

the invitation

by

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DARKNESS

The SOUNDS of a summer barbecue, a backyard pool party. Children squeal and splash. Adults chat around the grill. As these sounds continue, we FADE IN ON:

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

A static shot of an EMPTY BACK YARD-- a tranquil, sunny expanse of grass overlooking the Hollywood Hills. A soft breeze rustles through the trees. A sliver of patio in the foreground hints at a pool.

There are no people present. Just the SOUND OF A PARTY from some time ago, the voices strained through someone's memory.

Snippets of conversation, of laughter and gossip. Meat sizzles as it's thrown around the grill. A man's voice.

MAN (V.O.)
...just a little more, I think...

A woman mumbles something in reply. More laughter.

MAN (V.O.)
Okay, okay....

Then, just barely audible, a child's SCREAM.

A VOICE, coming closer, cuts through the rest.

VOICE (V.O.)
Will. Will!

WILL (V.O.)
What?

VOICE (V.O.)
It's Ty...

All levity stops. A metal utensil clangs to the ground. Chairs scrape against the deck. Footsteps rush from the patio to the grass.

WILL (V.O.)
Oh, God... Ty? Ty? What happened?

Worried voices overlap, mixing with Will's.

VOICE (V.O.)
... how did...

VOICE (V.O.)
...he's not breathing.

WILL (V.O.)
No! No! Oh God...

VOICE (V.O.)
... how, how...

VOICE (V.O.)
...oh God, call 911...

VOICE (V.O.)
Get back, just get back everybody,
just...

The shot continues-- the peaceful, empty yard, evening sun throwing long shadows. The voices rise in panic.

WILL (V.O.)
Ty! Ty!

A woman's voice, a wail of bottomless despair, pierces everything and we FADE TO:

ABOVE LOS ANGELES - DUSK

The sun has already set. Color fades from the landscape as the sky grows dim. The hills become an ominous, dark outline.

Sounds mix together, low, barely audible; broken transmissions, strange animal cries, quiet voices. The things that creep into the sky, both human and inhuman, organic and mechanical.

We move down through the haze to find HEADLIGHTS, winding up through Coldwater Canyon into the Hollywood hills. The lights turn onto a narrow, twisting road. A car, a Saab station wagon, is moving up.

IN THE CAR

A young man, WILL (30's) drives in silence. We linger on his face as he concentrates on the road. Behind his placid expression, we can see something pulling at him. There is a haunted quality to his eyes.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - SAME

The car continues its purposeful climb, drawn into the ever-darkening tangle of streets, the orange-blue haze of dusk giving way to blackness.

IN THE CAR

A long moment on Will's face, his eyes. The only sound is that of the engine, muffled by the closed windows. It's claustrophobic.

VOICE (O.S.)

Will.

The voice is jolting. We widen to see that, this whole time, someone has been next to him.

KIRA (30's) is athletic and watchful. There is quiet familiarity between them, a resigned tension.

Will looks over.

KIRA

I asked if you were okay.

WILL

Sorry.

He shakes his head a little bit, ridding himself of a thought.

WILL

Sorry. I'm back.

He smiles, turns back to the road. Kira looks at him.

KIRA

We don't have to do this. We can just go home.

WILL

No, it's okay. It's just going to have to be okay.

KIRA

If it feels like too much, being in that house again...

WILL

I'll be fine.

They drive in silence. Kira looks down at the INVITATION she is holding.

CLOSE ON IT - an oddly peppy party invitation. Drawings of palm trees on either side. "CELEBRATE WITH DAVID AND EDEN."

KIRA

Who's going to be there tonight?

WILL

Everybody. Ben, Claire, Tommy and Miguel... I guess that's the point. Getting everybody back together.

Kira turns the invitation over in her hands.

KIRA

This thing is so... chipper.

WILL

Maybe they're overcompensating.
Tough to just call people up after
two years.

KIRA

Nobody's seen her?

WILL

No.

KIRA

Jesus.

WILL

I mean, I ran into her one time at
the cemetery. She was with David.
It was awkward. Then she just
disappeared.

KIRA

They met in that grief group?

WILL

Yeah, while we were still married.
They loved it. I couldn't stand it.
(pause)

Somebody's bawling while you feel
fine. Someone's passing out cookies
while you're coming apart. It just
made me angry.

KIRA

You needed an anger group to deal
with the grief group...

WILL

I didn't want anyone's help.

KIRA

It's okay to need someone's help
sometime.

This could open into something more. It doesn't.

WILL

You could've put odds on our
divorce, I guess.

KIRA
People don't think like that.

WILL
Yes they do.

He shakes his head.

WILL
The things she did right after it
happened. Kira... it was fucking
terrifying. I thought she was going
to die, too.

Will looks over at her, taps the invitation.

WILL
She seems perfectly happy now,
though.

Kira laughs.

SUDDENLY, A FLASH

IN THE HEADLIGHTS - an animal darts in front of them. A flash
of fur and teeth.

No time to react.

A SICKENING THUD as WILL slams on the brakes. Splaying limbs
twist through the beams of light.

The invitation flies off Kira's lap and onto the floor. The
car screeches to an abrupt halt.

WILL
Jesus!

KIRA
What was it?

WILL
I don't know. A coyote maybe.
(unbuckling)
Stay here.

EXT. ROAD

The car sits idling. Will gets out, moves toward the front of
the car. The hazard lights blink.

WILL'S POV - we slowly round the front of the car. Closing
in. A glimpse of an animal's leg.

ON WILL as he sees what it is. He recoils.

WILL

Oh God...

ON THE GROUND, in front of the car-- a twisted shape. A mangled coyote. It's in its death throes, its cries a raspy gurgle. One bent leg twitches involuntarily.

The sound of a car door opening.

WILL

Don't come up here.

Will walks to the trunk. He reaches in and pulls out a TIRE IRON. Closing the trunk, he sees Kira standing over the coyote.

KIRA

Oh my God...

He walks toward the front of the car, puts a hand on her shoulder.

WILL

Kira. Get back in the car.

She looks down, sees the tire iron. She knows what's coming... heads back to the car.

Will looks down at the bloody, dying animal.

CLOSE ON WILL

He's obviously affected by this.

Will lifts the tire iron. He brings it down on the coyote, a powerful blow. An awful, wet sound. The coyote wails.

He strikes it again. Again. The blows seem to hurt Will as much as the animal.

IN FRONT OF THE CAR

Will drops the tire iron. He looks down at what he's done. Then, steeling himself, he grabs the dead animal by its feet and drags it to the side of the road.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Kira watches as Will comes around the front of the car and gets inside.

They sit there for a moment. Will is a little out of breath. Kira looks at him, then forward. Shocked.

KIRA

Fuck.

WILL

I know.

She puts a hand on his arm.

KIRA

Let's go back. We don't have to do this tonight. Especially after this. Everyone will understand.

Will, both hands on the wheel, doesn't answer. Finally...

WILL

How the fuck can she go back to that house?

KIRA

People deal with things in different ways. She's trying.

WILL

And I'm not.

KIRA

You said that, not me.

(pause)

Maybe she wants to let people in. Maybe she wants to make some new, good memories in that place...

WILL

I don't think things work that way.

EXT. ROAD

The car moves up the narrow road in the hills, headlights glinting off parked cars. Everything seems precarious, somehow. Dark and twisted.

They drive past lines of parked cars, closely packed on the side of the road. Just a glimpse, unseen to Will and Kira...

... in one of the nearly identical BMW's, a man is sitting there, still and waiting...

They continue up the street, pulling into a driveway and stopping behind three other cars.

The house is a modernist masterpiece, hanging off the side of the hill. Sprawling, beautiful, a classic. Will cuts the engine.

KIRA

This was *your* house?

WILL

Lot of money in Eden's family.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

As they walk up the driveway, Will stops. The house, glowing from within, has an obvious hold on him, a power over him.

Kira unconsciously makes a move to take his hand, but stops herself. They walk up the steps to the house.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Conversation spills out from inside. The door is ajar. As Will pushes it open--

A FLASH, Will's POV, the same house, YEARS AGO. A young boy tries to help as his young mom arranges some flowers in the entryway. Both of them look up toward Will...

BACK IN THE PRESENT

The EIGHT PEOPLE in the house turn to look at Will and Kira.

We play across the guests' faces for a long moment. Men and women in their 30's, Will's friends. They smile, apprehensive. No one seems to know where to start.

Finally, a woman breaks the spell, stepping toward Will and Kir-- GINA YAO, a lively, funky presence, a quintessential eastsider.

GINA

You're here! Fucking A. I win.

KIRA

Was there a betting pool?

TOMMY

For entertainment purposes only.

TOMMY, strong, mischievous, comes forward and kisses her. His partner, Miguel, stands back a little, smiling.

TOMMY

You are looking so hot right now, I can't believe it. Will you please bear a child for us?

MIGUEL

We're not kidding. Just get down right there, Kira, and do what your people do. Tommy... impregnate.

She laughs.

KIRA

So I see the two of you are having loads of problems getting along...

MIGUEL

Another 8 years of this is about all I can take. Then he can marry me or I leave.

(to Tommy)

You hear that?

TOMMY

I'd marry you, but Amanda's head would explode, honey.

Over in the living room, AMANDA VAN MARK, lean and intense looking, hears this. She gets up from the couch.

AMANDA

Come on, you know I like you. That has nothing to do with it.

MIGUEL

Let's not start. You've changed your mind since that horrible column you wrote on Monday?

AMANDA

Please. Don't be so sensitive. It's theatre. It's provocation.

MIGUEL

Well, these are people's lives.

Will looks a bit distracted. Seeing this, Tommy puts an arm around his shoulder.

TOMMY

You seem good, Will. You've shed that dirty dishrag vibe that has so concerned me.

WILL

I look like a dirty dishrag?

TOMMY

Looked like. Seemed like. Were.

Tommy leads him, arm still around his shoulder, into the sunken living room, where CLAIRE, intellectual and a bit awkward, sits next to BEN, a wry, vaguely stoned guy splayed on the couch.

CLAIRE

Will's here!

Without getting up, Ben extends his hand in mock-formality.

BEN

Hi, Will. I'm Ben. You remember me? We drove a thriving business into the ground together.

WILL

It never thrived.

BEN

It thrived like a motherfucker for three months. And you know it.

KIRA

So what did we miss?

Gina's eyes widen a bit, conspiratorially.

GINA

It's been an *interesting* fifteen minutes.

Will tilts his head inquisitively.

GINA

You'll see.

WILL

Where's Choi?

GINA

I don't know. Late as usual. Can't get any reception up here, either.

WILL
Is Eden...?

A voice from the hallway.

EDEN (V.O.)
I'm here.

Will turns toward his ex-wife's voice.

EDEN is beautiful and graceful. There's something ethereal, druggy about her-- she practically floats across the room toward them.

She hugs Will for a long time, finally pulling back.

EDEN
Let me look at you, Will.

She peruses him, arms draped over his shoulders. Her face calm and beatific, her eyes searching his.

EDEN
Mmmmm.

Her manner seems very strange to him. He's taken aback.

EDEN
I missed you.

WILL
Me too.

EDEN
House doesn't look very different,
does it?

WILL
No. Not really.

EDEN
We're so glad you're here.

We notice something on Will's face, a tiny spot, a smudge. We realize it's A BIT OF THE COYOTE'S BLOOD.

Eden notices it too, and, smiling, wets her finger and wipes the fleck of blood off Will's face.

EDEN
You're a mess!

Then she puts her finger in her mouth and tastes it.

Eden turns and beckons a very fit, VERY GOOD LOOKING MAN. He comes toward them, eyes shining with powerful life, a strong focus. He wears a distinctive LEATHER BRACELET on his wrist.

EDEN

You remember David?

WILL

Of course. Sure.

A flash: David, sitting in a therapy group, a stark circle, the greenish industrial light of a rec center. Colliding shots: he is crying. Composed. Head in his hands. Will and Eden watching him. Will's arm is around Eden's shoulders. David looking up, meeting Eden's eyes. A wreck.

David moves past Will's offered handshake, straight in for a hug.

DAVID

Very glad to see you. Really glad, man.

WILL

Hey. How are you?

DAVID

Brilliant. We have so much to talk about. We have so much to celebrate together tonight.

