

SILENT HISTORY

Pilot

by

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TEASER

CLOSE-UP ON A TEENAGER'S FACE

It rapidly shifts and twitches through a series of complex combinations of micro-expressions.

LAUGHING along with several VOICES OFF SCREEN, his eyes sparkle with energy and humor.

This is SPENCER (17).

INT. BARROWBROOK SILENT YOUTH FACILITY BUNK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MASON (14) and three other PALS in pajamas, are seated on the bed across from Spencer in the large dorm room.

They are cracking up at Spencer's story, making similar micro-expressions in response.

It's called Face-talking.

There is a loud RAP on the door. They're late.

INT. BARROWBROOK CAFETERIA - MORNING - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Spencer and Mason wait at the end of the breakfast line.

Barrowbrook has the faded look of an institution trying to create an upbeat environment while being totally underfunded.

Most of the BOYS and GIRLS are already seated at long tables, eating. They wear grey P.E. sweats with "Barrowbrook Silent Youth Facility" printed on them.

The weird thing is how quiet it is. None of the kids talk. We'll come to know kids like these as "SILENTS."

A LUMP OF SCRAMBLED EGGS DROPS ONTO A PLATE

The CAFETERIA WORKER hands the plate to Spencer.

The worker talks with his CO-WORKER as she swaps in a fresh tray.

We hear their conversation from Spencer's perspective.

It has all the cadence and intonation of someone speaking normally, but sounds like JIBBERISH.

Spencer can hear, but the words are nonsense to him.

The jibberish becomes more distant. As we hear with Spencer's heightened senses other sounds fade up: the CLINKING of silverware, RUSTLING clothing. There is a FAST TAPPING SOUND.

CLOSE ON an ATTENDANT'S fingers drumming on a table.

Spencer takes it all in.

INT. BARROWBROOK "LIFE SKILLS" ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

A large room filled with work tables.

SILENT KIDS are assembling tiny circuits using magnifying devices. They're quick at replicating intricate patterns.

An ATTENDANT supervises the kids. But he is distracted.

SCROLLING THROUGH PICS ON HIS CELLPHONE

Mason, goofing around, makes a little man out of wires. He puppets it to walk towards Spencer.

ATTENDANT
(scolding Mason)
[JIBBERISH]

Mason stops and the Attendant goes back to his phone.

Mason imitates him to Spencer, acting like his imaginary phone is *oh so important*. Spencer LAUGHS.

The Attendant eyes him, annoyed. Spencer shoots him a look --
"so what?"

INT./EXT. CAR - PARKED OUTSIDE BARROWBROOK - DAY

A serious-looking man in a shirt and tie is sitting in his self-driving car. Looks like he lives on black coffee and Vitamin B pills.

This is DR. AUGUST BURNHAM (40s).

He's on an intense conference call on the FOLD-DOWN VID-SCREEN with a slick business type in a suit (late 20s).

Burnham is stressed.

BURNHAM
I don't think you're understanding
me--

SLICK SUIT

The only thing I want to understand is if you have a working prototype to present or not.

BURNHAM

(defensive)

I'm close, but I need more time.

SLICK SUIT

Time's up. We will be making our 3rd quarter decisions on the 17th. If you have something to show in the next week, contact my assistant.

Slick Suit ends the call. The VID SCREEN displays:

CALL ENDED : PROFECTUS VENTURES : Duration 2 Mins 38 Secs

Burnham leans back in his seat, closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

He takes out a FIDGET CUBE. Spins a small wheel on one side of the cube. Tries to center himself.

EXT. BARROWBROOK - CONTINUOUS

THE CAR DOOR OPENS

Burnham gets out of the car.

OPENS THE TRUNK

Takes out a SILVER ROLLER CASE. Closes the trunk.

FOLLOW Burnham walking into the front entrance of Barrowbrook.

THE CASE TRAILING BEHIND HIM

INT. BARROWBROOK - CONTINUOUS

AT A SECURITY DESK WHERE VISITORS CHECK IN

Burnham greets the RECEPTIONIST warmly. He's the picture of composure despite the less than ideal conference call.

BURNHAM

Hey, Kathy.

RECEPTIONIST

Hello, Dr. Burnham. Mr. Molina is expecting you. He's back in his office.

BURNHAM

Thanks.

RECEPTIONIST

Sorry, I need you to fill out the Visitor Sign-In.

BURNHAM

No problem.

He signs on a TABLET mounted on the counter.

The Receptionist BUZZES him in.

INT. BARROWBROOK HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Burnham walks down the hall pulling his rolling case.

INT. DIRECTOR MOLINA'S OFFICE - DAY

DIRECTOR MOLINA (50s) is seated at his desk. He has a kind face that shows years of being beaten down by bureaucracy.

He looks up when BURNHAM ENTERS.

Burnham closes the door behind him. He's got his cold, down-to-business gameface on.

BURNHAM

I'm going to take one of them off-site.

MOLINA

What?

BURNHAM

You heard me.

MOLINA

What we agreed on was observation and testing. Here.

BURNHAM

I have OCFS approval.

MOLINA

I'm aware. But why didn't you tell me about this from the beginning?

BURNHAM

I'm telling you now.

(beat)

You should be pleased. Thanks to my work here my research is entering the next phase.

MOLINA

(unhappy but resigned)

I'll have Kathy schedule a window for you next week.

BURNHAM

No. It needs to be today.

CUT TO:

EXT. BARROWBROOK YARD - DAY

Spencer steps out from Barrowbrook into the open air. He looks up as a murmuration of birds circles, repeatedly turning, folding in on itself, forming beautiful patterns.

SPENCER BREATHEs IN DEEPLY THROUGH HIS NOSE, CLOSING HIS EYES

He slowly makes a strange and intentional gesture with his arm, almost like Tai Chi.

Scattered through the fenced-in yard, other SILENTS are moving in perfect time with Spencer.

Note: this is our first example of Silent "Communing," which we will see again later, and then in full force in the final Act.

Molina appears behind Spencer and watches for a moment. As many times as he has seen Communing, it still amazes him.

He reluctantly touches Spencer on the shoulder. This brings Spencer and ALL OF THE OTHER SILENTS simultaneously out of this trance.

INT. BARROWBROOK HALLWAY - DAY

Outside a CLOSED DOOR several SILENT KIDS sit waiting in a row of chairs.

We hear the sound of three pairs of FOOTSTEPS approaching.

Mason sits down in one of the empty chairs. He's nervous.

Spencer stays standing with Molina. He searches Molina's face for a clue.

The door opens and a confused-looking SILENT GIRL steps out. Molina holds out his arm to usher her over. She stands by him, happy to be close to a familiar face.

MOLINA SQUEEZES SPENCER'S SHOULDER

It's like a mix of an apology and an encouragement. Spencer is not sure what to make of it.

Molina SIGHS and guides the Silent Girl away down the hall.

Burnham steps out the door and motions for Mason.

Mason freezes with panic.

Spencer moves forward and goes into the room in his place.

INT. TEST ROOM - DAY

Spencer is seated at a table. A long IllumiDesk bar is projecting a KEYBOARD on one side.

A SERIES OF ABSTRACT IMAGES PROJECTED ON THE OTHER SIDE

Burnham prepares an EEG skull cap studded with nodes trailing wires that connect to a portable diagnostic machine.

Two BARROWBROOK ATTENDANTS stand by, clearly out of their element with the testing machinery.

Burnham walks around behind Spencer with the EEG cap. He starts to strap it onto Spencer's head.

Spencer thrashes out of the EEG skull cap.

Burnham steps back and motions to the Barrowbrook Attendants.

BURNHAM

Hold him down.

They do what they're told. Hold Spencer to the chair.

As Burnham tries again to position the EEG cap --

Spencer bites one of the Attendants. He YELPS with pain.

His counterpart keeps Spencer pinned down as Burnham takes out a TRANQUILIZER NEEDLE from a pouch.

He carefully sticks Spencer in the arm with the needle.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The Attendants drag a slumped Spencer out of the room and down the hall.

Mason watches, horrified.

Burnham steps out the door and motions Mason in for testing.

CUT TO:

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

WHIRRING and BEEPING, and the SOUND of something soft and moist.

CLOSE ON two socked feet sticking out from under a clinical blue blanket. We DOLLY UP the body under the blanket past several cinched nylon straps.

