

**Buffy The Vampire Slayer**

**Season 8**

Episode 17

"The Road To Hell, Part 1"

*WARNING: This script contains some graphic storylines. It is intended for mature readers only... Well, and older Buffy fans.*

## TEASER

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The woods are filled with darkness, making it hard to see anything at all. Only a rare beam of moonlight manages to cut through the dense foliage in this area.

The sounds of CRICKETS CHIRPING can be heard. They are all that can be heard. That is, until a VAMPIRE rushes into view. He's in vamp face, but something about him isn't quite normal. His eyes are red, instead of the standard yellow, and his ears have a gnarled, almost pointed look to them. This vampire isn't new to the world. This is one of the old ones. His style is old too.

He is clothed in animal skins, sewn together by hand. Nothing fancy, or flashy about him at all.

What is most striking about this vampire isn't that he looks different than normal vampires, it's the fact that he's scared. Very, very scared.

He stops, and looks back.

VAMPIRE'S POV

We now see the woods a little easier, through the eyes of the vampire (and their ability to see in the dark). All we see though, is woods.

The CRICKETS STOP CHIRPING. Now, there is an eerie silence. Something which scares the vampire even more.

After a moment, there is another sound. Something so faint, that it's hard to hear. It's the SOUND OF A HEARTBEAT. If it's possible, this worries the vamp even more than before.

VAMPIRE

Why?

(beat)

Why are you doing this?

There's no answer. The HEARTBEAT GETS A LITTLE LOUDER. It's a steady heartbeat. Calm.

The vampire begins to cry.

VAMPIRE (CONT'D)

I don't hunt your kind!

As the heartbeat continues to get louder, the vampire freaks out. He turns and runs as fast as he can.

WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN: "NEW ENGLAND, 2016"

EXT. ELSEWHERE IN THE WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

The vampire rushes between the trees at a speed that no human could. Especially in this darkness.

He pauses once again, and listens. At first, he hears nothing. Then, THE SOUND OF THE HEARTBEAT can be heard again.

He smells the air.

VAMPIRE  
(quietly, to self)  
It's coming.

He looks into the distance. Now, he knows where he's going. He takes off again.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

The cave is very plain. An animal skin rug covers part of the floor, but other than that, there isn't much to describe. The granite walls are empty. There are no chairs, or tables. No markings. The only light is given by a single candle.

The vampire runs into the cave, and stops. He turns around to face the entrance of the cave. He knows it's coming. He knows he doesn't stand a chance.

ANGLE ON : THE VAMPIRE, FROM THE ENTRANCE OF THE CAVE

The vampire stiffens up a little as his enemy enters the cave. He tries to be strong.

VAMPIRE  
Welcome to my sanctuary, Slayer.

We can only see her back. This SLAYER is small, with dirty blond hair that's been pulled into a loose bun. Her clothes aren't particularly stylish (whatever that means, since we don't know the style of the time). She walks with strength, and is very calm.

VAMPIRE (CONT'D)  
You don't have to do this. I understand why you're here, but you don't have to do this. I don't hunt your kind.

SLAYER'S POV

Though the space is pretty dark, she can see the vampire pretty well. He looks at her with fear in his red eyes.

VAMPIRE (CONT'D)  
I feed on rodents and game. I have since long before your kind came to this land. I am at peace.

She takes a couple of steps toward him. When she speaks, she speaks quietly, and softly. Her voice has a tired raspiness to it. A hardness, yet it is calm.

SLAYER

Not yet, but you will be soon.

VAMPIRE

I will not kill your kind, nor will I sire mine. Why won't you allow me to exist? I will live in this cave, as I have for as long as anyone can remember. I will harm nobody.

(beat)

Please.

SLAYER

You can fight, or you can surrender. Either way, your "existence" is over.

The Slayer raises her weapon. As it catches the dim light of the candle, the vampire looks at it. Tears fall from his eyes, though he tries to remain strong. He can feel it's power. He can sense it's purpose. He's never seen the Scythe before, but he knows it.

Slowly, his eyes drift back to the Slayer.

VAMPIRE

What will you do? What's to happen to a person once their purpose is complete?

She doesn't answer. He takes a moment, and then looks down.

VAMPIRE (CONT'D)

I will die as I have lived. In peace.

He lowers himself to his knees, and closes his tear-filled eyes. He turns his head upward, toward the moon that he cannot see.

The Slayer walks to him, and stands over him for a beat before raising the Scythe. She swings it with all of her power, slicing through the vampire's neck, and taking off his head.

The Scythe continues on it's path, eventually being driven into the granite wall of the cave. The VAMPIRE SLOWLY TURNS TO DUST.

The Slayer lets go of the Scythe handle, leaving it in the wall of the cave. She takes a step back.

SLAYER

(to herself)

What's to happen to a person once their purpose is complete?

She walks to the wall opposite the Scythe, and slides down it. She rests on the ground.

SLAYER (CONT'D)

They rest.

With that, she lowers her head, and closes her eyes.

ANGLE ON : THE CANDLE

A gust of wind rushes into the cave, blowing out the flame. The cave goes dark.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF TEASER

## ACT ONE

OVER BLACK:

WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN : "20 YEARS LATER"

SARA (V.O.)

"My dearest Sara, the road to hell, they say, is paved with good intentions. Those who have paved my road will never know the pain that they have caused.

(beat)

I don't mind the pain though. It has forced me to endure. My life was meaningless before I knew, but now... Now I have made a difference on this earth. I have looked into the face of evil without fear, without flinching. I have destroyed that evil, and I have made the earth safer for the daughter that now grows inside me..."

FADE IN:

INT. SARA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

SARA sits at the kitchen table. She's 16 years old, and pretty (though she doesn't show it off). She looks tough, but in a rural way, not a big city way.

She's reading a letter. She's not exactly sure what it is that she's reading, but she reads it anyway.

SARA

"I am but one in a long line, chosen to balance the evil that walks among us. I have just one regret for what I have done... I regret that I will never see my daughter meet destiny when it comes. You must continue the fight. You are a Chosen One. I will always love you, my daughter."

Sara stares at the letter for a moment, trying to understand it.

SARA (CONT'D)

What does this mean, "Chosen One?"

She gets no answer. She turns to face the kitchen counter.

REVEAL BETTY NEWSTEAD, standing near the counter, a slightly nervous look on her face. She's a woman in her early 50's with newly graying hair. Her clothes look like they're from the 1950's.

The kitchen is a small, country kitchen. New England style.

SARA (CONT'D)

Ma?

Betty walks to the table and sits down next to Sara.

BETTY

You're a young woman now. You deserve to know.

SARA

Mom, I'm sixteen years old. I've been a young woman for quite a while now.

(holds up the letter)

You didn't write this?

Betty pauses, finding it hard to say this.

BETTY

No, honey.

(beat)

I'm-- I'm not you're real mother.

Sara's face goes blank. Too many thoughts at one time, making it impossible for her face to pick just one expression.

Betty looks down.

BETTY (CONT'D)

I've wanted to tell you for so long. I wanted to... When your father died, I thought it would be better to let things calm down.

SARA

(to self)

My father?

BETTY

I didn't want your entire world to change overnight. I wanted to make this easier.

SARA

'Cause that's gonna happen.

Sara thinks for another moment, and then it all becomes too much. She stands up with a sudden need to move.

SARA (CONT'D)

I can't believe this.

BETTY

I'm sorry.

SARA

Mom, I don't understand this. If you're not my mother, then who is?

Betty hesitates.

BETTY

I don't know.

Betty gets up and puts a comforting hand on Sara's shoulder.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Nobody ever knew. All we know about her is from that note. Your mother... You're *real* mother wanted it that way.

SARA

Why?

BETTY

I don't know. I wish I had more answers for you, sweetie, I do. I just don't.

SARA

(beat)  
My father...?

Betty shakes her head and shrugs. She has no clue.

BETTY

I never wanted to lie to you. I just wanted you to be happy. I love you.

Sara looks into Betty's eyes strongly.

SARA

I love you too. None of this matters. You're my real mother. No letters can ever change that.

Sara hugs Betty. Betty hugs back, holding onto her daughter for as long as she can.

