

LOCUST FIELD
BY
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2017 (c)

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GOD SPEED!

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FADE IN:

INT. BRADFIELD DENTAL CLINIC, OPERATING ROOM - DAY

A GAPING MOUTH, tongue drooping over lower lip, saliva kept to a minimum by ejectors, steel wire fastened around teeth by latexed fingers.

CAROLINE BAINES, Berkshire County's finest and only dentist, has done this procedure a million times and it shows.

She never fails to create an environment that enables parents such as MR and MRS. STEVENS to feel at ease as their dearest daughter EMILY goes under the dental knife for some braces.

Moments later, the procedure comes to an end and FLORA, her long-serving nurse, adjusts the dental chair to an upright position.

Caroline moves a mirror towards Emily and by the effusive expression on her face- it's a job well done, again. Mr and Mrs. STEVENS offer concurring nods of approval: *it's wonderful, it really is.....etc*

Flora stows away the surgical apparatus while Caroline freshens up at a nearby sink.

She removes her dental mask to reveal a face disloyal to her age of 46, save for her graying temple that lends her an air of venerability.

MR. STEVENS

Thanks Carol, we told her there was nothing to worry about.

CAROLINE

(to Emily)

And you didn't believe them?

Emily looks away timidly.

MRS. STEVENS

Wasn't she a brave girl though?

CAROLINE

She most definitely was, and she deserves a reward for that.

Emily smiles in anticipation as Caroline retrieves a fresh bag of candy from a drawer.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY

Can I choose?

MR. STEVENS

May I.....

MRS. STEVENS

(scoffs)

Oh please.

CAROLINE

Of course you may.

Emily's eyes scan the vast reservoir of candies and after what seems like forever--she points at a pink lollipop. Caroline hands it to her.

EMILY

(to her mum)

Can I eat-

MRS. STEVENS

(cutting her off)

Only after supper dear.

Emily does as she's told and tucks the candy into her pocket.

CAROLINE

She's adorable.

INT. RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

Caroline ushers the Stevens out of the front door.

VOICE (O.S.)

Carol, Richard left you a message.

The voice belongs to SARAH COLTS; Caroline's affable receptionist.

CAROLINE

You did tell him I was with a patient?

SARAH

Naturally. He just wanted me to remind you about lunch with the Golding's, before Andrew's match.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
(disappointed)
The Golding's.....

SARAH
He mentioned you mustn't be afraid
to be punctual.

CAROLINE
(half-jokingly)
Watch it!

Caroline goes to leave, but turns back.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
I need a.....

SARAH
(finishing her sentence)
Bottle of red wine.....I sent Jeff
to buy one already.

CAROLINE
Where would I be without you?

Sarah smiles.

EXT/INT. GOLDING'S RESIDENCE, FRONT DOOR - DAY

Caroline presses the front door bell of a sprawling country house.

CYNTHIA GOLDING, a diminutive redhead in bifocals, answers it.

CYNTHIA
(pecking Caroline)
Sorry about the wait. You look
dashing dear.

CAROLINE
(playfully timid)
Stop it....
(handing Cynthia a bottle of
red wine)
I come bearing gifts.

CYNTHIA
Seventy-three chateau neuf. Jacko
will be impressed.

EXT. GARDEN - SAME TIME

RICHARD BAINES (50) and JACK 'JACKO' GOLDING (53) sit across from each other at a table in the middle of a meticulous garden. They are in mid-debate about politics when Cynthia saunters in with Caroline.

CYNTHIA

Look who's here.....

JACK

The busiest woman in Berkshire county.

CAROLINE

(with affection)

Jacko.....

JACK

(embracing Caroline)

You look dashing.

CAROLINE

Blame the job.

JACK

Evidently. She really does look fabulous though, doesn't she dear?

CYNTHIA

(admiring the bottle of wine)

Add that to her improving taste.

Jack nods his appreciation as Cynthia uncorks the wine.

RICHARD

(to Caroline)

You took your time?

CAROLINE

Patient delay...I tried my very best to hurry.

Jack pours each of them a glass.

CYNTHIA

Richard, leave her alone. At least you have a wife who saves lives for a living.

JACK

"Saves lives". She's a dentist for Christ sake!

(CONTINUED)

CYNTHIA

Yes, and do you know what the perfect smile can do for you? Life saving.

JACK

Nonsense. No offense Carol.

CAROLINE

None taking.

CYNTHIA

Well speaking of offense taking.....Richard, your piece on Mamet's play was lacerating.

JACK

(to Caroline)

Something tells me you gave him that line about Clive Owen's mustache managing to appear Stalinist and Hitlerian all at once.

CAROLINE

No....

(to Richard)

You didn't even mention you got a review published...

RICHARD

You were busy.

The front door bell sounds off momentarily.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

More guests?

CYNTHIA

No....must be the gardener letting us know he's leaving.

INT/EXT. FRONT STALL WAY - SAME TIME

Jack unlocks the front door and steps out onto the front porch but sees no one. He furrows his brows.

He turns to reenter the house but stops when he steps on what looks like a DVD case. Jack picks it up and reads with befuddled eyes a scribble on the case that spells in BOLD RED LETTERS: FOR CAROL.

INT/EXT. GARDEN - LATER

(CONTINUED)

Jack calls out to the group from the veranda.

JACK
I think you lot should come see
this.

CYNTHIA
Who was it Jack?

Jack disappears into the house leaving the others bemused.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Caroline and Cynthia are sat pensively on the sofa while Jack and Richard stand watching a grainy black and white footage on the television monitor.

It's like a scene out of the old testament: A SWARM OF LOCUSTS spiral violently inside a GLASS HOUSE, slamming into the windows as though seeking egress.

Caroline and Cynthia cringe from the unsightly image and the shrill cacophony of locust stridulation that accompanies it.

CYNTHIA
Jack, what is this....?

JACK
I don't know, someone left it on
the front porch.

Jack points at the opened DVD case on the coffee table.

JACK (CONT'D)
It said "to Carol" on the cover.

CAROLINE
(aghast)
And you opened it?

Caroline looks perturbed as she reaches for the DVD case and reads the message on the front cover.

JACK
(an edge of fear in his voice)
My God!!

They all watch in rapture as a NAKED MAN LUMBERS into the GLASS HOUSE.

Caroline and Cynthia recoil in fright as the man draws nearer and nearer into the path of the devouring locusts.

(CONTINUED)

CYNTHIA
(to Jack)
Turn it off.

Jack is too riveted to respond.

CYNTHIA
(yells)
Turn it off!!

Richard reaches for the remote and turns off the DVD player just as the MAN lurches to the ground.

JACK
(composing himself)
I'm sorry....I had no idea.

CYNTHIA
....should we call the police?

JACK
No-No....just for that?
(to Richard)
What do you think?

RICHARD
Still trying to gather my thoughts really....but I agree, police sounds a little alarmist. It's probably just a sick prank.

CYNTHIA
Well who sent it?

CAROLINE
I haven't the faintest clue. It's strange.

JACK
Probably a crazy fan...

CAROLINE
Fan...??

CYNTHIA
Well whoever it was knew you'd be here, that's the worrying thing. How did they even get past the gate?

JACK
I must have left it opened after I let Carol in. Damn thing no longer works automatically.

(CONTINUED)

Caroline places a consoling arm around Cynthia. The latter reciprocates the gesture.

Richard reads the time on his watch.

RICHARD

Oh no! Andrew's match starts in an hour.

JACK

You have plenty of time.

CAROLINE

Yes, but we have to be there well before hand.

JACK

Of course.

Richard and Caroline grab their belongings.

RICHARD

Carol, did you get the wine for the headman?

CAROLINE

Damn, I'm sorry...I forgot.

RICHARD

(rolls his eyes)

I reminded you about it this morning.

CAROLINE

I'm sorry, we just have to get another one on our way.

CYNTHIA

Nonsense, I'm sure Jack can donate one from the cellar.

JACK

I have the perfect bottle. Ninety-six pinotage, it's South-African.

EXT. BRADFIELD COLLEGE, RUGBY PITCH - DAY

It's halfway through the second half of a pulsating rugby match. The score line reads '10-7' to Bradfield's FIRST 15.

Caroline is at one end of the sideline watching her son, ANDREW (16), brace himself for a run on the left wing.

(CONTINUED)

The boy is very quick and elusive--dodging tackles this way and that way and never holding on to the ball for too long.

Richard keeps himself busy on the sideline by mingling with the headmaster MR. REGIS BROWN--a tall, pot-bellied old man with a stoic expression that lends him the aura of a disciplinarian.

Richard seems to be distracting him from the ongoing match but he manages to remain affable.

The opposing team concedes a try and the home support erupts into applause. Richard and Caroline trade glances of proud parents.

From the opposite side of the pitch, A tall and wiry BLACK MAN leers at Caroline. The black man dons a black leather jacket and black leather trousers. He looks like trouble.

Caroline sees the black man but manages to remain calm.

A few plays later and the home team regains possession, they are in the ascendancy- sensing imminent victory.

Andrew catches a pass and sets off on one of his meandering runs- breaking desperate tackles with impressive ease.

Suddenly, he is tap-tackled by a deft touch and he lands awkwardly on his right hand.

A collective gasp reverberates amongst the home support- they fear the worst.

Richard and Caroline look on with an almost disturbing gaze as players from both teams surround Andrew.

Andrew clutches his hand and grimaces in pain as the referee motions for a medic to come quickly.

Caroline can't bear to look. Richard approaches her and consoles her with a hug.

The medics help Andrew onto his feet and then off the pitch to a solemn chorus of applause.

Caroline glances over to the opposite side of the pitch but the black man has already vanished.

INT. BRADFIELD CLINIC, WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Richard sits in an empty waiting room save for Caroline, who is pacing back and forth.

RICHARD

You said it yourself, it's probably just a dislocation.

CAROLINE

I'm glad you find that prospect consoling.

RICHARD

It's rugby dear. If anything we pushed him too hard.

CAROLINE

Speak for yourself.

Richard is about to respond when the forlorn image of Andrew, right arm in a sling, comes into view.

Caroline moves closer to embrace him.

ANDREW

(wincing)

Mum!! be careful.

CAROLINE

(kissing him)

I'm so sorry.....

RICHARD

What did the doctor say?

ANDREW

Dislocation of the wrist. I'll be out for two, maybe three months.

CAROLINE

Oh honey! That's awful. Can you at least write?

ANDREW

I don't think so.

RICHARD

Yes he can.

ANDREW

Dad I'm serious. I think it's best if I stay home.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
Hush, I think you've done enough
dodging for the day.

A cell phone rings--it's Caroline's. The caller id reads
"EMMA"- the final member of the Baines family

CAROLINE
(in a loud whisper)
It's Emma.

She answers it.

CAROLINE
Hey Emm, I'm so sorry but we had to
dash to the hospital. It's your
brother.
(beat)
Nothing too serious. A dislocated
wrist from rugby.
(beat)
I know, I was telling your father.
(beat)
Oh, that would be wonderful. See
you back home then.
(beat)
Love you too, bye.

Click.

RICHARD
Is she getting a lift home?

CAROLINE
Yes, with Martha.
(to ANDREW)
Did the doctor give you a note for
the pharmacy?

ANDREW
Yeah, I almost forgot.

INT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The Baines family are tucking into a delicious spread.

EMMA
Mum, are you really considering
letting Andy skip school tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
Who told you that?

EMMA
(glancing at Andrew)
He did.

RICHARD
I don't think it's a bad idea. I
mean after all...he does need some
well earned rest.

ANDREW
Love you dad.

EMMA
(unconvinced)
Please. Give me twelve hours of
standing on a pitch over learning a
Bach solo any day. I'm the one who
needs the rest.

CAROLINE
Emma that's rude.

ANDREW
She's just jealous.

EMMA
I'm just saying. Music is a lot
more physically and mentally
strenuous than rugby.

ANDREW
You've obviously never played rugby
or any other sport for that matter.

RICHARD
Well speaking about rest.....your
mum did promise to take us on a
skiing trip this weekend.

The kids instantly stare at Caroline in excitement.

CAROLINE
I don't remember making any
promises.

EMMA
Mum.....

CAROLINE
Plus Andrew isn't in any position
to be skiing.

RICHARD
I'm sure he wouldn't mind chilling
out in the alps.

Andrew nods his assent.

CAROLINE
Well, we'll have to see about that.

RICHARD
Don't worry kids, mum or no mum,
we're taking that skiing trip.

The land line rings, saving Caroline from having to respond to that last comment. She opts to answer it.

HALLWAY

Caroline lets the phone ring once more before picking up.

CAROLINE
Hello?

NO response is forthcoming save for the eerie sound of MUFFLED BREATHING on the other end of the line.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
(puzzled)
Hello.....who is this?
(beat)
Hello.....?

Still no response. She hangs up and returns to the-

DINNING ROOM

Richard notices the baffled look on Caroline's face.

RICHARD
Who was it?

CAROLINE
No one.

RICHARD
What do you mean no one?

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

No one answered. I just heard something that sounded like.... labored breathing.

RICHARD

(mystified)

Breathing....?? That's odd. Did you call back?

CAROLINE

No, probably just a wrong number.

(beat)

Now, who's turn is it to do the dishes?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Richard and Andrew are half-awake while watching the highlights of a rugby game on the telly.

The land line rings and rings but neither of them move to answer it.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

Can one of you two get that please!!!??

RICHARD

Andrew, you heard your mother.

Andrew sighs before doing as he's told.

HALLWAY

Andrew picks up the receiver.

ANDREW

Hello?

Again the ensuing response from the other end takes the sinister form of MUFFLED BREATHING.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Who is this?

(beat)

Hello....?

Caroline comes over.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
Who is it?

ANDREW
I don't know.

Caroline takes the phone from him.

CAROLINE
(sternly)
Excuse me, who is this?
(beat)
Hello....?

Still nothing but the breathing. Richard comes over.

RICHARD
Hang up.

Caroline complies.

Richard attempts to redial the number but it's a private caller ID.

CAROLINE
Well that doesn't help.

RICHARD
Maybe they can't hear us.

CAROLINE
And the breathing?

Richard shrugs his shoulder in bemusement.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
(fed up)
I'm going to finish up in the
kitchen. Get the kids to bed would
you....and make sure Emma really
puts away her violin.

Richard acquiesces but not before casting a quizzical look at the phone.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Caroline lies half-awake in bed. She glances over to Richard's side of the bed where he sleeps like a child. She smiles and slips out of bed.

BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

(CONTINUED)

Caroline stands in front of a pile of cardboard boxes stacked on top of each other. She shifts them gently to one side revealing an inconspicuous steel door underneath.

She fishes out a set of keys from her pocket and unlocks the door.

Caroline looks up at the ceiling a moment-something's caught her attention. It's nothing. She reassures herself with a slight nod of the head.

She pulls out a flashlight and illuminates a short flight of stairs leading into a squalid underground cellar.

CELLAR - MOMENTS LATER

Caroline sits in front of two surveillance monitors barely illuminated by a flashlight dangling from the ceiling. She taps a few buttons on a small keyboard and the monitors roar to life.

