

DEVIL IN OHIO

Created by Daria Polatin

Episode #101

"Broken Fall"

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Based on the novel *Devil in Ohio* by Daria Polatin

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BLACK.

VOICES SINGING (V.O.)

*Holy, holy, holy,
All of us adore Thee --*

FADE IN:

EXT. CHURCH / SMALL TOWN - NIGHT

The pious *HYMN* emanates from an old church. Candlelight spills out into the night, casting an eerie glow onto dusty streets.

We PAN PAST wooden cabins, a schoolhouse, general store. Although it appears like a quaint, *Little House on the Prairie* town, there's something about this place that feels... off.

VOICES SINGING (O.C.)

*Cherubim and seraphim falling down
before Thee --*

SLOWLY PULL OUT TO A WIDE and HOLD ON THE CHURCH when --

THE GIRL

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!

A **TEENAGE GIRL** BOLTS OUT THE SIDE DOOR OF THE CHURCH, RUNNING FOR HER LIFE!

Maybe this town isn't so quaint after all.

The **TERRIFIED GIRL** sprints through the town to --

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

THICK WOODS. IN A FOLLOW SHOT THAT OBSCURES HER FACE, the frightened girl races past TWISTED TREES --

BLOOD seeps from her back, soaking her WHITE GOWN.

She zips through the trees in her BARE FEET, dodging shrubs, leaves -- A BRANCH leaps out at her! She muffles a *SCREAM* as it tears her bloody gown. Keeps running.

IN TIGHT SHOTS we see:

-- THE GIRL'S BLOOD-MATTED HAIR

-- TWIGS PAINFULLY SLICE HER FEET

-- HER HAND CLUTCHES: A BLOODY HUNTING KNIFE

She hears *SHOUTING*, someone coming after her! Panicked, she runs faster, and --

TRIPS OVER A ROOT! She TWISTS HER ANKLE, *THUDS* to the ground. Is she hurt? No time to tell, she can't get caught, she has to go go go. She scrambles back to her feet. Races to --

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The highway. The Girl frantically flags down an approaching car. As the headlights near, a *POP SONG BLASTS* from the car radio, revealing THIS IS PRESENT DAY.

The Girl -- still holding the knife -- waves at the car to stop! It slows, then --

DRIVES BY, the headlights leaving the Girl in DARKNESS. No no no she needs to get away --

RUMBLE OF ANOTHER VEHICLE APPROACHING.

Tossing the bloody knife into the brush, the Girl steps into the road. white gown in shreds, back dripping with blood, she stands in the middle of the lane as --

TRUCK HEADLIGHTS find her, finally revealing --

THE GIRL'S TERRIFIED FACE.

WHEELS SCREEEEECH --

SMASH TO BLACK.

DEVIL IN OHIO

PRE-LAP: A *CELLPHONE RINGS* --

EXT. STREET / MATHIS HOUSE - MORNING

TYPICAL SUBURBAN STREET IN A TYPICAL SUBURBAN TOWN. Trees arch across the pavement, domestic cars and trucks pepper the driveways, autumn leaves sway in the crisp, fall air.

LAND ON: The MATHIS HOUSE, a modest two-story home. Well-kept yard, white picket fence, homemade tree swing.

The *RINGING* continues --

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - SUZANNE AND PETER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

CLOSE ON: Closed eyes TWITCH, in the throes of a bad dream as --

DR. SUZANNE MATHIS is pulled from sleep, answers her phone --

SUZANNE (INTO PHONE)
Dr. Mathis... who brought her
in?... Did she require any
medication to settle?

Suzanne sits up, listening intently.

Suzanne is late 30s/early 40s, a hospital psychiatrist, deeply caring and fiercely passionate. She exudes equal parts strength and empathy, although her relentlessness can get her into trouble.

SUZANNE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
I'll be right in. Let me know if you
find out anything in the meantime.

Suzanne clicks off the call, as her husband stirs awake in the bed next to her:

PETER MATHIS, late 30s/early 40s, recently shifted from construction into real estate. Consummate Midwesterner, perpetual optimist, Peter would do anything for his family --

PETER
Everything okay?

SUZANNE
Sorry to wake you, honey. There was
a new admission to my unit
overnight. Gonna head in early --
(remembers)
Shoot, I was supposed to --

PETER
I'll handle breakfast --

SUZANNE
You don't mind?

PETER
...Nah.

Suzanne leans over and looks at her husband, still feels lucky to be with him after all these years.

SUZANNE
what would I do without you?

Peter smiles back, jokes --

PETER
we'll make your own eggs, for
starters.

Suzanne laughs and kisses him deeply... then tears herself
away.

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - SUZANNE AND PETER'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Focused, determined, Suzanne gets ready for work. Echoing the
QUICK CUTS we saw of the Girl in the woods:

-- SUZANNE RUNS A BRUSH THROUGH HER FRESHLY-WASHED HAIR

-- SHE ZIPS A SCUFFED LEATHER BOOT UP HER ANKLE

-- HER HAND BUCKLES AN ANTIQUE WATCH, carefully covering: A
ROUND BRACELET-LIKE SCAR AROUND HER WRIST

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - HALLWAY - MORNING

Suzanne heads down the hall of the modest, comfortable Mathis
home. She passes a door... then steps back to it --

SUZANNE
Jules, you up?

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - JULES'S BEDROOM - MORNING - SAME TIME

CLOSE ON: Eyelids cringe open.

JULIA "JULES" MATHIS wakes, braces herself for her day. Jules
is 15, awkward, admittedly average, un-admittedly sensitive.

SUZANNE (O.C.)
I don't want you sleeping through
your alarm again, Ju-Ju --

JULES
I'm not!

Jules heaves herself out of bed --

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - HALLWAY - MORNING

Jules races down the hall. We see QUICK SHOTS like we saw of
Suzanne and the Girl:

-- JULES'S TANGLED BEDHEAD HAIR

-- HER CHIPPED POLISHED TOES HURRY ACROSS SOFT CARPET

-- HER FINGERS CLUTCH HER PHONE

Jules reaches a bathroom, but DANIELLE "DANI" MATHIS -- 11, bubbly, actress/singer/dancer, Jules's adopted sister -- zips in first --

JULES
It's my day!

DANI
I have an audition!

SLAM TO:

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - HALLWAY - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

Outside another bathroom, Jules starts to open the door --

HELEN (O.C.)
Someone's in here!

SLAM! Jules's other sister shuts the door in her face.

CUT TO:

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - GARAGE - MORNING

Jules washes her hair in the UTILITY SINK in the garage, edged out of place in her own home.

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

CRACK! An EGG *SIZZLES* into a pan. At the stove, Peter watches the egg crackle in the hot oil...

Jules enters, pulling his attention --

PETER
How's your first week going?

JULES
Okay. I was actually thinking of --

HELEN (O.C.)
Tag's still on, klepto.

Jules's older sister HELEN MATHIS sails in. She's 17, perfect hair, perfect clothes, social royalty, bi. Bested by her sister, Jules tugs off the PRICE TAG still attached to her shirt.

PETER
Eggs are almost ready, Helen --

HELEN
Teddy's picking me up to work on our Ohio State applications.

SUZANNE (O.C.)
Go Bucks!

Suzanne flurries in, running late.

HELEN
Mom, I need you to read over my essay tonight.

SUZANNE
Can't wait!

PETER
You're applying early decision?

HELEN
You think I shouldn't?

PETER
No, your mom and I loved OSU. Just catching up.

SUZANNE
Has anyone seen my --

Peter holds up her work bag. Then hands her a to-go mug --

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
You're the best.

As Helen grabs a granola bar and waltzes off, Dani enters --

DANI
Mom! My audition for the Musical Revue is today can you fix my hair?

SUZANNE
It looks perfect!
(turns to --)
Love the new shirt, Jules!

