

WHAT WE BECOME

Written by
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"For women, the best aphrodisiacs are words."
- Isabel Allende, *Of Love and Shadows*

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF - NIGHT

The moon is bright. A TROUBLED YOUNG WOMAN, 19, wearing a sundress and sandals, stands on the edge of a steep rocky cliff. Ocean waves crash far below.

EXT. DIRT PATH - NIGHT

CLOSE ON ANOTHER WOMAN'S BARE FEET, running frantically down a dirt path surrounded by shrubs and wild pink geraniums.

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF - NIGHT

The air is still as the troubled young woman looks out at the horizon, a terrified look in her eyes.

EXT. DIRT PATH - NIGHT

CLOSE ON THE OTHER WOMAN'S FEET, still running.

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF - NIGHT

The troubled young woman closes her eyes as the other woman, out of breath, runs, naked, up behind her. - **We never see her face.**

OTHER WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Please...

The anguish in the other woman's voice is excruciating. The troubled young woman doesn't look back as her fear turns to sadness, and tears drip down her cheeks.

TROUBLED YOUNG WOMAN

Say it again.

OTHER WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

(desperate)

Please.

The troubled young woman slowly turns towards the other woman, the longing between them palpable. She gently smiles and leans back, disappearing off the edge of the cliff.

The other woman GASPS as she peeks over the edge. The troubled young woman's twisted, broken body lay on the rocks far below. The waves crash over her.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. JENNIFER & STEVEN'S LIVING ROOM, CONNECTICUT - DAY

"Nothing's Gonna Hurt You Baby," by Cigarettes After Sex, plays over OPENING CREDITS during the following scene.

It's pouring rain outside an affluent colonial-style family home.

A row of contemporary fiction novels, all written by Jennifer Phillips, line the shelf in an expensive old credenza.

Displayed on top of the credenza is a plethora of prestigious writing awards. We MOVE IN ON a dusty gold statue of a woman writing a novel with a quill pen. The trophy is engraved; "2016 What Lies Ahead - Contemporary fiction."

JENNIFER, 45, sophisticated, book smart, and still athletic, is in the middle of a bear hug with her adorable-yet-clingy youngest child, RUBY, 3.

JENNIFER

We'll FaceTime every night.

STEVEN, 48, charming, erudite, and slightly arrogant about it, pries Ruby off her mother.

STEVEN

If the Wifi works.
(lightly scolding)
Don't promise her that.

Jennifer pouts at Steven.

JENNIFER

If the Wifi works.

RUBY

And I open a present every day?

JENNIFER

Every day.

Steven stifles a judgmental laugh. Jennifer looks at her husband, helpless and guilt-ridden.

ELLA, 5, the eldest child and a bit precocious, is arranging a large stack of perfectly-wrapped presents on the floor beside the credenza.

ELLA

This is better than Christmas. Can I open mine all at once?

STEVEN

I don't think that's the point.

Jennifer takes her first novel, "Time For After," from the shelf and blows the dust off the jacket. Steven notices.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I remember when I read the first page of that book. I knew I had to rep you.

Jennifer forces a smile.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

(reassuring)

It's a good place to start.

She tenses.

EMMA

Write like the wind, Mommy.

Steven checks his phone.

STEVEN

The Uber's here.

JENNIFER

(to Ella)

Come here, you.

Jennifer smothers Ella's face with kisses.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I'm gonna try.

She tucks the book into her designer computer bag.

EXT. JENNIFER AND STEVEN'S HOUSE, CONNECTICUT - DAY

Under an umbrella, Jennifer runs through the pouring rain towards a black sedan parked at the edge of the stone driveway. Giant white oaks line the Connecticut upper-crust neighbourhood. Steven follows with her suitcase, tossing it in the trunk.

STEVEN

Everything is taken care of. Food will be delivered. I want you to just relax and focus.

JENNIFER

Is three weeks too long?

STEVEN

No. Yes.

He kisses his wife. The kiss lingers; there is real love here.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I almost forgot.

Steven impishly smiles and hands her a jewelry box.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I got you a little present, too.

Jennifer curiously looks at him and opens it. Inside is a small bullet VIBRATOR.

JENNIFER

(slightly offended)

Really?

Steven kisses her forehead and whispers.

STEVEN

May it help inspire you.

She laughs it off and discretely stuffs the vibrator in her pocket.

JENNIFER

(teasing)

I thought you didn't like toys.

His demeanour changes, getting serious.

STEVEN

Whatever it takes, Jennifer.

Feeling the pressure, Jennifer collapses her umbrella.

JENNIFER

I'll send pages as soon as I can.

STEVEN

I'll be here.

She gets in the back of the sedan. Steven shuts the door behind her like a gentleman.

INT/EXT. UBER - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer buckles herself in, and as the Uber pulls away, a deep sigh of relief escapes her, NEVER LOOKING BACK AT STEVEN, who is waving from the front lawn.

The UBER DRIVER, an older gentleman, watches from his rearview mirror.

UBER DRIVER

Vacation?

The pressure and guilt return.

JENNIFER

Work trip.

She dismissively looks out the window. The driver continues to watch her. Jennifer feels his stare. She glares at him.

UBER DRIVER

Which terminal?

JENNIFER

British Airways. I believe it's terminal C.

INT. AIRPLANE RESTROOM/FIRST CLASS - NIGHT

Jennifer, eyes closed, leans one hand against the bathroom mirror as her other hand is down her pants, masturbating with her new toy. THE HUM of the vibrator can be heard over the airplane engine. A bead of sweat drips down her cheek. The first-class bathroom is small and stuffy. It's not working.

JENNIFER

(frustrated)

Fuck.

There is a loud KNOCK at the door. Jennifer jumps.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Someone's in here!

Embarrassed, she places the vibrator on the counter, does up her pants, and washes her hands.

She looks at her reflection in the mirror, through the smudge of her handprint, zoning in on the crow's feet forming at the corners of her eyes. Jennifer scoffs at herself as she dries her hands with a paper towel.

INT. AIRPLANE/FIRST CLASS - NIGHT

Exiting the restroom, Jennifer maneuvers herself around a dowdy, heavyset, MIDWESTERN WOMAN (35) and her LITTLE GIRL (5), who stand impatiently waiting.

INT. AIRPLANE/FIRST CLASS POD - NIGHT

Jennifer tucks herself back into her first-class pod, repositioning her open computer and glass of wine.

She pulls up a document on her screen entitled "What We Became," dated back to August 2017. Jennifer scrolls through the pages.

The midwestern woman and her little girl pass by Jennifer's pod on their way back to economy class. Jennifer glances up and locks eyes with her. For an instant, the woman raises her eyebrows and gives her a sneaky grin. Jennifer awkwardly smiles back, trying to be polite.

She looks back at her computer and continues scrolling until she comes to the end, where she had left off, at page 170.

She positions her hands, ready to write, but first reads aloud the last line she wrote so long ago.

JENNIFER

(softly)

Julianne knew what she was in for.
She had always been able to
understand his idiosyncrasies; as
he did hers.

Closing her laptop, Jennifer sighs deeply, not ready to dive in. She takes another sip of her wine and despondently looks out the airplane window.

EXT. FERRY, ALDERNEY CHANNEL ISLAND - DAY

THE CAMERA SWEEPS ACROSS the open water towards the rocky cliffs of a lush-plained island. A small, quaint English village is seen below. A few cottages and larger manors are scattered about the countryside. THE CAMERA GLIDES OVER an old stone Victorian fortress and backs out over the sea towards a passenger ferry on its way to the tiny island.

EXT. FERRY, BRAYE HARBOUR - DAY

The ferry has docked in a small harbour littered with brightly-coloured fishing boats protected by a manmade stone breakwater.

Jennifer schleps her luggage and computer bag up the gangplank behind a few other disembarking passengers.

The wheel of Jennifer's suitcase gets stuck at the end of the plank where the metal meets the landing.

JENNIFER

Shit.

She struggles to set it free.

A young, sun-kissed hand with soft pink nails reaches in and helps her hoist the large suitcase onto solid ground.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Jennifer meets a pair of striking blue eyes. This is KATHLEEN, 25, effortlessly beautiful, wearing a bohemian sundress and strappy sandals. A talisman heart pendant dangles daintily from her long smooth neck.

KATHLEEN

(English accent)

Enjoy your stay.

Kathleen, without any luggage, glides past Jennifer and elegantly walks up a gravel incline towards the road, where a line of cabs and cars are waiting.

Paying no attention to the siren that just helped her, Jennifer organizes herself and her things and heads up the hill, not loving the schlep.

INT/EXT. CAB, COASTAL ROAD - DAY

A herd of cattle are grazing on a hillside near an old stone war bunker facing the sea. Jennifer, exhausted from travel, stares out the window from the back seat of a local cab.

The sound of an officious CAB DRIVER is heard muffled in the background.

CAB DRIVER

(English accent)

The Germans built the bunkers during the war.

(MORE)

CAB DRIVER (CONT'D)
Occupied the entire island. Tried
to turn the place into one large
fortress. We are now part of the
Bailiwick of Guernsey and have all
the tax advantages of the Channel
islands...

INT/EXT. CAB, STONE DRIVEWAY, INCLINE - DAY

The taxi makes its way up a gravel driveway surrounded by
wild pink geraniums.

Jennifer opens her window to take in their sweet smell.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR - DAY

The taxi pulls away from an old-world English manor, leaving
Jennifer alone in the stone driveway. Ocean waves can be
heard CRASHING nearby.

The turn-of-the-16th-century home is far bigger than the
cottage she was expecting.

JENNIFER
Jesus.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR - DAY

Jennifer presses a code, retrieved from her phone, into a
modern lock on a heavy oak front door set into mellow stone.

A BUZZING sound is heard as it opens.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - DAY

Long thick, yellow drapes are opened, shedding light into an
opulent, mostly yellow, English parlour. Jennifer takes the
place in; it's well-kept, not a speck of dust.

She drags an ornate wooden desk closer to the window and
places her leather computer bag on top. She pulls out her
laptop and the copy of her first book. She then plugs a USB
STICK into the side of her computer. Ready to backup her
work.

Outside the window, she sees the aqua-blue water of a
swimming pool, surrounded by a cement patio.

Jennifer catches her reflection in a large mirror on the parlour wall. She looks tired and worn in the natural daylight.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, LARGE STAIRCASE - DAY

Jennifer drags her suitcase up the steps of a large wooden staircase.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

The suitcase flops onto a king-size brass bed. Light from the window illuminates the primarily pink and red 17th-century-style large bedroom. Jennifer opens the wooden dresser and unpacks her basic, worn delicates.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, KITCHEN - DAY

The large kitchen has been modernized but still holds an authentic and historical style that reflects the Victorian era. Jennifer looks into an empty modern fridge.

She closes the fridge door and opens the pantry; it's also empty.

JENNIFER
(annoyed)
What the fuck, Steven?

INT/EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR, SHED - DAY

The shed doors burst open.

Standing silhouetted in the doorway, Jennifer looks at the broken windows and rusty yard tools inside.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR, SHED - DAY

Jennifer wheels an OLD THREE-SPEED BICYCLE out of the shed and into the sunlight. A wooden milk crate is fixed to the back. She mounts the bike and rides off down the long gravel driveway.

EXT. RURAL ROAD, INCLINE - DAY

Wild pink geraniums sway in the gentle breeze as Jennifer whizzes past on the bike.

INT. GENERAL STORE, SAINT ANNE - DAY

Placing a fresh loaf of bread in a basket, Jennifer browses the aisle of a quaint general store.

She picks out a bottle of red from a shelf of mostly Italian and French wines.

INT. GENERAL STORE, SAINT ANNE - DAY

Jennifer places her basket of groceries on the counter.
BERTA, 65, a crotchety English woman, rings her up.

A rack of cigarettes is up on the wall. She hesitates before asking.

JENNIFER
I'll take a pack of Gauloises,
please.

BERTA looks up at the rack.

BERTA
(local English accent)
Which ones?

There are a bunch of different kinds.

JENNIFER
The blue ones, I guess? I don't
know. I don't really smoke.

Berta puts the pack on the counter. Jennifer rushes them into the grocery bag, embarrassed by the purchase.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
And a lighter if you have one.

BERTA
'Cause, you don't really smoke.

Berta smirks and continues ringing up Jennifer's items.

On the floor nearby, Jennifer notices a few boxes of groceries ready for delivery.

JENNIFER
Wait, do you have the order for...
the Alderney Manor - I think it's
called - in there?

Berta shakes her head.

BERTA

No, that load was picked up yesterday.

JENNIFER

Are you sure? There were no groceries when I arrived.

Berta looks suspiciously at Jennifer and then checks her ledger.

BERTA

Up on Kings Road, yeah? I'm sure.
It's a big place. Look a bit harder. That will be £72.49.

Having no energy left to fight it, Jennifer takes out her credit card to pay.

EXT. GENERAL STORE, SAINT ANNE - DAY

A few tourists and locals buzz about the small English beach town. A coffee shop and ice-cream parlour are among several local businesses that fill the stone buildings lining the cobblestone road. It's charming and picturesque.

Jennifer precariously places the bag of groceries into the wooden milk crate while trying to balance the bicycle.

POV OF AN UNSEEN PERSON ACROSS THE STREET, someone watches Jennifer as she finds her balance and rides off down the cobblestone road.

EXT. BEACH ROAD - DAY

Jennifer rides her bike along the coastal road. A few beach-goers dot the stretch of white sandy on the left.

An old Austin Maxi drives up behind her. She waves for the car to pass. It won't. Annoyed, she stops on the shoulder to let the car go by.

Instead, the car stops behind her.

JENNIFER

Are you kidding me?

Kathleen, the striking young woman from the ferry, steps out of the car, the sunlight illuminating her beauty.

KATHLEEN
(English accent)
Can I give you a lift?

JENNIFER
No, thank you. I'm okay.

KATHLEEN
It gets a bit hilly around here.
You sure?

Looking towards the direction of the manor and the hill in front of her, Jennifer softens.

JENNIFER
It does, doesn't it?

Kathleen moves to the back of her Austin and opens the rear hatch, making room for the bike. Jennifer wheels over.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
I remember you from the ferry.

Kathleen takes her bike.

KATHLEEN
You can put your groceries in the front.

Jennifer obeys. Kathleen lifts the bike into the back of the car.

JENNIFER
This is the second time you've come to my rescue.

KATHLEEN
Pardon?

JENNIFER
At the ferry, you helped me with my luggage.

KATHLEEN
(dismissive)
How funny.

