

Apostles of Infinite Love

by

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FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - UPSCALE APARTMENT - NEW YORK CITY - 1982

A BORED FILIPINO BABY-SITTER sits on a sofa, watching "*One Day at a Time*".

On the floor in front of her, KAYLA - an ANXIOUS EIGHT YEAR OLD GIRL - writes A LETTER:

KAYLA (V.O.)

Dear Mom and Dad - OR Dad and Mom - I hope it doesn't bother you whose name I put first because I love you both equally... I'm writing to you about some concerns I have when you're not here. Number one, Zach thinks he's in charge. I have many problems with that.

(beat)

Leandra doesn't have a lot of answers.

She turns to look at the baby-sitter.

LEANDRA

Why you write letters to your parents? They live here.

Kayla shifts positions, and SLOWLY GROWS ALARMED.

KAYLA

...My foot.

(beat)

I can't feel my foot.

INT. HALLWAY - BACHMAN APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Clutching her letter, Kayla LIMPS past THREE YEAR OLD WES, who's UTTERLY FOCUSED on RACING TWO MATCHBOX CARS.

INT. ZACH'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM -- NIGHT

AN ANGRY TWELVE YEAR OLD strums Billy Joel's "*Big Shot*" (not well) on a GUITAR. Kayla knocks and enters.

KAYLA

(panicked)

Zach, help me. There's something wrong with my foot.

ZACH

Get out of my room.

KAYLA
Seriously, Zach. I can't feel
anything. I need mom and dad.

ZACH
We're not calling mom and dad
because your foot's asleep.

Zach spots Wes in the hall behind her. He SIGHS and RISES:

ZACH (CONT'D)
Why is he out of bed?

Just now, Zach SNIFFS THE AIR - suddenly concerned.

FILIPINO BABY-SITTER (O.S.)
Ayyyyyye!

INT. BATHROOM

Zach runs inside (Kayla and Wes trailing) to find the shower
curtain ON FIRE.

KAYLA
Oh, my God!

SCARLETT, a WAIFISH ELEVEN YEAR OLD, stares at it, PERPLEXED.

SCARLETT
I was making a campfire.

ZACH
In the bathtub?!

Thinking fast, Zach grabs the HAND SHOWER, and - over KAYLA
AND LEANDRA'S SCREAMS - SPRAYS THE CURTAIN.

SCARLETT
I wanted us to have our own camp -
So we could sit around and tell
stories-

KAYLA
In the bathroom?!

Finally, the flames go out. Kayla looks to Scarlett.

SCARLETT
I thought Zach could play the
guitar and you could-

Suddenly, Kayla SCREAMS - she points to a corner of the
curtain STILL ON FIRE.

Zach grabs the sprayer and turns it on the area.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
No! My campfire!

Scarlett grabs his arm - haphazardly redirecting the spray...
At Kayla. SOAKING HER.

Still holding his TWO CARS, Wes GIGGLES and CLAPS... Kayla
looks down at herself, IN SHOCK.

KAYLA
You ruined my letter.

Leandra just CROSSES HERSELF, picks up Wes, and exits. Zach
rolls his eyes and walks off...

As Scarlett walks off - downcast - Kayla watches her go...
Until she feels a drop of water on her foot.

She looks at her letter. As the BLURRED WORDS drip off the
page...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KAYLA'S APARTMENT -- PRESENT DAY

We PAN ACROSS rows of important literature: War & Peace,
Madame Bovary, Jane Eyre - fill the bookcases. ENDING ON:

A FRAMED CHICK-LIT BOOK POSTER with a skinny, pastel women
kissing a chiseled, pastel guy on the cover:

The Perfect Guy (or How Chloe Lost Her 'Baby Wait'!) by Kayla
Bachman.

33 YEAR OLD KAYLA (still anxious) stares at A COMPUTER
SCREEN, where A MERE HALF SENTENCE is written.

The CURSOR FLASHES; She CHEWS HER LIP.

KAYLA (V.O.)
There was something between them...
It was unnameable.
(to herself)
Oh, that's good, Kayla. Nice
trick. It's only unnameable
because you can't name it.
(beat)
Come on, Loser, get in the game.
Don't call yourself a loser - it
just makes things worse.
(looking at the poster)
(MORE)

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Just- pretend you're human.
Pretend you understand human
feelings. Pretend you didn't need
a restraining order against your
last boyfriend.

(beat; hopeful)

I bet lots of people are
pretending. Maybe no one really
knows about love... Maybe you're
not alone.

She looks down and begins PICKING HER CUTICLES.

KAYLA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

No, you're definitely alone.

Just now, her PHONE RINGS, STARTLING HER.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

(answering)

Hello?

(curt)

Zach - Listen, it's not a good
time, I'm- What about her? I can't
today, I'm- Fine... Your office?

(suddenly nervous)

...Does it have to be your office?

CUT TO:

A BRIEFCASE MONOGRAMMED with TWO GOLD LETTERS: ZB. We are -

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LAW FIRM - OFFICE BUILDING -- DAY

The briefcase sits on a conference table. 36 YEAR OLD ZACH
BACHMAN is at the head: Zach is clean cut; STILL IN CHARGE.

ZACH

Did they get us the draft too late?
Yes. Do we have to make sure the
clients get it on time? Yes.

One LAWYER leans over to ANOTHER LAWYER -

LAWYER #1

Why does Zach Bachman insist on
asking and answering his own
questions?

LAWYER #2

I think he's the only person he
wants to have a conversation with.

BACK TO Zach, as he CHECKS THE CLOCK and finishes up:

ZACH

...And since this is my last day, I just wanted to say thanks. It's been nice working with everyone.

SILENCE. A few of the lawyers smile politely.

CUT TO:

THE TWO MATCHBOX CARS from 1982. They sit on the window ledge of:

INT. THE WORLD'S MESSIEST LIVING ROOM

We PAN ACROSS: Piles of mail, dirty plates, beer cans, change, and a SKINNY CAT -

ENDING ON: TWO SOCKED FEET (one tapping quickly up and down).

While one sock is grey (used to be white) and hangs four inches off its toes, the other is black. With three holes.

TILT UP to meet WES BACHMAN (27) in socks and boxers. Good looking - though THE DIET of CIGARETTES and BEER SHOWS.

He's UTTERLY FOCUSED on the BASEBALL GAME on TV...

HE GLANCES AT THE CLOCK, then pulls a shirt off the couch next to him, smells the armpits, and puts it on.

He picks up his cat and - still watching the screen - KISSES HER. And then - something on screen disappoints him.

WES

(evenly)

Shit.

He puts down the cat and rises. Passing his bedroom, we see A GIRL PASSED OUT in bed (A BONG on the floor next to her).

He goes to his computer (on a GAMBLING WEBSITE): *ORIOLES vs. INDIANS: 11-3.*

As he SCROLLS THROUGH his WAGER HISTORY, we see most items are IN RED... LOSSES.

Reflexively, he opens a PILL BOTTLE, searches through SEVERAL PILLS, and POPS ONE IN HIS MOUTH.

He glances back at his computer... And POPS ANOTHER.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - MIDTOWN OFFICE BUILDING -- DAY

At a BANK OF ELEVATORS, a CROWD OF PEOPLE (including Kayla - apprehensive) waits. *DING!*

The elevator doors open; people get inside. Kayla swallows, letting them pass - watching them PACK IN TO THE SMALL SPACE.

As the doors close (without her inside) she smiles nervously at the SECURITY GUARD, who stares at her.

KAYLA

I'll just take the next one.

He couldn't care less. She presses the UP BUTTON... MORE PEOPLE trickle into the lobby.

By the time the elevator arrives, JUST AS BIG A CROWD has assembled. Kayla checks her watch... and gets on with them.

She presses '21', looks around the packed space... THE WALLS START TO CLOSE IN... She quickly pushes her way out -

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Excuse me - excuse me.

(scarily intense)

Excuse me.

She gets off - just as the doors close behind her.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - MIDTOWN OFFICE BUILDING -- DAY

The ANNOYED SECURITY GUARD unlocks the door to the stairwell.

KAYLA

Thanks. I really appreciate this.

(off his blank stare)

Thanks again... Thanks.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - 21ST FLOOR

THE STAIRWELL DOOR OPENS, and Kayla - TRYING TO CONTROL HER PANTING - enters. The RECEPTIONIST raises her eyebrows.

KAYLA

I'm here to see my brother, Zach Bachman.

She wipes the sweat from her forehead.

INT. ZACH'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Kayla enters to find her mother, JOY BACHMAN (EARLY SIXTIES - still beautiful) and her brother, Zach.

KAYLA
Hey, Mom. Zach. Where's everyone else?

JOY
Wes is late, of course, and your father's doing an interview.

KAYLA
Who's the interview with?

JOY
(impatient)
I don't know, Kayla, I can't worry about him anymore. I have to live my own life.

KAYLA
So, what's going on with Scarlett?
What's the big secret?

Just now, Wes enters.

WES
Sorry I'm late.

ZACH
(checking his watch)
We said three o'clock.

WES
I have ADD.

JOY
You don't have ADD. That's an excuse.

WES
The guy who tested me said-

JOY
A very mild case!

Just now, LOUIS BACHMAN enters. He's in his SIXTIES - handsome - dressed in jeans and a button down.

KAYLA
Hi, Dad. How was your interview?

Louis kisses Kayla hello.

LOUIS
My stomach is bothering me.

JOY
(sighing)
Again?

LOUIS
Oh, just kill me, Joy - okay? Will
that make life easier for you?

WES
Who was your interview with?

LOUIS
(thinking)
I don't know.

JOY
(vindicated)
Do you see?

KAYLA
So, what's the deal with Scarlett
this time? She give all her money
to the homeless? Start an art
collective for orphans?

Joy closes her eyes. As though what she's about to say is
the proof she's always needed that everyone is against her:

JOY
Scarlett has left the city.

KAYLA
What do you mean?

LOUIS
(beat)
She's joined a group of people.
Who don't live here.

WES
...Like a circus?

JOY
A group of troubled people, who she
thinks are helping her.

KAYLA
 (half-joking)
 What, like a cult?

No one says anything.

WES
 Scarlett joined a *cult*?

JOY
 It's not a cult.

ZACH
 (calmly)
 It's a cult.

As Kayla absorbs this - stunned, Zach hands her a PAMPHLET.

KAYLA
 How did this happen?

LOUIS
 Your sister's very sensitive.

ZACH
 I'm sensitive, you don't see me
 joining a cult.

JOY
 Boys are different.

KAYLA
 I'm a girl and I'm not in a cult.

JOY
 (impatient)
 I don't know, Kayla.

KAYLA
 (re: the literature)
 'The Apostles of Infinite Love,
 Wisdom and Truth'.

ZACH
 And power. It's continued on the
 back.

KAYLA
 Wait - I've seen this. She was
 going to these 'life enhancement'
 classes. She invited me to go.

WES
 (realizing)
 Oh, Jesus. She invited me too.

They both look to Zach. IT'S CLEAR SHE NEVER INVITED HIM.
 He looks away.

ZACH
 She left a note in her apartment.

He hands the WRITTEN NOTE to Wes.

WES
 (reading)
 'Where there is only self-love,
 there can be no community.
 Unfortunately, I was poisoned by my
 parents' selfish version of love-

JOY
 Poisoned. Can you imagine?

WES
 (reading)
 '...The Apostles have shown me the
 virtue of true community - achieved
 by separation from the hostile
 world and its material perils.'

ZACH
 Which means she's given them money.

WES
 Why would she give them money?

KAYLA
 Because 'separate yourself from
 material perils' means-

LOUIS
 Give all your money to the cult.

Zach buzzes his assistant.

ZACH (INTO THE INTERCOM)
 Would you send in Rick?

KAYLA
 Who's Rick?

ZACH
 Rick's the deprogrammer we're
 hiring.

WES
By the way, that means it's a cult,
Mom.

JOY
In a minute, I'm going to join a
cult, all right? How about that?

ZACH
(calmly)
This isn't about you, Mom.

KAYLA
I don't understand why Zach was the
only one who knew about this.

LOUIS
He's a lawyer.

KAYLA
What does that have to do with it?

LOUIS
We were trying to do what was best
for Kayla.

Kayla looks at her father, incredulous.

KAYLA
I'm Kayla.

LOUIS
Of course, Sweetheart. You know
what I mean.

Enter RICK DELACROIX: LATE THIRTIES, GOOD-LOOKING. He's the
picture of NEW-AGE CALM, but BUSINESS-LIKE AND SELF-ASSURED.

RICK
Hi, folks. Rick Delacroix.

Louis extends his hand, and Rick HANDS HIM A CARD.

RICK (CONT'D)
I always say: Sorry we're meeting
under these circumstances, but not
sorry we're meeting.

Louis turns to his wife.

LOUIS
My stomach really hurts.

JOY
Go home, Louis.

LOUIS
No, Joy, I want to be here.

RICK
You all might be feeling some anger
right now. Wondering - is this a
ploy for attention? If so, why?
Where did Scarlett learn-

Louis gets out of his chair and LIES DOWN ON THE FLOOR.

LOUIS
I'm sorry, but this is the only
thing that makes it feel better.

Zach, Kayla and Wes look at their father lying on the floor.
A beat, and they look back at Rick.

ZACH
Why doesn't Rick tell us a little
about what's going to happen?

Rick tries to act like Louis lying on the floor is normal.

RICK
I know a fair amount about The
Apostles. Aggressive recruiting,
powerful mind altering.
Fortunately, for you, I'm just as
aggressive.

KAYLA
So, what exactly do you do?

RICK
We'll need to "evacuate" Scarlett,
bring her to a "safe place", and
begin "re-education".

ZACH
Who's 'we'?

RICK
I'd like her siblings to be with
me.

KAYLA
Us? Kidnap Scarlett?

RICK
 (quickly)
 It's not kidnapping. Kidnapping is
 a felony. This is voluntary.

KAYLA
 What about my parents?

RICK
 Unfortunately, having your parents
 along might be counterproductive as-
 Well, did you read the note?

JOY
 We poisoned her.

KAYLA
 Uh, isn't this a little extreme?
 Maybe she'll come back on her own.

RICK
 Doubtful. The note highlights her
 growing dependency on the group.

WES
 So, where is she?

RICK
 Kentucky.

As Kayla, Zach and Wes exchange looks -

KAYLA
 ...Seriously?

