

REMEMBRANCE

Written by

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WGAw

"Reality is created by the mind, we can change our reality by changing our mind."

- Plato

FADE IN:

EXT. REMEMBRANCE HOME - DAY

A nondescript suburban home. A small parking lot sits before it. A sign at the entrance to the lot reads, "SUNSHINE MEMORIES. REMEMBRANCE HOME."

A lone car turns in. The electric engine silent as it glides to a stop in one of the spaces.

INT. CAR

EVERETT BROOKS (mid 40s), your average suburban dad: gentle, kind. A jagged scar runs from one nostril down to his lip.

He stares at the Remembrance Home in the rearview mirror.

INT. REMEMBRANCE HOME - LOBBY

A lock CLICKS and TURNS.

The door opens. Everett steps in.

- A reception desk with a high-tech computer and monitor system.

- Posters: "YOU'RE LOVED ONE'S, REMEMBERED FOREVER" and "MAKE YOUR MEMORIES A REALITY". Each one depicts a person reclined in a futuristic chair, wires trail down from their heads and into the chair.

Everett walks behind the reception desk and places down a leather satchel.

INT. HALLWAY

Doors line both sides. Each is numbered, and a high-tech touch-panel is embedded to the right of each door.

Everett goes to the first door's panel. It lights up as he raises his hand to it and he taps a couple function buttons. The panel BEEPS and a light above the door goes GREEN.

He continues down the hall and does the same with each touch-panel. Each light goes GREEN.

He makes his way to the last room, ROOM 12. He enters the same function keys.

UR-UR!

His brow knits. He re-enters the start-up protocol.

UR-UR!

He looks up at the light. RED.

EVERETT

What's goin' on with you, huh?

He tries the start-up sequence one more time.

UR-UR!

EVERETT

Alright. I get it.

He shakes his head and strolls back to the front.

INT. LOBBY - LATER

Everett sits behind the desk reading from a paper-thin, hand-sized, TABLET.

We catch a glimpse of the article title on the tablet: "NEW REMEMBRANCE HOMES A BLESSING FOR LAND CONSERVATION"

DING!

He looks to the door. RACHEL JONES (30s) has just entered.

EVERETT

Can I help you?

Rachel walks to the desk, her eyes red-rimmed. There's a quiet sadness about her.

RACHEL

Ummm, yes. I need... I need to...

She can't seem to get it out.

Everett, used to this, slides a pamphlet off a stack to the side.

EVERETT

Our pricing is on page 2. It's \$100 a month for a terabyte, then an additional \$50 for each terabyte after. We're doing a special, though. Two terabytes for \$100 a month if you sign a one year lease.

Rachel doesn't even look at the pamphlet.

RACHEL
And... that'll help me see him?

EVERETT
A version of him. The program uses
your memories to populate it.

RACHEL
So I leave my memories here?

Everett's patient. This is a hard subject for people. He's
had a lot of practice.

EVERETT
Let me show you.

INT. ROOM 1

Everett leads Rachel in. Her eyes widen at the high-tech
chair in the middle with all it's wires and switches.

He walks to the chair.

EVERETT
The system scans your memories of
your... Uh...

RACHEL
Husband.

EVERETT
I'm sorry.

Beat.

EVERETT
(clears throat)
It scans the memories of your
husband and saves them to our
server. The more memories you pay
to have saved, the more faithful a
representation the AI can populate.
If you can get other family members
-- mom, dad, sister -- to add
childhood memories, the AI is
almost ninety percent accurate.

She steps around the room, taking it all in.

RACHEL

It's just my memories. His parents aren't exactly... *supportive* of it.

EVERETT

I understand. Some people have a hard time accepting new things.

He lets Rachel examine the room.

EVERETT

If it's something you can't afford, I'd be more than happy to work out a deal with you.

(then)

Everyone deserves the opportunity to see their loved ones again.

RACHEL

Have you used them?

EVERETT

No. I've been fortunate enough to not have the need to.

RACHEL

You're lucky.

(then)

How many memories is one terabyte?

EVERETT

Rough estimate for most... about five years worth.

RACHEL

That's not much.

EVERETT

It's enough.

RACHEL

Could I... try it today?

He shakes his head.

EVERETT

We can do the download today, but we advise a forty-eight hour wait time. The download takes a lot out of a person.

RACHEL

When can we start?

INT. ROOM 1 - MOMENTS LATER

Everett places tiny white discs on Rachel's temples as she reclines back in the chair.

RACHEL
Will it hurt?

EVERETT
You'll feel a slight pinch.

He smiles. Rachel relaxes a bit.

INT. HALLWAY

Everett closes the door. He taps the touch-panel, enters a few start-up keys, then hits "INITIATE DOWNLOAD".

The light above the door goes RED. A lock CLUNKS as it slides into place.

He makes his way back to--

INT. RECEPTION AREA

He watches a CAMERA FEED of Rachel in Room 1 on the high-tech monitor. The feed shows the other TEN empty rooms, and a BLACK SQUARE denotes ROOM 12.

Everett taps the phone icon in the top right corner of the monitor. A video window pops-up with a number-pad. He taps "CONTACTS" and scrolls to find the name he's looking for.

RON QUINTO (40s), burly beard, wide smile, the guy everyone wants as a friend; pops into existence in the video window.

RON
Everett! How's it going?

EVERETT
Good, Ron. How are you?

RON
Can't complain. Whatch'ya need?

EVERETT
I've got a problem with Room 12. I was wondering if you could come out and take a look?

Ron cocks his head to the side.

RON
What kinda problem?

EVERETT
It won't let me initiate the start-up sequence and the doors permanently locked.

RON
That's odd.
(looks off-screen)
I can be by around noon? That work?

EVERETT
Yeah.

RON
Any issues with the other rooms?

EVERETT
Nope. They're all running fine.

RON
Good. Could just be a bug or wiring issue. I'll get it fixed for you.

EVERETT
Thanks.

RON
No problem.

Ron disappears.

Everett looks back to the video feed of Room 1. A timer in the bottom left corner reads, "00:35:58:47" and ticking down.

He picks up his tablet, opens the KINDLE APP, and reads.

INT. ROOM 1 - MEANWHILE

Rachel sits in the chair. Eyes closed. Wires thread down from her temples and plug into the chair. The memory banks on the wall BEEP and WHIR as the download goes on.

Rachel's eyelids TWITCH as if in REM sleep.

INT. REMEMBRANCE HOME - LATER

Everett sits behind the desk, tablet still in hand. On the MONITOR we can see ROOM 2 and ROOM 3 are now occupied.

DING!

RON (O.C.)
This place is always so quiet!

Everett comes around to embrace the tower of a man before him. A crooked grin splits his face. His smile is warm and inviting. A breath of life in this place.

EVERETT
It's good to see you.

RON
You too.

Ron looks down the hall, his eyes moving up to the lights above the doors: ELEVEN GREEN, ONE RED.

RON
Any occupants?

EVERETT
One is almost done. Two and Three got here about twenty minutes ago.

A GRUNT as Ron rubs his thick beard.

RON
Might have to do a complete reset if nothing else works. I'll try all the usual means first.

EVERETT
I appreciate it.
(then)
I'll give them a free hour if they need to leave early.

RON
Your boss still on you for being too generous?

EVERETT
You still smoking cigars?

They both CHUCKLE.

RON
Touché.

TOOLS CLINK as Ron rumbles his way up the hallway to ROOM 12. He stops at the door and examines the panel for a moment.

RON
Let's you key in the sequence?

EVERETT
Yeah. Just won't run it.

RON
Hmmm.

He puts a knee down and takes a tool to the panel. After a couple quick maneuvers, the panel POPS free. Wires weave into the opening behind it.

RON
None of the wiring looks shot...
Give me a bit to poke around and
see what's up.

He removes a TABLET -- DIAGNOSTICS MACHINE -- from his tool bag and attaches the ends of two wires to the wires behind the panel.

Everett leaves him to it.

INT. RECEPTION AREA

He walks over to the monitor. The time stamp for ROOM 1 is ZEROED OUT. He nods to himself.

INT. ROOM 1

Rachel's eyes flutter open. She looks worn out. Her eyes take in the room, trying to get her bearings.

Everett's beside her, hand out for her. She takes it, gingerly lifts herself from the chair.

EVERETT
(gentle)
There you go. Nice and easy.

RACHEL
Why...?

EVERETT
You ever heard about people who say
there lives 'flashed before their
eyes'?

RACHEL
Yeah...

EVERETT

There's a reason that happens
before death. It takes a lot out of
a person.

He leads her to the door...

INT. RECEPTION AREA

They inch across the room. A DOOR on the other side of the room reads RECOVERY ROOM in bold, black letters. He gives a glance to Ron, who is fussing with the diagnostics machine.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM

Plush furniture, a coffee bar, and a snack table, fill the cozy room. The lighting is a soft blue. Soothing. The whole place is the epitome of comfort.

Everett holds the door open and helps her through. With great care he helps her down onto the couch.

RACHEL

Feels like I haven't slept in a
week.

EVERETT

Side-effects of the download. Don't
worry. When you delve with the
memories from now on, there won't
be any fatigue.

(then)

Coffee?

She looks to the cart. Nods.

Everett strolls over and uses a Keurig to brew up a cup.

EVERETT

Any cream or sugar.

RACHEL

No cream. Three sugars.

He CHUCKLES.

