

MALWARE WOLF

Written by

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Looking for love and security in all the wrong places, Margot must do what it takes to protect herself and her daughter from a love-obsessed, predatory cyber-hacker.

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OVER BLACK:

Rain pours against a rooftop.

Then BANG, BANG, BANG! BANG, BANG, BANG!

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

MARGOT BIRDSONG(32) jolts awake.

She keeps her chin up if only to fool you into thinking she's brave.

BANG, BANG, BANG!

She stands in an instant as if given the order.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

BOOM-CRRSHH! Lightning illuminates Margot's panicked face as she hesitates toward the front door.

If not for the rain and the BANG, BANG, BANG on the front door, you'd see her heart beating through her ches--

--Err! The couch bumps.

MARGOT
(abruptly stops)
Fuck!!

Margot reaches down and grabs her foot. She makes her way around the couch.

OLD WOMAN (O.S.)
Margot?? I hear you! Let me in!

MARGOT
Janet?

Margot hastens to the door and swings it open.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
What on earth? Janet! You're soaked!

Janet pushes herself in.

JANET
Call the police!

MARGOT
(freezes)
What?

JANET
(waving her hands)
Hello?? Ugh!

Janet swipes Margot's phone out of her hand and hits the SOS feature.

Margot snaps out of it.

MARGOT
I-'m, I'm sorry... I just--

JANET
(on the phone)
--My name is Janet Barns. My house
was broken into!

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Police lights filter in through the curtains.

Janet speaks with two POLICE OFFICERS, including OFFICER BRANDT(40s), your typical Boston cop with a buzz cut.

Margot idles in the middle of the room, completely zoned out.

All noises are muffled around her until--

HARPER
--Mommy?

Margot whips her head toward HARPER BIRDSONG(6).

Harper walks in groggy with knotted hair.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Margot tucks Harper into bed.

An Alexa device sits on the dresser.

HARPER
Is daddy back?

MARGOT
Hunny, we've been over this. We
won't see daddy for a while. I know
you miss him.

Harper pouts.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Would you like me to sing you a
song?

HARPER
(smiling)
Yeah.

MARGOT
Okay, sweetie. Should I record it
on the Alexa again?
(off Harper's nod)
That way, I can keep singing to you
while I'm out there talking to
Janet and the officers.
(to the Alexa device)
Alexa.

Alexa flashes.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Record me.

ALEXA DEVICE
Recording now.

Alexa BEEPS. Margot sings a song like:

MARGOT
(singing)
Are there stars out tonight? I
don't know if it's cloudy or
bright. 'Cause I only have eyes...
for you... dear...

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The police make their way to the door. Officer Brandt pauses.

OFFICER BRANDT
It's not getting any safer out
there. Maybe you and your neighbors
should start a watch group or put
up some community cameras.

JANET
This neighborhood's gone to shit.

Margot walks in in a sweatshirt and pajama pants.

MARGOT
What about the police?

OFFICER BRANDT
We can only do so much, Ma'am.

MARGOT
I--

OFFICER BRANDT
--Wait. Aren't you Margot Birdsong
from--

MARGOT
--Channel five news, yeah.

OFFICER BRANDT
My wife watches you every morning.

MARGOT
I'm flattered.

OFFICER BRANDT
For like five years. She'll be wild
about this.

MARGOT
Well, since we're so close now,
think that could buy me a squad car
patrolling our neighborhood? I'd
feel so much better knowing someone
was watching over my daughter and
me.

Margot realizes Janet's stare.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
An-and my neighbors... of course.

OFFICER BRANDT
I understand, Mrs. Birdsong--

MARGOT
--Miss.

OFFICER BRANDT
Miss... I can't guarantee we'll
always have a car in your
neighborhood-- we're short-staffed
as it is.

Margot sighs.

OFFICER BRANDT (CONT'D)
I recommend taking measures to be
your own safety. We only have so
many eyes. Get some cameras set up
in your home and an alarm system.
You should already have one.

MARGOT
I know. I'm sorry.

OFFICER BRANDT
Uh- no need. Just... be safe,
ladies.

Officer Brandt leaves. Janet lets out a big SIGH.

Janet strolls into Margot's bathroom, shuts the door, and
loudly pees.

Margot furrows her brow and plays with her earring.

Swooooshh! Janet flushes.

MARGOT
Uh- Janet?

Kssshhhhhhh! The bathroom sink turns on.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Would you like me to walk you home?

JANET (O.S.)
Are you crazy?? I'm crashing on
your couch tonight!

Margot sighs.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

Margot lies awake in bed.

She spins her earring to the beat of her nervous heart.

She looks over at Harper fast asleep. Margot's eyes don't
dare to blink.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Margot is on the phone and cuts up a banana. Harper sits at
the kitchen table, drawing in a coloring book by the slider
door.

MARGOT

I just froze, Chloe. I just stood there. Who does that??... Yeah yeah... 'some people freeze,' and is Greyson there?... No? Are you sure? Well, you can tell him you're turning into quite the profiler yourself.

Margot looks at Harper, who is oblivious to the conversation.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

(softly)

Right. You were the one to call the police on John. I guess I just freeze under stress. It's been that way since we were kids. And then Greyson got you out of that hell hole and- No, I'm not saying that. I'm just saying you were the strong one.

(normal volume)

Should be any minute. Yep, wifi-enabled security; doors, windows-security cameras. The whole shebang.

Knock, knock, knock-- Margot jumps! She nearly drops her phone. She closes her eyes and lets the air escape her mouth.

EXT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - SAME TIME

ELI STONE(35) leans to the side and looks in the window. He straightens up. Margot opens the door.

MARGOT

Hi!

Eli takes a moment to register Margot's beauty. His eyes wouldn't melt butter, they'd burn it.

ELI

Uh, hi. I'm with Premier Security of Boston. Are you...

Eli looks down at his clipboard.

ELI (CONT'D)

Mrs. Birdsong?

MARGOT

Miss.

ELI

Sorry.

MARGOT

Don't be.

Margot smiles.

ELI

Should I come in?

Margot steps aside.

MARGOT

Yes, of course.

ELI

May I have the wifi so I can hook up everything?

MARGOT

Sure thing... it's Birdsong- for the name... and 'Harper234' is the password.

ELI

You really shouldn't give us the password- I was just going to have you type it in.

Margot shrugs and smiles.

ELI (CONT'D)

You could get hacked.

MARGOT

Thank you. I'll keep that in mind.

CHLOE (ON THE PHONE)

(muffled)

Hello?

Margot glances at her phone.

MARGOT

Shit- uhm- I'm going to defer to your professional judgment on where the cameras go.

Margot retreats to the kitchen and resumes her phone call.

MARGOT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(to Chloe)

He's actually pretty cute.

Eli smiles to himself.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

MARGOT

(on the phone)

I do not always pick the wrong guy!
What about Cole?... Yes, he turned
out to be gay, uh-huh... but... he
was decent.

(whisper yelling)

We can't all be so lucky as to
marry our high school sweetheart.

Margot breezes over to the sink, looks out the window, and
fiddles with her earring.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Some of us must go through a few
dragons to find our knight in
shining armor. It's not easy--

--Plink-ting-tink! Margot's earring bounces down into the
sink drain. Gone.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Shit! No... No, I dropped my damn
earring down the drain.

Margot reaches her hand down the drain and feels around.

Harper takes the opportunity to be nosey and tip-toes into...

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eli is about to climb up a ladder with a stud finder. He
stops when he sees Harper staring at him.

ELI

Uh- hi.

HARPER

What's that?

ELI

It's a stud finder. It finds nails
in the wall, so I know where to
make a hole and hang up the cameras
and not damage the wall.

HARPER

But you put a hole in the wall.

Eli looks around.

HARPER (CONT'D)
So you're damaging it.

ELI
You don't see the hole- the camera
covers it.

HARPER
It's still damaged.

Beat.

ELI
True... would you like to help
damage the wall?

Harper nods excitedly.

ELI (CONT'D)
Cool. Just climb up this ladder.

Harper follows his instructions and climbs to the top.

He hands her the stud finder.

ELI (CONT'D)
Now, place it on the wall and
slowly drag it around.

KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Margot is feeling around in the sink drain--

--beep-beep beep-beep beep-beep echoes from the other room--

--Margot bolts into the...

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Harper looks in horror toward the kitchen and drops the stud
finder.

Margot rips Harper from the ladder and places her on the
ground.

MARGOT
(hyperventilating)
Are you okay?? What happened?? Why
were you up there? Is your
pacemaker okay? Is it pacing you?
(MORE)

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Does it hurt? Answer me! Are you okay??

Harper stares wide-eyed and nods.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

Margot breathes.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

What on earth was that beeping??

Eli picks the stud finder up off the ground.

ELI

Just a stud finder.

He places the stud finder over his chest.

ELI (CONT'D)

Beep-beep.

Margot furrows her brow.

MARGOT

Why did she have it?

ELI

She was helpi--

MARGOT

--She can't be around anything with strong magnets, stud finders, computers--

ELI

--She can't be around computers?

MARGOT

She can't like- hold them close to her pacemaker. Sh-she can't be close to vending machines or-or metal detectors--

HARPER

--My heart stops when I walk into stores!--

MARGOT

--It doesn't stop... She can't be loitering between the anti-theft security thingies. Magnets- they render her pacemaker useless.

(MORE)

MARGOT (CONT'D)

It would be an emergency and... you know, an-and MRI machines or microwaves or--

ELI

--Hey, okay. Look, I'm sorry. I didn't know.

MARGOT

...or stereo speakers... Right... of course, you didn't know.

Margot winces and shakes her head.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have jumped down your throat.

ELI

No- I think it's excellent how protective you are of your kid.

MARGOT

Oh boy. That would be the first time I ever heard that.

ELI

You have to be like that now with all the crazies out there in the world. My mom was the same way.

MARGOT

She sounds wonderful.

Margot smiles.

ELI

She was.

Eli smiles.

ELI (CONT'D)

I'll just finish up here and then install the oth--

MARGOT

--actually... do you mind...

Margot points to the kitchen.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Eli shines a light down on the drain.

ELI

Oh, yeah. No problem.

Eli dips his arm into the drain and pulls out the earring.

MARGOT

I feel like such a ditz! Thank you.

Eli hands her the earring, and their fingers meet.

ELI

You shouldn't. I'm happy to be needed.

Margot smiles.

ELI (CONT'D)

You look really familiar every time you smile.

MARGOT

(resting face/voice)

Well, this is Margot, single mother of one.

(fake smile/voice)

And this is Margot Birdsong of Channel Five News--

ELI

--Ahhh. That's it! I don't watch a lot of T.V.- especially not the news.

MARGOT

I understand. Too depressing.

ELI

Well, I have a reason to tune in now. Don't I?

Margot smiles.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

His bachelor forever pad screams for a woman's touch almost as much as his interaction with Margot.

He's got a TV, a lamp, and a Goodwill gem of a recliner. Not even a coffee table, let alone a coaster on the overturned cardboard moving box.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

It's as if we walked into another home entirely... or the layer of an evil genius.

An elaborate set-up of multiple computer monitors illuminates wires and a luxury office chair.

On the wall is a framed picture of a beautiful woman and a young little boy around five years old.

He kisses his hand, touches his fingers to the photo, and plops down in the snazzy office chair.

Eli logs into his computer and starts typing.

ON ELI'S COMPUTER SCREEN

Eli goes to Facebook and types into the search bar.

"Margot Birdsong"

ELI

The whole room is dark except for his gleaming face.

ELI
(smiling)
Educated... Amherst... Party girl?

He scrolls.

ELI (CONT'D)
Seneca quote... "Fate leads the
willing and drags along the
reluctant." Not a party girl... or
at least a smart one.

He scrolls and clicks.

ELI (CONT'D)
Older sister... Chloe... Hmmm...
probably a control freak.

He clicks twice.

ON ELI'S COMPUTER SCREEN

On Facebook, Margot 'checks in' at a gym near her house.

ELI (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Every Friday afternoon.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Eli saunters into the dimly lit room, rolls out a yoga mat, and seats himself on the mat like a monk. He closes his eyes.

