

Spring 5-4-2023

The Wolves' Teeth

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Murray State University Honors College

HONORS THESIS

Certificate of Approval

The Wolves' Teeth

Abigail Moore
May 2023

Approved to fulfill the
requirements of HON 437

Approved to fulfill the
Honors Thesis requirement
of the Murray State Honors
Diploma

Dr. Carrie Jerrell, Associate Professor
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Examination Approval Page

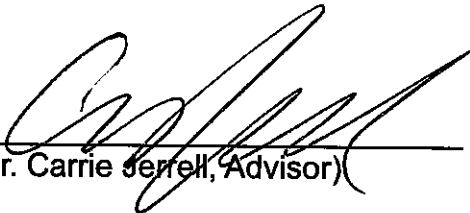
Author: Abigail Moore

Project Title: *The Wolves' Teeth*

Department: English and Philosophy

Date of Defense: 4/27/2023

Approval by Examining Committee:



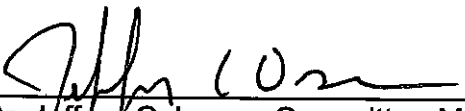
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4/27/23
(Date)



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4/27/23
(Date)

The Wolves' Teeth

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the Murray State University Honors Diploma

Abigail Moore

May 2023

Introduction

I. Origin of *The Wolves' Teeth*

On December 10, 2021, a series of tornadoes ripped through Western Kentucky. Like so many others living in the region, I holed up in my bathroom, cushioned my back with a pillow, and crossed my legs in front of my toilet. The power went in and out, but I had a fully charged iPad. Until the storm passed, I had to find something to do. So I wrote. It all came out at once, almost fully formed: a story about abuse, justice, and doomed love. What I wrote that night became the bones of this screenplay.

At that point, the story was chiefly a response to “cancel” culture and was inspired by Lorraine Bracco and Harvey Keitel’s 1998 custody trial, which involved coverage of Edward James Olmos (who Bracco had married after divorcing Keitel) and his alleged molestation of a 14-year-old family friend and sometimes babysitter of Bracco and Keitel’s daughter. Olmos denied the young girl’s allegations but paid her family at least \$150,000 to sign releases promising not to prosecute and to keep quiet about the matter, then went on with his celebrity career. The many recent “cancellations” of celebrities had reminded me of the trial and how most public figures who should be shunned for their actions are, through power and celebrity, quickly, if not immediately, welcomed back into the fold. But I kept thinking about the girl, and it was this forgotten act that broke my heart and moved me to write about the mental illness I thought she might grow into. Although the story didn’t involve the celebrity aspect anymore, it did end up being about abuse.

Another project I worked on informed the revenge plot of the story. I wrote a paper for a film class about international cinema’s preoccupation with justice, and in this paper I questioned whether *justice* was in fact real or simply an imagined construct. I was fascinated by the films *A Separation* (2011) and *The Story of Qiu Ju* (1992), both of which explored looking for justice under authoritative governments. While researching the films, I couldn’t help but see parallels with the American justice

system and its faults, and ultimately I became convinced that justice was in fact fictitious. I became embittered by public amnesia, which so easily welcomes back those who wrong others, and this bitterness spurred the original story into being. The plot of the story involved an abused woman, Heather, who began a revenge campaign against her abuser and his family while living a double life. One of her *lives* included being a patient of a psychiatrist, Dr. Ciaran Brennan. Over time, Ciaran became less of a lighthouse in the darkness and more lost at sea himself.

I wrote around forty pages of this story, after which I became disillusioned with it and put it away. My main character (Heather), her father (Tom), and her doctor (Ciaran) all remain characters in the final draft of my screenplay, but everyone else has been cut, and my portrayal of Heather's mental illness has been revised. Originally, in the very first draft of the story, I wrote Heather to reflect my own struggles with bipolar disorder. However, in the screenplay, Heather's struggles with mental illness are ever-present but not clearly defined, a choice I made so that her behaviors and motivations could be more ambiguous for a reader or a viewer.

Summer of 2022, I rewrote the story as a frame narrative, which it remains today, but it wasn't until October of 2022, while studying in Regensburg, Germany, that I got a good handle on the story. What would happen, I asked myself, if a man and a woman met on the side of the road when her car broke down? How did they get there? What were their stories? Was she running – and from what? Then it occurred to me that maybe Heather and her love interest, Ciaran, were those two people.

The next phase of the project involved me writing approximately twenty-two poems, all about Heather and Ciaran. At this point, the project was, in my mind, a poetry collection about them. Appropriately, some of the poems were plot-related, while others were character-driven. All of the poems, though, informed the genre, the plot, and the dialogue of the final screenplay. I would never have arrived at this final draft of the screenplay without those poems.

The poems – with their emphasis on foggy backroads, expansive woods, and moral ambiguity – were heavily inspired by the Southern Gothic genre. It wasn't until I began drafting the screenplay that I decided the story would be a more interesting fit for Neo-Noir. Both Southern Gothic and Neo-Noir, though, are seen “as privileging mood over... narrative” (Brasell 42). This is something that I kept in mind while writing both drafts, and I tried to capitalize on the moodiness of the environment, first in a Southern Gothic setting and then a Noir one. Ultimately, Southern Gothic is associated with “both the grotesque and degeneracy” (Brasell 47), and I didn't think I could do either one justice in the context of the story. I thought it would be more interesting for the film to explore and challenge elements of Neo-Noir. Noirs focus more on mystery, questions, and feelings of being trapped in some kind of unfortunate and inevitable destiny, while Southern Gothic “invokes degradation and decay” in a way I couldn't access at the time.

II. Film Noir

Film Noir was a genre of films made in the 1940s and 1950s, named by French critics, that were especially dark, inspired by German Expressionism, and explored gender roles in a way most films of the time didn't. They were underscored by their moodiness, their labyrinthine plots, and a character type I'm most interested in – the femme fatale. The femme fatale is a “lethal lady” (Dick 156), perhaps “not... a suffering woman but a misunderstood one” (Dick 157). Of course, some femme fatales are evil for the sake of being evil; others genuinely are misunderstood.

A great example of a femme fatale is Gene Tierney's female lead in the 1945 film *Leave Her to Heaven*. The critic Catherine Nealy Judd argues that the film's character, Ellen, presents as a kind of monster, a type of Medusa who “[guards] the boundaries that separate day from night and life from

death" (Judd 48). She is "at once enticing and repellent" (Judd 47), including in her first scene, where she *entices* her male love interest with a stare. Judd writes that Ellen as a femme fatale is "an allegory for dark, destructive and malevolent forces" (Judd 48), not simply an individual woman. In the case of *Leave Her to Heaven* as in many other Noir films of the time, it is less important to focus on Ellen's motivations and personal experiences, since she is functioning as a symbol. This is another reason why Ellen is an archetypal femme fatale: monstrous but beautiful, alluring but in all the wrong ways, and a symbol more than a person. Importantly, Ellen has a tragic ending, as most femme fatales do.

Just as I was interested in the concept of the femme fatale, I was fascinated by the male detective in the Noir. I kept returning in my mind to the scene in *Vertigo* (1958), when Jimmy Stewart's character is following Kim Novak in his car. His character is a detective, and through the film, we see that he becomes obsessed with the subject of his investigation. So much of the film is about obsession and delusion. In *Vertigo* one can see one of the hallmarks of the Noir: there is something distinctly perverted about the male detective in the noir film – by which I mean that he sees and moves through the world sexually, especially in regard to how he views women. While some protagonists are detectives by *profession* in classic noir, they are all always detectives by *nature of the story*. It is the protagonist's sexually driven curiosity that usually moves the plot forward, like in *Double Indemnity* (1944), where he is an insurance salesman playing the role of the Noir detective.

Also important for a film noir is its setting. Many of the typical aspects of the setting are easily recognizable to anyone familiar with the genre: "mean streets (usually wet with rain), pools of light from street lamps, flashing neon, sleazy hotel rooms," as well as Dutch angles, "low-key lighting," and a general "sense of entrapment" (Dick 155), all cinematic techniques that visually set the noir apart.

III. Neo-Noir

The Neo-Noir was born after the “national shock effects that began in the early 1960s” (Scheibel 319), including political assassinations and the Vietnam War. From the 1970s to the 1980s especially, Neo-Noirs like *The Long Goodbye* (1973), *Chinatown* (1974), *Taxi Driver* (1976), *Thief* (1981), and *Blood Simple* (1984), among many others, were produced. The Neo-Noir in particular is defined by “murdered women [and] anti-heroic detectives” (Scheibel 322) as well as “psychologically unsettled men [set] adrift.” They are also grittier and often more violent than classic noir films.

Neo-Noir is particularly interesting because of its developments from Noir. The femme fatale, for example, becomes a victim of blackmail, abuse, or manipulation of some kind, and this is the case for nearly every Neo-Noir femme fatale. It is no longer fashionable to make a woman evil for the sake of being evil, even if the traditional femme fatale was relatively beloved for it. Now we look at the femme fatale character’s justification – her excuse, her *motive*. This is due to “increasing numbers of independent working women, the women's consciousness movement, and more liberal sexual attitudes” (Boozer 24).

I would argue the Neo-Noir continues to center around a hardboiled male protagonist who is driven to women by sexual curiosity, though those women may or may not be femme fatales. Katie Kapurch and Jon Marc Smith describe the “wayward path” (Kapurch and Smith 92) that the “fallen man” is led down, usually by either addiction or the femme fatale. One can think of the aforementioned films *Thief*, *Chinatown*, and *The Long Goodbye*, as well as *L.A. Confidential* (1997), *Drive* (2011), *Cutter’s Way* (1981), or any number of other Neo-Noirs to see the popularity of the male Neo-Noir protagonist. If anything, the biggest difference seems to be a literal increase in the number of hardboiled male protagonists, from films like *The Usual Suspects* (1995) to *Pulp Fiction* (1994) to *L.A. Confidential*, all of which include more than one and sometimes whole ensembles of men dominating the cast. The setting

also becomes overwhelmingly neon – in fact, one quick Google search will show you that the term “Neo-Noir” is tied to dark settings highlighted by neon lights. Just as the original Noirs relied on stylized settings, the Neo-Noirs do as well.

IV. *The Wolves’ Teeth* and Noir/Neo-Noir Influences

In my screenplay, I tried to take the traditional Noir’s “threatening counterworld of corruption, intrigue, betrayal, and decadence from which [the protagonist] can escape only by death” (Bronfen 104) and put it to work as a defining circumstance for my femme fatale/female protagonist. The question of whether she *is* a femme fatale hinges on her circumstances, and everything she does and says is informed by them. Another way to portray a femme fatale, rather than someone who is a victim of circumstances, is as someone who is “fated” (Bronfen 106) and who “turn[s] what is inevitable into a source of power.” Whether Heather is truly *fated* or not, she believes that she will have a dark ending, and she uses it as an edge over other people. For example, in the scene where Ciaran and Heather fight over Heather’s father, Heather truly believes she has power over Ciaran because she knows her fate and she believes Ciaran is weak.

Ultimately, I veered away from the traditional femme fatale because of her lack of motivation, or at least her lack of backstory. I tried to make Heather a victim of the “counterworld” that Bronfen describes, but I didn’t want her to be seen only as a victim. Heather’s place as an object of sexual desire is still front and center, and I still explore it, but as one of the dual main characters, she has a motivation and reason for her actions. It was important for me to do this because in the twenty-first century, in my opinion, there is no room for creating vapid, evil female characters with no clear backstory that at least endeavors to justify her feelings, if not also her actions. I’m not interested in writing morally *good*

characters, but for the sake of the complexity I strive for, I try to create well-rounded characters whose moral ambiguity can be traced back somewhere.

In regard to Heather, I was most inspired by *Chinatown* (1974) and Faye Dunaway's Evelyn. In *Chinatown*, Evelyn at first seems to be a femme fatale but is later revealed to be a victim trying to protect herself. She inspired me to create a character who acts as a femme fatale as a sort of defense mechanism, to hide from others and from herself the fact that she might be a victim. Heather's ambiguity, however, ended up being extremely difficult to convey, and I don't think it made it into this draft. Constructing a character who may be complicit in their own downfall was much easier with Ciaran than with Heather. I did want to portray a Heather who becomes jaded and perhaps content with a tragic end, unlike Evelyn, who fights to the end and in fact has something to fight for.

