

UP THERE

WGA REGISTRATION #: 1920942



FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT - ROCKY HILLS - NIGHT

It's absolutely desolate. Not a living creature in sight. They're either dead or asleep in the rocky earth below.

Close on wheels hitting the dirt. They're fast, then slow. It's a pickup truck. The only vehicle on the road. Its engine turns off once it settles in place.

A door opens then slams shut. Tiny feet in pink LIGHT UP SHOES hit the ground. They bounce and twinkle. Another door opens. Two work boots exit.

Two silhouettes make it to a weird looking rock. The LITTLE ONE takes a seat while the TALLER ONE just stands.

LITTLE ONE

What time is it?

TALLER ONE

Just wait. OK. Wait.

LITTLE ONE

I don't wanna.

It's dark. Still. Silent.

LITTLE ONE (CONT'D)

What's so special about this?

The taller one doesn't answer. The little silhouette slouches just a little. Their heads stay fixated on the night.

Suddenly darkness becomes light. IT'S A METEOR SHOWER. Not the ordinary blips in the skies. They're enormous ribbons of STARDUST blasting through the black curtain of space above.

The way they shine so brightly reveals the silhouettes' faces: a bright-eyed small girl, LYDIA SUAREZ (6), and her stone-faced father, NED (34).

Lydia looks to her dad. Her father strains to muster a smirk.

LYDIA

Dad, where do the stars come from?

NED

I don't know.

LYDIA

Do you think someone makes them and shoots them off for us?

Ned looks at Lydia before taking a seat on the rock.

NED

Maybe. I really don't know.

LYDIA

Do you think Mom can see the stars?

NED

(under his breath)

Fuck.

(normal volume)

I'd hope so.

It's silent again.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Overhead, we see this dumpy pickup truck kick up some dust as it careens away from rocky hills to flatter lands.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Ned has his hands on the wheel, gripped tightly. His eyes beam ahead on the darkness in front of him. The headlights aren't enough.

In the passenger seat, Lydia yawns. She reaches over for something. A toy. A DOG. It looks like one of those cheap robot pets from the 90's.

The dashboard clock reads 1:00 AM. She's trying to stay awake. She looks out the window.

LYDIA

(yawning)

I think I know what I want to be when I'm older.

NED

What?

LYDIA

Ms. Silverstein asked us all in class today what we wanted to be.

NED

And?

LYDIA
I want to go up there.

NED
Be a pilot?

Lydia turns to Ned. Her eyes try to meet his but his are still looking dead ahead.

LYDIA
No, I want to see space. Explore it.

Silence. Lydia pouts for a brief second. Her expression flips when Ned moves his head towards her. Acknowledgement.

NED
(sighs)
Darling, are you sure? I'm not sure they send anybody up there anymore.

Lydia's despondent. Ned takes in a deep breath.

LYDIA
They don't do that anymore?

NED
They haven't for awhile. It's just too far away. Maybe they will again.

LYDIA
Why? I bet all the cool stuff's far away.

EXT. SUAREZ'S HOME - NIGHT

The truck pulls up to a makeshift driveway in need of some repair. Ned's door opens, he gets out then walks to his daughter's.

She's asleep. Ned cradles Lydia in his arms. She's lightly snoring which brings a crack of a smile to his face.

As he walks closer to the home, he passes by MINING EQUIPMENT of some sort. DRILLS, BURROWS, AND A SMALL CRANE.

He opens the door to his abode but before he gets in, he looks out into the distance with concern. He's staring at something. A GREY BLUR. A desert illusion? No. A compound with barbed wire.

Area 51.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - NIGHT

Ned walks through the hall. It's littered with photos frames flipped over. He keeps walking before he climbs up the stairs.

He makes it to...

LYDIA'S ROOM

There he plops Lydia in her bed, kisses her forehead, and tucks her in. He leaves briskly as if he doesn't want to see something.

As the door closes, Lydia's eyes open for a brief moment. She looks at the side table. A photo at a beach of her, her father, and her mother. She nods off again.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned takes a seat on the couch. He looks at the house phone on the table across. His eyes make a reach but he stays put. They close. Serenity. Quiet.

BLACK

EXT. SUAREZ'S HOME - DAY

Close on Ned's open eyes. They're shielded by protective gear. There's a LOUD DRONE coming from machinery in the ground.

Then a CLUNK. Ned cracks a half-smile before he steps away from the hole in the ground. He takes his work helmet off. His black hair has patches of grey. His eyes look wearier.

He walks towards a makeshift desk a little ways from the house where his laptop, a worn out radio playing 90s grunge, and a canteen sit.

He lifts the canteen. Empty. The music echoes in the emptiness of the surrounding desert.

Suddenly the front door opens and out comes NEON GREEN SNEAKERS with a familiar bounce.

They make their way to Ned. It's Lydia. Now 17, but just precocious as ever. She reaches out a water bottle to her dad.

LYDIA

Dad, I have school in a few. Also, Dr. Jenkins says you shouldn't be working this early in the mornings anymore.

Ned nods as he gulps down the bottle like he's a fish out of water thrown in a tank again.

NED

What does that old coot know?

LYDIA

You really shouldn't be calling him a coot.

NED

What does that mean?

LYDIA

Nothing.

A pause.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

To the car!

Lydia runs and almost trips on the rocks below. Ned trudges to the truck.

NED

You know most people your age hate going to school right?

LYDIA

Most people don't live in the middle of nowhere, Nevada, Dad.

NED

What's so bad about that?

LYDIA

Everything.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The sun's scorching on the lonely trail. Without another car in sight for miles, the Suarezs' truck zooms through worn-down pavement.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Ned's looking straight ahead. The radio's playing something but it crackles here and there.

Lydia's on her phone. She's taking photos of the landscape through her half-down window.

NED

I still can't believe you're graduating next year. So do you know where you want to go?

Lydia shakes her head.

LYDIA

Ms. Wiles tells me I should I apply to MIT. Rick tells me he wants to go there. The drone we built for the expo last year got a lot of attention. I was thinking of escaping Nevada, anyway--

NED

Rick?

LYDIA

He's a friend, dad.

Ned takes his eyes off the road, he looks at Lydia.

NED

It's perfectly fine to have a boyfriend but I'm going to tell you to be careful. If he was anything like I was his age...

LYDIA

Oh my god, Dad. Stop. I don't have time for that. I need to come up with a killer project for the expo this year.

Lydia resumes her texting. Ned's focus returns to the road but he's also looking at his rearview mirror, angling his eyes to read.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

I'm looking up cosmic anomalies.

NED

Wow, you really are a dork.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The truck is now trapped in a crowded sea of minivans, sedans, and school buses.

Lydia, impatient, opens the car door and runs into this mini suburban hell of traffic.

NED
(rolling down the window)
Lyd!

LYDIA
Bye, Dad! Love you!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Lydia's in the halls. She roams them like a lone hunter. An omega amongst alphas and betas. Even the dorks who play card games have a pack.

She's alone. At her locker. Grabbing some stuff. She closes her door to find RICK. 17. Too cute to be a complete loss but too peppy to be cool.

RICK
Hey, Liddy.

Or suave.

LYDIA
I hate that nickname.

RICK
So... I can't go. It's family game night.

LYDIA
It's fine. Just focus on Monopoly.
It's not like we have only 2 months to come up with a project.

RICK
Sorry. It's actually Sorry tonight.
Which I am by the way. Are you ready for the AP World History test?

LYDIA
Probably not.

RICK
Same.

Lydia begins to walk away. Rick follows like a little puppy. A preppy peppy puppy. The only thing that'd make this more hopeless was if he offered to hold her books for her.

RICK (CONT'D)
Hey. Those books look heavy.

LYDIA
They're not.

They keep walking before Lydia stops in place.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
Shit, I forgot to see Ms. Wiles.
I'll see you in second, Rick.

Lydia darts the other way. Rick watches her as she goes.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - WILES' ROOM - DAY

An older woman is at her desk. Late 60s. Grey hair. Thick glasses. Perma-scowl. She wields a red pen in her hand like a machete and she's hacking papers apart. This is Ms. WILES.

She's startled when she hears FRANTIC KNOCKING. KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Wiles gets up off her seat before she opens the door to find Lydia.

LYDIA
I'm sorry. I know I'm late.

WILES
It's fine. I was just digging through some old family junk and I found something I think you'd like.

Wiles disappears into her closet when she pulls out a cardboard box. It's HUGE.

Lydia immediately grabs the box. She opens it up to find this OLD ASS SPACE AGE LOOKING MACHINE.

LYDIA
Don't tell me this is from...

WILES
The old days when NASA actually did things? Call it: inspiration.

Lydia's looking at the machine. It's this boxy console with a read out for numbers and text. A giant dish and a corded rod stick out of its base.

LYDIA
What is it? Besides "inspiration"?

WILES
I don't know. To this day, I have no clue what it does. It's yours if you want.

Lydia goes to bear hug her teacher.

WILES (CONT'D)
You know it's against county rules for you to hug me, right?

Lydia does it anyway.

The bell rings.

INT. TRUCK - AFTERNOON

Lydia jumps in. She brings in the box from Wiles. It drops with a clunk.

NED
I'm guessing you had a good day.

LYDIA
It was more so-so. How was your day? Struck gold?

NED
Nothing new. Just silver as always.
(a pause)
What do you want?

LYDIA
I want to borrow the truck to see the stars tonight. I know it's dark out and hard to drive and--

NED
You can go. Just be careful.

Lydia's taken aback by surprise but her excitement quickly takes over.

LYDIA
I will.

Ned looks at the box again, then at Lydia.

NED

Don't just say it, do it. You know we're lucky we're even allowed to still live where we live. Don't stray too far.

LYDIA

I won't. I promise.

INT. DESERT - ROCKY HILLS - NIGHT

The family truck settles in the silence. The skies are painted with little specks of light here and there.

Lydia closes her door before walking over to the passenger seat. She lugs the box out of the seat. It's heavy, but she makes it to the top of a small hill.

She lays out the machine on the rocky floor, then flips a few switches. It starts BEEPING faintly. Steady sounds.

LYDIA

What do you do?

The beeping dies down a little.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Now we wait.

Lydia finds her place on a rock. It's the same one from her childhood. Just weathered down a little more. Her feet dangle over the edge. She whistles a bit as she waits.

Nothing. Then A FLASH OF LIGHT SMASHES INTO VIEW. Lydia stands up.

THE SKIES ARE ON FIRE. STARS SHOOT ACROSS THE SKY IN FORMATION. IT'S LIKE ONE SHOOTING STAR MADE OF SMALLER CELESTIAL BODIES.

The device starts to FREAK OUT, beeping like there's no tomorrow. Lydia runs to check the screen. It's spazzing out as it generates random numbers and letters.

It doesn't take long before the machine begins to SCREECH loudly. It starts to short out. Lydia's trying her best to make sure the old thing doesn't set itself on fire.

She doesn't notice ONE OF THE STARS VEER AWAY FROM THE PACK. It begins to hurtle closer and closer to the ground. It's free falling in the distance.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
(hitting the machine)
Shut up.

The device stops screeching. BUT BOOM! SOMETHING'S ARRIVED. Lydia sees a giant PUFF OF DUST in the distance.

The same SCREECH from the device echoes through the desert to the crash site then back to where Lydia stands before dying down again.

Lydia picks up the machine before she jumps in her truck.

She ignites the engine, puts the truck into drive, then stares at her rearview mirror which glimmers.

Her eyes shift from shock to contemplation to determination. The truck begins to speed... towards the CRASH SITE.

EXT. DESERT - CRASH SITE - NIGHT

The dust hasn't settled but there's a weird silver glow to the area. It's radiant. It could be radioactive.

The truck stops just short of this mess. Lydia hops out. She's wielding a baseball bat in one hand and her phone as a flashlight in the other. She leaves the door OPEN.

She's scared as hell, gripping the bat, but she walks closer and closer towards this weird glowing anomaly. Like a moth to a flame.

