

CASSANDRA IS NOT ALONE
An original Screenplay by
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EXT - ETHAN'S MANSION - DAY

A **BUTTERFLY** is flying over the rooftops. The insect is high above an upper middle-class neighborhood of North America. We see residential streets, large park and terraced houses from the butterfly's perspective.

The butterfly has coloured wings and lands on Alice's shoulder.

ALICE is in front of a luxurious mansion. It's a modern building, with stained glass, like a big fishbowl.

Slender body and shabby dress, Alice is a beautiful woman of about thirty-five.

Alice sees the flower garden. She has watery eyes.

Alice comes near the gate and sees through the glass doors the owner of the mansion...

...A 40-year-old man (**ETHAN**) is eating alone and seems sad. He is an elegant and charming man.

Alice becomes aware of a security camera and runs away. The cams face every angle outside the mansion.

The butterfly flies off, too.

INT. - COTTAGE - DAY

HALLWAY: The distorted view through the peephole onto the landing. Empty.

It is Alice checking, she then LOCKS UP the door, with multiple key turns.

LIVING ROOM: Alice contemplates a violin case on the table. She touches it lightly, then decides to open it.

She lingers on the violin, then closes the case.

In front of the mirror, Alice does some physical therapy exercises. But she feels a stab of pain.

INT. - RADIOLOGY ROOM - DAY

Alice, wearing a white lead apron, places the palm of her hand on the box of the X-ray tube.

An old **RADIOLOGIST** operates the machine that emits X-rays.

The wrist is subjected to radiological screening. The detection plane of the radiant image appears on the computer.

The radiologist positions the X-rays on the view box.

RADIOLOGIST

Metacarpal and wrist are reassembled.

ALICE

Are you sure, doctor?

RADIOLOGIST

The bones of our body are like pivots
for a bridge. I assure you that your
bridge can now support any weight.

Alice does not answer. The man looks at her, puzzled.

RADIOLOGIST (CONT'D)

Everything's back to normal.

EXT. - GARDEN CENTER - DAY

The coloured butterfly flutters among the branches of a peach-tree and high above fruit-bearing plants and evergreens, crosses a series of vases with flowers and...

...alights on the shoulders of Alice. Alice transports hand truck with plants and flowers. She stops at nice damask-roses, and, satisfied, chooses the vase. With one eye Alice sees...

...A **MYSTERIOUS MAN**, robust, in his forties. He smokes and seems to look at her.

Alice hesitates. She is frightened.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

Miss!

Alice ignores him and accelerates towards the flower-beds. She doesn't turns to the man, leaves the hand truck and rushes.

The butterfly follows Alice, flutters high above the flower-beds and the woman and it goes in...

...HOTHOUSE full of rare species.

Alice runs closing the door behind her.

Outside the door, the man is astonished. He has the vase of roses.

MYSTERIOUS MAN (CONT'D)

Your vase.

He looks at Alice across the glass wall, as if she was crazy, goes back to the flower-beds and walks away calmly.

Alice takes a step toward him, then runs back to the exit.

Inside the hothouse, the butterfly butts against the transparent wall, flutters and strikes against the glass.

INT. - COTTAGE - DAY

Alice has a phone in her hand. Nervous, she locks up the door.

ALICE

I don't know who he was... hurry,
please!

Alice hangs up the phone, afeard, and walks up and down. She checks out into the window and sees that the man is not there.

EXT. - COTTAGE - NIGHT

Alice opens the gate.

HECTOR, a forty-year-old Hispanic man, with beard and long hair, looks at her and comes in breathless.

HECTOR

I checked, there's no one down here.

ALICE

He left... he was spying on me.

HECTOR

No one knows this place, Alice.
Nothing can happen to you.

She hugs him.

ALICE

Thank you for coming.

HECTOR

If you want I can assign you another apartment.

Alice nods, still upset.

INT. - SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICE - DAY

Posters on various social issues on the walls. A **PSYCHOLOGIST** sits at a table, in front of **JOANA** (45). Hector stands. He wears bifocal spectacles with red frames.

JOANA

It's just one of her fantasies, of course. Hallucinations.

The psychologist examines a file with a picture of Alice in the footnote.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Possibly. In situations of intense stress... one can manifest episodes created by the mind that the subject mistakes for real events.

HECTOR

Mrs. Baker thinks a man's spying on her.

Joana looks at Hector annoyed, she seems to disagree with him.

JOANA

She's a subject at risk. What if she tried to commit suicide again?

HECTOR

She just swallowed a couple pills... You know she did it to attract attention.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Anyway... Only a violent shock could push her to vent her anger on herself.

Hector seems pensive.

HECTOR

We'll take care of her.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT / EXT. TENEMENT - DAY

Joana gives the keys of the new apartment to Alice.

JOANA

Hector managed to get you a car... You have our numbers for whatever reason.

She looks to Hector who hints a smile.

HECTOR

It's very quiet here.

Alice nods, still bemused. She looks around.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

You'll see you won't have problems.

Alice opens a French door and looks out into a small TERRACE.

The light floods her face. She looks in front of her... ...A tenement of **HOUSING PROJECTS**, noisy and quirky. We are on outskirts of a North American city. We could be in the United States or Canada, in beach-side area.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT / VARIOUS SETTINGS - NIGHT

BEDROOM: In the lighted room, Alice puts her suitcase on the bed and unpacks. Alice places the violin case and a few scores on a piece of furniture. She grabs one of them and opens it.

KITCHEN: The refrigerator is empty. There are only a couple bottles of water.

Alice takes one of them, then closes the refrigerator.

On the refrigerator door, attached with a magnet, there is a flyer for pizza delivery.

INTERCUT TIME PASSED

LIVING ROOM: The TV is on. The signal is unstable, it comes and goes.

Alice watches it, sitting at the table. She is finishing eating voraciously the pizza from the cardboard.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT / VARIOUS SETTINGS - NIGHT

We hear sticky FUMBLINGS. The dripping from the sink blend with heated GASPS coming from the bedroom...

...the door is open and getting closer, we find out that Alice is engaged in a sexual intercourse with a man who is above her.

Suddenly Alice stops. The man retracts revealing his identity: it's Hector.

ALICE

I'm sorry.

HECTOR

Don't worry, Alice.

He lies beside her and starts to caress her face. Gently.

INTERCUT - TIME PASSED

Alice lies naked in bed and watches Hector getting dressed. She puts his spectacles on the face, for fun.

ALICE

Stay... at least for the night.

Hector is serious. He takes his spectacles.

HECTOR

You know I can't. I'm afraid my wife has some suspects.

ALICE

When do you tell her about us?

Displeased, Hector ignores her who insists.

ALICE (CONT'D)

How many times did you promise that?
Why don't you tell her the truth?

HECTOR

I'll tell her everything after the trial. But you take some time for yourself. Try to distract yourself.

ALICE

How? I don't know anyone. I'm alone in a city that's not mine.

AT THE DOOR Hector puts on a jacket.

HECTOR

Try to live a normal life.

Alice twists her mouth. She breathes, trying to calm down, then she hears the door closing.

EXT. - TENEMENT COURTYARD / INT. - GARAGE - DAY

Alice stares at the garage door with the keys in her hand, then she decides to insert the key in the lock.

She opens the garage door.

A city car is visible.

Alice stands in the doorway. From there, she peers into every corner of the garage. There are dusty tools and old furniture.

She is nervous, as if she feared the coming out of some kind of monster.

Fear overcome, Alice breathes a sigh, gets quickly into the car and latches the door.

EXT. - PERIPHERY'S CITY / INT. - ALICE'S CAR - DAY

Alice is driving and is nervous because of the traffic. Scooters whizzing, annoying horns, cars parked second row.

Alice sees a parking spot. She signals the turn when... a scooter cuts in front of her and the driver INSULTS her.

To avoid hearing the traffic noise, Alice turns up the volume on the stereo. She is listening to BEETHOVEN'S MUSIC at full blast while driving. THE FIFTH SYMPHONY is getting louder.

Distracted, Alice slams on the brakes because only now she sees that a pedestrian is crossing. It is an old rancorous man.

Alice restarts. The car crosses the anonymous periphery, where the traffic is heavy. Alice enjoys listening to BEETHOVEN'S MUSIC.

EXT. - STREET / BAR - DAY

NICOLE (38), sophisticated, understated beauty, fiddles with her smart-phone, waiting at the bar's entrance.

She looks up and smiles at seeing that Alice is coming towards her, crossing the street to join her.

Nicole points at her watch suggesting that Alice is late. Alice hesitates. Traffic noise does not allow to hear the dialogue.

Nicole smiles, hugs and affectionately kisses a rigid Alice.

INT. - BAR - DAY

The two women are having coffee, seated in a fashionable bar.

NICOLE

There's gonna be a lot of nice people.
We're opening the new spa. I designed
it! It's amazing!

ALICE

I'm sure. You're great.

NICOLE

My husband gave me carte blanche. I did it all by myself... And you? How are you? It's so nice that you called. You can't imagine how happy I am to see you. And then, I mean... this thing of you starting to play again is so awesome, isn't it?

ALICE

I'd like to give it a shot, but it's not easy... my arm still hurts... The reference darkens Nicole.

NICOLE

Dad still sees him sometimes for work... what a jerk... if I think of what he...

ALICE

How are the kids?

NICOLE

Ok... we're all ok! We miss you... When are you coming? Or will you have to hide forever?

Betrayed by her exuberance, Nicole realizes she talked too much.

ALICE

And mom? Is she ok?

NICOLE

Yes... but, you know, you never call her.

ALICE

One of these days... Don't tell her that we met, though.

NICOLE

Fine, but you come to the opening. I'm counting on it. Don't disappear, sis. And tell me when you give your first concert, I wanna be in the front row.

EXT. - ROAD / TENEMENT COURTYARD - DAY

Alice is walking. She has the impression of seeing someone resembling the mysterious man at garden center. She sees another look at him, but THE PERSON walks away.

Alice is shaken. Trembling hands, she tries to open the door but she can't put the keys in the lock and turns nervous seeing...

...A man (**STEVE**) in his fifty, looking curious and funny hat, arrives dragging a trolley.

STEVE

Can you keep it open, please?

Alice opens and slips inside, closing.

Steve looks at the door, stumped.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT / LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Alice is on the phone: after a few rings someone answers.

HECTOR OFF

Hello. What have you done?

ALICE

I did what you said. Why?

HECTOR OFF

Ethan informed me what you did.
Surveillance cameras picked you up
walking outside his house.

ALICE

Sorry. It was a moment of weakness.

HECTOR OFF

Do you still love that idiot? I am
doing all this for you, so don't
spoil it. Don't get back to him.

ALICE

I'll do anything you want... Help me.

Alice takes a bottle of pills and swallows one pastille.

ALICE (CONT'D)

My sister invited me to a party
tomorrow. You don't wanna be my date?

HECTOR OFF

Maybe you'd better go on your own.

ALICE

It's important. I will meet with my
step-dad. I beg you, accompany me...

HECTOR OFF

...I can't talk now.

ALICE

You are with her, aren't you?

HECTOR OFF

It's okay, doctor... I'll call you
back tomorrow. Goodbye.

Disappointed, Alice hangs up without saying goodbye.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT / BATHROOM - EVENING ALT CON

EXT. - SEA - EVENING (NIGHTMARE)

Alice bathes in a **TUB** and starts to relax. She tries to hold her breath and submerges slowly the head...

...She puts the head in the water.

SEA: Alice is holding her breath underwater. She dives down, surprised. She is not in a bathtub.

She swims in **OPEN WATER** and remains with her eyes open.

After a while she sees her gory arms. Realizes she is bleeding profusely and has a swollen face.

BATHROOM: Alice emerges from the tub full of water.

Shaken, short of breath. She looks around fearfully and examines her body...

...Her arms are untouched.

INT - ALICE'S APARTMENT / BEDROOM - NIGHT

A few drops fall into the glass.

Alice drinks up the sleeping liquid and places the bottle on the night table. MUSIC and RESOUNDING VOICES come from the apartment next door.

The light on the night table is on, Alice lies in bed, staring at the ceiling while the VOLUME in the next-door apartment gets louder.

JUMP CUT TO:

Various moments of Alice that rolls around in bed, sleepless.

INT. - LANDING / STEVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

MUSIC comes from the apartment. Alice, in pajamas and a light overcoat, stops in front of the door and RINGS the bell...

...a **WOMAN** in her fifties, dyed hair, opens the door holding a glass of wine. Tipsy, she looks at Alice, intrigued by her look.

WOMAN WITH DYED HAIR

Hi. Shut the door or that pain in
the ass of a cat'll get out.

The woman turns and leaves Alice standing on the door.

INT. - STEVE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A party goes on in the living room. A dozen people.

In the middle of the room, a woman dances alone, some people eat, some others sit on a couch, chat and comment on images being played on screen: it is a video of Steve's trip to Brazil.

Others are around Steve, dressed eccentrically, who opens a bottle of sparkling wine and serves drinks to his friends, men and women of various ages all ready to toast.

GROUP VOICES

Welcome back! Brazil rules! Cheers!

STEVE

Too kind, thank you. I really missed you guys.

GUEST 1

So did we. Always around the world, man!

STEVE

Always... I wouldn't say always... I get away when I can.

GUEST 2

Really, from what? You were always locked up in your apartment when I met you.

STEVE

A lifetime ago.

GUEST 1

But you had the guts to change.

GUEST 2

Everyone can change, you just need to try.

STEVE

You need to try things you've never done for three times... the first, to overcome the fear to do it. The second, to learn how to do it... Steve pauses because he sees Alice coming.

GUEST 2

And the third?

GUEST 1

I wish! It's been ages since we last
got to the third!

They laugh.

STEVE

You greedy! The third is to see if
you like doing it or not... Excuse me...
Steve leaves the others to reach for
Alice. Their eyes meet.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hey. We've met before down the
building, maybe.

