

The Forest

written by

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EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The sound of waves crashing against wet sand is heard before the scene of a beach **FADES IN**. We see it from a distance, as if standing on a balcony of a hotel room. With the sun having completely set after a lousy, rainy day, and the moon reflecting what little light it can, giving off a blue tint.

On the shore, we see two figures walking away from a small pier. They're standing shoulder to shoulder as one figure appears to be comforting the other.

CUT TO:

Now sitting on the sand, watching as the waves come and go, are the two figures. **CLOSE UP** on one of them, a young, fragile man with tiresome eyes. He's sniffing and attempting to collect himself. He has clearly been crying. Embarrassed, he avoids making contact with the girl next to him, **ROXANNE**. Both of them appear to be in their late teens/early twenties.

Roxanne stares at him with her naturally big, beautiful hazel eyes, only seeming so big because of her overall small stature. She's worried. She leans her head in, resting her forehead on the young man's shoulder. She wraps her arms, along with the blanket on her back, around him. The ambience of the after-storm beach sets in as the two sit, watching the waves come and go.

Against black:

**"i. Nocturnal"**

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

*RIIING.*

The school bell rings, signaling the end of yet another school day. We follow teenage Roxanne, now looking much younger, towards the exit when suddenly, her one and only friend, **LUCY** (16), catches up to her after rushing through the crowd, calling out her name.

LUCY

Roxanne! Hey!

(Out of breath)

Damn, what the hell? So you just not gonna wait for me today? Also, practice is that way!

ROXANNE

I don't wanna go today, Lucy. I just wanna go home and take a nap.

With what great chemistry they have, Lucy needs hear no more to completely understand and see the genuine sadness on Roxanne.

LUCY

Oh. Okay. What's wrong? Did something happen?

The front of the school is packed with buses cars, and students. Roxanne walks away from the crowd through her usual path home, Lucy walks next to her for the meanwhile.

ROXANNE

No, just... not feeling it today... Honestly, I'm just not feeling anything today. Tell Ms.Wiley I had a family emergency.

LUCY

You know that's not going to work on her anymore. Homegirl, she's losing patience with you and you're at risk of becoming fourth chair.

ROXANNE

(Annoyed)

Who cares? Maybe then she'll finally stop picking on me and getting on my ass for everything... Ugh! I just need a naaaap.

LUCY

That makes two of us..

ROXANNE

You worked late again?

LUCY

Yeah, I'm working late all week! I'm starting to fucking hate working there, man. I might just quit.

ROXANNE

Mm.

LUCY

Well, anyways, take a fat nap for the both of us, then send that energy to me, because lord knows I'm going to need it!

ROXANNE

Heh, okay. Bye, Lucy.

LUCY

Bye, Roxy.

The two hug each other before Lucy splits away from Roxanne's path and out the scene.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUED

Roxanne walks along a fence at the border of an elementary school, gliding her fingertips along it. The overcast day has cast down a silence on the area with its early winter sunset.

Behind her, in the distance, a young man in a hoodie sprints around the corner of a neighborhood. The young man takes a moment to catch his breath as it looks around. He spots Roxanne and begins fast walking towards her, taking off his hood in the process.

As he nears, it becomes clear that this is the same young man from the beach. Although, this time he appears much more dirty overall, with a scrappy, DIY attempt at a haircut. It seems neither Roxanne nor the young man recognize each other.

YOUNG MAN

Hi there!

Roxanne turns towards the voice calling out to her as the young man finally catches up to her.

ROXANNE

(Awkward, unsure)

Hi--

YOUNG MAN

-- How are you?

He speaks in a rush, as if impatient and trying to get to the point, but still polite. He leans his head a little too close to Roxanne.

ROXANNE

Um, I'm good--

YOUNG MAN

-- That's good to hear!

The young man notices that Roxanne is very uncomfortable by his sudden approach. He collects himself and becomes much more calm and well-spoken.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Umm, I'm sorry, it's just... uh, I always see you walking this way which is sorta the same way home for me, and my earbuds got stolen so I can't listen to music on the way home, so I thought, 'why not talk to you for a change?'

ROXANNE

Umm, okay? Yeah, can't be leaving your earbuds around anywhere at school. That's just asking for them to get stolen.

YOUNG MAN

Oh, so it's the same at your school?

ROXANNE

Pretty much.

YOUNG MAN

Yeah. I'm thinking of going to the police for it.

ROXANNE

For earbuds? That's kinda extreme.

YOUNG MAN

I just really want them back. They were my only escape. So like, where would the nearest police station be?

ROXANNE

(Chuckle)

Oh, you meant a police station? Why not just go to police at your school?

YOUNG MAN

Umm... mine doesn't have any.

ROXANNE

Really? Must be nice. Our school is fucked up, so they fit right in.

YOUNG MAN

Where do you go?

ROXANNE

Sam Houston... it's literally just straight back until Davis Street.

YOUNG MAN

Oh, right. I should've guessed that.

ROXANNE

If you live nearby, why don't you go to Sam?

MAVERICK

Umm...

ROXANNE

Scratch that, I literally just told you. It's a shithole.

They share a laugh. The young man sneaks in a worried, suspicious look of his surroundings.

YOUNG MAN

So, what's your name?

ROXANNE

Roxanne. How about you?

For a brief moment, the young man looks perplexed.

YOUNG MAN

... Maverick.

ROXANNE

Maverick?

MAVERICK

Mhmm.

ROXANNE

Interesting name. I've never heard anybody called that.

MAVERICK

Well, I'm glad to be the first "Maverick" you've met.

ROXANNE

Heh, how old are you, Maverick?

MAVERICK

I am..

Again, he looks perplexed, having to actually think about it for just a moment.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)  
 ... seventeen. My birthday should be  
 or is in... 6 months.

ROXANNE  
 You really had to think about that,  
 huh? Are you lying to me, Maverick?

MAVERICK  
 No, it's just... my family doesn't  
 really keep track of that.

ROXANNE  
 That's strange. *Really* strange.

Having no idea what to say or do next, Maverick chuckles nervously. Before crossing a street, he looks both ways and notices Roxanne is continuing forwards.

MAVERICK  
 (Pointing ahead)  
 Oh, are you heading that way?

ROXANNE  
 Yep.

MAVERICK  
 Oh okay, (Pointing left) I'm  
 heading this way. I'll, uh, see you  
 around, hopefully.

ROXANNE  
 (Cautious)  
 Yeah, sure.

MAVERICK  
 It was nice meeting you, Roxanne!

ROXANNE  
 You too, "Maverick."

Roxanne stares suspiciously at Maverick as he walks away.

INT. ROXANNE'S HOME - EVENING

Roxanne walks in to her quiet, small, two bedroom, two bathroom home. There is barely an inch of furniture decorating the house. Her golden terrier, JOSSY (5), springs up from her bed to greet her.

ROXANNE  
 (Petting)  
 Hi, Jossy. I'll get you food in a  
 bit.

She heads towards her half of the house on the right, into her bedroom. She swings and launches her backpack on to her bed, and then herself, burying her face into a pillow.

Hours later, Roxanne awakens from her slumber to the sound of ROXANNE'S MOTHER (40s) arriving home from work. It is pitch black outside.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER (O.S.)  
 (Shouting)  
 Roxanne! I'm home!

ROXANNE  
 (Groggy, shouting)  
 Okay!

ROXANNE'S MOTHER (O.S.)  
 Have you fed Jozzy?

Knowing the backlash she's going to get from her response, Roxanne gets ready to feed Jozzy.

ROXANNE  
 No!

ROXANNE'S MOTHER (O.S.)  
 Get your butt over here and do it!  
 It's late!

Roxanne enters the living room to see her mom unpacking groceries.

ROXANNE  
 (Feeding Jozzy)  
 What's for dinner?

ROXANNE'S MOTHER  
 I'm making peach cobbler tonight.

ROXANNE  
 Yum.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER  
 How was school?

ROXANNE  
 It was okay.



ROXANNE'S MOTHER

Did you go to practice?

ROXANNE

... Yeah.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

How was it?

ROXANNE

Fine.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

Then why did Ms.Wiley call me saying you skipped... again.

ROXANNE

(Big sigh)

Okay, fine. I didn't go. I didn't wanna go today, because I've been feeling like shit and have no motivation to do anything, and those fucking pills the therapist keeps prescribing me are probably the reason why I always feel like shit--

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

Okay--

ROXANNE

-- and have no motivation, but I have to keep taking them just so you and her will stop bitching at me--

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

-- I get it! Ok!--

ROXANNE

-- and so you can keep my high-energy-ass tranquilized from giving you a headache! There, happy?

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

I get it!! Jesus! But you need to stop skipping! You were the one who wanted to move here for band, remember--

ROXANNE

-- I know, mom! I knoooooww!--

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

-- who made me leave everything behind to come support your dream! And now you're telling me you're going to quit on it!?!

ROXANNE

You fucking liar! I never said that! Only that I was considering it!

Roxanne storms off to her room.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

At this point, what's the fucking difference?!

She slams her door shut and drops onto her bed, frustrated.

Yet, in no time, she's up again, opening her laptop to play some music and unzipping her backpack to get started on her homework, as if she didn't just get into a heated argument with her mom.

About an hour later, Roxanne is burnt out by her homework. Her mom knocks.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(Calm, motherly)

Dinner's ready. Come get your plate.

ROXANNE

(Calm)

Be right there, mom.

Roxanne puts away her homework before heading off to the kitchen where a bowl of peach cobbler awaits. As she turns around, ready to head back to her room, she notices her mother watching dog behavioral tutorial on the computer monitor acting as a TV in the living room.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

(Amused)

Are you going to teach Jozzy something new?

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

I want her to learn how to defend our house.

ROXANNE

(Giggling)

Good luck with that, mom.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

What? What's wrong with that?

ROXANNE

Jozzy's the type of dog that would fetch our jewelry for the burglars.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

Oh, shut up. Jozzy is happy to learn.

(To Jozzy)

Isn't that right, sweetie?  
Yesyesyes! Such a good girl!

ROXANNE

Whatever. Love you, mom!

MOM

Love you.

Roxanne heads to her room and closes the door.

Long after having finished her bowl, she lays on her bed, holding her phone up as she watches a video on it. She begins yawning and notices the time, '2:00am'. Frustrated for staying up so late, but with no other idea, Roxanne continues watching her video.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Packing up from after school band practice, Roxanne, Lucy, and Lucy's boyfriend, LOYD (17) get ready to head out. Lucy opens the exit, gesturing for Roxanne to hurry and sneak by Ms.Wiley's office. Roxanne does the exact opposite, waving at Ms.Wiley as she walks by.

ROXANNE

Bye, Ms.Wiley!

MS.WILEY (O.S.)

(Annoyed)

Bye!

Out in the empty halls, the three walk side by side.

LOYD

So we getting some food or what's up?

ROXANNE

Eh, I don't really feel like it.

LUCY  
Bro, Roxy, c'mon.

ROXANNE  
Even if I wanted to, I don't got  
money for it.

LUCY  
What do you meaaaann! It's  
literally just one dollar.

ROXANNE  
... Let's go Saturday. After the  
game.

LUCY  
I mean, we can go then too, but  
guess we going without you today.

ROXANNE  
That's fine.

LUCY  
Roxy, I was joking!

Roxanne doesn't laugh.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
... You not feeling better today?

ROXANNE  
Eh. I'm done complaining, that's  
for sure.

