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Say something.

Maggie pulls herself up to the lifeless body of her daughter, ALEX, early teens. Maggie props herself up. Pulls Alex into her lap.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
It's okay, baby. I got you.
Mommy's here.

Alex's lifeless eyes stare into the distance. Maggie rocks back and forth. Cradling her daughter.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
We're going to be okay.

Muffled sound of sirens and yelling reverberate around them.

Maggie scans her surroundings. Something above her catches her attention. She clings to Alex and stares into the sky.

Maddening fire in her eyes.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The sun has yet to rise, bathing the room in a pale blue light. A DIGITAL ALARM clock sits on a nightstand by the bed.

IT READS: 5:59AM

Maggie lays under the cover. Watching the numbers.

The fire is gone. Replaced by a dull charcoal gaze.

INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

A faint CLICKING sound resonates from the hallway.

The door slowly opens.

Maggie enters, expertly navigating the doorway on CRUTCHES. They CLICK as they contact the floor. She leans the crutches by the door.

Hops toward the shower. She's done this many times before.

Moments later, piping hot water rains down on her. She sits on a handicap shower bench. Her once mangled leg is now gone below the knee.

A smooth stump in its place.

A KNOCK rings out on the door. Maggie doesn't answer.

The door opens a few inches. PAUL, early 40s, peaks in. A scholarly man. More logic than emotion.

PAUL
Do you need any help?

MAGGIE
I'm fine.

PAUL
I'll make us breakfast.

Paul leaves. Maggie savors the hot water.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Maggie sits naked on the bed. Stares at the space where her leg used to be.

She dons a sock on her stump and attaches a modern prosthetic. It beeps to life as she turns it on.

Maggie stands.

The prosthetic hums gently as she moves. It turns at the ankle with her weight. She examines herself in the mirror. Somehow incomplete and whole at the same time.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Paul messes about with a pan above the stove. Cracks two eggs and drops them in. They sizzle from the heat.

He hears footsteps and turns.

Maggie effortlessly walks down the stairs, casually dressed in low-rise boots, jeans, and a t-shirt.

PAUL
It looks good.

Maggie sways in place. Testing the prosthetic.

MAGGIE
It feels good.

Paul puts two plates on a nearby table, drops scrambled eggs into each one.

PAUL
Here. Sit.

Maggie sits. Eats. Paul joins her.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I thought we could go to the
aquarium next week. Remember how
Alex used to love it there?

MAGGIE

Can you talk about it later? I
just want to go back to work.

PAUL

That doesn't mean you should. You
still have another month.

MAGGIE

I can't sit around anymore, Paul.

PAUL

Please don't push me away.

MAGGIE

I want to stop therapy.

Paul slumps.

PAUL

I thought we were making progress?

MAGGIE

This empty house isn't progress.
You teaching three extra classes
isn't progress.

PAUL

I miss her every day, just like
you, Maggie.

(then)

You still have me.

MAGGIE

No. I don't, Paul. You haven't
looked at me the same since he
took Alex from us.

(then)

Sometimes I think the only reason
you stayed is that you didn't want
to divorce a cripple.

Paul stands. Tosses his unfinished meal into the sink.

PAUL

I know neither of us are the same
but we have to do this together.

MAGGIE
 No, we don't. We tried. Look where
 we are now.
 (then)
 I'm not going to stop you from
 grieving in your own way.

Maggie grabs a duffle bag.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 Please don't get in the way
 of mine.

PAUL
 Is this your way asking for
 a divorce?

MAGGIE
 I just want to go back to work.

And heads out the door.

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - DAY

Maggie drives through a well-manicured neighborhood.
 Suburban perfect transforms to blemished urban.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY

Heading deeper into the city, Maggie's car passes buildings in
 the process of repair from massive damage.

In the distance stand massive skyscrapers within Downtown Los
 Angeles. Eerily empty and silent. The closer Maggie gets to
 them, the more destruction there is.

The appearance of a natural disaster.

Maggie drives past a row of tents. They span the block. A
 homeless man holds a sign.

IT READS: SURVIVOR

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

A locker opens. Inside hangs an LAPD UNIFORM.

Next to it, a photo of Maggie and Alex, smiles all around. She
 takes the photo. Only sees a stranger.

RAY
Told them to keep it like it was.
Said you were gonna come back.

Maggie pockets the photo. Turns to see RAY MCRANEY, 40s. If you shot him, he'd bleed blue.

MAGGIE
Did you start an office pool?

RAY
I'm up two hundred bucks.

Maggie throws him a look.

RAY (CONT'D)
You gonna make me ask, or are you
gonna show me?

Maggie hesitates. Then lifts up her pant leg.

RAY (CONT'D)
Would you look at that.
(to others)
Hey, guys. Come check this out.

Two officers appear from an adjacent aisle, CLARK and LOUISE.

CLARK
No way.

LOUISE
That's some high-tech
shit, Temple.

Louise pinches the leg. Wonder in her eyes.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
Electronic gait-matching. IP68
rated. Damn. I want me one of
these.

MAGGIE
Pretty sure the department rewrote
their insurance policy because of
me.

CLARK
What about when the batteries
run out?

MAGGIE
I don't know, Clark.
(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I didn't have a problem lasting
all night with your wife.

Clark erupts in LAUGHTER. The rest join in.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Ray and Maggie look regal in their freshly ironed uniforms.
GOLDEN BADGES glistens on their chests. Proud LAPD officers.

MAGGIE
Thanks for that.

RAY
I'm not gonna hug you.

Maggie hides a smirk.

DING the elevator door opens--

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - GARAGE - DAY

Maggie and Ray exit into the bustling garage. Mechanics work on
police cruisers. Officers prep their vehicles for the day.

It's a mess. A department still in repair.

SERGEANT PARKS, 50s, stands on a dairy crate.

SERGEANT PARKS
The new system is up. Scan you
RFID badges. No more roll call as
of today.

He glances to a clipboard. Then the crowd. Spots Maggie.

SERGEANT PARKS (CONT'D)
And please welcome back Officer
Maggie Temple.
(to Maggie)
It's good to have you back.

Hoots and applause ring out. Maggie nods toward Parks.

SERGEANT PARKS (CONT'D)
Another shitter of a day so get
you assignments and head out as
soon as you can. Two more
vigilante sightings so keep a
lookout. Follow protocol. Let's
get these weirdos off the street.

Maggie leans close to Ray. Parks trails off.

MAGGIE

Why are there still so many?
Didn't the Vigilante Ordinance
help?

RAY

We've got a few. It's hard to find
out who these guys are under the
mask.

SERGEANT PARKS

McRaney and Temple.

Maggie and Ray snap toward Parks.

SERGEANT PARKS (CONT'D)

You get the MacArthur Park beat.
Happy hunting.
(to everyone)
And mind the quarantine.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - DAY

Ray drives. Maggie sits in the passenger seat. She scans the
streets instinctively. Her training slowly coming back.

She sees more construction and OFFICIAL WARNING SIGNS.

THEY READ: *QUARANTINE AHEAD. 5 MILES.*

ANOTHER READS: *MANDATORY CURFEW 12AM-6AM*

MAGGIE

I thought they'd be farther along
by now.

RAY

It took them a few months to set
up the quarantine.

MAGGIE

Trying to figure out who's
jurisdictional dick was bigger?

RAY

You haven't been down here yet,
have you?

MAGGIE

No.

RAY
It's a work in progress.

EXT. HOOVER ST. & 8TH - DAY

Maggie and Ray exit the police cruiser.

Outside the Dollar Variety Store an agitated STORE CLERK, 60s, yells in KOREAN at his DAUGHTER, 20s.

DAUGHTER
(to Ray)
What took you so long? We were
robbed an hour ago.

The Store Clerk turns to Ray. Continues yelling in KOREAN.

RAY
Tell him I don't understand him.

DAUGHTER
We're fine, thanks.

Ray peers inside the store.

MAGGIE
What happened?

DAUGHTER
They trashed the whole store.

RAY
Can you describe the assailants?

DAUGHTER
There was just one. He's tied up
in the store. The other guy was
one of those cape wearing idiots.

Maggie and Ray snap to each other. Draw their guns.

INT. DOLLAR VARIETY STORE - DAY

Guns at the ready, Maggie and Ray enter. Aisles are tumbled over. The ground is littered with chips and candy bars.

A massive fight occurred here.

MAGGIE (INTO RADIO)
Disptach, One-Adam-Nine. We need
additional units at our location.

Ray points to the back of the store. Maggie nods.

They make their way to the liquor aisle. Stepping over broken bottles, they see the ROBBER, late 20s, tied up and hanging from a freezer door.

EXT. DOLLAR VARIETY STORE - DAY

Ray exits. Maggie follows, leading the handcuffed Robber. The Store Clerk starts yelling at him in KOREAN.

RAY
(to Daughter)
Tell him to calm down.

Father and Daughter continue their argument. A police cruiser pulls up. Clark and Louise exit.

RAY (CONT'D)
Either of you speak Korean?

EXT. POLICE CRUISER - DAY

The Robber sits in the cruiser. Half-in, half-out. Maggie stands outside. Notepad ready. Louise speaks with the Store Clerk. Clark and Ray stand nearby.

ROBBER
Look, I was just trying to feed my family. City government ain't doing shit.

MAGGIE
Theft is still illegal.

ROBBER
So what? People took what they needed after Katrina.

MAGGIE
That was different.

ROBBER
What would you know? Not like you lost anything cause of some superhero in a mask.

Maggie lifts up her pant leg.

ROBBER (CONT'D)
Damn. My bad. Guess we all lost something.

Maggie kneels in front of the Robber. On his level.

MAGGIE

Listen. Tell me what he looked like. I'll talk to the DA. Get you a reduced sentence.

(then)

Maybe even time served.

ROBBER

He had a blue costume or some shit. Stupid ass letter on his chest. Said his name was Protectorate. That's not even the right word.

Impressed, Maggie throws him a look.

ROBBER (CONT'D)

What? Just because I robbed a store, I can't be educated?

She looks to Ray. He taps his radio. Waves her over.

EXT. MACARTHUR PARK - DAY

Edge to edge green. Families lounge. People walk their dogs.

At the center stands a statue of MALE FIGURE in COSTUME. Half destroyed. Yet still regal. The look of a real hero.

A FRANTIC MAN, 40s, disheveled and dirty, paces before it.

FRANTIC MAN

Can't you see? It is coming back.
We need our hero. He will save us.

Bystanders wear looks of disgust. Keep their distance.

FRANTIC MAN (CONT'D)

Guardian has left us and you
refuse to call him back. How can
he protect that which doesn't want
to be saved?

Ray and Maggie approach. Holsters palmed.

MAGGIE

I'll take this one.

Maggie steps forward. Sees the broken statue. Forces herself to peel her gaze away.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Sir? I need to see your hands.

The Frantic Man snaps to Maggie.

FRANTIC MAN
You cannot protect us. Only he
can. The Guardian.

Maggie tenses at the name.

RAY
Mags?

She shakes it off. Draws her gun but keeps it low.

MAGGIE
Sir? Your hands.

The Frantic Man sees the gun. Calms.

