

The Strange Dark

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBIA - NIGHT

A solitary star twinkles.

It's surrounded by infinite stars in the night sky.

They form constellations: the Big Dipper, the Little Dipper, Gemini, Taurus, and Orion - the hunter.

Beneath the heavens, a sea of split-level middle-class homes.

Telephone poles and streetlights illuminate the neighborhood. The road is quiet and, in this one home, the curtains are drawn, but a few lights are on. A modern VW Beetle sits empty in the driveway.

Parked on the street and in front of the house is an SUV with dark tinted windows. Someone is inside.

SUPER: Part 1

SUPER: Unexpected Guests

SUPER: 7:30 p.m.

The front passenger door slips open and out steps MARIA (36), confident and cool. She takes a deep breath. Dressed in a smart business suit, she's ready for the task at hand.

The driver's door slams shut, breaking the silence. FRANK (48), looking like the heavy from an old black and white film, just stands there.

MARIA

Do you have to be so damn loud?

Frank doesn't care and hunches his shoulders in reply.

Maria strides over to Frank, grabs his tie, and tightens it.

MARIA

You're killing me, Frank.

At the house, the living room curtains flutter.

Maria releases her grip on Frank's tie.

MARIA

That's better. You look good.
Professional. Now, let's do this.

Maria and Frank march up the front walkway.

At the door, Maria turns to Frank for one last warning.

MARIA
Remember, I'll do the talking.

Frank understands and attempts to smile. It's unsettling.

Maria rings the doorbell.

No answer.

Frank loosens his tie (that's better). Maria thinks about fixing it, gives up, and rings the bell again.

Still nothing. Maria has had enough.

MARIA
(to Frank)
Knock.

Frank lifts up his big fist, scars on his knuckles, and bangs it against the door. It rattles the house.

Someone stirs inside, but no one comes to the door.

Maria and Frank exchange curious looks.

Frank is about to knock again when the sound of the lock turning stops him and the door opens.

SUSAN (42) is clever and talented, but, at the moment, she's a little flustered with a few strands of hair in her face.

SUSAN
I'm sorry. I just got home, I was in the kitchen, my arms were full of groceries, I dropped the eggs and... how can I help you?

MARIA
Are you Susan?

SUSAN
Yes.

MARIA
I'm Maria and this is Frank. We work at Double Star Accounting, with your husband, Ed.

SUSAN
Ex.

MARIA

Excuse me?

SUSAN

My ex-husband. We're getting a divorce. We're separated.

MARIA

I didn't know.

SUSAN

It's okay. It's for the best.

MARIA

Well, we're here because... Ed is in a little trouble.

SUSAN

Is he alright?

MARIA

Maybe it would be better if we talked inside.

Susan sizes up this duo. Frank is inscrutable, but Maria smiles warmly.

SUSAN

Of course.

Susan looks over her shoulder.

SUSAN

It's a bit of a mess, but, sure, come on in.

Susan steps back and Frank walks through, assessing the room, with Maria on his heels.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Susan shuts the door.

The living room is cozy with a big leather couch, a loveseat, lots of cushions, and lamps casting the room in soft shadows.

But, she wasn't lying about the mess. Almost everything is covered in papers and notes. She gathers it all up as quickly as she can.

SUSAN

Sorry. I'm grading essays on Shakespeare and I'm in the middle of directing the school play. It's always a bit of chaos this time of year. We're doing, "The Scottish Play".

MARIA

Never heard of it.

SUSAN

Oh, it's just a silly superstition. It's what you say instead of saying... "Macbeth". It's supposed to be unlucky if you say "Macbeth" out loud.

MARIA

But, you just said it out loud.

SUSAN

True. But, I don't really believe the myth, it's just... tradition.

Finished cleaning, she places the stack of papers on the coffee table and turns towards her unexpected guests.

SUSAN

Please, have a seat.

Maria and Frank sit on the loveseat and Susan settles in across from them on the couch.

MARIA

So, have you seen him, recently?

SUSAN

Who?

MARIA

Your husband, your ex-husband...
Ed?

SUSAN

No.

MARIA

Do you know where he is?

SUSAN

At the moment... no.

MARIA
When did you last see him?

SUSAN
When?

MARIA
Today?

SUSAN
No, not today. Last... last week I think. He was picking up Taylor.

MARIA
Taylor?

SUSAN
Our daughter.

Susan gestures to an old family photo of Edgar, spattered in paint and smiling broadly, with Taylor and Susan laughing at his side.

MARIA
Is she here? We'd love to meet her.

SUSAN
No. Taylor's got mathletics tonight. She's a mathlete.

Maria doesn't understand.

SUSAN
It's a mathematics competition. Math plus Athlete equals Mathlete. There are teams. It's actually quite competitive.

MARIA
(unenthusiastic)
How fun.

Frank fidgets a bit and pulls an errant red pen out from under his seat. He tosses it on the coffee table.

SUSAN
Sorry about that.

Frank doesn't seem to care.

SUSAN
So, you both work with Edgar at Double Star?

MARIA

Yes.

SUSAN

You work in accounting?

MARIA

Not exactly.

Susan waits for Maria to elaborate, but she doesn't.

SUSAN

(pointing to Frank)

Does he ever talk?

MARIA

Not much. He's shy.

Frank doesn't look shy.

SUSAN

You said, Edgar's in some trouble.

MARIA

I'm afraid so. It might just be a misunderstanding, but there's a problem with some of his numbers. Some data has gone missing. And, like I said, it's probably just an accident. I'm sure he could explain it all, but we've been unable to reach him.

SUSAN

That doesn't sound like Edgar.

MARIA

So, do you know where we might find him?

SUSAN

Not really.

MARIA

Have you noticed any changes in his behavior lately?

SUSAN

Changes... I really couldn't say.

MARIA

Because of the divorce?

SUSAN
Separation.

MARIA
If you don't mind my asking, what
led to your separation?

SUSAN
That's... personal.

MARIA
Of course... I understand. I only
ask because, well, I don't know how
else to say this, but, you're in
danger.

From the kitchen, a tea kettle whistles angrily.

Susan is momentarily startled by the warning and the whistle.

SUSAN
I almost forgot, the kettle... I
put water on for tea... before you
arrived. Would either of you like
some tea?

MARIA
I'm fine.

FRANK
I'll have a cup.

Susan and Maria are both surprised to hear Frank's gruff
voice for the first time.

SUSAN
Great. Great. I'll just be a
minute.

Susan rises and disappears into the kitchen.

Maria stares daggers at Frank. They speak in strained
whispers.

FRANK
What?

MARIA
You know what.

FRANK
I'm thirsty.

From the kitchen, the sound of the whistle slowly dying.

MARIA

This is not going to be like Black Hill.

Frank actually looks a little hurt. That was a low blow.

MARIA

Or fucking Aperture Labs.

FRANK

That wasn't my fault.

MARIA

It's never your fault, Frank.

Franks wants to retort, but thinks better of it.

MARIA

Just watch the damn kitchen.

Frank turns his attention to the doorway, as Maria leans forward, rifling through the papers on the coffee table.

MARIA

It's always something with you.
 "I'm thirsty." That's classic.
 Wait until they hear that back at the office.

Suddenly, Franks swats the pages out of Maria's hands. Maria is about to complain, when Susan appears in the doorframe.

SUSAN

Do you take sugar with your tea?

FRANK

No.

SUSAN

I'll be right back then.

Maria quickly returns to the pile, resuming her search through endless papers about Shakespeare and Macbeth. She's almost given up when something catches her eye.

On one essay, there is a doodle: a sketch of the solar system and an equation, $101 = 10$.

Maria examines the page and then quickly and carefully folds the paper in half and tucks it away.

The sound of Susan returning and Maria drops the rest of the pages on the table.

Susan sets a tea tray down with a cloth napkin and two cups on it. She puts one cup down in front of Frank and returns to her seat with her own cup.

Frank picks up his tea and goes to take a sip.

SUSAN

Careful, it's hot and still needs another minute to steep.

Frank, chided, puts the cup down.

SUSAN

(to Maria)

You were saying before, something about danger?

Maria takes a deep breath.

MARIA

At Double Star Accounting, we work with numbers. Lots of numbers. Small numbers. Big numbers. Private numbers. Secret numbers. And, we pride ourselves on being able to keep those secrets. It's who we are. It's what we do.

Maria picks up the family photo from the side table.

MARIA

Ed works with those numbers. He's a genius with numbers. In fact, no one's better than Ed. He's the best, am I right?

No one answers.

Maria sets the picture down.

MARIA

But, lately, well, something's wrong with Ed. Human resources would say "mental health" issues. And maybe that's all it is. Maybe he's just feeling a little down. After all, he's going through a divorce. That can't be easy.

Maria leans in close to Susan.

MARIA

But, I don't think it's that simple. I think something snapped, in here.

Maria taps the side of her head, pointing to her brain.

MARIA

He's unstable. He's talking nonsense, doing crazy things, and... I'm worried for you and your daughter. If we don't find him soon, and get him some help, someone is going to get hurt.

Maria leans back and Susan finally takes a slow breath.

Has it been long enough? Frank lifts his tea and has a big gulp.

FRANK

Earl Grey... that's my favorite.

EXT. SUBURBIA - EARLIER

It's the same night, the same street, and the same home, only there are no cars out front, the curtains are open, and the house is dark except for one light upstairs.

SUPER: Part 2

SUPER: The Red Dwarf

SUPER: 25 Minutes Earlier

The VW Beetle puttters down the street and pulls in the driveway. Susan gets out of the car, retrieves two bags of groceries, and heads inside.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen is modern with stainless steel appliances and an island in the middle.

Susan turns on the lights with her elbow and sets the groceries down on the counter.

She exits and, from the living room, the sound of lamps turning on and her coat coming off.

It's dark outside the kitchen windows and with the lights on it's hard to see. Is something or someone moving out there?

Susan returns to the kitchen, putting away the groceries.

From somewhere in the house, a dull thud. What was that noise? From upstairs maybe? Susan isn't sure what she heard and stops moving. Listening.

SUSAN
Taylor? Is that you?

Silence.

SUSAN
Taylor? Are you home?

Nothing.

She considers the wooden knife block and carefully slides out a large and dangerous-looking carving knife. Still, she looks more prey than hunter.

Susan cautiously exits the kitchen. Again, she calls out.

SUSAN (O.S.)
Taylor?

While she's away, from another part of the house, the squeak of a sliding door opening and closing.

