

IMAGINARY

by

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FADE IN:

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY

The bedroom is filled to the brim with stuffed animals and figurines.

The walls painted lavender, covered with all kinds of fantasy artwork, handmade, all framed and hung meticulously.

Bed neatly made, the sheets a flowery cascade.

It is quickly clear, this is not just the room of a normal teenage girl - it's a sanctuary of creativity. A place where imagination flows. An escape.

In the corner of the room, a canvas.

A HAND makes deliberate strokes along it, washing the blank whiteness with color.

The work is done feverishly, but at the same time, with care.

LEAH MINUCCI steps back from the canvas, setting her brush down, looking at it with a smile on her face.

She stands strong for a 16 year old. Her eyes showing an age much greater than herself. She's a cute girl, a slight shadow hanging over her.

LEAH

Another to be framed.

She smiles at the canvas - a vast field of pastel-colored flowers amidst the drop of a purple sky.

NANCY (O.S.)

Let's go, Leah! If you miss the bus I can't give you a ride today!

With a heavy sigh, Leah prepares herself to leave the safety of her bedroom.

NANCY (O.S.)

Matt won't take you either!

LEAH

(to herself)

As if I'd want him to.

Leah stuffs a couple books into her backpack and slowly opens her door, peeking out into the hallway before leaving, cautiously closing the door behind herself.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Leah sits down at the counter, her mother, NANCY, making toast.

Nancy is perhaps in her early 40s, but has not aged well at all.

A bruise on her cheek, she's an unhappy victim, and everything about how she carries herself shows it.

LEAH
Another good night between you and
Matt, huh?

NANCY
It's not your business, Leah.

LEAH
You're my mother.

NANCY
And he's my husband. I'm the adult
and you're the child.

MATT enters the kitchen, Leah and Nancy both falling silent.

He's a tall, stocky, blond haired, quasi-redneck looking guy.

He completely ignores Leah, focusing on Nancy.

MATT
What'd you make me?

NANCY
Nothing, yet. I just made some
toast for Leah.

MATT
Yeah? I'll have it, then.

Matt grabs the toast and begins to eat it.

LEAH
(sheepishly)
She made it for me, Matt.

Matt turns to Leah, shocked by her audacity.

MATT

What was that?

Leah doesn't say anything, she looks down at the counter.

MATT

You can mumble it but you can't
say it to my face?

NANCY

Let's just try and have a good
morning.

MATT

Shut up. I'm not talking to you.

Leah continues to sit there, becoming more visibly afraid.

Matt spits the partially eaten food at Leah and tosses the
plate down in front of her.

MATT

Grow a pair next time. I'm going
to work.

Matt storms out of the kitchen. The front door opens and
slams shut.

Leah begins to furiously wipe the chewed up food off of
herself, disgusted.

Nancy lights up a cigarette, shaking her head.

NANCY

You know better than to make him
mad.

LEAH

Everything makes him mad. I'm glad
you stand up for your daughter.

Leah gets up from the counter, grabs her backpack and
leaves.

Nancy stands there a moment before grabbing a bottle of
pills from atop the sink and downs two of them with a heavy
sigh, closing her eyes.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL, COURTYARD - DAY

Leah walks through the courtyard, not a friend by her side.

She's the eccentric girl that everyone knows about and stares at, but nobody actually talks to for some reason.

Various HIGH SCHOOLERS murmur to each other about her and point as she makes her way to an empty bench and sits down, taking out a book and waiting for the first bell to ring.

As she's reading, JOHN walks past the bench. He's a typical high school boy, light build, athletic, handsome.

Leah looks up and stares, her eyes longing for him.

He looks over to the bench and their eyes meet briefly before he looks away and continues talking to his FRIENDS.

Leah buries her face back in her book, blushing.

The bell rings and she gets up, stuffing her book into her pack.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Leah sits in the back of the classroom by the window, a notebook open.

The TEACHER stands at the white board, scribbling down notes and lecturing the STUDENTS.

Leah scribbles something on her notepad, but it isn't notes. No, she's doodling again.

She glances out the window.

Outside, she sees herself in a flowing lavender dress, running around the large oak tree, happily being chased by a FAUN.

They're laughing and having a good time.

TEACHER (O.S.)
Isn't that right, Leah?

Back to reality.

Leah snaps her attention to her Teacher at the front of the room.

LEAH
I'm sorry, what?

TEACHER
Daydreaming again?

The Teacher walks back to her desk and looks at her notepad.

TEACHER
Interesting notes. Unfortunately
this isn't art class.

The students in the class giggle.

TEACHER
Would you mind telling the class
how a faun is part of world
geography?

More laughter.

Leah slinks down in her desk, embarrassed.

TEACHER
Keep your head out of the clouds.
You're no bird. Now I mean it, pay
attention.

The Teacher returns to the front of the class and continues
on.

Leah glances out the window once more.

There's nothing out there but the oak tree, rustling in the
wind.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Another blank canvas, another night of painting.

Leah stands there, swiftly moving her brush, quickly
creating the scene from school that she saw from inside the
classroom.

The oak tree, the faun, and herself. It's a bright, happy
painting.

Outside her room, somewhere in the house, Matt is screaming
at Nancy and throwing things around.

Leah closes her eyes, breathing deep.

She continues painting, trying to take her mind off of what's going on just outside the safety of her room.

All goes quiet for a moment, and then the loud sound of a smack breaks the silence, followed by Nancy crying out.

Leah drops the paint brush on the floor, breathing heavily.

She looks towards her bedroom door which thus far has remained closed.

LEAH
(whispering to
herself)
Please stay away. Please. Please.

A shadow fills the underside of her door and the handle jiggles.

Thankfully, the door is locked.

Leah slowly and quietly makes her way towards her bed, crawling under the covers, shutting her eyes.

The door handle continues to jiggle.

BAM!

Matt punches the door.

MATT (O.S.)
I'm taking the lock off this door
tomorrow! You hear me?

Matt punches the door again.

Leah covers her head with her pillow, curling into a ball.

EXT. FIELD OF PAPER FLOWERS - DAY

It's an endless field of pastel colored flowers, clearly made from tissue paper.

As the wind blows, they rustle together in a strange sort of harmony.

Leah lays in the center of the field, looking up at the purple colored sky with cotton candy-like clouds.

LEAH
It's strange, I find myself here
more and more as each day passes.

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
You sound surprised, as if you
haven't created all that surrounds
you.

Leah sits up to see PETER THE FAUN standing close by, a
smile on his face, playing his flute.

LEAH
You again. I know you.

PETER THE FAUN
As you rightly should.

LEAH
You were outside my classroom
today.

PETER THE FAUN
Was I?

Peter the Faun winks at Leah and continues playing his
peaceful melody.

LEAH
It's beautiful.

PETER THE FAUN
It'll wake you soon.

LEAH
I'd rather it didn't, if it's all
the same.

PETER THE FAUN
But you must.

LEAH
I built this world to escape that
nightmare.

PETER THE FAUN
But it's where you belong, Leah.
For now.

LEAH
What's your name?

PETER THE FAUN
Don't you know?

Leah closes her eyes, thinking.

Peter the Faun continues playing his flute.

Leah smiles.

LEAH

Peter. Your name is Peter.

PETER THE FAUN

Time to wake up now.

Peter the Faun begins blowing hard on his flute, creating an awful annoying pitch.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY

Leah opens her eyes, her alarm clock blaring. It's morning.

With a groan she rolls over and shuts off the alarm clock, sighing heavily as she prepares to leave her sanctuary.

LEAH

(to herself)

Peter. Peter the Faun.

As Leah gets dressed, she stops, looking at her painting of the oak tree.

She touches the faun on the canvas, smiling.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Leah enters the kitchen where Nancy sits at the table, smoking a cigarette and drinking, her lip freshly busted.

LEAH

Another souvenir?

Matt quickly steps behind Leah and cracks her over the back of the head, causing her to cry out.

MATT

Just keep giving me reasons, girl.
Keep right on pushing.

Leah's eyes water from the pain and she looks at Nancy, who looks away.

MATT

You hoping she's going to say something? Grow up. I pay for everything around here. Without me, you two skanks would be on the
(MORE)

MATT (cont'd)
streets.

Matt tosses Leah's bedroom door handle on the counter.

MATT
No more lock on your door.

Leah quickly grabs a bottle of water out of the fridge and leaves the kitchen.

MATT
Get your ass to school before I
change my mind.

Leah quickly leaves.

Nancy takes her pills and finishes off her drink.

NANCY
Did you have to hit her?

MATT
Excuse me? What was that?

NANCY
Nothing. What do you want for
breakfast?

MATT
Nothing. You two have ruined my
appetite. You need to do something
about that daughter of yours
before I do. I'm sick of her
mouth.

NANCY
Okay.

MATT
Okay what?

NANCY
I'll talk to her.

MATT
I'm going to work. Why don't you
make yourself useful today and
clean the house, huh?

Matt leaves the kitchen and Nancy pours herself another drink.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, GUIDANCE OFFICE - DAY

Leah sits across from her guidance counselor, MR. POWELL, an older fellow with a warm face and kind eyes.

He holds a textbook in his hands which has been covered with all sorts of doodles, apparently done by Leah.

MR. POWELL

For some reason your behavior is causing concern among some of your teachers, Leah.

LEAH

They're just drawings.

MR. POWELL

I know that. And there's nothing wrong with having an imagination. I'll tell you a secret. Can I?

Leah shrugs her shoulders.

MR. POWELL

Us adults would give anything to have our imagination back. For some reason when we grew up, we let it run away from us. We were all so focused on being grown ups that we lost our inner child. That's an important part of who we are as humans, Leah. Don't ever make our mistake and let yours go.

Mr. Powell winks at Leah and she half-smiles.

MR. POWELL

Now, having said that, I still have a job to do. Perhaps you are spending a little too much time in your head. Some is good, but too much can be bad for you. The lines between reality and fantasy can sometimes start to blur. Do you understand?

LEAH

Why does that have to be a bad thing?

MR. POWELL

It doesn't. But you are in school, and the point is to get an education so you can really be

(MORE)

MR. POWELL (cont'd)
something special when you become
an adult. Maybe just try to pay
more attention in class, okay? And
maybe keep the doodling on school
property to a minimum.

LEAH
I'll see what I can do, Mr.
Powell.

MR. POWELL
'atta girl.

Mr. Powell hands her textbook back to her and then leans
back in his chair, looking at her more seriously.

MR. POWELL
Is everything all right at home,
Leah?

Leah looks down at the floor, shrugging as she stuffs the
textbook back into her pack.

LEAH
It's all right I guess.

MR. POWELL
You don't have to talk to me, but
it's what I'm here for. If you
ever need anything, my doors are
always open. Even if you just need
someone to listen. I promise I'll
do my best to help in whatever
ways I can.

LEAH
Thanks, Mr. Powell. But really,
there's nothing you or anyone else
can do for me right now.

MR. POWELL
You sure?

LEAH
Yeah. My mom just needs to wake
up, you know?

MR. POWELL
What do you mean by that?

LEAH
Nothing.

Leah stands up and slings her pack over her shoulders, preparing to leave.

LEAH

Will you write me a pass back to class? I'd hate to get bitched at for being late.

MR. POWELL

Of course! We wouldn't want that.

Mr. Powell takes a piece of paper off his desk, scribbles on it, signs it, and hands it to Leah.

LEAH

Thanks. I'll see you around.

MR. POWELL

Take care of yourself, Leah. And remember what I said.

LEAH

Will do.

Leah leaves the office and Mr. Powell sits there a moment, twiddling his pen, thinking.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Leah sits in the corner of the library, between two bookshelves, a mountain of books piled on either side of her.

She's browsing through a book in her hand.

The LIBRARIAN walks over to her, a confused look on her face.

LIBRARIAN

You know the checkout limit is four at any given time, right?

LEAH

I know. I'm just looking through them. I'll put them all back, I promise.

LIBRARIAN

Trying to figure out which ones to take home, huh?

LEAH
Something like that.

With a smile, the Librarian walks away, continuing her work.
Leah buries her face back into the book in front of her.

JOHN (O.S.)
Leah?

Leah looks up to see John walking towards her.
She instantly blushes.