FRANTIC MAN
You cannot save us, girl. We are
just ants to them.

MAGGIE
Ant colonies can move
mountains, right?

Reaching out with a hand. They lock eyes.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
It's okay. I'm just one ant trying
to help another.

EXT. STATUE - DAY

The Frantic Man sits at the foot of the statue. Maggie drapes a police issue emergency blanket over him. Rubs his back.

MAGGIE
What's your name?

The Frantic Man huddles under the blanket. Shakes his head. Maggie stands and stares up at the statue.

A familiar fire sparks in her eyes.

RAY
You wanna to talk about it?

MAGGIE
Is he really gone?

RAY
Hasn't been seen since-- since you
lost your leg.

MAGGIE
You can say her name.

RAY
I didn't know if you wanted me to.
Maggie thinks about it.

MAGGIE
I guess I didn't either.

RAY
Are you sure you ready to be back?

MAGGIE
This job is all I got, Ray. You're
all I got.

RAY
You got Paul. You know how much he
loves you?

MAGGIE
I left him this morning.

RAY
Jesus, Maggie. What's going on?

Maggie looks toward downtown. A short concrete wall surrounds
it. Beyond it, a quiet stillness.

MAGGIE
I didn't think it would be this
scary. Has anyone gone inside?

Ray stifles a sigh. Follows the segue.

RAY
Don't know. Feds don't tell us
much. That's why all the
vigilantes keep popping up.
They're scared.
(then)
The world's only superhero is gone
and we all just want to feel safe.

MAGGIE
There's nothing heroic about him.

RAY
You know what I mean.

MAGGIE
You think we should ignore vigilantes then?

RAY
I don't know, Maggie. I've stared down crackheads and gangbangers with nothing left to live for.
(then)
You saw what Guardian was up against. How do we fight that? You can't just arrest it. Half the city crumbled when Guardian tried to fight it.

Fear escapes him for the first time.

RAY (CONT'D)
Whatever that thing was scared the shit out of me.
(then)
And what if it comes back? What if it's not dead?

Maggie softens. Looks to the Frantic Man.

MAGGIE
Let's get him someplace warm.

EXT. KOREATOWN - SHINHAN BANK - DAY

Two men in business suits march toward the front door. Briefcases in hand. Black gloves covering their hands.

Both don THEATER MASKS as they enter.

One HAPPY MASK. The other a SAD MASK.

Two construction workers approach the door. Block the exit with MAINTENANCE SIGNS. Also slip on theater masks and enter.

One mask ANGRY, the other SCARED.

INT. SHINHAN BANK - LOBBY - DAY

The kind of place where Rockefeller keeps his money.

Happy and Sad burst in. Activate a button on their briefcases. They disassemble, revealing SUBMACHINE GUNS.

RATATAT - Happy fires into the ceiling.

His voice is electronically distorted. A fear-inducing growl.

HAPPY
Everyone down.

The CROWD drops. Yelps and screams permeate the lobby.

SAD
We're not here for your money.
Stay down and you'll see all
tomorrow.

Angry and Scared enter behind them. Retrieve similar weapons from their overalls.

SAD (CONT'D)
Ninety seconds.

ANGRY
Mark.

Sad and Scared move to the back. Happy and Angry stay behind.

INT. SHELTER - DAY

Ray talks with a desk clerk. Maggie stands next to the Frantic Man. A kind hand on his back. He's calm. But fidgets.

Maggie sees Ray thank the clerk. He approaches.

RAY
They'll take him.

MAGGIE
(to Frantic Man)
You'll be okay here. I'll come
check on you. Okay?

The Frantic Man nods.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Take care of yourself.

Ray heads for the door. Maggie turns to leave. The Frantic Man grabs her by the arm. Stops her.

FRANTIC MAN
You have to find him. Guardian can
stop it.

Maggie pulls away. A mix of emotions rattles her.

Her radio CRACKLES.

DISPATCH (ON RADIO)
All units. Code Three at Shinhan
bank. Robbery in progress.

Maggie snaps to Ray. They BOLT toward the door.

INT. SHINHAN BANK - MANAGER'S DESK - DAY

Sad crowds a computer. His fingers a frenzy on the keyboard.
Scared drags the MANAGER by the collar over to him.

MANAGER
Please don't hurt me. I can't open
the vault. It's time sealed.

SCARED
Shut up.

Angry yells from the main floor.

ANGRY
Ten seconds.

The computer PINGS.

SAD
Right hand.

Scared grabs the Manager's right hand. Sad grabs the index
finger. Shoves it into a reader.

Another PING.

SAD (CONT'D)
I'm in.

SCARED
How much?

SAD
Fifty million in cryptocurrency.

SCARED
Start the transfer and lock him
out. Let's go.

Sad and Scared rush back to the main floor. Angry and Happy
cover them. Then turn to follow.

EXT. SHINHAN BANK - DAY

Sad and Scared exit the front doors. Hiding their guns. Their cohorts follow behind

SCREECH

A police cruiser rounds the corner across the street. Skids to a stop at the curb.

The heist crew freezes. Wait for the leader to make a move. Scared RAISES his weapon.

RATATAT

FIRES into the engine block of the police cruiser.

SCARED
Back inside. Alternate exit.

The crew piles back into the bank.

Maggie and Ray exit the police cruiser. Pistols ready. The engine of their car billows with smoke.

Another police cruiser races toward them. Screeches to a halt nearby. Clark and Louise get out.

MAGGIE
They went back inside.

CLARK
Is there another exit?

RAY
I don't know.

LOUISE (INTO RADIO)
Dispatch, One-Adam-Two. Need additional units covering Sixth Street behind location.

RAY
Mags, you good?

Maggie tightens her grip on her gun. Nods. Adrenaline kicks in.

LOUISE
Back up en route. Two minutes.

RAY
Hold here. Don't give them an exit.

Maggie looks upwards. Sees a wire suspended between the bank and an adjacent building.

MAGGIE

Ray?

He turns to Maggie. She points up.

They spot a man in a BLUE COSTUME gliding across the wire toward the bank. The letter P on his chest.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

We have to go in.

RAY

We wait for backup.

Maggie heads to the trunk. Retrieves a SHOTGUN.

RAY (CONT'D)

Maggie, stand down.

MAGGIE

That's our vigilante. He's going to get someone killed and I can't let that happen.

Ray hesitates. A knowing look. He can't stop her.

INT. SHINHAN BANK - LOBBY - DAY

Maggie and Ray enter. Guns raised. They move forward.

From behind cover they cautiously scan the main floor. The CROWD still cowers where they dropped.

MAGGIE

Clear. Go.

Ray moves up. Maggie follows. A patron starts getting up.

RAY

Stay down. Move when I say.

The two partners continue on. Moving from cover to cover. Reaching a row of desks where financial managers sat.

Maggie spots the Manager. Cowering behind a desk.

MAGGIE

Is there another exit?

He points towards a door. A sign above it reads: STAIRS.

MANAGER
The second floor leads to the
garage next door.

RAY (INTO RADIO)
Lock down the garage. West side of
the bank.

Maggie moves. Ray follows.

INT. SHINHAN BANK - 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Maggie stops at the doorway from the stairs. Shotgun ready.
Checks down both ends of the hallway.

RAY
Left or right?

MAGGIE
I'm turned around. Which way
is west?

YELLING. GUNFIRE. Left side.

Right side. A CRASH. More GUNFIRE.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I'll take right. Go left.

RAY
Maggie!

But she's gone. Racing down the hallway. Swings the shotgun
left. Then right. Checking every door.

More GUNFIRE to Ray's left. He chases after it.

INT. SHINHAN BANK - GARAGE ENTRANCE - DAY

Ray exits the hallway. Quick but cautious. Sad and Scared race
towards a car in the distance.

RAY
Freeze!

Sad and Scared turn.

RATATAT

Ray dives behind a car for cover. Bullets rip at bumpers and
doors. He reaches for his radio.

Then sees him.

PROTECTORATE. Blue costume covered in red blood. He chokes. Blood pours from the mouth opening in his mask.

PROTECTORATE
Please. Help.

Ray crawls toward him. Tries to stem the bleeding. Too many holes ooze blood.

RAY
Shit. Shit.

INT. SHINHAN BANK - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Maggie reaches the open door. Shotgun ready. She enters. Clears the room with precision.

And then she sees THEM.

Happy and Angry are laid out across the conference table. UNMASKED and UNCONSCIOUS. Maggie inches closer.

She senses someone behind her. Spins her gun to a FIGURE at the end of the room. A spitting image of the statue from the park.

It's GUARDIAN.

Draped in an otherworldly costume that looks more like armor. This is no ordinary vigilante uniform. This is the real deal.

Guardian HOVERS a foot above the GROUND. An eerie stillness to his body. Every movement isolated. Deliberate.

Maggie freezes solid. Anger rumbles inside her. Her eyes burn with familiar fire. Her throat tightens around her words.

She stares at his mask. Devoid of expression. No emotion.

MEMORY FLASH - EXT. STEET - DAY

Maggie clings to Alex's body. Stares into the sky as before.

Guardian floats above her. Thirty feet in the air. Body still. Same mask. No expression. No emotion.

He peers right into Maggie's soul.

BACK TO PRESENT

Maggie aims the shotgun at Guardian. Her radio CRACKLES.

RAY (ON RADIO)
Maggie, what's your twenty?

The standoff continues. Maggie trembles in anger.

MAGGIE
Why?

A flurry of movement. Guardian flies toward the window.

BAM CHU-CHUK BAM

Maggie fires. Misses.

SMASH

Guardian is gone in a blink of an eye.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
No!

Maggie falls to her knees.

And SCREAMS.

Letting out the pain, sorrow, and grief from the past few months. She finally calms. The radio CRACKLES again.

RAY (ON RADIO)
Maggie, I need you. Where are you?

EXT. SHINHAN BANK - NIGHT

Maggie sits in the back of an open ambulance. Thousand yard stare. Ray stomps over to her. Pissed as hell.

RAY
Where the hell were you?

She looks to her partner. A look of despair.

MAGGIE
I saw him, Ray. He's back.

His anger fades.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

RAY
It was Guardian?

MAGGIE
I can never forget that mask. I
shot at him, Ray.

RAY
Get up.

MAGGIE
What?

Ray pulls at Maggie. She stands. Tense.

And Ray hugs her.

Maggie's body softens. She falls into the embrace. Grasps her partner and squeezes.

RAY
I got you.

MAGGIE
I just wanted him to die, Ray.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Ray drives. Maggie leans on the window in the passenger's seat. Watches the city pass her by.

Ray makes a turn. Maggie lifts off the window. Curious.

MAGGIE
Where are we going?

RAY
I want to show you something.

EXT. THE WALL - NIGHT

A wooden wall runs the entire block. Abandoned construction behind it. Every inch of the wall is covered.

With photos. Personal items. Names. Hundreds of them.

People lay flowers on the ground. Some light candles.

Ray stands by the cruiser. Maggie's on the curb. She stares at candlelight glistening in the night.

MAGGIE
What is this place?

RAY

A memorial. For everyone that died that day.