As for Ciaran, I wanted him to be an inversion of the male detective for most of the story. Instead of driving the plot forward, most of the plot *happens to* Ciaran, who is at once helpless and complicit in his own misery. It isn't until the end when he takes charge of the narrative, and here in particular I was inspired by films like *Vertigo*, where the protagonist more traditionally fits the detective type. In the last act of *The Wolves' Teeth*, Ciaran finds Heather much in the same way, to my mind, as James Stewart in *Vertigo* finds Kim Novak. While I didn't want to write a film about a detective, this sequence required him to behave like one, in the name of obsession.

Another major inspiration for the screenplay was *Blood Simple* (1984). The screenplay for *The Wolves' Teeth* takes a lot from classic films, including a scene which is meant to be a callback to *Cat People* (1942), but in terms of trying to ground the film in a Neo-Noir setting, *Blood Simple* was the chief influence. The Coen brothers created a film which is a blend of a Southern setting and a Neo-Noir, with its Texas backroads, low lighting, and sketchy locations. Every place in the film has a dark, otherworldly quality. This was similar to what I wanted to achieve. My screenplay includes Southern settings like

backroads and woods (which are not really included in *Blood Simple*) and takes place, like the film, in a repetition of a few settings. *Blood Simple* is about multiple plots intersecting somewhat tragically, as many Coen brothers films are, but I took most of my inspiration from the mood of desperation and darkness and the visual language. For example, the empty spaces, the quick editing, and the way they play with light and darkness were inspirations for me. My favorite inspiration was the burial scene in the middle of a field, with only headlights lighting the action. It's a visually beautiful scene. When I visualize *The Wolves' Teeth*, I think about *Blood Simple*.

Since moving away from the poems and from Southern Gothic and toward the Noir and Neo-Noir, I have found that my screenplay resonates with some components of the Noir/Neo-Noir while complicating others. For one, while femme fatales are present in Neo-Noirs, they are not as prevalent as in the Noir. I was more inspired by responding to and complicating the original Noirs than the Neo-Noirs while writing my *femme fatale*, if you can call her that. Also, while the Neo-Noir does often have something to say about society, my piece is more focused on characters than making a commentary on the world we live in.

V. Writing *The Wolves' Teeth*

When it comes to the actual crafting of the screenplay, one particular challenge I had to navigate is that as a screenwriter, I don't have much control over the visuals of the film. I tried to capture the mood instead. While I would like to eventually direct my own screenplays, I am not writing as a director. A director who writes their own screenplay might include details that a screenwriter would not, like emotions and shots. I tried to be nonspecific with these. For example, there are a few times where I reference fades, crossfading between two scenes, which is the closest I got to describing specific

In the screenplay, this becomes part of Heather's dialogue when she is describing her abusive relationship with her father:

HEATHER

My father. Tom. He gets too close when he's drunk.

And I can, can smell the liquor on his breath, and he just... smiles at me.

She looks down at her hands.

HEATHER

With wolves' teeth. Sharp and shining.

I tried to change the syntax to mimic someone making a confession in a stuttering manner, in fragments, one phrase at a time. It was not difficult for me to translate this poem, which was an attempt to establish the foundations of Heather's mental illness, to dialogue. Just as the dialogue is a confession, the poem is, in a way, as well.

The poems became a guiding light for me while I was writing. I arranged them in a vaguely chronological order, and I tried to follow the story they set out for me. Through writing the poems, I got to know the characters so well that every time I revisit the screenplay, I find another line or another scene that I want to add, if only for the sake of writing it to spend more time with them.

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EXT. FIELD - MORNING

A foggy morning sets in on a Southern landscape. A field outstretches from behind a house on a hill. A light is on in the farmhouse sending beams into the heavy air. Two POLICE OFFICERS stand in front of a body which is pale and blue in the morning light.

Detective FREEMAN - middle-aged, with a rugged face - approaches, coming up through the fog as the officers continue to study the scene. He joins them and shines his flashlight on the body, and the VICTIM becomes distinctly redder. There is a giant pool of blood under her and a gash in her head.

OFFICER ONE

Detective, it's terrible.

FREEMAN

Go on. Go on and see where forensics is. I'll handle this.

He stops the second officer with a finger to his chest.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Not a word about this to anyone, understand?

They nod and head down the hill.

She is tangled in a barbed wire fence that is half collapsed, as if she'd been running away and stumbled into it. The detective leans down to look at her fingers. She fought. His eyes wander to her left, where he sees a rock covered in blood.

INT. THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

Freeman enters a large but mostly barren house. A few suitcases are strewn about but not ransacked.

UPSTAIRS

Papers are scattered everywhere. He sees two bedrooms.

DARKROOM

One is a darkroom, complete with a red light.

OFFICE

The other is a combined bedroom and office, with one small bed and a desk.

Freeman picks up one of the papers and reads it.

FREEMAN
 (reading)
 "There was nothing behind his
 eyes."

He thumbs through stacks of notebooks. Nothing revealing is inside. He glances over to another stack of books, these about vegetation and biology.

His eyes wander to a purse hanging on a post of the bed. He feels through the contents and produces a wallet. Inside, he sees the driver's license: HEATHER LAUTREC.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)
 "Heather Lautrec."

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

Winding roads lead into a neighborhood where parents push children in strollers on sidewalks and roundabouts are dotted with blooming trees. Spring is settling in.

Freeman and another detective, MORRISON, who is younger and more handsome, are driving into this neighborhood. They reach a cul-de-sac and park in front of a house set back in the trees.

EXT. BRENNAN'S HOUSE

They walk up the walkway next to the driveway and past the bushes to the front door. Morrison knocks, while Freeman hangs back some.

DR. CIARAN BRENNAN answers. He is an older, clean-shaven man with a strong nose and greying black hair. His eyes are bright and confused as he looks between the men.

MORRISON
 Hello. Sorry to bother you, Doctor.
 I'm Detective Morrison. This is my
 partner, Detective Freeman.

CIARAN
 That's alright. Is something wrong?

FREEMAN
 Can we come in?

CIARAN
 Alright.

Ciaran steps back and allows them inside, and Detective Morrison closes the door behind them.

INT. BRENNAN'S HOUSE

There isn't much of a foyer. It opens almost directly into the living room. The house is well-decorated, meticulously put together in the transitional style, with wood, white, and black. It's very elegant and alight with windows.

Ciaran leads them into the combined kitchen and living room with doors that open to the backyard and patio.

CIARAN

Would you like something to drink, Detectives?

FREEMAN

No thank you. We don't plan on staying long.

Ciaran pours himself a cup of coffee.

CIARAN

Do you mind I have some coffee?

MORRISON

Go right ahead.

CIARAN

Have a seat, if you'd like.

FREEMAN

Thanks. We will.

Freeman sits down, followed by Morrison, on the black leather couch.

MORRISON

Is Mrs. Brennan at home?

Ciaran is grinning.

CIARAN

No.

MORRISON

This is going to be a rather sensitive line of questioning.

CIARAN

Okay, detectives.

Ciaran walks into the living room and sits down opposite them on a matching black leather chair. He laughs.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

If it's your intention to frighten me, you're doing a wonderful job.

FREEMAN

That's not our intention.

Morrison furrows his eyebrows.

MORRISON

I detect an accent.

CIARAN

Brilliant work.

MORRISON

Yeah, thanks.

CIARAN

I'm Irish.

MORRISON

How did you end up here?

CIARAN

I went to Vanderbilt. I just stayed.

MORRISON

Why not go to medical school in Ireland?

CIARAN

Because I wanted to leave Ireland. Is that a crime?

The detectives exchange a look and then back to Ciaran. Ciaran sips his coffee.

FREEMAN

Do you know Heather Lautrec? Maiden name...

MORRISON

Callow.

FREEMAN

Callow, right.

CIARAN

Heather Callow, yeah. I knew her.
Not well.

FREEMAN

Doctor, we were told that you knew
her when she was institutionalized.
That maybe you had some trouble
with her father.

MORRISON

Tom Callow.

Ciaran looks between them.

CIARAN

He's been dead for years.

MORRISON

We know.

FREEMAN

You haven't seen Mrs. Lautrec since
then?

CIARAN

No. Not since her father passed.
Honestly, I wasn't aware she was
married.

Morrison pulls out a small notebook.

MORRISON

Marcel Lautrec. He's a movie
producer.

FREEMAN

Money launderer.

MORRISON

Supposed to be a real sweetheart.

CIARAN

What's this about?

FREEMAN

Mrs. Lautrec has been killed.

CIARAN

Killed?

MORRISON

She was found murdered two days
ago.

CIARAN

That's awful.

FREEMAN

Do you know anyone who might have a grudge against her? Might have some reason to want her dead?

CIARAN

No, I'm sorry, no. I haven't any idea.

FREEMAN

Can you give us an impression of her?

CIARAN

Nothing that would help you. I'm afraid I didn't know her very well.

Morrison looks at his notebook.

MORRISON

You were her therapist. You checked her out of the hospital. And you didn't know her very well?

CIARAN

I wasn't her therapist. I was a consult.

FREEMAN

We spoke to someone from the hospital. Said the two of you were friendly.

CIARAN

Friendly, maybe. But I don't know why, years later, someone would kill her. I'm sorry.

MORRISON

Dr. Brennan, do former patients of yours die often?

CIARAN

Excuse me?

MORRISON

You're acting awfully nonchalant about this, don't you think?

CIARAN

She wasn't a patient, Detective. I checked her out of the hospital as a favor, and she never went back.

FREEMAN

We don't have any records of your practice during that time.

Ciaran shifts in his seat.

CIARAN

Listen, someone called me. I evaluated the girl.

MORRISON

And how did you find her, Doctor?

CIARAN

I found her to be mentally and emotionally unstable.

FREEMAN

But you let her go.

Ciaran doesn't respond.

MORRISON

Where were you two days ago?

CIARAN

I was at my practice, working late. You can call the office.

FREEMAN

We will. Thank you.

Freeman stands up, followed by Morrison. Ciaran begins to get up, too.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Don't trouble yourself.

Ciaran relaxes back into his seat. He watches them disappear from the doorway, then he sets down his cup of coffee. His face changes. His chest heaves up and down, heavier and heavier.

LONG FADE

CLOSE - Heather's face

In a mirror-walled room of young women practicing ballet, we focus on pirouetting Heather.

MRS. HAMMONDS
(offscreen)
Alright. Let's say goodbye now,
girls.

GIRLS
(still offscreen)
Goodbye, Mrs. H.

Heather mumbles goodbye with everyone else. She grabs her clothes and her bag and leaves the room.

INT. A LONG GREY BATHROOM

She enters one of the stalls, and we see her feet and the transition of clothes. She comes out wearing a new outfit, something decidedly not girlish. Something womanly.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM

Coming out of the bathroom, Heather stops and examines a bulletin board. She sees a flier:

GROUP THERAPY FOR SEXUAL ABUSE VICTIMS

FIRST BAPTIST

THURSDAY 6:30

She keeps walking.

CAR - EARLY EVENING

She is driving through the city. We see urban buildings pass through her car window.

EXT. RESTAURANT

This restaurant is in the bottom floor of a large building in a nice part of town.

She parks the car outside.

CAR

She digs through her purse and finds lipstick. With the help of the rearview mirror, she puts it on. Then she sprays on perfume she gets from her purse, too. Her hands tremble.

INT. RESTAURANT

It is rows of white tables and candlelight. The light is falling through the windows as sunset descends. Night is coming on.

A smiling HOST holds the door open for her and welcomes her inside.

HOST

Good evening, miss. Do you have a reservation?

HEATHER

No, that is - I'm joining someone.
Mr. Lautrec.

HOST

Ah, yes. He's waiting for you.
Follow me, please.

He sits toward the back. We follow the host to the table.

LAUTREC, a handsome older man, stands and pulls the chair out for Heather. She smiles a thank you at him.

HEATHER

Marcel. Sorry I'm late.