The dust clears. Lydia points her light ahead of her. She's speechless.

It's the WRECKAGE of something ALIEN. Silver chrome panels on fire surround something that vaguely resembles a COCKPIT. The windows are shattered.

The earth around the ship is CRATERED but Lydia keeps inching closer. She almost SLIPS AND FALLS into the crevice but she regains her balance. She stands in front of the stranded starship.

LYDIA
Oh my god. No. Fucking. Way.

Almost instinctively, she starts taking photos of it. She's too taken by the sights to notice a STRAY LINE OF WIRE COMING FROM THE SHIP CREEPING TOWARDS THE TRUCK.

She's finally right next to the ship and tempted to touch the HULL but she hesitates for a second before running her fingers on it. She flinches.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
Ouch! Static.

She looks around before she takes the GOOFIEST SELFIE she can with whatever it is she's discovered.

The stray WIRE flies toward the open door of the truck. It reaches for the RADAR MACHINE. A small FLICKER OF LIGHT bursts when they touch. Lydia doesn't notice.

Lydia's just awestruck like a kid in a candy store. She's taking the moment in, staring at the downed vessel, when she's startled by CREAKING coming from her truck.

The wire falls limp to the ground by the door.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
Damn engine.

Then it's dead silent again. For a moment.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
They exist.

She lets that thought sink in the loneliness of the desert.

In the faint distance, turbines and engines begin to WHIR. The sounds grow louder and louder.

Once again, the pitch black desert sky is torn by a streak of a white harsh light.

THIS TIME, IT'S A SEARCHLIGHT COMING FROM A HELICOPTER!

Lydia spins around to watch her six. When she sees the light, she scrambles as she runs to her truck. She gets in then slams the door.

Now she's frantically searching for her keys. She can't seem to find them. She looks behind her as the searchlight moves closer and closer. It was far, now it's ALMOST THERE.

Lydia takes a deep breath. She combs through her surroundings then finally finds the keys. They were in the cup holder.

She turns the ignition. The truck throttles a little then sputters.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
C'mon!

LYDIA SLAMS HER FOOT ON THE PEDAL! She's kicking up ALL THE DUST SHE CAN. It is its own mini explosion. Then VROOM!

The truck speeds FORWARD. HEADLIGHTS OFF. She's driving in complete darkness!

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Lydia's got her phone light on and aimed out the window. She still can't see anything.

Heavy breathing. WHAM! A little bump. Lydia's shaken. Her eyes are wild. Her hands are tightly gripped on the wheel.

Another JUMP and BUMP!

LYDIA
OK. OK. OK.

She looks through the rearview mirror, the chopper's light fixates where she last stood.

They stop moving closer and hover. She's safe. For now. Lydia sighs but she moves onwards. Her feet hit the gas HARD.

Something in the car RATTLES but Lydia's calm.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

The truck's still going 80 when it should be going 40 at the most.

Lydia turns her headlights on as she approaches her home. It's a little too late for that, though.

EXT. SUAREZ'S HOME - NIGHT

The truck's coming in WAY TOO HOT. Lydia tries to slam the breaks.

CLANG! The truck SMASHES into the mailbox! It finally stops.

LYDIA
No! He's going to kill me.

POOF! The airbag opens.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
Ow.

The lights in the house FLICKER ON.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - NIGHT

Lydia's sitting on the dining table. Ned's checking her for bruises and cuts. He spots a small gash on her forearm.

He runs to a cabinet.

NED

I told you to be careful.

Lydia's speechless but she looks as if she's about to vomit... literally.

NED (CONT'D)

Well? Anything to say?

LYDIA

I was being careless.

NED

Careless doesn't even begin to describe the shit you just pulled.

Lydia's trying her best to not sweat bullets. Ned's looking around for first aid supplies in the cabinets.

NED (CONT'D)

Where'd you go?

LYDIA

To the spot. The rock. You know...

NED

I was talking to the gauze.

Ned's gruff stern face lightens up for a second.

NED (CONT'D)

It's still there?

LYDIA

Yeah...

Ned returns to his standard stone face. He's still perusing the cabinets.

He finds gauze, ointment, and scissors before turning to Lydia.

NED

You know you're grounded. Right?

LYDIA
Honestly, yeah. I was expecting
that.

Ned wraps the gauze on Lydia's wound.

NED
And that includes school on the
account our truck needs to be taken
to the shop.

Lydia pulls back, accidentally unwrapping her wound. She
winces. Ned grabs her arm and rewraps.

LYDIA
Can't I walk?

NED
Don't even try. I'll call Eli, but
it'll be a bit.

EXT. DESERT - CRASH SITE - NIGHT

Two JEEPS roll up to the site. The doors open and SOLDIERS
pop out. They wield their rifles close to them and FAN the
area.

They walk closer towards the crashed ship. They're looking
around vigilantly but then they stop.

BOSS
At ease, gentlemen.

It's their BOSS. Unnamed. Unseen from the knees up. His black
leather loafers carefully tread the desert floor then stride
on over to where the other men stand.

The loafers are somehow too clean to be where they are. The
boss crouches down near the vessel to take a closer look at
the wreckage.

BOSS (CONT'D)
At long last, we've found it.

The boss walks a little further away from where the wreckage
is. He looks down. His shoes are now dirty but he finds
STREAKS in the dirt.

Tire marks crudely etched into the earth.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - LYDIA'S ROOM - DAWN

The sun illuminates the walls. They're covered in space posters, messy whiteboards, and sticky notes.

Lydia's awake at her desk. She looks out the window, then at her phone. Nothing. She gets up. Leaves.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Lydia grabs a bag of cereal from the cabinet. She pours herself a bowl.

WHIR! WHIR! ZZZZT! Lydia looks out the front window to find her dad hard at work. As always.

Lydia takes her place at the dining table when she's STARTLED to see the RADAR MACHINE on the sofa.

It's making little FIDGETS, almost as if it wants to move.

Lydia walks to it slowly. It keeps moving. She's inches away when it stops.

CLICK! Lydia jumps but it's just Ned opening the front door.

NED

You're awake?

LYDIA

Well, I'd be at school right about now.

Ned looks at the machine.

NED

You know your heap of junk wouldn't stop making noise last night.

LYDIA

What?

Ned walks to the fridge, grabs a water bottle, then gulps it down.

NED

It just kept at it the whole night.

Ned walks out. As soon as the door shuts, she grabs the machine and runs up the stairs to her room.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - LYDIA'S ROOM - DAY

Lydia puts the machine down on her desk. She looks away from it to find notebooks. It fidgets towards the edge of the desk.

Lydia turns around. She pushes the machine closer to the center on a whim before booting her laptop up.

The machine moves again. Lydia turns around catching it in the act.

LYDIA

Gotcha!

EXT. SUAREZ'S HOME - DAY

Ned's out in the yard about to put another drill into the ground when a BLACK SUV rolls in.

Ned looks pissed. The pristine vehicle stops next to the Suarez's beat up Chevy.

Two doors open and TWO BLACK SUITS exit. They are followed by a man in a GREY SUIT with a RED BOWTIE and a PUNCHABLY HANDSOME FACE. This is Dr. VINCE MARKS. 40s.

MARKS

Hello. Are you Ned Suarez?

NED

Yeah. What do you want?

MARKS

I'm Dr. Vince Marks. I'm here to ask a few questions on behalf of my department.

The two men follow him to where Ned stands.

NED

It'd be rude to talk out here. It's hot.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - DAY

The men come into the humble abode. Marks and his two "buddies" take their place on a couch.

The two suits are unbelievably stiff but Marks splays out almost like a cat.

MARKS

Last night, did you notice anything strange in your area? Any lights? Flashing?

NED

Like a UFO? You guys are so desperate.

MARKS

Excuse me?

NED

Listen, bud. Whoever's higher up at your department clearly sent you here to ask me questions to see if I was "mentally fit" so you could take me away from here.

The two men are tempted to stand but Marks looks at them, they stay put.

MARKS

Why would we want to do that?

NED

(breathes in)

I live on a literal silver mine.

MARKS

I don't mean to offend you in any way but I'm looking for something far more valuable than that.

NED

What?

MARKS

Information. Knowledge but first and foremost, we're just here to make sure that all is well. You know your truck looks in bad shape.

NED

Thanks for reminding me.

MARKS

OK, I'll be frank with you. I don't want to be here. You don't want us here. We all want to go home and be left alone. No?

Ned nods.

MARKS (CONT'D)

So, let's start over. Last night,
where were you and what were you
doing?

NED

I was asleep.

MARKS

I see. Is anyone else living here?

NED

My daughter.

MARKS

Could you call her?

NED

(yelling)
Lydia!

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - LYDIA'S ROOM - DAY

Lydia's with the machine. She holds it in her hands. It
begins to SCREECH.

She pushes buttons, trying to turn it off again but nothing.
Just a faint blue light from the panel.

LYDIA

Shhh! Just stop!

The machine STOPS.

THREE KNOCKS! KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. Lydia scrambles to put the
machine away.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

One second!

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - DAY

The men are all seated aside from Ned who's waiting by the
stairwell.

Lydia makes her way down. She tries to keep her composure.

LYDIA

Hello.

NED

This is... uh?

MARKS
Dr. Vince Marks.

Marks actually stands up to shake Lydia's hand. He looks at her with interest. His eyes are intense as if he is reading every movement she makes. Her blinks. Her breathing.

MARKS (CONT'D)
Lydia, I have a few questions for you. I was sent here to ask you and your father if you saw anything strange last night.

Lydia manages a poker face. Not unlike her father's usual expression.

LYDIA
Nope.

MARKS
Nothing out of the ordinary?

LYDIA
No. Not at all. I was here the whole night. Studying. Sleeping. Right, Dad?

Ned merely nods. He's stiffer than usual but he manages to nod.

MARKS
So you didn't see the shooting stars, last night?

LYDIA
Nope.

MARKS
That's a shame, they were beautiful.

LYDIA
I bet they were.

Marks gestures to Lydia's patched-up arm.

MARKS
Do you mind me asking about what happened to your arm?

LYDIA
I'm a klutz. I tripped myself up on a wire the other day.

MARKS

Well, what can you do but try to be more careful? Right?

LYDIA

Well, I like to live a little on the dangerous side.

Lydia does a shit-eating grin. The kind a toddler makes when it knows it's about to get away with something. Marks merely mirrors the smile.

Marks then snaps his fingers. The men stand up and walk out. Marks gets up, pulls out a pen and a pad from a pocket, writes down something, then turns to the two.

MARKS

Well, my work here is done. I will be on my way.

NED

Goodbye.

Lydia does a condescending sort of wave with fake excitement. Marks exits with his men. The door shuts.

Lydia and Ned try to peek through the window, watching the SUV drive away.

INT. MARKS' SUV - DAY

Marks is in the back. The two agents are in the front.

MARKS

Very friendly people, I'd say.

The driver doesn't answer. Close on Marks' shoes. They're loafers. Black leather with earthy stains from the night before.

MARKS (CONT'D)

Bad liars, though. Especially the girl.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - DAY

Ned and Lydia both look relieved when they see the black SUV turn into a tiny blip.

NED

Tell me what happened last night. What really happened?

Lydia sits down. Ned's about to speak when...

LYDIA

Please promise me that you won't think I'm crazy. OK?

NED

OK. Just be honest with me. You owe me that much.

LYDIA

(gradually getting faster)

I went out to the rock with the box Ms. Wiles gave me. I was just sitting there because I read that there would be a meteor shower or something. I don't know exactly. The patterns were off.

NED

OK, slow down. Meteors?

LYDIA

(normal speed)

Yeah, I think one of them crashed and well... I almost made first contact. Like I may or may not have seen aliens.

NED

You're crazy. Did a scorpion getcha again?

LYDIA

Dad. Listen to me.

Ned begins to pace around before Lydia pulls her phone out.

She shows him a picture. It's her and Rick in class. Rick has his tongue out, Lydia's doing a peace sign.

NED

A selfie with a boy? Really?