MAGGIE

Is this supposed to make me feel better?

RAY

I want you to know that you're not alone. Everyone is angry.

MAGGIE

I don't want to be here.

RAY

I want you to say it. Say that you're angry.

MAGGIE

He took my daughter from me. Of course, I'm angry.

Maggie snaps.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

He threw that bus, Ray. It was his fault that Alex is dead. All those buildings that collapsed. His fault.

She points to the wall of names.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

All those people. His fault.

RAY

Say it.

MAGGIE

I'm angry!

(then)

I want to look him right in that mask and put a bullet in his head.

Mourners look toward them. Maggie glares at Ray. She calms.

RAY

A real-life superhero exists. He saved this entire city. We're alive because of him.

MAGGIE

You call this living?

RAY

This isn't a comic book. There are no happy endings, Maggie. This is real life where people die. Not everybody gets to live. Somebody has to die in the end.

MAGGIE

My daughter is not somebody!

RAY

You think we would have wanted to see you like this?

(then)

You either give yourself a chance to mourn or it rots you from the inside. Don't let the devil take you, Maggie. Please.

MAGGIE

I'd make a deal with the devil before I forgive him.

Maggie glares at him. Turns and gets into the car.

Ray glances at the wall once more. Then gets into the driver's seat.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - BULLPEN - NIGHT

The elevator dings. Maggie exits into a still bustling office of cops and detectives.

She scans past the commotion. Sees CAPTAIN KINNAMAN, 50s, pacing in his office. A woman sits by his desk. Back to the bullpen.

Louise rushes past. Maggie stops her.

MAGGIE

Who's that?

LOUISE

Commissioner Sheil. They've been at it for a while.

MAGGIE

Cause of him?

LOUISE

Probably.

Louise disappears into the bustle. Maggie stares at her Captain. Ideas circulating in her head.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Captain Kinnaman still paces.

He glances at the woman. COMMISSIONER SHEIL, 40s, bureaucratic red tape and female Latino fire.

CAPTAIN KINNAMAN
We can't just keep it quiet.
Someone will find out.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Calm down, Roger. No one has to
know. It's one sighting.

CAPTAIN KINNAMAN
Don't tell me to calm down. If
Guardian is back then that thing
isn't far behind him.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
And we are prepared this time.

CAPTAIN KINNAMAN
With what, Ava? We lost all of
downtown to that quarantine
because of them. Do you even know
how many people we lost that day?
(then)
Hundreds of thousands.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
One hundred and fifty-six
thousand, four hundred and ninety-
two.

Kinnaman stops pacing.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL (CONT'D)
I've had this job ever since
Guardian arrived in this city.
I've briefed two sitting
presidents on the matter and I
started the anti-vigilante
committee. You've been a Captain
for three months.
(then)
If I tell you to calm down, then
you better sit the fuck down.

The Captain takes his seat behind the desk.

A knock rings out on the door. Maggie enters.

CAPTAIN KINNAMAN

I'm busy.

Commissioner Sheil turns to Maggie and her face lights up.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL

Maggie Temple. It's a pleasure to finally meet you.

Kinnaman rolls his eyes. Waves her in. Sheil and Maggie shake hands.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL (CONT'D)

I was the one who approved your prosthetic. I'm glad to see you've put it to good use.

MAGGIE

Thank you, Ma'am. I'm surprised I haven't met you earlier.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL

We lost some good people after the incident. Unfortunately, I couldn't find the time. There was too much work to be done, I hope you understand.

MAGGIE

Of course. I'd like to continue doing that kind of work for you.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL

Oh?

MAGGIE

With the return of Guardian. I'd like to start investigating his identity. If we know who he is, we can try and stop him from causing any more damage or hurting anyone else.

Sheil looks to Kinnaman.

CAPTAIN KINNAMAN

No.

MAGGIE

Sir, I know I've just come back but I'm the only one who's come face to face with him. I can do this.

CAPTAIN KINNAMAN
Out of the question.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
I'm afraid I have to side with
Captain Kinnaman.

MAGGIE
Ma'am?

CAPTAIN KINNAMAN
As far as anyone is concerned,
your sighting is unconfirmed.

MAGGIE
He's a mass murderer. We can't
just ignore him.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
If Guardian is back then his
nemesis, whatever it is, will also
return. We can't have mass panic.
People have already left in
droves.

MAGGIE
I can't believe this.

CAPTAIN KINNAMAN
Watch your tone, Temple.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
If he appears again, we will cross
that bridge later. For now, we
leave him alone.

MAGGIE
With all due respect,
that's bullshit.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Don't waste the goodwill you've
earned with the department,
Officer Temple. You have a job and
you do it well apparently. We've
given you every tool you need to
succeed here.

Sheil motions to Maggie's prosthetic. Maggie looks at her
Captain. Then to the Commissioner.

She bends down. Rolls up her pant leg.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

Maggie detaches her prosthetic.

MAGGIE
You can have your tools.

She tosses the leg onto Kinnaman's table. It errors out and twitches. Maggie takes off her badge and removes her holster.

Throws them both onto the table.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
If anyone else dies, all that
blood is on your hands.

Maggie turns and hops to the door.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - BULLPEN - NIGHT

Exiting Kinnaman's office, Maggie hops from one support to another. Struggling to make it to the elevator.

The room falls silent. Everyone watches.

Ray appears from the elevator. Sees Maggie without her prosthetics.

He runs up to Maggie. Puts her arm around his shoulder. Maggie lets him help. They make their way to the elevator.

Everyone watches.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Ray and Maggie enter. The doors close with a DING.

Maggie leans against the wall.

RAY
Are you going to burn every last
bridge you have?

MAGGIE
The hell do you care?

Ray glares at her.

RAY
Cause I was there for every day of
your PT.
(MORE)

RAY (CONT'D)
Cause I care about what happens to
you. Because you watch my back and
I watch yours.

MAGGIE
You told me to forget her, Ray.

RAY
No, I told you to mourn. It's
holding you back.

Maggie's next words come out drenched in poison.

MAGGIE
The only thing holding me back
is him.

RAY
Don't leave me, Maggie. Please. I
don't want to lose you too.

The elevator stops. Doors open. Ray doesn't move to help.

MAGGIE
I'm going to find him, Ray.

RAY
And then what?

MAGGIE
I'm going to kill him.

Maggie hops out of the elevator. Ray watches her go.

The elevator door closes on him.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Paul sits in the living room behind a desk.

Glasses on the bridge of his nose. A single lamp illuminates a
stack of papers. He reads. Makes a note.

The front door opens. He looks up. Sees Maggie enter. Still
in uniform.

She drops her bag and hops toward the stairs.

PAUL
What happened?

Maggie takes one step at a time up the stairs.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Where's your prosthetic?

MAGGIE
Not now, Paul.

She disappears up the stairs. Paul slumps. Takes off his glasses and rubs his eyes.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maggie sits on her bed staring at her reflection.

Disrobes to her underwear. She reaches for her crutches.

Hesitates.

Then starts SWINGING at her bedside table with the crutch. The lamp SHATTERS. The digital clock goes FLYING.

Maggie yells with every swing.

DOWNSTAIRS

Paul hears the crash and yelling. He races upstairs.

2ND FLOOR HALLWAY

Rushes to the bedroom.

BEDROOM

Paul enters to see Maggie on the floor. Handicapped. Leaning up against the bed.

PAUL
Are you okay?

He rushes to Maggie.

MAGGIE
Stay away from me!

Paul freezes. Then lowers himself to the floor. On Maggie's level. He tries to hug her. Maggie fights him.

But he holds her tight.

PAUL
It's okay.

Maggie finally clasps Paul.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'm here.

They hold each other. Maggie wails.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Maggie sits at the table. Her crutches nearby. Paul brings two cups of tea. Gives one to Maggie and sits.

MAGGIE
Ray took me to the memorial wall.

She finally looks to Paul.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Is that all she is now? A name on a wall?

PAUL
She will always be our daughter.

MAGGIE
I don't know what to do, Paul. I feel like I don't belong in this world anymore.

PAUL
You don't.

Paul eyes Maggie with conviction.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You shouldn't have gone back.

MAGGIE
I had nowhere else to go.

PAUL
What happened changed all of us. We can't try to live like it hasn't?

MAGGIE
You think we should just pack up and leave?

PAUL
Why not?

MAGGIE
Alex is here.

Paul touches his chest.

PAUL
She's here. Wherever we go, Alex
will always be with us.

MAGGIE
I have to find him. He has to pay
for what he did to our daughter.

PAUL
He's gone, Maggie.

Paul reaches out with his hand. Maggie takes it.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Come with me. We can start over.
Let them play heroes and villains.
We don't belong here.

Maggie nods.

MAGGIE
Okay.

Paul stands. Leans in and kisses Maggie.

PAUL
I have to finish grading some
finals. Let me help you to bed. We
can talk about it some more
tomorrow.

Maggie nods.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The DIGITAL ALARM clock on the nightstand glows red.

IT READS: 4:32AM

Maggie watches the numbers. Wide awake.

She rises. Reach for her crutches and heads to the closet.
Opens it and sits on the floor. She digs around in the back.

Pulls out a prosthetic leg. Older. No electronics. Plastic.

She pulls it on and stands. It's clumsy. But she can walk.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Maggie makes her way down the stairs. Fully dressed. A duffle bag slung over her shoulder. She peaks into the living room.

Paul is sound sleep on the couch.

Maggie sits behind the dining table. Scribbles something on a piece of paper.

She pins it to the fridge. Sees family photos. Happy moments.

Maggie heads to the door. Sees Paul. Takes a moment.

Then exits the house.

The note on the fridge reads: GO WITHOUT ME.

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - DAY

The sun rises over the horizon. Illuminates the city.

Maggie drives past familiar buildings in the midst of repair.

The empty skyscrapers of downtown Los Angeles grow larger in front of her. She passes a street sign.

IT READS: *QUARANTINE AHEAD. 2 MILES. *

Maggie spots a security checkpoint ahead. National Guardsmen stand at attention by a metallic gate splitting the concrete wall in half.

A HUMVEE is parked nearby. A MACHINE GUN atop it.

Maggie pulls the car to the curb. Stares at the gate. At the massive buildings beyond it. Empty shells of what they were.

EXT. USED CAR LOT - DAY

Maggie inaudibly speaks with a USED CAR SALESMAN.

They shake hands. Maggie hands over her keys.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Maggie walks away from the used car lot. Stuffs a thick orange envelope into her duffle bag.

Her stride is labored. Leaning opposite her prosthetic.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Magenta light permeates the thick blinds. It's a simple room. As clean as \$50 a night will get you.

Maggie enters.

She puts her bag on the bed. Retrieves a brand new cell phone. Rips open the packaging. Turns it on.

Moments later she sits in bed. Staring at a photo of her and Alex. She lays down. Eyes a digital lock on her nightstand.

It BLINKS: 12:00

There's no sense of time here.

EXT. THE WALL - NIGHT

Small groups of family members mourn in front of the wall. Some lay flowers. Others touch the wall.

Tears are shed. Hugs are shared.

Maggie watches them from across the street. Hesitant. Head covered by her hoodie. She approaches and walks the wall.