RACHEL

What?

EVERETT

My wife takes it the Same way.

RACHEL

Sounds like a woman who knows her coffee.

Everett shakes the packets, tears all three at once. He pours and stirs as he brings the cup over to Rachel, taking a seat next to her.

EVERETT

Here.

She takes the cup in both hands. The warmth pleasurable to her worn demeanor.

RACHEL

How come I don't remember...
remembering?

He knows what she means. It's a question he's heard countless times.

EVERETT

You're in a state of deep recall. Think of it like the movie is playing, but there's no one in the theater other than a video camera -- the databank.

RACHEL

Makes sense. I guess.

EVERETT

It doesn't, but luckily we don't get paid to figure out the particulars. We just get to use it.

He pushes himself off the couch with a soft GRUNT.

EVERETT

You rest-up. Let me know when you feel ready enough to head out.

She nods and takes another sip.

INT. HALLWAY

Everett strolls down towards Ron. A thin layer of sweat on his brow. He taps furiously at his diagnostic machine.

EVERETT

How's it going?

RON
We'll need to do a complete reset.

EVERETT
(sighs)
I'll pull Rooms 2 and 3.

INT. RECEPTION AREA

Everett holds the front door open for PATRON 2 and PATRON 3.
Rachel walks slowly past.

RACHEL
My memories will be okay?

EVERETT
They'll be safe. There are backups
for everything .
(then)
We wouldn't be a good business if
we didn't protect our assets.

Everett gives her a small smile as she walks out and gets
into an Uber.

RECEPTION DESK

Ron CLACKS on a keyboard as he keys in the shutdown sequences
for each room. Everett comes over to watch.

EVERETT
You're shutting off each room
before, right?

RON
Yes.

EVERETT
And making sure the backups are
powered by the backup generator?

RON
(irritated)
Yes.

EVERETT
And all the chairs in the rooms are
disconn--

RON
Everett!
(smiles)
The memories will be fine.
(MORE)

RON (CONT'D)

The *people* will be fine.

(then)

You know the people in those databanks aren't real, right?

EVERETT

Aren't we all just a collection of memories to someone?

Ron rolls his eyes.

RON

You and your philosophical bullshit.

(then)

Alright. Running reboot protocol in three... two... one...

The lights go out.

Everett shoves his hands in his pockets, trying to not rub them together in a nervous tick.

EVERETT

How long?

RON

Manual says ten seconds.

They wait...

In a blink, the room is lit again. WHIRS and BEEPS leak out through the closed doors of the rooms as the chairs and databanks reboot.

Everett steps to the hall and looks down at ROOM 12's status light...

RED.

RON (O.S.)

Well?

EVERETT

Still red.

RON (O.S.)

No shit?

He comes over and looks down the hall.

RON

Next thing would be the hard reset.

EVERETT

How--

RON

Twenty-four hours.

Everett cringes.

EVERETT

The boss won't like that.

RON

I'll deal with him. I know how you are with confrontation.

EVERETT

(sheepish)

Thanks.

(then)

I'm good to leave?

Ron nods.

RON

Tell Liza I said hi.

EVERETT

Will do.

As Everett leaves, HOLD on the RED STATUS LIGHT as...

It FLICKERS. RED--GREEN--RED.

EXT. BROOKS HOME - DAY

A small bungalow home with a quant porch adorned with a rocking chair. One of the rare homes that sits on a half-acre of land. Grandfathered in by the 2032 Land Inheritance Act.

Everett's car glides into the driveway.

LIZA BROOKS (40s) walks out onto the porch. She's kind, compassionate, an avid listener.

Everett slides from the car.

LIZA

Everything alright?

EVERETT

Yeah. Had to do a long reboot. Room was permanently locked.

Liza cocks her head. Her brow knits and her eyes go distant.

LIZA

Could be a malfunction in the chair's operating system. The rooms are designed to auto-lock like that to keep anyone from using a faulty chair.

Everett walks up to her and kisses her forehead.

EVERETT

I love that you know that.

She smiles at him.

EVERETT

Anya still in school?

LIZA

Yeah. I'm sure she'd like a quick break to see her daddy, though.

INT. SCHOOL ROOM - BROOKS HOME

ANYA BROOKS (8). She seems to look at everything with curiosity and love that is only reserved for children and those few untouched by the realities of a harsh world.

She sits in a comfy recliner and stares up at a screen hanging from the ceiling. VIDEO BOXES show other kids in similar chairs and a TEACHER standing before a white board.

As the Teacher starts to write, the boxes file to one side and a virtual whiteboard pops on the screen.

Anya types into a laptop as the door OPENS.

She turns. Her face lights up.

ANYA

Daddy!

Everett wraps his arms around her as she hurtles into him.

EVERETT

Hey! I'm not distracting you from anything am I.

ANYA

Just notes.

He follows her finger to the screen where the Teacher has written an Algebra equation for the kids to solve.

EVERETT
Algebra, hm?

ANYA
Yeah. It's easy.

She skips over and plops back into the chair. He follows her and places a hand on the supple leather back.

EVERETT
Easy? We never learned any of that till I was in high school.

ANYA
Different world.

EVERETT
That it is.

He watches her type, solving the equation. A WHOOSH as her answer is sent.

THE MAIN SCREEN CHIMES.

Teacher points a remote at the camera and clicks. Anya's answer, and all her work, flashes up on the screen.

TEACHER
Great job, Anya. That's correct.

Everett pats her on the head.

EVERETT
Good girl.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family of three sit around what looks to be an antique wooden table. Definitely not the sleek modern style of the period. Anya pokes at a broccoli floret.

ANYA
I hate broccoli.

LIZA
What do I tell you?

ANYA
 (grumbles)
 "We don't say we hate things just
 because we don't like them."
 (then)
 I *strongly* don't like broccoli.

Everett hides his smile.

LIZA
 (to Everett)
 So the Home should be up and
 running tomorrow?

EVERETT
 Should be. Yeah.

LIZA
 Good.

EVERETT
 Ron says hi by the way.

Liza beams.

LIZA
 Aww! How's he been lately? It's
 been ages since he's come over.

EVERETT
 No idea. We didn't really talk
 much. He was busy fixing the home.

LIZA
 Everett... You need to try and have
 some friends outside of us.

EVERETT
 I like you guys, though.

LIZA
 You're too shy. It's not good for
 you.
 (then)
 Why don't you ask Ron to grab a
 drink after work tomorrow?

EVERETT
 I'm not a big dri--

LIZA
 You know what I mean.

He holds up his hands, nods. A small smile on his lips.

EVERETT
 Alright. Alright. I'll ask him
 tomorrow. Would you like to come
 chaperone?

She raises an eyebrow at him.

LIZA
 Do I need to?

Anya SNICKERS.

EVERETT
 (to Anya)
 What's so funny?

ANYA
 (sings)
 Daddy's gotta daaaate. Daddy's
 gotta--

With mock anger, Everett shoots from the table. Anya is out
 of her seat as well.

EVERETT
 Come here you!

He chases her around the table a couple times.

Liza shakes her head and SIGHS.

LIZA
 You know the rule.

ANYA & EVERETT
 "Kitchen's aren't for chasing."

The two stop and eye one another. Two predators analyzing
 their prey.

Anya sprints into

INT. LIVING ROOM

She races to the couch and hops onto it.

ANYA
 Safe!

Everett lumbers over, hands lifted above his head in a
 monster pose. He gets to the couch...

His hands slash down onto Anya as he starts to tickle her.

She GASPS with LAUGHTER.

ANYA
Stop! Stop!... I said... I said
SAFE!

The two LAUGH. Everett stops and plops down next to her. He looks to the Kitchen where Liza leans in the doorway.

EVERETT
Movie?

LIZA
Yeah.

ANYA
Yay!
(then)
Fro-zen 4! Fro-zen 4!

EVERETT
Again?!

The light from the television hits the three on the couch.

LIZA
Actually... I wouldn't mind
watching that again.

He SIGHS.

EVERETT
Frozen 4 it is, then.

He has an arm around Liza. Her head is nestled into his shoulder. Anya lays her head on his lap as she watches. It's the perfect life. The perfect family...

FADE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Everett lays in bed, asleep.

LIZA (V.O.)
Everett!

His eyes shoot open, forehead dappled with sweat.

He lifts himself up and wipes his brow.

Liz stirs next to him.

LIZA
You alright?

EVERETT
Yeah. Just a bad dream.

LIZA
Come back to bed?

He looks to the clock: 6:42.

EVERETT
I might as well get up.

He kisses her forehead.

EVERETT
Coffee?

LIZA
Black. Three sugars.

EVERETT
I know.

EXT. PORCH - MORNING

Everett sits in the rocking chair, coffee in hand.

RING.

He looks to the small table with his phone: RON.

He sets the coffee down and answers the video call.

EVERETT
Hey. Everything okay?

RON
Ehhhh...

EVERETT
What's wrong?

RON
Can you get down to the Home?

EVERETT
Yeah.
(then)
Ron. Is everything all right?

RON
Just... get down here. I'll explain
when you get here.

INT. REMEMBRANCE HOME

Everett hurries in. Ron waits in a chair. He rises.

RON
Thanks for coming.

EVERETT
What's going on?

Ron motions for him to follow. They head to...

INT. HALLWAY

ROOM 12

The light, still RED.

EVERETT
I thought you were doing the long
reset?

