

IN THE FAMILY WAY

By

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OVER BLACK.

We hear a woman consumed by crippling fear running away from something.

**EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

In her second trimester, SARA (late 20s) tears through dense trees with panic-stricken eyes.

CHILD (O.S.)

Sara?

She stops for a short beat then picks up her pace, trying to escape from the sweet, innocent yet taunting voice as fast as she can.

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

Where are you?

The obscure path twists and turns as Sara goes deeper into the woods.

A branch catches her nightgown. As she yanks her sleeve away, it rips the fabric.

She steps into a BEAR TRAP. She covers her mouth, trying to muffle her blood-curdling screams.

Leaves rustle in one direction. No one.

A branch snaps in the other. Nothing.

Sara senses a growing presence getting closer.

SARA

Get away from her!

And closer. She wraps her arms around her slightly pregnant belly. Her eyes plead.

SARA (CONT'D)

Leave her alone!

**EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

At the edge of the woods, we hear Sara let out a hair-raising shriek.

SMASH CUT TO:

**EXT. DIRT BED - DAY**

The next morning. Sara's fresh dead hand sticks out of the soil, her wedding ring glistening in the rising sun.

As a tractor rumbles by, it grinds Sara's hand to a pulp, tilling it into the earth.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY**

An SUV drives down a winding road with no end in sight through a heatwave.

**INT. CAR - DAY**

AC blasting, the car is filled with a grating silence. CHLOE (early 30s), with patchy blond hair, dull fair skin, and body weighted with fatigue, holds her protruding paunch.

Her husband, WILL (early 30s) dressed business casual but tightly buttoned up, drives on the defensive, his hands at 10 and 2. Stiff. Rigid.

They drive past an infinite stretch of cornfields on each side of them.

He adjusts his mirrors ever so slightly and notices her disgust towards the factory farms sprinkled throughout.

WILL  
Don't worry. I think you're gonna  
love the place.

Will turns the radio on, but the further they drive, the static increases. He shuts it off.

As the road narrows, the fields close in on them.

WILL (CONT'D)  
It must mean we're getting close.

The asphalt road turns to dirt, the tires kicking up dust.

After a long pregnant beat, Chloe turns the radio back on. Will grips the wheel tighter, the static crawling under his skin.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY**

Their SUV zooms past a SIGN: BOUNTIFUL, INDIANA. COME AS STRANGERS. LEAVE LIKE FAMILY.

**EXT. CHLOE AND WILL'S HOUSE - DAY**

A growing neighborhood with cookie-cutter, new-construction homes in the process of being built. Will walks to the car in front of their rustic modern farmhouse nestled on a quiet cul-de-sac. Their own slice of quiet suburbia.

He picks up a dingy UNLABELED BOX that's been opened and taped shut an unhealthy amount of times.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Chloe stands in the middle of every homebuyer's dream. Authentic reclaimed hardwood flooring throughout. Good sightlines. A white, modern kitchen. A perfect balance of old and new.

She stares out a window into nothingness. In her own head.

Will carries in the box. He adds it to the other stacks, but right when Chloe sets her eyes on it, an uneasiness stirs within her.

WILL

I'll put this somewhere else.

She breathes a sigh of relief, and he returns shortly after.

WILL (CONT'D)

Well. What d'you think?

She pushes her fingers deep into her protruding paunch.

CHLOE

It feels so... empty.

He grazes his hands over her stomach.

WILL

You've been healing nicely.

CHLOE

What am I even gonna do here? We're so far away from everything. Everyone.

WILL

Maybe you could volunteer.  
(half-joking)  
Or if you get bored you can go to that church down the street.

CHLOE  
And burst into flames?

WILL  
You can always be born again.

Chloe scoffs: Yeah. Right.

CHLOE  
It feels so... claustrophobic.

WILL  
I know it wasn't easy leaving  
Chicago, but I promised you  
wouldn't have to work anymore, so  
you can recover from the pregnancy.

Arms crossed, Chloe doesn't budge.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Come on, Chlo. Let me take care of  
you. Us. This was supposed to be  
our second chance. Maybe another  
boy to carry on my name. A  
grandchild for my parents.

Chloe rolls her eyes.

CHLOE  
And what is it supposed to give me?

WILL  
What we've always dreamed of. A  
house full of love and laughter.  
Getting down on our knees and  
playing again.

He pulls her close.

WILL (CONT'D)  
We can start slow.

A couple of smooches grow into passionate kisses, but she  
pulls away. Almost repulsed by the idea of intimacy.

CHLOE  
I just. Need some more time.

WILL  
Don't push me away this time. I  
just wanna help.

She walks away, leaving him behind.

**INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY**

Miscellaneous aisle. As Chloe and Will stroll, FRAMED STOCK PHOTOS of seemingly perfect young families catch her eye.

WILL

I'm gonna grab some shaving cream.

She doesn't seem to hear this as she gets lost in a PHOTO OF A COUPLE WITH A NEWBORN.

**INT. BABY AISLE - DAY**

Chloe stops in front of baby food jars and grabs one.

Somebody reaches in front of her, making Chloe drop the jar, pureed fruit splattering all over the bottom of her pants.

CAROL (late 40s), pleasantly plump with a maternal quality and riddled with guilt, tries to wipe off the stain from Chloe's pants.

CAROL

Oh! I'm so sorry.

The stain isn't coming out.

CAROL (CONT'D)

We can try rubbing seltzer on it. I think it's a little further down.

CHLOE

Really. It's fine. I'll get someone to clean this up.

CAROL

Are you expecting?

Carol extends her hand about to touch Chloe's stomach but catches herself: that was rude of me. Chloe hides her belly.

CHLOE

Just walking down memory lane. This was my son's favorite.

Carol gives her a look: was? Chloe wells up, and Carol envelops her in a hug.

CAROL

No parent should have to bury a child.

CHLOE  
That's kind of why we're here. To  
start over.

CAROL  
There's still time.

Chloe pushes her cart the rest of the way down the aisle, and Carol follows.

They stop at the seltzer water, and Carol opens a bottle. She pours a dab onto Chloe's pants and rubs vigorously. The stain disappears.

CHLOE  
You got it out.

CAROL  
Just a little elbow grease.

A grocery worker approaches them.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Excuse me. Clean up in the baby  
aisle.

The grocery worker hurries that way. Chloe and Carol look at each other and smile. A shared secret.

Carol notices the framed photo in Chloe's cart.

CHLOE  
Corny. I know.

CAROL  
No. Not at all.

CHLOE  
I always wonder if the people in  
these things are actually related.

CAROL  
At least it'll make a nice frame.

WILL  
Carol?

Carol and Chloe turn to Will who carries an armful of toiletries.

WILL (CONT'D)  
How're you?

CAROL  
Oh, I'm fine, doctor.

WILL  
Please. Call me Will.

Carol blushes.

CAROL  
OK. William.

WILL  
I only let my mom call me that, but  
you're the only exception.

They laugh at this.

CHLOE  
Do you know each other?

WILL  
Honey, this is Carol. She'll be a  
new patient of mine. We met at the  
office. Carol, this is my wife,  
Chloe.

CAROL  
You've already been such a  
wonderful addition to the  
community. We don't know how to  
thank you.

A light bulb goes off in Carol's head. She takes out a scrap  
of paper and jots something down.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
We're having a little party on  
Wednesday. You have to come.

WILL  
(to Chloe)  
I'll be working, but you should go.

Chloe takes the paper with Carol's NUMBER AND ADDRESS.

CAROL  
It starts at 1.

CHLOE  
I'll see if I can make it. We still  
have tons of unpacking to do.



CAROL  
I understand. I hope to see you  
there.

Carol pushes her cart away.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Stay cool. It's hotter than Satan's  
house cat.

WILL  
Nice lady.

Chloe pushes her cart toward a checkout line. Will follows.

**INT. CHECKOUT LANE - DAY**

The Cashier finishes ringing Chloe and Will up.

As Will pays, Chloe notices a PHOTO OF AN ETHEREAL ELDERLY  
MAN in lustrous robes sitting on a throne-like chair taped to  
the visible side of the cash register.

The CUSTOMER behind her grows annoyed.

CUSTOMER  
Excuse me.

CHLOE  
Oh. Sorry.

Chloe rushes to put the groceries in the cart and pushes it  
toward the exit.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Why can't I hold onto the check  
book or credit cards?

WILL  
That's how it's always been. I do  
all the budgeting.

CHLOE  
It'd just make things a little  
easier since I'll be doing the  
shopping. I shouldn't have to ask  
for money every time I need to do  
something.

WILL  
Not here. We can talk about it at  
home.

She shakes her head: Whatever. Then stops when she sees DAVID (early 30s), frantic, hanging up flyers on a bulletin board. A disgruntled TOWNSPERSON confronts him quietly, trying not to cause a scene. Chloe stops and watches.

WILL (CONT'D)

What?

Chloe nudges her head towards David.

DAVID

I have to keep looking.

TOWNSPERSON

We told you. She left.

DAVID

Sara would never leave. She's my wife. She was pregnant with our first child.

TOWNSPERSON

Don't make this harder than it needs to be. Get outta here. Before someone makes you.

David leaves in a huff, and Townsperson rips all of the flyers down

WILL

Yikes.

Will and Chloe exit.

#### **INT. BEDROOM - DAY**

Chloe rouses herself awake. She feels for Will, but he's not there.

#### **INT. FRONT DOOR - DAY**

Chloe peeks through the window. The car's gone. A young, blond, and Fair-Skinned Couple play with their Children on their lawn. They stop and wave in unison at Chloe.

CHLOE

Creepy.

Chloe walks back into the house. No longer smiling, the family continues to watch Chloe.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

A plain, white envelope greets Chloe on the counter. She opens it: 5s. 10s. A couple 20s neatly organized. Dissatisfied, she leaves her allowance on the counter.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Chloe pops open a bottle of wine and pours a generous glass.

CHLOE  
(toasting to herself)  
To a fresh start.

She downs it.

**INT. AROUND THE HOUSE - DAY**

Chloe stages the living room, fluffing pillows on the couch and hanging framed home decor.

She unboxes dishes, placing them carefully into their designated kitchen cabinets.

She adds fake plants and matching linen sets to the bathroom sink vanity.

She stages a dining room table with a full-blown table setting for three. She stares at the third plate with a nagging sadness. After a long beat, she removes the third plate and takes a picture of the setting with her phone.

She tosses out broken-down boxes next to her recycling bin.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Exhausted from a day's work, Chloe pours the last of the wine and admires the house which looks more put together.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

A little tipsy, Chloe washes a pile of neglected dishes when she jumps at the sight of Liam's box sitting in the shadows.

CHLOE  
Jesus Christ.

She dries her hands.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
I thought he put that away.

She stands over the box for a long beat.

As soon as she slices a knife through the layers of tape, she flinches. Almost afraid to see what she's about to unleash.

She pulls out sentimental baby items, growing increasingly emotional. A powder blue cashmere baby blanket. A preserved umbilical cord. A jar of unopened baby food. A PHOTO of a baby boy with a name engraved at the bottom: LIAM.

Something else catches her eye. At the bottom, she finds an old pack of cigarettes. She opens it and finds a few still intact with a lighter. A portal to a past life. She stuffs the pack in her pocket.

She works up the courage to pick up the umbilical cord. It starts to curl so tightly around her finger it turns purple.

She rips it off, buries it back in the box, and tapes it shut again, again, and again.

**INT. BEDROOM - DAY**

Chloe stows Liam's box out of sight in the closet.

**EXT. CHLOE AND WILL'S HOUSE - DAY**

Chloe opens the door and an abundant welcome basket full of fruits, veggies, and flowers surprises her on the doorstep.

CHLOE  
Oh.

She brings it inside.

**INT. CAR - DAY**

An idyllic agricultural utopia. Chloe's hypnotized by pig herders and farmers prepping high-climbing vegetable trellis farms when Liam's hysterical cries break Chloe's trance.

She screeches to a halt and turns to the backseat -- nothing.

A car honks behind her. Freaked out, she pulls into a church parking lot: ASSEMBLY OF GOD.

**EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY**

Chloe parks her car, trying to regain her composure when somber Churchgoers dressed in black walk into the quaint church. Curious, Chloe follows.

**EXT. CHURCH ENTRANCE - DAY**

Chloe stops at a PHOTO OF A VIBRANT ELDERLY MAN propped up on a stand: CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF ELDER SAMSON WATERS. She weighs the decision to enter. After a long beat, she opens the door.

**INT. CHURCH - DAY**

A sea of multigenerational Families. Everyone is blond and fair-skinned JUST LIKE CHLOE.

Chloe spots Carol fanning herself with a hand fan and quickly grabs a seat next to her. Their eyes light up at the sight of each other. Carol hands her a spare hand fan from her purse.

ELEANOR (late teens), dressed in clergy robes, commands everyone's attention as she stands in front of a closed casket.

ELEANOR

Although we all lost a wonderful  
man, heaven has gained a new angel.  
A devoted member of our community,  
he was one of our most  
accomplished.

Chloe's drawn in by ERIN (early 20s) who sits a few pews away. She glows radiantly in her second trimester.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Let's be thankful we had the  
pleasure of serving someone as well-  
loved as Samson.

Everyone breaks out in harmonious tongues. Eleanor lifts her arms, making the Churchgoers' prayers grow louder as if conducting a choir. Eleanor soaks in this all-consuming power while Chloe grows more uncomfortable, sinking deeper inside the pew.

**EXT. FIELD - EVENING**

Chloe watches members release paper lanterns into a symphonic sunset when a little boy, JACOB, runs up to her.

CHLOE  
Hi, there.

He offers her a lantern.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
For me?