JOHN
That's a lot of books you got,
there.

LEAH
Yeah. I didn't know you read.

JOHN
I'm not stupid, you know.

LEAH
No, wait. That's not what I meant.
I just -

John smiles and leans down by her, looking at the piles of books around her.

JOHN
Relax. I'm just teasing you.
What've you got here?

John begins going through the piles of books -- Mostly fantasy and horror, with a few art-based books thrown in for good measure.

JOHN
Interesting.

LEAH
I can never decide what to read. I
like to keep my options open
before I decide, I guess.

JOHN
Got any favorites picked out yet?

Leah motions to the book she has in her hand.

LEAH

I think this one. And I'm not sure
between these two.

Leah grabs two other books from the pile.

John grabs them both and looks at them.

JOHN

This one.

John hands one of the books to Leah and she reaches to grab
it.

Their hands briefly touch and Leah quickly grabs the book,
pulling her hand away, blushing even more.

LEAH

Sorry. I wasn't trying to grope
you or anything.

John chuckles.

JOHN

Are you always this nervous and
shy?

LEAH

Yes. No. I don't know. I don't
have a lot of friends so I spend a
lot of time alone.

JOHN

And you come here.

LEAH

I don't come here all the time or
anything. I'm not a total nerd.
It's just someplace to go that's
better than home.

John begins scooping up the books on the ground.

JOHN

I'll give you a hand putting these
away.

John walks away, disappearing behind some shelves.

Leah quickly gets to her feet.

LEAH

Wait. I'll come with you.

Leah walks the same direction John did, rounding the shelves.

John is nowhere to be seen.

LEAH
Where'd you go?

The library is deathly quiet.

LEAH
John?

Her response comes in the form of a flute being played.

It's an all-too familiar tune.

Leah begins weaving through the bookshelves, which have quickly turned into a maze-like setup.

With every step she takes, the library changes, becoming older and larger the farther she weaves in and out of the bookshelves.

LEAH
Hello? Anyone there?

The flute continues to play, and Leah continues heading to the direction of the noise.

LEAH
Peter, is that you?

As she rounds another corner, she finds herself in the center of the library, a large open area.

Peter the Faun sits in the center on a golden stool, playing his flute.

He sees Leah and stops playing, smiling.

PETER THE FAUN
I was beginning to worry the books
had swallowed you up.

LEAH
What are you doing here?

PETER THE FAUN
I should be asking you that very
thing. You're in my world, Leah.

Leah looks around and then returns her gaze to Peter the Faun.

LEAH
This isn't real, is it?

PETER THE FAUN
That depends on your perception of reality, doesn't it? It's as real as your mind makes it.

Peter the Faun smiles and resumes playing his flute.

Leah gets closer to him, sitting down in front of him.

LEAH
Is there something wrong with me?

Peter the Faun stops playing and looks at Leah.

PETER THE FAUN
How do you feel?

LEAH
Peaceful.

PETER THE FAUN
Have you got a fever?

LEAH
I don't believe so.

Peter the Faun shrugs.

PETER THE FAUN
Then I wouldn't say there's anything wrong with you.

LEAH
How long can I stay?

PETER THE FAUN
It's time for you to leave now, Leah.

LEAH
What? Why? I don't want to go.

PETER THE FAUN
I don't make the rules. Wake up. It's time to go.

LIBRARY - NIGHT

Leah suddenly snaps up at a desk in the library, fully awake.

The Librarian stands beside her.

LIBRARIAN
Did you hear me, young lady?

Leah looks at the Librarian, confused.

LEAH
What? I'm sorry.

LIBRARIAN
I said it's time for you to go.
We're closing.

Leah quickly stands up, fumbling for the books on the table in front of her.

LEAH
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to keep
you waiting.

In her hurry, Leah drops some of the books and quickly ducks down to grab them.

LEAH
I'm sorry. I'm not trying to make
a mess.

The Librarian puts a kind hand on Leah's shoulder.

LIBRARIAN
It's quite all right, dear. No
need to be so nervous. Come on,
I'll check these out for you.

The Librarian grabs a couple of the books from Leah and with a smile, leads her up front to check them out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leah enters her house and slowly makes her way through the living room, trying to create the least amount of noise possible.

NANCY (O.S.)
You're late! Dinner's on the
table!

With a groan, Leah sets her books down on the coffee table and makes her way to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leah enters the kitchen and joins Matt and Nancy at the table who are already halfway through their meals.

In front of Matt sits two empty beer cans. He cracks open a third.

MATT

Why the hell are you so late?
Where have you been?

LEAH

I was at the library.

MATT

Doing what?

LEAH

Reading.

Matt reaches across the table and smacks Leah across the head.

She immediately looks down at the floor, blinking away tears.

MATT

Don't be such a smart ass.

NANCY

I'm sure that's exactly what she
was doing, Matt. She loves to
read.

Matt glares at Nancy in warning, and she returns her complete attention to her food.

Matt then continues eating.

MATT

We of course know she wasn't
meeting a boy though, don't we?
What dumb ass would go after
something like that.

That stings Leah.

Nancy looks over to her daughter.

NANCY
Aren't you going to eat something,
hunny?

LEAH
I'm not hungry.

Matt grabs the last piece of meat from the tray and puts it on his plate.

MATT
Good. More for me.

Leah glances over to her mother.

LEAH
May I be excused?

MATT
What for? Don't you enjoy our
company?

Leah looks back down at the floor.

MATT
I asked you a question, retard.

Leah continues to sit there quietly.

MATT
So, the school called today. Bet
you can guess why, Leah.

Leah looks over to her mother, her eyes wide with fear.

MATT
Don't look at her. She's not going
to help you. Apparently they're
concerned about the conditions of
your home life.

NANCY
That's not exactly what they
said...

MATT
That's pretty much what they said.
What kind of bullshit are you
feeding these people, Leah? Don't
you get enough attention? Gotta
stir up some shit to get some
more? Need some sympathy?

LEAH
I didn't do anything.

NANCY
They just said that you've been
distracted in class lately and
just wanted to check and make sure
everything was okay.

Matt slams his hand down on the table to silence Nancy.

MATT
Don't sugarcoat this, Nancy. She's
telling lies about us. About me.

Matt looks at Leah, fire burning behind his eyes. He's
fuming.

Leah looks at him, terrified.

LEAH
I haven't said anything to anyone.
I swear to God!

MATT
It's all right. We're going to
handle this later. I'll really
give you something to tell them.

NANCY
Matt, don't. It was nothing.

Matt grabs Nancy's plate and slings it across the kitchen,
shattering it.

MATT
I told you to shut your mouth. Now
clean it up.

Nancy gets up and begins to pick up the broken pieces of
glass.

Matt looks at Leah, smiling.

MATT
You go on up to your room. Enjoy
yourself while you can. I'll be up
after I finish eating to handle
this little situation.

Leah's lip begins to tremble and she gets up, leaving the
kitchen.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Leah dashes into her room, slamming the door behind her and goes to lock the door.

It's gone.

LEAH

Damn it.

Leah frantically looks around her room for something to barricade the door with, tears flowing down her face.

There's nothing that will help.

As she continues to look around, something catches her eyes.

The window!

She rushes over to the window and opens it.

She looks back towards her bedroom door and then begins to climb out.

Her bedroom door bursts open and Matt charges in.

MATT

Going somewhere?!

Matt quickly crosses the room and grabs Leah, pulling her back inside.

She screams.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Leah sits in the sand on the beach, once again in her lavender dress.

She looks out to the emerald green sea, the sun resting on the horizon, casting a brilliant blaze of orange and yellow onto the purple sky.

Countless sail boats fill the water with a variety of differently shaped and colored sails.

Multi-colored seagulls fly all around, squawking gently.

Peter the Faun stands next to Leah, placing his hand on her shoulder.

PETER THE FAUN

You just can't stay away, can you?

LEAH

I have no choice, it seems. It's where my mind takes me. It must be where I'm meant to be.

PETER THE FAUN

Careful, you may get stuck here.

LEAH

Would that be such a bad thing?

PETER THE FAUN

I don't know. You tell me.

Leah looks at Peter the Faun and smiles. She returns her eyes to the sea in front of her.

LEAH

I don't think so. It's so beautiful here. It doesn't hurt.

PETER THE FAUN

Don't be fooled, Leah. The darkness you hold inside you can easily pierce this thin veil of serenity in your mind. It can't always be a retreat.

LEAH

But right now, it is. That's all that matters to me. Are there others here?

PETER THE FAUN

You know the answers better than I, Leah.

LEAH

Can I meet them?

PETER THE FAUN

When you are ready, you will.

LEAH

You're not very helpful. You always seem to be speaking in circles.

PETER THE FAUN

I'm simply a guide of sorts
created by your mind. I don't hold
all of the answers. If I talk in
circles, it's because you're not
ready for all the answers. Only
you can unlock your own secrets.

LEAH

That's an interesting way to look
at it.

PETER THE FAUN

It's the only way to look at it.

Leah continues to watch the boat on the sea, calming moving
across the water.

The sun hasn't moved.

LEAH

The sun doesn't move.

PETER THE FAUN

I hadn't noticed.

Leah looks at Peter the Faun.

LEAH

If this is all in my mind, don't I
have control over it?

PETER THE FAUN

Interesting question. Would you
like me to play you a song?

Leah smiles.

LEAH

Of course.

PETER THE FAUN

Excellent.

Peter the Faun raises his flute to his mouth and begins to
play a quiet, sad tune.

Leah closes her eyes, listening hard.

Tears slowly flow down Leah's face as the song comes to a
finish.

PETER THE FAUN
Apologies. I didn't mean to make
you cry.

Leah shakes her head.

LEAH
No, no. It was beautiful, Peter.

PETER THE FAUN
Shall we take a walk?

LEAH
I'd like that.

Peter the Faun offers his hand and Leah graciously takes it,
standing up.

The two begin to walk along the beach, the waves quietly
crashing beside them.

PETER THE FAUN
You know your visit must come to
an end soon.

LEAH
Why does it always seem so short?

PETER THE FAUN
You can only stay for just so long
each time. Otherwise your mind may
become confused.

LEAH
Confused how?

PETER THE FAUN
Confused in a way that you may
have a hard time separating your
dreams from reality.

LEAH
My guidance counselor said
something similar to me today.

Peter the Faun ignores that remark.

PETER THE FAUN
We will need your help one day.

LEAH
With what?

PETER THE FAUN
Against the darkness.

Leah looks around the sunny environment.

LEAH
I see nothing dark here.

PETER THE FAUN
It's there. Just beyond the
borders. Growing closer every day.

LEAH
And what happens then?

Peter the Faun stops walking.

PETER THE FAUN
This is as far as we go this time.

LEAH
What?

CRASH!

Leah turns to the sea and sees two sailboats crash into each other.

They slowly begin to sink.

LEAH
Oh, no. They're crashing! Come on,
we have to help them!

Leah turns to Peter the Faun, but he's gone.

CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!

Leah looks back to the sea.

All the boats are crashing into one another and sinking.

CRASH! CRASH!

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY

Leah awakens in her bed, her eye blackened.

Downstairs, Matt is screaming and throwing things around -
thus the source of the crash.

Leah groans and buries her head underneath her pillow.

LEAH

So much for sleeping in.

There's a knock on her door.

She tenses.

LEAH

What?

The door opens and Nancy steps in.

NANCY

It's me, sweetie.

Leah rolls over and looks at her mother, who crosses the room and sits down on the bed with her.

LEAH

What's he doing down there?

NANCY

He's just have one of his moments.
I guess one of his other workers
has been neglecting some of their
accounts so they're losing money.

LEAH

He does realize smashing
everything in sight accomplishes
nothing, right?

NANCY

Apparently not.

Leah examines her mother closely.

LEAH

You're awfully sober this morning.

Nancy looks at her daughter, unsure of what to say.

NANCY

Yes, well, I wanted to make sure
you were all right after last
night's episode.

LEAH

Because you certainly did nothing
to stop it.

Leah rolls back over in her bed, facing away from her mother.

NANCY

What could I have done?

LEAH

He's not my dad. He has no right
to put his hands on me.

NANCY

He just would have beat me, too.

LEAH

At least it would have showed you
cared for once.