EXT. SARA'S HOUSE - DAY

Snow is falling outside this rural New England home. Smoke is puffing out of the chimney. Everything seems so simple, looking at this house. Nobody would ever suspect the drama unfolding inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SARA'S HOUSE - DAY

The season has changed. Now, it is spring. The snow has been replaced by green grass and flowers. The smoke of the chimney is gone. The windows are open, allowing a fresh spring breeze to flow through the house.

EXT. JOHN HANCOCK HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A typical high school. Old. It must have been there since the 1900's.

The yard is empty now. School is in session.

INT. JOHN HANCOCK HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

STUDENTS fill the desks, listening to the teacher, MRS. KRAMER, who stands at the front of the class.

As she talks, we slowly PAN ACROSS THE ROOM.

MRS. KRAMER

I'm sure that all of you did the reading last night. If you didn't, you'd be wasting my time. You all know how much I dislike having my time wasted, right?

No response.

As we pan, we eventually FIND SARA, sitting at her desk. She's staring at a binder. She's not paying attention to the teacher.

ANGLE ON : THE BINDER

The binder's cover is a picture of Sara, with her adopted mother and father. Happy as can be.

Sara's hand moves into frame, gently touching the image. Remembering.

MRS. KRAMER (CONT'D)

So, can anyone tell me what the reading was about last night?

No response.

MRS. KRAMER (CONT'D)

Anyone?

Sarah's hand moves, and opens the binder now. Inside, there is a copy of the letter that she got from her birth-mother.

In big red letters, the word "WHO?" is written on the bottom of the copy.

Sarah flips the page, scanning over the information she's gathered. Copies of her adoption papers. A few print-outs from an online DNA scan for those seeking lost relatives, with the words "SEARCH YIELDS NO INFORMATION" written in bold letters.

Finally, she comes to a page with another copy of the letter, or part of it. It's been blown up. We can now see a watermark in the top corner of the paper, with the initials W.H.S., and a dragon symbol on it.

Below it, Sara has written "WHAT IS W.H.S.?" and below that, "WHARING HOUSE STATIONARY"

Mrs. Kramer looks around the room, and sighs.

MRS. KRAMER (CONT'D)

Allona?

A female student, Allona perks up.

ALLONA

Hmm?

MRS. KRAMER

The reading?

Allona doesn't respond. She doesn't know what Mrs. Kramer is talking about.

MRS. KRAMER (CONT'D)

What was it about?

ALLONA

Oh! It was- uhm- I know this.

(beat)

The Reformation?

MRS. KRAMER

Thank you!

(beat)

At least one person glanced at the index of their book. I don't suppose you actually did the reading by any chance?

Allona shrugs. Mrs. Kramer rolls her eyes. She continues to talk, but her VOICE IS MUFFLED into background noise.

ANGLE ON : SARA

She flips another page.

ANGLE ON : THE BINDER

The page is now an e-mail, sent to Wharing House Stationary.

Sara writes : "I'M LOOKING FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THE WOMAN WHO PURCHASED THIS PAPER. INCLUDED IS THE SCAN I MADE OF THE LETTER. ANY INFORMATION WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED."

Their response is this, "SCAN SHOWS THAT THE PAPER WAS FROM OUR DRAGON-TEAR LINE. THE ONLY LINE TO USE THAT PARTICULAR WATERMARK. THE DRAGON-TEAR LINE WAS AN EXTREMELY LIMITED RUN FOR US. THE LINE WAS DISCONTINUED YEARS AGO, DUE TO LOW SALES AND HIGH COST OF PRODUCTION."

Sarah responds : "WOULD YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE RECORDS OF THOSE WHO BOUGHT THE PAPER? I'M LOOKING FOR MY BIRTH MOTHER. PLEASE HELP ME."

To which they reply : "I SHOULDN'T BE DOING THIS, BUT I DO HAVE THOSE RECORDS. THE PAPER WAS PURCHASED BY THREE CUSTOMERS. WENDYLL HARRING, NANCY REINHOLD, AND ANOTHER WOMAN WHO PAID CASH. RECEIPT SIMPLY SIGNED, "RACHAEL W.". I HOPE THIS HELPS YOU."

Under that last reply, Sara has written the names, along with phone numbers for Wendyll and Nancy. They have since been crossed out. The only remaining name is Rachael's, and that has a big question mark after it.

MRS. KRAMER (CONT'D)

Now, could someone please tell me the socioeconomic consequences of the global quake of 2013?

(beat)

Aaron?

Another student, AARON almost jumps out of his seat. He looks at Mrs. Kramer like she's speaking another language.

MRS. KRAMER (CONT'D)

Care to tell us the answer to that?

He doesn't respond. Mrs. Kramer sits on her desk, looking quite upset.

MRS. KRAMER (CONT'D)

I honestly don't know why I bother with you kids. I try my hardest to teach you these lessons, but you won't apply yourselves. Is it really that hard?

No response.

MRS. KRAMER (CONT'D)

Can nobody tell me the answer to that question? Please? I beg you. Any thoughts at all?

No response. Mrs. Kramer closes her eyes in annoyance. A slight GIGGLE can be heard.

Mrs. Kramer opens her eyes and looks at another student.

MRS. KRAMER (CONT'D)

Well, Mr. Landry, it would seem that you have an opinion. Care to share?

She waits for a response, but none comes.

SARA

The consequence was humanity.

Mrs. Kramer looks over at Sara, amazed that someone actually spoke.

MRS. KRAMER

I'm sorry?

Sara doesn't look up. She still seems disinterested by the whole thing.

SARA

Humanity. The World responded by helping those in need. Like everyone suddenly forgot what asses they'd been and actually started caring.

Some of the other students roll their eyes.

SARA (CONT'D)

They managed to put aside the evils of the world long enough to help the people that were suffering after the quake. Without that, millions would have died. Instead, cities were rebuilt faster. Even today, murder rates are lower than ever, and war is rare.

(beat)

It's like... It's like the earth opened up and swallowed the evil. People were left with a *need* to help each other out.

STUDENT (O.S.)

So the quake was a good thing. Big "yay" for suffering, chaos and death.

Sara still doesn't look up.

MRS. KRAMER

Shut up, Steven.

(then)

As thought provoking as that is, Sara, I was hoping for more definable results. Something more academic, and less philosophical.

STUDENT (O.S.)

Yeah, Sara.

MRS. KRAMER

Seriously, Steve, I'm *this* close.

Sara finally looks up.

SARA

Umm, okay. When President Ri--

ALLONA

Here we go with the idol worship.  
"The great and powerful Oz."

MRS. KRAMER

Everyone who's spoken in the last  
ten minutes, who isn't Sara or  
myself... get out.

(beat)

Leave. Now. Go to the office.

Those students who have spoken get up and walk out of the  
class.

MRS. KRAMER (CONT'D)

Go on, Sara.

Sara takes a breath.

SARA

The Allies bailed out the rest of  
the world with our troops and rescue  
teams, while what remained of the  
U.N. sat on their asses, trying to  
decide whether or not they should  
vote on something. Without the U.N.  
"help", the smaller countries were  
left to fend for themselves. It forced  
those countries to democratize in  
order to compete globally.

(beat)

But, whatever. It's kinda hard to  
speak about philosophical topics on  
a purely academic level.

Mrs. Kramer takes this in. She'd probably have some kind of  
comment for Sara, but she's just happy that someone spoke  
up.

MRS. KRAMER

Interesting points. Would anyone  
else like to--

The BELL RINGS.

MRS. KRAMER (CONT'D)  
 Nevermind. We're out of time.  
 Remember, reports are due on Monday.  
 All late reports will result in lower  
 grades, I don't care how well you  
 downloaded them. The school-year  
 might be winding down, but that  
 doesn't give you a free pass.  
 (then)  
 Class dismissed.

The students get up, and begin to leave the room.

INT. JOHN HANCOCK HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Sara walks out of the classroom, and heads for her locker.  
 Another student, MARIA (same age, better dresser) catches up  
 to her.

MARIA  
 You know you'll never be popular if  
 you keep doing that, right?