Thousands of photos. Hundreds of names. She reads a few. Scared to find the one she wants to read.

A man walks the wall. Removes old candles. Lays new ones. This is HENRY, 40s. Priestly looking sans the holy robes.

He spots Maggie.

HENRY

Are you visiting someone?

Maggie looks toward him. Startled. Shakes her head.

MAGGIE

Just looking.

Maggie notices his bag of fresh candles.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Are you selling those?

HENRY

These? Oh, no. I'm just replacing the old ones. Would you like one?

Maggie nods. Henry hands her a TWO SMALL CANDLES.

MAGGIE
Are all the names on here?

Henry scans the span of the wall.

HENRY
They are.

MAGGIE
I'm looking for my daughter.
Alex Temple.

SAME SCENE - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie runs her hand across her daughter's name.

IT READS: *ALEX TEMPLE*

HENRY
Is this your first time here?

Maggie nods.

MAGGIE
Who wrote all these?

HENRY
Friends. Family. Loved ones.

MAGGIE
I didn't write this.

HENRY
Someone must have loved your
daughter very much.

Maggie turns to Henry.

MAGGIE
Are you a priest?

HENRY
Me? What makes you say that?

MAGGIE
I've only seen nuns or priests do
what you're doing.

HENRY
I'm just here to help. Sometimes
people move away. Or forget. Or
move on. I make sure no one is
forgotten here.

MAGGIE
I can't imagine forgetting
her name.

HENRY
Everyone grieves in their own way,
I suppose.

Henry keeps busy. Replaces another candle.

MAGGIE
It's kind of you.

HENRY
This wall is a reminder that it's
okay to move on. To let go.
(then)
Everyone who lost someone can
always return here.

MAGGIE
Why would anyone let go?

HENRY
Pain weighs you down, pulling you
into a dark hole. There comes a
point where you get so deep you
can't get out.

MAGGIE
You seem to know a lot
about grief.

HENRY
I suppose I do. I run a group down
the street for people who need it.
The past few months have been hard
for people.

MAGGIE
Are you a doctor?

HENRY
In a past life. Today, I
just help.

MAGGIE
Guess we all lost something.
(then)
I'm Maggie.

HENRY
Henry.

Maggie's phone beeps. She cryptically looks at it.

MAGGIE
(re: candle)
Thank you for this.

Henry nods. Maggie lights one candle with a nearby flame. Sets it down under her daughter's name.

She takes out the photo she got from her locker. Pins it to the wall.

And walks away.

HENRY
If you'd like to come to a meeting, we're at the fifth street church. Just up the block at noon.

MAGGIE
I thought you said you weren't a priest?

HENRY
I'm whatever they need me to be.

Maggie wants to dig further. But lets it go and leaves.

INT. HOSPITAL - NURSES STATION - NIGHT

A NURSE packs her bag. Dons a sweater.

NURSE
Goodnight, Phyllis.

A career nurse, PHYLLIS, 60s, sits behind the nurse's station.

PHYLLIS
Night, dear.

The Nurse heads to the elevator. Waits. It opens to reveal Maggie, covered in her hoodie. The Nurse smiles politely.

They trade places.

Maggie walks toward the nurse's station. Removes her hoodie.

MAGGIE
Hi, Phyllis.

PHYLLIS
Well, aren't you a sight for sore eyes. How are you? That new foot treating you well?

MAGGIE

Chasing down all the bad guys.

Phyllis chuckles.

PHYLLIS

What can I do for you? Your physical therapy isn't until next week.

MAGGIE

I came to see a friend.

PHYLLIS

Oh, that lovely officer playing bodyguard? Room 302, honey. Tell him he can be the Kevin Costner to my Whitney Houston any time he wants.

MAGGIE

I'll pass that along.

PHYLLIS

You better.

Maggie heads down the hall.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Maggie waits at the corner. Peaks around.

OFFICER KEMP sits in a foldout seat next to ROOM 302.

She checks her phone. Dons her hoodie once more and crosses the hall into a dark room.

Officer Kemp doesn't notice.

ROOM 310

Maggie enters quietly. Turns to see an elderly patient lying in the bed. Eyes closed. A breathing tube in her mouth.

Maggie retrieves her phone. Looks at it again.

It beeps. She waits.

Approaching footsteps reverberate in the hall. Maggie peaks out of the blinds of a nearby window.

Officer Kemp walks past Room 310. Greets OFFICER MARRON.

OFFICER MARRON
Any problems?

OFFICER KEMP
Nah. They sedated him. He ain't
going anywhere.

OFFICER MARRON
You eat yet?

Maggie eyes them. They're just out of sight. She slowly opens the door.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Maggie rushes past the Officers. Light on her feet. Silent.
She beelines for the unguarded room.

ROOM 302

The lights are off. A single bed is tucked into a corner. The only light comes from beeping medical equipment.

DEREK CECIL, late 20s, lays in bed with a chest full of bandages. His hand is handcuffed to the railing.

Maggie reveals herself from the shadows. A syringe in her hands. She approaches. Injects something into the IV.

She sits in a nearby chair. Waits.

Derek wakes. Groggy. He looks around. Sees Maggie and panics. He pats his bed with whatever strength he can muster.

Maggie lifts up the EMERGENCY BUTTON REMOTE. Derek glares.

MAGGIE
I need to ask you some questions.

Derek's voice croaks. Barely a whisper.

DEREK
Help.

MAGGIE
Are you scared of me?
Protectorate.

He turns toward the door.

DEREK
Please. Help.

MAGGIE
The officer is gone. You're lucky
to be alive.
(then)
You endangered all those people.

DEREK
I was trying to help.

MAGGIE
You were trying to be a hero.
Heroes get people killed. My
partner didn't have to save you.

DEREK
You're a cop?

MAGGIE
I know the circles you run in.
Wearing that silly costumes.

DEREK
Lawyer.

Maggie rises. Walks over.

MAGGIE
You got this all wrong.

Maggie raises the syringe.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I'm not a cop anymore. I don't
care about your lawyer.

Derek panics again.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
(re: Syringe)
You know what Adrenaline is?

DEREK
What do you want?

MAGGIE
Tell me what you know
about Guardian.

DEREK
No one has seen him since
the battle.

MAGGIE
He was at the bank. Stopped the
guys who shot you.

DEREK
I don't know anything.

Maggie leans in close.

MAGGIE
I know you've heard something. You
or your masked friends.

DEREK
We don't work together. We are all
independent.

Maggie shows him the syringe again.

MAGGIE
There's just enough here to make
your heart race so fast you'll
bust all your stitches.
(then)
Tell me what you know and the
syringe goes back where I found
it.

Derek remains silent.

Maggie inserts the syringe back into the IV.

DEREK
Wait.

She injects it.

Derek thrashes in panic as much as his weak body allows.

MAGGIE
Clock's ticking. That IV is moving
kinda fast.

DEREK
Please. Stop it.

Maggie glares at Derek. He eyes the IV. Every drip deadly.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Sheil.

MAGGIE
What did you say?

DEREK
The Commissioner. She works with
some of us. She knows.

MAGGIE
That's impossible. She runs the
anti-vigilante committee.

DEREK
She gives us information. Freedom
to work.

Maggie's face reeks of betrayal.

MAGGIE
You're lying.

Maggie turns up the IV. Drips come faster.

DEREK
It's true. Some say she worked
with Guardian. She knows. I
promise. Please. She knows. Stop
the IV.

MAGGIE
That bitch.

Footsteps outside the room. Officer Marron approaches.

Maggie puts a finger to her mouth and recedes into the shadows.

OUTSIDE ROOM 302

Officer Marron reaches for the door. Enters.

ROOM 302

The room is still dark. A curtain surrounds Derek's bed.
Officer Marron slides it aside.

Derek has a pillowcase stuffed in his mouth.

Marron's eyes go wide. Reach for his gun.

Maggie is already behind him. RAMS a foot into the back of his
knee. Brings him down. Grabs a FISTFUL OF HAIR.

TINK

SLAMS Marron's head into the railing.

NURSES STATION

Phyllis hears the commotion. Stands. Inches her way down the hall.

PHYLLIS
Officer Marron?

ROOM 302

Maggie straightens herself. Struggles to find balance on her fake leg. She looks to Derek.

MAGGIE
Don't worry about the IV. It's
saline. Feel better, hero.

And Maggie is out the door.

ON PHYLLIS

Phyllis rounds the corner. Doesn't see the officer.

PHYLLIS
Hello?

ROOM 302

Phyllis enters. Sees the aftermath of Maggie's rage.
She stifles a GASP.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Maggie exits a side door. Wraps herself in her hoodie.

Two Police Cruisers pull up to the front of the hospital. RAY
jump out. A new PARTNER in tow.

Gun raised, they rush inside.

Maggie stares at him from the shadows across the street.

She disappears into the night.

ROOM 302

Ray rushes in. Partner right behind him. Officer Marron holds
an ice pack to his head. Phyllis comforts him.

RAY
What happened?

Marron shrugs.

DEREK
It was your partner.

Ray spins to Derek. Recognizes him. Then looks to his new partner. He also shrugs.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Not him. A woman.

RAY
What did she want?

DEREK
Asked me about Guardian.

RAY
What did you tell her?

DEREK
The truth.

INT. PAWNSHOP - NIGHT

A cluttered mess lines the wall. Glass cabinets filled with all sorts of junk. All of monetary or sentimental value.

The DOORBELL dings.

HAROLD, 50s, exits from the back. His pockmarked face hidden by a beard. He heads to the door. Maggie stands outside.

HAROLD
Read the sign. I'm closed.

Maggie slams the thick orange envelope into the glass door.

SAME SCENE - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie stands in front of a counter. Several unloaded pistols lie on velvet pads. Slides cocked back.

Maggie points to a compact .44 Caliber pistol.

MAGGIE
That one.

Harold retrieves it. Hands it to Maggie. She palms it. Snug in her hand. Aims it down the length of the store.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
How much?

HAROLD
\$800

MAGGIE
It says \$500.

HAROLD
After hours tax.

Maggie scowls. Pulls out \$800 from her envelope. Lays it on the table.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
I'll start the paperwork.

Maggie puts more cash on the table. Harold eyes her.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
You in trouble?

MAGGIE
I'm just trying to scare him.

Harold nods. Takes the money. Pushes the pistol forward.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I need bullets.

HAROLD
I thought you wanted to scare him.

Maggie eyes him. Pulls out more money.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
Look, lady. I'm not comfortable with this. You should be going.

MAGGIE
You got a name?

HAROLD
Harold.

MAGGIE
You ever lived in fear, Harold?
Cause when I look at him I start to wonder how many days I have left. And that scares me.

Harold softens. He retrieves two boxes of ammo.

HAROLD
Extra box on the house.

Maggie shoves her new toys in her bag and exits. Harold shakes his head and picks up his money.

INT. POLICE COMMISSIONER'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A quiet bedroom bathed in moonlight. Two bodies sleep in a California king. A SCREECH of car wheels. Doors slamming.

BOOM BOOM BOOM

Someone pounds on the front door downstairs.