The three head out an exit leading to the football pitch.  
Roxanne splits paths with the two from here.

LUCY  
Babygirl, I don't like seeing you  
like this.

ROXY  
Ugh. If it helps, I'm not  
depressed, just... tired. It's those  
pills.

LOYD  
What kind of pills?

LUCY  
(Stern)  
Not those kind.

ROXY

Yeah, they're just for my ADHD.  
I'll be fine though, maybe I just  
need to distract myself.

LUCY

Alright, I just don't wanna lose  
you again, Roxy.

ROXY

You won't, I promise.

LUCY

Okay, well then bye for now, baby.

Lucy and Roxanne hug.

LOYD

How come you can call her that, but  
not me?

LUCY

Shut the fuck up, handsome.

ROXANNE

Bye, you two.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM - CONTINUED

As Roxanne begins her way home, she walks by the empty  
football stadium and notices a single person sitting high on  
the bleachers...

It's Maverick.

He's still wearing the same grey sweatpants, hoodie, and  
overcoat. She decides to head all the way across the pitch to  
talk to him.

Once at the bleachers, she calls and waves at him.

ROXANNE

Hey there.

Maverick is caught off guard from whatever he was  
contemplating. He spots her, and in an instant, puts on a  
smile as he waves back. Roxanne makes her way up, finding a  
seat next to him.

MAVERICK

Hey!

ROXANNE

Now you're the one being caught off guard.

MAVERICK

Ha! Guess so.

ROXANNE

Did you find those earbuds?

MAVERICK

No... they're gone for good.

ROXANNE

Damn, that sucks. Yeah, I bet someone in my school stole them. That's why you're here, and not just stalking me, right Maverick?

MAVERICK

(Struggling)

No... I'm just... enjoying the view.

ROXANNE

... You alright?

MAVERICK

Yeah! How are you? (Pointing at her clarinet case) What is that?

ROXANNE

It's a case. With my clarinet in it.

MAVERICK

Clarinet? Heh, so you're like Squidward?

ROXANNE

Yep, exactly. Exactly what people say when I first tell them.

MAVERICK

Oh, sorry.

ROXANNE

No, I was just being a smartass.

MAVERICK

No, it's not right for me to compare you to a legend.

ROXANNE  
(Playful, rolls eyes)  
Wooooow.

Maverick notices all the stickers and decorations on the case.

MAVERICK  
You've been playing for a long time?

ROXANNE  
It's the only reason I'm here.

MAVERICK  
What do you mean?

ROXANNE  
It's my dream to play professionally. Me and my mom moved here from across the country in hopes of getting to play for the big, fancy music institute nearby, but doesn't look like that's going to be happening.

MAVERICK  
Why not?

ROXANNE  
Ah, just a lot of things I'm dealing with resulting in a severe lack of motivation.

MAVERICK  
I'm sorry to hear that, Roxanne, but unless you play like Squidward, you shouldn't give up.

ROXANNE  
What if I'm really starting to relate to him?

MAVERICK  
He never gave up on his dream, though, did he?

ROXANNE  
... Shit. You got me there. I guess I gotta go home and keep on practicing.

MAVERICK  
That's the spirit!

Roxanne finally cracks a smile.

ROXANNE

Yeah... Alright, well, guess I'll be seeing you around, huh?

MAVERICK

Yeah, maybe.

"Maybe"? A bit concerning to hear that for Roxanne. Nonetheless, she gets up to leave.

ROXANNE

Bye, Maverick.

MAVERICK

Bye, Roxanne.

She heads down the bleachers. As she turns the corner, she suddenly gets this urge, this gut feeling to go back and check on Maverick. Something just didn't seem right with him.

She stops dead in her tracks, spins 180 and peaks around the corner.

Maverick is crying, head buried in his palms. Roxanne walks in a rush towards him and once again, is by his side.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

(Sobbing)

I'm sorry.

ROXANNE

What? No, for what? What's wrong?

MAVERICK

I'm homeless. I have no one. I have nothing. I don't know what to do.

ROXANNE

... What happened? Did your parents kick you out?

MAVERICK

(Shaking his head)

I just wanted to escape.

ROXANNE

Why?



MAVERICK

Because crying my eyes out here in the cold, right now, is better than going back. I just don't know what to do next.

ROXANNE

You don't got anyone to stay with?

MAVERICK

I don't got anybody. It's just me.

ROXANNE

How is that possible?

MAVERICK

I... ugh, I don't know.

Roxanne looks down at the ground with him. She looks back up at him, OBSERVING him, seeing if he's being genuine.

She's convinced that he is.

ROXANNE

(Spontaneous)

... You can stay with me.

Maverick finally looks her in the eyes. He's almost in disbelief such an offer has just been given to him on the spot.

MAVERICK

(Sincere)

... What?

ROXANNE

What?

MAVERICK

(Confused)

... Why?

ROXANNE

... I don't know... I've done crazier things. You can stay until you get sorted out.

Maverick takes his time to think this through. Now, he's the one OBSERVING her.

MAVERICK

... Okay.

ROXANNE

Okay, but... my mom can't know about you.

MAVERICK

Huh?

ROXANNE

You can stay at my place but, you'd have to stay in my room, and only my room, because my mom is... ugh, she doesn't even allow me to have friends over so... this is the best I can do- or offer, I guess?

MAVERICK

(Perplexed)

Is this how everything is?

ROXANNE

What?

MAVERICK

I mean... okay.

ROXANNE

... Alrighty then, c'mon, if we hurry, we can get there before she does.

Roxanne collects her case and leads the way with Maverick following closely behind.

EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - EVENING

With the sun nearly setting, turning everything into silhouettes, the two are barely visible walking down the sidewalk unless they pass under the neighborhood street lights. They near Roxanne's house until she spots her mom's silver truck parked in the driveway.

ROXANNE

Shit. She's already home... Okay, you see that window? The only one on the right? That's the window to my room. I'm gonna go inside, talk to my mom, whatever, and then I'm gonna open it and you're going to climb through it.

MAVERICK

(Unsure)

Oh, uh, sure.

ROXANNE

Umm, just wait here. I'll signal for you to come over. It shouldn't take long.

Roxanne hurries to her house. Maverick is left standing awkwardly, alone, in the streets.

INT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - CONTINUED

Roxanne's naturally great acting skills come to play as she walks through the front door as casual as can be. Her mom is mixing a pot of spaghetti on the stove.

ROXANNE

Hey, mom.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

Hey, Roxanne. How was practice?

ROXANNE

It was whatever. Ms.Wiley didn't give me shit today, so I got that going for me.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

You know she's just trying to get the best out of you, right?

ROXANNE

Well, I think she's gotten way more than she bargained for, mom. Anyways, what are we having?

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

I'm just reheating the leftover spaghetti from a few days ago.

ROXANNE

Sounds good. I'm gonna be in my room doing homework.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

Okay.

ROXANNE

Love you, mom.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

Love you.

Roxanne heads to her room.

## INT. ROXANNE'S ROOM - CONTINUED

Upon closing her door and locking it, her facade drops. She rushes to open her laptop and play her music loudly, drowning out the sound of her opening her window.

She holds out the window blinds and sticks her head out to find Maverick still waiting awkwardly. He spots her as she gestures furiously for him to come over. Maverick tippy toes his way and carefully climbs through. He places his weight on her bed which causes it to squeak. Roxanne shushes him.

Once inside, she closes her window and blinds. Again, she shushes Maverick before leaning in to whisper into his ear.

From now on, they will WHISPER to each other when Roxanne's mom is present at home.

ROXANNE

You okay?

MAVERICK

Yes. Why?

ROXANNE

Just checking. My mom is in the kitchen right now making dinner. Do you like spaghetti?

MAVERICK

I don't know, I've never had it.

ROXANNE

Really? I'll bring a plate and share some with you. If you like it, I'll go bring some more.

MAVERICK

Okay.

ROXANNE

Okay. Umm, are you claustrophobic?

MAVERICK

(Shaking his head)

I don't think so.

ROXANNE

Then you won't have any problem staying in my closet for the meanwhile, while I go get dinner?

MAVERICK

Umm, no.

ROXANNE  
Okay, c'mere.

Roxanne walks over to her wall closet. It's on the far right of her bedroom door, making it impossible to see into from the doorway. She opens it, revealing a space large enough for one person to stand in.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)  
(To herself)  
I should really clean this.

She gestures for Maverick to get in her closet. He does so, simply standing inside it, staring back at her with such an innocent look in his face.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)  
I'll be right back.

MAVERICK  
Okay.

The door closes to her closet. She heads out to the kitchen. We can hear her converse with her mom despite the music blasting from her laptop.

Roxanne returns with a plate of spaghetti. She sets it down on the drawer between her doors before closing her bedroom door and carefully locking it. She heads to the closet and opens it only to have Maverick nearly collapse onto her.

He's hyperventilating, his eyes wide open, a look of pain in his face.

ROXANNE  
Woah! What happened?! I thought you said you weren't claustrophobic?

MAVERICK  
(Out of breath)  
I'm not... I just... had a moment of weakness.

Roxanne can't help but let out an amused chuckle. She leads Maverick to sit on her bed, handing him a plate of spaghetti.

ROXANNE  
Here, try it. Tell me what you think of it.

As Maverick's tastebuds discover heaven, Roxanne does homework on her laptop. She quickly notices how much Maverick is enjoying his new found love for Italian food.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)  
You like it?

MAVERICK  
It's amazing!

ROXANNE  
You can have that plate.

MAVERICK  
Are you not gonna eat any?

ROXANNE  
I'll eat something later.

Maverick becomes curious at what she is working on.

MAVERICK  
What is that?

ROXANNE  
Just some algebra homework.

She notices him looking over her shoulder.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)  
Yeah, took me forever to understand this.

MAVERICK  
Maybe you could teach it to me?

Before she can respond, the doorknob to her room jiggles LOUDLY.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER (O.S.)  
Roxanne?

Both Maverick and Roxanne freeze up momentarily, staring wide eyed at the door seeing if it will budge. In an instant, Maverick takes action and springs up from the bed and into the closet, closing the closet door once inside.

This forces Roxanne to snap out of her frozen state and rush towards her door, opening it to unveil her mom standing there with an apple in her hand.

ROXANNE  
Hey, mom, what's up?

ROXANNE'S MOTHER  
What are you doing? Why is your door locked?

ROXANNE

I was about to change into my PJs.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

Hm, well, anyways, do you want this apple? It was the last one in the pantry, thought you might want it.

ROXANNE

Umm... sure. I'll take it.

Roxanne takes the apple and places it on her drawer while handing the empty plate of spaghetti to her mom.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

Oh wow, you actually finished a plate for once.

ROXANNE

My motivation may be down, but my hunger is only rising.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

That doesn't make sense.

ROXANNE

Anywayssss, goodnight, mom!

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

Goodnight, crazy head.

Roxanne closes her door and again, carefully locks it. She rushes to the closet, opening it, and this time finds Maverick still looking a bit shocked.

ROXANNE

You ok?

MAVERICK

Yeah.

ROXANNE

Here--

She rushes to another, bigger drawer in her room and opens it up. She pulls out two blankets. One very thick and heavy, the other light and thin. The thick blanket is set down on the floor next to her bed, the thin one she hands over to Maverick, but not before throwing one of her pillows onto the thick blanket on the floor.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

-- I know it's not ideal, but it's the best I can do for now.

MAVERICK

It's okay. I understand... I don't know if I snore or not, so I'm really sorry if I do.

