

LET THE RIGHT ONE IN

"Pilot"

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TOMORROW
STUDIOS

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EXT. COURTYARD - DAY (DAWN)

A pair of bare feet walking through the snow.

Reveal A BOY, 15. Pale skin, almost sickly so.

He's wearing a t-shirt despite the cold, a piece of cotton taped to his arm-- evidence of a recent injection.

Most curious of all, the boy's eyes seem to faintly **glow** in the pre-dawn dark--

As he stares at the horizon, the sun looming beneath.

The boy takes a shallow, nervous breath--

WOMAN (O.S.)

Don't be scared.

A WOMAN, early 30s, bundled in a cashmere coat, smiles, masking nerves of her own.

WOMAN

This is going to work.

The boy looks at her, *you promise?* And as if reading his mind--

WOMAN

I promise. Now look up, or you're gonna miss your first sunrise in years.

The boy looks up--

As the sun breaks the horizon, flooding the sky with *red*--

He actually gasps in awe--

As sunlight spreads across the courtyard, drawing closer toward his feet--

The woman holds her breath-- the boy shuts his eyes--

As sunlight envelops his body... nothing happens.

Yet we sense something profound has happened.

The woman's eyes flood with tears--

As the boy looks at her in disbelief... he starts to laugh, tears in his eyes too--

When suddenly he drops to his knees.

Wrenches in pain-- his skin starts to blister and boil--

The woman rushes toward him--

As he looks up in terror--

And then his body. Bursts into flames.

And as the boy opens his mouth to scream, we glimpse a pair of *white fangs*--

Then SNAP to BLACK-- and to our TITLE:

Let The Right One In

OVER BLACK:

The sound of a TRAIN.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

MARK KANE sits by the window, looking at his phone, a massive trunk by his feet.

Mark's early 50s and handsome in a grizzled way: unshaven, with circles of exhaustion beneath kind eyes.

GIRL (O.S.)

Excuse me?

He looks up to see a GIRL SCOUT (10) and her MOTHER.

GIRL SCOUT

Could I interest you in a box of cookies?

Mark smiles. The girl's adorable but it's more than that. A memory's stirring.

GIRL SCOUT

I have Thin Mints, Caramel Delites
Tagalongs, Smores, and Savannah Smiles.

MARK

Which one's your favorite?

GIRL SCOUT

Mmm... Caramel Delites.

MARK

Then if it's okay with your mom, I'll get
a box of those and you keep it for
yourself.

GIRL SCOUT

Mom?

MOTHER

That's very kind thank you.

MARK

Still four dollars?

MOTHER

How old's your daughter?

(he looks at her)

You knew the price I just figured...

MARK

Yeah... Yeah she um...

FLASH CUT-- Mark's wife, ELIZABETH, 40s, straightens the Girl Scout sash on--

ELEANOR, their daughter, 12 years old. Big brown eyes and a messy mane of hair impossible to tame.

BACK ON MARK in the present--

MARK

She would've been twenty-two next week.

MOTHER

... I'm so sorry.

Mark nods and hands the girl four dollars.

MARK

Here you go.

GIRL SCOUT

Thank you for your support.

Mark smiles and watches her go. Then looks back at HIS PHONE-- and the headline of a news story:

RED DECEMBER: Murder Rate Skyrockets in Windy City

Yet strangely, Mark seems excited as he reads when--

TAP-TAP-TAP. Mark looks down...

TAP-TAP-TAP-- it's coming from *inside his trunk*.

Then a SCRAPING, like an animal SCRATCHING to get out.

But Mark doesn't look disturbed. He's listening.

TAP-TAP-SCRAPE-- there's a *pattern* to it. Those fluent in Morse Code would understand the message:

Almost there?

Mark glances out the window--

To the iconic skyline of Chicago, practically glowing in the morning sun.

He smiles, then taps the trunk several times. Then drags his fingernails across the lid.

Almost home.

EXT. CHICAGO - DAY

And as the train barrels toward the city...

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

ISIAIAH, 12, practices a card trick in the mirror.

He holds up an Ace of Spades-- waves it in the air-- it morphs into the Two of Hearts.

Isaiah smiles. *Nice.*

He sets the double-faced card next to a trick deck and loaded dice. A true magic nerd. We like him immediately.

ISIAIAH
And for my next miracle...

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

As NAOMI, 40s, knocks on his door--

NAOMI
Hustle up, we're gonna be late!

She goes to the LIVING ROOM-- we hear the television:

FIELD REPORTER (O.S.)
Police have seemingly no explanation for the sudden surge in homicides. Nowhere is that more apparent, or more disturbing than right here downtown...

Naomi looks up at the TV--

FIELD REPORTER

Where tourist hotspots Navy Pier and
Michigan Avenue are eerily empty
following a wave of brutal slayings--

Isaiah emerges from his room-- Naomi clicks off the TV--

NAOMI

What are you wearing?

He's wearing a tuxedo jacket.

ISAIAH

Pretty cool, right? I got it at the magic
shop-- and check it out.

He flashes it open to show her--

ISAIAH

Secret pockets.

NAOMI

Can you go put on something normal?

ISAIAH

But I wanna wear this.

NAOMI

We talked about-- in your room you can
wear whatever you want. But out in the
world you gotta think how people are--

ISAIAH

But why's it my fault if people act--

NAOMI

Just don't make yourself such easy prey!
(then)
I didn't...

ISAIAH

It's fine I'll just go change.

She watches him go, pissed at herself she didn't handle
that better. She goes to the fridge and grabs a lunch--

NAOMI

I've got your lunch with me!

Then opens the front door and steps into THE HALLWAY--

NAOMI

You need some help?

As Mark drags that mysterious trunk across the floor.

MARK

I'm good, thanks, this is me right here.

He pulls out a set of keys.

NAOMI

So someone's finally moving in next door.

Mark politely smiles, keys in, pulls the trunk inside and shuts the door behind him. And off Naomi, *nice chat--*

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

To Mark, as he weaves past a maze of IKEA boxes, sets the trunk down, heaves a backpack onto the counter--

And sifts through the bag, setting aside--

An empty plastic jug. A butcher knife. A gas mask. *Jesus.*

He finds what he's looking for-- a roll of duct tape--

A KNOCK at the door-- he looks up-- not an ideal time for visitors.

He goes to the trunk and raps a code: *Stay quiet.*

The trunk answers with a series of ANIMALISTIC SCRATCHINGS: *Hurry up.*

Mark goes to the door and opens it partway--

NAOMI

Just wanted to officially introduce myself, I'm Naomi.

MARK

Mark, nice to meet you.

NAOMI

Is it just you moving in?

Before he can answer--

ISAIAH (O.S.)

Okay I'm ready--
(appears; sees Mark)
Oh. Hi.

Mark stares at the boy--

NAOMI

This is my son, Isaiah; Isaiah, this is
our new neighbor, Mark.

ISAIAH

Good to meet you, Mark.

MARK

... You too.

Off Naomi, clocking this strange man staring at her son--

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

She exits the building, Isaiah racing to catch up--

ISAIAH

He seemed nice, huh?

NAOMI

Mmm.

ISAIAH

You're too suspicious.

As Naomi rounds a corner-- reveal FRANK (40s, street-
hustler charm) leaning against her car.

FRANK

Don't be pissed.

Before Naomi (clearly pissed) can respond--

ISAIAH

Dad!