Kathleen struggles to get the bike to fit.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
Could you put the seat down?

Jennifer opens the back door and puts the seat down.

JENNIFER
I'm Jennifer.

KATHLEEN
Kathleen Monroe. My family owns the
inn in town.

Trying to make it fit into the back of the car, Jennifer
grabs the bicycle's front wheel and pulls as Kathleen pushes
from behind. It doesn't fit.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
I'll drive slowly.

Jennifer laughs, happy to have help.

INT/EXT. KATHLEEN'S CAR, RURAL ROAD, INCLINE - DAY

Kathleen drives. Jennifer sits sideways in the front
passenger seat, hanging onto the wheel of the bike, making
sure it doesn't fall out of the open back hatch.

KATHLEEN
What is it that you're writing
about? Sorry asking too many
questions.

JENNIFER
It's okay... Ummm... It's a
mystery.

Kathleen lights up.

KATHLEEN
Ooh, I love mysteries.

Jennifer laughs.

JENNIFER
I mean a mystery to me.

She stares out the window.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
It's about a spirited young woman,
Julianne, who falls for her college
professor, David, who is married
with a young child. David leaves
his wife, and they run off
together. Blah, blah, blah...
(exasperated)
Boring.

KATHLEEN
Young and free.

JENNIFER
Yes, that is what "Julianne" means.

Annoyed at herself, Jennifer shifts uncomfortably. Kathleen notices.

KATHLEEN
Do you have a title?

JENNIFER
(scoffs)
I do have that. It's called "What We Became."

KATHLEEN
What did they become?

JENNIFER
Therein lies the mystery.

They ride in silence for a beat.

KATHLEEN
Sounds rather sad, no? "What We Became?"

JENNIFER
Does it? Fuck.

Kathleen tries to help.

KATHLEEN
Why not "What We Become?" That's a bit more hopeful.

Exasperated, Jennifer gives up.

JENNIFER
The title's the least of my worries. Honestly, I'm here because I've had a five-year bout of writer's block, and this trip is supposed to kickstart my creativity. People have been waiting.

KATHLEEN
(earnest)
Five years. Are you sure that's writer's block?

Jennifer laughs.

JENNIFER

I suppose that's just called life.

The bike slips a bit, and Jennifer grabs it tighter. Kathleen reaches back and helps grab the wheel. THEIR HANDS SLIGHTLY TOUCH. Jennifer notices. She reaches her other hand over to secure the hold herself.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I got it.

Kathleen lets go and then lowers her window, taking in the fragrance of the wild geraniums.

KATHLEEN

It's such a sweet smell.

JENNIFER

It is.

She steals a glance at Kathleen and her youthful beauty. Kathleen looks at her and smiles. Jennifer looks back out the window.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR - DAY

Kathleen has unloaded Jennifer's bike and wheels it to the side of the driveway. Jennifer stands nearby, holding her bag of groceries.

JENNIFER

Thank you so much. This was very helpful.

Using the kickstand to steady the bike, Kathleen looks up at the large manor.

KATHLEEN

This place is just incredible. My father used to tell me stories about it.

JENNIFER

Good stories, I hope.

Kathleen raises her eyebrows.

KATHLEEN

Apparently, the Germans occupied it during the war. Used it as a meeting house.

JENNIFER
(sarcastic)
Fun...

KATHLEEN
(reassuring)
But then a lovely French family
bought it and restored it back to
its original state. I'm not sure
who owns it now. Seems to sit empty
most of the time. How'd you find
it?

JENNIFER
My husband did. Thought it would
help inspire me.

KATHLEEN
Does it?

JENNIFER
I'm not sure yet.

Kathleen gets an idea.

KATHLEEN
Listen, if you like, I could bring
you more food and wine, or whatever
you need. It would be no bother.

JENNIFER
That's okay.

KATHLEEN
No, really. I'm here for the entire
summer, and I tend to get a bit
restless around my family.
Honestly, it would be nice to have
a purpose.

She takes in Kathleen's effortless nature.

JENNIFER
That could actually be very
helpful. I'm hoping to get into a
writing zone and not come up for
air... for a while.

KATHLEEN
Brilliant, I'll come by in a few
days, then. Leave you to it.

Surprised by her own decision, Jennifer agrees.

JENNIFER

Okay.

KATHLEEN

Okay. Good luck.

Kathleen walks back to her car. Jennifer heads to the large oak door. Kathleen calls out.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Isn't there a swimming pool?

JENNIFER

(caught off guard)

There is.

KATHLEEN

Lovely.

And with that, Kathleen gets in her car and drives off. Jennifer watches, utterly bemused.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Vegetables sizzle in a frying pan as Jennifer cooks her dinner. Her phone is beside her on FaceTime.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. STEVEN'S CAR, HIGHWAY - DAY / CONTINUOUS

Steven, in business attire, drives on the highway rush-hour traffic. His phone is hands-free and mounted on the dash.

JENNIFER

She seems...

(bad English accent)

lovely.

STEVEN

She's from England?

JENNIFER

I think so. I can't really place her accent. Her family owns an inn in town.

STEVEN

Really? How old is she?

Her eyes light up.

JENNIFER

That's the beauty. I think she's exactly the same age as Julianne.

Steven is silent.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Steven?

STEVEN

No, that's perfect. Good idea, you should be around someone that age.

JENNIFER

I certainly can't remember what that feels like.

The house makes a loud CREAK.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

By the way, did you know that Germans occupied this place during the war? They used it as a meeting house.

STEVEN

Fascinating.

JENNIFER

No, it's not. It's disturbing. Where did you find it?

STEVEN

The London office did. I think it was on Airbnb? I don't know.

JENNIFER

Well, it's miles from nowhere and apparently sits empty most of the fucking time.

STEVEN

(scolding)
Jennifer.

JENNIFER

What? The kids aren't even there.

STEVEN

Your vocabulary is bigger than that.

She rolls her eyes.

JENNIFER

I'm going to go finish making my dinner. Will you give them a smooch for me, please?

STEVEN

Call us tomorrow.

JENNIFER

I might. I really need to find the zone.

STEVEN

Have you tried your new toy?

Jennifer stops what she's doing.

JENNIFER

Oh my God.

STEVEN

What?

She moves to her computer bag on the counter and opens the pocket where her vibrator was stored. It's empty. She bursts out laughing.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

What is so funny?

She looks away from the phone and makes an "oops" face.

JENNIFER

I uh... I left it in the bathroom on the plane.

STEVEN

Nice. That must have been a surprise for someone.

JENNIFER

Oh, yeah. Sorry.

STEVEN

Don't be sorry to me. That was for you. You need to just tap into...

She cuts him off.

JENNIFER
(annoyed)
Yeah, okay. I got it. Pay attention
to the road. Bye.

INTERCUT ENDS:

Jennifer hangs up and sighs heavily at the pressure being placed on her.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The moonlight shines through the open drapes, illuminating Jennifer, who lays wide-eyed in the king-sized brass bed, listening to the sounds of the WAVES CRASHING. A shadow from a tree outside the window dances on the wall in front of her. A loud CREAK is heard from somewhere in the house.

JENNIFER
(unsettled)
Jesus, fuck.

She hunkers lower into the bed, trying to feel safe. Another loud CREAK is heard. She sits up, on edge, then gets an idea.

Jennifer rearranges the pillows in the bed to look like someone is still sleeping. Satisfied, she takes her phone off the nightstand and leaves the room.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, HALLWAY - NIGHT

The lights turn on in the long hallway. Jennifer looks in a doorway to a smaller bedroom with two twin beds.

JENNIFER
(fake English accent)
Such a clever lady.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, SMALLER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer climbs in one of the twin beds and lays her phone beside her on the pillow. Proud of herself, she gets comfortable, feeling safer nestled in the tiny bed. She finally closes her eyes to sleep.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - MORNING

Sunlight illuminates the yellow parlour. Jennifer sits at the wooden desk facing the window, overlooking the pool. The sea sparkles in the distance.

She sips her morning coffee with her computer open and rereads the last words she wrote so long ago.

JENNIFER

Julianne knew what she was in for.
She had always been able to
understand his idiosyncrasies, as
he did hers.

She types a few words; **They had found their groove during...**

Then she deletes them and stares out the window. Sips her coffee. Stares at the screen again. Types a few more words; **They had fallen into their routine...**

She deletes again. Frustrated, she shuts her computer and looks at her copy of "Time For After" on the desk in front of her.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR, POOLSIDE - DAY

Sitting on a wooden chaise lounge next to a large stone swimming pool, Jennifer smokes one of her sneaky cigarettes, reading her first novel. She inhales deeply as she bounces her knee, antsy and frustrated.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR, POOLSIDE - DUSK

The sun is going down, and the ashtray is now full.

Jennifer smokes another cigarette with a glass of red wine in hand. She's nearly done reading her book.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, SMALLER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wearing white silk pyjamas, Jennifer is in the tiny twin bed, her phone beside her on FaceTime.

JENNIFER

(crying)
It's not working. I can't write
like that anymore.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. STEVEN'S OFFICE - DAY / CONTINUOUS

Steven, in business attire, sits at a desk in an office lit by daylight.

STEVEN

(amused)

Why are you in that tiny little bed?

Jennifer snaps at him.

JENNIFER

Because it's fucking creepy here.

STEVEN

Language.

JENNIFER

Stop editing me. I'm serious, Steven. It's too much pressure. I should be there with the kids. I can't do this. Let me come home.

Steven exhales, frustrated.

STEVEN

You just got there. Give it a minute.

JENNIFER

Don't get frustrated with me, that's not going to help.

Steven composes himself.

STEVEN

You said the kids stifle you, so I got you away from the kids. You needed a change of scenery, we rented you a mansion. Now get it together, Jen, and write something, or we're not going to have a house for you to come back to.

JENNIFER

That's a bit dramatic.

STEVEN

It was a big advance.

Jennifer holds back tears.

JENNIFER

I don't know who this woman is anymore.

STEVEN

Yes, you do.

JENNIFER

What do you think of the title
"What We Become" instead of "What
We Became?" Is it more hopeful?

Steven lovingly laughs at her.

STEVEN

I think tomorrow you should go for
a run. Soak in your surroundings.
Let the place inspire you. That was
the point.

JENNIFER

The fucking Nazi headquarters is
supposed to inspire me? What am I
writing?

He remains reassuring.

STEVEN

You're writing an award-winning
novel about a woman who finally
falls in love with the life she
chose. You know what they became.
You've done it before. You're going
to do it again.

Steven's determined, calming voice softens Jennifer.

JENNIFER

I just don't remember how.

STEVEN

You will.

JENNIFER

What if I can't?

Steven looks out the window, hiding the concern on his face.

STEVEN

Try to sleep.
(poking fun)
In that tiny little bed.

She finally laughs.

JENNIFER

It's less terrifying in here.

STEVEN

How?

JENNIFER
(proudly explaining)
If a murderer breaks in, they'll
look in the master bedroom first.
It gives me a bit of time.

STEVEN
You're a nut.

JENNIFER
A clever nut.

STEVEN
Good night.

JENNIFER
'Night.

INTERUPT ENDS:

Jennifer hangs up and curls into a fetal position; the creepy
CREAKS of the manor fill the air.

INT. STEVEN'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Steven places the phone down on his desk beside a photo of a
much younger Jennifer attending an awards gala. She's dressed
to the nines, dripping with confidence. Steven proudly stands
behind her.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, SMALLER BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The manor is quiet. Jennifer is asleep in the tiny bed.

Suddenly there is a loud KNOCK at the door. She bolts
upright.

Another loud KNOCK. Jennifer looks at her phone; it's 10:00
pm. She quickly dials Steven.

STEVEN (O.S.)
(speakerphone)
What's up?

JENNIFER
(whisper)
There is someone at the door.

STEVEN (O.S.)
(speakerphone)
So, answer it.

JENNIFER
(whisper)
No!

STEVEN (O.S.)
(speakerphone)
Okay, so don't answer it.

JENNIFER
Who would be knocking at ten
o'clock at night? Wait, shhh....

Jennifer listens. Silence. Another loud KNOCK.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
This is really freaking me out.

STEVEN (O.S.)
(speakerphone)
Why don't I stay on the phone with
you while you go find out who it
is?

JENNIFER
Oh, my God. Okay.

Jennifer tries to laugh.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
I'm being stupid, right?

STEVEN (O.S.)
(speakerphone)
Yes, I highly doubt someone is
there to murder you.

JENNIFER
(angry whisper)
Steven!

Steven laughs.

STEVEN (O.S.)
(speakerphone)
And they probably wouldn't knock
first. Just go answer the door.
You're fine.

Jennifer gets out of the bed and turns on the hall light.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, HALLWAY/PARLOUR - NIGHT

Making her way to the bottom of the large staircase, Jennifer heads into the parlour to peek out the window.

JENNIFER
Are you there?

STEVEN (O.S.)
(speakerphone)
I'm here. It's too bad you're not
writing a thriller.

JENNIFER
Fuck off.

STEVEN (O.S.)
(speakerphone)
Language.

She passes by the large mirror and catches herself creeping by. LOUD KNOCK. Jennifer's jumps.

JENNIFER
Fuck. I don't like this.

STEVEN (O.S.)
(speakerphone)
Language, please.

JENNIFER
(whisper)
Fuck off with the fucking language.

She peeks out the window and sees Kathleen's car parked in the driveway. That's odd.

BAM! Kathleen pops into view, right outside the window. Jennifer jumps, her hand to her heart.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Ah!

STEVEN (O.S.)
(speakerphone)
Jen?

Kathleen waves, holding a bag of groceries.

JENNIFER
(relieved)
Oh, thank God. Okay. I know who it
is.

STEVEN (O.S.)
(speakerphone)
Good. Who?

JENNIFER
I'll call you back.
(relieved laughter)
It's fine. I'll call you back.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jennifer opens the large door to see Kathleen's bright smile holding the bag of groceries and a fresh-cut branch of wild pink geraniums.

KATHLEEN
I come bearing gifts!

JENNIFER
You scared the crap out of me.

Kathleen hands her the flowers.

KATHLEEN
They say they're a sign of
friendship.

She notices Jennifer's pyjamas.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
Is it too late? I'm so sorry.

JENNIFER
No, no. Come in. I could use the
company.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kathleen unloads her bag of goodies on the counter. Jennifer returns to the kitchen with a hand-painted antique Victorian vase.

JENNIFER
This is perfect.

She fills the vase with water.

KATHLEEN
Wine?

JENNIFER
Please!