Alice hesitates, puzzled, and is anticipated by the irony of Steve.

STEVE (CONT'D)

It's normal, someone like me goes
unnoticed... Nice to meet you, I'm
Steve.

ALICE

Alice.

STEVE

Alice, the music's too loud, isn't
it? (*calling out*) You guys! Lower
the volume, there's people sleeping
next door!

WOMAN WITH DYED HAIR

Lucky her!

In the roars of laughter, one of the guests takes care of lowering the music volume. Steve turns to Alice.

STEVE

That's better. I'm so sorry... Can I
offer you something? Sparkling?
(*handing his glass*) I haven't had
any... Please, take a sit, I'll go get
one for me.

Steve walks away. Alice is alone and looks around disoriented. She sips the sparkling wine and looks at the other guests... They dance, smile, talk, flirt, drink... ...then Alice sees a Siamese cat cross the room to run and hide behind the couch.

BALD MAN OFF

D'you find out whatcha really like?

ALICE

Eh?

Alice turns surprised and sees one of the guests who was toasting with Steve earlier. A **BALD MAN** (50) He has bent his elbow.

BALD MAN

I love obsessions. You open my closet, everything's the same. All black. Dunno why... maybe it's my mother's fault, she wanted a girl but she had me... Would ya screw me?

Alice looks at him astonished.

JUMP CUT TO:

From the kitchen, Steve arrives with another glass and a bottle. He looks around but Alice is not there.

STEVE

Alice?

Steve approaches the guy who had talked to her.

BALD MAN

She left... Who was she? Quite humorless, you know?

EXT. STREET / KIOSK - DAY

Hector and Joana bought food and they walk eating their sandwiches. They are in a congested urban area.

JOANA

I don't like it. And if Alice had made it all up?

HECTOR

You think she broke her wrist by herself?

JOANA

I don't know... but maybe she is a pathological liar.

NOISES and HORN SIGNALS make the conversation difficult. Hector puts his sandwich in the garbage can.

HECTOR

Hysteria and persecutory anxiety. It is Cassandra complex... But she says the truth. I'm sure.

JOANA

You're not objective, not anymore...
you're too involved.

HECTOR

What do you think I should do? Leave
her alone!

Joana hesitates while Hector's cell phone RINGS. He checks.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Sorry... It's my wife.

Hector turns away to answer. Joana looks at him annoyed.

JOANA

So you're not helping her, are you?

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT DAY

The TV broadcasts stupid afternoon programs. Alice walks anxiously, cellphone in the hands. She is texting.

DETAIL: "Why aren't you answering?" She sends it, then she calls again. The number is unavailable.

Alice throws the phone onto the couch.

ALICE

What the fuck, you turned it off?!

Alice tries to stay calm, she sits down. She takes the remote and hysterically channel surfs, then she turns off and keeps on watching the blank screen of the television.

The RINGING of the cellphone shakes her. It is a text message.

Alice takes the cellphone and reads the text.

DETAIL: "Can't answer. Have a great night. Kisses."

INT. - STEVE'S APARTMENT / EXT. - TENEMENTS COURTYARD - EVENING

Steve looks out the window and waves Alice...

...In the **COURTYARD** Alice ignores Steve and walks towards the garage door.

...Steve still looks for a moment out the window.

STUDENT OFF

Already thinking of your next trip?

Steve moves away from the window and turns to a boy, about 16 (**STUDENT**), who sits at a table. In a listless attitude, he writes on a notebook while consulting a book and a dictionary of Greek.

STEVE

I wish... but I can't afford it.

STUDENT

Spent everything in Brazil, huh?

STEVE

Not for what you think... Traveling is culture, it enriches the spirit. Saint Augustine used to say that the world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page.

STUDENT

Cool.

STEVE

Yes. And if you keep studying like that you won't read a page! How far have you gotten?

STUDENT

Dunno... I have no goddamn idea.

STEVE

That's because you don't commit yourself. If you don't change your attitude, I'll have to tell your folks. I don't want them to waste their money.

Steve takes a look at the notebook with the translation. The student in difficulty indicates a passage of the version.

STUDENT

What does this "estecso" mean?

STEVE

Verb ending in k. An action that takes place in the future. It's a future perfect.

STUDENT

Too difficult... I hate Greek.

STEVE

Why did you take this class then?

STUDENT

Lots of chicks were takin' it. Had I known it, I'd have taken a nice trip to Brazil! They're really hot over there, ain't they Mr. Morris?

STEVE

Totally useless. You're a hopeless case.

EXT. - SPA - NIGHT

A modern facility surrounded by greenery. Swimming pools, tables with people being massaged, turkish bath, buffet, music, guests, candles everywhere. Beautiful people. Ostentatious women. A young blond talks with an elegant man, **KEVIN** (65).

Nicole and Alice are commenting on the guests, while watching Kevin.

ALICE

That one talking with Kevin, is she the wife of Ross, the bank manager?

NICOLE

Beautiful, huh? Dad has done a lot of work on her, she's had nearly everything done. And the husband reciprocates by granting him low interest loans. Exchange of favors... that's how it works.

ALICE

Nothing's changed.

NICOLE

Besides the sizes of their bras! They're all plastic women.

ALICE

Hey! You think I'm plastic too?!

NICOLE

No... although, if I were you... I'd have some work done!

They laugh. The perfect harmony of the past seems to be back.

Alice stops smiling. She turns to Kevin who walks toward them with a middle aged, still attractive woman, **CLARA** (65).

KEVIN

I'm so glad you came. Hi. You look good.

ALICE

Thank you... Hi mom.

Clara hugs her daughter passionately.

CLARA

Hello, honey. I haven't heard from you for so long, you made me worry.

ALICE

I'm sorry mom... but it was necessary.

CLARA

A mother has the right to know where her daughter is. At least one phone call...

MALE VOICE OFF

Hello Alice.

Alice finds out that Ethan, handsome man, is there. He is the owner of the beautiful mansion that Alice observed.

Ethan gives a hint of a smile, Kevin is the only one who greets him back.

Alice is petrified. She looks into Ethan's eyes, then she glances at her sister searching for help. Nicole is surprised.

ETHAN

I've missed you.

ALICE

Is that why you had me follow!

ETHAN

It's you who spied on me.

ALICE

I was a little bit homesick. Don't get ideas.

Alice looks contemptuously at Ethan and then leaves, making her way through the crowd.

Nicole goes after her and shouts something, drowned out by the noise.

Clara keeps looking at her husband who anticipates her intentions.

KEVIN

Don't look at me... I was hoping to do something good. But Alice is still out of her mind.

EXT. / INT. - ALICE'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Alice drives at high speed, her hands steady on the steering wheel. The headlights rend the darkness.

EXT. - GARAGE / TENEMENT COURTYARD / HALL - NIGHT

Alice exits the garage.

She crosses the courtyard's gate and walks wearily towards the hall door. She searches for the keys and opens.

INT. - HALL STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Alice goes up the stairs. She reaches the landing, breathes exhausted, with headaches and blurry vision.

She feels dizzy and loses her balance.

Her sight becomes blurred. She falls to the ground unconscious, in front of her apartment's door.

INT. - STEVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The pale face of Alice, who regains consciousness and looks around bewildered.

She lies on a couch. She recognizes Steve's apartment.

Books and souvenirs from travels are placed on some bookshelves.

There are also some pictures of Steve with a musician.

Pictures of orchestras and opera houses.

Alice rises with difficulty. She is about to get up but she turns, almost scared, to see Steve coming.

STEVE

No! You'd better sit down... a bit longer... you look pale. How're you feeling?

ALICE

What happened?

STEVE

A drop in blood pressure, I think. I found you in front of your apartment's door. Fainted.

Shaken, Alice does not know what to say, she keeps looking around.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Did you hit your head? Does it hurt?

ALICE

No... but... How long have I been here
for?

STEVE

Twenty minutes, maybe less... there's
more vinegar, if you need it...

Steve points at a glass with vinegar on a small table near them.

STEVE (CONT'D)

To smell... it works every time... I was
about to call a doctor.

ALICE

You don't need to. I'm ok now, thanks.

STEVE

For what? Actually, I should apologize
about the other night. My friends
are a little rowdy.

Steve takes the glass and moves towards the kitchen.

ALICE

No. You should forgive me, Mr Morris?

STEVE

No Mister, please, or I'll fall into
chronic depression.

ALICE

Well, then... I'm sorry, Steve. I left
without saying goodbye. It's just
that I've been going through a lot
lately.

Steve stays in the kitchen and speaks from there, while Alice is in the living room. He fiddles with something but we do not understand what it is.

STEVE

(ironic) I thought so... Alice goes
back to looking at the many books
and the pictures with Steve.

ALICE

Are you a musician?

STEVE

No, but I have a friend who plays
the violin and invites me to concerts
every now and then. He used to,
actually...

ALICE

Why's that? Did he stop playing?

STEVE

No... we just fell out of touch. D'you
like classical music?

ALICE

Well... yes, I love it... She hesitates,
then decides to open up.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I played the violin myself.

STEVE

What a coincidence.

Steve goes back to the living room holding a tray with cups
of tea.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You said you played?

Alice hesitates. Steve exchanges a long enigmatic look with
her. Suddenly, the light goes off. They remain in TOTAL
DARKNESS.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Oh no! Again?

ALICE

What happens?

STEVE

I don't know... a brown-out or
something.

Alice, agitated, struggles to contain the anxiety when she
hears the sound of Steve's chair being moved.

ALICE

What are you doing? Don't leave.

STEVE

I'm not leaving, no, I'm here.

Steve lights up a candle and puts it in a glass.

ALICE

Steve, help, stay with me.

The light is back and Steve looks at Alice, still fearful.

STEVE

Are you afraid of the dark?

Alice nods. Steve seems to study the girl for a while.

STEVE (CONT'D)

It's gone now, isn't it? You can stay if you want, come on.

Alice hesitates.

INT. - STEVE'S APARTMENT - DAY

The morning lights illuminate Alice's face who is asleep on the couch. The arrival of the cat awakes her, he jumps on her and starts licking her face.

STEVE OFF

Socrates, don't bother our guest.

Steve arrives fresh and perky in a bathrobe. Alice rises.

STEVE

Good morning. Did you sleep well?

ALICE

Wonderfully... the couch is comfy.

STEVE

I'll slip into something and be ready.
Meet you down for a dip!

Steve leaves the room under the amused gaze of Alice.

EXT. - SEA - DAY

Alice is swimming. She seems relaxed, after a few strokes she dips.

UNDERWATER, she remains with her eyes open. After a while she sees...

...Steve that is diving into the water. Steve has a bleeding body and some scars on his arms. He is wiggling in the water...

...Terrified, Alice emerges and looks around. There is no one in the water nearby. When...

STEVE

Here I am!

Alice retracts, scared by the sudden appearance of Steve who is emerged from the water at her side.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Are you ok?

ALICE

Yes... yes... let's go.

Alice starts to swim towards the shore. Steve follows her.

EXT. - COFFEE PLACE ON THE BEACH - DAY

Steve and Alice, with bathing-costumes, sit at the table. The **WAITER** (good looking, about 25) arrives. Steve smiles at him.

WAITER

Good morning Mr. Morris, the usual?

STEVE

Yes, dear... thank you. (to Alice) Are black coffee and muffin good for you?

Alice nods. She looks around and checks out the unconventional place.

ALICE

Nice place.

The two laugh with complicity. Steve's cell phone RINGS, he sees the caller i.d. and becomes serious right away.

He makes a gesture to apologize to Alice and answers:

STEVE

Hey, thanks for calling. I didn't mean to bother you. How are you?

Alice perceives that Steve speaks coldly on the phone.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Did you read my text? I don't know, but she may be worth it. She's a friend. As you like. Fine. Thanks again. Bye.

Steve hangs up and smiles at Alice.

ALICE

Who was that? Why are you smiling?

STEVE

I just spoke with my friend.

She looks at him with a quizzical expression. He goes on.

STEVE (CONT'D)

He said he always finds time to listen
to good violinists.

Alice keeps looking at him puzzled. He realizes it.

STEVE (CONT'D)

He's a pro. He wants to hear you
play for him. This afternoon, if you
can. What, you're not happy?

ALICE

Well... yes, but we barely know each
other. You don't know who I am. Why
are you helping me?

STEVE

Because I like you and I wanna get
into your pants... it's the way it
works, right?

She shakes her head uncertainly, while the waiter brings the breakfast tray.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You seemed a bit down and I thought
it'd be nice. But if you tell me you
don't feel doing it... never mind.

ALICE

I said nothing.

STEVE

(barraging) Relax, I'm not offended...
do what you like but please, no
whining... your life was hell? I'm
sorry... I don't care... I'm allergic to
people who feel sorry for themselves.
I have been through a lot myself,
you know...

Alice gets closer to his face and looks him in the eyes,
serious.

ALICE

But... who told you I'm good?

STEVE

You're really sexy when you're pissed
off, you know?

Displeased, Alice gets up.

ALICE

Thanks for breakfast.

STEVE

I'll get it as a yes?

EXT / INT - ALICE'S APARTMENT / TERRACE / LIVING ROOM - DAY

Alice opens the French door and puts a vase of roses on the windowsill. She waters the flowers and is satisfied.

Alice goes to the living room and stares at the violin inside the open case for a long time before deciding to take it.

She retrieves the bow and starts to tune the instrument with some embarrassment. Discouraged, she stops and is about to lay the violin in the case, but she changes her mind and starts to PLAY.

EXT - STREET / SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICE - DAY

Alice walks among the people. Relaxed, she smiles and reaches the building of the office. She catches up with Hector.

Hector seems anxious when looks at Alice.

ALICE

For your information, I've got a big audition.

HECTOR

Good.

Hector looks around, nervous.