Isaiah rushes past her and bear-hugs him--

FRANK

Look at you. Now the last time I saw you,
you were working on a coin trick.

Frank reaches into his pocket--

FRANK

Think you can do it with this?

He produces a chip from AA, clearly a gesture for Naomi.

ISAIAH

Why's it say '3 months'?

FRANK

Well, it's kinda like an award.

NAOMI

An award?

Isaiah holds up the chip...

ISAIAH

You watching?

He does a 'french drop,' vanishing the chip in one hand as he palms it in the other.

FRANK

Oh c'mon now-- *what?!*

NAOMI

Isaiah give your dad back his award and wait for me in the car, okay?

Isaiah hands him back the chip.

FRANK

Very impressive.

They wait until Isaiah's out of earshot--

FRANK

Before you say anything...
I know--

NAOMI

You can't keep doing this--
you can't keep popping in
and out--

FRANK

I know-- that's why I stayed away 'til I got some real sobriety under--

FRANK

I go to meetings every day
and listen to these drunks--

NAOMI

It's too late for this. I
don't care--

FRANK

These broken old dudes, talkin' how their kids can't even *look* at em anymore.

(then)

I got a job now, an apartment-- I'm ready to be a real father-- just let me come over for dinner tonight and prove it.

INSIDE THE CAR

Isaiah watches his parents in the rearview mirror, smiling as his mom begrudgingly caves.

Then Isaiah turns and looks up--

And Mark is watching him from the window.

Isaiah's breath hitches. He knows he should look away.
But he doesn't. The two just look at each other.

Then Mark smiles a sad smile and shuts the blinds.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

To Mark, as he runs a strip of duct-tape down the center
of the curtains--

And we see that every inch of curtain has been taped to
the wall, so not a sliver of sunlight can peek through.

Mark double-checks his work--

When behind him--

The lid of the trunk slowly opens...

And a *creature* rises, masked in shadow--

Its eyes **faintly glowing** in the dark as it whispers:

CREATURE

I'm hungry.

Mark freezes. The VOICE BOOMS:

CREATURE

Now.

He goes to the counter and grabs the butcher knife--

Pulls out a lighter and runs a flame under the blade--

No hesitation-- he presses the blade into his palm--

A PRIMAL GROWL as blood drizzles into the plastic jug--

Then a hand snatches the jug---

And Mark looks away--

As this thing guzzles the blood, the faint scar of a bite-
mark on its neck--

Then the jug lowers and we see the creature's face:

Her skin's pale and her lips smeared with blood, but there's no mistaking Mark's daughter, ELEANOR.

Still twelve years old.

MARK

Better?

She nods, a flicker of shame in her eyes as she watches him bandage his hand.

ELEANOR

You okay?

MARK

It's barely a scratch I'm fine.

(nods at the apartment)

What do you think of the new place?

She takes it in-- the bloodied knife and gas mask; the window taped shut.

ELEANOR

Love the view.

Then she sees the IKEA boxes.

Mark watches her approach them--

A spark in her eyes as she examines the sofa, rugs and lamps, the telescope and TV.

We don't know it yet, but this is the first furniture they've owned in years.

ELEANOR

You got the big screen.

MARK

Yeah.

ELEANOR

You said that was impractical.

MARK

Well I had to leave something as a surprise.

The hint of a smile. When she suddenly seems sad.

MARK

What's wrong?

ELEANOR
We can't take it with us.

MARK
What're you talking about?

ELEANOR
If we have to pack up and run.

MARK
That's not gonna happen.

ELEANOR
('if you say so')
Okay.

MARK
Look at me.
(she does)
We're not going anywhere for a long time,
I promise.

She wants to believe that so badly.

MARK
But that means we gotta be more careful
than ever.

ELEANOR
I'm careful.

MARK
Ellie...

ELEANOR
I *am*.

MARK
You've got a little...

He gestures to his lips, as if to say-- *minus the blood
mustache, you totally blend in.*

As she wipes it away with the back of her hand--

MARK
I just want us to be able to stay, and
that can only happen--

ELEANOR
If people don't know what I am.
(before he can reply)
Or what *you* are either.

MARK

... You're right. You're right, I gotta blend in too, which means I gotta go find a legitimate job. You gonna be okay on your own for a few hours?

ELEANOR

Why wouldn't I?

MARK

I know you need a real meal soon.

She looks at him. Something terrible unspoken.

ELEANOR

I'll be fine.

MARK

You sure?

ELEANOR

Yes.

MARK

And as soon as I get back I'll tackle these boxes.

ELEANOR

I can do it.

MARK

This IKEA stuff, it's like a puzzle designed by a sadist.

ELEANOR

I like puzzles.

It's a sign of life from her. He'll take it.

MARK

All right. Text me if you need anything.

ELEANOR

How old was the boy?
(he looks at her)
Who lives next door.

MARK

He's I don't know, eleven or twelve.

A flicker of *interest* in her eyes-- which clearly makes Mark nervous. He changes the subject.

MARK

Hey I was thinking when I get back, you
and I could go out to Navy Pier.

ELEANOR

Why?

MARK

It's our first night here and they got an
exhibit on the Hubble--

ELEANOR

Is it even open in the winter?

MARK

Are you kidding? That's the best time. No
one's there-- especially now since...

He stops himself but she completes the thought:

ELEANOR

Since people keep getting killed.

(before he can reply)

It's okay, that's why we get to be here,
right?

And as we wonder what she means by *that*--

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - LOWER WACKER DRIVE - DAY

The iconic ferris wheel of Navy Pier. A majestic backdrop
for a grisly scene.

As Naomi enters AN ALLEY, she ducks under police tape--

NAOMI

What do we got?

Her partner, BEN RAMIREZ (40s), pulls back a sheet,
revealing something from a nightmare:

The VICTIM's face has been *crushed inward*, the body
beaten so bad the ribs have broken through the skin.

BEN

You ever seen anything like this?

NAOMI

(nods; then)

Hunting with my dad. We came across a guy
who'd been mauled to death by a bear.

He looks at her.

BEN

That's a heartwarming childhood memory.

NAOMI

One of the better ones, actually. You ID
the victim?

BEN

Not yet. There was nothing in his pockets
but some loose cash.

NAOMI

He didn't take the money?

BEN

No.

They cover the body and rise.

NAOMI

Any witnesses?

BEN

Most of the people here last night are
out panhandling now. The people I did
talk to, I believe the general consensus
was--

NAOMI

"Fuck yourself, Detective"?

BEN

I would've appreciated Detective.

They step out onto a street lined with tents. Lower
Wacker Drive-- Chicago's version of Skid Row.

NAOMI

You talk to *him*?

A block down, a HEROIN ADDICT huddles against the wall.

NAOMI

He saw something.

BEN

How can you tell?

NAOMI

Because he's scared.

INT. L TRAIN - DAY

To Mark, looking out the window...

As his old neighborhood passes by.

Tree-lined streets. Homes. He sees a bakery--

FLASH CUT-- Eleanor, staring at a cinnamon roll as big as her head--

As her mom tells the cashier--

ELIZABETH

One cinnamon roll, three forks and a whole bunch of napkins, please.

BACK ON MARK in the present, the memory so visceral--

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

As Mark enters a restaurant--

HOST

I'm sorry, sir, we don't open for about an hour.

