

WEEDS IN THE GARDEN

By: Michael Wolfe

EXT. BRONX BOTANICAL GARDENS - DAY

LEANNE, pretty, vulnerable but radiating inner strength, in her early 30s, ambles through a wonderland of flowers and plant life, arm-in-arm with her husband JESSE; warm and loving, in his late 30s.

They meander through fields of orchids, anthuriums, birds of paradise and other exotic flowers.

JESSE

What do you call these again?

LEANNE

This particular 'anthurium'--?

JESSE

'Anthurium', of course--

LEANNE

--is the Painter's Palette. See how it's shaped like a--

JESSE

Like a paint palette with a penis sticking out of it, yeah.

She playfully SLAPS his shoulder. They walk, quietly and contentedly.

JESSE (CONT'D)

I still think you should do it.

LEANNE

What?

JESSE

Open your own nursery.

LEANNE

Yeah, yeah, yeah--

JESSE

I'm serious.

LEANNE

I know you are. And I want to but it's a lot. It's...it's--

JESSE

It's what? The perfect way to combine your business savvy, your beautificational instincts and your horticultural wisdom? Yes it is--!

LEANNE

'Beautificational instincts'--?

JESSE

I'm serious!

LEANNE

So you said.

He embraces her and locks eyes lovingly with her.

JESSE

You love it, you'd be good at it,
so just do it, baby.

LEANNE

I will. Some day.

JESSE

Some day soon. You're ready. Cassie
would love having you 'helicopter'
over her just a little less
and...we have more than enough
money in our savings.

LEANNE

I know. I'm just scared.

She disengages from him and ambles into a secluded, circular
patch of WHITE ORCHIDS. He follows after her.

JESSE

I'm not. I know who you are and
what you are and I don't doubt for
a second that you could do it and
do it well. So...promise me?

LEANNE

Promise you what?

He embraces her again.

JESSE

Promise me that you will grow the
most beautiful garden imaginable...
and share it with the world. I
won't ever be able to die in peace
unless you promise me--

LEANNE

'Die in peace'? Really?

JESSE

Just promise me.

She smiles lovingly and then KISSES HIM.

LEANNE
I promise.

He grins, turns to gaze at the ocean of WHITE ORCHIDS in front of him and WE HEAR A GUN SHOT MUTED BY A SILENCER.

The orchids are painted RED with BLOOD.

Keith's lifeless body SLUMPS TO THE GROUND and Leanne turns to face him just as A MALE FIGURE scurries off. She rushes over, horrified, ALL SOUND MUTES.

We hear nothing as she SCREAMS, glances around frantically and calls for help. TEARS pour down her face as she collapses over her husband's body. BLOOD DRIPS off the PEDALS of the white orchids and we:

FADE TO WHITE

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

FADE IN on a CLOSE UP of WHITE ORCHIDS placed on top of a mahogany CASKET. We pull out to reveal MOURNERS gathered around a freshly dug grave as a PRIEST gives the eulogy.

PRIEST
There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens. A time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to...

His VOICE dissolves into silence and we move in on Leanne, who holds hands with her daughter CASSIDY, ("CASSIE") 15, strong-willed and guarded.

Tears stream down Leanne's cheeks and she glances over at the flowers on the casket. She stares at them and the lost vulnerability in her eyes transforms into a piercing conviction. CLOSE on the WHITE ORCHIDS as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

CLOSE on WHITE ORCHIDS. We pull out to reveal that they are the only flowers in a large, otherwise empty greenhouse. Leanne walks over to the arrangement and GRINS.

SUPER: One Year Later

DANIELA "DANNIE" MILAGROS, a feisty Latina in her 30s, walks over and puts her arm around Leanne.

DANIELA
You sure this is the centerpiece?
The hub of the showroom?

Leanne eyes it contemplatively and finally NODS.

LEANNE
Yeah. It was our favorite flower.

Daniela looks at her friend and approves.

DANIELA
You the boss. *La Jefa!*

LEANNE
Si. Yo soy La Jefa!

DANIELA
Yeah, you '*La Jefa*' alright,
just...don't speak Spanish around
me, it makes my ears bleed.

They share a laugh. Cassie walks over and glances around at the space.

CASSIDY
This is nice but...kinda like every
other greenhouse I've ever seen
including the greenhouses in
Westchester. Did we really have to
move all the way out here to--?

DANIELA
'All the way'? Beacon is forty-five
minutes from Westchester, girl.
This ain't Maine. We in Canada, *la
Jefa*?

LEANNE
Nope.

DANIELA
Nope.

LEANNE
We are not in Canada.

DANIELA
Definitely not in Canada--

CASSIDY

I know but...I guess I don't know
why I had to leave my school and my
friends and my boyfriend just to--

DANIELA

'Him'?! That boy was a dud, what
was his name again?

CASSIDY

Marvin.

DANIELA

Come on! You gonna let some herb
named Marvin pop your cherry?

LEANNE

'Herb'?

CASSIDY

Don't go there, Dannie--

DANIELA

I'm goin' there! He was a boring-
ass stick in the mud and you gonna
find much better prospects here, I
guarantee you that. Find me one
while you're at it, will ya?

Cassie laughs and SHAKES HER HEAD.

DANIELA (CONT'D)

Besides your momma needed this so
cut her some slack, yeah?

She SLAPS Cassie playfully in the back of the head and walks off. A silence as Cassie looks her mother over.

CASSIDY

Need some 'slack' do ya?

LEANNE

I could use a little.

A heavy silence. Leanne finally faces her daughter.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

I know this is hard. And I can only
hope that you're not even half as
scared as I am about...all these
big changes. But I couldn't stay in
Westchester.

CASSIDY

Why?

LEANNE

Because I saw his face everywhere.
Every street corner, every
restaurant, every park, every
flower shop. I just...I knew I'd
never turn the page and be able
to...to...

CASSIDY

To 'write a new chapter'?

Leanne SMIRKS at her sarcastic comment.

LEANNE

Yes, smart ass. I knew I could
never do that in the town we lived
in, in the home we shared. But I
can't do this without you.

Cassie eyes her mother with a heavy heart.

CASSIDY

And you won't have to.

LEANNE

No? We gonna...?

She eyes Cassie playfully and she eventually NODS.

CASSIDY

Yeah, we gonna 'rally'.

Leanne GESTICULATES with her RIGHT HAND, MAKES A CIRCULAR MOTION with it.

LEANNE

We gonna 'rally'?

Cassie MAKES THE SAME GESTICULATION and then SMILES. Leanne BEAMS and EMBRACES HER emphatically.

INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

MONTAGE of the greenhouse coming to life as Leanne, Cassie and Daniela scurry about. With HAMMERS and hustle, they construct planters, stock shelves with plants, flowers. They put in the CASH REGISTER, set out BUSINESS CARDS and FLYERS.

Leanne watches an INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO on her phone as she TIGHTENS A UNION on PLUMBING that leads to TWO TANKS labeled: **H₂O** and **Dichloropropene**.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A TRUCK with a load of TREES pulls into the parking lot, past Leanne, who runs over to Cassie and Daniela and joins them in front of the greenhouse.

Leanne embraces them in a jubilant HEADLOCK as they watch CONSTRUCTION WORKERS place a WOODEN SIGN on the front facade of the greenhouse that reads: **Leanne's Green Thumb**

They all beam with pride, hope and possibilities.

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

Leanne walks through the completed main showroom that overflows with FLOWERS of every shape and color, as well as an array of exotic PLANTS and TREES.

She SMILES to herself with pride and self-satisfaction.

LEANNE

I kept my promise, baby. But if
this doesn't work out, you better
believe I'm gonna blame you.

She LOOKS UP and GRINS. After breathing in the aromas of the moment, she ambles over to a VALVE on the wall that is attached to PIPES that lead to the TANKS she worked on later.

She OPENS THE VALVE and MIST SPRAYS DOWN from SPRINKLERS that run along the ceiling of the greenhouse. Leanne fails to notice that along with the WATER, a GREEN GAS seeps out of the sprinkler heads as well.

She walks a few steps but when she SMELLS an unfamiliar odor, she STOPS and STUMBLES. She COUGHS and then COUGHS again as the GREEN GAS slowly fills the greenhouse.

She FALLS TO THE GROUND and panic floods her as she struggles to her feet and zig-zags groggily toward the FRONT DOOR and the fresh air beyond it. She is within reach of the door when she COLLAPSES.

From her BLURRY POV, we see: her EYES SHUT as a MALE FIGURE throws open the door and rushes in just before we:

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

An unconscious Leanne STIRS and OPENS HER EYES. She COUGHS violently and SITS UP, immediately realizing that she is lying on the hood of a TRUCK.

She glances around and spots a MAN in the shadows FIDGETING with the METAL TANKS outside her greenhouse.

LEANNE

Hello?

MAN

Oh, hello! Glad you could join us!

LEANNE

Uh, yeah, me too. What--?

MAN

Listen, I know the two-phase convergent-divergent nozzle is a marvel of modern science and--

LEANNE

What happened--?

MAN

--and the fact that it allows you to water your plants and gas them with pesticides through the same mechanism is super-cool but can I give you some advice?

LEANNE

Ummm, sure.

He steps out of the shadows and we see WAYNE, a scruffy, handsome and charming man in his 30s. He SMILES playfully.

MAN

Don't install it yourself after watching a five-minute instructional video on Youtube.

Though groggy, she GRINS sheepishly.

LEANNE

I didn't. Actually, it...

WAYNE

It what?

LEANNE

It was a three-minute video.

They share a chuckle.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Wayne looks over the TANK SYSTEM with Leanne.

WAYNE

So obviously, you need to carefully control the proportionate flow. There are automated 'Irrigation Propagation Control' systems you can buy that'll regulate everything but in the meantime, I went ahead and reversed the settings that you manually implemented.

LEANNE

Reversed them? Why?

WAYNE

Well, and I'm guesstimating here but, you had yours set at a delightfully fatal mixture of 5% water and 95% dichloropropene.

LEANNE

'Dichloro...what is that?

WAYNE

Your pesticide of choice which is, incidentally, one of the deadlier ones on the market.

LEANNE

I should probably know that--

WAYNE

You should definitely know that! I'll say it again, 'Do it Yourself' Youtube videos have their place but...not here. Water, good. Deadly, poisonous pesticide, bad.

LEANNE

Very bad. Duly noted.

They share a LAUGH and walk over to Wayne's truck.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Well, I guess I should thank you for, you know, saving my life?

WAYNE

Without 'please' and 'thank you',
we are savages, wouldn't you agree?

LEANNE

I would.

They share a warm CHUCKLE.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

So in that spirit...thank you.
Very, very, very much--

WAYNE

It was my pleasure. Glad I happened
by when I did.

He gets in his truck and SHUTS THE DOOR.

LEANNE

Me too. Why...why, did you 'happen
by' exactly?

WAYNE

Wayne Rooney, Founder, Owner and
C.E.O. of Rooney Fertilizing. I'm
about a half-mile down the road,
nice to meet you.

LEANNE

Leanne Kellerman.

WAYNE

Nice to meet you, Leanne Kellerman.
Anyway, I thought that with our
businesses in such close proximity
and our needs in what I perceive to
be, umm....

LEANNE

Symbiotic alignment?

He grins, impressed with her vocabulary and STARTS HIS TRUCK.

WAYNE

Yeah, you took the words right out
of my mouth. The exact words--

LEANNE

Uh-huh.

She SMIRKS incredulously at him.

WAYNE

Anyway, I thought...I don't know...
that you and I might be able to
scratch each other's backs?

LEANNE

Maybe. Let me marinate on that.
I've had a long day and I almost
died at the end of it so...

WAYNE

Of course, of course. Get some rest
and...I'll be around.

LEANNE

Thank you.

She eyes him sincerely and he GRINS back warmly.

WAYNE

Any time.

He DRIVES OFF.

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leanne pours herself a tall glass of wine and as she GULPS it down, her anxiety melts away. Cassie enters.

CASSIDY

I was wondering if you were ever
gonna get home.

LEANNE

Hey. Yeah, I had...ummm, some
things to wrap up before--

CASSIDY

Before your big opening day?

LEANNE

Exactly. You and me both, right!?

CASSIDY

Yeah.

Cassie notices her mother's flustered demeanor.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

You okay?

LEANNE

Me? Yeah. Of course. Very okay.
Why? Do I not...do I not look okay?

CASSIDY

Not really.

LEANNE

No? Well, I am. I'm fine. I'm
great, just...you know, long day
and...longer day tomorrow.

Cassie looks concerned, Leanne notices.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Enough about me. How are you...
feeling? About school, nervous?

CASSIDY

A little.

LEANNE

I don't blame you. It's not easy
and it'll take some time but...
it'll happen. I know. Hell, I went
to three different high schools.

CASSIDY

Why? Oh because Grandpa was--

LEANNE

Was in the Army, yeah.

Cassie NODS but is not reassured.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

There's nothing I can say that's
gonna make tomorrow any easier but
in regards to your long-term mental
health...I think it is in your best
interest to join the field hockey
team and get back onto the court as
soon as possible--

CASSIDY

Pitch.

LEANNE

What?