Mason is strapped to an operating table -- awake but groggy.

Mason's skull has been cut open and numerous electrodes are attached directly to his brain.

A SCREEN in front of Mason shows a series of words and counterpart images.

Burnham, in surgical gear, is surrounded by several ASSISTANTS.

He observes readouts and then adjusts the electrical current to each node.

KEYING IN NUMBERS ON A KEYBOARD

Mason's eyes blink and his mouth moves in jolts like a possessed doll.

CUT TO:

LATER

GLOVED HANDS SEW MASON'S SCALP SHUT

Extending out about an inch from his skull is an INPUT JACK.

END TEASER

ACT 1

INT. BACKSTAGE AT THE OAKS SCHOOL GRADUATION - DAY

POV looking past a stage curtain.

We scan the audience sitting in folding chairs in a school auditorium. Our POV lands on THEO GREENE (40s).

REVERSE TO REVEAL FLORA GREENE (16), peeking out from backstage. She's dressed in a preppy Oaks School uniform.

Flora looks back out to the audience, her gaze shifting from her dad to a GROUP OF TEENS her age sitting together chatting enthusiastically.

NOTICE one girl's distinctive SIDE BRAID hairstyle.

We hear all talking from Flora's perspective. The words are meaningless.

ONSTAGE and OFF SCREEN, a MAN's voice is going on in JIBBERISH.

It's a speech.

Flora pulls back from the curtain.

BACKSTAGE

Flora is surrounded by about 10 SILENT STUDENTS in Oaks School uniforms.

They are excitedly Face-talking with each other.

They are all younger than her - just kids.

SERIES -- Flora tries to make herself look cooler:

She pushes up her jacket sleeves.

She rolls the top of her pleated skirt to make it shorter.

She takes out her ponytail and runs her hands through her hair.

She restyles her hair into a side braid like the Girl out in the auditorium.

INT. ONSTAGE - DAY

PRINCIPAL HASKINS (50s), the man giving the speech, stands at a podium emblazoned with the crest of The Oaks School.

HASKINS

...People assume that being Silent is a disadvantage. Some even see it as a threat. But perhaps it's actually an advantage that has not yet been understood.

ANGLE ON Theo, smiling in agreement.

HASKINS (CONT'D)

We founded The Oaks School 5 years ago because we believe that education is for everyone. Every child has a special talent hidden inside, and education is the key to unlock that potential.

The Teens in the audience are still talking. A PARENT SHUSHES them.

HASKINS (CONT'D)

Our Silent students amaze us every day in unexpected ways. It's no coincidence that Face-talking was discovered by our own teacher Francine Chang.

ANGLE ON a woman in the front row as she nervously straightens her blouse. This is FRANCINE CHANG (30s).

CLOSE ON an extra button hole at the bottom of her blouse. Everything is off by one button. Realizing this, she tries to cover it up with her cardigan.

HASKINS (CONT'D)

As the saying goes, "Children are not things to be molded, but are people to be unfolded."

Haskins pauses for dramatic effect.

HASKINS (CONT'D)

Silent children are like wonderful new exotic plants in the garden of our lives. As we try to teach them about our world, they are teaching us. We are still learning how to give them what they need to bloom.

(MORE)

HASKINS (CONT'D)

Today I am proud to introduce The Oaks School's first graduating class - The Silent Class of 2027!

APPLAUSE from the audience.

HASKINS (CONT'D)

But first a few words from Francine Chang.

FRANCINE CHANG steps up to the podium on stage. She's clearly extremely uncomfortable with public speaking.

FRANCINE

Thanks Bob. Everyone gives me a lot of credit for "discovering" Face-talking, but anyone who really paid attention to these kids would have noticed.

(beat)

Um, teaching Silent kids is great. It's like working in a library. You never have to tell them to be quiet.

Awkward silence from the audience. Her joke doesn't land.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

Graduates. Wow. What does that even mean?

(beat)

I knew I should have written notes for this.

Haskins gives her a look.

Francine laughs nervously.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

And now, a special performance by the Silent Class of 2027, led by Valedictorian Flora Greene.

Francine gestures offstage. Waving the students out.

BACKSTAGE

Off Francine's cue, Flora closes her eyes and lifts her arms behind her like wings.

Without even seeing her, the Silent graduates interrupt their Face-talking and quickly get into a V behind her.

ONSTAGE

Flora leads the GRADUATES out.

She stands front and center, the V formation falling back on both sides of her in descending height order.

ANGLE ON Theo in the audience, beaming with pride.

HE SLIDES HIS PHONE INTO WIDE MODE

Holding it up high, taking pictures.

ON STAGE the Silents all bow to the audience in unison.

CLOSE ON Flora. Her eyelids flutter closed.

In unison, they all begin to sing a complex and haunting SONG WITHOUT WORDS.

The harmonies are both consonant and dissonant at the same time. It feels organic, not following any known musical structure -- clearly something they have invented themselves.

(Spotify Playlist for reference linked [here](#))

IN THE AUDIENCE, the parents look surprised and a little unnerved at the UNEARTHLY SOUND.

As the Silents sing, their harmonies build and layer until the sound builds to an incredible aural fever -- and then all at once -- in unison -- they fall silent.

Following Flora's lead, the Silents bow again.

A beat. And then --

APPLAUSE from the audience.

IN THE AUDIENCE, Theo stands, clapping.

ANGLE ON Flora, pleased with the response.

EXT. THE OAKS SCHOOL LAWN - DAY

Out on the school lawn, festooned with paper crepe streamers.

Each SILENT STUDENT has a COLORFUL HELIUM PARTY BALLOON tied to their wrist with a long string, making them easy to single out as they move about in the small crowd.

IN A CLUSTER

Side Braid and the other Teens from the audience are hanging out.

A YOUNGER SILENT SIBLING trailing a balloon runs toward them with deliveries of brownies and cookies for his older brother with FLOPPY HAIR.

The Younger Silent scampers off with a LITTLE BUDDY.

SIDE BRAID

My mom won't leave me alone. She wants me to tell her everything. Just check my status.

FLOPPY HAIR

You need a messed-up brother. Problem solved. My mom's so busy with Jack she lets me do whatever I want.

STAR SWEATER

Yeah except she makes you come to stuff like this. And then I have to come.

Floppy Hair smiles and takes a bite of brownie.

FLOPPY HAIR

Hey it's not so bad.

Their HOODIE wearing friend walks up with a lemonade and napkin full of cookies -- munchies for later.

HOODIE

So are you going to the party at Jayden's house?

STAR SWEATER

Remember last time?

SIDE BRAID

I think my shoe is still there!

The Teens laugh.

ANGLE ON Flora, watching them.

She carefully unties the string from around her wrist and watches as --

THE BALLOON FLOATS AWAY INTO THE SKY

Flora musters her resolve and approaches the Teens.
 She orbits around the group, waiting for them to notice her.
 She smiles and tries to make eye contact.
 They ignore her completely.
 A beat.

Flora realizes that to them she is not even there.

It's like she doesn't exist.

Deflated, she walks away from the party towards the SWINGS.

AT THE REFRESHMENT TABLE

Theo is talking with MRS. AND MR. ROARK. Their Silent daughter BECCA (15) and her younger non-Silent sister EMILY (12) are playing around nearby.

MRS. ROARK

The move has been tough for both of them. Becca had her routines, and Emily misses her friends, and her softball team.

THEO

Becca's going to love The Oaks.

MRS. ROARK

Luckily Garrett's firm has an East Coast branch, and I can work from anywhere.

THEO

Same. I'm a programmer, work from home. QA -- I fix broken code.

(to Mr. Roark)

What part of the city is your firm in?

MR. ROARK

It's near Lexington Avenue and 23rd Street.

THEO

If you're gonna be a New Yorker you gotta start saying 23rd and Lex.

MRS. ROARK

I thought we were becoming "Jersey" people.

THEO

If you work in the city it still counts.

(remembering)

There's this great 24 hour coffee place not too far from your firm -- The Flying Saucer. Me and my programming team used to be regulars...at 2am. We pulled a lot of late nights back then. I don't even know if it's still there, it's been so long.

MR. ROARK

I already miss my old go-to. Ritual Roasters.

THEO

You'll be missing that California weather this winter.

MRS. ROARK

With the storms these days, who knows.

ON THE SWINGSET

Flora is alone. On a swing, gently swaying forward and back ever so slightly.

