

AFTER THE 3RD

"Pilot: The Matter of Jacob Grey"

Teleplay by  
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INT. BANQUET HALL - HALLWAY TO WOMEN'S RESTROOM

A long wide corridor separates the guest restroom's from a stage hall on the right and a dining hall on the left. Wainscoted walls are top heavy with velveteen wallpaper holding up a mural of an evening star filled sky on the ceiling.

LAVINIA ATHENE, an elegant and highly sophisticated African American woman in her mid thirties, is wearing a VIOLET dress patterned in ethnic detail. Her hair sets up and away from the back of her head in a wrap extending several feet while various jewels and hoop earrings accent her nose and earlobes.

Lavinia carries a glass of RED wine in her hand as she and VICTORIA CROSS, an extremely fragile woman in her seventies, white hair and grey eyes, wearing a pure white simple dress and a VIOLET scarf around her neck slightly covering the left side of her chest are walking from the women's restroom.

AUTUMN PRICE, a thin, pale-skinned teenage girl with chestnut hair and sunken eyes, wearing a DARK BLUE, loose fitting dress, enters the corridor from the dining hall toward the restroom with her head down carrying a small black purse in her hand.

LAVINIA

Autumn? Your father's speech is  
about to begin, are you joining us?

Autumn continues past them and stops next to the restroom door, turning while rummaging through her handbag.

AUTUMN

I know. I... I'll be in shortly. I  
have to make a call.

LAVINIA

Okay, dear.

Lavinia continues with Victoria and walks into the stage hall.

WOMEN'S RESTROOM

The ceiling is lined with very dull, BUZZING fluorescent lights. On one side are several SILVER metal enclosed bathroom stalls, while sinks, crowned with tall mirrors, face opposite.

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The bathroom door swings open. Autumn thrusts herself inside, pushing the door closed behind her. She turns, rests her head against the door and begins to sob. Her hand shakes as she reaches for the deadbolt and locks it.

Autumn turns and presses her back against the door. She slowly slides down and sits on the floor while searching frantically through her purse for a cell phone. Upon retrieving it, she dials a number and listens while it rings.

AUTUMN

Come on pick up. Please pick up.

An indistinct applause can be heard throughout the restroom.

Autumn abruptly closes her phone after hearing a SWISH from the back of the last stall. Autumn looks carefully; cowering to investigate the underside of the stalls but sees nothing.

Autumn pushes herself upward to stand erect and places the phone into her purse.

She removes a SOILED NAPKIN and empties its contents of chewed up, uneaten food into the garbage can beside her and stumbles toward the furthest bathroom stall.

As Autumn passes by the CENTER MIRROR unaware, JACOB GREY, a ghost-like boy in his early teens with angelic features, BLACK messy hair and pale skin appears as a reflection in the mirror, shivering and wet, wearing nothing but a pair of BLACK, worn pants. His eyes are closed and head tilted down. His rib cage protrudes slightly, enhancing random scars and bruises on his body. Jacob grins.

He disappears as Autumn reaches the furthest stall, falling inward to her knees.

HALLWAY TO WOMEN'S RESTROOM

CYNTHIA RONACHE, a lovely looking woman in her late forties, wearing an elegant, BLACK, CONSERVATIVE LACE DRESS attempts to open the bathroom door unsuccessfully. She then knocks on the door and presses her ear against it.

CYNTHIA

Autumn?

Cynthia hears nothing and continues to knock.

## WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Autumn grabs the toilet seat with one hand and props her self over the toilet with the other as her purse falls to the floor by her side. She stares into the water as she slowly reaches two fingers into the back of her throat and gags.

The stall door closes and locks on its own behind her.

The CLICK of the lock alarms Autumn, forcing her to turn her head and look at the door with eyes wide.

AUTUMN

Hello?

A fluorescent light above her begins to flicker pulling her attention upward. A single snowflake falls; gently making it's way to her lower eyelid as she begins to shiver.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

Is someone there?

JACOB GREY(O.C.)

How long are WE going to do this?

Autumn turns back to see Jacob squatting on the water tank with his eyes closed and arms extended between his legs to keep his posture. She immediately stands up and slams her backside against the stall door.

AUTUMN

How...did you, ge... get in here?

Jacob opens his eyelids to reveal two mirrored spheres and begins to speak through his worn, discolored smile.

JACOB

You let me in.

Autumn screams and turns to POUND on the stall door, BANGING it several times in panic.

AUTUMN

Someone help me!

CYNTHIA (O.C.)

Autumn honey, answer me if you're in there?

AUTUMN

Cynthia, please... help me!

## HALLWAY TO WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Cynthia, still hearing nothing, looks around in panic and confusion as Lavinia walks into the hallway from the stage hall.

LAVINIA

What's wrong Cynthia?

## BATHROOM STALL

Autumn slowly stops hitting the stall door when she notices numerous snowflakes falling generously from above.

## HALLWAY TO WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Cynthia uses her body to try and force the door open. Her attempts again are unsuccessful.

CYTHINA

It's Autumn, she's locked herself  
in the bathroom and won't answer  
me.

## BATHROOM STALL

Autumn slowly turns to face Jacob, hugs herself and shivers as Jacob guides his hands outward. The sound of RUSHING water bellows from below as the snow recedes.

JACOB GREY

(Speaking with Autumn's voice)  
This is what happens.

CUT TO:

## IN BLACK

Lavinia Athene speaks in a soft and eloquent voice.

LAVINIA (V.O.)

This is our home.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW - UNITED STATES - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

From a distance, a once solid land mass is covered by flooded waterways, toppled buildings and forests of blackened ash.

LAVINIA (V.O.)

Like many others, our country has been carved out by the claws of Mother Nature, leaving only a trace of our existence behind.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

A) A weather anchor discusses the high-rising temperatures around the world on a local news channel.

B) A clip from a world news station displays photographs as it covers the incidents involving hurricane Katrina.

C) A television report illustrates the damage caused by the wild fires over the mid West.

LAVINIA (V.O.)

We were warned. Time and time again.

D) A clip from "An Inconvenient Truth" or similar documentary discussing the dangers of air pollution.

LAVINIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And yet we believed that ignorance would make our problems disappear.

E) A series of clips revealing cultures from all over the world, both children and adults, sobbing and screaming due to the after-effects of these tragedies.

IN BLACK

LAVINIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Until now.

EXT. CITY SKYLINE - NIGHT

A skyline of high rise buildings are cradled by Gothic cathedrals and worn, paint-chipped markets that illuminate the RAINY night with glaring FIRES punching through random

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windows and curls of SMOKE rising from their rooftops.

LAVINIA (V.O.)

This was meant to happen. A war designed to destroy the only kingdom to rule for more than a thousand years.

INT. DOWNTOWN CHURCH - NIGHT

A dark lit Gothic church, adorned with candelabra's and statues of religious figures is crowded with mahogany pews and translucent apparitions of families seated in prayer.

LAVINIA (V.O.)

A kingdom that would enslave our will by using guilt as its bondage.

The altar is blocked by the backside of an old priest standing with his arms spread while he chants in prayer, unaware of the ghosts behind him.

LAVINIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A restraint that light would remove, when shed on those who would be our beacon in dark times.

The door behind the priest bursts open, shedding an omnipresent blue glow across the shadows of the interior and his back.

Startled by the bursting of the door, he abruptly turns around, revealing his partially nude body underneath a heavily adorned religious cloak while SOBBING is heard in the corner behind him.

A group of angry townspeople rush in with an array of FLASHLIGHTS and VARIOUS WEAPONS screaming in anger as the priest covers his exposed skin, revealing two children on the floor behind him, using their knees and arms to hide their nude bodies.

LAVINIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Unveiling a reality that no one could bear.

## EXT. DOWNTOWN THOROUGHFARE - NIGHT

Along the thoroughfare and between the alleys, children and adults run SCREAMING in panic as they stumble over bodies piled along the damp brick streets and slip on puddles of water tainted with blood. Others brush by bodies left barely-alive and dangling through broken glass windows of cars and collapsed doorways.

LAVINIA (V.O.)

Our salvation has become equivalent  
to a ghost, running in fear from  
our translucence.

## INT. PRICE MANSION - BATHROOM

Streaks of light illuminate a dark, large scale and elegant bathroom through mangled blinds, highlighting the backside of Autumn Price, wearing panties and a tattered dress shirt that hangs off her bare shoulder.

While on her knees, Autumn rests her head over the toilet as she repeatedly GAGS and vomits.

LAVINIA (V.O.)

And while many of us attempt to  
punish ourselves for the emptiness  
we feel.

Autumn sits up and places her back against the nearby wall as she begins to CRY, dropping a TOOTHBRUSH from her hand.