Nancy sits there a moment, stung by Leah's words.

She stands up.

NANCY

I do care, whether you believe it
or not. I'm doing my best, you
know. You could help.

Nancy quickly leaves the room, her eyes welling up.

LEAH

You're the parent. You should be
taking care of me.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Nancy enters the kitchen and grabs her bottle of pills off
the window sill.

She pours herself an alcoholic drink and takes her pills
with it.

Matt enters the kitchen.

MATT

Waste no time getting trashed.

Nancy doesn't say anything.

Matt grabs a beer out of the fridge.

NANCY

Everything okay with work?

MATT

You're funny.

Nancy finishes her drink.

NANCY
Listen, about last night -

Matt shoots Nancy a look, stopping her mid-sentence.

MATT
You got something to say about
that, Nancy?

NANCY
It's just...I don't know. I guess
not.

MATT
Yeah. Didn't think so. Grow up.
Jesus.

Matt leaves the kitchen.

Nancy pours herself another drink.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY

Once again, Leah is painting.

However, this time she is moving much slower. She is taking
her time. Concentrating.

As the hours tick by and the paint runs out, she finally
steps back, looking at her work.

On the canvas is an elaborate castle scene.

She smiles.

LEAH
The perfect place to live.

Setting down her brush and taking off her apron, Leah
gathers up a notepad and leaves the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leah walks through the living room, heading for the front
door.

Matt and Nancy are sitting there, watching TV.

Nancy looks like a zombie, drunk and drugged out of her

mind.

Matt looks over to Leah.

MATT

And where do we think we're going?

LEAH

The park.

MATT

What for?

LEAH

Just something to do. Somewhere to go.

MATT

You don't like being home with your mother and me?

LEAH

It's the weekend. Normal kids go out on weekends.

MATT

You're not normal. You don't even have any friends. You spend all your time in your room painting your little fairy pictures and when you're not doing that, you're reading.

Leah looks to the ground, unsure of what to say.

LEAH

I'll be home by dark.

MATT

What makes you think I'm going to let you go?

LEAH

I was telling my mother. Not you, Matt.

NANCY

GO. I don't care what you do.

Matt looks over to Nancy, irritated.

MATT

After the shit she pulled
yesterday, you're going to let her
go out?

NANCY

She's just a kid. She needs a
life. At least someone in this
house should be happy.

MATT

Have another drink.

Seeing the opportunity, Leah quickly exits the house.

MATT

You're not back by dark, you
better stay gone, cause your ass
will be toast!

EXT. PARK - DAY

Leah sits on the park bench, sketch pad on her lap, drawing
the lake scene in front of her.

Gorgeous blossoming trees surround the lake, their stray
leaves scattering in the wind.

As Leah sketches, a HOBO approaches her.

HOBO

Can you spare any change?

Leah looks up at the Hobo.

LEAH

I'm sorry, I don't have anything
on me at all. I don't even have a
job.

HOBO

That's all right. That's quite all
right. Do you mind if I sit with
you a minute?

LEAH

Please do.

Leah moves her pack out of the way and the Hobo sits down
beside her.

HOBO
What are you working on?

LEAH
Just doing some doodling.

HOBO
Can I take a look?

LEAH
Sure.

Leah hands the Hobo the sketch pad and he looks at her drawing of the late.

HOBO
That's lovely.

LEAH
Thank you.

The Hobo continues going through the pages of the sketch book.

He hands it back to her.

HOBO
Those aren't just simple little doodles, young lady. You've got quite the talent. Don't go wasting it and throw it all away.

LEAH
You're very kind. Can I ask you something?

HOBO
Sure.

LEAH
How did you...you know. Why are you homeless?

The Hobo thinks for a moment, trying to piece together the right words to say.

HOBO
I was foolish, I guess. At one point in my life I had it all. House. Car. A lovely wife. The head of a large business. Then I got greedy and stupid and it all came crashing down around me.

LEAH

How long has it been?

HOBO

Three years. In a way I'm grateful, I suppose. It taught me a lot about myself and how precious life really can be. I take nothing for granted now.

LEAH

Do you think you'll ever bounce back?

HOBO

No. No, it's too late for me. I had my time to shine. I've accepted my fate. I'm content living out the rest of my days like this. People see me and think, "I'll never let that happen to myself." It makes me feel good in a way that I can affect people like that.

LEAH

I guess that's good.

HOBO

No matter how tough life gets, it's important not to give up. You can make anything positive. Just remember that there's always someone worse off than you.

With that, the Hobo stands up.

HOBO

I'll be on my way now, I think. Thanks for the chat, young lady. You've quite the gift. Don't be afraid to pursue that. Don't take no for an answer.

LEAH

Best of luck to you, sir.

With a wink, the Hobo turns and walks away.

Leah returns to her sketch pad and continues drawing.

As she continues drawing, something catches her eye across the lake.

In the distance, by one of the trees, she sees Peter the Faun.

He puts his flute to his mouth and starts to play, the music lightly carrying over across the lake to her.

She slowly stands up, stunned.

LEAH

Wake up, Leah. You're dreaming.
You fell asleep on the bench.

Leah pinches herself, but she doesn't wake.

The music from Peter the Faun's flute gets louder.

Leah quickly gather up her stuff and begins to make her way around the lake to the other side.

As she gets closer, the music gets louder.

She finally reaches the tree and the music stops.

LEAH

Peter?

Leah rounds the tree -

Only to find John sitting there, listening to his I-Pod.

He looks up at her, surprised, and pulls out his earbuds.

JOHN

I'm sorry, what? I couldn't hear
you.

Leah immediately blushes.

LEAH

Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you were
someone else.

JOHN

Oh, that's okay.

Leah quickly turns to leave.

JOHN

Hey, you're Leah, aren't you?

Leah slowly turns back around to face John, avoiding eye contact.

LEAH

How do you know my name?

JOHN

I've seen your artwork around the school. Plus we have Geometry together, remember?

LEAH

Oh, yeah. Right. Duh.

JOHN

Your work is really good.

Leah blushes even more.

LEAH

Thanks. Your football is really good. Er, I mean you play well.

Leah silently curses herself for sounding stupid.

JOHN

Thanks, but it's really nothing special. Anyone can play football. Not a lot of people can be an artist.

LEAH

I'm not really an artist.

JOHN

Well I disagree. What brings you out here? Meeting your boyfriend?

LEAH

No, I don't have one of those. I just come out here to draw and get out of the house, you know?

JOHN

Yeah, I know what you mean. You maybe want to take a walk?

Leah's face turns positively crimson and she smiles a bit, toothy smile.

She looks up at John, still smiling, but the smile slowly fades.

Something behind him catches her eye.

On the other side of the lake, standing on the top of one of

the trees is a large BIRD-LIKE MAN - ASHRAH - flapping his wings.

JOHN

What?

John turns around to see what Leah is looking at.

JOHN

What are you looking at?

John sees nothing on the other side of the lake, just trees and benches.

LEAH

You don't see it?

JOHN

See what?

LEAH

I'm sorry, I have to go.

Leah quickly walks away.

JOHN

Wait, what about our walk?

LEAH

I'm sorry!

Leah continues walking away, not looking back.

John watches her a moment and then looks back over the lake, trying to see what she says.

There's nothing.

JOHN

What the hell?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leah rushes through the front door, slamming it behind her and races up the stairs.

Matt watches her as she goes.

MATT

Quit slamming the doors! You got home just in the nick of time!

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY

Leah enters her room and closes the door.

She tosses her bag down on her bag, grabs a stack of sketch papers and begins rifling through them.

She freezes as she reaches one.

She slowly brings it closer, examining it.

On the page is a charcoal sketch of a large, black bird-man, amidst a sky filled with crows.

She slowly sets the paper down and sits on her bed, staring blankly across the room.

NANCY (O.S.)
Dinner is almost ready!

MATT (O.S.)
Get your ass down here!

LEAH
I'm not hungry!

MATT (O.S.)
I'm not interested! Let's go!

With a sigh, Leah gets up from her bed.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leah begrudgingly joins Matt and Nancy at the table.

MATT
Home just in time. Cutting it awful close, aren't we, Leah?

LEAH
I guess.

MATT
Don't test my limits.

LEAH
I'm not trying to.

MATT
Good. Now, isn't this a nice family dinner?

Nancy takes out her bottle of pills and begins to open it, a glass of wine in front of her.

Leah quickly snatches the bottle out of Nancy's hands.

NANCY

What are you doing?

LEAH

What are YOU doing? How long are you planning on taking these? And with alcohol? Are you trying to kill yourself?

NANCY

Give them back, Leah. Right now.

LEAH

No.

NANCY

Have you forgotten that I am still your mother?

LEAH

Start acting like it, then! Just once I'd like to see you sober.

MATT

Give Nancy back her pills.

Leah glares at Matt and sees the anger building in his eyes.

LEAH

Screw you.

Without hesitation, Matt swings.

Leah ducks out of the way and quickly gets up from the table, running through the house, popping pills the entire way.

Matt and Nancy get up and run after her.

NANCY

Don't take those! They'll hurt you, baby!

LEAH

Let's see how you like it!

Leah rushes up the stairs, Matt and Nancy charging after her.

MATT

Get back here, you little bitch!

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Leah bursts into her room, slamming the door behind her - not that it will do much good.

She finishes the bottle before Matt and Nancy break in.

Leah shakes the empty bottle in front of them.

LEAH

Too late.

Matt smacks her hard across the face, laying her out across the floor.

Nancy rush to Leah's side, gripping her unconscious daughter's hand.

NANCY

Oh, baby. Why did you do this to yourself?

Nancy turns back to Matt.

NANCY

Call the paramedics!

MATT

She's fine. I didn't hit her that hard.

NANCY

She just took an overdose of my medication you idiot! She needs the hospital!

MATT

It's her own fault. I'm not wasting my money on an ambulance ride.

NANCY

Then get the car ready and we'll take her!

MATT

She's your daughter. You do it, you drunken whore.

With that, Matt leaves the bedroom.

Nancy kisses the top of her daughter's head.

NANCY

Hold on, sweetie. I'm going to
take care of you.

EXT. FIELD OF PAPER FLOWERS - DAY

Leah once again wakes up in the field of paper flowers, in her lavender dress.

She looks around, smiling.

The wind rustles the flowers and she closes her eyes, listening. She is at peace.

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)

Back once more, I see.

Leah opens her eyes to see Peter the Faun standing in front of her, his arms crossed.

LEAH

I plan on staying this time.

PETER THE FAUN

You haven't got much choice now,
have you? At least, not yet.

LEAH

What do you mean?

PETER THE FAUN

In due time, Leah. In due time.
We've got a long journey ahead of
us. Best get moving.

LEAH

I'm content where I am, if you
please.

Peter the Faun extends his hand.

PETER THE FAUN

If YOU please, there's more to see
and much to do.

Frowning, Leah takes Peter the Faun's hand and stands up.

The two begin walking through the field.

LEAH
Where are we going?

PETER THE FAUN
To the heart of it all.

LEAH
To do what?

PETER THE FAUN
To make your choice.

LEAH
And that would be?

PETER THE FAUN
I wouldn't know, would I? The
choice is yours, after all. I
can't pretend to know the choice
you're going to make when the time
comes for you to choose.

LEAH
You have an interesting way of
speaking, Peter.

PETER THE FAUN
Yes, you do.

Leah leans down and picks a flower from the ground, looking
at it in wonder.

She smells it, a look of wonder on her face.

LEAH
It smells so good!

PETER THE FAUN
Did you want it to smell bad?

LEAH
Well, no. I just didn't expect it
to smell of anything at all.

PETER THE FAUN
Interesting.

Leah places the flower in her hair.

LEAH
Are we going to meet others?

PETER THE FAUN

I expect we certainly will. If you want to, that is.

LEAH

Again with your riddles. You know I don't fully understand all of this yet, don't you?

PETER THE FAUN

All in good time, dear Leah. All in good time.

Peter the Faun smiles and winks at Leah.

The two reach the edge of the field, a large forest standing before them.

LEAH

Through here?

Peter the Faun gently squeezes Leah's hand.

PETER THE FAUN

This is the Enchanted Forest. Do not be frightened.

