THE HUMANS

Written by

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From a play by Stephen Karam
Dialogue in brackets [ ] is expressed non-verbally.

A slash (/) means the character with the next line of dialogue begins their speech.
WHITE.

The slow intrusion of a cloud reveals we’re staring at a BRIGHT NOVEMBER SKY.

EXT. CHINATOWN AIR SHAFT - DAY

Same piece of sky carved into a geometric shape by DARKNESS. We are at the bottom of a dark air shaft looking up.

OPENING CREDITS over SKY SHAPES seen from the same angle--each unique, each carved by turn-of-the-century tenements.

A FINAL SKY SHAPE. We seem to be near the bottom of the shaft, yet we sink further DOWN, DOWN, arriving at a BARRED GROUND-FLOOR WINDOW. Inside, A MAN looks out. This is ERIK BLAKE (60), blue collar.

INT. DUPLEX APARTMENT, UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - DAY

Erik, alone, peers through the dirty glass. He searches for some sun. No luck. He clutches plastic bags, his coat still on. Indirect light from the air shaft filters into the room, a bit ghostly.

A THUD from above the ceiling startles him. He looks up.

ERIK

[What the hell was that?]

A PRE-WAR LIGHT FIXTURE VIBRATES, settles. Erik looks back down, then up again, wary. No noise. Eventually he starts to walk away when--another THUD. He looks up again.

Erik surveys the room. The PRE-WAR WALLS are slathered with OFF-WHITE PAINT--so is the:

--old cable wire snaking along the molding
--radiator
--ceiling fan

...all curiously monotone. On the wall, a BUBBLED WATER STAIN leading away from the THICKLY PAINTED WINDOW MOLDING. He follows the water stain to a spiral staircase leading down. Before he can peer down--laughter radiates from the hallway:

AIMEE BLAKE (36) and BRIGID BLAKE (25) arrive, hold up 48 rolls of toilet paper, look to Erik, smiling.
INT. UPSTAIRS - VESTIBULE - 1 MINUTE LATER - DAY

Brigid hangs a long white coat on a vestigial hook painting into the window, unloads bags of goodies. Aimee is on her phone. SOFT THUDS from above. Brigid notices ERIK LOOKING UP.

BRIGID
That’s our neighbor, we think she drops stuff? Or stomps around?--we don’t know.

Sound of toilet flush.

DEIRDRE (PRE-LAP)
Mission accomplished...

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - THIRTY SECONDS LATER - DAY

The corridor is deep and narrow, slathered in OFF-WHITE PAINT. DEIRDRE (61, Erik’s wife) and MOMO (81, Erik’s mother) exit the bathroom.

ERIK
I gotcha, Mom...

Erik helps Momo into her wheelchair.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SECONDS LATER - DAY

Erik wheels Momo past cracked walls, a missing floorboard.

BRIGID (O.S.)
It’s pretty big, right?

AIMEE (O.S.)
Definitely bigger than your last place.

...arriving in the--MAIN ROOM, where the monochromatic space is now full of life, the whole family together.

ERIK
Have you complained about the noise?

BRIGID
No, Dad, she’s a 70-year-old Chinese woman,/I’m not gonna--
DEIRDRE
Well, Brigid, I’m 61—older people can
still process information, we’re/still—

BRIGID
I’m saying she means well, she’s older so
I don’t wanna disturb her if I don’t have
to--here, gimme your coats...

INT. UPSTAIRS - VESTIBULE - 1 MINUTE LATER - DAY

Brigid holding all of the family’s coats. She doesn’t know
where to put them. Her coat—hanging on the window hook—
falls. Brigid sets down family’s coats—

BRIGID POV: Deirdre fixing Momo’s hair in the bedroom—  
there’s a SMALL BRUISE on Deirdre’s hand—from lifting Momo?

MOMO (CONT'D)
...cannevery you come
back...

DEIRDRE
She’s—[who the hell knows]—
even when she is sayin’
real stuff...what’s been
comin’ out is still all...
[muddled]...

Momo gazes at the floor, blank. Brigid arranges the
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES BLANKET on Momo’s lap.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)  MOMO (CONT'D)
...the doctor says it’s  ...you can never come
normal, the repeating... back...you can never come
back...

BRIGID
Momo, you can absolutely come back, any
time you want.

INT. AIR SHAFT WINDOW, MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

ERIK POV: ERIK PEERS THROUGH THE CLOUDY WINDOW AND DIAMOND
GRILLE. The layers of aged dirt have a numinous quality.

DEIRDRE (PRE-LAP)
Having her at home’s been, until it
becomes too much...it’s a blessing, you
know...right Erik? Erik...
BACK TO SCENE--AIMEE’S HAND ON ERIK’S SHOULDER jolts him out of his window-trance.

AIMEE          ERIK
Dad--whoa, come back to  Sorry, sorry...long drive.
earth...

BRIGID
Are you okay?

ERIK
Yeah, once I get some caffeine in me, I’ll be good.

INT. UPSTAIRS - BEDROOM - 1 MINUTE LATER - DAY

The family touring the apartment. Erik visible through the archway. An AIR MATTRESS leans against a wall. Deirdre notices an urban recliner.

DEIRDRE
This is a fancy chair. Erik, check out this fancy chair...

Erik’s looking out the window. He didn’t hear her.

BRIGID
Rich’s parents gave us that, a couch too. Not sure if the living area will be in here or--this might become the bedroom--

Brigid clocks Erik on his phone. Deirdre sits in the recliner.

BRIGID (CONT'D)
--Dad, you won’t get reception up here unless--is it a Verizon phone?

ERIK
Uh, Sprint.

BRIGID
Then you have to lean up against the window.

Erik gets closer to the window. Aimee heads to the bathroom.

BRIGID (CONT'D)
Yeah...but now, yeah, now lean in...

Erik leans deeper into the window. Deirdre now seated in the recliner, pulls the lever, it reclines quickly, startles her, she YELPS, laughs.
INT. AIR SHAFT WINDOW, MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

A SHADOWY, BLURRY IMAGE OF A WOMAN BEHIND GLASS.
The window’s bottom pane has so much condensation it’s hard
to see outside clearly. Erik by the window, watching.

Erik turns to Brigid--but she’s with Deirdre in the VESTIBULE.

ERIK
Hey, who’s walking around out there?

BRIGID
Uh...must be the super, he’s the only one
who has access.

ERIK
No, think it’s a woman?

BRIGID
Probably the super’s wife.

Brigid isn’t the least concerned with this, goes back to
chatting with Deirdre. Erik wheels Momo into the
BEDROOM, looks out that room’s dirty-but-clearer window:

THE AIR SHAFT IS EMPTY. CIGARETTE BUTTS line its floor. A
PIGEON pecks at the butts. Some garbage blowing around.

WIDER--a few steps from Erik, Momo sits in her wheelchair.
THE WHEELCHAIR STARTS TO ROLL AWAY FROM HIM (the floor is
uneven). Erik catches her in time, applies the brake.

INT. BATHROOM - ONE MINUTE LATER - DAY

In semi-darkness, Aimee gropes for a light switch. The pre-
war tub situation is bleak. She discovers the toilet seat
cover is cracked in half, held together with duct tape.

In the bathroom mirror Aimee sees the reflection of:

ERIK--in the main room--LOOKING UP. What’s on his mind?
She closes the door, wiping out her view of Erik.

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Brigid also clocks Erik’s preoccupation with the ceiling--
she and Deirdre are returning to the main room.

BRIGID
Hey, Detective; this is New York,/ people are loud--
DEIRDRE
Hey, he had a rough night, he hasn’t been sleeping,/ he’s been--Erik, you haven’t.

ERIK
Deirdre...[please don’t talk about this]...
(to Brigid)
I’m -- yeah, I’m okay...

BRIGID
Why haven’t you been sleeping?
Are you okay?...

AIMEE (O.S.)
I forgot the toilet paper!

INT. UPSTAIRS - VESTIBULE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

RIP--Brigid wrestles open an economy pack of toilet paper. Deirdre approaches, ensures Erik’s out of earshot--

DEIRDRE
I dunno if he’s having nightmares or what. The sheets were covered in sweat last night...

BRIGID
Rich sometimes takes a sleeping pill,/ I can ask what kind--

DEIRDRE
Oh right like your Dad’d ever try any sorta--no, no...

Brigid leaves to deliver the toilet paper, revealing TWO CHEAP OIL PORTRAITS leaning against the wall behind her--one of a 19TH CENTURY STERN WOMAN, one a SAD 17TH CENTURY GIRL.

BRIGID (O.S.)
Rich’s been having weird dreams about--he thinks they’re related to the stress of the move?...

Deirdre eyes the ‘stern woman’ who is ‘looking’ at her.

BRIGID (O.S.) (CONT’D)
...and he’s been keeping me up while he tries to unravel their meaning...

...Brigid is back with Deirdre.

BRIGID (CONT’D)
...he took one psychology course and suddenly he’s an armchair psychiatrist.
RICHARD (O.S.)
(emanating from stairwell)
I took two psychology courses!

BRIGID
[One.]
I found those on the curb,
can you believe someone was
gonna throw them out?

Deirdre can believe that someone would throw them out.

RICHARD (O.S.)
Hey, be up in a minute! Babe--bring down
the napkins, okay? Bridge?...

BRIGID
Richard, what are you yelling at me?!

INT. DOWNSTAIRS - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

RICHARD, 35, at the base of the stairs.

RICHARD
I said bring down the napkins please!

BRIGID (O.S.)
Yeah, Richard, or you could get them
yourself.

Richard walks out of the frame. Richard walks back into it--

RICHARD
Wait do you actually want me to/
come up and--

BRIGID (O.S.)
No, no I got them, sorry...

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Aimee on the toilet looking at her phone. Her iphone
reflected in her glasses. Something upsets her. She looks
away. Looks back, *is she about to cry?* She turns her phone
off. FLUSHES. She flicks on the lights above the sink; A BUG
FLUTTERS inside the bulb. She tries to ignore it. She can’t,
unscrews the bulb. She goes to leave, stops. Peeks in the
toilet; flushes again.
INT. UPSTAIRS - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS - DAY  
Brigid carefully positions two packs of napkins through the gap in the spiral staircase; she drops them--

INT. DOWNSTAIRS - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS - DAY  
--Richard misjudges the drop, the bags hit him in the face.

INT. UPSTAIRS - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS - DAY  
Brigid smiles, turns back to the room and sees--DEIRDRE HAVING AN AUDIBLE-BUT-INDECIPHERABLE PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH ERIK. THEY MOVE TO THE VESTIBULE...

INT. VESTIBULE - SECONDS LATER  
Brigid peers around the hallway doorway into the vestibule, glimpses DEIRDRE RESIST THEN RELENT TO LET ERIK MASSAGE HER KNEE FOR PAIN RELIEF. There is tension and care between them.

THE SHADOWS CAST FROM ERIK AND DEIRDRE IN THE ALCOVE DANCE ON BRIGID’S FACE, LIKE A HOME MOVIE PLAYING ON HER SKIN.

BRIGID
No complaining until the tour’s finished...

INT. UPSTAIRS - BEDROOM - 2 MINUTES LATER - DAY
4 PATCHES OF OFF-WHITE PAINT on a section of the wall.

AIMEE
These are different colors?

Erik, Deirdre and Aimee stare at the patches. Momo gazes down.

BRIGID
Woodmont Cream, Fresh Air, Athena, Dove Wing, Hint of Mint.

Deirdre refers to old wallpaper behind the fancy chair.

DEIRDRE
What happened here...

BRIGID
Mom... ERIK
You know, if you moved to Scranton your quality of life would shoot up.
BRIGID (CONT'D)
Uh, if I moved to Scranton, your quality of life would shoot up tremendously--

ERIK
Oh yeah? What makes you think we like you so much?

DEIRDRE
Don’t flatter yourself, lady--

AIMEE
These look exactly the same to me.

BRIGID
They’re literally different. Mom...

DEIRDRE
I wish you had more of a view...

Deirdre tries to see what’s out the dirty window.

BRIGID (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
It’s an interior courtyard.

Deirdre stifles laughter, Erik does too. Brigid is hurt.

DEIRDRE
Perhaps we can all take a stroll in the interior courtyard after dinner.

INT. KITCHEN - 5 MINUTES LATER - DAY
Richard watches Brigid search for something.

BRIGID
[Where did I put the fucking gifts?!]

DEIRDRE (O.S.)
Bridge, you didn’t even open our care package?

BRIGID
I’m not opening anything until the moving truck gets here!

Richard hands her a bag of gifts that was in plain view.

DEIRDRE (O.S.)
Is the moving truck on its way or--

BRIGID
No, no it’s still stuck in Queens!--

I said--

DEIRDRE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
[Wait what?]

[What did you say?]

[I can’t hear you!]

[I’m gonna kill her.]
DEIRDRE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Is it still stuck in Queens?!

Richard whispers something in Brigid’s ear, she smiles.

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - 2 MINUTES LATER - DAY

The family each unwraps A FRAMED PHOTO. They start to smile.

AIMEE
What did you get us?

DEIRDRE
Thank you...Erik don’t [rip your wrapping]--I wanna save the wrapping.

BRIGID
Open, open...

ERIK
Oh man...

BRIGID (CONT'D)
Found it when I was packing.

DEIRDRE
...oh man...were we ever this young?...look how young you are, Aimee...

AIMEE
I’m an elephant in this photo...

DEIRDRE
You’re beautiful.

BRIGID
No...

AIMEE
...and I’m holding a funnel cake...I can’t even blame genetics.

ERIK
This is gold, Brigid,/ thanks. Check it out, Mom...

DEIRDRE
It really is, honey...thank you.

AIMEE
I am a planet in this photo.

DEIRDRE
ERIK
Stop it, I’m bigger than you...I miss Wildwood.

You look beautiful.

BRIGID
Go back, take a vacation...

DEIRDRE
Talk to this one, he hates traveling--
Deirdre starts collecting the wrapping paper.

ERIK
I do not/ hate traveling--

BRIGID
You hate traveling to New York--

ERIK
I do not hate traveling to New York,/ no, no, I don’t...

BRIGID
Yes you do! Okay, that’s a lie.

ERIK
...I hate that you moved a few blocks from where two towers got blown-up and in a major flood zone...I hate that...

BRIGID
This area is safe-- Chinatown flooded during the last hurricane--/it flooded--

BRIGID (CONT’D)
Yeah, that’s why I can afford to live here--it’s not like you gave me any money to help me out.

ERIK
[Wow.]...hey...

Erik walks away. Deirdre looks to Brigid, disappointed.

INT. HALLWAY NEAR CLOSET - 1 MINUTE LATER - DAY

A softly distorted image of Erik’s face. He turns to us...

ERIK
You need a door sweep--/there’s gaps everywhere--

A hand clasps the image, pushes it--we were looking through a crystal doorknob onto Erik crouched in the hall. Brigid’s hand is on the doorknob.

BRIGID
Okay thanks, Repairman, hey, this area is safe. No one’s gonna steer a plane into a, a fish market on Grand Street--
ERIK
I liked you living in Queens, alright? I worry enough with Aimee on the top floor of the Cira Centre--

AIMEE
(from the main room)
Well stop, Philly’s more stable than New York--

BRIGID
Aimee, don’t make him more-- I’m just saying--it’s safer!

BRIGID (CONT’D)
Yeah, ’cause not even terrorists wanna spend time in Philly, /Philly is awful--

AIMEE
Oh, ha ha...

ERIK
You think everything’s awful, you think Scranton is awful,/ but it’s where--

BRIGID
We think it’s awful?!

AIMEE (CONT’D)
Dad, it is!

INT. DOWNSTAIRS - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

RICHARD--plastic cups and champagne in hand--makes his way to THE STAIRCASE, overhearing:

ERIK (O.S.)
--yeah, well what I think’s funny is how you guys, you move to big cities and trash Scranton, when Momo almost killed herself gettin outta New York--

Richard takes a few awkward steps up, it’s hard to balance the cups while navigating the narrow stairs--THE CUPS TOPPLE.

ERIK (O.S.) (CONT’D)
--she didn’t have a real toilet, and now her granddaughter moves right back to the place /she struggled to escape...

Richard tries again; step by step he not-so-gracefully ASCENDS THE SPIRAL STAIRS...

BRIGID (O.S.)
We know, yes...“return to the slums”...

DEIRDRE (O.S.)
It’s not the slums anymore...
ERIK (O.S.)
Oh man, that store--on the corner of Eldridge?--
--the family comes into Richard’s view as he arrives--

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY
--and heads to Brigid.

AIMEE
Hey Rich...

ERIK
--we went in to get you a candle...

DEIRDRE
Don’t tell her that, we didn’t end up buying it--

ERIK
The most expensive candles I’ve ever seen in my life.

AIMEE
They were 25 dollars.

ERIK
That’s a lot of money!

DEIRDRE
For a candle?! That’s insane, you should get five candles for that...

