

IN RETROSPECT

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Memory is a choice.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A RED BOTTLE CAP. The edges worn and faded. Nervous fingers fidget with it absentmindedly, rolling it back and forth.

SLOANE (39) sits in the waiting room of a doctor's office. Her kind features convey an air of calm, but her eyes suggest faraway thoughts - a mind lost someplace else.

The office gleams with a plastic shine. The modern decor feels artificial. The hollow warmth a facade - staged to force a false sense of comfort.

A young, polished NURSE (20s) emerges from a side door with a clipboard in hand.

NURSE

Sloane Lowery?

Sloane pockets the bottle cap and rises to follow her back.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The two enter a pristine examination room. State-of-the-art machinery crowds the space. Everything looks slightly more advanced than we're accustomed to.

The skeletal sprawl of the equipment seems alien in appearance, but Sloane approaches it with familiarity, taking a seat in a reclined chair.

The nurse begins checking her vitals as the two converse, their exchange innocuous and routine.

NURSE

Your vitals seem normal. How are you feeling?

SLOANE

I'm feeling fine.

NURSE

And you're sleeping well?

SLOANE

For the most part.

NURSE

Any changes in your mood since last time? Feelings of depression or emptiness?

SLOANE
Nothing out of the ordinary.

NURSE
Good.

The nurse shuffles through a thick stack of pages in Sloane's patient file, scrawling notes throughout as she goes.

NURSE (CONT'D)
It says here that you had a dull,
growing headache at the base of
your neck last week. Has it
improved at all?

SLOANE
It has. I haven't had one in days.

The nurse nods approvingly, jotting down more notes.

NURSE
Excellent. We found out that it was
a bandwidth issue. We've limited
simultaneous streaming to alleviate
the strain. We can always adjust
the parameters, so let us know if
they recur.

Sloane eyes the clock as the nurse gathers her file.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Otherwise everything looks great.
The doctor will be in in just a
minute.

SLOANE
Great, thank you.

Sloane watches as the nurse leaves. Patient. Muscles tense.
The door swings for an eternity before *CLICKING* shut.

In an instant, Sloane is on her feet, getting to work
immediately. Her speed is not frantic, it is calculated.

She drags equipment across the room, setting up an ad hoc
work station around her. Her fingers punch an array of
buttons and the machines *WHIR* to life, the *HUM* growing.

Wincing, she injects a long needle into her forearm, pushing
the plunger as the liquid drains into her.

Situating herself amidst the technology, Sloane hikes up her
sleeve, attaching wires and sensors to her arm and head.

With everything in place, she reaches into her pocket and procures the bottle cap. Wrapping her fingers around it, she squeezes it tightly in her palm.

Her hand goes slack as her body falls limp, sinking into the chair - unconscious.

A moment passes.

A loud *BEEP* rings out from the monitor next to Sloane. A dot appears on screen as the *BEEP* continues pinging rhythmically.

BEEP.

A *KNOCK* at the door. DOCTOR SALINGER (30s) enters, flipping through Sloane's patient file. He has a suave air about him, equal parts Harvard Medical and Silicon Valley.

DOCTOR SALINGER
Sloane, how are we toda-

His eyes wander up, staring at the sight before him. His brain not quite catching up with what his eyes see until -

BEEP.

A wave of panic crosses over him at the sound. He drops the file and sprints out of the room - crisis mode engaged.

DOCTOR SALINGER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
HELP! I NEED TECHS IN HERE
IMMEDIATELY.

He rushes back into the room. We stay on Sloane's motionless body as chaos erupts around her.

TECHNICIANS swarm the room. Fingers fly across keyboards, assessing the situation. The lead technician, CLARKSON (28), sits at the helm. He mans a foreboding bay of monitors with command. His direction confident. A wunderkind.

His attention is trained on Sloane's blinking dot on screen. He works to triangulate her location via the pinging.

He spots a nearby technician reaching for a switch.

CLARKSON
Don't touch that! You'll fry her
brain.

BEEP.

CLARKSON (CONT'D)
 (muttering to himself)
 Fuck. Where are you going? Stop
 moving around.

Doctor Salinger watches over his shoulder as he works. A realization stops Clarkson in his tracks. He glances up at Sloane's body.

CLARKSON (CONT'D)
 Oh shit.

(to Salinger)
 We have to pull her out.

DOCTOR SALINGER
 We can't. It could kill her.

BEEP.

CLARKSON
 We have to. I think she's making a
 run for it.

Clarkson begins flipping a panel of switches, prepping to extract her.

DOCTOR SALINGER
 Where could she go?

CLARKSON
 The 2%.

The color drains from Salinger's face.

BEEP.

DOCTOR SALINGER
 Do it.

Silence. Everyone turns to the monitor. The dot is gone.

CLARKSON
 We lost her.

Wrought with fear, all eyes land on Clarkson and Salinger. A bookish technician, HALE, breaks the silence.

HALE
 Are we going to get shut down for
 this?

Salinger takes command of the room, locking the door shut and sealing them inside as he heads back to the monitors.

DOCTOR SALINGER

This room is on lockdown. No one comes in or out unless I say so.

HALE

What do we do now?

DOCTOR SALINGER

We wait... and hope she comes back out.

EXT. ROOFTOP BAR - BOSTON - EVENING

An uber trendy rooftop bar overlooking the Boston skyline. It offers all the finest in uncomfortable seating, overpriced drinks and shifting eyes in search of something better.

The type of place where *nobody* knows your name.

The mass of patrons are there to be seen. Words are exchanged, but conversations are not being had.

Amidst the charade, we find JAMES (41) at the bar. A beacon of sincerity, his presence relaxed and at ease. He doesn't fit in here, but plays it off well - ever the good sport.

Beside him, his date, ALANA (36), converses with fervor, swept away by her own story. Well-dressed and meticulously put together - she tried harder for this date than he did.

James' expressive face strains to feign interest, nodding along as he listens on intently.

ALANA

... and I realized that everything I had done had brought me to this point. So there I was. Sitting in my car in the pouring rain. Stopped at a red light. And I turned the radio on, and you know what was playing?

She has no intention of letting him guess -

ALANA (CONT'D)

BOSTON. By Augustana. And I knew in that moment that it was a sign. The windshield wipers were flicking back and forth like crazy and as that light turned green, I made the decision. I was getting out. I told myself, 'Alana, you're better than this.'

(MORE)

ALANA (CONT'D)

You're not going to sit here in this deadbeat town like the rest of them. You have a higher calling. *You're going to Boston, where no one knows your name.* And that was the day I decided I was going to be an environmental lawyer.

JAMES

Were you in college?

ALANA

No, this was like 2 years ago. But it's the best decision I've ever made. I was *meant* to be here.

JAMES

So you're a lawyer?

ALANA

Well not yet. But I'm going to be.

She takes a proud sip from her drink. Content with the world.

James plays with his straw. Unsure where to take the conversation next.

ALANA (CONT'D)

So what do you do?

James looks up at her, pausing for a moment. A mischievous glint crosses his eyes as he answers with a lie -

JAMES

I'm a pilot.

ALANA

Whoa, amazing. What's the coolest place you've ever flown to?

James decides to take things up a notch.

JAMES

Mordor.

Alana's attention drifts as she responds.

ALANA

Hmm, I've never heard of it. I wonder if that's where my parents took their honeymoon... I have to run to the bathroom, I'll be right back.

As she slides off her stool and disappears into the crowd, a nearby BARTENDER leans in toward James.

BARTENDER

How long is the flight to Mordor?

James let's out a sigh of indifference.

JAMES

Shorter than you'd expect.

He chugs the rest of his beer and puts cash down on the bar as Alana returns from the bathroom.

ALANA

Oh, are we leaving?

JAMES

I have to head home. I've got a flight to Japan in the morning.

ALANA

Well did you want to head back to my place?

She touches his arm playfully.

JAMES

Maybe some other time.

James gives her a hug before putting on his coat and leaving.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - LATER

The same examination room as before. As promised, no one has come in or out. No one speaks, the mood tense.

The doctors are clustered together, restless. They stand shoulder to shoulder, crowding around the monitors.

Doctors intermittently check their watches, impatient. Every minute feels like a lifetime while they wait.

Sloane remains motionless in the chair, somewhere between life and death.

Hale notices Sloane's fist is clenched. She pulls back her fingers and the RED BOTTLE CAP *clatters* to the floor.

She holds it up to show Simon, who shrugs. They move past it.

CLARKSON

She's been in there for two hours now.

HALE

The longest she's ever stayed in before is thirty minutes.

An ATTENDING TECHNICIAN looks on worriedly.

ATTENDING TECHNICIAN

What do we do?

Once again, all eyes turn to Salinger. He stares down at the floor, deep in contemplation. His answer is matter of fact.

DOCTOR SALINGER

Call him.

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD PUB - LATER

We once again find James sitting at the bar. This time alone.

The surrounding decor stands in sharp contrast to his previous venue. The walls a warm, worn wood. Inviting, despite the lack of windows in the underground tavern.

Friendly banter and jovial conversations fill the space. A sports broadcast murmurs from a television behind the bar.

This hole-in-the-wall is James' home away from home.

James retrieves a wedding ring from his pocket, playing with it momentarily before slipping it back on his finger.

Finishing his drink, he signals for the bartender, HENRY, to close out his tab. As he removes cash from his wallet, Henry waves him off.

HENRY

Oh no, it's taken care of.

JAMES

C'mon Henry, you don't have to do that. Let me get it.

James puts the bill on the counter, insistent.

HENRY

It's not on the house, it's on him.

Henry points to a STRANGER (late 50s) sitting at the far end of the bar. The Stranger waves sheepishly.

James waves back awkwardly and holds up his left hand, showing off the wedding band on his finger.

JAMES

Thank you, but I'm taken.

The stranger makes his way over to James - wrought with apprehension. His face pale and gaunt.

STRANGER

I know a drink doesn't cut it...
but I didn't know what else to do.

James stares blankly back at him. Uncomfortable.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

I've thought about what I'd say if
I ever saw you and now you're right
in front of me. All I can think to
say is 'I'm sorry.'

James shifts on his stool, confused by the interaction.

JAMES

I think you might be confusing me
with someone else.

The stranger scans James' face with curiosity. A long pause as he processes this. Testing the water -

STRANGER

Have we ever met before?

James responds assuredly.

JAMES

No.

The stranger stares back at James meekly.

STRANGER

My mistake.

He turns and makes his way back to his stool. Sitting back down, he watches James from afar. James makes a swift exit.

EXT. CITY STREET - BOSTON - NIGHT

James meanders down a quiet cobblestone street. The sounds of city life fade as he makes his way home - his thoughts the only thing keeping him company.

His cell phone rings out, disrupting the silence.

James glances at the time, noting the late hour before checking the screen - "RESTRICTED."

He silences the phone and shoves it back into his pocket.

Moments later, it rings again - "RESTRICTED." Resigned, he answers.

JAMES

Hello?

A familiar voice, Doctor Salinger's, comes through the phone.

DOCTOR SALINGER (O.S.)

Is this James Lowery?

JAMES

It is, may I ask who-

DOCTOR SALINGER (O.S.)

My name is Doctor Salinger, I'm calling about your wife.

JAMES

My wife?

DOCTOR SALINGER (O.S.)

Ex-wife, my apologies. Sloane?

JAMES

Yeah, what about her?

DOCTOR SALINGER (O.S.)

I'm sorry to inform you - she's been in an accident.

JAMES

An accident? What happe-

DOCTOR SALINGER (O.S.)

You are listed as her emergency contact and we need you here immediately.

JAMES

I don't understand. We've been divorced for 3 years. She must have someone else -

DOCTOR SALINGER (O.S.)

There is no one else. I can't say anything more over the phone. We're chartering a flight for you now. Are you in Boston currently?

JAMES

I am, but -

DOCTOR SALINGER (O.S.)

Great. Be at Logan in 3 hours, I'll be there when you arrive. We'll speak further then.

JAMES

Arrive where?

CLICK. The line goes dead.

James tries to dial the number back. It won't go through. Racking his brain, he has an idea. He tries Sloane, but the call goes straight to voicemail.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Out of options, he takes off running into the night.

INT. JAMES' APARTMENT - LATER

Light from the outside permeates the dark apartment as James enters - a tornado in the tranquil space.

His mind and body a concert of chaos, both moving in a dozen different directions at once.

James packs with the uncertainty of a midnight traveler. He bounces from one task to another, completing nothing.

As he desecrates the apartment, he enters his bedroom and his eyes fall on his unmade bed. Suddenly, nothing else matters.

He drops his duffle bag and compulsively begins making the bed, desperately seeking reprieve from his helplessness.

Finishing, he surveys the room, taking in the disarray his hands have caused. He sits down on the end of the bed, gathering his thoughts. Unsure what to do next.

WOOF.

He glances up to find his WHITE LAB, tail wagging in the doorway. A toy eagerly protruding from his open mouth.

JAMES

Oh, hey Gandalf.

EXT. CITY STREET - BOSTON - LATER

James walks along the lonely streets of the city, Gandalf trotting beside him, grateful for the late night jaunt.

He operates on autopilot, drunk on exhaustion as he navigates to an ART GALLERY. James ties Gandalf up outside, jangling keys out of his pocket to unlock the door.

INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

A sleek, minimalist space. Polished floors and sparkling walls host a myriad of art prints and photographs.

James roams the gallery, finding comfort within its walls. He takes pride in his accomplishments, framed all around him.

The pieces are bleak, devoid of color. A rich saturation of black and grey. Each captures the desolate isolation of the city at night, as seen through the eyes of an insomniac.

He stops in front of a massive print in stark contrast from the rest. A vibrant mountain sunrise, hung prominently.

A placard next to it reads - 'FIRST LIGHT.'

James considers it for a moment, contemplating what to do. Reaching up, he pulls it off the wall as a shrill alarm begins to *RING OUT*, echoing throughout the gallery.

Lugging the unwieldy print, he drags it to a locked storage room, disappearing momentarily as he tucks it safely inside before reemerging and locking the door.

He walks behind the front desk, punching in a code to disarm the alarm. He shuts off the lights and heads out, leaving the dark, silent space in his wake.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S APARTMENT - LATER

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

James stands before his neighbor's door juggling a bag of dog food, a bowl and a leash. GANDALF stands dutifully nearby.

When no one answers, he knocks again.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

A light turns on inside as a sleepless NEIGHBOR in a bathrobe comes to the door, blurry eyed and aggravated.

NEIGHBOR

James? It's 2 a.m. What's going on?

JAMES

Do you mind watching Gandalf for a while? I have to fly out. It's an emergency.

NEIGHBOR

Is it your Mom? Is everything alright?

JAMES

No, it's Sloane.

NEIGHBOR

Oh. Well, of course. Safe travels.

James hands him the leash as Gandalf trots inside, looking back at James as he leaves.

INT. PRIVATE JET - NIGHT

James sits alone in the cabin of a lavish private jet. He searches outside of the window for answers, but the dark night enshrouding him remains tight-lipped.

Barely perceptible, in the distance, a beacon of light shines through the sea of dark. It stands alone, eerily isolated in an expanse of forest.

The light grows larger as they near and James is able to discern a cluster of buildings. A glistening facility beckons him toward it - ominous and alluring all at once.

EXT. VICARICORP FACILITY - LATER

James deboards the jet, welcomed by a waiting team of DOCTORS and TECHNICIANS who begin escorting him toward the building. The company's name is emblazoned across the entrance - VICARICORP.

SIMON

Mr. Lowery, welcome to Vicaricorp.
I'm Simon, this is Dr. Gordon.
We're here to take you to Dr.
Salinger, he's waiting for you.

James wastes no time -

JAMES

There's nothing for miles around this place. Where are we?

DOCTOR GORDON

Just outside of Hinsdale County, Colorado.

JAMES

Is anyone going to tell me what I'm doing here?

SIMON

Dr. Salinger will explain everything when you meet with him.

DOCTOR GORDON

In the meantime, I'm going to need your cell phone.

The Doctor extends his hand for James' phone, expectant.

JAMES

What for?

DOCTOR GORDON

Security purposes. There's no recording allowed inside of the facility.

JAMES

That won't be a problem. I'll keep it tucked away.

His hand remains outstretched, unwavering. A smile firmly plastered on his face. James turns over his phone.

SIMON

Excellent, right this way.

They lead him around the back toward a side entrance.

JAMES

So I guess we're skipping the tour then, huh?

SIMON

Our apologies, but time is of the essence.

James stares at the foreboding logo lording over them.

JAMES

Well, do you want to give me the elevator pitch on what exactly it is that you do here?

DOCTOR GORDON

We're a research facility. We work in memory. We're aiming to make Alzheimer's a thing of the past.

SIMON

Your wife is one of our biggest donors. We're tremendously grateful she found us.

JAMES

Ex-wife. And I didn't know that she had that kind of money.

The two doctors exchange a look.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - VICARICORP - LATER

James is ushered into a small observation room where Doctor Salinger awaits him.

DOCTOR SALINGER

James. Despite the circumstances, it's great to finally meet you. I'm Dr. Salinger.

James glances around the room. Sloane is nowhere to be found.

JAMES

Where is she?

Doctor Salinger gives a tired chuckle, extending his hand.

DOCTOR SALINGER

I prefer to start with a handshake.

James stands his ground, unamused by his smug disposition.

JAMES

I didn't fly across the country at 3 in the morning to shake hands. I want to see her.

Doctor Salinger gestures to a nearby table and chairs.

DOCTOR SALINGER

We'll get to that, you have my word. Why don't you take a seat?