SARA  
 Doing what?

MARIA  
 Answering questions. Speaking in  
 class. Getting good grades. How do  
 you expect to succeed in life if you  
 keep doing well in school?

SARA  
 I know I can't be the only one who  
 finds this system of yours flawed.  
 (beat)  
 Besides, I was just doing it to get  
 under Mrs. Kramer's skin. She hates  
 it when people say things that go  
 against her own politics. 'Specially  
 when she doesn't understand half of  
 what they say.

Sara gets to her locker and opens it. Inside, there are more  
 papers and documents that relate to the search for her mother.

MARIA  
 (re: the research  
 materials)  
 Find anything new?

SARA  
 Not yet, but I mean to.

MARIA  
 Yeah, I was thinking about that. The  
 trip, I mean.

SARA

I wanna be out of here Wednesday night.

MARIA

Wednesday? What about the party on Friday? I was looking forward to that.

SARA

Don't have to come if you don't wanna.

MARIA

(pouting)

No. I'll forget the party. We can still go to the stupid dance thing though, right?

Sara gives her a look that asks "Why would you want to?"

MARIA (CONT'D)

I know.

(beat)

Anyway, I was thinking about the trip, and I thought that we could-maybe- stop by the beach for a day or two. Look...

Maria pulls out a Palm-like device and shows it to Sara.

MARIA (CONT'D)

I mapped it all out. We don't even lose any time.

SARA

Damnit, Maria! I told you, this isn't a vacation. We're not going on this trip to get tans.

MARIA

I wasn't thinking about tans.

Maria taps her little device thingy. She shows it to Sara again.

MARIA (CONT'D)

I was thinking about this. Five guys to every one girl. With numbers like that, who's gonna get a tan?

SARA

You're a slut.

MARIA

I am not a slut.

SARA

Yes you are.

(beat)

We're not going to the friggin' beach.  
I'm going on this trip to find my  
mother.

Sara closes her locker and starts to walk away. Maria follows.

MARIA

Fine.

(then)

You're so serious these days.

SARA

I need to be.

MARIA

Have you told your mom yet? I mean,  
Betty?

SARA

No. Ma doesn't even have a clue.

MARIA

Don't you think you should tell her.  
Y'know, before she wakes up and finds  
you gone.

SARA

And say what? "Ma, we're out of milk.  
Oh, and by the way, I'm taking off  
to go find my *real* mother"?

MARIA

You have to say something.

SARA

I will. Eventually.

(beat)

Somehow.

MARIA

If you don't, you know you're rotting  
in hell, right? I mean, this has to  
be hell-rotting territory.

SARA

Aren't you supposed to be my  
supportive friend?

MARIA

I'm supporting. I just wanna make  
sure we're clear on the rotting part.

SARA

I'll tell her. My own way, and in my own time.

INT. SARA'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Betty is in her robe and slippers. She walks up the stairs, picking up a stray sock as she goes.

She walks to Sara's door and knocks on it.

BETTY

Sara? Sweetie, breakfast is on the table. I'm taking a shower, okay?

There's no reply.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Sara?

Betty opens the door and looks inside. After a moment, she walks into the room.

INT. SARA'S HOUSE - SARA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Betty walks into the room and finds that Sara isn't there. The bed is made, and has a few hangers scattered on it. There's a note on the pillow. Betty goes to it, and reads it.

SARA (V.O.)

Mom, I'm so sorry, but I need to know the truth. I need to know where I come from. Who I am. Please don't think this means that I don't love you, because I do. That can't ever change. I just need answers, and this is the only way for me to get them. Please don't worry about me. I'll be fine. This is something that I had to do... Your Daughter, Sara.

Betty needs to sit down. She sits on Sara's bed, not knowing what to think. She wants to cry, but she can't bring herself to do it.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. SARA'S CAR - DAY

Sara and Maria are parked. Both staring straight ahead. Sara's a bit nervous.

The car is an old 2004 SUV, with a few added gadgets here and there, but nothing too Star Trek. It's in good shape, but you can see that it's been put through the ringer.

The back of the car is filled with junk. Food wrappers, and fast food bags mostly.

Maria looks over to Sara.

MARIA

Two months. Tracking and driving and not bathing, and it all leads to this.

SARA

Yeah.

ANGLE ON : THE WINDSHIELD

Through the windshield, we can see what they're looking at.

The neighborhood is a suburban neighborhood, which was probably nice in it's day. The houses are older, and run down. The street is dirty, and not at all pleasant looking.

They're looking at one house in particular. It's windows are lined with foil, and the grass is in need of mowing. It's not the sweet country home that Sara's used to.

MARIA

So, would it have killed you to track down your mother and have her be rich? Or a spy? A spy'd be cool too. Maybe a rich spy.

SARA

She could be in there right now.

MARIA

Yeah, but she's probably not a spy.

SARA

Enough with the damn spy already!  
This is serious.

(beat)

My real mother could be in that house,  
and she wouldn't even know I was out

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

here. She'd have no clue that her entire life is about to change.

MARIA

Yours too.

SARA

But at least I'm ready for it.

MARIA

Are you?

Sara looks at Maria. She's not sure what Maria means.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Look, I'm acutely with you here. I got you, you know that. I just want you to be sure that you're ready for whatever you find.

SARA

I'm ready.

MARIA

And what if she's not?

(beat)

This woman isn't your mother. Betty is. She's the one that took care of you when you were growing up.

SARA

This isn't about me turning my back on Ma. I wouldn't do that. This is about me finding out who I am and where I come from.

MARIA

I get that. Just keep in mind that not all women are like your mom. This Rachael dame might not be kisses and cuddles. Just be ready for it, that's all.

SARA

I'm ready. I've been ready since we started this. In my head, I've played it out every possible way. Sometimes, she's nice and she cries and hugs me. Sometimes she's mean and slams the door in my face.

(beat)

I just want to know why. Why didn't she want me?

There's silence for a moment. Finally, Maria speaks again.

MARIA

Maybe she couldn't keep you.

(beat)

Maybe she couldn't afford the risk  
of bringing you on missions for the  
CIA.

Sara smiles. The tension draining for a moment. She slaps  
Maria on the shoulder.

SARA

You're so stupid.

MARIA

Hey, you never know.

There's another pause in the conversation.

MARIA (CONT'D)

So, are you going in?

SARA

Yeah.

(beat)

I'm just waiting for my legs to start  
functioning again.

MARIA

Nervous?

SARA

Wouldn't you be?

MARIA

Hey, I'm the one who's gonna be  
waiting out here alone.

SARA

You wanna come in?

MARIA

I'll be okay out.

(beat)

Unless you want me in. If you want  
me in, I'll go in.

SARA

It's up to you.

MARIA

I just said it was up to you.

SARA

Whatever you want is fine.

MARIA

Don't do that! I hate when you do that!

SARA

Fine. Stay out here.

ANGLE ON : THE HOUSE

SARA (CONT'D)

I guess I'm going now.

MARIA

Good luck.

SARA

Thanks.

Sara doesn't move. After a couple of seconds, the door to the house opens and a woman, RACHAEL WILSON (60's, graying hair, old clothes) sticks her head out and yells.

RACHAEL

You girls have been sitting out there for almost an hour! You coming in, or not?

Sara and Maria look at each other.

MARIA

Creepy.

SARA

I guess I'm going.

Sara opens the door and gets out. She starts to walk toward the house.

Maria takes a look around the neighborhood again. She quickly opens her door and rushes after Sara.

MARIA

Wait up!

She catches up to Sara and they continue toward the house.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Last thing I need is a close encounter of the ax murderer kind. You're mom's probably not one of those, right?

EXT. RACHAEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Sarah and Maria make their way toward the house, where Rachael is waiting. They're both nervous. Sara, because this could be the moment she's been waiting for. Maria, because this place gives her the creeps.

MARIA

If we do get killed, I just want you  
to remember... It's your fault.

They get to the door, and stop. Rachael looks at them,  
squinting a little.

RACHAEL

C'mon in.

Rachael walks into the house. Sara and Maria share a look,  
and then Sara follows. Maria isn't sure that she wants to go  
inside, but when she hears a BANG in the distance, she quickly  
jumps through the doorway.