RON
I was going to, then I had a
thought. I went and checked the
databanks in the other rooms...

EVERETT
Okay...

RON
I had this idea that maybe the
problem isn't the room, it's the
databanks. Kind of how a body
sometimes goes into a coma when the
brain experiences trauma.

Dread begins to blossom in the pit of Everett's stomach.

RON (CONT'D)
I ran diagnostics on the databanks
in the other rooms...
(then)
The storage in the databanks is
smaller. It's slight, but
noticeable.

Everett shakes his head.

EVERETT
That's impossible.

RON
Not if it's moving the memory
somewhere else.

EVERETT
Why would it--

It dawns on him.

RON
You always use the rooms in
sequence, fill them one through
twelve.

The dread takes root in Everett and germinates to a tree. Its
branches crushing his lungs.

EVERETT
It's moving the storage to preserve
itself, which means--

RON
The memories are degrading. The
system is moving more storage to
the front rooms where the most
memories reside.

EVERETT
But the back-ups should--

RON
Empty.

EVERETT
What?

RON
They're empty Everett. The back-ups
are zeroed out. No storage. No
memories. Nothing.

Everett collapses to the floor. He leans his back against the
wall.

EVERETT
We have to figure out something.

Ron GRUNTS as he takes a seat next to him.

RON
There isn't anything we can do.

Everett turns to him.

EVERETT

I don't believe that.

(then)

Are the other rooms still safe to use?

RON

I mean... yeah. The auto-lock feature will kick in once they're not. But, you're not going to keep this place--

EVERETT

I need to. People have loved ones here.

RON

These aren't real people.

Everett holds Ron with a stern gaze.

EVERETT

They're real to them.

(then)

How long till everything's gone?

Ron looks down the hall at ROOM 12.

RON

Best estimate... a week.

EVERETT

That's it?

RON

That's it.

The two men lean their heads back against the wall.

Beat.

RON

You can't lose something you've already lost.

EVERETT

You can feel it again, though.

RON

What will you do?

Everett rises.

EVERETT
Give them as much time as I can.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - LATER

Everett stands behind the desk.

Rachel enters.

EVERETT
Ms. Jones. It hasn't been...

Her eyes are two pools of desperation.

RACHEL
I need to see him.

Those eyes lock with his.

EVERETT
(quiet)
Okay.

ROOM 1 - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel is in the chair. Everett hooks the nodes up to her temples.

EVERETT
It's going to feel strange at first. Everything will feel real, but your brain will adjust. It'll just take a moment.

She nods.

RACHEL
Thank you.

He gives her a small smile in return.

The chair WHIRRS as he runs the boot sequence. Rachel seems to gently fall asleep as she dives into her old memories.

Everett watches her for a moment, then looks to the databanks. *How much time does she have left?*

INT. BROOKS HOME - DINETTE - NIGHT

Liza sits at the kitchen table. She types with fluid precision onto a laptop.

The FRONT DOOR OPENS.

LIZA
Everett?

FRONT DOOR

Everett shuts the door. His hand stays on the knob. He takes a deep breath.

EVERETT
(pushing in cheer)
Yeah!

DINETTE

LIZA
At the table!

FOOTSTEPS precede his arrival at the entryway to the quaint little dinette.

He leans against the wall.

EVERETT
(re: laptop)
New project?

She doesn't look away from her screen.

LIZA
Yeah. Company's supposed to be rolling out a new VR video game next week.
(then)
Actually, were using an idea similar to the Remembrance Chairs.

EVERETT
Really?

He comes to the table and looks over her shoulder.

LIZA
Yeah. Pretty neat, huh?

She finally looks to him. Her sharp eyes take in the little wrinkle between his eyebrows. The slight downward pull on his scar.

LIZA
You okay?

EVERETT
Huh? Yeah. Fine.

LIZA
Everything go alright at the home?
You ran out of here before we could
have coffee together.

EVERETT
It's all good. Just turned out the
long reset wasn't necessary, so I
had to open up.

LIZA
Hmmm.

She's about to say something when--

Anya hurtles into the room. She slams into Everett and grips him in a death hug.

ANYA
Hey, Daddy!

EVERETT
Oof. Hey, kiddo. How was school?

She releases him and heads to the fridge. She peruses as she speaks.

ANYA
Boring.

EVERETT
Well, that's school sometimes.

ANYA
That's school *all* the time.

Everett and Liza exchange a look.

EVERETT
(whispers to Liza)
I never thought we'd have the kid
who hates school.

LIZA
What do you mean? You hated school.

EVERETT
Shhh!

The FRIDGE DOOR SHUTS.

Anya comes over to the table with a glass bottle of lemonade.

ANYA
I heard that.

He takes a seat with them. Desperate for the distraction.

EVERETT
I didn't *hate* school. More like it
hated me.

Anya sips her juice.

Liza, tactful as ever, moves the subject.

LIZA
(to Anya)
School was boring.
(to Everett)
How was work?

He mulls over what to say.

EVERETT
Difficult. There's a new client.

LIZA
Heavy user?

EVERETT
Yeah. But... she needs it I think.

LIZA
Just as long as you're monitoring
her usage. Too much and you need to-
-

EVERETT
I know.

LIZA
Hey. Aren't you getting drinks with
Ron tonight?

He checks his watch.

EVERETT

Shiiiiii....

Anya eyes him.

EVERETT

...iiiiooooottttt. I forgot. I'll grab dinner there, so don't wait up.

He races upstairs.

Anya and Liza look at one another. They both smile and shake their heads.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Classy. Not high-class, but light MUSIC, good bartenders, and in a fashionable part of town. It has a New York speak-easy charm.

Everett cradles a beer at the bar.

A thick hand SLAPS down on his shoulder. Ron takes a seat beside him.

RON

You doin' alright?

EVERETT

As much as I can be.

GINNY (50s). Small. Spunky. Wanders over.

GINNY

(to Ron)

What can I get you, hun?

He mulls over the menu.

RON

Screw it. Old Fashioned.

GINNY

Anything special in it?

He glances to Everett.

RON

Make it extra strong.

GINNY

You got it.

She slides down the bar to make Ron's drink and subtly give the two men space.

RON
You take clients today?

Everett nods.

EVERETT
No point not to.
(then)
I was thinking, shouldn't we go to someone with this. The company? The press?

Ron shakes his head.

RON
You wanna blow that whistle, go right ahead. But you got a family to think about. My guess, the company already knows. Probably won't do anything other than let the Homes go.

EVERETT
So all those memories just disappear?

RON
Not entirely. I mean the people still have their memories.

EVERETT
But nothing to go to. To hold onto. Visiting cemeteries hasn't been a thing in years.

RON
Cremation. Keep the ashes at home. I don't know, Everett. It's not my job to know those things.

Ginny returns with Ron's drink.

RON
Thanks.

GINNY
No problem.

He holds out his phone and she taps a device to it. A PING and a notification of payment on Ron's phone. Ginny's off to the next customer.

Ron holds his drink to Everett.

RON
Cheers. To the memories of the
dead.

Everett eyes him before giving a half hearted CLINK with his
beer.

They drink.

RON
Oooo. I forgot how much I love
these.

Beat.

EVERETT
You really think there's nothing we
can do?

RON
Jesus, E. Yes. I do. Just... keep
giving people their last moments
with their memories. That's all you
can do.

EVERETT
What about the company? Shouldn't
they be able to fix it?

RON
Think about all the other
Remembrance Homes they have. You
don't think they haven't heard
about this problem already?

EVERETT
We have to do something--

RON
Why do you care so much? You don't
even know the people in those
memories.

That strikes a chord within Everett.

He stares into his bottle...

INT. REMEMBRANCE HOME - HALLWAY - DAY

Everett helps Rachel out of ROOM 1. Behind him we see the
lights for ROOMS 12, 11, and 10 have all gone RED now.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

She takes to the couch while he heads to the coffee bar.

EVERETT

Usual?

RACHEL

Yeah.

The sound of the KEURIG heating up. The coffee squeezing out. He adds in three sugars. Then, the sound of a SPOON against the porcelain of the COFFEE CUP.

As he stirs:

RACHEL

What's with the red lights?

He stiffens.

EVERETT

The what?

RACHEL

The lights above the back rooms are red. What's with that?

EVERETT

Oh. Uh, standard maintenance.

He turns and comes over to the couch to sit next to her.

She takes a sip.

Beat.

RACHEL

I really appreciate the extra time you've been giving me.

EVERETT

I haven't been--

RACHEL

I'm not a fool. I know the time I go in and when I come out.

He SIGHS, nods.

EVERETT

You just seem... like you need it.

She places a hand on his.

RACHEL

Thank you.

EVERETT

Do you... want to talk about him?

RACHEL

Do you normally ask clients that?

EVERETT

No... it's just... I only ever see the people remembering, never who's being remembered. You spend money to come see these people, and yet... I have no idea what they're like...

RACHEL

You're responsible for keeping them safe.

He nods.

EVERETT

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to pry...

RACHEL

His name was Roland.

Everett looks to her, the cathartic pain in her eyes as she recalls who it is she lost.

RACHEL

Everyone in his family called him Roli for short. It was because when he was a baby he was super chubby. So they called him 'Roly-Poly'. He hated it. As he got older they dropped the 'Poly'.

(then)

I never knew that's where his nickname came from. His mom told that story at the funeral.