## INT. CAGE RESIDENCE - KITCHEN

An overhead pendant light sways over a table scattered with stacks of MAIL, ASHTRAYS overfilled with cigarette butts and a nearly empty BOTTLE of WHISKEY. The walls are coated with yellowed, out-dated wallpaper and the counters are unkempt, stacked with dirty dishes and food.

STEPHANIE CAGE, a middle-aged and extremely overweight woman, nests her face into her hand at the table as she SOBS profusely while her other hand wraps around the neck of the WHISKEY BOTTLE.

LAVINIA (V.O.)

Others try to forget the pain that  
comes with it.

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Stephanie looks up and slowly takes a drink from the BOTTLE only to notice a BEAUTY MAGAZINE with a thin and beautiful woman on the cover amidst the mess of papers on the table.

LAVINIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Only to be reminded of it so often,

Stephanie throws her arm across the table, flinging everything on top into the air, then shoves her fingers into her scalp, grabbing her hair at the roots as she SCREAMS.

EXT. CAGE RESIDENCE - KITCHEN WINDOW

A lone tree branch catches fire as it sways past a white aluminum sided window while raindrops dance across the glass.

Stephanie turns to walk out of the kitchen into a dark room behind her. Seconds later a gunshot FIRES as a FLASH of light flickers against the surrounding walls.

LAVINIA (V.O.)  
...that permanent absence appears to  
be the only solution.

WIDER VIEW

An older male quickly limps across the front lawn into the nearby street while holding his daughters hand. The young girl is dragging a tattered TOY BEAR as she looks behind her in confusion, reflecting whips of fire in her tear-filled eyes.

As they continue down the street, passing several shops, a bank and overturned cars, a RONACHE lifts above the rooftops, revealing in the distance above the city skyline and untouched by the surrounding chaos, a massively brooding, yet elegant hotel updated from a 1930's train station. Its windows are dark with the exception of the penthouse floor.

CLOSER

A candle light silhouettes the outline of a woman sitting near an open window dressed by sheer curtains dancing around her.

## EXT. CROSS HOTEL - PENTHOUSE WINDOW

Lavinia, wearing a DARK GREEN silken dress patterned in ethnic detail and a extended hair wrap, pulls back the curtain of the penthouse suite window sitting with a martini in her hand, staring at the fires below.

The room behind her glows as candlelight shifts shadows across the walls formed by several luxurious antiquities and a large over-stuffed bed topped with numerous pillows and blankets.

LAVINIA (V.O.)

These are dark times ahead of us.

## INT. HALLWAY TO PENTHOUSE

A series of wall sconces flicker along a hallway decorated with Victorian wallpaper, Mahogany Wainscoting and dark floral runners.

LAVINIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Bringing moments where our  
conscience will face the  
illumination of our secrets.

An elevator bell RINGS as the feet of WILSON DIEVERE, an extremely old male dressed in a chauffeur's uniform and black tuxedo shoes, begins to walk down the hall passing Lavinia's penthouse door to a room at the end with the number 1223 on its facade. Upon reaching the door, it's opened to reveal a large bed with piles of disheveled blankets on top.

## WIDER VIEW

Wilson stands in front of the bed, holding a large RED GASOLINE CAN in his hand.

Wilson raises the GASOLINE CAN and begins to pour gasoline all over the bed followed by gently placing it on the floor by the nearby night stand. After a short pause, Wilson turns to walk back down the hallway and stops at Lavinia's penthouse door then KNOCKS lightly.

DOORWAY TO PENTHOUSE (WILSON'S POV)

As the door opens Lavinia, now flooded by warm glow from an exterior hallway lamp light, sits in her chair by the open window.

WILSON

Are you ready Ms. Athene?

Lavinia takes another sip of her MARTINI and turns to face Wilson as he removes a REVOLVER from his interior breast jacket pocket.

PENTHOUSE ROOM (LAVINIA'S POV)

Wilson checks and replaces the REVOLVER back into his jacket pocket.

LAVINIA

Has Victoria given you her instructions?

WILSON

Yes Ma'am. Mrs. Cross has instructed me that we will be staying at the guest house near the edge of town. Is this correct?

LAVINIA

Just until this passes and everything appears to be more... manageable.

Lavinia stands and walks towards Wilson.

LAVINIA (CONT'D)

Meet me in the car Wilson. I'll finish up here.

Wilson nods and turns to leave as LAVINIA sets her MARTINI down on a nearby table and walks toward a medium sized PAINTING on a wall just behind a large wood-carved desk to her right.

LAVINIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It is said, that nature has a way of cleansing itself; even at the price of human life.

Lavinia swings open the PAINTING, revealing a WALL SAFE directly behind. She opens the WALL SAFE and rustles through several items including jewelry, stapled bundles of paper and large denominated packets of tightly wrapped bills.

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Lavinia casually throws several stacks of bills and items over her shoulder on the floor behind her until she reaches several YELLOW COLORED LETTER ENVELOPES banded together and places them under her arm.

HALLWAY TO PENTHOUSE

LAVINIA walks toward the elevator and waits for the doors to open. As she enters and turns around, Lavinia opens her hand, reveals a ZIPPO LIGHTER and lights it in front of her.

LAVINIA (V.O.)

If this is true, then some of us  
have acquired the responsibility...

LAVINIA tosses the ZIPPO LIGHTER onto the floor in front of her, catching the floor aflame. She then places one hand on her chest, slightly shakes her head and gracefully extends her finger to the button panel, closing the elevator doors as the word CROSS engraved on them comes together.

HALLWAY TO PENTHOUSE

The flames begin to roar along the walls and chase down the hallway, illuminating the darkened room 1223, at the end.

CLOSER

As the blankets from the bed catch flame an arm of a young male falls from beneath them. As his hand hits the floor, a small OVAL SHAPED SILVER LOCKET falls from his palm as blood trails down his forearm.

LAVINIA (V.O.)

Of dusting the corners that nature  
may have missed.

CUT TO:

INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - GABRIEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

COBALT BLUE walls anchor an angled ceiling in Gabriel's attic bedroom hosting several DaVinci sketch posters, professional black and white photographs of portraits and landscapes, and a large GOUACHE ABSTRACT PAINTING of a GRASSHOPPER.

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GABRIEL RONACHE, a boy in his late teens with messy BLACK hair and crystal BLUE eyes that are outlined with heavy eyeliner lies asleep on top his bed. He lies amidst a disheveled pile of CREAM COLORED sheets and BURGUNDY pillows that wrap around his dark, baggy clothing.

Next to him stands a small table with a lamp and a FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH of AUTUMN PRICE and JAIME CROSS, a teen boy with BLONDE hair and ethereal features, both smiling with their arms around each other in a friendly fashion. Above his bed is a small rectangular window that is slightly open, allowing a delicate mist from the rain to creep in.

At the foot of his bed on top of a large wooden dresser, sits a RADIO turned on to a local news station at a medium volume.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

It has been six months since our city was hit with a horrible series of events, both natural and political, that left the city in ruins.

Behind Gabriel's bedroom door to the right, a series of FOOTSTEPS begin ascending the stairs.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Tonight, however, marks a special occasion when new Mayor elect, Jonathon Price, will be addressing the citizens of Detroit at a special benefit for all to attend.

Gabriel abruptly awakens to the high pitched CREAK of his bedroom door as it opens with a warm light that spreads across his bed from the stairwell. His mother CYNTHIA RONACHE, stands wearing an elegant, BLACK, CONSERVATIVE LACE DRESS, with the door open as she speaks through her silhouette to Gabriel.

CYNTHIA

Gabriel? You have been sleeping since five o'clock this afternoon. Are you feeling alright?

GABRIEL

Yeah...yeah I'm fine.

Cynthia walks to Gabriel's bed and sits down next to him.

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GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I just umm...I'm having those nightmares again and I don't get much sleep when I really want to.

Gabriel turns to his side as Cynthia wipes the sweat off of his forehead.

CYNTHIA

You know your Grandfather used to tell me that nightmares were our subconscious telling us to wake up.

Gabriel tilts his head towards the nightstand and stares at the dimly lit photo of AUTUMN and JAIME.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

He believed it helped our minds realize that we shouldn't be sleeping, but rather doing something very specific that the dream itself gives us hints to, even if they seem scary or confusing.

Gabriel rubs his eyes then pushes himself up against the headboard.

GABRIEL

I can't imagine what giant, man-eating grasshoppers and seeing you and dad being skinned alive means. On the contrary,

Gabriel leans over to the edge of the bed and reaches underneath, grabbing a journal and placing it on his lap.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

...the last good dream I had ended up being...

Gabriel flips through the pages of the journal and scans a few of the words until he finds an exact location.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

...the night before the storm six months ago. So, assuming opposites attract, I should be looking forward to great things, high school being one of them?