The monitors display surveillance recordings of the past day activities such as Richard writing an article on his laptop.

She switches to a camera in Andrew's room and rewinds the tape momentarily.

She freezes on an image of Andrew pulling out a magazine from underneath his bed. Caroline zooms in on Andrew and watches-transfixed-as Andrew turns to a page depicting a naked pornographic model.

Andrew unzips his pants and begins masturbating. He works himself into a ferocious frenzy and from the orgasmic expression on his face- he is near the point of climax.

Suddenly, a short rap on the door startles him and he quickly makes himself descent, just in time, before Richard walks into the room.

Caroline grins and switches to a camera in her HOME OFFICE. She rewinds the tape until Richard, with a voluminous stack of papers in hand, comes into view.

She plays the tape and watches with befuddled eyes Richard feeding the papers one after the other into a SHREDDER. Caroline zeroes in on Richard as he regards the shredded papers strewn across the floor.

She pauses on this image momentarily and nodes her head in dismay.

INT. CORNER STORE - DAY

Caroline scans the nutritional contents on the back of an energy drink. She is in full concentration mode until a voice behind her snaps her attention.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hello Carol...

Caroline turns to look and by the bemused expression on her face- she does not recognise ANNA LANGFORD.

Anna is frail, pale, early 40s, and employing the aid of an IVORY CANE. She also sports an odd tattoo of a LOCUST encircled by iridescent flames on the side of her neck.

Caroline, discreetly, glances at it.

ANNA

(gesturing at her tattoo)

Does it tickle your fancy
Caroline...? I always wanted a
visual memento of that night. It's
like having a piece of memory
seared onto your own skin.

Anna's voice throbs with an overtone of menace.

CAROLINE

I'm sorry....do I know you?

ANNA

In more ways than one, yes.

CAROLINE

(bewildered)

I'm afraid you've lost me...

ANNA

(chuckling)

Am I supposed to believe that my
face fails to ring a resounding
bell?

CAROLINE

I'm sorry....I'm usually good with
faces but yours just doesn't
register with me. Did we meet
somewhere?

ANNA

Please, you make it sound like
you're having an affair.

(CONTINUED)

Caroline is startled by this comment. She takes a sharp intake of breath.

CAROLINE
I'm late for work.

ANNA
We should talk Carol.

CAROLINE
(confused)
And what would that be about?

ANNA
Ill deeds from the past. One
doesn't forget easily you know.

CAROLINE
I'm really late for work.

Caroline briskly walks over to the counter. She pays for her energy drink and exits the store, pretending not to notice Anna's prying gaze.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

Caroline is in the process of pulling out a decayed tooth from an old man's mouth. She's perspiring at an unusual rate and her hands are visibly unsteady.

Caroline finally yanks the tooth out and the old man lets out an agonizing shriek. Flora quickly tends to his pain by massaging his jaw.

CAROLINE
(embarrassed)
I'm so sorry sir. Are you ok?

The old man mutters something underneath his breath- he's still reeling from the pain.

CAROLINE
(to FLORA)
Why don't you finish up here.

Flora peers at her- concerned.

FLORA
Yeah, of course.

Caroline exits the room.

INT. CAROLINE'S OFFICE - LATER

A SILVER-FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH of Richard, Emma, and Andrew rests on a desk. Behind it, Caroline sits pensively.

A gentle knock on the door.

CAROLINE

Yes, come in.

Flora walks in.

FLORA

Is everything alright?

CAROLINE

When did this knocking business start?

FLORA

I don't know Carol. I thought you might need some space.

CAROLINE

I'm fine.

FLORA

We can't all be perfect you know.

CAROLINE

Who's next on the list?

FLORA

A miss Anna Langford.

CAROLINE

Start prepping her, I'll be there in a minute.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Caroline walks into the room and as soon as her eyes fall upon the image of Anna being helped onto the examining chair-she freezes in her tracks.

ANNA

Hello doctor....

Caroline doesn't respond until Flora shoots her a hard-lined look.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

H-hello.

Caroline opens her file and skims through Anna's information.

ANNA

It's been a while since I got my teeth examined.

Caroline's trying desperately not to seem flustered but Flora senses an awkward tension between them- regardless of the subtlety.

FLORA

How long has it been?

ANNA

Too long. Far too long.

CAROLINE

So, it says here you're considering the JK veneers treatment.

Anna smiles broadly- like a Cheshire cat- revealing a perfect set of 'British teeth'.

ANNA

About time isn't it?

CAROLINE

(stalling)

W-Well....let's ummm...let's take a closer look.

Caroline goes to the sink and scrubs up. She glances over her shoulder and catches Anna leering at her. She flinches, prompting Flora to nudge her slightly on the shoulder.

Caroline reassures Flora with a nod and slips on a set of gloves. He perches down on a stool adjacent to Anna.

CAROLINE

Open wide....

Anna spreads her mouth apart, exposing a crevasse of decayed teeth. Caroline and Flora conceal their repulsion behind strained smiles.

Flora beams a stereoscopic light over Anna's mouth as Caroline examines the latter's dentition. She reaches for a pair of cotton pliers to gauge the depth of an abscess on the side of Anna's lateral incisor.

(CONTINUED)

Anna flinches and lets out a hacking cough. Flora instantly lifts her head to assuage her discomfort.

CAROLINE

Sorry...I should have administered a numbing solution. We can stop if you want..?

Anna rubbishes her suggestion with a nod of the head.

Caroline proceeds and a few minutes later rounds up the dental examination.

Flora helps Anna rinse into a miniature sink and then hands her some aspirin.

CAROLINE

Well I have to say your teeth are in decent condition.

ANNA

"decent"....?

CAROLINE

Healthy condition. You don't need the JK veneers. I would suggest something less invasive, say...lumineers.

Anna ponders her suggestion.

CAROLINE

It's up to you.

ANNA

It is isn't it?

(beat)

Let's try the lumineers.

CAROLINE

I'll call the pharmacy to make sure we have one in stock.

ANNA

Good. Thank you.

Caroline moves to stand when-

ANNA (CONT'D)

Where do you think you're going?

Caroline freezes, shoots Flora a befuddled look, then peers at Anna.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I asked you a question....

CAROLINE

(confused)

I'm sorry....I assumed we were done here.

ANNA

Surely that's for the patient to decide and after all, I did mention we needed to talk. Or have you already forgotten our little rendezvous this morning?

Caroline is trying her best to remain composed amidst the incipient apprehension brewing in Flora's eyes.

CAROLINE

I'm...you must be confusing me with someone else. But-

ANNA

(cutting her off)

Don't insult me.

Caroline takes a sharp intake of breath and wipes the beads of sweat off her brow.

CAROLINE

Err...I'm not entirely sure what it is you're insinuating.

ANNA

(chuckles)

I must say, you're starting to give me the awful impression of a woman in the throes of grandiose self-delusion.

FLORA

(stepping forward)

If it's an appointment you want, schedule one. Otherwise, you're currently trespassing on another patient's time.

Anna regards Flora with a look of irritation, which soon gives way to a supercilious grin.

ANNA

That is very rude of me, for that I apologize.

(CONTINUED)

(to Caroline)
I suspect will be seeing each other sooner rather than later, hopefully by then you would have....well, let's turn to that page when we get there shall we?

INT. CAROLINE'S OFFICE - LATER

Anna and the tall and wiry black man from the earlier scene saunter towards a vehicle. Caroline watches them from behind the office window. A look of concern creeps across her face.

The office intercom SQUAWKS- it startles Caroline.

SARAH
Carol?

CAROLINE
Yes...

SARAH
Kenneth Long is on the phone for you.

CAROLINE
Ahh....shit put him through.

A beat, as Sarah transfers the call.

KENNETH
Carol, how are we..?

CAROLINE
Not too bad. Yourself?

KENNETH
Oh fine-fine. Umm....I just wanted to confirm you'll be in Edinburgh this weekend.

CAROLINE
(straining)
...of course-of course. I'll be there.

KENNETH
I know how much you resent these kind of events but we would really appreciate it if you could come down, say a few words. Maybe even a few more words about the new products. How does that sound?

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

A few words...?

KENNETH

I mean nothing too grand. Just a few words. We could really use the wisdom of an experienced dentist like yourself.

CAROLINE

(in a sarcastic tone)

Well, how can I say no to that?

KENNETH

I'll take that as a yes then.
Thanks Carol.

CAROLINE

My pleasure.

INT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, FRONT STALL WAY - NIGHT

Caroline arrives home- utterly exhausted. She flings her scarf onto a coat stand and grabs a stack of mail scattered on a nearby table.

A roar of laughter, emanating from the living room, jolts her. She rolls her eyes and mutters an audible '*shit*'- evidently she isn't the biggest fan of whomever is laughing.

Richard steps out from the kitchen with a tray of refreshments and approaches Caroline. She acknowledges him with a smile.

RICHARD

What time do you call this?

CAROLINE

I left you a message, I had to work late.

RICHARD

And I called your office, and they said you'd call back, which you never did.

CAROLINE

I'm sorry, it was a tough day.

She pecks him on the cheek.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

How was your day?

RICHARD

Excruciating, I spent five hours trying to find a title for my review to no avail.

CAROLINE

Isn't there a deadline?

RICHARD

(evading the question)

Naturally. Umm.....you do realise my father's here?

CAROLINE

Oh! He is...

RICHARD

Yes, and we've been waiting for you to eat.

Caroline gently takes the tray from his hands.

CAROLINE

Well how about I help you with this..

LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Caroline walks into the living room and sets the tray down on the coffee table.

MITCHELL or MITCH as he's known around town has a great rapport with Andrew and Emma and it shows. They are so transfixed by his funny anecdotes that they barely even notice that Caroline has just walked into the room.

CAROLINE

Mitch.

MITCH

Carol.

(hugging her)

How are you?

CAROLINE

I'm very well thank you. And yourself?

(CONTINUED)

MITCH

Over the moon. I can't complain.

CAROLINE

Richard mentioned you were admitted recently....?

MITCH

Yes I was actually. I picked up an ankle injury during one of my afternoon jogs. Really hurt myself.

CAROLINE

Wow, still jogging...?

MITCH

As long as you're healthy, I don't see why not.

CAROLINE

and the ankle?

MITCH

Fully recovered.

CAROLINE

I'm glad to hear that. We were all very worried.

MITCH

Oh please. Don't worry about me, I can take care of myself. How are things down at the clinic?

CAROLINE

Fine....fine. Same old really.

(beat)

Did you see what your grandson did to his wrist?

MITCH

Yes I have. I'm just surprised it's the first injury he's ever picked up. Back in my days--

ANDREW

Oh God!! Not this story again.

MITCH

No I'm serious. Back in my days, rugby was much more violent. Players would get injured literally every match. You were only as good as your injuries.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

That makes no sense. The best players avoid injuries.

CAROLINE

(diffusing the debate)

I think we should carry this conversation to the dinner table.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Richard passes around a second helping of vintage English pudding.

MITCH

(admiring the pudding)

Richard, your mother would have been proud with your effort.

Richard is visibly touched by this comment.

EMMA

(to Mitch)

What was grandma like?

MITCH

Simply put, a woman of infinite warmth. Right Richard..?

Richard, with moist eyes, nods his assent. Caroline changes the subject to spare him from crying.

CAROLINE

Emma, tell your granddad about the concert.

EMMA

Oh that. Well. There's this huge student classical concert at the opera house in London in a couple of weeks. More importantly, there's a violin solo and it's either going to be me or this other girl playing it. So...I'm really excited and nervous about that.

MITCH

So what's her number?

EMMA

Whose number?

(CONTINUED)

MITCH

This other girl. I'll just give her a quick ring and tell her to kindly do the right thing and sit this one out.

RICHARD

Dad....

They all laugh.

ANDREW

I doubt you could even reach her, she probably doesn't even have a phone. She's a bit of a loner.

EMMA

No she's not, she's a really nice girl actually. She's just not popular that's all.

MITCH

(playfully chiding)

Andrew...be nice.

CAROLINE

I almost forgot to mention. I'm off to Edinburgh this weekend for a dental conference. Apparently, I'm just the right person to say a few words about products I've never seen before in my life.

RICHARD

And there was I thinking you'd change your mind about the skiing trip.

CAROLINE

I told you, I'm too busy.

RICHARD

Dad. You should take us instead. You know you hardly spend time with the kids.

MITCH

That doesn't sound like a bad idea.

ANDREW

Yesssss.

(CONTINUED)

MITCH

But, I'd prefer it if Carol joined us.

RICHARD

Didn't you just hear her?

MITCH

I mean I'd rather wait. So we can go as a whole family.

The doorbell rings.

Caroline casts an inquisitive look at Richard.

CAROLINE

Who could that be at this time?

The bell rings again. Richard answers it.

FRONT STALL WAY - SAME TIME

Richard peers through a peeping hole on the front door but sees nothing at the other end. He looks puzzled.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

Who is it Richard?

He is about to respond when CRACK!! the sound of shattered glass accompanied soon after by cries of *look out!!* erupts from the dining room.

Richard rushes back into the-

DINING ROOM

And screeches to a halt at the sight of the carnage in front of him: a broken window and a dinner table littered with shards of broken glass.

Caroline and the children are crouched underneath the table while Mitch looks around for something. Richard locates the object before he does: It's a large rock resting behind a damaged piece of furniture.

MITCH

Richard, check the window.

Richard gazes out through the hole in the window, making sure the coast is clear before helping Caroline and the kids out from underneath the table.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mitch is keeping the kids busy while Richard and Caroline talk to JOHN COLTS--a Thames Valley Police Constable. He jots down some notes as Caroline narrates the frightful events.

CAROLINE

Mitch just yelled "everyone down" and thank God we listened because the next second there was glass everywhere.

JOHN

And Richard, you answered the door bell?

RICHARD

Yes I did.

JOHN

And you saw no one?

RICHARD

No one. After that, I heard a scream and I ran back into the room and you know the rest.

CAROLINE

John, we've also been getting strange calls lately.

JOHN

How so?

CAROLINE

Well, whoever calls refuses to respond. The only thing we hear from the other end is just...very labored breathing. So someone has to be on the other end.

JOHN

That is very odd. Did you recognize the number?

RICHARD

No, it was a private number.

John flicks his note pad closed.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Well, I'll tell you this much,
we've never had anything like this
before. So, my best guess is...a
bunch of idle teenagers. Maybe yobs
from Newbury.

CAROLINE

Teenagers?

JOHN

It's a possibility
(beat)
Is there anything else?

Richard walks over to the book shelf and retrieves the
infamous DVD case. He hands it to John.

RICHARD

We decided to keep this between us
but after today's events....I think
you should have it.

JOHN

(puzzled)
What is it?

RICHARD

I think you ought to see for
yourself.

John nods his head.

JOHN

Well not to worry, we'll see what
we can do with this information and
I'll get back to you two as soon as
we have something.

RICHARD

Thanks a bunch John.

Caroline hugs John.