MARK

Yeah, no, I was wondering if Zeke's in?

HOST

Wait here please.

The host disappears out back, Mark steps into the restaurant and we see it with him:

It's a lovely French bistro. Unpretentious and romantic.

Still, it's startling when Mark *tears up*.

MAN (O.S.)

Can I help you?

Mark bites back the emotion, turns to face--

ZEKE DAWES (40s) handsome and charismatic. Even if right now he looks like he's seen a ghost.

MARK

Hey, Zeke.

Zeke says nothing. Just stares at him.

MARK

The um, place looks incredible.

ZEKE

Cynthia, can you give us a second?

The host exits. A beat.

MARK

You look good.

ZEKE

You look tired.

(then)

Is Eleanor...

MARK

Still the same.

Zeke clenches his jaw. Something enormous unsaid.

MARK

Look I'm sorry to just show up like this,
the thing is Ellie and I just got into
town and--

ZEKE

What you need *money*?

MARK

I need a job.

(Zeke laughs)

I'm not asking you to put me back on the--
I'll wash dishes, take out the garbage--
you can throw me in the back and forget
I'm there--

ZEKE

You seriously think you can just walk in
here after--

MARK

I need your help.

ZEKE

And why would I ever help you?

MARK

... 'Cuz it's what Liz would want.

Zeke's eyes flash with rage. But then:

ZEKE

All right. C'mon.

Mark quickly follows Zeke into THE KITCHEN--

But Zeke doesn't take him to the dishwashing station. He goes straight to CHEF DANIELLE CAIRNS, 30s.

ZEKE

Danielle, this is Mark, he's gonna be cooking for you today.

MARK

Zeke--

DANIELLE

I got a lunch rush coming in, I don't have time to train some--

ZEKE

No training necessary, this used to be his kitchen.

MARK

That... was a long time ago--
(to Zeke; aside)
I'd really be more comfortable--

ZEKE

You told me to do what Liz would want and she'd certainly want to see you cooking.

(to Danielle)

Just give him one shift to prove himself, he washes out, he's gone.

And before Mark can respond--

ZEKE

(to Mark; loaded)

Good luck.

Zeke exits and--

DANIELLE

How's your knife skills?

MARK

What?

DANIELLE

(slow; to an idiot)

Are you good with a knife?

MARK

... Yes.

DANIELLE

Brunoise a quart of shallots. If you
don't fuck it up we'll keep talking.

But as Mark goes to his station--

SOUS CHEF

Behind!

He nearly gets run over by a cook carrying a boiling pot.
Mark takes a breath. Grabs a knife and shallot.

DANIELLE

Seriously take your time.

MARK

Sorry chef. Right away chef.

And off Mark, hoping like hell muscle memory kicks in--

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - LOWER WACKER DRIVE - DAY

To the TERRIFIED FACE of our heroin addict.

NAOMI (O.S.)

I know you don't want to talk to me.

She crouches beside him; Ben hovers nearby.

NAOMI

So I'm just gonna sit for a bit...

She sets a twenty-dollar bill between them.

NAOMI

And when I get back up, maybe I'll
remember to take this and maybe I won't.

He stares at the bill, hating he can be bribed so easy.

ADDICT

Last night. I was trying to sleep I heard
someone screaming. I look out there's a
man coming out of that alley. And he's...
he's covered in blood.

NAOMI

What's the man look like?

ADDICT

White. Twenties. Sweatshirt and jeans.

NAOMI

Big guy?

ADDICT

Not much bigger than you. But *his eyes...*

NAOMI

What about his eyes?

ADDICT

You ever, you ever take a photo at night
and it's like instead of your eyes
there's little rings of light?

(quiet; haunted)

That's how they looked.

BEN

Okay, so a smallish man with the strength
of a bear and eyes that glow in the dark.

ADDICT

I'm telling you what I saw.

He reaches for the twenty. Naomi puts her hand on it.

NAOMI

You got kids?

ADDICT

What?

NAOMI

Do you?

(he's silent)

They proud of you?

BEN

Naomi.

She gets up. As they walk off, he gives her a look.

NAOMI

Frank showed up this morning.

BEN

I thought he was out of the picture.

NAOMI

If by out of the picture you mean 'coming
over for dinner'...

(MORE)

NAOMI (CONT'D)

(off Ben's look)

What am I supposed to-- Isaiah lights up like a Christmas tree around his dad. And it's not like that boy's flush with friends.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - CAFETERIA

To Isaiah, staring at a packed middle-school cafeteria.

He takes a deep breath, then spots an empty seat and locks in like a missile--

But when he draws close, he loses his nerve and pivots without breaking stride--

Sitting down at a mostly-empty table.

ISAIAH

Hey.

A LONER GOTH sits across.

ISAIAH

Cool trench-coat.

The Goth smirks (or was that a smile?) Isaiah takes it as a cue to keep going.

ISAIAH

Doing anything for the talent show?

GOTH

Talent shows are for losers.

ISAIAH

Totally... Wanna see a magic trick?

GOTH

Jesus Christ.

The Goth rises and leaves.

As Isaiah faces the prospect of another lunch alone-- HIS PHONE BUZZES-- a text from an unknown number:

Just kill yourself already.

Isaiah looks around to see where it came from, but it could've been anyone. And off Isaiah, intensely alone--

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

To Eleanor, surrounded by furniture boxes.

She grabs the box for the sofa-- it must be 100 pounds, but she flips it on its side like it's nothing--

Then tears away the packing tape with a single swipe. Dozens of pieces spill out of the box--

As Eleanor examines the Swedish instructions and grins. *It is a puzzle.*

Then she notices the window.

Despite Mark's efforts, a corner of curtain has peeled away and a sliver of sunlight slices through.

She carefully approaches and reaches out, her fingers millimeters away. Then she pushes them *into the light*--

Eleanor smiles, the warmth of sun on her skin...

Until her fingers start to blister and smoke--

She yanks them back before they burst into flames.

And off Eleanor, looking as lonely as Isaiah as she rubs her still smoking fingers--

INT. ROOM - DAY

To a HAND that's burned beyond all recognition.

Then A HEALTHY HAND takes the burned hand and holds it--

Our Woman from the Cold Open, looking *shattered*.

We stay on her face as we hear A PITEOUS MOAN.

WOMAN

Shh...

Then very quietly, barely a WHISPER:

BOY (O.S.)

Claire?

CLAIRE

I'm here, Pete, I'm here.

PETER (O.S.)
What... happened?

CLAIRE
You don't... [*unsaid: remember?*]
(quiet; guttured)
Yesterday, we. We tested the treatment.
It didn't work.

Then the BURNED HAND rises-- as Peter (still unseen) examines his hand.

PETER (O.S.)
I want to see.

CLAIRE
Later okay? You need to rest.

PETER (O.S.)
I want to see my face.

A beat. Then Claire grabs a mirror. And even though we know what's coming it's still a shock.

Claire raises the mirror and Peter sees his reflection-- if that even *is* the same boy.

His hair and eyebrows have *singed* away, one of his eyes swollen shut, two holes where his nose should be.

His cheek has *melted* into his chin-- his face, his neck-- every inch of skin blistered over with horrific burns.

And as Peter stares back at a monster--

INT. RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - DAY

We FLASH to a BLUR of METAL--

As Mark dices an onion and drops it into a SIZZLING PAN--

The kitchen's electric with energy and even if Mark's racing to keep pace--

He looks different somehow. Face flushed and dripping with sweat, he seems younger. *Alive*.