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. TAXI CAB -- MORNING

Kayla, Wes and Zach ride to JFK. Wes is ON THE PHONE.

WES
 (into phone)
 On Cleveland.

KAYLA
 (to Wes)
 Can you not lean on me?

WES
 (covering the phone)
 Where am I supposed to lean? You
 made me sit in the middle.

KAYLA
Because you're the youngest.

WES
I'm taller than you.
(into phone)
Not you - I have no idea how tall
you are.

KAYLA
I still don't see why we couldn't
rent a car.

ZACH
Because I'm not spending two days
driving to Kentucky when we can fly
there in two hours.

Kayla looks out the window - anxious.

KAYLA
This is really bad timing. I have
a lot of work to do.

WES
Me too. If she's happy in the
cult, maybe we should let her stay
there.

Zach ROLLS HIS EYES -

ZACH
Good. Good plan.

INT. TERMINAL -- DAY

As they go through security, Kayla WATCHES THE CROWD; she's
visibly apprehensive. WES NOTICES.

WES
Do you want to take something?

KAYLA
Like what?

WES
Xanax, Ambien, Klonopin.

KAYLA
I don't know... Did you?

WES
I'm not scared of flying. Besides,
when I get scared, I just pass out.

KAYLA
...Okay.

Wes opens his bag and locates a bottle (amid a tangle of clothes).

Just now, Kayla notices a CRYING TODDLER whose MOTHER pulls her through the terminal.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Look at that.
(beat)
That child is in pain and her
mother just ignores her. All that
baby needs is to be held, and the
mother is completely disregarding
her needs.

SILENCE. Because Wes is now watching a BASEBALL GAME at THE BAR. Kayla sighs and takes the pill.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPORT CORRIDOR

Rick is ON HIS PHONE, PACING, HIS VOICE LOW. He studies an OFFICIAL DOCUMENT: DEPOSITION - NOTICE TO APPEAR IN COURT.

RICK (INTO THE PHONE)
...Isn't it amazing how people
repay you for helping them? I just
consider myself fortunate to be so
at peace, or this might make me
angry. But anger is a choice, and
I choose pea-

A TRAVELER passes, knocking over Rick's suitcase, and continuing on.

RICK (CONT'D)
(calling out)
The words 'excuse me' are at
everyone's disposal, friend! Look
around, see how your choices affect
others! You might be a *happier*
man!

INT. GATE

Zach's ON HIS CELL PHONE, his briefcase open on his lap.
Inside: A few legal documents and SEVERAL CDs -

"Oklahoma", "West Side Story", "Forty-Second Street"...

ZACH (INTO THE PHONE)
I'll call her, but let her know...

Kayla approaches and sits next to him; he QUICKLY COVERS the
CDs with papers and closes his briefcase.

ZACH (INTO THE PHONE) (CONT'D)
I won't be in the office as of
tomorrow.

He hangs up.

KAYLA
You talk really loudly on your cell
phone.

ZACH
I do?

KAYLA
Really. You should be aware.

They sit in silence for a moment. Kayla watches TWO SISTERS
play a video game together. Finally:

KAYLA (CONT'D)
So, how have you been? You still
seeing... That girl?

ZACH
Penny. No.

KAYLA
Right. Penny. Penny.

Silence.

ZACH
Listen, there's something I wanted
to talk to you about - you and Wes-

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
We're now boarding all rows on
flight thirty-four to Louisville.

KAYLA
 (anxious)
 Already?

Just now, Rick approaches - HEADPHONES AROUND HIS NECK.

RICK
 Sorry I'm late. You guys catch
 that sunset we got?
 (blissful)
 Sometimes you gotta stop and soak
 it all in.

Zach raises his eyebrows at this guy, but Kayla's busy
 WATCHING PEOPLE LINE UP FOR THE FLIGHT.

Wes approaches. Kayla rises and swallows, anxiously.

KAYLA
 I don't think the pill is working.
 I feel more nervous, not less.

WES
 Give it a few more minutes.

As they head to the jet-bridge, Rick smiles at Kayla.

RICK
 Beautiful night to fly, isn't it?

Off Kayla's look of anxiety -

INT. CABIN

Sitting next to Wes, Kayla is now SWEATING PROFUSELY.

KAYLA
 (to Wes)
 Can you not breathe so loudly? You
 sound like you're on a respirator.

Wes (not breathing loudly) looks at her like she's crazy.

In the row in front of them, Rick sits next to Zach. As Rick
 adds some POWDER TO A BOTTLE OF WATER -

RICK
 So, Kayla's a published writer and
 Wes just won a fiction writing
 fellowship?

ZACH
 Yep.

RICK
 Wow. And your dad's a novelist.
 (elbowing Zach)
 Guess someone's gotta get stuck
 being the suit.

Rick - not noticing ZACH'S ANNOYED EXPRESSION - sips his
 concoction...Meanwhile, Kayla - SWEATY - removes her sweater.

KAYLA
 (to Wes)
 I don't know if I can do this.

She looks at Wes, but HE'S SLEEPING.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)
 Folks, this is your captain
 speaking. We'll be cruising at an
 altitude of thirty-five thousand
 feet tonight... How that's possible
 I will never know. Getting twenty
 tons of steel to stay airborne?
 I'm thinking we just plummet from
 the sky at some point.

Kayla swallows hard.

CAPTAIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Once we're in the air, I'll turn
 off the seat belt sign... Not that
 relief from that small confinement
 will matter, since you'll be
 trapped in this veritable *sky cage*
 with limited oxygen and no way to-

KAYLA
 (standing)
 I'm getting off.

She starts climbing over Wes.

WES
 (waking up)
 ...What?

KAYLA
 I need to get off.

ZACH
 What's going on?

KAYLA
I'll meet you there- I don't know.
I'm not doing this.

ZACH
Shhh, Kayla - relax.

KAYLA
Get me off this Goddamned PLANE!

AS STUNNED PASSENGERS turn to stare at the family -

CUT TO:

INT. GATE

Wes STUDIES TWO - NEARLY IDENTICAL - PILLS. As the PLANE
TAKES OFF in the background:

ZACH
You gave her speed?

WES
It's not speed, it's Adderall. I
take it for my ADD.

ZACH
You don't have ADD.

Rick approaches.

RICK
Next flight isn't until tomorrow
morning.

KAYLA
I'm *not* getting on another plane.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CAR - GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE

ZACH SPEEDS. Rick is next to him in the front seat; Kayla
and Wes are in the back.

RICK
...I say 'tragic' because the
people your sister's chosen to
follow are the same type of abusers
most of their victims have escaped
from.

ZACH
Scarlett wasn't abused.

RICK
I didn't mean to suggest she was
abused. Just vulnerable.

ZACH
Scarlett chooses to be vulnerable.
That's what she does.

Zach zigs in and out of traffic.

WES
How do you choose to be vulnerable?

ZACH
We all grew up in the same
environment and I'm not vulnerable.
(out the window)
Pick a lane, buddy!

KAYLA
(clutching the seat)
Zach, your driving is making me
really nervous.

ZACH
We have to get there somehow,
Kayla. We're not going to be
teleported.

WES
(reading aloud)
'We preach the Gospel of equality.
We believe in love and freedom for
society's lowest members'.

KAYLA
That doesn't sound so bad.

RICK
The leader of Scarlett's group also
believes in appropriating other
men's wives as part of a spiritual
doctrine.

WES
Wow. Maybe I should join the cult.

RICK
And telekinesis and ruling the
earth.

WES
Interesting options.

RICK
And ritual castration.

WES
(closing the pamphlet)
So, where do you think we'll stop
for the night?

ZACH
If you ask me that one more time,
we're never going to stop.

WES
Oh, we're never going to stop?

ZACH
Yes.

WES
We're going to drive forever?

ZACH
Yes.

WES
(to Kayla)
I need to stay somewhere with
Internet.

KAYLA
We know.

RICK
You a big computer guy, Wes?

ZACH
A big gambling guy.

WES
Right, Zach, I'm a 'big gambling
guy'. Because that's a thing.

ZACH
So, Rick, I never got to ask you -
did you go to school for this?

RICK
Intervention?
(chuckling)
No school for it. School of life.

ZACH
 What does that mean, 'school of
 life'?

RICK
 It means I was once a victim in the
 way your sister is.

KAYLA
 Really?

RICK
 I was what was commonly called a
 'Moonie'. Fifteen. Looking for
 answers. Reverend Moon exploited
 that. See, the relationship with
 the self-appointed leader is based
 solely on power. They thrive on
 their victims' excessive devotion.

ZACH
 Kind of like mom and dad.

KAYLA
 So, what happened to you?

RICK
 Don't know if I should say...
 (winking)
 You might go using my story in one
 of your books.

KAYLA
 I can't promise you anything.

Zach eyes Rick and Kayla - are they *flirting*? He
 accelerates, knocking Kayla backwards.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE WORLD'S MOST DECREPIT MOTEL

The only hotel for miles. A sign reads: COLOR TV. AIR
 CONDITIONING.

WES
 (sarcastic)
 I'm sure they have Internet, they
 just lead with color TV to be
 modest.

INT. RICK'S MOTEL ROOM

Rick sits on his bed in a half lotus position: Calm; eyes closed. A CANDLE IS LIT in front of him:

RICK
I experience all brands of
feeling... I do not avoid
emotion... I am the master of my
sensations.

He opens his eyes and calmly puts his palm over the flame.

RICK (CONT'D)
My will is str-
(yanking his hand away)
Ow! Motherfucker.

INT. WES' MOTEL ROOM -- LATER

The room is already the messiest place you've ever seen. A BASEBALL GAME is on TV.

While Wes tries to rig an Internet connection to HIS COMPUTER, Kayla sits on the bed, READING SCARLETT'S NOTE.

WES NEVER LOOKS UP FROM WHAT HE'S DOING.

KAYLA
Do you remember how Scarlett used
to have those theme dance parties
in her room when we were little?

WES
Um, kind of.

KAYLA
(beat; sighing)
Why do you think she's so weird?

Wes shrugs... Kayla takes in the messy space.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
...So, are you betting on something
tonight?

WES
Harvard Womens' softball.

He nods toward the TV. It's not a baseball game - it's a women's softball game on some random channel.

KAYLA
You can bet on that?

WES
You can bet on anything.

KAYLA
Are they any good?

WES
I have no idea.

KAYLA
Doesn't that stress you out?

WES
Constantly.

KAYLA
Are you- I mean... Maybe you should
stop. If it's-

WES
It's cool.

Beat. She looks at the TV.

KAYLA
Is it me, or do you think Zach's
more annoying than usual?

WES
I think he's about the same.

KAYLA
(rising)
I should go write.

Wes looks up at Kayla for the first time - eyebrows raised:

WES
You brought your computer?

Kayla eyes Wes' computer. He realizes his hypocrisy.

WES (CONT'D)
Right.

INT. HALLWAY

Kayla almost bumps into Rick.

KAYLA

Oh- Hi.

RICK

Hi. Feeling better?

KAYLA

Yeah. Thanks. Sorry- about being crazy. I mean- I guess you're used to crazy people, so-

RICK

You're not crazy.

KAYLA

Sad, what passes for a compliment these days.

RICK

Have you ever tried meditation?

KAYLA

Oh, God yes. I've been on Zoloft, Paxil-

RICK

No, not medication. *Meditation.*

KAYLA

Oh. No, I can't do stuff like that.

RICK

Anyone can do it. I'll tell you more about it some time.

(smiling)

If you want.

KAYLA

(smiling)

...Sure.

CUT TO:

INT. WES' MOTEL ROOM

Zach sits on Wes' bed. AGAIN, WES - still trying to get a connection - NEVER LOOKS UP.

ZACH

Does Kayla seem more neurotic to you than usual?

WES
Not really.

ZACH
She seems more neurotic to me.

WES
She just found out her sister's in
a cult.

ZACH
I'm not going to get into it with
her. Let's just get this over
with, and everyone can go back to
their lives.

WES
I think that's a good policy.

ZACH
What do you think of Rick?

WES
He seems fine.

ZACH
I think he's a little dippy.

WES
'Dippy'?

ZACH
Yes.

WES
You shouldn't use that word.

ZACH
What's wrong with 'dippy'?

WES
If you don't know, I can't explain
it.

Zach looks around the room, HIS EYES STOP at the PILL BOTTLE
on the counter.

He opens his mouth to comment, but reconsiders. He rises:

ZACH
Do me a favor and get a wake up
call. Then you can wake the rest
of us up, okay?

WES

Sure.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR -- DAY

Zach drives; Rick's in the passenger seat, WRITING NOTES.

RICK

Any more specifics you can think of about her state of mind?

KAYLA

Well, she just lost another job.

ZACH

She didn't lose the job. It wasn't 'Oops, where'd my job go? I had it and now I misplaced it. Where is it? Where's my job?'

KAYLA

Okay Zach, you don't have to do every permutation of the joke.

WES

You're just mad that she didn't ask you to join the cult.

ZACH

I'm not mad that she didn't ask me to join the cult. I'm mad that by the time we get there, she's going to have changed her mind and decide to go save babies in Rwanda.

KAYLA

You know Scarlett doesn't save African babies to annoy you, right Zach?

ZACH

I know she gives in to every whim she has, which creates all this drama, and now we're in -
(looking out the window)
Sayville with a deprogrammer.

RICK

Actually, I meant to say this before - I'm not a 'deprogrammer', I'm a Cult Intervention Specialist.

ZACH
Oh, excuse me - then it's not a
problem at all.

KAYLA
Zach.

ZACH
I'm kidding. Rick knows I'm
kidding.

RICK
(forcing a smile)
Perfectly natural for someone in
Zach's position to use sarcasm as a
defense.

INT. DINER -- DAY

THROUGH THE WINDOW, Wes can be seen outside - PACING, TALKING
ON THE PHONE, holding an UNLIT CIGARETTE.

Zach watches A PRETTY GIRL pass and give Wes a LIGHT...

RICK
The most important thing to
remember is we're not there as
adversaries.

He says that mostly to Zach, prompting him to turn his
attention back inside.

RICK (CONT'D)
We're there to *talk* to Scarlett.
To *educate* her about the danger of
being under the influence of a
destructive group.

KAYLA
Rick, you only ate a quarter of
your sandwich.