RICHARD
Thought we could have a champagne toast up here? Brigid claims we need to bless the upstairs and downstairs--

RICHARD (CONT’D)
--is that true?

DEIRDRE
Yeah, we do--gimme a hug, Rich...

RICHARD (CONT’D)
We only have paper cups but the good news is the bar is set very low if we ever host again...

INT. UPSTAIRS - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

ERIK wanders away from the family (still audible in the background) to grab a private moment for himself.

He rubs his aching lower back. He sets his FRAMED PHOTO down on a windowsill, walks to the bathroom.
In the air shaft light, THE PHOTO has a strange vibrancy--
like a window to another reality. It’s A 20-YEAR-OLD PHOTO
OF THE BLAKES crammed onto a chaise lounge, at the Royal
Court Motel in Wildwood, NJ. A Rite Aid--not the beach--
behind them.

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY
Deirdre looks into the hallway. SHADOWS MOVE IN THE LIGHT
CRACK BENEATH THE SHUT BATHROOM DOOR.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY
Erik stretches his lower back. Indecipherable chatter
outside the door. Erik notices

A SOFT, PULSING LIGHT behind the bathroom’s textured glass
window. It’s strange and hypnotic. What is it? He goes to
leave, stops; goes to the window, opens it:

A NEIGHBOR’S TV plays a CHINESE FAMILY FANTASY DRAMA
(“Eternal Love”). Erik shuts the window as the voices of his
own family takeover--

DEIRDRE (PRE-LAP)       AIMEE (PRE-LAP)
...Momo’s still good with   Okay, let’s just get it
prayers and music, Rich,   over with...
wait’ll you hear, she’ll
join in...

INT. UPSTAIRS - VESTIBULE - 1 MINUTE LATER - DAY
Erik watches his family from a distance; they’re full of joy.

AIMEE: Rich, I’m so sorry this’ll
be weird for you, she makes
us sing about Jesus.

BRIGID: Alright, let’s just, are we
gonna sing the Hail Mary?

DEIRDRE: I don’t make you sing about Jesus--

AIMEE: Okay, then we won’t sing.

1 MINUTE LATER--The women sing Hail Mary, look to Momo to
join. She doesn’t.

BRIGID, AIMEE & DEIRDRE
Blessed are you among women and blessed
is the fruit of your womb, Jesus
Richard’s eyebrows raise at the sound of the women singing “Jesus”. Aimee shoots him a look--I know, I know!

**MOMENTS LATER**--Erik watches with a smile.

**AIMEE**

_Holy Mary, Mother of God_  
*Pray for our sinners now--*  
(spooken)

I’m a lawyer, Rich--

**BRIGID**

(shushing Deirdre)  
Aimee solo--shhhh...

**MOMENTS LATER**--MOMO’S MUMBLING has a disquieting effect.

**BRIGID, AIMEE, DEIRDRE &**

Teach us wisdom,/ teach us love--

**MOMO**

(tapering to quiet)

...nairywheres do we blag  
werstrus, doll sezzer big  
sussten back whairidoll...

**ERIK**

(staying positive)

Shhhh, alright...you’re alright, Mom...  
...shhhhh...

MOMO’S HANDS TREMOR AGAINST HER GREEN FOOTBALL BLANKET.

**BRIGID (O.S.)**

She normally joins in. This is new,  
/this is--

**ERIK (O.S.)**

Well it’s--yeah, it’s not one of her good days.

THE CEILING FAN’S BLADE WHIPS AROUND SLOWLY. THE FAMILY’S SHADOWS ON THE CEILING.

**ERIK (O.S.) (CONT’D)**

You got any music gigs coming up,/ can we come embarrass you?

**BRIGID (O.S.)**  
Ugh, guys, no--I’m  
bartending most nights, you have no clue how much  
student debt I’m stuck with.

**DEIRDRE (O.S.)**

Yeah, I miss hearing you sing...

**ERIK**

Yeah, well, I do know who refused to go to a state school.

**DEIRDRE**  
Oo, score one for Dad.  
**BRIGID**  
Not funny.
A THUD ABOVE THE CEILING. The ceiling fixtures shifts, tilts. Aimee is startled. Erik looks up.

AIMEE
Oh man...oh, yeah I thought it was gonna [fall on me]...

RICHARD
Sorry--it’s fine, that was like that this morning and I tried to--I shoulda just left it, it’s safe, so--/ appetizers are out downstairs so--

BRIGID (O.S.)
Let’s--yeah, good idea, let’s move the party downstairs...

DEIRDRE
[Jesus, Mary and Joseph...]

WIDER--ERIK still looking up in the archway, everyone else in motion--Richard down the staircase, Deirdre to the bathroom.

BRIGID (CONT'D)
Dad, [what are you doing?]--

BRIGID (CONT'D) --go downstairs, please--

ERIK
Alright, okay...

DEIRDRE
Just gonna use the little girls’ room first...

AIMEE
How do I get Momo down there?

BRIGID
What do you mean?

AIMEE
Well I can’t dump her down the spiral staircase.

BRIGID
Oh God, sorry--

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY TO ELEVATOR - 2 MINUTES LATER - DAY

Aimee wheels Momo to the elevator. They pass a defaced “No Smoking” sign: “KEEP SMOKING”. They arrive at the elevator door, which has A PENIS ETCHED ONTO IT. Aimee pushes the down button, waits. Waits.

Aimee subtly pivots Momo’s wheelchair away from the penis graffiti.
INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Erik descends the final steps of the staircase, gets his FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE DOWNSTAIRS (BASEMENT) SPACE.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS are strategically strewn and give off a warm, inviting glow, although the shaft windows on this floor get even less natural light.

Another LONG UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, off of which is an ANTEROOM leading into a KITCHEN (Richard stirring some gravy).

IN THE MAIN ROOM: Two card tables pushed together form a dinner table, set with paper plates and silverware. A decent couch (with 10 years of use) sits in one corner. Inspector Erik checks a fuse box. And a vestigial fuse box.

RICHARD
Beer?

ERIK
Yeah, I’ll take a Coke, too, if you’ve got /soda or...

RICHARD
Yeah, coming right up...

ERIK
Thanks. Detroit’s up seven.

RICHARD
Oh...Oh, the football game?

Erik traces three wires that leave the fuse box...

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Aimee and Momo (in her wheelchair) riding to B-level. Their REFLECTION IN THE BRUSHED ALUMINUM DOORS. Above them, harsh fluorescent lights above a plastic grate. The elevator groans.

AIMEE
[This is insane.]

RICHARD (PRE-LAP)
How’s the lake house coming along?--

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - SAME TIME - DAY

Richard hands Erik a coke. Brigid descending the stairs carrying her coat.
RICHARD
--I hear you might build this summer?

ERIK
Uh, not until the sewers get put in... doesn’t make sense to build with a septic system if they’re putting in sewers soon.

BRIGID
Sooner the better, I can’t wait for a lake house Christmas...

Richard back to the kitchen, Brigid follows him. Erik moves down the hall along the path of the fuse box wires...

ERIK
You’re gonna miss the old house.

BRIGID (O.S.)
I will. I won’t miss the wall-to-wall carpeting...or the bunk beds.

Erik lifts a piece of cardboard taped on the main basement door revealing a small square window with two dense layers of metal in the glass.

ERIK POV: CLOUDY VIEW OF BASEMENT UPSTAIRS HALLWAY THROUGH THE SHIFTING PATTERNS OF THE TWISTED METAL IN THE GLASS.

RICHARD (O.S.)
Work’s good, Erik?--you’re still at-- it’s a Catholic high school, right?

BRIGID (O.S.)
St. Mark’s, for 28 years...

RICHARD (O.S.)
Wow, that’s impressive...

ERIK
Don’t make it sound--I headed up maintenance and coupla years ago they needed a, an Equipment Manager, so--

BRIGID (O.S.)
It’s a big job, triple-A school, he handles all the phys-ed classes,/ manages the weight room, the kids love him--

ERIK
All right, okay...hey enough...

RICHARD (O.S.)
That’s impressive.
Erik joins them in the **KITCHEN**--

**ERIK**
It’s practical. Got the girls free tuition. You don’t pick up after other people’s kids for 28 years unless you really love your own, you know?

**RICHARD**
Well, hey, to 28 years...

**BRIGID**
28 years... Cheers.

A bit awkward just the three of them. Silence.

**BRIGID (CONT’D)**
We’ll be more comfortable on the couch.

1 **MINUTE LATER ON THE COUCH**--

Still awkward but on the couch.

**RICHARD**
Yeah, no it’s crazy, our generation, we’re lucky if we stay in a job for one year, right Bridge?

**ERIK**
Are you guys even in the same generation?

**BRIGID**
Dad...[not funny]...

Brigid heads for the stairs, a distant **TOILET FLUSH**--

**INT. UPSTAIRS - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY**

--as Deirdre puts down the toilet seat cover. **HALF OF IT BENDS**. She screws in the light bulb Aimee untwisted--it lights up, the gnat now dead inside, a black spec.

She looks in the mirror. She blocks the LED bulb with her hand; that’s better. She looks closer, closer, closer...

**INT. DOWNSTAIRS - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - DAY**

**CLANK, CLANK** of Richard’s potato-masher as it bangs against the metal mixing bowl. **ROASTED SWEET POTATOES** sit on top of the oven. **STUFFING** in progress. **GREENS** and chopped **VEGGIES**. **THE STOVE LIGHT SPUTTERS**, Richard hits it, it steadies.
INT. UPSTAIRS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - DAY

DEIRDRE exiting the bathroom as Brigid passes her--

DEIRDRE
Your toilet seat is broken--

BRIGID
I know, go downstairs...

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
I love you I’m just saying.

Brigid enters the bathroom, shuts the door.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - DAY

A CHUNK OF SPRAY INSULATION BY A PIPE IS HALF-COATED IN WHITE PAINT. WIDER--Erik staring at it.

RICHARD
You decide on an architect for the lake house?

ERIK
Uh, no, that’s a ways away.

Erik drinks.

RICHARD
I actually like having the design process to look forward to, I like the planning stages.

ERIK
Yeah, well our budget’s--we’re gonna use one of those places where, they’ve got pre-designed homes you can choose from?/...but...

RICHARD
Sure, good idea...

ERIK
...yeah, and the place we’re looking at has good designs, you know?...

RICHARD
Yeah, no that’s great.

INT. UPSTAIRS - VESTIBULE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Deirdre moisturizes her hands; she takes a STRESS BALL from her purse, squeezes it; we hear Erik and Richard talking...
The CHEAP OIL PAINTINGS OF UNHAPPY WOMEN stare at Deirdre as she rubs lotion into her hands. RUB, RUB, RUB...

ERIK (PRE-LAP)
I’ll tell, you, Rich...

INT. KITCHEN – CONTINUOUS – DAY
43
Erik in the main room; Richard multi-tasks in the background.

ERIK
...save your money now...I thought I’d be settled by my age, you know, but man, it never ends...mortgage, car payments, internet, our dishwasher just gave out--

RICHARD
Oh man...

ERIK
--yeah, yeah...d0ntcha think it should cost less to be alive?

RICHARD
Ha, absolutely...

ERIK
I even started cutting my own hair to try and save a few bucks...messed it up pretty good. Thank God I’m married.


RICHARD
So you want--no, sorry Brigid said you’re--what?

ERIK (CONT'D)
[Nothing, nevermind.]

RICHARD
You want some ice?

ERIK
Uh, sure.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS – DAY
44
Aimee wheels Momo down the basement hallway, a bit lost. The hum of the boiler room. A discarded CHILD-SIZE MATTRESS.
MOMO  
(mumbled)  
...do we where do we go...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Erik notices a BUBBLED WATER STAIN on the wall.  
PLOP, FIZZ--Richard drops ice cubes into Erik’s soda.

RICHARD  
So you’ve been having some weird dreams too?

ERIK  
Huh?

RICHARD  
...just...you can hear a lot through the [hole where the spiral staircase is], just caught that you haven’t been sleeping, thought maybe--I’ve been having weird dreams all week, think it’s because of the move...  
...last night I was polishing a silver refrigerator and...my dog was caught inside it?...and I don’t have a dog?/...just weird stuff...

ERIK  
Oh man...sounds like it...no, I don’t remember my [dreams]...even when I have one of those ones where, uh...

RICHARD  
What?

ERIK  
...[no, nothing important]...you know the ones where you need a minute just to figure out it isn’t actually [real]...

RICHARD  
Oh, sure...

KNOCKING AT THE DOOR jolts Erik--he SPILLS HIS COKE.

ERIK  
Sorry about that, Rich...  

RICHARD (CONT’D)  
Don’t worry about it--

EXT. BASEMENT DOOR TO APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Aimee and Momo in front of the door as it swings open.
RICHARD
Welcome.../come on in...

AIMEE
Hello, hello...

FOLLOW AIMEE AND MOMO down the hall into the LIVING AREA.

AIMEE (CONT'D)
...so this is what lies beneath...

Aimee clocks ERIK CLEANING UP the last of his spill.

RICHARD
What are you drinking, Aimee?

AIMEE
Whatever’s open...red wine? This is really a lot of space...

MOMO
Where do we go? Where do we go where do we go where do we go...

RICHARD  MOMO (CONT'D)
Yeah, well if you sacrifice ...where do we go where do sunlight you can get some we go where... extra square feet.

AIMEE
Where do we--Momo we’re going into this room is where we’re going...

INT. VESTIBULE - CONTINUOUS

Deirdre walking out of the vestibule to the stairs...

MOMO (O.S.)
...where do we go do we where...

...she notices a patch of soft light on the floor in the BEDROOM. She follows it, sees it comes from light ricocheting off an OLD MIRRORED DOOR in the hall. She walks to it, curious, her warped reflection getting closer--

Brigid exits the bathroom.

BRIDIC
Are you snooping? What are you holding?

DEIRDRE
It helps with my arthritis. Snooper.
THEY START TOWARDS THE STAIRCASE—Brigid notices a present sticking out of Deirdre’s bag.

BRIGID
Is that present for me?

DEIRDRE
Yeah, open it downstairs.

BRIGID
Is it...a fancy candle?

DEIRDRE
Yeah, smart-ass, I’ll give you a fancy candle...keep walking...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Aimee’s phone. Aimee is in the doorway between the anteroom and living area struggling for reception as Deirdre and Brigid descend the stairs. Refresh. Refresh. Richard passes her delivering some snacks to the table.

RICHARD
It won’t work down here, sorry.

AIMEE
Ah...well M&A transactions are not a source of joy in my life...

ERIK
She’s an all-star there...    AIMEE (CONT’D)
    ...my phone could use the rest--

AIMEE (CONT’D)
Dad, ugh, no--I was informed last month I’m no longer on the partner track,/which just means--

DEIRDRE
What? When did this--    ERIK
Does that mean it just takes more time? Or--

AIMEE
No, it’s the nice way of saying: start looking for another job.

DEIRDRE
Why would they/ do that?   ERIK
Really?

AIMEE
It’s complicated,/ who knows...
BRIGID

I’m sorry.

SLOW PUSH IN on Aimee during the following:

AIMEE

...yeah, I missed a lot of time last year when I was sick.../and then...

DEIRDRE

She’s got Ulcerative Colitis, Rich --

AIMEE

...Mom, okay--

DEIRDRE

--it affects the colon--

AIMEE

...okay, Mom, so...and I missed even more time right before they made their decision, I had another flare up this month, so--

DEIRDRE

Why didn’t you tell us? Oh babe, I’m sorry...

ERIK

Oh babe, I’m sorry...

DEIRDRE (CONT’D)

...they can’t fire you because of a medical condition--

AIMEE

Well they gave other reasons, obviously, but...yeah, you get the sense they support your chronic illness as long as it doesn’t affect your billable hours.

CONTINUE SLOW PUSH IN ON AIMEE--

BRIGID

I’m really sorry.

DEIRDRE

Well, they don’t deserve you.

ERIK

How about...financially, are you okay or--

AIMEE

Yeah, I’m set for a while.

--until AIMEE’S FACE FILLS MOST OF THE FRAME...
ERIK
For a few months, or--

AIMEE (CONT'D)
Dad I’m, I’ll let you know
if I need money, I don’t
want to talk about my job
or my--/let’s talk about--

DEIRDRE
But just--how are you feeling?

AIMEE
Just minor cramping, I’m good, I am...

RICHARD
How about food-wise, can we get you/
something special--

AIMEE
No, I’m fine, at ease, everyone,/really,
let’s--

BRIGID
Hey we should--why don’t we do a
downstairs toast,/ before we forget,
yeah?...

AIMEE
Yes, please... I’m okay with that...

DEIRDRE
I’m okay with that...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - 2 MINUTES LATER - DAY

The SHADOWS OF THE FAMILY ON THE FLOOR.

ERIK
To the Blake family Thanksgiving--

DEIRDRE (O.S.)
...to the very special Chinatown
edition/of the Blake family
Thanksgiving...

BRIGID
Yes, yes, yes... Hear hear...