He reaches over to Kira, pulling her out of her conversation and hugging her close as well.

DAVID

What can I get you to drink?

He turns toward the bar, where many bottles have been set out. Tommy leans toward Will.

TOMMY

I'd suggest going with the wine.
It's an '85 Rothschild.

Gina has overheard this.

GINA

Are you shitting me?

WILL

I'm guessing that means it's expensive?

Tommy and Miguel look at him with pity.

TOMMY

Oh, Will.
 (to Miguel)
 Isn't he sad?

Gina leans in.

GINA

It's well over a thousand dollars a
 bottle, cro-mag.

KIRA

What's the special occasion, David?

He starts to pour the wine.

DAVID

You are. This night. We shouldn't
 save these things. We shouldn't put
 off enjoying what we have. Since
 everybody is here...

BEN

(calling out)
 Except Choi.

TOMMY/MIGUEL

Fucking Choi!

People laugh. A well-worn joke in this group. Will sits down
 on the edge of the couch, away from the others.

BEN

Fucking Choi.

DAVID

Right. We'll just have to start
 without him.

He raises his glass, gaining everyone's attention.

DAVID

Just a few words.
 (pause)
 This is a reunion. We've been away
 a long time, and you are all very
 special to us.

Everyone's attention is on David, but something else catches
 Will's eye-- a movement in the darkened side hallway.

Someone is standing there, watching them.

It's a GIRL, maybe 19 or 20, wearing only a tight t-shirt, naked from the waist down.

Sleepy-eyed, SHE STARES DIRECTLY AT WILL, a weird smile on her face.

DAVID (O.S.)

We invited you here because we love you, and we've missed you.

Will's eyes are fixed on her. She slowly breaks eye contact and drifts away into another room.

DAVID

This dinner is a way for all of us to reconnect. We wanted to open the house again. To give it, and us, a new start.

Everyone toasts, savoring the wine.

GIRL (O.S.)

Hey, save a glass for me...

The girl, now dressed, slinks out of the hall and up to David, who laughs as she grabs at his glass, kissing at his neck.

There's something unsettling about her energy; skittish, an abused animal. On her wrist, the distinctive leather bracelet.

Looks from Kira to Ben to Tommy... who is this?

EDEN

Sadie, meet our friends.

SADIE

Hi...

She laughs, uncomfortably.

BEN

Hi, Sadie. I'm Ben.

KIRA

So, uh... how do you guys know each other?

SADIE

Um. Friends in common, I guess.

EDEN

We met in Mexico. Sadie's staying with us for a while. Just helping out.

SADIE

Yeah... it's fun. We have fun. I hope you don't mind me crashing the party. It's awesome.

She looks at Will, almost conspiratorially.

SADIE

They've just told me so much about you...

She trails off, still looking directly at Will. Ben clears his throat.

Kira breaks the increasingly uncomfortable silence.

KIRA

Did Will tell you guys we hit an animal on the way up?

WILL

It's not...

KIRA

It just... came out of nowhere. There was nothing we could do.
(shaking her head)
It was in just horrible shape. It was making this sound...

Everybody looks at Will.

GINA

How did you not tell us this, like, immediately?

KIRA

He had to kill it. It was suffering.

GINA

You killed it with like...

WILL

A tire iron.

BEN

I don't know how you did it, man. That's pretty butch.

DAVID

It's beautiful. Amazing. You did a good thing.

Will looks around, a little disturbed. He lands on Eden. She's just staring at him serenely.

WILL

Excuse me for a second.

EDEN

Of course.

Will goes alone to the kitchen.

SADIE

What a trip.

DAVID

It's just, if you listen, you get these beautiful signs and signals. They just descend right on you.

INT. KITCHEN

Will leans against the sink, breathing for a second. Only now do we see how shaken he is. He pours a glass of water for himself.

As the water runs into the glass-

A FLASH - years ago in the same kitchen - Will enters. Eden turned away, at the sink. Sobbing. Something in her hands.

WILL

Eden?

She doesn't answer, but at the sound of Will's voice, her movements become hurried. A glimpse of a knife.

Will is on her as she SLICES OPEN HER WRIST.

WILL

Eden!

BLOOD SHOWERS THE SINK as Will struggles to wrest the knife from her. Eden is hysterical, desperately trying to cut her other wrist. Her blood on him, her tortured wail rising--

Suddenly-- Someone right behind him. A hand around his waist.

EDEN (O.S.)

Will.

Startled, Will drops his glass. It rattles in the sink, but doesn't break.

WILL
Christ...

He turns to see Eden smiling at him.

WILL
Sorry. You frightened me.

EDEN
(motioning to the sink)
No harm done.
(pause)
You're very handsome tonight, babe.
You're shining. And Kira... you're
both really beautiful.

She moves to a high cabinet, reaching for some glasses.

EDEN
Could you help me?

He comes to her, reaching up.

WILL
These bars on the windows are new.

EDEN
Oh. I don't know...
(she shrugs)
Security. It's safer.

As Eden reaches up for another glass, Will notices a leather bracelet on her wrist. The same one David and Sadie wear.

WILL
That's pretty.

She looks confused, then touches the bracelet, self-conscious for a second.

EDEN
Oh, thanks... we got them in
Mexico.

WILL
Is that where you were for the last
two years?

EDEN
Some of the time.
(pause)
(MORE)

EDEN (CONT'D)

Were you worried about me? Did you think about me?

WILL

Yeah. I did.

She nods, looking intently into his eyes.

EDEN

I've *never* been better. I'm fantastic. You don't have to worry.

WILL

It's not hard for you to be in this house again?

EDEN

Not at all, and it doesn't have to be. That's what's so *incredible*.

Will studies her.

WILL

You look different.

EDEN

I am different. I'm free. It's over. All this useless pain... it's gone.

WILL

What?

EDEN

It's something anyone can have, and I want...

Ben enters, interrupting this.

BEN

Eden looks hot.

Ben wraps around her, giving her a big kiss on the head. Will and Eden still are looking at each other.

BEN

I'm allowed to say that, right? We're all consenting adults.

He lets her go and dives into a plate of hors d'oeuvres. Eden smiles.

EDEN

It's good to see you, Ben.

BEN

You too. Way too long, Eden...

He pauses to look her, almost acknowledging the emotion of the situation. Instead, he hits the hors d'ouvres.

BEN

All right, don't mind me. I just came in for the food. What were you talking about?

EDEN

I was telling Will that grief is optional.

BEN

It is? Why didn't somebody tell me that before now?

EDEN

(getting excited)

I know, I know. But it's really pretty simple. All of the negative emotions... grief, anger, depression, abuse... it's all just chemical reactions. It's entirely physical and it's entirely changeable.

BEN

You kind of sound like a pamphlet there, Eden...

EDEN

Without much effort these limiting emotions can be expelled from the body, freeing you to engage in your life. To accept beauty.

BEN

So... you're shitting out your pain.

Eden seems to take it in stride, turns her attention to prepping some of the food.

EDEN

I can see you're not interested.

BEN

I'm sorry, Eden, but that sounds fucking crazy...

She turns and SLAPS him across the face, hard enough to more than get his attention. A stunned moment.

BEN
Eden, what the fuck?

WILL
Eden.

She smiles, enigmatic.

EDEN
Ben, until you stop making a joke out of everything, you won't learn a thing. That's why no one cares what you think.

BEN
Whoa. Uh, okay.

He tries to laugh it off but is clearly thrown. She leaves the kitchen with the glasses.

BEN
(laughing)
She fucking gored me!

Will keeps an eye on Eden as she mingles in the living room, passing out some caviar from a tray.

BEN
It was fucking LOUD.

WILL
Has she been acting like this the whole time?

BEN
You mean, with all of the Topanga Canyon new-agey bullshit? Yup. David too.

WILL
Man... she's like a different person.

BEN
Look, I'm all for whatever you gotta do to get by, especially you two, what you went through. But...
(pause)
But at least you didn't lose your mind.

WILL
I didn't?

BEN
(nodding toward Eden)
Not like that.

Will smiles.

BEN
How are you?

Will looks at him for a long moment, involuntarily tearing up.

WILL
I don't know. I don't really know
how to act.

BEN
Well, it's not just like the good
old days, you know.

WILL
No.

Ben shrugs. They look out the window for a moment. There is more to say. No one says it.

WILL
How's Amanda?

BEN
I think we hate each other.

WILL
That's not good.

BEN
Yeah, I know. But the sex, it's
so... angry. I can't get away.

Will puts an affectionate arm around his shoulder.

WILL
It's good to see you.

BEN
You, too.
(pause)
Nobody cares what I think?

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Will and Ben come back into the dining room where Eden is setting out the caviar on a side table.

Sensing them, Eden turns and smiles warmly, as if nothing had happened.

EDEN

Ben, have a glass of wine. I've let it go already, and so should you.

Ben grudgingly takes the drink. She looks at him closely.

EDEN

See? It's already gone.

She takes Ben by the arm. He shrugs and gives in, and she escorts him into the living room.

Will, now alone, takes a look around the room. His friends talking together, him separate.

WILL'S POV

He sees David, off by himself, speaking into his cell phone.

David is hunched over, furtive seeming. He snaps shut the phone, looks out the front window toward the driveway for a moment. As he turns...

Someone grabs Will's elbow.

CLAIRE

Come sit with me. Have a drink.

Claire sits down on the stairs, pulling him down next to her.

WILL

I have already. A few.

He looks across the room. David has joined the others, but glances back at the front window again. Claire prods Will out of his distraction.

CLAIRE

Ask me a question.

WILL

Okay. How's work? You're up for tenure, right?

She smiles at him.

CLAIRE
Yeah. I got it. A year ago.

WILL
A year ago. Really.

CLAIRE
(nods)
Had a party and everything. UCLA is stuck with my unbelievably gloomy seminars for the foreseeable future.
(she smiles)
At least until we all fall into the ocean. Which is soon.

A pause.

WILL
I'm sorry. About...

CLAIRE
You're here now.

They watch the party for a second. She leans her head on his shoulder, a gesture of sisterly familiarity.

WILL
I don't know why anyone would call your teachings gloomy.

CLAIRE
Me neither.

HEADLIGHTS play across the front window. From where he sits, Will sees a car pull in.

It wedges itself in the remaining space in the driveway, blocking in the other cars. The car door opens.

CLAIRE
Maybe that's our hero, Choi.

David has seen the car arrive, too. He goes to the front door and opens it, calling down to the MAN in the driveway.

ON THE STAIRS

CLAIRE
Who's that?

WILL
I don't know.

AT THE DOOR

PRUITT arrives, embracing David.

Pruitt is a very large, imposing man, but with a sweet face-- the vibe of a reformed con who has found religion. David turns, presenting him to the room.

DAVID
Everybody... this is my friend
Pruitt.

Pruitt doesn't make a move to greet anyone. Instead he just stands there, taking in the group, as if sizing them up.

PRUITT
Evening.

A SHRIEK... Sadie comes bounding up to Pruitt, leaping onto him and kissing him.

SADIE
All right!

PRUITT
Darling.

SADIE
I couldn't believe it 'til I saw
you. You're really here!

They hug each other for a moment, oblivious to the others. Finally, Ben makes a move.

BEN
Hi. Ben. Nice to meet you.

They shake hands. Will notices the same leather bracelet on his wrist-- the one Eden wears, and David, and Sadie.

David clasps Pruitt on the back.

DAVID
My man. Glad you're here.
(to the room)
Someone want to get my friend a
drink?

TOMMY
It's great to meet you, Pruitt.
But, frankly, where the HELL is
Choi?

PRUITT
Who's Choi?

GINA

My asshole boyfriend. He promised me he wasn't going to leave me hanging. Was gonna be early. Made a big deal of it.

PRUITT

Oh.

GINA

David, he didn't call you guys, say he was going to be late?

David shakes his head.

DAVID

I assumed you were coming together. We haven't seen him.

GINA

That's it. I'm gonna try again.

She pulls out her cell phone.

GINA

You guys have service up here?

DAVID

No. Almost never.

On WILL'S FACE: this registers. David was on the phone moments ago.

EDEN

Sorry, the bills fell through the cracks while we were away. We have to have them come out here and restore service on the land line.

GINA

It's just a little weird of him.

David moves over to the door, behind Pruitt and Sadie...