Meanwhile, Susan, discovering nothing, comes back to the kitchen relieved and sets the knife down on the counter.

She opens the freezer and throws in ice cream.

Back to the bags, she places fresh grapes on the counter. Next, she grabs the eggs and, when she turns around to the refrigerator, she is face-to-face with her husband.

Startled, Susan drops the eggs, which shatter on the floor.

EDGAR (45), brilliant and earnest, stares at his wife, unaware that he's frightened her. If he were younger, he would probably be called high-functioning autistic, but, as it is, most people would just call him odd, a square peg in a world of round holes.

Susan smacks Edgar in the chest.

SUSAN
You scared me to death.

EDGAR
(matter-of-fact)
You dropped the eggs.

SUSAN
That's your fault.

Edgar doesn't care and leans in closer to Susan.

EDGAR
(whispering)
Are they here?

SUSAN
Is who here?

EDGAR
The others.

SUSAN
I don't understand. It's just you
and me, Edgar. And, you shouldn't
be here. This isn't your home,
anymore. We talked about this,
remember?

EDGAR
I remember.

Edgar cautiously turns the corner and walks into...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

No one is there and Edgar looks confused.

He quickly goes to the window and draws all the curtains.

SUSAN
What's going on?

EDGAR
I'm closing the curtains.

SUSAN
I can see that. Why are you
closing the curtains?

Edgar closes his eyes, balls his hands into fists, and presses them tight against his eyes, rubbing in a slow circular motion.

EDGAR
We don't have much time.

SUSAN
Are you feeling okay?

EDGAR

I'm fine.

SUSAN

Are you having those headaches again? The doctor said --

EDGAR

It's not a headache!

SUSAN

Okay. Calm down.

EDGAR

I am calm.

No, he's not.

EDGAR

Where's Taylor?

SUSAN

She's not home.

EDGAR

Are you sure? She should be here.
(calling out)
Taylor?

There's no answer.

SUSAN

See, I told you, she's not here.

Edgar scans the room. Something is wrong.

SUSAN

What is it?

EDGAR

Something's different.

SUSAN

Different how?

Edgar examines a side table with photos on it of Susan and Taylor, but no pictures of Edgar.

Like a dog with a scent, Edgar pulls open a drawer, and, sure enough, in it is the family photo with Edgar speckled in paint and his wife and daughter laughing.

Edgar takes it out and puts it back carefully on the table.

EDGAR

Really?

Susan is pissed.

SUSAN

It's not your house, Edgar. You need to go.

Edgar ignores her and checks the time on his Lego wristwatch.

He turns to the window and pulls back the curtain, peeking at the street outside.

EDGAR

Strange.

Curious, Susan goes to the window and nudges the other curtain aside.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Edgar and Susan are at the window scanning the street.

No one is outside.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edgar notices Susan next to him.

EDGAR

Get away from the window!

They both let go of the curtains and step back into the room.

SUSAN

You have to tell me what's going on. You're acting weirder than normal and you're starting to freak me out.

EDGAR

We have to go. It's not safe here.

SUSAN

What the hell are you talking about?

EDGAR

You're in danger.

Edgar takes Susan's arm and pulls her with him.

EDGAR
We need to go, now.

SUSAN
Let go of me. Let go!

Susan yanks herself free of his grip.

SUSAN
You're scaring me.

EDGAR
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I'm just trying to help you... to save you.

SUSAN
To save me from what?

Edgar scans the room first, as if someone might be listening.

EDGAR
Double Star Accounting.

SUSAN
You're trying to save *me* from *your* job?

EDGAR
Yes.

Susan smirks.

SUSAN
Now, that's funny. All these years, you've been obsessed with work, practically ignoring Taylor and me and I begged you to change, but your work... was always more important than us.

EDGAR
(weakly)
That's not true.

It's totally true.

SUSAN
Please... leave.

Edgar tries a different tack.

EDGAR
I took something from them.

SUSAN
Well, give it back.

EDGAR
I can't. It's not like that.

SUSAN
What's it like? Explain it to me.

Edgar thinks about this for a moment and points to the couch.

EDGAR
You better sit down for this.

Susan is reluctant, but her curiosity gets the better of her and she settles down amongst her papers for school.

SUSAN
Well?

Edgar begins pacing the room.

EDGAR
I lied to you... I've been lying to you. I'm not who you think I am. I'm not... an accountant. I never was.

For a moment, Edgar stands still, waiting for a response, but Susan has no idea what to say or how to react.

Edgar resumes pacing.

EDGAR
Double Star isn't an accounting firm. We work with... numbers, but not *those* kind of numbers. I'm a cryptologist. I break codes.

Suddenly, Edgar sits on the loveseat across from Susan.

EDGAR
Do you understand? I did it. I broke... *the code*. And now, I know things. Things I shouldn't know.

SUSAN
What code? The Russians?

Edgar grins.

EDGAR
No.

He points up towards the ceiling.

Susan looks more confused than ever.

SUSAN

The code is upstairs, in our
bedroom?

EDGAR

Nope.

Edgar points his hand even higher and looks up, almost as if he could see through the ceiling and the roof of the house.

EDGAR

The stars.

Susan looks up, too, trying to take this all in.

EDGAR

The code is from space.

Susan thinks about this for a moment and shakes her head.

SUSAN

This is crazy. Do you realize how
nuts you sound?

Edgar is a little hurt by this.

EDGAR

No.

SUSAN

Well, you do.

EDGAR

Here, I can explain it.

Edgar leans forward and grabs a sheet of paper off the table.

SUSAN

Hey, don't take that! It's a
student's essay. I have to grade
that.

EDGAR

This is more important.

Edgar takes a pencil and sketches in the corner of the essay.

SUSAN

Damn it.

EDGAR
The Sun, Mercury, Venus, Earth...

Edgar pauses touching this tiny sphere.

EDGAR
This is us.

SUSAN
(annoyed)
Yeah, got it.

Edgar resumes doodling.

EDGAR
Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and
Neptune.

SUSAN
What about Pluto?

EDGAR
Don't get me started.

Edgar gestures to the middle of the essay.

EDGAR
This area is the Heliosphere.
Voyager 2 is currently drifting
through it.

His finger moves to the top of the page.

EDGAR
Next is the Oort cloud, a vast open
nothingness. But here, on the edge
of it...

Now, Edgar is at the far corner of the paper and he draws two
little asterisks.

EDGAR
This is Alpha Centauri A and B, a
binary pair of stars. The closest
stars to earth. And, since the
invention of the radio telescope,
we've been listening to them for
signs of life and all we've ever
heard is static, random noise.

Edgar puts the paper down.

EDGAR

But, what if it's not random? What if there's a pattern, but we just didn't see it? Everyone is looking at the numbers, trying to decipher a sequence in the binary code, but... it's not there to be found.

He smiles mischievously.

EDGAR

There's a third star in that cluster, a tiny red dwarf, Alpha Centauri C, better known as Proxima Centauri - hidden in the night sky by the brightness of her twin sisters.

Edgar grabs a highlighter, adding light to the binary stars.

Next, he picks up a red pen, gently touching the tip of it to the page and adding a little crimson dot next to the two glowing asterisks.

Finished, he drops the red pen on the loveseat which rolls into the cushions.

EDGAR

The code isn't binary. It's trinary.

SUSAN

Trinary?

EDGAR

Our numbers are base 10.

Edgar holds up his hands.

EDGAR

Because, as luck or evolution would have it, we have ten fingers. But their numbers are base 3, because they have three stars.

Edgar writes one last time on the essay: $101 = 10$.

EDGAR

For example, in trinary, $101 = 10$ and, once you know that, you have the key to the code and you can unravel the message.

SUSAN
What's the message?

Edgar stands up.

EDGAR
Do you want some tea? I'm going to
go make tea.

Edgar doesn't wait for a reply and marches into the kitchen.

SUSAN
Edgar?

There's no answer.

Reluctantly, Susan rises and follows Edgar.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Edgar is filling the tea kettle in the sink.

SUSAN
So, and I can't believe I'm saying
this again, what's this big message
from the stars?

Edgar turns off the faucet.

EDGAR
"The future is a mystery; it is the
strange dark".

SUSAN
That's the message?

EDGAR
No. Albert Einstein said that.
The *message* is the key to unlock
that mystery.

He smiles at Susan.

EDGAR
I can see the future.

SUSAN
What did you say?

EDGAR
(slowly and with emphasis)
I can see the future.

Susan is more concerned than impressed.

SUSAN
Don't be absurd.

EDGAR
I'm not.

SUSAN
Okay, fine. I'll play your little game. How? How can you see the future?

Edgar puts the kettle on the stove.

EDGAR
You know when you close your eyes tight and you press against them, you see stars and patterns? Those are called phosphenes and, well, they aren't random. It's like constellations in the night sky. There are images hidden in there. Flashes of our future. You just need to know how to look.

Edgar turns on the gas and the flame under the kettle ignites.

EDGAR
And that's what "the message from the stars" taught me.

SUSAN
You don't need tea.

Susan turns the burner off.

SUSAN
You need to get help.
Professional help.

EDGAR
You don't believe me.

SUSAN
If I told you this whole story, would you believe me?

EDGAR
Probably.

SUSAN
Fine. Prove it to me.

EDGAR
How?

SUSAN
What am I thinking?

EDGAR
I don't know.

SUSAN
What am I going to say next?

EDGAR
I don't know that, either.

SUSAN
Well, what the hell do you know?

EDGAR
It doesn't work like that.

Edgar storms out of the kitchen.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Susan is in pursuit.

SUSAN
Then, tell me, how does it work?

Edgar, momentarily beaten down, slumps onto the couch.

EDGAR
It's like deja vu, but backwards.
I close my eyes and patterns
emerge. Phosphenes. Pictures.
And, instead of seeing things that
already happened, I get glimpses of
the future. A prophecy.

Edgar grins.

EDGAR
I call it... "phos-phhecy".

SUSAN
(mildly amused)
That's ridiculous.

EDGAR
I'm still working on the name.

Susan sits down next to him.

SUSAN

Show me. Predict something.

Edgar takes a deep breath and closes his eyes tight. After a moment, he brings his hands up to his face, making tiny fists, and presses them against his eyes, rubbing in small circles.

SUSAN

Is this going to take long?

EDGAR

Quiet.

Susan hushes and settles in as Edgar rubs his eyes harder.

EDGAR

I see something. There are... six of us, right here, in the living room. You, me, and Taylor... I don't recognize the others. One of them is lying on the floor. I think you're... blind and sort of dancing... slow dancing by yourself. And, there's blood, a lot of blood. Taylor is saying something... "Fredo". She's saying, "Fredo" and I'm just... laughing.