Touched, she takes it.

Chloe takes out her lighter, lights it, and closes her eyes.  
They both watch the wind carry it off along with the others.

JACOB  
Who was it for?

CHLOE  
(holding back tears)  
My baby.

JACOB  
A boy or a girl?

CHLOE  
A boy. Just like you.

JACOB  
You'll find each other again.

Chloe gives a weak smile. She tracks her lantern in the sky  
when it veers off from the others and crashes into the ground  
next to an old barn.

CHLOE  
You stay here. I'll go get it.

Jacob watches as she disappears into the tall grass.

**EXT. BARN - EVENING**

Chloe walks up to the ominous barn with its wood rotted right  
through in some parts.

She sees the lantern with its light slowly dying out.

She creeps up to it without taking her eyes off the barn. As  
if it's watching her.

She picks up the lantern when a hand touches her shoulder.  
She jumps.

ELEANOR  
I didn't mean to scare you.

CHLOE

I was just... looking for my lantern. That was a beautiful service.

ELEANOR

Thank you. You must be the new neighbor.

CHLOE

I just moved here with my husband.

ELEANOR

The new doctor? He's making quite an impression on everyone.

CHLOE

Oh? I'm so glad.

ELEANOR

You came just in time for the harvest festival. When we celebrate the rewards of the growing season.

CHLOE

That sounds wonderful.

CAROL

Chloe!

Carol waves from afar, cradling a newborn baby in one arm.

ELEANOR

I see you've met my mother.

Chloe returns to the church with Eleanor.

#### **EXT. CHURCH - EVENING**

Carol awaits Eleanor and Chloe when another Churchgoer approaches Eleanor.

ELEANOR

Excuse me.

CAROL

Eleanor.

ELEANOR

What?

CAROL  
You're not going to just leave our  
guest, are you?

ELEANOR  
That's why you're here.

Eleanor steps aside, engaging with the Churchgoer in deep  
conversation.

CAROL  
Teenagers.

Chloe laughs nervously.

CHLOE  
I'm sorry for everyone's loss. He  
seemed like a lovely man.

CAROL  
We'll be reunited with those who've  
passed on before us.

CHLOE  
You must be so proud. I didn't know  
what I wanted to be let alone what  
I wanted to wear at her age.

Carol laughs.

CAROL  
I must've done something right.  
She's just filling in for her  
grandfather who was the preacher.  
Before he got sick.

The baby starts to fuss. Chloe's heart melts.

CHLOE  
May I?

Chloe stretches out her arms, and Carol places the baby in  
them. As Chloe sways the baby gently, a calm rushes over him.

CAROL  
You're a natural.

Carol and others close by watch Chloe approvingly as if she's  
passed some sort of test EXCEPT for Eleanor who stands off to  
the side, sizing Chloe up.



**INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe pokes at the extravagant meal she made from scratch.

CHLOE  
Happily ever after.

Her phone DINGS. She takes it out and checks her e-mail. There's an unopened message: IT'S BEEN A WHILE! She clicks on it. Skims. Thinks for a beat, as if she were about to reply but switches to Instagram instead.

**INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe sleeps soundly when a distant crying baby rouses her awake.

She peels herself out of bed to tend to the noise.

**INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Chloe creeps down the hallway when the cries suddenly stop.

CHLOE  
Liam?

**INT. ROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe peeks inside a room and sees a crib. She enters and tiptoes towards it.

She cranes her neck to see a powder blue blanket tightening around Liam's lifeless body.

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe shoots up from bed covered in night sweats. Horrified, she runs out of the room.

**INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT**

A dim hallway lit by old flickering fluorescent tubes. Peeling linoleum floors. Water-damaged ceiling tile. Obtrusive, low-grade equipment line the wall.

Exhausted, Will goes room to room, checking on his sleeping patients when Chloe bursts through the double doors on the verge of tears.

WILL

Hey. Hey. Hey. What's wrong? I was finishing up. I was just about to call.

CHLOE

(hyperventilating)

There was. Was. Crying. In the crib. And. He was. Was.

He wraps his arm around her and ushers her down the hall.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT**

Will tucks a frazzled Chloe in.

CHLOE

Do you really have to stay here all four nights?

WILL

I don't have a choice.

CHLOE

But we just moved in. Shouldn't we be spending more time together? We have the rest of our lives to grow apart.

WILL

I'm only a call away. If I don't answer, I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

CHLOE

You already sound like an answering machine.

WILL

Here.

He hands her a pill and some water.

CHLOE

I don't want it.

WILL

It'll help you relax.

She hesitates.

WILL (CONT'D)  
I'm a doctor, remember?

CHLOE  
Aren't doctors just certified  
dealers?

Will motions for her to drink. She finally gives in and reluctantly washes the pill down with her water.

WILL  
I won't let anything bad happen to  
you. Now get some sleep.

He kisses her gently, and she closes her eyes.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

The next day. A hospital room converted into a bedroom. It lacks personality besides a FRAMED WEDDING PHOTO of Will and Chloe.

Will rouses himself awake. He feels for Chloe, but she's not there.

WILL  
Chloe?

He gets up and puts on his doctor's coat over his PJs.

As he walks down the hall, he pokes his head into the patients' room.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Chloe?

She's still nowhere to be found. His panic rises but abruptly turns into relief when he sees Chloe filling up a patient's cup with water.

WILL (CONT'D)  
There you are. You can't just run  
off like that.

CHLOE  
I couldn't sleep.

She smiles at the patient as Will pulls her away, leading her down the hall.

WILL

I can't help you if you don't tell me what happened.

CHLOE

I saw something.

WILL

What?

CHLOE

You're gonna think I'm crazy.

WILL

Of course not. I'm your husband.

CHLOE

I heard a baby crying down the hall. When I went to check, he was just lying there...

WILL

Who?

CHLOE

Liam. His little body wrapped in...

WILL

It was just a bad dream.

CHLOE

Maybe he's trying to tell me something.

WILL

Chlo, you gotta stop doing this to yourself. It's not your fault.

CHLOE

I don't know if I can be in that house alone.

(beat)

Kim reached out. Maybe I should invite her over. You know. To see the house?

WILL

Why would you wanna be friends with someone who ghosted us after we lost Liam? I couldn't imagine abandoning someone you care about during their most desperate time of need.

CHLOE

Then can I stay here with you?

WILL

I didn't buy a house for you to sleep in a shitty hospital.

CHLOE

That's easy for you to say. You're always at work, so you don't have to deal with it half the time.

WILL

That's not fair. I just want you to be comfortable.

CHLOE

It's like we're being punished for his death.

WILL

We have to keep trying. Even if you're fertile in your 20s and early 30s, your chance of getting pregnant is 1 out of 4. By the time you reach 40, your chances are only 1 in 10.

CHLOE

(slamming the pitcher of water on a nearby counter)

I said I'm not ready yet.

WILL

Here.

He hands her a bottle of pills.

CHLOE

I don't need pills or a baby to fix me.

She walks out of the hospital. Suddenly, a monotone BEEP comes from a hospital room.

He bolts towards it.

#### **INT. PATIENT ROOM - DAY**

Will rushes over to tend to an elderly patient.

WILL

Shit.

He's already dead.

**INT. PATIENT ROOM - DAY**

Later. Will stands over the elderly man when CORONER (50s) wheels in a stretcher.

CORONER

You're the new doctor.

WILL

Yes.

CORONER

Grab his feet.

Coroner squiggles something on a toe tag and ties it to the elderly man's big toe.

Will takes a closer look. Instead of identification, a PUMPKIN DOODLE is scribbled on it. Almost illegible.

CORONER (CONT'D)

Contact the family, so they can proceed with the necessary arrangements.

Coroner zips up the body bag and wheels it away.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY**

Chloe drives by a factory farm and sees a worker ushering pigs off a truck and into the building.

Chloe winces at their sad fate.

Chloe sees a speed limit sign: 55 MPH. She ignores it and accelerates 60 MPH. 65 MPH. 70 MPH.

**EXT. URBAN STREETS - DAY**

As Chloe drives further into the city, the rural roads slowly transition into urban streets.

**EXT. PLANNED PARENTHOOD - DAY**

Chloe pulls into the parking lot.

**INT. LOBBY - DAY**

Chloe approaches LUCIA (late 20s) who sits at the front desk in nurse's scrubs.

CHLOE

Hi. I have an appointment today at 2:00.

Lucia looks through the computer system.

LUCIA

Chloe?

CHLOE

Yeah.

Lucia hands her a clipboard with some forms attached.

LUCIA

Dr. Rodriguez will be with you shortly.

**INT. OFFICE - DAY**

Chloe sits on a patient table when there's a light KNOCK at the door. DR. RODRIGUEZ (early 40s) pokes her head in wearing a bright smile.

DR. RODRIGUEZ

Hi, there. Chloe?

CHLOE

Hi.

DR. RODRIGUEZ

Nice to meet you. I'm Dr. Rodriguez.

Lucia follows close behind.

DR. RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

If you don't mind, Lucia's training with me today.

Chloe nods. Smiles at Lucia while Dr. Rodriguez checks her clipboard.

DR. RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

I see here you wanted to talk to someone about getting onto some form of birth control.

CHLOE

Yes.

DR. RODRIGUEZ

Have you been on any before?

CHLOE

A long time ago.

Dr. Rodriguez gives her a look. As if she's trying to pull information out of her.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

In college. But after my husband and I got married, he wanted to have kids pretty much right away. So we got pregnant and then shortly after...

Chloe clears her throat as if trying to spit the words out. Dr. Rodriguez furrows her brow. Empathizes.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Now he wants to try again, but I'm just not ready yet. It's like we're on two totally different wavelengths... like we're grieving differently. He throws himself into everything. Onto me. And I retreat into myself.

DR. RODRIGUEZ

Does he know you're here?

Chloe shakes her head. Dr. Rodriguez nods, acknowledging the sensitivity of the subject.

CHLOE

Every little girl dreams of their wedding day, right? Their prince charming. The white picket fence. I didn't think it would become my nightmare.

DR. RODRIGUEZ

Everyone's different. But that's not what they teach you.

CHLOE

Do you have kids?

Chloe shakes her head. Embarrassed.



CHLOE (CONT'D)

I hate that question. And here I am asking you.

DR. RODRIGUEZ

That's OK. It was always in the back of my mind, but I wanted to focus on helping other people instead. Once I started to think about it again, I didn't want it as badly as I thought I did. It's funny how things can change.

CHLOE

Tell me about it. I had just landed my dream job. It felt like my life was just starting and then before I even knew it I quit because Will didn't want me to be too stressed while I was pregnant. Everyone was blindsided. It's like my friends didn't know who I was anymore. Hell, I didn't even know. What scares me is that I still don't.

Dr. Rodriguez places a reassuring hand on Chloe's.

DR. RODRIGUEZ

We have options that provide a little more flexibility. There's the shot that you would get every 3 months. Or a ring that you can replace monthly. Or the pills which you would take daily.

CHLOE

I think I'd like to get on those again.

DR. RODRIGUEZ

OK.

Dr. Rodriguez scribbles something down on her clipboard.

DR. RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

Do you smoke?

Chloe feels shameful. Embarrassed.

DR. RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

It's OK. You'll just have to quit.

CHLOE  
You're the first person who doesn't  
treat me like I'm Satan's  
offspring.

DR. RODRIGUEZ  
You're only human.

Dr. Rodriguez puts her hand on hers reassuringly.

DR. RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)  
They'll be ready for you up front.

CHLOE  
Thank you.

DR. RODRIGUEZ  
And Chloe.

CHLOE  
Hmm?

DR. RODRIGUEZ  
Do you feel safe at home?

Chloe isn't sure how to take this.

DR. RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)  
If you need any of our abuse,  
sexual assault, or rape services,  
we can connect you to local  
resources.

CHLOE  
Oh, I'm fine. There's nothing like  
that going on.

DR. RODRIGUEZ  
If you need anything, please. Don't  
hesitate to call.

Dr. Rodriguez leaves the room.

**INT. LOBBY - DAY**

Chloe grabs an assortment of PAMPHLETS on her way out: SIGNS  
OF ABUSE.

**INT. HALLWAY - DAY**

Chloe stands where she hallucinated the crib, uncomfortable in her own skin. Like a stranger in her own home. She closes the door, shaking away the heebie-jeebies.

**INT. BATHROOM - DAY**

Chloe pops the first pill in her birth control pack and lets out a deep sigh of relief.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Brewing with boredom, Chloe sits in her immaculate home in deafening silence.

She scrolls through her picture-perfect Instagram. Couple goals of herself and Will. Aesthetically pleasing food spreads and interior design elements.

She stops at the same wedding photo we saw in Will's hospital room as if she's waiting for it to spark an ounce of joy when she hears Liam distressed nearby.

She stands and creeps towards the sound.

CHLOE

Liam?

She walks down the hallway, and Liam crawls around the corner. She follows.

**INT. HOME OFFICE - DAY**

Chloe walks in when Liam pulls on a filing cabinet that towers over him, trying to get to an open window.

CHLOE

Liam!

She lunges for him, but it's too late. He reaches for a handle above his head, grabs it, and the filing cabinet crushes him. She closes her eyes and screams.

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. HOME OFFICE - DAY**

Chloe opens her eyes, and the filing cabinet is back where she originally found it. She rushes over to the open window and shuts it.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Chloe runs in and scrambles to look for something on the counter. Finally, she finds the scrap of paper Carol gave her earlier. She takes out her phone. Dials.

CHLOE

Hi, Carol It's me. Chloe.

**EXT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Chloe stands in the rain, holding a plate of freshly baked cookies, and rings the doorbell. Soon after, Carol opens the door.