ALICE

Are not you glad?

HECTOR

Yes, but...

ALICE

...What, you're afraid your wife will see me?

HECTOR

She can pop in... And I have a great deal to do these days for your case... Do you remember the meeting with the lawyer? It's for tomorrow.

Alice is displeased. She moves away from Hector.

ALICE

That was precisely the pep talk I needed.

HECTOR

I'm sorry, but you can't do this!

INT. - TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

EMILY (50) indicates on a map the area covering India and Pakistan. On the table there are many tourist brochure.

EMILY

So... two days in Harappa, then Beit Khadir and a week in Cambay.

Sitting in front of her, Steve is leafing through some brochures.

STEVE

You forgot Rakhigarhi... it's the most ancient site.

EMILY

It'll cost you a lot.

STEVE

I'll work more.

Steve closes the brochures and looks at the woman, hopeful.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You know... This is a journey that I'd not do alone...

EMILY

Please, not again.

STEVE

Why you don't help me? For you it would be easier...

EMILY

We've just talked about. It's your problem.

STEVE

Our problem!

EMILY

It's not my fault if you lack the courage. At least once in your life, take your responsibility... or too ashamed of what you've become?

Steve looks offended, he gets up, trying to compose himself.

STEVE

Yes... it's better that way after all.
Who travel alone go faster!

Steve turns back and moves towards the exit.

EMILY

Oh, well done. (*shouting*) Go on
escaping! Keep on with hiding
yourself!

Humbled, Steve goes out slamming the door.

INT. - REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

The violin bow slides on the strings.

Alice PLAYS violin with dedication, but the SOUND isn't fluid.

AARON (45), clean cut and elegant, sits aside and listens to her. He is the same man that Alice saw in the pictures at Steve's.

Alice feels a slight stab of pain in her hand.

AARON

Focus on the music.

Alice is uncertain, the soothing SOUND of violin doesn't satisfy her. She stops.

ALICE

Sorry.

AARON

Why don't you go slower?

Alice starts again, under the look of Aaron. While she PLAYS, Alice hesitates. Her indecision brings her out of tune.

ALICE

I'm just not ready.

Steve appears at the back of the room.

STEVE

Just go ahead.

Aaron stands up and moves toward Steve.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You are actually doing really well right.

AARON

We agreed. Please, leave.

From her spot, Alice listens to the argument, astonished.

STEVE

Just a minute... You've disappeared.
Why don't you answer my calls?

AARON

Please, not here. I'm working.

STEVE

Why are you being so mean to me?
What did I do to you? I just want to
talk! I want to understand!

AARON

There's nothing to understand! It's
over, Steve, over!

STEVE

Is there someone else? Tell me, who
is he?

AARON

Don't be pathetic.

STEVE

And you stop treating me like an
idiot! I deserve respect! At least
that, fuck!

The raised voice has the merit to calm tempers.

AARON

Did you put up this charade to argue
with me? Congratulations.

The two realize just now that Alice is in front of them.

AARON (CONT'D)

Alice, this has nothing to do with
you... you were doing great.

STEVE

I'll just go. You can start over
from where you left.

Violin on her shoulder, Alice looks daggers at Steve.

ALICE

You've done enough.

EXT. - STREET / BUILDING OF THE REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

Alice exits the building and walks away.

Steve comes out of the building and chases after Alice.

STEVE

I cut you off when you were going
with something good. Sorry!

ALICE

I suck. I'm a loser.

Steve follows Alice and calls her.

STEVE

Wait! Alice! Alice!

ALICE

Oh yeah, fuck y'all.

Alice sees a garbage bin nearby. She stops, takes the violin case off her shoulders and smashes it hardly and in rage several times against the bin.

Alice leaves the violin case in the bin!

She goes away.

Steve reaches the garbage bin and retrieves the instrument's case.

He opens it and verifies any damages to the violin.

Broken strings, bridge and fingerboard damaged. Disappointed, he notices the presence of Aaron, who also got out to check the situation. Steve shows him the damaged violin.

STEVE

I screwed everything.

AARON

As usual.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Alice enters and is about to put the keys down. The ashtray where she normally puts them is not in its usual position. It was moved. Alice's face becomes slightly hopeful.

Alice scours the apartment, but there is no sign of Hector. She is disappointed.

Alice's heart leaps. She sees something on the table in the living room. A folded white paper.

Alice hesitates before she takes and opens the paper. It is a letter.

On the first few lines we can read: "Dear Alice, I preferred".

ALICE

Hector.

Alice recognizes the handwriting and is visibly shaken while she starts reading in difficulty.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Dear Alice, I preferred writing to you because it's not easy to find the words.

Voice broken, Alice finds it hard to continue while she starts crying. She SHOUTS out.

Rabid, she gives a kick and breaks a furniture.

HECTOR OFF

You still have to clear up many things in your life. Starting with your feelings. What we had was nice, but... She feels lost and drops on the nearest chair.

EXT. / INT. - LUTHERIE SHOP - DAY

Steve's figure is recognizable from out the window of music store.

Steve looks at the many cellos, violas and basses displayed behind the counter. He is in front of the **LUTE-MAKER** who is examining Alice's damaged violin on the counter, with an experienced eye.

HECTOR OFF

...we both know that we have no future. And it's just right, as I wasn't able to help you. You didn't trust me because I'm not strong enough to protect you.

The lute-maker pulls out some documents from the case of the violin.

LUTE-MAKER

How did you break it this way?

Steve does not have time to answer because the man urges him reproachfully, showing him the documents.

LUTE-MAKER (CONT'D)

This is a Guarneri... It's a rare piece,
it should be handled with care...
Violins have a soul like people... the
wood ages, the soundboard, the handle...
Steve does not know what to say. He
is inexplicably moved.

STEVE

The fact is that... sometimes we get
attached to things too much... We insist
to fix them. We want them back as
before, even when they do not work
anymore... and you can fix it, can't
you?

LUTE-MAKER

(perplexed) I'll see what I can do.

Glistening eyes, Steve smiles and thanks him with a nod.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT / LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Her face empty, Alice reads the letter of Hector while walking
in the corridor.

HECTOR OFF

*You need a man quite different from
me. Someone who can give you the
happiness you deserve.*

Alice abruptly crumples up the letter in her hand. She breaks
down and cries.

INT / EST ALICE'S CAR / LAKE - EVENING

Alice keeps driving. Her eyes glisten with tears while she
focuses on the road. Alice speeds up.

HECTOR OFF

*And that man could still be Ethan.
It's obvious that you have feelings
for him and maybe you still love
him.*

Alice is shocked and rabid, looking out the window. Her car
is flanking the west side of a large **LAKE**, filled with green
water.

ALICE

Son of a bitch! I'll tell your wife,
and your kids, about us.

The road runs fast in front of her eyes, choking back tears.

Alice looks at a black car in her rear view mirror. She realizes someone is following her car. She can't see the pursuer who is approaching her.

Alice's face is dazzled by the headlights of a car coming from the opposite direction.

Alice is taken aback and loses control of the car...

...The car swerves dangerously near the river of the lake.

Alice can't manage to regain control of the vehicle and goes off the road.

The car ends up in the **LAKE** and it is slowly submerged in water.

EXT - UNDERWATER / ALICE'S CAR - EVENING

The water level reaches the bottom of the side windows. The car will probably float for a short time, so Alice attempts to get out before it starts sinking.

Alice breathes hardly. She removes her seatbelt and tries to open doors, and after the sunroof, but they are closed!

Alice uses her foot to break the window and escapes through the broken window...

...Her body gets out of the car and goes down further and further. It is a game of clothes, enveloping like coils. As in a dance, Alice swims in the depth. She lets out a few bubbles breathing.

She sees a light above her. She struggles and tries to swim upriver towards the surface.

INT. - ETHAN'S CLINIC / ROOM - NIGHT

The blurred face of a man (Ethan), dressed up in doctor scrub, who examines her. Alice sees the man in a blurry way. His voice arrives in the distance, distorted, almost unrecognizable.

ETHAN

Good distal pulses.

Alice regains consciousness and she turns to stone when she finally focuses the man's face. It is her husband who smiles, and Alice is in a hospital bed.

ALICE

Where am I...?

With professional doing, Ethan tampons the wounds on Alice, who lies on the bed in a state of stupor looking around.

ETHAN

You are in my clinic, honey. You've gotten pretty darn close this time.

Moments of withering silence. Alice gets up brusquely. She doesn't know how much has slept in the clinic.

ALICE

How did you get in?

ETHAN

I arrived just in time in that lake. You almost could have drowned.

ALICE

How did you find me? It was that man, he works for you! Who is he?

ETHAN

What man? What are you talking about?

Ethan stares at her, sweet, in love. Appealing.

ALICE

What d'you want from me?

Ethan talks to her in an obliging voice.

ETHAN

I saved your life. You could at least thank me.

Ethan gently takes her wrist and starts to remove the bandage with extreme delicacy.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

You were at risk for an air embolism.

Ethan controls the wound and smiles.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Fortunately they were superficial cuts. Do they still bother you?

ALICE

They're a bit itchy.

ETHAN

A couple more days and they'll be gone.

Ethan holds the woman's hand, she lets him do it.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I don't care about your testimony in the trial. I only... I want everything to go back the way it was.

Ethan is about to leave the room and stops at the entrance.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Call me if you need me, I'm in the other room, ok?

Alice is regretted and she calls him.

ALICE

Ethan...? Had you not come in the lake, I'd be dead.

Ethan smiles and goes out.

Alice remains silent, waits, then gets up.

She's trying too hard to get dressed.

INT. - ETHAN'S CLINIC / HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alice leaves the clinic. Her dress is soaked and she is tired.

A female nurse looks at Alice and seems worried about the patient.

NURSE

You can't walk around in this state.

Alice keeps on walking.

EXT - ALICE'S APARTMENT / TERRACE - DAWN

Alice opens a French door and looks out. She sees tops of the buildings.

The dawn's early lights flood her face.

Alice looks in front of her. Dawn rises over the large city.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT / LIVING ROOM - DAY

Alice places the last bandages.

TIME PASSED

She smokes nervously while on her cell. She listens to the recorded voice repeating "*The customer you are calling is unavailable at the moment*".

Disgruntled, she puts the phone on the table where the crumpled letter from Hector lies.

Alice looks at it, then takes it. She quickly reads a few passages again. She crumples it and throws it away.

The phone RINGS and Alice answers up, hopeful.

CLARA OFF

Sweetheart? I tried to call you. How are you?

Alice's expression changes.

CLARA OFF (CONT'D)

When I saw in the party, you were so excited... I was afraid that you did another nonsense.

ALICE

I am fine.

CLARA OFF

Tell me... do you need money?

ALICE

No.

CLARA OFF

Shall we see you at Kevin's birthday?

ALICE

I will go, though I would have liked to be invited by Kevin.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT - DAY

The pale face reflected in the mirror, Alice carefully puts some make up to regain a decent look.

She wears a nice dress. She looks in the mirror.

THE PROLONGED SOUND OF THE DOORBELL.

Alice goes to the door. Her hand is on the doorknob but she hesitates, uncertain if she wants to open.

Alice looks at her bandaged wrists, then watches through the peephole...

...Steve is the one insistently RINGING THE BELL.

Alice puts her hand on the doorknob. She seems willing to open.

Steve is about to leave, then he hears a key turn.

STEVE

Alice?

Alice opens the door but keeps it latched. Steve can see only a portion of her face. He gets closer, worried.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hey, I didn't mean to bother you...
You ok?

ALICE

What d'you want?

STEVE

Are you mad at me? I screwed up, I know... but I meant well... I should've told you the truth from the beginning. I'm so sorry, I really am.

ALICE

It's ok.

STEVE

Your violin, I took it... they say it can be fixed.

Alice looks at Steve from the narrow opening.

ALICE

I'm done with music. Bye.

Alice closes the door. Steve hesitates and stays there.

STEVE

If you need anything, you know where to find me.

Steve waits for an answer, in vain. He leaves disappointed.

EXT. - STREET - DAY

Blankly, Alice walks alone. Everything around her seems to be hostile. People, voices, traffic noises.

LAWYER OFF

The undersigned has inadvertently hit the woman with a slap...

INT. - SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICE - DAY

A pompous **LAWYER** reads a memorial.

LAWYER

...which resulted in a contused
lacerated wound of the upper lip.
But he provided immediate assistance.

Sitting around a table, Alice, Joana and a **YOUNG ATTORNEY**.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

Following this incident the wife
left without giving him the chance
to apologize and explain.

Alice is shocked.

ALICE

What was there to explain?

The lawyer stops speaking and looks at her, frowning at the interruption.

Alice looks at Joana and the young attorney who both reassure her with a nod.

LAWYER

Ethan tried every way to a possible reconciliation.

YOUNG ATTORNEY

Reconciliation? What kind of bullshit is that?

LAWYER

I would avoid certain terms. This is the testimony of my client.

The lawyer stares at Alice, intimidating her.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

I wonder: why had you forgiven your husband back then?

YOUNG ATTORNEY

(to Alice) You're not bound to respond.

ALICE

Because... I thought that the love I feel for him would be able to change him.

LAWYER

The love you feel?

Alice hesitates, astounded by the question point blank.

YOUNG ATTORNEY

Enough. We're not in court.

The young attorney opens a folder.

YOUNG ATTORNEY (CONT'D)

And the cuts and bruises of Alice?
These are used as evidence. Or are
the efforts of reconciliation?

LAWYER

She may have gotten injuries in any
other way. Falling, for instance.

YOUNG ATTORNEY

And she also hit herself?

LAWYER

Many women have done before her.

YOUNG ATTORNEY

Why would Alice do that?

LAWYER

Persecutory delusions. Money. Revenge.
We all know that Mrs. Baker was seeing
an analyst at the time. And we all
know that she was prescribed a long
list of uppers and downers, am I
wrong?