DAVID

You could try calling from the deck if you're worried. That's your best chance.

...and he DEADBOLTS THE DOOR and pockets the key.

As David turns back to the party, he meets eyes with Will, sees Will looking at the deadbolted door.

DAVID
Everything okay, Will?

WILL
Why don't you just leave the key in
the door? It's like a fortress in
here.

David shrugs.

DAVID
Security. It's safe. We have to be
careful. You know, just a month ago
there was a home invasion further
up the canyon. This couple was
terrorized. It was really sick.

WILL
I never heard about that.

TOMMY
Then I'm *sure* it didn't happen.

BEN
Yeah, come on, Will. Can't a man
put himself in lockdown if he
wants? This is America.

AMANDA
You guys should have a gun.

WILL
It just isn't safe, is all I'm
saying.

KIRA
Will, give it a rest. Who cares?

David smiles, calmly.

DAVID
I just keep the house a different
way, Will. That's all.
(pause)
It's my house.

Eden puts a hand on Will's shoulder, interrupting.

EDEN
Will, could you do me a favor and
get some firewood? You know where
we keep it.

Will nods, accepting that he's being dismissed.

AS WE FOLLOW HIM out through the living room, we see Kira and Eden together in the background.

As he walks, we hear Kira and Eden's conversation.

EDEN (V.O.)
Has he been like this a lot? So
upset?

KIRA (V.O.)
It's been hard, Eden.

EDEN (V.O.)
I'm sorry. But it's really good he
has you.

KIRA (V.O.)
I actually... I keep trying, but I
don't know if we're going to make
it.

EDEN (V.O.)
Can I ask you something. Has he
ever been... violent with you?

KIRA (V.O.)
No. God no.

Will enters the darkness of the stairwell.

KIRA (V.O.)
You're not saying...

EDEN (V.O.)
Of course not. No...

Will moves down the stairs.

EDEN (V.O.)
I just worry about him. How he's
dealing with things. You wonder.

Will walks down the hallway. It seems, to him, unnaturally long. A trial. Will clears his throat, a sound to keep him company.

He passes an open door. He stops, looking inside.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

A clawfoot tub sits empty in one corner of the immaculate bathroom.

ON WILL'S FACE.

The sound of voices, gentle splashing.

The camera moves around Will, back to the tub, to find *WILL AND EDEN IN THERE TOGETHER, YEARS AGO.*

Eden relaxes against Will, looking content and warm. They feel to us like completely different people.

Will fishes a washcloth from the bottom of the tub. He starts to wash Eden's chest with a goofy look of concentration. She laughs.

WILL

You're very dirty there.

EDEN

Really?

WILL

(kissing her)

Yes. Attention to detail is incredibly important.

He continues washing her, making her laugh even harder.

WILL

It is my credo.

EDEN

It's your credo!

Suddenly, another voice can be heard. Will and Eden stop, look up-- Ty, their son, is peeking through a crack in the door. He's giggling.

WILL

Why don't you back to bed, buddy. We'll be quieter.

The boy looks at them, as if doing a mathematical problem in his head. Then he turns and leaves.

WILL

So that'll be the time he saw his gross parents having sex.

EDEN

We are gross.

A pause.

EDEN

Do you think he needs a brother?

Will smiles.

WILL

He could probably use one.

She turns, looks back at him. They kiss. She rolls over to face him.

ON WILL'S FACE

Will is lost in this memory. But as he slowly realizes, he is where he is. Today.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Will moves further down the hallway toward a closed door.

He puts his hand on it. He cannot bear to open it.

Will walks away down the hall, to the door leading outside.

EXT. BELOW THE HOUSE

Will opens the door and walks out into the night air. The woodpile is near, but, leaving the door open, he walks out into the backyard.

He can hear the muted sound of loud music echoing up the canyon from a party. He takes a breath.

Will steps out onto the patio, taking in the warm night air. He walks slowly around the pool. In the distance, the lights of the city spread out before him.

On the other side of the pool, the yard extends out a good 50 feet before dropping off into the night. Will looks across the grass, unwilling to step out onto it-- as if something is out there.

WILL'S POV - We're in exactly the same space, but it's daytime. Panic and movement. People are running to the yard. People ahead are backing away from something. A SCREAMING rises...

BACK IN THE PRESENT

Will stares at the spot in the grass.

Above and behind him, A LIGHT GOES ON. We see Eden silhouetted in the window. Will turns, watching her from below, through the wall of glass. Her bedroom is lit up like a diorama.

Eden moves around the bed, pulling something out of her pocket. She is obscured for a few moments. Hiding something?

When she comes back into view, her hands are empty.

She leaves the room. The light goes off.

Will turns back, toward the still-open door. He takes several firelogs off the pile and carries them inside.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Will moves back up the hallway. The door to Eden's bedroom is closed.

He thinks. He looks up the hall, seeing no one. Makes a decision.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Will goes into Eden and David's bedroom. He quietly puts the firewood down inside the door.

Timid at first, Will looks around, gently opening a few drawers, peeking into the master bath.

He grows bolder, going through the closet, rifling through the belongings there.

He knows that he's wrong. He can't help himself.

Finally, in Eden's bedside table, carefully placed in the back of the drawer, Will finds it.

A quarter-full BOTTLE OF PILLS. The bottle is unlabeled.

Will studies this. He plucks out one of the pills and puts it in his pocket. Then he carefully puts things back in order, picks up the fire logs, and exits the room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As he enters the hallway...

David is standing there, blocking his way.

The two men look at each other, David with a smile on his face, Will caught red-handed.

David keeps smiling, but says nothing. He walks past Will and DEADBOLTS the door to the outside.

He passes Will on the way back to the stairs.

DAVID
Come on upstairs when you're ready.

Will watches him disappear up the stairs. Takes a breath, and finally starts to follow him.

And there is a loud SCREAM from upstairs.

AMANDA (O.S.)
No!

ON WILL'S FACE

As he takes the steps two at a time, up to the main floor, coming around the corner to see...

Everyone is gathered together in the living room.

AMANDA
No way!

All of them, including Amanda, turn to see Will.

GINA
They're in a cult!

DAVID
Oh, come on, Gina... it's not a *cult*.

MIGUEL
I think they're joking. Eden, are you guys really in the Invitation?

EDEN
We are.

Will nods, putting the logs down.

WILL
So that's why you were in Mexico.

TOMMY
Did you guys get all naked in the jungle?

SADIE

Sometimes.

Pruitt laughs.

SADIE

Well, *I* did.

DAVID

It's just people who have lost someone, coming together to help each other. It's not some weird religious cult or anything. It's people like us... in LA and New York. Smart, successful people. You'd be surprised.

BEN

Yeah, my boss is into it. It's like a new EST or something, right?

DAVID

Well, it's a little more practical than that. More grounded.

MIGUEL

Seriously, what goes on down there? It's like a self-help group?

DAVID

Well. Since you asked...

David pulls a video camera from the cabinet, starts to connect it to the television.

AMANDA

Oh no...

MIGUEL

We walked right into it.

DAVID

... there's something we'd like to show you.

TOMMY

NOW I get why the doors are locked. We have to convert. This is a conversion thing.

GINA

Oh my god. *This* the real reason you invited us here!

Laughter. Will sees a private look between Ben and Tommy-- they seem amused, eager to see where this goes.

EDEN

I know, I know. It sounds crazy.
But it's pretty amazing.

DAVID

Just indulge us?

CLAIRE

Is this some kind of recruitment video? I don't want to...

BEN

I do. Convert me. I'm weak.

DAVID

It's nothing like that, I promise.

Will looks at Eden, as if to question her about all of this. She just smiles.

GINA

All right, let's do this thing.

They gather around the television. David starts the video.

ON THE TELEVISION

A series of quick shaky images of the GATHERING, at what looks to be a jungle compound in Mexico. Brief snippets show the massive turnout... thousands upon thousands of people in the middle of nowhere.

BEN (O.S.)

Christ, that's a lot of people.

DAVID (O.S.)

Over thirty thousand.

A WIDE SHOT of a huge clearing TEEMING WITH PEOPLE.

Shots of people huddling together in circles comforting each other, crying. Dancing. Improvised music circles.

The images are too brief to really see clearly, but the people seem blissed out, ecstatic.

The video cuts to a shot of a CLEARING. A few dozen people are gathered around DOCTOR JOSEPH, an attractive, almost saintly looking man in his late forties.

He kneels on the ground next to a young woman, ANNIE, who is lying on a blanket. She looks only semi-conscious. Her breathing is labored, choppy.

She is gaunt and sickly; her body a map of a long battle with illness.

JOSEPH
How do you feel, Annie?

She smiles weakly.

ANNIE
I feel loved.

WORDS OF SUPPORT from the crowd. Joseph nods.

JOSEPH
Yes. Do you hear that? You are loved. You are felt, and you are deeply loved.

ANNIE
Mmmmm.

JOSEPH
Who are you going to see, dear?

Her eyes flutter. A delirious grin.

ANNIE
My husband. James. My father...

People in the crowd softly chime in with other names--

Jodie...	MAN	Peter...	WOMAN
Amy...	WOMAN 2	Edward...	MAN 2

A reverent, overlapping chorus of lost loved ones.

JOSEPH
That's right. We're all one. All of them will be there.

Among the people in the crowd, we see EDEN. Crying, she calls out...

EDEN
Ty...

IN THE ROOM

Will looks at Eden. She turns to meet his eyes.

ON THE TAPE

We have moved back off the crowd to focus on Annie.

ANNIE

Oh, I... I...

JOSEPH

Soon, Annie. Soon...

(strokes her hair)

Over soon. All of this pain, all
this of grief you've chosen, you've
renounced it haven't you?

ANNIE

Mmmm.

JOSEPH

It is your choice. You have said no
to the grief, no to the depression,
and sickness, no to the
debilitation and fear.

FOLLOWER

Amen.

FOLLOWER #2

We love you, Annie.

JOSEPH

It is artificial... and it is
temporary. We create it for
ourselves... and we can abandon it
at will.

Shouts now, from farther away.

FOLLOWER (O.S.)

Thank you, Doctor!

JOSEPH

Our spirits are real.

Shouts of support.

JOSEPH

They do not die. No darkness, no
pain... just reunion.

He turns to Annie, stroking her forehead comforting her.

JOSEPH

You're ready, aren't you, honey?

ANNIE

Hnhh.

Her breathing becomes even more shallow and spastic. She's getting worse by the second.

DOCTOR

...any moment now. They're right there, all there with you...

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Will is having a hard time watching this. He registers the faces of his friends; some look disturbed, others fascinated.

Sadie leans forward, like an entranced child. Pruitt shakes his head, deep in thought.

ON THE SCREEN

Annie's head rolls back. Her eyes flicker. Doctor Joseph motions a WOMAN forward.

JOSEPH

Come....

He pulls her close to Annie.

JOSEPH

Breathe in. Breathe deep. Feel her spirit. It's real. It's a physical thing.

The woman inhales deeply from Annie's labored breath. A blissed out smile.

WOMAN

I can feel it...

The Doctor strokes Annie's head... her breath slowing now... slowing more and more... a tiny groan.

And then silence. She's gone. Keeping his hand on her forehead, he leans in and kisses her on the lips.

JOSEPH

She's with all of us now..... and her husband James...
(looking around.)
And your father... and your wife...and your son.

A long silence. The Doctor looks around at his many followers, nodding, letting them drink this in.

Sobs. Someone crying.

JOSEPH
No! Do not cry! Don't!
(gently)
Celebrate. She's safe.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Stunned silence. The guests look at each other. David quietly gets up and shuts off the television.

He has tears in his eyes as he turns around.

DAVID
This is what it's about.

GINA
We did NOT just watch somebody die.

BEN
Yeah. Wow. That was real?

EDEN
Of course it was. She wanted to
show people...

GINA
That's fucked up.

EDEN
(continuing)
She wanted to be brave for people.
She was very sick.

AMANDA
With what? She barely looked
twenty.

EDEN
Cancer.

BEN
Look, I get it... if you gotta go
at 20, it's not a bad way.
Surrounded by people who love you.

AMANDA
On video? Jesus.

SADIE
It's beautiful.

MIGUEL

She looked at peace to me. I
just...

Will finally speaks.

WILL

David, I don't understand why you'd
show us something like this.