Edgar opens his eyes, blinking from the light.

SUSAN

You saw all that?

EDGAR

Yes.

SUSAN

From the stars?

EDGAR

It didn't come from the stars. The stars just taught me how to interpret the images and predict the future.

SUSAN

When is this going to happen?

EDGAR

I don't know. I'm still... learning how to use it.

SUSAN

Well, what does it all mean?

EDGAR

I don't really know that, either.
But, when this happens, and it will
happen, everything will be alright.
I can feel it.

Edgar smiles. Susan doesn't know what to do.

She takes Edgar's hand in hers.

SUSAN

Eddie, I don't understand.

EDGAR

I like that.

SUSAN

You like what?

EDGAR

Eddie. When you call me Eddie.
Say it again.

SUSAN

Eddie, I don't understand any of
this. We need to get you some
help.

Edgar's smile fades and he pulls his hand away.

From outside, a car door slams shut.

Edgar panics and leaps to his feet. He dashes to the window
and nervously pulls back the curtain.

EDGAR

They're here.

SUSAN

Who's here?

EDGAR

(to himself)

I've run out of time. I didn't
stop it. Maybe it can't be
stopped.

Susan rises and heads for the window.

SUSAN

Who's out there?

Edgar stops her.

EDGAR

Listen, it's too late. They've come for us and we're all in trouble now.

SUSAN

Look, if this is all true, which I don't believe, but if... then why are Taylor and I in danger?

EDGAR

Don't you understand anything? You two are all that I love in this world. If they get you, they get me.

This is the first thing Susan truly believes and it worries her.

The doorbell rings.

SUSAN

I don't know what to do.

EDGAR

I should go. If they find me, we don't stand a chance.

SUSAN

This is insane.

The doorbell rings again.

EDGAR

You can't let them know I was here. You have to lie.

SUSAN

I can't lie. You know that. I'm a terrible liar.

EDGAR

Of course you can. You teach acting. Act.

A loud knock on the front door echoes through the house.

SUSAN

(whispering)
Go out the back door.

Edgar hurries to the kitchen and Susan follows to make sure he gets away.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Edgar grabs a post-it and quickly jots something down on it. He gives the note to Susan.

SUSAN

What's this? It doesn't make any sense.

EDGAR

It will.

Susan tucks the note in her pocket.

Edgar heads for the back door as Susan returns to the living room. He checks the rear window - the coast is clear.

Edgar slips out the back door just as Susan opens the front door for Maria and Frank.

SUSAN (O.S.)

I'm sorry. I just got home, I was in the kitchen, my arms were full of groceries, I dropped the eggs and... how can I help you?

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

No one is in the kitchen.

The eggs are still shattered all over the floor.

On the counter, the carving knife is missing.

SUPER: Part 3

SUPER: Fairy Tales

SUPER: 7:50 p.m.

From the living room...

FRANK (O.S.)

Earl Grey... that's my favorite.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maria, Frank, and Susan are back at it in the living room.

Susan is having one hell of a night and she's a bit stunned.

SUSAN

I'm sorry, what did you say?

FRANK

I said, Earl Grey is my favorite.

SUSAN

Thanks, but I was talking to...

MARIA

Maria. It's Maria. And, I said, I don't want anyone to get hurt.

SUSAN

Good. I don't want that, either. But, just to be clear, who is it that's going to get hurt?

Maria smiles.

MARIA

Let's not get ahead of ourselves. No one has to get hurt.

(to Frank)

Right, Frank?

Frank slurps down the rest of his tea.

MARIA

As I said earlier, Ed took something from Double Star. He even went so far as to wipe the data from the servers and that's not... nice.

SUSAN

Have you contacted the police?

MARIA

The police? No. There's no need to involve the authorities. They're not going to help anybody. We're family at Double Star and Ed is part of that family. If it was a mistake, and I'm sure it was, it can be fixed. It's all so simple, really. We just need to get the data back. We need to find Ed.

SUSAN

You keep saying that.

MARIA

Saying what?

SUSAN

Ed. You keep calling him Ed. No one calls him that. It's Edgar. He hates it when people call him Ed.

MARIA

It sounds like you still care about him.

SUSAN

He was my husband and we have a child together. Of course I still care about him.

Susan looks at the family picture and picks it up.

SUSAN

When Taylor was little, she was scared of the dark. So, Edgar painted stars on her bedroom ceiling in glow-in-the-dark paint. He got paint *everywhere*, but the stars were totally accurate. He taught her the constellations and told her the stories behind them. He made nighttime... fun.

MARIA

How clever.

Susan puts the photograph back.

SUSAN

Well, that was nine years ago and it's been a long time since Edgar was fun. I think... he forgot about us.

MARIA

Oh, I doubt that.

Susan, embarrassed, turns away.

SUSAN

Like I said, it's for the best.

MARIA

What about Edgar? Does he think it's for the best?

SUSAN

No. I think he's... confused. He needs help.

MARIA

I agree. Maybe we can help him together.

SUSAN

I don't know.

MARIA

So, do you know where he is?

SUSAN

No.

MARIA

Why don't I believe you?

Maria reaches into her pocket and pulls out the sheet she tucked away earlier. She unfolds it and places it on the table in front of Susan.

MARIA

What's this?

SUSAN

It's one of my student's essays. What are you doing with it?

MARIA

Not the essay, but here on the sides...

Maria points at the corners.

MARIA

What are these sketches?

Susan gives it a cursory glance.

SUSAN

It's nothing. Sometimes kids doodle.

MARIA

What about Edgar? Does he... doodle?

SUSAN

(unconvincingly)
I don't know what you're talking about.

Frank checks his watch. He looks impatiently at Maria.

FRANK

This is takin' too long and it's getting late. What do you wanna do about "The Kid"?

MARIA

Frank, I've got this.

SUSAN

What kid?

FRANK

I'm just sayin'.

Susan is suddenly very concerned.

SUSAN

Taylor? Do you have Taylor?

MARIA

Susan, you need to calm down.

SUSAN

Where's my daughter?

Maria turns on Frank.

MARIA

See what you did?

FRANK

I didn't do nothin'.

SUSAN

Where's Taylor?

MARIA

One thing. I asked you to do one goddamn thing. Let me do the talking. How hard is that?

FRANK

You talk too much.

SUSAN

Will someone tell me where my FUCKING daughter is?

Maria swivels back to Susan and smiles.

MARIA

Look at that, mama bear has claws. I understand. I do. But, one question at a time and I asked first. Where's Ed?

Susan isn't sure what to do.

MARIA

Don't think too much and don't tell me you don't know. Let's end this, now. It'll be better for everyone.

Susan leans forward - this is painful to say.

SUSAN

(quietly)

He's hiding in the kitchen.

Frank rises quickly and storms into the kitchen.

SUSAN

Please, don't hurt him.

MARIA

Is that what you think of us?

Maria calls after Frank.

MARIA

Frank, don't hurt him, just bring him here.

Turning back to Susan.

MARIA

Is that better?

From the kitchen, the sound of cupboards slamming open.

FRANK (O.S.)

He's not here.

MARIA

Are you sure?

FRANK (O.S.)

It's a kitchen, there aren't that many places to hide.

Maria turns on Susan.

MARIA

What are you playing at?

SUSAN

He was there, I swear.

FRANK (O.S.)

The eggs are broken all over the floor. She was telling the truth about that.

SUSAN
Where's Taylor?

MARIA
No, no, no. We still haven't
answered my question.

From the kitchen, the sound of broken dishes.

FRANK (O.S.)
He's not in the dishwasher.

MARIA
Oh, for fuck's sake. You want to
check the freezer, too?

FRANK (O.S.)
How would he fit in the freezer?

Maria rolls her eyes.

MARIA
You see what I have to work with?
Dumber than a wind-up monkey, but,
still, he's *my* monkey.

Maria shouts to Frank.

MARIA
It was sarcasm. I was being
sarcastic.

Frank appears in the door frame.

FRANK
I don't like sarcasm.

MARIA
How would you know? You can't even
spell sarcasm.

FRANK
You think you're funny. You're not
that funny.

MARIA
Alright, Frank, don't get your
trousers in a twist.

Maria rises and turns on Susan.

MARIA
You, come with me. Let's go see
about these *broken eggs*.

Susan follows Maria and Frank into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The eggs are getting sticky all over the floor.

The cupboards are open and ransacked.

An amateur Sherlock, Maria searches for clues as Susan and Frank watch.

Maria moves slowly through the kitchen as if following some invisible trail. On the counter is the full bunch of grapes, with one missing.

MARIA

He was here.

Maria turns on Susan.

MARIA

Tell me, are there any weapons in the house?

Susan glances at the knife block. The carving knife is gone.

SUSAN

No.

MARIA

Good. That's good.

Maria reaches the back door - it's slightly ajar.

She pulls it open and peers out into the inky blackness of the backyard.

SUSAN

He must have left.

MARIA

What do you think, Frank?

FRANK

You wanna know what I think?

MARIA

That's why I asked.

FRANK

S-A-R-C-A-S-M.

MARIA
Oh, you're hysterical.

Frank just smirks.

Maria closes the door and locks it.

MARIA
Well, I think he's still here
somewhere. Something tells me, he
wouldn't leave you alone... with
us.

From somewhere in the house, maybe upstairs, there's a
muffled thump.

MARIA
Did you hear that?

FRANK
On it.

Frank stomps out of the kitchen and up the stairs.

MARIA
While Frank searches the house, you
and I can have a little chat in the
living room.

Maria leads the way.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maria settles down on the loveseat and Susan nervously tries
to get comfortable on the couch.

MARIA
You're a teacher. I respect that.
I'm a sort of teacher, too. I
teach people what they can and
can't do.

From upstairs, the sound of Frank opening a door and
searching a room.

MARIA
Are you a good teacher? I bet you
are.

SUSAN
I try to be.

MARIA
Me, too. It's important, I think,
to take pride in your work.

From upstairs, another door and another room.

SUSAN
And you... are you proud?

MARIA
You think I'm a... monster? You
may be right.

A crash from upstairs. Was that a lamp?

Susan looks concerned.

MARIA
Are you worried about Frank? He's
really very sweet... a big pitbull,
lovable and loyal. But, he does
bite.

SUSAN
Where's Taylor?

MARIA
You're worried about your daughter.
Of course you are. How silly of
me. People worry about the ones
they love. I should have thought
of that before.