She looks out into her future, the unknown.

We are with her subjective experience, and the chatter of the party becomes incomprehensible JIBBERISH.

Flora focuses her attention on specific sights, sounds and smells in the environment -- *without language getting in the way, her senses are heightened.*

She closes her eyes and breathes in.

She feels the wind on her face, blowing her hair.

Her fingers brush the cool smooth chains of the swing.

A buzzing bee circles a dandelion.

Beneath the swing, Flora traces a pattern in the sand with her feet -- concentric shapes like lines in a Zen garden.

Francine comes over and sits on the swing next to Flora. She's not much of a party person.

Flora looks over at her. Smiles. Happy to have her company.

Francine doesn't ask her to be anything she's not, they can just sit together and that's enough.

BACK AT THE PARTY

Theo with the Roarks.

THEO

We should get Flora and Becca together. It would be nice for both of them to have a new friend.

MRS. ROARK

Great. I'll find you on Orbit.

Theo notices Flora sitting on the swings with Francine.

THEO

I should probably go.

MR. ROARK

Nice to meet you.

MRS. ROARK

See you soon.

FOLLOW Theo across the lawn over to the swingset.

AT THE SWINGSET

Theo steps up.

THEO

I was wondering where you two went off to.

(to Francine)

Look at you. Just one of the kids.

FRANCINE

Maybe you should give me a push.

Theo gives Francine a playful push on the swing.

Francine wiggles her legs back and forth like a little kid.

THEO

What goes up must come down.

FRANCINE
(bad joke)
Does this make us "swingers"?

THEO
Ha ha.

Francine's swing slows and she stands.

FRANCINE
I guess we won't be seeing any more
of your famous tacos at the PTA.

THEO
Wow -- I've finally achieved fame
for something.

FRANCINE
Hey, do you read?

THEO
Is this a trick question?

FRANCINE
I read a study that 42% of college
graduates never open a book again.
Crazy right? Have you been watching
Silveron Saga? The books are
better.

THEO
I do have a soft spot for Fantasy.

FRANCINE
How's your hero? Kill any dragons
lately?

THEO
(a little embarrassed)
Oh you remembered that. Pretty much
an invincible tank at this point.
I've started in a new space MMO
actually.

FRANCINE
You should get out more. And that's
advice from a nerd to a nerd.

Theo takes this suggestion more seriously than Francine
intended it.

THEO
Yeah I should.

FRANCINE

(pressing)

You know I have a life outside of
this school. And it's not virtual.

(beat)

And I do love tacos.

THEO

(awkward)

Well, you should come over
sometime. I know Flora would love
to see you.

(beat)

We better get going and let you get
back to the party.

Theo gets ready to leave and starts to gently tug Flora
towards the car.

Flora bursts away and runs back to Francine. Gives her a
tight hug.

ANGLE ON Theo, surprised and a little jealous.

END ACT 1

ACT 2

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

Mason is standing in the center of a room behind a wall of glass.

The input jack from his head is attached to a cable that runs to a computer server.

Burnham stands in front of him addressing an audience of VENTURE CAPITAL BIGWIGS from Profectus Ventures including the guy we know as Slick Suit.

Burnham gestures and a video is projected onto the glass.

It's a handheld POV shot, walking down a West Village street. WORDS are superimposed and tracking with every object. *Sidewalk. Taxi. Door knob. Planter. Neighbor. Stop Sign.*

BURNHAM

Try to imagine making your way
through a world in which nothing
has a name. How could you do it?
What would that world look like?
How would even describe to yourself
the idea of "looking"?

He gestures again and the words disappear. Then the video goes out of focus, becoming a sea of moving colors.

BURNHAM (CONT'D)

This is the wordless nightmare
these children with Emergent Phasic
Resistance -- "Silents" -- are
living.

He gestures and a new presentation slide appears on the glass. It's three side-by-side looping animations of PET scan brain activity.

BURNHAM (CONT'D)

There is a common misconception
that Silents are deaf. Here are
three brains. The first two, nearly
identical, are those of a hearing
and a deaf subject. And on the
right is a child born with EPR.

He points to the third animated brain scan.

BURNHAM (CONT'D)

You can see that the visual and auditory cortices are actively receiving information, but the language processing centers of the brain - Wernicke's Area, Broca's Area and the connecting Arcuate Fasciculus -- are entirely dark. "Silents" cannot understand language. It's meaningless sounds and symbols to them.

The HEAD PARTNER (60s) is focused on his tablet. He's not even paying attention to the presentation.

SLICK SUIT

We read your brief. Let's cut to the chase. I understand you have a solution to share with us.

Burnham, rushed, gestures to flip through a number of scientific and inspirational slides, skipping ahead to the end of his presentation.

The final image is a GRAPHICAL SILHOUETTE of a young boy, his BODY MADE UP OF TIGHTLY PACKED WORDS.

BURNHAM

Cogito ergo sum. I think, therefore I am. In a very real sense, thought requires language. For most of us, this is hardwired into our brains. For children with EPR, they need help to complete that circuit. Allow me to introduce Mason.

The glass becomes transparent fully revealing Mason.

BURNHAM (CONT'D)

Mason was born Silent, but thanks to an early prototype of what will become an embedded device - like a pacemaker for the mind - he can now speak.

BURNHAM (CONT'D)

Say "hello" Mason.

MASON

(speaking in blocky phonemes)

Hell-o.

BURNHAM

What is your favorite food?

CLOSE-ON Burnham's laptop, where he subtly taps the 2 KEY.

MASON

I lie-k chee-ez peet-zaa.

A no-nonsense MANAGING PARTNER is intrigued. She leans forward in her chair.

SENIOR PARTNER

Let me ask him a question.

BURNHAM

I'm not sure that's a good idea.
He's only comfortable with me.

Head Partner looks up from his tablet.

HEAD PARTNER

Unless you come with the package I
need to see it work on it's own.

Burnham motions for her to go ahead.

MANAGING PARTNER

Mason -- describe what you see for
us.

MASON

...

Burnham carefully presses the 5 key.

MASON (CONT'D)

Miy fav-oh-rit cow-lor ees yel-oh.

MANAGING PARTNER

Mason -- tell us...what you are
thinking?

Burnham starts to type and Senior Partner gives him a look.

Off the look, Burnham stops typing.

MASON

I em thee-nkuh-eeng...

Silence hangs in the air.

HEAD PARTNER

I've seen enough.

They all stand. Start to leave.

BURNHAM

(insistent)

I know it needs more development,
but you have to see the potential.

(tries again)

You're about to walk away from the
biggest medical breakthrough of our
lifetime.

MANAGING PARTNER

We're interested in research that
results in a product, not a Nobel
Prize.

She follows the others out the door.

Slick Suit walks up to Burnham and mashes the keys on the
laptop.

Burnham, shocked, tries to swipe his hands away.

MASON

(jerking and twitching)

EhUngHgelKekEengRitEesOh

SLICK SUIT

You've wasted our time.

Slick Suit shows himself out. Burnham watches him go.

Alone now, Burnham looks at Mason. He presses a key on his
laptop. A sad joke to himself.

MASON

Thay-nkuh yoo ev-ree-won.

Burnham walks over to Mason and carefully and gently
disconnects the cable from the input jack on his head.

BURNHAM

(to Mason)

I'm sorry.

INT. GREENE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM DAY

Theo is working. Sitting at his messy desk CODING.

He clicks over to Orbit (like a FUTURE Facebook/Twitter) on
another tab.

Looks up Francine.

Then hears Flora coming into the room. Quickly clicks back to his programming. *Feels guilty for even looking at Francine's profile.*

Flora is carrying a sheet of 11x17 drawing paper.

She presents it to Theo.

AN EXTREMELY DETAILED PENCIL-DRAWN PORTRAIT OF HERSELF

With RINGS OF LINES arcing out on each side of her like a **magnetic field**.

Theo takes the drawing, smiles at Flora. Holds it up next to her face.

She traces an imaginary arc above her head like the drawing.

THEO

This is great Flora. Looks just like you.

He's in the habit of talking to her at home from years of hoping it would sink in.

She smiles with a hint of defeat like he is missing the point. Turns around. Heads back upstairs.

Theo stares at the drawing for another beat.

He opens a drawer next to his desk and puts it on top of a pile of many other pencil drawings, dating back to Flora's childhood.