ROXANNE

Hmm, let's hope you don't, because I don't, and it would be really suspicious if my mom suddenly started hearing snoring coming from my room.

MAVERICK

I suppose I can forfeit sleeping tonight.

ROXANNE

No, it's fine, I stay up really late anyways. It's probably undiagnosed insomnia. So I'll like, keep watch.

MAVERICK

Oh. I'm sorry to hear that.

ROXANNE

Hm? Oh no, I'm used to it.

Maverick lays down on his makeshift bed.

MAVERICK

Okay, um, well, goodnight?

ROXANNE

Wait, hold on! I wanna know at least a bit about the person that is now secretly living in my room.

MAVERICK

Oh. Umm, what do you wanna know?

ROXANNE

(Shrugs)

Just start from the beginning.

MAVERICK

Sure. Umm... I was born and raised in this town. I had two sisters. My mom left a long time ago. My dad... is a monster. I don't really like talking about him. Um, I can braid hair really well. I can also cook, kinda. I like drawing and dancing and... uh, yeah.



ROXANNE

"Had" two sisters?

MAVERICK

Well, I won't be seeing them  
anytime soon.

Maverick nervously smiles. Roxanne is understanding.

ROXANNE

Well, I'll let you sleep now. I'll  
be here if you need anything.

The two go quiet, Maverick stares up at the ceiling, Roxanne resumes working on her homework, her playlist now switched over to something more melancholy and soothing.

In the dead of night, Roxanne watches videos on her phone. Maverick snores, but it's timid, like relaxing white noise. Roxanne yawns.

Suddenly, Maverick begins snoring LOUDLY. A rattle that spooks Roxanne. She looks over, unsure if she should wake him up or wait it out. The snoring continues briefly, until it dies down. Roxanne listens intently for her mother.

Nothing.

Maverick's eyes SHOOT wide open. He's panicking, but frozen, as if disconnected from his own body. Strange, desperate sounds come from his throat, but not loud enough for Roxanne to hear. Finally, he regains control.

He twitches, causing him to BANG his head up against the wall. Roxanne is startled once again and turns to look down at him. She finds Maverick rubbing his head.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

What happened?!

MAVERICK

(In pain)

... I... couldn't breath.

ROXANNE

What? Are you okay?

MAVERICK

Yeah... I'm sorry.

ROXANNE

No, it's fine. Let's just hope my  
mom didn't hear that.

MAVERICK  
... I'm not normal, am I?

ROXANNE  
Huh?

MAVERICK  
I feel lost in this new world. I just walked straight into a forest, knowing nothing about it. You can't tell me it's normal to wake up trapped in your mind, your throat closed up, unable to breath no matter how much you're panicking.

ROXANNE  
Is that what happened to you?

MAVERICK  
Yeah. It happens a lot. Maybe that's why I'm always tired.

ROXANNE  
Hmm. If it makes you feel any better, you are asking the wrong person. I am *far* from mentally stable 'AKA' normal.

MAVERICK  
Really?

ROXANNE  
Yep. Let's just say my therapist would love you. She'd "subtly" pressure you to share, just like she does with me. God, she can be so unprofessional.

MAVERICK  
You have a therapist?

ROXANNE  
Yeah.

For a moment, Roxanne hesitates sharing more about herself.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)  
... I used to be locked up in a mental hospital...

Maverick looks up at Roxanne. He would've never guessed.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

... I've done a lot of bad things in my life that I'm still paying the consequences for, but it was the multiple suicide attempts that broke the camels back, I guess. It's been about a year now since I got sent there and diagnosed with ADHD. They started giving me these meds for controlling it, but it only made me tired, which I guess was their idea of controlling it. So sometimes I wouldn't even take it, because I would miss being me. That hyper-energetic me, who danced like a maniac with my roommate.

Roxanne giggles.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

God, we were such bitches together, but don't get me wrong, that place was hell. I couldn't wait to get out, and when I finally did, imagine my disappointment when they told me I still had to take my meds. I guess it's what I deserved for all the shit I put my mom through. So let's see what else I deserve now that I'm putting her through even more shit with me unable to handle life, thinking about quitting my dream that we moved all the way here to chase.

A silence falls over them as Roxanne's monologue lingers on.

MAVERICK

... Sounds like you deserve happiness.

ROXANNE

Heh, do I?

Roxanne lays back on her bed, Maverick does the same.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

... I just don't know any more. My life is such a mess right now and I have so little time to fix it..

MAVERICK

... You sure you want me around?

ROXANNE

... I don't know... I don't know what  
the fuck I'm doing.

An intimidating silence hits.

MAVERICK

Your best, hopefully.

ROXANNE

Hah, very funny.

MAVERICK

Why is that funny?

ROXANNE

Oh, you were serious?

The two continue speaking as WE slowly FADE TO black.

CUT TO:

In the early morning, Roxanne wakes up having barely gotten any sleep. She turns over to look down and see Maverick STILL awake, barely keeping his eyes open.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

How long did we stay up?

MAVERICK

I'm not sure. You fell asleep after  
what felt like two hours of us  
talking.

ROXANNE

... When did you fall asleep?

MAVERICK

I haven't slept. I didn't want to  
risk snoring again.

ROXANNE

Maverick...

Roxanne gets up from bed.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

I gotta get ready for school, but  
I'll make you breakfast real quick.  
My mom is gonna take me to school  
and then she's going straight to  
work. So you're going to have the  
house to yourself for like eight  
hours before I come home.

MAVERICK  
Plenty of time to sleep, then.

ROXANNE  
Yeah. Hey, I'll be back.

MAVERICK  
Okay.

Roxanne heads to the kitchen, her mom still in her room. Jozzy wakes up to follow her around, the house as quiet as can be. She searches her fridge and takes out a hot pocket which she microwaves and places on a plate alongside two granola bars before heading back to her room with it.

Back in her room, Roxanne closes the door and locks it. She finds Maverick sitting up, half-asleep.

ROXANNE  
Psst. Here, I brought you some breakfast.

MAVERICK  
Oh. Thanks.

ROXANNE  
You're welcome. I'm gonna go get ready for school now, okay?

MAVERICK  
Alright.

ROXANNE  
If you need to use the restroom at any time, mine is, like, right there, literally the first door on your right.

MAVERICK  
Okay.

ROXANNE  
And if you're going to rob us, well, feel free, Jossy won't do shit.

MAVERICK  
Who's Jossy?

ROXANNE

Oh, it's my dog. I'm also gonna make my mom stop by the store this evening to get you some basic stuff like a toothbrush. Is there anything you want me to get?

MAVERICK

Umm, no, thank you. You've already done plenty for me, Roxanne.

ROXANNE

You sure? I don't mind.

MAVERICK

... If you can find anything for my snoring, I'd appreciate it.

ROXANNE

You got it. Well, I'll be seeing you this evening.. I hope.

MAVERICK

You will.

Roxanne collects her backpack and a pair of clothes.

ROXANNE

-- Oh! There's some books in my closet you can read, if you haven't noticed, and my laptop, you can use it, I don't care.

MAVERICK

Thank you.

Maverick stares at Roxanne with such an innocent smirk showing his appreciation for her hospitality. Roxanne returns the smirk right before she heads out the room.

SERIES OF SHOTS -- ROXANNE'S DAY

-- Roxanne stares out the window of a car while talking to her mom.

-- In class, she sneakily uses her phone.

-- At lunch with Lucy and Loyd, she continues using her phone until Lucy brings her into the conversation.

-- Back in the car with her mom, the two head to the store.

-- They enter a tunnel. Coming out, it's suddenly night and now Roxanne is being driven home after going to the store as clearly indicated by the grocery bag she carries on her lap.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. ROXANNE'S HOME - NIGHT

Opening the front door is Roxanne's mom, carrying a load of groceries on the other hand. Roxanne walks in, arms full with groceries, not to mention her backpack and clarinet case hanging off her. She rushes to put down a grocery bag and take the other back to her room. Her mom notices.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

Are you not going to help me bake tonight?

ROXANNE

Yeah, mom, I'm just gonna put these away.

Roxanne heads to her room to find no one there. She sets down the groceries and locks the door before heading over to her closet where she opens it and finds Maverick hiding.

MAVERICK

I heard you two coming home.

ROXANNE

You can come out, now. I brought you some stuff.

The two sit down on her bed as Maverick begins digging into the bag, taking out a toothbrush, deodorant, shampoo "for men".

MAVERICK

Wow. This is great.

He takes a mouthguard from the bag.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

... What is this?

ROXANNE

Oh yeah, I did some research online and this is supposed to help your snoring at night.

MAVERICK

How did you buy this without your mom noticing?

ROXANNE

So, she did hear the snoring last night, so I told her it must've developed from all the stress her and my therapist have been putting on me.

MAVERICK

That sounds kind of mean.

ROXANNE

Yeah, well, it gets her off my back, so...

MAVERICK

Well, thank you, Roxanne. I really appreciate all this.

ROXANNE

No problem. Umm, I know you're gonna need some clothes so I talked to one of my friends at school and her boyfriend has, like, a bunch that he was planning on throwing out, but he's willing to give to me now... for you.

MAVERICK

Your friends know about me?

ROXANNE

Umm, well, not exactly. I told them it was for a poor cousin.

MAVERICK

Oh.

ROXANNE

Yeah. I'll try picking them up tomorrow after school.

MAVERICK

... Why not tonight?

ROXANNE

Heh, that's gonna be hard to do.

MAVERICK

We could sneak out, see the city, pick up the clothes, see the city again, then come back.

ROXANNE

Hmm, maybe.



MAVERICK

... I get bored here.

ROXANNE

I mean, same... I'll think on it while I help my mom make dinner. I'll probably be back in like an hour with a plate for you. I think we're making pigs in a blanket tonight.

MAVERICK

(Perplexed)

What?! How do you- why would you...

ROXANNE

You've never had pigs in a blanket?

MAVERICK

How do you even... "have that"?

ROXANNE

Ugh, you'll find out when I bring it to you. I'll be back, okay?

MAVERICK

(Nervous)

Umm, okay?...

CUT TO:

Later that night, the two find themselves sitting in Roxanne's bed sharing a bowl of pigs in a blanket, laughing, talking, as Roxanne's slow-paced, melancholy music playing loudly over the laptop.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

... Man, your music is really... sad.

ROXANNE

(Sarcastic)

Thanks, yeah, it's really fitting for me, the "saddy furball", who's going through a lot right now, don't ya think?

MAVERICK

A sad bunny.

Roxane giggles.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

But maybe you can try some upbeat music? I may have some suggestions.

ROXANNE

Be my guest.

Maverick gets up and heads towards the laptop, he begins typing out and searching for a track until he finds one. It's a very ancient and very 80s pop hit track that gets Maverick in the groove. Slowly, he begins to come out of his shell and reveal his natural, flashy dance moves.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

(Humor)

Oh my god, you're going to start dancing...

Maverick ignores Roxanne's comment, or rather, becomes too engrossed in the music to acknowledge it. He lets loose and becomes a spectacle to watch.

The song ends.

MAVERICK

Can't do that with sad music, huh?

ROXANNE

(Giggling)

Guess not.

EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - MIDNIGHT

As the whole neighborhood sleeps, Roxanne's bedroom window opens. Roxanne pops her head out and makes sure the coast is clear before stepping out, being careful not to land so hard on the ground. Maverick follows suit, carefully closing the window afterwards. He hands over Roxanne's backpack to her as he zips up one of her winter jackets on himself.