EXT. CHLOE'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - MORNING

The door opens, and CHLOE ECKHART(40) steps out and beams at the sight of Harper smiling up at her.

CHLOE
Hey, Harpy!

MARGOT
Oh, come on. Don't call her that.

HARPER
(hugging Chloe)
Hi, Auntie Chloe!

Margot carries Harper's backpack past the embrace and into the house.

CHLOE
And why not?

INT. CHLOE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chloe's house is elegant and refined... no children.

MARGOT
Hunny, go get your coloring books.

Harper beams and sprints out of the room.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Because she's not a foul and rapacious vulture woman.

CHLOE
Well, I did tell you to consider all horrible nicknames when naming your child.

MARGOT
You're the only one who calls her that.

CHLOE
Whatever... Are you going to the
gym after work?

MARGOT
If that's okay.

CHLOE
No-yeah. That's fine.

Margot drops her hands and purses her lips.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
I can watch her all night long- I
just think maybe you're avoiding--

MARGOT
--your damn right I'm avoiding
Jerry.

CHLOE
But Kyle is--

MARGOT
--is-is what? He's Jerry's son?

CHLOE
He's a perv.

MARGOT
Mhm.

CHLOE
I can see it on your face when you
two anchor together- You need to
tell Jerry.

MARGOT
He'll fire me.

CHLOE
He loves you!

MARGOT
More than his son? Plus, I'll just
seem like I'm hopping on the
hashtag me too train. Crying
victim.

CHLOE
You wouldn't be declaring 'victim.'
You'd be setting an example for
your daughter.

MARGOT
I gotta go.

CHLOE
Mhm, Have fun at work.

INT. CHANNEL FIVE NEWS BUILDING - NEWSROOM - LATER

Margot sits at an anchor's desk next to KYLE(34). His hair is shinier than his teeth, and his smile hides when his eyes can not... sleaze bag.

They both smile at the camera.

KYLE
Thank you, Sarah.

Kyle turns to Margot.

KYLE (CONT'D)
I wouldn't want to be Sarah right now. I'd much rather be in this warm studio with you.
(back to camera)
Here at this desk.

MARGOT
She certainly did look cold. Let's take it to Paul with the traffic report. Paul? How's the traffic looking with all that ice?

The cameras turn off.

Margot gazes forward with half-lidded eyes. Kyle stares through her. Margot slowly pivots toward him without changing expression.

KYLE
Oh, I think I can feel that chill coming in.

He scoots his chair closer and smiles.

Margot rolls her eyes.

KYLE (CONT'D)
I'll keep you warm--

--Margot launches out of her seat and storms off.

KYLE (CONT'D)
It was a joke!

INT. CAPE COD BROADCASTING MEDIA BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS
LATER

Margot struts down the hallway single-mindedly fuming.

JERRY(70) furrows his grey and wrinkled brow. He slows to
observe Margot zipping by him.

JERRY

Margot?

No response.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Margot.

Margot whips around and softens her expression.

A giant decal of Kyle and Margot smiling looms over them.

MARGOT

Jerry, hi.

JERRY

Is everything alright?

MARGOT

Yes, absolutely. Of course. Why?

JERRY

Hmm... Are you going to the party
tonight?

MARGOT

Uh--

JERRY

--Everyone will be there.

Margot looks up at the decal of Kyle's cheesy grin.

Jerry follows her eye-line.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Sponsors.

MARGOT

Right. I'll try to make it.

JERRY

Margot, I don't need to remind you
that you are the face of this--

MARGOT
--I'm sorry. You're right. I'll be
there.

Jerry barely grins. He looks up at Kyle's decal.

JERRY
It's too big.

INT. ELI'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Eli surveys the...

EXT. GYM - PARKING LOT - SAME

A white SUV pulls in and parks.

Margot gets out and makes her way to the gym entrance.

INT. ELI'S CAR - SAME

Eli checks his teeth in the mirror, fixes his hair, and
checks his breath with a HUUH-HUUH into his hand.

ELI
(cocks his head back)
Oh god.

He pops a breath mint.

He jumps out and rushes toward- nope- rushes back and grabs
his water bottle.

EXT. GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Margot steps up onto the sidewalk next to ROSA(60s), a
homeless woman with nothing but a filthy face and a mason jar
left out for money.

MARGOT
Hey, Rosa.

Margot puts a few bucks in the jar.

ROSA
Oh, thank you, sweetie!
(grabs Margot's arm)
He's watching you.

MARGOT

What?

ROSA

Big Brother- The government!

MARGOT

Oh... Uhm- are you going to be warm enough tonight?

ROSA

Ahhh- sometimes I go to the hospital complaining of some bullshit- it's warm in there. Then I go up to the roof. The stars are so beautiful.

MARGOT

Not a lot of stars in the sky of Boston.

ROSA

No. No, you're right. That's why I'll be hitching a ride to the Cape. Fewer lights and more stars. Plus, I've always wanted to go.

MARGOT

It sounds peaceful, Rosa. Have a great day.

Rosa smiles. Margot continues into the gym.

Rosa relaxes against the wall when- CLANG-CRACK-CLINK-clin-clink. Eli, oblivious to Rosa, darts to the door and knocks over Rosa's jar of coins.

Her coins and dollar bills scatter across the pavement, and Rosa frantically collects them.

Eli doesn't even look back.

INT. GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Margot makes her way to the treadmill. Eli *happens* to get to it first.

MARGOT

Oh- sorry.

Eli turns and goes wide-eyed.

ELI
Margot?

MARGOT
Security guy!

ELI
Eli.

MARGOT
Right- sorry. Eli.

ELI
No worries. Here, please take the treadmill.

MARGOT
That's okay; this one's open.

She steps up onto the treadmill right next to Eli's.

Margot raises her headphones--

ELI
--It's funny running into your here.

MARGOT
...Wow.

ELI
Impressed?

MARGOT
(peering past his gaze)
You have a tag. Just there.

Margot reaches over and holds it out. Eli replaces her hand with his own and rips it off.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Maybe you're just tagging along?

ELI
What? No- I just started here and--

MARGOT
--Tagging. Tag. Get it?

ELI
Oh!

Eli LAUGHS- too loud.

ELI (CONT'D)
I'd like to think this is kismet.

Margot's eyes soften.

MARGOT
You believe in fate?

ELI
Absolutely.

Margot smirks.

Ping! Margot looks down at her phone.

MARGOT'S PHONE

Message from Kyle

Hey! Are you going to the party tonight?

BACK TO SCENE

Margot's face sours.

ELI
Are you okay?

MARGOT
Yeah, it's just that I have this party--

--Ping!

MARGOT'S PHONE

Message from Kyle

If you are, let me pick you up.

ELI
A party sounds like fun.

MARGOT
It's mandatory.

ELI
Mandatory fun is still fun.

Margot CHUCKLES, smitten.

Ping!

MARGOT'S PHONE

Message from Kyle

And if you're not, let's both play hooky.

BACK TO SCENE

Margot looks up at Eli. He waits with patient and kind eyes.

MARGOT
Uh- actually.

Eli smiles.

INT. ELI'S CAR - NIGHT

Eli is dressed in a suit and tie at the wheel.

Margot is decorated in an elegant and classy dress.

Eli looks over at her. She is fiddling with her earring.

ELI
You seem a bit tense.

MARGOT
A bit. A bunch of sponsors will be there.

ELI
Can I walk you through a mediation?

MARGOT
What? No- are you serious?

ELI
Suit yourself.

MARGOT
You meditate?

ELI
Fuck yeah, I meditate.

Margot laughs.

ELI (CONT'D)
What??

MARGOT

You don't seem the type is all.

ELI

Well, it's called remote viewing.

Margot stares at him.

ELI (CONT'D)

You close your eyes and meditate on a visual target that's hidden or not in the room. The US military used it during the cold war to spy on people.

MARGOT

You spy on people?

ELI

No! Of course not. It's just fascinating. It's like hacking into the universe using your mind. I haven't been able to do it yet, though. It takes practice.

MARGOT

Bullshit.

ELI

No, look, watch.

Eli closes his eyes. Margot SCREAMS- he opens his eyes.

ELI (CONT'D)

(smiling)

What??

MARGOT

(laughing)

Don't do that!

ELI

Live a little! Life's a risk!

MARGOT

You were risking death.

INT. HOTEL - BALL ROOM - LATER

Eli and Margot are at the open bar. Margot sips on a cocktail. Eli has nothing.

ELI
Are you a drinker?

MARGOT
What??

ELI
No- not like- do you drink often?

MARGOT
This is a great first date...
Sometimes, after work, I'll have a
cocktail.

ELI
You lush!

MARGOT
You got me.

Eli gives a half-smile and scans the crowded room.

ELI
So who is he?

MARGOT
He who?

ELI
Come on- the guy you're avoiding.

MARGOT
I don't know what you're talking
about.

ELI
Well, I bet I can guess who's the
reason you brought me.

MARGOT
Pfft.

Eli leans back against the bar.

ELI
(gesturing forward)
This quality gentleman.

Margot rubs her forehead.

Kyle stumbles toward them.

KYLE
You came!

Margot slides against the bar toward Eli.

Eli rights his posture, abandoning the bar's support.

Kyle reaches Margot and leans on the bar close to her. He ignores Eli's presence.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Wanna dance?

MARGOT
No, I'm here with--

KYLE
--Oh, come onnn!

Kyle reaches his hand toward Margot's arm--

--Eli swiftly and firmly grabs Kyle's wrist.

Kyle looks up at him for the first time.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Who the fuck do you think you are?

ELI
I'm the guy who's going to rip this
arm off if you font get your damn
hands off her.

MARGOT

mouths to herself, "Damn hands?"

BACK TO SCENE

Kyle furrows his brow, looks at a wide-eyed Margot, and stumbles off and out the banquet hall doors.

Eli lets a breath out.

MARGOT
Wow.

ELI
I know I--

MARGOT
--Damn hands?

ELI
I'm sorry.

MARGOT

For which part? The physical apprehension of my work colleague or the cheesy back to the future reference?

ELI

You know- as it was coming out of my mouth, I knew it sounded familiar.

Margot laughs.

MARGOT

I've never had my honor defended with a movie quote before. Actually, I don't think I've ever had my honor defended.

ELI

Well, that's a shame. It's such a great honor.

Margot smiles.

ELI (CONT'D)

Does he do that shit at work?

MARGOT

No- I mean. He's an ass but--

ELI

--You shouldn't put up with that.

MARGOT

Listen, I put up with it and keep my mouth shut for Harper.

ELI

I--

MARGOT

--I can't just quit. Jobs aren't exactly plenty right now, and I'm a single mother.

ELI

Margot--

MARGOT

--I'm doing it *for* Harper. And I don't have the luxury to--

ELI

--Okay.

Margot cools.

ELI (CONT'D)

Let's dance.

Margot's eyes brighten.

DANCE FLOOR

Montage of Eli and Margot dancing and having fun.

He spins her, and she twirls--

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

--and now in regular clothes, continues to twirl into the kitchen.

She hums the song they danced to the night before. She chugs on a half-gallon water bottle.

Brrrngg brrrngg brrrngg. Margot answers her cell phone.

MARGOT

Chloe! Oh my god, I had the best time last night!... He totally put Kyle in his place.

INT. PREMIER SECURITY HEADQUARTERS - CUBICLE - SAME TIME

In one of many cubicles sits Eli.

MARGOT (THROUGH ELI'S HEADPHONES)

(filtered)

And he works in security! How perfect is that??

ON ELI'S COMPUTER SCREEN

Multiple video feeds of Margot's house; kitchen, living room, backyard, front yard, and front door.

BACKYARD FEED: Harper plays on a tire swing.

KITCHEN FEED: Margot watches her from the slider.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

MARGOT
Yes, I'm hydrating. Peeing every
five minutes...

Margot storms off.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Yes, I know... 'I'm not hydrating
if it's just coming out in five
minutes.

Margot prances out of the room.

LIVING ROOM

Margot rushes into the bathroom and shuts the door.

Pssssssssss.

MARGOT (O.S.)
Shut up.

