THE SECRET DIARY OF BLUE MAGIC

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act one

ext. new york city. day.

We open on the NYC skyline as the movie’s theme plays. Moving through the city, we finally focus on a crowded sidewalk downtown, packed with pedestrians. We focus on TODD (18, scrawny, geek) wearing OLD HEADPHONES. People push past him, knocking him around as he walks. Panning over his shoulder, we then focus on LARA (18, tall, slender, ethnic), wearing earbuds. She’s making eye contact with people and smiling, the pedestrians are giving her room to move.

int. subway entrance. day.

Todd is almost pushed down the steps as the crowd throngs toward the turnstiles. He barely is able to swipe his card before being pushed through to the platform. Pan back to find Lara striding confidently down the stairs. There is a busker, playing a guitar and singing. Lara stops for a moment, smiling, and then tosses some bills into his guitar case. She passes through the turnstile, and waits for the train. Todd is in the foreground. The train pulls up, the sign reading “HARPER’S WOODS, LONG ISLAND,” and the two teens board different cars.

ext. above-ground subway platform. day.

The train pulls into the station and Todd and Lara disembark. They walk in separate directions and we track with Lara to a waiting SUV, her MOTHER behind the wheel. She gets in the car and they smile at each other, chatting with the windows up. They pull out of the station and pass Todd walking along a road with no sidewalks.

ext. todd’s home. day.

The movie’s theme plays and Todd removes his headphones, the music dropping out so that it is coming from his headphones. Through the screen door we hear the sounds of ad-libbed arguing. Todd sighs, heavy and enters the home.

INT. Todd’s home. Day.

Todd walks through his home, dropping his bag on the floor, going out to the kitchen and grabbing a snack and a drink, and then he makes his way to a door in the stairs and heads to the basement. While he does this we hear TODD’s MOTHER and TODD’s SISTER in an extremely heated argument.

ToDD’s mother

…can’t spend all of my time picking up after your kids!

todd’s sister

I am having a very rough time right now and—

todd’s mother

And nothing. You choose what you put in your body. Grow up and take some responsibility for—

todd’s sister

How dare you say that to me in front of my children!

todd’s mother

I have a *life.* A Career. Ever hear of it? I raised you and your two brothers almost by myself and still was promoted to assistant—

todd’s sister

Oh yeah, you did a great job! Look at me! Justin’s in jail, You never even *know* where Todd is…

todd’s mother

Like you can pass judgment on *anyone*…

INT. BASEMENT. Continuous.

Todd walks into the basement and turns on an overhead light. The sounds of the argument are muted, but still audible. Todd clicks on a light and we see his WORKBENCH. On it are pieces of audio and recording equipment, some disassembled, others patched-up, some machines are inexplicable. Tacked to the wall above the workbench is A FAMILY PHOTO of Todd, his mother and sister, and JUSTIN a tall, muscular guy hiding darkness behind his Sears Portrait Studio smile. Todd removes the tack and puts the picture in an open drawer and then slams it shut.

cut to:

ext. ice cream shop. day.

Lara and her mother exit the shop drinking to-go milkshakes. They are laughing. They get in her car and pull out of the spot and into traffic.

cut to:

int. lara’s house. later.

Lara and her mother enter the house. Lara holds both milkshakes, while her mother has some shopping bags in her hands. LARA’S FATHER emerges from the kitchen wiping his hands on a feminine KISS THE COOK apron.

MOTHER

(laughs)

What is this?

father

Just follow the instructions, you two.

Lara and her Mother both kiss Father on the cheek.

father

(indicating the milkshakes)

I hope you two didn’t spoil your appetite.

mother

I didn’t think you’d be home from work yet.

father

Can’t a guy leave work early and cook for his beloved family?

lara

I am kinda full.

Father puts her arm around her so sweetly we get diabetes.

father

Lucky for you my chili is even *better* on the second day.

Lara smiles and goes into the kitchen, setting the table without being asked. Mother and Father share a look.

cut to:

int. lara’s dining room. evening.

The family sits around the table. Lara picks at her food, while Father digs in. Mother pours wine for her and Father. They share a look again and then she pours a small amount in Lara’s glass. She looks at her parents as if they had just grown antlers.

mother

You have to get used to it, you know. Over in England, wine is like food.

lara

(not enthused)

That’s France, mom.

father

Well, trust me, there’s a fair amount of wine drinking that happens at Oxford. And it’s not even a full glass.

Father raises his glass and Mother and Lara do the same.

father

To everything going according to plan.

mother

And the best daughter in the world.

They clink glasses, but Lara is uncomfortable as if she has a secret.

lara

I’m stuffed, can I be excused? I want to ride my bike before it got too late.

father

That old thing is still running?

mother

Each time it doesn’t get any funnier, dear.

(to Lara)

Okay, but take a piece of fruit or something with you.

Lara gets up from the table, taking her plate.

Int. hallway. moments later.

Lara, sans plate, puts a worn diary in her knapsack and grabs her bike helmet.

ext. lara’s house. continuous.

Lara takes the helmet and stashes it under the porch. Slinging her knapsack over her shoulder she takes off.

cut to:

ext. cathedral. night.

Lara parks her bike in front of a huge, old cathedral. It’s empty, but the lights are on inside. She ascends the stairs, opens the door, and then looks over her shoulder. After a second, she goes inside. We

cut to:

ext. high school. morning.

High schoolers are scattered all over the campus. A school bus pulls up, kids pour out of it. Lara steps out of her mother’s car, waves, and walks into school. Todd exits the bus and follows her inside.

int. school. morning.

Students close up their lockers and rush inside the classrooms. A bell rings. Todd lingers at his locker a moment. When he shuts the door, a stern, older teacher is standing there, MS. SMITH.

ms. smith

Good morning, Todd.

todd

Ms. Smith! Did you, uh, need something?

ms. smith

Walk with me.

Ms. Smith and Todd walk down the hallway and we track with them.

Ms. smith

Well, the deadline fast approaches to get the yearbook pages off to the printer. Of course, a large percentage of seniors have not completed their questionnaires.

todd

Is that a big deal?

ms. smith

(shocked)

Of course it is! Why, this is your *senior* yearbook. It may not seem important now, but five, ten, fifteen years down the road? Trust me, they’ll thank you.

Ms. Smith hands Todd a STACK OF PAPERS and walks off down the hall, not even looking over her shoulder to answer Todd when he asks

todd

Thank me?

Ms Smith

You’re going to get them filled out for me. By the end of the day!

Todd looks at the papers, hopeless. He kicks the lockers and walks out of frame and we

int. hallway. later.

A mountain of kid, well over six feet tall, 260 pounds of muscle, and a dopey face holds a freshman’s lunchbox over his head, out of reach.

Freshman

Avery! Come on. At least give me the lunchbox back. And the fruit. You hate fruit.

Avery opens the lunchbox, taking the sandwich and dessert out of it and then tosses it, still open, out of frame. The freshman chases after it, almost pleased. Todd walks into frame, holding the stack of papers.

todd

Avery? Hey, Ms. Smith asked me to get you to fill out your senior questionnaire?

(Avery looks at Todd quizzically)

It’s going to print soon. You know in ten years—

Avery

How about you and Ms. Smith fuck off?

todd

Come on, help me out.

avery

I am helping you, by not kicking your face in.

todd

(annoyed)

I’m sure writing isn’t your strong suit. Want me to help you spell the more difficult words?

Avery reacts, quickly. He slaps the papers out of Todd’s hands, onto the floor, and slams Todd into the lockers. His forearm is in his neck, choking him. Todd’s face is one of helpless rage.

female voice (o.s.)

Leave him alone, Avery.

Avery spins his head, angry at whoever dared to interfere with his lesson to Todd. We track with his eyes and see Lara was standing just off-frame. Her hand rests on her hip.

lara

Please?

Avery doesn’t say anything, but he releases Todd, who slides against the lockers down to the floor. He’s not gasping or anything, but is breathing heavy (mostly from relief). Avery looks at Todd and then back at Lara and something like shame crosses his face. He averts her gaze and backs away out of frame.

avery

Sorry, Lara. Sorry, nerd.

Todd regains a bit of his composure. He starts to gather up his papers.

todd

Thanks. I didn’t think that was going to end well for me.

Lara bends down to eye level with him and helps him pick up the scattered papers.

lara

Avery’s a jerk, but he likes me.

todd

Well, he didn’t like me. I mean it, thanks.

(puts out his hand)

Hi, I’m—

lara

(interrupting him)

Todd. I know. We’ve had a couple classes together, right? I’m—

todd

(his turn to interrupt her)

Lara. Everyone knows you.

Lara looks away, hiding a nervous smile. She faces him again and hands him the papers she’s gathered.

lara

What’s all this?

todd

Senior stuff for the yearbook. These are the questionnaires that need completed. I don’t think Ms. Smith wants me to live to graduation, so she asked me to get them to fill ‘em out. Are you in here?

Lara takes the papers and flips through them.

lara

No, I turned mine in the first day. Hey, I know these people. The football players always hang around where the cheerleaders and the dance team hold practice.

todd

Which one are you? Cheerleader, dance team, or football player?

Lara’s laugh surprises even her. She swats at him with the papers.

lara

Dance team. You know, I could get these filled out for you. The girls’ll do it cause I asked and the guys will do it because the girls are doing it.

todd

Why-why would you help me? You’re one of *them*.

lara

It’s everyone’s yearbook. And besides, you have a nice face.

(hesitatingly)

Maybe we could meet up after practice so I could give you these?

Todd

(oblivious)

I have to work, so you can just put it in Ms. Smith’s mailbox, okay?

lara

(a bit disappointed)

Oh. Okay. See you around.

Todd waves, he can’t make eye contact with her, and walks off awkwardly. Lara stands, holding the papers to her chest, spins and walks away from the camera.

cut to:

int. todd’s house. late afternoon.

Todd rushes into the house and bolts downstairs into the basement. Off-screen we hear the sounds of his equipment moving around. At the top of the stairs, his Mother appears. She’s getting dressed.

todd’s mother

Todd? Is that you?

todd

(from basement)

WHAT?

We hear Todd clomping back up the steps as his mother descends the stairs, a suit jacket over her arm. Todd emerges into the hallway holding a cannibalized amplifier. Todd’s mother looks at him as if she’s never seen him before.

todd

(rapidly, excited)

Did you call me? I’m late for work. I think if I can get this thing tuned right, it’ll be able to power itself because of the sound it’s amplifying.

