

HALF TO DEATH

by

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DARKNESS.

We HEAR the strange, hollow cry of a BELL ringing in reverse. The warbled sound grows louder and louder until we...

FADE IN:

EXT. HOSPITAL BELL TOWER -- POTSDAM UNIVERSITY - MORNING

The morning sunlight gleams off the great IRON CAST BELL as it continues ringing, but at its normal speed.

From this high up we can see how isolated the school is -- surrounded on one side by thick forest.

A small campus, mostly brick and ivy. In the Quad, a fraction of the students amble to their classes.

We glimpse the highlights: THE FOOTBALL FIELD. SORORITY ROW. AN ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING. THE DORMS.

INT. CARTER'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

A boxed shrine to hip. From the "BLADE RUNNER" and vintage "STAR WARS" posters to the book shelf lined with plastic-sealed comics.

Tangled in black skull and crossbone sheets, we find TERESA "Tree" GELBMAN, 19, beautiful.

Outside, the bell tolls one final time before a calm settles over the room. The quiet doesn't last long as Tree's CELL PHONE plays "Happy Birthday".

Tree stirs through the fog of her hang-over, searching for her phone. As she sits up, several things hit her at once: *she's not in her room, she's wearing a guy's T-shirt, and the guy it probably belongs to is bent down, putting something away under the couch.*

CARTER DAVIS, 19, good looks hidden behind grunge and stubble, turns around and smiles at Tree.

CARTER

You're up. I wasn't --

TREE

(interrupting)

Where are my clothes?

CARTER
On the night stand.

Tree fishes her phone out -- 1 missed call from "DAD". She snaps it shut with an exasperated sigh.

Tree pulls off the T-shirt, exposing a black lace bra. Carter quickly turns his back to her.

CARTER (CONT'D)
I don't know if you remember my name. You were pretty wasted last night. I'm Car--

TREE
Tylenol?

CARTER
What?

TREE
My head's killing me. Do you have any Tylenol?

CARTER
Uh, sure. Hold on a sec.

He starts rummaging through the debris of his room while Tree finishes getting dressed. Carter finds a bottle of aspirin in a TOILETRY BAG that was hidden under a pair of jeans. He offers her a pill. She snatches the bottle and dumps three in her hand and dry-swallows them like a pro.

CARTER (CONT'D)
I'm Carter.

TREE
(interrupting again)
Not a word of this to anyone. Got it?

CARTER
Sure...

Tree starts to leave. The door is covered in a collage of band stickers and other bits and strips of randomness. In the middle of it all is a BUMPER STICKER that proclaims: **"TODAY IS THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE"**

Tree opens the door and collides with a lanky FRESHMAN. The words are already leaving his mouth:

FRESHMAN

Dude! Did you hit that fine-vagine
or what?!

He meets Tree's hard stare and instantly shrinks. Tree pushes past him.

Carter shoots the freshman a look.

CARTER

Nice one, dickweed.

Carter's eyes fall on Tree's GOLD BRACELET, lying on the floor, as it catches the light from the open window. She must have knocked it off the night stand in her haste.

EXT. THE CAMPUS - MORNING

Dressed in a slinky outfit and heels, Tree is forced to make the "walk of shame" across the already bustling campus. She shields her eyes from the blinding sunlight.

She passes a female STUDENT who thrusts a petition at her.

STUDENT PROTESTER

Stop global warming!

Tree doesn't deign to acknowledge the proffered clipboard.

A nearby CAR ALARM goes off.

Next, Tree notices a PAIR OF STUDENTS studying on the lawn as the sprinklers suddenly go off -- they're getting soaked as they scramble to protect their books.

On the left, TREE passes a group of FRAT PLEDGES singing loudly. THE FRAT BROTHER stands beside a sign: "26th Straight Hour".

FRAT PLEDGES

*-- not a Willie or a Sam! I'm the
eighth ole' man named Henry!
Henry the Eighth, I am!*

FRAT BROTHER

Second verse, same as the first!

FRAT PLEDGES
*Oh, Henry the Eighth, I am, I
 am!...*

The crowd of onlookers cheer as one EXHAUSTED FRAT PLEDGE passes out, hitting his head hard on the pavement.

Tree reaches the end of the quad and starts down the steps, as KEITH LUMBLY (18, a big-boned mouthbreather) is just lumbering up the steps.

KEITH
 Morning Tree!

She genuinely doesn't see him... He sighs.

The end of the steps lead to SORORITY ROW. Tree's house, KAPPA DELTA is a converted Mansion at the edge of the park.

INT. KAPPA DELTA HOUSE - MORNING

Tree creeps into the house -- trying to avoid any of her sisters. She's got one foot on the stairs when:

DANIELLE (O.C.)
 Oh-my-god. You sneaky beeyotch!

Busted. Tree turns around to face DANIELLE BOUSEMAN, 20, peroxide-pretty.

DANIELLE
 Who was it?

TREE
 Nobody.

DANIELLE
 Sisters don't keep secrets.

TREE
 Seriously. It was *nobody*.

DANIELLE
 Well, I hope *nobody* used a condom.
 We don't want *somebody* getting
 chlamydia.

TREE
 Thanks for that, Danielle. Really,
 so thoughtful.

DANIELLE
What are sisters for?

Tree starts up the stairs.

DANIELLE
(calling after her)
Don't forget! House meeting at
lunch!

TREE
Living for it!

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Tree has changed into new clothes and is running a brush through her tangled bed-head when her roommate, LORI SPENGLER (18, a cherubic faced redhead) steps from the bathroom, wet, wrapped in a towel.

LORI
She finally rolls in.

Shoving a pile of "rejected outfits" off her bed, Tree curls up with her childhood stuffed animal.

TREE
Did I totally embarrass myself
last night?

LORI
Not at all. Unless you consider
dancing on a table, starting two
fights, and barfing pretzel chunks
all over the bar embarrassing.

TREE
Please tell me you're kidding...

LORI
Oh, and you rammed your tongue
down Nick Sims' throat right in
front of Danielle.

TREE
Get out!

LORI
For shizzle.

TREE

But she was so nice to me this morning?

LORI

I think she was as drunk as you last night. Consider it collective amnesia.

TREE

Thank god for that.

Tree looks at the clock.

TREE (CONT'D)

Crap! I'm so late for class!

Tree starts putting her backpack together. Her side of the room is a giant mess -- clothes, make-up, and trash strewn everywhere.

TREE (CONT'D)

I can't find my damn book!

LORI

Maybe if you cleaned your side of the room, you could actually find something.

TREE

Just cause I'm not an OCD freak --
(finding her book)
Ha!

The TEXT BOOK is under a pile of mail on her desk. (Note: there's a BLACK ENVELOPE on top of the pile but Tree pays it no attention.)

Lori clears her throat behind Tree -- Tree turns around and discovers her roommate holding a CUPCAKE with a single, burning candle.

LORI

Did you really think you could keep it a secret from me?

TREE

How did you find out?

LORI
Driver's license. Not the best
picture of you, I might add.

TREE
I assume you changed my ringer
too?

LORI
(sly)
Who me? Never.

Tree reluctantly takes the cupcake. Closing her eyes, she
makes a wish and blows the candle out.

LORI (CONT'D)
What'd you wish for?

TREE
A new roommate.

LORI
(laughing)
Wench.

And without a second thought, Tree dumps the cupcake into
the trash.

LORI (CONT'D)
Hey!

TREE
Sorry. Too many carbs.

Lori looks a little hurt. Tree grabs her bag.

TREE (CONT'D)
Toodles.

LORI
Well, you're welcome...

Tree's already out the door.

Lori shakes her head: Tree thoughtlessly left the door
open with Lori still standing there in the towel.

LORI (CONT'D)
Hello? Towel here -- !

INT. DR. BUTLER'S SCIENCE CLASS - MORNING

Tree "sneaks" into the rear of the lecture hall. DR. GREGORY BUTLER (early 30's, chiseled) jots notes on the chalkboard.

GREGORY

When extreme agitation occurs,
locomotive response in the
subjects show an acceleration
across the quantum plane, where --

A quiet entrance is ruined by a very loud, squeaky door as Tree slinks into the room. As she takes a seat in the back she makes eye-contact with her professor.

Was that a sneer or a smirk he just flashed her?

EXT. LUNCH PATIO - AFTERNOON

A group of Kappa girls have gathered around a table, as Danielle conducts a house meeting with the intensity of a U.N. assembly. To her right, MONICA KEENER, 18, a nervous pledge, diligently takes notes on a legal pad.

The other girls, including Tree, absently suck on sugar-free, no whip Mochas OR what they call...*lunch*.

Visibly absent is Lori.

DANIELLE

-- and we still need to pick this year's charity. I can say right now, there is no way we're doing the Special Needs art fair again. All those tards want to do is hug. *Totally freaked my shit out.* Thoughts?

Another pledge, BECKY SHEPARD, 18, a little chunky but doing her best to fit-in, joins the group with her tray. All eyes fall on her food...a sandwich with a side of pasta salad, and a tall glass of chocolate milk.

Feeling the weight of their collective stares:

BECKY

What's wrong?

DANIELLE

I don't know. What's wrong Tree?

TREE

Nothing. Except for the *buffet* you just dumped on our table.

DANIELLE

And is that chocolate milk I see?

Becky looks horrified.

BECKY

(ashamed)

I missed breakfast.

She gets up with her tray and SLAMS into Carter. The chocolate milk slides off the tray and SPLASHES all over Tree. Danielle cracks up.

TREE

Ass--

She looks up and sees who it is.

TREE (CONT'D)

--hole.

Carter grabs some napkins from the dispenser on the table.

CARTER

I'm so sorry, Tree.

DANIELLE

You two know each other?

CARTER

Yes.

TREE

No.

They look at each other -- Tree's eyes could burn holes through him. Carter remembers her threat earlier.

CARTER

(sheepish)

We...had a class together last year.

Tree snatches the napkins from him and starts wiping herself down.

CARTER (CONT'D)

I just came by to return this.

He offers Tree her bracelet.

CARTER (CONT'D)

I didn't know where you lived--

Tree snatches it back and looks around to see if anybody saw the exchange. Luckily, they didn't.

He waits for a "thank you".

TREE

Help you?

Carter's hurt turns to indignation. But he doesn't bark at her. He's better than that.

CARTER

Sorry again about the mess.

Carter walks off.

DANIELLE

What a douche-bag.

INT. CAMPUS BOOK STORE - AFTERNOON

Tree, a BLUE WORK SMOCK over the CHOCOLATE MILK STAIN on her blouse thumbs through a copy of US Weekly. Her boss, LEONARD GILBERT, 40's, wormy, peers over her shoulder.

LEONARD

Teresa, I believe you're supposed to be unpacking the new shipment, not reading about--

(reading the cover)

--*Brangelina*.

TREE

I'm still on my ten.

LEONARD

Your ten ended ten minutes ago, missy.

Tree drops the magazine. As she heads toward the back, she passes a display of school-spirit paraphernalia including a stack of eerie MASKS (the school mascot).

INT. STOCK ROOM - AFTERNOON

Fluorescent lights HUM in the sterile room as we find Tree hunched over a pile of text books, stamping the covers with STICKERS that say "REDUCED".

Immersed in the mind-blowing monotony of her job, Tree doesn't see the HULKING FIGURE standing behind her.

We SEE a BOX CUTTER in his dirty hand as the blade slowly slides out...

The figure leans in and *SLASHES!*--

--the plastic band wrapped around a pile of books next to Tree. She jumps!

ANGLE ON

Keith (the mouthbreather from before) standing behind Tree.

TREE

Don't sneak up on me, Keith. It's creepy.

KEITH

Leonard wants to know if the books are ready.

Tree picks up a stack and shoves them into Keith's arms. But he doesn't move. He just stands there like a lug, holding the stack.

TREE

Anything else, Keith?

KEITH

Um...I was wondering what you were doing this Friday night?

TREE

Are you asking me on a date, Keith?

His cheeks turn red.

KEITH

Well...sorta...

Tree raises the gun and STAMPS Keith's forehead with a "REDUCED" sticker.

TREE
Sorry, I'm busy.

INT. CAMPUS HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

Tree enters the lobby. Her cell phone plays "Happy Birthday". Tree checks the LCD: *INCOMING CALL FROM DAD.*

She instantly hits the IGNORE button as she stops in front of the elevators. The doors open -- LORI steps out, wearing her NURSING SCRUBS.

TREE
(surprised)
Lori...

LORI
Hi.

She steps out. The doors close as Tree struggles with the stilted air between them.

TREE
So, I thought you only work nights.

LORI
I'm doing a double for Jen. She has the flu.

TREE
We missed you at the meeting today.

LORI
I didn't think I needed to be there to decide what color Danielle's hair should be this season.

Tree laughs.

LORI (CONT'D)
I guess I don't have to ask what you're doing here.

The levity between them dissolves instantly.

TREE

Gotta go.

Nudging past Lori, Tree presses elevator button.

LORI

Look, Tree...it's none of my business but I think eventually something like that is bound to have some pretty serious consequences.

The doors open. Tree steps inside.

TREE

You're right. It's none of your business.

The metal doors shut -- Lori's disconcerted expression reflected in the polished surface.

INT. 4TH FLOOR -- HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

Tree exits the elevator and discreetly slips past the nurse's station and disappears behind a door marked "DR. GREGORY BUTLER"

As the door closes, we SEE a POLICE OFFICER stationed outside a door at the far end of the hall.

INT. GREGORY'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Tree pushes open the door of this small cramped office and realizes she's alone for a moment.

She notices a wedding picture of a happy bride and groom. She smirks, places it face side down on the desk.

Gregory (Professor Butler) enters his office, closing the door behind him.

GREGORY

We can't do this. There's too much going on in the building today.

TREE

Okay. I'll go.

She takes his CAR KEYS out of his hand and dumps them in his desk drawer.

GREGORY

I have patients...

TREE

Yeah, and I'm losing mine.

ZIP! She has her hands down his pants, kissing him hard.

GREGORY

(between kisses)

This doesn't mean you're passing
my course.

TREE

Do I look like I care?

They start kissing passionately -- Tree accidentally
kicks the desk chair across the room. It wedges itself
between the door and a file cabinet.