EXT. MONTCLAIR SUBURBAN BACKYARD - DAY

A woman dressed in loose batik harem pants and a shirt with an Ohm symbol on it is pruning her rose bushes.

This is MARGARET LAFFERTY (30s).

Mrs. Roark comes around the side of the house with Becca (Silent) and Emily (non-Silent).

Emily is wearing a SANTA CRUZ 5K SILENT WALK FOR AWARENESS T-shirt.

MRS. ROARK

We tried knocking...

Margaret looks them over, critically.

MARGARET
I'm not interested in making a
donation.

She goes back to her pruning.

Mrs. Roark looks puzzled.

MRS. ROARK
Are you Mrs. Greene? Are Theo and
Flora home?

MARGARET
(without looking at them)
Next door.

MRS. ROARK
Excuse me?

Margaret stops her pruning again, annoyed, with a huff.

MARGARET
(pointing)
You have the wrong house. The
Greene's live next door.

INT. GREENE HOUSE - DAY

In the entryway.

Flora leads Becca upstairs, leaving Theo with Mrs. Roark and
Emily.

THEO
So Emily, what kind of things are
you into?

EMILY
I don't know.

THEO
I heard you are quite the
sportster. Do you and your dad
practice in the backyard?

EMILY
Not really. I go to team practice.
Used to. Before we moved.

MRS. ROARK
You're already signed up for the
summer league, practice starts in
two weeks.

(MORE)

MRS. ROARK (CONT'D)
 Let's scoot, I've got a long
 grocery list.
 (to Theo)
 Here's my number just in case.

She taps her Wearable and sends her contact info to Theo.

MRS. ROARK (CONT'D)
 Oh and Becca hates spicy food. In
 case you make snacks.

THEO
 Noted. No spice. See you this
 evening.
 (to Emily)
 Nice to meet you Emily, have fun.

Emily rolls her eyes like *"yeah right going to the grocery store with my mom will be fun."*

INT. FLORA'S ROOM - DAY

Flora's room is styled for a much younger age - *Theo clearly bought what he thought a little girl would like and left it at that.*

Flora has added a layer of her own decoration on top -- cut-and-paste collages of pictures, mostly of nature or expressive photography of faces. Plus some of her own pencil drawings, including many with aura-like rings expanding from the subjects.

Flora leads Becca over to a shelf with one of her most prized possessions --

A COLLECTION OF SMALL CRYSTAL ANIMALS

Flora picks up a crystal cat and holds it up to the light.

It scatters the light into sparkling reflections on the walls of her room.

Flora places the crystal animal carefully back on the shelf.

Flora and Becca sit on the bed Face-talking.

Flora, an initial "getting to know you".

Becca, warm responses.

Flora, trying to keep Becca's interest, pops up and leads Becca to her closet.

The two of them goof around dressing each other in different outfits and posing together in the mirror.

Becca goes back into the closet and flips through the clothes, uninspired. Flora's clothing is a bit conservative and young.

Becca Face-talks, asking if Flora has anything better.

INT. THEO'S BEDROOM - DAY

In an effort to please her friend, Flora expands their clothing repertoire by going into the back of her dad's closet where her mother's clothes have been put away.

She delicately tries on one of her mom's dresses over her own clothes.

She finds a small accordion box which opens to reveal her mother's makeup.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

Flora and Becca enter carrying a couple of make-up items each and immediately start applying them.

Flora traces her lips with the lipstick and looks at herself in the mirror a little differently for the first time. As a young woman.

IN THE STAIRWELL

Theo is walking up the stairs carrying two cupcakes -- one in each hand.

UPSTAIRS

He follows the giggles to his bathroom.

The door is closed.

He sets the cupcakes down on the dresser.

Opens the door.

IN THE MASTER BATHROOM

Theo walks in and is stunned for a moment to see the image of his wife from behind.

Flora turns to see her father, staring.

That moment -- he instinctually rushes forward and hugs her tightly.

Flora doesn't know what to do.

ANGLE ON Theo's face. His eyes well up.

He lets go of her. Pushes her away by the shoulders.

THEO

That's not yours. Take it off.

But she doesn't understand. Looks back confused at his burst of emotion.

Theo, frustrated, turns her around, and unzips the dress.

EXT. GREENE BACKYARD - DAY

Theo leads Flora and Becca by the hand and out the door.

Thrusts them out into the backyard and closes the door.

Flora and Becca Face-talk.

Confusion from Becca.

Apologies from Flora.

Not much to do outside. There's a trampoline and a patio table and chairs.

Bees BUZZ in and out of a hive hanging on a tree. CLOSE ON the HIVE.

Then Flora moves to face Becca, she wants to make a deeper connection.

Flora moves an arm. Becca mirrors this motion.

Then Becca moves and Flora mirrors.

Another movement. Mirrored.

At first their mirrored movements are intentional, but they shift to moving together on an intuitive level. Their movements flow and become more complex yet always synchronized, always matching but neither following.

They are "Communing" -- communicating with each other in some way we cannot fully understand.

We perceive heightened senses from their perspective.

The sound of their breathing.

The feel of skin on skin when they touch.

The crickets in the grass.

The sounds of the suburbs in the distance.

NEXT DOOR IN MARGARET LAFFERTY'S YARD

Margaret watches Flora and Becca suspiciously over the chest-high fence as she waters her roses with a hose.

She "accidentally" lifts the hose nozzle and hits Becca right in the face with a BLAST OF COLD WATER -- breaking Flora and Becca's spell.

IN THE GREENE BACKYARD

Becca starts crying. She is shocked, wet, and confused.

Theo comes out to see what the commotion is about.

THEO

What's going on? Why are you wet?

MARGARET

(not sorry)

Oops. Sorry about that.

Theo approaches the fence. Margaret innocently waters her roses.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

You know, it's illegal to leave Silents unaccompanied.

THEO

This is our backyard.

MARGARET

Flora almost passes for normal -- when she's alone.

THEO

So what were they doing?

MARGARET

Something... not right.

Theo waits for an actual answer. Margaret gets flustered.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
It's not what they were doing, it's
how they were doing it.

THEO
(cutting her off)
Look I'm sorry they bothered you.
I'm calling her mother.

Theo takes his sleeve and dries off Becca's face.

THEO (CONT'D)
You're fine, you're okay. Just a
little wet.

Becca yanks away from him. Theo takes out his phone and calls Mrs. Roark.

THEO (CONT'D)
Hello, Allyse? This is Theo
Greene...

Theo walks through the slider door inside to continue his phone call.

Flora looks at Becca, who is still crying. She has oriented herself away from Flora.

Standing alone, Flora looks dejected and miserable. Her chance at friendship in ruins.

CUT TO:

INT. BARROWBROOK HALLWAY - DAY

An ATTENDANT leads Mason -- walking several paces behind -- down the hall.

Mason looks damaged beyond repair, vacant, a bandage on his head where the interface had been surgically implanted and subsequently removed.

MASON
Ayy Kuh Kuh Naw Brrr Eeeg Guh...

INT. BARROWBROOK BUNK ROOM - DAY

Spencer is on the floor next to his bunk doing sit-ups.

The door opens and the Attendant helps Mason into the room. Sits him down on his bed.

The Attendant immediately leaves, closing the door.

Spencer jumps up, rushes to Mason, and examines the bandage on Mason's head.

Spencer Face-talks to Mason.

Spencer asks if he is okay.

No response from Mason.

Spencer grabs Mason by the shoulders, stares into his eyes, and **Face-talks more slowly.**

MASON

Prrr Eee Awww Shhhh Shhh Ehhh...

Spencer just looks at him, heartbroken.

Mason no longer understands anything at all.

Spencer goes to his personal shelf on the wall by his bunk.

He picks up a worn RAINBOW CATERPILLAR baby toy. NOTICE a PHOTO of Spencer (10) with his mom and dad, and an ICOSAHEDRON "RUBIK'S CUBE" on the shelf next to it.

Spencer carefully places the caterpillar in Mason's hands, and closes his hands around it.

INT. GREENE HOUSE - FLORA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Flora is sitting on the floor drawing ABSTRACT WAVE PATTERNS with a pencil on big sheet of drawing paper.

The door opens and she looks up.

It's Theo, checking in on her before going to bed. He's holding the two cupcakes.

Theo enters with an apologetic half-smile. He puts one of the cupcakes down in front of her.

