

SEARCHERS
V2201030

Written by

Isaac Ruth

isaacjruth@gmail.com

INT. SANTERIAN CHAMBER - DAY

Dark. A struck match illuminates a candle adorned with Caribbean saints. A cigar lit reveals a SANTERA, 60's, a witch doctor.

Smoke. A chicken's throat slit. Blood pooled in a bowl. A lit candle is set afloat in the blood and is placed in front of OLIVIA PATTERSON (17, nervous). The Santera sits across from her.

SANTERA

What have you brought of hers?

Olivia holds out a stuffed bear, it's been well loved. The Santera positions it in front of the bowl. She reaches out.

SANTERA (CONT'D)

Your hands.

Olivia offers her hands on the table. The Santera places Olivia's hands one-over-the-other, fingers intertwined so all ten fingers are exposed. The Santera places her cigar's lit end into her own mouth, inhales, removes the cigar, and exhales the smoke onto Olivia's hands.

SANTERA (CONT'D)

(gesturing to the candle)

For my magic to work, you must not look away from the flame.

Olivia nods. She focuses on the flame as the Santera places a playing card face-down on the table.

SANTERA (CONT'D)

If she is dead, you wish to speak with her?

OLIVIA

Yes.

The Santera turns the card over.

SANTERA

You must say her name.

A pain, Young Olivia musters through it, eyes on the fire.

OLIVIA

Amelia.

The flame flickers. The Santera mumbles something in another language.

SANTERA

You must think of her, focus. Her eyes. Her mouth. Her hair, you must think of these things.

Olivia stares into the flame, hands pressed down on the table. The flame dances again. The Santera notices.

SANTERA (CONT'D)

There is a spirit, a being who is with you.

Somewhere behind Olivia...

... something moves.

Olivia turns for hardly a moment.

SANTERA (CONT'D)

No, you must not look away.

Back to the flame. Olivia's sweating. The Santera mumbles. A card is turned. Movement behind Olivia. The Santera looks puzzled at the cards, the flame.

SANTERA (CONT'D)

She is your sister?

OLIVIA

Yeah.

The movement behind Olivia draws closer.

SANTERA

How old?

OLIVIA

Six.

Something's wrong. The Santera looks unsure, the darkness behind Olivia grows.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Can we stop?

The Santera stares at the cards, brow furrowed.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Seriously, I wanna stop.

Blood drips from Olivia's nose and onto her hands.

SANTERA

This being, whatever is with you,
it isn't female...

Another card turned.

SANTERA (CONT'D)

... and it's old. Very old.

The flame dances madly. Olivia vibrates with fear.

OLIVIA

Why can't I move my hands?

Suddenly, a panic. The Santera stands up.

SANTERA

Out, you go out now.

OLIVIA

I can't, I can't move.

SANTERA

You hear me, girl? You go and take
your devil with you.

Olivia's nose bleeds. The thing behind her is closer.

OLIVIA

Please. Please I want to stop.

The Santera looks just as worried. Her breath is heavy,
foggy, cold.

Suddenly, all is still as something behind Olivia catches the
Santera's eyes. She stares, terrified.

SANTERA

(whispers)

Who have you brought into my house?

From behind Olivia, a pair of **SKELETAL HANDS IN GOLDEN JEWELRY** slide across her shoulders. Olivia SHRIEKS and tears herself from the table, hurtling toward the exit.

SANTERA (CONT'D)

WHO HAVE YOU BROUGHT INTO MY
HOUSE!!??

Olivia bursts through the door, flooding the space with
light.

CUT TO:

INT. OLIVIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING - 12 YEARS LATER

Olivia, now 30, is up before sunrise. She smokes a cigarette at the foot of her bed.

INT. OLIVIA'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MORNING

She showers, taking deep breaths.

INT. OLIVIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Dressed, Olivia pads through her apartment. A chalkboard is hung up on her wall. It's unlabeled, but there are 5 tallies on it. She makes a mark, a 6th.

She takes a pill, swallows it without water, and places the bottle back. The label says "Thorazine - antipsychotic."

INT. LOS ANGELES NEWSPAPER - DAY

Olivia sits at her desk while CO-WORKERS bustle around. She types at her computer, bored. Her headline reads "How Much Fluoride is Too Much Fluoride?" She stares at the headline. Deletes it. Writes "How to blow my fucking head off."

ANDY (O.S.)

Liv?

Olivia looks up to see her boss, ANDY (40's, dresses younger) walking past.

ANDY (CONT'D)

My office for a minute.

He continues, not waiting for a response. Olivia gets up and catches a look from a ERIN (30s, timid), some unstated warning between them, as she makes for his office.

INT. LOS ANGELES NEWSPAPER - ANDY'S OFFICE - DAY

Olivia enters, Andy's pulled up a chair at his desk. He gestures.

ANDY

Take a seat.

As she does-

ANDY (CONT'D)

Oh, close the door, will you?

She hesitates, catching a final glance from the Erin outside as she closes the door. She turns back to Andy.

ANDY (CONT'D)
(gesturing to the chair)
Please.

She sits. He pulls up his chair across from hers and sits close to her.

ANDY (CONT'D)
So, how's it going?

OLIVIA
(shrugs)
Story's fine, fluorides not in the water to brainwash everyone, if that's what you mean.

ANDY
I meant you. How's it going with you?

Olivia shifts, not sure where this is going.

OLIVIA
Fine.

ANDY
I just ask cause, I don't know, I don't really know you like I know everyone else. Couple of us go out for a drink after work, I was hoping you'd tag along sometime. Get to know you better.

Olivia breaks eye contact.

OLIVIA
Thanks, it's not really my scene-

ANDY
Erin mentioned this time of year is hard for you. Something about a sister?

It halts Olivia.

ANDY (CONT'D)
I don't know the details but all the more reason for you to come out with us, you never know.

Back to direct eye contact.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Well, anyway, just an invitation.

As he gets up, he gives her knee a squeeze.

Andy opens the door. Olivia stands up and wordlessly passes by.

INT. LOS ANGELES TIMES - DAY

Erin's waiting for her outside. As Olivia walks by-

ERIN

Liv-

OLIVIA

Fuck off, Erin.

Olivia blows by. She makes for the bathroom but slows as she passes the exit to the garage. She opens the garage door.

INT. LOS ANGELES TIMES - LATER

Olivia sits at her desk, openly smoking a cigarette. Her screen is blank, the curser on her word document blinks unhelpfully at her. Erin watches guiltily. A MALE CO-WORKER stops at her desk, notices her lit cigarette.

MALE CO-WORKER

Olivia, what the hell are you doing?

A blank stare back before the SMOKE ALARM goes off. Mild chaos around her as the sprinklers go off. She smokes.

INT. LOS ANGELES NEWSPAPER - GARAGE - NIGHT

Andy walks into the garage, padding himself down with a towel. He walks up to his car but slows.

The windows are smashed in.

ANDY

What the fuck??

He gets closer and suddenly smells something. He looks inside the car but reels back, gagging and swearing.

INT. OLIVIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Olivia tosses a box of her office belongings on her floor. In no time at all she opens a full bottle of whiskey and pours herself shot after shot. She erases the tallies on her chalkboard.

INT. OLIVIA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

There's a knock at the door as Olivia lies face down on her bed. Another knock and she stirs, grumbles. From behind the door:

ERIC (O.C.)
Liv? You there?

Olivia sighs into her pillow, shakes her head, more grumbling.

ERIC (O.C.) (CONT'D)
I can hear you. C'mon, Cam's worried.

Exasperated, Olivia pulls herself away from the bed and opens the door. ERIC FAUST (late 50's, schlubby and harmless) enters as Olivia makes a bee line for the bathroom. He takes in the sight of Olivia's life, her tiny apartment, the mess, the bottle of bourbon. He sighs at the sight of the alcohol. He leans against the bathroom door. He's cautious, caring.

ERIC (CONT'D)
You sick?

OLIVIA (O.C.)
No.

ERIC
I can hold your hair if you need m--

Olivia opens the door and makes back for the bed.

OLIVIA
I'm not sick, Eric.

She finds a pack of cigarettes and lights one, opens a window. Eric notices the chalkboard.

ERIC
How many days?

OLIVIA
Six. New record. Hail sobriety.

ERIC
Cam was hoping you'd come over for dinner before she leaves for her conference.

OLIVIA

Uuugghh. Fuck, dude, c'mon, no. No no. No I don't want her to see me like this.

ERIC

She's seen you look worse.

A middle finger answers him while she chugs an energy drink.

ERIC (CONT'D)

It's been weeks. You know she gets... well you know how she *gets*.

Olivia pauses a beat after finishing the drink. Like she's thinking. Then BURPS loudly.

OLIVIA

Fine.

She makes for her bedroom and brushes past Eric.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

But you have to promise it won't be a pity party.

ERIC

I promise.

EXT. ECHO PARK - CAM AND ERIC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Eric and Olivia approach his beautiful home overlooking the city. CAMERON (late-50's, former hippy) greets them. She simply exudes a welcoming, caring demeanor. She wraps Olivia in a perfect hug.

CAM

Hey sweetie. Sorry about the job. You need anything, you know we're here.

Olivia gives Eric a look. "You promised."

INT. CAM AND ERIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

This house could not be more different than Olivia's apartment. Twelve-foot-high ceilings, a few thousand square feet of space, open concept, handmade furniture, a place deeply cared for. Cam, Eric, and Olivia sit and eat in the dining room.

INT. CAM AND ERIC'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The food is beautiful. High-end ingredients, healthy, deliciously complimentary colors. Olivia is finishing her plate.

CAM
Maybe it isn't permanent?

OLIVIA
Trust me, it's permanent.

CAM
Whatever it was, I'm sure your boss
could look the other way.

OLIVIA
I took a shit in his car.

Eric coughs out some wine. Cam stares, total shock.

CAM
Liv... you...
(starts laughing)
... you can't do that!

Liv giggles too, it's ridiculous. Eric can't help but join in.

CAM (CONT'D)
Really, you can't!

OLIVIA
It was bad, too.

CAM
Stop.

OLIVIA
He probably thought I had help.

They all laugh, not realizing--

CHLOE (O.S.)
Mommy?

Cam turns and sees that CHLOE (6) has wandered from her room and is at the top of the stairs.

CAM
Hey baby, what are you doing up?

CHLOE
I had a bad dream.

ERIC

I got her.

CAM

No, no, sit, I gotta start packing anyway.

Cam heads up the stairs and scoops up her daughter.

CAM (CONT'D)

Bad dream, huh?

CHLOE

The moon fell out of the sky.

CAM

Aw well that's no good.

Olivia pours more wine as their voices fade.

OLIVIA

Am I crazy or is she always in the middle of packing for work?

ERIC

Feels like it.

OLIVIA

How long's she gone this time?

ERIC

Just a few days.

OLIVIA

And that's working out for you two?

An uncomfortable silence, Eric doesn't need to answer her. Olivia takes the time to look around the space, taking note of a set of pictures on the fireplace mantle. One catches her eye, a young Cam and Eric lounging against a motorcycle.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Whoa. Eric what's this?

ERIC

Road trip from a few years back.

OLIVIA

You're fucking kidding me, look at you both! I always thought you were so lame.

ERIC

We're not lame.

OLIVIA

Uh-huh, we had quinoa and squash for dinner. These two people don't eat quinoa and squash, these badasses eat, fucking, mountain lions or some shit.

ERIC

We like having our secrets.

OLIVIA

You aint kidding.

Cam pads downstairs.

CAM

Just wanted to say goodnight, Liv.

She offers a warm hug.

CAM (CONT'D)

You're always welcome.

OLIVIA

Thanks, Cam.

Cam lets go and gives Eric a peck on the cheek.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Actually if you're traveling and working so much I'd be happy to watch the gremlin for you. Not like I'm doing anything.

Cam pauses, catches a glance from Eric. Something communicated in silence between them. She offers a smile to Olivia.

CAM

(to Eric)

I'll leave you two alone.

A beat after she exits.

OLIVIA

What was that?

ERIC

(searching for his words)

I wanted to talk.

OLIVIA

"You wanted to talk?"

ERIC
Just to check in.

It's veiled, Olivia sees through it.

OLIVIA
Was this a "we gotta talk" dinner
before I got fired?

ERIC
Well... now that you're available..

This means something to Olivia.

OLIVIA
You're kidding.

ERIC
We could use the help.

OLIVIA
Fucking Christ Eric, today is not a
good day.

ERIC
I understand, but this is time
sensitive and I haven't been able
to give it my all.

OLIVIA
Give what you're all?

ERIC
It's a missing kid.

A wallop to Olivia.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Some kid out in Salton Sea, been
gone for a week. I thought maybe
you'd want to help--

OLIVIA
Fuck you.

ERIC
--cause no one else seems to care
and I've...

He lowers his voice.

ERIC (CONT'D)
...things have been a little tough
recently, I...

He may be saying too much.

ERIC (CONT'D)

... I have to be here for Cam. My kid, too.

OLIVIA

Oh for fuck's sake.

She grabs her coat and heads toward the door.

ERIC

It'd be the same deal as before, maybe more money--

OLIVIA

It was one time, dude, and it was a goddamn mistake. I can't just pick up and go to bumblefuck-whenever and do your job for you.

ERIC

It's just... y'know, you have the experience--

OLIVIA

Don't. That's it, you get one slip, but that's it.

ERIC

--and with the work you've done I thought I could put a good word in for you with the department.

It halts Olivia. She gives him a piercing look.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Maybe they'd reconsider.

OLIVIA

Don't fuck with me.

ERIC

I wouldn't.

A moment of hesitation before she opens the door.

OLIVIA

Tell Cam I said thanks for a lovely fucking evening.

She's out.

EXT. CAM AND ERIC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Eric follows her out.

ERIC

Liv, you've been drinking all
night, I can't let you drive.

She's on her way. He walks back inside, defeated.

INT. CAM AND ERIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eric closes the door and sees Cam at the stairs. She looks
disappointed, arms crossed.

ERIC

She'll change her mind.

CAM

I know.

EXT. ECHO PARK STREETS - NIGHT

Olivia makes her way down the steep hill to her PICKUP TRUCK.
She climbs in, turns the ignition, but the truck won't start.
It's ancient.

