

JONQUIL

Written by
Scott Timmins
And
Xun Zixiang

Based on
"Endless Night"
Written by Xun Zixiang

Address
Phone Number

INT. LEXUS CAR- NIGHT

SARAH HOFFMAN, 24 years old, sits in the back of the sedan limousine. Sarah is a brunette with the Girl Next Door look, She is wearing a sexy yet elegant short black dress, black stockings, heels. Around her neck she wears a necklace with a ruby dangling just above her exposed cleavage.

EXT. FRONT CURB OF SARAH'S HOUSE- NIGHT

We see the sedan pull up in front of her small, modest home. A driver exits the then opens up the passenger door. Sarah's shapely legs exit followed by the rest of her.

SARAH
Thank you William.

He smiles as he closes the door.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I have a few days off. I will call
when my next appointment is set.

WILLIAM
Sounds good, Sarah. Enjoy your time
off. Good night.

SARAH
Thank you, you, too, William.

The driver gets back into his car and drives away as Sarah walks her front steps, places her key in the front door, opens it and walks in.

Across the street a dark figure watches Sarah while sitting in his parked car drivers seat.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE- LATER

Sarah puts down her purse and keys and walks into the living room where we see a caregiver named ANN sitting on her sofa.

SARAH
How was Matt?

Ann looks up to Sarah with a smile, placing a book she's been reading into her big bag, then stands.

ANN
He had one minor incident while I
tried to give him his bath but
other than that, he was a champ.

SARAH
What was the in-

ANN
It was nothing, Sarah. You know he doesn't like to take a bath. All kids his age act out once in awhile. This was normal.

Ann gives Sarah a reassuring smile.

EXT. PARKED CAR- LATER

The man sitting in the car across the street from Sarah's house watches as Ann exits, says good night to Sarah, with Sarah closing the door. Ann walks to her car parked down the street. As Ann's car pulls away, he exits his car and slowly walks towards Sarah's house holding something in his hand which we can not make out. Without seeing his face, he stands at the bottom of Sarah's steps.

TITLE CARD: THREE YEARS EARLIER

INT. DINER- MORNING

Sarah, looking very pregnant wearing a waitress outfit, is seen walking towards an elegant, beautiful customer named IRINA POZNIAK. She is a dark-haired Russian immigrant. She is wearing a very nice red dress, diamond earrings. She smiles as Sarah walks towards her. She speaks with a definitive Russian accent.

IRINA
Wow, you look like you're going to deliver any minute!

Sarah smiles.

SARAH
Two more weeks but I am soooo ready.

They both laugh.

IRINA
It's slow. Take a seat and I promise I will order slowly. Give us a chance to catch up!

Sarah smiles, looks around the diner then takes a seat across from Irina in her booth.

SARAH
Why not. Today's my last day
anyway. Thank you, my Russian
friend.

They smile at one another.

IRINA
Excited?

SARAH
Yes. And nervous.

IRINA
You'll be a great mother.

SARAH
Yeah? Thanks. You're too sweet.

IRINA
Did you have your baby shower yet?

SARAH
No! And I'm glad you came in this
morning. I haven't seen you in
weeks. I had an invitation for you!

IRINA
I thought it was American tradition
to surprise the mother with the
shower, no?

SARAH
With Matt over in Afghanistan the
last thing I need is a surprise.

Sarah gives Irina a forced smile. Irina senses Sarah's
uneasiness.

IRINA
When is it?

SARAH
Tomorrow at Matt's parents house. I
want you to come.

IRINA
Ah, that's sweet of you. I have to
work. And that's for family.

SARAH
And friends, too. You're a friend,
Irina.

Irina smiles. Sarah pulls out her order book and starts writing on it. When done, she tears the check from the book and hands to Irina.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 Here's the address and time it starts. I expect you there, got it? Whatever this 'secret' job of yours is can wait a day!

Irina opens her small black purse and places the paper inside.

IRINA
 Well, I *could* tell you what job is but then I have to kill you!

SARAH
 I *knew* it! You're a Russian spy!

This causes both of them to laugh. Sarah then stands.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 Please come, okay?

Irina gives Sarah a warm smile.

INT. HOFFMAN HOUSE- AFTERNOON

We are inside Sarah's husband's parents modest home in Kansas City, Missouri. A very pregnant Sarah is seen with women of all ages chatting, laughing, eating. The living room is adorned in a baby blue motif.

INT. HOFFMAN KITCHEN- LATER

Sarah is standing next to her FATHER-IN-LAW, PETER HOFFMAN, watching him make some finger sandwiches. He has a kind face, and is portly in stature. As he turns to Sarah we see he is wearing an apron that shows a chiseled body with six pack ABS.

SARAH
 Can I help?

PETER
 Nope. This is your day, dear, and his!

He leans over and kisses Sarah's belly.

SARAH
Love the apron.

She grins. Peter tears off his apron, stands next to Sarah and matches belly sizes.

PETER
Think I'm going to deliver before
you?

They both burst into laughter.

INT. HOFFMAN HOUSE- LATER

A brief montage of Sarah opening baby shower gifts.

EXT. HOFFMAN BACKYARD- LATER

Sarah sits alone, staring into the distance of woods beyond the backyard. Her best friend, NICOLE PETERS, comes to sit with her, breaking Sarah's trance.

NICOLE
Hey momma, You okay?

SARAH
Hey, Nikki. Yeah, just a little
tired.

NICOLE
That's understandable.

They remain silent for a moment until Nicole gives her a "well??" look and Sarah returns it with a "you know me too well" look.

SARAH
Matt didn't Cam today.

NICOLE
Maybe they got called into-

Nicole stops when she realizes what she's suggesting isn't helping Sarah's nerves.

SARAH
Exactly.

NICOLE
I didn't mean to say-

SARAH

It's okay, Nick. I know where he's at and what his schedule is can change on a dime. I'm used to it. But I just *feel* uneasy, like he's in some kind of danger.

Nicole doesn't know what to say to help ease her friend. There is silence.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I keep trying to convince myself it's just hormones and last minute jitters.

NICOLE

That's what it is, Sar. Completely. He knows what today is and as soon as he can he will make that Cam.

SARAH

Hope so. But we've been spiritually connected since the little punk pulled my pony-tail on the playground when we were in first grade.

NICOLE

And you kicked the little bastard in the shins to show him who the boss really was going to be!

They share a needed laugh. Followed by a knowing pause.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Matt is okay.

Nicole reaches out and takes Sarah's hand into hers as they smile at one another until interrupted by a friend who rushes out the back porch door with a grave look on her face.

FRIEND

Sarah. There's...there's men at the front door for you. Military men.

Sarah's face remains frozen for a moment as she stares at the messenger of this news. She stands, eyes wide open, and rushes towards the porch door.

INT. HOFFMAN LIVING ROOM- LATER

Sarah sees Peter and his wife GLORIA at the opened front door. Two cadets in dress uniforms stand before them.

COLOR GUARD #1

Mrs. Sarah Hoffman, Mr. And Mrs.
Peter and Gloria Hoffman. We regret
to inform you that Specialist
Matthew P. Hoffman...

We do not hear the rest of their words. The glass Gloria holds in her hand falls to the floor, shattering, the red wine strewn across the hardwood like blood splatter. Sarah collapses into Nicole's arms, face etched in horror.

CAMERA PANS AWAY FROM THE FAMILY GRIEVING

INT. HOFFMAN HOUSE, MATT'S BEDROOM- NIGHT

Sarah sits on Matt's bed. His room is as it was when he left for boot camp. Sarah looks around the room. There are photos of her and them on walls, bureaus and a night stand. Kansas City Chief player posters and jerseys also adorn the walls. Peter knocks on the door, enters the open door.

SARAH

How's Gloria?

PETER

Not well. She took some sleeping
pills and I stayed with her until
she feel asleep.

Sarah's gaze goes to an Army poster on the wall across from where she sits. Peter follows her eyes, looks upon the poster, sighs as he sits next to her.

PETER (CONT'D)

The only three things he wanted for
his future. Serving his country,
starting a family with you and
growing old with you.

Sarah lowers her head, closes her eyes, placing her left hand on her belly.

PETER (CONT'D)

He got to live out two of those.

He places his arm around Sarah's shoulder as tears silently fall from her eyes.

PETER (CONT'D)

This is not the ending, Sarah. He's inside you, with that beautiful boy. He will be with you, and your son, till the day you meet him again.

Sarah lifts her head back up, eyes meeting Peter's.

SARAH

I...I don't know if I can do this without him. I don't know if I want to.

PETER

You will, Sarah. And you won't be alone.

Peter places his arm around Sarah's shoulder, and as he does, Sarah's head collapses into his shoulder, gently weeping.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. KANSAS CITY INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL- MORNING

We see Sarah, wearing a bright red Chiefs T-shirt and denim cutoffs, and Peter and Gloria waiting at a terminal gate, anxious smiles on their faces. We then see people exiting the gate. Then we see MATTHEW HOFFMAN in his Army fatigues, carrying duffle bags. He stops in his tracks and we see Sarah and he make eye contact. She begins racing to him as he drops his bags. When she reaches him she jumps into his arms, wrapping her legs around his much taller body.

SARAH

Oh my God!! You're here!!

She then proceeds to kiss his entire face as he chuckles. As his parents move towards them we see people in the terminal watching, smiling, then politely cheering the scene that is unfolding. The two at first don't notice as they kiss each other deeply. It is only after the lip lock and Matt releasing his much smaller bride that they notice the applause. Sarah looks slightly embarrassed by the attention, Matt shakes his head to the well-wishers. His parents come to greet their son. Matt extends his hand to his father, but Peter takes his boy into his arms for a big bear hug. His mother then takes her son in her arms, happy tears flowing from her eyes, and kisses him all over his face, leaving red lipstick marks.

INT. MATT AND SARAH'S CONDO BEDROOM- NIGHT

With the bedroom lit by moonlight, Matt and Sarah stand before their bed, staring into each others eyes, then kiss deeply.

SARAH

I've missed you so much.

As they kiss Sarah starts unbuttoning his fatigue shirt, pulling it off his shoulders. She moves her mouth to his neck, then his chest, then begins rubbing him through his fatigue pants, hands unzipping them.

Matt lifts Sarah's head back up, leans in and breathlessly kisses her. Her then lifts her top up over her head as she raises her arms up. After tossing her top to the floor, he begins kissing her again, while his hands reach behind to unhook her bra. He stops kissing her, backs away a bit as he removes Sarah's bra, baring her breasts causing her to visibly shake. She then drops to her knees, removes his pants. When she stands back up, Matt picks up her tiny body and places her on the bed, him on top.

Then continue kissing, hands exploring each others bodies. Matt then starts kissing her ear, then her neck, kissing down until he reaches her left breast. He kisses it, then takes her nipple in his mouth, Sarah moaning. He comes back to her mouth, kissing deeply, passionately.

MATT

I love you so much.

Sarah smiles.

SARAH

I love you, too.

They continue kissing as we see Sarah reach down to help Matt remove his underwear. He stops kissing Sarah, leans over to their night stand, opens a drawer.

SARAH (CONT'D)

No, Matt. I want to feel you inside me tonight.

MATT

We can't take the chance, Sarah.

Matt pulls out a condom.

MONTAGE of them making love in different positions.

INT. MATT AND SARAH'S CONDO BEDROOM- LATER

The couple lay in each others arms, both glistening in sweat, Sarah's head buried in Matt's chest.

SARAH
God, I missed you.

MATT
Missed you, too, Sar.

She sits up a bit to make eye contact while running her fingers through his hair.

SARAH
Why the condom, babe?

Matt doesn't answer.

SARAH (CONT'D)
We've talked about starting a family since we were fifteen.

MATT
The time just isn't right.

SARAH
Why not?

Matt's expression changes to one of slight anger.

MATT
Not until my tour is over.

SARAH
But it will be soon.

Matt turns his head away.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Right?

Matt continues to avoid eye contact.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What aren't you telling me, Matt?

Still avoiding eye contact.

MATT
We were told to expect another tour after this one.

Sarah sits up.

SARAH

What? You're on your second now!

Matt finally turns to her, eyes showing fear.

MATT

Not enough people are enlisting.

SARAH

That's not your concern!

Matt doesn't respond.

SARAH (CONT'D)

This isn't fair! You didn't sign up for extra tours.

MATT

I signed up for whatever they needed.

Sarah can see Matt is upset, even sad. She leans down to him.

SARAH

Oh Matt!

She kisses his cheek. Matt holds her tighter.

MATT

Believe me, I don't want this. I want to be home, for good, moving on with our lives. I want a better place to live than this glorified apartment my dad is helping us pay.

Sarah kisses him again, cuddling up even closer in his arms.

MATT (CONT'D)

But until I'm back, for good, I can't be over there and have a child here. The pressure would be-

His voice trails off. Sarah's lifts her head to look Matt in the eyes. She begins kissing him deeply again as she rises up so her left nipple reaches his mouth, which he takes into his mouth. We see her right hand travel down his body until she reaches under the sheet. She suddenly stops touching him and pulls her breast away, looking down at Matt with a worried look.

MATT (CONT'D)

What?

Sarah's hands, still under the sheets, are seen moving desperately on her until she suddenly stops, eyes locked on Matt's.

SARAH

The condom. It's inside me.

Matt's eyes widen.

MATT

No.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE has Sarah awakening, tears in her eyes.

INT. MATT AND SARAH'S CONDO- AFTERNOON

SARAH

What? What do you mean?

She turns, face etched in confusion and pain, to Peter. They are sitting with two men from the Army.

PETER

This isn't right!

Sarah turns back to the two men delivering her bad news.

SARAH

He killed himself? I...I don't understand-

Her words run dry before she can finish speaking them.

ARMY MAN #1

He didn't leave a suicide letter.

PETER

How did he...(tries not to choke up) take his life?

ARMY MAN #1

He shot himself through his left temple.

Sarah begins crying as Peter places his arm around her to try and comfort her.

ARMY MAN #2

That's why we advise a closed casket.

Sarah whispers to herself, "Jesus Christ".

PETER

Will he get a Military Funeral?
Will the government pay for the
services?

ARMY MAN #1

Yes and no. His coffin will be
draped with the American flag.
However, no one from the Army will
attend and there will be no 21 gun
salute. The military will not pay
for the service.

Peter closes his eyes in attempt to hold back his tears and
anger. He opens them, collects his emotions.

PETER

Will Sarah collect his military
death benefits?

The two men look at each other, remaining in silence for a
moment. Sarah sits back up, eyes looking into theirs as they
turn back to match her pleading eyes.

ARMY MAN #2

That determination hasn't been
decided yet.

SARAH

What do you mean, "determination"?
He gave his life serving for his
country.

ARMY MAN #1

In cases where servicemen and women
take their own lives, they are
given a dishonorable discharge.
That's the reason for no military
presence at his funeral.

PETER

When and how will his Benefits
determination happen?

Both men look uncomfortable.

ARMY MAN #1

The Secretary of the Army will be
reviewing the circumstances that
led to Specialist Hoffman's suicide
before rendering a final decision.

PETER

But how does he do that?

ARMY MAN #1

By talking to Specialist Hoffman's commander, to his fellow soldiers.

SARAH

Will I be interviewed?

ARMY MAN #2

Yes, someone from the CNGB will be assigned to interview loved ones about their last contacts with the deceased.

INT. FUNERAL HOME- LATER

Sarah and Peter are brought in to view Matthew's body. The mortician removes the sheet covering his face. We do not see him but we do see the tragic, mortified reactions. Sarah and Peter collapse into each others arms. After Sarah collects herself, she moves to the edge of the metal slab holding Matt's body. With tears down her face she leans in and kisses the top of his head, not caring about how his head looks.

