<u>LOCKER 927</u>

by

Robert Holbrook

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FADE IN:

TITLE:

"The Gods visit the sins of the fathers upon the children" - Euripedes

INT. DOCTOR BROWN'S OFFICE RESTROOM - DAY

A small cupboard in the middle of a bland, pastel wall. A hand reaches in, opens the cupboard door, and places a small lidded jar containing a urine sample then shuts the door.

The hand (and sample) belongs to ANNA PORTER - early 30's, attractive but a tad bookish and dowdy, dressed in her workaday office attire.

Sitting on the toilet in a small but sanitary cubicle, Anna finishes up, flushes the toilet.

INT. DOCTOR BROWN'S OFFICE - LATER

Anna sits and talks with DOCTOR BROWN, mid-40's, healthy and extremely handsome.

He peruses her file on his computer.

DOCTOR BROWN Last time you were here was in March. Remember what we discussed back then?

ANNA I thought that since I've been on this new holistic regimen, there might be a change in my...

DOCTOR BROWN Well, I'll send it to the lab, but I'm doubtful. Anna, you'll have to wrap your head around the fact that...

ANNA I know, I know, but it's just that...

DOCTOR BROWN Anna, you've been trying for five years. I would advise you to consider other options, like.. ANNA Adoption? Brendan would never. Has to be his seed he said.

Doctor Brown shoots her a look.

DOCTOR BROWN

Really?

ANNA

Really.

DOCTOR BROWN How about a surrogate?

ANNA

Not an option.

DOCTOR BROWN

Well Anna, what can I tell you? Parenting is overrated. Kids stop being cute and adorable pretty quick, then its all basically work and stress, expensive, time consuming...

ANNA ... And loving and caring and rewarding in ways that you obviously don't...

DOCTOR BROWN ... Anna. Maybe you should consider it a blessing. Your life is yours to keep. More for you to enjoy. You should travel, see the world...

ANNA Brendan wants kids too.

Doctor Brown looks her in the eye.

DOCTOR BROWN Well, I can't comment on that.

Anna gets up to leave.

DOCTOR BROWN (CONT'D) I'll let you know if there's anything new with these tests.

ANNA Ok, thanks.

DOCTOR BROWN Put it behind you. Enjoy your life.

ANNA Yeah. Thanks.

DOCTOR BROWN Ok. Stay healthy.

Anna leaves.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Boxes within boxes. Windows and buildings, all hard rectangles. It's a gray, overcast day.

Anna exits a medical office building. Feeling drained, feeling dull.

INT. SUBWAY CAR

Anna stands in the crowded subway car. She watches a mother play with her infant daughter. The kid's smile is cute as hell. It breaks Anna's heart.

EXT. ANNA'S BUILDING - DAY

Anna enters the front door of her apartment building - a bland high rise condo tower in a district of similar buildings. Boxes and windows.

INT. BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Anna steps onto the elevator, holds the door open for an eccentric old woman on a walker - MARJ HEFFELFINGER(70+). She has her cat on a leash, and now it's balanced on her shoulder.

MARJ Anna. Darling, how are you?

ANNA I'm ok, Mrs. Heffelfinger. How are you?

MARJ My lumbago is acting up again. Tomorrow I fly to Phoenix to see a specialist. ANNA You can't find one anywhere here in New York?

MARJ It's a mystery to all of them! This doctor in Phoenix, he knows a cure. It's ancient Pueblo Indian! Anyway I can't take Galadriel with

me. Can you keep her for a few

ANNA Oh, I'd love to Marj. I love this kitty... (to cat) You're so cute! (to Marj) But Brendan is allergic. Can't have any cat hair on him or anywhere near his radar.

MARJ

Brendan?

ANNA

My fiance.

MARJ

Oh him. Yeah. He's a liar. I've seen him petting my Galadriel. Holding her in his arms. Oh yes. In the hallway. Many times...

ANNA

... Uh yeah, I'm sure you're thinking of someone else. I know for a fact he's allergic. But honest Mrs. Heffelfinger, you know I would. I really would.

MARJ

Why you'd marry anyone that says he's allergic.

ANNA Oh, we're not married yet. It's set for September.

Marj shoots her a skeptical look.

MARJ can happen

Anything can happen between now and September. Mark my words. (MORE) MARJ (CONT'D) (to cat) Ohhh, I don't know what I'll do with you my pushkin...

The elevator doors open and Anna steps out.

ANNA I'm sure you'll find someone. Good luck, Mrs. Heffelfinger.

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Anna enters her apartment, wearily hangs up her coat and heads to the kitchen/living area.

ANNA

You know Mrs. Heffelfinger must be losing it. Know what she just said to me? Told me you and her cat get along pretty famously. Oh yeah. Petting and hugging and all that. I mean you. Can you even imagine picking up...

BRENDAN is there, two suitcases beside him. He's early 30's, a slightly narcissistic stock promoter-type, dressed in business attire, and at the moment, quite somber.

> ANNA (CONT'D) What the...? You going somewhere?

She spots the engagement ring on the table.

BRENDAN Anna, I've been seeing someone.

That gets her attention.

BRENDAN (CONT'D) She's pregnant.

ANNA

Oh!

Anna gasps in horror, can't speak. She stumbles back into a chair.

BRENDAN I know. Anna, I'm so sorry. It's just... This hasn't been working for me. You must've sensed something these past few months? ANNA You told me. Your work. Stress. The overtime...

BRENDAN Yeah, I just... I guess I just didn't know how to tell you. You're such a good person. Such a kind and beautiful spirit...

ANNA

Oh, stop...

BRENDAN And I know, I can be an asshole...

ANNA Don't you dare give me that routine! You're too good for

routine! You're too good for me. It's a cop-out!

BRENDAN

No, you're not too good for me. Just not right for me. Look, it happens. I just need something else. Someone else.

ANNA Someone you could get pregnant!

BRENDAN No, it's not like that. Anna. It's not like that...

Anna flies at him, hysterically beating his chest, trying to hit him, hurt him. Brendan easily fends her off.

ANNA You bastard. It is so! You ARE a liar! You ARE! A liar and a coward. Who is it? Who is it Brendan? Is it Cheryl? Wendy? That cutesy little friend of Jason's? Who? Tell me!!!

BRENDAN No! You don't know her. Someone you never met. Look, I'm sorry. I don't know what else to say. I'm sorry.

ANNA How could you? How could you?!! Five years Brendan. Five years! Brendan picks up his bags and turns to go.

BRENDAN I know you hate me right now, but you know it was never going to work out. You know that. Look, I'm sorry Anna. I truly am sorry. I gotta go.

ANNA Yes, go. Get out. Get out. Get the hell out!

BRENDAN I'll come back tomorrow when you're at work and get the rest of my things.

Anna grabs a small sculpture from a nearby shelf and throws it at him. It misses and shatters against the wall.

ANNA Damn you! Damn you!! You bastard!

She pulls the engagement ring from her finger and flings it at him.

ANNA (CONT'D) You said you'd marry me!

Brendan ducks as he opens the door to leave. It bounces off the door.

BRENDAN Take care Anna. I'll always love you.

With that, he leaves and closes the door.

ANNA Bullshit! Bullshit! Go to hell!

She stares at the door and tears well up. So not her day.

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

TRICIA (early 30's) attractive, Asian-American, bursts through the apartment door, bottle of vodka in one hand, cranberry juice in the other.

Shuts the door, kicks off her shoes and runs to Anna, who's been crying and drinking.

TRICIA

Oh baby, I came as soon as I could.

Tricia sets down the bottles on the counter. Anna gets up and they hug each other tight. Anna bawls.

TRICIA (CONT'D)

There there. You're all right. You're all right. C'mon. Better he's out of your life. He was an asshole. I just knew.

ANNA

Everybody knew. Why didn't I know? Why couldn't I see? I never see what's going on around me. I'm so naive. I never see.

TRICIA

No, no. Come on now. Anna baby. Come on.

ANNA

I'm a screw-up.

TRICIA

No baby, no. Come on girl. You're gonna be alright. You're gonna be just alright. Hey. What's that?

Tricia spots the HOPE CHEST beside the couch. Anna has been going through it. Childhood mementoes and small toys on the couch.

Anna separates from her, turns and picks up some of the things from the couch and puts them back into the small chest.

TRICIA (CONT'D) That a hope chest?

ANNA I was saving this stuff in case I had a little girl someday. No point in keeping it any more.

Anna picks up a stuffed bunny. Anna smiles weakly and proffers it to Tricia.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Pookie.

TRICIA You keep it. Tricia picks up the vodka bottle and cracks it open. Goes to the nearby cupboard for glasses, and the fridge for ice.

Anna sits back on the couch puts the things back in the hope chest... including --

AN OLD PHOTO-BOOTH STRIP. Actually, 1/2 of a photo strip. Two pictures have been torn off. Reveals a small girl of 3, happy and smiling for the camera.

Anna shows it briefly to Tricia as she enters with the drinks.

ANNA Me. Wonder what made me that happy?

TRICIA Aw, come on. Don't be that way.

She puts it in the box and closes the lid, as Tricia sits down.

ANNA Funny how our lives come down to things in a box. That's my life right there. That's all I am.

TRICIA No honey. You're way more than that.

Tricia hands Anna a cranberry vodka on ice. Anna turns to her and takes it...

Suddenly starts blubbering again. Tricia quickly takes her drink from her, sets it down and hugs.

ANNA All I ever wanted was someone to care for. Someone to care for me...

TRICIA I know baby, I know. I care for you, you know that.

ANNA A family of my own. I never had a family...

TRICIA Yes baby, I know. INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

Anna rides the subway. Glum and a little hung over. The doors open and she files out with the crowd.

EXT. DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

It is a gray, rainy day.

Anna hurries across the street with her umbrella open, joins a group of workers filing into the tall, nondescript office building.

From across the street, a MYSTERIOUS MAN in a dark suit watches from the back seat of a chauffeur-driven MERCEDES LIMO.

INT. OFFICE FLOOR - DAY

It is the place where Anna works, a dull routine cubicle job. Tricia works in the next cubicle over. Concerned for Anna, she keeps an eye on her.

Anna at her computer. Excel or something similar on-screen. Boxes of figures.

The desk phone rings. Anna answers.

ANNA Accounting. Anna Porter speaking.

JESSOP Anna Marie Porter?

ANNA Yes, this is she.

JESSOP

My name is Bertrand Jessop. Lawyer with Dunn & Epstein. I'm calling on behalf of Joseph Porter. Your Grandfather.

ANNA Uh, I'm sorry. You must be mistaken. I don't have a grandfather.

JESSOP Everybody has a grandfather. ANNA

Uh, yeah. Well I don't, Mr. uh, Jessop? You see, I was, um...

JESSOP ...Raised in an orphanage?

Anna stops.

JESSOP (CONT'D) Nothing is obvious, Ms. Porter. Mr. Porter is dying. He has been asking to see you.

ANNA A different Anna Porter.

JESSOP No Ma'am. You. Anna Marie Porter. I'm nothing if not thorough.

ANNA Uh, yeah.. Sorry who are you again?

JESSOP Bertrand Jessop. I'm personal legal counsel to one Joseph Nathaniel Porter. Your grandfather by blood.

Anna turns to her computer, clicks to internet, Googles "Joseph Nathaniel Porter.. "

ANNA Yeah um, we're tying up the line here. So listen, if you could give me your number, perhaps we could talk about this later?

JESSOP Yes, perhaps after you finish work?

ANNA Uh, yeah sure. What's your number?

JESSOP 555-323-4778. He's dying Ms. Porter. Please fulfill his last request.

Anna writes the number down on a pad.

ANNA Okay, yeah. I gotta go. Bye. Tricia peeks over the divider, sees the stunned, quizzical look on Anna's face.

TRICIA What was that all about?

ANNA

Gotta be a wrong number.

GEORGINA (40+), a supervisor, breezes up to Anna's cubicle and drops a file on her desk. Tricia disappears back into hers.

GEORGINA The "Fortune Ready" file. Stan needs the breakdowns for these asap.

Georgina notes the computer screen -- hmm, not work-related.

The look is not lost on Anna. Georgina scurries off.

Anna scans the Google results, intrigued to see --

COMPUTER SCREEN:

- Some high society links.

-A school named after Joseph Nathaniel Porter.

-An orphan charity organization named after him.

- There's a very brief entry for Joseph Nathaniel Porter in WIKIPEDIA: - born 1923. Wealthy real estate developer.

EXT. DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Anna leaves the building with Tricia. They hug goodbye and part ways.

Anna heads toward the bus stop. A dark figure looms in front of her, blocking her path.

Startled, she steps back, ready to scream for help.

JESSOP Ms. Porter. I'm Mr. Jessop... JESSOP is a tall, well groomed gentleman in his late 50's. His features are darkly handsome and project a quiet assurance. He carries an attache case and wears a friendly smile.