OLIVIA

Ughhh, no. Not now.

A dramatic sigh, she's out of the truck and grabs some jumper
cables from the flatbed. Back up the hill. She attempts to
light a cigarette but it won't catch. She hurls the lighter
in frustration out into the dark street. A moment with her,
an anger...

...before the lighter is thrown back. It clacks against the
ground, stopping Olivia in her tracks. She looks to the
darkness where it came from, barely illuminated by a street
lamp. Olivia peers into the darkness before she sees a
silhouette appear.

A blonde girl, AMELIA (6), wrapped in darkness save for the
glow against her hair.

Olivia stares in disbelief.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Amelia??

Amelia starts to turn before a pair of GOLDEN-CLAWED HANDS
wrap around her and pull her violently into the darkness.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Amelia!!

Olivia sprints into the darkness, which morphs into...

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

...an open desert, stretching for miles. A blood moon cascades red down on Olivia as she searches for a clue. She finds Amelia's shoe covered in ants. Olivia rushes to it and digs desperately with her bare hands. Her nails bleed, she screams, manic. From above the hole looks like a grave. A wider view reveals she's dug hundreds.

INT. OLIVIA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Olivia wakes with a start, sweating. She's been crying. A shaky hand lights a cigarette. Deep breaths. A phonecall. Eric's groggy voice picks up.

ERIC (V.O.)

Hey. You alright?

OLIVIA

How old is she?

Eric hesitates.

ERIC (V.O.)

Six.

A sigh.

OLIVIA

This is the last time.

She hangs up on him.

LATER

Olivia Googles Salton Sea. She finds headlines "Empty Oasis," "Public Health Hazard," "The Dying Sea."

EXT. LOS ANGELES HIGHWAY - DAY

The next day, Olivia drives out of the city.

EXT. CALIFORNIA DESERT - DAY

The middle of nowhere.

INT. OLIVIA'S TRUCK - OUTSIDE SALTON SEA - DAY

Olivia smokes a cigarette. Something catches her eye. A shimmer in the distance.

EXT. SALTON SEA - DAY

The town's namesake lies glistening in the sun. What seem at first to be white sandy beaches are revealed to be *covered in the bones of rotting fish.*

INT. OLIVIA'S TRUCK - SALTON SEA - DAY

Olivia smells something. From her car? No. She rolls down the window. Ooph, it's rancid. She tosses her cigarette and rolls it back up.

EXT. SALTON SEA - BOMBAY BEACH - DAY

Olivia steps out of her truck by the shore littered in abandoned gymnasium equipment and art installations, some sank halway in the toxic water. She notices a dock nearby, inhabited by a FISHERMAN (50's) and his two SONS (early teens). Olivia approaches them.

OLIVIA

Hi.

FISHERMAN

Afternoon.

OLIVIA

Catch anything?

The Fisherman and his sons give a look to each other.

FISHERMAN

Not much in there. I bring 'em here
to get 'em outta the house.

He gestures to his boys. This place is more depressing by the second.

OLIVIA

Don't suppose you could recommend a
motel nearby?

Another odd look.

FISHERMAN

"Recommend?"

EXT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - DAY

Olivia pulls up in her truck and takes in the sight. It's sad at best. Undeniably a motel, but not much in the way of accommodation.

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - OFFICE - DAY

An empty office. She rings the bell. The sound startles someone in the next room who bangs their head.

MICHAEL (O.S.)
Shit! Fuck me...

Out from the back room comes MICHAEL DORMER (late 30's) rubbing his head.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
'Help you?

OLIVIA
I was looking for a room.

A bewildered look from Michael.

MICHAEL
Here??

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - ROOM A - DAY

Michael lets Olivia into her room. There's a kitchenette, a bed, and a bathroom.

She puts down her things and goes to plug in her phone.

MICHAEL
Oh hey, hey wait a sec, if you're gonna plug anything in make sure you do it one at a time, yeah? Plug in too much and the whole property goes dark.

A strained smile from Olivia.

OLIVIA
Great.

MICHAEL
And no noise after 9pm, walls are thin and I don't need any complaints from the neighbors.

OLIVIA
Oh, I didn't see anyone else here.

MICHAEL
I mean me, I'm the neighbor.

OLIVIA
Ah.

Michael turns to leave.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Oh, you got a map of the area?

She catches a look from him.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
I like working with paper.

MICHAEL
Huh. Sure, yeah, I can check. Need anything else, I live right here on the property.

OLIVIA
Thanks. You got a real nice Norman Bates thing going on here.

MICHAEL
Who's that?

OLIVIA
It's a compliment.

MICHAEL
(sincere)
Oh. 'Preciated.

He closes the door and Olivia's smile drops.

She takes in the sight of her room.

EXT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - DAY

Olivia gets her bearings while Michael attends to the property.

MICHAEL
You on vacation or something?

OLIVIA
Work.

MICHAEL
What'dya do?

OLIVIA
 Uh, good question. Right now... do you think people will talk to me if I say I'm a private investigator?

MICHAEL
 Doubt it.

OLIVIA
 How about journalist?

MICHAEL
 Bit better, though folks here aren't much for strangers no matter what they call themselves.

OLIVIA
 Hm. A little girl disappeared a bit ago, looking into it.

MICHAEL
 That the Lavin girl?

OLIVIA
 You know her?

MICHAEL
 Not much, I know she and her mom live up north a ways. I knew one of the others fairly well though, figure he's long gone by now.

It stops Olivia.

OLIVIA
 "One of the other ones?"

MICHAEL
 Sure.

Michael reads Olivia's confusion.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 Isn't that what you're doing here? About all the kidnappings and whatnot?

OLIVIA
 Other kids?

Michael nods.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 How many?

MICHAEL

This year? About five, maybe six.

Olivia takes a moment to wrap her head around all this.

OLIVIA

"This year??"

EXT. SALTON SEA - DAY

More driving. Olivia is on the phone, she listens as Eric's phone goes to voice mail. She hangs up mid-message.

OLIVIA

Eric, I swear to god.

Olivia passes a few structures. Some resemble homes, some more like rundown shacks, some worse.

INT. OLIVIA'S TRUCK - NEAR CATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

A house in far better shape than anything Olivia's seen nearby, though still a far cry from the homes in L.A.

EXT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Olivia pulls up and parks her truck, knocks on the door. After a beat, CATHERINE LAVIN (mid-30's, perpetually tired) answers.

CATHERINE

Yes?

OLIVIA

Catherine?

Catherine hesitates, looks outside.

CATHERINE

I am.

OLIVIA

I'm Olivia Patterson. I think Detective Faust told you I'd be stopping in?

Another hesitation. Catherine almost says something, but notices a BIKER on a motorcycle driving up the road. Something about it strikes her.

CATHERINE

Come on.

Olivia can't help but notice too, but nothing about the Biker seems off.

INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY - DAY

As Olivia steps inside the first thing she sees is the RIFLE Catherine rests next to the door. Catherine ushers her into a messy living room.

INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Catherine pulls up a chair for Olivia. She sits.

CATHERINE

Can I offer you anything? Coffee?

OLIVIA

A photo of Emily, if you have one around.

CATHERINE

I can e-mail you something easily enough.

OLIVIA

I have an easier time with physical photos. The way I work, the tangibility of a photo helps.

Catherine nods and gestures for Olivia to take a seat. She dips into another room as Olivia sits and takes in the space. She clocks a stack of mail on a nearby coffee table and tilts her head to see better. A letter sticking out is addressed to "Stephen Mercer." Olivia picks up the letter as Catherine returns.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Will Amelia's dad be back anytime soon?

CATHERINE

Oh he's... no, he won't.

OLIVIA

(bluntly)
Is he alive?

CATHERINE

Maybe.
(handing Olivia a photo)
I don't have many photos...

Olivia takes the beat up, torn photo of Catherine and EMILY (6) smiling and standing next to each other in the desert.

OLIVIA
This is fine, anything helps.

CATHERINE
Can I ask what you already know?

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Bare bones. Emily's six, and four days ago you reported her missing.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Kidnapped.

OLIVIA
You think someone took her?

CATHERINE
She's six and we live in a desert, she didn't leave on her own.

OLIVIA
Safe to assume you think it's connected with the others?

Catherine gives her a look.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
The other children, I mean.

CATHERINE
You're investigating everyone?

OLIVIA
Seems unlikely they're not connected. You know any of them?

CATHERINE
Everyone knows everyone here.

OLIVIA
Can you be more specific?

Catherine shifts uncomfortably. Olivia reads her hesitance.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Does anyone have any idea what's happening? A guess?

CATHERINE
They've got their stories.

OLIVIA
How about you?

More hesitance. Olivia's growing impatient.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Catherine - excuse me, Ms. Lavin -
this investigation won't go
anywhere if we can't be honest with
each other. I'm not the police, I'm
not here to get anyone in trouble,
I'm only here to--

CATHERINE

(under her breath)
I know what I saw.

OLIVIA

Excuse me?

Catherine sits up, more confident.

CATHERINE

I know is what I saw.

OLIVIA

What did you see?

Catherine pauses, lingers on a memory. She meets Olivia's
eyes.

CATHERINE

The moment I woke up that night I
knew something was wrong.

SMASH CUT TO:

6 INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - CATHERINE'S BEDROOM - LAST WEEK - 6
NIGHT

Catherine gasps awake! Something woke her up, maybe a sound,
she's out of bed in an instant.

CATHERINE

Emmy?

She's out the door and into the hallway

7 EMILY'S ROOM

7

She turns on the light. No Emily. Not under the bed, not in
the closet. Out the door.

CATHERINE

Emily!?

FRONT HALLWAY

Catherine hurries down the stairs to the hallway where the front door stands open. In the front yard she can just see Emily. A wave of relief.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Oh, baby, what are you doing
out...?

But as she steps closer her eyes go wide.

BACK TO:

8 INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - PRESENT DAY - DAY 8

Catherine sits in her chair, her eyes wet, gazing into the memory.

CATHERINE
There was... *something* with her.
Something impossible. Touching her.
Telling her things. I heard its
voice...

Her voice trembles.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
... and it was wrong.

CUT TO:

9 INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY - NIGHT 9

A LONG HAND slithers across Emily's shoulder. Something stands in front of her...

A tall figure, its face wrapped in a black and gold mask, cloaked and adorned with a halo crown, like a DEITY.

Catherine puts a hand over her mouth as her eyes go wider. A silent scream.

BACK TO:

10 INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 10

There's a severe tension in the room.

CATHERINE
The next thing I knew, it was
morning and I was in bed. And she
was gone...

She darkens.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

... but *it* wasn't. Even now I can feel it. I can hear its words, its whispers, its hands on me. Feel it in every room. See it--

She glances up... to see *golden claws wrapped around Olivia's shoulders*.

She gasps and leaps out of her seat, startled. Olivia stands too, looks behind her... but nothing's there.

Catherine stares another moment, disoriented. She shakes it off, embarrassed.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I...

Olivia looks back at the doorway where Catherine was looking, where Emily had been with the Deity the other night.

11 LATER

11

Olivia watches Catherine as she finishes a glass of water, coming down from the scare. An uncomfortable moment between them.

CATHERINE

Thank you...for listening. It's...
I know how it sounds.

Olivia considers this. Wrestles with what to say.

OLIVIA

My little sister disappeared when we were kids. She was eight, I was sixteen. Mom asked me to watch her while we were at the mall. I don't even remember what I was doing, just... anyway, when I went to look for her she was gone. I had nightmares too. I still have nightmares.

It dawns on Catherine, this won't end for a long time.

EXT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Olivia heads to her car as Catherine sees her out.

EXT. HILL OUTSIDE CATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

The Biker, 40's, sits on his motorcycle and watches the women from a distance. After a moment he revs the engine and leaves.

BACK TO:

EXT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

The women notice the sound of the motorcycle leaving.

CATHERINE

If I can make a suggestion? There's a slum town nearby, Slab City. 'Round there's a blue house. The guy who lives there's a pedo named Malcolm Douer. Been awfully quiet about this whole thing. Talking to him would be a good start.

OLIVIA

Thanks.

Olivia scrawls the info on a notepad and heads back to her truck.

EXT. SALTON SEA - EVENING

The sun is just beginning to set as Olivia listens to Eric's phone go to voice mail. She hangs up, annoyed. She glances over a photo of Catherine and Emily together. Bright, smiling, a happy family. She's distracted by some smoky tendrils trailing over the desert nearby.

EXT. SALTON SEA - DESERT - EVENING

Olivia's pulled her truck over and walks through the rocky desert ground towards the origination of the smoke, a few hundred yards from the road.

EXT. SALTON SEA - BURN SITE - EVENING

As Olivia gets closer, everything comes into focus. A PYRE, burnt earlier in the day, smolders in the middle of the desert.

Tied to it are COYOTES, burnt down to the bone. It's a disturbing site, causing Olivia pause once she realizes what she's looking at.

Around the pyre she notices indentations in the sand. Bare footprints. They lead off into the desert. Olivia pulls out a POLAROID camera and takes a photo of the pyre, the footsteps.

From above, we see that the footsteps circle the pyre and form the shape of the DEITY.

Just then her car alarm goes off, startling her. A short beat before she starts after it, giving one last glance to the pyre.

EXT. SALTON SEA - DESERT - NIGHT

Olivia carefully approaches her truck. The driver's side door is wide open. Olivia peeks her head in.

A CROW is nailed to her headrest, upside-down, mimicking a crucifixion. She reaches out to touch it.

It shudders, tries to flap, scares the shit out of her. Not quite dead yet. Olivia checks to see if the coast is clear. No one for miles. Nothing. The car alarm continues, lights blinking and reflecting off the crow's eyes.

SANTERA (V.O.)

You must say her name.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTERIAN CHAMBER - DAY - 12 YEARS AGO

A pain, Young Olivia musters through it, eyes on the fire.

OLIVIA

Amelia.

The flame flickers. The Santera mumbles something, it isn't in English.

SANTERA

You must think of her, focus. Her eyes. Her mouth. Her hair, you must think of these things.

Olivia stares into the flame, hands pressed down on the table. The flame dances again. The Santera notices.

SANTERA (CONT'D)

There is a spirit, a being who is with you.