Kathleen pulls out a bottle of red wine. Jennifer places the geraniums in the vase and fetches the opener while Kathleen spreads fresh vegetables on the countertop.

KATHLEEN
Can I cook for you?

JENNIFER
Now?

KATHLEEN
Have you had dinner?

JENNIFER
A while ago.

KATHLEEN
I forgot Americans eat so early.

Jennifer pours two glasses of wine.

JENNIFER
I'd love another dinner.

Kathleen laughs and takes a glass from Jennifer.

KATHLEEN
Cheers.

JENNIFER
Cheers.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR, POOLSIDE - NIGHT

It's a warm, clear night. The sky is full of stars. The aqua-blue water is illuminated by lights at the bottom of the pool.

Jennifer, a bit tipsy, and Kathleen are mid-conversation. Jennifer has changed out of her silk pyjamas and is now wearing a casual summer outfit.

The geraniums have been placed on a wooden table at the centre of the remnants of a delicious meal.

JENNIFER
It's been a long time since someone
cooked for me.

KATHLEEN
How long have you been married?

JENNIFER

Six years.

Kathleen raises her eyebrows playfully. Jennifer goes to pour the last of the bottle of wine into Kathleen's glass.

KATHLEEN

No, no. I still have to drive home.
You have it.

JENNIFER

This is true.

Jennifer happily pours herself the rest of the wine.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Would you like a cigarette?

She fetches her nearly-empty pack.

KATHLEEN

I don't smoke.

JENNIFER

Neither do I.

Jennifer lights up. Kathleen laughs. Then.

KATHLEEN

Do you like being married?

Jennifer is taken aback.

JENNIFER

Of course I do.

Kathleen's voice is soft and soothing.

KATHLEEN

I wouldn't like feeling trapped
either.

JENNIFER

(slightly defensive)
I'm not trapped.

KATHLEEN

Good.

Jennifer tries to turn the table.

JENNIFER

Do you have a boyfriend?

Kathleen laughs.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Is that funny?

KATHLEEN
It's funny you assume I would have
a boyfriend.

JENNIFER
Ah, a girlfriend?

KATHLEEN
(a twinkle in her eye)
Pansexual.

Jennifer laughs.

JENNIFER
(condescending)
So many names! I can't keep up.
What is this one again?

KATHLEEN
"This one" means I can fall in love
with any person, regardless of
their gender.

Jennifer thinks on that for a moment.

JENNIFER
It's quite beautiful, actually.

KATHLEEN
Love doesn't need restrictions.

Jennifer doesn't know how to respond.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
Do you mind if I take a dip?

JENNIFER
Sure. I might have an extra suit.

Kathleen stands up and takes off her sundress. She wears no
panties or underwear. She's completely naked except for her
talisman heart pendant around her neck. Her body is
voluptuous and healthy.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Or not.

Kathleen casually dips her toe into the pool, testing the waters, bearing no modesty, fully comfortable in her own skin. Jennifer, on the other hand, awkwardly takes another sip of wine.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

(teasing)

I thought Brits were supposed to be all prim and proper?

KATHLEEN

(playful)

I grew up in France.

Kathleen dives into the aqua-blue water. She glides the entire length of the pool. Jennifer watches, intrigued. Kathleen emerges at the other end.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Come in. It's wonderful.

JENNIFER

(joking)

Oh no, I'm American.

KATHLEEN

That's too bad.

Kathleen floats on her back. Jennifer takes another drag of her cigarette, relaxing into the moment. The two of them remain silent. The longer the moment lasts, the more comfortable Jennifer becomes.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jennifer does the dishes while Kathleen, hair wet, back in her sundress, pours hot simple syrup from a pan into a bowl on the counter.

KATHLEEN

Where are the serving spoons?

JENNIFER

Top drawer, I think?

Kathleen reaches over to the top drawer and looks at Jennifer, whose back is to her. SHE MOVES HER HAND DOWN TO THE SECOND DRAWER AND OPENS THAT ONE INSTEAD. It holds serving spoons and tongs. She digs to the bottom, looking for something specific, and pulls out a dainty silver serving spoon. She quickly shuts the drawer.

Jennifer places a clean wet plate onto a dishtowel on the counter. She looks over at Kathleen dishing blueberries into the bowl of sugary syrup.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
That's a lot of sugar.

KATHLEEN
My aunty used to load my fruit with
sugar when I was a girl.

JENNIFER
(joking)
I'm never going to sleep.

KATHLEEN
Is this too much?

Kathleen pulls a large blueberry from the simple syrup and holds it out to Jennifer. Jennifer's hands are still wet from the dishes.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
Here.

Kathleen holds the berry up towards Jennifer's mouth. Jennifer, a bit uncomfortable, opens up. Kathleen gently places the berry on Jennifer's tongue. Her finger lingers as Jennifer closes her mouth around the berry and Kathleen's finger.

Kathleen slowly pulls her finger from Jennifer's mouth.

JENNIFER
Hmmm.

Kathleen reaches into the bowl and fills her finger with more syrup.

KATHLEEN
The best part.

She holds her finger up to Jennifer's mouth again. Jennifer, mesmerized by Kathleen's sensual voice, opens her mouth. Kathleen slowly puts her sugary finger onto Jennifer's tongue. Jennifer closes her lips. Kathleen holds her finger there while Jennifer licks, her breathing slightly deeper.

Kathleen's finger lingers in Jennifer's mouth a moment after she's done licking, then gently touches Jennifer's lips.

Kathleen licks her own finger.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Hmm.

She smiles. Her blue eyes piercing Jennifer's. Jennifer breaks the tension.

JENNIFER

I better get to bed.

KATHLEEN

Early riser?

JENNIFER

Deadline.

KATHLEEN

Of course.

Jennifer awkwardly rushes Kathleen out the door.

JENNIFER

Welp, thank you for cooking me dinner.

KATHLEEN

I'll come by again.

JENNIFER

Perfect.

Jennifer walks towards the front door and opens it. Kathleen softly laughs at Jennifer's awkwardness.

KATHLEEN

Sleep tight.

JENNIFER

Sleep tight.

Kathleen giggles as she leaves. Jennifer shuts the door.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

What the fuck?

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer, feeling more confident, lies in the king-sized bed, looking up at the ceiling. She laughs to herself and covers her hands over her face, blushing at the thought of Kathleen's finger in her mouth.

She rolls to her side and closes her eyes to try and sleep.

After a moment, she lays on her back again, eyes wide open. She reaches her hand under the covers and begins to touch herself, reaching her other hand towards her face, slowly putting her finger in her mouth.

She sucks on her finger, reenacting the moment in the kitchen.

The moonlight comes through the window, illuminating Jennifer arching her back, reaching her climax.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR/ HILLSIDE - CONTINUOUS

FROM THE POV OF AN UNSEEN PERSON ON A HILL FACING THE MANOR, someone watches Jennifer as she pleasures herself through the upstairs window.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - MORNING

Sunlight illuminates the yellow parlour. Jennifer once again sits at the wooden desk facing the window. The sea sparkles in the distance. The hand-painted Victorian vase with the geraniums sits on a nearby table.

Jennifer sips her morning coffee with her computer open.

She stares at the words on page 170; **Julianne knew what she was in for. She had always been able to understand his idiosyncrasies, as he did hers.**

She thinks for a moment and then deletes; **as he did hers.**

She looks back out the window, deep in thought.

EXT. DIRT PATH - DAY

The sun is shining bright. Jennifer jogs down a dirt path surrounded by shrubs and wild geraniums.

FLASH TO:

EXT. DIRT PATH - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A WOMAN'S BARE FEET running frantically down the dirt path. SAME SHOT FROM THE OPENING OF THE MOVIE.

END FLASH

EXT. DIRT PATH - DAY

CLOSE ON JENNIFER'S RUNNING SHOES, jogging down the same dirt path.

EXT. DIRT PATH - DAY

CLOSE ON JENNIFER'S FACE, as she jogs deep in thought.

FLASH TO:

EXT. DIRT PATH - NIGHT

CLOSE ON THE WOMAN'S FEET running frantically. AGAIN, SAME SHOT FROM THE OPENING.

END FLASH

EXT. DIRT PATH - DAY

Jennifer picks up her pace, now running in a full sprint.

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF - DAY

She rounds a corner as the dirt path opens up and the edge of the cliff is directly in front of her. She abruptly stops herself, just in time.

JENNIFER
(out of breath)
Holy shit.

A large stone at her feet falls off the ledge. She watches it plummet, crashing on the rocks far below. The same rocks where the troubled woman's broken, twisted body lay in the opening.

For a moment, Jennifer closes her eyes. Invigorated, she steps back, away from the edge. She looks out at the horizon. AN IDEA COMES TO HER.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Fuck, yeah.

Jennifer turns and runs back towards the manor.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - DAY

Jennifer is back at her computer. The screen open to page 170. SHE PRESSES SELECT ALL AND DELETES ALL 170 PAGES. An empty computer screen in front of her.

She takes a deep, satisfied breath and then begins to write on the empty page; **When she stepped out into the sunlight, she took with her a desire she had long forgotten. She took with her a glimpse of who she once was...**

Her cell phone buzzes from across the room; we see that it's Steven. Jennifer doesn't move from her desk; she's finally in the zone.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - SUNSET

The sun is going down, and Jennifer, wearing a different outfit, is still writing. A dirty French press, coffee cups, water glasses, and plates with crumbs surround her; she's been at it for a few days.

She's on page 60. She types in one last sentence; **It was the sweet smell of wild geraniums.**

Jennifer leans back against her chair, pleased. She realizes the sun is setting. She presses save on her computer and drops her work into the USB DRIVE.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR, POOLSIDE - SUNSET

Jennifer exits the back of the manor. SHE STOPS TO SHUT THE DOOR and presses a code into the modern keypad. Similar to the lock on the front door.

A BUZZING sound is heard as the door locks.

FROM THE POV OF AN UNSEEN PERSON IN THE WOODS, someone watches Jennifer as she walks across the poolside patio towards the dirt path that leads to the cliffs.

EXT. BLUFFS - SUNSET

Jennifer stands back out on the cliff, her feet a few inches from the edge. She watches the sun start to dip below the horizon over the water.

She closes her eyes, letting the orange light illuminate her face.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR, POOLSIDE - DUSK

The sun has set, and darkness is starting to take over.
Jennifer emerges from the path that leads to the bluffs.

The lights are now on in the parlour. She hesitates, trying
to remember if she left them on.

Jennifer walks across the patio to the back door. She reaches
for the keypad but instead tries the door first. IT'S
UNLOCKED. WTF?

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - NIGHT

Jennifer nervously enters the parlour.

JENNIFER

Hello?

Kathleen is standing at the desk in front of her computer.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Kathleen?

A bit startled.

KATHLEEN

There you are.

Jennifer stiffens.

JENNIFER

What are you doing?

Kathleen beams as she moves to greet Jennifer.

KATHLEEN

I brought dinner.

Jennifer doesn't budge.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Did the writing go well?

JENNIFER

(pointed)

How did you get in here?

KATHLEEN

The door was unlocked.

JENNIFER

No, it wasn't.

Kathleen looks carefully at Jennifer.

KATHLEEN
Are you okay?

JENNIFER
(stern)
No. You can't just come inside.

KATHLEEN
(upset)
I'm sorry. I wanted to surprise you.

JENNIFER
You spooked me.

KATHLEEN
I'm so sorry.

JENNIFER
But how did you get in here? The door was locked.

KATHLEEN
It wasn't. I promise.

Jennifer looks around, confused.

JENNIFER
I know I locked it.

KATHLEEN
I came in the front. Are you sure?

JENNIFER
(confused)
I don't know.

Kathleen notices the geraniums on the table.

KATHLEEN
They look beautiful there. Such a sweet smell.

Jennifer finally softens.

JENNIFER
You said you brought dinner?

Kathleen lights up again.

KATHLEEN
I did.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR, POOLSIDE - NIGHT

It's a hot, muggy summer night. Jennifer and Kathleen, mid-conversation, sit poolside at the wooden table, clearly enjoying each other's company. A gorgeous spread of food is laid out before them, along with an open bottle of red wine.

KATHLEEN
You deleted everything?

JENNIFER
I had to. I couldn't find my way
back in. It had been so long.

KATHLEEN
Sometimes you have to just burn it
all to the ground.

JENNIFER
Or jump off a cliff.

KATHLEEN
Or get pushed off one.

Jennifer takes in Kathleen's deep blue eyes. A silence lingers between them. She self-consciously looks away.

Kathleen smiles and looks up at the stars illuminating the summer sky.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
I bet we can see shooting stars
tonight.

Jennifer looks up.

JENNIFER
Maybe.

KATHLEEN
(softly)
Come swim with me.

Jennifer tries to laugh the invitation off.

Kathleen stands and slips off her sundress, wearing nothing underneath. Jennifer takes a large sip of her wine.

JENNIFER
Honestly.

KATHLEEN
Come.

Kathleen moves to the pool and walks down the stone steps into the shallow end.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
You are still young and free.

Jennifer laughs to herself and pours the rest of the wine into her glass.

Kathleen eases herself into the deep end.

JENNIFER
Is it cold?

KATHLEEN
It's wonderful.

Kathleen lays on her back and floats. Jennifer watches.

Long beat.

Impulsively, Jennifer gulps back her wine and then starts to unbutton her shirt.

Kathleen remains floating, seemingly not paying any attention.

Jennifer slips her shorts off and then, in just her bra and underwear, walks over to the pool steps.

Kathleen floats, staring up at the stars.

Jennifer takes a deep breath, shakes her head in disbelief at what she's about to do, and then undoes her bra and quickly slips off her underwear. Just as quickly, she walks into the pool and submerges her body, keeping her head above the surface.

Jennifer watches Kathleen and then leans back to float as well.

The stars twinkle in the night sky. After a moment, A STAR SHOOTs BY.

Jennifer stands, excited, keeping her body submerged in the water.

JENNIFER
Did you see that?

Kathleen doesn't respond; she calmly floats. Her breasts poking out above the water. Jennifer watches for a moment and then lays back and outstretches her arms.

ANOTHER STAR SHOOTS ACROSS THE SKY.

This time Jennifer doesn't move, she stays calm, taking in the beauty of the night.

Jennifer feels Kathleen's hand softly grasp hers as they float. Jennifer doesn't move, she lets it happen. They float, like starfish, naked in the water, holding hands.

Kathleen stands and gently pulls Jennifer closer to her. Jennifer still doesn't move, letting Kathleen support her floating body. Jennifer's breasts poke above the water.

