

HEROES **AND** **VILLAINS**
ENTERTAINMENT

SEMPER MATERNUS

Written by

Laura Kosann

Creative Artists Agency
Stephanie Smalling & Albert Lee
424-288-4000

Heroes and Villains Entertainment
Christine Coggins
424-319-1400

ACT ONE:

OVER BLACK.

We hear the repetitive ROAR of the ocean. Its pitch is flawless and too artificial to be real; like a white noise machine pumped up to FULL VOLUME. The sound gets louder and louder, until it becomes deafening. Like we are inside of it. Then it slowly morphs into...

FADE IN:

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT. DAY.

...the CRASH of the ocean on TV. It's The Discovery Channel.

We PULL BACK to REVEAL an empty, small studio apartment. It's warm, bright and hospital-corners clean.

The nature program's NARRATOR talks pleasantly...

NARRATOR (O.S.)

The sea squirt will technically eat parts of itself in a case of auto-cannibalism. While the notion seems odd to us, this is a natural part of its life cycle. It consumes itself to grow...

The narrator continues to DRONE as --

Anna (30's) enters from a small bathroom with a COSMETICS CASE of toiletries. She puts them in a half-packed SUITCASE lying on the bed. Does it with care, as she does all things.

She talks into a landline PORTABLE PHONE, which is jammed under her ear.

ANNA

...if I want to say "check" to myself as I'm packing each thing, I'll say it. It's not like I shout it. I say it quietly to myself.

A woman we'll come to know as IZZY (20's), Anna's sister, talks on the other end.

Izzy sits in a **HOSPITAL BREAK ROOM** wearing SCRUBS and drinking from a crusty cup of coffee. Taps her foot, impatiently restless.

We INTERCUT between them, but mostly stay with Anna.

IZZY

It's like when someone *has* to count on their fingers when they're doing simple math. You cannot pack an item without saying "check." That's a tick --

ANNA

-- it was such a peaceful morning.

IZZY

I am just saying...you over-compensate in life with cleanliness. It's how you avoid your feelings. You replace necessary therapy with organization. But. No biggie.

ANNA

Did you call me at 8 AM to tell me this?

Izzy spots a MALE NURSE in the doorway, who motions her to hurry up. She nods and smiles. Then gives him the FINGER. He rolls his eyes and goes.

IZZY

(pivots)

Anyways...I thought you were there already.

ANNA

You called me on my landline. How would I be there already?

IZZY

Well I forgot because I don't know anyone with a landline. Besides Lucy Ricardo.

A CRASH of waves emits loudly from Anna's TV.

Anna jumps at the sound. Glances nervously at the TV. Then looks around. Turns a COUCH CUSHION over, searching for the remote.

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

You OK?

ANNA

(to herself)

Can never find the remote when I need to find the remote --

IZZY
Annie.

ANNA
What?

A beat.

IZZY
(concerned)
Nothing just...your breathing
changed.

Anna sighs, fed up.

ANNA
Izzy. Christ. You're a stalker.

IZZY (O.S.)
OK. I'd be a *great* fucking stalker.

Anna gives up on the remote. Zips up her suitcase, quickly.

Anna spots a framed PHOTOGRAPH on her nightstand. She goes to it and picks it up. Pictured is a smiling, 8-year-old boy.

Anna studies it with a tinge of emotion.

IZZY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I think you need more time off.
That's all I'm going to say.

Anna puts the framed photograph in her PURSE.

ANNA
It's been long enough this time and
I need the money. And whoever she
is...money's clearly no object.

IZZY (O.S.)
I told you I'd lend you --

ANNA
-- I'm not taking money from my
little sister who can barely afford
her apartment --

IZZY
-- Well. Stalking doesn't pay --

ANNA
-- Who is also on my Netflix
account. Anyways I miss it. Being
around it.

IZZY

I think it's time for a new profession.

ON TV -

NARRATOR

And while the baby sea star might appear innocent...don't be fooled. They will, in fact, eat their own siblings as a means of survival.

ANNA

There's an idea.

IZZY

What?

ANNA

Nothing. I love you. I've got to go.

IZZY

Don't drop off the face of the earth again.

ANNA

I'll try not to.

Hangs up.

Another CRASH of waves emits from the television. Anna side-eyes it, nervously. She sits for a second. Then wrings her hands and takes a breath.

Anna closes her eyes as the SOUNDS of the ocean continue and become...

EXT. DOCKS. SAN FRANCISCO BAY. DAY.

...the *natural* CRASH of the surf on San Francisco bay.

Anna stands near the docks bordering the water. She shifts, visibly squeamish.

Anna's eyes land on the water, then quickly dart away, avoiding it.

She looks down at a scrap of paper in her hand with an ADDRESS on it. Looks back up.

This is where she was told to go. *What's here?*

VOICE (O.S.)
 Anna Hunte. It is a pleasure to
 make your acquaintance.

Anna looks towards where the voice came from...

No one's there. Then --

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Miss Davis asks that you please
 board for your journey to Searidge
 Island. Thank you.

ANNA
 What -- hello?

VOICE (O.S.)
 Hello, Anna.

Anna turns both ways, confused. Then --

She notices a small, modern DRONE BOAT docked a few feet
 away. It has tinted windows, sleek lines, and is a shade of
 yellow usually reserved for Maseratis.

This is where the voice is coming from.

ANNA
 Hello?

VOICE (O.S.)
 Hello, Anna.

Anna realizes the voice belongs to a DIGITAL ASSISTANT.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT
 Miss Davis asks that you please
 board. Thank you.

ANNA
 Um --

DIGITAL ASSISTANT
 -- What can I help you with, Anna?

ANNA
 I...didn't realize we'd be taking a
 boat. I don't like water.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT
 I did not get that, can you try
 again?

ANNA DIGITAL ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Is there another way? Can you repeat that?

ANNA (CONT'D)
No one said anything about an
island. What is Searidge --

DIGITAL ASSISTANT
(automated)
-- Searidge island is San
Francisco's 8th largest island,
first purchased by Larry Ellison,
former CEO of Oracle Corporation.

ANNA DIGITAL ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
No, I was/ /Can you repeat that?

A beat.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Can you repeat that?

Anna takes a deep breath. This is frustrating.

Then she fixates on the ocean and the sound of the waves. She can't look away and is now in her own world. Trapped in something.

CLOSE UP of Anna - the color drains from her face. She breathes choppy breaths. Beads of sweat form on her forehead. She sways with nausea, close to collapse.

Anna catches the railing in front of her. White-knuckles it. Then slowly gets her balance back.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Miss Davis asks that you please
board. Thank you.

Anna looks back towards the city, considering it. Then she steels herself and walks towards the boat.

Anna's legs shake as she puts one sandaled foot on a step. Then the other.

The vinyl floor SQUEAKS as one of her feet slips out from underneath her. She catches at the boat's railing...

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Please watch your step.

...too late. Anna's shin SLAMS into the corner of a step. She winces.

Anna limps onto the boat and walks carefully to the front. She sits. Then fingers at the raw WOUND forming on her shin. A small stream of BLOOD trickles down her leg.

Anna closes her eyes, fearfully. Waits.

A long beat. The boat doesn't move. *Why aren't they going?*

Anna slowly opens her eyes. The moment she does, the boat jolts forward with a RUMBLE and begins to move, as if it was waiting for her attention.

CUT TO:

INT. DRONE BOAT. OCEAN.

We SOAR over the drone boat as it cuts a path through the Pacific.

Anna looks at the blood running slowly down her leg. She takes off the button-down shirt she's wearing and wipes at the wound with it.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (O.S.)
We are approaching Searidge island -

Anna swerves towards the voice and a gust of wind sends her shirt FLYING into the ocean.

VOICE (O.S.)
---San Francisco's 8th largest island, first purchased by Larry Ellison, former CEO of Oracle Corporation.

Anna frowns at her shirt now floating, limply in the water. Then she looks up. Gazes towards the horizon. She focuses on the blue skies.

Suddenly, a BOY'S voice drifts in, a MEMORY playing inside Anna's head...

BOY (O.S.)
How far back does the sky go?

Anna immediately squeezes her eyes closed, trying to shut the voice out.

FLASH TO -

CLOSE UP of Anna's hands playing with the fingers of a boy's hands. We see limbs, hands, feet - no faces - on dock on a LAKE, with the sun setting on the horizon. The background is vividly colorful, but out of focus.

Anna's hand catches the boy's hand. Points it towards the sky.

ANNA
Goes on forever.

The boy's hand playfully slaps at Anna's hand, again and again.

BOY
(playful)
And ever. And ever. Ever. Ever....

Anna and the boy start to giggle...

BACK TO PRESENT.

...the LAUGHTER continues to echo as Anna blinks hard and snaps herself out of the trance. Then it FADES OUT.

Anna shifts her gaze and notices the shore of a small, private island in the near distance. We follow her gaze to see...

A WOMAN sitting on a rock on the shore, waiting. A STROLLER sits next to her. The woman is disarming and casual, with baggy torn Levi's, a white tee-shirt and long hair. Zero frills.

The woman gives the boat a warm wave. Anna waves politely back.

The boat reaches **THE SHORE**. The woman walks the stroller over.

Anna climbs out painstakingly.

WOMAN
Anna.

The woman immediately hugs Anna, who, in turn, freezes up. Caught off guard.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Sorry -- I do hugs.

Anna steps back.

ANNA

It's nice to meet you, Jennifer.

WOMAN

It's Nicole, actually. Nicole Swanson.

A beat.

ANNA

I -- don't understand. You're Jennifer Davis. You and I talked on the phone?

NICOLE SWANSON (40's) glances back at the private island. Then at Anna. Sheepish.

NICOLE

I am -- How do I say this? Somewhat high profile. I don't feel comfortable with someone telling friends, family...anything about me from the interview. Or even telling them they're coming to work for me...or knowing around where I might be located, before I meet them. Get a sense of them. And yes...before they sign an NDA once they've arrived.

A beat.

Anna's eyes flicker with annoyance. Nicole picks up on it. Saves face.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

If you want to turn right back around I would completely understand. And I'll pay you for your trouble. Believe me, it's happened before. Or you can come use my computer and google my real name like you probably did Jennifer Davis' and then decide. But look, in the interview...that was really me. I'm just a Mom like all the other Moms you've worked for. Just...under an alias. Like what actors do when they check into hotels.

Anna stares at Nicole, skeptical, not hiding anything. It's clear she values honesty.

Nicole stares at her, a little pleadingly.

ANNA

Honestly I -- never really google who I go work for. I think I may have said on the phone --

NICOLE

-- you hate tech. You have a flip phone.

Anna nods.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Literally one of the reasons I hired you. The baby nurse lived on her phone. And every nanny does now.

Nicole waits, a little breathlessly. Looks at Anna like she's a life raft.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

You said on the phone you're there for the Mom as much as you are there for the baby.

(quieter, genuine)

I really liked that.

Anna takes this in. She doesn't like disappointing people. She glances towards the sun on the horizon-line. It's reminiscent of the sunset we just saw in the flashback.

Anna turns back to Nicole, softening. Deciding on something.

ANNA

Is this Aidan?

Nicole lets out a dramatic sigh of relief.

NICOLE

Gah. Thank god. I may have had to kidnap you.

Anna smiles and approaches the stroller.

It has thick, black NETTING over it. Anna peers through it...

Inside is AIDAN, an 8-month-old baby who is made for a Gerber ad. Even through the barrier, we can make out his bright, wide BLUE EYES.

ANNA

Hey Buddy.

Anna puts her hand on the netting.

ANNA (CONT'D)
What is this for?

NICOLE
He's prone to really terrible allergies. Since he was born. And one is rare -- EPP. Erythropoietic Protoporphyrria. He can't be in the sun -- he gets, just horrible blisters and the netting keeps out the UV rays. You can't take him outside without it. I...should have told you he had some health issues -
-

ANNA
-- no it's just...is he OK?

NICOLE
I'm just happy he's here. It was...scary. He had such a rough go of it when he was born. Was in and out of the hospital so much those first few months. **Poor thing**. We're OK now though.

The drone boat's engine RUMBLES.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Anyway I hope Sycorax didn't ruin the trip. She has no bedside manner.

ANNA
Sycorax?

Nicole motions towards the drone boat.

NICOLE
From The Tempest. I name all the digital assistants after Shakespeare characters. It's the English major in me.

Anna's eyes flicker across the opulent private island.

ANNA
You majored in English?

NICOLE

No -- I just wish I did. I am a tech entrepreneur trapped in an English major's body.

ANNA

Which one was she? Sycorax.

NICOLE

An evil witch. Machiavellian. Such a little fucker honestly.

The drone boat slowly moves away from the shore. The two women watch it go.

As Anna's eyes follow the drone boat, she suddenly sees something in the water, floating:

A BALD HUMAN HEAD

Its bright, pearly surface SHINES.

Terror overcomes Anna's face. She blinks a few times in disbelief.

Then suddenly, the object slowly comes into clarity:

It's just A CREAM BUOY.

Nicole looks to where Anna's gaze is fixed. Spots the buoy. Then looks back at Anna, confused.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Um...shall we?

Anna gathers her breath and nods. The two women begin to walk up the beach.

CUT TO:

A **STONE PATH** lined with plants, reminiscent of a Japanese garden. Meticulously manicured. Out of place. Far too OCD for beachside living.

Anna takes out her flip phone and looks down at it:

No service.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

(off the phone)

There's only wifi at the house. The cell phone company is supposed to come out in the next few days and find an alternative for you.

ANNA

I like to call my sister Izzy every now and then...that's it really.

Nicole leans in to Anna conspiratorially.

NICOLE

(sotto)

I don't like people either.

Anna relaxes a little as they approach a **GATE** leading into Nicole's house; a stunning, mid-century modern structure.

As they pass through the gate, another DIGITAL ASSISTANT chimes in...

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (O.S.)

Welcome back, Ms. Swanson.

NICOLE

Speaking of sisters. Goneril from King Lear. She poisoned hers.

Nicole opens the door to the house for Anna.

ANNA

All women. I like that.

NICOLE

See, and most people say "they're all villains." We're going to get along.

INT. FOYER. CONTINUOUS.

A stunning foyer with vaulted ceilings. Danish modern meets Japanese minimalism. Antiseptic cleanliness.

Anna takes it all in, in slight awe.

NICOLE

Hospital corners clean. I know. I think cleaning is how I avoid my feelings.

Anna smirks.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

What?

ANNA

Nothing -- it's funny. My little sister. She *just* said something like that about me before I left.

NICOLE

They don't get it!

ANNA

Not at all.

Anna's eyes go to the only color in the room:

An enormous, LORETTA LUX PHOTOGRAPH floating high above everything:

INSERT PHOTOGRAPH: Pictured is a girl with white-blond hair wearing a blue dress, standing against a sky filled with clouds. Her eyes are glowing and wide, but her stare is dead. There's something eerie and surreal about her.