MARCEL

You aren't. I'm early.

HEATHER

Good. Good.

MARCEL

Just coming back from...?

HEATHER

From home.

MARCEL

Ah. How are things with your parents?

HEATHER

It's just my father.

MARCEL

That's right. I apologize. I have so many things in my head right now.

HEATHER

I understand. With the movie and everything.

MARCEL

And everything.

They both smile.

MARCEL (CONT'D)

Well? How are things with your father?

HEATHER

Good.

Her smile fades. She looks down.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Quite good.

MARCEL

Well.

He unfolds the napkin in his hands but doesn't do anything with it.

MARCEL (CONT'D)

You'll be happy to hear my divorce is final.

HEATHER

That's good news. I-

She laughs and reaches for his hand. He looks at their hands skeptically.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I had an idea.

MARCEL

Oh, no. You've been thinking again.

HEATHER

I'm serious, Marcel. Listen.

Her face takes on a wistful look.

MARCEL

I am listening.

HEATHER

What if we ran off, eloped, went somewhere completely new to both of us? Got out of here?

MARCEL

(kissing her hand)
My sweet darling. You are so naive.

HEATHER

I know that I'm younger than you,
and I know it sounds silly, but
it's what we need.

MARCEL

What we need?

HEATHER

I need it. I can't...

MARCEL

Things are getting complacent, you
mean. You're tired of meeting me in
dim restaurants and in cars in
parking lots.

HEATHER

Yes. Yes, exactly. I want something
for us, for the both of us and us
only. Something that can be ours,
that we can keep to ourselves and
shun the world from. Shut the whole
world out.

MARCEL

Even your father?

HEATHER

Yes.

Marcel kisses her hand again and then drops it.

MARCEL

Don't be silly, love. It looks
tacky on you.

HEATHER

I'm not being... it's reasonable
enough.

MARCEL

You're my setting sun and rising
moon. You're the waves that wash
over and the water within. You're
my life and my love. Isn't that
enough?

HEATHER

Beautiful words, Marcel. Beautiful
words.

He reaches into his pocket and produces an envelope.

MARCEL

I wrote you something. Keep it with you when I'm gone next week. Think of me often.

HEATHER

Of course I will. Thank you.

She slips it into her purse.

MARCEL

And when I see you again, wear the green dress.

HEATHER

Of course, Marcel.

DRIVING ALONG A DIRT ROAD

Headlights on Heather's car hit the dark road. We wind through trees and fields.

EXT. HEATHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house sits way back in the woods. It is an old house, white and with two bands of porches wrapping around.

She parks, considers another parked, rusted car, along with another parked, new car, and then she goes inside.

INT. HEATHER'S HOUSE

Wallpapered walls and hardwood floors. The house is dark. She moves through the foyer, shaking off her shoes.

HEATHER

Dad?

No response. She does not push. She goes up the stairs and into one of the bedrooms.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM

The room is choked by floral patterns, spreading from the bed to the walls to the curtains. A vase of flowers rests on a dresser, below a mirror.

She reads the card on the flowers:

HEATHER, THIS BOUQUET REMINDED ME OF YOUR MOTHER'S.

She shivers and throws the card away into a drawer, turning quickly away from the flowers and tossing her purse onto the bed. She looks out the window and sees that

THROUGH A WINDOW

her father, TOM, lit by an outside light, is cutting firewood in the back.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM - LATER

She is lying in bed in darkness. She turns on her bedside table lamp, which produces a low light, and then she glares again at the flowers. She turns over in bed, away from them, and her purse falls on the floor.

She turns off the lamp and lies in total darkness again.

TOM

Heather?

She doesn't move.

Creaks on the stairs, creaks on the floor.

TOM (CONT'D)

Heather.

She doesn't respond.

He moves on.

INT. A CHURCH, AFTER HOURS

We're inside a recreational room made bare except for an arrangement of chairs.

People filter through the double doors, across the wooden floor to the chairs, sit down, some with coffee in their hands. One man, the COUNSELOR, sticks out from the rest because he makes a point to shake hands with almost everyone.

Heather is punctual. She comes in and tries to disappear in a group of a few people, sits down in the excitement of introduction and successfully avoids it for herself.

COUNSELOR

Let's get started, yeah?

Chatter settles down. The Counselor looks expectantly around the room.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

I see some new faces. Would anyone who's just now joining us like to speak?

A few people avert their eyes.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

You don't *have* to. But if you came all this way...

An antsy young WOMAN with red hair raises her hand.

WOMAN

I can start.

COUNSELOR

Jenny. Sure. Go ahead.

JENNY

Most of you know me already, but I'm Jenny. Um, I... I was molested by my cousin. It's taken me a long time to be able to say that, but it's true. And I have to face it. For a long time, I was just - like - hiding behind memory, you know? Pretending that I had no idea what the past was *because* it was the past.

Heather stares into the floor.

JENNY (CONT'D)

But now that I've, I've come to terms with it, you know, I... I...

COUNSELOR

Have you spoken to anyone in your family, Jenny? Your parents?

Heather looks at the Counselor now, and then at Jenny, waiting for an answer.

JENNY

No. How could I burden them with that?

COUNSELOR

But you're burdened.

JENNY

I don't think my parents would take it very well. That's all.

COUNSELOR

That's all as in you're finished?

Jenny nods vigorously.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)
Okay. Thank you.

HEATHER
I want to go.

The Counselor looks at her, and she swallows.

COUNSELOR
Someone new.

HEATHER
I'm-

She scoffs, as if she should stop and walk out.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
I'm Heather.

COUNSELOR
Nice to meet you, Heather.

She furrows her eyebrows and shakes her head.

HEATHER
My father. Tom. He gets too close
when he's drunk. And I can, can
smell the liquor on his breath, and
he just... smiles at me.

She looks down at her hands.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
With wolves' teeth. Sharp and
shining. He howls like a creature.
He pulls me against his stomach. He
takes off his shirt.

The Counselor listens to her intently.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
And I turn, but I don't push him
away. It's like... it would be too
much of a submission to put my hand
on his chest - his hairy, sweaty
chest. So I just ignore him and
think about how nice it would be to
see him...

COUNSELOR
To see him...?

HEATHER
Mangled. Punished.
(MORE)

HEATHER (CONT'D)

(beat)

And then he weeps on my shoulder.
And I wish that no man would ever
shed a tear again. And I think,
*There will be no release. I will be
as strong as you are weak.*

COUNSELOR

Anger is a natural reaction. It's
perfectly normal to feel indignant
when you're going through what
you're going through.

HEATHER

I feel more than angry. More than
indignant. I feel like I want to,
like I could-... this was a bad
idea.

COUNSELOR

No, I don't want you to feel that
way. Opening up-

HEATHER

Can we just, can we take a break?

COUNSELOR

Of course. Group, let's take a few
minutes, okay?

There is a murmur of agreement, and Heather rushes into the
hallway looking for the bathroom, wiping her tears.

INT. CHURCH BATHROOM

It is a bathroom with two stalls. A light flickers, a
trashcan is overfull.

Heather stands over the sink and carefully tries to preserve
her mascara. She breathes heavily, grabs the edge of the
sink, and uses it as leverage to breathe deeper and deeper.

Another GIRL from the group enters. Heather quickly tries to
get herself together. She snuffles and grabs a napkin,
wiping the running mascara away.

GIRL #2

You don't recognize me, do you?

Heather looks at her and furrows her eyebrows slightly.

HEATHER

Um, no.

The girl smiles.

GIRL #2

I'm Lily. We went to high school together.

Heather's face clears. She steps back.

HEATHER

Yes.

LILY

You used to do all those wonderful pictures.

HEATHER

Yes. Thank you.

LILY

Are you still into cameras?

HEATHER

Whenever I have time.

LILY

We thought maybe you'd become a photographer. You know, for weddings or newborns.

HEATHER

No.

There is some silence. Lily smiles sadly and stares at Heather's reflection.

LILY

I'm a victim, too. My father.

HEATHER

I'm not a victim.

LILY

Right, but what you said, in the group-

Heather looks at her directly.

HEATHER

I didn't say anything in the group. All I did was complain about my father. Whatever you think I was saying, you're wrong. You're projecting. It's pathetic.

LILY

But why did you come here?

HEATHER

It was a mistake. If you tell anyone what you heard here...

LILY

Why would I do that?

HEATHER

If you tell anyone, I will make your life a living hell, Lily. I swear that.

Lily's eyes widen.

LILY

Jesus. I'm not going to-

Heather walks past her,

INT. CHURCH REC ROOM

Through the room,

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

And out of the building. She walks to her car and gets in.

Inside her car, she cries. After she's done crying, she turns the car on and drives out of the parking lot.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM

By gentle lamplight, Heather reads. The front door opens, and she hears it. She slowly puts her book down and then quickly picks it back up when footsteps sound outside the door.

There is a knock at her door.

HEATHER

Come in.

Tom opens the door but doesn't enter.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

(without looking up)

You're home.

TOM

You're awake.

HEATHER
Am I usually not?

Tom enters fully and closes the door behind himself. She watches him walk forward and sit down on the bed.

TOM
You've been sleeping a lot lately.
And going out even more. I hardly
see you.

HEATHER
I was thinking...

She puts the book down.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
(softly)
I was thinking of getting an
apartment in the city.

Tom laughs.

TOM
And how will you pay for it?

HEATHER
With a job, I'd imagine.

TOM
What job? What are your
qualifications?

HEATHER
Photography. I could work in a
photography studio.

TOM
You *could*?

HEATHER
Why are you so hellbent on...?
Never mind. Goodnight.

TOM
Hellbent on what? Finish your
sentence.

HEATHER
On keeping me here.

He throws his hands in the air.

TOM

I thought you liked it here.

HEATHER

I don't. It reminds me of Mom.

TOM

And that's a bad thing?

HEATHER

I know, we made some kind of pact, some kind of twisted pact to never mention her in vain, but I'm tired of it. She loved us until she didn't. Now she's gone. And you whisk us away to a cabin in the woods-

TOM

Hardly a cabin.

HEATHER

-a *dreaded* house in the *godforsaken* woods. To what end, Dad? To be alone here forever?

He reaches for her.

She stands up and walks to her closet.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I'm about to change for bed. Could you please leave?

He puts his hands on her shoulders, and then he leaves the room.

EXT. WOODS OUTSIDE THE HOUSE - DAY

Heather walks through the trees and takes pictures.

INT. HEATHER'S HOUSE - MEANWHILE

Her father stalks up the stairs and into Heather's room.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM

He looks in the folds of the covers, under the mattress, in the drawers, and then he sees her purse lying on the floor. Inside, he rummages, and he finds a letter. Written on the front is:

HEATHER

He opens it and reads through it, his face showing disgust and betrayal.

INT. FOYER

Heather comes back inside.

HEATHER

Dad, I'm done taking pictures. You mentioned going to the store. I'm ready.

TOM

(calling)

Can you come up here a second?

HEATHER

(confused)

Sure.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM

She enters her room and finds her father standing there with Marcel's letter in his hands.

TOM

What is this?

HEATHER

Where did you get that?

TOM

From your room. Is it yours?

She reaches for it in vain.

TOM (CONT'D)

Because it has your name on it. It has your name on it, dear.

HEATHER

This is a misunderstanding.

TOM

Yes. I think I have misunderstood you. Who have you been whoring yourself out to?

He slaps her.

She pulls back.

TOM (CONT'D)
You're a terrible child. Too
willful for a daughter. Too wild.

HEATHER
All I ever wanted was something of
my own.

TOM
Well, you can't have it!

She weeps.

TOM (CONT'D)
You'll never see him again. You'll
never leave this house again.
You'll die here. With me.

HEATHER
Dad...

TOM
Don't. And this man, whoever he is?
I'll ruin him. I'll destroy him.
(beat)
You think... you honestly thought
you could get away with this? Steal
away to an apartment in the city
and leave me to rot?

HEATHER
Nobody was leaving you.

He waves the letter.

TOM
This is your suicide note.

HEATHER
That's the only man who's ever
loved me.

Her father snarls.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
All the love I had to give you, and
you could never accept it. You're
just an animal.