Kathleen slowly circles her fingertips around Jennifer's nipple. Jennifer, only slightly startled, closes her eyes. Kathleen tenderly puts her mouth around Jennifer's hard, wet nipple. Jennifer softly gasps as she opens her eyes, feeling Kathleen's tongue on her breast. Jennifer softly bites her lower lip.

Kathleen now moves to Jennifer's lips. Jennifer stands, inches from Kathleen. A palpable electricity between them.

KATHLEEN
(soft whisper)
Is this okay?

Jennifer lets her desire take over and leans into Kathleen, kissing her lips gently. Kathleen kisses Jennifer back with tiny soft kisses.

Jennifer can't help but touch Kathleen's firm round breasts. She holds them in her wet hands.

Kathleen's hand reaches under the water. Jennifer gasps as Kathleen's fingers penetrate her. Jennifer's mouth opens as her head falls back, and she lets Kathleen pleasure her.

JUMP INTO:

INSIDE JENNIFER'S POV, Her eyes are closed and everything is dark with bits of light from the pool bleeding in. The sound of her own heavy BREATHING is all we hear. A swirl of pink and purple colour seep into the darkness as Jennifer is brought to an orgasmic release.

As Jennifer opens her eyes, all she sees is Kathleen's soft stare. Jennifer doesn't move, unsure of what happens next.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
(whisper)
You're wonderful.

END JENNIFER'S POV.

Kathleen gently kisses her lips and then glides herself away and swims across the pool. Jennifer stays put, absolutely dumbstruck.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
(casually)
I better get back to my family now.

Kathleen pulls herself out of the deep end of the pool and onto the stone patio.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
They'll be expecting me. Will you
be okay with the dishes? I hate to
leave you with such a mess.

Jennifer tries to be nonchalant but can barely speak.

JENNIFER
That's fine.

Kathleen pulls her sundress over her head and rings out her long wet hair.

KATHLEEN
You sure?

Jennifer nods, staying submerged in the water, seemingly paralyzed.

Kathleen sees that Jennifer hasn't moved. She walks to the edge of the pool.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
(softly)
You okay?

She tries to be normal.

JENNIFER
Yeah, no. Thank you... for dinner.

Kathleen playfully laughs.

KATHLEEN
I'll see you soon, then?

JENNIFER
Yup.

Kathleen blows Jennifer a kiss and leaves. Utterly confused, Jennifer submerges her head underwater.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alone in the king-sized brass bed, Jennifer sleeps soundly. A shadow from a tree outside the window dances on the wall in front of her.

Her cell phone is on the nightstand. Ten missed calls on the screen, all from Steven.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - DAY

Once again, at her computer, Jennifer writes like the wind. Coffee cups and dirty dishes have already piled up; she's been at it for a few days.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR, POOLSIDE - DAY

It's a cloudy, drizzly day. Jennifer sits on the stone patio, smoking a cigarette.

She stares at her phone, conflicted with emotion. There are now 28 missed calls from Steven. She knows she needs to call back.

She finally texts: **Sorry... been in the zone. Will call tomorrow.**

Jennifer looks back out at the pool, at the place where Kathleen had pleased her. She takes a long drag of her cigarette and exhales deeply before stubbing it out.

Her pack is now empty. She crumples it in her hand and stands up, on a mission.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, BATHROOM - DAY

Dripping wet, Jennifer steps out of the shower. She grabs a towel off a rack and wraps her naked body.

Heat from the shower has left the bathroom full of steam. Jennifer turns on the sink, letting the water run as she puts toothpaste on her toothbrush.

The fog on the mirror begins to dissipate as Jennifer brushes her teeth. She watches herself slowly appear in the mirror.

JENNIFER'S IMAGINATION: Through the fog, Jennifer imagines Kathleen, naked, standing behind her. Jennifer's breathing gets shallow as she drops her towel, and Kathleen steps forward, reaching her arms around her, cupping her breasts. Kathleen's mouth whispers, but STEVEN'S VOICE comes out.

STEVEN (V.O.)
(whisper)
I think you're wonderful.

Jennifer snaps out of it, standing alone, naked, in the mirror, guilt-ridden.

She shakes off the guilt and continues getting ready.

EXT. BEACH ROAD - DAY

It is still a cloudy, drizzly day. The beach is empty except for a man walking his dog. Jennifer, WEARING MORE MAKE-UP THAN WE'VE SEEN, rides by on her bike.

INT. GENERAL STORE, SAINT ANNE - DAY

Berta is behind the counter ringing up sandwiches for a YOUNG FAMILY. Jennifer stands with two bottles of red wine, waiting for the exchange to finish.

Another feeling of guilt washes over Jennifer as she watches the doting MOTHER, 30, wipe her THREE-YEAR-OLD's nose while her FIVE-YEAR-OLD tugs on her shirt.

After the husband pays, the family walks away, leaving Jennifer standing there. Berta notices.

BERTA
You run out of smokes?

JENNIFER
Gauloises, blue, please.

Berta fetches the pack as Jennifer places the wine on the counter.

BERTA
Having a bit of a party up there?

JENNIFER
(guilty)
No. Just working through writer's block.

BERTA
(teasing)
That'll do it.

Berta places the pack on the counter and rings her up. Jennifer shifts awkwardly. Berta watches her.

EXT. MAIN STREET/GENERAL STORE, SAINT ANNE - DAY

Jennifer, holding her bag of groceries, exits and leans against the wall of the general store, grounding herself.

The street is full of tourists milling about, making the best of a crappy weather day.

POV OF AN UNSEEN PERSON ACROSS THE STREET, someone watches Jennifer as she places the wine in the milk crate on the back of her bike.

EXT. HIGH STREET/MONROE FAMILY INN - DAY

Jennifer nervously pushes her bike down another busy cobblestone road.

She sees a sign that reads: THE MONROE FAMILY INN, hung above the entrance of a charming stone building.

She stops and musters up her courage.

JENNIFER
(to herself)
Whatever it takes.

INT. MONROE FAMILY INN - DAY

A bell rings over the door as Jennifer nervously enters the empty, cozy, old-world reception area. A fire roars in the hearth in front of a dark leather couch and wooden coffee table covered in travel magazines.

Jennifer cautiously glances around the room. She is alone; no one is behind the reception desk. Old family photos line the walls.

Curiously, Jennifer steps closer to scan the photos. Her eyes land on a picture of a YOUNG WOMAN, 19, standing on the beach, the wind blowing through her long blonde hair. **Is this the same woman from the opening?**

BOBBIE (O.S.)
Did you need an umbrella?

Jennifer jumps, startled by BOBBIE MONROE, 48, a kind-hearted English woman, around the SAME AGE AS JENNIFER, standing right behind her.

BOBBIE (CONT'D)
Sorry to startle you. I thought you
were one of my guests. Is it
raining out there yet?

JENNIFER
No. Not yet.

Bobbie notices Jennifer's nerves.

BOBBIE
Is there something I could help you
with? Did you need a room?

JENNIFER
No... Umm.
(embarrassed by their same
age)
You're Kathleen's mother?

Sadness washes over Bobbie's face.

BOBBIE
Yes. Did you know my Kathleen?

JENNIFER
(stammering)
She's been doing some work for me,
groceries and stuff, and I didn't
get her number and just... I wanted
to pay her.

BOBBIE
I'm sorry, dear. You must have the
wrong girl. My Kathleen died about
five years ago.

Jennifer is gobsmacked.

JENNIFER
(barely audible)
Kathleen Monroe?

BOBBIE
Yes.

Bobbie shakes off her sadness.

BOBBIE (CONT'D)
Well, I wonder if the clouds will
open? You can't predict the
weather around here - it changes
like the wind.

Jennifer can barely breathe.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry.

She turns and rushes out of the inn.

EXT. COASTAL ROAD - DAY

Jennifer's feet pedal the old three-speed bike as fast as she can down the empty coastal road. Her groceries bump against the wooden dairy crate. Her cheeks are flushed, and her breathing laboured as she makes her way back to the manor, miles away from town.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's a hot, muggy night, and the sound of the POURING RAIN can be heard outside.

Jennifer, on edge, sits at the centre island, drinking a glass of red wine, staring at the kitchen door.

She looks up at the clock on the wall. It's almost 10 pm.

JENNIFER

(tormented)

Fuck!

Jennifer stands and angrily throws her glass of wine into the sink. It shatters into pieces.

There is a loud KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

Jennifer turns to see "Kathleen" soaked from the rain looking through the window.

KATHLEEN

(warm)

Jennifer?

She holds up a bag of groceries and smiles. Jennifer almost softens at the sight of her, then stiffens. She centres herself and then opens the door.

Kathleen stands there with a disarming smile.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

I brought dinner.

Livid, Jennifer doesn't move.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

JENNIFER
(quiet rage)
Who the fuck are you?

She knows she's been caught.

KATHLEEN
(with resignation)
I can explain.

JENNIFER
You can explain pretending to be a
dead person?

KATHLEEN
(deeply earnest)
Yes.

JENNIFER
I don't even know your fucking
name!

KATHLEEN
(vulnerable and scared)
I know... It's Rebecca. Rebecca
Hildreth.

KATHLEEN WILL NOW BE CALLED REBECCA IN HER CHARACTER
DESCRIPTION.

JENNIFER
Who the fuck are you!?

Tears well up in Rebecca's eyes.

REBECCA
May I come in?

Jennifer's anger is steady and strong.

JENNIFER
No. Tell me who you are.

REBECCA
I saw you getting off the ferry,
and I couldn't believe it. I've
wanted to meet you for so long.
Please, let me come in and explain.

Wait, what?

JENNIFER
(confused)
What are you talking about?

Rebecca wipes her tears and takes a deep breath before coming clean.

REBECCA
Your novels... they changed my
life.

Jennifer is floored.

JENNIFER
You're a fan?

REBECCA
(pleading)
I'm someone who adores your work,
who adores you. I've always wanted
to meet you, and then it just
happened. Honestly.

There is an earnest sincerity to Rebecca's passionate plea.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
Last night. That was real. That was
me. I promise!

JENNIFER
You pretended to be a dead person!

REBECCA
I know. I'm staying at the inn, and
I thought if I were someone local,
you would trust me. It was the
first person I thought of. I'm
sorry.

JENNIFER
She's dead.

REBECCA
She was beautiful.

Rebecca swallows her tears.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
I had just seen her photo on the
wall... Honestly, it was the first
person I could think of.

Jennifer doesn't know how to react.

JENNIFER
You can't fuck with people like
this!

REBECCA
(small)
I know.

Jennifer steps back, letting Rebecca come into the entrance of
the kitchen.

JENNIFER
(confused)
This is not okay.

Rebecca slowly enters.

REBECCA
I know.

Jennifer tries to make sense of everything.

JENNIFER
How did you know I was here?
Writing, all of it, how did you
know?

REBECCA
I saw you get off the ferry. That's
it. I promise. I saw you, and I
couldn't believe it, and then I saw
you again riding your bike, and I
just wanted to help you. I just
wanted to know you.

Jennifer shakes her head, trying to wrap her brain around
what Rebecca is telling her.

JENNIFER
(skeptical)
You recognized me?

REBECCA
(passionate)
I did. I've read all of your books.
(proudly)
In order, starting with "Time For
After." Your stories make me
feel...
(passionate)
everything.

Jennifer almost softens.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
(quietly begging)
Please... I need you to forgive me.

JENNIFER
This is so fucked up.

REBECCA
I know it is.

With mixed emotions, Jennifer stares at Rebecca, who looks vulnerable and scared.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
I wish I could go back and had just
told you the truth.

Rebecca's sundress is soaked, her hard nipples can be seen through the sheer material. Her hair is wet, and the rain has moistened her face. Jennifer can't help herself. Rebecca senses her want.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Please...

JENNIFER
(whisper)
Please, what?

Rebecca walks closer to her; both their breathing gets heavier.

REBECCA
(whisper)
Forgive me.

Jennifer reaches her hand behind Rebecca's head and holds her hair tight in her fingers; she pulls Rebecca's head back forcefully. Rebecca lets her.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
(begging)
Please.

FLASH TO:

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF - NIGHT

The troubled young woman, from the opening, stands on the edge of the cliff; her eyes are closed. The other woman's voice is behind her.

OTHER WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(out of breath)
Please...

END FLASH

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer still holds Rebecca's head back forcefully.

JENNIFER
Say it again.

REBECCA
(begging)
Please.

FLASH TO:

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF - NIGHT

The troubled woman gently smiles and leans back, disappearing off the edge of the cliff.

END FLASH

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer forcefully pushes Rebecca against the centre island, her hand still pulling Rebecca's hair. She holds Rebecca's face inches from her own, both women breathing heavily.

With her other hand, Jennifer puts two of her fingers into Rebecca's mouth, making her suck them until they're very wet.

Jennifer slowly removes them and then puts her hand under Rebecca's sundress, penetrating her with her wet fingers. Rebecca gasps.

JENNIFER
Is this what you want?

REBECCA
(whispers)
Yes.

Rebecca groans, biting her own lip. Both women stare into each other's eyes as Jennifer brings Rebecca to a climax.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Sunlight shines through the partly-opened drapes. Rebecca and Jennifer sleep in the king-sized bed, naked, white sheets wrapped around them.

Jennifer wakes up and looks over at Rebecca sleeping beside her. A wave of guilt washes through her; she lays back down. Jennifer glances back; Rebecca's beauty makes her smile.

Taking in the reality of the situation, Jennifer, self-consciously covers her face with her hands and giggles.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - DAY

Wearing her silk pyjamas, Jennifer is back at her computer, writing like the wind. Her fingers are flying.

She looks up from her keyboard to see Rebecca sunbathing naked near the pool. She fondly watches for a moment, then looks off, catching her reflection in the mirror on the parlour wall.

JENNIFER'S REFLECTION: Her hair tousled from too much sex, her shirt unbuttoned, her face flush. She looks relaxed and free.

Intrigued, Jennifer stands and walks closer to the mirror. She stares at herself, at what she has become.

HER REFLECTION SHIFTS BACK TO LOOKING OLD AND TIRED. It's all just perspective.

She shakes it off and returns to her desk to write.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - DUSK

The sun has set, and Jennifer is still writing.

She comes up for air and looks to the backyard, where she sees candles flickering on the table. She smiles.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR, POOLSIDE - NIGHT

Jennifer and Rebecca sit at the wooden table drinking wine. A beautiful spread of food is laid out before them.

JENNIFER

I haven't written like this... I think ever.

