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Wronged Women: A Foray into the Wronged Woman's Mind

by

Suzanna Poole

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Professional Writing
in the Department of English

Norman J. Radow College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Kennesaw State University
Kennesaw, Georgia

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Thank you to my beautiful friends and family, your encouraging words have always been and always will be a delightful thing that I greatly enjoy.

Thank you to my advisors for their outstanding feedback.

Special thank you to the individuals that inspired this.

Treat people the way you would like to be treated.

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A Foray into the Wronged Woman's Mind

The wronged woman¹ is the hated woman, the lonely woman, the crazy woman, or the woman that just straight up isn't good enough. My Master of Arts in Professional Writing Capstone project is on wronged women and is primarily an exploration into the ways that women have been done wrong and the ways that being mistreated affects mental health. I find there to be a tragic beauty in a wronged woman and explored these stories in great depth over the past few years (beginning in 2020 when I began my Professional Writing minor in undergrad). This Capstone is four short screenplays, as well as this essay, about women being wronged and the ways their thoughts, feelings, and emotions occur in reaction to these occurrences of being wronged. Although these stories include tragedy, I aimed to tell these stories in a truthful light, with hopeful, honest endings. As a screenwriter, I drew on my personal experiences to explore characters who are dealing with circumstances and events that are different from my own practices and understandings.

I decided to write about wronged women because *I* have been a wronged woman. Whether this was a friend being unsympathetic to my issues, a lover not granting me the grace I deserved, or simply going through the American public school system, I have been wronged. Of course, these short film scripts are not entirely biographical. I wanted to explore experiences that

¹ By personal definition, a woman is somebody who looks and behaves in an adult and feminine way. Though not everybody who appears feminine is a woman, for the sake of this exploration of females that have been wronged, anybody that abides by the traditional definition of femininity in that they have female sex organs and/or present themselves in a largely feminine manner is a woman, though there are ways in which these can occur in a person and the person not be female. To be wronged is to be scorned, done dirty, treated poorly, disillusioned, ostracized, and/or regarded as irrelevant, unworthy, or contemptible, regardless of if this conduct was warranted or not.

are not my own, both to stretch my creative mind, but also to reveal some truths about lives I have not lived. I understand women to be profound, creative, thoughtful, intelligent, nuanced individuals that are deeply interesting. Female rage is fascinating to me, but what I found to be more in my line of writing and more relatable to me is the way that women tend to just *take it* like champions. Women, as an overt generalization, are often the quiet reactors, when men will be more likely to let their thoughts and feelings heard. Of course, there is the stereotype that women are better communicators, effectively explaining their feelings better than men, but there will always be individuals that break the mold and don't abide by societal norms.

Mental Health

Though all of these stories were fictionalized to some degree, some were more based on fact or personal experience than others – *Rosy* was a personal recount of a relationship I partook in last summer that was fictionalized to some measure; *Petty* was the amalgamation of various friendships I've had over the years; some aspects were dramatized, and *Mad* is based on Joanna of Castile, the Queen of Aragon in the early 1500's but was reimagined in present day. *Visions* is the only fully fictional story, though I have experienced hallucinations like my main character does, just on a much smaller, shorter scale. There is a part of me and countless other women I know in each of these stories – I don't know a single woman who hasn't felt or been wronged in some way, shape, or form. I believe it's important to tell women's stories as much as possible, and while I understand the value of remaining truthful, I also appreciate the dramatics that come with made-up stories and all the wonders, opportunities, and doors that are opened when a story is fictionalized.

Of the stories I wrote, I explored mental health issues, such as post traumatic-related psychosis, borderline personality disorder, low self-esteem, and perinatal depression. These

stories were written from a woman's point-of-view, and I did everything I could to *not* romanticize these issues and instead show the less than attractive side of these struggles. I show these problems as the authentic, real, constant struggles that various women battle with every single day, due to trauma, inheritance, poor relationships, or random happenstance. I found that sometimes a woman can be wronged by herself, her own mind, and that occasionally, one's greatest opponent can be oneself.

Intentions and Inspiration

I felt as though it was important to represent the struggles that women face. Every single woman in these stories suffer from mental health struggles in some sort of way, which I felt was important to explore, as I have my own personal mental health issues that I've had to learn to deal with and nearly everybody I know struggles with their mental health daily in some type of way. Lucy in *Rosy* has borderline personality disorder; I am close with people that suffer from this disorder and have seen firsthand the ways it can rear its head into different relationships and practices. Margaret in *Petty* deals with anxiety, low self-esteem, and the inability to speak up due to bullying, which I used to struggle with. Mary in *Visions* is suffering from a schizoaffective psychotic break of some sort due to the trauma of losing her husband and son. Although I have never been married and can't imagine what it would be like to lose close family members in that way, I have been close to individuals suffering from psychosis. Joanna in *Mad* battles peripartum depression, due to possible child loss and because the act of childbirth is traumatizing enough as it is. I am close with many women that have had children of their own and have seen second hand how much one's mental health is affected by bringing a child into the world.

In *Mad*, Joanna struggles with peripartum depression, previously known as postpartum depression. From American Psychiatric Association: "The use of the term [*peri*]partum

recognizes that depression associated with having a baby often begins during pregnancy”.

Although it is unknown what made Joanna of Castile come across as emotionally unwell to the point that she was put into an institution for majority of her life by her husband, father, and son, I believe that the hormones that affect a woman as she undergoes pregnancy did something that made her behave in the way that did not align with the Royal Spanish code of conduct.

Peripartum depression is common, it affects about 15% of all women who have recently undergone live childbirth. According to Christine C. Greves, MD, about 1 in 4 pregnancies end in loss, and for the women that experience any sort of miscarriage or stillbirth their numbers are significantly higher. Joanna had six children and no reported losses, but statistically, it is likely she suffered from some sort of loss during her childrearing years, which could have absolutely contributed to her mental health struggles.

As for Mary’s delusions and hallucinations in *Visions*, it’s clear that there is some sort of connection between trauma, which she experienced, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which she suffered from; and schizoaffective disorder, which she battles in the story. Trauma and PTSD often go hand in hand, and trauma is one of the leading contributing factors to schizoaffective disorder, which is what I believe her hallucinations and delusions were caused by (Ellis, 2019). In Mary’s story, the loss of her husband was so traumatizing to her that she blocked out the loss of her son, causing her to imagine that Lennon was still alive and in her life. Mary also struggled with depression and anxiety due to the accident, which led to the darker thoughts she was experiencing. It’s a terrible snowball effect: she experienced something traumatic, which led to her developing anxiety, depression, and schizoaffective disorder, which led to her not taking care of herself, which led to her mental health suffering as a result, which led to the psychosis she experiences in the story.

Trauma is a tricky thing to understand; but that combined with PTSD, schizoaffective disorder, *and* psychosis could cause a number of imagined events to occur in somebody that is struggling's mind. I took advantage of the lines that could be blurred from psychosis and made the story purposefully unclear, so that readers' judgement could be just as clouded as Mary's. My goal with this story was not to confuse readers, but to create a plot that was difficult to follow so that one would struggle along with Mary to understand what was really happening. Around 30% of individuals suffering with their first episode of psychosis were also suffering from some form of PTSD (Croft), so this story is representative of plausible events that somebody could experience.