LEAH

I'm not. Shall we go in?

PETER THE FAUN

We shall.

The two step into the forest.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy returns to Leah's room and leans down to try and pick her up.

She struggles and struggles but she just doesn't have the strength, nor the coordination, to pick up her daughter off the floor.

She cries in frustration.

NANCY

Matt! I can't pick her up! I need your help!

MATT (O.S.)

Oh, for Christ's sake!

Matt thunders up the stairs and enters the room, shoving Nancy out of the way.

MATT

Move.

Matt scoops up Leah and leaves the room with her.

MATT

Get off the floor!

Nancy composes herself and gets to her feet, following Matt.

EXT. LEAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Matt throws Leah in the back seat of the car, closing the door.

Nancy stumbles out of the house, fumbling with her car keys.

NANCY

Matt, I really don't think I'm able to drive.

MATT

That's your problem, isn't it?

NANCY

That's not fair!

Matt gets right in Nancy's face.

MATT

I'm not the one that forces you to get plastered every day. If she dies it's on you. I did my part. Grow up and be a parent.

Matt shoves past Nancy and goes back inside, slamming the door behind him.

NANCY

Why don't you try being a real man you piece of shit! If it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be like this and she wouldn't have done this! It's all your fault!

NEIGHBORS standing outside watch Nancy's tirade.

She turns around, seeing them.

NANCY

And what do you all think you're
looking at?!

Nancy gets in the car, starts the engine, and drives off.

EXT. ENCHANTED FOREST - DAY

Leah and Peter the Faun step through the forest.

It's a lush explosion of life - Huge trees taller than
skyscrapers. Countless plants and flowers, all accented by
the bright powerful rays of the sun which beam through the
canopy beautifully.

Birds and frogs sing proudly and dart around. In the
distance comes the sound of running water.

LEAH

It's gorgeous here.

PETER THE FAUN

Were you expecting anything less?

LEAH

Yes. I mean, no. Well, I don't
know, really.

PETER THE FAUN

Slow down, you're confusing
yourself.

LEAH

There's just so much here!

Leah looks around in amazement.

Giant mushrooms loom all around in shades of red and
turquoise.

LEAH

Do we have to leave here?

PETER THE FAUN

Oh, yes. There is much for us to
do and the journey ahead is still
quite long.

LEAH

Are you going to start explaining
yourself or what?

PETER THE FAUN

Explain myself? What is there to explain about myself that you don't already know? I am Peter the Faun and I am your friend. What else is there?

LEAH

I meant about why I'm here.

PETER THE FAUN

Oh, you know that answer much better than I do.

Leah stops walking, frowning at Peter the Faun.

Peter the Faun stops walking and faces Leah, shrugging his shoulders.

LEAH

You're avoiding and I don't like it.

PETER THE FAUN

Perhaps you'll like this.

Peter the Faun takes up his flute and begins to play a tune.

Leah listens, smiling at the sweet notes Peter the Faun is playing.

Suddenly, a huge grouping of butterflies of all shapes, sizes and colors come dancing around Leah and Peter the Faun.

Leah begins to laugh, extending her arms as the butterflies dance around and perch themselves on her.

Peter the Faun continues to play whilst smiling himself.

Suddenly, a long, slimy red tongue whips through the air, snatching one of the butterflies.

LEAH

Hey!

The tongue whips back into the mouth of a large yellow toad with black spots.

The toad - FRANCIS - burps.

The butterflies scatter.

FRANCIS
Sorry 'bout tha'.

Peter the Faun looks over to Francis, shaking his head.

PETER THE FAUN
Uncalled for, Francis.

FRANCIS
Couldn't help meself. All in the
instincts, dontcha know.

LEAH
Spit it back out!

FRANCIS
I can't.

LEAH
Can!

FRANCIS
Can't!

Leah gets right in front of Francis.

LEAH
Open your mouth.

Francis purses his lips tightly, shaking his head.

LEAH
Open.

Francis slowly takes a step back, but quicker than expected, Leah shoves her hand inside Francis' mouth and pulls out his long, slimy tongue.

The butterfly quickly flies out and away.

Leah releases Francis' tongue.

FRANCIS
But I'm so hungry!

PETER THE FAUN
We don't eat our friends, Francis.

FRANCIS
Wha' am I s'pose ter eat, then?

LEAH
Plants.

Francis scoffs at Leah and turns his attention to Peter the Faun.

FRANCIS
Wha' she doin' here, anyway?

LEAH
Do you know who I am?

FRANCIS
Aye. We all do.

Francis returns his attention to Peter the Faun.

FRANCIS
She goin' ter fix our lil' problem?

PETER THE FAUN
I imagine so, should she so desire.

LEAH
I would appreciate it if you guys wouldn't talk about me like I'm not standing right here.

FRANCIS
Would ya like some company to the edge o' the forest? Things've got a bit dodgy 'round these parts lately. Might get lost and find yerselves on the wrong side o' the bark, if ya know what I mean. I'd hate for somethin' ter happen ter the wee lass.

LEAH
Again, still standing right here.

Peter the Faun turns his attention to Leah.

PETER THE FAUN
Apologies, my dear. Leah, this is Francis, King of the Toads in this forest.

FRANCIS
Not like ya need a proper introduction. Already saw it fit ter cram yer hand in me mouth. Poor manners these humans have nowadays.

LEAH
You were eating the butterfly!

FRANCIS
And I'll do it again as soon as
yer not lookin'!

LEAH
You won't!

FRANCIS
I will!

LEAH
Won't!

Peter the Faun raises his hands the interject.

PETER THE FAUN
If I make a suggestion. We've got
a lot of ground to cover and the
more time you two waste with your
petty bickering, the more the
darkness spreads.

FRANCIS
(Quietly under his
breath)
Will.

LEAH
I'm not going anywhere with him
unless he promises not to eat
anything more.

FRANCIS
Well then I s'pose yer not gettin'
very far then, are ya?

Peter the Faun kicks Francis' side and he grunts.

Francis looks up at Peter the Faun in anger.

FRANCIS
Oi! You kicked me!

PETER THE FAUN
Stop being stubborn, Francis.

FRANCIS
Oh, fine!

LEAH

Shake on it.

Leah extends her hand.

After rolling his eyes and sighing, Francis extends his tongue and grips Leah's hand with it, shaking.

LEAH

Ew!

Leah wipes the slime off on her dress.

FRANCIS

Oh, ya didn't have any problem
when ya were rippin' it out o' me
mouth!

PETER THE FAUN

Stop!

FRANCIS

This way.

Francis hops off.

Leah and Peter the Faun follow him.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Nancy runs inside the hospital, looking around frantically.

NANCY

I need help! My daughter is out in
the car! She took a lot of pills!
I can't carry her! Please, someone
help get her!

An ORDERLY rushes over to her.

ORDERLY

Where is she, ma'am?

NANCY

Right out here in my car!

The Orderly rushes outside.

Nancy stumbles a bit, clutching her head and groaning.

A NURSE rushes over to Nancy.

NANCY

I'm fine. Just help my daughter.

The Orderly enters the hospital with Leah in his arms.

ORDERLY

I need a stretcher, here!

The Nurse runs around the corner and returns a moment later with one.

The Orderly sets Leah down on it and the Nurse begins pushing it back towards the emergency room.

Nancy struggles to keep the pace.

NURSE

What did she take?

Nancy struggles to answer the question, fighting to stay conscious herself.

NURSE

You need to stay with me so I can help her! What did she take?

NANCY

Oxycodone.

The pushes the stretcher into an operating room.

Nancy tries to answer but DR. SAMSON steps through the doors to stop her.

DR. SAMSON

I know you're worried but you can't be back here. I'm Dr. Samson, I'll be taking care of your daughter. Have a seat out in the lobby and let us work.

Dr. Samson returns to the operating room, letting the doors close behind him.

Nancy drops to her knees, breathing heavily, trying to stay alert.

EXT. ENCHANTED FOREST - DAY

Thinking that the other two aren't looking, Francis shoots out his tongue, snagging a dragonfly.

LEAH
Hey!

FRANCIS
Wha'?

LEAH
I saw that! We had an agreement!

FRANCIS
You can take yer agreement and
shove it straight up yer -

A HUGE BIRD swoops down suddenly, scooping up Francis and carries him off.

PETER THE FAUN
Francis!

LEAH
Let him go!

The bird climbs high up into the air, coming to rest high above the canopy atop a huge, thick tree that is covered with mushrooms growing along its trunk.

PETER THE FAUN
We have to save him! Come on!

Leah and Peter the Faun run through the forest until they reach the huge tree.

They look up. It seems to climb forever.

LEAH
Now what?

PETER THE FAUN
You have to get up there!

LEAH
Me? What about you?

Peter the Faun looks down at his hooves, simply shrugging.

PETER THE FAUN
You're having a laugh, right?

Leah once again looks up at the towering tree.

LEAH
It's so high! How am I supposed to
get up there?

PETER THE FAUN

Climb.

LEAH

There are no limbs to grab onto.

Peter the Faun touches one of the mushrooms.

PETER THE FAUN

These wind around the entire tree.
They go all the way up.

LEAH

They won't hold my weight.

PETER THE FAUN

They will if you believe they
will.

Leah just sort of looks at Peter the Faun, dumbfounded.

PETER THE FAUN

You can do it. Believe in
yourself. You are stronger than
you know.

With a sigh, Leah approaches the trunk and grips a mushroom.

Closing her eyes, she lifts herself up - and the mushroom
holds.

PETER THE FAUN

I told you. Everything you ever
need is inside you, Leah! Now
climb! Save Francis before it's
too late!

LEAH

What about the bird?

PETER THE FAUN

I'll distract her!

Determined, Leah begins the long climb to the top.

EXT. TREE TOP - DAY

The top of the tree is flat. There are no branches. No
leaves. Just a large bird nest.

Francis cowers between two large speckled bird eggs as the
large bird circles above, cawing.

FRANCIS

Don't eat me. Don't eat me. Don't
eat me.

The sound of Peter the Faun's flute echoes through the air.

The large bird takes off towards the sound.

EXT. ENCHANTED FOREST - DAY

Peter the Faun runs through the forest, playing an annoying
tune.

The large bird flies over head, swerving in and out of the
trees, chasing him.

It swoops down, trying to snatch him up with its talons.

Peter the Faun ducks out of the way.

EXT. TREE TOP - DAY

Leah pulls herself up to the top of the tree and onto the
large nest, gasping for air.

FRANCIS

Finally! I was nearly bird food,
doncha know!

LEAH

How about a, "Nice to see you?
Thanks for saving my life?"

FRANCIS

Can't be arsed, dearie. Can't be
arsed. Let's go!

Leah turns around and Francis pounces onto her back. She
stagger.

LEAH

What are you doing?

FRANCIS

I can't climb down meself!

LEAH

You're a frog!

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)

She's coming back! Hurry!

FRANCIS
It's yer fault!

LEAH
How?!

The large bird appears, squawking.

Leah stumbles back from fright, bumping into one of the large eggs.

It rolls to the edge of the nest and then falls.

With a high pitched roar, the large bird charges Leah, slamming into her, knocking her off the top of the tree, tumbling to the earth far below.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Leah lays in a hospital bed, her eyes slowly open.

Nancy sits in a chair beside the bed, holding her hand.

Leah looks around, confused.

LEAH
(groggy)
Where am I?

NANCY
The hospital, sweetie.

Leah rubs her eyes with a groan.

LEAH
Why couldn't you just let me sleep?

NANCY
No mother could.

LEAH
When did you decide to take an interest in being my mother again? Is it because I used up all your pills?

This cuts Nancy, but she pushes through it.

NANCY
I know I haven't been the best mother lately -

LEAH

I can't even remember the last time we did something together. The last time you didn't have a drink in your hand or pills in your mouth.

NANCY

I remember.

Leah looks at her mother, surprised - waiting for an explanation.

NANCY

The fair was in town a few years ago. I remember you had gotten sick. It was the last weekend it was going to be there and you insisted you had to go. I told you no so many times but you cried and pouted and insisted - so I took you. Matt met us there. Do you remember?

LEAH

Before he moved in with us and showed us what he really is.