James is defiant, refusing to sit down.

JAMES

Not until someone tells me what's going on. A few hours ago I was about to go to sleep and now I'm -

Doctor Salinger removes a remote from his pocket and presses the button. The metal partition along the far wall slides up, revealing an observation window.

The window looks out onto the examination room below, where Sloane lies motionless, just as before. James moves to the window, staring down at Sloane for the first time in years.

DOCTOR SALINGER

She's in a coma.

James falls silent.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)

She was part of an experimental trial group and is stuck inside of her own mind.

JAMES

That doesn't sound like anything I can help with.

DOCTOR SALINGER

Quite the contrary. You are the only one that *can* help. You were listed as her emergency contact.

JAMES

I don't understand.

DOCTOR SALINGER

Why don't you take a seat.

James follows Doctor Salinger to the table where Sloane's patient file lays open along with TWO WAIVER FORMS.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)

This is all a bit complicated, but what you need to know is that right now, Sloane is lost. She's somewhere within her subconscious mind, but she's trapped inside of her own memories. We can't get her out. But you can.

JAMES

I'm not following.

Below, the technicians in the examination room begin setting up a second chair next to Sloane.

DOCTOR SALINGER

The only way to get her back at this point is to go inside of her mind. Someone has to navigate through her subconscious memories to find her and pull her back out.

JAMES

Are you insinuating that I'm the one that's supposed to do that?

DOCTOR SALINGER

You're the only one who can.

Doctor Salinger removes a form from Sloane's file and slides it across the table to James. He is the sole name listed as her emergency contact - her signature is scrawled below it.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)

She signed off that you were the only one allowed entry in case of an emergency.

JAMES

That doesn't make any sense. I haven't spoken to her in years. I'm sure there's someone else who -

DOCTOR SALINGER

There is no one else.

JAMES

This is insane. I've never met any of you people, I don't even have proof that you're a real doctor. I didn't know this company existed until 5 minutes ago. And now you're asking me to trust you with my life. What's in it for me?

Doctor Salinger's demeanor hardens, his kindness fading as his patience with James wanes. It's 3am for him as well.

DOCTOR SALINGER

Let me make this as simple as possible for you. You might not have a reason to trust me, but Sloane's life depends on it.

He takes the TWO WAIVERS and places them in front of James.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)
 Sign the form on the left and you consent to the procedure. Sign the one on the right and you refuse - we pull the plug and she dies.

He rises from the table and gathers Sloane's patient file.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)
 I'll leave you to it.

The other doctors file out of the room, leaving James alone with his choice. Before he exits the room, Doctor Salinger turns back to James.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)
 Did you ever remarry?

JAMES
 Excuse me?

DOCTOR SALINGER
 You said Sloane's your ex-wife. Did you ever remarry?

JAMES
 No.

Doctor Salinger points to the wedding ring on James' finger.

DOCTOR SALINGER
 Doesn't seem like a difficult decision then.

He removes a pen from his lab coat and puts it on the table in front of James. The "VICARICORP" logo stares back at him.

CLICK. The door shuts, leaving James alone in the silence.

James crosses the room to the observation window, which remains open. He stares down at Sloane, helpless. Weighing his options. A moment of contemplation as we CUT TO:

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE on James' eyes as they blink back blinding light from overhead. We pull back to reveal James seated in the once empty chair beside Sloane.

He is in the eye of the hurricane, a storm of pandemonium surrounding him on all sides as doctors and technicians prepare for the procedure.

James is prodded and worked on at a rapid pace from all angles. Technicians secure him to the chair, attaching wires and probes across his body.

Doctors check his vitals, inserting needles and IVs into him.

They work with the seamlessness of a pit crew, an intoxicating fusion of medicine and technology.

The energy in the room is fervent - causing this to feel less like a procedure and more like a rescue mission.

As this all carries on around James, Doctor Salinger appears in his line of sight. Clarkson stands by Salinger's side, awaiting his introduction.

DOCTOR SALINGER

James, this is my associate, Sam Clarkson. He's our lead technician. He's here to prep you for what you're about to encounter.

James nods. Clarkson doesn't wait for anything more.

CLARKSON

I know this is a lot to process at the moment, but this is all important, so try to keep up.

JAMES

I'm all ears.

CLARKSON

We're going to drop you into Sloane's mind. Now once you're in there, you can navigate from memory to memory by using Sloane's memory association. Just grab a nearby object and you'll make the jump. As you do, it might seem like these associations are random, but they're not. Remember, these are her memories, not yours, so they are going to be organized in whatever way makes the most sense to her brain. You follow?

JAMES

Yeah.

James' overwhelmed expression suggests otherwise. Clarkson soldiers on -

CLARKSON

Now we'll be right here the whole time monitoring your progress and positioning in her brain. If you need to talk to us, find something to speak into and you'll start talking out here. We'll hear you. But our communication is limited. Once you get too deep, you'll be out of range and on your own.

DOCTOR SALINGER

She's in there somewhere. Your goal is to find her.

James' eyes drift to Sloane lying next to him, familiarizing himself once again with the curves of her profile.

JAMES

What do I do when I find her?

DOCTOR SALINGER

Bring her back in range and we'll handle getting you out from there.

Clarkson jumps back in.

CLARKSON

Be forewarned, you'll see her in every memory, but that's not the Sloane you're looking for. The real Sloane won't be a part of the memory, she'll be accessing it from a third person perspective just like you.

JAMES

How will I-

CLARKSON

You'll know when you've found her.

James struggles to keep track of the barrage of information.

CLARKSON (CONT'D)

And most importantly, stick with what you know. Stay inside of memories that you share with Sloane. Your brain is familiar with them, which serves as a benchmark. They might vary slightly from how you remember them, but at least they won't be completely foreign to you.

JAMES

What happens if I leave the shared memories?

CLARKSON

It's a risk. They're harder to navigate and it will start to mess with your brain. Just avoid it whenever you can.

JAMES

Sounds... simple enough.

Doctor Salinger senses James' unease, placing a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

DOCTOR SALINGER

I'm sure you're nervous, but don't be. It's intuitive, you'll be fine.

CLARKSON

Oh and one other thing.

He procures the RED BOTTLE CAP from his pocket, holding it up for James to look at.

CLARKSON (CONT'D)

Does this mean anything to you?

JAMES

No. Why?

CLARKSON

She was holding it in her hand when we found her.

As they finish up their conversation, an ASSISTANT calls out from the background, perched at a bay of computer monitors.

ASSISTANT

Everything's online, we're up and running.

CLARKSON

Great. Now, James I'm going to lead you through a guided meditation to establish an access point to Sloane's mind and get you ready for the transfer.

The electrodes on James' head begin to light up and the monitors surrounding him beep and hum to life.

CLARKSON (CONT'D)
I want you to close your eyes.

James closes his eyes and the screen goes BLACK.

OVER BLACK

The rhythmic *BEEP* of the monitors signal that we're still in the examination room. Clarkson's voice guides James along.

CLARKSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Remember when you first met.

James exhales, settling into his own memory. Suddenly, James materializes in the blackness.

CLARKSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Where are you?

JAMES
I'm... in a bar.

The rudimentary fixtures of a bar appear around James in the black cavernous void.

CLARKSON (V.O.)
What kind of bar?

JAMES
A sports bar. With arcade games in the back.

His surroundings shift and we find ourselves in -

INT. LEVEL UP BAR

CLARKSON (V.O.)
Are you sitting down, or standing?

JAMES
I'm sitting down.

A barstool rests beneath James, now seated.

CLARKSON (V.O.)
At the bar?

JAMES
No, in a booth.

CLARKSON (V.O.)
And what color is the booth?

JAMES

It was faded red. And I remember that the seat had a rip in it, I was playing with the stuffing bursting through the seam.

The barstool disappears, and James finds himself in the booth he described. The rest of the bar slowly begins to fade into place as the memory continues to be built out in his mind.

CLARK (V.O.)

Now turn to your right, what do you see?

James glances across to his right where an empty bar becomes populated by patrons. Arcade games slide into place nearby.

JAMES

The bar. It's not too crowded, but the arcade games in the back are - there were always a ton of people.

CLARKSON (V.O.)

Good, now turn to your left.

JAMES

There was a big front window. And it was raining out.

The solid wall gives way into a window and beyond it, a torrential downpour outside.

JAMES (CONT'D)

But not heavy rain, just a light drizzle.

The rain slows into a lazy drizzle as described.

CLARKSON (V.O.)

And did you have anything to eat or drink?

JAMES

No, not yet.

The smorgasbord of food in front of James evaporates into thin air, leaving the table top bare.

CLARKSON (V.O.)

What do you hear, James?

JAMES

Old-school rock from a jukebox. A lot of conversations...

The sounds of the examination room fade as the roar of the bar overtakes it. The bar comes to life, pulsing with energy as James finds himself inside of a fully realized memory.

Clarkson's voice chimes out again, this time over the jukebox in the bar. None of the patrons seem to notice.

CLARKSON (V.O.)

Well done James, we've established a connection. We've got Sloane's version of the memory queued up and we're going to start to transfer you over to it. Hang tight, some things are going to change a little bit. It's completely normal, but it might be a bit disorienting momentarily.

The doctors start to 'cross-fade' James from his version of the memory into Sloane's. We notice subtle changes around him as he leaves his own memory and enters into her mind.

In an instant, the booth transforms from a faded red to a burnt auburn. The rip next to James disappears.

The faces and physical attributes of some of the clientele morph as their appearances alter.

The music distorts and shifts from 50s rock into 80s pop as the rain outside gives way to sunshine.

INT. LEVEL UP BAR - SLOANE'S MEMORY - CONTINUOUS

James struggles to adjust to his new surroundings, the trippy experience just as disorienting as promised.

CLARKSON (V.O.)

You're in there. The memory transfer took. Welcome to Sloane's mind, James.

DOCTOR SALINGER (V.O.)

You're good to go. Best of luck. We're out here if you need us.

James shakes his woozy fog and begins to scan the room.

As he orients himself to his surroundings, he prepares to look for Sloane - unsure of what he is supposed to do.

Rising to get up from the table, something strange happens. As he stands, he GHOSTS OUT of his body, splitting off from the James seated at the booth.

At this point, there are two versions of James. A "ghost" version of James stands outside of the body he was just in, watching from a third person perspective.

A duplicate version of himself, MEMORY JAMES, remains in the booth, unaware of James' presence.

Intrigued, he studies the doppelgänger before him as Memory James continues on, carrying out the narrative of the memory.

Memory James stares ahead intently. James follows his line of sight to find - Sloane, young and radiant.

She is walking toward the booth. He calls out to her.

JAMES

Sloane!

But she does not notice him. She walks straight through him.

Both versions of James stare on, he remembers this as if it were yesterday. Memory James looks disgruntled and aggravated. He stops Sloane as she walks by him.

MEMORY JAMES

Excuse me. I've been here for 25 minutes and no one's come by to take my order.

Sloane is *not* a waitress, but plays along.

SLOANE

Oh, I'm so sorry. What can I get for you?

As Memory James looks down at the menu, she slyly grabs a nearby napkin and an ORANGE CRAYON from the adjacent table.

She folds the napkin in half to take his order.

MEMORY JAMES

I'll take a Buffalo Bleu burger, medium well, with a side salad instead of fries. And a water with lime. Please.

SLOANE

You've got it. I'll be right back with that water.

Sloane takes his menu. He watches her walk off - putting the menu on the counter and throwing the napkin in the trash as she heads off to the back of the bar - she's a patron.

Memory James is mortified. He sinks into the booth before rallying the courage to get up and follow her to apologize.

James follows Memory James, enraptured to be reliving this moment. The two work their way to the back of the bar where Sloane is standing with a crowd of friends at an arcade game.

MEMORY JAMES

Hey, I'm really sorry about that. I just assumed -

SLOANE

That the girl walking by you was here to serve you?

Sloane's good. Memory James is into it.

MEMORY JAMES

I guess your use of a crayon to take my order should have tipped me off to your lack of professionalism.

She laughs. He's winning her over.

MEMORY JAMES (CONT'D)

Can I buy you a drink to apologize?

SLOANE

I'll consider. Go sit at your booth and order me a drink, I'll see if I can fit you in.

Memory James does as he's told, making his way back to the booth and ordering two beers. He waits dutifully.

The memory JOLTS, skipping forward as -

INT. LEVEL UP BAR - LATER

Time has passed. Sloane has made James wait an obnoxious amount of time. They make errant eye contact with one another from across the bar - an excruciating but playful game.

James watches on, both unsure of how to navigate the space and enjoying the brief foray into his past.

Finally, Sloane crosses the bar and slides into the booth with a smile.

SLOANE

Fine. You win. As long as you didn't order me an IPA.

Memory James' face falls, reaching to take back the beer.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

I'm fucking with you. I know it's an IPA - I asked the bartender what you ordered.

She snags the beer back from him and takes a huge swig. He laughs, bested. He is in the palm of her hand. He's going to fall hard for this girl.

MEMORY JAMES

You come here often then?

SLOANE

You could say that. Mostly for the arcade games.

MEMORY JAMES

I happen to be a pro at Space Invaders.

SLOANE

Is that so?

MEMORY JAMES

Intimidatingly good. I could teach you my ways if you want?

Sloane downs her drink. The memory JOLTS again.

INT. LEVEL UP BAR - LATER

The two stand in front of SPACE INVADERS. Memory James gives Sloane a lively crash course. Their lesson is wrought with sexual tension.

James watches them, looking for a clue of what to do next, but coming up empty. He's still getting the hang of this.

Memory James plays well, crushing it as an impressed Sloane cheers him on. Eventually he gets a game over.

JAMES

(to himself)

This is taking forever. I've got to get out of here.

The leaderboard flashes on the screen, he ranks #16th. The top of the leaderboard reads "K.A.B."

MEMORY JAMES

Damn you, K.A.B.
 (to Sloane)
 Want another round?

As Memory James walks by him, James tries a different tactic. He steps back inside of the body, merging with it once again and taking control.

He makes it to the bar just as the bartender puts two beers down for James. As he picks the BEERS up, he turns surprised to find that the memory is gone, he now finds himself in -

INT. JAMES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

James stands in the doorway of his kitchen. This cramped apartment is his, albeit different from the one we saw earlier. In his hands he holds two BEERS, still cold.

James stays still as Memory James proceeds forward, ghosting out of him. He walks to Sloane, who is sitting on his couch.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING plays on the TV.

Memory James hands Sloane the beer as Cate Blanchett's voice serenades her with the tale of the one true ring.

SLOANE

How long is this again?

MEMORY JAMES

A brisk 228 minutes. And don't even suggest the theatrical cut, you lose so much detail.

She looks like she's about to balk at this.

MEMORY JAMES (CONT'D)

It's my favorite movie, you've gotta do this.

Just then, the power goes out in the apartment. The screen goes black. Sloane lets out a chuckle of muted relief.

SLOANE

Well, we tried.

MEMORY JAMES

Nope. The show must go on.

The memory JOLTS forward.

INT. JAMES' APARTMENT - LATER

Candles light the apartment as Memory James regales Sloane with the mythology. He holds up an APPLE as he hunches over, impersonating Gollum.

James spots the apple and makes his way toward Memory James to try a different memory.

MEMORY JAMES

And then in the *next* movie, Gollum
is running around 'MY PRECIOUSSSS.'

James reaches for the APPLE and grabs it. He JUMPS TO -

EXT. APPLE ORCHARD - DAY

Memory James and Sloane walk side by side, lugging an absurdly heavy BURLAP SACK between them, filled to the brim with APPLES. Their spoils of the day. James follows close by.

MEMORY JAMES

How many apple recipes do you
actually know of?

SLOANE

I don't know, like... 4? 5? Why?

Memory James glances down at their haul of apples.

MEMORY JAMES

Because it looks like we pulled off
a heist from the Garden of Eden.
Why does everyone feel compelled to
take this many apples from an
orchard? We don't do this at the
grocery store?

SLOANE

Yeah, but these are so fresh!

MEMORY JAMES

Well they won't be for long.

They hoist the sack higher to prevent it from dragging.

MEMORY JAMES (CONT'D)

I'm going to pack you nothing but
apples in your lunch for weeks!

Ready to move somewhere else, James grabs Sloane's SCARF and
JUMPS TO -

EXT. PARK - DAY

James and Sloane sprint through the pouring rain to their waiting car, splashing puddles in their wake.

As they reach the car, James separates from the memory.

He watches as Memory James fumbles for his car keys, patting on his pockets before the realization hits him.

MEMORY JAMES

Fuck.

All three turn to look in the front window of the car where James' keys are sitting on the seat, locked inside.

Memory James takes Sloane's SCARF, wrapping it around his elbow to smash the window.

SLOANE

What are you doing? We can call someone.

James points to his cell phone - nestled next to his trapped keys inside the car. He *SMASHES* the glass of the window.

In a flash Memory James and Sloane are gone. The glass is restored. James is alone, confused. Then he notices the two sprinting toward him again - the memory is looping.

As the scene repeats itself, James searches for an exit.

MEMORY JAMES (O.S.)

Fuck.

SLOANE (O.S.)

What are you doing? We can call someone.

He spots a passerby walking with an umbrella and runs toward him. *SMASH*. Grabbing the UMBRELLA from him, he JUMPS TO -

EXT. HOTEL POOL - BORA BORA - DAY

James and Sloane lounge beside a luminous blue pool at a luxurious hotel. James glances over lovingly at Sloane.

Sloane struggles to take a drink from her piña colada without getting stabbed in the eye by the decorative mini UMBRELLA garnishing it. Her frustration mounts while he watches on.