EXT. RAINY CEMETERY- MORNING

Matthew's casket, draped with the American flag, is surrounded by Sarah, Peter, Gloria, with Nicole standing next to Sarah, holding an umbrella.

CAMERA PANS back and we can see there are hundreds of loved ones and friends in attendance.

FLASHBACK

INT. MATT AND SARAH'S HOUSE BEDROOM- NIGHT

Matt sits on the edge of the bed, head buried in his hands. Sarah is lying on her back, covered by the sheet.

SARAH

Matt, chances are nothing will come of this. Please don't worry.

Matt remains motionless.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Talk to me, please.

Matt lifts his head from his hands, face etched with worry.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Please, Matt. You're scaring me.

MATT
Do you remember my Uncle Joe,
Denise's father?

Sarah looks confused but answers as she sits up behind her husband.

SARAH
He was a cop. He died in the line
of duty when we were in first
grade.

MATT
He committed suicide.

SARAH
What?

MATT
We weren't told to protect us, and
Denise, from the truth.

SARAH
Jesus...why did he-

MATT
Dad told me Uncle Joe loved his
job, thought he was Dirty Harry.
Nothing scared him. But that all
changed when Denise was born.
(Pause). He had a child who needed
him to be safer on the streets, who
needed him to come home and take
care of her. Dad said it started
affecting his performance.

Matt lowers his head away from Sarah's as he continues.

MATT (CONT'D)
One night he was checking on a
reported prowler. It was dark. He
saw the suspect. Dad said Uncle Joe
told him it looked like the suspect
was carrying a gun, wouldn't stop
when he ordered him to. Uncle Joe
shot the suspect. It was a ten year-
old boy carrying a bottle of iced
tea.

SARAH
Jesus, Matt.

MATT

Luckily he only wounded the boy and he survived but Uncle Joe never recovered from it. A year later, when Denise was just three, he put a gun in his mouth and ended whatever was haunting him.

Matt turns back to Sarah, eyes pleading.

MATT (CONT'D)

I can't be Uncle Joe. I can't be over there knowing the danger I'm already in every day has taken on greater importance that I survive because I have a child back here, Sarah.

Sarah takes Matt in her arms as he whispers.

MATT (CONT'D)

I can't.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. MILITARY CONFERENCE ROOM- MORNING

Sarah, dressed in a maternity dress, sits at a conference table across from three men dressed in their Army colors. At the end of the table is a stenographer.

ARMY INTERROGATOR #1

Do you understand what we have just explained?

SARAH

Yes, to determine Matthew's state of mind at the time of his death.

She pauses for a moment.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Should I have brought an attorney?

ARMY INTERROGATOR #1

This isn't a trial, Mrs. Hoffman.

SARAH

It sure feels like one. And, please, call me Sarah. Mrs. Hoffman is Matt's mom. As you must already know since you put his parents through the same no trial.

Her final words come off as sarcastic, causing the lead interrogator to shift in his seat.

ARMY INTERROGATOR #1
When was the last time you spoke to your husband?

SARAH
How do you mean? In person, through Cam, email?

Sarah appears agitated.

ARMY MAN #1
Whatever mode of conversation which was the last while he was alive.

SARAH
It was an email.

ARMY INTERROGATOR #1
What did he say?

SARAH
You don't know?

ARMY INTERROGATOR #1
What do you mean?

SARAH
You may think I'm some kind of Midwestern hick from Kansas City with no college education. But I'm not stupid. I'm pretty sure you have gathered all of Matthew's emails and Cams and letters to me. You're not coming into this blind. And I sincerely doubt you haven't already made your decision.

ARMY INTERROGATOR #1
Mrs. Hoffman we-

SARAH
It's Sarah. I'm here...his parents were here as a formality, to make us believe we had a chance to defend Matthew's honor before you tell me I won't be receiving his death benefits. But we both know I won't be receiving his benefits. The Army pretty much made that clear by his non-military funeral.

Sarah takes a deep breath to try and control her anger, her emotions, but tears begin to form in her eyes.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Was he of sound mind when he blew
his brains out?

Sarah turns her head away from them as she starts sobbing. After wiping the tears from her face, she turns back to the men with determination in her eyes, body language.

SARAH (CONT'D)
He was sent into a war started by a
lie by a president who wanted to
wage a war so his daddy and his
cronies could get rich. Matthew and
every single man and woman who went
to Iraq and Afghanistan...

She takes a moment again to try and compose herself.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Those brave men and women...my
husband included...how can anyone
be of sound mind when they don't
know who the enemy is or where they
are coming from?

ARMY INTERROGATOR #2
Mrs. Hoff- excuse me, Sarah. We are
not the enemy, either. But we do
have to make an important
determination regarding his state
of mind at the time of his suicide.
Not only taking into account what
was inside his mind regarding his
tour but also what was happening at
home. With you. And your upcoming
delivery.

SARAH
So you want to know if he said
anything to me about wanting to die
to ensure me and his son would be
set for life with his military
death benefits?

ARMY INTERROGATOR #1
Yes.

Sarah laughs sarcastically, anger building inside her.

SARAH

No. No he did not. He wasn't that kind of man. Doesn't his enlistment in a bullshit war *before* I became pregnant prove that?

ARMY INTERROGATOR #2

Which leads us to believe he was of sound mind. He had never asked to see the core psychiatrist. When he was home during his month long leave he did not seek out the base psychiatrist.

SARAH

So? Just because he didn't seek treatment he wasn't suffering from PTSD? And if he did? Wouldn't that reflect badly on his military record? Wouldn't admitting he was suffering deeply affect his job potential when he came back home?

The men say nothing.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Matthew was a good, sweet, loving and brave man. Of course the war affected him! I could see and *feel* that when he came home for his leave. If war doesn't affect the human being fighting it, too me *that* is NOT being of sound mind. Taking another persons life...I can't imagine...I'm not going to beg for Matthew's death benefits. I knew coming here you had made up your mind. Matthew was not a coward. He was not dishonorable. I will not allow you to tarnish my Matt's image and I will not allow you to take away my dignity, nor his. Shame on you. Shame on this country. He volunteered to serve for his country, and he fought bravely for this country. You will **never** take that away from him, me or his family.

Sarah stands, turns and walks away.

INT. HOFFMAN CAR- LATER

Peter is driving, Gloria is in the backseat. Sarah sits quietly in the front passenger seat, eyes staring straight ahead. No words are spoken but we feel sadness, tension and anger from all three.

CLOSE UP of Sarah's left hand as Peter brings his right hand to it, clasps it.

She turns to him and he to her, exchanging a knowing glance.

INT. HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM- NIGHT

In a wordless scene, we witness Sarah giving birth to her child, with Nicole standing holding her hand, mouthing words to her until the child is seen in the doctors hands. We then see him place Matthew Jr. in to Sarah's hands. As she holds her baby we see her begin crying both tears of happiness and sadness.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE- LATER

Sarah is alone, sitting on her bed, holding her son. He is asleep, wrapped tight. She looks at him, smiling. She lifts her head to the framed pictures of her and her husband that fill the room, then looks back down to little Matthew.

SARAH

Every single day I'm going to tell
you about your daddy. Every memory
I have of him.

She begins smiling even as tears start coming down her face.

SARAH (CONT'D)

He's going to be with us every day,
watching you grow up. No sadness.

She takes one hand away from cradling her baby to wipe away the tears.

SARAH (CONT'D)

And I promise you I will do
whatever it takes to keep you safe
and loved, little man. Me and you.
That's the deal and I'm never
breaking it.

INT. HOFFMAN HOUSE- AFTERNOON

MONTAGE

We see Sarah and Matthew with the Hoffman family. The house is adorned with Thanksgiving decorations, football on the television. We see people talking, holding Matthew, laughter and smiles. Sarah sees Peter standing alone in the back porch. Sarah excuses herself and walks to him. Peter is staring at a sled and swing set sitting outside in the cold, covered by leaves.

SARAH

Hey

Peter breaks his trance, turns to Sarah forcing a smile on his face.

PETER

Hi Sarah.

SARAH

I miss him, too.

He turns to her, puts his arm around her.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Can't escape his memories, you know? Plus, it's not the same rooting against the Cowgirls without him.

They both warmly share a needed laugh.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Is there something else on your mind, Peter?

PETER

As if the first Thanksgiving without him isn't bad enough...

He turns his head to make sure no one else is around.

PETER (CONT'D)

A bunch of us long-timers were told the company is laying off 500 people just before Christmas.

SARAH

Jesus, Peter! Can they do that? You've been there longer than I've been alive.

PETER

They claim it's the economy. It's hit corporate America hard, and now it's trickling down to the workers.

SARAH

What are you going to do?

PETER

I have two options. Take the 6 month severance with partial health benefits, collect unemployment and be a full time granddad for awhile.

Sarah gives him a smile.

PETER (CONT'D)

Or they lay me off, no health benefits, no severance. Pretty easy choice, huh?

Sarah stares into Peter's eyes, not knowing what to say to make him feel better.

PETER (CONT'D)

But they haven't been able to tell us anything about our pensions.

SARAH

What do you mean? Those are yours, no matter what, right?

Peter looks away from her.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Right? You've been there, what, almost 30 years.

PETER

A lot of shady things went on that caused this crash. I have a feeling, since they can't give us a straight answer, they fell victim to it, too. And we're all going to lose our security.

SARAH

They can't do that, can they?

Peter avoids answering the question, looks out to the sled set again.

PETER

We'll continue to help with the mortgage payments for as long as we can.

SARAH

No. No. NO. If Gloria can continue, and I guess now you, watching Matthew I can get a second job and-

PETER

A mother needs to be with her son, not working 70 to 80 hours a week trying to support him.

SARAH

But I can't keep accepting money from you if you're out of work. I just can't, Peter.

PETER

Like I said, Sarah, we can help for as long as we can. And if worse comes to worse you can always sell the condo and move in with us.

SARAH

No, Peter. We can't burden you like-

PETER

Sarah, you practically lived her in Matt's bedroom since you were 15 years old!

Their words grow quiet as Sarah rests her head on Peter's shoulder. They continue looking outside to the slide area, skies gray and gloomy.

INT. HOFFMAN LIVING ROOM- MORNING

We see Peter, Gloria and Sarah decorating their live, fresh Christmas tree. Matthew is in his walker, silent, grabbing at the toys attached to the chair.

SARAH

I love the smell of real trees.

GLORIA

Nothing like it.

Sarah looks over to Peter, who looks pale. Sarah says nothing.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Honey, we're missing a box. Matt's
decorations he made growing up.

Peter looks at her with a look of confusion.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
It's marked with his name on it,
with the boxes of all his school
awards and trophies.

Gloria is too busy putting on tinsel to notice Peter in his
utter confusion but Sarah sees it.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Can you go get it?

Sarah moves from her box of decorations to Peter.

SARAH
I know where it is. You sit while I
go get it.

She reaches for Peter's hand, sees that it is shaking. She
helps him to a chair.

SARAH (CONT'D)
And I will get you some water. Take
a break, old man. Bringing in that
tree took a lot out of you.

Sarah looks in his eyes, forcing a smile, hoping to receive
one on return but doesn't. Sarah exits the room.

INT. HOFFMAN BASEMENT- LATER

Sarah is walking through the lit basement, moving towards the
back where a bunch of boxes sit. They are labeled "Matt's
Trophies", "Matt's Homemade Gifts", "Matt's Sports Cards"
"Matt's Chiefs Jerseys" and "Matt's Childhood Xmas
Decorations". She grabs it and turns around, walking towards
the steps when suddenly she hears Gloria scream. Sarah drops
the box and runs up the stairs.

INT. HOFFMAN LIVING ROOM- LATER

When Sarah runs into the room she sees Gloria kneeling over
her fallen husband, who is laying on the ground unconscious.
Gloria looks up to Sarah with tears in her eyes and a look of
total terror. Sarah runs to him, drops to her knees, starts
feeling his neck for a pulse.

SARAH

He's alive.

She quickly stands and runs to her purse and pulls out her cell phone.

INT. ICU HOSPITAL ROOM- NIGHT

Peter lays in a coma, head bandaged, tubes in his mouth, arms, monitors blinking and beeping. Gloria is asleep in a chair next to the bed. Sarah stands above the bed, holding a quiet Matthew in her arms.

DOCTOR (V.O.)

We were able to stop the bleeding but there has been massive damage to the brain.

Sarah leans in, holding Matthew closer to Peter's face.

DOCTOR (V.O.)

He's in critical but stable condition for now. The next couple of days will be critical for Mr. Hoffman. If he makes it I must tell you that he will be permanently paralyzed on the left side of his body.

Tears form in Sarah's eyes as she reaches down and kisses Peter on the cheek, whispers to him.

SARAH

I'm so sorry, Peter.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE KITCHEN- MORNING

Sarah is talking to a female realtor, Matthew again laying quietly in his stroller chair.

SARAH

Jesus Christ, are you kidding me?

The realtor tries to look comforting but it has no affect on Sarah.

REALTOR

I'm sorry, Sarah. This isn't my decision, my market. It's the economy.

SARAH

I can't afford to take a \$15,000 loss on this condo. I mean, I just can't. And I'm already two months past due.

Sarah turns to her son, who doesn't make eye contact with her as he sits. The realtor sits uncomfortably, says nothing. Sarah bows her head, lost.

EXT. HOFFMAN HOUSE- AFTERNOON

A "FOR SALE" sign on the front lawn, with a placard on it that reads, "SOLD"

A moving van with workers bustling in and out of the van and the Hoffman home.

Sarah sitting in her car, watching, tears in her eyes, a quiet Matthew in his back seat car seat.

INT. HOFFMAN HOUSE- MATT'S ROOM- LATER

With Matthew in her arms, Sarah stands inside Matt's room, which is now empty.

FLASHBACK MONTAGE

INT. MATT'S BEDROOM

8 year old Matt and Sarah, wearing Kansas City Chiefs jerseys, are singing, laughing and performing to the song, "Macarena"

12 year old Matt and Sarah, dressed in ugly Christmas sweaters, are playing a video game, picking on each other, talking trash, poking one another, laughing.

15 year old Matt and Sarah, barely dressed in summer clothing, make out on Matt's bed when there is a knock on the door, causing them to stop immediately, sitting up quickly as Peter opens the door to look in.

PETER

Dinner time, kids.

Matt's face is red and sweaty. Sarah just smiles, nervously.

PETER (CONT'D)
You two okay? Awfully quiet in here.

MATT
Yeah, dad, we're fine.

PETER
Okay then.

Peter laughs to himself as he turns away. After he is gone, the two of them turn to each other and start quietly laughing at each other.

17 year old Sarah, dressed in a low cut red prom dress, quietly walks into Matt's room, sees him standing in front of his mirror, wearing a black tuxedo, trying to place a bow tie around his neck.

SARAH
Oh my God.

Peter is startled, turns to Sarah.

MATT
Jesus, Sarah! You scared me!

Sarah giggles but has a look of astonishment on her face as she walks towards him.

SARAH
Oh my GOD, Matt!

MATT
What??

SARAH
You. Are. Hot!!

Matt's face blushes as she reaches out to help him fix the bow tie correctly. He then reaches his arms out, pushes Sarah back a bit so he can look at her.

MATT
Me? Wow, Sarah. Just. Wow!

They smile at each other then embrace one another and kiss deeply.

As 19 year old Sarah sits on Matt's bed, singing to "Hollaback Girl" Matt smiles, watching her. Lost in the song, Sarah doesn't realize Matt is watching intently.