ALICE

What are you saying, that I made the
whole thing up?

LAWYER

It wouldn't be the first time.

YOUNG ATTORNEY

We do not accept insinuations.

LAWYER

Those are just facts.

The lawyer keeps his eyes towards Alice.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

Isn't it true that ten years ago you
pressed sexual harassment charges
against your step-dad and after a
week confessed your story was a big
lie?

Alice is in trouble and keeps quiet.

YOUNG ATTORNEY

Right, we stop here for now. We'll see in the courtroom.

LAWYER

The truth will come out in there. I leave you the memorial. Good luck with your work.

The man leaves the room under attorney's hostile look.

YOUNG ATTORNEY

He's doing his job, but we're scared of nothing, right Alice?

The voice of the young attorney shakes Alice from her thoughts. She nods halfheartedly, the young attorney hands her a pen.

YOUNG ATTORNEY (CONT'D)

Here, you only have to sign twice. Don't be afraid... Nothing will happen to you. Don't worry.

Alice takes the pen, looks at it, hesitates for a long time.

EXT. - STREET / ENTRANCE OF SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICE - DAY

Joana is very upset. She looks gravely at Alice.

JOANA

That arrogant prick thinks that the protection program is a dissipation of public money. And what frustrates me more than anything is we have to let him know that.

Alice is shaken. Thunder and lightning in distance. The clouds are dense with rain.

JOANA (CONT'D)

We can't help you if you don't press charges against your husband!

ALICE

Hector didn't help me. There wasn't! He turned out to be just like the rest.

JOANA

Never mind Hector. You crashed a car, your husband patched you up in his hospital and this morning we pulled your fucking car out of the
(MORE)

JOANA (CONT'D)

lake. You do something else we should know about? Right, I forgot that story about your step-dad.

Alice looks her in the eyes.

ALICE

You think I made it all up. No one will believe me.

JOANA

Every time a woman makes a false accusation, it makes it that much harder for real victims.

ALICE

You talk but you have no idea of what I went through... If it weren't for Ethan, I would be dead now.

Joana is resigned.

JOANA

You're the one who loses here... You no longer need us at this point.

ALICE

When you see Hector, tell him I've asked for him.

Alice turns and walks away.

JOANA

He can't do anything about the apartment anyway.

Alice stops.

ALICE

What's with the apartment?

JOANA

You must leave it by the end of the week.

ALICE

But I don't have a place to go.

JOANA

It's the rules... I'm sorry. We must give it to someone who really needs it.

EXT. - CITY ROAD / HIGHWAY - DAY

Alice quickly walks away. It starts raining and she puts up the umbrella.

Alice walks aimlessly in the hectic city, her gaze lost in space. The woman throws the umbrella. She is all wet by the rain.

Alice looks at cars running fast on a **HIGHWAY**.

She leans and takes one step towards a parapet. She wants to kill herself.

The cars are rolling through the road.

Alice closes her eyes, plucking up courage... . She runs toward the highway throwing herself against the cars.

The FIRST CAR speeds near her!

A SECOND CAR swerves to avoid her!

Alice gasps and walks slowly stopping of the honking traffic. The drivers pull up short. TIRES SCREECH. CAR HORNS BLARE.

A TRUCK hits the cars in a violent COLLISION!

Alice is scared of the pileup. She falls down, gets back up and runs away.

EXT. - STREET - DAY

Alice runs without looking behind her. She is crying and shaking.

VOICE MAN

Stop! Alice!

She slows down. She is sweaty and panting. She doesn't know what to do. She steps out, toppling innocent passersby. She apologizes wordlessly and shakes off the thought.

Alice turns and surprisingly sees Ethan behind her. She faces forward again and runs.

She looks over her shoulder...

...The husband is still after her.

Alice soon loses her wind and stumbles to the curb.

A hand of Ethan grabs her!

The husband seizes Alice, as she tries to wiggle out of him.

ALICE

Let me go!

ETHAN

I saw what you did.

ALICE

You must leave me alone. Stop spying on me and stay away from me!

ETHAN

You need help. I can't leave you alone right now.

ALICE

Because I can't make it on my own?...
I'm worth nothing, right?

Alice cries while getting soaked by the rain.

ETHAN

I've just been informed you've dropped charges against me.

It is raining heavily. They are wet. In difficulty, Alice backs off. Ethan keeps watching her.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I love you. And I won't let you commit another folly.

Ethan hugs her. Alice gives in to his grip and bursts into tears.

EXT. / INT. - ETHAN'S CAR - DAY

The car runs along a tree-lined avenue in the city.

Ethan drives. Alice, at his side, holds on tight to a bunch of keys to which she directs a distracted glance.

Alice notices a piece of glass in the car mat, bends down and finds broken spectacles with red frames. They look familiar.

ETHAN

They are the second pair that I break.

Ethan hurries to take the spectacles from her hand. He makes them disappear getting in his pocket.

ALICE

Since when do you wear glasses?

ETHAN

I don't read closely. But they make me feel old.

Alice is silent, puzzled, while Ethan drives his car. It has stopped running.

Her husband seems worried.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

You're too thin and pale. You need something that lifts you off the ground.

EXT. - JUICE BAR - EVENING

There is an aquarium, with exotic fishes. The upper class people enjoy big smoothies, bowls with organic granola and fresh juice. The bar has a refined atmosphere.

Ethan and Alice are sitting at an outside table and are drinking a protein shake.

ETHAN

You haven't taken one of those pills, have you?

ALICE

Only mood stabilizers and Olanzapine.

ETHAN

Throw that stuff away. I'll prescribe you an antidepressant.

Alice takes a sip of energetic drink.

ALICE

Now it's better.

Ethan looks the pace. He is remembering their past.

ETHAN

We were here the day I asked you to marry me.

Alice smiles and indicates a bench near the aquarium.

ALICE

No, we were sitting there. And I almost choked on my shake.

ETHAN

You remember wrong. We were just here and when I showed you the ring you burst into tears like a baby.

A deep silence, disturbed by a group of noisy boys. Ethan looks intensely at Alice.

Ethan Why don't we go out one night this week? I can invite Robert and Diana, if you like. They'll be happy to see you.

ALICE

Do they know about our...?

ETHAN

...They know that there can be some arguing in a couple.

Alice looks confused. She is thinking.

Ethan has watery eyes.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

We'll solve any problem. I can't live without you.

INT. - STAIRS / STEVE'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Alice climbs the stairs where a cat MEOWS.

She sees that the door of the apartment next to hers is half-open. Curious, she chases the cat meowing.

The animal enters Steve's apartment.

Alice appears hesitant in front of the door ajar but...

...She enters in to APARTMENT.

ALICE

Steve?

A few ornaments on the ground, scattered books, mess and devastation.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Is anyone there?

Alice looks around, she hears the cat meowing.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Steve?

She enters the living room, where Steve gets up from the floor. The man has a small wound and puts a hand on his bloody forehead.

ALICE (CONT'D)

What happened?

Steve smiles and reassures her.

STEVE

I fell, but I'm not hurt.

Alice looks around. The stereo is missing but she avoids making comments. Then she helps Steve pick up things from the floor.

ALICE

You sure you're ok?

Steve nods. He tries to clear up the room that is upside-down.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Wanna call the police?

STEVE

No. A man gets lonely, at my age, and can let someone he has exchanged emails with come into his home.

ALICE

Did he stole something?

STEVE

It's not that big a deal... However, a woman came today. She asked questions about a colleague of hers, a guy named Hector... d'you know him?

ALICE

He's someone I'd like to forget about.

TIME PASSED - JUMP CUT TO:

Alice treats Steve's wound, he sits in front of her.

STEVE

I shouldn't have dragged you into my mess. I'm such an idiot.

ALICE

I agree. But now, keep still.

Alice puts a patch onto Steve's forehead.

STEVE

I was desperate. Please accept my apologies.

ALICE

Accepted. Your ex is cute. Did he leave you for a younger guy?

STEVE

Classic. You know, we gays can be so clichéd... Why didn't you let me in your apartment the other day?

ALICE

I was feeling blue. Sorry.

Steve stands up, takes the violin out of its case and gives it to her.

STEVE

It was such a shame to leave it in the trash.

ALICE

You got it fixed!

STEVE

I told you so... as good as new... and it's just waiting to be played.

Alice takes the instrument and smiles. She looks grateful at Steve.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT ALT WITH

INT. - STEVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alice watches the violin case on the table while she smokes. Uncertain, she slightly touches it.

She grinds out the stub of her cigarette in an ashtray and decides to open the case.

She touches the instrument's belly and caresses it as if it was a person. She thinks, lingering on the violin.

INTERCUT:

Steve, in his robe, puts some kibbles in the cat's bowl.

STEVE

I know, Socrates, I shouldn't have trusted that kid.

Steve bends down and puts the bowl on the floor. The cat reaches it and eats.

STEVE (CONT'D)

He was starving, like you, but he wasn't as classy.

Steve hears the MUSIC of the violin coming from the apartment next door. A smile appears on his face.

He keeps talking to the cat and gestures with his hand as if he is conducting the music.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Listen, listen.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alice PLAYS the violin, absorbed. Her music is melancholic and intense.

Alice hears THE SOUND OF THE DOORBELL. She goes out of tune and stops, but she has a satisfied look.

Alice goes the door and opens. She is surprised.

There is Aaron.

AARON

I heard the music and I couldn't resist.

ALICE

Did you made up with Steve?

Steve's friend looks at her and he is repulsed.

AARON

Don't mind my saying so, but why don't you forget the violin? You haven't got the gift. You really suck at this.

ALICE

Go away! Stay out of my fucking way!

Alice slams the door in his face. She puts away the violin.

AARON OFF

Your music sounds like a hundred mosquitoes buzzing in my ear!!

Alice covers her ears. She feels offended and bursts out crying.

INT - BATHROOM ALICE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The sound of flowing water is loud. The faucet of the bathtub is completely open. Warm water flows powerfully, producing steam.

Alice's bare arm reflects the mirror. Drops of blood hit the floor.

We find out that the blood comes from one of Alice's wrists.

She is completely naked, cuts the other wrist which colors with a line of blood.

Alice slowly soaks in the bathtub now full of water.

Alice closes her eyes and slowly soaks her face under water.

The blood begins to paint swirls in the water, then emerges on the surface. The faucet drips. The droplets of water turn into drops of blood.

The sight slowly fades away until Alice gets lost in the darkness.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT / BEDROOM - DAY

Patch of sunlight breaks through the darkness and lights up the face of Alice.

Alice opens the eyes. She had a nightmare.

She looks around, still confused. It was only a bad dream.

Alice gets out of the bed, yawns and wears a gown.

INT. - STEVE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Steve, sitting at his desk, drums with his fingers.

In front of him there is a young student who is reading Greek writings and translates the version.

STUDENT

Cassandra was a beautiful princess of Troy. She was considered insane.

Steve waits for him to translate the version.

STEVE

What is her curse?

The student focuses on the Greek text trying to decipher it, but he is in difficulty.

STUDENT

She yells fire when there is no fire.

STEVE

Cassandra had perfect knowledge of the future, but nobody would ever accept her predictions.

STUDENT

I'd like to have this ability, Mr. S.

The student closes the book, looking worried.

STUDENT (CONT'D)

If I don't get the version right I'm gonna fail finals this time.

STEVE

I'm sure you'll make it this time.
Good luck.

STUDENT

Thanks. Bye then, Mr. S, bye Miss.

Alice, seated in armchair, greets the student with a wave of her hand. She goes on with seeing the pictures of Steve in Italy.

STEVE

I'm sorry you had to wait. But, you know, private lessons are my only source of income.

Alice smiles and leafs through the book of Ancient Greek.

ALICE

Cassandra warned about the Trojan horse, but she was not believed... It was frustrating.

STEVE

You took Greek. Good. Studying shapes the person.

ALICE

Let's go out, now. I need a swim.

EXT. - BEACH - DAY

The sea is rough. Children play with waves. The beach is crowded with bathers.

Sipping beer, Steve is walking on the wet sand. Alice follows him.

STEVE

Why didn't you make a complaint? Are you still in love with your husband?

ALICE

Ethan seems sincere this time. He seems changed.

Alice remains serious. She thinks, saddened.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I want my mother to be proud of me.
She's done so much for me.

STEVE

Forget about your mother... That man
is dangerous. You know that.

ALICE

All I was saying is, I wanted to
test him.

STEVE

And, if so, how?

ALICE

I can decide where we are to go.

Steve smiles.

INT. - CONCERT HALL - EVENING

With the baton in his hand, Aaron leads the orchestra. He was the conductor of eight musicians and, using the baton, ensures entries by them. The MUSIC OF CHOPIN is powerful and intense.

Ethan is next to Robert and Diana, his friends. **ROBERT** (45) is husky, tanned, well-dressed, and **DIANA** (40) is a charming blonde woman. Ethan listens the CLASSIC MUSIC and glances at Steve and Alice, who are seated to his right.

Steve pretends to listen to the CONCERT but gives a look to Ethan. Their eyes meet, while the intensity of MUSIC rises.

They CLAP their hands and they look bad. Alice notices it.

EXT - CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

People come out the back of the theater. Diana walks with Alice.

DIANA

I'm glad to see you again... What are
you doing now?

ALICE

I'd like to start playing again.

DIANA

Playing?

Ethan, Robert and Steve follow the two women. Ethan becomes serious and talks to Alice.

ETHAN

Robert was just telling me that his secretary has recently quit.

ROBERT

Tell me about it! Such an idiot.

DIANA

Sorry Alice, but why don't you come work with us? You said you aren't doing anything.

Steve is seeing Alice and is studying her reaction. Robert speaks to Alice without even asking for her opinion.

ROBERT

You can come. I'll introduce you to my partner, it'll be just a formality.