With *Visions*, I was the most out of my element when it came to what can happen during a psychotic episode, how a mental health professional would deal with it, and to what extent the mind can play tricks on someone. I took to Reddit to ask certified-by-Reddit therapists the possibilities that I can play with in Mary's story. On r/askatherapist I asked "Would you tell a patient that is experiencing intense, lifelike hallucinations that she's experiencing delusions? If a patient begins talking to somebody that isn't there, how would you deal with that?" merely to understand more of how a therapist would approach somebody in Mary's position, as I was largely unsure of how to properly approach somebody that was experiencing intense hallucinations like Mary was. I did additional research and learned that obviously (not obvious enough to me) a trained psychologist would not feed into somebody's delusions by talking to it, and instead do their best to remain rooted in reality as much as possible, and instead interact with and discuss things that are real.

Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is a disorder that causes somebody to be impulsive and engage in risky behavior, experience inappropriate emotions, feel intense fear of

abandonment, engage in self-injurious behaviors, exhibit signs of suicidal ideation, and be involved in abusive relationships. This is often caused by a traumatic childhood and can be inherited (Mayo Clinic). Over five million *Americans* have this disorder, and while this means less than 2% of the country's population have it, this is a significant number (Clearview Treatment Programs). Lucy has been diagnosed with BPD and uses this as a reason for why she behaves inappropriately, making untimely jokes, having emotional overreactions, and for engaging in a less-than-virtuous relationship. Lucy's relationship with Tyler, a controlling individual, is classic for somebody with BPD, as they will often engage with and seek out personalities that are unsavory due to the desire to experience hazardous occurrences.

In this story, Tyler himself struggles with some sort of mental health issues that he isn't necessarily getting help for. I think it is worthy of note to point out that in addition to neglecting his mental health, Tyler is just straight-up controlling, manipulative, and unsympathetic to Lucy's wants and needs and refuses to hear her out or negotiate some sort of plan for their future. Though both characters were in the wrong here, I believe they both have some serious work to do on themselves. Lucy needs to treat herself seriously and stand up for herself; Tyler needs to consider other people's experiences and points of view, and maybe get help for his own psychological health. This was my attempt at some male representation in my Capstone.

Finally, we have Margaret. She experiences bullying, which, according to DoSomething.org, affects one in five American students. There are different forms of bullying: cyberbullying, physical altercations, and social/verbal harassment. Bullying is obviously never a good thing and can lead to anything from anxiety and depression to self-harming behavior, decreased academic achievement, substance use and/or abuse, to suicide attempts (stopbullying.gov). Bullying is a serious concern that has real consequences and is never as easy

as merely shaking it off. Really, this was just a dramatized recount of various experiences I have had over the years of being mistreated by various different people in my life. I've been called names, been told terrible things about myself, told to *do* terrible things to myself, among other things; all of which I'm sure countless other people, not just women have had to deal with.

Heflick from *Psychology Today* reports that insecure, insulted people are more likely to demean others. This is not an excuse for people that decide to be mean, but it does explain some of the why (2013). Hurt people hurt people. If somebody doesn't feel good about themselves, they may as well bring other people down to their level, right? Wrong. I know countless people that treat others with kindness no matter what. If I knew why some people were so awful to other people, I probably wouldn't be writing this about wronged women. I don't know why people are mean and terrible things happen to good people, I think that's just the nature of the world, unfortunately. Mean people are mean because they feel "less than" or have been mistreated in some sort of way, and those people that mistreated *those* people mistreat them because somebody else was mean to them, and so on and so forth; it's a terrible little circle of ugliness and detrimental mental health happenings.

Inspirations

Of these stories I wrote, I took aspects of numerous other stories as inspiration. For *Petty*, I rewatched scenes from *American Girl's Chrissa Stands Strong*, based on the American Girl "Girl of the Year". 4th grader Chrissa Maxwell is dealing with bullies so awful they make her throw up at one point and bully her brother into jumping off a too-high diving board, hitting his head on the way down. This film was a reminder of how terrible girls can be to each other, even though I was going from my own personal experiences in my screenplay. Another example from this film is the way bully Tara cuts living-in-a-shelter Gwen's hair too short on "accident" so that

she will “really *look* like a homeless person” (53:24). The casual pettiness and cattiness of these girls is a shame to see, but also absolutely realistic. Every single girl I know has been bullied in some sort of way, and more often than not, it’s a pretty blatant, rude exchange between girls.

Writing Methods

I struggled a little bit with how to set up Mary’s hallucinations in *Visions* but was recommended to watch *A Beautiful Mind* for ideas intended for schizophrenia representation. I decided to go with just short glimpses of Lennon and switching around points of view for my story. Usually when I write, I rarely go back and fix things until I’m finished. With *Visions*, I went back far before the story was done and fiddled around with various scenes, but focused a lot on the second scene, in which Mary is having a session with her therapist, Jim. I worked on having the language right for a mental health professional and making sure that Jim interacted with Mary in an aware-of-her-disorder, but not trying to shame her, kind of way; as close as I could get to a genuine therapist as possible. Thanks to research, I learned that a therapist would *not* engage with hallucinations and that doing so would be detrimental to a hallucinator’s mental well-being (Queensland Mind Essentials, 58).

When it comes to a personality disorder such as BPD, it was challenging to accurately and properly represent it in a fictional character such as Lucy in *Rosy*. The reason why Lucy told Tyler she nearly committed suicide and then started to feel uncomfortable after being called out for casually mentioning it is because she quite simply wasn’t expecting him to actually be listening, due to the standard of those with BPD having some sort of childhood trauma or neglect, such as being ignored. Once somebody is ignored enough times as a child, they start to slowly believe that their words and in Lucy’s case, life, does not carry much value. Another thing common in various mental disorders (such as BPD) is having a “favorite person,”

somebody that a mentally ill person obsesses over and can see no wrong with. Even though she only knew him for a short while, Lucy's favorite person was Tyler and she metaphorically had blinders on, refusing to see his flaws and weaknesses. Having BPD also means having an extreme fear of abandonment, which also suggests somebody is more likely to be a people pleaser, which can mean, in some cases, being so desperate to make somebody stay that they become manipulative, such as oversharing inappropriately, falling into relationships quickly, and becoming hyper-attached *to* a favorite person (Morton, 2022).

As for Joanna of Castile, I did everything I could to keep the base of her story representative of real life. The greatest source I was researching was from the editors from Encyclopaedia Britannica. These sources helped me greatly in establishing the sort of life Joanna lived before her death in 1555, as well as getting names right for her husband, children, sister, and parents. This story was fun to write as I didn't have to necessarily create any characters, I just got to imagine what they were like, which came easily to me. I had a few concepts that I already knew about Joanna bouncing around in the back of my mind, such as the story of her following her husband's corpse and literally sleeping next to it, as well as stories of her being tortured after refusing to do her schoolwork. I took these stories and ran, imagining what the build up to these situations looked like. I extracted observations I had of a woman close to me that recently began bearing children and took the ways she interacted with her newborn and placed them into my screenplay. Overall, my aim with all these stories was merely to garner awareness about women's mental health struggles and show the different ways somebody can struggle; mental illness is not just misplaced outburst or refusing to eat, it's much more nuanced. Mental illness looks different on everyone and the causes for it ranges from something easy to point out like being bullied to something as invisible as chemical imbalances or past trauma.

Conclusion

Having sound mental health is important to be a functioning member of society. All the aforementioned disturbances to one's mental well-being negatively affect one's ability to properly operate day-to-day. Being mistreated, harmed, traumatized, abused, or victimized clearly harms one's self worth and can lead to a series of harmful decisions. So what? What can be done? Awareness is the first step, as with any disordered behavior. Being aware that one is either treating other people poorly or that one is being treated poorly is important in recognizing that there even is an issue to begin with. Then, understanding the triggers is the next step in identifying that behavior. Knowing what activates these actions is vital in stopping things from progressing further. Once a root cause is known, it's much easier to figure out a fix to the issue. Getting help is crucial, but rarely easy. I personally believe as long as one is trying their hardest, that's the most important thing at the end of the day. Putting forth effort to better oneself is the most beautiful thing somebody can do, but it all starts with being cognizant of being done dirty or doing other people dirty. Obviously, it's best to avoid this, but life happens. People make mistakes.