INT. RACHAEL'S HOUSE - FOYER/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Rachael walks into the living room, and sits in an old rocking  
chair.

Sarah follows, looking around the house as she walks. The  
place is dirty, and dark (thanks to the foil-lined windows).  
Old papers and magazines are piled on the tables. Litter  
boxes, filled with kitty litter are scattered around the  
room. There's an empty fish bowl on a bookcase, which Sara  
looks at for a second, wondering if the fish ended up in one  
of the litter boxes.

Maria follows Sara into the house, closing the door behind  
her. As it closes, the house gets even darker than before.  
As Maria follows Sara into the living room, the smell of  
cats hits her hard. She tries her best to fan it away from  
her face, but it's not possible.

The girls walk into the living room, where Rachael is waiting.  
They don't know quite what to do, so they stand near Rachael,  
not saying anything.

RACHAEL

Sit.

The girls look back, and see the couch. They're not sure  
it's the cleanest place to sit, but they sit anyway.

SARA

Thank you, Ma'am.

Rachael smiles.

RACHAEL

"Ma'am." I haven't been called "Ma'am"  
since... Hell, I ain't ever been  
called Ma'am. You girls aren't from  
around here, are you?

SARA

No.

A cat jumps out of a shadow, running right in front of the girls. Maria jumps, and then catches herself.

MARIA

Cats. I hate cats.

She looks at Rachael and notices that she's staring at Maria now.

MARIA (CONT'D)

But not these cats.

(beat)

Good cats you have here.

SARA

I'm sorry about my friend. She's easily excitable.

RACHAEL

It's all right.

Rachael takes a sip from a glass of water that sits on the table next to her, keeping an eyes on the girls as she does.

RACHAEL (CONT'D)

So, is there any particular reason that you've been sitting outside my house?

SARA

Well...

Sara's not sure how to go about this conversation. She tries to think of the best way, but it doesn't come to her. She looks to Maria, who gives her a reassuring nod.

SARA (CONT'D)

I recently found out that I was adopted.

Sara pulls the now-worn letter from her mother out of her pocket and holds it out to Rachael.

SARA (CONT'D)

This is all I know about my mother.

Rachael takes the letter and looks it over, squinting to see it better. She grabs the glasses that hang around her neck and slips them on as she reads the letter.

SARA (CONT'D)

The paper has a watermark on it. I tracked it back to a stationary shop, and that eventually led here.

MARIA

(under her breath)  
Eventually... two months later.

SARA

(ignoring Maria)  
It was purchased sixteen years ago,  
just before I was born. I was kinda  
wondering if maybe you were...

Sara doesn't know how to finish that sentence. Rachael looks back to her, giving Sara the note.

RACHAEL

Oh, honey, no. I'm not your mother.  
I'm too old, just look at me.

SARA

But you bought the paper. I know you  
bought the paper.

RACHAEL

I bought the paper. It was just before  
I moved here.  
(beat)  
I knew your mother.

MARIA

So where is she? Do you know where  
she is now?

Rachael takes a moment. She looks into Sara's eyes with deep sympathy.

RACHAEL

I'm sorry to have to tell you this,  
child, but your mother is dead.

Sara's face goes pale. Two months of traveling, and researching finally catching up to her in this one moment. The air is knocked out of her.

SARA

Dead?

She tries to wrap her mind around this concept, fighting back tears. She manages to keep them back as she looks at Rachael again.

SARA (CONT'D)

How?

Maria puts a hand on Sara's shoulder.

Rachael takes off her glasses and leans back in her chair, thinking back.

RACHAEL

Sara...

(smiles)

I remember when your mother chose that name.

Her smile fades.

RACHAEL (CONT'D)

She was such a troubled girl. So sad.

Rachael looks down, and wipes a tear from her eyes. She looks back to Sara.

RACHAEL (CONT'D)

It was such a hard night for all of us. See, you almost died too. Your mother passed before she had a chance to see you.

Sara wipes a tear from her eye. This is a lot to take in.

Rachael takes another sip of her water, and continues.

RACHAEL (CONT'D)

It was raining cats and dogs that whole week. Your mother had lived with us for a little while by then. Maybe a few months or so.

SARA

What?

(beat)

Who's "us"?

RACHAEL

Well, your mother was an orphan of sorts too. She never had the chance to know her mother, just like you. 'Course, I heard several versions of that story. A few of them from Laura herself.

(then)

Laura was your mother's name.

Sara takes this information in. Maria rubs her shoulder, knowing that this is important.

RACHAEL (CONT'D)

From what I understand, your mother was born in aught-four, when your grandmother was very young. About your age, I'm guessing.

Maria thinks for a second, struggling to do the math. She looks to Sara.

MARIA

That means that your mom was about sixteen too.

Rachael nods slightly.

RACHAEL

Your grandmother had died as well. I'm not sure how, but she was still pregnant with your mother at the time. Your mother was saved, somehow- I'm not sure how, really- and became a ward of the state. That's how she eventually came to live with "us". At the time, I ran a home for wayward young women. We took her in when nobody else would. She was so troubled, and she was pregnant with you at the time. I couldn't turn her out on the streets. She had nowhere else to turn.

SARA

But, how did she die?

Rachael doesn't like reliving this memory, but she forces herself to.

RACHAEL

That night changed my life. Like I said, it was raining pretty hard. I got a call that your mother was in some kind of accident, so I rushed to the hospital.

(looks down)

By the time I got there, it was too late. Your mother had already passed, but you were alive, and well. I remember thinking how odd it was, the similarities between how you were born and how your mother was.

SARA

How did sh--?

(beat)

Was it me?

RACHAEL

Oh, no. Don't you think that for one second.

(beat)

Honey, your mother was murdered. She was found, nearly dead from the loss of blood. They said she was attacked, and cut somehow. They never did catch whoever did it.

(MORE)

RACHAEL (CONT'D)

(then)

But your mother was a hero. She saved your life. She made sure she stayed alive long enough for you to be born.

Rachael sits back in her chair, tired.

SARA

My father then? Do you know where he is?

Rachael shakes her head.

RACHAEL

I never knew who your father was. Laura never mentioned him. She was so independent. She always wanted to do everything for herself. Such a strong, brave young woman, your mother was. I'm sorry you didn't have the chance to know her.

Sara thinks for a moment.

SARA

There has to be some way for me to find out who my father is.

(then)

What was my mother's full name? Where was she from? Anything, please!

Sara finds herself on her knees, next to Rachael. She realizes that she's being very emotional, which is new to her. She humbly gets back to the couch, pulling herself together.

SARA (CONT'D)

I appreciate everything you've told me. I do. It's just that, I've been looking for so long. There has to be something else that you can tell me. Anything.

MARIA

Sara, maybe we should go. I think she's told us everything she knows.

RACHAEL

Nonsense. You girls are staying for dinner.

Rachael starts to get up.

MARIA

Oh, I don't know.

RACHAEL

Well, I do know. Now, let's get into the kitchen and see what we can dig up.

Rachael gets up, and walks out of the room, toward the kitchen.

Sara and Maria stand to follow her. Maria leans in closer to Sara.

MARIA

Are you sure we should stay?

SARA

Leave if you want to. I'm staying.

MARIA

Fine.

(beat)

She just better have something to eat besides cat food.

They walk into the kitchen.

INT. RACHAEL'S HOUSE - FOYER/LIVING ROOM - LATER

Sara, Maria and Rachael are walking out of the kitchen now. Maria's still munching on a leftover piece of chicken.

MARIA

Okay, can I just say that this is the best food I've eaten in two months? Seriously.

RACHAEL

(with a smile)

You poor thing. What have you been eating?

SARA

It was delicious, Ma'am. Thank you again.

RACHAEL

I enjoyed having you here. You're welcome back anytime. I sorta miss the sounds of other people in my home.

SARA

We'll come back and visit sometime. I promise.

RACHAEL

Which will make you better kids than my own. I haven't seen them in ages.

They get to the foyer, and stop for final farewells. Sara's face turns more serious once again.

SARA

You said that you might remember something else. My mother's full name? Anything?