Jennifer takes a long drag of her cigarette, Rebecca watches.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
It's like something has broken open
inside of me. This floodgate.

She takes another drag.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
I know it's not their fault, but...
my girls suck the *life* out of me.
They need so much attention. Steven
needs to so much attention. The
house needs so much attention. It's
all so fucking boring. There's
literally no room left... for
anything... remotely inspiring.

She looks up at the stars.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
I don't know if I ever want to go
back.

Rebecca watches her carefully.

REBECCA
I think you're wonderful.

Jennifer laughs.

JENNIFER
I think I'm selfish.

REBECCA
I had a full time nanny until I was
five and then my parents sent me
off to boarding school. I would see
them summers and holidays until I
was eight. Then that was even too
much for their busy schedules so
they shipped me off for the summers
as well. So, you're not selfish.
You're overwhelmed.

Jennifer notices a sadness about Rebecca she hadn't seen
before.

JENNIFER
That sounds very lonely.

REBECCA
(light)
I suppose.

Rebecca reaches over and takes Jennifer's pack of cigarettes.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
May I have one?

JENNIFER
Oh? So, now you smoke?

REBECCA
I don't really have any rules.
(cheeky)
Bad parenting.

They both laugh as Rebecca lights up like a pro. Jennifer takes another sip of wine.

JENNIFER
Have you been to the bluffs at night?

REBECCA
From here?

Jennifer looks towards the direction of the sea.

JENNIFER
Yeah.

REBECCA
No.

Jennifer raises her eyebrows.

JENNIFER
Come.

REBECCA
Now? No.

JENNIFER
I thought you had no rules?

REBECCA
I'm also not stupid. It's really dark out there.

Jennifer stands.

JENNIFER
Come with me.

She turns and runs towards the path that leads to the cliffs. Rebecca laughs out loud and chases her.

REBECCA

Wait!

EXT. DIRT PATH - NIGHT

Jennifer runs through the shrubs and wildflowers, dimly lit by the stars and the light of the moon.

CLOSE ON REBECCA'S SANDALS AND SUNDRESS running after her. There's a slight panic in her voice.

REBECCA

Wait, please!

Jennifer, smiling, looks back at Rebecca chasing her.

FLASH TO:

EXT. DIRT PATH - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A WOMAN'S BARE FEET, running frantically down a dirt path. SAME SHOT FROM THE OPENING OF THE MOVIE.

END FLASH

EXT. DIRT PATH - NIGHT

Jennifer picks up speed, having run this path numerous times now. Rebecca follows not far behind.

FLASH TO:

EXT. DIRT PATH - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A WOMAN'S BARE FEET, running frantically down a dirt path.

END FLASH

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF - NIGHT

Jennifer rounds the corner as the dirt path opens up to the field before the side of the cliff. The night sky illuminates the surrounding. Jennifer stops abruptly one foot from the edge. Rebecca runs up beside her, stopping just in time.

The two of them, exhilarated and out of breath, look down at the ocean waves crashing far below.

JENNIFER
(breathless)
It makes me want to jump.

Rebecca reaches over and grabs Jennifer's hand.

REBECCA
(yearning)
On three?

Jennifer laughs.

JENNIFER
One.

Rebecca's eyes are wild.

REBECCA
Two.

Realizing she actually might jump, Jennifer yanks her hand away, breaking the moment between them. She steps back, away from the edge.

JENNIFER
In another life.

Rebecca closes her eyes, still soaking in the moment.

REBECCA
(whisper)
In another life.

Jennifer watches her, turned on.

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF, FIELD - NIGHT

Seemingly not able to get enough, Jennifer kisses Rebecca passionately. Both women are naked, devouring each other.

The moonlight illuminates their naked bodies as the shadows of the tree branches dance on the field around them. The sound of ocean waves crash far below.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Sunlight shines through the partly-opened drapes. Both women sleep in the king-sized bed, naked, white sheets wrapped around them.

Jennifer slowly wakes up to see Rebecca's piercing blue eyes softly staring at her.

REBECCA

Hi...

JENNIFER

(sleepy)

Hi...

Rebecca props herself up on her elbow and then removes her talisman heart pendant and puts it around Jennifer's neck.

REBECCA

(whispers)

Vous y etes empreinte.

JENNIFER

What does that mean?

Rebecca turns the talisman over and shows her where those words have been engraved in french.

REBECCA

You are imprinted on my heart.

Jennifer smiles and holds the pendant in her hand.

JENNIFER

It's beautiful.

REBECCA

So are you.

Jennifer blushes.

JENNIFER

Who gave this to you?

Rebecca holds back tears.

REBECCA

Someone a long time ago. I haven't felt like this since then. I want you to have it.

Jennifer smiles, soaking in Rebecca's attention.

JENNIFER

(genuinely interested)

What's your favourite novel?

Rebecca leans over and softly kisses Jennifer's breast.

REBECCA

Yours, of course.

Jennifer laughs.

JENNIFER
Okay, which one?

She traces her tongue around Jennifer's areola.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Tell me.

Rebecca slowly moves down Jennifer's body, softly kissing her belly.

REBECCA
Which one is yours?

Jennifer relaxes into her pillow, enjoying Rebecca's soft touch.

JENNIFER
Probably "Time For After." If I had
to choose.

REBECCA
I loved that one too.

She softly moves further down Jennifer's body, kissing below her belly button.

JENNIFER
My writing was effortless then.

Rebecca moves her body between Jennifer's legs.

REBECCA
(agreeing)
Hmmm.

JENNIFER
What about "By The Dying Fire?" Did
you read that one?

REBECCA
I did. I loved them all.

She spreads Jennifer's legs with her hands and begins to pleasure her. Jennifer moans, getting off on what Rebecca is doing and talking about her own work.

JENNIFER
Which character is your favourite?

REBECCA
(whisper)
Tell me yours.

Rebecca doesn't stop. Jennifer arches her back in ecstasy.

JENNIFER
(breathless)
Ah, fuck... I asked you first.

She still doesn't answer. Jennifer suspiciously looks down at Rebecca's head between her legs, pleasuring her.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Tell me...

Still no response. Jennifer moans.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Edward Rochester...Edward Fairfax
Rochester.

Rebecca finally answers as she continues to devour her.

REBECCA
Mine too. He's also my favourite.

Wide-eyed, Jennifer stares at the woman between her legs, feverishly pleasuring her. Tormented, she lets Rebecca bring her to an orgasm.

JENNIFER
Ah, fuck...

Jennifer arches her back in anguished ecstasy.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
(moaning)
Ah....

STEVEN (O.S.)
Jennifer!?

BAM!! She forcefully shoves Rebecca off the bed, slamming her head against the wall.

JENNIFER
(vehement whisper)
Who the fuck are you!?

Jennifer GRABS REBECCA'S SUNDRESS from the nightstand and quickly dresses.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
(vehement whisper)
Edward Fairfax Rochester is the
Byronic hero in Charlotte Brontë's
1847 novel Jane Eyre. You dumb
fucking bitch.

Rebecca remains shellshocked.

STEVEN (O.S.)
Jen!?

She flattens her hair down and tries to make herself
presentable.

JENNIFER
(vehement whisper)
You're Kathleen Monroe, and your
family owns the fucking inn.

Jennifer exits the room, leaving Rebecca stunned, naked on
the floor.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, HALLWAY/MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Jennifer leans against the wall outside the master bedroom,
reeling.

STEVEN (O.S.)
Jen?

She takes a deep breath, gathers herself, and walks down the
stairs.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, HALLWAY/PARLOUR - DAY

Jennifer tensely walks down the hall towards the parlour. She
can see Steven sitting at the messy desk, reading her
computer screen.

JENNIFER
(forced cheerfulness)
Steven?

Steven turns around, elated.

STEVEN
You found the zone.
(referring to her work)
This is wild stuff, babe.

Steven stands. Jennifer continues her act of happy surprise.

JENNIFER
What are you doing here?

STEVEN
Seriously, where are you finding
this? Damn, it's good.

Jennifer nervously laughs.

JENNIFER
(mocking)
Language.

STEVEN
Come here, you.

Jennifer walks towards Steven, the sundress giving her an
ease he's not used to.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Look at you.

Steven takes her in his arms, breathing her in. The lingering
smell of sex subconsciously turning him on. Jennifer melts
into him, soaking in his safety.

JENNIFER
(whisper)
I'm glad you're here.

STEVEN
You had me worried. I called over a
hundred times.

JENNIFER
I know.

She proudly looks into his eyes.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
I was in it.

Steven smiles.

STEVEN
I don't want to break it. I'll
leave tomorrow.

Her nerves return.

JENNIFER
(desperate)
No. You don't need to go.

Steven eyes Jennifer, concerned.

STEVEN
Are you okay?

JENNIFER
(covering)
I'm just exhausted. Who has the girls?

STEVEN
My sister. She took the week off.

JENNIFER
(hopeful)
Stay.

STEVEN
I'll stay a few days. Then I want to head over to London. Visit the publishing house, maybe show them a few of these pages.

Steven raises his eyebrows proudly.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
This is what they wanted, Jen. This is what we needed.

Jennifer looks at the relieved look on Steven's face.

JENNIFER
I know.

They share an unspoken moment of hope.

STEVEN
Might even grab a few pints with some of my old Oxford lads. Do the rounds.

Steven curiously looks over Jennifer's shoulder.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Hello?

Jennifer turns to see Kathleen, now dressed in Jennifer's clothes, looking more sophisticated than usual, standing in the doorway of the parlour, having overheard their conversation. Jennifer's heart drops.

REBECCA WILL NOW BE REFERRED TO AS KATHLEEN AGAIN IN THE SCRIPT.

KATHLEEN
(coyly)
Hello.

Jennifer quickly jumps in.

JENNIFER
Steven, this is Kathleen Monroe,
her family owns an inn in town.
(to Kathleen)
This is my husband.

Steven smiles proudly.

STEVEN
And agent.

KATHLEEN
It's lovely to meet you. Jennifer
let me spend the night. It's such a
big place.

Steven raises his eyebrows at Jennifer, mocking what the
situation looks like. She quickly buries the joke.

JENNIFER
Kathleen's been helping me out.
Bringing groceries every couple of
days.

STEVEN
Perfect. How convenient is that?

Jennifer gives Kathleen a pointed look.

JENNIFER
Very.

STEVEN
(teasing)
Did you sleep in the big bed or the
little bed?

Kathleen doesn't get it.

JENNIFER
Very funny. She slept in the little
bed.

STEVEN
Well, I'm glad you've helped
inspire my lady.

Kathleen is earnestly elated.

KATHLEEN
It was my pleasure.

Jennifer jumps in.

JENNIFER
It was the place, really. You
should see the grounds. It's...
quite spectacular.

STEVEN
(earnest)
Whatever it is, it's good stuff.

JENNIFER
Thank you.

She soaks in Steven's praise, Kathleen watches.

STEVEN
(to Jennifer)
Thank you.

KATHLEEN
(uncomfortable)
I'll just let myself out.

JENNIFER
(pointed)
Of course, your mother must be
expecting you.

Jennifer and Kathleen lock eyes.

KATHLEEN
Probably.

Jennifer shoots her daggers.

JENNIFER
I'll walk you out then.

KATHLEEN
No, no. Don't bother.

JENNIFER
No bother.

Steven watches Jennifer leave the room with Kathleen.

STEVEN
Nice to meet you!

Unaware of the drama, he sits back down at Jennifer's computer, excited to continue reading.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR - DAY

Jennifer grabs Kathleen's arm with force and leads her towards her car.

KATHLEEN

Ouch.

JENNIFER

If you come back here again, I will call the police.

KATHLEEN

And tell them what?

JENNIFER

That you're a sick person.

They reach the car. Jennifer opens Kathleen's door.

KATHLEEN

But look how inspired you are. I did that.

JENNIFER

Fuck you.

Kathleen, tears in her eyes, looks to Jennifer.

KATHLEEN

Jennifer, please wait. You don't understand.

JENNIFER

I understand that you get off on messing with people. That's what I understand.

Kathleen won't get in the car. Jennifer glares at her.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

(glaring)

Get in the fucking car.

Kathleen has tears in her eyes.

KATHLEEN

(softly)

Steven is my father.

Jennifer bursts out laughing.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
I didn't know how to tell you. I
didn't expect for us to connect
like we did.

JENNIFER
What the fuck are you talking about
now?

Kathleen calmly repeats the outrageous statement.

KATHLEEN
Steven is my father.

Jennifer is dumbstruck.

JENNIFER
You are so twisted.

KATHLEEN
(desperate)
Please... just listen to me.

JENNIFER
My husband is not your father.

KATHLEEN
He is.

Jennifer stares at Kathleen incredulously.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
He went to Oxford with my mother.

JENNIFER
(maddening laugh)
You're out of your mind.

KATHLEEN
It's true. She works at the
publishing house in London.

Jennifer hesitates; why does she know so much?

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
(pleading)
He doesn't know. When he moved back
to the US... when he left, she was
pregnant. She didn't want a
complicated life, so she didn't
tell him.

JENNIFER
(drained)
Stop it.

KATHLEEN
I grew up in England and spent
summers in France with my
grandparents.

Jennifer doesn't move.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
My mother finally told me who my
father was six months ago. I wanted
to know the woman in his life. I
intern at my mother's office, I saw
on the roster that you were taking
a retreat here, to finish your
book.

Jennifer, exhausted by this woman's lies, walks away, towards
the house.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
Jennifer!

Jennifer stops, but DOES NOT turn around.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
(pleading)
Please don't tell him. I'm not
ready.

Jennifer walks into the house, slamming the door.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer leans her back against the door, taking a moment.

STEVEN (O.S.)
Jen?

She shakes off her emotions and heads to the parlour.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - DAY

Steven stands in the window curiously watching Kathleen drive
off down the driveway.

Jennifer walks into the room.

JENNIFER

Well? What are you waiting for?

She enthusiastically gestures to her computer.

STEVEN

What was that about?

JENNIFER

Nothing. She's just a little needy.
I think she has mommy issues.

Steven laughs.

STEVEN

You're too young to be her mommy.

Jennifer laughs, hiding the crazy drama she's in.

JENNIFER

Read, read. Please. I want to know
where I'm at.

Steven heads back to the desk.

STEVEN

How's the coffee in this joint?

JENNIFER

On it.

Jennifer excitedly rushes off towards the kitchen.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - DAY

Steven sits at the desk laser-focused, reading Jennifer's work. A half-empty French press is beside him. An anxious Jennifer stands nearby, looking out the parlour window.

