

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

SILENT STAR

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INT. ABANDONED PARKING BUILDING - DAY

Five stories parking building. Smearred with moss and cracks.

Three middle-aged men and two young adults.

One of which is: Rick (28). Brown jacket. Dirty and old clothing. A bit pessimistic.

He's surrounded.

RICK

On second thought, standing here has been making me feel utterly uneasy. Maybe we should--

MAN 1

You're yet to pay Johnny, Christopher, Victor, and not even Lebowski. What are you even trying to do out here? Committing suicide on yourself?

RICK

Well, if you put it that way - now it just feels like an exaggeration. You just can't take those people seriously, can't you?

MAN 2

Wait until you're decimated by them.

RICK

That's an overstatement. Besides, how long do you think those pretentious be able to roam unsupervised around these blocks before rotting in jail?

MAN 1

I don't think debt works differently either.

The man motions for an immediate attack.

In an instant, a buff-looking man PUNCHES Rick in the face -- hard.

Rick grunts. He was expecting.

RICK

Okay.

Rick reluctantly throws a punch, which promptly falls flat.

More rapid punches are coming.

It's becoming overwhelming for Rick to dodge; he's only able to successfully throw a single punch before getting thrown to the ground...

All five of them rush towards Rick.

RICK (cont'd)
Nope. Not into the swarms.

Immediately returns to his feet. He keeps missing his punches.

Few more punches later, he's entirely knocked out.

They left him on the ground. Mortified.

EXT. STREETS OF MANHATTAN - DAY

Rick walks across a destitute civilization with a bleeding nose and several bruises.

Abandoned buildings all across the streets. Immensely peaceful.

Everybody sits and stares helplessly at the ground.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Rick enters a small convenience store.

Silent. Empty. Barely any employee. Except for the cashier.

He grabs a jug of water and a loaf of bread. Two ONLY customers are tensed by his wounded face.

ROGER (33). Owner of the market. Sole worker. Grumpy, a stash, skinny, short.

ROGER
These?

RICK
These.

A beat.

ROGER
What the hell is wrong with you?

RICK
What do you mean?

ROGER
Look at your face!

RICK
Yea... what about it?

ROGER
Goddammit, man. You looked screwed
up!

RICK
It's ordinary.

ROGER
Exactly! You came here everyday,
looking like you barely survived a
catastrophic disaster. Scaring off my
customers--

RICK
What customers? All I see is just two
lifeless, edgy teenagers

ROGER
More alive-looking than you are

RICK
Oh god.

ROGER
AND, you're discrediting my
reputation

RICK
(scoffs)
Reputation? This forsaken market has
been here for five whole years, and
barely anybody cares. You'd think a
health inspector would even bother to
give this place a consideration? and
You're calling me unethical? Just
look at those...
(pointing)
God knows what even is that anymore.

Dozens of rotten, disgusting, moldy meals. Presumably left
untouched for months.

RICK (cont'd)
Don't even point out that illogical
argument.
(sighs)
Just take this...

He leaves a couple of bucks on the desk.

Leaves the market, after.

Roger takes it all in: *he does have a point...*

EXT. SHELTER - DAY

A two stories abandoned building.

Several homeless people took shelter within. There are dozens of small camps, a fireplace, and an old water dispenser.

Rick gets inside using the exterior stairs.

INT. SHELTER - DAY

Inside looks empty. Barely any furniture. It's dark, cramped, and damp. A couple of dim lights are the only light sources.

On the filthy couch: ZOE (26). Green outer, simple white-T, round glasses. Empathizer. Compassionate.

Currently reading a book.

She notices Rick bruised face.

ZOE
Seriously? Again?

Her face saying this happens more often than it should.

RICK
Nope. Definitely not.

Rick walks away. Uselessly covering his face.

ZOE
You know, you'd be rushed to the hospital at some point. And from there, how do you expect for me to pay the ridiculous bill?

RICK
I'm glad that's your priority of concern in that scenario

Zoe giggles.

ZOE
Are you alright?

RICK
Nothing that the body can't heal.

ZOE
Something that takes time.

RICK
A time that won't be going in my way.

ZOE
You've bought it?

RICK
Yea.

ZOE
You do realize these people couldn't
just eat bread all the time, right?
They need nutrition, fiber, iron,
vitamins --

RICK
Well, there's a super market right up
the streets. If you'd like to provide
the resources needed, then be my
guest.

(beat)
It's not by choice. It never has. And
you know it.

Rick about to step out --

ZOE
By the way, there was this lady in a
suit that came by the other day.
Asking regarding building's
permission and ownership...

(beat)
What's that all about?

RICK
Probably nothing. I'd take a look
into it later.

He gets out.

EXT. SHELTER - DAY

Rick fills the dispenser. Cuts the bread to equal slices.
Then serve the homeless one for each.

RICK

Alright. Last customer --

MR. GOLDMAN (78). Mentally crazy, bearded, scar-like-birthmark, occasionally wise, and a good unofficial actor.

Mr. Goldman rubs his finger with excitement.

MR. GOLDMAN

(playfully)

What appears to be in our menu today?

RICK

(playing along)

A special breakfast made with authenticity, specifically for you. Fresh from the oven.

MR. GOLDMAN

What an incredible honor to be served such a fine breakfast.

RICK

With pleasure.

Mr. Goldman takes a bite.

MR. GOLDMAN

Magnificent! Outstanding!
Unbelievable!

Rick nods and smiles.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A cold, low-saturated, boring office.

Workers who appear to be mentally tormented and have a cold, plain, and dead expression. Not a thought behind their eyes.

It's simply monotonous work.

JOHN (29). Formal office wear, short wavy hair, bearded, tall. Unlike other workers, he seemed to be committed.

Typing incredibly fast. Working as if he's on a competition.

On his back, BARNEY (30). Wide, small glasses, thin hair, vulnerable.

BARNEY

Dude. Dude. Dude!

John stopped.

JOHN

Hm?

BARNEY

Could you just... please. Lower it down. I can't concentrate with that noise of irritation attacking my ear

JOHN

Uh-huh.

BARNEY

What's with the rush anyway, man? It's like they even care for the quality. As long as it's done, it's done.

(a beat)

Wait a minute... Oh. I see. It's because of that promotion, huh?

(laughs)

You're all free, dude. Nothing's blocking you from entering that door. Heck, it's crazy for you to even think there's a larger room beyond that door.

JOHN

That's weird. Because it would appear from my personal observation, you seem to be very cautious and observant in the way you work for someone who doesn't care. Which door are you entering, Barney?

Barney eyed him with deep rage.

John stares, threateningly.

JOHN (cont'd)

Barney, why don't you grab us a couple of bottles at the kitchen? Dehydration can cause some serious distraction, you know? Don't want to lose our focus don't we?

Barney just obeys him regardless -- with his audible rage-filled breath.

A speaker directly attached to John's desk activates.

SPEAKER

John Jackson. You are required to the boss' office.

He locks his computer before leaving.

INT. BOSS' OFFICE - DAY

ELIZABETH (46). Independent, mean, hardworking, intolerant.

John nods and sit down. Oddly appears more silent and slightly anxious.

The clock ticks perpetually. With each tick, a second passes. The nervousness grows by the second.

Elizabeth's expressionless, menacing face stares right into his soul.

Clock stops ticking. In a click; reality returns.

ELIZABETH

So, John.

A huge breath of relief from John.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

I've noticed your work performance and quality have been excellent. an extraordinary effort. Something I genuinely appreciate about having such a convenient worker like you at last. which is why I'd like to offer you a new case of work.

JOHN

Which is?

ELIZABETH

A personal request, was made from the owner of the so called "Lotus Children Orphanage" which is a friend of mine, asked for a volunteer for one of their upcoming event.

JOHN

What event?

ELIZABETH

An event where the volunteer would be a temporary guardian for a chosen orphan.

JOHN

And you're asking me to be...?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

JOHN

I'm sorry for saying this, but I just can't.

ELIZABETH

I beg your pardon?

JOHN

I don't do well with kids. I've never been and I don't think I'll ever will be

ELIZABETH

I don't find anybody who's qualified and trustworthy enough for this task.

JOHN

Not one?

ELIZABETH

(crystal clear)

No.

JOHN

I... I can't. I won't.

ELIZABETH

And I thought I hired you to do everything I asked you to do. Or should it be the reason you've become a disappointment? Hm?

An irresistible offering.

John nods in agreement ever so slightly.

INT. LOTUS CHILDREN ORPHANAGE - DAY

Vast space. Highly-saturated walls. Joyful music. Kids running and playing everywhere.

Two adults are at watch.

At the corner of the room: SKY (10). Blonde, Blue-T, creative, and talkative.

She's all alone. Toying around with a wooden miniature piano figure.

She's intrigued.

Rhyming with the music blasting on the speaker - it fits perfectly well.

A watcher approaches. Her name is, SAMANTHA (25). Kind, lovely, and caring.

SAMANTHA

Hello there, sky. What are you doing all by yourself back here?

SKY

Experimenting.

SAMANTHA

What kind of experimentation? Is it music?

SKY

You could say so.

(pause)

Fascinating, isn't it? The concept of music. The mystifying creation behind the curtain of an infinitely flexible form of communication that triggers our emotional expression. It collides. It connects. It's a possibility.

Samantha smiles. A mixture between stunned and impressed.

Sky proceeds to play a soft, melancholy melody.

SKY (cont'd)

Another would say it's a way to express yourself. Without a single word being spoken from your mouth.

QUEEN (28). Second watcher and administrator. Forming an announcement.

QUEEN

Alright, everybody! I need all of you to gather around over here. I have a quick announcement to share.

All of them gather around at one spot.

QUEEN (cont'd)

Now that all of you are here -- there's something important coming soon enough. Ready? There will be an exciting event. What is it you may ask? It will be an opportunity for you to have an adventurous journey out there in the world --

One kid raises their hand.

KID

Like a field trip?

QUEEN

No. It's not something you share together. But rather something you experience by yourself WITH someone. It's called an "independent exploration event" -- where you will be assigned with a selected guardian to take care of you for thirty days long. Caring, guiding, bringing you in throughout the journey.

SKY

Why would we trust strangers to take care of us?

QUEEN

They're not just random strangers, Sky. They are specifically selected people that qualifies as a legal temporary guardian. With their promising history, documents, identity, we make sure to prioritize your safety. Which is why your activities will be supervised with reports everyday.

(then)

After the event, all of you will soon be transported to another district; located in buffalo.

A sudden shock in Sky's eyes. A look of fear. Understanding what lies underneath.

EXT. LOTUS CHILDREN ORPHANAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Guardians has arrived.

Confirming their identities before later paired with one children for each.

Numerous children are heavily excited.

A classic black sedan parked right on front. Doors opening.
A foot stepping outside -- Revealed to be John.

The overly bright walls took a toll on John's eyes -- it's
like being exposed directly to sunlight.

He unbearably goes to the front desk.

JOHN

I'm here for the guardian thing?

He seemed uninterested and uncomfortable.

RECEPTIONIST

Of course. May I have a name?

JOHN

John Jackson.

The receptionist checks through the list.

RECEPTIONIST

Jackson... Ah. Here it is. All you
need to do is fill this identity form
and show me your legal ID card.

JOHN

Right.

He opens his wallet, then gives her his ID card.

Continuing with filling the identity form with him
immediately rolling his eyes.

RECEPTIONIST

Alright, you're confirmed.

(beat)

However, before we continue to the
next process, I'll be requiring you
to swear to an oath

JOHN

An oath? What is this? A cult?

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry?

JOHN

Right, no. Just tell me what to say

RECEPTIONIST

Will you, under any circumstances, promise to give your full protection to the child? to make sure that you'll be fulfilling their necessary needs? And to give them what they truly deserve? Despite being unfulfilled yourself?

JOHN

Yes. I do.

RECEPTIONIST

Proceed it correctly, sir.

He raises his hand.

JOHN

(sighs)

I, John Jackson, Promise to fulfill everything that necessarily needs to be done, no matter what. There, happy?

The receptionist looks dissatisfied.

RECEPTIONIST

Wait right here.

The receptionist returns with Sky - looking completely unprepared.

RECEPTIONIST (cont'd)

I would like to introduce you to Sky --

JOHN

(awkwardly)

Hey there, Sky... How you doing?

RECEPTIONIST

(to Sky)

Don't worry, there's no need to be afraid. He's a trusted gentlemen, he'll take care of you for approximately a month. It'll be a fun experience. Trust me.

Sky still and will never like the sound of that.

The receptionist let go of her. Sky stood still.

RECEPTIONIST (cont'd)

Come on, Sky. It's okay

Hesitantly approaching John before eventually grabbing his hand.

RECEPTIONIST (cont'd)

There you go. It's the both of you together, from here on. You two have fun. If there's any problem, you could always contact us, immediately

JOHN

Sure. Thanks.