JOHN

You're welcome. I'll see myself
out.

John leaves.

RICHARD

Dad, I think you should really stay
here tonight.

(CONTINUED)

MITCH

No...I don't want to impose.

RICHARD

Dad, please.

CAROLINE

Mitch, maybe you should stay.

MITCH

Are you sure?

CAROLINE

Yeah, of course.

MITCH

Ok.

CAROLINE

Andrew, Emma, get ready to pack it up. You have a busy day tomorrow.

BASEMENT, CELLAR - NIGHT

Caroline sits pensively before the surveillance monitors, watching MITCH cry himself to sleep in the guest room.

Caroline cringes with a look of slight disgust, as Richard soon enters and takes his father into his arms, rocking him like an infant to sleep.

RICHARD

Mum's never coming back dad, we have to move on. That's what she would have wanted.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

A LAUGH-TRACK fills the air, as a stand-up comic reels of a joke on TV. Richard in pajamas and bathrobe, is asleep on the couch. A printed review of a local play lies on his lap.

Caroline enters and turns off the tv. She eyes the review with a look akin to suspicion, then settles down on the other end of the couch to read it.

Seconds later, Richard wakes up.

RICHARD

(regardng Caroline)

I know that look all too well.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
(setting the review aside)
My look of intrigue....

RICHARD
Something south of that.

CAROLINE
Really...? And why do I get the
feeling that any attempt to dissent
from that view would operate in
your mind as an admission of....

RICHARD
(finishing her sentence)
Disappointment, and perhaps a tinge
of apathy.

CAROLINE
"A tinge of apathy." I think you've
found your title dear.

Richard tilts his head back as he ponders the title. He
smiles at Caroline and beckons her.

Caroline obliges and they both hold each other- gently at
first, then firmer, evoking a hint of regained passion.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
I've missed these moments...you?

Caroline nods imperceptibly.

INT. CAROLINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Caroline sifts through some paper work on her desk when
Sarah walks in with some tea and biscuits.

CAROLINE
Thank you.

SARAH
How are you holding up?

CAROLINE
I'm fine.

SARAH
How about Richard and the kids?

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

They're ok...a bit shaken up naturally, but they'll live.

SARAH

That's good.

CAROLINE

And I'm sorry we had to call John at such an inopportune time.

SARAH

Don't be silly. He is the bloody police after all.

Caroline chuckles.

CAROLINE

I'm going to be away for the rest of the afternoon. It's Andrew's first check up with the doctor since his injury.

SARAH

Oh! Would you like me to reschedule Mrs. Appelgate then?

CAROLINE

Yes please.

INT. HOSPITAL CLINIC, WAITING ROOM - DAY

Caroline glances over at Andrew, who vacantly thumbs through a SPORTS MAGAZINE. He pauses to catch up on the latest exploits of THE LONDON IRISH.

A receptionist leans over her partition and calls out-

RECEPTIONIST

Andrew Baines?

Caroline and Andrew rise to their feet. As they walk towards the partition, Caroline notices the black man from the parking lot waiting in a queue at the pharmacy.

Caroline stands motionless.

ANDREW

Mum, what's wrong?

Caroline doesn't respond. She simply stares at the black man as the latter moves closer to the front of the queue.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

Go on without me, I have to speak
to someone.

ANDREW

(concerned)

Ok....

Andrew tromps off while Caroline waits for the black man to attend to his pharmaceutical needs. Once the black man collects a package, Caroline follows him to the car park.

EXT. CAR PARK/FREEWAY - SAME TIME

The black man lights a cigarette and climbs into a black corolla. Caroline calmly trails him in her car--making sure always to keep two car length away from him.

INT. CAROLINE'S CAR - LATER

Caroline manages to remain inconspicuous as she trails the black man into a quiet neighborhood.

The black man slows down and pulls into the driveway of a small cottage.

Caroline drives past him and parks her car at a distance that enables her to watch the black man discreetly.

The black man exits his car and approaches the front door of the cottage. A small, frail old woman opens the door as soon as he knocks on it.

The black man says something to her that Caroline can't make out, then hands her the package from the pharmacy. The old woman takes it and reenters the house.

The black man takes out a cigarette and lights it. He takes a long hard drag and glances out toward the street-

Caroline ducks down in the driver seat, trying to see without being seen.

The black man raises HIS ARMS and STRETCHES-

Caroline slinks even lower in the seat.

The corolla backs out of the driveway and heads down the road, passing Caroline's apparently empty car.

Caroline resurfaces from the floor of the car looking completely relieved.

EXT/INT. COTTAGE, FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Caroline raps lightly on the front door. Two knocks later and the old woman answers the door.

OLD WOMAN
(sharp and alert)
Yes, can I help you?

CAROLINE
I'm sorry to disturb you but I was wondering if by any chance you had a young woman living here with you?

OLD WOMAN
(protective)
Yes there is, she's my tenant. What is it you want with her?

CAROLINE
I need to speak to her please. It's rather important.

OLD WOMAN
She isn't here.

CAROLINE
Well, do you know where I can reach her? Perhaps at her work place.

OLD WOMAN
I'm sorry but I don't know.

CAROLINE
Ok, do you mind passing on a message for me?

OLD WOMAN
What message?

CAROLINE
That she needs to be more careful.

OLD WOMAN
I'll tell her.

CAROLINE
Thank you and again, I'm sorry for having disturbed you.

The old woman frowns as she steps back inside and slams the door.

INT. BRADFIELD COLLEGE, MUSIC DEPARTMENT - DAY

Emma plays J.S. Bach's Sonata for violin solo. Her eyes are closed, rendering the sheet music in front of her redundant. The music is absolutely mellifluous--almost perfect.

The piece ends and an off-screen applause commences. Emma turns to see Anna applauding.

Anna looks genuinely astounded by the prodigious talent before her.

ANNA

That was stupendous.

Anna plods closer to Emma, her cane striking a percussive sound along the floor.

EMMA

Wow! That's very kind of you to say.

ANNA

The crescendo at the end, c'était magnifique.

EMMA

Thank you.

ANNA

(putting out a hand)

Anna.

They both shake hands.

EMMA

Emma. Nice to meet you. Are you a....

ANNA

(completing her sentence)

Teacher, God no! I'm the new guidance counselor, hired to burrow into the labyrinth that is the psychology of a teenager, and listen as well.

EMMA

(glancing at her watch)

This is embarrassing, I was supposed to have a session with you an hour ago. I'm so sorry...

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

(chuckles)

It's fine, I know what it's like to be consumed by a passion. But if you like, we can finish up the last 15 minutes of your session.

EMMA

In here...?

ANNA

Why not...? I think it's refreshing, bringing the therapy to your doorstep. Offices can be so...well, formal.

EMMA

Yeah...although *therapy* makes me sound like I'm ill. I just really need someone to talk too, with the incoming exams and the music, I've been struggling lately.

Anna reaches forward and takes Emma's hand in a maternal gesture.

ANNA

That's precisely why I'm here.

Emma's features relax, her eyes dart around the room, as though unsure as to how to proceed.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I have a confession to make. You see that piano in the corner?

EMMA

(glancing back at the piano)

Yeah...it's beautiful.

ANNA

Ever since I was a child, it's the closest thing to a friend I've ever had.

EMMA

Wow, I actually feel the same way about my violin. I feel as though when I play, it's as much a part of the performance as it is an audience...a confidant. Not...

(CONTINUED)

ANNA
(completing her sentence)
Judging you.

EMMA
Exactly. That's the first time I've
told anyone about that.

ANNA
Don't be embarrassed, you never
know when you might meet a kindred
spirit.

Emma smiles. Anna reciprocates the gesture.

ANNA
I want to give you a little task,
which I hope you won't find too
intrusive.

Emma nods her assent. She's game.

ANNA (CONT'D)
I just finished composing an
original piece, a requiem. And I
would like you to render an
opinion?

EMMA
(excited)
You compose...? I've always wanted
to be able to do that but it's so
difficult.

ANNA
Perhaps I can teach you. In fact
there's a...a string crescendo that
would be perfect for a violinist.
You could help me fine tune it,
that's always a good way to start.

EMMA
(choking with delight)
Really? You really think I can do
it?

ANNA
From today's evidence, absolutely.
I'll tell you what, why don't I
give you my address and you can
come over anytime, call it an
in-house session if you will. Who
knows, in a few weeks you could be

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANNA (cont'd)
knee deep in composition and, it
may very well help ease the nerves.

EMMA
(playfully)
Tis music to mine ears.

ANNA
(smiles)
Mine as well.
(beat)
Do you mind playing something else?

EMMA
(sarcastically)
Do I mind?

Emma turns to a page in her music sheet and after a brief scan of its contents; she shuts her eyes and serenades Anna in classical bliss.

INT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, UNDERGROUND CELLAR - NIGHT

Caroline is fast forwarding through scenes of the last 24hrs, she stops and rewinds the tape on an image of Richard on the phone. She zooms in on Richard's face and then freezes the tape.

She runs her fingers down the monitor- as though attempting to feel Richard through the screen. She slips on a set of headphones and plays the tape.

RICHARD
(on the phone)
It's the way she looks at me dad, I
can feel the resentment...it's
palpable. It's affecting me to the
point where I fed my third fucking
manuscript to the shredder....you
know the one that publisher sent
back because it was "emotionally
aloof."

(beat)
You're right...but I'm not sure if
it's her, or me, or perhaps it's
living in this house that feels
stultifying.

(beat)
Something has to change dad..I'm
not happy.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD (cont'd)
I know.....the kids would be
devastated.

Caroline pauses the tape and slips off her headphones- she's heard enough.

INT. EDINBURGH, HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Caroline is at the reception making some last minute adjustments to her reservation. When:

KENNETH (O.S.)
Carol....

Caroline forces a smile, anticipating the identity, before turning around.

CAROLINE
Ken.

They shake hands.

KENNETH
How goes it?

CAROLINE
Not too bad actually. I like this venue.

KENNETH
It's a lot better isn't it?

CAROLINE
I suppose we have you to thank for that, being the chairman and all.

KENNETH
Well, a few others and myself do deserve a bit of credit. We did say right from the very start if we're going to demand for a larger membership fee then we had better use some of it on these annual conferences. It's only fair.

CAROLINE
I couldn't agree more.

KENNETH
You know everyone is really excited to hear what you have to say tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
(sarcastically)
Is that a fact?

KENNETH
I'm serious. You're one of the
highlights, up there with the
complementary crab cakes and new
prosthetic dentures.

CAROLINE
That's some company.

Kenneth laughs acerbically- he's a real chipmunk of a man.

Caroline glances at a clock hanging on a wall.

CAROLINE
I have to make a call, do you mind?

KENNETH
Of course not, go ahead. But make
sure you join us at the bar later,
there are a few people I'd like to
introduce you to. You'll love 'em.

Caroline nods her head half-heartedly. She walks over to the
payphone area and calls Richard on her cell.

RICHARD
Hello?

CAROLINE
Hey, it's me. I'm sorry I had to
leave so early.

RICHARD
No, it's fine. How is it coming
along?

CAROLINE
Good, if Kenneth is anything to go
by.

CAROLINE
You mentioned you had to say a few
words....

CAROLINE
Yeah, nothing too grand. I guess
they want a countryside perspective
or something like that.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
I'm sure you'll do fine.

An awkward pause ensues. Then-

CAROLINE
Richard. Is there something you're
not telling me?

RICHARD
I'm sorry?

CAROLINE
I have this odd feeling there's
something not quite right between
the two of us.

RICHARD
And when did you start feeling this
way?

CAROLINE
Why does that matter? The point is-

RICHARD
(cutting in)
Can we not have this conversation
now...please?

CAROLINE
...ok, have it your way. At least I
know I tried.

RICHARD
Don't patronize me.

A short pensive moment.

CAROLINE
I'm sorry.

RICHARD
Me too. Look, I have to go...I'll
talk to you later.

CAROLINE
Wait-

He's already hung up. Caroline hangs up, closes her eyes,
and steels herself. She looks utterly deflated.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Caroline watches a power-point presentation of some new dental technology from the back row. Everyone, except Caroline, seems rapt with attention.

The presentation reaches a new chord of tedium and Caroline reacts by moving restlessly in her chair.

She can't take it anymore and she exits the room as quietly as possible.

HALLWAY

Caroline closes the conference door behind her and is about to head for the restroom when the image of the black man purchasing a drink from the vending machine catches her attention.

She watches him with an almost disturbing gaze as the black man takes a sip of his drink and saunters towards her.

Caroline turns around quickly, feigning incognizance of the black man's presence. She glances over her shoulder as he strides past her and seconds later, she follows him

Caroline trails the black man for a couple of meters and just as she's about to say something he stops unexpectedly and turns around slowly to face her.

The black man grins at Caroline- a cold, menacing grin.

CAROLINE
(sternly)
Stop it.

BLACK MAN
Excuse me.....?

CAROLINE
I know it's you and that woman who came to my house the other night, and I want it to stop, *now!*.

BLACK MAN
(chuckles)
She was right about you. You don't take responsibilities.

CAROLINE
Just stop whatever it is you're trying to prove.

(CONTINUED)

BLACK MAN
Or else what?

A pause, as Caroline searches for a deliberate response.

CAROLINE
Please, just stop it.

The black man nods his head in disbelief, as though disappointed by the lack of venom in that last retort.

BLACK MAN
She was right about you.

And with that, the black man saunters away. Caroline watches him, with a weird mixture of fear and relief, as he exits the hotel.

INT. HOTEL, CAROLINE'S SUITE - NIGHT

Caroline is at her computer trying desperately to come up with a 'few words' for day 2 of the dental conference.

She composes a sentence and after reading it to herself, she deletes it.

The hotel phone rings. Caroline reluctantly answers it.

CAROLINE
Hello?

VOICE
Scot's tavern across the road. Be there in ten.

CAROLINE
(confused)
What.....who is this?

The caller has already hung up. Caroline slams the receiver into its cradle and grabs her coat.

INT. SCOT'S TAVERN - LATER

Caroline walks into a busy pub, her eyes survey the premises looking for the anonymous caller.

Anna waves at her from a table at the corner. Caroline shoots her an angry look and marches over to her table. This behavior merely amuses Anna as she chuckles.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

Now now Caroline, no need for that kind of attitude. Please, sit down.

Caroline takes a seat--her eyes never leave Anna's for one second.

ANNA

Can I interest you in anything? Their scotch is really good for some strange reason.

Caroline doesn't respond.

ANNA

Well it's your loss. How's your family? Are they well?

CAROLINE

Stop it.

ANNA

Stop what?

CAROLINE

Stop playing games with my life.

ANNA

Jesus Carol! You should hear yourself sometimes.

CAROLINE

The anonymous phone calls, the broken window...you could have really done some damage.

ANNA

But Caroline, I'm innocent.

CAROLINE

What do you want?

Anna glances over Caroline's shoulder and smiles at the black man who has just strode into the bar. She motions towards him to join their table.

The black man comes over and takes a seat next to Caroline. They barely acknowledge each other.