CASSIDY

Pitch. We don't play on a 'court'
or a 'field', we play on a 'pitch'.

LEANNE

Sorry... 'pitch.' Anyway, my point
was...

CASSIDY

What?

LEANNE

I forgot.

Cassie GRINS bemusedly.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

My point, yes! My point was that I
think you should get back on the
pitch and kick the crap out of
these Beacon softies.

Cassie LAUGHS and loosens up.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Show these girls how we do things
back in Westchester. Think you can
do that?

CASSIDY

Yeah, I think I can manage that.

LEANNE

Atta girl. Now get your ass to bed.

They share a warm moment before Cassie SMILES and walks off.
Leanne reflects and a flood of emotions wash over her.

EXT. CEMETARY - MORNING

Wayne solemnly inches toward a small HEADSTONE that has been
weathered by the elements. He lays down a BOUQUET OF FLOWERS.

WAYNE

I uhhh, just wanted to say, again,
that... I did my best with you.

TEARS stream down his face.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

And soon you will see why I did...
what I did. And hopefully you will
see...that I did the only thing I
could do. And that it was also the
right thing to do. For both of us.

His eyes blaze with conviction and determination as he sets down the flowers and walks off. The epitaph reads:

Mary Blevins-Rooney - Beloved Wife - 1986-2010

INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

Leanne helps two GUESTS as they pick out an array of FLOWERS.

LEANNE

Yeah, who wants some generic arrangement from Flowers.com, be original. We've got Orchids, Catchflies, Lady's Slippers...

Her voice trails off when she sees two more GUESTS ENTER the greenhouse.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Excuse me for a sec.

She walks over to greet them.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Hello, I'm Le--

GUEST

'Leanne', we know. Wayne Rooney sent us over.

LEANNE

He did, did he?

GUEST

Yup. We're re-designing our home's entire... 'landscape philosophy', I guess you could say. And he said you could help us accomplish that.

LEANNE

He's a very smart man! I can definitely help you accomplish that... and more.

She sees ANOTHER CAR enter her parking lot and more GUESTS approach the greenhouse. She SMILES and SHAKES HER HEAD.

INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY - LATER

Leanne and Daniela jostle between the many guests that mingle throughout the crowded showroom, exasperated but happy.

They exchange enthusiastic expressions of surprise before Leanne glances out at the parking lot and spots WAYNE leaning casually against his truck, a satisfied SMILE on his face. He SCRATCHES HIS OWN BACK and POINTS at Leanne. She LAUGHS, NODS and gets back to work.

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

Daniela OPENS THE CASH REGISTER to show Leanne the STACKS OF CASH inside it. She wraps Leanne up in a hug and they JUMP UP AND DOWN in delight.

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

An ALARM CLOCK BUZZES and Leanne shuts it off. Her sleepy eyes fill with optimism and determination.

EXT. ROONEY FERTILIZING - DAY

Wayne SIGNS A FORM for a delivery, courtesies of BARNEY, a jovial man in his 50s.

WAYNE

My manure messiah.

BARNEY

Same dung, different day, my man.

WAYNE

It sure is. Thanks, Barney, we'll see you next week.

Barney LAUGHS boisterously and walks off as a CAR PULLS UP. Two GUESTS get out and walk right up to Wayne.

GUEST

Wayne Rooney?

WAYNE

In the flesh.

GUEST

Hi, Leanne Kellerman just sold us a bunch of trees and she said you might be able to help us keep them alive?

Wayne GRINS and SHAKES HIS HEAD bemusedly.

WAYNE

I just might.

EXT. ROONEY FERTILIZING - DAY - LATER

Rooney tends to a bustling collection of GUESTS who swarm around his small business. He bursts with enthusiasm as he SHAKES HANDS with multiple guests.

After catching his breath, he looks up to see LEANNE leaning casually against her car. She SCRATCHES HER OWN BACK and then POINTS at Wayne. He NODS and SMILES, watches admirably as she gets in her car and drives off.

INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

Leanne lies under a large PLANTER filled with flowers, inspecting the IRRIGATION DRAINAGE BASIN beneath it. Daniela and Cassie supervise.

LEANNE

No, it's not clogged or anything.
It looks like it's feeding into the
drainage basin so maybe--

DANIELA

Maybe the angle's off. It doesn't
look like it's flowing downhill
enough so we need to...what--?

LEANNE

Elevate the far end of the table a
bit and it'll flow better. Yeah?

DANIELA

Yeah. Gimme that piece of wood,
girl.

Cassie grabs a loose 2 X 4 and hands it to Daniela. She lifts the far end of the planter and as she does, the FRAME slips off the LEGS that support it. Daniela and Cassie SHRIEK.

The planter IS ABOUT TO FALL ON TOP OF LEANNE WHEN:

A HAND CATCHES IT just in time. It is attached to Wayne's arm, who looks down at her with surprise.

WAYNE

Jesus, I leave you alone for one
day.

He TAKES LEANNE'S HAND and PULLS HER OUT, setting the planter safely on the ground. Leanne is shaken but looks up at Wayne, her eyes filled with gratitude.

LEANNE

Whoa. Thank you. Again.

WAYNE

I know I said I'd help you 'any time' but I didn't expect you to cash that in so fast.

She LAUGHS.

LEANNE

Me neither. Jesus, what are you a superhero?

He helps Leanne to her feet.

WAYNE

Yeah, shitslinger by day, superhero by night. Hi, I'm Wayne.

He extends his hand to Daniela.

DANIELA

I'm Dannie. This is Cassie.

WAYNE

Hi. And hello, Cassie.

CASSIDY

Hey.

DANIELA

Wait, this ain't the same guy that saved your ass the other night?

LEANNE

The very same. He's my guardian angel, apparently.

DANIELA

A guardian angel with anaconda biceps and judgin' by the fit of them jeans, a python for a--

Cassie SLAPS Daniela in the back of the head, silences her.

CASSIDY

Thanks for showing up and saving my mom's life...again. Funny how this happened twice in two days.

A wave of suspicion washes over Cassie. Wayne notices.

LEANNE

Funny and fortunate. For me.

An awkward silence. Cassie walks over to the cupboard by the cash register and PULLS OUT PEANUT BUTTER, JELLY and BREAD.

DANIELA

So...what brings you by this time?

WAYNE

I just wanted to thank you for...
scratching me so good and soooo
hard today. I haven't been loved
that thoroughly in a looooong time.

A disgusted Cassie stops making her sandwich and looks up.

CASSIDY

Seriously, dude? Right in front...?

Cassie's voice trails off when she sees Wayne PICK UP and presents a POT full of VENUS FLYTRAPS.

WAYNE

Just in case the dichloropropene
doesn't get the job done. These
little guys are a natural
pesticide. And they're pretty cool
looking too.

Leanne takes the pot and SMILES.

LEANNE

Thank you. I've always loved these.

Daniela playfully ELBOWS Cassie, who ELBOWS her back and then resumes MAKING HER SANDWICH. When she finishes, she puts the ingredients back in the cupboard. WAYNE WATCHES HER CLOSELY.

WAYNE

Ummm, anyway. I was thinking that
we might help each other more by
partnering up. A bit. Somehow.
Maybe. Just a thought.

Leanne contemplates, then GRINS.

LEANNE

Maybe. Why don't I 'happen by' your
shop tomorrow after we lock up and
we can discuss it further.

He SMILES and looks over at Daniela.

WAYNE

That's my line, actually. She steal
from you guys too?

DANIELA

All the time.

A brief chuckle.

WAYNE

I'll see you tomorrow.

LEANNE

You will.

He starts to walk out but STOPS at the door.

WAYNE

Ummmm...this particular superhero is
'clocking out' and I won't be able
to save her life any more tonight
so can you...?

DANIELA

We'll keep an eye on her.

WAYNE

Appreciate it.

He grins flirtatiously at Leanne before WALKING OUT. A beat
passes before Daniela bursts into LAUGHTER.

DANIELA

You are milkin' the 'helpless
widdow' act for every drop, ain't
you?!

LEANNE

Stop it. I'm just--

DANIELA

Just what?! Letting that buff
bumpkin 'accidentally' save your
ass night after night?!

LEANNE

It's just a coincidence.

DANIELA

A perfect coincidence!

Everyone LAUGHS but Cassie.

CASSIDY

Yeah, he's a little too perfect if you ask me.

DANIELA

Oh, come on. You don't like him?

CASSIDY

I don't know him. But I don't trust him.

A SILENCE follows that sucks all the fun out of the room.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

Sorry. Just seems a little shady to me.

She takes a bite out of her sandwich and WALKS OFF. On her way out, she sees a stack of WAYNE'S BUSINESS CARDS by the cash register and SNEAKS ONE INTO HER POCKET. Daniela walks over to a now morose Leanne.

DANIELA

Don't worry about her. She just young and threatened by...anyone that ain't her dad.

LEANNE

I know.

DANIELA

He's real cute though.

LEANNE

I know.

DANIELA

Strong cheekbones, stronger hands and the strongest ass I seen in this podunk town.

LEANNE

I know.

DANIELA

So if you don't let him 'fertilize your garden', I will.

LEANNE

I know.

They share a hearty LAUGH and WALK OUT together.

INT. SCHOOL - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Cassie walks down the hall, passes a trio of pretty, well-dressed, MEAN GIRLS. They BUMP HER and KNOCK THE BOOKS out of her hands as they pass. As Cassie gathers up her things, the girls give her stink-eye and WALK OFF.

Cassie continues down the hall and eventually reaches an open doorway that looks out onto the FIELD HOCKEY PITCH. She watches the PLAYERS SCRIMMAGE and as she does, her eyes fill with determination and a GRIN spreads across her face.

INT. GREENHOUSE - EVENING

Leanne says 'goodbye' to the last two GUESTS in the showroom and sees them out. Once alone, looks over the central ORCHID DISPLAY. A mixture of conflicting emotions flow through her before she walks out and LOCKS THE DOOR behind her.

EXT. ROONEY FERTILIZING - EVENING

The SUN SETS over the tree line as Leanne's CAR pulls up. She gets out and spots Wayne sitting in the back of his PICKUP TRUCK with a beer. He TYPES something on his laptop and without looking up, fishes another BEER out of a COOLER and offers it to her.

WAYNE

About time you showed up. I was about to leave. I do have a life, you know.

LEANNE

Do you?

WAYNE

No, actually. Not at all.

She takes the beer and they share a chuckle.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Step into my office.

LEANNE

Oh is this your office?!

WAYNE

Only on evenings as beautiful as this. Which are...thankfully, pretty often up here.

Leanne GRINS warmly at his romanticism and then looks trepidatiously at the high flat bed of the pick-up.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
Want me to get you a ladder?

LEANNE
Please. Then I'll have something large and uncomfortable that I can shove right up your--

WAYNE
Hey, hey, hey, easy! You can't come aboard with that hostility, this is a 'good vibes only' zone, here.

LEANNE
Is that actually what you call the back of your truck?

WAYNE
No, I just pulled that out of my butt but...I kinda like it.

LEANNE
It's not bad.

WAYNE
It's above average, at least. Just get up here.

She CLIMBS UP and in and he hands her a beer. She CRACKS IT OPEN and they SALUTE.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
Cheers.

LEANNE
Cheers.

The SUN SETS behind them, blankets them in a soft glow.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROONEY FERTILIZING - NIGHT

The sun has set and Wayne and Leanne share a LAUGH in the back of the truck.

LEANNE
So that's your opening offer?! An 80/20 split in my favor?!

WAYNE

I got a weak hand to play. You peddle beautiful flowers, I peddle crap, you clearly have the upper hand here--!

LEANNE

Two upper hands and an upper foot by the looks of it!

WAYNE

Look, there's a higher demand for your product than mine and furthermore...I have no illusions about who would be the pretty, shining face of this would-be partnership. It would clearly be you. In every possible respect and...

He GRINS sheepishly and she BLUSHES a bit.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

No pressure and no need to decide anything now. Just...think about it, will ya?

LEANNE

I will.

She SMILES warmly at him and SIPS from her beer. We hear a RUSTLE in the bushes across the parking lot and see Cassie, hiding in the shrubbery, watching them. She SHAKES HER HEAD in disapproval and quietly scampers off.

INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

Leanne UNLOCKS the front door, enters and throws her purse next to the register. She walks through the greenhouse, checking on various PLANTERS. He caresses a few leaves, feels the WATER on her fingertips.

She LOOKS UP at the sprinklers and NODS in approval just as a NOISE startles her. She looks toward the back of the greenhouse and HEARS SCUFFLING.

Her heart RACES and she glances toward the front door, conflicted. She decides to investigate, walks slowly toward the back of the greenhouse. She reflexively GRABS A SHOVEL that was leaning against a planter and wields it like a weapon.

LEANNE

Hello? Hello, is somebody there?

She reaches a DOOR at the back of the greenhouse and after hesitating for a beat, she OPENS IT and enters...

INT. UTILITY CLOSET - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Leanne inches forward, shovel in hand. She FLICKS THE LIGHT SWITCH but NOTHING.

LEANNE

Hello?