He slumps to the floor next to her, leans up against the bed.

As Flora continues her drawing, Theo eats his cupcake.

END ACT 2

ACT 3

INT. GREENE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Flora and Theo go about their Saturday morning routine.

Flora is at the electronic stovetop, integrated into the counter, making expert cheese and mushroom omelets.

She flips one, lets it get the perfect hint of brown, and lifts it onto a plate for Theo.

She starts on the second one for herself.

Theo makes coffee and toast. *Her cooking skills are not from his gene pool.*

TWO COFFEES -- Theo takes his black and adds almost more milk and sugar than coffee to Flora's, just the way she likes it.

After grabbing the sugar he leaves the cabinet open, *like always.*

Flora puts the sugar away and closes the cabinet in an automatic gesture.

The toast POPS UP in an old-fashioned (*read early 2000s*) toaster. Theo scrapes butter onto both pieces.

Flora collects a buttered toast onto each omelet plate and brings them over the table, while Theo sets each coffee in the appropriate place.

Their harmonious morning synchronicity ends as always with the two of them eating in silence at the table.

THEO
(giving a voice command)
Edie, play NPR.

NPR RADIO fills the void.

LATER

Theo and Flora are heading out the front door.

Flora takes an umbrella from the corner and hands it to Theo. Theo looks out at the clear sky.

THEO
If you say so.

INT./EXT. THEO'S CAR - DAY

Theo and Flora sit in Theo's self-driving car as it heads through Montclair. Low music plays on the car stereo.

Theo talks in a running monologue out of habit, kind of to Flora, kind of to himself.

Flora ignores Theo, staring out the passenger side window.

THEO

This picture was passing around Orbit yesterday. It's a polar bear floating in the middle of the ocean on this small piece of ice. You see photos like that a lot - "the last remains of the Arctic." But he wasn't in the Arctic, he had floated all the way down near Hawaii. I wonder what that bear is thinking?

Flora turns up the music on the car stereo. Theo continues talking to himself OFFSCREEN.

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

Maybe there's another polar bear floating up from Antarctica, and they'll meet halfway.

They stop at a stoplight. Flora looks out the window an APARTMENT COMPLEX. There is a moving truck parked outside.

Flora sees a YOUNG WOMAN supervising as MOVERS carry her furniture into her new apartment.

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

Maybe they'll adapt and generations down the line there will be tropical bears. Purple and yellow. They'll love to eat ice cubes, but they won't know why.

Flora watches this closely and then looks at her father.

ANGLE ON Theo. He doesn't even notice.

Then the light changes and the car accelerates.

EXT. YMCA - DAY

Theo's car pulls into the YMCA parking lot and stops. Raindrops have started hitting the windshield.

Theo and Flora get out. The scattered rain drops are quickly turning into a light summer shower. Flora gives Theo an "I told you so" look. He grabs the umbrella.

They head into the gymnasium as the car self-parks.

INT. YMCA - DAY

Theo and Flora enter and head to opposite sides of the room.

Theo and other PARENTS of Silents take their seats in a big circle of about 12 chairs.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Flora joins the other SILENT KIDS in their usual hang out spot. Some in a few chairs, some on the floor.

They are facing a TV on a rolling cart.

Flora takes a chair.

A VOLUNTEER finishes plugging in the television to an extension cord and tunes it to The Weather Channel.

This seems to get their attention...even to captivate them.

Becca arrives, along with her sister Emily.

Flora and Becca exchange an uncomfortable glance.

Becca and Emily sit on the floor far off from Flora.

IN THE SUPPORT GROUP CIRCLE

Theo takes an empty seat and gives the Roarks an awkward wave. The support group -- already starting -- is pretty freeform, an outlet for parents of the 1.3% to share their experiences.

Most are there with their SPOUSES.

BIG EARRINGS

...the news will not shut up about the Bronston trial.

HIPSTER PARENT

Yeah thanks a lot CNN. Like getting a babysitter wasn't hard enough already. Even my sister is afraid to come over.

BIG EARRINGS

Normal kids do horrible things too.

PREACHY MOM

What you have to remember is your child is normal. It's just an expanded definition.

SIMONE (30s) looks like she doesn't get much sleep. She's here by herself.

SIMONE

This will never feel normal.

POLO SHIRT

I've got Harper on a daily Omega blend, and it's really making a difference. She's more attentive, her eyes follow me everywhere. And when I talk she tries to mirror my mouth.

YOGA PANTS

What brand are you using? I tried the fish oil but my little guy wasn't having it. I gotta admit it tasted pretty gross.

BIG DAD

I hate to break it to you but it doesn't work. I tried it all, the Omegas, the B-12. Our whole family went Gluten Free for 6 freaking months.

(beat)

I just saw what I wanted to see. At least now we can eat sub sandos together.

THEO

You don't want to see my vitamin cabinet. But it can't hurt, right?

BALLBUSTER

Last week I swear to god this effing guy. I was in line at the mall with Elsie for Cinnabon, and these jerks standing behind me saw her, you know Face-talking to herself. They used the R word and were joking about her twitchy face.

(beat)

(MORE)

BALLBUSTER (CONT'D)

I wanted to turn around, punch one
of 'em right in the nuts and yell
"I can understand you, asshole!"

Other parents LAUGH.

WITH THE SILENTS

Meanwhile the Silents plus non-Silent Emily are sitting
around keeping themselves entertained.

Some of the Silents are sitting on the floor DRAWING
PICTURES.

Flora is braiding a FIVE YEAR OLD'S hair while another SMALL
KID is using her knee as a mountain for her doll.

ON TV

A WEATHER PERSON stands in front of a map of the greater New
York City Tri-State Area.

He gestures to high and low pressure lines, superimposed over
animating Doppler Radar data of an INCOMING STORM.

WEATHER PERSON

The upcoming week will see another
low pressure system coming in from
the North Atlantic, bringing more
storms. New York City could be hit
hard by the Nor'easter meaning some
nasty weather at the beach.

CLOSE ON one of the DRAWINGS as a HAND colors in DARK AND
STORMY CLOUDS.

Several of the Silents are drawing similar pictures: a group
of stick figures surrounded by a circle of RADIATING LINES
like in Flora's self-portrait.

Flora absentmindedly traces curving shapes that match the low
pressure lines onto the back of the little girl, her hair now
braided.

She keeps glancing away from the weather on TV over to Becca,
who continues to ignore her.

Becca and Emily play a holographic version of "Cats Cradle"
with gloves.

EMILY

Don't let me win!

Becca smiles and makes a winning move.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Hey!

CLOSE ON the television screen, showing satellite imagery of the Atlantic.

THE SWIRLING PATTERN OF THE STORM

The eye approaching New York City.

WITH THE SUPPORT GROUP

THEO

...Watching Flora graduate. She's so full of life. She has so many friends. She's the one who can't talk but she's better at connecting with people than I am.

SIMONE

That sounds like a dream. I'm still trying to pottytrain and he's 4. Ethan pees all over, but especially this fern in the living room. Loves peeing on that fern. I bought another houseplant and put it right next to the toilet, I figured close enough, but of course he won't give that one the golden showers!

BIG DAD

It's tough with boys.

MRS. ROARK

Have any of you guys tried PROMPT? Our PT says it helps kids with Apraxia. Or that new clinical trial?

ADOPTIVE MOM

The Dr. Burnham one? I heard they are looking for participants but Biyu is too young.

THEO

I'm thinking of taking Flora in to see if she qualifies. Worth a try.

CUT TO:

AFTER THE SUPPORT GROUP

ANGLE ON a bioplastic cup filling up with coffee from a silver coffee maker.

Theo places the cup on the table in front of Simone and fills another.

In the background, the rest of the Parents stand around chit-chatting.

SIMONE

You're so lucky with your daughter, all things considered. I know it's best for our kids if we focus on the present--

THEO

Cream and sugar?

SIMONE

Both, thanks.

Theo puts cream and sugar in her coffee.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

--but sometimes I can't help think about if things were different. If I could go back and have the choice... to not have Ethan, knowing what I know now, would I do it?

Theo hands the cup to Simone.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

It's hard to even admit it to myself. But there are times I wish he didn't exist. I want my life back. I don't know if that makes me a bad person.

THEO

We all feel that way sometimes.