When she finally does, her moves to the song become sexier as she gives him a "yeah, I know I'm sexy" look with her eyes.

When the song ends, he opens his night stand drawer, looks her in the eyes attentively.

SARAH
What, you goof?

His eyes move to the drawer, then back to hers.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What, Neanderthal?

Again, his eyes go from hers to the open drawer. Sarah leans over to see what he's trying to convey to her. WE SEE a little black box. Sarah's eyes fly open. Matt reaches inside the drawer and pulls it out, then kneels before Sarah. Tears begin forming in her eyes, a smile a wide long on her face.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Oh my God...Matt?

He opens the box and we see it's a diamond engagement ring.

MATT
I've known you almost my entire life. You're my best friend. My partner in crime. My soulmate. I can't imagine my life without you. Will you-

SARAH
YES! Oh, God, Matt, yes!

He places the ring on her left hand ring finger. She reaches out and takes him in her arms, head on his shoulder, tears down her face.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I will always be your's, Matt.

END OF FLASHBACK MONTAGE

We see Sarah standing in the empty room, tears in her eyes.

EXT. GRIMY APARTMENT COMPLEX- AFTERNOON

Nicole exits her car in an apartment parking lot. She accidentally walks into trash lying on the ground outside her car. When she looks down to see what she's walked into: she a used condom, empty beer bottles and a syringe.

NICOLE
Jesus Christ.

As she walks towards the doors of one of the apartment buildings she sees a gang of young adults hanging outside, smoking pot, talking slang. When they see her they stop and their eyes go all over Nicole. She quickly turns her eyes away.

Parked directly in front of Sarah's apartment window, a car sits with its engine off. It is the same car from the opening scene. We do not see who is sitting inside it.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT- LATER

Nicole lets herself in and finds Sarah nursing Matthew while sitting on a love seat. She drops her bag on the floor and gives Sarah a look that Sarah recognizes right away.

SARAH
No, I haven't bought a gun. Yet.

NICOLE
They were smoking pot in the open, Sarah! And when I walked by, I felt like I was being raped!

Sarah shakes her head "I know, I know" while nursing her son. Nicole turns to head to the kitchen, opens the fridge and sees that it is virtually empty.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Jesus, Sar, what the hell have you been eating?

SARAH
Ramen noodles.

Sarah laughs.

SARAH (CONT'D)
But there *is* iced tea for you. And some peanut butter crackers in one of the cabinets.

Nicole closes the fridge and walks back into the living room, notices something is missing.

NICOLE
Where's your HD tv? They didn't steal it, along with your food, did they?

SARAH
Worse. They bought it.

NICOLE
Bought it? You sold your tv??

SARAH
The car is next.

NICOLE
What the fuck, Sar?

Sarah finishes with Matthew and wipes his face with a baby towel. She then stands.

SARAH
What, Nicole? Do you think I wanted to sell my tv to those assholes outside, who I *know* already spent it on drugs? Do you *think* I want to give up my car?

Sarah places Matthew down inside his playpen.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I'm fucked, Nikki. I still owe money on the sale of my home! I'm working 70 hours a week at two jobs I hate. That tv, the car, they mean getting Matthew his shots last week, putting food on the table for us.

NICOLE
I'm sorry, Sar, I didn't mean-

SARAH
Everything I do from here on out is for him (she nods to a sleeping Matthew). So I have no tv, no cable, no connection to the outside world. Considering it's all falling apart anyway, and I'm *living* it, I don't need to be reminded of it. As for taking public trans after I sell the car? At least I have jobs. Some people don't so...

Frustrated, Sarah walks to the sofa and sits next to Nicole.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Nikki. I didn't mean to vent on you.

NICOLE

Listen, Sar, it's okay. Vent away. I don't know how you're dealing with all of this. So if venting helps-

SARAH

Things could be worse, right?

There is a long pause as Nicole's face looks sheepish, as if she is hiding something bad from her friend.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What Nicole?

NICOLE

I don't mean to pile on but...

SARAH

Pile on, Nikki. Give it to me.

NICOLE

Rachel had an interview last week. We didn't want to tell you because there were no guarantees. But she found out this morning she got the job.

Sarah sits for a moment, face a mirror of different emotions seemingly at once.

SARAH

Well, that's great news. Really. I'm happy for your sister. Finding a job in this economy is-

Sarah stands, head lowered, thinking, walks over to Matthew's playpen.

NICOLE

I know. It's great news for her.

SARAH

(looks up at Nicole) Tell her I'm so happy for her. I will call her tonight to wish her luck.

Sarah gives her friend a genuine smile which quickly disappears as reality sets in.

NICOLE

She starts next week. So she won't be able to help watch Matthew anymore.

Sarah takes a deep breath, closes her eyes, a sarcastic smile comes across her face.

EXT. STREET- MORNING

Sarah is seen walking out of her apartment complex parking lot, heading down the street to a Bus Stop. As she's walking she hears a car horn behind her. It's one of the drug punks and he's driving her car. With a sly smile on his face, he lowers the passenger side window.

DRUG PUNK

Hey hot momma, need a ride?

SARAH

Oh, hey. No, I'm good. Stop is right there. But thanks.

She motions to the street corner, feeling his eyes going up and down her body.

DRUG PUNK

Just asking. Anytime you need a lift, you just let me know. Thanks again for this sweet ride!

He gives her one more smart-ass smile and then peels away, trying to burn rubber. Sarah, laughing to herself, cynically responds.

SARAH

It's a fucking Kia, asshole.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY- MORNING

Sarah sits bedside to a sleeping Peter, the right side of his face badly drooping, his right hand curled up.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY- LIVING ROOM- LATER

Sarah, looking worn down, sits on a sofa next to Gloria.

GLORIA

You don't have to come visit so often. You look tired.

Sarah politely smiles.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Two jobs? An 9 month old son?
Coming here this often is just too
much.

SARAH
I need my family, Gloria.

Gloria smiles warmly. Sarah looks around the small habitat.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Place is looking good, Gloria.

GLORIA
Yeah, you think so?

Sarah nods.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
It's not much but will have to do.

She looks into the bedroom, sees her husband still asleep.

SARAH
How's his therapy going?

Gloria shrugs her shoulders.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What do you mean?

GLORIA
He doesn't want to be here. Losing
the house, losing his job, losing
his son in a matter of months. He's
not trying. I think he wants to
die.

Gloria breaks down sobbing, Sarah moves over to hold her.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
And I don't know how much more I
can take, either.

Sarah reaches for a tissue from a box on a coffee table and
hands it to Gloria.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
I've always believed God gives you
what you can handle.

She dabs her eyes with the tissue.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
We had such a good life. All of us.
Now, it's gone.

Sarah looks like she wants to say something but her eyes show she's at a loss.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
I can't be the strong one, Sarah.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY- BEDROOM- LATER

Sarah is standing over Peter, who awakens and sees her. He tries to smile through his paralyzed face and Sarah gives him a big grin. Then, almost instantly, tears form in Peter's eyes. Sarah leans in to meet him face to face.

SARAH
You don't get to give up,
understand? Your wife needs you. I
need you. Your grandson needs you
in his life.

Their eyes are connecting deeply.

SARAH (CONT'D)
The doctors have told you it will
be a lot of hard work but you can
talk again one day, regain the use
of your arm again. And that means
you will hold Matthew in your arms
one day. You will take him to his
first Chiefs and Royals game.

Sarah smiles warmly at him, the left side of his mouth returning the smile. Sarah nods.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You've always been my hero, Peter.
There's a little boy who needs you
to be one to him, too.

Peter nods, smiling, tears again in his eyes but these are from happiness. Sarah kisses him on the forehead.

EXT. NURSING FACILITY PARKING LOT- LATER

Through the POV of a man sitting in the car from the very first scene, we see Sarah walk to a bus stop, then emotionally collapse against its glass borders, body shuddering from her fallen emotional defense. When a bus pulls up, Sarah shakes off her distress, enters it.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT- LATER

Sarah sits on the living room floor, trying to engage her one year old son in playing with his legos.

SARAH
 Matthew. Look at mommy. Say
 "mommy". I know you can do it.
 "Mommy"

He ignores her as he works plays intently on the floor.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 Matthew. Please. Say *anything*.

Sarah watches with a deep look of concern on her face as he attempts to place pieces that don't fit. Frustrated, he picks them up and throws them across the room and begins screaming hysterically. Sarah quickly moves to take him in her arms, which only causes the screaming to get worse, his tiny arms flailing at her. After a minute of holding him and trying to comfort him, Matthew stops screaming and flailing. Both sit on the floor, crying.

INT. DINER- MORNING

Irina, dressed in a eloquent dark blue dress, sits in her usual booth, smiling as a haggard looking Sara approaches her.

SARAH
 Hey, Irina. Haven't seen you for
 awhile.

IRINA
 Us Russian spies don't have set
 schedules.

Irina smiles, waits for a return one that Sarah never gives.

SARAH
 Usual?

IRINA
 Yes, but with a special request.

SARAH
 Really? This might cause a chain
 reaction in the universe no one
 will recover from.

Irina looks at her not understanding.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Never mind, bad joke. What's the special request?

IRINA
You and me, going out for a drink when you're done.

Sarah smiles thinking Irina is joking.

IRINA (CONT'D)
I'm serious. You look like you need a night out. What's the American expression...all work no play make girl boring?

Sarah smiles.

SARAH
Close. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy is what you're looking for.

IRINA
Yes, and Sarah look like dull, depressed Jack.

Sarah thinks about the offer, smiles.

SARAH
I'm broke, Irina. Plus I'd have to make sure my sitter can stay and watch Matthew...

IRINA
My treat. Consider this my late 16 month baby shower gift. Call sitter. Let's do this.

Sarah smiles, nods.

INT. DINER- 5:00

Sarah, with her waitress smock removed, stands looking outside the front window. A black Lexus pulls up. A driver exits the driver side, walks to the back, opens the door. Sarah watches Irina, dressed in a sexy little black dress, get out. Sarah's eyes widen. Irina sees Sarah and waves for her to come outside. Sarah quickly leaves.

INT. BLACK LEXUS- LATER

Sarah and Irina hug, then enter the car. Sarah's face has a frozen smile as she looks at Irina, the driver and the inside of the car.

SARAH
Jesus, Irina, you *really* are a
Russian spy!

Irina smiles as the car pulls away.

EXT. KANSAS CITY GRANDE PLAZA HOTEL ENTRANCE- LATER

The Lexus pulls up in front of the gorgeous hotel.

SARAH
This is where we're going for
drinks?

IRINA
Yes. But first we shop.

SARAH
Shop?

IRINA
Body like yours needs showcase.
Time for it to come out and play,
too, not be so boring.

INT. HOTEL MALL- LATER

Sarah is seen trying on different eloquent dresses. Finally, we see her walk out of the store in a stunning long red dress that shows off her cleavage, with a side slit that shows off her legs.

INT. HOTEL BAR/RESTAURANT- LATER

The bar/restaurant is magnificent to behold, stylish, dark and screams out "expensive" to the eye.

Sarah and Irina sit at the bar. The bartenders, male and female, are dressed impeccably, professionally.

IRINA
What you going to have?

Sarah doesn't answer immediately, still taking in her surroundings. A male bartender comes to the women.

JAKE
Good evening, Irina.

IRINA
Evening, Jake. This is my friend,
Sarah.

JAKE
Nice to meet you, Sarah. What can I
get you?

Sarah looks confounded.

IRINA
Jake, let's make it two cosmos.

Jake nods, then steps away to make their drinks.

SARAH
This is *not* where I thought we'd be
when you asked me out for drinks,
Irina. And this *dress*?

IRINA
Beautiful woman deserves to feel
beautiful again, no?

Sarah blushes a bit.

IRINA (CONT'D)
When I saw you today in diner you
looked ten years older than last
time I see you. I know what life is
doing to you cause I can see it
with eyes. So shut up and enjoy.

Jake delivers their drinks to them.

SARAH
Listen, I have some money, let me
pay for these.

Jake nods to Irina, walks away.

IRINA
No need for money. I work here. All
is fine. Later we have dinner, too.

Sarah looks confused.

SARAH
Wait. You work here?

Irina nods, smiles as she motions for Sarah to pick up her cosmo as she does. She holds it out for Sarah to clink her glass.

IRINA
Ostrovia!

Sarah doesn't understand.

IRINA (CONT'D)
Sorry. Cheer!

They take a sip of their drink.

SARAH
What do you do here to be able to tip me so well, wear such incredibly beautiful and expensive dresses and have a limo driver?

IRINA
You really want to know?

SARAH
Will you have to kill me?

They smile at each other, then Irina grows serious.

IRINA
You think you know me. But you really don't. But I know you, Sarah.

SARAH
I'm not understand-

IRINA
When I was 16 my father, a drunken abusive bastard, sold me as a mail order bride to rich American business man.

SARAH
Jesus, Irina! How is that even legal? I'm sorry.

IRINA
It not. But father changed my birth date so I was not minor. I was "18" when I came here, bought and paid for.

Sarah sits in stunned silence, sipping her drink.

IRINA (CONT'D)

This was ten year ago. I not much older than you, Sarah, but I know I look much older.

SARAH

No you don't.

IRINA

It okay.

Irina swallows her drink whole.

IRINA (CONT'D)

Husband much older than me. Kind to me at first but he very jealous, possessive. He wanted what you call a "trophy woman". Wanted to show off his beautiful young wife but no one allowed to talk to me.

SARAH

Wife. Trophy Wife.

IRINA

Yea, "Trophy Wife". And a submissive sex toy for his use when he could get it up.

SARAH

You must have been so traumatized, scared! Coming to a different country, sold, married.

IRINA

I was. Tried killing myself twice.

Irina holds out her left wrist and Sarah see's faded scars running up and down.

IRINA (CONT'D)

If there was hell, I was living in it.

SARAH

Did he hurt you?

IRINA

No. But I was his possession. And told me if I ever cheated he wouldn't kill me. He said he'd slash my face so I be ugly to all men.

Sarah shakes her head, finishes her drink and as she does, Jake delivers two more.

SARAH
Are you still married?

IRINA
Yes, we still married, but he in jail and I filed for divorce.

SARAH
What? Why? What did he do?

IRINA
He was investment banker. When crash hit last year he was caught doing dirty business.

SARAH
I'm so sorry Irina!

IRINA
Don't be. He got what he deserve. He took advantage of me and family because we poor. Then he took advantage of other people and made them poor. Now he poor. No me. No freedom. No money. Fucking cockroach.

SARAH
You still haven't told me how you can afford this, what you do here for a job.

IRINA
Even before the crash and Richard got caught, I knew I had to have plan to get out of this life. Five years ago, without him knowing, I was approached by a man for a job. He own this restaurant, and work for man who own hotel.

Irina falls silent as she takes a sip from her cosmo.

SARAH
And?

IRINA
Ever hear of Girlfriend Experience Escort?

SARAH
I've heard of escorts...

As if a light bulb has gone off in her head, Sarah leans into Irina.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(Whispers) Irina? Are you telling me you're a prostitute?

Irina laughs.

IRINA
No reason to whisper here.

Sarah looks embarrassed.

IRINA (CONT'D)
I know this maybe hard for you to understand, but I control who I see, when I see, how much I get paid. I did what I had to do to plan for future away from slave owner husband. He paid for me. I get paid to have sex not with him. For first time in life, I felt in control, strong, know?

SARAH
Wow, Irina! I'm not judging you, at all. I'm just surprised by this.