CAROL

Chloe! What a pleasant surprise!

CHLOE

I thought I would bring over some cookies.

CAROL

Oh my! It sounds like the devil is beating his wife out here. Come inside.

Chloe enters.

**INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Loud, busy wallpaper. Drab floral and dusty pastel drapes. Outdated wood paneling. Screaming children run amuck in the middle of playing tag.

CHLOE

A lot of kids.

CAROL

We're throwing a gender reveal party for Erin. That's one of the great things you'll find about this community.

(MORE)

CAROL (CONT'D)  
If you ever need a hand, there's  
always someone willing to lend one.  
I think that's why we've been able  
to persevere for so long.

As Chloe follows Carol, Chloe stops at a pine curio cabinet displaying a kitschy, cartoonish pig collection.

CHLOE  
You have quite the collection.

CAROL  
They say pigs are a sign of good  
luck.

Chloe's eye wanders through the cabinet when she stops at  
FRAMED FAMILY PHOTOS with an elderly man and woman at the  
center of each one.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
That's Grandpa Abe and Grandma  
Eleanor. His relatives, the  
Abbotts, founded this town about  
100 years ago. It's been about 17  
years since Grandma Eleanor passed  
on, but she's still such an  
important figure in our community.

CHLOE  
I can tell they're really loved.

CAROL  
Go ahead and introduce yourself to  
the kiddos. They don't bite.

Carol leaves Chloe to navigate through the party.

#### **INT. MAN CAVE - DAY**

Voices seep through a cracked door. Chloe walks closer and  
peers in. Eleanor's the only woman amongst a group of men  
sitting around each other, but she doesn't seem intimidated  
by this.

MAN #1 (O.S.)  
Everything seems to be in order.

MAN #2 (O.S.)  
How are we so sure?

Everyone turns to Eleanor.

ELEANOR (O.S.)  
I wouldn't be so quick to jump at  
the opportunity.

MAN #3 (O.S.)  
But its almost time. His death is  
imminent.

ELEANOR (O.S.)  
But how do we know she won't run  
away like the last surrogate?

The men consider this when a couple of laughing children run  
past Chloe. She quietly shushes them.

MAN #2 (O.S.)  
And what if the transition fails?

MAN #1 (O.S.)  
(reluctantly)  
Then Eleanor will be crowned our  
new leader.

CHLOE  
(under her breath)  
Surrogate?

Chloe catches a glimpse of Eleanor who has a smug, approving  
look on her face when suddenly, a man appears through the  
crack in the door. She jumps back as he shuts it. Slightly  
embarrassed, she walks further into the house.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

YOUNG WOMEN buzz around the main floor, hovering around Erin  
and herding CHILDREN who throw tantrums like an in-home  
daycare. The real housewives of Gatlin, Nebraska. Chloe's eye  
is immediately drawn to tacky mass-produced pieces of word  
art sitting on the mantel: HOME. GATHER. FAMILY.

SCREAMING CHILD  
But I want more ice cream!

YOUNG WOMAN #1  
Shh. After you eat some of this.  
You need your fruits and veggies so  
that you grow big and strong.

SCREAMING CHILD  
No! I want it now!

YOUNG WOMAN #1  
OK! OK!

Riddled with stress, she turns to Chloe about to burst.

YOUNG WOMAN #1 (CONT'D)  
Everyday it's like this. He screams  
and cries. Every little thing is a  
battle, and nothing I ever do is  
good enough. I look in the mirror  
and don't even recognize the person  
staring back at me.

She gasps as if appalled by her own admission.

CHLOE  
Don't worry. I get it. Raising a  
kid is hard, but you're doing a  
great job. I wish I had someone who  
would've told me that.

Young Woman #1 smiles through her pain.

YOUNG WOMAN #1  
But I wouldn't change it for the  
world. He's such a blessing. The  
best thing that ever happened to  
me.

Young Woman #1 dashes into the kitchen when Chloe notices  
Young Woman #2 playing "This Little Piggy" with another child  
sitting in her lap.

YOUNG WOMAN #2  
This little piggy went to the  
market. This little piggy stayed  
home. This little piggy had roast  
beef. This little piggy had none.  
This little piggy went WEE, WEE,  
WEE, all the way to the slaughter  
house!

Chloe's eyes widen as Young Woman #2 tickles the child  
squirming in her lap: what the fuck?

Young Woman #3 pops up out of nowhere.

YOUNG WOMAN #3  
Say cheese!

Caught off guard, Chloe cracks an awkward smile when a camera  
flashes in her face.

YOUNG WOMAN #3 (CONT'D)  
That's one for the books.

Young Woman #3 disappears into the crowd while Chloe navigates around toys scattered on the floor.

Jacob runs around, waving a toy airplane. Brrrrr. He slams right into her.

CHLOE  
Hi, there. Remember me?

He nods.

JACOB  
Do you wanna see my airplane?

CHLOE  
That's OK. You go ahead and have fun.

He goes back to making noises. Louder this time.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Shh.

He ignores her, and Chloe grows annoyed.

He knocks over a large floor vase. It shatters.

Chloe grabs Jacob's arm maybe a little too rough. Carol runs in and sees Chloe's tight grip around Jacob's arm.

CAROL  
You're hurting him.

Chloe lets go. Jacob buries his face into Carol's legs.

CHLOE  
He knocked over your vase. I tried to get him to stop, but he didn't listen.

Carol kneels in front of Jacob.

CAROL  
Did she hurt you?

Carol kisses Jacob's arm who's on the verge of tears.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
I'll have one of the girls clean this up.

Both look at Chloe. They know something she doesn't.



CAROL (CONT'D)  
Now go on. There's cake waiting for  
you in the kitchen.

As Jacob scurries away, Carol watches him with admiration.

CHLOE  
What about the vase?

CAROL  
It's alright. Please. Help yourself  
to some food.

Carol rushes away.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Chloe makes herself a plate at the counter when she hears two people arguing in the walk-in butler's pantry.

She peeks from behind the wall and sees Carol and Eleanor deep in conversation. Both are equally upset.

**INT. WALK-IN BUTLER PANTRY - DAY**

Shelved home-canned goods surround Carol and Eleanor. Sauces. Jams. Vegetables. Mincemeats.

ELEANOR  
She's unqualified.

CAROL  
Will you keep your voice down?

ELEANOR  
She's a means to an end! A short-term solution should've never been considered to carry on his legacy.

CAROL  
He doesn't have much time. This is the best way to save him. Us.

ELEANOR  
And since when do you know what's best? Like when you handpicked the other one?

CAROL  
This isn't going to work if we don't work together and keep an open mind.

ELEANOR

By the grace of God, I hope you're right. Because if you screw this up again, I won't be around to clean up your mess like the last time.

Carol raises her hand at Eleanor as if she's about to slap her. Eleanor steps closer to Carol.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Just because you birthed me, doesn't mean you're entitled to any special treatment.

Eleanor storms off. Chloe and Carol's eyes meet. Flustered, Carol runs in the opposite direction.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Chloe turns her attention to a BABY MONITOR sitting on a counter that's turned ON. She hears labored breathing coming from it, but nobody seems to be paying attention.

**INT. HALLWAY - DAY**

Chloe follows the sounds of rhythmic THUMPS of an oxygen machine over the echoes of laughing Children.

**INT. GRANDPA'S ROOM - DAY**

Chloe pushes the cracked door open. She's overwhelmed by the matching wallpaper, bedding, and shag carpeting. Very 70s.

Chloe slowly approaches GRANDPA (90s). Rail thin. Mottled, discolored skin. Bony prominences. Like death warmed over. She realizes this is the SAME person from the photo of the ethereal elderly man from earlier. Although bedridden, he still holds a quiet power.

CHLOE

I've seen you before.

A fly crawls out of his mouth and lays little white eggs on a crack in his bottom lip. As Grandpa exhales, it flies away.

Chloe follows his gaze, landing on Chapstick on the nightstand. She gently applies it to his lips.

He whispers faintly. His voice is airy. Dry. Hollow. Chloe can't make out what he's saying. She leans in closer.

GRANDPA

Kill me.

Chloe's taken aback by this.

CAROL

I see you found Grandpa.

CHLOE

I just wanted to help.

CAROL

It's OK, dear.

CHLOE

I thought I heard him having trouble breathing, so I thought I'd check on him.

CAROL

You still have that maternal instinct. How is he?

CHLOE

OK. I think.

CAROL

Your family must miss you living all the way out here.

CHLOE

Oh, my parents died when I was pretty young, so my grandparents took me in. But they're not around anymore.

CAROL

Any brothers or sisters?

Chloe shakes her head.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Well, you have us.

Chloe smiles as they look back at Grandpa.

CAROL (CONT'D)

They said he might go any day now. It's so strange. We spend so much time trying to create meaning and maintain some sort of structure until we suddenly die, and things just spiral into chaos.

Chloe and Carol watch Grandpa lay motionless. Every breath stirs pain in his body.

Another Young Woman knocks on the door with an urgent look on her face. Carol and Chloe turn towards her.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
(to Chloe)  
Excuse me.

Young Woman pulls her aside and whispers in her ear.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Oh, dear.

Carol follows Young Woman out as Chloe turns back to Grandpa.

CHLOE  
Everything's gonna be OK.

She takes his hand, and he gently clenches onto hers.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Chloe joins a group of eager women. Soon after, Eleanor commands their attention.

ELEANOR  
Everyone. I'm afraid the party's  
been canceled.

The group erupts in concerned chatter.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
Everything's fine. Please be sure  
to grab a goody bag on your way  
out.

The group disperses, trickling out of the room.

#### **INT. FOYER - DAY**

Chloe sees a basket full of tiny cloth pouches. There's one with her name on it. She opens it and finds loose-leaf tea and a steel ball tea infuser inside. Eleanor walks up to her.

ELEANOR  
I harvested and dried the leaves  
myself. Will told us you were  
having trouble relaxing.

CHLOE  
I'll have to try it.

Just as Eleanor is about to leave...

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Eleanor.

Eleanor turns to her.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Maybe take it easy on your mom.  
She's just worried about your  
Grandpa.

ELEANOR  
I don't know how you do things  
where you come from. But here, we  
respect our elders.

Eleanor walks away, and Chloe scoffs: the nerve.

**EXT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - DAY**

As Chloe exits, she hears crying coming from the side of the house. It's Erin.

CHLOE  
Are you OK?

Her eyes are swollen and red. Her radiant glow from earlier extinguished.

ERIN  
(through tears)  
It's a girl.

Young Woman #3 swoops in.

YOUNG WOMAN #3  
Erin! There you are. Eleanor's been  
looking all over for you.

CHLOE  
Is everything OK?

Young Woman #3 whisks Erin away.

**EXT. CHLOE AND WILL'S HOUSE - DAY**

Chloe gets out of her car, and she sees David landscaping his yard across the cul-de-sac.

He notices her walking toward him, and he runs into his house.

CHLOE  
Wait!

**EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY**

Chloe knocks on David's door.

CHLOE  
Hello?

She knocks harder when David whips the door open.

DAVID  
Shh!

He pulls her inside.

**INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY**

Chloe steps into months of accumulated clutter and chaos.

CHLOE  
I'm Chloe. Your new neighbor. I saw you at the grocery store the other day.

DAVID  
I'd be careful. I'm not the most popular person in town.

Chloe notices stacks of SARA'S FLYERS from the grocery store. She looks different from when we last saw her. Happy. Wholesome. Under her photo: MISSING. Old newspapers lie strewn on the table. A monument to Sara.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
I've looked through all of them front to back. Nothing.

CHLOE  
Who is she?

DAVID  
(beat)  
My wife.

CHLOE  
I'm so sorry.

DAVID

I hold onto them afraid I missed something. Someone has to know something...

CHLOE

Seems like a nice town.

DAVID

Sara and I both come from small families, so we kinda liked that it was built on tradition and family values with a modern twist. I guess the Abbotts settled here because the climate was good and the land was cheap. Perfect for a farming community. Vegetables. Fruit. If they can sow it, they'll try and grow it.

CHLOE

They've been here a while.

DAVID

Born and bred. We thought we could really make this our own, until everything became all about *family*. Whether we were at home, work, or hell, just buying fucking milk at the store. If someone spotted me alone somewhere, they'd wonder where Sara was. But now that I'm the one asking where she is, it's like... No one seems to care. Everyone keeps saying I'll meet someone else.

Chloe puts an empathetic hand on his shoulder when he peeks through the shades, shrouded in paranoia.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You better get going before someone sees.

He shrugs Chloe's hand off his shoulder.

CHLOE

It was nice meeting you.

She motions towards a flyer.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

May I?

DAVID

Sure. No one else seems to want them.

CHLOE

Maybe you can come over for dinner sometime. We'd love to have you. Anyways.

(beat)

Stop by if you ever need anything. Please.

He nods.

DAVID

Welcome to the neighborhood.

She leaves.

#### **INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Another dull night as Chloe picks at her meal as she scrolls mindlessly through Instagram when she suddenly gets a follow. And then another. And another after that.

She clicks on one of her new followers. It's one of the Young Women from the party. She scrolls her feed only to find a constant barrage of nauseatingly cute babies.

CHLOE

Ugh.

She flips her phone facedown on the table without following back.

#### **INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe tosses and turns in bed haunted by the sounds of Liam's cries. She shoots up from bed when she hears Liam giggle and tiny feet pattering on the floor.

CHLOE

Liam.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe heads downstairs and sees the door wide open.

CHLOE

Liam? You can't keep running off like that.



**EXT. CHLOE AND WILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Chloe runs outside, but there's no sign of Liam.

CHLOE

What d'you want from me?