Suzanne checks through Dani's backpack, finds two EpiPens --

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Dani, you have to give the nurse
your extra EpiPen.

DANI
I know I know I know. Mom listen to
my up-tempo --

SUZANNE
Sorry, Dani-Bear, I have to run to
work. But I know you're going to be
fantastic!

Suzanne kisses Dani on the forehead and hurries out.

DANI
why's Mom always working...

JULES
Because she tries to save everyone --

PETER
Hey, we support each other in this
family, okay? Your mother takes
care of a lot of people.

Quiet. EGGS *SIZZLE* IN THE PAN.

DANI
Dad, listen to my sixteen bars --

Dani launches in *SINGING*.

JULES
Dani, can you not?

The *SMOKE ALARM* goes off! Jules *STARTLES*, sees burning bread
in the toaster. As Peter fans the alarm, Dani *SINGS LOUDER*.

Trying to escape the chaos, Jules reaches into her backpack
and pulls out: a *VINTAGE CAMERA*. She aims it at a mirror and --

TAKES A PICTURE OF HER REFLECTION, her family swirling in the
background.

Taking the photo gives Jules a sense of calm. As the middle
child -- overshadowed and overlooked -- photography is where
Jules finds her Zen.

PRE-LAP: THE STEADY RHYTHM OF *HOSPITAL MONITORS* CARRY US TO --

INT. REMMINGHAM MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - INPATIENT PSYCH UNIT -
PATIENT ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON: TWITCHING EYELIDS. This time they belong to --

THE TEENAGE GIRL we saw last night escaping from the church. She's alive, lying on a bed wearing a hospital gown, asleep on her side.

Gleaming metal and bleached floors make up the cold, sterile hospital environment -- a far cry from the candlelight and wood cabins the Girl came from.

SUZANNE (O.C.)
what's her name?

PULL BACK TO REVEAL Suzanne assessing the Girl, intrigued.

Nurse ADELE -- 40s, overworked and underpaid, kitten scrubs and a necklace with a cross -- checks the Girl's vitals.

ADELE
She has no ID. Cops couldn't get a statement when she arrived, and no one on the night shift got her to say a word. Hoping you can work your magic.

SUZANNE
How'd she get here?

ADELE
Trucker found her over in Amon County.

SUZANNE
Farming town?

ADELE
(nods)
Keep to themselves over there.

Suzanne looks at the Girl's face, pained even in sleep.

SUZANNE
She looks the same age as Jules...

Adele changes out an IV bag. It snakes down to the Girl's wrist, which is ringed with PURPLE BRUISES.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
She was restrained...

Suzanne stares at the bruises on her patient's wrist.
Something about the Girl strikes a deep chord in Suzanne.

ADELE
Got her on tramadol for the pain,
antibiotics for her... wound.

SUZANNE
May I?

with trepidation, Adele slowly -- carefully -- lifts the
cotton sheet from the Girl's back, peels back a bandage.

Suzanne's breath catches in her throat --

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Jesus...
(to Adele)
Sorry.

We don't see what's under the sheet, but peeking out we spy
painful MAROON LINES SLICED INTO THE GIRL'S BACK. Blood
crusts her MANGLED SKIN.

ADELE
She's like a fallen angel.
(then)
Although that didn't always turn
out so well...

Adele shudders and crosses herself --

SUZANNE
The cuts are deep. This was
intended to scar.

ADELE
Could be witchcraft -- a woman in
my congregation used to be wicca.

SUZANNE
we'll let her tell us what happened
in her own time.

Suzanne gently covers the wound, disturbed by the injury. She
glances at overworked Adele --

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Let me bring you a coffee. Cream
and Sweet'N Low?

ADELE
You are a saint.

SUZANNE
Call me when she wakes.

Suzanne takes a last look at the Girl, distraught by the abuse she's clearly suffered. What happened to this young woman?

PRE-LAP: *CLUNK CLUNK CLUNK* --

INT. REMMINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL (RHS) - DAY

A pair of HIGH-HEELED BOOTS CLUMSILY *CLUNK* through a doorway.

PAN UP TO: Jules, full of equal parts excitement and dread, wobbles her way down the HALL into her first week of SOPHOMORE YEAR at REMMINGHAM REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL.

ISAAC (O.C.)
True or false --

Jules turns to ISAAC KIM -- 15, overachiever, Debate Team, aspiring lawyer, queer. Jules's best (read: only) friend.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
This year is going to be filled with academic and personal success unlike any sophomore year has ever seen. I've already picked up three new tutoring students. SATS!

JULES
You haven't even taken the SATs.

ISAAC
Irrelevant. They cut my hours at Jamba Juice. Even if I get a full ride to Stanford -- which I will -- room and board are expensive.

As Jules and Isaac make their way down the crowded halls, Jules clocks everyone basking in their GROUPS OF FRIENDS.

Jules is grateful to be shielded from aloneness by her one friend. A thin barrier, but a barrier nonetheless.

Then, across the hall, Jules's eyes fall on: SEBASTIAN SHARMA, 15, nerdy-chic, "THE FUTURE IS FEMALE" T-shirt, reading an actual newspaper. SWOON.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
New threads?

Jules pulls her attention back to Isaac, looks down at her outfit.

JULES
I'm trying to dress better this
year. Upgrade my wallflower status.

ISAAC
In this school? Good luck.

Then, Isaac looks at his own outfit -- new blazer, cool shoes.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Speaking of outfits, take my
picture. I need to document these
future ACLU attorney vibes.

Jules pulls out her camera, sets up the shot and --

FLASH CUT TO:

FLASH OF BRIGHT LIGHT

It's blurry, dizzying. Another FLASH --

INT. REMMINGHAM HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

In the hospital, the Girl squints up to see --

HARSH, FLUORESCENT HOSPITAL LIGHTS FLASH above her as they
pass. She's being wheeled in a WHEELCHAIR, the lights above
assaulting her retinas.

Disoriented from the painkillers and sedatives, she notices
Adele pushing the wheelchair --

ADELE
Good job with the X-ray, your ankle
looked just fine. Few more things
then you can get back to sleep --

WHISPERING from across the hall. The Girl turns to see:

TWO HOSPITAL WORKERS *SPEAKING IN HUSHED TONES*, staring at her
as she's wheeled past them.

Ashamed, the Girl turns away. Then is once again assaulted by
the FLUORESCENT LIGHTS, triggering --

SLAM TO:

IMAGE SEQUENCE - QUICK FLASHES - FLASHBACK

FLASHING LIGHTS. But this isn't overhead lights, it's small bright spots... flames... CANDLES ON A CHURCH ALTAR.

VOICES SINGING (O.C.)

Holy, holy, holy...

The same HYMN we heard from the church in the beginning, only now we're inside. But the sound is like a nightmare -- warbled, distorted. Because we're hearing it from the point of view of --

THE GIRL FROM THE HOSPITAL WHO ESCAPED. She's standing at the front of the church, wearing that white gown before it got bloody, looking almost bridal. WE ARE IN HER FLASHBACK.

PUSH IN ON the Girl's petrified face --

CUT TO:

INT. REMMINGHAM HOSPITAL - ANOTHER PATIENT ROOM - DAY - PRESENT

Suzanne checks in on a five-year-old boy OMAR with cerebral palsy, his leg in a splint.

SUZANNE

I heard the surgery went well,
Omar.

The boy shrugs. Suzanne senses he's a little down. She points to his arm.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

How's your leg feeling?

OMAR

(laughs)
That's not my leg!

SUZANNE

No?
(pointing to his stomach)
Is this your leg?

Omar gets a kick out of this --

OMAR

No! That's my leg.

SUZANNE

ohhh --

They're both giggling now, when --

THE GIRL'S VOICE (O.C.)

AHHHHHHH!!