TOM
You'll respect me again. I'll make
sure of that, Heather.

DOWNSTAIRS

He takes the letter downstairs,

INT. LIVING ROOM

And into the living room, where he throws it in the fireplace. He gets a match off a desk and lights it, throwing it in the fireplace and setting the letter on fire.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM

Heather cowers and locks her door. She sits behind her door and breathes heavily, thoughts racing.

EXT. HEATHER'S HOUSE - SUNRISE

Tom drags an axe across the lawn and takes it to Heather's car, destroying the windows, the doors, and then the inside of the hood.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM

Heather watches him from the window. She wipes a few tears away and shuts the curtains.

INT. LIVING ROOM

She enters the living room and goes for the phone in the corner, but when she picks it up, she can't make a call. Her breathing picks up as she realizes she's stranded. She slowly sets the phone back on the hook and backs up from it.

The sound of her father outside, grunting and smashing, leaks through the open front door and into her ears. She becomes overwhelmed and runs back up the stairs.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM - LATER

She lies in bed, her covers pulled over her head.

A knock at the door. No response from Heather.

Tom enters. He lingers in the doorway.

TOM

Darling, don't you want lunch?

HEATHER

I'm not hungry.

TOM

You haven't eaten a thing.

(beat)

Unless you're keeping a stash up here I'm unaware of.

He smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)
You used to do that, you know. When
you were a child... your mother-

HEATHER
Can you leave me alone?

TOM
What?

Heather pulls the sheet down and sits up, glaring into his eyes.

HEATHER
I don't want to hear a charming
anecdote. I want to leave.

TOM
Why would you want to leave?

He sits down on the bed.

TOM (CONT'D)
We have everything here.

He reaches for her and runs his hand along her face and her hair.

TOM (CONT'D)
You're shivering. Are you cold?

HEATHER
Yes.

TOM
I'll warm the house up. In the
meantime, get some rest, and we'll
eat dinner.

He leaves the room.

Heather dangles her legs off the bed. She gets up, clears out her wardrobe, and ties her sheet in the wardrobe like a noose. She puts it around her neck and wonders if she could do it.

When she hears boots coming up the stairs again, she slides under the bed. The door opens.

TOM (CONT'D)
(offscreen)
Heather?

She levels out her breathing and becomes virtually silent.

He closes the door, and his boots cross the floor to the next room.

INT. UPSTAIRS

Tom opens the door to the spare bedroom and finds no one. He checks the bathroom, which is empty.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM

He goes back to Heather's bedroom. He kneels down and sees her.

She slides away from him, but he reaches over and grabs her hair, pulling her out. She whimpers and tries to slap him away.

HEATHER

Get off of me!

Tom lets go of her and looks at her, a mess on the floor. He shakes his head and leaves the room.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

There are three place settings but only two people. Heather sways gently in her chair and doesn't touch her food. Tom's lips move, but she can't hear him. Her ears are buzzing.

He snaps at her.

TOM

You've got to pay attention now, Heather. This is what it's going to be like now. I'm going to talk, and you're going to listen.

She stares into the table.

TOM (CONT'D)

And you're going to eat. No starving yourself.

(beat)

Eat!

Her hand, as if working on its own, slides around a fork, and the fork endeavors to bring food to her mouth, but no matter how much she chews, she can't stomach it. She throws up beside her chair.

HEATHER

I want to leave.

She begins to cry.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
I don't want to be here anymore. I
want to go.

TOM
You don't have a choice, do you?
I'm your father, aren't I?

HEATHER
(mouthing)
Mother.

TOM
Your mother isn't here. But she'll
be home very soon.

He nods to himself and keeps eating.

TOM (CONT'D)
She'll be home soon.

HEATHER
I want my mother. I want my mother.

BLACKNESS.

TOM
Don't think you can kill me,
Heather. I'm unkillable. You won't
get the best of me. Understand?

INT. DOWNSTAIRS - WEEKS LATER

Heather opens the front door and leaves it wide open. Then she goes carefully up the stairs, skipping every creaking step.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM

She closes her door and presses her ear against it.

TOM
(downstairs)
Heather?

She closes her eyes.

She hears his boots exit the house, and she goes to her window.

EXT. HEATHER'S HOUSE

Tom walks into the woods calling Heather's name.

TOM

You can't escape me, Heather. I'm
going to find you.

INT. HEATHER'S HOUSE

When he's out of sight, Heather leaves her bedroom and goes down the stairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM

She has to look through a few drawers, but she finally finds the key in a roll-top desk.

EXT. HEATHER'S HOUSE

She carries a bag on her shoulder and makes a run for the rusted-out car. Her mother's old car. The door creaks open. The key fits in the ignition. It takes a few tries, but finally, the car turns on.

EXT. DIRT ROAD

Heather weeps as she drives away from the house. The house becomes obscured by woods, and she keeps driving. Keeps driving.

CAR - HALF AN HOUR LATER

Ciaran is driving along a highway in silence.

EXT. SIDE OF HIGHWAY

The car is broken down. Heather stands next to it, her coat wrapped around her in the foggy morning.

Ciaran pulls over and gets out.

CIARAN

Morning.

HEATHER

Yeah, morning.

CIARAN

Car trouble?

HEATHER

Yeah. I don't know cars at all. Can
you help me?

CIARAN

Sure... of course. Let's see what's wrong.

He walks to the front and pulls open the hood. Heather follows at a distance.

HEATHER

Thank you. This is very kind of you.

CIARAN

Oh, it's nothing.

HEATHER

I'm Heather.

Ciaran looks at her.

CIARAN

Ciaran.

Each stranger's headlights make her jump. She watches each car pass from one end to the other, as if expecting them to stop and turn around.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

You seem jumpy. Someone after you?

HEATHER

Huh?

CIARAN

I said, is someone after you?

HEATHER

Why would you say that?

CIARAN

Sorry. My idea of a joke.

Heather looks around and then back at him.

HEATHER

Listen, what if...?

CIARAN

Yeah?

HEATHER

What if someone was after me? Would you help me? Would you help me, like you're fixing my car?

He stops.

CIARAN
What's this about?

She starts to laugh.

HEATHER
It sounds so silly, doesn't it?

He chuckles as well.

CIARAN
Truthfully, you're scaring me a little bit.

HEATHER
Well, you don't scare me.
(beat)
What if we had some coffee?

CIARAN
Together?

HEATHER
At yours.

CIARAN
I don't, um...

He chuckles again, nervously, and scratches his eyebrow.

CIARAN (CONT'D)
I don't know about that.

HEATHER
Why not?

She looks at the car.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
It won't start, will it?

She gets in and tries it again.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
See, it's dead. You'll have to give me a ride anyway.

He considers it for a while.

CIARAN
Okay. C'mon.

She grabs a bag and gets in his car.

CIARAN'S CAR

Once he begins driving, she continually checks the rearview mirror.

HEATHER

My name is Heather, by the way.
Heather Callow.

CIARAN

Yes, you... I'm Ciaran. Brennan.
(beat)
Who's, um,

He laughs.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

Who's after you then? Not the
police?

He shakes his head.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

You know what, don't tell me. I
don't think I want to know.

HEATHER

You probably don't.

EXT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING

They arrive at Ciaran's apartment.

CIARAN

Listen, it's not in the best shape,
so just keep that in mind, okay?

HEATHER

I don't care.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

The apartment is small and barebones. There's hardly anything except plenty of empty bottles of whiskey and bourbon, which he hurries to throw away.

HEATHER

It's nice.

CIARAN

Please.

HEATHER

I'm serious. I mean, it's yours, isn't it? Your own place to live. I would love to live here.

CIARAN

Where do you live now?

HEATHER

Outside of town. With my father.

CIARAN

Won't he be missing you?

She sets her bag on the couch and sits next to it. He sits in an armchair.

HEATHER

So what do you do, Ciaran?

CIARAN

I... I'm a doctor. I was a doctor. I'm unemployed.

He scratches his face.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

Well, that's not... I'm... I help strange girls with their cars and bring them back to my apartment, I guess.

She laughs politely.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

And you?

HEATHER

Do you have a girlfriend? Are you married? Divorced?

CIARAN

N-No.

She nods.

HEATHER

I don't work. I don't go anywhere. I just lie in bed and... I used to have a life. I used to go where I wanted, when I wanted. But he always had a rule.

CIARAN

A rule?

HEATHER

And I broke it. I couldn't help it.

She looks at him.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Honestly. Who can expect that from a young woman? Aren't I beautiful?

CIARAN

Yes.

She looks down again.

HEATHER

Aren't I human?

CIARAN

I'm afraid I don't follow.

HEATHER

Can I use your telephone?

CIARAN

Uh, sure.

He grabs it out from under a pile of papers and hands it to her. She sets it on a table and stands up to dial. Her hands are shaking, and he notices.

HEATHER

Marcel, please.

(beat)

Please tell him it's Heather. It's urgent.

He tries not to make it obvious he's eavesdropping, getting up to tidy the apartment.

She sits down where he was sitting and snuffles.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

(breathy)

Marcel. I'm-I'm back in town. I'm so sorry I left. It couldn't be helped. I couldn't help it, Marcel. Please believe me. I'm...

She pauses.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I wasn't avoiding you. How could you say that? No, don't go. Don't hang up, please. Please.

(beat, incensed)

I'll only call back.

She holds the phone intimately.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

(remorseful)

Remember, when we went to the park in the snow, and you told me, remember what you told me? I wouldn't have to worry about my father or anything anymore. Didn't you mean that, Marcel?

Ciaran looks at her.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Hello?

She puts the phone back on the hook placidly and sits there.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

He told me he'd have me killed if I left. He said he had the power. I wish he meant that.

CIARAN

You don't, um... you don't mean that. You're just upset.

He kneels beside her.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

Your boyfriend, right? Listen, he sounds awful.

He chuckles.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

You're better off-

He puts a hand on her. She looks at him sharply, and he removes it.

HEATHER

May I use your bathroom?

CIARAN

Sure. It's right there. Listen, I'm going to go arrange to have your car towed. I don't like the thought of it sitting out there. Then I can fix it and you can be on your way.

HEATHER

I thought you were a doctor.

CIARAN

Well, I... I was.

HEATHER

Oh. I see.

CIARAN

It's a story for another time.

He chuckles and stands up, pulling on his jacket.

HEATHER

Why did you bring me here?

He stops and looks at her.

CIARAN

You asked me to.

HEATHER

Do you... want something from me?

CIARAN

No. I don't want anything, Heather. I'm just being a good Samaritan.

HEATHER

You're trying to make up for all the harm you've done. Just like me.

CIARAN

Stay here, okay? I'll be right back.

Ciaran walks out and the door closes on Heather sitting along in the dim apartment.

EXT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Ciaran returns to his apartment building in his car. He exits the car and walks up the stairs to the door of his apartment.

His hand lingers on the doorknob for a moment, as if he knows what he will find.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

It is emptier than before. Cleared of its occupant. She's gone, and she left no trace. He walks inside and finds the bathroom door wide open. The kitchenette is empty. The phone is on the hook.

He sighs and sits down, looking at where she sat before. He takes the phone off the hook and wipes his hands over his face.

LATER THAT NIGHT

Beer bottles, liquor. Ciaran drinks and sits at the small table in front of the small window in his small apartment. A newspaper rustles in his hands.

He's looking at want ads. He rubs his face again and turns the page. Tragedy, tragedy, sports. He tosses the paper into a trashcan and takes cigarettes and matches out of his pocket.

He puts a cigarette between his lips but doesn't light it. He considers the match in his hand, strikes it, and flicks it at the trashcan. He does this again, and it sets the paper on fire.

He takes the trashcan to the sink and fills it with water. Then he sits down on the couch, leans back, and closes his eyes.

IN A DREAM

Heather stands against a blank background and stares right at us.

HEATHER

Marcel, I'm calling you from a one room apartment full of empty whiskey bottles. A man sits in a corduroy armchair and pretends not to eavesdrop. He's let me in because I asked him to. He's trusted me, Marcel. I have to tell you why I've been gone -

She fades away, and with a knock

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

Ciaran awakens. He's lying in his bed. He groans and drags himself up to a sitting position.