> ANNA Uh, yeah. Listen, really. I'm pretty sure you've got the wrong person.

JESSOP Miss Porter, I apologize for my intrusion. I know this must seem out of left field.

He hands something to Anna...

It's the OTHER HALF OF THE PHOTO STRIP -- two pictures torn off, little Anna smiling for the camera.

JESSOP (CONT'D) It's you, isn't it?

Anna is stunned.

ANNA How did you get this?

JESSOP Perhaps we can talk about this over a coffee?

Jessop nods in the direction of the Starbucks (or similar coffee franchise) on their block.

ANNA I don't know. I gotta...

JESSOP Surely you must have some curiosity about your ancestry?

Seems safe enough. Anna relents.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Anna and Jessop sit at a table with drinks in front of them.

Jessop reaches into his attache case and withdraws a file folder. He pulls out an old b&w family photo and hands it to Anna:

PHOTOGRAPH --

A younger Joseph Porter (40's), wife and 2 teenagers. All look unhappy, though quite prosperous.

JESSOP The Porters were a small family. Your Grandfather Joseph, Grandmother Shirley. That's your mother Emma and her younger brother Rodney - would have been your uncle.

ANNA

Would have?

Jessop hands Anna another family picture, a posed portrait. Thin, forced smiles on the parents, serious expressions on the teens.

JESSOP

Joseph and Shirley divorced shortly after this picture was taken. She took the kids and moved to Florida. A year later Rodney hanged himself. A few weeks later, Shirley succumbed to a heart attack.

Jessop hands a picture of her mother and brother in their teens. While not a smiling shot, we can tell they like each other.

ANNA God. That's awful. And my mother?

JESSOP

When she was 17, she ran off with a rock band. It was the 60's. But by the late 70's she had become a heroin addict. Out on the streets. One day Emma turns up at your grandfather's door, drops you off and then promptly disappears. Your birth father is unknown. Could be anybody. I'm sorry to be the one to tell you this.

ANNA Know if she's still alive?

Jessop shakes his head. He hands Anna a picture of a melancholy teenage Emma, a candid shot.

JESSOP

Overdose. By this time your Grandfather had become increasingly reclusive and depressive. He couldn't keep you. Felt it would be the wrong environment for you.

ANNA

So he stuck me in an orphanage.

JESSOP

One that his foundation provided for. Provided very well. He did care about you. You should know that. On rare occasions, he would even pay you a visit. Back when you were a small child. Perhaps you wouldn't remember.

Jessop gives Anna the half photo strip.

ANNA And now after all these years he wants to speak with me.

JESSOP

Yes. (a beat) Your grandfather just needs a few minutes of your time.

Anna ponders the photographs.

EXT. LONG ISLAND FREEWAY - DAY

The Mercedes limo takes an off ramp.

INT. MERCEDES LIMO - DAY

Anna rides silently in the back of the limo, gazing out the window. Anna looks out the window:

They've entered a wealthy old suburb. Tree lined streets with manicured boulevards and tall hedges hide old and elaborate mansions.

EXT. PORTER MANSION - DAY

The limo enters the electric gate and glides up the driveway to a large old mansion.

A few other cars in the driveway, none seeming to belong to this mansion.

Anna climbs out of the limo and Jessop ushers her up the steps and through the door.

JESSOP I should mention he has some symptoms of dementia and alzheimers. However, there are rare times he can be quite lucid. We're hoping your appearance will be one of those times.

INT. PORTER MANSION - DAY

Several dour strangers lurk in rotunda and adjoining rooms. All of them crane for a better look at Anna as she enters, then immediately reach for their phones and blackberrys.

An AIDE (40's) steps up. Dressed in the same, well groomed style as Jessop, but less friendly looking.

JESSOP This is Anna Porter.

The Aide nods curtly and leads them upstairs.

Things get stranger the deeper she goes into the house: The doors have been removed from all the rooms. All the fireplaces have been bricked up.

ANNA

Those relatives downstairs?

JESSOP Distant only. Former employees, lawyers, accountants, acquaintances. Vultures really. Been circling for years. But now they're distressed with the sudden reality of a direct heir.

As Anna processes that, the Aide leads them down the hall to a heavy steel vault-like door.

AIDE There will be absolutely no smoking or open flame in the room. Please make no sudden motions.

The Aide presses a button on the wall and the heavy door slides open.

Anna shivers at the frigid temperature as she follows the Aide into the cavernous room - painted completely white and sparse with furniture.

There's a prone figure on a hospital bed against the far wall, surrounded by medical monitors.

Despite the cold, the frail old man reclines beneath a single white sheet, mumbling to himself.

PORTER Moments moments moments...

AIDE Please do not move until I say.

ANNA What's wrong with him?

AIDE

Dehydration is a problem at his age. It can cause hallucinations, high body temperature.

Anna watches as the Aide approaches the bed and whispers to Porter.

The bed WHIRRS to life - the top raises up to reveal the anguished drawn face and cloudy eyes of a pale and emaciated man in his late 80's -- JOSEPH PORTER.

Porter's skeletal body begins to rock gently and his breathing quickens at the sight of Anna.

JESSOP Sir, this is Anna.

PORTER

Anna?

AIDE Yes, Mr. Porter. This is Anna Porter.

The NURSE monitors medical equipment. She nods at the Aide and he motions Anna forward.

PORTER

Anna?

JESSOP Your Granddaughter, sir. The old man gazes at her with tortured eyes. He raises his shaking fingers toward her. She cautiously takes his hand.

For a long awkward moment he stares at her. There is a depth of sadness and desperation in those eyes, difficult to bear.

The old man opens his mouth to speak but his voice is very faint and dry.

PORTER

Sweet Anna.

He urges her closer. Anna leans in to hear.

She pulls her hair back and carefully places her ear next to his quivering lips. His parched voice is barely audible:

PORTER (CONT'D) You are the last. Family blood. You are the last. The only one. It falls to you. It falls to you.

ANNA

What falls to me?

Porter looks at her with pleading eyes.

PORTER

Sweet Anna, forgive me. Forgive me. Oh, forgive me...

ANNA

It's ok... Grandpa. I forgive you. Whatever it is, I forgive you. I'm ok. You didn't do anything wrong. You're good.

PORTER No. My sin. Too great. My sin too great, too great, too great...

Anna looks to the others. No one in the room has a clue what Gramps is on about.

Anna starts to stand but Porter's bony grip tightens on her, pulls her back.

PORTER (CONT'D) Find the key! Save them!

ANNA Find what key? Save who? PORTER Unlock the door! Find the key!

She looks at the others. They shrug.

ANNA Ok. Sure...

PORTER Find the key! Save them! Find the key! -- Stop the curse!!!

Porter suddenly GAGS like he might throw up.

His eyes roll up. His jaw snaps open in a hideous silent scream -

The nurse and Aide rush to the bed as Anna backs away.

Porter thrashes, body arched in pain, then gives one final heave and lets out a long wheezing breath, slumps back, dead.

The Nurse tries desperately to revive him, but to no avail.

Anna looks on in stunned silence. Jessop moves beside her, gently ushers her out.

INT. UPPER EAST SIDE MANSION - PARLOR

The house guests crowd around the security monitor of Porter's room. Most are on their phones with the news.

EXT. PORTER MANSION - DAY

Ambulance ATTENDANTS wheel out Porter's draped body and load him into the back of a waiting ambulance.

Anna stands with Jessop.

ANNA Oh my God, it's so sad. (a beat) Well I guess I wish I knew him. Maybe he was nice.

JESSOP (sincere) Yes he was. He was nice.

Anna stops. Looks up at the old mansion. Faded stone, overtaken by creeping vines and moss. Somehow lonely, hidden away from the world. ANNA Find the key. What key?

JESSOP

I don't know.

ANNA Ramblings of dementia?

JESSOP Perhaps. Shall we?

Jessop leads Anna back to the waiting limo. Watches as the ambulance pulls away, then gets in.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Anna at the grave site. Jessop stands beside her. Also we recognize the Aide and the Nurse. And a few die-hard Vultures.

The PREACHER intones the last rites.

PREACHER O God, whose mercies cannot be numbered. Accept our prayers on behalf of the soul of thy servant departed, and grant him an entrance into the land of light and joy, in the fellowship of thy saints, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Preacher nods to Anna and she steps forward to lay the first flowers.

Jessop follows with a bouquet of flowers and then the Vultures place theirs.

The crowd dissipates into their waiting cars, casting suspicious looks over their shoulders toward Anna.

Jessop leads her to the Mercedes limo and they get in. The chauffeur closes their doors and gets in.

INT. JESSOP'S LIMO - DAY

They are travelling through the city.

ANNA No reception? No Wake? JESSOP This is the way he wanted it. Anonymously as possible. I had to talk him into a proper headstone.

Jessop reaches down and picks up a small briefcase. He opens it and withdraws an envelope, hands it to Anna.

JESSOP (CONT'D) Now Anna. As sole legal counsel and friend to your Grandfather for the last 20 years, he has chosen me as his Executor.

Anna opens the envelope, withdraws the 2 documents. She scans thru the top one.

JESSOP (CONT'D)

Fortunately, this is a living will, so it becomes effective immediately upon issuance of death certificate. No need to wait for probate. As you'll see there, the bulk of his estate including the house and personal effects will go to various children's charities. But he left you the contents of a safety deposit box, which as you can see there, is at a bank in San Francisco. And that's the extent of it. And those poor vultures will get diddly.

Anna pores over the document.

ANNA And how about you?

JESSOP Mr. Porter has left me more than adequately compensated.

ANNA A safety deposit box. Have any idea what's in it?

JESSOP Indeed I don't. I'll need your signature on both copies and you'll keep one for yourself.

Jessop withdraws a pen, gives it a twist and hands it to Anna.

JESSOP (CONT'D) However, I'm inclined to think the contents of that box will leave you well provided for. You know, Mr. Porter was keenly interested in your welfare, even though he preferred to keep his distance from you.

ANNA

Why?

JESSOP I asked him that once myself. He said it was to protect you.

Anna smiles ruefully. Signs the papers, as Jessop points out the lines and x's.

ANNA

From what?

JESSOP He wouldn't say.

ANNA And you've been watching over him, watching over me.

JESSOP Something like that.

ANNA So you know all about me?

JESSOP We haven't been stalking you. But we do think you should dump your fiance.

ANNA

Uh huh.

The limo pulls up in front of Anna's apartment building.

Anna hands the signed document to Jessop.

JESSOP Anna, if you need anything, have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me. Any time. Seriously. I'll help in any way I can. ANNA Thanks. Bye Mr. Jessop.

She gets out.

JESSOP Good luck, Ms. Porter.

Anna watches the limo as it drives away, looks up at her apartment building.

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Anna sits on her couch, contemplating her grandfather's will. She fingers a safe deposit box key in her hand.

She sadly looks around the room.

There's a wall unit in the living room. Wires hang loose where a TV and home theatre components used to be. Some pictures and artwork are missing from the walls and the bookshelves are emptier, leaving a conspicuous collection of ORIGAMI animals and figurines.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anna lies alone in the king-size bed, unable to sleep, pondering an origami camel in her hand, then unfolds it.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Anna in bed, asleep on her side. Her eyes blink open, wide.

There's someone in bed with her, behind her, covers obscuring his face.

She sits up turns over and pulls the covers down --

ANNA

Brendan?

It's Grandpa! He turns toward her.

PORTER

Save them!

Anna bolts out of bed in horror, reels back against the wall.

Porter slowly sits up, reaches out to her with long bony fingers.

PORTER (CONT'D) Stop the curse. It falls to you.

Terrified, Anna stares into his haunted, pleading eyes.

Grandpa BURSTS INTO FLAME! Spontaneous combustion!

Anna freaks, scrambles back. The fire quickly spreads across the bed and to the whole room.

The bedroom doorway at the other end of the long room is open - on the other side, brilliant white light, somehow inviting, somehow promising safety.

Anna makes a dash for the doorway as the walls and ceiling ignite around her, creating a hellish inferno.

As she gets to the doorway, a solid, metal plated door SLAMS SHUT and locks!

THE KEY! -- plain, silver, unadorned. It's hanging on its special hook on a carved wooden plaque -- on a far wall.

She looks back at Grandpa - on fire, still reaching for her.

Anna attempts to reach through the flames. Her clothes catch fire and she starts to burn...

She gasps and screams, quickly rolls onto the floor...

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - DAY

... Anna wakes up sweating, panicked. Looks around. She's back in her bed, alone. Thank God.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Tricia's VW Beetle pulls up to the drop off curb.

INT. TRICIA'S CAR - DAY

Anna's in the passenger seat, not excited about her impending trip. Tricia attempts to cheer her up.

TRICIA ... Yeah, but if he was that rich, I bet he left something really good in that box. Oh Anna I so envy you. San Francisco. I love that city. You should stay, check it out. Yeah, well there's also a chance there's nothing more than sentimental value in that box. As much as I'd like to take time off and see San Fran, I'll be back at work Monday morning, filling in little boxes and columns with numbers.