Silence. David looks at Will, a curious disappointment on his
face. He moves over and briskly starts to unhook the video.

DAVID

Maybe this isn't being taken the
way we meant it.

KIRA

This is a lot to take in, David.
It's a pretty heavy thing to drop
on us.

EDEN

That's the thing. For us it isn't.

PRUITT

It's okay. Most people don't get
it. The point isn't that she died,
it's about communion.

DAVID

All we're trying to show you guys
is that there's another way to look
at this. That...

He takes a breath.

DAVID

My pain had turned me into a
cliche. I was a drunk, out of
control *record producer*, for god's
sake. I was a slave to my own
grief. Doctor Joseph freed me from
that. He's showed me that life
should be a celebration.

CLAIRE

That's... hard to see in what you
showed us.

DAVID

The Invitation is really just about
free will. We can *choose* to be
happy in this life.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

We can choose our own terms. Our brief time here is somewhat arbitrary. Why not shape it yourself?

PRUITT

Amen, brother.

David looks around.

DAVID

We've all been through horrible things, but those things don't have to define us. We can *choose* how to feel.

(pause, careful)

Look, what happened to Eden and Will is...

WILL

Don't. Just don't.

EDEN

Finding this saved my life.

She looks at Will. She maintains eye contact with him as she speaks.

EDEN

I almost died. After. I almost couldn't keep living. You know that, Will. But now I'm great. We thought we had so much, but...

(pause)

We had nothing. We had nothing at all. We were like zombies, terrified all the time. Drunk all the time. Scared of losing what we had. Trying to succeed and fit in. None of that is real. It's not who we are. The spirit is all that matters. I have hope now. I believe in something now. I can finally get through a day. And if anyone wants to take that away from me... If they want to tell me that's not okay... If...

She doesn't finish. Silence.

WILL

I know.

DAVID
We're all lost. We can agree on
that, right? We're all just
wandering.

David stands up, eyes wet.

DAVID
It's all just too big, too big for
any of us alone.

He trails off. No one says anything. There is long and silent
moment, stretching on.

THE DOORBELL RINGS.

The sound startles people. The spell is broken. As David
finally moves toward the door, the bell rings again.

DAVID
Well.

David heads to the door.

GINA
That better be Choi.

WILL
Yeah...

GINA
He's just a complete space cadet.
Which is what I've always liked
about him, in a way...

Will listens, nodding, but is obviously distracted--

WILL'S POV

We creep slowly toward the door. David has opened it only a
foot or so. He talks to people we can't see.

From this distance, it's hard to make out what they're
saying. We can only hear mumbling. Will can't see the people
outside.

NEAR WILL

We realize that Gina has been talking the whole time. Will is
just watching the door.

GINA
 ... which is why I'm saying sorry
 we haven't been around so much.

WILL
 It's all right.

GINA
 We just have to make a better
 effort. That's on us.

IN THE FOYER, David glances back into the house, then closes the door. Very faint laughter can be heard outside for a moment.

ON WILL

Will looks down. His FIST IS CLENCHED. He is just now noticing it. It happened unconsciously.

GINA
 You haven't heard a word I said,
 have you?

WILL
 Sorry, I...

David, coming back toward them, catches Will's eye.

DAVID
 Couple people looking for a party.
 On foot.

GINA
 Good luck. They'll die of
 dehydration.

David moves on, looking back at Will again. A curious look.

GINA
 We can talk later, Will. I just
 wanted you to know I've been
 thinking about you.

WILL
 Thanks. I know. I miss you.
 (pause)
 Gina...

But she is already heading back into the party. Will sits down on the shallow steps that lead into the living room.

For a moment, he watches Kira, across the room, as she laughs at someone's joke.

Miguel breezes by behind him, carrying a plate of appetizers over to the table. Miguel gestures to the door with his head.

MIGUEL
No Choi?

WILL
Nope.

Will thinks for a second. He pulls Miguel down to his level, producing the pill he took from Eden's bedroom.

WILL
Hey Miguel. Can you tell what this is?

MIGUEL
It... is a *pill*, Will.

WILL
Seriously. I found a bunch of it downstairs... unlabeled.

MIGUEL
Will...

WILL
Come on, just look at it.

MIGUEL
(sighs)
This is crazy...

He looks at the pill, the markings.

MIGUEL
Phenobarbital, I think.

WILL
Is that dangerous?

MIGUEL
Anything's dangerous if you take too much. It's a barbiturate. They use them for seizures, anxiety, insomnia sometimes... I mean, there's better stuff now, but it's not so unusual to find it... if you're rifling through someone's medicine cabinet.

A voice.

TOMMY (O.S.)
Break up your little clique and
come talk to us.

They get up and walk across the room to where Tommy is
speaking with David and Pruitt.

WILL
(under his breath)
Let's just drop it.

MIGUEL
Okay, snoopy.

Miguel slides his arm around Tommy. Will nods to the group.

DAVID
What's happening, boys?

WILL
Not much new to report. Good wine.

MIGUEL
Will thinks you guys are on pills.

Will shoots him a look. A pause. Miguel waves his hand around
dismissively.

MIGUEL
Figuratively.

WILL
No. I...

PRUITT
I'm going to get a drink.

A brief glance to David. He heads to the kitchen.

WILL
I just meant that...

DAVID
You think we're crazy.

WILL
No. Not at all.
(to Miguel)
Why?

Miguel shrugs.

MIGUEL
No comprendo ingles.

DAVID

It's okay. I'm not offended. A lot of people think we're crazy.

(he smiles)

I doubt they are as happy as we are.

He shows his empty glass and heads to the kitchen.

WILL

Thank you.

MIGUEL

De nada.

WILL

Am I alone here? This is odd, isn't it?

TOMMY

No, it's just a nice reunion of old pals and a couple of totally random weirdos.

MIGUEL

They are a little Mansony.

TOMMY

Mansonian?

MIGUEL

And what about that skinny little freak of the week chick? I'm getting a real oft-molested vibe from her.

TOMMY

Totally!

WILL

I'm not kidding.

From his vantage point he can see David talking to Pruitt in the kitchen. It's hard to tell if the conversation is heated or just animated.

Tommy puts his arm around Will's shoulder.

TOMMY

Will, calm yourself. They're definitely weird, but, come on, this is L.A. They're harmless.

WILL

They don't seem right to me.

MIGUEL

Please. Everybody's just trying to get by. Give them a break. Let's go steal some more of their wine.

TOMMY

That I can get behind.

David comes back out of the kitchen and gets everyone's attention.

DAVID

Hey, guys? Listen... I didn't mean to... I mean, I'm aware that you might have found the video difficult, or off-putting, and I apologize.

Gina calls out.

GINA

It's cool.

DAVID

The last thing I want you guys to think is that I'm trying to force my ideas on you. It's just I want you to know me. It's an important part of me I want to share.

(pause)

So, look. I had an idea.

He looks around.

DAVID

There was a game we played in Mexico at the end of group. I think we should try it.

SADIE

Oh, yeah!

CLAIRE

What kind of game are we talking about?

AMANDA

I'm not big on games.

MIGUEL

Booooo.

DAVID

(smiling)

It's actually kind of fun. And it'll give you more of a sense of what we learned. It's very freeing...

TOMMY

Cult alert.

Eden wags a finger at him. Tommy shrugs.

DAVID

...and on a night like this, I think it's perfectly appropriate.

GINA

Please explain. We'll be good.

DAVID

It's kind of like that game we played in college, "I never."

This gets a big reaction from the group. Cheers, whistles, groans.

BEN

I always lose that one.

GINA

(provocative)

I don't.

DAVID

Except... this time, it's "I want." We take turns, and everybody says what they want...

TOMMY

I want to hear what Gina did in college.

MIGUEL

You mean, *who* she did?

DAVID

The point is to be honest, to admit our desires, or loves, or goals, or... anything. Because anything is possible...once we strip away embarrassment, the social constraints, the negative emotions...

Ben glances at Will, rolling his eyes. David notices this, but if he's irked he doesn't show it.

DAVID

It's a shame that we have to force ourselves to admit that we want more... emotionally, spiritually, even materially.

(looking around)

That's what this game is about. Okay? Everybody have a seat.

Ben shrugs his shoulders and sits right down. Slowly, the others follow, taking seats in a ragged circle, on chairs, the couch, the floor.

SADIE

I'll go first.

DAVID

Wonderful.

Sadie stands up, takes a breath.

SADIE

Okay. I want....

She smiles at all the faces watching her.

SADIE

To tell you, Eden and David... and Will, and Kira, and Miguel, and Tommy...

Laughter as she tries to get through them all.

AMANDA

Pack a lunch...

SADIE

(laughing with them)

...and Amanda. There's so many. Ben, Pruitt. I want to tell you all that I love you.

(pause)

I haven't known most of you for that long, but right now, tonight, I feel love. I do. And most people don't say that. They're afraid.

(pause)

So... I love you.

Sadie looks around at everyone, taking them in. Quickly she leans down and kisses the person nearest to her: Amanda.

AMANDA
Wow. Hi there.

GINA
(loudly)
I want...

She lets it settle.

GINA
... some of that coke you used to
do.

DAVID
Done.

He walks behind the bar.

DAVID
I think I still have some.

GINA
No, David. Don't. I was kidding.

DAVID
(smiling)
No you weren't. But that's okay.
That's what the game is about.

A long pause.

GINA
Okay, I wasn't kidding.
(over laughter)
Bust that shit out.

David tosses her a baggie full of coke.

TOMMY
I like this game.

As Gina starts to cut the cocaine, Pruitt stands.

PRUITT
I want... to tell you about my
wife. Margaret.

People nod. The room has warmed up.

PRUITT
We were married 8 years, would've
been 15 next month. She was a
painter. Oils.
(MORE)

PRUITT (CONT'D)

I first saw her work at this artists' retreat in Minneapolis. I was in love with her before I met her. These abstract, energetic landscapes... And then I saw her.

(laughing)

It was like I hit the jackpot. Wow. She had the most generous spirit I'd ever seen. And she was just as bright and gorgeous... as the morning.

GINA

That's so sweet.

PRUITT

(continuing)

When you'd really surprise her, she had this laugh, this joyous, guttural rumble that came from way down deep... You knew you had done something good.

(pause)

She was all light.

He looks to Eden, to Sadie. A sad smile.

PRUITT

During times like this, nights like this night, I think of her quite a bit.

MIGUEL

(tentative)

Did she...pass away?

Pruitt considers this for a long moment, as if deciding how to respond. He looks around the room, eventually landing on David. A pause.

Finally, Pruitt takes a long breath.

PRUITT

We had been drinking. *I* had been drinking. We had just come home from a dinner. We were in the kitchen... and we fell into one of our arguments. One of those stupid little fights that last your whole marriage...

Tommy nudges Miguel.

PRUITT

I think it was about the dishes.

A pause.

PRUITT

One of us started yelling. I don't remember who. I tried to pour myself another drink. She reached over to stop me... and something just gave.

(pause)

I turned, and hit her as hard as I could.

Silence. No one can speak. Pruitt speaks quietly, very carefully. There are tears in his eyes.

PRUITT

Her knees gave, and she hit her head on the counter. I think she was trying to get back up. You know, she had her hand out, and she was staring up at me....but then she just collapsed. And then...she was gone.

AMANDA

Jesus Christ! Is this a joke? You murdered your wife?

GINA

What the fuck?

PRUITT

I'm *confessing* to you. It's important that I tell you this, so you know how I was saved. How far I've come with the Invitation.

WILL

What are we supposed to say to that?

PRUITT

Nothing. I made a terrible, terrible mistake. It was 7 years ago. I went to prison, I paid that way. But I was still the same person. I have spent all of this time addressing that rage. That nameless thing. Changing it.

(MORE)

PRUITT (CONT'D)

And finally, through committing to the Invitation, and looking only ahead, destroying that horrible part of me that led to that moment. I'm cured.

(pause)

I miss her. Not a day goes by that I don't think of her.

(pause)

But... I don't grieve. And I don't feel guilty anymore. I've chosen to let it go... those emotions are useless. Because... I know I'll be seeing her again soon. That's my point. I'm free to forgive myself. And so are you. It's a beautiful thing. It truly is.

An silent, awkward moment.

BEN

Fuck me...

AMANDA

I'm sorry, but that's just..