RACHAEL

I've told you everything that I can remember.

Sara looks down, a little sad, but then looks back to Rachael with a smile.

SARA

Thank you.

RACHAEL

Come. Help and old woman out before you go.

SARA

What do you need?

Rachael walks to a closet door and opens it. The closet is packed... very packed. It's full of boxes, and old clothes, and bags and papers. It looks like an accident waiting to happen, there is so much old junk piled in there.

MARIA

(re: the junk)

Wow. That's a whole lot of stuff.

RACHAEL

You'll have a lot of stuff too, when you're my age.

(to Sara)

Up on the top shelf, sweetie. To the right, I think, there's a little brown box. I've been trying to get at that damned box for months now.

Sara nods, and looks around. She sees a chair, and looks back to Rachael.

SARA

Mind if I stand on the chair?

RACHAEL

Sure. Just don't sue me if it falls apart.

Sara smiles a small, gracious smile and then pulls the chair over to the closet. She climbs on top, and then starts to look for the box.

She pulls away an old vase and tries to hand it down to Maria, but Maria's still holding onto a chicken bone, so her hands are greasy. She gives Sara a "I can't" gesture, but Sara puts the vase in her arms anyway, avoiding her hands.

Sara pulls out some other things. Clothes, file folders, bags. She hands most of them down to Maria, and tries to find someplace to relocate the others, inside of the closet. Finally, she sees the box.

SARA

I think I see it.

She reaches to the back of the shelf, and grabs the box. As she pulls it out, she knocks over an old figurine. She gasps as it falls, but it doesn't break. It lands on a pile of old clothes.

Sara breaths a sigh of relief, and pulls the box the rest of the way out. She hands it to Rachael.

SARA (CONT'D)

Is this it?

Rachael smiles as she takes the box.

RACHAEL

Thank you.

Sara starts to get off of the chair, when Maria speaks up.

MARIA

Umm... What about this?

She holds up all of the junk in her arms.

RACHAEL

Oh, just throw that stuff back in there.

Sara helps Maria quickly pile the junk back into the closet. As they do this, Rachael opens the box, and starts to look through it.

When they're done piling the stuff back into the closet, Sara starts to close the door, but Rachael stops her.

RACHAEL (CONT'D)

No. One more thing.

Sara opens the door again.

SARA

Oh.

RACHAEL

(pointing)

That trunk. Right there. Could you pull that one out too?

SARA

Yeah.

Sara goes to the trunk that Rachael is pointing to. You can only see one of the sides, as most of it is buried in the closet.

She grabs onto the handle, and pulls the trunk out. It's a replica of an old steamer trunk, and has a big, thick lock on it. As she pulls it out, she expects there to be some sort of cave-in, or something, but to her surprise, there isn't. She wonders for a moment why there wasn't, but then shrugs it off and pulls the trunk the rest of the way out. She sets it in front of Rachael.

SARA (CONT'D)

Anything else?

RACHAEL

That's all, dear. Thank you.

Rachael pulls a couple of papers out of the box she's holding and smiles.

RACHAEL (CONT'D)

Love letters. My husband died two years ago, and I couldn't bring myself to read them.

(beat)

Now, I just want something to remind me of him.

Sara smiles, feeling how much Rachael misses her husband.

SARA

My father died, not too long ago. It's hard.

Sara's eyes begin to drift, as she thinks of something else.

SARA (CONT'D)

And my mom... I never even told her I was leaving. I just left a note.

Rachael allows Sara to have a moment to reflect before she speaks again.

RACHAEL

You girls should be going. You don't want to be caught out here in the dark.

She gives Sara a hug.

RACHAEL (CONT'D)  
I wish I could help you more.

SARA  
You did a lot. I know my mother's  
name now. Thank you.

As Rachael and Sara finish their hug, Sara takes a step back.  
Rachael looks over to Maria.

RACHAEL  
You too. Come here.

Maria's not a big hugger, but she smiles and hugs Rachael  
anyway.

MARIA  
Thanks again for the chicken.

RACHAEL  
You're welcome, honey.

Sara and Maria start to walk toward the door. Sara opens it.

RACHAEL (CONT'D)  
I have had that trunk for sixteen  
years.

The girls stop and turn around.

RACHAEL (CONT'D)  
I never did open it. It was all that  
I had left of your mother. I always  
hoped that someday, a young girl  
named Sara would come looking for  
it.  
(beat)  
It belongs to you now.

Sara looks down at the trunk, not knowing what to think at  
first. Slowly, her face begins to light up. She rushes to  
Rachael and gives her a hug.

SARA  
Thank you.

RACHAEL  
You're welcome.

The hug ends and Sara goes to the trunk.

RACHAEL (CONT'D)  
Now, take your trunk and get the  
hell out of here, before those damn  
(MORE)

RACHAEL (CONT'D)  
teenagers start prowling around your  
car.

Sara can't take her eyes off of the trunk. She doesn't know  
what's inside, but she can feel hope building within her.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT TWO

## ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Sara is sitting on one of the two beds. The trunk rests next to her, it's top open. There is a pair of bolt cutters on the nearby nightstand, and the now-broken lock is sitting next to it.

Maria is staring out the window, at the beach across the street.

MARIA

Hey, we finally made it to the beach.

Sara's not listening to her. She's too busy going through the contents of the trunk.

The trunk is full of notebooks, and diaries. A lot of them. Sara is reading one of them.

Maria walks to the bed and sits down. She starts looking at another one of the diaries.

SARA

Can you believe this?

MARIA

What? The fact that your mom never learned how to use a computer?

SARA

(ignoring Maria's  
joke)

Some of these are from when she was just a little kid.

Sara reads some of the diary, and smiles. Maria flips through her diary, but it's not as thrilling to her. This isn't her mother.

SARA (CONT'D)

She wrote everything.

(beat)

She was bounced around as a kid, going from orphanages to foster homes. She didn't seem to mind it though. Sometimes, she sounds like she enjoys living with different people. I mean, it was hard on her, but she felt loved.

MARIA

That's good. Kids should have that.

SARA

(still skimming)

She went to birthday parties, and on trips. She was happy. All the things that a normal kid would do, and she wrote it all down.

MARIA

Happy? Not really the impression I got from Rachael.

SARA

Something had to have happened.

Maria puts the diary she's flipping through down. She's a little bored.

Sara flips a page.

SARA (CONT'D)

She had chicken pox.

(looks up at Maria)

I never had chicken pox.

MARIA

Seriously?

SARA

Nuh-uh. Is it weird that I kinda wish I did though? I mean, all of these things that she's writing about... I've felt them. I know them. It's like we're connected somehow.

MARIA

Except chicken pox.

SARA

In a weird way, I want to know what it feels like to have it... them? Whatever. Is that crazy?

MARIA

Yes.

(beat)

But it still doesn't explain why your mom was all "troubled".

Sara holds out the diary, so Maria can see it.

SARA

Check it out.

ANGLE ON : THE DIARY

The entry is written in crayon, and there's a smilie face sticker on the bottom of the page.

MARIA

What am I checking?

SARA

See the sticker? She fell off her bike and hurt her wrist. Her foster sister, Landi, put the sticker on her cast.

(beat)

Sounds like they were close.

Sara seems genuinely thrilled by all of this, but Maria just doesn't feel the same way. She's happy for Sara, but she can't possibly know what this feels like. She moves over to her own bed, and lays down.

MARIA

It's late. You should sleep.

SARA

(still reading)

I will later.

MARIA

Just remember, we're beaching tomorrow.

SARA

(not paying attention)

Yeah.

Maria closes her eyes and falls asleep. Sara stays awake, enthralled by the diaries.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

It's morning now. Sara has fallen asleep on a pile of the diaries. The curtain is closed, so there isn't much sunlight in the room.

Maria walks out of the bathroom.

MARIA

Hey. Rise and shine, morning glory.

Sara doesn't even move. Maria rolls her eyes and goes to the window. She pulls open the curtain, causing a blast of sunlight to shine on Sara's face.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Time to get up.

Sara stirs, still keeping her eyes closed.

SARA

(groggy)

Time to sleep.