Plastic cups in hand--everyone is around Brigid’s “living
room”, complete with cardboard box coffee table.

ERIK
Neither rain nor hail--

MOMO
Sorn it all...

DEIRDRE
Nor sleet nor snow.../can neverbody black
nor...what else?

MOMO (CONT'D)
werstrus--
AIMEE
Nor ulcerative colitis...

MOMO
...can neverbody black werstrus...

BRIGID
Nor dementia...

DEIRDRE
Now you’re pushing it.

AIMEE
Brigid...

BRIGID
What--too soon?/ Too soon?

AIMEE
Yes, too soon...

DEIRDRE
Not funny...

ERIK
Yeah, you better give her a hug...

BRIGID
We love you, Momes...

ERIK
To knowing this is what matters, right here, ’cause lemme tell you, coming down these streets, thinking about how far the Blakes’ve come...even seeing that candle store/was--

BRIGID
It’s not a candle store, it’s a boutique that sells, like, one candle--

ERIK
--hey I’m just appreciating how...you see all these rich people walking around New York, God knows where their money comes from, but...end of the day, everything that anyone’s got...I don’t care how many candles you have...one day it goes...whatever gifts God’s given us, in the end, no matter who you are...everything you have goes.

No one quite knows what to make of this.

DEIRDRE
Well that’s the positive way of looking at things.

Everyone laughs at this, ad libs their way out of the strange moment via cheers, toasting; Erik speaks over the din.
ERIK
Sorry--I love my family...that’s the short version, I’m glad we’re together.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS - ANTEROOM - 2 MINUTES LATER

A CRACKLING FIRE projected onto the fireplace. Richard adjusts a mini short-throw projector nearby. Sounds of the family talking/bustling in the next room. Brigid walks by. Richard ‘warms his hands’ by the fire to amuse her.

BRIGID
Richard...[this is lame]...

Richard turns it off.

AIMEE (PRE-LAP)
So how are you, mom?

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - 2 MINUTES LATER - DAY

A crudité platter in front of Deirdre at the table.

DEIRDRE
I’m good, I’m good...I was, uh...

Deirdre studies the DIP. VEGETABLES. CHEESE. CRACKERS. A difficult choice. She decides, takes her first bite, notices: ERIK DISAPPEAR AROUND THE CORNER INTO THE BEDROOM CORRIDOR WHEELING MOMO. STAY WITH DEIRDRE in front of the crudité platter--her daughters bustle around her.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
...did you get the text I sent about--Bridge, this girl who played basketball for Dunmore, she was bullied for being gay...her mom found her dead in her room on Tuesday--

BRIGID       AIMEE
Whoa...      Oh man...

DEIRDRE
--yeah, suicide with some kinda pills...it’s all over the news...I texted you,/ I wasn’t sure if you got it?

AIMEE
This week was crazy...no, yeah I got it, I’m just behind with my messages...

Small beat.
BRIGID
You don’t have to text her every time a lesbian kills herself.

DEIRDRE          AIMEE
I don’t.    She doesn’t do that—I appreciate what /you mean.

DEIRDRE (CONT’D)
I get enough annoying forwards myself—I don’t wanna clog up your guys’s inbox--

AIMEE
You’re not, Mom. You’re good though?

DEIRDRE
I am, yeah...my bosses are—I’m an office manager, Rich, I’ve been with the same company since right outta high school...

ERIK
Whole place’d fall apart without her--

ERIK wanders back into the main room with Momo.

DEIRDRE
...yeah, well my salary doesn’t reflect that, and these new kids they hired, I’m working for two more guys in their 20s—I don’t wanna talk about it...

MOMENTS LATER--

DEIRDRE (CONT’D)
...and just ‘cause they have a special degree they’re making five times what I make, over 40 years /I’ve been there...

RICHARD          BRIGID
Wow, 40 years...?    Well...hey...focus on the lake house, you’ll be able to unwind soon...you gotta take care of yourself.

RICHARD (CONT’D)
It’s smart to wait for the sewers, the value of your property will skyrocket.

AIMEE          BRIGID
When are they gonna be installed?    Thanks, Professor.
ERIK
That’s up to the department of Public Works.

AIMEE
And how’s Aunt Mary?

DEIRDRE
She’s hanging in there, God love her--this is their Aunt, Rich, who had both knees replaced--

ERIK
Pass the...

DEIRDRE
--I drive her to her physical therapy...they got this contraption now to help load her into the pool--oh and did I e-mail you that Pam Hoban has ovarian cancer?

AIMEE
Oh man, how’s she doing? BRIGID
She does? Yikes...

DEIRDRE
Yeah, I’ve been taking her to her treatments ’cause her and her brother, they don’t speak anymore, so...that’s a whole mess, but she’s being tough, so...

Deirdre takes another bite of food.

DEIRDRE (CONT’D)
...what else...oh, Tuesdays I’m--

BRIGID
Mom, you’re talking with your mouth full.

DEIRDRE
I, uh, I’m volunteering for--Father Paul told me about, and don’t roll your eyes, Erik...

ERIK
I’m not saying a word.

DEIRDRE
...right in Scranton there’s a whole community of refugees from Bhutan...

Brigid and Aimee stifle laughter.

DEIRDRE (CONT’D)
What?/ It’s not funny...
BRIGID
Let me guess, Saint Deirdre is coming to their rescue?--

ERIK
You have /no idea...

DEIRDRE
Be quiet--you have no idea--these people have nothing... they’re all just looking to learn English, to find work--we think we’ve got nothing, but man...

RICHARD
That’s great you’re volunteering...

DEIRDRE
Thanks, Rich.

BRIGID
And how are you, mom. Aimee didn’t ask how the Republic of Bhutan was doing--

ERIK
Hey, hey... DEIRDRE
I’m good, smart-ass, I said that already... Now why don’t you open your gift...

BRIGID
Mom, I was just teasing...

Aimee registers a minor cramp, heads to the staircase--

AIMMEE
Hey guys--no one be alarmed if I’m up and down these stairs a million times to use the...facilities...so...

DEIRDRE
You want me to go with you?

AIMMEE
[Uh, no.]

MOMENTS LATER--

RIP, RIP--Brigid tears open her wrapped gift: A CANDY PIG.

BRIGID
...ah, check it out, Rich...

Brigid hands Rich the pig. Rich has no idea what to do with it.
BRIGID (CONT'D)  RICHARD
And what is this other... This is awesome, thanks...

RIP, RIP--Brigid tears open her second gift, revealing--

BRIGID (CONT'D)  ...ah, a Virgin Mary statue...

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)  ...ooo with a serpent
under her foot... Okay, before you tease me I
know you guys don’t
believe, but she’s
appearing everywhere now...

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)  ...not just in Fatima but in West
Virginia and--just keep it for my sake,
in the kitchen or even if you just put it
in a drawer somewhere, okay?

BRIGID  Mom, I will absolutely put this in a
drawer somewhere, thank you.

Brigid hands the Mary statue to Richard; he has no idea what
to do with it. CLOSE ON MARY STATUE being carried into the

DEIRDRE (O.S.)  Yeah, well...I feel better knowing you
have it.

KITCHEN. Richard searches for a place to put it...

MOMO (O.S.)  DEIRDRE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
...why’m I hereson. Go  Okay, okay, you wanna go
warson herror...do the  for a ride, Mom? Let’s go
glassor sezzor black...  for a ride...

The Virgin Mary is left facing the steaming sweet potatoes.

INT. UPSTAIRS - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Aimee sits on the toilet, phone in hand.

ON THE SCREEN:

Instagram account: CAROL4011:
[image of two 37-year-old women laughing,
their arms around each other]

Aimee’s EYES WIDEN--the picture provokes feelings of profound
jealousy and sadness. Aimee thinks. She starts a text message:
To: CAROL
Happy [turkey emoticon]!
good times in NYC w [emoticon of 2 girls and 2 parents]
where R U?

A GASSY FART catches her by surprise. She TURNS ON THE FAUCET
to mask the noise. She stares at her phone. No response.

We follow the WOOSH of the running sink water DOWN,
DOWN the sink pipe, DOWN past the floorboards until we
WIPE TO BLACK, THEN--

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - DAY 54
--a small water stain with bubbling streaking beneath layers
of thick paint.

ERIK (PRE-LAP)
She had a good day yesterday, you
know?...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - DAY 55
Deirdre tries to open a door a foot off the ground in the hall.
Erik nurses his beer, observes Momo being wheeled by Deirdre.

ERIK
(to Brigid)
...It’s hard to predict now how she’s...
this is definitely her last big trip...

BRIGID
How are you doing? Is that why you aren’t
sleeping?--

ERIK
I’ll sleep tonight--

RICHARD
Oh yeah, sorry Erik, we got
sidetracked--you were
talking about your dream?

DEIRDRE
Oh, so you’ll tell him details/ about
your dream but you won’t tell me?

RICHARD
He didn’t tell me
details...

ERIK
No--guys, I don’t even
remember it, there’s
nothing to tell...
BRIGID
Well, now I don’t believe you....

DEIRDRE
I saw the way you woke up, don’t tell me you can’t remember somethin’--

RICHARD
Hey, no I forget mine if I don’t write them down in the morning...

ERIK
(smiling, to Brigid)
[Man, you’re a piece of work.]

ERIK (CONT’D)
See?...there you go...

DEIRDRE
Well whatever it was, couldn’t a been scarier than the--

(laughing)
--I made him watch this--what was it called, Erik?--/the movie...?

Deirdre’s laughing so hard she’s having trouble speaking.

ERIK
What?

DEIRDRE
...the Lifetime movie about the housewife who got AIDS,/ guys--it was so cheezy but really terrifying...

BRIGID
Mom, you’re steamrolling the--

ERIK
She made me watch that...worst two hours of my life.

DEIRDRE
You loved it.

RICHARD
What was scary about it?

DEIRDRE
This housewife cheats on her husband, right?--and he comes home from work and asks her how her day was and--I mean what can she say? ‘Today I cheated on you and contracted the HIV virus, honey, how was your day?’...can you imagine?

BRIGID
You’re trying to be a comedian, no more wine for you--
RICHARD
Did you see the one where--think it’s
called “My Stepson, My Lover”?--

DEIRDRE  BRIGID
That’s a classic, Rich-- Rich don’t--ewww, mom,
don’t be gross--

RICHARD
She’s fine--be nicer to your Mom, babe.

DEIRDRE
Thanks, Rich.

Brigid goes to the kitchen. Beat; Richard follows.

DEIRDRE POV: Brigid and Richard arguing in the kitchen.

DEIRDRE (CONT’D)
Anything I say makes her [annoyed]...

ERIK
Yeah? Who does she remind you of?

DEIRDRE
You.

ERIK  DEIRDRE (CONT’D)
Me? She’s all you, my You, yeah you, my friend...
friend...

They smile. DEIRDRE STARES AT A STRAND OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTS,
SQUINTS; THE LIGHT SHIFTS TO BLURRY GLOW-BALLS. She squints
more, looks weird. She nudges Erik.

DEIRDRE (CONT’D)
Do it...[do it...]

ERIK
[No. You’re nuts.]

He does it, they smile. The moment passes. Beat.

DEIRDRE
Don’t wait until after dinner.

Erik drinks his beer, thinks.

DEIRDRE (CONT’D)
[Your call, Big Guy...]

Deirdre leaves Erik alone.
INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - 2 MINUTES LATER - DAY

BRIDGID knocks on the BATHROOM DOOR.

    BRIDGID
    You need anything?

    AIMEE (O.S.)
    An air freshener? Matches?

    BRIDGID
    Just stink the place up. We’ll deal.

Brigid walks back down the corridor, the sound of Momo’s mumbling wafting up through the stairwell--

    RICHARD (O.S.)
    Brigid said you guys went on a cruise last summer?

    MOMO (O.S.)
    I’m I here’m I why’m I heresuh blag sezzor why’m I sezzor...I’m I here’m I....

    BRIDGID
    [God don’t talk about cruise ships.]

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - DAY

    DEIRDRE
    Yeah, we’ve gone on four of ’em now, to Halifax and Mexico...ever been on one?

    RICHARD
    Uh, not on one of those big ships, but-- I sailed with my family growing up.

    ERIK
    We try to get the girls to come but they think it’s pretty lame, you know?

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Brigid supine on the floor, in quiet dread...

    DEIRDRE (PRE-LAP)
    ...yeah, we know it’s cheesy...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - DAY

    DEIRDRE
    ...but we like it ‘cause they take care of everything, you feel taken care of...
RICHARD
Yeah, I get that. Are you able to avoid all of the touristy stuff when you dock?/
Or do you--

DEIRDRE
All of the...well, they let you off in good spots usually...where there’s a lot to do...?

RICHARD
Oh, cool...

DEIRDRE
...yeah...
(Small beat.)
...the spots are pretty good usually...
where they leave you off at.

RICHARD
Cool, cool...I tend to be more of a...
like to wander off the beaten path...

DEIRDRE
No I hear you...Brigid’s the same way...

RICHARD
Can I [pour you more wine]...

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY
60 60
Brigid sits, listening. Shadows shoot up from the hole in the spiral staircase, cast from movement below. The conversation fills her with embarrassment and love for her parents.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - DAY
61 61
WINE FLOWS into Deirdre’s glass, courtesy of Richard.

DEIRDRE
...thanks...There’s usually decent entertainment options on the ship, lotta the singers have professional credits.
Lotta stuff going on all at once...

RICHARD
Sounds awesome.          ERIK
Yeah, yeah, so at night she can go see a show and I can go, you know, go do/something else...
DEIRDRE
Gamble. You gamble.

Erik gets up, walks to the stairs.

ERIK
Or whatever else I feel like doing.

DEIRDRE
Well c’mon, don’t act like you play shuffleboard on the lido deck.

Erik heads up the stairs...

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

...CLANK, CLANK...Brigid hears Erik’s footsteps, gets up--

ERIK
Gonna check the score of the game...

FOLLOW ERIK to the window, which now serves as a half-mirror; behind him Brigid disappears down the stairs. Deirdre’s voice echoes faintly from below.

DEIRDRE (O.S.)
Mom, you’re not hungry? Just finish drinking your shake...there you go...

Deirdre’s voice fades as Erik--consumed by other thoughts--stares out the window...THE SOFT ELECTRICAL HUM of the air shaft takes over...something weighs on his mind.

OUTSIDE A WINDOW--LIGHT FLURRIES begin to fall. Wispy flakes float. It’s mundane and magical. Erik’s captivated until--A PIGEON LANDS ON THE LEDGE, violently flapping its wings, startled by the bird spikes.

Erik steps back, scared. The VOICES FROM DOWNSTAIRS return as Erik’s breath steadies...

BRIGID (O.S.)
Ah, it’s everywhere...

DEIRDRE (O.S.) (CONT’D)
Oh God, I got it...Erik!

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Momo’s Ensure shake is splattered all over the floor.

BRIGID
Mom, I got it--we have loads of paper towels...

DEIRDRE
Oh man...you’re alright, Mom...
INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

ERIK POV--the commotion of the spill as seen THROUGH THE STAIRCASE HOLE. The sound of CLANKING up the stairs--Erik retreats, takes a calming breath. Richard appears--

RICHARD
We had a minor spill...

--and we FOLLOW RICHARD as he walks past Erik into the ANTEROOM, looks for paper towels.

AIMEE (O.S.)
I’m in here!

Richard is perplexed by this declaration, walks back to the MAIN ROOM where he finds Erik glued to the window, motionless.

RICHARD
You okay?

ERIK
Uh, just worried about the roads. It’s snowing out there...

Richard squeezes beside him, looks out.

INT. AIR SHAFT WINDOW - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

The flakes swirl in the breeze.

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

RICHARD
I think someone from a higher floor just emptied their ashtray.

Rich leaves. Erik stares out the window, his back to us.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Rich passes DEIRDRE ATTENDING TO MOMO--

DEIRDRE
...You feeling good, Mom?...now you can rest...there you go...

--and continues into the KITCHEN where Brigid is ringing out a towel--he hugs her from behind. Brigid sighs, stressed.
INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Deirdre wheels Momo back and forth; through the hall doorway:

RICHARD & BRIGID whispering to each other--what are they talking about? Richard makes Brigid laugh, they kiss. It stirs something inside of Deirdre.

Deirdre then notices a consistent creak, creak in the floorboards above her head, over and over--creak, creak--

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Aimee nervously rocks her foot back and forth...CREAK, CREAK...she checks her phone.

ON HER SCREEN--still no response from Carol.

AIMEE
[Don’t call her. Don’t call her.]

Aimee pushes the call button, paces...

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Erik bent over trying to touch his toes, stretching his back. Then does a back stretch on his back. THE CEILING ABOVE--WINDING PATTERN OF AN OLD WATER STAIN. Erik hears--

AIMEE (O.S.)
Hey, hi...Happy--I know--

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS -- LATE AFTERNOON

AIMEE
(on the phone)
--I know, Happy Thanksgiving--I know, but--I know, I just thought the holidays could be an exception...