As he wakes himself up, he staggers out of bed and to the front door. By the time he opens it, there is no one there. Maybe - as he looks around - there was nobody there at all.

The only thing he does see is the mailman departing.

He puts on pants and a jacket and decides to go down to check his mail.

EXT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING

At the mailboxes, he jingles his keys and opens his. There's a letter inside, addressed to him from a Heather Callow.

CIARAN -

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY.

I AM ALONE AND LONELY AT ST. CATHERINE'S.

PLEASE, DON'T LEAVE ME HANGING.

HEATHER

He knows exactly what St. Catherine's is.

EXT. ST CATHERINE'S

It's beautiful for a mental institution. It sits between two residences on a long block of 1920s mansions, and it has a wide backyard hidden behind a tall metal fence. During the day the yard is unusually full of patients wandering or smoking.

The day Ciaran drives in, a GIRL dives in front of his car after a soccer ball. He slams on the brakes, and she flips him off.

He parks by the porch and steps out of the car. He has shaved. He looks put together.

A plaque by the front door tells us the Tudor Revival belonged to Dr. Margaret Boorman.

KATHERINE

Our esteemed benefactress.

He turns to see a middle aged woman with a red ponytail. He recognizes her, from her crow's feet to her spotless shoes.

CIARAN

Katherine.

He shakes her hand.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

Perfect place for you, isn't it?

KATHERINE

It has its days. What brings you here? A consult?

CIARAN

Actually, I don't-
(chuckling)
I don't work today.

KATHERINE

Here on a day off?

A NURSE walks by and scrutinizes his tattooed hand with sharp eyes.

CIARAN

Well.

He puts his hand in his jacket pocket.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

I was in the neighborhood.

She laughs and leads him inside.

INT. ST CATHERINE'S

KATHERINE

After someone in particular?

CIARAN

You don't have to phrase it so dreadfully.

KATHERINE

Everything's dreadful here.

CIARAN

It seems pleasant enough.

KATHERINE

Seeming doesn't count, Dr. Brennan.
You know that.

He winces.

CIARAN

Call me Ciaran, please.

KATHERINE

Of course.

(beat)

Who are you here for?

CIARAN

A patient of mine. Heather Callow.

KATHERINE

Heather.

She nods.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

(in a low voice)

I can't make heads or tails of her. She appeared covered in blood. Now she acts like nothing's happened at all. She doesn't even want to go home.

CIARAN

What happened?

KATHERINE

She walked into an E.R. with her wrists open. Told the nurse she tried to kill herself and needed to be institutionalized.

CIARAN

I have a feeling I know why she did it.

KATHERINE

C'mon, come with me.

It's remarkable how much it feels like a home inside - until he rounds a corner and sees a GIRL bang her head on the wall and two white-clad NURSES restrain her. Wailing echoes through the hallway.

Katherine leads him to a room upstairs.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

Her father's a doctor, too, you know. Rich, too. More money than he knows what to do with. Lives in one of those antebellum houses in the country. This is her room here.

CIARAN

A private room. What a treasure.

INT. HEATHER'S ROOM

The walls are a calming lavender, and there is a small table with a single chair by the window. He takes stock of the room and walks to the window.

CIARAN

Where is she?

KATHERINE

In group. She'll be back soon.

CIARAN

How long?

KATHERINE

Just a few minutes.

(beat)

You know, I didn't call you, but I'm glad you're here. This girl could use you. It's like God called you here. I know you're not a believer anymore.

CIARAN

I'm not.

KATHERINE

Just have a good talk with her, alright? She could use company.

She smiles and leaves the room.

Ciaran looks over the room again and sits down to wait for her.

INT. HEATHER'S ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Heather walks into the doorway and smiles when she sees him. She looks younger than before. Her wrists are bandaged. Her face is pale. She walks inside slowly.

HEATHER

I knew you'd come.

CIARAN

How could I leave you hanging?

Heather laughs.

HEATHER

God, it's good to see someone who isn't crazy.

CIARAN

You don't know me at all, Heather.

HEATHER

I know Katherine knows you. I just spoke to her. She told me you're good. Can you fix me?

CIARAN

I don't trust myself to fix anyone. Not anymore.

HEATHER

Boo. Have a seat.

She sits down on the bed and crisscrosses her legs.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Did you get a look at her shoes? Immaculate. You know she scrubs them with a toothbrush when she gets home. Katharine working at St. Catherine's. It's like she was made just for us.

CIARAN

You're in rather a good mood. I'm glad.

HEATHER

Not a good mood. Just feeling chatty. Happy to see you, I guess.

CIARAN

Did I make that good of an impression?

HEATHER

What, with your kindness, your discretion, or your charity?

Ciaran rolls his eyes.

CIARAN

You're sweet-talking me.

HEATHER

Maybe I am. Maybe I want a favor from the doctor.

CIARAN

Like what?

HEATHER

Tell them I'm not fit to go home.
Tell them I'm one of those lifetime
cases. You know, extra crazy. Sits
inside and eats flies all day. That
kind of thing.

CIARAN

Why would I do that?

HEATHER

I can't go home. I think you know
that.

CIARAN

But why?

HEATHER

That house is haunted.

CIARAN

By ghosts, or by your father?

HEATHER

You know, you don't look like a
doctor.

CIARAN

You don't look like...

He stops himself and laughs a little.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

Someone who believes in ghosts.

HEATHER

Everyone has to believe in
something.

FADE

INT. HEATHER'S ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Ciaran paces from one end of the room to the other, tracing
across the tile.

CIARAN

I'm trying to help you. I'm trying
to understand. But it's important
that you answer my questions.

HEATHER

You aren't my doctor, Ciaran.

CIARAN

But you called me here. And you knew what I am. You know I'm going to talk to Katherine. I have to, if you want me to keep coming here. And I can't talk to her until you answer me.

She cocks her head.

HEATHER

Fine. What did you say?

CIARAN

I asked you what happened.

She pulls her legs up off the floor and onto the bed. Ciaran sits down in the chair that's a little too small for him across the room. There is a distance between them, but their eyes bridge it easily and often.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

Heather?

She sighs.

HEATHER

My bedroom was blue and white and pink. My bed was huge. It looked like something out of Better Housekeeping, you know? Impersonal.

He nods. She smiles.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

All the furniture matched, from the heavy oak wardrobe to the vanity that sat across from the bed. I used to sit there watching myself at night in the vanity mirror. I'd watch myself until I'd see things.

CIARAN

What things?

HEATHER

Shapes mostly. Static. Like when you close your eyes... but all around you.

She shakes her head and stares into the lavender walls.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I was a child I didn't know. A girl I wanted to speak to. From my bed... in the moonlight... I looked so dark, so blue, so foreign.

He parts his lips but she continues before he can speak.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

My mother brushed my hair before bed, and she sat down the hairbrush -- I remember it was ivory, with a marble back and pink bow tied around the handle -- and she put her hands on my shoulders so I could smell her flowery perfume, and it just... burst me open from the chest. Made me feel like a little child, tingling where she touched me and cold when she removed her lips from my cheek. She said *Goodnight* but it never felt like she said to me.

She still doesn't look at him.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Things got so bad when she left. Nothing was the same ever again. Suddenly the cabinets were empty, and dust swallowed every surface, and I half-expected him to cover the mirrors. And I tried to save both of us from life without her, but he couldn't take it. And he refused to be loved, and he refused to love, and I have nothing left. What can I give him that he hasn't taken?

CIARAN

Is that why you did it?

HEATHER

Sometimes, after she left, I imagined hanging myself in that wardrobe. What it would feel like to choke, and to fall cold and lifeless on the floor when he would find me and lower me down. The only... the only kind of touch from him that I wouldn't despise. Anyway, then he took us into the woods.

(MORE)

HEATHER (CONT'D)

And the bedroom there - my god,
covered in flowers. Just like Mom
liked. Everything just how she left
it, like a prodigal child he's
waiting to return.

INT. HALLWAY

Ciaran looks down the hallway, where nurses usher girls with wild hair into their rooms. One, with a bandage all the way around her neck, stops in the middle of the hallway to stare at him. He keeps walking down the staircase.

EXT. ST CATHERINE'S

KATHERINE

Dr. Brennan!

Almost to his car, he turns and sees her. She catches up to him.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

Sorry, Ciaran.

(beat)

So?

CIARAN

She's tough to crack.

Katherine crosses her arms.

KATHERINE

She told you why she did it?

CIARAN

We had a fruitful conversation
about it.

KATHERINE

I'm glad. What do you think, then?
Should we send her home?

CIARAN

(with hesitation)

Keep her here while I continue to
examine her. Who knows if she'll
try again, and when?

KATHERINE

We're of the same mind.

Ciaran smiles.

CIARAN
We usually are.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

Inside his apartment, Ciaran sits in semi-darkness, lit only by a table lamp, and lights a cigarette. He stares at a bottle of alcohol sitting across from him on a table. He keeps smoking and slides the pack into his back pocket.

EXT. ST CATHERINE'S

Heather and Ciaran are sitting on a bench outside the facility. He takes the pack out of his back pocket and offers Heather a smoke.

CIARAN
Do you think your father knows
where you are?

HEATHER
No.

CIARAN
He would come looking for you,
wouldn't he?

HEATHER
That's what I hope won't happen.

CIARAN
What do you mean by that?

HEATHER
I don't like him thinking about me.
(beat)
You know, I met a girl who couldn't
speak in the recreation room. She
had bandages all around her neck.
We sat at the chessboard. There
were no pieces, of course, because
another girl tried to swallow them
all.

CIARAN
Did you speak to her?

HEATHER
Who?

He motioned to his throat.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I asked her if she cut her neck. She did. Then I asked her if she'd do it again. I think she busted a vocal cord or something. Poor thing.

CIARAN

I thought about my father last night.

HEATHER

Did you?

CIARAN

Maybe it was the conversation we had on Monday. I don't know. But I remembered how my father, he used to insist we confront our fears. He was scared to death of spiders, so any time there was a spider, he would capture it and set it loose on himself. And he'd insist we all did the same thing.

HEATHER

And what were you afraid of?

CIARAN

Fire. Always terrified me.

HEATHER

So, what did he do to you?

CIARAN

He flung lit matches at me. I'd wake up and there he'd be. Told me, "Don't move, or I'll whack you."

HEATHER

Why are you telling me this?

CIARAN

I never forgave my father.

HEATHER

Then I'm supposed to forgive mine? You're saying I'll end up washed-up and lost like you?

CIARAN

That's not what I'm saying. I'm telling you that there are some things we don't move on from.

(MORE)

CIARAN (CONT'D)

Sometimes we are trapped in the past, but it doesn't have to be that way forever. We can get better. We can move on.

HEATHER

Moving on sounds so obscure to me.

CIARAN

Right now. But you'll see. Everything will be alright.

HEATHER

I think as long as he's alive he'll always be in my corner at night, like a ghost.

INT. CIARAN'S CAR

He drives back to his apartment.

EXT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING

He unlocks his door and enters.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

He sets down his keys.

At the kitchenette, he begins to make dinner, boiling water for pasta. The phone starts ringing, so he walks into the living room to answer it.

CIARAN

Hello?

HEATHER

Ciaran, it's Heather. I need to speak to you.

CIARAN

Where are you?

HEATHER

In the hospital. Katharine gave me illicit access to the phone. She's feeding the cord through the medicine window. You can say hello, if you'd like.

CIARAN

Thanks, I'll pass. So, what is it? Why are you calling?

HEATHER

I need you to pick me up tomorrow.

CIARAN

Pick you up?

HEATHER

Take me off the grounds. I have to get out of here. I'm going crazy.

(beat)

Fine. Crazier.

EXT. ST CATHERINE'S

Ciaran pulls up in his car, and Heather jogs to it.

INT. CIARAN'S CAR

She gets in, pulls the seatbelt over her blouse, and looks at him expectantly.

HEATHER

Let's go.

CIARAN

Where to?

HEATHER

Anywhere.

CIARAN

Now, hold on. Last week you were dead-set on staying here forever.

She looks out the window.

HEATHER

Anywhere, Ciaran. Just not here.