Chloe hears the phone RING from inside.

**INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe answers.

CHLOE

Hello?

CAROL (V.O.)

Chloe. It's me.

CHLOE

Hi.

CAROL (V.O.)

So sorry to call you on such short notice. You're the only person I thought I could call.

CHLOE

What is it? Is everything OK?

CAROL (V.O.)

It's Grandpa. I hate to ask... Our live-in had a family emergency, and we need someone to stay with him. Would you be able to stay the night?

CHLOE

Oh. I don't know if you'd want...

CAROL (V.O.)

Please. He asked for you. He feels comfortable with you more than anyone. That's a lot coming from a dying man.

**EXT. CAR - NIGHT**

Chloe smokes a cigarette with cool confidence. Takes one long last drag in total mischievous bliss. She tosses the cigarette on the ground and stomps it out.

She feverishly sprays herself with perfume and spritzes her mouth with breath spray.

**EXT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Chloe knocks with a small overnight bag in hand when Carol opens the door.

CAROL  
Chloe. Hi. Come on in.

Chloe enters.

**INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Chloe follows Carol.

CAROL  
Thanks for filling in.

CHLOE  
I would've just been cooped up in  
that house by myself.  
(a beat)  
Carol?

Carol stops and turns towards Chloe.

CAROL  
Hmm?

CHLOE  
How's Erin?

CAROL  
I'm not sure what you mean.

CHLOE  
She seemed upset about having a  
girl.

CAROL  
All babies are his children.

Chloe thinks this is strange as Carol keeps walking.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
We just need someone here to let us  
know if he passes. He mostly just  
sleeps, eats, and poops. Don't  
worry.

(MORE)

CAROL (CONT'D)  
You won't have to change him. He  
has a colostomy bag I empty.

They reach the doorway and peek inside.

**INT. GRANDPA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Eleanor sits next to Grandpa as she holds a cup of tea up to his quivering mouth.

CAROL  
Kind of like a baby. It'll be good  
practice. For when you decide to  
try again.

CHLOE  
I'm not sure when that'll be. Or if  
I'll ever be ready.

CAROL  
You never know what real love is  
until you have a child.

Chloe stews at this.

CHLOE  
Lots of women find purpose in other  
ways besides being a mother. Or a  
wife.

Chloe turns to Grandpa.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Like helping someone die a  
dignified death.

CAROL  
I guess it depends on how you  
define purpose. My life would just  
feel... meaningless.

Chloe follows Carol out, and Grandpa turns his head slightly to Eleanor.

GRANDPA  
I want to die.

ELEANOR  
(in a low voice)  
Do you know what they would do to  
me if I...

Grandpa closes his eyes and exhales, too tired to fight.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
But the sooner death takes you, the  
sooner you'll be free.

Eleanor lays a pair of rusted vintage scissors on the  
nightstand.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
Once your surrogate achieves a  
successful conception, we will  
possess immortality.

She kisses him on his forehead.

**INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT**

Carol leads Chloe into a room with a twin-sized bed.

Chloe sets her overnight bag down next to a nightstand.

CAROL  
It's not much.

Carol holds up the baby monitor.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Make sure to carry this around just  
in case he might need something.

Static crackles through the speaker.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Grandpa, it's Carol. Tap if you can  
hear me.

A slow TAP. TAP. TAP. from the other end.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Good.

She hands it to Chloe.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Carol opens the fridge. It's full of pureed food. Each  
container is meticulously labeled.

CAROL  
If he gets hungry there's plenty to  
eat.

She points to containers full of a blood-red substance.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Add about a tablespoon of thickener  
so he doesn't aspirate.

Carol turns her cheek.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Eleanor! Time to go. Father's  
waiting. Would you lock us out?

Chloe walks Carol to the front door. Soon after, Eleanor  
joins them.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Good night, dear. Call if you have  
any questions. Oh and Chloe?  
(beat)  
I'd appreciate it if you didn't  
smoke around Grandpa.

CHLOE  
(stunned)  
...Sure.

As soon as Carol and Eleanor leave, Chloe sniffs her clothes  
for any traces of cigarette smoke.

#### **INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT**

With every step Chloe takes, we hear the rhythm of a CREAK on  
the floor, followed by the THUMP of the oxygen machine, and  
breathing coming from the baby monitor.

CREAK. THUMP. INHALE.

CREAK. THUMP. EXHALE.

#### **INT. GRANDPA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

A dim lamp on the nightstand gently lights the room. You can  
see Grandpa's silhouette, his chest rising and falling.

She feels a gauze on Grandpa's forearm permeating with blood  
and pus.

She scans the room, but there's no sign of first aid  
supplies.

As she walks to the door, Grandpa's silhouette shoots up. Now  
sitting upright, he slowly turns his head towards Chloe.

**INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Wobbly, leaky appliances. Unsightly, tired tile with stained grout.

Chloe shuffles through drawers, pulling out first aid supplies. Gauze. Medical Tape. Rubbing alcohol.

She turns and finds Grandpa standing in the doorway. She screams.

GRANDPA

Please.

His head lolls back as he slowly falls to the ground.

Chloe drops the supplies and catches his fall.

CHLOE

Grandpa! What're you doing? Come on. Let's get you cleaned up.

He's so frail, Chloe picks him up with her hands looped under his knees and her other arm supporting his back.

**INT. GRANDPA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe tussles with Grandpa's top sheet and finds an EMBROIDERED SYMBOL OF A TRIPLE SPIRAL: huh.

She lays Grandpa gently in bed and slowly peels the gauze off, yellow pus sticking to it.

She carefully wipes away the pus from his papery skin. She cleans the wound and wraps a new gauze on his forearm.

CHLOE

You must be starving. I'm gonna get you something to eat. I'll be right back.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Chloe opens the fridge and grabs a tub of what looks like tomato soup. She pours it into a bowl and stares at the unappetizing glop: Eww. Gross. Microwaves it.

As the soup warms up, she sees lanterns bobbing in the distance.

The microwave BEEPS, but she ignores it.

She squints at the lanterns stopping at the barn.

The microwave BEEPS again, and Chloe takes out the piping hot bowl with its edges caked in burnt food.

She opens the container of thickener and sprinkles some of it into the bowl.

**INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Chloe carefully walks with the bowl of hot soup.

CHLOE  
Grandpa, I brought you something to eat.

She hears JINGLING coming from Grandpa's room.

**INT. GRANDPA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe opens the door as Grandpa tries to stab himself repeatedly in the chest with the scissors Eleanor left on the nightstand.

CLINK. CLINK. CLINK.

He's so weak he only manages to nick his skin.

CHLOE  
Grandpa!

She puts the bowl on the nightstand and snatches the scissors out of Grandpa's hand.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
I know how hard this must be. To live for everyone else but yourself. But you have to keep trying.

Chloe cleans Grandpa's shallow cut and tapes a gauze over it.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
I brought you some soup.

He doesn't show any interest. She's at her wit's end.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
We'll try again later.

Chloe takes the scissors.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Get some rest. I'll be downstairs  
if you need anything.

She turns out the light.

**INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe hides the scissors in a dresser drawer and pulls out her cloth pouch of tea from the party.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Chloe smells a spoonful of the soup: yeesh.

She swirls the spoon around the rim when strands of COARSE HAIR float to the surface. She swirls deeper and a cornea of a PIG'S EYE floats to the top.

She drops the bowl in the sink and turns the garbage disposal on, letting out a high-pitched RATTLING and GRINDING. After a long beat, she turns it off.

She takes a deep breath, trying to recover from the moment.

CHLOE  
Relax, Chloe.

Chloe pours hot water over the steel ball tea infuser in a Porky Pig mug.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Skeptical at first, Chloe finally takes a sip: not bad.

She sees VHS TAPES stacked inside a console under a bulky TV.

She picks out an UNLABELED TAPE and inserts it into the VCR. A grainy home video plays.

A younger, more robust Grandpa preaches at the pulpit in the church, passionately waving his hands.

She grows dizzy, holding her head as the room spins. She stands, trying to make her way around the room but falls and passes out on the floor.



**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Later. Chloe tosses and turns to the rhythm of Grandpa's breathing as it grows louder and more drawn out. Almost sensual. She opens her eyes, groggy.

She sees Carol approaching, reciting some sort of prayer.

CHLOE

Carol? What're you doing here?

Soon after, Eleanor and other women surround her and join in.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Hey, guys. What's going on?

They flip her on her stomach and lift her shirt. We hear something SEAR into Chloe's flesh. She yelps.

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

The static from the TV wakes Chloe from her deep slumber.

She slowly rises from the floor and ejects the unlabeled tape, but instead of putting it back, she takes it with her.

**INT. GRANDPA'S ROOM - DAY**

Overnight bag in hand, she slips the unlabeled tape inside. Chloe stands over Grandpa, caressing his hand.

CHLOE

I have to go, but I'll see you soon.

Carol walks in, and Chloe pulls Carol aside.

CAROL

Is everything OK, dear?

CHLOE

Was anyone here last night?

CAROL

I don't think so.

CHLOE

I had this really weird dream. You and the others were at the house.

CAROL  
That's impossible. The others live  
clear across town.

CHLOE  
Something else happened.

CAROL  
Was everything alright?

CHLOE  
He tried to kill himself.

Carol gives her a look: what do you mean?

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
With a pair of scissors.

CAROL  
They say when someone is so close  
to death, they get this sudden  
burst of energy. It could be any  
day now.

Carol lays a hand on Chloe's shoulder.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Go get some rest.

Grandpa's eyes follow Chloe as she leaves.

**EXT. CHLOE'S CAR - DAY**

As Chloe walks to her car, she sees an interracial COUPLE  
walking out of a newly finished home: OPEN HOUSE.

CHLOE  
Hi, there.

	HUSBAND		WIFE
Hi.		Hi.	

CHLOE  
Are you thinking about buying?

HUSBAND  
We're just looking.

WIFE  
How do you like it here?

CHLOE  
There's a great sense of community.

WIFE  
We like it, but there's one more  
we're looking at.

HUSBAND  
Nice meeting you.

CHLOE  
Happy house hunting.

Husband escorts Wife to their car.

**INT. BATHROOM - DAY**

Chloe undresses, revealing deep stretch marks etched onto her stomach. Constant, nagging reminders.

When she turns around we see --

THE SAME TRIPLE SPIRAL FROM GRANDPA'S BEDDING SEARED ONTO HER BACK.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Chloe neurotically busies herself when Will enters the house.

WILL  
Hey, babe.

She jumps.

CHLOE  
Shit. I didn't hear you come in.

WILL  
Slow down.

CHLOE  
Sorry. It just helps me to keep.  
Busy.

WILL  
I brought you a little something.

He whips out a bouquet from behind his back.

CHLOE  
They're beautiful.

WILL  
I'm sorry I've been putting so much  
pressure on you.

Chloe smiles at this small effort.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Hey, I thought maybe later we can go to the Harvest Festival. I keep seeing signs for it.

CHLOE  
Yeah. It'll be nice to get out of the house. Let me put these in a vase.

Will plops his overnight bag down.

WILL  
How was the rest of your week?

CHLOE  
It was fine.

She fills the vase with water.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
I spent the night at Grandpa's house.

WILL  
Grandpa?

CHLOE  
Carol's father-in-law. They needed help taking care of him. I might have to go back tonight.

Will's a little surprised.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
What? I thought you wanted me to get to know thy neighbor.

WILL  
I did. I'm just proud of you.

CHLOE  
I guess it feels nice to be needed.

WILL  
What're they like?

CHLOE  
Their kids seem a little spoiled. They're always at home.

Will shifts uncomfortably.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
It's true. They let them do  
whatever they want.

WILL  
They're probably just home-  
schooled.

Chloe slams the scissors on the counter.

WILL (CONT'D)  
I just don't think you have the  
right to tell people how to raise  
their kiddos.

She shudders.

CHLOE  
Did you tell them I was having  
trouble relaxing?

WILL  
It was just small talk. They asked  
how you were adjusting. Is it a  
crime to care?

CHLOE  
Do me a favor, and don't talk about  
me with strangers.

WILL  
They're not *strangers*. They're our  
friends.

CHLOE  
Maybe yours. And *Kiddos*? You're  
starting to sound just like them.

Chloe storms off.

#### **EXT. SMALL TOWN STREETS - DAY**

The leaves have turned fiery orange and red. Family-friendly fall-themed games fill blocked-off streets while vendors sell pumpkin-spiced everything.

A banner hangs above Eleanor sitting on a throne-like chair propped up on a small stage: HARVEST FESTIVAL.

As Will and Chloe approach the entrance, they watch excited Festivalgoers touch Eleanor's robes as they pass and violently shake as if internalizing a renewed energy.

CHLOE  
What're they doing?

WILL  
Touching the ceremonial garb of the  
reigning leader brings prosperity  
and health. Or so I was told.

Will touches Eleanor's robes as he passes.

Eager Festivalgoers accumulate behind Chloe who stands  
hesitant.

WILL (CONT'D)  
C'mon, Chlo. People are waiting.

Uncomfortable, Chloe approaches the stage. She taps Eleanor's  
robes and retracts her hand quickly.

WILL (CONT'D)  
See? That wasn't that hard.

Chloe follows behind Will with Eleanor watching her with  
approval.

**EXT. PETTING ZOO - DAY**

Chloe feeds the pigs as she watches families frolic in the  
pumpkin patch.

She turns her attention to a pig who noshes uncontrollably at  
the food in her hand.

CHLOE  
Hey, slow down.

The pig lets out an eerie, distorted, and drawn-out squeal,  
its crazed eye hypnotizing her. She's seen this eye before.

It bites her, snapping her out of her trance.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Ow!

