

PARAMOUNT NETWORK

VELVET

11/5/15

ON A BLACK SCREEN -

PART I

PRELAP the sound of a passenger jet. Then-

INT. AIRLINE CABIN - NIGHT

The engine HUMS, cabin lights low. It's 1970 - so even in dim light the plush colors of our red, brown, and burnt orange decade are unmistakable.

PUSH down the aisle, past row after row of shoes, all still as most of their owners sleep, until we come to pair of HEELS, twitching restlessly.

Up from the heels to reveal **VELVET TEMPLETON**, 40's, striking, tweed skirt and matching jacket, a curtain of black hair sliced by a single WHITE STREAK.

She looks troubled. She stares at a broken fingernail hanging loosely on her thumb, dotted with a sliver of dried blood. From there her eyes shift toward the closed curtains up front that separate first class from the rest of the plane.

The **WOMAN** beside her, older, a motherly presence, English accent, notices Velvet's state. She grabs her purse, begins to fish.

WOMAN

They'll give you brandy if you ask,
but I learned some time ago that
flying demands something stronger.

She produces a flask, offers it to Velvet.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

This always settles me.

Velvet hesitates, then decides 'what the hell'. She takes the flask.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

First time?
(off Velvet's look)
Flying?

VELVET

Oh. No.

Velvet takes a drink, COUGHS slightly, tries to contain her surprise at the stiffness of the drink.

WOMAN

The good news is that it doesn't take much.

The woman takes a swig herself before putting the flask back in her purse. A long beat as Velvet regards her broken nail.

VELVET

Actually... I always liked flying. The feeling you'd left one place but hadn't yet come to another.

WOMAN

I don't mind being between places. I just prefer to do it on the ground.

The woman notes Velvet's eyes drifting back towards the first class divider.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Who's up there?

VELVET

Excuse me?

WOMAN

You look up front every ten seconds or so. Who's up there that's got you squirming in your seat?

VELVET

(slight smile)

Am I being terribly obvious or are you being terribly nosy?

WOMAN

It's undoubtedly the latter. Just ask my children.

(beat)

Actually, since I've retired I've become quite obsessed with a series of detective novels. My husband says as a result I've begun to imagine clues everywhere. I'll grant him it's made me more observant, but I'd argue life tends be quite devoid of real mystery.

VELVET

So you've made a mystery of me, is that it?

WOMAN

I also have some theories about the chap across the aisle, but until he wakes up my investigation is at a standstill.

Velvet smiles.

VELVET

My boss is up front.

WOMAN

Ah. Of course. Probably all bosses up there, I suspect. What is it that you do?

VELVET

Wouldn't you rather have a guess?

The woman smiles.

WOMAN

Hmmm. Yes. Let's have a proper look at you.

She takes Velvet in, head to toe.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Just what might you be all about?

SMASH TO:

INT. HAMPSTEAD OFFICES - DAY

Velvet, similarly dressed, long skirt and blouse, heels, WHISTLES mindlessly as she walks with a tray of tea.

She stops at a large wooden door at the end of the hall. KNOCKS softly, then opens the door.

INT. SUMNER'S OFFICE - DAY

In the doorway-

VELVET

Mr. Sumner? Tea?

A gentle, fatherly, silver haired man, MR. SUMNER looks up from behind his mahogany desk. He seems pleased to see her.

MR. SUMNER

Ah! Splendid. Saves me the trouble of inventing my own excuse for not working.

She crosses to his desk. As she begins to expertly prepare him a cup-

VELVET

Mr. Hamilton will meet us as soon as we land in New York. He'd like to take you to breakfast.

(as he begins to object)

I told him you'd be *happy* to join him as that will give me time to get you checked in, after which you'll be able to return to the hotel and sleep off some of the jet lag before your afternoon meetings.

He accepts the tea, impressed. After a sip-

MR. SUMNER

You spoil me, Ms. Winstead. Soon I'll be relying on you to cut my food.

VELVET

My pleasure sir. Anything else?

MR. SUMNER

Actually, yes. Do you mind taking a letter?

VELVET

Certainly. Just let me get these things out of the way and I'll grab my pad.

She takes the tea tray and heads for the door.

INT. HAMPSTEAD OFFICES

Velvet, WHISTLING again as she carries the tea set toward a credenza, suddenly stops, as she finds herself staring at a navy umbrella with a white strap, leaned against the wall.

Her whistle dies to a stunned exhale as she nearly spills her load.

MANNING (O.C.)

Careful. Something tells me if anyone makes a mess it falls to you to clean it up.

In a chair by the wall across from her desk is MANNING, late 50's, pressed and proper, handsomely bald, and strangely intimidating for someone who cuts such a reedy figure.

MANNING (CONT'D)

Tell me that's really you getting tea, Templeton. I want to see if I die of a heart attack right here in this chair.

She recovers herself, puts the tray on the credenza. Attempting to sound calm, but unable to hide her concern-

VELVET

What are you doing here?

She heads behind her desk, takes her pad from a desk drawer -

MANNING

Sort something out for me Ms. Winstead, does executive secretary mean you're an important secretary or the secretary to someone important?

VELVET

It means I'll be getting back. Show yourself out.

MANNING

(firm)
Sit.
(beat)
I've waited years to speak with you, Templeton. Mr. Sumner can wait a few moments.

She doesn't sit, but she pauses, puts the pad down on her desk to show she's listening.

MANNING (CONT'D)

I feel silly, but do you know where I thought I'd find you? I had a vision of you somewhere in South America. Working cattle, perhaps. Sleeping under the stars.

(beat)

Imagine my surprise, scouring the globe only to find you... here.

(MORE)

MANNING (CONT'D)

(beat)

You really get the tea?

VELVET

I'm also an excellent filer.

MANNING

We trained you for seven years.

VELVET

Nine if you count the languages.

MANNING

You were something very special.

VELVET

And now I'm just a middle aged secretary? That the gist of what you've come to say?

MANNING

(saddened)

Filing.

VELVET

Yes. To think I could be chasing Brazilian cows.

He smiles briefly. Then-

He draws a gun from his pocket, begins to casually affix a silencer to the barrel.

VELVET (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

MANNING

Let's see if you've really let it all go.

(in SUBTITLED German)

How many are back there?

VELVET

What?

MANNING

So German's gone. Russian?

(in SUBTITLED Russian)

There's five, yes? Ted in the back with Mary. Charles and Bridget. And Mr. Sumner, the executive with the overqualified secretary. Come on, you can still count can't you?

VELVET

Put it away.

MANNING

(back to English)

Ah. Now remember, I can only hear you when you answer as you're addressed. Let's try this.

(in SUBTITLED Portuguese)

If I know how many it's not a mess, but if I'm surprised it's worse for everyone.

VELVET

(in SUBTITLED Portuguese)

Put it away.

MANNING

(SUBTITLED Portuguese)

Ah! I knew you were in there. How's your Japanese?

(SUBTITLED Japanese)

I know this seems rather blunt, but sometimes blunt is what's required, right Velvet?

He stands, pocketing the gun. She steps around the desk, blocking his way.

VELVET

You're not leaving this room.

MANNING

Oh? And are you going to stop me? I thought you were just a middle aged secretary.

VELVET

I believe that was your assessment. Do you really want to test it?

MANNING

Did it occur to you that might be why I brought a gun, dear?

She grabs the heavy brass nameplate off her desk.

MANNING (CONT'D)

Now what do you imagine you're going to do with that?

VELVET

I'm going to cave in your-

MR. SUMNER
Ms. Winstead?

Velvet wheels to see Mr. Sumner approaching. He stops when he sees Manning.

MR. SUMNER (CONT'D)
My apologies. I wondered if you'd forgotten about the letter. I see you're... otherwise engaged.