ETHAN

That'd be great. (to Alice) Wouldn't it?

Steve talks to Alice, but gets louder:

STEVE

Sounds like bullshit! Working in an office is a waste of your talent.

Everybody are glaring at Steve. Alice is embarrassed. A tense silence. Robert feels offended with Steve.

Diane sighs and clears throat.

DIANE

So, where to now?

Steve opens his arms and draws attention.

STEVE

Ok, people, I got something on my mind.

INT - DISCO - NIGHT

There are enjoyed crowd on the dance floor. The TRANCE MUSIC is strong. A melody followed by beats and percussion.

Steve and Alice are dancing in a triggered manner.

A deejay is scratching to create PERCUSSIVE SOUNDS. He mixes TRANCE MUSIC. The music is loud. Very loud.

Richard and Diana advance, they enter the dance floor and start to dance.

Steve moves in a funny way, maybe he drank too much. He follows the grooving SOUND, then he says something in Alice's ear and she cracks up.

Ethan is looking at Steve and Alice with a hostile look. The man seems a fish out of water. He sips a Martini and fixes Steve. His eyes are impenetrable.

Steve messes with Alice but we can not hear his words because the volume of the MUSIC is high.

Amused, Steve leaves the dance floor and reaches Ethan, who is standing with Martini in his hand.

Steve is sweaty and excited. He takes Ethan's glass and drinks.

STEVE

Come on, dig in, prissy pants.

Ethan does not answer to Steve.

Steve goes to the bar and says something to the barman, who prepares a cocktail.

Ethan sees Alice who dances in a sensual way. His face says nothing about his feelings.

Steve joins Ethan. He drinks in one breath his cocktail and turns to Ethan in a drunken slur.

STEVE (CONT'D)

She's really beautiful, right?

Ethan is lost in thought. He doesn't stop watching Alice.

ETHAN

On the outside she holds it all together, inside she is fragile as glass.

STEVE

Listen to him, Mr. innocence... I know people like you. Manipulative and arrogant. I will not let you hurt her.

ETHAN

I have a nose for people like you. You smell like failure. You are holding on to her because you're a faggot, a worthless sponge who gets lonely in the world.

Steve's hand is shaking while he drinks. He is full of rage.

STEVE

Did your detective gather information about me?

ETHAN

I wanted to understand what you hid.
And I wonder: what kind of man doesn't see his son, doesn't raise him?

Steve looks at Ethan like he wants to kill him.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Are you afraid you can't control your appetites? Do you want to kick his little ass?

Furious, Steve breaks the glass on the head of Ethan, before he finishes the sentence.

Ethan falls down and puts a hand on his forehead dripping with blood.

People SCREAM. Alice, Robert and Diana are running over. Steve looks at Ethan, surprised by his gesture.

Ethan gets up with difficulty. He has blood all over his face. The blood drips on the floor.

EXT. - TENEMENT COURTYARD / HALL - NIGHT

An hour after. Steve crosses the courtyard's gate. Behind him there is Alice. She is offended and gives reproachful stares.

Steve staggers and searches for the keys. Alice is silent and walks towards the hall door.

STEVE

I don't know what's going on with me.

Steve tries to open the door, turns his key in the lock, but doesn't open.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I had too much to drink.

Alice remains silent. She looks disappointed by her friend.

When Steve opens the door, she enters the building and goes up the stairs. Steve yells against the door:

STEVE (CONT'D)

I don't want you making my mistakes.
Trust me! A wrong decision can change
your life!

Steve is worn out. He leans against the door and screams:

STEVE (CONT'D)

We should regret our mistakes and
learn from them, but never carry
them forward into the future with
us!

Steve is talking to himself.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT / KITCHEN - DAY

The next morning Alice is having breakfast. She drinks coffee and takes a pack of cigarettes.

She smokes, letting a ring of smoke fly. She is thinking about her husband and about Steve.

Alice takes pills and shoves tablets into her mouth.

EXT - COFFEE PLACE ON THE SEA - DAY

Alice is walking and is talking on her cell-phone.

ALICE

And the head wound? I am so sorry
about yesterday... Yes, I'll see you
tonight.

Alice gets off the phone while sees Steve is sitting alone and has a breakfast.

She ignores Steve and goes completely indifferent.

INT. - BOOKSTORE - DAY

Alice is choosing a book and takes off it on the bookshelf.

The clerk uses pieces of tape to wrap the book. It's a present.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT / LIVING ROOM - EVENING

A stitch of makeup on, Alice is wearing a stylish party dress and looks at the gift box on the table.

RINGING OF THE DOORBELL.

Alice goes to answer. They carry on with the RINGING.

Alice opens the door without seeing through the peephole...
...It's Joana. She is detached.

JOANA

Hello, Alice.

ALICE

So you came to kick me out.

Joana does not respond. Alice only now sees the two men behind the woman (**POLICE OFFICER 1 and 2**). One is wearing a police uniform.

Puzzled, Alice looks Joana.

A police officer in uniform and one in plain clothes inspect the house with suspicious glances. Alice is worried.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Mr. Sanchez is been reported missing.

Alice greets the news with evident concern.

ALICE

Missing? You think something bad happened to Hector?

POLICE OFFICER 1

There's not enough to say that. We'll do our best to find him.

ALICE

But why d'you come here looking for him?

POLICE OFFICER 1

We know you and Mr. Sanchez were... friends.

ALICE

Yes. He helped me a lot.

POLICE OFFICER 1

D'you have any clue where he could've gone?

Alice hesitates while exchanges a glance with Joana that is staring at her.

JOANA

Alice... that day Hector told me he'd come here to see you. If you know something you have to tell them. It's important!

ALICE

I didn't see him.

Alice stops and looks with anxiety to the uniformed cop that comes. He has got the crumpled letter written by Hector.

POLICE OFFICER 2

I found this. It was in the trash.

The man hands the letter to his colleague that gives it a quick read.

Alice looks at him worried.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Why did not you say anything?

The man shows her the letter.

ALICE

I thought it was not important.

Joana looks to Alice. She just passed her judgment.

POLICE OFFICER 2

Your story ended badly.

Uncomfortable, Alice nods without saying anything.

POLICE OFFICER 1

We have to ask you to stay at our disposal for the next few days.

JOANA

(to the police man) She can stay here only for a week. By this time the apartment is assigned.

Alice nods deeply troubled and looks to Joana.

INT ALICE'S APARTMENT / BATHROOM - EVENING

Alice washes her face. She is upset and flushes with lots of water. She looks at the mirror in front, where... ...Hector is reflected.

Alice can hardly breathe. She screams, incredulous.

She closes her eyes. When opens her eyes again she looks astonished at... ...the reflection of Hector who wears broken glasses with red frames. His face is marked by evident bruises and scratches.

Alice retracts terrified and turns around...

...The image of Hector is vanished.

INT. - CLARA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We are in a party. Kevin has just unwrapped his presents. Nicole's husband and Clara are also there, near her grandchildren. Kevin is reading a coupon of Nicole's spa.

Alice is lost in her thoughts. She sits next to Ethan and her sister, elegantly dressed.

NICOLE

We design a program of treatments
and help your body guide back to
health.

KEVIN

I needed that.

Alice looks at Ethan with suspicion. Her husband has a bandage on his forehead and doesn't hold a grudge against Steve.

Curious, Ethan takes the coupon and starts to read.

Alice gazes at Ethan.

ALICE

You told me that you are unable to
read without glasses.

ETHAN

They aren't so indispensable.

The light goes off. They remain in TOTAL DARKNESS.

Alice struggles to contain the anxiety when she hears that Nicole murmurs to her:

NICOLE

Do not argue at least this evening.

Clara arrives unaware. She has a cake with candles.

CLARA

Happy birthday to you!

GRANDCHILDREN

Happy birthday to grandfather!

Alice is agitated. She does not care about what happens around: the children singing softly, Nicole applauding and Kevin blowing on candles.

The light is back and Alice is disoriented. She points at Ethan.

ALICE

Where is Hector? I think the police just got a lead on you.

ETHAN

Who is Hector?

ALICE

You left his glasses in the car.
(shouting) How did you remove his body?

An embarrassing silence falls among those present.

NICOLE

Stop yelling, please, you'll scare the children.

CHILD

What's happening?

ALICE

Nothing... your auntie's pissed.

Alice overturns a plate of cake and everyone becomes silent.

KEVIN

Are you crazy?

ALICE

You're fucking listening now, damnit.

Alice stands up.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry to spoil your party, Kevin, but you gotta give up. Sorry. I don't want a secretary job. And I'll never get back with Ethan. (to Clara) Sorry mom, if I'm not perfect like Nicole. I'll never give you grandchildren and my life was a failure.

Everyone looks amazed at Alice. Ethan grabs Alice's hand and squeezes it hard, hurting her. Alice frees her hand from the hold.

ETHAN

You're exaggerating now.

Alice repels him, horrified.

ALICE

Don't touch me!
(MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)

I don't wanna see you ever again.
(pointing her finger at him) And if
you ever touch me another time, I'll
call 911!

ETHAN

Calm down.

ALICE

You are a son-of-a-bitch! You are a
psycho! You need a treatment.

ETHAN

You sure I'm the one in need of a
treatment?

EXT - COFFEE PLACE ON THE SEA - DAY

The city wakes up and the sun shines on the sea. The coffee shop begins to work.

Bathing-costumes and funny sun-hat, Steve is sitting, sunbathing in the sun, while he is reading a magazine. The waiter brings a muffin and a coffee.

STEVE

I can't start the day without reading my horoscope.

The waiter smiles.

WAITER

Would you like anything else?

STEVE

No, thanks.

The boy goes away. Steve looks persistently at him. After, he starts to read the page of horoscope.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Relationships may not exactly be going as well as you'd like, Taurus, but hang in there and you will find that things eventually come around your way.

Alice arrives and sits near Steve.

ALICE

I don't know why you come here every morning. The coffee sucks.

STEVE

There is a nice view.

ALICE

I behaved like an idiot. You were right about Ethan. He is a dangerous person.

STEVE

What did you change your mind about him?

ALICE

It's doesn't matter now. I need a safe place... We had a fight, and I believe I made him very angry.

INT. - HOTEL ROOM - DAY

The same bald man who was at Steve's party wears the hotel uniform and takes the guests' luggage in the room.

Behind him, Steve and Alice check out the brightened room.

STEVE

You're a friend. Thanks.

BALD MAN

What for? It is an honor to have a princess as guest at our facility.

Alice tries to smile. She still feels tense.

Steve says good-bye to his friend and follows him to the door.

Alice slings the violin case over her shoulder and waits for Steve to be back.

ALICE

Thank you. I didn't mean to drag you into this mess... And, about the money...

STEVE

...No problem.

Alice puts down the violin case. She sits down on the bed and feels it. She finds it soft.

ALICE

Why are you doing all this?

Steve draws Alice close to him and hugs her. A veil of emotion shows on their faces.

STEVE

Because I've never had your courage.
I have lived a life of mistakes and
regret. Don't be like me.

Alice reciprocates the hug and nods. She hides her head in the man's arms, she feels protected for the first time.

EXT. - LOUNGE BAR / HOTEL - EVENING

The modern and glamorous place has a wide glass frontage. From outside we see guests and strangers while chatting and drinking in the tables and Alice and Steve, seated at bar.

We find out that it is the Ethan's private detective the one spying on them. He is the mysterious man at the garden.

He on his cell phone.

DETECTIVE

I found them. They are in the Great Central Hotel... Room thirty.

INT. - LOUNGE BAR / HOTEL - EVENING

Half-drunk, Steve finishes a drink with an umbrella in it.

STEVE

I wish I were at Kevin's birthday.

ALICE

(euphoric) You didn't see their faces.

STEVE

How can your mother stand that kind of husband?

ALICE

She can't be on her own. That's why she got married again.

STEVE

Have I ever told you I'm married too?

ALICE

You...? Are you kidding me?

STEVE

I'm serious. My wife filed for divorce when she found out I was having an affair with a student.

Alice laughs, but Steve is serious and she gets serious too.

ALICE

And... the student, what happened to him?

STEVE

I never saw him again. The school fired me and I hid in that hole, to my shame. But now the problem is my son.

ALICE

(amazed) Who?

STEVE

My son.

The bald man appears. He pours something in their glasses.

BALD MAN

A new drink, you should try.

Steve takes a little taste of the drink.

STEVE

The perfect combination.

BALD MAN

In half an hour I finish my shift. I'll give you one of my special cocktails.

STEVE

Do you know the ingredients of happiness?

Alice looks at Steve in silence. He is drunk.

STEVE (CONT'D)

There's getting lost in a good book, learning something new and making a fool of oneself by a friend.

BALD MAN

Sorry, they are calling me. See you later in your room.

INT. - HOTEL ELEVATOR - EVENING

Alice is serious. She would want Steve to overcome his diffidence.

ALICE

I wanna know why you didn't tell me you have a son.

Steve keeps silent, reticent, then puffs.

STEVE

At first, I agreed with my wife... I thought it was one less hassle to take care of... Now I wish I could only speak to him, but I feel ashamed.

ALICE

How could you bear these many years without seeing him?

STEVE

If I look back I feel like the worst man on earth. An asshole.

ALICE

He's the guy at the bar, isn't he?

Steve nods.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I figured it out 'cause you both have the same lips... but you are more good-looking.

The elevator comes to their floor. Steve smiles, they have cleared up things between them.

INT. - HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Steve and Alice enter.

STEVE

You know everything of me now.

ALICE

Yeah... Do you mind giving me a moment?
I need a shower.

STEVE

Sure.

BATHROOM: Alice takes off her clothes and speaks towards the door. She gets into the shower and shuts the glass door.

HALL: Steve hears someone knocking on the door.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Wow... quick service.

Steve goes to the door.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Got a rape drug in my glass made?

He opens it partly and looks surprised.