Which is perfect, as, suddenly... SOMEONE OUTSIDE opens
the door and tries to enter, but it is jammed.

STEPHANIE

Gregory? Are you there?

In what seems like an instant later...

... Gregory and a completely dressed Tree open the door
for STEPHANIE BUTLER (pretty, fragile) Gregory's wife.

GREGORY

Hey, Sweetie --

He gives Stephanie a kiss.

GREGORY (CONT'D)

-- just wrapping up here.

Tree squeezes past Stephanie and forces a smile -- which
isn't returned.

As Gregory closes the door, Stephanie glances back at
Tree, who wonders if Stephanie suspects anything.

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Tree sits on her bed, painting her toenails while a "Road
Rules" marathon runs for the umpteenth time on MTV.

There's a light knock at the door.

TREE

Enter...

Danielle walks in, all dolled-up. Tree sizes her up, brow furrowed.

TREE (CONT'D)

Is that my top?

DANIELLE

How cute is it on me?

TREE

Just don't get anything on it, please.

DANIELLE

You mean like Nick's jizz?

TREE

Wow. Classy.

DANIELLE

(ignoring her)
What time are you going to the party tonight?

TREE

I don't know...later.

Tree goes back to painting her nails.

Just then, there is a BLACK OUT. It is **9:23**.

DANIELLE

Our tuition dollars at work.

A moment later, the lights go back on.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

Anyhoo...don't be too late or all the cute Sigma boys will be taken.

Danielle leaves.

Looking down, Tree notices she messed up one of her toes in the blackout. Tree growls. As she reaches over to grab the bottle of POLISH REMOVER, she spills the open bottle of RED NAIL POLISH on her bedspread.

TREE

Damn it!

Tree jumps up and grabs a crumpled towel hanging over her desk chair. But something makes her freeze...

A *PHOTOGRAPH*...

Peeking out beneath her unopened mail (and the BLACK CARD).

She picks up the photo. We SEE Tree, dressed in her high school cap and gown, framed between her proud FATHER and MOTHER (Tree looks just like her).

The image cuts right to Tree's heart -- so Tree does the only thing she knows, she hides the photo in the top drawer of the dresser. Out of sight, out of mind.

EXT. THE THOROUGHFARE - NIGHT

Tree, in a resplendent white cotton dress, leaves her house and looks around. The area is completely empty of people. Most everyone at their respective pledge houses.

Tree checks her VOICE MAIL as she walks at a brisk clip.

GREGORY

(on the phone)

Hey, it's me. I'll text you later about meeting tonight. Not sure if I can get away but I'll do my best. By the way, that was close this afternoon. But kinda hot.

Tree laughs.

SAVE -- NEXT MESSAGE...

ALAN

(pissed)

Tree, it's dad. I sat in that restaurant waiting for you for almost an hour --

DELETE. Tree snaps her phone shut.

At the path she comes upon a blocked off area.

She glances at her watch. **10:43.**

TREE

Shit.

The lights are off along the cordoned and torn up path. But it is the shortest way to the Quad.

Tree steps around the wooden barriers...

EXT. THE PATH - NIGHT

Tree walks along the path, suddenly aware of... what?

Something? Someone?

TREE

Hello?

She comes across a large ditch exposing a water pipe. She realizes she has to edge around, towards the trees.

Taking a deep breath, convinced she is alone, she edges her way along the ditch. Her back to the trees.

Which is when a hand reaches out from the shadows and grabs her around the mouth!

Her muffled screams are cut short when she's suddenly aware of the KNIFE that erupts from her chest! Before she can make sense of it...

She's tossed in the ditch...

...where her rapidly draining blood mixes with the water and mud. She stares wide-eyed at an uncaring universe.

Then she is dead.

SLAM CUT:

INT. CARTER'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

Tree bolts awake -- realizing it was just a nightmare, she inhales deeply with relief. In the background we HEAR the bell toll the hour. Suddenly her cell phone rings..."Happy Birthday" plays.

Sitting up, Tree finds Carter bent over, putting something away beneath the sofa. He turns around, smiles.

CARTER

You're up. I wasn't --

TREE
 (interrupting)
 My clothes?

CARTER
 Uh...on the night stand.

Tree fishes her phone out of her jeans -- 1 missed call from "DAD". She snaps the phone shut.

Tree starts changing into her clothes. Carter turns around.

CARTER (CONT'D)
 I don't know if you remember my name. You were pretty wasted last night. I'm Car--

TREE
 (interrupting)
 Carter.

He smiles, pleasantly surprised.

TREE (CONT'D)
 Tylenol?

CARTER
 What?

TREE
 My head's killing me. Do you have any Tylenol?

CARTER
 Uh, sure. Hold on a sec.

Carter begins searching. Tree grows impatient and grabs his TOILETRY BAG under some clothes. She finds the bottle and dumps the pills in her hand.

CARTER (CONT'D)
 (laughing)
 Wow. Have you been here before?

The question makes Tree pause. *How did she know where the aspirin was?*

CARTER (CONT'D)
 You okay?

Tree is still thinking.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Tree?

She turns and looks at his door -- there's the sticker:
"TODAY IS THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE"

Suddenly, the door opens. Enter lanky freshman...

FRESHMAN

Dude! Did you hit that fine-vagine
 or what?!

He immediately shrinks at the sight of her. A little
 freaked, Tree pushes past him and hurries out.

Carter shoots the freshman a look.

CARTER

Nice one, dickweed.

EXT. THE CAMPUS - MORNING

Shielding her eyes from the glaring sun, Tree makes the
 "walk of shame" again. But it's all so familiar.

She passes the student protester.

STUDENT PROTESTER

Stop global warming!

The CAR ALARM goes off...

Then the sprinklers, soaking the studying pair.

The frat pledges...

FRAT PLEDGES

*-- not a Willie or a Sam! I'm the
 eighth ole' man named Henry!
 Henry the Eighth, I am!*

FRAT BROTHER

Second verse, same as the first!

FRAT PLEDGES

*Oh, Henry the Eighth, I am, I
 am!...*

Keith, waiting for Tree at the steps...

KEITH

Morning Tree.

This time, she notices him.

TREE

Keith, what day is it?

KEITH

Tuesday, the eighteenth.

TREE

Are you sure?

KEITH

Says so right here on my watch.

He offers his wrist but Tree turns and looks back. The whole world looks a little off kilter to her.

INT. KAPPA DELTA HOUSE - MORNING

Tree doesn't sneak in this time. But as she starts up the stairs...

DANIELLE

Oh-my-god. You sneaky beeyotch!

Tree turns around, clearly on edge.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

Who was it?

(off Tree's blank
stare/offended)

Sisters don't keep secrets.

TREE

No, I'm totally having deja vu right now.

DANIELLE

I have it all the time. It's supposed to mean somebody's like walking over your grave or something.

TREE

Seriously. I've had it all morning. It's crazy.

DANIELLE
 Maybe you should switch to water
 next time, hon. You're so Tara
 Reid when you drink.

TREE
 Thanks. I'll keep that in mind.

DANIELLE
 What are sisters for?

Tree starts up the stairs.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)
 (calling after her)
 Don't forget! House meeting at
 lunch!

Tree stops again, turns around. Danielle misinterprets
 the confused look in her eyes.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)
 It's been on the schedule board
 since last Thursday, Tree.

TREE
 Yeah...I remember.

The problem is she remembers *everything*.

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Tree is changing when Lori steps from the bathroom,
 wrapped in a towel.

LORI
 She finally rolls-in.

Tree just stares at her.

LORI (CONT'D)
 You were sort of a mess last
 night.

TREE
 Dancing on a table, barfing
 pretzel chunks?

LORI
 You remember. I'm shocked.

TREE
 (re: the deja vu)
 So weird.

LORI
 Oh, and you rammed your tongue
 down Nick Sims' throat right in
 front of Danielle.

TREE
 I'm...late for class.

Grabbing her backpack, Tree immediately finds her book on
 the desk. When she looks up, Lori has the cupcake.

LORI
 Did you really think you could
 keep it a secret from me?

She hands the cupcake to Tree who is still totally
 tripping.

LORI (CONT'D)
 Don't you wanna know how I found
 out?

TREE
 You looked at my driver's license.

LORI
 Well, aren't you the clever one.

TREE
 I gotta go.

Tree sets the cupcake down.

LORI
 But you didn't even blow the
 candle out.

She's gone, pulling the door shut behind her. The wind
 BLOWS the candle out anyway.

Confused by Tree's odd demeanor, Lori looks down at the
 cupcake.

CLOSE ON...

The candle...a sinewy rope of smoke rising from the
 extinguished wick.

EXT. THE PATIO - AFTERNOON

The Delta's are around the table as before. Tree is spacing out as Danielle holds court.

DANIELLE

-- and we still need to pick this year's charity. I can say right now, there is no way we're doing the Special Needs art fair again. All those tards want to do is hug. *Totally freaked my shit out.* Thoughts?

Becky arrives with her lunch tray.

BECKY

What's wrong?

DANIELLE

I don't know. What's wrong Tree?

Tree suddenly looks up -- she only caught the tail-end of the conversation.

TREE

I'm just a little tired, I guess.

DANIELLE

No, dumb-ass. What's wrong with that?

She points at Becky's food. Tree shakes her head.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

So *not* Kappa-cuisine. And is that chocolate milk I see?

BECKY

(ashamed)
I missed breakfast.

Humiliated, Becky stands with her tray, she starts to turn...

TREE

Becky, look out!

SLAM! Becky collides with Carter. The chocolate milk splashes all over Tree. Danielle cracks up. Carter grabs some napkins from the dispenser on the table.

CARTER
I'm so sorry, Tree.

DANIELLE
You two know each other?

No.	TREE	Yes.	CARTER
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Tree slowly turns and looks at Carter -- he sees the fear in her eyes. Translates it quickly:

CARTER
We...had a class together last year.
(to Tree)
Sorry again.

He starts to walk off.

TREE
Hey!

He stops turns around. Tree walks up to him -- clears her throat awkwardly. Carter stares at her like she's crazy until he looks down and sees her open hand.

TREE (CONT'D)
My bracelet?

CARTER
Oh. Yeah. Here--

Reaching into his pocket, he drops it into the palm of her hand. For a split-second Tree pauses -- *how did she know he had it on him?* Tree finally turns around and walks away.

DANIELLE (O.C.)
What a douche-bag.

INT. CAMPUS BOOKSTORE - CONTINUOUS

Tree, her blue smock covers her chocolate milk stain, thumbs through her US Weekly... her brow is furrowed, this is all so fucking familiar to her. It is irritating.

She suddenly recalls Leonard approaching. Tree quickly hides the magazine and pretends to be pricing down some dictionaries with a red pen. He eyes her suspiciously.

LEONARD
What are you doing?

TREE
(duh?)
Working.

LEONARD
I believe you're supposed to be
unpacking the new shipment, not
pricing dictionaries.

Tree drops the marker and gets up. As she heads toward the back, she passes the display of school spirit paraphernalia.

She freezes --

--and picks something up we don't see.

Trees looks like she's just seen a ghost. *Her own.*

Off screen, there's a loud BANG! Tree looks to her right where Keith has just dropped something. He looks at Tree. There's something peculiar in his eyes.

Tree hurries past the stock room door. Keith moves to the display and studies what Tree just set down...

A MASK.

Keith's big, meaty hand curls around the mask as he slowly brings it to his face -- his breathing even louder behind the eerie plastic grin.

There's a FULL-LENGTH MIRROR to his right -- Keith twists his head to the right and meets his masked reflection.

Off his silent stare...

INT. CAMPUS HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

Tree enters the lobby. Her cell phone plays "Happy Birthday". Tree checks the LCD: *INCOMING CALL FROM DAD.*

She instantly hits the IGNORE button as she stops in front of the elevators. The doors open as LORI steps out, wearing her NURSING SCRUBS.

TREE
 (surprised)
 Lori...

LORI
 Hi.

She steps out. This time Tree steps into the elevator. The doors start to close but Lori's hand catches the bumper. The doors open.

LORI (CONT'D)
 Everything okay?

TREE
 Yeah. Fine.

LORI
 You were acting really weird this morning.

TREE
 I'm having a weird day.

LORI
 Look, it's none of my business but I think eventually something like that is bound to have some pretty serious consequences.

TREE
 Lori, I really can't talk right now.

LORI
 Fine...it's your life.

Lori pulls her hand back, letting the doors close.

INT. GREGORY'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Alone, Tree turns over the wedding photo without looking at it. She pushes the photo under some papers.

Gregory enters, and quickly closes the door.

GREGORY
 We can't do this. There's too much going on in the building today.

TREE

I need to talk to you.

She reaches around him... to LOCK THE DOOR.

GREGORY

Tree, I know what you're going to say.

TREE

You do?

Gregory puts his CAR KEYS in his desk.

GREGORY

It's normal for a young girl to have feelings for an older man. But you can't let it cross that line. You can't fall in love.

TREE

I'm not falling in love with you.

GREGORY

(relieved)
You're not?

TREE

No. I've been having--

Overcome with lust at her proximity, Gregory lifts her to his desk and starts to kiss her -- Tree resists but he's not stopping. Tree is overcome by a sudden sense of dread. She pushes him back.

TREE (CONT'D)

(breathless)
Your...wife?

He stops.

GREGORY

Okay. That's kind of a buzz kill.

A jangling of the doorknob. And then a loud knocking!

STEPHANIE (O.S.)

Gregory? Are you in there?

GREGORY

(hushed)

Thank god you locked the door!

Tree and Gregory hurriedly adjust their clothing and open the door -- Gregory giving a lame:

GREGORY (CONT'D)

Didn't realize I locked the door.
Have you met my student Teresa?

STEPHANIE

No, I don't think I have.

TREE

Hi.

Tree edges past. Stephanie gives Gregory a look regarding Tree: What was that about...? Gregory gives the loopy-loop international sign for Parts On Order.

INT. 4TH FLOOR -- HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Heading toward the elevator, Tree passes the nurse's station and overhears a couple NURSES whispering.

NURSE#1

Well, I'm not comfortable with it.

NURSE#2

Me neither.