Velvet eyes Manning's hand in his pocket. A beat. Suddenly Manning steps toward Sumner. Velvet moves to cut him off, raising the brass nameplate as Manning moves to pull his hand out, but... when he does, there's no gun.

Manning smiles and politely extends his hand to Sumner, leaving Velvet to awkwardly lower the nameplate. Sumner watches her, thoroughly confused, but before he can question, Manning is shaking his hand.

MANNING
Mr. Sumner, Jeffrey Bourdand, Department of Health Interior. I'm afraid I was just discussing with Ms. Winstead that due to the potential leak of a chemical agent near her flat yesterday we're going to need her to come with us. She's in no way contagious and because we've caught it early, we'll be able to counteract any ill effects she and others might experience. But our protocol demands strict observation at our specialized facility straight away. Someone will be by later with paperwork to this effect, but I need to collect her now so that our business doesn't trouble the rest of you.
(to Velvet)
Does that sound like an acceptable solution to our predicament, Ms. Winstead?

She stares at him for a moment, unsure. A long beat.

VELVET
You're absolutely certain of the address?

MANNING
I'm afraid so.

VELVET
This was yesterday?

Manning seems unsure why she's dragging this out, but plays along.

MANNING
Yes.

VELVET
And you're bringing in everyone from the building?

MANNING
I know it sounds extreme, but it's for their and your own protection. Now, we really should get going.

He gently reaches out for her.

VELVET
No.

MANNING
Excuse me?

She smiles.

VELVET
I'm sorry, I should have mentioned it earlier, but the details of what you're saying were running through my head so quickly I distracted myself. We haven't been in our flat for more than a week. Minor renovations. There have been workers there though, I'm sure you'll want to get in touch with them.

(to Mr. Sumner)
Sir, let me just walk this gentleman out and tell him how to reach our contractors and I'll be right back to take the letter.

MR. SUMNER
(a little lost)
Of course. Take your time.

Before Manning can say a word she's grabbed his umbrella, shoved it into his hand and is pulling him towards the door, the heavy nameplate still in her free hand. As they walk-

VELVET
(whispering)
Try to do anything other than walk
straight out this door and I'll
crush your skull.

MANNING
Funny, Ms. Winstead. You sound just
like someone I used to know.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD OFFICES

It's raining out as Velvet hauls Manning through an alcove
towards the street. Just before they get there, she pushes
him roughly into a corner.

VELVET
Are you out of your fucking mind? I
will-

She stops suddenly, looks down to see the tip of the silencer
pressed into her stomach. She looks up at him.

VELVET (CONT'D)
You're going to shoot me now?

A beat, and then he flips the gun around, gives it to her,
handle first. She stares, confused.

MANNING
Take it.
(beat)
Take-

She snatches it away and has turned it on him before he can
finish.

MANNING (CONT'D)
Pull the clip.

She hesitates, then flips a switch, lets the clip fall into
her hand. The action is smooth, a muscle memory.

The clip is empty.

MANNING (CONT'D)
You really think I was going to
shoot up some offices in Hampstead
over a secretary who's let herself
go?

Off Velvet's confusion-

MANNING (CONT'D)

Perhaps I just wondered if there was even a bit of the old stuff still in you. Let's just say I'm pleasantly surprised.

(beat)

Besides, when you're calm, you're deaf. You were always a bit like a child's toy in that way. If we wanted to get anything out of you, we had to do something to wind you up first. So, shall I assume that you're now agitated enough to listen?

She doesn't respond but her face says she's sure as hell agitated.

MANNING (CONT'D)

I made you a promise Templeton, though admittedly I made it before you walked away, effectively rendering all our efforts moot.

(catching himself)

Apologies, the bitterness still has a way of creeping in.

(resetting)

I told you that if the opportunity to even that most awful of scores ever presented itself, you'd be the first to know. So... here I am.

Now Velvet's listening.

MANNING (CONT'D)

Of course enough time has passed that I'm afraid you're not just the first to know, you're almost certainly the last to care. But a promise is a promise, at least when it's from me. If you remain interested, we leave for Paris tonight.

VELVET

I'm on a plane to New York tonight.

MANNING

That may well be just how the story ends. But understand, this is no longer of interest to anyone else. Should you choose not administer a punishment, their acts will simply go unpunished.

(MORE)

MANNING (CONT'D)

If you're comfortable with that, so be it.

(beat)

May I have the gun back?

She stares at him a beat, then hands it back. As he pockets it-

MANNING (CONT'D)

Flight 648 leaves at 19:30. If you're not on it you'll never hear from me again.

He opens the navy umbrella and steps into the rain, then suddenly pauses, doubles back.

MANNING (CONT'D)

This was found among the effects you left behind. I thought you should have it.

He hands her a key fob - a simple black rectangle with a silver stripe along the length of it. She takes it, stares.

VELVET

I left this for a reason.

MANNING

Yes. I suspect it's the same reason I've returned it.

With that, he turns, walks into the rain. OFF Velvet, watching him go-

INT. SUMNER'S OFFICE

Velvet sits across from Sumner, scribbling as he dictates -

MR. SUMNER

Pursuant to clause B we believe it's imperative that all parties be prepared to revisit the issues raised in the presentation of last October the 12th and-

The SOUND FADES as Sumner's lips keep moving, but Velvet, a blank look on her face stops scribbling.

She's just staring, her mind elsewhere.

INT. HAMPSTEAD OFFICES

Still SILENT as Velvet hunches over an open file cabinet. She looks at the stack of files to be dealt with but she's not moving, just staring at them.

INT. HAMPSTEAD OFFICES

Velvet at her desk. We can see the phone is ringing by the blinking lights along the side, but we can't hear it. She doesn't move.

INT. HAMPSTEAD OFFICES

Velvet stands over the tea set on a tray, still utterly lost in thought.

The sound of her name breaks the silence.

MR. SUMNER

Ms. Winstead?

She looks up, startled.

VELVET

Yes sir.

MR. SUMNER

Everything all right?

VELVET

Yes sir. Fine. Just about to head home.

MR. SUMNER

You've got your own way to the airport then? I really don't mind having the car drop by.

VELVET

No sir. I'm taken care of.

MR. SUMNER

Of course you are. Very good. I'll see you there.

VELVET

Yes sir.

He departs. A long beat as she once again stares at the tea set. Then-

CUT TO:

EXT. DENSE FOREST - TWILIGHT - FLASHBACK

Velvet, roughly 20 years younger, tight black bodysuit, her hair, SANS THE WHITE STREAK, a waving waterfall of black as she sprints and dodges between the tightly packed trees.

MANNING (V.O.)

After Agent Templeton's transport fell victim to sabotage she cut a path through dense forest on foot in a race to make the rendezvous. Satellite images confirm this was approximately an eighteen mile run.

REVEAL FOUR RUSSIAN SOLDIERS, machine guns drawn, as they sprint through the forest after her.

MANNING (V.O.)

We believe discovery of the abandoned transport touched off heavy patrols in the area, one of which intercepted Agent Velvet when she was within the final two miles of the rendezvous point and began pursuit.

ON VELVET, still at a dead sprint, checking over her shoulder to see the soldiers in the distance, sprinting - closing.

She runs another few seconds and then-

Suddenly, she stops dead. Stands. A long beat.

INT. DEBRIEFING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Dimly lit. Cigarettes smolder in ashtrays all around. On one side of a long oval table sit Velvet and Manning.

On the other sits SIMONSON, a white haired old salt who appears to be constructed from bricks and worn leather. Despite his advanced age, he has a glare that would make General Patton cower, and it's aimed directly at Velvet.

Beside him is Agent RICHARD DONOVAN, a handsome man who might be ten years Velvet's senior, but he makes a magnetic asset of every line and fleck of gray. He's making an effort to look anywhere BUT at Velvet.