Be aware. Stay alert. Stay alive.

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PETTY

FADE IN:

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

CHYRON: 2010

MARGARET (11), weak but sweet, not wearing a bra despite needing one, sits and hurriedly eats PIZZA. PEYTON (12), likeable, pretty, wearing a lot of makeup, sits but does not eat.

IZZIE (11), long, well-straightened hair, confidently eats a salad sans ranch.

IZZIE

I just think that -- what's that over there,
Margaret?

Margaret turns to look, her hair dipping onto her plate. Izzie snickers and Peyton does too, once she notices Izzie laughing.

MARGARET

What? Aw, dammit! Fuck!

Izzie shoots Peyton a *look*.

IZZIE

I just think that some girls need more help
than others, isn't that right?

Peyton and Margaret nod.

MARGARET

I'll be back.

Margaret gets up to go to the bathroom and before she's out of earshot, Izzie begins to speak:

IZZIE

God, she's so stupid.

PEYTON

What?

IZZIE

Margaret. She's stupid.

PEYTON

Oh, yeah. She's dumb.

Peyton laughs nervously. Margaret hurries to the bathroom.

PEYTON

Wait, why is she stupid?

IZZIE

The little bitch got her hair in her pizza!
She has no social awareness. She needs...
help.

PEYTON

Do we help her?

IZZIE

Of course not. She needs to figure this out
on her own, just like the rest of us.

PEYTON

Oh.

Margaret arrives back at the table. The ends of her hair are soaking wet.

PEYTON

Um, Margaret?

MARGARET

Yeah?

PEYTON

Your hair is like, really wet.

MARGARET

Oh. Should I go fix it?

IZZIE

You should.

Margaret leaves again.

IZZIE

She's so STUPID, oh my God!

PEYTON

(to self)

I don't know if stupid's the right word.

IZZIE
What?

 PEYTON
Nothing.

 IZZIE
Tell me what you said.

 PEYTON
 (whispering)
I don't think stupid's the right word.

 IZZIE
Speak up!

 PEYTON
She's not stupid.

 IZZIE
Yes, she is.

 PEYTON
No, she's not. At least not all the way.

 IZZIE
Who walks around with their hair soaking wet
and just accepts it? A stupid person.

Silence from Peyton.

Margaret re-arrives.

 IZZIE
Oh, she's back. Let's ask her.

 MARGARET
What?

 IZZIE
Are you stupid?

Margaret's cheeks redden. She looks back and forth between Izzie and Peyton.

 MARGARET
N-no?

 IZZIE

Is that a question?

MARGARET

What are you fucking talking about?

IZZIE

Don't talk to me like that.

MARGARET

I'm sorry.

The bell RINGS. Margaret looks at her unfinished pizza. She looks at the girls.

MARGARET

I'll be shaky if I don't eat.

IZZIE

Come on, Peyton, let's not be late.

Margaret sits back down and scarfs down the pizza alone as all the other 11 and 12 year olds file out of the cafeteria.

Tears begin to fall down Margaret's cheeks as time progresses.

The second bell RINGS and Margaret hurries off into the bathroom.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

CHYRON: 2014

A now 15 year old Margaret leaves the bathroom, looking around. She snuffles and wipes beneath her eyes and checks her fingers for mascara residue. The hallway is empty.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL THEATER - DAY

Margaret enters the theater. She sits down in a theater seat next to a boy - 15 year old JOHNNY; he's not exactly cute but not exactly ugly, either. They smile at each other and Johnny takes out his phone and begins texting.

MARGARET

Johnny?

JOHNNY

Margaret?

MARGARET

What do you think about Mr. Gibson's ass?

They both look at MR. GIBSON (50s) and his bubble butt as he discusses stage directions for the play the whole class is working on.

Johnny and Margaret laugh.

JOHNNY

You play too much, Margaret.

Margaret leans in for a kiss and Johnny gives her a quick peck on the lips.

MR. GIBSON

Hey! No kissing!

Johnny deepens the kiss and flips Mr. Gibson off behind the seats.

MR. GIBSON

Do you hear me? I said no kissing.

MARGARET

(whispering)

We should stop before he comes over here.

JOHNNY

(whispering)

Watch this.

(now out loud)

What?

Mr. Gibson stomps over to the couple.

MR. GIBSON

No kissing in drama class. No kissing in my theater. Separate. Now.

MARGARET

Sorry.

Margaret scoots over a seat.

Once Mr. Gibson's back is turned again, Margaret and Johnny begin to kiss again, separated by the seat.

A now 16 year old Peyton with Izzie enter. Margaret and Johnny continue to make out.

PEYTON

Mr. Gibson, Hi. Mrs. Valdez wants to know
if...

Peyton's voice trails off as she sees Margaret and Johnny sucking
face.

MR. GIBSON

That's it. Principal's office, you two.

PEYTON

Margaret? Johnny? What the *hell* are you two
doing?

MARGARET

I--

PEYTON

Johnny, we're over. Again. Margaret, what
has gotten into you?

JOHNNY

(whispering)

I did. Ha.

PEYTON

I didn't think friends would do that.

MARGARET

I'll be honest, I didn't think we *were*
friends.

IZZIE

Oh, you are such a fucking *bitch*, Margaret.

A crowd has now gathered around the group.

CROWD

Oooooooooooh.

MARGARET

I mean- I didn't think - I didn't think that
we were that close anymore, you know?

PEYTON

Did you know we were a thing? Me and Johnny?

MARGARET

No. I mean I knew you guys were a thing but

I thought y'all broke up.

PEYTON

You don't go for girlfriend's exes. That's girl code.

IZZIE

Yeah, don't you know girl code? Oh wait, you don't have any friends other than us, so it makes sense, right, Peyton?

MARGARET

I'm sorry. I didn't know that.

IZZIE

Yeah, you should though. That's like, the basics of being a girl. I always knew you were a fucking stupid whore.

MR. GIBSON

Okay, okay, ladies, language. And no name-calling. You three, principal's office. I don't have time to deal with all this.

INT. MARGARET'S DORM LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CHYRON: 2018

A now 19 year old Margaret sits on her couch with a now 20 year old Peyton. They watch *Moana* together. Tefiti finally lays down.

PEYTON

I love you, bestie!

MARGARET

I... I love you too -
(she whispers)
Bestie.

INT. MARGARET'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

The two girls are now drinking moscato and Four Lokos. They're both *incredibly* drunk.

MARGARET

Oh my God! Have I shown you pictures of Mikey lately?

PEYTON

Uh, no.

Margaret gets out her phone and shows Peyton a picture of an 1 year old. He's sitting on the floor in just a diaper.

PEYTON

Ew.

MARGARET

What?

PEYTON

Ew. I hate babies. Especially that one.

MARGARET

What the fuck, Peyton?

PEYTON

I just don't like babies.

She shrugs and turns to her suitcase.

MARGARET

How do you not like babies? I thought you wanted babies.

PEYTON

I just don't. I did, but I don't anymore. I don't like babies but I like kids. I want to adopt a 3 year old.

MARGARET

What do you have against babies?

PEYTON

I just don't like 'em.

MARGARET

But why'd you have to say "ew" to my baby?

PEYTON

It's not your baby. It's your brother's baby.

MARGARET

He's more my baby than your baby.

PEYTON

It's still an ugly baby.

MARGARET

Get the fuck out.

PEYTON

I'm drunk.