James lets out a laugh. She plucks the umbrella from her drink holding it up as she turns to level with him.

SLOANE

Who the fuck's idea was this? They serve no purpose. They just bleed dye into your drink.

He mockingly surveys the opulent surroundings, contemplative.

JAMES

Yeah, it's really ruining the day.

Sloane's phone *RINGS*. She answers it, wandering away. James steps out of Memory James' body, following her to eavesdrop on her conversation - he's getting the hang of this.

They cross to a poolside bar. Sloane takes a seat and starts grazing on bar peanuts while chatting. James listens in.

SLOANE

... too soon? We've been together for a month already. (pause) Well, I didn't *book* it, he had to travel for work. (pause) Yeah it's been great. *Plus*, it meant that our first time was in Bora Bora.

James perks up at this, all-ears with curiosity.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

Ehh, it was fine. We'll get there.

He scoffs as he reaches for the PEANUTS and JUMPS TO -

INT. JAMES' CAR - MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Sloane rides shotgun as James cruises along a sunlit mountain road, speeding carefree without another car in sight.

Rather than ghosting out, James tries a different tactic - playing along with the memory to see what he can glean.

James reaches for a bag of PEANUTS, popping them into his mouth and tossing the shells out of his cracked window.

Sloane playfully peaks at him over the rim of her sunglasses.

SLOANE

So do you usually litter? Or is this more of a road trip thing?

JAMES

Oh no, it's who I am. Don't worry, they're biodegradable.

SLOANE

Yeah, after like, 3 years. Why didn't you bring a bag to throw the shells into?

JAMES

Adventure doesn't call for preparation. Now we'll have a trail of breadcrumbs to get home.

He beams at her childishly as she rolls her eyes.

From far off in the distance, the glint of an approaching car grows before *WHOOSHING* past them. Sloane watches it pass by.

She becomes lost in thought for a moment.

SLOANE

Where do you think they're going?

JAMES

I don't have the *faintest* idea. Why would you ask?

She unbuckles her seatbelt and sits cross-legged, facing him.

SLOANE

It's just - do you ever wonder if you've passed them before? What if your lives have intersected a dozen times and you've never realized it?

James has a flash of recognition, recalling the conversation.

JAMES

You mean like that word, *sonder*?

Sloane's face lights up like the Fourth of July.

SLOANE

YES! That everyone around you is living an equally complex life that you're in the background of. That's exactly what I was going to say.

Sloane reaches for James' free hand, gripping it tightly.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

You get me.

James takes this small victory too far, steering the conversation in another direction in search of answers.

JAMES

Where are you hiding, Sloane? Help me find you.

Silence as Sloane pulls her hand away, the moment turned sour. James has disrupted the memory, this does not compute.

SLOANE

What are you talking about? I'm not hiding anywhere.

Just then, the memory JOLTS forward -

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - NIGHT - LATER

James squints through a viewfinder, crouched beneath a camera setup pointed at the sky above. He finishes setting up his equipment for a long exposure shot and clicks the shutter.

He makes his way to his parked car, where Sloane folds down the seats and spreads a sleeping bag across the back.

The two lie side by side. All alone atop the mountain, overlooking the world. Tucked in beneath a blanket of stars.

SLOANE

So now what?

JAMES

That's it. Now we wait.

SLOANE

What a job.

As they admire the beauty of the night sky, James makes another attempt at getting answers, this time more subtle.

JAMES

What's your favorite thing we've ever done together?

SLOANE

I think this takes the cake.

Not the answer he was looking for. Getting nowhere, James' resolve softens as he starts to fall victim once again to the charm that won him over in the first place.

He wraps his arm around Sloane, nostalgia seeping in. His insecurity bleeding into his line of questioning.

JAMES

Do you think you'll ever hate me?

Sloane props herself up on her elbow, suddenly serious.

SLOANE

James Lowery, I couldn't hate you if I tried. You bring a sense of adventure to my life.

James avoids looking at her, heartbroken by the knowledge that her sincerity is merely a naive lie.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

My turn. Why photography? You've never given me a straight answer.

JAMES

It started out as a compulsion. A need to capture something that few people will ever experience.

SLOANE

The Lewis and Clark of cameras.

JAMES

Exactly. I get to make moments last forever. Even when the world fades, photos don't.

(beat)

Plus it gives me an excuse to live life like a vacation.

SLOANE

My adventurer.

Sloane leans in to kiss him. The memory JOLTS again.

INT. JAMES' CAR - MOUNTAIN TOP - EARLY MORNING

James and Sloane blink their eyes open the following morning, as the first rays of light stream through the car windows.

The light invades the space, causing dust particles to dance through the still morning air surrounding them.

They lie beneath a thin white sheet, illuminated in the glow of the rising sun, enraptured with one another, as they whisper through sleepy eyes.

A lifetime can be felt in the stillness as they cherish the moment, holding their breath for fear of losing it.

As the sun begins to crest the mountain range, James sits up, shattering the tranquility with a sense of urgency.

SLOANE

No, stay.

JAMES

I've got to get a photo of this.

He opens the trunk, grabbing a camera. We recognize the landscape before us as FIRST LIGHT from James' art gallery.

Soaking it in, he frames the perfect moment, raising the DSLR VIEWFINDER to his eye. As he does so, he JUMPS TO -

EXT. BOTANICAL GARDEN - DAY

An array of blurred colors fill the screen. Sloane comes into focus as James adjusts the lens of a DSLR camera.

We see through the confines of the lens as James frames the shot. Sloane occupies the bottom quarter of the frame, her arms extended above her, blue skies fill most of the frame.

Sloane beams at him as he finalizes the shot.

JAMES

Smile!

CLICK. He looks at the shot approvingly and turns the camera to show it to Sloane. She looks into the DSLR VIEWFINDER.

SLOANE

Aww, that's adorable!

James scans the garden for a way out. Noticing a rose bush, he grabs a ROSE PETAL and JUMPS TO -

INT. JAMES' BEDROOM - DAY

ROSE PETALS scatter across a white duvet, falling to the floor as Sloane and James make love rhythmically beneath it.

Where lust is lacking, love fills the gaps. The pair is in tune, comfortable with one another as they both climax.

The petals stick to the sweat of their bodies, coating Sloane's back as she collapses onto James, kissing his neck.

She sighs, content. James looks like he's been robbed.

JAMES

Really? Over already?

SLOANE
Give yourself credit, that was
awhile.

He turns to the nightstand, reaching for another condom.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
I'm not ready to go another round.

James grabs the CONDOM WRAPPER and JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dark silhouettes move beneath a heaping tower of sheets.

The awkward and hungry passion in the room betrays the sexual energy of new lovers. James sighs. Sloane sits up.

JAMES
Are you fucking kidding me? Not
right now.

SLOANE
Did it break?

James works tenaciously below the sheets, his flushed face deepening in red as his embarrassment grows.

JAMES
Uhh. No.

A moment of realization washes over Sloane.

SLOANE
OH! Oh. It's really not a big deal,
it happens to everyone. Is there
anything I can do to help?

Sloane opens her nightstand drawer, reaching for lube. James' eyes go wide, spotting a vibrator in the back of the drawer.

JAMES
Bingo.

Enraptured with lust, James loses sight of the task at hand. Distracted by the urge to feed his own satisfaction.

He reaches over Sloane, desperately grabbing for the VIBRATOR and JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE'S COLLEGE DORM - DAY

The cramped confines of a college dorm. Photos line the walls, stuck up with haphazard precision. String lights hang from clothespins, illuminating the space with a warm glow.

James looks around the unfamiliar room, Sloane sits on her bed, but he is unable to find himself in the memory.

Glancing down, he realizes that he is the ghost version of himself. Just then, a *KNOCK* on the door. Sloane moves to it.

She throws open the door and is immediately lifted, pressed against the wall and ravished by a muscular COLLEGE GUY.

James slowly comes to the realization that this is not a shared memory, he's wandered off the path.

They begin to undress. James watches on with horror, trying to stay out of the way of the animalistic teenage hormones.

As things escalate, College Guy drops Sloane on the bed and reaches for the VIBRATOR in the bedside table.

JAMES

You told me you bought that for us!
What the fuck, Sloane?

Shielding his eyes, he looks for a way out. James speaks to no one in particular as they carry on.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Who even is this guy?

College Guy comes up for air, taking off his WATCH and dropping it on the side table. James grabs it and JUMPS TO -

INT. FORMAL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Sloane and College Guy sit across from one another at a white-linen, candlelit table setting. Both look noticeably older.

Sloane reaches across the table, brushing her finger across his WATCH face, playing with it as she rests her hand on his.

James realizes that he is once again in an unshared memory. He moves in closer to listen in on their conversation.

COLLEGE GUY

I was surprised to hear from you,
it's been a while.

SLOANE

To say the least. Linen table cloths are a far cry from college bars.

COLLEGE GUY

If a pitcher would make you feel more comfortable, say the word.

Sloane chuckles, sipping her wine. James watches on, puzzled.

COLLEGE GUY (CONT'D)

I just want to say, I heard about everything that happened and I'm really sorry. How are you both holding up?

Sloane bristles, she's not here to discuss this with him.

SLOANE

I don't want to talk about it. Let's just enjoy the night.

James spots a check on the table. He tries to zero in on it, but his vision becomes blurry and distorted. Shaking it off, he strains to focus on the memory with increasing difficulty.

An awkward lapse passes between Sloane and College Guy.

James navigates to the check, noting the recent date across the top - Sloane met with him after her and James divorced.

COLLEGE GUY

I know things ended badly between us, but I'm really glad you reached out...

James is incredulous, betrayed. Anger overcomes him as heat creeps up from the base of his neck.

COLLEGE GUY (CONT'D)

... I'm a different person now.

JAMES

Didn't take you long, did it Sloane?

Wooziness overtakes him as the room around him begins to slip away and spin. Colors blur and melt together as he fights the onslaught of disorientation. The conversation distorts.

James starts to collapse. He grabs at a KEYCHAIN on the corner of the table. Before hitting the floor he JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The blurred colors of the restaurant give way to a sharper image. Sloane's first apartment. Cheap furniture abound.

College Guy screams at Sloane who backs away in fear.

They are both younger here. It is clear that this memory predates the dinner we saw them at moments ago.

James bears witness to the fight in progress. Once again a ghost - a passive observer in a dark corner of Sloane's mind.

College Guy closes in on Sloane, red faced with rage as he corners her. James charges at him to stop him but passes right through him, unable to interrupt the memory.

James looks on helplessly as Sloane tries to defend herself. College Guy strikes her across the face. She grabs her KEYCHAIN, interlacing the keys between her knuckles.

SLOANE

Get the fuck out.

She swings the keys threateningly as he encroaches upon her.

A scuffle ensues. We hear the sounds of a struggle as James wages a war with his own mind - straining to combat the fatigue setting in.

SLOANE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Get your hands off of me!

He drops to the ground, the weight of the disorientation too great to bear. Dragging himself across the floor, he pushes through, desperately seeking reprieve from the horror.

He reaches overhead to hoist himself up on the couch and his hand clenches a THROW BLANKET.

With all of his might, he pulls it down and JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The barrage of domestic violence fades, giving way to the pattering of rain falling against the house.

Sloane and James are alone now. They are gently intertwined beside one another on the couch - a mass of limbs and warmth.

He pulls the BLANKET up over the two of them.

All of the windows are open as a torrential rain pours from the sky outside. The soft howl of the wind blows through the space as the rain flits in and out of the window screens.

The moment is serene, a sanctuary in the midst of a storm.

He watches as Sloane's eyes get heavy, feeling her breath on his chest as she starts to drift to sleep.

She mumbles to him, nestling into his chest.

SLOANE

You make me feel so safe.

His eyes brim with tears, the words landing with pain after what he just witnessed.

He pulls himself out of his body, stepping back to stare at the tableau of the two - wrapped peacefully in each other's arms, unaware of the path they are headed on.

It's all overwhelming to James. He whispers to Sloane, knowing full well that she can't hear him.

JAMES

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to...
I didn't know...

He gets choked up, struggling with his words.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I thought I would always be there
to protect you.

James works to process what he's seen. He wishes he hadn't uncovered these morbid truths - realities of Sloane's life.

It dawns on him that not all of Sloane's memories involve him. This seemingly obvious realization sets him back.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I loved you, Sloane. But you don't
love me anymore.

On the couch, the two drift off into a sound sleep - content.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You have all of these memories
without me and... I'm not even sure
I know you. I can't do this.

Reaching a resolve to get out of her mind, James calls out into the ether.

JAMES (CONT'D)

HELLO?

Silence. Hoping for a voice from above, he tries again.

JAMES (CONT'D)

YOU SAID YOU COULD HEAR ME, RIGHT?

Still nothing. He needs to find something to speak into.

He riffles through a nearby closet in search of anything.

He unearths a SUITCASE and grabs hold of it. He JUMPS TO -

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Sloane sits in an endless row of chairs, SUITCASE in tow, in an airport terminal, crowded with holiday traffic.

Travelers hustle by. An overhead "CANCELLED" sign flashes above, citing the cause for her stillness amidst the chaos.

She cries softly, frustrated. James approaches, cradling an armful of food - the finest dining the airport offers.

James ghosts out, scavenging for a way out of Sloane's mind.

MEMORY JAMES

We might be missing Thanksgiving,
but we can still have the feast.

SLOANE

My parents are just getting so old.
I worry...

Memory James puts his arm around her, offering her a water.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

Fiji water? Are you kidding?

MEMORY JAMES

What's wrong with Fiji water?

SLOANE

Have you ever read the label? They
make bottling water sound like
brain surgery. Artesian water?

MEMORY JAMES

I'll tell you what - let's finish
these bottles and keep them until
we can refill them ourselves from -

He reads off the absurdly pretentious pontification.

MEMORY JAMES (CONT'D)

... 'the ancient active aquifer deep within the earth.' How's that sound? I've always wanted to go to Fiji.

Sloane laughs, toasting him with the water.

SLOANE

You've got yourself a deal.

Memory James opens up a container of sushi and unwraps chopsticks to devour it with.

JAMES

Fuck it.

Without a better option, James grabs the CHOPSTICKS. JUMP TO-

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' DINING ROOM - NIGHT

James comes to at a dining room table. Sloane sits opposite him, a feast of Chinese food bridging the space between them.

James is disarmed to find himself face to face with Sloane, eyes locked as he pleads with her silently for a moment - desperately seeking a lifeline amidst the chaos.

She continues eating with CHOPSTICKS as James begins to verbalize his plea.

JAMES

I can't do this.

Sloane puts the food down, giving him her full attention.

SLOANE

You can't do what?

James' hope soars, thinking that he's found a way out.

JAMES

You've got to help me get out of here. What do I do?

A moment of silence elapses as Sloane stares off. Suddenly, she bursts into LAUGHTER, cackling hysterically.

It echoes throughout the dining room, mocking him as it bounces off the walls. The distance between them seems to grow wider as James' face flushes with anger.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Fuck this.

His chair skids back as he explodes onto his feet.

SLOANE

Whoa, language!

He leaves the dining room and walks to the kitchen, rifling through cabinets with disregard. Dishes *SHATTER* in his destructive wake. He grabs a CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE. JUMP TO -

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

SMASH. Glass ricochets across the floor of a grocery store checkout line, champagne coating the bottom of James' suit.

James is standing behind Sloane, dressed to the nines. Their New Year's Eve toast floods around her heels.

Rather than lash out, Sloane begins laughing, thoroughly enjoying the humor of the situation.

The cashier flags down a MANAGER. James is mortified.

SLOANE

You stay here and keep watch, I'll go grab another bottle.

As she leaves, an announcement comes over the intercom.

MANAGER (O.S.)

We need a cleanup, register 6.

James wheels around, a moment of realization as he hones in on the Manager up front, speaking into... a *microphone*.

MANAGER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And attention shoppers...

Overcome with determination, James abandons checkout, running at the manager, whose bored expression turns to fear.

MANAGER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

... be sure to stop by our deli. We have everything you need for -

James reaches her, wrestling to grab the microphone out of her hands. She is incredulous. A newfound sense of duty.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

SIR! Excuse me sir, you cannot -

JAMES
I'm sorry, I need this.

The MICROPHONE bounces as it is juggled between the two, James finally gets a firm grasp on it and JUMPS TO -

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION - EVENING

James stands onstage before an awaiting crowd, microphone in hand. A bright spotlight floods his vision as applause from the crowd begins to fade.

He spots Sloane in the crowd, motioning with her hands, encouraging him to start speaking.

Confused, he scans the room, spotting a BRIDE and GROOM.

JAMES
Oh, right! Brian's wedding.

He racks his brain for some endearing words on the fly.

JAMES (CONT'D)
When Brian first asked me to be his
best man...

He stops. Why is he going along with this?

JAMES (CONT'D)
What am I doing? This is stupid.

The crowd lets out a collective gasp, terrified. He takes a scorched earth policy, desperate to get out and no longer giving a fuck to play by the rules.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I don't even know why Brian asked
me to give this fucking speech. We
were never that close.

James looks at Brian, who appears horrified.

JAMES (CONT'D)
It's true, Brian. Didn't you have
anybody else? We were in one
fantasy football league.

A MAN in a tux barrels down the aisle toward the stage. James gets to the task at hand.

JAMES (CONT'D)
HELLO!? Can you hear me through
this thing?

Nothing. Silence. The audience stares back at him, puzzled.

JAMES (CONT'D)
IS ANYONE LIST-

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

James' comatose body lays in the examination room. Words fall out of his mouth, flat and muted. Muttering as if hypnotized.