Dotted around the rest of the room, mostly in shadows, are various MEN. The proceedings have the feeling of a trial, Manning and Velvet one side, Simonson and Donovan on the other, the Men as jury.

Manning continues as Velvet returns Simonson's glare with icy indifference -

MANNING

Realizing that she would not make the rendezvous point cleanly, and despite being completely unarmed, Agent Templeton decided to engage the patrol.

EXT. DENSE FOREST - TWILIGHT - FLASHBACK

WITH one of the Soldiers as he hustles forward, then stops for a moment, listening. A beat, then-

Velvet bursts up from a pile of leaves to his right, swiping the knife from his belt and slicing his throat before makes a sound. When his body falls, she looks up, waits, then WHISTLES once, loudly.

ON ANOTHER SOLDIER as he hears the whistle, turns, rushes to the scene.

As he arrives and reaches down to check on the fallen body, suddenly Velvet reaches up from her hiding place under the body, grabbing the soldier by the hair with one hand and slashing his throat with the other.

As he falls a THIRD SOLDIER appears and as he raises his gun, she hurls the knife which buries itself directly in his heart.

She rushes to the third body, and begins to drag it toward the others as the FOURTH SOLDIER steps out of the trees. She uses the Third Soldier's gun to casually drop the fourth with a single shot to the head.

The GUNSHOT echoes through the forest. Other VOICES can be suddenly be heard in the near distance, alarmed.

She drops the Third Soldier by the others, and then begins to arrange them. Putting the Fourth Soldier's knife back in the First Soldier's holster, and then moving the bodies as she starts to loosen their belt buckles.

INT. DEBRIEFING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Manning presses on -

MANNING

After dispatching the members of the patrol she quickly arranged the bodies to appear as if deviant behavior among the group had led to a melee in which they'd killed one another.

EXT. DENSE FOREST - TWILIGHT - FLASHBACK

OTHER SOLDIERS come upon the scene to discover the first three soldiers with their pants down, lying near one another, the fourth soldier dead to the side as if he'd come upon them, and killed them before being shot by the third.

The soldiers stare at the scene in shock and puzzlement.

MANNING (V.O.)

The resulting scene provided ample diversion for Agent Templeton -

ON Velvet, covered in blood, but running full tilt through the forest again.

MANNING (V.O.)

- allowing her to make the rendezvous point with the package, successfully completing the mission.

INT. DEBRIEFING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Manning finishes and a tense silence descends. Simonson draws a breath, clearly winding up.

SIMONSON

I'm sorry. Are my ears failing me in my old age or did you just call this utter cock up a fucking success?

MANNING

Agent Templeton-

SIMONSON

'Agent' fucking Templeton was on a completely dark operation with strict orders NOT to engage opposing forces or leave any evidence of her presence. Does slaughtering four half naked patrolmen sound like running dark to you?

VELVET

I had no choice but to engage them, they-

SIMONSON

They were what, Agent Templeton? They were closing in on you. Catching you. Yes?

VELVET

Yes.

SIMONSON

You engaged them because you *couldn't* fucking outrun them, is that your excuse?

MANNING

May I remind you, Templeton had run sixteen miles before crossing the patrol. They were bound to-

SIMONSON

I don't give a damn if she'd just chased Marco Polo across fucking China. Don't tell me that leaving four dead bodies and sparking an international incident is a fucking success! The orders were simple. The orders were clear. Agent Templeton failed to follow them in spectacular fashion.

VELVET

You'd rather have had to explain the capture of an agent than dead patrolmen?

SIMONSON

I'd rather have a field agent who didn't offer me the choice between one pile of shit and another.

(to the room)

(MORE)

SIMONSON (CONT'D)

Perhaps I haven't made that preference clear, gentlemen? Or perhaps I was too polite when warning that failure to heed my recommendations against this experiment would leave us all knee deep in the bucket of fuck where we currently stand!

MANNING

Sir-

SIMONSON

No, I've heard enough from you. Let's hear from someone who's not selling something.

Simonson turns to Donovan.

SIMONSON (CONT'D)

Agent Donovan, give us your assessment of this mission and its outcome.

Donovan looks at Velvet and hesitates, then-

DONOVAN

I believe Agent Templeton's diversionary ruse was very clever and provided a good cover to both-

SIMONSON

Cut the shit, Donovan. I don't care if you're fucking her, I want a straight goddamned answer. As an experienced, capable, competent agent in this situation, tell the committee what you would have done.

A long beat. Donovan can't meet Velvet's stare, but when he answers, there's no uncertainty in his voice.

DONOVAN

I would have pressed on to the rendezvous point ahead of the patrol, delivering the package and making my escape without detection or interaction.

SIMONSON

But, but, but, what about the fact that you'd already been running for soooooo long.

(MORE)

SIMONSON (CONT'D)
Wouldn't your little legs have been
too tired to keep going?

DONOVAN
(beat)
That's why we train the way we do
sir.

SIMONSON
No, Agent Donovan -
(to the rest of the room)
That's why we train MEN the way we
do.

Off Velvet staring at Donovan -

INT. DONOVAN'S CAR - FLASHBACK

Donovan's behind the wheel of a bad ass silver 1960 Alfa Romeo Giulietta SZ, Velvet staring straight ahead in the passenger seat as they zip along.

DONOVAN
Do you like it?

She looks at him blankly.

VELVET
I know you're not asking me about
your car after what you just did.

DONOVAN
It's not a car. It's art. Someday
when you're less upset I'll let you
drive it and you'll understand.

VELVET
Oh. You'd do that for me?

DONOVAN
Look, I had no choice in there.
Simonson knows about us. How's it
going to look if I'm sitting there
sticking up for you?

VELVET
It would look like you thought I
did the right thing! Conversely,
how do you think it feels that you
didn't?

(MORE)

VELVET (CONT'D)

How is it that the man who's supposed to love me is cutting me off at the knees and the only person to have my back is Manning?

DONOVAN

Manning is not defending you. He's defending himself, his program, his position. And he's manipulating you just like he always does.

VELVET

Manipulating me?

DONOVAN

He plays your champion and savior when it suits him just to keep you loyal enough to hurl yourself at whatever brick wall he points to. He fills your head with-

VELVET

Stop trying to make it about Manning. Let's just be very clear. Are you saying that our relationship required you to try to avoid the appearance of favoritism? Or did you give them that answer because it's what you really believe you would have done?

Donovan hesitates.

DONOVAN

Look, Velvet, I'm not saying you didn't try hard or that you didn't do the best you could.

VELVET

Do the best I could? I performed a goddamned miracle! Instead of calling in one of the boys to weigh in on whether it was wise, they should have been asking me to teach the rest of you how on Earth it was possible!

Donovan is silent. He doesn't want to say more because he can tell he's only going to get in more trouble. But it doesn't matter if he speaks, she can read his mind.

VELVET (CONT'D)

Oh my God, you really believe it.
You really think you'd have kept
going.

DONOVAN

Look, I've been at this a long
time. I've been tested in ways that
you haven't. I-

VELVET

Tested?

DONOVAN

You asked me what I would have
done, and I'm telling you. Based on
my experience, yes, I'd have kept
running.

She goes silent, faces straight ahead. A long beat-

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Velvet, look, let's not let this
thing come between-

Suddenly she points at a very tall skyscraper on the side of
the street.

VELVET

Pull over.

DONOVAN

What?

VELVET

Pull over. Right there. Right now.

DONOVAN

Why?

VELVET

We're going to settle this.

OFF Donovan's confusion-

INT. STAIRWELL - FLASHBACK

Velvet removes her heels as Donovan stares at her in
disbelief.

DONOVAN

You want to race me. For my car.

VELVET
That's right.

DONOVAN
Why?