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CYNTHIA

Well, that's one way to look at it. However, you and I know that I am no psychologist or tarot reader. I just read the books and enjoy the mysticism of it all.

Gabriel reaches for a pen on the night stand and begins writing on a new page in the journal.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Something I am sure your father appreciates when he needs my advice. At least, that's one of the reasons why I think he married me.

Cynthia looks up at the window and acknowledges the intensity of the rain becoming stronger, then proceeds to stand up.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Do you want me to close the window, sweetie? Your bed's going to get wet and you'll catch a cold.

Gabriel looks back at the rain and shakes his head.

GABRIEL

I'll close it shortly; I like the sound and smell of it.

Cynthia sighs and begins to walk toward the bedroom door.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Mom, will you do me a favor?

CYNTHIA

What is it pumpkin?

GABRIEL

Will you grab me a glass of water and one of my pills?

Cynthia nods and walks to the door left of the bedrooms.

GABRIEL'S BATHROOM

Cynthia walks into a small BLACK and WHITE tiled bathroom after turning on the nearby light switch. Throughout the room are several candles, BURGUNDY towels, a GLASS on a nearby shelf and a mirrored medicine cabinet above the sink.

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CYNTHIA

You know, you start your senior year of high school next week.

GABRIEL'S BEDROOM

Gabriel looks up from his journal at the bathroom door then looks at the GRASSHOPPER PAINTING on the wall.

CYNTHIA (O.C.)

You might want to consider changing your sleep schedule and not dozing off so late in the day. You'll end up having a difficult time staying awake during class.

GABRIEL'S BATHROOM

Cynthia grabs the GLASS from a nearby ledge and fills it with water in the sink below followed by grabbing a PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE BOTTLE from the medicine cabinet above.

GABRIEL (O.C.)

What does it matter?

Cynthia sighs, removes a pill from the bottle then places the PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE back on the shelf, looking up at the label marked VALIUM intently while nodding her head from side to side. Cynthia then closes the medicine cabinet and exits the bathroom.

GABRIEL'S BEDROOM

Cynthia walks back toward Gabriel's side of the bed as he follows her with his eyes, stopping to look back at the PHOTOGRAPH of AUTUMN and JAIME again. Cynthia places the GLASS of water directly in front of the photo in the path of his view then hands Gabriel the pill.

Gabriel looks back at Cynthia and reaches for the pill from her hand.

GABRIEL

It's not like any of us have anything to look forward to at the moment.

(MORE)

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GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I can't go to Harvard and become a doctor. It doesn't exist anymore, remember?

Cynthia sits back down at Gabriel's side as Gabriel swallows the pill with the nearby glass of water and places it back on the night stand.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Chances are I will be working construction in the train yard as a community service once I graduate high school anyway.

Gabriel sits up on his knees and turns to rest his elbows on the window sill behind him, looking outside at the rain danced puddles on the sidewalks below.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

That's if it ever stops raining. I haven't seen sunlight in six months. Just grey skies.

Cynthia sighs as she reaches up to stroke the back of Gabriel's head, running her fingers through his hair.

CYNTHIA

You have your father's hair and his pessimistic attitude, too; but I still love the both of you.

Gabriel continues to look out the window as Cynthia lightly pats him on his back, then slowly turns and stares at the light from the stairwell in thought. She then gets up from the bed and walks towards the bedroom door.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

You know...what you did today, confronting Autumn with her problem, that was very brave.

Gabriel turns back around to face Cynthia and wipes his nose.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

You sure you don't want to accompany your father and me tonight?

Cynthia reaches up to adjust her earring.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

She'll be there and could probably use a friend to lean on right now.

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Gabriel shakes his head than looks back out the window, placing his hand out into the rain.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Call me if you change your mind,  
your father can send Franklin to  
come get you.

GABRIEL

He gives me the creeps.

CYNTHIA

I love you.

Cynthia closes the door behind her as the light on Gabriel's back disappears into black.

STAIRCASE FROM GABRIEL'S BEDROOM

A warm lit stairwell is covered from floor to ceiling with DARK MAHOGANY wood walls. Main support beams painted in a SLATE GREY protrude several inches from the wall and are spaced several feet apart while several more BLACK and WHITE PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHS hang neatly in between each section.

Cynthia walks slowly down the staircase, admiring the photographs on the walls then pauses at the sound of GRASSHOPPER CHIRPING nearby.

Cynthia darts her eyes around stairwell and finds the large GRASSHOPPER jumping in her direction, startling her and forcing her to obtain her balance on the wall behind her as she grips the railing tightly.

Cynthia speaks loudly.

CYNTHIA

Honey!?

KITCHEN

Grey granite counter tops sit vertical to dark painted walls and stainless steel appliances. The kitchen is lit with pendant lights topped with purple shades.

FREDERICK (FRED) RONACHE, a male in his mid-fifties, with a dark beard and mustache; and dressed in a black suit and tie is standing near a counter sifting through mail and speaking on a cell phone.

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FREDERICK

Jonathon, can you hold on a minute?  
Thanks.

Frederick places one hand over the receiver as the kitchen lights flicker.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)

What's wrong Cynthia?

CYNTHIA (O.C.)

There's a bug in the stairwell, a very large one! Did you leave the back door open again?

INT. BANQUET HALL - LOBBY/FRONT DESK

A large extravagant banquet hall hosts a variety of architectural designs both old and new. Brownstone bricks act as a base for steel beams that frame glass walls adjacent to Victorian floral print wallpapers seamed edge to edge. Velvet covered antique furniture accompany royal colored tapestries and solid steel modern tables.

JONATHON PRICE, mid-sixties, largely built with rough features and dressed in a brown out-dated suit and a crooked name tag with his last name, PRICE, in bold letters below his breast pocket, stands squeezing an empty rocks glass near the reception desk at the front of the hall while the counter clerk assists individuals walking in from the rain.

Jonathon leans onto the counter while waiting for Frederick to reply on the house phone as the lights flicker around him as well.

The counter clerk hangs up another phone behind the counter and taps Jonathon on the shoulder.

CLERK

Mr. Price?

Jonathon turns to acknowledge the desk clerk.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Mrs. Cross would like to have a word with you in the study when you finish here.

Jonathon nods and goes back to his conversation on the phone.

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JONATHON

Hey, Fred not a problem. You and  
Cynthia are still coming, right?

INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - KITCHEN

Frederick walks toward the stairwell to see Cynthia pressed  
against the wall, hands firmly attached to the railing.

Frederick chuckles.

FREDERICK

Yes we're still coming. Right after  
I fight off a large monster for my  
wife.

INT. BANQUET HALL - LOBBY/FRONT DESK

Jonathon sets down his glass and turns in confusion to face  
the front door of the hall. He waves to a few known guests  
walking in, than places his finger in his free ear.

JONATHON

Right after you what?

INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - KITCHEN/STAIRWELL

Frederick extends his hand to help Cynthia around the step  
and escorts her down the stairs.

FREDERICK

Never mind, we'll be there in a  
little while. You hold the fort  
down until I get there. Bye,  
Jonathon.

INT. BANQUET HALL - LOBBY/FRONT DESK

Jonathon hangs up the house phone and walks past the dining  
hall and a group of young women in color-saturated, satin  
period attire complete with busty corsets and formal length  
skirts in the lobby. They wear feathered masks adorned with  
crystals and fringe as they group together playing dramatic  
chords on their stringed instruments and flutes.

INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - KITCHEN

Frederick closes his cell phone and places it in his jacket coat pocket then walks back to the kitchen to grab Cynthia's shawl off of the wall near the back door.

FREDERICK

You couldn't convince Gabriel to come along?

CYNTHIA

No. He's still upset about his ordeal with Autumn earlier today. That poor girl has been losing weight rapidly and her father just ignores it.

Frederick reaches down and picks up his briefcase and a VIOLET umbrella in a stand near the door.

FREDERICK

He's not ignoring it. I should know I have worked for that man close to thirty years. What you have to realize is that although Autumn lost a mother, he lost a wife.

Frederick places the briefcase and umbrella on the counter in front of him.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)

Add to that, he has spent the past six months trying to get this city back on its feet. Our only power plant is running on the last of what fuel we've managed to find.

The kitchen lights flicker again to which Frederick reacts by raising his eyebrows and acknowledging a nearby light.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)

Our only two certified doctors are doing what they can to help the overwhelming amount of sick children and it's a surprise that our only psychologist hasn't gone nut's himself!

Cynthia walks a few feet toward the counter and places both hands face down on top.

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CYNTHIA

He only has one daughter. And I fear the day you put our son in the same position as she.

FREDERICK

Hey, I love my son!

CYNTHIA

I don't doubt you love your son but may I remind you that Jonathon thinks that tramp he's dating is an adequate replacement for a mother?