BACKYARD

A white van pulls up and parks on the road next to the yard.

INT. PREMIER SECURITY HEADQUARTERS - CUBICLE - SAME TIME

Eli leans toward the monitor.

BACKYARD FEED

Harper perks up toward the van.

ELI
No-no-no-no-no. Harper, come on.

Harper hops off the swing and hesitates toward the van.

ELI (CONT'D)
(whisper yelling)
Shit! Margot, get your kid!
(loud)
FUCK!

Eli darts his eyes around and sinks out of view.

ELI (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Shit. Fuck.

Eli takes out his cell phone and dials.

ELI (CONT'D)
Pick up-pick up- Margot! Where--

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

MARGOT
(stepping out of the
bathroom)
I was just brag--

ELI
--Where's Harper??

MARGOT
What? Outside--

ELI
--Go get her! Now!

Margot rushes toward the kitchen.

BACKYARD

Margot whips her head around until she lands her eyes on the white van and a MAN standing toward the back of the van next to Harper. He's about to open the back of the van.

Margot sprints toward them. He sees Margot and dashes into his driver's seat. He peels away from the curb and takes off.

Margot wraps Harper up in her arms and retreats back to the...

KITCHEN

MARGOT
What did I tell you about talking
to strangers??

HARPER
Not to--

MARGOT

--Not to talk to them! Did you know that man?? No! He could have hurt you!

Harper's eyes well up with tears.

Margot holds her to her chest.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Are you okay, baby?

HARPER

I'm sorry, Mommy.

MARGOT

Shhh. You're safe. I'm just glad you're safe. Is your pacemaker pacing you?

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Margot dials her phone and puts it to her ear.

MARGOT

How did you know?

ON ELI'S COMPUTER SCREEN - SAME TIME

The video feed of Margot's kitchen shows her with her hand on her hip and her brow furrowed.

ELI

I uh- I got a tip.

MARGOT (ON THE PHONE)

What does that mean?

ELI

We have our finger on the pulse of this city more than most cops.

MARGOT (ON THE PHONE)

You seemed awfully panicked and adamant that Harper was in danger.

ELI

Wouldn't you consider strangers in vans dangerous?

MARGOT (ON THE PHONE)

Huh- Part of the tip you got?

ELI

We have access to people's cameras
in cases of emergency.

MARGOT (ON THE PHONE)

And?

ELI

I saw the van. On your camera.

MARGOT (ON THE PHONE)

You accessed my cameras??

ELI

I thought Harper might be in
trouble. And--

MARGOT (ON THE PHONE)

--I don't know if this can work if
you're this comfortable crossing
boundaries like this.

ELI

At least someone was watching over
you and Harper- God knows what you
were doing when this went down.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Margot's jaw drops.

MARGOT

Excuse me?

ELI (ON THE PHONE)

I'm just saying if I hadn't been on
the cameras, what would have
happened?

MARGOT

I would have seen the van.

ELI (ON THE PHONE)

When? As it was driving off with
your daughter in the back?

MARGOT

Stop it.

ELI (ON THE PHONE)

I thought you were a more
responsible mother than that.

Margot sits down at the kitchen table.

MARGOT
You're right. I--

ELI (ON THE PHONE)
--Look. I'm sorry. You're a great mother- everyone could use some help, and I'd be honored to look over you both.

MARGOT
But--

ELI (ON THE PHONE)
--But I won't do so without your permission. I promise. I'm sorry.

MARGOT
It's just- John- Harper's dad. I'm still a little sensitive. It's hard to know what's protection and what's control.

ELI
Do I have to worry about John?

MARGOT
What?

ELI (ON THE PHONE)
I know that tone- my mother had the same tone in her voice when she spoke about my father.

MARGOT
John's in jail- he's got another year.

INT. PREMIER SECURITY HEADQUARTERS - CUBICLE - SAME TIME

Eli leans back, squeezes a stress ball, and looks at his computer screen.

ON ELI'S COMPUTER SCREEN

JOHN WARREN'S(34) mugshot and charges.

Felony Strangulation

Misdemeanor Criminal Mischief

ELI (O.S.)
--I'll do anything I can to protect
you from ever feeling that hurt
again... Do you believe me?...

INT. CHLOE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Margot is dressed in business-casual clothes and lying on the couch.

Chloe is sitting in a chair cocking an eyebrow at her.

CHLOE
And he just happened to call you?

MARGOT
It wasn't like that.

CHLOE
Wasn't like stalking?

MARGOT
Dramatic.

CHLOE
Margot--

MARGOT
--Chloe.

CHLOE
When you realize it is stalking,
think about who else stalks...
predators? Lions, tigers

MARGOT
Bears, oh my?--

CHLOE
--Wolves.

MARGOT
You think I'm just some little
helpless lamb.

CHLOE
No, I just think that's how the
wolf sees you.

MARGOT
Oh, he's the wolf now? Better than
the other guy's names you've given;
the dope, the ass, the rat--

CHLOE
--Some track record.

Margot props herself up and shoots mental daggers at Chloe.

MARGOT
He puts me on a pedestal.

CHLOE
I just hope you don't get hurt when
you fall off that pedestal.

Their stares grow more intense with mutual disdain.

GREYSON ECKHART(40) breezes into the room. His easy-going
stride falls away as he enters the thick tension in the air.

GREYSON
What now?

CHLOE
Harper was almost abducted.

GREYSON
What?? Oh my god! Did you call the
police? Is she okay??

MARGOT
Yes, of course, I did... She's
fine.

GREYSON
Damn. It seems like crime is really
on the rise. I got a virus on my
computer yesterday. Spent all
afternoon trying to get rid of it.

CHLOE
People are so sick.
(feigning cheer)
On the upside, Margot has a new
boyfriend. He saved Harper's life.

MARGOT
He's not my--

GREYSON
--Wow! What an incredible way to
meet.

CHLOE
No, he saw it on her home cameras--

MARGOT

--At his job at a security company
and security, he did provide. No?

Chloe rolls her eyes.

GREYSON

Hmmm.

MARGOT

Go ahead.

GREYSON

Nope. Not my business.

Chloe lets out a sharp sigh. Greyson kisses her on the head.

GREYSON (CONT'D)

Love you, Hun.

CHLOE

Love you too. Will you be home
late?

GREYSON

No, but I was hoping to take the
corvette out this afternoon.

Greyson gestures a kiss to Chloe and leaves the house.

CHLOE

I'm just say(ing how--)

MARGOT

(over)

Oh my god!--

CHLOE

How do you know? John started off--

MARGOT

--Why can't you be more like
Greyson? He minds his own business.

CHLOE

He's just as worried about you as I
am.

MARGOT

I like his way of worrying better.

CHLOE

He saw firsthand what dad did to
us. He's just as protective.

MARGOT

Well, not just as protective. He got you out of there, you guys left me in that mess.

CHLOE

I did what I had to do. We would have taken you if we could.

MARGOT

Yeah, well, my knight in shining armor turned out to be an even bigger dragon.

INT. PRISON - JAIL CELL - SAME TIME

Hollering and profanity ring out in the background.

A picture of Margot and Harper is taped to the wall.

A large shadow paces back and forth before the picture. A man's hand slams hard next to the photo.

EXT. PRISON - PARKING LOT SAME TIME

Eli's blue sedan sits inconspicuously on the outskirts of the parking lot under a tree.

INT. ELI'S CAR - SAME

Eli types on his laptop.

ON ELI'S COMPUTER SCREEN

The jail's schedule shows today's appointments.

Eli creates an appointment for an IT service.

INT. PRISON - RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

Eli walks in wearing a Boston Red Sox hat with a distinct rip on the side of it.

He smiles with charm.

ELI

Hi there, Miss.

The matronly spectacled receptionist, BETH(70s), looks up from her work behind the desk. She exchanges smiles with Eli and hooks her glasses onto the collar of her frilly blouse.

BETH
(smiling)
Hi.

ELI
I'm here for the computer issue you-
-

BETH
--Oh, yes. Yes. Greyson told me
about that nasty virus... Let me
see.

EXT. PRISON - PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

A black sedan pulls into the lot.

INT. GREYSON'S BLACK SEDAN - SAME

Greyson pivots his head and clocks the blue sedan in the shade of the tree.

He parks about four paces away, still watching the car.

INT. PRISON - HALLWAY - SAME TIME

ELI
That's a beautiful blouse.

Beth blushes and looks down.

BETH
Oh, it's so old. But thank you.

They stop at the door. Eli looks her up and down.

ELI
Not old... Timeless.

Beth locks onto his eyes and opens the door for him.

ELI (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Eli winks at her. She smiles.

INT. PRISON - GREYSON'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

The door shuts. Eli is alone. His smile drops, and his action becomes rapid. He beelines for the computer, plugs in the USB drive, and fervently types on the computer.

EXT. ELI'S CAR - SAME TIME

Greyson peers into the driver's side window.

THROUGH THE DRIVER'S SIDE WINDOW

A drone sits in the passenger seat with its remote control.

BACK TO SCENE

Greyson looks around. He hesitates to leave the car, then crosses the lot with his briefcase in hand.

Halfway to the building, he glances back at the blue sedan.

INT. PRISON - GREYSON'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Eli clicks around with the mouse. His eyes dart around the screen.

ELI

Ah-ha.

ON ELI'S COMPUTER SCREEN

Records for release dates file down the screen.

ELI (O.S.)

Warren... John.

The cursor highlights the release date on John's file.

Delete.

EXT. ELI'S CAR - SAME TIME

Greyson stands behind the car with his phone out. He snaps a picture of the license plate.

INT. PRISON - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Eli strides down the hallway with purpose past a public bathroom.

ELI'S POV

At the end of the hall, Greyson walks in and saunters over to the reception.

ELI

ducks into the bathroom and shuts the door.

INT. PRISON - RECEPTION - SAME TIME

BETH

Well, the IT guy is here. Maybe
it's his car?

Greyson furrows his brow.

BETH (CONT'D)

For your virus.

GREYSON

I didn't call anyone.

BETH

It's on the schedule.

INT. PRISON - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Greyson passes the bathroom door and storms into...

INT. PRISON - GREYSON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Greyson stands in the doorway and looks around.

EXT. ELI'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Eli hurries into his car, starts it, and makes a hasty escape.

EXT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - STREET - NIGHT

Eli parks in front of the house and turns his lights off.

INT. ELI'S CAR - SAME

Eli opens his laptop and connects to Margot's wifi.

ON ELI'S COMPUTER SCREEN

Alexa Voice History

An endless scroll of dates and nonsense numbers and letters filters down the screen.

He clicks on one.

MARGOT (RECORDING)
(singing)
Are the stars out tonight? I don't
know if it's cloudy or bright.
'Cause I only have eyes... for
you... dear...

ELI

smiles with warmth and clicks a button.

He takes out his phone and makes a call while looking at her house.

ELI
Hey, Margot... What are you doing
Friday night?... That's fine, I'd
love to spend some time with
Harper... Great- I'd love to... 8
PM, okay? Great- you too. Bye-bye.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eli holds a vase and practices bashing an imaginary adversary with it.

Brrrnnggg, brrnngg, brrnnggg. Eli answers his phone.

ELI
Hello?... Oh!-Uh. Sure uh. Hold on.
Let me get her.

Eli rushes into...

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Eli plugs in a microphone and puts headphones on. He puts the phone next to a speaker on his desk.

ELI
(calling out)
Hey, Margot?
(leaning into phone)
She'll be right there.

He clicks some buttons on his computer, steps away from the phone, covers his mouth, and talks into the microphone--

ELI (FROM THE SPEAKER) (CONT'D)
(Margot's voiceover)
Hello?

The result is a perfect impersonation of Margot Birdsong.

ELI (FROM THE SPEAKER) (CONT'D)
(Margot's voiceover)
Yes, I'm aware. Thank you... No.
That's quite alright. Buh-bye.

Eli sits down in a chair and blows out every last bit of air from his lungs.

ON ELI'S COMPUTER SCREEN

Video surveillance footage shows John being told he's being released.