TRICIA I don't know. Somehow, I can feel this is all going to be a great new beginning for you. You know? Can't you feel it?

ANNA Yeah, I guess so. Yeah, you're right. New beginnings.

They hug and Tricia gives her a peck on the cheek.

TRICIA That's the spirit! Call me when you get there ok? Call me, text me, email me, facebook me. Promise?

Anna gets out, grabs her overnight bag from the back seat.

ANNA I promise. Thanks Tricia. I love you , you're so awesome. You take care.

TRICIA Love you. Do everything I wouldn't do.

ANNA Oh, I will.

Anna shuts the car door, enters the airport.

INT. PASSENGER JET - DAY

Mid-flight. Anna sits in an aisle seat, folding a piece of paper - it's a ripped page from a magazine.

Across the aisle, a 3 year old girl is being ornery, screaming and crying. Her mother seems helpless to control her. 3 YEAR OLD No! No! No!

Surrounding passengers turn their heads and scowl, or shake their heads and roll their eyes.

MOTHER Stop it! Just stop it!

Anna reaches across the aisle and hands something to the child - it's an ORIGAMI SWAN.

The child stops, looks at it in wonder, smiles. Anna smiles. The mother smiles back in gratitude.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT - DAY

Anna's plane emerges from the gloomy gray overcast sky and lands on the tarmac.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT - LATER

Anna wheels her small overnight bag up to a taxi. The driver puts the bag in the trunk and they both get in, drive off.

INT. BANK VAULT - DAY

A key goes into the lock of a safety deposit box, unlocks it. Another key goes into a second lock, unlocks it.

A middle aged woman Bank Employee removes the box from its hole in the vault and gives it to Anna, then steps out and unlocks a private booth for her.

Anna steps into the booth.

INT. BANK BOOTH

Anna opens the box.

It contains several documents and some family jewelry.

Anna flips through the documents -- property titles, stock certificates - thousands of shares of blue chip companies, including 50,000 shares of Microsoft.

Anna likes that.

ANNA

Okay!

Anna finds a plain white envelope, with a loose pencil scrawl that reads: LOCKER 927.

Anna tears open the envelope - a key slides into her hand, along with a card - A-1 FRANCISCO SELF STORAGE. It's in San Francisco.

ANNA (CONT'D) This the key, Grandpa?

She examines the key and contemplates. It's similar to the one in her dream, but smaller.

EXT. SELF-STORAGE BUILDING - DAY

A gloomy, gray day.

A faded and weathered century-old, 10 story brick and stone building in a shabby and old area near the docks. The windows have long been boarded up. There's a faded awning over the loading dock - "A-1 FRANCISCO SELF STORAGE.

A taxi rolls up and lets Anna out. She has a large shoulder bag with her.

She looks up at the building. Carved in the stone on the side of the building -- "Argyle Building"

She steps up a short flight of stairs and opens the heavy metal door, enters.

INT. STORAGE BUILDING

The loading bay/reception area is dusty and dim. There is a bank of old tv monitors in the office behind the reception counter. One of them is zapping with static interference.

Anna steps up to the reception desk. No one around.

ANNA Hello? Hello?

She spots a buzzer button on the desk, hits it. A blast of BUZZER echoes throughout the building.

SULLY

Help you?

Anna spins at the voice --

SULLY (45), the creepy and slovenly building security guy looms behind her. His name is on his uniform shirt patch. A ring of keys attached to his belt.

Anna fishes through her purse, finds the locker keys and number.

ANNA I need to go through some stuff in locker, ah... 927.

Sully shuffles into the office and around the other side of the counter.

SULLY 927? You sure?

ANNA

I'm sure.

SULLY Ninth floor?

ANNA I suppose ninth floor.

SULLY Most of those lockers are vacant. Except for the long-timers.

Sully punches up something on his computer.

ANNA

Yeah, well.

SULLY I've worked here 10 years and I've never seen anybody open that locker.

ANNA

Uh huh?

SULLY Lessee... Ok. Seems it's all paid up. Automatic payments from a numbered account. Good to go.

ANNA

Great.

Sully gestures.

SULLY

I.D.

ANNA

What?

SULLY I.D. Y'know. Security?

Anna reluctantly digs out her drivers license and hands it to him. He studies it, eyes her. It makes her uncomfortable.

SULLY (CONT'D) New York. This is a New York address.

ANNA Yes, just visiting. Can I have that back please?

Sully hands it to her, glances at the wall clock - 4:00 - and spins around the sign-in sheet.

SULLY Print name, time in, signature.

Anna signs in. Sully gives her a lecherous look-over.

SULLY (CONT'D)

Closing time is 7 pm. Secure lockup and lights out. So you stay one second past 7 means you want to stay all night. Who knows, maybe you want to stay all night?

ANNA

No thanks.

She finishes signing in.

SULLY New York City, huh? You go to clubs? Huh? I bet you go to clubs?

ANNA Uh no. I don't go to clubs.

SULLY Online? You go online?

Anna looks at him dully. Sully chuckles snidely.

She grabs her bag, spins and heads toward the open freight elevator. The doors are open.

SULLY (CONT'D) Watch that elevator. Got a mind of its own. Just keep your finger on the button until you want it to stop.

ANNA

Thanks.

Anna spots a row of hand trollies near the elevator. Thinks for a moment, grabs one and wheels it into the elevator.

She closes the double wooden gates.

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR

Anna hits the up button. The old lift groans and shudders to life, slow and rickety as it ascends.

Anna watches the floors go slowly by. Each floor reveals dimly lit corridors of lockers -- rows of boxes containing the secret remnants of people's lives.

For some reason, the 6th floor is unlit. Anna strains to see in the darkness beyond the bars of the elevator gate.

As the elevator passes the 8th floor, a LITTLE ASIAN GIRL (10) crosses, down the dim hall. She's dressed in long skirt and apron, from a long-ago time. She stops for a second, then ducks behind a row of lockers.

Anna does a double take - did she just see that? Anna releases the up button and the elevator shudders to a stop.

Anna looks down the long corridor, listens -- just the SOUND of WIND HOWLING FAINTLY outside and the BUZZING of fluorescent lights.

After a moment, Anna presses the up button again and continues on her way.

As the elevator ascends and leaves floor 8 behind, JIAO, the little girl appears at the elevator gate, watches Anna go up.

Anna doesn't see her.

Anna releases the up button as the elevator becomes level with the 9th floor. A couple of adjustments, a couple of noisy shudders, and Anna opens the gates.

INT. 9TH FLOOR

She steps out, closes the gates behind her and looks at the directional sign: 920 - 940 that way.

Anna's every FOOTSTEP ECHOES down the long lonely corridor, crossing junctions of dimly lit rows of lockers.

She finds locker 927 - A double size walk-in. She unlocks the old padlock and lifts the roll-up metal door, with a loud CREAK AND CLATTER...

... Revealing another locker door, this one old wooden slats. Anna opens it.

INT. LOCKER 927

Light spills in from the hallway. Everything is dark and dusty. Anna cautiously steps into the small but deep room.

Anna pulls a portable battery powered lamp from her bag and turns it on, shines it around the locker, finds a place to hang it. It helps, but barely.

The locker is packed to the brim. A thick layer of dust covers everything:

Trunks, boxes, suitcases, heirlooms, covered furniture, filing cabinets, and much bric a brac, crammed haphazardly.

Anna breathes a deep sigh -- this is going to be time consuming.

INT. CORRIDOR 920-940

Anna moves a large box out into the corridor - a puff of dust in her face. She puts it down, sneezes. Opens it:

Household linens. Nothing of importance.

Anna sets it to one side.

INT. LOCKER 927

Anna looks around. Some sculptures. She's impressed. Some of this stuff could be worth something.

Anna cautiously squeezes her way in, peers past boxes, sees a stack of paintings standing against the wall, partially covered. She covers her face, pulls back the cover:

An original Pre-Raphaelite. Behind it, another classiclooking painting.

A NOISE - A locker door being closed, somewhere on the same floor.

Anna steps out of the locker, just as a MIDDLE AGED BUSINESSMAN in a dark coat and hat rounds the corner and brushes past the box of linen in the corridor.

ANNA

Hi, hey sorry about that box...

The guy keeps his head down, says nothing. He walks briskly down the hall and disappears around the corner as he heads to the elevator.

We HEAR the ELEVATOR START UP.

Anna whips out her smart-phone, checks the time.

It is 4:45 pm.

Anna starts in on the boxes crowding the floor. Opens one - old magazines and newspapers from the from the 50's. Anna casually flips through the top layers --

A quick glimpse of a newspaper with the headline "TRAGEDY!" -- with a b&w photo of a building.

Anna opens another box - books. Opens another -- more books.

Anna spots a small metal box, opens it. It contains a various assortment of small tools. She rummages through -- nothing of interest.

Anna opens a dusty trunk, kicking up a face full. The trunk contains old clothes. Women's clothes. She holds up a dress - 50's style, casual. Her size, even. She puts it back, digs thru the trunk a little more. Anna's intrigued.

Deep within the locker, 2 EYES WATCH HER intently. Then another pair of eyes.

Anna unaware of them, moves the trunk outside, separate from the linen box. This will be her "keeper" stuff.

There's a VAGUE MOVEMENT - deep in the back of the locker. Anna thinks she saw something. Shines a light there. Nothing.

Anna opens another trunk, recoils at the smell. Strong mothballs.

Men's clothes. In particular, a nice TWEED SUIT.

She leans back... bumps something with her head! A FISH MOUTH BEHIND HER OPENS -

-- STARTS SINGING! - "TAKE ME TO THE RIVER" - HORRIBLY!

It's one of those crazy wall-mounted singing fish. Somehow the batteries have lasted this long...

Anna tries to find a way to shut it off. It's annoying. Finally she finds the switch and turns it off.

She pauses and smiles. Turns it on again for a second. It brings back a memory --

EXT. CONEY ISLAND (FLASHBACK - 1980'S) - DAY

Little Anna is 3 years old. The singing fish is on the wall at a curio stand. Anna laughs like it's the funniest thing she's ever seen.

Grandfather Joseph Porter is now in his mid-60's. Happy that little Anna loves the singing fish, laughs along with her.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND - LATER

Grandfather shoots at mechanical ducks at a carnival booth. He wins a stuffed bunny (Pookie), which he gives to Little Anna.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND - LATER

Anna brushes a curtain aside and steps out of a photo booth as it deposits a photo strip in its slot.

Grandfather shows the pictures to Anna. Anna tears the strip and gives half of it to Grandfather. He is extremely touched by this. Smiles. A moment of true happiness in a mostly sad life.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Little Anna rides with Grandpa Porter in the back of a 1980's Cadillac limousine. She likes the ride, likes looking out the window.

EXT. ORPHANAGE - EVENING

The limousine drops Little Anna off at the orphanage.

A WOMAN is waiting. Anna gets out.

Grandpa stays inside the car, waves goodbye with a sad but affectionate smile. Anna waves back, also sad to say goodbye.

The woman takes her by the hand and leads her back to the building.

Little Anna watches as the limo pulls away.

INT. LOCKER 927

ANNA ponders the singing fish. It dawns on her:

ANNA Joe. Old Joe.

She puts the singing fish with the keeper stuff.

Anna opens another nondescript box, this one filled with various mementoes and bric-a-brac...

Anna picks up an ornately carved cigar box and opens it. It contains a few personal items - gold rings, pins, clips, a deck of playing cards with a different naked woman on every one.

There is also a NOTE and an old-fashion BRASS KEY.

Anna contemplates the key, pockets it, then reads the note:

"So long old pal. Hope you fare better than I. Elmer"

There's also a BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPH:

Two men in their 30's, standing proudly in front of the 9 storey Argyle building. This very building. A sign behind them proclaims: A & M GARMENT COMPANY LTD.

Both men are in business suits. They have their arms around each other. One man we recognise from the earlier family photos shown by Jessop: Joseph Porter, early 30's, tall, dressed in a tweed suit and more serious than the other, who is stockier, moustached and smiling proudly.

Written on the bottom of the photo: Joseph Asch, Elmer McMurtry, A & M Garment company est. 1953 As Anna pores over the photo, she has her back to the corridor... Standing there -- 2 Asian girls! -- JIAO and SOO-LIN (16) in 50's-era factory dress stare at Anna curiously. LIGHTS GO OUT. SHUT DOWN. Just her portable lamp glows. The ghost girls vanish. ANNA (CONT'D) Hev! (shouts) Hey!! Anna flips open her smart-phone. It shows the time - 6:45 not yet closing time. What the ...? ANNA (CONT'D) (shouts) Hey! Hey!! It's not seven yet! (to herself) Why you little creep. She rummages through her pockets finds the business card for the number downstairs. She dials the number... No answer. ANNA (CONT'D) Shit!

Anna grabs the portable lamp and scrambles out of the locker.