He drives aimlessly until she spots a sign.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

The zoo.

CIARAN

You want to go to the zoo?

HEATHER

Yes.

She looks at him.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Can we go?

CIARAN

I guess so. But aren't we a little old for it?

HEATHER

I haven't been in years.

CIARAN

I don't know that I've ever been.

HEATHER

Never?

CIARAN

Never.

EXT. ZOO

They walk inside the zoo and stare at the exhibits they pass.

HEATHER

This was the last place I came with my mother.

CIARAN

Oh. I see.

(beat)

Your mother - do you resent her for leaving?

HEATHER

And not taking me, you mean?

CIARAN

Yes.

HEATHER

Sometimes. All the time, really. It seems like a lot could have been avoided. Like my whole life trajectory could have been redirected.

CIARAN

Where do you think it's directed now?

HEATHER

Towards something big and dark.

(beat)

In some zoos, they used to keep people, you know.

CIARAN
Yes. So I've read.

Heather smiles at him.

HEATHER
Are you well-read, Doctor?

CIARAN
I tried to be.

They come to a stop when they reach the big cats. Heather stares at them.

HEATHER
Isn't it sad? The whole place. If the barriers weren't here, what would happen?

CIARAN
What's supposed to, I guess.

HEATHER
I'd rather they were all free.

Their hands linger close to each other, and for a moment, he reaches for her, but he stops.

EXT. ZOO - LATER

As they make their way out of the zoo, surrounded by children and families, she frowns and turns to him.

HEATHER
I'm not going back to St. Catherine's. That place is death. It's infectious. And my father will find me there, sooner or later.

CIARAN
You're safe from him there.

HEATHER
Bullshit.

CIARAN
Where would you go, then? You don't have a job.

HEATHER
Neither do you, Doctor.

He clenches his jaw.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I want to go home with you. Like before. Except this time I won't run away.

CIARAN

I don't know, Heather...

HEATHER

Katherine thinks you're still a doctor. But you're not. Don't forget the role you play and the reality you live. Once you mix them up, the comedy of errors never ends.

He watches her walk away from him.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

The door opens. Heather follows Ciaran inside. Immediately, she picks up a blanket and folds it, setting it down neatly on the couch. She brushes off the cushions, picks up a bottle of beer and tosses it in the trash. He stands and watches her.

CIARAN

This is a terrible idea.

HEATHER

Look at you. You look like you've seen a ghost.

CIARAN

Heather, you have to go back.

HEATHER

Back where? To my father's arms? You'd never let me go back there. You'd keep me from him, wouldn't you?

She approaches him.

CIARAN

(under his breath)
Of course I would.

HEATHER

Because you love me.

He says nothing. She kisses him. When she pulls away, his shaking hands reach up to gently push her away.

Then she goes into his bedroom and stands in the doorway, watching him think. She disappears into the darkness of the room, and he rubs his hands over his face.

INT. CIARAN'S BEDROOM

Heather kisses Ciaran and runs her hands through his hair. He kisses her shoulder and her chest, and she holds him against herself, in her arms. The moonlight streams in through the open blinds.

CIARAN

Tell me you love me.

HEATHER

I will keep you safe. Nothing will touch you here. What will you do for me?

CIARAN

Anything. Anything, Heather.

INT. CIARAN'S BEDROOM - LATER

He lies in Heather's arms, and she's smoking a cigarette. She kisses his ear and whispers to him.

HEATHER

The house sits way back in the woods. It's unbelievably dark. The air is heavy and dense, and it weighs on you. You can feel the darkness thick on your shoulders. The whole place is surrounded by ghosts. Moss clings everywhere. Fog rolls down from the heavens and sets itself on every surface. A long wet road of puddles and mud and red clay turns and vanishes and sticks to skin. It can't be washed out. Out there, the world is as still as it's always been.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Heather treads through trees, taking photos with her camera.

INT. CIARAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In Heather's arms, Ciaran sighs.

CIARAN

All this talk of fathers drains me. I hate the glimpses of mine that I catch in my face. I always thought if I could disappear into the problems of other people I could forget my own and leave them in the past where they belong. When I was younger, I drowned out my memories with drinking and fighting and yelling. The louder the music was, the less I could hear my parents screaming at each other; the sharper the bottles that cut me in a barfight, the less I could feel my father's hand on my shoulder. And if I drank... sometimes, it was like I could recover the memory of my Mam. That's how I used to feel, anyway.

HEATHER

What happened to your mother?

CIARAN

She died. I'm an orphan.

HEATHER

Died? How?

Ciaran reaches up.

CIARAN

Give me a cigarette.

She does.

EXT. WOODS

Ciaran follows behind Heather.

CIARAN

Where are we going?

HEATHER

It's not much further.

He looks back and shakes his head.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ciaran washes dishes in the kitchenette, and when he finishes, he leans against the counter and stares at the spare bedroom. The door is closed, locked, and sealed against light.

The door opens. Heather comes out with a paper in her hands. She walks toward him and extends it. It's a print of a photograph.

Ciaran looks up at the open door and the red light shining out. He then looks over the picture.

CIARAN

This is one of your pictures? Where did you take this?

HEATHER

In the woods.

Which was clear enough - in the photograph, a house overgrown with vines sits in the middle of trees and rotting, fallen trunks, leaves strewn on the ground.

CIARAN

It reminds me of your father's house.

EXT. WOODS

The two of them come upon a long driveway leading to a white house.

HEATHER

He's not home.

Ciaran looks at her with wide eyes.

CIARAN

Is this-? Is this your house?

HEATHER

Look at how empty the whole place is. Look how sad.

CIARAN

Heather, we shouldn't be here.

HEATHER

What could it hurt?

CIARAN

You.

She looks at him with tears streaming from her eyes.

HEATHER

I don't know why I brought you here.

He embraces her.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

She takes the photo back from him.

HEATHER

Just another forgotten house in the woods.

CIARAN

Should I not have mentioned it?

She walks over to the kitchenette, grabs the coffeepot and a mug, and pours enough coffee over the print to ruin it. The rest of the coffee goes into her mug.

HEATHER

Mention whatever you want.

She walks away, and he walks to the sink and gawks at the ruined print. She sets her sipped coffee on the table.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I'm going out.

CIARAN

Where?

She looks at him sharply. She grabs her camera off the table.

HEATHER

To take pictures.

She leaves and slams the door behind her.

He watches the door, but it stays closed.

EXT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Rain comes down in heavy torrents. Ciaran stands outside his apartment door looking out at the parking lot. He breathes erratically.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

He goes back inside his apartment and sits down. His legs shake. He stands up and goes to the window, looking out again. He puts a cigarette in his mouth and goes to light it when the phone rings.

CIARAN

Hello?

KATHERINE

Do you know how long it took me to find this number? A month. Exactly how long it's been since you checked Heather out.

Ciaran sighs.

CIARAN

I knew you'd catch up with us eventually.

KATHERINE

Don't be cute. This is serious. Do you know how lucky you are I didn't call the police?

CIARAN

Let's meet somewhere.

KATHERINE

There's a bar near my place. Oh, that's right. You don't drink.

CIARAN

Give me the address.

EXT. BAR

Ciaran pulls up and parks his car. He gets out and walks across the wet gravel parking lot to the front door, which he opens. He looks inside somewhat hesitantly.

INT. BAR

Katherine sits on a stool and asks the bartender something. She's drinking a beer.

Ciaran approaches her slowly, with his hands in his pockets. He stops a few feet from her.

She notices him and sighs.

CIARAN

I'll have what she's having.

She rolls her eyes.

KATHERINE

Sit down.

He does.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

So, you do drink. Are you drunk already?

He shakes his head.

CIARAN

Not drunk.

(beat)

Getting there.

She stares at him in silence a long time. He laughs.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

C'mon. Don't tell me you expected better of me.

KATHERINE

I respected you. When everyone else said, look at this piece of white trash, he'll never make it, he can't be serious... I defended you. When you checked in as Heather's guest, I thought, "My God, Heather's good. She's accounted for. She's got Dr. Brennan."

CIARAN

Don't call me Dr. Brennan. I haven't practiced in two years.

KATHERINE

What?

The bartender hands Ciaran a beer, and Ciaran takes a drink.

CIARAN

Heather's left me. My practice is gone. What's left?

KATHERINE

Do you honestly think so little of yourself? What are you talking about?

CIARAN

Look at me, Katherine. Do you see
what you thought you saw back then?
Is a speck of that man still there?

He takes out a cigarette and lights it.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

That all started with a girl, too.
She came into my practice with a
recommendation from a colleague.
She was caught in this stupid
relationship with a violent man,
and I thought I could help her out
of it. She reminded me of my
mother. Heather does, too.

KATHERINE

God, Ciaran. You didn't.

CIARAN

I loved her. Right up until the day
she died.

KATHERINE

And it ruined your life.

CIARAN

No, Katherine. Loving her didn't
ruin my life. God put me on this
planet, and ever since then, it's
been kill-or-be-killed. You talk
about God. You always have. What's
he done for me? And I'm stuck with
these goddamned tattoos because
when I was bashing boys' heads on
bar tops, I thought to myself,
"Jesus, Sean, you've got to do
something to get yourself into
heaven." So I...

He motions to the Celtic cross on his hand.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

Thinking it might save me to show
God what a holy man I could be.
What an idiot I was. Look where it
got me.

(laughing)

Stuck here. Burning in hell, even
as I'm breathing.

KATHERINE

You poor soul.

CIARAN

Don't. Please. I've had enough.

She gathers her purse.

KATHERINE

We're having trouble contacting the next of kin for Heather. Do you know her father's contact information?

CIARAN

No.

KATHERINE

He should know where she is, Ciaran.

CIARAN

I'm not lying. I don't know.

KATHERINE

If you find out, you should notify him. You know you should.

She gets up.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

God bless you, Ciaran.

EXT. STREET - AN HOUR LATER

Ciaran drives down the road of puddles and stops at a liquor store. He stands outside for a moment, pulling his jacket tightly around himself as he's rained on, and stares at the neon light of the store. He goes inside.

INT. LIQUOR STORE

He scours the shelves, then sees a woman with dark hair standing by the checkout.

CIARAN

Heather?

She doesn't turn. He looks down, embarrassed, and grabs a bottle of whiskey.

The MAN at the checkout counter looks him over.

MAN

Ciaran. You're looking- wet.

CIARAN
Thanks. It's raining.

MAN
How's the wife?

CIARAN
She's not my wife.

EXT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING

He walks through the parking lot and scrutinizes every car.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

He shrugs off his wet jacket, throws it on a chair, and holds his brown bag in his hands.

A cloud of smoke hangs above Heather, who sits on the couch.

Ciaran stops and leans against the door for just a moment, before propelling himself into slow action, staggering forward and holding the bag out to her.

CIARAN
Drink?

She takes the bottle. He wads up the bag and throws it away.

HEATHER
Aren't you going to ask me where I've been?

CIARAN
I stopped doing that a long time ago, Heather.

HEATHER
Hasn't been that long we've been together.

CIARAN
It's been a brief eternity.

She smirks.

HEATHER
You really don't care?

She nods at his lack of response and opens the bottle.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
Glass?

He brings her one. Then he goes into the bathroom but leaves the door open.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
I was taking photographs. Out of the state.

CIARAN
I believe you.

She scoffs softly.

He joins her on the couch, his shirt unbuttoned and his face unshaven, and she kisses him.

HEATHER
How was it without me?

CIARAN
Miserable.

INT. CIARAN'S BEDROOM

Ciaran stares at the sleeping Heather. He gets up, out of bed.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

He walks into the kitchenette and pours a glass of water. He stares at the door of the spare room, which is now being used as a developing room. He approaches the door, and his hand lingers over the knob, but he doesn't open the door.

He downs his water and goes back into the bedroom.

INT. CIARAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

His eyes open. The bed is empty. He sits up and pats the bed as if there is something hiding from him. He looks around the room.

CIARAN
Heather?

He gets up and goes into the living room.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

CIARAN
Heather? Heather?

He knocks on the door of the spare room. Nothing.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Ciaran sits in the chair with his phone on his knee.