Aimee’s foot rocks back and forth, back and forth....

INT. DOWNSTAIRS - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

BRIGID POV: Deirdre assisting Momo from wheelchair to the couch; Deirdre talks to Momo softly as she does this--what is she saying? Brigid’s about to offer help when--Richard grabs Brigid playfully, kisses her on the cheek.
BRIGID
No no no—ew, not now...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA — CONTINUOUS — LATE AFTERNOON

DEIRDRE POV: Richard kissing Brigid as punishment for her not liking the last kiss. Brigid resists, laughs.

AIMEE (V.O.)
...uh-huh...uh-huh...

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY — CONTINUOUS — LATE AFTERNOON

AIMEE
...huh...well sorry if--
...I just wanted to hear your--
(Beat.)
...no I get it, I get it...I’m okay, you know?...and you’re, are you upstate with the fam, or?--

Carol’s response devastates. Vocally, Aimee keeps it together.

AIMEE (CONT’D)
...oh...no, I figured--I saw your pics online...no I think it’s good...I’ve been dating too...so...yeah, nothing serious, but...yeah, yeah...

Aimee feels the wall as if it might provide emotional support.

AIMEE (CONT’D)
...well hey...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA — CONTINUOUS — LATE AFTERNOON

Deirdre sits beside unresponsive Momo, massaging her hand...

AIMEE (V.O.)
...I’ll let you go, but glad you’re...
(laughing)
...ha, I’ll tell them, they’ll appreciate that...so...

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY — CONTINUOUS — LATE AFTERNOON

AIMEE
...absolutely, and love to your...exactly, Happy Thanksgiving and--
Carol says something that cuts very, very deep. Aimee works hard to not show it, keeps it light.

AIMEE (CONT'D)
--well don’t wish me a Merry Chr-- we can talk again before Christmas...

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

ERIK POV: Aimee on the phone, her back to us.

AIMEE
...huh, uh-huh...huh...maybe...

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

AIMEE
(successfully fighting tears)
...well maybe your therapist is right...
...mm-hm...

Aimee flips the deadbolt to keep door open, exits into--

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

--seeking maximum privacy.

AIMEE
...just, the holidays feel wrong, without us at least--[talking]......no, I respect that... ...yeah...well look, love to all your-- ...you too... ...I will, I’ll tell them...okay, you too...bye...

Aimee hangs up. Returns to--

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Erik at the end of the hall. Aimee cries, unable to hold it in. Erik hugs her. LAUGHTER wafts up through the stairwell.

AIMEE
I miss her.

ERIK
You’ll find someone new. Hey, I’m serious, you’re gonna find someone--
AIMEE
Not with history--Carol knew me with acne...she helped me with my law school application...

ERIK
You’re gonna come outta this stronger, /I promise.

AIMEE
Stop, Dad, stop lying to me.

Aimee wipes her eyes, cleans her glasses. Beat.

AIMEE (CONT’D)
Don’t actually stop keep saying things to me...

Erik, unsure what to say. Aimee heads to the bathroom. LAUGHTER from downstairs grows...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - EVENING

...Richard, Brigid and Deirdre can’t stop laughing. Rich refills their wine glasses.

BRIGID
I wish you knew her before she got sick, Rich...

DEIRDRE
She refused to quit driving, refused... ...so, six years ago?, Erik couldn’t bring himself to take the keys from her, so he got her to take a driver’s exam so the decision wouldn’t be on him... and part of the test is--they show her a picture of a “yield” sign, but without the word “yield” on it and God love her, she can’t name it...

INT. UPSTAIRS - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - EVENING

...Erik rubs his back, paces away from the stairwell, Deirdre’s voice fades but remains present as soundscape.

Erik’s eyes wander to a WINDOW ACROSS THE AIR SHAFT WITH TWO EXHAUST FANS RESEMBLING A PAIR OF EYES. The quality of light has shifted; the sun’s setting. He spies another rear window propped open, a shape moving around inside.
INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - EVENING

DEIRDRE
...three wrong answers now, three, but enough of her’s still there that she goes to the poor guy giving the test, really pissed off, she goes: ‘Trust me, I’d know what to do if I was driving.’

Richard listens, rapt...

DEIRDRE (CONT’D)
So the guy’s like, ‘Then just tell me what you’d do if you were driving and pulled up to this sign.’ And she goes: ‘I’d see what everyone else was doing, then I’d do that.’

Richard laughs. Brigid has something else on her mind...

BRIGID
Where’re you at with the whole...nursing home discussion?

DEIRDRE
Mom’s--as long as Uncle John can watch her weekdays, we’re fine--

RICHARD
I love--oh...I was just gonna say I love that you both call her “Mom”.

BRIGID
I want you guys to [take care of yourselves]--

DEIRDRE
Well, that’s what she is to me, that’s what’s special about marriage, Rich, real marriage...you get two families.

BRIGID
Okay...

RICHARD
I’m very committed to Brigid.

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - EVENING

Erik DESCENDS THE STAIRCASE, hearing--

DEIRDRE (O.S.)
...she’s calm now, Rich, but man... when she has a fit, it’s like watching her turn into someone else, you know?

RICHARD (O.S.)
Can I...

DEIRDRE (CONT’D)
...oh, yeah, just lift her feet there...
INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - EVENING

RICHARD MOVES MOMO’S FEET as Erik arrives, sees this--

ERIK
Hey, get your hands off of my mother, you bastard!--

RICHARD
Oh my God I was just--
BRIGID
Dad--stop--
(to Richard)
--he’s teasing you...

Richard has turned a shade of white.

ERIK
(smiling)
The Lions are up ten.

BRIGID
Your sense of humor is terrible.

DEIRDRE
Have you guys noticed that everyone’s sense of humor is terrible except for Brigid’s? How interesting...

ERIK
Score one for Mom!
RICHARD
Amen, yes...

BRIGID
[Not funny...]

FIVE MINUTES LATER--

Richard in the ANTEROOM starting up his “fire” again.

BRIGID
Richard [please God turn it off...]

Richard stands his ground, but makes it dimmer and turns down the sound. The quiet dancing light dances in the anteroom.

Momo’s eyes, asleep.

DEIRDRE
...before we got her on these new meds...you coulda put some of her worst outbursts in a horror flick.

ERIK
Brigid’s?/ I agree...
BRIGID

Dad!

Richard laughs at this, Brigid does too. Deirdre at the table. She takes a carrot, dips it in hummus. Beat. She takes a chip and dips it in the ranch dip.

DEIRDRE

I’m serious, I keep seeing ads for that zombie show on TV...it’s awful, but it makes me think of/Mom’s worst [tantrums]--

ERIK

Hey, hey [we’re doing okay, right?]...

DEIRDRE

...[with the help of God, yeah...I] just can’t believe people wanna watch that stuff at night/ when there’s--

BRIGID

She hates anything with blood or gore --

DEIRDRE

--yeah, well there’s enough going on in the real world to give me the creeps,/ I don’t need any more...

RICHARD

That’s like--I bet she’d appreciate--there’s this comic book called Quasar...I was obsessed with it as a kid,/ it’s about this--

BRIGID

You’re still obsessed with/ Quasar...

RICHARD

Yes I am, be quiet--it’s about this species of like half-alien, half-demon-creatures with teeth on their backs--

BRIGID

Oh my God...just call them --but on their planet--monsters--

RICHARD (CONT'D)

--on their planet, the scary stories they tell each other...they’re all about us. The horror stories for the monsters are all about humans./ I love that...

BRIGID

Thank God he’s in grad school...
DEIRDRE
Yeah, well people are [terrifying]--you should meet my boss...no teeth on his back, but man...

BRIGID
But monsters aren’t scared of us,/ so why would--

RICHARD
Sure they are, it’s always a man driving a stake through the heart of the vampire--or if you’re a zombie, you eat people but you’re biggest threat is what?--getting killed by some enterprising human,/ right?

DEIRDRE
I get it, Rich...

BRIGID
They’d be more scared by monster-eating-monsters or something, am I right?

ERIK
Monsters aren’t real so it’s a weird thing to wanna be right about.

RICHARD
That’s probably the soundest argument.

DEIRDRE
Yeah well that’s not what you thought last night...you thought that was pretty real--there’s sweat on the sheets to prove it...

ERIK
Wow, you can’t let that go,/ can you?

DEIRDRE
Well tell me what you dreamed/ and I’ll drop it...

ERIK
Well you’re assuming I saw something specific when she was just/--it wasn’t like that, okay?

BRIGID
Wait wait “she”?--so you do remember something specific/ about your dream --
ERIK
Oh man, you guys’re relentless--
Rich, help me out here...

DEIRDRE
Erik, have you been
dreaming about a supermodel--
this whole time?--

RICHARD
(teasing)
Sorry, man, I tell Brigid
my dreams all the time...

BRIGID
Yes you do,/all of them...

RICHARD
--two weeks ago, I dreamt my oldest
sister was a mannequin working in a
grocery store/...what, I’m serious...

BRIGID
...Richard...[not the mannequin dream]...

ERIK
All I remember...

DEIRDRE
Was yours--oh [no go on]...

Deirdre stays quiet to encourage Erik to speak.

ERIK (CONT'D)
...there’s not much to...

BRIGID
Tell us...come on...

ERIK
...a coupla nights I’ve had this
dream...there’ll be a, a woman...

BRIGID
Uh-huh...and...

SLOW PUSH IN ON ERIK throughout the following:

ERIK
...her back’s to me...or maybe...
...something happens where...
...her head turns, I can see that her
face is all...[messed up]

DEIRDRE
What?

BRIGID
Just tell us...
ERIK  
...her skin’s stretched over her eyes and her mouth...

BRIGID  
Ewww...

DEIRDRE  
She’s got no face?

ERIK  
...just skin where her eyes and mouth should be,/you know...

BRIGID  
Ewwww-- --yeah, over the holes in her ears, over the--

A THUD from above the ceiling--everyone jumps--[we should too]--they look up; a faintly VIBRATING CEILING FIXTURE.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
Whoa, /whoa, how’s that for timing?  What the hell is going on up there?...

BRIGID  
Guys, sorry about that -- Okay, okay...yeah, maybe we should go up and say something...

DEIRDRE  
Welcome to New York... What do you think she’s -- is she exercising up there, do you think?...

ERIK  
No, you think she’s sweatin’ to the oldies up there?/ No way...

DEIRDRE  
Oh wait, you know what it probably is?/ I’m just realizing...

BRIGID  
What is it?  

RICHARD  
What?

DEIRDRE  
...it’s the faceless lady, telling us to be quiet--/or maybe she wants some turkey...

ERIK  
Nice...very funny...  

BRIGID  
Mom...are you drunk?...
DEIRDRE
(fighting back laughter)
--but how would she eat the turkey?
She’s got no mouth...

Deirdre mimes a woman without a mouth trying to eat turkey. It’s so unfunny it’s kind of funny.

BRIGID
Oh my God...

ERIK
So glad I shared my nightmare, thanks for your love and support--

Tell us the rest!

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - EVENING

87

Aimee answering an email on her phone, calls below:

AIMEE
Hey! Should I ask the dinosaur upstairs to tread a little more softly?

BRIGID (O.S.)
Not unless you speak Cantonese!--just come down...

RICHARD (PRE-LAP)
Erik--you’ll appreciate this...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - EVENING

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RICHARD
...last week I dreamed I fell through an ice cream cone made of grass and became a baby.

BRIGID
Okay, no no no, save your dreams for Christmas, we’re ready to eat here...
(calling up)
...Aimee!...

Sound of footsteps above--from one side of the room to the other. A tantrum-throwing toddler?

ERIK
Why don’t I go up and ask your neighbor to please--/just to keep it down--

BRIGID
No these floors are so old, Dad--

BRIGID RUNS UP THE STAIRS--
INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - 10 SECONDS LATER - EVENING  
Brigid jumps around. Aimee, baffled, watches.

AIMEE
Brigid, stop. No. Why? No. No--no, no, no--

BRIGID
...Try it! You have to, I’m showing Dad how creaky the floors are--it feels amazing!

MOMENTS LATER--

Aimee jumps with Brigid. At a certain point their stomping becomes more about releasing stress.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - EVENING  
THUDS, loud and fast. Erik, Deirdre and Richard look up.

INT. UPSTAIRS - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - EVENING  
Brigid collapses in the “fancy chair”--Aimee, out of breath, returns to her e-mail.

BRIGID
...did you see the Mary statue?...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - EVENING  
Richard prepares two cokes; he moves the Virgin Mary statue out of the way. Behind him we see:

ERIK AND DEIRDRE HAVING A PRIVATE CONVERSATION--

BRIGID (V.O.)
...we’ve been doing so good, I dunno why she’s back to...I dunno......something’s [not right]...I dunno...

EXT. DOWNSTAIRS AIR SHAFT WINDOW - CONTINUOUS - EVENING  
--Erik and Deirdre seen through the window, conversing.

INT. UPSTAIRS - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - EVENING  
Aimee’s on her phone. Aimee feels Brigid’s eyes on her.
AIMEE
...sorry, they even find me on holidays.
It never ends...how’s work for you?

BRIGID
Uh, the restaurant pays me under the
table so I can still collect
unemployment, so that’s been good...
but...my career is...[non-existent]...

AIMEE
Hey, okay...

BRIGID
I’m just glad Rich and I made the leap,/
it was time, you know?

AIMEE
Yeah...he’s great, Bridge...

BRIGID
Yeah, he helped me realize how we were
never taught about, like, eating well as a
kids so--I’ve lost 7 pounds since we’ve
been together...

BRIGID (CONT'D)
...and--yeah, thanks, it’s
That’s great--
crazy how we grew up eating
so much junk...

AIMEE (CONT'D)
Yeah, well--

BRIGID
Rich made up this list of pros and
cons...to move in or not to move in--

Brigid checks the stairwell to ensure they have privacy--

BRIGID (CONT'D)
--Aimee, his lists...I found this
posted to the fridge this morning...

Brigid produces a WORN INTERNET LIST with footprints-in-the-
sand/sunset stock imagery behind them:

3 Simple Ways to Find Joy:
1. Dance with yourself
2. Take long nature walks
3. Game nights
BRIGID (CONT'D) AIMEE
[I mean, can you even?!] [Sweet God even clip art!]
I literally took it down. I Put it back! This is will not! No... endearing...

Wafting through the stairwell, chatter between Deirdre/Rich.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS - ANTEROOM - CONTINUOUS - EVENING
Erik in front of former ‘crackling fire’—now an aerial screensaver of Earth at night, from space. Erik studies a HEAVILY FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER. He hears Deirdre and Richard’s chatter...Brigid and Aimee laughing upstairs...

INT. UPSTAIRS - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - EVENING
...Brigid, fully reclined in the fancy chair.

BRIGID
...we were happy without making it so...official, so...I dunno...

AIMEE
...yeah, well Carol and I broke up because...we were unhappy? And now I’m [wondering]... maybe loving someone long-term is more about...deciding whether to go through life unhappy alone...or unhappy with someone else?

BRIGID
Richard can draw up a list of reasons why your breakup was a good thing, if you want.../I can ask him to draft a very long list--

AIMEE
No, shuttup so...ugh...

Aimee gestures for Brigid to move further from the stairs into the VESTIBULE

BRIGID AIMEE (CONT'D)
What?... ...just, I need to have that surgery....the one where they’ll--

BRIGID (CONT'D)
I thought you could put that off until your 60s or--
AIMEE
This test showed--it’s just dysplasia
which means--it’s not cancer, but with
colitis it’ll become cancer if they don’t
take it out, so...

BRIDGID
You’ll lose the whole intestine?

AIMEE
It cures the disease, though, so...
but...yeah, they make a hole in your
abdomen so the waste can, you know...

BRIIGID
Do Mom and Dad know?

AIMEE
No, I don’t want to discuss it at dinner
and...I’m okay, I’m mostly just like...
uhhhh, how am I gonna find another
girlfriend?.../I’m serious...

BRIDGID
You’re a complete catch.

AIMEE
I’m gonna be pooing out of a hole in my
abdomen. Who’s gonna date me?

BRIGID
Lots of people...

AIMEE
Lotta ugly people...

BRIDGID
Aimee!...lotta troll ladies,
who’ll have their own troll
problems...living under
bridges...

BRIDGID (CONT'D)
If you shat out your ears, if they re-
routed your colon to your ears I’d still
marry you.

AIMEE
Uh-huh...
INT. DOWNSTAIRS - SPIRAL STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS - EVENING

Erik, halfway up the stairs, hears Aimee and Brigid talking indiscernibly, eventually hearing--

AIMEE (O.S.)
...I’m more worried about...did you notice Mom’s knees?...Going down /the stairs...

INT. UPSTAIRS - VESTIBULE - CONTINUOUS - EVENING

BRIGID
I saw, yeah...I’m afraid to ask how her arthritis is...or Dad’s back...