Somewhere in the dark room, behind Olivia, *something moves*.

BACK TO:

EXT. CRUZ'S PROPERTY - DAY - PRESENT

The next day, Olivia drives through the wasteland and pulls up to a rundown property. The place is essentially a junkyard with a trailer. As Olivia lets herself through the gate, she notices a pair of ceramic bottles hanging from a post, buzzing with flies. Two emaciated children, BEN (10) and RAFAEL (14), stare at her from behind the trailer. Olivia takes a Polaroid of the bottles as OSCAR CRUZ (50's) opens the trailer door and spots her.

OSCAR
Private Property.

OLIVIA
Mr. Cruz?

OSCAR
Who're you?

OLIVIA
I'm investigating the disappearance
of Emily Lavin, are you familiar
with her?

Oscar suddenly whistles to the boys and gestures indoors. They enter the trailer, giving a final glance to Olivia.

OSCAR
Private property.

He goes to close the door.

OLIVIA
Or your own daughter, Lola, is it?
Word is she's been gone some time.

He stops, turns to her, a darkness in his eyes. He marches in front of Olivia and stands inches from her. He takes a moment to scan the horizon, maybe looking for something in the distance, then back to her. He begins to speak, when--

ANA (O.S.)
Oscar!

Oscar turns to see his wife, ANA (40s) standing in the doorway of the trailer with the two boys. She shares something unspoken with him. He turns back to Olivia. Considers his words.

OSCAR
Private property.

Back to his trailer.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Olivia pays for a pack of cigarettes and exits the station as her phone rings. She answers.

OLIVIA

Why didn't you tell me about the other kids?

A pause.

ERIC (V.O.)

I did, it was all in the case file I sent.

OLIVIA

No, no I only had information on Emily Lavin.

ERIC (V.O.)

Well it should've all been there. I had my office manager put it all together for you.

OLIVIA

Fuck's sake, Eric, a single kidnapping and a string of them throughout a year are two wildly different things.

ERIC (V.O.)

I know, I know. I'm sorry.

OLIVIA

Don't dick me over like that, man, I'm doing you a favor.

ERIC (V.O.)

I know, and thank you. Let me know if you need anything.

OLIVIA

A fucking drink.

ERIC (V.O.)

I have to meet with some people in that area tonight. I know a place outside of town where we can keep a low profile, I'll send you the address and time.

OLIVIA

You better.

She hangs up on him and inhales on her cigarette. She flicks it away and heads back to her truck. Something catches her eye, stopping her.

The motorcycle from earlier is parked in the back. She checks to make sure the coast is clear and walks up to it, taking a Polaroid of the license plate.

She hurries back to the other side of the gas station and peeks her head around to watch the Biker approach his motorcycle. She takes a photo as he hops on, starts the engine, and drives away, unaware of Olivia as she flattens herself against the wall of the gas station.

A few moments later and she's in her truck, following stealthily behind.

INT. OLIVIA'S TRUCK - SALTON SEA - DAY

Olivia keeps the biker just in view over the horizon as she follows. She leaves Eric a voicemail.

OLIVIA

Hey Eric, I'm following a guy on a motorcycle, just texted you his license plate. He spooked Catherine during our interview earlier. I don't know, maybe something's there. Just in case I go missing or whatever I thought I'd tell somebody. Kay, hope I'm wrong, bye.

She hangs up.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Or maybe I'm just a stupid fucking idiot. I don't know.

She peers out, watching the motorcycle.

EXT. SLAB CITY - DAY

The motorcycle approaches a collection of run down shacks and trailers, the Biker makes a turn onto a dirt road going deeper into the slum. Olivia rolls to a stop before the entrance of the city. Littered with graffiti and strange sculptures made of junk, the place isn't exactly welcoming. She looks at her notes, "Slab City."

OLIVIA

That's you alright.

Olivia eyes the place, no sign of the Biker. She pulls out a digital camera with a long lens and takes a few photos of the shacks, trailers, and whatever else you could call a home. She notices bottles strung up around the perimeter, similar to those outside Cruz's trailer. Odd.

She packs things up, turns the ignition, but gets nothing from her truck.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

No. Oh c'mon please.

Another try. Nothing.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Piece of shit, Olivia, honestly, get a new fucking car.

A big sigh before she gets out and grabs her trusty jumper cables from the flat bed of her truck. She takes in the sight of the city before her, figuring the odds, is it safe? Nothing for miles in either direction, it'll have to do.

She finds a house in better shape than the rest, and with a car out front. The house is circled by a white line, a strange decoration. As she approaches, MIRIAM (late 30's, thin and greying) steps out. She closes the door tight behind her when she sees Olivia.

MIRIAM

You lost?

OLIVIA

Sorry, my truck died out front, I was hoping someone could help me jump it?

The woman looks her up and down.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I have cables.

She gestures with them. Miriam glances at the white line circling her house, Olivia stands just outside of it. Miriam extends a hand for the jumper cables.

MIRIAM

(carefully)

Here.

Olivia steps over the white line. Miriam seems to relax a little. She takes the jumper cables before locking the door behind her. As she turns to make her way to Olivia's car, a CAT slinks by and rubs against Miriam.

OLIVIA
This little guy yours?

MIRIAM
They're everywhere. Even find 'em
indoors sometimes, can't blame 'em
for keeping outta this heat. Want
one?

OLIVIA
I'm good.

LATER

Olivia's truck roars to life. Olivia pumps her fist as Miriam
fidgets with a bundle of dried sage, something habitual.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
(hopping out of the truck)
That'll do it! You're a lifesaver.

Miriam nods as Olivia removes the jumper cables.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Oh shit, I'm Olivia, by the way.

MIRIAM
Miriam.

Olivia takes the woman in. Always an eye over her shoulder.

OLIVIA
Thanks for all this, don't know
what I would have done.

MIRIAM
This place'll eat you alive you
give it a chance.

OLIVIA
Yeah that's sorta the sense I'm
getting.

MIRIAM
What brings you out here?

OLIVIA
Some kids went missing, looking
into what happened.

Miriam drops the sage. Olivia looks up and notices her
shocked expression.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
You know anything?

MIRIAM
Well of course. Everyone knows...
but... well I just didn't think...
(walking away)
Excuse me. I have to get back.

Olivia watches her go.

OLIVIA
Are you alright?

MIRIAM
(flustered)
Call it old wounds or something.

OLIVIA
Did you lose someone too?

Miriam stops at the front of her house. Turns, coming up with an answer.

MIRIAM
Just... be careful.

She steps in and closes the door. Olivia looks on.
Bewildered.

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - OFFICE - DAY

Olivia makes a mark on a map. She circles Salton Sea and writes "Miriam. Motorcycle?". Michael steps in.

MICHAEL
How's that investigation going?

OLIVIA
Big surprise, no one wants to talk.
I tried Oscar Cruz, you know him?

MICHAEL
How'd you hear about that?

OLIVIA
Police report.

MICHAEL
I doubt it.

OLIVIA
Why's that?

MICHAEL

Cause there's no way Oscar reported it.

OLIVIA

How do you mean?

Michael's unsure, maybe saying too much.

MICHAEL

Folks that live out here aint doing it because they like it, they do it because they're stuck here. Either hiding from something or running from it. Oscar's a man running from something, no way he'd involve the law.

OLIVIA

What's he running from?

MICHAEL

Well that's his business. Fact is, I'd be surprised anyone would report something like that out here. Don't know where you got your names, but they sure as shit didn't come from the police.

Olivia is a little stunned.

EXT. MALCOLM'S HOUSE - DAY

Olivia drives up the road.

OLIVIA

Blue house... blue house... oh.

Sure enough, she spots the cookie-cutter home. It's in surprisingly good shape considering the neighborhood. There's a tiny, fallow garden on the property. Olivia parks her truck and knocks on the front door. Knocks again. Nothing.

She takes a Polaroid of the house, another of the garden next to it. Just as she's inspecting the garden the door to the house opens and MALCOLM DOUER, (50's) peeks out. It doesn't take Olivia long to surmise that he has some disability.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Mr. Douer?

He seems unsure.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 Sir, My name's Olivia Patterson,
 I'm doing some research on some
 folks who went missing--

He slams the door shut.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 Well that's not suspicious at all.

Back to the truck.

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - NIGHT

Olivia works on her story in her room, tapping away on her laptop. She puts up the photo of Malcolm's property, his house, his garden. She prints some photos from her digital camera. Most of Slab City, Miriam's house, the bottles. Then the biker, his license plate. The map from Michael. She takes a step back, the bigger picture.

Her computer chirps a warning, low battery. She plugs it in but *jumps at the sparks that snap out at her from the socket*. The property goes dark. Outside, Michael's voice trudges away.

MICHAEL (O.S.)
 Shit. Goddamnit.

Olivia grimaces.

OLIVIA
 (to herself)
 Sorry.

She sits for a moment, her eyes adjusting to the dark, before she notices something about the wall on the other end of the room.

There's a crack, a bit of paint chipped away, and from it *sticks what appears to be hair*.

She pads over and looks at the crack in the wall, lightly touches it. It's wet. She chips at it, a neurotic gesture, like one picks at a scab. As she removes more of the paint and the wall, the hair becomes clearer. A strange insulation. She picks away more and more, becoming frantic.

Before long enough is chipped away that she sees the hair is connected to skin.

A BODY.

Just as she realizes what she's seeing, **a beam of light punches through her window and blinds her.**

The power's back on, the street lamp outside cascading into her window. As her eyes adjust she focuses on the hole she's chipped away in the wall. There's no hair, no body, just a *hole leading straight through the other side.*

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
(whispers)
No. No, no no no.

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - ROOM A - BATHROOM

Olivia snatches her pills from the sink and takes one, before splashing water on her face. She washes her hands but slows when she notices something under her fingernails.

Hair.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

An establishment that isn't exactly vying for good tips. Olivia sits at the bar, fingering at the hair next to her drink. Her eyes are far away, baggy. As she catches glimpses of the BAR PATRONS we get a sense that some of them may be watching her. She stands out. Back to the hair. Eric enters, his detective look is not missed by several patrons, who quickly leave. Eric finds her.

ERIC
Hey. I've been calling you.

OLIVIA
Oh, sorry.

The BARTENDER (60's, rugged) gives a look to Eric. Eric covers his badge.

ERIC
Not here for you. Bourbon please.
Neat.

The bartender takes a moment before obliging Eric with his drink. Eric's attention is back to Olivia.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Friendly folk around here.

She's far away.

ERIC (CONT'D)
You alright?

OLIVIA
Not sleeping much. At all. Not
sleeping at all.

ERIC
What's on your mind?

OLIVIA
(digging through her bag)
Witch bottles.

She takes some Polaroids from her bag and flips through them,
finding a witch bottle.

ERIC
Hm?

She places the Polaroid down.

OLIVIA
These old ceramic bottles people
used to put up back in the day to
keep evil away or something. They'd
fill them with piss and fingernail
clippings and hair or whatever and
leave them outside.

ERIC
Lovely. This an interest of yours?

OLIVIA
No, just they're all over the place
out at Salton.

ERIC
Huh.

OLIVIA
Salt, too. You know salt wards off
evil?

ERIC
Can't say I did.

OLIVIA
Well folks seem pretty convinced.
People seem superstitious out here
to you?

Eric shrugs.

ERIC
Isolation and paranoia walk hand in
hand, right?

OLIVIA
Eh, bunch of kids go missing
without a trace and I'd probably
not count anything out either.

ERIC
How's that going?

OLIVIA
Spoke with Oscar Cruz.

ERIC
Oh yeah?

OLIVIA
Really pleasant guy, you remember
him?

ERIC
Mm, yeah, sure. His daughter was...
Lola?

Olivia nods. Eric continues with his drink while she figures
him out.

OLIVIA
Y'know someone out here said
something pretty interesting.
Apparently a lot of these families
didn't report when their kids went
missing.

ERIC
You're kidding?

OLIVIA
Nope. Not even Oscar Cruz.

Eric's caught.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
So Eric, mind telling me exactly
why the fuck you know about a
missing kid who was never reported
missing?

He's fucked.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Olivia barrels through the door. Eric comes stumbling after.

ERIC
Olivia! Olivia, wait. Please.

OLIVIA
Whatever this is, I don't fucking
want it.

ERIC
Please, I'm sorry, I'm sorry I
lied.

She keeps marching to her truck.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I just... if I told you the truth I
wasn't sure you wouldn't have
agreed and... hey-

He catches up to her and gets between her and her truck.

OLIVIA
Move.

ERIC
Liv--

OLIVIA
Move.

ERIC
Give me 60 seconds. That's all,
I'll tell you everything.

She sighs.

OLIVIA
You have 30.

ERIC
I came out here a year ago. One of
the first missing kids, Rick
Martinez. I asked around and after
some time it was obvious that
everyone was hiding something. The
locals, the police, everyone.
Before I knew it, turns out there's
not just one missing kid.

OLIVIA
Sounds familiar. 20 seconds.

ERIC
You're right, and no one was
talking about it and no one was
telling me why. It was like... it
was like everyone was afraid of
something.

OLIVIA
So why aren't you out here now?

ERIC
Because one day I check into my motel and there's a packet there for me. And it's got a picture of my daughter in our front yard.

Bam, Olivia is taken aback.

ERIC (CONT'D)
They knew who I was. Whoever everyone was so scared of, they knew where I lived. They knew about Chloe, Cam, everything.

OLIVIA
So, what, you just sent me here cause I'm expendable?

ERIC
I sent you here cause you're good at your job.

OLIVIA
(figuring it out)
You never sent the files about the other missing kids cause there were no files.

Her sympathy is gone.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Fucking shit, Eric, this is astounding.

Back to her truck.

ERIC
I did it because I knew you could find them and no one has any reason to be suspicious of you.

She's in her truck. Engine started.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I knew you wouldn't get hurt. And I knew you wouldn't stop, I mean you of all people--

She stops the engine. Gets out of the truck. Gets in his face.

OLIVIA
Say it again. Say "you of all
people."

The words caught in his throat.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Use my sister again and I'll
fucking kill you. Understand? We're
done.

Back in her truck. Engine on. Speeds away.

She's not coming back.

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - ROOM A - MORNING

Olivia lies in bed. Her phone rings, she ignores it.