MARGARET

Sleep in your car. Get the actual everloving fuck out of my fucking dorm. Don't disrespect my nephew. Or me. But especially him.

PEYTON

No, I'm drunk and somebody will kidnap me.

MARGARET

Too bad. Get out. Zip your shit up and leave.

PEYTON

I need to piss. And maybe vom.

MARGARET

You know where the bathroom is.

Peyton exits to the bathroom.

Margaret waits.

And waits.

And waits.

INT. DORM BATHROOM - NIGHT

Peyton is laying on the floor in a pool of her vomit. Margaret rushes to her side.

MARGARET

You missed the toilet!

PEYTON

I know. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I said your nephew was gross. I'm just jealous of you, I think.

MARGARET

For what?

PEYTON

I don't know. Am I still kicked out?

MARGARET

Do you really mean you're sorry?

PEYTON

Yeah. I'm really sorry.

MARGARET

I guess you're not kicked out, then.

PEYTON

So are we still... besties?

MARGARET

I don't know. You still said my nephew was gross. That was rude.

PEYTON

I know. I'm sorry.

MARGARET

Yeah, I'm still mad but I forgive you. I guess. Do you remember Izzie?

PEYTON

Of course. Why?

MARGARET

Are you besties with her, still?

PEYTON

Oh God, no. She's a raging bitch.

MARGARET

Oh. Okay. Good. She sucked. And was really mean.

PEYTON

I know.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

CHYRON: 2023

A now 24 year old Margaret walks down the aisle of a somewhat-crowded chapel in a green dress, holding a bouquet of flowers. The music swells. The doors open. A beautiful, blushing 25 year old Peyton

enters in a white dress.

Peyton walks down the aisle and meets a handsome man at the altar - BRIAN, 26.

INT. BAR - LATER

A crowd of people are dancing. In the center are Margaret and Peyton having the time of their lives.

PEYTON

Thank you for sticking by me when I didn't deserve you. I was really mean and you didn't deserve that.

MARGARET

Oh, yeah. No problem.

PEYTON

I feel like this was Izzie's fault. All of it. Fucking Izzie, right?

MARGARET

Yeah, fucking Izzie. Fuck Izzie.

PEYTON

Yeah! Fuck Izzie! Izzie sucks!

The two women hug and flip off everything around them.

FADE TO BLACK.

ROSY

FADE FROM BLACK

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Super: 9 months ago.

LUCY (early 20s) - cute, prim, is wearing a floral dress and is sitting at a bar next to TYLER (early 20s) - cute, a little bit shorter than his female counterpart, far more casually dressed than Lucy.

Lucy leans into Tyler and laughs, her second beer taking a hold on her that she is very comfortable with.

LUCY

Ummmm, do you have any pets?

TYLER

Nope, do you?

LUCY

Nope, none for me. Maybe one day. I want a Australian Shepherd when that day comes, but who fucking knows when that'll happen.

TYLER

No way, an Australian Shepherd is my dream dog!

LUCY

No way. Uhhhh ... oh! Do you-- ah, nevermind.

TYLER

What?

LUCY

Nothing.

TYLER

I value your thoughts, Lucy. Tell me what's on your mind.

LUCY

I... okay. Sorry this isn't really a second

date question--

TYLER

Go ahead. You're wondering it anyway.

LUCY

Do you want kids?

TYLER

Yeah, definitely.

LUCY

I do. Want kids, I mean. At least 2, as many as 6.

TYLER

Well, I think I can work with that.

Tyler winks. Lucy smiles.

INT. LUCY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lucy and Tyler are sitting on Lucy's couch together, criss-cross-applesauce, facing each other. Tyler is rambling incoherently and then ...

TYLER

But I don't know, I think being on meds is kinda dumb anyway. That girl was crazy, I think she was hopped up on antidepressants and shit and that's why she was like ... that.

Lucy takes a deep breath.

LUCY

I need to tell you something.

TYLER

You can tell me anything.

Tyler hugs Lucy.

LUCY

I'm on antidepressants. And antipsychotics - I mean mood stabilizers. Dammit.

TYLER

For what?

LUCY

Oh you know, depression, anxiety, BPD...

TYLER

BPD?

LUCY

Borderline Personality Disorder. It's when, well for me, it affects my relationships. Makes me terrified of people leaving me. Stuff like that. I gotta tell you Tyler, I'm a little bit crazy.

Lucy sticks her tongue out and laughs a little, but quickly stops when she sees Tyler stone faced.

LUCY

What?

TYLER

I wish you wouldn't do that.

LUCY

Do what?

TYLER

Treat your mental health as a joke. I know you struggle, you've told me that, but why don't you --

Lucy, offended, gets up.

LUCY

It's *my* mental health. I'm clearly uncomfortable talking about it because I knew you were going to act like this.

Tyler gets up, too.

Lucy sits back down.

LUCY

I'm sorry. I didn't know you'd feel like this about everything.

TYLER

It's okay. I'm glad we got this out in the open. But just to be clear, I can't love you until you love yourself. It would be stupid

of me to do something like that, and it would be stupid of you to love me when you're not all the way there, mentally.

LUCY

Okay. How do you know I don't love myself?

Lucy hugs Tyler.

TYLER

I can just tell.

EXT. LAKE SIDE - DAY

Lucy and Tyler are walking hand in hand by the lake. Tyler drops Lucy's hand every once and a while to skip rocks. Lucy watches solemnly.

TYLER

Um, I've been thinking, and I think if you want to have babies with me, I need you off your meds for the baby's sake.

LUCY

What?

TYLER

I don't like the idea of you being on medication anyway, but I did some research and a lot of what you're on isn't safe for babies.

LUCY

Okay. I'm not planning on getting pregnant any time soon. We've been dating for three weeks.

TYLER

I know, but the sooner you're off them, the better.

LUCY

Why do you want me off my medication so bad?

Silence.

LUCY

I just need to stay stable while I finish up my degree and then I'll get off them if

that's what you want.

TYLER

No, I don't think that's good enough.

LUCY

I want to know why you want me off them.

TYLER

I just - I was on medication one time for...

LUCY

For your ADHD?

TYLER

Yeah, and I told my doctor I was seeing things so...

LUCY

They put you on anti schizophrenic stuff?
Oh, Tyler, I had no idea.

TYLER

Yeah, I mean, I never told you. So. Anyway,
I didn't like how I felt being on them.

LUCY

I feel fine. Did I tell you I went down on
my dosage for my antidepressant? That's why
I was so sleepy all the time. I'm fine now.
Really.

Tyler looks at her and tilts his head. He skips a rock.

LUCY

What do you want from me? I'm in therapy, I
take my meds, I go to the gym, I eat well, I
have a job, I talk to you every day, I keep
my apartment clean, I have friends, I, I, I
-- when will what I do be enough?

Tyler shrugs. Lucy sighs. She joins him in skipping rocks.

I/E. TYLER'S CAR/PARKING DECK - NIGHT

Tyler and Lucy are speeding out of the parking deck and laughing together.

Lucy points to a spot where there's no wall and just wires stopping

cars.

LUCY

That's where I almost drove my car off!

She laughs a little and then looks at Tyler. Tyler stops the car.

TYLER

Are you alright?

LUCY

Yeah. Why? I'm just--

TYLER

Why would you say something like that?

LUCY

I don't know, it just kind of came out. I want to tell you things.

TYLER

I know, but why say it like that? Why do you treat yourself like a joke?

LUCY

I just, I don't know.

Tears begin to spill down Lucy's cheeks.