Commissioner Sheil flies upright. Listens.

BOOM BOOM

More pounding.

CATHARINE, 40s, wakes in a panic.

CATHARINE
What is that?

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Someone's at the door.

CATHARINE
At this hour?

Sheil springs out of bed. Grabs a rob.

FRONT DOOR

Commissioner Sheil hurries to the door. Wraps a nightgown around her body.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Who is it?

RAY (O.S.)
Officer McNarey, Ma'am. Please
open up.

Sheil opens the door. Ray is there with Clark and Louise.

CATHARINE
Honey? Is everything alright?

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
It's just work. Go back to sleep.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Commissioner Sheil sits on a sofa. Still waking up.

RAY
Officer Temple broke into the
hospital where we were holding a
Derek Cecil, also known as the
vigilante, Protectorate.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
What did she want with him?

RAY
She threatened him for
information.
(then)
About Guardian.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
My god. Is he okay?

RAY
Maggie didn't hurt him.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
I know she was angry but why would
she do this?

RAY
Do you how Maggie lost her leg?

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Of course. I presided over her
case for her prosthetic.

RAY
She blames Guardian.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Oh no.

Sheil plays with her fingers. Nervous. She looks to Ray.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL (CONT'D)
But it wasn't his fault. I read
the report. It was just debris.

RAY
Ma'am, Guardian threw the debris.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
She lost her leg and her daughter.
That poor woman.

RAY
Her husband called me today. She
left without a word. Didn't take
her phone.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
What in the world is she doing?

Ray hesitates.

RAY
She told me she wants to kill him.

Sheil tenses.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Officer Temple confided in you?
Why didn't you say anything?

RAY
I didn't think she was serious.
It's Guardian.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
What did that vigilante tell her?

RAY
That's why we came. We believe
Officer Temple will come here
next. Derek Cecil told her you
worked with Guardian.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Preposterous. The department does
not condone vigilantism. No matter
what strength Guardian has.

RAY
He was insistent.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
He also runs around my city in a
costume and cape fighting crime,
for Christ sake.

RAY
Either way. I'm going to post a
unit outside while track Officer
Temple.

Commissioner Sheil rises off the couch. Stymies fear

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Do what you need. Find her before
she hurts anyone else.
(then)
Now please leave my house. You are
scaring my wife.

EXT. POLICE COMMISSIONER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Maggie hides in the dark across the street. Eyeing the Sheil's house. Clark and Louise stand by the front door.

Ray exits.

Exchanges inaudible words and nods with his colleagues.

He snaps to Maggie's hiding spot. Scans the darkness.

But Maggie is gone.

INT. CITY BUS - DAY

The sun has just risen.

Maggie is the only passenger. She leans on the window. Sees the city pass her by. Her bag sits nearby.

Her hand feels around in her pocket. Retrieving the small candle Henry gave her. She admires it.

INT. FIFTH STREET CHURCH - MEETING HALL - DAY

Members of the meeting share hugs and offer up goodbyes. Henry breaks down a circle of folding chairs.

He spots Maggie standing by the doorway.

HENRY
I guess I should have told you how
long the meeting ran.

MAGGIE
I heard most of it.

HENRY
Did it help?

Maggie shakes her head.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Shame.
(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)
What can I do for you, Maggie?

MAGGIE
Just needed someone to talk to.

HENRY
Don't you have any friends?

Maggie doesn't answer.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Have you had lunch?

INT. DINER - DAY

A waitress, MARGARET, brings two breakfast plates to a table where Maggie and Henry sit across from each other.

Maggie's MOTEL KEY lays on the table.

HENRY
Thank you, Margaret.

MARGARET
Sure thing, honey.

Margaret leaves. Maggie digs in. Doesn't wait for Henry. She notices him staring.

MAGGIE
Sorry.

HENRY
No, no. Don't wait on my account.

Maggie continues.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Must have been one hell of a night.

MAGGIE
You said you were a doctor?

HENRY
Weren't you the one who wanted to talk?

MAGGIE
We're talking, aren't we?

HENRY
I was. What was Maggie Temple
before whoever she is now?

MAGGIE
I was a cop.

HENRY
What happened?

Maggie sticks her leg out from under the table. Knocks on it.

MAGGIE
Kind of hard to chase down the
bad guys.

HENRY
I'm so sorry.

MAGGIE
It wasn't your fault.

HENRY
Still.
(then)
I had a practice before. After
what happened with Guardian, they
built a wall where my building
was.

MAGGIE
Why not start over?

Henry falls silent. Lost in a memory.

HENRY
There was an accident. Before the
wall. I hurt a lot of people.

Maggie freezes. Looks at him differently.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I never said I was perfect. That's
why I left it all behind. I don't
trust my hands anymore. The group
is a way to still help people
heal.

MAGGIE
What happened?

Henry looks at his plate. He hasn't touched his food.

HENRY

It's funny. Being a doctor, you're there to help all those people. You keep them healthy. Stem the tide of death.

(then)

But what they don't tell you in medical school is how easy it is for people to die because of you.

He moves eggs around with a fork.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Do you know what I mean?

Henry looks up.

Maggie is SLUMPED OVER. Fast ASLEEP. Henry looks to Maggie's motel key.

INT. MOTEL - DAY

Henry enters Maggie's hotel room. He carries her in his arms. He sets her down on the bed. Gently folds the cover over her.

Henry stands. Sees her duffle bag. Surveys the empty room.

He looks down. Maggie is holding his hand.

MAGGIE

Don't go.

HENRY

Maggie, you don't know me.

MAGGIE

I'm not perfect either.

(then)

I don't have anyone else.

Henry hesitates. Then sits on the ground.

And holds Maggie's hand.

SAME SCENE - NIGHT

Neon lights permeate the blinds. Maggie wakes up. Henry sleeps on the floor next to the bed.

Maggie rises. Quietly grabs her duffle bag.

HENRY
Are you in trouble?

She turns to find Henry is awake. Still sitting on the floor.

MAGGIE
You're the second person to ask
me that.

HENRY
I can help.

Maggie shakes her head.

MAGGIE
Thank you for lunch, Henry.

HENRY
I can try.

MAGGIE
You already have a lot of names to
take care of. They need you more
than I do.

HENRY
Why did you ask me to stay?

She walks up next to him. Kneels down.

KISSES Henry.

MAGGIE
I needed to feel human just one
last time.
(then)
You're a good man. No matter what
you've done.

Maggie stands and leaves.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Henry rushes out. Scans the parking lot.

Maggie's GONE.

HENRY
Damn.

Henry heads for his car. Gets in and pulls away. Down a
hallway, Maggie watches him drive off. She looks down.

Sees a MAINTENANCE TOOL BELT.

Maggie grabs a screwdriver and surveys the parking lot. Spots a RED SPORTS CAR and rushes over to it.

She kneels behind the car and unscrews the license plate.

Moves to an early 90s pickup truck. Swaps the plates.

Using the screwdriver, Maggie jams the lock. Pops the door.

INT. DOLLAR STORE - NIGHT

A POP JINGLE plays over aisles of cheap trinkets. Maggie peruses plumbing supplies. Takes down duct tape and zip ties.

She turns and heads to the register.

A TEENAGER rings her up. He eyes Maggie suspiciously.

MAGGIE
Plumbing leak.

Maggie spies something on a rack.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I'll take that too.

EXT. POLICE COMMISSIONER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A police cruiser hides in the dark across the street.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Clark and Louise sit inside. Spying on the empty street.

LOUISE
You really think she'll come here?

CLARK
I met a guy from the VA once that came back from Afghanistan with no legs. Went through therapy. Got prosthetics. Learned to run again. Then shot his wife.

LOUISE
Maggie wasn't in a war.

CLARK
Neither was I and I still can't sleep some nights.

LOUISE
You never told me that.

CLARK
That day fucked all of us up. If
she really wants to kill Guardian,
maybe we should let her try. Put a
stop to all of this.

LOUISE
What about the thing he fought?

CLARK
Maybe she'll kill him too.

Clark glances to Sheil's bedroom. Sees her standing in the
window. The light still burns inside.

INT. POLICE COMMISSIONER'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Catharine sits on the bed, staring at Sheil by the window.

CATHARINE
I don't like this, Ava.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
What would you have me do?

CATHARINE
Can no one find her?

Sheil turns to her wife.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
She's not coming to this house.
I'm a police commissioner for
crying out loud.

CATHARINE
Was the officer right? Are
you involved?

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Why do you insist on always
eavesdropping?

CATHARINE
Are you?

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Of course not.

CATHARINE

If she lost her daughter to him,
nothing will stop her. I know you
know that.

Sheil approaches Catharine and kisses her.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL

We are safe. This city is safe. I
have made sure of that.

Catharine nods.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL (CONT'D)

Don't go to sleep. I'll be
right back.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Clark watches as the Sheil's bedroom light turns off.

INT. POLICE COMMISSIONER'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sheil sits on the toilet atop both lids. She dials a phone
number on her phone. It rings and goes to voicemail.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL (INTO PHONE)

I have given you all the time you
asked for. This is an emergency.
Call me back.

She hangs up and flushes. Hides her phone and exits.

HALLWAY

The bedroom light at the end of the hall is off. Sheil
approaches the bedroom.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL

I thought you were going to wait
for me?

BEDROOM

Sheil enters the dark bedroom. Her eyes go wide.

Catharine is TIED to a CHAIR.

DUCT TAPE OVER HER MOUTH.

Tears stream down her face. Fearful eyes shake in their sockets. Her gaze darts to the end of the room.

Sheil spins.

Comes face to face with a figure wearing a WHITE MASQUERADE MASK. Half of it stylistically textured with cracked paint.

A FAMILIAR HOODIE covers the figure. A finger shushes the mask. The other hand grips the pistol from the pawn shop.

Sheil stymies a YELP with her hand. Then uncovers her mouth.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL

You have made me a liar. I told my
wife you wouldn't come.

The mask comes off revealing MAGGIE. She admires it.

MAGGIE

I can see why they like them.
There's power in this.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL

The police are outside.

MAGGIE

I know how to get around my own
people, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL

You've broken into my home with a
gun. You are nothing like them.

MAGGIE

You're right. I don't associate
with mass murderers and
vigilantes.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL

How dare you?

MAGGIE

I need to know who he is.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL

I have nothing for you.

MAGGIE

Your wife was right.

Sheil shakes in her robe.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
If you make me, I will hurt her
while you watch until you tell me
what I need to know.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
When they find you, I will put you
in a dark hole so deep, you'll
never see the sun again.

MAGGIE
Don't you see, Ava? I'm
already there.
(then)
Tell me who he is.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
I don't know.

Maggie rises. SWINGS.

SMACK.

Sheil craters to the floor. Clutching her head. Blood oozes
from between her fingers. Catharine cries.

Maggie approaches Catharine. Grabs her hair and puts the pistol
to her head.

MAGGIE
Look at me, Ava.

Ava turns. See Maggie. She's a monster now.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Tell me his name.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
I promise you. I don't know. He
never told me who he was. I never
saw his face.

Catharine glares at her wife. An expression of betrayal.