JAMES
-tensing to me?

This catches the attention of the doctors, huddled nearby.

CLARKSON
We're here James, we can hear you.

James' body continues speaking, emotionless.

JAMES
Can you speak any louder? You sound really distant.

Clarkson goes to James' side, speaking directly into his ear.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Clarkson's voice BOOMS from the speakers, godlike and reverberating. Feedback from the mic cuts through the room.

CLARKSON (O.S.)
IS THIS BETTER?

The man in the tux stops in the aisle, mid-charge. Everyone at the reception stands still, blinking. Staring at James.

JAMES
Jesus! Yes. Step back. I changed my mind, I don't want to do this anymore. I want out.

CLARKSON (O.S.)
We had an agreement. We're not pulling you out until you find her.

JAMES
I don't even know what I'm doing. This is pointless.

CLARKSON

No, you aren't trying hard enough. While you've been in there, we traced her last PING before she disappeared. It came from a memory near her emotional core. Wherever she is, it's deep. You've just been circling the outer layer of her memories, but you aren't getting anywhere near her. You need to establish a more strategic path. Find memories that matter to her. You want out? Find her.

Clarkson's voice disappears. The man in the tux immediately resumes charging at James. James drops the mic, flippant.

JAMES

This is bullshit.

Before the man can reach him, he grabs his CUFFLINK. JUMP TO-

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

James stands in front of a vanity mirror as he finishes fastening his CUFFLINK, dressed to impress.

Sloane slips up behind him, hugging him from behind. She stands back to admire him with over-the-top praise.

SLOANE

What a dashing man before me. Tall, dark *and* handsome. And those cufflinks! Nothing turns me on more than a pair of good cufflinks. What classy, intelligent and independent woman bought those for you?

He turns back to the mirror, stifling an eye roll and ignoring her as he adjusts his tie. She deflates.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

Don't be such a downer. It's date night. I picked the place, you just have to be fun. Cheer up.

She leans in to kiss him, but stops, crumpling her nose.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

You smell like smoke. I thought we talked about you quitting. It's a disgusting habit.

James grumbles, still disgruntled from Clarkson's mandate.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
I'm almost ready, I just need to----

Her words become garbled and distorted, indiscernible.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
----and then I'll be good to leave.

She walks out, James looks on, trying to determine what occurred that caused the memory to glitch.

Coming up with nothing, he grabs a COUGH DROP out of his jacket pocket and JUMPS TO -

INT. THEATER AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

James sits in a darkened auditorium among a sold out crowd. Actors on stage carry out a riveting performance.

He strains to stifle a cough in the dramatically silent theater. Failing, a cough erupts from his lungs, booming throughout the space and drawing glares from other patrons.

Sloane seems amused, basking in the unwanted attention. She slips him a cough drop and whispers to him.

SLOANE
(whispering)
What kind of awful human ruins the sanctity of a live performance?

James stares daggers at her. She smirks and faces the stage. A moment passes as they take in the performance.

Suddenly, her face lights up with an idea. She grabs his arm.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Follow me.

JAMES
(whispering)
Where are we going?

SLOANE
(whispering)
To watch the show from better seats.

James softens, remembering this night. A small smile on his face as he follows her, climbing over disgruntled attendees.

Sloane leads him away from the stage, toward the back of the auditorium and around a side hallway, headed backstage.

Rounding the corner, they step into orchestrated chaos. The hustle and bustle of set decorations and costuming.

They duck beneath a moving backdrop and start to climb a wooden ladder in the far corner, ascending into -

INT. THEATER RAFTERS - CONTINUOUS

- the rafters of the theater. Perched on a catwalk above stage looking down as the performance plays out below. They talk in hushed tones.

SLOANE

This is the best seat in the house.
Acoustics are a little shitty, but
what are you going to do? Can't
have it all, I guess...

James stares in awe, equal parts impressed and skeptical.

JAMES

Who are you?

Sloane nods to a LIGHT OPERATOR on the far end of the rafters who pays her no mind. They clearly know one another.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Did you used to work here?

SLOANE

A while ago, back before we met. I
missed my theater from home when I
moved out here, so I worked part
time as a cure.

JAMES

I had no idea I was dating such a
theater geek.

SLOANE

I practically grew up in the
theater. My dad used to take me all
the time when I was a kid.

She beams, looking down and squeezing James' hand.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

I've always loved live performance.
There's something so special to me
about it.

James watches the twinkle in her eyes as she looks on.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

It's fleeting. A moment shared only by a particular audience on that one night. And then it disappears forever.

Her thoughts trail off as music swells below.

JAMES

Have you been back since?

SLOANE

It burned down when I was in college. Now it's just a parking lot.

JAMES

That's sad.

SLOANE

If I were to agree, that would make me a hypocrite, wouldn't it?

As Sloane watches the performance below, James can't help but to watch her. A woman in her element.

He takes her in, holding her in admiration - a growing reminder as to why he loved her in the first place.

Applause booms from below as the performance ends. He turns her toward him, wrapping her in his arms and kissing her.

Just then, the memory JOLTS -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' FRONT ENTRY - LATER

The two arrive home from their night out and shut the front door behind them. Sloane kisses James once again as he takes her coat. She takes off her heels and heads up the stairs.

SLOANE

I'm going to get undressed for bed.
You might want to follow suit.

She turns back and winks at him provocatively. He laughs.

Turning to hang her coat in the front closet, he spots something odd - a FRAMED BLANK PHOTOGRAPH sits atop an end table in the entry. Inquisitive, he picks it up. JUMP TO -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' FRONT ENTRY - DAY

Sloane's hands tremble as she struggles to fit the lid on a cardboard box. She finally secures it snugly, taking no pride in her accomplishment.

She carries it across the foyer without ceremony, adding it to a growing pile of boxes stacked neatly by the front door.

The air has been sucked out of the room. The warmth of the memory James left moments ago, gone. Turned cold by the silent procession occurring before him. Somber and resolute.

Sloane avoids eye contact with James as she passes him, operating as if they were strangers. She grabs her car keys from a nearby table and hoists a box on her walk to the car.

The pain is too much to bear for James, who ghosts out of Memory James' body and watches the memory play out.

Memory James looks on from the doorway as Sloane walks off.

EXT. SLOANE AND JAMES' FRONT LAWN - CONTINUOUS

James follows Sloane outside, standing on the front lawn as she makes her way to the car in the driveway.

MEMORY JAMES

Sloane, please. You don't have to do this.

She pauses on her march forward, turning back to face him, tears welling in her eyes.

SLOANE

We've tried everything James and it's just not working.

MEMORY JAMES

There's got to be something else we can try...

She shakes her head and turns her face downward, pained, tears dripping from her lashes onto the front lawn.

She hoists the boxes higher on her hip, offering James a broken smile before opening the trunk and loading the car.

SLOANE

I think this will be good for both of us.

James turns away from the conversation, unable to continue watching it unfold. He heads back to the house.

Sloane *SLAMS* the trunk shut. The sound punctuates the finality of the moment. He grimaces, desperate for reprieve.

Crossing the lawn, he reaches for the DOORKNOB. JUMP TO -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' FRONT ENTRY - DAY

The front door swings open as Sloane lets go of the DOORKNOB. Her eyes sweep across the house, wide with wonder at seeing their future home for the first time.

James and a REAL ESTATE AGENT stand closely behind her.

SLOANE

Oh my god, it's beautiful.

The living room we're so accustomed to seeing now lays barren, a blank canvas for them to paint their lives upon.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

I thought you'd love it!

SLOANE

It's incredible, James what do you think?

JAMES

It's perfect.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

You haven't even seen the rest of it, let me show you around.

The tour continues, Sloane following the agent eagerly. Their conversation fades as they move deeper into the house.

James hangs back, scanning the empty space in contemplation.

He stands between two mirrors hung on opposite sides of the wall across from one another, staring at his reflection.

The sounds of the tour grow louder as they circle back. Sloane hurries over to James, kissing him on the cheek.

SLOANE

(whispering)

I think this is the one.

As she pulls back from him, the power surges and the lights in the room go bright. Suddenly, Sloane's face starts to flicker as several other people's faces flash over hers.

James is taken aback by the strange sight.

JAMES

What was that?

Sloane seems unfazed, unaware of the odd occurrence.

He glances up at the mirror, startled to find the reflection of a STRANGER standing beside him in Sloane's place.

Horrified, he rushes to the mirror to take a closer look.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

Stunning isn't it? Don't worry,
it's staying.

James positions himself such that the two mirrors opposite one another align, creating an infinity mirror effect.

Sloane crosses the room to talk to the agent, passing in front of the mirror.

As she does so, James sees a different person walk through the space in each consecutive reflection.

They perfectly mirror Sloane's movements with a slight offset. But just as quickly as they appear, they disappear, collapsing back into themselves until it is just James looking at himself in the mirror once more.

JAMES

What the fuck?

He extends his hand out cautiously to touch the glass, half expecting to pass through it, but it is just solid glass.

Reaching wide, he grabs the frame of the MIRROR and JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' LIVING ROOM - DAY

James remains where he was standing, the living room behind him now fully furnished. He hangs the MIRROR on the freshly painted wall in front him, tools scattered across the floor.

Sloane and James have officially moved in - turning the house into their home.

He looks around for Sloane, curious to test his theory.

JAMES

Sloane?

She appears from the other room, coming up behind him and wrapping her arms around his waist.

SLOANE

What?

James eyes the mirror expectantly. Nothing. Their reflection looks perfectly normal. He's confused.

JAMES

Maybe another mirror?

He heads off into the house, entering -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Their bedroom. He rifles through the closet and retrieves a distinct, SILVER AND PURPLE TIE. JUMP TO -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' BEDROOM - MORNING

Sloane stands behind James, admiring him in the mirror. He's all cleaned up in a pressed shirt and slim trousers.

Sloane dotingly ties the SILVER AND PURPLE TIE around his neck for him.

Once again, their reflection appears unobstructed. Nothing out of the ordinary.

SLOANE

Very handsome. First day nerves
look good on you.

He's disinterested - on the move the second she finishes adjusting the tie.

He heads down the hall to the bathroom -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He looks around the bathroom with intense focus.

JAMES

C'mon James, think.

Desperate, he removes the TOILET PAPER ROLL and JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' BATHROOM - DAY

Sloane holds up an empty TOILET PAPER ROLL as she rants an angry tirade at James.

SLOANE

- if you even *once* replaced the toilet paper when you used the end of it. How do you even *use* that much toilet paper? Has anyone ever taught you how to fold it?

James looks around her to get a look at the mirror - nothing. Sloane carries on.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

But this is just *so* classic of you. This is what you do James, you rely entirely on other people to -

James isn't sticking around for this. He picks up a HAIRDRYER on the counter and JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' BATHROOM - MORNING

James brushes his teeth, half-dressed, while Sloane emerges from the shower behind him, hair wet, wrapped in a towel.

SLOANE

I can't wait for you to meet my parents. They're going to love you.

He stops brushing as Sloane tries to turn on the HAIRDRYER. It won't turn on, broken.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

Dammit. Of all days...

The mirror in front of James is fogged from the steam of the shower. He wipes the condensation away with his hand and staggers back at the face of another stranger, an OLDER BLONDE WOMAN (50s) standing beside him in Sloane's place.

He stares at the image in disbelief as the reflection mouths Sloane's words.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

JAMES

What the hell is going on?

James lunges for a makeup mirror on the counter, holding it up to create the infinity mirror effect once again.

Sure enough, there are several strange faces staggered in the consecutive reflections just as before.

He drops the mirror in shock, the glass *SHATTERS* on the tile. Sloane crouches down to help him pick it up.

SLOANE

Are you okay?

He picks up a SHARD OF GLASS and JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' BACK ENTRY - NIGHT

SHARDS OF GLASS twinkle and glisten, scattered across the floor in the back entry. Police tape stretches across the door frame, filling the void where glass used to be.

Police take photos of the scene as Sloane and James survey the damage of a home invasion and assess what is missing.

James ghosts out of his body, rummaging around the scene.

JAMES

I've got to get out of here.

Exhausted and emotionally drained, Sloane sits down on the window seat, taking in the traumatic scene out back.

The red and blue lights flash from behind the house, illuminating her face and highlighting her sorrow.

Memory James, camera in hand, watches her for a moment, enthralled by the morbid experience. He raises the camera to his eye and *SNAP* takes a photo of Sloane's grief.

Sloane's head whips around at the sound of the shutter, livid. Her expression venomous.

SLOANE

What the fuck is wrong with you?

Memory James stares at her, numb.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

Someone was in here. Our home was violated. They touched my stuff. And you want to capture it?

MEMORY JAMES

I... I don't know how else to process this. This is how I deal with things.

A POLICE OFFICER approaches them, apologetic.

POLICE OFFICER

I don't want to interrupt, but we're going to need you to clear out. We're happy to help you find accommodations for tonight, but we still have some work to do here.

James hurries his search, time running out before the memory loops.

JAMES

What do I do? What do I do?

Sloane rises obediently, heading for the back door.

POLICE OFFICER

I'm sorry ma'am, but you've got to go back out the way you came in, this is an active crime scene.

James perks up at this - holy shit. *Back the way he came in.*

JAMES

That's it! Our first date at the bar.

As Memory James and Sloane get ushered out, James frantically looks around. He spies a DOG COLLAR hanging by the door. Before it's too late, he grabs it and JUMPS TO -

EXT. COUNTY FAIR - DUSK

Sloane stands amidst the straw inside of an animal pen at the county fair, an adorable puppy in her arms. James stands outside of the pen, shaking his head 'no.'

James ghosts out of the body, vision darting around the crowded fair, looking for something to use to jump back to the bar.

MEMORY JAMES

No. We can't adopt it.

Literal and figurative puppy dog eyes stare back at him.

MEMORY JAMES (CONT'D)

No. This is going to end up being my responsibility. This is what you do. We're not getting him.

A blank DOG COLLAR jingles from the puppy's tiny neck. Sloane looks down at it with an idea.

SLOANE

What if we name him Gandalf?

Meanwhile, James swims through a sea of people before spotting a YOUNG CHILD sitting on the ground, coloring.

A moment of clarity smacks James in the face. He bolts at the child, snagging the ORANGE CRAYON from the box. JUMP TO -

INT. LEVEL UP BAR - DAY

James appears back in the bar from the memory of his first date with Sloane - it worked, he made it.

The memory continues to play from where it left off. Memory James and Sloane banter flirtatiously from their booth.

His attention wanders in search of a way out. The front entrance catches his eye - awash with white light, an ethereal passageway that stands in stark contrast to the hyper-realistic details of the surrounding bar.

As he moves toward it, he is unable to navigate past the booth without stopping to listen in on the conversation.

A magnetic pull draws him to the two. He is fascinated by the conversation, enraptured with the nascent beginnings of the most important relationship he has ever had.

SLOANE

So what do you do for work?

MEMORY JAMES

I'm a pilot.

Unlike other dates who fall for his lie, Sloane is sharper.

SLOANE

Fascinating. What do you fly?

MEMORY JAMES

Commercial.

SLOANE

How does the experience of flying the new 747-100s compare to the 737-100s?

MEMORY JAMES

It doesn't. If I had it my way, I would exclusively fly 737s, there's nothing else like them in the sky.

SLOANE

Well how young were you when you started flying? They decommissioned the last 737-100 in 2005.

Busted. Memory James looks down and laughs, conceding.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

So you want to tell me what you really do?

MEMORY JAMES

I'm an artist.

SLOANE

Now that's way more interesting. You should lead with that. Why lie?

MEMORY JAMES

How else am I going to know if you'll be able to call me out on my bullshit? Dating is about finding compatibility, is it not?

SLOANE

Well I guess you have nothing to worry about with me then, do you?

MEMORY JAMES

Are you finally admitting that this is a date?

SLOANE

Not yet. We haven't even gotten dessert.

MEMORY JAMES

You know an awful lot about aviation. Is your dad a pilot?

SLOANE

No, he's a professor. Why wouldn't you assume it was my mom that's the pilot?

MEMORY JAMES

Oh, I'm sorry. Is your mom a pilot?

SLOANE

No, she's a professor too. But I
fucked a pilot once.

Memory James' face turns bright red.

MEMORY JAMES.

Uhh -

SLOANE

Not like, in the plane or anything
if that's what you were thinking.

MEMORY JAMES

I was not.

SLOANE

Oh, sorry.

James steps away, breaking his trance to continue on. Moving to the door, he takes a literal leap of faith - pushing through the column of light and waking back up into -

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

James sits up beneath a bright white overhead light, as if rising from the dead. Doctors and technicians gasp, startled by his sudden alertness.

James' head swivels, angry and unhinged - a wild animal. Expecting to see other setups like his own in the room.

JAMES

I'm not alone, there are other
people in there with me. Someone
needs to tell me what is going on.

CLARKSON

How did you get out?

James begins tearing the wires and medical equipment from his body as Salinger and Clarkson rush to his side.

JAMES

How many people are in her head
right now? Where are they?

The doctors and technicians crowd, whispering to one another.

HALE

I think he saw a stream.

CLARKSON

Christ, what are the odds?

HALE

1 in 172,320. We ran the numbers in preparation for -

A dirty look from Salinger silences her mid-sentence.

James snaps, pushed too far. He stands up, emboldened and looks Salinger directly in the eyes.

JAMES

You were wrong about my options - there's a third one. I want to know what's going on here. Or I'm not going back in.

DOCTOR SALINGER

But if you don't -

James doubles down, fearless in his demands.