RICK
I'm a member of the CR Movement.
(off their looks)
Calorie restriction. I only eat
fifteen hundred calories a day.
(beat)
You can prolong life by cutting
back on food to the point of bare
subsistence.
(beat)
I got into it after AA.

Behind Rick's back, Zach indicates to Kayla that Rick is nuts... AS THE WAITRESS DROPS OFF THE CHECK:

KAYLA
Can I get his sandwich to go?

EXT. RENTAL CAR

Wes pulls Kayla aside -

WES
(quietly)
Hey, have you seen that bottle of pills I had?

KAYLA
Not since you poisoned me on the plane, why?

WES
I can't find them anywhere.

KAYLA
You'll be home tomorrow. You can get more then.

Wes looks kind of stressed about that.

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR -- AFTERNOON

Zach drives...

EXT. DESERTED STRETCH OF ROAD - DUSK

The car rolls down the gravel road; turns on to dirt road...

RICK
This is it. Turn off the headlights.

Zach does. It's almost completely dark. The car rolls on...

KAYLA
(anxious)
What if we hit something?

ZACH
Shh.

She tries to contain herself, but the anxiety breaks through.

KAYLA
 What if another car comes? It
 can't see us.

RICK
 Turn here.

Zach pulls up in front of a small building. It's WELL LIT
 and looks like an army barracks.

RICK (CONT'D)
 (dramatic)
 Kill the engine.

Zach does. Kayla exhales.

RICK (CONT'D)
 This isn't a violent procedure.
 The three of you should be able to
 convince Scarlett to take a ride.

Just now - an OBESE FIFTEEN YEAR OLD passes.

KAYLA
 There's one of them!

A moment later, ANOTHER OVERWEIGHT YOUNG WOMAN passes.

WES
 These cult members are really fat.

ZACH
 And young.

RICK
 Could be part of their
 indoctrination.

KAYLA
 Getting fat?

WES
 ...And young?

RICK
 (dramatic)
 Anything's possible.

Now a less overweight YOUNG MAN PASSES.

WES
 He's not as fat.

ZACH
 Maybe he just got here.

Suddenly, A WHISTLE PIERCES THE AIR and SEVEN FAT TEENAGERS
 JUMPING in POTATO SACKS emerge from around the corner -

HOPPING TOWARDS THEM. Kayla screams. Wes screams.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN OFFICE -- LATER

While Rick talks on his cell phone, Zach, Kayla and Wes stand
 on the porch. Wes smokes. Zach paces.

ZACH
 How the hell did we end up at a fat
 camp?

INT. OFFICE

JERRI, the CAMP OWNER, lectures an OVERWEIGHT CAMPER (wearing
 FORTIES STYLE DRESS and HEAVY MAKEUP).

Jerri's not obese, but she's not exactly thin.

JERRI
 (southern accent)
 God gave you a body and mind,
 Honey. What you do with them is up
 to you. If you sneak a sleeve of
 Ritz Crackers, you just make it
 harder for God to love you. If you
 laugh during "Guys & Dolls"
 practice, you make it tough for God
 to care.

MANDY
 Okay.

JERRI
 There's a reason we say there are
 no dress rehearsals in life, Mandy.
 There's a reason that's our motto.

MANDY
 ...But it was a dress rehearsal.

Jerri FROWNS.

CUT TO:

Jerri exits the office. Mandy (now, with A TEAR STAINED FACE) follows her out.

JERRI
(re: Mandy)
Yikes - Parents' weekend!
Everyone's on edge.

Rick approaches.

ZACH
I still don't understand how we
ended up at a fat camp.

JERRI
Oh, no, no, no - we're a spiritual
retreat for underactive teens.

RICK
(explaining)
They were here-

JERRI
Illegally. Squatters. Over the
winter.

ZACH
I don't believe this.

KAYLA
Where are they now?

RICK
I have some leads. A contact of
mine-

ZACH
What do you mean, 'leads' and 'a
contact'?

RICK
An exit counselor I know, Jack
Bench, is working with a family
headed down to find the same group.

KAYLA
Another deprogrammer- I mean,
intervention specialist?

RICK
Exit counseling is somewhat
different from what I do. Not as
effective, if you ask me.

ZACH
It's a little effective, since he
knows where the group is and you
don't.

Rick forces a non-confrontational smile:

RICK
I should have their exact location
by morning.

WES
So, should we find a hotel for the
night?

JERRI
Oh, you won't find a room anywhere.
It's parents' weekend.

ZACH
Wonderful.

JERRI
I suppose you can stay in one of
our cabins.
(beat)
Just for tonight.

WES
Do you have Internet?

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN

A FAT THIRTEEN YEAR OLD BOY watches Wes look through his
duffel bag for the millionth time. Zach lays on a cot.

ZACH
Can you do me a favor and wake me
up in fifteen minutes?

WES
Can you do me a favor and stop
asking me to do you a fucking favor
every second?

ZACH
Whoa, I-

Wes - SWEATY - wipes his brow.

WES
Seriously, you do that all the
time. It's not cool.

Zach notices Wes' sweatiness.

ZACH
Are you okay?

WES
I'm fine. And why haven't you
asked me to drive? I have a
license, you know.

ZACH
Because you're not as experienced a
driver as I am, but you can drive
if-

Wes moves over to Zach's briefcase and starts rifling
through.

ZACH (CONT'D)
(sitting up)
What are you doing?

WES
I lost something. I need to see if
my stuff got mixed up with yours-

ZACH
Don't go through my-

Wes spots the MUSICAL CDS. He looks at them quizzically.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Those are for something I'm working
on.

WES
A case?

ZACH
Kind of.

Wes looks at him skeptically. After A BEAT, something occurs
to Wes:

WES
Dude, are you gay?

ZACH
No, Wes, I'm not gay.

Zach RISES AND GRABS THE BRIEFCASE FROM WES. Off Wes' look -

CUT TO:

A MUSICAL. We are:

INT. CHURCH/THEATRE -- EVENING

CAMPERS rehearse "*Fugue for Tinhorns*" from "*Guys & Dolls*".

NATHAN DETROIT and HIS COHORTS wear tightly-fitting forties attire. Zach, Wes, Kayla and Rick watch from the back:

KAYLA

These poor freaks. Other kids are at regular camp - waterskiing, dating lifeguards.

ZACH

Maybe the freaks like it here.

WES

They don't like it here.

RICK

Maybe all year they don't fit in, then they come here and have a group who's accepting of them.

KAYLA

(hopeful)

You think?

TWO OVERWEIGHT KIDS pass:

OVERWEIGHT KID #1

I fucking hate this shithole.

On stage, Nathan Detroit does an awkward dance move.

KAYLA

God... Musicals are embarrassing, being a teenager is embarrassing, and being fat is embarrassing. Why don't they just set them on fire?

ZACH

(beat; quietly)

I don't think musicals are embarrassing.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN -- NIGHT

Kayla sits on the porch with Rick. They watch a group of FAT KIDS play cards.

KAYLA

...Scarlett and I were never really close. I mean, we shared a room, but we're so different. I obsess over every decision... she barely considers consequences.

RICK

Unfortunately, in this case, the consequences can be dire. See, it's a coordinated program of thought reform-

KAYLA

Do you talk that way about everything, or just cults?

RICK

Oh, uh- I don't know.

KAYLA

Not that it's- Sorry - I didn't mean to embarrass you.

RICK

I guess... I do it when I'm nervous.

Rick smiles, embarrassed... They HOLD ONE ANOTHER'S GAZE.

RICK (CONT'D)

So, your book was on the New York Times Best-seller List?

KAYLA

Just- number nineteen.

(beat)

I've been having problems writing since then. The past year.

RICK

How come?

KAYLA

...I feel kind of like a wind up toy in a corner.

(beat)

Does that make sense?

RICK
 Sure. You're scared of your
 feelings.

KAYLA
 ...I'm scared of my feelings?

RICK
 So you obsess to avoid facing them -
 to cover the fear. Hey - fear's a
 tough competitor... I should know.
 (beat)
 I had a rough year, myself.

KAYLA
 What happened?

RICK
 Let's just say 'that which doesn't
 break you'...
 (dramatic)
 Even thought about having a drink
 once or twice.

KAYLA
 You don't drink at all?

RICK
 Nooo. No. I'm not a pretty drunk.
 (beat)
 But you know what I learned this
 year?
 (intense)
 I'm a survivor. I *survived*. And-

ZACH (O.S.)
 Kayla!!!

KAYLA
 What?! Jesus, are you trying to
 give me a heart attack?!

REVEAL: Zach watching them through the window, not pleased.

ZACH
 Jerri said lights out at ten!

KAYLA
 Okay! God!!!

She turns back to Rick, who's more than a little taken aback
 at the yelling:

KAYLA (CONT'D)
 Sorry. What were you saying?

CUT TO:

INT. BOYS BATHROOM

As Zach and Wes brush their teeth, Wes studies Zach. He's obviously given this some serious thought:

WES
 I just want you to know that if you
 were gay-

ZACH
 (defensive)
 I'm not gay, Wes, Jesus, I've had,
 like- ten girlfriends - or more
 even, okay? I love women. God.

Zach makes a silent decision.

ZACH (CONT'D)
 I was going to tell you and Kayla -
 (beat)
 I'm writing a musical. I quit the
 firm, and I'm writing a musical.

WES
 ...Seriously?

Wes looks more disappointed than if Zach were gay.

ZACH
 I never really wanted to be a
 lawyer. This is my dream. And I'm
 36... If not now, when?

WES
 (unsure how to react)
 Wow... What's it about?

ZACH
 A guy who sells balloons. He loves
 it, but then he gets disillusioned.

WES
 ...And you just- quit the firm?
 Like - you can't go back?

ZACH
 Why would I go back? I happen to
 be pretty good at this.

Pause.

WES
How come you didn't tell any of us?

ZACH
I applied to the top five musical
festivals in the country. When I
get home, I'll have the acceptances-
(catching himself)
I mean, the responses. Then I'll
tell everyone.

CUT TO:

EXT. GIRLS' CABIN - NIGHT

As nightgown-clad OVERWEIGHT GIRLS head to the bathroom,
Kayla PACES, trying to get CELL PHONE RECEPTION... Finally:

JOY (V.O.)
Hello?

KAYLA
(relieved)
Mom, Hi.

Immediately Kayla hears BACKGROUND VOICES (from Joy's end).

JOY (V.O.)
Sweetie, where are you?

KAYLA
Well, we're in Kentucky, but
there's- Are you having a party?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BACHMAN APARTMENT -- NIGHT

A SMALL PARTY takes place; a POKER GAME goes on behind Joy.

JOY
Of course not. The Stahls stopped
by to say hello.

KAYLA
It sounds like more than the
Stahls.

JOY
Well, we put some cheese out.

KAYLA
...What does that have to do with
it?

JOY
Sweetheart, tonight was planned
before any of this happened. Tell
me what's going on.

KAYLA
We're at the wrong place.

JOY
Oh, no.

Louis gets on the phone. The sounds of the party get louder.

LOUIS
What's wrong?

KAYLA
Hi Dad.
(speaking louder)
Rick had the wrong information-

JOY
They're at the wrong place.

KAYLA
The group moved, but we're going to
find them.

LOUIS
We've been so worried.

KAYLA
I can tell.

JOY
Kayla, we *fretted* over whether to
go ahead with this, but your father
was finally feeling better, and we
were trying to get our minds off-

KAYLA
Mom, it's fine. Don't worry, okay?
We'll find out more tomorrow. I'll
call you then.

CUT TO:

INT. GIRLS' BATHROOM

Kayla stands at a set of sinks, brushing her teeth between TWO OVERWEIGHT TEENAGERS.

OVERWEIGHT TEENAGE GIRL #1
My Mom's gonna kill me this weekend. I've only lost four pounds.

OVERWEIGHT TEENAGE GIRL #2
Don't eat tomorrow and then take laxatives.

Kayla looks alarmed.

KAYLA
Sorry- I mean- to interrupt, but that's really unhealthy.

OVERWEIGHT TEENAGE GIRL #2
So's being sixty pounds overweight.

KAYLA
But- I mean- you're not addressing the source of the problem.

OVERWEIGHT TEENAGE GIRL #2
My Mom paid four thousand dollars for this camp.

Kayla has no answer for that.

OVERWEIGHT TEENAGE GIRL #1
I have laxatives back in the cabin.

They both exit. A moment later, A VERY CHUBBY GIRL of FIFTEEN - ALLISON - exits a stall.

ALLISON
Are they gone?

KAYLA
Who? The other girls? Yes.

ALLISON
They make fun of me because I'm not one of the thin ones.

KAYLA
The thin ones?

ALLISON
Like those two.

KAYLA
Oh... Uh, of course.

ALLISON
(beat)
I hate it here.
(suddenly crying)
I hate my life. I'm so ugly.

KAYLA
Oh, Sweetie-

ALLISON
If no one likes you at fat camp, do
you know how big a loser you are?
You can't be a bigger loser!

KAYLA
No - you're not a loser, you're
just-
(searching)
...Scared of your feelings.

ALLISON
What does that mean?

KAYLA
I think it- basically means you're
scared.

ALLISON
Of course I'm scared - I'm never
going to have a boyfriend. I'm so
alone!

KAYLA
Honey, no, you're not alone - there
are all these kids here just like-

ALLISON
(crying harder)
I want to die!

KAYLA
(panicking)
I have a sandwich.

ALLISON
(tears stopping)
You do?

Kayla roots through her bag and finds RICK'S SANDWICH from lunch. As Allison takes a bite, Kayla exhales relief...

Until - A FLASHLIGHT IS SHONE on them. CAUGHT. It's Jerri.

KAYLA
...Jerri, this is my fault.

JERRI
Pack your things.

KAYLA
But, she didn't do anything wrong.

JERRI
Not her, you.

KAYLA
Me?! I'm not the one eating.

ALLISON
(mouth full)
You gave it to me.

Jerri marches over.

JERRI
Give me the contraband.

Allison hands Jerri the sandwich, and spits what she's chewing into her hand.

JERRI (CONT'D)
You. Out.

KAYLA
But you said there's nowhere else to stay.

JERRI
Pack your things and go.

KAYLA
You invited us to stay.

JERRI
And now I'm kicking you out.

KAYLA
What kind of maniac gets her kicks from starving fat kids?!

Allison starts crying anew.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Not you, Sweetie.