Suzanne hears the *SCREAM* from down the hall, bolts out --

CUT TO:

INT. REMMINGHAM HOSPITAL - PSYCH UNIT - PATIENT ROOM - DAY -
MOMENTS LATER

Suzanne rushes into the room --

THE GIRL

No no no no no no!!

The Girl backs away from a MALE AIDE, hovering with a needle. Adele is nearby.

CLANG!! The Girl accidentally knocks over a tray, hides in the corner, cowering, afraid. Adele turns to Suzanne --

ADELE

It was just supposed to be a blood
draw for a panel --

TWO ORDERLIES rush in, see the Girl. They reach for padded handcuffs --

SUZANNE

No restraints!

Suzanne quickly springs into action to protect the traumatized Girl --

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

(to the Orderlies)
I've got this, thank you.
(to Male Aide)
You can go. Adele, let's take the
blood sample later -- just you.

Adele nods, they all head out.

Suzanne and the Girl, alone. In an effort to create more of a safe space, Suzanne pulls a curtain around the area.

Looking at the Girl crouched alone on the floor, Suzanne kneels close to her and --

Sits down next to the Girl.

As the Girl's breath starts to calm, quiet settles in.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
I hate needles, too.

The Girl is quiet.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
I'm here to talk to you. I'm the
inpatient attending, Dr. Mathis.
But you can call me Suzanne.

The fluorescents *BUZZ* from above.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Lot going on around here, huh.
(then)
How are you feeling?
(then)
Are you in any pain?

The Girl doesn't answer, but Suzanne can see that she's shaking.

Suzanne grabs a blanket off the bed, hands it to the Girl.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Here.

The Girl looks at the blanket, then --
wraps it around herself.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
It's okay if you don't feel like
talking.
(then)
I'm not going anywhere.

The Girl is grateful. A long quiet.

Then, overcome by the weight of her trauma, the Girl --

Leans her head onto Suzanne's shoulder. We hold on them for a moment, as Suzanne empathizes with the Girl, but keeps her emotions contained.

CUT TO:

INT. REMMINGHAM HOSPITAL - BATHROOM - DAY

Suzanne, more affected by her interaction with the Girl than she let on, stands at the bathroom mirror. She looks down at her wrist --

The bracelet SCAR peeks out from under Suzanne's WATCH. As she covers it up, her emotions threaten to surge when --

She pulls her gaze to her REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR. Steadies herself with a calming breath.

Slow, deep breath... Slow, deep breath...

Suzanne adjusts her white lab coat. Tugs the edges to hide her wrists, and heads out the door.

PRE-LAP: *BRIIIIIING!*

SLAM TO:

INT. RHS - CAFETERIA - DAY

The assault of the *LUNCH BELL*. Jules and Isaac wend their way through the lunch line in the crowded cafeteria.

JULES
-- what about volleyball? JV
doesn't have tryouts.

ISAAC
Respectable. What else?

JULES
Um, maybe yearbook?

ISAAC
Too clique-y, not your scene.

Their trays full, Jules scans the cafeteria --

JULES
where should we sit?

ISAAC
About that. I have to go to an
informational meeting. I'm running
for Class President.

JULES
way to bury the lede. You're gonna
leave me?

ISAAC
Jules: Bigger picture. This school
needs so much work and I am
uniquely qualified to achieve those
goals. See you in Bio?

JULES

...Fine.

ISAAC

Fly, baby bird.

Isaac's off. Jules stands alone in a sea of students. She nervously looks for a place she can fit in.

She heads over to an empty chair, puts her stuff down -- *SNICKERS* from the STUDENTS at the table.

STUDENT

Someone's sitting there.

JULES

Sorry.

Mortified, Jules hurries away toward --

Jules's older sister HELEN'S TABLE, where Helen's soaking up attention from her ADORING FRIENDS and boyfriend TEDDY -- 17, confident, conservative.

Jules clocks an empty seat, her eyes pleading with her sister to help. But --

Helen ignores her awkward sister's dilemma and turns to her friends. Embarrassed and ignored, Jules flees the cafeteria.

OVER WITH HELEN surrounded by her friends, someone taps her on the shoulder. Helen turns to see --

TATIANA -- 17, wry, unapologetic, bi. She hands Helen a notebook.

TATIANA

You left this in Coding.

(then)

Your Python presentation was rad.

HELEN

I lucked out going after Winston who literally bombed.

They laugh, then Tatiana's about to turn away, when --

TATIANA

Phoebe and a bunch of us are going to the Pillow Pirates concert on Saturday.

HELEN
(a beat)
It's Teddy's and my anniversary, so
he probably has something planned.

Tatiana shrugs, with a grin --

TATIANA
Your loss.

Tatiana rejoins her GROUP OF FRIENDS, some of whom wave at Helen. Helen waves back... Teddy notices, jokes --

TEDDY
You wanna go hang with your STEM
nerd friends?

Helen turns back to Teddy, faux swats his arm.

HELEN
Shut up.

INT. RHS - DARKROOM - DAY

RED LIGHT bathes Jules's skin as she calmly develops film in the peaceful darkroom. This is her happy place.

CLOSE ON THE PRINT IN A TRAY OF DEVELOPMENT LIQUID: The picture Jules took this morning of her melancholy face through the mirror -- her version of a selfie.

BACK WITH JULES, looking down at the photo of herself. Confused. Existential. Who the hell is she, anyway?

Off the print of JULES THROUGH THE LIQUID in the tray --

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. REMMINGHAM HOSPITAL - PSYCH UNIT - PATIENT ROOM -
EVENING

THE GIRL'S REFLECTION IN THE WARPED METAL OF A PAPER TOWEL DISPENSER.

PULL BACK to see her staring at her distorted face.

SUZANNE (O.C.)
Hey there...

The girl startles -- Suzanne is standing in the doorway.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Adele said you ate all your lunch.
Glad to hear your appetite is
coming back.
(then)
I'm heading home for the night so
wanted to check in.

The Girl looks at Suzanne.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Are you feeling any better?
(no answer)
You don't have to be. Everyone
always wants you to feel better,
right? Kinda annoying.
(then)
Sometimes you just want to... be.

The hospital monitors *BLIP... BLIP...*

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Do you want to tell me your name?
(then)
Is there someone we can get in
touch with for you?
(then)
They're calling you "LAUREN TRAUMA"
-- that's your code name for your
file. It's for your protection, so
that only people we give it to can
find you.

The Girl's listening...

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
But the ones who we never find out
their real names? They get lost in
the system. I don't want that to
happen to you.
(then)
I'm hopeful you'll tell me your
name because that will help us
place you somewhere safe...

Suzanne waits...

But the Girl remains silent. Still, Suzanne warmly offers --

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
If you need anything, the nurses
can call me.

Suzanne turns to leave --

THE GIRL

Thank you.

Surprised, Suzanne smiles at the Girl -- it's a step. As Suzanne heads for the door --

STAY WITH THE GIRL. Who sits on her bed and --

STARES AT SUZANNE.

watching her.

DANI (PRE-LAP)

Hamster! Guinea Pig! Mouse?

CUT TO:

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mathis Family Game Night! Suzanne in the living room, acting out a word for Charades -- or at least trying to -- while Dani scrambles to guess --

DANI

Rat!

SUZANNE

No.

JULES

Mom, you can't talk!

SUZANNE

Sorry --

Jules, still upset by what happened at school, sits on the opposite side of the room from Helen. Peter sips a beer. Helen's phone BUZZES --

HELEN

Time.

JULES

Sure it's not a text from one of your million friends?

HELEN

PMS much?

SUZANNE

It was the Easter Bunny.

DANI
Mom and I should get extra time
'cause there's only two of us --

PETER
How 'bout we give Mom another shot?

JULES
Dad, you're supposed to be on our
team!

Suzanne tries to de-escalate --

SUZANNE
Dani and I didn't get the point. We
can handle it, right?