JAMES

I don't care. I'll let her die. Something tells me she's worth more to you than she is to me.

The doctors huddle up to sidebar nearby.

DOCTOR SALINGER

He signed an NDA right?

Simon and Dr. Gordon gloomily shake their heads "no."

SIMON

There is no precedent for this.

DOCTOR GORDON

We didn't know how to handle the first problem, so no... we didn't anticipate this one either.

The room falls silent. Their collective ivy league degrees are of no use to them now.

James turns the tide, making them eat their own threat.

JAMES

Clock's ticking.

Making an executive decision, Salinger turns around and claps his hands, a fake smile painfully plastered across his face.

DOCTOR SALINGER
Alright, who wants a tour?

INT. VICARICORP FACILITY - ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

James stands wedged between Doctor Salinger and Clarkson in a granite elevator, descending into the depths of the facility.

DOCTOR SALINGER
Vicaricorp was founded seven years ago as a brain-based research initiative. At the time, we were working to develop a cure for Alzheimer's.

The elevator glides to a halt and *DINGS*.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)
But we ended up stumbling upon something else. A far bigger discovery.

The elevator doors open as they step into -

INT. VICARICORP FACILITY - SURGERY CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

A grand hallway sprawls as far as they can see. Industrial and inviting - staged and waiting for venture capitalists.

On either side, cutouts with observation glass provide glimpses into the inner workings of the facility.

As they move down the corridor, it becomes apparent that Doctor Salinger is well versed at this - a practiced routine.

DOCTOR SALINGER
While studying brain receptors and the nature of memory, we reached a breakthrough - the brain has the ability for memory donation.

James listens intently, a mounting sense of unease.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)
With continued funding, we were able to develop a technology to harness this potential.

They reach the first observation window. Inside, a row of hospital beds are occupied by awaiting patients. A team of doctors move from one to the next, overseeing robotic open-brain surgeries in progress.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)

After a simple, minor invasive surgery, recipients are able to access the memories of a willing donor and stream them in real time convinced that they are their own.

They don't pause for long, continuing their stroll. Rounding a corner, the hallway opens up into -

INT. VICARICORP FACILITY - THE HIVE - CONTINUOUS

The HIVE. They stand at the ground level of an underground skyscraper. James marvels at the sight of it.

An open atrium, sunlight streaming in from the glass ceiling above. Tiers of catwalks and floating staircases web endlessly overhead, abuzz with morning energy.

Along one wall, the HONEYCOMB. An intricate mosaic of pods and simulation chambers, an attending technician perched outside of each.

CLARKSON

While streaming them, the recipient is fully immersed in the details of the memory as if it was their own lived experience.

They ascend a staircase, getting a look inside of the pods.

Each pod contains a recently operated upon BETA TESTER.

CLARKSON (CONT'D)

Our team of technicians is first class. They work with each patient to adjust their implant as necessary, ensuring that they are receiving a flawless stream.

Outside of each pod, a technician sits at a bay of three monitors, adjusting the newly implanted streaming device.

Their first monitor depicts the recipient's original memory, or lack thereof. The middle monitor showcases the memory they are attempting to stream. On the third monitor, the technician calibrates a composite of the two.

Reaching the peak of their climb, they cross a catwalk, endless traffic scurries below, a well-oiled machine.

DOCTOR SALINGER

The potential for the technology is unimaginable. We have the capability to replace traumatic experiences, repair the loss of degenerative mental illness and provide anyone with the opportunity to remember an experience that they've never lived.

Salinger guides them inside of a manicured conference room.

INT. VICARICORP FACILITY - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Opulent furniture invites them inside, everything impeccably staged but untouched. Poised and ready for ribbon cutting.

JAMES

So is Sloane a patient here?

A twinkle appears in Doctor Salinger's eye. He shares a proud nod with Clarkson.

CLARKSON

She's so much more than that.

DOCTOR SALINGER

When Sloane found us, she was exactly what we were looking for but had yet to encounter in our trials - a universal donor.

CLARKSON

Memory donation is a lot like blood donation, some brains are not viable recipients for certain memory types. But Sloane's memories were universal. Able to be streamed to all of our beta testers. She was our lucky break.

It occurs to James that Sloane is not a patient, she's a donor. His face goes white.

DOCTOR SALINGER

For the past two years we've been working to map her brain and prepare the technology for launch, which is in -

Doctor Salinger checks his watch.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)
31 hours.

James looks irate. Uninspired by this song and dance.

JAMES
So she's pawning her memories? *Our* memories?

CLARKSON
Technically she's renting them, but essentially yes.

JAMES
She can't do that. That's a complete violation of my privacy.

DOCTOR SALINGER
What we're doing here is entirely legal. They are her memories after all.

JAMES
I never consented to that. It's my relationship. She betrayed that.

DOCTOR SALINGER
I think you're looking at this all wrong. Your cooperation is vital to the program. Think about all of the good this can do.

James is not convinced, anger mounting. Doctor Salinger is determined to change his mind on the matter.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)
I want to show you something.

INT. VICARICORP FACILITY - HONEYCOMB POD - MOMENTS LATER

The three stand inside one of the pods we saw earlier on the tour. A woman is seated inside - the OLDER BLONDE WOMAN James saw inside of Sloane's memory.

A technician leads a guided meditation. James sees himself on the center monitor, a component of Sloane's memory.

DOCTOR SALINGER
This is Julianne. Her fiancé died in combat when she was 22 and they never got married.
(MORE)

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)

She's been battling severe depression ever since. She never experienced the anticipation of introducing her fiancé to her parents and she regrets it every day. Sloane's allowing her to remember things differently. Giving her a moment she never would have had otherwise.

We watch the monitors as the technician integrates her *into* the memory in Sloane's place, her husband's face replacing James' likeness - the experience now her own to keep forever.

CLARKSON

What you witnessed in Sloane's mind was a glimpse into the interface of the technology we are using. You saw all of the participants whose brains were accessing the memory you were inside of in real time.

James is quiet, overwhelmed. Weighing his options.

DOCTOR SALINGER

What Sloane is doing is helping people, James. We need her. This company won't exist without her.

The wheels start to turn. *It won't exist without her.*

A mischievous determination passes over James' face. His placid demeanor a bit too agreeable when he responds.

JAMES

I understand now. I'll go back in.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - LATER

James sits back beneath the white fluorescent light, ready to go back under. Hale reattaches wires and nodes to his body.

Looking over her shoulder, she leans in to talk to him.

HALE

There's something they're not telling you. I think they want to protect their own asses, but it might help you pull this off.

Paranoid, she leans in even closer, pretending to adjust an errant wire on the side of his neck. Words barely audible.

HALE (CONT'D)

When Sloane volunteered to be a donor, she made us agree to a stipulation. She insisted that she be permitted to maintain 2% of her memories for herself. We can't access them.

A tech walks by and she stops speaking before continuing.

HALE (CONT'D)

We've never mapped them, we can't track her in them and no one is allowed to stream them. We think that's why we've been unable to find her - she's hiding there, untraceable.

JAMES

I don't understand, what's in the 2%? What is she keeping there?

HALE

That's the problem, we have no idea. Find her.

(louder)

He's good to go.

Clarkson and Salinger watch on from above, unaware of the secretive exchange. They give an oblivious thumbs up from the observation room as James prepares to go back under.

INT. LEVEL UP BAR - DAY

Sloane and Memory James sit across from one another, the memory of their first date still in progress.

But the memory is still, frozen in time as if paused. Suddenly Memory James flinches, startled as if surfacing from underwater. The memory comes back to life. James has arrived.

Angry and impatient, James interjects before Sloane has the chance to speak.

JAMES

I'm going to find you. And I'm putting an end to all of this. None of this can exist without you. I'm shutting it down.

Sloane seems caught off guard, upset by his sudden anger.

SLOANE

What are you talking about?

JAMES

God, I can't believe you would do something so selfish, but then again - what else is new?

He stands to leave in disgust.

JAMES (CONT'D)

And just so you know, I never thought you were a waitress. That was a pickup tactic and you fell for it. Hook, line and sinker.

Sloane looks down, hurt. Fighting back tears.

SLOANE

Well that's awfully presumptuous. Who's to say I fell for it? This isn't even an official date. Maybe it won't work out.

James goes in for the kill.

JAMES

Trust me, it works out. Although now I wish it hadn't.

He grabs his JACKET from the booth defiantly to storm off and accidentally JUMPS TO -

EXT. SLOANE AND JAMES' FRONT YARD - DAY

James, armed with a rake, stands between three neat piles of leaves in his front yard. His JACKET combats the fall air.

His admiration of his handiwork is cut short by a tap from the front window. Sloane smiles and waves from inside.

Shaking the distraction, James turns back to the yard only to discover that the piles are messy again. Leaves spread out around him, an explosion of color quilting the front lawn.

He surveys the yard - the air still. No movement in the surrounding trees, no trace of wind. Odd.

Unable to find the cause and unwilling to repeat his task, James crouches down and picks up a LEAF to investigate - as he does so, he JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' DINING ROOM - MORNING

Sloane bounces around the house, hair still wet from the broken hair dryer, preparing for the arrival of her parents.

James immediately ghosts out, watching on intently.

Memory James sets an intricate table for four in anticipation of a Thanksgiving feast. He senses Sloane's nervous energy.

MEMORY JAMES

Everything looks great, you don't need to worry.

SLOANE

It's my first time hosting them, I just want it all to be perfect.

MEMORY JAMES

How many table settings include a handmade cornucopia?

Reveal a meticulously crafted cornucopia centerpiece, arranged on a bed of autumn LEAVES from the yard.

Sloane relents, point made. Memory James gives her a kiss.

DING. The doorbell rings, Sloane goes to get it.

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' FRONT ENTRY - CONTINUOUS

James beats the two into the front entry, eager to gather more intel as he continues his observation.

Sloane throws the door open, wrapping her father, JACK (60s), in a warm embrace. Hugging him a little tighter to make up for lost time.

SLOANE

Dad! Happy Thanksgiving.

She turns to her mother, MAGGIE (60s), offering the same hug, but something is missing. The warmth turned a little colder in translation.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

Hi, Mom.

James clocks this, noticing it more prominently from his newfound vantage point. Memory James does not.

He greets them, sizing them up - bookish and professorial. Every bit the academics you'd imagine them to be.

JACK

James, what a pleasure. We've heard so much about you -

The memory JOLTS forward -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' DINING ROOM - LATER

The four are seated around a table, dinner well underway. Plates scatter the table, minimal scraps of food speak compliments to the chef as the meal winds down.

James circles the table like a vulture, eyes peeled.

JACK

So James, Sloane tells us that you've been traveling all over for work lately. That must be exciting.

MEMORY JAMES

It's been incredible. I've been fortunate that the last few gigs I've booked have been in such exotic places. It barely feels like work.

Memory James stabs at the last piece of turkey on the table. Noticing this, Sloane grabs the carving knife to cut more.

MAGGIE

Sloane, why don't let your father help you carve it?

SLOANE

Because, Mom, I'm a grown woman who knows how to cut her own meat.

She slices the turkey with ease, making a point. The conversation dies before Sloane picks it back up.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

James, tell Dad about Egypt.

MEMORY JAMES

Uhh, I'm going there for a shoot next month. Nat Geo hired me to take some photos inside one of the pyramids.

JACK

Egypt! I've always wanted to go.

Another lull. Taking advantage of the tension at the table, James enters back into Memory James' body to stir things up.

JAMES

Maggie, Sloane told me that you two made an appearance at every dance recital in the state of Pennsylvania.

Maggie laughs at this, welcoming the change of topic.

MAGGIE

You don't know the half of it. She *loved* dance. I couldn't drag her away from it. She was in ballet slippers anytime she wasn't barefoot.

James ghosts back out, scanning the table for reactions.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I still have boxes full of her trophies in the attic. I made Jack take them with us to Ireland when we moved. We used to be attached at the hip, weren't we, Sloane?

Her eyes wander someplace else, distant, nostalgic. Sloane's do not move from her plate.

SLOANE

Yeah. We *used* to be.

The table bristles with another prolonged silence. Sloane and Jack exchange a look as he pleads with her wordlessly. Memory James misses this subtle exchange. James does not.

JACK

How about dessert?

Once again, the memory JOLTS -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' HALLWAY - LATER

Memory James helps Sloane carry dishes into the kitchen, pausing to pull her aside once out of earshot of her parents.

MEMORY JAMES

Do you think you're being a little bit harsh on your Mom?

SLOANE

What are you talking about?

MEMORY JAMES

I felt like things got a little tense back there, are you okay?

SLOANE

I'm fine. They're my parents, James. Let me handle it.

As she disappears into the kitchen, the memory JOLTS -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' LIVING ROOM - LATER

Memory James sits next to Maggie in the living room, sipping on coffee as they make small talk.

MAGGIE

... it's just such a different way of life over there. No one's in a hurry, people are kind to each other...

James is not interested in small talk. He navigates the house in search of Sloane. Hearing her voice, he follows it into the kitchen.

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sloane and Jack stand side by side in front of the kitchen sink. Sloane washes dishes as Jack dries them, stacking them neatly beside them on the counter.

They move with harmony, no strangers to this routine. James listens in as they strain to keep their voices down.

JACK

... you know she doesn't mean anything by it.

SLOANE

But it doesn't stop her from saying it.

Sloane scrubs at the dish in her hand with the frustration that only a holiday with your family can bring about.

Jack senses this, placing a fatherly hand on her shoulder.

JACK

Give yourself some credit. The day has been great. And we both think the world of James.

Sloane leans in, head resting on his shoulder.

SLOANE

I just miss you, Dad. If you two weren't a packaged deal, I'd fly out more often.

JACK

Don't say that...

He perks up, ear catching a familiar tune on the radio.

JACK (CONT'D)

What are the odds? Our song.

SLOANE

Dad -

Dropping the dishrag, he turns the volume up. "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" serenades them as Jack pulls her in to dance.

He leads her as Sloane trails, her steps laced with lethargy. She does not share in his enthusiasm.

She tries to protest, pulling away, but he spins her around.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

Dad, stop. Stop.

Jack is equal parts embarrassed and confused.

JACK

You used to love this song!

Sloane turns the faucet back on, facing away from him as she continues to wash the dishes.

SLOANE

I never loved this song.

Masking his hurt, Jack picks the dish towel back up and dutifully resumes his post.

James watches the emotion cross Sloane's face. A realization -

JAMES

Emotional core... a fight. I need to find a fight.

He rifles through a kitchen cabinet, finding what he was looking for - a FIJI WATER BOTTLE. He JUMPS TO -

EXT. SLOANE AND JAMES' FRONT YARD - EVENING

A gentle snow falls as James stands atop a ladder, attaching Christmas lights to the side of the house.

James ghosts out once again to see what he can glean. Sloane calls up to Memory James from the bottom of the ladder.

SLOANE

You're leaving? Again? Where to this time? Belize? Aspen? Bermuda?

MEMORY JAMES

Fiji.

SLOANE

Are you serious? Are you *fucking* serious?

James searches around for Sloane, thinking she might be here.

JAMES

SLOANE? Are you in here?

MEMORY JAMES

It's my job. I have to go.

SLOANE

No you don't. What you're doing isn't saving the world, James, it is self-indulgent. A chance to run away and justify it by thinking you deserve a Nobel Peace Prize for giving people with shitty desk jobs a screensaver to escape to. That was supposed to be our place.

Memory James climbs down the ladder, hammer in hand.

MEMORY JAMES

I think you're overreacting. Why don't you come with me then?

SLOANE

The doctor said I can't fly.

Memory James screams back, wielding the hammer. Sloane takes a nervous step back. James stares at it incredulous.

JAMES

Whoa! I *never* threatened you. I didn't do that.

MEMORY JAMES
IT'S THE FLU SLOANE, NOT THE
BUBONIC PLAGUE.

James intercepts him, grabbing the HAMMER from his hands as Sloane heads back inside. He accidentally JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

James stands in front of a door. He tries it, it's locked. He jiggles the handle, unable to open it.

Perplexed, he attempts to move downstairs but encounters an invisible wall - the memory doesn't extend any further.

Out of options, he turns to an adjacent coat closet. He discovers a crushed velvet DRESS HANGER and JUMPS TO -

INT. FITTING ROOM - BARNEY'S - DAY

James sits in an upscale fitting room, dress shopping. He waits for Sloane to emerge.

Sloane's feet dance beneath the door to the room as she works to get the dress on.

SLOANE
JAMES!

He hurries to her, thinking he's found the real Sloane.

JAMES
SLOANE?!

The door flies open and Sloane stands, half-dressed, DRESS HANGER in hand.

SLOANE
It finally happened! I got my first wrinkle. I look so wise.

She beams, pressing in close, invading his personal space to show it off. He closes the door, disappointed, and sulks off.

A nearby ATTENDENT catches James' attention as she turns to her MANAGER, pack of Newports in hand.

ATTENDENT
I'm going out for a smoke.

JAMES
You always hated when I smoked.

He chases after the attendant. Taking the pack of NEWPORT CIGARETTES out of her hand. He JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' DINING ROOM - NIGHT

James sits alone at the dining room table. The house dark save for the single light overhead. An unlit NEWPORT CIGARETTE dangles precariously in his mouth.

The rest of the pack rests on the table next to a lighter.

James ghosts out just as Sloane enters, vibrant. She puts her things down, immediately able to tell that something's wrong.

James can barely watch. Tears falling as he remembers.

MEMORY JAMES

I tried to call... but I couldn't -

SLOANE

What happened?