Her BREATHING ESCALATES as she shuffles forward. She STOPS, LISTENS and, convinced there is nothing wrong, she LAUGHS TO HERSELF.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Oh relax, kiddo.

She turns to leave and A RACOON Hisses AND LUNGES AT HER.

She SCREAMS and FALLS TO THE GROUND. The frantic animal JUMPS OVER HER, scampers across the room, crawls up a shelf and SCURRIES OUT AN OPEN WINDOW.

Leanne catches her breath and finally erupts into a fit of PETRIFIED LAUGHTER. She stands and CLOSES THE WINDOW. She then LOCKS IT and makes damn sure it will NOT open again.

EXT. FIELD HOCKEY PITCH - DAY

Leanne scurries around the grass, sweaty, determined. She PASSES, runs, RECEIVES the ball, PASSES again. She rushes toward the goal, the ball is fed to her and she about to SHOOT when she is BODY-CHECKED to the ground.

Dazed, disoriented and on her back, she LOOKS UP to see REAGAN, a short but feisty spark-plug looking down at her. She lifts up her GOALIE MASK and SMIRKS arrogantly.

REAGAN

Nobody's allowed in my crease. Not even you, New Girl. Nothing personal.

A WHISTLE BLOWS and Reagan helps Cassie to her feet.

EXT. FIELD HOCKEY PITCH - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Reagan and Cassie walk toward the school with the rest of the players. Cassie LIMPS a little.

REAGAN

You look a little gimpy there, New Girl.

CASSIDY

It's 'Cassie', actually. And I'm fine.

REAGAN

Yeah, you look fine. A hobbling peg-legged hunchback but, yeah, 'fine'.

Cassie can't help but LAUGH.

CASSIDY

I've seen you at the computer lab, haven't I?

REAGAN

Probably, I tutor there. Shepard the technologically challenged through the Silicon Valley of darkness. A little 'something something' for my college transcripts. Why you ask?

CASSIDY

I ummm...I was wondering if you could help me with some "research."

Cassie uses 'AIR QUOTES' and SMIRKS at Reagan.

REAGAN

"Research", huh? You stalking a guy or a teacher? Or you wanna steal your mom's credit card info?

CASSIDY

No, I just--

REAGAN

Don't care, I'm in. Clean off the ass-kickin' I just served you and we'll hack some shit.

Cassie LAUGHS and they enter the school.

INT. REAGAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Cassie sits in front of Reagan's OPEN LAPTOP, waiting. Reagan enters, sits beside her with a large BOWL.

REAGAN

Eat. Protein builds muscles. You clearly need more of 'em.

Cassie takes a brown NUGGET from the bowl, eyes it curiously.

CASSIDY

What exactly is--?

REAGAN

Bison Jerky. Lean, protein-packed deliciousness. Less talk, more eat.

Cassie cautiously TAKES A BITE and surprisingly enjoys it.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

What's this chump's name?

Cassie pulls the BUSINESS CARD out of her pocket, READS IT.

CASSIDY

'Wayne Rooney'.

REAGAN

Good name. Like the bastard son of a hockey player and a lounge singer. What do you have against this guy exactly?

CASSIDY

I don't know. He keeps...showing up at the exact moment my mom needs help and she's all smitten and--

REAGAN

He tryin' to lay some 'momma pipe'?!

CASSIDY

I don't...maybe, I just don't--

REAGAN

You don't want him layin' no 'momma pipe'?! I can dig it, girl--

CASSIDY

I just don't trust him. And I want to know what he's about.

REAGAN

Well, so far, he's about manure,
more manure and fertilizer that is
made of manure and...oh!

Reagan's face drops with intrigue.

CASSIDY

What?

SILENCE as Reagan CLICKS through various links on her laptop.

REAGAN

Don't get too close to this guy.
Anyone who does tends to die. And
die horribly.

CASSIDY

What?

REAGAN

Look at this.

They hunch over the laptop, scan a few WEBLINKS.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

He was present at the death of...
'Byron Burkowski'...but was never
an official suspect because...

We see: WEB IMAGES and NEWSPAPER HEADLINES that read: **Local Quarterback Murdered** and **Bronx Athlete's Death Drug Related**.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

...because they pinned it on
someone else. But then he also...oh
wow!

On the laptop, we see a NEWSPAPER HEADLINE that read: **Beacon Botanist Dies of Asphyxiation**

REAGAN (CONT'D)

This woman died under...very
curious circumstances.

CASSIDY

What does that mean?

Reagan READS intently, her EYES WIDE with amazement.

REAGAN

She choked to death on a deadly mixture of gases she "accidentally" inhaled at the laboratory she was working in. And...

Reagan GASPS.

CASSIDY

And what?

REAGAN

Your buddy Wayne was not only an employee there...but he was also her husband!

CASSIDY

Stop!

REAGAN

That's right!

A TENSE SILENCE. Reagan and Cassidy look at each other with peaked intensity. Their eyes fill with horror, the suspicious panic between them is about to explode when...

THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN LOUDLY.

COLLEEN

Surprise!

Reagan and Cassie JUMP, nearly fall out of their chairs. COLLEEN, Reagan's mother, ENTERS with a PLATE.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

I brought you some elk nuggets to help you study?

REAGAN

God damnit, mother!

COLLEEN

What? You don't want them?

REAGAN

Of course we 'want them' but you scared the Bejesus out of us! Here, gimme.

She snatches the PLATE from her and shoves her out the door.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

Thank you, goodbye. Shoo. Shoo!

She SLAMS THE DOOR and pops a NUGGET in her mouth. As ecstasy consumes her face and she looks over at Cassie.

REAGAN (CONT'D)
These? Delicious. You? screwed.

INT. GREENHOUSE - EVENING

Leanne watches Wayne fasten the last BOLT in place on the new DIGITAL CONTROL PANEL attached to Leanne's elaborate irrigation/pesticide system.

LEANNE
Thanks again for coming over.
Although...I probably could have
done this myself.

WAYNE
Yeah? Another three-minute video
later?

LEANNE
Hey, you can learn a lot from those
videos. They almost make handy men
like you entirely obsolete.

WAYNE
Now you're just being mean.

They share a LAUGH.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
That'll do it. So you just set the
levels, set the time-clock and
you're all set. If you have any
questions--

LEANNE
Call you?

WAYNE
No, read the instruction manual,
dummy.

He hands her the INSTRUCTIONS and SMIRKS. She LAUGHS.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
So you and Cassie settling in okay?

LEANNE
Pretty good. I think, you know? At
her age, it'll take a little time.

WAYNE

Sure. And at your age?

She contemplates for a moment.

LEANNE

Same.

WAYNE

You know what makes getting used to
a new town a lot more fun?

LEANNE

What's that?

WAYNE

The right guide.

He GRINS flirtatiously at her. Leanne SMILES back but then SQUIRMS with discomfort. A silence passes before Wayne summons the courage to press on.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Would you like that? To...you
know...explore the town some time?
After we finish work?

LEANNE

I'd like that. 'Some time'. But--

WAYNE

Look, I don't want to pressure you
but our relationship could be a
little more than professional...if
we allow it to...ummm...

LEANNE

Grow?

Wayne CHUCKLES.

WAYNE

Exactly. Like maybe right now
we're...germinating. And if we
want, in time, we can decide
whether or not we want to sprout,
grow and...maybe even pollinate.

LEANNE

Hey, slow down there!

They both LAUGH. Wayne BLUSHES and Leanne SMILES as she searches for the right response.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
That sounds lovely. It does but...
I'm just not in that place right
now.

Wayne NODS and GRINS sympathetically.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
But...

WAYNE
But?

LEANNE
But I'm getting there.

She flashes him a SMILE with potential.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Cassie walks down the street in workout clothes, her FIELD HOCKEY STICK slung over shoulder. She HOPS OVER a WOODEN FENCE and walks into...

EXT. WOODS - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

The forest is thick but there is enough light to see her way through the wooded shortcut. Cassie walks for a while but STOPS when she HEARS BRANCHES BREAK and FOOTSTEPS behind her.

She glances behind her but sees NOTHING so she presses on. A few steps later, she HEARS IT AGAIN. She turns again and still sees nothing. Her BREATHING QUICKENS a bit and so does her pace as she walks on.

She HEARS THE SOUNDS again and now they SURROUND HER on all sides. She walks faster still, wills herself not to panic. But the SOUNDS GET LOUDER and as panic fills her eyes, she starts to RUN.

She TRIPS and FALLS but quickly scrambles to her feet. She scurries through a cluster of trees and after a few moments, she HEARS NOTHING, EXHALES with relief and GRINS. Then...

FOUR TEENAGED BOYS JUMP OUT FROM BEHIND TREES, SCREAMING.

Cassie SHRIEKS and FALLS TO THE GROUND as the boys sprint into the woods, LAUGHING and SCREAMING. An irate Cassie leaps to her feet and YELLS after them.

CASSIDY
Yeah run away you little jerkoffs!

She takes a few DEEP BREATHS and then continues on. Before long, she reaches...

EXT. STREET - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Cassie emerges from the forest and makes her way back onto the street. She only gets a few steps when Wayne's TRUCK PULLS UP beside her.

WAYNE

Hey Cassie, you need a ride?

CASSIDY

Umm, no. I'm fine.

WAYNE

Come on, it's getting dark and your house is almost two miles away--

CASSIDY

How do you know where my house is?

A tense silence as Wayne SHIFTS in his seat.

WAYNE

Your uuhhh, your mom told me where you live. Come on.

CASSIDY

No, I'm good.

Wayne picks up on her icy demeanor.

WAYNE

Forgive me for being so blunt here but...I get the impression that you don't like me very much.

Cassie SHRUGS indifferently, never takes her eyes off him.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Look, I don't know what you think about me but...I can assure you, I have nothing but your mother's best interests at heart.

CASSIDY

Uh-huh. Did you have your wife's best interests at heart too? Or should I say, 'ex-wife'?

A flood of emotions wash over him as he studies Cassie.

WAYNE

So you Googled me and you found out, what? That my wife died in a lab accident that almost killed me too and you think--?

CASSIDY

I think her 'accident' seemed just a little too similar to the 'accident' you conveniently rescued my mom from.

Wayne's face turns to stone, then fills with RAGE.

WAYNE

I loved my wife Cassie. Just as I'm sure you loved your father. And I am not trying to replace your father, if that's what you think.

Cassie LAUGHS with equal parts disgust and bemusement.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Lastly, if you are going to make any presumptions about me then you should presume that my wife's death hurt me just as much as your father's death hurt you.

He CHOKES BACK tears and DRIVES OFF. Cassie's face registers the second-guessing that brews inside her.

INT. LEANNE'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Leanne and Daniela sip glasses of wine around the kitchen table, engulfed in hysterical LAUGHTER.

DANIELA

I wish I was kidding! It's a minefield of topless gym selfies at best and--

LEANNE

And at worst?!

DANIELA

Pics that are ummm, focused on a more specific part of the male anatomy.

LEANNE

No?!

DANIELA

Yes!

LEANNE

No way?!

DANIELA

Yes way!

LEANNE

No friggin' way!

DANIELA

Yes friggin' way, girl! That's online dating in 2020. Pics, profiles and swipes. Cyber-chemistry or nothing at all.

LEANNE

I...I could never.

DANIELA

That's what I said. But it's been two years since I even touched a man and...here I am.

LEANNE

Here you are.

DANIELA

Beatin' the hell outta my vibrator and gettin' cobwebs in all the wrong places.

Leanne erupts into hysterics.

LEANNE

I'm sorry, Dannie, I am.

DANIELA

Don't be. You had one good man in your life and...I actually got you beat there, I had two.

LEANNE

Yeah, Carlito and Manny, I remember them both.

A silent moment of remembrance.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

I ummm...I actually had a first love that I never told you about.

DANIELA

You did not?!

LEANNE

I did.

DANIELA

You little slut, you been holding out on me all these years?!

CASSIDY (O.S.)

'Holding out' about what?

They TURN to see Cassie standing in the doorway with her hockey equipment.

LEANNE

Nothing. Just...talking about boys.

CASSIDY

Women talking about boys? That what happens after a box of crappy chardonnay? The bar just gets lower and lower--

DANIELA

Watch it, smart ass!

They share a CHUCKLE, Cassie sets down her hockey equipment.

LEANNE

How was practice?

CASSIDY

Good. Team's pretty decent actually.

LEANNE

That's great!

Cassie looks her mother over, riddled with guilt and conflict. She is about to say something but decides not to.

CASSIDY

Well, I don't want to interrupt 'Ladies Night' any more than I already have so--

DANIELA

Noooo, hang with us!

CASSIDY

I can't, I have ummm, homework!
Yeah, that's it, I have at least
twelve hours of homework--

DANIELA

Uh-huh.

They share a LAUGH and Cassie disappears into her room. A few moments pass and Daniela looks intensely at Leanne.

DANIELA (CONT'D)

Alright, slut, talk!

LEANNE

Talk about what?

DANIELA

This second but first secret love
of yours, spill!

LEANNE

Fine, fine, fine. It was...it was
back in high school--

DANIELA

I'm sure it was! This guy deflower
you or what?

LEANNE

That and...more.

Daniela EXPLODES with hysterical delight.