CIARAN

Yes, I need to speak to someone about a missing person. She's- it's my girlfriend. Yes, she's been missing for twenty-four hours. It's not terribly long, no, but you see, she runs off, and... Well, I'm worried. I'm worried about her. She disappears for a week, comes back for a week, leaves again- I know that, I understand how it sounds, but... No, you don't understand. She's going to get herself killed or something. I'm sure of it. She wanders the woods. The woods, yes. No, don't-

He sighs and hangs up the phone. He then plunges his face into his hands and weeps.

He pours himself a drink and drinks it quickly. Another, and then another.

INT. BATHROOM

Ciaran staggers into the bathroom and cups water into his hands that he splashes on his neck and face. He can't cool down. He grips each side of the sink and breathes and breathes. He can't catch his breath either.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Sick on the bathroom floor. Skin stuck to the tiles. Body hot and swelling. He looks up and sees, hazy in the greenish light, Heather standing over him and then kneeling, with her nose wrinkling in concern. Her eyes unbelieving.

HEATHER

Ciaran, what have you done to yourself?

CIARAN

(mumbling)

Heather. Heather.

She helps him into the bedroom.

INT. CIARAN'S BEDROOM

Where he collapses onto the bed. She leaves for a moment and comes back with water. She gives him water.

CIARAN

Where were you?

She sits on the bed and pulls him into her arms. She grins at him.

HEATHER

I won't ever leave you again.

She takes his face in her hands.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I figured it out, what I was looking for. It's you. I was stupid to think my life meant anything without you in it, Ciaran.

He eyes her unsteadily.

CIARAN

(in a low voice)

Are you telling me the truth?

She nods.

HEATHER

I've lied to you, but I'm not lying now.

He lies on her lap, and she strokes his hair.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Years from now, when we're living in the suburbs, we'll look back and know there was beauty in how we suffered.

She presses her lips to his cheek.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

We'll name our firstborn Katharine. And we'll go wherever we want together, our family of three, but it won't be like with my father. It won't be like that at all.

CIARAN

What are you going to do?

HEATHER

What, darling? What did you say?

She leans down.

He is fading, mumbling.

CIARAN

You have to do something. You can't keep being one person and then another.

She steadies her breathing and stares at him. She reaches for a bottle off the nightstand.

HEATHER

Have another drink. Drink and forget about everything.

She takes a swig and then runs her hand along his scalp.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT - WEEKS LATER

The apartment has become covered in papers and trash. Paper bags, pizza boxes, empty bottles, newspapers are everywhere. Records are strewn along the floor.

In the middle of the mess Heather holds a blunt in her hands and smiles as she smokes. Ciaran lies on the floor under his ratty leather jacket, an improvised blanket, and drinks a beer.

She kneels down and flips through some records stacked on the floor.

HEATHER

It's sour, saying my father's name.
Can I have yours?

He sets down his beer.

CIARAN

What, you want to get married?

HEATHER

Why not? We're married now, aren't we? More or less?

CIARAN

But then why change anything?

HEATHER

Because it'll change everything.
Mrs. Brennan. Dr. Brennan.

(MORE)

HEATHER (CONT'D)

You can get your practice back.
We'll move out of this hellhole and
into some respectable place. Won't
that be nice.

CIARAN

I don't know, Heather.

HEATHER

You want to scrounge together
pennies from odd jobs for the rest
of your life?

CIARAN

I don't want to talk about it.

HEATHER

Of course you don't. If I left you,
you'd die. You can't lift a hand to
your mouth without me having to
maneuver your elbow.

Ciaran chuckles.

She smiles again, gets down on her knees, and crawls toward
him.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I have a dream. Would you like to
hear it?

(beat)

It begins at St. Catherine's. You
bring me cigarettes and we sit
outside by the pond. You're my
doctor. Katharine called you. You
bribe me, for each answer a
cigarette. "Will you make me
leave?" I ask. You ask me, "Don't
you want to?" "No," I say. "I can't
go home." "Why not?" Because the
house is haunted, and each night
I'm awakened by spirits. And you
tell me, "Nothing will get you
anymore. Not now I'm here. Not now
Ciaran's here."

Ciaran reaches for her hand and sees the scars on her
wrists.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Ciaran lights a cigarette and scrutinizes it. He climbs in
his car with a pack of beers.

DRIVING

He sets his gaze on the snaking road, watching his headlights hit trees and deer loitering on the edges of the asphalt. He reaches over for another beer and downs it. He passes an abandoned, rusted-out car parked on the side of the highway and stops in the middle of the road. He knows where he is, suddenly.

EXT. HEATHER'S HOUSE

He pulls onto a dirt road and ends up at the Callow house. Ciaran's eyes are red and bloodshot. He turns off his lights and quietly gets his toolbox out, feeling for a suitable weapon. He pulls out a hammer.

He stalks around the house and comes to the back door. It's locked. He tries the windows and finds one, in the living room, that is unlocked.

INT. HEATHER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM

He climbs inside and walks through the house with his hammer in his hand.

He walks slowly. He goes up the stairs one by one.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM

When he reaches the upstairs, he finds Tom sleeping in a floral bedroom. Flowers rot on the dresser. There is one low oil lamp turned on.

Ciaran heaves his breaths, stares at the man he hates, wields the hammer, but he cannot bring it downward. He can't do anything but stand there, with one hand in the air. Tom stirs.

INT. HEATHER'S HOUSE

Ciaran backs out of the room and rushes - as quietly as he can - down the stairs, going out the front door and leaving it behind him, wide open.

EXT. HEATHER'S HOUSE

He speeds down the driveway, leaving a cloud of dust in his wake.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

The door opens on Ciaran, walking inside with a glazed look in his eyes. He closes the door softly behind himself and stares at the couch, where Heather sleeps.

He goes to her, kneels in front of her, and cries.

He wakes her with his crying, and he reaches out for her embrace. She reluctantly gives it.

HEATHER
Ciaran? What-?

CIARAN
I couldn't do it. I couldn't do it.

She slowly pats his back. Her gaze narrows.

HEATHER
It's okay.

INT. CIARAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Heather stirs Ciaran awake. He is groggy.

CIARAN
Yes? What?

Heather is dressed, leaning over the bed.

HEATHER
I have to go into town.

CIARAN
Why?

He sits up on his elbow and wipes his eyes.

CIARAN (CONT'D)
Why town? Why now? I'll come with you.

HEATHER
No.

She smiles.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
It's just something I have to do. I'll be back.

CIARAN
When?

HEATHER
As soon as possible.

She takes his hand and kisses his knuckles and then kisses his face. Then she leaves the room.

Ciaran frowns. He pulls the covers back and sits up.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

Dressed now, he stands in the kitchen and pours himself coffee. He leans against the counter and stares again at the door to the spare bedroom.

He sets down his coffee and approaches the door slowly. His hand, like before, lingers over the doorknob, but this time, it bears down. He grabs the knob. It takes effort to turn it, to slide the door open, to come face-to-face with the darkness.

INT. SPARE ROOM

He turns on the light. Lines of yarn wall-to-wall hold pictures on clips. Nothing special. Cars, buildings, woods. Unnerving rural landscapes.

His eyes trail down to a stack on a table. He picks them up and sees a man he doesn't recognize. (It is Marcel.) He flips through to another photo - the same man, from a distance. Then the man smiling. Then the man shaking hands with someone. Then him and Heather, together. With their arms around each other.

He lowers the stack and uses one hand to wipe his face of sweat and building tears.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT - LATER

He sits on the couch with the prints beside him, and he stares at the front door.

Heather opens the door, sets the keys down, and closes the door slowly.

HEATHER

Hey.

She stares at his hand and the pictures next to it.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

What are you doing with those?

CIARAN

What are these?

He stands up when she approaches, and he holds them out of her reach.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

Is this Marcel? Is this who you've been sneaking off to see?

HEATHER

You sound paranoid.

CIARAN

But I'm right, aren't I?

HEATHER

You could not, with any fiber of your being, understand. Not one miniscule cell in your brain, not one flippant little synapse could endeavor to comprehend my life. So spare me your judgments and hand me a glass.

CIARAN

No! I won't. You think you're the only person who's struggled.

HEATHER

Give me a break, Ciaran.

She lights a cigarette.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

What, did Daddy belittle you? Did Mommy die too young?

CIARAN

No, no, you won't get me with this.

HEATHER

Get you? Am I trying to get you, Ciaran? I already have you. And you're just one of many.

CIARAN

I'm trying to resist, but more and more, I feel myself slipping away and being replaced piece by piece... by a made-up man who's everything I'm not, whose existence is flatly my antithesis, and he's clouding and gluttonous, so you think I'm going to lie down and give myself up, but I won't. Do you hear me? I won't.

HEATHER

You. You couldn't even do what needed to be done. What kind of man are you, Ciaran? Who is this antithetical monster lurking in your peripheral vision? Who's out to get you? What does your boogeyman look like?

She holds up a bottle.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

This? Is this what you're talking about? You fucking drunk. You pathetic little man. God, I could kill you. I could slash your throat and hold you bloody in my arms, and it wouldn't be enough to satiate my disappointment. To satisfy my... my strongest urge.

CIARAN

What, to kill me?

HEATHER

To destroy both of us.

She picks up a photo of Marcel.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

He came before you. Long before. When I was young and heartless like everyone else, when I stomped through dalliances, and I found solace only in being cruel. You didn't know me then. You knew me battered and silent. But I was a whirlwind.

She sits.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

When my father took my heart from me, locked me away at the top of a colonnade prison, I scratched at the walls like something stolen from the woods.

(beat)

Marcel left my life not long after. But I confess I saw him waltzing into restaurants and wandering and I missed his lack of tenderness. So I went back to him. He is unlike you down to the atom.

(MORE)

HEATHER (CONT'D)
He never trembles, never falters,
and he's cruel, like me.

CIARAN
You're not cruel, Heather.

HEATHER
You don't know a thing about me.
Not really.

She grabs the keys.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
I'm gonna do what you can't.

CIARAN
Heather... Heather!

She leaves through the front door.

EXT. HEATHER'S HOUSE - EVENING

Heather pulls up outside in Ciaran's car. She exits and approaches the front door.

She rummages through her purse and pulls out a set of keys, one of which lets her into the front door.

INT. HEATHER'S HOUSE

HEATHER
Dad? I'm home. Your little girl has returned.

She goes upstairs and calls out again.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
Dad?

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM

She goes in her bedroom and scowls at it. She leaves again and goes downstairs.

INT. HEATHER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM

She finds him standing in the living room, staring at her.

TOM
Heather?

HEATHER

Yes, it's me. Don't I look
recognizable? Or am I a ghost?

TOM

So you came back. I knew you would.

HEATHER

You know everything, don't you?

He walks toward her. She steps back.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Don't come near me. Do you hear me?

TOM

Are you making demands now? Have
you not learned anything?

(beat)

Heather, don't fight with me. I
love you more than life.

HEATHER

More than life. How I wish that
were true. What you would've done
to yourself by now.

When he starts toward her again, she runs upstairs.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM

She goes back to her bedroom and locks the door behind her.
She gets her old suitcase out of the closet. She begins to
stuff it with clothes.

TOM

Heather, open the door!

He pounds.

HEATHER

You know what I'm doing in here?
I'm packing! I'm leaving you. I'm
leaving you forever. You'll never
see me again.

TOM

Heather, please! Open the door!
Open the goddamn door or I'll break
it down!

She opens the door and comes toe-to-toe with him.

INT. HEATHER'S HOUSE, UPSTAIRS

HEATHER
Go ahead! Destroy something. That's
all you know how to do, isn't it?

TOM
Heather-!

She shoves him once, and he tumbles down the stairs. She is silent for a moment, staring at the stairs. He is motionless, a crumpled body at the bottom.

HEATHER
Tom? Dad? Dad?

She goes down the stairs slowly.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
Daddy?

When she reaches him, she gasps.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
I didn't mean to do that. I didn't
mean to do that. I didn't- Get up.
Get up! Goddamn you!

She starts to cry.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
Get the fuck up!

She falls into weeping and runs out of the house, grabbing her keys and her purse.

EXT. HEATHER'S HOUSE

She gets in the car and continues to cry before speeding away.