ANNA

You two have already met right?
(to Caroline)
You even followed him at one point I hear.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

I asked you a question.

ANNA

Oh.

(to the black man)

She was just asking me what it is we wanted.

BLACK MAN

And what did you say?

ANNA

I didn't have the time to respond.
You distracted me.

The black man turns to face Caroline

BLACK MAN

(stoically)

We want twelve million pounds!

A brief silence ensues as Anna, Caroline, and the black man each exchange unflinching looks.

Anna giggles, the black man laughs as well.

ANNA

Blackmail? God no. We're not that pathetic, plus it's too easy.

CAROLINE

(frustrated)

Then what is it?

ANNA

Can you at least stop pretending you don't know me? Do me that little favor.

Caroline has had enough. She moves to stand but the black man sits her back down with a firm hand on her shoulder.

ANNA

(coldly)

I'm not finished with you.

Caroline beams a radioactive stare at Anna.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Does Richard know?

Caroline doesn't respond; she merely looks away in annoyance.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA (CONT'D)
Look at me Caroline.

Caroline refuses to do so.

ANNA (CONT'D)
(raising her voice)
Look at me!!

Caroline reluctantly obeys.

ANNA (CONT'D)
How do you live with yourself
knowing what you did to me? How do
you do it? Does it ever haunt you?
Do you ever think about the
consequences?

CAROLINE
What do you want?

Anna leans over the table and snarls in a shrill and unforgiving voice:

ANNA
I want you to feel what it's like
to loose everything...your
innocence, your future, your
sanity. I want to ignite the flame
of shame in your eyes, and watch as
it consumes you, and everything you
love.

Caroline considers the threat a moment.

CAROLINE
If you come near my family again,
I'll go to the police and trust me,
you'll be put away for life.

ANNA
Oh I'm very aware of what you're
capable of.

And with that, Caroline rises to her feet. The black man moves out of her way-allowing Caroline, this time, to leave.

INT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, CAROLINE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Caroline is assisting Andrew with his math homework. She looks surprisingly calm and collected considering the unnerving events that just took place the previous night.

The front doorbell rings and after the second ring, someone answers it.

Moment's later, someone knocks on the office door.

CAROLINE

Yeah.....

RICHARD (O.S.)

Carol, John's here.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Richard and Caroline stand yards away from each other as they listen closely to John's update on the police investigation into the other night.

JOHN

Well, like I told Richard, I have some really good news.

(beat)

It was a bunch of school boy yobs who threw that rock. They hit the Grange's the other night.

RICHARD

(riveted)

That's awful!

JOHN

Yes, but fortunately one of them couldn't live with the overwhelming guilt of their actions. So this morning, he came down to the station and confessed. Even gave us information on the others whereabouts.

Richard breathes a sigh of relief while Caroline looks slightly baffled.

JOHN

We rounded up the rest of the group this afternoon except for one. The ring leader. He knew we were coming and made himself scarce. But we'll

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHN (cont'd)
soon find him. I tell ya, kids
nowadays uhh....

RICHARD
Honestly. How about the phone
calls, the DVD? Were they also
behind that?

JOHN
I'm afraid not. They both still
remain a mystery, but we're working
on it.

RICHARD
Well it's great news regardless.
Thanks to you.

JOHN
It's my job. I'm just happy I can
help.

CAROLINE
Thanks John.

JOHN
No worries. Well, I best be leaving
you two now.

RICHARD
Oh please, join us for dinner?

JOHN
Thanks but I can't.
(to Caroline)
You know how Sarah complains.

Caroline manages a smile and nods her head in agreement.
Richard extends his gratitude once more before John leaves.

EXT/INT. STREET - DAY

Emma navigates her way down an empty street on her bicycle.
She readjusts the violin case flung over her back to assuage
her discomfort. She rounds a corner and pulls into the
driveway of the

COTTAGE

Where she dismounts her bike and parks it against the bark
of a tree. She takes off her helmet and approaches the ajar
front door.

(CONTINUED)

Emma pauses a moment. She raps on the door but no response is forthcoming. She takes a sharp intake of breath and threads into the

FRONT STALL WAY

Emma casts a glance around the scene of domestic banality.

She starts for the living room to her right but stops abruptly upon hearing the faint sound of music. Emma smiles and follows the sweet trail of music to the

BACKYARD

Where she pauses as her eyes fall upon the sullen image of Anna stroking the keys of her wood-framed piano.

It's Ligeti mixed with a touch of Mozart and it's harrowing, hysterical, hyperdramatic and unrestrained. A micro-polyphony of sounds that render even the most cacophonous sections stupendous.

The requiem wallops to a riveting end, inducing chills down Emma's spine.

ANNA

What do you think?

EMMA

(struggling to find words)

It's....it's one of the most beautiful things I've ever heard. You composed that yourself?

ANNA

I'm afraid I did.

Anna beckons her forward to take a seat on the piano bench. Emma acquiesces.

ANNA (CONT'D)

You'd be surprised how easily it comes if you can merely summon that one memory or fear....that haunts you. I mean really hurts when you contemplate it.

(beat)

Lay yourself bare Emma...what is it you're scared of the most...? What terror holds you hostage at night?

Emma shudders as she ponders the questions. Anna settles a ruffled hair nestling on Emma's forehead with a nurturing stroke of her hand.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA

Failure....it has a face, and I see it in the eyes of everyone who's ever supported me, even my parents. I try to hide it but...it's got the better of me in the past. Sometimes I can barely breathe because of it, and I give up.

ANNA

No more hiding Emma. From now on, you play as though failure is always around the corner. Confront it, and you'll see how easily you can use it to your advantage.

Anna's stirring words seem to have had the desired effect, as Emma plays a short ballad on the piano-prompting a knowing smile from Anna.

EMMA

My mother taught me that. It's called-

ANNA

(completing her sentence)
"Anthem for lost souls". It's beautiful.

EMMA

It is.
(beat)
And you? What pain do you draw from?

Anna averts her face, the question has evidently struck an emotional chord.

EMMA

I'm sorry...I was just-

ANNA

It's ok. I...I often struggle to talk about it.

EMMA

I understand.

Anna peers into Emma's eyes, as though unsure about the latter's sincerity.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA (CONT'D)

You can trust me.

ANNA

Come closer...

Emma does so, and Anna whispers into her ears.

Emma's face suddenly contorts in a fog of alarm. She takes Anna into her arms.

EMMA

I'm so sorry.

Anna wipes away the tears trickling down Emma's cheeks in a gesture of maternal succor.

INT. BRADFIELD DENTAL CLINIC, RICHARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Caroline is in the middle of a consultation with an elderly patient. She flips open a large dental portfolio that contains adverts for denture models.

Caroline points to a particular model.

CAROLINE

I always advise my patients to try this one. Primarily because of the comfort level and the pricing is, as you can see, not too bad either.

The patient looks impressed. The intercom rings.

CAROLINE

Excuse me.

Caroline answers it.

CAROLINE

Yes....

SARAH

Sorry Carol but your son called. It's about Mitch.

CAROLINE

(concerned)

....Mitch? What did he say?

SARAH

He's in the E.R, he said it's bad.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Richard sits hunched over on a bench. He looks distraught.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
How is he?

Richard looks up to see Caroline, whose face spells a look of genuine concern.

RICHARD
He's in a coma.

CAROLINE
JESUS!! What happened?

RICHARD
They...they don't know...
(swallows his pain)
...he was found half-dead in the
middle of the park.

Richard looks away in anger--like a man seized by a sudden chest pain.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
(sobbing)
He was just jogging Carol....

Caroline moves closer and consoles him. Richard weeps in her arms.

A HYPERACTIVE DOOR BELL RINGS OVER-

INT/EXT. COTTAGE, FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

The old landlady, clad in pajamas, answers the front door after the fifth ring. She doesn't seem surprised to find Caroline standing on her front door at such an ungodly hour.

OLD WOMAN
(sharp and alert)
What now?

CAROLINE
Where is she?

OLD WOMAN
(Snapping)
Look young lady, go home or I'll
call the police.

Caroline cups her hands around her mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
(shouting)
WHERE ARE YOU?

OLD WOMAN
(matching her tone)
Young lady I asked you to leave and
you had better do as your told or I
will call the police.

The old woman steps back inside and tries to slam the door,
but Caroline catches it with her foot, and kicks it open
even wider.

OLD WOMAN
I'm calling the police.

As soon as the old woman starts to the living room, Anna
appears at the top of the stairway.

ANNA
Don't bother Margaret. She'll be
leaving soon, I promise you.
(beat)
Caroline please, let's talk in my
room.

Caroline briskly climbs the short flight of stairs and
follows Anna into her room.

ANNA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Anna reclines back in her chair and smirks at Caroline-
she's enjoying this.

CAROLINE
You killed him.

ANNA
I beg your pardon?

CAROLINE
Do you even realise what you've
done?

ANNA
I'm afraid I don't know what you're
talking about.

CAROLINE
What did he ever do to you? He's
completely innocent.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

What did I ever do incur your ire?
And I was innocent too, don't
forget that.

Caroline steps forward and lets fly a vicious backhand
across Anna's face.

Anna bares her teeth in a menacing grimace.

ANNA

Rage....how long have you kept the
monster at bay?

Caroline is practically foaming at the mouth, she beams an
odious stare at Anna and then turns to leave but turns back
when-

ANNA (CONT'D)

You want to know how I found you
after all these years...? It was
your mother Caroline.

(beat)

I spent...countless years looking
for you when out of the blue, your
mother reached me. You do remember
your mother right? She's dying by
the way.

Caroline averts her face in cold indifference.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I was with her just last week,
providing succor to the bereaved.
She had you tracked down for me as
a sort of...penance. It was
frightening...her eyes sunk in
misery and self-loathing as she
begged me for forgiveness. It seems
imminent death has afforded her a
certain amount of...retrospective
clarity if you will.

(scowls)

How tedious it is a guilty
conscious.

(beat)

This veneer of normality you've
fashioned for yourself
Caroline....the ease with which
you've stowed away the memory of
that night, it makes me sick. But
I will never forget. That is what
rage does to you Caroline.

Caroline searches for a riposte to no avail, her fiery indignation rendering her speechless. She storms out of the room.

INT. BRADFIELD DENTAL CLINIC, CAROLINE'S OFFICE - DAY

A hand pulls open a filing cabinet and retrieves a folder from it. Pull back to reveal Caroline scanning the contents of the folder with an incipient look of concern.

She moves over to her desk and dials an extension on the intercom:

CAROLINE

Sarah, I need you in my office
right now.

(beat)

...Sarah, are you there...Sarah..?

Caroline frowns as she parks the receiver into its cradle and exits the room onto a

HALLWAY

Where she gazes out towards the lobby. Sarah is nowhere in sight. Frustrated. Caroline tromps into the

LOBBY

And is instantly taken aback by the scene unfolding on the television monitor before her perturbed patients.

FROM THE MONITOR: Caroline slaps Anna across the face.

A gasp of shock reverberates amongst her patients, prompting Caroline to take action by hurrying behind a partition and ejecting the DVD from the machine.

CAROLINE

(to her patients waiting)

I'm dreadfully sorry you had to see
that...that was....

Caroline is struggling to abate the alarmed expressions etched across her patients' faces.

Sarah walks in, cigarette pack in hand, and Caroline regards her with a look of suppressed fury.

INT. HOSPITAL, EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Mitch's lifeless body nestles on a hospital bed; Caroline and Richard are seated adjacent to it. They both look utterly dejected.

RICHARD

You know you don't have to be here.

CAROLINE

I want to be here.

RICHARD

I can do this on my own. You have patients to worry about.

CAROLINE

Do you not want me here?

Richard scoffs at this question.

RICHARD

I don't want you here for the wrong reasons.

CAROLINE

"The wrong reasons"?

RICHARD

You two never got along. You practically told me you hated him.

CAROLINE

I admit we had our differences, but I never once said anything remotely like that.

RICHARD

I don't want to get into an argument with you. Especially under these circumstances.

CAROLINE

I'm not trying to argue with you, I'm just-

RICHARD

(cutting her off)

Carol please, I can't do this right now.

Richard goes to the window and stares aimlessly out of it, much to the chagrin of Caroline.

(CONTINUED)

Moments later, Caroline's cell phone rings. She answers it.

CAROLINE

Hello?

(beat)

Yes this is she.

(beat)

Are you sure?

(beat)

Of course, I'm on my way.

Caroline hangs up.

CAROLINE

Richard, I just got a call from the headman's secretary, they want us to come down as soon as possible. It's about Andrew.

INT. BRADFIELD COLLEGE, HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Caroline and Richard sit pensively before an expansive office desk occupied by Regis.

REGIS

There's been a recent family tragedy?

RICHARD

Yes, my uh.....my father was run over a few days ago.

REGIS

(gasps)

Oh! That's terrible. How is he doing?

RICHARD

He's in a coma. But the doctors say there's a good chance he might come round soon.

REGIS

My condolences.

RICHARD

Thank you.

CAROLINE

We appreciate it.

(CONTINUED)

REGIS

Unfortunately, what I'm about to say won't assuage the wounds so to speak. Andrew is in very big trouble I'm afraid.

RICHARD

What kind of trouble?

REGIS

Well this morning as I walked into my office, I was greeted by a brown envelope on my desk. The envelope contained photographs of Andrew smoking marijuana with a group of fellow students.

Richard nodes his head in utter disbelief. Caroline, for her part, is completely emotionless.

RICHARD

(incredulous)

That can't be. Andrew would never do that. We both spoke to him about drugs.

Regis pulls open a nearby drawer and removes a brown envelope from it. He opens it, takes out a stack of photographs, and hands them to Richard.

Richard scans the photographs with a look of visceral disdain. Caroline doesn't even bother looking. She merely fixes an empty gaze on Regis.

Richard has seen enough. He sets the photos back down on the desk.

REGIS

Now I'm sure you are aware of our strict drug policy here at Bradfield. We do not tolerate this kind of behavior. Especially when it's violated by one of our star sportsmen.

RICHARD

Andrew's a good student. He's never been in trouble before.

REGIS

Yes, he does have a clean record. And we took that into consideration before deciding on his punishment.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Already....?

REGIS

I'm afraid so. Andrew is as of this moment, suspended until further notice. The disciplinary board will decide when to reinstate him.

RICHARD

Is there nothing we can do?

REGIS

No. We can't make exceptions. Even for our best students.

(beat)

I will make sure he's kept on track in regards to his school work. We don't want him lagging behind when he returns.

RICHARD

....thank you.

REGIS

You're welcome. I always tell parents who find themselves in this situation to try and stay calm, and talk to their children. A little communication goes a long way.

CAROLINE

Thank you.

REGIS

Again, I hope your father makes a speedy recovery.

RICHARD

Thank you.

Richard and Caroline both rise to their feet and after shaking hands with Regis, they exit the office. Into a

HALLWAY

Where Andrew leans against a wall, his eyes cast down in shame. Richard, incensed, marches straight past Andrew without even acknowledging his presence.