INT. UPSTAIRS - SPIRAL STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS - EVENING

Erik stops, reverses course...

AIMEE (O.S.)
Well it’s bothering him--can’t you--

BRIGID (O.S.)
No, yeah, but maybe that’s just...

INT. UPSTAIRS - VESTIBULE - CONTINUOUS - EVENING

BRIGID
...he hasn’t been sleeping, right?...

The light fixture outside in the hallway burns out. Aimee and Brigid sit silhouetted by the indirect light.

BRIGID (CONT’D)
AIMEE
Shit... Was that the light?

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - EVENING

Erik descending the staircase, sits beside Momo on the couch. She’s sleeping. Deirdre enters from the kitchen area.

DEIRDRE
What are they doing up there?--

ERIK
REICH...Rich!...babe, do we have a spare bulb? The light up here is out!

BRIGID (O.S.)
They’re comin’, they’re comin’...I’ll talk to them after dinner...
Richard emerges from the kitchen, yells up the staircase:

RICHARD
Can you just...open the bathroom door,
let that light spill into--

BRIGID (O.S.)
Richard, that’s not a very good solution
to the problem!

RICHARD
Well, I’m not a magician,
do you want me to make a
light bulb appear out of
thin air?!

DEIRDRE
...hey, how--Rich, how
’bout, there’s an LED
lantern in our care
package...lemme get that
out so it’s not like a cave
up there...problem solved.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
No, Deirdre, you don’t have to do that.

102 INT. UPSTAIRS - VESTIBULE - 2 MINUTES LATER - LATE EVENING
RIP, RIP--Deirdre tears open the care package, takes out the
LED lantern. A FLASHLIGHT. Aimee turns on the bathroom light.

BRIGID
You bought us a lantern?!

ERIK (O.S.)
I bought it!--

103 INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING
ERIK
--after what the hurricane did to this
neighborhood...you can’t be without
light, not in a basement apartment!--

104 INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING
Aimee and Brigid exchange amused glances.

ERIK (O.S.)
--they say another storm’s gonna strike
this year, you’re in a Zone A flood zone!

Brigid pulls out A CASE OF TUNA FISH CANS...Mom, seriously?!

DEIRDRE
You gotta be prepared.
INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - LATE EVENING

Richard sets condiments on the table, etc.

RICHARD
I don’t blame you for worrying after--
Brigid told me about...you and Aimee...

Erik doesn’t respond. Unsure, Richard goes to the kitchen.
He returns with SPICY MUSTARD and THE VIRGIN MARY STATUE.

RICHARD (CONT’D)
(re: the statue)
Should this be out for dinner?

ERIK
...wasn’t sure if--
Rich. No.

ERIK (CONT’D)
(over the ice noise)
What’s strange is--

Richard didn’t hear Erik. Erik decides not to try again.

INT. UPSTAIRS - VESTIBULE - LATE EVENING

Brigid and Deirdre, backlit by the bathroom light. They open
batteries, fiddle with an LED Lantern and flashlight. Aimee
paces in the background, lit by the glow of her iPhone.

BRIGID
There are literally 3,000 double-A
batteries in here.

DEIRDRE
There are literally twelve.

The sound of WATER BEING POURED...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING

...INTO PLASTIC CUPS by Richard. Erik sees MUDDLED
REFLECTION OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTS in his cup.

ERIK
...what’s funny is--Bridge is the one
who’d been--you can imagine her as a
teenager, she was a piece a work...
Rich listens to Erik, but continues to set the table. He’s worried if he becomes too interested Erik won’t continue...

ERIK (CONT’D) (CONT’D)
...she loved teasing me because Scranton’s a stone’s throw from the greatest city in the world but I’ve never even, you know...

CONTINUE ERIK’S SPEECH OVER GLIMPSES OF APARTMENT:

108  INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING
The long empty corridor with its warped wood floors.

ERIK (V.O.)
...I’d never even seen the Statue of Liberty, never seen the--[anyway]--she’s a piece of work...

109  INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING
REFLECTION OF MARY STATUE IN THE KITCHEN BACKSPLASH.

110A INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING
THE AIR MATTRESS IS SEMI-DEFLATED.

ERIK (V.O.)
...so when--Aimee got a, an interview to be a paralegal at this New York firm...
...I took the day off, drove her in...

110  INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING
THE BASEMENT DOOR--and the strip of light visible beneath it.

ERIK (V.O.)
...Aimee’s at her interview by 8:45, 37th floor and...I’m at a Dunkin’ Donuts across the street, ‘cause the observation deck didn’t open until 9:30, otherwise...

111  INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING
BACK TO THE TABLE. THE RADIATOR chugs softly, clanks...
RICHARD

Oh man...

ERIK

...took me hours to find her 'cuz--
I had no cell then...but...

RICHARD

Man, I can’t even...it’s...just crazy....

ERIK

...yeah...well...

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING 112

BATTERIES CLICK into the LED lantern; IT LIGHTS.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING 113

ERIK

...what’s crazy is how you still mess up...you know?...

Erik stares at the REFLECTION OF LIGHTS ON HIS BEER BOTTLE.

INT. UPSTAIRS - VESTIBULE - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING 114

...Deirdre walking, lantern-in-hand. Strange shapes form around her as light bounces off the chicken-wire window...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING 115

ERIK

...yeah...it’s crazy how you still--

A WOMAN’S PIERCING SCREAM from upstairs stuns Rich and Erik--

ERIK (CONT’D) RICHARD

What, what happened? Is everyone okay?

--sends both men UP THE STAIRCASE--

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING 116

--out of breath, they find Brigid stalking the space with her flashlight, THE LIGHT RICOCHETS OFF THE WALLS, the floor--

ERIK RICHARD

What? /What’s wrong? Hey you okay?
DEIRDRE
It was a rat or something... oh
God.../ Did you see it?

ERIK
You’re okay?/ What
happened?

AIMEE
Oh my God I absolutely saw
that what was that?!?

Flashlight in hand, Brigid charges into the

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--the LED LANTERN is on the floor, it ROCKS
BACK AND FORTH, BACK AND FORTH, where Deirdre dropped it.

BRIGID
Okay don’t scream--American cockroaches are huge...I’m
sure it was just a roach--

RICHARD
Okay, okay, I’ll get it...

DEIRDRE
I have nothing to stand on...someone
give me something to stand on...

BRIGID
It was an American
cockroach, they’re huge okay?--don’t get so upset--

AIMEE
Ewwww...

DEIRDRE
A cockroach the size of a mouse is
upsetting!

AIMEE
Ahhhh, I can’t be up here
right now...

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
Shouldn’t we kill it?

THE LANTERN ROCKS BACK AND FORTH, BACK AND FORTH...

AIMEE (CONT'D)
I’m not killing it...

RICHARD
(laughing)
I’ll get it if it comes back...

DEIRDRE
Don’t laugh at me.

ERIK
You gotta caulk. If you
let me caulk and put down some boric acid...

BRIGID
Okay, okay...everyone
retreat...it’s just a cockroach...

RICHARD
I hear you, Erik, I
will...okay, everyone down
for dinner, sorry for the bug scare...
Richard rights the fallen, rocking LED Lantern. Leaving it lit, he places it in the darkest spot of the corridor...

AIMEE (PRE-LAP)
I had roaches once...

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INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING

CLOSE ON ERIK’S HAND GRASP A RUSTED SECTIONS OF THE STAIRCASE, as Erik descends.

AIMEE (O.S.)
...in my first Philly apartment...

DEIRDRE (O.S.)
Jesus, Mary and Joseph...

ERIK’S HAND STOPS, GRIPS THE RAIL.
ERIK POV MAIN ROOM: MOMO IS NOT ON THE COUCH.

ERIK
Mom...Mom...?

DEIRDRE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I should have included insect traps in the care package--

Erik’s heart pounds--

ERIK (CONT'D)
Mom...hey where’s, Dee, where’s Mom?

--he rushes to the couch, throws the blanket off--runs down the bedroom corridor--NO SIGN OF MOMO.

Erik, panicking, running DOWN THE HALLWAY, throws open the basement door; no sign of Momo.

ERIK (CONT'D)
...help me look for her!
Just look!

DEIRDRE
Well where could she -- you want me to look under the couch where the hell could she be?!

Erik rushes into the KITCHEN--she’s not there--Erik runs out--

118A

INT./EXT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING

--Erik runs down hall, opens front door. Through the glass square in the door, we see him stop Momo from entering street, turn her back towards the building.
INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - 2 MINUTES LATER - LATE EVENING

SHOTS of Deirdre and Erik struggling to get Momo settled.

CONTINUE SOUNDS OF GETTING MOMO SETTLED (shuffling of feet, pills being sorted, pans being picked up) over--

GLIMPSES OF THE APARTMENT:
--the stairwell and its curves, rusted sections
--a pre-war light fixture medallion sans light fixture

BACK TO SCENE--Deirdre gives mumbling Momo a pill. Richard, Brigid and Aimee clean up the kitchen mess.

INT. ANTEROOM - 1 MINUTE LATER - LATE EVENING

Deirdre catches a moment alone. Brigid’s lit half-used tea candles on the table in the living area. The darkness outside has turned the window into a mirror--she moves her hand, confirms the woman she sees is really her. Behind Deirdre, the ‘crackling fire’ app has reset to an aerial screensaver of a sunny beach as seen from above. Brigid appears.

BRIGID
Hey, should we bring her wheelchair to the table for dinner?

DEIRDRE
No, no she’ll be sleeping soon...

Brigid turns off the projector. Deirdre walks back to the--

INT. LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - LATE EVENING

--and Brigid follows.

BRIGID
Does the medicine make her sleep?

ERIK
It just calms her down--we can bring her to the table,/ see how she feels--

BRIGID
Yeah, don’t knock her out just because--

DEIRDRE
Hey, if you want to come home more and help control her tantrums then you can judge the way we care for her.
BRIGID
I’m not trying to judge you I just want—can’t you hire someone to help with—?

DEIRDRE
It’d cost a hundred bucks a night to hire someone to watch her, a hundred bucks to make sure she doesn’t fall and get hurt—

ERIK
Hey...okay--

DEIRDRE
--no, she needs to think before she opens her mouth.

Sorry.

Brigid, flushed with anger and embarrassment, walks to Richard in the kitchen. Aimee’s left in the midst...

AIMEE
Let’s all just...[calm down]... God bless us, everyone...

DEIRDRE
Yeah, yeah...

RICHARD
Will everybody eat dark meat?/ Or just--

AIMEE
We’ll eat it all, Rich,/ ERIK
Will we eat dark meat?
just send it our way...

DEIRDRE
Yeah but--I will, I’m just...oh man...I’m back on Weight Watchers/ and man...

AIMEE
That’s great, Mom...

DEIRDRE
...thanks, yeah...it’s tough, one baby ice cream cone takes up half my points for the day...same for a junior cheeseburger at Wendy’s, it’s tough staying on track.

BRIGID
Especially if you eat a bucket of ranch dip before dinner.
Deirdre at the table, wounded. Her pain in focus, the action around her, a blur. Richard bustles behind her, unaware.

RICHARD (O.S.)
...this is the last side dish, yeah?

DEIRDRE
I’m, uh, not being careful with points today, not on holidays.

VOICES (PRE-LAP)
Bless us oh Lord...

pt2 THREE MINUTES LATER--

Everyone’s heads bowed, holding hands for grace. Richard doesn’t know the grace but participates in the hand-holding.

ERIK, AIMEE, BRIGID & DEIRDRE
...and these Thy gifts...

Momo joins in the grace.

ERIK, AIMEE, BRIGID DEIRDRE & MOMO
which we are about to receive...

Gazes shift to Momo in various stages of surprise.

ERIK, AIMEE, BRIGID, DEIRDRE, & MOMO
...from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord, Amen.

ERIK
Did you/hear that?

BRIGID
AIMEE
Momo, I’m glad you’re here! Amazing...

ERIK
Is it crazy if we do it again? Just/one more time...

They all ad lib “no”, “go for it”, etc. The family gazes at her, uncontrollable smiles on their faces...

ERIK (CONT’D)
Bless us oh Lord...

ERIK, AIMEE, BRIGID, DEIRDRE & MOMO
...and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive, from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord, Amen.
This time everyone spontaneously claps, Momo too. They laugh at their impulse to applaud a woman for saying grace.

ERIK
Mom, you remember Aimee and Brigid, these are your granddaughters...

Momo grabs the serving spoon and goes for a bite of sweet potatoes--Deirdre catches her in time--

AIMEE
Don’t put the spotlight on her...

BRIGID
We’re happy you’re here, Mom. Guys, dig in, don’t wait...

MOMENTS LATER--

QUICK GLIMPSES of TURKEY BEING CARVED, CHARD SALAD TOSSED, PEPPER GROUND; a low-end dinner prepared with big love.

ERIK
All looks great...

Everyone ad libs agreement.

DEIRDRE
This looks good, what’s this...

BRIGID
It’s a rainbow chard salad, it’s packed with nutrients...everything else is familiar, I think...

DEIRDRE
You guys did a great job...

RICHARD
Thanks.

ERIK
Awesome.

Beat. They eat.

MOMO
Dig a hole shower.

They all laugh at the randomness of the remark.

ERIK
This is definitely not one of your better days, Mom...oh man, we, uh...we’ll all be there some day, right?/ We love you, Mom.

AIMEE
Yes we will be...

RICHARD
Dig in, everybody, please...
DEIRDRE
This turkey is so moist,/good job guys...

ERIK
Mm-hmm...

MOMO
Shower in holes.

They stifle laughter; Momo’s mumbling is funny and upsetting. They eat. Aimee laughs, stops. Aimee laughs again.

ERIK
What?

AIMEE
Momo’s Christmas toast...

Now Brigid can’t stop laughing. Richard doesn’t get the joke.

BRIGID
On Christmas, Momo--she always delivers a traditional Irish toast, it’s ancient, right?

ERIK
It’s ancient and it’s beautiful, but one year Aimee’s mind was in the gutter--

AIMEE
I was 12!

BRIGID
And ever since the blessing sounds kinda dirty to us--

DEIRDRE
Not to us... [to ERIK] To you guys it sounds dirty...

RICHARD
What’s the blessing?

AIMEE
"May the Virgin and her Child lift your latch on Christmas night."

Some beer dribbles out of Richard’s mouth.

DEIRDRE
Not you too, Rich...

BRIGID
I know, right?! They don’t get it.
ERIK
We get it we just don’t agree.

DEIRDRE
At first I thought latch-lifting was
a kinda sexual position...

BRIGID       DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
Ewww, Mom...            ...I’m serious...

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
...thought maybe it was like scissoring,
or/ somethin’--

BRIGID       AIMEE
Mom! Eewwww...            Oh my God Mom, I’m never
telling you anything
again,/we’re not discussing
this at the table.

BRIGID (CONT'D)       RICHARD
...you must never say the   I’m steering clear of this
word ‘scissoring’ again...   conversation...

ERIK
Its real meaning is beautiful--it’s old
Irish custom to leave the door unbolted
and a candle in the window for Mary on
her way to Bethlehem.

AIMEE
Well, it’s premature, but...in honor of
you, Momo...
(shouldering not to laugh)
May the Virgin and her Child lift all of
your latches...

They ad lib “cheers”...

PASSAGE OF TIME AS WE HEAR SOUNDS OF GLASSES CLINKING, FORKS
CLINKING, FOOD BEING EATEN ALL OVER:

GLIMPSES OF THE APARTMENT:
--faded honeycomb black & white kitchen linoleum
--peeling wallpaper on a section of the kitchen wall
--an old intercom/phone jack no longer operational

BACK AT THE TABLE--Deirdre notices Momo’s a bit dazed, her
neck is not at a good angle. Deirdre goes to help her--

ERIK
I got it...she’ll be dozing soon...
DEIRDRE
No, you stay and--

ERIK (CONT'D)
No I got it, keep eating...

Deirdre watches ERIK WHEEL MOMO TO THE COUCH. Beat.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
So where’s your family, Rich? They upset we stole you away?

RICHARD
Oh, they’re good, thanks. My Dad’s in L.A. and my Mom’s on the Cape now.

DEIRDRE
What Cape?

BRIGID
Cape Horn, Mom--you know he’s from/ Massachusetts--

AIMEE
Hey, hey...it’s not a dumb question.

BRIGID
Cape Cod, sorry...I’m sorry.

Brigid picks at her food, upset she can’t control her anger.

DEIRDRE
What’s your mom do, Rich?

RICHARD
She’s a therapist...she works from home...yeah...

DEIRDRE
Oh wow, that’s great...do you guys have any Thanksgiving traditions?

RICHARD
Uh, some, yeah, we usually volunteer at this soup kitchen about 30 minutes from our house, so...

DEIRDRE
That’s beautiful, I volunteer with the Bhutanese now, /every week they have --

BRIGID
Mom, we know.

