

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A cramped, dimly lit bedroom. The curtains are shut against the pale daylight outside.

EMMA (early 20s) lies flat on her back on the narrow bed.

Her nose is pinched by her hand and her mouth is closed.

Her eyes are SHUT. Her face has an uneasy look.

CLOSE ON her wristwatch - digital timer counting upward:

2:10 and climbing.

Her face TENSES.

She squirms, fists clenching the blanket.

She PUNCHES the bed beside her as if to fight through the urge.

She suddenly WRENCHES her hand away from her nose, GASPING.

A long rasping INHALE, then COUGHS.

She presses STOP on the watch.

INSERT - TIMER frozen at 2:42.

Emma lies there WHEEZING, catching her breath.

The bedroom door CREAKS open.

LAURA (late 20s), calm but concerned, steps in.

LAURA
(gentle, but firm)
How long?

EMMA
(still breathless)
Almost three minutes.

LAURA
Not bad, we can't risk it outside.

Emma sits up, rubbing her chest.

EMMA
I know. I'm trying.

Laura crosses to the small desk with a tray of wilted HOUSEPLANTS under a weak grow light on it.

LAURA
We need more food. Market's still
got some cans left. We go now.

Emma looks at her watch, exhales slowly, then NODS.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A bare room, with taped plastic on the windows.

A single air-sealed FRONT DOOR.

Backpacks on the table.

Laura checks her watch.

LAURA
Deep breath on three. In through
the nose, out slow. One... two...
three.

Both inhale DEEPLY, eyes locked.

Fingers hover over the watch buttons.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Go.

They press START, seal their lips, and open the door.

EXT. EMPTY STREET - CONTINUOUS

A lifeless neighborhood.

A thin WHISTLING WIND.

The sisters SPRINT side by side, clutching backpacks.

CLOSE ON Emma's wristwatch - 0:52 and climbing.

Their footsteps ECHO.

INT. ABANDONED MARKET - MOMENTS LATER

They move quickly, scooping supplies into their packs.

Emma glances at her timer: 1:52.

Her eyes widen.

She glances at Laura.

EMMA
(muffled, breath held,
points at watch)
Laura NODS, gestures: "Two more
cans."

They shove a few more items in.

Suddenly a STACK OF CANS topples from a shelf with a CLATTER.

Emma FLINCHES.

She is forced to let out a little bit of air, slightly
emptying her lungs, making it harder for her to keep holding
her breath.

Laura grabs her hand, pulls her toward the door.

EXT. STREET - RETURN RUN - CONTINUOUS

Emma's face contorts, making a gesture showing desperation to
inhale air that is not there.

They sprint back toward their home.

CLOSE ON her watch: 3:02 and climbing.

Her steps falter.

She brings a hand to her chest.

Laura tugs her forward, nearly dragging her.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Laura SLAMS the door shut behind them.

Emma collapses to her knees, finally drawing a long, shaky GASP.

Laura also exhales hard, coughing.

Both women lean back against the wall, drenched in sweat, savoring the flow of clean air.

The sounds of their gasping fill the silence.

EMMA

I guess I beat my record.

Emma smiles weakly while still trying to catch her breath.

Laura allows herself the faintest smile.

They both lean back against the wall, exhausted, staring at the plants.

FADE OUT.