DANIELA

More?! What more?!

LEANNE

He was my 'first love' and...
probably the love.

DANIELA

Whhaaat? You mean...him...and not
Jesse?

A long silence before Leanne admits the truth.

LEANNE

I loved Jesse. I did. He was good
to me and...he gave me Cassie and I
will always cherish him for that.
But...I always had a special place
in my heart for...

Her voice trails off as she slips into remembrance.

DANIELA
For who? What was this stud's name?

A long silence and eventually Leanne SMILES.

LEANNE
Byron. Byron Burkowski.

DANIELA
Okay. And what happened to him? Why
didn't it work out between you--?

LEANNE
Because he died. He was...he was
also murdered.

Daniela's face DROPS, awestruck. A long silence.

DANIELA
Oh, baby. Why...why didn't you ever
tell me?

LEANNE
I never told anyone. Not Jesse, not
Cassie. No one.

DANIELA
Oh my god, girl. You mean to tell
me that, what happened to Jesse--

LEANNE
Also happened to Byron.

Daniela GASPS and struggles to process it all.

DANIELA
Why? I mean, who would...?

LEANNE
It was drug-related. Or so they
said. I never knew him to be
involved with anything like that
but...I was too young to question
it so...

We see that CASSIE'S BEDROOM DOOR IS OPEN A CRACK and her EYES peer out at them. The door finally CLOSES QUIETLY.

DANIELA

Baby, I'm sorry, I had no idea. And I'm even more sorry that I been ridin' you about 'The Casanova of Crap', I didn't mean to--

LEANNE

Stop, you don't have to--

DANIELA

No, I mean it. I'm sorry, I'll slam on the breaks. You ain't ready to take a crack at this guy?

Leanne contemplates and then answers honestly.

LEANNE

No.

DANIELA

Then don't. Don't rush it and don't force it, I won't let you. Yeah, my droughts have been rough but did I die in a desert wasteland of sexlessness, choking on the dry sands of chastity?! No! I survived them and so shall you!

Leanne LAUGHS and is about to respond when THEY HEAR A LOUD SOUND outside the house. Leanne rushes over, OPENS the front door and glances around but sees nothing. Leanne appears behind her.

DANIELA (CONT'D)

What was that?

LEANNE

Nothing.

DANIELA

You sure about that?

LEANNE

Yeah. I got nothing.

DANIELA

Nothing? Great. Then let's go finish that...that--

LEANNE

That 'crappy box of Chardonnay'?

DANIELA

Exactly!

They LAUGH and CLOSE THE FRONT DOOR.

EXT. DANIELA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Daniela's CAR pulls into the driveway. She gets out, walks up her front steps and UNLOCKS HER DOOR.

INT. DANIELA'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Daniela enters her small but cozy house, makes her way to the kitchen and pours herself a glass of water. She TAKES A SIP and SCREAMS when her CAT JUMPS ON THE COUNTER.

She LAUGHS, catches her breath and HUGS her cat.

DANIELA

Scully! What did I tell you about that?! I know you been bored all night but that don't mean you gotta scare Momma--

She JUMPS when she hears a DOOR SLAM. She sets Scully down and cautiously walks through the darkened house, eventually reaches the BACK DOOR.

She SLIDES THE DOOR OPEN and her face drops with fearful confusion when she sees that it is UNLOCKED. She looks into the pitch darkness of her back yard.

DANIELA (CONT'D)

Hello? Hello?

After a few tense moments, she shuts the door and LOCKS IT. She glances around, her breathing escalates. She makes her way into the hallway and walks slowly toward her bedroom. Her HEART RACES and when she gets to the door, she opens it and TURNS ON THE LIGHT.

Her JAW DROPS when she sees that every DRAWER in every dresser is OPEN and so are BOTH WINDOWS. She rushes over and shuts the first window, glances around in a panic.

She is about to shut the second window when SHE HEARS A CAR DRIVE OFF. Through the trees, she sees TAILLIGHTS driving into the darkness. She shuts the second window, turns and SHRIEKS when sees a LARGE SNAKE in her bed. It HISSES AT HER.

She SCREAMS, RUNS OUT and SLAMS THE DOOR behind her.

EXT. DANIELA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Daniela stands on her front lawn, arms folded, emotionalized and SMOKING A CIGARETTE aggressively as TWO MEN exit her house with the large snake in a TRANSPARENT PLASTIC CASE.

They load the case into the back of the **Animal Control** TRUCK and DRIVE OFF. SHERRIFF BUCK HENLEY, a gruff, suspicious man in his 50s, walks over, reviewing details on his NOTE PAD.

SHERRIFF

So you didn't actually see anyone?

She SHAKES HER HEAD 'no'.

SHERRIFF (CONT'D)

And you didn't get a license plate number on the car?

She SHAKES HER HEAD 'no'.

SHERRIFF (CONT'D)

And you don't know anyone that would have any reason to do something this crazy?

She SHAKES HER HEAD 'no'.

SHERRIFF (CONT'D)

Okay, well...we're gonna look into the snake, check with local pet shops and what not but...in the meantime, just keep your doors locked and--

DANIELA

My doors were locked.

SHERRIFF

Yeah well, like I said, there weren't any signs of 'forced entry'. But we'll look into everything and if you can think of anything else, let us know?

Daniela NODS and the Sherriff WALKS OFF.

EXT. FIELD HOCKEY PITCH - DAY

Cassie scrimmages with the rest of her team; one side in RED jerseys, the other in BLACK. During a brief break in the action, she looks over and sees Wayne speaking with the school's GROUNDSKEEPER.

She lifts her FACEMASK to get a better look. The two men share a LAUGH but Wayne STOPS LAUGHING when he spots Cassie glaring at him. He offers an uneasy WAVE but Cassie angrily LOWERS HER FACEMASK.

When she resumes, she plays like a frenzied animal. She PLOWS through various players maniacally in an aggressive display of her skills. At the culmination, she LEVELS a TEAMMATE, knocking her to the ground. Hard.

A WHISTLE BLOWS and PLAY STOPS. COACH MARISSA BOWMAN, a fiery woman in her 40s, storms over, grabs Cassie by the FACEMASK.

COACH BOWMAN

Kellerman, what the hell are you doing?! That's your teammate or did you forget that?!

CASSIDY

No, Coach. I'm sorry--

COACH BOWMAN

Eichman, you okay?

GINA

Yeah.

Coach helps a shaky GINA EICHMAN to her feet.

COACH BOWMAN

Go take a very cold shower, you're done for the day.

CASSIDY

Yes, Coach.

She sheepishly MOUTHS the word 'sorry' to Gina as she walks off the field, her head hanging low.

EXT. SCHOOL - EVENING

Leanna shuffles out the back door, cloaked in bitterness. Reagan rushes out after her, still in her practice clothes.

REAGAN

Hey, psycho, wait up.

Leanne keeps walking. Reagan JOGS to catch up.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

Slow down, Speed Racer. My God, man, what's with you?

CASSIDY

Nothing.

REAGAN

Yeah, 'nothing.' You blindsiding poor little Gina Eichman is 'nothing.' She's so mousy and gentle, I mean, if you're gonna put anyone on our team in the hospital, it should be Carla Booker. She's a friggin' beast and she smells like Brussels sprouts and swamp ass--

CASSIDY

Look, I got carried away and... yeah, I lost it a little--

REAGAN

Yeah, just a tad. So you wanna tell me what's eating you or you just wanna be the cliched 'brooding teenager who can't communicate her feelings'?

Cassie walks in silence.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

You're better than this, kiddo. I think. I mean, I don't know you that well but I think you are--

CASSIDY

I saw 'him' and I lost it, okay?

REAGAN

'Him' who? Oh, 'him' him? Where?

CASSIDY

Talking to the...janitor, grass-cutting guy.

REAGAN

That was him?! OMG, he's hot for an older guy--

CASSIDY

Seriously?

REAGAN

Sorry. Alright, you saw him, it irked you, no big deal. I'm fine, you're fine, we're all fine--

A CAR HORN BLARES, A CAR SWIRVS AND SCREECHES, barely misses the two girls who unwittingly wandered into the middle of an intersection. They JUMP BACK and catch their breath. After a tense moment, they share a cathartic LAUGH.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

'Exhibit A', we're all fine! Jesus Harold Christ Esquire! Okay, let's look both ways and then cross. There it is. Onward we go!

They LAUGH some more as they cross the street.

INT. GREENHOUSE - EVENING

Cassie ambles into the greenhouse and an overwhelmed Leanne greets her with her arms full of PLANT FOOD.

LEANNE

Thank god you're here, I'm drowning! Dannie took a...what did she call it... 'mental health day' for some reason so I got about two hundred pounds of supplements I need to spread around and we got a shipment of saplings that I need to find room for somewhere. I don't know where we're gonna put 'em, the nursery is already--

CASSIDY

Okay, okay, okay, take a breath! I'm here, we'll get it all done. But can I eat first? I'm hangry as hell and--

LEANNE

'Hangry'?

CASSIDY

'Hungry' and 'angry', 'hangry'. And I'm not gonna make it til dinner so I--

LEANNE

What are you angry about?

CASSIDY

Nothing we need to talk about while you have your arms full of whatever that stuff is--

LEANNE

Yeah, yeah, grab a bite and then
please...help walk your mother back
from the brink of insanity?

They share a CHUCKLE.

CASSIDY

I got you, momma.

LEANNE

My hero. And we'll talk about your
'hangriness' later.

She scurries off into the greenhouse. Cassie shakes her head with bemusement and walks over to the cupboard behind the register where she fishes out BREAD, PEANUT BUTTER and JELLY.

She MAKES A PB&J SANDWICH and is about to put the TWO PIECES OF BREAD TOGETHER when SHE HEARS SOMETHING OUTSIDE. She puts her UNFINISHED SANDWICH down and scurries over to the door. She OPENS IT and peers outside. She hears a RUSTLING in the forest but sees nothing. A wave of concern washes over her as she closes the door and walks over to her sandwich.

She PUTS THE TWO PIECES OF BREAD TOGETHER and as she does, we see a SMALL WHISP OF GREEN FOG seep out from the sandwich. Cassie fails to notice and TAKES A BITE.

She CHEWS and SWALLOWS her first bite and barely a second goes by before Cassie starts CHOKING and GASPING for air. She STUMBLES and FALLS TO THE GROUND.

CASSIDY

Mom?! Mom?!

She tries to yell but can barely speak or catch her breath. From her POV, we see: HER VISION BLURS AND DISTORTS. She glances around frantically, losing consciousness. She spots a STACK OF CERAMIC POTS a few feet away and CRAWLS TOWARD THEM.

She COUGHS and GASPS FOR BREATH as she CRAWLS, barely clinging to consciousness. She barely reaches the POTS and with all the strength she can muster, GRABS ONE and HURLS IT at the front door. THE DOOR SHATTERS LOUDLY.

Cassie's EYES CLOSE and moments later, LEANNE RUSHES IN. She throws herself to the ground and embraces Cassie. She CHECKS HER PULSE and panic floods her eyes. She GLANCES AROUND frantically, lays Cassie down on the ground, rushes over to the register and PICKS UP THE PHONE.

INT. AMBULANCE - EVENING

A SIREN BLARES. Leanne holds Cassie's hand as TWO EMTs work on her. The ambulance BOUNCES UP AND DOWN violently as the EMTs FEED A TUBE down Cassie's throat. Leanne SOBS.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - EVENING

A GURNEY SLAMS THROUGH A PAIR OF DOUBLE DOORS carrying Cassie. Leanne races after it and follows it past a sign that reads: **INTENSIVE CARE UNIT**.

TWO NURSES STOP LEANNE there and she watches as Cassie's gurney disappears down an adjacent hallway. She retreats and collapses against the wall, buries her head in her hands as she breaks into SOBS.

INT. HOSPITAL - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

A HEART MONITOR BEEPS with A STEADY PULSE. Cassie sleeps quietly as an exhausted Leanne watches over her with BAGS under her eyes. Daniela also SLEEPS, slumped over in a chair in the corner.

A SOFT KNOCK from the doorway snaps Leanne to attention and a SMILE spreads across her face when she sees Wayne standing in the doorway with FLOWERS. She stands and can't help but rush over and HUG HIM.

LEANNE

I don't know what you're doing here
but it's really good to see you.

They converse but NEVER BREAK THEIR EMBRACE.

WAYNE

My friend Woody is the EMT who
pumped Cassie's stomach last night.

LEANNE

Jesus, the guy who saved my
daughter's life...is a friend of
yours?

WAYNE

A good friend, yeah. He's on my
bowling team.

LEANNE

Well, I hope he's as good at
bowling as he is at saving people's
lives.

WAYNE
I wish he was but he's not.

They share a LAUGH and break apart. Daniela STIRS and WAKES.

DANIELA
Hey.

WAYNE
Hey. How are you holding up?

DANIELA
Awesome.

WAYNE
I'm sure. Gosh, you guys look
wrecked. Why don't you take
'these'...

He hands Leanne the FLOWERS.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
...and I'll go get us some coffee?

DANIELA
I would love a quadruple espresso.

WAYNE
So would I but I think we're all
gonna have to settle for whatever
swill the cafeteria has at this
hour.