RECEPTIONIST

Goodbye! Bye, Sky!

Sky takes a last glimpse. Fearful that this may be the last time she feels comfort for a long time.

INT. CAR - DAY

Heading to John's house.

Sky sits uncomfortably on the passenger seat.

JOHN

So, how old are you again?

SKY

10.

JOHN

Uh-huh.

Sky is fascinated by the tall, looming buildings. She never had never seen one up close.

SKY

Why are these buildings so big? Is it necessary?

JOHN

Well, so it could load hundreds of workers in just one singular building.

SKY

But why is it built tall? Isn't it fairly dangerous when it reach a certain height? A possibility of it collapsing? Why don't just build it wide? Both could contain a lot of workers in the same way, right?

JOHN

(slightly annoyed)

Well, professional architects and builders designed these buildings symmetrically, including the ground and exposure level. So, the possibility of collapsing won't happen regardless of the height; they made it tall so it could save much more space rather than making it wide.

Sky nods.

While John shakes his head slightly and rolls his eyes.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Finally arrived.

Sky grows curiosity.

It's minimalist looking. Plenty of dirty dishes. Several empty beer bottles. Written papers scattered all over the place. Rough carpet.

It's intentionally cold.

An orange cat emerges.

SKY

You didn't say you have a cat.

JOHN

No. I didn't. But I do. Her name's Bells or whatever you want to call her.

SKY

That's the best name you could possibly think of?

JOHN

That's the only name I could possibly think of.

She pets it. The cat purrs.

JOHN (cont'd)

Hungry?

Sky nods. Very much hungry.

JOHN (cont'd)

Alright. Stay put.

John opens the fridge, which is mostly filled with frozen meals and beers. Nothing much.

He grabs a frozen pizza and puts it in the oven.

SKY

Is that a pizza?

JOHN

Yes.

SKY

There aren't anything healthier to eat? Something that contains vegetables? It helps lower the blood pressure, you know?

JOHN

No. Not currently.

SKY

Why?

JOHN

Because it's my food, my choice. I can eat whatever I want, and I don't need criticism from a child who likes to decide what to eat while I've provided one. That isn't simple enough for you?

Sky is silenced.

Pizza is fully baked.

John takes it out, serve it on the table. A medium-sized pizza with thick layer of cheese and pepperoni.

JOHN (cont'd)

Here's the knife. Dispenser's there. Glass is in the cabinet.

SKY

You're not eating?

JOHN

No. I've work to do.

SKY

It's nightttime, why would you be working? Shouldn't you be resting? That doesn't sound convenient at all.

JOHN

(sighs)

Look, just eat your dinner, alright? Let me mind my own business, and you do yours. If you ever need anything just knock on my room.

John irresponsibly leaves her alone.

Bells is the only company she got.

SKY

(to Bells)

I know we just met minutes ago, but you seems like you need a friend. I'm guessing he treated you the same? Couldn't imagine.

Sky eats the pizza, unfavorably.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Finished dinner. Belly's full of calories. Tired.

Sky sleeps in a cavernous bedroom. It's ridiculously cold.

She couldn't find the remote to turn off the AC -- trembling while covering herself with a thin blanket and a flat pillow.

Scratchings are heard outside. It alerts Sky.

Sky opens the door, it's Bells. Wanting to get in.

SKY

Hey. You're cold too aren't you?

(beat)

Alright. Let me bring you inside the blanket. It doesn't help as much, but still works

Both snuggle under the blanket.

INT. CAR WORKSHOP - DAY

An old, dirty, car workshop. Oily floor. Rusty equipments.

HECTOR (30). Bulky, covered with tattoos, thin goatee, friendly. He's fixing a car engine.

Rick is also present. Working on the undercarriage.

HECTOR
Hey, amigo. Mind passing that wrench?

RICK
Hold on just a second.

Rick passes the wrench. Unintentionally aggressive.

HECTOR
Hey! Calm down a bit.

RICK
Sorry.

Quite the fix later, the engine is done.

HECTOR
Alright. Now, try activating the engine

RICK
Where's the keys?

HECTOR
At the desk.

Rick grab the keys. Gets inside the car -- activates it.

--Perpetual loud noises--

It sounded promising for the first few seconds. Strangely, something isn't right, It's unable to start properly. Merely the sounds.

HECTOR (cont'd)
(sighs)
Try again

Still wont.

RICK
Well, sorry man. Looks like it doesn't work.

HECTOR
You don't say that.

RICK

Have you checked the battery? Or an ignition switch failure, possibly? Who knows. We'll have to try looking again.

That tone... it's familiarity sounds suspicious. Hector sensed the truth is hidden from him.

Rick walks around the car. Doing absolutely nonsense.

HECTOR

Maybe... it wasn't any kind of failure. The engine was perfectly fine. I've fixed it. Battery, ignition, electricity, oil, all are good.

RICK

Maybe you missed something?

HECTOR

I know what I'm doing, Rick
(sigh)
Just give it back to me

RICK

Give you what?

Rick's obviousness is crystal clear.

HECTOR

That one part that you stole so you can secretly sell and trade them for money. You think I'm not aware of that?

He's caught. There's no going anywhere.

RICK

Okay...

HECTOR

Listen, you're my friend. I gave you a job, paid you money, occasionally help you out when needed. But I just can't tolerate this much longer. Not under my business name.

Rick returns the parts he stole.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Returning in the office with john, another day of excessive working.

Sky is brought to the office.

She wanders around with curiosity. Searching for anything interesting, nothing but computer screen to a another.

Facing total boredom.

SKY

Why are we here, again?

JOHN

I'm working. That's why.

SKY

You're always working. I thought this ridiculous exploration was supposed to be fun and exciting. This is barely anything like it. Why did you even volunteered in the first place?

JOHN

Again, I don't need your commentary. I just need your obedience

SKY

And I don't need your ignorance. I need your willingness and affection

JOHN

Just try to do something. Whatever you'd like to distract yourself until I'm done?

SKY

You mean like for another seven hours? Ugh.

JOHN

I don't need your complain, either

SKY

Can't we just go outside? Have a walk? Breath some fresh air? Or some ice cream maybe? Cold beverages?

JOHN

Nor do I accept unnecessary requests.

SKY
Please... Come on...

Barney is irritated by the continuous chattering.

BARNEY
Dude. Control your kid, man. I'm
working here

JOHN
She's not my kid.

BARNEY
Then why bring her here? You know
it's fairly inappropriate for a child
to be let into a working office,
right?

SKY
I didn't even want to be here in the
first place.

Barney rolled his eyes. Going back to the screen. So does
John.

SKY
(sigh)
We've been here since seven.
I've been patient enough.
Everything revolves around
you is work. Nothing else.
It's barely even been a
week, and I've properly
disliked you. Even at first
glance, I was doubtful. Why
are you even doing this if
you are uncommitted? I was
perfectly fine before. I
don't need your "guidance."
It's unbearable--

JOHN
(palming his face)
Sky, please. Just stop
talking. Stop. For once. No,
stop. I don't care. Sky.
Stop!

John has had enough.

JOHN (cont'd)
(shouting)
WOULD YOU JUST PLEASE! STOP. TALKING.
JUST, SHUT UP! ALRIGHT?!

Sky is frightened.

Quickly, all eyes are on John.

JOHN (cont'd)
Want to go outside? Fine. So be it

He grabs her arms. Bringing her outside.

EXT. PARK - DAY

He brought her to a park outside.

John gives her some money.

JOHN

Take it. Go buy whatever you like.
I'll be at that bar. Once you're
done, go to the bar and fine me,
alright? Don't go anywhere else.
Straight to me. Understand?

Sky nods.

John departs.

Sky walks around the park. Searching for some treats.

She decided to buy an ice cream.

Instead of doing what she was told, she rather takes a
stroll around the park.

A man approaches. Tall, skinny, formal dress.

STRANGER

Hey there, little one.

SKY

Yes?

STRANGER

I'm unsure whether I'm looking at the
right person or not, but, you seems
familiar...

SKY

I do?

STRANGER

Yes. In fact, very similar.

SKY

To who?

STRANGER

I'd tell if you would like to go with
me. I've more treats in my bag, if
you'd like

A bag of candies, chocolate and cookies.

INT. CAR WORKSHOP - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Coincidentally, the park is right across the street from the workshop.

HECTOR
Care to join me on the game next
Wednesday?

RICK
I don't think I could. Sorry. Got a
tight schedule.

HECTOR
Really? For what?

RICK
Something... I mean, if you'd still
like me to--

HECTOR
No, don't worry. I'll just ask my
sister to go with me --

Something caught Rick's attention. It's Sky and the stranger.

Rick calculates the possibilities. It's a definite.

RICK
Hold on.

HECTOR
Where you going?

RICK
Be right back. Give me a minute.

Rick walk towards them.

STRANGER
Don't worry, it just takes a couple
minutes. After that, maybe we can
have a--

RICK
Hey!

STRANGER
(nervously)
Hey...

RICK
What do you think you're doing?

STRANGER
I was... um... doing...

Rick notices the bag full of treats.

RICK
Yeah. Right.

STRANGER
Oh, no. I wasn't trying to--

RICK
You better get going. Don't wanna get
your hands dirtier, don't you?

The stranger gives up. He leaves.

RICK (cont'd)
Weirdo.
(to Sky)
Hey, you alright?

SKY
I'm fine.

RICK
You sure?

SKY
Yeah.

RICK
What are you doing out here?

SKY
Enjoying this ice cream?

RICK
You're here with anybody?

SKY
Yeah. He's not far from here, just
right on that bar.

RICK
I'll tell you what, I'll accompany
you back to him, what do you think?

SKY
I'd like that.

RICK
You got a name?

SKY
Sky.

RICK
Rick.
(beat)
You from around here?

SKY
In a way, I guess. This particular
part of the city feels different...

RICK
Yeah? How so?

SKY
I mean, atmospherically, it's more
refreshing and naturally brighter.
More green, more color. But visually
and environmentally less hygienic.

RICK
Seems on point. Where are you from
exactly?

SKY
I came from the other side of the
city. The side with tall, immense,
colorless constructions. Except from
where I lived. Used to, at least.

RICK
Guess we all have our own
perspective.

SKY
While in civilians; here seems
more... impoverished?

RICK
"Impoverished" Where did you learn
that?

SKY
Dictionary?

RICK
(giggles)
Of course.

SKY
Where else would you learn it?

RICK
Well...

They have arrived at the bar.

John is seen looking slightly worried. Not for her concern, but rather himself.

JOHN
Sky! Where the hell you've been?! I told you to go to the bar once you're done

SKY
I was but, if we were to go back, I'd rather take my time.

Rick recognizes that face.

RICK
Wait a minute. I know you don't I?

JOHN
I'm sorry?

RICK
You're...
(thinking)
John?

JOHN
(confusingly)
I am?

John has no idea what's happening.

RICK
John Jackson, right?

JOHN
That's me... I guess...

RICK
Okay, I doubt you remember, but I'm Rick. Rick Williams. from high school?

JOHN
Oh. Right. Correct. Definitely. Wow. Can't believe it. It's been so long.

RICK

I know. I hope I'm not mentioning the wrong person and you definitely don't know who I am...

JOHN

Yeah, no. Of course, I remembered. You're the that obscure, anxious shirker, aren't you?

RICK

I wasn't expecting it to be specific...

JOHN

Well, now I fully remembered. Wow. What a coincidence.

Rick feels an overwhelming past coming back to him the moment John specified that.

RICK

(sarcastically)
Yeah. How remarkable.
(beat)
She's your kid?

JOHN

No. She's not.
(beat)
Anyways, I'd get going now. I appreciate for you returning her, safely.

RICK

Anytime.

Both of them leaves.

Sky waves to Rick. Rick waves back with a smile.

EXT. SHELTER - DAY

Rick notices a woman in a suit at the shelter.

Rick goes to her.

RICK

Can I help you?

The woman carries a bunch of documents. Her name is AMANDA (46).

She takes her glasses off.

AMANDA

Are you Rick Williams?

RICK

Yes. Is there a problem?

AMANDA

Actually, there is. This building right here - you live here?

RICK

This building is for the people. They can live freely here.

AMANDA

That includes yourself.

RICK

Am I not supposed to?

AMANDA

No. You're not.

RICK

I'm sorry?

AMANDA

Mr. Rick, with all due respect, you unfortunately, hold no permission on living inside this property legally. You're basically a trespassing squatter.

RICK

(scoffs)

Oh, please. Don't get me started with this. Who are you again?

AMANDA

I came from the bank. This property and all other abandoned properties around here - it's not yours to own. There's policy and laws to it. Do you possess official documents that proves your rights of ownership upon this property? Or a registered deed with your name on it?

(beat)

I'm afraid not.

RICK

Policy? Laws? These are abandoned. It has been sitting here empty for long periods.