RICHARD
No, I’m interested...

AIMEE
[Leave Mom alone...]
DEIRDRE
They uh, the Bhutanese, the level of poverty, guys, is...[unimaginable]...

Erik returns to the table. In the background: Momo asleep.

ERIK
You balancing a job with all your studies or just racking up the college loans?

RICHARD
Ha, I’ve gone the loan route but I plan on paying them off as soon as possible...

BRIGID
His grandmother--he’s getting a small trust when he turns 40--can I tell them?

RICHARD
You want to know if you can tell them after you tell them?/ Seriously?

DEIRDRE
Like a trust fund?

AIMEE
Pass the.../yeah, thanks...

BRIGID
Sorry--babe, sorry, don’t be embarrassed...

RICHARD
I’m not embarrassed-- it’s actually great--she didn’t want him spoiled so he doesn’t see any of the money until he’s 40.

ERIK
You haven’t reached that milestone yet, Rich?

BRIGID
Ha, ha...

RICHARD
No, not quite, I’m 35...

DEIRDRE
Having to wait until your forties is a--your grandma’s a smart lady, it’s like that--’member that email I forwarded you guys about Andrew Carnegie--is it Carnegie or Carnegie, /I never remember--

RICHARD
Pretty sure Carnegie is Carnegie Hall, right? corr--oh, maybe, yeah.

ERIK
Carnegie Hall...
DEIRDRE
I forwarded it, Rich, 'cause it had this
great answer to the question: “What makes
Americans powerful and influential and
wealthy?”

Small beat as they eat.

AIMEE
Trust funds?

DEIRDRE
No...not trust funds,/ smart-ass...

AIMEE
What--too soon?/ Too soon?...

BRIGID
Uh--yes, too soon...

DEIRDRE
What makes a person powerful and
influential and wealthy is not
growing up
with power and influence and wealth.
That’s what the e-mail said, anyway...
(emotions catch her off guard)
...the gift of poverty is a...it’s not a
myth,/ it’s a real thing, it can be a
blessing...

AIMEE
Whoa, Mom, are you okay?

DEIRDRE
Yeah, just happy to be with my girls.

Sound of the creaky--

INT. BATHROOM - 2 MINUTES LATER - NIGHT

--bathroom door closing. Deirdre splashes some water on her
face. The soft-white light bulb above the mirror flickers,
leading Deirdre to unscrew it and be at the mercy of the
lone, bright LED light bulb, which gives off a harsh, blue-
ish light. Not flattering. Deirdre sees herself in the
toilet water, the colored Christmas lights swim around her.

ERIK (PRE-LAP)
One thing I learned, Rich--and the older
I get I see this--it’s that having too
much money--it can be just as bad for you
as, you know, not having enough...
...you know? Gotta be careful...

Dad, why’re you--what are you--

CRACK of another beer opening. Deirdre descends the stairs.

I think I get what you’re--do you mean--

I’m saying--Dee’s bosses have more money than God and they’re stingy with her on everything, bonuses, vacation days so--and this isn’t some scientific notion or something--but, yeah, I do notice that rich people are usually pretty messed up.

[Oh my God...] That’s an elegant thesis.

Well, no, no, it’s a good point, I just don’t think being messed up is necessarily linked to how much money is in your bank account.

Of course... Yeah, but it can shift your priorities in ways that aren’t good.

We agree on that, yeah, but so can being poor. Right?/ Just meaning--

Yes...

Everyone’s right, guys...

--I actually agree with you, I’m just adding that...yes, wealth can ruin people but so can poverty.
DEIRDRE
Well I’d rather be ruined in a Four Seasons somewhere, on a beach, you know?...I’ll take wealth for four-hundred, Alex...

BRIGID
Mom, that doesn’t even make sense...

RICHARD
...I hear you, I’m just proud that my family went out of their way to ensure--you do get that I’m not able to touch my money until I’m 40, right?

ERIK
Uh-huh, but do you get how that sounds to a man my age?

RICHARD
No I hear you, I hear you.../ I do...

AIMEE
...pass the--thanks...

BRIGID
We got the veggies from this farmer’s market on Essex...

DEIRDRE
They’re delicious...

BRIGID
We’re gonna try and keep our fridge stocked with them, start juicing for breakfast.

AIMEE
Cool...

RICHARD
You guys liking any of the superfoods?

BRIGID
(to Aimee)
Rich made up a list that I e-mailed to these guys...

DEIRDRE
I even, I bought blueberries last week...they’re not cheap.

ERIK
You also bought blueberry donuts.
DEIRDRE
Yeah, and you had three of them, so don’t/ act like you’re better than me please.

ERIK
I did, no, I did.

AIMEE
Sadly, donuts are cheaper, too, huh?

DEIRDRE
Not cheaper when you consider how much heart disease costs once you’re hospitalized.

BRIGID
Yeah.

Aimee covertly nudges Brigid.

123A INT. DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT

OVER GLIMPSES OF THE APARTMENT, SOUNDS OF EATING:
--old writing/initials carved into a built-in shelf
--diamond-shaped window-grate on one of the shaft windows
--stray cable wire worming its way to nowhere

CAROL’S INSTAGRAM PAGE. Aimee checks her phone under table.

124 INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - 1 MINUTE LATER

ERIK
So what, uh, when 40 comes along, what happens...do you just, do you retire?

DEIRDRE
Erik...

BRIDIG
No, Dad, he’s studying to become a social worker...

RICHARD
Yeah, the main reason I’m not done with school yet is, I’ve been/ in and out --

BRIGID
He took time off--

RICHARD
--yeah, because for a while/ I was--

BRIGID
You don’t have to tell them...
RICHARD
--it’s fine--in my early 30s--I was
depressed for a bit, so--I’m fine now,
just took me a while to get up and
running again, but...I’ve been better for
years, it’s why I’m comfortable talking
about it...

ERIK
You take medicine for that?

BRIGID
Dad, that’s rude/ to ask--

RICHARD
It’s okay.

ERIK
Sorry, hey, sorry,
just...in our family we
don’t, uh, we don’t have
that kinda depression.

AIMEE
Yeah, no we just have a lot of stoic
sadness.

ERIK (CONT’D)
Well...I’m sorry, if...

RICHARD
[It’s fine.]

ERIK (CONT’D)
...makes you wonder if--the kind of faith
we grew up with...it’s not perfect but
you take for granted what a, a, a kinda
natural anti-depressant it is...

AIMEE
No religion at the table--

DEIRDRE
Hey, my mouth is shut, you know/ where I
stand...

BRIGID
You brought a statue of the Virgin Mary
into our house--/how is your mouth shut?

ERIK
All right...I didn’t mean to get us... I
was just saying it’s funny you guys’ll
try--you put faith in, in juice-cleansing
or/ yoga but you won’t try church--

BRIGID
I did one juice cleanse...one...
ERIK
--you eat chard to feel your best but you still-- you said half your friends are in therapy, you said that so I’m askin’--

DEIRDRE
My mouth is shut...

BRIGID
That’s because--yeah, I was trying to get you to pay for mine--I can’t afford it--

ERIK
Well save some of the money you spend on organic juice and pay for it yourself--

BRIGID
Don’t criticize me for caring about my mental health--

AIMEE
Okay...

ERIK
Well what about--Rich’s mom is a therapist--why don’t you get it from her?

BRIGID
Yeah, Dad, I’ll get therapy from my mother-in-law, that’s an awesome idea.

DEIRDRE
She’s not your mother-in-law unless you get married--

AIMEE
Mom...[don’t]...

BRIGID
Looking for work every day, it’s depressing--

ERIK
Well you’ve still got the will to eat superfoods--if you’re so miserable why’re you trying to live forever?

Aimee smiles involuntarily.

BRIGID
Last week--I shouldn’t even tell you--

ERIK
Tell us what?

RICHARD
I don’t think you appreciate how hard she’s been working....

BRIGID
Babe, you don’t have to--
BRIGID (CONT'D) DEIRDRE
He won’t care... Tell us...

RICHARD ERIK
Play the piece for them, Of course I’ll care.
you’ll feel better...play it for them...

DEIRDRE
Play what?

2 MINUTES LATER--

MUSIC PLAYS on Richard’s bluetooth speaker. Brigid is nervous. After a few measures of orchestral strains, silence.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
I th--

The MUSIC PLAYS again suddenly.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D) BRIGID
Oh...oh... Mom...[it’s not done.]

The music shows skill and is interesting. It’s hard to pin down. As it plays, its motion--unpredictable, two ideas at once--takes us into Erik’s head. Erik views the room--its shadows, water stains, old buzzers, molding--via the music. The MUSIC STOPS--BACK TO SCENE. Brigid feels very exposed.

BRIGID (CONT'D)
I spent a year finishing it,/and I sent it to--

DEIRDRE
Well it sounds good.

BRIGID RICHARD
--yeah, no mom it’s-- This one professor has been writing her recommendation letters--

Brigid gets out her phone, searches for something.

BRIGID (CONT'D)
Yeah, cuz he’s the only one I felt close to at school, who actually knew who I was, and...I was gonna miss this one deadline so I called and--his assistant agreed to e-mail the rec letter directly to me...

Brigid hands her iphone to Erik, who reads the PDF of the letter on her phone.
AIMEE
What’s it say?

BRIGID
...at least now I know why I’m not even getting interviews for unpaid internships.

ERIK
(reading)
What?--he didn’t praise you enough?

Pissed, Brigid grabs her phone.

BRIGID
Are you kidding me?
(reading)
“Brigid is a talented musician and composer; she served as a TA in my music theory class her senior year and many of the students noted how approachable and helpful she was to them in navigating the course. Initially, I must confess, I found Brigid’s compositions almost willfully opposed to specificity and urgency. In her senior year, however, she showed marked improvement. And while her orchestral pieces still do not have the range or originality of her contemporaries, she always displays technical proficiency and great verve. Her hard work and positive attitude have made her an asset to the music department.”
(eyes watering)
....why wouldn’t he respect me enough to say he couldn’t do it?

ERIK
You can always work retail.

DEIRDRE
Don’t tease her--

AIMEE
Dad--

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Brigid busies herself trashing some of the plates. Erik appears.

ERIK
Are you so spoiled you can’t see you’re crying over something hard work can fix?--
BRIGID
Everyone whose opinion I value read that--

ERIK
Your grandma grew up in a two-room
cesspool and your tragedy is what--havin
to figure out how to get a new letter of
recommendation? You’re lucky to have a
passion to pursue, if you don’t care
about it enough to push through these
setbacks you should quit and do something
else--

THE LIGHT ABOVE THE STAIRCASE BURNS OUT.

RICHARD
Oh great...Babe, the
staircase light is out!
Welcome to New York,
guys...

DEIRDRE
...It’s just a light bulb,
we’ll live...

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INT. CLOSET OFF KITCHEN - 30 SECONDS LATER - NIGHT

Brigid throws the closet door open, pulls a chain suspended
from the ceiling; the light bulb won’t turn on, it swings
back and forth. Erik appears behind her. Brigid tries to
screw in the bulb tighter. It’s been burned out for a while.

ERIK
Hey, I don’t wanna see you
bent outta shape over
something you can fix. The
Blakes bounce back, that’s
what we do.

BRIGID
Shit...lemme just [clean
this up]...uh-huh I don’t
really need a lecture
now...Rich--why didn’t we
ask the landlord to replace
all the lightbulbs before
we moved in?

Richard appears in doorway.

RICHARD
Because that’s a crazy thing to ask for,
babe, no one asks for that.

Deirdre appears behind them in the KITCHEN, finds the
flashlight. Aimee trails her.

DEIRDRE
(stifling laughter)
Yeah, no one asks for that/
and even if you did, it
wouldn’t matter, ’cause...

ERIK
Well, they’re all probably
on their last legs...
AIMEE
What are you laughing at?

Deirdre can’t stop laughing, puts her bag on the counter--
THE STRESS BALL falls out onto the floor unseen by Deirdre.

DEIRDRE
...she’s burning out the bulbs to get our attention...

BRIGID
What?

AIMEE
What--who is?

DEIRDRE
She-With-No-Face, she strikes again!

INT. ANTEROOM/LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Now they are all laughing, move towards the living area.
Deirdre, flashlight in hand, heads to the shadowy stairs.

ERIK
Now you got her started...

AIMEE
What’s so funny? What?

BRIGID
Dad sees faceless women in his sleep.

DEIRDRE WAVES THE FLASHLIGHT, SHINES IT UNDER HER CHIN...

DEIRDRE
...woooOOOOooo...

RICHARD
Tough crowd, Erik...

AIMEE
Where are you going, crazy lady?

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

THE STRESS BALL slowly rolls into the hallway and gravity
takes it on an intriguing path on the warped wooden floor.

DEIRDRE
To the bathroom. This is gonna be like
spelunking just to go pee...wooooooo...

AIMEE (O.S.)
Who is this headless person?
BRIGID (O.S.)
Faceless, she’s got skin covering her eye
sockets/ and mouth --

AIMEE (O.S.)
Ewwwww...

ERIK (O.S.)
Alright, ha, ha...

INT. ANTEROOM/LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

BRIGID
...yeah, and I hope she visits you
tonight in your sleep and casts an evil
spell on you--

ERIK
Oh yeah, smart-ass?

Erik stops Brigid, bear hugs her.

BRIGID
Stop! Dad! Oh now you wanna
be compassionate?! Stop!
The eyeless sorceress has
all my support.

ERIK (CONT'D)
You don’t know how good you
have it...

RICHARD
Last week I dreamed I fell into an ice
cream cone made of grass and became a
baby.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
...What?--I can share
it if I want--

BRIGID (CONT'D)
Richard, are you kidding me
with the sharing..."What?--I can share
it if I want--"

AIMEE
Hey, come with--

BRIGID (CONT'D)
but when you share dreams
in front of my family I
become a crazy person.

RICHARD
You guys need help?

AIMEE
No, no--c’mon, Princess we
literally can do it...yeah no I
literally cannot call me a
Princess...

* Aimee and Brigid bus a few dishes, head to the kitchen.
Outside, darkness. THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS IN THE SHAFT WINDOWS.
INT. LIVING AREA - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Erik and Richard at the table. Richard is unsure what to say now that he’s alone with Erik at the table. He drinks.

    RICHARD
    I got to re-boot my life, it was good...

    ERIK
    I dunno. Doing life twice sounds like the only thing worse than doing it once.

They drink. Audible-but-indecipherable conversation and laughter from Aimee and Brigid in the kitchen.

    RICHARD
    The cone was made out of grass from my backyard...?

    ERIK
    (smiling)
    Out of/ your backyard?...

    RICHARD
    ...my backyard?...like it got twisted into an ice cream cone?...in my head it was so normal...

Beat. Erik looks at his REFLECTION IN THE BACK OF HIS PHONE, moves it a bit, it’s like a funhouse mirror.

    ERIK
    In mine there was this one other weird thing I...[remember]...

    RICHARD
    In your dream?

    ERIK
    [Yeah]...I didn’t bring it up with--
    The girls already think I’m losing it, you know but--the woman without a [face]...she’s trying to get me in this, like a tunnel?

    RICHARD
    Yeah? And what do you do?

    ERIK
    Uh...I don’t move, I dunno...

LAUGHTER from Aimee and Brigid in the kitchen. Richard sees them laughing. He turns back to Erik, studies him.
RICHARD
Tunnels are—in my class we got this list of primitive settings?—tunnels and caves, forests, the sea...stuff so a part of us it’s...you know, 200,000 years ago...someone might’ve closed their eyes and...seen a similar kind of [image]...?

A mechanical RUMBLE sounds from behind the basement door.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Trash compactor.

They drink. The RUMBLE stops. Rich senses Erik’s quiet anxiety.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Get in it next time, the tunnel...

ERIK
Thanks,/ I’ll try that...

RICHARD
I’m serious, get in it next time—tunnels can just be, stuff hidden from yourself? So passing through one...[I dunno] could be...a favorable omen...

Beat.

ERIK
Is it a fortune telling school you’re at?

ERIK (CONT'D) RICHARD
---‘a favorable omen’?—No...
--you sure? You gonna...no, yeah...
bring out a crystal ball (laughing)
later?...no, no I am not...

CLANK, CLANK of pre-war pipes...

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

...CLANK of the radiator as Deirdre heads to stairs, hears a creak—turns around. The MIRRORED CLOSET DOOR IS CRACKED OPEN—is there noise coming from inside? Deirdre walks to the door, OPENS IT: another AIR SHAFT WINDOW hidden along the closet’s back wall. Visible across the air shaft, in a neighbor’s half-opened window: BARE LEGS MOVING. Deirdre finds it disturbing; she shuts the doors, walks to the stairs—the sound of laughter grows...
INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

...Brigid and Aimee laughing.

RICHARD (O.S.)
What’s so funny?

AIMEE
We’re conferring about...Mom’s latest e-mail forward,/oh man...

BRIGID (laughing)
Did you get it, Dad?...

ERIK
Hey, hey shhhh....