NANCY

We were there maybe an hour. It was chilly out. You kept coughing and sneezing. I knew you were miserable and running a fever - but you insisted you were having a great time.

LEAH

Of course I was. I was at the fair.

NANCY

You wanted a gold fish. The three of us stood there for an hour trying to sink a ball into one of those little bowls. When Matt finally got one in, you fell to the ground from your fever and we had to take you home. But you got your fish.

LEAH

Probably the only decent thing he's ever done for me.

Nancy takes Leah by the hand.

NANCY

I do love you, Leah. Very much. I never want to see you hurt. I never want you to end up like me. Afraid and pathetic and - - useless.

LEAH

You don't have to be that way. We can leave. Tonight. We can just get in the car and drive far away, just you and me. It'll be like it was.

A tear steams down Nancy's face.

NANCY

We'd never make it. This is where I have to stay. I made my choices and I'm okay with that. But you promise me something.

LEAH

What?

NANCY

As soon as you can, you get away. Run as far and fast as you can. Don't look back.

LEAH

I'll take you with me.

NANCY

I can't leave Matt. Through everything, I do love him.

LEAH

How can you love something like that?

Nancy leans over her daughter and kisses her on the forehead.

NANCY

You need to rest. I'll be right here.

With a heavy sigh, Leah nods her head and closes her eyes, drifting away.

TIME LAPSE

It's much later in the night.

Leah once again opens her eyes. She looks over to Nancy - asleep.

From somewhere in the hospital, Leah hears the faint sound of a flute being played. She perks her ears, listening intently.

She looks out into the hallway.

Ashrah glides past the door, glancing into her room before moving on.

Leah slowly sits up in bed.

LEAH
(whispered)
Hello?

Leah pulls the IV out of her arms and slowly climbs out of bed, stumbling as she tries to find her balance, still groggy and light-headed.

She steps out into the hall to see a trail of black feathers skittled down the hall. She follows them.

LEAH
(whispered)
Is someone here?

Leah continues stumbling down the hallway, gripping the wall for extra support.

The music from the flute grows louder the further she goes.

She stops dead as she rounds the corner - Ashrah is floating above a young CHILD, flapping his wings as the child sleeps.

LEAH
Who are you? What do you want?

Ashrah turns and looks at her, his red eyes burning deep into her soul.

Fear grips Leah and she slowly begins to back up - right into Dr. Samson.

DR. SAMSON

What are you doing out of bed?

Leah turns around and faces the doc, startled.

LEAH

Don't you see -

Leah turns to point to the Child sleeping in the bed, but there's no Ashrah.

DR. SAMSON

You need to be resting, Leah.
Come, let me help you back to your
room.

LEAH

No, you don't understand. It was
right there. You didn't see it?

DR. SAMSON

You're just a little out of you.
Some more rest and you'll be fine.

LEAH

(quietly)

He was there again. I know he was.

INT. NANCY'S CAR - DAY

It is now morning and Nancy and Leah are heading back home.

NANCY

Don't ever try anything like this
again, Leah. You're too important
to just throw yourself away on
pills.

LEAH

I could say the same to you.

NANCY

I need them. I have a prescription
for them.

LEAH

Right. Got yourself topped off
while you were at the hospital,
did you?

Nancy looks at her daughter.

LEAH

A whole night sober. You must really be feeling it, huh?

NANCY

Can't we just have a nice quiet ride together?

LEAH

Can't you just stop taking them?

NANCY

You know how I hurt when I don't have them.

LEAH

It's called addiction. They have classes for it. Maybe you should look into them.

NANCY

Maybe you should remember your place, Leah. I get it, you're concerned. I'm an adult. I'm your mother. You do as I say, not as I do. Period.

LEAH

Moodiness is kicking in, I see.

NANCY

Hush.

The two sit in silence for a few moments. Leah is clearly angry. The silence doesn't last long.

LEAH

I thought maybe this would have woken you up. I guess not.

NANCY

You don't get to do that.

LEAH

Do what?

NANCY

What you're trying to do. Just no. Stop.

LEAH

'kay.

The silence continues.

NANCY
School tomorrow.

LEAH
'kay.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leah and Nancy step inside the house.

Matt looks up from the couch at them, a beer in his hand.

MATT
Hey! The suicidal pill-popper
returns! How'd it feel to be your
mother for a day?

Leah just glares at Matt, who begins to chuckle.

MATT
Did you really need MORE
attention, Leah?

LEAH
No.

MATT
So you really were trying to kill
yourself? How sweet. And pathetic.

LEAH
I'm going to sleep.

Leah begins to climb up the stairs.

MATT
Next time try using a razor blade!
It's a more sure-fire way to get
the job done!

Nancy glares at Matt.

MATT
What? If she hates her life so
much, who am I to stop her from
tapping out? I'm being
"supportive."

NANCY
Whatever, Matt.

Nancy storms past Matt and heads to the kitchen.

Matt chuckles yet again.

MATT

That's right! Wouldn't want to miss a dose! Maybe I'll get lucky and you'll both end up offing yourselves.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Leah sits in class, doodling on her paper.

She looks across the room to see James looking back at her.

Their eyes meet. He smiles. She blushes, looks away.

The phone in the class rings and the Teacher answers it.

TEACHER

Leah, Mr. Powell in the guidance office wants to see you.

LEAH

Should I take my stuff with me?

TEACHER

You might as well.

Leah scoops up her stuff and exits the classroom.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, GUIDANCE OFFICE - DAY

Leah steps in the doorway of Mr. Powell's office and knocks.

He looks up from his desk with a smile, motioning for her to enter.

MR. POWELL

Come on in, Leah. Close the door behind you, if you would.

Leah closes the door behind her and sits across from Mr. Powell, who maintains his smile.

MR. POWELL

So, how are you doing?

LEAH

I'm fine.

MR. POWELL
Anything going on?

Leah shrugs, shaking her head.

Mr. Powell sighs, finally losing the smile.

MR. POWELL
Look, I'm sure you already know
why I've called you down here,
Leah. I would appreciate it if you
would just level with me. I just
want to listen to what you have to
say. It's my job to follow up on
these kinds of things.

LEAH
What kinds of things?

MR. POWELL
Your hospital visit.

Leah looks down at the floor.

MR. POWELL
You want to talk about it at all?

LEAH
What's there to say?

MR. POWELL
There's plenty to say. The
question is whether or not you
want to say anything at all.

Leah shrugs again, not looking up at Mr. Powell.

MR. POWELL
If you don't want to talk to me, I
can set it up so that there's
someone you can talk to. I have
friends in the field...but you
have to talk, Leah. Someone needs
to determine if -

LEAH
If I'm crazy?

MR. POWELL
No! No, of course not, sweetie.
That's not it at all. We just all
want to know if you're going to
try to hurt yourself again. Maybe
you might need some more serious
(MORE)

MR. POWELL (cont'd)
help. We just want what's best for
you - to make sure you're all
right.

Leah looks up at Mr. Powell finally.

LEAH
Really? Since when has that
mattered to anyone?

Mr. Powell leans forward, listening intently.

MR. POWELL
Do you really feel like nobody
cares about you?

LEAH
It doesn't bother me. I do my
thing. I have my painting. And my
dreams. God, do I dream. I dream
some really crazy stuff. I have an
entire world in my head. You know
the best part about it? I'm wanted
there. I'm content there. It's
peaceful. I don't have to worry
about where the next blow is going
to come from or how I'm going to
be made fun of that day. I think
of my mother as sober and I don't
fret over whether or not she's
going to make herself comatose.

MR. POWELL
Is that why you took those pills,
to prove a point?

LEAH
I guess. Not like it did much
good. She's right back to popping
them like candy. For the brief
time I was in the hospital though,
she was almost how she used to be.

MR. POWELL
How did she used to be?

LEAH
She used to be my mother.

Tears stream down Leah's face and she takes a moment to compose herself.

Mr. Powell offers her a tissue, but she declines.

LEAH

I'm fine.

MR. POWELL

Tell me about this dream world.

LEAH

It's nothing. Silly. Every kid has this sort of thing in their mind. I know I'm a bit old for it, but it's all I can do to keep going.

Mr. Powell nods his head, processing and collecting his thoughts.

MR. POWELL

How much time do you spend in your head?

LEAH

This really isn't important, Mr. Powell. I'm missing class. I'm fine, really.

MR. POWELL

You're not fine, Leah. Look at you. I hate to say it, and I don't want you to take it the wrong way, but you're a wreck. Your home environment is not healthy. I have to report it to somebody.

Fear encompasses Leah.

LEAH

No. No, you can't do that. If you bring someone to our house...he'll kill me, Mr. Powell. I know he will. He'll kill us both.

MR. POWELL

Then we need to get the police involved.

LEAH

I've only got two more years and then I can go. Just leave it alone. I shouldn't have said anything.

MR. POWELL

Are you working?

Leah shakes her head.

MR. POWELL

Where can you go without any money? Even college costs to stay on campus. A lot. You can't do it on your own. You need help and your home life clearly isn't fit to do it for you. Let me help you.

LEAH

I appreciate your concern, but just drop it. Please. I'm begging you. You don't know what it's like for me.

MR. POWELL

I'm trying to understand. Talk to me some more.

LEAH

No. I'm done talking. Write me a pass back to class, please.

Leah stands up and extends her hand for Mr. Powell to put a pass in it.

With a sigh, Mr. Powell writes the pass. He holds on to it.

MR. POWELL

It's completely your decision whether or not you talk to me. But I sincerely hope you do, Leah. Sometimes it's helpful just to have someone to talk to, to lift some of that burden.

LEAH

You're not going to report any of this, right?

MR. POWELL

As much as it goes against my better judgment, for you - for now, I won't. You must come see me

(MORE)

MR. POWELL (cont'd)
every day, now. If I begin to feel like things are getting worse or you're in more danger, I have to report it. Not only for my job, but for my own person.

LEAH
I can take care of myself. I've been doing it long enough now.

Leah grabs the pass out of Mr. Powell's hand and leaves the guidance office.

Mr. Powell leans back in his chair with a sigh, rubbing his eyes, thinking about what is right for him to do.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAY - DAY

As Leah walks down the hallway, the bell rings, and STUDENTS pour out into the hall, making their way to their next class.

Leah swiftly moves through the ocean of people, untouched, unnoticed - until she bumps into John.

LEAH
Oh, shit. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to.

John looks at her, smiling, and again Leah blushes, looking down.

JOHN
It's all right. I was actually hoping I would run into you.

LEAH
What? Why?

JOHN
I wanted to ask you to the dance in a couple weeks.

Leah looks up at John, her eyes wide with shock and excitement.

LEAH
Why? I mean, you really would want to go with me?

John chuckles.

JOHN

Yeah, of course. I wouldn't have asked if I didn't.

LEAH

But...why?

JOHN

Why not?

Leah looks down again, shrugging.

JOHN

Is that a no?

LEAH

No! I mean, not no as in I'm not going. No as in yes it's not a no. Er, ah you know. Right? You do know?

JOHN

I'm pretty sure you're trying to say yes?

Leah nods, a huge smile spreading across her face.

JOHN

Great. Can I have your cell number, then? I'll text you later.

LEAH

Oh, I don't have a cell. I can give you my house phone and you can call, but you really don't want to do that.

JOHN

Okay?

LEAH

Nevermind. Why don't you give me your number?

JOHN

Sure.

John takes Leah by the hand -- she breathes in sharply out of nervousness and excitement -- He writes his number down on her hand.

JOHN

Call me.

With a smile and a wink, John walks away, heading for class.

Leah stands there, beaming. She looks down at the number on her hand and slowly begins walking though the hall in a daze.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL, COURTYARD - DAY

Leah sits on a bench in the courtyard, staring down at her hand, a large smile on her face. She's lost in the moment.

The sound of large beating wings snaps her out of her daze and she looks across the courtyard.

Ashrah flaps above the courtyard, his feathers raining down upon the crowd of STUDENTS, who completely disregard them.

Leah quickly stands up and backs up - tripping herself with the bench and knocking her on her back.

LEAH

Ow.

Of course, several students see this and begin to laugh at her.

Leah slowly gets back on her feet and scrambles to flee the courtyard.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY

Leah sits nervously on her bed, looking at her painting on Ashrah. After a few moments, she tosses it to the floor.