INT. RESTAURANT - KITCHEN / DINING ROOM - LATER

To Mark, at the end of his shift, feeling good, when he leaves the kitchen...

And sees Zeke in the dining room-- alone at a table, with two tumblers and a bottle of bourbon. *Ah fuck.*

Mark heads over as Zeke sets an envelope on the table.

ZEKE

I figured you'd rather be paid in cash.

MARK

... This is significantly more than--

ZEKE

I advanced you the rest of the week.

(Mark looks at him)

According to Danielle, you're not a total lost cause. I told her I didn't share that opinion, but it's her kitchen, her call, so. Same time tomorrow?

MARK

Thank you.

ZEKE

Grab a seat.

MARK

I should get back to Ellie.

ZEKE

Sit down.

Mark sits as Zeke goes to pour him a bourbon--

MARK

I'm good.

ZEKE

You don't drink anymore?

MARK

It's... hard to explain.

A knowing laugh from Zeke.

ZEKE

Lemme guess. Since Eleanor doesn't get to eat and drink the stuff she loves, you won't allow yourself to either.

(Mark's silent)

Same old Mark.

MARK

What's that supposed to--

ZEKE

No I'm sure you think it's some kind
gesture, like you're showing Eleanor
you're in this together--

MARK

We are in this together--

ZEKE

And I bet she feels great, watching you
make yourself miserable on her account--

MARK

You know what I really appreciate? Your
advice when it comes to Ellie, especially
seeing as if I'd listened to you ten
years ago, she wouldn't be here today.

ZEKE

And Elizabeth would.

A charged silence.

ZEKE

Was it worth it?

MARK

Excuse me?

ZEKE

You ever find it?

MARK

Find *what*?

ZEKE

You know what.

A beat. Mark checks to make sure they're alone.

MARK

Look I need to know right now if--

ZEKE

I've never told a soul the truth about
Eleanor. But the only reason I kept that
secret was 'cuz you promised me you'd
never stop looking for a cure--

MARK

What the hell you think we've been...

Mark stops himself. Looks at Zeke.

Something inside him breaking open as he confesses:

MARK

I am no closer to finding the creature
that bit her than I was the day I left.

(then; quiet exasperation)

We haven't even found another creature
like her, much less the host.

(a bitter laugh)

And and not for lack of effort. Every
time there was even the *faintest*-- we
heard about these murders up in Canada,
bodies drained of blood. So we pack our
bags, thinking--there's gotta be
something here.

(simply shakes his head)

Heard about a killer who likes to eat his
victims-- we pack our bags and *nothing*.

And again, and again and every time I'd
promise Ellie *this time is different*.

This time we'll find the host and it'll
lead us to a cure-- and every time I'd
get her hopes up and crush them again.

(then; quiet)

These days we focus on staying alive
that's hard enough.

A beat. Then Zeke pours his friend a shot.

Mark looks at him and takes his first decent drink in ten
years. It's a moment, and Zeke lets him have it.

ZEKE

Mark.

MARK

Yeah.

ZEKE

Why did you come home?

A beat.

MARK

Ellie and I can't ever stay in one place
very long before people start asking
questions and we have to run.

ZEKE

And why's that different here...

(suddenly realizes)

All the murders going on...

(then; disgusted)

(MORE)

ZEKE (CONT'D)

And while the police have their hands full with that, you can go about your business unnoticed--

MARK
Just let me explain--

ZEKE
Jesus Christ--

ZEKE

Mark stop. Look I love you, but you being here puts everyone who works for me-- my family-- at risk. And I'm not willing to do that just so you can have cover while--

MARK

That's not the only reason we're back.

(then)

These murders downtown... everyone of em happened at night and the... animalistic nature--

ZEKE

You think the killer's a--

MARK

I don't know.

(then; raw)

It might be nothing-- honestly I can't bear to get my own hopes up, much less Ellie's. As far as she knows, the only reason we're back is to finally stop running.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

To Eleanor, in their apartment.

MARK (V.O.)

She deserves that.

Then we see she's unpacked and assembled the furniture.

And transformed their apartment into a home.

MARK (V.O.)

The last ten years have been a nightmare, she deserves something resembling a life.

An ALERT goes off on her phone. She goes to the window and, very carefully, peels back the curtain...

As the last sliver of sun slips under the horizon.

EXT. APARTMENT - COURTYARD DAY (MAGIC HOUR)

She runs through the snow like a kid.

She approaches a modest playground-- a jungle gym and a couple swings.

She bounds up the jungle gym and perches herself at the top, the best view of the purple-streaked sky.

This is her favorite time of day, when the sun's safely set but there's still some light left to savor.

Eleanor drinks it in, as happy as we've seen her, when:

ISAIAH (O.S.)

Hello?

Isaiah's standing at the base of the jungle gym.

ISAIAH

Hi.

She doesn't reply. Not loving the interruption. Not entirely minding the company.

ISAIAH

Are you okay?

ELEANOR

I'm fine.

ISAIAH

You're not wearing shoes.

She looks down at her bare, frosted feet.

ISAIAH

Aren't you cold?

ELEANOR

I don't get cold.

ISAIAH

How come?

ELEANOR

I guess I've forgotten how.

Isaiah has no idea what to do with *that*.

ISAIAH

Do you live here?

ELEANOR
I live next door to you.

ISAIAH
How do you know where *I* live?

ELEANOR
I heard you talking to my dad when we
were moving in.

ISAIAH
Wait how did you hear me? You weren't
there when--

Suddenly her stomach GROWLS.

ISAIAH
Whoa. Was that you?
(she nods)
You must be really hungry.

If it were her dad saying it, she'd insist she were fine.

ELEANOR
I am.

ISAIAH
Oh, well here...

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a Snickers bar.

ISAIAH
I was saving it for later, but you can
have it if you want.

Eleanor looks at him, not accustomed to the kindness of
strangers.

ELEANOR
I can't eat chocolate.

ISAIAH
Seriously? I don't know what I'd do if I
couldn't eat chocolate. I love chocolate.

ELEANOR
So did I.
(then)
You could... eat it for me.

ISAIAH
What?

ELEANOR
You could eat it and I could watch.

ISAIAH
That's weird.

ELEANOR
You're right forget it.

ISAIAH
No it's... I don't mind.

He peels back the wrapper, super conscious he's being watched (and let's face it, it *is* a little weird).

Then he takes a bite-- and chocolate's chocolate.

ELEANOR
It's good, huh?

ISAIAH
Oh my god it's *so* good.

She laughs-- quiet, sure, but it's the first time we've heard it. It's lovely.

MARK (O.S.)
Eleanor.

She looks up-- Mark's standing outside the building, a *concerned* expression on his face.

Isaiah turns and looks at Mark too. Smiles and waves.

So he doesn't see Eleanor step off the jungle gym, drop ten feet and land as soft as a cat.

She's just suddenly there.

ELEANOR
I gotta go.
(whispers)
Thanks for the chocolate.

And off Isaiah, his day unexpectedly brighter--

INT. MAGIC INC. - EVENING

To Naomi, a fish out of water in a magic shop.

MAGIC CLERK
Can I help you?

NAOMI

I'm looking for something for my son.

MAGIC CLERK

Birthday?

NAOMI

Sorry?

