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Empty Rooms: Novel to Screenplay Adaptation

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ABSTRACT

The following is a screenplay adaptation of a previous creative work, titled *Empty Rooms*. *Empty Rooms* follows the journey of a young woman trapped alone on a small farm in a remote Norwegian fjord in the dead of winter. As the days pass, the isolation becomes more and more unbearable until she begins to question whether she is even alone at all, or whether perhaps the nefarious forces from her childhood have found her even here.

This project was undertaken to explore the process of adapting fictional novel/novella-style prose to that of a screenplay. The original novella of the same name is an unpublished work written by myself.

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Empty Rooms

by

David Wagner

FADE IN:

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

EMMA WHARTON (20), an exhausted American traveler dressed in winter apparel, drags her suitcase through an uncrowded, white-lit airport terminal to the rapid CLICK CLICK CLICK of its wheels on the tile and muted MUMBLING of the PA system. At the end of the hallway, a TAXI DRIVER smiles at her. He holds a sign: EMMA WHARTON. Below her name: UMMS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS. She approaches him.

TAXI DRIVER

Emma?

She nods.

TAXI DRIVER (CONT'D)

Welcome to Norway.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Emma sits in the front seat of the taxi as the driver pulls onto the highway. From the empty roads and sparse infrastructure, it is clear they are in a rural part of the country. The windshield wipers MOVE NOISILY back and forth, batting away snow. The taxi's high beams struggle to cut the thick, murky darkness outside. Emma looks at the clock on the radio. 13:42. The driver notices her gaze.

TAXI DRIVER

Do you already know about the day length here?

EMMA

They told me the days were short in the winter.

TAXI DRIVER

Very short. At this time of year, we won't have any daylight. It's because we are so far north, so the sun does not come over the horizon.

Emma nods absently.

TAXI DRIVER (CONT'D)

Where in America are you from?

EMMA

I study in South Carolina, but I'm

from Virginia. Near Washington, D.C.

TAXI DRIVER

(smiles)

I don't know South Carolina, but I know the American capital. Have you been inside The White House?

EMMA

Not since I was little.

The driver pulls off of the highway onto a poorly lit side road. There are no other cars in sight.

TAXI DRIVER

Do you know already where you are going?

EMMA

It's a farm, I think. The program organizers didn't tell me that much, actually. All I know is that it's pretty remote, and that the family I'm living with are called the Halvorsens.

TAXI DRIVER

(correcting pronunciation)

Halvorsen.

EMMA

Halvorsen.

TAXI DRIVER

Yes, that is much better. And yes, this family home is very remote. We will drive now for many hours. I think you must be crazy to come all this way in the winter.

Emma squirms a bit.

EMMA

I'm definitely not crazy. I just...I wanted to see something different.

TAXI DRIVER

This I understand.

(beat)

You are probably tired from the long journey from...South Carolina. You can pull the lever under the seat to lay

back the chair...

Emma pulls the lever and awkwardly falls back. She presses her lips together.

EMMA

Thanks.

TAXI DRIVER

I will wake you when we arrive.

Emma closes her eyes.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Emma awakens to the taxi driver. She jolts up, but after a split second, calms down again.

TAXI DRIVER

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to frighten you.

EMMA

No, I'm...I just forgot where I was.

Emma looks out the window. They've reached the end of the road, which has fallen into an unfortunate state this far from civilization. A gravel driveway connects to the road and leads up a small hill to a tiny house, dully lit in the pitch-black night.

EMMA (CONT'D)

How long was I asleep?

TAXI DRIVER

A little more than seven hours.

EMMA

Seven hours?

TAXI DRIVER

Yes. I told you: very remote. I'll get your things from the trunk.

The taxi driver opens his door and gets out.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Emma gets out of the taxi. There is a gentle snow falling, and it has already accumulated in a thin layer on the ground. She is still waking up, so she stumbles a bit, and uses the

car for support.

The trunk opens, and the driver sets her luggage down.

EMMA

It's really dark here.

TAXI DRIVER

In the city, the lights bounce from the clouds back to the Earth. Out here there are no lights. When the storm passes, the moon will be very bright. This part of Norway used to have glaciers. Now it is many fjords, many mountains, so it will be very pretty for you. Usually the tourists come during the summer.

EMMA

The sun doesn't rise, though, right? Will it be this dark the whole day?

The taxi driver shakes his head.

TAXI DRIVER

No, it will be much brighter during the day hours.

(beat)

Do you want me to wait here until you get inside?

EMMA

Oh, no, it's okay. But thank you.

TAXI DRIVER

You remember how to say the name?

EMMA

(smiles)

Halvorsen.

TAXI DRIVER

That's right. I hope you have a wonderful time here in Norway.

Emma pulls her suitcase up the driveway, through the snow. Behind her, the taxi pulls away. It is very dark, so Emma speeds up her pace, and climbs the stairs of the porch.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Emma KNOCKS on the door, and hovers for a few seconds, but there is no answer. She tries to peek through the window in the door, but it is covered by a thin, half-opaque blind. She knocks again. Still no answer.

After a couple seconds, Emma tries the door. It is unlocked, so she leans inside.

EMMA

Mr. and Mrs. Halvorsen?

There is no response, so she steps inside

INT. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

and closes the door behind her.

In front of her is a staircase with a closet underneath, and to her right and left is a room each. The room on the right is dark, so she peers into the room on the left.

It is a small living room, with a sofa pressed against the window, bookshelf, and an armchair. It is lit in a yellow glow by a single lamp. No one is inside.

Emma checks the right side of the hall now. It is the kitchen, also very small and crammed. At the back of the room is another door, this one leading to the rear of the house. There is a table with two chairs on the far wall, a bit of counter space, a fridge, and an oven. No people. She notices a piece of paper on the table.

Emma takes off her snow-covered boots at the door. She goes into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Emma flips the lightswitch, but it does not work. She groans, then picks up the paper. It's a note.

The note says:

"EMMA,

WE ARE AT THE MARKET. WE WILL BE BACK TOMORROW.

SECOND BEDROOM IS YOURS.

FAMILY HALVORSEN"

Emma sets the paper down.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emma climbs the stairs with her suitcase. At the top, she pulls the string dangling from a naked lightbulb. It clicks on. At the top of the stairs, a bathroom is on her left, and two doors are along the wall on her right. She goes to the right, glancing just briefly at the first door. She opens the second.

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma enters the room. It, like the rest of the house, is bare-bone: a twin bed, a dresser, a vanity mirror. The walls are covered in old-fashioned white wallpaper with an ornate, light gray pattern.

She flicks the lightswitch, but the lights do not come on. She throws down her suitcase and huffs to herself.

She plugs her phone into the outlet, but it does not begin to charge. She tries the lower outlet. It also does not work.

MONTAGE:

- Emma tries her charger in the bathroom. Nothing. She tries the lightswitch, too, but it also does not work.

- Emma tries the outlet in the kitchen. Nothing. She opens the fridge. It is empty. Unpowered.

- Emma tries the outlet in the living room. It does not work. Confused, she turns on her phone's flashlight, then unplugs the lamp, replacing that outlet with her phone charger. The phone dings and lights up. She pulls down the bar down to check for cell phone reception, but sees no bars. She gives a joyless chuckle.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma takes a red-and-pink stitched blanket from her suitcase. She lays down in bed, and fans it out so that it will settle over her.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. CITY APARTMENT - DAY

The red-and-pink blanket is being knit by Emma's MOM (50s), who sits in a cramped, inner-city apartment living room. In the background, a NURSERY RHYME plays. She begins to SOB

SOFTLY.

The house would be nice if someone maintained it, but clearly no one does: the coffee table is stacked high with magazines, the sofa is pilling, there are dirty dishes are stacked in the sink in the kitchen behind the living room. The MUSIC comes from the TV, which is showing a still image of the Virgin Mary.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY

A young Emma sits on a twin bed in a tiny bedroom crammed full with overflowing cardboard boxes. The walls are covered in black and white wallpaper. She hears the crying. She takes her pillows and pushes them against her ears to block the sound.

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma stirs to a muffled PEELING sound, like paper being ripped. She immediately falls back asleep.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The next morning, Emma sits at the kitchen table downstairs, sketching in her journal. She is working on the last details of a drawing of a woman's face. To finish it, she fills in the woman's eyes.

Although there is no sunlight, the atmosphere outside is significantly brighter than during the day (though it is still murky and dark). Emma looks out the window to the driveway, but sees no car. She puts her journal on the table and picks up the note.

EMMA
(mumbles)
We will be back tomorrow.

Emma sets down the note.

EXT. YARD - DAY

Emma, now dressed in a coat, hat, and boots, exits via the back door by the kitchen. It is no longer snowing here outside. When she sees the landscape, she pauses.

A mile behind the house is a steep mountain. She walks around the side of the house and sees that, in the front, there is another mountain. That mountain lies to the opposite side of a river; she is standing in a fjord.

Emma goes back to the back of the house. There is a shed there. She tugs at the door, but it's caught on the snow, so she gives it another tug, freeing it.

INT. SHED - DAY

Emma takes a quick look around. She finds a shovel propped against the wall, and a large stack of bags with Norwegian text and an image of a pig on them with a blue tarp overtop. One has broken open, so she takes a look. It contains small pellets. Pig feed.

An old-fashioned sleigh hangs on the wall. She smiles when she sees it.

EXT. YARD - DAY

Emma makes her way away from the shed to the barn located a bit farther away. As she approaches, she can hear SQUEALING.

INT. BARN - DAY

Emma pushes inside through a large wooden door. The barn is arranged as a single aisle with rows of stalls to either side. The SQUEALING is deafening.

Emma takes a step forward, and the barn door swings shut behind her to a soft BOOM, startling her.

The stalls are full of pigs, two in each stall. They rush to their stall doors to greet her eagerly. Emma smiles when she sees them, and reaches down to pet one with a gloved hand.

EMMA

Hey there, pal.

Her gaze goes to the back of the barn, where she sees a collection of meat hooks. Her smile collapses from her face as she realizes what the pigs are actually for.

EXT. RIVERSIDE - DAY

Emma makes her way down the hill, past the road, front of Family Halvorsen's house visible behind her. At the bottom of this small hill is a riverbank, its shores hugged by loose chunks of ice. A small dock juts a few feet out into it. Emma steps out onto the dock. It jostles and whines a bit, but stays sturdy.

The river is wide - probably about a half-mile. On the far side is a thin strip of shore, then a steep bit of mountain,

similar to that a distance behind the house. The water flows gently and smoothly. A canoe is roped to the dock. Emma looks at it, taking note. Her stomach GROWLS.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Emma re-enters the house through the kitchen door. She kicks off her boots. Emma goes to the cabinets above the counters. The first is empty. The second has plates and bowls. She checks the third, and to her relief, finds a few boxes of cereal stacked in it. She takes one of the boxes out, then grabs a bowl.

We see her spoon enter the dry cereal, then her mouth. Her CHEWING is loud.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The spoon comes out from the bowl, and we are no longer in the house. A ten-year-old Emma shovels the dry cereal into her mouth, her eyes cast on the floor. The room is decorated with bright colors, puzzle-piece foam flooring, and picture books.

YOUNG EMMA

Am I in trouble?

Opposite Emma sits a SCHOOL COUNSELOR (40s-50s). She smiles and shakes her head.

COUNSELOR

No Emma, you're not in trouble. I just wanted to talk to you today.

YOUNG EMMA

My mom told me I'm not allowed to talk to you.

COUNSELOR

Did your mom tell you why you're not allowed to talk to me?

Emma keeps her eyes on the floor.

YOUNG EMMA

She said bad people would try to take me away from her.

The counselor marks something on the paper in front of her.

COUNSELOR

Well, Emma, I'm not trying to take you away from your mom. I just want to make sure that you feel safe. I thought I could ask you a few questions about home, but you don't have to answer any of them if you don't want to. Is that okay?

YOUNG EMMA

Am I going to get sick?

The counselor leans forward. Her eyebrows furrow.