Steven laughs at something he's just read. Jennifer turns and studies his face. He can't take his eyes off her work. She proudly smiles but then catches her reflection in the mirror. A wave of guilt takes over. She's barely able to breathe.

JENNIFER

(covering)

I'll make more coffee.

Jennifer grabs the French press.

STEVEN

Yes. Thank you.

He never looks up, not wanting to break his concentration.

Jennifer gets to the doorway of the parlour and turns back. She watches Steven engrossed in her work. She exhales reassuringly before leaving the room.

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF - DAY

The sun shines brightly as waves crash against the rocks, far below the steep rocky cliff.

EXT. DIRT PATH - DAY

Still wearing Kathleen's sundress, Jennifer eagerly leads Steven by the hand down the dirt path surrounded by shrubs and wild pink geraniums.

JENNIFER

It was right about here.

Steven, intrigued by Jennifer's excitement, takes in the beauty of their surroundings.

STEVEN

It's stunning.

JENNIFER

(animated)

It all just came to me. Like it just dropped in from the ether.

Remembering her epiphany.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Julianne doesn't need to stay with David. She may think she wants to, but when she travels that summer... a whole new perspective opens her life up. That's what I want this book to be about. Perspective, reality, illusion. What do we become as our perspectives change? Open. Twist.

Jennifer laughs to herself.

STEVEN

Poor David.

JENNIFER

Fuck David.

Steven doesn't scold but instead nods in agreement.

STEVEN
Yeah, fuck that guy.

They both laugh. Jennifer gets an idea.

JENNIFER
Close your eyes.

STEVEN
Why?

Kathleen's sundress blows in the breeze, highlighting Jennifer's athletic figure. He can't take his eyes off her.

JENNIFER
Just close your eyes.

Steven closes his eyes.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
No peeking.

He laughs and obeys. Jennifer grabs his hand and leads him down the dirt path.

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF - DAY

Jennifer leads Steven around the corner as the dirt path opens up, and the cliff's edge is directly in front of them.

JENNIFER
Don't open.

Steven feels the ocean breeze on his face; he slows his pace. Jennifer pulls on his hand.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Trust me.

He relaxes into Jennifer's guidance. She leads him right to the edge of the cliff.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Don't move.

Steven laughs curiously at her playfulness.

STEVEN
What are we...

JENNIFER

Shh.

She lets go of his hand and pulls her sundress over her head. She drops it on the ground and turns Steven to face her.

STEVEN

Can I open my eyes?

JENNIFER

Not yet.

Naked, she kneels on the dress, moves the TALISMAN HEART NECKLACE out of her way, and then begins to unbutton Steven's pants.

STEVEN

What are you doing?

JENNIFER

Shh... Don't open.

Jennifer begins to pleasure Steven. His eyes still shut, he moans.

STEVEN

(vulnerable)

What are you doing?

Jennifer doesn't answer. Steven grabs the back of her head as he feels her mouth on him.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

You're gonna make me cum.

She doesn't stop. It's been so long.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Wait.

Jennifer feverishly goes at it. Steven can't help himself from climaxing.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I'm going to cum.

JENNIFER

Now... Open now.

She brings him to an orgasm. Steven opens his eyes.

FROM STEVEN'S POV, the sunlight floods in across the horizon. The sea in front of him, pure ecstasy.

Realizing he's near the edge of a cliff, Steven instinctively steps back to safety.

STEVEN
(whisper)
Jennifer.

Jennifer looks up at him, her mouth wet and her eyes wild.

JENNIFER
(whisper)
No, Julianne.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR, POOLSIDE - NIGHT

The stars are out. Steven and Jennifer sit in front of a beautiful spread of food, sipping on wine.

STEVEN
Then Ruby looks at me, wide-eyed,
and says, "Dad! Everything's a
circle. Even the days of the week!"

JENNIFER
She did not.

STEVEN
I swear to you. She's brilliant,
that one. Like her mommy.

Steven pours the last of the wine.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Nice pendant. Is that new?

Jennifer puts her hand on the pendant.

JENNIFER
I forgot I was wearing it.
(lying)
No. I've had it.

Jennifer stares out at the spot where Kathleen had pleased her. She looks up at the stars, suddenly lost in thought.

Steven's phone buzzes. He reads the text.

STEVEN
Ah, nice. Gordon Burton. Haven't
seen that bloke in twenty years.

JENNIFER
Oxford?

STEVEN
He's wrangling the lads.

Jennifer watches Steven's childlike excitement as he texts Gordon back. Her curiosity takes over.

JENNIFER
(carefully)
Is there a woman at the London
office who went to Oxford with you?

STEVEN
Cheryl?

Jennifer sits up. She hasn't heard this name before.

JENNIFER
Who's Cheryl?

STEVEN
Just a woman who went to Oxford at
the same time as I did. Who used to
work at the publishing house. Why?

She can't help herself.

JENNIFER
Did you ever sleep with her?

Steven laughs out loud.

STEVEN
I don't think Cheryl would have
wanted to sleep with me.

JENNIFER
Are you sure?

STEVEN
Cheryl is a seven-foot-tall
lesbian.

JENNIFER
Does she have a child?

STEVEN
I have no idea. She hasn't worked
there in years. What's going on?

Jennifer's torment takes over.

JENNIFER
That woman. Who was here.

STEVEN

Kathleen?

She looks at the spot where Kathleen pleasured her.

JENNIFER

... She keeps fucking with me.

STEVEN

Language.

JENNIFER

I'm serious. First, she told me her name was Kathleen Monroe, and her family owns an inn in town.

Jennifer swallows her shame and continues.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Said she was here for the summer and... she offered to help me. She brought me groceries and beautiful flowers and cooked dinner for me...

STEVEN

Sounds heavenly.

JENNIFER

Then I find out Kathleen Monroe died years ago.

STEVEN

What?

JENNIFER

Then she tells me she's just a fan. That she loves my work and she just happened to see me on the ferry.

STEVEN

Are you serious?

JENNIFER

Yes, but then I realize she's never even read one of my books.

Steven stands.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Then right before she left yesterday morning, she told me she was your daughter.

STEVEN

Jesus.

JENNIFER

(loud whisper)

That woman keeps fucking with me.

Steven looks at Jennifer suspiciously.

STEVEN

Did something happen between you
two?

JENNIFER

What do you mean?

Steven is suddenly scared.

STEVEN

Jennifer, did you sleep with that
woman?

Jennifer begins to cry.

JENNIFER

It just happened.

Jennifer sighs, feeling a moment of relief from coming clean.
Steven takes that in.

STEVEN

(disappointed)

Really?

JENNIFER

(guilty)

You said whatever it takes.

STEVEN

(astonished)

Wow.

Steven turns away, needing a moment.

JENNIFER

Steven...

He looks at her like a vulnerable little boy.

STEVEN

Did you like it?

Jennifer sadly nods "yes."

STEVEN (CONT'D)
What's going on here, Jen?

JENNIFER
(tears in her eyes)
I don't know.

STEVEN
Fuck!

JENNIFER
(mutters)
... language

Steven walks away, leaving Jennifer reeling.

INT. PARLOUR, MANOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Steven storms in from the patio. He stands in the middle of the room, tormented.

He looks out at Jennifer sitting poolside, scared. He looks over at Jennifer's laptop on the old desk. He notices the flowers in the hand-painted Victorian vase. He scoffs.

In a fit of rage Steven's anger takes over and he throws the vase against the mirror hanging on the wall. Both shatter into a million little pieces.

Out the window we can see Jennifer stand, having heard the crash.

Steven sees his reflection through the shard of mirror still hanging on the wall. An angry, tired, bitter, older man stares back at him.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR - NIGHT

A taxi pulls to the front of the manor.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Steven is in the bedroom gathering his things. Jennifer timidly comes and stands in the doorway.

JENNIFER
(softly)
The taxi's here.

Steven doesn't answer.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
You said I've never written like
this before.

Nothing from Steven.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
She did something to me. Freed me.
You saw it.

He finally looks at her.

STEVEN
Pack your things, let's go.

JENNIFER
(surprised)
Now?

Steven sadly laughs. Tears fill his eyes.

STEVEN
(small)
What are you doing?

Jennifer takes a deep breath.

JENNIFER
I haven't had this feeling in so
long. I feel relevant.
(desperate)
I don't want to lose it. You don't
want me to lose it.

Steven explodes.

STEVEN
You fucked a stranger, Jen!

JENNIFER
It wasn't like that.

STEVEN
What was it like? Please, give me
the details. She lick your pussy?

JENNIFER
Stop it.

STEVEN
Tell me, I want to know. I haven't
been fucked in years!

JENNIFER
(vehemently)
It was freeing!

Steven stares at Jennifer incredulously. The two of them are silent.

STEVEN
Did you know in the Victorian era
the geranium represented stupidity?

Jennifer takes the punch and comes back.

JENNIFER
Love doesn't need restrictions. You
and I are more than that.

STEVEN
Are we?

JENNIFER
(desperate)
We need this.

Steven picks up his travel bag, and walks by Jennifer, exiting the room.

STEVEN
I don't need this.

Jennifer catches her breath. What the fuck is she doing?

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR - NIGHT

The taxi waits in the driveway. Steven loads his bag into the already-popped trunk.

Jennifer comes out the door, catching him before he gets in the cab.

JENNIFER
Steven!

Steven looks back at Jennifer.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Can I come home when I'm done?

He scoffs as he gets in the taxi, leaving Jennifer alone in the driveway.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR, POOLSIDE - NIGHT

Jennifer, still wearing the sundress, sits poolside with her phone on FaceTime.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT/EXT. SUV, MINI MALL PARKING LOT - DAY /CONTINUOUS

From the back of an SUV in a mini-mall parking lot, Ruby and Ella, full of energy, are buckled into their child car seats. It's the afternoon in Connecticut.

RUBY

When are you coming home, mommy?

JENNIFER

I'm not sure, baby.

ELLA

I like your dress.

RUBY

You look different, mommy.

ELLA

Are you writing like the wind?

JENNIFER

I am.

RUBY & ELLA

Yay!

ELLA

I knew you could do it.

BRIDGETTE, 30, Jennifer's sister-in-law, turns the phone towards herself.

BRIDGETTE

Can I talk to Steven real quick? He tried to call me, but I was driving.

Jennifer covers.

JENNIFER

He's not here yet.

BRIDGETTE

Really? I thought he landed yesterday morning?

JENNIFER
He missed the ferry. It's tricky
getting here.

BRIDGETTE
Got it. I'll try him after I drop
the girls at daycare.

JENNIFER
(sincere)
Thank you for watching them,
Bridgette.

BRIDGETTE
Anything for my favourite couple.

This hits Jennifer hard.

RUBY (O.S.)
I can't get my belt off!

Bridgette turns the phone back on the girls.

BRIDGETTE (O.S.)
Say goodbye to your mum.

Ella is already unbuckled and helping Ruby out of her car
seat.

ELLA & RUBY
Bye, mommy!

JENNIFER
Bye, babies.

ELLA
I'm not a baby.

The FaceTime ends.

INTERCUT ENDS:

Jennifer sits back against the lounge, visibly upset.

POV OF AN UNSEEN PERSON IN THE WOODS, someone watches
Jennifer.

REVEAL KATHLEEN, her breath is heavy as we realize she's
touching herself.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - NIGHT

Jennifer sweeps up the mess of the broken vase and shattered mirror. She carefully puts the pieces of the exquisite antique into a small trash can.

A jagged shard of mirror is left behind on the floor, unnoticed by Jennifer.

She picks up the branch of wilting geraniums and breathes in their fading sweet smell.

JENNIFER
(mocking herself)
Stupidity.

She carefully places the branch into another old vase.

EXT. FERRY, ENGLISH CHANNEL - SUNRISE

It's the break of day and the ferry storms through the foggy English Channel.

EXT. FERRY - SUNRISE

Steven stands at the railing looking out at the sea, pensive.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - EARLY MORNING

The morning mist can be seen out the window. Jennifer is at the desk, staring at the computer, not able to write.

INT/EXT. TAXI, HEATHROW AIRPORT - MORNING

The taxi drives down the highway towards the airport.

Steven is lost in thought starrng out the window. He sees the sign for departures.

STEVEN
(to himself)
God damn it, Jen.

He makes a decision.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
(to the cab driver)
How much further is it to London?

CAB DRIVER

That'd be another fifty minutes or so.

Steven sighs heavily and makes a decision.

STEVEN

Change of plans.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - DAY

Jennifer is still at the desk staring at her computer.

JENNIFER

Fuck!

Frustrated, she leans back in her chair.

She looks out at the pool, sparkling in the sunlight.

INT. ENGLISH PUB - DAY

An overly-crowded English college pub is in full swing, and it's barely noon.

A pitcher full of beer is slammed down on the table in front of Steven, sitting alone in a booth. He looks thirty years older than everyone else. A young HIP WAITRESS, 23, grabs an empty pitcher off the table.

WAITRESS

Take it easy, or you won't be walking out of here.

Steven, three sheets to the wind, slurs his words.

STEVEN

How old are you? If you don't mind me asking.

WAITRESS

Young enough to be your daughter.

STEVEN

You're very pretty.

The waitress ignores him and leaves. Steven pours himself another round.

GORDON BURTON, 40's, makes his way through the crowded bar clutching a folder. Steven spots him and waves him over.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

BURTON!

GORDON

(English accent)

Jesus, Phillips, you could have
picked a better place. The smell of
this pub makes me wankered.

Steven laughs and pours Gordon a pint. Gordon waves him off.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Not for me, sir. I've got a meeting
in an hour.

STEVEN

Come on. One pint.

GORDON

Fine, just the one, but I need my
wits about me.

Steven raises his glass.

STEVEN

To the good old times!

Steven downs his beer. Gordon placates and takes a sip.

GORDON

Here are the pages you asked me to
print.

STEVEN

Impossible to find a copy centre in
this city.

Gordon hands Steven the folder.

GORDON

Don't worry. I didn't peek.

Gordon raises his eyebrows. He peeked.

STEVEN

My wife has done it again, hasn't
she? Tormenting stuff.

GORDON

Of course, she has. She's
brilliant.

STEVEN

No, you don't understand. This is different. It's been five years since she's written a word. Nothing.

GORDON

Well, you produced a family. That's something.

STEVEN

They're going to drop us. They even want the advance back. Don't tell her that, though. I haven't had a best seller in years.

GORDON

You okay, mate?

Steven gets real serious.

STEVEN

Has your wife ever cheated on you?

GORDON

We're starting there?