VELVET
Because I want to know that losing costs you something that you love, something you'd never willingly part with. And then I want to beat you anyway.

DONOVAN
This is foolish.

VELVET
No. What was foolish was you making a claim that you're not prepared to back up. Don't just tell me what you'd have done. Prove it.

DONOVAN
And what do I get when I win?

VELVET
Anything you want.

DONOVAN
You know what I want.

VELVET
Now's hardly the time for a proposal.

DONOVAN
You said anything.

Beat.

VELVET
I did.

He looks at her. Really? Then it's settled. He removes his jacket, hangs it neatly on a doorhandle, then rolls up his sleeves.

VELVET (CONT'D)
Jesus, you think I had time to change clothes?

He stops.

DONOVAN
Very well. On your-

She takes off up the stairs without waiting. He takes off after her.

INT. STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER - FLASHBACK

They're crashing up the stairs, matching each other stride for stride. He takes the inside track, hugging the railing and isn't shy about using his body to block her attempts to pass.

Velvet is undeterred, sweeping around the outside, keeping pace and waiting for her opportunity.

They pass a sign for the 12th floor.

INT. STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER - FLASHBACK

They pass a sign for the 19th floor and Velvet is now leading him by several steps. They're both working hard, but the strain is visible on Donovan's face where Velvet looks like a machine.

INT. STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER - FLASHBACK

Velvet is alone as she comes to sign for the 38th floor. She pauses, breathing hard, looks down. She can see Donovan below, slogging ahead, but way off the pace.

VELVET
Come on Agent Donovan! There's four of them. They're right behind you! You have no weapon! You don't want to create an incident do you? Hell, if you stop now to face them, are you even *capable* of creating an incident? Do you have enough left to throw a punch?

Donovan stops a floor below, leans his head over the railing and looks up her, spent. She stares down at him.

VELVET (CONT'D)
This is why we train the way we do.

And she's off again. Donovan can only stand there puffing as he hears her relentless strides taking step after step in pursuit of the top.

INT. STAIRWELL - LATER - FLASHBACK

Velvet is bathed in sweat as she pushes up the final flight, refusing to stop running even if she's no longer being chased. She arrives at a sign marking the 68th floor.

As she takes the final landing and leans over breathing hard Donovan comes into the stairwell from the elevator bank. He walks toward her, his hand to his head as if it were a phone.

DONOVAN

(into imaginary phone)

Hello. Simonson? It's Agent Richard Donovan. Upon further reflection I wanted to properly answer your question. Agent Templeton is one of the most capable and commanding field operatives I've ever encountered. It's hardly my place to comment on her circumstances without actually having been there.

She stands, looks at him as he steps right in front of her.

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

(eating crow)

The only thing I can say with any certainty is that not only do I agree with any decision that she might have made, I can assure you that I would have been forced to do the same much earlier, and would have needed considerable amounts of luck to enjoy such a tidy outcome.

(beat)

Yes. Thank you sir. I'll tell her.

(hangs up his fake phone)

He says he still hates you.

Velvet can't help a small LAUGH. A beat, and then she holds out her hand.

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Seriously?

She nods.

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Why?

VELVET

Because by the time you said the right thing, you were talking to your hand.

Donovan holds a beat, then grudgingly pulls the keys out, hands them across. As she holds them we see the SILVER STRIPED KEY FOB that Manning returned to her.

DONOVAN

I still get visitation?

VELVET

I'll be happy to take you for a ride now and again. I hear it's like driving art.

DONOVAN

You realize the fact that you have my car means you can never leave me.

She looks at him.

VELVET

I'm comfortable with that arrangement.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Present day, white streaked Velvet steps into the lobby, still staring at the Silver Striped Key Fob and lost in intense thought until she's met by-

IRIS, 16, her daughter. Take away the prep school jumper and add six inches and she could almost double for a younger Velvet. She doesn't waste time with pleasantries.

IRIS

Mom, you have to get me out of this.

Velvet rejoins this reality. As they walk-

VELVET

Were you just sitting down here waiting to ambush me?

IRIS

He wants to take me shopping.

VELVET

This would mark the first time you've ever objected to that.

IRIS
He wants to pick my clothes!

VELVET
If he wanted to pick your clothes
he'd have gone shopping without
you. I speak from experience on
this.

The two of them reach the elevator. Velvet presses the
button.

IRIS
Mom-

VELVET
Iris, let him have this. It's one
little presentation at a conference
full of people you'll never have to
see again. He's asked you to be
part of it because he's proud of
you and excited to show you off.

IRIS
It's the same presentation we did
when I was six! It was cute then.
It's weird now.

VELVET
It's a conference of academics. I
assure you, you won't be any
stranger than the rest.

IRIS
But-

VELVET
Iris, in recent memory, can you
recall seeing your father happier
than he has been since you agreed
to be part of this?

Iris doesn't want to answer.

IRIS
No.

VELVET
Then ask yourself if that's really
something you want to take from
him.

The elevator dings. The doors open and Iris steps in.

IRIS

Look, all I'm saying is that I-

She looks back, notices that Velvet hasn't stepped in, seems to be staring across the lobby at something.

Iris holds open the door.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Mom?

We see where Velvet's eyes have drifted. A door off to the side marked "STAIRS".

A long beat. Velvet starts to take off her heels.

IRIS (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

VELVET

I'm taking the stairs.

IRIS

What? Why?

VELVET

What do you want to bet I beat you?

IRIS

Uh...

But Velvet doesn't wait. She takes off leaving Iris utterly bewildered.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Velvet charges up the stairs. Or tries to. It's clearly been a long, long time. Her pace is nothing like what it used to be. Still she's... going.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Not anymore. She trudges, grasping the railing, nearly hyperventilating, and undoes the top of her blouse for air, as she slowly takes the last couple of steps.

She arrives at the landing to find a plaque marking the 9th floor, and standing right in front of it, THEO, her husband, 50's, silver hair, still in a tie, but shirtless rolled up. He's holding a glass of water and a glass of wine.

THEO

Iris told me you'd gone quite mad.
Challenged her to race...
(checks his watch)
I suppose that was several hours
ago now.

She gives him a look of mock insult.

THEO (CONT'D)

Only joking. Here, I thought I
might find you thirsty. One seemed
like what a person should have
after dreadfully unnecessary
exercise. The other is a glass of
water.

She smiles, takes the wine, has a sip. A beat.

THEO (CONT'D)

Care to explain?

She looks down at the stairs. If there was any mystery about
who she is now, it's gone. She shakes her head.

THEO (CONT'D)

In that case, care for dinner?

She looks at him, leans in, gives him a kiss.

INT. VELVET'S APARTMENT - EVENING

It's cozy. The family sits around the table, eating, passing
dishes. Theo is enthusiastically speaking to Iris.

THEO

And then I thought this time you'd
read the little piece to sum it all
up. I thought it would be... well,
I thought it would be a nice way to
end.

Iris looks at her mother, but Velvet isn't about to offer
help, and truth be told even Iris is a little moved by her
dad's excitement. Rather than argue she gives a small smile
and nod.

IRIS

Okay, Dad.

On Velvet as they continue their conversation, but the sound
fades as she just watches, a faint grin creasing her lips.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

Velvet walks a bag of garbage to the chute, drops it down. She heads back, then pauses at her door.

She returns to the chute, opens it. A beat.

She takes the Silver Striped Key Fob from a pocket, stares at it for a long time. Then-

She drops it in the chute, listens to its rattle to the bottom. Then... SILENCE.

She holds the chute open another beat, then releases it. As it SLAMS shut we -

CUT TO BLACK:

ON A BLACK SCREEN -

PART II

A beat, then PRELAP the sound of CRASHING WAVES.