EXT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - MORNING

Olivia loads up her truck. Phone rings again. She answers
with a sigh.

OLIVIA
Dude, I'm not done being mad at you-

ERIC
They found one.

A pause.

OLIVIA
One what?

ERIC
Local police found one of the kids.
A boy. I'll send you the address.

He hangs up. Olivia's left with her astonishment.

EXT. MALCOLM'S HOUSE - DAY

A CROWD has formed around the property as POLICE and EMTs
swarm the area. Olivia pulls up in her truck and sifts
through the crowd to get to the front. The door of Malcolm's
home is left wide open, giving Olivia the chance to peek
inside. She notices the smell first, and her eyes adjust to
the dark room filled with witch bottles. Dozens.

An OFFICER ushers her away. She has enough time to catch a
glimpse of the side of the house. Poking out from the garden
is A CHILD'S FOOT.

INT. SALTON POLICE STATION - DAY

Olivia waits outside an interrogation room. Eric exits the room and gives her a glance before chatting with other DETECTIVES. Olivia peers through the window of the room at Malcolm as he sits, handcuffed to a table.

ERIC (V.O.)

You know there are sex offender support groups?

INT. SALTON POLICE STATION - PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Eric goes over his notes with Olivia.

OLIVIA

Can't say I did.

ERIC

Well Douer says he was attending one all evening. The coroner suspects the boy's been dead a few months, and you say you didn't notice anything while you were speaking with him yesterday afternoon?

OLIVIA

Garden was clean.

ERIC

You're positive?

She takes out a Polaroid of the garden.

OLIVIA

This was from yesterday evening.

And another Polaroid.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

This is today.

Sure enough, yesterday's Polaroid is clean, no sign of anything. A stark comparison to the more recent violence.

ERIC

Kid must've been buried last night, Douer says his support group session lasted all evening.

OLIVIA

The whole night?

ERIC
He says.

OLIVIA
Hmm.

A silence between them as Olivia looks over her notes.

ERIC
Liv, really, I'm very sorry for
dragging you--

OLIVIA
The less we talk about it, the
better, yeah?

ERIC
Yeah, sure.

An uncomfortable pause.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I can get you in to see the body if
you want?

OLIVIA
As enticing as that sounds I think
I'll just keep things lighter and
visit the pedophile support group.

ERIC
Great.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Olivia double checks her notes as she approaches a warehouse
next to an abandoned vinyard. Only one door, must be it.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

She's interrupted a meeting. BERNARD, THOMAS, OCTAVIO, and
PETER, all varying ages, sit in a circle in the mostly empty
warehouse. Each of them watches her, cautious.

PETER
Can I help you?

OLIVIA
Are you The Defiers?

Thomas stands up, rigid, afraid. Peter holds out a calming
hand.

PETER
Easy, Thomas, sit.

THOMAS
Fuck this.

He makes a bee line for the door, straight past Olivia.

PETER
Thomas!

Thomas ignores him, he eyes Olivia as he leaves. She turns back to the group. Peter stands and gestures to a door.

PETER (CONT'D)
Maybe it's better if we talk in private. Please.
(to the others)
We'll just be a minute.

Olivia hesitates. Peter heads to the door.

PETER (CONT'D)
(to Olivia)
Please.

She follows him in, catching the cautious eyes of the others.

INT. WAREHOUSE - BREAK ROOM - NIGHT

Peter closes the door behind them goes to a cheap coffee machine, pouring himself a cup.

PETER
I know who you are.

He clocks Olivia's reaction. Continues to pour his coffee.

PETER (CONT'D)
Word travels fast here. You want any?

She shakes her head. He sips his coffee and leans against the counter, taking her in.

PETER (CONT'D)
This is supposed to be a safe place for them, if you wanted to talk you could've called ahead.

OLIVIA
(sarcastic)
Well if there's one group who needs
safe spaces and support, it's the
sex offenders.

PETER
For your information no one in that
room has touched a child in an
indecent way.

OLIVIA
I thought this was a sex offender
group?

PETER
This is a preventative group.
They're The Defiers because they
defy what's inside of each of them.
Each one has defied it his entire
life and has had the strength to
defy it, together.

OLIVIA
Including Malcolm Douer?

A hard look from Peter.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Word travels fast, I take it you
heard what happened, what with you
all being so close?

Peter sits up straighter.

PETER
Malcolm makes an easy scapegoat.

OLIVIA
What makes you think he didn't do
it himself?

PETER
Because he was with us all night.
He came by early in the evening
saying he was scared and confused,
that... *some woman* came trespassing
on his property, accusing him of
hurting some children.

Olivia pieces it together, a little uncomfortable.

OLIVIA
His name came up, so--

PETER

And why wouldn't it? He's an easy enough target. Malcom's not perfect but he's far from a murderer.

OLIVIA

I think "not perfect" is putting it lightly.

PETER

At least he's asked for help. They all have. Would you prefer they didn't?

It's a good point.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

As Olivia approaches her truck, she notices Thomas smoking a cigarette by his car. They make eye contact. Olivia walks up to him. A heavy silence between them.

THOMAS

I didn't want them hearing anything.

He's a nervous, shifty man, failing to completely look her in the eye.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I knew Malcolm, lived in the Slab with him for a bit.

OLIVIA

Malcolm lived in Slab City?

THOMAS

(stepping closer)

The people that live there, I don't know about the kid, don't know if it's their way to... well, killin' kids is something else. But...

(lowers his voice)

There's stuff happening there, stuff that isn't... right. Religious stuff.

OLIVIA

What kinds of religious stuff?

THOMAS

Killin' animals. Burning em. Fuckin' in the dirt, weird shit.

(MORE)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You look out there at night and see the fires. There's something in 'em, the fire, something wrong. I got out when Malcolm did, when everyone did.

OLIVIA

What do you mean everyone?

THOMAS

Place cleared out some time back, like everyone knew something was coming. You could feel it everywhere.

Thomas looks past Olivia and notices Peter standing in the doorway of the warehouse, watching them. Thomas gives Olivia a final look and leaves. She looks on, simmering in whatever it was that just happened.

OLIVIA (V.O.)

They corroborated Malcolm's alibi, he was there all night.

INT. OLIVIA'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Olivia drives back to the motel while speaking with Eric on the phone.

ERIC (V.O.)

Well what do you think?

OLIVIA

That this gets weirder and weirder. You see the note in the coroner's report about the blood in the body?

ERIC (V.O.)

All located in the feet and legs.

OLIVIA

So if you found him face-down in Douer's garden...

ERIC (V.O.)

He was moved, buried somewhere else first.

OLIVIA

Well shit, man. At least we got one good thing going for us.

ERIC (V.O.)

What's that?

OLIVIA

Whoever did this knows how close we
are, and they're scared.

She cruises along the back roads of Salton Sea.

EXT. SLAB CITY - NIGHT

Olivia parks her truck outside the entrance of Slab City. She stands on the truck to get a better view. Sure enough, there's almost no life. The only lights on come from Miriam's house. Odd. Olivia takes a few photos.

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - ROOM A - NIGHT

Olivia adds the Slab City photos to her collection.

She gets ready for bed and slides under the sheets.

Suddenly she recoils, kicking the sheets and blankets away.

OLIVIA

Oh Jesus fucking shit, fuck fuck
fuck!!

She leaps out of the bed and stands, rigid, staring at the sheets piled on the floor. *The sheets move slightly.* She flips them over and a BLACK SNAKE slithers out from under them.

It makes its way across the room, until it reaches...

... a PAIR OF PALE FEET. *It slithers up the feet, up the legs, revealing...*

... *Amelia.*

But this is hardly the girl we've seen before. Her cheeks are sunken in, eyes fogged over, staring at Olivia.

Olivia's face goes slack, this can't be real.

Amelia's eyes widen, her mouth opens, continues opening, her head craned back, mouth open wider than it should. Her eyes tear up from the stress on her muscles. And from her mouth... a voice. Deep. Inhuman.

AMELIA

Look... beyond.

Olivia stares in horror, then tilts her head up to see the roof of the motel has disappeared, crumbled into space, revealing the massive red moon swirling above her head.

It reaches into space with dark tendrils, seemingly cracking the cosmos into pieces. Back down to Amelia.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Look... below.

Olivia looks beneath her to find...

... nothing. Just the floor. She looks back up. Amelia is gone. The snake slithers, pressed against the wall. Olivia closes her eyes, takes a frustrated breath, lightly hits her head.

OLIVIA

Stop. Stop it. Just...
(turning to a scream)
... be a NORMAL PERSON!!

She grits her teeth and takes a few more breaths when there's a knock at the door.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Ma'am? You okay in there?

OLIVIA

Yeah I'm... I'm fine. Sorry.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

'Fraid I have an obligation to make sure.

She sighs and opens the door.

He's a bit more cleaned up than usual, freshly shaved.

OLIVIA

(gesturing to herself)
See? Not being murdered.

MICHAEL

I see. Well... if you need anything, like, at all, you know where I am.

OLIVIA

'ppreciate it.

She puts a hand on the door.

MICHAEL

Or even recommendations about anything, anywhere to see or whatever, I been here plenty and... well anyway just happy to help.

OLIVIA
 (repeats)
 'ppreciate it.

MICHAEL
 Right. Yeah. Well cool, then, lemme
 know if anything comes up.

He turns to leave.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 Oh hey, y'know, I wasn't sure if
 you needed it or anything but I
 just finished making some late
 dinner. Nice night and all, was
 gonna sit out and have a bite if
 you were hungry.

OLIVIA
 It's been a long day.

Michael's endearing tone is a bit tragic.

MICHAEL
 Got it. All good. Have a good night
 then. Rest up.

Olivia closes the door and leans against it, sighing.
 Suddenly, a low, loud rumble from her stomach.

OLIVIA
 Son of a bitch.

EXT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - LATER

Olivia sits outside and looks at her plate of mac-n-cheese
 with hot dogs. Michael sits next to her, taking his plate
 from the side table between them.

MICHAEL
 Secret is the hot sauce.

Ooph, poor guy. Olivia digs in. The street lamp near them
 flickers and pops. She takes in the scenery, the sad motel.

OLIVIA
 You said you've been here a while?

MICHAEL
 Mmm, yeah, grandma brought my mom
 here back when it was booming,
 bought up a bunch of land thinking
 she'd be a millionaire someday.

OLIVIA

Booming?

MICHAEL

Shit, yeah. Supposed to be the new Vegas. Didn't know farmers were using the sea as a runoff for animal waste. Stocked it with tilapia which bred like rabbits, just kept fucking and dying and making the water more toxic. Sure you noticed the smell.

OLIVIA

Hard to miss.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Well anyway, everyone up and left as fast as they came, except a few. Grandma put all her money in this place so we had nowhere to go.

OLIVIA

And it's just you now?

MICHAEL

(shrugs)

Mortgage is paid for, so...

OLIVIA

Word is people still around are either running from something or hiding from it.

It changes things for Michael.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

What do you think?

He's clammed up.

MICHAEL

(gestures to the food)

You'll want to finish that, it's not good cold.

She picks at her food, noticing a bible on the side table.

OLIVIA

You don't strike me as the religious type.

He clocks the bible.

MICHAEL

These days, well with everything going on... I don't know. Didn't seem like it'd hurt to read up a bit.

OLIVIA

Lot of that going on out here.

MICHAEL

You blame em? All this land dying, people disappearing, makes you see shit in the shadows you didn't before. You talk with enough people and the Devil's sure to come up.

OLIVIA

Not with you, though.

MICHAEL

Dammit, girl, you always this noseey?

OLIVIA

Comes with the territory.

Michael shifts in his seat.

MICHAEL

Hell, I don't know. Seen shit I can't explain, that's for sure. I got an uncle buried out here, my mom put a little cross at the center of his slab, y'know one of those slabs that they lay on the ground over the coffin?

Olivia nods.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Anyway she put this tiny cross on it, just something she etched in, woulda cost a fortune to have someone else do it for her. I'm out visiting it the other day, just paying my respects, and I'll be damned if that cross isn't upside-down.

A strange memory.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Even the dead think something's up.

Olivia looks out to the desert, taking in the night air. She notices the snake from earlier slithering away. The street light flickers and pops, the snake fading in and out of view. Her eyes stay drawn to it, the hypnotic, impossible way a snake moves. She looks up. **Something glows red against her skin--**

MICHAEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

Olivia breaks out of her trance.

She's standing several feet away from Michael, her food spilled on the floor.

Michael stands as well, a few feet away, a frightened look in his eye.

OLIVIA
Sorry?

Michael looks her up and down, out into the desert.

MICHAEL
Who were you just talking to?

Back to the desert, to the snake. It's gone, lost in the dark.

OLIVIA
I wasn't...

Off his bewildered look.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
What was I saying?

MICHAEL
No fucking clue.

Olivia picks up the food.

OLIVIA
(rushed)
Thank you for dinner.

She hurries back to her room.

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - ROOM A - NIGHT

Olivia lies awake in bed. Stares at the ceiling. Suddenly...

OLIVIA
Holy fuck.

She's out of the bed.

EXT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - NIGHT

Olivia bangs on the office door.

OLIVIA
Michael!?

A blurry-eyed Michael answers the door. Olivia is frantic.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
You're sure about the cross?

MICHAEL
Huh?

OLIVIA
The cross on your uncle's grave,
you're sure it's upside-down?

MICHAEL
Pretty sure, yeah.

OLIVIA
How long ago did it change?

MICHAEL
I don't know, maybe the past month?

OLIVIA
Can you show me?

MICHAEL
Now??

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Michael and Olivia pull up in MICHAEL'S TRUCK. The cemetery is hardly formal, maybe an acre filled with crosses and grave stones. They make their way through the cemetery before they come to a stone slab.

MICHAEL
Right there, see?

Olivia looks. Sure enough, the slab covering the grave has a cross right in the middle, but it's facing downward. Olivia investigates it and notices some heavy scrape marks on the side of the slab. On the ground there's some indentation, as if something heavy cut into the earth.

OLIVIA
 You said it must've happened this
 month?

MICHAEL
 Think so.

Olivia inspects the fresh indentations in the earth.
 Something was moved here. Recently. She looks to Michael.

OLIVIA
 Michael, I need to ask you to let
 me do something. Something
 horrible.