A punch hits him in the middle of the face and makes him fall back!

BATHROOM: Alice is under the running water and soaps herself.

HALL: Steve is on the floor and covers his face with the hands. Ethan kicks him brutally and repeatedly.

BATHROOM: Alice, unaware, has a refreshing shower.

HALL: Ethan takes Steve's head and bangs it against a piece of furniture many times until the man, fully covered in blood, falls back again on the floor.

Ethan rushes upon him and punches him again.

BATHROOM: Alice wears a bathrobe and hears noises. She heads for the source of the noises.

She makes it to the **HALL**, searches for her friend but can not find him. She starts to get worried. She walks back to the room.

Alice sees Steve on the floor. She bends down and takes his head in her arms. She sees that her hands get full of blood and looks horrified at her fingers becoming red.

ALICE

Steve? Who did this to you? (tries to wake him up) Steve! Please! You can't leave me like that. No! We had so many things to do together.

Alice bursts into tears and shakes her friend who lies on his back in her arms. She moves him like a puppet, but Steve is now lifeless.

ETHAN OFF

Hello dear. How are you doing?

Alice leaves the dead body and runs furiously against Ethan, who watches her from the door with a challenging look on his face.

ALICE

You son of a bitch!

Alice's hands scratch his face.

ALICE (CONT'D)

He had nothing to do with it, you bastard.

Alice pushes Ethan against a piece of furniture. He seems to capitulate.

Then Ethan unexpectedly jumps on Alice and knocks her down.

He grabs the violin and smashes it onto her head.

ETHAN

He was your new friend?

Ethan has marks of the scratches, a fierce rage alters his face.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

You screwed him, like that other asshole?

Petrified, Alice watches in terror Ethan moving towards her. Cornered, she curls up shielding her face.

Ethan's hand makes its way on Alice's thigh.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Calm down and I won't hurt you.

He bends over and looks for Alice's lips but she pushes him away.

Ethan fondles her, excited, while Alice refuses his hug and screams:

ALICE

I don't love you anymore! You make me sick!

Ethan's eyes are indifferent, lacking any human feelings. The man bends over and checks out her wounds. He seems worried about her.

ETHAN

You force me to punish you.

Ethan looks at her from above, disdainfully, then bends down and starts suffocating her. She cries and coughs for the lack of oxygen.

ALICE

Let me go, please, let me go.

ETHAN

You wanted to leave me, leave me alone, again!

Ethan squeezes her neck with strength.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

You're mine, mine only!

Her hands try to push him back, her face more cyanotic. Her hands react more and more slowly.

Alice watches Ethan who is regretful.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

My love, I didn't mean to.

Alice is carried by the man who goes to **BATHROOM**.

She feels his breathing and his oaths.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Come on! Don't die!

Ethan forces her head under the sink.

Alice has wet hairs. Her head is under the water. She looks at the sink. Before becoming unconscious, Alice sees the hole...

...At the bottom of the hose-pipe there is a light blur. Everything becomes cloudy while the noise of water goes up.

EXT - UNDERWATER / LAKE - NIGHT

We go back in the moment of the accident. Alice gets out of the car and swims in the depth.

INT. - ETHAN'S CLINIC / ROOM - NIGHT

Alice is in a hospital bed. Her sleep is troubled. She hears a distant, distorted voice. From another world.

ETHAN OFF

God, what have I done? You're my life!

A doctor (Ethan) gives injection in her arm.

Alice continues to sleep.

EXT - UNDERWATER / LAKE - NIGHT

Alice opens her eyes while she is soaking in the depths of the lake. She sees...

...something, a HUMAN FIGURE that is moving very close to her...

...It is a man. It's the detective, who swims towards her. The detective helps Alice, sustains her and tries to pull her out of the lake.

The sunbeams penetrate the dark water. Alice lets out a few bubbles breathing. She sees a light above her, she struggles and tries to swim upriver towards the surface.

INT. ETHAN'S CLINIC / ROOM NIGHT

The blurred face of a man (Ethan), dressed up in doctor scrub, who examines Alice. His voice comes in the distance.

ETHAN

Good distal pulses.

On a bed, Alice partly regains consciousness and she turns to stone when she finally focuses the man's face. Her husband smiles.

ALICE

Where am I...?

With professional doing, Ethan tampons the wounds on Alice, she lies on the bed in a state of stupor looking around.

ETHAN

In my clinic, honey. You've gotten pretty darn close this time.

Moments of withering silence. Alice gets up brusquely.

ALICE

How did you get in?

ETHAN

I arrived just in time in that lake.
You almost could have drowned.

Alice can't believe her eyes. She isn't in the hotel room and she isn't died.

ALICE

It isn't possible... I was just here before... before... Where is Steve?

ETHAN

In your car there was no one. What are you talking about?

Alice realizes that she is suspended between life and death. Now she is back to reality.

ALICE

Do you know how long I've been here?

ETHAN

Relax, Alice. It's not important.

Ethan stares at her, sweet, in love. Appealing.

ALICE

What d'you want from me? Don't you touch me! Leave.

Ethan backs off and talks to her in an obliging voice.

ETHAN

I saved your life. You could at least thank me.

Ethan gently takes her wrist and starts to remove the bandage with extreme delicacy.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

You were at risk for an air embolism.

Ethan controls the wound.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Fortunately they were superficial cuts. Do they still bother you?

Alice rejects him. She is angry.

ALICE

Let me stay! Go away!

ETHAN

I don't care about your testimony in the trial. I only... I want everything to go back the way it was.

Ethan stops at the entrance.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Call me if you need me, I'm in the other room, ok?

Ethan leaves the room under the hostile gaze of Alice.

Alice remains silent, waits, then gets up.

She's trying too hard to get dressed.

INT. - ETHAN'S CLINIC / HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alice leaves the clinic. Her dress is soaked and she is tired.

A female nurse looks at Alice and seems worried about the patient.

NURSE

You can't walk around in this state.

Alice keeps on walking.

EXT - ALICE'S APARTMENT / TERRACE - DAWN

Alice opens the French door and looks out. She sees tops of the buildings.

The dawn's early lights flood her face.

She looks in front of her. Dawn rises over the city.

Alice looks at the vase of faded flowers and waters her roses.

The plants regain vigor.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT / LIVING ROOM - DAY

Alice places the last bandages.

TIME PASSED

She smokes nervously while on her cell. She listens to the recorded voice repeating "*The customer you are calling is unavailable at the moment*".

ALICE

This can't be happening! Everything's the same.

She puts the phone on the table where the crumpled letter from Hector lies. Alice looks at it then takes it. She quickly reads a few passages again. She crumples it and throws it away.

The phone RINGS and Alice answers up.

CLARA OFF

Sweetheart? I tried to call you. How are you? When I saw in the party, you were so excited. I was afraid.

Alice is living the same events she has already lived. Hangs up while Clara is speaking to her. She walks up and down, agitated.

INT. - CLARA'S HOUSE - DAY

Clara is speaking to phone.

CLARA

Alice? Are you there? Alice?

Clara puts the handset. Takes a glass and sips the scotch. Nervous, Clara moistens her lips.

Clara waits impatiently behind the closed door. She pours some scotch and tosses it off.

When the door opens, Clara puts the drink away.

Ethan and Kevin come out together.

ETHAN

I would do an ECG, just to make sure,
but I'd rule out any pathology.

KEVIN

How about the chest pain?

ETHAN

Stress. You should work less.

Clara looks Kevin that adjusts his shirt. She is annoyed by his intimacy with Ethan.

KEVIN

Thanks for coming. Ah, listen... about those machines to extract stem cells from adipose tissue.

ETHAN

Consider it done. You already got the tender for the clinic.

CLARA

Everything alright?

KEVIN

He says I have the heart of a child.

Ethan looks at Clara.

ETHAN

Alice had an accident. It's only a slight wound, nothing serious. But she wouldn't get treated.

KEVIN

If she ran away, it's her problem, not yours.

ETHAN

Maybe you are right, Kevin, but I am worried about her. (*smiles to Clara*) I'll go... See you tomorrow.

Clara looks daggers at Kevin, who is going to the door with Ethan. As soon as her husband is back, she shows her displeasure.

CLARA

You invited him?

KEVIN

Of course... This afternoon your daughter will see his lawyer and Ethan hopes she decides not to press charges.

CLARA

You must be happy, right?

KEVIN

Don't you get started on that again.

CLARA

It would have been different with her father around.

KEVIN

He's been dead for thirty years and you do nothing but remind everyone of him. Especially me!

Clara drinks the scotch.

CLARA

He would've smashed his face, he wouldn't have shaken hands.

INT - STEVE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Steve is stroking the cat while he flips through old photo album.

STEVE

So many memories, Socrates.

The pictures show him during his marriage and when he taught in a school.

Moved, Steve looks at pictures of him younger. Then he raises the head from album.

STEVE (CONT'D)

What time will she wake up?

The cat purrs and meows. Steve watches the clock and closes the album.

INT - ALICE'S APARTMENT / HALLWAY - DAY

Steve RINGS the bell and waits in hallway.

STEVE

Alice? I am Steve. Will you open?

Alice runs to the door as if she was expecting this visit.
Opens the door ajar and finds Steve.

The man smiles.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hey, I didn't mean to bother you...
You ok?

ALICE

Get in, quick.

Alice sneaks a glance at the landing and lets him in.

Steve enters **APARTMENT** and doesn't notice the Alice's anxiety.

STEVE

You still mad at me? I... I'm sorry
for...

ALICE

I need to talk to you.

STEVE

Your violin, I took it... they say it
can fixed...

ALICE

Don't mean a thing! I've got something
very important to tell you! Steve
stares at Alice who struggles to
find the right words.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I was about to die... and I don't know
how... I've lived things that seemed
real, and when I woke up I found out
they were the future.

Steve remains speechless.

STEVE

Your future... Are you sure?

ALICE

A fucking spirit, I don't know, gave
me the chance to see the future.
Like Cassandra.

STEVE

Maybe it was a dream... A bad dream.

ALICE

My husband hires a detective. He is coming in a few hours. We gotta go!

STEVE

What are you saying?

ALICE

He'll look for us everywhere.
Nothing'll stand in his way.

Steve hands her the cordless.

STEVE

Wanna call the police? Help yourself.

Alice looks skeptically at the phone and shakes her head.

ALICE

To say what? That in the future my husband will throw us down?

Steve puts the phone away and caresses her.

STEVE

I'm gonna look for a new place. A friend of mine works at this nice hotel...

ALICE

...near the train station, yeah, I know.

STEVE

You're freaking me out.

ALICE

Your wife was pregnant when she kicked you out cause you were gay. And you haven't had the courage to talk to your son ever since.

Steve sighs, bewildered. Alice nods, serious.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Did I dream that too?

INT. - HOTEL ROOM - DAY

The same bald man who was at Steve's party wears the hotel uniform and takes the guests' luggage in the room.

BALD MAN

It is an honor to have a princess as guest at our facility.

Alice is getting over her initial surprise. She tries to smile.

Steve says good-bye to his friend and follows him to the door.

Alice waits for Steve to be back.

ALICE

I know this room.

Alice breathes deeply. She still feels tense.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Thank you. I didn't mean to drag you into this mess... And, about the money...

STEVE

No problem. But you can't hide forever.

Alice sits down on the bed.

ALICE

I have no money. I have no work.

STEVE

You got this one wrong. I called my ex today... he says he wants to see you again. Aaron thinks you're good.

ALICE

And how are things between you two?

STEVE

Our relationship has nothing to do with it... This thing is all about you. I think it's a great opportunity. He could find you a job in an orchestra.

ALICE

Are you crazy? How can I play in the knowledge that Ethan shall be my assassin?

STEVE

This is completely absurd, but... if you believe in your prophecy, you should know that the experience of time is a series of moments... You demolished an anchor ring and can build a different time-line.

ALICE

But the future will continue to happen. Ethan will kill me.

STEVE

You exited your home before and will not accept his invitation. The sequence won't be the same. Your husband and his detective can't know you are here. They are out of your life.

INT / EST - LUTHERIE SHOP - DAY

The Steve's car is double parked. Alice and Steve are recognizable from out the window. Alice examines the violin...

Strings tuned in perfect fifths, and concave C-bouts at the waist.

Alice finds that the soundboard is fixed.

She and Steve say good-bye to the lute-maker and leave the shop.

Alice has the violin case on her shoulder. She looks at Steve. Her face is dark.

They get in the Steve's car.

INT - STEVE'S CAR - DAY

Steve is in the driver's seat and sees a puzzled Alice.

STEVE

What is it now?

ALICE

I haven't practiced ever since Aaron saw me.

Steve puts the key in the ignition, but doesn't start the car. He looks at Alice.

STEVE

What's the thing you like doing the most?

ALICE

Playing. It's the only thing that makes me feel good.

STEVE

Then play. Do it. Don't give up. I heard you, you're so good. The others will love you for what you really are.

ALICE

And my hand?... It hurts.

STEVE

Ethan thinks you're talentless, but you and I know that's not true. You cannot give in to your husband, okay?

Steve draws Alice close to him and hugs her. A veil of emotion shows on their faces.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Now we'll make this caterpillar become a butterfly.

Alice reciprocates the hug and she hides her head in the man's arms, but she seems sad.

Alice starts to remember. She is immersed in her memories.

INT. - ETHAN'S MANSION - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A younger Alice with a different haircut comes into the house soaked to the skin. She takes off her jacket drenched in water.

A hand rushes upon her and strikes her on the face!

Ethan turns on the light in the hall and watches his wife icily. He holds a crumpled letter.

ETHAN

What the fuck is this?

Alice wipes the blood from her nose and looks at him imploringly.

ALICE

Remember that audition? They took me for that concert.

Ethan throws the crumpled letter at her face.

ETHAN

And you'd like to be a whore while I'm here waiting for you?