John furrows his brow, walks over to the wall, takes off the picture of Margot and Harper, and walks out of the cell staring at it.

ELI

smiles

He leans toward the keyboard and cracks his knuckles.

ON ELI'S COMPUTER SCREEN

He pulls up an audio file.

He opens a text thread between him and Margot.

He sends her the audio file along with a message:

Play in your car to get the full surround sound effect.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - SAME TIME

Margot runs around playing the role of a helicopter, spotting Harper on everything she climbs. Literally hovering around her.

Harper climbs to the top of the slide.

Margot takes a step back only to take a picture of Harper.

Harper smiles.

MARGOT

Beautiful! I'm going to make this
my wallpaper right now!

Margot keeps her word and fiddles with her phone's settings.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

There!

ON MARGOT'S PHONE SCREEN:

Margot's wallpaper is Harper smiling at the top of a slide.

Ping!

MARGOT

Hold on, sweetie. Don't go down
yet! This might be work.

Margot checks her phone and smiles.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Are you ready to go, Harper?

HARPER

Let's play tag!

Harper slides down the slide. Margot swoops down to ensure her safety.

Harper's rapid descent knocks Margot's phone out of her hand. It hits the edge of the slide and then the ground.

Margot picks it up; the screen is cracked. Margot sighs.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Sorry, mama.

MARGOT
It's okay. No tag. We played like
four times today. Let's go home.

INT. MARGOT'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Margot gets into the driver's seat. Harper is buckled up in the back.

She turns her car on and switches to Bluetooth mode.

Margot takes her phone out and clicks the file.

ELI (OVER CAR SPEAKER)
(singing)
I don't know if we're in a garden.
Or on a crowded avenue. You are
here, so am I...

Margot looks back at Harper with her eyebrow cocked.

ELI (OVER CAR SPEAKER) (CONT'D)
(singing)
Maybe millions of people go by. But
they all disappear from view. And I
only have eyes for you...

It ends.

HARPER
That's our song!

MARGOT
Yeah... that's odd, isn't it?

HARPER
Yeah... wait- why?

MARGOT
Well, I never--

--The car's electronics begin flashing and blinking. Margot's headlights flicker, and then everything turns off.

HARPER
Mom??

Margot looks around and tries to start the car- nothing.

MARGOT
Uh...

She tries again... The car starts and all is well.

HARPER
What happened?

MARGOT
I-uh- I don't know.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - SAME TIME

Eli takes a 'new cell phone' out of its packaging, plugs it into the computer, and hard presses a button on the keyboard.

ON THE NEW PHONE SCREEN

The phone's wallpaper is Harper smiling at the top of the slide.

Eli opens a new text message to John.

Hey. I'd love to talk about things. Could you come tonight?

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Margot lets Eli in. He steps forward, extending the vase with flowers in it.

MARGOT
Oh my goodness! Thank you! They're beautiful. They will look so great in the kitchen. It gets great light in the morn--

ELI
--No!

Margot pauses.

MARGOT
What?

ELI
I- I thought we could have them on the end table.

Eli takes them from her and puts them on the end table by the couch.

ELI (CONT'D)
That way we can look at them while we watch the movie.

MARGOT
Are you a romantic, or what??

ELI
You're just now figuring that out?

They sit down on the couch together, and Harper runs in.

ELI (CONT'D)
Hey, Harper!

Harper just stares.

MARGOT
Say hello, sweetie.

HARPER
(whispering)
You told me not to talk to
strangers.

MARGOT
Well... Eli isn't a stranger. He's
a friend. You can trust him.

HARPER
(smiling)
Hi!

MARGOT
There she is.

HARPER
You sang mommy's and my song.

ELI
I what?

MARGOT
Yeah... The song you sent me.

ELI
Your song?

MARGOT
I sing it to Harper at night
sometimes.

HARPER
When I'm scared.

ELI
Call it another case of kismet, I
guess. My mother used to sing me
that song too.

Margot furrows her brow and then softens.

HARPER
Does anyone wanna play tag?

MARGOT
Hun, no. We have company.

ELI
Oh, I don't mind.

Harper gives the puppy dog eyes to her mom.

ELI (CONT'D)
Come on, mom.

MARGOT
(laughing)
Okay! You got me!

Margot springs off the couch, whisking Eli up by his hand.

EXT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Eli and Margot run around with Harper playing tag.

They laugh and avoid Harper. Harper tags Eli. Eli spins
around and chases Margot.

Margot SCREAMS and laugh. Eli grabs her and pulls her into
him.

ELI
Gotcha!

Margot's smile fades into a deeper gaze. Eli looks at Harper,
staring at their connection.

ELI (CONT'D)
(to Margot)
Do you want any water?

They separate to a more kid-friendly distance.

MARGOT
Oh, yeah. Let me get that for you.

Eli watches her walk into the kitchen.

Eli takes out the cloned phone and checks the text thread.

ON PHONE SCREEN

Message from John

I'll be there around 9:30, Babe.

ELI

forces air out of his mouth. He shakes the nerves out of his hand.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Margot scoots closer to Eli on the couch. Harper is fast asleep on the other side. She snuggles up to an empty bowl of popcorn.

Eli's expression is stoic, but against the flower vase, his fingers twitch and jitter.

Margot side-eyes Eli's agitated finger.

MARGOT

You okay?

ELI

Yeah. Of course, why?

MARGOT

Your fingers are making me nervous.

Eli pauses instantly and rests his hand on the sofa arm.

ELI

Hey, was John a big guy?

MARGOT

What? Where did that come from?

ELI

Just- one day, I may have to... you know... get physical.

MARGOT

Trust me, you don't have to worry about that. Plus, he's in jail.

Margot rests her head on his chest.

ELI
Five foot something?

Margot looks up at him and furrows her brow.

ELI (CONT'D)
Six foot something??

Margot gets up.

MARGOT
I'm going to get some more popcorn.

ELI
Maybe we should move Harper to her
bed?

MARGOT
Nothing is happening between us
tonight.

ELI
No, I just meant--

MARGOT
--She'll just wake up. She's fine
there.

Margot walks out of the room.

Eli checks his phone: **9:32**

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Margot pours more popcorn from the bag into a bowl.

Tap tap tap- Margot whips her head to the slider door.

John's huge frame takes up the whole slider door.

MARGOT
AAAAAAH!!! What?? How?? John!

JOHN
(jovial)
Open the door!

MARGOT
WHAT ARE YOU DOING--

--Eli runs in with the vase cocked back.

JOHN
(muffled behind glass)
Who the fuck are you??

Margot lunges to lock the door- John rips it open. Margot stands between them.

ELI
Margot, get Harper and--

JOHN
--You have Harper here with (this
guy??)

ELI
(over)
Margot!

Harper stands in the doorway to the living room- Margot is frozen.

HARPER
Daddy!

JOHN
Harper!

ELI
Margot! Call the police!

Margot sprints toward Harper and scoops her up as she darts out of the room.

Eli wastes no time- he smashes John in the skull with the vase, barely able to reach with the height difference. It smashes- John stands unfazed- then- John grows infuriated.

Eli runs for the kitchen knives.

John grabs Eli by the back of his shirt, spins Eli around, and grabs Eli's throat.

JOHN
Are you fucking Margot?

John squeezes Eli's neck as he drives his spine into the counter ledge.

ELI
Grrk-kk-kk-kch...

Eli struggles and GAGS, sputtering nonsense.

Eli side-eyes the knives.

John shoves Eli back by his throat and releases his grip, but he keeps his eye on Eli.

John shoves Eli back by his throat.

JOHN
(calling out)
Margot??

Eli looks behind John briefly--

--John looks behind himself--

--Eli swiftly drives a knife into John's gut. John stumbles back, Eli keeps the knife, and John holds his gushing wound.

WeeeeeEEE-OOOooo weeeeEEE-OOOooo weeeeEEE-OOOooo! Red and blue lights flash across Eli and John's faces. Trips backward toward the slider and, hunched over, shuffles out the door.

Eli looks at the blood on his hands and slices the knife blade into his shoulder, causing blood to flow down his arm.

He turns around and ardently cleans the knife in the sink.

Margot runs into the kitchen and covers her mouth, shell-shocked at the sight of all that blood.

Eli turns around with a worry-stricken face.

EXT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - LATER

Eli and Officer Brandt converse. Eli's arm has a bandage wrapped around it.

ELI
-I tried to pry his fingers off my
throat--

OFFICER BRANDT
--But he was too strong...

ELI
...Yeah. And then--

OFFICER BRANDT
(gesturing to his wound)
How'd you get that?

Eli looks at his shoulder.

ELI
He grabbed a knife.

OFFICER BRANDT
And where's the knife now?

ELI
I-uh- I washed it.

OFFICER BRANDT
You washed it.

ELI
Hey- I had the blood and oxygen cut off from my brain, and there's a child in the house- that was my priority.

OFFICER BRANDT
Mhm. We'll get a statement when your--

--Margot steps out in a coat. Her eyes are swollen and red-rimmed.

MARGOT
Why was he here?

OFFICER BRANDT
What?

MARGOT
He shouldn't have been let out.

ELI
Good behavior?

Margot's eyes don't leave Officer Brandt.

MARGOT
They would have called me.

OFFICER BRANDT
We checked with the jail. They said they did call you and talked to you.

MARGOT
What?? I--

ELI
--Well, sometimes... I mean, you said...

Margot cocks her head and furrows her brow at Eli.

ELI (CONT'D)
(to Brandt)
Sometimes after work, she has a few
drinks.

Margot's jaw drops. Officer Brandt raises an eyebrow.

MARGOT
What the fuck?

ELI
I'm not saying- I mean- a lot of
people do but maybe they called you
were--

--Margot venomously scowls at Eli.

MARGOT
(to Brandt)
What are the police doing?

OFFICER BRANDT
We're searching- if it was a
glitch, it will be rectified.

MARGOT
Great--

JANET (O.S.)
--Margot?

Margot rolls her eyes and lands them on Janet.

Janet ambles carefully forward in her bathrobe.

JANET (CONT'D)
What happened? Is Harper okay?

OFFICER BRANDT
Ma'am, we are working on--

JANET
--The hell you are. You guys never
caught that lowlife sack of shit
that broke into my house!

Janet looks Eli up and down. Eli smiles.

JANET (CONT'D)
Who are you? Margot, you didn't
tell me you had a new boyfriend.

MARGOT

It hadn't occurred to me to phone
you, Janet.

(to Brandt)

Are we done? Your cleaning crew
somehow made shit worse in there.
I'll have to rectify that myself.

OFFICER BRANDT

Yes, ma'am.

Margot feigns a smile at Janet and makes her way inside.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Margot is sobbing on her hands and knees as she cleans up the
shards of the broken vase.

Eli hesitates into the room.

ELI

Maybe you should be resting with
Harper?

MARGOT

(sniffling)

You can go home.

Eli walks over and puts his hand on her shoulder- Margot
flinches.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Don't touch me!

Eli steps back.

ELI

I know tonight has been--

MARGOT

--You told the cop I was a drunk!

Eli closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

ELI

Just let me help you.

Margot crawls forward a step--

MARGOT

--Shit!

She picks up her knee and observes a gash from a shard of the vase.

Margot gets up and wipes her nose.

ELI
Are you okay?

MARGOT
I shouldn't have dragged you into
this mess.

ELI
I broke the vase.

MARGOT
You know what I mean.

ELI
I'm just glad I was here. He was so
violent- I can't imagine living
with him- I'm sorry.

Margot slumps into Eli's arms. He hugs her.

MARGOT
I'm sorry.

ELI
No. It's not your fault.
(pulls away an inch)
Other than you did not warn me how
absolutely massive he was.

Margot nose laughs.

ELI (CONT'D)
Let me clean this up. Harper needs
you.

Eli kisses the top of her head. Margot looks up into his
eyes. She pecks him on his lips.

Eli watches her as she leaves.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - HARPER'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Harper pulls the covers over herself.

Margot sits on the edge of the bed.

MARGOT
Hi, baby. You okay?

Harper opens her arms. Margot embraces her.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
It's going to be okay, sweetheart.
We are safe.