MEMORY JAMES

My dad. He uh... he died this morning.

Sloane moves to his side and holds him in her arms. He's vacant, despondent. She doesn't speak. She doesn't have to.

Taking the lighter, Sloane brings it slowly to his mouth, lighting the cigarette for him. It crackles to life in the still room. Her tears land without a sound on the dining room table, staining the wood as they fall.

Smoke pours out as James exhales, enshrouding them in a cloud. It billows effortlessly, circling the pair as it dances around them. A choreography of sorrow.

Face glistening and wet, James can't stand the sight any longer. The pain and longing for Sloane leveling him.

His trembling hand grasps the LIGHTER, cherishing the moment of contact with Sloane's hand as he JUMPS TO -

INT. ROCK CONCERT - NIGHT

Darkness. A pulsing crowd surrounds him. James is lost in a sea of sweaty bodies and youthful sexuality.

They bob and sway to the sounds of "Somebody Else" by The 1975. Lights strobe across the crowd as the chorus picks up.

CLOSE ON James as the light show crawls back and forth across his face, awash with neon. He stares for an extended beat, entranced by the sight in front of him.

We REVERSE to see what he is staring at - Sloane, dancing. She moves to the music in slow motion. Intoxicating. Her carefree energy infectious inside of the surreal memory.

She pays no mind to the world around her, an island unto herself. James watches, transfixed with infatuation.

Suddenly, the music cuts out, stopping the moment short.

A spotlight turns on, harsh white light flooding over the crowd in search of James. Hovering over him, it stops.

As it lands on him, the other concert goers stop and stare blankly at him. Clarkson's voice booms from the sound system.

CLARKSON (O.S.)

James? It's Clarkson. What's going on? You were getting really close to her for a while there.

Everyone, Sloane included, look on, eerily still.

JAMES

Uhh, everyone is staring at me.

CLARKSON (O.S.)

It's just because we interrupted the memory, don't worry about it. Listen, whatever you were just doing, it was working.

JAMES

I started searching for her in emotional memories. Sad, painful, anything that set her off.

CLARKSON

Well you were PING'ing nearby her on our map. Keep doing it.

The memory resumes. Bodies move to the beat as James works through the crowd, headed straight for the merch booth. A T-SHIRT STONER nods to him over the music, holding up shirts.

JAMES

I'm looking for a black one. It's got white lettering on the -

He spots a BAND T-SHIRT in a pile of overpriced memorabilia.

JAMES (CONT'D)

That one!

As the stoner hands over the shirt, James JUMPS. Gone.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clarkson studies Sloane's brain activity with tired eyes.

SIMON

Clarkson, you're going to want to see this.

Clarkson rounds the corner to find Hale and Simon, attention glued to a bay of monitors. He looks puzzled.

CLARKSON

What is this?

HALE

We've been working to scan and catalog James' memories while he's under in an effort to expedite finding Sloane.

SIMON

We figured we could cross reference the two brain maps to see if there were any obvious recurrences that might help us find her.

CLARKSON

Does he know you're doing this?

HALE

The waiver he signed was pretty broad.

SIMON

We've been finding a lot of gaps. Entire blacked out portions of his brain. At first we thought they were repressed memories, which are fairly common.

CLARKSON

So what's the problem?

HALE

These are substantial blocks. They comprise a massive system of fractures throughout his brain.

SIMON

There's more.

Simon hands Clarkson a readout. He begins to flip through it. His face drains of color, growing whiter by the page.

CLARKSON

Christ. Did anyone know about this?

HALE

No, sir.

CLARKSON

We need to tell Salinger.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

Back in Sloane's mind. She reads WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOLF at a table in a coffee shop, waiting for her order. She wears the 1975 BAND T-SHIRT. A BARISTA calls from the bar.

BARISTA

GRANDE HAZELNUT LATTE FOR SLOANE.

Finishing her page, she walks to find the counter empty. The barista motions behind her to James, sitting with it smugly.

Amused by the chance encounter, she sits down across from him. James ghosts out of the body, searching for Sloane as Memory James slides the coffee across the table.

JAMES

Sloane? Are you in here?

MEMORY JAMES

Well, well, well, do you double as a waitress here also?

SLOANE

And here I was thinking I escaped you.

MEMORY JAMES

You got a three week break, but it looks like fate has its own agenda.

Finding nothing, James steps back into his body to try to see if he can't get some answers out of Sloane.

JAMES

At what point in a relationship can you tell that you're in love with the other person?

The abruptness of his question catches her off guard.

SLOANE

I think it depends on the relationship. It's not always the moment you expect it to be, sometimes it's small. It creeps up on you and catches you off guard.

Not exactly the compass James was hoping for. Next attempt.

JAMES

Would you say that you're falling for me yet?

SLOANE

No. I would say that I'm interested and that you have some work to do. Why, are you falling for *me*?

JAMES

From the moment I met you. Would a second date help?

SLOANE

It's a start.

He notices her fidget with her coffee sleeve. A recollection. He ghosts out of the body, allowing the memory to play out.

MEMORY JAMES

There's an art exhibit in town next weekend. I'd love to take you. That way I don't have to wait another month for the stars to align.

Memory James slides the COFFEE SLEEVE off of her cup, writing his number on it. James' memory served correct.

SLOANE

It's a date then. A second date.

MEMORY JAMES

And one more thing. I'm sorry -

James reenters his body, not wanting to miss the moment.

JAMES

- that this is three weeks late.

He leans across the table and kisses her, heart fluttering. She blushes. He pulls back, wearing a bittersweet expression.

JAMES (CONT'D)

And uh, I'm actually going to need
that -

James snatches the COFFEE SLEEVE from her and JUMPS TO -

INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Sloane stands in the lobby of an art exhibit, dressed for a night out. Cell phone to her ear, COFFEE SLEEVE in her hand.

James approaches, also on his cell phone. Before reaching Sloane, he ghosts out, searching the lobby in vain, growing exhausted by this constant ritual.

MEMORY JAMES

I can see you, look left.

Sloane turns, making eye contact with Memory James as they hang up their phones. Memory James motions to the sleeve.

MEMORY JAMES (CONT'D)

Did you carry that around all week?

SLOANE

Yeah, I wasn't ready to commit to
putting you in my phone yet.

They hug before James ushers her inside. The memory JOLTS.

INT. ART GALLERY - LATER

Sloane and James examine a photograph, pretentiously displayed on the wall in front of them. It depicts an intricate Russian subway station. You know, art.

MEMORY JAMES

What do you think of it?

SLOANE

I like it.

James eyes her. He doesn't buy it. He leans in to whisper.

MEMORY JAMES

I happen to think that there is
nothing sexier than a woman with an
opinion.

Sloane returns his gaze. Challenge accepted. James looks on, in no rush to leave. He's enjoying this - ahead of the joke.

SLOANE

Okay then, I don't like it. It's fine, but it's too perfect. Cool, they know about the rule of thirds and the symmetry draws your eye to the angular lines, but so what? I find imperfection more beautiful.

Memory James nods, impressed. A SUITED GENTLEMAN approaches them, politely interrupting their conversation.

SUITED GENTLEMAN

Excuse me, sir. A gentleman has expressed interest in "The Marquee."

MEMORY JAMES

How much is he offering?

The man slips him a piece of paper with a figure on it. Memory James nods in affirmation. Sloane is appalled.

SLOANE

This is your exhibit, isn't it?

The gentleman turns and walks away, chuckling. Memory James and James are *both* all-too-pleased with themselves.

MEMORY JAMES

Oh, I'm sorry - did I forget to mention that? I happen to agree with you, for what it's worth.

Sloane shakes her head in mock exasperation at the stunt.

SLOANE

Douche.

MEMORY JAMES

Come here, I want to show you one I think you'll like.

He guides Sloane across the gallery. James hovers, nostalgic. Sloane's breath catches, sincerely moved by the photo. It depicts a ballet dancer losing her balance on stage. She stares at it for some time before speaking.

SLOANE

It's beautiful. Did you take this?

He nods quietly. Humbled by how deeply she's moved.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

I'll take it.

He laughs it off.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
 Seriously, name your price.

MEMORY JAMES
 A dollar and it's yours.

SLOANE
 Don't insult me.

She opens her purse, only \$10 inside. Memory James notices.

MEMORY JAMES
 Fine, \$10 and a third date.

SLOANE
 Deal.

She leans into his chest. James steps in his body, unwilling to leave. His longing for her inhibiting any progress.

They stand there, enjoying one another's presence as they soak in the photo's beauty. Alone together amidst a crowd.

Grief spreads across his face. He knows where to go. He steps forward with a heavy heart and grasps the PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINT in his hands. He JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' BEDROOM - DAY

SMASH. Shards of glass ricochet out like shrapnel from the point of impact. The PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINT lays in a mangled heap on the floor.

James flees his body instantly, too much a coward to face this memory more than once. Ashamed of his actions.

Memory James stands over the ruin, fuming. The inevitable self-loathing yet to sink in.

MEMORY JAMES
 There. One less thing to remember
 me by.

Tears well in Sloane's eyes at the finality of it. Unable to put back together the pieces of either the photo or the relationship it symbolizes. Irreparable damage done.

SLOANE
 You selfish asshole, that wasn't
 yours to break!

James walks around the argument, on the move in search of Sloane, unable to endure a second more of this as he has to.

JAMES

SLOANE?! I'm sorry. Please. Where are you? I'm sorry.

MEMORY JAMES

Go ahead and quit, Sloane. This is what you do. This is ALL YOU EVER DO.

James' stomach churns at the venomous words that once came from his very mouth. He can't find Sloane anywhere.

Sloane screams back at Memory James, hurt, damaged.

SLOANE

I'M NOT QUITTING, JAMES. I've been... RIGHT. HERE. By your side this entire time. But you aren't by mine. I'm alone...

She continues packing, emptying drawers with haste.

JAMES

I can't do this. I can't do this.

MEMORY JAMES

You want to get out of here so badly, here, let me help you speed up the process.

Memory James opens the bedroom door and starts hurtling Sloane's boxes down the stairs. A landslide of belongings.

James gets in Memory James' face, yelling with irate fury.

JAMES

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING!
YOU'RE RUINING EVERYTHING FOR US,
YOU FUCKING IDIOT!

It's no use. Memory James and Sloane continue past him in blind rage as the fight wears on.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Sloane, I can't find you.
I've gotta leave... I did everything I could.

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

James heads downstairs, a broken man. Opening drawers and closets, he throws items aside in a desperate search.

Above him, sounds of the fight from elsewhere in the house spill over the cathedral ceiling into the living room below.

A door *SLAMS*. Sending tremors through the walls. Muffled yells. Downstairs, James' ransacking continues.

Memory James stomps down the stairs after Sloane. She collects her things, gathering them back into boxes as she goes, stacking them near the front door.

The last gasps of life from the relationship echo in the background as the memory nears its end.

MEMORY JAMES

Tell me you don't love me anymore.

He blocks the door. Sloane wipes tears and lifts the boxes.

MEMORY JAMES (CONT'D)

If you're going to walk out this door, look me in the eyes and say it.

James finds what he's looking for in a desk drawer - a box of crayons.

SLOANE

I can't do that.

He rifles through, snatching the ORANGE CRAYON and JUMPS TO -

INT. LEVEL UP BAR - DAY

The bar where it all began. The spark that lit the fire.

James, resigned to failure, heads toward the exit. He's done.

He decides to join Sloane before leaving. He slumps into his body at the booth. Joining her one last time to say goodbye.

He looks defeated, his spirit collapsed in on itself. He has failed her. She's going to die in here.

Unaware of his state, Sloane continues on in the memory, the date nearing its conclusion before looping back to the start.

JAMES

I have to go now. I'm sorry... for everything. You deserved better than me.

Sloane does not share in his somber disposition.

SLOANE

You can't leave before dessert.

James studies her a moment before relenting.

JAMES

Of course not. How could I?

Sloane flags down a WAITER to order.

SLOANE

Can we have a banana split with two spoons and extra whipped cream?

WAITER

You've got it.

He walks away as James smiles to himself, lost in reverie.

JAMES

That always threw me off about you.

SLOANE

What's that?

JAMES

How does a woman with such fine taste make such a poor dessert choice?

He chuckles, bittersweet nostalgia. Sloane answers assuredly.

SLOANE

It was my favorite dessert as a kid, my parents used to let me order it on vacation. It always stuck with me.

JAMES

And you've never wanted to branch out and try something new?

The waiter drops off the sundae, which she begins to devour. She offers him a spoon, explaining herself between bites.

SLOANE

Why would I? Your experiences as a kid are seminal, they're what make you you.

James staggers as the words soak in.

JAMES

Holy shit.

This seemingly innocuous conversation has unlocked a breakthrough.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I've been doing it all wrong. It's not a memory with me at all...

He stares at her, face lighting up. He stands up, going to her side of the booth and grabbing her purse.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I know where you are.

Sloane looks back at him, confused.

SLOANE

What are you doing? I'm right here.

He rummages through her bag until he finds a folded family photo of her and her parents in the back of her wallet.

JAMES

I know that now.

Picking up the FAMILY PHOTO, he JUMPS TO a new memory.

As he does so, he fails to notice that the lights in the room start to fade as it disassembles pieces by piece, elements of the bar eroding into blackness.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clarkson throws himself back in his chair in frustration.

CLARKSON

I almost had him.

Clarkson sits, joystick in hand as Salinger approaches.

DOCTOR SALINGER

They said you were looking for me?

His eye catches Clarkson's computer screen, suspicious.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

CLARKSON
That's what I wanted to talk to you about. We have to pull him. I'm tracking him now to extract him, but I keep losing him. He's not staying in any one memory long enough for the process to work.

DOCTOR SALINGER
You're what? No, no, no, I didn't authorize that.

Clarkson is glued to the screen, engrossed. Determined. He tosses Salinger the printout on James without looking up.

Salinger reads through it, expression grave.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)
Does this mean that he doesn't know that he -

CLARKSON
We assume he has no idea.

DOCTOR SALINGER
But what if the 2% -

CLARKSON
That's why we have to pull him. The risk is too great.

DOCTOR SALINGER
So what, we just abandon Sloane? We'll go under.

CLARKSON
If he finds her, and we're right about this, his brain will likely short circuit. We run the risk of frying them both.

DOCTOR SALINGER
This is all we've worked towards for nearly a decade...

Clarkson stares back, sharing the frustration but out of options. Salinger *SLAMS* his fist before regaining composure.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)
Pull him.

INT. SLOANE AND JAMES' HOME OFFICE - DAY

Inside Sloane's mind, James works on editing and printing photos in his home studio. He finishes fastening the back of a frame, face down on the work surface in front of him.

Sloane cobbles together pieces of a broken frame, the FAMILY PHOTO loose on the table - a casualty of the accident.

SLOANE

I don't know what happened, it practically flew off the shelf.

She cuts her finger on the broken glass, blood pooling.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

I'll be back.

As Sloane exits, James looks down at the photo printer - a photo slowly emerging, completely blank.

JAMES

What the-

The printer keeps spitting out blank photos, James flips over the FRAMED PHOTO in front of him. Also blank. He JUMPS TO -

EXT. SLOANE AND JAMES' FRONT LAWN - DAY

Sloane *SLAMS* the trunk shut, having just put the boxes in her car. Memory James stands in the front door watching her. A familiar scene, we've been to this memory before.

It continues playing out where it left off as James looks on.

MEMORY JAMES

I can't let you do this. What will I become?

But something is off. Sloane isn't wearing what she wore on the day she moved out. She does not get into her car to leave. She turns back to Memory James, walking toward him.

SLOANE

We'll find out together.

She kisses him tenderly on the cheek, rubbing his back to calm him down. She heads back *inside* the house, calling over her shoulder to him.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

Did you want to order dinner?

James is puzzled. *What is this memory?* Memory James follows Sloane back inside as James sprints for the car.

Throwing open the trunk, he begins opening the boxes, pulling off one lid after another, desperate to see what's inside.

He staggers back in horror at the sight before him - every box full of blank framed photographs.

JAMES

What is going on?

Mind racing, he digs through the car, eventually finding a loose ARCADE TOKEN underneath the front seat. He JUMPS TO -

INT. LEVEL UP BAR - DAY

James returns once again to the bar, this time the decor a bit more stuck in the past than it was on their first date.

James walks through throngs of people crowded around the SPACE INVADERS game in the back of the bar.

The crowd *CHEERS* on a rough-and-tumble tomboy, hair up in a ponytail as she mashes buttons and slams around the joystick like an expert - a young Sloane (17) in her element.

A pile of ARCADE TOKENS are stacked in a precarious tower next to her on the console, threatening to topple with her aggressive gameplay at any second.

She swigs from a beer bottle like a boxer between rounds as the crowd holds their breath. She's crushing it.

James stares at her, wonderstruck. This can't be...

Sloane's face furrows with intensity as - GAME OVER. The crowd *GASPS* as they eagerly await the next screen.

Baited breath until... an uproar erupts from the crowd at the sight - NEW HIGH SCORE. Sloane's taken the top spot.

JAMES

Get out...

She inputs her entry as people around her rough house and congratulate her. Her HIGH SCHOOL FRIEND looks on.

HIGH SCHOOL FRIEND

Those aren't your initials.

A grin spreads across her face as she replies, boastful.

SLOANE
Kick ass bitch!

She steps away from the screen as James sees her input - three letters screaming proudly from the 8-bit screen.

K.A.B. Kick-ass bitch. James is beyond belief.

JAMES
You're K.A.B.?!

He's impressed. Muttering to himself -

JAMES (CONT'D)
That's my wife.