MARIA

It's nine. Time to smell the fresh beach air, and partake in the...um... wetness of the water.

(beat)

You promised.

SARA

I went to bed at- like - three hours ago. Let me sleep.

MARIA

Fine, I'll let you sleep. But only until I get back with breakfast. Doughnuts?

SARA

If I have to eat another doughnut, I'm going to kill somebody. Bagels.

MARIA

Fine. Bagels and coffee, coming up. Don't forget, when I get back, you wake up.

Maria walks out the door. Sara falls back to sleep.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

MARIA

Get up!

Sara doesn't wake up.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Sara, c'mon. Seriously.

SARA

Go get breakfast.

MARIA

Breakfast got.

SARA

Is the bagel place- like - in the bathroom?

MARIA

Eew. Seriously, I've been gone for like, a half hour. The place was busy. I got you a plain with cream cheese, and a mocha.

Maria puts Sara's food down next to her. Sara opens her eyes, and slowly sits up. She grabs the mocha and smells it.

Maria pulls another bagel out of the bag.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
And an onion with butter for me.

Sara gives Maria a strange look.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
What?

SARA  
I thought you wanted to guy-hunt today?

MARIA  
(taking a bite)  
So?

SARA  
Don't you think the onion might scare off the prey?

Maria stops chewing and looks down at the bagel.

MARIA  
Oh.

She shrugs and swallows.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
Oh well. I guess I'm not smart like some people. My kind have to learn to live on stupidity and good looks.  
(beat)  
Not that you're ugly. You're okay looking... You have the whole smart thing too though.

SARA  
Is that a bagel you're eating, or your foot?

Maria moves one of the diaries and sits next to Sara.

MARIA  
So, are we ready to have some far out beach fun?

SARA  
I...

Sara looks down at the diaries. They're all she can think about.

SARA (CONT'D)  
I don't know.

MARIA

No. No, you do know. I know you know, because you promised me.

SARA

I just want to read them. For the first time in months, it's like I can breath again. I wanna know everything about her. I wanna know what happened to her.

MARIA

But... beach.

SARA

You go. Have a good time. I'll still be here when you get back.

MARIA

Are you sure?

SARA

Yeah. I'd just slow you down anyway. Guys hate the depressing friend.

MARIA

That's true.

SARA

Go. If you hurry, maybe you can get a guy to buy you into an all-you-can-eat breakfast.

Maria thinks about that for a second. She looks at her bagel, and then puts it down.

MARIA

(holding up her watch)  
Rattle me if you need me. You know my code.

Sara nods. Maria gets up and walks toward the door.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Bye.

SARA

Have fun.

Maria gets to the door, and stops to look back at Sara. Sara's already getting back to the diaries.

Maria puts her hand on the knob, but can't bring herself to turn it. Finally, she just gives up and walks back to her bed. She wants to leave, but she's a good friend.

MARIA

Toss me one of the diaries.

Sara looks up at her friend, knowing what Maria's giving up for her. She takes a moment to appreciate it, and then tosses Maria a diary.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER

A couple of hours have passed. There are some more junk food wrappers scattered around. Maria is pacing as she reads a diary.

MARIA

(reading)

"I was in a room. It was there with me. It trapped me. Blocked the door. I was so scared, but I couldn't scream. It spun me around, and then I saw it's face. It was horrible. Deformed somehow. And it's teeth... He bit my neck so hard, I could feel his teeth scraping bone. What was it?

(beat)

Stupid dreams. That's the third one. When will they stop? I just want them to stop."

(then, to Sara)

My goodness, that drama class paid off. Did you get the emotion I put into that reading?

(then)

She was thirteen here. Did you get that I was being thirteen?

SARA

She sounds upset, but they're just dreams. Who doesn't have nightmares sometimes?

Maria tosses that diary down.

MARIA

Last entry for that one.

Sara starts to read the diary she's holding.

SARA

"I saw it again. It was silvery. Shiny, with red too. In my dream it was heavy, but I could still lift it. One of 'them' was there too.

(beat)

Molly told me that they sound like Dracula.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

I said she was stupid, but she's kinda right. I'm not gonna tell anyone about the dreams anymore. They think I'm losing it."

Sara flips through a few pages, skimming as she goes.

SARA (CONT'D)

After that, it's like her life goes back to normal for a while. No mention of another dream until a month later.

Sara skims the page with the latest dream. She winces a little.

MARIA

What's wrong? What's it say?

Sara takes a breath.

SARA

(reading)

"Vivid. It's so real. I had another one of the dreams last night.

(beat)

It was a cold night. I was hunting again. Chasing a demon... A vampire. I could actually feel the air burning the back of my throat, and the dew on the leaves of the trees as I ran by them. I stopped in the moonlight, and saw my enemy. We just looked at each other for a second. We both knew that I was going to kill him, but I didn't want to rush it. I wanted to take my time... It wasn't like when the dreams started and I was scared. I was enjoying this now. It felt right somehow. Natural."

Maria winces.

MARIA

Vampires. Demons. Sure, completely natural.

Sara ignores her and keeps reading.

SARA

(beat)

"This one looked younger than the others I'd killed. Closer to my own age, but that didn't matter.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

I guess he could have been a hundred years older than me, and he'd still look the same. There was still fresh blood on his mouth, dripping down his chin. I checked my neck, but I wasn't cut. That's when I realized that it was my leg that was hurting. I hadn't even noticed it while I was running, but that was where he'd bitten me. The pain wasn't like normal pain though. It almost felt... Nevermind. The pain didn't matter. The only thing that mattered was that this demon was about to die.

(beat)

And then he changed. His face turned into a human face. That never happened before. Could I still kill this thing when it looked normal? More than normal, he... *it* looked good. I took a step toward it. That's when he said it. The same thing they always say. Why do they always say it? 'Chosen One'. I think it means me. I am a Chosen One."

Sara pauses now. She looks away from the diary.

MARIA

What?

SARA

"Chosen One." That's what she called me in the letter.

MARIA

Maybe she lost it.

Sara doesn't understand this, but she looks back to the diary. She reads more.

SARA

"I'm meant to kill these things. Knowing this made me feel something new. I'm not sure what it was exactly, but it was a sensation I'd never felt before. His appearance didn't matter. He looked normal, standing in front of me now. I ran the blade of my ax across his neck, making him bleed. It actually hurt, I think. He started to cry. This didn't stop me. I wanted to kill this monster. I turned my ax around, and plunged the sharp wooden end into it's chest.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

As I watched, the vampire vanished!  
I think it turned to dust.

(beat)

This was just a dream, but I still  
felt so much of it. I can only imagine  
what it'll be like when I do it for  
real."

(beat)

That's the end of that entry.

MARIA

Okay, now she's just creeping me  
out. "Real"? She believed this stuff?

SARA

(thinking)

She called me a "Chosen One". I still  
don't get it. What does that mean?

MARIA

It means that she was a very sick  
woman. That or a pretty bad writer.

Maria looks at the clock.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Damn, it's almost ten-thirty.

She stands up.

MARIA (CONT'D)

I'm going to the machine for a fajita.  
I'll be back in a few minutes.

Sara doesn't respond. She's still looking through the diary.

SARA

(to herself, re: the  
diary)

She was alone. Nobody wanted her  
anymore.

Maria grabs her key and walks out of the room.

Sara turns a few more pages. She reads more.

SARA (CONT'D)

"I figured it out. The Chosen One.  
The one person in each generation  
that is meant to battle the advancing  
forces of darkness. To protect the  
humans against those that would kill  
them. To turn the predator into the  
prey! This is why my mother died.  
She passed on her power to me.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

But where is the weapon from my dream?  
Will I know it when I see it? I  
have so many questions. I only wish  
my mother had kept a diary, as I  
have. Maybe that's why I've done it.  
To pass on this information to my  
children and answer the questions  
that they might have. I will have to  
see this through, and hope that  
destiny provides me with answers."

She flips a few more pages. She's growing more concerned.

SARA (CONT'D)

They're all dreams now.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Maria is walking toward a food machine on the side of the  
motel. LOUD MUSIC can be heard coming from a room upstairs.