ROXANNE

(Whisper)

This is crazy!

MAVERICK

(Whisper)

A lot more scary too, maybe we should go back in.

ROXANNE

(Whisper)

What? No! This was your idea!

MAVERICK

(Whisper)

Heh, you're right.

As the two walk along the streets, Maverick can't help look slightly frightened by the spooky atmosphere created by the dim streetlights and the cold winter night. He unintentionally bumps into Roxanne as he tries sticking along her. She notices how worried he looks and decides to throw her blanket around him.

Arriving at Loyd's house, Roxanne texts him. Loyd opens his window shortly afterwards.

LOYD  
(Whispering)  
Hey girl.

ROXANNE  
Hey, Loyd. You got the stuff?

LOYD  
Got it right here.

Loyd sticks his arms out, both of them holding trash bags full of clothes.

ROXANNE  
Jesus. We didn't need backpacks, we needed a pickup truck.

LOYD  
That's like three years of PacSun shopping sprees right there.  
(To Maverick)  
Take good care of them, won't you?

MAVERICK  
Yes. Thank you.

LOYD  
No problem.  
(To Roxanne)  
I'll see you tomorrow, girl.

ROXANNE  
Thanks, Loyd. This really means a lot.

Loyd shoots finger guns at her before sliding his head back into his room like a turtle into its shell. The window closes and Roxanne and Maverick carry a bag each as they head back.

Along the way, they take a different route, one where they will pass by the beach. It is upon seeing it, that Maverick becomes completely fixated on it. So much so, that he splits away from Roxanne's path only to have her stop him.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

Hey! Where you going?!

MAVERICK

I'm sorry... I got distracted. Can we stop by, just for a moment?

ROXANNE

Aren't you tired?

MAVERICK

No... I live at the night.

The two head towards the sound of waves crashing against the shore. Roxanne throws the other half of the blanket back over Maverick.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUED

The two sit shoulder-to-shoulder, staring off into the ocean. Roxanne seems unfazed by it, yet Maverick stares in silent bewilderment. She notices, but comments nothing.

MAVERICK

You know... I've never left this city. I've never known how warm and toasty fresh bed sheets felt like... nor the comfort of waking up to a quiet house, having no fears of the day ahead... or noticed how much hot pockets can scold your tongue because for once, something that trivial is the only worry of the day... I have never felt a fresh ocean breeze, and gotten goosebumps from it... never, until now.

Maverick turns to look at Roxanne.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

I've been here just a few days, but you've already help guide me through this new forest. I still don't know why you did this... but I don't think it matters anymore. I like how this is going so far, and I'm excited to see what's in store ahead.

Roxanne is touched. She gives him a beautiful little smile before leaning in and resting her head on Maverick's shoulder as they both resume watching the tides.

EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSES - LATER

Returning from the beach, the two ever so quietly sneak back in to her room through the window. Once inside, they work on putting away the bags of clothes into the closet.

MAVERICK

That was fun. We should try it again sometime.

ROXANNE

What else is there to do in the middle of the night?

MAVERICK

I'm not sure. Your friend Loyd had a pretty cool car. Maybe he can teach me how to drive.

ROXANNE

Ha! Okay, calm down, let's take it one step at a time.

Maverick chuckles.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

Hey, um, do you wanna take a shower and try some of these new clothes on?

MAVERICK

This late at night? Won't that wake up your mom?

ROXANNE

Nah, I tend to shower this late anyways. If anything, she'll think it's me.

MAVERICK

Oh okay.

Maverick begins digging into one of the bags, pulling out a basic white t-shirt and sweatpants.

ROXANNE

Yeah, you know, just go in there, take as long as you need. I'll still be awake by the time you're done.

MAVERICK

Sure.

## ROXANNE

Here, let me get the door.

Roxanne opens the door. Maverick tiptoes to the bathroom.

Alone in her room, Roxanne sits in her bed, grasping her phone tightly against her chest, just thinking over everything that's been happening so far.

At first, she looks deep in thought, anxious, distant, as if something is slowly brewing inside her. Her nose flusters like that of a bunny, one of her idiosyncrasies kicking in, but then, after taking a deep breath, she calms down, now having come to a conclusion.

She smiles.

## MONTAGE - TEENAGE DAYS

-- That morning Roxanne's mother wakes both of them up by knocking loudly on her door, warning Roxanne that she will be late for school, and to stop locking her door. Roxanne rushes Maverick and his "bed" into the closet before opening her door and pretending to be sick in front of her mom, successfully allowing her to stay home.

-- Once Roxanne's mother leaves for work, the two roam her house freely. Roxanne has Maverick join her in finishing chores around the house such as laundry, doing dishes, etc. Jossy watches on.

-- Nighttime. Finishing up Roxanne's homework, the two sneak out once again.

-- They head to the end of Roxanne's neighborhood where Loyd & Lucy await them inside a classic car.

-- In an empty parking lot, in the dead of night, Roxanne & Maverick are given driving lessons by Loyd & Lucy, Roxanne goes first and drives safe, boring, nervous. Maverick, on the other hand, is wild, crazy, bringing a rush of excitement, amidst some fear, to everyone.

-- One night, as both of them are dancing, Roxanne's mom attempts to open the locked door, to no avail. She becomes very irritated and demands Roxanne stop locking her door or she will unhinge it and take it down. Maverick hides, and Roxanne opens the door, apologizing to her mother.

-- The two walk down the Christmas-themed main street of the town in the dead of night. They walk and walk the empty streets until they find themselves on a bridge looking back onto the main street. With the moment feeling right, Maverick takes the opportunity to hold Roxanne's hand.

The two look at each other, happy, but knowing they are about to cross a bridge they can never go back on.

-- Later that night, as the two lay in their own beds, Roxanne turns over to look down at the floor where Maverick lays, staring up at the ceiling. She gestures with one finger for him to join her on her bed. Maverick does so, and the two finally share one bed together, cuddling one another.

-- Morning. Roxanne's mother attempts to open her locked door. This time, it is the last straw for her. She yells and bang on the door. Roxanne snaps awake and checks around for Maverick, who is nowhere to be found. With no choice, she opens her door, begging her mother to calm down.

-- Roxanne's mother storms into her room, searching for whatever her daughter must be hiding. She rushes to the closet. Roxanne begs her to stop. Her mother opens the closet to find... nothing. The two are left confused, her mother more angry, but defeated. She storms out and Roxanne is left to assume Maverick had left for good.

-- Minutes later, in her bathroom, as she brushes her teeth, Roxanne's shower door begins to slide open on its own, frightening her until Maverick steps out. He had correctly guessed that Roxanne's mother would have enough today. Relieved, Roxanne gives Maverick a big hug. He tells her it's time they confront her mother.

-- That evening, Roxanne sits her mother down. She tells her something which she does not approve of. Roxanne points to the front door, her mother heads to it and opens it. Standing there, is Maverick, looking proper, holding flowers.

-- Roxanne watches anxiously as Maverick attempts to charm her mother into approving their relationship. Slowly but surely, Maverick succeeds when Roxanne's mother breaks into a slight chuckle at his wit, shocking both Maverick and Roxanne.

-- Immediately after saying his goodbyes to Roxanne's delighted mother, Maverick walks out the front door... and then straight to Roxanne's window.

-- Nighttime. The two slow dance together in her room.

-- Months later, Maverick has earned enough trust from Roxanne's mother to allow him to watch over Jozzy and the house while they head to Roxanne's high school graduation.

-- In full gown and robe, after her graduation ceremony, Roxanne bursts into her room and pounces on Maverick who lays asleep on her bed. He's startled awake, but immediately takes her into his arms in full embrace.

Against black:

**"ii. Nurture vs Nature"**

EXT. CAR - NOON

Classic rock & roll playing through a radio.

CLOSE UP on Maverick's face. He has a slight stubble on him, he sports a pair of sharp sunglasses, and his clean-cut hair is being blown back by wind. As we ZOOM OUT, it becomes apparent that he is driving a hootie with the windows rolled down.

Despite a clean haircut, Maverick's white tee is stained with dirt and even some tiny grass blades. Next to him is Roxanne. Her hair is now dyed. She too, sports a pair of sunglasses and jams to the music with Maverick.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - AFTERNOON

The two arrive to the brutalist community center overseeing a local park. They step out, Maverick holding a folder of documents, makes his way to the entrance before suddenly remembering something.

MAVERICK

Oh! Did you deposit my money from all of last week?

ROXANNE

I haven't gotten around to that.

MAVERICK

(Frustrated)

Bunny! It's only once a week you gotta do that. C'mon now.

They enter the building and seem to know exactly where they need to go.

ROXANNE

(Whisper)

We'll do it right after this, on our way to the store.

MAVERICK

(Whisper)

You can do it, yeah, I still need to take a shower from work. I don't wanna walk into the store smelling like this.

(MORE)



MAVERICK (CONT'D)

Only reason we're here is because they're about to close for the day. Go without me, you know, just drop me off at the house along the way.

ROXANNE

Babe, I don't wanna go without you. We're supposed to act like crackheads there, remember?

MAVERICK

Heh, I don't think I got the energy for that.

ROXANNE

Please? Don't let me be out there alone.

MAVERICK

... Okay.

The two walk up to a representative of the city ready to hand in their documents.

REPRESENTATIVE

Hi there!

MAVERICK

Hi! I'm here to apply for a government ID today.

REPRESENTATIVE

Okay, may I see any and all documents you have brought along?

MAVERICK

Of course.

Maverick hands over his folder of documents. The representative searches thoroughly through all of them only to come to a quick conclusion.

REPRESENTATIVE

Unfortunately, we are still missing a birth certificate, or any birth records.

MAVERICK

Um, yeah, I don't have any of those.

REPRESENTATIVE

Have you tried contacting your parents or the hospital you were born in to acquire any records?

MAVERICK

Um, I can't do that... I wasn't born in a hospital and my parents are... gone.

REPRESENTATIVE

Okay, well, for now, unfortunately, we will have to deny your application, but I can set you up with someone who will help you track down all other required documents you would need to continue with your application.

MAVERICK

(Disappointed)

Oh. Yeah, sure.

REPRESENTATIVE

Michelle is fantastic. She will help you all along the way-

Maverick zones out as the disappointment sets in.

EXT. MOBILE HOME - EVENING

After their trip to the store, the two arrive back to their modest little trailer park home. Roxanne carries a load of grocery bags on her and opens the front door, Maverick slugs behind carrying half the weight she did.

From the inside, Maverick & Roxanne's small mobile home appears neatly decorated, mainly with Roxanne's old memorabilia such as the dream catchers that once hung off the wall of her bedroom.

Roxanne plops the groceries on the kitchen counter and holds the tightly hinged door open for Maverick as he slowly enters and proceeds to do the same, only to plop himself onto the sofa, exhausted.

ROXANNE

Thought you needed to take a shower?

MAVERICK

(Slightly annoyed)

I do... just give me a moment. Why?  
Do you need to take one?

ROXANNE

Yeah, after dinner, though.

MAVERICK

What are you making?

ROXANNE

Your favorite, spaghetti.

MAVERICK

You forgot to buy the ham and  
cheese. That's what makes it my  
favorite.

ROXANNE

Oh, so you're changing it up now?

Roxanne, in a good mood, has already began boiling a pot and placing the spaghetti pasta in it. She takes out her phone and begins playing a fun tune over Bluetooth and on their bookshelf speaker. Slowly, she begins getting into the groove of the tune and dancing her way towards Maverick.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

Dance with me?