She scans the festival grounds and sees Will standing in line  
at a food vendor talking with another young, attractive woman  
who looks full of promise. This is ABBY (late 20s). They look  
like everything Chloe and Will aren't. Happy. Care-free. A  
seemingly perfect match. Chloe walks over.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Hi.

Chloe's presence startles Will as if he snaps out of a trance.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
I didn't mean to interrupt.

WILL  
Abby this is...

He snaps his fingers, his words escaping him.

CHLOE  
His wife.

WILL  
Chloe.

ABBY  
(disappointed)  
Oh. William never mentioned you  
before.

He laughs nervously.

ABBY (CONT'D)  
I should go. Nice to finally meet  
you.

Abby walks away.

WILL  
Don't forget your appointment next  
week.

Chloe stares daggers at Will as he holds something questionable and deep-fried on a stick.

WILL (CONT'D)  
What?

He sees Carol approaching at a distance. Almost relieved.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Hey, Carol!

CAROL  
Don't you love this time of year?

Carol breathes in the crisp, fall air when she notices blood trickling down Chloe's hand.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Oh, dear. Your hand.

WILL

What happened? Are you OK?

CHLOE

Yeah. Yeah, I'm fine. I was just feeding the pigs. How's Grandpa?

CAROL

He's already been asking about you. Thank goodness you're coming tonight.

CHLOE

Oh, Carol. I met a lovely couple who wanted to move into the neighborhood.

CAROL

There're a lot of people who'd like to move here, dear. I can hardly keep track.

CHLOE

The newlyweds?

CAROL

Oh, that's right. I heard they were a little slow on putting in an offer.

CHLOE

Too bad.

CAROL

I don't think it would've been a good fit anyways. Well, I'll let you two lovebirds enjoy the rest of the day.

Carol disappears into the crowd.

CHLOE

Wouldn't have been a good fit?

WILL

I'm sure she didn't mean anything by it.

Chloe gives Will a side-eye glare, and he hands her the food on a stick.

WILL (CONT'D)

Come on. The baby pageant's starting.



**EXT. SMALL STAGE - DAY**

Festivalgoers cheer at parents parading their crying, fussy babies in front of judges. Will joins in.

One by one, the babies' cries turn into piglets' distorted squeals. Creeped out, Chloe covers her ears and slowly backs away from the crowd. Unnoticed.

**INT. CHLOE'S CAR - NIGHT**

Chloe dials the number for the ABUSE HOTLINE on the PAMPHLET from Planned Parenthood when a tired, overworked voice answers. This is SOCIAL WORKER.

SOCIAL WORKER (V.O.)  
Elder Abuse Hotline.

CHLOE  
I need to report suspected elder abuse.

SOCIAL WORKER (V.O.)  
And what's your relationship with the abused?

CHLOE  
I'm a friend of the family's.

SOCIAL WORKER (V.O.)  
Who's inflicting the abuse?

CHLOE  
The family.

SOCIAL WORKER (V.O.)  
And who do you suspect is being abused?

CHLOE  
Grandpa. I mean... the father.

SOCIAL WORKER (V.O.)  
What's his condition?

CHLOE  
He's in hospice.

SOCIAL WORKER (V.O.)  
What kind of abuse have you witnessed?

CHLOE

He's been expressing and showing suicidal behavior, and it doesn't seem like his family cares.

SOCIAL WORKER (V.O.)

Unfortunately, depression in the elderly is common.

CHLOE

So you're not gonna help?

SOCIAL WORKER (V.O.)

Does he have someone watching him?

CHLOE

Me. And his family.

SOCIAL WORKER (V.O.)

As long as he's cared for and has everything he needs, there's not much I can...

Frustrated, Chloe hangs up.

**INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Carol lets Chloe in.

CAROL

Hello, dear.

CHLOE

I brought some food from home. I thought maybe Grandpa would like to try.

CAROL

Oh, how sweet.

She takes the Tupperware from Chloe.

**INT. GRANDPA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Carol and Chloe stand in the doorway watching Grandpa.

CAROL

Oh, and Chloe? I know things have been a little shaky with William, but I found in times like these... It's important to cultivate a fruitful sex life.

She hands her the baby monitor and walks away.

CHLOE

Bitch.

Chloe approaches Grandpa.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Grandpa. It's me. Chloe.

She gently rouses him, and he lets out a sigh.

GRANDPA

Everything hurts.

CHLOE

Shh. Shh. You don't have to say anything.

GRANDPA

May my brittle bones nourish the earth. My blackened blood seal the foundation of our community. My rotted flesh release my savored spirit. For through this blessed death, I'm alive.

He coughs, and she wipes his mouth with a nearby Kleenex.

CHLOE

Don't talk like that. You still have time to spend with your family.

GRANDPA

I can't wait to be reborn with you.

This startles Chloe.

CHLOE

I'll let you rest.

As Chloe dims the lamp, she hears a bang from downstairs.

#### **INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

The basement door is ajar, and Chloe grabs a butcher knife from a knife block on the counter.

#### **INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Knife at the ready, Chloe creeps downstairs.

Something rustles behind a mountain of boxes. She zeros in.

CHLOE

I wouldn't make any sudden moves.  
I'm armed.

As she's about to reach for the box --

A SQUEAKING RAT SCUTTLES ACROSS THE FLOOR FOR ITS LIFE.

She throws her back against the wall.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ.

Once she regains her composure, she opens a box. An overflow of obsolete artifacts from the 70s. Floppy disks. A Polaroid camera. A Walkman.

At the bottom of the box, she finds SCRAPBOOKING ALBUMS. She pulls one out and opens to the first page:

A family tree with a PHOTO OF AN ELDERLY MAN next to a PICTURE OF A YOUNG WOMAN. A PHOTO OF JACOB, the little boy from earlier, sits below the two.

She flips the page. Another family tree with a PHOTO OF GRANDMA ELEANOR next to a younger PHOTO OF CAROL in her late 20s. A younger PHOTO OF ELEANOR sits below the two.

She flips the page. Another family tree. This one with a PHOTO OF SAMSON WATERS, but he isn't paired with anyone else. There's only an empty space lined with DECORATIVE TAPE where a missing photo used to be.

She digs deeper into the box and finds a bundle of PHOTO PORTRAITS of women. She shuffles through them and stops at a PHOTO OF ERIN. She shuffles a little further and finds a PHOTO OF SARA.

She takes both of the photos but leaves the others.

She shuts the scrapbooking album, tucks it under her arm, and goes upstairs.

#### **INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Chloe looks for her Tupperware in the fridge. It's not there.

The Tupperware of food she brought from home catches her eye in the trash. She scoffs.

In a huff, she looks into the backyard, the menacing barn taunting her.

She opens the door to the backyard.

**EXT. BARN - NIGHT**

Chloe navigates through the trellis farms. She stops several yards away from a small group of couples huddling around a terrified woman. Chloe tries to make out her face.

CHLOE

Erin.

FIN (early 30s), Erin's meek and scrawny husband, holds her hand.

FIN

There has to be another way.

Eleanor steps forward.

ELEANOR

You knew from the very beginning  
this was a possibility.

Two men restrain Erin, forcing her into the barn as everyone else follows.

ERIN

No! No!

FIN

It's OK, honey. I'm right here.  
Everything will be OK.

Chloe moves in closer.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Chloe peeks through a rotted hole in the wood siding. An impressive collection of vintage butcher tools caked with blood. Knives. Cleavers. Hones.

They strap Erin onto a blood-stained butcher block.

ELEANOR

A mother's love. Is her willingness  
to sacrifice.

A choking sound breaks through the static on the baby monitor.

As Chloe fiddles with the volume, it only gets louder.

Everyone turns towards her. She ducks.

Hunched over, she runs back towards the trellis farms.

Eleanor runs out of the barn towards the edge of a trellis.  
Chloe stands nearby, hidden behind a wall of luscious greens.

Eleanor scans the untroubled farms.

Once Chloe senses Eleanor is gone, she runs back towards  
Grandpa's house.

**EXT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

As soon as Chloe sets foot in the backyard, Erin lets out a  
spine-chilling shriek. Chloe looks back at the barn but then  
regains focus, running into the house.

**INT. GRANDPA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe rushes to Grandpa's side as he lays lifeless.

CHLOE

Grandpa!

She shakes him.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Grandpa!

His eyes are glazed over. She's too late.

She notices a small string dangling from his mouth. She pulls  
on it, but it catches on his teeth.

She slips on a latex glove and digs under his tongue, pulling  
out --

A TINY CLOTH POUCH STUFFED WITH LOOSE-LEAF TEA.

**INT. GRANDPA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Carol stands with Chloe who's in a panic.

CHLOE

I'm so sorry.

CAROL  
The important thing is you were  
here with him in his last moments.

Will walks in.

CHLOE  
Oh, thank God.

WILL  
Shh. Shh. It's OK.

Chloe pulls him to the other side of the room.

CHLOE  
(whispering)  
Something weird is going on.

WILL  
What're you talking about?

CHLOE  
I don't think this was an accident.  
And they did something to Erin.

WILL  
Erin? Who's Erin?

CHLOE  
From church.

WILL  
Go home, and get some rest. You've  
had a long night.

CHLOE  
Aren't you coming with me?

WILL  
I have to make a declaration of  
death. I'll be home soon.

She remembers something and turns to Carol.

CHLOE  
Carol?

CAROL  
Hmm?

CHLOE  
Did you know the girl that went  
missing?

CAROL  
I can't say that I do. Poor thing.  
Her family must be worried sick.

Chloe doesn't press her any further and leaves.

**INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT**

As Chloe gathers her things, she notices a car pull up.  
Eleanor steps out amongst other prominent men we saw in the  
man cave earlier.

She ducks behind the door as they walk into Grandpa's room.

Chloe watches Carol bow her head slightly at Eleanor, closing  
the door behind them.

**EXT. CHURCH - DAY**

Will and Chloe pull up to the church. They look around at the  
empty parking lot.

WILL  
The funeral's here, right?

CHLOE  
I think so.

They get out of the car and walk up to the church. Chloe  
tries to open the door. It's locked.

Chloe hears commotion coming from the center of town.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
What's that?

WILL  
I don't know. Looks like some sort  
of parade.

Chloe walks towards the procession.

WILL (CONT'D)  
What about the car?

Will follows.



**EXT. SMALL TOWN STREETS - DAY**

Townspeople, dressed all in white, stand on the sidewalk as a procession begins on the other end of the street. Some of them cheer while others cry hysterically.

As the procession nears, a stoic Eleanor leads an open casket down the street as the Townspeople run out and try to get a glimpse and touch whatever's inside.

Someone behind Chloe accidentally pushes her into the street. Curious, Chloe walks up to the casket.

As she approaches, the smell of active decay slaps her in the face. She puts her hand over her mouth.

As she inches closer, she sees GRANDPA'S BLOATED DECOMPOSING BODY. His skin is blackened with maggots crawling in and out of his flesh. His abdomen is burst open with fluids pooling around him.

She stumbles backward and bursts into tears. This is something she wasn't prepared for.

The Townspeople surround and comfort her, but it only makes her more afraid.

CHLOE

Will!

Will cheers as the pallbearers carry Grandpa away.

Shocked, Chloe picks herself up and runs back to the parking lot.

**INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe tries to muffle her cries on her side of the bed.

WILL

Hey, hey. What's wrong?

CHLOE

What was that back there?

WILL

What d'you mean?

CHLOE

You were cheering. At a funeral.

WILL  
I don't know. I guess it rubbed off  
on me.

CHLOE  
I wanna go back to the city.

WILL  
Come here.

He pulls her close.

CHLOE  
I gave this place a chance, but I  
want to go home.

WILL  
I am home.

Will kisses her gently, slowly melting away her walls, and  
envelops her in a passionate lusty whirlwind.

She takes off her top, revealing THE TRIPLE SPIRAL ON HER  
BACK now completely scabbed over.

#### **INT. BEDROOM - DAY**

Chloe gets up without waking Will and goes to the bathroom.

#### **INT. BATHROOM - DAY**

As Chloe takes off her shirt, it snags on something on her  
back.

She grabs a nearby handheld mirror, holds it up to her back  
and finds the SCAB. Although she can't quite get a clear look  
at it, she contorts in such a way as to pick and peel it off.  
Piece by piece.

CHLOE  
Ouch.

She lays three irregular, jagged pieces on the sink, and  
realizes they are a continuation of one another.

She puts them together like a miniature puzzle. Gasps at the  
sight of --

TRIPLE SPIRAL SYMBOL.

**INT. BEDROOM - DAY**

Chloe bursts in just as Will rouses himself awake.

WILL  
What's wrong, honey?

CHLOE  
I was gonna get some coffee.  
There's a cute little shop I found.

WILL  
Are you sure you're OK?

CHLOE  
Yeah. They say it's good to create  
some sort of structure.

WILL  
I'm proud of you.

Chloe puts on a fake smile and grabs her overnight bag.

**INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY**

Chloe sits with her to-go coffee as she scrolls through her phone. She types: SPIRAL SYMBOL.

She sifts through a convoluted search.

CHLOE  
Fertility. Life energy. Female  
womb. One of the oldest sacred  
symbols reflecting the evolution of  
life and death.

She sees the TRIPLE SPIRAL SYMBOL. CLICK.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
A Triple Spiral represents the  
passage of time. Each spiral  
symbolizes earthly life, the  
afterlife, and finally  
reincarnation.

She reclines in her seat, trying to make sense of it all.

**INT. LIBRARY - DAY**

Chloe inserts the unlabeled tape from earlier into the VCR, rewinds, and stops at the footage from a Harvest Festival of days past.