Michael give her a confused look.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

As night falls, Michael has attached a chain from his truck
 to the slab of the grave. Olivia looks on as the he starts
 his truck and pulls forward. Slowly, the slab moves and
 opens.

Olivia reacts to the smell.

A little further and Olivia waves at the Michael to stop. She
 slowly approaches the partially open grave and looks in. The
 corpse of Michael's uncle, entirely decayed. She peers
 closer.

Then she sees it.

Pushed to the back of the grave, barely visible from behind
 the corpse.

A little hand. **A CHILD'S HAND.**

SANTERA (V.O.)
 There is a spirit, a being who is
 with you.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTERIAN CHAMBER - DAY - 12 YEARS AGO

Somewhere in the dark room, behind young Olivia, something
 moves. A floorboard creaks. Olivia turns for hardly a moment.

SANTERA
 No, you must not look away.

Back to the flame. Olivia's sweating. The Santera continues
 to mumble. A card is turned. Movement behind Olivia.

The flame flickers erratically. The Santera looks puzzled at the cards, the flame.

SANTERA (CONT'D)
She is your sister?

OLIVIA
Yes.

Whatever is behind her feels closer. She's breathing quick, shallow breaths.

SANTERA
How old?

OLIVIA
Six.

Something's wrong. The Santera looks unsure, the darkness behind Olivia is heavier and heavier.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Can we stop?

The Santera stares at the cards, brow furrowed.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Seriously I want to stop.

Blood drips from Olivia's nose and onto her hands.

SANTERA
This being, whatever is with you,
it isn't female...

Another card turned.

SANTERA (CONT'D)
... and it's old.

BACK TO:

INT. SALTON POLICE STATION - CONFERENCE ROOM

Olivia and Eric look over an aerial photograph of the cemetery. There are numerous graves circled.

ERIC
This is his uncle's grave, and
these are where we found the other
bodies.

OLIVIA

How many?

ERIC

Fifteen total. Two in the uncle's grave.

OLIVIA

And Catherine's daughter?

Eric shakes his head, Olivia sighs.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

You've gotta be shitting me with all this. Do we know anything yet?

ERIC

It's early. The coroner suspects each was killed around a month apart, mostly just eyeballing though. All have a puncture wound on the throat at the jugular, likely bled.

OLIVIA

Have any of the parents come forward?

ERIC

Two so far. It'll take time to ID the older bodies.

She looks over the notes.

OLIVIA

You said they were bled?

ERIC

Seems so.

OLIVIA

Like... no blood in their bodies at all?

ERIC

Minimal.

Olivia opens a folder, searches.

ERIC (CONT'D)

What is it?

She finds something.

OLIVIA
(to herself)
"Blood in the feet."

ERIC
Sorry?

She shows him a file.

OLIVIA
The boy found in Douer's garden,
the blood was in the feet. He
wasn't bled like the others...

ERIC
You think...?

OLIVIA
They framed him.

Eric takes this in. Olivia looks over the map of the cemetery.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
You said they were killed a month
apart?

ERIC
Roughly, it's still early.

OLIVIA
And the most recent...

She's sorting something out.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
The most recent has been dead for
how long?

ERIC
20, 30 days.

OLIVIA
Shit.

ERIC
What is it?

OLIVIA
Emily went missing just over two
weeks ago.

ERIC
You think she's still alive?

OLIVIA

Unless she's another red herring
like the one in Douer's garden. But
if she isn't... I mean if she's
still alive, I don't think we have
more than a week to find her.

The threat of time dawns on both of them.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

MOURNERS gather to witness the re-burial of the children
found in the graves. Olivia watches, cigarette in hand,
keeping her distance. Catherine walks up behind her and stops
a few feet away. Olivia turns and notices her, Catherine
stares at the mourners.

CATHERINE

I need a drink.

Their eyes meet.

EXT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Cicadas sing, celebrating the heat.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

When they said they found someone
my heart just about jumped out of
my chest.

INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Catherine and Olivia sit on a couch together, sharing a
bottle of tequila.

CATHERINE

Someone called while I was driving
home and I just hit the brakes
without thinking. Stopped so
fucking fast. I don't even remember
doing it. Just... stopped.

OLIVIA

She's still out there.

CATHERINE

It's been over a week.

OLIVIA

I'm... getting somewhere.

CATHERINE

I read that if a child isn't found within the first 24 hours their chances of turning up alive drop almost to zero.

OLIVIA

Not all the time.

CATHERINE

Just most of it.

They share a look. Catherine eases.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Sorry. I want to trust you, it's just... It's been hard to get an honest answer out of anyone. The police, my neighbors, you.

Olivia looks her over. Makes a decision.

OLIVIA

When Eric told you I was coming did he say much about me?

CATHERINE

Eric?

OLIVIA

Detective Faust.

CATHERINE

Oh. Not really.

OLIVIA

He tell you I used to be a detective?

Catherine shakes her head.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Well, I was. As long as I can remember I always liked a mystery. When I was a kid I'd find little puzzles to keep my brain busy. I remember there was a ring from a cup on the dining room table, like a little bit of condensation, and taking out every cup in the house to find out which one left the ring. My mom came downstairs to find, just, this army of cups laid out on the floor.

(MORE)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Coffee mugs, glasses, mason jars, everything we had and she was like "Liv, what the fuck are you doing??" And I proudly held up my little sister's favorite sippy cup and was like "Mom, look what Amelia did!" I thought I was gonna get her in so much trouble.

(a moment, a memory)

She was gone maybe, like, 5 years later? And after that... anyway, it's just something I always wanted to do. Went through training, was a cop for a bit, Eric - Detective Faust - noticed me and took me under his wing. My dad wasn't in the picture much so, y'know, it was nice to be noticed. Anyway, I was Detective Patterson, rookie, but good. People knew I was good. But, uh, a few years in there was an accident. I had an accident, I mean. We were working on this case and it was... gruesome and messy and I wasn't sleeping and was having nightmares and was taking these pills to stay awake and it got... it was triggering and it caused a psychotic break. I saw stuff that wasn't there and heard... voices that weren't there and it all got to be too much. And then Eric found me passed out in my apartment and an entire bottle of sleeping pills in my system. He told everyone it was an accident and did what he could to keep me on, but... anyway, that was that.

CATHERINE

Was it an accident?

A beat, Olivia considers a lie, but...

OLIVIA

I wanted to find her. My sister. I thought if I go to some afterlife and I find her there then that means she was dead and I'd know, and if I got there and she wasn't there then she'd be alive... and I'd know.

(MORE)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

And if there was nothing, no afterlife or anything, then it didn't matter because then I'd be nothing and I'd never have to think about it again. And between that and not knowing, I'd rather be nothing.

Catherine stares, it's a lot to take in.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Anyway...
 (taking her glass of
 tequila)
 ... you wanted honesty.

She downs her drink.

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - ROOM A - NIGHT

Olivia sits in front of her collage, tries to put the pieces together. Nothing, nothing but more questions. She locks her head in her hands, pressing away the stress.

A sound, something hitting the ground. She looks up, one of her photos has fallen from the wall.

She picks it up, a photo of Miriam's house at night. She places it back on the wall.

She notices something. Miriam can be seen behind the house, mid-stride.

In Miriam's window is an outline, someone looking out. Blurry, but clear enough to make out.

Something about it strikes Olivia.

Olivia looks over her notes, comes to Miriam. "Lives alone." Back to the photo.

The silhouette is small, maybe a child.

OLIVIA (V.O.)

Eric what do I need to do to get you down here with a search warrant?

LATER

Olivia paces around on her phone.

ERIC (V.O.)

How soon?

OLIVIA
Immediately.

ERIC (V.O.)
You... what?

OLIVIA
Dude there's a lady down here who's
hiding something. Said she lived
alone but I've got a photo here and
there's definitely someone in the
house, it might be a kid.

ERIC (V.O.)
Liv...

OLIVIA
It might be Emily.

ERIC (V.O.)
That's a stretch.

OLIVIA
Well if I'm right about the time-
line of the murders then we don't
want to wait around to find out if
I was right about this.

Eric sighs.

ERIC (V.O.)
Who's the woman?

OLIVIA
Miriam Something-Or-Other, didn't
get her last name.

Eric thinks.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
I need that warrant.

ERIC (V.O.)
Warrants take time.

OLIVIA
Which we don't have--

ERIC
Then you'll have to get creative.

Olivia hesitates.

OLIVIA
The fuck does that mean?

ERIC (V.O.)
Gotta go.

He hangs up. She's dumbfounded.

EXT. SLAB CITY - DAY

Olivia sits in her truck, watching Miriam's house from a distance through the long lens of her camera.

INT. OLIVIA'S TRUCK - SLAB CITY - DAY

Olivia watches closely. No movement. She checks her watch, 9:14am.

LATER

The sun beats down on her as she watches the house. Checks her watch again, 11:45am. She's sweating, drinking delicately from her progressively emptier water bottle.

LATER

An empty water bottle. Heat. Flies. 1:20pm. Olivia catches the sight of a dehydrated COYOTE as it limps by. She can empathize.

As it passes Slab City she's startled to see Miriam leaving her house.

Olivia snaps to attention, watching Miriam lock her door behind her before getting in her car and leaving.

EXT. SLAB CITY - MIRIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Olivia checks to make sure the coast is clear as she enters the slum town. She steps over the salt line near Miriam's house. The cat from earlier pads by, making a B-line for the side of the house.

Olivia circles around the house, following the cat. The cat slips behind some wood pallets leaning against the house. Olivia dips down to look inside but the cat's gone. She moves some of the pallets, revealing small basement window, open just enough so a cat could fit through. She pulls at it, fighting against the rust, before it's open enough.

Head first.

INT. MIRIAM'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

It's a tight as hell squeeze, but she manages to scurry her way into the dark basement. She lights up her phone, revealing the mess beneath the house. Boxes, bags, things draped with sheets. She searches the wall and catches her finger on a loose nail. She yanks her hand back, ouch. Near the nail is a switch. A dim bulb on a string offers a little clarity, but not much.

An eager meow draws her attention to the cat sitting at the top of a ladder leading to a trap door in the ceiling. Strange. Olivia climbs up the ladder and opens the trap door.

INT. MIRIAM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Olivia peeks out as the cat scurries past. She's in the center of the room, mostly cleared out save for a chair next to the trap door. She makes sure the coast is clear and climbs out.

The house isn't much to look at. No decorations save for some wicker patterns hung on the walls.

INT. MIRIAM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

A kitchen, hardly big enough to accommodate more than one person at a time. She finds glass bottles filled with oils and dried herbs lined up on the counter. She reads a few labels. Periwinkle. Rosemary. Lavender. Aconite. She opens one, smells it. Ooph, no good.

She's been so preoccupied she hasn't noticed *Miriam's car pulling up to the house.*

Miriam closes the car door. Olivia hears it and jumps. Shit. She puts the bottle back and runs back to the trap door.

LIVING ROOM

Almost to the trap door but Miriam unlocks the front door. No time. Olivia ducks back into the house, down a hallway.

HALLWAY

Olivia tip-toes into a closet as Miriam enters the house.

CLOSET

Olivia shuts the door as quiet as possible and holds her breath as Miriam closes the door behind her. Olivia can see both the living room and kitchen as she peeks out the cracked-open door.

She watches Miriam set down a bag and take out a bundle of herbs. She walks them to the kitchen, sets them down, and picks the leaves and flowers off of the stems.

The process is methodical, practiced, there's a deep care to each herb. Miriam opens the cabinet with the glass bottles.

She freezes.

Olivia freezes as well.

Something's wrong. The bottle Olivia put back, it's turned backwards, askew from the others. Miriam stares at it. So does Olivia. When...

... a MEOW breaks Miriam's concentration. She looks down to the cat rubbing against her leg. Miriam relaxes.

MIRIAM

(to cat)

How did you get in?

Olivia breathes a sigh of relief. Miriam readjusts the spice bottle and puts her things away. She turns back to the living room...

... but slows again. Olivia looks.

The trap door is cracked open. Miriam slowly looks up, scans the house. Back down to the trap door. She gets on her knees. Lets out a deep, sad sigh.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

(to herself)

We must be safer. We must.

She closes the door.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

There will come a day we will no longer live in fear. Until then, we must be strict. Careful. Quiet.

Miriam stands up and walks to a record player in the corner of the room, putting on some happy classical music. She gets down on her hands and knees over the trap door and assumes a prayerful position. She whispers to herself, something unintelligible, over and over.

Olivia takes a moment to take off her shoes. This may be her only chance while the music's on.

She opens the closet door, Miriam's back is to her.

Olivia tip-toes to the stairs, keeping an eye on the praying Miriam.

STAIRWAY

Olivia pads up the stairs, slow as she can. She's halfway there.

The music stops.

Olivia stops.

Silence.

Olivia slowly turns to the living room.

Miriam isn't there.

Olivia holds her breath, scanning, can't find her. She continues up the stairs, quiet as possible. There's a room at the top of the stairs, a room with a window. Maybe her way out.

BEDROOM

Olivia backs into the room and closes the door as quietly as she can. She locks it, backs away further toward the window.

Silence.

THUMP THUMP THUMP up the stairs and BANG BANG BANG BANG against the door.

Miriam's found her! The doorknob shakes violently as Miriam tries to get in. Olivia scrambles to open the window, unlocking it, sliding it up, can she jump down? No time to waste, she has to.

She jumps.

EXT. SLAB CITY - MIRIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Olivia crashes against the ground, her bare feet cut by the rocks below her. She doesn't have time to scream. She runs. Runs as fast as she can to her truck. She runs and runs, doesn't dare look back.

INT. OLIVIA'S TRUCK - SLAB CITY - DAY

Olivia hurls herself into her truck and hits the ignition. It gargles and struggles for what feels like ages until it finally turns. She hits the gas and speeds to the road, catching a glimpse of Miriam standing outside of her house... *holding Olivia's shoes.*

Miriam watches her race away.

EXT. SALTON SEA - DAY

Olivia's pulled over her truck.

INT. OLIVIA'S TRUCK - SALTON SEA - CONTINUOUS

Olivia hoists herself to lay flat across the driver's and passenger's seats to get a better look at her bloody feet. The right isn't too bad, just some scrapes, while the left has several rocks embedded under her bloody skin. She touches it, wincing.