MAGGIE
Why would you work with him? After
what he did. All those people--

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
He saved us. We would all be dead
if it wasn't for him.

MAGGIE
Then why is my daughter not alive?

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
I'm sorry about what happened. But
I can't change that.

MAGGIE
You know something. A weakness?
Where he's been seen the most?

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Just let my wife go.

MAGGIE
I'm not here to hurt you or your
wife. You're just standing in my
way.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
He told us to build the wall.
There's something there and he
refuses to go inside.

MAGGIE
Why?

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
He said he couldn't. Whatever
you're searching for is in the
quarantine.

Maggie releases Catharine. Tosses zip ties at Sheil.

MAGGIE
Tie yourself to the bed.

Sheil binds herself. Maggie double checks her work.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
How do I get into the quarantine?

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
The National Guard has is
surrounded. You'll never get in.

Maggie raises her pistol. Stuffs it into Sheil's mouth.

MAGGIE
Don't lie to me again.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Maggie drives through Sheil's wealthy neighborhood. A frantic
hysteria sets in. She snaps to the rearview mirror.

Her breathing speeds up. A panic attack creeps up on her.

A police cruiser appears ahead. Maggie covers her face as it drives past.

She snaps back to the rearview. The police cruiser keeps going. Maggie exhales.

Takes a deep breath. Then another.

EXT. POLICE COMMISSIONER'S HOUSE - DAY

The same police cruiser pulls up. Ray exits the car and approaches Clark and Louise sitting in their cruiser.

RAY
Anything?

CLARK
No. Lights went off about thirty minutes ago. All quiet since then.

Ray inspects the neighborhood.

LOUISE
You really think she'd come down here? Go after a Police Commissioner?

RAY
I don't know. But you should have seen her face when she left.

CLARK
What did she look like?

RAY
Dark. Full of hate.

CLARK
I don't blame her.

RAY
Me neither.

Ray looks up to Sheil's window.

THUD

Clark and Louise snap to the house.

CLARK
Did that come from the house?

RAY

Shit.

He books it towards the house.

RAY (CONT'D)

She was already here!

Clark and Louise pile out of their car and charge after Ray.

INT. POLICE COMMISSIONER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Flashlights dance from outside the front door.

BOOM

It flies open. Debris flies everywhere. Ray enters. Clark and Louise rush in after him.

They run up the stairs.

BEDROOM

Sheil is gagged and still bound where Maggie left her. Catharine lays on the floor, strapped to her chair. She yells from behind her duct-taped mouth.

Ray rushes to Sheil. Removes her gag. Goes for the binds.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL

How did you miss her?!

Clark and Louise attend to Catharine.

RAY

What did she want?

Sheil is silent.

CATHARINE

Tell him, Ava. Tell him or I will.

RAY

What did she want?!

EXT. PARKING GARAGE = TOP FLOOR - NIGHT

Maggie parks the car in the back of the garage. Stuffs her duffle bag under the seat and walks away.

Checks the time on her phone.

IT READS: 11:45PM

She pulls her hoodie over her head and quickens her pace. Her gait hobbled by her prosthetic.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Maggie sits on her bed in her underwear. Her prosthetic lays on the floor. A map of the city is laid out in front of her.

With a big marker, she draws a border over the quarantine area. Makes some notes. Then circles a section of the border.

Maggie leans back. Stares at her diagram. Her eyes grow heavy. Seconds later she's out cold.

INT. MOTEL - DAY

Maggie sits slumped over. Sleeps softly.

A KNOCK rings out. Maggie jumps awake. Tense. Waits.

HENRY (O.S.)
Maggie? It's Henry.

MAGGIE
Shit.
(then)
One second.

Maggie shoves the map under the bed. Grabs her leg.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

The door opens revealing Maggie. She hides behind the door. Her plastic prosthetic peaks out.

Henry glances at it. Tries not to stare.

HENRY
Sorry. Is this a bad time?

MAGGIE
What do you want, Henry?

Henry senses the cold demeanor.

HENRY
I wanted to make sure you were
okay and I didn't have a way to
reach you.
(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)
(then)
Thought it'd be my turn to talk
and then fall asleep.

Maggie softens.

MAGGIE
God, I'm sorry. I can't believe I
did that.

HENRY
I was in the neighborhood on an
errand. Was wondering if you
wanted to grab some coffee?

MAGGIE
Sure. Let me get dressed.

Maggie shuts the door.

INT. MOTEL - DAY

Maggie pulls on her jeans. Retrieves the maps and folds it,
hiding it in a drawer. She spots herself in the mirror.

Her reflection is run-down.

A complete stranger.

EXT. THE COFFEE SPOT - DAY

Henry exit. Two cups of coffee in hand. He hands one to Maggie.

MAGGIE
You don't want to stay?

HENRY
It's a good day for a walk.

Maggie taps her leg.

HENRY (CONT'D)
We'll walk slow.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Maggie and Henry walk side by side. A leisurely pace.

HENRY
I never married.
(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

The job just took over. Next thing I knew I had the whole city on my shoulders.

(then)

What about you?

MAGGIE

Separated.

HENRY

I'm sorry to hear that.

MAGGIE

I'm sure he was too.

(then)

It was difficult. After my accident, we were never the same.

HENRY

Is that the reason for the motel?

MAGGIE

It's temporary.

HENRY

I'm in a temporary place too. Going on six months now.

MAGGIE

Mine has free HBO.

Henry chuckles.

HENRY

What are you doing now since you left the force?

Maggie searches for a lie.

MAGGIE

I'll go back eventually. They offered me an electronic prosthetic.

HENRY

Is that something you'd want?

MAGGIE

Some days are better than others.

He nods.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
The vigilantes make it difficult.

HENRY
How so?

MAGGIE
You build a police force and make
it their job to protect the
people. But then these mask-
wearing heroes, without any
oversight or care for the law,
jump around, break things, get
people hurt.
(then)
Worst of all, get people killed.

HENRY
I agree with you.

MAGGIE
Not many people do.

HENRY
What about the actual superhero?

MAGGIE
Why does everyone keep calling him
a hero? A hero would have
sacrificed more and compromised
less.
(then)
A hero would have done better.

A beat.

The WAIL of police sirens break their silence.

Maggie snaps toward the source. Sees a police cruiser zoom
through an intersection. Maggie notices the direction.

Toward her MOTEL.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Henry, I'm sorry but I have to go.

HENRY
I didn't know how to bring it up.
About last night?

MAGGIE
Let's just leave it at that, okay?

Henry hesitates. Nods. Skeptical of the answer.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
You have a warm heart.
(then)
I'll just end up breaking it.

Maggie palms his cheek.

Turns and leaves toward the direction of the police cruiser.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

Police cars screech to a halt in front of Maggie's room.
Officers jumps out, guns ready. Ray is amongst them.

RAY
Which room?

An Officer exits the Manager's Office.

OFFICER
Room thirty-two.

RAY
Go around back.

A team of officers stack up on Maggie's room.

SMASH

The door is kicked in. They charge inside.

Moments later they slowly exit. One officer carries
Maggie's map.

Across the street, Maggie hides between two buildings. Watching
the whole thing unfold.

She turns and slinks away as more cop cars arrive.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

Maggie enters her truck. Reaches under her seat and pulls out
her duffle bag. Check it. The gun is there. Money is there.

Sits back and calms.

Then lays down and closes her eyes.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Maggie is startled awake by the silence. She cautiously rises.

Surveying the parking garage for anyone else.

Then checks the time on her phone.

IT READS: 10:14PM

She rubs her eyes and opens the door.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - TOP FLOOR - NIGHT

Maggie exits the car. The cold air chills her. Wrapping herself in a coat he walks to the edge of the garage.

Faint POLICE SIRENS are heard in the distance.

Maggie turns. Looks toward the quarantine and the dark skyscrapers beyond the wall.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Maggie pulls her pickup out of the garage and makes a turn. Heads straight for the quarantine.

EXT. 8TH STREET - THE WALL - NIGHT

Ray and a slew of police officers have the entire street blocks off. Clark approaches.

CLARK

Seems like overkill for a cripple.

RAY

Don't be an asshole. She was our friend.

CLARK

Emphasis on was. Even I can't defend her after what she did.

RAY

We're all a little messed up after what happened. You told me that.

Clark concedes.

CLARK

She's probably halfway to Mexico by now. Maybe Canada.

RAY

No. She's coming over this wall.

CLARK
You a mind reader?

RAY
I'd do that same thing in
her shoes.

CLARK
It's swarming with National Guard.
We found her plans in the motel
room. Half the cops on duty are
here. Maggie's stupid if she
thinks she's getting through.

A realization hits Ray.

RAY
What if we're meant to be here?

CLARK
Huh?

RAY
What if after the Commissioner's
house, this was all set up to lure
us away from where she's actually
going?

Clark and Ray look at each other.

RAY (CONT'D)
Maggie is the farthest from
stupid. She set us up.

CLARK
I'll call it in.

Ray rushes over to his cruiser. Jumps in. Turns the engine and
guns it.

Red and blue lights blaze into the night.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Ray's police cruiser races through intersection after
intersection. The siren wails. Lights dance.

He scans the streets. Every intersection.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Ray hits the breaks and spins the car around.

Races a block over and guns it back toward the quarantine.

Still searching.

He looks down another intersection. Another street. Checks each one as he careens toward the wall.

Racing past an intersection, Ray spots an early 90s pickup truck. It registers late.

Ray slams the brakes.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Maggie notices Ray's cruiser as it skids to a halt.

She shoves the shift knob into first gear and hits the accelerator.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Maggie's pickup truck shoots down the street. Ray's cruiser appears behind her in the distance. Sirens blaring.

Maggie jerks the wheel and flies around a corner.

The tires squeal. She accelerates to full speed. Ray's police cruiser catches up behind her.

Another turn. Then another. Ray keeps gaining.

Maggie sees the skyscrapers of downtown growing in size in front of her. QUARANTINE SIGNS appear with more frequency.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Ray is locked onto Maggie's truck. He watches it make a turn.

Zooms forward and around the corner after her. Maggie's truck in the middle of the road.

Cabin empty. Driver's door open.

Ray skids to a halt. Takes a moment. Studies his surroundings.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Ray exits. Gun drawn. Maggie is nowhere to be seen.

He notices five different directions. All escape routes.

RAY
Maggie! Where are you?

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Maggie hobble runs. Crashing through puddles. Duffle bag around her shoulder. The pawn shop gun in her hand.

She doesn't look back.

ON RAY

The radio crackles.

RAY (INTO RADIO)
All units. Suspect is heading for
the quarantine wall on West Second
Street. Notify all National Guard.
North wall on West Second Street.
Suspect is armed. Use caution. I
repeat. Suspect is armed.

Ray bolts toward the wall.

EXT. WEST SECOND STREET - NIGHT

Ray rounds the corner. Sprinting like a madman.

The wall rises in front of him. Construction equipment stands between him and the wall.

Then he sees her. Maggie is halfway up some scaffolding.

RAY
Maggie!

Maggie turns to Ray.

Determination on her face. She continues. Climbs the scaffolding and disappears through a crack in the wall.