Maria stops at the machine and starts looking at her options.  
As she does this, she starts to bob her head to the music.  
Finally, she looks up, and sees PARTIERS going in and out of  
the room.

MARIA

At least someone's having fun.

She turns a little, and sees a guy, JAMES (late teens, good  
looking) walking toward her. She smiles at him in a flirty  
way.

He stops at the machine and looks over his options.

JAMES

Hey.

MARIA

Hi.

(re: the machine)

If you find anything edible, let me  
know.

He smiles.

JAMES

We have a ton of chips and stuff  
upstairs, but I felt like something  
sweet.

MARIA

Ah.

(beat)

Sounds like you guys are having fun  
though.

JAMES

It's all right, I guess.

He looks at her.

JAMES (CONT'D)

If you want, you can check it out  
for yourself.

MARIA

I probably shouldn't. My friend is  
waiting for me.

JAMES

Oh. Okay.

MARIA

(beat, then a smile)  
Doesn't mean I won't though. Just  
that I probably shouldn't.

She grabs onto his arm, and they start to walk back toward  
the party.

JAMES

Think your friend will miss you?

MARIA

Probably won't even notice I'm gone.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT THREE

## ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Sara finishes up one of the diaries, and puts it down. Her face tells us that what she read was both confusing and disturbing. She's watched her mother change from a pretty happy child to a very troubled young adult over the course of a few hours, and she couldn't understand why.

She reaches into the trunk for the next diary. Unable to reach it, she leans over and looks inside. As she pulls this diary out, she takes note of the fact that it is the last one. The trunk is now empty.

She looks at the cover, and touches it. Trying to work up the nerve to open it. She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. When she speaks, it's hard to tell whether she's speaking to the diary itself, or her dead mother.

SARA

You better explain this to me.

She opens her eyes, and slowly opens the diary. When she sees what's inside, she's not sure what to think.

ANGLE ON : THE DIARY

There is only one sentence written on the page :

"IT IS ONLY WHEN WE HAVE REACHED THE BOTTOM THAT WE CAN FULLY APPRECIATE ALL THAT WE HAVE"

This can't be it. Sara won't accept that.

SARA (CONT'D)

No. No, you're not doing this to me.

She flips through the pages of the diary, desperate for more answers. When each page turns out to be blank, anger builds in Sara.

SARA (CONT'D)

No. No. NO!

She throws the diary across the room, knocking over a cheesy motel vase.

She can't believe this is it. The end of her search is nothing but more questions. She puts her head in her hands, trying to calm down, but finding it to be a challenge.

Finally, she grabs one of the other diaries from a stack on the nightstand, and quickly begins to flip through it, searching for more answers but finding nothing new.

She throws it to the ground and grabs another diary, repeating the process.

SARA (CONT'D)

You can't do this to me, you stupid bitch. You can't bring up all of these questions and then just stop! I need to know what this means!

She throws the diary onto the floor with the other one, more angry now than she was before. She sweeps the rest of the diaries off of the nightstand, onto the floor.

Once this is over, she looks at the mess she's created. She sits on her bed, with her head in her hands, out of breath, trying not to break into tears.

She looks to the empty nightstand, seeing only the alarm clock that it sitting on it. It reads : "5:23"

Sara looks around the room, confused. She'd totally lost track of time.

SARA (CONT'D)

Maria?

She stands up and rushes out of the room.

EXT. MOTEL - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Sara goes to the food machines, looking for Maria. She doesn't find her. There's not even a sign of her.

Sara stops to think about this. Finally, she hears THE MUSIC coming from the room upstairs. There's a party going on.

Sara thinks about this for a second, and then starts to walk toward the room.

INT. OTHER MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The music is much louder in this room. Some DRUNK TEENAGERS are still up and dancing, or making out. Others have passed out.

Sara opens the door and walks into the room. She looks around for Maria, but doesn't see her. She keeps walking, looking at the faces of the other people as she makes her way toward the back of this room.

Finally, she notices something.

ANGLE ON : JAMES

He's on the floor, mostly hidden by the bed. We can only see his bare chest and head, but he is interacting with someone else on the floor. Laughing. Drunk.

Sara walks over to where James is, and looks at the floor. Maria is laying near James, giggling. She's also drunk.

James leans down and starts to kiss Maria in a very passionate way.

SARA  
(over the music)  
Maria.

Before there's even time for Maria or James to look up, Sara rushes over to them, and slams into James, sending him crashing into the wall and off of Maria.

MARIA  
Hey!

JAMES  
What's your problem?

SARA  
(to James)  
Can't you see she's drunk?

Sara then turns her attention to Maria. She grabs Maria's arm and pulls her up.

MARIA  
(slurred)  
I arm not drump.

SARA  
What were you thinking, Maria?

MARIA  
Calm down, *Mom*. I'm just having some fun.

SARA  
With him? You don't even know these people.

MARIA  
Relax. It's just a party.

SARA  
Let's just get out of here.

Sara pulls Maria out of the room, avoiding all of the other drunk people.

MARIA  
He's not that bad.  
(calling back)  
I'll call me!

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Sara brings Maria back into their room, and helps her to the bed. Maria looks around at the mess.

MARIA

Whoa. Did we have a party too?

SARA

Go to sleep.

MARIA

You didn't have to pull me out of there y'know? I was having fun for, like, the first time this entire summer.

Maria lays down, falling asleep.

MARIA (CONT'D)

(dozing off)

You never wanna have any fun.

Maria's asleep as soon as she finishes that sentence.

Sara looks at her, not knowing what to think. She looks around the room. This is as far from fun as she can imagine being.

She walks to the window and closes the curtain. When that's done, she walks back to her bed, and falls onto it, trying to avoid the papers that are scattered around it.

She closes her eyes to go to sleep. As she drifts off, she reaches over to the empty trunk, and touches it.

FLASH TO:

EXT. THE WOODS - SARA'S DREAM - NIGHT

The woods are bathed in an eerie blue glow, coming from rays of moonlight that make their way through the leafless trees.

Sara runs through the cold woods. It's winter, but she is in bare feet and a t-shirt. Her hair is messy, and there is dirt on her face.

We soon realize that she is running from something, not after something.

ANGLE ON : HER FEET

They are dirty, and bleeding as she runs across the frozen ground.

ANGLE ON : HER ARMS

As she rushes past tree branches, they leave scratches on her. They begin to bleed.

ANGLE ON : HER FACE

Filled with fear. Also being scraped by the branches.

She stops running, and looks back. She is out of breath, and as she gasps for air, we can see STEAM coming from her mouth as she exhales.

She's scared. Not sure what to do next. She looks around for any help she can find, but she can see nothing.

There is FAINT MUSIC in the background. It starts to get louder. Closer.

She turns and begins to run again. Away from the music.

Behind her, we can hear BRANCHES SNAPPING as someone chases her.

Her fear grows as she continues to run. She doesn't know what's after her. Could it be one of "them"? She can hear it calling to her.

VOICE (V.O.)

(faintly)

Stop running. You can't hide forever.

She doesn't listen to it. She keeps running.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'm everywhere. You can't escape what you don't know.

She stops running now. She tries to calm herself down and figure this out.

She closes her eyes and tries to feel her way out of this.

SARA

Help me.

VOICE (V.O.)

I'm coming for you.

She opens her eyes and looks around the area.

In the trees above her, an animal RUSTLES THE BRANCHES.

She looks up, but figures that it's nothing. She continues to look for a way out of this.

The MUSIC GETS LOUDER.

SARA  
(whispered)  
Help me. Please.

She finally sees something.

ANGLE ON : A OUTCROPPING OF LARGE BOULDERS

They're in an open area of the woods.

Sara starts to walk toward them slowly.

VOICE (V.O.)  
What makes you think you can hide  
from me?

She ignores the voice.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
What makes you think you're safe?

As Sara reaches the boulders, the LIGHT AROUND THEM FADES.  
She finds herself in total darkness.

BETTY (V.O.)  
It's only once we've reached the  
bottom that we can fully appreciate  
all that we have.

FLASH TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

It's early morning, but only a small ray of sunshine manages  
to sneak through the curtain.