HARPER
Is daddy back?

MARGOT
I love you.

HARPER
I love you too, mom.

Margot hugs her tighter.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eli wipes the counters down as Margot saunters into the room in silk pajamas. She makes her way to him and leans against the counter.

She watches him clean.

MARGOT
Thank you.

Eli looks at her over his shoulder and then faces her.

ELI
Of course.

He looks down at her knee.

ELI (CONT'D)
Come here.

Margot lets him grab her waist and hoist her up onto the counter.

Margot won't take her eyes off his.

ELI (CONT'D)
First aid kit?

MARGOT
(unwavering gaze)
Under the sink.

Eli grabs and opens the kit. He takes out an alcohol wipe, ointment, and a bandaid.

He washes his hands in the sink. Margot's eyes continue to soften.

He kneels, puts his hand under her knee, and lifts her leg with care. Margot smiles.

He proceeds with the treatment of her wound and finishes with the placement of the bandaid.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

My hero.

Eli smirks.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

I admire how calm you've been with all of this.

ELI

I've been through worse.

MARGOT

Do you mind me asking?

ELI

No- I think you should know.

Margot places her hand on his cheek.

ELI (CONT'D)

My dad- whom I hadn't seen in weeks- showed up drunk on my fifth birthday. Tried to shove my mom and me into his truck. He hit my mom so hard she passed out. He was driving erratically, and I was begging him to stop.- He wouldn't, so I started hitting him and screaming. He was so drunk. I distracted him- I did us no favors. He went off the road.

(averts his gaze)

My dad died instantly. I watched my mother die right before I was pulled from the truck.

MARGOT

Oh- my god. I am so, so sorry.

ELI

I mean- I was five.

MARGOT

Still. That trauma lives on. I'm--

ELI
--If I just hadn't distracted him.

MARGOT
Stop that.

ELI
I couldn't stop him- I tried...
before we got in the truck. I
couldn't save her.

MARGOT
You were five. You had no control.

ELI
None.

MARGOT
How can you blame yourself if you
had no control?

ELI
Regardless- I'm the product of my
family and my failures.

Margot places her hands on either side of his face.

MARGOT
We all are. And your mother would
be so proud of you.

She extends her arms and gestures for him to rise. She wraps her arms around him. He places his head against her beating chest.

They part and look into each other's eyes.

She caresses his cheek. He places his hand on hers and kisses her palm.

She leans forward and kisses him on the lips.

They become passionate as they make out and quietly make love on the counter.

Eli whispers into Margot's ear. She smiles and kisses his neck.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Margot stretches out all alone on her bed. She smiles with contentment. She puts her hands over her eyes and shakes her head. The smile fades.

She checks her cracked phone screen for the time: **8:13 AM**

ELI (O.S.)
Chocolate chips?? Yeah??

She glances toward the door and gets out of bed.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Margot tiptoes into the room.

Sheets are on the couch and are tucked into the cushions.

A pillow is at one end, and at the other, a blanket is thrown over the couch arm.

Margot folds the blanket and places it on the arm.

ELI (O.S.)
Should we put onions in the
pancakes??

HARPER (O.S.)
Ewww!!!

They laugh in the kitchen. Margot smiles.

She pulls the sheet up from the cushions and, with it, pops out a phone.

She picks it up and furrows her brow at the perfectly crack-free screen with the picture of Harper smiling at the top of the slide as its wallpaper.

Ping!

ON SCREEN

Message from John

I'm so sorry about last night. Can we please talk?

MARGOT

flies to the...

MASTER BEDROOM

She picks up her phone and holds it next to the other.

LIVING ROOM

Margot frantically puts the fitted sheet back onto the couch and shoves the cell phone into the back of the cushion.

She unfolds the blanket and throws it on the couch.

She darts back into the...

MASTER BEDROOM

And picks up her phone. She dials.

MARGOT

(whispering)

Chloe. You need to get here now.

It's a long story- please just- Yes-

no- Eli is here. Please just--

--Eli walks in. Margot hangs up.

ELI

Morning!

Margot puts on a smile.

MARGOT

Morning.

ELI

What were you--

MARGOT

--I was just calling my sister.

ELI

You hung up pretty fast.

MARGOT

She, uh- sometimes, really pisses me off.

ELI

Oh. Well, you're missing a bunch of fun in the kitchen. Harper is such a great kid.

MARGOT

She is.

Eli looks at her shaky hands.

ELI
Are you okay?

MARGOT
Of course. Why?

ELI
You know- I thought we had a really
great time last night and--

MARGOT
--We did. No, yeah. We did. It's
just I shouldn't have dragged you
into all of this. I mean, you were
attacked.

ELI
You couldn't have known.

MARGOT
Still.

ELI
What can I do?

MARGOT
I think I just need to be alone
with Harper.

ELI
What if he comes back?

MARGOT
Well, you can't move in.

Eli furrows his brow.

ELI
Whatever you want.

MARGOT
Thank you.

Eli turns to leave.

ELI
(looks back)
Make sure to keep an eye on Harper
while I'm gone.

He leaves. Margot breathes.

EXT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Eli's blue sedan pulls out of the driveway as Greyson's black sedan pulls in.

INT. GREYSON'S BLACK SEDAN - SAME

Greyson arches his brow at the blue sedan.

CHLOE (O.S.)
That's Eli. Still haven't met him.

GREYSON
Hmm.

EXT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Greyson and Chloe make their way up the steps. Margot opens the door.

CHLOE
Hiiii- Are you okay??

MARGOT
I'm fine.
(looking at the street)
Did Eli leave?

GREYSON
He's gone.

MARGOT
Come inside.

Chloe steps inside.

GREYSON
I'm going to make a call real quick. I'll be right in.

INT. ELI'S CAR - DRIVING - SAME TIME

Eli's palm strikes the steering wheel.

ELI
Fuck. FUCK. Why?? I mean, 'thank you for saving my life, Eli. Now kindly get the fuck out of it?'

Eli repositions his rearview mirror to look at himself.

ELI (CONT'D)

You were number one dad this morning and number one lay last night. You were phenomenal! She must know something- She saw you stab that asshole, you fuck!!

Eli strikes the steering wheel again. Again.

He brakes hard at a red light. Someone HONKS at him.

ELI (CONT'D)

FUCK YOU!!

EXT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - SAME TIME

Greyson paces on the phone.

GREYSON

-yeah. I need a background check on him. No, I just talked to Lawrence- he didn't call someone for the virus- please just pull the footage from that day. Yeah- thanks. Bye.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe sits next to Margot on the couch.

MARGOT

I don't know what to focus on. John or this cloned phone- I feel like I'm going crazy.--

--Greyson pauses in the doorway.

GREYSON

Where's Harper?

MARGOT

In her room. She's fine. I don't think she gasps what happened.

GREYSON

What did?

Margot exhales hard.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - SAME TIME

Eli watches Margot's video feed with headphones on.

ON ELI'S COMPUTER SCREEN

Greyson sits on the couch and puts his hand on Margot's back.

ELI

wipes his mouth of stress and hard closes his eyes.

ELI

God damnit. God fucking damnit.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Greyson sits next to her. On the other side is Chloe.

GREYSON

When I met you two, I thought you were to two bravest girls I had ever met. Margot, I wish I could have gotten you out of there. I thought you'd be okay.

MARGOT

But you didn't get me out. I lived with that monster- how could I not see that monster in John- or Eli now?

Greyson hugs Margot. Margot weeps.

GREYSON

A little bit of a monster is good. Monsters are necessary for situations that call for taking brave and brutal action in the face of a threat. Sometimes we can mistake confidence for competence and obsessive control for genuine care. Unfortunately, people like John and Eli- prey on and manipulate their good-natured victim's perspectives into believing the predator is both confident and competent--

MARGOT

--He's more competent than me.

GREYSON

Competent people can measure their morals and principles adjacent to the empathy they have for others.

(MORE)

GREYSON (CONT'D)

We all have monsters inside of us-
You have one. I'm sure if you could
have gotten your hands on that guy
that tried to abduct Harper, you
would have done shit you can't even
imagine now.

MARGOT

I can imagine.

GREYSON

Right- some people- these dark
individuals can't check their
monsters and instead let their
monsters consume them. The person
consumed by their monster only
protects their needs under the
guise of protecting you.

MARGOT

What do I do?

GREYSON

Damage control. Restraining order
for sure. And we need to take down
the cameras--

MARGOT

--Oh no. I can't. What if he finds
out and comes over?

CHLOE

Stay the night at our place.

MARGOT

What about Harper? I don't want to
freak her out.

CHLOE

It'll be a sleepover!

MARGOT

We never--

GREYSON

--I couldn't save you from your
father. Please let me save you now.

CHLOE

Us.

Margot nods.

GREYSON

Just go to the police. We will be here, and when you get back, we can pack.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - SAME TIME

Eli watches Margot's video feed.

ON ELI'S COMPUTER SCREEN

Margot hurries out of the room. She comes back with Harper and grabs her coat. She hugs Chloe.

ELI

takes his headphones off and chucks them at the monitor.

ELI

Fuck! She hates you! You fucking failed!

He stands up, turns around, and PUNCHES a hole in the wall.

ELI (CONT'D)

(calming)

They got into her fucking head, and now you have to fix it. She needs to know- be reminded- that she needs you.

Eli sits down in the chair, takes out his phone, and rapidly bounces his knee as he dials.

INT. MARGOT'S CAR - DRIVING - MOMENTS LATER

Harper is in the backseat.

Vrrr. Vrrr. Vrrr. Vrrr. Margot checks her phone.

ON SCREEN

Call From Eli

Margot presses **IGNORE**.

MARGOT

looks back at Harper.

Vrrr. Vrrr. Vrrr. Margot looks down at her phone.

ON SCREEN

Call From Eli

MARGOT

picks up the phone and answers.

MARGOT

Hello?

ELI (ON THE PHONE)

Why did you ignore my call?

MARGOT

I'm driving.

ELI (ON THE PHONE)

Where?

MARGOT

Why?

ELI (ON THE PHONE)

Just curious.

MARGOT

Look. I don't think we should see each other anymore. I'm sorry, I just have too much going on, and I need to focus on Harper.

Margot looks at her phone.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Hello?

ELI (ON THE PHONE)

No. Margot. Who will protect you?

MARGOT

I'm not some helpless little lamb.

ELI (ON THE PHONE)

Can't even protect your daughter.

Margot looks at Harper in the rearview mirror.

ELI (CONT'D)

Why are you doing this to me??

MARGOT

It's not to you. I'm just getting my priorities straight.

ELI

After all the energy and time I've invested in you? The literal blood, sweat, and tears?? I think I deserve better than that!

MARGOT

Then go find it.

Margot hangs up and smirks.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - SAME TIME

Eli SCREAMS into his phone.

He chucks it at the wall- it falls in the hole he made earlier.

ELI

GAAAH!!

He clenches his fists and marches at the wall- he tears at the drywall and exposes the wood and insulation. The phone falls to the ground.

He throws a piece of drywall across the room.

He lets out a gust of air and pivots toward the computer.

He sits in the office chair, brushes the drywall off his hands, and begins typing.

INT. MARGOT'S CAR - DRIVING ON THE HIGHWAY - SAME TIME

MARGOT

(back to Harper)

Almost to the exit, hun.

The interior car lights flicker.

The radio volume rises unbearably high and then low again.

HARPER
Mom! Stop it!

The windshield wipers swipe frantically.

MARGOT
I'm not doing anything!

EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME

Margot pulls over and parks.

INT. MARGOT'S CAR - SAME

Margot shuts off the car.

MARGOT
When in doubt, turn it off and back
on again, right?

The car comes back to life on its own.

The headlights flash, and the steering wheel cuts hard to the left.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
What the fuck??

HARPER
Mom!

Margot whips her head back at Harper in shock.

The car JERKS forward.

Margot stomps on the breaks; they do nothing.

MARGOT
Wha- what??? Oh my god!

Margot unbuckles herself and reaches for the door- The car takes off.

EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME

The car cuts hard into traffic, missing two vehicles.

It starts speeding.

SPEEDOMETER

70... 74... 76... 80...

