

under

by

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&

Mike Thompson

FADE IN

LIQUID...

Clear. Pulsating.

FRIGHTENED (O.S.)

I'm -- scared...

A needle pierces through a sea of bubbles. Glistening metal.

RUSTY (O.S.)

Nothing to fear.

FRIGHTENED (O.S.)

What if... I don't wake up?

RUSTY (O.S.)

Been putting people to sleep for  
some time. That's never happened.

A syringe inhaling silky fluid...

A patient beneath surgical lamps. A FRIGHTENED woman. Eyes  
trembling. An operating room. Her soothing anesthesiologist,  
RUSTY, readying tubes.

FRIGHTENED

I've... Got three boys.

RUSTY

And you'll see 'em in a few hours.  
Minus one gall bladder.

The faintest of smiles. He taps the syringe. RIPPLES...OF...  
OXYGEN. Injects the metal into her I.V. LINE --

WE SURGE DOWN THE TUBE -- SPINNING, TWISTING -- PLUNGING  
INTO SOFT, RED FLESH --

RUSTY

Ready for take-off? Can you count  
backward from ten for me?

FRIGHTENED

Sure, okay. Ten. Nine. Eigh...

Her VISION WARBLES... Breathing slows...

FRIGHTENED

Seve... Si...

And just like that, her WORLD GOES...

BLACK.

HOLLOW ECHOES. Distant, a million miles away.

DOCTOR (O.S.)  
...she still going after the house?

DOCTOR #2 (O.S.)  
And the beach condo. Did I mention  
she's screwing her lawyer...

OPERATING ROOM

Scalpels into flesh. Rivers of red.

A team of DOCTORS, NURSES hovering over the table. Blood, gauze, instruments. Respirator filling Frightened's lungs. Rusty studying a bank of monitors.

AN ALARM -- freezes the conversation -- a spike in her vitals -- all eyes on the brainwave monitor.

SILENCE...

Nothing. An aberration. Rusty shakes it off.

ANGLE - FRIGHTENED

Peaceful slumber. Calm. Until -- her eyes rocket open --

FRIGHTENED'S POV

Bright, unfocused glare -- A BLUR OF SCRUBS, TUBES --

SCENE

Doctors slicing and dicing, oblivious to her eyes --

The tiniest flinch in her paralyzed stare -- wide awake, is she feeling every cut?

NURSE

Doctor?

Indicating Frightened -- Rusty checks the EEG, unfazed --

RUSTY

No worries -- optic nerve spasm,  
vitals are fine.

He gently closes her eyes. Checks the bispectral monitor, injects a barbiturate. A moment and it's back to the divorce talk at hand. But...

WHAM! Her eyes pop open again.

FRIGHTENED'S POV

Clamps going in and out of her abdomen -- bloodied instruments handed to and fro -- ghastly -- and then --

THRUM! : grey-blue STREAK flashes past. Unearthly.

NEW ANGLE

Unaware, Rusty spots the open lids --

RUSTY

Dammit, got ourselves an ophthal  
reflexer --

(to Nurse)

Boric ointment, every three minutes.

The Nurse hops to, squeezes drops into Frightened's eyes --

FRIGHTENED'S POV

A DROWNING BLUR...slowly clearing...TO REVEAL...

Gnarled blood vessels spiderwebbing across grey-blue skin.  
Black eyes. A MANLY APPARITION hovering over her. Dead.

SCENE

If Frightened could scream, she would -- panic -- AN ALARM --  
vitals escalating -- eyes trembling --

RUSTY

Whoa--

NURSE

Pressure nosediving, 50 over--

DOCTOR

Jesus, she's not a reflexer -- she's  
awake --

RUSTY

That's not possible --

Obviously not seeing what Frightened sees, Rusty works the  
needles and tubes -- a frenzy of activity --

The apparition edges closer -- stalking her -- menacing --  
she trembles in paralysis -- terror --

RUSTY

Neuromuscular's already at max--

(torn)

Dammit --

Fuck it, he slams a syringe into the line -- WE THRUST INTO  
THE TUBE -- SPEEDING INTO THE BLOODSTREAM --

NEW ANGLE

The grey man is suddenly nose to nose with the patient --  
places a finger to her lips -- shhh...

She panics, attempts a cough through her breathing tube --  
paralyzed gagging -- HER VITALS SPIRE --

DOCTOR

Shit -- she's myocardial --

HEART RATE ERRATIC... Her vision WARBLES, goes BLURRY --

The doctors attempt to resuscitate --

The dead being stares at her, expectant. Presses his rotting fingernails over her eyes, closing the lids --

The EKG goes flat. The ELECTRONIC tone of death...

She's gone. SILENCE.

WE WITHDRAW... Out the window... TO REVEAL the looming facade of our hospital. New England General. A haunting clash of colonial past and inner city present...

SMASH OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. BOSTON OUTSKIRTS - DAY

Rain. Sheets spilling from grey skies...

An old Chevy pick-up cuts a path through the highway. Tarp covered flatbed full of boxes, furniture.

Inside, a pair of furry heads peer out the driver's window. Kittens. Balancing on their owner's lap as she hums to a country-western song on the radio.

Wide eyes, soft smile. CLAIRE MULLINS. A girlish mid-to-late twenties. Tired, driving all night. But the skyline in the distance brings a grin. Quickly broken by --

WHAM! The steering wheel lurches -- the truck veers -- cats go tumbling -- she brakes, navigates to the shoulder. Catches her breath, peeks into the side view. Flat tire.

She gently scoops up the kittens, staring out at the downpour. Ugh, what now?

CUT TO:

THE CLANG OF METAL

A tire iron on bolts. Claire expertly cranking. Soaked, she wipes rain from her eyes, swaps out the spare, kicks down the jack...

Tosses the tire in the back and hops into the truck. Lickety split, no sweat.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

South end, chainlink and brown lawns. Claire hoofing it up an old brick walk-up, boxes in each arm.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - DAY

One-room studio. Cracked walls, stained carpet, Bunsen burner for a kitchen. The felines watch as Claire unpacks boxes, dials the phone, MESSAGE BEEPS --

CLAIRE

Hey, it's me. Made it all the way through, no stops. Gonna take a day or two, get settled, then come see you guys, 'kay?

Hesitates. Unpacking a chipped, pottery wheel creation.

CLAIRE

'Member that pot I made in high school? Where you used to hide your birth control pills? 'Til mom knocked it over dusting?

(fond)

I still got it. Not that I've had a need for it...

Slight smile. Reflective.

CLAIRE

Anyway, yeah. Glad I'm here. Talk soon.

She hangs up. Exhales. Next item in the box. Pauses. Fingers caress it just so. Searches for just the right place. There, the rickety dresser. Sets down a picture frame.

Placed with delicate care. Middle-aged man and woman, arm in arm, country house in the background. Mom and dad.

A moment.

SMASH TO:

A HELLISH WAIL.

Groggy, Claire wakes. Fumbles for the alarm clock. She and the cats crashed out on the futon. Dark. A yawn and...

SERIES --

...Claire flossing teeth. Meticulous...

...at the coffee maker, anxiously watching every drip...

...bowl of oats for her, Meow Mix for her roommates...

...out the door to face the day...

INT. SUBWAY CAR - LATER

Empty train minus Claire and a homeless guy. She fights sleep.

EXT. NORTH END - NIGHT

Darkness. Empty streets. Claire and a tourist map. The Paul Revere house. Oddly still. Quiet.

Museum closed.

INT. 24 HOUR GYM - NIGHT

Sweating it out on a rowing machine. Just her and the guy vacuuming. What time is it?

INT./EXT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Meow Mix, aisle twelve. Claire stocking up. Not a soul in sight...

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - DAWN/DUSK

Blinding sun rises on the awakening city...

PUSHING INTO HER WINDOW as shades are pulled, Claire readies for bed. Hard day's night. Sets the alarm, lights out...

WE ADJUST BACK TO THE WINDOW -- TIME-LAPSING as day breaks and the rats begin their race: A BLUR OF HUMANITY ticking off the hours while SHADOWS LENGTHEN INTO SUNSET...

INT. LATE NIGHT DINER - NIGHT

Claire, a bowl of chili, the *New York Times*.

OWNER (O.S.)

Night owl, huh?

She glances up, guarded. Friendly OWNER type, bussing.

CLAIRE

Something like that.

OWNER

Vampire. S'what my friends call me, sleepin' all day.

CLANK

Yeah. Trying to reset my clock.  
Start the late shift tomorrow.

OWNER

Lemme guess... Workin' at the plant?

Eyeing her work boots, jeans, flannel shirt.

CLAIRE

Hospital.

OWNER

'Course, nurse? My next guess. The  
boots threw me.

She attempts a smile. Looks away.

OWNER

Well, good luck with it. Stay away  
from the garlic and wood stakes.

CLAIRE

You too.

Off he goes. She stares down at her feet. Tucks her boot  
under the booth, self-conscious.

CLIPBOARD (PRE-LAP)

Vermont, huh?

EXT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - NIGHT

Inner city graffiti painted over New England spires. A  
nervous Claire straightens her clothes. Her new shoes at  
the ready. Heads in.

CLAIRE (PRE-LAP)

That's right, I was at Saint Madeline  
Sophie.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The CLANKING of gears and cables as floors swish past. An  
anxious Claire with a CLIPBOARD-toting administrator.

CLIPBOARD

Graveyard?

CLAIRE

Uh, no. But we had our share of  
long days--

CLIPBOARD

No, ya didn't. Not like this.

O-kay... Awkward pause before the doors open into --

EMERGENCY ROOM

Chaos. Accidents, sickness, pain. Claire ogles.

CLIPBOARD

(keen)

Uh-huh. This way, Vermont.

Nonchalant, Clipboard leads her through the pandemonium, deaf to the waiting room QUESTIONS AND PLEADINGS.

CLIPBOARD

Need the rest of your start paperwork by end of shift; paychecks every other Thursday, mailed to your primary residence; I'll get you your I.D. by tomorrow; and no, you can't park in the main structure -- so don't even try it if you like your car.

Arriving at the Nurse Station, a nurse with a BEEHIVE do --

CLIPBOARD

Where's Mackey?

BEEHIVE

In three.

CLAIRE

(to Beehive)

I'm Claire -- starting today with--

BEEHIVE

(whatever)

Nice to meet you --

Beehive plows past, too busy. Claire swallows. Follows Clipboard to Trauma Three.

CLIPBOARD

Dr. M, knock knock. Got yer latest victim reporting for duty.

Curtain opens to reveal DR. COLIN MACKEY. Fifties, round face. Wears a *THIS TOO SHALL PASS* T-shirt under his coat.

MACKEY

Ah, Claire Mullins...

CLAIRE

Dr. Mackey, it's an honor to see you again.

MACKEY

Yeah? Tell that to him.

His patient on the gurney. Janet. She goes white.

MACKEY

Let's walk and talk...

He heads on -- simultaneously sterilizes his hands, changes scrubs, eats a PowerBar. A generally good-natured guy.

MACKEY

How ya feel? Ready?

CLAIRE

Yes, sir.

MACKEY

Met your cohorts yet?

CLAIRE

Just during the interviews last month.

MACKEY

Get to know 'em. Learn their strengths, doubly learn their weaknesses. Survival of the fittest is modus operandi around here, but we're all on the same team.

(re: E.R. patients)

Their team. Try not to lose sight of that.

CLAIRE

I won't.

MACKEY

Yes, you will.

(then)

FYI, I love this gig, really do. So I naturally hope the same to be true for everybody under me. I like my people to care. But. Not too much. Understand?

CLAIRE

(no)

I think so.

A NURSE stops Mackey --

NURSE

Gunshot to the leg in six, might need an ortho -- Rusty's on PM...

MACKEY

Thanks, Janet.

(to Claire)

Last thing -- tell me something about yourself. Something good.

CLAIRE

I -- well... Graduated University of Vermont with honors. As you know, got my feet wet at Saint Mad--

MACKEY

Not your resumé. Something about you. What makes you tick? What do you like to do on Sunday mornings?

She's thrown, off-guard. Thinks on it. Too long.

MACKEY

Right. Get a hobby. We all need an outlet. They forget to teach that in the honors classes. Now hit six, do anything Rusty tells you.

He throws a genuine smile, walks on. She dares --

CLAIRE

And yours? Hobby?

MACKEY

Blue Marlin fishing. Every Saturday with my one of three sons that'll actually talk to me... Break a leg, Mullins.

He tosses her a name badge: DR. CLAIRE MULLINS. A nurse she's not. She runs her fingers across it. Proud.

She exhales, searches for Trauma Six -- lost --

RUSTY (O.S.)

Claire?

The familiar young M.D. in six, Rusty Kelton. Fourth-year resident, quirky-handsome, juxtaposed Rolex and Birkenstocks.

RUSTY

Russell Kelton. We met during your interviews --

CLAIRE

Of course -- hi, hello -- so you're my senior res?

RUSTY

Had my pick of the litter ya know.  
(wink)

But since just about everyone detests me, figured I'd start fresh with someone new...

(re: patient)

Wanna finish?

Indicates -- signs of pain blood frothed -- A GARGANTHER  
sweating in agony --

CLAIRE

(nerves)

Sure.

BANGER

(pain)

Hurry it up --

RUSTY

Gunshot to the femur -- possible skeletal trauma, but no majors taken down. Waiting for surgical to diag, clean it out. 210 pounds, NKA, no PM drip yet. What's the call, doc?

She thinks. He waits. An eternity. But she digs it out --

CLAIRE

Begin with an eutectic mixture of local cream -- lidocaine and prilocaine combo -- then cover with an occlusive dressing. If the knives go in, I'd recommend a catheter with a 20cc dosage of benzodiazepine.

RUSTY

You were one of those flash card girls in med school, weren't you?

She looks away. Yes. He grins, heads out --

RUSTY

Just stick him with some morphine, call it a day. I'll check on surgical, back in two.

Leaves her alone with this beast of a man. Grunting pain.

BANGER

C'mon, bitch -- I'm dyin' here.

Phases her. She scrubs his arm, readies an I.V. needle. Anxiously searches for the vein -- finds it -- he howls, jerks away -- BLOOD SPLATTERS -- shit, she missed it --

BANGER

What the fuck?!

CLAIRE

You -- can't move, sir -- otherwise we'll have to restrain you --

BANGER

The hell you will -- get me a real  
doctor --

He rises up, lashes out -- quick, she presses down on his  
injured leg -- he shrieks, instantly quiets --

CLAIRE

Now then. Work with me. What's  
your name, sir?

BANGER

Dammit -- hurts -- Eduardo, Ed --

She searches for the vein -- finds it -- NEEDLE...  
INTO...FLESH...

CLAIRE

Alright Ed, there we go...

(re: chart)

I see you have no known allergies --

BANGER

Nah -- c'mon, please, lady --

She injects the NEEDLE INTO THE LINE -- WE FOLLOW IT, SWIRLING --  
A SEA OF GELATINOUS LIQUID -- INTO HIS EXPANSE OF BLOOD --

SCENE

His eyes instantly flutter. Pain eased. That quick.

BANGER

Oh shit.... Yeah...

His eyes close. Peace. Half-sleep. She smiles, feels  
better. One down. Until --

NURSE

(entering)

You our new anez?

CLAIRE

Yes, Claire Mullins --

Sticks out her hand. Which is met with a chart --

NURSE

Kitchen knife in one -- Doctor Sanders  
wants to stitch her, needs a local  
ASAP.

And she races out. Claire sighs:

CLAIRE

Nice to meet you, too.

the her's back in the chaos of gurneys, patients, unfa. lar  
faces. Turns into a stall to find a young woman (Ed. E).  
Bloodied hand, ghastly grimace on her face.

KNIFE

-- pain -- killin' me --

CLAIRE

Then I'm just the person you want to  
know.

She closes the curtain -- eyes catching the CORNER MIRROR  
above -- A FLEETING GLIMPSE OF BANGER waltzing through the  
E.R. crowd?!

What the?! She whips open the curtain -- searches -- can't  
find him?! Follows after --

KNIFE

Hey! Where you going?

Claire navigates the E.R. -- chaos -- is that Banger  
disappearing out the front door?!

CLAIRE

Ed?!

She bolts --

OUTSIDE

Ambulances -- weeping loved ones -- beyond, a dazed Banger  
walking -- shirtless, dragging an I.V. bag behind him --

CLAIRE

Whoa -- Eduardo!

Deaf, he vanishes into the dark street -- she races for him --

CLAIRE

I need security!

But APPROACHING AMBULANCE SIRENS mute her -- she sprints --

Banger walking in the street, a stupor -- A CAR HONKS,  
SCREECHES -- but he's oblivious, the walking dead -- continues  
into the opposite lane of traffic -- an oncoming semi-truck  
barrels toward him --

Claire runs -- screams at him --

But he continues, dazed and deaf --

The truck blitzing toward him --

Claire sprints, lunges at him -- he stumbles free -- into  
the opposite railing -- she trips, falls into the street --

The truck skids toward her -- EAR-SPLITTING STRIKE OF RUBBER --

She scrambles -- barely clears -- Jesus, catches her breath.  
Banger, beside the railing. Dead look in his eyes. Wobbly.