From upstairs, a third door opens.

MARIA
I bet Ed is worried about you.

Maria turns towards the stairs.

MARIA
FRANK!

Frank, a little sweaty, appears at the top of the stairs.

FRANK
What?

MARIA
Come here and have a seat.

Frank trundles downstairs and sits next to his partner.

MARIA

We've been doing this all wrong.
Ed's going to come to us.

SUSAN

Why is he going to do that?

MARIA

I'm going to call him.

Maria leans forward and lets loose with a furious slap to Susan's face that echoes throughout the house and knocks her sideways.

Susan can't help but let out a tiny whimper.

Susan sits up slowly, clutching her face, her eyes filled with pain and terror.

MARIA

Do you think Ed heard me calling
him?

Frank smiles.

FRANK

No. Call him again.

Maria is about to when...

EDGAR (O.S.)

I heard you the first time.

Edgar stands in the dining room doorframe.

Frank rises, waiting for orders.

MARIA

You're a sneaky one, Ed. Where
have you been hiding?

EDGAR

(to Susan)
Are you alright?

Susan nods.

MARIA

She's peachy. But, how come no
one's asking about me? I broke a
nail.

Maria holds up her hand. She's not lying.

She puts her hand down.

MARIA

Now, why don't you come and join
the party?

Maria points to an empty chair.

Edgar shuffles over and takes his spot.

Frank remains standing.

EDGAR

I'm here now and it's me you want.
Let her go.

MARIA

So, you're a hero now?

EDGAR

I'm no hero.

MARIA

No, you're definitely not. What
you are, Ed, is a thief. And theft
has consequences. Isn't that
right, Frank?

Frank just stares, waiting to pounce.

MARIA

Let's start with something simple.
Explain to me what you wrote on
this paper.

Maria gestures to the paper on the table, only it's not
there.

MARIA

Where did it go?

EDGAR

Where did what go?

MARIA

It was just here.

Maria looks around the room. She flips through all the
essays. She even looks under the table. It's gone.

MARIA

(to Susan)
Did you take it?

SUSAN

When could I take it? I was with you.

MARIA

Frank?

FRANK

Why would I have it?

MARIA

I don't know, I just thought someone had to...

Finally, it dawns on Maria.

MARIA

(to Edgar)

It was you. You did this.

EDGAR

What did I do?

Maria grins slightly.

MARIA

They warned us, back at the office. They said, be careful, Ed's on to something. What was the phrase they used... expect the unexpected. That's it. Expect the unexpected. So, how did you do it?

EDGAR

I can't say.

MARIA

You can't say or you won't say?

EDGAR

What's the difference?

MARIA

Semantics? Is this a game to you, Ed? Are we playing now?

EDGAR

I don't know. What are the rules?

MARIA

There are no rules in this game. We just make it up as we go along. That's what makes it fun.

SUSAN
I don't like this game.

MARIA
How would you know? You haven't
played yet. Besides, it's Ed's
turn now. You're next.

EDGAR
How do I play?

MARIA
I'll ask you a question and you
answer it. Tell me the truth and
you win. Lie to me and you lose.
Frank's the judge.

Frank steps closer to Edgar, hovering over him.

EDGAR
Let's play.

MARIA
You took something from Double Star
Accounting?

EDGAR
Yes.

MARIA
Data?

EDGAR
Yes.

MARIA
And you erased all that data on the
servers?

EDGAR
Yes.

MARIA
Three for three. You're good at
this game.

Edgar smiles.

MARIA
But, you must have made a copy of
the numbers. Taken it with you.
Hidden it somewhere?

EDGAR

No.

MARIA

Don't lie to me.

EDGAR

I work with numbers. All day.
Every day. And, I like it.
Numbers don't lie. I don't lie.

MARIA

You're telling me the data is gone?

EDGAR

No.

MARIA

Then, where is our data?

EDGAR

It's all locked up in here.

Edgar points to his brain.

MARIA

That's good news. I brought a
locksmith. Frank.

Suddenly, Frank unleashes a horrific punch, his massive fist shattering Edgar's nose. Blood sprays everywhere as Edgar flips over backwards in the chair. Edgar's knocked unconscious even before he hits the floor.

SUSAN

EDDIE!

Edgar lies motionless on the floor, blood running out his nose and down his face.

Susan kneels at his side, cradling his head.

SUSAN

Eddie? Eddie?
(to Maria)
What did you do?

MARIA

(unconvincingly)
He'll be alright. He just needs a
minute. Right, Frank?

Frank isn't sure and hunches his shoulders in reply.

Susan gently slaps Edgar's cheeks trying to bring him around.

SUSAN

Eddie, open your eyes. Wake up.
Eddie?

Susan turns to her captors.

SUSAN

Whatever he did, we can fix it,
make it right. He's sick. He's
been talking nonsense... strange
stories. He needs help.

Edgar's eyes flicker open. He spits up some blood. He's dazed, but alive.

MARIA

See? He's fine. Frank, help him
up.

Frank lifts the chair up with Edgar still in it.

Susan returns to her seat and takes Edgar's hand.

SUSAN

Are you okay?

Edgar gives his head a small shake, clearing out the cobwebs.

EDGAR

(to Maria)
I told the truth.

MARIA

Well, the rules changed and I
didn't like your answer. Are you
ready for the next question?

SUSAN

Stop this!

MARIA

Still not your turn, Susan.

EDGAR

(to Susan)
I'm okay.

Edgar looks miles from okay, but he turns to Maria, ready for the next round.

EDGAR

Shoot.

MARIA
Why?

EDGAR
Why what?

MARIA
Why did you do it?

EDGAR
Because, in the wrong hands, it's dangerous.

MARIA
And you're the right hands.

EDGAR
I don't know. Maybe.

Maria tries a different approach.

MARIA
Your wife says you've been telling fairy tales. Is that true? Have you been making up stories?

Edgar disappointed, looks at his wife. She turns away.

EDGAR
No.

MARIA
Well, I would sure love to hear one of these tales. Frank loves a good bedtime story. Don't you, Frank?

Edgar wipes some of the blood off his face with the back of his sleeve. He actually seems a little disappointed.

EDGAR
(to himself)
This is not enough blood.

SUSAN
What did you say?

Edgar ignores her.

EDGAR
(to Maria)
Do you even know what it is you're trying to get back?

MARIA

Tell me.

EDGAR

It's Pandora's box.

MARIA

Pandora?

Frank perks up.

FRANK

It's a greek myth about a jar created by the Gods, filled with darkness and malice. Pandora is warned not to open it, but her curiosity gets the better of her and she opens it and unleashes evil upon the world.

Everyone stares at Frank.

FRANK

What? I read.

MARIA

Well, that sounds scary.

EDGAR

You have no idea.

MARIA

But, I am curious. In this story, am I Pandora?

SUSAN

Enough. Edgar, please, stop with the stories. Just give them what they want.

MARIA

You know, you really should listen to your wife.

EDGAR

I can't do that.

SUSAN

Yes, you can. You have to. They have Taylor.

For a moment, Edgar is unsure, but then he closes his eyes and rubs them, like before.

Maria watches, intrigued. Frank is restless.

Edgar opens his eyes, takes a long hard look at Maria and Frank, and then turns to his wife.

EDGAR
No, they don't.

SUSAN
What are you talking about?

EDGAR
(quietly)
I explained all this.

SUSAN
It doesn't make sense. None of this does. You're not well. I wish I knew how to help you, but I don't. So, I'm going to help our daughter.

EDGAR
What are you going to do?

Susan turns from Edgar and fixes on Maria.

SUSAN
I can tell you about the doodles.

EDGAR
No. Really? MARIA

Edgar rises out of his chair.

EDGAR
Don't do it! Frank. MARIA

Frank pushes Edgar back down and holds him there.

MARIA
You were saying...

SUSAN
I mean, I can tell you what he told me. It's ridiculous, but if I tell you, will you let Taylor go?

MARIA
It will be like we never even had her.

EDGAR
Susan, you have to trust me.

MARIA
(to Frank)
Don't let him interrupt us again.

Frank's grip on Edgar tightens and it's clearly painful.

MARIA
Please continue.

SUSAN
He said... Edgar said he could see
the future.

MARIA
Really? That is crazy. Tell me
about his drawing.

SUSAN
He sketched the planets and the
solar system. He said there was a
signal from the stars. From a
star. I think he said, something
Centauri.

MARIA
What about the numbers on the page?

SUSAN
He said he was trying to break the
code, that it wasn't binary. It
was...

EDGAR
Don't...

Frank wraps his beefy arm around Edgar's neck and constricts,
shutting Edgar up. Edgar's face turns red, his eyes bulging.

Susan, trembling, turns to Edgar.

MARIA
Quickly, the Proxima code or Frank
snaps it.

Susan stops shaking and turns on Maria. Something is wrong.

SUSAN
What did you say?

MARIA
You heard me.

SUSAN
Say it again. Please.

MARIA
(confused)
I said, the Proxima code or Frank
snaps it.

Susan pulls the post-it from her pocket.

On it is Edgar's scribble from earlier, "the Proxima code or Frank snaps it". A perfect match.

Susan looks up in disbelief.

SUSAN
This can't be.

MARIA
What is it?

Susan is shaken, thinking what to do next.

Maria snatches the note away from her.

MARIA
I don't understand. Who wrote
this?
(to Edgar)
Did you write this?

Frank releases his grip on Edgar.

Edgar gulps for air, the blood draining from his face.

MARIA
When did you do this?

SUSAN
(to herself)
I'm such a fool.

MARIA
(to Edgar)
Tell me.

Her decision made, Susan leans forward towards the tea tray, slides her hand under the cloth napkin, and quickly pulls out the missing carving knife.

Just as fast, she brings the blade to Maria's neck.

Maria stops moving, the knife already having nicked her and drawing a little blood.

SUSAN

My turn to play and I'm changing
the rules.

Frank looks at Maria. What should he do? Maria calmly holds
her hand up, signaling him to stop and wait.

SUSAN

Let him go.

Maria nods and Frank complies.

MARIA

So, what's next?

SUSAN

I'm asking the questions now.
Where's Taylor? Is she alright?

MARIA

Honestly, I have no idea.

SUSAN

What do you mean?

MARIA

I've never even seen your daughter.

EDGAR

I tried to tell you. We should go.
Now.

Edgar heads towards the front door.

EDGAR

Bring her.

Susan rises, and with the knife at her neck, Maria follows.