They both look up at Tree at the same time. Tree's immediate thought...*Do they know about her and Gregory?*

Diverting her eyes, Tree reaches the elevators. While she waits, she notices the POLICE OFFICER sitting at the end of the hall. Was he in her "dream"? (YES)

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

"Road Rules" is on the TV. Tree is at her dresser, looking at the same picture from her high school graduation. There's a knock at the door...

Tree stuffs the photo into the top drawer as Danielle enters.

She's all dolled-up. Tree recognizes her top instantly. Reading Tree's expression:

DANIELLE

I know. I'm just borrowing it for tonight. How cute is it on me?

Overwhelmed by her deja vu, Tree looks at the TV -- she recognizes the challenge on "Road Rules".

DANIELLE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

What time are you going to the party tonight?

(Tree doesn't hear her)

Hello?...earth to space-bitch...

Tree snaps out of it.

TREE

Huh?

DANIELLE

(pretending to use sign-language)

What-time-are-you-going-to-the-party?

TREE

I don't know...later.

BLACKOUT.

TREE (CONT'D)

Oh my god!

The lights come back on.

DANIELLE

Our tuition dollars at work.

She sees the fear in Tree's eyes.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

Chill out. It's just another rolling blackout, sweetie.

TREE

(hopeful)

It happened before?

DANIELLE

Yeah, like two weeks ago. I remember because I was running on the treadmill and almost ate shit. I don't know what's so *hard* about keeping the electricity on. *Anyhoo...* don't be too late or all the cute Sigma boys will be taken.

She leaves. We HOLD ON Tree -- her face wrought with a mounting sense of dread.

EXT. THE THOROUGHFARE - NIGHT

Tree, in a resplendent white cotton dress, leaves her house and looks around. The area is completely empty of people. Most everyone at their respective pledge houses.

Tree checks her VOICE MAIL as she walks at a brisk clip.

GREGORY

(on the phone)

Hey, it's me. I'll text you later about meeting tonight. Not sure if I can get away but I'll do my best. By the way, that was close this afternoon. But kinda hot.

SAVE -- NEXT MESSAGE...

ALAN

(pissed)

Tree, it's dad. I sat in that restaurant waiting for you for almost an hour --

DELETE. Tree snaps her phone shut.

At the path she comes upon a blocked off area. A palpable dread washes over her.

She glances at her watch. **10:43.**

The lights are off along the cordoned and torn up path. But it is the shortest way to the Quad.

TREE

(chiding herself)

You're being an idiot. It was just a dream.

Tree steps around the wooden barriers...

EXT. THE PATH - NIGHT

She walks the path...skittish, but nope. Nothing.

She comes across a ditch exposing a water pipe. She needs to edge around it, towards the trees.

Off screen a branch *SNAPS!* Tree freezes...

TREE

Hello? Somebody there?

She looks around. All seems quiet and still until she catches something or *someone* move in her periphery....

Tree spins around. Just more space and the woods beyond...but Tree's eyes zero-in on something peeking out from behind one of the trees...

A FAINT GLIMMER OF LIGHT.

LIKE THE TIP OF A KNIFE.

Is somebody hiding behind the tree? Waiting?

TREE (CONT'D)

Screw this.

Tree turns and runs back the way she came and practically leaps over the wooden barrier.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - EVENING

Hurrying up the path, Tree reaches the front door and rings the bell. It's oddly quiet for a usually racous place.

Tree looks back over her shoulder to make sure she's not being followed. When she turns back the door is already open.

Tree's POV --

-- THE MASK instantly appears out of the darkness!

Tree SCREAMS and throws a right hook! BAM!

The lights suddenly turn on revealing a CROWD gathered in the doorway.

There's a big "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" banner hanging on the wall. Everyone is staring at Tree in shock.

Somewhere in the back of the crowd, someone says:

PERSON (O.C.)

Happy Birthday?

The guy who just got slugged, NICK SIMS (21, major hottie) pulls his mask off, rubbing his red and swelling cheek.

NICK

What the hell, Tree?!

TREE

Oh my god! I thought you -- I thought I was -- *I'm so sorry.*

Danielle steps forward, addressing the crowd:

DANIELLE

Don't mess with a Kappa bitch!

The crowd cheers, bringing the levity back to the affair. Somebody CRANKS the music as Danielle pulls Tree into a hug.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - EVENING

The party is in full swing. Empty plastic cups shake on the speakers pumping out some old school party anthem.

Pushing through the throngs of REVELERS we find Tree in the corner with Danielle and some other randoms.

Tree checks her cell phone -- no new messages. The disappointment registers on her face.

DANIELLE

(looking around)

That slut.

TREE

Who?

DANIELLE

Lori. She said she'd be here. She's so *out* of the house next year.

TREE

I think she had a double shift.

DANIELLE

Whatevs. She's been boning some mystery guy.

Nick saddles up to Tree and offers her a beer.

NICK

Truce?

TREE

You know I didn't mean it.

Danielle tries to wedge herself between these two -- there's lots of hair-flipping and eye-lash batting but it's pretty obvious that Nick is more interested in Tree.

TREE (CONT'D)

Why were you wearing that stupid mask in the first place?

NICK

Big game's on Friday. Just showing a little school spirit. Didn't think I'd get clocked for it.

Danielle laughs REALLY LOUD. It's desperate and draws an annoyed look from Nick.

TREE

I really am sorry. Did you ice it?

NICK

It's fine.

(devilish grin)

You can make it up to me later.

He gives her a knowing wink before heading off into the crowd. Danielle looks like she's going to kill Tree.

TREE

What?

DANIELLE

Don't "what" me. You know exactly what you're doing, Tree.

TREE

Danielle--

Danielle storms off in a huff. Tree's CELL PHONE chimes. She looks at the screen. **1 NEW TEXT.**

It's from Gregory:

"Sorry...can't get away tonight. C U tomorrow?"

Hurt, Tree snaps the phone shut. Surrounded by people she hardly knows or hardly wants to know, Tree looks sad and alone.

Tree starts pushing her way toward the front door when she sees something--

--Nick. Heading upstairs. He looks right at Tree and flashes a smile that says "follow me".

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL -- FRAT HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Tree reaches the top of the stairs, but Nick is already gone.

TREE

Nick?

She starts down the hall. Tries the first door on her right.

Tree's POV -- THE BATHROOM. Two Kappa PARTY GIRLS (X-ing; eyes-wide, pupils totally dilated) are standing shoulder to shoulder at the sink. One of them is staring at herself in the mirror while the other pets a wash-cloth like it was her cat.

PARTY GIRL #1

(staring)

I'm so pretty...

PARTY GIRL #2

(petting)

It's so soft...

They don't even see Tree as she closes the door.

A little further down the hall, Tree tries another door...

Tree's POV -- HALL CLOSET. A drunk COUPLE is getting it on.

She quickly shuts the door.

The next door to her left is slightly ajar...

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nick is sitting on the bed wearing the MASK.

TREE

You want me to hit you again?

He stands and approaches her. Face to face, Tree laughs:

TREE (CONT'D)

Okay, I'm not into kinky. Lose the mask.

She tries taking the mask off but he stops her with a GLOVED HAND.

TREE (CONT'D)

What's going on?

She sees something over his shoulder...her eyes go WIDE with terror!

ANGLE ON -- THE CLOSET

Nick's semi-naked BODY lies on the closet floor. Blood pooling around him.

Tree starts to scream as her KILLER grabs her throat! He pulls out a knife! Before he can stab her, she's already swinging a FRATERNITY PADDLE she grabbed off the night stand!

WHACK!

The hard wood, cracks his arm, knocking the knife out of the killer's grip -- it drops behind the headboard!

Tree tries to go for the door but he blocks her!

TREE (CONT'D)

(screaming)

SOMEBODY HELP ME!

The music and crowd-walla easily drown-out her cries for help.

The killer grabs a HOCKEY STICK mounted on the wall as Tree backpedals toward the window. She pulls it half-way open when the killer takes a swing! Tree ducks!

CLOSE ON

The bottom of the window frame as the hockey stick shears off the bottom of the wooden frame, exposing the jagged GLASS.

Trying to squirm away, Tree loses her footing and falls back onto the window sill. The killer's gloved hand pins her down!

Looking up, Tree sees the sharp, exposed GLASS directly above her throat.

TREE (CONT'D)

NO!!!

The attacker grips the top of the frame and SLAMS the window shut!

SLAM CUT:

INT. CARTER'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

Tree wakes with a SCREAM. Clawing herself up into a seated position. Outside, the bell chimes the hour as Tree's eyes dart around the room -- noting all the familiar bits and pieces.

TREE

This can't be happening...this can't be real!

Carter is staring back at Tree, mouth agape.

CARTER

Everything...okay?

Cue "Happy Birthday" from Tree's cell phone. She grabs the phone from her clothes on the night stand.

CLOSE ON -- THE LCD SCREEN

INCOMING CALL FROM "DAD"

On the brink of hysteria, Tree grabs her clothes and starts changing.

Carter turns his back to her.

CARTER (CONT'D)
I don't know if you remember my
name. You were --

TREE
--pretty wasted last night.

CARTER
Yeah.

TREE
And you're name's Carter?

CARTER
(perking-up)
Yeah.

TREE
But we've never met before?

CARTER
Not until last night. I mean, I've
seen you around campus but we
don't exactly *move* in the same
circles.

Tree's eyes fill with tears.

TREE
This is a nightmare....

CARTER
(hurt/defensive)
I'm sorry...but you're the one who
wanted to come here last night!

Tree shoves him out of the way and runs for the door. She
sees the sticker again.

TREE
Oh-my-god.

Tree throws her weight into the door, as it swings open --

FRESHMAN (O.C.)
Dude! Did you--

The door SMASHES the lanky kid in the face!

FRESHMAN (CONT'D)
Ow! Sonofa--

He sees Tree. Sees the tears running down her cheeks.

FRESHMAN (CONT'D)

Oh. Hey.

Tree pushes him out of the way and runs down the hall.
The Freshman shoots Carter a look.

FRESHMAN (CONT'D)

Nice one, dickweed.

EXT. THE CAMPUS - MORNING

A distraught Tree hurries through the bustling campus.

She tries to side-steps the female PROTESTER who thrusts a petition at her.

STUDENT PROTESTER

Stop global warming!

Tree slaps the clipboard away.

STUDENT PROTESTER (CONT'D)

(shouting after her)

A simple "no-thanks" would do!

Car alarm...

Sprinklers...

TREE passes a group of FRAT PLEDGES singing loudly. THE FRAT BROTHER stands beside a sign: "26th Straight Hour".

FRAT PLEDGES

*-- not a Willie or a Sam! I'm the eighth ole' man named Henry!
Henry the Eighth, I am!*

FRAT BROTHER

Second verse, same as the first!

FRAT PLEDGES

Oh, Henry the Eighth, I am, I am!...

The crowd of onlookers cheer as one EXHAUSTED FRAT PLEDGE passes out, hitting his head hard on the pavement.

Horrified by the re-play, Tree begins to run blindly!
Reaching the end of the quad, Tree bounds down the steps
and CRASHES into...

Keith.

KEITH

Morning Tree.

Tree backs away from him. Eyes wide with fear.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Tree--

She keeps running.

INT. KAPPA DELTA HOUSE - MORNING

Tree slams the door shut. She starts for the stairs but
is forced to grab the rail. She's having a hard time
breathing.

DANIELLE (O.C.)

Oh-my-god. You sneaky beeyotch!

Tree turns around. Danielle sees tear-streaked cheeks,
the wild look in her eyes.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

She can't answer. Doesn't know how to explain. Instead,
she just runs up the stairs.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

Tree?!

She vanishes around the corner.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

(baffled)
Freakshow.

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Tree throws herself on her bed and sobs into her pillow.
Lori steps out of the bathroom, wet and wrapped in a
towel.

LORI

She finally rolls-in.

Lori realizes Tree's upset.

LORI (CONT'D)
Hey, what's wrong?

TREE
I feel like I'm losing my mind,
Lori. I don't know what's
happening to me. I'm so confused.

LORI
Just calm down and start from the
beginning.

Tree takes a deep breath.

TREE
Have you ever had deja vu?

LORI
Sure. Everybody has.

TREE
Well, I'm having it but like...*big
time*. This isn't going to make any
sense but, I've already lived
through this day. Twice.

LORI
Tree--

TREE
I know! It's not possible but it's
happening! I swear to god!

LORI
Look, Tree, I know this is a hard
day with your mom and all.

TREE
You made me a cupcake! For my
birthday! You're about to give it
to me, right? And later tonight
there's a surprise party!

LORI
Who told you? Was it Becky?

TREE

No! Nobody told me! Don't you see?
I know what's going to happen
before it happens!

Tree grabs Lori's arm, desperate/afraid.

TREE (CONT'D)

Lori, somebody's going to kill me
today.

Lori looks at Tree in total shock -- but she suddenly
cracks a smile and laughs.

LORI

Okay. I get it. Who put you up to
this? Danielle?

TREE

No! This isn't some stupid joke!
I'm being totally serious! It's
already happened! But I don't know
who it is!

LORI

Okay, Tree...you're starting to
freak me out.

TREE

How do you think I feel?!

LORI

Tree, listen to me. Nobody's
trying to kill you.

TREE

Yes, they are--

LORI

Tree! Look at me!

Gripping Tree by the shoulders, Lori looks into her eyes.

LORI (CONT'D)

You need to take the day off. Skip
class. Get some rest. Maybe you
can talk to somebody.

TREE

Who?

INT. STUDENT HEALTH CENTER - AFTERNOON

We're CLOSE ON a "FEELINGS CHART" (a poster featuring a series of cartoon faces with categorized moods matching corresponding expressions.)

Tree sits rigidly on a floral print sofa, surrounded by other posters encouraging "COMMUNICATION!" and proclaiming "DEPRESSION: IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT".

A light rap on the door precedes the entrance of DR. MARY TURTLEBAUM (late 30's, wispy, doe-eyed, saccharine). She checks her file before offering her hand.

MARY

Hello, Teresa, I'm Mary.

Mary sits down across from Tree, pen and pad at the ready.

MARY (CONT'D)

So, Teresa...what brings you here today?