Grandpa sits in the SAME EXACT throne-like chair Eleanor was sitting in earlier at the Harvest Festival. As he waves, giddy Festivalgoers touch his robes as they pass.

She fast forwards and then stops at Grandpa at church. He places his hands on Churchgoers' foreheads as if channeling his spirit into theirs. They close their eyes, and their mouths gape open. They've reached nirvana.

She fast forwards and then stops at Grandpa sitting in the middle of a crowd. As he speaks, the people hang on to his every word.

Chloe stops the tape and looks up. The SAME EXACT ethereal photo of Grandpa we saw earlier towers over her on the wall.

CHLOE

He's a cult leader.

Chloe pulls out the scrapbooking album from her overnight bag and takes out the PHOTOS OF ERIN AND SARA.

She notices the EXACT SAME DECORATIVE TAPE from earlier on the edges of both photos.

She matches Erin's photo with the empty space next to Samson's photo.

She flips further to the back of the album.

She reaches the end, and her eyes widen. She matches Sara's photo with the space next to Grandpa, but the space isn't empty. Instead, it's the beginning of another family tree. This one with a PHOTO OF GRANDPA next to THE PHOTO OF CHLOE TAKEN AT THE GENDER REVEAL PARTY.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

The surrogates birth the children  
who are the reincarnation of the  
elders. If the sex of the baby  
doesn't match, they keep trying  
until they do.

A bout of nausea overwhelms her.

#### **INT. BATHROOM - DAY**

Chloe throws up in the toilet. With horror-stricken confusion, she stares more closely at her vomit, and a TRIPLE SPIRAL SYMBOL comes into view.

**INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY**

Chloe peruses through feminine care products when a GROCERY WORKER walks by.

CHLOE  
Excuse me? Where're the pregnancy tests?

He dangles a key.

**INT. FRONT COUNTER - DAY**

Grocery Worker stands behind the counter and opens the display case.

GROCERY WORKER  
Digital or non-digital.

CHLOE  
Whatever's cheapest.

He rings up a NON-DIGITAL PREGNANCY TEST, and as Chloe pays with what little cash she has, Carol walks by.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Damnit.

Chloe tries to shield her face.

GROCERY WORKER  
Hi Carol!

CAROL  
Hi there, Robert!

Carol notices Chloe as she stuffs the pregnancy test in her zip-up hoodie.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Chloe? Is that you?

Chloe could just about strangle the Grocery Worker but puts on a fake smile.

CHLOE  
Carol. How are you?

CAROL  
Oh, just fine, dear. I have this glorious feeling that our prayers have been answered.

CHLOE  
I better get going. Will's back at  
home. Don't wanna keep him waiting.

CAROL  
But doesn't William work today?

Chloe rushes off, Carol watching her with suspicion.

**INT. CAR - DAY**

Chloe pulls out SARA'S FLYER and dials the number. It RINGS.

DAVID (V.O.)  
Hello?

CHLOE  
David, it's me.

DAVID (V.O.)  
Chloe?

CHLOE  
Sorry to bother you. I got your  
number from the flyer.

DAVID (V.O.)  
You've seen Sara? Where is she?

CHLOE  
No.

DAVID (V.O.)  
I don't have time for games.

CHLOE  
Wait.

David's patience wears thin.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
When was the last time you saw her?

DAVID (V.O.)  
We had one of those stupid gender  
reveal parties. It just ended  
suddenly, and Sara just  
disappeared. I have to find her.  
She's out there alone with our  
unborn daughter. She was about 24  
weeks.

Chloe's ears perk up.

CHLOE

A girl? You're having a girl?

DAVID (V.O.)

Yeah.

CHLOE

There was another woman who found out she was having a girl, and. It was so weird. Everyone seemed upset about it. The next night, they took her to the barn, and.

A lightbulb goes off in Chloe's head. She shuffles around in her wallet and pulls out the PHOTOS OF ERIN AND SARA she found earlier.

DAVID (V.O.)

Hello? Hello?

CHLOE

She knew. Sara knew what they were gonna do to her. So she ran.

David breaks down on the other end.

DAVID (V.O.)

I shouldn't have made her move here. But they kept pressuring me into buying the house. They just went on and on about how if I didn't put in an offer someone else would.

CHLOE

Who?

DAVID (V.O.)

Carol.

She hangs up and starts her car.

**EXT. TRELLIS FARMS - DAY**

A light, fresh snow covers the soil and bare trellises.

Erin stands out in the open field. Chloe pulls over and gets out of the car.

CHLOE

Erin!

She doesn't hear her. Chloe walks closer to her.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
 (louder)  
 Erin!

Chloe notices stubborn dirt caked under her nails.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
 Are you OK?

ERIN  
 I lost it.

CHLOE  
 Lost what?

ERIN  
 Her.

Erin places her hands on her empty belly, tearing up. Chloe empathizes.

ERIN (CONT'D)  
 They say you lost a child.

Chloe freezes.

ERIN (CONT'D)  
 When will I feel normal again? Will  
 it ever get better?

CHLOE  
 Let me take you home. I'm sure your  
 husband is worried sick.

ERIN  
 They are who we eat.

Erin walks toward Chloe.

ERIN (CONT'D)  
 They are who we eat.

Erin lifts her dress, revealing a GNARLY SCAR across her stomach. Chloe stumbles back and runs back to her car.

#### **EXT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - DAY**

As Chloe drives by, she sees the house previously up for sale has a new sign: SOLD.

She sees Carol talking to the new residents. A young, blond, and Fair-Skinned Couple.



**INT. BATHROOM - DAY**

Chloe pees with urgency onto the pregnancy test. Within a matter of seconds, a strip appears.

She holds her breath for a long beat -- nothing. It's NEGATIVE. She lets out a sigh of relief when --

ANOTHER STRIP slowly appears. It's POSITIVE.

She breaks down and cries tears of distress.

As the wheels slowly start to turn in her head, her breathing calms and steadies.

She looks in the mirror, wipes away her tears, and mentally pulls herself together. As if getting ready for war.

**INT. DINING ROOM - DAY**

Chloe shuffles through a lifestyle and food magazine next to a stack of others: Magnolia Journal. Bon Appetit. Food and Wine. She lands on a page: HOW TO HOST THE PERFECT DINNER PARTY.

**EXT. FARMER'S MARKET - DAY**

Chloe walks amongst the townspeople who hop from vendor to vendor, filling a basket with fresh vegetables and produce.

Chloe sees Carol and Eleanor at a nearby stall. She takes a deep breath and goes over to them.

CHLOE

Carol. Eleanor.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I'm hosting a dinner party, and I'd love it if you came. It's just a small group of us.

Carol's eyes light up at Eleanor.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

How about tomorrow around 6?

CAROL

That sounds lovely. You should see what they have here. We carry the freshest produce. You can't get more farm-to-table than this.

CHLOE

I have to go into the city, so I'll just pick up some things while I'm there. I'll see you tomorrow.

Chloe goes on her merry way as Carol waves goodbye.

ELEANOR

What do you suppose she's up to?

CAROL

It's just a dinner. There can't be much more to it than that.

Eleanor watches Chloe like a hawk.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Chloe unloads bags in the kitchen.

WILL

What's all this?

He goes through the groceries.

CHLOE

I went to the Americana to pick up some things.

WILL

But isn't that all the way in the city? Why not just shop here?

CHLOE

Their produce tastes a little...  
*funny.*

(beat)

I invited some people over for dinner. I hope that's OK.

He gives her a look: people?

CHLOE (CONT'D)

You know. Carol. Eleanor. Is it a crime to want to show my appreciation?

Will doesn't argue this.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

You've been working so hard. Just sit back and relax.

Will stands back and watches Chloe work, appreciating this welcome change.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Chloe slays as she expertly navigates the kitchen, simultaneously sauteing vegetables while checking the oven and then whisking a mixture in a bowl.

**INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

A three-course meal interweaving a full-blown table setting for eight people. Chloe finishes filling champagne glasses.

WILL

I didn't even know you knew that many people.

He pecks her on the cheek when the doorbell RINGS.

CHLOE

Can you get that?

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Will answers the door. It's Eleanor and Carol.

WILL

Eleanor. Carol. So good to see you.

CAROL

William. Thank you for having us. It wouldn't be a party without my famous pie!

WILL

Can't wait to dig into that. Make yourselves at home.

Will takes the pie and their coats while Carol and Eleanor marvel at Chloe and Will's house.

ELEANOR

You've really settled in.

WILL

All the credit goes to Chloe. She's thrown all of herself into this house.

Chloe greets them with champagne.

CHLOE  
Some champagne?

ELEANOR  
Aren't you going to have any?

CHLOE  
Maybe a little later.

Eleanor notes this when the doorbell RINGS.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Excuse me.

She rushes to answer the door. It's Erin, her husband, and David. Carol and Eleanor shift uncomfortably at the sight of them.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
So glad you all could make it. Come on in.

Everyone enters.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Would you like some champagne?

ERIN  
That'd be nice.

FIN  
Sure.

DAVID  
I'd love some.

They migrate towards Carol and Eleanor.

**INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Will follows Chloe.

WILL  
What the hell are you doing?

CHLOE  
What?

A timer goes off, and Chloe rushes into the kitchen to pull out the main course from the oven: a showstopping crown roast of pork.

WILL  
You invited Erin? And *David*?

CHLOE  
Why not?

He scoffs as she sets it on the table.

WILL  
You know.

CHLOE  
Just because they're grieving  
doesn't mean they need to hide from  
the rest of the world, Will.  
They're a part of our community  
just as much as you and I are.

She turns to the guests.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Everyone! Dinner's ready.

As everyone takes their seats, Carol notices the seat next to hers is empty.

CAROL  
It looks like we're missing  
someone.

The doorbell RINGS.

CHLOE  
That must be them right now.

They all look at each other with no clue who she's talking about when she returns with Dr. Rodriguez.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Everyone. I'd like you to meet my  
friend, Dr. Rodriguez.

DR. RODRIGUEZ  
Hi, everybody.

EVERYONE  
Hello. Hi.

CHLOE  
Everyone go ahead and help  
yourselves, but make sure you leave  
room for dessert.

CAROL  
Well, what a... *diverse* group of  
company.

Chloe starts dishing out the crown roast of pork.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Dr. Rodriguez, what do you practice  
if you don't mind me asking?

DR. RODRIGUEZ  
I'm a gynecologist. I specialize in  
women's reproductive health.

CAROL  
Oh? And what does all of that  
entail?

CHLOE  
Pap smears. Cancer screenings. They  
also help facilitate abortions.

Chloe slices right into the pork, and Carol chokes on her  
food.

DR. RODRIGUEZ  
We also help with family planning  
as well.

ERIN  
We're trying for another baby.

Fin and Erin join hands at the table.

DR. RODRIGUEZ  
Oh, that's wonderful. If you're  
looking for a doctor, you could  
always stop by my office.

CAROL  
She already has a doctor. Don't you  
dear?

Erin forces a nod.

ELEANOR  
So... how are you liking it here?

WILL  
Chloe's been quite the explorer. It  
seems like every week she finds  
something new.

CHLOE

I've been doing a lot of research,  
and this town is chock full of *rich*  
history.

Carol and Eleanor share a glance.

DR. RODRIGUEZ

Oh, really? What have you found?

CHLOE

So I've been seeing this symbol  
everywhere, and I couldn't figure  
out what it was. Then I started to  
do some digging, and it seems like  
this town is built around this  
superstition of fertility and  
reincarnation.

Crickets.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Carol. You've lived here the  
longest out of all of us.

She laughs nervously.

CAROL

I guess I never really thought  
about it.

CHLOE

Then I thought about Sara and how I  
couldn't find *anything* about her or  
her disappearance.

WILL

Chloe. I'm sure they don't wanna  
think about this right now.

CHLOE

How can you just vanish in a town  
where everyone knows everything  
about everybody at every waking  
minute? And they don't even cover  
it on the news?

David looks at Carol and Eleanor.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I just hope nothing happens to me  
or our baby. No matter if it's a  
boy or a girl.

Chloe places her hand on her stomach. Everyone looks around at each other and then back at Chloe.

WILL

Wait. You're... pregnant?

Silence.

WILL (CONT'D)

That's great, honey. I wish you would've told me a little sooner.

CHLOE

The funny thing is... I really don't know *how*.

CAROL

(to Dr. Rodriguez)

You might need to tell her the story about the birds and the bees.

Everyone breaks out in nervous laughter.

CHLOE

I know how sex works, Carol. I meant I've been on birth control practically since we moved here.

Will turns to Dr. Rodriguez.

WILL

I get it now. She went to you for the pills. What happened to honesty in a loving marriage between two committed human beings? Not to mention, I know you started smoking again, too.

CHLOE

(dumbstruck)

You've been going through my things.

DR. RODRIGUEZ

This has all been so lovely, but I should go.

CAROL

I need to excuse myself.

CHLOE

Please. Don't go.



DR. RODRIGUEZ  
I have an early day tomorrow.

Dr. Rodriguez is just about to get up when a knife pierces through her sternum.

Everyone jumps back in their seats all in a collective yelp except for Eleanor.

Dr. Rodriguez pulls on the table cloth as she falls to the ground revealing --

CAROL STANDING WITH A BLOODIED CHEF'S KNIFE.

Plates. Food. Wine spill everywhere.

CAROL  
I know a great home remedy that'll  
get that right out.

CHLOE  
Oh my God. Oh my God.

CAROL  
What a beautiful knife. What brand  
is it?

CHLOE  
Wusthof Classic 8-inch Chef's  
knife.

Eleanor looks at the three Fin, Will, and David.

ELEANOR  
Bury her in one of the dormant  
garden beds. It'll be ready in time  
for spring.