LUCY

I don't know. I'm sorry. It just kind of came out. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

TYLER

It's okay, I just want you to take yourself as seriously as I take you.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Lucy stands at a podium. 16 students stare at her expectantly. She looks at a clock - 8:54. A few students enter. Lucy's PHONE buzzes.

Tyler: Hey. I've been doing some thinking and I don't think I can do this anymore. I'm sorry but I think we should call it.

Lucy's face contorts in pain. She exits to --

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

She takes a deep breath and tears begin to fall.

LUCY

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Shit. Fucking hell,
Tyler. What the fuck? And on my first
fucking day, too? Are you fucking kidding
me?

Lucy types: *Hey. Can we talk later? I get it but I'd like some answers.*

Lucy erases everything but the "Hey." Lucy continues to type: *I get it. It's okay. I'm sorry.*

INT. LUCY'S APARTMENT - VARIOUS

BEGIN MONTAGE:

Lucy lays in bed, scrolling and scrolling and scrolling.

Lucy cries a little.

Lucy gets very drunk.

Lucy sleeps on her couch.

Lucy sleeps on her couch again.

Lucy sleeps on the couch *again*.

Lucy begins sleeping in her bed again.

Lucy is sitting on her couch, typing on her laptop.

END MONTAGE.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Lucy is at the podium, listening as her students conversate with each other before class.

ANGEL

Have you heard this song? By Hozier? It's
called Cherry Wine. Listen to it.

NEIL

No, I haven't heard it. Play it! Is that
okay, Professor?

Lucy nods, not really sure what she just agreed to.

The song begins to play, loud as all get out. Lucy looks out into the hallway and nods as more students enter.

The song continues. Mary looks down. She looks back up when the line "open hand or closed fist would be fine," tears brimming in her eyes. She wipes the tears away quickly.

Lucy looks at the clock.

LUCY

Alright, good morning everyone. Let's pause the music for now, please. How's everybody doing? Have a good weekend?

INT. LUCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lucy, ever so tired, enters her bedroom and switches on a lamp.

She sighs as she pulls out her JOURNAL and she begins to write for a minute.

Lucy pauses. Tears begin to roll down her cheeks as she continues to write.

A KNOCK at the front door startles Lucy from her breakdown. She looks outside her window. Nothing. She wipes her tears.

INT. LUCY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lucy silently walks through the dark, small living room and avoids turning on any lights. She looks through the peephole and breathes a sigh of relief. She unlocks the door and opens it.

Enter JULIA (mid 20s) - just as pretty as her --

JULIA

Hey sister!

LUCY

Hi sister.

JULIA

You alright? You look kinda...

LUCY

I -

Before Lucy can decide whether to lie or tell the truth, she bursts into tears.

LUCY
(through her tears)
Sorry. I'm just. I'm sorry. I'm really
tired.

Julia wraps her sister into a hug. They separate. Julia gives Lucy a long, hard stare.

LUCY
(whispering)
I miss Tyler.

JULIA
Aw, I'm sure you do, honey.

They hug again.

JULIA
What happened?

Lucy takes a breath, not sure where to start.

LUCY
One of my students was playing Hozier's
Cherry Wine and we were talking lyrics and
meaning and domestic abuse and I don't think
he was abusive but, he just wanted to
control me and I just -- I don't know if I
can --

Lucy begins to hyperventilate.

JULIA
Aw, fuck, Lucy. Fuck, Lucy. Lucy, Lucy,
breathe. Breathe, Lucy. Breathe, BREATHE
WITH ME LUCY.

Lucy is ignoring her sister and sitting on her couch in her still-dark apartment, sobbing and breathing hysterically.

LUCY
I'm just really bummed out because next week
is Valentine's Day and I can't stop thinking
about how I've never been in a good
relationship and all these dudes have
treated me like SHIT and--

Julia nods.

Lucy continues to sob.

Julia pats her on the back.

JULIA

Breathe, Lucy, breathe. You've gotta calm down, you need to get air to your brain so we can talk about this.

Lucy finally takes a deep breath.

JULIA

There you go. Keep it going. I'm going to talk now, is that okay?

LUCY

Mmhmm.

JULIA

I'm so sorry that you... that guys are mean to you. Or control you. I hate that you're only realizing this now, but this is something I've noticed with you, too, but I-

Beat.

JULIA

Can I turn on this light? I want to really look at you when we talk about this.

Julia gets up and turns on a lamp.

LUCY

How long have you known that? I mean who did this start with? Daniel? Tyler? Johnny? Adam? Noah?

JULIA

Do you want me to be honest?

LUCY

Of course.

JULIA

I think you've been used, taken advantage of, controlled, or abused in every single

relationship or situationship you've ever been in. You've settled for really shitty guys and I've hated it for you but you know how I feel about confrontation. Every guy - I'm hoping he'll treat you right and I hate to say this, I really do, but they never do.

Lucy nods, stunned at this revelation.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Super: 4 months later.

Lucy walks an Australian Shepherd puppy through the park, alone.

Lucy spots and smiles at a guy (ADAM, 22) - super straight hair, tall, deep dimples, a button up *in a park*, walking a small mutt.

The guy smiles back.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Lucy and Adam are in a not-so-crowded café, talking.

ADAM

But yeah, I have OCD and it makes me kinda spin out easily. I'm medicated for it, so it's fine, but yeah, just wanted to tell you.

LUCY

Thanks for telling me. I'm medicated, too.

They high-five.

ADAM

Medication is great, isn't it? I love meds and health insurance and therapy. It's all wonderful.

Lucy smiles at Adam.

FADE TO BLACK.

MAD

FADE FROM BLACK:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

A beautiful young woman with long, dark hair, high cheekbones, and a slender figure, JOANNA - 24 - runs through a deep, dark forest. She stumbles over her long skirt but maintains her balance.

She pants.

She hides behind a TREE.

A horde of MEN ON HORSES race by.

Joanna checks her POCKET WATCH and looks around.

JOANNA
(Whispering)
I think we lost them.

A horse whinnies in the distance.

JOANNA
Shhhhhhhhit.

Joanna puts her fingers in her mouth and WHISTLES.

A deep brown HORSE comes racing up to the young woman and Joanna swiftly MOUNTS the horse.

JOANNA
C'mon Betsy, let's get out of here.

Betsy and Joanna race ahead, dirt flying up from Betsy's hooves.

Joanna laughs maniacally.

ON SCREEN: MAD

INT. OFFICE - DAY

ISABELLA (50s) paces in her massive office in front of a seated Joanna. Her heels click the ground, which makes a 24-year-old Joanna shudder with every step.

ISABELLA

What's your excuse for today?

JOANNA

Come on Mom! I'm not an excuse of the day kind of woman.

ISABELLA

Sure, and I'm not the mayor of Castile.

Joanna frowns.

ISABELLA

What am I going to do with you, my dear, sweet Joanna?

JOANNA

Maim me?

ISABELLA

Don't joke.

JOANNA

I'm kidding. Mom, please, don't make me do this again!

ISABELLA

I am afraid I will have to, Joanna. And I will continue to do so until you learn that I am not playing around.

JOANNA

Please!

ISABELLA

Nurse!

NURSES (30s) enter the office and take Joanna by the arms, pulling her backwards out of the room.

JOANNA

Mom, please!

Isabella turns, not wanting to see or hear her daughter suffer.

Joanna wails off screen.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

The two nurses throw Joanna into the dark basement. She rolls a

little, only stopping when she runs into a wall.

JOANNA

Please don't make me stay here!

NURSE 1

I don't make the rules, I just enforce 'em.
And you're staying here, prissy!

Joanna stands up. She climbs up the steps and bangs on the door.

CATHERINE (O.S.)

Hey! Stop it! I'm a princess!