She finds her pocket knife and removes the tweezers, then starts delicately picking out bits and pieces of rock and dirt, swearing between clenched teeth.

Once she's finished, she finds a bottle of water and pours it over her feet. She rummages around, finds an old t-shirt, and tears it apart, wrapping it around her feet to create a half-assed bandage and even worse shoes.

As she finishes, she hears a familiar sound...

... a motorcycle.

She cranes her head out of her truck, hears it echo around the desert, until it comes into view behind her. Sure enough, it's the Biker.

She ducks down in her seat a bit as he comes closer and zips past her.

Olivia lets out a sigh as he continues on for a few hundred meters.

But the Biker slows. Then pulls over.

Olivia looks back up, watches the Biker closely, hard to tell what he's doing through the heat distortion of the road.

He turns around.

She rolls her window up, turns the ignition.

He slows as he gets closer, his motorcycle growling by her.

Her engine starts as he creeps by.

He stares at her through his dark helmet, she stares back, knuckles white on the steering wheel.

He REVS his engine loudly and shoots off, blaring away back where he came from.

She hits the gas, glancing out her rear view mirror as he disappears in the distance.

EXT. MALCOLM'S HOUSE - DAY

Olivia knocks on the door. She waits. Her shoeless feet are bloody and worn, bleeding through her bandages. Knocks again. There's some movement behind the door but no answer.

OLIVIA

Mr. Douer? Malcolm? Malcolm it's Olivia, I need to talk.

Further silence.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Malcolm I know you haven't done anything wrong. I wanted to talk with you about Slab City, about the person who framed you.

A pause, then the door creaks open. Malcolm looks out, bleary-eyed, checking to see if the coast is clear. He ushers Olivia inside.

INT. MALCOLM'S HOUSE - DAY

Dimly lit, the place has been emptied save for a few pieces of furniture.

MALCOLM

The cop here?

OLIVIA

No sir, it's just me.

MALCOLM

They took all my bottles, y'know. Every one. I made each special and they took 'em.

OLIVIA

The police?

MALCOLM

No, someone like me, someone who could stand it. The smell.

OLIVIA

Do you have any idea who it may have been?

Malcolm's hesitant, shifting back and forth.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
When I mentioned Slab City--

MALCOLM
Weren't them.

OLIVIA
It... how are you sure?

MALCOLM
It's, it's just, just that I'll
have to start again. Make new ones.
You don't know what you're asking
and now I gotta make new bottles.

Olivia pulls out the photo of Miriam's house.

OLIVIA
Do you know the woman who lives
here, Miriam?

A nerve is touched on Malcolm.

MALCOLM
You gotta go.

OLIVIA
Malcolm, tell me so I can help.

MALCOLM
It aint about... it aint just about
her, it's about you and what you're
bringing. Now I asked you to leave
so fuckin' leave!

OLIVIA
All I want to--

MALCOLM
You think they aren't watchin' us
all the time? They got people all
over. Scavengers, birds, dogs.

He's getting aggressive, approaching her.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
No one's safe, no one that isn't
part of it.

OLIVIA
Part of what?

MALCOLM

I didn't want no one getting hurt.
Honest to god, I was trying to
help. I wanted to say no, wanted to
tell 'em to fuck off, but I seen
what they can do. I seen what they
are. And now you're coming in here
and ready to get your blood on my
hands!? Out! I want you out!

He goes to grab her but she backs away and runs out the door.

EXT. MALCOLM'S HOUSE - DAY

Olivia tumbles out of the house as Malcolm slams the door.

OLIVIA

Fucking hell.

She makes for her truck.

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - ROOM A - NIGHT

At her motel, Olivia soaks her feet in a bowl of hot water while she researches some of the imagery she saw at Slab City, the herbs Miriam had in her bottles. Witchcraft comes up over and over. Then covers the details about the kids that were found, all born some time between December and January. Capricorns. Further research into Capricorns, horned goats, goats in Satanism. It's pretty heavy, she goes to get a cigarette but she's out.

She delicately slips on a pair of new shoes.

EXT. SALTON SEA DINER - NIGHT

Olivia pulls up and limps into a diner.

INT. SALTON SEA DINER - NIGHT

A HOSTESS and a COOK seem to be the only people working. Olivia approaches the Hostess.

OLIVIA

You have cigarettes?

The Hostess motions to a cigarette machine against the wall. As Olivia's making the purchase a YOUNG MOTHER (30s) and her daughter, VICKI (7), enter.

YOUNG MOTHER

Go take a seat, I'll be right there.

The girl does as she's told, plopping onto a booth. The mother inaudibly chats with the hostess. Olivia locks eyes with the little girl immediately. She walks up to her.

OLIVIA
Hi.

VICKI
Hi.

OLIVIA
What's your name?

VICKI
Vicki.

OLIVIA
That's a nice name.

VICKI
Bobby Pelosi calls me 'Icky Vicki'

OLIVIA
Fuck Bobby Pelosi.

Vicki's eyes go wide.

VICKI
You just said the F word.

OLIVIA
Yeah and I meant it, Bobby Pelosi doesn't know what the fuck he's talking about.

Vicki smiles brightly as her mom approaches.

YOUNG MOTHER
You making friends, sweetie?

VICKI
She hates Bobby Pelosi too.

OLIVIA
That's what I said. My exact words.

YOUNG MOTHER
Sorry if she's bothering you, she's in a chatty phase.

OLIVIA
You from here?

YOUNG MOTHER

Ugh, god, no. Been driving all day
and night from Texas.

VICKI

Grandma's sick.

YOUNG MOTHER

Her dad's mom's outside Vegas. Not
much further but I feel like we
need a break tonight.

Vicki tugs on her mom's shirt and whispers.

VICKI

I have to go to the bathroom.

YOUNG MOTHER

Alright let's go, then we'll have a
little bite to eat and find
somewhere to stay.

She turns to Olivia.

YOUNG MOTHER (CONT'D)

Have a good night.

OLIVIA

You too.

They get up and head to the bathroom.

VICKI

Mommy, Bobby Pelosi doesn't know
what the fuck he's talking about.

YOUNG MAN

Shhh!

Olivia watches them go and catches some strange looks from
the workers at the diner. Something doesn't seem right. She
scribbles something on a napkin and leaves it under the
plate, then exits and drives away.

The mother comes back with Vicki and reads the note under the
plate. "Keep driving, not safe here."

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - ROOM A - NIGHT

Olivia finishes dressing after a shower. She looks over her
notes, a few tabs are open on her computer, lore about Witch
Bottles and witchcraft. Her motel phone rings by a window.
She picks it up.

OLIVIA
Hello?

BIKER (V.O.)
Olivia Patterson?

OLIVIA
Yes?

Click. He hangs up. Olivia does the same and goes back to her notes. The phone rings again. She picks up more aggressively.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Alright who the fuck--

BLAM!

A bullet BURSTS through the window and *explodes the phone in her hand*. She screams and drops to the floor, blood trickling from her ear where the bullet grazed her. She keeps her head down and gasps rapidly. She waits.

BANG BANG BANG!! More gunfire through the wall above her head. Glass and wood splinters rain down on her as she crawls away from the window.

EXT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - NIGHT

The Biker perches on top of a hill, checking the sights of his rifle. He fires again.

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - ROOM A - NIGHT

Olivia is pancaked on the floor, covering her head.

Her door SLAMS open and Michael comes tumbling in, staying low to the ground. He hurries up next to her.

MICHAEL
You hurt!?

OLIVIA
(looking herself over)
I... I don't know?

MICHAEL
Shhh, listen.

Off in the distance, the sound of metal clinking together in the distance.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
He's reloading.

Michael rummages in his back pocket and pulls out a snub-nose pistol.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(as he checks the chamber)
Listen... I've been... well I haven't been honest about things. I wanted to, really, but... they told me they needed you to figure it out on your own--

OLIVIA

What? Who? Who's "they?"

MICHAEL

-- and I don't think there's a lot I'm proud of in my life. But I swear, I'm gonna make it up to you.

He stands up, still hunched low, as Olivia grabs his arm.

OLIVIA

Mike, no!

He turns to her, an honest moment--

MICHAEL

When I come back, I'll tell you everything. Don't worry.

A nod, and he heads to the door. He pulls back the hammer on the pistol. Gives her a look.

It's time.

He whirls around the door and--

BLAM! His head is nearly ripped from his shoulders.

Olivia screams and quickly covers her mouth. She looks for a way out. Spots her hair dryer.

EXT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - NIGHT

The Biker eases closer and closer to the motel, finger on the trigger.

POW! Everything goes black, all the lights across the property are out. The Biker whips around, unable to see. He hears something clutter from Olivia's room. He quietly pads over and enters, stepping over Michael's body.

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - ROOM A - NIGHT

He scans. Olivia's plugged in everything she can find to short the power, but she's nowhere in sight. The Biker checks around before he notices a large pillow propped up against a wall.

He moves the pillow and reveals a *large hole, just big enough for someone to fit through*. Just then the sound of Olivia's truck revs up. The Biker watches her speed away.

EXT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - NIGHT

Olivia guns it in her truck.

INT. OLIVIA'S TRUCK - NIGHT

She swears, panicked, hitting the gas. She hears the Biker's motorcycle start, and before long his headlight shines out in the distance.

SALTON SEA

Olivia makes it to the main road and speeds away. Shortly after the Biker comes roaring out from behind the Motel and reaches the road.

OLIVIA'S TRUCK

Olivia's foot presses the gas pedal as far as it will go. The Biker comes back into view. **BANG BANG BANG BANG**. Bullets fly and crack into her truck as she ducks down.

MOTORCYCLE

The Biker is only a few dozen yards behind her. He picks up speed.

OLIVIA'S TRUCK

The truck crawls its way up to 70, 75, 80. The motorcycle is gaining fast. More gunfire. Her rearview mirror goes. She screams, pushing the truck to do everything it can. 90. 100. 110. Only a dozen yards between them. Closing. Suddenly, something in the distance gets Olivia's attention... something glowing red...

MOTORCYCLE

The Biker looks up, the redness reflecting off his helmet...

In the sky above them, the moon appears **massive and red**. It's otherworldly, impossibly big and bright. As the biker looks back down to the road...

Something steps out of the dark between them, something impossible.

THE DEITY.

The biker sees it for hardly a fraction of a second. He loses control, his bike goes out from under him, his body continuing at 120 miles-per-hour.

CRACK.

The first impact shatters his helmet.

SMACK.

Then his skull. Over and over he tumbles, breaking with every rotation. Slides, his leather wearing away from the pavement speeding underneath him. Finally he stops. He's been killed several times over before he comes to a rest.

OLIVIA'S TRUCK

She sees him fall and slows, finally coming to a stop. She waits, looking behind her, maybe he'll stand up? A few moments of watching proves that he won't. She gets out of her car.

EXT. SALTON SEA - NIGHT

She looks to the sky, the moon is back to normal. She waits another moment and takes a wrench out of her truck. She cautiously approaches the biker. He's very dead. She looks around in the dark for any sign of what caused the accident.

SANTERA (V.O.)

This being, whatever is with you,
it isn't female...

CUT TO:

INT. SANTERIAN CHAMBER - DAY - 12 YEARS AGO

Another card turned as Young Olivia drips blood from her nose.

SANTERA

... and it's old.

The flame dances madly. Olivia is vibrating with fear but she can't look away from the flame.

OLIVIA

Why can't I move my hands?

The Santera stands up, alert.

SANTERA
Out, you go out now.

OLIVIA
I can't, I can't move.

SANTERA
You hear me, girl? You go and take
your devil with you.

Olivia's nose bleeds. The thing behind her is closer.

OLIVIA
Please. Please I want to stop.

The Santera looks just as worried. Her breath is heavy,
foggy, cold.

All is still.

The Santera stares at the darkness behind Olivia. Eyes wide.
Horrorified.

SANTERA
Who have you brought into my house?

BACK TO:

EXT. SALTON SEA - NIGHT

Olivia sits by an ambulance as EMTs and POLICE investigate
the area. Eric stands by the corpse, ruffles through his
jacket, and finds a wallet. He flips it open, glances for
some ID. Olivia winces as an EMT attends to the injury on her
ear.

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - ROOM A - NIGHT

Olivia looks over the devastation of the room. Bullet holes
everywhere, her research strewn about. POLICE monitor
everything outside and inspect Michael's body.

Olivia puts a hand in her pocket and feels something she's
not expecting.

She pulls out a man's wallet. Opens it. Inside is a note.
"Don't trust the local police, hope this gets you anywhere. -
Eric."

It's the Biker's wallet.

She makes sure the coast is clear before looking through it, sure enough there's no proper ID anywhere. Some money, a photo.

She stands up.

The photo is of Miriam.

EXT. SLAB CITY - MIRIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Olivia marches up to Miriam's house and bangs on the front door.

OLIVIA
Miriam! I know you're there, answer
the door.

She waits, no response.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Answer the door, you bitch!

MIRIAM (O.S.)
Get off my property!

OLIVIA
I feel I got a right to be here if
you're sending your fucking
boyfriend after me.

MIRIAM (O.S.)
I don't know what you're talking
about, now leave.

OLIVIA
So you don't know he's dead?

A pause.

MIRIAM (O.S.)
I don't who you're talking about.

OLIVIA
I'm sure you don't. Well let me
fill you in, your boyfriend tried
to kill me and turned himself into
a fucking meat marker on the road.

Another pause, Miriam's voice is choked up.

MIRIAM (O.S.)
I'll call the police.

OLIVIA

You'll call shit. You knew I was here yesterday and you didn't tell anyone. I'm willing to bet there's a damn good reason for that. And you bet I'm gonna find out. You hear me??

Silence. Olivia bangs on the door.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

You fucking hear me??

Nothing.

Olivia storms off.

EXT. SEASIDE MOTEL - ROOM 2B - NIGHT

A new motel. Maybe a little better than the previous one, but not by much. Olivia takes out her key to her room but freezes.

The door is unlocked, open. She slowly opens it further and looks inside. Nothing at first, but a dark shape moves and steps into the light.

Malcolm.

MALCOLM

You alone?

She nods.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Back to your truck.

He steps outside.