DANIELA
Beggars can't be choosers.

WAYNE
How do you guys take it?

DANIELA
Black and strong. Like my men.

WAYNE
We have a lot in common, Dannie.
How about you?

LEANNE
Actually...I think I'll come with
you. I'd like to stretch my legs.
Can you...?

DANIELA
Yeah, I'll stay with her.

LEANNE

What would I do without you?

DANIELA

Work harder and live a much more
boring life.

Leanne EMBRACES HER.

LEANNE

I love you.

DANIELA

I know. (Whispers) And I know what
I said about relationships but
don't be afraid of a little
'bathroom boom boom' if the
situation presents itself. It might
cheer you up--

Leanne laughs, SLAPS HER SHOULDER and disengages.

LEANNE

You're the worst!

DANIELA

And he just might be 'the best.'

Leanna SHAKES HER HEAD bemusedly and walks out into the
hallway with Wayne.

WAYNE

Might be 'the best' at what?

LEANNE

Bowling.

WAYNE

Oh. I am pretty good, actually.

LEANNE

I'm sure you are.

EXT. HOSPITAL - COURTYARD - NIGHT

Leanne and Wayne step out into a small, gardened courtyard in
the center of the hospital, holding their cups of coffee.
They are alone in the quiet, tranquil space.

WAYNE

Aaahhhh, fresh air.

LEANNE

Yeah, this was a good idea.

WAYNE

What can I say...I'm an 'idea man'.
Most of them suck but a few are
actually pretty good. Wanna sit?

LEANNE

I would love to sit.

They cozy up on a park bench, sip their coffee.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

I don't want to sound ungrateful...
but this might be the worst coffee
I've ever had in my life.

WAYNE

Easily. That's why we're doing
Dannie a favor by not bringing her
her's.

They share a LAUGH and Cassie looks affectionately at Wayne
as he sets Daniela's CUP of coffee on the bench beside him.

LEANNE

I want to say something and I'm
fully aware of how cheesy it is
but...I'm glad you're here. In the
what...four, five months that I've
known you? You have somehow become
one of my closest friends. And one
of the few people that, regardless
of what is happening in my
life...can always make me smile.

Wayne BEAMS with gratitude and soaks it in. But after a few
moments, his face constricts with inner conflict and he looks
away for a tense moment of contemplation. He finally looks
back at Leanne, his eyes confessional and heavy with guilt.

WAYNE

You've known me a lot longer than
four or five months, Leanne. Or at
least, I've known you.

Her forehead crinkles with confusion.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Christopher Columbus High School,
Class of 1999. We were both just a
couple of 'Y2K kids'.

Leanne stares at him, flabbergasted.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
On the brink of the millennium...
our whole lives in front of us.

He hangs his head in shame.

LEANNE
What...what are you saying, Wayne?

He struggles but eventually finds the courage to be honest.

WAYNE
We had a few classes together,
Leanne. I was...well, kind of that
invisible, awkward kid that you
would never notice. But I
definitely noticed you.

Leanne's JAW DROPS in disbelief.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
I knew you, watched you, followed
you. And...although I never spoke
to you, I knew I wanted to know
you. And I knew, without a
doubt...that I wanted to be with
you.

She STANDS and takes a step back.

LEANNE
Wait, you've...you've known who I
am this whole time?

He STANDS and faces her.

WAYNE
I'm sorry. I wanted to tell you but-

LEANNE
But what? How could you just...
pretend? And lie?

WAYNE
I was afraid.

LEANNE
Afraid of what--?

WAYNE
Telling the truth about how I feel
about you.

LEANNE

About how you 'feel'? How you
'feel' about me--?

WAYNE

I love you, Leanne. I have loved
you for twenty years. I have
watched every chapter of your life
unfold, wishing I was a part of it--

LEANNE

You've watched me?!

She BACKS AWAY from him.

WAYNE

I've coveted all your
relationships. While hating them.
All the years you wasted on the
wrong men while I--

LEANNE

'All my relationships'? What are
you saying--?

WAYNE

I'm saying I have known for decades
who we are and what we should be.

LEANNE

What we 'should be'--?!

He GRABS HER BY THE ARMS.

WAYNE

We belong together Leanne. You must
see it. And you must feel it--?

LEANNE

No! I don't feel it. And I would
like you to let me go--

WAYNE

I won't let you go. I can't. I've
waited twenty years to get you in
my arms and now that I do...

He LEANS IN TO KISS HER and she TURNS HER HEAD. His eyes fill
with rage, Leanne SQUIRMS with fright.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

You won't kiss me? Okay, you'll
come around. You will.

LEANNE

I won't.

WAYNE

You will!

Leanne's breathing quickens but she eyes him with conviction.

LEANNE

No, Wayne. I don't feel that way
about you--

WAYNE

Wrong!

His face reddens with rage as he SLAMS HER AGAINST A TREE.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

You don't feel that way about me
yet! But you will.

Leanne constricts with terror, TEARS streak down her face.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

You will learn to love me. You will
love me as I have loved you for
half my life. One way or
another...you will love me back.

His eyes burn with conviction; he stares her down for what
seems like an eternity. He finally RELEASES HER and storms
off, leaving a shellshocked Leanne behind.

INT. WAYNE'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

A DOOR OPENS, illuminating an otherwise dark basement. TWO
FEET descend a staircase and traverse a dark room that is
littered with BUCKETS and BARRELS; all labeled **Toxic!**

The last TWO BUCKETS, both with OPEN LIDS, are labeled:
Dichloropropene and **Cyanide**. The feet continue walking until
they STOP in a DARK CORNER of the room.

A HAND IGNITES A MATCH that LIGHTS CANDLES. As the candles
glow, they illuminate a SHRINE. We see SCHOOL PHOTOS of a
young Leanne, her WEDDING PHOTOS, NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS about
the death of Byron Burkowski and Jesse Kellerman's OBITUARY.

One YEARBOOK PICTURE of Leanne features her laughing with a
young Wayne LEERING AT HER in the background.

We PULL OUT to see Wayne staring at the shrine, his eyes filled with a maniacal lust. He stares for a few beats, his eyes fill with fury and purpose before he BLOWS OUT THE CANDLES and we:

BLACK OUT.

EXT. FIELD HOCKEY PITCH - DAY

A GAME is in full swing. The two TEAMS swarm about the pitch in hot-blooded competition and after a few moments of play, the REFEREE BLOWS HIS WHISTLE.

REFEREE
That's halftime!

The two TEAMS retreat to their sidelines and Coach Bowman wades through the mob of players.

COACH BOWMAN
Martinez, you're getting squeezed every time. You gotta hold em at the edge of the box.

MARTINEZ NODS and Bowman continues.

COACH BOWMAN (CONT'D)
Gilmartin, you don't always have to make the extra pass. The shots are there so put 'em on net. You miss one hundred percent of the shots you don't take.

GILMARTIN NODS and Bowman reaches Reagan. Bowman GRINS at her with a subdued approval.

COACH BOWMAN (CONT'D)
You just keep keepin' those parasites outta your creese. Think you can do that?

REAGAN
That's my home, Coach. No trespassing, no squatting and no loitering.

She SMIRKS, NODS and then glances around.

COACH BOWMAN
Any idea where Kellerman is?

REAGAN
No. She wasn't in school today and--

COACH BOWMAN

No?

REAGAN

Nope.

A brief SILENCE. Coach Bowman NODS, a brief wave of concern washes over her as she WALKS OFF.

INT. HOSPITAL - PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Cassie sleeps in her bed with TUBES running from her mouth and arms. Leanne sleeps slumped over in a chair beside her as the HEART MONITOR BEEPS STEADILY. We PUSH IN on the monitor and the HEARTBEAT QUICKENS. And QUICKENS SOME MORE.

It BEATS RAPIDLY, faster and faster and then suddenly CASSIE LUNGES FORWARD IN HER BEAD, EYES OPEN, GASPING FOR BREATH. Leanne AWAKENS abruptly, leaps onto the bed, embraces Cassie and attempts to CALM HER.

LEANNE

Baby! Baby, I'm here! I'm here,
Cassie, just breathe! Mommy's here!
Mommy's here, just breathe!

Cassie BREATHES deeply, EMBRACES Leanne emphatically.

INT. HOSPITAL - PRIVATE ROOM - DAY - LATER

Cassie SHOVELS PUDDING into her mouth and chases it with JELLO. Leanne watches with bemused relief.

LEANNE

Nice to see you have your appetite back.

Cassie says nothing, just continues GORGING. Finally, after she has inhaled every morsel of food, she looks at Leanne.

CASSIDY

So what did the doctors say?

LEANNE

About what? What happened to you--?

CASSIDY

Yeah, obviously. They have no idea why I--?

LEANNE

Not yet. They're running a full toxicology work-up on you though so maybe they'll find out--

CASSIDY

--why that peanut butter and jelly sandwich almost killed me?

Leanne eyes her curiously.

LEANNE

What sandwich?

CASSIDY

I made a sandwich, I took a bite and...that's pretty much the last thing I remember.

A tense silence as Leanne tries to recollect.

LEANNE

I remember you saying you were hungry but...

She SHAKES HER HEAD and can't remember any more. A tense silence before Cassie SWALLOWS HARD and looks up at her mother earnestly.

CASSIDY

Mom, I want to tell you something. But...I don't know if it's something you want to hear.

Leanne eyes her daughter for a tense moment.

LEANNE

Try me.

Cassie eyes her for a long moment.

CASSIDY

I think it was Wayne.

LEANNE

You think 'what' was Wayne?

CASSIDY

I think Wayne poisoned me.

Leanne studies her daughter long and hard.

LEANNE

And why exactly would you think
that?

CASSIDY

Because I think he's done it
before.

LEANNE

What?

CASSIDY

My friend Reagan dug up all this
dirt about his past and...it's not
good.

Leanne LAUGHS, tries to dismiss it but after reading the
sincerity in Cassie's eyes, submits.

LEANNE

Go on.

CASSIDY

Over the years, his best friend,
his wife...they both were killed
and...the way his wife died
kinda...kinda...

Cassie hangs her head, unable to continue.

LEANNE

Kinda what, baby?

CASSIDY

Kinda reminds me of how you almost
died the night he saved you.

Leanne's face turns to stone. A long silence passes.

LEANNE

Who is this friend of yours?

CASSIDY

She's a fascinating specimen. Want
to meet her?

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. REAGAN'S HOUSE - DAY

An irate Reagan OPENS HER DOOR.

REAGAN

You! We got our asses kicked yesterday, partially, if not predominantly because you decided to be a no-call, no-show negligent, deadbeat midfielder! I should drop-kick you right in your lady parts but I won't because...who's that?

Leanne SMILES awkwardly.

CASSIDY

That's my mom, she wanted to meet you--

REAGAN

Mom!!!

She EMBRACES Leanne emphatically.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

You wanted to meet me?! I'm flattered but the pleasure is all mine and maybe you can tell me why your daughter disappeared and left her teammates for dead and--!!!

Cassie SHOVES HER HOSPITAL BRACELET IN REAGAN'S FACE and that silences her.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

Whoa. You eat some bad shellfish or--?

CASSIDY

Think you could 'hack some more shit' and show my mom what you showed me?

Reagan SMIRKS incredulously.

INT. REAGAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Reagan TAPS AWAY at her laptop. Leanne and Cassie bookend her, all their eyes on her SCREEN.

REAGAN

Okay, Mom. We found out that your hunky new boyfriend--

Cassie SLAPS Reagan in the back of the head.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

Sorry, your 'man friend' has a tendency to befriend people that die...ummm...mysteriously and horribly under ungodly circumstances--

Cassie SLAPS her again.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

What?

CASSIDY

Just give her the facts.

REAGAN

These are the facts--!

CASSIDY

Well, give her the facts without the...what's the word, the word that overdramatizes--?

LEANNE

Hyperbole.

CASSIDY

Yes! Skip the 'hyperbole' and just give my mom--

REAGAN

Give Mom the information? Fine. You listening, Mom? 'Exhibit A', Byron Burkowski, shot dead, your boyfriend was the--

Leanne SLAPS Reagan in the back of the head.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

Your 'man friend' was the only other person at the scene but authorities blamed it on a rival drug gang.

They eye the WEBLINK on the computer. Leanne SHAKES HER HEAD.

LEANNE

I never trusted that.

CASSIDY

Trusted what?

LEANNE

The cops, everyone. They said it was 'drug-related' but...that just wasn't Byron. He was never into any of that.

REAGAN

And he probably wasn't. Which takes us to 'Exhibit B'. His wife and colleague, Mary Blevins-Rooney, died by inhaling a deadly mixture of cyanide and di...di--

LEANNE

Dichloropropene.

Reagan's eyes light up with impressed shock.

REAGAN

Yeah. How do you know what that is?

Leanne is too awestruck to respond.

CASSIDY

Mom, is that...is that the same...?

LEANNE

It is the same.

REAGAN

Same what?

LEANNE

Same pesticide that almost killed me.

A tense silence.

REAGAN

Whoa. This guys sounds bonkers. I wonder if he ever...

Reagan HAMMERS AWAY on the keyboard.

LEANNE

Ever what?

REAGAN

People this bonkers usually wind up on 'the grid'.

CASSIDY

What 'grid'?

REAGAN

Institutionalized. Jail or the
loony bin.

CASSIDY

Yeah but...there isn't gonna be a
record of that. Is there?

REAGAN

'Red Flag' laws dude. They exist to
protect us from psychos. Sometimes
they work...and sometimes they
don't.

Reagan STARES AT LEANNE, her face cloaked in fear. A TENSE
SILENCE when suddenly, the DOOR SWINGS OPEN LOUDLY.

COLLEEN

Hey y'all!

The three of them SHRIEK and nearly fall out of their chairs
as Colleen ENTERS with a TRAY of SNACKS.

REAGAN

Goddamnit, mother!

Reagan STANDS angrily and fends off Colleen.

COLLEEN

Relax, I just brought you some of
these 'Bambi in a Blankets' I've
been experimenting with--

CASSIDY

'Bambi in a Blanket'?

COLLEEN

Uh-huh! Made with the venison from
your father's last hunting haul.

Reagan's hostility subsists as she POPS ONE IN HER MOUTH and
LIGHTS UP with ecstasy.

REAGAN

These are phenomenal.

COLLEEN

Aren't they?! I mixed some turkey
bacon into the croissant batter to--

REAGAN

And it worked like a champ, thanks
mom, love ya, bye!

Reagan GRABS THE TRAY, SHOVES Colleen out and SLAMS the door. She inhales another and SAVORS IT.

REAGAN (CONT'D)
These really are orgasmic.

CASSIDY
I'm sure they are. Can we...?

Reagan NODS, hands the tray to Leanne and gets back to her LAPTOP.

REAGAN
We were...where?

LEANNE
'Red Flag' laws.

Regan NODS and TYPES AWAY vigorously as Leanne and Cassie SNACK AWAY.

REAGAN
Right. So...New York is one of six states with 'Red Flag' laws, meaning anyone who is convicted of a violent crime or spends time in a psychiatric hospital is entered into a public database that's supposed to prevent them from buying a machine gun or joining the 'Big Brothers of America'--

LEANNE
Does it work?

REAGAN
No. Good in 'theory' but the 'reality' is a shitshow of politics, bureaucracy and red tape.

Leanne and Cassie eye each other, impressed but befuddled as Reagan TYPES AWAY.

LEANNE
How do you know all this?

REAGAN
I'm informed and 'woke'. And...

CASSIDY
And?

REAGAN

And I have some first-hand
knowledge because I may have spent
a little time in...

CASSIDY

In...?

REAGAN

That's a really fun story for
another time but...BOOM!

LEANNE

Boom?

REAGAN

Your 'platonic man friend' has a
history of domestic violence and he
spent six months in Rockland
Psychiatric Center. Recently.

LEANNE

How recently?

REAGAN

He was discharged in...June of last
year.

LEANNE

June?

Leanne slips sadly into remembrance.

CASSIDY

What is it, Mom?

LEANNE

That's when your father died.

A long and painful silence.

REAGAN

Mom, I know it's not my place to
speak but--

LEANNE

That hasn't stopped you yet--

REAGAN

This guy ain't boyfriend material.

Leanne GRINS but realizes how right Reagan is.

REAGAN (CONT'D)
And you should get as far away from
him as possible.

EXT. POLICE STATION - EVENING

Leanne's CAR pulls into the police station. Her and Cassie get out and RUSH into the building.

INT. POLICE STATION - OFFICE - EVENING

Cassie and Leanne sit on the other side of Sherriff Buck Henley's desk. He wears an expression of incredulity.

LEANNE
...and there are just too many coincidences for this to be a random...coincidence. I know it's him.

SHERIFF
The same guy did both of--?

LEANNE
Yes. The incident with me in my greenhouse, my daughter's poisoning, both of these--

SHERIFF
And the hospital confirmed that it was poison?

LEANNE
Well, not...not yet. We're waiting for the toxicology report but if you check the sandwich, you will find all the evidence you need.

Sherriff Henley eyes her curiously.

SHERIFF
What sandwich?

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

Leanne and Cassie SCUTTLE AROUND ON THE FLOOR around the cash register. Sherriff Henley watches them with bemusement, his arms folded. An apron-clad Daniela tends to some PLANTERS on the far side of the greenhouse but watches them curiously.

Leanne CRAWLS AROUND, searching vigilantly as Cassie, also on her knees, RUMMAGES THROUGH THE CUPBOARD.

CASSIDY

I'm not crazy, I made a sandwich with ingredients that...that were right here!

LEANNE

And if she dropped it here, stands to reason that it would still be here! Or somewhere near here. Baby, are you sure it was here--?

CASSIDY

It was right here! Then I felt sick and I fell down and...I got the brick and I threw it. There.

She POINTS at the BRICK lying in a pile of BROKEN GLASS where the front door used to be.

SHERIFF

Yes, I see the brick and the broken glass but...that's all I have to go on.

LEANNE

Well, can I get a restraining order against him?

SHERIFF

'Him' who? You don't have any evidence so can I assume that you don't have a name either--?

LEANNE

I do! His name is Wayne Rooney!

Henley's eyes fill with contempt and he eventually takes a slow step toward her.

SHERIFF

Let me get this straight. You're accusing the shortstop of my softball team for the last eight years...and the godfather of my daughter...of trying to kill both you and your daughter...and you want me to issue you a restraining order against him with no evidence what so ever?

A long silence. Cassie and Leanne both shy from the Sheriff's glare and HANG THEIR HEADS.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

Leanne and Cassie watch the Sheriff DRIVES OFF and stand for a moment, defeated.

CASSIDY

He didn't even remotely believe us.
Not for a second.

LEANNE

No.

CASSIDY

I don't understand. Where is the sandwich, where is the jelly, where is...everything--!?

LEANNE

He cleaned it all up.

CASSIDY

How? When?!

LEANNE

As soon as the ambulance took us away. Probably.

Daniela walks out and joins them.

DANIELA

What are you gonna do?

LEANNE

I don't know.

DANIELA

Are you okay?

LEANNE

Not really. But...you should go.

DANIELA

No way. The saplings need to be rooted and they haven't had a proper drink in two days so they are dry and thirsty as hell. And nothing on the lot has gotten nutrients since Tuesday.

LEANNE

You don't have to stay--

DANIELA

But I'm still gonna, ain't I?

Daniela eyes her; playful but stern.

DANIELA (CONT'D)

There's a little catchin' up to do
after the last few days but I got
it. Go.

Leanne eyes her with love and gratitude.

LEANNE

How can I thank you?

DANIELA

Full medical, dental and a two
hundred percent raise?

Leanne LAUGHS.

LEANNE

Done, done and done.

DANIELA

Go home, botha y'all.

She CARESSES Leanne's face, heads back into the greenhouse
and disappears into the far end of it. A silence as Cassie
tries to process it all.

CASSIDY

She's a 'keeper', that one.

LEANNE

Sure is.

Another silence. Cassie takes a deep breath and SHAKES HER
HEAD before looking up at her mother desperately.

CASSIDY

Mom, this is--!

WAYNE LEAPS OUT OF THE SHADOWS.

WAYNE

Crazy?!

Leanne and Cassie FALL TO THE GROUND, terrified.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Yes, the world is a crazy place!
Filled with toxic 'PB & Js',
unrequited love and...a very biased
system of justice.

He SMIRKS knowingly; Cassie and Leanne are frozen.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Don't waste your time with the
police. Me and Buck have 'roots' in
this town, unlike yourself. You
like that? A little horticultural
pun for you--

CASSIDY

You really are crazy, aren't you?

Wayne stares at Cassie with spite and then aims his gaze back to Leanne.

WAYNE

And don't think about running
either. I will find my girl. As I
have always found my girl.

Leanne's forehead crinkles with intrigue.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

I will get what I deserve. And the
more you resist? The more I will
have no choice but to continue to
eradicate all 'the weeds in my
garden'. Whether it's your
daughter, your husband...or even my
own wife.

He GRINS SADISTICALLY. A tense SILENCE before he SLIPS INTO THE SHADOWS and disappears. A few moments pass before Leanne exhales and embraces her daughter fearfully.

INT. LEANNE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

CLOSE ON WINE pouring into a wine glass, filling it to the brim. Cassie watches enviously as her mom GULPS from the glass.

CASSIDY

Mom, I know I'm under-aged but--?

LEANNE

Oh, hell yeah.

She gives Cassie her glass and as she takes a hearty GULP, Leanne FILLS ANOTHER for herself. After taking a SWIG, Leanne TEXTS A MESSAGE on her phone and SENDS IT. She breathes deeply and looks over at her daughter.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

CASSIDY
No.

LEANNE
Me neither.

She they both GULP from their glasses. A tense silence follows.

CASSIDY
What are we gonna do?

LEANNE
We're gonna stick together, that's what. Because we are all we've got.

Cassie comes to terms with this realization and NODS. Leanne's CELL PHONE RINGS and she ANSWERS IT.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
Hello? Yes, this is her mother. Oh, hello, Doctor. You do? And?

Leanne's face floods with horror.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
How could that be? No, there is no way she could have 'accidentally' ingested that. No. Okay, let's ummm...can I call you tomorrow? Thank you, Doctor.

She HANGS UP and stares into space, shellshocked.

CASSIDY
What is it, Mom?

LEANNE
That was the hospital. They found traces of cyanide in your blood.

CASSIDY
'Cyanide', that's...that's--

LEANNE
Poison.

A long SILENCE as they both try to process this.

CASSIDY

Okay, now I'm really, seriously,
very, very scared.

LEANNE

Me too. But we're gonna be okay.
We'll get by and we'll figure it
out. We have so far, haven't we?

Cassie reflects and finally answers.

CASSIDY

Yeah. But...barely.

Leanne looks over her daughter, a million thoughts race
through her head.

LEANNE

Cassie, I'm not going to pretend to
know how hard this has been for
you. Losing your father, moving to
a new town. But I do know that it
has taken every ounce of strength
and heart and guts to make it
through every day as I try to...to
rebuild my life. And I know that
it's taken the same for you.

Cassie's eyes FILL WITH TEARS and she NODS.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

So when you're on that pitch...

Leanne SMIRKS knowingly, Cassie chuckles between tears.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

...and you're scared that you might
not be good enough...or strong
enough...or tough enough. Do you
back down? Do you quit?

CASSIDY

No.

LEANNE

No. What do you do?

CASSIDY

I get angry and I kick some ass.

Leanne GRINS with approval.

LEANNE

Well, this is our 'pitch'. And we're the only two players on this team so we had both better kick some ass. Because your father, as much as he would love to be here to help us, he's not. It's just you and me, kid. I got your back. You got mine?

CASSIDY

Always.

LEANNE

Alright. Then we gonna 'rally'?

Leanne GRINS and GESTICULATES with her hand in a CIRCULAR MOTION. Cassie NODS and GESTICULATES in kind.

CASSIDY

Yeah, we gonna 'rally'.

Leanne SMILES and after a few moments, Cassie SIGHS and SHAKES HER HEAD with trepidation.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

But still...how do we just...go back to our lives when we know he's out there? I'm just gonna go to school and you're gonna sell flowers like nothing is wrong...?

She clams up when Leanne's face goes white with fear.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

What is it?

LEANNE

Dannie's still at the greenhouse.

CASSIDY

How do you know that--?

LEANNE

Because I just texted her.

CASSIDY

About--?

LEANNE

How to hydrate the saplings.

Cassie's face also fills with fear.

CASSIDY
What if...what if he's still
hanging around their?

Without another word, Leanne RUSHES OUT and Cassie follows. We see both of their CELL PHONES sitting on the counter as we hear the FRONT DOOR SLAM SHUT.

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

Daniela READS A MANUAL and punches a few buttons on the KEYPAD that controls the irrigation system. Nothing happens. She takes a few steps forward into the DARK SILENCE, looks up at the NOZZLES on the ceiling. Still nothing.

She hears a LOUD NOISE and looks at the greenhouse ceiling where a BRANCH rakes against the glass. The WIND HOWLS LOUDLY. She takes a few more steps forward toward the SAPLINGS in front of her and waits. Still nothing. Then...

WATER SPRAYS DOWN LOUDLY and Daniela JUMPS BACK with alarm.

She LAUGHS at herself as she walks toward the front of the greenhouse, listening as the WIND HOWLS angrily outside. RAIN starts to POUR DOWN, pelting the glass of the greenhouse.

She continues on, stops at a small CONTROL PANEL and TYPES a command into it. The LIGHTS IN THE GREENHOUSE CHANGE FROM REGULAR TO INFRARED LIGHT. With the greenhouse blanketed in RED LIGHT, Daniela continues out. She is at the front door when A LOUD SHATTER startles her. She looks UP to see:

A LARGE BRANCH BREAKS THROUGH THE CEILING OF THE GREENHOUSE.

Daniela nearly FALLS OVER. RAIN POURS into the greenhouse, THUNDER cracks, LIGHTNING flashes. Daniela takes a few steps toward the broken ceiling but overwhelmed by the maelstrom, she retreats and scurries toward the register.

She PICKS UP HER CELL PHONE, UNLOCKS IT and CALLS LEANNE. The PHONE RINGS at the other end but no one picks up. Eventually we hear LEANNE'S VOICE on her outgoing voicemail MESSAGE.

DANIELA
Hey, girl, it's me! Your greenhouse
just got a new ventilation system
so call me back ASAP!

She HANGS UP and looks up at the gaping HOLE in the ceiling and SHAKES HER HEAD. Her HANDS SHAKING, she retrieves a CIGARETTE from her purse and LIGHTS IT with a ZIPPO LIGHTER.

The moment she EXHALES, she hears the subtle HISSING SOUND of the irrigation system STOP. She looks up, notices that the sprinklers have SHUT OFF and NO MIST is being emitted.

DANIELA (CONT'D)
What's that about--?

TWO HANDS GRAB HER THROAT and LIFT HER OFF THE GROUND. They HURL HER ACROSS THE ROOM and she HITS THE GROUND with a thud. Her Zippo SOARS across the room and lands in the branches of a SMALL TREE. A SIGN beside it reads: SAPLING NURSERY.

TWO HANDS GRAB Daniela, LIFT HER UP and SLAM HER AGAINST THE GLASS WALL, CRACKING IT. Wayne gets right in Daniela's face and GLARES AT HER furiously.

WAYNE
You won't let her "force" herself into a relationship with me? Well, I'm sorry we don't have your blessing. And by 'I'm sorry', I mean that...I'm sorry for you.

HIS HANDS TIGHTEN AROUND HER NECK. Her EYES WIDEN and we:

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON a sapling ENGULFED IN FLAMES. The FIRE SPREADS to the adjacent tree as HEADLIGHTS pull into the parking lot.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Leanne's car SLAMS ON THE BREAKS, SKIDS through the MUD and STOPS. Leanne and Cassie RUSH OUT and PAUSE briefly when they see the FIRE inside the greenhouse.

LEANNE
Oh my god.

They RUN up to the front door, OPEN IT and...

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Leanne bursts in, trailed by Cassie. Her eyes WIDEN when she sees the FIRE SPREADING. She then spots the HOLE in the ceiling and the RAIN pouring in. We see A FLASH OF LIGHTNING as we hear A CRACK OF THUNDER and the WIND HOWL.

LEANNE

Dannie?! Dannie, where are you?!

CASSIDY

Dannie?! Dannie?!

Leanne takes a few steps toward the fire and STOPS, yells back at Cassie.

LEANNE

Call 9-1-1!

CASSIDY

I don't...I don't have my phone!

Leanne CHECKS HER POCKETS and panic washes over her.

LEANNE

Me neither. Use the landline.

Cassie rushes over to the register and PICKS UP THE PHONE beside it. She SHAKES HER HEAD in disbelief and PRESSES BUTTONS frantically.

CASSIDY

It's dead!

LEANNE

What?!

CASSIDY

It's dead, there's no dial tone!

Leanne hangs her head, thinks for a moment and then scurries over to her daughter.

LEANNE

Okay, take the car, go down the road to the gas station and--

CASSIDY

No!

LEANNE

Go call 9-1-1, please--

CASSIDY

No way! I'm not leaving you hear alone!

The FIRE SPREADS TO the adjacent display of TREES.

LEANNE

I need you to go, baby!

CASSIDY

No! He's here! I know he's here!

LEANNE

Then that's more of a reason for
you to go--!

CASSIDY

I'm not leaving you! You're all I
have! You are all I have--!

LEANNE

Which is exactly why I will never
leave you! That is a promise,
Cassidy, I will never leave you!

The conviction in Leanne's eyes persuades Cassie who NODS
reluctantly. Leanne SMILE reassuringly.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Now go to the gas station and call--

CASSIDY

Call who?!

LEANNE

Everyone. The fire department, the
police, everyone. And baby? You
don't come back here until you see
sirens, do you understand me?

CASSIDY

No way! I'm--

LEANNE

You do not come back here until you
see sirens parked out front! Full
stop, end of discussion!

Cassie stares her mother down for a long beat before she
NODS, turns and RUNS OUT. Leanne turns just in time to see a
LARGE TREE BURST INTO FLAMES.

She rushes to the corner of the greenhouse, grabs a FIRE
EXTINGUISHER off the wall and runs over to the fire. She
empties the fire extinguisher, dousing the fire, putting out
a majority of it.

The LAST FEW WHISPS of CO2 seep out of the now-empty fire
extinguisher and Leanne throws it down in defeat. With a few
saplings still engulfed in FLAMES, she ponders her next move
and then hears a WOMAN'S SCREAM come from outside.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
Dannie.

Without hesitation, she RUNS out of the greenhouse.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Leanne bursts through the door and sprints through the parking lot to the much smaller, SECONDARY GREENHOUSE. She SLIPS and SLIDES through the mud but finally reaches the door.

INT. SECONDARY GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Leanne cautiously enters the small greenhouse and pauses as a FLASH OF LIGHTNING illuminates the otherwise pitch black space. A wave of terror washes over her.

LEANNE
Dannie? Dannie?

She hears nothing but the THUNDER CLAP that echoes through the greenhouse. She inches forward, ARMS OUTSTRETCHED, feeling her way through the darkness.

Her BREATHING QUICKENS as she fumbles around, BUMPS INTO something, adjusts course, continues. She reaches the far end of the greenhouse and fumbles around until she finds a DOORKNOB. She turns it, INHALES deeply and enters...

INT. TOOLSHED - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Leanne shuffles into the small toolshed attached to the rear end of the small greenhouse. A trickle of LIGHT streams in through the lone window and all we hear is LEANNE'S RAPID BREATHING as she fumbles around in the dark.

LEANNE
Dannie? Dannie are you in here?

She KNOCKS SOMETHING OVER as she stumbles forward.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
Dannie? Answer me, girl, please--

A MOTORIZED HEDGE-CLIPPER ROARS TO LIFE. Leanne SHRIEKS and stumbles backwards against the wall, breathing heavier still. She hyperventilates as the hedge-clipper slowly WINDS DOWN and eventually STOPS.

Silence. All we hear is Leanne's BREATHING. Though horrified, she presses on, looking for her friend, a way out, anything. She walks a few more steps before SHE BUMPS INTO SOMETHING.

She REACHES OUT with her hands to see what she walked into and A FLASH OF LIGHTNING ILLUMINATES DANIELA'S LIFELESS FACE.

Leanne SCREAMS and falls to the ground. She SHRIEKS as another FLASH OF LIGHTNING reveals that Daniela HANGS from the ceiling by a rope and as she SWAYS BACK AND FORTH, SAND POURS OUT OF HER MOUTH. Sand.

Leanne STIFLES SOBS, glances around frantically, struggles to compose herself. She finally STANDS and slowly walks up to Daniela. She CLOSES HER EYELIDS and softly STROKES HER FACE.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, Dannie. I never wanted this. You shouldn't have been here...but you were here...you insisted on being here...because you're my friend...and you were the best friend I ever had...

She BREAKS DOWN, SOBS, FALLS TO HER KNEES. As the RAIN PELTS THE ROOF and the WIND HOWLS, Leanne WEEPS. She purges all the hurt she can and then eventually catches her breath.

As soon as she does, Wayne's VOICE penetrates the dark silences. He SINGS slowly, maniacally.

WAYNE (O.S.)

(singing) You know I wish that I had Jesse's girl. I wish that I had Jesse's girl. I want Jesse's girl. Where can I find a woman like that? Like Jesse's girl. I wish that I had Jesse's girl.

Silence. Leanne BREATHES HEAVILY, her HEART POUNDS.

WAYNE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I still do.

Leanne JUMPS TO HER FEET and scurries across the room. We hear Wayne's FEET SHUFFLE in the darkness.

WAYNE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I used to love that song when we were in high school. So catchy, so intoxicating. It was wholesome and naughty, all at the same time.

Their FEET scurry around as Leanne evades him in the darkness, BREATHING HEAVILY.

WAYNE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 I guess the fact that your boyfriend's name was 'Byron' made it easier for me to love that song. But I didn't love Byron. No, I was not a fan of Byron.

Leanne CRASHES into a RACK OF TOOLS, FALLS and quickly STANDS, SCURRIES away from the ruckus.

WAYNE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Why, you ask? Why did I not adore him like everyone else did? Why would I not yearn for the opportunity to sniff the jockstrap of a triple-lettered varsity stud like Byron Burkowski? Well, I think you already know the answer. Because he had you...and I didn't. Because you loved him and not me.

Leanne STUMBLES FORWARD and eventually finds the BACK DOOR. She OPENS IT. THUNDER CRACKS and a FLASH OF LIGHTNING illuminates WAYNE'S FACE as he GRABS HER and SLAMS HER UP AGAINST THE DOOR. His eyes are filled with psychotic fury.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
 But I have you now. And you will learn to love me back.

He LEANS FORWARD TO KISS HER but Leanne KNEES HIM IN THE CROTCH and RUSHES OUT THE DOOR.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Leanne runs through the POURING RAIN. THUNDER CRACKS, LIGHTNING FLASHES and then...A GUN SHOT. A WINDOW of the primary greenhouse SHATTERS and Leanne HITS THE DECK.

She glances behind her frantically, then STANDS and RUNS. Another GUN SHOT rings out as Leanne, now dripping with MUD, sprints towards the front door of the main greenhouse.

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Leanne BURSTS THROUGH THE DOOR, collapses to the ground, stands and rushes to the back of the greenhouse that is still lit by the INFRARED LIGHTS and the few SAPLINGS that are still ON FIRE.

Leanne disappears into the shadows and a moment later, Wayne explodes through the front door, dripping wet, the GUN in his hand. He glances around and then strides purposefully into the depths of the greenhouse.

WAYNE

Still playing 'hard to get',
Leanne? That is not going to stop
me. I thought you would have
realized that by now.

Leanne TIPTOES between rows of planters, tries to get some distance between the two of them. Wayne shuffles forward, deeper and deeper into the greenhouse.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

It didn't stop me from getting rid
of Byron, which was disturbingly
easy. I was a high school misfit...
hardly a 'criminal mastermind'. But
all it took was the will to put a
bullet in his head...

Leanne's JAW DROPS.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

...and the foresight to plant a few
bags of cocaine and the phone
numbers of a few drug dealers in
his pocket...after the bullet.

Wayne SCREAMS and UPENDS a PLANTER full of FLOWERS that CRASH TO THE GROUND.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

But even with Byron out of the way,
I just couldn't bring myself to
speak to you...to claim you as my
own. I was...I was afraid. I was a
coward.

THUNDER CRACKS and LIGHTNING FLASHES as an emotionalized Leanne struggles to keep moving, slaloming through the rows of planters. Wayne criss-crosses them in search of her.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

And I hated myself for it. For
years, I hated myself. You moved
away after high school and I lost
site of you for long enough to
marry a woman that at least
reminded me of you.

Leanne stumbles into a small TABLE with an ORCHID DISPLAY that FALLS TO THE GROUND WITH A SHATTER. Wayne hears it and rushes over to find...NOTHING. He HEARS SCUFFLING a few rows over and heads toward it.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

So I married Mary. Isn't that funny? I married Mary. But she wasn't you. As much as I tried to convince myself that she was, she wasn't. And I tried, Leanne. Every time I kissed her, every time I was inside her, my eyes were closed... and I saw your face. It was you I kissed every night. It was you I made love to. For years.

Leanne huddles in a corner, BREATHES HEAVILY, tries to formulate a plan. Wayne stalks down an aisle with purpose.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

But Mary didn't appreciate that. And after a while, she said I had to either look her in the eye or leave her. But I don't leave, Leanne. And I don't get left.

Wayne STOPS, GLANCES AROUND frantically, his eyes filled with a psychotic glee.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

So Mary had herself a little accident. And afterwards, I decided that her death would not be in vain. That her death would bring about life.

CLOSE ON Wayne with a demented smile on his face.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

And it has. What is left of her lives on...breathing life into my garden. And now...she is also breathing life into yours.

A horrified Leanne eyes the front door.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Nothing fertilizes like decomposing organic matter. It's a scientific fact. Sure, synthetics like Ammonium Nitrate or Potassium Sulfate get the job done.

(MORE)

WAYNE (CONT'D)
But nothing works better than the
real thing.

She takes a few steps toward the door but STOPS, retreats and COWERS in the corner.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
But I digress. My first few years
with Mary were manageable but when
you married Jesse, that is when
things took a turn for the
worse...and when the song 'Jesse's
Girl' became poison to my ears.

She RUSHES FORWARD, a few rows of planters closer to the front door. Wayne SCURRIES down his row, follows the sound.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
After I put Mary out of her misery,
I spent some time in the hospital.
It was nice vacation, actually.
Plenty of time for soul-searching
introspection...during which I saw,
quite clearly, what it was I had to
do.

Wayne STOPS and an evil GRIN spreads across his face.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
I just love the Bronx Botanical
Gardens, don't you?

SHOCK envelops Leanne's face.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
Every first Sunday of the
month...for years...and years...
like clockwork. I could always rely
on you being there. With him.

Leanne's eyes fill with a cocktail of grief and rage.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
And I could only take so much.
Lately something changed...

He starts to SING.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
(Singing)...and it ain't hard to
define. Jesse got himself a girl
and I want to make her mine.

He RUSHES to the end of a row, expects to find Leanne but finds NOTHING. Leanne SCURRIES forward a bit, gets CLOSER to the front door. Wayne TURNS and stomps forward.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

It must have taken a lot of strength to plant orchids in the center of your greenhouse...just one year after I painted those Bronx orchids red with Jesse's blood.

TEARS stream down Leanne's face. Her face swells with rage as she summons the courage to make a run for the door.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

That's just another example of why we belong together. Because you are as unstoppable as I am.

LEANNE STANDS AND RUNS toward the door. She is two steps away when Wayne GRABS HER FROM BEHIND and PLACES HIS GUN AGAINST HER TEMPLE. Neither of them speak.

The WIND HOWLS and the RAIN pelts the roof. Wayne has Leanne in a headlock, they both BREATHE HEAVILY as Wayne caresses her face with his GUN.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

You have two choices, Leanne. You will either love me...or join them. Byron, Mary, Jesse, all of them.

LEANNE

You kill every man I ever loved and you expect me to love you-?!

WAYNE

I demand that you love me! I have earned your love. And you will give it to me. Your life depends on it. Your daughter's life depends on it. Because...and I know it's a cliche but...if I can't have you, no one will.

Leanne's eyes FLICKER WITH HOPE as she sees a FIGURE MOVING IN THE SHADOWS. Wayne COCKS THE GUN'S HAMMER.

LEANNE

No, no, no, no, wait! Please! Okay, okay, okay! Just...just give me a chance!

WAYNE
A chance to what--?

LEANNE
A chance to learn!

WAYNE
To 'learn'?

LEANNE
Yes! Yes! To learn! To learn...how
to love you.

A LONG SILENCE. Wayne contemplates.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
Look at me. Please? Please let me
look at you, Wayne?

Wayne contemplates for a beat and then SPINS HER AROUND
angrily.

WAYNE
What? What?!

LEANNE
I...I just...I just need time.

WAYNE
Time?

LEANNE
Yes, time. Give me...give me some
time and...I know...I know that I
can learn to love you. Please?

WAYNE
You want time?

LEANNE
Yes. You're right. We are
unstoppable. Both us. And I just
need to... 'germinate' a little
longer. But I know I can 'grow.'
That we can 'grow'.

Leanne's eyes soften and a SMILE spreads across her face. His
glare melts away, replaced with love and hope. They share a
moment, a glimpse of the bliss they might share together and
then finally...Wayne UNCOCKS THE HAMMER ON HIS GUN.

WAYNE

You need time to 'grow'? Baby, I will give you all the time in the world.

They share a SMILE. Wayne LOWERS THE GUN from her head and LEANS IN TO KISS HER. Their lips are about to touch when:

THWACK! A STICK PUMMELS HIS HAND, KNOCKS THE GUN OUT OF IT and sends it flying into an IRRIGATION DITCH below a planter where it DISAPPEARS DOWN A DRAIN.

Wayne turns to see an angry Cassie holding her FIELD HOCKEY STICK.

CASSIDY

You could never replace my father
you big, stinky pile of...

SHE SWINGS AND CLOCKS HIM IN THE FACE. He FALLS DOWN, lands directly in front of the door, blocking their exit. Leanne and Cassie RUN, slaloming through the rows of planters, eventually reach the BACK DOOR and...

EXT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Leanne and Cassie explode through the back door into the POURING RAIN as a FLASH OF LIGHTNING lights up the darkness. They stand for a moment and catch their breath.

CASSIDY

Why are we stopping? Let's go!
Let's go and--

LEANNE

Go where, you called the police?

CASSIDY

Yeah, I called them before I came--

LEANNE

Before you came back here, you
extremely bad girl--!

CASSIDY

Yeah, I'm horrible. But I will
always come back for you

A wave of gratitude washes over Leanne.

LEANNE

I'll punish you for disobeying me
later but the point is--

CASSIDY

What point? What are we gonna do?!
I called the cops and--

LEANNE

And they're not coming. They're
not.

Silence. They come to terms with this reality as the RAIN FALLS and the WIND HOWLS. Another FLASH OF LIGHTNING illuminates the GAS TANKS on the exterior of the greenhouse. Even in the darkness, Leanne LIGHTS UP with revelation.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

I have an idea.

CASSIDY

Okay. And...?

Leanne looks around, sees the SMALL FIRE still burning inside the greenhouse and then fixes her gaze on Cassie.

LEANNE

...and I'm gonna need your help.

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

Wayne STRUGGLES TO HIS FEET, holds his head and WINCES in pain as he WIPES BLOOD from his forehead. His eyes fill with fury and he staggers into the greenhouse.

WAYNE

Where are you?! Where are
yyooooouuuu?!

He stumbles into the darkness that is barely lit by the INFRARED LIGHT.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON a HAND that OPENS A VALVE ON ONE TANK and CLOSES ANOTHER. She then DISCONNECTS A HOSE from the tank and attaches it to a PIPE with a LABEL that reads: **Irrigation**

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Wayne stalks through the greenhouse, passes the small FIRE in the Sapling Nursery.

WAYNE

You think you're gonna walk away
from me?! You think you're gonna
live without me?! You won't! You
need me! You want me! You love me!

He walks deeper into the greenhouse and we see the IRRIGATION DITCH FLOODING WITH LIQUID. It gets HIGHER AND HIGHER. Wayne is about to disappear into the distant blackness when a VOICE stops him.

LEANNE

You're right, Wayne.

He TURNS and locks eyes with Leanne, who stands on the far side of the greenhouse, just a few steps from the front door. He stares at her for a long silence that she finally breaks.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

I do want you. And I do love you.

He stares her down incredulously.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Come closer so I can see your face.

He hesitates for a beat but then strides slowly toward her. A welcoming SMILE spreads across her face as she stands motionless; inviting and vulnerable.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Don't be afraid. I see it now. I
do, I see it all so clearly.

He walks toward her. Closer. And closer still. He walks right into the SMALL PUDDLE that has formed at the base of the overflowing IRRIGATION DITCH.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

You want to hear a funny story?

He eyes her incredulously and STOPS.

WAYNE

Sure.

LEANNE

You know how I love my 'Do it
Yourself' Youtube videos, right?

WAYNE

I do.

Leanne GIGGLES sheepishly.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
What's so funny?

LEANNE
It's...it's embarrassing to admit.
I feel like a hopeless, helpless,
damsel in distress, I can't.

WAYNE
Tell me.

Leanne SMILES bashfully.

LEANNE
Well, when I got my 'Irrigation Propagation' system in the mail, I watched one of those silly little videos that taught me exactly how to install it, even with the super-complicated two-phase convergent-divergent nozzles my greenhouse utilizes and...

She eyes Wayne sheepishly.

WAYNE
And what?

LEANNE
And even though I felt like I could have installed it myself...I called you because...

A long silence.

WAYNE
Because?

LEANNE
Because I liked you. I did, I really liked you.

Wayne percolates with hope as Leanne smiles.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
And for the first time since Jesse passed, I thought...I thought I'd met a man that I could actually build a future with.

Wayne's expression sours with incredulity as THUNDER CRACKS and LIGHTNING FLASHES.

WAYNE
Don't you mess with me!

LEANNE
I'm not. I swear, I'm not.

He softens a bit.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
I called you because...do you
remember what I asked you to do?

She GRINS flirtatiously at him and he GRINS back.

WAYNE
You asked me to help you install
your 'Irrational Propulsion System'
to make sure that you don't
accidentally blow up your own
greenhouse.

Leanne LAUGHS girlishly and Wayne can not help but laugh too.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
Good thing you did.

LEANNE
A very good thing! Because...in
every moment between that day and
tonight...I learned everything I
needed to learn.

WAYNE
And what did you need to learn?

LEANNE
That we have no future.

Her smile TURNS TO STONE.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
We. Have. No. Future. You. Sick.
Bastard.

Wayne wells up with rage.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
And after you die...we will have no
past.

SILENCE. They stare each other down.

WAYNE
After I die?

LEANNE

After.

WAYNE

Well, I hate to disappoint you but
I have no intentions of dying any
time soon.

Leanne GRINS knowingly.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

What?

LEANNE

I did watch the Youtube video,
Wayne. Before I called you. And I'm
a pretty smart girl so I know
exactly how to not accidentally
blow up my own greenhouse.

Wayne notices that he is STANDING IN A PUDDLE. He SNIFFS IT
and his eyes flood with PANIC.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

And I also know how to make sure
that you never hurt my family
again.

Leanne RAISES HER HAND and MAKES THE CIRCULAR 'RALLY'
GESTICULATION'. A moment later, a SMALL FIRE IGNITES outside
the greenhouse. Leanne OPENS the front door and Cassie enters
with a LIT MOLOTOV COCKTAIL in her hand.

Cassie and Leanne eye a fear-stricken Wayne with conviction,
wrath and resolve.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Goodbye, Wayne.

Cassie STEPS FORWARD and glares at Wayne for one last time.

CASSIDY

This is for my father, you son of a
bitch!

CASSIE THROWS THE MOLOTOV COCKTAIL, Leanne PULLS HER out the
door and they LEAP TO THE GROUND. The DOOR CLOSES behind them
as THE MOLOTOV COCKTAIL soars through the air and then
EXPLODES at the base of the Sapling Nursery.

Wayne SCREAMS as he is ENGULFED IN FLAMES.

The explosion's FIRE spreads to every IRRIGATION DITCH in the greenhouse, then to the PIPES feeding the CEILING SPRINKLERS, resulting in a chain reaction of MULTIPLE EXPLOSIONS throughout every inch of the greenhouse.

EXT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Leanne and Cassie watch the first few EXPLOSIONS but SCRAMBLE TO THEIR FEET and RUN away as the greenhouse erupts into a series of larger EXPLOSIONS.

They fall to the ground at a safe distance and watch as the EXPLOSIONS consume the greenhouse. They EMBRACE EACH OTHER in solidarity and when the explosions finally cease, they meet each other's gaze.

After the shock and horror subsides, they share a cathartic SMILE and EMBRACE EACH. They both break down into SOBS as the FIRE RAGES behind them and we...

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

A group of MOURNERS gather around a freshly dug GRAVE. A PRIEST stands before the graveside, giving his eulogy. The TOMBSTONE reads: **Daniela Milagros 1965 - 2000**

PRIEST

And in closing...in lieu of a bible verse, I would like to read the following...which was written by Daniela's closest friend.

Among the Mourners, we see Leanne and Cassie sitting in the front row. Leanne WIPES TEARS from her eyes as the Priest UNFOLDS A PIECE OF PAPER and READS.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

Dannie was not a good friend, she was the best friend. She was not a good person, she was the best person. She was a force of nature, unpredictable yet reliable. Crass but compassionate. Spontaneous but consistent. Consistent in her joy, consistent in her spirit, consistent in her love. And the love she had to give was boundless. And that love will shine on forever in the lives of everyone she touched.

Cassie PUTS HER ARM around Leanne and consoles her.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY - LATER

The last of the Mourners file away from the grave site; only Leanne and Cassie remain. They sit in silent reverence for a few moments. Finally, Cassie looks up at her mother lovingly.

CASSIDY

You okay?

Leanne wipes one last TEAR away and SMILES.

LEANNE

Yeah. I'm sad but...I'm okay.

CASSIDY

She really was 'a keeper', wasn't she?

Leanne LAUGHS. But the laughter quickly morphs.

LEANNE

She was. I just wish...I just wish we could have 'kept' her for a little while longer...

She BREAKS INTO SOBS and Cassie EMBRACES HER. Leanne cries herself out and eventually lifts her head. She smiles at her daughter and they share a reflective silence.

CASSIDY

What are we gonna do?

Leanne contemplates for a moment and then a subtle SMILE of contention unfolds across her face.

LEANNE

The same as we always do. We're gonna be there for each other because...we're all we got.

Cassie looks up at her mom and SMILES.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

I've got you...and you've got me...and--

CASSIDY

And that's all we'll need.

Cassie SMILES reassuringly and they share a warm silence. After a few beats, Cassie's comfort gives way to concern.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
But what...what are we going to do?

LEANNE
Well...you're gonna go back to
school...and continue kicking ass
on the 'pitch'.

Cassie can't help but CHUCKLE.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
And me? I'm gonna continue doing
everything I have to do to keep the
last promise I made to your father.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
What promise?

Leanne STANDS and walks toward the GRAVE. She stares at the BOUQUET OF WHITE ORCHIDS sprawled atop the casket.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
I promised him that I would grow
the most beautiful garden
imaginable and share it with the
world. No matter what.

Cassie STANDS and walks forward and TAKES LEANNE'S HAND.

CASSIDY
No matter what?

LEANNE
No matter what.

They share a SMILE and then WRAP THEIR ARMS AROUND EACH OTHER emphatically. The embrace lasts for a long while before they finally detach. And as the SUN basks them in a warm glow, they stare at the WHITE ORCHIDS on the casket and we:

FADE TO WHITE.