JERRI
Get out or I'm calling the police!

KAYLA
I've got a newsflash for you, Jerri
- you could stand to lose a few
pounds!

EXT. RENTAL CAR

Zach and Wes eyeball Kayla as they get into the car.

KAYLA
It's not my fault she's crazy.

WES
Is it your fault you gave a fat kid
a sandwich?

ZACH
(weary)
We have to find a hotel. We need
to get an early start tomorrow.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - FLEABAG MOTEL -- MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

The TV show "Alice" plays in the background; the light from the television casts a depressing illumination over the room.

Kayla sits in bed - HER COMPUTER OPEN ON HER LAP. But she's READING SCARLETT'S NOTE instead... A few feet away, WES SLEEPS FITFULLY ON A COT.

WES
Can you turn that off?

He rolls over. She notices how sweaty he is.

KAYLA
Jesus, are you okay? What kind of
withdrawal are you going through?

WES
I need a Trazedone to sleep, but I
can't call in a prescription,
because I don't know where we'll be
tomorrow.

KAYLA
 Maybe this is a good opportunity
 for you to stop taking pills. I
 mean - it can't be great for your
 writing, and-

WES
 (irritable)
 Thanks, that's really helpful. Can
 you turn the TV off?

She stares at her brother's back, WANTING TO SAY MORE... She
 turns off the television... Sits there for a moment.

INT. RICK'S MOTEL ROOM

Rick lays on his bed, eyes closed, listening to headphones.

RICK
 (chanting)
 I do not look to others for peace.
 I create peace. I deserve peace.

There's a KNOCK ON THE DOOR...

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Kayla paces.

KAYLA
 ...I make no impact on the world.
 I can't write, I can't cheer up a
 fat kid... I just feel like-

RICK
 A wind-up toy in a corner?

He pats the bed next to him. She sits. He starts rubbing
 her hand.

RICK (CONT'D)
 These are pressure points. If we
 release tension you hold here...

KAYLA
 Oh... That feels really-

She turns to him. They look into each other's eyes.

RICK
 You know, when I first saw you, I
 thought - It's gonna be hard to
 keep this professional.

KAYLA
 Really? That's...

They lock eyes... And start PASSIONATELY MAKING OUT.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
 (breathless)
 See, I need to find a guy who's
 centered - normal. Who knows who
 he is.

RICK
 (breathless)
 That's me, baby. That's me.

KAYLA
 I love what you do with your life.
 I just sit around and *think*, but
 you *do* things - it's amazing.

He pulls out of the kiss, HOLDING HER FACE IN HIS HANDS:

RICK
 Before you idealize me, you should
 know... there can be complications
 with what I do.

KAYLA
 Complications?

Making a SILENT DECISION, Rick rises and retrieves THE
 DEPOSITION from his briefcase. He hands it to Kayla.

RICK
 Kidnapping charges. A young woman
 I removed from extreme
 circumstances. Family's suing me.
 Claiming I was a '*vigilante*'. That
 I have '*anger issues*'.

KAYLA
 You? But you seem so centered.
 (beat)
 That was your bad year?

RICK
 Throw in a girlfriend who left me -
 out of the *blue*, and there it is.

KAYLA
That's terrible. You're just
trying to help people.

RICK
Unfortunately, I don't make a lot
of friends doing what I do.

KAYLA
All you need is one...

They gaze at each other for a beat, and START MAKING OUT
WILDLY again.

CUT TO:

INT. KAYLA AND WES' MOTEL ROOM - FLEABAG MOTEL - MORNING

Kayla's BACK IN HER BED, asleep... Until there's a LOUD KNOCK
ON THE DOOR.

She opens her eyes and, half asleep, stumbles out of bed.
She opens the door to reveal Zach.

ZACH
We have to talk. Wes, get up.

Wes doesn't stir.

KAYLA
What's going on?

ZACH
Wes, get up.

WES
Quiet... I just fell asleep.

ZACH
Rick talked to his contact early
this morning. We know where they
are.

KAYLA
Okay.

ZACH
They're- the group is...

He smiles.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Sorry.

KAYLA
What? They're in Alaska.

ZACH
No, they're-
(deep breath)
They're...

He starts laughing.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Sorry.

Now Kayla starts laughing.

KAYLA
What? What's so funny? I don't
even know why I'm laughing.

ZACH
It's not funny.

But they're both laughing louder.

KAYLA
Then why are you laughing?

ZACH
Sorry.

They're near hysterics.

ZACH (CONT'D)
They're-

He tries to keep a straight face.

ZACH (CONT'D)
They're planning a mass suicide.

Kayla stops laughing.

KAYLA
What?!

WES SITS UP. He has sheet imprints on his face.

ZACH
In four days.

WES
That's not funny.

ZACH
I know. Sorry.

Zach BURSTS INTO LAUGHTER:

ZACH (CONT'D)
The vessel is coming.

WES
What vessel?

There's a knock on the door. Rick sticks his head inside.

RICK
Zach told you what's going on?

KAYLA
About the vessel? Yes.

Zach starts laughing again.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Stop laughing.

RICK
I was worried about this. They seemed to be exhibiting the traits of a doomsday cult.

WES
What's a doomsday cult?

RICK
Do you remember Heaven's Gate?

WES
No.

RICK
Their beliefs were based on a mixture of Christian doctrine and UFO theories. They thought extraterrestrials sought to bring humans to a higher level, and that properly timed suicide would-

ZACH
(impatient)
A doomsday cult means they kill themselves.

Silence.

KAYLA

Well, let's go, for God's sake! We have to get there before the vessel does.

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR -- DAY

There's tension in the car as Zach drives; Kayla listens intently to Rick:

RICK

Hal Belkin, the Apostles' leader, is timing the suicide by an astrological chart. He believes when the moon is in Mercury the planets will align to-

KAYLA

Excuse me, Rick.

(to Zach)

Now you go the speed limit?

ZACH

It'll take two days to get to Alabama. The vessel isn't coming for four.

KAYLA

I wish you'd stop calling it 'the vessel', like it's a big joke.

ZACH

That's what they call it, Kayla - the vessel.

Kayla looks to Rick. Reluctantly, he nods.

CUT TO:

INT. ROADSIDE BAR -- NIGHT

A COUNTRY BAND PLAYS for the FEW REGULARS at the bar...

CLOSE ON: A MAP OF ALABAMA. Zach and Rick pore over the map spread out in front of them; Kayla READS SCARLETT'S NOTE.

RICK

Jack Bench took ninety-three down, he's been taking it back, and he said it's smooth sailing.

ZACH
Ninety-three is taking us twice as long as fourteen would.

RICK
Twice as long? You sure?

ZACH
Obviously I'm exaggerating to make a point, Rick, but-

RICK
I hear you about fourteen, but the challenge with fourteen is-

ZACH
Fourteen cuts two hours off the trip. How is that a 'challenge'?

RICK
I have no vested interest in arguing with you, Zach - believe me - but fourteen has traffic.

ZACH
And ninety-three is all back roads-

KAYLA
Excuse me, I think I blacked out about ten minutes ago - are you still talking about fucking ninety three and fourteen? Because our sister's going to kill herself in three days, so the nuances of the route are kind of beside the point!

Kayla shakes her head, disturbed.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
This makes no sense. Why would Scarlett want to die?

Before Zach can respond, he spots Wes behind the bar - using THE BARTENDER'S computer.

He finishes and pounds fists with THE BARTENDER.

ZACH
Is he betting?

KAYLA
(disbelieving)
I think so.

A moment later, Wes approaches with FOUR SHOTS.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
What are these for?

WES
Cleveland's in the playoffs.

KAYLA
Good. Because that's what's
important right now.

Rick slides his shot away from himself.

RICK
I don't drink.

Not missing a beat, Wes does Rick's shot.

CUT TO:

INT. ROADSIDE BAR -- LATER

Wes, Kayla and Zach have finished off a few drinks between them. Wes KEEPS ON EYE ON THE GAME (on TV behind the bar).

KAYLA
(feeling the alcohol)
Can I tell you guys something
personal?

WES
Definitely.

Kayla takes a deep breath.

KAYLA
I'm getting my eggs frozen.

WES
What eggs?

KAYLA
(sarcastic)
The eggs in my refrigerator.

WES
...Why?

KAYLA
Oh, just for the hell of it.

WES
Oh. Weird.

He goes back to watching the game.

KAYLA
(incredulous)
The eggs in my ovaries.

WES
Oh. Why?

KAYLA
So I can have children later in
life.

WES
That's creepy.

KAYLA
Maybe for you because you can have
kids until you're seventy-five.

ZACH
He's right. There's something
really depressing about it.

KAYLA
(annoyed)
It's not depressing, it's a
technological advance. I want
kids, but I don't want to feel
pressured to meet someone, so -

WES
I don't want that kid in the
family.

ZACH
Me either. He depresses me.

KAYLA
Thanks. Glad I decided to share
with you.

Kayla takes a sip of her drink; starts listening to THE BAND -
they're playing America's "*Sister Golden Hair*."

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Hey... This was one of Scarlett's
dance party songs. Do you
remember?

Zach listens for a moment... MOMENTARILY TRANSPORTED.

ZACH

Yeah... She loved this song.

The three of them listen. After a while:

KAYLA

Why would Scarlett want to give up control of everything? Her autonomy? Her life?

No one has an answer. After a beat -

WES

Do you remember the time Scarlett brought home that dying pigeon from Central park?

KAYLA

(laughing)

Yes. It was so sad... It had one foot and one stump for a foot. And a messed up wing, remember? Scarlett was amazing - she was like Jason Bourne - she distracted the baby-sitter, caught the pigeon, hid him in the doll carriage... Got him home, and saved his life.

WES OPENS HIS MOUTH to say something... then DECIDES AGAINST IT. Kayla starts to TEAR UP. After a beat:

KAYLA (CONT'D)

So why is she doing this?

Zach and Wes share a look - mostly uncomfortable with Kayla's emotional display. Zach gestures to Wes to say something.

Wes AWKWARDLY PATS KAYLA ON THE BACK.

Just now, the front door opens, and an EXHAUSTED LOOKING MAN enters with an WEARY MIDWESTERN COUPLE -

The wife is overweight; the husband smokes. As Rick exits the bathroom, he SPOTS THE MAN WITH THEM.

RICK

(surprised)

Jack!

Jack eagerly approaches; it's evident that he's thrilled to see new people.

JACK
 (extending his hand)
 Rick.
 (re: his couple)
 These are the Millers.

Rick leads Jack and the couple to the Bachman table.

RICK
 (to the table)
 This is Jack Bench - the exit
 counselor I told you about.
 (gesturing)
 These are the Bachmans.

MRS. MILLER
 I have to sit, Jack. My arthritis
 is- never mind.
 (too cheery)
 My husband tells me no one likes to
 hear about it.

JACK
 (desperate)
 Mind if we join you?

Not waiting for an answer, Jack and the Millers sit.

RICK
 The Bachman's sister is also a
 member of The Apostles.

MRS. MILLER
 So was our son, Justin.
 (tearing up)
 We just picked him up.

KAYLA
 He was in Scarlett's group? Where
 is he now?

MRS. MILLER
 Asleep in the room. I gave him a
 pill and he's just out, poor thing.

She starts to cry.

MR. MILLER
 She's crying, I need a beer.
 (calling out)
 Waitress!

Wes RISES - FOCUSED ON THE GAME behind the bar.

WES
I'll get a pitcher.

KAYLA
Did he say anything about the
group? Or their plans?

MRS. MILLER
Oh, no. He was exhausted.
(sniffling)
Looked like he'd been up for days.

RICK
Congratulations on completing the
first step of a difficult process.

MR. MILLER
Congratulations, four grand later.

JACK
(closing his eyes)
It hasn't been an easy trip.

MR. MILLER
That's the understatement of the
damn century.

Mrs. Miller shifts, GASPING DRAMATICALLY, clutching her knee -

MR. MILLER (CONT'D)
For the love of God, take a pill,
Sarah.

MRS. MILLER
They make my throat dry!

JACK
(weary)
Sarah, Jonathan. Please.

Kayla and Zach exchange a look, but before anything else can
be said - CRASH! A bottle is smashed on the bar -

EVERYONE LOOKS UP: AT THE BAR - Wes is GRABBED FROM BEHIND.

A SKINNY, DISORIENTED YOUNG MAN - DRESSED ENTIRELY IN BLACK
(and wearing a WOVEN WRISTBAND) - has him in a head lock.

He holds the broken bottle to Wes' throat. Kayla and Zach
jump to their feet -

KAYLA
Oh, my God, Wes!

MR. MILLER
Justin, Goddammit!

ZACH
That's Justin? Get him away from
my brother!

JACK
(calmly)
Justin, let him go.

Justin's eyes dart around the bar -

JUSTIN
(in a HIGH VOICE)
Nobody move!

ZACH
Wes, don't panic.

MR. MILLER
Goddammit, Justin-

MRS. MILLER
I knew I should have stayed in the
room with him, but the doctor said
movement's good for my joints, so I-

JUSTIN
(in a high voice)
Shut up, Mom!
(to Jack)
I want to go back! Take me back!

KAYLA
(to Zach)
What's wrong with his voice?

Zach eyes Justin's crotch, MOTIONS SCISSORS SNIPPING.
Kayla's EYES WIDEN, as she looks at JUSTIN'S CROTCH.

JACK
Justin, you and I are going to have
a conversation-

JUSTIN
(high voice)
Fuck you. Take me back.

Justin PUNCHES WES IN THE JAW.

WES
Ow!

Kayla and Zach gasp.

JUSTIN
(high voice)
Take me back!

WES
Take him back!

JACK
Justin, you have my word that we'll
discuss your return.

MR. MILLER
He's not 'returning' anywhere.
Boy, you've caused enough trouble
for enough people tonight.

Just now, Justin releases Wes. He drops the bottle and pulls
out A 9 MM HANDGUN.

ZACH
Oh, my God.

Justin waves the gun around the bar. PEOPLE SCREAM.

KAYLA
Holy shit! We're going to die.
We're going to die. We're going to
die!

ZACH
Be quiet, Kayla!

Wes gets to Kayla's side. Kayla clings to him.

KAYLA
Are you okay?!

Before he can answer, Justin shoots the gun into the ceiling.
WES FAINTS.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Oh, my God, Wes!