IRINA
So now he in jail, poor and here I sit with you, free drinks, free food, dressed nice having a good time. And with lots of money in bank account.

Sarah finishes her second drink. When Jake delievrs a third she tries to wave it off.

IRINA (CONT'D)
Drink, dear Sarah. We have designated driver!

Irina laughs but Sarah looks a little woozy.

SARAH
You said you "know me"? How so?

IRINA
You lost husband. Lost your home. You broke.

(MORE)

IRINA (CONT'D)

Working two jobs, barely enough time to spend with precious little boy. Worn down. Like me, you a slave to a life you have no control of.

Sarah picks up her third drink, sips, thinks.

SARAH

Maybe it's the buzz I'm getting but I don't understand where you're going with all of this?

IRINA

You're beautiful woman, Sarah. Girl next door look as Americans like to call. What I'm saying is...you don't have to work two jobs. You don't have to worry about baby-sitters making too much. You no longer have to take public transportation, can buy any car you want. You don't have to worry about clocking into job that pays nothing.

Sarah looks incredulously at her friend

SARAH

Are you *seriously* asking me to become a prostitute?

IRINA

I'm a Girlfriend Experience Escort.

Sarah begins to get a little angry.

SARAH

You can call it anything you want but you're still a whore. Like I said, I'm not judging you, Irina. I'm not.

Sarah tries to calm herself down, quickly finishes off her third drink, hand visibly shaking.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I could never do that. I wouldn't be able to live with myself. I've only been with Matt. I've never had 'sex'. With me and Matt it was always 'making love'. Having sex with strangers for money is just something I could ever do.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

I hope you understand. I appreciate the offer, really. I'm not angry.

Sarah is now calm, looks sincerely at Irina.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Irina, I'm sorry if anything I said hurt you in anyway. I know you mean well. And part of me is glad you think so much of me that you'd look out for me like this. But I just can't. Ever. But thank you.

IRINA

Not hurt, Sarah. Nothing hurt me anymore. I not offended. I'm just sorry I hurt you. I just want to see you living better life.

They smile deeply at one another. Just then Sarah notices her purse vibrating. She reaches inside and pulls out her cell.

SARAH

Sorry, gotta take this. It's my friend Nicole. She's watching Matthew.

IRINA

Sure, go ahead.

Sarah turns away, placing a finger in her left ear as she answers the phone with her right.

SARAH

Nicole? Everything alright?

Sarah's facial expression changes quickly to worry and concern.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Okay...okay. I will be home soon. You okay?...Okay, Soon you soon.

Sarah turns back to Irina.

SARAH (CONT'D)

It's my son. He's been throwing terrible anger tantrums and we don't know why. He's having a really bad one now. I could barely hear her over his screaming.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT- LATER

Sarah rushes in, sees Nicole holding a sleeping Matthew in her arms. Sarah takes him from her, kisses his forehead.

NICOLE

I'm sorry, Sar, but he's never had an episode like this before. I was scared for him. He was actually punching himself in the face!

Sarah starts to gently swing him in her arms.

SARAH

What was he doing just before it?

NICOLE

Playing with his blocks. He was stacking them. They didn't fall or anything. But it looked like he was trying to move.

SARAH

Move?

NICOLE

Maybe stand? But nothing happened.

Nicole looks at the two, eyes showing concern.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I know I brought this up before but, Sarah, something's not right.

Sarah doesn't look at Nicole.

SARAH

You don't think I know this?

Sarah starts to weep.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You don't think I know he has all the signs of possibly being autistic?

Tears flow down Sarah's face.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I already made an appointment for him to see a pediatrician for tomorrow.

NICOLE

I have off, I can go with-

SARAH

Thanks, Nicole, really. But if I'm going to be knocked down with more bad news I think I want to be alone.

Sarah then whispers to herself "Alone"

INT. PEDIATRICS OFFICES- MONTAGE

In a wordless montage, Sarah is seen with Matthew at various different doctor offices as pediatricians talk to her, watch and study Matthew during hearing tests, sensory tests, visual tests, with Sarah talking more to the various doctors.

INT. PEDIATRICS OFFICE- AFTERNOON

A troubled, tired looking Sarah sits with the doctor, tears in her eyes.

SARAH

Jesus Christ. What am I going to do?

PEDIATRICIAN

That's what were here to disc-

SARAH

I heard everything you told me. I know we caught it early, and despite the severity, with the right doctors, trainers, vitamins, medication, counselors, caregivers there's a chance he can lead a productive life.

PEDIATRICIAN

Yes.

SARAH

But what am I going to do?

PEDIATRICIAN

Be there for-

SARAH

Of course I'm going to be there for him. But *all* of this is going to cost money. Money I don't have.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

And my medical insurance has already told me they won't cover what I can't pay.

PEDIATRICIAN

There are organizations out there that can and will help pay for some-

SARAH

Some. That's great. It really is. Honestly. But some is more than I have. The 'rest' is what I'm worried about.

They sit, silently, as Sarah wipes tears from her eyes.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE- BANK- AFTERNOON

Sarah sits on the edge of a chair facing the bank manager, looking upset.

BANK MANAGER

Mrs. Hoffman, as I explained on the phone, based on your credit score and your lack of necessary income we can not approve this loan. A face to face meeting can not change this.

SARAH

Did you not *read* the purpose of this loan?

BANK MANAGER

Yes I did. And I'm so sorry for your son's health.

SARAH

So it's just the numbers, nothing personal, right?

BANK MANAGER

Right.

SARAH

Am I more than my credit score numbers? Are any of us?

He doesn't know how to answer this, sits in his chair searching his brain for an appropriate answer.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Did you bother to check what my score was 18 months ago before my life fell into the abyss?

BANK MANAGER

Well, I-

SARAH

(seething with controlled anger)
Don't bother. Nothing in my life until this moment matters to a big bank like yours.

BANK MANAGER

Mrs. Hoffman, I really wish I-

SARAH

What's amazing to me is this bank...*this fucking bank* is under investigation for bank fraud. This BANK caused many ordinary everyday people to lose their homes and savings. But when we ask for help, you continue to fuck us over.

BANK MANAGER

Mrs. Hoffman, there is no need for that kind of lang-

SARAH

You're more concerned about my fucking language than the fact my son needs medical help to hopefully live a normal, productive life and you're taking that chance away from him?

Her eyes glower at him, her body visibly shaking from anger she wants to let loose.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Are. YOU. **FUCKING** kidding me?

Sarah turns to walk out of the office, people and workers in the bank staring at her. She turns back to the manager.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Nothing personal, sir. You're just following orders and guidelines. But you're the one in front of me. And since you are? Go fuck yourself.

Sarah walks out of the bank, fighting back tears.

INT. SARAH'S CAR- LATER

Sarah sits, car off, trying to collect her emotions. She pulls her cell phone from her purse, hits a button.

IRINA (V.O.)

Sarah?

Sarah says nothing, looking for a moment like she wants to hang up.

IRINA (V.O.)

Sarah, you there?

SARAH

Irina? I...I...

IRINA (V.O.)

What Sarah? Are you okay?

SARAH

If the offer is still there, I'd like to meet your boss.

There is dead silence on the other end.

IRINA (V.O.)

What's happened? Are you sure?

SARAH

I'm sure. Set it up when you can.

Before Irina can respond, Sarah ends the call, her body visibly trembling.

INT. RESTAURANT- CROWNE PLAZA- AFTERNOON

A tense looking Sarah sits in a booth with Irina. A waitress walks and delivers two cosmos as they talk.

IRINA

Drink. You look like you need it.

A shaking hand reaches out for her glass and Sarah takes a long sip. Irina notices Sarah's hand.

IRINA (CONT'D)

So bank turned down loan. And your son needs how much to start program?

SARAH

It's not just how much, but for how long, too. This will be life going, Irina. My insurance will barely cover any aspect of this.

Sarah takes another long sip from her glass, hand still shaking.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Plus the time I need to give to him...I should have been there more for him. Maybe if I hadn't been working so-

IRINA

I'm not mother, but Sarah you were working two jobs to support you and him. You did nothing wrong and you are getting him help at early stage. STOP with guilt. It will eat you from inside out. I said goodbye to guilt long time ago. Right now, there is no place in your life for it.

Sarah stares at Irina, nods slight, finishes off her drink as Irina motions to waitress to bring another.

IRINA (CONT'D)

This big step, Sarah. You told me you never been with another man before. Mr. Contino knows your story because I told him. Before he interviews you I need to assure him you can do this.

Sarah nods as the waitress sits another drink in front of her.

SARAH

I have no choice.

IRINA

We all have choice, Sarah. You will be giving something you only gave to one man in your life. Can you separate sex from love, job from personal life? That's what he needs to know. And what you need to know about yourself.

SARAH

I will do anything I need to do for my son, Irina. The answer is yes. I can do this, separate sex from love. It's a job that will provide for my son.

Irina stares intently in Sarah's eyes. After a few seconds, she smiles and nods.

IRINA

Easy to say that now, but you will only know for sure the first time you are with client.

Sarah takes another long sip of her cosmo.

IRINA (CONT'D)

Before he meets with you he wants me to tell you how this works, what expected of you, what he will supply to help you make you and him as much money as possible.

SARAH

Is he a pimp?

IRINA

Pimps are for whores. We are escorts. This legit business. You will pay taxes!

SARAH

Health insurance benefits?

IRINA

I wish, but no. Sorry.

Irina finally reaches for her glass and takes a sip.

IRINA (CONT'D)

Slow down there, sister. You don't want to be drunk when you meet Mr. Contino.

Sarah puts her glass down, nods, smiles.

IRINA (CONT'D)

You will be employee of this restaurant. You will be a Hostess and Escort. You choose your hours, and clients. There is a website where your pictures and description will be.

SARAH

Wait? I'm going to have pictures of me online?

IRINA

Yes. It's how the client find you. Once he does he make arrangement to contact you and tell you what kind of Girlfriend Experience he seek, and you decide if you meet him or not. If you book the Experience with client, he pay up-front.

Sarah again reaches for drink, takes a sip.

SARAH

How is this different than being a prostitute or a whore?

IRINA

With whore men just want instant sexual gratification and then they leave. Our clients are looking for a full night, full experience, a girlfriend for the night. Sometime even a weekend.

SARAH

I'm still trying to wrap my head around-

IRINA

You need example? Okay. I've been hired a few times to be a "trophy" girlfriend. Like for a high school reunion. This one guy rented a Porsche, hired me to be girlfriend dressed in sexy dress and he showed off car and me to prove to friends he was success.

SARAH

Was he?

IRINA

No. He was loser.

They break out in laughter.

IRINA (CONT'D)

He broke himself to pay for all of it. It like he was male Cinderella.
(MORE)

IRINA (CONT'D)

When clock strike midnight he was back driving pumpkin working terrible blue collar job. But for one night he did make believe. And, of course, got laid. I rocked his world.

They laugh.

IRINA (CONT'D)

He good man, though. He deserved to have world rocked. He treated me like a princess that night.

SARAH

So they hire you to be something their not? Or to experience something missing in their lives? And not just sexually?

IRINA

Yes. It's not always about sex. Yes, they want sex at end. But it's more. I had one guy, he loved bowling. He also said he was a ass lover and thought women wearing tight jeans bowling were hot. It was a fetish. But wife wanted no part of bowling. He hired me. We drove 20 mile away to alley where no one know him. And we bowled all night, me in tight jeans.

They both start laughing again.

IRINA (CONT'D)

Not all clients will be this easy but this example of what you can expect.

SARAH

What is the payscale?

IRINA

Considering how sexy that body is and that Girl Next Door face, Mr. Contino will probably set you up in top money range.

SARAH

Which is?

IRINA

Starting at \$3,000 a night.

Sarah accidentally almost knocks over her drink.

SARAH

What?? That's twice as much as I
made working 70 hours a week!

Irina smiles slyly.

IRINA

If you can handle this. I mean
really handle it, your son will get
the best care for the rest of his
life. You won't have to live in
that hellhole you tell me about
much longer. And this be only job
you need. You will be able to be
there for little Matthew.

Sarah stares pensively at Irina, not reacting.

IRINA (CONT'D)

Are you ready to meet Mr. Contino?

Sarah nods yes.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER STUDIO- FLASHFORWARD

Sarah sits with a photographer, talking.

INT. MR. CONTINO'S OFFICE- LATER

Sarah sits in a chair in Mr. Contino's office, which is
adorned with pictures of family, pictures of him with
celebrities, his college degree. His desk has a photo of he,
his wife and three daughters, as well as a Kansas City Chiefs
helmet which is signed by many players. The office, desk and
furniture are rich in texture, design, and financial status.
He is wearing a finely tailored suit and tie.

MR. CONTINO

Irina speaks very highly of you.

SARAH

Thank you.

MR. CONTINO

She also told me of your background
and present situation. I'm truly
sorry for the loss of your husband
and the illness of your son.

SARAH
That's very kind of you, thank you.

His eyes then drape over her body.

MR. CONTINO
Irina was correct. You are a very beautiful woman. And our clients are going to be drawn to that Maryann look.

SARAH
Maryann?

MR. CONTINO
From "Gilligan's Island". Maryann.

Sarah chuckles when she catches on.

MR. CONTINO (CONT'D)
Maybe in New York City the men want Ginger. This is Kansas City, the heartland. They want sweet, innocent Maryann, especially when they know that at the end of the 'episode' they're going to have sex with her. That angle is going to work for you.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER STUDIO

Sarah is seen standing before the photographer wearing a red-checked shirt which is tied up to expose her belly and rib cage, along with denim cut-off shorts, posing as a "Maryann".

INT. MR. CONTINO'S OFFICE- CONTINUED

MR. CONTINO
That look gets you noticed. But for the Girlfriend Experience you'll be expected to be whatever they want you to be, provided you accept the client. Whether it's glamorous...

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER STUDIO

Sarah poses while wearing a sleek, sexy short red dress.

INT. MR. CONTINO'S OFFICE- CONTINUED

MR. CONTINO
A seductress...

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER STUDIO

Sarah stands topless, arms covering her breasts, giving the camera a sexy smile.

INT. MR. CONTINO'S OFFICE- CONTINUED

MR. CONTINO
A sports babe they can take to a
Chiefs or Royals game to show off
to their friends...

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER STUDIO

Sarah poses in a Chiefs jersey that is tied up to show off her stomach, wearing sexy Chiefs short shorts, holding a football in her hands, smiling.

INT. MR. CONTINO'S OFFICE- CONTINUED

MR. CONTINO
Or a business woman meeting them to
unwind...

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER STUDIO

Sarah poses in a sexy business outfit that shows off her legs, which are covered by thigh high stockings.

INT. MR. CONTINO'S OFFICE- CONTINUED

MR. CONTINO
Or a friend who understands the
pressures they are under at work,
at home with a wife that doesn't
sexually please them anymore...

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER STUDIO

Sarah poses in various outfits that feature normal summer tops and shorts, sundresses, sweaters and skirts.

INT. MR. CONTINO'S OFFICE- CONTINUED

MR. CONTINO

Each night, each different client, you'll be expected to be someone they need. You'll become that special woman missing from their lives. Think of it as being an actress every night. Can you do that, Sarah?

SARAH

Yes, I can be that and do that, Mr. Contino.

MR. CONTINO

Good, Sarah. I know Irina has told you how the operation works. I'm going to fill in the gaps now. We'll start your asking price at \$3,000 and negotiate from that price point. This is a legitimate business. Taxes will be deducted each week you work. Plus, there is a 30% fee taken out that goes directly to me. That may sound like a lot but for that amount I will place you on our online Escort Portfolio site...