Getting up from her bed, she goes to her desk and picks up her phone, looking at her hand and dialing the number on it.

LEAH

Hey, it's Leah. You gave me your number at school. Of course you know that, though. Right. Um. I'll just call you later. You must be busy.

Leah hangs up the phone, biting her lip.

She looks around her room at all her paintings and begins to pull them all down, tossing them to the floor.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Leah enters the kitchen to see Nancy sitting at the table, drink in hand, bottle of pills on the table in front of her.

LEAH
What's this?

Nancy glances over at Leah, shrugging.

NANCY
Nothing you need to worry about
hunny. I just have a headache, is
all.

Leah stares at her mother in disbelief, fighting back tears.

LEAH
It's nice to see I mean so much to
you, mom.

NANCY
It's not like -

Leah storms out of the kitchen.

NANCY
Leah!

INT. LIVING ROOM

Leah races past Matt and runs out the front door.

MATT
Where the hell does she think
she's going?!

EXT. PARK - DAY

Leah sits on a bench at the park, staring out across the water.

She leans her head back, closing her eyes.

In the distance, the sound of a flute.

Leah shakes her head to try to shake the sound away. It grows later.

LEAH
I don't need you anymore.

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
But we need you, Leah.

Leah turns her head to see Peter the Faun standing there right before her.

She quickly gets up in shock.

LEAH
You can't be here.

Peter the Faun looks around, perplexed.

PETER THE FAUN
Why not?

LEAH
Because you're not real!

PETER THE FAUN
And yet here I am. I'm as real as you make me, Leah. I exist. You hear me. You see me. Reach out. You'll feel me. We need your help.

Leah shakes her head, backing up.

LEAH
No. None of this is real. None of it. I don't need you. I can live my own life in my own world.

PETER THE FAUN
You've been doing that from the start. The question is, which world is more real, Leah?

LEAH
Just leave me alone. I can't do this anymore. It's time for me to grow up! Just stop it! Go away!

Leah looks around. She's alone at the park. All is quiet.

INT. LEAH'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leah walks through the front door and into the living room, where Matt is sitting in his recliner, apparently waiting for her, a big smile on his face.

MATT
Did you have a good time?

Leah looks down at the floor, shifting her feet.

MATT

Oh, don't worry. I'm not mad.
Actually, I haven't been so amused
by you in a long time.

LEAH

What did you do?

MATT

Oh, nothing. Somebody called for
you today.

Leah's heart drops.

MATT

Oh boy. What did he say his name
was? James? Jim?

LEAH

(whispered)

John.

MATT

John! That's it! I can't believe
you actually had the balls to talk
to a guy, let alone give him your
number. The guy must be a total
faggot.

LEAH

He's not.

MATT

No? He sounded like it to me.
Maybe he's just a fat ass, then.
You a chubby chaser, Leah?

LEAH

No.

MATT

You're a sensitive girl. Some guy
could just come into your life,
walk all over you, and leave you
completely broken. What kind of
father would I be if I allowed
that to happen?

LEAH

You're not my father.

Matt laughs.

MATT

Thank God for that, right? I'd be horribly disappointed. In any case, you don't gotta worry. I don't think he'll be calling again. Ever. In fact, I doubt he'll even talk to you.

Leah's eyes water and she turns away, storming up the stairs.

Matt continues laughing, quite proud of himself.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Leah throws herself onto her bed, sobbing.

She looks down at the number on her hand and cries harder.

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)

Wake up already!

EXT. HOT AIR BALLOON - DAY

Leah opens her eyes and find herself lying in a hot air balloon with Peter the Faun looking down at her.

PETER THE FAUN

Didn't think you were ever going to come around. You're missing all the good parts.

Peter the Faun extends his hand and Leah takes it, climbing to her feet.

She looks out - countless brightly colored hot air balloons fill the sky, as do several multi-colored winged creatures of all sorts - some resembling people.

The sun lights the sky magnificently, causing the balloons to shine brightly. The land far below is bright green and lush with life.

Leah takes everything in, smiling. She turns.

LEAH

How did we get here?

PETER THE FAUN

After your encounter with that horrible bird, Francis and I had to carry you out of the forest. He led us all the way through, bless his heart.

LEAH

Vile frog.

PETER THE FAUN

Come now. You shan't talk about your friends in such a manner. Moving onward, we stuffed you inside this basket and off we rose. It's the fastest way to get across the land, don't you know.

LEAH

But where are we going?

PETER THE FAUN

why do you insist on asking questions for which you already know the answers?

LEAH

Why can't you ever just talk straight with me?

PETER THE FAUN

Is this a question game? I do so enjoy playing games while I'm traveling. Makes the time go much quicker.

LEAH

I want an answer, Peter.

With a sigh, Peter the Faun points out and Leah looks to the direction he's pointing.

In the vast distance shrouded by fog and darkness, is the outlines of a large black castle.

LEAH

And what are we going to do when we get there?

PETER THE FAUN

You'll know what to do when the time comes.

LEAH
Is it a long journey?

PETER THE FAUN
You've got plenty of time.

LEAH
Plenty of time for what?

PETER THE FAUN
To choose. Go on. Best get a move
on!

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Leah wakes up in her room, slowly rousing herself.

She looks at the clock - 3:15am.

With a groan, Leah gets out of bed and heads out of her room.

INT. KITCHEN

Leah walks into the kitchen to find Nancy sitting there, several empty bottles of beer in front of her, as well as a bottle of pills.

She's staring into the abyss.

LEAH
This what you've been doing all
night? I'm glad you're so on the
wagon.

Nancy doesn't say anything, just continues staring out.

LEAH
Mom?

Leah approaches Nancy and touches her shoulder.

LEAH
Mom?

Nancy snaps out of her trance and looks up at Leah, smiling.

NANCY
Oh, it's you. Why are you just
getting home so late?

LEAH

I'm not. I've been home since dark.

NANCY

Of course you have. Always such a good girl, Leah.

Leah grabs the bottle of pills from the table.

LEAH

I think you've had enough. Time for bed, Mom.

Leah turns away from her mother and opens the fridge, looking for something to drink.

NANCY

I can't even really remember what life was like before Matt anymore. Isn't that something? Seems like it's always been this way.

Leah stops searching for something to drink and looks at Nancy.

NANCY

Thank God for you. Don't know what I would do if I didn't have you around to keep me sane.

LEAH

Go to bed, Mom.

NANCY

The child parenting the parent. Such a twist.

Nancy gets up from the kitchen table and leaves the kitchen, leaving Leah standing there, baffled.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Leah takes some books out of her locker and crams them into her book bag.

As she slams the locker and looks away, she catches a glimpse of John just down the hall - who spots her and, looking slightly afraid, turns the other way and leaves the hallway.

Tears well up in Leah's eyes and she fights through the sea

of students in the hallway and throws herself inside the girls bathroom.

INT. GIRLS BATHROOM

Leah rushes inside one of the stalls and barricades herself inside, crying quietly to herself.

SOMEONE moves in the stall next to her.

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
No tears, Leah.

Leah's eyes widen, her ears perk up.

LEAH
Peter?

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
Leah?

LEAH
This is the girls bathroom!

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
So it is!

LEAH
You can't be in here.

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
Where? In the girls bathroom? Or
in your world? I won't get caught,
I promise.

LEAH
Leave me alone today.

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)
Have you made your decision yet?

LEAH
This is not the time or place to
talk about that, Peter!

GIRL (O.S.)
Why do you keep calling me Peter?
All I asked was for some toilet
paper.

Leah sits there silently, horrified.

GIRL (O.S.)

Hello?

Leah grabs some toilet paper and hands it under the stall to the GIRL sitting next to her.

GIRL (O.S.)

(quietly)

Weirdo.

The toilet next her flushes and the girl apparently exits the stall and the bathroom.

Slowly and quietly, Leah opens her stall door and peeks her head out, looking around to make sure nobody else is in the bathroom.

Shaking her head, Leah steps out from the stall and makes her way to the sink, splashing water on her face.

LEAH

Get it together, Leah.

Leah continues to splash water on her face and glances in the mirror - only to see Ashrah's reflection in the mirror, just outside the window.

Leah quickly looks over at the window - nothing is there.

LEAH

Stop. Just stop it.

Leah storms out of the bathroom.

Outside, a black feather slowly floats past the window.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL COURTYARD - DAY

John makes his way around the courtyard, wandering aimlessly.

Leah runs up to him from behind.

LEAH

John!

John ignores her and keeps walking.

LEAH

John, please wait.

With a sigh, John stops walking and turns to face Leah.

LEAH

I heard that you called last night.

JOHN

I don't want to talk about it. Forget about the dance.

LEAH

Why are you being like this?

JOHN

Your dad told me I was never supposed to talk to you again, and if I called the house looking for you, he'd kick my ass. You seem like a cool girl, but it's not worth it. I'm sorry. I'll see you around.

John walks away from Leah, leaving her standing there, hurt.

INT. LEAH'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leah walks through the door to find Nancy sitting on the couch, waiting for her, a smile on her face for the first time in ages.

LEAH

Where's Matt?

NANCY

They're working late out of town tonight, and since he's going to have to be back first thing in the morning, he's just staying there.

LEAH

It's just us tonight, then?

NANCY

It's just us.

Leah beams.

NANCY

Go get changed. We're going out tonight.

LEAH

Really?

NANCY

Really. Go on!

Leah races upstairs to go get ready.

EXT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - NIGHT

Leah and Nancy sit outside, enjoying ice cream together.

LEAH

That was an amazing movie. Did you like it?

NANCY

It was interesting.

LEAH

You didn't like it, did you? I'm sorry. We could have gone to see something else.

NANCY

Absolutely not. That's what you wanted to see, that's what we saw. It was just different. very artsy, I suppose. How's your ice cream?

LEAH

It's good. Want to try?

Nancy leans forward to take a lick and right as she does, Leah smears the ice cream over her nose, laughing.

Nancy stands up, smiling.

NANCY

That is it!

Nancy chases Leah across the parking lot with her ice cream, both of them laughing and hollering excitedly.

INT. LEAH'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leah and Nancy are curled up on the couch together, candles burning, enjoying the peace and quiet.

NANCY

Today was fun. We should do it more often.

Leah smiles, her eyes starting to tear up.

NANCY

What's wrong? Why are you crying?

LEAH

You don't know how long I've wanted my mother back. For the first time since I can remember, I feel like a normal girl should with her parents.

Leah snuggles up on Nancy, embracing her tightly.

NANCY

You mean the world to me. I don't mean to be a bad mother. I really don't. It's just -

LEAH

Why don't we leave? Right now. We'll pack a few bags and hit the road. He'll never find us and it can be like this all the time.

NANCY

Oh, how I wish sometimes. It's not that simple, Leah. You just don't understand.

LEAH

No, you don't understand how I feel all the time.

NANCY

Believe me, I do, sweetie. I do. I promise I'm going to make a better effort. I promise. I haven't felt so alive in years.

LEAH

You going to keep this promise?

NANCY

Yes.

Nancy wipes the tears from Leah's face.

NANCY

Come on, time for bed. School in the morning.

LEAH

Can't I stay home with you?

NANCY

School's important. At least tomorrow is Friday! Come on. Off to bed.

Leah kisses her mom on the cheek and stands up.

LEAH

I love you, mommy.

NANCY

Love you too, princess.

Leah makes her way upstairs to her room.

After a moment, Nancy opens up her purse and takes out her bottle of pills.

EXT. LABYRINTH ENTRANCE - DAY

Leah and Peter the Faun stand before the entrance of a large labyrinth.

The large black castle looms ahead in the distance.

PETER THE FAUN

Closer still every day. In fact, we're nearly there, as long as we can make it through here. That shouldn't be a problem for you, of course. You do know the way.

Leah looks at the challenge ahead.

LEAH

Say I do know how to get through, then what? What happens then? We go to this castle and what? Beat the bad guy?

PETER THE FAUN

I always knew you had the answers inside. now you're beginning to understand.

LEAH

I understand nothing. Why is this even hear? Does it even matter?

Peter the Faun is taken aback.

PETER THE FAUN

We're all very disappointed to hear you say that.