She takes his hands and tries to pull him off the sofa. Maverick doesn't budge.

MAVERICK

Bunny, I just said I'm too tired to  
even shower.

ROXANNE

Work couldn't have been that bad..

MAVERICK

Oh, but it was. I had to break down  
walls with a sledgehammer and no  
mask. Then immediately afterwards,  
we had another landscape job and of  
course I had to be the one picking  
out the weeds because I don't know  
how to ask if I can operate the  
lawnmower in Spanish.

ROXANNE

Then quit. I'd rather be broke than  
see you tired like this.

MAVERICK

No you wouldn't... you wouldn't know what that's like.

ROXANNE

(Frustrated)

Then I'll get a job and ask my mom to cover us with a little extra more--

MAVERICK

--No, Bunny. I'm doing this so you can focus entirely on school, and I don't need your mom getting more suspicious on why I'm not in school, or working a better job... It's okay. I'll push through. I just needed to vent today.

Roxanne stares at Maverick with her large, beautiful, sympathetic, puppy eyes.

ROXANNE

Fine...

Maverick uses up what energy he has left over to walk to the bedroom, passing by the boiling pot of pasta and water.

MAVERICK

Pasta, looks ready...

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The two sit in bed working on Roxanne's college homework. She now wears glasses to help her farsightedness. Maverick was reading from a textbook, despite wearing his mouthguard, making him sound like a knock-off Vito Corleone. He closes the textbook and strokes it like a cat.

MAVERICK

(Playful)

... Did you get that, my dearest?

ROXANNE

(Playful)

Yes, godfather.

MAVERICK

I want you to send a message to this "professor". Let him know I cannot give him justice. Because what has he ever given back?

(MORE)

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

This unholy amount of mental labor?  
No. Give him a lesson to learn.

ROXANNE

I won't let you down, Don Maverick.

Maverick laughs and takes off his mouthguard.

MAVERICK

Other than helping me give a  
fantastic mafia boss impression,  
does the mouthguard still work? Has  
my snoring gotten worse?

ROXANNE

A little.

MAVERICK

Damn, I suspected.

ROXANNE

Are you going to the doctor for it?

MAVERICK

Hah, very funny. How much homework  
do we have left?

ROXANNE

Not that much.

MAVERICK

Okay, I'm going to go get a glass  
of water.

As Maverick attempts to adjust himself into a more comfortable position in bed, he gets a shot of pain down his back, it catches him off guard, but he nonetheless manages to hide it fairly well, but not well enough to hide it from Roxanne. She pretends to not notice it.

ROXANNE

(Strong Italian accent)

Hey Maverick!

Maverick turns around to Roxanne pointing finger guns at him and unleashing an unholy amount of imaginary shots at him.

Maverick "dies" dramatically and stumbles to the kitchen.

He pours himself a glass of water, but only to take out a hidden bottle of ibuprofen from underneath the kitchen sink. As he's about to pop two pills of ibuprofen, Roxanne catches him.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Caught in the act, Maverick sees no point in lying.

MAVERICK

Bunny... I'm twenty four years old and my spine feels like it's about to explode... I'm trying to make the pain go away.

ROXANNE

What the fuck? Why did I have to catch you in the act for you to tell me this? You're not going to work tomorrow. You're quitting, this isn't good.

MAVERICK

And then what? You move in back with your mom? Imagine the aneurysm she'll have seeing you and me showing up at her door with our belongings. Or what, you get a job, put more stress on yourself, while I do what exactly? Stay at home feeling like a useless waste of space because I can't even get a simple goddamn form of I.D. after countless, countless attempts?!

ROXANNE

I just don't wanna see you like this... At least let me take you to the doctor.

MAVERICK

We have no money! We can barely afford to pay rent without your mom helping.

Roxanne gives Maverick a look that says that they both know exactly which money they can use.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

No... we are not touching that money.

ROXANNE

(Gasp)

This is your health we're talking about! Y- you could end up paralyzed, or overdosing!

MAVERICK

... We're not touching that money.  
Please, Bunny...

ROXANNE

What is wrong with you?! This is  
exactly why we started saving up--

MAVERICK

(Shouting)  
--No it's not!

ROXANNE

Then what's the money for?!

MAVERICK

It doesn't matter! Just don't touch  
it! Please!

ROXANNE

(Shouting)  
I can't believe we're even arguing  
about this! I'm withdrawing that  
money out tomorrow! End of  
discussion!

MAVERICK

Don't you DARE touch that money!!

With a sudden burst of energy, Maverick lashes out and STOMPS towards Roxanne, pointing at her, forgetting he's holding an open bottle of ibuprofen in the other hand. The remaining pills, of course, fly out the bottle, spilling all over the place as Maverick comes to a sudden halt right in front of Roxanne, as if caught by a leash.

Beat.

The two stare at each other in horror. Roxanne just witnessed a monster show its face in the innocent man she loves. Maverick found himself overcome by something evil in him.

Hit by a fight-or-flight response, Maverick grabs his jacket rushes out the front door without saying a word, without looking back. Roxanne is left alone, still struck with fear.

Only after realizing that Maverick has nowhere to go in the freezing night outside, Roxanne panics and grabs a blanket before heading out and chasing after him.

EXT. MOBILE HOME - CONTINUED

Roxanne finds herself looking around the trailer park for Maverick.

Nothing.

She begins heading down the street, not entirely sure where she's heading, just hoping to find Maverick. The more corners she turns, the more streets she crosses, the more she begins to panic until she finds herself running. She runs until her lungs burn causing her to stop and catch her breath, coincidentally, at the elementary school she used to walk by all the time.

ROXANNE  
(To herself)  
Where'd you go?

As if she spoke the magic words, she suddenly realizes the most likely place Maverick would have gone. She begins a painful, fast pace walk towards that place.

EXT. BEACH - MIDNIGHT

Traversing through the coarse, awfully thick and wet sand, Roxanne brushes her hair out of her face blown by the freezing wind. She's keeping her eyes fixated on the lone figure that must be Maverick sitting on the beach pier. As she starts getting closer, the sound of her shoes mashing down on the goo-like sand alerts the figure. It stands up and turns to face her, removing the hood that once hid its face, and revealing Maverick, with tears that had been rolling down his cheeks.

MAVERICK  
... I'm sorry... We need to talk.

An ominous message that concerns Roxanne. She wraps the blanket around both of them as they begin walking along the beach.

INT. ROXANNE'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - MIDDAY

Natural light illuminating the living room, Roxanne, her mother, and a lawyer are gathered on the dining table discussing something.



Her mother and the lawyer are in discussion, Roxanne turns to look at the other side of the living room where Maverick quietly sits alone on the couch, tapping his foot anxiously, nerves getting to him. There's a knock on the door.

CUT TO:

Evening. An interview crew from a news corp has setup lights and cameras at the center of the living room. The interviewer/reporter, is a professionally dressed woman in her 30s. She heads over to Maverick, who is now being comforted by Roxanne.

REPORTER

Maverick? We're ready for you.

Maverick stands and heads over to his chair, as does the interviewer.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

I want to thank you again for inviting us here for this interview. Your story needs to be heard.

The reporter stares at him, not acknowledging how uncomfortable he is, but instead excited about her chance to interview him.

CREW MEMBER (O.S.)

Ready in 3... 2... 1...

SMASH CUT:

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Roxanne and Maverick both sit in a tense matter as Roxanne's mother drives them home. She herself appears indifferent.

ROXANNE

... Thanks again for the ride, mom.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

Of course.

ROXANNE

First thing we're going to do with that money is getting the car fixed.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

That's good.

ROXANNE

Heh, yeah, you know, less chance of me calling you in tears, asking if you can pick me up from the side of the road. God, the last thing I needed that day was the car breaking down on my way to class. That was just all this stressed finally tipping over and spilling.

No response from Roxanne's mother. The tense silence returns. Roxanne gives up and addresses the elephant in the room.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

... I'm sorry, mom. You shouldn't have found out this way.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

... Was I ever going to find out?

Roxanne remains quiet. Surprisingly, her mother chuckles.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

I'm not even mad at this point... so many years this went on under my nose. That's just impressive.

MAVERICK

... We had a whole system down.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

Really? What about the time we had an infestation and pest control had to tent the house for a few days?

ROXANNE

Lucy let Maverick sleep in her car.

MAVERICK

Every morning, she'd wake me up and drop me off at the corner. Sometimes, even buying me some Starbucks on the way there... Heh, I owe her so much, just from the coffee alone.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

And the first time we actually met?... When you were supposedly taking her to prom?

MAVERICK

I had already been living there for a few weeks.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

(Baffled)

I just can't be mad. All that effort you two put in... and now at least you're putting it on work and school. So that's good.

Roxanne smiles, tension relieving.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

How are you feeling, Maverick?

MAVERICK

Better, now that that lady is gone.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER

(Jokingly)

Yeah, that's reporters for you. They saw you as a rating rather than a human, but hey, at least they paid accordingly.

Beat.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

I'm hungry. You two want something to eat? I'm buying.

A childlike smile appears on Roxanne. Maverick forces a smirk before disappearing into his own thoughts.

INT. MOBILE HOME - NIGHT

Laying wide awake in bed, Maverick is in distraught at the thoughts that haunt him, his back towards Roxanne who is watching videos on her phone.

As the moonlight creates silhouettes in their pitch black bedroom, Roxanne puts away her phone and rolls over to Maverick.

ROXANNE

Psst. Babe... Babe. Let's sneak out.

With his mouthguard on, Maverick is almost unintelligible.

MAVERICK

What? Why?

ROXANNE

C'mon, why not. It'll be fun just like the ol days.

MAVERICK  
I'm tired. I have work tomorrow.

ROXANNE  
Please? Just once. Let's sneak out,  
it's nice and quiet. We can go to  
the beach, get some food at a shady  
waffle restau--

Maverick takes off his mouthguard.

MAVERICK  
-- we're not at your mom's house,  
it's not sneaking out.

ROXANNE  
Well, obviously not, but it's more  
fun if we pretend. C'mon, let's go.  
Pleeeeaasse?

MAVERICK  
No.

ROXANNE  
Pleaseplease--

MAVERICK  
Bunny. No.

ROXANNE  
pleasepleaseplea--

MAVERICK  
(Annoyed)  
--Roxanne, no! I have work in a few  
hours! Let me sleep! Jesus.

Roxanne's silhouette lays back down in bed.

ROXANNE  
Okay... I'm sorry.

Maverick puts his mouthguard back on.

EXT. MOBILE HOUSE - MORNING

In the quiet, winter morning, the two step out of their mobile home, both look sad. As they pass by their broken hooptie, Roxanne is struck with a bit of hope and decides to get into their car and attempt to start it up. Maverick simply watches on.

ROXANNE  
(Turning the key in the  
ignition)  
C'mon... c'mon.

To her amazement, the car actually starts up and runs like normal. She's shocked, but is quick to celebrate loudly. She sees Maverick giving her the briefest, faintest hint of a smile.

INT. CAMPUS COFFEE SHOP - MIDDAY

For the first time since high school, WE see Lucy and Roxanne hanging out. They have clearly remained best friends throughout this entire time. Lucy now has wildly colored dyed hair, nose piercings, and lots of tattoos on her arms which we only get to see thanks to the tank top she bravely wears in this frosty afternoon weather.