CLAIRE

Ed...?

No response as... He tumbles right over the rail -- she  
grabs at him -- a grip on his shirt -- the Charles River  
thirty feet below --

He's too heavy -- sliiiiipping -- his hand grapples for her --  
locks around her neck --

Their eyes meet -- evil in his gaze --

His grip suffocating her -- dragging her down over the rail --

Beyond, A BLUR -- Rusty, PARAMEDICS racing across the street --

She's losing air -- can't...hold...on...

Rusty this close --

Her muscles give in -- she tumbles over the rail --

Faaaalling...

Shattering the icy surface --

Sinking -- Banger's grasp still tight -- deeper, deeper --

Her eyes flutter, emptying of life -- WE CLOSE IN ON HER  
LIFELESS STARE --

WASHING US INTO:

MEMORIES OF HER LIFE...

WARBLED ECHOES. SURREAL, HAZY IMAGES. A PLAYGROUND, LAUGHING  
WITH AN OLDER SISTER... DECORATING A CHRISTMAS TREE WITH  
MOM AND DAD... REPAINTING THE WEATHERED FARMHOUSE... MAKING  
OUT UNDER FOOTBALL BLEACHERS... PROM NIGHT DANCING... MED  
SCHOOL CLASSES... TAKING THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH...

But then, a change... An inky grey-blue cloud -- mushrooming --

A BLITZ OF FOUL IMAGES -- HEROIN BOILED -- A NEEDLE INJECTED --  
TECHNICOLOR IMAGES KALEIDOSCOPIING -- BULLETS LOADED IN A  
CHAMBER -- A TERRIFIED WOMAN SCREAMING --

A BLAST OF WHITE, THEN BLACK. QUIET. STILL...

SMASH INTO CONSCIOUSNESS:

CRASH INTO BLACK.

Staring at us -- blue-grey veins, black eyes -- hunched over us -- fucking harrowing --

CRASH INTO BLACK. QUIET. STILL...

SMASH INTO CONSCIOUSNESS:

THE DEAD MAN --

Black teeth, grey tongue -- expectant grin as he forces our eyes shut --

CRASH INTO BLACK. QUIET. STILL...

SMASH INTO CONSCIOUSNESS:

FLICKERING BLASTS OF WHITE --

GLARE. Blinding us. An overhead light. The Dead Man gone, replaced by THE HAZE OF DOCTORS, NURSES -- WHIRS AND WHISTLES of medical machinery...

NEW ANGLE

Mackey, others frantically performing CPR on Claire. Quiet tension as he pounds her chest. Her eyes FLICKER OPEN, CLOSED -- OPEN, CLOSED --

Then, at last, a hiccup. A cough. Gasps. Vomiting water. A spastic awakening. VITAL SIGNS calm down. Eyes blink, focus. Brain processes.

MACKEY

There we go, that's what I like to see...

(to Rusty)

Brainwave?

RUSTY

EEG's clean, ox-sat never below 95.

Claire shakes out the stars. Coughing. Weak.

CLAIRE

Wha...? How...?

MACKEY

Helluva a way to try to get out of my residency, Mullins.

But her mind is elsewhere. Clearing. Instant concern.

CLAIRE

Eduardo... Is -- he okay?

A moment. Dour. Finally:

RUSTY  
He... Didn't make it.

She realizes. Rusty: sopping wet, towel around him.

CLAIRE  
You're...wet? You...?

MACKEY  
Jumped in after you, pulled you out.  
(wry)  
I, however, did the hard part. Mouth-  
to-mouth, all that.

She's touched. Abashed. And still lost in it.

CLAIRE  
I don't. Understand. He was sedated.  
And then he's waltzing out--

MACKEY  
We're running a full M.E. panel --  
see if there was anything in his  
system he wasn't disclosing.

CLAIRE  
The look. In his eyes. It was  
like...  
(a chill)  
I don't know.

MACKEY  
How many cc's of morphine you give  
him?

RUSTY  
Seventy-five.  
(off her)  
I checked the vial in the trash.  
His body weight, not an issue.

Claire looks away. Distraught. Guilt. Empty.

MACKEY  
On the surface, everything was by  
the book. Shit happens. Guy wasn't  
exactly fresh outta charm school --  
hard to say what was going on in his  
system.

CLAIRE  
(sotto)  
Yeah...

MACKY  
 Look, I hate losing one as much as you do. And I appreciate your efforts. Noble stuff. However. Don't do it again. I'm not kidding. My people put out the fires, they don't jump into them. We clear?

Stern, but not an asshole. She nods. Great first day.

MACKY

I want you to spend the night upstairs, take it easy --

CLAIRE

No, I'm fine --

MACKY

I'm not asking.

His eyes warn. She relents, nods. A paternal wink and he heads on. Leaving her with Rusty.

CLAIRE

I... What you did, Russell, I --

RUSTY

Rusty. Completely selfish. Think I want to get stuck with some understudy on my team?

She smiles. He, too.

CLAIRE

Not exactly the first day I was hoping for...

RUSTY

I left a needle in the ass of my first patient for an entire shift. But yeah, you've definitely taken the cake.

CLAIRE

Lucky me.

A stall. A tiny connection? A moment.

RUSTY

I...better go change. You get some rest.

She nods. Her gratitude apparent. Yes, a connection.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

Claire with an older nurse, LAUREL. Forties, maternal, soft eyes. Gets Claire settled into her overnight room --

LAUREL

...this one, this one and that one...

Three pills in a cup. Claire, prone in bed, studies them --

CLAIRE

Pulmozyne to clear my lungs of aspirated water. Metoclopramide to combat the acid-reflux caused by the pulmozyne. And triazolam? Why's Mackey got me on a sedative?

LAUREL

Guess he wants you to get some shut-eye instead of leaping tall buildings in a single-bound.

(then)

'Tween you and me, it's good. On it for a week once. Best sleep had before or since.

Claire smiles, likes her style.

CLAIRE

I'm Claire by the way.

LAUREL

Oh I know. Everybody knows.

CLAIRE

Great.

LAUREL

It'll all be fine, sunshine.

(handshake)

I'm Laurel. Your pain-in-the-ass 'til dawn.

CLAIRE

Nice to meet you, Laurel. Guess we'll be passing each other in the halls at three in the morning.

LAUREL

Piece of advice -- bring your own coffee. That tar in the lounge'll tear your stomach all up.

(then)

Get ya anything 'fore you start counting pink sheep?

CLAIRE  
Meh. I'm good.

And out she goes. Leaving Claire. A smile. Until...

Her eyelids GROW HEAVY...

Her VISION WARBLES...

Her HEARING REVERBERATES...

She attempts to shake it off -- but her consciousness EBBS  
AND FLOWS as the wall clock TICKS, TICKS, TICKS PAST MIDNIGHT.

DARKNESS:

BANGER --

*His hand grapples for her, locks around her neck -- a heinous  
look of evil in his gaze --*

BACK TO:

CLAIRE --

Bolting awake with a gasp. Cold sweat. Distressed. Focuses  
on the clock: FOUR A.M. Whoa.

Attempts to sit up. Clear away the cobwebs, think.  
Unbalanced feet hit the floor as she goes for her clothes...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - A FEW LATER

Peeking into the hallway -- coast is clear...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - BASEMENT HALLWAY - A FEW LATER

Elevator doors open, Claire steps out. Hung-over, unsteady.  
Attempts to focus on the brick walls. Dimly lit. Checks a  
sign, turns down the empty corridor into --

THE MORGUE

Door cracked open. Empty of life. Claire peeks in --

CLAIRE

Hello...?

SILENCE. She edges inside. Unsettling. Corpses on gurneys.  
She tiptoes to one. An ELDERLY LADY, peaceful smile.

Moves to the next. Banger. Pain carved into his face.  
Pupils exposed. Harrowing.

Her eyes fill with guilt. She gently touches his face.  
Brushes her hand over his eyelids, closing them.

She looks away. Emotion. Tough time. Glances back --

He's staring at her -- eyes wide open --

She backsteps -- WHAM! A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT -- arms  
grab her -- A MAN --

The MYOPIC Medical Examiner, medical lamp atop his head --

MYOPIC

Somebody's a little jumpy...

She fumbles for her name tag --

CLAIRE

I'm -- Dr. Mullins. He's -- a patient  
of mine.

MYOPIC

Was.

CLAIRE

Yeah. Uh. His eyes -- just opened?

MYOPIC

Least he didn't fart. Postmortem  
spasms, get it all the time

CLAIRE

(for casual)  
Of course...

MYOPIC

You alright?  
(realizes)  
Wait -- you the doc that went in  
after him?

CLAIRE

Uh, yeah...  
(deflects)  
You worked on him yet? Notice  
anything...odd?

MYOPIC

Kansas, right? That where you from?

CLAIRE

Vermont.

MYOPIC

Uh-huh.

(MORE)

## MYOPIC (CONT'D)

(re: another body)

Shot thrice in the head and stabbed  
in the chest least a dozen times.

(next)

Choked on her own vomit after shooting  
up a cocktail of H and ephedrine.

(next)

Inmate from County strangled with a  
sheet while his "colleagues" took  
turns on him.

(re: Banger)

Your guy? Not so odd.

She swallows. Plays tough. Nods.

## CLAIRE

Right. Just checking in -- wanted  
to introduce myself.

And out she goes. He stares after, curious. WE ADJUST to  
the corpse, CLOSING IN ON HIS LIFELESS EYES...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - BASEMENT HALLWAY - SAME

Claire headed for the elevator. The HOLLOW ECHO of night.  
Step after lone step. She pauses. Did she hear something?

A HISSING. Down the opposite hall. Haunting. Unnerved,  
she follows it, edges into...

SURGICAL AMPHITHEATER

Teaching auditorium. An operating table serving as the stage.  
Dark, empty. The HISSING WHINES...

She fumbles for the lights -- they don't work. Gulp. She  
searches in the shafts of moonlight --

There, a tank near the gurney. Labeled, Nitrous Oxide. The  
gauge spinning wildly as a plume of colorless gas spills  
into the air. She holds her breath, reaches for the valve --

It's stuck. Won't budge.

She steps back, takes a deep breath -- edges into the  
translucent cloud -- tries again, both hands --

Then, from behind...

The cloud seemingly envelopes her --

Oblivious, she fights the valve, the gauge still flickering --

A shadow crosses -- a grey-blue apparition in the plumes --

She senses -- spins -- terror -- nothing there?

Because now it's on the other side of her -- closing in --

Unaware, she sees a surgical hammer on a tray -- grabs it, beats at the valve -- finally, it budes -- closed.

The gauge goes still. And the mist evaporates into nothing. She exhales. Phew. Odd.

MAX (PRE-LAP)

What if they're afraid?

EXT. BOSTON - DAWN

A single ray of light pierces the dark horizon, shimmering across the glassy skyline...

CLAIRE (PRE-LAP)

There's nothing to be afraid of...

INT. MARCI'S HOUSE - MAX'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Monster trucks and superheroes. Stuffed animals and train sets. Claire on the edge of a sleepy six-year-old's bed. MAX MULLINS. Freckles, bright eyes, curious.

CLAIRE

We're just trying to help, after all.

MAX

But how do you make 'em go to sleep?

Doting, Claire brings his arms to his side:

CLAIRE

First, I give you medicine that makes you very, very still. So you can't move during the operation -- even when being tickled --

She launches an attack. He squirms and laughs.

CLAIRE

Then I give you another medicine that makes all the hurt go away when the other doctors do what they need to do.

MAX

Cut you open and make blood gush out?!

CLAIRE

(ahem)

And last I give you a medicine that  
makes you drift deep, deep, deep  
into sleep...

She gently runs fingers across his eyelids, closing them.

MARCI (O.S.)

Only problem is -- it's wake-up time.  
Chop chop kiddo, dressed for school.

MARCI MULLINS in the doorway. Max's eyes pop open with a  
smile. Gives Claire a hug --

MAX

Are you staying for breakfast, Aunt  
C.?

CLAIRE

Only if we're having Cap'n Crunch.

He smiles. She, too.

INT. MARCI'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Single mom breakfast 101. Marci setting the table, ordered  
routine. Late-twenties, conservative *Ross Dress for Less*  
attire. Claire nursing a coffee.

MARCI

The hell were you thinkin'?

CLAIRE

Excuse me, I am a doctor -- supposed  
to save lives.

MARCI

And what, no call, no nearest relative  
emergency contact?

CLAIRE

It wasn't an emergency. I'm fine.

MARCI

Hello?! You nearly drowned to death.

CLAIRE

Well, patient number one getting  
flattened by a truck wasn't exactly  
the first impression I was hoping to  
make.

Marci pours juice and butters toast in one fell swoop --

MARCI

So what, the guy was just some nutcase  
off his meds?

CLAIRE

Don't know. The whole thing was  
just -- not...normal.

MARCI

Hope not. Otherwise, I'd be advising  
a serious change of venue.

CLAIRE

(dares)

The thing is... When I was  
unconscious. I kinda -- saw  
something....

Marci raises a brow. Claire, awkward.

MAX (O.S.)

Mom, where's my X-Men shirt??

MARCI

In the wash. Have to live with  
Spiderman today.

MAX (O.S.)

Aw, man.

CLAIRE

He's huge. Put him in a Patriots  
uniform and ya'd never know the  
difference.

MARCI

Yeah, really shot up this year.

Pouring cereal, Marci senses Claire's anxiety. Pushes:

MARCI

Spit it out, sis.

CLAIRE

(exhales)

I'm on the bridge. And everything  
goes black. But then there's  
this...this vision or something. Of  
a man. Staring at me. Like waiting  
or something.

MARCI

Waiting? For what? Who was he?

CLAIRE

I don't know. But I'd swear... He was...

(dares)

Dead.

Silence. Uh, what did you just say? Awkward.

MARCI

Okay... I'm not the bigshot M.D., but who the hell knows what the brain conjures up when it's running on empty.

CLAIRE

This didn't feel like my imagination. It felt real.

Anxiety in her eyes. Marci sees it. Concern.

MARCI

You mention this to anyone else?

(off her 'no')

Don't.

CLAIRE

Gee, thanks.

MARCI

Claire, hon. You had a brain fart -- leave it at that. You don't want your esteemed colleagues thinking you moonlight at seances.

She nods. But still troubled. Whatever, diverts --

CLAIRE

So how's the new gig?

MARCI

Stressful as shit.

(sigh)

It's not like I fit in with the Mercedes crowd. I know it, they know it -- but oh-how-we-don't-all pretend to be on the same team.

CLAIRE

I get it -- most of the doctors I work with are more concerned with doing an x-ray on me than the patient...

MARCI

Yeah well, you'll be kicking their asses soon enough. Big ballsy doctor

(MORE)

MARCI (CONT'D)

chick with a mansion in the 'burbs  
and some GQ husband who'll be  
completely embarrassed by his po-  
dunk-single mother-paralegal-sister-  
in-law showing up once a year for  
the totally awkward perfunctory  
thanksgiving dinner.

CLAIRE

Not true.

(then)

You know I can't cook for shit --  
we'll be coming to your place.

Marci grins. Looks away. Then:

MARCI

Ya know. I'm proud of you, C. And  
I know damn well you didn't actually  
haul your ass out to Boston to be  
"closer to family."

(off her)

New England Gen, top three anesthesia  
residencies in the country?

Caught, Claire scrunches up her face. But Marci is genuine:

MARCI

But I appreciate you pretending  
otherwise. And either way. I'm  
glad you're here. Really am.

And now Claire grins. Equally touched. Then:

CLAIRE

Love you, sis.

MARCI

Yeah yeah, likewise.

A moment. Quiet. Bonding.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Shafts of sun through blinds. A groggy Claire sets the alarm  
and climbs into bed.

CLAIRE

Jekyll, Hyde...

The two kittens bound in from the kitchen, snuggle beside  
her. She slaps on an eye-cover and calls it a night.

SILENCE...

shattered by an EAR-SCREAMING VOICE. A LIGHTNING BOLT. She staggers to the window. Peers outside -- an adjacent construction site.

CLAIRE  
Kill. Me. Now.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - NIGHT

Moonlight cuts across the eerie building...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A sleepy Claire enters from the garage, yawning through a cup of coffee. Quiet, empty hallway. Headed for the locker room, she pauses, raised brow.

Beyond, a gurney. Against the wall. Odd. She steps for it, checks under the sheet...a WOMAN. Grimace of death.

Claire sighs, picks up an adjacent house phone --

CLAIRE  
Hey, this is Dr. Mullins -- there's a deceased parked outside the lockers on B2 like a shopping cart. ...  
Thanks.

Hangs up, heads for the locker room. Until --

CREEEAAAANK...

She turns. Gurney, empty hall. Hm. Heads on...

CREEEEEEAAAAANK...

She spins around -- double-takes -- the gurney now ten feet closer to her. Middle of the hallway -- what...the...hell?