INT. CORRIDOR 920-940

Anna lightly heads back thru the darkened corridor, lighting her way with the portable lamp.

She lights her way to the elevator shaft. Shouts down the shaft.

ANNA (shouts) Hey! I'm still up here! It's not seven yet! Please turn the lights back on. Hey! Anybody down there? Hey! Idiot! I'm still here!

No answer. Just the silence and the wind howling down the shaft.
ANNA (CONT'D)

Shit!

Anna presses the elevator "call" button. Down below, the elevator jumps to life. Anna holds her finger on the button as the elevator slowly makes its way to her floor, GROANING AND SQUEALING. It SOUNDS vaguely like CHILDREN SCREAMING.

Anna releases the button. The elevator stops. Silence. Weird. Anna presses the button and the elevator GROANS to life again.

INT. ELEVATOR

Anna takes the slow and spooky ride down, elevator shuddering and groaning. As darkened floors go by, weird shapes seem to be moving in the shadows.

INT. MAIN FLOOR/RECEPTION AREA/LOADING BAY

Finally the bottom floor. Anna opens the gate and steps out.

TV monitors glow in the office/ reception area. Anna heads toward it, finds a light switch, flips it on... Light. Relief. She turns off her portable light.

Anna turns toward the exit door and jiggles the handle. No go. A strong locking mechanism on the door assures that.

Anna goes to the loading bay door, attempts to lift it. Securely locked.

There's a heavy door beside the freight elevator.

Anna opens it. It's a stairwell, leading up, and also down to a dank and dark basement...

Anna rejects that idea.

She closes the door, turns to the corridor.

INT. MAIN FLOOR CORRIDOR

Anna hurries down the main floor corridor. There's a fire exit sign at the end...

And a heavy door. Anna tries it. Firmly locked and secured.

INT. LOADING AREA

Frustrated, Anna bangs on the metal loading door with all her might and shouts:

ANNA Hey!! Help! Help! Help! Can anybody hear me?

EXT. SELF-STORAGE BUILDING - NIGHT

The night street is completely lifeless. The SOUND of Anna's POUNDING is too FAINT.

INT. LOADING AREA

Anna sighs and slumps to the floor, at her wits end.

She thinks for a moment, gets up and dashes back to the office.

INT. SULLY'S OFFICE

Anna quickly scans the office. It's a dishevelled sight - a disorganized slob works here.

ANNA Keys. Where did you leave your keys, Mr. Creepyguy?

No key hook to be seen, no obvious key spot. Anna puts down her portable light and rummages thru the papers and junk on top of the desk.

Nothing. Opens the drawers, rummages through them - a half full bottle of cheap bourbon and --

A stash of hard-core porn magazines... including some scary S&M bondage shit.

She slams the drawer shut and slumps into the desk chair.

Anna spots a yellowed list of phone numbers taped to the wall by the counter.

Anna scans the list, finds a number. Whips out her phone and calls. No answer.

Tries another number. No answer.

Anna spins around in the office chair, examines the monitors.

MONITORS -

Each monitor has a yellowed label of its floor number.

One monitor sees the entrance, loading dock and a piece of the street outside. It's night. Devoid of people or traffic.

The other monitors are dark... except for the 8th floor. There is a dim light, illuminating the corridor, deep at the far end. Some movement in the shadows!... What was that?

INT. OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Anna is on her phone to Tricia.

TRICIA (O.S.) Can you jimmy the lock or break it or something?

ANNA No, won't break.

TRICIA (0.S.) You sure there's no other door, a fire exit door, a back door...

ANNA

Tried them all. Oh God, this is so embarrassing. Can you believe this? This place is creeping me out. I don't wanna be here all night!

INTERCUT:

INT. JAZZ BAR - NIGHT

Tricia is sitting with friends at a late-nite jazz bar.

TRICIA Have you tried finding the home number of the security guard or the owner...

ANNA (O.S.) Been there, done that.

TRICIA Well honey, I think you're just going to have to wait it out and make the best of it... ANNA (O.S.) And this key! I found this key but what the hell does it open?

A JAZZ TRIO starts up.

M.C. (O.S.) Ladies and gentlemen, again let's give it up for The Ben Cotton Trio!

Applause.

TRICIA Well that may be your answer right there. Listen Anna, The band's back on and I'm here with someone...

ANNA (0.S.) Yeah, sorry Tricia. I caught you at a bad...

TRICIA It's ok. You hang in there. I'll call you in the morning ok?

ANNA (0.S.) Ok. Hey do everything I wouldn't do.

TRICIA Oh you bet I will!

Tricia turns to a good looking MAN next to her and smiles coyly. But he's oblivious, more into the band than her.

INT. OFFICE/RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

Anna is on her phone, sitting in Sully's chair.

FEMALE VOICE (0.S.) Ok, just sit tight. Can't promise you it's gonna be soon, it's kinda busy out there tonight. I'm not sure what we can do for you but we will send an officer around to take a look, ok?

EYES!!! -- on every monitor behind Anna! A different Asian girl in every one.

ANNA Ok great thanks. I appreciate it. Bye.

Anna hangs up, contemplates, unaware of the watching eyes. She gets up and leaves the office.

INT. MAIN FLOOR / RECEPTION AREA / LOADING BAY

Anna explores the reception area, finds the breaker panel on a wall. The floors are marked. She turns on the main floor, turns on the 9th floor.

Suddenly - STRANGE BANGING NOISES. Distant, but from within. As if someone is working away on one of the upper floors.

At first, Anna's too scared to investigate. But maybe it's something explain-able. It's gotta be. The BANGING STOPS.

She shouts up the freight elevator shaft.

ANNA Hello? Hello? Anyone up there?

The banging stops.

ANNA (CONT'D) Hello? Someone up there?

No answer.

Suddenly the elevator jumps to life. Goes up. Anna watches it go and listens intently, waits to see what happens next...

The elevator stops several floors up, but there's no subsequent sounds. No one loading, no one getting on.

ANNA (CONT'D) Hello? Hello! Anyone up there?

Anna presses the call button and the elevator descends.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Anna presses the button and the elevator goes up. Past every dimly lit, spooky floor. Did something move on Floor 3? She shines her portable light into the dark void, but it's nothing but locker corridors.

WHAMMM!! -- Something HEAVY SOUNDING, like a body, lands on top of the elevator.

Anna releases the button and looks up, gasps...

There's a dent in the ceiling!

The elevator continues upward.

WHAMMM!! -- Another body landing on the ceiling. Another dent.

Anna screams -- the elevator continues upward...

Presses the stop button, holds it hard. No effect.

She hits it repeatedly.

WHAMMM! WHAMMM! -- two more bodies, two more dents.

Anna can't stop the elevator...

Finally it SCREECHES to a grinding stop -- almost on the 9th floor. The elevator MOTOR WHINES desperately, then stops.

Anna struggles, lifts open the inner elevator gate, then manages to pull open the outer gate to the 9th floor, now level with her waist.

INT. 9TH FLOOR

Anna clambers up onto the floor, checks the top of the elevator, now visible as it's stuck halfway:

No bodies. Nothing there. However, the elevator rails are bent out of shape. The guide wheels are firmly stuck.

Anna is unnerved and creeped out, heads back to her locker. A semblance of refuge.

Anna stops, looks up, startled to see - little Jiao stands halfway down the corridor, looking at her, shyly.

ANNA Oh! Hey, you scared me! Hi. Hi. What's your name? What are you doing here?

Anna moves toward her. The little girl turns and runs away.

ANNA (CONT'D) It's ok, I won't hurt you! Hey... Hey, come back...

The girl runs toward the end of the corridor, disappears around a corner.

Anna runs after her, stops as she comes up on the corner. Where did she go?

> ANNA (CONT'D) (calls out) Hey... I won't hurt you!

Anna wonders to herself. Did she just imagine that?

INT. CORRIDOR 920-940

Anna heads back to her locker.

INT. LOCKER 927

Anna sits in the locker, collects her thoughts, looks around the dim room. Her portable light is back in its hanging position.

Anna opens a wooden crate:

Packed antique china.

She turns her attention to an antique roll-up desk. She moves some boxes out of the way, tries to open the roll-up cover, but it's locked.

The tool box. Anna retrieves a large screwdriver.

Anna pries open the flimsy lock, lifts the roll-up cover, sees:

Paperwork and stationery supplies. Neatly organized.

There's a stack of blank stationery with the letterhead:

"A & M Garment Company. From the desk of Joseph Asch"

There are opened envelopes containing letters, addressed to Joseph Asch.

One envelope is from MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY. - Addressed to Joseph Asch and Elmer McMurtry.

Anna opens the letter:

It's an insurance settlement - for business loss and damage. The amount is \$970,000. Dated 1954.

More letters, bills and invoices to Joseph Asch.

INT. BATHROOM

It's a dingy, 2 cubicle bathroom. At the sink, Anna runs water into an antique china cup and gulps down some water.

She looks at her haggard face in the mirror. Grabs a paper towel, runs it under the water, then over her face.

Her PHONE BEEPS. Anna whips it out.

It's a message from Tricia -- "Hope ur alright??"

Anna hesitates, but texts back:

"I'll live. Thx! :) "

PHONE BEEPS - follow up message from Tricia: "Ok. Call you tmoro am. Gnite. :)"

Anna has a thought - scrolls through her contacts to a recent entry:

- Jessop. Anna presses the call button.

EXT. CHARTER BOAT - DAY

It's a beautiful day on the water near a Greek Island coastline.

Jessop, enjoying himself, in a Panama hat and shirtless, answers his phone. He has a rod and reel in front of him and tall, fruity cocktail beside him -- as do several other fellow tourists on the small fishing charter.

> JESSOP Anna! How are you? No, no. It's 9 am here. I'm in Santorini. (a beat) What?? Where?

INT. BATHROOM

Anna turns and leans on the sink, with her back to the mirror.

ANNA San Francisco. It's a Public Storage Building on Greene and Water Street. I'm locked in.

JESSOP (O.S.) Did you say Greene Street? ANNA Yeah. Near the docks.

JESSOP (O.S.) The Argyle Building?

ANNA

I dunno. Wait a minute, yeah. I think it is the Argyle building. Why?

INTERCUT:

EXT. CHARTER BOAT - DAY

Jessop is suddenly serious.

JESSOP What are you doing there?

ANNA (O.S.) The safety deposit box. There was an envelope with a key. Y'know, maybe the key that Mr. Porter, um my grandfather, y'know...

Jessop takes a minute to process that.

ANNA (CONT'D) Hello? You there?

JESSOP Yes, I'm here.

ANNA (O.S.) It led me to a locker in this building. Mr. Jessop, my Grandfather changed his name, didn't he? It used to be Asch?

JESSOP

Yes, Joseph Asch. There was a big scandal of some sort, so he changed the family name.

ANNA (O.S.) When was this?

JESSOP Sometime in the 50's, I believe. Long before I took over. ANNA He owned this building? The Argyle Building?

JESSOP Yes, he bought it sometime in the mid-50's. Apparently was undervalued. He renovated and sold it to a self storage company, made a hefty profit. It all started his career in real estate development.

ANNA (O.S.) But before that he was in the garment business?

JESSOP In the beginning, yes. He was partnered with uh,...

ANNA McMurtry. Elmer McMurtry.

JESSOP Yes, that rings a bell.

ANNA Do you know what became of him?

JESSOP

I heard it was suicide, related to that scandal business. (a beat) Anna. Leave that building. Get what you need and get out.

INT. BATHROOM

Anna on phone, her back to the mirror -- reflected in the mirror are a group of ASIAN GIRLS! -- staring at her curiously. Anna is facing them, but doesn't see them.

ANNA I can't. I can't get out. That's what I'm trying to tell you...

JESSOP Anna, try to find a way...

The connection is lost -- NO RECEPTION.

ANNA Hello? You there? Damn. She HEARS FAINT HAMMERING outside. Anna pockets her phone and opens the bathroom door.

INT. 9TH FLOOR

Beside the bathroom door is the door to a stairwell. The HAMMERING comes from somewhere on the other side.

INT. STAIRWELL

Anna steps out onto the 9th floor landing, follows the HAMMERING SOUNDS down to the 8th floor.

She opens the door to the 8th.

INT. 8TH FLOOR

Anna steps into the darkened 8th floor. The HAMMERING is much louder, somewhere on this floor. There's a dim light, coming from an unseen source, somewhere on the floor.

Anna uses her phone to light the way.

ANNA Hello? Anybody here?

The HAMMERING STOPS.

ANNA (CONT'D) Hello? I just need some help here. Hello?

Anna searches the corridors. Sees a shadow darting at the end of a corridor.

Anna runs to the end, looks around the corner. Nothing.

ANNA (CONT'D) Hey! Hello?

Anna spots an electrical cord running from the ceiling to a locker -- door is open, light shining out. Curiouser and curiouser.

ANNA (CONT'D) Hey, is somebody in there?