INT. OLIVIA'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Olivia sits in the driver's seat, Malcolm in the passenger's. They sit in silence for a moment before Olivia realizes Malcolm's crying.

MALCOLM

I didn't wanna hurt nobody. Honest, if I'd known I woulda left, woulda just killed myself instead. Fuck knows I tried, I thought about it since. At first I wanted to make it quick so it didn't hurt too much, but now... if I'd known, I woulda done it any way I could.

OLIVIA

Malcolm, if you're in trouble, I can help. I know people who can help protect you, people in the police.

MALCOLM

You don't know shit. You aint got a clue of what you're doing, the people watching you.

He's aggressive, takes a moment to calm himself.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

I didn't mean for anyone to get hurt. They didn't tell me that, didn't say anything about killing. Just said they needed those kids is all, needed them for something special. That if I'd help 'em they'd... fix me, make me not like *this*. Not like what I am. Just said I need to do one more thing and I'd be free.

OLIVIA

Who? Malcolm, who told you to take the kids?

MALCOLM

You seen 'em, those animal worshippers, they just said I needed to do it one more time. Just one more and they'd be done.

Olivia musters some courage.

OLIVIA

Did you take Emily Lavin?

A trembling lip, Malcolm nods.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Is she still alive?

A long beat.

Shakes his head.

He looks her in the eye for the first time.

MALCOLM

But I can show you where I put her.

EXT. SALTON SEA - NIGHT

Olivia's truck pulls up to the lake. A rowboat is moored in front of them. Olivia looks around.

OLIVIA
Where is she?

Malcolm gets out of the car.

MALCOLM
Come on.

Olivia checks her pockets, makes sure she has her knife.

She gets out of the car and follows Malcolm to the shore. She stops when she sees a rowboat. Alarm bells ringing.

She pats her pocket a moment.

OLIVIA
Hold on, I need my phone.

She turns back to the truck, thinking fast. She opens the passenger side door and pulls out her phone, pulls up her contacts list, finds Eric. A sound distracts her. She looks up...

... to see a bottle of Chloroform gently rocking on the floor of the car.

Just as she sees it--

WHAM.

Malcolm grabs her from behind and forces a towel over her mouth and nose. She gasps, struggles, but is out like a light in seconds.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. SALTON SEA - LAKE - NIGHT

Gentle rocking on the water, Olivia slowly comes to, finding herself lying in the rowboat in the middle of the lake. Malcolm sits at the other ending and slips on a pair of gloves.

MALCOLM
(to himself)
One more. One more and they pay
their end of the bargain. I
suffered enough.

Olivia turns to him, realizes what's happening.

OLIVIA

Malcolm.

He looks her dead in the eye.

MALCOLM

I suffered enough.

She whips around to try and grab an oar to defend herself, *but he's on top of her in an instant*. After a short struggle his hands are around her throat.

She tries to get her arms free but he's got her pinned down with his knees. He's out of his mind, screaming.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!

Her face is turning purple, she's losing. Arm almost free. He repositions and pins her harder. It seems like all is lost.

Something gets Malcolm's attention.

A sound, a whisper from the water. His name. He looks up.

Standing on top of the water, a few yards from shore...

... The Deity.

Blood leaking from its empty eye sockets, the halo crown shining in the dark.

Malcolm is frozen, shocked. It's just enough time for Olivia to get her hand free, reach into her pocket, pull out her pocket knife, and *stab him in the ribs*.

He cries, loses his grip, Olivia gasps for breath. Malcolm shrieks in pain and looks again at the Deity on the water.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

I'M DOING IT. WAIT, WAIT, NO NO NO.
I WILL, I AM!

He lunges at Olivia, his bloody hands failing to get a grip in her again. She squirms and slips away, enough to swipe at him with the knife again. She plunges it into his cheek, cracking against his teeth. He's out of his mind, screaming nonsense. She stabs again. In his stomach. Again, in his throat.

The Deity is within a few feet of the boat, walking on the water.

He grabs her and with a final cry *throws himself in the water, pulling her in with him, capsizing the boat.*

SPLASH. Olivia is held on tight by Malcolm in the toxic water. It stings her eyes, poisons her, inky black, surrounded in Malcolm's blood. She wriggles against him, sinking deeper and deeper...

...until she sees it.

Above her, standing at the top of the water, distorted, dark, staring at her, is the Deity. She stops her struggle, the impossible image of the thing standing on the water distracting her from everything else.

From below her, deep in the lake, something emanates from the darkness. It could be a creature, but maybe seaweed, then perhaps a school of fish? No, **arms**. *Hundreds of impossibly long arms reach out and take Malcolm down into the deep, while dozens more push Olivia to the surface.*

In the blink of an eye, she's standing there on top of the water.

Directly in front of her, intimately close, is the Deity. This is the closest we've seen, close enough to into its eyes. It seems like they travel inward forever, a mirror into the abyss.

The massive red moon sits behind it, silhouetting it against the horizon.

Olivia looks down. She's standing on the water.

Back up. The Deity stands on the shore, far from Olivia. *Behind it steps a form, barely visible save for the blonde hair. A LITTLE GIRL. Olivia's eyes go wide.*

CUT TO:

EXT. SALTON SEA - NIGHT

Olivia coughs, spatters, she's lying on the shore amongst bones of dead fish. She's breathless, exhausted, freezing. She crawls and collapses, succumbing to the poison in which she almost drowned, to the cold. The Deity is nowhere, the Girl is nowhere. She pulls herself into a tight fetal position and shivers, barely able to open her eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

In a disorienting transition, Olivia finds herself in a hospital. Her eyes are pink, swollen, an IV drip in her arm. Eric is there waiting.

OLIVIA
Where...?

ERIC
Liv! Hey, hey how you doing?

OLIVIA
What happened?

ERIC
Someone found you.

He gestures out into the hallway where the Fisherman and his two sons wait.

ERIC (CONT'D)
A few more hours and you would've died of hypothermia.

She looks around, her eyes squinting in the light.

ERIC (CONT'D)
You remember anything?

OLIVIA
Douer, found me, said... he's the one abducting the kids. Doing it for someone else. He said he had Emily, but...

She trails off. Eric sighs.

ERIC
I'm getting you out of here. You're going back to L.A.

OLIVIA
He was lying, I think I know who he was lying for.

ERIC
Liv...

OLIVIA
I know you searched his place already but if I come with you we can--

ERIC
Liv.

He gives her a pained, sincere look. Squeezes her hand.

ERIC (CONT'D)

We found you covered in his blood.
His hair is in your truck. And
there are witnesses who can
corroborate his story that he
thinks you were stalking him.

Olivia stares at him in disbelief.

OLIVIA

Eric--

ERIC

I know that's not true and...
whatever happened out there, I know
it wasn't your fault, but... the
investigation's changed.
Understand? People are gonna start
asking questions and I can't have
you here doing this when they do.

OLIVIA

But... we're so close. She--

ERIC

She's been gone for weeks. You know
what that means.

It's dawning on her, the weight heavy.

OLIVIA

What do I do?

ERIC

Go home. Get a lawyer. We'll be in
touch.

He leans over and gives her a kiss on the head.

ERIC (CONT'D)

You did so good. So good.

She hugs him and cries into his chest.

INT. SEASIDE MOTEL - DAY

Olivia packs her things.

EXT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Olivia knocks on the door, waiting a moment before Catherine
answers.

CATHERINE

Hey.

OLIVIA

I'm, um, I'm going back to L.A. I wanted to say goodbye.

Catherine's shocked.

CATHERINE

You... aren't you coming back?

Olivia shakes her head.

OLIVIA

It's, uh, I'm sorry. It's beyond me now. It always was. I just wanted to say goodbye, to say good luck.

Olivia goes back to her truck.

CATHERINE

What about my daughter??

Olivia ignores her as she climbs in and slams the door shut.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

What about Emily??!

Olivia holds back tears in her car as she starts the ignition.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Olivia fills up her car, takes a long look at Salton Sea. Defeated.

INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Olivia peruses some of the snacks and notices the MALE GAS STATION ATTENDANT working behind the counter. He's talking to himself, a full conversation. It's an odd site. From a back room steps a FEMALE ATTENDANT, responding to him. Not talking to himself, just to someone out of sight. Olivia shrugs it off, she's getting paranoid.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Olivia heads back to her truck when she slows.

Something's occurred to her. The attendant talking with himself.

Miriam talking with herself.

The other attendant out of Olivia's view walking in. The attendant wasn't alone.

Miriam in her living room. Looking down.

The trap door.

OLIVIA
You weren't talking to yourself.

EXT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Olivia's truck screeches to a halt outside of Catherine's house. Catherine comes outside as Olivia storms up to the front.

OLIVIA
We're getting Emily back. Tonight.

EXT. SALTON SEA - NIGHT

Olivia and Catherine race in Olivia's truck.

INT. OLIVIA'S TRUCK - SALTON SEA - NIGHT

Olivia notices Catherine's shaking leg, as well as the rifle she brought with her.

EXT. SLAB CITY - NIGHT

They pull up out of sight of Miriam's house. Her car is gone.

INT. OLIVIA'S TRUCK - SLAB CITY - NIGHT

Olivia and Catherine take a breath.

OLIVIA
In the back of her house is a basement window, doesn't shut all the way. You can slip in if you squeeze enough.

CATHERINE
No, you've done it before.

OLIVIA
What about you?

CATHERINE
I'll wait outside in case she tries to make a break for it.

OLIVIA
If she's even there.

CATHERINE

Let's hope she is.

Catherine checks to make sure the rifle is loaded.

OLIVIA

We can't just shoot her, you know that, right?

CATHERINE

If she's got my daughter I can't make any promises.

Fair point.

EXT. SLAB CITY - MIRIAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Olivia circles around the house, stepping over the line of salt. She glances to Catherine, standing a few yards away from the house, gun ready. A nod between them.

Olivia keeps her head low and finds the basement window. She peers in, sees nothing. She pulls the window open and squeezes in.

INT. MIRIAM'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Olivia orients herself and holds her breath, making sure the house is silent and empty. She turns on her phone flashlight and tip-toes through the basement. She looks around, any sign of Emily. She slows and notices... *little footprints leading from the ladder to one of the covered boxes.*

Olivia pads over, slowly, carefully, quietly. She kneels in front of the sheet and pulls it up.

A cage. She notices the smell first. Dried herbs everywhere, lining everything. Then, in the back of the cage.

Emily.

Her eyes shining in the dark. A tiny girl, dirty, eyes sunken.

OLIVIA

Emily.

Olivia reaches over and turns on the string light...

... she hardly has a moment to notice *Miriam standing in the corner of the basement.*

Miriam rushes out, swinging an AXE with a roar!

She barely misses Olivia who dodges to the side. Another wild swing. WHACK. Miriam hits the string light, knocking it from its socket, throwing the two women in a dizzying, strobing dark, light, dark, light.

Emily watches as Miriam and Olivia grapple, silent as a mouse. Another swing, the handle of the axe slamming into Olivia's side, but she manages to catch it and wrestle it away from Miriam.

They fall to the ground, Miriam a wild animal, tearing at Olivia. A quick choke hold, Olivia claws at Miriam's arms.

MIRIAM

She's mine! MINE!! They can't have her!!!

Olivia manages to stand up and run Miriam into a wall, again. And again. Olivia notices...

... the loose nail.

Another ram directly into it. Miriam screams and lets go. Olivia slopes down, catching her breath, eyeing a shovel nearby. She reaches out.

THUD.

Miriam's axe comes down and takes the Olivia's two fingers closest to the shovel. Olivia screams and rolls away as the axe comes down again. Before Miriam can bring it down a third time Olivia hurls dirt into her eyes. Miriam shields herself as Olivia tackles her, bringing them crashing into a weak wall and tumbling straight through...

INT. MIRIAM'S HOUSE - BASEMENT 2 - NIGHT

They collapse on the ground in the new room. Olivia gets her bearings for a moment in the new space; it's covered in candles and herbs and oil lamps...

... all surrounding the DEITY MASK.

Olivia can hardly clock it for a moment before she has to defend herself against Miriam again.

She rolls, saving herself from being pinned. Pushes herself away from Miriam. Miriam raises, Olivia grabs at one of the oil lamps surrounding the idol, and crashes it against Miriam's head, *sending flames spewing across the basement.* Miriam cries and rips herself away, putting out the fire in her hair.

Before they know it the place is engulfed in flames. Miriam hurls some heavy boxes and furniture in front of the hole in the wall, trapping Olivia.

Miriam grabs Emily from the cage and hoists her upstairs as Olivia crawls through the wreckage.

INT. MIRIAM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Smoke billows from the basement as Olivia crawls her way onto the living room floor. She coughs and sputters, noticing an open door by the kitchen leading outside. It swings closed, Miriam just left.

EXT. SLAB CITY - MIRIAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Olivia limps out of the house and sees Miriam running into the desert with Emily in her arms, crossing the salt line.

Catherine steps up behind Olivia and raises her rifle.

OLIVIA

Wait!!

Catherine fires a single shot, Miriam collapses several yards away.

Olivia's bloodied hands cover her mouth, they wait.

Finally they hear it. Emily screaming. Catherine drops the gun and sprints towards her. Olivia follows.

They find Miriam on the ground, lying on top of Emily as she screams at the sight of the dead woman. Catherine picks up Emily and cradles her.

CATHERINE

Oh baby. Oh sweetie, it's alright.
It's alright baby, I found you. I
found you.

Olivia stares at Miriam, the bullet punched straight through her throat. Miriam stares back. Her final words, hardly whispers. Suffered ravings.

MIRIAM

She's mine. She's mine. She's--

But she can't continue. The woman is still. Emily cries in her mother's arms. Catherine cries with her.

LATER.

Police take photos of the scene, Eric glances at Miriam who's dead eyes seem to be staring through him.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Emily is going through some tests with a NURSE, Catherine is by her side. There's some confusion and unresponsiveness with Emily.

EMILY

Mommy.

CATHERINE

Hey baby, I'm here. You're safe.

Emily's face is blank, lost.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Baby look at me.

Emily looks around confused. Catherine gives a worried look to a DOCTOR.

LATER

Olivia watches as Catherine talks with the doctor. It's a hard conversation. Olivia holds her bandaged hand close.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

Post-traumatic stress, they say.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

Catherine sits with Olivia.

CATHERINE

Who knows what she's seen? What that woman did to her?

She chokes back tears, keeping it together. Olivia puts a hand on her shoulder.

OLIVIA

You got her back.

Catherine wraps her in a big, thankful hug.

CATHERINE

Thank you. Thank you.

They hold the embrace, sharing in the relief.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Olivia goes back to her truck, gets inside, and bawls her eyes out. Big, heaving, grateful sobs.

EXT. CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY - DAY

Olivia drives back to L.A.

INT. CAM AND ERIC'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The meal's been long finished. Olivia leans against the kitchen counter, staring into nothing.

ERIC (O.S.)

Liv?

She shakes it off as he approaches with a whiskey glass. She clocks it, shakes her head.

OLIVIA

I'm alright. Need a hand with the dishes?

She gestured with her maimed hand. He smiles.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

You deserve a break.

Olivia looks around his house, notices a pile of mail.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Taking your work home?

Eric turns, unsure of what she means. She picks up a letter.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

"Stephen Mercer." That's Amelia's dad, isn't it?

ERIC

Oh, Catherine sent a box of that stuff over a bit ago, just in case something in there helped. Must've forgot I had it.

OLIVIA

Mmm

(as she handles the letter)

I wish I could talk to her.

ERIC

Catherine?

OLIVIA

Miriam. I mean. I just want to know what the hell happened.

ERIC

Did some digging. We know she had a daughter at some point, but the kid disappeared like the others. Seems whatever happened down there, the cult, whatever you want to call it, she got wrapped up in it. Maybe Emily was a replacement?

OLIVIA

Maybe.

Cam rounds the corner with her daughter in her arms.

CAM

This one's off to bed, she just wanted to say goodnight.

OLIVIA

Night, munchkin.

CHLOE

Can Auntie Liv read me a story?

CAM

Oh Auntie Liv needs her rest too. She did something incredible that no one else could. She's changed the world, you know that?

CHLOE

Really?

OLIVIA

I wouldn't say that.

CAM

Hush, it's true.

Cam leans in and gives Olivia a kiss on the cheek.

ERIC

Want me to put her down?

CAM

I've got her.

OLIVIA

Both of you, go.

They give her a look.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Never let her out of your sight.

They understand. A smile from Eric before they both leave to put their daughter to bed.

Soon Olivia is left alone. She exhales, it's been a long day. A long month. She paces to the mantle and smiles at the photos of Eric and Cam together with Chloe. She pauses at the photo of the two of them by the motorcycle.

Something strikes her about it. She steps closer. Her expression changes.

The motorcycle.

The photo is strangely cropped, too much space on the right.

But there's more. The location, the light, the fact that Eric, left side of the photo, has his arm out, a hand peeking out from his left side, as if he's leaning on someone.

A tense thought. Olivia finds her purse and pulls out some items. Back to the photo. Olivia checks to make sure the coast is clear before removing the photo from its frame.

She holds it out, and holds another photo next to it. The one of Catherine and Emily. Catherine now stands next to Eric, all smiles, arms around each other.

She holds out another photo. Her blood runs cold. The photo of Miriam. She stands next to Catherine and Emily, a group photo.

It's the Biker's motorcycle. He's taking the photo.

Olivia hears Eric and Cam come back downstairs. She struggles to put the photo back and rushes to the door.

ERIC
You alright?

OLIVIA
No, not really. I, uh, I have to go.

She continues to the door.

ERIC
What's wrong?

OLIVIA
I don't feel well. I'm sorry, it's
just my stomach, and I gotta go.

She tries the door but it's locked.

ERIC
Liv?

She's sweating. She turns to them.

OLIVIA
Why is the door locked?

After a tense beat, Cam notices the misplaced photo on the mantle. Olivia's dropped one of the other photos in her hurry.

A hard beat falls for all of them.

Olivia's lips are trembling, hands shaking. She can barely whisper.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
I need to smoke.

Cam nods. Olivia pulls out a pack of cigarettes and lights one, hand vibrating. She takes a long drag. Eric stands across from her. Cam at the table, watching.

BEEP BEEP BEEP. The smoke detector goes off and Olivia tries to race past Eric. He grabs her easily enough and wrestles her until she's pinned.

ERIC
Stop! Olivia, stop, please!

After a short struggle she does, she's no match. Cam gives her a look.

CAM
We need to talk.

INT. CAM AND ERIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Olivia sits on a couch. A fire is going in their fireplace. Eric stands back as Cam approaches Olivia. She's warm, but sad.

CAM
We hoped we'd have more time
before... well, Eric knew you'd
figure it out eventually, he had
that much faith in you.
(MORE)

CAM (CONT'D)

Still, to spare you from all this was all we asked, but it seems that isn't meant to be, and now our time is up.

Olivia looks to Eric.

OLIVIA

Eric what the shit is this?

CAM

Please don't blame Eric. He did his part, just as I did and now so you have done. He gave you what you needed to help weed out Miriam. There were those who protected her, and because she knew our ways she knew how to keep us out. But you could cross where we could not.

A memory.

EXT. SLAB CITY - MIRIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Miriam clocks the salt line. Gestures for the jumper cables. Olivia steps over the salt line.

EXT. MALCOLM'S HOUSE - DAY

Olivia peeks in to see the witch bottles.

INT. CAM AND ERIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Olivia pieces things together.

CAM

Eric has spent a long, long time keeping the police away from all this. The attention died with Miriam, and our ritual could be completed in peace.

Olivia stares at Cam, horrified.

OLIVIA

You... you stole Emily, to kill her? And Catherine??

Cam's words are hard to say, even harder to hear.

CAM

I'm so sorry, Liv. But Catherine wasn't Emily's mother... Miriam was.

Shock. A punch to the gut. This is impossible.

OLIVIA

No.

CAM

Miriam was one of us, we raised Emily and Miriam knew what she would have to do one day...

OLIVIA

No, no no.

Olivia is on the verge of vomiting.

CAM

... and when the time came she failed. Emily had been groomed to be the ultimate sacrifice, years had been put into her but Miriam... she left us, fled, and took her daughter with her.

OLIVIA

Stop. No.

All Olivia's memories of Miriam. The desperation, the lies, the finger pointing, the defensiveness. Her final words.

CUT TO:

EXT. SLAB CITY - NIGHT

Miriam lies bleeding on the desert ground, staring as Catherine takes Emily away.

MIRIAM

She's mine. She's mine.

BACK TO:

INT. CAM AND ERIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Olivia hyperventilates.

OLIVIA

Fucking no, please. Oh god. No no no no.

CAM

I'm so, so sorry, Liv. We never wanted to hurt you but we knew you would never help us if you knew the truth.

Olivia's furious, glaring at Eric.

OLIVIA
You lied to me.

CAM
Even Catherine wouldn't accept it at first. But in the end she knew her place in all this. She knew what she had to do.

OLIVIA
I'll kill you. I swear to God
I'll...

She stops. There's something wrong.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
W... why can't I move?

Cam gives her a pitying look.

CAM
Because I'm not letting you.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTERIAN CHAMBER - DAY - 12 YEARS AGO

The flame dances madly. Young Olivia is vibrating with fear but she can't look away from the flame.

OLIVIA
Why can't I move my hands?

BACK TO:

INT. CAM AND ERIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Olivia stares in horror, disbelief. Eric watches from far away, small, powerless.

CAM
The life we lead is not without sacrifice. Emily was family, we loved her more than Miriam ever could because Miriam could not accept what her death would bring.

OLIVIA
You could never do that to your own flesh and blood! She was her mother!!

CAM

And Eric was her father.

Stunned. Olivia's eyes find Eric, wilted in the shadows, a pain in his eyes.

CAM (CONT'D)

We go by many names. All of us. Do not hate him for this deceit, he has made far more sacrifices than anyone.

(to Eric, proud)

And for that she shall be rewarded.

OLIVIA

(to Eric)

You used me.

CAM

He used you. He worked through you. His plan is greater than anything you could imagine.

OLIVIA

Who's??

CAM

He who was with you, He who guided you at every turn.

CUT TO:

EXT. SALTON SEA - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The Deity steps in front of the biker, causing him to crash.

EXT. SALTON SEA - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

It walks on the water, distracting Malcolm.

INT. MOTEL BY THE SEA - ROOM A - NIGHT

The photo of Miriam's house falling to the floor, the silhouette in the window.

BACK TO:

INT. CAM AND ERIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Olivia is piecing it all together, aghast.

CAM

He knew your importance, because
when He tested you, you called to
Him.

Horrified, Olivia stares at Cam.

CAM (CONT'D)

Because you let Him in.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTERIAN CHAMBER - DAY - 12 YEARS AGO

The Santera stands up, alert. Young Olivia remains pinned to
the table.

SANTERA

Out, you go out now.

OLIVIA

I can't, I can't move.

SANTERA

You hear me, girl? You go and take
your devil with you.

Olivia's nose bleeds. The thing behind her is closer.

OLIVIA

Please. Please I want to stop.

The Santera looks just as worried. Her breath is heavy,
foggy, cold.

All is still.

The Santera stares at the darkness behind Olivia. Eyes wide.
Horrified.

SANTERA

Who have you brought into my house?

From behind Olivia, the Deity's hands slide across her
shoulders.

She shrieks and tears herself from the table, hurtling toward
the exit.

SANTERA (CONT'D)

WHO HAVE YOU BROUGHT INTO MY
HOUSE!!??

Olivia bursts through the door, flooding the space with light.

BACK TO:

INT. CAM AND ERIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Olivia fights against the darkness consuming her, attempts a lunge at Cam.

OLIVIA

You fucking murdering psychos!

Cam grabs her by the hair and forces her to her knees with incredible strength. She turns Olivia's head to look at the fire.

CAM

You cannot be told what it is we do, what we're doing, what we're striving for. But you can be shown.

Olivia looks, watches the fire dance. She struggles but Cam is firm.

CAM (CONT'D)

Look.

Olivia struggles further.

OLIVIA

I don't...

But something catches her eye.

A slow push in to Olivia, we see her reaction. We aren't shown what she sees. No visual in the world could accurately show the horror she goes through. But we watch her reaction evolve. *First it's worry, then curiosity, then shock, then horror, then agony, then terror. This is the Clockwork Orange torture scene on crack. She's screaming, clawing, desperately trying to get away, but she can't stop watching. Whatever it is she's seeing, it's unfathomably terrible. The redness of the fire, like the moon, pouring over her.*

INT. CAM AND ERIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Olivia sits with a cigarette in the dark room, looking lost, eyes focused nowhere. Eric sits next to her.

ERIC

I didn't believe it either, not at first. I couldn't. Couldn't fathom that the world I knew wasn't...

A MEMORY. THE RED MOON.

He shifts, trying to find his words.

ERIC (CONT'D)

His name... Its name... to even try
and speak it would mean death.
Insanity. It's why it must be
shown. You have to understand, it's
not just us. We live on a knife's
edge between worlds. My people have
known this for centuries and only
now we've finally gotten to a point
when bridging our world and theirs
is within reach. It's taken...
(this is terrible)
... a great sacrifice. From all of
us.

Olivia can barely comprehend the words.

She drags on her cigarette.

OLIVIA

And your daughter? What happens
to... ?

She chokes on the words, too horrible.

ERIC

Chloe's meant for something much,
much greater.

OLIVIA

I'll tell everyone, Eric. Stephen.
Whoever the fuck you are. I'll tell
them everything you've done.

He's surprisingly warm.

ERIC

I know. That's what we need from
you now.

She gives him a confused look.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Tomorrow you'll get a two phone
calls. One will offer you a job. It
will be somewhere important,
somewhere where you will have a
platform to bring this truth to as
many as you can. That's what we
need from you;
(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)

to free as many minds as possible before this takes place, to bring them into the fold just as we've done for you so that they will be spared. It does not wish for death but it will bring it to those who resist. And I'm tired of it. Of death. I've been tired of it for a long time. You'll have five years, and then it'll happen. What you saw will happen.

Olivia can't come to terms.

OLIVIA

What if I say no?

ERIC

You can. But you need to know that it's already done. It's started. All we have to do now is wait.

She shakes her head and stands up.

ERIC (CONT'D)

If you want to ruin me, Cam, the rest of us, we won't stop you. It was never about what we get, it's what the world gets for our sacrifice. To be united with something greater than we could ever imagine--

OLIVIA

Never.

She gives him a hard look.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

(standing up)

There's nothing you could offer.

She starts to leave.

ERIC

What about someone?

She slows.

Comes to a stop.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I begged. I want you to know that.
For a long time, begged, pleaded,
prayed, to keep you out of it.

She turns.

ERIC (CONT'D)

But it isn't up to me. It didn't
matter how much it hurt, how...
(tearing up)
... how badly I knew it would hurt
you. To lie that way, to see that
look in your eyes and to know that
with a single word you could have
her back.

Tears roll down Olivia's slack face. She turns, stunned. Eric gets up and approaches her. He reaches out and takes her good hand in his. Looks her in the eye.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Tomorrow... that's the other phone
call. Take it. See what we can
offer you.

She meets his eyes, wordless.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Olivia drives home, the world mute around her.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTERIAN CHAMBER - DAY - 12 YEARS AGO

Olivia bursts through the door, flooding the space with light.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - DAY

Olivia races out of the chamber onto an unassuming street. Her shirt is covered in blood from her nose, her shoulders covered in black grease. She runs for her life.

BACK TO:

INT. OLIVIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Olivia takes in the sight of her apartment, her belongings, her life. She throws away the sobriety chalkboard. Then her antipsychotics.

INT. OLIVIA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Olivia sits on her bed, smokes a cigarette. Her phone rings. She hesitantly approaches it. It's an unknown number. She reaches out and lets her maimed hand hover over it.

A drop of blood drips on her hand.

The phone rings.

She touches her nosebleed.

The phone rings.

She picks it up.

Brings the phone to her ear.

From the shadows behind her, the Deity turns and reveals itself, watching her, its halo crown illuminated behind her, like a crown of her own.

And a voice on the other end of the phone, weak, delicate, shaking...

AMELIA

Liv?

Olivia drops the phone, the scream caught in her throat.

THE END.