MARGOT'S CAR

sideswipes four other cars in the adjacent lane and stampedes down the highway.

It cuts right, back into traffic and--

INT. MARGOT'S CAR - SAME

--The wheel cuts HARD to the left. Margot and Harper SCREAM.

EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME

The car tries to straighten out but fails. It launches up a guardrail and flips in the air.

It skids across the pavement upside down and stops in the middle of the highway.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - SAME TIME

Eli's computer closes out of a window.

He puts his head in his hands and yanks at his hair.

OVER BLACK:

CRACKLING FIRE is accompanied by MOANING.

MARGOT

opens her eyes to the fire that surrounds her. Through the flames, she sees Harper SCREAMING upside down in her car seat.

MARGOT

Harp--

--Margot fades in and out of consciousness.

OVER BLACK:

SCREAMING.

MAN
Can you hear me, ma'am??

MARGOT

opens her eyes and is pulled out by a FIREFIGHTER.

MARGOT
My daugh- daughter- Harp--

OVER BLACK:

Harper CRIES.

HARPER
Mommy!!!!

MARGOT

opens her eyes to see Margot on a stretcher.

HARPER
Mommy!

Margot looks down- she's strapped to a stretcher.

MARGOT
Harper! No! N--

--She struggles under the straps and fades.

OVER BLACK:

WOMAN
She has a pacemaker.

MARGOT

opens her eyes and sees Harper with an oxygen mask on.

OVER BLACK:

Beep. Beep. Beep. Beep. Beep.

INT. HOSPITAL - MARGOT'S ROOM - LATER

Beep. Beep. The vitals monitor continues.

Margot is in a hospital bed with her leg supported by a sling hoist. Her face is scraped up and bruised.

Chloe is by her side. Margot stirs under the sheets.

CHLOE

Margot?

MARGOT

Harper. Where--

CHLOE

--Harper is fine.

Margot increases her alertness.

MARGOT

I want to see her.

CHLOE

Her pacemaker is fine- everything is fine. Why didn't you have your seatbelt on? Maybe you would have been as lucky as Harper.

Margot scowls at Chloe.

MARGOT

The car- I was trying to get out. Are you really going to give me shit right now?

Chloe softens.

CHLOE

The background check came back on Eli.

Margot props herself up on her elbows and winces. She looks at her foot.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Fractured foot, strained neck, bruised ribs, and a minor concussion.

Margot snarls her lip.

Chloe takes a tablet from a backpack on the chair and shows it to Margot.

ON SCREEN

Marisa Hurley: November 3rd, 1989 - April 8th, 2021

She was survived by her mother, Kelly Hurley, her sister, Stephanie Hurley, and her long-time boyfriend, Eli Stone.

BACK TO SCENE

MARGOT

What the--

CHLOE

--car crash.

MARGOT

Do you think he had--

--Chloe nods.

CHLOE

I looked it up- It's possible, but you have to be like a super hacker.

MARGOT

Well, that would explain the phone.

OFFICER BRANDT (O.S.)

Knock knock.

Officer Brandt takes a big step into the room.

OFFICER BRANDT (CONT'D)

How are you, Miss Birdsong?

MARGOT

(gesture so-so)

Any sign of John?

OFFICER BRANDT

No, I'm afraid not.

MARGOT

Great... I need a restraining order.

OFFICER BRANDT

On John?

MARGOT

Well- shit- yes. But I meant Eli Stone.

OFFICER BRANDT
Did he hurt you?

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM/RECEPTION - SAME TIME

Greyson breezes through the automatic front doors.

RECEPTION

A man wearing a Boston Red Sox hat with a rip on the side talks to the receptionist and lays a bouquet down on the counter.

GREYSON

walks in and clocks the man.

ELI
Birdsong. B-i-r-d-s-o-n-g.

RECEPTIONIST
Yes. I see the patient, but your name isn't listed.

ELI
I'm her boyfriend.

Greyson saunters up behind him.

RECEPTIONIST
I'm sorry. I can't let you--

GREYSON
--Hi.

Eli swivels around and freezes then smirks.

GREYSON (CONT'D)
Let's talk outside.

ELI
I'm good here.

GREYSON
(grins)
Nope. Now. Let's go.

EXT. HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

Greyson stares at Eli. Eli fiddles with the rubber band around the bouquet.

GREYSON
If you cared about her, you'd give
her the space she asked for.

ELI
What do you know?

GREYSON
(scoffs)
I know more than you think.

Eli takes a step closer. Greyson does the same.

Eli hesitates.

ELI
You're driving a wedge. She was
fine until she talked to you.

Greyson sizes him up.

GREYSON
Let me guess. Single mom. Died
young. Father wasn't really in the
picture, but when he was, you
wished he wasn't.

Eli takes a step backward. Greyson takes two steps forward.

GREYSON (CONT'D)
You failed at protecting your
beloved mother, and now you live to
rectify that failure. Probably
explains the security profession.

ELI
You can't protect her.

GREYSON
You've lost control.

Eli shoves the flowers into Greyson's chest.

Greyson doesn't waiver- the flowers hit the ground. Eli
leaves.

INT. HOSPITAL - MARGOT'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Greyson steps in as Officer Brandt steps out.

CHLOE

Greyson- the police said Margot
can't get a restraining order.
Can't prove anything.

GREYSON

Eli was just here.

MARGOT

He what??

GREYSON

Yeah, with flowers.

Margot puts her head in her hands.

CHLOE

It's okay. The cops are gonna talk
to him.

GREYSON

There should be video proof he
hacked into my computer at work.
That's something.

MARGOT

Probably erased them.

Greyson sits down on the edge of the bed and massages his
eyes.

GREYSON

Let's go pack.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Margot limps into the house with a single crutch on her left
foot, she wears a medical boot. Harper beelines for her room.

Chloe and Greyson follow.

EXT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - STREET - SAME TIME

A beat-up car pulls up to the curb. The DRIVER looks to the
back seat. John leans forward.

JOHN

Not yet.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Chloe sits down on the couch.

MARGOT
I'm going to go see if Harper's
okay.

GREYSON
Here.

Greyson extends a flip phone in its plastic package.

MARGOT
What's this?

GREYSON
It's a prepaid phone. Get's get
wifi at all. So- safe.

MARGOT
Wow. Thank you. Really.

Chloe half-heartedly smiles.

Margot makes her way to...

HARPER'S CLOSED DOOR

A child's song plays from inside the room.

It stops.

ALEXA DEVICE (O.S.)
Answer these questions to play the
next song. What's your greatest
fear?

Margot furrows her brow and leans in closer to the door.

HARPER (O.S.)
Uhhmm... fire. My mommy and I--

ALEXA DEVICE (O.S.)
--Next question. What is your
mommy's greatest fear?

Margot immediately swings the door open and limp-marches
into...

HARPER'S ROOM

Margot raises her crutch and WHACKS the Alexa off the dresser. With the crutch, she continues smashing the Alexa over and over again until it's broken to bits.

Margot looks back at Harper... she's squeezed herself in between the bed and the nightstand. Her whole body shivers.

MARGOT

We're getting rid of Alexa.

Margot picks up the bits of Alexa and cradles them in one arm. She uses the other to lean on the crutch and limp out of the room.

INT.

LIVING ROOM

Margot swipes her crutch at the mounted security camera, and it falls, only suspended by a wire. She yanks it from the drywall. It's a mess.

CHLOE

I'm sure there's a better way to--

--Margot ignores her and lurches into the...

KITCHEN

She approaches the kitchen security camera and repeats the process; smash and yank.

BACKYARD SECURITY CAMERA

Smash and yank.

EXT. FRONT DOOR SECURITY CAMERA

Smash and yank.

EXT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Margot dumps the Alexa pieces and junk pile of cameras into the outside trash bin.

On the street, Janet raises an eyebrow.

Janet takes one step toward Margot.

MARGOT
Fuck off, Janet.

Janet freezes in position.

Margot hobbles back toward the house.

JANET
Excuse me??

Margot pays no mind.

JANET (CONT'D)
Margot!

EXT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Margot doesn't turn back. She slams the door behind her.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Margot storms her lame leg into the...

KITCHEN

She stomps over to the refrigerator and opens the freezer.
She pulls out an ice pack.

LIVING ROOM

Margot plops down on the couch, raises her bootless, bandaged foot onto a couch pillow, and ices it.

Chloe stares at her. Margot rolls her eyes.

CHLOE
So, do you want me to get your clothes?

MARGOT
Just give me a minute.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - SAME TIME

Eli stares at his computer screen.

He rubs his face and digs his nails into his scalp.

His foot jitters. Like a cobra, he lunges forward and hard-clicks the enter button.

He stands, looks at what he's done, and walks away.

INT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Margot is packing a suitcase on the bed.

From the other room- Sherrkkk-eeek-errr. Margot looks at the door.

MARGOT

Chloe?

CHLOE (O.S.)

Your printer's acting up.

MARGOT

Are you trying to print something??

Chloe peeks her head in.

CHLOE

No. It's just making noises.

MARGOT

It does that sometimes. Is Harper okay? I think I scared her.

CHLOE

I can check.

Chloe exits and leaves the door open.

Margot doesn't notice a light beginning to emanate from the hallway. She keeps packing.

The light source swells and dances- Margot lifts her nose and breathes in.

From the other room Chloe SCREAMS!

CHLOE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Margot!!!!

Margot hurries her booted foot out into...

LIVING ROOM

The kitchen is engulfed in flames.

MARGOT

rushes to Harper's door, and Chloe comes barreling out with Harper in her arms.

MARGOT
Harper!

HARPER
Mommy!

CHLOE
I got her. Come on!

MARGOT
Where's Greyson??

Greyson BANGS on the door.

GREYSON (O.S.)
It's locked!!

HARPER
Mommy!!

MARGOT
Hold on, Harper!

Margot tries to open the front door- the lock won't let her.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
'Smart lock,' my fucking ass!!

THROUGH FRONT WINDOW

Greyson tries to smash the glass with a rock. It cracks.

LIVING ROOM

The fire quickly and steadily creeps into the living room.

Chloe WHEEZES and COUGHS.

THROUGH FRONT WINDOW

From behind Greyson, John rampages forward and smashes through the window.

Margot SCREAMS. Chloe drops Harper and collapses.

MARGOT

Chloe!!

HARPER

Daddy!!

John scoops Harper up and drops her out the window.

Greyson tries to climb in- John helps him up.

MARGOT

Oh my god! Chloe! Wake up!

Greyson beelines for Chloe and hoists her up in his arms.

John Helps him carry her to the window.

Margot limps to the window, avoiding flames and debris.

John guides her out of the window into...

EXT. MARGOT'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Margot stumbles over to Harper. Harper COUGHS.

MARGOT

Are you okay, baby??

HARPER

Daddy saved me!

John and Greyson carry Chloe away from the flame-enveloped house.

They watch as the flames consume and crumble Margot's home.

EXT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Firefighters douse the burnt bones of the house.

John is being cuffed by a COP. Margot stands by Harper. Harper lunges forward and hugs John.

John hugs her.

JOHN

I'll see you again, sweetheart. I love you.

HARPER

I love you, Daddy.

Margot wipes her watery eyes.

JOHN
(to Margot)
I'm sorry.

MARGOT
If you hadn't been out, we could
have been dead.

JOHN
You know what I mean.

Margot nods. The Cop guides his head into the back seat and
shuts the door.

EXT. AMBULANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Margot and Harper stand outside an open ambulance with
Greyson. Chloe is on a stretcher inside.

GREYSON
She'll be okay.

MARGOT
Of course, she will.

GREYSON
Just needs some oxygen.

Margot smiles at him.

GREYSON (CONT'D)
How are you doing?

MARGOT
I don't feel like I have the luxury
of processing that at the moment.

GREYSON
Same.

Harper hugs Margot's leg. Margot strokes Harper's hair.

Greyson looks at Harper.

GREYSON (CONT'D)
Why don't you go to our timeshare
on the Cape?

MARGOT
What?

GREYSON

I don't think it's safe for you here.

MARGOT

I don't know.