Frederick scratches his forehead and folds his arms in front of him.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

That woman has more fluid in her chest than there are fresh water lakes left in North America!

Frederick begins to chuckle under his breath.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

And don't even think that-

Cynthia begins to break down in laughter.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

I am trying to be serious and I have a strange feeling the only thing on your mind is her chest.

STAIRCASE FROM GABRIEL'S BEDROOM

Gabriel is sticking his head out the door listening to their conversation as the GRASSHOPPER continues to jump in random patterns up the stairs.

FREDERICK (O.C.)

What would you like me to do?

CYNTHIA (O.C.)

That woman has already had three husbands and I guarantee Jonathon will become her fourth if she has any say in the matter.

Gabriel closes the door to his bedroom right before the grasshopper could get inside.

## KITCHEN

Frederick raises his palms upward and shrugs his shoulders then responds to the sound of Gabriel closing his bedroom door.

FREDERICK

I can't keep him from marrying her. You, above all people, should know how cunning she is. She's your high school friend.

CYNTHIA

She was never my friend.

FREDERICK

I have a strange feeling this has everything to do with Amanda and nothing to do with my relationship with my son.

Frederick's cell phone RINGS.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)

I hope you don't plan on letting her bother you like this the rest of the evening.

Frederick removes the phone from his coat as he continues to respond to Cynthia.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)

Besides, I thought I thoroughly explained to you that a handful is more than enough?

He pauses as Cynthia shakes her head and smirks. Frederick then opens the cell phone and answers it.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)

Yes, Franklin?

As he listens, he mouths the words "I Love You" in her direction. Cynthia rolls her eyes, smiles and walks into the living room behind her.

## LIVING ROOM

The living room is filled with lush plants, overstuffed comfortable furniture and a large array of spiritual themed artifacts such as crosses, Celtic stars, replicas of historical relics, astrological accents and two large wooden bookcases housing several encyclopedias, books about true crime, medieval history and magic.

Cynthia turns off a few lamps, locks the front door and notices a black MERCEDES with its headlights on out front.

FREDERICK (O.C.)  
We'll be right out.

Cynthia walks back toward the kitchen picking up a small BLACK beaded PURSE and a pack of CIGARETTES from a table nearby.

## KITCHEN

Frederick closes his cell phone, puts it back into his coat and collects the briefcase and umbrella back off the counter.

FREDERICK  
Franklin's outside waiting for us.  
Do you have everything?

Cynthia looks at both hands and shrugs at her PURSE in one hand and her CIGARETTES in the other then nods towards the back kitchen door.

CYNTHIA  
Looks like it, except for that  
inflatable raft out in the garage.

Cynthia starts walking out the door as Frederick follows behind.

FREDERICK  
It's not raining that hard, dear.

CYNTHIA  
I was actually more worried about  
her chest giving way at the hall.

Frederick laughs as he turns off the nearby light switch before closing the door.

## GABRIEL'S BATHROOM - MIRROR

It's almost dark as the outline of Gabriel's face is reflected in the medicine cabinet mirror. He reaches out and turns on the light switch to his side, illuminating his entire face as he stares at his reflection.

A darkened, watercolor tear falls down his cheek as the back kitchen door is reopened.

FREDERICK (O.C.)

Bye son! I love you! And call us if you need anything.

The back door of the house SHUTS as JACOB GREY'S pale blue lips, a ghost-like boy in his early teens with angelic features, BLACK messy hair and pale skin, appear in the mirror next to Gabriel's ear. Visible only in the reflection, Jacob's lips move slowly, off-time with the word's coming from their soft, young masculine voice.

JACOB GREY

He lies you know. They all do.

Blood begins to flow from Jacob's mouth.

JACOB GREY (CONT'D)

It's only a matter of time before you realize that you are going to hell for your sins.

Gabriel closes his eyes and all goes black. He yells in aggravation.

IN BLACK

GABRIEL

Shut up! Leave me alone!

INT. BANQUET HALL - STUDY

A large room filled with several bookshelves, a large wooden desk and several chairs sit at the front of the Banquet Hall looking out to the front Veranda from a tall bay window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICTORIA CROSS, wearing a pure white simple dress, stands near the window with a glass of RED wine in her hand, watching as cars pull in.

Jonathon Price is sitting at an armed chair near the desk sorting through an open file folder that lies in front of him. The folder is filled with a neat stack of papers containing number charts and paragraphs of typed and hand written material.

VICTORIA

I am worried. I have spent a large sum to make sure you have what you need to keep this place in working order and you mean to tell me we may have no power in a week's time?

JONATHON

The nearest city that is even close to the same working capacity as us is over three hundred miles away.

Jonathon flips through a few sheets of paper then looks back up at Victoria.

JONATHON (CONT'D)

And they sure aren't going to freely hand over any fuel they may not even have. And we sure as hell can't afford to send any engineers out of the city to look elsewhere; we need them here so they can finish the repairs at the high school, train yards and church.

Victoria exhales in impatience then smiles and waves at the window.

VICTORIA

That poor boy Gregory Cage is here with that manipulative Aunt of his. I swear she plays the dumb card better than that new girlfriend of yours.

Victoria walks away from the window and sits down in a chair across from Jonathon at the desk as Jonathon looks down in shame.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Oh stop moping. Sometimes I wonder where you ever got the balls to work with me.

Victoria grabs the folder of papers and begins looking through them.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I only hope she realizes that fucking you doesn't give her access to my accounts once the governments get their shit back together.

After a moment of reading, she stumbles across one form and GASPS in shock.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Why in God's name have the engineers stopped working on the solar panels at the train yard? We need those to be finished before next week according to what you've been telling me.

JONATHON

In case you didn't notice, it hasn't stopped raining for the past six months.

Victoria shakes her head and takes a sip of her wine.

JONATHON (CONT'D)

Solar panels are useless when we have nothing but grey skies day in and day out.

VICTORIA

If we don't find some way of powering this city by week's end we will be back in the Dark Ages living by candlelight.

Victoria closes the folder and pushes it across the desk back at Jonathon then stands up and places both hands on top of the desk, leaning in towards him.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Don't test my patience Jonathon. You're a puppet in my eyes and I make the decisions around here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Victoria leans back up, grabs her wine and begins to walk towards the study door.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

The only reason you were elected mayor is because they know my feelings about religion.

JONATHON

Actually, it's not your feelings about religion they dislike, they're afraid you'll try to use it to run their lives the same way it has been by others for quite some time.-

Victoria interrupts Jonathon, raising her index finger in the air.

VICTORIA

And that's what I have you for. So I suggest that you keep our conversations private. What these people do not know... well, ignorance is bliss.

Jonathon grabs the file folder off the desk and stands to walk towards the door and open it.

JONATHON

Do I have a choice?

Victoria smirks and reaches for the doorknob.

VICTORIA

Did you send your daughter back to the museum to pick up more garments?

JONATHON

They are at Edwin's house being darned. He should be finished by morning.

Victoria traces an imaginary cross on her chest and tilts her head in prayer.

VICTORIA

Let those who live in sin work with God's people to rid them of their dark lifestyles and be saved.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Jonathon opens the door as Victoria opens her eyes, looking out at the female violinists and flutists playing nearby and places her hand on her chest while taking another sip of her wine.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Your daughter has such splendid taste. I knew I could count on her picking out the right outfits for my girls. I just hope there is enough to go round to the others.

Victoria exits the study into the main lobby.

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

God forbid we have to rob Henry Ford of his Onassis collection.

Victoria chuckles as she walks off into the crowd, mingling with guests as Jonathon heads back towards the lobby, closing the study door behind him.

INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - BATHROOM MIRROR

Gabriel opens his eyes and peeks between his fingers to see that Jacob Grey's mouth, in the mirror, has disappeared from view then begins to sob profusely, stumbling back into his bedroom.

BEDROOM

Gabriel begins to break down by thrashing his arms about, knocking items off shelves and tables. After a few moments of anger release, Gabriel falls to his knees and continues to cry.

Suddenly the radio turns on, startling Gabriel as a female reporter begins to speak.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

It's reported that Chicago's citizen's are in despair this evening due to more power outages across the state leaving many with no heat and electricity tonight.

Gabriel looks about the room and wipes his nose with his forearm then reaches for the radio to shut it off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
In other news, Jonathon Price-

INT. BANQUET HALL - DINING HALL/MAIN LOBBY

White linen table cloths drape over large round tables topped with crystal wine glasses and floral arrangements of Iris's and peacock feathers. The dinnerware is lined with silver flourished accents and the tables are dusted with silver glitter and gemstones.

Several individuals dressed in luxurious costume dresses and tailored suits dated from the Victorian era to present, walk among the tables, some enjoying food and drink seated nearby.