Anna walks up to the locker. Nobody inside ...

Something looms behind her - a scary looking bearded man!

She spins, screams!

He's not a ghost. He's real. Appears friendly.

LIONEL Would you like some tea?

He's LIONEL, a squatter, 60-something, scruffy and so pale he's almost translucent. He's dressed in a genuine Admiral's uniform jacket, circa 1940's.

He steps into his locker and begins to busy himself. Anna stays frozen to the spot.

INT. SQUATTER'S LOCKER

It's more of a tiny furnished apartment than a locker. It's tidy but eccentric and looks lived in for years. Various bric-a-brac and weird accoutrements hanging, a mattress, a bookshelf stocked with every size of book, an eating area with hotplate, basin, cooking utensils hanging and a well stocked shelf of cans and dry goods. A few plastic plates, cups and saucers.

There's a variety of throw pillows to sit on. Fancy antique lamps provide the illumination.

You get the sense a lot of this stuff has come from other lockers in the building -- which it indeed has.

Lionel turns to Anna, gentle, friendly, endearing.

LIONEL Come come. Sit, sit.

Anna cautiously steps in, ready to bolt.

The squatter (LIONEL) pours some water from a jug into a pot and sets it on an electric hot plate. He then sets out a place setting on a small, low table (actually a chess board resting on an apple crate)

> LIONEL (CONT'D) Lionel Patowski. You can call me Lionel.

He holds out a hand to shake. She doesn't. He waits for her to answer.

ANNA Oh sorry. Anna.

LIONEL

Anna. Anna. Long time since I've had a guest for tea, Anna. Long time. Very long time. Soo Lin will be delighted when I tell her I had a guest for tea. She likes to see me happy. Yes she does, she does, she does. This makes me happy. You are a nice young lady. Very nice. Very nice.

ANNA

Thank you.

LIONEL

If I'd known you were coming, I would have put on a more suitable jacket. Oh yes. My Saville Row blazer. Oh yes. Soo Lin likes that one the best.

ANNA Oh. So were you in the navy?

Lionel looks at his uniform, realizes, giggles uncontrollably. Imagining himself as an Admiral.

ANNA (CONT'D) Lionel, you live here?

LIONEL

Oh yes. It's not much, but it's where I hang my hat.

Lionel opens a package of biscuits, sets some out on a plastic picnic plate and offers it up to her. Anna is wary.

LIONEL (CONT'D) They're fine. They're good. Don't worry. I know.

ANNA Lionel, I need to get out of here. All the doors are locked. Do you know how I can get out?

LIONEL No way out. No way out.

ANNA Are all the doors locked?

LIONEL Yes, all locked. ANNA There's no back door, side door that can be...

LIONEL All locked. All the doors. All locked. Need the key.

ANNA

Lionel, do you know where the keys are? Is there a spare set anywhere?

LIONEL No key. No key. The doors were locked. Very sad. Can't get out. Have to jump.

ANNA Have to jump?

LIONEL Very sad. Have a biscuit. Go ahead. They're good.

She takes a small nibble as she begins to accept her situation.

ANNA How long have you been here?

LIONEL

Here?

ANNA In this locker?

LIONEL This locker?

ANNA

Yes, this...

LIONEL Since the beginning.

ANNA The beginning?

LIONEL

Yes. The tea's ready. It's a rare blend. It's from the Philippines. Number 213 has a stock of many fine teas. ANNA What do you mean number 213?

LIONEL

Number 213.

She doesn't get it. He points to his locker number... 835.

LIONEL (CONT'D) Number 213

ANNA

Oh. Yes. So you just take stuff from other people's lockers?

LIONEL

(defensive) No.

He kicks a small sledgehammer and broken padlock under a footstool. Not very subtle.

ANNA Lionel, have you been in my locker?

LIONEL No... What number are you?

ANNA

927.

Lionel looks up, eyes wide. His friendly attitude completely changes.

LIONEL Why are you in 927?

ANNA Lionel have you been in number 927?

LIONEL

No. Tea is finished.

Lionel takes her cup and throws out the remaining tea. He scoops the remaining biscuits back into the box.

ANNA Oh, ok. I'll be leaving then. Nice to meet you. You make lovely tea.

Lionel doesn't say anything, turns his back to her and busies himself.

Shocked and bemused, Anna gladly leaves.

INT. LOCKER 927

Anna checks her phone - the time is 1:37 AM. Flips it shut.

Anna sits on the floor, goes through a box of PHOTOGRAPHS:

Family photographs. Her family by blood. Not a smile to be found among them.

Contemplating the pictures but feeling exhausted, Anna starts to drift off to sleep -- then suddenly her eyes blink open as:

Anna HEARS SCRATCHING... behind the paintings against the back wall.

Anna squeezes her way to them, moves aside a large painting, revealing an OLD WOODEN DOOR, singed with burn marks and damage. No handle, just an old-fashioned keyhole.

She tries opening the door. No go. She needs a key.

Anna bends down and looks through the keyhole.

POV - KEYHOLE:

As expected, it's completely dark. Anna can't see a thing ...

AN EYE BLINKS OPEN!! - on the other side of the keyhole. An ASIAN girl!... who then reels back in a silent scream of terror! It's the ghost of WEI (14), dressed in period factory garb.

Anna gasps and falls back!... WTF!!!

Fear paralyzes her - she stares in horror at the door.

Suddenly scrambles to her feet, skedaddles out of the locker, scared shitless.

INT. CORRIDOR 920 - 929

Then, Anna HEARS A CLAMOR somewhere on the floor. She looks toward the end of her corridor when...

Rounding a corner, another ASIAN TEENAGE GIRL runs around the corner, toward Anna. Her hair and clothes are on fire! Her expression is pure terror and her screams are silent.

Anna screams and jumps out of the way!

The girl runs past her and jumps up, through the wall at the end.

Anna still smells the burning hair from the faint smoke, still lingering.

Paralyzed with fear for a moment then runs...

INT. 9TH FLOOR

Anna sprints to the elevator, presses the button.

The ELEVATOR MOTOR WHINES, but it does not budge. Still stuck halfway up the 9th floor.

ANNA Help help! Somebody help!

She crumples to the floor in fear. Shivering and whimpering. Anna pulls out her phone and calls the cops again.

> ANNA (CONT'D) Oh hi. I called a few hours ago --I'm the one trapped in the public storage building on Greene Street. Yeah. They said they'd send someone by?... They did? No, I didn't hear them. Banging on the door? I didn't... No my life isn't in danger, it's just that, well ok yes, maybe it is in danger... Uh, by um, well there's an old guy in here... No he hasn't... Look, could you please just... Hello? Hello?

Anna looks at her phone. No reception. BATTERY IS DANGEROUSLY LOW.

ANNA (CONT'D) Shit! Shit, shit, shit!!

She pockets the phone.

She feels something in her pocket, slowly withdraws the old BRASS KEY. She knows what lock its for. But does she really want to open it?

INT. LOCKER 927 - MOMENTS LATER

Anna looks into her locker. Steels herself. She's going to get to the bottom of this. Be brave.

Anna cautiously makes her way to the secret door.

Anna musters up the courage to put the key in the keyhole, turns it - clunk! - unlocked. She pulls on the key and door, opens it slowly.

No Asian girl. It's a tiny empty closet -- but with an open trap door on the floor:

Anna sees a small wooden staircase that leads down into the dark.

Anna shines the light from her phone and cautiously steps down thru the trap door.

INT. SECRET STAIRWELL

Anna gets to the bottom of the staircase, 8th floor. A wooden panel / secret door. Anna presses it and it swings open on SQUEAKY HINGES - into another dark closet. Another old wooden door, with a similar keyhole --

A light beams through it!

Anna hears MUFFLED, DISTANT MALE VOICES beyond the door.

Anna braces herself for a look, then bends down, peers through the keyhole -- absolutely mind-blown to see:

INT. MCMURTRY'S OFFICE - DAY

It's the office of company co-owner ELMER McMURTRY (early 30's), circa 1950's. It's a smallish cramped office, dominated by a large oak desk.

McMurtry, the stocky moustached one, sits in his chair, smokes a cigar while a sober-faced JOSEPH ASCH (early 30's), tall, thin and dressed in his distinctive tweed suit pores over (forged) immigration papers.

Across from McMurty sits HENRY CHAN, (40's, Chinese) kinda sleazy looking.

SOUNDS AND VOICES STILL SEEM MUFFLED AND DISTANT:

CHAN

Papers very good. Just like real U.S. Immigration. No difference. Very good work.

ASCH

Yes, very convincing.

McMurtry punches some figures into his calculator, pulls the lever and a piece of paper with the total spits out.

MCMURTRY So a hundred twenty dollars per girl plus finders fee makes it one thousand, three hundred ten. That sound about right?

McMurtry starts writing a cheque.

ASCH They all have experience?

CHAN

Oh yes. All very experienced. Tiny hands. Very good for special stitching.

ASCH Yes. Very good.

MCMURTRY Same as always? Pan Pacific Imports?

CHAN Yes. Pan Pacific. Very good.

McMurtry hands Chan a cheque and they all stand, shake hands.

MCMURTRY Thank you, Mr. Chan. Until next time. Let's see what you brought us, shall we?

McMurtry flashes a sleazy grin to Asch, who does not return the same, instead a look of reluctant tolerance.

All the men walk out the door, into the office hallway.

INT. SECRET STAIRWELL

Anna's mind is reeling by what she's just seen and heard. She looks at the key in her hand. Then unlocks this bottom door. Cautiously opens it...

It's all completely boarded up. No McMurtry's office.

Anna presses on the wood, tries to find an opening. There is none.

Anna closes the door, turns back through the secret door at the back of the closet and up the little stairway to the trap door.

INT. BUILDING STAIRWELL

Anna heads down the stairs to the 8th floor. She brings her portable light with her.

INT. CORRIDOR 821 - 840

Anna rounds the corner and sidles up to locker 827. Not locked. She rolls up the metal door, then opens the slatted wooden door. Completely vacant.

INT. LOCKER 827

Anna steps inside. She shines her light around, sees the back wall, boarded up. Is there a door behind those boards?

LIONEL Mr. McMurtry's office.

She spins. Lionel is at the entrance. Wearing the Admiral's hat, but not the jacket, just a ratty Grateful Dead tye-dyed t-shirt.

LIONEL (CONT'D) You shouldn't be in here. Employees not allowed. You'll be fired.

ANNA Yeah well, I'm not an employee. What do you know about Mr. McMurtry? LIONEL

Very bad man. And Mr. Asch too. Very bad men. They left them behind. People died!

ANNA What are you talking about?

LIONEL Very sad. Very bad. You shouldn't be in here.

ANNA Why? Did something happen here long ago Lionel?

LIONEL Something very bad.

ANNA What happened?

LIONEL Something very bad.

ANNA Is there something behind that wall?

Lionel gasps in fear and scrambles off down the corridor.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Hey!

Anna steps up to the back wall of the locker, runs her hands over the boards. She finds one slightly loose.

She manages to get a hand hold and tugs it with all her might. After some effort and sweat, rusty nails SCREECH in protest as she pries a board away from the back wall...

There is indeed an old wooden door behind the boards.

Anna can now get a firm grip on the other boards. Struggles mightily, pries another one away, again with a loud SCREECH.

INT. LOCKER 827 - LATER

Anna, covered in dust and sweat, pries the last of the planks away from the back wall...

Revealing an old wooden CLOSET DOOR, also singed and burned in spots.

She takes the old brass key from her pocket and with a resounding click, unlocks the door.

INT. SECRET STAIRWELL

Anna slowly ascends the stairs, flashlight leading the way.

Through the trap door to the top closet door. Locked. A beam of light shines through the keyhole.

Anna braces herself, then looks through the keyhole:

INT. BATHROOM (1953)

Anna amazed to see -- not her locker but a small bathroom.

INT. SECRET STAIRWELL

Anna unlocks the closet door and opens it.

INT. BATHROOM (1953)

Anna steps into the small bathroom, tries to comprehend what she's seeing.

She cautiously approaches the bathroom door... Opens it:

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

Anna observes in wide eyed wonder and disbelief. Is she in a dream?

SOUNDS AND VOICES ARE FAINT AND HOLLOW -- from a distant time.

The supervisor MARY WONG (40's) has a desk by the bathroom door. She's an Asian woman, gaunt, stern, humourless, the wicked witch of the east. She rises...

She looks right at Anna. Then gets up from her chair and closes the bathroom door. No, she doesn't see Anna at all.

Anna looks around, takes it all in:

It's a garment factory. Specializing in women's dresses, sweaters and blouses. Dress and casual wear.

The freight elevator arrives. McMurtry and Asch step off with 10 new Asian girls - recruits. Mary Wong addresses them.

MARY WONG

(in Chinese) If you arrive late, you will be docked a day's pay. If you miss a day, you will be deported along with the rest of your family. No one is to use the elevator during working hours. The doors will be locked at precisely 7 am when you start work. They will remain locked until 7 pm when you leave. Girls have been known to sneak out to take breaks or even steal clothes. This is why we lock it.