(then to himself, in that way geniuses often do)

It’ll still need external power to start, but perhaps I can have the circuit switch to the internal circuits. After a few minutes? Once the charge is—nevermind. Anyway, Mom, I gotta go or I’ll be late.

All the while Todd has been speaking to her, she is looking the mirror. She puts on her jacket, puts in earrings, and touches up her lipstick.

mom

(hadn’t heard a word he said)

I called your boss and told him you couldn’t make it in tonight. Your sister is gone and I have a very important dinner da-

(she catches herself, looks at Todd, lies)

Meeting. A *business* dinner meeting. Anyway, I need you to watch your nephews.

todd

You called Carl? That’s incredibly inappropriate, Mom! What did he say?

mom

What could he say? I said family emergency?

Todd’s mother walks off-frame, Todd follows.

int. todd’s kitchen. continuous.

Todd follows his mother, narrowly avoiding running into things, meekly furious.

todd

You had *no right* to do that, Mom. This job is important to me and—

Mom

And nothing. I told you what you needed to do, you are still a minor.

todd

I’ve been 18 for three months.

mom.

(as if she’d forgotten)

You-You know what I mean.

todd

No, I don’t.

At that moment, Todd’s sister bursts in the back door. She seems hung over.

Todd’s sister

What’s for dinner?

Todd’s mother looks at her disapprovingly, she’s about to speak when Todd pushes past them both and out the back door.

cut to:

ext. establishing shot of store. day.

A formerly 7-bedroom house on a corner lot in Queens has been converted to apartments and a storefront. The sign hanging over the porch reads “Fagelson & Son’s Music Shoppe.” Carl stomps up to the door, ripping it open.

int. carl’s store. continuous.

It’s an instrument and musical equipment store. It’s nice inside, but crowded with merchandise. Carl (late 60s, Jewish, Aging hipster)is behind a counter, talking to a guitarist for a death metal band.

carl

…you know you should try to add some violins or cellos under the main track.

(notices Todd, brightens)

Hey! There’s my star employee, I was just telling Dave here…

Todd brushes behind the counter into a back room without acknowledging Carl or the customer. They watch him as he disappears and then Carl turns back to the customer.

carl

Give me a minute, okay?

The customer nods and Carl follows Todd into the back room.

int. todd’s workstation. continuous.

Carl stands in the doorway. The room is large and divided into two workstations. One desk is Carl’s, cluttered with paper and an old computer. Record players and tape decks are stacked next to his things. On the other side is a larger workbench that looks much like Carl’s basement workbench. He has a newer computer on the desk. He slams his bag down and sits hard, with his head in his hands.

carl

Son? Are you all right? Your mother said there was a family emergency, so I—

todd

There wasn’t. She shouldn’t have done that. I didn’t want to miss the shift.

carl

(almost hurt)

Hey. You know I don’t care about that. What’s wrong? You know you can talk to me. Want me to get rid of this guy so we can talk?

Todd looks towards Carl, near tears. After a moment though, he smiles and laughs it off.

todd

No, thanks, Carl. I’m okay, I guess I was throwing a bit of a tantrum. Sorry.

carl

Forget it, kid. After Dave leaves, wanna break some old drums? Did I ever tell you I was the one who told Keith Moon to start doing that? It always made him feel better.

todd

You’ve told me. And maybe.

carl

Chicken. I’ll let you get back to it. Try to get that tuner done before you leave, okay?

Carl disappears through the doorway and Todd pulls the half-dismantled tuner in front of him. He fiddles with some wires and then leans back in the chair, sighing. He clicks the mouse to fool around on the computer. He opens his e-mail.

close up of screen.

The first new message is from a social network, the subject reads “Lara has added you as a friend! Click here to check out her profile.”

int. todd’s workstation. continuous.

Todd clicks and pulls up her page. He immediately goes to the pictures and scrolls through them. They are of her dance team, her and popular people doing popular things, her family, Her in front of an Etta James poster copying the pose, a black and white photo of her at a piano, etc. He’s interrupted by a video-chat call that reads “Roy.” He clicks “accept.” A window pops open and we see Roy, overweight, curly red hair, glasses. He is drinking an 80-oz lime-green and pink-swirled frozen drink, loudly.

roy

Yo broski. Whatchya doin?

todd

Nothing. Working. What?

roy

(mock offended)

Sorry man, you answered the call. Want me to let you go?

todd

Yes. No. What?

roy

Just finished typing the questionnaires into the proof pages for the yearbook. Have you seen Melinda Wilson’s senior picture?

todd

No, why?

roy

Major “BSTs”

todd

“BSTs?”

roy

Big. Stupid. Titties.

(a beat, while he slurps)

Here, I am sending it over, check her out.

Another e-mail pops up on Todd’s screen. He clicks on “Download attachment.” The page slowly loads and we see that Melinda Wilson does indeed have some large breasts. Right beneath her picture, however, is Lara’s picture. All the breasts in the world couldn’t keep our eyes from landing on it.

close up of yearbook page

Under Lara’s picture we see her answers to the questionnaire. We focus on her “Quote” which reads: Everyone’s dreams are worth chasing and so is someone to share them with.

int. todd’s workstation. continuous.

Todd is visibly moved by the quote and caught by the eyes staring out from the picture. Totally forgetting that Roy can see his every move, he runs his finger across the letters.

roy

Dude. I *know.*

(grabs his own chest)

It’s, like, you can feel their *heaviness* through the screen.

todd

(amused and disgusted)

Ugh. I gotta go, Roy.

Roy

Peace out.

(as a term of endearment)

Nerd!

Roy disappears from the screen and Todd goes back to working on the tuner. After a second, he looks back at the picture of Lara beaming at him from the screen.

dissolve to:

int. lara’s kitchen. morning.

Lara looking decidedly less happy than she did in the photo. She sits at the breakfast table, eating cereal. Father sits across from her, reading a London newspaper and drinking coffee. Mother buzzes about the kitchen, gathering her things to leave. As she passes the table, she drops the mail by Father.

mother

I thought by now the letter would be here. Lara turned the application in early and she’s a legacy, so…

Father

I can make a call next week, find things out.

Lara gets nervous when she hears this, like she’s hiding something. Mother kisses them both on the cheek and then she’s out of frame, seconds later we hear the door close.

father

(reading his daughter’s concern)

Don’t worry, kiddo. You’re going to get into Oxford. Foregone conclusion.

(pause)

Of course, you *earned* it. It’s not just because I sent them a check.

Father chuckles at his own joke, Lara fidgets.

lara

Dad, I—

Father looks up from the paper, waits. At the last moment, Lara changes her mind.

lara

-I mean, it wouldn’t be the worst thing in the world if I didn’t get in, right? I could stay closer to home, go to Columbia, maybe? I hear they have a great music program.

(she’s said too much)

A double major! It could be the second part of a double major. Minor, even.

Father folds the paper up meticulously and puts it down. His eyes are kind, but they bore into her chest.

father

I don’t know about the world, but not getting into Oxford would be the worst thing for our plan, wouldn’t it?

lara

(sarcastically)

Yeah, *our* plan.

father

Facetiousness doesn’t help anything, young lady. If you’ve got something on your mind, out with it like a mature adult.

Lara bites her lip a moment, then decides—it’s time to have this out.

lara

There is no part of that plan that has anything to do with what I want.

father

Perhaps. But it has everything to do with what you *need* to do so you can reach your highest potential.

lara

For what? To be an Amabassador or whatever it is that you and your friends do?

father

You know exactly what—

Lara

(yelling)

I don’t care! I want to study music. There are so many places to perform, here in Long Island or even in the city. I don’t *want* to go to Oxford. I don’t want to do what you do!

Father is working hard to maintain his cool. It seems the angrier he gets, the quieter he gets. Where he was relaxed when the conversation began, he’s sitting bolt upright.

father

Your mother and I have supported your hobby and will continue to do so. *So long as it remains a hobby.* You can really go places, Lara. You can help people. The time for piano lessons is over.

Lara slams her open palms on the table, and stands. The room is a teakettle seconds from coming to boil.

lara

It’s more than a hobby! You don’t think art *helps* people? And what about me? What about being happy?

Father

(almost whispering)

Happiness comes after a life of accomplishment. You will stick to the plan. Stop being childish.

lara

You can shove the plan! My life isn’t yours to play with. I am going to make my own decisions. I am going to be a performer and *I am not going to Oxford*!

Father’s had it, he stands suddenly, Lara reels back in shock, and he tosses the coffee mug across the room. It shatters a family photo of them on vacation in London. The glass had Lara’s handprints in the corner from when she was smaller. Lara and Father are both stunned at his outburst. Lara gets up and runs toward the door. Father goes after her and grabs her shoulder, apologizing. She spins suddenly.

lara

(effect on voice, forceful, softly sonorous, hypnotic)

Let me go!

Father’s arm drops and his face goes slack, losing all concern and passion. Except his eyes, in his eyes there is the faintest glint of fear.

father

You can go.

Lara is surprised too, tears at the corner of her eyes. She grabs her knapsack and is out the door. We

Cut to:

ext. cathedral. morning.

Lara pulls up on her bike, pedaling as if she was being chased by a demon. She lets the bike just drop to the ground and she runs into the church.

int. cathedral. continuous.

Lara walks into the Cathedral. Like most large Cathedrals, it’s shaped like a cross (Long center rectangle, short side rectangles) with the altar in the center. There is a large crucifix hanging over the altar, but it’s shadowed. There is a large rose window at the opposite end of the door through which Lara enters, casting a subtle red hue over everything. The cathedral is empty. Lara plops down into a pew, head in her hands. After a moment, she pulls out her diary and a pen. She opens to a page and writes a few lines. She counts out beats with her pen and softly sings the lyrics she’s just written. She shakes her head, scratches out the last line, pauses, and writes another one. She sings it again, softly. She smiles and then she *really* sings it, her voice echoing through the empty church. She falls silent and then hears a single person slow-clap in one of the church’s eaves. Lara turns her head suddenly and we see a man we hadn’t seen before standing by the candles. This is SODEM. He’s holding one of the matches, still on fire, used for lighting the candles. He extinguishes it with his fingertips and walks over to Lara. He sits and she snaps the diary closed, protective.

sodem

Easy there! I won’t bite.