The two sit in the corner of the local college campus coffee shop, their backpacks sporting the same school logo decals as the ones seen painted on the coffee shop walls.

LUCY  
(Sincere)  
So how are you doing, baby?

ROXANNE  
I'm good. A bit tired. Been a tough  
couple of weeks.

LUCY  
I can only imagine...

ROXANNE  
Yeah. Doesn't help that this whole  
town is giving us unwanted  
attention everywhere we go. One of  
my professors pulled me aside today  
after class and tried persuading me  
to buy his book because 'the  
research I did and the info I put  
into that book will help you two  
tremendously'.

LUCY  
Hell no, that's asking to be  
bitched slapped.

ROXANNE  
(Sigh)  
It's whatever. We're hanging in  
there though.

LUCY  
How's Maverick?

ROXANNE  
... He won't really speak to me.  
It's like he bottles everything up  
for some future where we can afford  
a therapist. I'm doing my best,  
though, looking after him... For  
sure, he's better, he has to be,  
even though he may not smile a lot.

LUCY  
Well, if you wanna get him to  
smile, you could always tell him  
about how I freaked out when I  
thought you were fucking your  
cousin, who turned out to be him,  
but he wasn't actually your cousin,  
but instead a homeless kid you  
secretly took in, but you avoided  
telling me that so I wouldn't freak  
the fuck out, but I still did even  
after you cleared everything up,  
because, you know, you let somebody  
secretly live in your room, but  
then I was all like 'awwww' when I  
found out you two were in love.

Roxanne lets out a genuine laugh she desperately needed.

ROXANNE  
(Jokingly)  
Hmm, that's not a bad idea...

LUCY  
Honestly. It's really funny how  
everybody thinks I'm the wild gal,  
but I don't think I could ever top  
that.

Roxanne chuckles.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
... Or, hey, you two could come to  
the party we're having at Jason's  
house after graduation. Like  
seriously, it'll be a great night  
of distractions.

ROXANNE  
Are his parents going to be okay  
with it?

LUCY

Baby, the whole squad is coming over and they're okay with that. They're okay with... other shit we've done while they were in the house.

ROXANNE

(Giggles)

Oh. Yeah, a party sounds really nice. We'll try to make it.

LUCY

Yessir! That's what I like to hear! It's gonna be fun! It's seriously what you two need. Dumb, no goddamn care type of fun!

Lucy takes a sip from her latte as Roxanne laughs, feeling excited at the thought of partying like a college student should.

INT. MOBILE HOME - EARLY MORNING

Roxanne wakes up to the sight of Maverick staring at her gown and dress hanging off their wardrobe. He, himself, is dressed in t-shirt and jeans ready to go to work.

MAVERICK

You're going to look so gorgeous in it, standing up there.

Roxanne smiles.

ROXANNE

What time are you getting off work?

MAVERICK

I'm not sure. I'll make it, though. I'll quit on the spot if I have to, just to leave on time.

ROXANNE

(Cautious)

You could always just quit, regardless.

MAVERICK

One day, Bunny. I'll be stopping by the house though, on my way. Just to take a quick shower and change so I'll be ready for the party.

ROXANNE

Okay.

Maverick caresses her gown and dress before heading to the kitchen.

EXT. GRADUATION CEREMONY - EVENING

Amongst the students all sitting orderly in front of the stage, Roxanne waits nervously for her name to be called up.

As soon as Roxanne's name is called, she walks up to the stage. She looks around, hearing for Maverick and her mother. Although seconds are passing, she begins to worry. Lucy's loud cheers she can hear, amongst the clapping, but nothing else. She's now reaching for her diploma when she hears two distinct voices join in the cheer.

She looks around and quickly spots them, Maverick and her mother, cheering her on. Finally allowing herself to relax, Roxanne accepts her degree in full confidence.

EXT. JASON'S HOUSE - EVENING

Arriving in their hooptie, Roxanne & Maverick park next to the curb of a modest house with a well-cared for garden. They are the last guests to arrive to the party. Music is heard kicking the walls of the house. Roxanne notices an anxious look on Maverick's face.

ROXANNE

This is gonna be fun. Trust me.

The two step out the car and head towards the front door. Roxanne knocks on it and in no time, Lucy opens the door.

LUCY

Heyyyy, the wild ones are here!!

The two walk in to see black-lights setup all over the place, in every room visible. Every window is blocked with thick bedsheets. There's bags of confetti, glow sticks, and other miscellaneous party items on three, white folding tables. The house is ready and set for a glow party like a 90s roller rink. Strangely enough, there's no one else in sight, despite all the cars outside.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Wait. (Pointing at their clothes)  
Naw, this ain't gonna work. I got something for you two.



Lucy rushes to the back of the house. Suddenly, all lights go off. Roxanne lets out a playful yelp and giggle. The two are now in awe at the blacklight revealing paint thrown, scribbled, and graffitied on every wall in the house. Lucy, carrying two glow-in-the-dark psychedelic hoodies, comes out chanting with the rest of the party guests.

Every single one of them wearing an array of blacklight clothing and accessories making them illuminate intensely. Lucy hands Roxanne & Maverick their hoodies, which they gladly put on. And so, the party starts.

#### MONTAGE - THE PARTY

-- Jason and his buddies chug down some beers as the rest cheer them on, except for Maverick, who can't seem to get out of his shell, and Lucy, who simply looks on unimpressed.

-- Lucy begins a keg stand with the help of Jason and a friend. She chugs an impressive amount of beer... and then some more... and then even more. The cheering slowly dies down until everyone is simply staring in silent awe, including Maverick.

-- As everyone else is dancing or playing beer pong, Roxanne, although a bit tipsy, tries to gently get Maverick out of his shell. She sits on his lap, facing him, giggling, caressing his neck with her lips, hovering a beer in front of his face, to no avail. It's not until she whispers into his ear something that stuns Maverick. Whatever it was, it convinces him to take the beer and join her.

-- Suddenly, the two are in the dance floor dancing wildly like everyone else. The music stirs the energy inside them, forcing them to unleash it out on the dance floor.

-- Maverick is now painting Roxanne's face with glow in the dark paint, after already having his painted on. They're both drunk, so his precision is sloppy, but still he manages a pretty picture with the canvas that was her face. They smile and laugh at each other after she gets a look in the mirror.

-- Now late at night, everyone is in the backyard gathered together in a tight circle like a football team huddled, stomping, jumping, and chanting wildly at the sky. Acting wild, young, and free. Letting all their troubles, stress, anxieties out of their systems.

-- With all their energy depleted, everyone is exhausted. Some eat cake, but all sit and laugh amongst each other. Roxanne & Maverick in particular look refreshed and energized after all the hardship they've endured.

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUED

The two come out stumbling from Jason's house. They hold each other up as they continue on into their hooptie.

Once inside, Maverick struggles to insert the car keys in, giggling along with Roxanne like madmen at his struggle. Both are very clearly drunk, yet nonetheless they're getting ready to drive home...

That is until Maverick remembers something that makes him stop and go quiet.

MAVERICK

Wait...

Roxanne looks on in wonder as Maverick gets out and retrieves something from their trunk. It's two shortboards, each with a ribbon slapped on to them. His graduation gift to her. Roxanne laughs and soon, Maverick begins walking away with them to who knows where. She rushes to get out and chases after him. He sees this, and begins running, the two laughing like a maniacs along the way.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER

In an empty, large, grocery store parking lot, in the silence of the dead night, the two find themselves riding their boards. They're barely able to maintain their balance, but when they do, they ride side by side, or ride head on, like a joust, giving each other high-fives or making silly faces at one another as they pass by.

As Maverick is resting, catching his breath, Roxanne comes in at full speed. Unable to properly stop herself, she aborts from her skateboard and tackles Maverick into the grass patch on the edge of the parking lot. They land softly on the grass, unharmed, rolling around until they're laying side-by-side, on what looks like a large burrow, staring up, dazed, at the spinning sky.

MAVERICK

(Out of breath)

... I love you so much.

ROXANNE

(Smiling, giggling)

I love you more.

CLOSE UP on Maverick. He's getting emotional.

MAVERICK

... I should've quit a long time ago.

ROXANNE

What?

MAVERICK

(Topsy)

... I've put myself through so much,  
after I've been through so much. My  
body is gonna get revenge one day.  
So I'm just hoping it's not too  
late to start a life with you.

Roxanne scoots to get under his arms.

ROXANNE

(Topsy)

... It can't be too late, if we're  
only getting started.

MAVERICK

Oh yeah? You have an idea of what  
the future might look like?

ROXANNE

Maybe...

Beat.

MAVERICK

... Well? Tell me.

ROXANNE

Heh, umm, well, I think we can  
safely say we'll be out that  
trailer park one day--

*In their late twenties, Roxanne and Maverick are moving into a new, proper, urban American brick house. Maverick now wears tucked-in polo shirts, slacks, and thick framed glasses. Roxanne is dressed business casual with short hair curving into her neck.*

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

-- when I'm making mad bank as a  
software analyst, most likely.

MAVERICK

Heh, and I'll assume the role of  
house husband, for sure.

*29 year old Maverick is gleefully bringing the freshly cooked dinner to the table one evening as Roxanne watches TV from the sofa.*

ROXANNE

Michelle has to get your I.D. first, though, remember?

MAVERICK

Oh yeahhhh... Can't have a full time, 401k, house-husband position without proper government identity. You really think that'll happen?

ROXANNE

It'll take time, but yeah, she'll get it.

*Roxanne searches for silverware in a cabinet, her back turned to Maverick on the dining table opening mail. It takes her a while to find the right silverware, but when she does, she turns to find Maverick standing, holding his first ever government issued identification card. They're both shocked momentarily before bursting into excitement and celebrating.*

MAVERICK

Then what?

ROXANNE

Thennn... we get married. Make your title of house husband official.

*Continuing on, Maverick suddenly gets on one knee and reveals an engagement ring he had hidden behind his I.D. card. Roxanne is left stunned.*

MAVERICK

I would love that.

ROXANNE

Yeah, then, later on, hopefully, maybe... we have a kid?

Long beat.

Maverick has a look of uncertainty.

MAVERICK

... yeah, maybe--

*Some time later, in the heat of the moment, Maverick is clearly seen shouting the words, "I don't want a kid" to Roxanne. She looks devastated upon hearing this.*

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

-- we'll still be young by then, though, right? I think we should try seeing the world first.

ROXANNE

With all the money you've been saving up, we could travel for like a year! Oh! You know where we should go first?

MAVERICK

Where?

ROXANNE

Tulum, Mexico! Just imagine it, us sitting on the white sandy beach, staring out at as far as we can towards that beautiful, sparkly, blue ocean, drinking really colorful cocktails.

Beat.

Maverick is having a hard time imagining this. It gets to him, he is soon in tears.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

MAVERICK

I can't see it... I can't see it.

ROXANNE

It's ok. Some day you will... for them.

Roxanne readjusts herself under his arms to get more comfy. The two stare up at the stars as we PAN OUT.

CUT TO:

Against black:

**"iii. Mav·er·ick**

**noun**

**a person of free spirit."**

INT. LIVING ROOM - NOON

Maverick, now 29 years old, sweeps the living room. It seems he's almost in pain from such basic labor work. Nonetheless, he looks proper, wearing another set of his many polo shirts, this time tucked into his tan slacks. All those years working hard labor gigs has put a strain on his posture as he sweeps with a hunch. He coughs a bit before taking a sip from his tea on the dinner table, adjusting his thick glasses and returning to sweeping.