STEVEN

It's my fault though. I hired her.

Gordon sits back to listen.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I asked the agency to find someone. Help inspire her. She's been so stuck. Preferably her character Julianne's age, I requested. Thought I was being so sneaky.

Gordon just listens.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Maybe some cooking, some cleaning, a little friendship... with someone younger. Get the juices flowing.

Steven laughs and downs his beer.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

...we really got a bang for our buck. Above and beyond.

Steven waves the pages at Gordon.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
This my friend is the stuff dreams
are made of.

EXT. POOL, UNDERWATER - DAY

Jennifer, naked, swims the length of the pool underwater.

EXT. POOLSIDE, ALDERNEY MANOR - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer comes up for air and pushes backwards off the side
of the pool, gliding to the centre. She floats on her back.

She stares at the puffy clouds in the sky. A shadow falls
over her face.

BAM! Jennifer stands up, startled. Kathleen stands above her
on the side of the pool.

JENNIFER
(relieved)
Jesus, you scared me.

KATHLEEN
I want to talk.

Jennifer swims toward the shallow end.

JENNIFER
(stern)
Pass me my towel.

Kathleen takes the towel off the wooden table and walks
toward the stairs.

Jennifer walks up the steps of the pool. Kathleen hands her
the towel. Jennifer wraps it around her naked body.

The moment between them is silent. They look deeply into each
other's eyes. Kathleen's stare is full of remorse.

Finally:

KATHLEEN
My name is...

JENNIFER
Shh...

The stare continues.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
(quietly)
I don't want to know your name.

KATHLEEN
Please.

Jennifer shakes her head "no" and walks closer to Kathleen and touches her lip with her fingertip.

JENNIFER
(quietly)
I don't want to know who you are.

Kathleen's pout softens. Jennifer leans in and softly kisses Kathleen's lips. Kathleen opens her mouth slightly. Jennifer softly licks. The longing between them is excruciating. Then Jennifer steps away.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
I'm going for a run. Make me some lunch.

Kathleen stands there, dumbfounded.

EXT. PUBLISHING HOUSE/ LONDON - DAY

A 17th-century limestone building with a large oak door is situated on a busy street in London.

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE/ RECEPTION - DAY

The front covers of at least two hundred best sellers are on display next to a large window shedding light into the pristine upscale publishing house reception area.

Steven, briefcase in hand, stands perusing the covers. His eyes land on "Time For After" by Jennifer Phillips. He takes the book off the shelf.

SASHA (O.S.)
Kendra's ready for you.

He turns to see SASHA, 25, a young hip office assistant.

EXT. DIRT PATH - DAY

Jennifer runs down the dirt path through the shrubs and wildflowers. She picks up her pace and sprints.

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF - DAY

Sweat dripping down her face, Jennifer rounds the corner and runs towards the side of the cliff in a full sprint. She stops herself right at the edge.

A bird soars over the ocean. Out of breath, she looks down at the waves crashing below. She screams gutturally.

JENNIFER
AAAAAHHHHH!!!!

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE/ OFFICE - DAY

Steven, still drunk, walks through an open-concept office area, holding Jennifer's first novel. The room is filled with shared workstations, state of the art listening booths, beanbag chairs, and a Playstation at the centre. A number of MILLENNIALS lounge and "work" about.

INT. KENDRA'S GLASS OFFICE - DAY

Steven sits in front of KENDRA, annoyingly serious and barely 30.

STEVEN
This place has changed so much. I remember when there were cubicles and chairs.

KENDRA
(thick English accent)
Studies show that a collaborative, equal work environment is better for productivity.

Steven glances out at the workspace. People lounging in beanbag chairs, playing video games, laughing and chatting.

STEVEN
(teasing)
You sure?

Kendra ignores him.

KENDRA
To what do I owe this pleasure, Steven? I didn't expect to hear from you until the book was finished.

Steven centres himself.

STEVEN
I brought some of Jen's pages.
(proudly)
It's tantalizing stuff.

He hands her the printed pages. Kendra doesn't take them.

KENDRA
Could you email it? I don't do
paper.

STEVEN
You don't do... you make books, for
Christ's sake!

Steven shoves the pages at her, losing it.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Take the fucking pages.
(recovering)
You're going to love it. I promise.

Kendra reluctantly takes the pages.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
By the way, that woman you sent to
help Jen really went above and
beyond. Cheers.

Kendra looks at Steven, confused.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
The crazy lies she told her. Not
sure that was the best angle... but
it inspired. It certainly got the
juices flowing. Where'd you find
her? The old bawdy house?

KENDRA
What are you talking about?

STEVEN
Kathleen Monroe, whose family owns
the inn, died years ago. Which one
of you wrote that?

KENDRA
Steven, the intern we sent came
back days ago. Said your wife
didn't need any help.

STEVEN
No. That's not true. I just met
her.

Kendra, now concerned, turns to Sasha who's right outside the door at her ergonomic desk.

KENDRA
Sasha, will you find Tracy and send
her in here? And a cup of coffee
for Mr. Phillips, please.

Sasha moves off.

STEVEN
Who's Tracy?

KENDRA
How long are you here for?

STEVEN
Kendra, who the fuck is Tracy?

Tracy, 23, a very naive, bright-eyed girl comes rushing into Kendra's office.

TRACY
Did you call for me?

KENDRA
I did. This is Steven, Jennifer
Phillip's agent.

STEVEN
And husband.

TRACY
Who?

KENDRA
The writer you were supposed to
help out on the island.

TRACY
Oh, hello.

STEVEN
(to Kendra)
Who is this?

KENDRA
Tracy, you said Steven's wife sent
you away?

TRACY
Yes, she was lovely.

Tracy blushes a bit.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Said she wouldn't be needing my
help.

STEVEN
(not buying it)
Jennifer? She sent you away?

TRACY
Told me to travel around for a few
days, if I wanted.
(nervous)
But I didn't, I came right back.

Steven opens the copy of "Time For After" to the author's
page and shows Tracy the headshot of Jennifer.

STEVEN
This woman sent you away?

TRACY
Oh, no. Jennifer was much younger.

Steven turns back to Kendra enraged.

STEVEN
You sent a fucking moron to take
care of my wife?!

KENDRA
Calm down.

She turns to Tracy.

KENDRA (CONT'D)
Tracy, that's all.

STEVEN
No, it's not all!
(to Tracy)
You didn't bother to research the
writer you were going to help?!

KENDRA
Alright, that's enough. She's just
an intern.

Tracy is on the verge of tears.

TRACY
I'm so sorry.

STEVEN

Right, why would you send somebody competent? That would be a waste.

(to Tracy)

What did this Jennifer look like?

Twenties? Long blond hair?

TRACY

Beautiful. Yes, that's her.

STEVEN

Who the fuck is fucking my wife!?

Everyone in the office turns to stare at Steven.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - DAY

It's a rainy day. A fire burns bright in the hearth. Jennifer sits at the desk, typing. Her fingers are flying.

WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL Kathleen on the floor in front of her, between her legs, under the desk, pleasuring Jennifer.

Jennifer's face is flushed as she orgasms while writing.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, BATHROOM - DAY

Jennifer sits inside a large steamy clawfoot bathtub. Her head lays back against the wet porcelain. She sighs deeply.

Kathleen, sitting on a stool next to the tub, turns the water off.

KATHLEEN

Is it hot enough?

JENNIFER

It's perfect.

Jennifer sits up, making room for Kathleen. Kathleen smiles and pulls her dress over her head, and climbs in the tub, sitting at the opposite end.

KATHLEEN

I used to take baths with my sister. We'd wash each other's feet.

Jennifer doesn't say anything. She leans back and closes her eyes. Kathleen lifts Jennifer's leg out of the bath and places it on the side of the tub. Jennifer lets her. Kathleen takes a bar of soap and begins to wash Jennifer's foot.

Beat.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
I grew up in this house.

Jennifer's eyes open.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
I would come and stay with my aunt
every summer.

Jennifer doesn't move. Kathleen continues to wash her feet.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
I first met Kathleen when I was
thirteen. She taught me how to
French kiss.

Jennifer stares at Kathleen, barely able to breathe.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
We'd sneak out of our windows at
night and smoke her father's fags
on the cliffside. She was like
family to me.

Her eyes fill with tears.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
When I came back the summer we
turned nineteen, she had a
boyfriend. Some guy she had met at
university. He came home with her
that summer. Kathleen wouldn't talk
to me... I'm not sure if she was
embarrassed or ashamed... I missed
her so much, I wanted to feel what
she felt... So I slept with him. It
wasn't very hard to get his
attention. He was weak.

Kathleen painfully looks away.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
What I didn't realize was that
Kathleen was also weak... I thought
she was like me... but she
disappeared... because of me.

Silence.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
I came back here to disappear...
But then I met you.

The two of them stay silent for a long moment.

Jennifer lifts Kathleen's foot out of the tub and begins to gently wash it. A tear drips down Kathleen's cheek.

Jennifer carefully watches her. Finally, she whispers.

JENNIFER
(whispers)
Bravo.

Jennifer takes her wet hands and softly claps.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
That was the best one yet. Fuck,
you're good.

Kathleen cracks a smile.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
And what shall we call Kathleen
Monroe's best friend?

CHLOE
(earnest)
Chloe. It's Chloe Ermont.

KATHLEEN WILL NOW BE CALLED CHLOE IN THE SCRIPT.

Jennifer sits forward.

JENNIFER
Come here, Chloe.

Chloe sits up, their faces inches apart.

CHLOE
(submissive)
What am I supposed to do now?

JENNIFER
Kiss me.

Chloe softly licks Jennifer's mouth.

CHLOE
Like this?

JENNIFER
More.

Chloe grabs Jennifer's neck and leans her back into the tub, crawling on top of her.

CHLOE
Like this?

She squeezes her neck as she softly kisses her lips.

JENNIFER
(whisper)
More.

Chloe squeezes harder as she begins to move her body on top of Jennifer. PUSHING JENNIFER'S HEAD UNDER WATER.

INT/EXT. TAXI CAB, LONDON - DAY

It's rush hour in London. Steven sits in the back of a cab stuck in gridlock traffic. He's searching the ferry schedule on his phone. The last ferry to Alderney is at 9 pm.

STEVEN
How long will it take?

CAB DRIVER
Normally a couple of hours, not
sure at this rate.

STEVEN
Damn it.

Steven anxiously stares out the window.

He goes back to his phone and curiously searches the name Kathleen Monroe, Channel Islands. Up pops Kathleen Monroe's obituary from 2016. She was only 19 years old. THE CAUSE OF DEATH, DROWNING.

He stares at her photo. Kathleen stands on a beach, her long brown hair blowing in the wind. THIS IS THE SAME WOMAN FROM THE OPENING CLIFF SCENE.

He zooms in closer. Around her neck is a talisman heart pendant. The same that Jennifer was wearing. Steven looks up, panicked.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, BATHROOM - DAY

Chloe finally releases the pressure around Jennifer's neck. She gasps, coming up for air, nearing an orgasm. They continue to passionately devour each other.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - NIGHT

The sun has just gone down, and Jennifer is writing, deeply inspired. The talisman dangles from her neck.

Chloe is curled up on the couch by the fire, reading Jennifer's first novel. Jennifer looks over at Chloe and smiles, then continues writing. Her fingers are flying.

EXT. FERRY, POOLE HARBOUR - NIGHT

The last car drives onto a large ferry docked in a stale industrial harbour filled with giant metal shipping containers. A FERRY WORKER waves on a handful of pedestrians waiting to board.

The taxi pulls into the empty parking lot, and Steven races out and runs toward the ship.

STEVEN

Wait!

The ferry worker is about to close the gangplank.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Wait!

He hears Steven racing towards him.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - NIGHT

The fire has died, and the wind can be heard whistling across the chimney. Jennifer is still at her desk writing. Chloe is now asleep on the couch.

Jennifer types; **The only thing that lingered was her sweet smell, an essence that had penetrated Julianne with excruciating desire, so agonizing that it would carry her through until her next life.**

Jennifer leans back in her chair and exhales. She looks at the page count. 298 pages. She satisfyingly smiles and types: **The End.**

JENNIFER

(whispers)

The end.

She presses "save" and victoriously raises her arms over her head.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

The end.

She stands to stretch her legs. Then jumps up and down in a moment of victory.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

The fucking end!

Chloe stirs.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Five long, excruciating years since
I've written a fucking word.

Chloe sits up, confused.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

(euphoric)

...and now I'm free.

(arms outstretched)

I'm finally free!

CHLOE

What happened?

JENNIFER

I finished.

(overcome with deep
emotion)

My book is done.

She wipes her tears and looks around for her phone.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I need to call Steven.

CHLOE

Why?

JENNIFER

(simply)

I want to go home now.

The phone is on the coffee table near Chloe. Chloe grabs it and stands up, scared.

CHLOE

Wait. No, no, wait. This is
happening too fast.

JENNIFER

I just hope I can.

Jennifer grabs the phone out of Chloe's hands.

CHLOE

WAIT!!

Chloe's haunting screech stops Jennifer in her tracks.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I thought you didn't want to go
back?

JENNIFER

Of course I do.

CHLOE

You said they sucked the life out
of you.

JENNIFER

I needed a break.

CHLOE

What about me?

Jennifer stares at the woman she's been sleeping with, inches
from her. Chloe's eyes are wild.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

What happens to me?

JENNIFER

(carefully)

Listen... Thank you.

(sincere)

For everything. You've been a huge
help.

Chloe pathetically laughs.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

But I'm done. I finished.

CHLOE

Just like that? You just walk away?

Jennifer reaches out and carefully takes the phone from
Chloe.

JENNIFER

"The only thing that remained was her sweet smell, an essence that had penetrated Julianne with excruciating desire, so agonizing that it would carry her through until her next life" That's what I wrote. That's how it ends. Yes, she just walks away.

Jennifer holds up her phone..

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I want to call my husband now and tell him that I love him and that I finally finished the book that we were paid for years ago.

(forthright)

I need to now save my marriage and my life. So... thank you, whoever are, but...

I need you to go.

CHLOE

You think I got what I needed?

JENNIFER

Frankly, I don't care.

Jennifer's eyes turn cold.

CHLOE

(fragile)

So none of it was real?

JENNIFER

No. I don't even know who you are.

CHLOE

I'm me.

Jennifer treads carefully.

JENNIFER

I need you to go.

CHLOE

Are you embarrassed or ashamed?

JENNIFER

Neither. I'm just done.

Chloe nods. She holds up Jennifer's novel "Time For After."