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND - SUNSET - FLASHBACK

CLOSE on feet padding along a stone walkway, the fringe of a sarong just visible at the edge of the frame. In the distance we can see waves, sunset, sand. Paradise.

Occasionally the path splits off toward individual, private bungalows, but our feet press on.

CLOSE on the ICE BUCKET the owner of our feet is carrying, a large bottle of champagne sticking out. A letter tucked into the ice, leaned against the bottle, the word 'CONGRATULATIONS' written in perfect calligraphy.

Now REVEAL Young Velvet again, hints of her bikini top below the black curtain of hair that hides half of her face, which only serves to draw attention to just how lost and concerned the other half looks.

And now her feet have come to the end of the path where they stop before a door. She stands. Hesitates.

Back on Velvet's face as she takes a second, turns her head toward the beach, the crashing waves. She studies them for a moment.

On the waves - a ROAR of crashing water.

On VELVET watching - another THUNDERCLAP as the ocean crushes itself.

And then she turns back to the door, takes a breath. She's ready. She enters.

INT. ISLAND BUNGALOW - SUNSET

Inside, Velvet's instantly a different person, a warm smile on her face, no trace of the hesitation or concern she showed on the other side of the door.

VELVET

I'm back.

Her entrance turns Donovan's head.

DONOVAN

And here I was beginning to worry you might have reconsidered, decided to swim for it.

VELVET

I find it oddly attractive when insecurity strikes you.

She makes a little gesture with the bucket.

VELVET (CONT'D)

The management wanted us to have this champagne. They said congratulations.

DONOVAN

They must have said much more than that.

VELVET

Yes. Well, the young lady at the desk, she was a bit of a talker. That's the trouble with girls, they always mistake me for one of their kind.

She sets the bucket down. She hesitates ever so slightly as she wraps her hand around the champagne, as if struggling with whether or not to take it out. We see a glimpse of the troubled look she wore outside. Then she summons her courage and decides to go for it.

VELVET (CONT'D)

Shall we toast?

But before she can move the bottle, he wraps his arms around her, plants a kiss on her cheek.

DONOVAN

What was she on about?

VELVET

What?

DONOVAN

The young lady at the desk. The talker who stole you from your husband long enough to induce his roguishly charming insecurity and then sent you back with a mere bucket of champagne for the trouble.

Velvet shrugs.

VELVET

Girl stuff.

DONOVAN

Girl stuff? You'll forgive me, but among your many talents I was not aware you were an authority on girl stuff.

VELVET

I'm not much on recipes but I know a thing or two.

DONOVAN

About?

Velvet releases the bottle, turns in his arms to face him. A shadow of something serious flickers across her face.

VELVET

Men.

DONOVAN

So you chatted about men?

Velvet thinks about this for a beat. Decides she owes him the story.

VELVET

She... said she had a question and being as I was here with my new husband, I seemed like someone who might be able to give her the answer.

(MORE)

VELVET (CONT'D)

Seems she's recently fallen for someone. A man who came here alone. That's rare, she said. Mostly it's couples, either ones like us, looking to celebrate being together, or ones looking to hide that fact. But this guy, he comes alone, and they get to talking, because she's a talker, and apparently he's gorgeous and they fall in love. Just like that. Head over heels. Two weeks in his bed and on the beach. Two weeks of her calling in sick and then hiding from the rest of the staff right under their noses. Two weeks, and then... he has to go. It's a resort so they know this is coming, but when it actually arrives he tells her he doesn't want to let her go. Can't imagine life without her. He asks her to come with him. She says they've just met. It's too fast. Too crazy. But he begs her. Says it's fate.

DONOVAN

Laid it on quite thick, did he?

VELVET

See, that's the English in you. A heartfelt plea is against your religion. Us Yanks can't help ourselves. Once the heart's decided, we'll kneel at the altar of tears and bad poetry if it means we can hold on.

DONOVAN

That may or may not go for the Yanks, but I'll lay you bottom dollar it doesn't go for you.

VELVET

Possibly. But then I'm only half Yank. Anyway, he goes. She stays. Right there behind the desk, watching couples come and go, day after day, lovers so absorbed with each other that they walk right by that big beautiful beach like it's an inconvenience. And she starts to wonder what she's done. Has she let the one great love of her life go?

(MORE)

VELVET (CONT'D)

Missed her own destiny? That's what she wants to know, wants me to tell her - should she stay or go after him? Is two weeks enough to tell? 'How do you know when you've found the one' is what she's asking me.

DONOVAN

And what did you say?

She looks over at him.

VELVET

What would you have said?

DONOVAN

I don't know. The recipe end of girl talk is really more my specialty. I suppose I'd have said that... when you know, you know.

(approaching, embracing her)

That's it's not a stronger version of a feeling you've had before, it's a singular instance of an entirely different feeling. A certainty that simply announces itself, tumblers having fallen inside a lock you didn't know you had.

That seems to catch Velvet off guard, leave her drifting on her feet. It strikes at whatever's bothering her, whatever she's hiding.

VELVET

That's not bad. Maybe you should go back to the front desk and set her straight.

Velvet, trying to recover herself, breaks free, seeks space. She reaches down to take the last chocolate from a small box on the table.

DONOVAN

Whoa. What do you think you're doing?

VELVET

I'm having a chocolate.

DONOVAN

That's my chocolate.

VELVET

Is your name on it?

DONOVAN

There were six. You ate three. I ate two. That equals mine.

VELVET

You're really going to deny your bride a chocolate on her honeymoon?

DONOVAN

Don't try to make it about matrimony just because the math isn't in your favor.

VELVET

I tell you what. I'll flip you for it.

DONOVAN

That's hardly fair.

VELVET

You want it to be about math, what could be fairer than 50/50 odds?

DONOVAN

Except we both know it's not 50/50. Not with you.

VELVET

You saying I cheat?

DONOVAN

I'm saying when you want something, the universe has a way of obeying. You can flip the coin, but we both know I haven't a prayer. You'll simply announce what you want, and God will put it in your hand.

She smiles.

VELVET

You're trying to throw shade on the results, make me feel like I should give it to you even if I win.

DONOVAN

If there were an 'if' to begin with.

VELVET

Stop. Heads it's mine. Tails it's yours. Simple.

DONOVAN

(to the ceiling)

You hear that up there? Trust me, you don't want to piss this one off.

(to Velvet)

But then, I imagine he knows that. They say he knows everything. Go on then. Flip.

And she does. She catches it. Covers it on her wrist. And then reveals it to herself. Then, with the faintest whiff of surprise she says-

VELVET

Heads.

DONOVAN

See? We're all at your mercy, V. Even those in the highest of places.

He holds the box out to her, but she just stares, her eyes locked on the coin on her wrist. In doing so her guard drops and the lost look she's been hiding since she stepped in seeps through.

A long beat as he stares at her. When he speaks, his voice is soft and gentle. He doesn't sound like he's surprised by this moment, but like he's been waiting to arrive at it.

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Velvet. What's wrong?

She looks up at him. Real confusion, real concern in her eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND - AFTERNOON

Velvet, barefoot, bikini, sarong, walking away from her room carrying an EMPTY ICE BUCKET. She takes in the setting sun and waves, her face relaxed, awed, utterly at peace.

She crosses past rows of empty, thatch roofed shade structures that dot the beach, the last of which has bamboo blinds rolled down on three sides, hiding whatever is inside from everything but the ocean.

She's not particularly interested until, just as she nears it, she notices something leaned against one of the sides.

A closed, dark navy umbrella with a simple white strap.

The sight freezes her. She stands, rooted, until a crisp British voice calls to her from somewhere behind the blinds.

MANNING (O.S.)

Velvet, dear, do come in and sit down. I'm afraid it's imperative we have a chat.

She slowly steps to the front of the structure, the ocean breeze tossing her hair and whipping at her sarong.