Tree struggles with how to even broach her crisis. After a few prolonged seconds of false-starts and hand-wringing, she decides just to blurt it out:

TREE

I'm reliving the same day over and over.

MARY

That's fairly common. Lots of people feel stuck in a rut. The routine of life can often feel--

TREE

No, you don't get it! I'm literally living the *same day over and over*! It's like I can't get out of it! And somebody keeps killing me!

MARY

I'm sorry?

TREE

He's wearing one of those school masks!

(MORE)

TREE (CONT'D)

The other night -- *which will actually be tonight* -- he stabbed me to death near the quad and then last night he chopped my head off with a window!

(off Mary's reaction)

It was broken. He smashed it with a hockey stick.

(off Mary's raised eyebrow)

Nevermind. Point is, I keep dying and then waking up. I'm scared out of my mind! I don't want to die again!

Mary takes a beat to put this all down in her pad. Tree waits in agony for a response, for some miraculous intervention that's going to make sense of it all. What she gets is:

MARY

(sing-song)

Okee-dokey. I'm just going to recap to make sure I'm getting this straight.

(reading from her note pad)

You wake up today, Tuesday the 18th, and you re-live the same day over and over, and the same exact things happen in a specific, linear order, before a maniac wearing a mask stabs you or chops your head off, and then you wake up and start all over again?

TREE

Yes! But you make it sound so crazy when you say it like that!

MARY

Teresa, first of all, there's no such thing as "crazy". There's a very logical explanation for what's happening to you.

TREE

There is?

MARY

Of course. Stress, fatigue, repressed emotional trauma -- these are all *powerful* triggers. Now what we can do, together, is figure out which of these factors is playing a role in your...situation.

Tree stares at Mary incredulously as Mary begins flipping through her schedule book.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'm a little booked tomorrow, but Thursday is wide open.

TREE

Lady, have you heard a single word I've said?! I can't come in Thursday! I'll be dead!

MARY

(placating)

I'm so sorry, Teresa. You're absolutely right. What I meant to say was, in two days, which will still be today, you can come in and we can get down to the bottom of this.

TREE

Right. Sounds great. I'll just die a couple more times before I come back here to sit on this ugly couch so you can make me feel crazy and then tell me there's no such thing as crazy even though what's happening to me is *totally-fucking-crazy!*

Tree jumps up and grabs her bag.

TREE (CONT'D)

Thanks for the help.

She storms out and slams the door so hard the "FEELINGS" poster falls off the wall.

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

The dresser slowly lumbers across the floor as Tree pushes it flush against her bedroom door. Along the way, a few items fall off the top -- including Tree's graduation PHOTO with mom and dad.

Tree picks it up, studies the image for a second, tracing her finger over her mother's smiling face.

Suddenly, somebody tries the handle. Tree looks at the door startled.

There's a knock then:

DANIELLE (O.S.)
Tree? Why's the door locked?

TREE
I'm...uh...just need a little
privacy.

DANIELLE (O.S.)
What time are you going to the
party tonight?

TREE
I don't know...later.

Tree looks at the clock -- **9:22**

Then the digit changes to **9:23**

BLACKOUT.

DANIELLE (O.S.)
Our tuition dollars at work.

The lights turn back on.

DANIELLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Anyhoo...don't be too late or all
the cute Sigma boys will be taken.

Tree listens to Danielle's FOOTSTEPS walking away -- her eyes suddenly filling with purpose...

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Tree has dismantled her Ikea night stand and is nailing the wood panels over the windows. Finished, she gives them a good tug to be sure they're secure.

With the windows sealed-shut and the door locked and securely blocked, she feels "safe".

TV back on, Tree finds the CUPCAKE Lori made for her sitting on her desk. She settles onto her bed and begins peeling the paper off of her treat. About to take a bite, Tree notices the "Road Rules" marathon is still playing. It feels like a bad omen, she opts for a station change.

Tree begins searching for the remote but it's nowhere to be found.

TREE

(annoyed)

Lori...what'd she do with the freagin' remote?

Tree goes to her desk, riffling through loose papers when she comes upon her stack of mail and THE BLACK ENVELOPE. There's no post mark and the front is blank.

Perplexed, Tree opens it...

Inside the envelope is one of those 3-D cards featuring a weird little Elf waving a "Happy Birthday" sign attached to a tiny spring. As the sign bounces the Elf GIGGLES through a tiny, hidden voice box.

On the blank side of the card, written in black marker, a child-like scrawl reads:

"HOPE IT'S YOUR LAST ONE..."

Disturbed, Tree slowly lowers the card when --

The TV turns off.

Tree looks at it.

TREE (CONT'D)

What the hell?

She walks over and turns it back on manually. "Road Rules". Tree immediately changes the channel.

CLOSE ON -- THE TELEVISION SCREEN

The first station change brings us to the famous opening credits of "The Twilight Zone".

TREE (CONT'D)

No shit.

She changes the channel again to an unfolding "Breaking Story" on a local news station. A female REPORTER standing outside the entrance to an EMERGENCY ROOM.

REPORTER

--where suspected murderer Joseph Tombs is being treated for a gunshot wound following a deadly shoot-out this morning that left one officer dead.

The story CUTS TO a MUG-SHOT of the menacing killer.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Tombs had been the subject of a nationwide manhunt--

The TV suddenly TURNS OFF AGAIN...

Tree freezes. In the stillness, we HEAR a scraping noise coming from

THE CLOSET.

At this moment, it dawns on Tree that she never checked the room before she barricaded herself inside.

Picking up the HAMMER, Tree advances slowly toward the closet -- the door is slightly ajar.

She grips the handle...raises the hammer, ready to strike...

PULLS!

ANGLE ON -- THE CLOSET

Empty.

Tree notes a lone wire hanger, gently scraping on the wall.

She sighs with relief and closes the door. But as she turns around, Tree's focus moves to another part of the room...

THE BATHROOM.

Through the open doorway, she can see the shower -- the opaque curtain is drawn. *Did it just move a little?*

Tree crosses the room.

IN THE BATHROOM

Tree stops at the shower. As she reaches out for the curtain...

The TV turns back on! A loud COMMERCIAL blares, scaring the shit out of us!

Spinning around, Tree looks at the TV. Her eyes slowly move to the bed and then the slip cover where the sole of a BLACK BOOT is just sticking out from under the fabric.

He's hiding under the bed!

Tip-toeing back into the bedroom, Tree gingerly kneels down in front of the bed, keeping her hammer at the ready.

Looking over Tree's shoulder, we SEE the shower curtain is OPEN -- as the masked killer emerges from the bathroom!

Tree doesn't see him creeping toward her, the long blade of his knife at his side...

Tree yanks the slip up and finds the boot -- but it's not attached to anybody. That's when she HEARS it...

BREATHING.

Tree slowly turns around...

Before she can scream the killer strikes! Tree narrowly dodges the blade as it digs into the mattress!

Running for her door, Tree tries to push the dresser out of the way but there isn't time! The killer is already behind her.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE TREE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

We HEAR Tree screaming in agony as her blood begins to spill-out under the crack of the blocked door...

SLAM CUT:

INT. CARTER'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

The tolling bells outside are drowned out by Tree's hysterical awakening -- THRASHING and SCREAMING so loud that Carter himself screams from the shock!

CARTER

What's wrong?!

Jumping out of bed too quickly, Tree suddenly doubles-over in pain. Carter rushes to her side.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Tree ---

She shoves him back. Her cell phone plays "Happy Birthday". Tree grabs the phone and throws it against the wall.

TREE

SHUT UP!!!

Afraid, Carter jumps back. Tree grabs her head, distraught.

TREE (CONT'D)

*Ohmygod..ohmygod...make it stop,
please make it stop...*

Carter tries to approach Tree again.

CARTER

What's wrong? Are you sick?

TREE

Just get away from me!

Pain subsiding, Tree pulls the T-shirt off and starts changing into her clothes. Carter spins around.

CARTER

I don't know what's going on but --

Carter turns around -- Tree's already out the door. A second later, the lanky freshman peeks into Carter's room.

FRESHMAN

Dude...what's up the psycho-hottie?

EXT. THE CAMPUS - MORNING

Tree staggers through the crowded thoroughfare -- her eyes darting left and right. Everyone she passes has an air of menace.

Anyone could be her killer.

TREE'S POV -- VARIOUS "SUSPECTS" STARING BACK...

* A PROFESSOR peering at us over the rim of his coffee cup.

* A PAINTER, wearing a bandana over his mouth, looks up from his work to tracks us with his eyes.

* A STUDENT VENDOR, working behind an espresso kiosk, stares at us through a glass partition.

Becoming winded again, Tree stops in the middle of the walk way. The student protester thrusts the petition at Tree!

STUDENT PROTESTER

Stop global warming!

Tree staggers back.

The car alarm goes off.

Then the sprinklers.

Behind her, the FRAT GUYS are singing...

FRAT PLEDGES

-- not a Willie or a Sam! I'm the eighth ole' man named Henry! Henry the Eighth, I am!

FRAT BROTHER

Second verse, same as the first!

Tree begins to turn in a circle, the world spinning around her in a kaleidoscopic nightmare!

The protester, the car alarm and the frat guy's voices grow louder and louder!

Students begin to stop and stare at Tree, who is caught in the middle like a trapped animal.

The world begins to whirl faster and faster...

The voices become louder and louder...

Until everything builds to a deafening crescendo!

And Tree collapses onto the pavement.

INT. TREE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Tree is arguing with DR. ELLIOT WINTER (50's, kind face). Arms folded, pouting like an indignant little girl, Tree doesn't want to be here.

TREE

It's just a concussion right?
That's not a big deal. Why can't I go?

DR. WINTER

Where's your father? We've been trying to contact him but we must have an old number on file.

TREE

What do you need him for?

DR. WINTER

We need your full medical history. Our system's down from the rolling black-outs and we can't retrieve any records. Specifically, we're trying to find out how many times you've been hospitalized.

TREE

Never.

DR. WINTER

Excuse me?

TREE
I've never been hospitalized
before.

A grave expression falls over the doctor's face.

TREE (CONT'D)
What?

Dr. Winter opens a file and puts up a series of X-RAYS on the LIGHT BOARD.

DR. WINTER
We just got these back from the
lab. You see here --

He runs his finger over a CHEST X-RAY.

DR. WINTER (CONT'D)
These are your lungs. There's some
scar tissue here. At first we
thought it was a sign of
pneumothorax.
(off Tree's blank
stare)
A collapsed lung. But then we saw
these...

He points to light-colored lines crisscrossing through her NECK and LOWER ABDOMEN.

DR. WINTER (CONT'D)
These are signs of major trauma,
Teresa. Given the severity of the
scar tissue and the size of the
lesions...

He shakes his head, unable to finish his sentence.

TREE
What?!

Slowly, Dr. Winter turns his baffled gaze on Tree.

DR. WINTER
You should be dead.

The words sink in slowly.

DR. WINTER (CONT'D)
 We're going to keep you here for
 observation. Your heart rate's a
 little low and we need--

TREE
 (interrupting)
 I have to go.

Tree starts to get out of bed.

DR. WINTER
 Whoa. Hold, on. You're not going
 anywhere.

TREE
 I have to go! He's going to kill
 me again!

Dr. Winter forces Tree back into her bed.

DR. WINTER
 Teresa, I need you to calm down...

TREE
 NO! LET ME GO!

DR. WINTER
 (calling out)
 I need a little help in here!

Two NURSE'S rush into the room.

DR. WINTER (CONT'D)
 Get me three cc's of pentobarbital
 right away.

Tree grabs Dr. Winter's arms, pleading desperately:

TREE
 Please...I don't want to die
 again...

DR. WINTER
 Nobody's going to hurt you Teresa.
 We just want to help.

The nurse returns with the shot. Tree takes one look at
 the needle and starts freaking out.

DR. WINTER (CONT'D)
 (shouting at the
 nurses)
 Hold her down, damn it!

Arms pinned, Tree is helpless as the needle sinks into her skin. She begins to slow down, losing her motor skills. In a matter of seconds, she's out again.

INT. TREE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

A thick silence fills the air as Tree slowly begins to emerge from the fog of her sedation.

From her blurry POV we're looking at the door. It slowly begins to OPEN.

A MAN enters...

As he draws closer, we SEE he's wearing THE MASK.

Tree opens her mouth to scream, but no sound comes out!

He reaches out to grab her! Tree recoils!

But Tree's vision pulls into focus and she realizes it's just Gregory and he's not wearing a mask.

He sits beside her.

GREGORY
 Hey...Tree it's me. It's okay.

TREE
 (alarmed)
 What are you doing in here?

GREGORY
 Just checking on you. I heard they had to sedate you. The drugs take a little while to wear off.

TREE
 What day is it?

GREGORY
 Tuesday, the 18th. Why?

Tree closes her eyes. *It wasn't a bad dream.*

Her eyes fill with tears.

TREE
Nobody...believes me.

GREGORY
Believes what?

TREE
That I'm dying...every day.

Must be the drugs.

Gregory brushes her hair out of her face.

GREGORY
I can't stay long. Stephanie's gotten us into some god-awful charity thing tonight. But I'll come check on you first thing in the morning.

Tree licks her dry-lips.

TREE
I'm really thirsty.

Gregory starts to pour her some water.

TREE (CONT'D)
No water. Can you get me a Coke?

GREGORY
Sure. Be right back.

He kisses her forehead and leaves.

INT. HALLWAY -- HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

Gregory fights with the machine as it won't take his dollar. It finally sucks it in. He punches the button as the soda can dumps into the tray.

We TRACK Gregory back to Tree's room.

GREGORY
(announcing as he enters)
Special delivery...

INT. TREE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Entering the room, Gregory comes to an abrupt halt...

ANGLE ON -- TREE'S EMPTY BED

She's gone.

INT. 4TH FLOOR -- HOSPITAL - SAME

Tree quietly exits the elevator -- there's only one NURSE at the station but she's too busy reading a cheesy harlequin novel to notice Tree as she tip-toes right past her.

Reaching the door to Gregory's office, Tree glances to her right and notices the POLICE OFFICER isn't stationed at the end of the hall. But his chair is still there beside a fresh, steaming cup of coffee.