LEAH

That's just tough, isn't it? I can't be expected to fix everything. You an do this yourselves.

PETER THE FAUN

And how, dear Leah, if I may be so bold, do you expect us to do that? This is your creation. It is your undoing.

Leah looks past the labyrinth to the looming black castle.

LEAH

It doesn't seem so bad. Why not let it be?

Peter the Faun picks up his flute and plays a quick, sharp tune.

PETER THE FAUN

Prepare yourself.

LEAH

For?

With a brash neigh, a flying horse, SERENITY dives down from the sky, landing with a soft thud, wings flapping brazenly.

LEAH

Whoa.

PETER THE FAUN

You refuse to acknowledge the darkness you've allowed to manifest here Climb on.

LEAH

Is it safe?

Serenity looks to Peter the Faun.

SERENITY

I have no time for her games, faun. What you ask of me is dangerous and if she does not trust me, I will not waste the effort.

PETER THE FAUN

No, no. Of course not. She trusts you, Serenity.

Peter the Faun turns back to Leah, smiling.

PETER THE FAUN

It's perfectly safe, I assure you. I'll be waiting right here for your return. I can't make it through the maze without you, after all.

LEAH

You're not coming?

PETER THE FAUN

Serenity is a proud beast. It is enough shame for her to carry even one passenger.

With some hesitation, Leah slowly approaches Serenity.

LEAH

It's lovely to meet you.

Leah bows her head.

SERENITY

I'm a Pegasus, not a hippogryph. Climb on and let's get this over with.

Peter the Faun helps Leah climb on to Serenity.

PETER THE FAUN

Go easy on her.

SERENITY

Hold on tight, little girl.

Serenity bucks, then takes off running.

Leah graps her as tightly as she can.

With a few flaps of her wings, Serenity soars into the air.

EXT. SKYLINE - DAY

Serenity soars through the sky, Leah holding on tight.

Up, up, and away, zooming past the black castle and cruises over the land beyond.

SERENITY

Look down and see. What once was a bright, lush world is now a place of darkness and decay - spreading like wild fire.

Leah looks down at the world below, shrouded in shadow and fog - virtually a desert, everything is dead and crumbling.

Thunder roars, rain starts to pour. The wind howls.

LEAH

What's happened? Where's it coming from?

SERENITY

It pours from that castle - where the castle came from, only you can answer that. And only you can fix what's been done before it's too late.

Serenity circles around, heading back towards the castle.

Lightning cracks, thunder rumbles.

EXT. LABYRINTH ENTRANCE - DAY

Serenity lands gracefully and Leah climbs off of her, with Peter the Faun's help.

PETER THE FAUN

Now you must understand the gravity of our situation.

SERENITY

I hope you're not wasting time with her, Peter. I'll do nothing further.

Serenity gallops off and launches herself into the night sky, heading away from the black castle.

Leah looks to Peter the Faun, who motions to the labyrinth.

PETER THE FAUN
Shall we begin, love?

LEAH
Actually, I don't think that will
be needed.

Leah shifts her feet uncomfortably.

PETER THE FAUN
Leah?

LEAH
This is all going to go away now.
Things will go back to the way
they were. Better, even.

Peter the Faun motions to the labyrinth.

PETER THE FAUN
This is the only way.

LEAH
I won't be back, Peter. Things are
better now.
This...darkness...it'll all be
gone. This isn't my life. This
can't be my life. I need to live
in the real world, where I'm
needed. Where I'm supposed to be.

PETER THE FAUN
You're needed here. By your logic,
which doesn't all together make
much sense, you're supposed to
stay here.

LEAH
I'm going, Peter. I promise you,
this will all be gone. I just
can't stay here.

PETER THE FAUN
Don't you understand? There is no
"here" without you.

LEAH
You'll live on in my paintings.
I'll be watching.

Leah moves forward and kisses Peter the Faun on the cheek, a
tear running down her face.

LEAH
 Thanks for always being there when
 I needed you.

PETER THE FAUN
 I'm always here. Need has nothing
 to do with it.

Leah looks into Peter the Faun's eyes and smiles.

LEAH
 Goodbye, Peter the Faun.

Leah turns and begins to walk away.

PETER THE FAUN
 If things were really fixed, this
 castle wouldn't be standing here
 before me!

LEAH
 (calling back)
 Give it time!

PETER THE FAUN
 (to himself)
 We're running out of that.

INT. LEAH'S ROOM - DAY

Leah wakes up in her bed, smiling.

The sun is already out. Birds are chirping outside. It's
 going to be a beautiful day.

INT. KITCHEN

Leah enters the kitchen, dressed and ready for school.

Nancy is already up and about, cooking something on the
 stove.

LEAH
 Morning.

Nancy turns and greets Leah with a smile.

NANCY
 Good morning. I'm making eggs.

LEAH
 I don't eat eggs, mom.

NANCY

Since when?

LEAH

Since I decided I was against the slaughter of little baby chickens. This happened years ago.

NANCY

(frowning)

Oh. Guess I forgot.

Leah approaches her mom and kisses her on the cheek.

LEAH

The gesture is still appreciated, mom.

Nancy smiles again.

Leah turns to leave.

LEAH

I'll be late if I eat, anyway. Think of something for us to do this weekend!

NANCY

Okay! Bye!

LEAH

Bye!

Nancy continues to smiles for a moment longer, then looks at the clock.

Her smile fads and she takes the pan of eggs and throws it into the sink.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE OFFICE - DAY

Leah sits across from Mr. Powell, beaming.

LEAH

You should see her, Mr. P. It's like she's my mother again. The way she used to be. I hadn't seen her smile in years and she's smiley and happy and we're going to keep doing stuff. We're doing something this weekend. I think she's finally snapped out of it.

Mr. Powell smiles.

MR. POWELL

That's really excellent news,
Leah. I can't tell you how much it
please me to hear that.

Leah's smile fades.

LEAH

Why do I feel a "but" coming on?

MR. POWELL

I just...don't want you to get too
excited just yet. These
transitions take time. Change is
never fast and it's never easy.
She'd probably going to have a few
more relapses. She'll have her
good days and her bad days. You
need to expect that and not get
too bummed out when they happen.

LEAH

No, I know. I'm not going to. It's
just...

MR. POWELL

I know, it's an exciting thing.
You've been waiting for this for a
long time, haven't you?

Leah nods her head, then begins fidgeting with her hands.

LEAH

Maybe now she'll finally see that
she needs to leave Matt. She'll
see that she can do it. she
doesn't need him. We'll have each
other and we'll do things on our
own.

MR. POWELL

My fingers are crossed for you,
Leah. They really are. However, I
think your mother is going to need
a lot of help to do that. Outside
help. Maybe she should see
someone.

LEAH

My mom's not crazy, Mr. Powell.
She doesn't need to see anyone.

MR. POWELL

I've never said that word to you. You see me. Does that make you crazy? I don't think so. Sometimes people just need someone on the outside to talk to. It's easier to have your eyes opened when there's another person helping you do it.

LEAH

Can't I do that?

MR. POWELL

Doesn't really work that way. Not only are you her daughter, but you've been going through all of this abuse and trauma with her. She sees you as biased, whether she means to or not.

LEAH

I guess I can understand that.

MR. POWELL

We'll talk more about that a little later down the road. In the mean time, I'm just glad you had such a great time with your mother. Here's to a great weekend with her, as well!

Mr. Powell and Leah both smile brightly at one another.

EXT. LEAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Leah walks up the sidewalk to her house - Matt's vehicle is in the driveway.

From outside, Matt can be heard shouting.

LEAH

Oh, no.

Leah slowly and cautiously makes her way up to the front door.

INT. LEAH'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leah walks into the living room.

Matt is standing over Nancy - who has a shiner - screaming.

MATT

I mean, really. That's really cool. I'm out busting my dick to support your lazy, good for nothing as and your equally useless daughter, and you're out having a grand old time with MY money!

NANCY

I - I just thought -

MATT

There's the problem! You "THOUGHT!" You're too stupid to think!

LEAH

She's not stupid, Matt.

Matt turns around at Leah, practically snarling.

MATT

There you are! I've been waiting for you. You put her up to it, didn't you? Just one more way for you to piss me off, right?

Leah doesn't say anything, her courage gone.

MATT

Got nothing to say? I bet you had plenty to say when you were filling her head with ideas on how to blow my money.

LEAH

I'm going to my room.

Leah heads for the stairs.

MATT

Yeah, you just wait up there for me. I'll up be up to take care of you after I finish with this slug down here.

Leah climbs the stairs, trying to hold back the tears so Matt doesn't see her cry.

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM

Leah curls up into a ball on her bed, burying her face in her pillow and gripping a stuffed animal tightly.

TIME LAPSE

Leah peeks her head out from under the pillow - listening. The house is unnaturally quiet.

Leah gets off her bed and slowly walks out of her room.

INT. HALLWAY

Leah creeps down the hallway.

The door to her parents room is partially closed, the sounds of Matt snoring emanating from them.

Leah heads for the stairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Nancy is sitting up on the couch, asleep.

Leah makes her way over to her, curling up next to her.

LEAH

You don't have to stay down here,
you know. You can come up to my
room with me.

Nancy doesn't respond.

Leah sits up and examines her mom - then notices the empty bottle of pills in Nancy's hand as well as the empty beer bottles on the coffee table.

LEAH

Mom?

Leah shakes Nancy.

LEAH

Mommy? Wake up.

Leah shakes Nancy more violently, then checks her pulse.

LEAH

MATT!

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Leah and Matt sit across from each other in the waiting room. Leah's is devastated, Matt is pissed.

MATT

I can't believe you dragged me out of bed for this.

LEAH

She overdosed, Matt. What was I supposed to do?

MATT

Let the junky choke to death on her own puke.

LEAH

It's your fault she's like this. You did it!

MATT

Excuse me?

Leah has finally found her nerve. She stands, fuming.

LEAH

You heard me. Your constant abuse and berating. That's why she's a "junkie" as you call it. I hope you're proud! It takes a real big man to kick around a couple of girls! Your daddy really raised you right, huh? Such a catch you turned out to be!

Matt stands up in a rage, then examines his surroundings, catching himself.

MATT

You're real tough while there's all these people around, aren't you? Finally found your voice.

Matt leans in real close, lowering his voice to a whisper.

MATT

We'll see how tough you are once you get home. And good luck getting there. I'm not driving you.

Matt gets out of Leah's face and heads for the door.

MATT

I'm out of here. Don't bother to
call if she wakes up.

Matt leaves and Leah sits back down in her seat.

Dr. Samson steps into the waiting room.

DR. SAMSON

Hello again, Leah.

Leah stands up.

LEAH

How is she? Can I see her?

DR. SAMSON

I've got her vitals stable, but
beyond that, I can't do much else.
we just have to wait. Where's your
dad?

LEAH

That scumbag is not my dad. It's
just me.

DR. SAMSON

You can see her. Come on.

Leah follows Dr. Samson out of the waiting room.

INT. NANCY'S ROOM

Dr. Samson ushers Leah into the room and exits, closing the
door behind him.

Leah makes her way to Nancy, hooked up to IV's and sleep,
grips her hand, crying.

LEAH

We were supposed to run away
together. Everything was going to
be so much better. We can't do
that if you don't wake up.

Nancy doesn't stir. Her monitors don't fluctuate.

LEAH

You're in your own world now
though, aren't you?

Leah leans down and kisses her mother's hand, a tear running
down onto it.

LEAH

I love you, mommy. Be seeing you.

Leah leaves.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Leah walks through the hospital doors, into the night.

With a deep breath, she steps out onto the street -- right into traffic.

EXT. LABYRINTH ENTRANCE - DAY

Peter the Faun stands right in front of the entrance, just staring at it.

Leah approaches him from behind. He doesn't turn to greet her.

PETER THE FAUN

I knew you'd come back.

LEAH

Is there ever anything you don't know?

PETER THE FAUN

Not unless you really don't want me to.

Leah gently touches Peter the Faun's shoulder.

LEAH

What do you say, old friend? One last adventure?

Peter the Faun turns, smiles.

PETER THE FAUN

Last adventure? My dear, this is simply our new beginning.

The two pass through the gates leading into the labyrinth.