His eyes catch a glint from Sloane's neck - a GOLD NECKLACE, swinging side to side. Reaching for it, he JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE'S CHILDHOOD HOME - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

He's finally done it. James has made it to Sloane's childhood home. The basis of her emotional core. The people, memories and emotions all new and foreign to him. He's close.

He watches a memory unfold in front of his eyes.

Christmas morning - a majestic evergreen in the corner of the room, pine needles litter the floor. BRACES SLOANE (14) opens a gift on a sunlit morning. Her parents watch on in robes.

A robin's egg blue box with a white ribbon - Tiffany. She squeals with delight and pulls out the GOLD NECKLACE.

Her father watches on, smoking a TOBACCO PIPE. James doesn't see the real Sloane anywhere, so he snags it and JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE'S CHILDHOOD HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

YOUNG SLOANE (6) even younger now, dances with her father. He smokes a TOBACCO PIPE, smoke wafting through the kitchen air.

She stands on his feet and laughs as he whisks her around, loving every second of it.

"Somewhere Over the Rainbow" sings out from a nearby record player. Still no Sloane.

Remembering their fight on Thanksgiving, James reaches for the VINYL RECORD and JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE'S CHILDHOOD HOME - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

TEENAGE SLOANE (15) comes home early from school, backpack slung over her shoulder. Wrapped box in her arms.

She drops them both on the couch as she walks through the house. James follows her.

TEENAGE SLOANE
Happy Birthday, Mom!

She rounds the corner, following the muffled sounds of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" playing on vinyl once again.

TEENAGE SLOANE (CONT'D)
Mom? I'm home!

Laughter from behind a door. Sloane pushes it open to find her mother, Maggie, with ANOTHER MAN. Startled, she turns to leave, mouth agape in shock.

On her way out, she grabs the VINYL RECORD off the player. The vinyl *scratches* as the music stops. The door swings open and Maggie comes rushing out, wrapped only in a sheet.

Sloane tries to exit the house, but Maggie grabs her arm before she makes it to the front door.

She spins her around as James watches on, pained. The pieces finally coming together. Pages of a story he never knew.

MAGGIE
Sloane. Sloane, please.

TEENAGE SLOANE
Let go of me!

MAGGIE
Listen to me. I'm sorry. But Sloane... you can't tell your father. He doesn't know. It will kill him.

Sloane barges out of the house, her makeup smeared by tears. The memory loops back to the beginning.

Sloane enters once again. James eyes the box she puts down.

TEENAGE SLOANE
Happy Birthday, Mom!

He ignores the scene behind him and unwraps the box revealing an ornate CRYSTAL VASE. Taking hold of it, he JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE'S CHILDHOOD HOME - FRONT ENTRY - NIGHT

The CRYSTAL VASE is prominently displayed in front of a window on an accent table in the front entry.

All is quiet. The window slides open and TEENAGE SLOANE (16) shimmies inside, trying to keep quiet as James watches.

Losing her balance she knocks the accent table over, the vase cascading to the ground and shattering. *CRASHHHH*.

Lights turn on as her parents rush downstairs, bounding into the entry to investigate the sound. Sloane is busted.

JACK

Do you know what time it is?

SLOANE

I'm not a child dad! I don't need you two monitoring me 24/7.

MAGGIE

You are *our* child. You can't just run wild and do whatever you want.

SLOANE

Leave me alone, you bitch!

Sloane barges up the stairs to her room. As she passes James, he grasps onto the LETTERMAN JACKET in her arms and JUMPS TO -

INT. SLOANE'S CHILDHOOD HOME - SLOANE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

TEENAGE SLOANE (17) sits puffy-eyed on the edge of her bed, LETTERMAN JACKET clutched tightly in her hands as she cries.

She is irreconcilable. James observes, half saddened and half amused by her end-of-the-world teenage heartbreak hysterics.

A quiet *KNOCK* on the door as Jack pokes his head in.

JACK

Can I come in?

Sloane snuffles and nods in affirmation. Pathetic.

Jack sits by her side, draping a fatherly arm around her. She leans into him and lets the tears flow.

SLOANE

I'll never be okay.

JACK
He's just a boy sweetheart.

SLOANE
Yeah, but I loved him, Dad.

JACK
I know you did. But someone else
will come along, I promise. They
always do.

James stares and can't help but wonder if he's the someone else, or just another one in line on the way to him.

JACK (CONT'D)
I have something that might cheer
you up.

Jack pulls an envelope out of his pocket. THEATER TICKETS.

James' face lights up - how could he have missed it.

JAMES
THE THEATER! That's where you're
hiding. The place you were never
able to go back to. You built it
here, didn't you?

He bolts, diving for the THEATER TICKETS and JUMPS TO-

Nothing. The memory starts back at the top. Her memory association for the tickets is the same memory. Sloane cries.

JAMES (CONT'D)
NO! Son of a bitch, how do I get
there? Think James, think.

He scans the room rapidly for a way there, coming up short.

Suddenly, the house begins to deconstruct itself piece by piece. The walls of Sloane's room start to tear away, breaking off and revealing a black void behind them.

Items in the room start to fade, furniture disappears into thin air, Sloane and Jack's faces distort. Lights flicker.

The doctors are locking in on James. They're about to extract him. He's running out of time. Unsure what's happening he runs out of the room into -

INT. SLOANE'S CHILDHOOD HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

James flings open drawers, clearing shelves with chaos - every corner of the room explored.

The black void inches closer as the floorboards fly away.

His gaze lands on the mantle, where he spots a photo of Sloane and Jack outside the theater. In the background behind them is a gazebo on the hill. He runs to it, ecstatic.

IT. FUCKING. EVAPORATES.

JAMES

NO! How do I get there? How do I get there?

He's got it.

JAMES (CONT'D)

The gazebo. I've been there before.

As most of the house succumbs to void, he heads into the only room remaining, his last shot -

INT. SLOANE'S CHILDHOOD HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He throws open cabinets, tossing out pots and pans. He's looking for something. Sweet relief sweeps across his face as he spots it - his golden ticket.

He pulls out a PICNIC BASKET and holds it above his head, victorious. With seconds to spare as the room melts away into the abyss, he laughs with pure joy and JUMPS TO -

EXT. PARK GAZEBO - DAY

James and Sloane lie side by side in a gazebo, gazing up at the overcast skies above.

Beside them, an open PICNIC BASKET houses beer and snacks.

The gazebo rests on a grassy hill, overlooking the main street of a small town below. Surrounding it, the silhouette of a city can be seen in the distance. Quaint. Picturesque.

James eagerly ghosts out of his body, looking around with anticipation. But as he stares down at the main street below, the theater is gone. A paved stretch of asphalt in its place, exactly as it was when they visited in the memory.

He's demoralized. Convinced he had found her. A defeated man.

JAMES

I'm out of ideas. I thought you'd be here.

With nowhere to turn, he lays back down, rejoining his body. They lay there a moment, the rising and falling of their breath the only sound in the space. He stands to leave.

SLOANE

Do we have to go so soon?

James lacks a plan or direction. Unsure what else to do.

JAMES

I guess we can stay a little while longer.

He reclaims his place next to her.

Off in the distance, city buildings drift off into the air. The edges of their world decaying around them as the memory disappears. The doctors have found him. James accepts defeat.

Sloane seems not to notice, cherishing the moment.

SLOANE

I could stay here forever. This is perfect.

James lets this sink in, regretful.

JAMES

I can't believe I forgot that we came here... but I remember it all now.

He turns to watch her face as she gazes up at the sky.

JAMES (CONT'D)

This is what I've been doing wrong. I was always searching for the big moments, but you never were. I understand now. I know why this memory is so special to you.

SLOANE

And why is that?

JAMES

Because nothing happened. It was just the two of us, alone up here. But that's just it... that's what made it perfect.

His eyes start to well up, overwhelmed by it all.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I remember everything I felt when we came here for the first time. Do you remember what you said to me?

Sloane is caught up in the reality of the memory, thinking this is a flirtatious game.

SLOANE

What did I say to you?

JAMES

Well, you propped yourself up on your elbow.

Sloane props herself up as he is describing.

SLOANE

Like that?

JAMES

Yeah, like that.

SLOANE

Then what happened?

JAMES

You put your hand on my chest -

She puts her hand on his chest.

JAMES (CONT'D)

-and said that no matter how many people you loved, you would never feel closer to anyone than you did to me in that moment.

SLOANE

And then what did you do?

James looks around, soaking this in.

JAMES

I looked at you - the way your hair fell on your shoulder, the goosebumps on your skin from the breeze, how perfectly your fingers fit between mine when you held my hand. And for the first time, I found the courage to tell you that I loved you.

She looks him dead in the eyes. Leaning in to kiss him.

SLOANE
I love you too.

JAMES
And then it rained.

At that, the sky opens up. A heavy rain begins to fall all around them. The gazebo a safe haven in the storm.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I remember it all so clearly now.

As James trails off, Sloane reaches for something on the blanket, we see it - our rosebud.

The RED BOTTLE CAP gleams in the light. Edges rough and unworn. An innocuous scrap of metal that will forever hold a significance to her from this moment on. She pockets it.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Inside the facility, the doctors work to extract James. The machines *WHIR* as they work, Clarkson sweating with fear as they hone in on James, triangulating him for extraction.

Suddenly, the machine starts pinging faster. James' tracking dot glows red on the display.

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP

CLARKSON
This isn't good.

DOCTOR SALINGER
What's going on?

The beeping stops abruptly. The room eerily silent.

DOCTOR SALINGER (CONT'D)
Where'd he go?

CLARKSON
He found her.

EXT. PARK GAZEBO - CONTINUOUS

Sloane turns knowingly to James. An enlightened look crosses her face, as if now aware of the confines of the memory.

She looks behind James, over his shoulder. He follows her gaze, in disbelief at what he is seeing.

Where moments earlier James saw only asphalt, the theater now stands in all of its glory. Sloane's childhood theater.

Hidden from him until this moment. Memory is a choice and James has finally made his - he is ready to remember.

SLOANE

I'm waiting for you.

James stumbles to his feet, taking off down the hill at full speed toward the theater doors.

The world of the memory collapses in on itself around him - the grass rolls up into bales, main street floats up into the sky brick by brick, trees unroot themselves, drifting away like balloons. James races through the rain, finally entering-

INT. THE THEATER - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The theater. Chandeliers shine brilliantly, illuminating a palatial lobby, grand and sweeping in design. Every detail immaculate and ornate. Sloane's theater of the mind.

Gold trim and lush maroon carpeting beckon him inward, inviting him deeper into the space. He ascends the grand staircase as he makes his way to the upper balcony.

INT. THE THEATER - UPPER BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

James emerges in the upper balcony of a majestic theater, regal in design. He looks down at the packed auditorium, noticing an oddity.

Each patron looks exactly alike, a face and contour we've grown all too accustomed to - Sloane's.

200 duplicates of Sloane sit in rows, captivated. The curtain rises and a performance begins, a memory acted out on stage.

STAGE SLOANE and STAGE JAMES bicker in the set - a theatrical recreation of Sloane and James' living room.

Stage Sloane carries a batch of white laundry to the couch, dumping it out to sort and fold. Stage James carries on.

STAGE JAMES

What am I supposed to do now? What sort of relationship is this if I can't rely on you?

Stage Sloane continues folding the laundry, noticing that the whites all have an odd, bluish tinge to them.

STAGE SLOANE

I forgot to go, I'm sorry. Let it go. I have a lot on my mind.

She digs through the pile, procuring a tiny BLUE SOCK. She holds it to her chest, unable to breathe, overtaken by grief.

She begins to cry quietly, working to hide her breakdown from Stage James. She stuffs the sock into her pocket.

STAGE JAMES

Of course you do. You always do.
Newsflash Sloane - it's not all about you.

Tears stream from her face. She rushes to the bathroom, locking herself inside.

In theatrical fashion, Stage Sloane and Stage James stand on opposite sides of the door mid-stage. Stage Sloane tries to stifle her sobs in a towel, while Stage James presses her.

STAGE JAMES (CONT'D)

Again? What's going on Sloane? Why do you keep acting out like this? Why are you doing this? I didn't say anything to hurt you, you're overreacting.

Stage Sloane gathers herself, catching her breath.

STAGE SLOANE

I heard somethings once, about pilots. If two planes were flying perfectly parallel to one another, they could continue on forever, never moving farther apart. But if one of the pilots changed their direction, even a single click, they would slowly start to drift away from one another. It would be so subtle that they wouldn't notice it right away. Every time they'd look out their window, they'd see each other, side by side. But all the while, the separation between them would be growing. Eventually, they'd look out their window and the other plane would just be gone. Nowhere in sight.

She holds her breath, hoping he will understand.

STAGE JAMES

I really think you need to talk to a doctor. This is getting out of hand.

She slides down the door, head in her hands. The blue sock nestled in her palm. It's too late. She's lost him.

The spotlight fades as the performers bow and exit. The curtain falls.

199 of the duplicate versions of Sloane rise from their seats, exiting the theater. Leaving only one. THE Sloane.

The doors to the theater open once more as she looks around, confused. An army of duplicate versions of James file in, 30 total, and take seats around Sloane.

The curtain opens once again and a different version of the same scene begins, the performance slanted with James' bias.

Stage Sloane folds laundry as Stage James converses with her. His tone softer, kinder. The sock is nowhere to be seen.

STAGE JAMES (CONT'D)

All I'm asking for is to be able to rely on you. What am I supposed to do?

STAGE SLOANE

I can't be there for you 24/7. You're just going to have to accept that. Newsflash James - it's not all about you.

STAGE JAMES

I don't need it to be. I just want to know you're here for me. I miss the old us.

At this, Sloane stands sobbing, just like before. Only this time she's hysterical over what appears to be nothing.

He pleas with her through the door as she sobs.

STAGE JAMES (CONT'D)

Let me know what's going on, Sloane. I just want to help.

STAGE SLOANE

Leave me alone, there's nothing you can do to help me.

STAGE JAMES

I really think you need to talk to a doctor. I don't want this to get out of hand. I'm here for you.

Sloane realizes this is noticeably different. It dawns on her. He's here. His presence biasing the memory performance.

Sloane rushes to her feet, wheeling around and searching the auditorium for him. Their eyes lock.

As the curtain falls once again, James disappears from the balcony, making his way down to Sloane below. The duplicate versions of James begin filing out of the auditorium.

James gets lost in the sea of duplicates as Sloane pushes her way through, trying to discern which one is the real him.

Finally, as they all file out, only one remains. James. He runs down the aisle toward her, sweeping her up in his arms.

They embrace, all of the anger and questions pushed aside for a moment as they are reunited at last.

After a prolonged beat James pulls back, searching her face, a million questions on the tip of his tongue, but all he can mutter is -

JAMES

Why, Sloane? Why did you do this?

SLOANE

You don't understand. I can explain-

JAMES

What is there to explain?

His words are biting, cold, harsh. Betraying his pain.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I loved you, I still do. But you don't love me anymore.

SLOANE

You're wrong about that. There's something I have to tell you. The reason we're here. Something you don't remember.

With that, a projector kicks on from the back as the theater darkens. Memories of their relationship are projected on stage, coming to life in three dimensions around them.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

When we first fell in love, it was the kind of love I always dreamed of, unconditional. It made me feel whole. And for a while, that was enough. But then we decided we wanted something more. To make something out of the best parts of both of us.

The two stand awash in light as the images swarm around them and overtake the space.

They suddenly find themselves standing in the middle of the memories, which swirl around them, morphing as Sloane speaks.

Many of them are familiar to us, we've seen them before.

SLOANE (V.O.)

I got pregnant.

MEMORY PROJECTION - SLOANE AND JAMES' FRONT YARD

James climbs down a ladder as the two fight about Fiji. Sloane is noticeably pregnant, end of term.

SLOANE

The doctors said I can't fly. It's bad for the baby.

JAMES

Then we'll go another time. This is my job.

SLOANE (V.O.)

We cried the day we found out. We had a daughter and named her Emma.

MEMORY PROJECTION - HOSPITAL

Sloane holds a newborn baby in her arms, James coos at her as Sloane whispers to her.

SLOANE

Emma.

SLOANE (V.O.)

She was the most beautiful girl either of us could have imagined. We adored her and we gave her all the love we had.

MEMORY PROJECTION - BOTANICAL GARDEN

James frames the shot we've seen before, only this time Sloane holds Emma on her shoulders.

JAMES

Smile!

He snaps the photo, turning the viewfinder to Sloane.

SLOANE

Aww, that's adorable!

Emma giggles from atop her shoulders in approval.

MEMORY PROJECTION - SLOANE AND JAMES' HOME OFFICE

James stands over the photo printer once again as the photos emerge one by one, only this time they are not blank. They are all photos of Emma.

He flips the frame in front of him over, staring at the photo of Sloane and Emma from the botanical gardens adoringly.

MEMORY PROJECTION - SLOANE AND JAMES' DINING ROOM

A feast of Chinese food. Sloane and James sit opposite one another at the long table, Emma now seated between the two.

As they talk, Emma struggles to mimic their chopstick use, slipping and sending food flying.

Sloane bursts into laughter, cackling hysterically at the spectacle. James chuckles to himself.

MEMORY PROJECTION - SLOANE AND JAMES' BEDROOM

Sloane and James dressed to impressed for date night. James finishes fastening his cufflinks.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

I'm almost ready. I just need to put Emma down for the sitter and then I'll be good to leave.

She leans in and kisses James before heading out.

SLOANE (V.O.)