NICOLE

Dorothea. That's the name of the photograph. See how her eyes follow you everywhere? Like the Mona Lisa. And she's so high that you can actually see her from most corners of the house. I'm a bit of a photography nut. Do you like it? Some people think she's creepy.

Anna shakes her head.

ANNA

(genuine)

I think it's sort of beautiful, actually.

Nicole nods graciously, and gestures down a hall. The two walk down it, then make their way into...

INT. KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS.

...an enormous chef's kitchen. Made for an Architectural Digest feature.

Nicole starts to undo the netting on Aidan's stroller. Anna unzips her suitcase. Takes a tattered book out. Leafs through it.

NICOLE

Whats's that?

ANNA

This encyclopedia of health issues I have from my Mom. She is -- was -- a registered nurse. My sister is too. I started as one. Thought I'd see if Aidan's allergy was in here.

NICOLE

(amused)

You can use my computer.

Anna shrugs, a little embarrassed.

ANNA

It's a nostalgia thing, I guess.
(soft, more to herself)
Like I'm carrying her around with me.

Anna draws her finger down the E section.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I don't see it. May have had a different name for it back then.

NICOLE

A fellow workaholic. Get settled in! There's no need to get to it immediately.

Suddenly, Anna spots a FORM sitting on the counter, pen atop it, on a neat, gold TRAY. The NONDISCLOSURE AGREEMENT.

Nicole glances at it too, a little self-conscious.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Um -- you can take it back to your room if you'd like. Look it over. It's pretty standard.

Anna goes to the counter and picks up the pen.

She gives the NDA a quiet, thorough read-through. Then signs.

Nicole watches, a little surprised.

ANNA

Not my first one actually.

NICOLE

Oo. Who?

ANNA

I'll just say she slept with Tom Cruise in the nineties.

NICOLE

OK so you haven't narrowed it down for me at all.

ANNA

(laughing)

That's the point.

Nicole opens the net on the stroller.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Did you want me to feed him?

NICOLE

No I'll do that and put him down. Take tonight to get unpacked. Dinner will be ready soon. We'll eat together.

Nicole takes Aidan out of the stroller and cradles him.

Anna walks over to take a closer look. Studies Aidan, warmly. He stares, wide-eyed back at her.

CLOSE UP of Aidan's eyes: Anna's REFLECTION glows, a little warped, in his irises. This will often happen when she stares at him.

ANNA

So cute. And mellow.

Nicole gestures at a large door past the kitchen.

NICOLE

That's me there. Your room is down that hall. Second door to the left. The only room overlooking the ocean.

Anna smiles feebly, not able to bring herself to say she hates water. Nicole and Aidan disappear into her bedroom.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

A sleek and impersonal guest room. All amenities, no warmth.

Anna unpacks as the sounds of waves CRASH beyond the open windows, visibly bothering her. She goes and closes each window, one by one.

Now the waves are muffled, but the sound still nags at the room.

Anna attempts to ignores it.

Anna sets a small, ALARM CLOCK on her nightstand. Straightens it.

Then she notices a sleek, large glass MIRROR lying flush, on the wall. It's razor thin. Anna goes to it.

She looks at her reflection, then brushes her fingers across the mirror to REVEAL...

It's actually a SMART TV. Turns on immediately.

ON TV --

The business news. A male, TALKING HEAD.

Anna touches at it, amused, attempting to change the channel. She's confused how to work it.

She gives up and goes back to unpacking.

Suddenly, Anna's interrupted by Nicole's voice:

NICOLE (O.S.)
Every problem is a software
problem. It can be solved with
code. Especially the personal
ones...

Anna turns to face Nicole...

ANNA
What?

We REVEAL it's Nicole on the screen, being interviewed on
SQUAWK BOX.

ON TV --

A SPLIT SCREEN with Nicole and a Joe-Kernen-type TALKING
HEAD.

NICOLE
...the human ones. If I can solve
those I'm doing what I need to.
Changing the world.

TALKING HEAD
You're also making billions of
dollars.

NICOLE
Sure. That too.

TALKING HEAD
I'm just stating a fact. What's the
valuation? 39 billion?

NICOLE
40. But that's not what I wanted to
talk about today. The reason we are
diving, head first, into the world
of fertility is not just so that
women who want to be Mothers can be
Mothers. It's also so that women
don't have to feel accountable when
they have trouble conceiving. Like
there's something wrong with them.

Anna stops what she's doing, intrigued.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

As a society, we make them feel that way, don't we? Like it's *their* problem. Well I want to make it my problem. As a woman who had struggles...tragic struggles...in my own pregnancy journey. This step for Renoven as a company, was not a choice. It was a necessity.

With that last line, Nicole stares, straight at the camera.

Anna stares back.

INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

The two women sit, over dinner, at a white, marble dining room table.

Anna eyes the grandiose PLACE SETTINGS and long tapered CANDLES, all lit. This took effort.

ANNA

(off the food)

This is very good.

(looks towards the kitchen)

Do you --

Anna stops herself. Nicole laughs.

NICOLE

It's OK. Yes I cook. No I don't have help. An array of machines clean this place. You'll see. Help's...not really my style. Plus I'm very private.

ANNA

I get that. I saw you...on the news in my room.

NICOLE

Oh god. That's embarrassing.

ANNA

Please. I'm embarrassed. I'm -- so out of it. I didn't realize who you are by just your name. It sounds incredible. What you're doing.

Nicole shrugs.

NICOLE

I'm just helping people the way you help people.

Anna shakes her head, self-effacing.

ANNA

On an exponentially larger scale.

NICOLE

No, no. You change one life, you change many. I believe that.

Anna smiles, appreciatively. Like she needed to hear that.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Anyway for me it's personal. I had more miscarriages with my ex-husband than Pete Davidson has women better-looking than him. And then...the stillbirth...that hurt me. It will all drive you insane, really. Absolutely out of your fucking mind. So...what problem is more important to solve than all of that? It's an enigma. Isn't it? One of life's big mysteries.

ANNA

Infertility?

NICOLE

No. Pete Davidson.

Anna snorts and laughs. Then gets serious again.

ANNA

(earnest)

I'm sorry. About the stillbirth.

Nicole nods appreciatively.

NICOLE

(matter of fact)

You have a uterus that won't hold. Over and over, it won't hold. But everything else in your life...it holds. And if it doesn't hold you make it hold. But this thing...it's out of your control. I couldn't handle that. Anything being out of my control. With Aidan I had a sperm donor and froze my eggs.

(MORE)

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I plugged my body with so many hormones I probably will have cancer by the time I'm 60. That's what we're forced to do as women, isn't it? Go to war on our bodies. I don't want women to have to do that. I don't want our daughters to have to do that.

Anna leans back, taking this in. She can't help but be inspired.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

We can change the world. Truly. Every problem is a software problem. It can be solved with code.

ANNA

Yes -- you said that during the interview.

NICOLE

I guess it's my mantra. Some people say "my body is a temple." I say that.

Nicole takes a sip of wine, then realizes she's monopolized the conversation.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Ah. Tech comes into the conversation and I'm a narcissistic encyclopedia. Tell me about you. I should probably know *why* you hate tech so much...

ANNA

Those records should be sealed.

NICOLE

Come on.

ANNA

I really shouldn't.

NICOLE

Anna.

ANNA

Yeah?

A beat.

NICOLE
I am...so fucked up. Like so crazy -
-

Anna starts to laugh.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
-- Seriously! There is nothing you
can say to make me judge you. Try
me.

Anna considers this.

ANNA
Well -- ironically I was sort
of...in tech.

Nicole's eyes widen in shock.

NICOLE
Really? I mean no offense. I just
wouldn't expect --

ANNA
-- No it's fine. Just in college.
Nothing past that. I have one of
those math brains. Good with
computers. Really good at
coding...got a scholarship for it
actually.

Nicole's impressed.

ANNA (CONT'D)
And then. Um...

Anna trails off.

NICOLE
What?

ANNA
It's...embarrassing. And you *just*
hired me.

NICOLE
Come on. We all have our skeletons.

ANNA
I was young. Just -- remember that.

Nicole impatiently gestures her to keep going...

ANNA (CONT'D)
I had this boyfriend.

NICOLE
(conspiratorial)
Mm-hm.

ANNA
I caught him...cheating on me.
Facebook messages. You know, that
whole deal. I was obsessed with
looking at his phone. Pouring over
his social media. It
became...almost addictive. You
know?

Nicole nods. She does.

ANNA (CONT'D)
And when I discovered what he
did...I hacked into his computer
and sent his entire pornography
history to the whole campus.
Students. Teachers. Everyone.

Nicole spits out her wine. A pause.

NICOLE
Woww. You are my new personal hero.

ANNA
(laughs)
That's what Izzy said. Of course I
got expelled. And then it
became...a hard time for me.
And -- I don't know. I never wanted
to touch it after that. Tech.
Social media. Smartphones. It all
made me nauseas. I didn't like what
it made me become. That...anger.
And the guy...he wrote this long,
facebook post about the whole
thing. It's embarrassing. Even
though it's hard to find...it's
there. Sometimes a potential
employer sees it when they're
digging. Doesn't hire me.

NICOLE
To go from that...to nannying?

ANNA
Well like I said I was a registered
nurse first. Like Mom.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

But then a nanny job came up while I was working at the hospital. It was just supposed to be part time. But I absolutely loved it. My favorite thing is working with kids. It's selfish really. I get anxious sometimes. And kids...they make that go away.

NICOLE

(sarcastic)

Yeah. Adults don't have that gift, do they?

ANNA

Absolutely not.

Both women laugh.

NICOLE

Did you ever want your own? Kids.

A beat. Anna shifts, uncomfortable.

ANNA

I do. I did. I have a son.

NICOLE

Oh. Where is he?

Anna's suddenly ashen.

ANNA

I'd sort of prefer not to talk about him. If you don't mind.

NICOLE

Oh. Of course. I'm sorry.

A long beat.

Then suddenly, something BUZZES.

Anna startles and looks towards the floor, where a small and extremely sleek square, glass object glides towards some crumbs.

It's a ROOMBA ON STEROIDS. MOVES LIKE A SHARK IN WATER.

Vacuums the crumbs up. Then exits the dining room.

Anna's eyes widen as she watches it go, again impressed. Turns back to Nicole.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
You'll get used to them.

Both women take a bite of their food. Nicole eyes Anna. Hesitates, then decides something.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Anna. Can I do something for you?

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Nicole sits on a laptop, typing complicated CODE. A TUMBLER with a whiskey neat, sits next to her.

Anna sits nearby, nervously watching.

ANNA
Is this legal?

NICOLE
What do you want to hear?

Anna studies Nicole, who types with a vengeance.

ANNA
Seriously...you don't have to do this. It's just a stupid facebook post. Most people don't even find it.

NICOLE
It's the principle. You can consider it an early holiday tip. But more importantly, a nice, big "fuck you," to all the cheaters. My ex-husband cheated. We have to have each other's backs don't you think? Take care of each other?

Anna watches Nicole, somewhat touched by this. Nicole proudly turns the computer towards her.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
All set.

Anna looks at a FACEBOOK ACCOUNT on the screen. Scrolls down the page.

After a few moments --

ANNA
How did you...it's gone?

NICOLE

I have a slight tendency to make
other women's problems my problem.

Anna stares at the computer in disbelief. Then she looks at
Nicole, ambiguously.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

What?

ANNA

You just...remind me of my little
sister. Like, you both scare me and
impress me.

NICOLE

Uh. Thank you?

Anna nods, confirming it's a compliment.

ANNA

You're welcome.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Anna takes the small, framed photograph of the boy out of her
purse. Set it on the nightstand next to the bed.

She stares at it for a moment. There's pain behind her eyes.
Then suddenly, she sings a few lines of a song to the
photograph...

ANNA

*Why are there so many songs about
rainbows? And what's on the other
side? Rainbows are visions. But
only illusions. And rainbows have
nothing to hide. So we've been told
and some choose to believe it. But
I know they're wrong wait and see.
Somebody we'll find it, The Rainbow
Connection. The lovers. The
dreamers and me.*

Anna picks the photograph up and kisses it.

Puts it back down. Turns her light out and goes to sleep.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. DAWN.

Muffled, pop music ECHOES from somewhere in the house. Anna
lays in bed, fast asleep.

Her alarm RINGS.

Anna blinks her eyes open and hits the alarm clock OFF. Then she registers the music, confused. Glances at the small clock on the nightstand:

5:30 AM

Anna sits up and listens.

Before she can do anything else, another advanced roomba, this one in LAMBORGHINI YELLOW, buzzes from somewhere, then enters the room. It starts to VACUUM the floors.

Then an automated VOICE emits from it:

VOICE
Good morning, Ms. Hunte.

The machine continues to glide around the floor.

Anna watches it, amused, then swings her feet off the bed...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY. DAWN.

Anna walks slowly down a hallway. The pop music gets louder and echoes throughout the house.

It's "Express Yourself" by Madonna.

Anna arrives at the doorway of a large LIVING ROOM made entirely of glass. The doors are all ajar, opening up to the outside.

There's a huge, sleek INFINITY POOL beyond them that hovers above the ocean.

Anna approaches it...

INT. LIVING ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

...She nears the doors as the music BOOMS. Night-club-level-loud. The base shakes the entire room.

Anna's POV -- a clear blue, perfect rectangle. Serene.

Suddenly, we hear Nicole SHOUT-SING off camera. Out of tune.

NICOLE

*Don't go for second best baby, put
your love to the test.*

(louder)

You know, you know you've GOT TO...

The vague SHAPE of a nude Nicole shoots into frame, like a cannon, diving into the water.

Anna stops, surprised. She watches Nicole come up for air. Nicole turns and faces the ocean. She dances to the music, beautiful and free. Anna watches, a little admiringly.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

(sings)

*Long stem roses are the way to your
heart, but he needs to start with
your head. Satin sheets are very
romantic. What HAPPENS when you're
not in bed?*

Anna begins to retreat. Then:

NICOLE (CONT'D)

*Don't be shy Anna -- Second best is
never enough you'll do much better,
baby, on your own -- JOIN ME!*

Anna stops. Approaches the pool, sheepishly.

Nicole turns to her with just her head above water and smiles.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I keep it warm all year around.

ANNA

I'm OK. Thank you.

A beat. Anna gestures at the music.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Doesn't Aidan hear this?

NICOLE

His room's sound-proofed.

Nicole holds up her wrist to show a TABLET WATCH. Aidan's
BABY MONITOR plays on the watch.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Sleeping soundly. You could drop a
nuclear bomb on this patio, he'd
still sleep like a baby.

(MORE)

NICOLE (CONT'D)

We as women *cannot* give up our beloved, morning routines on account of our kids. Do you make time for yourself in the morning?

ANNA

(admittedly)
Not really.

NICOLE

I won't let a day pass without some time for you. Mark my words. Self-preservation, Anna.

Anna watches Nicole, a little enamored. No one's treated her like this before.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Anyway, will it be a problem? The music in the morning. I could do air-pods but I like the build of the surround sound. That BUILD. Makes me feel feral. Or like a huntress.

Nicole is amped. She proceeds to pull herself up and out of the pool. Stark naked.

Anna looks away, a little embarrassed. Nicole towels herself off.

ANNA

Uh -- no. It's not a problem. I like to get up early anyway. And I'm sure Aidan will be up early.

Nicole ties the towel around her chest.

NICOLE

Natto?

ANNA

Excuse me?

NICOLE

I have a traditional Japanese breakfast every morning. Natto are fermented soybeans. I lived in Japan for five years.

ANNA

Oh um, no. Thank you.

Nicole smirks.

NICOLE
I'm a walking cliché of a tech CEO
aren't I?

Anna half-smiles.

ANNA
What do you want to hear?

Nicole nods amusingly, recognizing her own words.

ANNA (CONT'D)
I'll just have cereal, if you have
it.

Nicole frowns.

NICOLE
Somewhere. I think?

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

Nicole sits at the counter, over a flawless, perfectly plated, traditional Japanese breakfast.

Anna looks down at a sad-looking bowl of cereal. Grape Nuts. The gnarled, CEREAL BOX sitting nearby, on the counter looks about 10 years past its expiration date.

Another small, glass Roomba, this one sporting the RACING RED color of a Ferrari, glides along the counter, washing and wiping down the surface.

Anna picks up her bowl awkwardly, so it can pass. As it does -
-

Nicole gestures a chopstick at her own food.

NICOLE
I am going to convert you.

Anna can't help herself. Off Nicole's breakfast --

ANNA
You do *that* every morning?

NICOLE
It takes discipline. I'll give you
that.

Anna gestures at Nicole's watch.

ANNA

What monitor should I use?

Nicole points at a MIRROR, razor thin, on a wall next to the REFRIGERATOR.

Anna goes to it and touches the glass. Footage of Aidan in his crib pops up.

NICOLE

There's one in your room too. The small mirror by the nightstand. It's portable.

Suddenly, AIDAN'S CRIES begin to emit from Nicole's watch and the screen.

Anna starts to leave the room, but Nicole beats her to it.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I'll feed him and then he is all yours.

Nicole's leaves the room before Anna can respond.

INT. AIDAN'S NURSERY. MORNING.

A bird's eye view of an enormous smart nursery.

Anna sits with Aidan on the floor. There are high-tech TOYS scattered everywhere.

Anna's POV - Aidan's sitting up. Bangs his hands on the floor. Anna watches him, lovingly.

ANNA

Look how you're sitting up!

Anna peers around the room. The lighting is dim. She looks towards the windows to see --

Intense, thick BLACKOUT material covering every inch of the windows. They're made of the same netting the stroller netting was made of.

Then she notices a razor thin, GLASS TABLET, on a PLATFORM in the middle of the room.

She touches the tablet. MUSIC TRACKS pop up.

Anna spots a track that reads:

AIDAN'S FAVORITE.

She presses PLAY.

A stunning CONCERTO bursts on.

Immediately, Aidan's face lights up at the music. He flashes a broad smile and COOS. Anna watches, delighted.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Look at that smile. You like that song?

Aidan locks eyes with Anna, still smiling as the concerto plays. She stares back at him.

FLASH TO -

Quick FLASHES of the inside of a CAR as the sun shines...CLOSE UP of a boy's feet kicking the back of a driver's seat as the song Anna sings to the photograph - "Rainbow Connection" - fades out on the stereo. The boy kicks the seat over and over again...

BOY

(shrieks)
Again, again!

CLOSE UP of Anna's hand hovering of the DIAL.

ANNA (O.S.)

(teasing)
You really want me to play that again?

CLOSE UP of the boy's feet stamping the car floor.

BOY

Again! How far do rainbows go?

"Rainbow Connection" starts again.

ANNA

Forever.

BOY

And ever. Ever. Ever. Ever...

BACK TO PRESENT

Anna blinks away the MEMORY and pets Aidan's hair, wistfully, as he smiles at the concerto. She picks him up and puts him in her lap. Then takes an electric XYLOPHONE off the floor and presses the buttons. Nothing happens. Tries again. Nothing.

The tablet catches her eye, again. She labors to lean over. Swipes the screen across. A LIST OF TOYS in GALLERY VIEW comes up. She hits the XYLOPHONE icon.

The electric xylophone lights up in her hands, now ON. Anna frowns at it in disbelief, discovering the toys are BLUETOOTH OPERATED.

The xylophone lights up with all the primary colors. Tinny MUSIC emits from it.

ANNA

Can you press the buttons? Try playing...

Aidan bangs his hands, haphazardly on the toy.

After a few minutes, the concerto ends. Aidan bangs his hands on the floor. Anna teases the same way she did in the flashback --

ANNA (CONT'D)

You really want me to play that again?

Aidan bangs his hands. Anna smiles and hits "repeat."

As the song comes on, Aidan beams again, then COOS. Smacks the xylophone.

ANNA (CONT'D)

That's right. You're starting to get it now. *Da. Da. Da.* Just like that.

A long beat.

Then suddenly...

The concerto CUTS out.

The xylophone's lights turn off. It goes DEAD in Anna's hands.

Anna inspects it.

Then, a loud CLICK emits from somewhere in the room. Anna gazes towards where the click came from:

The top corner of the ceiling where --

A sharp, BLUE LIGHT EMITS from a small LENS in the wall.

Nicole's voice comes over the room...

NICOLE (O.S.)

Anna.

A beat.

Anna stares up at the blue light, confused.

CUT TO:

- POV of Nicole's NURSERY CAMERA -

Looking down at Anna, who gapes up at it. The footage is awash in a BLUE TINT.

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

Please move on to another toy.
Something different.

CUT BACK TO:

- Anna's POV -

She stares up and studies the lens, bewildered.

ANNA

Nicole?

NICOLE (O.S.)

...And let's not repeat songs.

Before Anna can respond:

THE WHEELS ON THE BUS suddenly SCREAMS over the room. High-pitched kids' voices singing.

Then, we PULL FOCUS to another TOY on the floor as it lights up and springs to life with a VIBRATE. Turned on remotely.

ACT TWO:

INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

EXTREME CLOSE UP on a whole-roasted BRANZINO, impeccably plated.

Anna stares down at the enormous, DEAD fish on her plate. Its blank eye and limp mouth are completely unappetizing.

Nicole interrupts Anna's trance with a large BITE. Then she sips her white wine. Side-eyes Anna.

NICOLE

It's not for everyone. Want me to debone it?

ANNA

No, it's fine as it is.

Anna begins to cut into the scaly, skin of the fish. The CRUNCH reverberates in the otherwise quiet room.

It's a little tense.

NICOLE

I hope I didn't catch you off guard today with the camera. I'm just -- very into his development. All the milestones. I like to be part of his play. Come in and out. Watch. And in general, I like to keep an eye on things with his health the way it is. All the allergies. Poor thing.

No response.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

You can be honest. You're thinking something.

ANNA

No -- I expect people to have nanny cams. I do usually like to know beforehand...

NICOLE

...It's not a nanny cam per se. I'm not one of those.

Anna side-eyes Nicole. She's totally "one of those."

NICOLE (CONT'D)

It's about his health. All his allergies. And his development. The cameras -- they're the same technology I have in my labs.

Anna can't help herself.

ANNA

Well he's a baby. We're not -- in a clinical trial, here.

NICOLE

Of course not. I know I should have told you before. I'm so used to this stuff I forget others aren't. You don't mind, though?

Anna thinks for a moment.

ANNA

No. I don't mind. Honestly I was-- a little more concerned about the feedings. You keep taking him into your room to feed him. I'm happy to do that for you.

NICOLE

I don't want you to think I don't trust you. I just...get scared. Maybe I have PTSD from all his time in the hospital. I worry something will happen. And that it will be my fault.

Anna's eyes flicker with recognition.

ANNA

Nothing's going to happen. And that feeling...it's so normal for a first time Mom. To be scared you'll make a mistake...

Anna trails off. Then looks down, a little vulnerable. Unable to finish the thought.

After a beat, Anna clears her throat. Pivots.

ANNA (CONT'D)

He could even start solids...I can help with that.

NICOLE

(a little too firm)
Solids are out of the question right now.

Anna's caught off guard. Suddenly it's tense again. Nicole softens a little...

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Nicole takes a deep breath.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Look. For now, I like to feed him. He's on a very special formula. He has horrible reflux. So I don't like there to be distractions. I do it by myself in a quiet spot. He chokes very easily because of the reflux. Just -- constantly.

ANNA

Is it dysphagia? Soft foods can help with that.

NICOLE

(a little impatient)

No it's something far more complicated with his esophagus. The pediatrician explained it to me. Anyway the choking happens a lot. He chokes on his own spit even. You should be aware of what it's like when he chokes.

ANNA

I'd be curious --

But Nicole suddenly tenses up and turns BRIGHT RED.

She drops her fork with a CLANG.

Anna stops mid-sentence and stares, worried.

ANNA (CONT'D)

-- Are you...

Nicole starts making sharp, guttural SOUNDS. Anna stands up.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Nicole, are you OK?

A beat.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Nicole??

Nicole nods mid-sputter and holds up her hand signaling Anna to *watch and wait*.

Anna pauses, bewildered.

Nicole continues to gag violently. She twitches. Then starts to COUGH.

More coughs. Then a wheeze.

And suddenly, Nicole stops. She breathes normally. Her face returns to its normal color.

She picks up her fork and knife and goes back to her fish.

NICOLE

(calm)

I just want you to know what it's like when he chokes. *That's* really what it sounds like. And what it looks like. And if that ever happens just put him on his stomach over your knees and slap his back repeatedly.

Nicole gets up and leaves the room.

Anna is left standing, unmoving, at a *total* loss.

Nicole comes back in holding a rubber, DUMMY BABY from a CPR ANYTIME KIT.

She sits and places it, face down, over her knees.

She slaps its back once. Then again. Then again.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Like this.

A few more slaps.

Then Nicole lightly tosses the dummy baby on the table next to her plate. She continues eating.

Anna slowly sits down. She stares at the dummy baby. Appetite's gone.

Nicole takes another large bite. Then a long sip of wine.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Anyway. I like to be the one to feed him.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. LATER.

Anna stares out her window, pensively. She hears the muffled SOUNDS of waves. Something's bugging her. She takes out her flip phone and opens it:

No service.

She frowns down at the phone.

Anna looks back up and sees something in the water. She cringes: *Not again...*

A GLOWING HUMAN HEAD

Anna blinks. Then the cream buoy comes into clarity. Anna shakes her head: *Get a hold of yourself.*

But then:

The CRASH of waves that were outside suddenly overwhelms the room, like they're inside, startling Anna. The sound is artificial, like it's from a white noise machine, jacked up to FULL VOLUME.

Anna draws in a sharp breath.

The sound is coming from everywhere.

Her gaze swerves, confusedly around the room. At the walls. At the ceiling. At the floors.

She heads for the door.

INT. HALLWAY. CONTINUOUS.

Anna moves quickly down the hallway.

She catches the eyes of Dorothea on her way, in the distance. Dorothea's eyes follow her, like the Mona Lisa.

Anna gets to Nicole's bedroom door and knocks.

After a long beat, Nicole opens the door in a SILK ROBE. Surprised.

ANNA

I'm sorry but there's a noise in my room. The ocean, but fake. Like...so loud.

Nicole angrily blows past Anna, out the door.

NICOLE

Don't tell me this is happening again. Arnold was supposed to fix this.

Nicole storms down the hallway. Anna follows her.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Nicole and Anna enter. Nicole looks around, annoyed. She has to speak loudly over the sound of waves...

NICOLE

It's the sound machine from my room. It keeps playing in other rooms. You pay these audio guys a fortune to set up your house and always -- something goes wrong. No matter how much money you throw at them.

Nicole heads to the door and disappears.

Anna's left standing, alone. She tries to catch her breath as the artificial waves CRASH, deafening and invasive.

CLOSE UP of Anna's squeezing her eyes shut as the boy's VOICE whines in her head...

BOY (O.S.)

Why can't I go in?!

ANNA (O.S.)

*Theo. You don't go in without me.
Wait.*

FLASH TO --

CLOSE UPS of a boy's feet running across sand on a SHORE...then Anna's feet...chasing him...Anna's hand catches the boy's hand...stops him...

BOY (O.S.)

No.

ANNA

Theo! I said no.

BACK TO PRESENT.

The crash of waves suddenly stops. Anna snaps out of her trance.

We now hear the natural sounds of waves beyond the window.

Nicole appears again.

NICOLE

Ugh. I'm so sorry.

Nicole stares at Anna, who's now ASHEN.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Are you OK?

Anna attempts casual.

ANNA
I'm -- fine.

Anna wipes a little sweat from her brow.

ANNA (CONT'D)
It was just loud.
(side-eyes Nicole)
I don't really like water.

NICOLE
Oh. Anna. I'm mortified. Here I am,
the idiot giving you the room on
the ocean. It's the only guest
room. We are literally surrounded
by water...the private island is
supposed to be a perk. I'm trying
to think what I can do --

ANNA
-- No, no it's fine. Really. It was
just loud.

A long beat. Nicole studies her.

NICOLE
Are you sure?

ANNA
I'm sure.

NICOLE
OK.

Nicole turns to go.

ANNA
Will the cell phone company be
coming soon?

A beat. No response.

Anna holds up her flip phone.

ANNA (CONT'D)
For the signal.

NICOLE

(remembering)

Oh. Yes. Sorry. In the next few days. You know how these companies can be they keep changing the time window. Sorry my mind is in ten directions. I had seven different zooms today about building artificial wombs. We're almost there.

ANNA

Wow.

NICOLE

No excuse. I'm on it. Promise. I have a tendency to make your problems my problem, remember?

Anna nods, politely. But the comment's not hitting the same as the first night.

Nicole goes.

Anna gathers herself and takes a deep meditative breath.

She gets into bed and kisses the framed photograph on the nightstand. Then she sings to it:

ANNA

What's so amazing that keeps us star-gazing? And what do we think we might see? Someday we'll find it, the rainbow connection, the lovers the dreamers and me.

Anna turns off the light.

The room drowns in pitch black DARKNESS.

For a few moments, we hear Anna's BREATHS. In and out.

And then we hear...

a CLICK. Like from the camera in the nursery.

Anna sits up and turns on the LIGHT on the NIGHTSTAND. She searches around the room at the ceilings and walls. Looks for *the blue light*. There's isn't one.

Then, we hear another sound, slightly different. A DRIP.

Anna gets up and goes into her bathroom. She spots the source of the sound:

A leaking FAUCET.

She twists the faucet knob, tight. It's all the way shut. But just as Anna turns her back on it:

DRIP. Drip. Drip.

Anna gives up and gets back into bed. She looks towards the windows and hears the muffled crashing of waves.

Then, another CLICK.

Anna turns on the light again. Waits. Nothing.

She turns the light off again.

CLOSE on Anna's face. Her breaths rise and fall. The faucet DRIPS...

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. MORNING.

Anna lies awake, with dark circles under her eyes. Barely slept.

Suddenly, pop music echoes from another part of the house.

It's "Single Ladies", by Beyonce.

Anna stays in bed, listening.

After a few moments, her ALARM CLOCK rings. She hits it.

A BUZZ emits from outside the room as another Roomba glides in and starts to VACUUM.

VACUUM
Good morning, Ms. Hunte.

Anna gives it a dead stare. Then swings her legs off the bed...

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

..."Single Ladies" continues to play, on repeat, in the distance as Anna sits, eating grape nuts.

Then Nicole skeets in, in a towel, doing an odd dance. She HUMS along to the song. Amped, like every morning.

She winks at Anna.

As the chorus PLAYS, Nicole dance-gestures at herself then Anna playfully...pointing out that they are *both*, in fact, single ladies.

As Nicole continues to bop around, Anna watches her.

ANNA

Nicole?

Nicole hits her watch. The music lowers.

NICOLE

What's up?

ANNA

There aren't -- this is a weird question. But, there aren't cameras anywhere else in the house are there?

NICOLE

Just in my workspace. Trade secrets and all that. But you can't get in there anyway. You'd need a key card. Why?

ANNA

I just -- thought I heard that click sound from the nursery camera in my room last night.

Nicole laughs.

NICOLE

If I wanted to spy on you I'd do something soundless, don't you think?

A pause.

Nicole transitions to concerned.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I think you were a little shaken from the sound machine, maybe. Are you sure you're OK?

But then, Aidan's CRIES emit from Nicole's watch and the screen in the kitchen. Anna starts to get up. But Nicole, again, beats her to it...

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I've got it! Will feed him. Then he's all yours.

Nicole skips out of the room.

INT. AIDAN'S NURSERY. DAY.

Anna sits in the nursery. Aidan lies on his stomach next to her. Anna rubs his back with a small smile. A small, electric TRUCK swooshes around in front of him. He tries to reach for it.

Suddenly, the truck shuts OFF.

Anna leans over towards the tablet. Hits the TRUCK icon again. A prompt pops up:

TRUCK DISCONNECTED

Anna sighs and shakes her head. Keeps pressing the button. No dice.

Then:

A loud CLICK.

Anna glances up towards the corner of the room where the click came from.

The blue light comes on. Nicole's voice echoes over the nursery, pleasant...

NICOLE (O.S.)
I don't think we've read any books
today, yet.

Anna glances at the windows, covered in netting.

CUT TO:

- POV of the nursery camera.

Looking down at Anna. The room is bathed in a BLUE TINT.

Anna stares at the window shade, then at Aidan. Doesn't move to get a book.

We hear a few CLICKS OF A BUTTON and the camera ZOOMS in on Anna.

EXTREME CLOSE UP of her studying the window shades.

CUT BACK TO:

- Anna's POV

She stays focused on the windows, curious.

NICOLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
All children, except one, grow up.

Anna peers up at the blue light.

ANNA
What?

NICOLE
The first line of Peter Pan. It's there. By the tablet.

ANNA
Isn't he way too young for Peter Pan?

NICOLE
Verbal development is verbal development.

Anna reluctantly picks PETER PAN up. She puts Aidan in a baby chair and starts reading to him.

CUT TO:

-POV of the nursery camera

Looking down at Anna as she reads...

ANNA
All children, except one, grow up...

CUT BACK TO:

-- Anna's POV

As she reads, she notices that Aidan is staring into space. She stops. She puts her face in front of his.

CLOSE UP on Anna's reflection in Aidan's irises. The reflection frowns. Then continues to study Aidan.

Still on the reflection...

ANNA (CONT'D)
Do you need a nap, honey?

Anna puts her lips to Aidan's head.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Nice and cool.

Anna holds up the book next to Aidan's face. His cheek is almost as white as the page.

ANNA (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
You're really pale.

NICOLE (O.S.)
Is there something wrong?

ANNA
He's just a little --

NICOLE (O.S.)
(loud, in person)
-- It's time for him to eat
actually.

Anna startles as we REVEAL that Nicole is not talking through the camera...

She's in the room.

Nicole goes and picks up Aidan, carefully, out of the chair. Anna recovers.

ANNA
I just -- thought he looked a
little pale. Maybe I'll take him
out later.

Nicole nestles her face into Aidan's.

NICOLE
He's just having a bad day. Poor
thing. Let's keep him inside today.

Nicole kisses his forehead.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
I think he has a fever, maybe.

ANNA
I don't think so. He feels cool.

Nicole smiles politely, then leaves the room. Anna follows her out of the nursery...

INT. HALLWAY. CONTINUOUS.

...Anna walks behind Nicole, down the hallway.

NICOLE

I meant to remind you, you should really take his temperature every day. Just to be safe. And record it. In general, I'd like you to keep an "Aidan journal." His nap times. His milestones. When he goes to the bathroom. I put a pen and pad by your bed.

No response.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Surely I'm not the first Mom who's had you do that.

ANNA

No -- you're not.

Anna looks towards the doors.

ANNA (CONT'D)

But you know -- the fresh air might be good for him.

NICOLE

Not when he has a fever. You can try tomorrow.

Nicole flashes Anna an apologetic smile.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I promise. You should take a walk though. Sunset's gorgeous here. Self-preservation, remember?

Nicole disappears into her bedroom and shuts the door behind her. Anna watches after her.

Then Anna looks up, and catches the eyes of Dorothea in the distance.

Anna's gaze lingers on Dorothea.

EXT. BEACH. SUNSET.

Anna walks along the beach, by herself.

She looks out at the ocean, trepidatiously. Takes it in without panic.

ANNA
(to herself)
Step by step.

She half-smiles, proud of herself for facing her fear.

Then she looks up and stares at the brilliant colors of the sunset on the horizon. Everything is aglow.

Anna's gaze shifts downward. She spots the cream buoy in the distance. She focuses, on it. It bobs in the water.

Finally, it's *just a buoy*.

The waves push at the buoy and make it revolve. As it turns 360...

A DEADLY STILL AIDAN GAPES AT US.

He FLOATS in the water; now the buoy. He stares at Anna. Blue eyes blazing.

Terror overwhelms Anna's face. She tries to scream just as the crash of the ocean's waves become LOUD and ARTIFICIAL.

Aidan continues to gawk at Anna from the water.

EXTREME CLOSEUP of Aidan's REFLECTION, now in Anna's irises, which fill the frame...

CUT TO:

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

...Anna shoots up in bed, covered in sweat. She takes a deep breath. Just a nightmare.

She turns on the light on her nightstand.

We hear the muffled sounds of waves. Then the DRIP of the faucet.

Then a CLICK. *Or was it a drip?*

Anna draws in a sharp breath.

Another DRIP.

Anna goes to the bathroom. She takes a hand towel off the towel rack and puts it under the dripping faucet.

She watches as the droplets of water, land - one by one - soundlessly on the towel.

INT. LIVING ROOM. MORNING.

Aidan's stroller is parked by the doors to the infinity pool. Nicole and Anna stand over it.

Anna again, has dark circles under her eyes. Watches as --

Aidan's bright face disappears as Nicole carefully zips up the blackout netting over Aidan's stroller. REVEAL the end of the zipper has a small lock on it. Nicole turns a small KEY, attached to a RUBBER BRACELET, locking the netting into the stroller.

Nicole puts the bracelet-key around her wrist.

ANNA

I can hold that.

NICOLE

It's no problem.

ANNA

Nicole. Do you not trust me?

A beat. Nicole's caught off guard. She pivots.

NICOLE

(casual)

Of course I do.

Nicole hands her the key.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

There's just no reason you need it. Besides when you're a Mom it's always a battle right? The only person you truly trust is yourself. As bad as it sounds. I'm sure that's how you feel with your son.

Anna flinches, as if someone struck her.

Nicole doesn't notice. Or chooses to ignore it.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I have a zoom with China. So. Take your time.

Nicole goes.

EXT. NICOLE'S HOUSE. BEACH.

Anna pushes the stroller along a path on the beach. She looks down and tries to see Aidan through the netting.

We catch little glimpses of Aidan: His hands, his legs...then his bright blue eyes that stare.

ANNA
Beautiful day, huh buddy? I wish
you could see it.

Aidan starts to BABBLE.

AIDAN
A-ga. A-ga.

Anna mimics him.

ANNA
A-ga. That's right. A-ga. A-gaaaaa.

AIDAN
Da-da-da-da-da.

Anna lights up.

ANNA
Aidan! You said Da da. Was that
your first time saying Da da?

Anna sing-songs it...

ANNA (CONT'D)	AIDAN
Da da da...	Da da da daaa.

Aidan slowly puts his hand up to the netting. Anna stops the stroller and puts her hand on the netting so it touches Aidan's hand.

Anna's face gets so close to the netting, her nose presses up against it. She peers through it and watches Aidan, a little guiltily.

Her gaze wanders to the lock. Then to the key bracelet on her wrist. Considers it.

She squints up at the sun, curiously. Then down at Aidan.

Whatever she was considering, she thinks better of it. Continues pushing the stroller down the beach.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Anna unlocks the stroller netting and takes Aidan out. She cradles him lovingly. He doesn't respond. He watches her, zoned out. Anna frowns.

ANNA
You're tired again?

Anna walks out of the living room...

INT. NURSERY. CONTINUOUS.

...Anna and Aidan come into the nursery. Anna bends carefully and turns on the tablet.

She hits "Aidan's favorite."

The concerto comes on and Aidan suddenly lights up with a smile. He COOS.

ANNA
There we go. There's that smile.

Anna dances around the room with Aidan. She stares at him, adoringly.

CUT TO:

POV of the nursery camera -

Looking down on Anna dancing with Aidan, drowned in a blue tint.

Anna's voice comes, thinly, across the feed...

ANNA (CONT'D)
So you'll be my date tonight? We'll
take the town.

Aidan coos.

CUT TO:

ANNA'S POV --

She looks down at Aidan, who stares up at her. They lock eyes.

Anna stops and stares. Then slowly:

ANNA
(whispers)
Can I tell you a secret?

CLOSE UP of Anna's reflection in Aidan's irises. The reflection gets closer as she leans in and kisses him.

Then further away again.

Aidan stares up at Anna.

ANNA (CONT'D)
You remind me a little of
him. He was a good boy.
Like you.

Anna's eyes have a hint of wetness. Of emotion.

CUT TO:

POV of the nursery camera -

Anna cradles Aidan with her back to the door.

Suddenly, Nicole walks into the room.

She stops a few feet behind Anna, who doesn't see her. She remains there. Doesn't announce herself. Watches Anna cradling Aidan, remaining unnoticed.

Slowly, Nicole's head tilts. She cocks it, as if fascinated. And completely entranced by Anna.

CUT BACK TO:

Anna's POV -

Anna stares at her reflection in Aidan's irises.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Beautiful boy.

A beat.

NICOLE (O.S.)
(loud)
Good walk?

Anna startles and swerves around.

A pause.

ANNA

Oh -- yes. I didn't know you were here.

NICOLE

Sorry. Just came in.

Nicole looks at her watch.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

The walk took awhile. After you change him I should feed him. Schedules. I'm a stickler for them. Kids need consistency.

Anna gathers herself and carries Aidan to the CHANGING TABLE. Nicole stands next to her as Anna changes his DIAPER.

ANNA

You know -- I've noticed he seems really lethargic a lot of the time.

NICOLE

I think it's par for the course with him. He'll get stronger.

Anna gathers courage. She's been wanting to say this for awhile...

ANNA

I was curious...I just -- haven't really noticed much spit up. Or any choking. And the sunlight thing. When was the last reaction? Vitamin D is so good for them --

NICOLE

-- I don't even want to think of it--
-

ANNA

-- And...I'm just wondering what formula he's eating because he really does seem so tired. And his color too. He's very pale.

Nicole ignores Anna and picks up the DIGITAL THERMOMETER on the changing table.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I took it already this morning. It was 98.3.

Nicole puts the thermometer to Aidan's forehead. Waits. It beeps.

NICOLE

98.6

ANNA

Not a fever.

NICOLE

Still. Going up. Go easy on playtime today. And no going outside tomorrow.

Anna picks Aidan up off the changing table, a little protectively.

Nicole notices.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Look. Anna. I don't want you to take this the wrong way. But I'd like you to just more focus on his development. His play. Everyone can work remotely now. Virtually. Including me. And I do it for a reason. So I can be in charge of certain things. I never wanted to be a Mom that leaves at 7 am and gets back at 9 pm. I want to be here. Around. And his pediatrician and I have him on our own plan.

ANNA

Which I could be filled in on.

NICOLE

In time. Sure. I just don't want to burden you with it quite yet. We've just started.

Aidan lets out a small cough. Nicole springs forward.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I think you picked him up too fast. Let me take him. He might start choking --

ANNA

-- he's just coughing, Nicole.

But Nicole forcefully takes Aidan out of Anna's arms. She leaves the room.

NICOLE

Poor thing. Always something wrong.

Anna watches after them.

Aidan stares, wide-eyed, at Anna over Nicole's shoulder as they disappear out of the room.

EXT. NICOLE'S ROOM. SAME.

Anna stands outside the closed door.

She hears Nicole delivering SLAPS to Aidan's back. Like on the CPR Anytime Doll.

INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

The two women sit, having dinner: Whole lobsters.

Anna struggles to crack into anything.

Nicole *dismembers* hers, systematically and expertly.

ANNA

You know, Aidan said "Da da" today.
Has he done that before?

Nicole visibly twitches. A little too intense...

NICOLE

He hasn't. What a milestone for me
to miss! And you wonder why I like
to keep an eye on you two in the
nursery.

Nicole breaks open the tail of her lobster, a little
overzealously.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Ironic isn't it? Man's out of the
picture but still...they manage to
come in first.

A beat.

ANNA

The D's usually come first. It's --
just easier for them. They don't
know what they're saying.

NICOLE

It still hits a nerve though
doesn't it? I mean, especially with
Aidan. All of his health issues.
Who's here for him? Me. Not a "Da
Da."

Nicole breaks a CLAW open with a CRACK. Points it at Anna.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

In 10 years women won't need the Da
Da to make the baby. Mark my words.
They'll be able to make sperm, in a
lab, with embryonic stem cells.
We'd be better off, wouldn't we?

ANNA

I don't know about that.

NICOLE

(pointed)

Your son's Father. Where is he?

Anna stares back at Nicole. Sees her point...but it was
harsh.

ANNA

He left.

Nicole nods, satisfied.

NICOLE

See? You deserve better, Anna. You
deserve everything.

A beat.

The comment landed icily, not warmly.

ANNA

So -- was Aidan OK earlier?

NICOLE

He was choking a bit, from reflux.
That walk may have been a lot for
him. I took it easy on dinner --
fed him less. The pediatrician says
to pace ourselves with the formula
when the reflux is acting up.

This unsettles Anna.

Nicole gets up. Gestures at Anna's plate.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

More?

A WHOLE, untouched lobster still sits on Anna's plate.

ANNA

No. I'm OK. Thank you.

Nicole goes.

CLOSEUP of Anna's doubtful eyes as we FLASH TO --

Two sets of arms and hands - Anna's and a boy's - drawing. The boy draws two stick figures with CRAYONS.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Who's that?

BOY

Izzy and Danny. But Izzy said Danny won't come around anymore. Cause he lied.

A beat.

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

How do you know when someone's lying?

Another beat. More scribbling.

ANNA (O.S.)

It's just a feeling you get...in your tummy. Your gut. Right here.

Anna's hand and crayon circles the stomach of one of the stick figures.

BACK TO PRESENT

Anna stays seated at the empty table. Puts her hand to her stomach, like she's nauseas.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Anna sits in bed, with a pad and pen. She jots notes down about Aidan.

INSERT NOTES on PAD:

Napped for an hour at 2.

Pooped -- 3 pm

Very pale again today.

Anna underlines "very" a few times.

Anna pauses and thinks. Then she takes the tattered book off her nightstand.

It's the ENCYCLOPEDIA from her Mom. The cover reads:

"An Encyclopedia of Health Psychology"

She turns to a certain section: M. She gets to the condition she's looking for:

INSERT BOOK TEXT: Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy

She reads.

INSERT FLASHES OF TEXT: *Fictitious disorder imposed on another...Mental illness and form of child abuse...fake symptoms or cause real symptoms to make it look like the child is sick...done by a primary caretaker, often the Mother...can be caused by extreme stress...*

Anna focuses again on a certain line...

Caretaker often causes real symptoms to make it look like the child is sick...

Her eyes dart to the next page. A case study example.

INSERT TEXT: *Mother in the UK suspected of poisoning child...giving the appearance of weakness and illness...*

But then she's interrupted by...

A CLICK.

Anna looks up. She closes her book and gets out of bed. She waits and listens. But all we hear are the muffled sounds of waves.

Then a DRIP.

Anna goes to the bathroom. She spots the towel that she'd put in the sink.

It's neatly folded now, hanging on the rack. *Someone moved it.*

The leaking faucet DRIPS again, into the marble sink.

She takes the towel and puts it back in the faucet.

Anna walks out of the bathroom. She looks at the corners of the ceiling, searching.

Then she fixates on a small, abstract PAINTING on the wall. Anna goes to it, and takes it off the nail. She inspects the back of the painting. Then hangs it back up.

She proceeds to look for a lens.

QUICK CUTS of Anna tearing her room apart.

It starts slowly then becomes a FRENZY...

Anna moves a LOVE SEAT into the center of the room...takes more pictures down...pulls both nightstands away from the walls...stands on a CHAIR feeling around the molding on the ceiling...

Finally Anna stops.

She looks around, defeated. *Is she going crazy?*

NICOLE (O.S.)

(loud)

I didn't think you'd do that.

Anna jumps. She looks towards Nicole but --

We REVEAL the mirror screen on the wall has turned ON.

ON TV -

A 60 Minutes interview with Nicole, across from BILL WHITAKER.

BILL

Do what?

NICOLE

List off all of my achievements like that. I'm embarrassed.

Anna walks over to the TV, puzzled. She inspects it: *How did it turn on?*

Nicole LAUGHS, loudly. Anna watches Nicole cackle. Hits the screen to turn it off.

But then...

The artificial sound of the ocean suddenly ENGULFS THE ROOM.

Waves CRASH. Sounds like a white noise machine.

ANNA
Jesus christ.

Anna's genuinely upset. Walks shakily towards the door...

INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT.

...Anna walks down the hall and arrives at the door to Nicole's bedroom. She knocks, firmly. Then again, impatiently.

Nicole opens the door, groggy...

ANNA
It's happening again.

NICOLE
What?

ANNA
Your sound machine.

Anna turns on her heel before Nicole can respond. Nicole follows her, taken aback.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. DAY.

The two women walk in.

The sound of waves is muffled and natural, now outside. Not artificial.

Nicole looks at Anna, warily.

ANNA
It was just playing in here.

NICOLE
That's from outside.

ANNA
I know it's outside but it was just in here.

Nicole rubs her eyes.

NICOLE
No -- I didn't even have it on tonight.

A long beat. Anna's wary.

ANNA

When is the cell phone company coming? I really do need to make a couple calls.

NICOLE

I know. They're impossible. They said sometime this week. In the meantime...

Nicole takes out her IPHONE.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

...use mine. Really.

Anna considers Nicole's phone, but thinks better of it.

ANNA

No. I'll just...use mine once they come.

NICOLE

You can use my computer too. If you want to send emails, anything. Really. They'll be here before Friday.

Nicole studies Anna.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

You know. You really look pale. Maybe you should take tomorrow off. **Poor thing.**

The last two words strike a chord: Words reserved for Aidan.

Anna stares at Nicole, a little warily.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

What?

ANNA

Nothing. Maybe...maybe I will take tomorrow off. I haven't been sleeping that well.

Nicole smiles, satisfied.

NICOLE

It will do you some good.

A pause.

Nicole's eye flicker around the room, noticing it's torn apart. Anna notices her notice.

Nicole continues to stare at it all.

Then she looks back at Anna, with a wide smile.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Well. Sleep tight.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. MORNING.

Anna sits and stares out her window. She watches Nicole walk Aidan on the beach.

INT. AIDAN'S NURSERY. MORNING.

Anna comes slowly into Aidan's nursery. She looks up towards the corner of the room. The blue light is on.

She attempts to ignore it and begins to pick up toys. Appears to be tidying up, but we get the sense it's not what she came in for.

CUT TO:

- POV of the nursery camera

Looking down at Anna as she makes her way around the room, cleaning.

Anna moves, slowly, towards the windows.

CUT BACK TO:

-Anna's POV -

She approaches the windows. Her eyes fixate on the blackout netting.

She touches it, attempting subtlety. Then pulls at it. It doesn't give.

She leans to look behind it and discovers there are thick BARS, locking it in place.

They're reminiscent of a prison cell.

INT. HALLWAY. MORNING.

Anna walks down a hallway.

She notices the door to Nicole's bedroom is ajar.

She stops and considers it. She looks back and locks eyes with...

DOROTHEA. Hovering in the distance.

Anna averts her eyes, then decides something. She goes to the door of Nicole's bedroom...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM. CONTINUOUS.

A master-bedroom with a minimal aesthetic. "Low living", but done expensively.

Anna enters carefully and quietly. She looks around the room. It's utterly uncluttered...nothing to find here.

But then, she spots the MASTER BATH beyond. Heads there.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM. SAME.

Anna sifts, a little hysterically, through the drawers of Nicole's bathroom.

She has no idea what she's looking for.

Finally, in a bottom drawer, she notices a KEYCARD buried under a few different, old bottles of LA MER products.

She pockets it.

CUT TO:

The **SINK** in the Master Bath.

Anna fingers at the MIRROR above it. She opens it, slowly.

There are PILL BOTTLES. Dozens. Anna draws in a breath, surprised by the sheer number of them.

She scans the labels. It's a slew of ANTI-DEPRESSANTS and ANTI-ANXIETY MEDICATIONS.

ANNA
(mutters)
Jesus. Who is filling all of these
for you...

Then, she spots a few bottles of XANAX. She considers them.

CUT TO:

The MASTER BEDROOM. Anna is headed for the door, then notices a drawer on one of the NIGHTSTANDS.

She goes and opens the drawer.

Spots a half-empty bottle of formula. Anna's eyes widen.

She picks the bottle up and inspects the liquid inside.

Suddenly, she hears the SHUT of a door.

Anna quickly puts the bottle down.

Nicole walks in, holding Aidan.

NICOLE

What are you doing?

ANNA

I --

Anna trails off. Collects herself.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I know you said I could use your computer. I thought it might be in here. Your laptop.

A long beat. It's tense.

Nicole's cheek twitches, like she's holding back.

NICOLE

There's a computer in the office off the kitchen.

Anna nods, attempting casual.

ANNA

Great. And -- sorry.

She walks by Nicole and goes.

Nicole gazes around her room, angrily.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Anna walks into the small study. At the back of the room is a DESK and a wall of built-ins lined with Japanese objects.

There's a LAPTOP on the desk. Anna goes and sits. She opens CHROME. She eyes the door to the office, gets back up and shuts it.

Anna sits back down. Locks eyes with a particularly menacing SAMURAI MASK staring at her from one of the shelves above.

Focuses on the computer again. Types into the Google search-bar...

"Nicole Swanson"

Anna scrolls.

INSERT QUICK FLASHES of headlines, articles and images...

Nicole on the cover of Time Magazine...Forbes Most Inspirational Leaders in Tech...Vogue's Women Changing the World...Nicole Swanson is the Queen of Silicon Valley...Wired's 10 Most Powerful People in Tech...

Anna frowns. She can't find one bad thing. Keeps scrolling.

A certain article catches her eye from a niche, RIGHT-WING publication.

There's a tag underneath it for "Nicole Swanson"

Insert Headline: "Studies Have Shown Overwork tied to Miscarriage and Infertility"

Anna clicks on the article.

INSERT flashes of ARTICLE TEXT:

*Certain studies have shown that infertility can be tied to both stress and overwork...there's a pattern of powerful women who have been public about their struggles to get pregnant...Nicole Swanson, CEO of Renoven, has been open about miscarrying. One starts to ask if there's a link between the two. **If these women want to carry to term, perhaps they need to look inward, at their own habits.***

Anna registers disgust at the last sentence.

She scrolls up to the Author Bio line. The author is a woman: LINDA PIERCE. Anna shakes her head.

ANNA

Bitch.

INT. LIVING ROOM. MORNING.

Anna moves slowly around the living room, cradling Aidan. Anna blows bubbles at him with her lips. Makes funny faces.

They lock eyes like they're the only two people in the world. Anna mouths "love you" playfully. Then stares at her reflection in Aidan's irises...

FLASH TO --

Anna's hand twisting the knob of a locked, bedroom door. The picture of the STICK FIGURES from the last flashback is taped to it.

ANNA

Theo. I said I'm sorry. I'll be at the next game.

Anna leans her head against the door frame as the boy's voice comes from behind the door...

BOY

Why do you take care of other kids? Not just me.

A beat.

ANNA

I love kids. Is that so bad?

BOY

As much as you love me?

ANNA

I don't love anything as much as I love you. It's all practice. For you.

Another long beat. The door slowly unlocks.

BACK TO PRESENT

Anna looks at Aidan, a little guiltily. Then gives his forehead a small kiss.

She looks out the living room double doors to the infinity pool. Watches the SUN stream in. The entire doorway is flooded in light.

Anna looks back down at Aidan, then up at the light. Decides something. And walks slowly to the doors.

Anna stops, just one foot out of the SUNLIGHT. Then she lifts her hand and holds it out under the RAYS, like she's checking the temperature of water.

Her hand SHAKES.

CLOSE UP of Anna, clearly terrified of what she's about to do. But determined. She looks down at Aidan.

Anna's POV - Her reflection shines in Aidan's irises, in the glow of the light.

Anna slowly leans Aidan directly into the sunlight.

Her whole body trembles as UV RAYS begin to POUR onto Aidan's head.

Anna's eyes widen at Aidan's sunlit SCALP. *Getting redder and redder by the second.*

Anna breathes out, nothing's happening.

Then --

A high-pitched SCREAM from the other end of the room. It's Nicole.

Anna quickly steps back. She looks down at Aidan's head and sees...

Still nothing. Flawless skin. No blisters. No reaction.

But Nicole is already across the room in a rage, eyes wide.

NICOLE

What is wrong with you?

ANNA

(insists)

Nothing is happening. He's OK.

Nicole stares at Anna, irate. She's looks terrifying. Anna's crossed a line.

NICOLE

(slow)

Give. Him. To. Me.

Anna looks down once more at Aidan's head. She begins to hold him out to Nicole.

Nicole snatches Aidan out of her hands, barely looking at him.

Nicole storms out with Aidan, leaving Anna by herself.

Anna looks up to see Dorothea, in the distance, watching her.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

Anna sits at the counter in the kitchen, pensive.

Nicole enters, holding Aidan. There's a thick, white, topical CREAM on his head.

Nicole faces off with Anna...

NICOLE

Honestly. I don't think this will work if you don't trust me at all. If you don't respect my choices.

ANNA

It should go both ways. You don't even let me feed him. I'd -- like to know what you're feeding him. I want to see you feed him.

Nicole gives Aidan a kiss. Stares down at him.

NICOLE

(creepy sweet)
Oh -- she thinks I'm starving you?

Then...

NICOLE (CONT'D)

You know. That article you read about me yesterday...from Linda Pierce.

Anna's eyes flicker with horrified surprise.

ANNA

You looked at my search history?

NICOLE

That's not as bad as going through someone's room, is it?

ANNA

I told you -- I was looking for the computer.

A beat. Nicole stares at her as if to say 'we both know that's not true.'

NICOLE

Anyway that article. You saw what she did to me. A woman. Took my fertility issues. Made it my fault.

(MORE)

NICOLE (CONT'D)
I overworked myself into those miscarriages.

Anna nods, genuine. Can't help but agree.

ANNA
Yes. That was awful.

NICOLE
(loud)
Right there, splashed across the internet. "The corporate woman who worked her fetuses to death." Used me like a statistic. I should have infected her fucking computer with malware. I can do that remotely.

A flicker of recognition passes over Anna's face: Was that a threat?

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Silicon Valley has always been men trying to fuck me, or fuck me over. They can't decide which. But that article -- the fact a woman wrote that...

Nicole's almost shaking. Tears are in her eyes.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
...That fucking hurt me.

A long beat. Anna's torn between pity and suspicion.

ANNA
(slow)
I'm just asking to see you feed him. To know *what* you're feeding him. That's it.

Nicole loses her temper.

NICOLE
(screams)
You're like a broken record. Jesus. You are tedious. SO tedious.

A beat.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
If you are working in my house you need to be on *my* side. No one ever is. And I can't have that here.
(MORE)

NICOLE (CONT'D)

In my home. If you can't do that then maybe this isn't the right fit.

Anna stares at Aidan. He locks eyes with her. Smiles a little. She can't bring herself to leave him.

A long beat.

ANNA

No. It is. It won't happen again. You'll -- show me in time.

Nicole glares at Anna. For a moment, an unspoken threat.

Then her face changes completely. Cheerful and pleasant.

NICOLE

Good.

Nicole gives Aidan another kiss.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I'd like to take him for the rest of the day. So till dinner, then. Ready at 7:30. Hope you like sea urchin. It's a delicacy.

Anna smiles. Nicole turns and goes.

Then Anna's expression changes: She looks after Nicole determined. With a plan in mind.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. DUSK.

Anna lays in bed, eyes closed. Suddenly, she opens her eyes wide, revealing she wasn't asleep.

She pulls the covers higher up on her head and moves slowly underneath them.

Under the covers is the encyclopedia. Anna fishes for something in her pocket. Nicole's Xanax. We discover she's hoarded some of it.

She takes a pill out, and lays it on the book. Then she takes a small spoon out of her pocket.

She grimaces as she tries, carefully, to crush one of the pills. It won't give.

She bites down on the pill with her teeth and breaks it, into a few pieces. Chews on it. Tongues it out. Wipes the residue off her tongue.

Then takes the wet bits and crushes it up with the spoon. She peeks out from under the covers and eyes the clock --

7:23

She works faster. Desperate. Gritted teeth. She bites another pill. Starts to crush it.

Then...

We hear a CLICK.

Anna shuts her eyes in dread.

A DRIP.

Then the muffled SOUNDS of the ocean, a little loud.

Anna takes a deep breath.

Then suddenly, something BUZZES.

One of the ROOMBAS has entered the room. Vacuums. Anna freezes under the covers, listening to it for a few moments.

The BUZZ gets closer...

...then father away, then closer, then farther away.

Anna bites another pill.

INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

Nicole walks in with two plates.

Anna's already seated, waiting. Nicole smiles, surprised.

NICOLE

Oh. Hungry, are we?

ANNA

Famished.

Nicole puts the plate in front of Anna: An enormous SEA URCHIN sits in the center of it.

Then Nicole sits down.

Anna immediately digs her spoon into the ORANGE GOO at the center of the urchin. Takes an eager bite.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Delicious.

We get a sense it isn't.

Nicole smiles, satisfied. Then starts to eat. The two eat in silence for a few minutes.

Anna watches Nicole's wine glass, hopefully. Wants her to drink from it.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I can't help but wonder. You mentioned -- Artificial wombs. It sounds amazing but -- how will that help that problem you talked about on the news? Women feeling like something's wrong with them for not being able to conceive. Like they're accountable. My uncle got in a car crash when he was 37. Paralyzed from the waist down. He was never the same -- he wanted to go where he wanted, when he wanted. They gave him a high-tech wheelchair to get him around. Didn't make him feel any less paralyzed.

Anna takes a casual bite.

Subtly side-eyes Nicole, who looks like someone just shit on her front stoop. The exact reaction Anna wanted.

A long beat.

NICOLE

Are you saying we shouldn't help these women if we can?

ANNA

No -- of course you should. It's incredible. World-changing. As you say. But -- acting as though it's solving the mental health behind it. Is it, really?

Nicole flinches. She picks up her wine.

Anna focuses hard on the glass as Nicole takes a long sip from it.

NICOLE

It's an interesting perspective.

Then, Nicole finishes off her glass. She leaves the room to get the bottle.

Anna's eyes stay fixed on Nicole's empty wine glass. There's a hint of white residue. The Xanax.

Nicole comes back in, sits down.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

(pointed)

I guess maybe you *would* have certain insights about the mental health aspect that I don't.

A beat.

ANNA

Excuse me?

NICOLE

(casual)

It's just -- when I called some of your different references I noticed a couple of gaps between jobs. I asked one of your employers -- Cynthia Simms I think it was -- what that was about. She said you two were *so* close.

ANNA

(quiet, with dread)

We were.

NICOLE

Anyway her and I got to talking. And she intimated that once or twice you had to take time off between jobs. To take care of yourself. Self-preserve.

(chuckles)

Don't we all.

Anna stares at Nicole, shocked. This was a huge betrayal.

ANNA

That wasn't her business to share.

Nicole shrugs.

NICOLE

Mom code, maybe? Employers code? Anyway, I don't know I connected the dots. Thought maybe you'd been in a hospital before. A "mental break," I believe is the phrase Cynthia used. She said -- you've had one or two episodes where you can't distinguish between what's real and not real? That one of the episodes was precipitated by a tragedy. But she wouldn't tell me what. She's just *that* loyal to you.

Anna looks as if someone just struck her.

For a moment, the sound in the room DULLS, like we are underwater.

CLOSE UP on Anna as everything slows. We hear her heart THUMP.

Then we hear VOICES in Anna's head...

ANNA (O.S.)
*Theo. I said don't go in
 without me.*

BOY (O.S.)
 (impatient)
Then hurry up!

ANNA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (screams)
I said, wait.

BOY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 NO.

There's perspiration on Anna's forehead as we hear the slow DRAWL of Nicole's, muffled voice, but can't make it out. Waves CRASH somewhere. It's unclear if they're real.

Then suddenly, we hear the real world again as the clear voice of Nicole YANKS Anna out of the trance --

NICOLE

Anyway. That's why I've been trying not to overwork you. And -- keep an eye on you. Like when you thought those waves were from the sound machine. You worry me sometimes. Poor thing.

Anna watches spitefully, as Nicole takes another sip from her wine glass.

INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT.

It's dark. The house is quiet.

Anna slinks down the hallway, cautiously.

She glances around. Looks up.

Dorothea watches her, with a dead stare.

Anna keeps moving and arrives outside Nicole's room.

She twists the KNOB and slowly pushes open the door.

She stays, frozen in place. Gazes at Nicole's bed and makes out her shape. She's sleeping diagonally; barely made it to the bed. Lets out a big snore. Out cold from the Xanax.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Anna tip toes into the room. She looks around in the darkness.

She goes to one of the nightstands and bends down. Opens the drawer of the nightstand. Nothing.

Anna's face brushes the mattress.

Nicole suddenly sputters, turns over and comes FACE TO FACE with Anna. Eyeballs inches from one another to REVEAL...

Nicole's eyes are OPEN. She stares at Anna.

Anna freezes. Deadly still.

A long beat.

Then Anna takes a closer look at Nicole's stare: It's blank.

Anna waves her hand in front of Nicole's. Realizes she's sleeping with her eyes open.

Anna gathers herself and stands. She moves around the foot of the bed, and notices a SLEEK STORAGE BENCH. She opens it up.

Inside are boxes of BABY FORMULA. Anna takes a bottle out of an open box. She inspects it.

Glances towards Nicole, then quickly twists open a bottle.

She takes a small sip. Then another.

ANNA
The fuck...

Anna stares at the bottle.

ANNA (CONT'D)
(mutters)
Tastes like chemicals.

Then...

A CLICK.

Anna's breath catches in her chest. Her eyes swerve around the room.

A DRIP.

Anna shuts her eyes tight.

She hears Nicole's voice in her head...

NICOLE (O.S.)
Cynthia...she said you couldn't
distinguish between what's real and
not real.

Anna shakes her head, fighting off the voice. She opens her eyes.

She takes another bottle from the open box. Twists it open. Takes a sip. Then another.

She POPS her lips. Now unsure of her own senses.

Anna b-lines it to the door, holding the bottle.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Anna tears into the kitchen, formula bottles in hand.

She goes to the REFRIGERATOR and opens it. Her eyes scan a slew of JAPANESE PRODUCTS. The sight of them makes her nauseas.

She spots a perfect, whole COCONUT CAKE.

She takes it out of the fridge and puts it down on the counter. Grabs a SPOON from a drawer.

Anna barely gets the saran wrap off before digging into the cake. She takes a bite.

ANNA

Mm.

Then she takes a sip of the formula, testing her taste buds. She nods to herself, confirming something.

Anna takes another big bite of cake. Another sip of formula.

Something BUZZES somewhere as --

Anna distractedly oscillates between the cake and formula...

Bite. Sip. Bite. Sip.

Again and again.

Anna begins to get emotional.

ANNA (CONT'D)

What is she feeding him? Chemicals.
These are chemicals.

Suddenly, Anna JUMPS as a Roomba GLIDES across the counter and STARTLES her. Appearing as if from nowhere.

Anna breathes out. Watches the machine pass with disdain.

Then something catches her eye:

Her REFLECTION in the monitor on the wall. In off mode, it's a dark mirror.

Anna gapes at herself --

The dark reflection opposite us is ominous. Anna is thinner with deep bags under her eyes, hunched over.

A SHELL OF ANNA.

Anna takes it in. It makes her doubt herself again, just for a moment.

She brings the old KEY CARD out of her pocket and stares down at it.

INT. LOWER LEVEL. STEPS/HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Anna walks down a flight of steps. Looks back up towards where she came from, unsure.

Then she turns into a small, antiseptic hallway. It's got the feeling of an underground, research facility.

Automatic lights suddenly flutter on, reminiscent of hospital lighting. Anna squints.

She spots what she's looking for ten feet away...the door that requires a key card.

She goes to it.

Anna swipes the key card.

A red light BLINKS. Then, a DIGITAL ASSISTANT'S voice:

DIGITAL ASSISTANT
Access denied. Facial recognition
required.

Anna tries the card again.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Access denied. Facial recognition
required.

Anna stares down at the card, frustrated.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Anna attempts to sleep.

We INTERCUT between Anna tossing and turning violently and FLASHES of a nightmare...

The ocean's waves crash...CLOSE UP of Aidan's eyes...Anna's reflection in his irises...Aidan floats in the water, gaping...A CLICK repeats again and again...

...Anna WINCES in her sleep.

CUT TO:

...the signature bird's eye view of the **OCEAN, like it's a subject of the nursery camera...like Nicole has MOTHER NATURE ITSELF UNDER SURVEILLANCE...** A DIGITAL ASSISTANT'S voice emits from the SKIES...

"Ms. Swanson would like you to please board"....

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP on the formula bottles as a faucet DRIPS....

CUT TO:

In **BED**, Anna slowly WAKES UP. Her eyes flutter open to see...

Nicole hovering over the foot of the bed, smiling wide at her.

Anna starts to SCREAM...

But the artificial sound of waves have begun to CRASH over the room, making Anna's scream SOUNDLESS. Drowned.

She's still in the nightmare. Until...

CUT TO:

Anna shoots up in **BED**. Stares ahead of her to where Nicole was standing; now pitch black emptiness.

Then a DRIP. *Or a click.*

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. MORNING.

Anna sleeps in an embryonic position, clutching the covers. After a beat, she blinks her eyes open. She spots the alarm clock:

7:35 AM

She overslept.

Anna picks up her alarm clock and inspects it. Shakes it. She puts it down, irritated.

Then she hurriedly starts to get dressed.

INT. HALLWAY. MORNING.

Anna hurries down the hallway. Then, something stops her in her tracks.

A certain song PLAYS somewhere in the house...

SONG (O.S.)

Why are there so many songs about rainbows? And what's on the other side? Rainbows are visions, but only illusions. And rainbows have nothing to hide.

It's "Rainbow Connection," Anna's lullaby she sings to the photograph of the boy.

Anna grabs at the wall for a moment, needing support. It looks like she just took a bullet to the stomach.

A long beat.

Anna walks warily down the hall. The song gets LOUDER. Echoes off the walls, eerily.

It's coming from Aidan's nursery. Anna turns into the nursery...

INT. AIDAN'S NURSERY. CONTINUOUS.

...Nicole sits in a ROCKING CHAIR with Aidan. She stares down at him, humming along to the song, which continues to play.

Anna stands, watching them.

After a beat, Nicole notices her.

NICOLE
Rough night?

No response.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Mine was. I think I drank too
much...

A beat. Anna and Nicole lock eyes.

For a moment, Nicole's eyes flicker with intention. Anna studies her: *Does she know about the Xanax?*

Anna's at a breaking point.

ANNA
Why -- are you playing this song?

NICOLE
What do you mean?

ANNA
This song. Why are you playing it?

NICOLE
(airily)
Kermit the Frog's *Rainbow
Connection?* Why not? Haven't you
heard this one?

Anna doesn't answer.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Kids just love it.

Anna walks over to Nicole and Aidan. She stares down at Aidan, protectively, remembering the formula. *Is he OK?*

NICOLE (CONT'D)
 (off Aidan)
 Someone's in a very good mood this morning.

The song continues. Gets to Anna.

ANNA
 I think I need some air.

NICOLE
 (passive aggressive)
 Well. You've already taken some of the morning off, haven't you?

Anna ignores her. Walks out.

Nicole puts on her best baby-voice to Aidan...

NICOLE (CONT'D)
 What's a little more time, right?

CUT TO:

EXT. SEARIDGE ISLAND. WOODS.

A bird's eye view of Anna, hiking through a stretch of woods in the middle of the island.

CLOSE ON Anna. She breathes heavily, it's clear she's been walking for a long time.

Every few minutes, she checks her cell phone frantically. But each time:

No service.

Anna's eyes dart around the trees.

A CRUNCH from somewhere makes Anna jump. *Is she being watched?*

CUT TO:

ANOTHER STRETCH OF WOODS

Anna sweats. She looks down at her phone:

No service.

Her eyes scan the ocean in the distance. She continues...

CUT TO:

A HIGH CLIFF

Anna nears a CLIFF that's a far drop into the ocean. The island's edge.

She approaches it warily, and looks down. The WAVES crash onto the rocks, ominously below.

For a moment it seems she might jump. All feels lost.

Then she sways a little and stumbles backwards away from the cliffside.

She looks down at her flip phone, expectantly disappointed. But instead sees --

ONE BAR of service.

Anna puts her hand over her mouth. Frantic excitement.

ANNA

OK..OK.

Anna's hands tremble. She shakily dials a number.

We hear the phone RING. Then again. Then again.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Come on.

The ringing continues.

Anna looks around, exasperated. She starts to hang up when --

IZZY (O.S.)

Hello?

Anna puts the phone back to her ear.

ANNA

Izzy? Izzy it's me.

Izzy drives a **CAR** through the SUBURBS, in nurses scrubs.

We INTERCUT between them. But we stay more on Anna.

IZZY

-- WHAT THE FUCK, Anna? What the hell is going on?

(MORE)

IZZY (CONT'D)

All my calls go straight to voicemail. It's been weeks. GET AN EMAIL ADDRESS. You know who stays off the grid like this? SERIAL KILLERS. This is the 21st century --

ANNA

-- I know. But I can't. I can't do this right now. There's not time.

A beat.

IZZY

What's wrong? Are you OK? Your voice. I don't like when your voice sounds like this, it's...like what happened the last time --

Anna starts to get emotional.

ANNA

No. I --

Anna stops. Chokes up. A long beat.

IZZY

I'm here. God -- why do you wait until you hit rock bottom to call? You wait till you're on a fucking knife's edge. It's going to be OK --

ANNA

- Is it you? I feel insane.

A long beat.

IZZY

Annie. Annie, you're scaring me.

Anna wipes at her face. Gets her shit together.

ANNA

I need you to look up Nicole Swanson. Or -- do you know her? She's a big tech boss.

IZZY

What? You need to talk to me first -
-

ANNA

(screams)
-- Izzy! I need you to do this for me. I'm serious.

IZZY (O.S.)

Fuck. Calm down. OK. Nicole Swanson. No -- I don't know her. I'm in my car. Hold on I'll park and look on my phone. Wait a minute.

Izzy pulls over.

A beat. Anna attempts to breathe normally.

IZZY (CONT'D)

Then I want to know what the fuck is going on, Annie...

A pause.

Anna waits. Her eyes dart around for someone watching.

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

Ok so why am I looking up this crazy psycho?

A long beat.

Anna's bewildered.

ANNA

(soft, slow)

What...what do you mean?

IZZY

I mean what's French for sociopathic cunt? I'm a woman. I can use it when it's appropriate.

ANNA

(quiet)

She's...she's a big boss. Renoven. On all the top tech lists...every headline...she's doing work in fertility...

IZZY

...Uh -- yeah, that was like a year and a half ago? They made her step down nine months ago. She was spying on all of her employees. Threatening whistleblowers. Two employees committed suicide. Her colleagues said she was clinically insane. And then -- the fuck...

ANNA

What?

Izzy's eyes widen at her phone.

IZZY

She did a whole fertility trial on women in an underserved community and it was all bullshit. A scam.

ANNA

I don't -- those are the headlines you're seeing?

IZZY

There are no other headlines to see...

ANNA

...But -- no there's a Squawk Box interview, and an interview on 60 Minutes with her and Bill Whitaker. Can you look for it?

IZZY

Uh -- hold on. OK...Youtube...

Anna waits.

Then we hear the CHATTER of the familiar interviews from the other end of the line. A beat.

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

Yeah I mean who cares? These are from two years ago.

Anna draws in a breath.

Nicole LAUGHS in the interview. Izzy recoils.

IZZY (CONT'D)

Creepy. Ass. Laugh.

CLOSE UP of Anna as she drops the phone to her side. Sheer horror overcomes her face.

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

Annie? Annie?! Are you still there?

Anna slowly puts the phone back up to her ear. She chokes through her words in disbelief...

ANNA

She's...filtering the information
in her house. Playing reruns.
Controlling headlines. Why...why is
she doing this? Can people do that?

IZZY

(slow)
...Is that...wait, is that who
you're working for right now?

ANNA

Yes --

IZZY (O.S.)

-- She can absolutely do that.
You're on *her* wifi.

ANNA

The facebook post.

IZZY

What?

ANNA

That facebook post Tom wrote about
me back in college. Can you find it
on his page?

IZZY (O.S.)

Don't understand what's going on
here Annie.

ANNA

Just do it. Please.

IZZY

Hold on.

A beat.

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

Yeah...it's there where it's always
been. Why?

Anna stares ahead, betrayed. Lost.

ANNA

I have to go.

IZZY

If she is who you're working for
you need to quit. Now.

ANNA

Her son. I don't know -- what she's doing to her son. Something. Hurting him or...experimenting on him. And she doesn't want me to know who she really is. Something's wrong --

IZZY (O.S.)

-- I don't give a shit about her son, Annie. Not your kid. Quit.

ANNA

I have to go --

Izzy cuts her off, she has to get this across...

IZZY

This *isn't* going to fix anything. What happened to Theo. It was an accident, Annie. And helping her son will not fix it. It will not make up for it. It was not your fault.

Anna flinches.

ANNA

Don't...go there. I have to go.

IZZY (O.S.)

(desperate)

Annie --

Anna hangs up the phone.

She looks at the ocean in the distance, contemplating something.

ACT THREE:

INT. FOYER. DUSK.

Anna and Nicole sit across from one another, neatly.

Nicole's processing something Anna's just told her. Nicole's hands are clasped together in her lap.

Dorothea hovers above them, watching.

NICOLE

Are you sure?

Anna nods.

ANNA

I think it's what you said. Not the right fit.

NICOLE

I can't say I'm surprised. Things have been...tense. I know. I've failed to notice how unhappy you are. I guess I've just been so busy with work. It's immense pressure what I do. Profound pressure. You wouldn't understand.

Anna's cheek twitches at the blatant lie. At the insult.

ANNA

I appreciate the opportunity.

NICOLE

There's nothing I can say to convince you otherwise? Nothing I can change?

Anna shakes her head.

ANNA

No. I'm sorry.

NICOLE

I can't imagine future employers would be happy to know about this. I mean...if you go like this without any notice. Any time. As a parent I'd feel amiss not to let another family know. That the person might just leave that day on a whim. We count on you people.

Anna stiffens. Pushes past the threat.

ANNA

I'm sorry you feel that way. But -- I'll be going in the morning.

Anna gets up.

NICOLE

Wait. Anna.

Anna turns. Nicole watches her, wide-eyed.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

What about me is so unbearable for you? So I know. For future...working relationships.

No response.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I mean -- what would my performance review be?

A long beat.

Then, a few CRIES from Aidan emanate from Nicole's watch.

Anna deflects...

ANNA

I should go check on him.

Anna goes.

Nicole looks down at her clasped hands. She unclasps them, slowly to reveal...

A fresh, bloody GASH across the inside of her left hand from her right hand's fingernails digging into it.

Nicole smiles, numbly at the wound.

INT. AIDAN'S NURSERY. NIGHT.

Anna cradles Aidan in his nursery and HUMS to him as he sleeps.

She looks up towards the usual corner of the room. No blue light. She looks back down at Aidan.

ANNA

(whispers)

I'm going to get you out of here.

EXT. SEARIDGE ISLAND. WOODS. DAWN.

The crack of dawn -- still dark.

Anna walks frantically through the woods, out of breath. Tree branches whip her face.

She starts to jog. Her breath becomes wheezy.

Every few feet, she glances behind her again, as if she's being chased. The jog becomes a sprint...

CUT TO:

CLIFFSIDE

Anna reaches the spot she made the call. Takes out her flip phone:

One bar.

She dials, then waits. An OPERATOR picks up on the other end. The voice is cold, uninviting.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
Child protective services emergency
line. What maltreatment do you need
to report?

ANNA
I --

Anna trails off.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
Hello?

A beat.

ANNA
How does this work? Making a
report.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
(icy, impersonal)
You'll give us the information. A
case worker will evaluate the
report. They'll talk to the family,
or child if need be. If it's a
certain degree of either negligence
or abuse, the child may eventually
be seized and brought into the
custody of the state.

A long beat. Anna doesn't respond.

OPERATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(firm)
Ma'am. What maltreatment do you
need to report?

The cold voice makes Anna unsure. She slowly hangs up the flip phone.

EXT. NICOLE'S HOUSE. MORNING.

Anna walks briskly towards the house.

CLOSEUP of Anna's face as we FLASH TO -

A boy's small bedroom. Anna sits on the bed, hands intertwined with the boy's hands.

BOY

I can't go to sleep. I'm scared.

ANNA

*There's no reason to be scared.
I'm right there. Outside the door.
So you're safe.*

Anna's hands squeeze the boy's hand.

BOY

How do you know?

ANNA

Because I'm Mom. That's my job.

BACK TO PRESENT

Tears come to Anna's eyes. She shakes her head like she's shaking the memory away.

She picks up her pace with a sudden, crazed determination.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM. MORNING.

Anna enters her room.

She goes to the closet. Gets a bag. Quickly packs a few things.

She swings it over her shoulder and walks out of the room.

INT. AIDAN'S NURSERY. MORNING.

Anna hovers in the doorway of the nursery. She looks up at the ceiling:

No blue light.

She goes in and begins to pack a DIAPER BAG of Aidan's things. Frantic.

Then she pauses. Checks the clock on the wall:

6:20 AM

Anna goes out to the hallway. Looks both ways. *Where are they?*

Suddenly, an ALARM BLARES, interrupting her. It's deafening.

Anna retreats back into Aidan's room. Pauses. She's bewildered.

Then she throws the bags in a closet and walks out...

INT. HALLWAY/KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM/ANNA'S ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

...Anna heads to the kitchen, warily as the alarm continues to BLAST...

ANNA
(loud)
Nicole?

She checks the kitchen, then the living room.

Anna goes back to her room. Looks around.

Then she notices something through the window. We follow her gaze to see...

Aidan's stroller sitting on the beach, alone. But there is no sign of Nicole.

CUT TO:

EXT. NICOLE'S HOUSE. BEACH.

...Anna jogs down the path that leads to the beach.

The alarm echoing from the house suddenly STOPS.

Anna glances back towards the house, registering the silence. Then continues towards the shore.

She spots the stroller in the distance and runs to it. Looks inside.

The netting is open. The stroller is empty.

Suddenly, we hear blood-curdling SCREAMS. Nicole's.

Anna swerves and spots --

Nicole near the water, soaking WET. Crying. Anna sprints to her.

Nicole shakes. Her demeanor is feral.

NICOLE

I was trying -- trying. I was trying...

Nicole continues to babble. We can barely understand her.

Anna is visibly frightened.

ANNA

What's happened --

NICOLE

(through wails)

-- I thought it was fine. I *had* him. Was trying to listen to you. Not be so worried...tried to take him out of the netting. The sun. I said -- maybe it's OK. Maybe it'll be OK. Like Anna said.

Anna's face fills with fear.

ANNA

Where's Aidan?

NICOLE

I took him. I took him into the water to swim. Into the sun. Maybe he outgrew the allergy. Maybe I am just *too* paranoid. Too anal. Like Anna thinks. Why she's leaving -- maybe Anna's right. Face your fear Nicole. FACE IT. But the current was too strong --

Nicole trails off, stares at the water and immediately starts to scream again.

A beat. Anna's crestfallen.

Her eyes scan the water in terror --

ANNA

(desperate)

Where were you swimming?

Nicole is incoherent.

NICOLE

I wasn't fit to be a Mom. Like they
said. Wasn't fit to do it. Wasn't
FIT --

ANNA

(screams)
NICOLE!

But Nicole is ghostly. Barely there anymore.

Anna's eyes sweep the water.

They land on the cream buoy. But then, Anna spots something
next to the buoy...

A SMALL HUMAN HEAD.

Aidan's. Like in the dream.

Anna doesn't wait to see if she's imagining it...

She runs into the ocean and plunges headfirst into the water.
Without thought.

INT. WATER. CONTINUOUS.

Anna swims out as the ocean shakes her, violently.

Her arms and legs FLAIL frantically, cutting through the
waves.

Anna SWALLOWS water and chokes. Her eyes dart around. She is
utterly terrified.

We are UNDER the water with her. Dull silence.

Then ABOVE the water. We can hear again.

Anna GASPS for air.

Suddenly, we catch a glimpse of the cream buoy...

...getting closer.

Anna takes a deep, long breath then plunges underwater and
uses all her strength to kick herself towards the buoy.

Everything is drowned in SILENCE as Anna swims, teeth
gritted.

She comes up and finds herself --

Inches from the cream buoy.

Up close: It is rusted.

Ordinary.

Just a buoy.

Anna turns 360, head above water, searching for anything.

CLOSEUP of Anna as Emotion overwhelms her face...this moment reminds her of another memory. A voice echoes from somewhere...

ANNA (O.S.)
Theo?! Theo. Theo!

Anna swerves around, desperate.

ANNA (CONT'D)
(desperate)
Aidan?!

She won't make this mistake again.

Anna takes a breath and plunges vertically underwater.

We are with her, in a sea of blue. It's reminiscent of the BLUE TINT from the security cameras.

Anna scans the water for any shape that might be Aidan.

Then she revolves in the other direction and finds herself --

FACE TO FACE WITH A BABY.

Anna recoils and SCREAMS. Swallows water instead.

Then she stares.

The baby bobs up and down, grotesquely. Blank eyes. No expression. Then we see --

IT'S THE "CPR ANYTIME" DUMMY BABY.

There's a ROPE around it's foot. The rope's attached to the chain that anchors the cream buoy.

Someone planted it here.

Anna pokes at it, in horrified disbelief. It jerks, lifelessly at her touch.

Then, suddenly remembering she can't breathe, she comes up for air.

ABOVE WATER, a beat.

Shock.

Then terror.

Anna turns back towards the shore. We follow her gaze to see -
-

Nicole standing on the shore, deadly calm. HOLDING AIDAN. Nicole watches Anna, smiling now, from ear to ear.

Anna stares back, disoriented and lost.

Then she begins to shakily swim back.

CUT TO:

THE SHORE.

Anna staggers up it, hysterical. She gets to Nicole and Aidan.

All hysteria has left Nicole's face. She watches Anna, coolly.

NICOLE

(slow)

You swam. I can't believe you swam
for him. Like he was your own son.

Nicole gently sets Aidan down, to a seated position, on the sand.

The sun BEATS down, directly on him.

ANNA

(hysterical)

You OK baby?

Anna drops to her knees and gets eye level with Aidan.

ANNA (CONT'D)

What are you doing -- I don't
understand...

But then Anna notices something and trails off.

CLOSE UP of Aidan -- His eyes are suddenly unmoving. In fact, they're FROZEN.

Anna looks up at the sunlight, then at Aidan.

She waves a hand in front of his face.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Something -- something's wrong with
him.

Anna stares again, up at the sun. Then at Aidan.

His eyes are motionless. LOCKED.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Aidan?

Anna's reflection in Aidan's irises GLOWS in the sunlight.
Then...

ANNA (O.S.) (CONT'D) ANNA (CONT'D)
What's wrong with him? What's wrong with him?

ANNA'S QUESTION ECHOES.

**Suddenly, there's DOUBLE of Anna's voice. A live feed of her,
playing simultaneously.**

Anna slowly looks up to the source of the ECHO and finds it:

Nicole's watch SCREEN.

ON SCREEN --

Anna is on her knees, on the sand. THIS VERY SECOND. Live
footage of her.

But where is the camera?

**Then, Anna turns and looks - again - straight into Aidan's
eyes.**

QUICK CUT TO:

a CLOSE UP of Nicole's watch screen -

Anna is staring **STRAIGHT AT CAMERA.**

REVEALING...

AIDAN TO BE A CAMERA.

A long beat.

Nicole studies Anna.

NICOLE

(slow)

Do you know anything about
Artificial Intelligence, Anna?

Anna gapes at the unmoving Aidan.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

They're machines that mimic *human*
intelligence. What better vessel
than a baby, to mask a machine?
Because that's what babies
do...they mimic.

Anna shuts her eyes, tight.

ANNA

This can't be real. This -- this is
a nightmare.

NICOLE

No. This is a dream. A dream for
women. This was my dream. Is my
dream. At first -- I was lost. My
uterus couldn't build him. I was --
driven crazy by it all. They said
it was my fault. That I couldn't do
it. Fuck that. I could.

(desperate)

Yes. "It's OK" I said to myself.
Because, every problem is a
software problem. It can be solved
with code. I solved it.

Anna stares, slowly up at Nicole.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

But no one understood. Those
stunted people. Those fucking
plebeians posing as dreamers. They
thought I was going too fast.
Cutting corners. But it was
beautiful. I was trying to offer
women a way to build with their
brains what their bodies can't do.
I know different. I
needed...different. I won. See? I
did it without them.

Anna collapses backwards, onto the sand. Begins to wheeze in
shock...

ANNA

Why -- why am I here? Why are you doing this to me?

NICOLE

I needed a human control. The turing test. That's just the first step. Having a human not be able to distinguish the machine...the AI...from human. If they can't, it's true AI. But I wanted to take it a step further. Deeper. With an AI baby, with motherhood...it's about evoking true maternal behavior from the human control. Getting them to put the child's life ahead of their own. Facing their greatest fear, without a second thought, for the sake of the child. Aidan made you do that. A machine made you do that. My son is real...he made you swim. Like he was your own son.

Anna stares down at the sand, devastated. Triggered by something. Tears stream down her cheeks.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Even with Aidan's glitches, you swam. Don't you see? I had to tell you he was ill -- to mask the glitches. I've figured out natural light. But sunlight...it still causes a glitch. The same way he can't eat normal formula, he needs to ingest a certain chemical. And even that sometimes fails. Or if he chokes...coughs...he'll malfunction. That slapping motion...

Nicole energetically mimics slapping Aidan's back on her knee.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

It's like shaking a broken alarm clock, isn't it? That's all. But this will all be fixed. In time.

Anna draws in a breath. Wipes away tears.

ANNA

(slow)
I know.

NICOLE
What do you know?

ANNA
How you filtered the information in
your house. How you were forced to
step down.
(screams)
How the world knows you have gone
INSANE. You are...fucking
delusional. Delusional.

A beat. Nicole's cheek twitches. Then she smiles.

NICOLE
As delusional as singing a lullaby
to your dead son? Talking about him
in the present tense?

A long beat. This crushes Anna.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
I know what happened to Theo. The
tragic accident. The rip current.
Why you're afraid of water. The
nervous breakdowns. And even your
hatred of tech...It all made you so
perfect for this. I hand-selected
you. Knew everything about you.
Watched you before all this. And
Anna -- you're a part of history
now. Do you understand? You are at
the very *center* of it.

Anna steels herself and stands, shakily.

ANNA
You...are done. Once people find
out --

NICOLE
-- but will they? Are you sure?

As if expecting this, Nicole presses her watch.

It runs a slew of Anna footage, revealing there are CAMERAS
everywhere in the house.

ON THE WATCH SCREEN --

FLASHES of different footage from different vantage points,
all awash in an eerie blue tint:

MASTER BATHROOM CAMERA POV -- Anna takes the Xanax and key card from Nicole's bathroom.

ANNA'S BEDROOM CAMERA POV -- Anna tears her room apart, maniacally.

TAPERED CANDLES CAMERA POV -- Anna blocks the view from above and slips Xanax into Nicole's drink. But the camera was in the candles.

Another piece of footage starts...

NICOLE (CONT'D)

This one's my favorite.

ROOMBA CAMERA POV -- A TRACKING SHOT of Anna as she drinks Aidan's formula then eats the coconut cake. Back and forth.

Nicole laughs, high-pitched and creepy.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Speaking of fucking crazy...

ANNA

...I thought you were poisoning him

--

NICOLE

-- nooo no no. Anna. No. That's *not* what happened. You came into my house and had a nervous breakdown. You drugged me, spied on me, ate my kid's baby formula.

AIDAN'S CAMERA POV - Anna stares down at him. She talks to Aidan...

ANNA

(to Aidan)

I'm going to get you out of here.

NICOLE

Even deluded yourself into thinking you would steal my baby....How twisted are you? Who's ever going to hire you again?

Nicole PAUSES the footage, briskly.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

So don't go there. With the threats. No one knows you worked here. No one has to. Only I have the footage. It can be our secret.

(MORE)

NICOLE (CONT'D)

This is bigger than us Anna. This
is the future of maternity...

But as Anna's eyes drift to a frozen Aidan, it's too much.

She kneels down on the ground and VOMITS into the sand.

Nicole continues on a manic rant...

NICOLE (CONT'D)

...Always maternal. We must always
be maternal. They shun us if we
aren't don't they? Me? My body
wouldn't let me do it. So I did it
another way. And you. You failed
too. In a different way. You failed
at the quintessential thing a
Mother is supposed to do. Protect
her child. I can help you make up
for that with --

Anna - TRIGGERED by this - charges at Nicole, a ROCK from the
sand in her hand.

She delivers a violent BLOW to Nicole's TEMPLE.

Anna's on top of Nicole like a wild animal.

The side of Nicole's head GUSHES with BLOOD as Anna STRANGLES
her.

Nicole stares, wide-eyed, too weak from the blow to fight
back.

Her legs FLAIL and KICK.

Anna grits her teeth and GROWLS. Uses all of her remaining
strength.

Then --

The life leaves Nicole's body completely. She lays limp.

A beat.

Anna slowly gets up.

She looks at Aidan, frozen in the sun.

There's some BLOOD SPATTER on his face.

Anna looks back at Nicole's dead body. She registers what she's done. Panic overwhelms her.

She stares out at the ocean, helpless.

Then Anna turns back and her eyes land again on Nicole's face:

It's undisturbed, fair and smooth...save for the wound on the side of her head...

Anna has an idea.

INT. LOWER LEVEL. HALLWAY. DAY.

A LOCKED OFF POV at the bottom of the stairs; the antiseptic hallway leading to the keycard room.

It's empty. Quiet.

Suddenly, we hear a deafeningly loud THUMP. Then another.

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP.

Until --

Anna APPEARS, dragging Nicole's LIFELESS BODY down the remainder of the stairs.

Anna collapses at the bottom of the stairs in sheer exhaustion.

She lies next to Nicole for a few moments. Doesn't move. Looks down at Nicole, whose eyes are only HALF-OPEN.

Anna eyes the keycard room, then Nicole. Knows she needs facial recognition.

Anna places her fingers on Nicole's EYELIDS and opens them with a CRACKLE.

Anna gets up. She hoists up the upper part of Nicole's body and fights to drag the deadweight down the hallway.

The trek feels like an eternity.

She gets to the door of the keycard room. Takes the keycard out of her pocket and swipes it.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT
Facial recognition, required.

Expecting this, Anna has started to hoist Nicole up.

She drops Nicole's body, messily.

Tries again.

Finally, Nicole's face is in line with the doorway camera. Anna grimaces and waits.

A beat.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Time expired.

Anna bares her teeth, determined.

She struggles to swipe the keycard again, while still holding Nicole.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Facial recognition required.

With one final GROAN, Anna lifts Nicole up, so she's immediately EYE LEVEL with the camera.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Facial recognition, activated.

The door CLICKS to UNLOCK.

Anna drops Nicole with a THUD.

She pushes the steel door open...

INT. SECURITY FOOTAGE ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

...Anna enters a dark room. She can barely see.

Automatic lights slowly flicker on. Anna is face to face with a WALL OF RAZOR THIN SCREENS. It's SECURITY FOOTAGE of the entire house.

She spots a chair stationed in front of them. There's a small microphone: It's where Nicole watched her from in the nursery.

Anna sees a TOUCH PAD. She presses it. Begins to REWIND through the footage.

INSERT QUICK FLASHES on the DIFFERENT SCREENS:

Anna undresses, naked in her bathroom and gets in the shower...Anna blows bubbles at the Aidan camera...Anna sings a lullaby to Theo's picture...Anna pees...Anna makes funny faces down at Aidan...Anna sits at her window, looking out at the ocean...Anna stares down at Aidan and cries...Anna puts a towel in the faucet, to stop the drip...A tracking shot of Anna in bed from the Roomba...

Then one SCREEN in particular catches Anna's attention. From AIDAN'S CAMERA...

On SCREEN -

Anna stares down at Aidan.

It's a creepy UP SHOT of Anna's face.

Her voice comes thinly on...

ANNA
You remind me a little of
him. He was a good boy.
Like you.

Anna averts her eyes from the screen and winces.

After a beat, she spots another screen: Nicole's bedroom.

Anna watches.

ON SCREEN -

Nicole walks into her room with Aidan. She shuts the door.

Anna stares, fearfully, expecting something sinister.

ON SCREEN -

Nicole looks down at Aidan. Kisses him. Talks to him, manically.

NICOLE
I love you. My beautiful, beautiful
boy.

Tears come to Anna's eyes.

ANNA
He's not real. Jesus. He's not
real.

She wipes at her eyes and focuses, realizing she's gotten side-tracked.

She looks at the TIME STAMP on the security footage.

Her hand shakes violently as she hits a button that reads "ACTIONS"

Then she selects "DELETE FILES"

A range of dates come up. Anna HIGHLIGHTS the entire month.

A visual PROMPT comes up in time with a DIGITAL ASSISTANT'S voice:

VISUAL PROMPT
**Are you sure you want to
delete all files?**

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (O.S.)
Are you sure you want to
delete all files?

Anna hits "Yes."

A beat.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Files deleted.

Then, Anna deactivates each camera on the KEYPAD.

A DIGITAL ASSISTANT speaks in time with each deactivation --

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Kitchen camera deactivated. Bedroom
camera deactivated. Bathroom camera
deactivated. Aidan's camera
deactivated...

The voice continues as each screen goes BLACK, one by one.

Anna pauses, giving them one last look. Then she turns to go, and suddenly comes FACE to FACE with --

AIDAN.

Hanging, limply off of a filing cabinet.

But it's not the Aidan we know. It's HALF-SKIN, HALF-MACHINE.

A prior model.

Anna looks past the filing cabinet, and we follow her gaze to see a DARK DOORWAY beyond that she has yet to notice. She approaches it and reaches...

A full on **RESEARCH LABORATORY** lined with steel tables.

On the tables are old, earlier MODELS of Aidan...

...Ears, legs, arms, torsos, heads, fingers. PARTS of Aidan.
Everything is a mixture of SKIN and MACHINE.

THE ROOM IS A JUNKYARD OF AIDAN.

Anna walks through the space, in shock. She finds an older, almost-whole model of Aidan: She stares into its eyes.

A long beat.

Then, Anna finally turns and walks out of the laboratory...

...Then out of the **SECURITY FOOTAGE ROOM**....

...and exits.

But we stay put.

Suddenly, we hear a BEEP.

It repeats, again and again...

One of the SCREENS begins to FLICKER.

The pleasant voice of a DIGITAL ASSISTANT comes up over the room...

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Miss Swanson. Please confirm
termination of all security
surveillance for Searidge Island.

A beat.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Miss Swanson, please confirm
termination of all security
surveillance for Searidge Island.

Another beat.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
System breach. Activating emergency
backup surveillance.

The screen that's been flickering comes into FOCUS. It's the backup surveillance.

ON SCREEN -

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW of the inside of Nicole's house from a CAMERA in a high place.

CUT TO:

...the EYES OF DOROTHEA. AN EXTREME CLOSEUP.

REVEALING DOROTHEA TO BE...

...THE BACKUP SURVEILLANCE CAMERA.

A long beat on Dorothea's blank stare.

CUT BACK TO:

The SCREEN in the LABORATORY - the footage from the Dorothea camera.

It's a high, aerial-view of the house. And then...

ON SCREEN --

Anna walks through the house, out the door, back to the beach...

IMPLICATED.

EXT. BEACH. DAY.

Anna sits on the shore next to Aidan.

She looks down at her bloody hands. Then she glances at Aidan, still frozen in the sunlight.

She gets up and walks away from Aidan, out of frame.

After a beat, Anna comes back into frame, and picks Aidan up.

CUT TO:

The **PATH** back to the house.

Anna walks, Aidan in tow. She looks down at him.

ANNA
(whispers)
You aren't real.

Aidan's eyes stay locked. He remains frozen.

EXT. NICOLE'S HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

Anna approaches the exterior of Nicole's house.

The moment Anna and Aidan come under the SHADE of the roof and OUT OF THE SUN...

Aidan's eyes begin to MOVE, FLUTTER and COME BACK TO LIFE.

Aidan looks up at Anna, eagerly. Suddenly ALIVE.

Anna gasps and stops in her tracks; like she just had the wind knocked out of her.

Aidan COOS. High. Sweet. Endearing.

A pause. Anna trembles.

Then she collects herself and continues into the house.

INT. AIDAN'S NURSERY. CONTINUOUS.

Anna walks into the nursery with Aidan.

She sets him down in the middle of the floor. Presses the tablet and selects "Aidan's favorite."

The concerto DRIFTS on and Aidan smiles and coos.

Immediately, Anna pauses it, then hits REPEAT.

It starts.

Aidan smiles and COOS again.

Anna pauses it. Hits REPEAT.

Aidan smiles and coos, identical to the last time.

He too, is on repeat.

Anna does this a few more times. Pause then play.

Aidan, in turn, pauses and plays. As if he is programmed.

And now we know he is.

Anna watches Aidan's same expression repeat itself over and over: *How could she not have known?*

Finally, Anna lets the concerto play out.

She strokes Aidan's cheek and fights back love...

Because in this moment, somehow, he seems more real than ever.

Then, with all the resolve she can muster:

ANNA
You're not real.

Aidan's gaze follows Anna as she gets up, gives him one last look, then walks out of the room.

Aidan is left sitting, alone, in the center of the nursery as we...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT. DAY.

We are back, safe, in Anna's apartment. The bed is unmade.

After a few moments, Anna comes into frame. She moves around the room and begins to make the bed. Folds hospital corners.

A weight has been lifted. All is as it should be.

The photograph of the boy - who we now know to be Anna's late son, THEO - sits on her nightstand.

CLOSE UP on the photograph as Anna begins to sing "Rainbow Connection"...

ANNA
*Why are there so many songs about
rainbows? And what's on the other
side?*

As Anna continues to sing, we begin to PULL OUT from the photograph...

ANNA (CONT'D)
*Rainbows are visions, but only
illusions. And rainbows have
nothing to hide.*

...and continue to pull out, until...

Two small legs, KICKING and DANGLING playfully, come into frame.

A BABY'S LEGS. AIDAN'S.

He sits in a baby chair. Looks up at Anna and listens. She sings the song to him.

ANNA (CONT'D)
*So we've been told and some choose
to believe it...*

The sound of police SIRENS suddenly WAIL in the distance...

ANNA (CONT'D)
*...But I know they're wrong wait
and see.*

The sirens get closer and closer...

ANNA (CONT'D)
Someday we'll find it...

...louder and louder...

ANNA (CONT'D)
The Rainbow Connection...

Until we know they are just outside.

ANNA (CONT'D)
The lovers, the dreamers and me.

Suddenly, the room is AWASH IN A BLUE TINT. We hear the signature CLICK of the nursery camera as we --

CUT TO BLACK.