Inside, shaded, seated, legs crossed, is MANNING, who, despite sitting under a thatched roof, his leather shoes disappearing into white sand, still couldn't look more properly British if he were having tea with the Queen.

As she gapes at him, not comprehending -

VELVET

What are you doing here? We're on our-

MANNING

Please, do me the courtesy of remembering that I'm well aware of your circumstances. Sit.

She does. When we're looking at him, he's in the dark, the rolled bamboo shades on each side and behind him. When we look at her, she's framed by blue sky and ocean.

MANNING (CONT'D)

One could rightly conclude that it is in fact my knowledge of your circumstances, and my decision to interrupt despite them, that indicates the urgency and absolute necessity of this meeting.

Velvet starts to stand.

VELVET

Fine. Just let me tell Richard and I'll come right-

MANNING

No.

VELVET
He'll wonder where I am.

MANNING
And when you return you'll have an
excuse. But for now, you'll have a
seat.

She hesitates.

MANNING (CONT'D)
Velvet, I'm afraid it is Donovan
who figures to be the subject of
our discussion.

OFF Velvet-

CUT BACK TO:

INT. ISLAND BUNGALOW

The chocolate still held out in the box. The coin still on
her arm. Velvet looks at Donovan.

VELVET
Nothing. I'm fine. Really.

As if to prove it, she takes the chocolate, pops it in her
mouth. He watches her, nods, the faintest hint of a smile on
his lips.

DONOVAN
My mistake.

He takes a seat as she turns away, regathering herself. Then-

DONOVAN (CONT'D)
You can't miss your destiny, you
know.

She turns.

VELVET
What?

DONOVAN
The girl. You said she wondered if
she'd missed her destiny. But you
can't miss it. It's not optional.
That's what makes it destiny.
(beat)
You never said how you finally
advised her.

VELVET

Sure I did.

DONOVAN

No. You asked what I'd have done, but you've been very cagey about where you ultimately came out of this conversation.

VELVET

(beat)

I told her to go.

DONOVAN

Why?

VELVET

(considers, then)

Because that's what I would have done.

DONOVAN

And you think she'll follow through?

VELVET

I don't know. I hope so.

DONOVAN

Me too. Me too.

(beat)

Although I do wonder how the other bloke will take it.

VELVET

What 'other bloke'?

DONOVAN

Well, I went to get a fresh set of towels yesterday, couldn't seem to find anyone at home behind the desk. So I walked round to the linen room. And there was the missing counter girl, quite busy as it turns out. Of course I hadn't meant to interrupt, but do you know, they didn't even seem to notice me? So wrapped up in one another that a wandering towel hunter didn't even register. Frankly, I found it quite sweet, heartening even. Of course that was before I knew her tragic story.

(MORE)

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

That while she was wrapped around this dark skinned native boy, looking lost in the throes of pleasures the rest of us might only hope for, inside she was really pining away for her departed, and actively weighing the question of whether to stay or go.

(beat)

But, I suppose we all deal with difficult decisions in our own way, don't we?

She looks at him, caught, but not yet decided on how to go forward. He rises, steps toward her.

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

It wasn't a good story, V. And whoever gave it to you doesn't know you like I do. They don't know that if God can't stop you from getting the last chocolate, the counter girl certainly isn't going to keep you from getting to your room. So the question is - the person who gave you this flimsy counter girl story... what else did they give you? What did they say that's got your mind running laps behind those eyes?

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND

Velvet, seated across from Manning.

MANNING

I'm sorry, but I'm afraid the intel is of the highest order. Bulletproof. Do you really think I'd be here if it weren't?

She cannot comprehend.

VELVET

No. It's bullshit.

MANNING

You are of course free to take that position. But you will be the only one. And that will raise questions on its own.

(MORE)

MANNING (CONT'D)

Please understand Velvet, he's done for. Bastards turned him simply to burn him, and when I find them I promise you'll be the one who gets to take them apart, piece by piece. But there's nothing either of us can do for Donovan now. It's you, I've come all this way to save.

VELVET

Me?

MANNING

You've married a traitorous spy, my dear.

(beat)

What you do or don't do now won't change how things end for him, but it's going to determine everything for you. I'm here to encourage you to take the right side, while there's time. For your sake, this musn't play out with you on the sidelines.

He reaches into the breast of his jacket, pulls a paper from an unseen pocket, passes it to her.

MANNING (CONT'D)

You'll have found this in his effects. You'll have realized what it meant only to have him discover you, at which point there will have been a confrontation... and then you'll have taken care of the problem.

She stares at the paper. We barely glimpse it. Hints of a bank statement, money transfer. She's still reeling.

MANNING (CONT'D)

The key is to simply get it done, Velvet. I've seen limbs amputated in a clean stroke and I've seen fingernails pulled out with excruciating delay. Guess which was the source of more suffering? You let him talk, he'll spin you in circles, he's trained to do just that, which won't change what you have to do, just make it more painful.

He reads her expression, sees the way she's studying the paper.

MANNING (CONT'D)

I can see that you understand what I'm saying even as you're preparing to ignore it.

(beat)

Let's play it out, shall we? First, he'll deny it.

CUT TO:

INT. ISLAND BUNGALOW

Donovan looks at Velvet.

DONOVAN

It's utter fucking tosh, V. Surely you can see that. And this fucking transfer sheet-

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND

Back with Manning.

MANNING

He'll attack the source. Look for details in the faint hope he can twist them.

CUT TO:

INT. ISLAND BUNGALOW

Back with Donovan.

DONOVAN

Where's this supposed to have come from? They're telling you this was recovered by an X agent? Or what, did Moscow just happen to drop it in the wrong letter box?

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND

Back with Manning.

MANNING

There'll be an alternative explanation. He'll say it's some sort of-

CUT TO:

INT. ISLAND BUNGALOW

Donovan practically finishes the sentence-

DONOVAN

It's some sort of plot. I don't know whose game we're playing, V but ask yourself -

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND

Manning now completes Donovan's sentence-

MANNING

Questions without answers. Anything to try to turn it all upside down.

CUT TO:

INT. ISLAND BUNGALOW

Donovan.

DONOVAN

If I were a double, why would I have done the Prague mission? They didn't assign that, V. Remember? I volunteered.

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND

Manning.

MANNING

He'll probably even reference
Prague, tell you that he
volunteered and so why-

CUT TO:

INT. ISLAND BUNGALOW

Donovan raises his hand.

DONOVAN

Stop. Just... stop.

A beat as the futility of it all washes over him.

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

(smiles)

I'm afraid I can't win can I?
Whoever and whatever I'm up
against, they've seen all this
coming. Wargamed every response.
Built quite the box for me. One
where the holes are filled in
before I can poke them.

(beat)

In the end it's all going to come
down to something other than
details. In the end, Velvet, you're
simply going to have to decide. Do
you believe them... or me? The
spies and strategists, professional
fabricators and string pullers.

(beat)

Or the man who fell in love with
you.

Velvet looks at him, pained. It's clear she wants to believe
him.

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND

Manning looks right into her eyes.

MANNING

You'll want to believe him. Which
is precisely why you have to
resist. You simply cannot trust
your heart in a circumstance such
as this.

(MORE)

MANNING (CONT'D)

Your head can register the facts.
And the facts, Velvet, are the only
thing that won't bend.

CUT TO:

INT. ISLAND BUNGALOW

Donovan studies her.

DONOVAN

The thing is, I suspect you already
know what you're going to do.

Velvet holds herself steady, but can't stop a single tear
from escaping down her cheek.

VELVET

I don't.

DONOVAN

Come now. Whatever they said,
whatever I might say, you played it
all out before you walked into the
room. So just tell me. Are you
going to kill me? Or are you going
to believe me?