INT. CIARAN'S BEDROOM

He is sitting on his bed in darkness when he hears the door open.

INT. CIARAN'S APARTMENT

He shoots up and runs into the living room. She stands wide-eyed at the door.

CIARAN
I thought you'd gone forever.

HEATHER

Ciaran.

CIARAN

What is it?

She approaches him slowly.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

What is it, my love?

She plunges herself into his embrace, and he wraps his arms around her.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

What's happened, darling?

HEATHER

He's dead. My father. I killed him. I didn't think I could do it. But I did. And now I - I don't know how to feel.

CIARAN

You-?

He pulls away and holds her at arms' length.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

Heather, what happened?

She stares blankly beyond him.

HEATHER

I pushed him down the stairs. He didn't get up. I called his name, and he didn't get up. I feel like a ghost... wandering through someone else's life.

CIARAN

Heather, my dear Heather. My beautiful girl.

HEATHER

What are we going to do?

CIARAN

We're going to get in the car.
We're going to drive a long time.

CAR - DRIVING

A dark, lonely highway.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

They lie in each other's arms.

HEATHER

Ciaran.

CIARAN

Yes?

HEATHER

I have a plan for us.

CIARAN

What's that?

HEATHER

You brought those bottles of whiskey. Didn't you?

CIARAN

Yes. Should I pour you a drink?

HEATHER

No. Here's what you're going to do. You're going to pour them out, all over us and on the floor around us, and you're going to set it on fire. And we're going to lie together, arms intertwined. And we're going to die.

He laughs.

CIARAN

You're kidding.

HEATHER

I'm serious. Tomorrow they will find the bones of two lovers, wrapped in each other's arms like they've been vaporized by Vesuvius. All that will be left of us is our strength and our will.

He stares at her.

CIARAN

Is that what you want?

HEATHER

To die with you? Yes, Ciaran. That's what I want more than anything.

CIARAN
Then go to sleep.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER

Heather is asleep.

CIARAN
Tomorrow, they will find us.

Her eyes are closed, and her eyeliner rubs on the white pillowcase. He lets his head drop, lets all his weight give out, and he stares at the holes in the cork ceiling.

Outside children make waves in the pool, suitcases roll over cracks in the sidewalk, station wagons pull up, stall, turn off. Heather won't leave him again. He brushes her hair out of her tired face.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

He wakes up alone. The car is still outside. He waits for her. She is gone.

LONG FADE INTO

A clean-shaven, put-together Ciaran.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - DAY

He is welcoming FREDDIE, a patient, into his office.

CIARAN
Good afternoon, Freddie. Thank you for accommodating me.

FREDDIE
No problem, Dr. Brennan. I understand completely.

CIARAN
Well, have a seat.

They sit in chairs opposite each other. Ciaran has a notepad and a pen.

FREDDIE
Strange being here this late. I'm usually here before lunch. Do you eat lunch in your office? You're so professional, I can hardly imagine you eating at all.

Ciaran smiles faintly.

CIARAN
Do I exist to you only as a
psychiatrist?

FREDDIE
The platonic ideal of one.

CIARAN
Sure, sure. Let's get started,
shall we?

FREDDIE
Well, I'm afraid I'm not going to
be very focused this week.

CIARAN
Oh? Has something happened?

Freddie sighs.

FREDDIE
I've met someone. I know, it's all
very sudden. I've done it again. I
never learn my lesson, do I? I met
her two weeks ago, and she wants to
run away with me.

CIARAN
You're right. That is sudden.

FREDDIE
Maybe I should refer her to you.

CIARAN
Who is this woman?

FREDDIE
A mystery. I can't figure her out.

CIARAN
And you'd like to use your hour
talking about her?

FREDDIE
I'm sorry, Doctor. I just can't get
her out of my mind.

CIARAN
What's her name?

FREDDIE
Heather. Heather Lautrec.

Ciaran is frozen.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

And - it's complicated. She's married. Her husband is some French film producer; I don't know. I don't care. I don't like to think about him. That might make me sound bad, but it's true.

CIARAN

Heather? What does she-? Is she-?

FREDDIE

Doctor, I don't think I've ever seen you tongue-tied in the four years I've been seeing you.

CIARAN

Forgive me. I'm suddenly reminded of my past.

FREDDIE

The past I've been instructed by your secretary not to ask about?

Ciaran discreetly pulls his sleeve down over his tattoos.

CIARAN

Keep going.

FREDDIE

Well. I think I'm in love with her. I know that sounds insane and stupid, but she's asked me to help her leave her husband, and I think I'm going to do it. She's afraid of him, you know. He scares her. She's a gentle soul.

(beat)

Anyway, they've been married two years, and he's been arrested for domestic violence three times. Every time, she bails him out. Can you believe that?

CIARAN

How are you going to help her?

FREDDIE

Nothing unseemly.

CIARAN

You can't fall head-over-heels for every woman who comes in off the street, Freddie.

Freddie frowns.

FREDDIE

You're right. I know you're right.
But you haven't met this girl.
She's special. She's married into
wealth, but she's so...
dissatisfied. So lonely. I just
want to make her feel better.

Ciaran writes something down.

CIARAN

Has anyone at the law firm met her?

FREDDIE

No - you know I never bring my
personal life into work.

CIARAN

Let's keep going, and let's try to
talk about you.

EXT. LAW FIRM - AFTERNOON

Ciaran sits in his car outside a building. He is watching
the entrance.

Freddie exits the building with a briefcase and walks to a
car. When Freddie's car leaves, Ciaran follows.

EXT. HOTEL - EVENING

Ciaran makes a block around the building that Freddie drives
to while Freddie parks. On his second lap around, he sees
Freddie standing outside waiting with flowers in his hand.
On his third lap, Freddie is joined by a blonde woman that
Ciaran recognizes as Heather.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Ciaran waits in his car and watches the entrance. He is
beginning to nod off when he sees Freddie leave. As soon as
Freddie's car is gone, Ciaran gets out and heads for the
building.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

Ciaran approaches a desk with an ATTENDANT.

CIARAN

Excuse me. I need to speak with
someone who's staying here.

ATTENDANT

Are you expected?

CIARAN

No. Can you just tell Heather Lautrec that a Dr. Brennan - that is, a Ciaran Brennan - is here to see her?

ATTENDANT

Um... okay. Just one moment.

He steps back from the desk.

The attendant punches a number into a phone.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Mrs. Lautrec, there's a man here to see you. His name is Brennan. Ciaran Brennan.

(beat)

Uh huh. Okay.

The attendant hangs up the phone.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

You're okay to go up. Tenth floor. She has a suite up there. To the right when you get off the elevator.

Ciaran goes into the elevator.

INT. HOTEL, TENTH FLOOR

On the right of a large lobby is a door. Ciaran knocks. There is no answer. He tries the doorknob. It's unlocked, and he enters.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

It's a huge suite, comparable to an apartment. A grand centerpiece stands near the entrance, and he sticks his hands in his pockets and scrutinizes the gold-and-marble gaudiness of it as he passes by.

He walks down the nearest hallway and sees a lit doorway. He walks down slowly and comes to the doorway, then enters.

INT. HOTEL SUITE STUDY

Heather is reclining on a sofa with a cigarette between her fingers. She's dressed in Chanel tweed. She crosses her stockinged legs and looks at him with a long gaze.

HEATHER

So, you found me.

CIARAN

I thought maybe you were dead. I drove through the city every day looking for you until I gave up.

HEATHER

I'm not dead.

CIARAN

How long have you been living like this?

HEATHER

Oh, a long time.

(beat)

Are you here to save me?

He pulls up the knees of his pants and sits down, exhaling.

CIARAN

From what?

He looks around at the bookshelf-lined office. She reclines still against a red leather couch.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

I-I don't see anything *here*.

She leans forward.

HEATHER

Look closer. Look deeper.

CIARAN

I am looking.

HEATHER

You should be good at divining meaning out of nothingness. You're Freddie's doctor... he told me tonight.

CIARAN

What are you doing with him, Heather?

HEATHER

Playing with my food.

CIARAN

Would you have loved me then, if I'd been respectable, if I'd been summoned to St. Catherine's to diagnose you instead of do your bidding?

HEATHER

Would I have-? You never did my bidding. You pranced around and acted like you cared about me, but no one has every truly done that. Including you.

CIARAN

Not even Marcel?

HEATHER

Do you think I live here with my husband? My husband lives in Paris and New York City and Los Angeles. I live in a white house in a big field. You should see it sometime. It looks like something out of a poem.

CIARAN

You got the solitude you craved.

HEATHER

No one craves solitude. No one really wants it, no matter how much they clamor for it. It's a crude illusion of freedom, but there's no freedom in it. All it really means is you're alone.

CIARAN

You're in pain.

HEATHER

Pain? Don't sympathize with me, Ciaran. It looks terrible on you.

CIARAN

And your father?

HEATHER

Tom Callow was a drunk. He fell down the stairs and killed himself. I didn't go to the funeral, but I heard it was just lovely. Just what he deserved.

CIARAN

I remember you crying in my arms.

HEATHER

I was stupid to have cried. I was stupid to have gone back to you. I should've stood over his body and set the whole place on fire, with me inside. And I should've choked to death on the soot and the fumes and the smoke and stared at the beams coming down hard and fast against the door and I should've known there would be no other way out.

(beat)

Now, get out of here. My husband will be here soon.

He moves toward the edge of the seat and reaches for her, but she stands up.

CIARAN

I don't understand. You left me to get married? What happened to you? Who are you?

HEATHER

I'm not Heather.

She stands at the door to the hallway. He watches the back of her head.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

So forget about all of that.

CIARAN

You're up to something.

She turns in the doorway and stares at him. Her eyes unsettle him, and he looks away.

HEATHER

You're not the only one who can pretend to be someone else.

CIARAN

What are you talking about?

HEATHER

You think I don't get it. Your daddy was one crazy man, too, wasn't he, baby?

She approaches him and puts a hand on his cheek. He closes his eyes and savors the contact from her palm.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

He set it all ablaze. I bet you'd like to do that. Just once. Wouldn't you? God, you must have had real self-control not to light me up back in that motel. It's in your blood to kill, isn't it? You'd kill your father if he were here. Just for what he did to your mother. Isn't that true?

CIARAN

Don't.

He reaches for her with both arms, in one furious grasp, but she backs up toward the door.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

Do you know what I said to myself? I said, Let her sleep. And God, let me have the strength to do this. Of all the things I haven't done for her, let me do this one thing.

He falls to his knees.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

Heather. Don't leave me like this.

She opens the door behind her.

HEATHER

I'm not leaving you like anything.

When he leaps at her feet, she steps back into the hallway, and his breaths heave against the floor. His hands scramble to get some support beneath his body, but he turns over and onto his back on the rug. His tears are uncontrollable.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

Ciaran is on his feet. He passes a window, where he sees Marcel getting out of a car. He walks past the centerpiece again, where there is a vase of flowers. The flowers Freddie gave her. Ciaran pulls out a business card and a pen, and he writes on the back of the card.

GOOD SEEING YOU AND TASTING YOU. CALL YOUR LOVER BACK AGAIN.

He hears a shower turn on somewhere else in the suite.

He leaves the card on the centerpiece and leaves.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

He passes Marcel as the latter is entering.

LONG FADE FROM

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Ciaran walks back to in his car in the rain.

TO

INT. STUDY - DAY

Ciaran sits at a desk with a cup of coffee. He stares pensively at the cup. A framed photo of Ciaran and a woman hangs on the wall.

A phone on his desk rings.

CIARAN

Hello? Detective. Yes. Sure, I'll come in for an interview. Of course, I understand. This afternoon. Okay. I'll be there. Goodbye.

He hangs up the phone.

CIARAN (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Honey! I'm going for a drive.

CAR - DRIVING - DAY

Ciaran looks over at the passenger seat, where brown bags lie.

EXT. MOTEL

He parks at the same motel where, years before, he stayed with Heather.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Ciaran pulls the bags off the bottles of alcohol and pours them along the floor. Then he gets on the bed and pulls out a box of matches. Like his father used to do, he starts to light and flick them.