MAGIC CLERK

Is it a special occasion?

NAOMI

I was an asshole this morning.

MAGIC CLERK

... How old is he?

NAOMI

Twelve. And he um, gets picked on a little, so if we could maybe avoid anything that's gonna make it--

MAGIC CLERK

You're saying steer clear of the never-ending scarf.

She smiles. He's a kind man.

MAGIC CLERK

I think I have just the thing.

The clerk presents a long, sharp needle.

NAOMI

Oh sorry I should've, he's more into the coins and cards--

MAGIC CLERK

And I hear that, but trust me, this is gonna freak his classmates out.

NAOMI

It's just I don't think he's trying to freak--

And then the clerk drives the needle into his own arm, drawing blood.

NAOMI

... Okay wow that's...

MAGIC CLERK

So real-- I know. Even the grown-ups
can't figure out how it's done.

NAOMI

Isn't there just some rubber glue on your
arm?

He stares at her.

NAOMI

Also that's not quite how a puncture
wound bleeds and the color of the blood--
(off his look)
Sorry.

She's not being a dick, it's just habit. If there's a
mystery, she accounts for every detail until it's solved.

(That's what comes from being a kid and the people around
her not picking up on subtle signs of distress.)

MAGIC CLERK

You were saying cards and coins?

NAOMI

Yeah he likes the, you know, palm of the
hand, making things vanish and reappear.

MAGIC CLERK

Hm.

NAOMI

What?

He doesn't answer. Grabs a packet labeled 'ITR.'

MAGIC CLERK

I suspect he'll like this.

NAOMI

Wait just. Why'd you go 'hm'?

MAGIC CLERK

The magic your son's doing, it's actually
quite hard. Which means at that age, it's
gonna be hard for him to find an
audience.

(then)

You want him to make friends, I'd get him
the needle instead.

INT. L TRAIN - NIGHT

To Eleanor and Mark, riding side by side in silence.
She's wearing shoes now, his backpack rests by his feet.

MARK

Excited about Navy Pier?

ELEANOR

Just say it, okay?

MARK

What?

ELEANOR

You clearly don't like that I was talking
to that boy.

MARK

That's not true.

Except it *is* true. It's impossible, really.

MARK

I want nothing more than for you to have
someone besides me to talk to. You just,
have to be careful.

ELEANOR

I didn't even tell him my name.

Mark's silent. And she realizes:

ELEANOR

You're not worried for me you're worried
for *him*.

Mark's silent. She gets up and by the door. And off the
distance between them--

EXT. NAVY PIER - NIGHT

To Mark and Eleanor at Navy pier. It's a ghost-town.

ELEANOR

Are you sure it's open?

MARK

Yes I double-checked--

ELEANOR

There's *no one* here.

MARK

That's what makes it so cool.

And off Eleanor, *is cool the word?*

INT. NAVY PIER - CHILDRENS MUSEUM - NIGHT

Aside from a BORED EMPLOYEE, they really are the only ones there.

Eleanor's standing in front of a floor-to-ceiling monitor, an interactive museum display.

She presses a button--

An image from the Hubble Telescope, a STUNNING PHOTOGRAPH OF THE COSMOS, fills her field of vision--

Eleanor's eyes instinctively light up--

Mark smiles, happy to see her happy--

She clicks the NEXT PHOTO, more spectacular than the last--

As we hold on Mark, watching his daughter *engage...*

ELEANOR (V.O.)

The Hubble didn't even work at first...

INT. HOME - KITCHEN TABLE - DAY - FLASHBACK

ELEANOR

Turns out the mirror in the telescope?

Eleanor and her mom are building a homemade model of the Hubble Telescope for a sixth-grade science fair.

ELEANOR

They measured it wrong by like a fraction of a millimeter. So they sent up a bunch of astronauts to fix it, *in Space*.

She's so unlike the creature we've seen. So *full of life*.

ELIZABETH

Well they must've done a good job...

Elizabeth glances to a textbook on the table, open to a PHOTO taken by the Hubble.

ELIZABETH

'Cuz the pictures it took are beautiful.

ELEANOR

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

That's gonna be you some day.

ELEANOR

Mom it's super hard to become an astronaut.

ELIZABETH

Then it's a good thing you're super smart. I'm telling you, one day Dad and I are gonna be looking at photos that you sent us from Space.

INT. NAVY PIER - MUSEUM - NIGHT

To Mark, watching Eleanor stare at the photos in awe.

A part of him feeling the pain of an un-lived life...

But another part getting to glimpse his daughter again, that girl who looked at the night sky and dreamed.

Then she notices him watching her.

ELEANOR

You okay?

MARK

... Yeah. You good?

She nods. And means it. When her stomach GROWLS.

MARK

Ellie...

ELEANOR

I'm okay.

MARK

C'mon let's get you home--

ELEANOR

Honestly it was just a pang.

MARK

Eleanor--

ELEANOR
I'll be fine 'til tomorrow I promise.
(then)
Let's not ruin tonight, okay?

A beat. He nods.

MARK
Where you wanna go next?

ELEANOR
... Ferris wheel.

MARK
Ellie I don't think it's running.

She looks at him-- *Yeah. That's the point.*

EXT. NAVY PIER - NIGHT

To Mark, scoping the pier, checking to make sure--

MARK
Okay, coast is clear.

But when he turns back, Ellie's already gone.

As we follow his gaze...

There-- halfway up the ferris wheel and barely visible in the dark-- is Eleanor--

Scurrying up the twenty-story structure like a *spider*-- until she reaches the top and gazes out...

At the most stunning skyline in the world.

She grins, a moment of joy that's equal parts monster and child.

BACK ON MARK keeping watch, when he spots--

A MAN halfway down the pier, walking the other direction.

Mark watches him closely-- *keep walking, asshole*--

Then Mark notices the man *isn't wearing shoes*.

Mark watches, curious...

As the bare feet approach some broken glass, then CRUNCH right over them and keep walking, unfazed.

On Mark, *what the fuck...*

When suddenly the man stops. Can sense there's eyes on him-- the man turns and looks back...

And Mark cannot breathe.

The man's eyes. Faintly **glow** in the dark.

A moment where neither of them move. Then the man turns and walks away, FASTER NOW--

Mark doesn't even think-- throws his backpack over his shoulder and follows--

BACK ON ELEANOR, watching her dad, wondering where the fuck he's going...

EXT. LOWER WACKER DRIVE - NIGHT

To Mark, falling behind--

The man's a full block ahead-- he sharply turns and darts into an alley--

Mark picks up his pace-- reaches the alley and peers around the corner--

As a SEWER GRATE snaps shut.

And this is where common sense says *Do Not Follow*.

But common sense isn't driving him.

After ten years, he's found one.

INT. SEWERS - NIGHT

Mark drops into the sewers.

A shaft of light from the street above, otherwise he's in a pitch-black tunnel.

He clicks the FLASHLIGHT on his phone--

Unzips his bag, grabs the butcher knife and gas mask.

He pockets the knife, aims his flashlight ahead and steps into the dark.

No sound but the *splish* of his FOOTSTEPS.

Nothing visible outside his beam of light.

Unbearable silence.

Until.

Faintly at first... but growing LOUDER--

Something's *scratching* toward him at speed.