INT. GREGORY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Gingerly closing the door behind her, Tree goes straight to Gregory's desk and opens the top drawer. She grabs what she came for...

HIS CAR KEYS.

INT. 4TH FLOOR -- HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Peering into the hallway, Tree makes sure the coast is clear. But as she reaches the elevator, the doors automatically open.

Tree freezes...

Gregory steps out.

GREGORY

Tree? What are you doing?

Tree bolts!

GREGORY (CONT'D)

Tree!

Running down the hall, Tree makes a desperate dash for the emergency exit. She's still weak so it's easy for Gregory to gain ground.

Passing a GURNEY, Tree stops to push it in Gregory's direction. It slows him down a little but not enough.

Tree collides with the FIRE EXIT DOOR but it doesn't budge.

Gregory stops a few feet away from Tree.

GREGORY (CONT'D)
Tree, listen to me --

TREE
YOU KILLED ME!

GREGORY
Tree, you're delirious. Let me help you.

Tree turns back to the fire door and begins banging on the handle.

TREE
Somebody help me!!!

She feels something WET hit her hospital gown. Tree spins around...

ANGLE ON -- GREGORY

Eyes wide, blood running out of the corner of his mouth. He collapses to the floor revealing THE KILLER STANDING BEHIND HIM!

TREE (CONT'D)
No...

The killer rips the knife from Gregory's back!

Tree kicks the handle this time. The door SWINGS OPEN just as the killer steps over Gregory's body.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Hobbling down the stairs, Tree looks up as the killer pursues!

Using everything she's got, Tree runs down four more floors until she reaches the FIRST PARKING LEVEL.

INT. PARKING LEVEL 1 - CONTINUOUS

Bursting out the door, Tree screams for help but there's no one around.

Behind her, the killer continues his relentless chase.

Tree scans the area, desperately searching for Gregory's car. There's too many! It could be anywhere! She starts pressing the ALARM button on his key-chain.

The killer is getting closer!

Frantically pressing the button, an alarm finally goes off two rows over. Tree and the killer are about equidistant to the flashing lights and honking horn of Gregory's car.

They both pause for a split-second. Waiting to see who makes the first move...

Sucking in a deep breath, Tree goes for it! Running harder than she's ever run before in her life!

The killer keeps pace. It looks like they're going to make it to Gregory's car at the same time but Tree gets there first.

INT. GREGORY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Lunging into the car, Tree slams the door shut and hits the LOCK BUTTON just as the killer SLAMS against the driver's side window!

Tree SCREAMS!

The killer immediately begins pounding the glass with the butt of his knife. Tree tries to start the car but her hands are trembling too much.

TREE

COME ON!!!

The glass begins to crack!

CLOSE ON -- THE KEY

As it slips into the ignition. Tree starts the engine and throws it in REVERSE!

Peeling rubber, Gregory's car flies back and smashes into a parked car. Looking ahead, Tree sees the killer standing a few feet ahead.

Slamming the gear into DRIVE she stomps on the pedal -- the car lunges forward. The killer narrowly dives out of the way!

INT. PARKING LEVEL 1 - CONTINUOUS

The killer slowly rises to his feet as Tree speeds off in Gregory's car.

EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE -- POTSDAM UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

Racing off the campus grounds, Gregory's car fish-tails onto the main road.

INT. GREGORY'S CAR - NIGHT

The lights of the isolated campus fade from view as Tree pushes the speedometer past 80.

Realizing she's escaped, Tree is overcome by a wild euphoria. She begins pounding the steering wheel, laughing through her tears.

TREE

I did it!!!

Her celebration is cut short by the sound of SIRENS. Tree glances into the rear-view window as a POLICE CAR closes-in behind her.

TREE (CONT'D)

Shit.

Tree slows down and pulls onto the shoulder. OFFICER BILL SANTORA (40's, seen too many Clint Eastwood movies) saunters up to the driver's side and raps his knuckles on the glass. Tree rolls the window down, trying to stay calm.

TREE (CONT'D)

I know. I was speeding.

OFFICER SANTORA

Turn the engine off.

TREE

Sorry, officer.

She kills the engine.

OFFICER SANTORA

License and registration.

TREE

Um...I don't have them.

OFFICER SANTORA

Pardon?

TREE

(blurting out)
Someone's trying to kill me again!

OFFICER SANTORA

Again?

TREE

Yes!

(realizing how that
sounds)

I mean no! I mean...he's tried
before but this time I got away
but I didn't have time to get my
clothes and my driver's license
was in my pocket.

Santora grabs his FLASHLIGHT and shines it in Tree's
face. She squints back.

OFFICER SANTORA

Ma'am, are you under the influence
of alcohol or any other controlled
substance?

TREE

No! I'm not--

(pause/epiphany)

Wait. If I am, does that mean
you'll arrest me and put me in a
jail cell?

OFFICER SANTORA

That's usually how it works.

Realizing she couldn't be in a safer place:

TREE

I'm drunk!

OFFICER SANTORA

You are?

TREE

Wasted! And I'm high. Pills, weed,
you name it man! I'm on it!

Santora couldn't be more confused.

OFFICER SANTORA

Well...then I'm placing you under arrest.

TREE

Good idea.

She gets out of the car. Santora cuffs Tree's hands behind her back and leads her to his cruiser. As he opens the back door, Tree looks at him and smiles.

TREE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Officer Santora: *Weirdo.*

He pushes Tree into the backseat. The POLICE RADIO suddenly CRACKLES.

DISPATCHER

All units, we've got a 187 at the university hospital.

Santora pauses, listening to the homicide report.

DISPATCHER (CONT'D)

Suspect is believed to be an escaped patient. Be advised--

As Santora looks at Tree's hospital gown he's suddenly flooded by a BRIGHT LIGHT!

We HEAR an engine roar! Before he can even turn, Santora is struck by a speeding car! The impact SHEERS the back door right off as Tree SCREAMS in terror!

The UNKNOWN VEHICLE makes a hard 180 and stops.

Hands cuffed tightly behind her back, Tree struggles to get out of the cruiser. Feet crunching over broken glass, she finally manages to shimmy out.

The other car idles...Tree can't see the DRIVER beyond the blinding HIGH-BEAMS.

Then she hears it: a door squeaking open. Footsteps begin to draw closer. Tree looks around, there's nowhere to hide. Just miles of woods...

The driver, steps in front of one of the headlights -- backlit, we SEE it's the masked killer.

TREE
 (screaming)
 Why are you doing this to me?!

Unsheathing his hunting knife, the killer begins to advance.

Tree runs!

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Fighting for balance, Tree makes a futile attempt to flee as her killer, with a clear advantage, takes his time.

Toying with her.

Tree screams for help but there's nothing but miles of forest.

Branches whip Tree in the face as her bare feet crunch over twigs and, tiny jagged rocks.

With only a two-second lead, Tree runs as fast as she can. Looking over her shoulder, the killer is gaining ground!

Ahead, Tree sees some LIGHTS through the trees up ahead!

TREE
 (screaming)
 HELP! HELP ME!

She looks back over her shoulder again -- she's suddenly confused.

He's not behind her anymore...

Breaking out of the forest, Tree reaches a short clearing -- she can see the lights of a FARM come into view.

Then she DROPS OUT of frame!

She just ran off a cliff.

We HEAR Tree cry out as she plummets over two hundred feet! As she's about to make impact with the jagged ROCKS below we...

SLAM CUT:

ALTERNATE DEATH SCENE -- CONT. FROM PAGE 61

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Tree has just been placed into the backseat by Officer Santora. A split-second after he closes the car door...

WHAM!

Santora is struck by a speeding car as it broad-sides the police car in a flash of scraping metal and flying sparks!

Tree screams!

Looking through the plexi-glass partition, she can see Santora's crumpled body, mercilessly displayed in the police car's headlights.

Tree looks for the other car but it's nowhere to be seen...

Suddenly, a pair of HIGH-BEAMS appear -- blinding Tree as the car roars toward her at full throttle!

Tree goes for the door handle! *But there is none!*

ANGLE ON -- THE SPEEDING CAR!

Blazing a head-on collision course!

Tree braces for impact but the other car SLAMS on its brakes at the last second!

Tires SCREECH! Then...*silence.*

The cop car is completely flooded with light now. Tree shields her eyes as we HEAR a door open and close outside followed by slow, encroaching FOOTSTEPS.

Suddenly a HAND slaps against Tree's window! Tree yelps as the MASKED KILLER comes into view, peering at Tree like a bug in a jar.

TREE

What do you want?!

He presents something to her...A *BIRTHDAY CANDLE?*

The killer lights it.

What he does next is even more baffling to Tree. He simply turns around and goes back to his car.

The killer's car starts to back away...headlights fading until they're the size of distant FLASHLIGHT BEAMS...

TREE (CONT'D)
(dumbfounded)
Where's he going?...

And then his lights just GO OUT.

Beat...

OUTSIDE THE KILLER'S CAR:

The black-gloved hand emerges from the open driver's-side window holding the birthday candle. He drops it...

WHOOSH!

A FLAME IGNITES!

The fire starts at the killer's car (driver's side) quickly running toward the police car!

BACK IN THE POLICE CAR:

Tree beats on the glass but, it too, is bullet-proof. Looking toward the rear of the police car, Tree can see the damaged gas tank -- hemorrhaging GASOLINE from the previous collision.

ANGLE ON -- THE FLAMES

Running faster and faster in Tree's direction!

CLOSE ON -- TREE

Face framed in the window as the glass suddenly reflects an ORANGE/RED glow...

TREE (CONT'D)
Oh Fu--

BOOM!!!

The car explodes into a massive ball of fire!

INT. CARTER'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

The tower bell rings one last time as Tree's eyes SNAP OPEN...

ECU -- we SEE the FIRE BALL flare and then vanish in the reflection of Tree's eyes.

She sits up and wipes the sweat from her brow. A brief glance around the room reminds her she's still trapped in the same day.

TREE
(sighing)
Here we go again...

The opening bass-line of a White-Stripes-*ish* song starts...

BEGIN MONTAGE:

EXT. KAPPA DELTA HOUSE - MORNING

The two KAPPA GIRLS (who were X-ing in the bathroom at Tree's B-Day party) stare up at the second floor as BOOKS, PAPERS, even a LAPTOP fly out of Tree's bedroom window.

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Desk cleared of debris, Tree sits down and begins to jot-down a list of NAMES in a small note-pad. The "suspects" include KEITH, STEPHANIE, DANIELLE, and GREGORY...(But she immediately goes back and crosses off Gregory since he already died in front of her.)

EXT. KEITH'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

On her tippy-toes, Tree peers through a first-floor window. From her POV we can SEE Keith, already fast-asleep in his over-sized Sponge-Bob pajamas.

Tree looks disappointed as she crosses his name of the top of the list. She turns around and--

--**WHAM!**

She collides with the masked killer. Looking down, Tree finds the handle of a knife protruding from her stomach.

PRELAP: "Happy Birthday" plays on Tree's cell phone.

INT. CARTER'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

Already, sitting up in Carter's bed, Tree grabs her ringing cell phone and makes a perfect basket-toss into Carter's trash can.

Carter looks at her: *crazy bitch.*

INT. BATHROOM -- TREE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Tree cuts huge chunks of her hair off (which has already been died a hot shade of bright-pink).

EXT. THE PATIO - AFTERNOON

Danielle and the other Kappa girls stare in horror/disgust as Tree (sporting her new-do) sprays a bottle of Cheeze-Wiz into her open mouth.

EXT. GREGORY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Gregory escorts Stephanie (he's in a tux, she's in a gown) out of their up-scale house.

CLOSE ON -- THE PAD as Stephanie's name is crossed out.

Gregory's sedan pulls out of the circular driveway -- Tree is suddenly tackled by her killer! Tree falls backward into a KOI POND. She manages to knock the mask off, but the killer shoves her head UNDERWATER...

Tree's POV -- through the rippling water, she can't make out the identity of her attacker.

INT. CARTER'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

Tree wakes up and instantly leans over Carter's bedside to puke a stream of pond-water.

On Carter: *gross!*

EXT. THE CAMPUS - MORNING

Shot tastefully, Tree strolls down the thoroughfare COMPLETELY NAKED...

ANGLE ON -- THE STUDYING PAIR as they look up and see Tree. The sprinklers go off but they don't even react because they're too stunned.

ANGLE ON -- THE STUDENT PROTESTOR

STUDENT PROTESTER
Stop global war--

She sees Tree and pulls her clipboard back.

ANGLE ON -- THE FRAT PLEDGES who follow Tree's naked body with shocked grins. So distracted are they, nobody notices when the exhausted brother passes-out.

ANGLE ON -- THE STAIRS where Tree crosses paths with Keith. His eyes look like they're going to shoot out of his head. As Tree streaks by, she winks at him. Keith turns too quickly to follow Tree and loses his footing. He eats shit down the stairs.

EXT. STREET -- ON CAMPUS - AFTERNOON

Tree is walking with Danielle when a student bumps Danielle. A BLACK CARD falls out of her bag. Tree grabs it...it's just like the one she found in her room earlier. Danielle looks guilty.

Tree attacks her and a cat-fight ensues right there on the street. A few BYSTANDERS try to stop them. Danielle and Tree fall off the sidewalk and onto the street.

We HEAR a HORN blare one long note...

Tree and Danielle both turn as an on-coming BUS speeds toward them. They both scream in unison then -- *SPLAT!*

INSERT: Tree's "suspect list" as Tree crosses off Danielle's name.

EXT. THOROUGHFARE - NIGHT

Tree, donning army fatigues and camo face paint, makes herself small behind a Tree. She waits, clutching a baseball bat, as we HEAR approaching footsteps...

Just as the killer enters her periphery, Tree jumps out and SWINGS!

CRACK!

He goes down. But Tree's face falls when she realizes it wasn't the killer. It was just BECKY (her chubby Kappa sister), sneaking onto campus with a box of doughnuts, which are now splayed around her unconscious body.

Tree drops the bat and rushes to Becky's aid. Suddenly, there's a SNAPPING SOUND behind Tree. She looks over her shoulder and finds the killer hovering over her -- armed with Tree's own bat!

But instead of screaming, Tree just sighs...