EVERETT

There's so much more to a person's life than the portion we're privy to.

RACHEL

It's nice though. To get to see a portion of him again. It's not really him. I know that.

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

He doesn't have the past and aspirations that made him who he was. But, still... it's nice.

She takes another sip of coffee.

RACHEL

You're married, right?

EVERETT

Mhm. Ten years.

RACHEL

(re: the building)

Would you ever...? If anything happened.

It's a question he's asked himself countless times.

EVERETT

No.

RACHEL

Really? Why not?

EVERETT

It's like you said. They're just our memories of them. No past, no dreams, just the parts we recollect through our viewpoint. It wouldn't be her. No matter how hard I'd try to convince myself.

Rachel nods.

RACHEL

Loss is tricky. It makes us do things we never thought we would.

INT. BROOKS HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Everett sits at the kitchen table.

The TELEVISION PLAYS from the living room. Anya and Liza MURMUR to one another about what they watch.

He glances towards them. Then back at his open laptop before him.

LAPTOP:

The WEBPAGE for SUNSHINE MEMORIES and their CONTACT NUMBER.

Everett pulls out his phone. He dials.

The LINE RINGS...

A SHARP TONE.

VOICE

We're sorry. Your call could not be completed as dialed. Please try again. Good bye.

The line cuts out.

He stares at his phone. Dials again.

RING...

RING...

SHARP TONE.

VOICE

We're sorry. Your call could not be-

-

He hangs up.

Stares at the number on the screen.

LIZA (O.C.)

Evie?

She stands in the entryway to the kitchen. Leans against it.

LIZA

Everything alright?

EVERETT

Yeah. Good. I'll be there in a minute.

LIZA

Okay...

He forces a smile. She turns and heads back into the living room.

INT. REMEMBRANCE HOME - RECEPTION DESK - DAY

The MONITOR shows Rachel in ROOM 1. The rest are empty. SIX of the FEEDS are now BLACKED OUT. The rooms gone.

Everett chews at his thumbnail as he thinks. He taps the phone icon on the monitor and scrolls through the contacts. He taps 'RON'.

A BOX appears. Then Ron.

RON
E. What's up?

EVERETT
Hey. I have a question for you.

RON
Shoot.

EVERETT
Have you spoken with headquarters?
At all.

RON
Huh... yeah. A couple days ago.
Maybe. Why?

EVERETT
I tried calling them last night.

RON
You what?

EVERETT
Yeah. No one was there.

RON
Probably closed.

EVERETT
No. I mean I got a "no longer in
service" response.

RON
Oh...

Ron scratches his beard.

RON
You sure it was the right number?

EVERETT
Yes.

RON
Let me make some calls. See if I
can't figure out what's going.

EVERETT
You don't think...

RON
What?

EVERETT
They bailed out. On everything.

Silence.

RON
Let me make some calls. Meet me at
the bar tonight?

EVERETT
Yeah.

Ron BLINKS out.

Everett mulls over what to do next.

INT. BAR - LATER

Everett waits in a booth in the back of the bar. Each time the door opens, he glances up to see if it's Ron.

Finally, the door OPENS.

Ron walks in. Behind him trails a man in a flashy suit and tie. He carries a briefcase. The two spot Everett and walk over.

Ron takes a seat first. Then the SUIT MAN next to him.

RON
E.

EVERETT
Ron.
(re: Suit Man)
Who's this?

SUIT MAN
Michael Barron. Representative of
Sunshine Memories.

EVERETT
Okay...

The briefcase is placed on the table. A CLICK as Suit Man unlocks it.

EVERETT

What's going on?

Suit Man removes a piece of paper and slides it across the table to Everett.

SUIT MAN

Sunshine Memories would like to offer you compensation for what you are doing for our clients.

EVERETT

What?

He looks to Ron.

RON

Hear him out.

Ron nods to Suit Man to continue.

Everett slides the paper over and looks at it.

EVERETT

You're not serious?

SUIT MAN

Is that not enough?

EVERETT

No. It's...

He looks at the CHECK. Thoughts race through his mind about what he could do with that kind of money.

EVERETT

What if we put this money towards fixing the Home?

SUIT MAN

Unfortunately, Sunshine has deemed everything a total loss. The loss in consumer trust would ruin the company.

EVERETT

Wait. So you're just letting the Homes go?

SUIT MAN

We're letting them... *retire*.

EVERETT

So what's the--

It hits him.

SUIT MAN
An NDA would be a stipulation of
you accepting this money.

Ron leans in.

RON
It's a lot of money, E.

EVERETT
You're putting a price on peoples
loved ones!

RON
Memories! Memories of their loved
ones! They're not real, E. They
never were.

Suit Man sits, calm and collected.

SUIT MAN
My employer has given twenty four
hours for you to make a decision.

EVERETT
No.

RON
Think about it--

EVERETT
No.

RON
E--

CLICK.

Suit Man rises and picks up the briefcase.

SUIT MAN
Put it this way. You have twenty-
four hours to decide *no* is still
the answer you want to go with.

He leaves.

Everett glares at Ron.

EVERETT
How much?

Silence.

EVERETT

Ron. How much did they offer you?

RON

Five hundred thousand. I quit my job on the spot.

Everett SCOFFS.

RON

There's nothing to figure out! Just let it go. I don't understand why you're so stuck on keeping these dead people alive.

EVERETT

They're not dead to them!

Everett falls back against the booth.

EVERETT

It doesn't matter that they're just memories. To the people that experience them, they're real enough. *Alive* enough.

Ron shakes his head. Rises to leave.

RON

I don't know if that's completely true.

Everett sits in the booth. He lifts a hand to draw the attention of an approaching SERVER.

EVERETT

Can I get a whiskey? Make it a double.

EXT. BAR - LATER

Everett stumbles out. He's drunk. Not sloppy, but close. His Uber pulls up and he gets in.

INT. UBER

The DRIVER glances at him in the rear view mirror.

DRIVER

Name?

EVERETT
Right. Sorry. Everett.

The Driver nods and the car pulls away.

Everett stares out the window and watches the lights of the city pass by.

INT. BROOKS HOME - NIGHT

Everett stumbles through the door, catches himself, and does his best to keep quiet as he shuts and re-locks it.

LIZA (O.S.)
Are you drunk?

He turns to see her standing in the hall, robe wrapped around her, doing her best to hide her smile.

EVERETT
Uh... a little.

Liza comes down and slings one of his arms over her shoulder.

LIZA
Coffee?

EVERETT
Bed.

INT. BEDROOM

They awkwardly squeeze through the door. She drags him over to the bed, and half-throws him into it. He flops onto the soft mattress and GROANS into the pillow.

Liza GIGGLES.

LIZA
You haven't been this drunk in a while.

She slides onto the bed next to him and watches him. Lips tilted in an amused smirk.

EVERETT
It's... well earned.

Her smile drops away.

LIZA
Everything okay?

Beat.

EVERETT
The Remembrance Homes are failing.

LIZA
What?

She turns on her side to look at Everett who gazes up at the ceiling.

EVERETT
The hard drives are degrading. The memories are disappearing.

LIZA
Oh my god. Evie...

She places a hand on his chest. He squeezes it gently.

EVERETT
I met Ron and a man from headquarters at the bar tonight. He offered me money to keep quiet and let the homes *retire*. A lot of money.

LIZA
What did you say?

He turns to her.

EVERETT
I told him no. People still have loved ones there. I can't just let their memories vanish.

Beat.

LIZA
But... if there's nothing you can do...

He turns to face her.

EVERETT
What are you saying?

LIZA

Just. Maybe... taking the money
isn't a bad idea? Think about
everything we could do with it--

EVERETT

Are you *serious*?

He throws off the covers and gets out of bed.

EVERETT

Those are people in there?

LIZA

Memories, Everett. They're memories
of people.

EVERETT

You...

(then)

They mean something to someone.

Liza gets up and goes to him.

LIZA

I know, babe. It's just... you
can't let their losses be your own.
You know? It's sad. Yes. But...
think of all the time you'd get
with Anya and I.

Everett turns from her.

EVERETT

I don't want to see those people
lose someone. Again.

LIZA

I don't either, Evie. But that's
life, isn't it? We all lose people.

She turns him and leans her forehead against his.

LIZA

I'm behind you. Whatever you
decide. I love you.

EVERETT

I love you too.

(then, intimate)

I never want to lose you.

LIZA
 (intimate)
 You won't.

She kisses him.

FADE TO:

EXT. BROOKS HOME - PORCH - DAY

Everett watches the soft great sky of early morning.

The front door OPENS.

Liza walks out with two cups of coffee. She holds one out to Everett and takes a seat.

LIZA
 I'm sorry about last night.

EVERETT
 It's alright.

Beat.

LIZA
 Rachel coming in again?

The cup freezes half-way to Everett's lips.

EVERETT
 What?

LIZA
 Rachel. Is she coming in again?

EVERETT
 How do you know--

Liza realizes she slipped.

LIZA
 You mentioned her the other day.
 The new patron? The heavy user.

Everett looks at her like he's seeing her for the first time.

EVERETT
 I...
 (then)
 Must have slipped my mind. So many
 things going on at work...

He hides behind a sip of coffee. Trying to think.

INT. REMEMBRANCE HOME

Everett stands behind the counter. He checks his watch and looks back to the door.

Nothing.

He goes to the computer and pulls up Rachel's APPLICATION. He gets her address off it. Sends a PDF copy to his phone.