COUNSELOR

What do you mean by that?

YOUNG EMMA

Sometimes I hear my grandma say my mom is sick. If I get those germs on me, will I get sick, too?

The counselor looks ready to respond, but before she has the chance, the door flies open. Emma's mother stands there, disheveled, a furious look on her face. A few other ADMINISTRATORS stand around her. She bats one of their hands off of her. The counselor stands up.

EMMA'S MOM

Get your fucking hands off of me.

She barges into the room, and grabs Emma by the shoulder, knocking the cereal from her hand. She crouches and meets her daughter's eyes.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)

Did they hurt you? What did they say to you?

COUNSELOR (O.S.)

Mrs. Wharton -

Emma's mom points an accusatory finger at the counselor.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)

You leave my daughter alone, do you understand me? I'll sue you and the district if you ever take her out of class without my permission.

(to Emma)

C'mon, I'll take you home.

She lifts Emma into her arms and storms out of the room, through the gathered crowd.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The sound of a door CREAKING wakes Emma up. The door downstairs slams shut. Emma listens as FOOTSTEPS come up the stairs. She checks the time on her phone next to her bed. It's 2am. Another door OPENS and CLOSES. She falls back asleep.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Emma sits on the couch, writing in her journal. After a few moments, she hears a CREAKING noise. She turns around and notices that the front door is slowly swinging open.

Emma puts her journal down and goes to the door. As she arrives, she is surprised as a small black blob darts inside. It stops on the stairs and looks at her. A cat.

EMMA

Hey there.

Emma notices the cat is wearing a collar. She approaches it slowly, but the cat does not appear skittish in the slightest. She takes the collar and turns it to face her.

COLLAR TEXT: UUN.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Un? Uhn? Is that your name?

He does not react except to stare at her.

EMMA (CONT'D)

And where did you come from?

She turns around and looks out the door. Tiny cat paw prints lead up the stairs onto the porch. Beside them are her own footprints from the first day. There are no other footprints. She narrows her eyes, confused.

INT. FAMILY HALVORSEN BEDROOM - DAY

Two loud KNOCKS on the inside of the bedroom door.

EMMA (O.S.)

Hello? Mr. and Mrs. Halvorsen?

A pause. The door opens. Emma enters the bedroom and shivers.

There is no one in the room. It is furnished with a bed and dresser. A similar wallpaper to her room. Above the bed is a strange oil portrait of a man. The strokes are blocky, but it appears as though the man's eyes are without pupils. Emma looks at it briefly.

The window in the room is open, so Emma goes across the room and closes it, pushing the lock across so that it stays shut. When she turns around, she notices that the wall beside the door is missing huge strips of its wallpaper, torn away haphazardly, carelessly. She moves across the room and runs a finger along the folds.

Uun peeks around the corner.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Did you do this?

She takes one final look at the markings. There is a skepticism, a suspicion, in her eyes, but after an extended beat, she turns away. Uun jumps onto the bed.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Either you got in the window or Family Halvorsen has got a giant rat living in the walls. Either way, this room's off limits, got it?

Emma pauses, as though she expects a response. She gets none.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I don't suppose you have any idea where Mr. and Mrs. Halvorsen are? Their note said they were supposed to be back yesterday.

Uun gives her a curious look. An uncomfortable look suddenly comes over Emma's face.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Don't give me that look, like I'm talking to myself. I'm talking to you. There's a difference. Cats are companion animals, aren't they? That's what you're there for.

Emma takes a deep breath, then releases it.

EMMA (CONT'D)
C'mon, out of here. You must be
starving.

She gestures to the door. The cat doesn't move. Emma sighs again, and then scoops him into her arms and leaves the room, closing the door behind her.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Emma goes one-by-one through the cupboards under the kitchen counters. She closes the last one and turns to Uun, who lingers at the door.

EMMA
No cat food here. Maybe they keep it
in the shed?

He MEOWS and saunters into the entrance hall. She picks herself up and follows after him.

INT. ENTRANCE - DAY

Uun stands in front of the small closet door built into the staircase. He looks at it, and then at her, and MEOWS.

EMMA
In here?

Emma opens the closet door. A black wool coat hangs inside. Underneath it are two bags of cat food, one open.

EMMA (CONT'D)
You're pretty clever, aren't you?

Emma pushes the coat aside and notices a metal box attached to the wall. At first she's confused, but she notices a lightning bolt symbol printed on the box lid. A fuse box.

Emma pulls the fuse box open. Inside is a collection of old fuse bulbs, the majority of which are shattered. Emma groans.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Uun, you wouldn't happen to know how
to fix a broken fuse?

As Emma pulls back out of the closet, she knocks over an old painting that was leaned against the wall. It hits the ground with a loud THUD. Emma leans over and pulls the picture up, then props it against the side of the stairs.

It's another oil portrait similar to the one in Family Halvorsen's bedroom. Her eyes, too, are empty white circles.

Emma frowns.

INT. FAMILY HALVORSEN BEDROOM - NIGHT

The light from the window is beginning to dim - it's getting to be night. Emma opens the bedroom door. She awkwardly maneuvers into the room with the large portrait from downstairs in tow. She props that portrait against the side of the bed.

She shivers.

Emma climbs onto the bed and takes down the portrait of the man, nearly falling over in the process. She brings it down and sets it next to the portrait of the woman.

The two of them, eyeless, stare at her.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN PORCH - NIGHT

Young Emma sits at a table on a back porch somewhere in suburbia. In front of her is a box of crayons and a sketchpad. She is coloring a picture of a family - a young girl, a mother, and an older woman. At this moment, she fills in the little girl's eyes with her brown crayon.

The sun is setting somewhere beyond the fenced-in backyard, and the sky is lit in muted reds and pinks as the night creeps in.

An older woman, EMMA'S GRANDMOTHER (late 60s, early 70s) comes to the porch through a sliding glass door. She looks her age with white hair, wrinkled skin, and glasses, but she's still active and mobile, the type who might still run marathons. She leans out the door.

GRANDMA

It's getting dark out here, Emma. Why don't you come finish that inside?

YOUNG EMMA

I'm almost done.

Emma's grandmother comes outside and sits at the table. Emma looks at her, then takes a blue crayon to color in her grandmother's eyes in the drawing. Now the only figure left

with empty eyes is her mother.

YOUNG EMMA (CONT'D)

(looking down)

Do you know what color mom's eyes are?
I don't remember.

GRANDMA

Oh, don't say that. She hasn't been
gone that long.

YOUNG EMMA

I just don't remember.

GRANDMA

Well, they're brown. Just like yours.

Emma stops coloring for a second. Her face goes flat, like she doesn't like that answer.

Then reluctantly, she grabs the brown crayon and begins scribbling.

YOUNG EMMA

When does mom come back?

GRANDMA

Now, Em, you know she's at the doctor
right now. She'll be back as soon as
she's feeling better.

YOUNG EMMA

Is she going to die?

Her grandmother's eyes widen.

GRANDMA

No, of course not! She's a different
kind of sick. But she'll be better
soon.

Emma finishes coloring but still doesn't look up. She's frowning, her bottom lip stuck out. Dejected. Her grandmother frowns as well, then tries to fake a smile.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

Well, listen to this. Your mom sent a
present for you.

That's all it takes - Emma's eyes light up. Her grandmother reveals a book from her lap and gives it to Emma.

Emma looks through the pages and sees that they're blank.

YOUNG EMMA

There's no words in this book.

GRANDMA

That's because it's a special type of book. It's for you to write in.

YOUNG EMMA

What about?

GRANDMA

Well, about whatever you want. Sometimes, if you're ever feeling sad, you can write about it and trap it right there in that book so you don't have to worry anymore.

Emma gives her grandmother a toothy smile.

YOUNG EMMA

Thanks, grandma.

GRANDMA

You're very welcome. Now run along inside. Dinner's almost finished.

Emma jumps up from her seat and runs toward the house, outpacing her slow-moving grandma. She runs through the sliding doors and rounds the corner into

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

a man and a woman, both with large, white, empty eyes, staring directly at her.

CUT TO:

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma jolts awake from her nightmare. She sits on her bed, breathing heavily for a few moments, then checks her phone. 3 am.

Before she lays down again, she hears the door downstairs creaking open. She looks to the hallway, but her door is shut.

Emma slides out of bed.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emma walks down the hall, using her phone as a flashlight. She stops at the top of the stairs and looks down. The front door is wide open, swinging back and forth on its hinges slowly. Wind WHISTLES through the door. She pulls the string on the lightbulb above her. A dull light pops on.

EMMA

Mr. and Mrs. Halvorsen?

No response. Emma goes down the stairs.

INT. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

She peers outside briefly, looking for footprints in the snow, but sees none. She closes the door and gives the knob a hearty pull to see whether it's secure. It is. She gives the door a quizzical look, one that also contains traces of nervousness. Emma turns to go back up the stairs.

Emma makes her way back up. She is nearly at the top when the door slowly CREAKS open behind her. She hears this and turns around.

She pauses here for a second as gears spin behind her eyes. She looks nervous, but after a few seconds, shakes her head angrily.

EMMA

Stop it, Emma.

Emboldened, she goes back down the stairs and pushes shut the door. She looks at it for a second, daring it to open, then looks around her for something that might help. She sees the chairs around the kitchen table.

Emma forces the chair under the door knob so that it can't open. She tries to tug it, but it doesn't budge. She takes a few steps upstairs, but then stops and turns around.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

She tears a piece of paper from her journal on the kitchen table and scratches a message on it. She slides it behind the thin curtain in the door's window so that it is visible from the porch.

"FAMILY HALVORSEN,

THE WIND IS BLOWING OPEN THE DOOR. IF YOU KNOCK, I WILL COME

OPEN THE DOOR FOR YOU.

- EMMA "

Satisfied, she groggily heads back upstairs.

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma sits back on the bed. She sets her phone beside her and pulls up her blankets when she hears the door CREAK open again.

Her breaths become heavy, her eyes wide. Her head swivels to look at her door once again. She is not panicked, but maybe halfway there.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emma peeks around the corner, shining her phone as a flashlight. The chair is where she left it, in front of the door. This takes her for a loop, and she narrows her eyes. A bit of wind blows through the house, coming from the kitchen. Emma's gaze falls there. She tiptoes downstairs. Her pink-and-red blanket is wrapped around her.

INT. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

She moves to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen door is wide open, swinging lazily on its hinges. Emma looks back and forth, as though she expects someone to appear inside with her. She is hesitant to approach the door, holding back like she's waiting for the right moment.

Emma moves very slowly toward the door, tilting her head so that she can catch a glimpse of the space outside, but holding back just enough that she could fall back should something come through it. She shines her flashlight outside, but the darkness swallows it immediately. When she reaches the door, she shuts it quickly. Before it has a chance to reopen, she grabs the other kitchen chair and slams it under as she had done with the front door.

Emma backs away, still looking around herself. She moves far enough back so that she can see into the entrance hall, a position that gives her sightlines to both doors. She pulls herself on top of the kitchen table and stares at the kitchen door.

Emma sets her phone on the table in front of her on speaker. It RINGS twice, then gives a NO SIGNAL NOISE. Emma clicks it off.

The kitchen door GROANS a bit as it is battered by noisy WINTER WINDS, but stays firmly shut.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(firmly)

Stop it. You're fine. It's the wind.

She watches the kitchen door, but her eyes are tired, and she yawns, and...

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Emma is SNORING quietly. Her head is against the wood of the kitchen table. It's daytime now; it's still dark, but the darkness isn't as menacing now.

A cat MEOWS. Emma stirs slightly, but dozes off. The cat MEOWS again, and Emma this time wakes up. She tilts her head to the side. Uun stands in the kitchen door frame, staring at her.

Emma moves to get up and nearly falls off the table, clearly having forgot that she had fallen asleep there last night. She winces as she stands up straight, her hand going to her stiff lower back.

EMMA

Did you hear that wind last night? It kept blowing open the doors.