ALICE

I'd have never said yes... I was about
to tell you.

Ethan jerks Alice and forcibly takes her to a table. He grips
her arm while she tries to escape his hold.

ALICE (CONT'D)

No, Ethan, please. Don't hurt me.

ETHAN

I'll have you drop your fucking hobby.
For good.

Alice bursts into tears and tries to react, but Ethan grasps
her arm and bangs it against the table with unprecedented
violence.

Alice screams in pain and falls down.

INT. - REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

Alice touches the instrument's belly and caresses.

Holds the lower bout of the instrument between the left
shoulder and the jaw.

The left hand regulates the sounding length of the strings.

Alice PLAYS a sonata for violin and harpsichord in G major.
Excited, Steve looks at her.

Alice grimaces with pain. Her fingers hurt.

From behind the glass of the control room, Aaron examines
the LIVE ROOM where the woman is playing near Steve.

Alice stops abruptly and exits.

ALICE

It hurts really bad.

STEVE

You have to overcome a block.

ALICE

I can't do this.

STEVE

Your problem is not here (*points at
the woman's wrist*) but here.

Steve points at Alice's head.

Aaron enters, impatient. He glances at Steve.

AARON

Sorry... could you wait us outside?

Steve nods and goes out. Aaron looks at Alice strictly.

AARON (CONT'D)

If you want to play in an orchestra,
you've got to get used to little
pains.

Alice goes back to the **LIVE ROOM** and doesn't play.

She hesitates for a long time, while trying to hold back her emotions, the mass of memories delving into her soul.

INT. - ETHAN'S MANSION / BASEMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Alice is bent on the floor in the utmost dark. She is cold and shakes.

A small door opens and a flashlight lights up the dark. Ethan's commanding shadow appears. He sings a nursery rhyme with a sadistic voice:

ETHAN

"Open your eyes, my sweet belle,
stay awake in your prison cell"

The light enters the basement as the blade of a sword. Ethan directs the beam of the flashlight towards Alice who is crouched up, her face swollen.

ALICE

My wrist, Ethan... it hurts.

ETHAN

"The bogeyman's here, you must look out, down these long stairs, no child can keep him out. And if it's his voice you want to ward off, there is no real shelter, not even a cross"...
Did they sing this to you when you were little? Well, I'm no bogeyman.
I'm someone who loves you and will teach you how to live.

On the floor, Alice drags herself to the man. She finds it hard to talk with the lips swollen from the injuries.

FLASHBACK ENDS

Alice seems more determined now. She arranges the music stand in front of her and opens the score.

She starts PLAYING and produces a beautiful MELODY.

From the opposite side of the glass, Aaron is impassive.

EXT. - STREET OUT THE REHEARSAL BUILDING - DAY

Steve walks nervously out the rehearsal building.

Alice arrives behind Steve and hesitates. Steve looks at her, curious.

Alice bursts out laughing and raises her hand as a sign of victory.

ALICE

I have an audition next week. And it's all thanks to you!

STEVE

This is awesome!

Alice plants a kiss on Steve's forehead.

STEVE (CONT'D)

The tradition is to go to the lounge bar and get drunk.

ALICE

The lounge bar can wait.

Steve is surprised.

STEVE

Where are you going?

ALICE

Now that I know what it's my future, I gotta do something to change it. Alice smiles, determined. She is confident for the first time in her life.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Did you think what your life would be like without any mistakes, if you made a different choice?

STEVE

I ask myself this question every day.

ALICE

I am on time to improve the fate... And you too.

STEVE

Where are you going, Alice?

ALICE

To put my life back together.

INT. - ETHAN'S CAR / EXT. - DRAWBRIDGE / SEA - DAY

Ethan drives in silence. He pulls himself together. He blows his nose, takes a deep breath and unloosen the shirt collar, trying to compose himself.

Ethan's car stops, leaving the headlights on. He gets off. He looks around. There is not a living soul to be seen.

He opens the trunk where there is a body of a man.

ETHAN

People like him don't deserve to live.

Ethan grabs... Hector's body.

Ethan lifts the corpse onto his shoulders.

The doctor takes Hector to the parapet and flings him into the sea.

Carried by the waves, Hector's body slowly sinks.

Ethan looks at the body. He is distracted by a PHONE CALL.

He picks up the phone and hears. He seems bothered.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Let's never talk on the phone. Come to my office.

INT. - ETHAN'S CLINIC WAITING ROOM - EVENING

Anatomical pictures hanging on the wall. A secretary stands up when she sees Ethan approaching her. The doctor seems tired.

SECRETARY

Are you all right, doctor?

ETHAN

Yes.

SECRETARY

A man is waiting for you.

Ethan nods and looks at the big clock on the wall.

INT - ETHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

The detective says good bye to Ethan. Ethan wears a white coats and gives a nervous smile.

DETECTIVE

I lost Alice.

ETHAN

How could this happen?

DETECTIVE

Your wife was terrified. It's strange.
She knew I was following her. Then
she got into the neighbor's car.

Ethan chokes back tears, excited.

ETHAN

The neighbor? Did he sleep with her?

The detective is embarrassed.

DETECTIVE

I don't know, Doc. But... I can look
for Alice.

ETHAN

It's no longer necessary. Right now
my lawyer is trying to talk some
sense into her. It doesn't matter.
I'll take care of her like the old
days.

INT. - SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICE - DAY

A pompous lawyer, Joana and a young female attorney are sitting around a table.

LAWYER

We all know that Mrs. Baker was seeing
an analyst at the time. And we all
know that she was prescribed a long
list of uppers and downers.

YOUNG ATTORNEY

We do not accept insinuations.

ALICE

Sorry, I'm late.

Alice arrives. The Ethan's lawyer looks at her severely.

LAWYER

It wouldn't be the first time that Mrs. Baker lied.

Alice doesn't take her eyes off of him.

The lawyer keeps his eyes towards Alice.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

Isn't it true that ten years ago you pressed sexual harassment charges against your step-dad and after a week confessed your story was a lie?

ALICE

It's the past. It doesn't matter if it is true or false. Now there is one thing I'm sure of. Alice opens a folder and scans through it.

She shows the lawyer pictures attached. Photos about mistreatments.

Portions of the Alice's body covered in injuries.

A black eye of woman.

Lacerations and contusions in her body.

ALICE (CONT'D)

This isn't my invention.

The lawyer gets up, irritated.

LAWYER

Oh, the truth will come out in the court. I leave you the memorial. Good luck with your work.

The man leaves the room under attorney's hostile look.

YOUNG ATTORNEY

He's doing his job, but we're scared of nothing, right Alice?

Alice nods halfheartedly, the young attorney hands her a pen.

JOANA

(muttering) Motherfucker. He'll destroy her credibility.

The voice of the young attorney shakes Alice from her thoughts.

YOUNG ATTORNEY

Here, you only have to sign twice.
Don't be afraid... Nothing will happen
to you. Don't worry.

Alice takes the pen, looks at it, hesitates.

ALICE

Where is Hector?

JOANA

It's his day off. What's the problem?

After a time of uncertainty Alice signs.

Joana and the attorney are satisfied. The young female attorney smiles and takes the document.

YOUNG ATTORNEY

You did the right thing.

Silence. Alice shakes Joana.

ALICE

Hector will not come to the office tomorrow. And you'll get worried. I know this, I know it'll happen.

JOANA

Are you aware of what you're saying?

ALICE

It's kind of hard to explain... it's as if I'd seen the future...
Everything's happening the exact same way.

JOANA

And I'm supposed to believe it?

ALICE

I've already seen it, even the conversation with lawyer.

YOUNG ATTORNEY

It's a difficult period for you. Why don't you have a little talk with our psychologist?

ALICE

Fuck you.

Joana and the attorney are surprised and watch Alice leaving.

EXT. - CITY ROAD - DAY

Alice quickly walks away. It starts raining and she cracks a smile. She has finally relieved of a burden.

Under the rain Alice SCREAMS and it's strangely liberating.

INT. - LOUNGE BAR HOTEL - EVENING

From outside we see guests and strangers while drinking in the tables. The atmosphere is informal. Alice is seated at bar, alone.

The bald man appears. He pours something in her glass.

BALD MAN

A new drink, you should try.

Alice takes a little taste of the drink and looks around.

ALICE

How long does it take to return?

The bald man polishes the counter and remembers something.

BALD MAN

Steve told me he was gonna go home
and came back.

ALICE

Did not go to our room...?

BALD MAN

No, he was going to take his dresses
for tonight.

Alice gets up from the chair and moves, anxious.

BALD MAN (CONT'D)

It's going to be a long night. You
have to celebrate.

The man looks at Alice who rushes to exit. He is astonished.

BALD MAN (CONT'D)

Alice? Alice!?

INT. - GARAGE - NIGHT

Ethan has marks of the scratches, a fierce rage alters his face. Steve is tied up to a chair and is covered in blood.

STEVE

You haven't changed. You said you'd never touch Alice again. But you're the same person.

ETHAN

Be quiet!

Ethan starts to kick him brutally and repeatedly.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Are you her boyfriend?

Ethan takes Steve's head and bangs it against a piece of furniture many times until the man, fully covered in blood, falls back again on the floor.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Where is Alice?

Steve's cell phone RINGS. The caller: ID: ALICE.

Ethan takes the phone and turns off it. He is furious. Ethan decides to get out.

INT. - TAXI - NIGHT

A taxi crosses the periphery and passes a truck.

The passenger is a nervous Alice, who puts away the phone.

A fat man drives the car, whistling, and stops the car. Alice is impatient while she waits at the traffic lights.

ALICE

Can you drive faster, please?

The cab-driver restarts quickly and steps on the gas. He overtakes a vehicle on a curve and picks up.

The driver stops his taxi in front of Steve's building.

Alice gets out, agitated.

INT. - STEVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alice gets back home and looks around. She takes off the wet coat and looks for Steve.

ALICE

Steve? Where are you?

She goes to the kitchen, but finds it empty.

The cat popes up and Alice gets scared.

She looks for Steve. She sees a red spot near the fridge, bends down and realizes that it is blood.

She stands up again, worried, and inspects the room. She sees...

...a trail of blood and wooden cutting board with a blood-stained edge.

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT ALT WITH

INT. - BUILDING'S STAIRS - NIGHT

STAIRS: Ethan climbs the stairs, with blood on his face. He realizes that he is covered with blood. He stops, washing his face carefully.

APARTMENT: Alice goes back to her apartment and checks it out. No one is there.

BUILDING STAIRS: Ethan has retrieved his aplomb. He looks around as if he suspects he is being watched.

APARTMENT: Alice opens a drawer and takes a knife. The BELL RING shakes her. Alice hesitates then places the knife into the drawer.

HALLWAY: Ethan opens the door with his keys.

ETHAN

My darling...?

LIVING ROOM: Terrified, Alice looks at Ethan who enters the room. She tries to hide her fear.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I am not interested in the trial.

ALICE

You must leave me alone.

Ethan seems dazed by the woman's beauty.

ETHAN

You scared the hell out of me in that lake... and I won't let anything happen to you.

Alice strives to look normal.

ALICE

I'm feeling better now.

ETHAN

I came to bring your keys back.

ALICE

Where have you been?

Ethan smiles as a loving husband.

ETHAN

Why don't you cook me up a nice meal?

Alice relaxes her face and gives a hint of a smile.

ALICE

Ok. Gimme one sec to tidy myself up.

ETHAN

Great. Just like in the old days.

Alice gets into the bathroom while Ethan has a satisfied face.

BATHROOM: Alice looks in the mirror and takes deep breaths to calm down. Scared, she holds her tears and leaves anxiety behind. She pulls herself together and pretends she is calm in front of the mirror.

She opens the medicine chest and takes a bottle of sleeping drops.

KITCHEN: Ethan turns the TV on. Alice is making burgers and checks on Ethan. She smiles back and tries not to arouse suspicion.

ALICE

Wanna open a beer?

Ethan nods. He distractedly watches the TV but is still excited. He sits down at the table.

ETHAN

Everything'll be just as before,
Alice... We are inseparable.

Alice takes a bottle of beer and turns so that he can not see her.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Do you want to go home, tomorrow?

Alice pours a little beer into the sink, then adds the soporific into the bottle. She gets up, uncomfortable. Ethan follows her.

ALICE

It's ok.

ETHAN

We can organize a barbecue with Robert and Diana. They'll be happy to see you.

Alice turns back and hints at a smile holding the bottle in her hand.

ALICE

Shall we make toast?

Ethan stops to look at her for a while.

Alice feels like that look is going right through her but stares him out, pretending to be unconcerned. Ethan slightly nods in assent.

Alice serves the burgers. Ethan seems to be studying her and he also bites into the meat.

ETHAN

I'm addicted to your burgers.

ALICE

I know... Well-cooked...

Alice smiles. They eat the hamburgers.

Alice pours Ethan some beer and quickly seals again the bottle where she had put the narcotic.

Ethan chews satisfied. He raises the glass and is about to drink. Then he halts.

ETHAN

You've been through a lot, with your car.

He seems to be thinking of something. She waits for a moment with an anxiety that her face can not hide.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

You know, I heard a legend about that lake. A long time ago a shamaness lived there.

Alice inhales smoke and checks out her shaking. She looks at him holding the drugged beer.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Her prophecies scared the white men and she was drowned in the lake. From then, the people who swim in have strange dreams.

Alice stubs out the cigarette butt in the ashtray.

ALICE

And you believe it?

Ethan cracks up.

ETHAN

Of course not. The Indians used to fantasize.

Alice nervously watches her husband raising the glass again to drink. Ethan drinks his beer.

ALICE

Maybe the story is true. I think as we dream, so we shall become.

Alice waits for Ethan to finish off his drink and stares at him.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Our vision can be the promise of what we shall one day be.