ZACH
(to Mrs. Miller)
Tell him he's going back.

MRS. MILLER
(hopeful)
Honey, you're going to come home
with us!

ZACH
 (to the Millers)
 Will you stop doing that?!

SUDDENLY, Justin is HIT OVER THE HEAD WITH A BOTTLE. REVEAL:
 The BARTENDER with a broken bottle in hand.

SOUTHERN BARTENDER
 I don't care where the son of a
 bitch goes - get him outta my bar.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR -- LATER

In the background, Justin is hauled into a POLICE CAR. Zach
 sits with Wes, who holds an ICE PACK against his jaw.

ZACH
 ...Then Justin shot the gun again,
 Kayla screamed, and you fainted.

WES
 I didn't faint, I passed out.

ZACH
 A really important distinction
 considering you just got your ass
 kicked by a eunuch.

Kayla brings Wes a drink.

WES
 I need a pain killer.

Rick approaches. He looks QUITE DISTRESSED:

RICK
 We need to talk.

INT. MOTEL LOBBY -- MOMENTS LATER

Kayla's head is in her hands, Wes just looks miserable -
 holding an ice pack to his cheek.

ZACH
 (incredulous)
 A weapons cache?

RICK
 That's where Justin got the gun.

ZACH
You're telling me they have a
stockpile of weapons?

Zach starts to pace.

RICK
Jack says the FBI knows, but
they're not taking action because
they're afraid of another Waco.

ZACH
So, if we try and get Scarlett,
we're going to get killed.

KAYLA
We have to call the police.

RICK
Bad idea.

ZACH
Really, Rick? You still feel
qualified to talk about good and
bad ideas? Because you didn't know
where the group was, you didn't
know they were going to off
themselves, and you didn't know
they had weapons!

KAYLA
Zach-

RICK
I understand your feelings, Zach,
but if you'll-

ZACH
Oh, you understand my feelings?
Oh, good, I was worried you might
not understand my feelings. That
was my big concern right now!

RICK
(evenly)
What I do isn't an exact science.

ZACH
Gee, really? I hadn't noticed
that.

RICK
 (under his breath)
 More sarcasm.

KAYLA
 Zach, let's calm down and hear Rick out.

RICK
 Thank you, Kayla.
 (beat)
 We'll need to get guns and go in ourselves.

KAYLA
What?

WES
 Cool.

ZACH
 Are you serious? That's your suggestion?

RICK
 The chance of us needing to discharge the weapons is minuscule. Remember, these people have a major agenda set. Odds are they'll give Scarlett up, rather than chancing a disturbance.

ZACH
 We're not getting guns and storming the Goddamned Apostles of- whatever-

RICK
 Infinite Love and Truth and Wisdom.

KAYLA/WES
 And power.

ZACH
 Whatever! I'm not going to put everyone in that kind of jeopardy. We're calling the FBI.

RICK
 And? Then what?
 (beat)
 You think the FBI's gonna show up in the next two days?
 (moving closer)
 (MORE)

RICK(CONT'D)

You think they're gonna swoop in
and save your sister?

(dramatic)

Get real, Zach.

Zach starts to pace again. Kayla ponders the options...

KAYLA

Rick's right.

ZACH

Oh, really? So, you're going to
use a gun?

KAYLA

Yes.

ZACH

You break out in a cold sweat going
through the Lincoln Tunnel, but
you're going to pack heat?

WES

Don't say pack heat.

RICK

I can get a layout of the compound
from Jack. That'll eliminate any
element of surprise. If I know
these types, they'll have escape
routes everywhere.

KAYLA

I think we should vote. Wes?

WES

I'll do whatever.

Zach rolls his eyes - exasperated.

KAYLA

Zach, what choice do we have? If
we don't do this, she's going to
kill herself in seventy-two hours.

RICK

We can't do anything tonight
anyway. Let's get some sleep and
we'll reconvene in the morning.

INT. WES' MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Holding a BOTTLE OF TYLENOL PM, Wes paces as he watches A
PLAYOFF GAME. From the television:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
*If Ramirez strikes out, this game
 is over-*

The pitch, and... RAMIREZ STRIKES OUT -

WES
 Come on!

He GRABS HIS JAW IN PAIN.

WES (CONT'D)
 Ow! Jesus Christ!

He throws the bottle across the room.

WES (CONT'D)
 Fuck you, Tylenol! You pointless-
 baby aspirin-piece of shit!

CUT TO:

INT. ZACH'S MOTEL ROOM

Zach is on his bed; A LIST is next to him: NEW MUSIC
 FESTIVAL, YOUNG COMPOSER FORUM, EMERGING VOICES IN THEATRE.

He makes SOME CHANGES in the SCRIPT of "BALLOON MAN".

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE RICK'S MOTEL ROOM -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Rick opens the door to reveal... Kayla. SHE SMILES and
 SNEAKS INSIDE...

INT. RENTAL CAR - NEXT MORNING

Zach drives; Rick is in the front seat next to him.

KAYLA
 I don't understand how you can just
 go buy guns. Isn't there, like, a
 waiting period or something?

RICK
 Not in Alabama. They only keep a
 record of your name.

Zach sizes up Rick - how does he know that?

CUT TO:

A WALL-DISPLAY OF HANDGUNS, SHOTGUNS, RIFLES, CROSSBOWS. We are:

INT. B&B GUNS & AMMO - NEXT MORNING

As Rick talks to the SALESPERSON, Kayla waits with Wes, who's EDGY - in pain and without drugs. He keeps rubbing his jaw.

Kayla watches Rick:

KAYLA

I think we're lucky we found Rick.
I have a feeling he'll really be
able to help Scarlett, you know?

WES

I guess.

Kayla sighs... Shakes her head.

KAYLA

Maybe if we'd gone with her to
those life enhancement classes,
none of this would have happened.

WES

Or we'd just be in the cult too.

Pause.

KAYLA

It's not funny, you know. Does
anything effect you besides who's
going to win the game?

(annoyed)

Pay attention.

She walks away, leaving Wes searching for a response...

CUT TO:

NEAR THE BACK ROOM, Zach talks on his CELL PHONE. He has the pamphlet for THE NEW MUSIC FESTIVAL in his hand:

ZACH (INTO THE PHONE)

I know you don't give results over
the phone, but you've already
mailed them, and I'm out of town so-
Thanks. It's called-

A BURLY SOUTHERN GUN SALESMAN passes; Zach hides the pamphlet.

ZACH (CONT'D)
 (quietly)
 "Balloon Man".

Just now, Rick approaches.

RICK
 We're ready to pay.

Zach reaches into his pocket, and hands Rick THE CASH.

RICK (CONT'D)
 Uh, why don't you pay?
 (beat)
 Just... easier that way.

From A FEW FEET AWAY, Wes OVERHEARS THIS - registering RICK'S APPREHENSION...

CUT TO:

INT. MINI-MART - TRUCK STOP/GAS STATION

While the car gets fueled, Zach is ON HIS PHONE, listening to HOLD MUSIC. He pulls a list from his pocket. It reads:

NEW MUSIC FESTIVAL - X. YOUNG COMPOSERS FORUM - X...
EMERGING VOICES IN MUSICAL THEATRE - X.

One's left: THE NEXT STAGE - a BLANK SPACE next to it...
 Waiting, he browses the greeting cards, the CD rack...

He spots AMERICA'S GREATEST HITS, and looks it over. Someone comes on the line, and he quickly puts the CD back:

ZACH
 I'm here...
 (disappointed)
 Oh, I see. Were there comments?...
 'Unemotional'...'Clinical'... No,
 that's helpful. Thanks.

He hangs up, disappointed... As he approaches the counter to pay, he spots Kayla out the window. She's talking to Rick:

It's clearly an intense conversation... even more so when Rick leans in and KISSES HER... Zach is DUMBFOUNDED.

CUT TO:

INT. MINI-MART

Zach waits in line. As Kayla enters, he DOESN'T MAKE EYE CONTACT.

ZACH
Would you please get everyone some water before we go?

KAYLA
Sure. I'm just gonna go to the bathroom first.

ZACH
Can you do it now? I'm paying.

KAYLA
...Then, I'll just pay for it separately.

ZACH
Fine. I'll fucking get it.

The CASHIER LOOKS UP; Kayla looks shocked.

KAYLA
Whoa - what's your problem?

ZACH
My problem is I'm paying for gas -
What are you doing?
(under his breath)
Other than screwing the deprogrammer.

KAYLA
Excuse me?

ZACH
I said: What are you doing, other than screwing the deprogrammer?

The cashier looks to Kayla for her response.

KAYLA
(shocked)
Fuck you, Zach.

ZACH
Wow. Nice communication skills.
Good luck raising your frozen kid.

KAYLA

It's none of your business what I do.

ZACH

Actually, when I have to take care of everything for everyone, it becomes my business.

KAYLA

Who asked you to take care of *anything*, you dictator?

ZACH

Oh, gee, I wonder. Who *asked* me to find the deprogrammer? Who *asked* me to buy the plane tickets, be mom and dad's lawyer? If I didn't do those things, no one else would.

KAYLA

Oh, my God - newsflash, Zach - That's what all dictators think.

ZACH

Really? So who's going to do it? Wes? You?

KAYLA

Oh, no. No one knows anything but you, Zach. No one can do anything but you.

EXT. TRUCK STOP/GAS STATION

Wes sits on the curb, his FOOT TAPPING UP AND DOWN, as he studies a RACE TRACK CARD... He looks up and spots A PIGEON.

STARING AT HIM. He looks back down... A moment later, he looks up again. The pigeon is still there...

CUT TO:

INT. MENS' ROOM - GAS STATION

Rick stares in the mirror, INTENSE. As he AIMS HIS GUN -

RICK

Hand over the girl. Now.

Just now, Wes enters, unseen by Rick (who continues talking to his reflection).

RICK (CONT'D)
Don't make me use this, my friend.

Rick suddenly makes eye contact with Wes, and tries to cover:

RICK (CONT'D)
Just checking the weapon for flaws.

WES
...Totally.

BACK TO:

INT. MINI-MART

The CASHIER unabashedly watches Kayla and Zach fight:

KAYLA
You're such an ass-hole, Zach. You don't even give a shit about Scarlett. At least Rick cares about her.

ZACH
Rick? Rick, who we've known for two days, cares about Scarlett?
(beat)
Great. Well, why don't you two join her? Better yet, start your own cult for people who do whatever the fuck they feel like.

KAYLA
You don't even know me! And you can make fun of Scarlett, but at least she has feelings! You should try having one every once in a while, you robot!

ZACH
There's a difference between having feelings and indulging every emotion you ever have.

KAYLA
I don't indulge every emotion I have!

ZACH
Oh, no. You just can't leave New York without having a nervous breakdown.

KAYLA

You know, you've made it clear what a burden we are to you, Zach. I get it - you would have been better off without us. Well, one of us is about to die, and you never have to see the other two again, okay?

She storms off, but when she gets to the door, she turns around and heads back - with purpose.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

You're so transparent - you know that? It's obvious why you hate us. You're jealous. You're jealous that we all have the freedom to be creative and you've never had that.

That stings, but he covers.

ZACH

You have freedom? You can't ride in an elevator. Of course you're freezing your eggs. Your whole pathetic life is frozen!

Off Kayla's stunned expression -

CUT TO:

INT. BACK SEAT - RENTAL CAR

Kayla sits next to Rick, CRYING. Rick massages her hand.

KAYLA

I hate him.

RICK

I know.

KAYLA

If I wasn't related to him, I wouldn't even sit next to him in the subway.

(beat)

If I took the subway.

RICK

Look, it's simple. Your brother's a loser.

KAYLA
 (sniffling)
 Well... he's not a loser.

RICK
 I'm sorry. That's extreme.
 (beat)
 He's got the qualities of a loser.

KAYLA
 We don't even know each other, you
 know? If we didn't happen to be
 related by blood, we wouldn't even-

RICK
 You know what this is really about?
 You feeling helpless about saving
 your sister.

KAYLA
 (not really)
 I guess... All I know is your
 family is supposed to make you feel
 good about who you are, not-

HE TAKES HER FACE IN HIS HANDS - looks her in the eye.

RICK
 I will save her.

KAYLA
 ...Okay.

RICK
 Look at me.

KAYLA
 (uneasy)
 ...I am.

RICK
 I will save your sister.

KAYLA
 (beat)
 'Kay.

Rick keeps staring at her - PIERCINGLY. After a moment -

RICK
 And you're going to be all right.
 Say it with me.

KAYLA
Oh- I can't do things like that.

RICK
Say 'I'm going to be all right.'

KAYLA
Really, I-

RICK
Say it.

KAYLA
I'm going to be all right.

He gazes into her eyes, then shakes his head, smiling.

RICK
I want to tell you something,
Kayla. I was sugar coating it when
I told you I had a rough year.

(beat)
Truth is, I've barely held it
together the last six months.

(beat)
Times - especially after Anna left -
I thought about ending it all...
But something told me to take this
case. And now I know why.

(beat)
You make me feel whole again.

KAYLA
But... we just met.

RICK
Yet, I feel like I've known you
forever.

KAYLA
(uneasy)
Cool... Thanks.

EXT. MOTEL SIX -- NIGHT

RURAL ALABAMA. Our CAR OF WEARY TRAVELERS pulls into the
motel parking lot. As Zach parks:

ZACH
We leave in five hours. Not a
second later.

He gets out and slams the door.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE -- NIGHT

A GROUP OF LOCAL TEENAGERS stand outside. As Zach enters -

TEENAGER #1
Buy us some beer, Man?

ZACH
(bitter)
Fuck off.

INT. LIQUOR STORE -- MOMENTS LATER

Zach stands at the register, BUYING A BOTTLE of JACK DANIELS.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - ZACH'S MOTEL ROOM

Zach, drunk, takes a SWIG OF WHISKEY and looks in the mirror.

ZACH
(singing; angry)
*Balloon man - how soon, man? How
soon before you get to fly? When
will you get to touch the sky?!*

He does a SOMEWHAT AWKWARD DANCE MOVE, TAKES ANOTHER SWIG...
He goes to his briefcase and takes out the AMERICA'S GREATEST
HITS CD (from the truck stop).

He puts it in his CD player, and as "*Sister Golden Hair*"
starts to play, Zach listens...