She gulps. Seeing things?! A chill. Edges toward the body. Checks the wheels -- CREEEAAAANK. Loose, wobbly. Perfect explanation. Phew, rights the gurney back against the wall, locks the wheels. Heads into --

LOCKER ROOM

Door closes behind her. She goes for her locker. And --

CREEEAAAANK...

From outside the hall -- growing LOUDER -- THUMPING TO A HALT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR...

She swallows, creeps to the door, attempts to push it open -- stuck. The gurney lodged against it.

CLAIRE

Help!

WHAM! The overhead lights power off -- pitch black --

FOOTSTEPS ECHO INSIDE THE ROOM! The sound of bare feet shuffling -- dragging something? Claire spins -- searches the shafts of moonlight --

CLAIRE

Who's there?

She runs along the wall -- panic -- fear -- freezes -- something wet on the floor?!

NEW ANGLE

A trail of clear liquid, glistening in the moonlight. AN I.V. BAG dragged behind a pair of blue-grey feet, heinous veins bulging from skin --

CLAIRE

Hears the footsteps nearing -- bolts through the lockers -- charges for the door -- WHAM, barrels through it --

HALLWAY

Crashing out -- right into a body -- she SCREAMS --

ORDERLY

Whoa whoa -- easy, Doc --

A burly ORDERLY, gentle --

ORDERLY

You okay? Got a call 'bout a deceased...?

Claire pulls it together -- catches her breath, heart racing --

CLAIRE

Yeah -- no, I'm fine. The -- uh, lights went out --

ORDERLY

Par for the course, this place. So where is it?  
(off her)  
The gurney?

CLAIRE

It was right...  
(sees)  
...there?

Down the hall, against the wall. Claire as she lights up.  
How the...?! Mind playing tricks?!

CLAIRE  
Would you -- uh, mind calling  
maintenance, about the lights?

ORDERLY  
Will do, Doc.

And with that, he heads for the body. She exhales.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - RESIDENT LOUNGE - NIGHT

Claire at the sink, cold water in the face. Opens up her  
backpack, pulls out a box of NoDoz. Takes one. No, two.

LIZA (O.S.)  
Hey hey, it's our resident celebrity.

BRUCE (O.S.)  
The Olympic freestyle diver herself...

LIZA and BRUCE entering. She: dreadlocks, bifocals, New  
York attitude. He: straight-laced, conservative, gay. Both:  
living off adrenaline fumes.

Claire hides the NoDoz, pulls it together --

CLAIRE  
Uh, hi. Claire Mullins.

LIZA  
Liza Simkins -- met during your  
prospective visit --

CLAIRE  
Right, third-year neurosurgery --  
and fourth-year pediatrics,  
Bruce...Evans?

BRUCE  
If only my ex could remember me with  
such detail.  
(shakes)  
How you faring? Heard you 'bout  
went flatline.

CLAIRE  
No, I'm good. Everybody's blown it  
out of proportion.

BRUCE  
Mmm. Wonder who in the world fueled  
that fire?

As Liza fills a thermos with Red Bull --

LIZA

"...it was just instinct -- didn't think about the risks for even a second..."

BRUCE

"...because I'm a doctor. And that's what doctors do by god..."

CLAIRE

Uh. Rusty?

LIZA

Ooh, she's already moved from "Russell" to "Rusty."

BRUCE

Trouble. One week tops.

LIZA

Not even. He did save her life.

CLAIRE

Excuse me?

BRUCE

(ignoring)

You're right. Some guy jumps in the Charles to save my fat ass? One hour and I'm his love slave.

CLAIRE

Uh. I'm not that grateful.

LIZA

Just hazin' ya, new guy -- no damage. Can be rough around here -- ya need anything -- anything --

(exits; re: Bruce)

He's your woman.

Bruce downs a coffee. Pours another --

BRUCE

She's a real bitch, god love her.

(re: coffee)

Oh, little heads up -- don't drink this shit. It's evil. Ciao for now, Claire.

And out he goes. She smiles, heads to the schedule board. Spies: *Thoracic, Turner. Anes: Mullins.*

Game face on, she heads out.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - PRE-OP ROOM - NIGHT

Pre-op procedures: NURSES with instruments, Claire arriving to prep a GRIZZLY barrel-chested patient.

CLAIRE

(re: chart)

Evening, Mr. Turner, ready to do this thing?

GRIZZLY

(nerves)

As I'll ever be...

CLAIRE

Hey, we're the ones gotta work all night while you count Z's.

GRIZZLY

I'll take my Sealy Posturepedic over this any day. Just see to it I'm not one of the two thousand.

(off her)

My wife's done her research. Cardiac arrests caused by anesthesia every year.

CLAIRE

Now your wife must've also read that the odds of that happening are like winning the lottery.

GRIZZLY

Slightly better result ya ask me.

CLAIRE

Okay...we could just leave that aortic valve all clogged up, see what happens...?

GRIZZLY

Alright, you win.

As she works, he goes quiet. Mind drifting.

GRIZZLY

My father. Died in his sleep. I remember everyone telling me how lucky he was, goin' like that. "Peaceful." Well. I don't care what anybody says...

(fear)

When it's my turn, I wanna know. Make right with it.

Claire looks into his anxious eyes. Feels for him.

CLAIRE

Question. Would you think twice about getting in your car to get a quart of milk?

(off his no)

About a ten times greater risk of an accident in that. We're just going out for a quart of milk, Mr. Turner.

He sees her confidence. Helps a little. He nods. She readies his arm with the I.V. line. Injects the meds.

CLAIRE

Okay, do me a favor and list your ten favorite foods...

GRIZZLY

(wry)

This a last meal kinda thing?

(off her scowl)

Chocolate cake...

Injection complete, she watches the monitors like a hawk.

GRIZZLY

A la mode. With hot fudge. And whipped...cream...chocolate...sprinkles...

(heavy eyes)

Sausage...pizz...French...bologna...sand...

And he's out. She adjusts the settings of the drip just so. Prepares the breathing tube, ventilator.

WE GENTLY DESCEND ON HIM, CLOSING IN ON HIS FLICKERING EYES, INTO HIS SLEEP STATE --

WASHING US INTO:

MEMORIES OF A LIFE...

WARBLED, DRUG-INDUCED ECHOES. SURREAL, HAZY IMAGES. A CHILDHOOD BIRTHDAY PARTY... FIRST BICYCLE RIDE... ARGUMENT WITH MOM AND DAD... FIRST KISS... SEX IN THE BACK OF A CAR... GRADUATION... WEDDING... LAUGHING WITH MRS. TURNER OUTSIDE THEIR MANSION... FATHER'S FUNERAL...

SLOWLY OVERTAKEN BY A DISTANT HISS... GROWING LOUDER, LOUDER --

DISSOLVE TO:

A HISS...

Inhaled anesthetic. Mask over Grizzly's face.

ANGLE - OPERATING ROOM

Doors open, enter hotshot surgeons POMP and CIRCUMSTANCE. They offer perfunctory nods to Claire, lining up needles, meds beside a lifeless Grizzly.

POMP  
How we doing -- Claire is it?

CLAIRE  
Dr. Mullins, yes.

CIRCUMSTANCE  
The Vermont girl, right?

Girl? She tries to ignore --

CLAIRE  
He's stage two, ready for prime time.

Pomp sizes her up, tests her --

POMP  
Nitrous or isoflurane?

CLAIRE  
(keen)  
Since his heart's the topic of the day, I certainly wouldn't go with iso given its history of inducing arrhythmia. Nitrous.

Pomp nods, test passed.

POMP  
Alright. Let's churn and burn --

Latex gloves snapped, glistening blades readied, overhead lamps ignited. All under the eerie HISS OF GAS as the sights and sounds of surgery BOMBARD US --

...scalpel into flesh. A RIVER OF BLOOD in its wake...

...ELECTRONIC GRAPHS charting a life...

...rib spreaders CRACKING OPEN the chest...

...the DRIP, DRIP, DRIP of chemicals in the I.V....

LAPSING INTO:

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - OPERATING ROOM - LATER

Clamps and sponges protrude from Grizzly's chest as the surgeons cut and sew. All systems normal as Claire monitors his ventilation. Quiet minus the PUMP OF MACHINES. Until --

SQUEAK...

Eyes instinctively glance up. The O.R. door swings in its hinge ever so slightly... But no one's there? A draft...?

POMP

Swear to god this place is bolted together with chewing gum and rubber bands...

He continues, unfazed. But Claire gazes at the door. Sensing something. The hairs on her neck standing up. A moment. Catches a glimpse of a Nurse eyeing her. Shrugs it off.

CIRCUMSTANCE

How's he doing, Mullins?

CLAIRE

Hypnotic depth is stable. How much longer you under the hood?

CIRCUMSTANCE

Fifteen, give or take a chunk of fat.

CLAIRE

'Kay, I'm gonna give him one more hit.

She readies a needle, injects the silky liquid. And then...

CREEAAAANK...

The door swaying ever so slightly. Claire freezes --

HER P.O.V.

AN INVISIBLE WARBLE -- GLIDING ACROSS THE ROOM -- then, a glitch on the EEG -- a hiccup on the ventilator --

SCENE

CLAIRE

Did you see that...?

Oblivious gazes ogle at her. Huh?

POMP

See...what?

Blank stares. Until a BLIP on the oximeter -- a SURGE in the operating lamps -- the EEG dances with activity --

Grizzly's finger twitches --

CIRCUMSTANCE

What the--?

IMP  
 Look at the EEG -- dammit, shoot him  
 up, he's waking up!

CLAIRE  
 No way -- I just gave him 50cc's of  
 thiopental --

POMP  
 (to Nurse)  
 Get Rusty or Jackson in here now --

Unsure, Claire's hands fumble for another needle -- BLASTS  
 IT INTO THE LINE --

WE BLITZ THROUGH THE TUBING -- STORMING through liquid,  
 CRASHING into cells, tissue -- ROCKETING into --

GRIZZLY'S NETHERWORLD OF SLEEP STATE -- HONEYMOON GRASS SKIRTS  
 AND LEIS... NEWLYWED KISSES IN AN EMPTY HOUSE... A SURPRISE  
 BIRTHDAY PARTY ENTRANCE...

Suddenly, AN INKY CLOUD INFECTS US -- THRUSTING US INTO --  
BLACK.

WHAM! A man's gnarled, necrotic face CRASHES INTO FRAME --

ANGLE - GRIZZLY

His eyes rocketed open --

GRIZZLY'S P.O.V

A dead man. Unfamiliar -- but same grotesque features as  
 the others -- rotting skin, black eyes -- enveloping us --

ANGLE - O.R.

Grizzly's eyes close -- flickering eyelids --

GRIZZLY'S SLEEP STATE --

HONEYMOONS AND BIRTHDAY PARTIES REPLACED BY A BLITZ OF HEINOUS  
 IMAGES -- A WOMAN SCREAMING... DARK, VIOLENT SEX... A  
REFLECTION OF A BLADE AGAINST FLESH --

ANGLE - O.R.

Grizzly, instantly sedate. Machines settled. Calm.

CIRCUMSTANCE  
 Jesus. Is he down?

CLAIRE

(re: monitors)  
He's plane four -- can't hold him  
here --

POMP

(to Circumstance)  
Let's blast the septum -- you take  
the atria --  
(to Claire)  
Mullins, I don't know what the hell  
just happened, but I'm gonna find  
out who the aberration is -- him or  
you.

But she doesn't hear him. Her eyes locked on Grizzly. The  
damnedest thing...

A broad smile. Planted on his face.

FUCKING WHAM! Grizzly bolts up!

The group recoils -- shock, horror --

Grizzly flings himself off the table -- thrashing --  
haphazardly rips out his breathing tube -- chest wide open --

CIRCUMSTANCE

My god -- get ahold of him!!

But Claire is frozen. Terror. Pomp grabs at Grizzly -- but  
the patient fights -- superhuman -- unaffected by the gore --  
lunges for a stack of needles -- locks eyes with Claire --

Staggeres straight for her --

Raises the needles to stab her --

She reacts -- spins for the defibrillator on the wall --  
ignites a burst into him --

He stumbles back -- a daze -- and then collapses -- behind  
him, Circumstance with a syringe -- the needle broken in his  
back...

POMP

Get him back on the table --

A daze, Claire helps lift his hulking frame --

POMP

100 units blood --  
coumadin on deck --

CIRCUMSTANCE

Get an AED in him --

Life-saving chaos -- Rusty enters --

RUSTY (O.S.)  
 What's going on?

POMP  
 Goddamn sleepwalker -- leapt off the  
 table halfway through --

RUSTY  
 Wha?! What was his depth?

CLAIRE  
 BSI in the fifties -- it's -- not  
 possible--??

Rusty shoves her aside as the doctors work --

But she doesn't hear as the alarms settle. She doesn't see  
 Grizzly go stable. She doesn't feel the restored calm. For  
 SOUND HAS CAVED IN, ECHOES IN A FOG...

What. The. Hell. Just. Happened?

MACKEY (PRE-LAP)  
 Mullins?

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - I.C.U. - LATER

Claire outside Grizzly's room. The man on life support, but  
 stable. Claire hardly stable.

MACKEY (PRE-LAP)  
 Mullins, you with us?

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - MACKEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Claire snaps to, in the hotseat. Rusty pacing behind. Mackey  
 at his desk, chewing his glasses.

CLAIRE  
 Yes. Sorry.

MACKEY  
 And everything up to that point was  
 clear?

CLAIRE  
 Clear.

MACKEY  
 So what do you think happened?

What does she think? Can't even begin to say.

CLAIRE

I've dealt with intra-operative awareness before. But this... He was awake. Zero paralysis. Which is unfathomable -- he was well above 50 on the bispectral.

RUSTY

He was. Can look at the charts.

MACKEY

I have. And so will the review board.

RUSTY

Let 'em. Nothing off the radar there.

CLAIRE

He leapt off the table during bypass surgery and tried to turn me into a pin cushion!

RUSTY

A little off the radar.

Claire sits with it. Spent. Frayed. Mackey sees.

MACKEY

Rough coupla days, Mullins.

(then)

Question. In Vermont, how many patients you lose?

CLAIRE

(masks)

Never really kept track.

MACKEY

Estimate.

CLAIRE

(then)

Two.

RUSTY

Two?! You're kidding, right?

She's not kidding. A moment. Wow.

MACKEY

Russell, you?

RUSTY

Stopped counting at a hundred.

Dour moment. Silence.

Dr. Mullins. This hospital, this shift, you're going to lose more than you'll save. Just the way it is.

(gentle)  
You able to handle that?

The room thick. Waiting. Tense. She digs deep --

CLAIRE

After endotracheal intubation, I injected six milligrams of succinylcholine into the patient via continuous infusion over the course of a fifty-three minute surgery. His spectral entropy stayed a constant Stage Three -- even during flushing of the aorta. The fact that he somehow broke through sedation and paralysis barriers was an unfortunate event -- one of some .5 percent of all operations a year. But if the next patient under my care had the same chart, I'd perform the identical procedures without hesitation.

(then)  
As you said, this is a hospital. People die.

Fucking whoa. They absorb it. Mackey hides a smile. Then:

MACKEY

O-kay then. I'll take that as a yes.

Lets the air out. Meeting adjourned.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - A FEW LATER

Rusty and Claire walking out. He pauses, concern:

RUSTY

I've spent a lotta late hours in these halls, seen some serious weirdness. Goes with the shift.

CLAIRE

Maybe it goes with this place...  
(off him)  
There's just something -- off -- about...

But she stops herself. Can't go there. Won't.

CLAIRE  
I should get back.

RUSTY  
(wink)  
Yeah, your Senior Res might be missing you.

She feigns a smile. About to head on --

RUSTY  
Hey. You like camping?

CLAIRE  
Uh... I dunno?

RUSTY  
How 'bout waffles? Like waffles?

CLAIRE  
And the two have what in common?

RUSTY  
(heads on)  
You'll see. Pick ya up after shift.

CLAIRE  
I'm not sure exactly what -- but I can't just --

RUSTY  
Sure ya can. Doctor's orders.

He winks and heads off. She slumps against the wall. Beat.

TIME CRASHES INTO ITSELF:

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - E.R. - TIME-LAPSE

Claire and a blitz of PATIENTS...coffee...diagnoses...  
coffee...medical rounds...coffee...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - RESIDENT LOUNGE - DAWN

Weary eyes, Claire logs out, changes out of her coat. Until --

BRUCE (O.S.)  
(entering)  
Yo, Vermont -- message from the Mackster. Meyerson's a no-show this morning -- you and your boyfriend get to cover.

She exhales. Groans.

CLAIRE

Meyerson sucks. Whoever the hell he is.

He pops a Diet Coke, inhales a donut --

BRUCE

We should've gone into orthopedics.  
Nobody breaks their arm at three in  
the morning.

He plops onto the couch. Until his PAGER GOES OFF --

BRUCE

(to pager)  
Screw you, bitch.  
(gets up)  
Well, this was great -- let's do it  
again soon.

He trudges out. She sighs, slips back into her coat...

CUT TO:

TREMBLING EYES.