Caroline casts a pitiful look at Andrew.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

Get your things. We're leaving now.

ANDREW

Mum, I'm sorry.

CAROLINE

I know.

INT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, BASEMENT - NIGHT

Caroline, in a bathrobe, emerges from the basement. She starts to move but stops abruptly upon hearing the O.S sound of Bach's sonata for violin. Caroline smiles.

LIVING ROOM

Caroline enters and the blood drains from her face upon seeing the silhouette of EMMA'S NAKED FRAME against the dark, her back hunched over her violin.

Caroline throws a wall switch and paces forward cautiously, reaching forward to touch Emma on her pale back.

CAROLINE

EMMA.....

Emma looks up, exposing a GARISH LACERATION across her THROAT. Caroline staggers back in horror and trips over a chair.

Emma clutches her blood-corrupted throat and whimpers in pain, as Caroline claws fearfully to her aid.

SUDDENLY-

INT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Caroline bolts up in bed, sweating. She looks around frantically as if searching for a misplaced item. She turns to her side and fortunately for her-- she hasn't woken up Richard.

EMMA'S BEDROOM - MOMENT'S LATER

Caroline peeps into Emma's dark bedroom, throwing a nervous glance at her empty bed.

FRANTIC, Caroline rushes for the bed, when the sound of a running tap freezes her in her tracks.

(CONTINUED)

Caroline turns to see Emma stepping out of the bathroom, rubbing the sleep from her eyes, and she heaves a sigh of relief.

EMMA
(confused)
Mum....what are you doing here?

CAROLINE
(peering at her neck)
Nothing....I was um....I wanted to
make sure you were ok.

EMMA
Well...I'm fine.

Caroline smiles and turns to leave.

EMMA
Mum....are you ok?

CAROLINE
....I'm fine dear.
(gazing into Emma's caring
eyes)
....I love you.

Emma smiles and slips back into bed.

INT. CAROLINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Caroline is on the phone with John. There's an uneasy tension about her as she fiddles with a pen.

CAROLINE
I hope you don't mind but I asked
Sarah for your personal number.

JOHN
Of course not. I hope everything is
alright? I heard about Mitch, I'm
dreadfully sorry.

CAROLINE
Thanks John. We all are

JOHN
How is Richard holding up?

CAROLINE
She's devastated....but I think
we'll pull through. The doctors are
optimistic.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Well I'm glad to hear that. And just so you know, we're doing our part here. Whoever did this will be caught. I promise you.

CAROLINE

I appreciate it John.
(beat)
I need to ask for a favor.

JOHN

Of course, anything.

CAROLINE

Are you at your desk?

JOHN

Yes.

CAROLINE

Good. I need some information on the owner of this plate number. H, four, K, two, six, L. Can you run it through your system?

JOHN

I can try. Give me a second.

The sound of rapid tapping can be heard as John runs the plate number through the police database. A few seconds later--

JOHN

I'm sorry Carol, but we don't have anything on that number.

CAROLINE

That's a pity.
(beat)
Do you have access to another police database? Perhaps London metropolitan?

JOHN

Carol, you know I have to ask you-

CAROLINE

(cutting him off)
I know. But I can't tell anyone....not now anyway.

A brief silence ensues from John's end.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
I'll call you back.

CAROLINE
Ok.

INT. CAROLINE'S OFFICE - LATER

Caroline's cell phone rings and she answers it immediately.

JOHN
What's your email?

CAROLINE
C.Baines@hotmail.co.uk.

JOHN
I'm sending you everything on that
number you gave me.

CAROLINE
Thanks John.

JOHN
I hope you know what you're doing.

CAROLINE
I do. Thanks again.

Caroline hangs up and turns on her computer. She logs on to her email account and clicks on the flashing new message from John in her inbox.

Once opened, she downloads an attached file and a page pops up that contains a MUG SHOT of the BLACK MAN and his detailed criminal record.

Caroline scans the document and her eyes soon come across a home address under the heading of 'current status'. She's about to scribble down the address when a rap on the door startles her.

CAROLINE
(irritated)
Who is it?

RICHARD (O.S.)
Carol it's me.

Caroline looks even more startled now.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
....come in.

She minimizes the web page on her computer before acknowledging Richard with a hug.

RICHARD
Sorry to show up unannounced like this.

CAROLINE
Don't apologize.

RICHARD
Sarah told me you were taking a break.

CAROLINE
Not really but please, sit down.

Richard sits.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Do you want anything?

RICHARD
No I'm fine, thank you.
(beat)
You know....it just hit me, I haven't stepped foot in this place since God knows how long.

CAROLINE
Wow! That long....?

RICHARD
(looking around)
Yep. I've missed it. Never really been a fan of offices.

CAROLINE
Of course not, you're an artist.

Richard manages a smile.

RICHARD
Sarah is so lovely. I'm sure everyone loves her warmth.

CAROLINE
Yeah, I don't know what I'd do without her.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
I can imagine.

CAROLINE
How's Dad?

RICHARD
Still in the coma.

CAROLINE
What did the doctors say?

RICHARD
The same really...."be strong, hang
in there, he could wake up when you
least expect it."

CAROLINE
You should listen to them.

RICHARD
That's what he would say. It's
funny...I never saw my father shed
a single tear, even when my mother
passed, until a week or so
ago....that night he spent at our
house. I couldn't get him to stop
crying. It was as if he had waited
sixty years to finally unburden
himself.
(beat)
Some part of me knew that night was
ominous...

CAROL
Richard...don't do this to
yourself.

Richard looks at Caroline with eyes fraught with sorrow and without warning he is overcome. He lurches forward, burying his face in his hands. The sobs come unrestrained, violently, like a sudden tidal wave.

Caroline looks away, unable to watch as Richard unravels right before her.

RICHARD
I-I don't know what I'd do if he
di-

The office intercom squawks, prompting Richard to wipe away his tears.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH
Carol, Mr Greenbalt just arrived.

CAROLINE
Ok. Thanks.

Richard moves to stand.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
You don't have to go. He can wait.

RICHARD
No please, go ahead. I'm fine.

CAROLINE
I can make him-

RICHARD
Carol please, I'm fine.

RICHARD
Are you sure?

He smiles to mollify her concerns and exits the office.
Caroline sighs and casts an anxious look at her computer.

INT. BRADFIELD COLLEGE, STUDENT AUDITORIUM - DAY

The auditorium of the student union is in darkness. Pato Levanti's *Pazzani Milano* is the opera they are rehearsing. Emma is on stage as well, performing background music to the unfolding farce.

Emma stumbles on a note, inducing a disapproving look from the opera's DIRECTOR.

DIRECTOR
(exasperated)
Emma....I know you're just covering
for a friend, but at this rate
we're never going to finish.

Emma seems distracted, throwing a curious look at a nebulous FEMALE FIGURE in the back row.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Emma...?

Emma narrows her eyes and her features relax as she sees Anna motioning at her from the back row, encouraging her to press on.

(CONTINUED)

DIRECTOR
(approaching Emma)
EMMA!!

EMMA
(raising the bow of her
violin)
.....I'm ready.

STUDENT AUDITORIUM - LATER

The rehearsals are now over. Anna and Emma sit in the back row in silence. A sudden look of distress streaks across Emma's face.

EMMA
You know that feeling when everyone around you seems to be falling apart?

ANNA
.....By everyone, you mean your family?

EMMA
Yeah...my brother just got suspended, and it's the last thing my...bickering parents need with my grandpa in a coma.

ANNA
Oh I read about that, I'm sorry. I hope they find the perpetrators.

EMMA
I just want things to get back to the way they were.

ANNA
I envy your simplicity...there is something undeniably seductive about the status quo.

EMMA
I didn't mean it like that it's just....well, I'm sure you must have felt the same way after...you know...what happened to you as a little girl...

ANNA
No. I felt the only emotion that lingers like death.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA
...Betrayal...?

ANNA
Rage Emma, till this day I feel
nothing but rage.

Anna places a menacing palm on Emma's thigh.

EMMA
(an edge of fear in her voice)
This woman...the one responsible,
she's still out there isn't she?

Anna nods in the affirmative and the mere thought of her tormentor's liberty triggers an extraordinary grimace of wrenching pain. She pulls back her lips in a rictus of madness.

Emma is taken aback by Anna's visceral countenance.

ANNA
Put yourself in my place Emma,
would you not cut down all the laws
in England just to bring her to her
knees?

EMMA
(riveted)
I would.....

ANNA
You'd burn it all down wouldn't
you?

EMMA
....yes.

ANNA
And when you have her cornered, and
she turns to look you in the
eyes....what will you do then? All
the laws in England having been
burned down.

Emma ponders the implication underlying that arresting remark.

ANNA (CONT'D)
It's not so simple you see Emma.
Still, you can be certain of one
thing, it may come as a jolt to
find out who she is.

Emma beams a stare of puzzlement at Anna.

INT. CAROLINE'S VEHICLE - NIGHT

A steel gate glides open and Caroline pulls into the parking lot of the music department at Bradfield college.

She glances out toward the side of the road and sees, to her horror, Anna, the black man, and Emma conversing beside the front entrance to the student auditorium.

Caroline brakes instantly and lurches out of the car in a seething rage.

Anna, Emma and the black man are oblivious to the incensed figure bearing down on them, until Caroline howls:

CAROLINE
Stay away from her.

Emma turns to regard Caroline with a frightful look, while Anna and the black man exude an air of cocky indifference.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
(to Emma)
In the car, now!

Emma looks at Anna as though seeking permission, this riles Caroline even further.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Now!

Emma grudgingly obeys.

Caroline's eyes trail Emma as she slams the car door closed. She then fixes an odious glare at Anna and the black man.

CAROLINE
I told you to stay away from my family.

ANNA
It's eerie, wouldn't you say Carol...? How so intimately your Emma reminds me of myself.

CAROLINE
Don't you dare...

(CONTINUED)

ANNA
Paralyzed by an awful sense of
loneliness, yet so driven.

Caroline moves to assail Anna, but her attempt is quickly repelled by the stiff arm of the black man.

ANNA (CONT'D)
I heard little Andrew strayed too
far down the wrong path recently.
It seems the chickens have finally
come home to roost.

CAROLINE
I won't tell you again, if you-

ANNA
(cutting her off)
Then don't.

The black man reaches into his back pocket.

Caroline retreats a few steps. The black man grins and pulls out a set of car keys. He dangles them in the air, taunting Caroline.

INT. CAROLINE'S VEHICLE - MOMENT'S LATER

The front door opens and Caroline sinks onto the driver seat. She casts a look of disdain at Emma who vacantly watches as the black man hops into a white van.

CAROLINE
Do you have any idea what you're
doing? The kind of danger you're
in?

EMMA
I'm seventeen years old mum....

CAROLINE
I want you to stay away from her.

EMMA
I'll speak to whomever I want.

Caroline reacts to Emma's impudence by grabbing her arm.

CAROLINE
Stay away from her.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA
(wincing)
You're hurting me.

CAROLINE
You're not listening to me. I said-

EMMA
(yells)
Let go of my arm!

Caroline does as she's told. A look of shame flashes across her face.

EMMA
(massaging her arm)
Does dad know about her?

Caroline doesn't respond.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I thought as much.

CAROLINE
I don't know what lies that lunatic fed you, and frankly I don't want to know but-

EMMA
(cutting her off)
Why not? What are you afraid of hearing?

Caroline has reached her limit and she raises her arm to strike Emma.

EMMA
(unfazed)
Go on...hit me. Confirm what I already suspect.

Caroline lowers her arm.

CAROLINE
Let that be the last time you ever speak to me like that. Do you understand?

EMMA
(in a mocking voice)
Yes mother.

Fed up, Caroline takes out the car key and stabs it into the ignition.

INT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, FRONT STALL WAY - NIGHT

The front door opens and in flops Caroline and Emma, still carrying with them an air of palpable tension.

Caroline attempts to address Emma but the latter vaults up the stairs before he even opens her mouth. Caroline heaves a sigh of frustration and tromps into the-

LIVING ROOM

Where she freezes on the unsettling image of Richard, a remote in hand, watching in stupefaction Caroline's last visit to Anna on the television monitor.

Faintly, from the monitor:

ANNA

This veneer of normality you've fashioned for yourself Caroline...the ease with which you've stowed away the memory of that night, it makes me sick. But I will never forget. That is what rage does to you.

Richard has seen enough. He pauses the DVD, inducing a momentary silence.

Richard regards Caroline with a look akin to suspicion.

RICHARD

Is she the reason why my father is in a fucking coma right now?

CAROLINE

I don't know.

RICHARD

(raising his voice)
What do you mean you don't know?

CAROLINE

(matching his tone)
I mean exactly that. She didn't confess to it. You saw how I tried to get her to say it...

RICHARD

(bewildered)
And this thing about your mother...you told me she died when you were little, now I hear she's been alive all this time...?

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

I'm sorry.

RICHARD

"Sorry", is that it? Carol you've been lying to me for God knows how long. And that's your explanation..?

Caroline slumps down onto a sofa.

CAROLINE

....I hated my mother. She abused me as a child and I hated her. She was dead to me the moment I left home, I didn't want to saddle you with that kind of baggage. So I lied. I did it for us.

Richard looks as though he understands.

RICHARD

And this woman....who is she?

Caroline remains reticent.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(moving closer to Caroline)

Carol please....I am your husband, and I need you to trust me. I know these last few weeks have been torture for you, I understand and I sympathize. But it's been difficult for me as well. I'm worried sick about the kids, about us....my father. Carol, now is not the time for secrets, I mean in case you haven't noticed we're practically under siege here. So please, for our fucking sanity, I need some showing of solidarity. You can start by telling me the truth about this woman.

Caroline stares into Richard's eyes and she's overtaken by the look of desperation they effuse. She steels herself for a confession.

CAROLINE

Her name's Anna Langford, and she uhh...she and her father used to live with my mother and I about uhh...God what is it now....thirty

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE (cont'd)

or so years ago. Anna's father worked for my dad on our estate, doing carpentry work and what not. After my father died, my mother took Anna in, I guess to feel some void, but uhh...it turned out Anna was apparently gifted with the piano and my mother was certain that under her close tutelage she could become a great pianist. So, hourly lessons turned to days and then weeks and then sure enough, Anna moved in.

(beat)

I had never seen my mother so overjoyed, she was fixated with Anna. Galvanized by her precocious talent and they...grew so close it was like I didn't even exist anymore. Anna was the daughter and quite frankly the child she never had and always wanted, and I was neglected. Sometimes for weeks even months. I got jealous, and one night...I uhh...I took one of mother's expensive necklaces that dad gave her and slipped in Anna's rucksack. Mum wanted to wear it that night and went around accusing all the maids of theft. Then she went from room to room ransacking everything until sure enough, she found it in Anna's bag.

(beat)

I remember the look of betrayal on my mother's face...it terrified me. She threw Anna out of the estate along with her father that night and I never saw her again until now. I imagine she's on some kind of a vendetta against me for what happened that night.

RICHARD

(riveted)

Jesus Carol....