ZACH (CONT'D)
(singing)
*...I've been one poor
correspondent, I've been too, too
hard to find, but it doesn't mean
you ain't been on my mind...*

He re-attempts his move, lost in the music - It's sad, funny
and weird all at once. And he has tears in his eyes.

INT. KAYLA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kayla brushes her teeth; there's a knock on her door.

WES (O.S.)
Hey, can I talk to you?

CUT TO:

INT. KAYLA'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Kayla sits across from Wes -

WES

I was online, so I decided to check Rick out.

(beat)

Turns out he's had a little trouble with the law.

KAYLA

I know. The kidnapping thing. I didn't say anything because-

WES

The kidnapping thing? No.

(beat)

He killed someone.

KAYLA

...What?

WES

He shot a guy. Four years ago.

KAYLA

What? Are you sure?

WES

He only served two years because he said it was self-defense.

KAYLA

...So he was protecting himself.

WES

Well, the guy's family says Rick shot him in cold blood.

KAYLA

(losing color)

Was all this before or after the cult?

WES

I don't know, but when you're asking 'Was the murder before or after the cult' about your boyfriends-

KAYLA

Holy shit.

Kayla rises and starts pacing.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Why do I always sleep with psychos?! I *knew* there was something weird about him.

WES
Then why did you sleep with him?

KAYLA
Because that's what I do, okay? I ignore my instincts because I'm needy!

Before he can respond, there's A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

RICK (O.S.)
Kayla? Are you in there?

Kayla GRABS Wes' arm.

WES
Ow.

KAYLA
(panicked)
What do I do?

WES
Answer him.
(re: his arm)
- Seriously, that hurts.

KAYLA
(calling out)
Uh, yeah?

RICK
Just wanted to...check in with you.

Kayla turns to Wes.

KAYLA
What do I do?!

WES
Check in with him.

KAYLA
Ew!

WES
 What? Is 'check in' code for something?

KAYLA
 I don't have a code with him!

WES
 Look, so he killed someone, maybe... I don't know how to finish that sentence.

She rises and heads to the door.

WES (CONT'D)
 Hey -
 (she turns back)
 Don't make him mad.
 (beat)
 Seriously. We just bought him a gun.

CUT TO:

Kayla WEARING AN EXAGGERATED SMILE. She closes the door behind her and addresses Rick:

KAYLA
 Hey, you.

Rick tucks her hair behind her ear; SHE SMILES WIDER.

RICK
 Everything okay?

KAYLA
 Absolutely. Of course. Great.

RICK
 You seemed a little distant today. In the car. After we talked.

KAYLA
 Well, you know - things had gotten kind of crazy so...
 (exaggerated yawn)
 Think I'm just ready for bed.

RICK
 Kayla, I need to tell you something.

...Okay.

RICK (CONT'D)

I don't know how to say this,
but... I feel this energy between
us, and-

(beat)

I think I'm falling in love with
you.

(relieved)

Wow. I'm so glad I told you that.
I was really nervous.

KAYLA

Rick, wow- Thanks... I think you're
great.

He smiles.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

But... you're here for my sister
and- maybe we should just keep the
focus on that.

He cocks his head - confused.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

I just think things are getting a
little muddled and-

RICK

No, I get it. It's too much.

(beat)

I came on too strong. I do that
sometimes.

KAYLA

(relieved)

Thanks. Thank you for getting
that. It's just- you know, timing
and stuff.

RICK

Sure.

(beat)

Of course.

INT. WES' MOTEL ROOM -- LATER

Eyes GLUED TO THE GAME Wes looks extremely stressed - it's
NOT GOING WELL.

He gets up... And spots something out the window. He slowly
approaches to find... A PIGEON. He opens the window -

The pigeon doesn't budge. They stare into each other's eyes.

PIGEON

Pay attention.

Wes' EYES WIDEN - the pigeon's beak didn't move, but where else could that have come from? He looks around, panicked...

EXT. PARKING LOT - NEXT MORNING

Zach (very hungover) arrives at the car to find Rick (not well rested) waiting.

They don't speak. Just now, Kayla approaches... For different reasons, it's awkward between her and BOTH MEN -

KAYLA

...Where's Wes?

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP ON: WES. He's wearing his clothes from the night before, his FOOT TAPS QUICKLY up and down. We are -

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS FIELD - MORNING

He sits next to ONE of the HIGH SCHOOL KIDS from the liquor store. Several EMPTY BEERS are in front of them.

WES

...It's just because there's only one playoff game left and I have a lot of money on it.

HIGH SCHOOL KID

Also, probably the thing with your sister.

WES

Yeah. I just need some-
(beat)

Do you ever feel - sometimes - like if you feel one thing, you'll feel-

HIGH SCHOOL KID

Everything?

WES

(beat)

When we were kids, my sister tried to save this weird pigeon, and... People think I don't remember stuff, but... It died.

(MORE)

WES (CONT'D)

And she couldn't stop crying. It was crazy - she couldn't stop. No one else was awake but us - it was the middle of the night. I was four... I didn't know what to say, so I just watched her...

Just now, the RENTAL CAR DRIVES UP. Zach gets out and approaches - IRRITABLE.

ZACH

What are you doing? Let's go.

Zach sees the high school kid and AVOIDS EYE CONTACT.

EXT. PARKING LOT

As they walk to the car, Zach, HUNGOVER, TOSSES WES the KEYS.

ZACH

I'm off the clock. I'm going to sleep.

That clearly makes Wes anxious, but Zach's in no mood to argue.

ZACH (CONT'D)

You wanted to drive.

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR -- DAY

RURAL ALABAMA. Wes drives, as the BASEBALL GAME plays on the radio. Next to him, Zach is passed out.

In back, Rick and Kayla look out their respective windows.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Gutierrez with the pitch... And that's strike three.

WES

(pounding the wheel)

Yes! Baby, yes!

JARRED, Rick and Kayla look at Wes - doing so, they make eye contact. Kayla SMILES. Rick DOESN'T SMILE BACK...

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR - LATER

Rick, Kayla, and Zach SLEEP... Wes GRIPS THE WHEEL; the GAME IS NO LONGER GOING WELL.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 (breaking up)
*Two out... Man on second.
 Cleveland's season-... on the line.*

WES
 Come on!

The radio gets more static-filled; Wes looks alarmed.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
And... or is it...the-

WES
 What? No.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
And the pitch is-

As WES reaches for the tuner, he sees his HAND SHAKE. He looks at the car in front of him and SEES DOUBLE.

He looks around. He's in the far left lane, surrounded by CARS. He swallows and starts TO CHANGE LANES.

A HORN BLARES. Zach and Kayla's eyes spring open.

ZACH
 What are you doing?

WES
 (swallowing)
 Nothing.

ZACH
 Jesus, check your blind spot.

WES
 It's fine, it's-

ZACH
 Obviously it's not fine, if-

WES
 (just holding it together)
 Back off, Zach. Seriously - shut the fuck up right now.

Rick wakes up, and Kayla shoots Zach a concerned look.

WES (CONT'D)

I- have to change lanes and I feel like I don't know how to drive all of a sudden.

A big-rig passes. Wes swallows.

ZACH

Okay... just put on your signal and check your mirrors...

WES

I think I might be- losing my mind.

Kayla and Zach share a look. A HORN BLARES.

ZACH

Let's just focus on changing lanes right now.

WES

I can't. I fucked up. Seriously.
(swallowing)
I lost a lot of my fellowship money on the playoffs. Like, a lot.
Even if I win today-

KAYLA

Okay, it's going to be okay -
You're not losing your mind.

WES

How do you know?! You don't know!

KAYLA

Yes I do. You're just feeling some things you haven't felt in a while-

WES

Fuck, Kayla - you're crazy too!
Both of you!

Another car horn. This time Wes gets THE FINGER TOO.

WES (CONT'D)

Fuck.

ZACH

Well, we're who you're stuck with,
and we're going to get you off the highway.

(checking behind him)

Signal and change lanes now.

Wes does. Zach looks over his shoulder.

ZACH (CONT'D)
And again.

Wes' hands start to shake.

WES
I can't. There's something wrong.

Kayla looks terrified - this is really dangerous... She opens her mouth, but before she can say anything -

ZACH
Nothing's wrong. You're totally sane and competent. You're a great writer, girls love you, you're fucking- cool. In a way I never could be. I'm- jealous of you.

Kayla's heart breaks a little... Wes is moved. He and Zach share a look. Just now, the game comes back on:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
*...Scores! With a home run.
Cleveland is back in the game!*

This grabs Wes' attention for a beat. He looks down.

ZACH
Wes-

Wes refocuses on the road, but he's swerved a little into another lane. A HORN BLARES, and he swerves to compensate.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Look out!

Zach grabs the wheel, but it's too late. The car goes into a spin and lands in a ditch. SILENCE.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Okay. You have ADD.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - BODY SHOP -- MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - DAY

While A TATTOOED MECHANIC works on the car, Zach signs papers. Wes enters (from the men's room).

WES
It's my fault if we don't get to
her in time.

ZACH
(beat; certain)
We will get to her in time.

INT. WAITING ROOM - BODY SHOP

Kayla - anxious - watches Rick pace the parking lot. Wes
approaches.

RICK
(mocking)
'Peace will find you'. 'You create
your own peace'.

Rick ANGRILY KICKS SOME SCRAP METAL.

RICK (CONT'D)
Yeah, *right!* When?! WHEN?!

They watch him kick the scrap metal again, then YELP,
GRABBING HIS FOOT IN PAIN.

WES
Is he drunk?

KAYLA
Of course not. Rick doesn't-

Rick kicks the scrap metal AGAIN, LOSES HIS FOOTING, AND
FALLS. He REACHES FOR ZACH'S WHISKEY BOTTLE, BUT IT'S EMPTY.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Oh, no.

RICK
(throwing the bottle)
Dammit!

Just now, Zach approaches Kayla and Wes.

ZACH
Insurance is paying for the damage,
and the rental company said we
could get a new car, but we only
have six hours, so I decided to fix
this one, otherwise-

KAYLA
Good call. We need to ditch Rick.

ZACH
 ...What?

KAYLA
 He's obsessed with me, and he's
 drunk.
 (beat)
 And he killed someone.

ZACH
 (taken aback)
 Excuse me?

KAYLA
 You're right, I'm self-indulgent
 and I'm stopping after this, but-

ZACH
 I don't understand.

Zach looks outside and sees Rick muttering to himself.

ZACH (CONT'D)
 ...We can't ditch him, he knows the
 layout of the compound.
 (beat; to Kayla)
 You have to talk to him.

Kayla's eyes widen - she looks to Wes... He nods.

EXT. BODY SHOP -- MOMENTS LATER

Kayla sits with Rick on a ledge - he has TEARS IN HIS EYES.

RICK
 Every time. *Every time* I fall in
 love this happens! What's wrong
 with me?!

KAYLA
 You're not in love with me, you're
 just needy, so you think you're in
 love with me.

RICK
 (teary)
 See?! You get me.

KAYLA
 Rick, you're a survivor, remember?

RICK
I'm not a survivor! I'm the
opposite of a survivor!

Kayla looks into the body shop, makes eye contact with her
brothers: This is not going well.

KAYLA
Rick, we don't even know each
other. I mean, what do we know
about each other's pasts?

RICK
What do you mean 'about our pasts'?

KAYLA
N-Nothing. I just mean - for
example.

RICK
But we can learn about each other.
That's what people do-
(suddenly suspect)
This isn't- did you find out
about... the incident in Deluth?

She takes a moment too long to answer.

RICK (CONT'D)
I knew it! Kayla, that was self-
defense! You have to know that.

KAYLA
I do - I'm totally not worried
about the murder-

RICK
It wasn't a murder!

He GRABS HER SHOULDERS. IN UNISON, Zach and Wes (watching
through the window) lean forward.

KAYLA
I know! I'm *sure*. I so don't care
about the death- or whatever.

Just now, the mechanic - KEN, comes inside, wiping his hands.

KEN
Knocking off.

ZACH
What? What do you mean?

KEN
It's five o'clock. I'm done.

ZACH
But we need the car tonight.

KEN
No can do.

ZACH
Look, we have to get out of here.
What if we pay you extra?

KEN
Cash?

Zach looks to Wes, who shakes his head. Just now, Kayla enters.

ZACH
Kayla, do you have any cash?

KAYLA
...Not on me. I could go to a cash
machine-

Ken laughs and opens a beer.

KEN
Forget it. Nearest ATM is fifteen
miles from here. I ain't driving
ya. See you tomorrow.

As Ken exits, HOPELESSNESS FILLS THE ROOM... Zach reaches into his pocket and pulls out the list of FESTIVALS:

EVERY SINGLE ONE HAS AN 'X' NEXT TO IT. HE CRUMPLES the LIST IN HIS HAND...

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT IN BACK OF THE BODY SHOP

Zach, Wes and Kayla approach. Coming from inside are the sounds of A COUPLE ARGUING and a LITTLE GIRL CRYING.

Zach knocks. Nothing. And again. Finally, Ken answers.

KEN
I told you, we're closed, ass-hole!

ZACH PULLS OUT HIS GUN and POINTS IT AT KEN. Kayla and Wes' EYES WIDEN.

KAYLA
Zach! What are you doing?!

ZACH
(to Ken)
Fix the fucking car.

KEN
Are you cra-

ZACH
(maniacal)
Fix it! FIX IT! FIX THE CAR!

INT. BODY SHOP

Ken is under the car's hood - Zach stands over him, GUN POINTED.

INT. APARTMENT IN BACK OF THE BODY SHOP

Kayla and Wes sit across from KEN'S GIRLFRIEND and daughter. Each of them holds a HANDGUN, AWKWARDLY.

WES
Sorry about this.

THE GIRLFRIEND gives him THE FINGER.

KAYLA
If our sister wasn't going to die,
we would never do this.

The GIRLFRIEND SPITS on the rug.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
She just spit on her own rug.

WES
(under his breath)
I saw.

The LITTLE GIRL takes a few steps away from her mother. Her mother yanks her back. Hard.

GIRLFRIEND
Don't you walk away from me.

She smacks the little girl; the little girl starts crying.

KAYLA
 (stunned)
 Don't hit that child!

GIRLFRIEND
 Don't tell me what to do, Bitch.

WES
 (under his breath)
 Kayla, let it go.

KAYLA
 (under her breath)
 She hit the little girl and called
 me a bitch.