(beat)

When I was younger I never thought of myself as a dad. Just not how I saw my life. But Mel really wanted it. We do things for love.

Theo grabs a Danish off the table and takes a bite.

END ACT 3

ACT 4

INT. BARROWBROOK BUNK ROOM - NIGHT

The Silents in the boys bunk room are asleep in their beds.

CLOSE ON Spencer -- EYES OPEN.

Spencer sits up. He looks around the room, checking to see if anyone has noticed him awake.

All clear. He quietly slips out of bed, already fully dressed in his Barrowbrook sweats.

Spencer picks up his sneakers, tied together by the shoelaces, and drapes them over his shoulder.

He pads towards the window in his socks.

Pauses to look at Mason, asleep, holding the caterpillar.

There is nothing he can do, he has to leave Mason behind.

He turns around and returns to his bed.

From next his family photo, he grabs the ICOSAHEDRON "RUBIK'S CUBE" and stuffs it in his pocket.

Spencer moves to the window. He carefully slides it open. There are four wrought-iron bars -- there is no way he can fit through.

But...the bars are as old and disintegrating as Barrowbrook.

Spencer tries a couple of the bars until he finds one that is rusted through.

He starts yanking on the bar. Again. Again. UNTIL --

CRUNCH -- it breaks at the weak spot -- making a loud metallic sound.

Spencer freezes and turns around to see if anyone noticed the noise.

Several of the Silents sit up in bed, awake now.

Spencer exchanges looks with each of them. They're not coming with him, but they're not going to stop him.

He uses the leverage of the bar to bend it out of the way.

This leaves a space just large enough to slip through.

EXT. BARROWBROOK - NIGHT

A WINDOW ON THE SECOND FLOOR

Spencer climbs through the space between the bars.

It is quite a big drop to the ground.

Spencer grapples down so that he is hanging out of the window from the windowsill.

He lets go, and drops down onto a dumpster below.

CLANG.

A light goes on somewhere inside Barrowbrook.

Spencer hops off of the dumpster onto the ground and runs away from the building in his socks.

He stops to look behind. There is no turning back now.

Spencer quickly pulls on his sneakers and then disappears into the night.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS - MORNING

Spencer walks down a street in Brooklyn. He takes off his sweatshirt and then puts it back on inside-out hiding the "Barrowbrook Silent Youth Facility" name and logo.

He takes a napkin from his pocket and unfolds it, revealing a dinner roll. Breakfast.

Spencer approaches a BODEGA. It has outside racks displaying cheap goods.

He grabs a pair of knockoff sunglasses, a phone case with a paper phone placeholder inside, and an "I ♥ NY" shirt.

INT./EXT. THEO'S CAR - DAY

In the car again, Radiolab playing.

Theo and Flora drive across the Verrazano Bridge towards NYC.

A look of concern on Flora's face as she watches for landmarks and doesn't recognize any.

She looks at Theo, trying to read him.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Burnham's research facility is stark, like a doctor's office, but more utilitarian. Precious funding is not being wasted on creature comforts.

Theo and Flora walk in. Theo tries to get across a reassuring TONE to Flora.

THEO

It's going to be okay. It's just another doctor. You used to go to doctors all the time.

They walk up to RECEPTION.

STRANGELY EMPTY AND QUIET

The lights aren't even on over the reception desk or in the waiting area. It's not dark -- there's light coming in through the windows -- but it doesn't exactly look open for business.

Theo looks around, perplexed.

THEO (CONT'D)

Hello?

The door to the back office opens and Burnham comes out.

THEO (CONT'D)

Did I get the time wrong?

BURNHAM

(lying)

Oh, she's on break.

(beat)

Let's take Flora back.

Burnham leads Flora.

DOWN THE HALL

Theo follows.

They reach the door to the testing room and Burnham ushers Flora in.

Theo is about to go in with her --

BURNHAM (CONT'D)

Only the test subject. I don't want your presence to influence the results.

Theo looks past Burnham into the test room, full of unfamiliar equipment. He realizes he doesn't know what the test involves.

BURNHAM (CONT'D)

Make yourself comfortable in the waiting room.

Theo gives Flora another look. He's faking his calm and she can tell. He's nervous about leaving her in there alone.

THEO

Alright. Thanks.

ANGLE ON Flora. She nods to her dad. She hates to see him worry. Whatever it is, she'll handle it.

CUT TO:

THE WAITING ROOM

Theo finds the light switch. Turns on the fluorescents.

Grabs a E-Mag and sits down. He selects WIRED and scrolls through the pages on autopilot. His mind is elsewhere.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - DAY

Spencer is walking down the street without a destination. He is now wearing the "I ♥ NY" shirt.

He reaches into his pocket and takes out the ICOSAHEDRON "RUBIK'S CUBE."

He turns it over in his hands.

He starts to absentmindedly mess with it. Turns the side.

Starts solving it without even thinking about it, as he continues walking.

SPENCER TURNS A CORNER

He sees a bread truck pull in front of a bakery across the street.

The DRIVER opens up the back and carries a box into the bakery leaving the truck open.

That moment -- a group of teenagers we will come to know as THE SILENT GANG appears.

There are four guys: RAMON (the leader), LOGAN (his sidekick) FLIP (the jokester), and JACK (the bottom guy); and one girl with a messy mohawk: SASHA (tough as nails and Ramon's right hand).

The Silent Gang sneaks up to the truck without a sound and steals a box from the back. Easy. They've done this before.

They signal each other by Face-talking and take off.

Spencer follows them. They embody the freedom he's always longed for, and he wants in.

As the Silent Gang walks down the street, Logan SMASHES a windshield just for fun and a car ALARM goes off.

A SHOP OWNER comes out.

SHOP OWNER
Hey! What are you doing???

Ramon stops and turns. Takes an intimidating step towards the Shop Owner. The Gang follows his lead.

They slowly close in, surrounding The Shop Owner.

Then --

SILENT GANG
(all at once)
AHHHHHHHHHHH!

An intense, overwhelming scream from all of them at the same time.

The Shop Owner is overloaded and panicked. He spins around, surrounded by screaming faces.

And then they laugh and back off. Continue down the middle of the street.

The shellshocked Shop Owner turns to see Spencer lingering behind near the car and assumes he's part of the Gang.

SHOP OWNER
I'm calling the police! You freaks
are out of control.

The Shop Owner grabs Spencer by his shirt. The Gang thinks this is hilarious. Flip waves "bye bye."

Spencer throws him off and runs after the Silent Gang.

SHOP OWNER (CONT'D)
Get back here! You should all be
locked up!

EXT. SUBWAY ENTRANCE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The Silent Gang heads down into the subway.
Spencer follows.

INT. SUBWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Silent Gang turnstile jumps.
Spencer looks around nervously and then does the same.

ON THE PLATFORM

Spencer makes his way towards the Silent Gang.
A train pulls up, and they get on.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Spencer follows the Gang onto the train. The doors close.
As the train picks up speed, Logan and Sasha give Spencer a
sideways look.

Spencer Face-talks to them.

Introduces himself. He wants to hang out with them.

Sasha grimaces at Spencer and then shoves him back against
the door with a BANG.

NON-SILENTS on the train look frightened.

A LADY gets up from the seat closest to them and walks to the
other end of the train.

Sasha gets in Spencer's face -- she's almost nose-to-nose
with him.

Sasha, angry and wild, Face-talks at Spencer.

**She's aggressive. Just because he's Silent doesn't mean he is
one of them. He's too much of a wuss for street life.**

Spencer doesn't take no for answer. He argues they should give him a chance.

The train pulls up to the next stop.

The door opens.

Sasha shoves Spencer out of the train and he lands hard on the ground on the platform.

He doesn't get up. Just looks at Sasha and the Gang as the doors close and the train pulls away.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - THE TESTING ROOM - DAY

A suspicious but stoic Flora is sitting in a chair with an EEG cap on her head.

She is in the middle of a series of tests of perception, comprehension, and pattern recognition.