She was four when it happened. It was an honest mistake. And you have to believe me James, I never blamed you for it.

MEMORY PROJECTION - SLOANE AND JAMES' FRONT YARD

James walks along the sidewalk in front of their house, holding Emma by the hand. She notices something across the street, her small hand slips from his as she runs to it.

JAMES

EMMA, NO!

We hear the sound of the collision first as James' face watches on in horror, twisting into despair as he yells out in vain, willing it to stop as it happens.

We see it all in slow motion. Emma floating through the air, dress billowing in the wind as she drifts down. Serene as she glides to meet the asphalt below.

A lone shoe in the middle of the street. Broken glass.

James running, grief pouring out of his lungs as he wails.

The driver gets out of his car, distraught. It's a face we recognize, the STRANGER that approached James at the bar.

James kneels next to the small pile of floral print. Emma's still body. A growing pool of blood creeps toward him.

His face hardened. Unforgiving. A moment carved in stone.

SLOANE (V.O.)

But all you could do was blame yourself. We grieved together, I was there for you.

MEMORY PROJECTION - SLOANE AND JAMES' BEDROOM

The two hold one another in an embrace late at night. Tangled in their grief. Staring at the ceiling, unable to sleep.

SLOANE (V.O.)

But you were never able to forgive yourself, you couldn't cope with the guilt. The pain grew and grew until it eventually became too much for you to bear. I watched as you started to fade away. Your mind caved in on itself and you slowly erased Emma from your memory.

MEMORY PROJECTION - APPLE ORCHARD

Sloane and James walk through an apple orchard carrying Emma between them, swinging her by her arms.

They hoist her higher and James leans in to her face.

JAMES

I'm going to pack you nothing but
apples in your lunch for weeks!

Emma laughs as they lower her back down. She slowly starts to fade, a burlap sack taking her place, held between the two.

MEMORY PROJECTION - SLOANE AND JAMES' FRONT YARD

James finishes raking leaves into a neat pile. Sloane taps on the glass and waves. James turns to see Emma waving back.

She trounces through the piles of leaves, giggling with delight. James drops the rake and joins her, throwing up leaves, which shower down around her.

As the leaves rain down he turns, the yard now empty. Nothing but leaf piles. Emma is gone.

SLOANE (V.O.)

As things got worse, I helped you
to forget her. It was the only way
for you to move on.

MEMORY PROJECTION - SLOANE AND JAMES' FRONT ENTRY

Sloane gathers all the photos of Emma from around the house, boxing them up and carrying them outside. James watches from the door as she packs them into the car.

JAMES

There's got to be something else we
can try...

SLOANE

I think this will be good for both
of us.

JAMES

I can't let you do this. What will
I become?

SLOANE

We'll find out together.

She kisses him tenderly on the cheek, rubbing his back.

SLOANE (V.O.)

Taking care of you was easy, but
grieving alone was the hard part.

MEMORY PROJECTION - SLOANE AND JAMES' BEDROOM

Sloane stares up at the ceiling late at night, unable to sleep. James sleeps soundly, his back to her as she cries softly to herself.

SLOANE (V.O.)

I had no one to remember her with, forced to stand by as the memory of our daughter faded away. No one to recall her laugh with or wonder what she would have grown up to become. A whole life, gone.

MEMORY PROJECTION - SLOANE AND JAMES' UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

The locked door that James was unable to open. It swings back to reveal a NURSERY inside.

As we slowly push down the hallway toward the door, we glimpse a montage from inside the nursery.

- James and Sloane paint the empty room a soft blue
- James builds a crib with a HAMMER while a pregnant Sloane watches on
- Sloane hangs a mobile up over the crib, ready to burst
- James paces the nursery, sleepless and exhausted, rocking newborn Emma as she cries
- Sloane feeds Emma, nursing her from a rocking chair
- James reads to Emma, older now as she drifts to sleep
- An empty bed. James sobs, Sloane holds him in her arms
- Sloane paces the nursery alone at night, a wreck
- They pack up the mobile and break down the bed
- Sloane walks out of the room, now completely barren, closing it behind her and locking the door

SLOANE (V.O.)

Over time, it grew to be too much. I started resenting you for it. I wasn't able to love you the way I promised I would. I had to leave, but the pain stayed with me.

MEMORY PROJECTION - SLOANE AND JAMES' BATHROOM

Sloane slumps against the bathroom door, crying with the sock in her hands. James calls from the other side, oblivious.

SLOANE (V.O.)

When I heard about Vicaricorp, I sought them out, thinking I had found a new life for Emma.

MEMORY PROJECTION - VICARICORP LOBBY

Sloane shakes hands with Dr. Salinger and Clarkson.

SLOANE (V.O.)

She could be born again, in memory. Not just in mine, but in everyone's. I did it to preserve her, to share her. That way, if I overheard a stranger in line for coffee telling a story about their daughter, I could think to myself, 'maybe that's Emma.' It wouldn't matter whether or not it was, only that it could be. She'd be out there somewhere.

THEATER

Tears flow from James' eyes as he listens to Sloane's story. Shaking his head slowly from side to side in disbelief.

SLOANE

We reached an agreement. They could have everything as long as I got to keep some of the memories locked away. The painful ones, the ones that hurt. Memories that no one else should have to remember.

MEMORY PROJECTION - CEMETERY

A grave covered in uneven dirt. Snow falls gently on top of it. James tries to pull Sloane away, but she cries into his chest, inconsolable.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

I can't leave her...

MEMORY PROJECTION - OPEN FIELD

Emma runs in a field of grass, kicking up pollen in her wake. Sun streams through the blades, hair flowing behind her.

SLOANE (V.O.)

That way, when a stranger thought about her, they'd see only the golden hair of a four year old blowing in the breeze, not her lifeless body in the middle of the road.

THEATER

James' mind races as he listens, emotionally overwhelmed.

SLOANE

I did what I had to do to make sure she was never forgotten. And I found peace. No longer carrying the burden of remembering her on my own. It didn't matter that you couldn't remember her. I was able to love you again the way I wanted to - unconditionally.

He is stunned into silence, struggling to process this.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

I came here to say goodbye to her, to hold her in my arms one last time, but I was unable to let go. I couldn't leave. Not without one last thing. You. I knew if I stayed in here they'd send you to come find me. And then I could show you all of this. And we could say goodbye. Together.

At this, Sloane falls silent, studying James. Searching his face for some trace of recognition.

James stares blankly ahead, drowning at the prospect of this new reality. A truth he cannot accept.

JAMES

That can't be...

Sloane stays silent as his mind unravels, giving him time.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It's not true... I couldn't have...

James stumbles. Even as his mouth forms the words, we can tell he doesn't believe them.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I wouldn't just forget her.

His eyes plead with her, pained and desperate. Sloane remains patient, coaxing him along, gently nudging him to remember.

SLOANE

On Sunday mornings, you two would wake up early to make breakfast. It was always the same - blueberry chocolate chip pancakes.

He turns his back to her, rejecting her words, refusing to let himself believe.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

Every time it rained she would go outside to move the snails off the sidewalk so no one stepped on them.

JAMES

Stop it, Sloane.

He's angry now, jaw tightening at the possibility that she's telling him the truth.

SLOANE

We debated her middle name the whole time I was pregnant and finally gave her the name -

JAMES

- Rose. After my Mom.

Sloane's eyes go wide.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The doctors monitor the devices for any sign of James or Sloane. They suddenly notice an uptake in his brain activity as his graph goes haywire. A cacophony of medical *BEEPS* sing from the bay of monitors.

CLARKSON

His brain activity is spiking.

DOCTOR SALINGER

What's happening?

CLARKSON

I can't tell, he's still off our servers, but I've never seen anything like this.

INT. THEATER AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

James buries his face in his hands, his body weak, words almost inaudible.

JAMES
I remember her.

Sloane chokes back tears. James looks her square in the eye.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Emma.

She cries hearing him say her name after all these years. Sloane exhales a sigh of relief, embracing James. The man in her arms familiar to her once again.

Behind them, memories of Emma continue to project onto the stage, a life played out before them in shimmering beauty.

Repressed memories spill over, breaking through the levee of his mind. Years of bottled up grief push through the surface, brimming on his eyelashes and running down his cheeks.

The two are finally able to share in their grief.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry I did
this to you... that you had to face
all of this alone.

She quiets him, his regret of no value to either of them. She takes his face in her hands, wiping his tears away.

SLOANE
It's time for us to leave.

James looks at her, afraid.

JAMES
I can't go.

SLOANE
We have to.

JAMES
Please, Sloane.

His words heartfelt, unable to contemplate returning to the world he knows outside.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I just got her back. If I leave,
I'll lose her all over again.

SLOANE

But no matter what happens, you
have me.

She holds his hand in her own, assuring him that he's not alone. Not anymore.

James looks wistfully around the space, the light from the projector fluttering across his face.

He nods at Sloane, determined. Ready to face their future. She squeezes his hand tighter pulling him toward the stage.

On stage, he kneels down next to a projection of Emma. She grins at him, holding up a dandelion. His eyes glisten.

He reaches out to touch her, his hand passing through the beam of light, catching only the darkness behind it.

JAMES

(whispering)
Make a wish.

Emma takes a deep breath and blows the dandelion at him.

The seeds drift effortlessly throughout the theater, surrounding James and Sloane as they soar up into the rafters, flickering into oblivion.

Emma smiles at them before vanishing as the projector sputters off, plunging the stage into darkness.

Sloane guides him to the curtain. They stand before it, unable to know what awaits them on the other side.

She opens the curtain. James follows her lead, dependent on her bravery to carry them as it has countless times before.

Taking a leap of faith, they exit through, hand in hand.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sloane's eyes flutter open, the room blurry and out of focus. She begins to shake a thick fog, disoriented by the extended amount of time she spent under.

She comes to with a start, suddenly remembering where she is as she bolts up, searching around the examination room.

SLOANE

James?!

A team of doctors hold her down and try to calm her as she tries to catch a glimpse of James around them. Craning her neck as the onslaught of doctors closes in.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

Where's James?

They take her vitals, shining a light in her eyes and hooking her up to IVs.

DOCTOR GORDON

We just need you to stay still,
your body is under a lot of stress
at the moment.

As they work to stabilize her, she spots James across the table from her.

He is not conscious. Pandemonium surrounds him. His shirt unbuttoned as doctors attempt to defibrillate him.

SLOANE

What happened to him?

DOCTOR GORDON

His brain is a bit overwhelmed from
the spike.

He continues working on Sloane, his primary concern, as James is wheeled out of the room behind him. Sloane fights fatigue.

SLOANE

Where are they taking him?

DOCTOR GORDON

He's going to be fine. We need to
take him in for treatment.

Salinger pushes through the crowd, making his way to Sloane.

DOCTOR SALINGER

We were worried about you in there.

SLOANE

I'm not apologizing for what I did
if that's what you're looking for.

DOCTOR GORDON

Doctor Salinger, I'm going to have
to ask you to step back while she
stabilizes. You can speak to her
another time.

DOCTOR SALINGER
We're out of time.

Sloane waves Doctor Gordon off, sitting up, weak.

SLOANE
It's fine, I'm alright.
(to Salinger)
Go ahead and ask already.

DOCTOR SALINGER
If this changes anything-

SLOANE
This changes nothing. I want to go
through with this. Let's launch.

Doctor Salinger nods, appreciative, relieved - understanding the sacrifice she's making for them, for him.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - VICARICORP - LATER

Sloane stands over James' bed in a recovery ward. He survived, albeit with a tremendous toll on his brain.

He looks worse for wear as she surveys the damage - IVs protrude from his arms, a highway of tubes bringing fluids to and from his feeble body.

A litany of machines *HUM* and *BEEP* a melody beside him, as he sleeps, half from exhaustion and half from modern medicine.

Sensing her presence, he stirs, starting to wake up. His confused state dissipates as he returns to reality. Eagerly anticipating his real world reunion with Sloane.

She leans in to hug him, their first warm embrace in years.

SLOANE
You saved me.

James' responses are heavily sedated, strained but endearing.

JAMES
You let me win.

They share a smile. Sloane notices his wedding ring next to him on the side table, her face flushes.

SLOANE
You're going to be okay. You just
need to rest for a while.

She kisses him on the forehead.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

I just wanted to make sure that the first face you saw was mine.

His eyes fall heavy as she turns to leave. His voice calls out as she reaches the door, stopping to turn back.

JAMES

As a kid, I used to refuse to wear matching socks. It drove my Mom crazy. She'd send me back to my room to change every day before school so that I looked *presentable*. It never made any sense to me, who was going to care?

Sloane walks back inside, closer to James.

JAMES (CONT'D)

On the morning of the accident, I fought with her for a good ten minutes trying to get her dressed for school. She had two different sneakers picked out and wouldn't put on a matching pair.

Her breath catches as she sinks into the chair beside James' bed. He cries as he talks, voice stuck in his throat.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It finally dawned on me that I was becoming the parent I never wanted to be. It didn't matter. So I gave in, I let her wear a different shoe on each foot.

She reaches over to wipe the tear from his eye before it falls, but we notice that hers are already falling.

JAMES (CONT'D)

When they saw the mismatched shoes in the street, I'm sure everyone's first thought was that I was a terrible parent. How could I not have noticed? Why couldn't I pay attention the way that you did? But the truth is that I was only trying to be the father I wanted to be for her. I don't care what other people thought about me that morning, all I cared about was that she was happy. And she was *happy*, Sloane.

He remembers.

TITLE CARD: A WEEK LATER

INT. LEVEL UP BAR - DAY

Sloane sits at the same booth she met James at all those years ago, waiting for him one more time.

A second chance at a first date.

The door opens and he hobbles in, a cane supporting his weight and robbing him of his usual bravado.

He joins Sloane in the booth, a foreign yet familiar energy hanging in the air between the two. Where to begin?

SLOANE

How are you feeling?

JAMES

Doing well. The doctors say that my brain is healing quickly - I should have the emotional maturity of a 12 year old in a few weeks or so, so things are really looking up.

He bears that boyish grin she fell in love with.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I'm just kidding... they doubt I'll ever make it past 8.

She smiles back.

JAMES (CONT'D)

How'd the launch go?

SLOANE

Even better than expected. They're going to move forward out of beta next quarter. IPO to follow.

JAMES

You should be proud. I think this is a good thing.

SLOANE

I think so too.

JAMES

And how are you feeling?

SLOANE
 Minor headaches from time to time,
 but otherwise...

She trails off. They've both run out of runway for small talk, but are unprepared for takeoff.

JAMES
 So, 'Kick-Ass Bitch,' huh?

Sloane laughs.

SLOANE
 You saw that?

JAMES
 Oh yeah, I saw that.

SLOANE
 I was seventeen, lay off.

JAMES
 Why don't you show me the ropes?
 For old time's sake.

INT. LEVEL UP BAR - LATER

James plays SPACE INVADERS while Sloane instructs from behind him. The roles reversed, but the sexual tension ever-present.

He plays for quite some time with her encouragement until -
 GAME OVER.

The leaderboard flashes. They are both disheartened to see that "K.A.B." has fallen to 3rd place.

JAMES
 Looks like you've got some work to do.

SLOANE
 We need to get more tokens. I'm taking it back if it takes all night.

Another lull. An awkward silence settles between the two.

They take in the bar. Younger couples playing arcade games around them, drinking pitchers of cheap beer, whispering sweet nothings to the sounds of top 40 radio.

The two of them stand amidst it all, stuck in the past, unsure how to move forward.

A question lingers that they both want answered but no one wants to ask.

JAMES
What are we doing?

SLOANE
I don't know.

Silence.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
I haven't been able to decide if this feels like a first date or a fiftieth.

He shrugs, sharing in her sentiment with no solution to pose.

JAMES
Is this the last time I'll see you until the next coma?

She doesn't laugh, lost in thought.

SLOANE
I don't know what you saw in there... and I'm not sure I want to know. But do you still feel the same way about me?

James has never seen her so serious.

JAMES
There was a point in time when I was convinced I hated you and I still wore our wedding ring every day.

He lets this sink in.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I don't love you in spite of what I saw in there, Sloane. I love you because of it. That's not going to change.

Sloane reaches out, taking his hand in hers. There are more miles to travel, rafters to climb and high scores to chase.

SLOANE
Can we try this again?

JAMES
I thought you'd never ask.

SLOANE

I just have one important question for you.

JAMES

What's that?

SLOANE

Are you still an IPA guy?

INT. LEVEL UP BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Sloane leans over the bar to get the BARTENDER's attention.

BARTENDER

What can I get for you?

SLOANE

Two draft IPAs.

BARTENDER

You've got it.

She takes a seat at the bar awaiting her drinks and overhears the conversation between TWO WOMEN seated next to her.

WOMAN 1

How are the kids?

WOMAN 2

They're good. My youngest just went back to school yesterday so the house is finally quiet again.

Sloane eavesdrops for a brief moment, a long-awaited inner peace washes through her.

Turning to the strangers, she taps one of the women on the shoulder, borrowing her attention to interject.

SLOANE

I'm sorry to interrupt, but I couldn't help overhearing you mention your child. Boy or a girl?

The women welcome her warmly into their conversation, turning their chairs to face her.

WOMAN 2

A daughter. She's five.

SLOANE

Tell me about her.

We don't hear the woman's words, we merely watch Sloane's glowing face as she listens to her paint a verbal portrait of her child.

Sloane's eyes glisten as she is finally able to do what she's long dreamed of - listen.

Wondering if the tales they are recounting might be one of her memories.

Imagining her own daughter. Emma.

It might not be.

But it could be.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.