GREYSON

It's on the beach, it's surrounded by other houses but still secluded. It's perfect.

MARGOT

I don't have a way of getting there.

GREYSON

You can take my car.

MARGOT

So Eli can hack into it and total your car too?

GREYSON

You know what car can't be hacked into?

MARGOT

...I couldn't.

Greyson smiles.

EXT. CHLOE'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

The garage door opens. Rum-rum-rum-rum-grum-grum-rum; Eli drives A baby blue 1957 Corvette convertible out with its top down.

FRONT DOOR

Margot, in her medical boot, limps over to the...

CORVETTE

MARGOT

(over loud exhaust)

Are you sure about this??

GREYSON

(yelling)

Nope!!

He shuts the engine off.

BACK TO SCENE

Greyson gets out.

GREYSON

I don't have a top so I hope the
wind doesn't bother you too much.

MARGOT

It's going to be freezing! What if
it rains?

GREYSON

There's a tarp in the trunk.

MARGOT

Greyson--

GREYSON

--it's all you've got.

Margot looks at the corvette.

GREYSON (CONT'D)

And it's really fun.

Greyson side-hugs her.

GREYSON (CONT'D)

So shut up and enjoy it!

Greyson hands her the keys, and she puts them in her pocket.

EXT. CHLOE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Margot stands idly watching Harper play tag with Chloe and
Greyson. She smiles faintly.

HARPER

Mommy! Play with us!

MARGOT

(gesturing to her boot)
I can't, sweetie.

Harper runs off. Greyson and Chloe are fully engaged.

ELI (O.S.)

Margot.

Margot is frozen.

Greyson stops, and Chloe follows suit.

HARPER

Eli!

Harper takes a step forward. Chloe grabs her shoulders.

Margot's neck is stiff- she looks at Harper.

GREYSON

You need to leave.

Eli ignores him and stares at Margot.

MARGOT

What do you want?

ELI

Are you okay?

MARGOT

Chloe... do you have your phone?

Chloe takes out her phone and--

--Margot clocks Eli's coat pocket. He's pointing whatever is in his pocket at Harper.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Wait! Stop, Chloe.

Eli's gaze at Margot is unblinking.

ELI

Put the phone away, Chloe.

Greyson steps forward. Eli points the pocket at him.

ELI (CONT'D)

Stop. Wouldn't want to scare--

--Eli gestures to Harper.

HARPER

What's going on?

MARGOT

Nothing, sweetie.

ELI

Harper, were you playing tag?

Harper nods.

ELI (CONT'D)
Well, don't let me stop you.

MARGOT
Great idea... Let's play.

HARPER
But your foo--

MARGOT
--I said let's play, Harper!

Greyson and Chloe exchange furrowed brows.

ELI
I was actually hoping to talk to
you, Margot.

MARGOT
Harper wants to play.

Eli looks at Harper.

CHLOE
Okay, then!

Chloe tags Margot. Eli steps back.

Margot limps after Harper- she can't keep up.

Chloe body-blocks Harper- Harper laughs and tries to get
around her.

Margot tags Harper. Margot pivots, bites her lip, and limps
for her life around to the side of the house. Harper pursues.

Eli runs after her- Greyson jumps and tackles Eli. Greyson
controls Eli's pocketed wrist.

Eli shifts to his back, and Greyson rips Eli's wrist from
Eli's pocket. Out of his pocket comes- a comb??

Eli takes advantage of the confusion and scurries to escape.

He runs after Margot.

CORVETTE

Margot hoists Harper into the front seat.

HARPER
Where are we going?

Margot limps to the other side of the car.

MARGOT
Seatbelt, now!!

Harper's expression sours.

Margot gets in as Eli reaches the passenger seat door.

He grabs the handle right as Margot starts the engine. Eli drops. Margot peels away from the curb, leaving Eli on his knees.

Eli beelines for his car. He slowly pulls away.

EXT. CHLOE'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - SAME

Greyson catches his breath.

CHLOE
We have to do something!

GREYSON
I'm going.

CHLOE
To the Cape? No!

GREYSON
He's after her! What am I supposed to do??

CHLOE
Go to the police!

GREYSON
That has not been going very well.
I can't abandon her again--

CHLOE
--Oh my god. We didn't abandon her.
My mother--

GREYSON
--You don't understand the guilt I feel! She could have suffered less!

CHLOE
You didn't have a choice!

GREYSON
I have a choice now.

CHLOE
What about me?

Greyson kisses her. He hugs her tight.

GREYSON
He's after Margot. I've met many of his kind. He won't stop. Not until his failures are erased from his reality.

Chloe shakes her head.

GREYSON (CONT'D)
As long as she lives, she's a reminder of what he can't live with.

EXT. POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Margot limp-storms out of the doors dragging Harper along with her. Margot trudges to her car. Harper gets in.

She looks up at the security camera pointed right at her.

She gets into the driver's seat and puts the car in reverse.

She backs out of the parking spot and makes a snappy three-point turn.

CORVETTE - DRIVING

Margot looks to her right; Harper is asleep with a blanket tucked up around her.

They drive across the SAGAMORE BRIDGE.

Under the passenger side door: a small, red light blinks.

EXT. BEACH COTTAGE - AFTERNOON

Margot pulls up and parks. She looks around at the beach dunes and past the tiny little coastal cottage; the ocean spreads out forever.

She takes a deep salty-air breath. It starts to drizzle.

Margot takes the tarp from the trunk- it starts to rain harder.

With her eyes close, Margot covers the Corvette with the tarp from the trunk. She misses the blinking light completely.

INT. BEACH COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The open floor plan is furnished with elements of tacky coastal decor.

On the kitchen counter sits a large, wireless Bluetooth speaker.

Harper walks over to the couch and sits down.

HARPER
Why are we here?

MARGOT
It's like a little mini vacation!

HARPER
It's cold and rainy.

Margot limps over to her and crouches down to her level.

MARGOT
Listen. If you see Eli. I want you
to run to me right away.

HARPER
You said Eli wasn't a stranger.

MARGOT
I was wrong. I thought he wasn't.

HARPER
And he's after us?

MARGOT
I don't know.

Harper's breathing quickens.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Hunny, breathe. Come on.

Margot holds her. Harper hyperventilates.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
It's okay. Breathe.

HARPER
(grabbing her chest)
Owww!

Margot puts her hand over Harper's heart.

MARGOT
Breathe. Don't let it pace your
heart- you need to control it.

HARPER
It hurrtsss.

MARGOT
I know. Breathe to slow your heart.
Your pacemaker's parameters don't
go that high.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK- Harper and Margot's heads whip on a swivel
to the door.

GREYSON (O.S.)
It's me! Come on, the rains getting
worse!

Margot slumps in relief.

She opens the door and lets Greyson in.

GREYSON (CONT'D)
It's looking like a Nor'Easter out
there.

INT. ELI'S CAR - SAME TIME

The rain pours hard against the windshield.

Eli types on his computer.

ELI
(typing)
Dear Members of the Cape Cod
Cottage Community. A nor'easter is
expected to hit our area in the
coming days, bringing heavy rains,
strong winds, and coastal flooding.

INT. BEACH COTTAGE - SAME TIME

Greyson sits down on the couch with Margot.

The wind and rain smack against the windows.

GREYSON

We can make this fun. We can get pizza and watch a movie. Doesn't that sound like fun, Harper?

Harper nods excitedly.

MARGOT

I'm afraid to fall asleep.

GREYSON

Have you slept at all?

MARGOT

No. I feel like I'm losing my mind.

GREYSON

Tell you what. I'll make some coffee. That way, you can rest knowing I'm caffeinated and alert.

Greyson smiles. Margot nods.

INT. ELI'S CAR - SAME TIME

Still typing.

ELI

Please take precautions to ensure your safety, including securing any loose outdoor items, stocking up on necessary supplies, and following any evacuation orders that may be issued.

INT. BEACH COTTAGE - SAME TIME

Margot fights her heavy eyelids and holds Harper on the couch.

Greyson checks multiple cabinets.

GREYSON

I'm not seeing any coffee. The other people must have used it all.

MARGOT

Hmm?

GREYSON
I'll be right back. I'm going to go
get some Dunky's.

Margot is drifting. Greyson tip toes out the door.

INT. ELI'S CAR - SAME TIME

Still typing.

ELI
Visit www.capecodwateralerts.com
for up-to-date information on
weather conditions and evacuation
orders. I highly recommend checking
this site frequently.

Eli clocks Greyson's car leaving the neighborhood.

The rain is too dense for Greyson to notice Eli's blue sedan.

ELI (CONT'D)
(typing)
Stay safe. With regards from the
Cape Cod Cottage Home Owners
Association.

He presses a key, sits back, and smiles.

MONTAGE OF RANDOM RESIDENTS

In different homes, multiple people get BUZZING weather
alerts on their phones:

**Emergency alert! Coastal flooding is imminent. Evacuate now
to higher ground. Take only essentials. Stay tuned for
updates and follow instructions. Stay safe!**

INT. BEACH COTTAGE - SAME TIME

Margot is asleep on the couch. Harper is drifting in her
arms.

THROUGH FRONT WINDOW

People pack into their cars and evacuate as commanded.

HARPER

Looks over at the window.

She walks to the window. The rain quiets.

HARPER

Mom?

Margot doesn't wake.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Mommy? Why are people leaving?

Margot stirs.

HARPER (CONT'D)

The rain is stopping.

A song like Enter Sandman by Metallica BLARES from the Bluetooth speaker at top volume- Margot jolts awake.

Harper crouches on the ground covering her ears.

MARGOT

WHAT THE--

Margot rushes over to the speaker and tries to turn it off. It won't turn off. She throws it on the ground and annihilates it.

The broken bits of plastic scatter everywhere, the music ceases, and the actual speaker portion of the device lay deconstructed on the ground.

Margot heaves over the junked speaker.

Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz. Margot looks over her shoulder out the window. Harper is sitting below the window.

A drone floats into the center of the window and hovers in place. Margot furrows her brow and rubs her eyes.

She looks again. The drone is gone.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

(to herself)

I'm losing my fucking mind.

Margot ambles over to Harper and consoles her on the ground.

Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz. Margot hesitates to look above her head.

The drone watches from the window.

ELI (THROUGH DRONE)
(filtered)
Tag. You're it.

Margot springs up and grabs Harper by the arm. She dashes for the door.

HARPER
Owww!!!

Margot looks back- Harper is clenching her chest. Harper falls to her knees.

MARGOT
Harper!

ELI (THROUGH DRONE)
(filtered)
Easy, Margot. You wouldn't want to give the poor girl a heart attack.

Margot looks at Harper and then at the drone.

MARGOT
Harper! Just breathe, baby!

ELI
Did you know it's really not all that hard to hack into a pacemaker?

Margot drops to her knees and extends her arms toward Harper.

ELI (THROUGH DRONE) (CONT'D)
(filtered)
Don't touch her!!!

Margot's jaw contorts- she tries to scream, but nothing comes out. She can't take her eyes off Harper. Harper holds her chest and winces.

ELI (THROUGH DRONE) (CONT'D)
(filtered)
I have the control now.

Margot grabs the sides of her face and frantically looks around.

She clocks the dismantled speaker. She lunges for it and, in an instant, dives back at Harper. She holds the speaker to Harper's heart.

Harper GASPS, and her eyes flutter.

MARGOT

Oh my god! What have I- Oh my god!

She hoists Harper into her arms and limps out into...

EXT. BEACH COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

It's drizzling rain.

Margot makes a beeline for the Corvette, but the drone won't let her pass.

She runs behind a...

DUNE

Margot sits and cradles Harper.

MARGOT

It's okay, Baby. I'm so sorry.

GREYSON'S BLACK SEDAN

drives down the street in sight of the cottage.

GREYSON

clocks the drone and squints his eyes.

EXT. BEACH COTTAGE - SAME TIME

The drone finds her. She takes off back toward the Corvette.

The drone body blocks her from the car.

Greyson gets out of his car with a baseball bat.

INT. ELI'S CAR - SAME TIME

Eli smirks.