LYDIA

(scrolling)

No! This!

She gets the photos of the wreckage up. They're blurry but clear enough that Ned's shaken. He takes the phone in his hands before sitting down.

NED
So you're telling me you saw aliens
last night?

LYDIA
I saw a ship.

Ned looks shell-shocked.

NED
Anything else?

LYDIA
I think I have one in my room.

NED
An alien? Like one of those grey
heads with the anal probes?

LYDIA
No. That's ridiculous. The last
part is insane.

Ned takes a breather before facing Lydia again.

NED
Why can't you be like other
teenagers? Screwing around or
drinking? I can handle that but
aliens?

LYDIA
Well, we live in the middle of
nowhere! I can't do any of that out
here, can I?

Ned pinches the bridge of his nose.

NED
Great, we got the feds auditing us
again, then you go and meet an
alien!

LYDIA
So you believe me?

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG! Something is FALLING FROM THE STAIRS.
It's the RADAR MACHINE. It's trying to move but it just
CRASHES.

NED
Oh, hell no!

Ned runs to grab the baseball bat in the umbrella holder by the door and runs to the machine.

It SCREECHES AGAIN through cracked screens and worn wires, it's even more distorted as if it's HURT.

LYDIA

Wait!

Lydia runs to collect the machine that's awkwardly hobbling without wheels or legs.

When she picks it up, it CHIRPS a small tone.

NED

Lyd, that thing you're holding is a monster. It's probably possessed by the Devil. Drop it!

LYDIA

No, it's the alien!

The machine BEEPS. Ned drops down to his knees. Lydia carries the box in her arms before she sits near him. He looks at it, then at her.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Can we keep it?

Ned's done. He's in full fight or flight mode. Shaken as if a ghost has come to see him, he drops the bat.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

The windows are tinted orange. It's sunset. Ned's at the kitchen, he's stirring a pot of stew. He's still a little stirred himself but he's holding it together.

NED

Dinner!

Lydia comes running down the stairs with a pet cage in her hands. The MACHINE is in it.

NED (CONT'D)

Please don't make us eat with it.

LYDIA

It'll run if we leave it alone.

NED

Then let it.

LYDIA
It won't survive on its own.

NED
That's what I was kinda hoping for.

The Machine beeps SPORADICALLY.

NED (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Does it understand what we're
saying?

Lydia nods. Then doesn't.

LYDIA
I'm not sure.

Lydia takes her place at the table. She puts the cage in a chair and pushes it in.

NED
I'm going into town tomorrow. We
need to get the car fixed so we can
get things back to normal.

LYDIA
With an alien around? How'd
anything be normal? Can't we talk
about it?

NED
Not unless we're talking about how
to get it back.

LYDIA
Back to where?

NED
To where it came from.

Lydia ponders that thought. Then, she backs off the table just a little bit.

She opens the cage and places the machine on the table. What's left of its dish turns to Lydia.

LYDIA
Dad, we just made the biggest
discovery in years. We can't just
let it be.

The dish on the machine turns to Ned.

NED

You just made the biggest discovery in years, I don't want to be part of it. The only thing I want to be part of is getting that thing home.

LYDIA

How do you propose we'll do that?

NED

I don't know you could build a rocket or something, can't you?

LYDIA

Yeah, Dad, it's totally going to give instructions on how to bring it back. In perfect English, too.

The machine's LED screen display SPARKS up. It's gibberish. A mix of numbers and incomplete letters.

NED

Like that?

LYDIA

It's speaking to us! I gotta document this!

Lydia runs off.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - LYDIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lydia puts the cage on her table. She opens it up and pulls out the machine.

It whines a little as if it's in pain then proceeds to keep outputting numbers and letters on its screen.

LYDIA

Shush.

It does for a moment.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Don't worry. We'll get you home. I promise. But before we do, I want to know more about you.

Lydia takes a journal out and begins scribbling down the strange output coming from the machine.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ned's standing outside of Lydia's door. He's about to knock but he doesn't.

He walks downstairs.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - NIGHT

Ned takes a bottle of whiskey from a hidden cabinet by the couch. He pours a glass.

He looks at something. A framed photo.

NED

God, I wish you were here. Your daughter brought an alien home.

Ned sighs before dozing off on his couch.

EXT. SUAREZ'S HOME - DAY

A TOW TRUCK pulls up the house. Ned opens the door and steps out.

A man around Ned's age, Eli, comes out of the truck. He's short, hairy, but happy.

ELI

(shouting)

Ned! It's been years! How are you doing you son of a gun?

Ned walks towards the truck and Eli. Eli runs up to hug Ned. It catches him by surprise.

NED

Well, it could be worse.

Ned tries to feign a smile. He fails.

ELI

Stop that, you look like one of those killer robots trying to smile.

Ned stops.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - LYDIA'S ROOM - DAY

Lydia's dozed off in her desk. She hears clunky CLANGING. It startles her awake.

She looks at her bed. The machine's still there. Powered off.

LYDIA
So it does sleep.

Lydia walks to the window. She sees Ned and Eli hook the mildly battered pickup truck to the tow.

Lydia opens up the window. Ned notices this.

NED
(yelling)
Awake, kiddo?

ELI
Whoa! Lydia! You've grown up! How long has it been?

LYDIA
10 years, give or take!

NED
I'm headed to town! Need anything?

LYDIA
Uh, cookies! There's a place near school I love!

Ned does a thumbs up gesture.

EXT. SUAREZ'S HOME - DAY

Ned and Eli get into the truck. It slowly makes its way away from the house.

Lydia closes the window.

INT. TOW TRUCK - DAY

Eli's driving. Eli's looking at Ned, but he checks the road occasionally. There's no one on the roads anyway. Ned's looking straight ahead.

ELI
Wow, I'm still a little, you know... surprised.

NED

About?

ELI

Lydia growing older so fast. Time flies. She'll be headed off to college soon probably.

NED

Yeah. I don't like thinking too much about it.

ELI

When Josiah went to college, Meg and I were so...

Eli's searching for the word.

NED

Bored?

ELI

Close but... It's a weird thing. I used to think empty nest was something people made up. It's weird not being a full-time parent.

NED

I can't imagine.

ELI

I couldn't either, then one day, it happened.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Eli's truck leaves the empty desert and enters a small but bustling town. Cars take their turns at stoplights a little too perfectly.

Call it suburbia. Families walk the streets. Strollers and walkers. There's even a few Starbucks. Two but not five.

The houses surrounding are cookie-cutter, not nearly as rustic or individual as the Suarez's home.

EXT. REPAIR SHOP - DAY

The tow truck pulls into the garage. Ned and Eli get out.

ELI
It should probably take us about 4
hours or so.

NED
What's the damage?

ELI
For an old friend like you?
Nothing, but you do need to hang
out with the gang again at least
once in awhile.

NED
You got me. One of these days.

ELI
It's the least you could do, Ned.
We miss you. We miss--

Ned and Eli share a glance. Eli can't finish the sentence.

NED
I know.

Ned starts walking away.

ELI
Oh, and a warning.

Ned looks back.

ELI (CONT'D)
Don't be too shady around here. I
know you can't help it but there's
been a lot of suits lately.

Ned tips his hat's bill before leaving.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Ned's walking around the town square. Flannel. Trucker's hat.
Barely kempt beard. He looks like a bad episode of Duck
Dynasty compared to the suburbanites.

He makes his way to a cookie store. Its PASTEL PINK WALLS are
nothing like he's ever seen before.

He opens the door.

INT. COOKIE SHOP - DAY

Rick's behind the counter, he's tending to some cookies in the oven when the door chimes ring.

RICK
Good afternoon, sir!

Ned doesn't pay him any attention. He's on his phone. A text from "LYD" pops up.

NED
Hey, you wouldn't happen to have
(reading off his phone)
"Unicorn Choco-bombs"?

RICK
(scratching his head)
Yeah, but it's an off-menu thing.
It'll take a few. You can sit.

Ned sits down.

Another bell ring. Italian loafers walk in smoothly. It's Dr. Marks. Ned's on his phone reading. He doesn't mind him.

RICK (CONT'D)
The usual?

MARKS
You know I think it was a mistake
telling you to get a job. You just
had to work at a cookie place. I'm
getting pudgy.

Rick rolls his eyes before grabbing a GIANT COOKIE from the display and boxing it.

Marks does a hawkish roundabout scan through the place with his eyes.

His eyes stop on Ned. He does something of a double take. Theatrics.

MARKS (CONT'D)
Mr. Suarez? Is that you? You go
here?

Ned looks up. He looks as if someone's thrown cold water in his face for a second but he gets a grip.

NED
You can call me Ned, you know. I
forgot your name.

MARKS

Dr. Marks? Vince? We met a few days ago.

NED

I remember. I'm just no good with names. What's surely a busy man like you doing in a place like this?

MARKS

I'd ask you the same.

Ned chuckles a little. Rick's still assembling the cookies. Marks' order is huge.

MARKS (CONT'D)

I'm just picking up cookies for the office. I'm going to take a guess and say you're getting your truck fixed.

NED

Those teenagers.

MARKS

I totally feel that.

Rick looks a little miffed but he gets a box ready.

RICK

They're ready, sir.

Ned walks up to the counter.

NED

How much?

RICK

\$6.54.

NED

Okie dokie.
(reading name tag)
Rick.

Ned picks up his bagged-up small box.

RICK

Yep.

Rick goes to pull two giant bags.

RICK (CONT'D)
 Hey, dad! These are yours.

Marks walks up, takes the bags. Ned looks at Marks and Rick funny.

MARKS
 Well, it was nice seeing you again
 in better circumstances.

Marks extends his hand. Ned gives a firm handshake.

NED
 Same to you, doctor.

Marks exits. Ned looks relieved when he does.

NED (CONT'D)
 Rick? You wouldn't happen to know a
 girl named Lydia, right?

RICK
 Uh, yeah? I know one.

Ned takes in the thought. His face scrunches as he puts two
 and two together.

RICK (CONT'D)
 Have a nice day, sir!

Ned merely exits.

RICK (CONT'D)
 What a weirdo.

EXT. COOKIE SHOP - DAY

Ned's on his phone again. He dials a number. He lingers a bit
 before walking a little.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - LYDIA'S ROOM - DAY

Lydia's on her laptop when her phone RINGS. She picks up.

LYDIA
 What, Dad?

INTERCUT BETWEEN NED AND LYDIA

NED
 So I met that boy you were talking
 about. Rick something?

LYDIA
 (mouthing)
 Shit.
 (talking)
 Yeah, and?

NED
 He seems nice. Also, I met his dad
 there.

Ned stops talking and looks around.

LYDIA
 And?

The coast is clear.

NED
 Remember Dr. Marks? That weirdo
 they sent to our house?

LYDIA
 No way.

NED
 Yeah. We'll talk later.

LYDIA
 Wait! Did you get my cookies?

NED
 Yeah. That cookie shop near your
 school is where I went.

LYDIA
 Rick got a job... there? And he
 didn't tell me? Wow.

NED
 Please don't talk to me about boy
 stuff.

LYDIA
 I bet he looks like a total dork in
 that pastel pink polo. I just can't
 believe--

The call breaks up.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - LYDIA'S ROOM - DAY

Lydia puts down the phone. The machine begins to get a little rowdy.

LYDIA
You're a restless little thing,
aren't you?

The machine purrs.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
Huh, I wish you had wheels or legs
or something.

Lydia looks on her shelf. There's a ROBOT DOG TOY on the shelf. It's dusty and old.

MACHINE'S POV

It's green, everything is green. It looks like a bad Instagram filter mixed in with the Matrix grid.

A telescopic glance at the dog toy. Closer. Even closer.

Then a CLICK. All the wires and connectors are suddenly highlighted in a neon light.

It beeps softly as if it's trying to say something.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
Are you OK?

The machine focuses on Lydia. She's not transparent. Just flesh, no bone.

EXT. SUAREZ'S HOME - DUSK

A pitch sits in a sandbox next to a small mount. It's still, then...