DANI
It's not about who wins, it's about
having fun. Who's next?

PETER
Jules, you go.

JULES
(heaving a sigh)
Fine.

WE JUMP THROUGH QUICK CUTS OF THE FAMILY PLAYING CHARADES --

-- JULES acting out *Great Expectations*

-- DANI pretending to be Mary Poppins --

JULES (CONT'D)
You can't sing!

-- PETER acts out a clue. Helen jumps to answer --

HELEN
Jaws!

PETER
Yes!

SUZANNE

That was too easy.

PETER
Or maybe I'm just too good?

Peter pops a pretzel into his mouth with a grin.

JULES
Helen, can you stop hogging the
pirouettes?

PETER
I'll get more --

HELEN
Jules, what is with this shade?

Jules can't believe her sister's feigning ignorance after
watching Jules do a social face-plant in the cafeteria --

JULES
I'm sorry. Me?!

HELEN
Yeah. You're so bitchy --

DANI
Swear jar!

SUZANNE
Hey, what's going on here?

HELEN
No idea, I didn't do anything --

JULES
Exactly!

Jules storms off, *SLAMS* the bathroom door.

PETER
All right everyone, half-time!

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Peter refills the snack tray as Suzanne pours herself a much-
needed glass of wine.

SUZANNE
And I thought work was bad.

PETER
what happened?

SUZANNE
Just a lot going on. And this new
patient who's... been through a lot --

Dani bursts in --

DANI
Mom, Jules finished the salted
caramel popcorn we need more!

SUZANNE
We're out, sweetheart.

Disappointed, Dani leaves. Suzanne takes a long sip of wine.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
I didn't buy it this week, trying
to cut down on extras.
(then)
Dani wants to take ballet and tap
this year. At least Helen's
applying in state.

PETER
Yeah, but with Teddy. You think she
should apply somewhere else? She
used to talk about CalTech.

SUZANNE
Ohio State has a great pre-med
program. I loved it there.

PETER
It's just a lot of "Teddy" these
days.

SUZANNE
well, we were inseparable in high
school --
(then)
Oh! Adele said something about some
money for the muffler her husband
installed for you -- ?

PETER
Yeah, I'll take care of it.

Peter looks on the bright side for her benefit, although we
get the sense that it's for his as well.

PETER (CONT'D)
We're almost out of the woods. I'm
closing Windemere this week --

SUZANNE
That's great!

PETER
Final walkthrough tomorrow. Can't wait to get these carrying costs off my hands.

SUZANNE
It'll all be worth it. I'm so proud of you, honey.

He wraps his arms around her.

PETER
Soon Dani can take whatever dance class she wants, we'll get a lifetime supply of salted caramel popcorn --

SUZANNE
I can't wait.

They lean in to each other for a kiss --

DANI (O.C.)
Mom, Dad -- Jules and Helen are fighting again!

PETER
Better get back out there before Game Night turns into "Survivor."

Peter takes the snack tray and heads out.

Suzanne stands alone. Drains her glass of wine.

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT - LATER

Suzanne approaches Jules's bedroom door. *KNOCKS* lightly --

SUZANNE
Jules?

In answer, the light under the door turns off. Suzanne realizes she's not going to get anywhere tonight, heads off.

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - JULES'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - SAME TIME

Inside the bedroom, Jules lies in bed, awake.

She stares up at the ceiling -- lost, alone.

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - SUZANNE AND PETER'S BEDROOM/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Suzanne enters, Peter's flossing. The two get ready for bed in the unspoken ballet of a longtime couple.

PETER
You talk to Jules?

SUZANNE
Pretended she was asleep.

PETER
High school's hard.

SUZANNE
Don't remind me. I don't know what I would've done if I hadn't met you.

PETER
Some other guy would've lent you a pen in Social Studies and you'd be married to him right now.

Peter heads over to the bed.

SUZANNE
But would that other guy have brought me a whole box of pens the next day? And a notebook?

PETER
wanted to make sure you had what you needed.

Suzanne removes her watch, climbs into bed next to him.

SUZANNE
You're too good to me.

PETER
You deserve it.

Suzanne takes that in. Something she struggles with, which Peter knows.

PETER (CONT'D)
Hey. You deserve it.

Suzanne looks at him for a long moment. Then --

Kisses him. They kiss again, reaching for each other, finding respite in each other. Peter slips off the strap of her nightgown --

Suzanne stops, turns to -- HOSPITAL FILES ON HER NIGHTSTAND.

SUZANNE
I have more work to do.

Peter pulls back, surprised that Suzanne brought her work into their bedroom.

PETER
I thought you stayed late --

SUZANNE
I did, I just have this new patient.
Rain check?

PETER
...All right. G'night.

Hiding his disappointment, Peter turns away. He clicks off his bedside lamp and goes to sleep.

OVER WITH SUZANNE, she reaches for her files, starts looking over some notes, then... opens the file for "LAUREN TRAUMA."

GRUESOME PHOTOS of the Girl stare back. Suzanne flips through, lands on a tight shot of the Girl's BLOOD. PUSH IN on the RED, RED, RED --

MATCH CUT TO:

IMAGE SEQUENCE - QUICK FLASHES - FLASHBACK

CLOSE ON: CRIMSON. Candlelight dances on red liquid.

A RED DROP PLOPS into the crimson. Another drop. Blood -- DRIP- DRIP- DRIPPING. The blood pools on wooden floorboards --

"Holy, holy, holy..." warps into our ears.

The Girl is lying facedown on a table at the front of the church. CLOSE ON her face as she looks below, watching blood drip onto the floor. When --

*A **BLACK FEATHER** FLUTTERS INTO THE POOL OF BLOOD.*

CUT TO:

INT. REMMINGHAM HOSPITAL - PSYCH UNIT - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT - PRESENT

CLOSE UP ON: Linoleum. No blood. No black feather.

PULL BACK TO: The Girl facedown in her hospital bed, staring at the floor.

The Girl sits up in her quiet room, but the silence is deafening. Her mind starts racing.

To distract herself, she looks down at her hands. Purple swirls BRUISE her thin wrists. With one hand, she presses into a DARK PURPLE SPOT, watching the colors change. She winces at the pain. Then --

She presses the bruise again. The pain sears through her fragile body, as she presses harder. Harder --

Tears flood her eyes, stream down her cheeks. The pain of her excruciating injuries, the trauma of her escape -- all too much. But feeling the pain somehow helps her release it, until --

She halts her tears.

THE GIRL

No.

She SLAPS HERSELF IN THE FACE!

THE GIRL (CONT'D)

No!

She SLAPS again --

THE GIRL (CONT'D)

No!!

(SLAP)

NO!!

She takes a calming breath. Flipping a switch, she cuts herself off from the pain. She sits, still as a statue...

...for a long time.

FADE TO:

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - SUZANNE AND PETER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Peter wakes to his *ALARM*. He takes a deep breath, has a big day today.

PETER

'Morning --

He reaches over to the other side of the bed where --

Suzanne is gone.

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

wearing a collared shirt and slacks, Peter comes into the kitchen to find Suzanne on the phone. She's set cereal and milk on the counter, where Jules and Dani help themselves.

SUZANNE (INTO PHONE)

Uh-huh...
(whispers to Peter)
You look hot.

Peter smiles, grabs a banana.

DANI

Dad, why're you all dressed up?

PETER

I'm not.

JULES

You're wearing a shirt without
paint on it.

Peter smoothes down his shirt --

PETER

Just a work meeting.

DANI

Are you nervous?

PETER

Nah, all good. I'll see ya tonight!

SUZANNE

(covering the phone mic)
Good luck, honey!

Peter kisses Suzanne, heads out.

DANI

He was totally nervous.

JULES

Wow, amazing observation, Captain
Obvious.