It is quiet in their new and proper house. The furniture, khaki, with plenty of room for their vibrant, abstract decorations the two have found a new love for.

Outside, a car door is slammed shut. Maverick takes a peak through a window and is instantly in a good mood. Someone is heard unlocking the front door and entering. It's Roxanne.

ROXANNE

Hey.

MAVERICK

Hi! How was work?

ROXANNE

It was fine.

Hearing Roxanne's uninterested tone disappoints Maverick. Nonetheless, he forces his smile to stay up. Roxanne sets her purse on the sofa while taking off her shoes. She's dressed business casual in a black knee-length skirt and a purple blouse.

She walks past Maverick, towards the kitchen. There's tension, something is driving a wedge between them.

MAVERICK

Did you talk with Diana?

ROXANNE

Mmm, not yet.

MAVERICK

We really need that vacation approved soon.

ROXANNE

I'll get to it, I promise.

Roxanne begins rubbing the back of her neck to relief a slight strain she feels.

MAVERICK

... Tired?

ROXANNE

Yeah. Not as young as I used to be.

Maverick reserves back to sweeping, head drooping down. Roxanne notices. She takes a gentle sigh, a moment to gather herself, before deciding to walk over and sit at the table. She stares at him until he stares back, she gestures for him to sit across from her.

Maverick obeys. The silence is haunting as he puts up the broom and pulls out the chair for him to sit in.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

You and I want two very different things... It just doesn't seem fair for me to give you what you want, when there's no guarantee I'll ever get what I want in return, and what hurts most is that this is being treated as some sort of business negotiation.

MAVERICK

... Don't you want to travel the world, too?

ROXANNE

Yes, I do! I wanna spend an entire summer just traveling country to country with you... but I also want to be a mom, and I have to ask you, will I ever get to be one?

Maverick remains silent, unable to look Roxanne in the face.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

You're like a deer in the headlights. I just want an answer.

MAVERICK

... I'm not ready.

ROXANNE

You've been telling me that for years now... When will you be ready?

Beat.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

Maverick?

MAVERICK

I can't... I'm not ready for that again.

Roxanne, looks away, defeated, frustrated.

ROXANNE

... Okay. I'll go call Diana.

Roxanne heads to their bedroom, leaving Maverick feeling guilty. He coughs.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

During the middle of the night, Maverick snores LOUDLY. Roxanne can't sleep. Suddenly, Maverick begins coughing. His coughs become more severe until they suddenly stop.

Roxanne turns over to check on Maverick to see that his eyes wide open, shocked, looking at her, yet he doesn't move. Roxanne panics and starts shaking him.

ROXANNE

Maverick?! What's wrong?!

She shakes him harder. His eyes begin to tear up. He wants to speak, YELL, MOVE, but he just can't.

Finally, he GASPS loudly, inhaling the ungodly amount of air he had been missing. He coughs and coughs as he regains control of his own body and sits up.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

At the doctor's office, the two await the results of Maverick's check-up. Maverick can't help but tap his foot as Roxanne watches on. A door is heard opening.

CUT TO:

Maverick and Roxanne sitting in their car at the hospital parking lot.

MAVERICK

'Obstructive sleep apnea'. Jesus Christ. And look how much it costed JUST to get diagnosed.

ROXANNE

At least there's treatment for it.

MAVERICK

Yeah a machine by my bedside that's going to make me look like I'm a terminally ill patient on his last breath. As if I wasn't pathetic enough. How are we even going to afford it?

ROXANNE

... I can take out a loan.

Maverick is distraught.



ROXANNE (CONT'D)

At least we know what it is now.

Maverick doesn't respond.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

Maverick, honey, you were literally on the verge of death every time this happened. I can't imagine how horrifying it must of been to have your airway closed off, your body paralyzed, your own mind disconnected from it, with only 30 seconds to use nothing but sheer willpower to regain control before you suffocate to death!

Beat.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

But now we can stop it from ever happening again.

Still no response. Roxanne gives up. She starts up the car and reverses out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NOON

Roxanne brings Maverick some tea she made from the kitchen. She sits with him at the dining table. She takes his hand.

ROXANNE

Hey... we got plenty of time. We'll be in Tulum before you know it, or across the ocean. We'll get through this the same way we got through everything else... nothing will stop us.

MAVERICK

... We were so close.

ROXANNE

What you've done for the both of us is the most admirable thing I have ever seen and I love you so much because of it. Maverick, baby, we will get through this.

Roxanne goes in for a hug as Maverick remains motionless. As she lets go, she sees through his forced smile, a look of hopelessness in his face.

MAVERICK

I'm going outside for a while.

Maverick gets up and heads to their backyard where he sits on a reclined lawn chair.

EXT. CAFE - NOON

ROXANNE (V.O.)

To be honest... I'm terrified.

Lucy & Jason, now in their 30s, sit across Roxanne at a cafe. Just like Roxanne & Maverick, middle age is catching up to them, although a hint of youth clings to them in the form of their tattoos and piercings. They stare sympathetically back at Roxanne, who's head slumps down, looking more stressed than ever.

ROXANNE

I really don't know what's going to happen. It's so quiet back home, the air is just different. I'm doing my best. But when I'm at work, I worry for him. I just want to be with him. Yet, coming home is the most anxious part of my day. I enter and he's never there. As if he's hiding from me. And lately, even after I find him, he'll ask to be left alone.

*Roxanne stares through their small backyard window, at Maverick who's simply reclined back on a lawn chair, staring up at the sky.*

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

I don't know what to do, I feel like I'm losing him... He's thinking of something, I know he is... but I'm scared to find out what it is.

LUCY

Don't think like that, Roxy. That's not Maverick. When has he ever given up?

ROXANNE

Well, he definitely doesn't think highly of himself.

JASON

But he does of you.

Roxanne realizes this.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 Last thing he'd ever want to do is  
 leave you alone, no?

Lucy prepares herself to tell Roxanne something important.

LUCY  
 ... If you... need money...

ROXANNE  
 Lucy, no.

LUCY  
 I'm just saying, I can be the best  
 bank you'll ever deal with. No  
 hidden fees, no high APR, just lots  
 and lots of love for my best  
 friend.

Roxanne becomes teary eye. Lucy rushes to hug her.

ROXANNE  
 Thanks, baby.

INT. ROXANNE'S CAR - EVENING

On the way home, Roxanne plays melancholy music to alleviate any anxiety she can. She looks drained, as if driving on autopilot.

She arrives home. Getting out and entering her home, she's hit with a disturbing silence and darkness. Not a single light is on. She has to find her way to the light switch. She finds the living room untouched. Nobody has sat on the sofa, or so much as thrown a towel into the trash. The fear of the unknown brews quickly in her as she begins to slowly make her way to their bedroom.

ROXANNE  
 (Worried)  
 Maverick?

No response. Roxanne becomes nerve wrecked as she enters their bedroom. She finds yet another room untouched.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)  
 (Tearing up)  
 Maverick, baby?

The slightly closed closet doors grab her attention. She doesn't want to, but she must find out if he's in there or not. The worst thoughts of what might lie behind those doors plague her mind.

Her body moves on its own towards the closet, as if detached from her will. She grabs on the knob and, ever so slowly, begins opening the closet door. The doors creak with every inch they move, the light from the bedroom fails to shine inside the closet, as if denied by the darkness within. Just as she's about to peak inside...

*BAM!*

The front door of their house slams shut.

MAVERICK (O.S.)  
(Whispering)  
Come on, come on. No, no, over here.

Roxanne is startled so badly, she freezes up and momentarily fails to recognize who's voice she's hearing. When she does remember her husband's voice, she rushes to the living room and finds Maverick setting down a goody bag.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)  
(Smiling)  
Hi.

Maverick immediately sees how distressed his wife is. He rushes towards her and comforts her as best as he can.

ROXANNE  
(Crying)  
You scared the shit out of me!

MAVERICK  
(Soft, comforting)  
Oh no! Hey, hey, hey, it's okay.  
I'm sorry! I'm here, I'm here... or actually...

A tiny golden terrier puppy appears from behind the couch.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)  
... We're here.

ROXANNE  
Who is this?

MAVERICK  
This is Phoenix. He's here to... help us.

ROXANNE

Phoenix... Well, you nearly gave me a heart attack. Where did you get him?

MAVERICK

I've been searching for a while, and someone just a few blocks down was actually selling a litter so, I went and bought him today.

Roxanne caresses Phoenix, Maverick senses a bit of uncertainty in Roxanne.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

Heh, believe it or not, I needed him more than he needed me.

The two hug it out with Phoenix in the middle.

Maverick heads over to their stereo and plays a slow tempo classical song.

SERIES OF SHOTS -- THE NEXT FEW WEEKS

-- The two will spend their time training and embracing the new joy in their life that is Phoenix. Slowly but surely, their happiness rises back to what it once was.

-- They're back to exploring the town at night, although in a mild manner as Phoenix comes along on a leash.

-- Another night, as Phoenix sleeps on the couch, Maverick & Roxanne slow dance in the living room. They slowly sway left and right, holding each others hands, eyes closed, lost in their own little world.

-- Phoenix emerges from the border of a forest, he has grown a lot in what time has passed. Maverick and Roxanne following behind.

-- At their house, Roxanne's mother, Lucy, and Jason gather for Thanksgiving. It's very stereotypical as everyone sits around the table and enjoys a feast with laughter.

-- Roxanne lays in bed, curled up on her own. The moonlight shines through the bedroom window. Maverick soon joins her in bed, getting under the covers and spooning her. We get a shot from above very similar to the first time Maverick joined her in her old bedroom.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Roxanne wakes up from a strip of sunlight shining intensely on her face. Maverick lays next to her as she decides to get out of bed and go to the restroom to freshen up. The door shuts, and the bathroom sink runs.

Roxanne returns in no time

ROXANNE  
(Yawning)  
Rise and shine.

Maverick doesn't respond. She opens their closet and begins searching for clothes until it hits her that Maverick has still not woken up. She turns around and heads over to him. She notices the nasal mask from his sleep apnea machine had slipped off him. She begins shaking him lightly.

No response.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)  
Babe, get up.

She begins shaking him harder.

No response.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)  
... Wake up, please.

No response.

A look of denial sets in on Roxanne, she returns to the closet to search for clothes, her mind outright rejecting any rational thoughts.

Suddenly, she turns back around and SPRINTS to Maverick's body, a distraught look on her face. She gets on top of him and begins to shake him harder this time, grabbing him by his shoulders and pressing down on them hard, over and over.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)  
WAKE UP!!

No response.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)  
No no no no no no no no no!  
Please...

She shuts her eyes, which forces tears to drip out and land on Maverick.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)  
... please... please.

Roxanne accidentally pressed on his neck before letting go. She crumbles. Her head now resting on him one last time.

FADE TO:

EXT. THE BEACH - NIGHT

CLOSE UP of Maverick. He's staring out into the ocean. He appears to have been crying. He looks down at something and moves his hand towards it.

It's Roxanne's hand.

On the night of Maverick's lash-out, after having found him sitting on the pier, after walking on the beach from the first scene, the two find themselves sitting on the coarse sand. Roxanne stares at him, waiting for him to speak. He turns to her.

MAVERICK  
... I know I can be annoying  
sometimes.