ON ELI'S COMPUTER SCREEN

Greyson creeps toward the drone with the bat cocked back.

MARGOT

looks down at Harper- she's paler.

ELI (THROUGH DRONE)
(filtered)
You know, your 'family' really
drove a wedge between us. It
disgusts me. You deserve better
than that.

MARGOT
Eli! She's going to die!

INT. ELI'S CAR - SAME TIME

ELI
I wasn't the one who rendered her
pacemaker useless!!! Don't you
fucking blame me for her death!

MARGOT

sobs into Harper's chest.

MARGOT
You were holding her heart for
ransom!

Greyson is about a foot away when--

INT. ELI'S CAR - SAME TIME

--Eli anger-hits a button on the keyboard--

BOOOOM!!!!

GREYSON

is thrown backward, his head smashes against the corvettes
bumper. He slumps over, his face is badly burnt.

MARGOT
Greyson!!!!

Bits of the drone fall from the sky, and the rain picks up
again.

Margot runs to the Corvette and puts Harper in the passenger
seat. She runs back to Greyson; he's out cold.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Greyson! Get in the car!

No response.

Margot covers her mouth, shakes her head, and struggles to lift Greyson up. She quits.

GREYSON
Margot.

Margot hugs him- he winces.

GREYSON (CONT'D)
I told you I'd get you out.

MARGOT
We have to go!

GREYSON
I'm not going to make it, Margot.

Greyson turns his head; the back of his skull oozes blood.

Margot covers her mouth and CRIES.

MARGOT
I'm so sorry!

Greyson looks up at her and half-smiles. His expression fades, and he gazes through her. The light leaves his eyes.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Greyson!
(looking at car)
Harper!

She runs to the driver's seat.

The corvette peels off down the street. The sand makes her back-end fishtail.

She gains control and speeds down the road.

MARGOT

looks back and wipes her tears.

Margot has one hand on the wheel, the other holds the phone to her ear.

MARGOT

Please hurry! There was an explosion. No! I had to leave him! He's dead. He's fucking dead.

She hangs up.

HARPER

is passed out.

MARGOT

Baby?? Please stay with me, okay?

Margot takes a hard left.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

(trying to sing)

Are the stars out tonight? I don't know if it's cloudy or bright! Fuck fuck fuck.

ELI'S BLUE SEDAN

Skirts out behind her and pursues her.

CORVETTE

Margot punches the accelerator.

A COP CAR

Pulls out behind Margot and takes off after her.

WeeeeEEEE-OOOOoooo weeeeEEE-OOOOoooo

MARGOT

looks back, then floors it.

ELI

takes the next exit.

EXT. CAPE COD HOSPITAL - FRONT ENTRANCE - SUNSET

Margot screeches the Corvette to a halt.

The cop car pulls up behind her.

MARGOT
Help!!! Someone Help me!!!

She grabs Harper. Before she can lift her, a MALE NURSE is by her side, picking Harper up into his arms.

A FEMALE NURSE rushes over to Margot.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
It-it-it-she-it's her- she has a
pacemaker- please- it- It's not
working.

FEMALE NURSE
It's okay- we will take care of
her.
(yelling out)
Mother says her pacemaker isn't
working!

Margot limps after the staff.

INT. CAPE COD HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Male Nurse runs with Harper in his arms.

MALE NURSE
Call Code White and Code H.

Margot catches up.

MARGOT
What is that??

FEMALE NURSE
She's going to need to be med-
flighted to Boston.

The Female Nurse stands in front of Margot.

MARGOT
What are you doing?? I need to be
with my daughter!

FEMALE NURSE
Due to the life-saving procedures,
which will likely be implemented,
I'm afraid we can't let you on the
helicopter with her.

MARGOT
What?? No! You can't--

FEMALE NURSE
--I'm sorry, Ma'am. You can drive
to Boston Children's Hospital and
be with her there.

Margot stands frozen. The Female Nurse hurries away.

COP
Ma'am, can we talk?

INT. CAPE COD HOSPITAL - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Margot comes out of a stall on the phone.

MARGOT
Chloe! I didn't ask him to come.
That's not fair!... Hello? Chloe??

Margot looks at herself in the mirror. She washes her hands
and then splashes her face with water.

She's rubbing her eyes. Eli comes out from one of the stalls.

She looks up--

MARGOT (CONT'D)
--Ah! HEL--

--Eli covers her mouth and puts a knife to her back.

ELI
Make a fucking noise, and I swear
to god I will cut you and let you
bleed out in this bathroom.

He points her toward the door.

ELI (CONT'D)
Walk.

INT. CAPE COD HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Eli puts his arm under her coat and around her waist.

He presses the knife into her side- she winces.

ELI
Good.

They walk past multiple unsuspecting patients and staff.

INT. CAPE COD HOSPITAL - STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Eli pushes her onto the stairs. She sobs and falls to her knee.

He grabs her by the hair and guides her up the stairs.

ELI
Shut up. Go.

EXT. CAPE COD HOSPITAL - ROOFTOP - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

*****PASTED*****

Margot limps to the ledge and stops about three feet back.
Eli puts the knife to her back.

ELI
Go!

MARGOT
I can't!

ELI
Do you know how happy we could have been??
(beat)
We could have finally had a happy family. I know you wanted that- I know I did. For my whole life!! You were supposed to be it!

MARGOT
You're crazy!

ELI
Crazy in love! Do you think I wanted to release John from jail and fight him? Hell no. It was the only way to remove the threat from your life. Do you think I wanted to watch you?

Rosa, the homeless woman, peeks her wild hair and eyes around a large commercial air conditioner with a blanket wrapped around her.

Eli and Margot both face the ledge.

ELI (CONT'D)

You were just so... goddamn foolish
and naive!

Margot sobs.

MARGOT

You killed Greyson!

ELI

Greyson was getting between us, and
it was his actions that caused his
death!

MARGOT

The drone blew up!

ELI

He was driving a wedge! Can't you
see that??

MARGOT

I don't want to die, Eli.

Rosa stalks forward. Silent, she takes the blanket from her
shoulders and creeps closer to Eli.

ELI

I am consumed by the need to keep
you safe, and if you won't let me
do that, the only way to move on is
if one or both of us is dead.

(stepping forward)

I'm doing you a kindness by putting
you out of--

--Rosa leaps with the blanket over her head.

ROSA

Aaaaaaahhhh!!!!!!--

--Margot whips around.

Eli pivots around and puts his hands up in defense.

She envelopes Eli in the blanket, but Eli charges forward and
slams Rosa to the ground. Rosa is dazed.

Margot lunges forward and kicks his hand with her medical
boot. The knife flies out of his hand. He stands up.

Margot jumps on his back and wraps her arm around his neck
like a chokehold, squeezes her elbows together, and his face
turns red. His eyes bulge.

He drops to his knees. He flails his arms behind him in an attempt to get her off.

He falls to his stomach.

Margot lets go and hammers his head into the concrete with her fist. She loses her mind.

STAIRWELL DOOR

Two COPS rush out and charge toward the scene.

BACK TO SCENE

Margot looks up and backs off.

Rosa slaps for good measure, and a police officer pulls her off.

Eli comes to. He fights off the cops and rushes toward Margot. She falls backward out of his way, and Eli trips over her boot.

He tumbles and slides off the edge. He grabs Margot's boot.

Margot hangs on to a pipe sticking out of the roof.

ELI

Margot! Save me!

The cops pull him up and immediately handcuff him.

COP 1

You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have a right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you. Do you understand?

ELI

Margot!

Margot sits in shock. Cop 2 approaches.

COP 2

Ma'am? Are you okay?

MARGOT

Is it over?

Rosa walks up to her and hugs her.

ROSA
It's over, dear.

Margot sobs and hugs Rosa back.

ROSA (CONT'D)
Big brother can't watch you
anymore, child.

Margot continues to sob and looks up at the stars.

ROSA (CONT'D)
Beautiful, isn't it?

INT. CHANNEL FIVE NEWS BUILDING - NEWSROOM - DAY

Kyle and Margot sit at the news anchor's desk and smile at the cameras.

KYLE
Thank you, Sarah. I can't wait for
that beach weather. Maybe Margot
and I can hit the Cape.

MARGOT
(smiling)
Not a chance.

Kyle furrows his brow.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Up next. Cybercrime and how to keep
you and our family safe. Dangerous
strangers aren't just in white vans
with candy anymore, folks. They may
be stalking you via your own
devices. Stay tuned.

The cameras turn down, and Margot ignores Kyle's stare.

KYLE
What was that?

Margot shifts in her seat and faces him.

MARGOT
No more of those comments. I don't
appreciate the suggestive
commentary.

KYLE
What I said was harmless!

MARGOT
Don't play dumb.

Margot gets up and leaves.

INT. CHANNEL FIVE NEWS BUILDING - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Margot struts out of a stall and freezes.

Kyle is propped up against the sink counter.

MARGOT
What the fuck are you doing in here? Get out!

KYLE
I've been thinking, and I don't appreciate your hostility in the workplace.

Kyle takes a step toward her, and Margot freezes.

KYLE (CONT'D)
I think we'd get along better if you were a bit more agreeable-- better for the on-air chemistry.

Margot is frozen.

He steps closer, now just inches away. He places his hand on her ass and--

--Margot takes a step back and swiftly decks him in the jaw.

He steps back, holding his jaw.

Margot looks on in shock and then marches out the door.

INT. CHANNEL FIVE NEWS BUILDING - JERRY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Margot storms in. Jerry looks up from his computer.

JERRY
Margot! Are you okay?

MARGOT
(collecting herself)
I- uhm. I'm sorry.
(MORE)

MARGOT (CONT'D)

I'd like to uh- I'll be giving you my letter of resignation.

JERRY

What? Why?

MARGOT

Well, quite frankly, sir. Your son is a complete asshole and a pervert, and I would not like to be fired, so I quit- I hit him. I punched him in his stupid face.

Jerry looks down at the ground.

JERRY

I see.

He walks around to the other side of the desk and sits on it.

MARGOT

I'm sorry, si--

JERRY

--How did it feel?

MARGOT

What?

JERRY

When you punched him.

MARGOT

Uhm-- honestly great--

--Jerry raises and clenches his fist.

JERRY

Ohhh! I would have loved to see that.

Margot freezes.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Do you know how long I've been wanting to do that to that boy?

Margot closes her eyes for a moment. She opens them.

MARGOT

What is happening...

JERRY

I'm not firing you.

MARGOT
You're not...

JERRY
No. That dick-head had it coming--

--Kyle busts in, holding his jaw.

KYLE
Dad!--

--Kyle notices Margot. Margot looks at him and then at Jerry.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Dad. She assaulted me.

MARGOT
You were in the woman's bathroom!

JERRY
(taken aback)
Oh! a new low.

KYLE
That can be explained.

Silence.

KYLE (CONT'D)
I--

JERRY
--Kyle, you're fired.

Kyle stands in disbelief. Margot furrows her brow.

KYLE
Dad--

JERRY
(to Margot)
--I just didn't want to believe my
son could be so--

MARGOT
--I understand rose-colored glasses
all too well.

Kyle looks back and forth between them.

KYLE
You've got to be joking.

Kyle storms out.

JERRY
Now. To find your new co-anchor.

MARGOT
I could be the sole anchor.

JERRY
You don't want a co-anchor?

MARGOT
I don't need anyone else. I'll be
fine on my own.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - LATER

Margot chases Harper around, playing tag.

Margot tires and plops herself down on a bench.

The bench is decorated by a plaque that reads:

In Loving memory of Greyson Edward Eckheart

1983 - 2023

Margot traces the plaque with her fingers.

Vrrr-vrrr. Margot answers her phone.

MARGOT
Chloe. Thank you for calling me
back. How are you?

Harper jumps off the slide from the top and embraces herself
as a wild child.

Margot smiles while she watches Harper from the bench.

INT. PRISON - JAIL CELL

Eli sits cross-legged on a blanket, drawing on a sketch pad
in his lap. He 'meditates.'

ON THE SKETCH PAD

A sketch of Margot smiling while she sits on a bench.

ELI

His lips curl up into a sinister smile.