DANI

Mom, Jules is being mean to me! --

PRE-LAP: CAR ENGINE REVS --

CUT TO:

INT. PETER'S TRUCK - DRIVING - DAY

Peter drives his aging pick-up down a dirt road toward the entrance to a large property.

EXT. WINDEMERE FARMS - DAY

Peter steps out of the truck and heads toward the entrance of a GORGEOUS FARMHOUSE. Beyond the house lies beautiful, sprawling FARMLAND.

From the fresh paint and well-landscaped property, we can see that this place has been meticulously restored, like the "after" on a home improvement show.

Proud, nervous, Peter looks down the dirt drive. Waits...

INT. REMMINGHAM HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Suzanne is heading down the hospital hallway with a RESIDENT, looking through files --

SUZANNE

Ms. Miller in Room Four needs .05 risperidone twice a day, and let's see how Room Seven's doing with the aripiprazole.

Suzanne sees a **TALL MAN** wandering the hall, his back to her. He wears an OVERCOAT and BLACK BRIMMED HAT.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

He turns around to reveal -- A STEEL BLUE LAW ENFORCEMENT UNIFORM. Suzanne clocks -- METAL HANDCUFFS dangling from his belt. He tips his hat to her.

TALL MAN

Looking for a girl. Came in a few nights ago. Got a little... cut on her back.

SUZANNE

And you are...?

TALL MAN

Sheriff of Amon County.

SUZANNE

(confused)
where's Detective Nelson?

SHERIFF
I wouldn't know about that. I just
came to check up on the girl.

A little wary of the unfamiliar man, Suzanne holds her cards.

SUZANNE
Unless you have a court order,
we're only allowed to give
information to legal guardians and
next of kin.

A beat. ONLOOKERS have quieted to watch the interaction. The Sheriff takes a step closer, into Suzanne's personal space.

SHERIFF
Is that so.

SUZANNE
It is.

A STANDOFF -- Suzanne and the Sheriff hold each other's gaze. Then, the Sheriff reaches his hand near her and --

-- GRABS A CANDY from a dish on a counter behind her. Suzanne masks her relief. The Sheriff unwraps the candy, pops it into his mouth and *CRUNCHES*, as the nearby *CHATTER* stirs back up.

The Resident approaches Suzanne.

RESIDENT
They're ready for you in Room
Seven.

Suzanne looks at the Resident --

SUZANNE
Thanks, I'll be right there.

-- then turns back to the Sheriff --

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
what did you say your name was -- ?

He's gone. Off Suzanne, perturbed by the interaction.

SMASH TO:

INT. REMMINGHAM HOSPITAL - PSYCH UNIT - HALLWAY/PATIENT ROOM -
DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Suzanne's *SHOES ECHO* as she strides down the hallway. Suzanne approaches the Girl's room, where Adele is exiting.

ADELE
She's --

Suzanne opens the door to the Girl's room, finds --
The Girl is fast asleep. Relieved, Suzanne closes the door.
Adele looks at Suzanne, clocks her behavior as a little unusual. Suzanne brushes it off, straightens her lab coat.

SUZANNE
Room Three needs a blood draw.
Suzanne heads off, glad the Girl is safe.

EXT. WINDEMERE FARMS - DAY

Peter waits on the steps of the windemere house. Finally --
An expensive car pulls up. A well-dressed man, JEFF FISK, 40, hops out, *BEEP-BEEPS* his car lock even though no one else is around.

PETER
Fisk! How are ya? Ginny good? The kids?

FISK
First week of school, you know how that goes.

PETER
Time flies, man. Feels like yesterday we were shooting three-pointers against Michigan.

Peter turns toward the house entrance --

PETER (CONT'D)
You gotta come check this out -- porcelain doorknobs are in, and wait till you see the terrazzo backsplash --

FISK
Pete, look. I hate to do this to you... I have to pull out.

A beat as that lands on Peter, then --

PETER
Hey, if you need extra time I can give you a couple more days --

FISK
We found another property. It
doesn't come near to the work you
put in here, but it's so much land.

Peter tries to process, feels like the rug has been pulled
out from under him.

PETER
Fisk, we're in escrow, we're about
to close --

FISK
I feel like shit about it --

PETER
What's the property?

FISK
Great land over in Amon County.
It's not on the market -- friend
knew a guy.

Peter tries to reason with him --

PETER
I put in the Carrera marble Ginny
wanted, double vanities in the
bathrooms --

FISK
I know, man. I just can't turn down
this other deal. I'm sorry.

Peter tries hard to muster positivity, not show his cards.

FISK (CONT'D)
Hey, we gotta go hunting this
season. Bag some big buck.

PETER
...Sounds good.

Off Peter as the hard truth sets in that he's not going to
make ends meet.

CUT TO:

INT. REMMINGHAM HOSPITAL - SUZANNE'S OFFICE - EVENING

Suzanne in her office. She's looking through the Girl's case
file. Her gaze fixates on a PHOTO of the Girl's BRUISED WRIST --

BAM BAM!

SUZANNE JUMPS. Turns to see -- RHODA, 50s, social worker, too many years of too many cases, standing in the doorway.

SUZANNE
You look nice. Hot date?

RHODA
(nods)
Vet tech with a Harley. Vroom
vroom.

SUZANNE
Hey, have we heard anything from
the parents of that Girl?

RHODA
Nothin'. That's what I came to tell
you. No one's shown up for her and
she's still not talking.

SUZANNE
Anyone file a missing persons
report?

RHODA
Nope.

SUZANNE
That's unusual...

Off Suzanne, wondering what's going on with this Girl...

INT. REMMINGHAM HOSPITAL - PSYCH UNIT - PATIENT RM - EVENING

Inside the hospital room, the Girl is curled up on the bed, when she hears -- a *LIGHT KNOCK* on the door. She turns to -- Suzanne pokes her head in, sees the Girl.

SUZANNE
Thought you might want these.

Suzanne unloads vending machine SNACK BAGS of chips and pretzels from her pockets --

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
My girls like to have snacks
around.

The Girl looks at the items, marveling at the spread.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Try to get some rest, all right?

The Girl, grateful for the gifts, nods at Suzanne.

CUT TO:

EXT. MATHIS HOUSE - EVENING

warm lights illuminate the windows of the Mathis Home as day turns to night.

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

That night, Suzanne heads down the hall, passes Jules's room. She sees the light on --

SUZANNE
Hey, Jules --

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - JULES'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Jules hears her mom step in, buries her head in her phone.

JULES
what.

SUZANNE
I wanted to check in, see how everything's going at school.

JULES
Amazing, I have a hundred new friends and everyone loves me.

Suzanne absorbs the sarcastic reply. Sits down on the edge of Jules's bed.

SUZANNE
Starting new things can be overwhelming --

JULES
Ohmygod I am not doing a therapy session right now.

Fair enough. Suzanne decides to shoot from the hip.

SUZANNE
High school is the worst.

That's not what Jules expected her mom to say.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

It was for me, anyway. Your dad was the only good thing about it...

Jules appreciates her mom understanding, but something still bothers her.

JULES

Do you think I'll ever fit in?

SUZANNE

The truth is, everyone's on their own timeline -- you figure it out as you go. And even though other people seem like they have it all figured out, they're probably in the same boat. You just have to keep going, try new things, keep an open mind.

JULES

There is a Club Fair tomorrow...

SUZANNE

That's great! Sign up for some activities, meet some new people. You'll find your place, Ju-Ju.

Suzanne reaches over and gives Jules a hug.

Although Jules wishes it wasn't the case, a hug from her mom is exactly what she needed.

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - ENTRY - NIGHT

Peter steps into the house, tosses his keys into a bowl.

SUZANNE (O.C.)

Honey, is that you?

Peter dreads having to face his wife after losing his windemere buyer, but he's got to some time.

PETER

Yup.

SUZANNE (O.C.)

Come upstairs!

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - SUZANNE AND PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peter steps into the bedroom, trying to keep his spirits up for the sake of Suzanne.