Lara’s silent, her body posture closed.

sodem

I was just over there lighting a candle for a friend and I couldn’t help but hear you. Your singing is lovely, you know?

lara

Thanks.

sodem

(offers his hand)

My name is Sodem.

lara

I’m Lara. Sorry if I disturbed you. I like to come here to work. It’s…it’s my sanctuary.

sodem

(laughs)

Well a cathedral is a good place for it. So, are you going to be performing your songs anywhere? I’d love to come to a show.

lara

Thanks. I, uh, I’ve only performed at school. Talent shows and stuff.

sodem

Well Lara, you have the right kind of voice to perform anywhere you want. If you ever want to go pro, I think I could help you.

lara

You could help me?

sodem

Sure, I’m a tour manager. Do you have a demo?

lara

No.

sodem

Get a demo and send it to me. You are perfect for an international tour.

lara

I am?

Sodem stands and pulls a business card out of his pocket. He hands it to Lara.

sodem

Whatever you’re writing in that diary? It deserves a chance.

He leaves and Lara watches him go, her sadness turning into hope.

cut to:

int. todd’s workstation. day.

Todd sits at his workstation, fiddling with his machinery. He carefully lowers a circuit board into a half-disassembled piece of equipment.

carl (o.s.)

Todd! Get out here!

Todd fumbles it, taken by surprise. Disappointed, he wipes his hands on a rag and stands. We track him as he walks out of the room.

int. front of carl’s store. continuous.

Todd emerges from the back to see Lara standing with Carl. He watches as she’s sings the same bit of song from the Cathedral. Carl beams at her.

carl

That is some voice you got there, kid. And I know it. You know, I was the guy who told Mitch Miller to sign Aretha Franklin. He thought she was just a gospel singer, but I told him—

Lara notices Todd and grins in surprise. Carl notices him too.

carl

Ah! There he is. My resident genius.

lara

Todd? You work here?

carl

(a knowing smile)

Oh? So you two know each other?

todd

A little.

carl

Well, this guy can take any of the recording equipment here, mess around with its guts, and make it work five times better than before.

(to Todd)

Lara here is setting up a home studio. I thought you could go and help her set it up.

todd

We do that?

carl

When it’s someone like her! Remember boy, I have an ear for talent. *Aretha*.

lara

I dunno, it might have been interesting if she had been on Sam Cooke or Barry Gordy’s label, you know?

Carl looks at Lara, not used to someone knowing as much about music history as him. He turns to Todd.

carl

What did I tell you? Special. Help her get set up.

Carl walks off frame to the counter, not quite out of earshot.

lara

So you work here?

todd

Yeah. It’s cool

Carl rolls his eyes. His work isn’t done.

carl

You should see him back there. I don’t understand it, but he’s doing these experiments…it’s, well I’ve never seen anything like it.

lara

Experiments?

todd

Yeah, I’m trying to take sound energy and change the field—

(loses confidence)

It’s nothing.

lara

I am sure it isn’t. You’ll have to tell me all about it. So, I want to set up the studio in the shed in my backyard.

todd

Does it have power?

lara

(only just realizing)

It doesn’t.

carl

Why the back shed? Got any spare bathrooms? The acoustics in bathrooms….

lara

Well, I, uh, I am kind of keeping this a secret from my parents.

Lara looks slightly guilty, Todd just looks uncomfortable. Carl thinks.

carl

You know, one of the single-room apartments upstairs is empty. Why not set up in there? No one would be the wiser.

lara

Do you mean it? Really? Thank you so much, Mr.—

Carl

Just Carl.

Lara

Carl. Thank you for believing in me.

carl

I believe in you *both.*

Sensing his work is done, Carl exits to the back. Todd is still unsure and nervous, but Lara is almost shaking with excitement.

lara

Well? Let’s get started!

cut to:

int. studio.

Montage. They set up the studio, Todd guiding Lara through some technical set-up. Something sparks and the readouts go dark. Lara smiles sheepishly. Different day: it’s all set up. Lara is working from her diary and talking to Todd, Todd is checking the equipment. Lara notices and tosses a wadded up piece of paper that bounces off his head. They laugh. Different day: She sings and he works the board. Different Day: They share pizza, lights dim and romantic. The wardrobe changes should indicate the passing of seasons.

dissolve to:

int. lara’s kitchen. morning.

Lara’s mother enters the frame, Lara is eating a bagel by the toaster. Mother is on the go, again.

lara

Morning, Mom. Where’s Daddy?

mother

He went in early. Are you two still avoiding each other?

Lara doesn’t answer, bites her bagel. Her Mother stops gathering her things and stands with her, hand on her shoulder.

mother

Your father means well. It’s obvious you two aren’t angry with each other, quit being so proud.

lara

Mom…

Mother

I told him the same thing.

Mother goes to leave, then stops.

mother

I got a call from your dance coach yesterday…

Lara stops mid-bite, she knows she’s caught.

mother

He asked how your ankle injury is healing, are you hurt?

Lara

(panicked)

Oh it’s nothing, I’m fine. Just being careful, you know? I will be at practice today as a matter of fact. And—

mother

I’m not worried about all that. Are *you* okay?

lara

Yeah. I am doing really great, Mom. Thanks.

Mother smiles, touches her cheek, then grabs her briefcase and walks out of frame. We hang on a guilty Lara and then

cut to:

int. studio. night.

Lara is in the makeshift recording booth and sings a king-hell bastard of a finish to one of her songs. Todd looks on in awe for a second and then flips some switches.

todd

I think we got it.

lara

You mean--?

todd

You’ve just finished your demo.

Lara squeals with excitement and runs over to Todd, wrapping him in a bear hug. He’s still seated and, as the chair spins, she ends up on his lap. The hug lasts a moment longer, then Lara lifts her head from her neck. They are face-to-face, less than inches apart. We hang on them for a moment, waiting for the kiss that doesn’t come. Lara releases him and stands, backing a few steps away. Todd pulls his chair closer to the equipment. The awkward tension is thick and expanding.

lara

Well, uh, I guess, I-I should probably go, huh?

todd

Uh, sure. Yeah. All your stuff is done, so, I, uh…

lara

Want me to wait for you?

todd

Yes,

(looks down just for a second)

um, no, I uh should stay here and uh, finish up, the uh, you know--

lara

(interrupting him)

Sure, yeah, I-I had a place I wanted to stop by anyway.

todd

(slightly crestfallen)

Of course you do. Yeah. I can wrap up here.

Lara quickly grabs her diary and coat and heads towards the door, just before she’s goes through, Todd calls out to her.

todd

Call you tomorrow?

lara

Yeah. We should *celebrate*.

Todd smiles and goes back to work. Lara leaves.

ext. street. night.

Lara emerges from Carl’s shop into a chilly spring night and walks towards the camera and out of frame. On her journey to the park, we intercut between her and Todd in the studio.

intercut between todd and lara

Todd sits at the sound board, exhales heavily.

Lara crosses a street, heading towards a park.

Todd spins in his chair, silently cursing to himself.

Lara walks up the sidewalk, hands in pockets, the turns into the park, taking a well-lit path.

Todd gets up, kicking his chair back. He paces, muttering ad-libs like “stupid,” and “you chicken,” etc.

Lara scribbles in her diary as she walks, looking up only so often.

Todd, pacing around the studio sees Lara’s KNAPSACK sitting on a chair. He looks at it and turns away, turns back, grabs the knapsack and runs out the door.

Lara, writing in the diary but not looking up now, walks onto a part of the path that is not illuminated. We see figures, homeless folks, junkies, and ne’er-do-wells, sitting at picnic tables and in silhouette. Also a LAKE in the distance.

Todd rushes out of the house on the same course that Lara walked earlier.

Lara, still writing and happy, walks past three men. The RINGLEADER nudges the other two and they follow her.

Todd gets to the park, but runs past the well-lit path Lara had taken.

Lara looks up, realizes she’s not where she should be, just in time to be grabbed by the Ringleader and tossed to the ground. When she’s grabbed, she screams.

Todd hears the scream, looks up terrified for Lara, and runs off in the other direction towards her. End of intercut sequence.

Ext. Park. night.

Lara is on the ground, sitting down and scooting backwards away from the men. We see them clearly for the first time; they are obviously strung-out and have evil in their hearts. They laugh at her fear.

ringleader

No more screaming now, girlie. Or we’ll not be so nice.

The others laugh even harder at that. Lara realizes she’s not getting out of this unless she fights. The Ringleader approaches and just as he’s about to bend down for her, she kicks him HARD in the balls. He drops to the ground and the other two are stunned. Lara gets to her feet and runs.

ext. lake overlook. night.

Todd runs onto an overlook, scanning for Lara. He sees her running. He takes off in her direction.

todd

Lara!

ext. park. continuous.

Lara runs and is cut off by the other two guys. She stops and they advance.

lara

(effect on voice, forceful, softly sonorous, hypnotic)

Leave me *alone*!

The two men stop cold and then turn around as if they just remembered they had something else to do and were in no hurry to get there. Lara is understandably surprised.

ext. park path. night.

Todd, running towards where he believes Lara is, runs into a chain link fence. He shakes it in frustration. He sees Lara cornered by the two men.

todd

Lara!

Todd watches in amazement as the two men suddenly turn and walk away. He exhales in relief, just in time to see Lara tackled by the Ringleader.

todd

No!

Like a man possessed, Todd vaults the fence.

ext. lake shore. continuous.

Lara and the Ringleader tumble to the edge of the lake. Lara is stunned, but the Ringleader is up and on her. He grabs her by the back of the head and sticks her face in the water.

ext. underwater angle. continuous.

Lara struggles, holds her breath. She is pulled from the water.

ext. lake shore. continuous.

The Ringleader dunks her again. She struggles more and he holds her down a bit longer. He brings her up one more time.

ringleader

I wanted to be nice. You made me not be *nice.*

He dunks her again and is holding her head in the water for good this time.

ext. underwater angle. continuous.

Lara struggles, holding her breath. Finally, she lets it out and screams. There is the same sonorous effect on her voice, her scream begins high-pitched, but then takes on a powerful quality. The water drains from around her head as if a drain-plug in the lake has been pulled.

ext. lake shore. continuous.

The water has receded, Lara is gasping for air and the Ringleader lets go of her, surprised. They look at each other and then towards the sound of a huge wave heading towards the lake shore. It crashes against it and both Lara and the Ringleader are knocked down. Lara grabs a nearby tree, while the Ringleader is pulled out into the lake from the undertow. He disappears into the dark water. Lara lies there, soaking wet and sobbing. Todd runs up to her.

todd

How did-? Are you okay? Lara?