CLANG!

A HORSESHOE nicks it slightly to the left but doesn't stick the landing quite right.

Lydia stands holding two horseshoes in her hand. She's at Ned's makeshift desk. The machine's sitting on the table.

Lydia takes a deep breath. She moves her free hand to make calculations before she tosses again.

Another horseshoe flies through the air.

This time, the far right hook of the horseshoe snags the pitch. It lands in a way that puts the pitch back where it was earlier. One out of two.

Then another toss with a spin, then a clang. Lydia finds satisfaction when it lands just right. Two out of three.

Then another CLANG but it's not coming from the horseshoes but the machine.

Lydia runs over to see the screen light up with more random combinations of letters and digits. She opens the journal sitting right next to it.

She flips to another page with a bunch of similar combinations. She jots down the new information but stops when she sees headlights come in.

Instinctively, she covers the machine but turns to see it's her father and her favorite beat-up truck rolling in.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - NIGHT

Ned opens the door. He's holding bags of groceries. Lydia manages to squeeze through the door to pick up a few bags as well as a small pink bag.

She sets down the things on the table before opening the pink bag. Lydia pulls a cookie out and stuffs it in her face.

LYDIA
(chewing)
Thanks, dad!

Ned begins to walk slowly over to the kitchen.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ned just catches his breath and sits in a chair. Lydia takes the seat across him.

NED
So what did I miss? Anything weird going on with... uh... it?

LYDIA
Well, it's been quiet. It doesn't try to run anymore. I think it's cute.

NED
Remember, Lyd. It's not a dog. It's something else.

LYDIA

I know that. I'm sure it wants to go wherever home is.

NED

Do you think they'll come back to get us? Like revenge?

LYDIA

No, I have a theory as to what it is but I need more time to research.

NED

We don't have time. I'm pretty sure that Marks guy is suspicious of us. I don't think it's a coincidence I saw him today.

LYDIA

That's so weird.

NED

Don't trust that Rick kid.

LYDIA

Dad, I just can't stop talking to my lab partner.

NED

For that thing's sake, you probably should.

Ned begins to rise from his seat but stops. He grabs his back.

LYDIA

You really need to stop working too hard. Seriously.

NED

I'm fine.

Lydia rushes over to him and helps him on his feet.

LYDIA

You know you won't be able to do this forever.

Ned sighs.

NED

Yeah, but who else will do this?

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - LYDIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

The machine's scuttling around. It's trying its hardest to keep hitting the wall.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

It's still trying. It's determined.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ned and Lydia are startled by the banging.

NED
What's going on?

LYDIA
I don't know.

Ned painfully breaks away from Lydia's helpful hold. He's strained as he walks up the stairs.

Again, Lydia runs to her father's aid.

NED
He better not be building some nest
in my home.

LYDIA
I doubt he reproduces that way,
Dad. Let's be rational here.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - LYDIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

The two open the door to find the little radar machine hopping its way to the wall then smashing against it.

Above it on a shelf is the ROBOT DOG toy. It's slowly reaching the edge.

NED
Not the walls!

LYDIA
Bad boy. Girl? Thing!

Before Ned or Lydia can intervene, the dog falls to the ground. It's a little battered.

The machine inches towards it. It beeps and chirps before...

A GIANT FLASH OF LIGHT.

Ned grabs his daughter in his arms and ducks down before they're bathed in a blinding white light.

EXT. SUAREZ'S HOME - NIGHT

It's dark everywhere except Lydia's window. The light starts there then BLOWS EVERYTHING TO WHITE.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - LYDIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

The beeping and chirping of the radar die down. As does the light.

Ned and Lydia keep their eyes covered.

NED
Are we dead?

LYDIA
I don't think so.

Lydia lowers her hands from her eyes. The lighting's back to normal. She sees the radar machine.

It's FRIED. CHARRED BLACK.

Ned opens his eyes and takes a good look.

NED
You think it's gone?

Ned jumps a little. It's the machine REBORN AS THE LITTLE ROBOT DOG.

NED (CONT'D)
It's on my leg! Oh my God!

Ned almost falls over. Lydia catches him before looking at the little ROBOT DOG.

NED (CONT'D)
Are you sure it's not a demon, Lyd?

LYDIA
It's definitely not a demon. It's something else. Something amazing.

Lydia runs over to her computer. She's typing up a storm.

NED
Well, what is it?

LYDIA

It's just as I suspected.

The robot dog runs towards Lydia. It's jumping towards her computer. Lydia swats it away.

NED

What?

LYDIA

I think that it's some sort of silicon-based life form.

NED

Silicon-based what?

LYDIA

You know how we are carbon-based?

NED

Lyd, I don't read those scientific journals like you, I didn't even go to college.

LYDIA

It's basically a living supercomputer.

Lydia's losing him, she takes a second to think.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

It's like a virus! Think of it like a virus! Uh, I think it wanted the dog as its body. It was searching for a host!

NED

You can't sleep here anymore. We are throwing it in the basement. You're not becoming some demon android monster. I've seen this--

LYDIA

In a movie?

Ned nods.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

It can't take the form of humans. It can only take things that rely on electric charges, silicon. If it could "possess" me, it would have done it by now.

Ned immediately grabs the flailing robot dog.

NED

Don't we need to contain viruses?

Ned puts the dog in the little pet carrier. It tries to break free but it's SHUT IN.

LYDIA

Well, of course.

NED

And how do you reckon we do that without smashing it to pieces?

LYDIA

I don't think it dies the same we do either, Dad.

The little ROBOT DOG barks repetitively.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

I forgot it even did that! How could it? The batteries have to be corroded! Unless it's somehow breathing through transistors--

NED

Only you'd be this excited.

LYDIA

And you aren't?

The robot continues to bark. Almost in coded patterns.

NED

Is it trying to talk to us?

LYDIA

Well, yeah. I think so.

NED

What do you think it's saying?

LYDIA

I don't speak dog, Dad.

Lydia grabs the carrier. She's about to open the latch when...

NED

Stop! You said we should contain it.

LYDIA

It'll just stay here. Promise. We keep it contained in the house.

NED

Great, we know it's dangerous. Let's just keep it in the house.

She opens the latch and the robot dog RUNS out. He roams around the open space before settling down.

LYDIA

I don't think it's that dangerous but I do agree we need to be careful.

NED

This isn't one of your experiments, Lyd. This is mad science.

LYDIA

Dad. I'm just trying my best here with what I have.

Lydia walks over to her journal, she flips to a page with the GIBBERISH she wrote down from the machine.

NED

What's that?

LYDIA

It came from the machine. I think it's a code.

NED

A code?

LYDIA

Yes, I've been trying to decipher it.

NED

What do you think it says?

Lydia paces around before she stops in place.

LYDIA

I think I know someone who can help us with that.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Ms. Wiles is walking down the hallways. In the crowd of moving students, AN ARM PULLS WILES AWAY into an empty classroom.

INT. RANDOM CLASSROOM - DAY

Wiles yelps as she enters the room forcefully. It's Lydia. Wiles calms down.

WILES

You haven't been in class for the past 2 days.

LYDIA

It's a really long story.

WILES

You know this conversation would be better done in my own classroom. Not...

(looks around)

Mr. Hendricks' room.

LYDIA

You don't even know your neighbor's name?

WILES

I hate it here, Lydia. We all do.

Wiles intentionally scowls. Lydia laughs a little.

LYDIA

OK, sniping aside, I need to ask you a few questions about that machine you gave me.

WILES

Like?

LYDIA

Why did you give it to me?

WILES

I thought it was about time I let go of it. I'd been holding onto it all this time. It just seemed like something you'd want.

LYDIA

OK, but it's been acting up. I turned it on the other night and it's been showing me things.

WILES

What? It shouldn't even work. I never got it to even start up.

Lydia pulls out her notebook, opens to the pages with the code from the machine.

LYDIA

Does this look familiar to you?

WILES

(squints)

Barely. It looks a lot like what Adam kept talking to me about.

LYDIA

Adam?

WILES

My brother.

LYDIA

Could I talk to him? I think I have something that'd be--

Wiles retreats from Lydia a little.

WILES

He's not with us anymore.

LYDIA

Whoa, I'm so sorry about that.

WILES

He just vanished when I was about your age. No one ever told us where he went or how he went. I--

LYDIA

You don't have to talk about it.

It's quiet for a moment.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Uh, unrelated note but do I have to do the homework I missed?

WILES

I don't want to grade extra papers.
We'll let it slide.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAYS - DAY

Both Wiles and Lydia slip out of the room and blend into the sea of students and faculty trudging to where they need to go.

Lydia makes it to her locker.

RICK

Hey.

LYDIA

Hey.

Lydia collects her thing from her locker. She shuts it.

RICK

I was worried about you. Heard you
got into a little fender.

LYDIA

Yep...

Lydia looks away. Dramatically. She can't help it.

RICK

Are you avoiding me?

LYDIA

Rick. It's complicated. The past
few days and all. Also, you never
bring me cookies from work.

RICK

Wait, how'd you know I got a job?

LYDIA

I have my sources.

Rick's a little dumbfounded.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Lydia takes her seat in a desk. Rick follows suit. They're next to each other.

Their teacher, MR. DARBY, walks in. He's portly but enthusiastic.

DARBY

Everyone turn to page 217. Today we're talking about the space race between the US and USSR. I know it's more American History and Hendricks would kill me...

Darby's voice could trail off into background noise but it doesn't. Lydia perks up a little. Rick's half-asleep.

DARBY (CONT'D)

I was actually your age when that was all going on, believe or not.

RICK

I believe it, sir.

The class chuckles.

DARBY

Our town was a weird place, then. Lots of government folks around. People were watching us. You kids are lucky you didn't have to go through that. But that's beside the point...

Lydia looks intrigued to the point, she wants to blurt but she doesn't.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Lydia's sitting alone at a table, she's aggressively scribbling in her notebook. She's trying to piece together the machine code.

She's really in a groove when she JUMPS. It's from Rick tapping her shoulder.

LYDIA

Dude!

RICK

OK, I know that wasn't cool but you've been weird.

(pauses)

Weirder than usual since you disappeared. Did aliens finally get to you?

Lydia looks horrified for a second but catches herself and regains her composure.

Rick laughs.

RICK (CONT'D)
You know what'd be perfect right
about now?

LYDIA
What?

RICK
Real lunch. You know we should grab
some.

LYDIA
Now?

RICK
Yeah, now. The guard's distracted
by a tip about a fight in building
two.

LYDIA
You didn't.

Rick pulls keys out of his pockets, gestures to the back door. He stands up and begins to walk away.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
Wait!

Lydia packs up her stuff and follows.

INT. RICK'S CAR - DAY

Lydia's clicking in her seatbelt. Rick clicks his in too. He's wearing shades. Try-hard.

RICK
So what were you in the mood for?

Rick turns the key. The Range Rover's running.

LYDIA
Well, I was in the mood for
cookies...

RICK
Seriously, Lydia?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Rick's Range Rover rolls quietly and slowly past the gates of the high school before accelerating away.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

The car reaches a stop sign. Rick puts up the hazard lights, he doesn't have to because the roads are practically empty.

A man in a suit lurks in the corner. Black shades. He watches the inside of the car.

INT. RICK'S CAR - DAY

Rick turns to Lydia. He removes his shades. Lydia's averting his gaze. She can't for long but she catches the man in black in the corner of her eye.

LYDIA
Why did we stop?

RICK
We need to talk.

LYDIA
In the middle of the street?

RICK
Yes. What's really going on here?

LYDIA
It's not the job. OK.

RICK
What?

Lydia turns to look at Rick. Her eyes aren't sharp. They're softer.

LYDIA
Listen, Rick. I really can't talk much about it, I want to tell you. The minute it happened I wanted to tell you. But I can't.

RICK
So you don't trust me?

Lydia's silent. Rick's hurt but he's trying his best to hide it. He even cracks a smile.

RICK (CONT'D)

I understand. I'm not going to bother about it. I'm just worried.