INT. COMPUTER OFFICE

Sarah sits with a woman as they look at a laptop screen, looking at and picking and choosing pictures to be displayed of Sarah from her modeling session.

MR. CONTINO (V.O.)

With our website professional, we will also have you write your own little synopsis of who you are, why the client should choose you...

Sarah sits at a laptop, typing.

MR. CONTINO (V.O.)

Which will be placed with your online photo portfolio. Along with your 'escort' name. No real names are used for your protection.

Sarah and the programmer look at the final product, high five each other. The name above Sarah's pictures is "Tori".

INT. MR. CONTINO'S OFFICE- CONTINUED

MR. CONTINO
The 30% also includes your
wardrobe...

MONTAGE of Sarah and Irina at high end clothing boutiques
trying on and purchasing dresses and outfits.

MR. CONTINO (V.O.)
Jewelry...

MONTAGE of Sarah and Irina picking, wearing, and buying
necklaces, ear rings, bracelets.

MR. CONTINO (V.O.)
Make up and hair styling...

MONTAGE of both women trying different eyeliners, lipstick.
Also, having their hair and nails done.

INT. MR. CONTINO'S OFFICE- CONTINUED

MR. CONTINO
We also supply you with a job as a
hostess here at the hotel. This is
where you will meet your client the
first time. We try and vet each
client to ensure you're not ending
up with a psycho, deviant or serial
killer. It's also why we supply you
with your own hotel room. The
client may or may not want to end
up here, but this is your call
Sarah, not his. And they understand
that. We also give you a driver. He
will pick you up at your home,
drive you to your destination and
take you home when your session is
done. He acts as protection, too.
If the client is made aware someone
is looking after you, the less
chance of him hurting you.

Sarah nods.

MR. CONTINO (CONT'D)
But Sarah, once that door closes or
if you choose to not use your
driver, you are on your own. We
can't guarantee complete safety,
though we will try to as much as we
can. Understand?

Again, Sarah nods.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT- NIGHT

Nicole sits on the floor with Matthew, helping him move around blocks and stacking legos.

Sarah's bedroom door opens. Nicole turns and her eyes bug out when she sees Sarah, who is wearing a low cut red dress with spaghetti straps. It is mid thigh length and she is wearing thigh high stockings. On her ears are fastened ruby earrings.

NICOLE

Holy shit, Sarah! You look...

Sarah stands before her, trying not to look embarrassed but not succeeding.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

What and where is this new job again?

SARAH

I'm a hostess at the Grande Royal.

NICOLE

And that's how hostesses dress in swanky restaurants?

SARAH

Do I look stupid?

NICOLE

No! You look sexy, girl. Never seen you dress like this. Just can't believe that's the accepted attire for a place like the Grande.

Sarah doesn't respond, turns, grabs her little red hand purse.

SARAH

If there is an emergency, call.

NICOLE

What time should you be home?

SARAH

Are you okay if it's late? Really late?

Nicole looks confused.

NICOLE

Yes. But why would it be really late? Don't they close at some point?

Sarah stares without a response, her eyes showing a kind of worry Nicole picks up on.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Sarah?

Sarah turns and walks to the door.

SARAH

Got to go.

As the door shuts behind Sarah, Nicole walks over to the window and watches Sarah climb inside a black Lexus and the driver closing the passenger door.

NICOLE

A driver? What the *hell* are you doing, Sarah?

EXT. PARKING LOT- SAMETIME

The man from earlier scenes watches from his car as Sarah's black lexus pulls away from her apartment complex. As it does, his car starts, pulls away, and starts following it.

INT. BLACK LEXUS- LATER

Sarah sits looking nervous in the backseat. The driver looks at her through his rearview mirror.

WILLIAM

Good evening. I'm William and I am your driver.

SARAH

Nice to meet you, William.

Her voice is shaky in response.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I'm Sar...Tori.

This causes William to smile.

WILLIAM

I'm not a client. Whatever name is most comfortable for you. Tori.

As William pulls the car away from the front of the apartment Sarah takes off her wedding ring and places it into her little red purse, closes her eyes, takes a deep breath.

FLASHBACK

INT. RESTAURANT- CROWNE PLAZA- AFTERNOON

Sarah sitting with Irina in the booth at the restaurant.

SARAH

Do you...do you ever *enjoy* the sex?

IRINA

On some level, yes. If you don't you die inside. For me it's more about empowerment. I control situation. We hired as escorts. Sex is expected at end but not always happen. We are hired to provide them an 'experience'. The guys you choose, *you* choose.

SARAH

I don't want to feel anything.

IRINA

If that true, you better be one hell of actress, Sarah. You better make them believe you feeling something. For hundred dollar they can go to any whore and get off with no mental attachment. For \$3,000 they expect you to be love of their life, for one night.

FLASHBACK ENDS

INT. RESTAURANT- CROWNE PLAZA- LATER

Sarah sits with her first client, a man named Jackson, early 40's and dressed impeccably. They sip wine, eat dinner, talk, laugh. They are now finishing dessert and drinking port wine as a nightcap.

JACKSON

I must say, Tori, I didn't know what to expect tonight. I know, from my own research and history with the escort service, you're new. I might even be your first.

(MORE)

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Nonetheless, you have been
excellent company and I've really
enjoyed myself.

SARAH
Thank you, Jackson. I've had a nice
time, too.

JACKSON
When I'm with an escort I want her
to feel special, too. I don't want
it to be just about me.

Sarah smiles, not knowing how to respond, takes a sip from
her port glass.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
If you're finished, I'd like to go
to your room now and show you what
I mean.

Sarah's eyes briefly flash fear, but she catches herself
doing so, smiles.

SARAH
Okay.

INT. GRANDE HOTEL ROOM- LATER

As they enter the room, Jackson grabs Sarah by her shoulders
gently, and pushes her against the wall, trying to kiss her
lips. Sarah politely pushes him away. Jackson stops trying to
kiss her.

JACKSON
First ground rule? No kissing?

Sarah stands looking a bit startled, caught off guard.

SARAH
I...I'm sorry. I didn't expect that
so quickly.

Jackson smiles slyly, walks over the edge of the bed, sits.

JACKSON
Please, sit.

He motions to her to sit on a cushy chair directly in front
of the bed on which he sits. She does so.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Before I discovered this escort service, in my youth, I was with a few prostitutes. They did what I needed at the time to release pent up sexual needs. But they always felt empty, soulless. But escorts? They do what we ask, they get us off, make us believe they care. And for a hefty price, too. But I want more than a performance for the money I pay.

Sarah shifts in the chair a bit, trying not to look worried.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

I don't want you for fake cumming. I want you to really cum. I want you to feel as much as I do, Tori. Can you do that for me?

Sarah swallows hard, nods yes.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Stand and take off your dress. Slowly.

Sarah stands, trying not to show any worry in her eyes, but her shaking hands give her away as she unzips the back of her dress. This brings a smile to Jackson's face.

After the dress is unzipped, she pulls it off her shoulders and then down and away from her body. She stands before him in a black lace front hooked bra, thong, thigh highs and heels.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Turn around. Slowly.

Sarah slowly turns her body around as Jackson takes it all in.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Now remove your bra.

Sarah's hands reach to the front snap and undoes her bra, slowly peeling it away from her breasts until she is topless.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Beautiful, Tori. You're doing good. Sit back down in the chair now.

Sarah sits back down, trying to give him a sexy look with her eyes that he still isn't believing.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Run your fingers over your nipples.

Sarah's smile fades as shaking fingers move to her nipples.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Pull on them, Tori

Sarah, breathing heavy from the humiliation she is now feeling, begins to pull on her nipples.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Cup your breasts, squeeze them.

Sarah does so, her eyes flashing many things.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Now run your right hand fingertips
down your belly, to your right
thigh, and start gently running
your fingers over your thigh.

Sarah does so, but is now looking down to the floor, not at her client.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Tori, look at me.

She brings her eyes back to his.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Good Tori. Now bring your fingers
to the outside of your thong and
slowly start rubbing yourself.

Sarah follows his instructions, her eyes fighting not to show humiliation.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Now put your hand inside your
thong, Tori. Finger yourself.

As she does, her eyes take on a look of letting go.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Now two fingers, Tori. You're going
to cum for me. No fake orgasm. I
will know.

As Sarah fingers herself inside her thong, she begins to moan for the first time.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
That's it, Tori. Look in my eyes.
Let yourself go. Cum for me.

A tear forms in her left eye as she moans softly, breathlessly, back arching. She cums in front of Jackson.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Look at me.

With her body shuddering from her orgasm, she looks into his eyes as Jackson rises from the bed, kneels before her and removes her thong. He then picks her body up from the chair and carries her to the bed. He begins to undress.

FLASH FORWARD

Sarah watching Matthew with a doctor doing motor skill tests.

INT. GRANDE HOTEL ROOM- PRESENT

A nude Jackson slides on top of her, kissing Sarah's breasts, sucking her nipples.

FLASH FORWARD

Sarah in the bank, making a cash deposit, turning to look at the bank manager who turned down her loan.

INT. GRANDE HOTEL ROOM- PRESENT

Jackson kissing Sarah's neck as his fingers crawl down her stomach until they go between her legs.

FLASH FORWARD

Sarah standing at the pediatrician's reception window, writing out a check and handing it over.

INT. GRANDE HOTEL ROOM- PRESENT

Jackson is now on top of Sarah, thrusting, moaning.

FLASH FORWARD

Sarah and Matthew together doing motor skills in their apartment.

INT. GRANDE HOTEL ROOM- PRESENT

Jackson having an orgasm while on top of and inside Sarah.

INT. BLACK LEXUS- LATER

Sarah sits quietly in the backseat, looking out the window, sadness etched on her face.

WILLIAM

You okay?

Sarah doesn't answer, doesn't look at him.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I've been told it gets easier.

No reaction from Sarah as she reaches into her purse, pulls out her wedding ring and places it on her ring finger.

EXT. CEMETERY- MORNING

Sarah kneels before Matt's headstone, head bowed, crying.

SARAH

I'm so sorry, Matt.

She lifts her head up to look at the headstone.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I'm only doing this for our son. I hope you can forgive me but...

She looks down again, shakes her head, looks back up.

SARAH (CONT'D)

If you can't forgive me...your actions brought me to this, Matt. Not even a goodbye. You left me alone, Matt. And now I have to do what I have to do so our son can have a shot at a normal life.

Camera pans away from her small body kneeling in front of his tombstone.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I've been trying not to judge what you did. You can't judge what I've got to do now.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT- LATER

Sarah stands over her son, asleep in his bed. She closes her eyes as tears stroll down her face.

EXT. TOWN CENTER PLAZA DOWNTOWN KANSAS CITY- NIGHT

It is Christmas season and the Center is dazzling dressed up in its decorations, lights and colorful fountains. Sarah is walking with a much taller man named DAVID. Both are bundled up to keep warm from the winter temperatures. Christmas music is heard from the plaza's loud speakers.

SARAH

I've only been here once in my life
but it was during summertime.

DAVID

Never been here this time of year?

SARAH

Nope. I've seen pictures of it
online but in person?

DAVID

Pretty spectacular, isn't it?

SARAH

It's breathtakingly beautiful.

David smiles as he puts his arm around Sarah as they continue walking.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT- LATER

They sit at a table overlooking a window where an outside fountain can be seen dancing, bathed in lights that continually change colors. Behind them, a fireplace is seen. They are finishing their meals with after dinner coffees.

SARAH

Yeah, I've been thinking of getting
a dog. I think my son would love
one, and it would be good for him,
too. How old is Thunder?

DAVID

He's 8 now, but not slowing up yet.
Still got some puppy in him. How
old is your son?

SARAH
He's two and a half now.

DAVID
Terrible two's?

SARAH
Nah. He's an angel. I think a dog
would help center him more.

DAVID
Center?

SARAH
My son is autistic. It's hard for
even me to break into his world.
But I think a dog might be a
perfect companion for him.

DAVID
Dogs are awesome. Twenty four/seven
unconditional love. I think your
son would bond instantly.

Sarah smiles as she thinks to herself, takes a sip of her
coffee.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I know we just met, but I can
already tell you're a very caring
person and a great mom, Tori.

SARAH
Aww, really? Thank you.

DAVID
I got Thunder when I got back to
help 'center' me, too.

SARAH
You've been back from Afghanistan
eighteen months now?

David nods "yes".

SARAH (CONT'D)
And has he helped center you?

DAVID
He's a Service Dog for military
people suffering from PTSDs. Having
a constant companion has been a
life saver for me. Whenever this
brain starts reliving what...

He grows quiet.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Simple, direct answer as to not
bore you: Yes.

They both laugh.

INT. GRANDE HOTEL ROOM- LATER

With soft Christmas music playing in the background, David sits on the edge of the bed. Sarah, who has been wearing a tight, semi-low cut buttoned down red sweater and black skirt, stands before him and starts to slowly unbutton her sweater. David reaches up to stop her fingers.

DAVID
I'm not looking for that tonight,
Tori.

He takes her hands and brings her down next to him on the bed.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I just want...I need to be held. I
just need to be held. And fall
asleep in each other's arms. Is
that okay?

With understanding eyes, Sarah smiles warmly, places her arms around David. As she does, it looks like a huge weight is lifted from his broad shoulders. He softly, quietly cries on Sarah's shoulder.

SARAH
Ssssh. Everything's okay now,
David. Everything's okay.

The two lie down, arms wrapped around each other as David falls asleep in Sarah's arms.

INT. BLACK LEXUS- LATER

William looks in his rear view mirror, see's Sarah is smiling to herself.

WILLIAM
See, it does get easier.

Sarah looks into his eyes through the mirror, smiles.

MONTAGE of

Sarah with different clients, on different dates, in different situations.

Sarah at a restaurant.

Sarah at a concert.

Sarah at a club dancing.

Sarah trying not to laugh as she's at a bowling alley, wearing tight jeans, with an older man watching staring at her ass as she bowls, huge grin on her face.

Sarah walking into the bank making deposits, looking at the bank manager who turned her down her loan.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. BLACK LEXUS- NIGHT

Sarah sits in the backseat wearing a prom dress. Next to her is a red-head 17 year-old high school senior named Ralph, face full of zits. When he speaks, his voice cracks from nerves.

RALPH

I want to thank you again, Tori,
for agreeing to be my date.

Sarah smiles warmly.

SARAH

It's my pleasure, Ralph.

Ralph sits in awkward silence, his bow tie slightly ajar. When Sarah reaches over to fix it and touches him, he acts like he's been struck by lightning.

SARAH (CONT'D)

It's okay. I'm just fixing your bow
tie.

Face flushed, he laughs as he watched her adjust it.

SARAH (CONT'D)

None of my business, but who is
paying for this tonight?

RALPH
My brother, Scott.

SARAH
That was the man I met when we
picked you up?

RALPH
Yes.

SARAH
Do your parents know?

RALPH
They died two years ago.

SARAH
Sorry, I didn't know.

RALPH
My dad lost everything when the
crash happened. He and mom fought a
lot. He drank a lot. When night
when I wasn't home he took out his
gun and...

His words run dry.

RALPH (CONT'D)
Anyway, Scott took me into his
apartment and has been looking
after me since.

SARAH
Sounds like he's a good man.

RALPH
Look what he got me for a
graduation present!

Ralph finally summons the nerve to look at her and smile.
Sarah smiles back.

SARAH
What do you think your friends will
say when they see us walk in-

RALPH
I don't have many friends, Tori. I
mean, look at me.