Asch nods, holds up -- The Key.

McMurtry inspects the girls one by one, eyes the girls up and down, barely concealing his sleazy desire.

MARY WONG (CONT'D) (in English) Thank you Mr. Asch. Thank you Mr. McMurtry. (in Chinese) Girls, thank your bosses.

GIRLS (obediently, in English) Thank you Mr. Asch. Thank you Mr. McMurtry.

MARY WONG (in Chinese) Very good. Now, come this way.

Mary Wong leads the girls toward the factory floor as McMurtry and Asch take the elevator back down.

Anna observes:

About 200 Asian girls and young women laboring intensely --

Rows of sewing machines, cutting tables, etc -- a young Asian girl at every one.

Some girls are wheeling carts, supplying cut fabric or moving finished garments between stations.

Mary Wong patrols the rows. She stops at a Jiao's station.

MARY WONG (CONT'D) (in Chinese) This stitching is sloppy. Look at this! It is unacceptable! Undo that and do it again! You are wasting company time with your sloppy work!

Poor Jiao cowers in shame. Mary moves on, her new recruits obediently follow.

Everyone is oblivious to Anna. She's the ghost here.

But Jiao sees her!... Anna and Jiao stare at each other a moment, then Jiao resumes her work, stealing an occasional glance.

Mary Wong stops at another station. HU SHI SHEN's. A shy and demure girl of 15.

MARY WONG (CONT'D) (in Chinese) You forgot the cuff. Forgetful.

Soo Lin restrains her contempt as she approaches with a trolley cart, collects the finished blouses from Hu Shi Shen's station. Soo Lin shoots her a sympathetic look. Hu Shi Shen betrays a faint smile and Soo Lin moves on...

... Toward the freight elevator. There is a stacking area where girls pack the garments for shipping. Boxes marked A & M GARMENT COMPANY.

There are boxes and rolls of fresh fabrics near the elevators, beside rows of cutting tables, manned by older teenage girls and young women.

The rolls are marked "Brushed Rayon" and we may notice a "flammable" indicator.

The elevator arrives back. An OFFICE BOY (17) steps out with papers for Mary Wong. Just then, Soo-Lin wheels a cart past him. They exchange an affection smile and sneak a little finger hook.

Anna sees this.

Office Boy walks to Mary Wong's desk and gives her the papers. She scans them and pins them to a bulletin board.

Office Boy heads back to the elevator. Anna follows him.

INT. ELEVATOR

On the ride down, Anna studies the Office Boy.

Office boy feels a weird chill. Looks around, sees nothing.

INT. A & M GARMENT COMPANY - DAY

Office Boy steps off the elevator and Anna follows, gliding behind him.

He walks down the hallway various offices - Accounting, Shipping, Design, etc. A busy enterprise.

Office Boy walks to his tiny, cramped room, just as a postman arrives with a fistful of mail for him, then leaves. Office boy sorts the mail.

McMurtry walks through Anna! -- momentarily giving her a creepy chill.

McMurtry enters Asch's office, right next to Office Boy's room. Anna follows.

INT. ASCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Asch is sitting at his desk, on the phone, smoking a cigarette when McMurtry walks in.

ASCH Yes, those orders will be ready for you by Friday. Good, good. Bye Frank.

McMurtry has a cigar in his mouth, slaps a profit statement in front of Asch. Asch looks at the number and grins.

> ASCH (CONT'D) Not bad. Not bad.

MCMURTRY Every month has been better than the last since last November. Believe me now? It's all about keeping costs down.

Something catches Anna's eye -- a small wooden plaque by the door, with a single hook. On the hook -- The Key!!

She tries to grab it. But her hand goes right through it.

Anna is stymied. So what now?

McMurtry breezes out as Asch looks down at the numbers.

Anna watches Asch. Her grandfather.

ANNA

(whispers) Grandpa, you should be ashamed.

Asch looks up, as if he heard her. He shoves the profit statement aside and picks up the phone, resumes his work.

Anna sits in a vacant chair, watches him with a mix of curiosity and pity.

ASCH

(into phone) Yes, I'm going over these cost reports. Yes, seems there's a discrepancy with the brushed rayon supplier. Are you sure those figures are right? They seem high. Yes. Yes, please look into that. We have to get our costs lower. Yes.

He hangs up and starts writing in a ledger, boring clerical stuff.

Anna feels very tired. Very very tired. She slumps in the chair and begins to nod off...

INT. ASCH'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Anna opens her eyes - Old man Porter is directly in front of her, with the haunted, beseeching look in his eyes.

PORTER (hoarse whisper) Stop the curse! Find the key!

He points to the keyhook plaque. The Key is gone.

INT. LOCKER 833

DISTANT CLANGING AND BANGING -- Anna awakens with a start. She's on the floor of a darkened locker. She fumbles for her phone, turns it on and shines its light around --

She's in a different locker. Somebody's old stockpile of guns and ammo. Wooden boxes marked explosive. Cobwebs and dust indicate it's been here untended for years.

She gets up, can't get out. Locker door is closed and locked.

Anna desperately bangs on the door.

ANNA

Help! Help!!

After a while, the metal roll-up door rattles, then some METALLIC BANGING IS HEARD, then the roll-up door opens.

Lionel is there with his small sledgehammer. Now wearing a golfer's cap, plaid sport slacks and a polo shirt.

LIONEL Mr. Asch's office.

INT. CORRIDOR 820-840

Anna steps out, confused, exasperated.

ANNA How do you know all this? What's going on in this place?

LIONEL You shouldn't be in there. You'll be fired.

Lionel closes the roll-up door. This locker is immediately next to Lionel's open locker.

ANNA

I know. I shouldn't be in there. I don't know how the hell I got in there! Lionel, tell me. You know all about this place don't you? You've been seeing this stuff for years. I'm not dreaming this. There's spirits here aren't there?

LIONEL

Echoes of things past. Echoes, echoes, echoes. The past never leaves. It's all around us. We are between dimensions here. Everything there is still here. Still here. There is still here. (points up) They're stuck here! They need to get out! I can't get them out. I would if I could, I would if I could, I would if I could... ANNA Get out of that factory room? With the key, right? The key in Mr. Asch's office?

LIONEL

Yes, yes, yes, yes! The key. But not in Mr. Asch's office. Not in Mr. McMurtry's office. It's gone, it's gone, it's gone.

ANNA

Yeah well, I think I'm supposed to look for it.

She turns to leave. Lionel stops her.

LIONEL

Do you want some baked beans? I have Heinz baked beans. Or corn? Green Giant? It's good.

ANNA

Yeah, no. I gotta get back. Y'know, look for that key, right?

Anna heads toward locker 827.

INT. LOCKER 827

Anna retrieves her portable light. Pauses to contemplate the open closet door. Gently shuts it, turns and leaves.

INT. LOCKER 927

VARIOUS SHOTS:

Anna goes through boxes, trunks, suitcases, drawers, everywhere, looking for the damn Key.

INT. LOCKER 927 - LATER

In a box of assorted knick-knacks Anna finds the little carved wooden plaque with the key hook. Same as the one in Asch's office. Same as the one from her nightmarish dream.

Anna rummages through the box, but no Key to be found.

ANNA

Aughh! I can't find it! It's not here. Where? Where? Somebody tell me where!

No answer.

Anna's portable light flickers, goes out. Just then...

The roll-up door rolls down, slams shut! Complete darkness.

ANNA (CONT'D) Hey! Hey!

We can HEAR ANNA STRUGGLE as she tries to open it.

ANNA (CONT'D) Hey! Lionel? Lionel? You open this door! Lionel? Come on, stop fooling around. Please, please!

No answer. Not a sound until...

INT. BATHROOM (1953)

A light comes on. Anna gasps -- she's back in the past!

Hu Shi Shen has just entered and turned on the light switch, locks the door. She goes to take a pee, sits down on the toilet just as --

The closet door opens. Out steps McMurtry. He grins at her and presses his finger to his lips, closes the door behind him.

Oddly, there is a vacant chair directly in front of the toilet.

The girl is paralyzed with fright.

McMurtry holds out a \$10 bill to her, motions for her to take it. She does, confused.

He pats her hand and leans back into the vacant chair, motions for her to hoist up her dress.

Hu Shi Shen hesitates, then slowly complies. Humiliated, almost in tears.

McMurtry stares.

Anna is stunned with disgust.

Just then, Mary Wong bursts in, bathroom key in hand --

MARY WONG (in Chinese) Hu Shi Shen, you are taking too long...!

She stops, shocked at what she sees. McMurtry is caught! He stands. Hu Shi Shen pulls down her dress and jumps off the toilet, runs out.

Mary Wong looks at McMurtry, disgusted, accusing.

MCMURTRY You want to be deported?

That stops her. Continues glaring at him.

MCMURTRY (CONT'D) I can get you full landed immigrant status.

He reaches into his pocket, withdraws a roll of bills, peels off several and hands it to her.

Mary Wong bats the bills away, disgusted at him at herself. She turns on her heel and leaves, slamming the door behind her.

McMurtry watches her go, suspicious. He picks up the bills from the floor. He opens the closet door, goes in, shuts it behind him.

The light in the room flickers.

Anna springs to the closet door. It's locked. It's solid. She can't walk through it. Needs the brass key again -- in her pocket. She fumbles for it...

The light flickers off an on, spasmodically.

INT. LOCKER 927

Anna's portable lamp flickers...

Flashes of a group of 6 or 7 girls. Hu Shi Shen is one of them. Also Jiao and Soo Lin. They're behind Anna, deep in the locker. Intently observing. Anna finally inserts the key into the lock, turns it, opens the door --

Anna stops. Becomes aware of the presence behind her. She turns.

Nothing. They've gone.

INT. SECRET STAIRWELL

Anna looks through the trap door, down the dark stairs. Thinks better of it. Is chasing after McMurtry going to help this situation? No.

RESUME - LOCKER 927

She closes the door, turns to the locker and stumbles...

... on a heavy opened box. On the top, inside the box is a thick LEATHER LEGAL BINDER:

It's labelled "Trial Transcript - Vol. 1" More leather binders underneath contain subsequent volumes.

Anna picks up the top binder and opens to the TITLE PAGE, reads:

November 20th, 1953.

PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA - against - JOSEPH N. ASCH AND ELMER T MCMURTRY. Indicted for manslaughter in the 1st and 2nd degrees.

Appearances: For the People: CHARLES F. BOSTWICK

For Defendants: JULIUS J. EPSTEIN ESQ.

Anna flips through the thick document, starts reading a random page near the middle. It reads like a script.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

It is 1953. The courtroom is packed with observers and reporters, seething with hate toward the two defendants.

Asch and McMurtry sit at the defendants table, while their lawyer JULIUS EPSTEIN, a tall balding man in his 40's, hands papers to the JUDGE (60's).

The prosecuting attorney CHARLES BOSTWICK (40's) sits with his team.

A 40-something man in a cheap business suit named THOMPSON, sits in the witness box.

JUDGE I take it that these are originals?

THOMPSON Yes, they are originals as submitted to the Department by the inspectors.

JUDGE

All right Mr. Epstein, I'll declare these admissable. You may continue.

EPSTEIN Mr. Thompson, please tell the court the nature of this report.

THOMPSON

Mr. Walling made this inspection in November 1950, to observe general conditions in the establishment of the A & M Garment Company, with a view to a proper enforcement of certain provisions of the law.

EPSTEIN

And which provisions of the law would those be?

THOMPSON Oh, the labor and safety standards.

EPSTEIN And the company passed the inspection did they not?

BOSTWICK Objection. Leading.

EPSTEIN I'll re-state. Did the company pass inspection? BOSTWICK

Objection.

JUDGE (to Thompson) Just yes or no.

THOMPSON

Yes.

INT. LOCKER 927

Anna flips a few more pages. Puts the binder down and picks another volume from the box. She flips pages, randomly reads:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Defense lawyer Epstein questions an Asian girl named PENNY CHENG (15) who knows some English. A TRANSLATOR is there to help.

PENNY ... And bathroom door locked too.

EPSTEIN And the bathroom door was locked too. Did you try to open the bathroom door?

She looks to the Translator.

TRANSLATOR (in Chinese) Did you try to open the bathroom door?

PENNY Ah try. No. No try.

EPSTEIN Then how did you know it was locked?

TRANSLATOR (in Chinese) How did you know it was locked? PENNY Other girls tell me.

EPSTEIN The other girls told you. So you didn't try opening the bathroom door yourself?

PENNY

No.

EPSTEIN Ladies and Gentlemen, I ask the court to direct your attention to yesterday's witness testimony of Lily Yu.

Pages are passed to the jury and judge and prosecuting attorney.

EPSTEIN (CONT'D) Now I ask the court reporter to please read back the last statement by this witness.