SUZANNE
We did pizza, there's some in the
fridge --

PETER
I'm not hungry --

SUZANNE
well I hope you're thirsty!

Suzanne pulls out -- "MATHIS REALTY" WATER BOTTLES!

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
I had them made! Aren't they great?
You can give them out at your open
houses.

Peter stares at the swag -- moved, and ashamed.

PETER
Thank you, babe, that's super
thoughtful. Look --

SUZANNE
Before you say anything, I just
want you to know that I appreciate
how much you do to support our
family.
(then)
I know it wasn't easy going out on
your own. And I know how hard
you've worked on Windemere, how
much you've put into it. I want you
to know how proud I am of you, and
how much you mean to me. So...

She grabs two water bottles she's set aside, hands him one --

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Cheers to you, and Mathis Realty!

Suzanne takes a sip of a bottle. Peter doesn't.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
were you going to say something?

Peter looks at her. He knows he should tell her that he risked his savings, two years of work, and his reputation on a property he just failed to sell...

But he can't bear to disappoint her. He forces a tight smile --

PETER
Nah.

CUT TO:

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

WIDE SHOT: Peter sits at the kitchen table, alone.

He takes a bite of cold pizza, stares.

What the hell is he gonna do now?

FADE TO:

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - JULES' S BEDROOM - MORNING

CUE AN UPBEAT SONG --

CLOSE ON: Jules's eyes spring open, remembering that the Club Fair is today. Inspired by her mom's reassurance, Jules inhales the promise of a fresh start.

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING

Jules shaves her legs in the shower, determined to look her best today --

JULES
Ow!

She's cut herself with the razor --

BLOOD SPILLS down her leg, painting the shower floor pink. Jules tries to wipe away the blood, but it keeps coming.

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - HALLWAY - MORNING

Jules heads down the hall in a short dress, embracing optimism. She wears a sideways NEWSIE CAP --

HELEN
That hat is nauseating. You're trying too hard.

Helen has appeared. Jules steps around her, keeps walking.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Don't say I never do anything nice
for you.
(calling after)
You're bleeding!

Jules looks to see --

BLOOD TRICKLING down her leg from her red-soaked Band-Aid.

JULES
Shit.

SUZANNE (PRE-LAP)
Cleveland?

INT. REMMINGHAM HOSPITAL - RHODA'S OFFICE - DAY

Suzanne squares off with social worker Rhoda -- Suzanne can't believe what she just heard.

SUZANNE
They can't send her to Cleveland,
she won't last in those facilities.

RHODA
Talk to CPS. Allendale's full up,
so is every other group home in the
county --

SUZANNE
She's still so fragile. Can't she
stay here a little longer? --

RHODA
She's been here three days and
doesn't meet further hold criteria.
You can talk to hospital admin but
there's no money coming in for her
stay so you won't get anywhere. I
don't make the rules --

SUZANNE
What about a foster family?

RHODA
No one has room. And I tried the
Emergency Foster Care Providers.
Only person on that list I haven't
called is you.

A beat as that lands on Suzanne.

RHODA (CONT'D)
The county just doesn't have the
resources.

Suzanne wracks her brain for a solution.

EXT. RHS - QUAD - DAY

The Club Fair! Adrenaline-high students bustle around tables as Jules hovers, inspecting various clubs and activities.

Isaac spots Jules, drags her away.

ISAAC
Objection! You are not joining the
Bocce Ball League. Come try out for
Debate.
(seeing her newsie cap)
And lose that hat A-SAP.

Jules finally takes the hat off, stuffs it in her bag.

Jules and Issac arrive at the SPEECH AND DEBATE SOCIETY
TABLE, monitored by VICTORIA LIU -- 15, club president,
Isaac's nemesis.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Now: I will give you a prompt, then
you argue either the affirmative or
the negative --

VICTORIA
"Isolation promotes creativity."
Affirmative. Go.

Isaac glares at Victoria. Victoria stares at Jules who...

Freezes up. Nearby students look on. Jules doesn't know what
to say, feels her face flush, eyes well --

JULES
I -- ...

ISAAC
why don't we try another prompt
that I give you --

Jules backs away from the staring students and... BOLTS.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
That went well.

EXT. WINDEMERE FARMS - DAY

Peter pulls his truck up in front of the Windemere property. He grabs his toolbox and climbs out of the vehicle.

As he heads toward the house, he notices the lawn sign --

MATHIS REALTY
IN ESCROW!

He pulls off the "IN ESCROW" part, which makes the sign crooked. He straightens it, and --

It tilts again. He tries again. No luck. The stupid sign won't stand up straight. Finally, Peter --

KICKS the sign.

As he walks away -- the sign droops.

EXT. RHS - DAY

Jules sits on a bench away from the crowd. She feels like a total social fuck-up. Then again, why'd she expect this year to be any different?

She takes her CAMERA out of her bag. Hey, old friend.

SEBASTIAN (O.C.)
The master at work.

Jules turns to see: Her crush Sebastian, wearing a NOTORIOUS RBG T-SHIRT. He sits next to her. Jules wipes her tears.

JULES
Hey, Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN
How was your summer?

JULES
Medium. I worked the front desk at the Rec Center and baby-sat.

SEBASTIAN
Sweet. I did journalism camp, went to Mumbai with the 'rents. My aunt tried to marry me off like eight times.

He's holding the school newspaper: *The Remmingham Regal*.

JULES
Congrats on being Editor-In-Chief
of the *Regal* this year.

SEBASTIAN
Thanks. Despite what people think,
print journalism's not dead yet.
(then)
Saw your exhibit at the library
last spring. Great work using depth
of field to tell story in the
foreground and the background.

Jules can't believe someone noticed her work. Double swoon.

JULES
I like exploring context. Like the
difference between what's going on
with a person, and the situation...
I don't know, it's dumb maybe --

SEBASTIAN
Super smart. Hey, would you be
interested in doing a photo column
in the *Regal*?

Jules is floored. Tries to stay chill --

JULES
Cool, yeah, sounds neat.

SEBASTIAN
Come through the *Regal* office
tomorrow and pitch me something?

JULES
It's a date.
(then)
I mean not a...
(then)
See you there!

He smiles at her, then heads away.

ON Jules, feeling seen.

SUZANNE (PRE-LAP)
I get the sense you may not have
always gotten the support you
needed.

INT. REMMINGHAM HOSPITAL - PSYCH UNIT - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Suzanne with the Girl in the hospital, making one last attempt to connect with her.

SUZANNE

I really want to help you here, but
I need you to help me do that.

(then)

Can you tell me anything about
where you're from? The town,
street...?

Silence.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

What about your parents. Are they
alive?

(no answer)

Are they the ones that did this to
you?

(then)

You can tell me if they did, I can
handle it.

Nothing. Suzanne tries one more thing.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

A man came looking for you.

(then)

He said he was the Sheriff.

THE GIRL BLANCHES, clearly some recognition here.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Did he hurt you?

No answer. Suzanne's disappointed she didn't get anywhere.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

One last thing: I want you to know
that whatever happened to you is
not your fault.

The Girl absorbs that, although doesn't quite believe it.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

I hope things go well for you.

Having done what she can, Suzanne heads for the door. Seeing
Suzanne leave, the Girl panics --

-- SHE HYPERVENTILATES

-- "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY" WARPS INTO HER EARS

-- SHE SEES: A FLURRY OF BLACK FEATHERS BURSTS THROUGH THE AIR

Shaking off this haunting vision, the Girl desperately calls after Suzanne --

THE GIRL

Mae!

Suzanne stops. Looks back at her.

MAE

My name is Mae.

Suzanne is warmed that MAE finally shared her name.

SUZANNE

Mae.

Off Suzanne, assessing this poor girl's fate.