VELVET

(cracking)

I don't know.

DONOVAN

Yes you do.

VELVET

I don't.

A beat.

DONOVAN

I tell you what, then. Let's flip
for it. Heads I'm telling the
truth. Tails I'm a liar.

He picks up the coin.

VELVET

Richard, I'm not flipping for it.

DONOVAN

I know you're not. Not really.
You've already decided.

(MORE)

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

And given that you've decided, the coin's simply going to do what you tell it to. But this way, at least I know.

VELVET

Richard-

He flips the coin. Catches it. Covers it. He looks at her.

DONOVAN

You could just tell me what it's going to be.

VELVET

I told you, I don't know.

DONOVAN

Well, I need to. A man deserves a fighting chance.

He uncovers. Looks.

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

I was afraid of that.

(showing her)

Tails.

VELVET

Stop. Please.

They stare at one another.

DONOVAN

I'm not going lie. We appear to be in a serious pickle. I do have one last idea. Far from certain that it will work, but I don't see an alternative at this juncture.

He slowly reaches toward the table and a knife that's resting there.

VELVET

(wary, confused)

Richard.

DONOVAN

Now, on the very good chance this doesn't work out, this might be my last opportunity to say anything. So if this is it, you'll understand if I just keep it simple.

(MORE)

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

Goodbye, V.

A pregnant pause and then...

In a flash, he grabs the knife, lunges for her. She blocks, punches, crushing his nose, blood pouring forth.

He grabs her arm, flips her onto the coffee table, which SHATTERS. As he moves to get on top of her she sweeps his leg, dropping him into broken glass.

They both get to their feet, bloodied, but ready. As they engage, trading blows, slashes, slams, it's clear that they're both not only exceptionally well trained, they're remarkably well matched.

The room falls apart in their wake. Cushions cut and bleeding their feathers, tables overturned, walls springing holes as fists, elbows, and feet snap through them like paper.

It's not like a boxing match, but more of a vicious dance, each violent move fluidly preceded and followed by another as they clutch and crush one another with artful speed and shocking grace.

Finally, she has him from behind, her hands grasping at his head, preparing to snap his neck with a quick twist. But before she can make the move he gets the better of her, grabs her arm, and flips her over his back where she lands flat on the floor with a crushing THUD.

Without releasing her arm, he flips her face down, her arm twisted behind her back, and pins her heavily, crushing his knee into the space between her shoulder blades. She struggles, but she's stuck. Utterly at his mercy.

He uses his free hand to grab the knife from the floor, and he pulls it to her throat.

They're both breathing hard, his head only inches above hers, as blood drips from his face and onto her cheek below. He squeezes the knife tighter against her skin which causes her to go very still.

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Very sorry dear. I wasn't sure going in that we'd find ourselves in this position. But I certainly hoped so. Because I couldn't think of any other avenue, you see. You've got that paper. And all I've got to debate it with is 'I love you.' But how do I prove that?

(MORE)

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

How do I make you see it? How do I give you the evidence you need?

(beat)

I'm afraid I couldn't think of any other way than to get right to here... and do this.

And then, he delicately sets the knife down right in front of her face. As she looks at it, confused, he releases her arm, raises himself up. She's completely free.

She turns, looks up at him, confused.

DONOVAN (CONT'D)

Messy, but I'm afraid this is as close as I come to poetry.

OFF Velvet really struggling what to make of this-

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND

Manning keeps walking through it.

MANNING

In the end, I doubt he'll hurt you. It's a losing strategy. The only way he can win, the only way he can leave that room, is have you fall victim to the same sort of lies that have bested him. The only thing he can do is to offer you something false to believe in.

CUT TO:

INT. ISLAND BUNGALOW

Donovan looks down at her. Despite his avowed British nature, his face is raw, emotional, pleading.

DONOVAN

Don't think about anything else, V. Look at me and tell me I'm lying. Tell me I don't love you.

There are tears streaking through the blood on her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND

Manning adjusts his position for his close.

MANNING

You know me, Velvet. You know where I found you. You know what we've been through. Which means, whether you want to or not... you know the truth. And because of that, however you get there, fast or slow, easy or hard, when the time comes, we both know what you're going to do. Don't we, Velvet?

He nods toward a full ice bucket on the table, holding a bottle of champagne and a letter with the word 'Congratulations'.

CUT TO:

INT. ISLAND BUNGALOW

Velvet tries to hold his gaze, but her eyes drift, and she notes the ice bucket, toppled, but still intact, the bottle of champagne tucked inside, the congratulatory letter on the ground just beside.

When her eyes flick back to Donovan, he doesn't know the details, but he can sense that somehow, despite it all, he's lost her. He looks at her with deep regret.

DONOVAN

(quietly)

Shame.

And in a flash she whips his leg and he's down as she uncoils herself toward the ice bucket and thrusts her fist in, comes out holding a garrote. Before he can move she's whipped it around his neck and she begins to pull, strangling him.

He struggles, clutches at her, his left hand grabbing hers and pulling desperately, the wedding rings on each of their fingers only inches apart as he GURGLES and GASPS, the life draining from him.

CUT TO:

EXT. ISLAND

Velvet stands, staring at the ice bucket on the table. Manning hands her a glass with a healthy belt of something brown inside.

MANNING

Before you go.

She looks at the drink.

VELVET

I don't want it.

He presses it into her hand, hoists a glass for himself.

MANNING

Trust me dear, best to steady yourself.

(beat, a tinge of emotion)

Sometimes it's a shit game we play. I brought him in. You married him. And our now our man's been turned and tossed by someone who saw him only as a pawn, and didn't blink at the fact that this would be his fate. We can't change what has to happen. But we can vow that someday those who brought us to this unfortunate point will pay. Until then-

(as he subtly raises his glass)

To Donovan.

CUT TO:

INT. ISLAND BUNGALOW

Donovan's left hand stops struggling, loses its grip on hers, and falls away.

A beat, and then she lets him go. His body falls gently backwards, into her lap.

OVERHEAD, looking down, the room destroyed, Velvet bloodied and wrecked, her husband of two days dead in her lap, his lifeless eyes staring up at her.

As she begins a WAIL that could silence the ocean-

SMASH TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Theo drives as Present Day Velvet and the painfully earned white streak in her hair, sits, stone silent, her face against the glass as rain smears the window.

THEO

You okay?

She looks up.

VELVET

Hmmm. Yeah.

Thinking he understands her issue-

THEO

It's just for a couple days.

She stares out the window.

VELVET

That's right.

INT. LONDON HEATHROW - NIGHT

The gentle SWISH of automatic doors parting as Velvet steps in from the rain, towing her suitcase behind her. She turns, waves as Theo drives away.

She walks as if in a haze. She looks up and slows as if being stopped by something. As she halts-

ANGLE ON the giant flipboard of departures.

BACK ON Velvet, taking it in.

ANGLE ON a listing for the flight to PARIS.

ANGLE ON a listing for the flight to NYC.

BACK ON Velvet, tempted. Confused. Troubled.

A beat then -

MR. SUMNER (O.C.)

Ah, Ms. Winstead.

She looks over. Here he comes, a welcoming and fatherly presence. As he arrives-

MR. SUMNER (CONT'D)
All set then? Here, let me help you
with this bag.

He reaches for it. She lets him. He takes a step with it, but she's still rooted to the spot. He turns back.

MR. SUMNER (CONT'D)
Ms. Winstead?

VELVET
(beat)
I just need a moment.

INT. LONDON HEATHROW BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Velvet washes her hands, then looks up, finds herself in the mirror. She studies the face, the fine signs of age creeping into it's edges. Reflexively she reaches up, touches the white streak in her hair.

She puts her hands on the sink. Stares into her own eyes.