She limps forward into the hall

INT. ENTRANCE - DAY

and pulls the chair from under the door, immediately pulling it back

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

to the kitchen table. She grabs Family Halvorsen's note from the counter and collapses into the chair.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Emma. We are at the market. We will be back tomorrow.

Emma looks to Uun.

EMMA (CONT'D)

That was three days ago. They should be back by now.

(beat)

What do you think, Uun? You live with them, right?

No response from Uun. Emma groans. She gets up from the chair and moves like a zombie to grab the cereal from the cabinet.

EMMA (CONT'D)

It was snowing pretty hard when I left the airport.

She pours the cereal into a bowl. A collection of bowls has already collected in the sink. Emma is only able to fill her current bowl up a tiny bit before the cereal box runs dry. She shakes it for good measure, then grabs one of the two remaining fresh boxes from the cabinet and tears it open.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I hope they're alright.

Emma starts eating her dry cereal. She looks to Uun, who has not moved from his spot. She frowns, and speaks between bites.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I know what you're going to say, but don't. If I walk up that road, I'll get frostbite, or hypothermia, or, you know, eaten by a wolf, or something.

(beat)

I shouldn't slept on the ride out here. That was stupid. Irresponsible. I don't know if we're ten miles or a hundred miles from the next town.

Uun continues to stare.

EMMA (CONT'D)

But anyone would lose their mind in this house with the one working outlet and two total light bulbs and doors that blow open in the middle of the night. There's no service here, but there might be on top of that mountain out behind the barn. That's what they say in the survival shows. Higher ground means better reception.

(beat)

It's a good plan. The exchange program should know what's going on. And it'll be a good walk. The crazy thing to do would be just sit down here and do nothing.

She finishes her cereal and tosses the bowl atop the others in the sink. She checks her phone. 65%.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Emma, now fully dressed in her outdoor wear, walks through a thin line of trees, made even thinner by the barren branches. Besides her boots CRUNCHING in the snow, the only sound in the forest is her exhausted BREATHING. She walks up an incline to an uneven stone cliffside.

The mountain towers above her. Even from this low she can see its structure: some areas are straight verticals, but most of the mountainside is made of steep, albeit navigable, ground. She moves beyond the bit of cliff and begins making her way up the mountain, using the trees to steady herself.

EXT. BACK MOUNTAIN CLIFFSIDE - DAY

Emma, now at the top of the mountain, lumbers from the treeline to a the rocky croppings near one of the steep drop-offs. Her coat is unzipped now, and her hat is crammed into her pocket. She perks up a bit as she sees the edge of the cliff, but approaches it very slowly, with great caution. The wind nips at her hair, and while it doesn't look strong enough to disrupt her balance, those gusts keeps her from getting too close to the edge.

She stops five feet from the drop-off and leans forward to get a better view of the valley. Across from her is another mountain. Beneath her is the river and bit of flatter land where Family Halvorsen's house and barn sit, made to look small by the height.

Emma takes a awesome breath, then takes a few steps back from the edge.

She collapses to sit criss-cross on the rock. She pulls off her right glove, cramming it beneath her leg to keep the wind from snatching it away, and then pulls her cell phone, as well as a folded piece of paper, from her jacket pocket. She pulls down her lockscreen, looking for a signal, but still sees none. She SIGHS noisily.

Even so, she takes the time to type out the emergency contact

number printed on the program information paper, the wind tugging at it all the while. She clicks call, but gets a NO SIGNAL noise.

EMMA

Shit.

When the call fails, her phone defaults to the contact screen. The first contact listed is her mom. Her finger hovers there a moment. Emma takes a deep breath, highlighted by the frost. On the side: some 50 unread messages. She clicks it.

The screen shows the oldest unread messages first. The first message she sees is from August, 2017 - 2 years ago.

It says: "Hi baby girl. Hope you enjoyed first week of college. Call me when you see this."

Next message, 4 days later: "Did you see message? Let's talk soon. I miss you."

Next message, November 2017: "Is school okay? When do you have a Christmas break?"

Next message, December 2017: "Will you come from for Christmas?"

Next message, December 2017: "Merry Christmas, Emma. I wish I could see you and tell you in person, but I know you are busy with school. Call me sometime?"

Emma scrolls through the dozens of other messages, her face becoming more and more sad as she does. Tears begin to form at the corners of her eyes, but she doesn't acknowledge them.

At the bottom of the text chain is a final message from four months ago: "i'd really like to talk to you again"

Emma slowly types out response, choosing her words carefully: "i'm sorry. for everything"

She sends it. Error: no service.

Emma wipes some of snot from her nose and puts her phone away. She puts a hand to her head and her forehead creases. She looks back to the vast expanse of empty land below her and shivers.

EMMA

Now what?

She sits still a few moments, thinking, then takes out her journal from a large pocket inside her jacket, along with a pen, and opens it up. She scrolls to her most recent page, but right as she's touching her pen to the page to write, something that stops her in her tracks.

The face she drew earlier in the week is still where she left it, but it has been modified. Its eyes are no longer detailedly filled in, but rather completely empty like the men in her dream and the portraits.

INT. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Emma props a kitchen chair against the front door. The leg gets caught on the mat. She goes into the kitchen

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

and uses the other chair to block the second door.

EMMA

The wind isn't going to be spooking us tonight, Uun. The note is already there for the family if they ever decide to show up.

Satisfied, she pours some cereal into a bowl and sets it on the counter. She takes a second bowl, goes to the

INT. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

entrance, and opens the closet door.

EMMA

Don't worry, I haven't forgotten about you. I'm running out of cereal. We might have to start sharing your food, soon.

She scoops the bowl into his food, filling it, and closes the closet door, before going back to the

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

kitchen.

EMMA

So, I was thinking that we could make Tuesday date night. Make it a bit special. We can't do dinner and a movie, but we could do snack and a bad

poetry reading? Sound fun?

She shakes the bowl to attract Uun.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Here, kitty kitty.

As she shakes the bowl, there is a single loud KNOCK on the front door. It startles her. She drops the bowl. It CLANGS off the ground as the cat food patters everywhere.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Family Halvorsen?

There is no response. Emma stands frozen. She holds her breath, staring at the door. Apart from the wind, the house is eerily silent. Emma listens more closely, and there's the subtlest sound of moaning wood, perhaps a person shifting their weight on the porch.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(louder voice)

Is that you, Mr. and Mrs. Hal -

Another KNOCK.

Emma again jumps.

At a snail's pace, Emma creeps the few feet over to the kitchen counters, not taking her eyes from the front door for a second. She reaches the counter and opens the first drawer. It's empty.

She has to move a bit back now, away from the angle at which she can still see the door. She does, moving her gaze to the kitchen entrance, and pulls open the second drawer. Her eyes scan it quickly, and she grabs a knife from inside. She clutches it with white knuckles.

INT. ENTRANCE - DAY

Emma tiptoes into the hall. The thin veil over the door's tiny window is absolutely still - no shadows, no movements. Emma pivots herself so that she is always facing that door, even once she is on the stairs.

Emma takes a step backward, just enough to notice the curtains pulled in front of the living room window. She looks there, debating, and takes the tiniest of steps in that direction, but then thinks better of it. She inches up the stairs slowly.

EMMA

(shaky)

Mr. Halvorsen? Please tell me if it's
you.

More inching. She's near the top.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(louder)

Mrs. Halvorsen?

Emma reaches the top of the stairs. She stands there, shaking, her shallow exhales making soft *HHHS* in an otherwise silent void.

KNOCK.

Emma stays frozen there atop the stairs for another beat. Her face wrinkles up in confusion and fear and disbelief.

POP.

The bulb above her head explodes in a brilliant fizzle. Emma SCREAMS and drops her knife as glass showers down over her head and shoulders. Without the bulb, she is now cast in shadows.

Her knife is halfway down the stairs now, but she pivots to run and leave it behind. Before she is fully turned, however, she has already reconsidered, and turns quickly grab it.

She takes a step in the direction of the knife and plants her foot firmly on a patch of broken glass. She CRIES out again and falls, tumbling down a few steps.

KNOCK.

She recovers quickly and grabs her knife, and once again turns to flee to her bedroom.

She doesn't retreat, though. She looks back at the door, her teeth gritted, her eyes keen—an expression of anger rather than just terror—and she goes in that direction instead.

She pushes herself to her feet and pulls the chair out from the door. She throws it open, knife in hand, and charges outside.

EXT, PORCH - NIGHT

Emma checks her left and her right. No one is on the porch

with her. She limps down the porch stairs

EXT. LAWN - NIGHT

onto the driveway and spins in a wide circle.

EMMA (CONT'D)
(screaming)
Where are you?

No one answers.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Who are you? What do you want?

No one answers.

Emma hears a concerned MEOW. She turns and looks at the entrance. Uun stands in the door.

Emma's eyes catch on the stairs. The snow that is stained red, and a trail of it leads to her. Underneath her, a small puddle of blood is forming. She checks the bottom of her foot. There's a shard of glass lodged in it horizontally. This breaks her moment of rage. Her expression softens, then her eyes widen.

Emma limps back to the house.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Emma grabs a rag from the counter, leaving her knife there, and pulls herself onto the kitchen table. She sets the rag under her bleeding foot and inspects the damage more closely.

It's not too bad - there's more blood than there is injury. Emma puts a finger on the glass, and seeing that it doesn't hurt too bad, easily slips it out. She sets it on the table and pats her wound with the towel to stop some of the blood.

Uun MEOWS. He stands at the kitchen doorway.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Uun. I'm okay. It's not a very deep cut. It's just bleeding a lot.

Her voice catches a bit on the words. She looks up at Uun. He watches her expectantly. Emma wipes her nose and begins to cry. She presses the rag to her foot to apply pressure.

EMMA (CONT'D)

You're right - I'm not okay. I'm sorry you saw that...I mean, I'm embarrassed...I must look totally insane. It's just that these fucking doors are psyching me out. That, and the isolation, and the no sun. It's enough to freak out anyone, right?

She releases the pressure on her foot. The bleeding starts again. She pushes the rag back to her foot and wipes her tears away.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Crying isn't going to help, though. Crying never helped anything. My mom, she used to fucking cry all the time, and she never felt any better. I'm gonna do something, okay, Uun? I have to just keep busy and stay sane until I can find a way out of here. There's got to be a way out here.

Her tears are already drying on her face. She sounds more determined than hysterical. Her eyes echo that sentiment.

INT. BARN - DAY

Emma pushes open the barn door to the loud SQUEALS of the pigs. In her hands is a huge bag of feed.

EMMA

Good morning, everyone.

Emma inspects the first pen. The two pigs inside are pushed up against the door OINKING wildly, their eyes on her. She smiles.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Hey guys.

She spots a trough pushed up against the inside wall of the stall. She lifts the bag of feed so that it hangs over and slowly tilts it down. Pellets rush out of the bag and fall a few feet into the trough. The pigs rush it eagerly.

Emma pours enough so that the trough is half-full, moves her head back and forth like she's considering whether she's given them enough, and apparently satisfied, moves to the other side of the aisle.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Be patient, guys. There's enough for everyone.

Emma pours some feed into that stall's trough, then moves down the line. When she reaches the next stall, the smile falls from her face.

There are two pigs in this stall. Both are quiet. One picks himself up from his lounging position when he sees her. The other lies in the center of the stall, his eyes open. Dead.

Emma stands there for a few moments as the first pig makes his way over. When he arrives at the stall door, he is not loud or excited like the other pigs. He just looks at her indifferently. Emma tries to avoid his gaze, but after a few seconds, gives up.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I should've come sooner.
I'm from D.C. I don't know how much pigs eat.

He continues giving her that same emotionless look.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I guess I should bury him, huh? Yeah,
I can do that.

The pig moves to stand next to the trough. Emma pours the feed.

INT. SHED - DAY

Emma grabs the shovel leaned against the wall, as well as a blue tarp from the top of the feed pile. She takes the sleigh down from the wall and stacks those items on top of it.

EXT. OUTSIDE BARN - DAY

Emma walks away from the barn, pulling the sleigh by its lead. On top of the sleigh is a large mass wrapped in the tarp - the pig's body. The handle of the shovel also sticks out from the tarp. She moves in bursts, heaving the sleigh a foot at a time.

EXT. YARD - DAY

A distance from the barn now, Emma finally stops pulling. She falls to her rear, panting, and wipes sweat from her brow.

She stays sitting for only a few seconds. Then she picks herself up, clumsy in her exhaustion, and pulls the shovel from where she stashed it on the sleigh.

She looks at the ground. There is patchy grass at this spot, but it is otherwise just plain packed dirt. She sets the shovel's head in the dirt and steps on the back of it. The shovel barely breaks the ground. She puts more of her weight on it. It wobbles back and forth in response, maybe going another inch deep. The ground is frozen. Emma takes a deep, frustrated breath.

Emma scoops up this pathetic amount of dirt and sets it to the side. She tries again to the same result, but pushes forward anyway. Again. This time, she lets out a frustrated YELL.

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma sits in her bed. She is writing in her journal. At the base of her bed sits Uun. Emma runs to the end of the page, and when she flips it, realizes there is no space left in the book.

She sighs and sits for a minute, then rolls out of bed.

Emma looks at the walls of the room. After a few seconds, she settles on a spot. She pulls the vanity away from the wall. The wallpaper behind it is dirty.

Emma sets her marker in that space.

EMMA

(mutters)

Sorry to ruin your stuff, Family Halvorsen, but you should've been back by now.

(beat, to Uun)

If I'm going to be trapped here alone, might as well add some personality to the room, right? I can replace the wallpaper later.

(beat, she chuckles to herself)

All I'd need is some hot water.

Emma begins to draw there. She quickly sketches out the outline to a face. After, she begins to fill in some of the details, starting with the eyes.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 (doesn't look up)
 There's not a lot of food left, Uun.
 Well, not a lot for me. You've still
 got plenty of cat food left. Less if I
 start eating it.

Emma does not fill in the eyes yet. She looks to Uun briefly,
 then back to her work. She begins stenciling the nose.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 Oh, don't pout. I'm only kidding. I
 think that stuff would only make me
 sick. But don't worry. Before I starve
 to death, I'll make sure to put the
 bag out for you.

She goes to the lips and hair.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 I'm going to have to try for help
 again. Across the river, there's
 another mountain. I don't know why it
 would be any different than this side
 of the river, but I gotta try, right?
 Maybe I'll get reception? Or a view to
 some hint of civilization?

Emma looks to Uun for a response. He of course doesn't.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 No advice for me?
 (beat)
 That's okay. It's nice to talk to
 someone. Thank you for listening.
 You're a pretty good companion animal.

Emma finishes her sketch and fills in the woman's eyes. She
 goes to her bed and lays down.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 Goodnight, Uun.

The woman's on the wall face looks familiar.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

A similar drawing of a woman's face. It's the Virgin Mary.
 The picture is printed in a calendar. Young Emma holds it.

She sits in her mom's disheveled apartment.

EMMA'S MOM

When I saw it, I had to buy it for you. It's just perfect, isn't it?

Her mother's voice is Emma tilts her head to the side.

YOUNG EMMA

Who is it?

EMMA'S MOM

Her name is Mary. She's very special. Do you know why?

Emma shakes her head.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)

They call her the Virgin Mary. That's because she gave birth to a child without a father. So many people didn't know that could happen, but Mary proved it. She proved a woman can have a child without a man.

(beat)

But even now, so many people still don't believe it's possible.

YOUNG EMMA

But you did, right? You had me without a man?

Emma's mom gives Emma a long, hard look, her lip quivering ever so slightly, the corners of her eyes becoming moist.

EMMA'S MOM

Yes, I did.

She turns around and ruffles through the stacks of paper, leftover takeout containers, and unopened letters, knocking things to the floor, which itself is already a mess of similar items. She finds the remote in the chaos and turns on the old television.

The TV fizzles a bit, but when the snow clears, the still image of the Virgin Mary appears, just as it had in an earlier flashback. The same religious MUSIC plays through the TV.

Emma's mom points to the TV. Emma looks there as well.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)

That's her there. She's always on this channel. It's one of my favorites. She proved it, Emma. If anyone ever tries to tell you something different, or that I'm lying...if you ever start to doubt your mother, you remember Mary. Okay?

(beat)

I want to teach you the prayer. The Hail Mary prayer. Let's do that now.

The SONG continues to play.

EXT. RIVERSIDE - DAY

Emma stands on the dock in the river. She considers it - the river is wide, probably half a mile, with tiles of ice drifting by at a leisurely pace. On the far side is a sliver of shore, then the steep incline of the mountain.

Emma crouches and sets a foot on the boat tied to the dock to test its stability. It rocks a bit, but it's sturdy. She looks back to the distance in front of her, and then removes her foot and tugs at the rope securing the boat to the dock until it is loose. She tosses the rope into the boat.

Emma trepidatiously sets both of her feet into the boat, holding the large dock peg to steady herself. She lowers herself in and immediately grips the sides in a meek attempt to discourage its back-and-forth rocking. After a few seconds, it settles.

Emma takes the two oars from inside the boat and sets them into grooves on either side. She pushes them back. The boat grinds against some of the ice, so she tries a new strategy. She uses her hands to drag the boat parallel to the dock, then gives it a hearty push to escape the ice drift.

EXT. ON RIVER - DAY

Emma takes the oars back into her hands and rows. The first few are lopsided, inexperienced rows, but after a few tries, they become more uniform. Powerful.

EXT. FAR SHORE - DAY

Emma's boat collides with the silty clay of the shore. Emma, sweaty and exhausted from rowing, carefully climbs out of the boat by the front to avoid getting her shoes wet. She grabs the bow and, with labored tugs, drags it up further onto

land. Emma brings the canoe a few meters back onto the rocky gravel of the land.

She sits down for a moment to catch her breath, and as she does, she turns to face the mountain. It looks similar to the one on the house's side of the river, but far less steep and rocky.

EMMA
(sarcastic)
Piece of cake.

EXT. FAR MOUNTAIN - DAY

Emma makes her way through the thin trees that straddle the side of the mountain. The wind HOWLS around her, and she pulls her coat tighter on herself.

As one gust blows by, Emma hears a WHISPER: *Emma*.

She freezes in her tracks and looks around. There is, of course, no one there. Emma looks upset by this, but she shakes her head and keeps moving.

EMMA
Stop it, Emma. Just stop.

The snow sticks to Emma's boots. There is something unsettling about this forest; once the wind dies, there are no sounds. No rustling of leaves, no animal calls. The snow is too soft to CRUNCH under her feet. It is eerily quiet.

Emma seems to get the sense of this. She frowns and takes quiet breaths.

The wind WHISTLES again, breaking that bout of silence. After a few seconds, Emma just barely hears another word: *Weston*.

Emma freezes.

EMMA
(breathes)
Weston.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

A street sign reads WESTON. It lies in a wealthy gated neighborhood. Each house here is more grand than the next: each is enormous, set far back from the street with long,

winding drives.

One house in particular is especially of interest. Unlike some of the others, it is more a manor than a mansion; it is an old-fashioned structure, made of stone and wood rather than glass and concrete.

In front of the house are two signs. One says FOR SALE. The other says OPEN HOUSE - TODAY!

INT. WESTON HOUSE - DAY

Young Emma and her mother stands in house's foyer. The house is teeming with well-dressed people. Small tables are set up around the room with pamphlets and hor d'oeuvres.

Young Emma and her mother are not well dressed. Young Emma wears casual school dress, and her mother is wearing sweatpants and a loose-fitting, stained sweatshirt. Her hair is a mess. She looks through one of the pamphlets.

Young Emma looks uncomfortable.

EMMA'S MOM

It says here red cherry floors. Marble bannisters.

She points up to the staircase.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)

Isn't it gorgeous? I always wanted marble in my house. And the walls are all painted. I heard from a woman at the hospital that this wallpaper company was hiding secret Nazi symbols in the patterns. I'm going to start tearing it off the walls in our apartment. You can do it with hot water and your fingernails.

(beat)

And the chandelier - how many lightbulbs are on it, you think?

Emma still looks nervous. Her mother frowns.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)

Why do you look all pissy?

YOUNG EMMA

I think grandma is going to be mad you took me out of school today.

Emma's mom huffs.

EMMA'S MOM

Well good thing I'm your mother. You remember that, no matter what anyone tells you. All these people try to take you away from me because they don't get it.

Emma's mom takes out a cigarette. She sets it in her mouth. Another person in the room gives her a confused look, so she takes it out and puts it back in her pocket.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)

I'm not a bad mother, am I?

She's on the verge of tears.

YOUNG EMMA

No.

EMMA'S MOM

(voice cracking)

Exactly. It's just...difficult sometimes. Your grandma thinks I am. But I've just had bad luck. But luck breaks eventually. I'm going to get out of this pit. You'll see, Emma. She will, too.

EXT. FAR MOUNTAIN CLIFFSIDE TOP - DAY

Emma, at the top of the mountain, looks at her phone. No signal. The NO SIGNAL sound plays through it.

Over a bit off cliff, she sees the house and barn across the river, both appearing tiny at this distance. She also looks to the opposite mountain, where she stood just days earlier. She hardly looks frustrated at this point. Just dejected. Near hopeless.

The wind WHISTLES.

EXT. FAR MOUNTAIN CLIFFSIDE - NIGHT

It is starting to get dark as Emma makes her way down the cliffside. The wind blows QUIETLY. As she descends, the HOWLING gets louder and louder. Emma pretends to ignore it, but discomfort is painted across her face. She speeds up her pace a bit.

EMMA

Stop it.

It is a slow transition, but after a few seconds, the HOWLING of the wind is nearly deafening.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Stop it. Stop it.

Emma sets her hands over her ears to block the sound and speeds up even more, now without hands to support her on the uneven terrain.

She is panicked now, and doesn't try to pretend anymore. She takes her hand from her ears to steady herself, and hears

NOTHING.

The forest has gone perfectly silent. The only sound is that of Emma's panicked breaths. It stays this way for a beat, then two, then

HOWLING WIND.

Emma starts running down the hill, barely dodging trees and obstacles. She hears her name in the tiniest, quietest, subtlest voice, hidden in the screaming of the wind. Emma.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Stop it! Stop!

She can see the river through the trees. She is almost there. Then she missteps.

Emma's foot slips in the snow, snaps to the side, and she falls with a pained YELP.

Emma's momentum propels her forward down the hill. She rolls and tumbles like a ragdoll, bouncing off rocks and sticks to horrible IMPACT sounds. She falls this way for ten seconds to

EXT. FAR SHORE - NIGHT

the bottom of the hill, until her front collides directly with the base of a wide tree trunk. The impact makes a loud CRASH sound. Then, once again, the forest is silent.

Emma PANTS and COUGHS. She spits blood out of her mouth. When she finishes spitting up, she lays still, WHIMPERING softly.

When she tries to sit up, she GRUNTS to sharp pain. She manages to pull herself into sitting position, her back pressed against the tree trunk. Her face is torn and bloody, her clothes covered in mud. She reaches out to touch her ankle.

She touches it and grimaces. When she tries to move it, though, she pulls away in pain. She looks left and right, panting, trying to figure out...

She hears a SHUFFLING sound in the leaves and snow, like an animal. Emma quiets her breathing to listen more carefully, a horrified look on her face.

The creature is not far away. It is somewhere behind this tree. Its feet crunch in the snow, one at a time, like HUMAN FOOTSTEPS. The sound is getting closer.

Emma tries to peer around the tree trunk to her right. There, she sees the river, and a bit farther behind her, maybe just ten meters away, her canoe, right where she left it. The FOOTSTEPS are getting louder, but are on the other side. They're so close now, and it'll be upon her any moment...

Emma grips the ground to her sides tightly and holds her breath.

But they stop. There are a long few seconds of quiet WIND WHISTLING, and then the FOOTSTEPS start again. They go the opposite direction. Emma's eyes, still terrified, glint now with the smallest tinges of hope. She looks like she might even breathe a sigh of relief...

There is a loud DOUBLE BUZZ SOUND that interrupts this quiet. The FOOTSTEPS stop. Emma looks down, and sees her phone glowing in her pocket. She tries to move quickly to pull to shut it off, pulling it out and looking at the screen. New message: MOM. Before she can shut it off, the BUZZ comes again. 2 new messages: MOM.

The FOOTSTEPS come back at her again, this time at a much more rapid pace. Accompanying that sound is a low, snarling MOAN that sounds more human than not. Emma can't hide this time. It knows she's here.

Emma shoves her phone in her coat pocket and throws herself forward in the direction of the river. Now the FOOTSTEPS are almost directly behind her. She crawls forward a few feet, but hearing it get nearer, forces herself up on her uninjured ankle, stumbling a bit, and begins to run in a desperate limp-sprint in the direction of her canoe.

Even in this state, she moves fast, but it's on her tail - right on it - and she has nowhere to go. Her canoe is in front of her, and when she reaches it, she throws herself into it, grabbing the side, and using her momentum to rock the whole thing so that it tips. As Emma rolls, right before the canoe is upside-down, she catches the faintest of glimpses of her pursuer, so fast she would hardly have the time to process it. In this light, all she can see in that mili-second glimpse is a tall shadow walking upright.

Then the boat hits the ground, trapping her underneath it in its overturned hollow. She collides with the stony earth with a THUD and another PAINED YELP, but recovers quickly and spins herself around (again, more PAINFUL, FEARFUL GRUNTING), pushing the oars that have fallen on her aside, and grabs ahold of the bench above her. She wraps her arms around the bench to weigh the canoe down, panting panicked combat breaths, but nothing comes to lift it up.

She holds this position, listening through her own ravenous breathing for more FOOTSTEPS or MOANS, but the night is silent outside. After a few moments, she reluctantly loosens her grip on the bench and lowers herself to the floor.

She moves slowly, quietly, her arms twitchy. She removes her phone from her pocket. The screen is cracked now, coated with some dirt. She wipes the muck away to see the notification again: 2 New Messages: MOM.

Emma slides the phone open to the text message page.

Emma's last message to her mother is on the screen: "i'm sorry. for everything." It has now been sent.

Below it are two new messages from her mother in response:

"sorry about what?"

and

"who is this?"

Emma hastily types out a response:

"Emma Wharton, umms international programs, i'm trapped in house alone, injured, please send help"

A few seconds of loading, but it doesn't send. No signal. Emma bites on her finger. Tears are in her eyes.

EMMA
 (whimpering)
 Please.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Young Emma is biting her finger on the sidewalk. She looks over to her mother, who is pacing back and forth a short distance away, talking angrily on the phone. The Weston house sits behind them.

EMMA'S MOM
 Yeah, mom, she's my daughter, not yours.
 (beat)
 No, it's not your business where I bring my daughter.
 (beat)
 Go ahead, tell the school. It's none of their fucking business, either. I don't care what the court documents say. She's MY daughter.
 (beat)
 Are you fucking for real? You think I would hurt my own...

Emma's mom looks back to Young Emma. Young Emma looks to the ground. Emma's mom brings the phone over. She covers the receiver to talk to Young Emma.

EMMA'S MOM
 Hey, it's grandma. Do you wanna say hi, just real quick?

She puts the phone to Young Emma's ear.

YOUNG EMMA
 Hi, grandma.

GRANDMA
 Emma, hey baby girl. Are you okay?

YOUNG EMMA
 Yeah.

GRANDMA
 Your mother took you out of school again?

YOUNG EMMA

Yeah.

GRANDMA

Well listen, I -

Emma's mom pulls the phone away.

EMMA'S MOM

Are you happy now? Good. Bye.

She hangs up. Young Emma looks back to the ground. Her mother comes over and crouches down to Young Emma's height. Young Emma refuses to meet her eyes.

YOUNG EMMA

I told you she would be mad.

EMMA'S MOM

Oh, don't listen to her. She's not mad. She was just worried. Moms do that sometimes.

Young Emma still doesn't react. Her mother sighs.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)

Hey, how about we go get ice cream?
Would you like that?

Young Emma finally peeks up. She gives a sad nod. Her mother smiles and scoops her into her arms. She walks down the sidewalk.

YOUNG EMMA

Mom?

EMMA'S MOM

Yeah, girl?

YOUNG EMMA

Why did we go see that house today?
Are we going to live there?

EMMA'S MOM

Well no, not that one, Emma. But a similar one. Soon.

YOUNG EMMA

Isn't it expensive to buy a big house?

EMMA'S MOM

Yes, it is. But all I've got to do is get some money together. You know, people go from being poor to being rich all the time. I saw it in the newspaper just this morning. This old couple in Arkansas won the jackpot. Thirty million dollars. That would be more than enough to buy a house like this.

YOUNG EMMA

Do you think you'll win it, too?

EMMA'S MOM

I dunno. You ever hear about karma?
(beat)

It's from India. It's a force that makes sure people are treated fairly. I've had a streak of bad luck for a few years now, but that means God is going to give me some good luck soon.

YOUNG EMMA

Is the bad luck why you're sick sometimes?

EMMA'S MOM

Yeah, it is. When you have so much bad luck, it's hard to be happy, and when you can't get happy, you get sick.

Young Emma, held by her mother, looks down the street in the direction in the opposite direction they are walking. As they walk through a suburban intersection, she sees a man and a woman standing on the corner. They are blurry, but it is clear they are staring at her.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)

But that's about to change. My life will get better here soon, and we'll get a big house like that one with the red cherry floors and marble bannisters and chandelier and simple walls without the tacky wallpaper with secret messages hidden in the patterns. And there will be a thousand rooms for all the guests.

Young Emma watches the man and the woman carefully. They do not break their fixed stare.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)

And when we do, they'll stop saying
I'm crazy, or that I'm unfit, or that
I'm a bad mom. And then we'll be
happy, together.

The man and the woman keep watching...

EXT. FAR SHORE - DAY

Emma jumps up, hitting her head against the bench of the
canoe. She falls back down to the ground.

EMMA

Ouch.

She rubs her head, her eyes squinted, face painted in
confusion as she tries to figure out where she is.
Realization dawns on her face. She looks to her twisted
ankle. She reaches to touch it, and when she does, grimaces.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(muted)

Ouch.

Emma sticks her fingers under the canoe's rim and slowly
lifts it up. It is much brighter outside now than it was last
night. Nothing rushes at her, or makes noise, so after a few
cautious seconds, she pushes the canoe up more.

She sits up as she pushes the boat so that it tips back
upright, freeing her from underneath. She checks her pocket
for her phone. The messages from last night are still there.
Her own message still hasn't sent.

Emma tries to get to her feet, but winces when she moves her
injured foot. She looks to her left and right, and sees that
the canoe's oars are directly beside her. She takes one and
uses it as a crutch to pull herself to her feet.

Emma limps forward to the tree she had been pinned against
the previous night. She takes her phone out and tries to send
the same message again: "Emma Wharton, umms international
programs, i'm trapped in house alone, injured, please send
help".

It does not send.

Emma is once again near tears.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 C'mon, you fucking stupid thing, you
 connected last night. Just go through.
 Please, just go through.

There is no luck. Emma wipes the tears from her eyes.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 Stop it, Emma. Pull yourself together.
 Tears never helped anyone.

She limps back around to the other side of the three, and sees something odd - footprints in bits of snow. The snow is patchy, and so the shape of the footprints are not well defined, but one in particular is fairly clear. It looks to be roughly in the shape of a human shoe print.

INT. ENTRANCE - DAY

The door opens. Emma, still a mess, and still limping with the oar as a crutch, comes inside.

MONTAGE:

- Emma takes a butter knife from the drawer
- Emma tears a bit of bedsheet
- Emma tries to use the sheet with the knife to set her ankle. She CRIES OUT in pain, the noise muffled by a rag she has in her mouth.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Emma comes into the bathroom. She turns the shower on, wincing as she leans forward to do so.

Before she steps inside, Emma opens the medicine cabinet. There are some basic things inside - toothbrush, toothpaste, toothpicks. On the top shelf, all by itself, is a plastic medicine bottle. Emma takes it down.

She turns it over. Underneath the medicine name and a bit of Norwegian text is an English translation: TAKE FOR PAIN.

EMMA
 For pain.

Emma looks at the bottle a bit longer. She puts her hand on the lid to open it, but doesn't twist. She sets it back in the cabinet and closes it.

She steps into the shower fully clothed. Mud splatters everywhere. She pushes it from her hair. She unzips her jacket and tosses it to the floor outside the bathroom.

Uun walks by about then. He jumps when her jacket hits the ground.

EMMA

Sorry, Uun. Didn't see you there. I had a rough night.

He gives her a curious look.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Don't ask.

INT. BARN - DAY

Emma, dressed now in different outdoor wear, pours feed into the pigs' troughs. They SQUEAL excitedly.

EMMA

That's right. I haven't forgotten you guys. Ankle's probably broken, but I'm here feeding the pigs. Just the kind of person I am.

Emma limps to a second trough, dragging the bag of feed along the top of the pen, wincing all the while.

She looks into the pen where the pig had previously died. His penmate stands in the back, staring at her.

EMMA (CONT'D)

What, are you still grumpy?

She pours some of the feed into the trough. He doesn't move forward. Emma tilts her head.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Or just not hungry?

He looks thin, but not necessarily sickly. Emma tilts her head.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Hey, take it from me. Starving is no fun.

Emma moves on to the next pen.

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma is now dressed in pajamas. She stands up against the wall, the oar still there for support, and finishes writing some letters on the wallpaper. From a distance, you can see she has written a few journal entries on the wall around the pattern of the wallpaper.

Satisfied, Emma limps back to her bed and sits down. Wincing, she pulls her foot up onto the bed and inspects her ankle. The flesh looks a bit purple. The injury looks pretty severe.

She takes the wet cloth from the wound and replaces it with another long strip of cloth.

She clutches her pink-and-red blanket.

INT. ENTRANCE - DAY

In the morning, Emma moves the chair she had apparently jammed against the door last night. Uun hangs out on the stairs.

EMMA

(to Uun)

If a message went through, it means there must be a tower somewhere, right? That means it isn't hopeless.

Emma, awkwardly limping, brings the chair to the

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

kitchen table. She clumsily makes her way to the counter, where only box of cereal remains. When she picks it up, only a few pieces can be heard RATTLING inside.

EMMA

You know, when I was out in that canoe coming back yesterday, I was thinking I could point it downriver and try to paddle to civilization. I keep thinking about it. It would be easier than walking. But I have no idea where that river goes.

Emma pours a measly amount of cereal into the bowl. She tosses the box to the side and looks into the cabinet. There is a can of tomato sauce inside, so she takes that down and begins to rummage through the drawers.

After searching through a few, she grabs a knife from the drawer. She sets the point of the blade against the top of the can and hits the hilt, forcing the front through the metal of the can. She uses the knife like a saw to open up some of the rim.

EMMA (CONT'D)

But desperate times, right?

Emma uses the knife's blade to peel up a side of the can's roof, then pours some of the sauce onto her cereal. Uun enters the kitchen and jumps onto the table. Emma joins him with her meal.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(through bites)

My ankle is probably broken. I have literally no food left. Things are looking bleak, Uun.

Uun, of course, is silent, but he looks at Emma with an understanding expression. Emma scrunches her face.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I know what you're thinking. That's pretty messed up, especially coming from you.

Emma takes a few more bites of her cereal mix and gags.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I know that's what they're meant for. I saw the meat hooks. But I won't...I don't want to be the one to do it. I don't even know how to do it. Out of the question. I got a signal once, I can do it again.

(beat)

Where is my phone, by the way?

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Emma's clothes from the day before are still soaking wet, thrown carelessly in a pile in the hall. Emma digs through the pocket of her jacket. She pulls out her phone. It, too, is soaking wet.

EMMA

Shit.

Emma uses her shirt to wipe some of the water from the phone

and hits the phone's on button, but the screen stays black. She holds the button.

EMMA
C'mon, please. C'mon.

The phone does not come on.

Emma heads down the stairs to the

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

living room and puts the phone on the charger. The screen stays black.

EMMA
Fuck. No, no, no...

It stays dead. Emma pounds her fists against the floor. She leans into the couch cushion and SCREAMS. When she pulls back, her face is bright red.

EMMA
God dammit!

Emma takes the phone from its charger and storms outside.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

Emma throws the phone in the direction of the river. It bounces off the gravel driveway.

Before she goes in, her eyes catch on the shovel propped beside the door. She looks at it for a second, then her eyes light up.

EMMA
Oh my god.

EXT. YARD - DAY

Emma, using the shovel as a crutch, moves across the yard, past the barn. She goes to an awkward lump of soil.

Emma begins to dig. The soil here is made up of large, frozen clumps of dirt. The digging is more the job of moving those dirt clumps to the side. She does not have to dig far. The original burial job was clumsy.

As she clears the earth, she sees a protruding white spike. Emma leans over. The spike is a bone. She gives it a confused

look, and pulls, but the bone is stuck in the dirt pile.

Emma uses her hands to push some of the dirt away. She pulls the bone again, the this time it is much looser. The bone is attached to something. She clears more of the dirt, and now pulls again. It comes free, and she falls back from the momentum.

She picks herself up into a sitting position. In her hand is not a bone, but a series of bones. It is a fragment of the pig's ribcage. Her face contorts and her eyes widen.

EMMA
What the hell?

She sets it to the side and climbs unsteadily to her feet. She takes her shovel and, much slower now, digs away a bit more at the pile. After a few strokes, the blade of her shovel connects with something fleshy to a SQUISHY THUD. Emma pulls the shovel out and sees its tip stained an ugly maroon.

She goes back to her knees to clear the last bit of dirt. Her hands are shaky now as she reveals a patch of bluish-pink skin and a curly ear. She uses both hands to grip either side of this head and pulls.

The head comes free easily, still in tact, but detached from the body. Emma sees only the back. She drops it in front of her and uses her sleeve to cover her nose.

EMMA
Jesus.

The pig head is frozen, but not rotten. There is a gash on its side where her shovel connected. Emma takes a few seconds to recover from her surprise, then pokes at it with her hand. It rolls over.

The pig's eyes are open. Wide open. Both are pure white orbs - no iris, no pupil.

Emma falls back. Her mouth falls wide open. She puts her hand on her mouth to prevent herself from screaming. Her chest heaves up and down...

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

The grave of Charlotte Wharton. The sound of Emma's mother SOBBING.

Young Emma stands by her mother's side facing this grave. Both are dressed sloppily. Her mother SOBS. Young Emma's face is steely.

EMMA'S MOM

I told her not to trust the doctors. They're fucking liars. You understand that? All they want to do is sell medicine. They killed her. They killed your grandma, Emma, and now they're going to try to take you away from me.

Young Emma does not respond. No tears, no reaction.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)

First the school, then the doctors; soon it'll be the police. They're all the government. They're spying on us. Watching us.

(beat)

You listen to me, Emma. Don't ever touch their medicine. Someday you'll be sick, or hurt, and they'll give you these pills, and you're just supposed to trust them because they're doctors. If you refuse to take them, they'll try to force you to. Believe me. I know what I'm talking about.

Young Emma looks a bit up from the grave. She notices two people standing beside a tree in the distance. They are very blurry.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)

It's okay, though, Emma. They got her, but she'll be okay. She has God to look after her now. Let's say a prayer, okay?

Emma's mom takes Young Emma's hand. She begins reciting the Hail Mary prayer. Emma says the words with her.

EMMA'S MOM/YOUNG EMMA

Hail Mary, Full of Grace, The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of death. Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Emma's focus, though, is elsewhere. Those two people beneath the tree. A man and a woman. No inner eyes.

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma sketches a picture of a woman resembling her mother in a huge mural on her wall. The picture is far from complete - at this point, little more than a rough outline, with a shape, nose, and lips - but the eyes are already finished. They both are brilliant and full of life.

Emma goes and sits on her bed. There is a knife on her nightstand. Her stomach growls, and she clutches it.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emma walks back in the direction of her bedroom, eating tomato sauces out of the jimmied can with a spoon. At the top of the stairs, she gags, nearly throwing up.

She collapses onto the floor to recover, panting deep, heavy breaths. There, she feels and hears A DRAFT WHISTLES through underneath Family Halvorsen's bedroom door.

INT. FAMILY HALVORSEN BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma pushes open the door. The two paintings - a man and a woman, both without eyes - are still propped against the bed, exactly where she left them many days ago. Across the room, the window is open, and the wind WHISTLES loudly, blowing around the curtains.

Emma looks at those two paintings. The man and the woman look familiar, like the characters from her dreams. She recognizes them, too; her gaze is fixed there for a few moments, studying, rationalizing. Her BREATHING becomes louder than the wind. Her body shakes. Her expression flashes between sadness and disbelief and confusion and terror, and tears well up in her eyes. She is on the verge of breaking.

It is a gust of wind that breaks Emma from this trance.

She storms across the room and closes the window. This time, she checks for a lock on top, and after a few seconds of tugging, manages to force it shut.

When she turns around, Uun stands in the doorway. He MEOWS.

Emma takes a deep breath.

EMMA

The window was open again.

(beat)

Something is weird about this place,
Uun. It isn't just me being crazy. It
can't be...I'm not...

Emma again sees the stripped wallpaper on the side of the wall beside the door. She moves over to them and feels them. There is significantly less wallpaper there than the last time she checked.

EMMA (CONT'D)

You're not big enough to reach this
high, are you?

Emma looks around the room cautiously.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I know I must sound crazy, Uun, but
I'm NOT. Something isn't right here,
and it isn't just my mind Maybe I'm
starting to lose it. Or not starting
to. I don't know.

Emma starts to cry.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I just...I don't know what to do. I'm
so tired, so hungry, so scared. What
if I die out here, Uun? I never really
thought it could happen, but now I...

(beat)

I don't know what to do.

EXT. YARD - DAY

A forlorn-looking Emma limps along the path to the barn,
sleigh in tow behind her. Her eyes are cast down, face
expressionless. Hard.

INT. BARN - DAY

Emma opens the door to the barn to the sound of PIGS
SQUEALING.

She limps along the aisles, the sleigh GRINDING on the stone
floor behind her. The door closes itself behind her. As she
walks, she looks into each pen. The pigs jump and SQUEAL
excitedly.

Emma stops when she comes to the pen with a single occupant. He lays on the floor in the back. When she stops, he looks up, but does not get up.

He looks thin. Emma gazes at his food trough. It's still full. He isn't eating.

EMMA

You're sick, aren't you? I know that feeling. You're going to be okay.

Emma pushes open the pen's door. She leaves the sleigh here and limps inside with her shovel, its tip SCRAPING on the ground, and shuts the door behind her. The other pigs continue to SQUEAL.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Emma moves close to the pig. She has tears in her eyes, and she uses her sleeve to push them away and resets her steely look. The pig still does not react.

Emma steadies herself on the wall and raises her shovel back. She prepares herself to strike the animal.

But she pauses. The determination breaks in her eyes, just for a second, and she again looks scared. The tears flow freely now.

She swings.

EXT. OUTSIDE BARN - DAY

A THUD as the blade connects, then LOUD PIG SCREAMING over the SQUEALS.

EMMA (O.S.)

Oh my god. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

SCRAPING, a WHOOSH as the shovel is raised and swung, and then THUD. The SCREAMING stops.

INT. BARN - DAY

Emma is shaking. Her mouth hangs open. There is blood in her hair, on her face, and on her shirt and pants. A lot of blood.

The shovel CLATTERS to the ground. Emma lowers herself into criss-cross sitting position, then falls over more so that

she is laying on the floor, staring forward, back pressed against the wall. Blood from the dead pig seeps toward her.

EMMA

I...I...

There are no tears anymore. She appears only shocked.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Hail Mary, Full of Grace, The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of death. Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

The pool of blood reaches Emma and begins seeping into her hair. She does not react to this. Instead, she begins HUMMING the Virgin Mary song from her childhood.

After a verse, Emma gets a bit quieter, and stops. The room is SILENT. No more squealing. Emma, on the floor, looks up, but cannot see over the half-wall of this pen.

Now adequately drenched in blood, Emma pulls herself into sitting position, her wet hair staining her jacket maroon. She grabs ahold of the wall and uses it to pull herself up.

In the pen beside the one she is in, both pigs stare at her silently. Emma's shock mixes with confused terror.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

She stumbles to the pen door and pulls it open. As she grabs the sleigh, she sees into the pen across from her. There, too, the pigs stand beside each other, staring at her. Emma's breaths get caught in her throat. She begins to move a bit quicker.

She pulls the sleigh over to the pig. It is dead with a wide, bleeding gash in its neck. She falls to her knees and pushes her hands under its body, and with some STRAINED GRUNTING, manages to lift it onto the sleigh. She panickedly fishes a long strip of bedsheet cloth from her pocket and uses it to tie the carcass onto the sleigh.

Emm again picks herself up. She takes the lead of the sleigh

and pulls it behind it out of the pen. It gets caught at the pen's door, giving Emma enough time to see another pen, also with staring pigs. She quickly looks away and casts her gaze to the floor, her teeth clenched.

EMMA (CONT'D)

C'mon, please.

With a strong tug, she manages to free it, almost falling over as she does. She now moves forward as quickly as she can, the lead strung over her shoulder, clutched in her right hand. Her left hand grips pen walls to steady her bad foot.

Emma keeps her eyes on the floor. She looks up briefly to see how far she is from the doors, and notices more pigs staring at her when she does.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Emma reaches the door. She puts down the lead and pushes the door open and tries to pull the sleigh through. It gets caught on a tiny curb on the floor.

EMMA (CONT'D)

C'mon.

She gives it a few strong tugs, but it won't budge.

Emma goes behind the sleigh to push it from behind. She puts her weight on it, her good foot sliding against the floor, but it is stuck.

She looks up. Her gaze is forward, but the two pigs in the last pen stare a hole in her cheek. She turns to look.

The two pigs inside stare at her, but neither have eyes. Instead, they just have white gaps.

Emma's mouth again falls open, but she only sees those pigs for a second. The sleigh finally pushes free. It slides forward, and Emma falls.

She YELPS as she hits the ground. Her cheekbone hits it with a DULL SLAP. She raises a hand there, wincing. She looks scared, though, and so she picks herself up quickly and rushes out of the barn.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

Emma sits on the bottom stair of the porch, shaking, even

bloodier than before. She holds a bloody knife in her right hand, and uses it to cut away at the pig caracas. She puts the bloody flesh into a bucket beside her.

Her face is blank. She looks defeated.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Emma sets a pot of water on the stove. She turns on the gas, then uses a match to light the flame. She sets the matchbox to the side.

Emma takes meat from the bucket on the counter and puts it into the water to cook it. Her oar is propped beside her.

She has left a trail of dirt and mud behind her.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Emma sits on the kitchen table.

She takes a bite of her boiled meat with her hands. It is still partially red inside. She looks like she might gag, but recovers and takes another bite.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emma stumbles up the stairs, using the oar as a cane, her knife in her other hand. She stops at the top of the stairs, and goes into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

She sets her oar and knife against the sink.

Emma turns the shower on. She strips off her blood clothes and steps inside. The water immediately turns red as it passes through her hair, over her skin. When Emma sees the color, she begins to hyperventilate.

Emma, panicked, tries to scrub the blood from her hands, her arms, to some success. Even as she does, the water stays a dark red. Her hair.

Emma tries much less successfully to scrub the blood out of her hair. It is matted and clumped with the dried stuff, and the water struggles to take it out. Emma grabs shampoo and rubs that in, but it doesn't do much to help.

Emma pulls at her hair. She grabs the knife from the sink and uses it to hack off a clump of it. Emma doesn't stop there.

She takes another handful and slashes it clumsily with the knife, then another.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emma, in a blood-stained towel, limps down the hallway, using her oar as a crutch. Her hair is short and messy now. Her cheek is purple and swollen from where she hit it in the barn.

Emma pushes open her bedroom door and steps inside.

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma sees a nightmare.

The walls are covered in her ranting writings and drawings of faces and eyes, like something from an asylum. In the vanity mirror, she sees a monstrous version of herself, covered in blood and bruises and dirt, her hair hacked into messy clumps.

She looks insane. And terrifying.

She looks around, a horrified expression on her face, at the scene. She moves across the room and grabs her suitcase and backpack, and trades her towel for her mother's pink-and-red blanket. She gets out of the room as quickly as possible and slams the door behind her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Emma, now dressed, sobs on the couch. The curtains are drawn behind her. Her suitcase and backpack are in the living room with her, like she has supplanted herself to this room.

She hears a quiet CREAK and jumps, SCREAMING, her knife stuck out in front of her.

Uun walks around the corner. Emma wipes the tears from her eyes.

EMMA

Uun? Uun....where did you come from?

He stands in the doorway, watching her.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I did it, Uun. I'm a fucking psychopath. No, I know I had no choice but to kill it, but...but the blood,

and the screaming, and their eyes.
They have NO FUCKING EYES. Just like
my dreams, and my drawings, and those
paintings.

Emma sobs some more. She doesn't bother wiping the tears from
her eyes this time.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I keep seeing them. The people in
those paintings, I mean. It's
like...it's like they're real, like
they're here with me, but that doesn't
make any sense, because I only ever
see them in my dreams.

(beat)

But it's just my paranoia, right? My
mind playing tricks on me? That's what
I've told myself this whole time, but
even though it's all in my head, I
can't shake this feeling that they're
trying to find me, and that every day
they're getting closer. I really AM
crazy. I am.

Emma wipes her nose.

EMMA (CONT'D)

And now I'm here, talking to a cat.
I've lost it. I'm going to die here in
this house in these mountains, alone.

(beat)

You know, when I die, I'll finally
escape. Not just this house, but all
of it. I've just been so sad, so
stressed, and I thought I could escape
it in South Carolina, but I couldn't,
and I just felt so guilty, and then
she died, and...

Emma takes a moment to let some of her tears out.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I was too afraid to go the funeral, so
I just sat in my dorm room and...

(beat)

I have this picture in my mind of her
ashes in a dull little urn sitting on
the altar in an empty church. I ran
off to school and left her behind
because I just couldn't deal with it

anymore. I abandoned her. I left her all alone. She died alone, thinking I hated her. And I did.

(beat)

So I tried to run again, and I thought if I could just get far enough away, so far away from it, that I would just become a new person. That I would forget who I was, and about her. But I'm here, and I'm not a new person, and I haven't forgotten her. I'm just me, but here, alone and scared and still so guilty. And yeah, I know I'm crying, and I know I told you crying never solved any problems, but I'm not trying to solve this one. I don't know how.

Uun meows. He jumps onto the couch beside her. Emma laughs through her tears.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Yeah, you're just a cat, but thank you for listening. I never trusted anyone else to.

She lets herself cry a few more moments, petting Uun while he purrs.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(solemnly)

If I stay here, I'm going to die.
You'll die. It'll all be for nothing.

(beat)

We're going to leave here, Uun.
Tomorrow.

Emma leaves Uun on the couch. She grabs her backpack and goes to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

There, the meat is still out on a series of plates. She shoves it into her backpack. She grabs the matchbox as well.

She turns to leave, hesitates, and turns around. She adds a kitchen knife to the bag for good measure.

INT. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Emma sets the bag next to the door.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY

A backpack sits on the floor beside the bed. Young Emma sits on the bed, her journal in hand. She sketches in it.

She is working on a sketch of a girl and a woman - her and her mother - more evolved than the picture she was working on at her grandmother's. Emma dots in the girl's eyes.

She moves her pencil to draw in the mother's eyes, but hesitates. SOFT SOBBING NOISES begin in the living room. Young Emma skips past the pupils and draws tears on the character's face.

The SOBBING becomes louder. Young Emma puts her pencil down. She pushes her face into her pillow and presses on the sides to keep the sound of the CRYING out as it gets even louder.

Half of the wallpaper in Emma's room has been stripped away in long, torn streaks, like it was done by claws, leaving behind some patches of torn, icky wallpaper. A water bucket sits on the floor.

The journal lies open on the bed. Young Emma never filled in her mother's eyes.

EXT. ON RIVER - NIGHT

Emma wakes up. She sits in the canoe, which floats near the middle of the river. She is in her clothes from the previous night. It is a quiet night. Water LAPS GENTLY against the side of the boat.

Emma looks back and forth, trying to get her bearings. She realizes where she is and shivers.

EMMA

What...how...

The wind whistles by on the lake, and Emma shudders. Her teeth chatter. She is not wearing a coat. She pulls her arms tightly around herself.

The wind tears through again. This time, there are two whispered words on them: Hail Mary.

Emma jolts her head to look behind her.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 Who said...who's there?
 (beat)
 It's you.

The wind whips by, this time with carrying the first few beats of the Virgin Mary nursery rhyme tune. In that tune is embedded: Full of Grace.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 (whispered)
 It's just a dream. Another one of the dreams.

The WINDS picks up. More of the notes of the song come with it, along with more words from the prayer: The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb...

EMMA (CONT'D)
 (screaming)
 Fuck you! Whatever you are, leave me the fuck alone!

The WIND and MUSIC and prayer words continue: Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of death.

The wind has picked up enough to begin blowing the boat. It pushes the boat in the direction of Family Halvorsen's house. Emma looks in that direction.

On the shore, standing on the dock, are a man and a woman. They both stare at her. Emma takes a few deep, shocked breaths.

The WIND practically yells the words: Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 It's just a dream, just a dream...

Even so, she grabs the oars. She tries to paddle the opposite direction. It almost works. Emma makes the mistake of looking into the water. The decapitated pig's head, with its beady white eyes, floats on the surface. It surprises Emma, and she jumps, dropping the oars into the water.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(to herself)

It's just a dream.

(to the man and woman)

Who are you? What do you want?

The boat gets closer to the shore. The man and the woman come into clearer focus. Emma sees their gaping empty white holes-for-eyes.

Emma moves back in the boat to get farther from them. The SONG PLAYS loudly, mixed with HOWLING and WHISTLING WIND. The words of the prayer are repeated over and over by a disembodied, inhuman voice.

The boat is close to the people on the shore. Emma grabs the sides of the canoe and flips it over.

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Emma falls into the freezing water. She shakes wildly for a second in the cold, her eyes as wide as dinner plates, but manages to bring herself under control.

She swims up and almost immediately hits her face into a wall of ice. Emma, surprised, looks at the layer of ice across the water above her. She hits on it with her hands, but it doesn't break. She SCREAMS and pounds on the ice.

Somewhere far below her, blood begins to leak into the water. Emma continues to SCREAM, the water dulling her voice. The blood surrounds her, staining the ice above her even red...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Emma's eyes shoot open. She falls from where she is sleeping on the couch to the floor, wrapped in her pink-and-red blanket, and begins to violently COUGH up water.

She COUGHS up a significant amount of water, then a few deep breaths, hunched over, her face pointed directly at the floor. She looks like she might slowly be coming off the dream, but she notices something that makes her whole body shake.

Emma reaches out in front of her and feels the pool of water on the floor. It is real.

There is a LOUD KNOCK at the door. Emma jumps, accidentally pushing her knife under the couch. She reaches to get it, but it is far underneath, and she sees there is a greater

problem.

The chair sits at the kitchen table. The door is unguarded. A person clearly stands in the window, though the thin cloth obscures them. A look of pure terror covers her face.

There is another KNOCK. The door begins to CREAK.

Emma throws herself forward to her feet. She grabs the oar beside the arch and limps a few steps into the

INT. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

hall, but she is traveling too fast for her feeble body, and she loses her balance. The oar skids just out of her reach in the direction of the kitchen. Her pink-and-red blanket falls off. The door is now partially open.

Emma has no time to retreat up the stairs. She crawls toward them, and sees the closet under the stairs. She crawls there instead at a panicked speed as the door CREAKS open behind her.

She reaches it just in time to shove herself inside and pull the door shut.

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Emma sits in the closet by the cat food and black wool coat. She lowers her breathing to be as quiet as possible.

There are slow, deliberate FOOTSTEPS in the hall outside. Emma holds her hands over her mouth to prevent herself from screaming.

The FOOTSTEPS fade a bit into the kitchen, then get louder again as it returns to the entrance. The FOOTPRINTS move to the stairs.

The stairs CREAK as FOOTSTEPS go up them. Emma tightens her grip on her mouth. Her eyes water.

The CREAKING gets quieter. Emma takes her hands from her mouth. She quietly pulls the black wool from the hanger and puts it on.

At the pace of a snail, Emma opens the closet door and looks outside. The front door is open. WIND WHISTLES inside. Somewhere above her, she hears CREAKING.

INT. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Emma slowly maneuvers out of the closet. She grabs her pink-and-red blanket from the floor and throws it over her shoulders. She takes her oar-cane and manages to quietly raise herself to her feet.

She limps to the door. A TEARING SOUND starts upstairs. Emma's FOOTSTEPS and CANE TAPPING are very quiet in comparison.

She heads to the front door slowly, keeping an eye on the stairs all the while. As she leaves, she grabs the backpack she left beside the door the previous night.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Emma sneaks onto the porch. She looks like she might be home free. Then...

MEOW.

Emma stops. She turns around.

She is still on the porch. The door is wide open. At the top of the stairs is Uun. He looks at her curiously.

Emma looks to Uun, then to the road, then back to Uun. She gestures him toward her and lightly CLICKS HER TONGUE.

EMMA
(whispered quietly)
C'mon, Uun.

Uun doesn't move. Emma bobs her head in frustration.

EMMA (CONT'D)
C'mon.

Uun stays still.

Emma turns and moves back in the direction of the door. She reenters.

INT. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Emma again tries to gesture to Uun, but he doesn't come. He doesn't seem to understand. The TEARING SOUND is still loud upstairs.

Emma, again moving at a snail's pace, makes her way clumsily

up the stairs. Once at the top, she peeks around the corner.

The door to the room that was once hers is open. The TEARING comes from inside, along with a MOAN.

Emma unzips her backpack. She snatches Uun and puts him inside, then zips it back up, leaving only a tiny gap for him to stick his head through.

Uun MEOWS.

The TEARING stops. Emma freezes. Another MOAN comes from the room. Emma watches the door in horror. A large sheet of torn wallpaper is thrown from the room. On it is a partial sketch of the Virgin Mary. Emma's drawing.

Then the TEARING resumes.

Emma quietly sneaks back down the stairs and out the door.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Once outside, Emma runs as fast as she can away from the house. She gets to the road and runs in the direction the taxi originally brought her from.

As she goes, she adjusts the pink-and-red blanket so that it acts like a scarf.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Emma's mother, a bit older than before, has that blanket around her shoulders. She is beaming with tears in her eyes.

Emma, only a few years younger than her current age, sits at a table across from her, slightly less enthused. There is a cake between them. On it reads CONGRADULATONS, misspelled, in sloppy icing text. The whole cake is lopsided and a mess. It is clearly homemade.

EMMA'S MOM

I'm proud of you, baby, I am. I can't believe you're going, but I'm so proud of you. I wish grandma could be here to see this.

Emma doesn't respond. She looks at the cake. Her expression is flat.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)
South Carolina is so far away. I don't
know what I'll do without you here.
I'll probably just sit around waiting
for you to come back. You'll be back
for Christmas, right?

Emma bites her lip. She doesn't meet her mother's eyes.

EMMA
I don't know.

There is a long pause. Her mother's smile falters a bit, but she manages not to break down.

EMMA'S MOM
Well, I made you this.

She holds out the red-and-pink blanket.

EMMA'S MOM (CONT'D)
(smiling through tears)
I know it's not perfect, but I've been
working one for years now, and I think
it's as good as it's gonna get. And I
thought the fact that it's a bit messy
would remind you of me...

EMMA
I can't take that.

Emma's mom desperately holds onto her smile, but her eyes are sad.

EMMA'S MOM
Emma, you can take it.

EMMA
I don't want to take it.

EMMA'S MOM
Oh, Emma, you don't have to -

EMMA
I don't want it.

Emma's mom finally loses her smile. She holds it out.

EMMA'S MOM
Please take it. Please.

EMMA

Fine.

Emma takes it. Her mom's smile comes back, but her eyes are even sadder than before.

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - DAY

Emma heats up her pork on a stick by a small fire on the side of the road. Her backpack sits beside her. She pulls the pink-and-red blanket on her shoulders so that it covers her lap.

She removes the pork from the fire and CLICKS HER TONGUE. Uun's head pops out of the backpack.

EMMA

Oh, now you know that sound.

She offers the pork to him. He bites at it. Emma bites at a different piece.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Emma limps down the road. Progress is slow, but Emma is persistent.

She sees something to the side of the road in the distance. She narrows her eyes.

As she gets closer, it becomes apparent that the form on the road is a person. Emma approaches carefully.

It is a woman lying face-down against the road in a pool of dried blood in the snow. Glass shards surround her.

Not far from her is a car. It lies totaled, wrapped around a tree.

EMMA

Family Halvorsen.

Emma leaves the body of the woman and approaches the car. The windshield is shattered: Mrs. Halvorsen was ejected through it in the crash. Mr. Halvorsen sits in the driver's seat. He does not resemble the eyeless man from her dreams.

Emma zips her backpack shut.

EMMA (CONT'D)

You don't have to see this, Uun.

She opens the car door and brushes glass beads from the seat. She takes a seat beside Mr. Halvorsen. She's silent for a while.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Well, I'm glad I finally met you.

(beat)

I wish it were under different circumstances.

(beat)

All this time, and you were right here, just a few miles from your house.

(beat)

You don't look much like the man from my dreams, do you?

Emma leans over and turns the ignition key. The car doesn't start.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I didn't think it would work, but worth a try, right? I need to just check one more thing. I hope it's alright.

Emma leans over Mr. Halvorsen's body and checks his coat pockets, then his pants pockets.

EMMA (CONT'D)

No phone, huh? I guess you wouldn't need one out here.

(beat)

I'm sorry I couldn't help you and your wife, but I'm going to rescue your cat. And I'll make sure they know what happened here. Make sure they know to bury you.

(beat)

Goodbye, Mr. Halvorsen.

Emma climbs out of the car. Before leaving, she checks the trunk and finds a few bags of groceries. She opens her backpack.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Emma continues to limp down the road.

EMMA

We'll make camp for the night in a few

minutes, Uun.

(beat)

I'm sorry about Family Halvorsen.
You're a loving cat. I know it must be
tough for you.

(beat)

I never met my father...

Emma pauses. In the distance, through the trees, is a bit of light. She looks at it in disbelief, then smiles. She rushes forward

EMMA (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Hey! Help! Hello!

She races up the street, a huge smile on her face, until she breaks from the treeline and sees

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Family Halvorsen's house.

The smile falls from Emma's face. Horror and disgust immediately replaces it.

EMMA

No.

(beat)

No, no no. No fucking way.

Emma moves in the direction of the house.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(yelling at house)

No fucking way!

She moves toward it now. She appears more furious than afraid.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I won't go back! You can't make me go
back!

Uun MEOWS. He jumps from her backpack and runs toward the house.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Uun, no!

Emma chases after him. The door is slightly ajar. Uun dashes

inside. Emma stops at the base of the porch and clenches her jaw. She stands there for a few seconds, then sighs. She goes up the stairs to the porch.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Uun, I won't go without you.

She goes inside.

INT. MANSION HALL - NIGHT

The interior of the house is not Family Halvorsen's house. Emma stands in an enormous, ornate grand entrance with a great staircase leading to a second floor. This room alone is far too large to fit into the house she saw from outside. There is no furniture in it. She looks around, bewildered.

A huge chandelier hangs above the hall. The floors are made of cherry. The bannisters are made of marble. There is no wallpaper.

Emma sees a bit of movement at the top of the stairs. She moves that direction.

EMMA

Uun, come back. Don't make me chase you through here.

Emma walks up the stairs. She continues to look around her, like at any moment this illusion, this trick, will come crumbling apart. She feels the marble of the bannister.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Uun, please. We shouldn't be here.

At the top of the stairs is a hallway so long that Emma cannot see to the end. Doors line both sides of the hall.

INT. MANSION HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emma walks into the hall. She stops at the first door and peeks inside. The room is empty - no furniture, no decoration. She closes the door and moves to the room across the hall.

It, too, is empty.

Emma walks a bit down the hall.

EMMA

Are you in here, Uun? Where did you

go?

She opens the next door. Another empty room.

Somewhere behind her, a woman begins SOBBING. It is her mother's SOBBING, the same Young Emma endured. Emma turns around and leaves the room.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Mom?

Emma follows the sound of the CRYING to one of the doors. She opens it. Inside, the room is once again empty, spare her mother, who sits on the floor CRYING.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Mom?

Her mother looks up.

EMMA'S MOM

Emma? You came. Oh, I'm so happy you're here. I missed you so much.

Tears come to Emma's eyes.

EMMA

Why are you here? How are you...What is this place?

EMMA'S MOM

It's the house. Our house. I told you my luck would change, and it finally did. Karma didn't forget about me. I knew it wouldn't. It's nice, right? Do you like it?

Emma looks around her.

EMMA

The rooms are all empty.

Emma's mother begins to sob again.

EMMA'S MOM

Now you understand. I knew this could happen. And that's why I could never stop crying. You won't stay here with me in this empty house, will you?

Tears form in Emma's eyes as well.

EMMA

It's okay, mom. I'm here. I'm here.
But I can't stay.

EMMA'S MOM

Just stay. You can't go out there.
Those things...you saw them...

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - DAY

Emma wakes up calmly. She is propped against a tree, the pink-and-red blanket wrapped tightly around her. She sits up, and Uun pokes his head up from her backpack.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Emma continues walking back toward Alta.

Far, far in the distance, beyond Emma's view, the man and the woman follow after her.

FADE OUT

Academic Vita

David Wagner

EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University (University Park) | Schreyer Honors College

Smeal College of Business | Bachelor of Science in Marketing

Bellisario College of Communications | Bachelor of Arts in Film-Video Studies

Expected Graduation: May 2021

Expected Graduation: May 2021

Presidential Leadership Academy

Member

University Park, PA

Aug 2018–Present

- Draft and implement Penn State policy alongside University president and Honors College dean.
- Represent the opinion of student leaders to improve our campus community.
- Debate to enhance understanding of pressing issues and discover unique, effective solutions to social and economic issues through exploration of the nuanced gray area of leadership; write and post blog content relating to current student issues.

Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) Study Abroad

10-month overseas immersion program participant

Papenburg, Germany

Sep 2016–July 2017

- Selected as one of 250 American students for State Department scholarship.
- Completed 10-month German immersion program in rural Germany. Participated and graduated from a German *Gymnasium* high school and lived with a German host family.
- Shadowed and worked alongside a German member of parliament both in host community of Papenburg and Berlin.

International Management (MGMT 461) (15 hours/week)

Second-term Teaching Assistant

University Park, PA

Aug 2020–Present

- Evaluate and grade student reports, presentations, and papers regarding developing markets for grammar, structure, and content accuracy. Fact-check student claims.
- Prepare exam questions based on current international events in various global markets.
- Assist professor in redesigning course syllabus.

WORK EXPERIENCE

1855 Capital Venture Fund (35 hours/week)

Social Media & Marketing Specialist

Innovation Park, PA

June 2020–Aug 2020, Jan 2020–Present

- Manage client contact logs and outreach campaigns, securing 10 new PSU-alumni angel investors to syndicate.
- Modernize website/blog and analyzed social media analytics to develop content for LinkedIn and Twitter accounts
- Design, develop, and create bi-weekly video reels/stories for Instagram and TikTok for portfolio company Reflexion. Maintain content schedule and posted generated content to Facebook and Twitter via Buffer.

American Field Service (AFS) (50 hours/annually)

Volunteer

Susquehanna Valley, PA

Nov 2017–Present

- Perform group and panel interviews to award over \$60,000 in scholarships to applicants to Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX), National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y), and Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Abroad (YES Abroad).
- Review and process student scholarship applications on basis of AFS and U.S. Department of State criteria for successful study abroad applicants.
- Chosen to speak to groups of 500 high school students on the value of international communication and cooperation at Penn State's German Heritage Day festival.

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CommAgency (20 hours/week)

University Park, PA

Producer, Team Manager

Jul 2020–Dec 2020

- Led the production team and the editing team in creation of client video projects, serving as point of contact for clients, including managing client complaints.
- Corresponded between clients, subjects, production/editing teams, and CommAgency leadership to communicate client goals, secure necessary legal releases, and designate production/content schedules, deadlines, and releases.

Schreyer General Office — Work-Study (25 hours/week)

University Park, PA

Office Assistant, Content Producer

Aug 2019–May 2020

- Produced and edited promotional video content for alumni outreach/fundraising social media campaigns for study abroad/international programs.
- Operated admissions desk, assisted in event planning, and operated phones. Greeted office guests and coordinated visitor satisfaction.

Echo Lake Entertainment (30 hours/week)

Beverly Hills, CA

Editorial Staff Intern

May 2019–Aug 2019

- Designed and compiled film look-book with constant input from writer, editor, and management team.
- Managed assistant desks for executives, including managing phones, email, schedules, and script coverage.

U.S.–China SciTech Exchange Program (15 hours/day active, permanently on-call)

Boston, MA

International Program Facilitator

June 2018–July 2018

- Coordinated the daily activities (including Harvard Medical School classes, MIT classes, and weekly tours of Boston) of Beijing and Nanjing-based students.
- Supervised groups of up to 70 students and planned cultural immersion activities such as American sports tournaments and an American-style science fair.

RELEVANT COURSEWORK AND EXTRACURRICULARS**Keystone Nano Consulting**

Aug 2018–Dec 2018

- Compiled market analytics and financial statements for local biotech company into 105-page business plan, met on weekly schedule with corporate executives to determine strategy, pitched plan to investors.
- Reviewed global trends regarding patent law and economic development to determine international marketing strategy, especially with relation to international pharmaceutical companies.

PresentUSA International Distribution Consulting

Aug 2019–Dec 2019

- Collected primary research for European furniture distributor to determine American expansion strategy.
- Analyzed results through SPSS and Excel software and presented findings to company CEO.

Hershey Food Safety Case Study

Jan 2018–May 2018

- Researched best food safety practices for refrigerated and non-refrigerated food items with oversight from corporate head of food safety.
- Presented strategy for transition to blockchain systems to company logistics experts.

Creative Writing Club, President (20 hours/week)

Jan 2019 – Present

- Organize and direct weekly club general body meetings and executive board meetings to found club and grow club membership, most recently remotely through Covid-19 pandemic. Grew club from 3 active members to 20.
- Lead the club in planning, drafting, writing, and executing a collaborative club screenplay and novel. Copyedit spelling, grammar, and style of both promotional and creative projects.

RELEVANT SKILLS AND CERTIFICATION

- SPSS Marketing Analytics Software, Microsoft Excel
- Systematic Selling Dialogue Sales Certification
- Foreign Service Officer Test Passing Score (188.87)
- Adobe Photoshop, Premiere, After Effects
- B2 German Language Proficiency, 1-Year U.S. State Department Overseas Immersion Program (CBYX)