COURT STENOGRAPHER, a 50-ish woman, reads it back:

COURT STENO The elevator was full, Greene Street door was locked, Water Street door locked and bathroom door locked too.

More pages are passed out.

EPSTEIN And this testimony from the witness Han Lee on Monday. Miss Cheng, was your testimony here in any way rehearsed?

BOSTWICK

Objection!

JUDGE I'll allow it.

Penny shrugs. Doesn't know what he means.

EPSTEIN What you just said. Rehearsed? Practised?

Penny shrugs again.

EPSTEIN (CONT'D) Were you coached to say any part of your testimony today?

TRANSLATOR (in Chinese) Did somebody tell you what to say today?

PENNY

No.

EPSTEIN Then why even bring up the bathroom door? What relevance is the bathroom door?

TRANSLATOR (in Chinese) Why did you mention the bathroom door?

PENNY Other girls told me it was locked.

EPSTEIN The other girls told you. Which girls?

PENNY I don't remember.

EPSTEIN You don't remember?

Girl shrugs. Translator shrugs too. Epstein sighs.

EPSTEIN (CONT'D) Alright, I'll move on. Miss Cheng, why were the doors locked?

PENNY The bosses. They lock the doors. Prevent girls taking breaks.

EPSTEIN From taking breaks?

PENNY And stealing stuff.

INT. LOCKER 927

Anna realizes there's too much transcript to read - digs in the box for the last volume, opens to the last page. It's blank, but for one sentence at the top:

"The jury, which retired to deliberate at about 2:55 P.M., returned to the courtroom at 4:45 P. M., and rendered a verdict of not guilty."

Anna ponders that. Bewildered. What to make of all this? The SOUND OF THE ROLL-UP DOOR - opening...

INT. LOCKER 927

The light from the corridor floods the locker. Anna turns. Standing there, the silhouette of a man --

It's Sully !! Menacing, in partial S&M bondage gear.

SULLY So you decided to stay the night? Guess that means you want some of this!

Anna stands, whips out her phone to call 911...

He lunges at Anna. Knocks her to the floor, amidst the clutter. She drops the phone.

SULLY (CONT'D) You like bad boys? Huh? All the bitches like bad boys!

Anna screams and struggles with all her might. Legs kicking and arms flailing.

ANNA (screams) No! Get off me! No!

But Sully finally overpowers her, his full weight on top of her. He clasps his hand over her mouth.

SULLY Now don't be that way. You'll like this. I know your type.
He thrusts his other hand down her pants. Anna convulses with all her might.

SULLY (CONT'D) Oh yeah. That's what I'm talking about!

Sully moves his hand up her shirt, squeezes her breast hard. Anna's screams of pain are muffled.

> SULLY (CONT'D) Yeah you love it bitch! You fucking love it!

Sully grabs her pants and rips them open.

SULLY (CONT'D) Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Sully moves his hand down to his pants, zips his fly.

SULLY (CONT'D) Wait till you see what I've got for you!

As he's about to mount Anna...

SULLY (CONT'D) You New York sluts love this shit...

WHAMM! A hand sized sledgehammer bashes his head! Blood flies as Sully is knocked off of her,

Anna screams.

It's Lionel! Wearing a dirty white bathrobe, now spattered with blood.

Sully moaning, temporarily unconscious. Lionel leaps on top of him and bashes away at Sully's head with the hammer.

Anna screams, horrified at the whole scene.

ANNA Stop! Stop!

LIONEL Bad man! Bad man!

Lionel finally stops. Sully is quite dead and his head is half caved-in.

Oh Lionel. What have you done?

Lionel grunts and ignores her, gets up, grabs Sully by the feet and drags him out.

ANNA (CONT'D) Omigod, omigod, omigod.

INT. CORRIDOR 920-940

Lionel drags Sully's lifeless body down the corridor, leaving a trail of blood on the floor.

INT. LOCKER 927

Anna is frozen in horror, then spots her phone on the floor. Reaches for it...

Battery out. No good to her.

Anna just wants to wake up, out of this nightmare. Her body starts shaking as she gently sobs.

ANNA No, no, no. This can't be happening. No...

She senses something beside her -- It's Jiao! -- sitting with her head buried in Anna's side.

Anna's startled at first, scared, but then feels a calm tenderness wash over her. It's obvious Jiao really likes Anna, wants to reassure her. Everything's going to be alright.

Now Anna sees 4 other girls, including Soo Lin and Hu Shi Shen looking at her hopefully, friendly, needing her.

ANNA (CONT'D) Who are you?

They are silent.

ANNA (CONT'D) What do you want?

Still silent.

ANNA (CONT'D) I don't know what to do. What do you want.? What can I do? JIAO (whispers) Zhaodào yàoshi!

ANNA What? I don't understand...

GIRLS Zhaodào yàoshi. Ka-imén. Ka-imén!

ANNA I can't... I don't know what you're...

A nearby cardboard box - the lid flies open. It's the box of old magazines and newspapers from the from the 50's.

Anna cautiously looks inside:

The newspaper with the headline "TRAGEDY!" -- with a b&w photo of a building. She picks it up and starts to read.

As she reads, she stifles a horrified gasp. After a beat, she looks up -

The girls have vanished.

The secret stairwell door RATTLES like crazy!

Frightened of what she might find, Anna puts down the paper and cautiously makes her way to the closet door, opens it and peers down through the trap door.

INT. SECRET STAIRWELL

Anna arrives at the bottom of the stairs, pushes open the secret doorway, steps into McMurtry's closet. The closet door is ajar.

She pushes the door wider, sees --

INT. MCMURTRY'S OFFICE - DAY

McMurtry locks the office door and turns to --

A girl of 14 stands nervously in front of McMurtry's desk. It is Wei. McMurtry attempts to put her at ease as he moves close to her.

> MCMURTRY There's nothing to be afraid of. It's ok. Ta shi hao. Hao.

He strokes her gently on her arm and shoulder.

There's a small bowl of individually wrapped liquor chocolates on his desk.

McMurtry unwraps a liquor chocolate and gives it to Wei. She puts it to her mouth and eats it, savoring the flavour but warily keeping an eye on him.

> MCMURTRY (CONT'D) You're very pretty. Hen piàoliang. Yes?

McMurtry leans back in his chair, eyeing her lustily, and lights a cigar.

MCMURTRY (CONT'D) Go ahead. Have another. Zai chi.

She reaches for a small bowl of liquor chocolates and unwraps it, cautious, not sure what he wants.

MCMURTRY (CONT'D) Turn around. Go ahead.

He motions for her to spin around, model for him. She pops the chocolate in her mouth and slowly spins for him.

ANNA --

Is appalled at what she's seeing, but helpless to do anything about it.

MCMURTRY (CONT'D) That's it. That's right. Hen piàoliang. Very nice.

He takes a big puff on the cigar and eyes her up and down. He likes what he sees.

MCMURTRY (CONT'D) It's good, no? Hao? Hao? Yes?

McMurtry puts the cigar on his fancy ashtray and gets up. He takes another chocolate from the bowl, unwraps it and puts it to her lips.

MCMURTRY (CONT'D)

Very hao.

Now she's a little afraid, but she lets him put the chocolate in her mouth.

He moves in close. Too close. Watches her lips and mouth...

Suddenly he kisses her, hard on the mouth! --

Wei struggles desperately. McMurtry seems surprised, as if he'd never considered this reaction. He angrily tightens his grip, overpowers her.

She gives it all she's got, legs kicking, arms flailing.

McMurtry wrestles her down onto the desk, forgetting about his cigar...

The cigar is knocked from the ashtray, rolls along the desk, into a wastepaper basket. It ignites.

The bowl of candies has been knocked to the floor.

McMurtry has got her pinned, his hand over her mouth. With his other hand, he reaches up her skirt. She tries to resist, but he's too strong. He rips off her panties and flings them aside...

Wei's eyes were fearful but now they widen in terror --

The waste bucket has caught fire, shoots flames up, filling the room with smoke.

McMurtry realizes, clumsily gets off Wei and turns, knocking the bucket over --

The fire spreads along the floor, liquor candies popping like tiny bombs, quickly spreads to the shelves - containing books and papers.

The fire sweeps up the wall. McMurtry tries in vain to stamp out the flames, pat it out with his jacket. It just makes it worse.

Wei scrambles off the desk and dashes into the closet --

INT. SECRET STAIRWELL

Wei sprints up the secret stairway, goes thru the trap door to open the door at the top. It's locked! She shakes the door with all her might. It won't budge. She screams, claws at the door in desperation.

INT. MCMURTRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Anna watches helplessly as --

The fire has quickly spread throughout the office, flames roaring up the wallpaper. McMurtry unlocks his office door and runs out into the hall, shouting.

MCMURTRY

Fire! Fire!

INT. A & M GARMENT COMPANY - HALLWAY

Office workers spill out into the hallway.

MCMURTRY Fire! Everybody out!

Asch comes running down the hall.

The smoke and fire spreads quickly -- neighboring offices and the hallway.

There's a fire alarm button on the wall in the hallway. Asch presses it. It RINGS LOUDLY.

Anna walks unharmed through the encroaching flames.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

Mary Wong and the girls stop work as they hear the ringing. Mary Wong claps her hands and shouts to everybody:

MARY WONG

(in Chinese) Everybody to the elevator and door! Everybody! Single file! Don't panic!

INT. ASCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Asch grabs The Key from the special hook on the wall plaque and runs out into the hall.

INT. 8TH FLOOR OFFICES - DAY

Asch heads toward the stairway door. Fire is spreading toward it, blocking his path. But maybe he can run through the flames...

McMurtry grabs him, stops him from going further, shoves him toward the elevator.

MCMURTRY No! You'll never make it

ASCH I've got to try!

MCMURTRY It's too late! It's impossible! Come on!

Reluctantly, Asch acquiesces, takes a look back over his shoulder.

MCMURTRY (CONT'D) Come on! Hurry! Come on everybody!

McMurtry leads everybody to the elevator. An office employee has his finger on the elevator call button.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

Smoke seeps up through the floor, then tiny tongues of flame... ignites a pile of brushed rayon, which instantly sparks an inferno, spreading quickly...

Girls scream and run toward the door, windows, elevator.

INT. 8TH FLOOR OFFICES - DAY

The elevator has arrived. An office worker opens the gate. Office workers pile onto the elevator.

MCMURTRY Get on! Quick, quick!

Only the Office Boy remains on the floor. Fire is tearing up the walls. McMurtry gestures to get on. The Office Boy hesitates gestures wildly upward.

> OFFICE BOY What about them?

> > MCMURTRY

Get on!

INT. ELEVATOR

McMurtry grabs him and forcefully drags him onto the elevator, shutting the gate behind him. Somebody presses the button and the elevator starts its slow descent.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

The girls crowd around the elevator and the door, waiting for someone to open it, waiting for the elevator to come.

The fire ignites a pile of fabric around the cutting tables, then...

... SPREADS WILDLY across the room as all the flammable fabric explodes into raging flames.

Panic. The girls scream in terror, scream down the elevator shaft, scream at the door.

INT. ELEVATOR

The elevator is packed full, and all including Asch and McMurtry, look up with guilt and horror at the source of the SCREAMING.

Anna, now on the elevator, sees all.

The elevator slowly descends past the lower floors --

All the lower floors have other office and factory workers clamoring around the elevator gates.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

The panic continues.

Mary Wong and girls struggle with the door, try to jimmy the lock try to shake it, screaming for help all the while.

Other girls huddle in the corner, trying to escape the encroaching fire.

Still others rush to the windows, throw them open or smash the glass out.

Some windows burst from the heat.

EXT. ARGYLE BUILDING / STREET - DAY

Large shards of glass land on the street.

Pedestrians look up in horror at the smoke and flames coming from the top two floors of the Argyle building.

There is a FIRE ESCAPE stairway outside the building and girls pile out a window to it, as other girls step out onto the window sills and ledges.

A SIREN IS HEARD APPROACHING in the far distance.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

Mary Wong heaves against the locked door with all her might. It won't budge.

INT. STAIRWELL

Fire from the 8th floor spreads out into the smoke filled stairwell and flames gradually climb up the stairs.

INT. STAIRWELL

Meanwhile, the lower stairs are crowded with panicked people squeezing downward. Sheer pandemonium.

INT. MAIN FLOOR / RECEPTION AREA / LOADING BAY - DAY

The elevator shudders to a stop, the doors are thrown open and the people spill out, including Asch and McMurtry.

Anna is there.

Asch takes a guilty look back over his shoulder.

The Office Boy turns, tries to get back on the elevator. McMurtry stops him.

MCMURTRY Lionel! No! Lionel!

Anna reacts. Lionel!

But Young Lionel shakes him loose, makes it back onto the elevator. When all the people are off, he slams the gate shut and hits the up button. The elevator slowly ascends.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

The area near the elevator is ablaze, forcing the girls against the gate.

The elevator arrives. Young Lionel throws open the inner gate...