A thought hits her. She reaches into her purse, fumbles around, then-

She pulls out a coin. She stares at it in her palm. Then she turns it over. And over. Then, very quietly, to herself, she labels the choices. As the coin shows heads-

VELVET
Paris.

As it shows tails -

VELVET (CONT'D)
New York.

She takes a breath, puts the coin on her thumb, prepares to flip it. And just as she sends it into the air -

CUT TO:

INT. AIRLINE CABIN

We pick up with Velvet and the Woman again-

VELVET
Wouldn't you rather have a guess?

The woman smiles.

WOMAN

Hmmm. Yes. Let's have a proper look at you.

She takes Velvet in, head to toe. A beat and then-

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Just what might you be all about?

As the woman considers her answer-

MR. SUMNER (O.S.)

I thought you might like these.

Velvet looks up as Mr. Sumner leans in with a plate of cookies.

MR. SUMNER (CONT'D)

They've given us quite the feast up front, though I'm afraid this is all they'd permit me to bring back to you. I believe they're chocolate chip.

Velvet smiles, takes the cookies.

VELVET

Thank you sir.

MR. SUMNER

I feel awful you didn't book yourself a seat up there.

VELVET

That's very kind, but you really needn't worry about me. What you need to do is go and get some rest.

He nods.

MR. SUMNER

Very well. I'll see you in New York.

He nods politely to both Velvet and the Woman, then returns up the aisle. Velvet looks over at the Woman.

VELVET

Cookie?

WOMAN

(smiling)

I'm going to go with secretary.

VELVET
How ever did you guess?

WOMAN
Well, he certainly made it easier,
but truth be told I knew it the
moment you sat down. We're all more
obvious than we imagine, aren't we?
As bosses go though, he seems quite
nice. You must really enjoy your
work.

Velvet doesn't answer. Instead she looks down at the broken
nail on her thumb. A beat.

VELVET
Do you happen to have a clip and
file?

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE BATHROOM

Velvet CLIPS the remainder of the nail, then runs the sliver
of blood under the sink. As she does she catches sight of
herself in the mirror. As she holds on her reflection-

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LONDON HEATHROW BATHROOM

Velvet staring at her reflection as she looks down at the
coin again. As it shows heads-

VELVET
Paris.

As it shows tails-

VELVET (CONT'D)
New York.

She takes a breath, puts the coin on her thumb, prepares to
flip it. And just as she sends it into the air -

MR. SUMNER (O.S.)
Ms. Winstead?

Distracted, she SNAPS her thumbnail and the coin zings wildly
across the bathroom.

It hits the tile floor, bounces, and then stands on end where it starts to roll and hop, looping and turning until-

It bumps her shoe and finally falls right in front of her - head side up - PARIS.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRLINE CABIN

The Woman eyes Velvet's cookies, then reaches over, takes one. As she begins to eat it-

CUT TO:

INT. LONDON HEATHROW BATHROOM

Velvet stares down at the coin.

VELVET
(whispers)
Paris.

MR. SUMNER (O.S.)
Ms. Winstead, are you all right in there? We're boarding very soon.

Is that what she *wanted* to happen? Is that what it was *supposed* to say?

VELVET
Be right there, sir.

But she doesn't move.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRLINE CABIN

The Woman smacks her lips, starts to feel off. Her breathing gets shallow, like she's choking. She looks over at the plate of cookies.

CUT TO:

INT. LONDON HEATHROW BATHROOM

Velvet picks up the coin. She looks down at her broken thumbnail. Then, she seems to snap out of her superstitious reverie.

VELVET
Oh, fuck this.

She tosses the coin in the garbage.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE BATHROOM

The broken nail, now filed clean. Velvet sits on the closed toilet, staring at the nail, her face unable to hide some regret, disappointment.

It's the sound of MURMURING and RUSHING outside the door that breaks her reverie. She stands, confused.

INT. AIRLINE CABIN

Velvet steps out just as a FLIGHT ATTENDANT rushes forward. Velvet steps into the aisle, sees people gathered around a seat many rows up. HER SEAT.

She heads forward, into the back of a leaning crowd. She can see the Woman struggling to breathe as another passenger, a **DOCTOR** is working with her.

Velvet turns to the **ATTENDANT** at the back of the crowd beside her.

VELVET
What happened?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
He thinks she's having an allergic reaction. Nuts in the cookies.

At that, the Doctor turns to Flight Attendant 2.

DOCTOR
We've got to get her to a hospital.

Flight Attendant 2 nods, races up the aisle towards the cockpit.

The Flight Attendant next to Velvet addresses the crowd.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Okay everyone, let's return to our seats.

Velvet just stares at the Woman. At the cookies.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Ma'am.

Velvet looks at her, dazed.

VELVET

The doctor. He's in my seat.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Oh.

(beat)

Come with me.

CUT TO:

INT. SECOND AIRLINE CABIN

It's a different plane. Different decor. Everyone calm. And we're drifting up the aisle into first class. We stop when we reach a bulkhead and discover, leaned against it, the familiar navy umbrella with the white strap.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRLINE CABIN

Velvet is shown to a seat in first class. As she takes it, Mr. Sumner notices her from across the aisle and a row ahead.

MR. SUMNER

Ms. Winstead? What's going on?

OFF Velvet-

CUT TO:

INT. SECOND AIRLINE CABIN

ON MANNING, looking out the window as we hear the familiar SQUELCH of tires as his plane touches down.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRLINE CABIN

Velvet is sitting in her new chair when she feels the plane begin to bank steeply - turning itself around.

As she looks out the window-

CAPTAIN

(filter)

Ladies and gentleman, it appears we've got a medical emergency on board. The passenger is currently receiving care from a physician, but we're going to need to loop back and get her to a hospital as quickly as we can.

Some passengers MURMUR.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

(filter)

Unfortunately, London has gone foggy since we took off, so our best bet is to put down in Paris.

On Velvet as this hits her. Her face doesn't show the faintest bit of surprise. At this point she knew it was coming, she was just waiting for someone to say it.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

(filter)

We'll be met there by an ambulance, get our passenger taken care of, file a new flight plan, and get back on our way as soon as possible.

As people begin to turn and MUMBLE, Mr. Sumner looks back, catches Velvet's eye. He gives her a look that says 'Wow, how about this turn of events?'

OFF Velvet, blank -

CUT TO:

INT. SECOND AIRLINE CABIN

Passengers are standing, gathering luggage. Manning stands, takes up his umbrella.

He begins to make his way off, nodding politely to the FLIGHT ATTENDANT as he exits.

EXT. TARMAC - NIGHT

ON the tip of the Umbrella as Manning picks it up and puts it down like a cane as he leaves the stairs at the side of the plane and walks across dark asphalt.

ON Manning as he walks, his face blank, the lights of planes and runways twinkling beyond him.

Then, as he approaches the door to the airport proper, something flickers across his face. He pauses for a beat.

REVEAL, inside, waiting, is Velvet.

INT. PARIS AIRPORT

Manning, eyes fixed on Velvet, steps inside, slides out of the stream of passengers headed after their luggage, and walks over to her.

As he approaches, she stands.

The two of them face one another, squared off, silent for a long beat.

Then -

VELVET

You're sure they're the ones who turned Richard?

MANNING

I am.

VELVET

How many?

MANNING

Two.

VELVET

When?

MANNING

Tomorrow.

She nods. A beat.

MANNING (CONT'D)

I must say, I was convinced you weren't coming.

VELVET

And I was convinced I had a choice.

(beat)

You should know, I'm not what I once was.

He regards her with the faintest hint of a smile.

MANNING

If that were true my dear, you
wouldn't have found your way here
ahead of me.

He turns and walks without waiting. She watches him for a
moment, then she takes a breath. And she follows.

FADE OUT.

PARAMOUNT NETWORK