A Humvee skids to a halt behind Ray. National Guardsmen pile out. Ray motions for them to follow and dashes after Maggie.

RAY (CONT'D)
We have to stop her.

GUARDSMAN #1
Stand down.

Ray continues. Guardsmen tackle Ray to the ground.

RAY

Let me go. She's right there.

GUARDSMAN #2

You can't go in there.

RAY

I can stop her.

More Guardsmen pin Ray down.

GUARDSMAN #2

You don't know what's in there.

Ray snaps to the fearful Guardsman.

INT. QUARANTINE - NORTH WALL - NIGHT

Maggie drops down from the scaffolding. Her good leg gives out. She tumbles into the dirt.

Looking up, Maggie observes the emptiness. A once bustling downtown district is now completely dark and empty.

She rises and makes her way into the dark.

The sound of yelling and police sirens grows from the opposite side of the wall.

But Maggie continues on. The sounds fading away as she walks.

Maggie pulls her gun. CLICKS the safety off.

A FIGURE appears behind Maggie. Silent as her surroundings.

She spins to see GUARDIAN hovering menacingly above the ground.

BAM

Maggie fires.

Guardian dodges. The bullet craters into a slab of concrete debris. Maggie breaks into a quick hobble.

Runs deeper into the quarantine.

Guardian flies after her. The closer he gets to Maggie the closer he gets to the ground. He reaches out for Maggie.

CRASH

He tumbles to the ground. Maggie trips. Also goes down.

She spins onto her back. Gun trained on Guardian.

GUARDIAN
Maggie, don't.

Maggie hesitates. Guardian can barely push himself off the ground. Maggie fingers the trigger, sensing weakness.

Before she can fire. Guardian SNAPS to something unseen.

With all his strength he jumps back towards the wall. Covering an entire block. He lands with a THUMP.

Guardian stares at Maggie.

In the blink of an eye, something grabs her.

WOOSH

And pulls her deeper into the darkness.

Guardian surveys the landscape. Stands, strength renewed. He hovers up above the ground and flies away.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Ray exits the elevator and stomps past the nurse's station.

PHYLLIS
Sir, can I help you?

RAY
Where's the Commissioner?

PHYLLIS
They were asked to not be disturbed.

Ray storms off. He looks down the hallway. Then another. Stops when he sees a uniformed police officer and marches toward him.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM 340 - NIGHT

A DOCTOR removes a bandage of Sheil's forehead. Stitches across the wound Maggie gave her. Catharine stands away from her. Arms crossed.

RAY (O.S.)
Is she in there?

OFFICER (O.S.)
You can't go in.

A SCUFFLE is heard. Ray barges in.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
What is the meaning of this?

RAY
What's behind the wall?

DOCTOR
I'll give you all a few minutes.

The Doctor slips out.

RAY
I looked a soldier in the face
tonight and he was scared about
what was on the other side.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Maggie made her own choice.

RAY
What's she going to find there?
What are you keeping back?

Sheil remains silent.

RAY (CONT'D)
Derek Cecil was right, wasn't he?

CATHARINE
You endangered our lives, Ava.
Tell this man what he needs to do
his job.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Neither of you will understand.
These aren't regular people we're
dealing with.

Sheil looks between Ray and her wife.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL (CONT'D)
They destroy cities.

RAY
What did you do?

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Guardian was on our side. He did
good things. The work we did saved
lives.

CATHARINE
You lied to me all this time?

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
I was trying to protect you.

RAY
And the monster?

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
The battle wasn't our fault. That thing just showed up.

RAY
You gave him room to be a hero, Commissioner. But every hero needs a nemesis. You brought the monster here.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
I was trying to protect everyone.

RAY
You brought him to our city.
(then)
And now you sent Maggie into a dark hole you created.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
That was her decision.

RAY
I won't ask again. What's behind that wall?

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Are you threatening me, Officer?

RAY
You're damn right I am. You're at the center of all of this. If you don't tell me what I want to know, I will find out another way.
(then)
Even if that brings you down.

Sheil remains silent.

RAY (CONT'D)
Have it your way, Commissioner.

Ray storms out.

Sheil looks to Catharine.

CATHARINE
I can't believe you.

Catharine follows Ray.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
Honey, wait.

But she's gone.

INT. GUTTED BUILDING - NIGHT

Maggie regains consciousness. Slowly opens her eyes.

She finds herself in the burned out remains of a hip coffee shop. Only walls and twisted metal debris are left over.

Rainwater drips from the ceiling.

Maggie pulls herself up. Attempts to stand and falls. She looks at her legs and finds her prosthetic missing. She scans her surroundings.

No bag. No gun.

Panic sets in. Maggie fights it. Takes deep breaths.

And finally calms.

Drags herself to some debris and stands. She looks outside to see PERSHING SQUARE. Now OVERGROWN.

A living forest in the middle of a concrete jungle.

Maggie looks back into the building.

A MASS OF BONE, MUSCLE, AND SINEW stands in the once empty space right in front of her. ROCK-LIKE SHARDS of armor cover the entire body.

It stands EIGHT FEET TALL.

Its name is NEMESIS.

Dark beady eyes. Soulless. Peer at Maggie.

Her body trembles. Beyond fear.

Maggie drops to the ground. Unsure if the eyes can even see her. Nemesis reaches out. Extends a long sharp finger.

A VOICE resonates from its mouth.

If you can call it that. Like blood churning screams and volcanic rocks being crushed together.

NEMESIS

You are not like the others.

Maggie's own voice is lost. Running scared.

NEMESIS (CONT'D)

You seek death?

Maggie shakes her head.

NEMESIS (CONT'D)

Then life?

MAGGIE

What are you?

Nemesis lowers his sharp finger.

NEMESIS

Do you feel that you are in the presence of God?

MAGGIE

You can't be God.

NEMESIS

I am life giver. Death bringer. Is that not God?

Maggie continues to tremble in her skin.

NEMESIS (CONT'D)

You are broken. Incomplete. Why are you here, Broken Thing?

MAGGIE

I'm looking for a weakness.

NEMESIS

Your own flesh is a weakness.

MAGGIE

Not mine. Guardian's weakness.

Nemesis contorts his face. An attempt at amusement.

NEMESIS

You seek death for the Guardian?

MAGGIE

Yes.

NEMESIS

You have courage.

(MORE)

NEMESIS (CONT'D)
Or perhaps you are stupid?

MAGGIE
Do you know what it is? Is it you?

He nods twice.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Will you help me?

NEMESIS
Very stupid. Why should God
help you?

MAGGIE
Because you want him dead too.

Nemesis contorts his face again. A smile?

NEMESIS
I will let you live today.

Nemesis reveals her prosthetic. Dwarfed by his hand.

NEMESIS (CONT'D)
And this?

MAGGIE
Guardian took it from me.

NEMESIS
You want battle. Even when you are
broken? Maybe that is strength?

MAGGIE
He killed my daughter.

Nemesis tosses the prosthetic to the ground by Maggie.

NEMESIS
I accept.

MAGGIE
What do you want in return?

NEMESIS
The same as you.
(then)
Follow.

Nemesis glides past her.

EXT. THE CENTER - NIGHT

What used to be Pershing Square. Now an overgrown forest.

Nemesis leads. His gait slow. Yet Maggie struggles to keep up due to his long strides.

MAGGIE

Where are we going?

Nemesis points toward the overgrown forest.

NEMESIS

Inside.

MAGGIE

What am I looking for?

NEMESIS

Our source. The beginning and the end.

MAGGIE

I don't understand.

NEMESIS

Years ago it came from the stars.
Bore the Guardian. Gave me life.

MAGGIE

You're like him? You were human?

NEMESIS

Once a host, yes. A vessel.
Whoever he was is no longer. Only
I remain.

MAGGIE

And Guardian. Will he become
like you?

NEMESIS

We are opposites, him and I. His
power comes from growth. From
life. Mine come from consumption.

MAGGIE

You've been here all this time?

NEMESIS

This is my prison and my fortress.

MAGGIE

Why not leave?

NEMESIS

The source weakens us both. Him
more than me. Guardian cannot
venture here where I can kill him.
Yet I am his equal outside these
walls.

(then)

So here I wait.

MAGGIE

You must be so lonely.

NEMESIS

I am never alone. There is an
entire world around me. I don't
need your sympathy.

They reach the edge of the forest.

NEMESIS (CONT'D)

I thought I could end our struggle
by bringing the source here.

(then)

But I was wrong.

He looks to Maggie. Beady eyes an endless void.

NEMESIS (CONT'D)

Enter.

Maggie looks into the woods. Hesitant. Then ventures forward.

EXT. THE SOURCE - NIGHT

A bustling growth of trees and brush. No birds. No bugs. Not
even a breeze. Eerily silent and just as beautiful.

Maggie approaches the center. A pool of water.

At its center is a short thick tree.

Maggie looks to Nemesis.

MAGGIE

What do I do?

NEMESIS

Take from the source. You will
know what to do.

Maggie looks to The Source.

MAGGIE
Will it give me his strength or
will it kill me?

Then back to Nemesis.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Will it make me like you?

NEMESIS
The source has already given life.
Only death remains. You will be
unharmmed.
(then)
Take it. And think of your
daughter when you bring him to his
knees.

Maggie approaches The Source.

Right to the water's edge. It's knee deep. She wades into it
and closer to the tree. Leaves sag down from the branches.

Under each leaf is a bud.

Each one glows a faint blue light.

Maggie cradles a bud in her hands. Then plucks it from the
stem. The bud blossoms revealing a sharp spine.

It's hard to the touch. The point microscopic.

NEMESIS (CONT'D)
Remove it.

Maggie snaps the spine from the bud.

She turns to Nemesis. A menacing behemoth in front of her.

Death incarnate.

Maggie hesitates. Nemesis senses it.

NEMESIS (CONT'D)
Only death waits for you if you
venture back.

Maggie trudges out of the water and stands in front of Nemesis.

No more fear inside her.

EXT. MACARTHUR PARK - DAY

Morning joggers run the length of the lake in the center of the park. The sun has barely left the horizon.

On its own podium stands the half-destroyed statue of Guardian. It's visage still a powerful presence.

Maggie appears over the same ridge she walked days earlier. She hobbles on her failing prosthetic.

In her hand, she holds a clear bottle. A rag is stuffed inside the opening. It touches the liquid inside.

Mere feet from the statue, Maggie stops. Stares it down. It looks back at her with that cold emotionless mask.

Anger boils inside her.

She lights the rag. Making a burning MOLOTOV COCKTAIL.

Maggie savors the moment. Then CHUCKS the bottle.

CRASH.

It smashes on the sculpture and SHATTERS. Guardian's Statue ERUPTS in flames.

Pedestrians let out yelps of fear and run from the scene.

The park clears as Maggie relishes the heat from the fire. The tall blaze rises twenty feet into the air.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - DAY

Sirens WAIL as Ray guns the cruiser. His PARTNER clings to the dash.

RAY
Out of the way.

He swerves around a car in street.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A row of police cruisers charge down the street.

National Guard Humvees join the convoy.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - DAY

Ray pulls into MacArthur Park.