LYDIA

Worried about what?

RICK

You. The project. The list goes on.

LYDIA

I'm worried too.
(catching herself)
About the project.

He puts his shades back on. Pushes the hazard lights off and continues to drive.

Lydia looks relieved. She looks at Rick again. She opens her mouth as if she'll say more.

She doesn't. She just sits still.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - DAY

Ned walks inside. He's clearly come back from a day out mining, covered in sweat and grime.

As soon as he opens the door, the robot dog flies down the stairs.

As soon as it sees its just him, it whines then tries to jump back up the stairs. It can't.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Ned's pouring himself a bowl of cereal. The little robot is still trying to climb the stairs.

BANG!

Ned's trying to refocus on the bowl of cereal.

BANG!

Ned looks like he's about to lose it when the banging stops.

The robot dog scampers towards the kitchen. Ned looks at it real funny.

It whines a little.

NED

What do you want? Do you miss
Lydia?

The robot dog BARKS then tries to jump. It can only muster a good inch or two.

Ned picks up the little machine and rests it on the counter.

NED (CONT'D)

You could have just asked.

The robot dog barks, then tries to approach Ned who retreats a little.

NED (CONT'D)

Whoa, we're not buddies.

It doesn't listen. It tries to jump into Ned's arms.

Ned loses his balance off his chair and falls off but he catches the robot.

NED (CONT'D)

Don't do that ever again. Please.

The dog barks an affirmative robotic arf-arf.

INT. DINER - DAY

Rick and Lydia sit with menus at a booth.

RICK

So is there anything we can
actually talk about?

Lydia's still reading her menu.

LYDIA

Well, I thought Darby's lecture was
interesting for once.

RICK

The cold war? Blah, it's nothing
compared to half the stuff he
talked about earlier. Feudal lords
in Japan? So much more interesting.

LYDIA

Nope, the whole town history thing.
Something happened here a long time
ago.

Lydia puts down the menu. Rick's looking at her, gazing. He catches himself and stops.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Don't you wonder what happened?
Like he was the second person today
to tell me weird stuff happened in
the 60s.

RICK

Not really. It was the 60s.

LYDIA

History repeats itself.

RICK

You're sounding a little crazy.
Like one of those conspiracy
theorists.

LYDIA

(gesturing to the window)
You know that one guy's been
following us all throughout town.

Rick looks outside and sees the man. He's reading a newspaper, not minding the two through the window.

RICK

Coincidence.

LYDIA

I don't think so.

RICK

You know you got to get out of that
house more.

LYDIA

I know... wait! What's that
supposed to mean?

RICK

Well...

A WAITRESS walks up to the booth. Rick looks as if he's dodged a bullet.

WAITRESS

Howdy, you two. What'd you like to
eat today?

RICK

I'll have my usual.

WAITRESS

I beg your pardon.

RICK

The giant plate of curly fries.
Sorry, I thought Meg was in. She usually gets my order.

WAITRESS

Oh, she's out of town.

RICK

Huh, weird.

WAITRESS

What's weird is seeing two high schoolers playing hooky.

Awkward silence. The waitress turns to Lydia.

LYDIA

I'll have the soup of the day and probably just steal fries off his plate.

Everyone laughs. The waitress laughs in an off-putting, artificial way.

The waitress walks away towards the counter to bring the order to the kitchen.

INT. DINER - KITCHEN - DAY

The waitress enters the kitchen and passes by two bodies. A man and a woman. A tarp covers their heads.

The dead woman has a name tag on her. MEG.

The waitress pulls out a walkie-talkie from her apron. She clicks the button.

WAITRESS

I have visual on Suarez's daughter and a boy. Do I engage?

A voice comes through the speaker. It's muffled.

INT. DINER - DAY

Rick's twiddling his thumbs while Lydia's trying to fiddle with the jukebox.

LYDIA

Does anything about this feel off to you?

RICK

What? Us eating here? Together... alone?

LYDIA

No, not that. That waitress was weird.

RICK

Yeah, she's no Meg but she was nice.

Lydia pinches the bridge of her nose.

LYDIA

She didn't ask us for drinks.

RICK

And? Rookie mistake. She's probably new.

The waitress comes out the double doors with a tray with two milkshakes and the phoniest smile on her face. Too much teeth with a side of dead eyes.

Lydia shoots a "you've got to be kidding me" look at Rick. Rick's just focused on the milkshakes.

The waitress sets them down on the table.

WAITRESS

It's on the house, kids.

The waitress stands by.

LYDIA

Could we have some privacy?

RICK

I apologize for her rudeness, ma'am. Lydia, manners?

LYDIA

(rolling her eyes)

Oh, it's just I never get to spend much alone time with my boyfriend. You know...

Rick's completely lost and blushes red.

WAITRESS

Oh, no. I'll go. Just please enjoy
the drinks. The food will be out
shortly.

The waitress leaves.

RICK

(beaming)

So I'm your boyfriend now?

LYDIA

The only "BF" you are to me is a
best friend.

Rick's about to take a sip when Lydia swipes the drink away.

RICK

Hey!

LYDIA

OK, call me paranoid but that drink
has something in it.

RICK

OK, paranoid, you need to relax.

LYDIA

We need to go.

RICK

Go?

LYDIA

It's a long story.

RICK

I've got time.

LYDIA

We don't. Let's go.

Lydia rises from her seat.

INT. DINER - KITCHEN - DAY

The waitress looks from the window. She immediately starts
frisking her apron for something.

WAITRESS

Oh no, you don't.

INT. DINER - DAY

Lydia immediately grabs Rick's hand and pulls him towards the door.

The kitchen double doors open again. It's the waitress and her smiley facade has broken. She's got her mean face on as she pulls out a small TAZER from her pocket.

The waitress aims a little red LED light at Lydia.

LYDIA

I told you!

The waitress fires but misses and HITS RICK'S ANKLE.

RICK

Son of a bitch! That hurt!

Lydia immediately grabs three plates off a nearby table and CHUCKS them at the waitress.

CRASH! One misses and smashes to pieces.

WAITRESS

Oh, come on? Do we always have to do this the hard way?

The waitress fails to dodge the second and third. They hit the side of her jaw just like frisbees but porcelain and painful.

Lydia pulls the hooks of the tazer off Rick's ankle before wrapping his shoulders around her and making a speedy dash for the exit.

The waitress begins to get up. She's a little disoriented.

EXT. DINER - DAY

Lydia grabs Rick's keys out of his pocket and opens up the car. She pushes Rick into the passenger seat.

Lydia gets in the driver's chair. She turns the ignition and backs the hell out of the driveway.

The waitress comes out of the restaurant. She has a small pistol.

The Range Rover speeds away while the waitress aims her gun and fires!

BANG! Miss. She keeps firing and missing at the SUV. It's an exercise in futility as the SUV speeds away.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The Range Rover's now in the desert. It's just as vacant as ever. Surprisingly, no one's in pursuit.

INT. RICK'S CAR - DAY

Lydia's got her eyes on the road. She looks back at Rick who's sitting there with his eyes wide open.

Rick's a little manic and mangled like he's just had an anxiety attack.

RICK

What is going on? Also, when did you become such a badass?

Lydia goes back to looking at the empty desert road ahead.

LYDIA

We're on the run, I'm headed home to pick up my dad.

(pause)

Also, when haven't I been one?

RICK

What?

LYDIA

The night of the cosmic anomaly, I ended up communicating with aliens. One of them crashed in the desert and followed me home.

RICK

You're harboring an alien fugitive?

LYDIA

Please don't think I'm crazy.

Rick glares incredulously at Lydia.

RICK

You didn't let me finish. You're harboring an alien fugitive and you didn't tell me?

LYDIA

Well, I wanted to but I couldn't.

RICK
Because? We're lab partners! Best
friends?

Rick looks away from Lydia.

LYDIA
Listen. I couldn't tell you because
I think your dad is involved in
this whole conspiracy.

RICK
What?

LYDIA
Is your dad's name Vince?

RICK
Yeah.

LYDIA
What does he do?

RICK
He's just a physicist who works for
the local university and sometimes
the government.

Rick does a double take at his last words.

LYDIA
He came to visit my house, he tried
to get information from me and my
dad.

RICK
No kidding.

LYDIA
I wish I was.

RICK
Where are we headed?

LYDIA
My place.

RICK
Try not to crash my baby.

Rick blacks out.

EXT. SUAREZ'S HOME - DAY

Ned's outside. He's messing around with a medium-sized drill. It's at least a foot wide. The front door's left wide open.

NED

OK. Let's see what you can do.

Ned puts the drill in the ground. The little robot dog runs out of the front door. He's speeding towards the drill. A little SPARK and FLASH.

The dog falls lifelessly to the ground. Ned runs over to pick up the body.

NED (CONT'D)

Come on...

WHIR! THE DRILL'S COME ALIVE. It's spinning and digging deep into the earthy ground.

NED (CONT'D)

Yes! I take back everything I said about you earlier.

Ned walks over to the hole it's making and peeks in.

NED (CONT'D)

OK. I think you can stop around...

It's still going into the ground, it's at least 5 feet deep.

NED (CONT'D)

Now! Now! Stop!

The drill stops, then turns towards another direction. It's going and going. Before it resurfaces near Ned.

The nose of the drill peeks up near Ned's hands. It WHIRS again.

NED (CONT'D)

OK, let's see if this works. Don't fry the drill.

The drill begins to slow down. Ned reaches out the little robot dog body to the tip.

Another FLASH of light. The drill dies down and the robot dog's eyes light up.

NED (CONT'D)

Good boy!

Ned looks in the distance to find a small dot. He picks up the robot dog.

NED (CONT'D)
Please forgive me.

Ned chucks the robot dog through the front door.

Some barking, banging then a CRASH! Touchdown.

Ned takes a good look at the incoming dot as it becomes more visible. It's Rick's Range Rover. He spots Lydia driving then looks to his right. The mailbox.

He runs towards the porch!

The Range Rover comes in hot but stops just a few inches away from the hole in the ground.

Lydia opens the car door.

NED (CONT'D)
I'm surprised you didn't smash the mailbox this time. Also, whose car is this?

LYDIA
Rick's.

Ned looks in the car and sees Rick KO'd. He's confounded, upset, and confused (so like the usual parent half the time.)

NED
Of all people...

LYDIA
Well, I wasn't just going to leave him at the diner.

NED
Diner? So you were playing hooky?

LYDIA
No, we went to grab lunch--
(deep breath)
Wait, why are we talking about this? We need to get out of here.

NED
Wait. What? No. The first thing we're doing is ditching that car. They probably have trackers in there or something.

Ned runs into the house. Lydia looks back in the car. Rick's passed out.

LYDIA
Dad, no! Don't...

Ned walks out with his baseball bat. The little robot dog follows him out. He looks down.

NED
Wait, Spark.

Ned gestures for it to stay. It doesn't listen. Spark trails behind him.

LYDIA
You named it? I wanted to name it!
I was going to name it Quasar!

NED
Hey, when you keep watch on it
during the day, you can name it.
(pause)
Also, that's an awful name.

Ned walks closer to the car. Rick stirs awake before Ned can strike the first blow.

RICK
WHOA! Dude! Don't.

NED
It's Mr. Suarez to you.

Rick jumps out of his seat and tries to jump in front of his car when...

HE FALLS INTO THE HOLE SPARK DUG UP EARLIER.

RICK
What the fuck?!

NED
Language.

Ned walks over to the hole. He extends his arm out. Rick tries to grab it but Ned pulls away before he can.

RICK
OK, that's just mean. What's your deal?

NED
Listen, I don't appreciate you or
your fancy pants father snooping
around in my business. OK?

RICK
I'm just as lost as you are!

NED
I don't think you are.

LYDIA
Trust me. He is. Just help him up,
dad.

Ned looks back. Lydia looks mortified.

NED
Fine.

Ned pulls Rick out of the pit. Rick's covered in dust and
dirt. He looks mad.

INT. SUAREZ'S HOME - AFTERNOON

Lydia knocks on the bathroom door. The shower's running.