CAROLINE

I know, I regret it. It was....it was a schoolboy error driven by envy. I didn't think my mother would react like that, I expected a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE (cont'd)
mild admonition at worst....I mean she loved that woman more than her own daughter. I wanted to teach her a lesson....I guess it went too far.

RICHARD
Well she definitely has a right to feel aggrieved. Still, thirty years is a long time. It's hard to believe anyone would hold a grudge for that long.

CAROLINE
I feel the same way. It's absurd.

RICHARD
Regardless, do you have any idea what this woman is capable of?

CAROLINE
No. What I just told you was the sum of my interaction with her. I mean I barely even recognized her the first time she approached me.

RICHARD
Where was that?

CAROLINE
She came for a routine check-up at the clinic. Made quite a scene at the end of it. Flora asked her to leave

RICHARD
And then you felt it best to storm into her house. How did you even know where she lived? Seeing as you didn't even recognize her.

Caroline regards Richard with an expression that belies a truth untold.

CAROLINE
I asked John to track her down.

Caroline effuses a subtle air of incredulity.

ANDREW (O.C)
Do you still want me to set the table?

(CONTINUED)

Richard and Caroline turn to see the taciturn figure of Andrew standing beside the doorway- a table cloth in hand. Caroline nods approvingly.

DINNER TABLE - LATER

The Baines family sit down to a quiet and sullen dinner. Andrew has barely touched his food. He looks at Richard and then at Caroline, and after what seems like forever murmurs--

ANDREW

Can I be excused?

RICHARD

No.

Andrew sulks like a petulant teenager. Emma, on the other hand, looks like she's itching to say something. She puts down her cutlery and clears her throat audibly.

RICHARD

What's the matter Emma?

EMMA

I have some important news I'd like to share.

Caroline sits up in her chair, bracing for the inevitable.

RICHARD

Good I hope..?

EMMA

Judge for yourself. Remember that student opera thing I told you guys about? Well....I got the violin solo.

Richard pats Emma on the shoulder--he's trying his best to be supportive.

RICHARD

Congrats Emma, I'm so proud of you.

CAROLINE

Well done. Good job.

EMMA

Thanks.

Emma's sangfroid is unsettling, giving the chastening events that just took place between her and her mother.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
I think this calls for some
champagne. Carol, what do you
think?

Caroline stalls- contemplating.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Carol..?

CAROLINE
Champagne...of course.

DINNER TABLE - MOMENTS LATER

Richard uncorks a bottle of champagne. Andrew's face lights up as Richard pours a little bit of champagne into his glass.

Richard serves the rest of the family, then raises his glass to make a toast.

CAROLINE
Maybe Andrew should make the toast.

Andrew frowns a little before taking his cue.

ANDREW
A toast to Emma, for her hard work
and perseverance. A toast, that I
may follow in her footsteps. And a
toast to grandpa, for renewed
health.

Everyone indulges in a chorus of cheers, culminating in the obligatory chinking of glasses.

Caroline proffers a strained smile at Richard and he reciprocates the gesture.

INT. GLASS HOUSE - NIGHT

The shrill humming of a LOCUST COLONY fills the air, as a MAN in a full body lab coat spreads a handful of cereal grasses across a breeding room floor. The man stands back as the LOCUSTS descend upon the cereal in a menacing swoop.

MAN
Caroline, the camera....

Caroline (7) emerges from underneath a table, brandishing a SUPER 8 CAMERA. She is trembling with fear, as she hands the camera to her FATHER, who instantly trains it on her.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
Dad, don't. I'm scared.

FATHER
It's not nearly enough. I'll show
you terror.

Father lurches forward and shoves Caroline onto the breeding floor.

FATHER
(filming)
SCREAM CAROL, become terror!!

Caroline shrieks in horror as the LOCUSTS envelope her.
A FIRM KNOCK AND--

INT. LONDON HOTEL SUITE, BATHROOM SINK - NIGHT

Caroline, looking incandescent in a long black dress, snaps out of her nightmare.

RICHARD (O.S.)
Carol, what's taking you so long?
we're going to be late.

Caroline stares at herself in the mirror as though scrutinizing her appearance.

RICHARD (O.S.)
Carol....?

CAROLINE
Sorry, I'll be out in a second.

Caroline turns the tap on and splashes some water over her face. She gazes at herself, once more, in the mirror.

RICHARD (O.S.)
(angry)
Carol!!!

Caroline dries her face and steps back into the-

BEDROOM

Where Richard, dressed in a sharp black tuxedo, throws his arms aloft in aggravation.

RICHARD
What is going on?

Caroline gestures at her forehead.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 Andrew, get your mother an aspirin.
 I'll call a taxi.

Andrew does as he's told.

RICHARD
 (hanging up the hotel
 landline)
 Are we done? There's a cab waiting
 for us downstairs.

HOTEL CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Caroline's cell phone rings as they walk towards an elevator. Caroline picks up.

CAROLINE
 Hello?
 (beat)
 Linda, how are you?
 (beat)
 Emma....? You mean she's not with
 you?

The three of them freeze on that last question.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 I don't understand. I thought she
 and Sarah had planned to go
 together. Is she not picking up her
 phone?
 (beat)
 Umm...well we're actually on our
 way there right now. She probably
 just went along with the main
 group. I'll try calling her myself.
 (beat)
 Thanks Linda.

Caroline hangs up. Richard rings Emma. They all wait apprehensively as the ringing tone goes unanswered.

Richard leaves a voice mail.

CAROLINE
 Emma dear, it's your father.
 Sarah's mum just called to tell us
 you weren't with them. What's going
 on? I thought the plan was to get a
 lift with them? Please call me or
 your mother back as soon as you get
 this message. I love you....bye.

(CONTINUED)

he hangs up and looks at Caroline and Andrew for some much needed reassurance.

CAROLINE

She must have gone with the main group.

RICHARD

It's so unlike her though, to not call before changing plans.....

CAROLINE

I'm sure she's there. She has to be there.

INT. LONDON OPERA HOUSE, LOBBY - NIGHT

Richard, Andrew, and Caroline are sat anxiously in a busy reception area.

A stout brunette in bifocals steps out from an elevator and immediately looks towards their direction.

ANDREW

Mum, that's her--Miss Dyer.

Caroline waves at her and MISS LINDSAY DYER briskly walks over.

LINDSAY

Mrs. Baines?

CAROLINE

Please, call me Carol.
(gestures towards Richard)
My husband Richard.

They shake hands.

LINDSAY

Very nice to meet you. I don't suppose Emma is grabbing something from the car?

The blood drains from Caroline's face. Richard places a consoling hand on her shoulder.

RICHARD

We were hoping she came with you.

(CONTINUED)

LINDSAY

With me? I don't understand. She was given permission to travel with a friend.

CAROLINE

Yes, that was the plan. But I got a call from her friend's mum as we were leaving the hotel, asking if we knew where she was.

LINDSAY

That's strange. I tried calling her several times, she never picked up.

RICHARD

We can't reach her either. It's so unlike her.

LINDSAY

When was the last time you spoke to her?

RICHARD

Right before she left for school this morning. Why?

LINDSAY

I don't know....did she seem different? A little upset maybe?

RICHARD

No, the complete opposite. I've never seen her so excited.

(to Caroline)

You dropped her off at school, she looked her normal self right?

CAROLINE

Yes....extremely happy for obvious reasons.

ANDREW

Maybe her band mates might know something...?

LINDSAY

I already asked them, they don't know anything.

RICHARD

Please, ask again.

(CONTINUED)

LINDSAY

Ok, I'll call my assistant upstairs. She's with the students rehearsing.

Lindsay walks over to the concierge and asks for a room number to be dialed. They do as requested and hand her a receiver.

Caroline, Richard, and Andrew all watch with an almost disturbing gaze as Lindsay inquires about Emma's whereabouts.

Moments later, Lindsay nods her head in despair. Caroline looks away--fearing the worst.

INT. BAINES' HOTEL SUITE - LATER

Caroline is sat at the dressing table while Andrew and Richard pace back and forth. There's a palpable sense of apprehension in the air as Caroline fiddles with a photograph of Emma.

A knock on the door, Richard answers it.

Andrew walks over to his mother.

ANDREW

Mum, do you want anything?

CAROLINE

No, thank you.

Richard comes back in with two police officers: Detective Chief Inspector NATHAN STROUT and Chief Inspector TOM LONGDEN.

STROUT

Good evening, I'm detective Strout, this is inspector Longden.

CAROLINE

Carol.

They exchange handshakes.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Please tell me you have some good news.

(CONTINUED)

STROUT

I'm afraid not. But all our officers have been notified, including Thames Valley police. If she's out there, we'll find her. The important thing is to stay calm and to avoid thinking about the worst.

RICHARD

Which is?

STROUT

.....abduction.

Caroline fights back a tear.

LONGDEN

If that's the case we should be contacted at the very latest in three days.

STROUT

I just have a few questions for the both of you if you don't mind?

Caroline and Richard nod their assent.

STROUT

Good. First off, has Emma ever done anything like this before?

RICHARD

What? Gone missing?

STROUT

No. But you mentioned it was highly unusual for her to change plans without informing the two of you. Has she been distant lately, at home or at school?

RICHARD

No. Not that we know of anyway.

STROUT

So you're not sure?

CAROLINE

Emma's been the same. Forever smiling and looking forward to perform today.

(CONTINUED)

STROUT

So there's no chance she might
have.....ran away?

RICHARD

Emma's a happy girl, a great
student. Hard working, diligent,
always home early, never a cause
for complaint. I don't see why she
would do anything like that.

STROUT

Sometimes the motives are very
unclear.

RICHARD

Even if, why today of all days?
Tonight was practically the
culmination of a life's long
ambition. Why would she suddenly
sacrifice that?

STROUT

True. But as I said sometimes these
things aren't as clear cut as they
seem.

(beat)

What do you do for a living madam?

CAROLINE

I'm a dentist.

STROUT

(to Richard)

And you sir?

RICHARD

I do freelance work...journalism.

STROUT

Ok, I'm asking because some
occupations come with special
hazards such as enemies. You
wouldn't happen to know anyone that
might want to harm your daughter in
order to get to you? That applies
to your personal lives as well?

Richard looks at Caroline.

CAROLINE

A woman....Anna Langford. She's
been harassing us for the past few

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE (cont'd)
weeks...showing up at my practice,
sending disturbing DVD's to our
home.

STROUT
DVD's...?

RICHARD
Yes....the contents of which are
frankly difficult to explain. But
we did hand them over to Thames
valley police.

STROUT
You think she's capable of pulling
of something this daring?

CAROLINE
I'm not sure. But I certainly
consider her dangerous.
(handing Strout a note from
her pocket)
I have her Bradfield address here.

Strout takes a quick look at it and nodes his head. He hands
it to Inspector Longden, who exits the room as soon as he
receives it.

STROUT
Well that's enough of the questions
for now. I'm going to station an
officer right outside your door for
tonight.

CAROLINE
Thank you.

STROUT
You're welcome. You might also be
contacted tonight, if this Langford
woman doesn't pan out to be the
culprit. Make sure the officer is
in here before answering and put
the phone on speaker, so he can
monitor the conversation.

Strout turns to leave.

RICHARD
What if no one calls us tonight? Is
there a deadline for these things?

(CONTINUED)

STROUT

Well like inspector Longden said, we can only go by previous cases which indicate that families are usually contacted within the first two days of a reported abduction. But, like I said, it's best we try to remain as calm as possible.

RICHARD

Thank you.

STROUT

You're welcome.

Strout starts for the door. Caroline follows him.

HALLWAY - SAME TIME

CAROLINE

I have some information I think may be pertinent, but I rather share it in private....I haven't told my husband yet.

STROUT

I understand.

CAROLINE

Ehh...well I think Langford might be working with someone.

STROUT

Someone?

CAROLINE

Yeah...tall black guy, mid-twenties, thin goatee, scar on the left cheek. Don't have a name. But he followed me to a conference in Edinburgh at the Hilton Monroe a few weeks back. Threats were made. Perhaps you can look through their surveillance...id the guy.

STROUT

You ought to have told us earlier about this madam.

CAROLINE

I know.

(CONTINUED)

STROUT

Not to worry. I'll get my men
working on this information.

CAROLINE

Thanks.

Caroline watches Strout as he leaves.

HOTEL ROOM - SAME TIME

Caroline steps back into the room and shuts the door. She
walks into the bedroom and sees Andrew and Richard gazing
desolately out the window.

CAROLINE

Are you boy's ok?

Richard nods half-heartedly.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Andrew....?

ANDREW

I'm fine.

CAROLINE

Are you sure? You know you can talk
to me right?

ANDREW

I know.

(beat)

I'm fine.

Caroline goes to the window and stands in between Richard
and Andrew.

CAROLINE

We'll get through this, I promise.

INT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, DINING ROOM - DAY

A bedraggled-looking Richard sits with Andrew by the phone.
A solicitor is here as well.

MONTAGE- of chaos and panic. London Metropolitan police are
trying to set up shop. Tape recorders. Listening devices.
Video cameras.

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME TIME

DCI Strout updates Caroline on recent developments.

STROUT

Were you aware that Anna Langford was recently hired as a guidance counselor at your daughter's school?

CAROLINE

(alarmed)

No....what??

STROUT

I'm afraid it's true and the school has just confirmed it. In fact, Emma was one of the few students who sought her counseling.

CAROLINE

She's lying...why would Emma need counseling?

STROUT

No, that was confirmed by the school records as well. Given the nature of your allegation, we managed to get them to relax their confidentiality rules somewhat. But Anna refused to divulge the content of her time with Emma.

CAROLINE

Did you search her house?

STROUT

It's empty. She also claims she's never harassed you in any way shape or form.

CAROLINE

(raising her voice)

Did you not see the videos...? She sent those.

STROUT

She emphatically denies it, and the phone calls, and the incident with your father in law. We can't disprove her claims, not now at any rate. And lest you forget, you assaulted her in one of those

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STROUT (cont'd)
 videos. You're lucky she isn't
 pressing charges.

CAROLINE
 (in a spasm of anger)
 Fuck her charges...she's a fucking
 lunatic.

STROUT
 I understand your frustration, but
 we have to thread softly here.

CAROLINE
 "Thread softly".
 (beat)
 How about the man who was helping
 her?

STROUT
 Allegedly helping her. And from
 what we've seen, you followed him,
 not the other way around.

The O.S. sound of a ringing phone erupts like a bomb
 exploding from the inside. Strout and Caroline rush back
 into the house.

DINING ROOM - SAME TIME

A technician answers. Everybody is on headsets, monitoring.
 Strout hands Caroline the receiver. Caroline takes a deep
 breath. We hear the conversation.

CAROLINE
 Hello?

CYNTHIA
 Hello....is that you Carol?

A collective sigh of disappointment reverberates around the
 room. Caroline rolls her eyes in annoyance, as Strout
 signals to her to cut off the phone with a hand to his neck.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
 Carol are you there? Carol....