She gets up for a drink.

CLAIRE

It's just a weird thing to say at a party. Pretty... intense.

AMANDA

...I don't know what it is. But stay away from me.

PRUITT

I apologize. I didn't mean to offend. I want to be honest, because I want you to trust me. I want you to see who I am, and that means you need to know who I was.

David lays a hand on Pruitt, whispers something comforting to him. Then he turns to the group.

DAVID

What's more honorable? Facing the truth or hiding it to be acceptable? People change.

No one seems able to respond. Finally, Eden tries to break the tension, trying like a good host to save the moment.

EDEN

I want...

CLAIRE

Are we really going to keep doing this?

EDEN

I want...

GINA

This better be good.

EDEN

... to kiss Ben.
(looking at him)
I always have.

This seems to subtly settle them... a tacit agreement to continue.

MIGUEL

Sweet.

Ben laughs. He looks to David, who seems thrilled with the idea. He looks over at Amanda. She waves her arm--

AMANDA

Why the hell not?

Ben stands, beckons Eden toward him.

BEN

Bring it, sister.

Gina whistles. Eden smiles and approaches Ben.

MIGUEL

I want to kiss him.

BEN

Sorry, one per party.

MIGUEL

It's alright. I know where you live...

AMANDA

Yeah, with me.

Eden leans in. Ben meets her with a quick, friendly kiss. As he pulls back--

EDEN

No...

She puts a hand on the back of his neck and pulls him in for a long deep kiss. Slowly, she ends it, pulling away softly.

EDEN

There.

KIRA

Jeez...

AMANDA

I don't know if I approved that.

TOMMY

Okay, I want a blow job. From
somebody.

Laughter.

TOMMY

I'm not joking.

Miguel hits him on the shoulder. The laughter continues, but charged now.

Claire stands up, interrupting. She looks uncomfortable. An awkward silence as she looks at them.

CLAIRE

I have to go.

DAVID

Claire... don't. It's all right.
We're just having fun.

CLAIRE

This... this all is making me a
little uncomfortable. I'm sorry.

DAVID

Just have a seat, let me get you a
drink, we'll do something else...

CLAIRE

No, I don't want to spoil anyone's
fun. This just isn't my thing.

DAVID

Claire, please...

WILL
Just let her go, David. Why can't
she just leave?

David looks at him strangely, a little surprised by Will's
tone.

DAVID
Will, I just want her to stay and
have a good time. Eden has planned
this for a long time and it would
just be really disappointing if...

WILL
Just let her do what she wants.

CLAIRE
I'm going to leave.

She now seems genuinely upset.

A long moment. David smiles at her, a glimpse of something,
his mind working. He takes her by the shoulders.

DAVID
Of course. It's all right. I hope
you feel better.

CLAIRE
Thanks.

David reaches into his pocket. He looks directly at Will,
holding out the keys.

DAVID
You want to do the honors?

Someone laughs.

WILL
I'm good.

As David goes to the door, unlocking it, Claire hugs Eden.

EDEN
Are you sure? Why don't you just...

CLAIRE
I'll see you soon, okay? I'm really
sorry.

EDEN
Okay, Claire. Goodbye, goodbye.

Eden seems reluctant to let go.

DAVID

Okay Eden.

Claire breaks away and goes to Will, hugging him.

WILL

You want me to walk you out?

CLAIRE

It's like forty feet, Will.

Back with the others, Pruitt remembers something, snapping his fingers.

PRUITT

Oh, shit. I'm parked behind you,
Claire. I'll have to move the car.

He gets up and makes his way to the door, joining David there. Claire picks up her jacket, and waves goodbye. Pruitt trailing behind her, out the door.

DAVID

So. Who needs a drink?

TOMMY

Tommy does.

Kira sees Will going to the window.

KIRA

Hey, Will, come over here and talk
to me.

WILL

I'll be there in one second.

Will stays at the window, watching. He sees the headlights bob as Pruitt pulls his car out and backs it up the street just out of sight.

Conversation continues behind him, but Will stays at the window, doesn't move.

DAVID (O.S.)

Will...

Claire's car backs out, and slowly starts down the street. Will lets out his breath quietly.

DAVID (O.S.)

Will.

And then her BRAKE LIGHTS GO ON. The car stops just out of Will's sight, the rest of the car obscured behind foliage.

Pruitt jogs after her. Waving.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

Will cranes his neck, trying to see better.

Pruitt leans casually into the driver's side of the Claire's car. It is very hard to see what is going on through the foliage, just Pruitt's legs, one arm, the car lights.

DAVID

Will. Come on.

Will looks at David's hand on the shoulder.

DAVID

Can you and I talk alone for a minute? It's important.

Will looks back out the window. The conversation continues. Another car passes by slowly, lights moving up the street.

WILL

Sure.

They walk across the room, away from the others, David motioning him into a chair. David chooses his words carefully.

DAVID

I know you aren't into this, but I'm worried about you. There's a reason you're here. It's very important to Eden, but it's important to me too. We chose you because you matter to us.

WILL

You chose...

DAVID

You've been acting very suspicious of our hospitality, you know. And frankly, it upsets me a little. I lock the door so we can have some peace of mind, and you have a fit about it. My friend needs to move a car, for God's sake, and you stand at the window like you're going to catch him stealing something.

(pause)

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

You're scaring Eden a little bit,
Will. You seem very distant.
Very... just off somehow.

WILL

I'm sorry you feel that way.
Maybe... I wasn't prepared to be
here.

DAVID

Okay. Okay, I really appreciate
that honesty.

David sits down in the chair next to him.

DAVID

I know you must... You must feel
like you have to look out. I know,
because that's how I felt. That the
world is unsafe, and chaotic. If it
happened before, why shouldn't...

WILL

David, please. *Please.*

(pause)

I don't pretend to know what you
went through. And you don't know
me. You can't.

David nods, holding Will's stare. The keys rattle in the
front door. Pruitt comes back in.

PRUITT

Tried to convince Claire to stay. I
felt... bad about scaring her. My
story. She understood.

He smiles at them and quickly heads off up the stairs.

PRUITT

David, can I borrow a jacket or
something? Kind of chilly.

DAVID

Whatever you need.

Will watches him go. Pruitt has his arms folded across his
chest as if he's cold. He turns the corner and is gone.

EDEN (O.S.)

Everyone...

Will turns to see that Eden holds a beautiful silver tray,
piled with perfect-looking lamb.

A feast.

EDEN
Dinner is served.

We close in on Will, and we begin a

MONTAGE

IN THE HALLWAY

We creep through a darkened part of the house, inexorably. Voices are audible ahead. We are peering into rooms, into half-opened doors, drifting, moving on toward the light and sound.

IN THE DINING ROOM

We watch from above, the conversations in the warm pool of light of the dinner table.

A droning sound, insistent, begins.

AT THE TABLE

We wash in and out of conversations, the night getting into its groove, food passed back and forth, laughter.

TOMMY
Penguins are overrated animals.

AMANDA
(laughing)
Overrated?

TOMMY
Yeah, I think they're cocky.
Everyone thinks they're just
adorable and they...

MIGUEL
Oh, god...

TOMMY
They just know it. They're haughty.

BEN
They do kind of lord it over you.

Will laughs, too, but is still having a hard time. Trying to connect, but a step behind. We are deeply in his point of view.

There is something about the way people are tearing at their meat, something primal.

There is something mechanical about the conversations, the seams and gaps revealed.

There is something grotesque about all of it.

Will looks across to Ben, watches as, laughing, he tips back him wine glass, raising his eyebrows

A FLASH

Remembering, the same gesture, Ben lighter, younger. So much has changed.

AT THE TABLE

We wash back into the conversation, more wine has come out, more drugs.

TOMMY

I think generally it's pretty simple how to act in this life. Do unto others.

DAVID

(smiling)

I think we can agree to that.

AMANDA

No. I don't agree. There are absolutes. And people need guidance. I know it isn't a popular thing to say, but it's true. They do.

BEN

I love when you tell me what to do. I like the clarity.

AMANDA

There are people who *do* know best. And there are people who should be told what to do. Deal with it, you know?

KIRA

I just don't think we get to decide for anybody else.

Will looks to Kira, the way she moves her hands.

A FLASH - THE PAST - SOMEWHERE ELSE

The same gesture. She looks at him expectant, open.

AT THE TABLE

Her expression very different. Darker.

IN THE HALLWAY

We move closer and closer to the sounds of the conversation. We creep toward it, like an animal, curious, approaching a campfire.

AT THE TABLE

Will sees Gina, looking at the empty seat where Choi should be.

Kira puts down her glass, looking intently into it for a moment, then up at the table.

KIRA

All these big ideas that people
kill and die for are meaningless.
All these ideals and... beliefs. It
isn't worth it. It comes down to
the people in front of you.

DAVID

But you can't deny that sometimes
the greater good calls for things
that, in the short term seem...

KIRA

I don't believe in that any more,
David. I don't.

EDEN

If we don't think there's anything
bigger than just what's in front of
us, what's the point then? What's
all of this for?

We close in on Will's face.

A SHOT OF THE BACKYARD

In the daytime, a child's birthday party. Adults talking. Ty, his son, and another boy, a little bit older are playing, roughhousing a little bit.

AT THE TABLE

The droning sound is louder and louder.

The people around him seemingly slower and faster, all at once. He looks to Kira-- the only one who seems real.

She is not looking at him. He watches her. He says her name. She doesn't hear him, doesn't look over at him. She looks closed to him. Like a person he doesn't know.

THE BACKYARD

Will runs. Pushing through people.

The older boy is crying. He holds an aluminum baseball bat.

WILL

What did you do? What did you do?

Eden is on her knees in front of them. She screams.

AT THE TABLE

Will's face. The sound of the conversation rises into a cacophony.

CUT TO:

SILENCE

Will sits in the hallway, as if startled to be there. He looks back-- people are clearing plates from the table.

Off to himself, he rubs his palms into his eyes, trying to get himself back together.

He hears something. Water running in the bathroom. He gets up, drawn toward the sound.

INT. HALLWAY

Will stands a few steps away from the bathroom. The door is open a crack. Through it, he can see Sadie standing in front of the mirror, leaning forward.

He can't quite make out what she is doing. He moves a little closer.

Sadie is making faces at herself in the mirror. Horrible, twisted expressions, eyes and mouth wide open, screaming without sound. She stops. Looks at her reflection. Makes another face. A sort of game.

Will watches, fascinated, disturbed. Finally, he turns away... just as she turns slowly to see him.

Will walks down the hall. Behind him, we see Sadie staring at him.

She follows him.

EXT. DECK

Will comes out onto the deck, looking out. He pulls out his phone, watches its display for a moment, moves it around. Still no service.

Behind him, Sadie steps out onto the deck.

SADIE

So things aren't great with Kira,
huh?

He laughs, surprised.

WILL

I don't... why would you say that?

SADIE

It just seems like that to me. It
seems like she's real distant.

WILL

Anything like that isn't her fault.

Sadie nods.

SADIE

Should we go back inside?

She smiles, enjoying whatever she's toying with in her mind.

WILL

I'm gonna try to make a call. I'll
see you in there.

SADIE

Oh, good luck. There's no service
up here.

She moves closer to him.

SADIE

I could hang with you.

Abruptly, she leans toward him. Puts the palm of her hand on the inside of his thigh. She whispers.

SADIE

You can fuck me right here.

Will looks at her as if he's unsure he's actually heard this.

WILL

What?

SADIE

Nobody will care. We're not like that. It's just life. Why should we deny that ever? Especially not tonight.

As she speaks, she is absently brushing her fingertips across the thin fabric of her skirt.

SADIE

That's the way we were in Mexico, man. It was awesome. People were just going for it.

WILL

I think we should go inside.

She leans forward, lips opening. It is an electric moment. She gets close to his lips, and it looks for a moment like he is going to give in. He holds her by the shoulders.

SADIE

You don't like me?

WILL

I don't know you.

SADIE

I can make you like me so much. I can make you *beg* me. I can do it without even touching you. Just...

She slides her hand down toward his crotch, leaning forward toward his ear.

SADIE

... with my voice... with my breath...

WILL

Sadie.

SADIE

You can hurt me if you want...

WILL

I don't want to do that.

She smiles.

SADIE

I don't believe you.

She goes in. He leans out over the balcony, taking a breath, steadying himself.

EXT. DECK

A RUSTLING NOISE below. Will looks over the rail. It is nothing but darkness.

A shape rises behind him.

It's Tommy. Will, surprised, recoils.

TOMMY

What are you doing out here?

WILL

I just needed a break.

TOMMY

From what?

Will makes an indistinct gesture with his hand.

TOMMY

Not following...

WILL

Tommy, there's something wrong here. Something really weird is happening.

TOMMY

No, Will. You're wrong. And I know what you're going to say. But listen-- Claire went home because the poor girl is sexually awkward. Choi is fucking one of his many side girls and lost track of time. And David and Eden... they're just blissed out on their new thing.

(pause)

It's not weird. It's *life*.

WILL

It doesn't feel safe here.

Tommy takes a breath.

TOMMY

Then go home.

Will doesn't respond. Tommy tries, but is incapable of indulging Will any more.

TOMMY

I'm sorry, Will. But enough is enough. You know very well why things feel unsafe to you. We all do.

He lets this sink in.

TOMMY

Look. I love you.

(smiles)

More than Miguel, even... But stop acting so fucking weird. It's freaking people out.

WILL

What do you want me to do?

TOMMY

I want you to start living.

Will nods. He gives Tommy a reluctant smile.

WILL

Okay.

TOMMY

You're safe now.

Tommy gives him a hug and walks back inside, leaving Will alone.

Will takes a moment, breathes.

WILL

Okay.

Loudly, startlingly, his phone CHIRPS.

He looks at it-- the most tenuous of signals. One new message. He presses the button.

We hear the rustling sound again, from below. Will listens to the message.

CHOI (O.S.)

Will. Choi. What's up? Listen, it's about 7 and I'm just pulling up to Eden's house. I forgot to pick up dessert like I said I would, and I can't get ahold of Gina. Could you get some on your way? I know I'm early, but honestly, dude, I don't want to go back down the hill and look for a fuckin' patisserie. Hope you get this. See you here in a few, I guess. I'm going in.

Will hangs up the phone. He looks stunned, frightened.

Choi was there.

Slowly, Will walks back inside, toward the dining room.

INT. DINING ROOM

Will enters. Seeing him, Gina smiles.

GINA

There you are!

Kira pats the seat next to her. Will sits back down, his mind racing. David and Eden are nowhere to be seen. He looks to Tommy, trying to get his attention.

Suddenly, the LIGHTS in the house snap off. DARKNESS.

A long pause. Then...

DAVID & EDEN (O.S.)

Happy birthday to you...

David and Eden enter with a birthday cake, complete with candles. The flickering light distorts their smiling faces.

DAVID & EDEN

...happy birthday to you...

MIGUEL

It's not for a week.

EDEN

(kissing him)

It's close enough.

Eden continues singing. Miguel laughs, getting into it. The rest of them join in...except for Will. On his face, panic.

As Miguel is about to blow out the candles...

WILL
(too loud)
Where's Choi?

EDEN
Excuse me?

WILL
Where's Choi? Where the fuck is
Choi?

Everyone looks at Will.

GINA
What are you talking about, Will?

WILL
I just got a message from him. He
said he was here. That he got here
at seven.

KIRA
What?

WILL
He said he was here.

David is staring at Will, exchanging an anxious, quick glance
with Pruitt.

GINA
Eden, is that true?

EDEN
I haven't seen Choi tonight.

WILL
Where is he?

KIRA
Will, stop it. Please just stop it.

WILL
I got a message from him. He said
he was here. He was right outside
when he called.

DAVID
We haven't seen him, Will.

WILL
Don't lie to me. He called from
your front door!

EDEN
David's not lying. Choi never got
here.

BEN
Maybe he turned around.

TOMMY
He could've forgotten something.

WILL
Everyone is being so fucking
polite! Where is Choi?!

Now Gina is getting a bit freaked.

GINA
Eden...

EDEN
We really haven't seen him.

KIRA
Sit down, Will.

WILL
No. This isn't right. Something
very strange is going on and no one
is saying anything.

PRUITT
What do you think is happening,
Will?

WILL
Who are you? I don't get why you're
here.

Silence.

WILL
Two years. We don't see you for two
years. And then suddenly you invite
us to this lavish dinner... blissed
out, spewing all of this jargon...
(motioning to Sadie &
Pruitt)
... with these two in tow. Don't
tell me this is normal. The
Invitation?

SADIE
It's helped people.

MIGUEL
We know a lot of people who do the
Invitation.

WILL
It's a cult! A fucking cult!
(to Eden)
Our son died, and you're ignoring
it! You are just... you're trying
to make me ignore it, too. How can
you do this?

KIRA
Will!

WILL
Look at the tape. It isn't about
grief or counseling, or family.
It's about denial... and death. And
it's frightening.

PRUITT
You're out of line.

WILL
You can't deal with grief this way!
You can't let it do this to you. It
meant something when Ty died. Don't
erase... you're trying to erase
him. He was real. It was real. It
is real.

Will stands, suddenly a threatening presence. The music
continues to play into the silence, an empty echo of the good
feelings of the evening, now lost.

WILL
Please, Eden... where is Choi?

KIRA
She said she doesn't know!

GINA
Please stop this....

David raises a calming hand.

DAVID
I think this is just a big
misunderstanding.

WILL
Don't patronize me, David.

A long pause as the two square off. Will seems to gather himself.

WILL
Tell me why the doors are locked...

AMANDA
Oh, God...

WILL
Tell me why there are bars on the windows. Tell me why there's a big fucking bottle of phenobarbital stashed in your bedroom.

BEN
Jesus Christ, Will...

EDEN
Did you go through our things?

KIRA
I'm sorry. We should go.

WILL
No! Something is going on. Something dangerous, and we're all just ignoring it because David opened some good wine!

Eden pounds the table in frustration. Gina is in tears. Kira gets up and heads toward Will.

KIRA
We're going. We're going now.

And then there is A HARD KNOCK on the door. The room goes silent.

The knocking comes again, insistent.

David calmly walks to the door. He is just out of sight.

We hear the door open. Muted voices. David's and another person's.

Footsteps approach. All eyes go to the hallway.

Will follows the stares.

A GASP from someone at the table.

It's CHOI.

Sighs of relief. Kira buries her head in her hands. Ben laughs despite himself. The table looks spent, harried.

ON WILL

He looks confused, devastated. As if the known world has collapsed for him.

GINA runs to Choi's side. He is 35, fit and confident. He wears a multicolored leather racing jacket and carries a motorcycle helmet with him. He looks chastened.

CHOI

I'm so sorry. I was right here and then the garage called... It's so fucked up, but they can't do anything without me.

He smiles, surprised at how Gina is clutching him.

CHOI

You okay, baby?

MIGUEL

We're just glad you're here.

CHOI

(to Eden)

Did I miss dinner?

BEN

You missed more than that, buddy.

EDEN

We've got plenty. I'll get you something.

She heads to the kitchen. Gina escorts Choi to the table, sits him next to her. The few people who feel like speaking greet Choi quietly.

Eyes turn to Will.

AMANDA

I think you owe everyone an apology.

BEN

Thanks, honey. Cool.

CHOI

What's going on?

Will looks mortified, almost in shock. He tries to say anything.

WILL

I...
(looking up)
David.

DAVID

It's okay.

KIRA

No, it's not.

TOMMY

(under his breath)
Give him a minute.

WILL

I'm fine...

Eden enters with a plate of food for Choi.

WILL

Eden, I'm so sorry...

Will is barely able to form the words.

WILL

It's very difficult for me to be here.

EDEN

I know... it's hard for me too.
But you can't criticize us for finding our own way through this.
I've never done that to you.

WILL

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

(pause)

I'm very sorry.

Eden takes a moment to absorb this.

EDEN

Okay.

She goes over to him and kisses him.

DAVID
Will. You're part of our family.
(raises his glass)
All of you are.

EDEN
Choi. Eat.

Choi doesn't need to be asked twice. Things, for a moment, are creeping back toward normal. Tommy raises a timid hand.

TOMMY
Is there more wine?

DAVID
(smiling)
I'll open some.

MIGUEL
Hallelujia.

BEN
Something harder, maybe.

Will stands up.

WILL
Excuse me for one second.

Will leaves the table. The others watch him go.

INT. WASHROOM

Will enters a small powder room. He seems to be on the verge of a breakdown-- the tight space only magnifies his breathing.

The water is running in the sink. He leans down, splashing handful after handful of water onto his face. There's a violence to it-- as if he could wash some of this away.

INT. HALLWAY- SAME

Will opens the door, moves into the hallway. Looks down the hall toward the light and sound of his friends talking.

And quickly, Kira stands up-- he hadn't seen her, sitting back to the hallway wall. They stand, looking at each other, for a long moment.

He goes the other way, out onto the deck. She follows him.

EXT. DECK - CONTINUOUS

KIRA

Let go of it. We're with our friends. We're fine. Just breathe. It's okay.

WILL

It isn't.

KIRA

What's going on? What have you been seeing? What are you afraid of?

WILL

I've just felt... I've just wanted to run since we got here, and I don't know why.

KIRA

Let's go then. Let's just get out of here.

WILL

We can't.

KIRA

What do you mean we...

She shakes her head.

KIRA

I don't know how to do this. You can't go and you can't stay...

WILL

I'm just... Kira, I'm not okay.

He gestures to the other room, trailing off.

KIRA

These people care about you, Will. Eden wanted you here to try to break through to you. Maybe it's good this has come out. Maybe...

WILL

It isn't good. This is not good.

KIRA

You're safe here. You have to know that. You need help, Will, and...

WILL
I've had help. It doesn't work.
Nothing works.

He looks away from her for a long moment.

WILL
My son is dead. Where do I put
that?

KIRA
I don't know.

WILL
Neither do I. There's no fix for
it. It's like a scream trapped
inside of me.
(pause)
And there's no changing the fact
that I wasn't watching carefully
enough that day.

She comes closer to him, tentatively.

KIRA
You couldn't have known. You
couldn't be looking out for that,
you just can't expect that of
yourself. What happened to your son
wasn't anything that could be
predicted or changed or... it just
happened.

WILL
I can't live with that.

KIRA
I'm scared for you. I really am. I
want to help. Just let me.

WILL
I've been waiting to die since the
moment it happened.

A long moment.

KIRA
Please just let me help. We'll go
home, we'll...

WILL
I don't think you can.

KIRA

That hurts so much, Will. Every
time you say that.

(pause)

I've tried so hard. Nothing works,
but I keep trying.

WILL

I'm sorry, Kira. It's easier to be
alone.

Kira shakes her head. On her face, anger and sadness, finally
giving up. She looks very alone.

KIRA

Okay. Enough.

She starts to say something else, but can't put it together.
She leaves, gone quickly, back to her friends.

FROM FAR AWAY

We see Will leaning against the railing, looking out into the
night. It's quiet. Only the sound of a gentle wind, muted
voices of people inside.

In the distance, the whole of the L.A. basin is spread out
before him like a blanket of lights.

We notice that there's another sound. A faint rustling in the
brush. Will doesn't react. He doesn't seem to hear it.

WE MOVE DOWN SLOWLY to reveal--

Claire.

Her body is twisted, her face streaked with blood. She lies
tangled in the brush at the corner of the house. Barely
alive.

Will, on the deck, is just above her.

Claire opens her mouth, but she can't make a sound. All she
can manage is a twitch of her finger against the brush-- a
desperate attempt to be heard.

Her eyes are wide with panic. She is very near death.

ABOVE

Will composes himself. Takes a last look out.

Unable to hear Claire, he turns and walks back inside.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Will enters the dining room, Eden is cutting up the birthday cake with a long knife.

Only a few meet his glance. Choi is eating away.

GINA
(quietly)
Hi, Will.

Will nods. He looks ashamed. He turns to Eden.

WILL
Do you mind if I look at his room?

Eden glances briefly at David, then nods to Will.

EDEN
Of course.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Will walks to the door that leads to the study; the room he wouldn't go inside. Now he does.

INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

He locks the door behind him. He sinks down against the door, sitting on the floor. He closes his eyes, opens them again.

A flash: the room as it was. A child's room, in the blinding sunlight.

The same POV, the room as it is now. A tidy, well kept study. All traces of his son, erased.

Another flash: his son, sleeping.

WILL
God. Oh god. Oh god.

He puts his head in his hands.

Muffled but loud laughter can be heard from down the hall. Will looks up...

And sees DAVID WALK PAST THE WINDOW, walking along the deck.

Will gets up and goes to the window, craning his neck to look down the deck.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

We see that David is standing on the far end of the deck, looking out into the city. He has a long match, is lighting something.

It's a decorative RED LANTERN. David finishes lighting it, replaces the glass, and looks at the light for a moment, breathing in the night air.

David walks away around the other side of the house.

IN THE ROOM - CLOSE ON WILL

He turns around to look at the room. There's something feral, ashamed but determined in him.

JUMP CUTS

Will yanks out drawers, pulls papers off the meticulously organized desk, opens closets. Looking for what, he doesn't know. He is trashing the place. He is desperate.

A man possessed, he pries open a locked desk drawer, splintering the wood around the lock.

There are files, mundane and ordered, but on the shelf, carefully placed, is a DVD.

Will picks it up. He finds the player, puts it in.

ON THE VIDEO

An image of DOCTOR JOSEPH. He is very good looking, instantly compelling. He sits at a makeshift desk, in a palapa. Behind him, a lantern like the one outside. A glass of wine, in front of him. He looks very calm.

IN FRONT OF THE TELEVISION

Will turns the volume down, leaning forward to hear.

ON THE VIDEO

Joseph begins to speak. He is hypnotic. He is speaking directly to Will. To us.

JOSEPH

You are so close now. I know you have doubts. But you are special, and I know that. Stay focused, and remember the reward. This beautiful moment, the night of nights, is upon us.

There is a SUDDEN, LOUD KNOCK on the door. A voice from the hallway.

PRUITT (O.S.)
Hey, Will. You in there?

But Will is transfixed by what is on the screen.

JOSEPH
Remember that God is great, and that our pain will be sanctified, and that we will be made whole again. You are giving a wonderful and merciful gift. Each one you gather to us increases your blessing, and theirs. They'll rejoice to be with us. The hardest thing is starting, for them and for you. Just take that step, believe, and give yourself over.

The knocking, even louder now, rattling the door. Pruitt's voice is shedding any cover of the collegial. It's forceful.

PRUITT (O.S.)
Will, let's go. Everyone is waiting for you.

On screen, Joseph raises the glass. Tears stream down his cheeks, but he is smiling.

JOSEPH
I love you. I love so much my heart is breaking. I cannot wait to see you. To meet our new brothers and sisters. We'll be together soon. I'm waiting for you.

The screen goes black. The knocking is now a pounding.

Will is still transfixed. The pounding is louder and louder and we CUT TO...

EXT. HALLWAY

The door opens. Pruitt and Will stand face to face. A long moment as they look at each other. Pruitt puts a hand on his shoulder, gently but firmly.

PRUITT
Okay?

He walks Will back toward the dining room, standing behind him, hand staying on his shoulder.

Will walks in front of him, up the stairs. Pruitt seems giant to us, his hand large and powerful.

INT. THE DINING ROOM

All heads turn to see Will. The smiles are welcoming now.

Pruitt, quietly, forcefully guides Will to his seat.

Now that everyone is here, David stands to give a toast.

A piercing sound is rising...

Will is struggling. We focus on the drinks, on the crystal decanter filled with port, on the fancy glasses in front of them.

DAVID

Everyone please take each other's hands.

Slowly, a few of them comply. David raises his glass.

DAVID

We all know pain. The pain of this world. Let's transcend it together. Let's be transformed into something pure and good. I wanted... we wanted all of us to be together. Look around at who is with you. I am so glad to be with you all right now. To a better world to come. To peace.

They reach for their drinks. We watch Will.

Back and forth between Will. The drinks. Their faces. The port in its decanter, splashing out.

Eden's hand is shaking as she pours it.

The piercing sound rises and rises. Will stands up.

WILL

Don't drink it! Don't fucking touch it!

SADIE

What are you doing?

CHOI
Take it easy, man.

KIRA
Will! That's *enough!*

Will is on his feet; he lurches around the table, slapping the drinks out of people's hands. Wine spilling everywhere.

Pruitt is on his feet to stop him.

WILL
Don't drink it!

DAVID
(quietly)
This is wrong. This is wrong.

Tommy gets up as well.

TOMMY
Will. You need to calm down.

Will is writhing against Pruitt, who is restraining him.

WILL
We have to get out of here!

PRUITT
Get yourself under control.

Eden just looks at Will, heart breaking.

EDEN
Will, I'm sorry. I know it's hard.
Please just be quiet.
(to Pruitt)
Let him go. Pruitt, let him go.

Slowly, Pruitt moves away from Will.

AMANDA
Well, this is awkward.

Amanda looks at Ben, mouthing. "Get the coats?"

Eden just watches, a hand over her mouth. David takes her other hand. His intensity is strange.

DAVID
Everyone sit back down and relax.
Let's just go back to where we
were. Let's just forget about this
and have a drink.

A laugh escapes from someone at the table.

AMANDA

Great party. Wow.

David is still staring down at the table. We notice that Sadie is glaring at Will, distraught and angry.

DAVID

Just take your drink and we can move on... Let's drink together, please, and it'll be all right.

WILL

Do not drink that!

Sadie stands up abruptly.

SADIE

What did you do?! You ruined it!
You fucking ruined it!

She charges Will, clawing at him wildly, out of control. Will puts his arms up to defend himself. They collide, Will moving out of the way, lashing out at her.

She loses her balance, shrieking... *and HER HEAD SLAMS INTO A CORNER OF THE BANQUETTE WITH A SICKENING WET CRACK.*

Silence.

AMANDA

Oh my god.

Sadie is crumpled on the floor.

Miguel is the first to get to her. He bends over her, checking on her.

A long slow moment. Surreal and quiet. Kira stares at Will. So does Eden.

AMANDA

What did you do, Will?

David is slowly shaking his head. He meets eyes with Pruitt.

All other eyes are on Miguel, who gently handles Sadie, rolling her over. We focus on his efforts. Sadie's eyes are wide open, but she is unresponsive. Her mouth is silently mouthing words. Blood drips onto the floor from her temple.

MIGUEL

Call 911. Right now.

EDEN (O.S.)

It's going to be alright. It has to be alright.

DAVID (O.S.)

What are we going to do?

PRUITT (O.S.)

We knew this could happen. It doesn't change anything.

MIGUEL

I need some towels. Anything.

Miguel looks into her eyes, reaching back for a cloth napkin to stop the bleeding.

KIRA (O.S.)

She's not breathing.

MIGUEL

No, she's breathing. She's...

KIRA (O.S.)

Gina.

Miguel turns.

Gina is slumped in her chair, her empty glass on the floor next to her. Her eyes are wide open. Choi scrambles around the table.

CHOI

Gina. Baby.

Miguel leaves Sadie, moves over to Gina.

MIGUEL

What's going on?

Everyone is stunned-- frozen or backing slowly away. Kira is the first to snap out of it She helps Miguel get Gina out of the chair and onto the floor. Miguel checks her pulse and breathing, and starts CPR.

Very quietly, David starts whispering what sounds like a prayer. Pruitt joins him. He puts his hands on Will's shoulders.

PRUITT

Oh, glory to God.

LOW ANGLE ON MIGUEL

He starts to give Gina mouth-to-mouth. He breathes into her.
He starts compressions.

The room is quiet, except for the prayers.

Miguel bends forward for another breath.

And his head erupts in a gout of blood and viscera.

His body falls onto Gina.

BEHIND HIM-- David, clutching a snub-nosed pistol, smoke
curling from the barrel.

In the room, shock. An eerie moment of paralysis-- no one can
process what is happening. Even David, mouth wide open, seems
shocked at what he's done.

But then, he starts to turn the gun toward the others.

And the room erupts.

Chaos-- Will, kicking himself out of the chair, Pruitt,
shouting something strangled and triumphant.

Tommy charges at David.

A HORRIFYING SHRIEK.

Sadie, blood smeared across her temple, mouth an inhuman
gash, meets Tommy mid-stride. She has a knife from the table.
She SLASHES him across the chest, blood spurting out of a
deep gash.

Tommy falls over a chair. Sadie slips on Miguel's blood and
clatters to the floor.

Now everyone is screaming.

Ben is running toward the door. Will shouts.

WILL
Ben! It's locked!

Pruitt rushes after him, David behind him, knocking chairs
over.

PRUITT
Oh! Oh.

David shouts something guttural, unintelligible. Pruitt drags
Ben to the floor.

ON KIRA

Watching this in horror. Her hands in front of her, palms up, defensively.

Will's hand on her arm. They meet eyes.

She is in shock.

WILL

Kira!

And they run, Will pushing her in front of him, stumbling toward the stairs. It's the only place they can go.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Sadie has pushed Miguel's body aside. She is astride Gina, stabbing her, feverish. Gina's legs kick out spasmodically under her.

INT. STAIRWELL

Kira bounds up the stairs, Will just behind her, hand on her back, pushing her. Kira reaches the top, reaches back for him.

TOP OF THE STAIRS

The hallway runs in both directions. Will motions to the right, a door at the end of the hall.

WILL

Down there.

As Kira heads toward the door, Will glances back down the stairs.

BEHIND THEM, BELOW-- Pruitt, knees pinning Ben to the floor, takes the gun away from David, and points it at Ben's writhing form.

He FIRES.

Will runs down the hallway to Kira, the door. Her voice is a garbled cry.

KIRA

It's locked.

As he tries to force the door with his shoulder, hurried FOOTSTEPS can be heard on the stairs.

It's Amanda. Not seeing Will and Kira, she turns to the left, running toward another door at the other end of the hallway. It's also locked.

KIRA

Amanda!

Amanda, hyperventilating, doesn't seem to hear her. She desperately rattles the door, whimpering to herself. It won't open. She sinks against the door, shutting down.

KIRA

Amanda! Come here!

A CRASH. Will has forced their door open. The sound seems to startle Amanda back to her senses. Eyes wide, she scrambles to her feet.

KIRA

Amanda!

Amanda runs toward them.

As she passes the stairs, a shape, a person, Sadie, shrieking, SLAMS INTO HER.

The two bounce against the wall, land tangled on the carpet.

Sadie, still shrieking, slashes with the knife. Amanda bats with her hands, arms flailing, trying to protect herself, but Sadie is possessed, and too fast.

She plunges the knife into Amanda's throat. Blood fountains across the wall.

Will steps toward her, an instinct, to help her, but it's too late. And Kira is pulling him back through the door, closing it.

Through the closing door, a sliver of Sadie, continuing to rip at Amanda.

Then darkness.

IN THE ROOM

Utter darkness. The sounds of the horror in the hallway.

WILL (O.S.)

Try to find a light, Kira...

KIRA (O.S.)

...I'm trying. Oh God...

WILL (O.S.)

Kira.

The sound of them fumbling for a light. They are just black shapes against a deeper blackness to us. They find none.

Groaning with the strain, Will pulls a heavy, bulky shape, maybe a dresser, away from the wall and in front of the door, barricading it.

WILL (O.S.)

Stay still. Just stay... I'll find you.

A THUMP, right behind him, the door slamming against the barricade. An incoherent screaming, guttural, animal, outside the door. It must be Sadie.

KIRA (O.S.)

...the light.

The lights come on. The room, what used to be a bedroom, is filled with 13 MAROON SHROUDS, arrayed carefully around a low table with a number of objects on it. An altar. A shrine.

KIRA

Oh God.

From outside, a different sound. Sadie scratching, clawing at the door. A lower moaning.

Will goes to the window, trying to find a release for the bars that block their exit.

BELOW HIM, a crashing sound of shattered glass.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

We see Choi down below. He's thrown a chair through a locked plate glass door. Injured, panicked, he limps hurriedly across the floodlit backyard.

David emerges, chasing after the fleeing Choi, dragging him down from behind.

Instantly top of him, David stabs Choi repeatedly. The sound is sickening.

Pruitt appears, walking quickly up to them.

Choi is saying something, desperate, but we can't hear what it is.

Pruitt fires into Choi's head.

WILL (O.S.)

No.

BACK IN THE HOUSE

Kira clutches Will from behind, burying her head in his back.