She turns to Chloe.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
Go easy on William. When he found  
your birth control pills, he didn't  
know what to do, so I gave you some  
tea to reduce its effectiveness.

CHLOE  
I thought it was just supposed to  
help me relax.

ELEANOR  
It helps with a lot of things.

CAROL  
It's for our own good, dear.

Chloe's mouth hangs agape.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Let's get this cleaned up.

Chloe sits paralyzed as Carol, Erin, and Eleanor buzz around the table picking up shattered glasses and plates littered around the table.

**INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Later. Chloe escorts Carol to the door.

CAROL  
Well, I'm full as a tick!

CHLOE  
(voice shaky)  
We had to return the favor somehow.

CAROL  
Don't be silly. You're always  
welcome at our home. You're  
practically. Family.

Will walks up behind them.

WILL  
Let me walk you to your car, Carol.  
It's slippery out there.

CAROL  
Bless your heart.

Will opens the door, revealing a fresh blanket of snow.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Ugh. It's cold as a frosted frog.  
I don't know about you, but I'm  
ready for spring. Enjoy the pie,  
dear.

Chloe closes the door behind them.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Chloe throws away Carol's pie.

**INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe stops where Dr. Rodriguez sat and cries quietly for a long beat. Moments later, Will returns. Slams the door.

WILL

What the fuck was that shit show?

CHLOE

You mean the part where she killed a woman in our dining room and then had us hide the body?

WILL

Would it hurt to just try to fit in?

CHLOE

Is that all you're worried about? *Fitting in?* Who the fuck even are you? Why did we move here?

WILL

What're you talking about?

CHLOE

Out of every house, why did you pick this one?

WILL

It had everything on your must-have list.

CHLOE

Where did you first meet Carol?

WILL

At the hospital.

CHLOE

No. She was the one who pressured you into buying the house. Wasn't she?

Will scoffs.

WILL

I'm doing my best to provide you with everything you want, and I never feel like it's good enough.

CHLOE

And what is it I want?

WILL

What everyone wants! All of this!  
The American dream. I was never  
gonna be anybody in Chicago. Here,  
I'm already an attending physician.

CHLOE

That's it then. She gave you status  
and in exchange you uphold these  
unrealistic expectations?

He throws his hands up in defeat.

WILL

This isn't how this was supposed to  
be.

CHLOE

Well, tell me then. How is this  
supposed to be?

WILL

I give you what you want so that  
you give me what I need. That's how  
it works. It's called compromise,  
Chloe.

CHLOE

Well, I'm giving you a fucking  
baby. Are you happy now? Cause this  
is what life is all about.  
Continuing your fucking legacy!

WILL

If this is such a nightmare for you  
then why did you even say yes?

CHLOE

Because I fell in love with the  
idea of you.

Will grabs her arm.

WILL

You're not gonna ruin this for me.  
We're in this together...

Chloe yanks her arm away and runs out.

#### **INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe stops when she sees a PLUSH TOY CAR sitting in the  
middle of the room. She picks it up, studying it.

CHLOE

You're trying to get me to leave.

She digs through her dresser drawers and finds the assortment of PAMPHLETS from Planned Parenthood. A way out.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, baby. I'm gonna get you outta here.

She takes out a small suitcase from her closet and stows it under the bed.

**EXT. TRELLIS FARMS - DAY**

Farmers tend to trellises and plant crops on a sunny spring day under clear blue skies.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Chloe, now with a slight belly bump, sits on the couch deep in thought. Will bounces in. She puts on a happy face as he kneels in front of Chloe's stomach and plants a kiss on her navel.

SUPERIMPOSE: 24 WEEKS LATER, SPRING

WILL

(looking up at her in awe)  
I'm really happy we're working things out. This is gonna be good for us.

CHLOE

Mmhmm.

WILL

Don't forget about that appointment.

CHLOE

I won't.

WILL

Are you sure you don't want me to go with you?

CHLOE

It's just a checkup.

WILL  
If you're too tired, Carol said she  
could take you.

CHLOE  
I think I can handle it.

WILL  
After that, you can go get spoiled  
at your party.

As soon as he leaves, she stands.

**INT. BEDROOM - DAY**

Chloe goes into the closet, carries Liam's box, and grabs her  
prepacked small suitcase from under the bed.

**EXT. CHLOE AND WILL'S HOUSE - DAY**

The porch is flooded with gift baskets. She doesn't have the  
energy to deal with it.

She cranes her neck from left to right. The coast is clear.  
As she steps over baskets, Carol appears out of nowhere with  
you guessed it. Another gift basket.

CHLOE  
(unenthused)  
Carol. Hi.

CAROL  
I was just seeing if you wanted a  
ride to your appointment?

CHLOE  
I can drive myself.

CAROL  
Let me help you with that.

Carol tries to grab Liam's box, but Chloe dodges her.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Are you sure you don't need help  
with that? It looks heavy.

CHLOE  
Just some things I'm taking to the  
thrift store. Spring cleaning.

She takes a whiff of the air.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
What's that smell?

CAROL  
That must be the animal rendering  
plant. Nothing goes to waste.

CHLOE  
I'm gonna throw up if I don't get  
outta here.

CAROL  
Let me help you get these inside.

CHLOE  
It's OK. I'll take care of it  
later. I was just leaving.

CAROL  
Do you need a ride to the gender  
reveal party?

CHLOE  
I think I'll drive myself.

Chloe walks towards the car as Carol trails behind her.

CAROL  
How's the baby?

CHLOE  
It's fine.

CAROL  
*It?*

CHLOE  
We don't even know if it's a boy or  
a girl.

CAROL  
(defensively)  
It's far from just an "it."

Chloe takes a breath.

CHLOE  
You're right. I'll see you at the  
party.

Carol watches Chloe as she walks to the car.

**INT. CHLOE'S CAR - DAY**

Chloe stores her suitcase and Liam's box in the trunk and gets in the car.

She sinks into her seat and lets out a deep exhale. Finally, a moment to herself.

**EXT. TRELLIS FARM - DAY**

Stoic, Chloe stands where Dr. Rodriguez is buried.

CHLOE

Without you, I wouldn't have the  
courage to leave. Wherever we go,  
you'll be.

Chloe nestles Liam's PLUSH TOY CAR in the dirt.

**EXT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Chloe knocks on the door, but the door's already cracked open. She lets herself in.

**INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Chloe marvels at the completely remodeled home, the layout almost identical to her house. The one thing that remains the same is the SURROGATES tirelessly entertaining Children who we now understand are the reincarnation of the Elders.

CHLOE

Everything is. Different.

CAROL

This house always had good bones.  
We always wanted to remodel, but  
with grandpa being sick it was just  
too difficult. Come along.  
Everyone's waiting.

As Carol leads her further into the house, she catches a glimpse of Will in the man cave.

CHLOE

Will?

Surrogate #1 approaches.

SURROGATE #1

Chloe. It's time.



Surrogate #1 escorts her to the living room.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Chloe joins a group of eager Surrogates and Elders surrounding Eleanor when a male PRENATAL DOCTOR walks up to her.

PRENATAL DOCTOR  
Chloe. Where were you? You missed  
your prenatal appointment.

CHLOE  
Sorry. I'll reschedule.

Eleanor gathers everyone's attention.

ELEANOR  
The past few weeks have been hard  
for us all but losing a precious  
life only makes it possible for a  
new beginning. Let us seal the fate  
of our beloved leader.

Eleanor leads the group to the backyard.

**EXT. BACKYARD - DAY**

As a Surrogate wheels out a gender reveal cannon on a cart, everyone forms a circle around Chloe.

Nervous, Chloe takes the cannon. Everything comes down to this moment.

Eleanor watches with nervous anticipation.

Chloe takes a deep breath, twists the bottom of it when --

A BLUE PLUME OF SMOKE EXPLODES INTO THE AIR.

Eleanor's heart sinks while Carol and the other Surrogates erupt in tearful cheers.

Stunned, Chloe drops to her knees, when Carol runs up to her.

CAROL  
You saved him.

Carol lifts her from the ground.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
It's OK. The firstborn is always  
the scariest.

The men, including Will, come out to join the Surrogates,  
patting him on the back. A man's man.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
How about we take a family photo?  
William!

Carol leaves for a brief moment.

CHLOE  
(confused)  
You were here the whole time.

WILL  
I was able to take part of the day  
off. I wanted to surprise you.

Carol returns with a Polaroid camera.

CAROL  
Now get close!

Will puts his arm around her and smiles.

WILL  
One big happy family. Just you. Me.  
Grandpa.

The camera flashes and spits out a POLAROID of Chloe staring  
at Will as if he were a stranger.

CAROL  
(looking at the Polaroid)  
Perfect! And he'll be here just in  
time for the fall harvest.

CHLOE  
Who even are you?

Chloe backs away.

WILL  
Chloe. C'mon.

CHLOE  
You're not the man I married.

WILL  
Don't make a scene.

CAROL  
You're one of us now. Go on.  
They're waiting for you.

As she passes everyone in the backyard, the Surrogates all touch her belly as they mumble prayers.

**INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Chloe walks past Jacob who sits on SURROGATE #2'S lap. She's the same Young Woman in Jacob's family tree we saw in the scrapbooking album.

They flip through a photo album, and she points to a photo.

SURROGATE #2  
There you are.

JACOB  
How old am I there?

SURROGATE #2  
It looks like you were in your 60s.

JACOB  
What was I doing?

Surrogate #2 looks closer at the photo.

SURROGATE #2  
That must've been right before the  
Harvest Festival. Just before you  
died.

Jacob flashes an evil smile at Chloe.

Chloe dodges a group of Elders who run amuck, yelling at the top of their lungs.

SURROGATE #3 approaches ELDER THOMAS with a tray of drinks.

ELDER THOMAS  
Another one!

SURROGATE #3  
Pleased to serve you, Elder Thomas.

Elder Thomas grabs a drink, spilling it all over the floor.

Chloe walks by ELDER SIMON who rides on the back of obedient, exhausted Surrogate #4 as if she were a horse.

ELDER SIMON  
One more time!

SURROGATE #4  
Yes, Elder Simon.

Elder Simon flashes an evil smile at Chloe.

ELDER JOSEPHINE draws a bloody scene with a red marker freely on the wall when timid SURROGATE #5 approaches her.

SURROGATE #5  
Another marker, Elder Josephine?

Elder Josephine snatches the red markers from Surrogate #5 and flashes an evil smile at Chloe.

Carol holds a tray of appetizers up to her.

CAROL  
Surrogate Chloe.

Chloe's in a daze, missing her cue.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
(a little louder)  
Surrogate Chloe. You don't want to upset them, dear.

Chloe, crying inside, goes around with the tray, the Elders reaching for the appetizers. She cringes at their grubby little hands as they pick the tray clean.

Eleanor watches Chloe off to the side when giddy SURROGATE #6 runs up to her.

SURROGATE #6  
He's saved! Isn't it wonderful?

Eleanor doesn't look so pleased.

While everyone's distracted with the Elders, Chloe slips into the butler pantry.

#### **INT. BUTLER PANTRY - DAY**

Chloe puts her serving tray down. She tunes out the Elders' voices, trying to think of her next move when one of the canning jars catches her eye.

She pushes one to the side.

Another to the other side and sees --

A FETUS IN A CANNING JAR.

She's so terrified that she can't even let a scream out.

**INT. FOYER - DAY**

While everyone is distracted by the Elders, Chloe sneaks out of the house through the front door.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Will flows through the party as if he's looking for something.

CAROL  
William? Is everything alright?

WILL  
Have you seen Chloe?

CAROL  
She was just serving the Elders.

WILL  
I can't find her.

CAROL  
I'm sure she's around somewhere.  
Have you met, Surrogate Abby?

Will's eyes light up.

WILL	SURROGATE ABBY
At the festival.	At the festival.

They laugh nervously.

CAROL  
You enjoy the party. I'll go try to find her.

Will turns to Surrogate Abby. A spark ignites between them.

**EXT. BARN - NIGHT**

As the fiery sun starts to set, Chloe runs to the front doors of the barn and shakes them. They're locked.

She finds a rotted piece of wood siding and kicks it in.

She grabs a shovel.

**EXT. TRELLIS FARMS - NIGHT**

Chloe runs onto the farm where she once saw Erin.

She digs until she hits something.

She brushes off the dirt and finds --

HUMAN REMAINS.

CHLOE

May their brittle bones nourish the  
earth.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Chloe runs back into the barn and takes a meat cleaver,  
holding it up to her lower abdomen. After a long beat, she  
drops it and breaks down, cradling her belly.

GRANDPA (V.O.)

(whispering)

I can't wait to be reborn with you.

Her skin crawls as she covers her ears, trying to shut out  
Grandpa's voice.

**EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT**

Chloe drives past a house and sees a Glutinous Family  
stuffing their mouths full of vegetables from the trellis  
farms, burping in between exceedingly large bites.

Another house with a Family talking with their mouths full,  
spitting food everywhere.

Another house with a Family reaching over each other,  
smacking, crunching, and licking their fingertips.

Another house with a Family, but it's not just any family.

ERIN (V.O.)

(whispering)

They are who we eat.

She sees herself serving Will and Grandpa as a small child at  
the dinner table.

**EXT. CAR - NIGHT**

A GPS DEVICE blinks red under her car as Chloe zooms off.

**INT. PLANNED PARENTHOOD - NIGHT**

Chloe barges in when Lucia greets her at the door, surprised by her growing baby bump.

LUCIA

Chloe. Is everything OK? We're just about to close.

CHLOE

I can't have this baby.

LUCIA

You're pretty far along.