INT. ELEVATOR

Two girls throw open the outer gate and crowd on in a panic, the sheer force of them throws Lionel to the back of the elevator.

Young Lionel strains to see Soo Lin, but she's not around.

YOUNG LIONEL Soo Lin! Soo Lin.

The elevator is packed beyond capacity. Someone shuts the gates and the elevator descends.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR / ELEVATOR SHAFT - DAY

A desperate girl jumps onto the elevator cables and attempts to slide down, landing on top of the elevator...

At first, it works. So another girl tries the same thing.

Then, another girl.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT

But the cables are too greasy -- the girls quickly pick up speed or lose their grip and fall down the shaft...

... onto the elevator roof with a dead thud, as it slowly descends.

Still more girls attempt to jump onto the cables...

Still more girls lose their grip and fall to their deaths on top of the elevator car.

EXT. ARGYLE BUILDING / STREET - DAY

Anna, horrified to see:

Asch and McMurtry emerge from the building in a daze, look up in at the building...

Girls are out on the window ledges.

The flimsy fire escape is overburdened with the weight of dozens of girls. It starts to break away from the building.

A girl at a window can't take it anymore -- the flames and smoke behind her. She leaps to her death...

The gathering crowd screams.

The first of the fire trucks arrive.

Firemen scramble off. 4 of them carry trampolines and quickly position themselves under a window.

Other firemen carry hoses, attempt to locate a hydrant.

THE FIRE ESCAPE --

Some lucky girls have made it to the bottom, and onto the street.

But the top of the structure can't take the weight, as more girls pile onto it and they slowly make their way down, stumbling over each other and falling.

INT. MAIN FLOOR / RECEPTION AREA / LOADING BAY - DAY

The elevator lands, the gates fly open and the girls pile off, running toward the exits.

Young Lionel stays on. He shuts the elevator gates and hits the up button, bravely going back to attempt another rescue.

EXT. ARGYLE BUILDING / STREET - DAY

The fire escape can't take the strain, comes loose from the building. The top slowly bending outward as the girls desperately hang on.

DOWN BELOW --

The crowd looks on in horror. The firemen shout up.

A flaming girl jumps from a window. The firemen try to catch her with the trampoline. They don't succeed.

Another girl jumps, but the firemen don't have time to get underneath her.

Asch is horrified. He takes the key from the pocket of his tweed jacket and yells at McMurtry.

ASCH We could've saved them! I should have gone up!

MCMURTRY No! There was no chance! You would have died too! -- Anna sees this! She's seen that tweed jacket before - one of the first things she opened - the clothing trunk.

THE FIRE ESCAPE --

There are too many girls on it. It bends outward under the weight, slowly at first, then it breaks, sending dozens of girls hurtling toward the ground.

DOWN BELOW --

The crowd screams and Asch cries out in anguish, covers his face with his hands. He can't bear to look anymore.

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

Mary Wong, Soo Lin, Jiao, Hu Shi-Shen, all huddle together by the door as the flames surround them. Mary throws herself on top of them, tries to shield the girls.

More desperate girls crowd around the elevator shaft, attempt to slide down the cables, but fall to their deaths.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT

Over twenty girls have fallen on top of the elevator, caused the rails and wheels to buckle and the elevator grinds to a stop --

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

-- halfway up the floor. It won't budge.

INT. ELEVATOR

Lionel hits the up and down buttons repeatedly. The elevator shudders then stops. It won't budge. His elevator is filling up with smoke. He rips his shirt open and covers his face.

EXT. ARGYLE BUILDING / STREET - DAY

More girls fall to the pavement.

The ladder truck has arrived and the firemen work feverishly to extend the ladder and reel out the hoses.

The firemen now have some hoses ready and start spraying the flames up to the top floors.

Anna knows what she's got to do. She must go back up. She runs back into the building.

INT. BUILDING STAIRWELL

Anna runs against the tide of panicked building employees running and stumbling down the stairs. She runs right through them, up the stairs.

INT. 7TH FLOOR LANDING

The fire has spread to the 7th floor. Anna continues up the stairs.

INT. 8TH FLOOR OFFICES - DAY

Anna runs onto the smoke-filled burning floor, now vacant. She runs through the flames to McMurtry's office.

INT. MCMURTRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Anna dashes to the closet.

INT. SECRET STAIRWELL

Anna runs up the secret stairwell, thru the trap door. Wei is not there.

INT. LOCKER 927

Anna unlocks the closet door, emerges into her locker. Relieved. It's not the burning past.

She digs through the stuff, finds the trunk, opens it.

Inside the trunk, the tweed suit on top.

Anna digs through the coat, withdraws THE KEY.

She holds it up to the light. Contemplates. Now what?

Jiao and The Ghost Girls are there. They look at her expectantly.

Go back down, right? If I go down, I can go back up the stairs and unlock the factory door? Okay.

INT. SECRET STAIRWELL

Anna bounds down the stairs. The closet door at the bottom is closed. She opens it --

INT. LOCKER 827

And emerges in the vacant locker, still in present day. All is eerily silent. What worked before does not work now.

Anna exits the locker.

INT. CORRIDOR 820 - 840

Anna looks up and down the dark row.

ANNA

Lionel?

No answer.

Anna can see a trail of blood down the stairwell and onto the 8th floor - where Lionel has dragged Sully's body. She sees the trail lead into a locker down the corridor.

> ANNA (CONT'D) (sadly) Oh Lionel.

She walks up to the locker door. It is locked.

Must be nearby. Anna doesn't want to deal with him, heads away.

INT. LOCKER 833

Lionel sits on the floor of the ammo locker. He holds a candle in his hand and looks up to the ceiling.

LIONEL (whispers) Soo Lin. My love.

INT. BUILDING STAIRWELL

Anna takes the stairs up to the 9th floor. No ghost door, just present day door. No lock on it.

Anna ponders the stairway, which continues up. She goes up.

At the top, one floor up, is a locked door to the roof.

Anna rattles the door. Nothing. She tries The Key, just in case. It won't fit.

Damn. She turns back down the steps.

INT. 9TH FLOOR

Anna emerges in present day 9th floor. Sees Sully's bloody tracks on the floor.

INT. LOCKER 927

Anna looks around the cluttered locker, no idea what to do with this Key. Appeals to the Ghost Girls, who are now strangely absent.

ANNA I've got the key! Hey, I've got the key! What do I do with it?

No answer. No ghosts.

ANNA (CONT'D) Tell me what to do! What do you want from me? Please tell me what to do!

Still no answer. She slumps to the floor, exhausted, dejected.

Spots something glinting on the floor, moves closer...

It's SULLY'S KEY RING! Must have come off during the struggle.

Anna snatches it up and gets to her feet.

It's her ticket outta here. She can leave the building! In fact, why not right now?!...

KABOOOM!! An explosion rocks the building.

Anna dashes out to the corridor -- WTF??!! --

INT. CORRIDOR 920-940

Anna sees the smoke and flames billow out from a blown locker, down the corridor.

INT. 8TH FLOOR

The explosion of fire and smoke blows out the locker door and sets the entire floor ablaze.

The good news is this building has now got a sprinkler system running along the ceiling.

The bad news is it doesn't work.

Flames lick at the ineffectual sprinkler nozzle. Teasing it, melting the paint off it.

Exploding bullets create fireworks amidst the blaze in locker 833.

INT. 9TH FLOOR

Anna spots a fire alarm trigger on the wall. Lunges toward it and trips it... It RINGS.

She's gotta get outta here! She sprints toward the stairway door.

INT. BUILDING STAIRWELL

Anna takes the staircase, bounds down toward the 8th floor. Flames have spread onto the landing and are slowly crawling up the stairs... She tries to see a way through the fire, but it's too dangerous. It's too hot. This fire she can feel.

She can only go up - to the roof exit - which she how has the key for - if she can find the right one on Sully's key ring.

Anna goes up to the top.

The stairway is filling up with thick smoke.

INT. ROOFTOP DOOR

Anna fumbles with the keys. A lot of keys on the key ring. She hastily tries a few of them. No go. Choking, Anna fumbles with another key, inserts it. Turns it. It works!

EXT. ROOFTOP - MORNING

Anna steps out onto the rooftop. The sun is coming up over the rain-soaked city.

Anna dashes to the roof's edge. Spots a fire escape. She can climb down it to safety, but...

She HEARS THE SCREAMING GIRLS. Distant, like the APPROACHING SIRENS, but all consuming. The screaming gets louder, swirls around her head.

She looks at the open roof door - smoke billowing out.

She's got to go back down.

She makes the decision - dashes back to the rooftop door.

INT. BUILDING STAIRWELL

Anna runs down the smoke filled stairs to the 9th floor door. It's the present day one. SCREAMING AND FIRE BELL RINGING.

Anna opens it.

INT. 9TH FLOOR

Anna steps into the 9th floor, present day, filling with smoke and starting to catch fire. Anna runs to the nearby bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

Anna grabs some paper towels, runs them under the sink.

The Ghost Girls appear in the mirror, screaming to Anna for help. She stares into their pleading eyes. She knows what she's got to do.

Anna puts the soaked paper towels to her face, readies herself, then opens the door.

INT. CORRIDOR 920-940

Anna holds the wet towels over her face and makes her way through the smoke, can't see a thing, except --

The ghosts of over a hundred girls, panicking and running for the elevators, doors and windows. Some girls catch on fire, some jump out the window. A replica of the scene we've seen earlier, but now they're apparitions in the smoke.

All pleading to Anna -- help us!

Anna makes out her locker through the haze and dashes up to it.

The real fire is encroaching around her.

The Ghost Girls gather behind her, and around her. Encouraging her on, pleading with her to go on.

Anna knows what she has to do. It's going to cost her life.

INT. LOCKER 927

Anna enters her locker as the Ghost Girls usher her, prompt her to the stairwell door.

Anna stares at the stairwell door. This is it.

She lowers the wet towels from her face, throws them away. Then takes the brass key from her pocket, opens the door.

A blast of smoke, then Wei runs out, joins the other girls who hug her.

Anna, tears welling up, takes one last look at the girls then enters the stairwell.

INT. SECRET STAIRWELL

Anna slowly goes down the smoky stairs. Through the secret door into the closet.

She unlocks the closet door for one last time and opens it -- the backdraft hits her - a wall of flame consumes her for a moment.

She steps through it into ...

INT. MCMURTRY'S OFFICE - DAY

It's McMurtry's office -- just after the room caught fire. It's spreading up all the wallpaper.

McMurtry unlocks his office door and runs out into the hall, shouting.

Anna glides to the door, follows him out. Here, she doesn't feel the flames.

INT. A & M GARMENT COMPANY -HALLWAY

Anna moves into the hallway. It's a repeat of McMurtry urging everyone to evacuate.

Anna sees him manhandle Asch toward the elevator, despite Asch's urgent protests.

Anna sees the despair in Asch's eyes, then the guilt at the decision he's just made.

Anna looks down at The Key, in her hand.

She moves through the spreading flames and smoke toward the stairway door.

INT. BUILDING STAIRWELL

Anna moves up the stairs to the 9th floor landing. It's not burning here yet, but smoke is filling up.

9th FLOOR DOOR -- this one, the old one, has a lock.

Anna inserts The Key, glowing white hot, into the lock. Turns it...

It opens. The door flings open, and the girls pour out. Anna directs them all up the stairs to the roof. The girls all run up...

EXT. ROOFTOP DOOR - MORNING

The rooftop door bursts open. Nobody comes out.

INT. BUILDING STAIRWELL

Anna keeps an eye on the flames creeping up from the 8th floor.

Anna continues to direct the girls toward the roof exit.

Several girls gesture in gratitude and thank Anna as they file past her.

Jiao runs up and hugs her.

Hu Shi Shen goes by, smiles gratefully. So does Wei.

Thick white smoke issues from the stairwell below, as the flames creep up the stairs.

Then Young Lionel emerges from the smoke, runs up the stairs into the arms of --

Soo Lin. They quickly hug and he takes her by the hand, smile gratefully at Anna.

SOO-LIN

Xièxiè mama.

They turn and join the rest of the girls to run up the stairs to the light.

EXT. ROOFTOP - MORNING

White smoke billows from the open rooftop door, drifting up and away from the vacant rooftop

RESUME - STAIRWELL / 9TH FLOOR DOOR

Finally the last of the girls, and then Mary Wong, making sure everyone's out. Looks at Anna with humility, bows in respect.

Together, Anna and Mary Wong move toward the light at the top of the stairs.

EXT. ROOFTOP - MORNING

White smoke issues from the open rooftop door, drifting up toward the heavens.

Smoke and fire swirl around the top floors of the old brick building.

Down below, the fire trucks have arrived. Firemen struggle to do their thing.

EXT. BUILDING ROOF - MORNING

Their souls drift straight up and away... away from the burning box, surrounded by a sea of boxes, up and away from the big city.

FADE OUT

THE END