CHLOE

Can I keep this? I'm not done.

Jennifer softens.

JENNIFER

Of course. Let me sign it for you.

She grabs a pen off the desk and then writes something on the inside cover. Jennifer hands the book back to Chloe.

CHLOE

No one ever just walks away.

JENNIFER

Of course they do.

Chloe pathetically leaves the room.

Jennifer can hear the front door open and then shut. She exhales and reaches for her phone.

EXT. FERRY STATION, POOLE - NIGHT

The ferry pulls out of the harbour, heading toward the open sea.

JENNIFER (O.S.)

Hi... I finished.

(small)

I'm done. I want to come home now.

INT. FERRY STAIRCASE, CHANNEL ISLANDS - NIGHT

Steven walks up a metal staircase.

JENNIFER (V.O.)

I know it's hard for you to understand what I've done, what I needed. I don't even know if I understand it myself.

INT. FERRY, ENGLISH CHANNEL - NIGHT

Steven exits the stairwell.

JENNIFER (V.O.)

Ambition is a double-edged sword. But... what I do know is that I love you, and I love the girls, and I did this for us...

He finds an empty seat on a sterile bench near a window overlooking the sea.

JENNIFER (V.O.)
... as twisted as that may sound.

Steven pulls out his phone. He has no reception. A wave of emotion sweeps over him as the day's events take hold.

JENNIFER (V.O.)
I'm ready to come home now... I
think the book might be really
good, Steven. Call me.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer hangs up the phone and walks to her desk. She presses save on her novel document again. She then goes to drag her work into the USB DRIVE, but it's gone. She searches her messy desk; it's nowhere to be found.

The wind whistles through the fireplace. Jennifer carefully closes her computer. Unable to properly back-up her book.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, KITCHEN - NIGHT

The loud BUZZING sound is heard as Jennifer locks the front door. She looks up at the clock on the wall. It's 10:00 o'clock.

She goes to the counter and pours herself a celebratory glass of wine. She holds up her glass and toasts.

JENNIFER
Cheers.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR, POOLSIDE - NIGHT

Jennifer sits on the ground at the edge of the pool, trying to light a cigarette. She folds into herself to shelter from the wind. Success. She inhales deeply, as her feet dangle into the aqua blue water illuminated by the pool lights. The bottle of wine is beside her.

Jennifer takes one more long drag, savours the moment, and then stubs it out. She then stuffs the butt into the rest of the pack and crushes it in her hand. Destroying what's left. She's ready to go home.

Suddenly the back patio lights go out. Her feet now dangle into dark water. Jennifer stands up, startled.

JENNIFER

Chloe?

She looks around. Nothing. The lights are also off in the manor.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - NIGHT

Jennifer locks the back door. The entire manor is now dark. She carefully places her glass of wine on the credenza near a VASE OF FRESH CUT WILD PINK GERANIUMS, which she does not notice.

She turns on her cellphone flashlight and carefully makes her way across the parlour. She stumbles into the coffee table.

JENNIFER

Ouch, shit.

She passes by her desk, NOT NOTICING THAT HER COMPUTER IS GONE.

INT. MANOR BASEMENT - NIGHT

Lit by the flashlight on her phone, Jennifer makes her way down creaky wooden stairs.

She pans the light across room. Broken antique furniture and dusty cardboard boxes fill the space.

The light lands on a fuse box mounted on the wall. Jennifer carefully makes her way across the room.

She opens the fuse box to find an ancient system.

JENNIFER

Jeez.

Not knowing what to do, she shuts it.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, KITCHEN - NIGHT

By the light of her phone, Jennifer double checks the lock on the door. It's still locked.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer, wearing her silk pyjamas, finishes brushing her teeth by the light of her phone. She stares at her reflection, half-lit in the mirror.

THE LIGHTS FLICKER, AND THE POWER COMES BACK ON.

Relieved, she gathers her toiletries from the sink and packs them up.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The drawers are empty, and Jennifer's suitcase is neatly packed and waiting by the door. The king-size bed is empty.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, SMALLER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer is curled up, asleep in the tiny twin bed. The manor is still.

The creaking sound of FOOTSTEPS is heard slowly coming up the staircase. Jennifer opens her eyes. More footsteps are heard ascending the stairs.

Jennifer quickly and quietly leaps out of bed and hides on the floor, tucked beside the dresser. She holds her breath and listens.

SOMEONE WALKS down the hallway.

Jennifer closes her eyes, **hoping to hear the intruder go into the master bedroom.** Nothing.

Jennifer slowly peeks around the corner of the dresser.

BAM! Chloe's face is right in front of hers.

CHLOE

Boo.

JENNIFER

(terrified)

What the fuck?!

CHLOE

(calmly)

Such a clever girl.

JENNIFER

How did you get in here?

CHLOE

I grew up here. I told you that.
It's not that difficult.

JENNIFER

What do you want?

Chloe holds back tears.

CHLOE
I want you to know what this feels
like.

Jennifer stares at the tormented woman in front of her.

JENNIFER
Stop.

Chloe holds up Jennifer's computer.

CHLOE
This would show you, right?

JENNIFER
What are you doing?

Chloe backs away toward the door.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Give it back!

CHLOE
Take off your clothes first.

JENNIFER
What? No.

CHLOE
Take your clothes off, and I'll
give it back.

JENNIFER
Are you kidding me?

CHLOE
(screeches)
Take off your fucking clothes!!

Stunned, Jennifer quickly takes off her silk pyjamas. She stands there naked and vulnerable.

Satisfied, Chloe smiles.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
Now call me Chloe.

JEN
Chloe, give me my fucking book
back.

CHLOE

No.

Chloe turns and runs. Jennifer races after her.

JENNIFER

Stop!

EXT. HALLWAY/STAIRCASE - NIGHT

The hallway is dark as Chloe runs toward the large staircase.

Jennifer is right behind, but just as Chloe reaches the top step, she moves to the side, sending Jennifer headfirst down the stairs.

Chloe watches her tumble to the bottom.

BAM! Jennifer smacks her head on the floor, finally coming to a stop.

INT/EXT. BRYER HARBOUR, FERRY - NIGHT

The ferry has docked in the harbour. Workers take their time securing the boat.

Steven impatiently stands in line behind a number of locals lining up to exit the ship.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, STAIRCASE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

JENNIFER'S POV, everything is blurry from the fall. Jennifer STRUGGLES TO BREATHE, having had the wind knocked out of her. With great effort, she turns and looks back up the stairs.

Chloe calmly walks down the steps. Jennifer tries to catch her breath. Chloe gets to the bottom and crouches down beside her.

CHLOE

(softly)

Are you okay?

JENNIFER

(barely audible)

Give me my book.

CHLOE

No.

Chloe stands up and walks towards the patio door.

Jennifer struggles to her feet and runs after Chloe, almost catching her, BUT STEPS ON THE SHARD OF MIRROR LEFT ON THE FLOOR.

JENNIFER

Ah!

Jennifer hits the ground hard, wincing in pain. She pulls the shard from her foot and sees Chloe walking across the patio, heading for the path that leads to the bluffs.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Stop!

Blood flows from Jennifer's foot as she gets back on her feet and stumbles through the parlour door, leaving a trail of blood as she goes.

Naked, she limps across the patio towards the path that leads to the bluffs.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

(anguish)

Chloe!!!!

EXT. BRYER HARBOUR - NIGHT

Steven pushes his way through a crowd of tourists making his way up the incline towards a line of cabs.

He races towards the first taxi in line and opens the back passenger door. Noticing that there is no driver, he urgently looks around.

A few cabbies shoot the shit a few cars down.

STEVEN

Hey! Is this your taxi?

The driver sees Steven, stubs out his cigarette, and takes his sweet ole time.

EXT. DIRT PATH - NIGHT

Jennifer's bloody, bare feet run down the dirt path through the shrubs and wildflowers.

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF - NIGHT

Chloe walks across the field toward the edge of the cliff.

EXT. DIRT PATH - NIGHT

Jennifer, naked, runs down the dirt path.

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF - NIGHT

Chloe reaches the edge of the cliff and breathes in the fresh night air as she clutches Jennifer's computer. The wind is strong.

EXT. ALDERNEY MANOR - NIGHT

The taxi pulls up the gravel driveway.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, HALLWAY/PARLOUR - NIGHT

The lights are on and all is quiet. Steven walks into the hallway from the kitchen. He looks up the stairs.

STEVEN

Jen?!

He hears a noise coming from the parlour.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Jen?!

He walks down the hallway.

As he approaches the parlour he sees Jennifer's bloody footsteps on the floor. BANG! The wind the open back door against the wall. Steven runs out towards the bluffs.

EXT. OCEAN BLUFF - NIGHT

Jennifer emerges from the woods. She sees Chloe across the field, standing at the edge of the cliff.

JENNIFER

Chloe!!!

She races towards her. Chloe closes her eyes as she hears Jennifer run up behind her.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Please!

The anguish in her voice is excruciating. Chloe doesn't look back, soaking it in.

CHLOE
Say it again.

JENNIFER
(agonizing cry)
Please, give me my book back.

Chloe finally turns towards Jennifer.

CHLOE
That's what it feels like.

Jennifer, naked and vulnerable, loses her mind.

JENNIFER
Give me my book!!!!

Chloe holds the computer out over the edge.

CHLOE
What happens if I don't?

Tears stream down Jennifer's cheeks.

JENNIFER
I will lose everything. Everything.
Please...

CHLOE
No one just walks away. Ever!

Jennifer, feeling ashamed, tries to cover her naked body.

JENNIFER
Please... give me my book.

The two of them stare at each other. The passion they once shared, gone.

CHLOE
When Kathleen stood here that
night, I knew there was nothing I
could do. I could see it in her
eyes.

Tears fill her eyes.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
Why would she want me to feel so
much pain? Why would she do that?

JENNIFER
I don't know...

Tears spill down Jennifer's cheeks.

CHLOE
If I give you your book... will you
change the ending?

JENNIFER
Yes.

CHLOE
Promise?

JENNIFER
I promise.

Chloe smiles through her tears.

CHLOE
Okay. On three?

Jennifer nods.

JENNIFER
On three.

CHLOE
One... Two...

Their eyes are locked.

JENNIFER
Three.

Chloe flings the computer into the air out over the cliff.
EVERYTHING SLOWS DOWN as the sound of her computer crashes
against the rocks below.

A fierce look washes over Jennifer's face as she lunges
forward towards Chloe, just as Steven breaks through the
woods into the clearing.

Chloe locks eyes with Steven and she smiles as Jennifer
pushes her over the edge. Chloe is gone. Jennifer falls to
the ground.

All is quiet. Jennifer lets out a chilling scream. Steven
rushes to the edge and looks over. Waves crash over Chloe's
twisted, broken body.

STEVEN
Jesus.

Jennifer, whimpering, curls into a ball on the ground, trying to disappear. Steven rushes over and puts his coat around her.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
You're okay. You're okay.

Jennifer, shivering with trauma, looks up at her husband, eyes crazed. The talisman necklace dangles from her neck.

JENNIFER
I pushed her. She threw my book away, so I pushed her.

STEVEN
No, you didn't.

Steven grabs the necklace and yanks it from Jennifer's neck. He throws it over the edge of the cliff. He leans in close to Jennifer's ear.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
She jumped. I saw. That woman jumped.

Jennifer looks into Steven's eyes, trying to make sense of what he's saying.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
She jumped.

Jennifer accepts it.

JENNIFER
Okay...

Steven slowly helps Jennifer stand up. They walk back towards the manor, Steven's arms around his wife.

INT. ALDERNEY MANOR, PARLOUR - DAWN - MONTAGE

- Steven dresses Jennifer's wound.
- Jennifer scrubs her bloody foot prints off the floor.
- Steven drags the desk back to its original spot.

STEVEN
Any other signs of her?

JENNIFER
I don't think so.

He reassuringly looks at his wife.

STEVEN
Let's go home.

Jennifer nods.

EXT. TAXI, ALDERNEY MANOR - DAWN

Steven tosses Jennifer's suitcase into the trunk of the taxi.

Jennifer opens the back passenger door and notices the bumper of Chloe's Austin Maxi hidden in the shrubs.

JENNIFER
Steven.

He looks at his wife. She gestures towards Chloe's car. Steven quickly pivots and ushers Jennifer into the cab.

STEVEN
(to cabbie)
Can you drop her at the ferry station?

The cabbie nods.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Thank you.

JENNIFER
(whispers)
What are you going to do?

STEVEN
(reassuring)
I'll meet you on the dock.

Steven shuts the door and watches the taxi drive off down the gravel driveway.

INT/EXT. AUSTIN MAXI/BUSHES - DAWN

The keys dangle from the ignition. Steven gets in and slams the door shut. He starts the engine.

INT/EXT. TAXI, BEACH ROAD - DAWN

The sun is rising as the taxi drives past the empty beach.

Jennifer stares out the window from the back of the taxi. She sees the shoulder of the road where she first met Chloe on the bike.

INT/EXT. BEACH PARKING LOT - DAY

The Austin Maxi parks in the corner of the empty beach parking lot.

The ferry can be seen heading towards the harbour in the distance.

Steven turns off the ignition and takes a deep breath.

He then takes his sleeve and wipes down the steering wheel. He looks over at the glove compartment and decides to open it using his sleeve.

Inside the glove are registration papers. Steven pulls them out. The car is registered to Chloe Ermont.

As he shuts the glove box, he notices Jennifer's novel "Time For After" on the floor of the front passenger seat. He picks it up and opens the front cover where Jennifer's inscription stares back at him; **You were wonderful, Jennifer Phillips.**

A wave of emotion sweeps over him, and just as quickly, he stuffs it down.

EXT. FERRY, BRAYE HARBOUR - DAY

The ferry has docked, and passengers are disembarking.

Jennifer stands with her bags on the dock. She sees Steven heading down the hill towards her.

Steven reaches the bottom of the incline and TOSSES THE NOVEL into a trash can before he joins Jennifer.

INT/EXT. FERRY, ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

The ferry glides through the open waters. Passengers bustle about the inside cabin.

Jennifer and Steven are seated near a window that looks out over the sea. The silence between them is deafening.

Steven reaches over and puts something in Jennifer's hand, breaking the tension.

Jennifer opens her hand. It's her USB STICK with the first half of her book.

STEVEN

I wish I got to read the rest of it.

She holds the USB stick tightly.

JENNIFER

I need to change the ending anyway.

Steven looks back out the window. Jennifer stares straight ahead and exhales.

THE END