SLOW MOTION: the bat swings in CLOSE-UP and connects with the side of Tree's SKULL! Continuing with the motion, Tree's head slowly tilts out of frame and lands on--

--A PILLOW as we

END MONTAGE.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

Tree's HEAD lies on the pillow in the same position. She opens her right-eye, squinting...

Outside, the bell tolls -- wincing in pain, Tree gradually pushes herself up:

TREE
This-is-getting-really-friggin'-old...

Looking to her right, she sees Carter staring at her. "Happy Birthday" plays on her phone.

TREE (CONT'D)
I'm fine. Really.

Tree stands. She grabs her phone and dismisses the call from her father.

CARTER
I don't know if you--

She holds her hand up.

TREE
Carter...sshh. A moment.

Carter nods as Tree shuffles over to his desk and unearths the toiletry bag. She helps herself to his aspirin.

CARTER

How did you...

He watches Tree pour 2...3...6 pills into the palm of her hand.

CARTER (CONT'D)

I don't think you're supposed to take that many. You could die.

TREE

If only it were that easy.
(snapping her
fingers)
Water, por-favor.

As Carter retrieves a bottle from his bedside, Tree is already at his door. She pulls it open -- the lanky Freshman is already there but before he can say it...

TREE (CONT'D)

Hi. I'm the so-called "fine-vagine.

Freshman to Tree -- *How the hell did she know he was going to say that?*

TREE (CONT'D)

And if that's the way you refer to girls, then you and your hand are going to have a very lasting relationship.

Tree pushes him back gently.

TREE (CONT'D)

Thanks for stopping by.

And she closes the door in the freshman's stunned face.

Turning around, Carter is still wearing the same confused look on his face. Tree takes the bottle of water from him and knocks back the pills before chugging down what's left of the water.

She tosses the empty bottle on the floor and finally acknowledges Carter's dumbfounded stare.

TREE (CONT'D)

What?

CARTER
Are you always this charming in
the morning?

TREE
(shit-eating grin)
Just this one.

Tree pulls her T-shirt off. Carter spins around as she starts getting dressed.

CARTER
So...bad dream?

TREE
Sorry?

CARTER
You were screaming before you fell
out of bed.

TREE
Oh. I was dying. Again.

Dressed, she turns around.

TREE (CONT'D)
It's a long story.

CARTER
I've got nothing to do.

TREE
Trust me. You'll think I'm
bonkers.

Tree bends down to grab her shoes and starts to leave. But the same damn sticker gives her pause.

"TODAY IS THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE"

Tree turns around...

TREE (CONT'D)
Seriously, I hate this sticker.

INT. HALLWAY -- CARTER'S DORM - CONTINUOUS

Carter catches up with Tree at the stairs.

TREE

Why are you following me?

CARTER

I hate when people start something and they don't finish.

TREE

Look, no offense, but there's really no point in explaining any of it to you. Every time I try, I end up sounding crazy which, at this point, I must be.

She reaches the exit.

EXT. THE CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

Tree puts her shoes on just outside the dorm. Carter is still tailing her.

CARTER

So you're having bad dreams. I took an elective course on neurocognition and dream content.

TREE

Hooray for you.

CARTER

Maybe I can help?

TREE

Can you stop me from re-living the same day, everyday, only to be murdered by someone I may or may not know?

Carter stops. *Huh?*

TREE (CONT'D)

Thought so.

Tree keeps going. Carter catches up again.

CARTER

You literally think you're re-living the same day?

TREE

Yup.

CARTER
And somebody kills you?

TREE
Yup again.

They pass the student protestor.

STUDENT PROTESTER
Stop global warming!

She thrusts the clipboard at Tree, who takes it and hands it off to Carter. It stalls him, leaving Carter in Tree's wake. He has to run and catch up *yet again!*

CARTER
Come on. You're just messing with me, right? You don't seriously think you're re-living the same day?

Annoyed, Tree stops.

TREE
Car alarm...

CARTER
What?

Just then, the CAR ALARM goes off.

Tree turns, facing the pair studying on the lawn.

TREE
Sprinklers...

She snaps her fingers and the sprinklers go off.

Tree grabs Carter by his shoulders and turns him to face the FRAT PLEDGES.

TREE (CONT'D)
See that pledge over there? The one with the baseball cap?

She points to the exhausted FRAT PLEDGE.

CARTER
Yeah?

TREE

He's going to pass out right now.

Thump. He goes down on cue. Shocked, Carter slowly turns and looks at Tree.

TREE (CONT'D)

Any further questions?

INT. DAIRY QUEEN - AFTERNOON

Muzak plays softly in the background as Tree noisily sucks down the last drops of her Oreo Blizzard through a straw.

Carter is staring at her, mouth agape.

TREE

Please stop looking at me like I have a dildo stuck to my forehead.

CARTER

Sorry. I'm just trying to work this whole thing out.

TREE

And how's that going for you?

CARTER

I guess it's kinda like that movie "Groundhog's Day", only you're not Bill Murray and instead of zany-fun you're being violently butchered.

TREE

Well, you're a nerd. Don't you have some *scientific theory* about it?

CARTER

First of all, I wouldn't classify myself as a nerd.

TREE

Carter, you have a poster of Boba Fett in your dorm room. You're a nerd.

CARTER

Whatever. Just because I like science fiction doesn't make me an expert on crazy chicks trapped in the same day.

Tree looks down, a little hurt. Carter feels bad.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Look, if I were you I would stop trying to figure out *how* it was happening and start figuring out *why*.

TREE

What do you mean?

CARTER

There has to be a reason you're stuck in this day. Out of all the days of your life, *this day* must have some kind of meaning.

TREE

But it's like any other day. Except the dying part.

Suddenly, Tree's phone rings -- she looks at her CALLER ID. It's DAD again. Tree thinks of answering it...but balks.

CARTER

(off the ring-tone)
It's your birthday?

Tree nods.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Hello?!

TREE

So what? Birthdays are just excuses people make to eat cake and get presents and shit. There's no real meaning to a birthday.

CARTER

It's symbolic! Whoever is killing you knows it's your birthday!

CARTER (CONT'D)

Here --

Carter unfolds a napkin and removes a PEN from his shirt pocket. Tree stares at the pen.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Okay. *That's nerdy.* Let's move on. Who knows it's your birthday today and who would want to kill you?

TREE

Well, thanks to my sorority sisters, the whole school knows it's my birthday. They're going to throw me this stupid surprise party tonight. It could be anyone. At first I thought it was Gregory, but he got killed last night.

CARTER

Who's Gregory?

TREE

One of my professors. We've been having an affair.

CARTER

Nice.

TREE

Hey, mister "*I brought a drunk girl home and took advantage of her*". Don't judge.

CARTER

For the record, I didn't take advantage of you. I slept on the couch.

TREE

(shocked)
We didn't --

CARTER

No. You were wasted and I was worried you'd fall or choke on your own vomit like Janis Joplin.

Sitting across from her in the booth, Tree discovers two things about Carter: he's probably the sweetest guy in the whole world and he's actually kinda cute.

But she's not letting her guard down.

TREE

Well...thanks but I would have been fine.

CARTER

Yeah, I can see that.

Tree manages a laugh. It's the first time we've seen her smile like this.

EXT. THE CAMPUS - AFTERNOON

Carter is walking Tree back to her house. The sun is out, the flowers are in bloom, and if they weren't talking about Tree dying violently every day, the moment would almost seem *romantic*.

CARTER

There has to be somebody you didn't think of.

TREE

That's it. Everyone who'd want to kill me had a solid alibi.

CARTER

But it could be somebody who knows you but you don't necessarily know them.

TREE

Carter, that's just dumb. Do you know how many dozens of people *that* could be. I'd spend the rest of my life dying trying to figure that out.

Carter snickers.

TREE (CONT'D)

What?

CARTER

You just said you'd have to spend the rest of your life dying.

(MORE)

CARTER (CONT'D)

It was ironic.
 (off Tree's blank
 expression)
 Get it..."rest of your life
 dying"....
 (she's still not
 laughing)
 Sorry. I'll shut up now.

They reach Tree's house. She plops-down on the short wall
 and releases an exasperated sigh of defeat.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Can I ask you a dumb question?

TREE

Go for it.

CARTER

Why don't you just leave the
 country?

TREE

Oh, you mean like on my private
 jet? I don't even have a *passport*.

CARTER

Look, my parents gave me a credit
 card for emergencies. You have a
 driver's license, right?

Tree nods.

CARTER (CONT'D)

That's it, then. We'll put you on
 a plane. Europe. Mexico. Whatever.
 By the time you get there it'll be
 tomorrow. Even if they send you
 back cause you don't have a
 passport it'll still be the next
 day. You'll be home free!

TREE

(genuinely touched)
 You'd...do that for me?

CARTER

My parents will freak when they
 get the bill but if it means
 keeping you alive...yeah. Of
 course.

PRELAP: A HORN beeping...

INT. CARTER'S VW JETTA - DUSK

Carter and Tree are stuck in a long line of cars trailing back from the interstate on-ramp.

TREE

This is ridiculous. There aren't even enough people in this stupid town to make a traffic jam.

(punching the dash)

God, I hate this day!

Carter clears his throat.

CARTER

So, apart from the obvious reasons, why are you so down on your birthday?

TREE

I just think it's dumb.

He looks at her. *He's not buying that answer.*

TREE (CONT'D)

My mom and I were born on the same day.

CARTER

And you've had to share it all your life and it pisses you off?

TREE

No. The opposite. It was always the best day of the year. I'd get to skip school, we'd go to the beach. My dad would get mom and I this big cake. There was always just one candle on it. Dad said it was cause on this *one day* the greatest people he knew were born.

(she laughs)

Mom said it was cause the cake would look like a bonfire if both our ages were on it.

Her smile fades. Carter sees the sadness in Tree's eyes.

CARTER
She died, huh?

Tree nods as she shoves her hurt back down.

TREE
Three years ago. Cancer.

CARTER
Sorry. That sucks.

TREE
Yeah, well...that's life right?
Everybody dies. Some more than
others.

Inching closer to the on-ramp, Tree suddenly sits up in her seat -- her gaze fixed ahead.

TREE (CONT'D)
Oh my God...

ANGLE ON -- A POLICE OFFICER

Directing the traffic around a small fender-bender, we immediately recognize him as the SAME COP that pulled Tree over before.

TREE (CONT'D)
He died...

CARTER
Who?

TREE
It was my fault. I made it happen.

Tree looks stricken with guilt as she watches the cop, dutifully waving the cars toward the on-ramp -- completely unaware that three cars away, a young girl he's never even met has seen him die violently.

TREE (CONT'D)
Turn around.

CARTER
What?!

TREE
Take me back!

CARTER

Tree, I'm getting you out of here!

Reaching over, Tree grabs the steering wheel.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The car behind Carter SLAMS on its breaks as Carter's car flips a bitch, swerving into oncoming traffic!

Narrowly escaping a major accident, Carter slips into the flow of traffic heading BACK TOWARDS campus.

CLOSE ON -- THE POLICE OFFICER

Shaking his head disapprovingly as he continues to direct cars.

INT. CARTER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Checking his rear-view mirror, Carter sighs with a mix of relief and frustration.

CARTER

Are you crazy?!

TREE

Every time I try to run, somebody dies! Nick, Gregory, that cop! If I leave who knows how many more people will die?!

CARTER

So then what?

TREE

I don't know, okay?! I just...I don't know.

Carter turns to look at her. His face is so sympathetic it calms Tree's frayed nerves like a salve.

Looking ahead, the horizon is ablaze with a crimson glow as the school's BELL TOWER rises above the woods. Ominous. Foretelling.

TREE (CONT'D)

(softly)

I know one thing...*no more running.*

INT. 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY -- KAPPA HOUSE - EVENING

A vexed Danielle bumps into Tree as she exits Tree's room, holding Tree's blouse.

DANIELLE

Where were you?
(off Tree's blank
stare)
You ditched our house meeting.

TREE

Danielle, I'm sorry. I'm
just...going through a lot right
now.

DANIELLE

It's mandatory, Tree. I just
finished telling your roommate the
same thing. If you guys want to be
Kappa sisters you have to stick to
the schedule or else you're out.

TREE

Then I'm out.

Tree yanks her top out of Danielle's hands and walks off.
Danielle is floored.

DANIELLE

Have fun back in the dorms!

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Lori is zipping-up a small bag when Tree enters the room.
As she flops down on the bed, Tree notices the cupcake
sitting on the night stand.

LORI

She just bitch you out too?

TREE

I so could care less.

LORI

You two fighting?

TREE

Danielle and I?

LORI

No, you and Gregory. He asked where you were. Said you didn't show up to his class.

TREE

I can't even think about that right now.

LORI

I'm off. I have--

TREE

--a double shift. I know.

LORI

(weird)
Right.

Lori starts out the door but stops. Something is on the tip of her tongue...but she chickens-out.

LORI (CONT'D)

See ya later.

TREE

Bye.

Lori leaves. Tree lays back down on her bed. Exhaustion and pain have taken their toll as she easily dozes off.

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Tree wakes up. Looks at the clock...**9:19**

Danielle bangs on the door before entering in a huff. She's all dolled-up *sans* Tree's totally cute top.

DANIELLE

Well, it was supposed to be a surprise but since you're being a *total bitch* I've decided to spoil it. The party at the Sigma house tonight is a surprise birthday party for your *ungrateful-ass* so I suggest you suck it up and go. Just don't even *try* talking to me when you're there. Got it?

Danielle storms out, slamming the door behind her. Instead of getting upset, Tree grabs the cupcake Lori made her and peels-off the paper shell. She's about to take a bite when...

BLACKOUT.

TREE
(in the dark)
Damn it!

The lights come back on and Tree finds the cupcake resting upside-down on the floor.

TREE (CONT'D)
So much for that.

Tree picks it up and dumps it in the trash. She turns the TV on. The "Road Rules Marathon" is still playing.

TREE (CONT'D)
Oh for god's sake, enough already!

She changes the channel.

The same LOCAL NEWS REPORT is on. But this time, she's catching the beginning of the story. Tree instantly recognizes the HOSPITAL in a WIDESHOT -- it's the one on campus.