Roxanne stares with confusion. He notices.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)  
C'mon, begging you to sneak us out  
at night to explore the city when  
you got school in 4 hours, taking  
spontaneous detours when you just  
wanna go get groceries, hiding pain  
from you... I do that because I'm  
scared, I'm scared of wasting my  
youth... scared of wasting even more  
years...

Beat.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)  
I've barely shared anything about  
me because I was so afraid that it  
would be too much for you. But, now  
I can see you're in it for the long  
run. So let me finally start from  
the beginning. Let's talk about me...

He takes a deep breath. Roxanne stares at him, understanding.

## MAVERICK (CONT'D)

It starts with my earliest memory, since I don't know where or when I was born... that memory is the one of me holding my mother's hand at a carnival. It's the only thing I remember of her... her hand. It was soft, too soft. She wore a thin gold bracelet and had painted her nails purple. I was... six? And I just remember thinking, "I'm hungry". I had a normal childhood as far as I can remember, right up until I was thrown into the basement. That concrete room. I remember that day.

Maverick grips Roxanne's hand.

## MAVERICK (CONT'D)

I cried and cried, banging at the solid, metal door, screaming until my throat burned, until I collapsed and fell. I don't know how long I was alone, and looking back, my dad had been testing the room, seeing how well he had built it. Because one day I wake up and find two little girls unconscious on the floor. I didn't dare touch them. And when they woke up, just like me, they kicked, and banged, and screamed until they couldn't anymore. They thought I was the boogeyman at first...

Beat.

## MAVERICK (CONT'D)

I've had time to think about it, and my guess is, my dad had tried to convince my mom of his plan to kidnap them. My mom refused and threatened him, so he killed her and went ahead with it. That's how they came to be stuck with me for the next... six years? They weren't even old enough to really remember their names, so we came up with ours. I chose Maverick. I don't even know if I was ever given a real name. They were Roseymosey and Buttercup... and they were my sisters.



Maverick begins to tear up.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

I took care of them. I cut their hair, fed them, taught them. We learned about everything through the cable TV we had. We read stories, about these beautiful places; New York, Italy, Mexico. And we dreamt about them. And they grew so fast. I noticed... He noticed. That monster, takes me away from them one day, locks me in a closet... then throws me back in, and they're crying. They don't dare talk about it, but they didn't need to... I couldn't stop him. No matter how hard I tried fighting back each time. The only reason he never killed me was because I cared for them, it made his job easier...

Beat.

Maverick takes a moment to collect himself.

MAVERICK (CONT'D)

One day though... it happened. I escaped.

SMASH CUT:

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

Inside a run down, wooden house, stands a single antique wardrobe against a wall. Its handles are chained up with a lock. A small screw-like tool is seen sticking out on the upper corner of one of the wardrobe doors. It is slowly and carefully positioned on a hinge, turning and turning until the hinge SNAPS, and the door collapses. It smacks the wooden floor and Maverick, skinny as a toothpick, with hair down to his waist, forces his way out through the gap.

MAVERICK (V.O.)

Whether or not he heard me, I don't know. I was in such a hurry. I ran out whichever door I saw first.

Maverick bursts outside into a backyard resembling more of a junkyard. He collapses and is struck by the unique feeling of autumn leaves covering his hands.

He freezes momentarily, staring down at his hands, until a dog barking off in the distance scares him. He sprints around a corner of the house, onto the streets.

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

I ran and ran until I found a creek. I knew he would be searching for me in that blue truck, so I had to change my look.

At a creek, Maverick begins taking off his clothes, revealing an entirely different attire, underneath. He searches the pockets of his overcoat and pulls out a razor blade. He grabs as much of his long hair as he can and begins cutting it off.

Afterwards, he gets on his knees, stares down at the cold running water of the creek, and dips his head into it, shaking it violently while under. He whips his head back, revealing his new look.

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

The next step was to look for a police station, but I didn't know what one looked like. I just knew about policemen.

Maverick now wonders a neighborhood alone, hugging himself, shivering, paranoid. So paranoid, he begins sprinting when he hears a car drive pass behind him.

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

... and that's when I met you.

We now see Maverick's POV from their first encounter, when he turns a corner and spots Roxanne walking home from afar.

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

You were the first normal person I ever saw after ten years. I wanted you to read my pain, my scream for help when we first talked. I don't know why I didn't just tell you. I guess I didn't want to scare you off. When we went our separate ways, I spent the rest of the night searching and searching, until I exhausted myself.

Lying in an alley, with a single, dim bulb of the building illuminating the area, Maverick sits up from the concrete floor as the sound of police sirens grow louder and louder. As they pass by, he runs around the corner to catch the police cruisers driving by just in time.

He sprints after them, managing to spot them right before they turn a corner and disappear from sight.

Nonetheless, he continues. Running around the corner, chasing after the sirens until he spots the cruisers again, off in the distance, surrounding his old house.

MAVERICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I could tell what had happened... he panicked... and took his life... after taking theirs...

Maverick walks away from the scene, crying, wiping snot off his nose. He wanders and wanders the streets at night until he comes across Roxanne's high school. He decides to camp out in the high corner of the stands, shivering as he tries to sleep.

CUT TO:

It is morning, and Maverick continues to lay there, motionless.

At noon, he remains, still motionless.

MAVERICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I never moved from that spot until you convinced me to. You finally saw it in my eyes, didn't you? The pain? That's why you came back.

Roxanne's beautiful big eyes stare at him as he wipes tears off his face. The two get up and beginning walking away.

MAVERICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
... The times I was alone in your room were the worst. I had so much to deal with.

SERIES OF SHOTS -- MAVERICK

--Maverick's eyes sneakily stare out Roxanne's window blinds as he watches her mother reverse out the driveway, on the way to drop Roxanne off at school. Once alone, Maverick remains still, sitting on Roxanne's bed, alone to his thoughts.

--He'll break down and bawl his eyes out as he succumbs to the pain he so desperately tries to suppress. This crying last for so long, he finds himself wrapped in a blanket on the floor.

-- In time though, he will need to use the restroom. So he rises and attempts to exit her room, only to startle Jozzy from her slumber, causing her to BARK at him and terrify him back into Roxanne's room just as he was stepping out.

-- He hears Jozzy sniffing at the door. Maverick stares at it, wide eyes and petrified, until he realizes that he REALLY needs to use the restroom. He'll contemplate peeing out the window... or maybe into the trashcan? No, he decides. So, after placing his ear up against the door and hearing Jozzy walk away, he pumps himself up, he musters up the courage to attempt the dangerous.

-- In one sweeping motion, he swings open the door and bombs it to the restroom just a few steps away. Nonetheless, Jozzy's "killer" instincts are activated and she begins barking again, sending Maverick into a panic. He makes it to the restroom and shuts the door, exhausted.

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

It wasn't all that bad though, once I realized Jozzy was anything but harmless.

-- After pacing around in the bathroom, waiting for Jozzy to leave, Maverick gives up and decides to slowly open the door. He finds Jozzy looking up at him, her tail wagging in excitement. He slowly goes in for a gentle head pat. Jozzy is just glad to get head pats.

-- Days later, the two relax in the living room, Maverick reclined on the couch, watching TV, actually looking tranquil while petting Jozzy, who lays on her bed right next to him. The two jolt up upon hearing a car door slam shut outside. Maverick springs out the couch and rushes to hide in Roxanne's room.

-- Even in her closet, although slightly muffled, he can hear Roxanne's mother talk on the phone with a friend.

ROXANNE'S MOTHER (V.O.)

(Distressed)

What am I doing wrong? She just won't listen anymore. I tried being soft, I tried being tough, but nothing is working. Why do little angels turn this away? My little Roxy... she hates me.

-- Later, after having waited for so long that he fell asleep, Maverick is woken up to Roxanne opening the closet. He looks up at her, a smile on her face, as she sticks her hands out for him to grab.

MAVERICK (V.O.)

You really were an angel... but my presence was damaging something important in your life. So I had to act.

-- In another instance, right after being shouted at to stop locking her door, Roxanne closes and locks her door, rushing over to then open her closet where Maverick steps out looking concerned.

-- Early that next morning, he wakes up and gently gets out of bed, Roxanne still asleep. In the bathroom, he gets in the shower and goes back to sleep.

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

I had to do something about my situation.

-- At a deadbeat street corner, amongst other unemployed men hanging out at their spot, Maverick leans against a wall, holding a cloth bag over his shoulder, waiting for any work to arrive in the form of a pickup truck.

-- After an exhausting gig he picked up, leaving him stained with dirt and grass, Maverick walks himself to the local YMCA for a shower, picking clothes out of his cloth bag.

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

Still, being with you made everything worth it.

-- Late at night, after the shower, Maverick finds his way to Roxanne's home, where just like Juliet, she will be waiting by the open window for him, her Romeo. They'll spot each other and smile.

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

I felt truly happy...

-- Inside her room, there will be a warm cooked meal waiting for him. The two cuddle up and watch videos on Roxanne's laptop as he eats his dinner.

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

... like I could actually get back those years I had stolen from me. With you, I enjoyed being young and free...

-- That very same night, Maverick leads Roxanne up some narrow, parking garage staircases.

At the top, he opens the door leading to the top floor parking lot with the spectacular view of the city skyline. The two lean against each other, admiring the view.

MAVERICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 ... but even with you, their hopes,  
 their dreams of seeing the world,  
 lived in me... that's why I lashed  
 out. I'm so sorry for that.  
 Tonight, I can already tell there  
 will be hard times ahead..

-- Maverick is taken to a police station with Roxanne's assistance.

-- While cooking dinner, he spots the news on the TV reporting an exclusive interview in a few days with the him, the "John Doe" who finally came forward.

MAVERICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 ... and although my instincts will be  
 to look at you for help..

-- During the interview with the reporter, Maverick constantly looks over the reporter's shoulder, looking for Roxanne's reassuring smile.

-- At the grocery store, he is given judgmental stares by a lot of people. He looks for Roxanne who is off somewhere else in the store.

MAVERICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 ... or to lock myself up from the  
 world.

-- In their trailer home, in the middle of the day, Maverick lays, tucked in bed, staring at the ceiling..

MAVERICK (V.O.)  
 ... I will learn to pick myself up.

-- Suddenly, he springs out of bed.

MAVERICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 ... and work hard.

-- He begins fixing up their hooptie.

MAVERICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 ... to get out of my shell.

-- At the graduation party, we learn that Roxanne whispered to Maverick, "I know you fixed the car."

MAVERICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
... to accept, and let go.

-- In the dead of night, Maverick stands in their backyard holding a drawing clearly made by Rosemosey and Buttercup. He holds it against his chest as he stares up at the moon.

MAVERICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
... to prepare for the future.

-- Maverick stares at Phoenix in his puppy litter. There's a faint smile on his face.

MAVERICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
... and to never leave you... alone.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

SMASH CUT TO:

Maverick BURSTING back to life, GASPING for air, after Roxanne had found him unconscious and thought him dead. He looks around briefly before staring back at her, surprised, shocked, scared, amazed.

She stares back at him, the exact same expression on her face until she finally breaks down into tears of joy.

Long beat.

BACK TO:

We come back full circle at the beach where Maverick had been speaking his monologue.

POV Roxanne. Maverick turns to look at CAMERA. Teary eyed, but an innocent little smirk on his face.

POV Maverick. Roxanne stares at CAMERA with her big beautiful, hazel eyes. She is too touched to react.

SMASH CUT TO:

Against black:

The ambience of the after-storm beach sets in. The sound of tides brushing up against the beach come and go.

THE END.