CHLOE

Please. You have to get it out of me.

LUCIA

How far along are you?

CHLOE

About 20 weeks.

LUCIA

Dr. Rodriguez hasn't been in, so you'll have to wait.

Chloe breaks down and cries.

LUCIA (CONT'D)

We can remove the baby surgically or you can have a medically induced abortion. Either way, you might have to stay in the hospital overnight. Out of state.

CHLOE

I don't care. I just need to get outta here.

LUCIA

I can get in touch with another doctor.

CHLOE

Please. Before it's too late.

LUCIA

I'll see what I can do.

CHLOE  
Until then can I stay here for  
tonight?

Lucia nods.

LUCIA  
Let me go get some blankets from  
the closet.

She steps out of the room, and for the first time, Chloe  
feels more relaxed.

**EXT. PLANNED PARENTHOOD - NIGHT**

Will parks and immediately notices Chloe's car. He double-  
checks an APP tracking Chloe's location.

**INT. PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT**

Chloe hears yelling coming from the lobby. She opens the door  
and sees Will.

**INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Chloe exits the patient room and creeps away from the lobby  
where Will and Lucia argue. She dips into the bathroom.

WILL  
Where is she?

LUCIA  
I can't disclose that.

WILL  
As a doctor, I can have your  
license revoked.

LUCIA  
Lucky for me, I'm still in  
training.

Will sneers and goes back into the patient room.

LUCIA (CONT'D)  
Hey. You can't go back there.

Will ignores her.



**INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT**

A one-person bathroom. Chloe props herself up on the sink and escapes through a tiny window.

**INT. PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT**

Will whips open the door. To Lucia's relief, no one's there.

**EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Chloe runs into the parking lot and sees an incessant red light blinking from the underside of her car.

CHLOE  
He tracked me.

She looks longingly at the trunk where Liam's box sits.

She disappears into the dense woods when Will storms out. He scans the parking lot, but she's nowhere to be found.

**EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

Chloe tears through dense trees with panic-stricken eyes.

ELEANOR (O.S.)  
Chloe?

She stops for a short beat and picks up her pace.

ELEANOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Wait!

The obscure path twists and turns and as Chloe goes deeper into the woods, she steps on a tripwire.

A spear carved out of a branch flies towards her, but she ducks right in time as it hits a nearby tree.

Crippled by fear, she crouches behind a bush.

Leaves rustle in one direction. No one.

A branch snaps in the other. Nothing.

Chloe senses a growing presence getting closer.

CHLOE  
I give up. Please. Just let me go.

Eleanor emerges from the nearby brush.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
What do you want from me?

Eleanor stands over her, Chloe trying to anticipate her next move. After a long beat, Eleanor extends her hand.

ELEANOR  
Hurry. They're coming.

Paralyzed by her suspicion, Chloe stays put. Eleanor grabs her hand, dragging her further into the woods.

#### **INT. CHURCH - NIGHT**

Everyone shares collectively concerned glances.

CAROL  
We can't just stand around.  
We need to find them.

SURROGATE #7  
But what if they come back?

Jacob stands, and everyone turns to him.

CAROL  
Everything's fine, dear.

Jacob stares into Carol's eyes, piercing right into her soul.

JACOB  
That's not what I see.

Carol laughs nervously.

CAROL  
We should be starting soon.

JACOB  
Where's the girl?

CAROL  
We're looking for her.

JACOB  
She's not to set foot outside of town.

CAROL  
Yes, Elder Jacob. We'll make sure of it.

Several men stand including David and follow Carol out.

**EXT. FACTORY FARM - NIGHT**

Chloe and Eleanor emerge from the woods bombarded by high-pitched, frightened pig squeals.

CHLOE

Why are you helping me?

ELEANOR

You don't expect me to believe you really want this baby.

CHLOE

You thought I was stupid enough to believe these were real families.

ELEANOR

Like it or not, you were willfully oblivious in the beginning.

Chloe scoffs.

CHLOE

You build these houses to recruit men and women to birth your elders. It's a factory farm for families!

ELEANOR

Grandpa Abe liked to think we had a higher purpose than that. He brought only the most superior to our herd. Why kill ourselves in surrender to some make-believe entity when we can take life and death into our own hands? No more grief or sadness because they're all still here. Inside of all of us.

CHLOE

All you want is power.

ELEANOR

Face it. You'll never be able to destroy us, but you can help us start fresh. Starting with him.

CHLOE

Grandpa.

She cradles her belly.

ELEANOR  
I don't disagree with you. The  
congregation could use new  
leadership.

CHLOE  
Even if I wanted to, I'm too far  
along.

Eleanor pulls out a baggie full of tea.

ELEANOR  
Just a sip and...

CHLOE  
It'll make me pass out.

ELEANOR  
But ingest the source, and that'll  
be enough to take care of  
everything.

CHLOE  
What will happen to me?

ELEANOR  
You'll be free.

Eleanor hands her the baggie when cars pull up to the factory  
farm. Carol, David, and the other Townspeople get out.

Carol's eyes widen when she sees what Chloe's holding. Carol  
walks towards her.

CHLOE  
Get back!

Carol raises her hands, trying to calm Chloe down.

CAROL  
Chloe. Put the bag down.

Chloe notices David.

CHLOE  
David? What're you doing here?

DAVID  
Do as she says, and put the bag  
down.

CHLOE  
But what about Sara?

David closes his eyes, trying to shut out her voice.

CAROL  
Do you realize what you're doing?

The tea taunts Chloe.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
You don't want to break up the family, do you?

CHLOE  
I'm not livestock you can breed.

CAROL  
Don't you see? You're not like the others. You're a surrogate for our beloved leader. You should be grateful!

CHLOE  
Grateful? For what? For my husband dragging me here?

ELEANOR  
Chloe, you have the power to change the course of history.

Carol shoots Eleanor a glare and then turns to Chloe.

CAROL  
When William came to us, he had a dream. A happy marriage. A strong family. A powerful career. But unfortunately, it was with someone who wasn't good enough for him.

Will drives up to the factory farm and gets out.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
William! Stop her!

WILL  
Chloe. Please. Just do what she says.

CHLOE  
(to Will)  
Or what?  
(to Carol)  
You are all monsters, and we were your helpless prey. You lure hopeful, vulnerable couples in.

(MORE)

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
And if they don't give you what you  
want then you throw them away.

CAROL  
If you stay, there's still a place  
for you as broken as you are. I  
can't say the same about the  
outside world.

Suddenly, the baby kicks. Chloe yelps and holds her belly.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
What? What's the matter?

CHLOE  
He kicked.

Carol tears up with joy.

CAROL  
He's alive.

CHLOE  
(to Will)  
I forgive you. You're just an  
innocent lamb who just does what  
they're told.

Chloe opens the baggie.

CAROL  
(scared)  
Chloe.

Chloe picks up a wad of herbs.

CHLOE  
You messed with the wrong little  
piggy.

Carol lunges at her, and Chloe shoves the herbs in her mouth  
and swallows them.

CAROL  
No!

Chloe's world spins as hysteria breaks amongst the  
Townspeople. She hears familiar frantic voices muffling the  
pigs' squeals.

Will drops to his knees, his dreams crumbling before him  
while Eleanor's ego inflates. She wears a conniving smile.

Carol runs over to Chloe, clawing out the herbs from her mouth, but it's too late.

Chloe passes out.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Groggy, Chloe's in and out of consciousness. She hears panicky Townspeople crying in the background.

TOWNSPERSON #1  
Hopefully, Carol gets to the hospital in time.

TOWNSPERSON #2  
What would we have done if you weren't here to perform an emergency c-section?

WILL  
He'll be in good hands.

TOWNSPERSON #1  
What do we do with her?

TOWNSPERSON #2  
We try again.

TOWNSPERSON #3  
Feed her to the pigs!

DAVID  
Let her go.

TOWNSPERSON #1  
Are you crazy? Not after all she's seen.

Chloe slowly regains consciousness as everyone continues to bicker.

She swings her head to the left, right, up, and down, trying to shake her hands and feet loose until she sees that she's strapped to the butcher block.

She winces in pain and sees Will hovering over her belly but isn't quite sure what he's doing.

CHLOE  
Will. Please. Help me.

WILL  
Careful. You don't want to undo  
your stitches.

Will ties off a stitch to a GNARLY WOUND across her stomach.  
She screams.

Everyone quiets down. They all look at her in unison.

WILL (CONT'D)  
That should do it.

ELEANOR  
We kill her.

Eleanor comes out of the shadows.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
There's a garden plot that needs  
nourishing.

CHLOE  
But you said I'd be free.

ELEANOR  
Freedom in death.

She turns to the Elders who stand off to the side.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
I think it's a perfect opportunity  
for an Elder to make his first  
kill.

Jacob steps forward in front of the other Elders, admiring  
the butcher tools. He stops at the meat cleaver.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
Ah. The bone meat cleaver. Heavy  
and blunt yet swift.

He picks it up and walks toward Eleanor. Panic sets in.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
It cuts thicker cuts of meat and  
bones fast, and with a wider blade,  
you can use it for crushing food.  
One of my favorites growing up.

Jacob stands on a block on the floor, towering over Chloe.

CHLOE  
Jacob. Please.



He ignores her and raises the meat cleaver over her neck.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Wait!

Right as he's about to cut off her head, he stops.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Eleanor killed Grandpa!

Jacob lowers the meat cleaver looking at the other Elders.

ELEANOR

She's lying.

Murmurs ripple throughout the small crowd.

CHLOE

With the herbs. I found a teabag  
soaking under his tongue.

One by one, Eleanor loses them. Jacob steps down from the block.

JACOB

Assisted suicide is punishable by  
death.

ELEANOR

He was in pain. What was I supposed  
to do? Anyway, Surrogate Carol took  
him to the hospital. He'll be fine.

CHLOE

You wanted all the power to  
yourself.

The Elders and Townspeople walk toward Eleanor.

ELEANOR

You're not going to listen to her,  
are you? She spews lies.

Eleanor backs away from the increasingly angry mob. She turns  
and runs for her life.

The rest of the Elders and Townspeople grab a weapon.  
Carving forks. Butcher and skinning knives.

While everyone chases Eleanor, David walks towards Chloe. Her  
body writhes as he gets closer.

CHLOE

Please. Don't hurt me.

He undoes the straps.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
What're you doing?

DAVID  
Trying to get out of this thing  
alive.

She gets off the table. Weak, she falls to her knees.

He slings her arm around his neck, and he leads her out of the barn.

**EXT. BARN - NIGHT**

As David and Chloe weave through the trellis farms, they hear Eleanor's gut-wrenching screams as the Townspeople pierce and hack at her flesh.

**EXT. TRELLIS FARMS - NIGHT**

A Townsperson smears Eleanor's blood on the Elders' cheeks. A rite of passage.

**EXT. PLANNED PARENTHOOD - DAY**

David's car zooms off as Chloe lies on the pavement in her blood-stained clothes.

Lucia rushes up to her.

LUCIA  
Oh my God. Chloe!

She shakes her awake.

LUCIA (CONT'D)  
Everything's gonna be alright.

She runs into the building. Moments later, others run out, carrying Chloe inside.

**INT. PATIENT ROOM - DAY**

Lucia stands over Chloe, inspecting her stitches on the patient's table.

LUCIA

Well, whoever gave you these did a pretty good job. We'll just have to keep an eye on them for any sign of infection.

Chloe drops her shirt.

LUCIA (CONT'D)

What happened to the baby?

CHLOE

He's alive. Somewhere.

LUCIA

Everything's gonna be OK.

CHLOE

For the first time, I actually believe you.

LUCIA

We found this in one of your pockets.

Lucia pulls out the POLAROID of a pregnant Chloe and Will at the gender reveal party.

LUCIA (CONT'D)

I'll give you a minute.

Chloe gets lost in the photo.

# **INT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

As the sun rises, Carol stares at a premature baby hooked up to tubes, clinging to life in an incubator.

Suddenly, she sees his finger twitch. A small sign of life. She lets out a sigh of relief, crying tears of joy.

CAROL

Welcome back... Grandpa.

GRANDPA (V.O.)

May my brittle bones nourish the earth.

# **EXT. SMALL TOWN STREETS - DAY**

The rising sun's rays flood the small-town streets.

GRANDPA (V.O.)  
My blackened blood seal the  
foundation of this community.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Will performs a checkup on the healthier-looking baby while Carol holds him as if he were her own.

Then a light knock on the door. It's Surrogate Abby. Carol hands her the baby and watches the bond between Will and Surrogate Abby grow. Picture-perfect.

GRANDPA (V.O.)  
My rotted flesh release my savored  
spirit.

**EXT. TRELLIS FARMS - DAY**

Eleanor lays to rest next to where Grandpa lies, her severed limbs and entrails laced grotesquely through the trellis. A bird lands on her freshly dead hand, nipping at her fingertip.

GRANDPA (V.O.)  
For through this blessed death, I'm  
alive.

**INT. LIBRARY - DAY**

A PHOTO OF THE ETHEREAL BABY, better known as the reincarnation of Grandpa, hangs, dressed in lustrous robes sitting in a throne-like chair.

**EXT. PLANNED PARENTHOOD - DAY**

Chloe opens her trunk, reuniting with Liam's box. She takes it out and puts it in the front passenger seat.

She digs under the floor mat and takes out a pack of cigarettes and a lighter.

She lights a cigarette, the tip getting red hot as she takes a long, hard-earned drag.

She flicks the lighter, setting the POLAROID of Chloe and Will on fire.

She tosses it on the ground and gets in the car.

As she drives onto the wide, open road, leading out of town,  
the flame engulfs the Polaroid. A family legacy destroyed.

**THE END**