REPORTER
*I'm standing outside Potsdam
University Hospital where
suspected murderer Joseph Tombs is
being treated for a gunshot wound
following a deadly shoot-out this
morning that left one officer
dead.*

Tree slowly rises from her bed as they CUT TO Tombs' mug-shot.

REPORTER (CONT'D)
*Tombs was the subject of a
nationwide manhunt that ended
after a five month pursuit, across
four state lines that left six
known female victims.*
(MORE)

REPORTER (CONT'D)
Authorities are still not sure if Tombs is responsible for the murders of more than a dozen other victims he claims to have buried across the vast deserts of Arizona and New Mexico.

CLOSE ON -- TREE'S STUNNED FACE

TREE
 He's been here this whole time?

FLASHBACK IN TREE'S MIND: Tree is running from Gregory in the hospital. As she passes the room where the OFFICER'S empty chair sat, she catches a split-second glance at the closed door -- in the tiny, glass window we SEE specks of BLOOD.

BACK ON TREE -- AS SHE REALIZES

TREE (CONT'D)
 Oh my god. He's going to escape...

INT. 4TH FLOOR -- HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The same NURSE is reading her harlequin novel when Tree runs up to her station, startling her.

TREE
 He's going to escape! Call the police!

NURSE
 Who?!

TREE
 Joseph Tombs! Just call the cops!

Tree runs down the hall -- she catches a GLIMPSE of the guarding OFFICER as he enters the room!

TREE (CONT'D)
 Wait! Don't go in there!

He didn't hear her. Tree spots a FIRE AXE mounted on the wall. She retrieves it and approaches Tombs' room.

Behind her the nurse calls after Tree:

NURSE
 Excuse me! What are you doing?

Tree ignores her and enters the room.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The first thing Tree sees is the empty hospital bed with a pair of ARM RESTRAINTS dangling from the guard rails.

Moving deeper into the room, Tree discovers the OFFICER'S BODY lying on the other side of the bed. His throat has been slit, his GUN is missing from its holster.

TOMBS (O.C.)
(Southern drawl)
Hey...

Tree turns around and finds her killer standing behind her.

TOMBS (CONT'D)
*That's a pretty big axe you got
there, little girl.*

Tombs raises the officer's stolen handgun. Tree starts to swing the axe -- Tombs fires twice! Both bullets ricochet off the blade, knocking the axe out of Tree's grip.

Tree: *Oh shit.*

Tree bolts for the door! Tombs goes after her!

INT. 4TH FLOOR -- HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Running out the door, Tree slams into the nurse.

NURSE
What are you--

TREE
Run!

Tree tries to grab her but the nurse pauses to peer into the room.

BAM-BAM-BAM!

Three rapid-fire shots take the nurse down. Tree screams and runs for the elevators. She sees another NURSE in the hall -- she bolts for the elevator. By the time Tree reaches her, the elevator doors are already closing!

TREE (CONT'D)

WAIT!

Too late! The doors close on Tree. Tombs rounds the corner. Tree is trapped in the small reception area. He laughs -- cold-blooded and mocking.

Backed against the elevator doors, Tree watches helplessly as Tombs advances, gun raised and ready to fire!

Suddenly, Carter appears BEHIND Tombs. He tackles Tombs -- the gun goes off twice before falling from his grip!

Tree is quick to grab the gun. She aims at Tombs and fires!

CLICK...

Tree's eyes widen in horror. It's empty.

Without missing a beat, Tombs pulls a hunting knife tucked away and drives the blade into Carter!

TREE (CONT'D)

Carter!!!

He's dead. Tree backpedals away from the elevator as Tombs rises to his feet.

Tree turns and runs down another CORRIDOR. It dead-ends at a door marked "STAIRS".

INT. STAIRWELL -- BELL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Assuming it was another fire-exit, Tree discovers the stairs only go up...

...toward the BELL TOWER.

Tombs bursts through the door!

Tree races up the wooden steps of this small, cramped stairwell (metal candle holders line the wall) -- Tombs is close behind! He lunges --

-- when Tree reaches back and KICKS him hard in the gut!

He slips back a few steps! She kicks him again -- square in the face, shattering part of the mask -- exposing half of Tombs demented grin.

Catching her ankle, he yanks her hard and she nearly tumbles atop him!

Tree's kicking at him, but his grip is iron clad.

Tombs snaps a metal candle stick from the wall -- prepared to stab her with the jagged metal edge! He brings it down hard, Tree dodges the blow as the pointed edge jams into the soft wood of the stair!

Tree seizes the moment and CLAWS his face as hard she can. Tombs screams in agony! Wriggling out from under him, Tree clamors for the entrance to the bell tower.

INT. BELL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Moments later, Tombs steps into the loft.

He looks, where could she have gone? There's no way out.

Tree is standing on the railing.

He's confused. She's three flights up.

He notices the rope leading from the bell tower...

...is tied around her neck.

She turns, glares him in the eye.

TREE

See you tomorrow, asshole.

She leaps!

In mid-air, the rope pulls taught! The bell rings out as we...

SLAM CUT:

INT. CARTER'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

Outside, the bell is still tolling as Tree's eyes snap open. She sucks in a breath of air and exhales with a wheeze. Tree looks pale -- we don't know how many more "lives" she's got left.

But her eyes are filled with purpose. She knows who her killer is and she's not afraid anymore.

Tree sits up and sees Carter staring at her.

CARTER

You're up. I wasn't --

Weak but elated to see him alive, Tree jumps out of bed and throws her arms around Carter.

TREE

Thank you! I can't believe you tried to save me!

Carter's body is rigid in Tree's awkward embrace. He finally pats her back cordially.

CARTER

No biggie.

She pulls away as her cell phone plays "Happy Birthday". By the time she retrieves it, she's missed her dad's call.

TREE

Damn it.

Tree pulls her T-shirt off. Carter spins around.

CARTER

I don't know if you remember my name --

TREE

Carter.

He looks surprised. Tree grabs a pillow from his bed.

TREE (CONT'D)

Can I borrow this?

CARTER

Uh...sure. Why not?

TREE

Thanks.

She pecks him on the cheek.

TREE (CONT'D)

See you at lunch.

Now he's really confused but before he can even ask she's already starting out the door. The freshman is just arriving. As she passes him, Tree SLAPS his ass.

The freshman looks at Carter -- *WTF?*

Cue a hot song with a nice beat...

EXT. THE CAMPUS - MORNING

A walk of shame no more, Tree ditches her heels and chucks them in the bushes before strutting down the main thoroughfare.

Sun in her eyes, Tree casually snatches a pair of SUNGLASSES off a passerby and puts them on. He spins around and watches Tree keep going, too shocked to protest.

She comes across the PROTESTER...

STUDENT PROTESTER

Stop global--

Tree grabs the clipboard out of her hand and signs the petition. She shoves it back into the protester's hands, adding:

TREE

I love Al Gore.

Next stop, the frat pledges...

FRAT PLEDGES

-- not a Willie or a Sam! I'm the eighth ole' man named Henry! Henry the Eighth, I am!

FRAT BROTHER

Second verse, same as the first!

FRAT PLEDGES

Oh, Henry the Eighth, I am, I am!...

The EXHAUSTED FRAT PLEDGE starts to go down, but his fall is broken by Tree. She gently lays him down and sticks the pillow under his head. He's already out like a light as Tree plants a kiss on his forehead.

A hush has fallen over the cheering crowd of onlookers. Tree doesn't pay any attention to them as she keeps going.

Reaching the end of the quad, Tree starts down the steps. She sees Keith up ahead and waves to him.

TREE
Morning Keith!

He almost has a heart attack as she gives him a bear hug.

TREE (CONT'D)
Have a great day.

KEITH
Thanks?

As he watches Tree go, his confused expression yields to a smitten grin.

INT. KAPPA DELTA HOUSE - MORNING

Starting up the stairs, Tree is accosted by Danielle.

DANIELLE
Oh-my-god. You sneaky beeyotch!

Tree turns around.

TREE
(rapid-fire)
His name's Carter. We didn't have sex. But I think if I get through this, I might have his children. Lots to do. Gotta go.

Tree's really racking-up the baffled expressions today.

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Dressed and ready for the biggest day of her life, Tree smiles as Lori exits the bathroom.

LORI
She finally rolls-in.

TREE
Lori, I'm late for class but I wanted to say that I'm sorry for being such a shitty roommate. I know you've been seeing somebody and you couldn't even talk about it with me and that's wrong. I should have been there for you.
(MORE)

TREE (CONT'D)
 But I want to change that.
 Starting today.

LORI
 Are you okay?

Tree smiles.

TREE
 Never better.

INT. DR. BUTLER'S SCIENCE CLASS - MORNING

Late for class, Tree enters the lecture hall. The door squeaks open, drawing everyone's attention -- including Gregory's as he turns from the chalkboard.

Only Tree doesn't sit down.

TREE
 Dr. Butler...a word please?

INT. HALLWAY -- OUTSIDE GREGORY'S CLASS - MOMENTS LATER

Tree is already waiting outside as Gregory practically explodes out of the lecture hall.

GREGORY
 What the hell do you think you're doing?!

TREE
 Ending this.

GREGORY
 Wait. What?

TREE
 I wish I'd never started seeing you. It was wrong. Anyway, I can't change that. But I can start doing the right thing today.

Gregory laughs -- it's smug and condescending.

GREGORY
 What lame self-help book did that come from?

TREE
 You know something, you have a wife who really loves you.
 (MORE)

TREE (CONT'D)

If you can't be committed to her
then have the balls to leave her.

That shut him up. Tree starts off.

GREGORY

(shouting after her)
Don't expect me to let you coast-
by in my class now!

TREE

(laughing)
I already dropped it!

She flips him the bird before disappearing out the door.

EXT. LUNCH PATIO - AFTERNOON

The Kappa lunch meeting is in full swing. Danielle is holding court when she sees Tree approach the table with a tray FULL of junk food. She sets it down and instantly dives-into a wedge of cheesecake. Everyone is staring at her like she's a leper.

TREE

(mouth-full)
This is totally amazing.

Becky arrives with her tray -- including a sandwich, pasta salad, and the notorious glass of chocolate milk. As she sits down...

DANIELLE

Did I miss the memo?

BECKY

Sorry?

DANIELLE

What's up with the fat-fest? We're Kappa's.

Tree shoves her plate of cheesecake toward Danielle.

TREE

Live a little, hon. A few calories won't kill you.

DANIELLE

No, they'll just turn me into a chunker like Becky here.

Becky looks like she's going to die. She starts to get up with her tray of food. She doesn't see Carter coming.

SMASH!

They collide. Only this time, Tree's ready as she nimbly ducks out of the way. Becky's chocolate milk flies off the tray and splashes all over Danielle!

Tree cracks up!

CARTER

Oh my god! I'm so sorry!

TREE

Don't be. That was perfect.

Becky starts laughing with Tree. Danielle gets up. As more people see her dripping wet they start laughing too.

DANIELLE

Shut up!

Her tantrum only makes them laugh harder. Bursting into tears, Danielle runs off with some of her Kappa cronies chasing after her.

CARTER

I didn't mean to--

Tree grabs him and plants a big kiss on his lips. She finally pulls away. Carter's eyes are as wide as saucers.

CARTER (CONT'D)

What was that for?

"Happy Birthday" starts playing again on Tree's cell phone. It's dad again.

TREE

Look, I have to run but what are you up to tonight?

CARTER

Um...nothing.

TREE

Would you like to take me out for my birthday?

CARTER

Okay. What's the punch-line?

TREE

I'm being serious. I know it's kinda random but I'll explain everything tomorrow assuming there is one. Just say yes.

CARTER

Yes?

Tree pecks him on the cheek. As she heads off, Carter looks at Becky -- they both share confused grins.

INT. RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

Tree's dad, DAVID (late 40's, distinguished), sits in the half-empty restaurant -- an empty coffee cup in front of him.

He looks at his watch with a sigh before waving the WAITRESS over to his table.

DAVID

Can I pay for my coffee?

WAITRESS

You're not going to eat, honey?

DAVID

No. Thanks. Just the check.

The waitress leaves. David fishes out his wallet and removes a ten. But when he looks up, he finds Tree standing there.

TREE

Hi, daddy. Sorry I'm late.

Tree takes a seat across from him. She can tell he's hurt.

TREE (CONT'D)

You look nice. I like the tie.

David looks down at his tie.

DAVID

Thanks.

An uncomfortable silence fills the air. Tree looks down, ashamed she's let the distance between them get this far.

DAVID (CONT'D)
How's school?

TREE
It's fine. Dad, I don't want to do that anymore.

DAVID
Do what?

TREE
You know...small talk.

David looks surprised by her forthrightness.

TREE (CONT'D)
This day...it's so hard. I miss her so much. And I thought if I just avoided it -- and you, it'd be easier. But it's worse. All this running and hiding has made me so unhappy. I think I finally figured it out. It took something crazy for me to get it. But I'm here and I love you and--
(she chokes up)
I'm so sorry for hurting you.

Tree's dad looks visibly moved. Tree wipes her own tears away. David takes her hand and kisses it.

DAVID
Happy Birthday, baby.

TREE
Thanks daddy.

NEW SHOT -- FROM ACROSS THE ROOM

We SEE Tree and David engaged in conversation. Picking-up where they left off three years ago.

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

We're CLOSE ON a chef's KNIFE as Tree slides it into the back of her jeans before hiding the handle with a tight T-shirt.

Pulling her hair back into a pony tail, she glances at her reflection in the mirror. Her eyes say all we need to know...she's ready to take control of her destiny.

Teresa Gelbman is going to make it to Wednesday, the 19th.

Even if it kills her.

INT. 4TH FLOOR -- HOSPITAL - NIGHT

We follow Lori as she comes down the hall -- she passes the nurse's station where our hopeless romantic (the same nurse every night) has her face buried in the harlequin novel.

LORI

Deena, I'm taking my break. Back in a few.

The nurse doesn't look up. She just answers with a "K".

Lori steps into the elevator. As the doors close, we see the adjacent doors open revealing Tree.

Our heroine slips by the nurse's station. Much to her relief, she finds the OFFICER just sitting down outside Tomb's room with his hot cup of coffee.