He touches her shoulder and she looks up at him. She’s scared, worn out, and when she recognizes it’s Todd, she falls into his arms, letting her emotions go.

todd

Hey. Hey. Shh. Everything is going to be okay.

He strokes her hair and all awkwardness is gone between them. It’s more intimate an encounter than the almost-kiss in the studio. Todd takes off his jacket and wraps it around Lara. He puts his arms over her shoulders and helps her to his feet. He pulls out his phone and starts dialing 911 as they walk off toward the illuminated path.

Dissolve to black.

end act one.

Act two

int. stage. night.

We open on a black curtain, closed. Suddenly an explosion of pyrotechnics and music kicks in. Lara bursts through the curtain in a sexy outfit, dancing and singing one of her songs. As we pull back, we see that she is the center of a massive stage show, back-up dancers, a band, the works. As she sings, she goes into a dance break. She moves past her dancers, lingering for a moment in front of CYNTHIA (20, shorter, brunette from South Boston) who winks at her. Lara smiles back and then faces the audience and finishes the song. As leaves the stage we see she is performing for an audience of thousands. She waves to the crowd as she walks behind the curtain.

int. backstage. continuous.

Sodem stands just off-stage, talking on his phone (Bluetooth headset) as the dancers and musicians stream past him. Lara brings up the rear with Cynthia in tow, both laughing and exhilarated from the performance. The Manager taps his earpiece, hanging up the call, and meets the two of them.

sodem

Great job, ladies. Cynthia, can you give Lara and I a moment?

cynthia.

Sure.

(to Lara)

See you, “Blue Magic.”

sodem

How’s everything?

lara

Great. Better than great. I never imagined it would all happen so fast.

sodem

When your video hits 100 million views in 48 hours, things tend to go fast.

lara

Well, everyone on the tour is so talented, I’m just glad—

sodem

Sorry, sweetheart, I am rushed. Still, I wanted to give you some good news. There’s an EDM tour being sponsored by WorldPopStar.com and, because of the viral videos, they want you to headline on the main stage.

lara

Headline? The main stage?

sodem

If you think you can’t handle it, tell me.

lara

No, no. I’ll be ready.

At that moment JUSTIN, Todd’s brother and now Sodem’s employee enters the frame. He whispers in Sodem’s ear.

sodem

What? How could you—

(to Lara)

Give me a moment. I have to handle something.

He glares once more at Justin and walks rapidly but with poise out of frame. Justin and Lara acknowledge each other with a nod and wave respectively, and stand quietly for an awkward moment finally speaking at the same moment.

 -LARA -JUSTIN

 So how do you know Have you talked to
 Sodem again? the kid lately?

Lara laughs politely and Justin looks annoyed.

Justin

You first.

lara

Oh it’s nothing, I just asked how you knew Sodem.

justin

We met in the military. He offered me the job when I de-enlisted.

lara

Yeah. And you asked about Todd, right?

justin

Yeah, he has it rough at *her* house. What with my sister’s kids and all. I’m lucky mine are with their mothers.

lara

Right. No, I haven’t really talked to him much lately. I know Carl keeps him busy at that store.

justin

What store?

Sodem reappears and beckons Justin over to him. He waves to Lara, big fake smile on his face. Justin leaves without even acknowledging he’d just asked Lara a question.

lara

Glad we had that talk you guys.

Lara walks slowly away in the other direction, looking over her shoulder towards where Sodem and Justin disappeared.

int. dressing room. night.

Cynthia and Lara lounge in Lara’s dressing room wearing a mix of wardrobe and comfy clothes. They are chatting when Lara’s phone rings. She glances at the screen and sees that it’s Todd. She clicks “Ignore.” Cynthia doesn’t seem to notice.

cynthia

I dunno, girl it’s not like they were runnin’ to the packie for smokes and beer. They’re up to something.

lara

It was a *little* weird. I think you’re imagining things.

cynthia.

Justin’s for sure a skid, a real friggin’ tool. I’ll bet you a million dollars.

Lara

I don’t have a million dollars.

cynthia

(smiles)

I know you’ll be good for it.

Lara’s phone rings again, she mutes it and tosses it on a sofa across from her.

cynthia

Is that your boyfriend?

Lara gives her a reproachful look.

cynthia

Truth hurts. Why are you avoiding the little geek? You make him sound cute.

The phone rings again. Cynthia stands up to leave.

cynthia

Well, it’s late, I’m sheets.

(at the door)

Take his call.

lara

I have much more important things to do, I’m going to be a headliner!

They laugh and the phone rings once more. Lara rolls her eyes and picks it up.

lara

Hello.

todd

Hey, sorry to blow up your phone like that.

lara

Is everything okay?

todd

Better than okay. They finally pulled him from the lake.

Lara tenses, she’s been worried about this.

lara

And?

todd

And what? It’s been 8 months, he’s jello. They ruled it drug-related, like he was high or something.

Lara exhales, weight lifted from her soul.

todd

So---how about that *other* thing?

lara

I dunno, little things. Nothing major.

todd

I still think it was my equipment that did it.

lara

That’s crazy, Todd.

todd

Crazier than screaming a tsunami?

Lara closes her eyes, there’s guilt there.

todd

I promise you, I am going to figure it out. Okay.

lara

Look, it’s not that bad. And, I have too much going on right now to worry about that.

todd

What? What’s more important that what’s happening to you?

Lara sees a package on the table, a gift from a fan presumably.

lara

Todd, I gotta go. I’ll call you soon.

Lara hangs up and walks over to the gift. It wasn’t there before. She goes to the door, opens it and looks out but there is no one around. The entire place is empty. She goes back and opens the package, pulling out long strips of a synthetic blue fabric. There’s a note that reads “Blue Magic for Blue Magic,” signed with a heart. She loves it.

int. dressing room. minutes later.

Lara stands in front of the mirror. She has wrapped the fabric around her, creating half of what will be her heroic costume. She’s playing with the arrangement when she hears a woman’s shrill scream. She runs out of frame.

int. the stage. seconds later.

Lara emerges onto the stage and sees Justin struggling with a YOUNG WOMAN. He’s dragging her to the door. Lara jumps off of the stage and heads towards the side exit where Justin’s headed.

lara

Hey! What are you doing?

Justin looks up surprised and the girl struggles free. Justin grabs her jacket. Lara is close to them, but not close enough to get to her before he does.

lara

(sonorous effect on voice, but deeper and more forceful than before)

LET HER GO!

Rather than just stop dumbfounded, Justin is knocked off of his feet as if he was hit with buckshot. The woman reaches Lara and they both flee, Lara hesitates and watches as Justin labors to his feet and staggers out the door. We hold on her concern and surprise then

int. dressing room. early morning.

Lara is sitting down wearing a robe, Sodem at her side. Two police officers stand there. They speak in the country’s native tongue and Sodem translates.

police officer

(unsubtitled)

Ask her if she can identify the attacker.

sodem

He wants to know if can identify the attacker.

lara

You know I can. It was him, Sodem. He was kidnapping that woman.

sodem

(unsubtitled)

No, it was too dark for her to get a clear look.

The police officers nod to Sodem and then to Lara and exit. Lara is distraught.

lara

That’s it?

sodem

These foreign police, huh? It’s why I hire private security.

lara

Like Justin?

sodem

(pained)

I know. It’s just, my father was an ex con and no one took a chance on him. I wanted to believe Justin could change.

lara

What are we going to do?

sodem

We? Nothing. We’re going to move on to the next country. The show? Must go on? Trust me, security knows Justin’s face. He’ll not get within 50 feet of the venue without someone catching him.

Lara seems reassured and her phone rings again, it’s Todd. Sodem smiles and takes his leave. Lara answers.

Todd

What is going on over there? My mother just a got a call from the US Consulate about Justin. Something about if he’s ever been involved in kidnapping? My mother is a wreck!

lara

Oh, Todd. I saw him try to kidnap this girl at the venue.

(whispers)

I stopped him, with…you know.

todd

You did? How?

lara

I don’t know. It felt different this time. Like—

Lara opens her robe a bit and glances down at her half-an-outfit.

lara

I think it has something to do with this package I got. Did you send me something?

Todd

No.

Lara appears disappointed, but moves on.

lara

Well, I got these, I dunno, scarves. I can’t tell what kind of fabric it is. I thought it was wardrobe and I was playing with the look when I stopped Justin.

todd

Maybe, or maybe you got lucky. You’ve got to be careful. Try not to…you know…until I can figure out how I did this to you.

lara

Look, it’s been a long night. I’ll let you know when I know something, okay?

todd

Okay. Lara?

lara

Yeah?

todd

I am really glad you’re okay. And if you think it helps, hold on to that outfit.

Touched, Lara hangs up the phone, looks at her outfit one more time and then wraps the robe around her again.

cut to:

int. todd’s workstation. morning.

Todd looks at the phone and sits down, defeated. His workbench is covered with new notes and figures and calculations. Under some of the papers is a poster of a superhero wearing what will be the other half of Blue Magic’s outfit. Todd notices it and pulls the paper down. He starts sketching things and writing equations in the margin.

todd

An outfit….

Carl walks in. He looks wan, sickly. Coughing every so often.

carl

This outfit is going to go broke if you don’t hurry up with those back orders.

todd

I’m sorry, Carl, I…

carl

Relax, I’m just kidding. Actually, we’re having a good month. I’ve been renting out Lara’s old studio. Seems her success has everyone in town thinking they’re stars.

todd

(forceful)

What? You can’t!

carl

I can. Calm down, boy. This is good news. Means more time for, whatever it is you’re doing back here. What’s really going on with you? Is it the girl?

todd

It’s just, what if you do something unforgivable?

carl

Look son, I don’t follow you, but you two have something special. I don’t think it’s in either of you to not forgive each other.

As always with sage advice, Todd doesn’t want to hear it. Carl smiles and goes to sit at his desk. Very subtly around his things (so that most may miss it), there should be a swatch of the blue fabric.

cut to:

int. stage. night.

A new venue in a new country, we join Lara as she is singing the end of a soft, soulful song. The spotlight is just on her and she’s incorporated the blue fabric into her wardrobe. The song ends, the applause is huge. Lara bows and exits the stage.

int. backstage. later.

Lara is meeting and greeting with fans. Cynthia hangs around in the rear. Lara poses for a picture and beckons Cynthia to get in it with her and the fan. She obliges, reluctantly.

cynthia

This is beat. I am getting out of here.

lara

What are you going to do?

cynthia

(whispering)

Smoke this wicked good herb one of the sound guys gave me.

Lara just shakes her head. Cynthia walks out of frame.

cynthia

(over her shoulder)

Meet you in the dressing room!

Ext. venue. later.

Cynthia stands there smoking a joint. She keeps her head on a swivel, when she spies Justin by the tractor trailers that hold the sets. She stubs out the joint and then puts it in her jacket pocket. She creeps over to a stack of crates and peers around the side. Justin is standing between a large van and an open trailer. He opens the side door and dirty, bedraggled women pour out of it and up the ramp into the trailer. Justin shuts them in. Sodem appears and gets into the van with him and they drive off. When they are out of sight, Cynthia runs over to the trailer. She’s trying to figure out how to open it, trying and failing. Tension builds and she finally gets the latch undone. She’s whips open the door on one side, only for it to be stopped by Justin’s meaty hand. Cynthia looks up at him in terror and he moves in front of the camera darkening the frame.

dissolve to:

int. dressing room. morning.

It’s the previous scene all over again. Lara sitting in her robe, Sodem at her side, and two police officers standing with their notebooks open. This time Lara is an emotional wreck. One of the police officers speaks in accented English.

officer

Do you know if she got the drugs here or did she bring them from outside the country?

lara

I’m telling you, Cynthia didn’t DO drugs. I mean, she smoked a little weed every so often.

officer

This was more than weed. Her body was found in her hotel room, what time did she leave here?

lara

Right after the show, but she always comes to my dressing room first. Look there was this guy, a few weeks ago, he tried to kidnap a girl—

sodem

(interrupting)

Lara, that was half a continent away. Justin isn’t here.

(to the Police in the native language-subtitled)

We hired a man who was a criminal, I had no knowledge of this, but I assure you he is not here. She is hysterical, they were friends.

The police officers nod and take their leave.

sodem

Lara, I know this is a tough time. I am cancelling the next show.

lara

It’s Justin, I’m sure—

sodem

If it is, the police or our guys will nab him. Now, I have news. It seems that a certain-famous-dj has dropped out of a big gig at Wembley stadium in London.

Lara pulls herself together when she hears “Wembley.”

sodem

Feel up to your first headlining gig?

lara

You mean *the* Wembley stadium? Thee Madonna, Tina Turner, Michael Jackson *Wembley Stadium*?

sodem

Well, actually it’s the new one built in ’07, but yeah kind of.

Lara hugs Sodem who seems off-put by it. She drops her arms and then starts crying again.

lara

Oh God, I just thought “I can’t wait to tell Cynthia…”

sodem

I can’t think of a better performance to dedicate to her memory.

int. dressing room. night.

Lara is video-chatting with Todd who is in the backroom at Carl’s.

lara

It’s all so crazy.

todd

Are you *sure* Cynthia was clean?

Lara reacts like he’s changing the subject.

lara

Yes. I am. Oh god, she would have loved this London gig.

todd

Well, I think Sodem had something to do with it.

lara

Todd! If anyone had anything to do with it was Justin.

todd

Sure, but if Justin’s there it’s because Sodem wants him to be. If Sodem is my brother’s friend, he’s *not* a good guy.

lara

Sodem met him in the military.

todd

What? The closest Justin ever got to the military was stealing kids’ GI Joes. They’re *lying,* Lara.

Sodem enters the room.

sodem

Lara, I need you. Tell that little twink it’s time for you to go.

Lara is shocked by Sodem’s tone. Sodem just looks at her impatiently. Finally he strides over to her computer.

Todd

Lara, what’s happening? Are you o—

Sodem flips off the camera and unplugs the computer.

sodem

Lara, I know you lost a friend, but these are non-refundable first class tickets. You leave for the airport now or I recoup the loss from your earnings.

Lara grabs a bag and follows Sodem out the door. She’s stunned into silence.

cut to:

Ext. small airport outside of london. morning.

Lara and Sodem exit the airport, a man is behind them with their luggage on a cart. Lara is still obviously annoyed and Sodem is distracted.

lara

-can’t believe you talked to Todd like that, to *me* like that.

sodem

Lara, I’ve apologized. This has been hard on me, too. I overreacted.

Lara

And you fired all of my dancers?

sodem

It’s an immigration, work visa issue. When you start the US tour, you’ll have a dedicated crew.

Lara’s arms are crossed, she doesn’t like it but can do nothing about it. Her back is to Sodem, as if she’s looking for a taxi. There is a TOP OF THE LINE CAR parked near the door. Sodem approaches her from behind, a bit sinister. Finally, he pulls a set of keys from his pocket and dangles them over her shoulder, in front of her face.

lara

What’s this?

sodem

It’s your first headlining gig and that deserves a present.

Sodem gestures to the car. Lara’s eyes go wide, this car is a far cry from the little girl’s bicycle she left back home.

Lara

Oh my God! This is mine?

sodem

Well, while we’re in England. It’s a rental, but don’t worry it’s still so expensive it’s vulgar. You’ve had a rough couple of days, some of that my fault. You deserve this.

Lara smiles, coy, and then takes the keys and runs over to the car. As she checks out the car, Sodem gestures towards the bags.

sodem

(yelling)

We’ll take the bags to the ho—

(to himself)

she’s not listening.

cut to:

int. lara’s car. night

It’s after the show and Lara is pulling out of the venue. Music plays in the car and she does some donuts or other crazy driving. Laughing to herself she peels out of the venue’s parking lot and peels off down the street. Lara is happy, but reckless, so there’s some anger or aggression underneath her movements. She is not even paying attention to traffic lights and she busts a hard right, tires screeching. She’s heading back toward the venue now, still speeding. A light switches to red and a van parked at an intersection starts to move ahead, not seeing Lara. Lara panics and slams on the brakes. She almost collides with the van. There’s a moment for exhalation and then she sees the driver, it’s Justin. He sees her, and then backs up fast, spinning the van around. Lara mutters to herself in determination and takes off after Justin. She chases him through the streets.

ext. dockside warehouse. night.

Justin seems to have lost Lara. He pulls into the Warehouse. The camera backtracks his path and we see, just around the corner, Lara’s car with headlights off. She exits the vehicle, wearing her half-outfit. She follows the van on foot onto the property and hides out of sight when he parks it.

ext. warehouse parking lot. continuous.

A black car pulls up to the van and Sodem exits. They talk. Lara tries to hear them, but she can’t. She cups her hand behind her ear (ensure wardrobe has the magic fabric around her wrist or even hand itself) and she suddenly picks up the conversation.

sodem

And getting the container on board isn’t going to be a problem?

justin

No, the freighter captain is a pro. His only concern is if any of them don’t survive the trip.

sodem

Mine too. How many do you think we can get?

justin

In London? There are desperate girls everywhere, artists, runaways, junkies, the poor. We should get 30 heads, easy.

Sodem nods and walks back to his car. Justin doesn’t, seeming as if he wants to add something. Sodem stops and turns back.

sodem

Is there something else?

justin

Uh yeah. Lara saw me.

sodem

What?! How could you let that happen?

justin

She was in the car you gave her! She was speeding around, she almost hit me. Don’t worry, I lost her.

Sodem’s face is all rage, he gets to his car and peels off. Lara runs to the car, making eye contact with Sodem as he drives down the road. She hops in and gives chase. A shorter chase this time, that ends very suddenly when she crashes the car. She screams and the audio effect on her voice happens, much like in the lake and it acts as a sonic airbag. She’s not hurt. She gets out of the car and starts running down the street.

cut to:

ext. hotel. night.

Lara runs into the hotel where she’s staying. She walks in and gets in the elevator.

int. hallway. night.

Lara exits the elevator and strides with a purpose up the hallway, we see her that even with half an outfit, she is about to become the hero we know she was born to be. She gets to Sodem’s door and calls out his name, the doors blow open. She walks in, confident.

int. sodem’s room. continouous.

Lara walks into Sodem’s room and is greeted by him and her parents standing there with a few extras. Their chairs are arranged in a semi-circle.

mother

Oh, there she is. Thank God.

sodem

Lara. We’ve been worried.

lara

What is this? Mom, Dad, what are you doing here?

father

Sodem flew us out for your show, we only just arrived when he told us the police found your rental car, totaled. What is going on with you Lara?

mother

Are you—are you high right now?

lara

Am I-? What? No, I crashed my car chasing *him*

(points at Sodem)

He’s working with Todd’s brother, I think they are abducting girls.

father

(to Sodem)

Oh no. It’s worse than we thought.

sodem

Lara, darling. This is an intervention. You’ve been noticeably off the rails since Cynthia oh-dee-ed. It’s time to check yourself in somewhere and get the help you need.

father

I blame myself sweetie. I’ve put so much pressure on you. It’s not your fault.

lara

This is bullshit! Mom, Dad, I am telling you, Sodem is a very bad man. And I can stop him. I—

(she hesitates)

I have an ability, powers. Something Todd did, we think. But it doesn’t matter. I *have to stop him*.

mother

Oh Lara, I’m so sorry…

From one of the other rooms two British police officers emerge.

sodem

You have two choices Lara, leave here and go to a facility, near your home, or leave here in the custody of these officers.

Lara seems ready to lunge for a moment, but then her shoulders drop. She’s defeated. She sits down in the chair they have for her. Sodem walks towards the door and the camera, we track with him backwards until we are out the door. He shuts it on us.

end act two

act three

int. rehab group session. day.

Lara sits in a circle of recovering addicts, one of them is INGA TRUJILLIO (50s, lean, smoking). It’s not a glamorous facility. There are bars on the windows and one patient is wearing cuffs on his hands and feet. DR. STYRON (60s, balding, portly) sits at the head of the circle as if waiting for an answer to a question.

dr. styron

Well? Anyone?

Quiet. Some patients fidget nervously. Lara looks bored by it all.

dr. styron

Lara? Feel like finally sharing?

lara

Nope.

dr. styron

It’s been three months and you have yet to even acknowledge your addiction.

lara

Because I am not an addict.

inga

You know, I used to feel the same way—

dr. styron

Inga, please. This is Lara’s time.

lara

It’s not *my time*. I am in here against my will and—

dr. styron

Yes, and you were put in here by a man you believe is involved in human trafficking and also happens to be your tour manager and the one paying for your stay?

Lara raises her hand as if to say, “there you have it,” and leans back even further in her chair.

dr. styron

This you have mentioned before, but how about something new. Maybe something from your diary?

Lara glances down to the diary in her lap, as if she’s forgotten it was there. She opens it and flips through it, then snaps the book shut.

lara

In three weeks, I am supposed to be the headlining act on a nationwide tour. This is after appearing on an international tour. I am only 20. Everyone expects that the pressure is unbearable, that I did drugs because I couldn’t handle my success. But here’s the thing, I can handle my success. I can handle even more. Since I was a little girl, I’ve known I’ve been meant for great things. I *am* special and I can—

patient in cuffs

Shut up! Bitch! All of you, shutupshutupshutupshupup.

The Patient in Cuffs continues to yell and be disruptive until two orderlies armed with batons enter the room and drag him away.

dr. styron

Well, that’s as good a place as any to stop. Until tomorrow, everyone.

As the rest of the patients file out of the room, Inga approaches Lara and touches her shoulder. Lara smiles and they walk out together.

cut to:

ext. rehab facility. day.

Todd walks in through the front doors.

int. rehab reception. continuous.

He stops at the desk and signs in. The guard at the desk presses a button and a buzzer sounds. A door behind the guard opens and Todd walks inside.

int. visiting room. day.

Todd waits in a chair until the door opens and Lara walks in. She looks tired, drugged, but glad to see Todd. He stands and they greet each other with a long embrace. He pulls her chair out for her and then sits down.

todd

How are you doing?

lara

The same. How’s Carl?

todd

(cagey)

Uh, fine. Any luck with your…?

lara

No. It’s the drugs, I think. I can’t get anyone to do what I say. I can’t knock anything over.

todd

Here. Maybe this will help.

Todd slides over folded pieces of the blue fabric.

lara

Where did you find it?

todd

With your stuff in storage. I bribed the guard. Said I was your biggest fan.

Lara laughs. She rubs the fabric between her fingertips. She seems to brighten.

todd

I also found some things out about your manager.

Todd pulls some folded pieces of paper out of his coat pocket. Slides those over as well.

todd

Turns out Sodem has a record. He did time with my brother, that’s how he knew him. His *real* name isn’t Sodem either.

lara

I knew it sounded made-up.

todd

It is a cool name.

(catching himself)

Anyway, all you need to do is to get his fingerprints and they can confirm it’s him.

lara

(whispering)

I think he has people here. Watching me.

todd

Well, that doesn’t sound paranoid…

lara

Everything about this is insane! It’s why they’ve been able to keep me here for so long. No one believes me.

todd

Well, lie. Just play along.

lara

I can’t.

They are at an impasse they’ve reached many times over many visits. Todd resigns himself.

todd

Now’s the part where they usually come in and tell me time’s up.

They stand and hug once more, Todd kissing her softly on the cheek.

todd

We’ll get you out of here, okay? Stay hopeful.

A guard opens the door.

guard

Time’s up.

Todd goes to leave and Lara grabs his hand. He holds it a second and then leaves. Lara’s eyes well, but no tears fall. The door behind her opens and she rises and walks out of it.

int. patient dayroom. evening.

Lara and Inga play a game of CHESS while the other patients watch TV and play Connect Four.

inga

You’re getting better.

lara

You’re kicking my ass.

inga

But it isn’t as easy as it was when you got here. Chess is a game of strategy. You’re figuring things out now. You know, what not to do and all that. But you still just barrel forward with no plan. I’ll get ya every time that way.

lara

What’s the point? Strategy doesn’t matter when the other side doesn’t play by the rules.

inga

Then change ‘em.

lara

What?

inga

Change the rules. Look, I can see you’re not an addict. Everyone can see you’re not an addict. Hell, I bet even Dr. Styron can see you’re not an addict.

lara

Someone put me in here to keep me out of the way.

inga

Well, get back in his way.

lara

Uh, I’m stuck in here? Only person’s way I’m in is my own.

inga

Damn straight. You sound like you’re angry. Like you’re out for justice.

Lara doesn’t respond. It’s exactly what she is looking for.

inga

Listen darling, just play along. Make up some stories in group. Tell them what they want to hear. You’ll get out and then you can get your justice. You grab it by the balls and you don’t let go of that son of a bitch.

Lara laughs, the words don’t match the person saying them. She thinks about it and nods okay almost imperceptibly. She makes a move with her bishop. Inga pounces.

inga

Checkmate!

cut to:

int. dr. styron’s office. day.

Lara sits in front of Dr. Styron, who is smiling.

dr. styron

Lara, I am so pleased at the progress you’ve made.

lara

I think when you asked me to share last week…well it was the jolt I needed.

Dr. Styron smiles, pleased with himself. The door to his office opens and Lara’s parents and Sodem walk in. Her parents embrace her. Lara hugs them back hard. Sodem extends his hand. To everyone’s surprise she takes it.

lara

Sodem, I, I am so sorry about the things I said about you.

sodem

(surprised, but tries to downplay it)

You are?

lara

Of course! I mean, I was so confused I didn’t even realize I had a problem. I had to have hallucinated all that craziness…well, I don’t know if you can ever forgive me.

Lara’s parents and the Doctor are all warm smiles and they look to Sodem to let her complete this important step of the program.

sodem

It’s, uh, it’s fine.

lara

I understand if you don’t want to work with me any longer.

sodem

Nonsense. Your fans, well most of them anyway, are very supportive. You can still headline the show. It’ll be your comeback!

mother

Oh I prayed for this. Lara, I am so happy!

Lara embraces her mother.

lara

Me too, I’m sorry.

dr. styron

Wonderful, Lara. You may be my greatest success yet.

mother

When can Lara come home, Doctor?

dr. styron

Well, there are a few administrative hurdles left to leap, but I think in a day or two.

Lara’s Father takes her hand, Lara smiles at him. Sodem is glaring at her, Lara gives him a knowing look in return. Frowning, Sodem leaves the room.

cut to:

int. rehab reception. day.

Lara stands by the desk, dressed in her street clothes and carrying a bag. Inga is with her.

inga

So. This is it?

lara

Yeah, I guess so.

inga

You remember what I told you?

lara

(smiling)

By the balls.

inga

That’s my girl.

They hug each other. Lara breaks the embrace first and then hands Inga a card.

lara

When you get out of here, look me up, okay?

inga

Maybe I can be one of your sexy back-up dancers?

Lara winces at the mention of dancers.

lara

Maybe. Just, take care of yourself, okay?

inga

You don’t worry about me. You worry about you. You’re a very special girl, Lara.

Lara’s Father enters the room and hugs his daughter.

father

Ready to go?

lara

Yes. Can you drop me off in town?

Father is wary, he’s not sure whether to trust her.

father

Is that a good idea?

lara

Dad, I’m just going to see Todd and Carl at the store. Maybe see the old studio. You know, happier times.

father

Lara, I know I’ve been overbearing in the past. I pressured you with Oxford, with a career you didn’t want, one you weren’t meant to do…

lara

Dad…

father

Let me finish. A year ago, I told you happiness comes after a life of achievement. Well, I was wrong. When you were gone, in here, I realized there is no joy that can compare to seeing your daughter do what she’s meant to do. Watching you on stage, it’s obvious you were meant to do this. If it gets tough again, if you feel like using, call me or your Mom, okay? There’s no pressure anymore. We just want you *safe.*

Lara hugs her father, over his shoulder her face a mix of guilt and sadness.

lara

Dad, I—

She looks over to the window and sees Inga, who gives her a thumbs up and then makes a downward grabbing motion.

father

Yes, honey?

lara

I-I love you.

Father puts his arm around his little girl, picks up her suitcase and they exit.

cut to:

Ext. carl’s store. day.

Lara exits Father’s car and walks up to the door. The sign says “Closed,” but the door is open when she tries it. She enters.

int. storefront. continuous.

Lara walks in. The entire store has been rearranged. It’s less cluttered, more organized. She looks at the labels on the equipment, far more detailed than they used to be.

lara

Carl? Todd?

There’s some noise off-screen and Todd comes out from the back room, Lara the last person he expected to see.

todd

Lara? How did you get out?

lara

I lied.

todd

What made you change your mind? What made you start to play along with them?

lara

I don’t know. A friend in there, she…she didn’t really say anything different than you’ve been saying for months, but it just clicked when I heard her say it.

todd

Well, whatever, I can’t believe you’re here.

lara

I know, it feels like forever since I’ve been in here. Where’s Carl?

Todd’s face falls

todd

I have to tell you something…

Todd hesitates, Lara awaits the revelation. Todd loses his nerve and changes the subject.

todd

So, I have been studying the readings from my experiments with the studio equipment. I tried to replicate the what happened. First with me and then

(a bit ashamed)

With some of the others who rented studio time from Carl.

lara

What? You tried it on yourself? On others? How could you?

todd

I-I don’t know. I just wanted to figure out how I did this to you.

lara

Look, I don’t know if it was because of you or something else that caused these…abilities. Even if it was, I know you didn’t do it on purpose.

todd

Well, that’s what I’m saying, I don’t think it was me anymore.

lara

What?

todd

Well, I mean, I looked over the readings from the time we spent recording your demo. Over a period of months, the amount of phonons—

Lara looks at him as if she thinks he just made up that word.

lara

Phonons?

todd

Yeah, like light particles but with sound, but anyway, as the sessions continued, the amount of phonons that were converted into energy increased exponentially.

lara

That’s…interesting?

todd

Damn right. My equipment is supposed to capture phonons and focus them into energy that can be converted into, uh, other types of energy. The amounts of phonons I could harness were small, infinitesimal really. Enough to power a light bulb for 2 minutes maybe. But, after the first month, I was catching enough to power the building for an entire day. And that was just one song!

lara

What are you saying?

todd

I’m saying that they had to be coming from you. I am no biologist or anything, but my best guess is that you naturally do the same thing as my machine.

Lara looks at him, still lost.

todd

You. You take sound and change it into different energy. The hypnotic thing is done by tone and pitch, according to my best guess, but the other stuff? Well, that’s like a laser or an atomic bomb or something.

lara

So, I’m some kind of freak?

todd

I would use the word “miracle” but yes.

lara

How is this good news?

todd

Because now that I understand your power, I think I can help you control it.

Todd takes her hand and pulls her into the back room.

INt. todd’s workstation. continuous.

The workstation is cleaner than it was. The nice computer has moved to Carl’s desk. All of Carl’s things are packed into boxes and off to the side. In the middle of the room is a mannequin wearing the full version of Blue Magic’s suit. It’s hooked up to different sorts of equipment.

lara

What-what is that?

todd

This is for you. Remember when asked if I sent you an outfit?

lara

(lightly touches the bit of it she’s wearing)

Yes.

todd

Well, that got me thinking. If I can adapt my mechanisms to fit in this suit, you could control and focus your abilities!

lara

Really?

todd

Yeah, I didn’t think it was going to work, you know? I didn’t have any material that was a good conductor for the phonons. But I found some blue stuff like you described in Carl’s things and it was exactly what I needed.

lara

There was some *here?*

todd

Yeah, I mean I’ve never seen anything like it. Can’t tell you how it works, just that it does.

lara

Todd. Where’s Carl?

Todd’s face falls.

todd

I-I have to tell you something…

cut to:

Int. hospice ward. evening.

Lara and Todd stand in the ward of dying men and women. Todd’s expression is one of familiarity, while Lara is stunned.

lara

My god, I thought the rehab facility was terrible.

todd

It’s not really a bad place, Lara. The people here are really good. Carl’s very comfortable…well as comfortable as he can be.

Todd and Lara walk over to a bed where Carl is lying. He’s on oxygen and all sorts of other hospital equipment. His breathing is shallow.

todd

Carl?

Carl wakes up, groggy. He squints his eyes at Lara.

carl

(half asleep)

Todd? Love him, like my own son…

(wakes, voice weak, raspy)

Lara? Is that you, honey?

lara

(tearfully taking his hand)

Yes, Carl. I’m here.

(to Todd)

Why didn’t you tell me?

carl

I told him not to. You had to focus on getting out of there not

(coughing fit)

Some sick old man….

Lara sits next to him, stroking his long hair.

lara

I wish I’d known.

carl

Nothing you could do, sweetie. How was the world tour?

lara

(smiling)

It was amazing. And I owe it all to you. If you hadn’t believed in me…I don’t know where I would be right now.

carl

I told you then, I believed in you *both.*

Carl notices the blue fabric and his bony hand reaches out and touches it lightly.

carl

I see you got my present.

lara

Your--? You sent this to me?

carl

(struggling to hold onto consciousness)

…knew you were special, first time I saw ya…

lara

What is it, Carl? What is this?

todd

How does it work? Where did you get it?

Carl laughs and it turns into coughing, when it subsides, he’s laughing still.

carl

It’s…it’s…ha…

(drifting away)

Blue magic….

Carl closes his eyes and is gone, peacefully. Todd ad-libs a call for a nurse, frantic, and Lara lets slip one tear. She kisses his hand and sets it back on the bed. A doctor and nurse come over to the bed, but not in a rush. Lara and Todd hold each other, Todd taking the death harder.

ext. hospice. evening.

Todd and Lara sit on a stone ledge, near the smoking area. Sadness hangs between them, but Lara takes Todd’s hand.

lara

I’m sorry, Todd.

Todd doesn’t say anything, but continues to look at the ground.

todd

There was so much about Carl I don’t know. And now? My questions have questions…

lara

Todd, come on, this isn’t about me or what Carl knew about the Blue Magic outfit, is it?

todd

(tough façade crumbling)

What am I going to do without him? I-I’ve got no one. I’m alone.

lara

No, not alone.

Lara leans over and kisses him, deeply.

lara

Let’s go home.

todd

I can drop you off at your parents’, I guess.

lara

No, home. To the studio…

Todd and Lara stand and walk out of frame.

ext. carl’s store. Morning.

Lara and Todd emerge from the store, wearing the same clothes they were the previous night. They are closer, more relaxed around each other. Glowing, one might say.

todd

Carl had his arrangements already taken care of. No funeral, no nothing.

lara

Nothing?

todd

He wants his ashes kept in the store. I suppose we could have a ceremony or something.

lara

Well, that’s just as well because the concert is tomorrow.

todd

So?

lara

So, the night of a show is when Sodem and your brother ship off their victims.

todd

And you have a plan?

lara

I do. First, I’m gonna need to know how to work that suit.

todd

Whoa, whoa. I haven’t tested it or anything, you can’t just—

lara

I can’t let them hurt anyone else, Todd. I’ll have to take my chances.

Todd

That’s a big risk, at least let me—

lara

There’s no time, I need you to do some digging. See if Sodem or his company has any property along the docks.

todd

I don’t like it, Lara.

lara

Me neither, but he has to be brought to justice.

Todd laughs, inappropriately. Lara glares at him.

todd

I’m sorry, you just sound like a a comic book character.

lara

(smiling)

Maybe I am. Call me: Blue Magic.

cut to:

Int. dressing room. night.

Lara sits in the dressing room, wearing the outfit, warming up her voice. As she does her vocal exercises, the blue parts of the suit begin to shimmer with energy. She opens and closes her fingers a few times, until a jolt of blue light (like a laser) shoots out from her palm and blasts apart a vase of roses. She smiles. Her phone rings, it’s Todd.

lara

Did you find it?

todd

Yeah, there’s a building, out near East Islip. I am on my way now.

lara

Look, just stay out of danger, okay? Wait for the police to arrive.

todd

Hey, I’m no superhero.

Lara smiles and hangs up the phone. There’s a knock on the door. Before she can say anything, Sodem walks in, with a big security guard.

sodem

So, it’s a few minutes to curtain, babydoll and we have to talk.

The guard lunges at her, grabbing her arms and holding her. Lara doesn’t resist.

sodem

You were very clever in the doctor’s office. But I think we both know you were putting on another show, weren’t you?

The guard grips Lara tighter; she cries out in pain, the blue in her outfit shimmers. Neither of the two men notice.

lara

Look. I came to my senses. I don’t know what you’re doing and I don’t care. A life in luxury is better than what I had before.

Lara really sells it, and Sodem eyes her warily.

sodem

Nope, not buying it.

lara

Look, we can do this the easy way or the hard way. I don’t want to hurt anyone.

guard

(laughs)

I’d worry about yourself, bi—

lara

(effect on voice)

Let me GO!

She shrugs her shoulders violently and the Guard goes flying against the wall, blasted away from Lara by a bolt of blue energy. Sodem falls backwards onto his ass. He looks up with childlike fear.

sodem

Please. Don’t hurt me.

Lara grabs him by the shirt collar and pulls his face towards hers. She tags him with a couple of good blue-powered punches.

lara

How many girls said that to you? How many did you close up in a shipping container and send off to god-knows-where?

sodem

(whispering)

Please. Please don’t kill me.

lara

What’s in East Islip?

sodem

It’s where the girls are. My guys are gonna be there when the show starts to load them on the truck.

lara

Where are the others?

sodem

I don’t know. Once they get on the ship, I don’t know where it goes. It’s better that I don’t know.

Lara launches him against the wall, getting a real rush from all this power. Her face is slightly scary.

sodem

(crying)

How are you doing this? When Justin said what you did, I-I thought he was just lying, covering his mistakes, I never thought.

lara

I should kill you.

Sodem is reduced to a cowering mess on the floor, afraid for his life.

lara

But, I won’t take a life. Not again. I have a better idea.

Lara bends down until she is eye-level with Sodem. She grabs him by the collar again and stands him up.

lara

Let’s go. It’s showtime.

int. backstage. moments later.

Lara’s parents stand backstage waiting for Lara. She arrives with a visibly shaken Sodem. They wave to her, but she doesn’t pay attention to them. We track with her and Sodem as she walks with Sodem to the edge of the curtain. She looks out into the crowd, it’s a packed house. There is a large viewscreen hanging above the stage. She lets go of Sodem’s shirt.

lara

(hypnotic effect on voice)

Stay here.

sodem

I’ll stay here.

lara

Good boy.

She walks over to a board operator at the side of the stage. She hands him her phone.

lara

Can you make a call with video to this number and can you patch it into the big screen up there?

board op

Well, I should probably ask…

lara

(hypnotic effect, blue shimmer on outfit)

Do it, as a favor to me?

board op

Yeah, I can do it. As a favor to you.

Lara touches his cheek flirtatiously and spins on her heels, walking back towards Sodem, standing motionless but with panic in his eyes.

sodem

(whispering)

What are you doing to me?

lara

(hypnotic effect)

Shut up.

sodem

I’ll shut up.

Lara waits for the right moment at the side of the stage. She glances around nervously and spots the guard from earlier running out the back exit. She makes a move as if to follow him, but reconsiders. She turns to Sodem.

lara

Okay, it’s now or never.

(hypnotic effect)

Go out on stage and confess. Then, introduce me.

sodem

I’ll go onstage and confess. Then I will introduce you.

lara

Go.

Sodem walks, slowly, as if he’s fighting the urge, out onto the stage.

int. stage. continuous.

Sodem walks out to the center and a spotlight illuminates him. The crowd cheers like crazy. He grabs a cordless microphone out of the stand. He taps the top and there is a moment of screeching feedback. Lara’s suit shimmers just off-stage.

sodem

Hello? Good evening. My name is Sodem, well that’s not my *real* name, but it’s what I have been calling myself for two years.

Sodem lowers the mike, as if battling with himself to stop talking. He loses and the raises it to his mouth again.

sodem

I am the tour manager, but that’s not my only job. I oversee a group that takes young women and…

Struggling again, losing again.

sodem

…I arrange for their transport out of their home country and send them off to, well, I don’t really know, you see. I always thought it would be better if I didn’t know where they went. I told my employers it was for deniability’s sake, but the real reason is, I didn’t want to know if they were going to be sex workers or slaves or something even more horrific. Also, I had a dancer of ours, Cynthia, killed because she found out about it. Made it look like she overdosed on drugs.

The crowd is dead silent, half confused, half-horrified.

sodem

Still, even though I don’t know what happened to them, I’ve kept records.

(laughs sorrowfully)

I wasn’t supposed to, but I did anyway. They are in my office, in the safe. The combination is 25-54-13.

Lara stands just offstage, two police officers have joined her, hands on their guns.

sodem

Now, ladies and gentleman, please welcome: Blue Magic!

The crowd is mostly silent, but a fifth of them still cheer when she walks onstage. She waves to them and takes the microphone from Sodem.

lara

Everything this man just told you is true.

(looking toward the Board op)

Make the call.

The screen lights up above Lara show text that reads: CALLING TODD. Todd answers the phone and we see his face.

todd

(whispering)

Okay, I’m inside.

lara

(off-microphone)

What? Oh, Todd, no.

Todd turns the camera away from him and over a crate he’s hiding behind. Justin and five or six other henchman stand around the room. A group of women are huddled in the corner looking terrified.

todd

It looks like there is over a dozen women here. As many guards, too. I hope the police are on their way…

Off-stage one of the police officers starts talking into his radio, the other walks onstage, handcuffs out.

lara

(off-mike, hypnotic effect)

This man wants to cuff you.

sodem

(extending his hands)

I suppose you want to cuff me.

A confused officer cuffs Sodem’s hands behind his back.

lara

(in the microphone)

This probably isn’t the show you thought you were going to see tonight. But tonight these women are going to go free, go home to their loved ones. No more families will have to wonder what happened to their little girls.

The crowd cheers, starts chanting her name. Lara’s parents come onstage and she walks over to them. Her Father hugs her tightly.

mother

Oh Lara, we should have believed you.

father

I wish I didn’t have to keep apologizing to you, kiddo.

lara

It’s okay, it’s okay.

Suddenly there are gasps from the crowd. The camera on the screen is still trained on the women, but a gruff voice from off-screen is heard over the speakers.

voice (o.s.)

Hey. What are you doing?

The camera spins with Todd and we see a large, tattooed man standing over him. He throws a punch, sending Todd and the camera phone flying. The phone lands, pointing towards a large ceiling fan, rotating slowly. The sounds of a struggle and Todd’s pained cries are picked up by the phone.

lara

Todd!

The man walks over to where the phone is on the ground. The last thing we see is him bringing his heavy boot down onto the camera. The screen goes fuzzy and then dead. Father and Mother look at her concern, she’s frozen.

father

Well? What are you waiting for? GO.

Lara nods and bolts off stage.

ext. backstage door. continuous.

Lara runs out into the parking lot and then stops, scanning for a vehicle. In a parking space that reads “Tour Manager” is the exact same kind of car that Lara crashed in London. She opens the door and gets in, fumbling around the interior looking for the keys.

lara

Please, please, please…

She pauses, looks up at the visor, and then flips it down. The keys fall into her lap.

lara

How ‘bout that.

She fires up the engine and peels out, driving expertly out of the parking lot and onto the highway.

cut to:

int. warehouse office. night.

Todd is tied to a chair in a corner of the warehouse. Justin and the guy who grabbed him are standing in front of him.

justin

Little brother, you fucked the dog on this one.

todd

Justin? What are you doing? Let me go?

justin

Look, I want to. Why were you filming us?

todd

Uh, I dunno?

justin

Wrong answer little brother.

The big guy punches Todd in the face. He reels and spits blood onto the floor.

todd

But, you’re my brother…

justin

I know. It’s why you shouldn’t mix family and business. Now tell me why you were filming us.

todd

I-I was helping Lara.

Justin’s face falls into fear.

justin

Does she know where we are?

todd

(a bloody smile)

She’s probably on her way.

tattoo guy

Who’s Lara?

justin

Nobody. Get out there and get ready to move the merchandise. We’re going to have company.

He leaves and we hang on a worried Justin.

ext. outside the warehouse. night.

The car pulls screeching into the parking area. Lara opens the door and moves in front of the vehicle. She’s illuminated by the headlights. She’s a superhero. Four men carrying rifles come running towards her. She tenses and runs towards them. The sight of her advancing, suit radiating blue, startles the men into stopping. As she closes on them, she yells a war cry that turns into a blast of sound that knocks three of them unconscious. The fourth raises his weapon and fires, only a few feet away from her. Lara raises her arm to her face, scared for the first time.

lara

No!

As she yells, the blue fabric shimmers and the bullets ricochet off of her as if there was a forcefield. The criminal drops his rifle and turns to run away, tripping over one of his unconscious comrades and braining himself on the pavement. Lara runs over them and into the building.

int. warehouse. continous.

Lara bursts in, knocking the door off of its hinges. The prisoners cower in fear and the henchmen attack. They have pipes and bats. Each take a swing at Lara, hitting her outfit. The bats break, the pipe bend. A few of the men start taking swings, but Lara dispatches with them easily. Two of them appear with rifles and Lara pauses. A third steps in behind her and cocks his pistol, the barrel right against her temple. Lara freezes.

int. warehouse office. moments before.

The sounds of the fight can be heard through the door and Justin is in panic mode. His pistol is in his hand, his ear is to the door.

todd

You’re next, asshole.

justin

Come on, little brother. This is me.

todd

Yeah, I remember. The guy who was telling the other guy to punch me in the face.

justin

Aw, we were just trying to scare you. I wouldn’t let him hurt you.

(unconvincingly)

I love you.

Todd reacts the way a kid would who hasn’t heard that a lot in his life.

todd

Untie me.

Justin runs over, tucking the PISTOL in his WAISTBAND, and unties his brother.

justin

Look man, don’t let her hurt me okay?

todd

Let me do the talking and don’t try anything stupid.

justin

You got my word, kid.

The sounds of fighting stop, Justin and Todd look towards the door.

int. warehouse. continuous.

A man wearing glasses has his pistol to Lara’s temple, the rifles are pointed at her chest.

man with glasses

Get down on the ground, slowly, freak.

Lara raises her hands and gets down on her knees slowly.

lara

Look, just put your guns down and no one has to get hurt.

man with glasses

Shut up! I decide who has to get hurt.

lara

This is your last warning.

man with glasses

That’s it, say goodbye you bitch.

Before he can fire, Lara holds a low note. It rises in pitch (or tone?) as she continues. The men holding the guns look around, confused and scared. The walls start to vibrate. The Man with the glasses drops his gun and puts his palms up to his ears. The men with the rifles do the same. They drop to their knees, blood seeping out from their ears. They scream. After a moment, they drop to the floor unconscious. Lara gets to her feet and walks towards the prisoners.

int. warehouse office. seconds earlier.

Justin and Todd have their hands over their ears too, disoriented and in pain, but no blood. It stops.

justin

What the fuck was that?

todd

Lara. Let’s go out there.

justin

(terrified, grabbing Todd’s shoulder)

No! We have to stay here, maybe she won’t find us.

todd

She’s looking for *me*, asshole.

Justin stands motionless, terrified.

int. warehouse. continuous.

Lara approaches the prisoners. They are scared, but they’ve been scared since they got there.

lara

I’m not here to hurt you. Is everyone okay? Can everyone walk?

The prisoners nod and Lara helps a few to their feet.

lara

Head for the door. The police were right behind me.

They walk quickly towards the exit, stepping over the men on the floor. Lara runs after them a few steps.

Lara

My friend Todd was here, did any of you see where he went.

One of the prisoners points towards the office. Lara smiles.

lara

Thank you. Now, go. Hurry. You’re free.

They run out of frame and Lara turns, striding towards the door.

int. warehouse office. continuous.

The door is blown off its hinges. Lara stands in the frame, scanning the room. Todd is between her and Justin. She rushes over to him.

lara

Todd. Are you hurt?

todd

Fine. You okay?

Lara nods and they hug. As they release their embrace, Justin maneuvers himself to be in direct line-of-sight to Lara. He draws his weapon and takes aim. Lara doesn’t see it, but Todd does.

todd

No! Lara!

He jumps in between her and Justin as Justin pulls the trigger. Todd is shot through his side, the bullet going clean through. Lara screams and Justin is thrown backwards by the force of it. He clambers to his feet and runs out a different door than the one Lara came through. She doesn’t notice, because she is on her knees next to Todd, who’s bleeding out.

lara

No, no, no, Todd. Hang on, okay? Help is coming.

todd

(gurgling, weak)

No time, you have to fix me.

lara

I can’t, just lie still, I have to find something to stop the bleeding.

She turns to look for something, but Todd grabs her arm.

todd

Ultrasound, like a laser. Cauterize the wound…

lara

I can’t do that, Todd. I don’t know how.

todd

(woozy, losing consciousness)

Sure you can. You can do anything…blue magic…

Lara, tears slipping from the corners of her eyes, lays Todd on the ground gently. She lifts his shirt to get a look at the wound, it’s spurting blood. She closes her eyes, whispers a silent prayer, and then points her finger at the bullet hole. The suit shimmers, but nothing happens at first. Finally a small, thin laser shoots from her fingertip, cauterizing Todd’s wound. It is very painful. But the blood stops and Todd is saved.

todd

My hero…

Lara laughs and kisses him. Behind her, through the door, we see the police pouring in with their guns drawn. An officer runs over to Lara and Todd.

fade out.

fade in

int. carl’s storefront. day.

Todd sits in a chair, crutches nearby, reading and filing paperwork. His bruises look a few days old. A bell dings as the door opens and we track with his eyes to see Lara walking in, dressed in civilian clothes, an outfit reminiscent of the one she was wearing the day she first walked in. Todd beams.

lara

You look good back there.

todd

Thanks. Doesn’t feel the same without Carl. I’ll never replace him.

lara

Well, he had enough faith in you to give you the store.

Todd breaks eye contact, this is painful for him.

todd

Is it wrong for me to be happy about it? I mean, I miss Carl, but I couldn’t stand losing this place too.

(meets Lara’s eyes)

Everything important to me happened right here.

Lara leans across the counter and kisses him. Todd winces.

todd

Careful now, you’ll make me pop a staple.

Lara move behind the counter, standing next to Todd.

todd

So, what’s next for Blue Magic? Another world tour?

lara

I don’t know. Maybe.

todd

Oh.

lara

But, I think I am going to stick around here for a little while.

todd

Oh?!

lara

Carl seemed to know something about what’s going on with me. I thought maybe I could find some answers here.

todd

Oh.

lara

And, mostly, because this place…with you…it’s really starting to feel like home.

She stands and walks to the door. She flips the sign in the window to CLOSED and locks it. She turns around and strides slowly back towards Todd.

todd

Lara? What are you—

Lara silences him with a finger on his lips and they kiss again, this time passionate and deep. After a moment, Lara slides Todd off of his chair and they disappear beneath the counter. We dissolve to black.

todd (v.o.)

Ow! I think I popped a staple…

THE END.