NURSE 1

Princess of my ass!

The door to the basement opens and shuts as red-haired CATHERINE (18) is thrown down the stairs.

JOANNA

What is up, little sister?!

CATHERINE

Shut it. This is all your fault.

JOANNA

What? How?

CATHERINE

I was talking to mom about how I should be allowed to go out on my own like you --

JOANNA

Sounds like your fault.

CATHERINE

I wasn't finished.

JOANNA

Okay, continue.

CATHERINE

I was talking to mom about how you get all tortured and stuff and how it's not fair and next thing you know she's calling the nurses on me! Can you believe that?!?

JOANNA

Sounds like classic mom, are you seriously surprised?

CATHERINE

I guess not. What did you do to get you sent down here today?

JOANNA

I was caught riding Betsy after curfew.

CATHERINE

That's kindergarten stuff. You're 24. You're way too old to still have a curfew.

JOANNA

That's exactly what I'm saying!

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Joanna is typing on her computer, taking breaks every few words to stretch, or scratch herself, or yawn, and so on.

JOANNA

I don't want to do it!

Joanna flings herself off her chair and onto the floor, laying down.

Joanna's father, FERDINAND (60s), enters.

FERDINAND

Throwing another fit?

JOANNA

N-no, father. Just resting. That's all.

FERDINAND

Stop your rest or I'll call the nurses.

JOANNA

Yes father.

Joanna stands up and sways a little bit, as if she's unsure of how to stand around her father.

FERDINAND

Everything alright there?

JOANNA

Yes, I'm fine father. Just having some

spatial issues, that's all.

Ferdinand sniffs.

FERDINAND
What's that smell?

JOANNA
What do you think it is?

Ferdinand's eyes narrow.

JOANNA
I should not have said that, huh?

FERDINAND
Tell me immediately what that smell is,
Joanna, before I call the nurse.

JOANNA
(whispering)
Alcohol.

FERDINAND
Excuse me? Speak up.

JOANNA
I drank.

Joanna hiccups.

FERDINAND
NURSE!

The nurses immediately enter upon Ferdinand's command.

NURSE 1
What did she do this time?

NURSE 2
That's not our business.

FERDINAND
True, it's not usually your business, but
Joanna's punishment depends on what she did.
She consumed --

Ferdinand gestures to Joanna, asking her what exactly she drank.

JOANNA

Brandy. But not even that much! Watch!

Joanna puts her fingers to her nose a few times and then walks a few steps in a straight line. She stumbles and then stops and stares at the men.

The men stare back.

Joanna makes a run for the door.

The nurses and Ferdinand attempt to get her, but Joanna is small and fast. She slips out the door.

The nurses look at each other.

FERDINAND

Go get her!

EXT. CASTLE GROUNDS - CONT.

Joanna laughs to herself as she runs through the castle grounds. The nurses are nowhere to be seen. She stumbles a little bit as she slows down and looks around at the grand grounds.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ferdinand and Isabella are pacing, every once and a while peering out the windows at the nurses chasing around Joanna.

FERDINAND

We need to do something about Joanna.

ISABELLA

We certainly do. I fear we're past the point of no return for her.

FERDINAND

Nonsense! There's still hope to turn her act around.

ISABELLA

What do you have in mind?

FERDINAND

I think she would benefit from being sent away. Or at least the threat of being sent away would do her some good.

ISABELLA

Oh, Ferdinand! Institutionalize her? My dear, I think that's too far!

FERDINAND

Well, what do you have in mind? We need to put a stop to her behavior before it's too late. She's beginning to make a fool out of us; she's much too old to behave like this.

ISABELLA

I don't know, but I'm afraid it is too late. I think putting her away is too far.

FERDINAND

I think I have an idea.

INT. EVENT HALL - NIGHT

A grand event hall is decked out with gigantic bouquets and several hundred people, immaculately dressed. Joanna is sitting with Isabella and Ferdinand, looking bored out of her mind in a purple dress. A band is playing.

Ferdinand spots somebody and waves them over.

A deeply handsome man in a tuxedo, PHILIP (25) approaches the table.

FERDINAND

There's somebody I'd like you to meet, Joanna.

JOANNA

Huh?

Philip extends his hand. Joanna takes it. Philip kisses her hand. Joanna blushes.

PHILIP

May I?

Ferdinand nods.

Philip and Joanna begin to dance.

Ferdinand and Isabella watch the two dance.

FERDINAND

They're a good pair, right?

Isabella takes a sip of her wine and eyes Ferdinand.

ISABELLA
What are you up to?

FERDINAND
You'll see.

CUT TO:

INT. EVENT HALL - NIGHT

Joanna, overjoyed comes up to Isabella and Ferdinand and whispers into their ears:

JOANNA
I think I've found the man I'm going to marry.

FERDINAND
Perfect! The wedding is in 3 weeks!

Joanna takes a step back.

JOANNA
What?

PHILIP
Excuse me, what's going on?

JOANNA
We're... we're getting married?

PHILIP
I didn't...

ISABELLA
You need to explain yourself, dear.

FERDINAND
I talked to your parents, Philip, and they're in a similar situation as we are with Joanna. We're kind of at our wit's end - sorry, dear - and we've... well, this is an arranged marriage of sorts, but not exactly because you guys like each other! So it's just...!

JOANNA

What the hell, dad? I didn't consent to this? I mean I like you, Philip, but I barely know you.

FERDINAND

Lucky for you, you guys have 3 weeks to get to know each other before the wedding, but you're getting married. I paid the vendors already.

JOANNA

Mom?

ISABELLA

It's out of my control.

INT. NURSERY - NIGHT

BABY ISABELLA (6 months) cries.

A sleepy Philip (now 35) enters and picks the baby up. He SHUSHES her.

ON SCREEN: 5 YEARS LATER

He carries the baby into the --

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

And lays the crying baby next to a sleeping, now 34-year-old Joanna.

Joanna stirs in her sleep but does not wake.

Philip gently shakes her awake.

JOANNA

Why'd you bring her in here? I was asleep!

PHILIP

It's her hungry cry.

Joanna angrily whips out her breast and shoves her nipple into the infant's crying mouth.

Isabella does not stop crying.

Joanna lets out an exasperated sigh.

JOANNA

Shhhhhhhhhh I'm right here. Eat.

The baby continues to whimper as she begins to suck on Joanna's breast.

Philip climbs back in bed and nearly instantly falls asleep.

Isabella continues to nurse.

Joanna slowly falls asleep. Once she's fully asleep, her hand that was holding the child falls and the baby unlatches.

Isabella begins to cry again.

Joanna is jolted awake by the cries of the baby. She begins to cry as well.

Joanna and Isabella's cries get louder and awaken Philip.

PHILIP

What's wrong?

JOANNA

I can't do this! She doesn't stop crying or eating or fussing, and I'm sick of it!

PHILIP

Come here honey.

Philip leans in for a kiss.

JOANNA

No!

Joanna turns her body away from Philip and sticks her breast back into Isabella's mouth.

They slowly but surely fall back asleep.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Philip is sitting and eating lunch with his father in law, Ferdinand.

PHILIP

Joanna hasn't been doing terribly well now that she's a mother of three. This new baby has really done a number on her.

FERDINAND

How bad is it?

PHILIP

She's crying all the time. She won't watch the baby or Eleanor or Charles--

FERDINAND

You know what I've always kept in my back pocket? Only do this if you really want to - need to.

PHILIP

What?

FERDINAND

You can always get her institutionalized.

PHILIP

That's an option? I can do that?

FERDINAND

I mean, of course it is.

Philip ponders upon this.

FERDINAND

But of course, I'd recommend she have more children before doing so. You know, so that you can use the children for uh -- good.