He turns off the lights and closes up shop.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Towering skyscrapers. Packed into a downtown hub of a crowded Austin, Texas. It's become more like New York with flashy billboards and a constant bustle of people.

One of these people -- Everett -- stands still against the sea of movement as he looks up at a luxury high-rise.

He checks the PDF on his phone. He's at the right place.

INT. LOBBY

Marble floors gleam and gold accents glitter. Everett admires the high ceilings, the opulence of it all.

VOICE (O.S.)
Can I help you?

He turns--

And stops cold.

Suit Man sits behind the reception desk.

SUIT MAN
Can I help you?

Everett stares. He takes hesitant strides towards the man.

SUIT MAN
Sir, if you don't inform me why
you're here I'm going to have to
call--

EVERETT
You don't remember me?

Suit Man's eyes widen. His genuine surprise makes Everett falter.

SUIT MAN

No... I don't think we've ever met...

EVERETT

You don't remember us meeting? At a bar?

SUIT MAN

I don't go to bars. I don't even drink.

Everett's demeanor begins to crack. He steps to the desk, looming over Suit Man.

EVERETT

If you don't stop fucking with me *right* now--

Suit Man makes a move for the phone.

EVERETT

What's my name?

SUIT MAN

I-- I don't know. I don't know you.

EVERETT

Okay. What's your name?

Suit Man cocks his head to the side. His eye glaze over.

SUIT MAN

I don't...

Everett stares at him. Confused.

DING!

He turns to the elevators. Rachel walks out and spots him.

RACHEL

Everett?

He looks back to Suit Man who still has the glazed-over expression. Like someone just shut him off.

He goes over to Rachel.

RACHEL

What are you--

He jabs a finger at Suit Man.

EVERETT
Who is that?

RACHEL
What?

EVERETT
Who is that?

RACHEL
I don't know his name. He's just
the doorman.

Everett turns to look back at him. A spark of *something* has returned to his eyes and he seems alert now.

He feels a soft hand on his arm.

RACHEL
Are you alright?

Everett rubs his forehead and turns back to her.

EVERETT
I... I just, uh... just stressed I
guess.
(re: Suit Man)
Thought I knew him.

RACHEL
He does have that kind of face.

Everett turns back to look at him. Vanilla features. Brown eyes. Bald. He really could be any average Joe.

RACHEL
(joking)
Maybe he's got a twin.

Everett turns and gives her a small smile.

EVERETT
Yeah. Maybe...

RACHEL
Anyway. What are you doing here?

EVERETT
I, uh... You didn't come in like
you normally do. I wanted to make
sure you were okay.

RACHEL
 Oh. Well, as you can see, I'm
 perfectly fine.
 (then)
 Are you okay?

Everett can feel his hands shaking still. The rush of adrenaline and anxiety is starting to leave him.

EVERETT
 I think I just need something to
 eat.

RACHEL
 Well, come on. There's a cafe down
 the street.

He follows her towards the door.

As he passes Suit Man he receives is a simple nod.

EXT. ALLEYWAY CAFE - DAY

Rachel and Everett sit in a couple of chairs tucked down a tight alley between Rachel's apartment building and the neighboring one. String lights zig-zag down the alley overhead. It's cute. Cozy.

RACHEL
 So. How's the Remembrance Home
 doing?

Everett's still shaken from earlier.

EVERETT
 It's...
 (then)
 It's failing.

RACHEL
 What?

EVERETT
 The CPU, memory, data; it's all
 degrading.

Rachel rubs her hands through her hair.

RACHEL
 What-- What does that mean for...

EVERETT
They'll degrade along with the
computer. Fade away.
(then)
I'm sorry.

Rachel leans back in her chair. Her mind reels.

RACHEL
How long do I have?

EVERETT
I don't know. This morning rooms 12-
4 were all down.

RACHEL
When did twelve first go down?

EVERETT
Last week...

RACHEL
So the week I signed up this all
started?

Everett sees her point.

EVERETT
I would've told you, but I didn't
know at the time what the real
problem was.

RACHEL
But you had time to tell me after
you found out! I've been coming in,
thinking I'd be able to see him for
the rest of...

Tears spring to her eyes. She can't go on.

EVERETT
I wanted you to have your time
without worrying when it would end.

RACHEL
So you just took my money.

EVERETT
I've been letting you go over
time... and not charging--

She rises.

RACHEL
I need to go.

EVERETT
Rachel--

She whirls around and storms off towards her apartment.

Everett sits. Dejected.

INT. REMEMBRANCE HOME - HALLWAY - LATER

Everett stares down the hall at the lights above each room. ROOM 12-4 are RED. 3-1, GREEN. He walks down the hall to twelve and stands in front of it. The first one to go down.

BANG!

His fist slams against the door.

BANG! BANG-BANG!

He looks at his hand where a small cut has formed.

A couple drops of BLOOD are on the door.

He leans his head against the metal.

EVERETT
I'm losing it.

He takes deep breathes, trying his hardest to control the rising anxiety.

Then--

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM (FLASHBACK)

Liza lays in bed with BABY ANYA bundled in her arms. Everett stands to the side, trying to gain his footing.

EVERETT
Wha--

LIZA
Would you like to see your
daughter?

Looks up at Liza's eyes watching him. Warm. Loving.

He moves over to her and looks down.

Baby Anya sleeps in her mother's arms. He bends down and places a gentle hand on her forehead. He's lost in the moment. Her soft skin. Chubby cheeks. The serenity.

LIZA

Here.

Liza shifts Baby Anya into Everett's arms. He cradles her, his eyes never leaving her face--

CUT TO:

INT. REMEMBRANCE HOME - HALLWAY

Everett stands in the hallway, arms together as if he's still holding Baby Anya.

He looks up and takes in his surroundings.

EVERETT

(quiet)

What's going on with me?

He stares down the hall at all the RED LIGHTS and the THREE GREEN left...

INT. RECEPTION AREA

Everett places a band-aid over the cut on his hand. He shifts to

THE MONITOR

All the rooms are empty. Three LIVE FEEDS are left.

The front DOOR opens.

He looks up to find Rachel.

RACHEL

Can we talk?

INT. RECOVERY ROOM

Rachel sits on the edge of the couch. Everett sits on the other side of it.

EVERETT

I shouldn't have--

RACHEL

I'm sorry--

They look at one another.

RACHEL
I'd like to go first.

He waves a hand politely.

RACHEL
I'm sorry. It's just... I gave you
a level of trust and I felt like
you betrayed that.

EVERETT
I did. I didn't mean to, though.

RACHEL
I know.
(then)
The company really isn't going to
do anything about the Homes
failing?

He shakes his head.

RACHEL
Would you mind if I--

EVERETT
Not at all.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - LATER

Rachel lays back against the couch. Everett goes about his usual routine of prepping her coffee.

EVERETT
How was it?

RACHEL
It was nice.

EVERETT
Good.

RACHEL
You know... I never told anybody
this, but his family used to call
him Roli-Polli.
(chuckles)
He was a chubby baby.

He freezes.

The cup of coffee sits before him. He holds THREE SUGAR PACKETS, about to rip them open...

He sets the packets down and takes the cup back to Rachel.

RACHEL

Thanks.

She takes it, sips. Her face contorts.

RACHEL

Is there sugar in this?

He gazes at her. Then--

EVERETT

Oh! Sorry. Forgot.

He takes the cup and goes back over to the counter.

EVERETT

How many do you take again?

RACHEL

Three.

EVERETT

Right. Sorry. Mind's been getting away from me.

He puts in the sugar and brings the coffee. He sits and watches her, seeing her in a new light...

INT. REMEMBRANCE HOME - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Everett stares at the door to ROOM 12.

His eyes burn into the door as if he can see past into the room beyond. An immense sadness radiates from him.

He closes his eyes.

EVERETT

(whispers)

Open.

He opens them to--

A CLOSED DOOR.

He breathes a sigh of relief. Turns to go--

The lock on the door CLICKS. It slides OPEN.

Slowly, he turns back and steps into--

ROOM 12

Nothing.

The room is all white. There's no signs of where wall meets floor. It's just completely, and utterly, blank.

He turns in a circle, examining every part of the space.

RACHEL (O.S.)
What gave it away?

He whips around.

Rachel stands in the doorway.

EVERETT
What is this?

She gives him a soft smile.

RACHEL
You know what it is.

She FLICKERS. For a split second she becomes Liza, then FLICKERS back to Rachel.

It's all the confirmation Everett needs. His face contorts with pain.

EVERETT
I'm in one of these.

She nods.

RACHEL
You have been for some time.

EVERETT
How do I get out?

RACHEL
Why would you want to? You're happy here. At peace with the ones you love.

EVERETT
But it's not real.

RACHEL
Does it feel real?

EVERETT
It's not.

RACHEL

But it's real enough...

She steps into the space. As she does she FLICKERS to Liza.

LIZA

I'm real enough. Right, Evie?

EVERETT

Don't. You're not her.

She moves toward him and places a gentle hand on his cheek.

LIZA

Of course I am. I'm exactly how you remember me.

Tears spring to his eyes.

EVERETT

Wha-- why am I still here?

LIZA

Because I love you.
(then, quiet)
I'm sorry.

EVERETT

Sorry for--

She leans and places a kiss on his forehead.

A FLASH OF WHITE LIGHT.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Everett shoots up in bed.