Screeches to a halt by a row of police and military vehicles.

EXT. MACARTHUR PARK - PARKING LOT - DAY

Jumping from the cruiser, Ray spots rising smoke.

Clark and Louise approach.

RAY
What is she doing?

LOUISE
We don't know. She torched
the statue.

CLARK
The Guard is keeping us back.

RAY
Why?

CLARK
She's calling him out, Ray.
They're scared as shit.

Ray draws his weapon.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Ray!

RAY
I didn't stop her. She's up there
because of me.

Ray breaks the police line and muscles his way up the hill.
Military and Police alike are too scared to join him.

Clark and Louise appear behind Ray.

Guardsmen join in. Then other officers.

EXT. MACARTHUR PARK - GUARDIAN STATUE - DAY

Ray, Clark, and Louise see the flaming statue rise over the
hill as they approach. A group of twelve police officers and
military personnel follow behind them.

The fire burns into the sky.

Then he sees Maggie. Dirty. Bruised. Angry and full of hate.

RAY

Maggie!

She turns to Ray. The statue fire reflecting her inner pain.

He doesn't recognize the stranger standing in front of him.
Lowers his weapon. Approaches further.

MAGGIE

You shouldn't be here, Ray.

He sinks. Realizes he lost her. Raises his weapon.

RAY

Get on the ground and place your
hands behind your head.

Maggie doesn't budge.

RAY (CONT'D)

I'm not going to ask again.

She just stares. Ray approaches. Clark and Louise follow.

THUD

A mass of otherworldly armor lands between Ray and Maggie. The
dust settles.

Revealing GUARDIAN.

The police and military take a step back. Ray stands his
ground. Points his gun at the superhero.

RAY (CONT'D)

Get out of my way.

GUARDIAN

Leave her to me.

RAY

I will go through you.

GUARDIAN

You will fail.

BAM

Ray fires.

The bullet smacks into Guardian. A pebble bouncing off a
mountain. Ray slumps. Lowers the pistol.

Guardian turns towards Maggie. She glares at him. Filled with hate. He closes the distance between them.

GUARDIAN (CONT'D)
Stop this, Maggie. Please.

There's familiarity within his booming voice.

MAGGIE
You took everything from me.

GUARDIAN
This won't make it right.

Guardian stops before Maggie.

GUARDIAN (CONT'D)
Come with me.

MAGGIE
You murdered her. Nothing you do
will bring her back.
(then)
This world doesn't need heroes.

He stands still. Emotions race behind the mask.

GUARDIAN
You're right. It doesn't.

Guardian reaches behind his otherworldly mask. About to remove it. Maggie holds her breath.

Dying to know.

She sees her chance. Maggie thrusts with the SPINE from the tree. It breaks through Guardian's armor. Piercing deep into his stomach.

The armor around the wound recedes. Fearing the spine.

It's ALIVE.

Guardian grabs the spine. The armor around his hands recedes.

GUARDIAN (CONT'D)
Why?

Guardian stumbles back.

Looks to Maggie with his emotionless mask and falls to his knees. Ray and his group approach. Guns ready.

RAY

Get on the ground! Right now.

Ray is almost to Maggie. She holds her ground.

The fire behind her suddenly fades. A monstrous body of armored bone, muscle, and sinew appears hovering behind her.

It blocks the light from the flames. Covering her in shadow.

In darkness.

It's NEMESIS.

Ray succumbs to fear. The fear he talked about before.

He's staring death in the face.

GUARDSMAN

Fire!

Every available weapon in the vicinity OPENS FIRE. The bullets have no effect. More pebbles bouncing off mountains.

Maggie stands triumphant. Gunfire raining around her.

She glares at Guardian.

WHAAAAMP

A RED BEAM slices forward from behind her. Draws a line through Ray. Through Clark. Louise. The entire group.

They all collapse. Their bodies fall apart into two pieces.

All her FRIENDS ARE DEAD.

Maggie's face fills with dread.

MAGGIE

No!

Her voice cracks. Emotion tearing at her vocal chords.

The energy beam was so powerful it created a vacuum. The ground catches fire where the red beam landed and the winds pick up.

Maggie spins.

Coming face to face with Nemesis. His black beady eyes glow a faint red-orange. The color of molten metal.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Why did you kill them?!

Guardian pulls at the spine. Lacking the strength.

NEMESIS
You asked for this.

MAGGIE
They were not supposed to die!

Maggie's mind races. Realization. Emotion. Fear. She sinks to the ground. Looks at her hands covered in blood.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
What have I done?

NEMESIS
Life giver. Death bringer.
(then)
To you I give life.

Tears clean the dirt of Maggie's face. Nemesis floats around her. Closer to Guardian. Towering over him. He lands.

MAGGIE
No. Wait.

WHAM

Nemesis slams an enormous fist down.

Guardian craters into the ground from the impact. Maggie tumbles back from the impact.

The dust settles. Maggie rises to her knees. See dead bodies. Raging fires. Destruction. Death.

All because of her.

Nemesis raises Guardian up by the neck. Stares at him with glowing red eyes.

NEMESIS
We end this, old friend.

BOOM

Sparks and shrapnel explode from Nemesis' head. He drops Guardian. Stumbles back.

ROOFTOP

A Guardsman lays behind a sniper rifle.

BOOM

He fires again.

BACK TO STATUE

Nemesis dodges. The bullet whizzes by Maggie's head. Colliding with the ground behind her.

She doesn't budge. Shock and guilt ravage her body.

Nemesis rises into the air.

WHAAAAMP

Another RED BEAM extends from his eyes.

It draws a line of destruction across the sniper's building. Screams. Yelling. More fire. Nemesis floats towards it.

Feeding off of it.

Maggie watches him disappear beyond the flames. She sweats from the heat. Then sees Guardian.

He barely moves.

Body contorted. Bones broken.

Maggie stands and her prosthetic finally gives out. Distorted from the heat. She claws at it. Struggles to remove it.

It finally comes off.

Maggie claws at the dirt and drags herself toward Guardian. The sound of destruction is heard. More screams. Gunfire.

She ignores it. Only one thing matters now.

Guardian's armor continues to slowly recede. It's completely gone from his face. The spin is still sticking in his bloody stomach.

Maggie finally reaches him.

Guardian turns to look at her.

It's HENRY.

Betrayal. Anger. Denial. Maggie stifles a whine.

MAGGIE

It was you all this time?

Henry chokes. Blood oozes from his mouth.

HENRY

I tried to save her. I failed your daughter.

(then)

I failed everyone.

MAGGIE

Did you put her name on the wall?

HENRY

No. Everyone's name.

MAGGIE

Why didn't you tell me?

HENRY

I tried.

Maggie notices her handy work.

MAGGIE

Oh, god. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

HENRY

I don't blame you.

She reaches to remove the spine.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Don't.

MAGGIE

I don't want you to die.

Henry shakes his head. It's too late.

HENRY

Stay with me.

Maggie crawls to Henry. Pull his head into her lap. The armor continues to recede from his body.

Henry is almost normal.

MAGGIE

I hated you for what you did.

(then)

Now I did the same thing.

HENRY

I was never a hero.

MAGGIE

You saved as many as you could.

HENRY
I'm sorry.

Henry's eyes roll back into his head. His body goes limp.

MAGGIE
No. Please.

Beyond the fire, a dark mass reappears. With two glowing eyes. Nemesis floats back toward Maggie and Guardian.

She snaps to him.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I won't let you take him!

Maggie glares at him. The monster is almost upon them.

NEMESIS
I gave you life.

She looks down to Henry. Lifeless in her arms.

Maggie hugs him tight. Shuts her eyes.

NEMESIS (CONT'D)
Then you choose death.

MAGGIE
(sotto)
I forgive you.

Nemesis eyes glow brighter. Building energy. Maggie tenses.

Waiting for death.

WHOOSH

An unknown vortex spins around Maggie. A transfer of energy is displacing the very air around her.

Nemesis is about to FIRE.

THUMP

The energy transfer hits again with a shockwave.

Displacing gravity at the same time. Debris around Maggie flies up. Holds inches off the ground.

Nemesis STUMBLES back from the event.

WHAAAMP

His red beam goes wide. Slices across the nearby lake. Boils the water where it hits.

Something is happening to Maggie.

Something Powerful. Primal.

Maggie lifts her head. Hair dances around her.

She locks eyes with Nemesis. Guardian's armor creeps up her neck. Nemesis prepares to fire again.

A BLINK of movement.

Maggie flies toward Nemesis. The SPINE in HAND.

The world around her is a blur. Her new armor grows around her body. Yet fall off her hand that holds the spine.

She is caught mid-transfer. Powerful enough to hold the spine that killed Guardian. Maggie charges Nemesis.

Feints. Nemesis swings. She dodges and THRUSTS.

The spine enters past armor and bone. Deep into the muscle.

Nemesis flies backward. Hits the ground and tumbles backward. He claws at the ground to slow himself.

Maggie struggles to see him through the kicked up dirt and dust. The armor continues to wrap around her body.

The dust settles. Maggie sees Nemesis struggle to stand.

She tenses. Readies to pounce. Nemesis isn't ready. Those beady eyes tremble. They show FEAR.

Maggie charges.

IN THE SKY

A bird's eye view of MacArthur Park.

Everything below is ant-sized. A colony in the midst of destruction.

FWOOOMP

A collision occurs right at the center where Maggie and Nemesis are. A shock wave spreads outward.

As if a bomb went off.

Two square blocks are doused with dirt and debris. Windows shatter and car alarms go off.

Moments later, everything settles.

EXT. MACARTHUR PARK - PARKING LOT - DAY

The fires are gone.

Smoke rises from charred remains of cars and people. Firefighters comb the scene. Searching for survivors.

Police Officers make their way through the destruction. Between them is Commissioner Sheil. She surveys the devastation.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Ma'am, we should get back. The
Fire Marshall hasn't cleared this
area.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
I need to find them.

POLICE OFFICER #1
With that big of an explosion,
there won't be anything left.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
I don't care. Lead me to
the center.

The officers follow orders.

EXT. MACARTHUR PARK - GUARDIAN STATUE - DAY

The park is unrecognizable.

Yet Guardian's statue still stands. A few more pieces missing than before.

Commissioner Sheil wobbles over debris and torn up earth as she makes her way through the mess. Her police escort follows.

They see Henry's body. Sheil approaches.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Is that him?

Kneels to examine it.

COMMISSIONER SHEIL
I don't know.
(MORE)

COMMISSIONER SHEIL (CONT'D)
He always wore that mask.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Are they gone?
(then)
Is it over?

She stands. Swipes the dirt off her hands. Something above her catches her attention.

Sheil looks up.

A FEMALE FIGURE hovers in the sky.

Draped in an otherworldly costume that looks more like armor. Every movement an elegant motion. The head is uncovered. Letting long hair dance in the wind.

MAGGIE TEMPLE hovers in the sky. The NEW GUARDIAN.

Her new armor acts as a prosthetic for her missing leg.

She stares down at Sheil from the sky. Soft eyes full of emotion.

Regret. Guilt. Shame.

Hope.

She is nothing like Guardian.

FADE OUT

END