Philip nods.

FERDINAND

This is something I spoke with Joanna's mother before she passed. She agreed that her behavior when she was younger was inappropriate but we didn't know what to do with her.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ferdinand and the now slightly aged nurses enter the bedroom. Philip nods to the men.

FERDINAND

Now!

The nurses grab Joanna's arms and legs, shocking her awake.

JOANNA

Wha- wh- what's going on?

FERDINAND

We have a plan for you.

NURSE 1

Yeah, we have a plan for you!

NURSE 2

Shhh, don't wake the baby!

Baby Isabella begins to cry.

JOANNA

Hey baby, mama's right here!

NURSE 2

Not for long!

JOANNA

What are you talking about? Put me down!

INT. CELL - NIGHT

The nurses throw Joanna into the cell, similarly to how she was thrown into the basement earlier.

Joanna sobs.

INT. CELL - DAY

ON SCREEN: 15 YEARS LATER

CHARLES (16) enters the room his mother's cell is in but does not enter the actual cell.

Joanna looks up from her book.

JOANNA

Charles? Oh, my boy! Come here, honey, let me hug you!

Charles does not move. A tear slips down his face.

JOANNA

What is it?

Joanna's voice begins to rise in panic:

JOANNA

Talk to me, Charles. What's going on, my love?

CHARLES

Your dad-

JOANNA

No!

CHARLES

I'm sorry mom. There's going to be a funeral in 3 days.

JOANNA

Are you coming to let me out for it?

CHARLES

I'm sorry.

Charles exits.

Joanna sobs.

FADE TO BLACK.

ON SCREEN: JOANNA OF CASTILE WAS WRONGFULLY PLACED IN PRISON BY HER FATHER, HUSBAND, AND SON AT THE AGE OF 26 AFTER BEING DECLARED INSANE. SHE REMAINED IMPRISONED UNTIL HER DEATH IN 1555, AT THE AGE OF 76.

VISIONS

FADE IN:

EXT. PARK - DAY

A FAMILY is playing catch in a PARK in the middle of a city.

A beautiful woman, MARY (40s, very well put together) is playing catch with her husband, STEVE (also 40s, heartbreakingly attractive) and their child, LENNON (16, perfectly coiffed hair to the point where it looks plastic) Lennon is wearing a green shirt that says "I WANT TO BELIEVE" with a UFO on it.

The family laughs and talks inaudibly with each other.

They exit to the --

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

And get into a SUV, Steve in the driver's seat, Mary in the front passenger seat, and Lennon right behind Steve.

Steve slowly backs out.

Another CAR comes *zooming* out of nowhere and runs straight into where Steve and Lennon are with a loud CRASH.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mary is now far less put together than when we previously saw her. She's wearing a fuzzy housecoat, her hair is in a bun, she either skipped concealer or has horrendous dark circles under her eyes, and is no longer confidently speaking and laughing; instead she's talking in a near-whisper, deathly serious.

Mary is sitting on her COUCH with a male therapist, JEREMY, 40s. Jeremy is gay, black, calm, and listening intently to Mary speak.

MARY

I don't know how to put this...

Jeremy looks at Mary attentively and nods to encourage her to keep going.

MARY

But I've been having these. I don't know. I don't want to self-diagnose, but I think I'm having hallucinations about Steve coming back to me and apologizing for leaving me. I think it's starting to freak Lennon out.

JEREMY

He didn't mean to leave you, Mary. It was a freak accident. Nobody saw it coming. Not you, not Steve, not Lennon, not Mr. Yearwood.

MARY

I know you're right. But it's just, disturbing to me that I'm imagining things.

Jeremy writes something down on his notepad.

JEREMY

What else are you imagining?

The front door opening and closing interrupts Mary before she can gather her thoughts.

LENNON (O.S.)

Mom, I'm home!

MARY

(whispering)

Shit. You need to go.

JEREMY

(whispering)

I need to go?

Mary shakes her head.

JEREMY

Now's the time. Confrontation is key.

Mary takes a deep breath.

MARY

Lennon, honey? Can you come in here for a moment?

Lennon enters.

LENNON

What? Who are you?

MARY

That wasn't very polite.

LENNON

I'm sorry. Who exactly are you?

JEREMY

What is it?

LENNON

Mom? You've been seeing someone?

Mary nods nervously.

LENNON

Oh. Nice to meet you, I guess.

MARY

No "I guess," Lennon. It's nice to meet you.

LENNON

Sorry. It's nice to meet you.

JEREMY

It's nice to meet you too.

LENNON

I'm gonna go to my room now, if that's okay.

Lennon exits without a confirmation.

Mary brings her attention back to Jeremy.

JEREMY

How are the new meds working?

MARY

Just fine, I guess. I don't notice much of a difference?

JEREMY

You tapered them, right?

MARY

Yep.

Beat.

JEREMY

Well, I guess that's about it.

MARY

I had something I was going to say...

Jeremy pauses.

MARY

But I don't remember it now.

JEREMY

That's okay. Email or text me if you remember. Or write it down and save it for our next meeting. Tuesday at 3 good for you?

MARY

Mm-hmm.

JEREMY

Very good. I'll see you then.

Jim stands up. Mary does as well.

MARY

Thank you.

Jeremy exits.

Mary goes into the --

BATHROOM

And sits on the toilet without taking off her pants. She covers her face with her hands and begins to cry quietly.

There's a knock on the door.

LENNON (O.S.)

Mom?

MARY

Yes?

LENNON (O.S.)

I'm going to Aiden's house to play Overwatch.

MARY

Okay, have fun with Payton.

LENNON

Aiden.

MARY

That's what I said.

LENNON

Okay, I'm going.

MARY

Alright. Have fun.

Lennon exits off screen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mary begins to prepare a meal in her messy but homey kitchen: well seasoned chicken, rice, and beans.

Mary meticulously measures and remeasures the water for the rice. She foregoes the electric can opener and reaches for the handheld can opening device. She cranks it with great strength and merely sighs when the bean juice spurts out.

Mary walks over to the --

STAIRCASE LANDING

And yells up at her son:

MARY

Lennon?

Silence.

MARY

Lennon? Can you hear me?

More silence.

MARY

Lennon are you okay? Or playing a prank on me?

INT. LENNON'S ROOM - DAY

Mary hurriedly enters her boy's room and looks around wildly.

MARY

Lennon?

Mary gets down on her knees and looks under the bed.

Nothing.

Mary pulls out her phone from her robe pocket and calls Lennon.

ROBOTIC VOICE

We're sorry you have reached a number that has been disconnected or is no longer in service. If you feel this is in error, please check the number dialed, and please try again.

MARY

Lennon? Where are you? I need you to come out from wherever you are and come home now.

Lennon appears in the doorway behind Mary.

LENNON

Mom. I told you I'd be at Aiden's house. That's where I am right now.

Mary turns around. Lennon is nowhere to be seen, but she speaks to him anyway.

MARY

Lennon? I didn't hear you come in. Wait.

Mary spins around in circles, looking for Lennon.

MARY

Where are you?

LENNON

I'm right behind you Mom.

Mary turns around fast and the speed of her twirl gets her far enough off balance she falls down, first stumbling then falling dramatically, hitting her head as she lands on the ground.

MARY

Shit.

Mary lays on the ground for a moment and then gets up. She shrugs to herself as she looks around the room one last time and exits.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mary is sitting at her small dining table, eating the meal she prepared earlier in complete silence.

LENNON (O.S.)

Mom?

Mary begins to COUGH, CHOKING on a piece of chicken.

Her eyes widen in panic. She continues to cough.