Ethan keeps silent, looks at Alice and then bursts out laughing.

Alice laughs falsely and pretends to drink.

ETHAN

This beer's funny. It's strong.

Ethan's expression becomes hesitant. He half-closes his eyes. Alice monitors the situation.

ALICE

You're tired. D'you wanna lay down?

Ethan struggles to stay awake.

ETHAN

No, it's just... I'm not feeling well.

Ethan collapses on the plate.

Alice changes expression. She grasps the husband's collar and lifts his head.

ALICE

Where did you take Steve? What d'you do to him?

Ethan's eyes are almost closed, his tongue is furred.

ETHAN

He's gonna end up like that other one...

ALICE

Where the fuck is Steve?

The husband does not answer and his head sways, sleepy.

Alice grabs a knife. She squeezes it so hard that her knuckles become white. Her breath is fast.

She seizes Ethan's head by the hair with one hand, as if she wanted to tear it off. With the other hand she aims the knife at him.

The blade slightly plunges into the soft skin of his neck.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Where the fuck is he? Answer me!

Ethan seems unconscious.

Alice stares at him. Ethan's neck seems offered as in a sacrifice, the jugular vein pulsing undisturbed.

Alice pulls the blade back, then moves her arm quickly and deals a stroke, jabbing the knife into the table just a few inches from the man's throat.

She sighs. She bends frantically to plunge her hands into the pockets of his trousers. She gets some keys.

A satisfactory flash sparks in her eyes. It is the keys of the garage, she recognizes them.

INT. - GARAGE NIGHT - ALT WITH

INT. - ALICE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alice tinkers with the lock of the GARAGE.

The garage door opens. Alice turns on the neon light, breathless.

The lamp weakly lights the box. The woman proceeds.

The dim light outlines a formless heap. It is Steve tied up to a chair, near city car and old furniture.

ALICE

Steve!

Alice frees the man from the gag.

ALICE (CONT'D)

God, what has he done to you!

STEVE

Your husband's out of his mind! You were right...

ALICE

...I know, Steve, I know!

Steve bursts into tears. She kisses him repeatedly and frenziedly on the face. Her cheeks are wet with tears.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Wait! Let me set this free now!

STEVE

Behind my back. Undo that knot.

Alice gets on with it. The knot is very tight.

ALICE

It's tight. I can't!

Alice looks for some object in a corner used to store things. Among the many objects haphazardly set aside, she finds some scissors.

She gets on with the ropes again, now equipped with scissors.

Steve, still tied up, fidgets anxiously.

The blades of the scissors cut the knot and the rope loosens.

APARTMENT: Ethan lifts his head from the table onto which the knife is still jabbed.

He gets up, can not walk and falls down on the floor running over the chair. He gets up again and moves towards the bedroom. His movements are slow, the effect of the narcotic can still be felt.

GARAGE: The neon projects a stroboscopic light. Steve is free from the rope but can not stand up from the chair.

STEVE

I've been stuck for too long...

ALICE

Don't worry, I'll help you out.

Alice helps him to stand up. His legs are like jelly and tremble.

STEVE

I can do it, I can.

He makes a great effort to stand on his feet.

The two move towards the door, she holds him up with her arm, he drags his feet like a disabled person.

Alice opens the door and in front of them...

...Ethan's silhouette appears! He holds an iron chain found in the garage.

Alice and Steve freeze.

ETHAN

Where were you going, you poor assholes?

ALICE

Leave us alone! Please!

ETHAN

What? You thought you'd just free that son of a bitch and run away?

Alice looks at him with contempt, still holding up Steve who would otherwise fall down.

Ethan spins the chain ready to strike.

Terrified, Alice and Steve retreat.

The neon light, hit by the chain, dies out. The garage falls into darkness.

Alice feels Steve's body next to hers under Ethan's menacing shadow. She shakes nervously.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

You scared of the dark, huh? Who's gonna protect you now?

Alice tries to light up a match but breaks it for the excessive rubbing against the box. She abruptly takes another one and tries again. She is able to light it but this also goes out right after.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

You shouldn't have betrayed me! I would have given you all my love. But now it's over. Because of you, d'you get it?

Ethan's shadow moves towards her, his profile getting bigger and bigger. He is self-confident again and sings a nursery rhyme while he continues to spin the chain producing a scary hiss:

ETHAN (CONT'D)

"The bogeyman's here, you must look out, down these long stairs, no child can keep him out".

His silhouette rises menacingly, his voice echoes between the walls:

ETHAN (CONT'D)

"And if it's his voice you then come across, there is no safe haven, not even a cross".

The man's figure is cast on the wall at the back of the garage and on Alice's frightened face. The spinning chain draws a strange extended shadow.

Alice passes her hand across her forehead and takes a deep breath.

ALICE

Kill me. If this'll make you feel less weak, kill me! Now!

Ethan seems disoriented by Alice's words. Suddenly, he sees Steve's shadow falling on the floor and Alice's disappearing.

ALICE OFF

I'm not scared of you anymore.

Ethan keeps spinning the chain in front of him and searches in the semi-darkness but he sees only disused worthless objects.

ETHAN

Baby? Don't venture out into the dark, the boogeyman could harm you.

Ethan is only some feet from Steve who, painful on the floor, tries to get up. He finds it difficult to understand what is happening.

He hears an imperceptible noise behind him so he throws a blow with the chain, blindly.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Where are you hiding?

He moves stiffly and nervously, continuing to spin the chain. He thinks he has seen something and a blind blow again.

His eyes try to decipher the shadows which are dense like a spider's net. Then the well dealt blow of a bottle from behind knocks him out.

Alice, sneaked out from behind a table, gets the chain and she watches with satisfaction the body of her husband facing upward.

EXT. - TENEMENT COURTYARD - NIGHT

The sky is starry. Alice shuts the garage door.

ETHAN (V.O.)

(aching) You can't leave me here!

Alice does not care about the SCREAMS. She drops the chain and carries battered Steve without minding the NOISES from the garage.

STEVE

You did warn me, but I didn't want to believe you.

The two walk through the **COURTYARD** holding up reciprocally, they are far from the nightmare. Alice smiles.

ALICE

In my future, however, things went much worse.

From the garage we can hear NOISES of Ethan banging against the door, trying to escape.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. - COFFEE PLACE ON THE BEACH - DAY

We are one month later. Steve sits at a table near the student who he had given private lessons. After the beating, Steve has marks, band-aids on his face and bruises everywhere.

STUDENT

They've really beaten you up, but that's nothing compared to what could happened to me if I had failed the exam.

Steve doesn't hear the student. He is looking at the young waiter.

The waiter hands a client the rest of his bill on a small plate and goes away.

STUDENT (CONT'D)

Hey Mr. S, d'you hear me?

STEVE

Yes, of course.

Absentminded, Steve continues to stare at the waiter.

STUDENT

Aren't you happy then? My first B+.
My mom wants to put up a statue of
you and you say nothing.

Steve drinks a coffee, thoughtful, then deigns to give the student a look.

STEVE

Do you make a bet? Do you see the
guy over there, in the bar?

STUDENT

So what?

STEVE

Do you want to see a funny thing? In
a little bit he's gonna slap me and
storm off.

STUDENT

It still wasn't enough to be beaten
up.

STEVE

There are things that hurt harder
than a slap.

Steve gets up and joins the waiter. They talk.

Steve says something and the waiter socks him.

Steve falls on a table and BREAKS a glass!

STUDENT

Is that ok?

The student arrives and helps Steve to get up, while the waiter leaves angrily.

STEVE

I'm fine. I can manage on my own.

STUDENT

I'm sorry, but you have lost the
bet. That was a punch, not a slap.

Steve massages his jaw.

STEVE

Not a bad right cross.

STUDENT

You are lately not lucky, Mr. S.

STEVE

Luck has nothing to do with it... *Homo faber fortunae sua*.

STUDENT

What does it mean?

STEVE

Each man shapes his own fate.

A coloured BUTTERFLY flies over Steve's head and tables of coffee place.

The enmeshed insect flutters high above beach and gets away.

EXT - CITY - DAY

The butterfly flies over to a large port, the coastline and the city's roofs, looking at the activity of human inhabitants.

EXT. - OPEN AIR THEATER / TICKET OFFICE - NIGHT

The butterfly flaps the wings and flutters high above the heads of elegantly dressed people, a big cover for a grandstand and the open stage...

...The insect alights on the billboard that shows an orchestra and that announces the play of that night.

In front of the near **TICKET OFFICE**, there is a line of people. Clara and Nicole are queueing.

NICOLE

Daddy didn't come?

Clara hesitates, feeling awkward. Nicole stares at her with an interrogative look.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Did you two argue about something?

CLARA

We've had a few divergences.

NICOLE

You are always gotten on well with Kevin.

CLARA

We have pretended to get on well.

NICOLE

However, the most important thing is
that you are happy, mom.

CLARA

I'm happy... and I'm proud of Alice.

INT. - HALL / CHANGING ROOM - NIGHT

Steve, now recovered from his wounds, has a bouquet of roses and walks down a carpeted hall. He knocks on the door and enters.

STEVE

Hello, Alice. These are for you.

He looks at Alice who, sitting in front of a mirror, holds the violin case in her hands.

ALICE

Thank you.

Alice watches her friend arrange the roses in a vase. She seems tense. Steve lovingly bends and caresses her head.

STEVE

Relax. It's gonna be alright.

Someone KNOCKS on the door. A young assistant peeks out from behind the door.

ASSISTANT

Ten minutes to go on stage. Ready?

Alice nods and waits for the assistant to leave.

Steve clears his throat, his eyes dim with tears.

ALICE

Hey, why the long face?

STEVE

My son... He didn't take it well.

ALICE

I know. He told me that.

STEVE

Have you spoken to him?

ALICE

Yeah, and I have invited him tonight.

STEVE

He will never come here. I'm sure.

Steve hesitates and kisses Alice.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Let's take care of you. And break a leg. Tonight's your night.

INT. - INTERROGATION ROOM - EVENING

Two police officers are interviewing Ethan, with prison clothes, in the presence of the lawyer. The first policeman talks to Ethan.

POLICE OFFICER 1

This is not your big day. We found the body of Hector Sanchez.

LAWYER

My client is mentally unfit. The psychiatric report finds him non compos mentis.

POLICE OFFICER 2

It was a revenge. It's not about insanity. Mr Baker beat up Sanchez to make him write a farewell letter... and then tortured him for days until he finally gave in.

LAWYER

Please, let's not jump to conclusions. We're waiting for the autopsy.

Ethan interrupts his lawyer.

ETHAN

He is wrong. Love is the wisdom of the fool. And now, without Alice, nothing makes sense. I can't imagine my life, I don't see the colors, I don't hear any music.

EXT. - OPEN AIR THEATER - NIGHT

On STAGE: the hinge of the violin case opens.

The chin rest on the body of the violin gets checked. The pegs are turned for tuning. A slim hand drums on the table.

Alice is stretching.

In the ORCHESTRA Steve sits. His face is tense. An empty seat next to him.

Steve looks around searching for someone while the other seats are being taken. He checks the time, nervous, and seems disappointed.

On **STAGE**: Alice is trying to relax and is preparing to play.

MALE VOICE OFF

We're ready. Three, two, one...

The curtain opens. APPLAUSE.

The spotlights reveal a small orchestra at the center of the stage. Among the violinists, we recognize a familiar figure. It is Alice. She appears very focused.

Steve claps his hands in the **ORCHESTRA**, but he continues to look around. The seat next to him is empty.

Steve checks out the music hall. He turns and sees the young waiter coming. The man's tight face relaxes into a smile.

The young man sits down next to him and whispers in his ear:

WAITER

Sorry, the parking lot was full.
Have you been waiting for too long?

STEVE

Only twenty years.

The young man smiles and Steve looks at him happy.

EXT. - JUNGLE - DAY (FLASH-FORWARD)

Under the driving rain, Steve in torn shorts walks with his son and gets out of the way cutting the branches by a machete. We hear monkeys SCREECHING and birds CALLING.

Out of breath, Steve pauses exhausted. It has stopped running. Steve and his son wring the water out of their clothes, taking a break, and then run on and come out of the dense forest. They pant for the emotion and admire the view.

Before Steve there are the ruins of an INDIAN TEMPLE.

CUT TO:

On **STAGE** the orchestra begins to PLAY in front of the attentive audience.

The music hall is full of people who listen to the MUSIC captivated. Steve's eyes shine, he watches Alice first, then he glances at his son.

Nicole and Clara, seated in the front row, encourage Alice with their eyes. They both follow the concert with enthusiasm.

EXT - SEA - DAY (FLASH-FORWARD)

Nicole and Clara are swimming.

Alice emerges and dives into the sea. She smiles and sprays Nicole and Clara with the water.

CUT TO:

In **OPEN AIR THEATER** Alice PLAYS the piece magnificently, with confidence and mastery.

She closes her eyes, a teardrop comes out and streams down her face.

EXT - LAKE - NIGHT (FLASH-FORWARD)

We are in the spot of the lake where there was the car accident. A BUTTERFLY is on a tourism poster.

We find that on the board there is a big drawing of an American Native women. We can read also a part of her history:

DETAIL: "The medicine woman saw the future and served her community. She was called Holy Butterfly".

The butterfly flies away and follows Alice.

Alice is looking at the lake, that remains a mystery. The stars reflect in the pond and the nature has a wild beauty.

Alice sees the peaceful waters while the butterfly lands upon her finger.

CUT TO:

In **OPEN AIR THEATER** Alice opens her eyes again, and then the audience APPLAUDS delighted.

Seated in the front row, her mother and sister applaud proudly. Nicole and Clara clap their hands and smile at each other, visibly satisfied.

In the packed theater Steve and his son join in the applause. The whole music hall explodes in a STANDING OVATION.

Alice bows to thank the audience, and a smile shines on her face.

THE END