SARAH
What do you mean, look at you?
You're a handsome young man!

Ralph looks a little annoyed.

RALPH

You don't have to placate me, Tori. I know where I stand on the dating food chain.

SARAH

Ralph, don't ever think so low of yourself. If I thought you were low on the "dating food chain" I wouldn't be here.

RALPH

My brother had to pay for you to be here, Tori.

SARAH

I pick and choose who I'm with. Just because your brother offered didn't mean I had to accept.

Ralph looks at her with eyes that want to believe.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Honest, Ralph. If I didn't find you handsome and sweet I wouldn't be here. I *chose* to be your prom date.

Ralph smiles the biggest grin in his life, and Sarah matches it.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Friends or no friends, what do you think your classmates will think of us tonight?

RALPH

That I had to pay you to be my date. And that's okay. I will be there with the prettiest girl and they will be wondering...if I paid for you, does that mean we're going to do it afterwards.

He smiles at Sarah, his face red.

RALPH (CONT'D)

I mean, I don't expect you to, you know, do it with me. But just them wondering...

William looks back at Sarah from his rearview mirror, smirking. Sarah catches him, grins back at him.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM- NIGHT

A brief montage of Sarah and Ralph walking into the prom, eyes of students on them, faces aghast, fingers pointing, whispers to each other. Sarah and Ralph ignore the commotion as they walk in hand in hand.

They dance, both fast and slow. They talk. They mingle with other students.

During a slow dance, Sarah reaches in and kisses Ralph softly on the lips, then lays her head on his shoulder. Ralph looks like he's died and gone to heaven.

INT. BLACK LEXUS- LATER

Sarah holds Ralph's hand as William drives them from the prom.

SARAH
Have you ever been with a girl
before tonight?

Ralph shyly nods "no".

SARAH (CONT'D)
So tonight, I was your first kiss.

Face turns red as he nods "yes".

SARAH (CONT'D)
I feel honored, Ralph. Honestly.

Face turns even more red. Sarah looks up into William's rearview, nods to him. William smiles, nods back.

EXT. PARKING LOT- LATER

The black Lexus pulls into a darkened parking lot.

INT. BLACK LEXUS- SAMETIME

RALPH
What are we doing stopping here?

SARAH
William, would you mind giving us
some privacy?

WILLIAM
Not at all, Tori.

William exits the car grinning.

RALPH

Tori? What are we-

SARAH

I had a wonderful time tonight with you, Ralph. You were a perfect gentleman and I'm honored to have been your prom date.

Ralph doesn't know how to respond.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You deserve more firsts tonight.

She shifts herself over to him and takes his right hand and places it on her left breast. She leans in and starts to kiss him softly. He responds by kissing her back, awkwardly but deeply. Sarah then pulls down her dress on the left side, exposing her breast. Ralph's eyes nearly bulge out at the sight. She places his hand back on her breast as she continues kissing him. Her left hand goes down to his tuxedo pants and starts squeezing his cock through his pants. Ralph starts to moan louder and louder until he orgasms. He is breathless.

RALPH

Oh my God, Tori!

Sarah quiets him.

SARAH

No need to talk. You gave me a night to remember. I hopefully gave you one in return, too.

He nods, tears in his eyes from pure happiness, which causes Sarah to smile. Sarah knocks on the window. William soon reenters the car. He looks at Sarah through his mirror, nods approvingly and she nods back at him.

EXT. SINGLE HOME- MORNING

A moving van with movers bustling about moving furniture into the house. Sarah comes walking down the front steps to the "For Sale" sign, removing it and handing it over to a female realtor.

INT. BANK MANAGERS'S OFFICE- MORNING

The bank manager sits in his office staring at his computer when there is a knock on his door. He looks up and see's it's Sarah.

SARAH
May I come in?

He smiles and nods.

BANK MANAGER
Hello Mrs...Mrs...

SARAH
Sarah. Sarah Hoffman.

BANK MANAGER
Yes, Mrs. Hoffman. Come on in. How can I help you?

SARAH
The time for help was 8 months ago and you didn't. I just wanted to apologize for my meltdown that day.

BANK MANAGER
There's no need to apologi-

SARAH
I just wanted to tell you that things are much better now. But because of your denying me the loan I needed to take care of my sick son, I've had to do things no mom should ever have to do. Over the past 8 months you've probably noticed I've been coming in weekly making deposits.

He looks at her confused where this is going.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Despite the money I'm paying for my son's medical needs, and buying a new home, at an institution which is NOT yours, I currently had over \$100,000 in your bank.

This causes the bank manager to smile.

BANK MANAGER

I'm glad to hear things have turned around for you and your son, Mrs. Hoffman. If there's anything we can do for you. We can set you up in a high earning Money Mark-

SARAH

I don't think you heard me. It's amazing how you stop listening after dollar signs are presented. I said I **HAD** over \$100,000 in your bank.

BANK MANAGER

I don't understand?

Sarah holds out her right hand and shows him a cashiers check with 6 figures typed out on it.

SARAH

I wasn't a sum of my numbers then. I'm not a sum of my numbers now. I'm a real person, same today as I was then when I was poor. But I guess I'm more real now, right?

She turns away from him to leave his office, then turns back.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Fuck you very much.

Mouth ajar, the bank manager watches Sarah as she leaves the bank.

EXT. KAUFFMAN STADIUM- NIGHT

Sarah, dressed in a Royals baseball jersey and denim cut-offs sits in a seat next to David as they watch a baseball game. A cotton candy vendor walks by. Sarah nudges David's shoulder, motions to the vendor.

DAVID

Cotton candy?

Sarah nods, smiling. David motions to him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Two please.

The vendor hands over two pink sugary treats to Sarah as David pulls out cash and pays for them.

SARAH
Thank you. Can't remember the last
time I had cotton candy!

DAVID
Honestly, this is my first. I'm a
cotton candy virgin.

SARAH
No way!

DAVID
Way.

Sarah pulls a lump from her own and brings it to David's
mouth.

SARAH
Open up, virgin, here comes the
sweet stuff.

He opens his mouth and Sarah pushes the cotton candy into his
mouth. He starts to chew, then stops, laughing.

DAVID
Where did it go?

Sarah starts laughing, too.

SARAH
It's pure sugar. It dissolves,
fool!

They both start laughing.

EXT. KAUFFMAN STADIUM PARKING LOT- LATER

The two walk through the parking lot, holding hands.

SARAH
I had a really nice time. It's been
years since I've been here.

DAVID
My first time taking in a Royals
game here. Love the stadium.

SARAH
How's it compare to where the
Rangers play?

DAVID
Much nicer stadium. Cozier.
Friendlier fans.

She looks up into his eyes, smiling.

DAVID (CONT'D)
And prettier, too.

This causes Sarah to smile wider.

INT. OKLAHOMA JOE'S BAR-B-Q RESTAURANT- LATER

The two are chowing down on some serious Kansas City barbecue. David has a huge brisket sandwich which is quite messy. As he takes a bite, the sauce goes all over his face, which causes Sarah to chuckle. He hears her laughing, stares at her, then nods down to her plate of ribs, motioning for her to eat. She smiles, grabs a rib, takes a bite.

DAVID
Awesome isn't it.

Sarah doesn't answer because her mouth is full but nods with a smile. Once she swallows, she looks at David as he continues eating.

SARAH
Glad you're enjoying yourself
tonight.

He nods, swallows his next bite, takes a sip of a coke.

DAVID
I am. Baseball game, check. First
cotton candy, check. Brisket
sandwich, check. Beautiful woman,
check.

They both smile.

SARAH
How does Kansas City barbecue match
up against what you're used to from
Texas?

DAVID
Just as good if not better. But you
just can't go wrong with any
barbecue. Well, unless you're in
the Carolina's. But we won't
discuss that.

They both laugh. Their conversation continues as they eat.

SARAH
What part of Texas did you grow up
in?

DAVID
Lubbock.

SARAH
Any brothers or sisters?

DAVID
Had a sister, Charlene.

SARAH
Had?

DAVID
She passed away about 10 years ago
of cancer.

SARAH
I'm so sorry.

DAVID
It's okay. (pauses, sips his coke)
She was the best big sister a
brother could have. Taught me so
much. Protected me.

SARAH
Sounds like she was a special
person. What did she protect you
from?

DAVID
Life, in general. (laughs) Doing
stupid things little kids do.
Looking out for me. Protecting me
from monsters.

SARAH
You mean like in the closet, under
the bed monsters?

DAVID
Those, of course (laughs). But real
one's, too.

SARAH
Such as?

David grows quiet for a moment as he sits back, reflects.

DAVID

My dad was a drinker, and frustrated by life. So he would beat me. Charlene would always step in, try and stop him from taking out his pain on me.

Sarah looks down, grabs her drink, takes a sip, looks into his eyes.

SARAH

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to-

DAVID

No worries, Tori. Really. We live, we learn, we lose, we remember and we move on best we can.

These words get to Sarah and she smiles warmly at him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Char was so much like my mom, it was uncanny and precious. She was going to be a floral designer like my mom was.

SARAH

Wow, your mom is a florist? I love flowers.

DAVID

She was until the day she died, and loved it.

SARAH

Geez, I'm so sorry, again. How long ago did your mom pass?

DAVID

A year before I enlisted. After she was gone there was nothing for me in Texas. Haven't talked to my dad since.

There is a long silence as David studies Sarah's reaction to all of this, wanting to ask about her family.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I know the rules. Nothing personal regarding you. So I won't ask. But I can see there's something about my past that might be part of your's, too?

Sarah looks into his eyes, thinking before she responds.

SARAH

I'm an only child. My dad died when I was very young, too young for me to remember him. My mom...she drank. She was always a kind person until she started seeing my StepMonster. And he drank, too. (pause) Things were never the same after that.

Sarah looks down at her food as both remain silent. Sarah then looks up with a smile.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Enough sadness about family. What was your mom's favorite flower?

DAVID

She loved them all, really, but her favorite was this very under appreciated flower called a Jonquil.

SARAH

Never heard of it. What does it look like?

DAVID

It always reminds me of a carnation. It's got big white pedals but inside those are smaller yellow pedals. My mom always told me the white pedals were her and the yellow pedals were me and Char and she'd always be there, looking over us like the white pedals. If anything tried to harm us, she'd close up, protect us.

This causes Sarah to look deep into David's eyes, smiling warmly.

SARAH

That's sweet. I like that thought.

INT. BLACK LEXUS- LATER

With William driving, the two sit in the back, chatting.

SARAH

You're my first repeat customer.

This causes David to laugh, which catches Sarah off guard.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What? Did I say something funny.

DAVID
No, you didn't. It just sounds,
well, funny. "Customer".

Sarah looks slightly embarrassed.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I will take that as a compliment.

SARAH
Good, because you should.

He reaches his hand to hers and holds it as they smile awkwardly to each other.

DAVID
I just hope one day you won't think
of me as just another 'customer'.

Sarah doesn't know how to respond. They sit in awkward silence which is broken thankfully by William.

WILLIAM
We're here.

They both break their stare and look out the window to see the car has pulled in front of the hotel.

SARAH
Are we going inside?

David sits silently, thinking, looking into Sarah's eyes, still holding her hand.

DAVID
Not tonight. This is the date I
asked for and I can't be happier
with how it turned out, Sarah.

She stares into his eyes with a look that could almost be called 'disappointed' but she quickly snaps that look away, smiles.

SARAH
I feel the same way. I had a great
time. Thank you.

He leans in to kiss her but it's not the kiss Sarah expects. He gives her a quick, soft, warm kiss on her lips.

They smile quietly at each other until he releases her hand and opens the door.

DAVID
Good night, Sarah.

SARAH
Good night, David.

David looks up front.

DAVID
Thank you, William.

WILLIAM
You're welcome, David. Good night.

David exits the car. Sarah sits in silence as David disappears from sight.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Be careful, Sarah.

Sarah's train of thought is broken.

SARAH
What do you mean?

WILLIAM
I've seen it before, but not to this extent.

SARAH
I'm not understand-

WILLIAM
He's falling for you. In a big way.

SARAH
David? No he's-

WILLIAM
Yes, he is. And I can see you like him as well. Just remember the boundaries, Sarah.

Sarah gives William a look of "no way" but then breaks it off, catching herself and her emotions.

SARAH
Just a 'customer', William.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE- MORNING

Sarah is on the floor with Matthew, trying to help steady him as he tries to stand on his own when there's a knock on the door. Sarah gets up from the floor.

SARAH
Stay right there, little man. You
are doing such a great job!

Sarah walks through the living room until she reaches the front door. She looks through the peep hole, whispers "shit", takes a deep breath, opens the door. It is Nicole. She is holding a present.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Hi Nicole.

Nicole does not smile. She looks ticked off.

NICOLE
Hi, Sarah.

SARAH
Come in.

Nicole brushes past her friend, Sarah closes the door.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Sorry I haven't had a chance to
invite you over, but I'm glad you
came.

Nicole hands her the present.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You shouldn't have, but thank you.
Come into the living room.

Nicole walks in. When she sees Matthew she finally smiles and goes to him.

NICOLE
Hi Matthew. Missed you, buddy. Look
how big you've got!

Though he doesn't look at her, he smiles when he hears her voice, claps his hands together and makes a "mmmmm" sound. She bends over and gives him a kiss on the top of his head.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Oh my God, he's making sounds!

SARAH
He started about a month ago. He's
doing so well with the help he's
been receiving.

Nicole gives Matthew an adoring smile.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Have a seat. Can I get you some-

NICOLE
Let's cut to the chase, Sarah.

The two women remain standing.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Nice house, Sarah. Saw your new
Mazda 3 out front. Very nice as
well.

Sarah remains blank-faced.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Been five months since you replaced
me with a new caregiver. Expensive
one, too, I hear.

She waits for some kind of response from Sarah, grows more
agitated when there is none.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Eight months ago you walked out of
your apartment looking like Julia
Roberts in "Pretty Woman" saying
you were starting a new job at the
Grande as a "hostess". Now you have
a new home, a new car, Matt is
getting the best care possible. And
when I spoke to Gloria yesterday
she said a mysterious benefactor
made a \$10,000 deposit into their
checking account.

Sarah briefly looks down to the floor looking sheepish, but
regains her resolve, looks Nicole intently in her eyes.

SARAH
And your point is?

NICOLE
I've done some research. You've
never lied to me, Sarah. So I'm
going to ask this. Are you a
'hostess' or an 'escort'?

They stare each other down. Finally, Sarah gives a sarcastic laugh.

SARAH
Does it matter, Nicole?

NICOLE
Yes, it does!

SARAH
To who, Nikki?

NICOLE
Me. Matt's family. Matt. To God!
And to your *son!*

Sarah backs away from Nicole, paces around the room a few seconds, trying to control her emotions.

SARAH
Yes, I've become an escort. I provide a service to men and in turn I get paid. Very well. So, yeah, part of the job is fucking for money.

Nicole shakes her head no, disappointment on her face.

SARAH (CONT'D)
As for anyone else's concern? Matt's family helped us financially so much...Matt? He's gone, Nikki. I loved him and still do but I've moved on because *I had to*. Mourning his loss didn't help financially.

Sarah closes her eyes, trying not to choke up.

SARAH (CONT'D)
And God, Nikki? Seriously? You mean the same God who took Matt from me and his son, from his parents? The God who struck down Peter when the stress of losing his son and job became too much? The God who gave my son autism the same time I lost my house?

Very visible, angry and hurt tears come down Sarah's face.