WES
 (under his breath)
 You're not going to change
 anything, and you're going to make
 it worse for the kid.

KAYLA
 Come here, Sweetie.

Britney steps forward; Kayla spots a bruise on her leg.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
 Where did you get this bruise?

BRITNEY
 I fell on the playground.

WES
 Okay, I'm officially in an after-
 school special.

GIRLFRIEND
 Britney, get back here.

WES
 Kayla, let Britney go to her
 mother.

KAYLA
 Whose side are you on?

WES
 I didn't think there would be sides
 today!

ZACH (O.S.)
 (calling out)
 Let's go!

Wes rises. Looks out the window.

WES
 Come on, Kayla, the car's ready.

Kayla reluctantly rises. She looks back at Britney.

EXT. APARTMENT IN BACK OF THE BODY SHOP

As Kayla and Wes exit, Kayla stops - looks back.

KAYLA
 Wes, maybe we're at this gas station for a reason - to help Britney. I'm just sick of never doing anything, you know?

WES
 We can call the police from the car, but that's it right now, Kayla. We have to go.

...Kayla knows he's right. She nods. REVEAL: Rick around the corner, OVERHEARING THIS.

He finishes one of KEN'S BEERS; THROWS IT ON THE GROUND.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT

Zach sits in the driver's seat, the engine running. Kayla and Wes approach.

ZACH
 Where's Rick?

Just now, there's a commotion; they turn to see RICK RUNNING TOWARD THE CAR, BRITNEY IN HIS ARMS.

KAYLA
 Wha-

The girlfriend chases Rick.

ZACH
 What the hell-

Kayla and Wes get into the car. A moment later, Rick jumps in (carrying Britney).

RICK
Drive!

WES
What the fuck is-

The girlfriend starts BANGING ON THE WINDOW.

GIRLFRIEND
Give me my daughter!

RICK
Drive! Drive!

KAYLA
What are you doing?!

Just now, Ken comes running out of the garage with A SHOTGUN.
ZACH TEARS OUT OF THERE -

RICK
(to Kayla)
I did it for you!

ZACH
What's he talking about?

KAYLA
I have no idea!

RICK
You want to make an impact! So do I! We're helping this girl!

KAYLA
What?!

RICK
Don't you see, Kayla?! I'm a good person, and we're saving her!

KAYLA
You can't just take her, Rick. That's kidnapping! Does that ring a bell? It's what you're being indicted for?

It hits Rick. HIS FACE FALLS... Just now, Ken's truck appears in the rear view mirror.

He aims his shotgun at their car; THE SIDE VIEW MIRROR SHATTERS. Wes promptly PASSES OUT.

ZACH
Holy shit!

Panicked, Rick passes Britney to Kayla.

KAYLA
What are you doing?! I don't want her!

Britney STARTS TO CRY.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
It's okay, Sweetie.

RICK
I can't be here! I can't be part of a kidnapping!

ZACH
Part of a kidnapping? You ARE the kidnapping, you psycho!

Britney is crying; Wes' limp body bounces around the back seat.

RICK
Oh, God. What did I do?! Why do I repeat the same patterns?
(hitting his head against the window)
Over and over and over-

ZACH
Will you shut up?!

Ken is catching up to them -

KEN
(calling out)
Pull over!

RICK
Pull over!

ZACH
We threatened him with a gun and took his kid, I can't just pull over!

Wes comes to. Another SHOTGUN BLAST. Wes passes out. Britney continues crying.

KAYLA
It's okay, Honey, don't be scared of them.

BRITNEY
I'm scared of you!

KAYLA
(offended)
Don't be scared of me.

ZACH
Okay, if I stop in a public place, maybe he won't hurt us.

Just now, THREE POLICE CARS APPEAR IN THE REAR VIEW MIRROR.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Shit.

RICK
My life is over, my God - my life is over.

ZACH
Shut up, you maniac!

ZACH PUSHES RICK. RICK PUSHES ZACH. As the car swerves -

CUT TO:

INT. HOLDING CELL - POLICE STATION

A small cell. Everyone is beyond glum. Kayla PACES, PANICKED.

KAYLA
Are we going to get out of here, Zach?

ZACH
Even if we do, I somehow doubt the Alabama State Police is giving us our guns back any time soon.

KAYLA
Oh, God- if we don't get to Scarlett by tonight-

Rick glares at Kayla.

RICK
This is all your fault.

KAYLA
Excuse me?

RICK
If you hadn't broken up with me-

KAYLA
I didn't 'break up with you', you
head case, I've known you for two
days!

RICK
(rising)
You callous bitch.

ZACH
Don't you talk to her like that!

RICK
Fuck you, Man! I've been putting
up with your shit for five days!
You're a world class ass-hole!

ZACH
I thought anger was a choice, Rick!

RICK
And I'm choosing to kick your ass!

Rick punches Zach... But misses.

KAYLA
Oh, my God!

WES
Guys.

Zach throws a punch. It lands on Rick's shoulder.

KAYLA
(to Wes)
Do something!

WES
They're not really hurting each
other.

And then they start to tangle - pushing, punching.

KAYLA

Wes!

Reluctantly, Wes steps in - just as Rick throws his ONLY GOOD PUNCH. Which LANDS SQUARELY ON WES' JAW.

WES

Goddammit!

COP (O.S.)

(re: the fighting)

Hey! Knock it off!

Zach pulls out of Rick's hold as A COP approaches.

ZACH

(to the cop; breathless)

I'm an attorney.

COP

I'm a Pisces. Sit the hell down.

Zach sits.

COP (CONT'D)

Mr. Owens is pressing kidnapping and assault charges. Against all of you.

KAYLA

(panicked)

Does that mean we have to stay here?

COP

No, I thought I'd book you a room at The Hilton. As I mentioned upon your arrest, you're entitled to an attorney.

(to Zach)

I guess that's you.

WES

We'd like to press charges too.

Zach and Kayla are surprised to hear Wes speak.

COP

Pardon me?

WES

For child abuse.

WES (CONT'D)
I saw Mr. Owens' wife hit his
daughter.

KAYLA
(quickly)
I saw it too.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELL -- LATER

Everyone sits in silence. The cop approaches.

COP
Mr. Owens is willing to drop the
charges. If you're willing to do
the same.

KAYLA
No way, that little girl-

ZACH
It's a deal.

He shoots Kayla a look: TRUST ME.

COP
You're all free to go. Except Mr.
Delacroix. Who has kidnapping
charges pending in...
(re: his file)
Atlanta.
(to Rick)
Hobby?

EXT. POLICE STATION -- MOMENTS LATER

Zach waits outside the front door. After a moment, Ken, the
mechanic, exits.

ZACH
I just got off the phone with Child
Protective Services. Expect a
visit tomorrow.

KEN
Fuck you.

Zach takes a step closer.

ZACH
 Touch that girl again, and I
 promise I will be back here to kick
 your ass.

Ken pulls back to punch Zach, but Wes is SUDDENLY THERE.

WES
 He didn't mean that, Man.
 (beat)
 He meant we - We will be back here
 to kick your ass.

It's clear from Ken's expression... They got through to him.

EXT. PARKING LOT

The three siblings walk towards the car, worse for the wear.

ZACH
 Thanks for getting us out of jail,
 Wes.

WES
 Sure.

ZACH
 We have four hours.

KAYLA
 No Rick. No guns.

The reality of this sinks in... It's just the three of them.

WES
 I have an idea.

INT. DRUG STORE -- DAY

As Wes talks to the PHARMACIST, Kayla and Zach wait. After a moment -

KAYLA
 I appreciate you defending me to
 Rick.

ZACH
 It's fine.

Beat.

KAYLA
 Sorry you've always had to take
 care of everything.

ZACH
 Thanks.

KAYLA
 I'm glad you're my brother.

Zach nods slightly. Enough said. Wes HOLDS UP A
 PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CAR - LATER

Zach and Kayla sit in front, Wes in back. As Wes CRUSHES his
 newly acquired pills into a FINE POWDER -

ZACH
 We try to talk to her first. If we
 can't convince her to take a ride-

KAYLA
 We just slip her sedatives,
 separate her from sixty people with
 guns, and force her into a car,
 unnoticed.

They all look truly fearful at the prospect... Zach makes a
 turn. Ahead of them is A CONVERTED FARM HOUSE.

...This place looks like PARADISE - surrounded by rolling
 hills and fields of wild flowers.

WES
 This is-

KAYLA
 (stunned)
 Gorgeous.

As they drive up the FLOWER LINED DRIVEWAY, A GOLDEN
 RETRIEVER runs beside the car.

WES
 This is a lot nicer than where I
 live.

A BLOND CHILD appears. Cherubic. Smiling... A BEAUTIFUL
 BLOND WOMAN approaches and scoops the child up in her arms.

Though she's ALL IN BLACK (wearing the wrist band) she's the very picture of bliss. She APPROACHES THE CAR; Zach slows...

ZACH
(nervous)
We're here to see our sister.
Scarlett Bachman.

BEAUTIFUL BLONDE
(beaming)
Oh, I'm sure she'll be *thrilled* to
have visitors. Follow me.

As they trail after her, they share a look - that was easy...

CUT TO:

EXT. CORN FIELD -- DAY

The blond woman escorts Wes, Zach and Kayla to the vast field, where around FORTY PEOPLE PICK CORN.

It's almost impossible to distinguish one black-clad, sunglasses-wearing cult member from another.

As they approach, Wes talks to the beautiful blonde (AMELIA):

WES
So, this is it for you - tonight?

She smiles.

WES (CONT'D)
I can totally see that.
(beat)
Life can be so lame.

She smiles wider.

WES (CONT'D)
Any unfulfilled fantasies?

AMELIA
Just love.

WES
Nice. You seeing anyone?

AMELIA
I see everyone.

WES
Excellent.

A BLACK-CLAD MAN walks past, carrying a basket of corn.

AMELIA
 Afternoon, Crena Jim. Meet Hafta
 Scarlett's earth origin family.

Zach elbows Kayla and gestures to the PLAYGROUND next to the farm house: ADULTS play on the jungle gym and swing set.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
 Hafta Scarlett's in the field.
 (calling out)
 Hafta Scarlett! Hafta Scarlett!

WES
 Uh, what are you guys calling each other?

AMELIA
 Hafta means divine woman and Crena is glorious man.

ZACH
 In what language?

AMELIA
 The language of divinity.

Just now, from the corn field - SCARLETT BACHMAN stands and spots her family. For a brief flash, she looks frightened.

Then she breaks into a HUGE SMILE.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
 (beaming)
 Isn't she beautiful?

ZACH
 She's a little thin.

AMELIA
 (beaming)
 And beautiful.

ZACH
 Thinner than I remember.

AMELIA
 And beautiful.

KAYLA
 (pointed; to Zach)
 Okay, thin and beautiful - moving
 on.

Scarlett approaches, beaming.

WES
 Maybe she won't be that different.

SCARLETT
 Beautiful earth-origin family.

Scarlett gently touches Kayla's cheek. Kayla, Wes and Zach
 looked incredibly freaked out.

ZACH
 Okay, can we talk to Scarlett alone
 for a few minutes?

AMELIA
 Hafta Scarlett is never alone.

KAYLA
 What he means is, can we have some
 private time with Hafta Scarlett?

Amelia smiles wide.

AMELIA
 I'm afraid not.

ZACH
 She can speak for herself, can't
 she?

They all turn to Scarlett.

SCARLETT
 That was a lovely visit. Goodbye.

AMELIA
 (calling out)
 Ten minute playground break!

As the mass of cult members (including Scarlett) drop their
 baskets and run toward the see-saw and jungle gym -

AMELIA (CONT'D)
 (calling out)
 Gentlemen.

TWO CULT MEMBER/BODYGUARDS approach. They're bigger than the other cult members, and are actually QUITE INTIMIDATING...

Until they OPEN THEIR MOUTHS:

BODYGUARD #1
(in a high voice)
It's time for you to go.

Bodyguard #2 lifts his shirt to REVEAL A GUN tucked into his pants. BACK TO INTIMIDATING.

INT. RENTAL CAR

Zach, Kayla and Wes (all freaked out) confer:

ZACH
Jesus, she's barely there. She's a total clone.

WES
That's the whole point - by stripping them of their individuality, they conform more easily to the leader's wishes.
(off Zach's look)
What? I listened to Rick.

KAYLA
(realizing)
I know what we have to do.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: Three pairs of WHITE SNEAKERS. We are:

EXT. ADJACENT PASTURE - DAY

TILT UP to reveal: ZACH, KAYLA, and WES CLAD entirely in BLACK... It's clear they've made do -

ZACH'S SHIRT is INSIDE OUT; WES' PANTS are FAR TOO TIGHT...

CUT TO:

EXT. CORN FIELD -- MOMENTS LATER

Heads down, they sneak into the field. Across the field, the TWO BODYGUARDS STAND WATCH.

KAYLA
Whoever finds Scarlett first, the other two get there quickly.

WES
 (nervous)
 I've never picked corn before. How
 do you pick corn?

Before Kayla can respond, Zach spots A WRIST BAND on one of
 the cult members.

ZACH
 Shit. We don't have the wrist
 bands.
 (beat)
 Okay, just- don't let anyone look
 at your wrists.

WES
 (anxious)
 How do you stop people from looking
 at your wrists?

ZACH
 The same way you pick corn, Wes: I
 have no fucking idea.

EXT. CORN FIELD

Kayla looks around. Unfortunately, the CORN IS HIGH, AND she
 can't see anyone who's NOT IN HER ROW -

She stands next to two cult members, who chat while working -

CULT MEMBER #1
 What do you think the vessel will
 be like?

Kayla discreetly listens in.

CULT MEMBER #2
 I told you. Like ice cream all the
 time. Ice cream and hugs.

CULT MEMBER #1
 I love ice cream.

CULT MEMBER #2
 What about hugs?

CULT MEMBER #1
 (defensive)
 I love hugs too.
 (beat)
 I bet it's luxurious - like a limo.

CULT MEMBER #2

We're not supposed to want material things.

CULT MEMBER #1

Not in *this* life. Once we get to the vessel it's okay.

CULT MEMBER #2

Oh, yeah.

(beat)

Well, three more hours and we find out.

...MEANWHILE - Zach picks corn, looking for Scarlett...
FINALLY, he spots her.