AIMEE
Rich, the subject line was: “PLEASE READ THIS” in all caps, all caps--so the e-mail got flagged by my IT department for being “potentially harmful”...

The girls leave the kitchen to join the table; ONE POT TEETERS ON THE EDGE OF THE DRYING RACK, THEN SETTLES.

INT. UPSTAIRS - SPIRAL STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Deirdre, frozen in the dark. We can’t see her face. Her flashlight shines towards the floor, her arm limp.

BRIGID (O.S.)
...She forwarded a Scientific American article about how...

As if with Deirdre’s heart, we sink DOWN to the floor...

WIPE TO BLACK, THEN--

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS

...arrive beneath the ceiling, continue DOWN to the table.

BRIGID
...how nothing’s solid; when you’re touching a table, you’re really feeling its molecules bouncing against...we’re not even solid, we’re, what... electrons/pushing back against stuff?--
AIMEE
Electrons, yeah...it also had vague
religious overtones, there was a poem at
the bottom in about ten fonts about how
we already are a part of everything, how--

ERIK
Hey don’t make fun of your mom,/no, I’m
serious--

AIMEE
Dad, come on, it was a
little crazy --

BRIGID
We’re making fun of the e-
mail...

AIMEE (CONT’D)
--it was like: “Happy Tuesday, oh and
just FYI: at the subatomic level,
everything is chaotic and unstable...
love, Mom.”

ERIK
You have to start writing her back,
okay?/ I mean it...even to stuff like
that...

AIMEE
You’re right. I know, I will...

BRIGID
I know, I will...

ERIK
...Rich, I hope you don’t think the
Blakes’re [insensitive]...we’re better
than that,/ we’re drinking too much...

BRIGID
He doesn’t think that...

RICHARD
No, no way...and hey...no...if my
family’s meals are any calmer it’s only
because, the joke in my family is that
our holidays are all sponsored by
Klonopin, so/...or so the joke goes...

ERIK
What’s that?

BRIGID
Richard--[don’t talk about
your anti-anxiety meds].

AIMEE
Just--it’s medicine.

Strange rumbling noise.
BRIGID
That’s the laundry room, that’ll die
down...

They sit awkwardly, waiting for the noise to die down as
Deirdre starts to clank down the spiral staircase.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - 1 MINUTE LATER

The laundry room noise is louder out here. Richard carries
the garbage bag past the MATTRESS WITH BALLOONS (with broken
toy now on top), the bag rips before he can set it down, he
struggles to keep the garbage from spilling everywhere.

BRIGID (PRE-LAP)
Richard, we’re pig-smashing, get in here!

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - FIVE MINUTES LATER

A HAMMER. AN ENORMOUS HAND picks it up, revealing the hammer
to be very, very tiny. THE CANDY PINK PIG on the table.

BRIGID
...we each pass it around, say what we’re
thankful for, then smash it...

The entire family gathered around the pig except for Deirdre.

AIMEE
And then we each eat a piece of the
peppermint for good luck. Mom, c’mon...

She’s relocated THE VIRGIN MARY STATUE to the ‘coffee table’.
Brigid sees it, sighs. Aimee indicates “just let her do it.”

RICHARD
That is the weirdest tradition.

DEIRDRE
Please, that’s the weirdest? Wait ‘til
you spend a Christmas with us...

ERIK
She’s threatening to invite all the
Bhutanese in Scranton over for caroling.

Deirdre joins the group.

DEIRDRE
Oh that’s not a threat, honey, that’s
happening.
BRIDIG
Okay, you start, babe.

RICHARD
Ah, now I’m nervous. Okay, uh...this year I’m most thankful for falling in love with Brigid...and for getting a new family in the process.

This elicits “awwwwws” from Deirdre and Aimee and Brigid.

RICHARD (CONT’D)
Now I...[smash the pig?...]

He takes the tiny mallet and smashes the pig.

BRIDIG
(with love)
That was terrible.../do it harder...

RICHARD
Well I don’t know you made me go first!

BRIDIG
AIMEE
Okay, Dad you go next... Rich, it was a fine smash...

ERIK
Okay, well...I already gave one speech so lemme just say...I’m thankful for having your unconditional love and support. Hope there’s nothing any of us could ever do to change that, ’cause this is what matters...this family...

Erik smashes the pig, passes the mallet to Deirdre.

DEIRDRE
Alright, well I’m with your Dad and--it may sound cliché, but I’m thankful for the both of you.

Deirdre smashes the pig, hands the mallet to Brigid.

BRIDIG
Okay...I’ll state the obvious, there will never be a year I’m not thankful that the observation deck didn’t open until 9:30, so...and I’m grateful Momo’s with us.... (MORE)
BRIGID (CONT'D)
oh--a wise old, haggard drunk man once
told me that pursuing your passion is a
gift--so I’m grateful for that reminder--
even if I end up pursuing it while
managing an H&M;/ I’m lucky...no I’m
actually being serious about that--I am...

AIMEE
Ohhh so soon, so soon...

DEIRDRE
See what you’ve done?

BRIGID
...and while everyone’s--if anything were
to ever happen to me, like an accident or
whatever--and it won’t, but... I’d want
to be cremated--it’s weird to talk about
but you guys’d do open-casket so...I’ve
been trying to find a way to bring it up
that isn’t morbid or weird.

No one knows how to respond to this.

AIMEE
Well you didn’t find it, Bridge.

Erik and Aimee start laughing. Richard joins them.

DEIRDRE
Are you serious? You’re
crazy.

BRIGID
Oh come on--I am seri--
You’re crazy--no one in
this family can handle
honesty...

AIMEE
No you’re right, Bridge, dinner is the
perfect place to discuss what we should
do with your dead body,/ thank you...

BRIGID
I hate you all.

AIMEE
...pass me that pig. So. In a year where--
I lost my job, my girlfriend, and I’m
bleeding internally...really a banner
year... I’m thankful for what’s right,
okay? I love that in times like this I
have a home base, a family I can always
come home to. Thanks for giving us that.

BRIGID
You always have to win.

RICHARD
Yeah, she really cremated you.
EXT. AIR SHAFT WINDOW - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Silent view from outside: the Blakes start to laugh uncontrollably, a moment of uncomplicated joy...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

...now we hear the laughter. Deirdre is in tears.

BRIGID (to Richard)
...just when you can’t get less funny....

DEIRDRE
She cremated you! She really cremated you...oh man...

ERIK
How about for Momo--should we read Momo’s email?

BRIGID
Dad, no, it makes us cry--

AIMEE
Oh God get out the kleenex.

ERIK
This might be our last Thanksgiving together, can we please give her a voice...?

BRIGID
Of course...

AIMEE
Yeah, has he heard this?

RICHARD
I heard about it, but not the actual...

ERIK
She wrote this before she got really sick, Rich...an e-mail to these girls, what four years ago?

Erik finds the message on his phone.

DEIRDRE
Here, give it to me, you’re gonna end up asking me to finish...

Erik hands her his phone. MOMO’S REFLECTION IN ONE OF THE WINDOWS. Brigid goes to Momo’s side.

DEIRDRE (CONT’D)
“Dear Aimee and Brigid, I was clumsy around you both today and felt confused. I couldn’t remember your names and felt bad about that...

CONTINUE MOMO’S EMAIL OVER SHOTS OF:
--SHIFTING SHADOWS ON THE STAIRCASE (MADE BY THE BLAKES).

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
...It’s strange slowly becoming someone I don’t know. But while I am still here, I want to say: don’t worry about me once I drift off for good. I’m not scared.

--TREMORING LIGHT being reflected off of someone’s watch.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
If anything, I wish I could’ve known that most of the stuff I did spend my life worrying about wasn’t so bad.

--THE CEILING FAN BLADES ROTATE SLOWLY, SLOWLY

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
Maybe it’s because this disease has me forgetting the worst stuff, but right now I’m feeling nothing about this life was worth getting so worked up about. Not even dancing at weddings.”

THE FAMILY MEMBERS, some cracking smiles through tears...

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
“Dancing at weddings always scared the crap out of me, but now it doesn’t seem like such a big deal.

BRIGID’S SMOOTH HAND HOLDING MOMO’S WRINKLED HAND.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
Dance more than I did. Drink less than I did. Go to church. Be good to everyone you love. I love you more than you’ll ever know.”

Quiet tears of appreciation. They pass around the SMASHED PIECES OF PEPPERMINT; they take a bite, one at a time.

RICHARD
I’m buying a pig for my family.

Richard heads to the kitchen.

BRIGID
He wants you to like him.

AIMEE
We do,/ he’s in...

DEIRDRE
We love him...
ERIK
(getting up)
Just look out for each other, okay?

AIMEE
Hey if you’re having another beer, fine,
but I’m calling a car for you guys.

BRIGID
Thanks for drinking responsibly, Dad.

DEIRDRE
Erik...

ERIK
I’m forgetting I’m not home, I’m sorry...I’m sorry...

AIMEE
I don’t mind using my work account now
that I’m on my way out--

ERIK
No way, that’s gonna cost a fortune...what’d we do
about our car?

DEIRDRE
I’ve been drinkin water...

AIMEE
This is on me--I’m calling a car, end of discussion.

BRIGID
Mom for like the last ten minutes.

BRIGID (CONT'D)
Just--bus it into the city and help us
paint this weekend, okay? We’ll put you
to work, just/ take the car...

ERIK
Yeah, just, I’m not used to driving on
Thanksgiving, Rich--

RICHARD
No worries--Bridge, should we re-park the
car? I think it’s street cleaning in the
morning but...we’ll figure it out...

ERIK POV: Brigid mouths “Thank you, I love you” into
Richard’s ear. They kiss. Their affection triggers something
in Erik—embarrassment that Richard needed to take care of
him? Nostalgia for his early romance with Deirdre?

BACK TO SCENE, WIDER--Both couples: Brigid and Rich’s flawed—but-alive connection; a gulf between Erik and Deirdre.

AIMEE (PRE-LAP)
...Hi, I--yeah, I need a car...
INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Aimee, on her cell, walking into the deepest corner of the eastern corridor, lit by the bright LED lantern.

AIMEE
(on the phone)
...no case number, take it out of my personal--yeah, exactly...uh, three--but one of them is in a wheelchair--

Erik appears at the end of the corridor, Aimee turns--

AIMEE (CONT'D)
Do you guys need a van for Momo...?--

ERIK
Here...[mouths "go downstairs"]...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Deirdre, alone at the table, listening to Erik and Aimee’s audible-but-indecipherable conversation upstairs. A few beats go by, Deirdre stares into space...then, a shift--she’s overcome with emotion, stifles sobs; Richard and Brigid are in the kitchen, moving about. No ones sees this.

ERIK (O.S.)
We don’t need a van if it’s...no it folds...a lot cheaper or--?--then a van’s good then, that’s fine...

The CLANK of Aimee down the stairs prompts Deirdre to regain composure. STAY WITH DEIRDRE--

RICHARD (O.S.)
(calling from the kitchen)
Dessert is on the way...

AIMEE (O.S.)
DEIRDRE
Thank you...so is a car... Oh man...I can’t believe there’s more food...

Deirdre’s eyes are a bit red. Aimee notices.

AIMEE (CONT'D)
Mom, don’t worry about it, it saves me a cab ride--I can hitch a ride with you guys to Penn Station...

Erik.descends the stairs in the background.
ERIK
Okay, they’ll come at six...but we can change the time if you want...

DEIRDRE
Sounds good...

AIMEE
Okay, I can make a 7:05 train.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
Thanks, Aimee, I’m embarrassed we had to do this.

AIMEE
Hey, first time for everything, right?

Aimee goes to the kitchen to help Brigid.

DEIRDRE
(to Erik)
Are you too drunk to thank your daughter?

BRIGID (O.S.)
(to Aimee, in the kitchen)
This is all from a local bakery...

DEIRDRE
Hey, are you too drunk to thank your daughter?

This pisses Erik off, he ignores her.

RICHARD (O.S.)
Incoming...

A DESSERT PLATE lands in front of Deirdre. RUGELACH. VANILLA CUPCAKE. CHOCOLATE CROISSANT.

DEIRDRE
Wow...well today I officially fell off the Weight Watchers wagon, so...man, these all look good...I’ll have, uh...
...I’ll have--

ERIK
Give her the one with all the frosting, that’s the one she wants.

That was the one Deirdre wanted, but now she’s too stung. The world around her blurs...

DEIRDRE
I’ll have, the, uh...I’ll, uh...
RICHARD
Which one can I get you?

DEIRDRE
Just gonna...[sit here for a minute]...

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)
...I’m gonna take her to the bathroom, yeah Erik?..../okay?...

BRIGID (O.S.)
You okay, Momes?...

ERIK
I can help you--

DEIRDRE
No I’m good.

MOMO’s POV--as she is helped into her wheelchair:

ERIK
(to Richard)
Would you help her get Momo settled upstairs,/ I don’t want her lifting her by herself...

RICHARD
Sure...

BRIGID
Dad, I said I’d help...

ERIK
No, stay here, will you?/ Stay here...

Deirdre wheels MOMO into the long DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY...

BRIGID (O.S.)
Why?

ERIK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I wanna talk about how...

AIMEE (O.S.)
What?

ERIK (O.S.)
...we might be movin’ soon if, uh--

Deirdre wheels Momo out the basement door--

BRIGID (O.S.)
Dad, what’s wrong?

---continues down the hallway in a heightened state.
AIMEE (PRE-LAP)  
What’s going on?

BRIDGID (PRE-LAP)  
...Dad...[what’s wrong?]

ERIK (PRE-LAP)  
Nothing, everyone’s okay, alright?

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

AIMEE  
Are you sick?

ERIK  
No no, relax, no one’s sick...

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Richard backlit by the hallway light, he waits for the elevator. The chug of the elevator motor starting up.

ERIK (PRE-LAP)  
...we’re good, just...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

ERIK  
...we sold the lake property, okay?/ To help with--

AIMEE  
Okay...

BRIDGID  
What...when...?

ERIK  
[Not important]...St. Mark’s let me go, okay, so we’ve had to/ tighten our belts and we’re figuring out --

BRIDGID  
Why would they let you go?

ERIK  
--that’s not [important]--I’m not getting my pension now, they could fire me before it kicked in, alright/ so--

AIMEE  
They can take away/ your pension -- ?

ERIK  
It’s [complicated]--they’re a private school so/they can do whatever--
AIMEE
But--why did they fire you?

ERIK
It’s [complicated]--they have this
morality code, okay?, St. Mark’s makes

AIMEE
Okay...
ERIK (CONT’D)
you sign it/ and if you--

BRIGID
Why would a morality code--were you,
like, selling drugs on the playground?

INT. ELEVATOR – CONTINUOUS – NIGHT

Momo and Deirdre going up. Deirdre’s eyes wander up to the
fluorescent light above the plastic white-grated ceiling.
The DING of the elevator arriving. The doors open.

ERIK (PRE-LAP)
There was an incident, and...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA – CONTINUOUS – NIGHT

ERIK
...alright?, so/ they could--

BRIGID
What kind of--

ERIK
--they could fire me...because of this
incident, it’s--

AIMEE
What are you talking about?

ERIK
I cheated on your Mom, with, uh, a
teacher from school and...we’re okay but,
I realize this is a lot to just
[unload]...you guys okay?

AIMEE
[Uh, not really...]

BRIGID
Just...[keep going]...
EXT. AIR SHAFT WINDOW - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Aimee and Brigid, silent at the table, unsure how to react. As if mirroring their emotional experience, Erik’s mouth moves—but we can’t hear him.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

ERIK
--we worked through it, okay?/we met with Father Paul and...

AIMEE
Okay...

ERIK
...we’re good, but people talk and we don’t want you hearing from other people, okay?/ We’d rather you hear it from us, okay?...

AIMEE
Okay, so...you guys...you just want us to...just...to know?...

ERIK
Yeah, and I’m already at a Walmart in Danville/ to keep money coming in--

AIMEE
God, Dad...for how long? --

BRIGID
Why the one in Danville?

ERIK
I don’t want kids from school seeing me there. Something full-time should open up this spring, so.../the trick’s been...

AIMEE
...so...

ERIK
...the cost of taking care of Momo’s been a surprise,/ you wouldn’t even believe how much the [medical stuff costs] --

BRIGID
Are you guys... AIMEE
...okay...
So you’re behind? How much are you behind?
INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Richard backlit by the hallway light in the doorway. The grumble of the elevator from the hall. He strains to hear voices downstairs but can’t make out what’s being said.

ERIK (PRE-LAP)
The plan is to sell the house and rent an apartment...we don’t need space...