Sara's eyes shoot open as she jolts herself awake. She is  
out of breath, as though she has actually been running.

She rolls over and picks her head up to look at the clock.  
It's 10:37.

She puts her head back down, wanting to go back to sleep.  
She looks over at Maria. Maria looks like hell, but is still  
soundly sleeping.

The sound of a DOOR CLOSING next door can be heard, followed  
by a CAR STARTING. Sara just lays in bed, listening to this  
for a moment.

Finally, she sits up, and rubs her eyes. She gets herself to  
her feet, and walks into the bathroom, avoiding the mess on  
the floor.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - DAY

The water is running, but Sara is just staring into the mirror. Looking into her own eyes, trying to figure out where they come from.

She touches her face, remembering the scratches from her dream.

She pulls herself back to reality, and grabs one of the two bathroom kits from the side of the sink. As she does, the other one falls into the sink. A nail file falls out of it.

She puts the file back into the bag, and puts the bag back where it was. Then she proceeds to brush her teeth.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Sara walks out of the bathroom. She walks through the mess, going to the dresser. She picks through some food wrappers, looking for something to eat. She comes across the bagel bag from the other day, and reaches inside. She pulls out a half-eaten bagel and begins to eat it. It's stale, but it's all she has.

Outside the SOUNDS OF PEOPLE can be heard. Laughing, yelling, fighting. This is a beach town, and there are a lot of people making a lot of noise. There's also the sound of the AIR CONDITIONER HUMMING softly.

She sits in a chair next to the dresser, looking around the mostly dark room. The little sunlight that shines through the curtain gives the room an almost eerie glow.

The strongest part of this sunlight is shining in Maria's face, but she's sleeping too deeply to notice.

Sara looks at the diaries on the floor. She sees the last diary that contained the one sentence.

SARA

"It's only when we've reached the bottom that we can fully appreciate what we have."

She lets that thought echo in her head for a moment.

SARA (CONT'D)

Whatever the hell that means.

She looks at Maria again. Maria's still sleeping peacefully.

A thought pops into Sara's head. More of a realization, really. She watches Maria for a moment, and then looks at the dresser. On it rests her binder, with all of her research information in it. It's closed now, so the only thing Sara can see is the picture of her, with her family, smiling.

She grabs the binder and stares at the cover.

SARA (CONT'D)  
(with new acceptance)  
It's only when we've reached the  
bottom...

She gently touches the picture. After a second, another thought pops into her mind. She looks up, at the empty trunk.

SARA (CONT'D)  
...That we can fully appreciate what  
we have.

She puts the binder down and walks to the trunk. She looks down at it, studying it.

She reaches down and picks it up.

SARA (CONT'D)  
Heavy.  
(thinking)  
It's still heavy.

She puts the trunk down, and gets on her knees. She feels the bottom of the trunk, and taps on it. There's nothing unusual about it at all.

Using her hands, she measures the outside of the trunk.

SARA (CONT'D)  
Five hands tall outside.

She measures the inside. She tries to figure out if there's a difference.

SARA (CONT'D)  
A few inches.  
(then)  
Maybe.

She tries to find a way to pull on the bottom of the trunk, but there's nothing to grab onto. She sits back and looks at it for a moment, trying to figure this out. She's getting worked up now.

She gets back to her knees, and closes the lid of the trunk. She flips the trunk over, and examines the bottom. She feels the decorative rivets that line the trunk, but nothing about them seems unusual.

Annoyed, she turns the trunk back over and opens the lid. She looks inside for a second, and then stands up and looks around the room. She's trying to find a tool.

She sees the bolt cutters on the nightstand and grabs them. She goes back to the trunk, and looks at it, trying to figure out the best method of attacking it.

She gets back to her knees, and presses the bolt cutters into the bottom right-hand corner of the trunk. The bottom of the trunk starts to bend down under the pressure. She puts all of her weight into it.

The corner SNAPS LOUDLY. She loses her balance for a moment, but quickly recovers.

Before she looks inside, she looks back at Maria to see if she heard the noise.

ANGLE ON : MARIA

Still sleeping soundly.

Sara turns back to the trunk, and looks inside.

ANGLE ON : THE INSIDE OF THE TRUNK

The corner is broken, bending a triangle-shaped piece farther into the bottom. There is definitely a space down there, but it's impossible to see what's there with the broken piece still blocking it.

Sara tries to pry out the broken piece with her hands, and with the bolt cutters, but she can't do it. She puts the cutters down, and looks around the room for something thinner to use.

She gets an idea, and rushes into the bathroom. A moment later, she comes back out with Maria's nail file. She goes to the trunk, and kneels next to it.

Using the nail file, Sara digs out the broken piece of trunk bottom. Once that is out of her way, she looks into the newly cleared hole.

ANGLE ON : THE HOLE

It's too dark to see anything in there, but it's just big enough to fit her hand.

She reaches into the hole, and pulls on the fake bottom with all of her strength. Soon, she pulls another large chunk of the bottom out. As she does, she falls backward hard. The lid of the trunk LOUDLY SLAMS SHUT.

She shakes her hand, trying to dull some minor pain caused by her fall.

Maria stirs, keeping her eyes closed.

MARIA

Huh? What's...?

Sara looks at Maria, sorry that she made the noise. She doesn't really want Maria to wake up.

SARA

Shh. It's okay. Go back to sleep.

Maria rolls over.

MARIA

The bus to Graceland leaves in four minutes. We have to hurry, Rhoda.

Sara stops to wonder what Maria's talking about for a moment, but then shakes it off. She looks at the chunk of trunk bottom in her hand. This piece is much larger than the other. Roundish shape, and about a half foot in diameter. She goes back to the trunk and opens the lid.

She looks inside.

ANGLE ON : THE HOLE

We can see more of the true bottom now, but still nothing special.

Sara's confused. There has to be something.

She tilts the trunk backward, trying to see if there's something else in there. As she does, WE HEAR SOMETHING MOVE inside.

She smiles as she shakes the trunk a little, and tilts it to the right. Soon, a notebook slides into view.

Sara's smile fades as she grabs it. She's happy to find it, but this serious. This could be the answer that she's been waiting for. She pulls the notebook out of the hole, bending it slightly in order to make it fit.

After she pulls it out, Sara sits back on the floor, leaning against Maria's bed.

She holds the diary tightly, preparing herself for what it has to say. Slowly, she opens the cover and begins to read.

As she reads the first page, a pained expression forms on her face. Whatever this diary says, it is troubling to her.

She flips the page and continues reading. Soon, she flips the page again. She's reading fast, but carefully. She has been pulled into the world of her mother's mind.

Tears form in her eyes as she reads now. She can't believe what she's reading.

She closes the diary, and puts it on the floor next to her. She can't go on right now, it's too hard.

She puts a hand on her mouth, trying to grasp this information, but finding it hard. Tears roll down her cheeks.

After a moment, she pulls herself together. She doesn't want to read more, but she has to. She need to know.

She picks up the diary, and prepares herself. She opens it, and finds her place. Within seconds, she's pulled back into her mother's world, and the emotions start coming back to her. She's terrified by what she's reading. She can't believe it.

SARA

(in total shock)

No. Oh, God.

She starts to cry harder, but she presses on. After a moment, she wipes the tears from her eyes, and tries to gather herself as she reads. She grips the collar of her t-shirt tightly without even realizing it, needing to hold onto something.

The passage ends. Sara flips through a few more pages to make sure there is nothing else before she closes the diary.

She stares into the space in front of her for a moment, just trying to comprehend what she's just read, and trying to put the pieces together.

After a moment, a thought comes into her head. She drops the diary and gets to her feet.

She walks to the trunk and looks down into it. She then bends down and grips the edge of the hole in the bottom as tightly as she can, and puts her foot on the side of the trunk for more leverage. She pulls.

The faux bottom pops out of the trunk, and Sara straightens out. As she looks into the trunk now, her arms fall to her sides. She drops the faux bottom that she has pulled out of the trunk.

She stares at what she has uncovered with wide eyes. Her mouth is open with amazement. She cannot believe what she's looking at.

FADE TO BLACK:

TO BE CONTINUED...