Fear. A man in bed, beads of sweat dotting his forehead.  
MAGUBU. Mid-thirties, east African, sickly. Kofia hat on  
his head, Bantu figurines in quaking hands, prayer candles  
lit on the bedside table.

LAUREL (O.S.)

Mr. Magubu, I'm not gonna tell you  
again --

An irked Laurel entering, extinguishing the candles --

LAUREL

Gonna burn down the whole hospital.

MAGUBU

Would be favor -- this place stink  
of death.

LAUREL

(sigh)  
How 'bout I open a window?

He stares at her. Dead serious.

MAGUBU

There is rotting nochana in the air.

LAUREL

That's just the cafeteria, hon.

But his eyes shift. Pointed glare.

MAGUBU

No. It her.The doorway. Claire. She swallows, off-guard.

MAGUBU

All you doctors. No good.

CLAIRE

(ahem)

Mr. Magubu, is it? Good morning.  
I'm Dr. Mullins, anesthesiologist,  
filling in for Dr. Meyerson. Came  
by for a little Q and A before your  
operation tomorrow.

MAGUBU

There will be no operation. Don't  
care what my brother say.

LAUREL

(exiting; mouths)

Good luck.

Claire sees his troubled eyes. Tries:

CLAIRE

You haven't eaten. Ya know, the  
chicken parmigiana's not half bad.

MAGUBU

I do not eat other living creatures.  
And you people will not cut me open.

CLAIRE

Have you discussed this with...  
(re: chart)  
...Dr. Kaplan?

MAGUBU

He say I die if I not have surgery.  
I say I die if I do.

CLAIRE

Now why would you think that?

He looks away. Anxious eyes. Coughs, sick. Tense fingers  
weaving through a tangle of ornate beads.

MAGUBU

Zugado.

CLAIRE

Excuse me?

MAGUBU  
Poison evil death. Everywhere in  
 these walls.

(senses)  
 And in you. I see it. Eyes full--

CLAIRE  
 Mr. Magubu--

MAGUBU  
 All over you. Borana.  
 (then)  
Fear.

He peers into her eyes. She swallows. But snaps to --

CLAIRE  
 I... Mr. Magubu, you have a highly  
 aggressive pancreatic tumor. If you  
 don't--

MAGUBU  
 (fear; quiet)  
 Would you let them pump you full of  
 chemicals, put you to sleep in this  
 place?

She masks a wince. Would she? Diverts, gently places the  
 milk carton from his tray into his hands...

CLAIRE  
 Mr. Magubu. Do you think twice about  
 getting in your car to go buy a quart  
 of milk?

He considers, eyes narrow. She sits next to him, digs in...

EXT. MIDDLESEX FELLS - CLIFFSIDE - DAY

Morning sun shatters a vast treeline, a patchwork of rivers  
 cutting through auburn forest. Downtown on the horizon below.

Batter pours into a rustic waffle iron over a fire pit.  
 Rusty navigates breakfast as Claire warms herself. Beyond,  
 a sleek Airstream trailer and a six-figure convertible.

CLAIRE  
 Mean to tell me you live up here  
 full time?

RUSTY  
 We live at the hospital, occasionally  
 sleep elsewhere.  
 (then)  
 You like strawberries?

CLAIRE

Sure. This your standard impress-the-innocent-new-girl routine?

RUSTY

Gonna be spending a lot of time together and that hellhole doesn't do much in the way of breaking the ice...

CLAIRE

'Kay, you first. Besides the LL Bean catalog, what's your story? Why M.D.?

RUSTY

Old man? Surgeon-in-Chief, Harvard. Mummsy? Chairwoman, B.U. Child and Adolescent Psych. Asshole brother number one? Team doctor for the Patriots. Asshole brother two? Postdoctoral fellowship at the NIH.

CLAIRE

Wow. That's... Disturbing.

RUSTY

One word for it.

His eyes. History. Pressure.

RUSTY

And why you?

CLAIRE

Oh, just wanted to do something meaningful. Help people.

He stops, smirks --

RUSTY

Gimme a break, this isn't a med school app.

CLAIRE

(caught)

Alright. But it's kinda...I dunno. Dumb.

(he waits)

When I was six. My best friend in the world died. She was seven. Mimi. Cancer. It was slow. Torturous. Lot of suffering.

(then)

It stuck with me. That grimace on her face all the time. Guess I

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
 figured if one day I could take away  
 a little bit of the pain that's out  
 there... That'd be good.

He stares. This woman. Charmed.

RUSTY  
Not dumb. Wish I had half the  
 motivation.

CLAIRE  
 Yeah, well. I conveniently left out  
 the part about Mimi being a ferret.

RUSTY  
 A...?

CLAIRE  
 Yeah. My pet.

He smiles. She, too. He hands over the waffle.

CLAIRE  
 You're not eating?

No. He pulls out a joint. Lights it, deep inhale --

RUSTY  
 And goodbye, County General...  
 (offers it)  
 Takes the edge off.

CLAIRE  
 (declines)  
 Doubt anything can take the edge off  
 right now...

Her eyes stare off. The day's events.

RUSTY  
 Rough start, that's all. It'll settle  
 down.

She's quiet, conflicted. Screw it, takes the joint. Dares:

CLAIRE  
 Today, I...felt something. In that  
 O.R.  
 (off him)  
 Like something...bad.

RUSTY  
 Guy flew off the table with a rib-  
 spreader in his chest. Not good.

She stare? off. Thinks. Then:

CLAIRE

When you pulled me out of the water.  
How long before I was respirating?

RUSTY

Minute or two. But we had O2 in  
your lungs within--

CLAIRE

But, I wasn't breathing on my own?  
Technically speaking, I was flat.  
Dead?

RUSTY

Jesus, this was supposed to be happy  
pot. You're fine, you're here, you  
have an incredible waffle waiting to  
be eaten.

CLAIRE

Yeah, I'm here...  
(then)

Why me? Why'd you pull me out of  
the water? Not Eduardo?

RUSTY

You think too much. Look, a lot of  
our 'clientele' made a choice to be  
in that E.R. by their lifestyle.  
Half those scumbags needing help  
don't deserve it. So you or them?  
Yeah, I pick you.

That hangs there. Her guilt. A moment.

RUSTY

Plus, you have way better legs...

She smirks. He shrugs, playful. But she's still in it.

CLAIRE

I'm wiped. Maybe I should go...

RUSTY

Nuh-uh. There's a kick-ass bed in  
the Airstream.  
(off her)

It sleeps one. I'll sleeping bag it  
out here.

CLAIRE

That's not fair --

RUSTY

You need sleep. No further  
discussion.

She stares at the ground. A little stunned. A little embarrassed. A little enamored.

CLAIRE

Thank you, Dr. Kelton. You're alright.

RUSTY

Ah, you say that now...

A tinge of self-loathing. But their eyes find each other.

INT. RUSTY'S AIRSTREAM - DAY

Claire tucking herself into the little mattress. Reaches for the light. Pauses. Photographs on the sill: Rusty and his family -- Christmas, vacations. Happy smiling faces.

Except for Rusty. Invariably staring off, disengaged.

Hm. She checks the clock -- 10:07. Clicks off the light.

SMASH TO:

AN INKY GREY-BLUE CLOUD --

A BLITZ OF FOUL IMAGES -- HEROIN BOILED -- A NEEDLE INJECTED -- TECHNICOLOR IMAGES KALEIDOSOPING -- BULLETS LOADED IN A CHAMBER -- A TERRIFIED WOMAN SCREAMING --

A BLAST OF WHITE --

CLAIRE

wakes with a start. Nightmare. Glances at the clock -- 10:08?! Strange. Settles back down. QUIET. Until --

SCRAAAAATCH...

She opens her eyes. Listens.

SCRAAAAATCH...

From under the bed. Oh god. She slowly bends down...pulls up the sheet... Nothing.

She eases back on the pillow. Phew.

WHAM! Arms explode from under the bed -- a hand clutches her mouth -- another her waist -- grey, necrotic fingers scratching her eyes -- closing them --

She struggles -- can't breath -- can't move --

SMASH TO:

CLAIRE

bolting up -- slams her head on the shallow ceiling. The real nightmare. Shakes it out. 12:03PM. Pinches herself.

Flops back down on the pillow. Perturbed. Sleepless.

EXT. BOSTON OUTSKIRTS - TIME LAPSE

A fiery sun rises in the sky... Clouds rocket past...  
Shadows metamorphosize beneath forest density...

INT. RUSTY'S AIRSTREAM - DAY

Red eyes, wide awake. Claire, not a wink of sleep. Slowly stands, opens the door --

Blinding afternoon sun. She stumbles out to find Rusty working out. Jump rope, pull-ups from a tree.

CLAIRE  
Do you ever sleep?

RUSTY  
Sure, 'least eight hours a week.  
How was the bed?

CLAIRE  
(covers)  
Uh, great. Slept like a log.

EXT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rusty pulls up, dropping her off...

RUSTY  
Door to door service.

Awkward lull. Man, woman.

CLAIRE  
Ya know. What I was babbling about last night... I'm not some touchy-feely chick, okay? I'm a doctor first and foremost. You don't have to worry about me.

RUSTY  
Then I won't worry.

CLAIRE  
'Kay. Well. Thanks. For the waffle.

Wait 'til ya try my French Toast.

She stares at him. His tired eyes. Weary veteran.

CLAIRE  
You look tired, Rusty.

RUSTY  
Good looking woman in your bed has a way of keeping you at night.

She blushes. He dares to lean in. She dares to let him.

CLAIRE  
This... Isn't a good idea.

RUSTY  
The worst.

Their lips meet. Gentle.

CLAIRE  
I...

RUSTY  
Day at a time.

She nods. Smiles. He, too.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - I.C.U. - DAY

Claire headed inside. An I.C.U. NURSE finishing up linens. Grizzly still out cold.

I.C.U.  
Morning, Dr. Mullins. Thought you were graveyard?

CLAIRE  
I am, just wanted to see how he's faring.

I.C.U.  
Stable. Dr. Mendelsohn expects him to rise and shine next few hours.

Claire breathes relief as the Nurse heads out. Peruses his chart. Flips pages. Stares at one in particular:

THORACIC SURGERY EEG REPORT.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST: DR. CLAIRE MULLINS.

She unfolds the brainwave chart. Hm. Focuses on one area. A highly peculiar erratic pattern. The black ink wild and manic, forceful and dark. Spiked levels out of nowhere.

A carved line in her brow. Glances up --

Grizzly. The hypnotic state of life support. She edges toward him... Listens to his heart -- a HAUNTING THROB. Checks his reflexes, breathing, eyes...

The heart rate ECHOING, ECHOING...

Removes the stethoscope from her ears. And goes pale. For the HAUNTING BEAT continues. How in--?

She backsteps, drops his wrist. And the BEAT stops. SILENCE. Dares to touch him again -- skin on skin --

Again, the DEAFENING REVERB BEATING, BEATING...

She releases. QUIET. Looks to the vitals monitor -- normal.

Glances back to Grizzly -- WHAM! His hand swings up, grabs a fistful of hair, yanks her to the bed --

His eyes still closed, coma-state -- and yet his hand grappling for her face --

She sees his skin go transparent -- a blue-grey apparition beneath -- black eyes locked on her --

His fingers press into her eyes, slamming her into the sheets -- suffocating her --

The inky blue tint of death spilling out of him -- into her -- her veins bulging, spiderwebbing along her skin --

She flails -- reaches for the respirator -- fingers...inches ...away...from...the...power...cable ...

But it's too late. She goes still. THE BLUE CLOUD OF DEATH MUSHROOMING INTO HER --

She lurches -- a last spasm of life -- fingers find the cable -- rip it free -- the respirator SLAMS OFF --

Vitals go haywire, ALARMS WAIL -- Grizzly's grip releases -- Claire breathes --

The blue infection draining from her...

ANGLE - I.C.U. NURSES STATION

A NURSE arrives, sees her monitors, alarms -- bolts across the room, into --

## GRIZZLY'S ROOM

To find everything as it should be?! Respirator plugged in, vitals stable, Claire checking his chart in the corner...

NURSE

My monitors were showing distress...?

CLAIRE

Really? He's fine... Maybe -- a short or something?

Nurse raises a brow. But all seems okay.

CLAIRE

Anyway, on my way...

And out she goes, casual. WE ADJUST to the heart monitor. Grizzly's HEART RATE ECHOING...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - DAY

On edge, Claire struggles down the hall. Finds a door, enters --

FILE ROOM

Aisles of files, computers on tables. Sits at a keyboard, types. A record. Electronic charts, notes alongside a scanned DRIVER'S LICENSE: Banger. Claire's first patient.

She clicks through reports. Arrives at E.R. VITALS, EEG SCANS. Scrolls to the end: TIME OF DEATH.

The word DEATH haunting her...

Eyes on the digital FLATLINE. She inches back along Banger's chart. And sees... An erratic spike. Aggressive stain of ink. She hits print --

Studies Banger's erratic spikes. Then pulls out Grizzly's from her coat...

The unusual brainwave patterns identical. Beat for beat.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - COURTYARD - NIGHT

Claire pops her head out the door -- sees --

CLAIRE

Liza, there you are.

Liza lying on the stairs, sunglasses and cigarettes.

LIZA

Liza's not here, go away --

CLAIRE

Then can I ask you a question instead?

LIZA

'Less it's about the color of Wayne Brady's underwear, F off. Got another 4.2 minutes of break.

CLAIRE

C'mon. I need neurological know-how.

LIZA

I need a sandy beach and a daiquiri. We don't always get what we want.

CLAIRE

Rusty kissed me.

LIZA

(bolts up)  
Hello, details.

CLAIRE

Quid pro quo. What do you make of this --

She offers up an enlarged photocopy of one EEG chart, erratic spikes. Liza exhales, studies it.

LIZA

Whoa. Serious theta activity. Abnormal amplitude. Diphasics indicate sleep state...

(then)

Never seen such a quick, hot burst -- but my guess is you've got an epileptic on your hands.

Claire hands over the second EEG --

CLAIRE

Couple days later...

LIZA

Yup, a repeater. Okay, strange pattern, but still say epileptic.

CLAIRE

What if I told you those were from two separate patients?

LIZA

I'd say you were smoking crack. The odds of paroxysmal abnormalities like that without even a millivolt difference? One in a million...

CLAIRE  
You're sure?

LIZA  
Positive. What gives?

CLAIRE  
Don't know. That's the catch.

LIZA  
You're one weird chick, ya know that?  
Now gimme the dish on Dr. Man-Whore.

CLAIRE  
Oh, it's casual.

LIZA  
Casual my ass, he's your Senior Res.

CLAIRE  
Yeah. But he's also a good kisser.

LIZA  
What else is he good at?

CLAIRE  
I wouldn't know, thank you very much.

LIZA  
Uh-huh, sure...  
(then)  
He is cute, the bastard. So, how  
long before you sleep with him?

A BEEP. Claire reaches for her pager --

CLAIRE  
Saved by the bell...

She hustles on to Liza's chagrin.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Claire exiting a room with Laurel --

CLAIRE  
...You too, Mrs. Kellor, and no more  
punching that morphine button 'til  
you're on your feet!  
(to Laurel)  
Limit her to 20 cc's every twelve.

LAUREL  
I'm gonna need 20 cc's just to put  
up with her.

(MORE)

LAUREL (CONT'D)

(then)

How you hanging?

CLAIRE

Fine, good.

(off her)

Okay, coffee's a major food group now, but I'm solid.

LAUREL

Be good to yourself, dear. And if you need a home-cooked meal, I'm all about playing surrogate mom.

CLAIRE

(seeing)

Hey, so he went through with it?

Outside a patient room. Magubu asleep in bed, connected to machines. His father, DANNU, in a traditional African dashiki, sleeping in the corner chair.

LAUREL

Just came down from I.C.U. Guess you eased his fears.

Piqued, Claire heads inside. Magubu lost in slumber. But oddly enough, there's an unnatural smile planted on his face.

CLAIRE

He's smiling...?

LAUREL

Better than the alternative, wouldn't ya say?

Would she? She chews her lip...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Volume after volume of medical texts, journals. Claire at a tiny desk with half-a-dozen tomes: *The Unconscious World*; *Brainwave Planes*, an *Abstract*; *Anesthesia Awakenings*.

But getting nowhere. Her eyes woozy, unable to focus. Fights a yawn. Reaches into her bag, digs out the NoDoz. Fumbles with the wrapper, drops it to the floor. She freezes --

A puddle of liquid at her feet. Clear, forming a trail out the door. Creepy. She rises, dares to follow it into --

THE HALLWAY

Dark. Empty. The river of ooze glistening, snaking around a corner... Step after step, she follows it...

Easing...toward...the blind corner... You just know something's around it...

Oh shit...

Nothing. Phew. She breathes. Relief.

FUCKING WHAM! A panel flings open at her! Heart attack. Oh, laundry chute, bag landing in a bin. She gathers herself, follows the wet trail...

To a door. PHARMACEUTICAL LOCKER. Slightly ajar. She edges --  
INSIDE

Dark as hell. Tries the light -- doesn't work.