EXT. MATHIS HOUSE / STREET - DAY

BIRDS CHIRP on the quiet neighborhood street, when --

SCREEEEECH -- a school bus lurches to a stop. Jules and Dani descend from the vehicle, head toward the --

MATHIS HOUSE. Jules pushes through the fence gate, a spring in her step. Despite the embarrassing incident at school, Sebastian made her day.

DANI

I have to get a role in the Revue.
Since it's a variety show there's
tons of parts.

(then)

I saw you talking to that boy.

JULES

what boy?

DANI

You're the worst liar --

Suddenly Jules thrusts her arm in front of her sister, her voice dropping to a whisper --

JULES

Dani!

Dani follows Jules's gaze to the front door. It's --

OPEN. WTF? Did somebody break in?

DANI
Should we call the police?

JULES
Mom's car is here. why's she home
this early?

DANI
Mom never leaves the door open...

Fear mounting, Jules leads the way inside --

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - ENTRY / LIVING ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Jules and Dani slowly creep into the house. It's --
Dead. Quiet.

JULES
...Mom?

SILENCE. Jules and Dani exchange worried looks.

They peer into the living room --
Nothing.

JULES (CONT'D)
Mom?

CREAAAAAK --

Jules spins to see where the sound came from -- OH GOD
THERE'S A BURGLAR IN THE --

SUZANNE (O.C.)
I'm so glad you're home!

Suzanne comes in from the kitchen. Jules and Dani jump --

Ahhh! JULES Eek! DANI

JULES (CONT'D)
The door was open!

SUZANNE
I didn't mean to scare you. Why
don't we sit down for a sec --

JULES
You're acting weird --

SUZANNE
I need to talk to you about
something --

DANI
Do we have to talk about our
feelings?

SUZANNE
It's always good to talk about our
feelings --

Annoyed at her mom, Jules makes a beeline for the kitchen --

JULES
I'm "feeling" thirsty --

SUZANNE
Before you go in there --

Jules punches through the swinging door to --

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Jules sees --

JULES
Holy shit.

A strange girl sits at her kitchen table. Even though she's wearing a mismatched outfit from the hospital's Lost & Found, this girl is alluring, ethereal.

SUZANNE
This is Mae!

Suzanne and Dani have followed Jules in.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Mae, this is Dani, our youngest.
And Jules -- our middle child.

Jules hates being called that but what else is new.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Jules, Dani, have a seat.

Jules and Dani cautiously sit across from the girl, wondering what the heck her deal is.

JULES
Mom, what's going on?

SUZANNE
Mae came into the hospital a few days ago. We're waiting for a foster home to open up, so she's going to stay with us for the night.

DANI
(to Mae)
I was a foster kid. Well, orphan, technically. Do you remember that big tornado outbreak -- ?

JULES
Dani, stop annoying her --

DANI
Wanna stay in my room? I have a trundle bed --

SUZANNE
Actually, I thought Mae could stay in Jules's room, and Jules can stay with you. That way Mae can have some privacy.

The last thing Jules wants is to bunk with Dani, but Jules knows better than to argue.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
How does that sound, Mae?

They all turn to Mae, who... nods like a shy baby animal.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Great. We'll get you some fresh linens and --

Suzanne stops cold. Bolts over to the counter. Dani sees what Suzanne saw --

DANI
Ahhhh!

Jules turns to Mae --

A BLOODSTAIN blooms on Mae's shoulder. Crimson soaks through her sweatshirt, creeps up her back and over her shoulder.

JULES
Are you okay?

DANI
Ew I hate blood I hate blood --

Mae sees the blood on her shoulder.

Then, Mae's face turns to stone, like a cemetery statue, seemingly immune to the pain. Creepy...

Suzanne returns to Mae, covers her bloodstain with a dish towel.

SUZANNE
Time to change your bandages.

Jules wonders, what bandages?

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Jules, can you get your room ready for Mae?

Jules starts for the door, then sneaks a look back and --
Mae is staring at her.

PETER (PRE-LAP)
You brought her home with you?

CRASH TO:

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - SUZANNE AND PETER'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Suzanne and Peter in their bedroom, Suzanne on the defense --

SUZANNE
It was an emergency situation. I left you a voicemail about it. Didn't you check your messages?

PETER
I -- didn't get it. I've been busy --

SUZANNE
I didn't know what else to do. They were going to ship her off to Cleveland --

PETER
SUZ --

SUZANNE

I couldn't let them do that to her.
She just needs a place to stay for
a night while I find her a foster
home --

PETER

They couldn't keep her?

SUZANNE

She didn't meet hold criteria and
they needed the bed.

PETER

well that's shitty.

SUZANNE

Tell me about it.

(then)

Look, I know this isn't ideal, I
just couldn't abandon her, she's
clearly been through a lot of
trauma --

PETER

I get it, but another mouth to feed
is not what we need --

SUZANNE

It's just temporary. And you never
minded fostering before. It always
brought us together as a family.
Look at Dani --

PETER

Dani is different -- Janelle was
your friend. You don't even know
this girl and you brought her into
our home --

SUZANNE

She had nowhere to go!

PETER

They approved you taking her home?

SUZANNE

They had a dispositional hearing
and the judge approved temporary
emergency placement.

Silence. They both avoid looking at each other.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Look, I'm sorry. I should've waited
till I heard back from you before
bringing her home. It all happened
quickly.

(then)
But I hear your concern, and I'm
right there with you. I'll find her
something tomorrow.

Peter evaluates. Knows that Suzanne didn't mean to cause an
uncomfortable situation. Plus, he's got his own problems.

PETER
It's fine --

SUZANNE
I just wanted to help her --

PETER
I understand...
(then)
Are you okay?

Suzanne looks at him, can tell he's concerned about her --

SUZANNE
I'm fine. I just want to make sure
she's okay.

Peter eyes her, weighing whether Suzanne really is fine.

We sense that there's more to the story here with Suzanne...

...but that's for another episode.

Suzanne brushes it off, moves on.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Dinner'll be ready in a little.

PETER
Great. I'll be out back.

Peter heads out.

Suzanne stands alone. Readjusts her WATCH.

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - DANI'S ROOM / HALLWAY - EVENING

Jules carries a duffel bag into DANI'S ROOM, FACETIMING with
Isaac.

ISAAC (OVER FACETIME)
Please, you think you're the first person to get intimidated by Victoria Liu? That's her entire M.O. You're just not a debate person, so what.

JULES
It's fine. I did sign up for the volleyball team.

ISAAC (OVER FACETIME)
Progress!

Jules dumps the duffel bag, heads into the HALLWAY.

ISAAC (OVER FACETIME) (CONT'D)
what's with the duffel bag?

JULES
This girl from my mom's work is staying in my room.

ISAAC (OVER FACETIME)
Your mom literally deserves a Nobel Peace Prize.

JULES
whatever. If I die of a *Hamilton* overdose it's her fault.

Isaac holds his freshly-painted nails up to the screen, each nail a different color.

ISAAC (OVER FACETIME)
Ombre!

JULES
Looks cute, don't delete --

CREAAAAAK. Jules hears something behind her, spins to see --
The hall is empty. Strange, Jules swears she heard something.

ISAAC (OVER FACETIME)
You okay?

JULES
...Yeah. I gotta go.

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Jules opens the medicine cabinet, pulls out some cleanser and washes her face. Her mind races with the ups and downs of the club fair, her run-in with Sebastian, Mae...

Jules dries her face, shuts the medicine cabinet. *THUNK* --

MAE'S FACE HAS REPLACED JULES'S IN THE MIRROR.

Freaked out, Jules whips around --

Mae is standing behind Jules like a twin from *The Shining*.

JULES
Do you... need something?

MAE
I'm sorry. For making you move...

Jules doesn't love moving rooms but doesn't want to make Mae feel bad.

JULES
It's cool.

MAE
Cold?

JULES
Um, no, like "fine."