SARAH (CONT'D)
How fucking dare you judge me, Nicole. All that I've done was for Matthew. ALL. OF. IT.
(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

Unless you want to jump into my skin, fuck off with your judging of what I'm doing to make sure he gets the help he needs to have a chance at a productive life, to live in a neighborhood that doesn't have drug dealers and junkies standing outside the front door.

NICOLE

You're a whore selling her body.

SARAH

How's your job, Nicole? Get that promotion yet? Remember telling me your boss mentioned how nice you look everyday? Remember telling me if "showing the girls a little and my legs a lot helps me climb up the ladder, why not?"

NICOLE

Fuck you, Sarah. That's completely different? I didn't have sex to get-

SARAH

You *used* sex to get what you wanted. You may not have spread your legs, but you still used your body. Don't kid yourself. Only difference between you and me is, I get paid a lot more than you ever will, and I need to because I have a family.

NICOLE

Jesus Christ, Sarah. I don't even know who you are!

SARAH

I'm still me. You just can't see that because you think you're better than me. If you don't understand my decisions, if you can't accept them, if you can't support me...get the fuck out of my house, Nicole.

Both women, tears and anger in their eyes, stare at one another. Nicole is the first to blink, break off the stare. She leans down, kisses Matthew on the cheek, stands and leaves the room. When the front door is heard closing, Sarah crumbles to the floor in a flood of tears, both hurt and angry.

Without noticing, Matthew has crawled to her and lays his head on his mom's knee. Like a shot of adrenaline, Sarah's tears of sadness change into tears of joy.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Matty!! You just crawled!! You
crawled!!

She picks him up and kisses his whole face as he giggles.

INT. HOFFMAN HOUSE- AFTERNOON

Sarah sits on a Sofa in Peter and Gloria's Living Assisted apartment. Gloria does not sit with her but sits in a love seat across, an upset look at her face. Peter is the middle of both, sitting in a wheelchair.

SARAH
Look at you, Peter! Jazzy set of
wheels! I expect you to take me on
a ride to the Ozarks on that baby!

He smiles. The conversation grows quiet, tension filling the room.

GLORIA
Nicole told us it's been you making
deposits into our checking account.

Sarah, sensing what's about to happen, tries to ease things by smiling warmly.

SARAH
You did so much for me and Matt
when we got marr-

GLORIA
I wonder why you would keep such a
thing a secret from us?

Sarah tries to think of a response but before she can Gloria continues.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Maybe it's because you're ashamed
of what you had to do to make this
kind of money.

Sarah briefly looks like a deer in the headlights.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Maybe it's because you know once we found out what you've been doing to get this money, we wouldn't approve and certainly wouldn't accept it.

SARAH

Gloria, you have to-

GLORIA

Have to what? Accept that our daughter in law is now a whore?

SARAH

I'm not a-

GLORIA

You can call it any fancy name that you want, Sarah, but a woman who sleeps with men for money is still a whore.

SARAH

I'm sorry you feel this way. But you knew what kind of financial-

GLORIA

Yes, we know. But there has to be better solutions in today's world than to sell yourself. You may think you're helping Matthew. Maybe you are. But every time you do this, you are putting yourself in harm's way. You could be hurt, killed.

SARAH

It's not like that. I have someone who pro-

GLORIA

And each time you degrade yourself you're desecrating the memory of our son.

This hits Sarah like a slap in the face and her eyes tear up but she remains quiet. Peter, his voice affected by his condition, stops this interrogation, firmly.

PETER

ENOUGH!

Gloria is caught off guard by her husband's voice.

PETER (CONT'D)
That is enough!

He glowers at his wife.

PETER (CONT'D)
Leave us. I want to speak to Sarah,
alone.

This floors Gloria. After a moment, she collects her emotions, stands reluctantly, then walks through the room. We hear the front door shut. Sarah's wipes the tears from her eyes.

PETER (CONT'D)
She does not speak for me.

Sarah's eyes open wider with appreciation.

PETER (CONT'D)
All good parents sacrifice
themselves in someday for their
child. What you're doing is no
different.

She reaches out to hold Peter's hand, nodding a "thank you".

PETER (CONT'D)
As long as I'm alive, you will be
apart of this family. Always.

Tears of happiness appear in Sarah's eyes.

PETER (CONT'D)
I'm just terribly sorry I put you
through this. It's my fault.

Peter now begins to cry as Sarah squeezes his hand tighter.

SARAH
Don't you ever say that, Peter! And
don't ever blame yourself for any
of this.

He shakes his head "no no no".

PETER
Promise me you stay safe. I don't
know what I'd do if you got hurt.

She nods "yes, leans over and kisses him on the cheek.

SARAH
Promise.

PETER

And promise me you get out. Make what you need and then get out.

They hug each other, crying.

INT. GRANDE HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

Sarah, wearing a slinky purple dress that shows off her cleavage and legs, sits in a love seat. Across from her is a man named Anthony, in his early fifties with salt and pepper hair, sitting in a chair.

ANTHONY

Thank you for agreeing to spend the evening in your room here at this wonderful hotel.

SARAH

I understand your concerns.

ANTHONY

A married councilman can't afford being seen in a public setting with a beautiful like yourself without drawing suspicions or cell phones downloading pictures that will go viral.

Sarah nods in agreement.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

You look stunning, Tori. Everything I asked you to wear, which wasn't much. And purple! I have a thing for the color purple. And, no, I don't mean the movie.

He laughs while she smiles.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Mind if I make us drinks?

He points over the mini fridge across from where they sit.

SARAH

Help yourself. I'm going to pass, however.

He stands.

ANTHONY
Come on? I insist! You can't have
me drink alone!

She thinks about it, smiles.

SARAH
Okay. But just one.

ANTHONY
Great!

He walks over to the mini fridge, opens it.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Such beautiful, colorful bottles. I
love the look of alcohol bottles.
Always wanted to be a bartender.

He bends down to look inside.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
What would you like?

SARAH
What are you having?

ANTHONY
I'm a vodka man, myself. How about
I make us some screwdrivers?

SARAH
Sure, why not.

He reaches inside and pulls out two mini vodka bottles and two small cans of orange juice, places them on top of the fridge, and grabs two glasses that sit on the ledge next to the fridge.

ANTHONY
While I'm making these, how about
you put on some music worthy of a
night with such a beautiful woman.
And then get out of that dress so I
can see if you're *truly* wearing
everything I requested.

Over his shoulder we see Sarah stand and walk over to a CD player. Anthony reaches into his pants pocket when he hears Sarah changing channels, and pulls out a small bottle. He briefly turns to look at Sarah to make sure she isn't watching him. He grabs a pill from the bottle, places the bottle back into his pants pocket.

SARAH
Soft jazz?

ANTHONY
Sure.

He opens the pill and empties its contents inside her glass. Again, over his shoulder we can make out Sarah taking off her dress as he quickly pours the vodka and orange juice into the glasses, then turns to face her. His eyes dance when he sees she is standing before him wearing a see through purple lace bra and matching thong, with a silver belly chain hugging her tummy.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Wow, Tori. And you even remembered
the belly chain, too.

She smiles seductively as he hands her the glass.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Cheers, Tori.

Sarah nods as they clink their glasses and take a drink. She goes back towards the chair but he stops her.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
No no no. We have to finish our
drink before we proceed!

He gives her a devilish smile and then gulps down his drink, then nods to her to do the same.

SARAH
I thought this was a drink, not a
shot?

He smiles, then nods again. Sarah places the glass to her lips and swallows its contents.

ANTHONY
Let's go sit on the bed now.

He takes her by the hand and walks her to the bed, then sits her on it, standing before her.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
You're simply stunning, Tori.

SARAH
Thank you.

ANTHONY

You know I love my wife. But there are things she'd never do, has never done.

Sarah looks at him and suddenly her eyes start to flutter.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

And I know you have your *own* ground rules, too. But for \$5,000, I expect them to be broken.

Sarah is now bobbing a bit, trying to speak but her words are slurred and slow.

SARAH

What...are...you...talking...about?

He walks over to a chair where his suit jacket is wrapped around it, reaches into its pockets and pulls out 4 ties that have been bunched up. He then turns and walks to her, unwrapping them for her to see.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Wait...what...are...those-

ANTHONY

See, she's not into bondage or S&M.

SARAH

You put something in my-

ANTHONY

There are *a lot* of things she's never been into.

Sarah's eyes open wide, then flutter again, barely able to keep her head up. When she tries to stand he pushes her back down on the bed, roughly. He then grabs her hair forcibly and drags her to the top of the bed.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Tonight, there are no rules.

Sarah tries to scream but he slaps her face, hard.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

If you scream again, I *will* choke you until you pass out.

He slaps her face again as he roughly turns her body onto her stomach. He grabs her flailing left hand, secures it to the bedpost with a tie. He does the same with the right hand. Sarah feebly tries to fight back but is helpless.

He runs his fingernails roughly down her back, leaving marks. He does the same to her legs until he reaches her left foot. He secures her left, then right foot to the bedposts using the ties. She is now spread eagle. Sarah's eye make up is smeared, one eye bruised from being slapped, her cheeks flushed from the slaps, tears now coming down her face but no sound escapes her opened mouth. He grabs her thong at the sides and pulls it hard upwards, causing her to yelp in pain, until the material breaks free. Her eyes roll white as he enters her from behind.

INT. GRANDE HOTEL ROOM- LATER

There is a knock on the door but Sarah does not answer.

WILLIAM (V.O.)
Tori? It's William.

Again, a knock but Sarah is not seen. Finally, the door opens and William enters. He looks around the room, does not see Sarah.

WILLIAM
Tori?

He sees the bathroom door shut, walks towards it. As he passes the bed he sees blood stains on the white sheets.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Sarah??!!

He doesn't bother knocking on the bathroom door, swings it open and finds Sarah in a fetal position inside the bathtub, barely awake, face red and bruised. There is blood coming from underneath where Sarah cradles herself.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Jesus!

He grabs his cell from his slacks pocket goes to make a call.

SARAH
No. Stop.

He stops the call, bends on a knee to help reach Sarah in the tub. Her voice is hoarse, groggy.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Don't call anyone.

WILLIAM
You're hurt!

SARAH
I will be fine.

WILLIAM
Your face...you're bleeding.

SARAH
Comes with the territory. I'm just surprised it took this long.

He grabs a white robe, wraps it around her nude body, picks her up and carries her to the bed.

WILLIAM
Mr. Contino needs to know what-

SARAH
Fine. We'll tell him so this monster can't hurt any of the other girls. But not now. Not tonight.

WILLIAM
We have to at least take you to the-

SARAH
Tomorrow is Matthew's birthday. I'm not taking the chance of not being there for him. (She looks sternly at William) Okay? (eyes soften). Please?

He reluctantly nods.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE- MORNING

Sarah sits on the floor with Matthew, helping him open birthday presents. Make up covers the bruise under her left eye.

INT. GRANDE HOTEL ROOM- LATER

Sarah, wearing a nice coral buttoned down top and black skirt, lays on the bed facing David, who is dressed in a black T-shirt and jeans.

DAVID
Time to ask the 'Elephant in the room' question.

He lowers his gaze from her eyes to the area below her left eye.

SARAH
Fell down the steps.

He gives her a look of disbelief.

SARAH (CONT'D)
That's my story and I'm sticking
with it. And I'd appreciate if
you'd drop it. Now.

He smiles at her, nods as she pokes him with a finger to his
chest.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I don't ask you about your battle
wounds.

DAVID
That's because you haven't seen
them yet.

SARAH
So...you do have some?

He gives her a polite smile.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What was it like over there?

There's a long pause as David looks into her eyes, not
responding, thinking.

DAVID
You haven't told me much about
yourself but you did tell me your
husband died in Afghanistan.

Sarah doesn't verbally answer but slowly nods "yes".

DAVID (CONT'D)
He never talked about it?

Sarah does not answer, looks uncomfortable. David doesn't
respond, either, as they lay there quietly.

SARAH
I'm sorry. You don't have to answer
that.

He reaches his hand up and starts running his fingers through
her hair.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 It's your time, it's whatever you want. I shouldn't ask such personal questions. It's not fair.

Again, it goes quiet as David continues stroking her hair.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 But I need to ask one thing. You don't have to answer this, either.

David nods "okay"

SARAH (CONT'D)
 Were...were you injured down there?

David chuckles uncomfortably.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 If you were, I'm truly sorry for-

DAVID
 Why do you ask that question, Tori?

SARAH
 Because my clients hire me, ultimately, for sex. Yet you haven't wanted-

DAVID
 Sex isn't important to me, Tori.

SARAH
 What is then?

DAVID
 Making love.

Surprised by his answer, Sarah looks away, almost embarrassed.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Quid pro quo. I will answer your questions if you answer mine.

Sarah pulls her hair away from his fingers, sits up, looking a bit upset.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry. But for me, this has to go both ways. So if you're not willing to-

SARAH
What do you want to know?

DAVID
Was it easy to go from making love
with a husband to having sex with
men who were paying you?

Sarah looks hurt by the question, David sees this.

DAVID (CONT'D)
No accusations, here, Tori. And no
judgments. You don't have to answer
the-

SARAH
That's between me and God. I'm
doing what I need to do to survive.

Sarah turns back to look into his eyes.

SARAH (CONT'D)
This is a job. I can't afford to
allow personal feelings to get
involved. There are things I want
to share, but can't. I hope you
understand. I just can't.

David reaches his hand out again to start stroking her face.

DAVID
Boundaries. I understand.

She begins responding to his touch as he looks like he wants
to probe the 'boundaries' issue, but doesn't.

DAVID (CONT'D)
But I can allow my personal life to
crossover?

She smiles, nods "yes".

DAVID (CONT'D)
So you're not just an escort but a
really high priced shrink, too.

She laughs out loud.

SARAH
Can be, if that's what you need
from me.

David grows serious.

DAVID

You want to know what it was like over there?

Here eyes widen as she gently nods yes.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Do you think it will somehow bring you closer to your husband.

Innocent eyes answer for Sarah while she remains quiet.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I became close to one of the privates in my platoon. We had been together since boot camp. He was like a brother to me.

He drifts off, deep in thought.

DAVID (CONT'D)

One day we were passing a village and got ambushed. We didn't know what direction the shots were coming. All we knew was we were taking in a lot of artillery and we were cornered. There were three Humvees, we were in the first one. We radioed in for help from the Air Force, stood our ground but the second Hummer got bombed. As the soldiers inside made a break to get out, we tried to cover them. One of the soldiers stepped on an IED and blew up. My buddy was covered in this soldier's body parts, but we didn't have time to...

He slows down, a lump in his throat, composes himself and continues.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Both of the men in the second Humvee were gone. We got out, along with the men in the third Hummer. We got inside the village, took cover, waiting for air support. We still didn't know who was firing at us or from where. Things died down a bit as we hunkered down. Then, the shooting started again. The four of us fired all around us. My buddy, he got up and ran to where he thought the shots were coming.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

I yelled for him to stop, but he didn't. So I followed. When I found him, he was frozen in his tracks. The shooting had stopped. When I looked at what he was staring at...the fucks had been using civilians as shields. My buddy had opened fire with his AK-47. He killed the three motherfuckers who had been firing at us, threw the A10 bomb that torced the second hummer. But my buddy had also killed the human shields. A woman and her two children. One was a baby...There wasn't much left of them.

He stops, closes his eyes, shakes his head.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Have you ever seen the damage an AK-47 does to a human body?

Sarah shakes her head no, mournful expression on her face.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Anyway. My buddy never really recovered. Even though it wasn't his fault, he never overcame the guilt he felt for killing that mother, her children...the baby.

SARAH

What happened to him?