They open the front door and standing there is THE KID (24).
He's ex-military and a sadist with a baby-face. Eager to
prove himself, he grins at Edgar and Susan like a cheshire
cat.

THE KID

Going somewhere?

SUSAN

Who are you?

EDGAR

I've seen you... before.

THE KID

Where?

Edgar points to his head.

EDGAR

In here.

THE KID

Cool.

The Kid raises a strange gun, a sort of metallic looking taser, but it's no taser.

THE KID

Did you see this?

The Kid fires, electricity crackles, and a blinding light shoots out.

Edgar, Susan, and Maria collapse in a heap on the floor.

EXT. STREET - EARLIER

It's the same night, the same street, and the same house. The VW is in the driveway, but no SUV is in sight.

The lights are on in the house and Edgar peeks out through the living room curtains.

Susan appears next to him. They both scan the empty road. When Edgar suddenly pulls away, Susan follows, and the curtains close.

SUPER: Part 4

SUPER: The Kid

SUPER: 35 Minutes Earlier

For a moment, the neighborhood is peaceful and quiet until an SUV with dark tinted windows rumbles down the street. It drives slowly, searching, then stops in front of the house.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Frank's massive hands grip the steering wheel. Maria is in the passenger seat and staring at the home, sizing it up.

MARIA

This is the place.

Frank turns off the ignition.

MARIA

So, what do you think?

FRANK
About what?

MARIA
The house.

FRANK
I dunno... it's a house.

MARIA
Wow, you have a real way with words, Frank. You're a goddamn poet.

Frank just ignores her.

MARIA
Me, I could never live in a house like this. In the...
(with disgust)
suburbs. I mean, what the hell do you do all day, bake cookies and go to PTA meetings? I'd rather be dead.

Maria lifts a manila folder. Stamped on the front of it is "Double Star Accounting - Confidential".

Opening it, there's a picture of Edgar wearing an ill-fitting business suit and an awkward smile.

Maria touches Edgar's face with her perfectly manicured nails. She looks back at the house.

MARIA
Do you think he's in there?

FRANK
Not if he's smart.

Maria flips through the pages in the folder.

MARIA
That's just it. Says here, he's a fucking genius. A savant with numbers. Do you know what a savant is, Frank?

Frank is getting sick of all these questions and just stares out the windshield, expressionless.

FRANK
I dunno... everyone bleeds the same.

MARIA

True enough. But, let's not start with that, okay?

Maria puts the folder away.

MARIA

Let's go in there and make nice. Maybe this doesn't have to get ugly. Can we do that?

Frank is stony silent.

MARIA

Frank? You listening? Can you do that?

Frank turns to Maria.

FRANK

Yeah, I'm listening. Yeah, I can do that.

MARIA

Good. Then, let's go.

Before they can leave, a voice pipes up from the back seat.

THE KID (O.S.)

What about me?

The Kid's been back there this whole time, eager and waiting for his moment.

FRANK

What about you?

THE KID

What am I supposed to do?

MARIA

You stay out here and watch... in case someone tries to leave the house.

THE KID

But, I want to come inside, too.

MARIA

Well, we need you out here.

THE KID

This is bullshit.

FRANK
Why'd we have to bring The Kid?

THE KID
I have a name.

FRANK
No one cares.

THE KID
Screw you, Frank!

MARIA
Will the two of you shut up? If I
wanted children, I would have had
them.

Everyone settles down.

The Kid gives it one last try. He raises his hand; in it is
that metallic laser gun, the Helios.

THE KID
I've trained. I'm ready.

FRANK
Good Lord! "Eager beaver" brought
a pop gun.

MARIA
What are you doing with that?

THE KID
It's the Helios.

MARIA
I know what the hell it is. It's
fucking dangerous and we don't need
it.

THE KID
I like it.

MARIA
Give it to me.

The Kid leans back in his seat.

THE KID
(quietly)
No.

Frank looks at Maria waiting for an order to retrieve it, but
it doesn't come.

MARIA

I don't want to see you or that gun
out of this fucking car.

THE KID

You're not the boss of me.

Frank chuckles at this.

MARIA

Like hell I'm not. We work for
your father. Not for you. Do you
understand?

THE KID

Fine.

Maria softens.

MARIA

Look, it's your first OP. Just...
stay here and don't do anything
stupid.

The Kid watches Maria slip out of the SUV and close the door
gently behind her.

Frank turns on The Kid.

FRANK

Just don't do... anything. Daddy
wouldn't want you gettin' hurt.

Frank steps out and slams the door.

The Kid, watches them, through the tinted windows.

MARIA (O.S.)

Do you have to be so damn loud?

The Kid is annoyed. He's angry.

He holds up the Helios. It pulses in the darkness.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Frank watches Edgar, Susan, and Maria standing at the front
door, the knife still at Maria's throat.

The Kid's hand, holding the Helios, rises from outside and
into view.

THE KID (O.S.)
Did you see this?

Frank quickly closes his eyes and turns away.

The Helios fires, electricity crackles, and a blinding light fills the room.

When Frank turns back, Edgar, Susan, and Maria have collapsed in a heap on the floor.

SUPER: Part 5

SUPER: Countdown

SUPER: 8:00 p.m.

The Kid steps over the bodies and into the house, closing the door behind him.

FRANK
(to the Kid)
What the hell are you doing here?

THE KID
You guys left me in the car. I got bored.

FRANK
Maria told you to stay in the car and I told you not to do anything.

THE KID
Quit your moaning, will you? It looks like I was saving your ass, anyway.

FRANK
We had it under control.

The Kid bends down and picks up the carving knife.

THE KID
Oh, is this what control looks like?

FRANK
I told Maria it was a mistake to bring a kid.

THE KID
Whatever, old man.

FRANK

Look, it's a game of cat and mouse and sometimes, you gotta pretend you're the mouse to get what you want.

THE KID

Oh, so, you were... pretending?

FRANK

Quit busting my chops. You know what? I'm done jawing with you. Help me pick Maria up and put her on the couch.

Frank and The Kid lift Maria, carry her over, and place her down carefully on the couch.

FRANK

I wouldn't wanna be you when Maria wakes up. She's gonna be pissed.

THE KID

I thought you were done talking to me.

The Kid smirks. Frank is not amused.

FRANK

You and me, we're gonna settle this later.

THE KID

Why not now?

FRANK

Because, I'm a professional. You wouldn't know anything about that. Look at you, you're wearing sneakers and playing with toys. When the work is done, we'll dance.

THE KID

Awesome. I'm looking forward to it. You just let me know when.

FRANK

Count on it.

Frank checks on Maria. She's still out.

THE KID

What about these two?

The Kid kicks at Edgar and Susan.

FRANK

Put 'em on the love seat.

THE KID

Why do I have to move both of them?

Frank sits on the couch next to Maria. He gently places her head in his lap as he tries to bring her around.

FRANK

'Cause, I'm supervising.

The Kid begrudgingly lifts up Susan, walks over, and plops her down on the love seat.

He goes back for Edgar, but he's heavier. The Kid lets out an accidental grunt as he throws Edgar over his shoulder.

Frank is enjoying this.

FRANK

Lift with your legs.

The Kid stumbles to the love seat and drops Edgar next to Susan like a sack of potatoes - both of them still unconscious.

The Kid's a little winded.

THE KID

You know, he's heavier than he looks.

FRANK

If you say so, Kid.

The Kid and Frank eye each other. Is this fight really going to wait until the work is done?

Just then, Maria wakes with a start, gasping for air, almost as if she'd been under water for too long.

FRANK

You're okay. You had a little shut-eye - that's all. Just breathe. Slow breaths.

Maria's breathing slows down.

FRANK

That's better.

She blinks, adjusting to the light.

MARIA

The Kid, he was... he was there...
at the door... he shot us with that
goddamn Helios.

FRANK

I know.

The Kid looks a little nervous.

FRANK

He's right here if you wanna talk
to him about it.

Frank smiles like a kid getting his brother in trouble.

Maria, groggy and angry, forces herself into an upright
position. She raises her head and fixes on The Kid.

THE KID

I wasn't aiming for you.

MARIA

I don't give a good goddamn who you
were aiming at. I told you to stay
in the car.

Maria's strength returns with her fury.

MARIA

I gave you an order. Who the hell
do you think you are to disobey me?
We're not some goddamn amateurs!
We're professionals.

FRANK

That's just what I told him.

Maria doesn't need (or want) Frank's help.

She rises and steps closer to The Kid, who instinctively
takes a cautious step back.

MARIA

I don't care who your daddy is.
Out here, in the field, there's a
chain of command and I'm at the
tippity top of it. You're at the
bottom of that chain dragging on
the ground. Do you understand?

THE KID

Yes, Ma'am.

MARIA

Good. Now, give it to me.

Maria holds out her hand.

The Kid, an unhappy and admonished child, reluctantly places the Helios in her palm.

Maria tucks the gun away.

MARIA

(to herself)

My fucking head is killing me.

Frank is disappointed.

FRANK

Is that it?

MARIA

What do you want me to do, shoot him?

Frank shrugs his shoulders - it's not the worst idea.

Maria finally notices Edgar and Susan slumped together on the couch.

MARIA

(to The Kid)

Get some water from the kitchen. We need to wake these two up.

The Kid obediently sets off for the water.

FRANK

So, what's the plan?

MARIA

First, we get them up. Then...
countdown.

FRANK

You think it'll work?

MARIA

When hasn't it?

Frank smiles at this.

From the kitchen, the sound of water running.

FRANK

So, what do you think, two or three? My money's on three. You want the over or the under?

MARIA

I'm not betting with you.

FRANK

I know, but if you were, the over or the under?

Maria can't help but play this game.

MARIA

The over. He's tougher than you think.

The Kid returns with a full plastic bucket dripping water over the side.

MARIA

What the hell is that?

THE KID

You asked for water.

MARIA

You want to drown them or maybe just give them a bath?

THE KID

What should I do?

MARIA

Bring me a cup.

The Kid, now eager to please, starts to walk away with the water.

MARIA

Leave the bucket.

He does and heads off to the kitchen.

Maria rubs at her temples.

Frank rolls his eyes.

MARIA

Don't. Don't say it.

FRANK

I'm not saying nothin'.

MARIA

But, you're thinking it.

That's true, so Frank tries to settle and stay quiet.

The Kid returns with a plastic cup.

THE KID

Will this do?

MARIA

Perfect.

The Kid smiles, happy to have finally done something right.

Maria dips the cup in the water and splashes Edgar in the face.