Without responding, Carol slams the phone down in
 exasperation and storms off. Everybody watches her leave-
 they understand.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Caroline is half-asleep, and suddenly she's roused by the O.S sound of a flushing toilet. She looks up to see Richard emerging from the bathroom dressed like he's about to go out.

CAROLINE
Where are you going?

RICHARD
I just got a call from the hospital. Dad's finally woken up.

CAROLINE
(elated)
That's fantastic!

RICHARD
It's not that great. He can't speak. But I thought I'd better give him some good news.

Richard grabs his car keys and starts for the door.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
I'll come with you.

RICHARD
Don't be silly. Someone has to be here.

Richard manages a smile to quell her concerns and plants a kiss on Caroline's lips before leaving.

Caroline is visibly surprised.

CAROLINE
(in a loud whisper)
Bye....

She slips back under the quilted counterpane.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Andrew rouses Caroline from her nap with a hand to her shoulder.

ANDREW
Mum....mum....wake up.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
(half-awake)
What....?

ANDREW
The police!

Caroline is fully awake now.

CAROLINE
W-What?

ANDREW
The police, they found something.

DOWNSTAIRS: SAME TIME

Caroline and Andrew descend the stairs. At the bottom of the stairway, Richard watches in bemusement as an officer holds up a minuscule wireless surveillance camera.

STROUT
(to Caroline)
One of my men accidentally stumbled
on this.

Strout points at the camera in the officer's hand.

CAROLINE
What is it?

STROUT
It's a wireless covert camera,
similar to the one we use in drug
busts. It fell out of a picture
frame in your daughter's bedroom.

Richard looks at Caroline, who shares his expression of bemusement.

STROUT
I've already asked your husband and
son and they both claim they know
nothing about it. And I'm assuming
Emma wouldn't either, because this
is pretty advanced stuff. That
leaves you, having owned the house
before-
(pointing at Richard)
he moved in, did you install any
cameras without their knowledge.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
(indignant)
No!! Of course not.

STROUT
Then perhaps it's safe to assume
that this might be the key to
finding your daughter.

Caroline looks away in horror.

STROUT
Have you had any break-in's
recently?

RICHARD
No. We've never had any.

STROUT
None that you noticed anyway.

ANDREW
Are we being watched?

STROUT
Only time will tell. I already
called in a team to conduct a
thorough sweep of the house. I have
a feeling there's plenty more where
that came from.

They react as two vehicles pull up outside. Chaos as the front door opens. MEN IN SUITS, several POLICEMEN each armed with high-tech covert camera detectors.

Strout barks out some orders, designating some policemen to one area of the house and others to another.

MONTAGE: The thorough sweep for bugs commences.

INTERCUT WITH SCENES OF RICHARD, CAROLINE, AND ANDREW
WAITING APPREHENSIVELY IN THE LIVING ROOM.

The cops carefully fan their detectors over everything including, family portraits, picture frames, smoke alarms, wardrobes, toilets, drawers, doorknobs, clocks, carpets, book cases, computers, plants, and their vases.

The red lights on the detectors flash non-stop as most of the enumerated items conceal an almost inconspicuous wireless camera.

Once a cop locates a camera, he carefully uproots it and dumps it in a large cardboard box. At the end of the tedious search, the box is more or less full.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Caroline, Richard, and Andrew watch closely as the box is closed, sealed, and carried out of the house by two officers for inspection.

Strout strides purposefully over. He looks about as mystified as they do.

ANDREW

What are you going to do with them?

STROUT

We're going to check them for fingerprints, but that might be wishful thinking, I'm assuming anyone smart enough to carry out such an expansive installation process wasn't stupid enough to leave fingerprints. We're also running a product trace right now, maybe we find the seller and that'll lead us to whoever's behind this.

RICHARD

Maybe.

STROUT

I'm afraid that's all we have. I've never seen anything like it before. It must have taken weeks, even months to set up and extensive surveillance system like this one, and right under your very noses.

RICHARD

Should we leave? I mean...are you sure you found everything?

STROUT

We checked everywhere possible and impossible to plant a camera of that size. But just to be on the safe side, we're going to install a 24 hour infrared tracking device around the house. It'll pick up any hidden camera signals.

EXT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, BACK GARDEN - NIGHT

Caroline is having a quiet smoke alone, pondering over the events that just took place.

RICHARD (O.S.)
I didn't know you smoked?

CAROLINE
Sorry.

She puts out the cigarette.
Caroline (CONT'D)
I quit right before we met.

RICHARD
That's convenient.

An awkward silence ensues. Richard moves closer to Caroline as though about to tell her a secret.

RICHARD
Carol, if there's something you want to tell me. Now's the time.

CAROLINE
What?

RICHARD
I know we've uhh...had our issues, but I've always respected you nonetheless. And I know you don't want anything bad to happen to her.

CAROLINE
(shocked)
What?!! Richard come on...you can't really be-

RICHARD
(angrily interrupts)
Please. It's not about me or you right now. It's about Emma. I just want her home.

Caroline looks him dead in the eyes.

CAROLINE
She's my daughter to.
(beat)
How can you even suggest that I would do anything to hurt her.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

That's the problem isn't it? Far too much *suggesting* going on around here.

Richard trudges back into the house--the last few hours are beginning to take their toll on him.

Caroline gazes, desolately, at Strout as he converses with some policemen in the kitchen. She nods her head in dismay and briskly reenters the house.

FRONT ENTRY WAY - SAME TIME

Caroline grabs her coat and exits the front door much to the confusion of the onlooking policemen. Richard, for his part, doesn't even acknowledge her departure.

INT. CAR - LATER

Caroline punches in an address into her SatNav. A map directing her towards the location appears. She studies it and accelerates ahead.

INT. CAR- LATER

Caroline is parked across the street from a decrepit council estate. She reaches into the glove compartment and retrieves a large tool box with a safe code.

She punches in a four digit code and CLICK, she lifts the box open to reveal a pair of antique Fauchard ORAL SAWS. Carol leers at the instruments a moment as though scrutinizing their entrails.

EXT/INT. ESTATE BUILDING, BALCONY - MOMENTS LATER

Caroline approaches a door with a plaque that reads '133'. She pauses momentarily then peeks through a small window to her right. She sees nothing but darkness.

She looks to her sides, ensuring the coast is clear, then presses her ear against the door- all is quiet on the western front.

She draws back, exhales, and feels the simple doorknob style. She reaches into her coat pocket and takes out a paper clip. She straightens out the paper clip and pushes the pick into the hole in the knob.

(CONTINUED)

One turn, two turns, and on the third turn; the door clicks open- She's obviously done this before. She glances to her sides once more before stepping in.

She feels the sides of the wall- searching for a wall switch. She finds it and flicks it on to reveal an unremarkable apartment littered with beer bottles, ice buckets, and Chinese take out. Caroline winces from the foul stench.

She walks into a miniature kitchen and checks the fridge; as though expecting to find some incriminating evidence in it.

She proceeds down a short corridor and into a surprisingly capacious-

BEDROOM

She scans around- nothing catches her eye. She checks the wardrobe and the space underneath the bed--nothing there less dirty laundry.

Next, She checks the bathroom and pulls back the shower curtain revealing a tub in dire need of some cleaning.

(O.S.) SOUND OF SLUGGISH FOOTSTEPS EMERGES FROM THE BACKGROUND.

Caroline turns around swiftly--Se's left the lights on. She races back to the living room and switches off the lights as the footsteps draw nearer and nearer until they pause in front of the door.

O.S. sounds of keys rattling against metal as someone unlocks the door.

The lights come on revealing the BLACK MAN.

He squints intently, as though he's noticed something out of place. He nods his head- it's nothing. He staggers towards the kitchen--he's intoxicated. He almost falls but manages to hold onto a nearby table.

He whacks his head violently and tries again.

This time, he makes it to the fridge and takes out a bottle of water, which he consumes in one gulp. He tosses the bottle to the side and lets out an almighty belch.

He lumbers into the-

BATHROOM

(CONTINUED)

and urinates--it's a long one. He flushes and as he starts to the sink, Caroline emerges from behind the shower curtain and wallops him across the back of the head with the butt of the SAW.

The black man tumbles to the floor as though a trap door gave way underneath him.

The black man slowly comes round. He feels the gash on the back of his head and he grimaces in pain.

CAROLINE

Where is she?

The black man opens his mouth to speak but nothing comes out.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Where is she?

The black man appears to be tethering on the edge of oblivion. Caroline climbs on top of him and places the blade of the saw against his throat--drawing blood instantly.

The black man spits in Caroline's face.

Caroline, unperturbed by the saliva cascading down her cheek, continues her interrogation.

CAROLINE

For the last time, where is my daughter?

The black man grins and breaks into a raspy laugh.

EXASPERATED, Caroline delivers two savage blows to his head via the saw's butt--rendering him unconscious.

She stands and stares at the black man's twitching fingers with a look of visceral disdain.

She moves over to the sink and washes her hands and the streak of saliva off her face.

Caroline searches the black man's pockets. She pulls out some random business cards and a wad of cash, which she discards in frustration.

She rolls the body over and removes a cell phone from his back pocket. Caroline quickly scans the caller ID and stops at a number that reads 'LOCUST FIELD' in bold dark letters.

She dials the number and Anna answers immediately.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA
Is there a problem?

Caroline doesn't respond.

ANNA
Are you there?

CAROLINE
Where is she?

A brief pause ensues from Anna's line.

ANNA
What have you done Caroline?

CAROLINE
Where is she?

ANNA
What have you done?

CAROLINE
Where is she?

Anna hangs up.

ENRAGED, Caroline hurls the phone against the wall. The phone shatters on impact.

EXT. WASTELAND - LATER

Footbridge over railway sandwiched between freeway. Empty train blazes through. Dangerous, deserted downtown neighborhood. Looks more like "war torn Beirut", burnt out cars and trash.

EMOTIONLESS, Caroline watches a small BONFIRE ablaze at a distance. A group of HOODED BLACK KIDS on bicycles ride menacingly around the growing flame.

The kids soon disperse leaving Caroline and the undulating flame to taunt each other with their melancholy.

EXT. BRADFIELD PARK - DAY

The croaking of some dismal raven perforates the frigid air of an early morning. Move in on a FEMALE FIGURE cowering underneath a slide. Her head mummified in tape leaving one ear exposed.

The figure shivers and unfurls her fist to unveil a broken piece of bridge from a violin.

INT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, LIVING ROOM - LATER

A handful of policemen mill about the living room. Richard and Andrew walk in with some refreshments. The policemen don't need a second invitation to help themselves.

The back door alarm sounds off momentarily- Caroline has just walked in

KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Caroline is rummaging through the fridge when Richard tromps in with an empty tray.

He sets it down on a table and eyes Caroline from top to bottom- he doesn't like what he sees.

RICHARD

Where have you been all night?

Caroline doesn't respond.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I asked you a question.

Caroline takes out a carton of orange juice and reads the expiration date. Richard moves closer and grabs Caroline by the arm.

Caroline shoots him a stern look and Richard immediately lets go of her arm. She slams the fridge door closed.

STROUT (O.S.)

Sorry to interrupt.

Strout comes into view. Richard manages a thin smile to undercut the tension.

STROUT (CONT'D)

We found her.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Emma hooked up. Tubes running in and out of her. And She's suddenly surrounded. Caroline, Andrew, Richard, and a Doctor all stand at the foot of the bed.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
(to doctor)
May I?

He motions towards Emma.

DOCTOR
Of course.

Richard moves closer and gently pulls back a long strand of hair nestling on Emma's forehead. Emma's face is surprisingly unscathed.

ANDREW
How long has she been like this?

DOCTOR
She fell unconscious in the ambulance about two hours ago. Most likely induced by hypothermia, she was out in the cold for a long time.

CAROLINE
Will she come around soon?

DOCTOR
She should. Fortunately, we haven't found any injuries. She came out pretty unscathed.

Richard can't fight back the tears any longer and he starts sobbing. The doctor leaves. Andrew consoles his dad with a deep embrace and for the first time, he too sheds a few tears.

Caroline, on the other hand, stands motionless as though paralyzed by the scene of family solidarity playing out before her. She extends an arm but retracts it immediately--it's too soon, far too soon.

INT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, KITCHEN - DAY

A hand shakes a few pills onto a saucer. Pull back to reveal Richard as he reaches for a tumbler and fills it with tap water.

EMMA'S ROOM - MOMENT'S LATER

Richard walks in on the unsettling image of Emma struggling to play her violin.

Emma drops the violin in frustration. Richard picks it up and lays it gently on the bed. Like an infant.

RICHARD
Emma, don't rush it. It'll come
back, I promise.

Emma nods her head like a mute. Richard hands her the saucer. Emma doesn't even look at it, she just stares blankly into space.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Emma you have to try. If not the
food at least the medication.

Emma keeps staring aimlessly.

RICHARD
Emma please?

Emma remains unmoved.

Richard sighs and averts his eyes- he's utterly deflated. He leaves the medication for her. Like a zookeeper.

The front doorbell rings.

FRONT STALL WAY - MOMENTS LATER

Richard opens the door to reveal DCI Strout.

STROUT
Hi Richard.

RICHARD
Nathan.

STROUT
How are things?

RICHARD
I should be overjoyed but....a part
of me feels worse.
(beat)
I know that sounds awful.

(CONTINUED)

STROUT

No, It's normal. I can't tell you how many times I've heard that from other parents. You have to be patient.

RICHARD

Is that even possible?

STROUT

What?

RICHARD

Normality. Once it's taken from you in such a traumatizing manner, can it ever be regained?

STROUT

Some families pray about it. Others....well, they hope. But you have to talk about it, pretending it never happened is seldom the answer.

Richard nods in concurrence.

EMMA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Strout and Richard quietly walk in on Emma as she settles down to take a nap. She frowns at the sight of them.

Richard glances at the untouched saucer.

RICHARD

Emma. I want you to meet detective Strout. He was the man in charge of finding you. He's also been a really good friend.

Emma looks at him and then averts her gaze.

STROUT

Emma, I can't imagine what you must be going through right now. No one can, but sometimes talking about it helps.

Strout moves closer to Emma and takes a knee.

STROUT (CONT'D)

Can you tell me what happened? Anything you can remember, perhaps the people who took you?

(CONTINUED)

Emma slumps her head like a child sulking at an unwanted Christmas gift.

Strout looks at Richard as though trying to obtain permission to continue. Richard simply averts his moist eyes.

STROUT

Emma, you want these people to pay
for what they did right?

Emma maintains her obstinate posture.

STROUT (CONT'D)

Well, you have to give us
something, anything.

His words fall upon deaf ears. Defeated, Strout rises to his feet, casts a pitiful look at a despondent Richard and leaves.

INT. BRADFIELD DENTAL CLINIC, CAROLINE'S OFFICE- DAY

Caroline, with her head buried in an office file, enters. She looks up to see Strout staring out the office window, a DVD case in his hand.

STROUT

Hello Caroline. I hope you're not
too busy for a few questions.

CAROLINE

(frowning)

Um...no. Please sit down.