He scans the field for Kayla and Wes, but the corn is too high. Afraid to lose the opportunity, he approaches:

ZACH

Scarlett.

She turns around. Stunned and then angry:

SCARLETT

What are you doing here?

ZACH

I'm here to take you home. Now put down the corn and let's go.

SCARLETT

I am home. This is my home.

Just now, a bell is rung.

BODYGUARD #1

Dinner time!

As the cult members gather their baskets and start inside -

ZACH

New York is your home.

SCARLETT

New York is impure.

ZACH

Of course New York is impure. It's New York.

SCARLETT
Thanks, but I'm happy here.

She starts off.

ZACH
Scarlett, what are you doing?
You're not a follower, you're smart
and opinionated-

SCARLETT
I reject those things now. I
sacrifice for my family.

That last part stings...

ZACH
There's no vessel.

She stops and turns back.

SCARLETT
How do you know?

ZACH
Because- I'm your big brother.
That's how.

Scarlett shakes her head, ever so slightly... Clearly
affected by this. Still:

SCARLETT
(beat)
Bye, Zach.

Scarlett joins the others... Wes (holding a VERY FULL basket
of corn) and Kayla have been watching.

ZACH
Where were you?!

KAYLA
I couldn't see past my row.

WES
(ashamed)
I got really focused on picking
corn.

ZACH
We're going to have to get inside.
(off Kayla's nod)
You have to talk to her.

KAYLA

What? Me?

ZACH

You understand her - you have that thing about admiring her courage.

KAYLA

Uh, yeah, I also think she's nuts.

WES

You're the only one who can do it.

Pause.

KAYLA

Great. So, no pressure.

INT. DINING ROOM

CULT MEMBERS wait on line to get: corn bread, corn chowder, corn on the cob... Zach - holding a tray - keeps an eye on:

Wes. Who hovers near Scarlett (carrying a TRAY OF FOOD)... He PALMS THE CRUSHED PILLS in his hand.

As he eyes her drink, SOMEONE STEPS IN HIS PATH... He ducks away and collides with ANOTHER CULT MEMBER -

As the guy LOOKS AT WES, Wes quickly turns away... A door opens, and everyone FALLS TO THEIR KNEES.

Zach and Wes look at each other, and immediately fall to their knees as well.

THEIR LEADER HAS ENTERED: Meet HAL. A short, so-so looking guy with a commanding presence and A GUINEA PIG.

HAL

My children.

(stroking the rodent)

Who would like to be Fernando's guardian for our final meal?

HANDS SHOOT UP. Hal points to AN EXCITED CULT MEMBER. He approaches, and HAL HANDS HIM THE GUINEA PIG.

With everyone's focus diverted, Wes reaches over and DROPS THE CRUSHED PILLS into Scarlett's drink.

HAL (CONT'D)

My children. Rise.

They do.

HAL (CONT'D)
And be seated.

Everyone makes their way to their seats. Wes and Zach scramble to find chairs.

They all sit - eyes glued to Hal. Scarlett is ENRAPPED.

HAL (CONT'D)
Tonight is the last night we
languish in this time-space.
Rejoice!

A CHEER rises from the crowd. He looks out into the crowd.

HAL (CONT'D)
Hafta Amelia. Come. I shall do a
final search of your soul.

Amelia approaches him - PRACTICALLY GIDDY. She stands in front of him... and he proceeds to FONDLE HER BREASTS.

WES
Whoa.

ZACH
I can't watch this.

HAL
Who else would like to receive a
final soul search?

DOZENS OF WOMEN jump to their feet - Scarlett among them. Zach turns to Wes, NODS. He NODS BACK.

In the chaos of the forming line, Wes approaches Scarlett.

SCARLETT
(angry)
What are you doing? I told Zach-

WES
Kayla's really sick. She needs
you.

Scarlett looks skeptical, but concerned...

WES (CONT'D)
Five minutes, then we'll leave and
you never have to see us again.

Contemplating this, Scarlett SUDDENLY YAWNS. Wes looks to her empty glass...

INT. BATHROOM

Scarlett opens the door to find Kayla - who immediately locks the door behind her.

KAYLA
We need to talk.

SCARLETT
I thought you were sick.

KAYLA
I'm feeling better.

SCARLETT
Then I'm leaving.

KAYLA
(blocking the door)
Hey, I came all the way from New York to see you, and I do not leave New York. I've bought a gun, been charged with assault, and almost been killed three times. You can give me five minutes.

Scarlett folds her arms. A reluctant agreement.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
I don't want you to die.

SCARLETT
You don't get it. None of you do - it isn't a bad thing.

KAYLA
Okay. Let's say there is a vessel.
(searching)
And the vessel has everything you've ever wanted - security, love, fulfillment... puppies.

SCARLETT
I don't know about the puppies, but basically, yes.

KAYLA
Here's the thing: If you get on that vessel, you know who you're going to spend eternity with?

(MORE)

KAYLA (CONT'D)

(gesturing outside)

Them. You're going to spend eternity with a hundred freaks, eating corn and wearing wristbands.

(beat)

And if you're going to spend an eternity with a bunch of freaks, it should be us.

Scarlett closes her eyes... shakes her head. She opens them:

SCARLETT

I'm sorry. It's too late.

KAYLA

No, it's not.

Scarlett tries to leave, but Kayla blocks the door.

SCARLETT

Get out of my way.

KAYLA

No.

SCARLETT

I'm serious! I don't need you to save me!

But Kayla won't back down -

KAYLA

I know! I need you to save me!

Kayla's surprised both of them with this...

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM

As the women wait on line, the men eat. Zach and Wes slowly inch toward the door, TRYING TO REMAIN UNNOTICED...

INT. BATHROOM

Scarlett seems AFFECTED, but CONFUSED...

KAYLA

You're the bravest person I know. You set fires, you save pigeons, you lose jobs - do you know what I'd give to be that brave? You know how to *feel* your life. You can't just- give that up.

Scarlett sits on the edge of the bathtub. She looks up. A LONG PAUSE...

SCARLETT
I don't want to feel anymore. It sucks.

Kayla sits next to her sister.

KAYLA
Then, I'll help you, okay? We'll take turns.

Kayla takes her sister's hand:

KAYLA (CONT'D)
There's no vessel that can show up and make it any easier than that.

SCARLETT
(beat)
I want there to be.

A long pause. Kayla squeezes Scarlett's hand:

KAYLA
Tell me about it.

And there it is: A moment of clarity... Scarlett looks her sister in the eye and NODS.

INT. DINING ROOM

Zach and Wes are almost at the door, when THE GUY WHO BUMPED INTO WES SEES THEM. Suspicious, he looks at Wes' wrist:

CULT MEMBER
Hey - who are those guys?

Suddenly ALL EYES ARE ON Wes and Zach.

WES
(to Zach)
We need to go.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE DINING ROOM

As Scarlett and Kayla exit the bathroom, they see Zach and Wes fleeing the dining room.

HAL (O.S.)
Find those intruders!

SCARLETT

Follow me.

As cult members start to give chase, the four siblings run.

HAL (O.S.)

(furious)

Our perimeter is being secured by my inner circle! There are explosives everywhere!

ZACH

Where are we going?

SCARLETT

There are tunnels.

KAYLA

What?

SCARLETT

Hal has all these weapons, so there are tunnels in case he ever needs to make an escape.

(yawning)

He doesn't know I know about them.

KAYLA

Uh, I'm not sure I can go through tunnels.

INT. STORAGE ROOM

Corn products everywhere. As they make their way inside, Scarlett is YAWNING - GROGGY.

ZACH

Scarlett, where's the door to the tunnels?

Half-asleep, Scarlett yawns again. Zach searches desperately for the trap door. He slips and FALLS ON SOME LOOSE CORN -

WES

Dude, hurry.

ZACH

Gee, sorry, Wes. I thought I'd take my time. There's fucking corn everywhere!

Escaping the chaos outside, THE GUINEA PIG SCURRIES into the closet and STARTS EATING SOME OF THE LOOSE CORN.

Wes and Kayla stare at him, MOMENTARILY MESMERIZED by the FRANTIC, KINDRED SPIRIT. Just then Scarlett stumbles -

KAYLA
How many pills did you give her?

WES
Don't worry, she can't OD on them.

With that, Scarlett PASSES OUT. Wes and Kayla just manage to catch her. Until: MACHINE GUN FIRE.

And Wes FAINTS FROM FEAR. As he drops, Scarlett drops too.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM

Hal now has a machine gun and a hand grenade.

HAL
Where is Hafta Scarlett?!

Everyone looks around - unsure.

HAL (CONT'D)
Find her! Nobody leaves here until we find her!

CULT MEMBER
(raising his hand)
If we don't leave here, how can we find her?

Good point... Hal looks momentarily at a loss.

BACK TO:

INT. STORAGE ROOM

Zach shoves aside three huge boxes, and finds the door:

ZACH
I found it!

Kayla looks over to see the opening to a tunnel. A CLAUSTROPHOBIC'S NIGHTMARE -

KAYLA
Oh, no.

ZACH
Kayla, wake up Wes.

Kayla goes over to Wes and starts shaking him.

KAYLA
Get up! Wes, get UP!

As Wes comes to - more GUN FIRE. Kayla grabs him; Zach grabs Scarlett.

CUT TO:

INT. TUNNELS

Dark and muddy. All four crawl through.

KAYLA
Oh, God. Oh, God. Oh, God. Oh,
Jesus. Fuck. Oh, fuck.

ZACH
Eyes on the prize. We're almost
there.

KAYLA
Are we, Scarlett?

SCARLETT
(groggy)
I don't know. I don't even know if
these are the right tunnels.

KAYLA
What?! What do you mean? Is there
more than one set of tunnels?

SCARLETT
(groggy)
I don't know.
(starting to cry)
I miss Hal!

KAYLA
Scarlett! Is there more than one
set of tunnels? Are we just going
to hit a wall or something?

Scarlett just continues to cry.

ZACH
Eyes on the prize, Kayla.

KAYLA
Stop saying 'eyes on the prize'!
Oh, God - I can't take this.

Just now, Kayla's cell phone rings. She answers:

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JOY AND LOUIS' BEDROOM -- AFTERNOON

JOY
Kayla? Where are you? We got the strangest call from Rick, and we haven't heard from you-

KAYLA
Gee, sorry Mom. We've kind of had a lot going on.

JOY
Well, I wish you would have called. We've been worried sick, and-

KAYLA
Hey, Mom? I'm a little busy right now, so here's an idea - why don't you have another party? Seriously. Get a pinata this time - we'll just perish in a tunnel in Alabama! Oh, and by the way? IT'S A CULT!
(beat)
Hello?... Mom?

She looks at her phone.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
I lost her.
(closing her phone)
Oh, God... I can't do this.

There is a short silence, and then -

ZACH (SINGING)
What is a balloon? Why do children love it so? It's made of air - not real - it flies away, watch it go!

Kayla and Wes exchange a look, but they keep crawling...

ZACH (SINGING) (CONT'D)
But the balloon man, he'll give you more, the balloon man, he's got a store - of balloons!

Scarlett has STOPPED CRYING... Kayla is actually GETTING CALMER... then: A shard of light breaks through.

Literally: The light at the end of the tunnel.

ZACH (SINGING) (CONT'D)
Of love! Of hope!

KAYLA
Oh - thank God!

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD

An embankment covered in leaves and mud. And then - breaking through: A muddy arm. And then a leg.

Then the rest of the body - ZACH: panting, covered in mud. Fighting his way out. Birth.

Then SCARLETT: crying through her emergence. KAYLA: panicked and kissing the ground. WES: quiet; in shock.

They stand there for a moment, looking at each other. Then Zach silently turns and starts walking down the road.

No words need to be spoken. THE OTHER THREE SIMPLY FOLLOW.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE ON: A HARD COVER BOOK in a store window. The title of the book - PIGEONS AT THE DUCK POND, by Kayla Bachman.

We are:

EXT. NEW YORK BOOKSTORE - SIX MONTHS LATER

Kayla eyes the book, looking - for the first time - content.

SCARLETT
Are you ready?

REVEAL: Scarlett. SIX MONTHS PREGNANT.

They turn the corner, to a SMALL, OFF-OFF-OFF-BROADWAY THEATRE. On the MARQUIS:

"BALLOON MAN - A TRAGI-COMIC MUSICAL IN SIX PARTS"

Wes (CLEAN CUT and in MUCH BETTER PHYSICAL SHAPE) is waiting for them in front. He pats Scarlett's belly.

WES
How's the little cult baby?

SCARLETT
 Stop calling him the cult baby. He
 was conceived in love.
 (beat)
 Okay, he's a cult baby.

INT. SMALL THEATRE

As Wes, Scarlett and Kayla find seats, A PIANIST warms up.

A HALF-DRESSED CLOWN carries a CLUSTER OF BALLOONS across the stage. He places them in the corner and walks off.

Just now, LOUIS and JOY ENTER. As they find seats -

JOY
 We're here, we're here. Your
 father had to finish the chapter he
 was working on.

LOUIS
 It's my fault, of course.

KAYLA
 Guys.
 (turning around)
 It's Zach's night.

JOY
 (genuine)
 ...Sorry, Darling.

From the wings, Zach surveys the audience. He sees his family cluster... And smiles.

As the MUSIC STARTS, Scarlett leans over to Kayla -

SCARLETT
 I think this is going to be really
 good.

Kayla smiles... And as the LIGHTS DIM, we PULL OUT of the theatre, into the street... up into the night sky...

Higher... HIGHER... Past the skyline, the clouds... Until we're IN SPACE. And there it is: THE VESSEL.

In ALL ITS GLORY. Making its way through the galaxy. We MOVE IN through the window:

CULT MEMBER #1
 (peering out the window)
 I can't see anything.

CULT MEMBER #2
Let me look.

CULT MEMBER #1
No way. I called the window seat.

From behind them -

CULT MEMBER #3
Are we almost there? I'm hungry.

CULT MEMBER #4
Quit crowding me! You keep
stepping on my foot.

HAL
That's enough! Don't make me turn
this vessel around!

And scurrying across the floor - panicked, looking for an
escape from the insanity - THE GUINEA PIG.

Over the sounds of arguing, we MOVE IN ON HIM... His nervous,
twitching nose. CLOSER, CLOSER until we -

FADE OUT:

THE END