Mary finally gets the piece loose and chugs water, swallowing roughly.

INT. MARY'S ROOM - MORNING

Mary is asleep in bed and wakes up with a jolt.

MARY

Lennon!

She scrambles out of bed and grabs her phone, calling him once again. Nothing. Mary dials 911.

MARY

Hello? Yes, I'd like to report my son as missing.

CUT TO:

MARY

Okay, thank you. Bye.

The doorbell RINGS.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Police Officer DAN (30s, charming) is standing on the front porch, checking his hair and breath when Mary opens the door.

MARY

Oh wow, that was fast.

DAN

Yes ma'am. I was in the area and got the call to come talk to you.

MARY

Well, thank you. Come on in.

Dan enters the foyer that feeds into the living room.

DAN

Nice place you've got here.

Rain begins to pour outside.

DAN

But I can see why Lennon would want to leave. You look kind of crazy, lady.

MARY

What?

The rain stops.

DAN

I said we need to talk about why Lennon would want to leave. You're sure he *left*? And how long has he been gone? 6 months?

MARY

What? More like maybe 12 hours. I'm sure he left.

DAN

Wait, are you Mary uh, Burton?

MARY

Yes?

DAN

I see. How's your husband?

MARY

My husband is dead. He died. Steve is dead.

DAN

Okay. That's what I thought. I'm sorry, that was a little rude of me.

Beat.

DAN

I'm sorry. Let's start over again. I'm officer Dan Packard. How are you feeling today?

MARY

I'm *feeling* like you're not helping me find my son, officer. What I'm feeling doesn't matter, what matters is that my boy is missing and you're not doing anything to try to find him!

DAN

I understand your frustrations. Um. What was Lennon wearing the last time you saw him?

EXT. PARK - DAY

The same day the accident happened: Lennon is laughing with his parents in his "I WANT TO BELIEVE" shirt.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Mary's eyes are shut tightly, remembering what Lennon was wearing.

MARY

He was wearing a shirt with a UFO on it that said "I want to believe". And jeans. He always wears jeans. Dark wash, because he thinks that makes him look smarter.

DAN

Okay. Well. Is there anything else you want to tell me?

Mary shakes her head.

DAN

Right. Well. Here's my card. Call me if you think of anything. Are you seeing somebody?

Mary furrows her brows and narrows her eyes.

DAN

For the loss of your husband?

MARY

That's not really any of your business, but I am. Don't see why that matters to you, though.

DAN

My apologies. And my condolences. I'll get out of your hair now.

Dan exits just as quickly as he entered.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's raining. Mary stumbles into the kitchen. The clock on the oven says 4:26. Without turning on any lights, she scribbles on a piece of paper with her left hand.

INT. MARY'S ROOM - DAY

Mary wakes up for real this time and gets out of bed quickly. She makes her bed.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mary enters the kitchen, fully dressed.

She stops when she reaches the note she left herself last night.

In scribbled, terrible handwriting, it reads:

MARY

Mom, I came back tonight but you were asleep. I've been in the woods and will stay there until you come and find me. Lennon.

Mary puts down the piece of paper.

Mary covers her face with her hands and begins to hyperventilate.

Mary sobs.

MARY

My boy is alive and safe and well. My boy is alive and safe and well. My boy is alive and safe and well.

This repetition calms Mary down.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Mary parks her beat up loaner car in the back of a near-empty parking lot, as far away as possible from other cars and people.

Mary walks up to the treeline and stands for a moment. She takes a deep breath and enters the trees.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Mary walks.

Mary jumps over a log.

Mary pulls out a vintage compass, turns left and right, and then turns left.

Mary walks some more.

Mary pauses and kneels down to look at a patch of flowers.

END MONTAGE.

Mary is walking along, mindlessly humming to herself when she suddenly stops dead in her tracks.

It begins to rain.

Asleep on the ground is LENNON wearing his "I WANT TO BELIEVE" shirt.

A BEAR comes out of the heavy trees and roars ferociously.

The bear starts toward Lennon.

MARY

NO!

Mary jumps in between the bear and Lennon.

The bear swipes at Mary, clawing her face.

MARY

Lennon, wake up!

Mary looks away and when she looks back, Lennon is gone.

MARY

Good boy.

Mary begins to run away from the bear. The bear chases after her.

Mary races back to the --

PARKING LOT

And gets in her car without looking around.

Again, without looking, she begins to back up and RUNS OVER LENNON.

He is laying down on the ground, next to some TRASH.

Mary reacts to the bump slightly but does not slow down.

As Mary drives away, we can see the trash, but Lennon is gone.

INT. LENNON'S ROOM - DAY

Mary is in Lennon's room, sitting on his bed. Mary's eye catches a green shirt laying slightly under the dresser.

MARY

Hm.

She looks at the "I WANT TO BELIEVE" shirt, carefully folds it, and puts it back in the dresser.

FADE TO BLACK.

Suzanna Poole

706-834-8676 poolesuzanna181@gmail.com

EXPERIENCE

Teacher of Record

Aug. 2022 - Present

Kennesaw State University English Department | Kennesaw, GA

- Created lesson plans explaining various compositional practices and standards for college level writing.
- Implemented engaging curriculum for students.
- Communicated efficiently and effectively with 44 students regarding classroom policies, education expectations, grading standards, and other various matters that impacted student performance.

Writing Assistant

Aug. 2021 – May 2022

Kennesaw State University Writing Center | Kennesaw and Marietta, GA

- Assisted students across all disciplines with their writing, from individuals in high school that are dual enrolled to individuals pursuing master's degrees.
- Discussed ways in which students could improve their writing on micro / macro levels, both in-person and online.
- Worked with an average of four students every day and communicated empathetically and intellectually how their writing abides by assignment guidelines and rubrics.

Marketing Intern

Aug. 2020 – May 2021

Backline Cares | Kennesaw, GA (Remote)

- Wrote articles on the relationship people in the music industry have with their mental health, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the effect it has had on mental health.
- Edited articles written by artists, edited and timestamped videos.
- Created a catalogue of all past social media posts from Instagram and Facebook.

Marketing Communications Intern

March - May 2021

Protocol Entertainment | Kennesaw, GA (Remote)

- Filed a list of all rock radio stations in the country.
- Compiled a list of contact information of several hundred magazines locally and nationally that would accurately represent bands that are managed by Protocol.

Intern

Jan. - May 2020

Accelerando Music LLC | Kennesaw, GA (Remote)

- Kept digitized records organized for easy updating and retrieval by authorized team members.
- Filed a list of all music production companies in the country.
- Sorted and organized materials using Google Sheets and Google Docs.

Style Consultant

May - Dec. 2020, May – August 2022

Target | Evans, GA and Kennesaw, GA

- Monitored and maintained cleanliness, sanitation, and organization of apparel sales floor.
- Styled mannequins of all ages with in-style clothing and performed POS transactions.

EDUCATION

Kennesaw State University | Master of Arts in Professional Writing Expected to graduate May 2023

- Currently maintaining a 4.0 GPA.
- Main concentration in Creative Writing, support area in Rhetoric and Composition.
- Partaking in the Teaching Assistantship, in which I am currently teaching an English 1101 class.

Kennesaw State University | Bachelor of Science in Communication Graduated Cum Laude May 2021

- Dean's List Fall 2019 and Spring 2020, President's List Fall 2020 and Spring 2021
- Majored in Media and Entertainment.
- Minored in Professional Writing and Music and Entertainment Business through the Joel A. Katz Music and Entertainment Business Program.

SKILLS

Editing, writing, content generation, Word, Excel, Google docs, slides, and drive; Canva, proofreading, customer service, social media, written communication, punctuation, and research.