LYDIA
Hey, princess. Don't waste the
water.

RICK (O.S.)
Yeah, yeah. Give me a second.

The water shuts off.

Lydia walks off to the living room where Ned's on the couch,
waving around a laser pointer.

Wherever the dot goes, Spark follows.

LYDIA
Really, dad?

Ned shuts off the pointer. Spark stops and jumps onto Ned's
lap.

NED
So what are we going to do? About
him?

LYDIA

I honestly have no clue which him
you're referring to.

NED

You know...

LYDIA

I honestly don't. The dog or the
boy?

NED

The boy!

Steam comes out the bathroom door. Rick enters, gone are his
pseudo frat boy clothes. He's wearing Ned's clothes. They're
loose but telling. A boy trying to be a man.

NED (CONT'D)

Speak of the devil.

RICK

You know you have pretty bad taste
in clothes, Mr. Suarez.

LYDIA

You actually look kind of cute.

Rick blushes and looks down. He jumps when he sees Spark run
towards him.

RICK

What's that?!

LYDIA

The alien.

NED

Spark. His name is Spark.

Spark circles Rick. He's reading him.

RICK

So the alien is a little robot pet
dog? I was expecting something
scarier.

LYDIA

Technically, it's a silicon-based
lifeform--

(deep breath)

You know what? Yeah, it's the dog.

RICK
(looking at Spark)
Who's a good boy?

Spark barks at Rick before running back to Ned.

NED
He doesn't like you.

LYDIA
I think he hates being patronized.

RICK
Of course, he does.

NED
(snuggling Spark)
He likes me the best.

Lydia facepalms as she sits in between Ned and Rick.

Ned pulls himself away from Spark to look at Rick.

NED (CONT'D)
Should we be worried about your dad
wondering where you are?

RICK
Honestly, not really. He's too busy
with his work to worry about me.

LYDIA
Join the club.

Ned curls his face up with a scowl. Spark whines. Ned pets the robot puppy.

NED
So that's how you feel?

LYDIA
Let's not talk about it right now.
We need to make sure it gets home.

NED
Well, you said you had a friend.

LYDIA
I tried to talk to Wiles about the
code but she couldn't tell me much
about it.

RICK
Code? Let me see.

Lydia hands over her notebook.

RICK (CONT'D)
Guys, this is a really old form of hexadecimal. No one uses it anymore. Get me a laptop.

Lydia brings over her laptop. Rick's transcribing the notebook in record time into a "translator" site.

LYDIA
How do you know what old hexadecimal looks like?

RICK
I'm a Westworld conspiracy theorist.

The screen begins to transcribe loosely constructed sentences.

LYDIA
(reading)
Lost. Retrieve. What. Belongs. To. I.

Lydia scrolls down.

RICK
What's that?

LYDIA
It looks like coordinates.

RICK
37.2347° N, 115.8110° W.

LYDIA
That's extremely exact.

Lydia plugs those coordinates in. It's not terribly far.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
So the ship's at Area 51.

RICK
We're totally going to make it in there.

NED
Great.

LYDIA

Well, you were the one who wanted to get him home. Let's do that.

NED

About that, I think we could get by if we kept on keeping the little guy around.

LYDIA

Dad!

NED

He's so handy! Have you seen him drill?

LYDIA

Dad, he doesn't belong here. He needs to go anywhere but here.

NED

Maybe, he was sent to us for a reason. Maybe, this is his home.

LYDIA

No, this is our home. It needs to get back to its home. It's not safe here. For all we know, it has a family or someone or something waiting on it.

NED

Well, what happens after we send it back? We go back to normal? It goes off into space? You go off far away?

LYDIA

Dad--

Ned takes off with Spark. Rick's speechless. He opens his mouth then shuts it. Lydia takes a moment to herself.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

I think I have something but we need to get to Darby and Wiles.

RICK

Darby?

LYDIA

Remember class? He knows something. I know it.

INT. WILES' HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Wiles is in her comfy chair. National Geographic's playing on the TV screen but she seems more invested in the sudoku puzzle book in her hands.

KNOCK.

WILES
Hello, who is it?

Wiles sits still in place.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

WILES (CONT'D)
I'm coming.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Wiles flies a little out of her seat on the third set of knocks. She looks at the door.

WILES (CONT'D)
Lydia?

BLAM! The door is KNOCKED DOWN with a heavy THUD to the ground.

Wiles looks at the doorway. Loafers walk in with a familiar smoothness.

MARKS
Sorry about the door.

WILES
You better be. It's antique.

MARKS
My men and I have been looking for something. We think you have it.

Wiles gulps.

EXT. SUAREZ'S HOME - NIGHT

Ned's sitting in the back of his truck. He takes a good look at his home. Then at Spark rubbing his head against his leg.

Lydia enters, she sits on the steps of the porch.

LYDIA

Hey, dad. Uh, do you remember how we even got that little dog?

NED

Christmas. 2002. You were 4. It'd been a year or so since you know...

Lydia takes a look at her father. Ned's looking right back for once. He's genuinely smiling, then he looks down at Spark.

NED (CONT'D)

You told me how you wanted to have a dog. Like how your mom and I had one back when we were young and--

LYDIA

What?

NED

You were allergic. So you pouted and pouted until you opened him up that morning.

Ned stops in place. He takes his eyes away from Spark to look at Lydia but she's lost in her thoughts again.

Ned laughs to himself for a bit.

LYDIA

Why are you laughing?

NED

You always do that thing where you zone out. Your mom was the same. She'd always be in her own world. I kinda hoped you wouldn't get that from her.

LYDIA

Really?

NED

Yep.

LYDIA

Dad--

There's a moment of silence. Their eyes meet and say all they need to say in that moment. Lydia's pleading as ever. Ned's sharp then understanding.

Ned picks up Spark. He hands Spark to Lydia. It barks.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
Thanks, Dad. For everything.
Seriously.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Lydia puts Spark on the dashboard. She rolls down the window to catch Rick enter his car.

LYDIA
Hey! If we pull this off, we should
finish our lunch at the diner.

Rick looks back.

RICK
I'll bring the cookies.

NED
You done? The two of you?

RICK
Yes, Mr. Suarez.

NED
Don't kiss my ass, kid.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

The truck is blazing fast through the night. Headlights on.
No longer so alone, it's followed by Rick's SUV.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Ned's taking glances at Lydia and Spark. Spark almost slides off the dashboard but Lydia catches him.

LYDIA
You know, I think this is the most
we've talked to each other in
years.

NED
Is that a bad thing?

LYDIA
Not at all.

NED

Well, this whole thing isn't a complete disaster then.

LYDIA

None of us are dead yet. I think that's a victory.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

There's no one in sight who isn't a suited agent. It's like Coachella but with the Men in Black instead of drunk hipsters.

They all seem to be aggregated around a storefront. It's the cookie shop.

INT. COOKIE SHOP - NIGHT

Wiles is seated at a table. The lights are up. It's still pink everywhere.

WILES

I was expecting less frou-frou.

Wiles has a shit-eating grin up. Marks has the creepiest artificial smile on his face.

MARKS

We were in a hurry.

WILES

Hurry for what?

MARKS

None of your business. So the machine. The radar. Where is it?

WILES

I don't have it.

MARKS

I know you don't but I know you know who has it. Don't you?

WILES

I don't know. I probably lost it when I was moving or sold it off at a yard sale.

MARKS

No, you didn't. That machine is stolen government property.

WILES

And?

MARKS

Besides, it's all you have left of Adam.

Wiles is caught off-guard. Her smile falls apart.

MARKS (CONT'D)

If I recall, your brother disappeared almost 50 years ago. Is that correct?

WILES

Yes.

MARKS

Ms. Wiles. I want to prevent another disappearance from happening again.

WILES

What?

MARKS

It's happening all over again. I read the files. He was out in the desert the night of a cosmic anomaly not unlike the one this past week.

Wiles' face scrunches. The gears are turning. Her eyes do a sort of "eureka" moment.

MARKS (CONT'D)

Ms. Wiles. I need you to cooperate with me.

WILES

I don't know anything.

Marks looks out the windows. An agent looks back at him, the WAITRESS from earlier. She has a bandage over her cheek.

MARKS

Don't panic.

WILES

Now I'm panicking.

MARKS

We're going to take you to a facility for further questioning and your own safety.

The front door chimes, the waitress walks through the door and immediately grabs Wiles by the arm.

WILES

Unhand me!

Wiles is a fighter. She steps on the waitress' toes, prompting the waitress to do something akin to a Vulcan death grip on her.

Wiles is down for the count. She's still breathing.

MARKS

You know you don't have to be so rough with them.

WAITRESS

It makes things easier.

MARKS

Did you ID the boy that was with Suarez's daughter?

WAITRESS

I ran the plate and...

MARKS

Well, spit it out.

WAITRESS

It's your son. I'm sorry.

MARKS

I am too.

Marks pulls out a small pistol from his coat pocket and shoots the Waitress.

The body hits the floor but Marks keeps his cool. He walks up to the windows of the store and knocks on the glass.

Two agents turn around and enter. The doorbell chimes again. They step over the waitress' corpse and carry Wiles up.

They exit. Marks does too. Before he leaves, he shuts off the light.

EXT. DARBY'S HOME - NIGHT

The truck and Rick's SUV make a stop in front of a small home with Halloween decorations still out on the lawn.

Rick immediately gets out of his door and runs to Lydia's to open it. Lydia puts Spark in her small purse.

NED

Are you gonna get my door?

Rick scowls at Ned before opening up Lydia's door. He helps Lydia down a step.

Ned exits and the three walk up to the porch. Lydia rings the doorbell.

No answer.

NED (CONT'D)

Maybe they got to him.

Lydia presses the doorbell again. It sounds like glass is shattering from the inside.

Ned walks over to the nearby window and is about to punch it open when the door clicks...

NED (CONT'D)

Get behind me.

Rick does, Lydia merely stands where she stands.

The door opens and Darby, in an extremely unflattering robe, walks up.

DARBY

How may I help you?

Rick's stifling his laughter. Ned ribs Rick.

LYDIA

Mr. Darby! You're OK! We heard some noises.

DARBY

I'm a klutz, I dropped a glass on my way here. You are?

LYDIA

Lydia. 3rd period.

DARBY
Oh, you sit with that wisecracker
Rick.

Rick steps forward.

RICK
Present.

Darby ignores Rick. Cold shoulder.

LYDIA
I came here to ask you a few
questions about something you
mentioned in class.

DARBY
Is this about footbinding?

LYDIA
It was one joke!

Ned clears his throat. Lydia finds her calm.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
No, I came here to ask you about
this town way back when. Do you
remember anything?

EXT. TOWN - STREETS - NIGHT

A black SUV devours the scenery. It roars past cookie cutter homes. It's going 50 in a residential zone.

DARBY (O.S.)
When I was about your age, the men
in black were always lingering
around. People vanished.

INT. MARKS' SUV - NIGHT

Marks is in the backseat twiddling his thumbs, he's seated next to an unconscious Wiles.

DARBY (O.S.)
Everyone in town said it was the
Commies. I always thought it was
something else.

LYDIA (O.S.)
What'd you think it was?

DARBY (O.S.)
Aliens.

EXT. DARBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Darby takes a long pause before doing a belly laugh. Lydia laughs along nervously. Rick and Ned are standing there solemnly.

Spark SUDDENLY JUMPS OUT OF LYDIA'S PURSE.

LYDIA
No, bad boy!

Spark is circling around Darby now.

DARBY
Is this your new science project?

Lydia's speechless.

RICK
Yeah! It's our submission for the fair this year. A robot dog... with a custom AI.

Spark walks closer to Darby before nudging his leg.

NED
He likes you.
(pointing at Rick)
He doesn't like this one.

DARBY
I don't either.

Rick looks done. Ned looks behind him. He becomes tense.

NED
We got company!

The Black SUV enters near the driveway. The doors click open. Marks steps out.