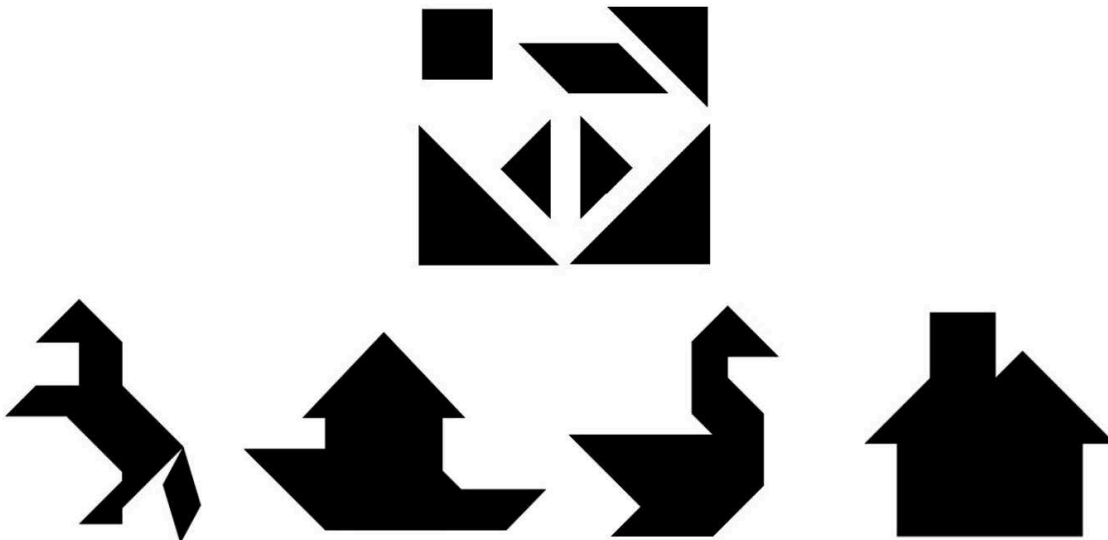
There are FOUR BUTTONS on the desk. A SCREEN in front of her.

Burnham is seated to the side with his laptop.

TESTING SERIES

TANGRAM SHAPES APPEAR AT THE TOP OF THE SCREEN

At the bottom of the screen there are four choices of what the shapes might combine to make.



Flora hits a button.

Again. Again. She quickly gets a correct match every time.

Burnham watches an imaging display of her brain activity as she responds.

GEOMETRIC PATTERNS FLASH

Each pattern has a dot in different places.

Flora indicates where the dot should go in the following PATTERN by hitting the correct button.

PHOTOS APPEAR ON SCREEN

Burnham says a word that matches one image.

BURNHAM

Tree.

(pause)

Tree.

Flora hesitates. She guesses and hits a button corresponding to the WRONG IMAGE.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - HALLWAY - DAY

Flora follows Burnham down the hall to another room. She looks back in the other direction towards the door to the waiting room.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - BACK ROOM - DAY

Burnham leads Flora into a large room. Against one wall there is a computer set-up connected to several medical devices, with an image of a brain scan on the monitor.

There are metal filing cabinets and labeled storage boxes. A table is pushed to the side, covered with testing equipment, children's toys, medical tools, and a number of vials.

Flora looks around apprehensively. This room looks "unofficial."

Burnham walks her to the center of the room and sits her down in a swivel office chair.

He takes a U-shaped magnet off of the table and shows it to Flora.

BURNHAM

Point. Like this. Follow the magnet.

She follows his example and points at the magnet. She follows it with her finger as he moves it around in patterns through the air.

Burnham puts a blindfold over Flora's eyes, followed by noise-cancelling headphones. She grips the edge of the chair, extremely anxious at having her senses cut off in this room alone with this man.

He holds the magnet up in front of her. She points at it.

He moves the magnet around in the air. Her finger follows it.

He walks around her in a circle, and she slowly spins in the the chair, keeping her finger trained on the magnet as easily as when she could see.

CUT TO

DRIPS OF A CLEAR LIQUID FALLING FROM AN EYEDROPPER

The drips land on the floor making a curving dotted line, like a Jackson Pollock action painting.

Burnham finishes creating a complicated line of the liquid around the room.

Flora is standing, still blindfolded, and wearing the headphones. He holds up the dropper IN FRONT OF HER NOSE, then pushes her gently forward.

Flora's feet WALKING FORWARD, heel-to-toe, following an invisible line.

Flora BREATHES IN.

As she walks along the invisible path with increasing speed and confidence, Burnham watches, impressed.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY - BURNHAM'S OFFICE - LATER

Theo sits anxiously in Burnham's office to discuss the results.

Flora is beside Theo but Burnham talks like she is not even there.

BURNHAM

Your daughter's visual-spatial cognition is top percentile. As well as a remarkable level of magneto-sensitivity, beyond the average EPR subject.

THEO

(looking over at Flora proudly)

I've always said she is really smart in her own way.

BURNHAM

I want to sign her up immediately.

THEO

That's great.

(beat)

So what does the trial entail exactly? I couldn't find any specifics online. Is it a new medication?

BURNHAM

She would be admitted and live here as an in-patient until the end of the trial period.

THEO

She's never been away from home before, can't she come in weekly visits? I don't mind driving her.

BURNHAM

It does involve a minor surgical procedure. A small implant.

Flora watches Burnham's face closely. She sees the little twitch around his eyes, the tightening of his upper lip.

She can tell from his unconscious microexpressions that he is not telling the whole truth.

THEO

Oh. I uh didn't realize it was so invasive.

BURNHAM

Emergent Phasic Resistance is a serious congenital brain defect, and requires a correction in kind.

(MORE)

BURNHAM (CONT'D)
You wouldn't be here if the cure
was as simple as taking a few
pills.

Pause.

THEO
I'll have to think about it.

BURNHAM
Don't wait too long. I'm only
selecting a few subjects.

Burnham and Theo stand. Flora looks at Theo and does the
same.

BURNHAM (CONT'D)
I'll email you more information and
a consent form.

Burnham reaches out and shakes Theo's hand.

Then Burnham puts out his hand for Flora to shake.

She narrows her eyes at him. Doesn't take his hand.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

As they leave the facility, Flora walks ahead of Theo to the
car.

She is upset. This is the first time we have seen her truly
angry at her father.

Flora gets in the car and slams the door - *a gesture maybe
even Theo can understand.*

INT. THEO'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Theo gets into the car. Looks at Flora.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROOKLYN SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT - DAY

WIDE

Theo's car pulls in.

Theo and Flora get out of the car.

Flora begrudgingly follows Theo into the supermarket.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Theo picks up some groceries putting them into a basket.

FOLLOWING FLORA

She wanders the aisles alone.

Flora walks past a GUY in sunglasses (Spencer - but she doesn't know that) who is sneaking food into his pocket.

Cute, she thinks, but a non-Silent.

SPENCER'S PERSPECTIVE

He notices a pretty girl catching him red-handed.

Quickly he uses the phone case (he took from the bodega) and acts occupied with scrolling through his phone like the attendant back at Barrowbrook.

But she doesn't say anything. And walks away.

IN THE CEREAL AISLE

A TEENAGE BOY and his FRIENDS enter the aisle and spot Flora.

He walks up alongside her, as his friends trail behind.

TEENAGE BOY

Did you have Lucky Charms for
breakfast? Because you look
magically delicious!

When she doesn't respond, he thinks she is ignoring him, or playing hard to get.

TEENAGE BOY (CONT'D)

JK. But seriously what's your name?
I'm Derek.

Flora looks at him - clearly oblivious to the meaning of everything he is saying - and in a moment of horror the boy realizes that she is a Silent.

TEENAGE BOY (CONT'D)

Oh shit, you're one of them.

His friends burst out LAUGHING at him.

FRIEND 1

She's perfect! You can tell her
your dumb jokes all day!

FRIEND 2

A chick as stupid as you!

The boy, now embarrassed, gets mean. He approaches her and starts to lift up her skirt.

TEENAGE BOY

I bet you're a real slut. Just say
no if you want me to stop.

Flora holds down her skirt and tries to back away.

And at that moment, Spencer shows up and puts his arm around Flora. His dark sunglasses are fixed on the guy with a "try me" expression.

A tense beat.

The boys back off and leave.

Flora looks shaken up by the whole thing.

Spencer takes off the sunglasses and Face-talks to Flora.

Spencer, protective, expresses concern.

Flora expresses relief, gratitude.

They share a moment of understanding.

Then Flora sees Theo appear at the end of the aisle.

She gives Spencer a last look and heads off to her dad before Theo can approach and ruin it, leaving Spencer standing there watching her go.

END ACT 4

ACT 5

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Middle school coed soccer practice scrimmage.