He flashes his beam around-- the sound grows LOUDER--

He flashes his beam-- it's SO LOUD-- *why can't he see it?*

Then he tilts his beam to the ground--

As A PACK OF RATS paces over his feet--

MARK

Jesus Christ!

Then they're gone as quickly as they appeared.

MARK

Fuck.

He takes a breath and relaxes...

When *right behind him*--

A pair of faintly **glowing** eyes.

The SPLISH of a footstep-- Mark *freezes*.

And what happens next happens almost too fast to process.

Mark spins around, shining his light as--

The MAN slams into him--

Mark hits the ground hard--

The phone flies from his hand--

BEAMS of LIGHT bounce like strobes as--

The Man attacks Mark with *animalistic* speed--

Mark covers his body as he's savagely MAULED--

Then the man grips his hands around Mark's throat----

Mark tries to snap the gas mask over the man's face--

But the man grabs Mark's arm and pins it down--

Continues to CHOKE Mark with one hand, his fingers
breaking the skin of Mark's neck--

When suddenly they hear something coming.

Scratching toward them at speed.

The man's head snaps up--

As Eleanor slams into him--

They fly out of view and tumble into the dark--

Mark GASPS for air and manages to scream--

MARK

Ellie?!

He dives for his phone-- finds them with his beam--

She's struggling to pin the man as he violently FLAILS--

ELEANOR

DAD, HELP!!

Mark scrambles to his feet--

As the man starts to push Eleanor off him--

Mark snaps the gas mask over his face-- the HISS of
Halothane--

And the man... goes... still. *Fuck.*

MARK

You okay?

ELEANOR

Yeah. You?

Mark nods. They pant.

ELEANOR

What the hell were you doing down here?

MARK

Look.

He pulls off the gas mask and peels back the man's lips,
expecting to see fangs.

Except there are no fangs.

Mark stares at the man, *confounded*...

As Eleanor stares at her dad.

ELEANOR
Why are you checking for fangs?

MARK
Doesn't make...

ELEANOR
Why are you checking for--

MARK
His eyes...

Mark shines his light and pulls back the man's eyelids--

MARK
You see?

And they *do* seem to glow a bit-- but fainter than before.
And fainter than Eleanor's are glowing right now.

MARK
See how they're glowing?

ELEANOR
'Cuz you just shined a light in his eyes--

MARK
Ellie he was strong like you--

She suddenly grabs the man's face, showing Mark the neck.

ELEANOR
Do you see a bite mark?

MARK
... No.

ELEANOR
Did this man try to bite *you*?

MARK
No.

ELEANOR
Did he try to drink your blood?

MARK

No.

ELEANOR

Because he is not. Like me.

(then)

You told me we were done with this.

(Mark's silent)

How long til he wakes up?

MARK

Twenty minutes, maybe less.

ELEANOR

Then we should stop wasting time.

(off his look)

I'm not sure I can make it til tomorrow.

MARK

Why did you say you could?

ELEANOR

'Cuz I know how much you hate feeding me.

A terrible beat. Then Mark pulls out his butcher knife.

With the tip of his blade he pierces the man's skin--

The man stirs but doesn't wake--

As a drop of blood pools on his skin--

Ellie's eyes and nostrils *flare*, animalistic--

Mark looks away--

As she leans in and sniffs the blood (she's 'testing' it,
a ritual we'll come to know well).

Then she licks the blood-- *euphoria* in her eyes--

When suddenly she spits out the blood.

MARK

What's wrong-- it's tainted?

ELEANOR

He's on something.

MARK

What?

ELEANOR

I don't know it's nothing I've tasted.

Then something lights up in the man's pocket.

Mark and Eleanor look at each other. He reaches inside the man's pocket and pulls out a cell phone.

Sees a TEXT from a BLOCKED NUMBER:

Columbus and Wacker. 30 minutes.

As Mark stares at the phone-- *what the hell is going on--*

Eleanor watches her dad, unsettled by the growing excitement in his eyes...

INT. APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

As Frank raises his glass:

FRANK

I would like us to raise our 7-Ups and
thank your mom for this...

(can't help himself)

Interesting meal.

NAOMI

Your ass is welcome to cook next time.

Isaiah suppresses a grin.

NAOMI

What.

ISAIAH

You said *next time*.

Before Naomi can take that back-- Frank's phone BUZZES--

NAOMI

We try not to have our phones at the
dinner table.

He checks the message and pockets the phone.

FRANK

Sorry, that was work.

NAOMI

And what exactly is this new job?

A KETTLE WHISTLES in the OTHER ROOM--

NAOMI

Excuse me a second...

She leaves the table, leaving Frank and Isaiah alone.

FRANK

I gotta run, Little Man. You got any magic tricks to show me before I go?

ISAIAH

Actually...

FRANK

Yeah?

ISAIAH

It's just there's this... talent show at school tomorrow--

FRANK

Oh I see how it is--

ISAIAH

I was gonna skip it--

FRANK

I wanna see the tricks, I gotta pay like everyone else.

ISAIAH

Dad...

FRANK

I get it, you're an artist, you can't give that shit away. Time's the show?

ISAIAH

... Seven.

FRANK

(nods; then)

Listen do me a favor and thank your mom for me, okay?

In fact Naomi's in the doorway, watching unseen.

FRANK

She's the best, you know that right?

ISAIAH

I know.

FRANK

Okay then. See ya round, David Blaine.

And off Isaiah, beaming--

EXT. CITY - DOWNTOWN - STREETS - NIGHT

To Mark and Eleanor, moving through the streets of
downtown--

MARK

What's wrong?

ELEANOR

Nothing let's just go home.

MARK

Look I'm gonna meet you there--

She stops in her tracks.

MARK

Ellie...

ELEANOR

Stop it.

MARK

What?

ELEANOR

Please.

(then; raw)

We were having a good day... I can't
remember the last time-- and then you
leave me to chase after something--

MARK

Just hold on--

ELEANOR

That isn't even--

ELEANOR

You're the one who said we have to be
careful. That we only get to stay here if
we're super-duper careful and you go
running into a freaking sewer and almost
get yourself killed--

MARK

You're right, okay, that was reckless and
I'm sorry. And you're absolutely right
when you said that man *wasn't* like you.

She looks at him-- *does he really mean it?*

MARK

But he was on some drug you'd never
tasted--

ELEANOR

Oh my god...

MARK

And whatever he was on--

MARK

Had him acting *like* you so maybe--

ELEANOR

I NEED. TO EAT.

(then)

Do you get that I'm *starving*? I mean I
know that disgusts you--

MARK

It doesn't disgust me--

ELEANOR

Yes it does you can't even look at me
when I feed.

MARK

Ellie I don't have time for this shit
right now--

ELEANOR

Then maybe I'll find my own dinner.

MARK

That's not-- you're not gonna do that--

ELEANOR

Why not?

MARK

'Cuz that's the rule YOU DO NOT DO THAT--

ELEANOR

WHY NOT?

MARK

BECAUSE THAT'S NOT WHO YOU ARE!

She stares at him, biting back tears. Then, quietly:

ELEANOR

You think I *like* being this way?

(then)

That I'm not ashamed every time I think
about what you're doing to keep me alive--

MARK

But can't you see that's why-- I mean if there's actually something here that could lead to a cure-- you'd never have to--

ELEANOR

Dad.

MARK

What.

ELEANOR

There is no cure.

She says it so simply, it's heartbreaking.