Tree quietly approaches him. He looks up at her, surprised.

POLICE OFFICER

Help you?

Tree brings a finger to her mouth, shushing him.

TREE

(whispering)
This is going to sound crazy, but Joseph Tombs is going to escape tonight.

POLICE OFFICER

(you crazy?)
Come again?

TREE

Please. Just check on him.

POLICE OFFICER
 Look, I don't know who you are,
 missy, but you better turn around
 and high-tail it out of here
 before I have you thrown out.

He doesn't even see it coming. Tree has the blade at his
 throat before the officer can get the gun from his
 holster.

TREE
 I'm really sorry but you're just
 gonna have to do what I say right
 now.

POLICE OFFICER
 (scared)
 Okay. Take it easy. Take it easy.

TREE
 Now stand up *very slowly*.

He does as he's told.

POLICE OFFICER
 This is a real bad idea.

TREE
 So's getting killed for the sixth
 time. Open the door.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Guiding the officer into the room, Tree's relieved to
 find Tomb's still asleep in his bed.

POLICE OFFICER
 See? Safe and sound.

She nudges the officer closer.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
 Look, he's not--

TREE
 Shoot him.

POLICE OFFICER
 What?!

TREE

Shoot him in the head.

They both don't see Tomb's eyes slowly open...

POLICE OFFICER

Girly, you are out of your
freakin' mind!

CLOSE ON -- TOMB'S ARM RESTRAINTS

His wrists are just resting in them but the straps are
already UNDONE.

TREE

He's going to kill me! Shoot him!

Tombs suddenly LUNGES at the cop and shoves the knife he
was hiding into the police officer's stomach!

Tree staggers back as Tombs rises from his bed. He picks
up the MASK sitting on the table beside his bed.

Tree grabs the fallen officer's GUN! She aims it at Tombs
and squeezes the trigger! Nothing happens!

TOMBS

*The safety's still on little
girl...*

The blood covered Tombs throws his full weight atop her!
She goes down hard -- shattering a rib! The gun sails
across the room from the impact!

He drops the knife, climbing atop her, choking her with
his bare hands!

TOMBS (CONT'D)

I should cut off your head and be
done with it... but this feels so
much better, no?

But this isn't the weak and defenseless Tree who has been
killed again and again. She focuses --

-- and drives her open palm hard into his nose! He cries
out in pain. Tree tries to run but he grabs her by her
shirt and throws her across the room! Tree hits the wall
like a rag doll.

Tombs retrieves the knife and slowly stalks over to Tree. She's in too much pain to move.

He he stands above her, the knife in the air. Tombs flashes a sadistic grin.

But he's surprised...

...when she smiles back?!

9:23. Blackout.

Moments pass.

The lights come back on.

He is surprised that Tree... is gone?!

TREE

Psst.

No, not gone. She took advantage of the blackout to scramble a few feet away and pick up the gun.

TREE (CONT'D)

Thanks for the tip.

...and as he lunges at her, knife in hand...

...she empties the gun into his chest!

Tombs falls back onto the bed, a bloody mess. *DEAD.*

We HOLD ON Tree -- exhausted but still alive. A victim no-more.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KAPPA DELTA HOUSE - NIGHT

The police have gone, the ordeal is finally over. Carter is walking Tree to her house.

CARTER

So this has to be strangest birthday you've ever had.

TREE

You have no idea.

CARTER
Did the police say how Tombs got
free?

TREE
They really don't know.

CARTER
Like Houdini.

TREE
I guess.

They stop outside her front door.

TREE (CONT'D)
So, sorry our little date didn't
happen.

CARTER
It's okay. There's always
tomorrow.

Tree glances at her watch. It's **11:53 pm**.

TREE
(under her breath)
I hope so.

She kisses him.

TREE (CONT'D)
Good night.

CARTER
Night.

She goes inside. Carter lingers for a moment, totally
smitten.

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tree's a little surprised to find the room empty. Lori
must be out with her "new man".

But she left something behind...

THE CUPCAKE.

Tree grabs a book of matches sitting on a box of incense.
She lights the candle on the cupcake.

Sitting down on her bed, Tree closes her eyes. Thinking of a wish.

Love? Money? Fame?

Doesn't matter. She's alive.

Tree opens her eyes and blows.

CLOSE ON -- THE WICK

As the flame is extinguished by Tree's breath we are plunged into DARKNESS.

SLAM CUT:

THREE BEATS OF DARKNESS MAKE US THINK OUR STORY HAS ENDED BUT...

THE TOWER BELL TOLLS THE HOUR...

Tree's eyes flutter open. She's a little groggy. Pushing herself up, her eyes suddenly fill with an unspeakable horror!

INT. CARTER'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

Carter is putting something under the couch when he notices Tree sitting up in his bed. He smiles.

CARTER

You're up. I wasn't --

TREE

Carter...

CARTER

I didn't think you'd remember my name. You were pretty wasted last night.

Tree's cell phone plays "Happy Birthday". She grabs the phone...the caller ID says "DAD".

TREE

No...this can't happening! This can't be happening!

She jumps out of bed.

TREE (CONT'D)
I killed him!

CARTER
(alarmed)
Who? What are you talking about?

She pulls her T-shirt off. Carter spins around.

CARTER (CONT'D)
You probably just had a bad dream.
It happens to me whenever I drink
too much.

But when he turns around, Tree's already gone. He frowns.

CARTER (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Nice one, dickweed.

EXT. THE CAMPUS - MORNING

Tears streaking down her cheeks, Tree runs past everything familiar. Nothing has changed. She's trapped in the same day forever...

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

We can HEAR the shower running through the bathroom door as a border-line hysterical Tree enters.

She immediately begins pulling clothes from her drawer and tossing them on the bed.

The water stops as Lori emerges from the bathroom wrapped in a towel.

LORI
Oh. She's finally back.

Lori notices the pile of clothes building on Tree's bed.

LORI (CONT'D)
Going somewhere?

TREE
Yes! As far away as possible!

LORI
What's wrong?

TREE

What's wrong?! I'll tell you what's wrong! Me! I was wrong! I thought if I stopped running I could beat it! But it's never going to stop! So I'll run! I'll run to the end of the god-damn earth if I have to!

LORI

Tree, you're freaking me out.

TREE

Oh well! That's me! A freak!

Tree yanks the closet open, searching for something.

LORI

Tree, look...

She turns around. Lori's holding the cupcake she made for Tree.

LORI (CONT'D)

Happy Birthday.

TREE

(sarcastic)
Thanks, but I already ate it last night--

Tree freezes. *Last night...*

She turns around to face her roommate -- her eyes locked on the cupcake.

TREE (CONT'D)

I died in my sleep.

LORI

What?

TREE

You...*killed me.*

Lori slowly sets the cupcake down on Tree's desk.

TREE (CONT'D)

(working it out;
aloud)

(MORE)

TREE (CONT'D)

It was poisoned. But I never ate it before.

FLASH: We SEE Tree throwing the cupcake in the trash -- then dropping it on the floor after the black out.

TREE (CONT'D)

So you had to find another way. Then Tombs fell right into your lap...the perfect scapegoat.

FLASH: Tombs is rolled past Lori on a gurney. She follows him with narrowed eyes as a plot is hatched in her mind.

TREE (CONT'D)

You had access to him. Did you drug him first?

FLASH: Lori jams a hypodermic needle in Tombs' arm. While he's unconscious, she changes him into "The Killer's Outfit". She puts the MASK on his face and sets the HUNTER'S KNIFE at his side. As she slips out of the room, we SEE his wrists are no longer restrained.

TREE (CONT'D)

You knew he'd wake up and escape. Then they'd just assume he killed me.

FLASH: Tree's FIRST DEATH. The masked killer stabs her from behind.

TREE (CONT'D)

But it was always you...

FLASH: The killer pulls-up his mask REVEALING Lori's satisfied/hateful expression as she looks down on Tree's lifeless body in the ditch.

BACK TO TREE'S BEDROOM:

Lori's stunned expression yields to a sardonic laugh.

LORI

You've totally lost your mind. You actually think I'd try to poison you with a friggin' cupcake?

TREE

Prove it.

Tree nods to the cupcake.

TREE (CONT'D)

Have a bite.

Lori hesitates. Tree picks it up.

TREE (CONT'D)

Go ahead...

LORI

You really are nuts.

TREE

Fine. I'll just take it to the police. I'm sure they can see what your little *birthday treat* is made of.

Lori's expression falls. As Tree turns, Lori grabs Tree by the hair! The cupcake falls on the desk! Lori swings Tree into the wall! Tree hits the ground, dazed.

Lori slams the bedroom door shut and locks it. Blocking the door, she looks down on Tree.

LORI

(with venom)

You stupid little whore.

TREE

Why?..

LORI

Oh, I don't know. Maybe because you wouldn't stop sleeping with him.

TREE

Gregory?

LORI

But he kept choosing you over me. Guess all he really wanted was a cheap slut like you. But what I want to know is...how did you figure it out?

TREE

You've killed me before.

LORI

Then I guess I'll just have to do it again.

Tree runs for the window but Lori tackles her! She flips Tree over. Grabbing her by the hair, Lori begins BASHING her head against the floor.

Suddenly, there's a loud KNOCK at the door...

Lori stops for a second and immediately covers Tree's mouth with her hand.

DANIELLE (O.S.)

What the hell's going on in there?

LORI

Everything's fine...Tree just fell. She's okay.

In her peripheral, Tree SPOTS the up-turned cupcake lying on the desk -- just an arm's length away...

Lori suddenly becomes aware of Tree grabbing the cupcake. With her other hand, Tree PUNCHES Lori in the throat!

Lori gasps for air!

TREE

Eat it, bitch!

And Tree crams the cupcake into Lori's open mouth!

As Lori struggles to spit the cake out, Tree SLUGS her again, knocking Lori off.

Tree gets to her feet fast. Lori rises, spitting the last bits out.

LORI

Oh, you're dead now...

Looking up, Tree spies a built-in BOOKSHELF over the window where Lori is standing.

With the last of her strength, Tree JUMPS UP and catches the shelf with both hands then KICKS Lori through the window!

EXT. KAPPA DELTA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Glass and wood EXPLODE as Lori sails though the window! Her body bounces off the ledge, before flipping over backwards!

There's a skull-crushing *THUD* as Lori hits the stone walkway two-stories below.

INT. TREE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Danielle's door-pounding has intensified with all the commotion.

DANIELLE (O.S.)
What the hell was that?

ANGLE ON TREE -- BATTERED AND FADING

TREE
(winded)
Lori...ate...my birthday cupcake.

We can HEAR some of the sorority sister's SCREAMS outside as Tree's eyes roll back into her head and she passes out cold.

FADE IN:

EXT. POTSDAM UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL - MORNING

It is a beautiful, sunny morning.

Half a dozen LOCAL and NATIONAL NEWS VANS parked out front, all covering the story of the day.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE WARD - MORNING

Tree wakes up in the hospital bed. Beside her is Carter and her dad.

TREE
What... day is it?

DAVID
Wednesday, you slept all night.

TREE
Wednesday? The nineteenth?

DAVID

That's right.

TREE

(relieved)

I made it.

She smiles... starts to get up, but can't.

CARTER

You're not supposed to move.

You've been banged up pretty bad.

She lets them lower her back down.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Do you remember anything?

TREE

Lori? She's dead?

He shakes his head.

DAVID

The police know everything. They found her journal.

She takes Carter's hand. Then her Dad's. Tree is grateful. Just then, Dr. Winter appears.

DR. WINTER

She needs her rest. You can visit her later.

DAD

I love you.

TREE

I love you, too.

As dad starts off, Carter steals a little kiss, adding:

CARTER

You still owe me a date.

Tree smiles.

They leave. Alone with Dr. Winter: Tree winces.

TREE

Can I get something for the pain?

DR. WINTER

In your condition, I'm afraid anything I would prescribe could be dangerous. You might need to put up with some pain for a day -- can you do that?

Tree smiles.

TREE

I can handle one day. Believe me.

Dr. Winter excuses himself.

Tree closes her eyes, soaking in the sunlight of this new day, pouring through the window --

-- when she's suddenly aware of a shadow over her.

She sees the silhouette of a nurse standing over her. The woman is preparing a syringe.

Tree raises her hand to try to get a look at the nurse.

TREE (CONT'D)

Excuse me. What are you doing?

NURSE

It's for the pain.

The nurse brings the syringe to the I.V. tube.

TREE

But... the doctor said no.

The nurse steps closer...

It's Stephanie -- Gregory's wife.

STEPHANIE

Not your pain, Teresa. Mine. Did you think you'd get away with screwing my husband?

Stephanie empties the syringe in the intravenous.

TREE

You've got to be kidding me.

...whispers Tree, even as she begins to convulse...

SLAM CUT:

END CREDITS

ALTERNATE ENDING

INT. CARTER'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

The bell tolls outside. Tree stirs from her slumber. She sits up...notices she's wearing the same oversized T-shirt.

TREE

No...

She spies Carter -- bent over, in front of the couch putting something away.

Tree's eyes go wide with shock as her cell phone plays "Happy Birthday". She grabs it...

CLOSE ON -- THE LCD SCREEN

It says: *PRIVATE NUMBER*

Tree: *What?*

Carter turns around, holding his cell phone. He laughs as he snaps it shut. Tree's cell phone instantly stops ringing as she realizes he was just fucking with her.

TREE (CONT'D)

You think that's funny?!

CARTER

Hilarious.

Grabbing a pillow, Tree takes a swing and misses. Carter tackles Tree onto the bed. Pinning her down, he goes in for the kiss...

But Tree suddenly pushes him back -- she looks worried.

CARTER (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

TREE

What if I get stuck in this day?

Carter kisses her. It's passionate but tempered with sweetness. He pulls away. A smiles breaks through Tree's anxiety.

TREE (CONT'D)

I guess I could live with that.

Tree grabs Carter's head and pulls him into another kiss.

Cue love-song that makes teenage girls prematurely ovulate as we PULL AWAY from our lovebirds...

EXT. HOSPITAL BELL TOWER - MORNING

The bell rings one last time as the sun rises over the Potsdam University campus -- its incandescent light finally keeping its promise of *tomorrow*.

FADE OUT.