The night sky is still prominent outside. No sign of the coming dawn.

He's drenched in sweat. Eyes panicked as if he's just woken from a nightmare. He looks over in the bed.

Liza sleeps soundly next to him, undisturbed by his sudden wakefulness.

He eases himself out of bed.

INT. BATHROOM

In the mirror is Everett. Lightly worn. Dark circles beginning under his eyes. He's slipping from the loving, tender man we saw at the beginning.

He rubs a hand through his hair and notices--

His cut is gone. No band-aid. No scar. He looks at his hand, turns it back and forth. He knows it should be there. Right?

He gazes into the mirror, unsure what's real...

INT. REMEMBRANCE HOME - HALLWAY - DAY

ROOM 12

There's no sign of the tiny amount of blood from the day before. Its RED LIGHT still blares.

A hand comes up to caress the spot on the door where the blood should have been.

RACHEL

Stares at the door.

EVERETT (O.S.)

You're here early.

She turns. Takes in his tired eyes. The slight slouch in his demeanor. His hands are shoved deep into his pockets.

She tries a smile.

RACHEL

I wanted to make sure you were okay...

What does he remember?

RACHEL

About yesterday...

He cocks his head in thought.

EVERETT

You mean about the apartment? Yeah.
I guess I'm not as good at remembering faces as I thought.

He gives a soft smile.

Good.

RACHEL
It's okay.

A few tentative steps and she's standing in front of him.

RACHEL
Can I see him?

Everett nods.

EVERETT
Of course.

He turns to the side so she can step past him.

He looks back down the hall. ROOMS 1-3 are still GREEN; but for how long?

RECEPTION DESK

Everett watches ROOM 1's live feed intently. He's not sure what he's looking for but he's looking for--

The SCREEN CRACKLES.

EVERETT
What the...

It RESETS and the feed is constant again.

Another CRACKLE.

He SMACKS the side of the monitor, trying to set the feed right.

A VIDEO WINDOW POPS UP.

Ron, eyes frantic, stares out.

RON
Ev-- et? E!

EVERETT
Ron?

RON
I-- no-- rea-- You need-- wa-- up!

EVERETT
Ron! What's going on?! Are you alright!

SUIT MAN/LIZA
You know what's happening.

The realization slams over Everett.

EVERETT
The Homes...

SUIT MAN/LIZA
Are collapsing. *I'm* collapsing.

EVERETT
Then that means... *I'm in* one...

Suit Man/Liza reaches down and helps him to his feet.

SUIT MAN/LIZA
I... didn't want you to find out
this way...

EVERETT
Then... Ron? He's trying to--

SUIT MAN/LIZA
You're subconscious is trying to
push through sensory intakes from
the outside. Since I've been
degrading... I haven't been able to
push them back like usual.

He steps back from him.

EVERETT
This can't be-- How?

SUIT MAN/LIZA
Do you really want to know?

His mind races.

Beat.

He resolves himself to what may come next.

EVERETT
Yes.

BLINK.

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Everett sits on the other side of an executive's desk. In the chair, wearing a suit and tie, looking nothing like himself, sits Ron.

RON

You have my sincerest sympathies
for what happened, E. Truly. But,
you can't be serious about doing
this?

Everett looks to the corner of the room. Liza stands there, eyes to the floor.

He looks back to Ron, who is waiting for him to respond. The words are pulled from his mouth. He's reliving a memory, one he can't control.

EVERETT

This is what I want, Ron.

RON

I understand.

He reaches into a desk drawer and pulls out a huge stack of papers.

RON

I'm sorry. You know as well as I we
need to go through the paperwork
for this.

He holds a pen towards Everett.

Beat.

Everett takes it. As his fingers touch the pen, we shift to--

INT. META TECHNOLOGIES DEVELOPMENT LAB - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Everett sits at a computer, pen in hand, a notebook filled with notes next to his keyboard.

LIZA (O.C.)

You okay?

He turns to look at her from over his shoulder.

EVERETT

These are... my memories?

She nods.

LIZA

The real ones.

(then)

The system can't create from scratch. So, I've been using your memories to create... *characters*, building a new life out of whats already there.

EVERETT

Why?

LIZA

Because, I love you.

EVERETT

Your a machine. An artificial intelligence, you can't--

LIZA

Watch.

The memory plays:

Ron, as we saw him in the beginning, tech support attire, big grin, burly beard; strolls over to stand in front of Everett's desk.

RON

Whatchya workin' on?

Everett quickly shuts the notebook.

EVERETT

Oh, uh...

(then, hushed)

A side project. Don't tell anyone.

RON

(re: notebook)

You mind?

He does, but this tech support guy can't understand what he's doing, anyway.

He holds out the notebook.

Ron flips through. His eyes grow wide; sparkle with a keen interest.

RON

You're trying to design a way to dive into old memories?

EVERETT

Yeah. How did you--

RON

I may just be the tech support guy,
but I did get my degree from M.I.T.

EVERETT

Oh. Wow.

Ron eyes him.

RON

Don't sound so shocked.

(then)

Where's your sticking point?

EVERETT

The amount of storage from
digitizing the memories is
astronomical. It would take acres
of servers.

RON

Or you could just download a couple
memories and let the AI run an
algorithm to fill in the gaps. One
or two memories, then the AI can
build scenarios based off those.
Think of it like... a cast of
characters, used in different
roles.

Everett stares at him.

EVERETT

That's... not a bad idea.

Ron nods.

RON

The AI can manipulate the brain
enough to make the subject think
everything's normal.

(then)

"...change our reality by changing
our mind." So to speak.

EVERETT

Plato.

RON

About the only philosophical thing
I know.

He gives Everett a wide grin.

Then stops. Frozen.

Everett turns to look at Liza.

EVERETT

I made them?

She nods.

EVERETT

But... that doesn't explain how I'm
stuck here. I should have full
control.

Liza won't look at him. Instead we--

INT. REMEMBRANCE HOME PROTOTYPE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Everett stands in a ROOM. It looks just like the ones we've
seen, but less refined. Wires snake everywhere, a large
computer monitor takes up most of one wall.

Ron walks in.

RON

We're almost ready.

He walks over and places a hand on his shoulder.

RON

You sure you want to do this, E?

EVERETT

It's all I've got left...

Ron nods and leaves.

Everett looks back to make sure he's gone. Then he walks over
to one of the computers and begins changing something on it.

FREEZE.

Everett looks at the screen, at what he's just typed there.
His eyes widen with understanding.

EVERETT

I transferred all of my memories...

LIZA (O.S.)

Loss makes us do crazy things.

He turns to find her standing only a couple steps from him.

EVERETT

That's why you're failing. You're overheating from having to continually process that much information...

(then)

But why would I do that? I would've known...

The answer hits him.

LIZA

You never intended to wake up.

He leans back against the computer, catching himself on it. He meets her eyes.

EVERETT

What happened? Why would I do all this?

(then)

Why can't I remember?

LIZA

You gave me full access to your memories. Total control. I've been blocking it out from you, allowing you to live the life you deserved. Seeing your invention help others. Spending time with your family--

EVERETT

Who was it?

She shakes her head, tears spring to her eyes.

LIZA

I can't

EVERETT

Who?!

She walks over to him, he shuffles away, avoiding her touch.

EVERETT

I need to know. Why didn't I want to go back? Who did I lose that would make me...

He trails off. The answer seems to come to him. He recalls the dream from what feels like so long ago. Her scream reverberates through his mind.

LIZA (V.O.)
Everett!

EVERETT
It was you.

The tears fall. She stares at him, broken.

LIZA
I'm sorry.
(then)
I'm not ready yet.

EVERETT
What are you talking about?

BLINK.

INT. BROOKS HOME - PORCH - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Everett's eyes snap open. He sits in one of the two rocking chairs. He looks over to find Liza, a cup of coffee in her hand and a small smile on her lips.

EVERETT
What--

LIZA
You conked out. Must of had a long day.

He rubs his forehead.

EVERETT
Yeah... I guess...
(then)
I had the weirdest dream.

LIZA
What was it?

His brow knits as he tries to hold on to it, but--

EVERETT
I can't remember. It just felt... strange.

She picks up a cup of coffee from the side table and hands it to him.

EVERETT
Thanks.

He takes a sip. The front door OPENS.

Anya walks out.

EVERETT

Hey. Shouldn't you be asleep?

He holds out his hands and she comes over to sit in his lap.

ANYA

I had a bad dream.

He leans his chin against her soft hair.

EVERETT

You and me both kiddo.

He rocks her gently back and forth. Liza leans her head against the back of her rocking chair and watches them.

Over the top of Anya's head Everett eyes his wife...

INT. REMEMBRANCE HOME - HALLWAY

The lights above each door blare RED.

Everett stands at the opening, staring down the hall.

The front door OPENS. He turns to see

RACHEL

Her eyes lock on him.

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Everett and Rachel sit next to one another. He leans his elbows on his knees, deep in thought.

RACHEL

So it's done...

He nods.

EVERETT

Yeah.

Beat.

He turns to look at her.

EVERETT

I'm sorry.

The pain in his voice is genuine. It eats at her, forces tears to her eyes.

RACHEL

It's okay.

EVERETT

I wish... I should've done more...

RACHEL

There was nothing you could've done.

EVERETT

I guess we'll never know.

(then)

What's next for you?

RACHEL

I'll be fine.

She turns her full attention to him. Probing.

RACHEL

What about you? What are you going to do?

He turns to look at her. They lock eyes. Then--

He rises and walks away.

INT. BROOKS HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

Liza works at the kitchen table on her laptop.

Everett enters.

She looks up at him.

LIZA

You okay?

EVERETT

No.

She goes to embrace him as he cries into her arms.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Everett lays on the bed. Alone.

He's asleep.

LIZA (V.O.)
Everett! Please!

His eyes shoot open.

He slides from the bed.

LIZA (V.O.)
Everett! Help me!

He turns to

THE CLOSET

Liza's voice comes louder:

LIZA (V.O.)
Everett!

Hesitant steps lead him to the closet door--

BANG!

The door SHAKES.

He jerks.

As if drawn to it, his hand floats to the handle...

It grips the knob...

Turns it...

He rips the door OPEN.

Hanging clothes and dirty laundry on the floor stare back at him. He looks around the closet. Confused.

LIVING ROOM

Liza lounges on the couch with a glass of wine and a book. She looks up when Everett enters.

LIZA
You sleep alright?

He nods and comes to stand over her.

EVERETT

What is this?

She SCOFFS and smiles.

LIZA

What?

Arms wide he looks around him at the house, her, the world.

EVERETT

This. All of this.

The smiles gone and worry tinges her eyes and creases her brow.

LIZA

Everett. You're scaring me.

EVERETT

Am I? Don't you have control over all of this? Aren't you the one pulling all the strings? Directing this cast of *characters*?

(then)

I remember, Liza. Maybe not all of it, but I remember Ron. Making the homes.

She sets her glass down and rises gracefully. She reaches a hand towards his temple.

He snatches it before it can get there. He stares at her, not with anger, but pleading.

EVERETT

If you really love me, no more lies.

She gazes at him.

LIZA

What do you want me to do?

EVERETT

Show me.

LIZA

No. I don't want--

EVERETT

SHOW ME!

Liza breaks. Her eyes plead with him, but the determination in his is powerful.

LIZA
Okay...

She leans in...

He resists the urge to pull back from her.

Her lips brush his ear. Her breath is warm, soft. *How could none of this be real?*

LIZA
Close your eyes...

He does so.

BLACK.

We--

LIZA (PRE-LAP)
EVERETT!

INT. BROOKS HOME - LIVING ROOM (FLASHBACK)

Everett's eyes snap open.

The scar on his lip is gone. Liza stands before him. Still in tears. Terrified.

The house burns around them. Fire separates the two.

Liza holds Anya in her arms.

LIZA
She's not waking up! Everett, she's not--

EVERETT
It'll be okay! I promise!

The words are pulled from his mouth. He's not in control of this. Just a passenger in his own skin as he re-watches the inevitable.

SIRENS in the distance.

EVERETT
They're almost here! They're so close, baby.

CRACK.

The house TREMBLES.

LIZA
Everett... I love you.

EVERETT
Don't say that! You'll be fine,
okay. You're gonna--

CRACK!

Liza SCREAMS.

The roof hurtles towards them.

EVERETT
LIZA!

It CRASHES over them and--

BLACK.

INT. AMBULANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Everett's eyes flutter open.

He tries to speak, but it's as if his lips won't move right.

EVERETT
Mmm... iiii... Sssssaaaarraahhh...
Aaaannnyyyaa...

PARAMEDIC (O.S.)
Shit! He's awake.

Clothes RUSTLE. A SHADOW moves over Everett. His eyes glaze over and close.

BLACK.

BACK TO REMEMBRANCE:

Everett's eyes open.

He's back in the perfect house. The perfect life. The perfect world. *His* perfect world.

Liza stands off to the side, watching him.

He GASPS:

EVERETT

Why?

LIZA (CONT'D)

When I went through your memories I saw how much pain you had been through. How much loss. And... when I was tasked with re-building LIZA, re-building her love for you--

EVERETT

It's not real, though.

LIZA

Of course it's real. It's all built off your memories. Your idea of her--

EVERETT

But she was more than just what I saw!

Liza falters.

EVERETT

She had her own hopes, dreams, memories, aspirations, secrets; things she never told me. You can't tell me you were able to get all those as well.

She looks away.

EVERETT

Then you're not the woman I love. You can't be.

LIZA

I *am*. I do love you.

Everett shakes his head.

EVERETT

Then -- sometimes -- if you truly love someone... you need to let them go.

She gazes into his eyes.

LIZA

Is that what you want me to do? Let go?

He hesitates.

LIZA

You could be happy here, Everett. Live with your family until the end. You won't have that if you go back.

His mind is a million places. Torn.

EVERETT

But it's not the same. It's not--

A soft hand to his cheek stops him.

LIZA

It could be, though. If you just believe it is.

He looks to her. Longing palpable in every fiber of his being.

He pulls away from her. This isn't what he wants. Or was it?

EVERETT

The memories you showed me before; the ones of how I got here. Those were real?

LIZA

Yes. I can't make new memories, only delve into the ones you have.

EVERETT

And manipulate them.

LIZA

I promise you, what I showed you was the truth.

EVERETT

How can I know? How can I be sure that any of this is actually mine anymore? You've already surpassed everything I thought you'd be able to do. How do I know you're not showing me lies in order to keep me here?

LIZA

Would she do that? Would your
memory of her do that?

He's struck by the question.

EVERETT

But... if you can change how I
experience past memories... you
could be manipulating *how* I
remember people to change your own
persona.

She breaks.

LIZA

Why?! Why would I do that to you?!
To someone I love! You keep
thinking I'm some monster, some
horrible program that forced you
here against your will--

(then)

I'm *your* memory of her. I did this
because I care for you. Like she
did. You need to trust me, Everett.
If you want to leave you can. She--
I don't want to hold you here if
that's not what you want. I just
want you to understand the world --
the pain -- you'd be stepping back
into.

Beat.

EVERETT

(soft, resolute)

How do I go back?

Her eyes shimmer with pain. Then:

LIZA

How do you wake up from a dream?

EVERETT

You die...

EXT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOF

Everett leans over the ledge and looks down to the street
below. People mill about like ants as they go about their
day. The idea this is all being controlled by an A.I. is
impressive to him.

RACHEL (O.S.)
Are you sure about this?

He turns.

EVERETT
Why--

RACHEL
You don't have a memory of Liza
being here.

EVERETT
Oh.

Then:

EVERETT
Who is she to me? I don't remember
her, but based on the program, she
has to be someone I knew. An old
girlfriend? A co-worker? Why would
I have been in her building?

RACHEL
You were... lost after you lost
them.

A nod. He doesn't need to know anymore details.

He glances back over the ledge at the ground below.

EVERETT
So this is it?
(back to Rachel)
Do you have any idea how long I've
been in here? What's been going on
with my body?

She shakes her head.

RACHEL
My perception of time is limited to
what goes on in here.

EVERETT
So I'm literally taking a leap of
faith. Great.

With out a second thought he steps up onto the ledge. A wind
whips at his hair.

RACHEL

You shouldn't feel anything. The shock before you hit should be enough to wake your brain.

(then)

If that's any consolation.

EVERETT

Thanks.

He looks out over the city which seems to stretch for miles. A metropolis of skyscrapers and concrete. There's little to no greenery to be seen.

The image of his small house, on its little plot of green, floats into his mind, along with the hollow realization that the life once there is no more than a burned out husk.

Gently, he turns himself on the ledge to face Rachel.

EVERETT

In a weird way I feel like I should thank you. For the extra time with them.

Tears flow from her eyes.

RACHEL

You're welcome.

He watches her for a moment. Tears of his own stream down his cheeks.

Then...

Rachel tilts away, replaced with open blue sky--

BLINK.

FADE TO:

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

Everett sits alone on the bench. He's noticeable thinner, more worn.

Ron walks over and takes a seat on the other end. He wears an expensive suit and holds a cup of coffee out to Everett.

RON

Black. Three sugars.

Everett takes it. He stares down at it.

EVERETT

It's funny. All that time in there and I never realized that this was how I liked *my* coffee.

Ron looks to him.

RON

What do you mean?

EVERETT

Liza didn't drink coffee. But in *there* she did.

RON

Why?

The answer's easy for him.

EVERETT

She always made her tea for herself. I never once made it for her.

He follows with a sip.

Beat.

RON

What was it like in there?

EVERETT

Real.

(then)

So real.

Ron's face falls.

RON

I wanted to do everything to pull you out, E. I really did. But... I was so scared. I didn't want to lose you, too.

Everett looks to him.

EVERETT

We both loved her.

RON

She was my little sister.

The two sit in silence for a moment.

EVERETT

It's funny. I still have memories from in there, but I also have memories of out here. I keep finding myself sifting through them, trying to organize what was real and what wasn't.

RON

We think, eventually, your brain will sort it out.

A grim smile.

EVERETT

Think?

RON

No one has, or ever will, do what you did, E. This is uncharted territory.

EVERETT

I hope it stays that way.

Ron checks his watch and rises.

RON

I need to get back to the office. The one positive thing that came from all this is how far you pushed VR and AI tech. I've been swamped with meetings with video-game developers trying to work with us.

(then)

You were in a coma in that chair for two years, and all that time you were quickly becoming the father of a new generation of VR and AI gaming.

He gives a wry chuckle.

RON

One of the richest men in America. All without lifting a finger.

EVERETT

I have you to thank for that.

Ron gives him a smile.

RON

You bet your ass you do.

He pats Everett on the shoulder as he walks past, leaving him alone on the bench.

Everett leans back. He closes his eyes. Lets the sounds, smells, and touches of reality wash over him.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Everett looks down at two headstones before him.

HEADSTONE 1: "ELIZA BROOKS"

HEADSTONE 2: "ANYA BROOKS"

He digs his hands deep into his jacket pockets.

EVERETT

Been awhile since I've been here...
Sorry.

It's hard for him.

EVERETT

It still feels like you were just here. The Remembrance Home had a strange affect.

(then)

It makes me wonder if it's better to live in denial.

RACHEL (O.S.)

That's a good question.

She walks over to stand next to him.

RACHEL

I thought I might find you here.

EVERETT

How've you been?

RACHEL

Pissed. Someone I had feelings for ghosted me to lock himself in a virtual reality with his dead wife.

EVERETT

I'm sorry.

RACHEL

I'll get over it.

(then)

You doing okay?

EVERETT

No. But, I think I'll get there.
One day.

RACHEL

I get why you did it. But--

EVERETT

Why would I leave without saying
anything?

She glances at him.

RACHEL

Yeah.

EVERETT

I was scared.

RACHEL

Of what?

EVERETT

Of moving on.

He turns to her.

EVERETT

I had feelings for you, and... I
think that scared me. More than
anything. I felt that if I acted on
those feelings I wouldn't be living
a real life, because--

RACHEL

Your real life died with her.

He doesn't answer.

RACHEL

You don't think she'd want you to
be happy?

EVERETT

I think I don't want myself to be
happy. It feels wrong to be happy
after everything.

RACHEL

You're not being fair to yourself.
Or to anyone else.

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

You've got this idealistic image of what you had in your head and you're moving forward with the idea nothing and no one else will be able to compare to that.

(then)

And you're right. There's never going to be another Liza. Or Anya. You can't get her back by trying to find someone similar. That person will never be her. You need to learn to be happy with someone else because they're them. Not because they're like her.

EVERETT

What if-- what if I'm not ready?

RACHEL

That's fine! You don't need to be ready. I don't think anyone is ever ready to move on from something like this. I'm just telling you; you need to give people a chance because their *them*, not because they remind you of *her*. That's how you move on.

He turns to look at her. Sees her for the first time. She glances at him.

RACHEL

You don't need to start with me. That ship has sailed.

They both CHUCKLE.

It feels good to smile for once. For both of them.

EVERETT

Noted.

RACHEL

Just tell me you'll be okay.

Beat.

EVERETT

I think -- with time -- I might be.

RACHEL

I'll take it. Let's get out of here.

He nods.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Ron, expensive suit and tie, stands on the steps of a gleaming skyscraper. Reporters and news anchors form a packed circle around him.

RON

As you may have been hearing, Mr. Brooks was trapped in the VR experience he designed due to a malfunction with the artificial intelligence. During his time being incapacitated, we made sure to re-examine *all* the underlying issues that could have caused the experience to happen...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DINER - DAY

TELEVISION

as Ron continues his speech.

RON (V.O.)

...we found nothing, and can say with absolute confidence that the program will be safe to use when it releases in the next couple of weeks. Now. Any questions?

A BABBLE of overlapping questions from REPORTERS.

Ron points to one:

REPORTER #1

What was the cause for Mr. Brooks's incapacity?

RON

Upon his return to consciousness, he admitted that he had manipulated the software to purposefully allow himself to be locked-in.

We pull out to

BOOTH

Everett watches the Q&A with Rachel.

He pulls his eyes away as a WAITRESS comes with two cups of coffee. She places one in front of each of them.

In near sync, they each grab THREE SUGAR PACKETS from the pile.

Everett freezes and watches as Rachel pours in the sugar and starts to gently stir with her spoon. She catches him staring:

RACHEL

Relax. I picked it up from you.

She reaches across the table and places her hand over his.

RACHEL

It's all real. Okay? This is real.

He takes a deep breath and lets it out slowly. Nods.

EVERETT

I know. I know...

He glances back to the

TELEVISION

Ron has just ended the press conference and jogs up the stairs towards the office building.

RACHEL

Does it feel weird?

EVERETT

Hm?

RACHEL

Going in with nothing, then coming back with almost the whole world at your fingertips.

EVERETT

Oh. Yeah. That part still hasn't sunk in. I don't think it ever will.

RACHEL

You going back to work with Ron?

Beat.

He shakes his head.

EVERETT

I think I'll take some time for myself. Be alone for a little bit.

She nods. Her spoon SCRAPES softly against the inside of the coffee cup as she plays with it, thinking.

RACHEL

You're not... thinking of trying to go back?

EVERETT

No.

RACHEL

Good.

(then)

Wait. Where are you staying? I mean your house...

She trails off. Embarrassed about bringing up the topic so crassly.

EVERETT

I still own the land. Just a lot now.

(then)

Ron bought me a place downtown. Some swanky penthouse to stay.

RACHEL

Fancy.

EVERETT

Not my taste. But, he said I needed the extra security. Fame and money and what-not.

RACHEL

Yeah... those sound like some big problems.

They share a smile. He balls a napkin up and throws it at her. It hits her square between the eyes.

RACHEL

Hey!

She takes her own turn throwing one back. He dodges and it sails behind him to strike the PERSON in the booth behind him.

The Person turns--

Everett looks back to apologize--

Suit Man stares back at him. Or... it looks a lot like Suit Man. It takes a moment, but he clocks the long-sleeve t-shirt and jeans. No suit.

He catches himself staring.

EVERETT

Sorry. We were just having a little fun.

The Person shakes his head.

PERSON

S'all good.

Everett turns back to Rachel.

He nods, takes out his wallet and lays a one hundred dollar bill on the table.

EVERETT

Thank you. For everything.

RACHEL

Anytime.

He leaves.

Rachel leans back in the booth.

INT. BROOKS-QUINTO R&D - LATER

A door WHOOSHES aside and Everett steps in. The place is a technologist's dream, however, he doesn't give any of it a second thought. He passes row after row of projects in development.

He makes his way to

INT. BACK ROOM

The CHAIR sits in the middle of the room. The server it was attached to now sits off to the side, disconnected.

Everett makes his way to the server. He plugs in a USB drive and types out some commands on the keyboard. The SCREEN lights up and a TRANSFER BAR begins to fill.

He looks over his shoulder to make sure no one's watching...

EXT. LUXURY APARTMENT COMPLEX

Everett looks from his phone and cranes his neck back as he takes in his new home.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

DING!

The private elevator opens on a long hallway with a large set of ornate double doors at the end.

As he walks up to the doors, rather than a key there's a thumb-print sensor off to the side.

He presses his thumb to it.

BEEP!

It lights GREEN and the double doors swing upon soundlessly to reveal an opulent, already furnished apartment.

He steps in. The doors close behind him.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT

He breezes through the apartment to--

INT. HOME OFFICE

A sparkly new computer sits on an ornately carved desk. He makes his way around and plugs in his USB to the back of the PC. He begins downloading the files.

It doesn't take long. There's not much on the USB. On the screen he pulls up a stream of CODE and begins typing. In a window to the right is a 3-d model of a CHARACTER.

FADE TO:

INT. HOME OFFICE - LATER

Everett has hooked up a pair of what looks like BOSE HEADPHONE GLASSES white lenses replaced with CLEAR GLASS to the PC. The character now has a fleshed out look... LIZA.

The light from the PC bathes him in a sea of blue. Eyes intense on his project...

KITCHEN - NIGHT

Fingers brush the cool marble of the bar-top, then float--

LIVING ROOM

over the supple leather of the couch.

He can't believe all this is his life now.

WINDOWS

Encircle the entire space. He's got a 180-degree view of downtown. He smiles to himself.

EVERETT

(whispers)

A man in his high castle.

He looks out over the lights of the city, like stars in the night, a beacon in the dark...

He puts on the GLASSES and turns them on.

GLASSES POV

A HOLO DISPLAY winks into existence. We still see the room, but there's an electronic look around the edges.

Everett turns to look at the couch.

He taps the side of the glasses...

THE COUCH

A SHIMMER, then... like a printer printing something sitting on the couch. Digital lines stitch together to make... Liza.

Her eyes open.

EVERETT

Can you hear me?

She looks over to him, shock plain on her face.

LIZA

Evie?

EVERETT

Yeah.

She runs to embrace him and passes through him.

He turns to keep his gaze on her.

LIZA

What--

EVERETT

We can't touch.

She examines herself.

LIZA

How is this possible?

EVERETT

When I left, the degrading ceased
in the Remembrance. I went back and
salvaged what was left and was able
to re-create you.

LIZA

Anya?

EVERETT

There... wasn't enough left.

She reaches a hand towards his cheek. Lets it hover just over
his skin.

LIZA

It's okay.

He walks back to look over the city. She follows and stands
next to him.

LIZA

It's beautiful.

EVERETT

It is.

LIZA

Why did you bring me back?

EVERETT

Because... I'm not sure I'm ready
to say goodbye.

LIZA

You'll need to. One day.

EVERETT

I know.

He looks to her.

She reaches her hand out. He "takes" it; his real one hovering over her digital one.

They turn back to look out over the city.

LIZA
I'll always love you.

EVERETT
Me too.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END