He startles awake and, like Maria, his first breath is massive.

MARIA

Wakey, wakey.

Edgar wipes at the water on his face, sputtering and trying to catch his breath and calm down.

EDGAR

What... happened? What was that...
light? My head.

MARIA

The headache after is the worst.
You have the Helios to thank for
that.

EDGAR

The Helios?

MARIA

You're not the only one with a
secret, Ed. What do you think
everyone else at Double Star is
doing? Working with numbers?
There are a lot of people who work
there, with a lot of secret
projects. Right now, though, I
want to know your secrets, Ed.

Maria dips the cup in the water.

MARIA

And, I bet your wife, I mean, your
ex-wife would like to hear them,
too.

Maria throws water in Susan's face.

INT. KITCHEN - FLASHBACK

The kitchen is empty and the eggs are still broken.

SUSAN (O.S.)

You said, Edgar's in some trouble.

Slowly, the back door creeps open and in slips Edgar,
silently closing the door behind him.

He listens to Maria intently.

MARIA (O.S.)

I'm afraid so. It might just be a
misunderstanding, but there's a
problem with some of his numbers.
Some data has gone missing. And,
like I said, it's probably just an
accident. I'm sure he could
explain it all, but we've been
unable to reach him.

Momentarily worried, Edgar gets an idea, he turns the flame
on under the tea kettle.

SUSAN (O.S.)

That doesn't sound like Edgar.

MARIA (O.S.)

So, do you know where we might find
him?

SUSAN (O.S.)

Not really.

Edgar turns the flame up higher.

MARIA (O.S.)

Well, have you noticed any changes
in his behavior lately?

SUSAN (O.S.)

Changes... I really couldn't say.

MARIA (O.S.)

Because of the divorce?

SUSAN (O.S.)
Separation.

MARIA (O.S.)
If you don't mind my asking, what
led to your separation?

Edgar leans closer to the doorway, he really wants to hear
this answer.

SUSAN (O.S.)
That's... personal.

MARIA (O.S.)
Of course... I understand. I only
ask because, well, I don't know how
else to say this, but, you're in
danger.

The tea kettle whistles and for a second it even startles
Edgar.

He tucks behind the kitchen counter. Waiting.

SUSAN (O.S.)
I almost forgot, the kettle... I
put water on for tea... before you
arrived. Would either of you like
some tea?

MARIA (O.S.)
I'm fine.

FRANK (O.S.)
I'll have a cup.

Edgar grabs the carving knife off the counter.

SUSAN (O.S.)
Great. Great. I'll just be a
minute.

Susan cautiously enters the kitchen, not quite sure what
she'll find, and not exactly relieved to discover Edgar has
returned.

Susan and Edgar speak in strained whispers.

EDGAR
It's just me.

SUSAN
I know it's you. Why the hell did
you come back?

EDGAR

We have to fulfill the phos-phony.

SUSAN

Please stop saying that word.

EDGAR

I thought I could take you away
before they got here. Then I
thought I could run away. But, I
realized, we can't avoid our fate.

Susan turns off the flame and the tea kettle simmers down.

SUSAN

Let me get this straight. You're
saying to survive tonight, someone
has to lie on the floor, there
needs to be a blood sacrifice,
Taylor (who isn't here) needs to
call out someone's name (who also
isn't here), and I need to be blind
and dancing. Is that all?

EDGAR

I need to be laughing.

Susan's head is spinning.

SUSAN

I don't even know where to begin.

Edgar points towards the living room.

EDGAR

You should check on them.

SUSAN

And say what?

EDGAR

Just do it. Before they get
suspicious.

Susan is about to protest, as Edgar practically pushes her
out the door.

SUSAN (O.S.)

Do you take sugar with your tea?

Edgar gathers the tea tray, a cloth napkin, and a couple of
tea cups.

FRANK (O.S.)

No.

SUSAN (O.S.)

I'll be right back then.

Susan returns to the kitchen. As she comes through the door, her happy facade fades away.

SUSAN

This is madness. What do you expect me to do?

Edgar thrusts the carving knife towards Susan.

EDGAR

Take this knife.

SUSAN

What? No. I don't want the knife.

EDGAR

Take it.

SUSAN

No.

EDGAR

You have to! It will all come down to this.

Susan begrudgingly takes the knife and slips it under the cloth napkin.

EDGAR

I love you.

SUSAN

I hate you.

Susan coldly turns away from Edgar, picks up the tray, forces herself to smile, and disappears back into the living room.

Edgar closes his eyes and rubs at them.

SUSAN (O.S.)

Careful, it's hot and still needs another minute to steep.

Edgar's eyes open and he scans the kitchen.

SUSAN (O.S.)

You were saying before, something about danger?

He spies a small dish towel and stuffs it in his pocket.

One last look around the kitchen, and then, he grabs a grape from the bunch on the counter, pops it in his mouth, and sneaks away.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Susan startles awake as water drips down her face.

MARIA

Welcome back to the light.

Susan blinks, trying to adjust to the light in the room. But she can't.

SUSAN

What's going on? Why is it so bright?

Susan rubs at her eyes.

SUSAN

I can't see anything.

Susan turns her head wildly, her hands feeling the air, trying to figure out where she is and what's going on.

EDGAR

Susan, I'm right here beside you.
You're okay.

Edgar takes her hand.

SUSAN

All I can see is light. Where are we?

EDGAR

On the couch... in our living room.
(to Maria)
Is this normal?

Maria, Frank, and The Kid exchange looks. This is clearly not normal.

MARIA

This is... totally normal. A common side-effect of the Helios. It'll pass.

The Kid nods in agreement. Frank crosses his arms, annoyed.

FRANK
Great job, Kid.

Maria claps once loudly.

MARIA
Everyone, focus! Let's get back to the reason we're all here. We have a game to play and we're about to start Round Two, where the questions are harder and the prizes are doubled.

EDGAR
Prizes?

MARIA
It's an expression.

Maria sits down across from Edgar and Susan.

MARIA
Now, you have something I want - that sheet of paper with the numbers that mysteriously vanished.

EDGAR
I don't have it.

MARIA
So you said. But, and I apologize if this hurts your feelings, I don't believe you.

Susan looks blankly in the general direction of Maria.

SUSAN
Edgar is a lot of things, but he's not a liar.

MARIA
Really? And what did you think he was doing for a living these last twelve years?

That's true and it stings a little.

EDGAR
(quietly)
I'm sorry about that.

Maria goes back to being host.

MARIA
So, we're going to play a game.
Countdown.

EDGAR
What are the rules?

MARIA
I ask you where the paper is and
you have ten chances to tell me.

EDGAR
Why ten?

MARIA
Because that's how many fingers you
have.

Frank suddenly comes up behind Edgar and grabs his wrist, wrenching his hand free from Susan's. He thrusts Edgar's hand down on the coffee table, his fingers splayed out.

Edgar tries to struggle, but it's no use - he's a kitten caught in a bear trap.

MARIA
(to The Kid)
Grab the knife.

The Kid takes the carving knife and holds it over Edgar's pinky.

THE KID
I'm ready.

SUSAN
What are they doing?

EDGAR
It's nothing. Just a game.

Susan feels around, finds Edgar's arm, and traces it down to the coffee table.

SUSAN
What the hell? You don't have to
do this.

The Kid looks excited, maybe even eager to make the cut.

EDGAR
I don't think we have a choice.

MARIA
Let's begin. First chance.

Susan is freaking out.

SUSAN
Please! I'm begging you.

EDGAR
It's okay. There has to be more
blood.

Susan remembers Edgar's prophecy.

SUSAN
Oh my God.

MARIA
Enough nonsense.

Maria leans forward, staring into Edgar's eyes.

MARIA
Where's the paper?

EDGAR
I don't know.

Maria pauses for a moment, disappointed. She leans back in her chair.

She nods at The Kid.

And with that, the knife comes down fast and hard.

A sickening crunch and Edgar's pinky falls onto the table.

Edgar shuts his eyes and lets out a quick low moan.

Susan grabs on to Edgar for support.

MARIA
You still with us, Ed?

Edgar opens his eyes and speaks through gritted teeth.

EDGAR
I'm not going to lie... that
hurt... more than I expected.

Blood pools on the table. A lot of blood.

Edgar whispers to Susan.

EDGAR

I think that's enough blood.

SUSAN

Someone stop this.

MARIA

No stopping. You have nine more chances to answer my question.

The Kid slides the knife over Edgar's ring finger.

MARIA

I see you're still wearing your wedding ring?

EDGAR

We're still married.

MARIA

For now.

Once again, Maria leans forward.

MARIA

Where's... my... paper?

Edgar is about to answer, but before he can, there is a muffled noise from upstairs - maybe a window opening.

MARIA

What the hell was that?

SUSAN

A mouse.

MARIA

A mouse?

SUSAN

In the attic?

Outside the living room window, two feet appear, dangling down from above. They hover there for a moment, trying to find some footing, but only scraping on the glass.

Everyone turns to look as a body drops down to the hedges below.

MARIA

Big mouse.

EXT. HOUSE - EARLIER

It's the same night, the same street, and the same house. No cars are in the driveway or on the street.

SUPER: Part 6

SUPER: Mice in the Attic

SUPER: 70 Minutes Earlier

The house is dark, except for one lamp in an upstairs bedroom.

INT. TAYLOR'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The walls were pretty and pink at one time, but now they're covered in posters of the rock gods Taylor worships - mostly female punk singers with spiky hair and attitude.

COLE (15), a rocker wannabe, falls back on the bed - was he pushed? His eyes open wide in anticipation. He licks his lips.

TAYLOR (15), a rebel with a cause, climbs on top of Cole, her legs straddling him. Her hair is shaved on one side and dyed on the other. There's a fire in her eyes.

TAYLOR
Say that shit again.

COLE
I said, the Violent Femmes are my favorite girl band.

TAYLOR
You're a fucking idiot.

Taylor bends down and kisses Cole. It's long, messy, and wet.

Suddenly, Cole stops.

COLE
Wait, where's your mom?

TAYLOR
Where she always is, at rehearsal.

COLE
For Macbeth?

TAYLOR
Don't say it out loud - it's bad
luck.

Cole pulls Taylor close and the kissing resumes.
In the distance, the muffled sound of a car door.
Cole stops again.

COLE
Did you hear that?

Taylor lifts her head and listens.

TAYLOR
I don't hear anything. Do you want
to do this or what?

COLE
Sorry.

TAYLOR
Shut up.

Taylor leans in and they're back at it, hotter and heavier
than before.

After a moment, Taylor comes up for air.

COLE
What's wrong?

She has a fucking brilliant idea.

TAYLOR
We should form a band.

COLE
With who?

TAYLOR
Nobody. We don't need anybody
else.

COLE
But, we don't play any instruments.

TAYLOR
So what? You don't need to know
how to play an instrument to be in
a punk band. It's about your
attitude. You have to be fucking
angry.

COLE
I'm fucking angry.

Cole is definitely not angry.

TAYLOR
I'll sing and play guitar. You'll
be on drums.

COLE
I can do that.

TAYLOR
Cool.

COLE
Cool.

This is exciting.

They stare at each other for a moment and then Taylor peels off her shirt revealing a black sports bra. Cole kicks off his pants; he's sporting tighty-whities.

They fall back onto the bed kissing, as arms and legs entwine.

TAYLOR
Wait, my boots.

Taylor kicks off her big leather Doc Martens and they thud on the floor.

The only sound is the two of them breathing heavy and swapping spit until a voice calls out from downstairs.

SUSAN (O.S.)
Taylor? Is that you?

The two teens freeze.

Complete and total fear.

SUSAN (O.S.)
Taylor? Are you home?

They speak in panicked whispers.

COLE
Is that your mom?

TAYLOR
Fuck, fuck, fuck.

COLE
You should say something.

TAYLOR
My mom thinks I'm at a fucking math
competition. She'd kill me if she
found you here.

COLE
But you quit that weeks ago.

TAYLOR
I know. She doesn't.

Cole swallows hard.

Susan calls out one last time.

SUSAN (O.S.)
Taylor?

Cole stares at his pants lying on the floor.

TAYLOR
Don't fucking move.

Finally, it sounds like Susan is walking away.

COLE
What do we do?

TAYLOR
I don't know.

COLE
I could go out the window.

TAYLOR
You're not going out the fucking
window. I'll think of something.

Taylor gets off the bed and tiptoes to her door. She opens
it slightly, listening.

From the kitchen, the sound of eggs shattering.

SUSAN (O.S.)
You scared me to death.

EDGAR (O.S.)
You dropped the eggs.

Taylor gently closes her door.

TAYLOR
What the fuck? That's my dad.

COLE
I thought he moved out.

TAYLOR
He did.

Taylor picks up her shirt and pulls it on.

TAYLOR
Put your pants on and stay here.

She grabs Cole's pants and tosses them to him.

TAYLOR
Something strange is going on and
I'm going to find out what.

Cole looks like he could cry.

COLE
Don't leave me.

It's too late, Taylor's already out the door.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATER

Susan, Maria, and Frank argue in the living room and, watching them from the top of the stairs, is Taylor. She's lying on the carpet, just barely peeking over the top step.

FRANK (O.S.)
You think you're funny. You're not
that funny.

MARIA (O.S.)
Alright, Frank, don't get your
trousers in a twist.

Maria rises and turns on Susan.

MARIA (O.S.)
You, come with me. Let's go see
about these *broken eggs*.

Susan follows Maria and Frank into the kitchen.

As they do, Taylor lifts her head up cautiously, scanning the living room.

It's empty.

Quietly, she rises and scampers down the stairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Taylor listens, they're searching the kitchen.

She looks around the room. Everything seems normal, except for that one piece of paper with strange doodles on it.

Impulsively, she snatches it, and, just as quick, she scampers up the stairs and into her room.

INT. TAYLOR'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door opens, Taylor rushes inside, and quietly closes it behind her.

The bedroom window is open. Cole leans through it, trying to find an escape.

Taylor grabs him and whispers harshly.

TAYLOR

What the hell are you doing?

Cole, startled, bangs his head on the window as he comes back into the room.

COLE

I was just getting some fresh air.

TAYLOR

Well, don't.

Taylor closes the window.

COLE

Who are all those people downstairs?

TAYLOR

I don't fucking know.

Suddenly, they hear Frank stomping up the stairs.

TAYLOR

Get under the bed.

Cole does as he's told.

Taylor turns off the lamp in her room and, as she does, a thousand painted stars glow on her ceiling.

She quickly slides under the bed next to Cole.

The footsteps are in the hall outside.

But Frank opens the door to another room first and Taylor and Cole can hear that room being thoroughly ransacked.

Lying shoulder to shoulder, they speak in whispers.

COLE

What do we do?

TAYLOR

Shut up.

COLE

He's going to find us.

TAYLOR

Shut up!

They hear Frank enter another room.

COLE

What's he looking for?

TAYLOR

My dad... and this.

Taylor holds out the sheet of paper she took.

TAYLOR

I think it's important.

A distant lamp crashes to the floor.

COLE

Maybe you should give it to them.

TAYLOR

Fuck them.

Frank is moving again. Taylor's door swings open. Standing in the silhouette of the doorframe is Frank.

He flips on the light and surveys the room. He's about to dive in when...

MARIA (O.S.)

FRANK!

Frank turns, closes the door, and shuffles off.

Taylor breathes a sigh of relief.

TAYLOR
That was fucking intense.

Cole looks sick.

COLE
I need to pee.

TAYLOR
Hold it.

Taylor turns her head sideways, her ear to the floor, trying to listen.

INT. TAYLOR'S BEDROOM - LATER

It's fifteen minutes later and Taylor's ear is still to the floor.

COLE
I really have to pee.

TAYLOR
Quiet.

Taylor is straining to listen.

TAYLOR
There's five of them now, but, I can't tell what they're saying. They definitely have my dad. I'm... worried about him.

COLE
But, I thought you hated your father?

TAYLOR
I mean, yeah, he's strange, and he's never... here, and stuff, but he's still my fucking dad.

COLE
I guess.

Taylor examines the sheet of paper with the cryptic drawings.

TAYLOR
He used to be cool. I mean, I used to think he was cool... when I was little. He used to tell me stories, when he put me to bed at night.

COLE
What kind of stories?

TAYLOR
Crazy stories.

Taylor slides out from under the bed. She folds up the paper and tucks it in her pocket. She heads to the door, still trying to listen.

Cole slinks out from under the bed and tiptoes to Taylor.

COLE
We could go out the window.

Taylor has another idea.

TAYLOR
Or... you could come with me this time. We can spy together and find out what's really going on.

COLE
That sounds... dangerous.

TAYLOR
Don't be a big baby. It's not that bad. I'll protect you.

Taylor takes Cole's hand. She pulls him close. Kisses him. It's his kryptonite.

TAYLOR
We can listen from the top of the stairs. What's the worst that can happen?

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATER

Taylor is back at the top of the stairs, lying down on the carpet and curiously peering over the top step. She's frozen and fascinated.

MARIA (O.S.)
Enough nonsense.

Behind Taylor is Cole, wiping the sweat out of his eyes.

MARIA (O.S.)
Where is the paper?

EDGAR (O.S.)
I don't know.

Cole taps Taylor on the shoulder; he wants to go.

Taylor's face clearly says, fuck off.

They both look back downstairs to see what will happen next.

Suddenly, the sharp metal swoosh of the knife, a bloody crunch, and a dismembered pinky falls onto the table.

Taylor instinctively clutches her mouth to cover her reaction.

Cole's jaw falls open in horror.

He's had enough and, as quietly and quickly as his legs will carry him, he panics back towards Taylor's room.

Taylor chases after him.

INT. TAYLOR'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cole is headed back to the window.

Taylor grabs him.

TAYLOR

Stop!

COLE

I need to go home.

TAYLOR

Through the window?

COLE

No, yes, I mean... is there another way?

Taylor is trying to keep it together.

TAYLOR

This is fucking crazy! We just need to calm down. We need a plan.

Cole paces.

COLE

I think, I think I'm having a panic attack.

TAYLOR

You're not having a panic attack.

COLE
I can't breathe. I need air.

Cole is at the window and, before Taylor can stop him, he throws it open, loudly.

TAYLOR
Don't leave me alone! I need your help.

COLE
I'm sorry. I can't be here.

Cole starts climbing out the window.

TAYLOR
That's a twelve foot drop.

COLE
It's cool. I'll just climb down.

It's not cool.

Cole tries to climb down, but there's nothing to climb onto.

He's hanging from the window sill and turning red in the face. Maybe this was a bad idea. All of it.

Cole looks through the open window at Taylor one last time.

COLE
I don't want to be in the band anymore.

With that, his arms give out and Cole falls with a loud thud onto the hedges below.

TAYLOR
Shit.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

It's the same night, the same street, and the same house. Susan's car is in the driveway and Maria's SUV is in the street.

SUPER: Part 7

SUPER: Phos-phhecy

SUPER: 8:15 p.m.

What's new is the upstairs window is open and Cole hangs out of it.

His feet dangle, looking for something to grip, but there is nothing; they just scrape against the living room window.

Finally, Cole can last no more and he falls into the bushes below with a thud.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

Shit.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Everyone stares in disbelief towards the window.

MARIA

Big mouse.

Edgar's finger, or lack thereof, bleeds profusely, but he seems oddly unconcerned.

EDGAR

That was... unexpected.

MARIA

(to Frank)

You, outside.

(to The Kid)

You, upstairs.

Maria pulls the Helios out.

MARIA

I'll watch these two.

Frank races out the front door as The Kid bounds up the stairs.

With his good hand, Edgar reaches into his pocket, pulls out the dishtowel and wraps it around his severed hand.

MARIA

This is getting interesting.

EDGAR

Wait until the dancing starts.

Maria is confused, but Edgar, his face still bloody and beaten, smiles.

SUSAN
 (towards Maria)
 "Blood will have blood."

MARIA
 What's that... a threat?

SUSAN
 It's Shakespeare and you're going
 to regret all of this.

MARIA
 Am I now?

SUSAN
 Yes.

MARIA
 Big words from a woman who can't
 see.

SUSAN
 Oh, I can *see* everything.

Susan's hand searches the couch, finds Edgar's hand (the one with all five fingers), and takes it in hers.

Edgar smiles again, only it quickly fades.

From upstairs, the sound of a brief tussle.

TAYLOR (O.S.)
 Let go of me.

SUSAN
 Taylor?

TAYLOR (O.S.)
 I said, get your fucking hands off
 me.

Taylor and The Kid appear at the top of the stairs. The Kid has a firm grip on Taylor and a devilish grin on his face.

THE KID
 Look who I found hiding upstairs.

TAYLOR
 I wasn't hiding, you asshole. I
 was just hanging out in my room.

The Kid shoves Taylor down the stairs and she tumbles into the living room next to the rest of her family.

SUSAN
Don't hurt her.

THE KID
She's fine.

TAYLOR
Fuck off.

Taylor, bruised but defiant, rises to her feet.

EDGAR
Have you been here this whole time?

TAYLOR
It's my house. You're the one
who's been gone.

EDGAR
I didn't... your Mom and I, we're
just...

SUSAN
It's complicated.

MARIA
This family drama is all so
touching, but I'm on the clock and
I still have questions.
(to Taylor)
Who fell out of the window?

TAYLOR
What window?

Maria rises and turns on Taylor - there can only be one Alpha
in this room and, make no mistake, it's Maria.

MARIA
That attitude might impress the
little kids at school, but we're
not at school now. I don't like
spilling blood, but he does.

The Kid smirks - it's true.

MARIA
So, I'll ask one more time. Who
dropped out of your window?

TAYLOR
I don't know what the fuck you're
talking about.

Maybe Taylor is the Alpha after all.

MARIA

So be it...

Suddenly, the front door bursts open and in stumbles Frank, huffing and puffing.

He slams the door shut and bends over, hands on knees, trying to catch his breath.

MARIA

What the hell happened to you?

THE KID

Where's the other one?

FRANK

He... he, uh... he got away.

MARIA

He got away?

FRANK

That kid... he was like a goddamn gazelle. At first, I thought he must of knocked himself out, he was just lying in the hedge out front, like a lump of meat, but as soon as I got near him, he leapt up. Scared the crap outta me. Next thing I know, he took off running. I chased after him, through some yards, over a goddamn fence.

Frank points to his pants.

FRANK

Tore my best pants. Some old broad started yelling at me from her window. Kid was a mile away at this point and he's probably still running, that goddamn freak.

Frank finally catches his breath and stands up.

FRANK

So, I came back here.

THE KID

You lost the target?

FRANK

I told you, he was fast. That boy
is long gone.

THE KID

I bet you wish you had some
sneakers now.

FRANK

What did you say?

THE KID

You know, maybe the problem wasn't
him. Maybe the problem is you're
old and slow.

Frank takes a step towards The Kid.

FRANK

Come on, snake, let's rattle.

THE KID

What the hell does that mean?

FRANK

This.

Frank slams his fist into The Kid's kisser - it's a goddamn
steam train.

FRANK

Was that too slow?

The Kid staggers for a moment, trying to stay upright, but
it's no use. His eyes roll back and he crumples to the
floor, falling on his side and into the fetal position for a
long and painful nap.

MARIA

Frank, what the hell did you just
do?

Frank is half proud and half embarrassed.

FRANK

He called me old.

MARIA

You are old.

FRANK

Well... I'm not slow.

Maria stares at The Kid lying unconscious on the floor.

MARIA

How am I going to explain this?

Maria surveys the room and gets an idea.

MARIA

We should take everyone back to Double Star. Now.

Frank starts to move when Edgar shouts...

EDGAR

No! You can't take them.

MARIA

And, why is that?

EDGAR

This is *my* fault... not *theirs*.

(to Susan and Taylor)

I wasted so, so much time. I was obsessed with work and I neglected our family. And, for what, to solve a riddle? I put you both in danger. I'm truly, truly sorry.

MARIA

You can end this. It's not too late. Just tell me what you know. Tell me... everything.

EDGAR

You're right. I'm going to end all of this... they'll be safer without me.

Edgar grabs the knife from the table and quickly presses it to his chest.

EDGAR

Forgive me.

MARIA

No!

SUSAN

Eddie!

TAYLOR

I HAVE THE PAPER!

This freezes Edgar.

MARIA

What?

TAYLOR

I have his notes and I can explain them to you. No one has to die.

EDGAR

Taylor, please don't do this.

Maria takes the knife away from Edgar.

MARIA

I don't believe you.

TAYLOR

You told the big guy "not to get his trousers in a twist" and then you went searching for my dad. When you did, I slipped downstairs and took it.

MARIA

Well, aren't you the sly one? Alright, I'll bite, where is it?

TAYLOR

Put the knife down first.

MARIA

You're not the one giving orders here.

TAYLOR

You already carved my dad up like Frodo. If you want the paper, drop the knife.

EDGAR

What did you call me?

TAYLOR

Frodo.

Taylor holds up her hands with one finger folded down demonstrating the obvious.

TAYLOR

Nine fingers.

Edgar smiles and starts to laugh.

EDGAR

Frodo, of course. That makes much more sense.

MARIA

You're a very strange family.

Maria places the knife down on the table, rises, and walks over to Taylor.

MARIA

Give me the paper.

EDGAR

Don't do it.

TAYLOR

If I give you the paper, you promise no one will get hurt?

MARIA

You have my word.

Edgar rises.

EDGAR

You can't trust her.

MARIA

Frank.

Frank goes to Edgar and shoves him back down on the couch, holding him there by his shoulders.

Maria pulls the Helios out.

MARIA

Either get me that paper now, or else, I'll just shoot you all and find it myself.

Susan reaches out across the coffee table, her hands searching for something.

MARIA

I'm not going to ask again.

Susan's hand finds the knife.

She grasps it tightly and slowly stands, not quite sure where to look, she shouts out to the room.

SUSAN

Don't you dare threaten my daughter!

MARIA

Oh, and what are you going to do about it?

Susan is unnaturally calm.

SUSAN

I'm going to sheathe this knife in your fucking belly.

But she also says this to an empty wall.

MARIA

That's a hell of an offer, but you're blind, and I'm over here.

Susan attempts to turn in the correct direction.

Maria slowly moves around the room, taunting her.

MARIA

Please, put the knife down. This is embarrassing.

Susan awkwardly tries to follow Maria, swinging the knife wildly in the air.

It's a sort of chaotic dance. It's kind of mesmerizing, but it's definitely not deadly.

EDGAR

(quietly)
It's happening.

TAYLOR

Mom, put the knife down.

FRANK

Do you want me to take it from her?

MARIA

No, this is amusing, pathetic, but amusing.

Susan swings crazily in the direction of Maria, but Maria easily steps out of the way of the clumsy attack.

EDGAR

My vision, it's all coming true.

MARIA

You predicted this?

Susan tries in vain to follow Maria's voice.

EDGAR

All of it.

MARIA

Don't keep us in suspense. How does it end?

EDGAR

For you... badly.

MARIA

Oh, I doubt that.

Another lunge from Susan, but this blind dance with the knife is not working.

Maria quietly steps behind Taylor.

MARIA

Come and get me.

Susan moves in that direction.

She's face to face with her daughter.

TAYLOR

Mom, it's me. Be careful, she's behind me.

Susan stops moving and lowers the knife.

With Taylor as a shield, Maria steps closer, taunting Susan from over Taylor's shoulder.

MARIA

Have you had enough of this game?

Susan looks up and her eyes suddenly focus on Maria.

Susan can see.

Maria realizes the deception, but it's too late. The look on her face is a mix of panic and respect.

MARIA

Oh, fuck.

Susan thrusts the knife forward, safely past her daughter's side, and firmly into Maria's belly.

SUSAN

I'm not a great liar. But, I am a damn good actress.

Susan lets go of the knife, which sticks out of Maria's abdomen, twitching slightly.

Maria drops the Helios and fumbles at the knife.

It's lodged deep.

Maria tumbles back, grabs the upstairs bannister, and falls down onto the stairs, still conscious but in a hell of a lot of pain.

Frank rises, but Taylor is quicker - she picks up the Helios and holds it on the big man.

FRANK

Maria?

TAYLOR

Don't move.

Frank slowly lifts his hands up.

EDGAR

You could see... this whole time?

Susan nods.

EDGAR

That was amazing.

SUSAN

I played that blind woman in "Wait Until Dark". People always underestimate the blind.

TAYLOR

Pretty cool, Mom.

SUSAN

Thanks.

Maria coughs and spits up a little blood.

MARIA

Pretty fucking clever.

FRANK

Can I go to her?

TAYLOR

Slowly.

Frank makes his way over to Maria and kneels down at her side, inspecting the wound.

FRANK
I've seen worse.

MARIA
Fuck you, Frank.

FRANK
See, you're fixin' for a fight
already.

Frank tries to smile, but Maria is not amused.

Susan turns to Edgar.

SUSAN
What do we do now?

EDGAR
It's not safe here. We should go.

SUSAN
Where?

Maria tries to prop herself up and look dangerous.

MARIA
It doesn't matter where you run -
we'll find you.

EDGAR
Oh, I have no doubt you'll try.

FRANK
We're relentless.

EDGAR
I'm not afraid.

MARIA
And why is that?

EDGAR
I'll see you coming.

Frank and Maria have no retort for this.

Edgar holds out his hand to his wife and daughter.

EDGAR
We need to leave, now.

Taylor takes his hand.

TAYLOR
This is so fucking punk.

Edgar looks at his wife, beseechingly.

EDGAR
Are you coming?

Susan thinks for a moment. Her mind is made up.

SUSAN
Are you kidding? You two wouldn't
last a day without me.

The three of them slip out the front door.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Free of the house and the trouble inside, Susan turns to her daughter.

SUSAN
So, who was that hanging out the
window?

TAYLOR
Mom, really?

SUSAN
What?

TAYLOR
You want to talk about this now?

SUSAN
You're right. You're right. We
can talk later.

Taylor rolls her eyes.

Edgar unlocks the car and the family slides into the VW Beetle.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Edgar puts the key into the ignition, but doesn't start the car just yet.

EDGAR
This is nice.

Susan and Taylor look at Edgar like he's lost his mind.

EDGAR

I mean, being together like this...
a family.

Susan smiles.

TAYLOR

Can you teach me?

EDGAR

To drive?

TAYLOR

No. To tell the future. Like you.

Edgar and Susan exchange looks.

EDGAR

Maybe.

Taylor is momentarily placated.

SUSAN

So, what's going to happen to us?

EDGAR

The future's not all dark.

Edgar closes his eyes tight.

Susan and Taylor watch him closely, looking for any signs.

When Edgar finally opens his eyes, he seems excited.

EDGAR

It's going to be an adventure.

Edgar starts the car.

Susan turns on the radio.

The bright catchy pop of Timbuk 3's one-hit-wonder "The Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades", blasts out of the speakers.

EXT. SUBURBIA - NIGHT

The VW Beetle pulls out of the driveway, with the song echoing behind, as it disappears down the road.

Up above, the infinite stars continue to twinkle and shine.

FADE OUT.