AMANDA SIMMONS, mid thirties, with flawless features and a voluptuous body is decorated with diamonds and pressed into a tight RED dress as she hangs onto Jonathon's arm while they stand greeting guests entering the dining hall near the main lobby.

Amanda turns her head and sees AUTUMN PRICE, wearing a DARK BLUE, loose fitting dress, sitting alone at one of the dining tables behind her. Autumn is picking at her food and staring at her plate, gripping a small purse in her lap.

Amanda rolls her eyes at Autumn and then turns her head back to see Lavinia dressed in colorfully intricate attire, a VIOLET scarf and matching hair wrap, standing in front of them.

Lavinia raises one eyebrow at Amanda and quickly shifts her attention to Jonathon, smiles then nods.

JONATHON

Lavinia! What a pleasure having you stop by this evening.

Jonathon steps forward to shake Lavinia's hand and looks back at Amanda.

JONATHON (CONT'D)

Honey, this is Lavinia Athene. She will be Autumn's high school principal over at Cross Independence once they finish the repairs.

Amanda grins from the side of her mouth and nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMANDA

I believe Autumn says she speaks to you often. And surely she speaks highly of our new, happy family here.

Amanda looks past Lavinia's shoulder.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(to Jonathon)

That's Kate dear; I'll be back in a moment.

Amanda proceeds to walk past Lavinia; bumping her arm along the way.

JONATHON

Sorry Lavinia. She and my daughter had a disagreement the other night and things... did not go well.

Lavinia glances back over her shoulder at Amanda and speaks to Jonathon while staring at her intensely.

LAVINIA

Mr. Price. There is one thing your daughter understands among all... well most of us, that you obviously intend to ignore.

JONATHON

Heh... and what's that?

Lavinia turns her head back around and glares at Jonathon directly in the eyes.

LAVINIA

My point exactly.

Lavinia looks throughout the hall and spots Autumn sitting alone at the dining table then begins to take a step into her direction, pauses and looks back at Jonathon.

LAVINIA (CONT'D)

You know I am only here supporting you because of your daughter's well-being. You may not be as lethal as your new wife to be...however your cowardice...

Lavinia looks down at Jonathon's hand as it shakes the ice cubes in the bottom of his rocks glass and then studies his stature with her eyes back up to his pupils.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAVINIA (CONT'D)  
 Never mind; I look forward to  
 hearing your delightful speech this  
 evening.

Lavinia chuckles under her breath and gracefully walks away  
 towards Autumn, sitting down next to her.

Jonathon exhales in relief then looks off into the opposite  
 direction at a server nearby then raises his drink in the air  
 and walks away.

JONATHON (O.C.)  
 Waiter! Another drink, please.

EXT. DOWNTOWN THOROUGHFARE - NIGHT

Blue hued street lights illuminate a rainy evening along an  
 old-fashioned street dense with foliage, light commercial  
 businesses, newer markets and old homes as a lone BLACK  
 Mercedes drives down the thoroughfare.

In the distance the overhead light of the Mercedes turns on,  
 silhouetting two dark figures in the backseat.

CYNTHIA (V.O.)  
 Oh... I think I left my cell phone at  
 the house.

INT. BLACK MERCEDES - BACKSEAT

Leather upholstered seats dress the interior of the Mercedes  
 as Cynthia sits passenger side in the backseat with a lit  
 cigarette in one hand as Frederick sits driver's side in the  
 backseat facing Cynthia.

Cynthia rummages through her purse, pauses, shrugs, then  
 flicks an ash out the side window as she rubs her shoulders  
 and glances at the right side of FRANKLIN WATT'S face, a  
 chauffeur in his 70's and dressed in an appropriate BLACK  
 uniform attire and hat. Cynthia sighs then looks back over at  
 Fred.

CYNTHIA  
 I told him to call me if he changed  
 his mind.

Frederick smirks, removes the shawl from off of the seat  
 between them and places it over Cynthia's shoulders.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FREDERICK

I have my phone with me, he'll figure it out.

Frederick looks at the back of Franklin's head.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)

You can turn off the light now Franklin.

Cynthia peers out the open end of the fog-covered window. The Mercedes continues to a blinking stop light at an isolated crossroad with abandoned, broken down homes and an old burned down church. Located in the front lawn of the church are a few flooded flower beds and a newer looking, brightly lit Nativity scene.

A Virgin Mary statue kneels in front of a baby Jesus resting on a bed covered in hay as rain begins to pummel harder, pushing the baby Jesus through the bed to the ground below.

Cynthia glances over at a broken down, burned out, lettered sign aside the Nativity scene that reads: DON'T HAVE SUCH AN OPEN MIND, YOUR BRAINS WILL FALL OUT.

Cynthia stares back at the Nativity and speaks.

CYNTHIA

Do you think we are headed in the right direction?

Frederick laughs.

FREDERICK

Franklin has been Jonathon's driver for years, Hun; I think he knows where we are going.

Cynthia turns back to Frederick and impatiently nods her head.

CYNTHIA

I'm not talking about Franklin. I'm talking about us. It seems like it's taking forever for everyone to accept what happened. And for most, well...most have blocked it out like it never occurred.

Frederick takes Cynthia's hand as the Mercedes turns into a driveway, pulling under a large veranda accompanied by an extraordinary stone building.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Its windows are illuminated by shadows of people passing by as several valet attendants stand out front.

FREDERICK

Jonathon is going to change everything, you'll see. He's a good man. Winning this election was probably the best thing that could have happened to all of us.

Cynthia nods at Frederick as the car reaches the front entrance of the banquet hall.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)

Just be thankful that crazy old lady didn't try to take over.

A valet attendant opens Cynthia's door.

CYNTHIA

Who? You mean Victoria? She's far from crazy...she couldn't hurt a fly.

Frederick begins to reply but is interrupted as a valet escorts Cynthia from the vehicle.

VALET (O.C.)

You look beautiful tonight ma'am.

Frederick turns to Franklin and places his hand on his shoulder from behind.

FREDERICK

Franklin, would you mind picking up my son if he calls?

FRANKLIN

Not at all Sir; have to enjoy this car as much as possible before they force us to pedal.

Frederick smirks, then exits the vehicle and closes the door behind him. As Frederick begins to walk to the entrance of the hall Franklin's window rolls down, revealing the opposite, previously unseen left side of his badly burned and disfigured face.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Sir, don't forget your briefcase.

Frederick steps back and opens the door, reaches in and grabs the briefcase.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You know Sir; I've known your family for a long time. I even saw your son the day he was born. And although no one expected what happened, we all need time to heal, even you.

Frederick looks up over the car at Cynthia standing on the front porch of the banquet hall. The door opens behind her, lighting her like an angel in the night as the doorman escorts her inside.

FREDERICK

Thank you Franklin, I a... Jonathon should be finished with his speech around 10:30.

FRANKLIN

I'll have the car warm and waiting Sir.

Frederick nods at Franklin and walks towards the front door, pausing for a moment to listen to the rain begin to fall on the rooftops and sidewalks much harder than before. A small flash of lightning illuminates his face before he adjusts his composure and walks in.

The Mercedes pulls away and heads towards the parking lot in the rear of the banquet hall.

EXT. WINDOW TO GABRIEL'S BEDROOM

In the distance, Gabriel is curled up in the far corner of his bedroom sobbing. His arms are folded, knees to chest.

CLOSER

Gabriel is holding his fist closed, concealing something in his hand.

He immediately stops sobbing when a loud, glass-like CRASH is heard downstairs. He looks up quickly; eyes wet with thick black circles and long trailed tears; then drops the object hidden in his hand near his feet making a slight METALLIC CLINKING noise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gabriel places his hands on the floor, one of which nearly touches the STRAIGHT EDGE RAZOR that fell to the floor a moment ago, pushing himself up the wall behind him and rising to his feet shivering as a large gust of wind blows through his open bedroom window.

Gabriel's bedroom door CLICK'S and opens slightly.

He rubs his exposed arms with his hands as he paces the room with his eyes, then reaches for the doorknob of his bedroom.

INT. BANQUET HALL - DINING HALL/MAIN LOBBY

Frederick walks into the lobby and notices his wife, Cynthia, in the distance speaking to Jonathon Price, alone. She has two drinks in her hand, a cosmopolitan in one, a whiskey and sprite in the other.

Frederick casually walks towards them and begins to speak before he reaches their immediate area.

FREDERICK

It's beginning to get a lot worse out there; looks like we might even have some flooding issues again.

Cynthia turns to Frederick as he approaches and hands him the whiskey and sprite.

CYNTHIA

Then I guess you'll need this to calm your nerves. I hear Jonathon is adding some congrats to you in his speech that you never told me about.

Frederick hesitates and looks at Jonathon, than takes the drink from Cynthia's hand.

FREDERICK

That's because it's news to me as well.

Cynthia turns to a table by her side to place down her drink and search for a cigarette from her purse. Frederick places his briefcase on the floor at a nearby wall then reaches up to shake Jonathon's hand only to be intercepted by Amanda's, who had just joined their group.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMANDA

I'm Amanda Price. It's a pleasure meeting one of Jonathon's most prized possessions.

Frederick slowly looks up, searching through the folded fabric of Amanda's tight red dress; finally laying his focus on her large busty chest. He then stands completely erect and greets her face with a smile.

FREDERICK

It's a pleasure meeting you as well... Miss?

Frederick looks over at Jonathon as Cynthia turns back to join their conversation.

JONATHON

Actually, it's Simmons. Amanda Simmons. It's her way of reminding me that we are not married yet.

Everyone laughs as Amanda glances over at Cynthia then back at Frederick.

AMANDA

And you must be Cynthia's husband.

Cynthia exhales a cloud of smoke away from everyone's direction then places her cigarette between two free fingers of her other martini holding hand. She then extends her free hand and smiles.

CYNTHIA

Yes, Frederick RONACHE to be exact.

Amanda shakes Cynthia's hand as the lights in the hall flicker for a spilt second. Amanda looks up at Jonathon with concern.

AMANDA

This ought to be an interesting evening for all of us.

Amanda looks back at Frederick.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I will save both you and Cynthia a table near the front of the stage.

Amanda then turns her side, furthest from Jonathon, inward towards him and whispers in his ear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AMANDA (CONT'D)  
Cover me dear.

Amanda reaches into the top of her dress and adjusts her cleavage as she looks around the room. She comes across Autumn sitting at the dining table with Lavinia and rolls her eyes just as she turns back around.

AMANDA (CONT'D)  
Well, I am going to start rounding people up. Jonathon, why don't you show Frederick and...

Amanda pauses; then glares at Cynthia.

AMANDA (CONT'D)  
...Cynthia around the hall. Once again it was a pleasure meeting you, Frederick.

Amanda walks away into the crowd.

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

Ladies and gentleman, my husband will be giving his speech shortly. I suggest you all find a seat before the best ones are taken.

INT. STAIRWELL TO GABRIEL'S BEDROOM

Gabriel slowly creeps down the stairs, silhouetted by his open bedroom door. The GRASSHOPPER'S CHRIRPING begins again as Gabriel speaks into the dark kitchen below.

GABRIEL  
Mom? Dad? Hello... is anyone there?

Gabriel makes his way to the bottom step as the GRASSHOPPER jumps into the bedroom door above and behind him. The wind suddenly bursts through his window, SLAMMING his door closed.

Gabriel jerks around and places his hand to his chest, then chuckles lightly and rests his head against the stairwell wall for a moment, regaining his composure.

INT. BANQUET HALL - DINING HALL

Autumn and Lavinia are sitting alone at the table while a small portion of uneaten food sits on a plate in front of Autumn.

Autumn picks at her food with a fork as she continues to stare at her plate and snuffles as if she were about to cry. Lavinia has one elbow on the table to rest her head and the other on Autumn's shoulder.

AUTUMN

I'm exhausted. I've tried to ignore it, but it keeps repeating over and over again.

LAVINIA

Have you talked to Cynthia?

AUTUMN

I'm trying to keep a distance at the moment.

A loud CRASH of lightning roars outside as the lights of the banquet hall go out. Moments later the emergency lights go on and Lavinia quickly glances behind her to see Victoria fall to the ground and spill red wine all over her dress.

A cocktail server kneels nearby amidst a tray of broken glasses attempting to help Victoria as Lavinia turns back to Autumn and hesitates.

LAVINIA

I'll be right back.

Lavinia stands slowly as Autumn looks off into the corner of the room at seemingly nothing.

AUTUMN

This is what happens.

Lavinia looks back at Autumn, then briskly walks off to help Victoria as Autumn looks back down at her plate.

VICTORIA'S POV

Lavinia bends down and places her hands underneath Victoria's back, lifting her to her feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAVINIA  
Mrs. Cross, are you alright

LAVINIA'S POV

Victoria looks up at Lavinia then glances over at Autumn to see her gazing at the two of them intently.

VICTORIA  
Oh I'm fine dear. I swear I get  
clumsier and clumsier the older I  
get.

Victoria laughs and looks back at Lavinia as she brushes herself off.

LAVINIA  
Let's go get you cleaned up.

AUTUMN'S POV

Victoria laughs, bracing herself on Lavinia's shoulder as she gains her balance while Autumn listens to their conversation from afar.

VICTORIA  
Is that girl alright Lavinia? I  
swear she has the look of death in  
her eyes.

Lavinia looks up at Autumn then places her arm around Victoria's waist and guides her to the restroom down a hallway on the opposite side of the dining hall.

As Lavinia and Victoria move out of view, Autumn turns her head to see Amanda staring at her from the lobby then walk abruptly towards her, placing her hands on her hips.

BACK TO SCENE

Amanda glances around the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLOSER

Amanda leans down to whisper in Autumn's ear.

AMANDA

Your father will be giving his speech in a few minutes. I expect you to be sitting next to me on stage with an actual smile on your face.

Amanda leans back slightly; hovering over Autumn, then assures that no one is listening before she continues.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

And I'd really appreciate it if you would stop talking to that woman about our family. Do you have any idea how it makes me... your father look?

Autumn looks down at her hands as she twiddles her thumbs and speaks softly under her breath.

AUTUMN

When our emptiness is revealed, it will haunt us.

Amanda steps back, eyeing Autumn with peculiarity, then walks back into the lobby, entertaining guests and escorting them into the stage hall.

Autumn looks around the room then begins scraping items from under her plate into a soiled napkin. She then pushes her hair behind her ear and looks to her side before placing the napkin in the handbag that lies on her lap.

The banquet hall lights come back on at the exact moment that Autumn speaks under her breath again.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

This is what happens.

INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - KITCHEN

Gabriel stands at the back door, reaching to turn on the light as he stares out into the storm, through the window of the door.

As he turns on the light his eyelids flinch and he gently

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

shakes his head.

INT. UNRECOGNIZED BEDROOM - BED (FLASHBACK)

Gabriel's face, glowing by candlelight, lies on a white pillow laughing. After a few moments, he turns over to a nightstand behind him.

GABRIEL

I have something for you.

INT. GABRIEL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN (PRESENT)

Gabriel massages the bridge of his nose as he opens his eyes to his reflection in the window of the door.

As he stares at his reflection a flash of lightning illuminates the night as Jacob Grey appears vaguely in the distance, shirtless, running from the garage to the side of the house through the rain.

Gabriel fumbles with the door to make sure it is locked and quickly turns out the light and slowly backs away.

Moments later another flash of lightning STRIKES and illuminates Jacob Grey's face, wearing a black blindfold over his eyes, in the window of the door as Gabriel GASPS and turns to run into the living room behind him.

INT. BANQUET HALL - WOMEN'S RESTROOM

The ceiling is lined with very dull, BUZZING fluorescent lights. On one side are several SILVER metal enclosed bathroom stalls, while sinks, crowned with tall mirrors, face opposite.

Victoria stands in front of the mirror staring at her reflection inquisitively, while Lavinia wets a towel in a nearby sink and begins blotting at the wine stain on Victoria's chest.

VICTORIA

What's happened to me dear?

LAVINIA

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICTORIA

What do I mean? I used to be beautiful, Lavinia. Now I'm an old woman whose husband leaves unannounced.

Lavinia stops and looks up at Victoria's face in the reflection of the mirror.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

You're all I have left.

INT. GABRIEL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM

After entering the living room from the kitchen, Gabriel turns to see that Jacob's face has disappeared. He continues to walk backward slowly as a curtain from the living room window dances behind him near the sofa, flapping from the gusts of wind pushing through from the outside.

Gabriel turns to investigate.

INT. BANQUET HALL - WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Lavinia pushes a lock of hair out of Victoria's face.

LAVINIA

First of all you are not old...you are beautiful. And second,

Lavinia leans into Victoria's ear to whisper indescribably. Victoria closes her eyes, smiles and shakes her head.

INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

Gabriel walks towards the living room window slowly, sticking his neck outward, looking into the darkness by the underside of the window shadowed by the arm of the couch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAVINIA (V.O.)  
Everything happens for a reason,  
you'll see.

As Gabriel gets closer he notices several shards of broken glass around the frame of the window sill.

LAVINIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
And why on earth are you saddened  
about an old drunk that has done  
nothing but waste your time?

INT. BANQUET HALL - WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Victoria ponders Lavinia's question as Lavinia removes the violet scarf from around her neck and places it over the stain on Victoria's chest.

LAVINIA  
There. If we can't get rid of it,  
then we'll just have to cover it  
up.

INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

Upon finally reaching the window, Gabriel sees a broken Rosetta stone lying on the floor below the side of the couch. As he crouches to clean up the mess he looks closer and notices the corner of a book sticking out from below the sofa.

Gabriel pulls on the corner of it, pushing the broken stone pieces out of the way, revealing a slightly worn and burnt yearbook. The book reads in bold, gold letters across the top: CROSS HIGH SCHOOL.

INT. BANQUET HALL - WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Lavinia grabs her glass of wine off of the counter and reaches for Victoria's hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICTORIA

Are you ready? I believe you will be saying a few words tonight as well.

Victoria nods and exits the restroom with Lavinia.

HALLWAY TO WOMEN'S RESTROOM

A long wide corridor separates the rest rooms from the stage hall on the right and the dining hall on the left. The wainscoted walls are top heavy with velveteen wallpaper holding up a mural of a midnight starry sky on the ceiling.

Lavinia and Victoria walk towards the stage hall entrance as Autumn enters the corridor from the dining hall toward the restroom with her head down.

LAVINIA

Autumn? Your father's speech is about to begin, are you joining us?

Autumn continues past them and stops next to the restroom door, turning while rummaging through her handbag.

AUTUMN

I know. I... I'll be in shortly. I have to make a call.

LAVINIA

Okay, dear.

Lavinia continues with Victoria and walks into the stage hall.

INT. BANQUET HALL - STAGE HALL

The stage hall is dense with small cocktail tables and purple velvet covered chairs accented with dark Mahogany woodwork. The stage that hugs the seating area has a small dark blue glow around the edge of its perimeter, peering through the seams of the wood floor to its steel façade.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On the stage to the right are several chairs and center is a glass podium with an old style 1930's radio microphone with the letters: P.A.Y.S.A forged on a curve near the head.

The group of women playing instruments in the lobby walks in and stands near the corner of the stage. They begin playing a soft, dramatic tune as several people gather in while Amanda helps them find seats.

After a few moments Lavinia walks in with Victoria and guides her to a seat in the front.

GREGORY CAGE, a male in his late twenties, wheelchair bound, is pushed into the opposing door of the stage hall by his Aunt, SUSAN LOCKE, an woman in her forties, dressed in a very loud and obnoxious, fluffy gown.

Victoria glances over and waves in Gregory and Susan's direction as Lavinia and Victoria take a seat.

LAVINIA

Who's that?

VICTORIA

You don't remember Gregory Cage? He was your student in public speaking during his senior year.

LAVINIA

Oh... he was the young man who left early to go to war right? Don't tell me that's how he ended up in-

Victoria looks over at Gregory and Susan as they get closer to their table as she leans in slightly to Lavinia's ear and speaks softer.

VICTORIA

No, no, no. He was only stationed about a month before he was diagnosed with MD. He's been paralyzed from the waist down ever since.

Victoria leans in closer as to not let anyone around her hear their conversation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Remember that "larger" women just outside of town that ran that phone sex operation and the online Christian book store out of her home?

Lavinia nods and covers her mouth as her eyes grow large with awe.

VICTORIA

That's his mother. She shot herself during all the commotion six months back. Not that it's any loss to the poor boy; she abandoned him when he was eleven. Now his crazy Aunt-

Gregory and Susan approach their table, interrupting Lavinia and Victoria's conversation. Victoria looks up to greet them.

VICTORIA

Hello Gregory! You still have your handsome looks; and Susan... oh Susan, where on earth did you get that dress! It's amazing!

Gregory quietly shrugs and responds with a nod. Susan looks down at her dress with a big smile as she curtsy's and giggles then replies in a Southern drawl.

SUSAN

Victoria, I thought you'd be rid of this place by now. How's your husband doin'?

Lavinia interrupts as she reaches to shake Susan's hand.

LAVINIA

I'm Lavinia Athene. I was Gregory's public speaking teacher a few years back.

Susan glares at Lavinia's hand as she folds her own in front of her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SUSAN

I know who you are, Ms. Athene. We haven't met because I prefer it that way.

Susan leans down and kisses Gregory on the back of the head as he continues to keep quiet.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Pardon us, Victoria. We are going to go find a seat before Jonathon begins.

Victoria grins as Susan pushes Gregory around and heads back to a table further away. Lavinia looks back at Victoria and raises her eyebrows.

VICTORIA

I was just... going to get to that part dear.

Amanda walks by their table and smiles at both Lavinia and Victoria as she spots Jonathon walk in and rushes over to him. She turns toward him, reaches into to her cleavage to adjust her breast again and whisper's in his ear.

AMANDA

Where's your daughter? I told her she had to be here for your speech.

Amanda steps back and grabs Jonathon's wrist. She pushes up his sleeve and glances at his large-faced, gold digital watch.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

And it starts in less than five minutes.

Jonathon shrugs and straightens his tie.

JONATHON

I guess we will have to start without her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Jonathon adjusts his jacket as Amanda unpins and then pins his name tag on straight. Amanda huffs and flattens out the folds in her dress.

AMANDA

There... much better. I'm going to go look for your daughter. Do you need another drink before you go up?

Jonathon shakes his head and begins to ascend the staircase of the stage nearby.

WOMEN'S RESTROOM

The bathroom door swings open. Autumn thrusts herself inside, pushing the door closed behind her. She turns, rests her head against the door and begins to sob. Her hand shakes as she reaches for the deadbolt and locks it.

Autumn turns and presses her back against the door. She slowly slides down and sits on the floor while searching frantically through her purse for a cell phone. Upon retrieving it, she dials a number and listens while it rings.

DINING HALL

Amanda walks into the dining area, squints over the crowd and spots Cynthia standing in the corner with a glass of wine as she nods to a guest walking by. Amanda stumbles towards her, stops to adjust her dress and then speaks.

AMANDA

Will you find Autumn for me? I'm trying to seat guests while my husband prepares for his speech.

Cynthia grins as Amanda looks down and smoothes out her dress.

CYNTHIA

She was just here a minute ago talking to Lavinia, then I think she went to the restroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Amanda continues to look at Cynthia as if she were waiting for a response.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)  
And you still want me to go get  
her?

Amanda smiles and nods at Cynthia's puzzled expression.

AMANDA  
I'm busy and there are still a few  
guests that need to be seated.

Amanda continues to stand while seemingly looking over a less populated crowd.

CYNTHIA  
It's nice to know she has someone  
who cares about her.

AMANDA  
Trust me, it's not hard.

CYNTHIA  
I didn't mean you.

Amanda rolls her eyes as Cynthia exits the dining hall towards the restroom. Amanda then turns to adjust her breast again and exits in the opposite direction of the same door.

STAGE HALL

Jonathon stands behind the podium on stage while Frederick sits behind him to the right. Jonathon taps the microphone as guests settle down with their drinks.

JONATHON  
Ladies and gentleman welcome to a  
new beginning towards a bright  
future.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The audience applauds as Amanda walks in and ascends the stairs to the stage. She walks towards Frederick and motions him to move over a seat so that she may be closest to Jonathon, then pulls her seat slightly forward and begins applauding as well.

INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

Gabriel is seated on the sofa with the book resting on his lap. He slowly opens the cover and begins reading the inscriptions written inside. He runs his finger across one that says: HOW DID WE EVER SURVIVE THIS SCHOOL YEAR? LOL...

JONATHON (V.O.)

We have survived because we were chosen!

INT. BANQUET HALL - STAGE HALL

Jonathon stands speaking with his palms up as Amanda crosses her legs and begins dangling her shoe off of her toes.

JONATHON

And by sticking together we can begin to create a brighter future for all!

INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

Gabriel flips through the pages until he comes to one slightly stuck together and begins to pull at the corner.

JONATHON (V.O.)

We can survive on our own and persevere through these hard times!

After he pulls the pages apart, he reveals a photograph of Jamie Cross in the upper right hand corner with a black circle around it. Gabriel runs his finger across it briefly, to the side of the page that reads: CROSS, JAIME.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He then quickly flips through a few more pages and looks for and finds a photograph of Autumn.

INT. BANQUET HALL - STAGE HALL - PODIUM

Jonathon raises his finger in the air and pauses.

JONATHON

Everyone...

He glances around in confusion and pulls a pair of reading glasses from his breast pocket. He then bends down and reads the speech before him. His name tag aligns with the head of the microphone stand as it reads: P.A.Y.S.A. PRICE.

Jonathon clears his throat and continues.

JONATHON (CONT'D)

Everyone will reap the rewards of our victories! For I am announcing the construction of a new church; fully funded by Mrs. Cross and is to be resurrected here in Detroit, over the central city fountain!

The audience applauds.

WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Autumn is sitting on the floor listening to the continuous rings from her cell phone.

AUTUMN

Come on pick up. Please pick up.

JONATHON (V.O.)

In order to preserve the foundation for which we stand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

An indistinct applause can be heard throughout the restroom.

Autumn abruptly closes her phone after hearing a SWISH from the back of the last stall. Autumn looks carefully; cowering to investigate the underside of the stalls but sees nothing.

HALLWAY TO WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Cynthia "zigzags" into the hallway, eyeing signs on doors until she comes to the bathroom. She reaches to push it open only to find it locked.

CYNTHIA

Autumn, sweetie, are you in there?

WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Autumn pushes herself upward to stand erect and places the phone into her purse.

She removes the SOILED NAPKIN and empties its contents of chewed up, uneaten food into the garbage can beside her and stumbles toward the furthest bathroom stall.

As Autumn passes by the CENTER MIRROR unaware, JACOB GREY, appears as a reflection in the mirror, shivering and wet, wearing nothing but a pair of BLACK pants. His eyes are closed and head tilted down. His rib cage protrudes slightly, enhancing random scars and bruises on his body. Jacob grins.

He disappears as Autumn reaches the furthest stall, falling inward to her knees.

HALLWAY TO WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Cynthia knocks on the bathroom door.

CYNTHIA

Autumn?

Cynthia still hears nothing.

## BATHROOM STALL

Autumn grabs the toilet seat with one hand and props her self over the toilet with the other as her purse falls to the floor by her side. She stares into the water as she slowly reaches two fingers into the back of her throat and gags.

The stall door closes and locks on its own behind her.

The CLICK of the lock alarms Autumn, forcing her to turn her head and look at the door with eyes wide.

AUTUMN

Hello?

A fluorescent light above her begins to flicker pulling her attention upward. A single snowflake falls; gently making it's way to her lower eyelid as she begins to shiver.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

Is someone there?

JACOB GREY (O.C.)

How long are WE going to do this?

Autumn turns back to see Jacob squatting on the water tank with his eyes closed and arms extended between his legs to keep his posture. She immediately stands up and slams her backside against the stall door.

AUTUMN

How...did you, ge... get in here?

Jacob opens his eyelids to reveal two mirrored spheres and begins to speak through his worn, discolored smile.

JACOB GREY

You let me in.

Autumn screams and turns to POUND on the stall door, BANGING it several times in panic.

AUTUMN

Someone help me!

CYNTHIA (O.C.)

Autumn honey, answer me if you're in there?

AUTUMN

Cynthia, please... help me!

## HALLWAY TO WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Cynthia, still hearing nothing, looks around in panic and confusion as Lavinia walks into the hallway from the stage hall.

LAVINIA

What's wrong Cynthia?

CYTHINA

It's Autumn, she's locked herself in the bathroom and won't answer me.

## INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

Gabriel rests the yearbook on the coffee table before him and places his elbows on his knees, hands on his eyes and begins to cry.

JONATHON (V.O.)

Our world will once again be filled with faith for the one who has spared our lives!

A deep wind from the window behind Gabriel flips several pages in the book over followed by slamming shut.

Gabriel abruptly looks up.

## EXT. CROSS HIGH SCHOOL - EARLY MORNING (FLASHBACK)

Gabriel hides behind an enormous tree as the parking lot lights of Cross High School shine across the pavement.

He cries as several adults and teenagers run screaming from the school that is bursting with fire and smoke while others are left beating on windows, screaming for their lives.

## INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM (PRESENT)

Gabriel comes to as smoke puffs from the yearbook that begins singeing at the corner. He grabs the book and tosses it out the broken window, then swiftly walks to the frame of the kitchen doorway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gabriel turns back to see the living room intact, window unbroken and curtains still; he then continues back up to his bedroom.

INT. BANQUET HALL - BATHROOM STALL

Autumn stares at the stall door then pauses to notice numerous snowflakes falling generously from above.

JACOB GREY (O.C.)

We watch ourselves rot from the inside, like coffers filled with maggots.

Autumn slowly turns to face him, hugs herself and shivers as Jacob guides his hands outward. The sound of RUSHING water bellows from below as the snow recedes.

JACOB GREY (CONT'D)

(Using Autumn's voice)

This is what happens.

Autumn drops her head and begins to sob as water from the toilet overflows, quickly filling the room.

AUTUMN

Please stop.

From the water tank, in a split second, Jacob is suddenly facing Autumn while holding her wrists above her head, firmly against the door. Jacob leans inward and whispers in her ear just as the water level rises to their bottom lips.

JACOB GREY

This is the peace WE need.

HALLWAY TO WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Cynthia is BANGING on the door as Lavinia steps slowly backward in panic.

CYNTHIA

Autumn, please say something!

LAVINIA

I'm going to go get help.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lavinia turns and exits in the opposite direction.

INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - STAIRWELL TO GABRIEL'S BEDROOM

Gabriel makes his way up the stairs only to hear his cell phone vibrating and beeping through his bedroom door.

INT. BANQUET HALL - RESTROOM STALL

While both completely underwater; Jacob stares at Autumn, kisses her forehead and pushes away from her. He closes his eyes as she lets in a breath of water.

INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - GABRIEL'S BEDROOM

The message alarm on Gabriel's cell phone is vibrating on the nearby dresser. Gabriel walks towards it, picks it up off of the dresser and opens it to see AUTUMN'S name on the missed call screen.

INT. BANQUET HALL - HALLWAY TO WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Cynthia continues to bang on the door until it suddenly CLICKS and slightly opens.

WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Cynthia slowly walks into a normal, well kempt restroom, stops and glances around.

CYNTHIA

Autumn?

Cynthia glances down to see a set of women's legs sticking out from underneath the far bathroom stall. She GASPS and races towards them and presses open the door.

Autumn is lying on the floor, completely DRY, her purse by her side with its contents including a set of keys, a few papers, a wallet and a CELL PHONE spilled out. A pool of vomit is beside her cheek.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cynthia quickly reaches down and checks her pulse then grabs the cell phone to dial 911. While waiting for someone to answer she screams.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)  
Someone help me!

STAGE HALL

Guests are applauding as Jonathon stands on stage holding Amanda's hand in the air. Guests towards the back begin to become unsettled by the sounds of Cynthia screaming from the women's restroom. Several individuals rush to the scene as others begin gossiping in panic.

WOMEN'S RESTROOM (CYNTHIA'S POV)

From the door, Cynthia hangs up the phone, stands up and slowly steps backward as people rush in to investigate the situation.

The CELL PHONE in Cynthia's hand rings. She looks at the LED screen to see Gabriel's name in the window and answers the call.

CYNTHIA  
Gabriel?

Cynthia steps further backwards away from the crowd until her backside hits the counter top of the sinks behind her.

Jacob Grey is seen kneeling on the counter top in the reflection of the mirror behind her. With no one aware of his presence, he leans forward against the glass as his lips begin to move.

INT. RONACHE RESIDENCE - GABRIEL'S BEDROOM

Gabriel, stands shaking with the cell phone next to his ear.

GABRIEL  
Mom?

INT. BANQUET HALL - WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Jacob mouths Gabriel's last words in Cynthia's ear as she listens intensely to Gabriel on the other end of the phone.

GABRIEL (V.O.)  
(Jacob mimicking)  
...help her please

IN BLACK

AUTUMN (V.O.)  
This is what happens.

CUT TO:

INT. KENDALL RESIDENCE - SEAMSTRESS ROOM - NIGHT

EDWIN (TRIXIE DELUXXE) KENDALL, mid thirties, stands near a vanity mirror and sewing table amidst sewing machines and racks of clothing, while stitching a hem of a Victorian gown. He wears a wig of long blonde hair wrapped in a bun; long fake eyelashes and press-on nails.

AUTUMN (V.O.)  
We mend the past in hopes to  
preserve some part of ourselves.

Edwin pricks his finger with a needle and sucks on it to stop the bleeding.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

A) Amanda Simmons stands on the stage in the banquet hall with her arms folded in annoyance as guests of the hall chaotically address the issues of Autumn's body in the restroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AUTUMN (V.O.)

Only to ignore what the real issues  
are, that so desperately need a  
healing touch.

B) Gabriel lies on the edge of his bed crying as his cell  
phone sits on the floor, open, as Cynthia is heard on the  
other end calling for him.

AUTUMN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

With this, we are haunted.

C) Victoria stands among the crowd of guests in the women's  
bathroom, staring into the mirror as she pulls aside the  
VIOLET scarf and stares at the stain on her chest. She  
remains oblivious to the crying women and frightened men  
around her.

AUTUMN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

For as our past is revealed;

D) Autumn lies on the floor as medics do their best to revive  
her.

CLOSER

Amidst the pile of belongings scattered from her purse,  
Autumn's hand barely touches a small piece of PAPER with the  
number: 1223 written on it.

AUTUMN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So are the secrets buried with it.

FADE OUT:

THE END