And for a moment we think he's going to put his arms around his daughter and comfort her.

MARK

If I believed that, I'd put a gun in my mouth right now.

(then)

Go home. I'll be back later tonight and I will bring you dinner.

And off Eleanor, unsure she can make it that long...

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM

To Isaiah at his desk-- when Naomi knocks on the door.

ISAIAH

I can't really talk right now I need to work on my routine.

She takes a breath.

NAOMI

Hey speaking of, I got you something.

She holds out the bag from the magic shop.

ISAIAH

You went to Misdirections?

He reaches in the bag and pulls out the needle.

ISAIAH

Oh.
(disappointed)
Cool, thanks.

NAOMI

It's not the only thing in there.

He reaches in and pulls out the packet labeled 'ITR.'

ISAIAH

No way. Do you even know what this is?

NAOMI

I'm just hoping I didn't pay for an empty
bag of plastic.

ISAIAH

Oh there's something in here.

NAOMI

(smiles; then)
You wanna show me how it works?

ISAIAH

You don't like magic.

NAOMI

That's not true.

It's obviously true.

NAOMI

I saw some kids out in the courtyard,
maybe you could show them.

He looks at her.

ISAIAH

I thought you wanted me to be normal.

NAOMI

... Sweetheart. Listen. Look. If the
world were right, you could wear whatever
you want and be exactly who you are.

(she looks at him)

And if I could do a magic trick, it'd be
to make the world more like you. To make
it worthy of you. But the world's...

(then)

I just want you to be safe.

ISAIAH

I know.

NAOMI

And no farther than the courtyard and
lights out by nine o'clock.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - LOWER WACKER DRIVE

To Mark, as he arrives at the meet-up spot.

He finds a DARKENED DOORWAY a half-block down and settles
in to watch...

As a MAN arrives at the corner.

Mark can't quite make out his face...

But it's clear the man's A DEALER. Because as soon as the
man settles into position--

One by one, ADDICTS emerge from the shadows and approach.

Like moths to a flame.

And off Mark, *what the fuck is going on...*

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

To Isaiah, trudging through the snow, toward a group of
THREE BOYS by the swings.

ISAIAH

Hi guys.

They look at each other. *This fucking kid.*

ISAIAH

What're you doing?

BOY 1

Hey you guys wanna play some XBox?

BOY 2

I call first player!

As they walk past Isaiah like he's not even there--

Isaiah looks at his mittens. His jacket. Wonders what it
is people find so repulsive. He sits down on a swing...

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

As Eleanor literally *claws* the walls she's so hungry...

When-- in between SCRATCHINGS-- she hears a SQUEAK.

She goes to the window and looks out..

That boy from the courtyard is on the swings. *All by himself.*

Her eyes narrow. That squeaking might as well be a dinner bell.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - PLAYGROUND

To Isaiah, flying back and forth on the swings--

He launches off, lands shakily on his feet-- *and there she is.* Standing by the jungle gym, not ten feet away.

ISAIAH

Hey.

(then)

How's um... how's it hanging?

He immediately regrets saying *how's it hanging.*

ISAIAH

I mean how's it going.

ELEANOR

It's fine.

An unmistakable GROWL to her voice.

ISAIAH

You okay? You sound sick.

ELEANOR

... I'll be better soon.

ISAIAH

Oh. Okay.

(then)

I was worried you were gonna get sick.

ELEANOR

What?

ISAIAH

Earlier. When you weren't wearing shoes.

It's said with such simple kindness, it blindsides her.

ISAIAH
You want my coat?

ELEANOR
No.

She grips the jungle gym hard.

ISAIAH
You sure you're okay?

He has no idea *she's holding herself back*.

ELEANOR
(very quietly)
Not you.

ISAIAH
What?

ELEANOR
You should go.

ISAIAH
What-- why?

ELEANOR
Please.

ISAIAH
But I was here first.

ELEANOR
You should go now.

ISAIAH
Okay. Can I just show you something real quick?

She looks up at him to scream GO when--

ISAIAH
But you have to come close.

And something *shifts* in her eyes. The last shred of Eleanor, falling away.

ELEANOR
Close?

ISAIAH

If that's okay.

She lets go of the jungle gym.

ELEANOR

Okay.

As she moves toward him, she glances up at the apartment building to make sure no one's watching--

When Isaiah reaches into his pocket and pulls out a quarter and the invisible thread reel ('ITR').

ISAIAH

No but even closer.

She looks at him, *this is too easy*. She draws very close--

He holds up the coin--

ISAIAH

Just a regular quarter, right?

As he places the coin into his palm, he looks down, *exposing his neck*--

Her lips pull back, *exposing her fangs*--

She leans in to bite-- her teeth inches from his skin--

When she glances down and sees--

The quarter floating above his palm.

She stops. Stares at it, more confounded than amazed.

Her fangs are practically *grazing* his skin--

As the quarter floats impossibly in the air.

Then-- very slowly...

She pulls back, her eyes locked on the coin, her lips curling back over her fangs.

Isaiah's focus never leaves the coin-- it floats back between his fingers--

And Eleanor snatches it from his hand. Examines it. Holds it over her palm and drops it--

ELEANOR

I don't get it.

He gently takes the coin, places it in his own palm and closes his hand.

ISAIAH

It's magic.

He opens his hand, the coin's *gone*--

And Eleanor smiles in a way we haven't seen.

When Isaiah notices--

ISAIAH

Whoa.

ELEANOR

What?

ISAIAH

What's with your eyes?

She instinctively looks away.

ISAIAH

That's so cool.

A beat. Then she looks back up at him--

Her eyes ever so faintly ringed with light.

ISAIAH

How do you make em do that?

She has no idea how to answer. Until it occurs to her--

ELEANOR

It's magic.

He smiles. A moment. Her stomach GRUMBLES.

ISAIAH

Seriously I can get you something to eat.
We have loads of leftovers.

ELEANOR

That's okay. But I should go.

ISAIAH

Oh. Okay.

Only then does he realize they still haven't met.

ISAIAH
I'm Isaiah, by the way.

She looks at him. She hasn't told anyone her name in a long time.

ELEANOR
I'm Eleanor.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - LOWER WACKER - NIGHT

To Mark, watching an exchange--

His POV-- the DEALER hands a USER product-- the user walks away-- finally the dealer's alone when--

Mark's phone BUZZES-- A TEXT from his daughter:

Please hurry.

A flash of dread in his eyes.

Then he pockets the phone, slings his backpack over his shoulder and makes his way to the dealer.

MARK
Excuse me?

The dealer turns-- it's Frank.

FRANK
Can I help you?

MARK
Yeah. I'm...
(not good at this)
Interested in what you're selling.

FRANK
And what would that be?

Apparently there's a protocol here.

MARK
I um. Heard there's something new out there-- something strong.

A flash of recognition from Frank-- Mark knows he's onto something.

MARK

I have money.

He pulls out the envelope of cash from Zeke. Frank eyes him-- nothing about this man reads *user*.

MARK

Look I'm not a cop.

Frank smirks-- that's exactly the shit a cop *would* say. And this dude's not worth the risk.

FRANK

Have yourself a nice night.

MARK

Just wait...

FRANK

We're done here.

As Frank turns to leave, Mark checks to make sure they really are alone.

To Frank, walking away-- when the gas mask snaps over his face-- Frank struggles-- then the HISS of Halothane...