The door slams!

CLAIRE

Hello?!

It's locked. She bangs -- pleads -- frantic, searches for an escape until her eyes take in --

The source of the liquid. An I.V. bag on a shelf, *Anesthetic Agent, Chloroprocain* -- DRIP-DRIP-DRIPPING the chemical to the floor...

Bad goes to worse -- the fluid at her feet appears to be pooling around her -- enveloping her legs -- her waist -- up to her chin --

She screams -- now it's in her mouth -- drowning her -- up to her eyes --

Her skin turning blue, dying -- veins bulging -- melting away -- horror --

SMASH TO:

EYES ROCKETING AWAKE.

Claire. The overhead lights FLICKERING --

SMASH TO:

EYES ROCKETING AWAKE.

Magubu. The overhead lights FLICKERING --

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - LIBRARY - SAME

Claire sees the NoDoz in hand, the books, charts. Nightmare. Phew, shakes it off... Heads into the --

HALLWAY

Trudges for the elevator. Pauses, the opposite corridor.  
An ajar door. The Pharmaceutical Locker?! Gulp.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL ROOM - SAME

Magubu staring at his hands. His skin. His hair. Awe.  
Sees his sleeping father. Blinks, as if not recognizing  
him. Eerie gaze...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - SAME

Claire swallows. Can't help herself -- tiptoes toward to  
the locker door...

WHAM! Crashing into a body -- research spills -- Rusty.  
They both realize, exhale...

CLAIRE

Rusty -- scared the shit out of me --

RUSTY

Jesus, likewise.

He helps with her spilled books. Sees the pair of EEG  
enlargements, patient records --

RUSTY

What's all this?

CLAIRE

Uh. Nothing -- just research.

The way she said that. He raises a brow. She spies a nitrous  
canister in his hand --

CLAIRE

And what are you doing down here?

RUSTY

Just -- had to get a nitrous for a  
spleenectomy upstairs...

The way he said that. She raises a brow...

RUSTY

You... Cool?

CLAIRE

Yeah. You?

RUSTY

All good.

Awkward. Neither quite knows why.

CLAIRE

Okay. See you later then...

And they go their opposite ways. Odd...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

Edge of his bed, Magubu spies the religious artifacts on his table. Curiously stares at an ornate cross.

MAGUBU

Praise. The. Lord.

The way he said that. Off.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Claire traipsing for the elevator. Pauses. Her gaze beyond. The chapel. Open door. Candles burning.

Christ on a cross. A dictum carved into the stone altar:

*That Christ should suffer*

*And that he should be the first*

*To rise from the dead.*

Claire finds herself drawn in. Staring. *Rise from the dead.*

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - MAGUBU'S ROOM - SAME

Feet hit the floor. Hands stretch. Magubu rising from his bed, bright as day. Restricted by his I.V. and tubes. Calmly tears out the needle from his wrist -- blood splatters --

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - CHAPEL - SAME

Claire sighs, shuffles on her way. Heavy.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - NURSE STATION - SAME

WAILING ALARMS. Laurel arrives at her desk, BEEPING MONITORS --

LAUREL

What the--?

She heads for MAGUBU'S ROOM -- freezes in her tracks -- empty -- blood on the floor --

LAUREL

Mr. Magubu!

Dannu wakes with a start.

LAUREL

Where's your son?!

The man blinks. A loss.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - SAME

Elevator DINGS and out steps Magubu. Dead look in his eyes as he shuffles for the cafeteria...

He spies the blood from his wrist. Laps at it like a dog...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Laurel searching the halls, Claire in tow --

CLAIRE

But he just had a pancreatectomy?!  
No way he's walking yet --

Laurel spies a blood trail...leading to the elevator --

LAUREL

Tell that to him.

Claire stares. Oh. Shit.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - CAFETERIA - SAME

Magubu in line, tray stacked with food. As he edges forward, he's bumped from behind -- a CHUBBY lab worker --

CHUBBY

Oh, sorry --

Magubu's eyes go narrow --

MAGUBU

Damn right you are --

CHUBBY

Ease up, pal --

Magubu shoves him -- demonic gaze --

MAGUBU

I ain't your pal.

A SECURITY GUARD in line turns --

SECURITY  
Hey hey, cool down --

Magubu spins -- lunges for his neck -- a scuffle -- Security struggles, marveling at the man's uncanny strength --

Beyond, Claire and Laurel enter --

CLAIRE  
Mr. Magubu?!

Magubu reaches for Security's holster -- yanks his revolver --

Aims it straight at him --

FIRES! Security drops to the floor --

Pandemonium -- SCREAMS -- chaos -- Claire, frozen --

Magubu spins to Chubby -- halfway out the door -- climbs atop a table, training the gun on the fleeing man -- FIRES --

Chubby drops to the floor, wounded -- Claire reacts, grabs a chair, slams it into Magubu's back --

He topples -- spins, sees her -- rabid look --

Finger...on...the...trigger...

BAM! THE DEAFENING GUNSHOT --

But it's Magubu that goes down.

Another SECURITY GUARD, gun raised -- smoke from the barrel -- Magubu on the floor -- dying -- looks at Claire --

MAGUBU  
...sotano de Satanas...sotano de Satanas...

His life drains away. Beyond, Rusty arrives, goes pale.

Claire shakes out the stars. Crawls to Chubby, injured in the arm. Goes to work on him as WE RISE above the carnage. The red stains a hellish contrast to the white floor.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - OUTSIDE MACKKEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Mackey, talking with a DETECTIVE inside. Claire and Rusty in chairs. Quiet. Shellshocked.

Beyond, Magubu's weeping father and brother (JIMON) talking to OFFICERS. Not pretty.

RUSTY  
You alright?

CLAIRE

No...

RUSTY

Yeah. Me neither.

Silence. Her face drained. Finally:

CLAIRE

Anesthesiology. Is about the finite. Exact calculations derived from a person's body weight, gender, age, blood pressure. Real and tangible and precise things. Things that make sense. That's what I've always liked about it.

(then)

But what I'm about to tell you doesn't make sense. So I need you to get that it's hard enough for me to think it, much less say it...

RUSTY

Uh, okay...?

CLAIRE

The man I met yesterday in room 416, going in for a pancreatectomy? Was not the man that just did that.

(then)

He wasn't capable of such a thing.

RUSTY

I don't understand...?

CLAIRE

Listen to me, Rusty. When patients in this hospital go under -- at the deepest levels -- Stage Three, Plane Four -- something is happening to them --

RUSTY

Like...what??

CLAIRE

Like that cafeteria. Like psychotic awakenings in the middle of operations. Like everything in this goddamn place.

She's fraying. Exhaustion. Trauma. He tries:

RUSTY

Claire. You're exhausted. You've been through--

~~CLAIRE~~  
No, I think I'm the only one who's actually awake around here. Can you really not see this for what it is?!

RUSTY  
(aside)  
See what?! Get control of yourself. You're talking about crazy shit that--

CLAIRE  
I'm talking about the fact that Nagir Magubu was a vegetarian.

RUSTY  
So?

CLAIRE  
So you know what he ordered for lunch?  
(off him)  
A hamburger.

Wits end, she storms off. He doesn't know how to react. Exhales as Mackey surfaces --

MACKEY  
She okay?

RUSTY  
No. No, I don't think she is.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - A FEW LATER

Claire at a coffee vending machine. The last dregs of tar barely dripping into a cup. She angrily kicks the shit out of the contraption. Down the way, Laurel sees --

LAUREL  
Don't think that's gonna make it taste any better...

Claire just slumps in resignation. Sad sight. Laurel marches over, takes her by the arm --

LAUREL  
That's my cue. If anyone ever needed a break, it is you -- right now.

CLAIRE  
Laurel, I have rounds--

LAUREL  
Rounds-schmounds, they'll be here when we get back.

She pushes open a stairwell door, leads --

CLAIRE

Get back? From where?

LAUREL

Best juice shop in the city. Need some vitamins in you, girl.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - NIGHT

Laurel leads Claire across the street to an old apartment building. Laurel unlocks the front door --

CLAIRE

'Kay, I'm confused. Don't see any blenders?

LAUREL

You're looking at 'em.

Holds up her hands with a wink.

INT. LAUREL'S APARTMENT - A FEW LATER

Modest two-bedroom. Cleanly furnished, feminine. Laurel squeezing fruit --

CLAIRE

Well, you sure got the commute beat.

LAUREL

Hour or two I save in drive-time translates into tub-time.

She ambles to a wall of family picture: *class photos of a twelve-year-old GIRL, bright smile, freckles. Happy twosomes of Laurel and daughter...*

CLAIRE

This your daughter?

LAUREL

Ashley Jean, pride and joy.

CLAIRE

She's darling. How old?

LAUREL

Terrifying twelve. Before my very eyes, the same boys that were 'gross' last year, are 'like way hot' this year...

CLAIRE

Remember it well.

Claire roves to a bookcase filled with medical texts, Harlequin romances...

LAUREL

Her on-again-off-again father has her this weekend. You know he tried to file for me to have to pay him child support?! Men.

CLAIRE

Can't live with 'em, can't live with 'em.

A smile, Laurel sets down a juice --

LAUREL

There you be. Carrot-orange-papaya delight. Twice the bang for your coffee buck.

They settle into seats, the weight of the world lifted. Laurel instinctively busies herself with a stack of Ashley's laundry...

CLAIRE

Thank you. Just five minutes of peace. You have no idea.

LAUREL

Oh yes I do, believe you me. We girls gotta stick together.

(concern)

Speaking of... I don't want to sound like your nagging mother, but you... look...wiped.

CLAIRE

Yeah, I am. And I kinda miss my nagging mother.

LAUREL

Big change for you, huh?

CLAIRE

I dunno... Sometimes I think -- maybe... I should've stayed in Vermont. Slower pace, less violent shootings in the food line...

LAUREL

Honey. You see it through, hear me? Fact is, there are plenty of just plain bad people gonna come through our doors. Just have to accept that. Be stronger. Fight harder.

She taps a photo of her daughter --

LAUREL

Maybe you just need to remember what it is that keeps you going. For me, real simple answer.

(then)

But you. What is it?

CLAIRE

Oh, I dunno... I grew up on this dairy farm. When I was little, thought it was the biggest place in the whole world...

(then)

But after awhile. After the boys became 'like way hot,' guess it started to feel... Like the smallest place in the world.

A moment. Hopes and dreams.

LAUREL

So after a few tough days, you wanna give up, go back to that?

Maternal smarts at work.

CLAIRE

No, Mom, I don't...

LAUREL

Didn't think so. You're paying your dues, Doctor. Keep your eye on the prize and you'll be fine.

Wise words. Resonating. Lifting her spirits.

LAUREL

A toast. To girl power!

CLAIRE

To girl power...

The share a tired giggle.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - MAGUBU'S ROOM - NIGHT

Claire enters to find Dannu on the bed. Pain in his eyes as he quietly sings an African hymnal. He pauses, seeing her.

CLAIRE

Mr. Magubu. I -- I'm so sorry for your loss.

DANNU

It is the world's loss. My son was twice the man I have ever been.

She feels his ache. Little to say.

DANNU

Were you one of his doctors?

CLAIRE

Not really. I met him during rounds.

DANNU

He did not believe in surgery...

(guilt)

But we all thought it best.

He heads out. She dares --

CLAIRE

Your son seemed to think -- that something in this hospital...

(difficult)

Well...

He turns. Peers at her. Then:

DANNU

Zugado. This place reeks of Zugado.

(off her)

The dead.

(then)

And so do you.

That hangs there. She swallows.

DANNU

Yes, Doctor, there is something in this hospital. And you know it.

You feel it, can't you?

She dares not answer. Quiet. He exhales. Weight.

DANNU

Many years ago, before I come America. My village. Daughter of my cousin find rebel fighters in jungle. Dead bodies. Machete to necks. When she return to the village, she not same. She go...fatula. Not right in head.

JIMON (O.S.)

(entering)

Father, it is time to go.

DANNU

It is alright, Jimon --

JIMON

No, it isn't -- we are done with these people and their questions and their lies --

The son ushers the father out.

CLAIRE

Mr. Magubu. Did your son speak Spanish?

DANNU

No... Why?

CLAIRE

I... Just curious...

Awkward. They leave. Her eyes fall to the bed. And there, on the bedside table, placed just so...

Claire's carton of milk. Breaks her heart. She trudges out. Pauses. Corner of her eye, the bathroom door ajar.

BATHROOM

She enters -- shock -- the mirror covered in red scribbles -- a macabre collage -- blank faces with mutilated lips --

A red bar of soap on the sink, the artist's paintbrush. She swallows, heads back into --

PATIENT ROOM

Bolts for Magubu's chart -- rifles pages -- *SURGICAL REPORT, EEG PRINT-OUT* --

There, in black and white -- the exact same erratic brainwave pattern as Grizzly and Banqer...

INT. MARCI'S APARTMENT - DAWN

A yawning Marci opens the door --

MARCI

How is it that a hotshot doctor doesn't even own a laptop?

Claire on the porch --

CLAIRE

Because she can barely afford a cell phone, much less a computer.

INT. MARCI'S APARTMENT - LATER

Claire at the computer in the living room, surfs onto translation website. Types Magubu's words: Sotano de Satanas.

MARCI (O.S.)

Don't have enough to do, learning Spanish in your spare time?

Entering, Marci sets down a coffee. Claire masks --

CLAIRE

I -- have a patient -- doesn't speak much English. Hoping to learn a few phrases.

Marci isn't stupid, narrow eyes. Whatever, heads into the kitchen as Max enters. Teddy bear, sleepy eyes.

MARCI

Morning, Big Man! How was your sleep?

MAX

Dunno, I was asleep.

MARCI

Waffles, scrambled eggs, or broccoli?

MAX

(big yawn)  
Okay.  
(lights up)  
Hey! Aunt C --

He runs for her. But Marci's eyes are elsewhere, frozen on the muted television: A REPORTER OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL, CHAOTIC IMAGES OF THE CAFETERIA MASSACRE...

She turns up the volume --

REPORTER

...one man killed, two others injured, currently in stable condition. Hospital staff has declined comment thus far, but will be issuing a statement later this afternoon...

ANGLE - LIVING ROOM

Max bounding up and down before Claire --

MAX

...and then my teacher said no way and sent Jemma to the principal -- 'cause kissing is not allowed in school 'cause it's gross and she could've given me lice.

CLAIRE

My goodness. Sounds like someone's quite the ladies man...

MARCI

(entering)

Max, go get dressed for me.

(off him)

Now please.

The look in her eyes. He trudges out. Claire senses --

CLAIRE

What?

MARCI

How come Dan Donalson on Channel Four tells me more about your life than you do?

Claire glances at the TV beyond. Shit.

INT. MARCI'S APARTMENT - LATER

Marci staring out the window. Claire, awkward. Silence.

MARCI

I want to believe what you're saying. I do. But...

CLAIRE

Yeah yeah, don't beat yourself up about it.

MARCI

Maybe you're pushing yourself too hard.

CLAIRE

This is why I didn't tell you -- I knew you'd judge--

MARCI

I'm not judging--

CLAIRE

Just -- forget it -- I'll find a computer somewhere else --

Gathers her things, heads for the door. Marci sighs. Gentle:

MARCI

You wanna know something? Half the time I feel like I'm the younger

(MORE)

MARCI (CONT'D)

sister. Probably 'cause... I'm in awe of what you're doing.

(then; raw)

The beautiful thing about you, Claire, is that when you go and get something in your mind, nothing stops you.

But. There's a flipside, too, honey.

What I'm saying is... Don't screw up what you've worked for. Not just for you. But for me. 'Cause I'm living vicariously, okay?

Tender. Honest. A moment between sisters. Claire pauses. Fighting emotion. But forces herself out the door.

Max enters, dressed --

MAX

Where's Aunt C?

MARCI

She -- had to go, sweetie.

MAX

That sucks.

MARCI

Yeah, it does...

(then)

Watch your mouth.

Max scrunches his face. Marci gazes off, concern. Then:

MAX

Mom. What's the "Devil's Basement?"

(points)

The Devil's Basement.

On the computer screen. Claire's translated text. Marci raises a brow. Struck by something.

EXT. MARCI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Claire in her truck. Just sitting there. Alone. Glint of wet in her eyes. Exhales, starts the engine, brakes --

Marci before the vehicle.

MARCI

I can't believe I'm doing this...

CLAIRE

Doing what...?

MARCI

Sotano de Satanas. Do you know what that is?

CLAIRE

No...?

MARCI

I do.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Corporate elevator, Marci and Claire zipping up a rat trap.

MARCI

Most of the cells are below ground, no windows. S'why they call it The Devil's Basement.

CLAIRE

The hell does a prison have to do with anything...

MARCI

Ain't just any prison. It's a throw-away-the-key-and-don't-look-back-serial-killer-hellhole.

Doors open into...

LAW OFFICES

Old school, well-appointed. Marci leads Claire through a maze to her cubicle in the back --

MARCI

(re: firm)

Some of the new money guilty types in here do pro-bono work there like it's sport fishing.

CLAIRE

And what are we doing exactly?

Marci plops down at her computer --

MARCI

I'm risking my neck and going against everything I stand for. You are getting me a coffee and Danish from the kitchenette down the hall.

O-kay, Claire heads off...

INT. LAW OFFICES - KITCHENETTE - A FEW LATER

Claire pours a black coffee to the brim. And promptly gulp, gulp, gulps it empty. Emits a tiny burp.

To the collective awe of a pair of SUITS in the doorway.

CLAIRE

Mornin'...

Takes Marci's cup and pastry, casually struts out.

INT. LAW OFFICES - A FEW LATER

A page of company stationery emerges from a printer. Marci signs it, stamps it with a notary seal.

CLAIRE

(arrives)

What are you doing?

MARCI

Sending you on a field trip.

CLAIRE

Uh. Why?

MARCI

So that you'll find whatever you need to find in order to get some rest.

She hands over the letter. Claire reads it. Shock.

CLAIRE

You should be working for the NSA or something. Swear to god, Marci.

MARCI

Just don't get me fired. And be careful.

CLAIRE

This mean you don't think I'm crazy?

MARCI

Never said that. But either way, you're my sister.

Claire smiles. Marci, too.

CLAIRE

Thank you.

EXT. SUFFOLK COUNTY CORRECTIONAL - DAY

Claire emerges from her truck. Eyes daunted by the guard towers and barbed wire. A deep breath as she heads up the cement path.

WARDEN (PRE-LAP)

And how come I didn't hear about this before?

INT. SUFFOLK COUNTY CORRECTIONAL - WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Cinder block and bars. A buttoned-down WARDEN before Claire. In his hands, he clutches her "legal document."

CLAIRE

Oh? Admin should've contacted you. Been on my calendar for weeks.

WARDEN

But it's not on mine. And what's the point of this study, exactly?

CLAIRE

Uh. Well. It's a state investigation of the long term health effects of prolonged incarceration.

Skeptical, he stares at her letter, medical I.D.

WARDEN

They might be incarcerated, but they have privacy rights all the same. Sorry, but we'll have to reschedule until I can run this up the flagpole.

Shit. She thinks, thinks --

CLAIRE

(re: letter)

Did you know that Andrew Zimmerman is running for state attorney general, currently leading the polls three to one? If you want to second-guess him, feel free. I'm sure that when they're appointing wardens next year, he'll appreciate your thoroughness.

She offers her cell phone. He considers. Sighs, turns to an armed GUARD beyond.

WARDEN

See to it she gets what she needs.

The Guard nods, escorts her. We catch her exhaling.

INT. SUFFOLK COUNTY CORRECTIONAL - DAY

Arriving at a door marked RECORDS. Opens it --

GUARD

There you go...

Thousands of files. Digital age this isn't. Claire heads to a section, searching the M's. No luck.

CLAIRE

Excuse me. You worked here long?

GUARD

Too long.

CLAIRE

Ever had an inmate named Magubu?  
Nagir Magubu?

GUARD

Not that I recall, last five years.

Hm. Thinking, thinking.

CLAIRE

So they call this place the Devil's  
Basement, huh?

GUARD

The solitary, they do. You act up,  
Warden sticks your butt down there.  
Attitude adjustment real quick.

CLAIRE

You don't happen to know if there's  
a way of cross-referencing inmates  
that've been down there, do you?

GUARD

(indicate)

Sure. They got a red sticker on the  
corner, means "handle with care."

She searches the files. Almost every single one has a  
sticker. Oh boy. She takes off her coat, digs in...

DISSOLVE TO:

BLOODSHOT EYES --

Claire, desperate to stay awake as a COLLAGE OF HORRIFIC  
FILES BLURS past --

HEINOUS CRIME-SCENE PHOTOS highlighting acts of human evil --

The netherworld of HALF-SLEEP as criminals LEAP FROM MUGSHOTS INTO HER CONSCIOUSNESS -- alive, sexual, threatening --

SHE BOLTS AWAKE --

BLOODSHOT EYES --

Christ, seeing things. Whoa.

GUARD (O.S.)

You okay?

She turns to him -- blood gurgling from his mouth -- his lips cut to shreds --

She recoils, blinks --

SHE BOLTS AWAKE --

THE GUARD.

At her side, perfectly normal. Her imagination.

GUARD

You alright?

CLAIRE

I... Yeah, long hours...

And then she sees. The open file before her. Victims of inmate #043741. Blood from mouths, lips cut to shreds --

CLAIRE

This prisoner. Do you recognize him?

GUARD

You kidding me?

INT. SUFFOLK COUNTY CORRECTIONAL - LATER

A steel staircase descending into a basement abyss. Cells. Dark, eerie. The Guard escorting Claire through clanging gate after gate. This. Is. Hell.

GUARD

Jesus Salazar. Be an insult to animals to call him one.

Her heels clicking on the cement. Faint voices of broken prisoners ECHOING. Claire clings close.

GUARD

Life sentence for over a dozen rapes on the south side. Did some damn awful things to those women.

CLAIRE

How'd they catch him?

GUARD

Somebody I.D.'ed him, called it in. Ended up in a bloody shoot-out down by the Charles. Crazy sonofabitch was up on picnic tables firing away like he was Butch Cassidy.

They arrive at an empty cell. Dark. He unlocks it, steps inside and flips the switch -- light fills the cage -- and with it, a horror -- wall to wall --

Blank faces, mutilated lips carved into cinder block.

GUARD

Used to bite his victims. Sometimes tore their lips right off. Did this here handiwork by ripping out his own teeth, using 'em as carving tools.

She's frozen in horror. Dementia.

CLAIRE

What -- happened to him?

GUARD

Met his end at your hospital. Figured that's why you was asking.

CLAIRE

Wha? At my...

GUARD

Yeah. Took a shiv to the kidney here in the showers. Had to rush him to General for surgery. Died coupla days later.

Her mind spins with the realization.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LIBRARY - DAY

Claire hurrying up stairs to the entrance --

INT. DOWNTOWN LIBRARY - MEDIA RESEARCH ROOM - DAY

Claire waiting as a CLERK arrives with videotapes.

CLERK

Two tapes of local news coverage on the first date -- second's too recent, try streaming web archives.

CLAIRE

'Kay, thanks.

INT. DOWNTOWN LIBRARY - MEDIA RESEARCH ROOM - LATER

Claire in a media cubicle. Fast-forwarding through old news footage -- ANCHORS, REPORTERS, CLIPS -- pauses --

An AMATEUR HOME VIDEO on the news broadcast --

A PARK -- PEOPLE FLEEING -- CHAOS -- THERE, JESUS SALAZAR ON A PICNIC TABLE, FIRING A HANDGUN --

MANIACAL GRIN ON HIS FACE, WILD POSTURE --

She freezes it. Turns to a computer, clicks the mouse -- WKBC website, archived news broadcast: SECURITY CAM FOOTAGE OF THE HOSPITAL CAFETERIA -- MAGUBU ON THE TABLE --

MANIACAL GRIN, WILD POSTURE --

She freezes the image. Identical to the opposite monitor. Two different people and yet...

The exact same.

WIDEN FROM THE IMAGE:

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - RESIDENT LOUNGE - NIGHT

Rusty watching the tape on the T.V. Claire waits for his reaction. It gets to him. But he denies --

RUSTY

Claire. I'm not. Exactly sure what you want me to say...

She offers up half-a-dozen files --

CLAIRE

We're the critical care center for that prison. In the last fifteen months, at least six prisoners have died here.

RUSTY

Six pieces of garbage kick it and you think that's something special?

CLAIRE

Can you explain what's been going on? These coincidences?

He can't. But refuses to let himself go there...

RUSTY

I -- I've got rounds --

He skirts out -- but she refuses to give up, follows --

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - A FEW LATER

Elevators open, Claire trailing Rusty --

RUSTY

I don't want to discuss this anymore.

CLAIRE

Me neither. But that's not going to solve the problem.

RUSTY

What problem? Tell me exactly what you think is happening? I want to hear you say it out loud.

On the line. Dare she? She can't. Enough, he heads into --

I.C.U. WARD

Trudges for a patient. But Claire has frozen, shocked gaze -- Grizzly's gone. She bolts to the NURSE --

CLAIRE

Mr. Turner -- what happened to him?!

NURSE

His wife yanked him out. Had a whole host of lawyers with her citing surgical negligence and blah blah blah --

CLAIRE

Wha? Where'd they transfer him to?

NURSE

Home care. Guess they've got more money than God...

Rusty overhears. She urgently pulls him aside --

CLAIRE

Rusty. Listen to me. When Turner wakes up, it won't be Turner waking up. If he's out there somewhere -- god only knows what can happen...

He chews his lip. Trying not to believe her...

CLAIRE

Day at a time, right? Just trust  
me. Today, right now, this once.  
Please.

The desperation in her eyes. He considers.

SMASH TO:

WATER STORMS TOWARD US --

Claire, pacing at the bow of...

A FERRY

A fretting Rusty in the b.g as she dials her cell.

RUSTY

Refuse to believe I'm doing this...

CLAIRE

Makes two of us.

She hits SEND --

INT. TURNER ESTATE - SAME

Waves crash a cliffside out the window as a PHONE RINGS.  
Palatial estate. Old money. Answering machine CLICKS ON --

CLAIRE (ON MACHINE)

Hello, this is Dr. Mullins calling  
again for Margaret Turner -- or anyone  
related to Daniel Turner...

As she leaves her number, WE TRAVERSE UP the stairs into..

THE BEDROOM

A PETITE home nurse tending to Grizzly. His weeping wife,  
MRS. TURNER, in a chair. Staring out at the ocean beyond.

PETITE

Mrs. Turner...

(no answer)

Mrs. Turner? Is it okay if I go  
outside for a minute?

Mrs. Turner snaps to --

MRS. TURNER

Yes, of course, dear. Take a few  
drags for me, too.

A smile and Petite departs. WE, HOWEVER, LINGER... CREEPING  
TOWARD Grizzly in his sleep state...

A moment...

Two moments...

Three mo--

SLAM! His eyes rocket open --

Mrs. Turner spins --

His hands lock around her neck --

She struggles --

His eyes FILL WITH BLACKNESS --

And she's dead. Just like that.

EXT. LEMON ISLAND FERRY STATION - DUSK

Claire's truck speeds off the ramp, screeches through the tiny hamlet --

EXT. TURNER ESTATE - DUSK

Petite outside. A Marlboro and the ocean view. WE EASE PAST HER... INTO THE WINDOW...

Where a pale figure emerges at the top of the stairs. Grizzly, eyes on the lass outside. Heinous grin as he heads down the flight. An I.V. bag dragging from his wrist...

INT./EXT. CLAIRE'S TRUCK - TRAVELING - DUSK

Claire speeds down the rural road -- Rusty navigating a map --

RUSTY

Take that left --

The one they just passed -- she screeches, flips a U --

INT. TURNER ESTATE - DUSK

Petite closes the door behind her, a chill. Pauses, spotting an I.V. bag on the floor?! Its line leading into the pitch black hallway beyond...

PETITE

What in--?! Mrs. Turner?!

And the dead-to-be-Petite diligently strides toward it...

EXT. TURNER ESTATE - ENTRY GATE -- NIGHTFALL

Claire screeches up -- slams the buzzer --

CLAIRE

Come on, come on...

Screw it -- she backs up, tightens her seatbelt --

RUSTY

You're not...?

CLAIRE

I am.

She floors it -- crashing through the ancient gates --

INT. TURNER ESTATE - NIGHTFALL

Bare feet pause... Eyes stare out the window to spy the oncoming trouble... Bloodied fingers strum...

EXT. TURNER ESTATE - NIGHTFALL

The truck skids to a stop -- Claire and Rusty climb out. Rusty knocks -- the door WHINES OPEN...

RUSTY

Hello...?

They tiptoe inside. SILENT. Dark.

CLAIRE

Mrs. Turner??

She grabs a fire poker, edges for the light...

UPSTAIRS

They ease onto the landing. Creeping...for...the...room... to...find... Grizzly in bed. Eyes closed. Seemingly out.

CLAIRE

Hello?? Is anyone here??

No response. Rusty moves for Grizzly, checks vitals --

RUSTY

He's self-respirating, HR stable...

He checks his cell -- no service --

RUSTY

I don't know where the hell everyone is, but I'm calling dispatch. He looks dehy to me -- see if there's any electrosol --

He heads out. She swallows, keeping a watchful eye on Grizzly as she searches the medical supplies. Until...

AN EERIE CREAK. Armoire doors. One ajar, swaying ever so slightly. She frets. Edges toward it. Carefully opens it --

A coat! Phew, nothing...

Problem is, the other door swings open -- Claire, meet Mrs. Turner, dangling from a hanger!

She screams, spins -- right into Grizzly!

GRIZZLY

Hello there...

He grabs her -- the poker falls as he pins her against the armoire -- she struggles -- gets a grip on a hanger -- lashes it into his face -- catches his lip with the hook -- yanks --

It punctures through his cheek -- he shrieks -- EYES GO BLACK -- she bolts -- down the stairs, two at a time --

OUTSIDE

Rusty searching for a cell signal --

RUSTY

Hello, can you hear--

CLAIRE

Get in the truck!

He sees her fear -- runs -- she sprints -- trips in the darkness, falls -- back up -- they scramble in -- her trembling fingers fumble with the key -- can't get it in --

CLAIRE

Shit shit shit --

He grabs it, slams it in -- she floors it -- fishtails toward the gate... Thank the Lord on high, safe.

RUSTY

What. The. Fuck?

CLAIRE

(hyperventilating)

-- was awake -- killed her -- dead --  
oh god --

RUSTY  
Slow down -- what are you talking  
about?? He was out cold --

Pissed, she turns to him --

CLAIRE  
Wanna go back so you can see for  
yourself?!

He swallows. Tense. Exhales and --

FUCKING WHAM! Grizzly's arm erupts through the rear window!

His grip strangles Claire -- she swerves, blind -- skidding  
toward the cliffside bluff --

Aghast, Rusty grabs the wheel -- the vehicle in a 360 --

She slams the brakes -- Grizzly rockets against the glass --  
the tire iron on the floor slides to her feet --

Rusty grabs it -- smashes it into Grizzly's face -- he tumbles  
back into the tailgate --

Claire crushes the accelerator --

He's flung from the vehicle --

Over...the...endless...cliff... Shark bait. They stare  
after. Quaking sweat. SILENCE. Finally:

RUSTY  
Okay. I believe you.

CLAIRE  
What. Now?

RUSTY  
We leave.

CLAIRE  
Wha?

RUSTY  
We weren't here. This -- this is a  
goddamn mess -- we can't be involved  
in this --

CLAIRE  
We can't just--

RUSTY  
Just what the hell do you expect to  
say? 'Yes, officer, we're  
Ghostbusters, just following up a  
lead?!'

CLAIRE

I don't know -- but we'll figure it out -- look, Turner's fingerprints are all over the place -- it's obvious he's guilty --

RUSTY

All the more reason they don't need our help.

(then)

Claire. This somehow goes down the wrong way, our careers are in the toilet. Over. Done. That what you want?

CLAIRE

(weak)

I want... All of this to stop...

She stares off. A broken shell of a human being.

RUSTY

Look. You were right, okay? I've seen it now -- whatever the hell it is. So let's get outta here and find something tangible that Mackey can see, too.

CLAIRE

(spent)

What's the point? It'll just keep happening. Don't know how to stop it.

RUSTY

We'll figure out a way. Together. I trusted you. Now you trust me.

She peers into his eyes. Uncertain exhaustion.

EXT. FERRY - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Rusty, Claire, and the Boston Harbor. Murky ripples of water speeding by. No words. Quiet, drained reflection.

He gives her a comforting squeeze, excuses himself.

INT. FERRY - BATHROOM - A FEW LATER

Rusty closes the door behind him. Paces. Trembling hands. Anxiety. Digs into his pockets, finds a small vial.

White powder. Spreads a line on his palm and inhales...

Stares at his reflection in the mirror. A fleeting look of disgust. Soon replaced by the calming fix... His eyes quickly sparkle, back in control.

EXT. FERRY - TRAVELING - SAME

Claire staring out at the water. Weary eyes.

RUSTY (O.S.)

Phew, a little water on the face and all's right with the world again.

He plops down beside her. She's mute.

RUSTY

Hey, Mullins... We made the right call.

CLAIRE

No. No, we didn't...

RUSTY

If we'd stayed. And my father found out I'd been involved in the completely unexplainable death of some offsite patient? Shit, he'd personally have the A.M.A. pull my license.

CLAIRE

Yeah...

(then)

But if we'd stayed. My dad. Would've been proud...

That hangs there. A moment.

EXT. MIDDLESEX FELLS - CLIFFSIDE - DAWN

Glint of sun as Claire parks at the Airstream.

RUSTY

You want to crash here?

CLAIRE

Thanks, but gotta feed the cats...

RUSTY

Okay. So we'll hit it after some shut-eye. Find something to convince Mackey.

The look in his eye. Distant. A lie?

CLAIRE

Sure, okay...