KIRA

(muffled)

Why is this happening?

Will is still looking out the window.

WILL

Kira....

DOWN BELOW

David and Pruitt are standing over Choi's body.

They are looking right up at Will.

Will ducks away from the window, pulling Kira down with him.

WILL

We have to get out of here. We...

KIRA

Will...

WILL

I'm sorry. I'm sorry I brought you here.

KIRA

It's...

She has no more words. The next conversation is rushed, jumbled.

WILL

We can't just wait here. For them to come. He has a gun...

KIRA

How do we get out?

WILL

I don't know. Maybe the back door?

KIRA

We can't get there. It's past them.

Will holds her head in his hands.

WILL

We have to get ready. We have to do whatever it takes. They're just people, they're just four...

KIRA

We'll fight.

They look at each other for a long time. Kira's voice is cracking.

KIRA

I'll help you. If...

WILL

I know you will.

Looking for a weapon, any weapon, Will breaks the table with several kicks. He and Kira each grasp a shattered table leg, improvised clubs.

Kira nods at Will. Her knuckles white around the club. Her knees shaky. Will pushes the dresser aside enough to get through the door. Will puts his hand on the door.

WILL

The door. Let me go first.

He breathes in a few times. With a yell, they yank open the door.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sadie is gone.

Will and Kira move forward, trying not to look at the twisted form of Amanda's body as they step around it. We see only a horrible impression, clothing soaked in blood.

They try to control their breathing as they move toward the stairs.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Will and Kira move down the stairs. They stop at the bottom, crouched against the wall. There are voices right around the corner.

He looks ahead-- the deadbolted front door. Ben's legs, splayed out. The reality hitting him again.

He peers around the corner, looking for the voices...

INT. THE DINING ROOM

David holds Eden by the shoulders, trying to calm her. She is frantic, her entire body clenched.

DAVID

It'll be quiet in a minute. We just have to...

EDEN

It wasn't supposed to be like this...

DAVID

We just have to finish. It'll be quiet then and we can rest. Just one step at a time. We have to finish it, honey, we have to finish it so we can rest.

EDEN

No, I can't...

DAVID

Yes, you can. Come help me.

EDEN

No. No.

DAVID

You have to help me. Dr. Joseph said, remember he said there would be some for whom it would be hard, some chosen. We're chosen for this.

EDEN

I know. I know.

DAVID

You can do this. We're almost there.

Outside, a horrible yelling and howling.

David goes toward it, around the corner, out of sight.

Eden remains for a second. Then she follows him.

IN THE STAIRWELL

There is a door across the room. They run to it.

Before they ever get there, it looks hopeless. Will pulls at the door, which is very thick, and obviously deadbolted.

He puts his forehead against it, speaks half to Kira, half to himself.

WILL

Look for keys. Something to open
the window. Something....

Kira goes to the long window, high up on the wall, pulling at the bars. They are solid.

Right outside is the street. No way to get there.

KIRA

We could signal someone. We could
try...

Kira leaves the window, starts desperately tearing through the cabinets that line one wall. She keeps glancing back into the house. No one is coming.

Will goes to the fireplace and takes a poker from the rack. He brings it to the window, trying to pry the bars back.

The only sound: Will grunting with effort. Kira breathing fast as she looks through the shelves and cabinets.

Kira reaches the highest shelf. There's something there.

She pulls down a box of bullets.

A box of bullets, but no gun.

KIRA

Will!

She holds the box up. His eyes widen.

WILL

Where is it?

Will goes to her, helping her look.

Kira slides to another cabinet, opening it. She glances over her shoulder, out into the house.

Now Pruitt is coming.

EDEN

Will! Will!

Pruitt holds the gun in his hand, walking toward them, unhurried.

Will grabs the fireplace poker, pushes Kira behind the couch.

Pruitt closes on them. The gun comes up. Pruitt FIRES.

CLOSE ON

Will, running to the wall, just inside the archway.

AGAINST THE WALL

Will grips the poker, waiting. He can hear the final footsteps outside the room. They stop.

Will hears heavy breathing on the other side of the doorway.

A moment. Standstill.

Pruitt comes through the doorway. Will screams, SWINGING THE POKER INTO PRUITT-- but he swings too wide, missing with the barb, hitting him across the chest.

Pruitt drops the gun, but grabs Will and wrestles him into a choke hold.

Kira runs for the gun.

Pruitt bats her into the wall. She hits her head hard and collapses into the hallway.

Will is almost able to struggle free, but Pruitt corrals him, squeezing his arm tighter around his neck. He kicks the gun out of the room.

PRUITT

Will...

Will struggles against Pruitt, trying to hit out or kick him-- but with Pruitt choking him from behind, it's useless.

Pruitt speaks in a close, feverish whisper.

PRUITT

Let go.

Will's punches lose strength as he gasps for air.

PRUITT

Just let go. We'll be there soon.

Will is about to pass out.

PRUITT

You'll thank me. I promise.

But Kira appears behind them. She smashes a bottle of wine into the side of Pruitt's face.

Pruitt reels back, releasing Will. Will falls to his knees, Pruitt falling behind him.

Pruitt tries to rise. His cheek has been ripped open by the glass. His nose, broken, shoved grotesquely to one side.

Will struggles to his feet, picks up the poker, and brings it down hard onto Pruitt-- again and again-- blood splattering against him as he furiously beats him to death.

Finally, he drops the poker, slumps over. After a few deep breaths, he looks up at Kira.

WILL

Are you okay?

She nods. They look at each other for a long, desperate moment. Grateful.

WILL

Good.

IN THE BACKGROUND, unseen to them, Eden appears, out in the living room.

She seems dazed, out of control.

She picks up the gun.

Kira sees her before Will does.

KIRA

Will!

Eden holds the gun out and FIRES, recoiling.

A pink mist of blood in the air as Will falls out of frame.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Eden looks at the gun, almost in surprise.

EDEN

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Will lies on the floor, holding the side of his neck, blood seeping through his fingers.

Kira stands up, hands forward. Eden looks at the gun, at Will, and at Kira.

Kira takes a step toward her.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Eden breathes in sharply. It's as though she's waking up from a dream.

Eden points the gun into her own chest.

She pulls the trigger. Her body folds around the gun.

Acrid blueish smoke clings to the air.

KIRA (O.S.)

Jesus. Oh, Jesus. Stop it. Stop.

Eden lies on the floor, mouth and eyes wide open. Thick blood is soaking through her dress as she puts her hand on the wound, writhing in pain.

IN THE FAMILY ROOM

Kira stands, lost. She blinks, clearing her eyes, seems to regain herself.

Kira bends over Will. He looks up at her.

Through his eyes, everything is clear now. Lucid.

We slide back and forth, his point of view, hers.

She presses her hands on top of his, his blood on her hands. She speaks very close to him, desperate.

KIRA

I need you. I need you, Will. We're not gonna die like this. When we die, when we die it's gonna be quiet.

He's alive. He's breathing, looking up at her.

WILL

You can get through this.

She nods.

WILL
You can get through this.

A voice from somewhere in the house.

DAVID (O.S.)
Eden?

WILL
You have to get the gun.

Kira scrambles toward where Eden lies, toward the revolver, out into the house.

The voice again.

DAVID (O.S.)
Eden?

Will is pushing himself up now, shouting.

WILL
She's dead, David!

The voice is close, but David can't be seen.

DAVID (O.S.)
Good. That's good. She's with them now.

WILL
We have a gun!

Kira hunched over, looking out, runs back to Will, and past him. She falls to her knees next to the couch, hands shaking, picking up the box of bullets she found.

WILL
Kira.

KIRA
It's empty.

She breaks open the cylinder, and David comes into view, out of a side room and into the living room.

He is maybe twenty feet away. He has a gun.

DAVID
It's time now. It's okay.

WILL
David! Don't do it!

He raises the gun.

Kira is still trying to get bullets into the cylinder.

And Tommy is behind David, staggering toward him, wounded, something in his hand.

But David has heard his gasping breaths. He turns toward Tommy.

Will forces himself onto his feet, lurching toward them.

Behind him, Kira fires the gun wildly.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

David cries out and collapses on top of Tommy, both sliding in the blood.

The two roll on the ground, David trying to choke Tommy, Tommy forcing his hands away.

Shoes and limbs thump violently against the walls and floor as the two of them struggle brutally. A confused, slippery mass.

Finally, Will makes it to them, pulling David off of Tommy. David has gone slack. There is a knife in his belly.

Tommy pushes himself away from the body.

Silence.

Kira comes up to them, sinking down next to Will and Tommy. We watch the three of them. They say nothing.

Finally, Will moves.

WILL

The keys.

He takes them from David's pocket.

TOMMY

Who's... who's still...?

KIRA

Sadie, I think.

Will gets up.

They follow him with their eyes as he goes to Eden, who lies curled around herself on the floor.

There is a thick smear of blood and gore behind her. She has tried to drag herself away.

Eden is lying on her back. Blood covers her dress. She looks up at Will, and manages an affectionate, melancholy smile. It is discordant. From a different time.

Will bends down next to her. There is a scorched, open wound in her chest. Nothing can be done.

WILL

Eden...

Eden gazes for a long moment into Will's eyes. There's too much to say. Tears run down her cheeks. Then...

EDEN

I miss him, Will. I miss him so much.

WILL

I miss him too.

EDEN

I believed. I just believed...

She's interrupted by a horrible, wet cough. There's not much more she can manage.

EDEN

I'm sorry.

Will takes her hand, presses it to his mouth. He shakes his head. He whispers something that sounds like *goodbye*.

EDEN

Will you take me outside?

He nods, carefully, awkwardly picking her up.

A LITTLE WAY AWAY

Kira and Tommy watch as Will struggles to pick her up.

He carries her out toward the deck.

EXT. DECK

Will carries Eden across the deck. She keeps her eyes on his. Something innocent and overwhelmed in her eyes.

He reaches the end of the deck and gently puts her down.

Eden looks up into the sky. Will sinks down beside her, holding her hand.

She's in terrible pain, but she seems relieved to be outside, grateful for the night air, this view that will be her last.

Her breathing grows labored.

EDEN

I hope. I hope we...

She lets go of his hand, turns her head to gaze out at the city. To die.

Will stands.

ON THE DECK

Tommy and Kira have followed Will outside. They raise their eyes to Will's approach. He comes to them.

Silently, the three hold each other for a moment.

There is a sound below. They see something moving in the brush.

DOWN BELOW

Sadie stumbles across the yard, clattering into the brush. She's lost her shoes. She crashes down the hill, running. Falling, and disappearing.

ON THE DECK

Kira speaks quietly, to herself.

KIRA

Why did this happen?

No one answers.

TOMMY

We have to call the cops. We have to call the cops now.

KIRA

I can't go back in there.

WILL

There are stairs on the other side. I have the keys to the gate. We'll go down that way.

TOMMY

I have to go get Miguel.

KIRA

Tommy.

She goes to him, putting her arms around him, Tommy starting to cry.

WILL

We'll meet you on the road, okay?

Tommy nods and walks back into the house, around the corner, where one streak of glistening blood on the wall is the only indication of what waits there.

On the other side of the deck, Will and Kira notice that the red light, the lantern Will saw David light, is still shining brightly, undisturbed.

Something draws Will to it. He looks at it for a moment, moving closer.

WILL

Oh my God.

AS THE CAMERA RISES BEHIND THEM, Kira sees it too.

Among the lights of the hills and city, shining brightly...

Dozens and dozens of the same red lanterns.

They are everywhere.

CLOSE ON

Will and Kira's hands, touching. Grasping each other tightly. Almost defiantly.

Sounds are now filtering up toward them. Far away sirens. Visible now are lights of police cars, of ambulances, flashing in all directions through the city. The chopping sounds of helicopters.

WILL

Stay with me. Kira, stay with me.

She nods.

KIRA

No matter what.

The wind rustles the trees. Something screams far in the distance. A man or an animal. Another.

A dog comes onto the lawn below them, a house dog with collar and tags that has gotten loose from another house.

The fur around its mouth is matted with blood. It looks up at them, curious, then warily turns and crashes off into the woods.

Still holding hands, Will and Kira walk down the steps, out of view, leaving us with the view of the city, the red lanterns, so many red lights.

The view is still quite beautiful.

FADE TO BLACK.