LYDIA
Play dead!

Spark drops lifelessly to the floor. Lydia picks up the little robot off the porch and stuffs it in her purse.

MARKS
Lovely night, we're having.

Marks is alone. His driver's still in the car.

MARKS (CONT'D)

Rick, get in your car and get home.

RICK

No, dad.

Marks does a "tsk tsk" before turning towards Lydia, Ned, and Darby.

MARKS

We'll deal with this at home. I'm going to need the three of you to kindly turn yourselves in for questioning.

NED

Or what?

DARBY

Don't ask him that.

Marks pulls out his small pistol.

MARKS

Or you answer to this guy.

Marks cocks his gun.

RICK

Dad, what the hell are you doing?

MARKS

I'm saving the world. Now tell me where the pilot is.

LYDIA

Pilot?

MARKS

Don't play stupid. You were there. The crash site. We need to contain the creature and ensure it isn't against us but with us.

LYDIA

No, you're going to keep it here against its will and force it to do seedy things. Aren't you? That's how the movies go.

RICK

Dad, you don't have to do this.

Marks puts his arm down, then looks into Rick's eyes.

MARKS

I'm doing this all for you, kid.
Just scram from here before it's
too late.

Rick stands firmly next to Lydia. Marks rolls his eyes.

MARKS (CONT'D)

All of this for the girl? Really?

RICK

Nope, I'm doing this because what
you're going to do to Spark is
wrong.

MARKS

It has a name? Shit, now you're
involved.

It's silent.

MARKS (CONT'D)

Well if no one's going to talk, I
might as well put this thing to
use.

Marks aims his gun at Ned.

LYDIA

I'll go with you! Just leave my dad
out of this. He didn't do anything,
Rick didn't either. I was there! I
took it home! I'll tell you
everything I know. It's all my
fault!

NED

Lyd--

LYDIA

He's all I have left.

Marks stows away his pistol.

MARKS

That's really sweet but I was just
stalling.

In the distance, a helicopter's engines ROAR. Its searchlight
flies down.

MARKS (CONT'D)

You really didn't think I'd come here alone. Right? You're all coming in with us.

Marks walks up the porch. His eyes locked on Ned and Lydia. He grabs Rick by the shoulders.

MARKS (CONT'D)

It goes without saying you're grounded.

The two go down the porch. As they do, men rappel down a rope from the helicopter.

These guys mean business. Men in compact hazmat suits. Armed.

They grab Darby, Lydia, and Ned one-by-one.

EXT. AREA 51 - NIGHT

A helicopter flies across the grey dull compound. There's steel everywhere: the doors of warehouses, the hulls of "experimental aircraft", the support beams of light towers.

Rick's Range Rover rolls through the opening gates of the facility along with Marks' black SUV.

INT. AREA 51 - LABS - NIGHT

Tubes filled with strange fluid surround the area. Huddled groups of scientists wearing all sorts of suits are fiddling around with telescopes and soldering irons.

They all pause when the doors swing open. It's Marks. Everyone is arrested in place.

MARKS

Evening, folks.

Marks casually continues his walk. He's cutting the air of tension with his leather loafers and charming smile.

A meek scientist musters the courage to walk near him.

SCIENTIST #1

We've run the diagnostics on the ship. It's not like anything we've seen. It's alive but it isn't.

MARKS

What do you mean?

SCIENTIST #1

I think it's a suit. Like... a skin... for our "buddy."

MARKS

Can we use it?

SCIENTIST #1

We'd need authentication. A fingerprint. He needs to "wear the suit."

Marks takes a gander past a window. It's the downed ship. Polished but covered in wires, surrounded by men with radars and notebooks.

MARKS

I think I can manage that. Is that all?

The scientist nervously clears her throat.

SCIENTIST #1

One of the specimens has been acting up lately.

MARKS

Which one?

SCIENTIST #1

Subject 144-12-2.

MARKS

The squidish looking one?

SCIENTIST #1

Bingo.

MARKS

Get a team and bring him down to the catacombs. I think he needs some alone time.

SCIENTIST #1

The last time we had that thing moved, it almost killed 2 men.

MARKS

Well, if you're so concerned.

Marks turns to the scientist.

MARKS (CONT'D)

You can go and supervise the relocation yourself. You wouldn't mind?

The scientist's trying her best to hide her horror. Marks hands her a dossier and some keys before he departs.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Lydia's sitting alone. On the desk in front of her is her bag opened and laid out.

An empty notebook, a few pens, tissues, a tampon, and a DEACTIVATED SPARK.

The door opens. It's Marks.

MARKS

Well...

LYDIA

Well, what?

MARKS

I thought you were going to tell me all about your little friend. Spark? What was it?

LYDIA

You went back on your deal.

Marks looks at the assorted items on the table.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

By the way, the tampon's a Tampax Pearl if you were wondering.

MARKS

That little dog's interesting.

LYDIA

It's nothing.

Marks picks up Spark in his hands. It's still lifeless. Lydia's trying to keep it together.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

It was a gift from my dad the year my mom passed.

MARKS

My condolences.

Marks puts it down.

MARKS (CONT'D)

Pleasantries aside. I'm here to know what you know.

LYDIA

Well, I know little to nothing. All I know is that you're never getting your hands on that alien.

MARKS

Am I? You're just one of four eggs I can crack. Someone knows something. It may be your father.

LYDIA

He won't spill.

MARKS

Nothing some torture couldn't do.

LYDIA

He works a silver mine every day. That's torture enough. Why don't you ask your son?

Marks scoffs a little.

MARKS

I kind of see why Rick would like you. You got gusto. It's a darn shame we all had to meet each other this way.

LYDIA

It is.

Marks clicks his tongue.

MARKS

You seem reasonable. I'll offer you something. How about you tell me all you know and hand it over and in exchange, you get a job here post-grad?

LYDIA

What?

MARKS

You could work for the good guys.
(MORE)

MARKS (CONT'D)

You seem like a smart, capable
young woman who loves science.
Imagine the resources.

Lydia takes a moment to let that register. She looks at Marks
before she looks at Spark on the table. Playing dead.

LYDIA

Never. It doesn't belong here. It
needs to be free.

MARKS

We can and will keep you here
forever. The choice is yours.

LYDIA

I'll gladly take Spark's place if
it means you won't find him.

MARKS

Be that way.

Marks leaves. The door shuts closed. The sounds of 7
different locking mechanisms ring through the room.

INT. AREA 51 - HOLDING CELLS - NIGHT

Ned and Darby are sitting in a cell. It's barren. Rick's
outside sitting freely on a chair.

They're all being watched by one of the AGENTS from the
cookie shop. He's a generic man in black, standing still and
straight.

Rick moves just an inch when the agent immediately turns
around.

RICK

Are you sure you're not a robot?

The agent's silent.

WILES (O.S.)

I'm walking. I'm walking! Don't
push.

Wiles comes into the holding cells followed by another agent.
She's put in the same cell as Ned and Darby.

The locks shut. CLICK.

RICK

Ms. Wiles?

WILES

Rick? What are you doing here?

RICK

My dad works here.

WILES

Is he the asshole who brought me here?

AGENT #1

Quiet, all of you.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Lydia's alone. She looks at the camera above her, then at Spark.

LYDIA

Don't do anything. They're watching us.

Spark awakens anyway then nuzzles Lydia's arm before jumping off the table. It runs to the walls.

Lydia walks to the walls. There's a GIANT WHITE GLOW.

INT. AREA 51 - HOLDING CELLS - NIGHT

It's silent for a moment. Then...

A SIREN GOES OFF. The lights begin to FLICKER. On and off and on again before it's PITCH BLACK.

AGENT #1

Everyone remain calm.

CONTROL ROOM OS (O.S.)

Emergency evacuation protocol activated. Please leave the premises immediately.

The light's go up for a second. Rick's left his chair. Darkness.

The locks CLICK again. Light returns. Rick's back with a fire extinguisher in his hands.

He SWINGS but misses. The agent notices and HOLDS him. Locking up his arms.

The extinguisher drops. The doors of the holding cells come undone.

Ned runs out and immediately CLOCKS the agent straight in the face. The agent falls down.

Rick's set free from the grip and goes for the fire extinguisher.

SMACK. Rick gets the agent's legs before he can stand up again.

Ned, Darby, and Wiles look at him in disbelief.

RICK

Just making sure he was down for the count.

Ned shakes his head.

NED

We need to find Lyd. If our cells were opened, hers probably did too.

Rick nods. Ned walks over to the downed agent who's out COLD. He pickpockets the suit for a gun and a pair of handcuffs.

RICK

Toss me his badge.

Ned rummages for a badge then tosses it to Rick.

NED

Good idea, we might need it later.

RICK

No, when this is all over, this guy's getting fired.

NED

Darby, get her away from here. It's going to get ugly.

Darby grabs Wiles' hand.

WILES

Please don't do that.

The four exit the room. Wiles and Darby going right. Ned and Rick going left.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Spark's little body reanimates with a GIANT FLASH.

Lydia backs away from the walls. The locks click open.

LYDIA

OK, I don't know what you did Spark
but let's get out of here.

Lydia picks up Spark and pushes the door. It budes.

INT. AREA 51 - HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Lydia's running down the hallway. It's utter CHAOS.
Scientists and agents SCRAMBLE AROUND.

AGENT #2

We gotta get out of here. It's out
of the containment cell!

Red sirens on the wall are going OFF. No one pays any
attention to the escaped prisoner.

Lydia runs towards the direction everyone is running away
from.

Spark barks.

LYDIA

This way?

Spark barks again.

Lydia continues running before she's ALMOST HIT by a speeding
GOLF CART that slams to a halt in time.

Its occupants jump out and run. Lydia immediately jumps in
the cart. She puts Spark on the dashboard. Spark begins to
move like a COMPASS. It points in a direction.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

That way?

It barks. Lydia kicks the cart into gear and turns it around.

INT. AREA 51 - CATACOMBS - NIGHT

Ned and Rick are walking through emptied space. The lights
are dimmed. Rick puts up a flashlight via his phone.

He screams and drops the phone.

A scientist's body is hanging upside down from a vent. The top half at least.

SCIENTIST #1

Help.

A TENTACLE descends from the vent. It wraps itself around the scientist's face and PULLS THE POOR GAL OUT OF SIGHT. Human screams eventually get drowned out by an unearthly SCREECH.

Rick picks up his phone.

NED

Keep calm, I got you.

RICK

Are you sure?

The two walk carefully and slowly. They creep forward when...

ANOTHER TENTACLE FLIES THROUGH ONE OF THE WALLS.

RICK (CONT'D)

Shoot it! Will you just shoot the thing?

NED

I'm trying to get it. Keep yourself calm.

RICK

How can I when a monster is out there?

YET ANOTHER TENTACLE COMES OUT OF THE BLUE AND BARELY SCRAPES BY RICK'S LEG.

Rick's screaming like a little girl at this point. Ned's quiet, resolute, determined.

A TENTACLE TRIES TO SWEEP PAST THE TWO MEN BUT GETS STUCK ON THE WALL.

The two keep running.

Ned cocks the pistol in his hand and SHOOTS at the tentacle stuck on the wall.

RICK (CONT'D)

They weren't kidding when they said they kept monsters here.

NED

You see that?

Ned gestures to a set of doors.

RICK

What?

NED

An elevator!

The doors are shut until Ned shoots the panel. He manages to hit the "up" button.

There's a man in the elevator. A PLUMBER looking dude. He's scrambling to close the door. Jamming away at the buttons as Ned and Rick dash towards the door.

RICK

Thank the maker!

Ned nods, the two make the final break for the open door.

Rick gets a little ahead. Just as the door closes, Ned PUSHES Rick through the door.

Rick falls in. Ned slides in the door, not unlike a professional baseball player.

They're SAFE as the doors close.

The elevator doors are POUNDED. The poor plumber in the elevator merely whistles awkwardly.

RICK (CONT'D)

Lovely weather, we're having.

Rick's huffing and puffing. The plumber turns silent. Ned turns to the plumber.

NED

Do you know where the other cells are?

PLUMBER

I just clean the toilets here, man.

INT. AREA 51 - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The golf cart zooms through empty halls that alternate between RED FLASHES and SIRENS.

It's dreadfully eerie. It's silent almost bar the cart's engine running and the occasional bark from Spark acting like a makeshift GPS.

Spark turns his head right when a fork approaches.

Suddenly, there's a RUMBLING growing. Metal creaking. Followed by an unearthly SCREECH.

Above, the vents begin to come apart. A TENTACLE rips through and begins swiping towards the cart.

Lydia takes a glance towards her side mirrors. She sees the tentacle rappel through the walls to REACH and TEAR OFF her left mirror.

LYDIA

Holy shit! What was that?

The tentacle descends back into the darkness. Lydia decides to FLOOR IT.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Are we close?

Spark barks twice. Suddenly the cart STOPS moving. Lydia looks back and sees a tentacle SNAG her rear left wheel. She keeps her foot slammed on the pedal.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

C'mon. Please.

The wheels try their hardest to break free...

And they do but only after they RIP THE TENTACLE clean off!

Once free the cart SPEEDS OFF, the creature begins to roar but it trails off into the distance.

Spark begins to bark incessantly as if they've arrived. Lydia stops then gets off the cart. She stands in the darkness.

Something DROPS with a THUD. It's the remnant of their pursuer's appendage. It moves around just a little before dropping dead.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Well, where is it?

A slit of light appears. It's a DOOR beginning to OPEN. Lydia and Spark enter.

INT. AREA 51 - LABS - NIGHT

It's completely emptied out. Brightly lit and white but still empty. Sterile.

Unfinished machines lay on the tables. Whiteboards with code and formulas litter the scape.

There's shattered glass all over the floor. As Lydia walks through the space, the glass crunches at her feet.

Lydia's enthralled by everything around her. Any other day it'd be her wonderland, her heaven: the promised land. But now, it's her paradise lost.

Spark, in her hands, barks at her to throw her back to reality.

LYDIA

What is it?

Spark tilts his head towards a GLASS WINDOW.

Lydia walks towards it. It's the SHIP. Unearthed and suspended in the air.

A sleek but slightly battered circular HEMISPHERE made of something akin to silver.

Spark jumps out of Lydia's hands onto the floor. He rams his head against the glass.

It barely registers a small tap.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

I told you we'd make it.

Glass begins to crunch. CRUNCH. CRUNCH.

Black loafers eat up space. CRUNCH.

MARKS

It's beautiful, isn't it?

Marks steps in. He has a pistol in his hands and an unhinged look in his eyes.

He aims at Lydia. Spark begins to BARK and WHINE.

MARKS (CONT'D)

I should have known it was that dog. When I held it in my hands, I felt it.

LYDIA

Dr. Marks. It doesn't have to be this way.

MARKS

You're playing the game with the wrong team. That monster in your hands will be the end of us all.

LYDIA

You're wrong.

MARKS

It's stolen all of our data. Could you imagine what it could do if it got onto the internet? It'd know everything!

Marks walks closer. He wades into the darkness of the room. Lydia stands her ground.

MARKS (CONT'D)

It could learn all of our secrets our offensives, our enemies' moves, anything. Whoever has it with them could rule the world.

Marks cocks his gun.

MARKS (CONT'D)

We need to get rid of it if it's not with us...

LYDIA

Let it go home. If we do that, it can't hurt anybody.

Marks steps into the light.

MARKS

No, we need to harness it. It arrived here for a reason.

LYDIA

You're not thinking correctly. Put the gun down!

MARKS

Everything we've worked for has been made obsolete. Our assets, our research, our facility. Destroyed all by that monster.

LYDIA

The only monster here is you.

Marks aims directly at Lydia. Fingers on the trigger. He's about to squeeze when he's TACKLED DOWN by Ned.

BANG! The glass behind Lydia SHATTERS into a million pieces. Lydia covers her ears and ducks.

Spark runs towards Lydia, dodging the raining shards of glass.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Dad?!

Ned manages to pin down Marks who's squirming around.

Ned CUFFS Marks hands together then gestures to Rick to keep watch before he runs towards his daughter for an embrace.

NED

Are you alright? Hurt? How's your arm?

LYDIA

I'm fine, dad. I can take care of myself.

Ned pulls Lydia away from their hug. He shares a look with her.

NED

I know that now.

Rick walks to his dad who's slouched over on the ground. Defeated.

MARKS

Rick, uncuff me.

RICK

No, dad.

He takes a good look at Lydia and Ned, then at his father.

MARKS

I'm the only one that can fix all of this.

RICK

You can't.

MARKS

I'm your father. I demand you uncuff me right now!

RICK

Dad, it's over.

Rick walks over to Lydia and Ned who are at a loss as to what to do.

RICK (CONT'D)
Well, what now?

The sirens are still running. Red lights spinning and alarms everywhere.

Marks, hands restrained, tries to loosen the cuffs' hold. He can't get them off. The group doesn't notice.

Spark runs towards the cracked window. He tries to jump but he can't reach the floating SPACESHIP.

Ned walks to Spark, picks him up, then looks at Lydia.

NED
Wait.

Everything's silent.

NED (CONT'D)
Lydia. I think you should be the one to do it.

Lydia walks up to collect Spark in her hands.

NED (CONT'D)
Make them count.

LYDIA
(cradling Spark)
Gosh, I wish we had more time together and I don't want to let you go but I have to.

Lydia walks to the SHIP. Spark touches the HULL. A GIANT WHITE LIGHT that begins to envelop the space. Everyone is struck with awe. It's ethereal.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
I know this is completely irrational but you see her up there, tell her I said "hi."

The SHIP SPRINGS TO LIFE. The hull begins to ripple and repair itself.

It's whole again. Shining a BRIGHT SILVER. Ned pulls Lydia into his arms.

NED
 (whispers)
 I miss her, too. I miss her every
 day. She'd be so proud of you.

Ned kisses her forehead. The ship begins to HUM AND WHIR. The noise sounds cacophonous and disjointed. It's trying to communicate but it can't verbally.

LYDIA
 Spark?

Marks stops in place. He tries to get up on his feet. He manages to and he scrams.

The ship opens its doors before it cuts symmetrical shimmering pieces of itself off to form a stairwell leading to a fixed up cockpit.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
 What?

NED
 I think it wants you to go with it.

LYDIA
 Dad, that's insane.

Lydia looks at Spark.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
 Do you?

The ship tilts upwards then back to Lydia. Lydia looks at the ship and back at Ned and Rick.

NED
 You can go. Y'know. Just promise
 me, you'll come back, one day.

RICK
 What he said.

Lydia walks towards the steps. She looks back at Ned but looks forward. Her eyes glint with determination. Confidence.

LYDIA
 Thanks, Spark. For everything, but
 this world's my home. I'll miss it
 if I go, even if I act like I
 won't. You have a home?

The ship gestures upwards again before it revs its engines. This time it lingers before it returns to face the group.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Go there.

The ship extends its steps one more time. They tap Lydia's feet like an arm.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

I'm sure.

One more tap.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

(laughing)

I promise. Now go but don't be
afraid to visit every now and then.
I got you.

Lydia looks at her father and her best friend.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

We got you.

The ship waits a moment before it begins to retract its landing gear. Before it can, a sliver of a step falls to the ground. It's not much.

Lydia looks at Spark who merely waits. Lydia reaches for the sliver before picking it up. Spark makes a warm hum through its engines as she does.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Goodbye, Spark.

The hemisphere begins to tilt upwards. Engines begin to roar.

With a SONIC BLAST that SHATTERS all the remaining windows and one LAST GIANT BLAST OF LIGHT, it ZOOMS upwards to the sky.

But before it reaches the sky, it PLOWS THROUGH THE CEILING.

Making a silvery streak and turning away, it makes a SCREECH then WHOOSH...

Sparks's gone like a shooting star into the dark void above.

Lydia grabs Ned's hand, then Rick's. They all look up in awe of the vastness of the universe.

EXT. AREA 51 - NIGHT

Marks makes it to the door of an SUV when he finds himself with a flashlight and a gun pointed at him.

It's Darby and Wiles. Wiles with the gun, Darby with the flashlight.

WILES

Hello, again.

MARKS

You got nothing on me.

DARBY

Illegal kidnapping, murder, the list goes on.

Wiles has files in her hands. A few stuffed manila envelopes labeled "Wiles, Adam".

MARKS

Where did you get those?

DARBY

The archive.

WILES

We also have files on you and your suspicious activities.

Giant choppers fly through the sky. Lights shine on the whole facility.

DARBY

You have nowhere to run.

A chopper lands and a STERN, SCARY WOMAN walks out the doors. This is MICHELLE LEE, Director of the CIA.

Marks is cornered, he hangs his head in shame.

LEE

Well, well, well. Dr. Marks. I see you've failed to get a grip on the situation.

MARKS

I can explain everything.

LEE

Explain it to me under probation and behind bars.

(to her mic)

Get a clean-up team down here immediately and get these civilians to safety. We got aliens out of their containment.

Lee takes Marks away with her.

DARBY
Aliens?

LEE
Talk about it to anyone and you'll
be joining him.

WILES
Ma'am.

LEE
It's Director Lee to you.

Lee looks at the files in Wiles' arms.

LEE (CONT'D)
Those are government property but
considering the circumstances, I'll
look the other way for now.

Ned, Lydia, and Rick emerge out of the warehouse. Lydia's
holding the lifeless robot dog toy in her hands.

They pass by Lee putting Marks in the chopper. Marks shoots a
sad glance at Rick.

Lydia puts her arm around Rick's shoulder, they keep walking
until they find Wiles and Darby.

Lydia runs to her teachers.

LYDIA
You're both safe!

DARBY
(winking)
Homework's still due.

WILES
(reading files)
Did it ask you to go with it?

LYDIA
Yes, but I said no. How did you
know?

WILES
My brother apparently did.

Lydia hugs Wiles.

WILES (CONT'D)
Still against county rules.

LYDIA
Still don't care.

Wiles hugs back.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
You think we can call off school
for the next week?

EXT. SUAREZ'S HOME - DUSK

SUPER: 3 MONTHS LATER

The front yard's empty. No mining equipment. Just plastic flamingos.

The front door swings open. Lydia runs to the car. Her dad's hand in hers as she drags him out.

The two make it to the beat-up truck. Ned tosses Lydia the keys.

LYDIA
You sure?

NED
Yeah. Just don't crash into
anything.

LYDIA
No promises.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

The roads are empty. Lydia's focused on what's ahead. Ned's looking out the window for once.

NED
I've been hanging out with Eli and
the old gang lately.

LYDIA
That's great, dad!

NED
How's Rick?

LYDIA

We met up the other day to put the finishing touches on our final presentation for nationals. Fingers crossed.

NED

So did you pick which school you're going to?

LYDIA

I'll see where the wind takes me but I'm actually sort of considering places closer.

NED

Like?

LYDIA

Maybe Stanford. I think I could get in.

NED

You better visit home when you can.

LYDIA

I will.

Ned sighs.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Yeah, dad?

NED

I can't find the word for it but everything's fine and I'm OK with that.

LYDIA

The word's contentment, Dad.

EXT. DESERT - ROCKY HILLS - NIGHT

Lydia and Ned sit on the rock.

NED

You really think he'll come back?

LYDIA

According to the maps, I read... he has to, the pictures match the anomaly from a few months ago.

NED

I still don't get any of what you said.

LYDIA

Yes. He'll be here.

The skies are ABLAZE once more. It's a GIANT MIGRATION OF STARS.

Again, one of the stars begins to separate from the pack.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

That must be him! It has to be!

It hurtles but ducks and CURVES towards Ned and Lydia. It has returned once more.

NED

Spark!

It slows down and floats in front of the two. Lydia smiles as she reaches for the ship's hull. As she reaches, we see a necklace that shines the same way Spark does.

FADE TO BLACK.