INT. LABYRINTH - DAY

Leah and Peter the Faun make their way through the labyrinth, Leah leading with hardly the slightest bit of hesitation.

LEAH

It's strange. I've never been here before and yet...I feel like I know the way.

PETER THE FAUN

As it very well should be. Is this not a fabrication of your very own imagination? Everything here is your creation, whether you're aware of it or not.

LEAH

I guess.

The two wind through the twisted, curving passages, surrounded by sand, stone, and cobwebs.

The place grows dim as the darkness looms overhead. Lightning flashes.

PETER THE FAUN

The deeper we get, the more the darkness will pervade.

LEAH

There's no going back, Peter.

PETER THE FAUN

No. Indeed not.

Finally, they reach the end of the labyrinth, the gate to the castle just up ahead.

Standing guard in front of that gate - a hulking MINOTAUR.

PETER THE FAUN

Best if you let me do the talking.

Leah and Peter the Faun slowly approach the Minotaur, and Peter the Faun graciously bows.

He looks over to Leah.

PETER THE FAUN

(whispered)

Bow!

With a sigh, Leah bows.

MINOTAUR

State your business.

Leah and Peter the Faun straighten up.

PETER THE FAUN

Good sir, we have come to pay your master a visit.

MINOTAUR

The master isn't seeing visitors.

PETER THE FAUN

Be that as it may, we've come a long way and would be very appreciative if -

MINOTAUR

I know it is no easy task to make it this far and for that I commend you. However, the master is not taking visitors and I must ask you to turn around and go back from where you came.

LEAH

No.

The Minotaur grunts, becoming angry.

MINOTAUR

Do not test my patience. Faun, control your mortal while she is a guest in our world.

LEAH

A guest in your world? A guest? In your world? I created this entire world. I am the master. It is YOU that is a guest in MY world. You and your master. And you have overstayed your welcome. Now stand aside.

Peter the Faun stands there, both flabbergasted and amused.

The Minotaur raises his spiked mace.

MINOTAUR

Now you've -

LEAH

MOVE!

With the blast of Leah's voice, the Minotaur goes flying through the gate and shatters on the ground like glass.

She stands there, shocked.

PETER THE FAUN
You're beginning to understand.

The sky grows pitch black and the lightning cracks, the wind picking up.

PETER THE FAUN
We mustn't tarry! There's not much
time left!

INT. BLACK CASTLE - DAY

Leah and Peter the Faun step inside the Black Castle, its entrance hall standing before them.

The ceiling reaches high. The floors decorated with all kinds of dark, twisted furniture. The walls are covered with Gothic art. The main staircase lies straight ahead of them, twisting and curving its way to the main door.

PETER THE FAUN
It was so beautiful, once.

LEAH
This has always been here?

PETER THE FAUN
do you not recall? 'Twas one of
your first creations.

Leah thinks hard.

LEAH
No. I have no memory of this
place.

PETER THE FAUN
You're hiding it.

Leah slowly begins to back away, fear gripping her.

LEAH
I can't do this. we shouldn't have
come here. We need to go. We have
to get out of here. Now.

Leah turns towards the door and pulls on it. It doesn't budge.

PETER THE FAUN

Do not be afraid. You're stronger than this. Always remember how strong you are, Leah. We can do this. YOU can do this.

Leah pulls on the door one final time before collapsing to the floor, crying.

LEAH

I'm not, Peter. I try so hard all the time to prove that I am and that I can do anything I put my mind to, but I'm tired. I'm tired of lying to myself. I'm tired of hiding and just being okay.

Peter the Faun crouches next to Leah and places a comforting hand on her shoulder.

PETER THE FAUN

You've allowed yourself to come this far. Don't stop yourself now. Don't let the darkness win.

Leah sits there quietly, lost in thought.

PETER THE FAUN

Come on, Leah. we have to keep moving. On your feet!

Peter the Faun stands up and offers Leah his hand. After a moment of hesitation, she takes it and is pulled back up.

LEAH

Lead the way.

Peter the Faun and Leah climb the twisted stairs.

The main door bursts open and out jumps Matt, only he's become a twisted GOBLIN creature.

Leah stops dead, fear once again taking her.

GOBLIN MATT

And where do you think you're going, little girl? We're not taking any visitors!

Peter the Faun looks at Leah, who just stares, terror-stricken.

GOBLIN MATT

What's the matter, girl? cat got
your tongue? Shall I rip it out of
your mouth for you?

Matt cackles. It's an ugly sound.

PETER THE FAUN

Stand aside, goblin!

GOBLIN MATT

Silence, Faun, or I'll tear your
legs off and have them for stew.
You have no power here.

Peter the Faun's legs begin to quiver and Matt laughs again.
He looks to Leah.

GOBLIN MATT

Isn't this cute. You've come all
this way just to turn around. All
these creature resting all their
hopes and dreams on you, and what
do you do? You disappoint. People
shall always remember Leah, the
big disappointment! No go! I'll
not warn you again!

Anger wells up inside Leah. She tightens her fists.

GOBLIN MATT

Aw, look. She's getting upset. Is
the little baby going to cry?
Squirt out a few tears. It's been
so long since I've tasted them!

He cackles.

LEAH

I'm not afraid of you.

Matt stops laughing.

GOBLIN MATT

What did you say?

LEAH

I'm not afraid of you!

GOBLIN MATT

I'll show you fear, girl!

With a snarl, Goblin Matt rushes forward.

LEAH

NO!!

The word is roared as if from a lion - the room shaking from it.

Goblin Matt covers his ears and cries out, suddenly terrified - and begins shrinking. Down, down, down. To the size of a baby, sitting there crying.

Peter the Faun looks at Leah, smiling proudly.

PETER THE FAUN

I knew you would find the strength inside you.

LEAH

I will fear no more.

PETER THE FAUN

Your true test lies just beyond that door.

LEAH

Let's go.

Leah presses forward, but Peter the faun does not move.

She looks back, puzzled.

LEAH

Aren't you coming?

Peter the Faun shakes his head, smiling.

LEAH

Why not?

PETER THE FAUN

It's not my place. This you must do on your own. You don't need me anymore.

LEAH

But I want you with me.

PETER THE FAUN

I apologize but that's just not how it's going to be. I'm so proud of you, Leah. Never forget how strong you truly are.

LEAH

Will I see you after?

Peter the Faun smiles, but it is apparent he's holding back tears. He shrugs.

PETER THE FAUN

Only time will tell. get in there,
Leah. Save this world. Your world.

LEAH

How will I know what to do?

PETER THE FAUN

You'll know.

Leah moves towards Peter the Faun, leans in, and kisses his cheek. A tear streams down his face.

LEAH

Farewell, Peter the Faun. Can I
ask of you one final thing?

PETER THE FAUN

Of course, my lady.

LEAH

Play me a song.

Peter the faun smiles and picks up his flute. He plays.
Soft. Beautiful. Somber.

Leah turns to the door and closes her eyes, preparing
herself with the sound of Peter the Faun's swan song.

With a deep breath, eyes still closed, Leah opens the doors
and walks through them.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

The throne room is a large, dome-like room with a huge glass
window over looking the land. In the center sits a black,
spiny pedestal, a dark crystal resting on top. In the back
sits a large black throne.

Leah enters, taking everything in.

A FIGURE stands at the crystal pedestal, their back to Leah.

Ashrah swoops down from the ceiling, landing with quiet
grace.

Leah backs up a bit.

FIGURE

I must admit, I didn't think you'd
come this far. Ashrah disagreed
with me, of course.

The Figure's voice is female with just the slightest tinge
of darkness behind it, but it sounds quite familiar...

LEAH

Ashrah?

Ashrah expands his wings, identifying himself.

FIGURE

I thought you'd be brighter.

The Figure turns, revealing herself to be DARK LEAH - a
carbon copy of Leah, although much paler, bleaker, dark.

DARK LEAH

Although I suppose I am the best
of you, after all. I shouldn't
expect much.

Leah's eyes widen, her chin trembling.

LEAH

Wh - Who are you?

DARK LEAH

I'm you. You're me. One in the
same. Only not.

Dark Leah makes her way over to Leah, circling her slowly,
taking her in.

DARK LEAH

All the pain and hate and sadness
and guilt that lives inside you,
eating away at your soul like a
pestilence - gave birth to me. You
created me, Leah.

LEAH

You're the one poisoning this
place.

DARK LEAH

YOU'RE the one that has poisoned
this place. I'm simply the
embodiment of what's inside you.

(MORE)

DARK LEAH (cont'd)
Look in a mirror, you know it to
be so.

LEAH
I didn't want this to happen...

DARK LEAH
Tut! Come.

Dark Leah offers her hand and after some hesitation, Leah
takes it.

Dark Leah leads Leah over to the crystal.

Ashrah follows.

DARK LEAH
Have you any idea what this is?

LEAH
No.

DARK LEAH
This is the heart of it all. The
power source that keeps all of
this running. The hand of God, if
you will. And if this is the hand
of God, the one who controls it,
is God.

Leah reaches out to touch it, but it shocked.

DARK LEAH
Tut. It is not yours to touch. Not
anymore. You handed it over to me
long ago, Leah.

LEAH
You're killing it.

DARK LEAH
You've killed it, remember?

LEAH
No.

DARK LEAH
Yes. Accept it.

LEAH
It's not too late to fix.

Dark Leah laughs.

DARK LEAH
If only that were true.

Dark Leah walks away from the crystal and stands in front of the huge window, looking out over the land. The sky black, spreading as far as the eye can see.

DARK LEAH
Isn't it gorgeous?

Leah doesn't move. She just stands there, staring at the dark crystal.

Dark Leah turns to Leah.

DARK LEAH
Still in denial? Go ahead, keep stuffing it deep down inside you. Let it consume you, it's delicious!

Leah looks up at Dark Leah, a tear rolling down her cheek.

LEAH
I forgive you.

Dark Leah shakes her head as if fighting nausea.

DARK LEAH
You're talking foolish now.

Dark Leah takes a few steps towards Leah.

LEAH
I can't keep it inside anymore.

Dark Leah stumbles as she walks to Leah, clutching her stomach as if sick. She groans.

DARK LEAH
Ashrah, take her away.

Ashrah takes off into the air, but does not grab Leah. He soars towards the large window.

DARK LEAH
What are you doing, you stupid bird!

SMASH!

Ashrah smashes through, disappearing into the darkness.

LEAH

Come here. I have something for
you.

Dark Leah wretches.

Leah takes the final few steps towards her and then wraps
her arms around her, embracing her tightly.

Dark Leah cries out.

LEAH

Let it go. Let it all go.
Forgiveness. Forgiveness is what
we need. I love you.

Dark Leah begins to cry black tears.

The wind begins to roar, blowing violently through the
broken window.

Slowly, Dark Leah brings her arms up - and returns the hug.

In a brilliant flash of light, the two become one. All is
still.

Leah stands there, alone, collecting herself. She looks
around. The darkness is still looming outside.

PETER THE FAUN (O.S.)

(whispered)

You'll know what to do.

Leah looks at the dark crystal and slowly walks up to it.

She slowly reaches out and touches it - it begins to glow.
Brighter, brighter, brighter - BOOM!

BLAST TO WHITE

The blinding white light slowly begins to fade and with that
- the darkness is gone.

Leah stands in a throne room no longer dark. The crystal in
the center now a bright, beautiful gem.

Leah makes her way to the window and looks out into the land
beyond - the sky is blue. The sun is shining brightly.
Everything is green and alive. Her world restored. Lush.

Vibrant.

Ashrah flies back inside the window, now a gorgeous white instead of black.

LEAH

It's perfect.

ASHRAH

I knew you'd come if I called. You always said you would.

Leah looks at Ashrah, realization hitting her.

LEAH

You were really there, weren't you? All this time.

Ashrah nods his head humbly.

ASHRAH

You will stay this time?

Leah looks back out the window at all the beauty outside.

LEAH

This is where I belong, isn't it?
What more could I need?

NANCY (O.S.)

Leah.

Leah's eyes widen and she turns.

Nancy stands there - no longer beaten. No longer abused. No longer sad or strung out. Just gorgeous and full of life.

Leah smiles brightly and the entire room seems to brighten with it.

FADE OUT.