STROUT

I'll stand if you don't mind.

Caroline takes a seat behind her desk, and fixes a wolfish gaze on Strout.

STROUT (CONT'D)

(pointing at a tv stand with a
dvd machine)

Does that work?

Caroline nods in the affirmative. Strout walks over and plugs in the DVD machine.

STROUT (CONT'D)

(holding up the DVD case)

I've spent a lot of time
re-watching this, the one where

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STROUT (CONT'D) (cont'd)
that naked man falls to his death.
It's strange, something about it,
the glass house...it looked
familiar.

Caroline's features tense up, as Strout plays the DVD,
fast-forwards to an exterior shot of the GLASS HOUSE and
pauses.

STROUT (CONT'D)
It's much easier to see with the
tech down at the station, but
(gesturing at the bottom of
the screen)
Right there, you can see a label,
and if you blow it up, it says
"property of Baines' laboratory".

Caroline seems unshaken by the revelation.

STROUT (CONT'D)
That was your father in that video
wasn't it?.

Caroline averts her eyes, as though ashamed.

STROUT (CONT'D)
I read an article on your father.
Apparently he was a brilliant
animal psychologist, carrying
out bizarre studies on locust
colonies. Colleagues say he was...a
little strange, perhaps insane. He
also had a penchant for filming
everything, his work, family, a
life lived under constant
surveillance. To what end?

Caroline leans forward, glaring at Strout.

STROUT (CONT'D)
I figure you picked up that
surveillance habit from him.

CAROLINE
To reduce man to his primal state
of terror.

STROUT
Excuse me....?

CAROLINE

You asked to what end. He thought man had lost its sense of terror, so he took it upon himself to reinstate it. I was his guinea pig, cowering under the constant and oppressive glare of his camera, till I was reduced to a shivering mess of terror.

(beat)

Imagine what it feels like to be an 8 year old girl, knowing nothing but fear and self-loathing, and then told to capture a moment of such visceral insanity....delivered by your own father.

STROUT

(gesturing at the tv monitor)

That was you filming?

CAROLINE

I was under direct orders. Don't look so surprised, you watched the entire footage didn't you? Then perhaps you can imagine how easy it is to be seduced by such....deranged fidelity.

The intercom rings, startling a riveted Strout. Caroline answers it.

SARAH

(concerned)

Carol, there's a commotion in the lobby, come quickly.

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Caroline hurries towards the lobby amid the howling soundtrack of Anna's voice.

ANNA (OC)

Caroline BAINES.....Caroline!!!

Sarah appears at the doorway, her face a contorted mess of alarm.

SARAH

I tried to stop her from coming in....I've already called the police.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

Good.

Caroline steps into the

LOBBY

Where she sees Anna glaring at his affrighted patients.

ANNA

(yelling)

Caroline BAINES. Caroline....!!

The Patients begin shuffling out of the front door. Strout appears on the scene, he looks intent on observing.

CAROLINE

Anna, please....let's talk in my office.

Anna turns to take in Caroline through a hue of visceral contempt.

ANNA

After all these years, you still want it your way. Have you learned nothing?

CAROLINE

It's over Anna, we're done. You've got what you came for, just leave. What more do you want?

ANNA

(snarls)

What more do I want...?

Anna dispenses with her cane and limps towards Caroline, each grudging step eliciting an audible groan of pain.

Caroline averts her face as Anna stops two feet away, her face drenched in sweat.

ANNA

(growls)

Anything....do you feel anything...?

And like that, a look of profound SHAME creeps across Caroline's face. She attempts to conceal it behind a sweaty palm.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA (CONT'D)

How does it feel Caroline...? How does it-

The front door shoots open and suddenly the POLICE are everywhere. Anna attempts to grab hold of Caroline but a phalanx of policemen hustle her out of the building.

EXHAUSTED AND RELIEVED, Caroline sinks onto a chair, taking in the chastening incident that just took place.

INT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, EMMA'S BEDROOM - DAY

EMMA, NAKED. HER FACE, GRAVE AND FEBRILE. HER BROODING EYES CLOSE LIKE SHUTTERS. And soon after-

The haunting reverberations of J.S Bach's sonata for violin solo punctuates the air. She makes love to her violin with an intimacy that conveys the horror of her abduction.

The majestic piece culminates in a heart-wrenching crescendo and Emma, with a faint look of satisfaction, sets down her violin.

BASEMENT - MOMENT'S LATER

Emma rips through the duct tape on a cardboard box revealing an old, haggard violin. Emma cracks a faint smile and plucks away at its strings. She likes what she hears.

She grabs the violin and turns to leave, but turns back when her eyes dart across the pile of cardboard boxes stacked neatly on top of each other. She pauses a moment.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Richard stands by the window, eyes glittering with tears. Behind him, Mitch lies motionless on a hospital bed. His condition somewhat stable although he still appears lifeless.

Richard settles down on a chair next to him.

RICHARD

Dad....can you hear me?

Mitch remains still.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Blink if you can hear me?

A short hiatus, then Mitch's eyes blink open.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(smiles)

Emma asked me about you the other day. It's the first time she's spoken unprovoked, and guess who was the first person she asked for....

(beat)

You dad.....she loves you, we all do. You have to promise me you won't go gentle...

Richard takes Mitch's limp hand into his and clutches it intently as if his life depended on it.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

What would you do about Carol if you were me? I'm not willing to confront her again with the children around, I need guidance dad?

A tear trickles from Mitch's eye.

INT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, KITCHEN - DAY

Andrew, clad in a school uniform, enters and takes out a can of coke from the fridge. While swigging from the can, Andrew glances outside the kitchen window to the empty back garden.

CORRIDOR

Andrew stands at the foot of the stairway. He looks up.

ANDREW

(in a loud tone)

DAD!! Are you here...? Is anyone here?

EMMA'S BEDROOM

Andrew raps lightly on the door.

ANDREW

Emms....you here?

Andrew opens the door slightly and peeps into an EMPTY room. He shuts the door and turns to leave when the stony image of EMMA startles him.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

For fuck sake Emms, how long were you standing there?

EMMA

What are you doing in my room?

ANDREW

Nothing...I was just...you know, checking if you were in.

EMMA

Where's dad?

ANDREW

Don't know. He was supposed to pick me up from school, never showed up. He hasn't replied back to my texts either.

EMMA

He's probably still with granddad.

ANDREW

You're probably right.

Emma starts for the stairs.

EMMA

I need you to follow me.

Andrew furrows his brows.

BASEMENT - MOMENT'S LATER

Emma and Andre loom over the imposing cellar door.

ANDREW

What are we doing...? There's nothing underneath that door.

Emma reaches into her back pocket and unearths a set of keys.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Emms...what are you doing?

EMMA

What does it look like?

ANDREW

How did you get those?

(CONTINUED)

EMMA

It doesn't matter.

Emma is about to try one of the keys when Andrew interjects.

ANDREW

I don't know how you got those and I'm not sure I want to know either. But you're wasting your time, don't you remember?? Mum told us it was--

EMMA

(angrily interrupts)

I don't. I'd rather see for myself. You?

ANDREW

What are you trying to prove?

EMMA

....That I'm wrong about mum.

Emma squats down, selects a key at random and tries it to no avail. She tries another key-same result.

Andrew relieves her of the keys. He studies them and inserts one into the key hole- the door clicks open.

Andrew and Emma lean in and stare down into the darkness beneath them, the latter takes out her phone and shines a faint beam of light that illuminates the short flight of stairs. They both descend the stairs into Caroline's-

SEEDY LAIR

Andrew reaches for the light bulb dangling above him and tugs it on.

Emma and Andrew exchange disquieting looks prompted by the sinister surveillance system that accosts them.

DING-DING. The front door bell RINGS. Andrew and Emma can't seem to make a deliberate move.

RICHARD (O.S.)

(in a loud tone)

Andrew.....are you home? Is any one home?

Andrew turns to leave but Emma stops him by grabbing his arm.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA

He deserves to know.

Andrew nods his assent and disappears up the stairs, as Emma settles down on a chair and takes in the monitors with a look of suppressed fury.

EXT/INT. CAROLINE'S VEHICLE - NIGHT

Sheets of water waver across the front window of Caroline's car as it grumbles past a dilapidated sign that reads in BOLD DARK LETTERS: "**LOCUST FIELD. NO TRESPASSING. PROPERTY OF BAINES' FAMILY & CO.**"

Caroline pulls into the drive way of a yawning-

COUNTRY ESTATE

and steps out of the car. She exhales audibly and takes in the cavernous architecture before her with an air of cold familiarity.

She trudges up the front steps and rings the door bell. Moments later, the door creaks open revealing an OLD WOMAN clad in a maid's attire.

CAROLINE

...I called earlier today.

OLD WOMAN

Oh yes, I remember. Who was it you said you were again? You see the madam is very ill and she can't take many visitors save her doctors.

CAROLINE

I'm her daughter.

INT. BAINES' COUNTRY ESTATE, BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The old woman leads Caroline into a capacious bedroom that looks more like a hospital ward; replete with an oscillator, CT scans, defibrillators etc. The old woman gestures for Caroline to wait by the door.

Caroline obeys and watches with a look of apprehension the old woman approaching a bed occupied by the sickly and haggard old figure of her fading MOTHER.

(CONTINUED)

The old woman whispers something into her mother's ears and the latter awakes-beckoning Caroline with a trembling finger.

Caroline starts to move but halts abruptly, her attention suddenly transfixed by a PIANO in the corner of the room.

INT. LOCUST FIELD, BAINES' COUNTRY ESTATE, LIVING ROOM -
FLASH BACK

Anna (7) playing the PIANO prodigiously under the watchful eyes of Caroline's MOTHER. Anna misses a key, prompting a disarming smile from the latter.

PULL BACK to reveal Caroline (11) leering at them from the doorway. Her face contorts into a grim and fiendish countenance.

Caroline's mother cups a handful of Anna's hair in a maternal gesture and turns to regard Caroline with disdainful eyes.

MOTHER
(to Caroline)
Be a good girl, go play outside.

Caroline shoots Anna a nefarious look before doing as she's told.

EXT. BAINES' COUNTRY ESTATE - LATER

Caroline sternly watches a MAN entering into the guest house perched on the far end of the estate. Caroline follows him.

INT. BAINES' COUNTRY ESTATE, GUEST HOUSE - LATER

Amidst the sound of water cascading from a shower head, Caroline stands motionless as she watches the silhouette of a MALE FIGURE behind a translucent shower curtain. A hand reaches from behind the curtain and grabs a towel.

Moments later, the MAN from the earlier scene steps out from behind the curtain with the towel wrapped around his waist.

A look of apprehension streaks across his face upon seeing the emotionless figure of Caroline leaning against the wall.

An excruciating silence ensues, as the man peers in wordless stupor at Caroline.

(CONTINUED)

MAN
(fumbling over his words)
What...what are you....how did you
get in here?

Caroline says nothing.

MAN (CONT'D)
Where is Anna?

Caroline remains eerily silent.

MAN (CONT'D)
(swallowing his discomfort)
What's the matter Caroline...? Does
your mother know-

Caroline rips off her lace night gown violently, stopping the man mid-sentence. She steps forward with her embryonic bosom exposed and the man instantly retreats.

MAN
(reaching frantically for the
towel behind him)
What are you doing?

He tosses the towel over Caroline, but she quickly discards it and steps out of her torn gown- revealing her naked body.

CAROLINE
I've seen the way you look at me.

MAN
(outraged)
...You're sick, I hoped it ended
with your father...but-

Caroline lurches forward and ensnares the man in a pathetic embrace. The man attempts to pry himself away from Caroline, but it's futile. Caroline tightens her grip around his waist and looks into his eyes with a callous stare.

CAROLINE
I know what you're trying to do,
and I won't let you get away with
it.

Terrified, the man forcefully extricates himself from Caroline's grip but the latter grabs onto his arm and sinks her teeth into it, inducing a shriek of pain from the man.

WHACK. The man sends Caroline crashing to the marble floor with a firm slap across her face, drawing blood from Caroline's lips in the process.

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly, the front door whines open and in steps little ANNA, who freezes on the image of naked Caroline crawling out of the bathroom, blood dripping from her lips.

Anna throws a frightened look into the bathroom where the man sits doubled over on the edge of the sink- a blood rivulet across his towel.

ANNA

Papa...

Anna's father can't bear to look up.

INT. BAINES' COUNTRY ESTATE, ROOM - LATER

Anna pleads for clemency at the heels of Caroline's mother to no avail, as her father is bundled into the back of a police vehicle.

From behind a large window, Caroline watches the dreadful scene with a frigid insouciance.

INT. BAINES' COUNTRY ESTATE, MOTHER'S BEDROOM - PRESENT TIME

ANNA (OC)

Feels like it happened last night
doesn't it Carol?

Caroline turns to regard Anna with a mystified look. She glances over her shoulder at the old woman attending to her mother.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I wonder....did she mention how my
father took his own life after the
arrest...?

Caroline averts her face- like a child sensing an imminent reproach from a parent.

ANNA

He managed to smuggle his way back
on to the estate, and then into the
glass house.....where he lit
himself on fire. I think even your
father would have appreciated that
homage.

CAROLINE

(groaning)
...No more. I'm finished.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA
(furiously)
Not until you say *it*...like you
told your mother that night.

Caroline sinks onto the piano stool in a dejected heap,
burying her face in her hands.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Say it. He never forced you into
his room did he..? He never touched
you the way you told the police.
You lied, didn't you?

CAROLINE
(slowly raising her head)
....Yes....yes.

And with that, Caroline emits a sonorous sigh of relief, as
though a noose around her neck was suddenly severed.

Anna takes a sharp intake of breath, grabs her cane and
trudges out of the room, leaving Caroline languishing amidst
an eerie quiescence.

INT. BAINES' RESIDENCE, FRONT STALL WAY - NIGHT

Caroline enters, looking deflated and forlorn. She casts an
anxious glance around the house then flops into the-

LIVING ROOM

Where her tired eyes fall upon the perturbing image
of Richard, Andrew and Emma sitting motionless on the
couch.

Caroline sags onto a chair opposite them and perforates the
awful silence with a sigh of exhaustion.

CAROLINE
Where do I begin...

Emma manages to regard her mother in the eyes, while Richard
and Andrew lower their gaze to the floor.

OVER BLACK: THE THUNDER OF AN ORCHESTRAL SYMPHONY
REVERBERATES.

INT. BRADFIELD COLLEGE, CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

A stage is awash with light, illuminating a STRING QUARTET lead by Emma.

A conductor takes center stage and aptly marshals his troupe through the last movement of Mozart's Dissonant Quartet.

It's a full and transfixed house tonight, with Richard, Andrew and Caroline sat in the middle row.

The conductor imposes silence with a grand gesture then motions at Emma to commence on a solo.

Richard and Caroline trade empty stares as the ruffle of program notes gives way to-

A haunting rendition of Tubin's Solo violin sonata courtesy of EMMA.

DARKNESS.

FADE OUT.