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

And his eyes blink open.

As Frank slowly wakes...

Only to discover he's in an abandoned room, tied to a chair, duct tape over his mouth--

And the man he just met has a butcher knife in his hands.

MARK

I'm gonna ask you some questions and if you're honest with me, there's a chance you walk out of here alive. Do you understand?

Frank looks at Mark. Nods. Mark peels back the tape...

MARK

I found these in your jacket pocket.

Mark opens his palm: a pill filled with a glowing amber fluid.

MARK

What is it?

Frank hesitates. Knows he doesn't have a good answer.

FRANK

I don't know.

Mark presses the blade to his throat.

FRANK

I *don't* I swear. Look I'll tell you everything just *be cool* okay?

Mark doesn't lower the blade.

FRANK

Couple weeks ago I was coming out of an AA meeting this dude comes up to me and asks if I wanna make some money.

As Frank spills his story, honest and fast:

FRANK

Every night he texts me an address. I go there, the man gives me product to sell. The next night it's a new address, I go give the man his money, he gives me more product to sell.

MARK

What's the man's name?

FRANK

I don't know.

MARK

What's his number?

FRANK

I don't know.

Mark presses the blade deeper, drawing blood.

FRANK

I don't I swear to Christ. No one gives names they only use burners-- look the guy I'm working for, he's just a middle-man. I overheard him talkin' 'bout some woman in charge of this whole thing.

MARK

Who is she?

FRANK

I don't know.

MARK

You're not giving me anything useful and that's not good for you.

FRANK

Listen listen-- the phone in my jacket pocket. The guy I work for, he'll text me tomorrow with a new address. You wanna find this dude he will be there tomorrow.

Mark takes this in, then:

MARK

What do you know about this drug?

FRANK

Not much. People who buy it say it's a primal high. Like they can see in the dark and run through walls. Except...

MARK

Except *what*?

FRANK

Apparently the hangover's brutal. They go out in the sun it feels like their skin's on fire.

On Mark-- *there is definitely something here.*

MARK

What else?

FRANK

That's all I know.

MARK

You never used it yourself?

FRANK

No way.

MARK

Don't lie to me.

FRANK

I'm not.

MARK

Listen. If you're not clean, you should
tell me now.

And suddenly we realize why Mark's asking if Frank's
blood is clean.

FRANK

Look in my pocket, okay?

MARK

What?

FRANK

My pants pocket. Look inside.

Mark reaches in the pocket, pulls out the chip from AA.

FRANK

Three months I haven't touched a drink
much less a drug. I'm clean.

Mark nods, a part of him wishing Frank wasn't.

FRANK

Look I never should've gotten mixed up in
this shit, I just... I got a son, okay?

MARK

I don't wanna hear about your fucking--

FRANK

I just wanted a little money so I could
take him to dinner--

MARK

I'm not gonna say it again--

FRANK

Get an apartment where--

FRANK

You got a kid?

Mark looks at him.

FRANK

Then you know. You *know*.

(fighting tears)

That boy's my light in the dark. And I
wanna see him again, okay? I'm so sorry I
got mixed up in this mess but I was just
trying to take care of my kid.

Mark nods, tears in *his* eyes too.

MARK

So am I.

And then he slits Frank's throat.

As blood starts to pour from Frank's neck--

Mark tilts Frank's chair all the way back, until Frank's upside down--

His blood drizzling into the plastic jug that was positioned behind him, unseen all this time.

Then Mark catches a glimpse of Frank's face.

Mark quickly looks away, fighting the impulse to retch-- but his body starts to convulse.

Mark drops to his knees-- his body shakes harder--

Mark tries to fight it-- no use-- he puts his face in his hands and begins to sob--

INT. LABORATORY/BEDROOM - DAY

As we find the boy from our Cold Open, asleep in bed.

Peter looks almost peaceful, his burned chest rising and falling gently--

As we drift through the room and reveal a strange cabinet of curiosities:

Half the room's a state-of-the-art laboratory:

Vials of blood, tissue samples, and test tubes of the same glowing amber fluid that was in Frank's drug.

The other half's a teenaged boy's bedroom:

Maxim posters, sports trophies and a bookshelf lined with FRAMED PHOTOS.

That's where we find Claire, holding an OLD PHOTO of her family.

INSERT PHOTO: Claire's twenty years old and beautiful, her entire life in front of her as she stands between--

Her FATHER (50s, commanding)-- and her brother, Peter, who looks exactly the same age as when we met him.

They're all standing in front of a snow-capped mountain, posing with downhill skis.

She hears a SOUND-- she turns-- as Peter sits up in bed, and we see the full, gruesome extent of his wounds.

CLAIRE

Hey...

She goes to his bed and sits at the edge.

CLAIRE

How's your pain?

He nods, *okay*. Then sees the photo in her hands.

CLAIRE

You remember that trip?

PETER

... I remember Dad making us do that black diamond. I remember almost flying off a cliff until you grabbed--

He stops mid-sentence.

CLAIRE

What?

PETER

You pulled me out.

CLAIRE

What?

PETER

That's why I'm alive. You pulled me out of the sunlight before I burned to death.

A beat. She nods.

PETER

You should've let me die.

Very gently, she puts her arms around him--

CLAIRE

We're not giving up, okay? The treatment was working for a moment. We're *so* close.

We hold this poignant image of brother and sister...

Then, curiously, we drift back over to THE PHOTOS.

Moving past SNAPSHOTS of Peter's family and friends, of his baseball team--

We settle on a PHOTO of his neighborhood swim club.

Peter's standing in the back row, one of the older swimmers on the team.

And amongst his FEW DOZEN OTHER TEAMMATES--

Kneeling in the front row, her big brown eyes and messy mane of hair impossible to tame, is Eleanor.

But that's a mystery for another time.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

As we find Mark, returning home.

He closes the door and sets his backpack on the floor.

And we hear a low, steady GROWL.

Mark unzips the bag, revealing the plastic jug, filled to the brim with Frank's blood.

He unscrews the lid and-- *so fast*--

Eleanor steals from the shadows, crawling on all fours--

She grabs the jug and begins to guzzle the blood--

She looks less a child and more a leech *gorging* itself--

Mark just stands there, not watching her feed--

Until the empty jug clatters to the floor--

And Eleanor, lips drenched in blood, exhales in *relief*.

And then doubles over in shame.

Her hunger sated, her humanity's returned-- and after feeding there is only ever shame.

But then her dad reaches down his hand.

The simplest of gestures to remind her *you're not alone*.
As long as I'm here, you will never be alone.

As she takes his hand and grips it tight-- PRE-LAP the SOUND of WATER--

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Mark's cleaning by hand the jug that held Frank's blood.

It's strangely domestic, like he's just washing the dishes after dinner.

He leaves the jug to dry, walks to A SPARE BATHROOM--

And opens the door, a bit of ambient light illuminating--

Eleanor, fast asleep in the tub.

She looks *healthy*-- pink-cheeked and freshly fed, a couple drops of blood drying near her lips.

CUE MUSIC ("Sweet Child O' Mine")--

As Mark goes to Eleanor's side, pulls the blanket snug around her shoulders and kisses her forehead.

And for just a moment, she's not a monster and he's not a killer.

He's simply a dad, checking in on his daughter before he heads off to bed.

Then he closes the door behind him--

And Eleanor disappears into the dark.

END OF PILOT