AMANDA

Just because the building is vacant does not mean it is fully abandoned and available for someone to just live here without consent of the owner. Whoever was the legal owner or occupant has left their property abandoned for a reason that cannot be determined. The ownership still exists, you know. It could either be retrieved or terminated at any given moment. Until there is a confirmed contact from the owner itself, which I doubt, this property will be held by the bank. We may even initiate a deconstruction.

RICK

Deconstruction?! That's nonsense. What if the legal owner disagrees? How will that proceed?

AMANDA

They left this building unoccupied for a reason.

RICK

You'd still be doing something possibly against their will.

AMANDA

We have records, Mr. Rick. All of them. Living with such conditions should at least be more aware of the world around you.

RICK

Is that supposed to be personal? And where will all of these people supposed to live if so?

AMANDA

The streets are free for consideration, by the way, Mr. Rick. I think they might be used to it already.

Amanda leaves.

Leaving Rick unsure what to do.

INT. STREETS OF MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Windy. Silent. Cold.

The world is asleep. Barely a person in sight.

Streets are illuminated with a flickering orange street light.

Rick offers himself in secret for a quick job.

RECRUITER
10\$, 20\$, 30\$. There.

RICK
It's barely anything equivalent to what I did...

RECRUITER
Did I say I'd pay you in accordance with your efforts?

Negotiation seems unlikely.

RECRUITER (cont'd)
If you're looking for consistency, I'd suggest you get an actual job. a steady job.

RICK
Easier said than done.

RECRUITER
Easier to give up than try.

RICK
(pause)
Thanks.
(beat)
By the way, you know any near tax property records around here?

RECRUITER
That seems a bit out of the blue, but there's probably one a couple of blocks from here, if I recall.

RICK
Alright. Thanks, again.

Rick departs.

He inhales the freezing yet refreshing air, which he exhales while gazing up at the stars.

INT./EXT. JOHN'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

Back to the ridiculously cold house.

Sky is currently playing with Bells.

While John is outside - sitting right next to his sister: OLIVER (32). Black dress, long hair, tall, idealistic, perfectionist.

Both observing her project.

OLIVER

The proportion appeared to be asymmetrical. It's disproportionate. Who was even assigned to work on this? It's idiotic.

JOHN

That's what happens when you trust someone else to do your work

OLIVER

(sighs)

This is unacceptable. Whoever done this, they better be responsible enough to admit.

JOHN

Doubt it.

OLIVER

For now, we'd have to drive over to Chicago. Resolve this absolute imperfection.

JOHN

Chicago? You're serious?

OLIVER

What?

JOHN

You realize I'd have to bring the kid with me if so. And it's not the best idea to bring her to such place. It's going to be disastrous.

OLIVER

Then leave her.

JOHN

I can't. I've been assigned to be with her at all times, or else--

OLIVER

Or else what? Elizabeth will figure?

(scoffs)

She has about five other corporations to keep an eye on. Do you really believe she'll notice whether or not she's with you? Do you have any acquittances?

EXT. SHELTER - DAY

RICK

You're kidding me right?

JOHN

I've no other choice.

Rick still believes he's joking.

RICK

For how long again?

JOHN

Two weeks. Probably.

RICK

Two weeks? Uh-huh. Listen, after all these years, we just met again yesterday for like a minute. And now, the next day, you're asking me this?

JOHN

I told you I have no choice. I don't know anybody else that's capable of doing this.

RICK

You think I can? Your "obscure and anxious" high school friend? What about childcare? Why aren't you considering that?

JOHN

No. It's exposing.

RICK

I'm sorry what? Exposing as in what? I'd need a further elaboration on that one.

JOHN

What does it matter?

RICK

A lot. Actually, it's concerning.

JOHN

Why are you making this overly complicated? It's just two goddamn weeks, then it's done.

RICK

I don't think you understand what truly is the problem for me here. Why do you think I live here in the first place?

John sighs. Have put the pieces together.

JOHN

Okay. I get it.

John grabs a couple hundred bills.

JOHN (cont'd)

This is an approximation. Call me if it's not enough. I'll manage.

John leaves.

Leaving Sky with them.

Sky is meeting with all of the homeless.

Waving. Smiling. Curious. She brought a smile to their faces as she introduces herself to each of them.

She's about to meet Mr. Goldman for the first time.

Mr. Goldman is dancing while wearing a brown-striped cowl. Randomly swinging a baseball bat.

SKY

(giggles)

What are you doing?

MR. GOLDMAN

(American-Indian
accent)

I'm an Indian. Celebrating a successful hunt. Performing a significant ritual in order to receive blessings from the gods.

(MORE)

MR. GOLDMAN (cont'd)
A gift. In an extraordinarily
unexpected form.

SKY
Are you a descendant?

MR. GOLDMAN
(normal accent)
No. I wouldn't be socially accepting
modernity and would rather live
independently free in the wild.

Sky nods slowly. Processing what have just been told.

MR. GOLDMAN (cont'd)
Simmer down the solemnity. I was
simply acting. What is your first
honest impression of it?

SKY
I think it was pretty impressive.
Especially with the accent. You had
me thought you're an actual
descendant for a moment.

MR. GOLDMAN
I'll be damned. Another glorious,
magnificent and astounding
performance of mine. How marvelous.
Come join me little one, we shall
enjoy this great deal of a moment!

Mr. Goldman holds her hand.

Together they dance, happily.

Rick smiled from a distance.

INT. SHELTER - DAY

ZOE
So we're taking care of children now?

RICK
Temporarily. Besides, what could
possibly go wrong? Thought we could
have some positivity in this place a
bit more, don't you think?

(beat)
And luckily, that bearded pedantic
gave guarantee.

ZOE
Interesting description.

RICK
Thanks. You think she'd fit on the
couch with you?

ZOE
Yeah, we could make it work.

RICK
Great.

Sky comes in after having a blast with Mr. Goldman.

RICK (cont'd)
Hey, Sky. There you are. Come here.
I'd like to introduce you to Zoe.
She's a friend of mine.

ZOE
Hi there, Sky. How are you?

SKY
Doing great.

Zoe smiles.

RICK
Well, I'm certain by the look that
it's not as impressive as you'd
expect. I'd imagine it's
significantly different from where
you were before. So, I apologize if
this barely meets your expectations.

SKY
Not really. I mean, it has its own
fair share of advantages and
disadvantages. But honestly? I prefer
it here. just because it feels
different. The people, the air, the
freedom -- let me tell you, it was
rough, boring, and extremely cold
before. It was like living at the
north pole!

Both Rick and Zoe laughs.

RICK
Agree to disagree.

Sky explores more of the building.

She come upon a bookshelf.

SKY

Who's books are these?

ZOE

It's for everybody. Anyone can take one and read it. Mostly, It's just me, though.

SKY

Have you read every single one of them?

ZOE

Not yet. But I'm planning to.

SKY

How many you have read so far?

ZOE

Probably like... twelve?

SKY

That seems like a lot of reading.

ZOE

It is.

SKY

Which one is your personal favorite?

ZOE

I'd say... this one.

Zoe grabs a book with pink cover.

SKY

What is it about?

ZOE

What about rather than spoiling it, we read it entirely together. So you'll know why it's my personal favorite. What do you think?

SKY

I like the sound of it.

ZOE

Great. We'll read on the perfect time, okay?

SKY

Okay.

EXT. STREETS OF MANHATTAN - DAY

Foggy. Bright. Wet.

Rick introduces Sky around the block.

SKY

So... both you and John were together
in high school?

RICK

Yeah. You could say so...

SKY

You two were like, buddies?

RICK

(hesitant)

Not really, no. I mean, sure, he was
a decent company back then. But
things eventually went the other way
around...

SKY

What happened?

RICK

John used to be different. He used to
be nice, caring, and friendly. He was
likeable. As time goes on, that
confidence slowly turns into
selfishness. He thinks he's capable
of achieving anything on his own.
started to underestimate everyone
beneath him and put himself above
them. You'd be surprised how much
excessive confidence can corrupt
one's life and make one presumptuous.

SKY

What about you?

RICK

Me? What John said about me was
already specific enough to tell the
story...

SKY

I don't believe that.

RICK

Why not?

SKY

You said it yourself. John became a dreadful person. If he said anything to an acquaintance from high school, it would be something intentionally meant to patronize you.

RICK

Out of everything he has said and done. That's the most honest he's ever been.

A moment of brief silence.

SKY

How long you've been living here?

RICK

Can't tell. It's been long enough for me to forgot.

SKY

Why did you choose to stay?

RICK

I didn't.

They came upon a tax property records office.

RICK (cont'd)

Don't get me wrong, but I'd have to leave you here for a couple of minutes. There's something I need to do. Will that be okay?

SKY

I'm used to it by now already.

RICK

Don't worry, it will be quick

Rick enters the office.

Sky sits down on the ground. Observing the empty roads.

Something grabs her attention -- it's a piano.

INT. TAX PROPERTY RECORDS OFFICE - DAY

Small. Hot. Green-painted walls.

It's tediously simplistic.

Rick sitting on a uncomfortable looking chair.

RICK

How long do I need to wait, again?

A woman steps into the room. JOLLY (55). Curly hair, wrinkly, green-sweater, straightforward.

Jolly sits down. Opens the drawer. Grabs sheaf of documents.

JOLLY

Mr. Rick?

RICK

Yes.

JOLLY

In order to claim an abandoned property, you might want to have a confirmation with the previous owner.

RICK

The owner still exist?

JOLLY

Generally speaking, real estate can never be abandoned, because there will always be the name of an owner recorded on the deed for the property.

RICK

Okay, if they're still out there, somewhere, how do I contact them?

JOLLY

There are several ways. However, I strongly suggest that you either track the tax record or do some more in-depth research by going to the county recorder's office.

RICK

The tax records. It's available?

JOLLY

Yes, if real estate exists and someone is paying taxes on it, or at least owns it, it is possible the contact information for the owner is written on it, but it might take a while...

RICK

I have time.

Jolly steps out of the room.

LATER.

After patiently waiting, Jolly returns.

JOLLY

Well, a record's a record...

Rick grabs the tax record.

Countless money have been spent over the years, and the last tax was paid literally decades ago.

Rick unable to discover a name on it.

The address written located exactly where the shelter is.

RICK

Where's the name?

JOLLY

What name?

RICK

The owner. The one to hold the ownership. I thought their name supposed to be written here.

JOLLY

Unfortunately, whoever the owner was, I don't think they wanted their name on it. There's still an address, however.

RICK

It's literally the building's location! Where can I find their name and more specific information? There must be more data written somewhere about it.

JOLLY

I'm sorry, Mr. Rick. However, I do not have access to such information. I could only share accessible data. There's no way around it. Going to the recorder's office is your only option. They might have more specific information regarding the property.

Rick palmed his face.

EXT. STREETS OF MANHATTAN - DAY

Rick leaves the office with disappointment.

He later realized he had left Sky for a while now.

Rick starting to worry.

A minute later, Rick found Sky completely fine.

She's playing the public piano.

RICK

Sky, I'm sorry. it took me longer
than expected.

She ceased the piano-playing.

SKY

No, it's okay. Besides, I've found
myself some amusement.

RICK

You played it well.

SKY

Want to hear some more?

RICK

Why not?

Sky plays almost impeccably. Rick is simply amazed.

However, her hand's position appears to be incorrect.

RICK (cont'd)

That's amazing.

SKY

Thank you. I always wanted to play in
front of an audience. to be heard by
so many.

RICK

You can be a child-prodigy musician,
you know.

(she grins)

If you want to play in front of an
audience, I suggest that you correct
your hand's position first.

(MORE)

RICK (cont'd)

So you won't have the unnecessary confusion of mixing what should be played by your right and left hands. Audio is a priority. But the visual is as important as everything else when you're on stage.

SKY

You play?

RICK

No. Not anymore...

A sudden sadness in his face. he tries his best to hide it.

SKY

Well, now's your chance!

RICK

(forcing a smile)
That would unnecessary.

SKY

But I want to see you play.

RICK

Maybe another time.

SKY

Come on --

RICK

Time to go.

EXT. STREETS OF MANHATTAN - DAY

On their way back to the shelter.

RICK

I still have a question. What are you doing with John in the first place? I'm guessing it's not by choice.

Sky begins to make up some stories.

SKY

It never was.

(beat)

He's-- a-- friend of my parents...

RICK

Seriously?

SKY
(hesitantly)
I mean, more of a co-worker, I
suppose. It was an emergency, my
parents couldn't bring me with them.
So they came to the last resort.

RICK
Doesn't appear to be the most
convenient resort.

SKY
Unfortunately...

A candy store across the streets caught Sky's interest.
Rick notices her captivation towards it.

RICK
Want one of those?

SKY
No. It's fine.

RICK
Don't worry. You can have one.

SKY
Really?

RICK
Sure, why not?

Sky grabs a blue-wrapped candy.

RICK (cont'd)
How much?

SELLER
30 cents.

Rick pays it.

RICK
How is it?

SKY
Flavorful.

EXT. SHELTER - DAY

The moment they stepped into the area -- they witness something totally unexpected.

A riot of several homeless. Trying to steal their resources.

Zoe is struggling on stopping them. Her efforts are almost useless.

Rick swiftly runs toward the monstrosity.

RICK
What's happening?

ZOE
(out of breath)
Rick! Where have you been?! Don't you see what's happening here?!

RICK
How am I supposed to know this is going to happen?

ZOE
Well, don't just stand there, do something!

Rick dives into the raging group.

They've destroyed majority of the equipment.

Water resources are spilling everywhere. Breads crumbled into crumbs.

Rick tries to retrieve the remaining.

RICK
Hey! What are you doing?! You can't--
(being pushed)
No! Stop! Wait... don't!

RIOTERS 1
Piss off! Get yourself out of here.
These are ours!

RIOTERS 2
With this much water and bread you could've shared with the rest of us!
But you keep it all for yourself!

RICK
Seriously? It's already barely enough.

(MORE)

RICK (cont'd)

And now you excuse yourself with that reason? I paid these with my own money. It belongs to me and these people who deserve them. Now give me those back!

RIOTERS 1

No chance, mate. NO CHANCE!

The rioter pushes Rick to the ground. Punches him before leaving.

Rick grunts.

Zoe on the other hand, securing the other homeless to safety. Including Sky.

ZOE

Get inside. Make sure to be safe,
I'll let you know when it's over
(to Rick)
You okay?

RICK

I'd take that question was sarcastic.

He runs back towards the madness.

RICK (cont'd)

I told all of you to stop, goddamned!
I don't want to hurt you, but I will.

Rick constantly gets pushed and punched. He's overwhelmed.

Nothing is working. Too much force.

EXT. SHELTER - LATER THAT NIGHT

Several hours after the catastrophic event.

What's left are merely crumbs of crushed bread and a puddle of spilled water.

Most camps are also destroyed. Blankets are stolen.

Rick is cleaning up the mess in an overpowering, distressing manner.

He's injured. Bruised. Bleeding.

Someone had to do the work.

RICK

Dammit...

Mr. Goldman approaches.

MR. GOLDMAN

It was inevitably coming. An unexpected incursion. The justification is vague. Tolerance must be made. Forgiveness is a consideration. Acceptance is required.

RICK

Yeah? Why don't you tell that to those people, Mr. Goldman?

Rick is both physically and emotionally exhausted.

INT. SHELTER - DAY

Rick goes inside. The work is mostly done.

Zoe is reading her favorite book to Sky.

ZOE

(reading out loud)

...The proposition the man made might or might not alter the course of human history. He believed it to be overstated. an impossible destination. a dream. Nothing was thought to be impossible, though, because he lives in the same world as a supercilious demon and a dragon wracked with rage. giving his all despite being misunderstood because of his appearance and background.

Sky giggles.

SKY

I mean, honestly, I do envision him having a ridiculous haircut.

ZOE

I'm with you.

Both of them notices rick hiding under the shadows.

ZOE (cont'd)

Rick. You're alright?

RICK
I don't think you need an answer for
that.

Sky unexpectedly runs towards him and hugs him.

SKY
Rick! Thank god you made it out
alive!

RICK
You're overreacting...

SKY
You'll be okay right?

RICK
Of course.

Rick glances at the clock: 9 PM.

RICK (cont'd)
Time for bed.

SKY
But we haven't finished the book...

RICK
I'm sure we can continue that later.
There will be plenty of time, I
promise you that.

Sky hops on the couch. Comforting herself.

Rick covers her with the blanket.

They eyed each other -- a broken face and a beautifully
precious, innocent little face.

She closes her eyes.

INT. SHELTER - MOMENTS LATER

Rick is resting his back.

Preparing to close his eyes.

Zoe comes to him carrying water and adhesive bandages.

ZOE
Here, let me take a look.

RICK

No need.

ZOE

Come on. After all of that? Don't expect this to be avoidable.

RICK

Maybe I do.

ZOE

Well, you can't.

RICK

That's unfair...

ZOE

Has it ever been the opposite?

RICK

(chuckles)

Don't be oblivious.

Zoe cleans the wounds, gently.

Rick grunts, softly.

ZOE

Shouldn't you be used to this already?.

RICK

Used to? Yes. Bearable? Never.

ZOE

What are we going to do now?

RICK

Starting from what's left.

ZOE

Things just wouldn't get right, wouldn't they?

RICK

Like you said: "unavoidable."

ZOE

How long can we even keep this up anymore?

RICK

(sighs)

I don't know... We'll simply have to keep going. Whether or not there's a destination, we just have to keep walking...

INT. SKYSCRAPER - DAY

A lengthy meeting room.

Filled with elderly in fancy suits.

Oliver is representing her work.

John sits tightly on the back. His attention is elsewhere.

OLIVER

There would be a hazy visualization of the artifact over here. A glimpse at much more exploration. That way, there will be no need to decipher anything--

BUSINESS MAN 1

Oliver, I'm not sure whether this proposition of yours can be executed, flawlessly. This would cost a lot. Like A lot. There's no place for failure. There's no place for imperfection.

BUSINESS MAN 2

I don't get it. Why go through all of this complicated structuring, when eventually you're just going to spoil it for them? This is a misconception!

BUSINESS MAN 3

The sphere of mysteries within the organization is its core premise. The intriguing part of the matter is that. What distinguishes us as unique.

OLIVER

I can assure you, this is merely the foundation. There was an absurd miscalculation, which was--

BUSINESS MAN 4

See? The issue is that. You're giving us a false, harmful, and absurd interpretation. Everything is different from what we anticipated. Anything you say doesn't matter unless it's true. And so far, it resembles none of it!

Both Oliver and John exits the meeting room.

She's visibly frustrated.

OLIVER

What are you even doing back there? You were supposed to support me. Help me to convince them!

JOHN

You said you wanted to go to Chicago and revision your project. I didn't said I'm going to be any part of it.

OLIVER

You're kidding? This project is important to us, if we don't--

JOHN

Your project. I have no involvement. Nor do I have any interest. I only came because you wanted me to go with you.

OLIVER

Are you serious?

JOHN

Oliver, you don't want to get dragged into this, they do it on purpose to make it look like they're above the league. They want control over power. With their arrogance, they're just going to suck you dry till there's nothing left, and you'd be replaced like you never existed. They value nothing but themselves and their empire.

Oliver is reconsidering.

JOHN (cont'd)

Do you really want to work for those people? Working endlessly with no discerning appreciation?

INT. RECORDER OFFICE - DAY

Books, documents, data full of information and tax histories.

Rick is scrolling endlessly without a clue. Too many names to read.

RICK

Come on, where is it? How do people even do this, correctly?

Appeared to be almost impossible. In his frustration, Rick slammed the desk - which was heard by many.

People quickly alert him to be quiet.

He goes to the front desk.

RECEPTIONIST

May I help you, sir?

RICK

I'm looking for records on this address? Preferably individual owner, if possible...

RECEPTIONIST

Alright, give me a minute.

The receptionist enter the backrooms.

RICK

Sure.

The receptionist returns with some information.

RICK (cont'd)

Anything useful?

RECEPTIONIST

I could only discover the mortgage recorded on the deed.

RICK

Only thing or the only thing you're allowed to share?

RECEPTIONIST

Allowed.

Rick sighs.

RICK

I thought this place was supposed to offer a more specific information regarding a property.

RECEPTIONIST

We do have the records.

RICK

Then why aren't you giving it to me?

RICK

It's inaccessible.

RECEPTIONIST

It's inaccessible.

RICK

What's the point of this place anyway if everything is inaccessible?

RECEPTIONIST

If it could help you any further, you could bring the mortgage record to the nearest bank. They might be able to help you regarding the property's owner.

RICK

(sighs)

Great. Very helpful. Thank you.

INT. BANK - DAY

A long walk was needed for Rick to reach the bank.

RICK

You're saying I still couldn't get the information for the ownership? That isn't enough, already?

RECEPTIONIST

We have policies, Mr. Rick.

RICK

What's that supposed to mean?

RECEPTIONIST

It means there are limits to information that are available.

RICK

Okay, what are the available information?

RECEPTIONIST

It's already in your possession.

RICK

This? The mortgage?

RECEPTIONIST

Yes.

RICK

I need names. Or anything that could lead to me to whoever owns all of this.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm afraid such information is beyond the limits of availability.

RICK

I don't need anything else beyond. Just a name. It's not really a confidentiality breach, isn't it?

RECEPTIONIST

Sir, if do not have any other business, I would like to ask you to leave.

RICK

No. I won't. I'm still not done here. You barely given me any new useful information that I desperately need. All I need is a name, is that too much to ask for?!

RECEPTIONIST

Sir, I need you to calm down.

RICK

Not until you give me a name. I won't leave until you do.

RECEPTIONIST

You know I can call the security right?

RICK

Just give me the name and I'll be gone. Please... I don't want to start a chaos as much as you do.

RECEPTIONIST

(sighs)

Alright, maybe, I might be able to share you the address of the owner.

RICK

That works.

The receptionist writes down the address.

EXT. BANK - DAY

A clue, at last.

Rick receives a call.

RICK

(into phone)

Yeah?

JOHN (O.S.)

(over phone)

It's John.

RICK

(into phone)

Oh, John. Yeah. How's it going?

JOHN (O.S.)

(over phone)

Perplexing.

RICK

(into phone)

Unsurprising.

JOHN (O.S.)

(over phone)

Is she with you?

RICK

(into phone)

Yeah, but, not currently

JOHN (O.S.)

(over phone)

What do you mean?

RICK

(into phone)

She's fine, don't worry. I just have something to do at the moment.

JOHN (O.S.)
(over phone)
Right. The money's enough so far?

RICK
(into phone)
Hopefully.

JOHN (O.S.)
(over phone)
Alright. Just checking. I'll see you soon once I'm back.

RICK
Okay.

Phone hangs up.

The phone rings again.

It's an unknown number.

RICK (cont'd)
Um, hello?

A more intimidating and deeper-sounding caller.

CALLER (O.S.)
(over phone)
Rick Williams. Where is our money?

RICK
(into phone)
What money?

CALLER (O.S.)
(over phone)
Don't pretend to be foolish! You still owe us!

RICK
(into phone)
Wrong number.

CALLER (O.S.)
(over phone)
Don't you dare--

Rick quickly ends the call.

RICK
Weirdo.

Rick reads the written address: *paper streets*.

Too much of a distance. He decides to call for a cap.

EXT. PAPER STREETS - DAY

A place for luxurious houses. An elite civilization.

Rick standing in front of an immense mansion.

Elegant front lights, a lavish porch, and big ornamental plants.

He knocks. No response. He knocks again. Still no response.

Several knocks and no sign of response.

A man with a leashed dog passes by.

RICK

Hey!

STRANGER

Yes?

RICK

Is there by any chance you know the person that lives in this house?

STRANGER

You mean Mr. Adrian?

RICK

Yes... him.

STRANGER

Of course, I do. He's such a kind gentlemen with a golden heart.

RICK

You know where he is?

STRANGER

I'm not sure... He often goes out of town. never been in his house for more than five days. If he's not here, then that's possibly where he is right now.

RICK

Any idea when he'd return?

STRANGER

I'm afraid not.

RICK
Right. Thanks anyway.

STRANGER
Anytime.

The stranger walks away.

Rick is back with another dead end.

INT. SHELTER - DAWN

The building is empty.

Zoe's favorite book was left open. It was recently read

Rick hears a childish laugh outside -- that appears to be Sky.

She's running around at the park with a smile.

Zoe is also present.

EXT. PARK - DAWN

Sky is playing fetch with a random golden retriever.

RICK
Seems fun around here.

ZOE
Hey.

RICK
Hey.
(beat)
Where did that dog come from?

ZOE
(shrugs)
I left her for a minute and the second I returned, the dog was already with her

RICK
Odd.

ZOE
Yeah.

Sky notices Rick's presence.

She runs towards him. The dog follows.

SKY

Rick!

RICK

Hey. I've noticed you made a new friend.

SKY

Yeah. He's very fun and cute, don't you think?

RICK

Can see that very clearly.

The dog barks rapidly. It licks and cuddles Rick.

RICK (cont'd)

Okay. You're very energetic.

Rick pets the dog.

SKY

I think I'll name him... Lucky! What do you think?

RICK

Very original. Where did you even found him?

SKY

I don't know. He was just here all of sudden. Then he started to follow me everywhere.

Rick nods.

SKY (cont'd)

Come on, Rick, Zoe, follow me

Sky runs towards the meadow.

Lucky follows her directly.

SKY (cont'd)

What are you guys waiting for? Let's go!

RICK

Looks like we got no other choice.

Rick and Zoe joins them.

Together they play along.

Lucky constantly barks. Chases them around. Tail wagging like a flash.

Mr. Goldman soon joins the party.

MR. GOLDMAN

Dare to not invite THE Goldman to
this glorious party?

Mr. Goldman pretends to fight Sky. Wielding an imaginary sword.

MR. GOLDMAN (cont'd)

Come here, you little monster! Thou
shall not pass my judgment!

Sky runs in laughter.

SKY

No! Don't!

Mr. Goldman catches her and gently puts her to the ground.

MR. GOLDMAN

Hah! Resist no longer you can!

SKY

Someone save me!

Rick and Zoe comes to the rescue.

They pushes Mr. Goldman away.

ZOE

Be gone, you evil darkness!

MR. GOLDMAN

No! I am defeated! This cannot be!

RICK

You are saved, my princess.

SKY

Why thank you, my knight in shining
armor and his noble partner

They cease their drama -- to enjoy the time of their life.

Watching the sunsets right in front of their very eyes.

For a moment, everything feels unreal. Nothing matters.

Everybody smiles.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Sky is sitting quietly on the rooftop, taking in the stars at night...

Rick later joins her.

They sit under the resplendent, glaring stars.

SKY

You ever wonder, how it'd feel like,
to see one up close?

RICK

One thing I know is, I would be
instantaneously vaporized before I
could consciously react.

Rick killed the mood.

He feels guilty.

RICK (cont'd)

Hey, it still counts as an experience
Even if it were only nanoseconds. You
need to understand the realism before
you can indulge in your fantasy.

SKY

What if you fantasize to escape
realism?

RICK

Well, if you imagine where you could
live peacefully for eternity,
surrounded with nothingness. No
civilization. No hassles or
obligations. You'd think it's a
paradise. The definition of
perfectionism -- to live like that
for the rest of your life. But people
never really foresee what might
concealed underneath the
gratification.

SKY

Which is?

RICK

Emptiness. Just full of emptiness. It doesn't sound as fulfilling as you'd hoped it to be. Our lives, our souls, none of us ever asked to be created. To exist. It just happens. It's destiny. Either having the time of your life, or being rock-bottom, that's the two path of life. And we experience both from time-to-time. There's no escaping that. All the contentment and desperation, incorporate all of those and you'd get a fully functional human. Remove one side or another, or even both, and you'd get a soulless, unfulfilled human being.

SKY

What about the meaning?

RICK

Meaning?

SKY

Like for instance, the stars. Some people told me, they symbolize different emotions in various forms. A constellation. Like animals, plants, objects. They kept saying it holds something meaningful. But I never figure what it truly means --

RICK

Anybody can possess their own interpretation of the definition of what a star is. The ancients saw a reflection of themselves in them. They feel connected. They established a bond and decoded what defines humanity. Later passed down through different generations, each with a different perspective, resulting in different interpretations and meanings.

(beat)

It can represent hope, joy, aspiration, exasperation, depression, imagination, or anything else that gives life meaning. Stars are like humans. You see them up there? Can you count them individually?

SKY

No. There's way too many...

RICK

Exactly. And are they all the same sizes?

SKY

No.

RICK

Precisely. Just like humans, we all come in different shapes and sizes. We are countably infinite. One might say each is unique; one might not. People often categorize each other due to their differences. The bigger and the brighter the star often categorized as the special one. However, it's truly just a matter of perspective. The little ones are as special as the big ones. And even the ones that possess no light are as bright as the brightest.

(beat)

You, me, Zoe, your parents -- we are all worth the same. It's just the path we take differs.

SKY

(pause)

I... They're not around anymore...

Rick is shocked.

RICK

Oh... I'm sorry. I didn't know.

A beat.

He starts putting the pieces together.

RICK (cont'd)

That's why you were with him?

Sky nods.

RICK (cont'd)

I'm sorry.

SKY

Once this is over, I will be transported to buffalo.

RICK

What's wrong with buffalo?

SKY

A place where you wish you'd rather be dead. I'll probably be there for the rest of my life. Trapped. Just like you said: emptiness. Just full of emptiness.

(dropping tears)

RICK

Hey, look at me. Don't worry. Everything will be alright.

SKY

Everybody always say that. A promise wont change anything. Stop acting as if everything is controllable!

RICK

You're right. I maybe can't miraculously cancel your transport or change it's course. What's changeable can only be done by yourself. Your life is changeable.

SKY

How?

RICK

Like I said, If I can't change your life, then there's no possible way for to know the key to it.

SKY

If a person can change themselves, change their own fate, then why you're still here?

Rick sighs.

A brief silence.

RICK

It's inconsequential to this conversation.

SKY

No. I want you to tell me. If everything is going to be alright, then why shouldn't it be for you?

RICK

Believe me, Sky. I'm trying. for all my life. Sometimes results are not visible until the very end. Or there are no results at all, in my case.

SKY

You said anyone.

RICK

Anyone with strong determination.

SKY

And you're not?

RICK

Mostly demolished.

A beat.

RICK (cont'd)

(exhales)

Anyway, let's talk about what you want.

SKY

What?

RICK

What do you want to do? If you had the chances to fulfill everything you desire at once, what would it be?

SKY

(thinking)

I'd love to watch a live classical music performance. Maybe going to an amusement park, watching a movie on the big screen --

RICK

Excellent choices.

Sky continues her stargazing.

A beat.

SKY

What would you do, if there's suddenly an alien invasion?

RICK

I'd just move to another country.

SKY
Wouldn't they invade the whole earth?

RICK
No. Only America.

EXT. PAPER STREETS - DAY

Back to the mansion. Expecting. Hoping.

Constantly knocking the front door. Not a single response is heard to this day. Just Complete silence.

The particular stranger returns.

STRANGER
Still waiting?

RICK
Why else would I be here?

STRANGER
Do you even know him?

RICK
I could ask you the same question.

STRANGER
Not personally, no.
(beat)
Unsure what business you have with him, but he was for once present.

RICK
Really? Here? Right now?

STRANGER
Indeed. I saw him briefly went inside, before going out again. He went to cafe near the city, I believe.

RICK
How long has it been?

STRANGER
Forty minutes?

-- Rick promptly sprint his way to the cafe --

The stranger oddly smirks -- before continuing his jog.

EXT. SHELTER - DAY

Cursed with boredom -- Sky checks on Mr. Goldman.

Zoe is currently feeding what's left of the bread to the others.

Sky finds Mr. Goldman -- hiding in the corner. Isolating himself.

SKY

Mr. Goldman? Why are you here? Are you okay?

He looks pale. Weak. Dazed.

MR. GOLDMAN

Oh, don't worry, my dear. I'm completely alright - no need to worry.

SKY

But you're shaking.

MR. GOLDMAN

It's merely a subconscious reaction from my body to generate heat in the cold breeze - you're simply overestimating.

She sits right to next to him. Comforting him.

SKY

Why do people do that?

MR. GOLDMAN

Do what?

SKY

Hide their pain?

MR. GOLDMAN

(shakily)

Am I?

(beat)

I suppose it's an underlying lack of trust for themselves and other people. They're fearful of being fragile. Unwilling to show their vulnerability. Trying to show their strength and impenetrability, while being ripped apart inside. Being stoic is typical.

(MORE)

MR. GOLDMAN (cont'd)

(beat)

Your body can be hurt, but your mind shouldn't.

SKY

Is that what you're trying to do currently?

He's looking as pale as a ghost. Weaker than ever.

MR. GOLDMAN

Why do you think I perform?

A beat.

Mr. Goldman forces himself to stand -- quickly loses balance. Barely any strength left.

He falls to the ground.

SKY

Mr. Goldman!

Thankfully still conscious.

He's experiencing a major pain on his chest with pure agony.

SKY (cont'd)

Zoe!

Zoe called the ambulance.

Mr. Goldman is quickly rushed to the hospital -- they are unable to accompany him.

INT. CAFE - DAY

A minimalist cafe.

All seats are occupied. Insatiable, careless young stragglers.

Rick is searching for a face. A face he has never seen in his life. He's got no clue what he's after.

He approaches the cahier.

RICK

Excuse me?

CASHIER

Yes, can I get your order?

RICK

Actually, I'm not here to order anything, I'm here to ask information

CASHIER

What kind of information?

RICK

I'm looking for someone who's name is - Mr. Adrian. He was supposedly here about... forty minutes ago?

CASHIER

(thinking)

Mr. Adrian... yeah, no idea.

RICK

This is a cafe - don't you put customer's names on the cup?

CASHIER

A cup that is no longer in my possession.

RICK

Okay, do you remember ever writing the name?

CASHIER

Not really, no.

RICK

It was forty minutes ago.

CASHIER

And we endlessly have new customers every minute - so, you can't really blame me on that

RICK

What about bill receipt? Purchase history?

CASHIER

I'm not scrolling through a bazillion of data to look for a name.

RICK

(sighs)

Please, I need your help.

CASHIER

(shrugs)

I'm not giving assistance to people
who burden me with the process.

(beat)

And you're in the line.

Rick faces back -- dozens of justified impatient customers.

CASHIER (cont'd)

Sorry.

He's visibly disappointed.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

Once more left clueless. Confused. Unmoored.

Three muscly but short men raged furiously at him from a
distance.

Their faces look rather ridiculous than intimidating.

SHORT MAN 1

Rick! Rick! I see you!

Rick was aimlessly avoiding, attempting to disappear as a
truck passed by.

He's still visibly running.

SHORT MAN 1 (cont'd)

Hey! I said - I see you!

EXT. EMPTY ALLEY - DAY

Strangely is overrun by one of them.

Pushed to the wall. Choking him by his neck.

SHORT MAN 1

You little bastard. You think you can
keep running away?

RICK

I think you need a mirror.

SHORT MAN 1

Shut up!

(beat)

You can't talk your way out of this.

RICK

I'm not expecting to - because you won't kill me.

SHORT MAN 1

And how do you know?

RICK

You're not invincible. You're not at the top of the food chain. Killing me would essentially lead to a crime, which would eventually lead to you being behind bars.

SHORT MAN 1

At least you're dead.

RICK

Which is not something I really try to avoid.

(beat)

But you -- you'd be imprisoned. You're already qualified at this moment if you really want to.

SHORT MAN 1

Why you have to be so infuriating?

RICK

I could ask you the same question.

He chokes Rick even harder - as if he's seriously trying to kill him.

SHORT MAN 1

A reminder that we're just one of many people you also owe. Which, undoubtedly, means no more bullshit from you will be tolerated. You're lucky I let you live another day; what they'd do to you is... unimaginable.

RICK

They'd be joining you in prison.

SHORT MAN 1

Take it.

The rest rummages his jacket - proceeds to empty his wallet.

RICK

Wait!

It's too late.

RICK (cont'd)
Great.

SHORT MAN 1
We're done here.

They ran away.

Threw back the wallet, whatsoever.

Without a question - it's empty.

RICK
Would be nice if you also throw back
the money!

Rick notices a dollar bill on the ground -- the same bill
that came from his wallet.

It is visibly odd. Something is definitely different.

Rick exposes the bill to the sun -- surprisingly to be fake.
The very bill that was given by John.

RICK (cont'd)
(chuckles)
Son of a bitch.

His worry has subsided.

EXT. CITY - DAY

On his way home -- an ambulance abruptly collides with a
car. Face-to-face. Both are hurled a significant distance.

In a flash, a police car crashes into the ambulance. The
ambulance flips upside-down.

Everybody freaks out - while Rick approaches.

Coincidentally, it's the very ambulance that was carrying
Mr. Goldman.

In disbelief, Rick freezes. giving it a second thought.
Wishing he's seeing someone else -- unfortunately, reality
does not change.

He goes inside.

Mr. Goldman is alive. Bleeding. Gasping for air. Half-
conscious. On the edge of death.

RICK
(shaking)
Mr. Goldman? W-- what... are-- you
okay?

Mr. Goldman could vaguely see him.

Rick holds his hands.

MR. GOLDMAN
R... Rick?

RICK
What happened? Why are you in an
ambulance?

MR. GOLDMAN
An explanation is unnecessary. What's
about to come shall be unavoidable.

RICK
(glassy eyes)
No... you don't say that. You can't.

MR. GOLDMAN
You. Cannot. Accept.
(beat)
But, fate. Does not deny.

RICK
Well I tell fate otherwise - 'cause
I'm bringing you to the hospital.

MR. GOLDMAN
Nearest one is located miles away.
How do you expect to carry me there?

RICK
I'll find a way. I'll get help.

Mr. Goldman stops him.

MR. GOLDMAN
No. There's no need.

RICK
You're dying!

MR. GOLDMAN
I'm aware. But you need to stop
avoiding what is meant to be. You
cannot avoid the path you first
walked down. You must finish it.
(MORE)

MR. GOLDMAN (cont'd)

The more you avoid it, the more it slowly vanishes, until you end up on a new path you never really wanted to be on.

(beat)

Promise me... you will continue your path. Set course to the right direction. Promise me.

RICK

(tears dropping)

I promise.

MR. GOLDMAN

That, ladies and gentlemen, is my glory.

Mr. Goldman does a curtain call gesture -- before closing his eyes for eternity.

RICK

The curtains are closed. You can rest now...

Tears running down his face. Feeling regretful. Unworthy. Lost.

INT. SHELTER - DAY

Rick returns - carrying a sad news.

Sky and Zoe rush their way to him -- about to inform something he already figured.

SKY

Rick!

ZOE

Thank god. You're finally here.

Rick remains silent.

SKY

Rick! There's an emergency! Mr. Goldman, he was rushed--

RICK

I know.

SKY

What?

ZOE

(confused)

You... know?

Rick nods ever so slightly. Afraid of telling that cannot be unheard.

SKY
What do you mean?

RICK
Trust me. I know more than you do. I know worse.

SKY
I don't understand...

RICK
It's better if you don't.

ZOE
What are you saying?

RICK
(sighs)
I don't need to tell you what I'm saying - I need you to understand it.

SKY
Are we referring to the same thing?

RICK
I hope not.

Sky is genuinely confused.

Zoe begins to figure the elephant in the room.

SKY
So you know?

RICK
More than that. I...
(pause)
I was...

Rick is speechless. He's inarticulate.

SKY
You what?

Sky becoming anxious. Yet to discover the truth.

SKY (cont'd)
Why aren't you saying anything? Rick? Say something! Do something! Why are you just standing there?!

A beat.

Rick is unresponsive on purpose.

Heart pounding. Heavy breathing. Somewhat composed.

SKY (cont'd)
Say something!

RICK
(finally bursting--)
He's gone, alright! Which part of
that do you not understand?!

Sky stood aghast.

SKY
You're lying!

RICK
I wish I was, Sky...

SKY
I don't believe you... you're doing
this on purpose. So you could--

RICK
He's completely gone, alright!?
There's nothing we can do about it.
Gone forever! That's it! He's not
going back... ever.

Sky is holding back tears. Afraid. Disbelief. Whimpering.

She proceeds to run away.

ZOE
Sky...
(beat)
What is wrong with you?

RICK
What is wrong with me?

ZOE
Yes. You! What were you thinking!?

RICK
I told her the truth.

ZOE
It was an inappropriate approach.

RICK

There's no appropriate approach to this kind of announcement. You either understand it or you don't. That's it. You want me to lie to her by saying he somehow survived? Making her believe a lie will only hurt her more than it should; it's better to inform her now.

ZOE

Still, you could've had did it more gentle.

RICK

God. Why do you have to be so self-righteous? Can't you just accept the truth as it is!? You can change the way it's delivered any way you want, but the truth is still unavoidable. If you can't afford to take the pain, then you just leave it to be years of torture, until one day it all strikes you so hard that you can barely take it anymore.

ZOE

How is that have to do with anything?

RICK

It has to do with everything. You're terrified of the idea of opening your eyes and seeing something horrific. All you want is to shut your eyes and live in your imaginary, fantasy, cupcake-rainbow world where everything is perfect. But guess what? At one point, we all have to wake up. Either you want it or not. It's not a choice. It's reality. We can't escape it.

ZOE

You think I haven't been noticing the life I've been living for years? that we live in a destitute wasteland? That we are hopeless in this mundane reality? Or maybe I was simply putting up with all the miserableness for the sake of my sanity -- doing what I can do best for my life. Focus on what is important rather than feeling sorry for myself for living such a despondent life?

(MORE)

ZOE (cont'd)

(beat)

Every single day, I have tasks I'm required to--

RICK

Oh, please. What you do is non equal to what I do each day. I'm the one who had to work my ass off to acquire the resources we have. The one who bought all the things we own at the moment. What do you do? Pouring water and giving bread that I've already bought? Guiding them to their pillows and blankets that I've already bought? Then you lie down on a couch, reading a book for hours.

(beat)

I have to make sure things are enough for the day, the next day, and so on. I did it all, just so everybody could survive. So that YOU could live.

(pause)

You think your objectives are challenging? We've been on this never-ending cycle for too long. I'm getting sick of pretending everything is and will be fine. I'm tired of this. I'm tired, Zoe... There's not a single day where there are no bigger problems than yesterday. I'm not sure how long I can keep this going...

A beat.

She could tell he's more angry to himself. She tries to comfort him.

His eyes are swelling with tears.

RICK (cont'd)

(wipes tears away)

No.

Rick exits the building.

EXT. SHELTER - DAY

Sky leaning against the wall. All alone.

Rick glances. They lock eyes briefly -- Rick promptly goes away.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Working at the workshop was the only way he could let out his frustration.

Aggressively repairing a damaged engine -- all he does is keep hammering it. No second thought.

Hector is concern.

HECTOR

Hey...

Rick doesn't seem to listen. Silent. Furious. Drifting away from reality.

HECTOR (cont'd)

Hey... stop it.

He's not listening.

HECTOR (cont'd)

I said stop it.

He's stuck in a perpetual loop -- holding back tears behind those glassy eyes.

Hector interferes. He grabbed his hand and ceased his action. Throwing away the wrench.

HECTOR (cont'd)

Stop it!

Not a single word spoken by him.

Rick take a distance, reeling a little

HECTOR (cont'd)

Hey, listen. I know everything is going downhill. Especially after what happened to Mr. Goldman. And I'm sorry - he was... the best of us all. I know you're facing an insurmountable problem, but trust me when I say you're not alone. I promise you that.

RICK

What's the use of a company when nothing is going to change...

HECTOR

What happened is irreversible.

RICK

I'm not talking about changing what has happened; I'm talking about the unchangeable "what's always going to happen."

HECTOR

You don't know that.

RICK

I don't. I understand it.

Rick stands up - about to leave the workshop.

RICK (cont'd)

(over his shoulder)

I guess... I just feel... numb.

All hector could do is just stand there and watch him leave to an unknown destination.

INT. LOAN AGENCY - DAY

A cavernous space.

Rick requesting a loan -- accepted with condition.

RECEPTIONIST

Your identification and documents are verified. You are now eligible for a loan of \$1,000.

Rick nods.

RECEPTIONIST (cont'd)

Will you be requiring a safe-case for the cash?

RICK

No need.

RECEPTIONIST

Are you sure? It would be unsafe to carry such money with nothing but your bare hands...

RICK

It's fine.

RECEPTIONIST

Your responsibility, then.

RICK
I understand the risk and
consequences. You don't need to
remind me twice.

RECEPTIONIST
(nods)
Be aware that you require to pay back
the loan within a month.

RICK
Of course.

Rick sounded bogus.

INT. SHELTER - DAY

Rick returns -- seeing Zoe on the couch. Lost in thought.

RICK
Where is she?

ZOE
(sighs)
Rooftop.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Sky is sitting all alone.

Rick approaches. Beelining over. His presence is easily
noticeable.

RICK
Hi.

SKY
No.

RICK
I know...

SKY
You don't.

RICK
Okay, I don't.

SKY
(contemptuously)
Why are you here?

RICK

Thought the obviousness gave it away already.

SKY

It does. I just want to know what you have to say.

RICK

I have nothing to say - and I have no right to.

(beat)

But sometimes, we are overtaken by our own emotions in distressful situations. We became what we are not. Every single thought, emotion, and concern coming together -- I'm sure you've felt that before. once or twice. But I felt that for all of my life. And with this...
I'm not sure how much more overwhelming things can be. Nothing is a surprise anymore.

SKY

It's unfair.

RICK

It has always had and will always have. What's unfair is that you've gone through this phase more than once. At the time, you're not even supposed to.

(beat)

I always try make sure everybody around me are satisfied enough so they don't have to worry about the world around them. But, I always fail. And I just failed again...

SKY

Do you believe in the afterlife?

RICK

I hope. I just can't bear to watch another person go up there, not when the way they went up there was painful.

SKY

We're giving him a funeral right?

RICK

Absolutely. He deserved to be honored.

SKY

You won't be going anytime soon, won't you?

RICK

No. Of course not. Why would you ask that?

SKY

It's just that... there haven't been many people who genuinely cared about me who have stayed. People always come and go. Nothing but memories and broken promises...

RICK

Nothing last forever as they say -- there is no guarantee. But the least I can do is to keep my word.

SKY

What word?

RICK

Being there with you on your happiest moment.

SKY

What happiest moment?

RICK

Your soon to be happiest moment.

Rick grabs something out of his pocket -- Revealing three pieces of tickets to a classic musical concert.

Sky is flabbergasted.

SKY

You're kidding right?

RICK

After everything?

Sky remains hesitant.

SKY

How can I trust you?

RICK

You don't need to. because I trust
you enough to trust me.

A big smile on her face. Her sadness faded away in an
instant.

She excitingly jumps to hug him.

RICK (cont'd)

(laughs)

Okay... calm down there.

Sky rushes downstairs.

INT. SHELTER - DAY

Sky is overjoyed.

ZOE

(crossing her arms)

Seriously?

Rick shrugs.

ZOE (cont'd)

Where did that come from?

RICK

What does it matter?

ZOE

If you're risking something bigger
just for the sake of redemption
then -- yes. Absolutely.

RICK

Out of all things -- how many were
happiness?

ZOE

What about Mr. Goldman?

RICK

I've talked. They require some time
and analysis before we can take one
last look... I just can't have her
experience this much longer. I don't
want her to share in our suffering.
That kid doesn't deserve this. We
don't deserve her.

(MORE)

RICK (cont'd)
I'm not letting another person's life
be ruined just because they were
indirectly involved in mine...
(pause)
Including you...

Zoe nods. Apologize has been accepted.

A beat.

RICK (cont'd)
You're coming or what?

A smile on her face. A genuine smile.

ZOE
Looking like this?

RICK
Of course not. That's why we should
get going.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

A visually appealing clothing store -- currently in the
formal clothes section.

Rick dressed in a fancy-looking tuxedo. Becoming more
attractive than ever.

Sky is uncertain which between two dresses she should pick.

RICK
Might as well pick your first glance.

She quickly head towards the fitting room.

Zoe recently emerged from the dressing room - wearing a
stunningly glamorous dress. Entirely different. Unlike
anything we have ever seen.

ZOE
(spinning)
What do you think?

RICK
No words.

ZOE
I couldn't even remember the last
time I wore anything like this in my
life...

RICK

It's not really the kind of luxury we have...

ZOE

True. You're looking sharp in that suit by the way.

RICK

(playfully)

Yeah? Do I look like your... *James Bond*?

Zoe giggled.

Sky returns. She's more beautiful than ever.

SKY

What do you think?

RICK

Perfect.

Sky smiles.

RICK (cont'd)

Alright. We got a proximately three hours before the show. Which means we got time to do something else first.
(wink)

Sky understands exactly what that means.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

A crowded theme park with loud noises and excessive lighting.

They're riding the pirate ship ride. Bursting with laughter.

SKY

You never tell me how exciting this was!

RICK

I'd figure it's best for you to experience this yourself. Don't wanna spoil the fun.

SKY

I think this is an indescribable experience!

She's having the time of her life. Pure unadulterated joy...

A nauseating ride later, they buy some ice creams and cotton candies.

SKY (cont'd)
I'd like the Oreo ice-cream with
extra chips, please.

The cashier nods. Processing her order.

ZOE
Rick? Anything?

Oddly enough, Rick looks unwell. Slightly pale. Sweat percolating.

RICK
Um... You know what? I think I'd
pass. You get some.

ZOE
You alright?

RICK
Yeah. I'm... fine. Just need to go to
the bathroom real quick.

ZOE
Alright.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Rick throws up in the hot and narrow bathroom.

He leans against the wall. Catching a breath. Being in the bathroom doesn't help at all. Suffocating under the malodorous air. Feeling all dizzy and weakened.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

He exit the bathroom and breath the fresh air he desperately needed.

Both Sky and Zoe are already waiting for him.

ZOE
You sure you're alright?

RICK
Why wouldn't I?

SKY

You don't look well to me.

RICK

Probably just feeling a little dizzy
due to the ride. It'll pass - don't
worry.

(beat)

Come on, let's watch something. We
still got time.

An outdoor theater. Audience sitting on a field of grass.
Mostly lovebirds. Crying. Hugging. Eating. Sleeping...

Watching *Shawshank redemption*.

RED (FILM)

*"Their feathers are just too bright.
And when they fly away, the part of
you that knows it was a sin to lock
them up does rejoice. But still, the
place you live in is that much more
drab and empty that they're gone. I
guess I just miss my friend."*

Rick's mind focused on every word the character said, which
was a reminiscence of Mr. Goldman. an awful coincidence

Silent. Motionless. Frozen. As the voices in his head grow
louder.

INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

An astonishingly massive hall. Glaring lights. Orchestrated
instruments. Compelling to the eyes.

Both Sky and Zoe are in their seats. One next to them is
empty.

SKY

Where's Rick?

ZOE

I thought he was behind you?

SKY

I didn't notice.

The light dims. The crowds are thrilled. All eyes are on the
stage. Musicians are confined to their instruments, with the
piano being the sole exception.

The orchestra is yet to begin. Audience start murmuring.

Suddenly, a faceless figure in a suit walks beneath the shadows. The figure reveals itself on the stage: It's Rick.

Both Sky and Zoe are startled. How he get there is unexplainable. Beyond their comprehension.

He walks soothingly toward the piano. The seat was rearranged. Hands on the keys. Ready to play.

A prolonged silence.

A single note. Another and another. And so on...

It begins with a quiet tune. soft and tender - before becoming more wild. His hands are shaking from not playing in years. You could tell he was nervous. A sudden sadness crossed his face -- playing the piano reminded him of something he didn't want to remember again.

Zoe is as speechless as ever, and Sky, on the other hand, is admiring every single note that he plays. Observing. Mesmerized. Dreaming...

Rick notices two distinguishable Buff-looking men staring intimidatingly. dead, flat, predatory eyes.

Rick starts to slow down after recognizing the threat. He brought the performance to a dramatic conclusion before the rest of the orchestra joined him.

Seeing this as a distraction, Rick hurries to the exit. As usual, his escape is easily spotted.

Zoe is starting to worry. His behavior indicates danger. Something is not right.

ZOE

Alright. Time to go.

SKY

But the orchestra just started...

ZOE

We've seen enough. Now let's go.

They exit the building.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

A lengthy search later - they are reunited.

Rick looking uneasy. Heavy breathing. Heart pounding.

RICK
Zoe?

ZOE
Rick! I saw you running away. What's wrong?

SKY
Rick! You were incredible. How did you manage to--

RICK
We need to go. Like right now.

SKY
Why?

RICK
I'll explain later - the important thing is, we get the hell out of this place, right now.

They tentatively follow him.

Entering a stranger's car.

ZOE
Who's car is this?

Rick hotwires the car.

SKY
Are we stealing it?

RICK
Temporarily borrowing it.

Several tries needed before working.

RICK (cont'd)
Finally! Thank god.

Thrusting his foot on the pedal. Car accelerating. Making a sharp turn.

ZOE
Okay, now can you tell me what's going on?

SKY
Where are we going?

RICK
We're going back.

SKY
Already?

RICK
Yes.

ZOE
Can you just tell me what's going on
Rick?! You're making me nervous!

Rick's anxiety is impairing his ability to think clearly.
viewing the rearview mirror repeatedly

Out of nowhere, from the darkness -- a tinted-black van is
pursuing them in high speed.

Alarmed, Rick thrust the pedal deeper. The van is still
right behind them. He's not escaping this.

ZOE (cont'd)
(afraid)
Rick... why is there a van chasing
us?

Rick remains silent.

ZOE (cont'd)
Rick...

The van accelerates even further. Now it's right there next
to them. The car is continuously jolted.

SKY
(crying)
What are they doing?!

RICK
Hold tight!

Eventually, Rick loses control. The car spins.

RICK (cont'd)
Hang on!!!

Zoe is holding for her life -- Sky is screaming on the back.

The car freezes. The engine dies.

RICK (cont'd)
(starting up the
engine)
Come on... Come on!!!

Regardless of how many attempts are made, there is no sign of hope.

Zoe looks over her shoulder and sees five abnormal men emerging. carrying lethal weapons and a few aluminum bats.

SKY
Who are they?!

ZOE
Rick... I don't think they're
friendly...
(beat)
What did you get yourself into?!

RICK
I...

He knows he has to say it, but nothing comes out of his mouth.

RICK (cont'd)
(pause)
Just... stay here. I'll deal with
them.

ZOE
Are you crazy?! they're carrying
weapons -- you're going to kill
yourself!

RICK
Sky, hide underneath the seat for me
would you?

Sky nods in fear.

ZOE
You can't be serious!

RICK
There's no other way.

ZOE
Please... don't do anything stupid.

RICK
I already have...

Rick began to walk nervously toward them. He's completely surrounded. Escaping is not an option anymore.

The men are silent. Intimidating. Bellicose.

RICK (cont'd)
Listen, I know it's idiotic. And
irredeemable... but if you'd kindly-

The leader swiftly punches Rick on the face.

He grunts. His nose bled. The leader grabs him by the shirt
and pushes him onto the car.

It leaves a dent and broken car tail light. The strength is
unbelievable.

He throws Rick to the ground like a rag doll. The leader
Motions to the rest for a full attack.

Rick is defenseless. Punches are thrown every second.

Inside the car: Sky is covering her ears while crying to
keep her from hearing the horrors outside -- Zoe is seeing a
nightmare right in front of her eyes.

Rick is thrown onto the hood of the car. Shattering its
window. Blood flowed through his face. Bruises all over
feeling like he's about to die at any moment.

Zoe can no longer stand the horrors and steps outside.

RICK (cont'd)
No...

ZOE
Rick! Oh my god...

This is something Zoe was never meant to see. Tears running
down her face.

ZOE (cont'd)
Be with me Rick...

In rage, Zoe rushes toward the men, pushing them out of the
way, but they are completely unfazed. not moving an inch.
Her punches are useless.

One man about to strike her with his aluminum bat...
CRACK!!!

Zoe falls to the ground. Unconscious.

RICK
(mumbly)
Zoe!!! You son of a bitch!!!

Rick with all the strength he has left, run toward the man.
Enraged. But it was not enough. Barely enough...

He's knocked off. Incapable of standing up.

The men departs. Leaving the crime scene as it is.

RICK'S POV: Everything is getting hazy. Hearing fading off. The World's spinning -- before he's finally unconscious.

LATER.

Minutes have passed. Everything remains the same. Silent. Cold. Windy. The dark, empty road was illuminated by the car headlights.

Rick is beginning to awaken. Coughing blood. Crawling up to Zoe, who is still laying on the ground, unconscious.

RICK (cont'd)
Zoe...?

No response. She's not moving at all.

RICK (cont'd)
Zoe. Wake up...

He checks her pulse -- there is none. A drop of blood dripping from her nose. Her hair is unusually wet.

His hands turns out to be covered in blood.

There's no denying to this.

He freezes. In complete shock.

RICK (cont'd)
(in heavy tears)
Don't... don't do this to me.
Please... not you. Not you, please...
Zoe... Zoe!
(beat)
I'm sorry. I'm sorry I did this to
you...

He hugs her as tears drop endlessly from his eyes.

EXT. SHELTER - NIGHT

Returned to the building with a now - wrecked rust bucket that he stole.

A beat. Deep-breath.

He glances at the backseat -- Sky fell asleep. Unable to take a step out of the car ever since.

INT. SHELTER - NIGHT

Rick carries her inside. Gently lay her down on the couch.
Covering her with a blanket. Shutting off the lights.

A car is heard from the outside.

EXT. SHELTER - NIGHT

It's a recognizable black sedan.

The door opens, it's John.

He emerges. Looking disappointed. Worrying.

RICK

I'm sorry I had to call you this
late--

JOHN

What the hell happened?! What the
hell happened to you?! Look at your
face!

RICK

You don't need to worry about me...

JOHN

I'm not worried about you. I'm
worried that if something like this
happened to you, That means something
atrocious happened while Sky was with
you.

RICK

She's perfectly fine.

JOHN

Things could've been the other way
around, and you wouldn't even
anticipate it. Gosh, damn it! Why
would you let something like this
even happen?! I brought her to you
because I thought I could trust you.
I thought she'd be safe. But no, you
instead tried to get her killed!

RICK

That's not why you brought her here.
I think we both know that.

JOHN

What are you saying?

RICK

You think I didn't know? Out of all people, you're the last person I expect to care about her well-being. You never cared about her. You're only concerned about her because her safety could affect your own regard, not the fact that she is fine. You never wanted to deal with her in the first place. You were obliged. You are as treacherous as you've always been.

JOHN

And you think you're doing a better job than me?

RICK

I'm the one who gave her the comfort and affection she always needed - while you're up there, dressed in a tight and clean suit, working in a comfortable office, and having little to no struggle to do your job. caring about nothing but yourself.

JOHN

Let's not forget that you're also the one who actively tried to get her killed, so what's your point? You want to blame me that you ended up down here? You had as many opportunities as everyone else in this world. But you were too frightened to take them. afraid to be overwhelmed. To fail. To try. Then that opportunity went away, and everything went downhill. You weren't even trying to save it. You just let it happen. And now you're here, hoping it will get better day by day without you even trying to make a difference. You might view me as a relentless human being, but you can't ignore the fact that what I said is true. Are you going to keep living under your own deception?

A beat.

Rick is completely speechless. He knows every word is true.

JOHN (cont'd)
I'm bringing her back tomorrow
morning. And there's nothing you can
do about it.

John departs.

Rick remains motionless. Adrenaline pumping. Thoughts
clouded.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Waiting in a empty hallway. Half-asleep.

A doctor later emerges. Carrying a bag of medicine and
documents.

DOCTOR
Mr. Rick?
(Rick nods)
Are you sure you won't need a medical
check? A serious injury is a
possibility. You won't even realize
it. Considering the damage...

RICK
No. I don't need to.

Rick stays persistent.

DOCTOR
Alright. Here's a couple paracetamol
and ibuprofen and some NSAIDs to ease
the pain.

RICK
What about them?

The doctor hands him a sheaf of paperwork.

DOCTOR
My consolation for your loss.
(beat)
These are the forms you need to fill
out -- death certificate, report of
death, and some more identification.
I'd like for you to be as detailed as
possible.

RICK
Can I see them?

DOCTOR

Of course.

INT. MORTUARY - NIGHT

Rick standing between the two people that meant the world for him, is now gone forever. Wrapped in a white cloth.

He couldn't bare to look at their faces. No tears. No words. Just emptiness...

INT. SHELTER - DAY

Next day has is here. The inevitable has arrived.

John's waiting outside by his car.

Rick simply watches as there's absolutely nothing he could do.

She take a one last look at him -- before entering the car.

In a flash, Sky is no longer with him. She is gone.

Phone rings, Rick answers.

RICK

Yes?

AMANDA

Mr. Rick, I'm here to remind you, you have a day left before we start the deconstruction process.

RICK

Wait. That's happening?

AMANDA

We've warned.

RICK

No. You need to give me more time.

AMANDA

Time for what? There were no negotiations.

RICK

There's gotta be another way that doesn't involve deconstruction.

AMANDA

I'm sorry, Mr. Rick. There is absolutely nothing you can do to reverse this. You cannot bargain your way out of this. It was never yours to begin with.

RICK

Okay, what about adverse possession?

AMANDA

The requirement for adverse possession is that the occupation must be open and notorious, exclusive, hostile, and continuous and uninterrupted for a prescribed period of time.

RICK

Then you gotta give me some more time.

AMANDA

You have been given a time limit, and now it has expired.

RICK

Please... Give me another chance...

AMANDA

I'm sorry, Mr. Rick. But there's nothing you can do to stop it. That's why we informed you the day before so you could pack your things out and make sure nobody stays in the area any longer by tomorrow. Have a good day.

Phone hangs up.

A beat.

He's still holding the phone.

Later, he furiously slams the phone several times with all his strength.

RICK

GODDAMMIT!!!

He collapses to the floor. Distressed. Defeatist.

EXT. PAPER STREETS - DAY

It's thundering with strong wind.

Back again at the mansion. Still as dead as before.

Perpetual knocks. It's now more of a banging the door now.

Still nothing after everything.

Rick gives up. He sit down on the sidewalk, under the heavy rain.

From the distance, a figure emerges. It's the usual stranger.

Rick glances. He sits right next to him.

RICK

Why are jogging? It's raining.

STRANGER

(shrug)

It happen to rain while I jog. A bit of rain won't hurt.

RICK

It's not exactly "a bit."

The stranger shrugs.

STRANGER

Still waiting?

RICK

Not anymore...

STRANGER

And why is that?

RICK

It's all too late now. It's over. I did everything I could and all I got is a name.

STRANGER

And an address.

RICK

Stop.

STRANGER

Stop what?

RICK
Being hopeful.

STRANGER
Does it relate to the cause of your
face?
(pause)
Or the impact?

RICK
I'm not answering that.

STRANGER
So this is it? The end of the line?

RICK
What are you even trying to do?
Enlighten me? 'Cause that's not
happening. I'm not doing this
anymore. I'm done taking risk...

STRANGER
There's always a risk for everything.
That's the whole point.

RICK
Yeah, well, I took them and what I
got for return are the consequences.
Not the other way around. So don't
expect me to go back searching for
this nonexistent person.

STRANGER
On the contrary, his existence is
based on your beliefs. The choice is
always going to be in your hands.

The stranger politely walks away.

EXT. SHELTER - DAY

Standing. Thinking. Regretting.

Loud perpetual noises not far from the distance.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

A pickup truck. Filled with boxes and tools.

The workshop is half empty.

The place is being wrecked. Valuable items are no more. Mostly scraps are left.

RICK

Hector? What are you doing?

HECTOR

You know, trying to open your eyes are harder than I thought.

RICK

I don't understand...

HECTOR

Of course you don't.

RICK

Is it about the stolen parts? I'd try to make it up for you as soon as I--

HECTOR

It's not about the parts that you stole -- that, I can replace. But the reputation you obliterated, cannot.

(beat)

You know how much criticism I receive because a part of their car is missing? which gave later customers trust issues. I don't get as many customers as I used to due to that.

RICK

You're not closing the workshop, are you?

HECTOR

You can't sacrifice one's life for the sake of others' survival. It only works when it's voluntary.

(beat)

How could you do this?

Hector walks away.

RICK

Hector... please... I'm sorry.

HECTOR

"Sorry" won't do anything.

Hector slips inside his car. Departs. Gone for a long time.

EXT. LOTUS CHILDREN ORPHANAGE - DAY

The end is near for Sky.

JOHN

Here we are. A piece of monstrosity
right in front of your very eyes.

(sarcastically)

Onto the next adventure, am I right?

Sky remain silent. Refusing to exit.

JOHN (cont'd)

(sighs)

Why the long face? You knew from the
beginning it always going to end this
way. I thought you liked this place.
You said it yourself, you didn't even
want to go.

SKY

I didn't want to go with you.

JOHN

You preferred to stay with the
problematic Mr. Williams?

SKY

I'd choose him over you.

JOHN

As if I wanted to be chosen.

(beat)

Now, you don't have to be with either
of us. You're back on your own. He's
not going to be there with or for
you. The two of you will never
reunite. How's that sound? Exciting,
isn't it?

Sky looking dead in the eye.

JOHN (cont'd)

Okay. You either go out there by
yourself or I'm gonna make you.

SKY

Make me.

JOHN

I'm crashing this thing from the
back.

SKY

Do it. It's Your car. Your disadvantage. Good luck with the insurance.

JOHN

Damn.

John steps out.

He's approaching Samantha. His intention is clear.

Samantha greets Sky by the half-opened window.

SAMANTHA

Hello there, Sky. Long time no see! I missed you! How you've been?

SKY

agitated.

SAMANTHA

(sighs)

I know... transportation to a completely new sector can be tough. Especially when you're unfamiliar with it. But you've had a glimpse of what life could actually be, what it holds, and the possibilities. This could be your other chance to discover more of the world.

SKY

It just had to be you, huh?

Samantha shrugs.

Sky finally decides to go outside -- while being escorted by Samantha. Holding her hand.

JOHN

Guess this is a goodbye, huh?

(facetiously)

I'd definitely miss you. All the good time we've been together...

Pure hatred in Sky eyes.

SAMANTHA

Nothing last forever. But the memories we share will always be there.

JOHN

I suppose so...

SAMANTHA

Alright, I will be seeing you later.
Thank you so much for your
participation in this, John! Your
service will be unforgettable.

JOHN

Pleasure.

Both of them walks away as John give himself a breath of relief.

JOHN (cont'd)

Thank god.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The long awaited moment of achieving his goal. The thing he desires the most.

John walked triumphantly to his new office. Passing by other workers. Eyes full of jealousy.

BARNEY

Well, this was expected. How does it
feel to be in a position nobody even
really wanted. Should we even
applause?

JOHN

Maybe if you weren't such a lazybones
and give actual commitment, you might
actually achieve something in your
life, Barney.

Now that he has achieved everything. He's becoming purposeless. Nothing more to conquer. Feeling incomplete.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Rick gives one last effort to look for a suitable job.

A white, tall, mid-thirties man conducting an interview.

INTERVIEWER

Any experience?

RICK

Personally? yes. Academically? No.

INTERVIEWER
History? Internship perhaps?

RICK
Voluntary?

INTERVIEWER
To what?

RICK
Friends?

INTERVIEWER
Seriously?

RICK
Sorry.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Vintage-looking cafe.

INTERVIEWER 2
I'm not sure whether I'm hiring an
entertainer or an intimidator.

The interviewer looking on in scorn.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

A fancy hotel.

INTERVIEWER 3
I'm sorry but this isn't a scare
house.

Most of the rejection are reasonable. Rick simply accept his
fate. He never even got to play for them. The interviews
ends within an instant.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - DAY

Old-fashioned looking jazz club with a bit of modern touch.

The interviewer is visibly intimidating, with a cold face.
Menacing. Restrictive.

A beat.

The interviewer is observing the way he looks.

INTERVIEWER 4

You know one thing interesting about musicians? People don't usually come to a performance to watch the performer play. No, they come to hear the music they're playing. To listen. To feel. Unless, of course, you're an egoistic millionaire spoiled child with a pretty face who can't write anything but a lyric or two before effortlessly covering your hoarse, ear-damaging, out-of-tune voice with... auto tune and endless layers of echoes.

(beat)

But in your case, it shows that you might be helpful when this place eventually gets robbed.

(beat)

What is truly helpful are... traits. I want you to show me why you're here in the first place. Why you wanted to be here. I don't need any of those time-wasting piece of paper. I just need a show.

Rick lay his hands on the keys...

INT. SHELTER - NIGHT

A long day of interviews.

The shelter is oddly empty. Silent.

Rick assume they are all in their camps -- there are no movements. No voices. No people.

Two people is seen. Nobody else. Both are shaking. Weak. Starving.

RICK

Where did the rest go?

HOMELESS

They left. Trying to find a better place to stay -- where they can actually find some food to eat.

A moment of realization.

Resources are depleted. Rick has completely abandoned them.

RICK

My god... I'm sorry... I'll get some food straight away...

INT. SHELTER - NIGHT

Everything is hopeless. Nothing but acceptance.

Collecting memorable. Tidying furniture. Putting away useless items.

Rick notice Zoe's favorite book left opened.

He flip a few pages.

RICK

It's unfortunate she couldn't get to know why this was your favorite, huh?

Rick closes the book - gently putting it along side other memorable.

EXT. SHELTER - THE NEXT DAY

Nearly everything useful is out.

Rick worked tirelessly all night -- completely out of breath.

As expected, Amanda arrives.

RICK

(nods)

I know... I know... it's time.

AMANDA

Mr. Rick...

RICK

Would you at least spare me a minute to talk to the remaining before you begin?

AMANDA

(exhales)

Mr. Rick.

RICK

Yes?

AMANDA

I'm not here to initiate a deconstruction.

RICK

I thought it was today?

AMANDA

Initially, yes. But a sudden change occurred.

RICK

What change?

AMANDA

An anonymous called - who happens to be the rightful owner to this property announced to transfer his ownership to you.

RICK

They what? I'm not getting it.

AMANDA

You are given ownership. You now legally own this building.

RICK

Who's this owner? Actually?

AMANDA

It's classified.

(beat)

Congratulations, Mr. Rick.

Amanda walks away.

Rick is perplexed. Dazzled. Relieved. thankful.

Now he has to put everything back in.

Before he could get the chance to do so -- A shiny blue sport car arrives.

No familiarity to it. Door opens, driver step foot, It's the unnamed interviewer.

An unexpected encounter. Could either be good or bad news.

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER

Rick!

RICK

Yes? Why are you here?

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER

Come here.

RICK

Is this about the job?

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER

No, it's about my daughter's broken marriage with her problematic fiancée.

RICK

What?

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER

No shit. What else do you think it was going to be?

(pause)

Straight to the point, I need you tonight.

RICK

To perform? Does that mean I get the job?

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER

No. But I got no players for tonight - since other applicants are unworthy, you're the only decent so far. If you could prove yourself, then yes, you might possibly get the job.

RICK

What will I be playing?

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER

There will be a set list given. Just play it. Don't go anywhere beyond that.

Rick nods.

RICK

Time?

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER

8 o'clock. Don't be late, or else you'd get more than a rejection.

RICK

Alright...

The unnamed interviewer leaves, swiftly.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

The jazz is now crowded. Young. Old. Altogether.

Rick arrives with a suit. Masked his bruises. Hair brushed. Did everything he could to look respectable.

Standing... and watching over the crowded tables. Lost in thought.

CUSTOMER

Excuse me...

Rick moves aside.

The nameless interviewer emerges.

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER

Rick! Finally! What are you doing man? You're blocking the entrance. Come here...

(beat)

You see that piano onstage? That's your part.

RICK

Solo?

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER

For now. There's haven't been any pianist for a while... they're all expecting.

RICK

You announced it?

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER

How else can I get them excited enough to come here?

Rick sighs. Anxiety pumping.

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER (cont'd)

Don't worry, if you do good, they'll like you. If you don't, I'll kick you out of the club. Now go!

He's not making this any easier for Rick.

Rick walk nervously across the tables. Slowly, he's noticed.

Mostly are intrigued. Curious. Ignorant...

Rick is now onstage.

Crowds are silenced. All eyes are on Rick. Standing with his visible nervousness and heavy breathing.

The interviewer is tapping his foot. Waiting. Expecting to be disappointed anytime soon. Ready to shut it all at once.

With enough courage, Rick begins to sit down. Fingers are on keys. Heart pounding. A prolonged deep-breath.

So it begins...

It begins with a slow melody, gradually accelerating to an impressive tempo. Palms are sweaty. Fingers are becoming slippery. Thoughts clouded with failure. Disappointment. Embarrassment...

This might be the best we've ever seen of him. From an absolute silence in a room full of expectations, it transitioned to a room of acceptance. Guests are getting into the groove. nodding their heads. a smile of satisfaction on their faces.

With a pianist at last, the club is now complete.

The interviewer smirks. Nodding. Relieved.

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER

Let's hear it for our man on the keys
ladies and gentlemen!

All are clapping their hands. Congratulating.

Rick is now filled with optimism. more relaxed than before, boosted with confidence from the cheering. He smiles. never been more proud and happy for himself.

Building up an exaggerated climax... and just like that, the last note was played. A triumphant disclosure.

Everyone is cheering and clapping their hands.

EXT. JAZZ CLUB - LATER

3.00 AM.

The club is now closed. Lights are off. Tables are tidied up.

Rick leaning against a street light. Gazing at the stars.

The interviewer approaches.

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER
Quite the view, huh?

RICK
Didn't know you're still around...

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER
You don't think I'm that
irresponsible, don't you?

Rick chuckles.

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER (cont'd)
Listen, your performance was...

RICK
Amazing?

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER
Satisfactory.

Rick nods.

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER (cont'd)
Here.

The interviewer offers him a pile of cash.

RICK
What's this for? I thought I'm not
officially hired yet.

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER
You are now. So take the money before
I change my mind.

RICK
Thanks.

UNNAMED INTERVIEWER
Don't mention it.
(beat)
Be ready - and welcome...

Rick nods.

The interviewer walks out.

Rick continue to gaze the stars in the dark, silent, and
lonely night.

RICK
Thank you.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Two years later...

Two graveyard right next to each other. Flowers on each of them.

We can see a name carved on it: Goldman Nelson. Zoe Michael.

Someone is crouching near to it. We can't see their face or body. Nothing more but a pair of leather shoes.

The figure leaves.

EXT. SHELTER - DAY

Normally, in this exact location, lies a barely functioning building. Following with it's infeasibility...

But it now appears to be significantly different -- a newly renovated building. Larger in space. Capacity doubled.

Bricks and dirt are now cement. Wood is now aluminum. Camps are now proper beds.

A complete transformation with the same sole purpose.

And endless line of homeless waiting as far as the eyes can see.

INT. SHELTER - DAY

A well-dressed man is running down the stairs.

It's Rick.

Not much of a difference.

ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Rick! We have a situation here.

RICK

I'm aware.

ADMINISTRATOR

What do we do?

RICK

Use any kind of available spaces. As long as we have enough resources, which I believe we do, we can fill them all in.

ADMINISTRATOR

You sure?

RICK

This place was built to offer chances
not to shut them down.

ADMINISTRATOR

And where are you doing?

RICK

I have a promise to keep.

Rick departs.

Driving away with his own personal car.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

A clear, blue sky. Sunshine never shines so brightly.

Rick passes a sign: Buffalo.

INT. LOTUS CHILDREN BUFFALO - DAY

RECEPTIONIST

Just a minute, please.

Waiting. Nervous. Thrilled...

Shortly after, the main door opens, and from there, a
recognizable-looking Blondie emerges.

A huge smile on Rick's face.

THE END.