He gives her a peck, heads out. Claire doesn't hesitate.  
Driving into the PRE-DAWN QUIET...

BLACKNESS.

WE SILENTLY RISE FROM THE EARTH...

A grave. A funeral. Immersed in African tradition. The  
HOLY MAN speaks to a small gathering. Colorful tribal garbs  
and headdresses. But there is NO SOUND. Only FAINT WIND...

Dannu and Jimon in the front row. Stoic, emotional.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

Dannu and Jimon headed for the car. Paused by --

CLAIRE (O.S.)

Mr. Magubu?

They turn. Surprised to find Claire in their midst.

CLAIRE

I have seen them.

(off him)

Zugado. And -- I need some help.

Didn't know who else to talk to...

JIMON

Father --

DANNU

I'll meet you in the car, Jimon.

Jimon sighs, heads off. Dannu and Claire walk as the Holy  
Man remains with the body, waiving small smoking pots across  
the casket --

CLAIRE

A few days ago. I was in an accident.

Heart stopped. Since then...

DANNU

(keen)

Death. Attracts the dead.

CLAIRE

I don't know how to stop them. Get  
rid of them.

DANNU

Zugado never want go...

CLAIRE  
 During operations. I think -- that's  
 how they're getting in...

DANNU  
 When ghani weak...

CLAIRE  
 Ghani?

The Holy Man begins a quiet chant, encircling the grave,  
 dousing it with powders...

DANNU  
 You say soul. When fragile, Zugado  
 can take over ghani.

CLAIRE  
 During surgical anesthesia. The  
 heart slows, lungs stop functioning,  
 chest muscles submit. The closest  
 one can come to death without actually  
 dying.

DANNU  
 Man's way. Not God's.

CLAIRE  
 Do you know what happens to the person --  
 who they were before --

DANNU  
 Gone. Zugado the person now.

CLAIRE  
 And if this -- Zugado -- if they  
 were -- a bad person?

DANNU  
 I tell you about my cousin's daughter?  
 She kill neighbor's baby.

CLAIRE  
 But -- I don't understand why now?  
 Why this hospital?

DANNU  
 I cannot know that. But they say  
 Zugado come when die not right. So  
 make right what not right.

CLAIRE  
 (weak)  
 I don't know how...

DANNU  
 That you must find. Otherwise...

His troubled eyes drift to the... The King Mac...  
 in a Robina stance as the body is lower into the earth...

INT./EXT. CLAIRE'S TRUCK - TRAVELING - DAY

Claire, driving. On her cell --

CLAIRE  
 ...just anything you can dig up --

INTERCUT - LAW OFFICES

On the phone, Marci scribbles a final name on a list --

MARCI  
 And what's the rush if they're all  
 locked up?

CLAIRE  
 They're not. They're dead.

MARCI  
 O-kay. Then really what's the rush?

CLAIRE  
 (weak)  
 If I told you, you'd have me in a  
 rubber room...

MARCI  
 You okay, babe?

CLAIRE  
 Don't worry, Marce.

MARCI  
 Long past that.  
 (sighs)  
 What are you looking for specifically?  
 Need something to work with.

CLAIRE  
 I don't have a clue. I mean, maybe  
 they were wrongfully convicted or  
 something??

MARCI  
 (re: list)  
 Dwight Albany? They found his wife  
 hanging in his closet.

CLAIRE  
 (frustration)  
 I -- don't know then -- just pull  
 anything, everything --

HONKING CARS -- Claire obliviously running a red light --

MARCI

Claire, have you slept since I last saw you?

CLAIRE

'Course, yeah. Gotta run, Marce -- thank you.

DIAL TONE. Marci hangs up with a sigh. Concern.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - MORGUE - DAY

Claire before the Myopic examiner --

MYOPIC

What for?

CLAIRE

(plays cute)

Because...I asked. And post-mortem records aren't in the database.

MYOPIC

Technically speaking ya gotta fill out a 620-B.

CLAIRE

Would you like to have dinner with me? Tuesday night, Giordano's, eight o'clock?'

MYOPIC

(shock)

For -- real?

CLAIRE

Technically speaking? For real.

He can barely breathe. She hands over a list of names.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - MORGUE - A FEW LATER

Myopic returns with a batch of files --

MYOPIC

So what's the deal? All these guys are from the big house...

CLAIRE

Are they? Whaddya know. See ya Tuesday.

She takes them and sashays out. He watches her go.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Warm sun pours over Jekyll and Hyde, sleeping on Claire's feet as she scours the files. Medical reports, post-mortem data, autopsy summaries...

But her body can take no more. Posture slumps. Eyes close. The phone BLARES. She rockets awake, answers --

CLAIRE  
Hello--?

INTERCUT THE E.R. --

Rusty on the line --

RUSTY  
Where the hell are you?

CLAIRE  
Wha--?

RUSTY  
You're two hours late.

CLAIRE  
Shit --

She realizes. It's now pitch black outside. Night.

CLAIRE  
I'll -- be right there, -- have you spoken to Mackey?

RUSTY  
Claire, we can't just get everybody all riled up without something specific.

The tone of his voice. She goes quiet. Eyes fall.

RUSTY  
Claire?

A change in her gaze. Intent. Locked on -- CAUSE OF DEATH: CARDIAC ARREST. She finds another file -- CARDIAC. Another -- CARDIAC. All of them.

CLAIRE  
Oh my god...

RUSTY  
What?

CLAIRE  
They all died from heart failure...

RUSTY  
What are you talking about? ...  
Hello? Claire!

DIAL TONE. He stares at the phone. Dammit.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Elevator opens, Claire strides out, on a mission. Her PAGER BEEPS -- she slams it off, keeps walking --

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - E.R. - SAME

Rusty slams down the phone. Shit. Panic.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Claire searching rows of books, finds the section she's after: *Clinical Drug Encyclopedia; Pharmaceutical Reference; Medication Toxicity...*

Finds a table and --

RIFLES THROUGH PAGES

*...cardiac arrest as a result of pharmaceutical complications...*

*...digoxin injection...*

*...in higher amounts has lethal side effects...*

*...graphic and violent in nature...*

WE WIDEN --

INT. LAW OFFICE - SAME

We've seamlessly arrived at Marci. Computer research of her own: *The prisoners. A legal filing: ...GROSS MISCONDUCT WITH MINORS...PREYING UPON YOUTHS...MISSING CHILDREN...*

A video link. She clicks it --

PRE-TRIAL DEPOSITION. AN ORANGE-SUITED PRISONER SMIRKING TO AN OFF-SCREEN LAWYER.

LAWYER (O.S.)  
*...and on what date was the first encounter?*

PRISONER

Hell if I know. But we did quite a  
little dance, the two of us.

(then)

I do 'member when I ended the little  
darlin', though.

HIS FACE TICKS AND TWITCHES. SINISTER.

PRISONER

'Cause it was President's Day.

(lascivious)

School holiday.

The image FREEZES.

CAMERA ADJUSTS --

BACK TO CLAIRE --

She glances up from her library work. A realization:

...digoxin often unnoticed in the autopsy...

...death mistaken for natural causes...

She bolts out of her chair --

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Claire outside Mackey's office, checking both ways. Peeks  
inside -- empty. Dashes for his computer -- clicks away --

N.E. GENERAL MEDICINAL LOG

ENTER PASSWORD.

Shit. She thinks. Tries: Mackey. Denied. Colin. No.  
Hmm. Spies the photo on his desk: Father and son on a charter  
boat, rods in hand. Takes a guess --

BLUE MARLIN.

Bingo, she's in. Clicks through screens: PHARMACEUTICAL  
CHECK-OUT LOG. Searches DIGOXIN: hundreds of hits.

Pulls out her prisoner file -- JESUS SALAZAR, Date of Death:  
November 14th. Types in the date. A few hits. One of note:

RUSTY KELTON.

She swallows, types in another prisoner's expiration date...

RUSTY KELTON.

Another, another, another. Same fucking name every time:

RUSTY MELTON.

She trembles. Horror. Shock.

SMASH TO:

A HISS...

A gauge spins. A lever turned. BREATHING...

Rusty inhaling from a mask. Carved lines of stress instantly leave his face. Breath after breath from a nitrous tank.

PHARMACEUTICAL LOCKER

He slumps to the floor. High. Fingers fumble for the knob -- can't reach -- attempts to shut it off --

He stumbles. Weak. Struggles with the face mask -- too far gone. Half-conscious. SOUND EVAPORATES INTO NOTHING --

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT - M.O.S.

SILENCE... Claire striding down the hall. As if in shell-shocked SLOW-MOTION...

MIND DRIFTING:

EXT. RUSTY'S AIRSTREAM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Claire stares across the fire at him --

RUSTY

Look, a lot of our 'clientele' made  
a choice to be in that E.R. by their  
lifestyle. Half those scumbags  
needing help don't deserve it...

CLAIRE - PRESENT

Pale, remembering --

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - E.R. - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Rusty in the lounge with Claire --

RUSTY

Six pieces of garbage kick it and  
you think that's something special?

CLAIRE - PRESENT

Reeling with it. Rounds the corner -- WHAM! Right into  
Rusty, emerging from the pharmaceutical locker --

CLAIRE

Rus...

He stares at her, frigid gaze. Sees the printed medical logs in her hand. She backsteps, fear --

CLAIRE

I know -- all of it --

(then)

Why??

He cocks his head, amused. A facial twitch, tick.

CLAIRE

(lie)

Mackey already knows -- he's calling the police --

He stalks after -- a dead gaze --

CLAIRE

What's -- the matter with you --

She bolts -- but he grabs her by the hair --

RUSTY

Where ya goin', girl?

Evil. No. maniacal. He drags her into --

THE PHARMACEUTICAL LOCKER

Slams the door behind --

CLAIRE

Don't do this -- you need help -- please --

RUSTY

You're done talking --

With that, he forcefully licks at her face -- tosses her to the ground. Casually unclasps his belt buckle --

CLAIRE

HELP!

He slaps her quiet, yanks her hands up. Wraps his belt around her wrists, ties it to a storage rack. Grabs a bandage roll --

RUSTY

Open wide --

Forces it into her mouth, and just like that, locks the door behind him. Frantic, she searches -- pauses -- hearing something -- A FAINT HISS...

In the corner -- the nitrous tank -- valve open -- tube and mask attached --

Her face drops, realizing --

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - SAME

Rusty traipsing down the hall. Sick grin emerging, a facial tick twitching, his eyes BRIEFLY FLASHING A DEEP BLACK...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - E.R. - NIGHT

Arm full of files, Marci waits for an ATTENDANT on the phone. Max at her side, bored stiff.

ATTENDANT

(hangs up)

Nope, not in the lounge.

MARCI

Well can you page her again?

ATTENDANT

For the third time??

MAX

Mom, I'm hungry...

MARCI

(to Attendant)

Yes, and maybe a fourth and a fifth time.

(to Max)

Hang on honey, I'll get you a snack --

She digs in her purse. The Attendant clicks his mouse --

ATTENDANT

Look, I don't even have Dr. Mullins logged in today -- maybe she didn't come in...

MARCI

Shit... Just try her one more time. Please.

He sighs, dials. She finally finds a granola bar --

MARCI

(to Max)

Here ya go, sweetie. We'll get dinner in just a--

But he's gone. Nowhere to be found.

MARCI

Max??

CUT TO:

A BALLOON

floating down the hallway... Max in happy pursuit... Around a corner, he finally catches the string. A satisfied smile as he turns back around to --

RUSTY (O.S.)

Hey, little man.

Rusty. Standing over him. Prey.

RUSTY

What ya got there? A donkey?

MAX

No... It's a giraffe.

RUSTY

Oh, silly me. Now where'd ya get such a fine balloon?

MAX

Saw it floating down here. Do I gotta give it back?

RUSTY

Hell no, guy -- finders keepers, right?

Rusty searches the hall, facial tick-tick-ticking...

RUSTY

So where's your folks?

MAX

My mom's -- right here --  
 (realizing)  
 Somewhere...?

Nervous. Lost. Rusty in control.

RUSTY

Tell ya what, I know a place where there's lots more balloons -- betcha they even got a donkey. What say we have 'em call your mom and she meets us there?

Max thinks on it. Eyes the man's medical badge. Nods and the pair slowly disappears around a corner...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - PHARMACEUTICAL LOCKER - SAME

Claire searches -- spots a supply box -- hands stretch for it -- pulls open the lid -- instruments -- a scalpel -- blade into leather -- cutting at the belt --

Finally gets through it -- yanks free -- bounds for the door -- locked -- she kicks at it -- nothing doing. An idea -- the nitrous tank -- heaves it up, slams it at the door handle --

It splinters free --

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - SAME

Marci desperately searching a hall --

MARCI

Max?!

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - SAME

Down an endless corridor... Rusty leads Max through a door... Closes it behind...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - SAME

Frantic, Claire sprints out of a stairwell door, to --

NURSE STATION

Out of breath, finds Laurel --

CLAIRE

Laurel, tell security to find Dr. Kelton -- he's a danger to himself and others --

LAUREL

What? Dr. Kelton?!

CLAIRE

Just do it, Laurel!

LAUREL

Uh, okay... But did you get ahold of your sister?

CLAIRE

What?

LAUREL

She's here, at the hospital. Ralph downstairs said she's misplaced her son?

Claire processes that. Overhead --

CLAIRE

Call security, Laurel!

And she bolts. Laurel tentatively goes for the phone --

JUMP CUT:

-- Searching hall after hall --

-- Door after door --

-- Room after room --

-- Down a corridor into an opposite --

HALLWAY

Searching -- pauses -- corner of her eye -- the giraffe balloon bobbing against the ceiling -- she heads for it -- the door --

Stairwell leading up -- three steps at a time -- bounds out to the --

ROOFTOP

The door SLAMS behind her. AN ELECTRIC DRONE fills the night air -- a maze of skylights, electrical substations --

There, alone down the way, Max -- tears in his eyes --

CLAIRE

Max!

His face lights up -- but just as quickly, it turns to fear --

BAM! She's struck from behind -- Rusty looming with a steel pipe -- she tumbles onto a skylight -- disoriented --

Terrified, Max cries out -- runs toward her -- she shakes out the stars -- eyes processing -- stands up --

RUSTY

Can't get enough, can ya, lady?

He leaps for her -- hands around her throat --

MAX

Stop it!!

The boy scratches and kicks -- but Rusty hurls him off, superhuman strength --

Max crashes into the roof's edge -- his head slamming against cement -- out cold --

Claire sees -- rage -- summons everything in her -- kicks  
Rusty full force in the gut -- picks up the steel pipe,  
rockets it into him --

He tumbles back -- crashing into an electrical box -- it  
crashes down -- live wire --

Electricity courses through him -- wild spasms --

Claire gets to her feet, watches as A TRANSLUCENT PRESENCE  
GLIDES AWAY FROM HIM, vanishes down a vent...

Incredulous, she rushes to Max --

EXT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - LATER

Claire rushing down the hall between gurneys -- Rusty on one --  
Max, the other -- NURSES alongside --

CLAIRE

(re: Max)

Possible subdural concussion -- get  
some phenytoin on deck --

Rusty stirs, disoriented -- in pain --

RUSTY

Where am I? What happened?

CLAIRE

(re: Rusty)

I want a mannitol drip and CT monitor  
STAT --

Bursting into --

THE E.R.

An awaiting Mackey --

MACKEY

What the hell is going on??

CLAIRE

My nephew got lost on the roof --  
Rusty was up there -- all I can say  
right now --

(re: Max)

He's concussive, disproportionate  
pupils ---

MACKEY

(to orderly)

I want film yesterday --

The gurneys split in opposite directions -- Rusty grabs  
 ahold of Claire, weak --

RUSTY

Claire...

CLAIRE

Get your hand off me.

(heads on; spins back)

Funny, I can suddenly understand  
 your motivation -- 'cause the thought  
 of treating you actually makes me  
 sick.

RUSTY

Wha?!

CLAIRE

I've got all the pharmaceutical logs,  
 Rusty.

His face drops. Shame. Quiet.

RUSTY

I... I'm sorry. It just -- I don't  
 know how it got so out of control...

CLAIRE

Tell it to the police.

RUSTY

Claire, no -- you can't report this --

CLAIRE

You killed six people.

RUSTY

(shock)

What?!

CLAIRE

You wanted proof for Mackey? Well,  
 I got it. Some coincidence you  
 signing out digoxin the exact days  
 each prisoner died.

RUSTY

The hell are you talking about??

CLAIRE

It's there in black and white --  
 your last piece of handiwork on  
 November 14th.

RUSTY

November--?! I was at my parents'  
30th anniversary in Barbados!

That floors her. Whoa.

CLAIRE

But your keycard -- was swiped --  
it's in the computer --

RUSTY

Then somebody -- cloned it or  
something -- I dunno -- Christ, you  
really think I--?

She suddenly doesn't know what to think. A fucking loss.

MARCI (O.S.)

Claire -- oh God, where's Max --  
what's happened?