DAVID

He had a wife and child back home. He always talked about them to me. Man, did he love his wife. Always talked about her.

David grows quiet, almost afraid to continue.

SARAH

David?

DAVID

From that moment on, he never talked about them again. He became withdrawn. Two months later he killed himself.

Sarah lowers her head, shaking "no".

SARAH
That poor man. And leaving behind a
wife and child. Jesus.

DAVID
He...he...

David looks into her eyes, wanting to say more but he is
unable to, unwilling to.

SARAH
What David?

DAVID
Nothing.

They lay facing each other, silent.

DAVID (CONT'D)
There's your story, Tori.

SARAH
I'm sorry for making you relive
that.

DAVID
It's okay. I think you needed to
hear it.

Sarah looks deep into his eyes. He leans in to kiss her, as
she arches slightly anticipating his lips on hers, but his
kiss lands on her forehead. He then rests his head on her
shoulder.

INT. GRANDE HOTEL ROOM- LATER

Sarah and David lie asleep in each others arms when the hotel
phone rings, waking them up.

DAVID
Expecting someone else tonight.

Sarah quickly sits, reaches over him for the phone.

SARAH
It only rings for emergencies.

Sarah picks up the phone, voice shaky and breathless.

SARAH (CONT'D)
It's Tori. Is every...Jesus Christ!
Where is she?
(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)
Can you drive me there? Okay, I
will meet you out front!

Sarah quickly jumps off the bed and races to collect her
stuff.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I'm sorry but we have to end for
tonight.

DAVID
Is everything okay?

Sarah shakes her head "no".

INT. BLACK LEXUS- LATER

Sarah is being driven by William.

SARAH
What happened?

WILLIAM
I got a call from Mr. Contino.
Irina was knifed by her client.

SARAH
Jesus Christ! How did it happen?

WILLIAM
The police found her a few hours
ago. They are investigating.

SARAH
Well, what do you know?

WILLIAM
From what her driver and the
detective told Mr. Contino, she was
hired for a weekend experience. Her
driver wasn't needed. She said she
trusted the man, had been with him
before. Turns out, at least from
what they know so far, he was hired
by her husband.

SARAH
Fuck! I thought these guys we end
up with are supposed to be vetted!

WILLIAM

You know the deal. Yes, Mr. Contino has security check them out, but it's not a perfect science.

SARAH

Where is she?

WILLIAM

Kansas City General.

SARAH

What's her condition? Fuck!

WILLIAM

Her life isn't in danger. But it's not good.

SARAH

What do you mean?

WILLIAM

That prick husband of her's hired her client to carve up her face. From what I was told, the damage is pretty bad.

INT. HOSPITAL ICU- LATER

Sarah walks into the room and her face instantly shows horror, eyes filling with tears. She continues until she comes to Irina, lying in bed, face bandaged completely. Where what her nose used to be, tubes run in and out so she can breathe via a machine. Irina's eyes open when she hears Sarah's crying. Their eyes meet. Irina's eyes fill with tears. Sarah bends, takes Irina's hand in her's.

SARAH

I'm so sorry, Irina.

INT. ADMISSIONS DEPARTMENT- UMKC- MORNING

Sarah sits with a female admissions officer at the University of Missouri-Kansas City filling out paperwork.

Sarah stands in front of the Tuitions office, writing a check, removing it from her check book and handing it over.

Sarah browses inside the college's book store searching for her classes book. When she finds it, she pulls it from the shelf. The book is for "Early Childhood Education".

INT. GRANDE HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

Sarah, flat on her back, pretends badly that she is enjoying sex from a heavy-set man lying on top of her.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM- AFTERNOON

Sarah sits with Irina in her room. Irina is still heavily bandaged. Irina's eyes reflect the inner pain she is suffering. When she speaks it is with a raspy, rough voice.

IRINA

Sarah, please, don't come anymore.

SARAH

Irina, I will not listen to this anymore.

IRINA

You are visiting a dead woman.

SARAH

No, Irina, you're *not*.

IRINA

My face is gone. That bastard reached from his jail and made sure no other man will ever want me again. He could have killed me but he wanted me to suffer.

Her eyes fill with tears.

IRINA (CONT'D)

But he not going to win. I not suffer anymore.

Sarah tries to fight back tears.

SARAH

Please stop saying that. The plastic surgeons will-

IRINA

Stop, Sarah. Just stop.

They sit silently as Irina tries to regain her composure.

IRINA (CONT'D)

My father abused me, sold me. I was just a sex trophy for animal husband. The men here paid for experience.

Her eyes lock on Sarah's full of deep sadness.

IRINA (CONT'D)

Not once has anyone ever told me
they love me.

SARAH

I love you, Irina.

Once again, the tears start flowing from their eyes.

IRINA

Thank you, Sarah. But it too late
to save me.

SARAH

Please, Irina, stop. You're more
than-

Irina shakes her head "no", grabs Sarah's hand, hard.

IRINA

Not too late for you. You have
beautiful boy. You pretty and
smart, too. It's time to find
someone love you now, like husband
did.

SARAH

There are too many walls I've
placed. My son is my love. That's
all I need.

IRINA

You so strong, Sarah. But at some
point this job we do...the
sacrifice you do for Matthew...it
will kill you inside, if it hasn't
already. You need take down wall,
let someone new inside.

Both women grow quiet.

IRINA (CONT'D)

Make promise to me.

SARAH

Promise what, Irina?

IRINA

Say you promise first.

SARAH
I won't promise until I know what
you're asking of me.

IRINA
If you truly love me, leave now and
never come back.

SARAH
You know I can't do-

IRINA
And promise you get out before this
happen to you, too.

SARAH
Please, Irina, I can't promise
those-

Irina screams for the nurse while pressing her 'help' button.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Irina, stop, please!

Sarah stands, mortified, confused, crying.

IRINA
Get out! Get out! GET OUT!

The nurse comes rushing in as an embarrassed Sarah gathers her coat and purse. Before leaving she looks deep into her friend's eyes.

IRINA (CONT'D)
Get out and don't come back.

SARAH
I love you, Irina.

Sarah turns and walks out of the room as Irina begins to sob, body heaving.

EXT. KANSAS CITY GENERAL HOSPITAL- LATER

Sarah rushes out the front doors, comes to a complete stop, tears down her face.

EXT. PARKED CAR- SAMETIME

The same car and person from earlier scenes watches Sarah's emotional breakdown.

MONTAGE

We watch as Sarah and Matthew continue to work on his motor skills, both at home, in group therapy sessions with other children.

The MONTAGE continues with Matthew being HELD by a smiling Peter as Sarah looks on, smiling and laughing.

INT. GRANDE HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

Sarah is with David, sitting on the edge of the bed while he stands above her. She looks upset, annoyed.

SARAH
What's your end game here?

DAVID
What do you mean?

SARAH
With me? Why do you keep coming back to *me*? What are you hoping for, exactly?

DAVID
I like being with you. Why are *you* with me? You could simply say no.

SARAH
Stop, David, and answer the question.

DAVID
I answered, Tori.

Sarah grows more frustrated.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Now it's your turn to answer the same question.

Agitated, she turns away from him, walks a few paces away. He studies her body language.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What's going on, Tori? You seem agitated. Is there something wrong?

She doesn't turn to face him.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Does this involve the emergency
call from the last time we were
together?

SARAH
You don't get to ask the questions.

This causes him to stand and walk behind her.

DAVID
Why not? As you said the first time
we were together, "it's my money".

Sarah still does not face him but can feel him behind her.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I answered. I like being with you,
around you. You're the one good
thing in my life.

SARAH
That's the point. You're *paying* to
be with me.

DAVID
And you continue to be with me.
Why? Is it just the money?

He moves closer to her, her eyes dance around the wall in
front of her, breathing heavy as she remains silent.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Or do you feel the same emotions
for me as I do you when we're
together?

His face is now against her right ear. She is trembling, eyes
flashing vulnerability, confusion.

DAVID (CONT'D)
The first night we were together
you asked me why I didn't want to
have sex with you. Do you remember
my answer?

Sarah doesn't answer, her vulnerability growing.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I said sex means nothing to me
without love. Despite what you do
for a living, I think you feel the
same way.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
I think deep down you need to feel
what you felt for Matt again.

He places his hand on her right shoulder as he continues to speak softly in her ear.

DAVID (CONT'D)
From the moment I first met you, I
knew I loved you.

He turns her around and kisses her deeply and she breathlessly returns his kiss.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I've just been waiting for you to
feel the same for me. I want the
'first' time to be more than a job.
I want it to be real.

They wrap their arms around one another, kissing passionately when she suddenly stops, pushes him away, her eyes reflecting fear.

SARAH
Wait. You said "Matt". How...how
did you know my husband's name?

David's eyes fly open as if caught stealing.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I have **never** told you his name!

Her eyes open wider, full of questioning as well as fear.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Who the **fuck** are **you?**

She rushes past him to the night stand where she grabs the phone.

DAVID
Sarah! Don't!! I can explain!!

SARAH
I need you up here **NOW! Right now!**

She slams the phone down. When David approaches her she turns her hands into fists and raises them.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Sarah??? Did you just call me
Sarah? Get the fuck out, David.
Get. The. Fuck. OUT!

DAVID
I can explain.

SARAH
That you know all about me? That you're some kind of sick stalker? That your game was to make me fall in love with you? Fuck, were you even a soldier?? Or was that another lie??

DAVID
I was in Afghanistan. Everything I've told you about myself is true. I can explain if you let me.

SARAH
I don't care about any of your bullshit lies, David. Get the FUCK out, NOW!

DAVID
You just said I was trying to make you fall in love with me. Have you? Because that's all that matters right now.

Anger builds within Sarah's entire fiber, leading her to jump at David and start slapping his face, which he stops by grabbing her wrists, holding them. She then brings her knee up, missing her intended target, his balls, and lands on his thigh.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Please, Sarah, let me explain.

Just then the door flies open. William rushes in, holding a gun in his hand. Two other men rush in after him.

WILLIAM
David, let go of her now.

In shock, he lets go of Sarah's wrists. His eyes turn back to her's, pleading.

DAVID
I love you. This hasn't been an act. And I know you love me, too.

She slaps his face, hard. The two men approach David.

DAVID (CONT'D)
If you'd just let me explain all of this, you'd understand.

Sarah slaps him again. The two men take David by his shoulders and move him away, forcibly.

SARAH

That's not necessary. He's leaving on his own, aren't you, David?

DAVID

You know you love me, Sarah. This wasn't a game I've been-

SARAH

Bye.

With the assistance of the two men, David walks away from Sarah.

OPENING SCENE

EXT. FRONT CURB OF SARAH'S HOUSE- NIGHT

We see the sedan pull up in front of her small, modest home. A driver exits then opens up the passenger door. We see Sarah's shapely legs exit followed by the rest of her.

SARAH

Thank you William.

He smiles as he closes the door.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I have a few days off. I will call when my next appointment is set.

WILLIAM

Sounds good, Sarah. Enjoy your time off. Good night.

SARAH

Thank you, you, too, William.

The driver gets back into his car and drives away as Sarah climbs her front steps, places her key in the front door, opens it and walks in.

Across the street a dark figure watches Sarah while sitting in his parked car drivers seat.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE- LATER

Sarah puts down her purse and keys and walks into the living room where we see a caregiver named ANN sitting on her sofa.

SARAH
How was Matt?

Ann looks up to Sarah with a smile, placing a book she's been reading into her big bag, then stands.

ANN
He had one minor incident while I tried to give him his bath but other than that, he was a champ.

SARAH
What was the in-

ANN
It was nothing, Sarah. You know he doesn't like to take a bath. All kids his age act out once in awhile. This was normal.

Ann gives Sarah a reassuring smile.

EXT. PARKED CAR- LATER

The man sitting in the car across the street from Sarah's house watches as Ann exits, says good night to Sarah, with Sarah closing the door. Ann walks to her car parked down the street. As Ann's car pulls away, he exits his car, slowly walking towards Sarah's house. He is holding something in his hand which we can not make out. Without seeing his face, he stands at the bottom of Sarah's steps.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE- SAMETIME

There is a knock on the door. Sarah, who is in the living room looking through a pile of mail, turns and walks to the door, opens it.

David is standing there holding a beautiful white plant in his hands. Her eyes fly open.

DAVID
Before you call the cops, please let me explain what you wouldn't listen to last week.

Eyes filled with anger drop to the plant he is carrying in his hands, then back up to his eyes. They are no longer angry but are cautious. She doesn't answer but she doesn't shut the door, either.

DAVID (CONT'D)
This is the flower I told you
about, my mom's favorite. Jonquil.

He raises his hand out to give her the plant. At first she doesn't accept.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I promise you, it's not poisonous.
And it doesn't have cameras hidden
inside it. It's a very non-stalking
flower, I promise.

She almost lets out a smile, studies his eyes, then the plant, then reaches out to accept it. Her eyes soften a little as does her body language.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Do you remember the story I told
you about Afghanistan?

She slowly nods yes.

DAVID (CONT'D)
About my buddy, the best friend
I've ever had?

Sarah's eyes look vulnerable, her body sensing what he's about to tell her, not wanting to hear.

DAVID (CONT'D)
His name was Matt. And his wife's
name was Sarah. His child had not
yet been born but he knew it was
going to be a boy.

Sarah, emotional, hands waving to stop, turns away from him.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Sarah, he never stopped talking
about you. After the incident, he
changed. He made me promise him
that if anything happened to him
over there he wanted me to come
here, to look over and protect you.

Sarah, trying not to cry, turns back to him.

SARAH
I didn't need your protection.
(pauses) I needed Matt.

There is a long pause as David searches for words.

DAVID
I know you didn't. But I kept my
promise, anyway.

He moves up one step towards an emotional Sarah.

DAVID (CONT'D)
And I never expected to fall in
love with you, Sarah. That's why we
never had sex. I couldn't if you
didn't feel the same way. I hope
you understand that. And I hope you
understand I wasn't trying to
deceive or hurt you.

They stand silent as Sarah's eyes moisten but she refuses to
cry.

DAVID (CONT'D)
But that night, we *both* felt
something for each other, beyond me
paying you to be with me. And it
was real.

Sarah looks at him, eyes almost pleading.

SARAH
I don't know what that was.

DAVID
Yes you do, but it's been so long
since you've felt it you're afraid
to admit it.

She lowers her head.

SARAH
I can't afford to allow someone
into my life. I have no place for
it.

He reaches out his hand and takes Sarah's left hand into his.
She looks at their hands.

DAVID
We all do, Sarah.

There is a long pause as Sarah reflects, then removes her hand from his, looks into his eyes.

SARAH

What if I don't know how too?

Again, there is a pause as they stand silently.

DAVID

I will respect your decision,
Sarah. I will not bother you again.
I just don't want you to hate me.

SARAH

I could never hate you, David.

There's an awkward pause as they both stare at one another.

DAVID

Think of me when you look at the
jonquil. And when you do, I hope it
brings a smile to your beautiful
face, Sarah.

Sarah wants to say something but words never come from her. David smiles with tears in his eyes. Without a word, David turns and walks down the steps, Sarah standing holding the flower in its pot watching him walk away, tears in her eyes as well.

ONE WEEK LATER

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE- BEDROOM- MORNING

Sarah watches Matthew sleeping on her bed, smiling to herself. She then turns to start folding a pile of laundry that sits on the bed corner. After she's folded a few of her panties and bras she walks to a bureau, opens it, places the garments inside. Her attention goes to the Jonquil sitting on top of the bureau, sitting in its pot.

She stares at it.

FADE TO BLACK

(CONT'D)