Jules and Mae look at each other for a long moment.

MAE
Your dress is fetching.
(then, worried --)
I didn't mean to flatter you.
Please don't tell --

JULES
Oh. You don't have to be sorry.
People like compliments.

Mae absorbs that.

MAE
I crocheted a collar like that.

JULES
That's cool you know how to
crochet. who taught you?

MAE
Women learn in Sewing Circle.

Weird.

MAE (CONT'D)
People must think you're neat.

JULES
"Neat"? Um, I guess.
(then)
Not really.
(then)
I don't have a lot of friends.
(then)
One. I have one friend.

Awkward beat. Jules starts to feel claustrophobic standing in the small space with Mae.

JULES (CONT'D)
I can show you around my room if you want?

MAE
"Cool."

Mae is a quick study. Jules heads into the hall.

Mae follows her out like a creepy shadow.

CUT TO:

INT. REMMINGHAM HOSPITAL - RECEPTION AREA - EVENING

DETECTIVE ALEX LOPEZ -- 30s, handsome city guy in a small town -- steps up to the reception area. He flashes a bright smile to Adele.

LOPEZ
Hi there --
(reading)
Adele. I'm here to see the girl with the, uh, wound on her back. Been trying to get a statement.

ADELE
And you are?

He pulls out his BADGE.

LOPEZ
Detective Alex Lopez. I'm assigned
to her case.

We wonder, huh -- if he's the detective on Mae's case, who was that Sheriff guy?

EXT. CAR / DIRT ROAD - DRIVING - NIGHT

The Sheriff -- who we saw at the hospital with Suzanne -- drives an old towncar down a dirt road.

We follow him as he drives through the woods and pulls up to --

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

The Sheriff pulls the car up to a small cabin and turns off the ignition. Climbs out of the car and surveys the area.

Then, he heads up to the front door and... unlocks it.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

The Sheriff walks into the small, rustic cabin.

As his *BOOTS CLUNK* across the floorboards, he removes his black brimmed hat, hangs it on a hook on the wall.

As he walks away, we HOLD on the hat for a moment, then SLOWLY PAN over to reveal --

AN UPSIDE-DOWN CROSS HANGING ON THE WALL.

SMASH TO:

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A roast chicken descends onto the dining table.

PULL BACK to see Suzanne, laying out an abundant meal in the cozy Mathis house.

SUZANNE
Dinner, everyone!

Dani barrels down the stairs, followed by Jules and Mae.

DANI
Mom they still haven't posted
casting for the Musical Revue!

SUZANNE
That must be frustrating, sweetheart --
(calling)
Helen! Dinner! --

JULES
(explaining to Mae)
Helen's probably avoiding us at her
fancy boyfriend's house --

Helen glides in, oozing superiority --

HELEN
No I'm not, Jules, I'm home with my
wonderful family.

Jules rolls her eyes. Helen notes Mae --

HELEN (CONT'D)
I'm Helen. Who are you?

Contemplating the question, Mae's gaze drops to the dining
table where she sees: the CARVING KNIFE.

MAE STARES AT THE KNIFE.

who is she, indeed...

JULES (O.C.)
Mae?

Mae snaps back to reality. Jules jumps in to answer Helen's
question --

JULES (CONT'D)
Mae's staying with us until she
finds a foster home.

Jules looks at Mae, who appreciates Jules stepping in.

MAE
(to Helen)
Your hair is so pretty.

HELEN
Thank you, Mae. I like her already.

Jules eyes Mae, who seems to have picked up that compliment
note fast.

Peter enters from the kitchen sipping a cold beer. He sees
all the food on the table, the good silverware, a tablecloth.
He's surprised how much effort Suzanne put in.

PETER
You made all this?

SUZANNE
And your favorite -- mashed
potatoes with cheddar.
(then)
Dig in, everyone!

As they start to take their seats --

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Jules, come sit and tell me about
the Club Fair.

There's an empty chair next to Suzanne, but Jules is about to sit with Mae at the other end of the table.

Jules evaluates. She doesn't want to look like a baby running to her mommy in front of Mae, so she plays it cool.

JULES
I'm gonna sit next to --

Suddenly, Mae disappears from Jules's side and sinks into the seat next to Suzanne.

BACK ON Jules, confused. Did Mae just ditch Jules for her mom?? And why does that bother Jules so much?

Peter calls Jules over --

PETER
C'mere, kiddo.

Jules takes a seat next to her dad.

SUZANNE
who wants chicken?

DANI
Me!

Everyone starts to fill their plates --

MAE
The blessing.

Peter lowers a fork from his mouth.

JULES
we don't usually say grace --

SUZANNE
But you can if you'd like.

Mae folds her hands, bows her head. The family follows.

MAE
Bless us, O Morning Star, and
these, Thy gifts, which we are
about to receive from Thy bounty.
Through the Ruler of Demons, our
Lord. Amen.

RECORD SCRATCH!

The family stares: Did Mae just say Satanic grace at the Mathis dinner table?

Yes. Yes, she did...

Peter glares at Suzanne: who is this girl that Suzanne brought into their home?

DANI
Those aren't the words I learned --

Peter presses normalcy --

PETER
Everything looks great! Dani, pass
me those mashed potatoes.

HELEN
Jules, salad --

JULES
I didn't take any yet, you're gonna
hog it all --

SUZANNE
Hey, no food shaming --

JULES
It's salad --

SUZANNE
Let Mae have some first, she's our
guest!

PAN AROUND THE DINNER TABLE -- everyone passing plates,
chatting, ribbing each other.

The Mathis Family and Mae, all together.

We PULL FARTHER BACK... BACK... then THROUGH THE WINDOW and --

EXT. MATHIS HOUSE - NIGHT

Outside the house. Framed by the window, we HOLD ON: THE TABLEAU OF THE MATHIS FAMILY AND MAE.

CAW CAWWW -- calls a CROW on a nearby branch. The crow sits for a moment, then --

FLAP FLAP FLAPS away. As it does --

A SINGLE BLACK FEATHER...

...drifts slowly downward...

...and lands on the Mathis doorstep.

FADE TO:

INT. MATHIS HOUSE - HALLWAY / MAE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Suzanne passes by Jules's room, where Mae is now staying. The door is cracked.

Suzanne gently *KNOCKS*, peeks her head in --

Mae is sitting on the bed.

SUZANNE
You have everything you need?

Mae nods.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
I'm right down the hall if anything comes up.

MAE
Your kindness. It's too much --

SUZANNE
Mae, you deserve it.

Suzanne looks at Mae fondly, who appreciates the support.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
we'll find you a new home before you know it.

Suzanne exits. Now alone, Mae stands. Slowly moves around the shadowed room.

She inspects Jules's things -- a birthday card, stuffed animal, photo of Jules and Isaac.

-- MAE RUNS HER FINGERS ACROSS JULES'S CLOTHES
-- OPENS A TUBE OF LIP GLOSS, NOT SURE WHAT IT'S FOR
-- TRIES A *SPRITZ* OF JULES'S PERFUME

Mae arrives at -- a full-length MIRROR. She inspects her reflection. Then slowly --

Slides her bathrobe off her shoulders. It slips down her body and crumples on the floor.

ANGLE THROUGH THE MIRROR ON: A LARGE BANDAGE covers the wound spanning Mae's back. Mae slowly peels back the dressing, revealing --

AN UPSIDE-DOWN PENTAGRAM CARVED INTO MAE'S BACK.

MAROON LINES SLICE HER SKIN in the shape of an UPSIDE-DOWN STAR, A CRUDE CIRCLE ETCHED AROUND IT.

Then -- fighting off emotion -- Mae pulls her gaze from the pentagram scar and pulls the robe back around her.

She meets her eyes in the reflection, takes a deep breath, steels herself.

Mae looks at herself for a long moment, and --

SMILES.

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE