

MASTER

Screenplay by

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1 EXT. AIKEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY - DAY 1

The first few minutes of the morning, darkness receding like a curtain pulled back.

Balancing a cardboard box on her hip is GAIL BISHOP, mid 40s, black, upright and unyielding.

A1 EXT. BLODGETT HALL - DAY A1

She cuts across the courtyard, flats sinking into dew-wet grass.

B1 EXT. MASTER'S HOUSE - DAY B1

The Belleville Master's House rises up before Gail like a fortress. She steadies herself before approaching it.

She struggles a while with the lock, almost as if someone is blocking it from the other side. Gail turns from the door, whipping her phone from her pocket.

GAIL (ON PHONE)

Buildings and grounds... Yes, this is Gail Bishop... The lock's jammed... Well of course I --

Exasperated, Gail turns back.

The door has been pushed open. Beyond it lies an unlit chasm. She hangs up, hesitating on the threshold of her new home.

And steps forward into the darkness.

2 EXT. BELLEVILLE - DAY 2

FRESHMEN COUNSELORS outfitted in Ancaster College t-shirts scream their welcome as new FRESHMEN and PARENTS arrive.

One wields a clipboard as she approaches JASMINE MOORE, 17, black, impatient for life.

FRESHMAN COUNSELOR

We've got a live one!

JASMINE

Barely. After that flight.

FRESHMAN COUNSELOR

Last name first name?

JASMINE  
Moore, Jasmine.

The Freshman Counselor's finger traces the clipboard.

FRESHMAN COUNSELOR  
 Alright, you're in room...

She pauses when she sees the room number, looking from the page to Jasmine. The Freshman Counselor turns the clipboard to the other Counselors.

FRESHMAN COUNSELOR (CONT'D)  
 She got the room!

The Counselors gather, something sharp beneath their knowing laughter. Jasmine smiles hesitantly.

JASMINE  
 What's wrong?

A glance is passed between the Counselors and then scattered as their features reassemble in benign masks.

FRESHMAN COUNSELOR  
 Welcome to Ancaster.

She takes Jasmine's bag.

3 INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

3

A dorm room door is decorated with photos of Jasmine and her soon-to-be roommate. It opens onto a corner room, one end of the ceiling slanted to accommodate the pitched roof.

There's space enough for two twin XL beds; one lies under the angled ceiling. The other has been claimed.

Jasmine heads for the bed selected for her by default. She lies back on the mattress gingerly.

Rafters criss cross the low ceiling that slopes overhead. The wood is rough and uneven. She rises unsteadily to touch its pocked surface.

A sharp inhale at the door.

Jasmine turns to see her new roommate, AMELIA MILLER, 18, white, a conquistador in a strange new land.

Amelia catches her breath, explaining:

AMELIA  
 You scared me.

4 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 4

Living room furniture bulges under plastic sheeting. Kneeling on the hardwood floor, Gail unpacks from a cardboard box.

The muddy outline of a shoe mars the aged oak floors. Sighing, Gail checks the underside of her shoes, pausing when she finds them dry.

She glances around the room, eyes catching on the stone gaze of a MARBLE BUST distorted beneath a cloudy cover of plastic. She holds its stare before looking away.

5 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY 5

Gail tears off a ream of paper towels. Somewhere nearby, a bell chimes.

Gail follows the sound to a narrow staircase that leads directly off the kitchen. At the top of the flight is a door left slightly ajar.

Pushing aside her unease, she climbs the stairs.

A5 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - MAID'S ROOM - DAY A5

A stuffy room, lonely and claustrophobic, crammed with the boxed detritus of former masters.

On the far wall hangs a row of BRASS BELLS. Inscribed underneath them are the names of different rooms of the house -- Master Bedroom, Dining Room, Parlor.

Gail studies the bells for a moment before stooping to gather documents scattered on the floor. The documents are aged and fragile. On top is an original blueprint for the home.

Gail moves to place them in a cardboard box, but pauses at the sight of a photograph. A black and white snapshot from the 1950s, it shows an unsmiling PAST MASTER and his family.

It takes Gail several moments to notice the BLACK MAID at the margins of the photo, half hidden by darkness. She is turning her head at the moment of the photograph, features lost in a blur.

6 INT. BELLEVILLE - COMMON ROOM - NIGHT 6

Gail stands before the BELLEVILLE FRESHMEN gathered cross legged on the floor like overgrown children.

GAIL

Legends. Ancaster College is  
crowded with them.

(MORE)

GAIL (CONT'D)

When you go to a school nearly as old as the country, you're bound to hear a few. Like, maybe you've heard that FDR was rejected by Ancaster and had to settle for his safety school, Harvard.

The Belleville Freshmen cheer.

GAIL (CONT'D)

While I can't confirm that, I can say that two US presidents and a small army of senators count this school as their alma mater. Or maybe you've heard about Margaret Millett, a woman hanged for witchcraft not too far from where this building stands. That part's true, but believe me when I say the only thing that will haunt you this year is that extra slice of pizza.

The Freshmen hang on her every word.

GAIL (CONT'D)

I consider it a huge honor to be stepping into the role of Belleville House master for the first time. As master, I'm more than just a professor -- consider me a confidante, an ally, a friend. And if you need anything, I live right there --

She gestures.

GAIL (CONT'D)

So I'm easy to find. And even though it's a new position for me, I'd love to share some facts I've picked up in my many years at Ancaster.

Gail counts off on her hand:

GAIL (CONT'D)

The best seat in the school is the right corner carrel on the second floor of the Aiken Memorial Library. Trust me on that. As a related point, no one calls it the Aiken Memorial Library. For reasons that will become clear, you'll soon know it as "The Ache."

Jasmine sits beside Amelia, shimmering with excitement.

GAIL (CONT'D)

There's a vending machine in the basement of Belleville House. Only feed it coins. We start and close every semester with something called the Primal Scream. Get your lungs ready now. This year, you'll fail at something. Rejoice; it means you're challenging yourself.

Gail pauses, glancing around the room.

GAIL (CONT'D)

And my last fact: you'll never go back home again.

Gail savors the quizzical silence.

GAIL (CONT'D)

Don't get me wrong - Thanksgiving's in two months. You'll be allowed to leave. But when you head back to your hometowns over break, it'll be as visitors. There's no returning to what came before. So for now, all I can say is: welcome home.

7 INT. KATIE'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

7

Pop music drones relentlessly.

Jasmine sits amongst a small group of Amelia's friends, all 18 and white, subtle variations on the same.

KATIE FUCHS is a pint sized social operator, while her roommate CRESSIDA CARROLL-BLAKE lets her posh British accent do the heavy lifting. LIBBY NIELSEN, drunk, spills beer.

CRESSIDA

Can someone clean that up? The kitchen roll's over there.

JASMINE

Wait, so how do you guys all know each other?

Katie points to Amelia as she explains to Jasmine:

KATIE

We went to the same school. Libby went to Dalton --



LIBBY

What? No. I went to Dwight. *Dwight.*

AMELIA  
Libby's my friend. Camp  
Chappaquiddick.

KATIE  
Oh, Dwight. Dumb White Idiots  
Getting High Together.

CRESSIDA  
Can we keep on? Never have I ever  
joined the mile high club.

Libby slurps her shot, laughing. It dribbles down her shirt.  
Amelia clocks that Katie has also downed a drink.

AMELIA  
Yeah right. You weren't like that.

KATIE  
It happened on Birthright!

Cressida turns to Jasmine with the cool ease of one used to  
giving commands.

CRESSIDA  
It's her go.

LIBBY  
Yes, girl. Show us what you got.

Jasmine is out of her depth.

JASMINE  
Never have I ever had sex.

Incredulous, the girls wait for her to continue.

JASMINE (CONT'D)  
... in... a hot tub?

Disappointed, the other girls take shots in quick succession.

LIBBY  
I have an actually good one. Never  
have I ever pissed my pants.

CRESSIDA  
Tonight's not too late to start.

The girls look in surprise as Jasmine throws back a shot.  
Amelia is mortified. Jasmine laughs, unembarrassed.

JASMINE

Wait! Listen, I can explain. So I sleepwalk, right? Sometimes, not all the time.

KATIE

Do you ever sleep eat?

JASMINE

No. I don't think so. So anyway, last spring I slept over at my friend's house after prom with a bunch of people --

LIBBY

We had the sickest after prom. Amagansett.

JASMINE

Usually I'll sleepwalk if I'm stressed, or in a new place or whatever. So I guess that's what happened, because the next thing I know, her mom is waking me up, and I'm sitting on top of their open dryer, no joke, just peeing.

Jasmine can barely get the words out around her laughter. It's infectious, spreading first to Cressida and then quickly to the rest.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

So it's like... I didn't just piss my own pants. I pissed everybody's pants.

Cressida surveys Jasmine appreciatively.

CRESSIDA

Who found this girl?

They are interrupted by a shriek from somewhere outside. The girls' eyes shoot to the window, wide with concern.

Other voices add themselves to a chorus of screams.

KATIE

The primal scream!

Leaping to their feet with glee, the girls race to the window, Jasmine reaches it first, flinging it open as across the school others do the same.

They throw their heads back and wail.

8 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

8

Warm afternoon sunlight seeps into the room.

Gail poses for her official portrait, perched delicately at the edge of a chaise. A PAINTER sketches her, the sound of graphite on canvas tickling the air.

PAINTER  
Congratulations.

Gail struggles not to move as she speaks.

GAIL  
Thank you.

PAINTER  
I painted Dean Maroney when he started as master of Peabody House. It's a huge step.

The trill of a bell sings softly somewhere in the next room. Gail jerks her head, searching.

PAINTER (CONT'D)  
Tired?

GAIL  
No, I... that sound --

PAINTER  
This is a good place to stop, anyway. We can pick back up next week.

As the Painter packs up, Gail sneaks a look at the unfinished work. Only the faintest outline of Gail can be made out, just the trace of a faceless woman.

A9 EXT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

A9

The Ancaster dining hall, a modern structure made of glass, glows in the thick darkness.

9 INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

9

The Ancaster dining hall is ornamented with a portrait of the school's founder. Jasmine stares up at it, mesmerized. The founder peers back, imperiously.

For one moment the portrait appears not as a man, but something demonic, all waxen skin and bloodstained lips. Her head jerks in shock.

A group of JOCKS swagger by, one jostling Jasmine.

Uneasily moving on, she queues up for the hot meal, where a black DINING WORKER puts on a folksy act for the students.

DINING WORKER

Don't be shy, now! I know you can do better than that. Here you go, load up that plate now. Mmhmm! Now we're talking. Alright now child, eat up!

When Jasmine makes it to the front of the line, the Dining Worker's expression slams shut.

|     |   |     |                  |
|-----|---|-----|------------------|
| A10 | INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT  | A10 | *                |
|     | Amelia and a group of UPPERCLASSMEN have commandeered the dorm room and sprawl on both beds. TYLER, 21, defacto leader, tries to teach Amelia to blow smoke rings.              |     | *<br>*<br>*      |
|     | As Jasmine lets herself into the room, an Upperclassman moves to hide their weed. Amelia laughs.  |     | *<br>*           |
|     | AMELIA  |     | *                |
|     | She's not gonna do anything.  |     | *                |
|     | With no room left on her bed, Jasmine squeezes next to Tyler, who sizes her up approvingly.   |     | *<br>*           |
|     | TYLER   |     | *                |
|     | Who are you?  |     |                  |
|     | JASMINE   |     |                  |
|     | Guess.  |     |                  |
|     | TYLER   |     | *                |
|     | Um. Beyonce?  |     |                  |
|     | Jasmine beams inwardly at the compliment, though her glee is cut short as Tyler rattles off the names of several more famous black women who bear no resemblance to each other. |     | *<br>*<br>*      |
|     | TYLER (CONT'D)  |     | *                |
|     | A Williams sister? Venus and or Serena. No, wait, Megan the Stallion.   |     | *<br>*<br>*<br>* |
|     | Jasmine watches in slight discomfort as the guessing game spreads to the others. NICKY jumps in.  |     | *<br>*           |
|     | NICKY   |     | *                |
|     | Nicki Minaj.  |     | *                |

AMELIA \*  
Lizzo? \*

The group laughs. \*

JASMINE \*  
Wrong, wrong, wrong. \*

AMELIA \*  
Ok, game over. She's my roommate. \*

Tyler smiles warmly at Jasmine. \*

TYLER \*  
Nice to meet you. I'm Tyler. \*

JASMINE \*  
Hi Tyler. \*

AMELIA \*  
Ignore him, Jasmine. He's a loser. \*  
And a bad influence. \*

Tyler feigns dismay. \*

TYLER \*  
Bad influence?! \*

Nicky looks at Jasmine. \*

NICKY \*  
Oh shit, you live here too? You \*  
better watch your back, girl. \*

JASMINE \*  
What? \*

NICKY \*  
This room is haunted. Some chick \*  
died here in the 50s or whatever. \*

Nicky looks around. \*

NICKY (CONT'D) \*  
It's pretty legendary. \*

TYLER \*  
The whole school's cursed. By the \*  
Witch. \*

Tyler smiles at Jasmine conspiratorially. \*

JASMINE

You're gonna have to try harder  
than that to scare me.



TYLER

Seriously, it's real. The Witch  
chooses a freshman every year.  
Could be one of you.

\*

Amelia flicks her middle finger.

\*

AMELIA

You're so full of shit.

NICKY

You guys don't know this? This is  
like, known facts.

\*

Tyler focuses all his attention on Jasmine. She listens,  
transfixed, not sure if he's flirting or serious.

\*

\*

TYLER

I mean, it doesn't always work.  
People go nuts, drop out, withdraw.  
The lucky ones. This girl my year,  
Treasure --

NICKY

Holy shit, I forgot about Treasure.

TYLER

She lost it. Jumped out the window.

Tyler gives a pointed look out the window.

\*

JASMINE

What happens?

TYLER

The Witch shows herself to one  
person. Chooses them. And on  
December 3rd - the day she died -  
at 3:33 on the dot, she takes them  
with her.

Jasmine looks on, disturbed despite herself.

JASMINE

Takes them where?

TYLER

To hell.

Jasmine surveys the laughing faces of the Upperclassmen from  
behind the fog of her first smoked joint. Bad vibes a-plenty.

A sinister haze of weed smoke clouds the room. Jasmine stumbles through it, maneuvering around Upperclassmen who block the way.

\*

JASMINE

Excuse me. Sorry. 'Scuse me.

Amelia murmurs something to Tyler. They both laugh.

11 [OMIT] 11

All INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT All

Steam hangs thick, clouding the long mirror. Jasmine emerges from the fog, wrapped in a towel. When she gets to the sinks, the lights cut out.

JASMINE

Can you get the lights?

SOMEONE is standing in the corner, only the darkest outline visible.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Really fucking funny.

Her eyes have adjusted enough to see a bit more of Someone; the white teeth of a wide smile.

Irritated, Jasmine stomps to the door and flips on the lights, stopping short to find the bathroom empty.

A bathrobe hangs from a corner hook. Jasmine stares long and hard at it before accepting the explanation.

Turning towards her bag of toiletries at the sink, she spots a note left nearby on the gleaming steel counter. Its hurried scribble reads: Clean up. DISGUSTING!

Beside the note is a small clump of kinky hair.

A12 EXT. SEMINAR ROOM - DAY A12

ANCASTER STUDENTS hurry to class, oblivious to the CUSTODIAL STAFF MEMBER emptying a garbage can.

They scamper by, carelessly tossing garbage into the bagless can as they go.

12 INT. SEMINAR ROOM - DAY 12

A freshman seminar led by LIV BECKMAN, late 30s, black, with pale skin she wears like a cross on her back.

A dozen STUDENTS gather at a table, Jasmine amongst them.

LIV

Hawthorne went ham, I think we can all agree. I mean, just take a look at Pearl. This little girl is like 90% symbolism, 10% precocious statements.

The Students chuckle. Liv is the academic equivalent of the "cool mom."

LIV (CONT'D)

What do y'all make of her?

The Students hang back, loath to put themselves on the line. Jasmine tentatively raises her hand.

JASMINE

Professor Beckman?

LIV

Call me Liv. And just chime in. Raising hands is for high school.

JASMINE

Oh. Sorry. I think it's kind of ironic that Hester named her Pearl.

LIV

How so?

JASMINE

Pearls are associated with the color white, so we connect her with purity, innocence and all --

LIV

Pearl should be read as innocent  
because of her association with  
white. Who agrees?

The Students are silent, spineless bastards that they are.  
Jasmine begins to raise her hand again, then drops it.

JASMINE

Well, Professor Beckman --

LIV

Liv.

JASMINE

Um, Liv, I think at the time at  
least, the color white was  
connected with purity.  
Symbolically? But then there's that  
part where she's like, shouting at  
the village kids in tongues. So  
obviously some of her behavior  
isn't supposed to be innocent.

Jasmine gets a laugh from the room. Cressida senses the  
opportunity to play to Liv's sympathies.

CRESSIDA

Or that's exactly the point and Pearl is basically the white woman come to bring Hester down... Hester representing all non-conforming women of course.

LIV

Brilliant, Cressida. Let's go into that some more.

Cressida's bluff has been called. She deftly deflects.

CRESSIDA

I'd actually defer to Jasmine on this one.

JASMINE

I guess I think it doesn't have to be a contradiction. Her hatefulness is a kind of purity. The Puritans, the hidden, twisted way they lived - that's what Pearl grew out of. She's the truest expression of her environment.

Liv sizes Jasmine up like a worthwhile adversary.

LIV

Alright let's check out this passage on page 103...

13 [SCENE 13 WAS MOVED - SEE SCENE A11] 13

14 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 14

An intimate collection of FACULTY and the MASTERS of Ancaster's other houses have gathered in Gail's home.

MASTER BRIAN FOOTE, 50s, white, nudges Gail.

MASTER FOOTE

It sink in yet?

GAIL

I couldn't sleep at all the first night, if that counts.

MASTER FOOTE

This is amazing, Gail. First black master. You'll be president next.

MASTER DIANDRA CASE, 50s, white, jumps in.

DIANDRA  
Should we call her Barack?

MASTER FOOTE  
I meant of the school.

Diandra smiles at Gail.

DIANDRA  
It's all very exciting, isn't it?

GAIL  
It is. Well, you would know. You've  
been here too.

DIANDRA  
Not quite the same.

MASTER FOOTE  
(to Gail)  
Welcome to the club.

Diandra glances around the room.

DIANDRA  
Something's changed.

MASTER FOOTE  
What happened to the landscape  
Anders kept up there? Brilliant  
piece.

GAIL  
Oh, I --

DIANDRA  
Don't be such a dinosaur, Brian. I  
think it's wonderful she's trying  
to make this her own.

Gail's smile is stretched to its limit.

GAIL  
Can I get you anything, Diandra?

Diandra distractedly hands her empty glass to Gail. Gail  
takes it, swallowing the affront like medicine. She leaves.

Master Foote and Diandra warmly watch her go.

DIANDRA  
Good for her.

MASTER FOOTE  
Absolutely. Just wonderful.

15 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT 15

Gail empties a bottle of Pinot Noir into Diandra's glass, crimson specks sloshing out and freckling the counter.

There's one last sheet of paper towel. She holds the paper to the spill, wine blooming on its white surface like a wound.

When she lifts the glass, she notices that it's chipped.

Searching the kitchen she is clearly unfamiliar with, she hunts through a cupboard under the sink. Stiffening, she pulls out something: a mammy cookie jar. She holds it uneasily in her hands.

DIANDRA (O.S.)  
Gail? Are you stomping the grapes  
yourself?

Gail looks up from the jar as if caught.

16 [SCENE 16 MOVED - SEE SCENE A5] 16

A16 [OMIT] A16

17 EXT. LIV'S HOUSE - NIGHT 17

A residential block lined with scuffed Victorians. Gail makes her way up the overgrown path.

It takes two rings before Liv answers the door. She peers from behind a chain latch.

LIV  
Gail?!



GAIL  
Hey, sorry, I --

LIV  
Hang on.

Liv closes the door to undo the lock. Gail glances back towards the street as if to beat a hasty retreat.

Liv steps out onto the porch, hugging Gail.

LIV (CONT'D)  
Girl you look like you've seen a ghost. Where were you?

GAIL  
I had the other masters over, some faculty too. A small thing.

LIV  
Damn. If this is what you're like after a party...

Gail lets loose a self deprecating snort.

GAIL  
You're right. I'm overreacting. I just felt --

LIV  
Like a house nigger?

Gail recoils.

GAIL  
No. That's... not...

LIV  
You think I don't know? Us sisters are an endangered species on this campus.

Gail grows further uncomfortable. Liv tries to smoothly recover from the blunder.

LIV (CONT'D)  
Let's get out of here. Boston. I'm meeting Ramel. I'll get him to bring Mark. You know I keep trying to set y'all up.

GAIL  
I need sleep, not a man.

LIV  
So you're just gonna sit up there  
in the massa's house? I can't leave  
you like this.

Gail pries herself from Liv's grasp.

GAIL  
I'm not going to Boston tonight.

Liv's face is creased with worry.

GAIL (CONT'D)  
Don't worry. I'll see you soon.

Gail is halfway down the path when Liv calls out.

LIV (O.S.)  
Hey!

Gail turns. Liv's apprehensive eyes drink in the street  
before settling on Gail.

LIV (CONT'D)  
Be safe.

A18 EXT. BOSTON STREET - NIGHT

A18

Gail emerges from a taxi onto what certainly looks like a  
Boston street.

18 [SCENE 18 MOVED - SEE SCENE A18]

18

19

INT. MICHELLE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

19

Michelle reclines on the couch, laptop balanced on her belly. Gail carries two glasses of wine in from the kitchen.

GAIL

This is heaven. The semester's barely started and I can't get out of Ancaster fast enough.

Gail sighs, relaxes.

GAIL (CONT'D)

I've been waiting all week for this.

Gail hands a glass of wine to MICHELLE BAIRD, early 30s, white, her casually rumpled style as studied as her politics.

MICHELLE

The wine or me?

Gail sniffs her glass.

GAIL

Definitely not the wine.

Michelle crawls over to Gail on the couch, nuzzling her.

MICHELLE

Babe that's a really good wine. Plus, it's a woman run vineyard.

Michelle plucks a wad of gum from her mouth and hands it off to Gail in what is clearly a routine gesture.

GAIL

I didn't know I needed that.

MICHELLE

You need that.

Michelle resumes scrolling through her computer.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I'm so over Democracy Now. Amy Goodman, I don't know... It's like I'm trapped in some kind of cycle with her.

CUT TO:

Gail and Michelle eat on the floor of the minimally furnished apartment, digging forks into takeout containers.

Michelle scoops a scrap of naan into curry and holds it out for Gail.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Here, try this.

Gail reaches for it before allowing herself to be fed. She chews slowly, her head falling back in orgasmic delight.

CUT TO:

Gail in actual orgasmic delight as she and Michelle have sex on the floor of the apartment, ornamented by half consumed food and blind to anything else in the world.

A20

INT. MICHELLE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A20

Michelle snores gently as Gail lies beside her, staring straight ahead.

20 [OMIT] 20

21 [SCENE 21 WAS MOVED - SEE SCENE 51] 21

22 INT. AIKEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY - CIRCULATION DESK - NIGHT 22

Jasmine glances nervously at a portrait of a solemn Puritan-era woman labeled "Margaret Millett."

Pulling herself from the portrait's glare, she turns towards a smiley LIBRARIAN who scans Jasmine's books.

JASMINE

Is that for the anniversary?

LIBRARIAN

Clever girl. We're doing a whole series on the witch trials ahead of the anniversary on December 3rd.

JASMINE

December 3rd. I heard about that. They said she died at 3:33 in the morning?

Jasmine passes the Librarian her books.

LIBRARIAN

According to the legend. Supposedly, Margaret Millett was about to be granted a stay of execution by the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. But before that could happen, the town rushed her execution. 3:33 AM.

A chill passes over Jasmine. The Librarian smiles brightly.

LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)

Anyway, that's all in the past.

JASMINE

Right.

The Librarian takes stock of Jasmine's books.

LIBRARIAN

No procrastinating here, I see.  
You've clearly got a good head on  
your shoulders.

JASMINE

Figuratively, maybe, but dragging these books around has completely wrecked my posture and whole head, shoulder, and neck alignment.

LIBRARIAN

How funny! Gosh, you're well spoken. Your family must be so proud of you.

Jasmine's smile flickers as she crams the books into her bag.

JASMINE

Have a good one.

The security gate beeps when Jasmine goes through. She turns back to meet the uncomfortable expression of the Librarian.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Ugh, this happened last time too.

LIBRARIAN

Could you come back and we'll just... We just have to be sure.

Jasmine returns to the desk. Embarrassment creeping over her, she passes the books to the Librarian to crosscheck them.

JASMINE

Maybe I should take this as a sign.

Jasmine forces a chuckle, but the Librarian is wholly focused on the books. She checks the last one. All clear.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Yeah, I don't know what it is.

The Librarian gestures to Jasmine's backpack, suspicion narrowly edging out her extreme discomfort.

LIBRARIAN

Can I just?

Jasmine chews her lip as the Librarian paws through her backpack, searching thoroughly. When her search turns up empty, she offers Jasmine an abashed grin.

LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)

Sorry, we just --

JASMINE

Oh, no, yeah. I totally understand.

The Librarian's face floods with relief at the sight of Jasmine's smile, which stays plastered on as she returns the books to her bag one by one.

23 [SCENE 23 MOVED – SEE SCENE A55] 23

A23 [OMIT] A23

B23 INT. BELLEVILLE HOUSE – STAIRWAY – NIGHT B23

Jasmine descends the stairs beneath Belleville's giant windows. The building gives off a lonely and deserted sensation.

Reaching the second floor landing, Jasmine continues towards her room. Behind her looms a darkened corridor with intermittently flickering lights.

A bizarre noise reverberates through the space – a squelching, stabbing sound.

On high alert, Jasmine turns.

At the end of the dark hallway is a stooped, squatting SILHOUETTE, its back to Jasmine. Wielding some kind of long weapon, it jabs violently at something on the ground.

Slowly it stands, back hunched, head down. It moves backwards towards Jasmine with jerky, unnatural movements.

Jasmine looks on, frozen with terror, a scream strangled before it can leave her throat.

Briefly flickering light illuminates the hood pulled over the Silhouette's misshapen form.

Jasmine stumbles backwards several feet, but can't pull her gaze. The Silhouette is nearly upon her.

Jasmine's feet get tangled and she tumbles to the ground. The Silhouette turns to face Jasmine as she screams.

Taken aback, the Silhouette – a CUSTODIAL WORKER (black) – brushes the hood from her head. Pulling some airpods from her ears, she looks at Jasmine in equal fear and alarm.

Jasmine begins to take in the scene. The Custodial Worker in an Ancaster hoodie, the mop and bucket, the glistening floor, the yellow caution sign she tripped over.

Embarrassment floods Jasmine's face.



CUSTODIAL WORKER  
My bad, I didn't even hear you.

JASMINE  
Sorry, I just --

JASMINE (CONT'D) CUSTODIAL WORKER  
Sorry. Sorry.

CUSTODIAL WORKER (CONT'D)  
'Scuse me.

The Custodial Worker gives Jasmine a deferential nod before awkwardly moving on, leaving Jasmine horrified and alone.

24 INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

24

Jasmine is fast asleep, one arm flung over the edge of her bed. The sound of heavy breathing echoes through the room.

Her digital clock ticks to 3:33 AM.

It's just possible to see a GNARLED HAND slowly reach from under the bed and drag a jagged nail across Jasmine's arm.

Jasmine flinches, shifting slightly.

The pale hand extends again, scratching harder this time.

Jasmine is jerked from her sleep. The breathing rattles on. She glances over at Amelia's bed and finds it empty.

JASMINE

Amelia?

Blood gone cold, Jasmine wills herself out of bed and crouches to take a look when --

AMELIA (O.S.)

Jasmine!

A24 INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

A24

It's suddenly morning. Amelia watches her from bed, backlit by glaring daylight. 7:58 AM on the clock.

AMELIA

Nice manners. I said your name like ten times. What are you doing?

Embarrassed, Jasmine gets her bearings. She slowly gets to her feet, looming over Amelia, who uneasily draws back.

JASMINE

Sorry.

Amelia throws on some slippers and stomps out of the room. Jasmine checks under the bed, finding nothing.

When she looks at her arm, there are two bloody scratches.

25 [OMIT] 25

26 INT. LIV'S OFFICE - DAY 26

Jasmine slides into a seat in Liv's classroom.

JASMINE

Thanks for squeezing me in. I got you this.

Jasmine nudges a latte towards Liv.

LIV

Who told you black people drink coffee?

Liv tempers her remark with a laugh as she slides an essay to Jasmine.

LIV (CONT'D)

So I read your essay. And it's good.

Jasmine exhales a breath of relief.

JASMINE

Oh thank god.

LIV

Hang on, you didn't let me finish. I can see your effort. And this is a good paper, just for an entirely different prompt. You didn't address the topic at all.

JASMINE

It's impossible.

Jasmine flips through her dog eared copy of the book.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

I mean, a critical race analysis of  
The Scarlet Letter?

LIV

What's the issue?

JASMINE

It's not there. There isn't race in  
The Scarlet Letter.

LIV

Girl. Just because you're not  
seeing something doesn't mean it  
isn't there.

Liv takes a gentle tone.

LIV (CONT'D)

I get it, this is advanced stuff.  
It can be really hard to make the  
adjustment to a school like this,  
especially for students of color  
coming from disadvantaged --

Jasmine prickles.

JASMINE

Where do you think I'm coming from?

LIV

I didn't --

JASMINE

I'm from the suburbs. Okay? Tacoma.  
I was valedictorian. Class  
president. I'm not -- you don't  
know who I am.

Jasmine stands, brushing tears with the back of her hand.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

You don't get it. You don't get it.

Jasmine flees before Liv can say anything more. Liv watches  
as the door slowly closes with a controlled hiss.

A26

[OMIT]

A26

B26 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

B26

The chipper voice of Ancaster's COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR rings down the phone line. Gail reads off her notes.

GAIL

By choosing its first black master,  
Ancaster is taking an exciting --

COMM DIRECTOR (ON PHONE)

I think thrilling might be a better  
word.

Gail locates a bottle of wine and searches for a corkscrew, pulling open kitchen drawers, most of them still empty.

GAIL

-- thrilling step into today's increasingly diverse and inclusive world. As the woman chosen for --

COMM DIRECTOR (ON PHONE)

Woman of color.

GAIL

-- chosen for this honor, I am humbled to be a part of Ancaster's evolution. Even so, there remains a lot of work as we pursue our goals, and it won't be possible without the help of donors like --

Gail pulls open a corner drawer and recoils, nearly dropping the phone. Writhing larvae crowd the drawer, reaching blindly for the sky.

COMM DIRECTOR (ON PHONE)

Everything ok?

GAIL

I'm fine. I'm good. I'm great --  
I'll call you back, ok?

|     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| C26 | INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY  | C26 |
|     | Gail looks on as an apathetic MAINTENANCE WORKER vacuums larvae from the drawer. |     |
| 27  | [SCENE 27 WAS MOVED - SEE SCENE A23]   | 27  |
| 28  | [OMIT]   | 28  |
| 29  | [OMIT]   | 29  |

A29 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY A29

Gail works through notes in an empty classroom, hunting for the perfect phrase, leafing through texts. She silently reads over a sentence, mouth moving with muted words.

B29 LATER B29

The now full classroom buzzes with energy. The STUDENTS lean forward, engaged. SASCHA, a black upperclassman, holds forth.

SASCHA

I dunno. To me, it's faux-woke. He always does that. His books feel so sorry for white men.

JOCK

Dude, how can you say that?

SASCHA

Have you read Disgrace?

GAIL

People. Back on track.

SASCHA

He pushes everything onto Colonel Joll, who's the obvious villain, and just lets the Magistrate skate by.

GAIL

I think that's a case you could make. But let's reach back to the Arendt reading. What happens if we consider this through the lens of the banality of evil?...

C29 LATER C29

Sascha lingers as Gail packs up, her intellect ignited by the class discussion.

Students trickle out of the classroom, some pausing as they go to share a few words with Gail, praise the class, invite her to a club meeting.

Never has she seemed so at home.

30 [SCENE 30 MOVED - SEE SCENE B26] 30

31 [SCENE 31 MOVED – SEE SCENE A16] 31

32 [SCENE 32 MOVED – SEE SCENE C26] 32

33 [OMIT] 33



A33 INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

A33

Jasmine totes a pizza box into the common room, bringing it to where Katie, Cressida and Amelia have commandeered the lounge seating.

CRESSIDA

I call the pepperoni. All the pepperoni.

Jasmine sets down the pizza and Katie, Cressida and Amelia dig in.

JASMINE

It came to like twenty bucks.

KATIE

I can't get over how crazy cheap everything is up here.

AMELIA

Gross, it's cold.

CRESSIDA

Stop avoiding the subject. Are you two dating or what?

Jasmine pours herself a drink. Across the room, a JANITOR cleans in silence.

JASMINE

We're talking about Tyler?

KATIE

As usual.

AMELIA

Dating is a lot. We're just cool.

Jasmine pushes herself to speak up.

JASMINE

The pizza was nineteen dollars if you guys wanna pay me back.

CRESSIDA

Does nineteen even divide four ways?

AMELIA

I mean, if you want to do that,  
that's my wine you're drinking  
right now. Can I get back my eight  
dollars and thirty cents?

Amelia and Cressida laugh.

CRESSIDA

Get it right, it's eight point  
three repeating.

KATIE

Guys. Women who don't support other  
women go to hell.

She pulls some bills from her wallet, handing them to  
Jasmine. Jasmine hesitates for a moment before accepting.

KATIE (CONT'D)

It's on me.

34

[OMIT]

34

35 INT. SEMINAR ROOM - DAY

35

Liv distributes papers back to Students who grab at them hungrily. Jasmine immediately flips to the last page of her essay, jolting in shock to see the F splashed across the crisp sheet.

Through tear-clouded eyes, she gives Liv a good, long look.

36 EXT. QUAD - DAY

36

Cressida observes Jasmine apathetically.

CRESSIDA  
Are you crying?

JASMINE  
No.

Jasmine tucks in her sorrow.

JASMINE (CONT'D)  
What a bitch.

CRESSIDA  
Yeah, that killed my Sunday night.  
I spent the whole day on it.

JASMINE  
You started this the day before it  
was due?

CRESSIDA  
I was at the Ache at the crack of  
dawn. I wanted to give myself time.  
All that racial dynamic stuff -- we  
don't have it back home.

JASMINE  
What did you get?

Cressida checks her paper.

CRESSIDA  
B+.

JASMINE  
How?! What did you write about?

CRESSIDA  
Oh, I don't know. A bunch of stuff.  
The color red, Indians.  
(MORE)

CRESSIDA (CONT'D)  
The French-Indian war. The savage  
as personified by nature...

Cressida scrutinizes her, incredulous.

CRESSIDA (CONT'D)  
Are you telling me you had a hard  
time? Jasmine, it was easy.

37 INT. MASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

37

Jasmine looks on apprehensively as Gail flips through her  
essay, snorting occasionally at something witty.

GAIL  
Your writing's great.

JASMINE  
I wish that made a difference.

GAIL  
Maybe you can see if there's an  
extra credit assignment?

Jasmine stews, turning a thought over in her head. She slides  
a sheet of paper across the desk.

GAIL (CONT'D)  
What is this?

JASMINE  
I'm filing a dispute.

GAIL  
That's really serious, Jasmine.

JASMINE  
I've never failed before in my  
life.

GAIL  
Don't take grades personally. Trust  
me. It'll save you a lot of grief.

JASMINE  
It's not the grade. And it's not  
me.

Jasmine's expression darkens.

JASMINE (CONT'D)  
It's her.

38

INT. MICHELLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

38

The lurid red of glazed strawberries. They sit atop a cake that Gail hovers over, sneaking a taste.

Michelle is a flurry of activity, moving from the kitchen to the dining table.

GAIL

Can we have a safe word? For when I can't take it anymore?

MICHELLE

Come on, babe. We always do what you want.

GAIL

Pineapple?

MICHELLE

I've been spending a lot of time with Tara since you've been busy, and she's been really impactful.

The doorbell rings.

GAIL

Is she your friend or your guru?

MICHELLE

(distracted)

She's a doula. Now can you just try to enjoy yourself?

As Michelle goes to the door, Gail glances at a nearby shelf. Prominently displayed are several books on Black Studies.

TARA (O.S.)

Gail!

Gail turns to see TARA coming in for a hug. Tara is white, 30s, an echo of Michelle.

TARA (CONT'D)

At long last!

Over Tara's shoulder Gail spots NICOLE, 40s, black. Between the four of them, it's like a hall of mirrors.

As Tara peels off her outerwear she excitedly chatters to Michelle, freely dispensing compliments.

Gail offers Nicole her hand at the same time Nicole goes in for a hug. They negotiate an awkward detente, settling by grasping each other's hands.

NICOLE

It's great to meet you.

TARA

Nic, doesn't she remind you of  
Kenya?

NICOLE

Hmm --

MICHELLE

Oh my god, yes!

Michelle and Tara share a conspiratorial laugh. Gail looks uneasily from Nicole, to Tara/Michelle, and back again.

39 EXT. HOCKEY HOUSE - NIGHT

39

Two ATHLETES man the door of the hockey house like bouncers. A line of PARTY HOPEFULS jostles to get in.

Jasmine gets separated from her friends, watching helplessly as Cressida and Katie enter swiftly.

At the front, an Athlete stops her from passing by.

JASMINE

My friends just went inside.

ATHLETE

We're at capacity. Fire code.

A BRO saunters over with his GIRLFRIEND, getting high fives from the Athletes and squeezing past Jasmine to get in.

Katie pops her head out the front door.

KATIE

Jasmine, what are you doing?

40 INT. HOCKEY HOUSE - NIGHT

40

Jasmine is a great dancer, gleeful and uninhibited. She dances with her friends at the heart of the crowded party.

Her energy is irresistible and earns appreciative glances from some HOVERING BROS. A rap song comes on, and with a vampiric need for attention, Katie pulls Jasmine towards her.

They dance closely, Katie's eyes flicking to the observers. Feeling suddenly like a spectacle, Jasmine tries to step away, but backs into the Hovering Bros. They rap along, waving their arms like gangsters, grinding against her.

The party closes in from all sides, loud, rotten, grotesque.

41 INT. HOCKEY HOUSE - BEER PONG ROOM - LATER

41

A poster of a buxom bikini clad woman. Someone has replaced the bikini model's head with a cut-out photo of a TEAMMATE.

Jasmine surveys the poster by her perch near a scattered collection of grain alcohol before turning her eyes out the window.

The room is empty save for a PASSED OUT PARTIER slumped on the couch.

Tyler pokes his head into the room and does a quick sweep with his eyes. Having found Jasmine, he approaches her casually.

She jumps at the sensation of a hand on her back. He lifts his hands as if protesting innocence.

TYLER

Sorry. I scare you?

JASMINE

No, I'm just... just, um...

Jasmine searches for the words and finds none. She shakes her head, embarrassed.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

I'm just really weird, huh?

She lets off a self deprecating laugh.

Tyler works to cheer Jasmine up.

TYLER

Weird? Don't sell yourself short.  
What about aloof?

JASMINE

Oh, totally. Mysterious.

TYLER

Superior.

Jasmine's smile flickers, unsure if this is a compliment.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Seriously, you good? Why aren't you  
out there?

JASMINE

I need a drink. Bad. But there's no  
chasers.



TYLER

Chasers, are you kidding me? Let me show you how to take a real shot.

He slops vodka into Solo cups.

TYLER (CONT'D)

I did a semester in St. Petersburg. I can drink like a Russian.

JASMINE

Whatever that means.

TYLER

Alright so the first step is, you blow all your air out like this.

He exhales vigorously.

TYLER (CONT'D)

And then you throw it back fast. You won't taste a thing. Ready?

Jasmine dutifully follows him as he exhales and then drinks. She grimaces, weathering the vodka. When she opens her eyes, Tyler's coming in for the kiss.

She holds back for a second, uncertain. Then she leans into the kiss, hungry for affection, belonging. When she pulls away, she spots Amelia across the room, hatred frankly coloring her features.

A42 EXT. BELLEVILLE - NIGHT

A42

Moving at a dreamy pace, Jasmine wanders the quad. The deserted college is eerily bereft of sound and people.

Jasmine walks past a dormitory, oblivious to the WOMEN who peer at her from the windows, as well as the SHADOW that reaches a thin arm towards her as she trudges steadily into the night.

Jasmine observes her illuminated dorm room window.

As she draws closer, she detects what looks like a figure standing in the window. The HOODED WOMAN is silhouetted, pale features indistinguishable.

Jasmine stops still, paralyzed with fear. The Hooded Woman slowly extends her hand, finger pointing at Jasmine.

A faint knocking echoes. Jasmine realizes with dread that the Hooded Woman isn't pointing at her, but behind her.

She turns to face a HANGING WOMAN dangling from a tree, her leather boots rhythmically knocking into its wood.

The rhythmic knocking picks up in pace as Jasmine watches in terror. The sound of a throaty, phlegmy laugh haunts the courtyard.

Jasmine looks to her bedroom window, but the Hooded Woman is gone. Crimson blood trickles down the window pane.

When she looks back at the tree, an empty noose swings like a pendulum.

Before Jasmine can react, the Hooded Woman appears out of the darkness from behind Jasmine and zooms towards her. Her pale and rotting hand grabs Jasmine by the throat.

43 SCENE 43 MOVED - ADDED TO A42 43

44 INT. DORM ROOM - DAY 44

Someone knocks insistently on Jasmine's door. She slowly wakes up.

Sunlight streams in from the open curtains. Amelia is nowhere to be seen, bed still made.

Shaking off sleep, Jasmine goes to answer the door, surprised to find Gail on the other side, worry etched across her face.

GAIL

Who did this?

Carved into the door with seething fury is the word "LEAVE." Jasmine's eyes move from the carved command to a length of rope that dangles from the doorknob and ends in a noose.

45 INT. MASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

45

Jasmine sits across from Gail, arms crossed protectively.

GAIL

Did you hear anything?

JASMINE

My mom says I sleep like the dead.

Gail thinks aloud.

GAIL

This could trigger a discrimination investigation...

JASMINE

Why do you -- we don't even know what this was about.

Gail gestures to the noose.

GAIL

I think we do.

Amelia bursts through the door, pulling down a skirt that insists on riding up.

AMELIA

Hey -- Jasmine? What happened?

GAIL

Take a seat, Amelia.

AMELIA

Is everything ok?

GAIL

Someone carved the word "leave" into your door and hung a noose.

AMELIA

Why?

GAIL

You didn't notice anything when you got home last night?

Amelia rubs her face of errant eyeliner.

AMELIA

I actually, uh -- I didn't come back to the dorm. I haven't even seen it yet.

GAIL

Is there anyone either of you have been having problems with?

AMELIA

No. I mean, not me.

GAIL

Jasmine?

JASMINE

No.

AMELIA

It's probably just a prank.

Gail gestures to the noose.

GAIL

You think this is a prank?

AMELIA

No, not -- all that stuff about the Witch and the girl who died in the 50s or whatever.

Jasmine processes this information. Gail is skeptical.

GAIL

I don't think this is about the Witch, Amelia.

Amelia shrugs.

AMELIA

What do you think it's about, Jasmine?

JASMINE

I don't know.

Gail clocks the dynamic.

GAIL

You girls get along fine, right?

The girls hesitate, looking at each other and then away.

AMELIA

Sure.

46 EXT. JOGGING PATH - DAY

46

A narrow path hugged on both sides by forest. Liv struggles to keep up with Gail's pace.

GAIL

A noose. I've never seen anything like that.

LIV

I have. At my grad school they found one on the quad. Huge scandal.

GAIL

I'm just worried about Jasmine.

LIV

Who knows what she's been going through. It kind of makes that grade dispute make sense.

GAIL

Yeah. They fixate on grades when everything else feels out of control.

LIV

But that dispute can control whether or not I get tenure.

GAIL

Don't be dramatic. You'll be --

Gail stops suddenly. Camouflaged amongst the trees is a LITTLE GIRL. She wears a hand sewn black dress that looks plucked from another era.

Gail shoots a knowing look at Liv.

GAIL (CONT'D)

One of the kids from that sect.

Gail takes a step towards the Little Girl. Liv hangs back, unnerved.

GAIL (CONT'D)

Hey! You ok?

LIV

That's impossible. Those people live hours from here. That town is... that's impossible.

Liv grabs Gail by the arm.

LIV (CONT'D)

I don't like this. Let's just go.

GAIL

Are you crazy? I'm not gonna leave this little girl here alone.

Gail turns back to the Little Girl and SHRIEKS. A SOMBER WOMAN has appeared almost magically behind her. She keeps a protective grasp on the Little Girl.

Gail catches her breath.

GAIL (CONT'D)

Sorry. We thought she was lost.

The Somber Woman looks past Gail at Liv.

Finally, the Somber Woman nods her thanks to Gail. She leads the Little Girl into the woods, turning once to look back.

|    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 47 | [OMIT]                                       | 47 |
| 48 | [SCENE 48 MOVED - SEE SCENE A64]             | 48 |
| 49 | [OMIT]                                       | 49 |
| 50 | INT. AIKEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY - STACKS - NIGHT | 50 |

Jasmine walks the nearly-deserted floor. The stacks' motion activated lights flick on as she moves through the space.

51 INT. AIKEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY - DOCUMENT ROOM - NIGHT 51

Jasmine winds the dial on a hulking microfilm, backtracking until she locates an article whose headline screams: STUDENT HANGING SHOCKS CAMPUS.

Glimpses of the article paint the picture of the 1965 suicide of a student named LOUISA WEEKS who died in a Belleville dorm. The article notes that Louisa was the first black woman admitted to Ancaster.

Jasmine reads the article in a state of complete captivation, hardly noticing as she speaks the words aloud.

JASMINE

(reading along)

Louisa Weeks, class of 1968...  
found hanging by her roommate...  
the death of Ancaster's first black  
undergraduate brings an end to a  
promising young life...

LATER

Jasmine yanks open a file cabinet and removes an archival storage box.

Opening the box, Jasmine picks up a leather-bound datebook. A sepia toned photograph is wedged inside. Jasmine looks uneasily at the portrait of Louisa Weeks.

She sets the photo down and thumbs through the datebook. The early entries are packed with dates and short observations:

"Lunch with Alice. Tomato bisque - delicious!"

"World Lit exam. 96%"

The entries become sparse with time. One engagement is crossed out, the word "uninvited" written beneath it.

Louisa's handwriting grows sloppier. A November entry simply reads: TIRED.

Jasmine accordions through the rest of the datebook. Names of friends and professors peter out, gradually replaced by only one: Margaret.

"Knock on door past midnight. Margaret?"

"Headache, nightmares. Margaret again."



Jasmine glances up at the WORK-STUDY STUDENT, a nonchalant upperclassman who distractedly scrolls through their phone.

She noiselessly slips the datebook into her bag.

A52

OMIT

A52

52 SCENE 52 ACTION MOVED TO 51

52

53

INT. TENURE COMMITTEE - DAY

53

A tenure meeting with the tenor of a blood sport. The room buzzes with crosstalk as fragments of discussions fly ping pong across the table.

VICTOR

... Honestly the department is overstaffed as it is.

LAM

... I heard they tried to poach him to Dartmouth.

JULIANNE

... She's taking a sabbatical to write a novel. A YA trilogy.

DIANDRA

... Completely shocking. Heart attack, right in the middle of the lecture hall.

A nearby ACADEMIC bursts into unrestrained laughter. Gail blinks in confusion at the Academic, uncertain of the joke.

LATER

JULIANNE, 50s, leafs through a folder.

JULIANNE

-- honestly I think she's the perfect tenure candidate for right now.

DIANDRA

What's "now"?

JULIANNE

She's incredibly popular with students, several of whom wrote testimonials --

LAM THANH, 40s, Department Chair, interjects.

LAM

Fifteen of them.

JULIANNE

And let's face it. Liv Beckman is a woman of color in a faculty that's overwhelmingly not... of color. I think there's a perspective she brings that's woefully missing.

Several eyes turn to Gail, then jump away.

LAM

It's an important step forward. That should be the image of Ancaster, not racist vandalism or --

DIANDRA

Irrelevant. What we have to decide is: on the basis of what's in here -

She holds up her folder.

DIANDRA (CONT'D)

-- does Professor Beckman deserve to be tenured? It's a privilege, not a right.

JULIANNE

You'd know something about privilege.

DIANDRA

Her published work is thin to the point of nonexistence.

GAIL

Let's be fair. Liv has published. Maybe not a ton, but enough.

DIANDRA

Gail, do you really think you can be impartial?

The question hangs awkwardly over the room.

GAIL

Why?

DIANDRA

She's your friend.

JULIANNE

Are you seriously trying to disenfranchise her right now?

GAIL

I'm perfectly capable of being professional.

DIANDRA

You're right. Actually, I'm surprised you don't agree. When you were tenured you already had two books published. And how many articles?

GAIL

Too many.

DIANDRA

Right. A ton. We've all been through the process, and we know it's grueling. But we earned it. We can look each other in the face and know we belong here. Imagine if that's thrown into question.

Diandra knows exactly where to hit Gail.

JULIANNE

Diandra, that is completely bogus.

Gail wrestles internally.

GAIL

I do have some doubts about Liv.

Diandra suppresses a smile of victory.

GAIL (CONT'D)

A freshman in her seminar approached me with a grade complaint. She's filing a dispute with the registrar.

VICTOR chimes in.

VICTOR

Grade grubbing is like an extracurricular for these kids.

LAM

This is news to me, Gail. That definitely changes things.

Julianne shakes her head.

LAM (CONT'D)

So what I'm gonna suggest is that  
we table this for today and  
reconvene when more of the details  
come out in the wash.

The Academics gather their folders, eager to get home. Gail rises to go, drifting hazily to the door.

A jolt as someone grabs her arm. Diandra brandishes a smile.

DIANDRA

Thanks for speaking up, Gail. We  
needed your voice at the table.

54

[OMIT]

54

55 [OMIT] 55

A55 [OMIT] A55

56 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT 56

Sitting across from her bedroom mirror, Gail applies globs of night cream onto her face as her voicemail plays.

MICHELLE (ON PHONE)

Babe, you have to get better about charging your phone. I had this really weird dream and I haven't been able to shake it all day. Anyway, call me. And charge your cell!

After a beep, the next message plays. A feeble VOICE is barely detectable behind the hiss of a bad phone line.

VOICE (ON PHONE)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I didn't know what to do. This is Esther Bickert. I'm looking for my daughter, Elizabeth. Please help me. Please --

The message comes to an abrupt stop. Gail stares at the phone, uncertain of what she just heard. After a moment's hesitation, she dials \*69.

An AUTOMATED VOICE plays down the line.

AUTOMATED VOICE  
We're sorry, but the number you  
have dialed cannot be reached.  
Please hang up and...

Gail closes the lid on the jar of cold cream, her face assembled into a pale mask. She flips the light and exits.

Her reflection remains in the mirror, a gleaming white face looking out from the darkness.

|    |        |    |
|----|--------|----|
| 57 | [OMIT] | 57 |
| 58 | [OMIT] | 58 |



59 INT. BELLEVILLE - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

59

A TOUR GROUP crowds the freshman corridor. Stuck behind this wall of bodies, Jasmine has no choice but to listen as the GUIDE offers canned information. She can't see their faces.

GUIDE

... one of the oldest buildings on campus, built in 1801.

The Tour Group oohs and ahhs.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Some of the original brickwork here was taken from the Ancaster Village courthouse, where the infamous trials were held.

Jasmine drifts along, not noticing SOMEONE watching her through a crack in the door.

An OLDER MAN turns slowly to look at Jasmine. There is something mask-like in his blank expression.

The Guide stops in front of a room.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Here we are.

Fleeing the Older Man, Jasmine pushes her way through the group, momentarily lost in a sea of fabric. The Guide stands at the open doorway to Jasmine's room.

60 INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

60

Amelia's bed is empty.

GUIDE (O.S.)

Fun fact: the reason why the rooms on this floor are so small is because this wing of Belleville House was originally used for servant's quarters. If you pay attention, you'll notice other similar spaces around campus.

From the doorway, Jasmine watches alongside the Tour Group as SLEEPING JASMINE lies in bed. The digital clock reads 3:33 AM.

TOUR MEMBER 2

What's this?

GUIDE

This is a black student. Sleeping.

Someone is outside of the fourth floor window. As Jasmine's eyes adjust to the darkness, she can make out the barest outline of a HOODED WOMAN. The whites of her eyes and her teeth bared in a smile glow dimly.

TOUR MEMBER

And what's that?

The window frame inches upwards of its own accord. A Tour Member elbows in front of Jasmine.

GUIDE

That's what's coming.

She watches as the Hooded Woman crawls through the window. Jasmine looks in terror at her own helpless, sleeping form.

JASMINE

Wake up!

Jasmine struggles to get into her room past rubbernecking Tour Members. They jostle for space.

The Hooded Woman tenderly fastens the noose around Sleeping Jasmine's neck.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

No! Wake up!

Jasmine beats her way to the front of the crowd just at the moment the Hooded Woman turns to look at her and smiles. And then YANKS Night Jasmine up by the noose.

61 INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

61

Jasmine sits up in bed, screaming. Amelia jumps back, half terrified, half guilty.

AMELIA

I didn't do anything! I didn't!

Jasmine is nearly hyperventilating. Her hands race to her neck, finding it scratched and bleeding.

Tears rush from Amelia as she explains herself.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

You were talking and I -- you scared me. You scared me!

62 [OMIT]

62

A62 INT. DINING HALL - DAY

A62

Jasmine, Katie and Cressida sit at a table of Upperclassman. Jasmine is squeezed beside Tyler, warmed by his golden boy glow.

Katie pats her pizza with a napkin.

KATIE

You should sue her. Professors aren't supposed to give Fs.

TYLER

Wait, you failed? Awww.

He playfully pats her head with mock affection. Jasmine shrinks away.

JASMINE

It was completely unfair. I'm gonna get it reversed.

CRESSIDA

It is strange. Liv's so cool.

She thinks.

CRESSIDA (CONT'D)

I know someone who can get you Vyvanse.

Jasmine spies Amelia entering the cafeteria, their eyes connecting briefly before Jasmine looks away.

JASMINE

It's Amelia.

TYLER

Can't we all just get along?

CRESSIDA

Just ignore her.

KATIE

Seriously, Cressida? Silence is consent. Be an ally.

CRESSIDA

I am an ally, I --

Katie meets Amelia as she approaches. The dining hall thrums with energy, a confusion of faces and sounds.

Jasmine keeps her gaze fixed on Amelia.

JASMINE

I just need her to be gone.

63

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

63

Amelia faces the wall as she gets changed. On the other side of the small room, Jasmine does the same.

AMELIA (O.S.)

I hate you.

When Jasmine turns around, Amelia is staring at her. Tears course her face.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Why are you fucking with me?

JASMINE

I didn't do anything to you.

AMELIA

You took my friends.

JASMINE  
They're my friends too.

AMELIA  
No they're not.

The girls stare each other down, the only sounds in the room  
the twin rattles of their breathing.

64 [OMIT] 64

A64 [SCENE MOVED - SEE SCENE A26] A64

65 [OMIT] 65

66 [OMIT]

66

67 [OMIT]

67



|    |        |    |
|----|--------|----|
| 68 | [OMIT] | 68 |
| 69 | [OMIT] | 69 |
| 70 | [OMIT] | 70 |
| 71 | [OMIT] | 71 |
| 72 | [OMIT] | 72 |

73 EXT. RURAL ROAD - DUSK 73

The late afternoon sun sinks heavily, splashing light onto deserted country roads.

Gail jogs as if pursued, sneakers slapping concrete.

With time, we notice that Gail is running along a cemetery overgrown with weeds.

Ragged tombstones jut from the earth. As Gail races by, we land on a headstone with the faded inscription "Margaret Millett."

A73 [SCENE A73 MOVED - SEE SCENE 73] A73

B73 EXT. CEMETERY - HILLTOP - NIGHT B73

Further in the cemetery, Gail detects the sound of a SINGING WOMAN somewhere nearby, her clear and resolute voice punctuated by the beat of a shovel striking the earth.

As darkness falls, Gail spies the Singing Woman across the cemetery. She holds a lantern that illuminates her solemn face and hand-sewn black dress. Beside her is the bent form of a GRAVEDIGGER.

Gail strains to understand the unfamiliar tongue of Singing Woman's plaintive song.

Gail goes ice cold with fear when around the cemetery, MOURNERS step forward, the shivering flames of their lanterns glowing like fireflies in the night.

Gail sinks to the ground and presses herself against a tombstone, going unnoticed by the Mourners.

There is something private, though intensely hypnotic about the affair. Gail steals a look at the Singing Woman and is startled to find her eyes fixed on her.

The piercing ring of a cell phone breaks the spell, and chest heaving, Gail fumbles to answer it.

GAIL

Lam?

LAM (ON PHONE)

You okay?

GAIL

No, I'm... can I call you back?

LAM (ON PHONE)  
We're pumping the brakes for a  
second on Liv's tenure case.

Gail flinches with guilt.

GAIL  
Oh.

LAM (ON PHONE)  
The student actually escalated her  
grade dispute into a faculty  
conduct complaint.

GAIL  
What?

LAM (ON PHONE)  
I don't know too much yet, but it  
has to do with race and the way  
Liv's handling it in class.

GAIL  
God, that is...

LAM (ON PHONE)  
Yeah.

GAIL  
Lam, I -- let's talk tomorrow.

Gail hangs up. She takes a few deep breaths before quietly pulling herself to her feet.

Gail takes one last look at the Mourners before turning to go and nearly colliding with -- the Singing Woman?! Gail draws back fearfully, not understanding how she can be in two places at once. Or is it a different woman?

The Singing Woman smiles and gestures towards the group, but Gail is already stumbling away, tripping over herself to get as far away as possible.

|    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 74 | [OMIT]                                 | 74 |
| 75 | EXT. SANCTUARY TRAIL - NIGHT           | 75 |
|    | Gail makes her way down an unlit path. |    |

A guttural moan echoes somewhere in the night. Gail pauses, ears pricked. She glances around but finds nothing.

As her eyes adjust, she spies a pale figure writhing in the darkness. Gail can't quite grasp what she's seeing.

She strains to listen, but the woods have grown silent.

Two WHITE MEN burst from the darkness. Gail reels in fear as they push past her, shoes untied and loose belt buckles singing to the night.

GAIL

Hey!

She watches as their silhouetted forms retreat.

Looking back to where they came from, Gail takes a tentative step forward.

GAIL (CONT'D)

Anyone there?

She creeps onward, not noticing Amelia until she's nearly upon her. The freshman is huddled at the foot of a tree. She turns a mascara stained face towards Gail.

AMELIA

Am I in trouble?

A76

INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - VESTIBULE - NIGHT

A76

Amelia wears an Ancaster sweater and a sheepish expression. She stares past a fog of alcohol into her cup of tea.

GAIL

You cold?

Amelia shrugs off Gail's concern.

AMELIA

I'm fine.

GAIL

It's nearly freezing out. What were you doing out there with those guys?

AMELIA

Nothing. We just -- they're friends.

Amelia holds Gail's gaze, defensive.

GAIL

So when you feel ready I'll walk  
you over to the infirmary.

AMELIA

What? No. This was not -- I'm fine.

Gail surveys Amelia's bruised legs and snarled hair.

GAIL

No judgment. It's just that you've  
been drinking... something might've  
happened that you don't realize. A  
tick bite, even.

AMELIA

No. No. You don't get it. It's  
gonna be hell when everyone finds  
out.

She looks at Gail fiercely.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I'm not going through this again. I know what happens. I'll transfer. I'll leave.

GAIL

Let's talk about this in the morning. Right now I'll just grab some clothes from your room before we head over.

AMELIA

You won't get in. I tried. Jasmine locked it from inside. That bitch.

77 INT. FRESHMAN CORRIDOR - NIGHT

77

Gail makes her way down the empty freshman corridor. The door beckons at the end of the hall, the word "leave" sanded down to a faint whisper of what it was.

Knocking but receiving no answer, Gail takes several moments to notice Jasmine's photograph affixed to the door.

Her face has been blacked out, scribbled over until it's a dark circle. In the center, someone has animated it with a leering white mouth.

B77 INT. LIV'S OFFICE - DAY

B77

Liv looks up from grading papers.

LIV

I am Ancaster.

C77 INT. AIKEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY - DAY

C77

An ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENT pulls a book from the shelf.

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENT

I am Ancaster.

D77 INT. DINING HALL - DAY

D77

A LATINX STUDENT eats cereal.

LATINX STUDENT

I am Ancaster.

E77 INT. OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT - NIGHT E77

The COLLEGE PRESIDENT smiles broadly.

COLLEGE PRESIDENT

The one thing that is not Ancaster,  
is discrimination. That's why I'm  
happy to announce the college's  
latest initiative.

F77 INT. LIV'S OFFICE - DAY F77

Liv continues.

LIV

The Ancaster Alliance for an  
Inclusive Future is a student-  
faculty coalition committed to  
protecting and promoting diversity.  
Using innovative methods such as  
diversity workshops, a visiting  
lecture series, and multicultural  
events, AAIF will blaze a new path  
towards radical inclusion.

G77 INT. GAIL'S OFFICE - DAY G77

Gail smiles stiffly.

GAIL

Now more than ever, let's show the  
world who we really are.

A77 [OMIT] A77

78 [OMIT] 78

79 [OMIT] 79

80 EXT. QUAD - DAY 80

Freshly applied sidewalk chalk is etched into the ground.  
Jasmine reads the message that unfolds beneath her feet.



## EMERGENCY MEETING: ANCASTER ALLIANCE FOR AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE

Liv squats beside the message, shading in the finishing touches. Jasmine steps back when she notices her, smudging some letters in the process.

JASMINE

Oh! Sorry, I --

LIV

Don't sweat it. I'm one step ahead of you.

She shakes a spray can.

LIV (CONT'D)

Fixatif. They wish it was that easy to shut me up.

JASMINE

Okay. Well... happy Thanksgiving.

Liv dusts herself off as she stands up. She turns a compassionate gaze towards Jasmine.

LIV

So when do you fly out?

JASMINE

I'm actually staying for break.

LIV

Word? This place is a graveyard on Thanksgiving.

JASMINE

Are you going home?

LIV

No. I... no.

There is a lot left unsaid. Liv rushes on.

LIV (CONT'D)

I'm going to New York. My friends are putting on a dinner. Collard greens, candied yams, the works. I'm sure they'd love to have you.

Jasmine looks down at the colorful letters.

JASMINE

I don't think -- I can't.

LIV

Listen, you don't have to feel like anything's awkward between us. At least on my part.

JASMINE

Yeah. Same. Thanks.

Jasmine uncertainly meets Liv's smile.

LIV

Just know, I'm here.

81 INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

81

Amelia leans all her weight on her suitcase, urging it shut as she pulls the zipper. She struggles breathlessly, tears forming at the corners of her closed eyes.

Jasmine lets herself in and stops short to see half the room stripped bare.

JASMINE

What's happening?

Amelia heaves her suitcase upright.

AMELIA

I'm leaving.

JASMINE

For break?

AMELIA

Forever.

Jasmine keeps to her side of the narrow room as Amelia double checks the closet and under the bed.

A BLOND WOMAN has materialized in the doorway like an apparition. She pointedly avoids Jasmine.

BLOND WOMAN

Honey.

AMELIA

Yeah, I know. I'll be down in a second.

The Blond Woman recedes into darkness.

Amelia emerges from under the bed, pants covered in a ghostly film of dust. She brushes them off as she heads for the door.

JASMINE

Wait.

Jasmine finds herself tongue tied when Amelia turns to face her, expectant expression quickly hardening. Shaking her head, Amelia departs, leaving Jasmine in the room alone.

82

INT. KATIE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

82

Cressida hastily pulls designer resort-wear from her closet, throwing the clothes into a suitcase.

Jasmine sits on the bed, going through mail. Spam, financial aid, bank statement.

CRESSIDA

What do you mean you're not leaving?

JASMINE

I can't.

A large yellow envelope is addressed to Jasmine in ornate, gothic calligraphy. She digs it open.

CRESSIDA

I guess I understand. If they weren't taking me to Dominica I wouldn't want to spend break with my bloody parents.

Jasmine reaches her hand into the envelope and then yanks it back out. Cressida paws through her closet, oblivious.

Jasmine goes into the envelope once again, pulling out thick clumps of tightly coiled hair. Jasmine stares in incomprehension at the mass of dark hair in her hand.

Cressida screams.

CRESSIDA (CONT'D)

Jasmine, what the fuck?!

The hair writhes as if alive. A garter snake has emerged from the depths of the hair and wound itself around Jasmine's hand. Frozen with fear, Jasmine can barely manage a whisper.

JASMINE

Help. Help. Get it off. Please.

Cressida swiftly flees the room.

CRESSIDA

Don't come close! I hate snakes.  
Why the fuck..? I can't be in here.

The door closes with a slam.

83 [OMIT] 83

84 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 84

Gail arranges two cocktails on the coffee table, positioning them just so. Michelle appears in the doorway.

MICHELLE

Gail, what is this?

She holds up the mammy cookie jar.

GAIL

Oh god. Yeah, that was in the kitchen when I moved in. I guess Anders, or maybe even the master before him --

MICHELLE

How could you keep this in your house?

GAIL

I know. I saw it, I freaked out and just put it back. I couldn't handle it.

Michelle comes over to Gail, putting the jar on the table. Michelle brushes away a tear.

GAIL (CONT'D)

You're crying?

MICHELLE

It's just such a painful history. You know how sensitive I am to these things.

They consider the jar in silence. Gail clenches her jaw. She rubs Michelle's shoulder.

GAIL

Hey. It's okay.

Michelle exhales a deep yoga breath. She looks at Gail with a smile.

MICHELLE

Thank you.

85 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

85

The table is elaborately set for two.

MICHELLE

This looks amazing. I'm waiting for the teacups to start singing.

GAIL

It felt like a special occasion.

MICHELLE

Thanksgiving?

GAIL

You. Being here.

Michelle smiles mischievously at Gail before sliding under the dining table.

GAIL (CONT'D)

You drop something?

Michelle giggles as she crawls towards Gail. Gail cranes her neck, pushing her chair back for a better view.

Michelle's hand grips the chair leg, keeping it in place.

GAIL (CONT'D)

Come on, we're in the middle of dinner.

MICHELLE

I know, I'm hungry.

Michelle moves to push up Gail's dress. Gail pushes her hands away.

GAIL

We can't do this here.

MICHELLE

It's your house. You're the master.

Gail acquiesces, relaxing as Michelle tugs off her underpants. Her eyes drift blissfully closed.

Under the table, Michelle is going to town. Gail moans in ecstasy, breath accelerating.

Through her parted eyelashes Gail can make out the stern gaze of a FORMER MASTER pictured in a black and white class photo. He seems to watch her from the corner of his eye.

GAIL

Babe, stop.

Gail gives Michelle a little push, but she carries on. When Gail looks back at the photo, the Former Master is staring straight at her.

Startled, she kicks wildly, jerking backwards in her seat.

GAIL (CONT'D)

Stop!

86

INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

86

Gail and Michelle sit stiffly on the living room couch.

GAIL

I don't know what that was about. I thought I saw something, and -- I didn't mean to hurt you. Sorry.

MICHELLE

Ok.

GAIL

Wanna finish dinner?

MICHELLE

I'm not really in the mood.

GAIL

Oh, ok. Yeah. I understand.

Michelle follows a moth's erratic trajectory as it flaps into sight. It lands on the coffee table and flexes its wings.

Gail shoos it, reflexively wiping invisible crumbs from the table.

GAIL (CONT'D)

This place has me constantly cleaning up.

Michelle studies the room.

MICHELLE

Is any of this yours?

GAIL

What do you mean? You know that piece.

Michelle glances at a collage, waving away a bobbing moth.



MICHELLE  
Besides that?

GAIL  
Lots of stuff.

Gail doesn't elaborate.

MICHELLE  
Your old place was gorgeous.

GAIL  
It was glorified grad housing.

MICHELLE  
I can't believe you'd throw it all  
away. For this.

Gail follows her eyes around the living room.

GAIL  
I worked for this.

Michelle is silent. Something ignites within Gail.

GAIL (CONT'D)  
That is such white bullshit.

MICHELLE  
What?!

GAIL  
Why can't I have something? Why,  
when I get something, am I supposed  
to give it up?

MICHELLE  
Because what you have is a relic of  
a patriarchal, white supremacist  
system?

GAIL  
Oh, you found your library card.

MICHELLE  
That is so patronizing.

GAIL  
What's patronizing is you dictating  
how I should feel about race  
because you brushed up on bell  
hooks and listen to Solange.

Michelle shoots up. She turns back once she reaches the door, anger competing with regret.

MICHELLE

Good luck.

87 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT 87

Gail cleans the dining room, stacking the last of the dishes and carrying them out.

Returning a few moments later, she wipes down the table, polishing the wood until it shines.

She grabs a vacuum and flicks it on. It roars to life.

88 EXT. ANCASTER CAMPUS - DAY 88

The eerie, ghost-like atmosphere of a campus during break.

89 INT. BELLEVILLE - COMMON ROOM - NIGHT 89

An email alert rouses Jasmine awake. She looks to her laptop, which is open to the Google search: Louisa Weeks + death. She groggily closes the tab. The next tabs modify the search to Louisa Weeks + suicide, then to Louisa Weeks + murder, Louisa Weeks + haunting, Louisa Weeks + witch. With mechanical repetition, she closes tab after tab.

She pauses to flick dust from her screen, instead smearing blood across a webpage bearing an illustration of a gallows.

Her laptop displays the time 3:33 AM.

Jasmine checks her thumb, the nail bitten down to the bloody quick. She puts it in her mouth and sucks.

Closing her computer and gathering her things, Jasmine stands up to go. We catch a brief glimpse of a HOODED WOMAN further down the hall behind her.

Then, without the lights cut off, plunging the room into darkness.

JASMINE

Hello?

Suddenly, an alarm squeals, filling the room with its piercing vibrato. Jasmine nearly collapses from fear as the alarm light rhythmically strobes on and off.

The room alternates between white light and darkness as Jasmine struggles to get her bearings. She looks around, catching glimpses of the room before it plummets into black.

Bookshelf. Blackness. Desk. Blackness. Window. Blackness.

The alarm light briefly illuminates a HOODED WOMAN hidden in a corner of the room. When the light flashes on again, no one is there.

90

[OMIT]

90

91 [ADDED TO SCENE 89] 91

A89 INT. BELLEVILLE HOUSE - STAIRWELL - NIGHT A89

During the moments that the squealing alarm falls silent, Jasmine can detect an insistent thud.

Jasmine pauses, listening in morbid curiosity. A low groan adds itself to the strange chorus.

Drawn toward the sound, Jasmine makes her way up the stairs, utterly oblivious to the Hooded Woman several steps behind her. Head bowed, the Woman stands motionless.

92 INT. BELLEVILLE HOUSE - UPPER STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS 92

Jasmine continues upwards falteringly. With each wink of the alarm light, the Hooded Woman draws closer.

At the top of the stairs, the roof door groans on its hinges as the wind swings it open and shut.

A92 EXT. BELLEVILLE - ROOF - NIGHT A92

Jasmine steps out, mouth falling open with shock.

A confusion of flames jump and sputter. She backs up, horrified, when someone GRABS her.

GAIL

Jasmine!

Brandishing a fire extinguisher, Gail rushes ahead, blanketing the flames in gray plumes of carbon dioxide.

The dust settles, leaving the charred remains. The two gnarled branches of a tree form a large misshapen cross. Smoke rises skyward in ghostly wisps.

93 EXT. BELLEVILLE HOUSE - DAWN 93

The early morning sun paints the sky a pale blue. Arms crossed against the cold, Gail surveys the scene outside Belleville. Jasmine huddles on the Belleville steps, swaddled in a blanket.

SECURITY OFFICERS tramp in and out of Belleville like ants, two carrying between them wood scorched black.

94 EXT. ANCASTER CAMPUS - DAY 94

Across campus, Students back from break shout greetings to each other. Jasmine crosses the quad flanked by Cressida and Katie, who chatter about their vacations and wave to returning friends.

Savoring the sympathetic attention directed at Jasmine, they keep her in step between them as if parading a fresh kill.

A94 INT. CAMPUS BUILDING - BATHROOM - DAY A94

Jasmine washes her hands, watching the water fall over her bitten and bloody cuticles. When she looks into the mirror, Sascha, two sinks over, is looking back.

SASCHA

You're Jasmine, right?

JASMINE

Yeah, how did you --

Sascha's frank though compassionate expression cuts the crap.

SASCHA

How are you doing?

JASMINE

I'm good. Great.

Sascha holds Jasmine's gaze as she wills the tears back into her eyes.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

It's hard.

SASCHA

My first semester I had insomnia. During finals I didn't sleep for two days straight. I kind of hallucinated. I thought my lamp was a gnome.

Jasmine surprises herself by laughing along with Sascha. She brushes aside the tears that flow freely.

JASMINE

I've been having nightmares. A lot.

Sascha digs in her bag, handing Jasmine a wrinkled flyer.

SASCHA

Come to the AfAm House some time. It's a really great place for students of color. All eight of us.

They share a wry smile.

SASCHA (CONT'D)

Maybe I'll see you there.

Jasmine nods as Sascha folds her into a hug. Stiff at first, Jasmine relaxes into it, grateful for the connection.

The bathroom door swings open.

CRESSIDA (O.S.)

You fall in or some--

Cressida gawks as Jasmine jumps out of the hug. Sascha dries her hands on the way out, turning back at the door.

SASCHA

You're not wrong.

She exits past Katie, who has appeared at the door.

CRESSIDA

You know her?

KATIE

Nice vest.

Sascha's inroads are erased with these withering remarks.

JASMINE

No, she...

Jasmine holds out the flyer. Katie inspects it.

KATIE

Oh, gross. I had some people do the same thing for me but with Chabad.

CRESSIDA

Ugh. Embarrassing.

KATIE

Seriously, it was awful.

Jasmine forces a smile as she folds the flyer into ever smaller squares.

95 [OMIT] 95

96 INT. LIV'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT 96

Liv keeps one eye on a Youtube video as she sits facing the mirror. A black YOUTUBER walks through a complicated method of tying a headscarf. Liv follows her every motion.

97 INT. TENURE COMMITTEE ROOM - NIGHT 97

The Academics look out at Liv like a tribunal, their features vague and impenetrable under the low lighting.

JULIANNE

Before we start, I have to say how much I enjoyed your editorial. The one in the Globe.

LIV

Thank you. Thanks so much.

JULIANNE

Incredibly thought provoking.

VICTOR

I think I read that you'll be leading an intracollege conference next week?



LIV

Yep. Yeah. At Amherst. Title is  
 "Addressing Cultures of Violence in  
 Institutions Hostile to Modernizing  
 Demographics: Pathways to Change."  
 Kind of a mouthful, so if anyone  
 has any suggestions...

Light chuckles from the group.

LAM

Well, we really do appreciate you  
 making yourself available.  
 Obviously, something like this is  
 rare, but we felt it was the best  
 course forward in addressing the  
 portfolio.

From Gail's vantage point, Liv looks pale, fragile.

LIV

Absolutely. I appreciate the  
 opportunity to lend my voice to the  
 dialogue.

DIANDRA

This editorial. Will it lead to  
 further publishing on your part?  
 Books, I mean.

LIV

Not in the immediate future. I'm in  
 the early stages of the notes  
 collection process for --

DIANDRA

Published work obviously is only  
 one factor in tenure review.  
 Usually in instances where  
 publishing is light, an application  
 will lean more heavily on other  
 factors, such as classroom  
 performance and engagement.

LIV

Understood completely. I place  
 classroom instruction above  
 everything else.

DIANDRA

So you can understand why the  
 current dispute filed against you  
 is of particular concern.

LIV  
I... well --

LAM  
Has that reached a resolution?

LIV  
Not yet.

Liv glances at Gail, hoping for a lifeline.

GAIL  
Maybe you can expand a bit on the  
substance of the issue?

Liv flails for a good response. After a long silence, she  
looks up, cheeks flushed.

LIV  
The issue is this school.

The committee members exchange a look.

LIV (CONT'D)  
Why is the administration spending  
more energy on undermining my  
application for tenure than on  
ferreting out the racist who's  
terrorizing the student body?

DIANDRA  
I don't see how the two are --

LIV  
Last week someone *lit a cross on  
fire*. This isn't an incident, it's  
an emergency.

Liv presses on, gaining strength with each word.

LIV (CONT'D)  
I will not allow myself to be  
scapegoated by a school that is  
unable or unwilling to see itself  
for what it truly is.

The Academics are cowed, uncertain of how to respond.

LIV (CONT'D)

If anyone really wanted to help that girl, it would be by ending the culture of hatred that vandalizes students' rooms, undervalues the work of professors of color, and compels me to come stand before all of you today.

Gail watches Liv with a mixture of awe and unease.

98

INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

98

Gail anxiously holds a phone to her ear.

GAIL (ON PHONE)

Babe, it's me again. Just call me back, please.

Gail paces the kitchen, passing by a kitchen calendar open to December 2nd.

The phone rings as soon as she hangs up.

GAIL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

Michelle! Finally. Listen --

VOICE (ON PHONE)

Hello?

Gail goes rigid at the sound of the faraway voice.

GAIL (ON PHONE)

Who is this?

VOICE (ON PHONE)

I'm calling about my daughter Elizabeth.

Gail pinches the skin between her eyes.

GAIL (ON PHONE)

How did you get...? Call the registrar if you need a student. This isn't the school, all right? This is a home. It's my...

The faraway ping of a bell stops Gail cold. She lowers the phone from her ears and listens, wide eyed.

Suddenly, a DOOR SLAMS. Dropping the phone, Gail looks sharply towards the room at the top of the kitchen stairs.

99 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - MAID'S ROOM - NIGHT 99

Gail pulls the chain on the hanging bulb. Two moths hover lazily by the window, and she opens it to let them out.

The aged documents are once again on the floor. As Gail puts them away, she notices her new portrait propped up on a stand in a corner. Gail processes the portrait with confusion. There's something strange in her painted expression.

It takes her a moment to see that the eyes are chewed out, as are a few other patches of the mottled, moth bitten canvas.

Gail leans in, horrified, as the portrait's mouth twitches. A single moth crawls out from the canvas, tensing its wings before taking to the air.

Gail touches the painting, peeling a corner of the canvas aside. Moths and larvae pour from the portrait's mouth. Gail recoils, stumbling into the hanging bulb. The bulb swings as the insects flutter around it.

100 INT. LIV'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 100

Gail watches as Liv yanks open a pull out bed, snapping a fitted sheet mid air and letting it float down.

GAIL

Total infestation. It was like a plague. Luckily they said it only needs a day to fumigate.

Liv plops down on the edge of the bed, Gail following suit.

LIV

Consider this a sleepover. I was always dying to have friends over when I was a kid. Total only child.

GAIL

Me too. Even my imaginary friend was shitty.

They smile. Gail searches for a compliment.

GAIL (CONT'D)

I like your place.

LIV

It's my third spot in three years.  
Trying to make this one home.

GAIL

I don't know what I'd do if you  
left.

Liv's smile drains.

LIV

I don't either.

A100 INT. AIKEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY - CIRCULATION - NIGHT A100

Jasmine trudges down an inner library staircase, passing the Ancaster Witch Trial exhibit. A poster has been affixed below Margaret's portrait: TOMORROW, VIGIL HONORING MARGARET MILLETT'S EXECUTION, DEC. 3, 1694.

A tone chimes and a voice comes over the loudspeakers.

RECORDED VOICE

The library will close in five  
minutes at 3:30 AM.

101 INT. AIKEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY - READING ROOM - NIGHT 101

Jasmine flicks through Louisa Weeks' datebook, searching the December entries. On the 1st, Louisa records a migraine and a visit to the school infirmary -- "useless."

She turns to December 2nd, the entry written in a frantic hand. "She comes dragging her rope. She will take me with her."

The rest of the entries in the datebook are blank. Turning back to the beginning of the month, Jasmine notices that the book jumps from December 2nd to the 5th.

She peels apart two pages that had become stuck together, and looks with dread to the December 3rd entry.

"3:33 AM - Margaret."

This is the last entry.

Jasmine pulls out a heavily creased printout of the 1965 article about Louisa. It confirms she died on December 3rd.

The library closing bells chime again. Jasmine grabs her things. A SECURITY GUARD can be heard doing final rounds.

SECURITY GUARD (O.S.)  
Last call! Library is now closed.

The lights begin to turn off across the library. A HOODED WOMAN is briefly visible in the dark recesses of the library before the lights flick out.

Jasmine, oblivious, pulls out her phone, the date - December 3rd - and time - 3:28 AM - glaring back as she dials Katie.

JASMINE (ON PHONE)  
Hey!... at the Ache... Where are  
you?

Rising from the table, Jasmine walks towards the library  
exit.

JASMINE (CONT'D)  
Listen, can I sleep over  
tonight?... No, just like crash on  
your floor... Please, I just --  
ok... Okay fine... see you  
tomorrow.

As Jasmine frantically scrolls through her address book, her  
phone lets out a grim tone and powers off.

Slipping behind a bookshelf, Jasmine tries to revive her  
phone.

A dark figure approaches quickly from behind, GRABBING  
Jasmine roughly.

Jasmine whirls around in fear to see the Security Guard  
glaring back.

SECURITY GUARD  
Time's up.

|      |        |      |
|------|--------|------|
| A101 | [OMIT] | A101 |
| 102  | [OMIT] | 102  |
| 103  | [OMIT] | 103  |

104 EXT. AIKEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY - NIGHT 104

Jasmine heads into the cold night air, head down, breath escaping in white puffs.

Furtive and nervous, she constantly clocks her surroundings as she hurries home.

She pauses, trembling with fear. In the distance she can make out the silhouette of a HOODED WOMAN advancing slowly towards her.

A104 [SCENE A104 HAS MOVED - SEE SCENE 104] A104

105 EXT. MASTER'S HOUSE - NIGHT 105

Jasmine races towards the Master's House, pounding on the doors.

JASMINE  
Master Bishop!

She steps back to look at the darkened windows of the home.

JASMINE (CONT'D)  
Master Bishop! Please, wake up!

A105 EXT. BELLEVILLE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS A105

Jasmine races towards Belleville House, hunting desperately for her keys. An unseen presence moves in, almost closing in on her when she unlocks the door and dashes inside.

106 INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT 106

Jasmine hurries into her bedroom, locking the door.

Racing to the window, she pushes it open and scans the Belleville courtyard below.

The sound of footsteps draws near. Jasmine whips around to see two feet come to rest outside the door.

Almost crying with fear, Jasmine searches her room for an escape and finds none.

And then the door rattles. Gently.



Jasmine gets a desperate idea, stepping onto the bedside table as nearby, her alarm clock shifts to 3:33 AM.

Maneuvering one leg out the window, she wildly searches for a foothold.

Jasmine registers the sound of the knob turning. She turns back to see the door slowly open just as --

She slips, toppling off the building. Time seems to slow as she tumbles earthwards, arms spread, amidst the softly falling snow.

107 [OMIT] 107

108 INT. LIV'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 108

Overhead, the floorboards creak under the weight of Liv walking by.

Gail searches the loose paper on Liv's table for a notepad, pausing briefly to glance at an envelope addressed to ELIZABETH BICKERT.

She finds a scrap of paper and jots down a quick thank you note. Gail's phone rings.

LIV (ON PHONE)

Listen, I gotta be quick but I hid a key for you in case you need to get back in at some point.

GAIL

Great, thanks. I was just about to come up and say bye.

LIV (ON PHONE)

Huh?

GAIL

I'm downstairs, you can't hear me?

Liv is silent for a few moments. From upstairs, Gail can detect the sound of an angry whispered prayer.

GAIL (CONT'D)

Hello?

LIV (ON PHONE)

Get away from the house.

GAIL

What?

LIV (ON PHONE)

Get away from the house right now.

A108 [OMIT]

A108

109 EXT. LIV'S HOUSE - DAY

109

Gail stumbles out the door.

GAIL

What's happening?

LIV (ON PHONE)

That's not me. I'm not at home.

Gail stares up at the second floor window. A SILHOUETTE steps out of sight.

GAIL

Holy... Ok. Ok. We should call the cops.

LIV (ON PHONE)

Don't do anything. I'm coming back right now.

The line cuts off.

Gail surveys the house warily. Her phone rings again.

GAIL (ON PHONE)

Did you --

HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR (ON PHONE)

Gail Bishop?



110 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

110

Jasmine sits propped up in bed, arm enveloped in a cast. She looks at Gail through the fog of medication.

GAIL

Jasmine. Oh my god. How did this happen? Did someone push you? Did you slip?

JASMINE

I had to get away from her.

GAIL

Who? Get away from who?

Jasmine's words come out in a half whisper.

JASMINE

The Witch.

GAIL

Ok. You're not feeling well. We can talk about --

JASMINE

I saw her. In the common room. The night of the fire, I saw her.

GAIL  
Jasmine, the Witch isn't real.

JASMINE  
You don't know.

GAIL  
I do know. I know what it's like to  
be scared. And to feel alone, and  
to feel isolated.

JASMINE  
It doesn't matter how I feel.

GAIL  
You can say that as much as you  
want, that won't make it true.

Jasmine leans towards Gail.

JASMINE  
There are ghosts at that school.

GAIL  
Don't be ridiculous.

JASMINE  
They're watching, always. I feel  
their eyes on me.

Gail listens, unnerved, before shaking the thought from her head.

GAIL  
I know you're having a hard time,  
but this isn't the way to deal with  
it.

JASMINE  
I won't go back. I won't go back  
there.

GAIL  
Jasmine, you can't quit. You don't  
understand what this could --  
you're such a bright girl. You  
could do so well here.

A sob escapes Jasmine's lips.

JASMINE  
I'm not doing well.

GAIL

So you go back home and then what?  
Transfer to another college hoping  
it'll somehow be different?

JASMINE

It's that school. It's that room.

Gail lectures Jasmine as if coaching herself.

GAIL

It's not. I wish I could tell you  
it was, but it's not. It's not  
ghosts, it's not supernatural. It's  
America and it's everywhere. So you  
need to toughen up. I know. I went  
through it. I was one of three  
black women in my whole class. They  
couldn't tell us apart. But I stuck  
in there. I didn't let anyone push  
me out.

JASMINE

I just want to get away from there.

GAIL

You can't get away from it,  
Jasmine. It will follow you.

Jasmine blinks away tears.

GAIL (CONT'D)

Believe me, I know.

111 INT. CAR - DAY

111

Liv's voice is piped in over speakerphone as Gail drives back  
to campus.

LIV

Holy shit. A broken arm? Is she okay?

GAIL

She will be. We're lucky it wasn't worse.

LIV

What the hell's in the air today? I'm saging my house later.

GAIL

So the police checked everything out?

LIV (ON PHONE)

Yeah, but they basically shrugged. No sign of forced entry, nothing taken. I'll change the locks just in case.

Gail shakes her head.

LIV (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

Gail, don't get mad at me, but do you think --

GAIL

No.

LIV (ON PHONE)

Listen, you're under pressure. You could've misheard something, or --

Gail clocks smoke pluming from the hood of the car.

GAIL

Fuck. Seriously?! Liv, sorry, my car is -- I'll call you back, okay?

112 EXT. RURAL ROAD - LATER 112

Gail pops the hood, waving away billowing smoke. Stepping away from the car, she dials AAA.

The purring line competes with the clop of horse hooves. Gail looks down the road, surprised to see a horse and buggy slowly headed towards her.

Gail waves, but receives no response. As the buggy nears, Gail observes uneasily that no one drives the empty carriage.

She watches as the horse continues pulling the buggy to destination unknown.

113 INT. OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT - NIGHT 113

The Comm Director frets over a printer that slowly spits out a page, while the DEAN OF STUDENTS paces, texting wildly.

Gail opens the door onto a room bubbling with barely contained frenzy. The Comm Director thrusts a sheath of pages at Gail before she can even get her bearings.

The College President, tie loosened, face flushed, leaps up.

COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Gail, finally! What took so long?

GAIL

I can't even begin to tell you.

DEAN OF STUDENTS

How's the girl?

GAIL

Broken arm, but she --



Unintelligible bleating comes from a desk phone.

GAIL (CONT'D)  
Sorry, what is that?

COMM DIRECTOR  
Rick from the Board of Trustees.

The Comm Director turns to the phone.

COMM DIRECTOR (CONT'D)  
Speak up, Rick!

RICK (ON SPEAKER)  
We need to get out ahead of this, quick. We're in the heart of the admissions cycle. This could be disastrous.

COMM DIRECTOR  
I'm working on a statement right now. We need to deemphasize the student's race and avoid connecting it to the previous events.

Something approaching hysteria grips the room.

DEAN OF STUDENTS  
Truthfully Gail, this falls under your responsibility. This girl is a Belleville resident, she's --

GAIL  
This is the responsibility of the police!

COMM DIRECTOR  
A police report in the news would be fatal.

The College President lifts a silencing hand.

COLLEGE PRESIDENT  
Everyone take a breath. Racism has no place at Ancaster. So what we need to do is find the person behind all this and deal with them swiftly.

The others nod sagely.

COLLEGE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)  
Gail, we're counting on you.

114 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

114

Jasmine sleeps, bandaged arm awkwardly bent across her chest.

A moan drifts over the air. Jasmine stirs, eyes fluttering open. She listens in dread to another other-worldly croak.

Her eyes search the dimmed room, finding only a muted television.

Turning with difficulty, Jasmine studies the other side of the room. A curtain blocks her roommate, MRS. DENNIS from view. Jasmine can see her sitting upright in bed. Without warning, the groaning resumes at a louder pitch.

Jasmine watches as Mrs. Dennis' shadow begins rocking back and forth, slowly at first, then picking up speed.

JASMINE

Are you ok?

The shadow stops moving, and Jasmine watches uneasily as its head turns slowly towards her.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

If you want I can call a nurse.

Mrs. Dennis' voice is small and pitiful.

MRS. DENNIS

Help me.

Jasmine pushes herself off the bed, padding cautiously across the room. She hesitates before slowly pulling aside the curtain. Mrs. Dennis is 80s, white, both child-like and withered. Her eyes search Jasmine.

MRS. DENNIS (CONT'D)

Virgie?

Blood seeps through the Mrs. Dennis' bandaged temple. She resumes rocking, picking violently at her arm.

MRS. DENNIS (CONT'D)

We're too late. They're almost here.

JASMINE

Let me get someone.

Jasmine rests a hand on Mrs. Dennis' shoulder. Instantly, Mrs. Dennis transforms, face grotesque with hatred.

MRS. DENNIS

Get your black hands off of me.

Jasmine yanks her hand back. Her voice a hiss, Mrs. Dennis continues her tirade.

MRS. DENNIS (CONT'D)

You think you can touch me? I let you get too comfortable. Gary warned me about this.

Mrs. Dennis seems ready to spring at Jasmine, who edges backwards in terror.

JASMINE

Someone help!

An RN hurries into the room. Mrs. Dennis flips emotions, suddenly distraught. Jasmine is pressed against the wall.

RN

Is everything --

MRS. DENNIS

Her smell is everywhere. I can't get it out of my house.

RN

You're in the hospital, Mrs. Dennis. Why don't I help you get back in bed?

The RN makes apologetic eye contact with Jasmine as she settles the sobbing older woman back in bed.

As she inches backwards, Jasmine doesn't move her eyes from Mrs. Dennis.

MRS. DENNIS

It's not right. It's not right.

Jasmine backs into her bed. She watches as the RN comforts Mrs. Dennis, the sound of her wails filling the room.

115 INT. MASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

115

Gail sits at her massive desk, photographs and records of Jasmine's attacks assembled like a jigsaw puzzle.

Liv lets herself in. She holds out a cup of soup.

LIV

How are you holding up?

GAIL

I'm not.

Liv perches on a corner of the desk, gazing down on the evidence Gail's collected.

LIV

Lord a mercy. Look at this shit.

She picks up the photo of Jasmine's door, her thumb tracing the letters carved in the wood.

LIV (CONT'D)

How did those girls not notice this as soon as they got home?

GAIL

Amelia never went home. And Jasmine... it happened while she was sleeping.

Liv gives the slightest indication of a frown before laying down the yellow envelope Jasmine received in the mail. She freezes, staring at it.

Finally, she speaks.

LIV

Where's the stamp?

GAIL

What?

LIV

This envelope -- is that the one Jasmine got in the mail?

GAIL

Yeah.

LIV

Gail, it doesn't have a stamp. How did it end up in her mailbox?

Gail looks in surprise at the envelope addressed in elaborate and old fashioned penmanship. It bears no stamp.

LIV (CONT'D)

Her roommate?

GAIL

Every student gets their own mailbox. Their own key.

Gail grasps at a reasonable explanation.

GAIL (CONT'D)

I keep a master key in here. It opens all the mailboxes.

LIV

Who would have access to that beside you?

GAIL

There's got to be another way this got there...

LIV

What if she put it there herself?

Gail studies the photograph, the black void where a face should be and the eerie minstrelsy of the hand drawn smile.

LIV (CONT'D)

Was anyone else in Belleville the night of the fire?

GAIL

She told me she saw the Witch.

LIV

The Witch?

Gail puts her head in her hands, bent under the weight of this new information.

GAIL

She seemed so sure it was real.

116 INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

116

Gail eats at a long dining table, crowded in by STUDENTS on either side.

She eavesdrops on a nearby conversation.

KATIE

... literally sick to my stomach. A hoax? Way to discredit real suffering.

CRESSIDA

I'm not sure I believe it. What I can't get is why.

KATIE

I read that self-victimization is a really big problem right now.

A116 INT. CAR - DAY

A116

Jasmine rides in the back of a taxi, staring impassively out the window as the landscape flies by.

117 EXT. QUAD - DAY

117

Liv bends against a gust of freezing wind, leaning into the frosty breeze as she crosses the quad.

She stops suddenly, surprised to see Jasmine.

LIV

Jasmine?

Jasmine turns. Her coat is draped over her shoulders, accommodating her broken arm.

LIV (CONT'D)

Does Gail know you're here? Anyone from the school?

Jasmine shrugs.

JASMINE

I came on my own.

Liv sizes her up.

LIV

What are you trying to do?

JASMINE

I figured it out. I understand now.

Liv scans the quad, then turns her attention back to Jasmine.

LIV

I don't think this is the right place for you to be right now.

JASMINE

You're wrong.

Jasmine takes off, addressing Liv over her shoulder.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter where I go. It's everywhere.



Liv watches as she recedes into the distance, growing smaller with each step.

A117 EXT. QUAD - NIGHT

A117

Gail makes her way back to Belleville, moving slowly despite the cold.

The wind whistles through the trees that flank the courtyard. A faint cry adds itself to the chorus.

The cry picks up in volume: all along Belleville, windows fall open. Students thrust their heads outside their dorms and let loose with an unbridled scream.

Gail stops in the middle of it all as the noise devours her like a wave.

118 EXT. BELLEVILLE COURTYARD - NIGHT

118

When Gail opens her eyes, she notices a steady light in a familiar window, and in its center, a strange sight.

Through the slanted blinds, she can detect a silhouette. To Gail's eyes, it looks like a woman suspended in air.

119 INT. FRESHMAN CORRIDOR - NIGHT

119

Gail pushes a key into Jasmine's dorm room door. She pauses a moment with her hand on the knob, terrified to see what awaits her on the other end.

120 INT. DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

120

Gail pushes the door open slowly, staring blankly at what lies ahead. Then her face cracks and she doubles over, arms hugging her sides as if to hold herself together.

Across the tiny room, two feet dangle mid air, stiffly pointed downwards, floating almost daintily.

121 INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

121

From behind, Gail looks like she's praying.

Jasmine's room is cleared out. Kneeling on the bedroom floor, Gail is bent over a cardboard box. Treating each item with a delicate reverence, she packs Jasmine's clothes. She folds and refolds a shirt until she gets it just so.

Closing the box, Gail tapes it shut. It is addressed to the Tacoma home of Carol Moore.

Gail moves to the next box, carefully loading Jasmine's schoolwork and books. Louisa Weeks' journal goes in amongst other notebooks, its significance lost on Gail.

Gail picks up a high school yearbook and opens to the front page. It is littered with inscriptions from friends excited for the summer and all that lies ahead.

Gail reads them, tears dropping onto the page. She takes a deep breath and closes the box, alone in the empty room.

A122 EXT. BELLEVILLE HOUSE - NIGHT

A122

MOURNERS ferry candles in a somber vigil.

Faces lit by the flickering light, they deposit the candles at the foot of a memorial to Jasmine.

The College President and Dean of Students are unnerved and eager to leave. Katie and Cressida are red-eyed and disbelieving.

Liv appears blank, elsewhere, as she leaves her candle behind. Gail watches her with surprise.

Feeling Gail's gaze, Liv turns towards her. Emotion floods her face, features crumpling into the picture of sorrow.

123 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

123

Huddled on the sofa, Gail hugs her knees to her chest. Liv watches her nervously.

LIV

You look like you haven't been sleeping.

GAIL

How can I?

Liv searches gingerly for the right words.

LIV

It wasn't your fault. I mean, obviously, but -- don't blame yourself.

GAIL

I didn't listen to her. I didn't listen to what she was really saying.

LIV

Gail, how could you know? There was so much going on with her that we didn't realize.

GAIL

Why did you do it?

Liv's face grows serious.

LIV

Do what?

GAIL

You told someone. You told someone about the envelope, that she was behind everything. How did anyone find out?

LIV

I didn't think... It came out by accident, I --

Gail snarls, finger pointed.

GAIL

You had no business doing that!

Liv withdraws, startled. Gail presses a palm to her face.

GAIL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Fuck. I don't know why I'm blaming you. I don't even know what I'm feeling anymore.

LIV

I get it. Look, I'm here for you.

GAIL

I know it's been hard for you too. And at a time when normally we'd be celebrating. You did it. Tenure.

Gail lifts a mug. Liv clinks her mug against Gail's.

LIV

Tenure.

Liv shakes her head.

LIV (CONT'D)

I don't think they had the stomach for any more scandal.

Gail stares into her tea.

GAIL  
I started to believe her.

Liv watches Gail closely.

GAIL (CONT'D)  
It's crazy, but I started to wonder  
if this place could be haunted.

Liv exhales.

LIV  
Jesus.

GAIL  
I always thought this was the  
prize. Sticking it out and  
surviving. Enduring. But what if I  
fooled myself? What are we doing  
this for?

Liv turns Gail's words over in her head as if tasting them.

LIV  
I know what I'm doing this for.

Gail looks at her, surprised.

LIV (CONT'D)  
I belong now. I have a place. Maybe  
belonging is something you've  
always had. Well I didn't.

Liv grasps Gail's arm for emphasis.

LIV (CONT'D)  
I haven't found a home since the  
day I left mine. And of all the  
programs, all the positions I  
applied to, this was the only one  
that took a chance on me. And I  
never get chances.

Her pointed nails dig into the skin.

LIV (CONT'D)  
I never fit in, growing up. Never.  
The things I went through. It would  
make your blood run cold. Nothing  
has ever come to me easy. My own  
brother used to lock --

GAIL  
Your brother?

Gail shrugs free.

LIV  
What?

GAIL  
You told me you were an only child.

Liv stares into her lap, breathing heavily. When she eventually looks back at Gail, her eyes shine with tears.

LIV  
I say I'm an orphan too, sometimes.  
They're not my family anymore.  
That's why this matters to me,  
Gail. I don't have anything else.

A123 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER A123

Gail lifts Liv's mug from the table, frowning at the ring it has left behind. She leaves the room, returning with cleaning supplies. Gail wipes down the coffee table, arms moving with muscular vigor.

A faded footprint on the buffed oak floor catches Gail's eye. Getting down on her knees, she scrubs it from the ground.

Under the watchful gaze of ANCASTER MEN framed in pictures around the room, Gail cleans with increasing fervor.

The faint ring of a bell stops her dead in her tracks.

124 [OMIT] 124

125 [OMIT] 125

126 [OMIT] 126

127 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - MAID'S ROOM - NIGHT

127

The lights are on. Wind swirls through an open window, the bells chiming in response. Papers fly from an open storage box, spiraling around the room like a tornado.

She crosses to the window and pushes it shut. The bells quiet.

Gail gathers the aged forms, one catching her eye. It is a 1797 bill of sale for a black woman. Sinking to the ground in disbelief, Gail reads and rereads.

The lights flicker out, dropping the room into complete darkness.

A sound adds itself to Gail's breathing: hushed crying.

The weak light of a gas lamp illuminates a woman - ELISHEBA - in a corner of the room. She scrubs the floor, back turned.

Gail jerks back in surprise. Elisheba slowly turns to face Gail. Tears course her lined and tired face. She gapes at Gail with incomprehension.

Gail scrambles backwards, looking wildly around the room.

Light blooms from gas lamps scattered around the room. The space is transformed, as if from another time. Clothes hang from a line. A tattered blanket covers a cot.

A gust blows through the room and the bells begin to ring.

Elisheba crawls towards Gail in surprise, while Gail inches backwards in fear. The lights dim sporadically with the wind.

As Elisheba approaches, Gail can make out a gruesome scar on her face.

Gail is backed against the wall. Tears stream from her eyes.

GAIL

No no no no no...

As the bells roar, Elisheba reaches out, extending her hand towards Gail.

The lights cut out.

Gail huddles in the corner, eyes squeezed shut, hands covering her ears.

It's a long while before she opens her eyes again. The lights are on. She lowers her hands from her ears.

The phone is ringing.

128 INT. MASTER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT 128

Gail stands in the kitchen doorway, warily observing the ringing phone. She stares, mesmerized by its insistent ring.

At last, she strides ahead and picks it up.

129 EXT. DINER - NIGHT 129

A fluorescent diner shines like a mirage in the middle of nowhere. Gail emerges from her car, a hollow, haggard version of the woman she once was.

130 INT. DINER - NIGHT 130

The place is mostly empty. A TRUCKER guzzles coffee, a SALESMAN orders breakfast, and an OLDER COUPLE share the paper.

A black woman, LORNA, heads directly for Gail.

GAIL  
Esther, hi I --

Lorna raises an eyebrow. Gail takes in her waitress uniform, the name "Lorna" stitched into her blouse.

LORNA  
Booth or counter?

GAIL  
... booth.

Lorna leads Gail to a corner booth. Gail turns, feeling herself being watched.



She turns to look out the diner window and finds herself looking directly at a WOMAN IN BLACK, slightly hunched, her pale face offset by her gloomy clothing.

131 LATER

131

The woman, ESTHER BICKERT, white, 60s, looks plucked from the canvas of American Gothic.

They face each other in the booth, neither very comfortable with the other.

GAIL  
You're Esther Bickert.

ESTHER  
I knew I would have to meet you for  
this to make sense.

Esther speaks English with the formality of a second language.

ESTHER (CONT'D)  
Here.

Esther pulls a photograph from her cloak. A young girl in a bonnet and long dress smiles uncertainly into the camera.

It takes Gail several moments to recognize her as Liv.

GAIL  
Is that Liv?!

ESTHER  
Elizabeth.

Gail looks back at the photograph, aghast.

ESTHER (CONT'D)  
It's as if she walked off the edge  
of the earth. Left and never came  
back. In our community, that's not  
unusual, it's unheard of. We don't  
leave, not like that. Our world is  
our own. Of course there was no way  
to find her.

Gail struggles to follow along.

ESTHER (CONT'D)  
And then one day there she was.  
Right there in a newspaper, our  
Elizabeth.

(MORE)

ESTHER (CONT'D)

But they were calling her Liv. And they were saying that she's *black*.

It's unclear who is more baffled.

GAIL

... Liv... is not black?

ESTHER

Of course not. She's my daughter.

GAIL

But her father...?

ESTHER

No, god rest his soul. No.

This is getting a bit too weird for Gail.

GAIL

This is a lot. Why would you...?  
How did you even find me?

ESTHER

I saw you. You were outside her house one night. I could tell that she trusts you. A friend. I thought...

GAIL

I don't -- this is between you and Liv.

Esther makes a strange noise that Gail realizes is a sob.

ESTHER

She won't speak to me. The devil is inside her. She turned me away from her own home. Me, her mother.

GAIL

So what do you want from me?

Esther pulls a leather bible from her bag.

ESTHER

She loved this. I remember the day I gave it to her. She sat right down and signed her name. So proud.

Esther runs a wistful finger over the inscription page. ELIZABETH BICKERT is inscribed in ornate calligraphy that we've seen before.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

She always had such beautiful  
handwriting.

She pushes the bible towards Gail.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

Will you bring this to her? And let  
her know that we love her, her as  
she is, and not whoever she thinks  
she has to be?

132 EXT. DIANDRA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

132

Gail hesitates before pushing the bell, finger hovering  
midair. After a prolonged pause, Diandra throws the door  
open, the sound of voices spilling into the night.

DIANDRA

Gail, you made it! Thank goodness.  
This party needed a little more  
flavor.

133 INT. DIANDRA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

133

The party has reached a rapturous pitch.

Faculty and Masters gulp down wine, lips stained blood red.  
They hack at crimson soppressata, dangling quivering chunks of  
meat over open mouths. They shriek with laughter.

Liv is in her element by the stereo, talking animatedly to  
Master Foote.

LIV

Gail, get over here! Help me DJ.

Gail braces herself before heading over.

MASTER FOOTE

I can't believe it. This is a  
hostile takeover.

LIV

Brian, I love you, but your music's  
not cutting it. It's time for us to  
turn up.

GAIL

Liv, do you have a minute?

MASTER FOOTE

For us to what?

LIV  
Get turnt. Lit. Gail, can you  
please educate this man for me?

GAIL  
I need to talk to you.

Liv scrolls through a phone, engrossed.

LIV  
In a sec. Let me just show these  
white folks what music is.

A booming hip-hop track comes over the speakers. The  
Academics look over in amusement as Liv begins to sway.

MASTER FOOTE  
Well I'm out. Two left feet. You  
can dance to this, Gail?

LIV  
Of course she can!

Liv reaches for Gail, who pulls away.

GAIL  
Stop it.

Laughing, Liv grabs Gail by the hand, pulling her close as  
she dances.

GAIL (CONT'D)  
Stop!

Gail pushes Liv, who staggers back a few steps. The Academics  
watch in stunned silence.

Gail turns off the stereo.

GAIL (CONT'D)  
You liar.

LIV  
What the fuck, Gail?

GAIL  
I met your mom tonight. Yeah.

Liv blanches, quietly processing the information.

MASTER FOOTE  
Okay, let's --

Gail turns to face the room.

GAIL

Her mother is a white woman. A full  
on white woman.

DIANDRA

So was Obama's.

JULIANNE

Biracial erasure is a big issue in  
that community.

GAIL

She's not biracial. She's not.

DIANDRA

So what are you saying?

GAIL

What I'm saying is you've been  
getting tutorials on blackness from  
a white woman.

Liv looks nervously at the Academics, then back at Gail.

LIV

Gail, how could you?

GAIL

How could *you*? You fraud.

The Academics look at each other uneasily.

MASTER FOOTE

This is a huge accusation.

LIV

It's insane! I don't need to prove  
my blackness to any of you.

JULIANNE

You definitely do not. And I'm not  
comfortable, honestly, with the  
direction of this conversation.

GAIL

Oh, fuck you. What are you  
comfortable with?

JULIANNE

Wow, that's --

GAIL

Yeah, wow. Exactly. Wow. You people  
are so --

LIV

You people?

GAIL

-- divorced from reality that you literally can't tell black from white. That's what this place does.

MASTER FOOTE

Hang on --

GAIL

I know what happened to Jasmine. If she did all that to herself, I know. I get it. This place oozes hate. It might not be white hoods and minstrels, but it's there. It's like a ghost. You can't catch it, you can't prove it. And sometimes you just want to have proof.

DIANDRA

Gail, calm down.

The Academics watch in discomfort as Gail continues to spin out.

GAIL

She died. And I could've helped her. I could've set her free. But I kept her here, because that's all I knew. That's what I did, that's how I got here. But look at me.

Gail spreads her arms wide, then drops them.

GAIL (CONT'D)

I was never master. I'm the maid. They brought me here to clean up. I didn't change anything, I didn't do anything. I failed her. So now she haunts me. And she will haunt me forever.

The sob that bursts from her throat surprises Gail, and she can't stop the rest from following. The room watches awkwardly.

Liv sighs, watching Gail with weary empathy.

LIV

Gail. Oh, Gail. Come on.

Drained, Gail allows herself to relax into Liv's embrace and be led out the room.

134 INT. DIANDRA'S HOUSE - BILLIARDS ROOM - NIGHT

134

Liv leads Gail into the room.

LIV

Breathe.

Gail warily obeys. Liv hands her a glass of water.

LIV (CONT'D)

Gail, what happened?

GAIL

I had to talk to you.

LIV

So you had to do it at a party? You had to lose your shit and drag my personal life through the mud with all those white folks looking on?

GAIL

You're white too.

LIV

No I'm not. I'll tell you who I am, even though you don't deserve to know the first thing about my struggle.

Liv fights back tears.

LIV (CONT'D)

You ever stop to wonder why I cut her off? Why this woman needs to stalk a stranger to tell all her private business to? You ever consider the source?

GAIL

Liv --

LIV

That woman abused me. That woman raised me believing that I would go to hell for being the bastard child of a black man. That's the woman you sat down with. That's the woman you're trying to bring back into my life. How dare you?!

GAIL

She said your father's white.

LIV

Is that her story now? Well did she tell you about the beatings? The scripture memorizations? Did she tell you how I got this scar --

Liv holds out her arm, which is crisscrossed with scars.

LIV (CONT'D)

-- or this one, or this one?!

Chest heaving, Liv catches her breath. Cowed, Gail brings a tentative hand to Liv's shoulder.

GAIL

Liv. Oh my god, I'm so sorry. I've been so crazy stressed lately. And then she calls me, and I see her and she's telling me about you and she gives me this bible to give you, and I just -- I was just trying to make it make sense.

Liv snatches her black hoodie and coat from a nearby chair and pulls them on.

LIV

It doesn't have to make sense to you. You didn't live it, it's not your story.

She flips up her hood, turning back at the door.

LIV (CONT'D)

Consider yourself lucky.

Liv disappears into the party. Diandra comes in just as Gail is getting her coat.

DIANDRA

Gail, don't go.

GAIL

Oh god, Diandra I --

DIANDRA

You don't have to explain anything. I can't imagine what you've gone through this semester. But please don't go. Ancaster needs you. We need you. We need your voice.



135 INT. DIANDRA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

135

Gail sits on the sofa, motionless, mute. Diandra and Julianne carry on a conversation over her head.

Master Foote takes a seat across from Gail, smearing a cracker with brie. He bares wine-stained teeth.

MASTER FOOTE

I don't know if I've ever seen anything like that.

Gail looks past him, an UNFAMILIAR PROFESSOR holding her attention. There is something off-putting in his half smile and dark suit.

Gail looks from the Unfamiliar Professor to an 18th century portrait of an identical man.

Nearby hangs a tintype photograph of THREE OLD MEN bent over a desk. Across the room, the same Three Old Men appear to huddle over a table. One turns suspiciously towards Gail.

GAIL

It's always been this way.

A photograph rests on the side table beside Master Foote. It shows him, stern faced and unsmiling, in a 19th century photo outside an Ancaster building.

GAIL (CONT'D)

And it's never going to change.

Gathering her things, she walks out the room.

136 EXT. QUAD - NIGHT

136

Gail crosses the quad, face determined. She pauses, halted by the unsettling sensation of being watched.

She turns, finding herself looking square at a SECURITY GUARD. He clips his walkie talkie.

SECURITY GUARD

Faculty? Mind if I take a look at your ID?

GAIL

No.

SECURITY GUARD

'Preciate it. I'll just give it a quick scan and then --

GAIL

No, I mean I don't work here. I was just on my way out.

The Security Guard pauses, his demeanor icing over.

SECURITY GUARD

Oh. Well, the exit's that way.

GAIL

Thanks.

Jaw set, she turns and walks away. A small group of OVERACHIEVERS tumble from the library. One recognizes Gail.

OVERACHIEVER

Master Bishop!

Gail gives no sign that she even heard.

OVERACHIEVER (CONT'D)

Master Bishop!

She doesn't turn around.

As Gail walks away, slowly shrinking in the distance, a GROUNDS WORKER comes into view, salting the path.

Two DINING WORKERS hurry by, pulling on their coats. They briefly stop to talk with the Grounds Worker.

A group of DRUNK STUDENTS cross the quad.

A JANITOR empties the trash.

BLACK