INT. UPSTAIRS BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Deirdre wheels Momo down the building hallway to apartment.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

BRIGID
Are there even apartments in Scranton?/
Who lives in--

AIMEE
Of course there are -- Hey, getting a place on one level will be good, Mom won’t be climbing stairs --

AIMEE (CONT'D)
It doesn’t sound good, Dad--

AIMEE (CONT'D)
it sounds like you’re in deep hole --
ERIK
Well I’m working it out, Aimee --

AIMEE (CONT'D)
Do you have anything saved? Dad, do you have any/ savings?--

ERIK
We don’t have savings, Aimee--

INT. UPSTAIRS BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

--Richard holds the door open for Deirdre and Momo. Awkward trying to get her wheelchair back inside. Deirdre hears the voices downstairs--

ERIK (O.S.)
--we’ve been stretched--

AIMEE (O.S.)
--okay, okay well you’re telling us this when you’re drunk so sorry if I’m getting frustrated...
--Deirdre leaves Momo with Richard...

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Something’s fallen apart for Brigid, thoughts spinning.

BRIGID
Have you asked Uncle John to help?

AIMEE
He lives in a trailer, /you think--

BRIGID
That doesn’t mean he has no money--

AIMEE
That’s exactly what it means,/ grow up...[fucking baby]...

BRIGID
Relax, I’m just... [I’m shocked, I don’t know what I’m saying...] sorry I’m not grown up like you and make a ton of money--

AIMEE
Right, you’ve got no choice but to collect unemployment/ while you try to -- it’s not unfair for you to get some marketable skills--

BRIGID
That’s not fair--I can’t get a break if I’m working full-time...

ERIK
Don’t get upset with her, hey this is on me--

BRIGID
Hey easy, cut it out, this is on me and--hey, I’m working it out,/ I love your mom, we’re good...

BRIGID (CONT’D)
No, I’m glad you’re working it out but--you’re good but you’re not sleeping and Mom’s still eating her feelings,/ it’s freaking me out--

AIMEE
Brigid.

DEIRDRE’S FEET ON THE TOP OF THE STAIRS. Deirdre reverses course, goes upstairs. Brigid runs after her--

BRIGID
Mom...I didn’t mean it... Stay here...
ERIK (CONT'D)
Would you stay down here, please?
Brigid!

INT. UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT
Brigid trails Deirdre--

DEIRDRE
Go talk to your father, please, I know you think something’s wrong with me, it’s not a newsflash.

BRIGID
Mom--I will, but--I don’t [think that]-- I think something’s wrong with everyone-- please don’t act like a martyr when I’m trying to apologize...

INT. UPSTAIRS - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

THUD above the ceiling as Erik clanks up the stairs...

BRIGID
(to Richard)
Can you go up and tell that lady how loud she’s being?

RICHARD
I will, just relax.

MOMO
(barely audible)
Nevery blacken wherenall blezzick...

Brigid comes into Erik’s view as he arrives--

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

--just as another THUD sounds above the ceiling.

ERIK
Brigid, please come talk to me.

BRIGID
(to Erik)
I’m gonna ask that woman to stop banging her fucking feet.

Brigid exits. Richard stops Erik from following her.

INT. BUILDING STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT
Brigid runs up narrow tenement stairs. Richard is a flight behind her.
INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Aimee arrives upstairs, Deirdre passes her, going down the spiral stairs, *Momo’s mumbling* grows--

DEIRDRE
I can’t hear her now...

MOMO (O.S.)
...nevery where do we go back...do we never go hole you hole do we nairywhere...

Momo is agitated; Aimee isn’t sure what’s happening--Erik wants Aimee out of there.

AIMEE
Is she...[okay?]...

MOMO

Erik wants to go back...do we... do we... do we... momo... momo... momo...

ERIK
Go with Mom... (to Aimee...)
Go with her? She’s okay, just give us some room......go with Mom, okay? Go with Mom.

MOMO (CONT'D)
...nevery where do we go back do we never go hole you bitch...nevery black hole you do we you did this do we back... (fixed on Erik) Go hole. Go hole! Go hole!

Aimee sits at the top of the stairs as Erik rolls Momo deeper into the corridor, backlit by the bathroom light.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Deirdre holds the Virgin Mary statue in her hand. Mary is horizontal, Deirdre stares into space, resigned...

MOMO (O.S.)
--oh airroridoll...aawwwhhh...
INT. UPSTAIRS - SPIRAL STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

AIMEE POV through the railing: ERIK, in the depths of the corridor holding Momo as she has a fit. They are backlit by bathroom light. It’s as if Momo’s possessed.

MOMO
...go home to fuck you you bitch!.. Aaaawwww... where do you go hole! They’re comin to what’s wrong with you did this...

ERIK
Okay, okay, okay...we’ll go for a walk... okay...shhhh... ...shhhhh...you’re okay... shhhhh... shhhhh...you’re okay.... shhhhh...

Momo’s screams TAPER OVER GLIMPSES OF EMPTY AREAS OF THE APARTMENT: corridors, forgotten corners, electrical tape flapping by a vestigial heating grate etc.

MOMO (CONT'D)
(tapering)
...where do go hole in a wheres do go hole in a wheres do go hole in a... shhhhh....

ERIK (CONT'D)
...there we go... there we go, shhhhh.... shhhhh....you’re okay...

The floor creaks as Erik starts to wheel Momo around, calming her. Aimee creeps down one spiral step at a time.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Deirdre at the table. The tea candles have burned out.

EXT. AIR SHAFT WINDOW - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Through the window bars: Aimee and Deirdre. Aimee walks out. Aimee reappears with a glass of water for Deirdre.

INT. BUILDING STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Brigid hustles up the final set of building stairs, bursting from the cramped, narrow stairwell onto the--

EXT. TENEMENT ROOFTOP - NIGHT

--expanse of a ramshackle roof and its stunning view of the financial district lit up against a navy sky.

Richard arrives, out of breath. We see Brigid and Richard talking but we can’t hear them—the hum of the elevator motor room and whoosh of the city is our soundscape.
AROUND BRIGID AND RICHARD, WE TAKE IN THE SKY AND CITY LIGHTS. BLURRED, THE CITY LIGHTS resemble the glow-balls made by the strands of Christmas lights. Focus returns to Brigid and Richard, now silent in each other’s arms, small against the enormity of the city.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Aimee and Deirdre search for something to say.

DEIRDRE
If I ever get like that...I don’t ever want you guys to have to...

Beat.

AIMEE
Mom...I’m sorry.

Deirdre goes to say something, stops.

DEIRDRE
Sorry you’re sick.
(Beat.)
That e-mail about us being electrons wasn’t religious—it was from a science website.

Aimee goes to respond, can’t find the words.

EXT. TENEMENT ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Brigid and Richard against the expanse of the city. Richard stands to leave, Brigid pulls him back down; she holds him.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Deirdre studies Aimee who’s a bit lost herself.

DEIRDRE
Think you and Carol might still...?

Deirdre realizes this isn’t what Aimee needs now.

DEIRDRE (CONT’D)
If I skinned my knee or had any kinda setback, my Mom’d say...‘This, too, shall pass’, and I’d roll my eyes at her, but...this’ll pass, it will...
AIMEE
[I know, I know...]

Aimee resists breaking down. Deirdre knows she’s hurting.

DEIRDRE
You can love someone for 40 years... there’s still times you’re alone, you know?...but, uh...[I don’t know how to describe it].

Aimee looks to her mom for more, in spite of herself. For a second, it’s like she’s a little kid again.

DEIRDRE (CONT’D)
...I, uh, drank too much...gotta use the [bathroom].

Deirdre goes up the staircase; her knee gives her trouble.

AIMEE
Mom...[I love you]...sorry, it smells really bad in there.

DEIRDRE
Shoulda got Brigid that candle.

Deirdre disappears up the stairs, Aimee hears ERIK AND DEIRDRE UPSTAIRS EXCHANGING WORDS. Are they arguing?...

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - 1 MINUTE LATER - NIGHT

...Aimee in the stairwell, observing Deirdre and Erik through the bars. They’re having an audible-but-indecipherable argument. Deirdre wants to get Momo to the bathroom but Erik insists Deirdre sit down and rest. Deirdre relents, Erik cares for her. He massages her patella tendon. They have a routine. The historic love underscoring this moment hits Aimee hard. SHADOWS CAST FROM ERIK AND DEIRDRE DANCE ON AIMEE’S FACE, LIKE A HOME MOVIE PLAYING ON HER SKIN.

Aimee CREAKS up the final steps as Deirdre helps Momo into the bathroom. Erik sees Aimee, approaches.

AIMEE
Gonna go for a walk around the block...

ERIK
You okay?  

AIMEE (CONT’D)
I’m--yeah, I want some air, Dad.

Aimee puts on her coat. Erik searches for something to bridge the gap, to stop her from going, thoughts racing...
ERIK (CONT'D)
I’ve been losing sleep trying to--I was saying to Father Paul in how.../just thinking about losing you guys gets me thinking about...

AIMEE
What’re you [saying?]...

In the dim light, ERIK SEES AIMEE IN SHADOW, featureless.

ERIK
...when you were gone, this--

AIMEE
What’re you [saying?]... --fireman was holding a body with your suit on?

AIMEE (CONT'D)

Dad...

ERIK
...but a coata ash melted onto her?, like she got turned into a statue like...

AIMEE
Dad...

Aimee aches for her father but needs to take care of herself. She heads for the UPSTAIRS HALLWAY...

ERIK
...there was gray in her eyes and mouth even, it was...like her whole... (a discovery) [...face was gone...]

Aimee doesn’t clock it, she’s already WALKING OUT--

AIMEE (O.S.)
The car company will call when they’re ready, leave your phone by the window so it’ll ring.

--Sound of the door shutting--

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Erik takes out his cell per Aimee’s instructions and places it on the windowsill when--A SHADOW CROSSES HIS FACE. He looks outside but can’t see anything. He goes into the **UPSTAIRS HALLWAY**, gets the LED lantern. He walks back to the window to get a better look, holds up the lantern to the window but THE GLASS ONLY REFLECTS HIS IMAGE. A LOUD CRASH of fallen pots and pans from downstairs.

**ERIK**

*(calling down)*

Brigid...?

No answer. A bit unnerved, Erik slowly DESCENDS THE STAIRS...

---

**INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT**

...it’s brighter here; Erik turns the lantern off, leaves it by the staircase. **Pipes clank**. He moves into the **KITCHEN**—he sees a FEW POTS AND PANS (the ones we saw teetering earlier) fallen in front of the drying rack.

**AIMEE***(O.S.)*

Guys, the car’s out front!

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**INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - 1 MINUTE LATER - NIGHT**

Aimee holding the main door open. Deirdre and Momo hustle into their coats, backlit by the hallway fluorescent light.

**DEIRDRE**

Help her with her coat, will you?...

**AIMEE**

Is Dad...?

**DEIRDRE**

[I dunno...]

**(calling down)**

...Dad!

**DEIRDRE** *(CONT'D)*

Where’s Brigid?

**AIMEE**

With Rich...

*(Deirdre wants more info)*

...she’s embarrassed, she’s...[I don’t even wanna get into it.]
INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

AIMEE (O.S.)
...Dad!...

ERIK (calling up)
I heard you...

DEIRDRE (O.S.)
(to Erik, calling down)
Hey, can you grab Mom’s blanket and the pan we brought?

ERIK
Uh-huh.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Aimee and Momo exit the apartment. Deirdre follows, then stops.

EXT. VESTIBULE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Deirdre’s figure, hesitating. She walks to the window, until her figure fills most of the window frame. Deirdre walks away, her figure shrinking, revealing the outline of THE VIRGIN MARY STATUE on the air conditioner.

CLOSE ON MARY as we hear the sounds of Deirdre’s footsteps leaving, then the sound of the door close as--

EXT. ELDREDGE STREET - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

--as DEIRDRE AND RICHARD AND AIMEE SLAM THE TRUNK shut on Momo’s half-folded wheelchair, it’s stuck.

DEIRDRE
No, no you gotta...[let me]...

WIDER—they struggle to collapse the wheelchair. They’re fighting over how to do it—but can’t be heard above the street noise. Eventually one of the foot holders snaps back, scaring Deirdre, who YELPS. This starts Aimee laughing involuntarily. BRIGID BOUNDS OUT OF THE TENEMENT’S FRONT DOOR--she shoos Deirdre and Aimee into the van. Momo stares out of the van window, already buckled in. The tenement’s front door light flickers. Richard is exhausted.

AN ELDERLY FUJIANESE COUPLE looks on from across the street.
INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA – CONTINUOUS – NIGHT

Erik searches for Momo’s blanket. He finds it, folds it when–
–THE DOWNSTAIRS LIGHTS FLICKER, then steady. Then go out.

ERIK
Shit.

Erik is barely visible via artificial light from neighbors’
air shaft windows. He puts the blanket down; gropes for the
lantern, knocks over a chair, then hears—VIBRATING,
faintly, from...is it in the room?...

Somewhere—a phone vibrates. Vibrates. Vibrates. Erik finds
the lantern, turns it on...the vibrating stops. LED lantern
in hand, Erik goes to the fuse box. He tries the switches
to no avail. He tries them again, when—VIBRATING, again.

ERIK (CONT’D)
[Is that the phone?]

A phone vibrates. Vibrates. Vibrates. LED lantern in hand—
ERIK GOES UP THE STAIRCASE and into the--

INT. UPSTAIRS MAIN ROOM – CONTINUOUS – NIGHT

--where steel curves of the stairs throw FANTASTIC SHADOWS on
the wall. Erik’s phone lights up the windowsill, moving
slightly as it vibrates. Vibrates. His heart races as he
reaches for the phone.

ERIK
Hello?...hello--

Sudden rumble of the TRASH COMPACTOR from below. He goes to
the stairs; as he descends THE MIRRORED CLOSET DOOR IS HALF-
OPEN and reflects his lantern, stopping him for a moment. He
continues downstairs--

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA – CONTINUOUS – NIGHT

--where the rumble grows louder with each step...Erik’s
breath quickens as he moves DOWN THE DARK HALLWAY towards
the THE BASEMENT DOOR. He throws it open; fluorescent light
floods in—the rumble of the trash compactor is now even
louder but more familiar, more like a loud trash compactor.

The trash compactor completes its cycle. Silence.

Erik comes back inside but the spring-hinged door doesn’t
stay open, it slams shut plunging the room into darkness.
It scares him, he drops the lantern.
Erik gropes for something to hold the door open, grabs a paint can holding the anteroom door open, uses it to prop open the basement door...

Fluorescent hallway light spills into the space again via the basement door. Erik’s propping it open with a chair.

Erik grasps for the dropped lantern, which has remained on, holds it up and for a second WE ARE JOLTED by what might be A DARK OUTLINE OF A WOMAN--which quickly reveals itself to be THE OUTLINE OF BRIGID’S COAT hanging on the wall...

Erik sweats--what is happening to me--He swings the lantern around and catches a brief glimpse of what might be a FACE PUSHING THROUGH THE WHITE WALL, quickly revealed to be the bubbling water stain as--from the depths of the hallway--

...click-clack, click-clack, click-clack...
Erik backs away from the hallway entrance.
...click-clack, click-clack, click-clack...
Erik’s heart pounds, he looks towards the door.
...click-CLACK, click-CLACK, click-CLACK...

In a breath, AN ELDERLY CHINESE WOMAN passes the basement door on her way down the hall, wheeling her laundry in a cheap metal cart with a busted wheel. The sounds slowly disappears as she rolls the cart down the hall.

This ordinary event overwhelms Erik; triggers a few ugly sobs. His face, half-visible via the lantern. He sits, quietly terrified, sweating, mumbling the Hail Mary. Is he recovering from a panic attack?

ERIK
[What’s happening to me?...oh God...]

SLOW PULL BACK, around 25 seconds--almost imperceptible until we glean how small Erik is, alone, surrounded by huge darkness. Then, in the growing darkness above Erik--

A DOOR OPENS. It’s the upstairs hallway door. Brigid enters, backlit by the hall light. For the first time WE SEE UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS AT THE SAME TIME.

BRIGID
Dad...the driver’s gonna have to keep circling the block. Dad...?

ERIK
Yeah, no here I come...
Brigid searches for something more to say. She stops in the doorway. Brigid returns, searches for something to say.

Erik finds the pan.

Erik can’t find Momo’s blanket.

BRIGID

It’s a van for some reason, so...I can ride with you guys to Penn Station... I’ll get out with Aimee there, take the subway back...it’s not far.

ERIK

Thanks.

DOWNSTAIRS:

Erik in the epic dark. He goes to leave, but realizes THE LED LANTERN IS STILL ON. Erik turns off the lantern. The shaft of hallway light has a tunnel-like quality. Floating dust particles are visible. Imperceptibly, the dark around Erik slowly saturates, from the darkness of a room without light to a black that voids any sense of architecture. Erik exits down the hallway. Is the hallway a bit longer than before? A long beat.

The faint ding of the elevator from deep in the hallway. The sound of the elevator doors opening and closing. The sound of the elevator motor going up. A very long beat.

The propped-open door begins to close entirely on its own; the weight of the chair can no longer hold it open.

The door slowly creaks shut, leaving us in a deep, true BLACK.

THE END