Marci storming up, worried eyes. Claire embraces her and --

CUT TO:

AN MRI FILM SLAMS INTO PLACE --

MACKEY

We're looking at a cerebral hematoma --  
brain is swelling at a dangerous  
rate -- Ms. Mullins, he needs surgery  
right away --

Claire and Marci looking on. Thick. Distress.

CLAIRE

No.

MACKEY

I beg your pardon?

CLAIRE

(to Marci)

We can transfer him to St. Mary's --  
we can't do this here --

MACKEY

Excuse me?

CLAIRE

Marci, do not authorize this -- don't  
let him go under in this place --

MACKEY

In this place?? Claire, are you out  
of your mind?

CLAIRE

(to Mackey)

There are things happening in this  
hospital you don't have a clue about.

MACKEY

Obviously -- your sanity being at the top of the list.

CLAIRE

(to Marci)

All of those prisoners? They died here. But they haven't left. The weird shit going on? Them. Getting into patients during surgery --

MACKEY

What the hell?! Alright, that's it -- Dr. Mullins, get out.

Tears stream down Marci's face. Caught. Hell.

MARCI

How long would it take to transfer him?

CLAIRE

We could be there and prepped in 45 minutes--

MACKEY

He doesn't have 45 minutes!

CLAIRE

Mackey, don't do this -- if you let me explain -- you don't understand --

MACKEY

I understand that you have struggled to meet the demands of this profession since the day you arrived. To the point now where you've completely lost touch with reality. So I'll ask one more time before I call security. Leave.

Claire looks helplessly at her sister -- who looks helplessly at Mackey --

MACKEY

Miss, I cannot more urgently advise you to allow us to prep your son for surgery. If you do not, he will die.

Tense silence. Marci submits. Claire exhales, leaves.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Claire ambling the hall. A daze. Wet eyes. Arrives at the Nurse Station, asks a Nurse --

CLAIRE

You know where Laurel is?

NURSE

She's on break. You -- alright?

CLAIRE

No...

She ambles on...

INT. LAUREL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - A FEW LATER

Claire at the door, welling eyes. Knocks insistently --

CLAIRE

Laurel, you there? ... I -- I need  
someone to talk to...

Keeps pounding -- interrupted by a nosey NEIGHBOR headed in  
with her mail --

NEIGHBOR (O.S.)

Don't think she's home.

Claire keeps knocking anyway --

NEIGHBOR

Just told ya -- saw her leave half  
hour ago --

CLAIRE

Was she going back to the hospital?  
Or to pick up Ashley?

NEIGHBOR

Ashley?

CLAIRE

Her daughter.

The Neighbor crooks her head, bewildered --

NEIGHBOR

Laurel Minkoff don't have no daughter.  
She lives alone.

CLAIRE

Excuse me?

NEIGHBOR

I lived here since she moved in two  
years ago -- ain't never been no  
daughter in 2C.

A punch to the gut. Say what?! Claire reels, pale confusion.

CLAUDE

Oh. I -- musta -- had her confused  
with -- uh, thanks...

Claire rounds the corner of the landing -- attempting to  
process -- thinks, thinks --

Peers back around to see the Neighbor close her door. Screw  
it, she edges back to Laurel's -- tries the knob -- locked.

Takes off her coat and wraps it around her fist -- checks  
both ways -- rams a hole through the stained glass panel  
beside the door -- reaches in, unlocks it and slips --

INSIDE

She searches -- not sure for what -- edges into --

ASHLEY'S BEDROOM

All the tidings of a young girl. Clothes, drawings, books.  
A backpack on a chair. Claire rifles through it -- finds a  
geometry test -- Ashley Minkoff scribbled across the top  
alongside the date:

February 21, 2003.

She searches the room -- there, on the desk -- a photo album,  
centered perfectly. She moves to it -- rifles through a  
mother's collage of memories -- freezing at --

A newspaper article: *CAR ACCIDENT CLAIMS YOUNG LIFE*. The  
photo: ASHLEY MINKOFF. Dated, 2003.

There in black in white. She drops the album -- stunned --

LAUREL (O.S.)

Hell. Figured it was just a matter  
of time with a smart cookie like  
you...

Laurel in the doorway. Sighs.

LAUREL (O.S.)

I'm so sorry about your nephew,  
Claire. I really am.

A single tear falls down her cheek.

CLAIRE

You -- you murdered those...

Laurel turns toward her -- Claire backsteps --

LAUREL

Nothing to fear from me, honey.  
(MORE)

LAUREL (CONT'D)

(weak)  
It's over. You caught me with my  
hand in the cookie jar.

Claire searches for an escape route -- closed in --

LAUREL

But listen to me, Claire. Try and  
understand, okay, dear? I think if  
you just hear my side of things,  
you'll understand a bit better.  
Because this is all about my Ashley,  
don't you see?

CLAIRE

Your daughter's dead, Laurel.

Laurel winces, crack in the facade.

LAUREL

That depends on how you look at it.  
Because I'm doing her work. And that  
makes her so very alive.

CLAIRE

What are -- you actually think your  
daughter wants you to kill--

LAUREL

(erupts)  
You don't know a goddamn thing about  
my daughter -- so shut your mouth,  
young lady!

In the mouth of madness. Laurel breathes, collects herself.  
And then cracks. Tears. Emotional hell.

LAUREL

They just kept... Moving her down  
the line in order of importance.  
Guess at the beloved New England  
General, a nice, good, honest little  
girl complaining of stomach pain  
from a car accident just doesn't  
rank real high. At least not when  
compared...

(spike of venom)

Compared to some scum-sucking maggot  
felon from County two beds down.  
No, 'cause he's top fucking priority  
don't ya know! Well, that's not a  
problem anymore!

More tears. A seismic upheaval of emotion.

LAUREL

(then)  
 She died. She died. She died.  
 Right there in the E.R. in my arms.

She brushes it away. Puts up a casual smile --

LAUREL

But I could see, Claire. Mm-hmm.  
 That you were beginning to catch on.  
 Oh yes, I watched you -- like a little  
 tenacious mouse after that cheese.  
 Very good. And I could get -- even  
 with all that crazy ghost talk of  
 yours -- that you were starting to  
 put it together. To understand. My  
 mission. Ashley's mission.

Claire just ogles. Stunned.

CLAIRE

Laurel. Are you even a real nurse...?

LAUREL

Why I never! Of course I am -- got  
 my certificate from the mail-in school  
 and everything.

(aside then)

I do think I'm pretty good at it,  
 don't you? I know what my patients  
 are going through. I've felt their  
 pain. Just like I felt your pain.

(then)

So tell me, Claire, can you feel  
 mine? Can you understand?

Claire swallows, sick. A grimace. Laurel registers it,  
 disappointed. Interrupted by --

LAUREL

(sees)

Oh -- hello, Martha --

Claire turns to the door -- no one there --

WHAM! Laurel's hand over her mouth -- a cloth -- her eyes  
 INSTANTLY GO BLURRY -- body goes limp --

BLACKOUT.

SMASH IN:

EXT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - MAINTENANCE ALLEY - NIGHT

Generators and trash bins. A beat-up car screeches up to a  
 pair of back entrance double doors. Laurel steps out, checks  
 her back and pops the trunk --

Inside, Claire. Just coming to -- UNFOCUSED BLURS --

LAUREL

Oh, I do hate this...

She smashes the cloth over Claire's face again --

BLACKOUT.

SMASH IN:

FLUTTERING EYES.

Claire. Eyes UNFOCUSED. Dark. A loud ELECTRIC HUM...

LAUREL (O.S.)

It pains me to have to do this,  
Claire. It really does.

Claire struggles to make out her surroundings. Brick walls, machinery. The basement. Laurel crouching over her, a medical bag at her feet.

LAUREL

But I have to carry on my work. For Ashley. And I'm sorry, but that's so much more important than you.

(then)

Now just lie back... The anesthetic overdose should take hold quickly; your nervous system will become paralyzed, but then you'll sleep sleep sleep...

(then)

Shame. I see the headline now -- suicide in the face of losing her career...

Weak, Claire spies a rubber strap around her bicep -- Laurel injecting a needle into a vial --

Claire struggles -- no use -- the woman's on top of her, on a gurney. Laurel sadly gives her a last look and --

Injects...the...drug...

WE BLITZ through the syringe -- a sea of murky liquid --  
STORMING THROUGH MEMBRANES, BLOOD --

Laurel leans down, a whisper --

LAUREL

Goodbye, my dear. May God have mercy  
on your soul...

Rage surfaces -- Claire slams her skull into Laurel's -- the nurse falls back -- off the table -- crashes through a CART

OF STERILIZERS -- GLASS SHATTERS -- her hand slips on the  
floor and she passes out --

Claire attempts to move -- whoa, the WORLD TURNING INTO A  
 DIZZY BLUR -- glances down at her arm -- the needle still in  
her vein -- the drug one-third empty --

She reaches for it -- but her arm is numb, paralyzed -- she's  
 frozen but for her woozy head. The syringe just sitting  
 there in her skin. A breath away from the lethal dose.

And bad goes to worse...

For spilling from the shattered tray: liquid sterilizer --  
DRIP-DRIP-DRIPPING toward the floor --

Splashing mid-way against the syringe -- nudging in the  
plunger millimeter by millimeter --

Her eyes wide, she struggles to move her arm -- a tiny tremor  
 all that's possible --

DRIP...DRIP...DRIP...

She cranes her lethargic head -- searching -- desperate --  
 spots the empty drug vial, inches from her nose -- stretches  
 for it...

Can't...fucking...reach...it...

Sticks out her tongue -- so close --

DRIP...DRIP...DRIP -- panicked eyes BLURRING --

An idea -- she sucks in a breath -- the vial rolls toward  
 her -- again, again -- got it, clenches it in her teeth --

She lurches her head -- back and forth -- one, two, three --  
 flings the vial at her arm -- direct hit -- knocks the needle  
free of her vein!

She heaves -- silent celebration...

A twitch of fingers. Then toes. Slowly coming out of it...

Carefully rises. Dizzy. And then sees --

Laurel is gone?!

WHAM! She appears from behind -- shit, Claire drops to the  
 floor with a thud -- Laurel bounds atop her --

But freezes -- ho-ly shit --

Claire's got the syringe in her grasp -- jams it into the  
nurse's neck and injects --

Laurel's eyes flutter and she drops to the floor.

Claire exhales. Slowly forces her body up, trudges for the exit until...

AN UNGODLY HOWL...

She dares to turn...

Doors, windows blast open -- AIR RUSHES INTO THE ROOM -- TRANSLUCENT ENTITIES rushing past from every direction -- half-a-dozen plunging into Laurel's numb vessel -- swirling into her form --

Claire ogles in horror as Laurel suddenly rises -- revitalized -- eyes black as ink, veins bulging, the strength of six --

She lets out a DEMONIC HISS -- evil incarnate --

Mortified, Claire hurls her lifeless legs forward -- thrusts open a steel door into --

THE INCINERATOR CHAMBER

Bolts the door locked. A medically sealed biohazard station. Labyrinth of conveyor belts, biological waste bins stuffed with blood, fat, skin, tumors --

She hides behind a conveyor belt. Waits. Silence.

FUCKING WHAM! The window SHATTERS -- a chair tossed through -- Laurel emerges -- heinous veins bulging -- a psychotic throbbing of translucent flesh --

ENTITY

Come on out, Doctor!

Laurel slams a button -- the conveyor belt rockets to life -- she steps from rail to rail -- searching -- the incinerator alight beyond --

Claire scrambles onto a belt, out of view -- coast is clear --

WHAM! Laurel leaps onto the belt -- thrusts her hands around Claire's throat -- strangling --

Claire chokes -- sees the approaching incinerator -- summons everything in her -- kicks her full force --

Laurel tumbles back -- smashing through bins -- human bio waste spilling -- into the awaiting embers, -- flames consuming her -- AN OTHERWORLDLY SHRIEK --

Claire lurches to the ground -- watches as Laurel fights off the flames -- CHARGES SWIRLING IN AND OUT OF HER BODY -- refusing to submit --

Until the heart simply consumes the flesh... Dead.

Over.

Phew.

Not. The SIX TRANSLUCENT SHAPES ASCEND -- HALF HUMAN-HALF DEMON -- searching -- finding the blood and ligament waste splattered on the floor --

Congealing into a physical form -- legs -- arms -- torso -- a head -- the red meat of other human bodies -- trying to reconstitute --

It quivers -- desperate to stand -- to live -- but cannot --  
ERUPTING IN A BLAST OF BLOOD...

Claire behind a counter, heaving with horror. SILENCE.  
Finally puts her head to the ground. Now, it's over.

DETECTIVE (PRE-LAP)

And who found the discrepancy in the logs?

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - MACKEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A pair of DETECTIVES before Mackey and Claire. Her research and logs open on the table.

MACKEY

Dr. Mullins. In fact, she uncovered Nurse Minkoff's activities all on her own. Despite her superior's belief that she was completely off course.

A thick moment. Then:

MACKEY

We not only owe her an apology. But a great deal of gratitude.

DETECTIVE

Quite the detective. What tipped you off to all this, Dr. Mullins?

CLAIRE

Oh. Guess you could say it was a...dead give away.

Mackey stares at her...

MACKEY

So it would seem.

His eyes concede. Hers thank him.

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Claire headed down the corridor. Stops in her tracks -- emerging from the elevator, Rusty. Civilian clothes, clutching a box of belongings. They stare at one another.

CLAIRE

Really gonna do it, huh?

RUSTY

Guess 50,000 volts has a way of shaking up your head.

CLAIRE

So what now?

RUSTY

Dunno. Get my head straight. Day at a time, right? Maybe I'll be a doctor. Maybe I won't. Whatever it is, I gotta be doing it for me.

She nods. He looks away, emotional.

RUSTY

Ya know. I'm sorry, Claire... I let you down. When you needed me most.

CLAIRE

We're even. You saved my life.

RUSTY

Yeah. Think maybe you saved mine, too.

Their eyes locked. Lingerin'. Possibilities past.

CARROT (O.S.)

Excuse me?

A young CARROT-TOP intern. Arms full of books, anxious.

CARROT (O.S.)

Hi, uh -- I start residency next week and I'm totally clueless -- do either of you know where I can find a Dr. Kelton?

Rusty and Claire exchange a look.

RUSTY

Kelton went AWOL. Lucky for you, though -- this is Dr. Mullins. Twice the doc he was.

CARROT  
Oh, uh -- okay --  
(to Claire)  
Nice to meet you --

As Claire shakes hands, Rusty slips away. A fond look as Claire takes a glance at Carrot's papers..

CLAIRE  
Nightshift, huh? You ever worked graveyard?

CARROT  
No. But ya know, I've done some trauma before.

CLAIRE  
No, you haven't. Not like this.

Claire smiles, walks her down the hall --

CLAIRE  
Come on, I'll show you around...

INT. NEW ENGLAND GENERAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Two dozen balloons float down a hallway. Into...

A PATIENT ROOM

Claire arriving in Max's room...

CLAIRE  
Is the bravest patient in the world in this room?

Max, a tad bruised, a tad battered, but smiling away as he colors in a book.

MAX  
(sees)  
Cool!

Marci looks on from the other side of the bed --

MARCI  
What do you say, kiddo?

MAX  
Thanks, Doc!

Claire gently adjusts his head bandage just so --

CLAIRE  
Now you don't have to go chasing after balloons ever again.

She winks. He beams.

MARCI

So, you're quite the hero 'round here...

CLAIRE

Not without some help from the best paralegal in Boston...

MARCI

Yeah, well.  
(regret)  
Ya know, Claire --

CLAIRE

Stop. In your shoes, I would've done the same thing. He needed the surgery. And now look at him.

Falling asleep, face buried in the balloons. Happy smile.

CLAIRE

If he's okay, then I'm okay.  
(then)  
Enough said?

MARCI

On one condition...  
(off her)  
Got you something at the gift shop downstairs.

She pulls out a small gift box. Off Claire --

EXT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Light breaks over the Charles. Orange, explosive, clean...

WE ADJUST INTO CLAIRE'S WINDOW as shades are pulled and Claire readies for bed. Sets the alarm and plops down on the futon to open up Marci's gift.

Inside, a sleeping mask and pair of ear plugs. A little smile emerges as she quickly puts them to use.

And with that, she curls up with Jekyll and Hyde and clicks off the light --

BLACK.

THE LIGHT CLICKS BACK ON --

Bright, a glare. Bare feet hit the floor. Step after step... Wait, we're not in Claire's bedroom. We're in...

A PATIENT ROOM

Feet shuffle out the door, an I.V. bag dragging across the linoleum. WE ADJUST to the bed sheets --

Covered in red scribbles -- blank faces and mutilated lips...

ANGLE - HALLWAY

The I.V. bag slides across the floor toward the Nurse Station --

NURSE

Excuse me, you really shouldn't be out of your room -- can I help you with something?

A guttural WHISPER resounds --

WHISPER

Yeah. Yeah, you can --

REVEAL: MAX'S EYES FILLING WITH INKY BLACK CLOUDS. The Nurse shrieks in horror as WE --

SMASH OUT.

THE END.