WITH THE FORWARD AS HE DRIBBLES DOWN FIELD

CLEATS PASSING THE BALL

On the far end of the field the GOALIE -- readies to defend the goal.

A gust of wind blows the net of the goal.

The Goalie gets distracted from the game. She looks into the wind and starts to wander off the field, almost like a sleepwalker.

The COACH starts YELLING. The other players too.

WAVING THEIR HANDS TO GET HER ATTENTION

Then another SILENT PLAYER -- the Defensive Midfielder -- walks off after her in the same direction.

They both keep walking while in the background the Striker scores.

EXT. HIGH RISE BALCONY - DAY

A SILENT TEEN GIRL is lying on the balcony of her family's modern apartment, trying to get a tan.

The wind blows her hair over her face.

She gets up and stands at the balcony railing. She closes her eyes and bends towards the wind, like she is being tugged by an invisible thread.

EXT. BROOKLYN RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Spencer hasn't slept.

He sits on a stoop and lets his eyes close for a moment.

The breeze moves his hair.

He starts to unconsciously lean into the wind.

He adjusts his jaw as his ears pop from a change in pressure.

He opens his eyes.

Spencer stands and closes his eyes again, this time to focus on an inner compass.

The RUMBLE of thunder in the distance.

Spencer starts to walk towards the coming storm.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

STILLWELL AVENUE SUBWAY STATION

SILENT TEENS flood down the stairs.

ON SURF AVENUE

A bunch of SILENTS walk down the street, all heading in the same direction.

They are coming from everywhere...

GIRLS walking holding hands.

The two Soccer Players.

STREET SILENTS and PREPPY SILENTS walking together.

All quietly converging on the beach.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BOARDWALK - DAY

On the boardwalk, a hot dog vendor named KENULE MITEE (30s) stands beside his cart with the Coney Island rides visible in the background.

Kenule watches a trail of TEENAGERS pass by and head down to the beach.

OUT OVER THE OCEAN

The sky is growing dark.

A storm is coming in.

ON THE BOARDWALK

A few KIDS approach Kenule.

One SILENT BOY points at some cotton candy.

KENULE
Four dollars.

The Boy gives him a blank stare.

Kenule takes four one-dollar bills out of his cash box and holds them up in front of the Boy.

The Silent Boy removes cash from his pocket and hands it to Kenule for the cotton candy.

A neighboring CART VENDOR watches the exchange.

KENULE (CONT'D)
(to neighboring vendor)
See! Everyone loves cotton candy!

EXT. ASSER LEVY PARK - DAY

A group of SILENTS cuts across the grass in Asser Levy Park, heading towards Surf Avenue.

Spencer sees them and catches up with them.

He merges into the group, all heading towards the beach.

The wind kicks up, bending the branches of the trees back and forth.

Spencer and the other Silents cross Surf Avenue and climb onto the boardwalk.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - DAY

On the boardwalk Spencer passes by NEWS CREWS setting up, with their vans parked nearby.

The wind now really gusting.

ANGLE ON a CAMERA OPERATOR sandbagging a tripod.

ON THE BEACH

Spencer heads down onto the sand with the group.

NOTICE one awkward guy, a few years older than the rest. He is DAVID DIETRICH (early 20s) -- NOT A SILENT BUT TRYING TO PASS AS ONE. We'll be seeing more of him later in the season...

The CROWD gets more and more dense. Spencer makes his way through, slipping past and between people.

It's packed as tight as at an outdoor music festival - but all Silents.

Spencer sees the Silent Gang. They are surrounded by a group of YOUNGER STREET SILENTS who look up to them.

INT. GREENE HOUSE - FLORA'S ROOM - DAY

Flora sits alone in her room.

She half-heartedly fits pieces into a massive ten thousand piece COLOR GRADIENT PUZZLE on her desk. Her hands place each little piece in the right spot without thinking.

Flora gets up and goes to the window. She opens it and the wind blows in.

Flora closes her eyes and breathes deeply.

EXT. BEACH AT CONEY ISLAND - DAY

Spencer moves deeper into the center of the crowd of SILENT TEENS.

There is an electric energy in the air like the tension before a thunderstorm breaks.

FLASHES in the sky. Bolts of lighting going horizontal between storm clouds.

Like a "wave" in a sports stadium where no origin can be traced, all of a sudden the kids to the left of Spencer start to sway rhythmically.

Spencer and the Silents nearby him start to sway as well, and it continues onwards, until the whole MASS OF TEENS is swaying in unison.

Spencer grins as the sway starts to develop into slightly more complex synchronized movement.

EXT. BOARDWALK - DAY

REPORTERS are positioned in a row on the boardwalk each with their LIVE CAMERA CREW.

Their hair is blowing wildly in the wind.

We track along the line of reporters catching a snippet from each:

REPORTER 1
...the largest gathering of Silents
we have ever seen...

REPORTER 2
...frightened and intimidated by a
growing crowd that no one can speak
to or reason with...

REPORTER 3
...very little is known...

LAND ON --

STEVEN GRENIER (30s), the one journalist who is not like the others -- less slick, without a news crew, he's just got a BUDDY operating a handheld BLACK MAGIC POCKET CAM.

Grenier is interviewing Kenule, the hot dog vendor.

STEVEN GRENIER
Why do you think they are here?

INT. GREENE HOUSE - DAY

Flora walks downstairs.

Theo is in the kitchen doing the dishes, and has left the television on in the living room.

It's the News.

NEWS ANCHOR
Authorities fear the worst as
thousands of Silents gather on the
beach... violence could break out
at any moment.

Flora sees the news footage of the Silents on the beach and is immediately drawn towards the television.

She stands in the glow of the screen, alone, watching the swarm of Silents all together, all moving in unison, *Communing*.

Flora reaches out to touch the screen.

She starts to sway and, all alone in the living room, begins to dance in unison with the Silents on the beach as if in a trance.

Theo walks in from the kitchen and watches his teen daughter articulating strange movements, bathed in the blue light of the television.

She looks beautiful and eerie.

The yawning gap of understanding between father and daughter has never been wider.

Theo doesn't know how to reach her.

INT. BURNHAM'S LAB - THAT MOMENT

Burnham is watching the News, eating a microwave dinner.

His phone BUZZES. Incoming text from Profectus Ventures.

Burnham picks up the phone.

CLOSE ON the screen.

TEXT: *Interest in Silent control chip. Will call in the AM.*

ANGLE ON Burnham. A tiny smile.

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

The synchronized movements of the Silents have escalated to a complexity and detail that we can't comprehend in its simultaneous spontaneity and precision.

ANGLE ON Spencer's expression. He has a look of bliss on his face.

Spencer is lost in the moment, moving with the sea of teen bodies. *They are one.*

But it's so quiet - except for...

THE CRASHING OF THE WAVES

THE THUP-THUP OF A CIRCLING HELICOPTER

DISTANT SIRENS OF POLICE VEHICLES APPROACHING

As the camera cranes higher and higher we see that the Silents on the beach are creating INTRICATE AND SHIFTING ORGANIC PATTERNS.

Like something between celtic braids and an undulating murmururation of birds made up of human bodies.

A CRACK of THUNDER.

INT. GREENE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATE THAT NIGHT

Theo is playing a VIDEO GAME on his computer. It's a SCI-FI MMORPG.

Theo's AVATAR is being mobbed by a horde of insectoid aliens. He dies. His avatar respawns.

Theo closes his STEAM GAME WINDOW revealing --

THE OPEN FILE OF BURNHAM'S CONSENT FORM

It's already partially filled out.

Theo scrolls to the bottom of the document.

A beat.

He adds his DIGITAL SIGNATURE.

HOLD ON Theo. His finger hesitates over the mouse.

HE CLICKS THE "SEND" BUTTON

INT. FLORA'S ROOM - BEFORE DAWN

The next day, just before dawn.

Flora packs some clothes, her drawing book, and her favorite crystal cat wrapped in a sock into a bag.

INT. GREENE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Theo is asleep on the couch.

Flora comes into the living room on her way to the door. Notices her father.

She stops to look at him.

Carefully puts a throw blanket over him.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Flora exits the house quietly.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONTCLAIR SUBURBS - DAWN

Flora walks down the suburban streets of Montclair.

As she passes under the STREETLIGHTS, they cycle off one by one.

CUT TO BLACK.

END SHOW